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Nag Hammadi Codex V and Late Antique Coptic Hagiographies : A Comparative Approach

Thèse

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Résumé

Cette thèse porte sur le Codex V de Nag Hammadi en tant que produit d'une compilation copte dans l'Antiquité tardive. Nous le comparons à un autre groupe de textes qui circulaient à la même époque en copte, les hagiographies. Cette comparaison démontre l'existence de plusieurs thèmes et motifs littéraires communs aux deux *corpora*. Cela illustre qu'un lecteur copte connaissant les hagiographies en question pouvait également avoir de l'intérêt pour les textes du Codex V, étant donné que ce dernier contenait plusieurs thèmes et motifs en commun avec ce corpus. Ainsi, loin d'être un livre à saveur gnostique et hétérodoxe, étranger à la culture copte chrétienne – comme généralement suggéré par la recherche – le Codex V était un livre bien intégré à l'ambiance littéraire de l'Égypte de l'Antiquité tardive. De plus, suivant la théorie de la réception telle que théorisée par Jauss – en particulier son concept de « horizon of expectations » – nous utilisons ces thèmes et ces motifs littéraires pour interpréter les textes du Codex V à la lumière de leur contexte copte. Autrement dit, nous offrons une lecture copte du Codex V, et non pas une lecture « gnostique ».

Abstract

The present dissertation deals with Nag Hammadi Codex V as the product of a late antique Coptic compilation. We compare it to another group of late antique Coptic texts, the hagiographies. This comparison shows the existence of many points of contact concerning literary themes and motifs between both of the corpora in question here. This demonstrates that a given Coptic reader – who knew the hagiographies in question – could also be interested in Codex V, since it displays many literary themes and motifs to which he was accustomed when reading Coptic hagiographies. Consequently, far from being a volume with a Gnostic and heterodox taste and alien to a Coptic context – as generally pictured by scholars – Codex V was very well placed in the literary environment of late antique Egypt. Moreover, following the theory of reception as it was theorized by Jauss – in particular the concept of "horizon of expectations" – we make use of these literary themes and motifs to interpret Codex V in the light of its Coptic context. In other words, we offer a Coptic reading of Codex V, instead of a "Gnostic" one.

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List of Abbreviations

2 Ieu – Second Book of Ieu

AB – Analecta Bollandiana

ARAL – Atti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei

BA – Biblical Archaeologist

BAISSP – Bulletin de l'Académie impériale des sciences de Saint-Pétersbourg

BASP – Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists

BCNH – Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi

BETL – Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium

BG – Berolinensis Gnosticus

BIFAO – Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale

BIHBR – Bulletin de l'Institut historique belge de Rome

BSR – Bulletin for the Study of Religion

CBC – Cahiers de la bibliothèque copte

C.I.M. – Centro Italiano Microfiches

CPR – Corpus Papyrorum Raineri

CRSSTA – Cassiodorus: Rivista di studi sulla tarda antichità

CCSA – Corpus Christianorum, Series Apocryphorum

CSCO – Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium

C.V. – Codex vaticanus

C.V.C. – Codex vaticanus copticus

EJL – Early Judaism and Its Literature

Eranos-JB – Eranos Jahrbuch

HCO – Histoire des conciles oecuméniques

HThR – Harvard Theological Review

IFAO – Institut français d'archéologie orientale

JA – Judaïsme Ancien - Ancient Judaism

JARCE – Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt

JbAC – Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum

JBL – Journal of Biblical Literature

JECS – Journal of Early Christian Studies

JJP – Journal of Juristic Papyrology

JJPS – Journal of Juristic Papyrology Studies

JSNT – Journal for the Study of the New Testament

LThPh – Laval théologique et philosophique

Muséon – Le Muséon

NH – Nag Hammadi

NHC – Nag Hammadi Codices

NHMS – Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies

NHS – Nag Hammadi Studies

NT – Novum Testamentum

NTS – New Testament Studies

NTTSD – New Testament Tools, Studies, and Documents

OECS – Oxford Early Christian Studies

OCA – Orientalia Christiana Analecta

OCP – Orientalia Christiana Periodica

PTRSL – Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London; Biological Sciences

REAug – Revue des études augustiniennes

REG – Revue des études grecques

REgypt – Revue d'égyptologie

RHR – Revue de l'histoire des religions

RSEHA – Revue sémitique d'épigraphie et d'histoire ancienne

SC – Sources chrétiennes

SCJ – Studies in Christianity and Judaism

SNTS – Society for the New Testament Studies

SR – Sciences religieuses/Studies in Religion

STAC – Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum

SVTQ – St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly

TCJ – The Classical Journal

VChr – Vigiliae Christianae

WUNT – Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

ZÄS – Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde

ZKTh – Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie

ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲓ ⲇⲉ ϧⲉⲛⲡⲓⲉϫⲱⲣϩ ⲉⲧⲉⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲉⲧⲁⲡⲓϧⲉⲗⲗⲟ ⲕⲏⲛ ⲉϣⲗⲏⲗ ⲁϥⲣⲁⲕϥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲟⲩⲕⲟⲩϫⲓ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ
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(*Life of Shenoute* §146)

Deo omnis gloria

Acknowledgments

It took me so long to finish this dissertation that I could say that the number of people that I am supposed to acknowledge is proportional to the time it took me to accomplish it. And I am not exaggerating; such a hard and long job demanded the help and collaboration of so many people to the point that one could say that it was much more a product of team work than of the individual efforts of a single Ph.D. student. This is why I choose to use "we" – even if I was told that it sounds a bit old-fashioned today in English – instead of "I" in the writing of this dissertation: it is a practical way to show that it is the result of a team effort, in which many other students and professors – from Université Laval and outside of it – took part. This dissertation would never be done without them.

I may start by thanking my advisor, Professor Louis Painchaud, who is certainly the main person responsible for the final shape of the subject of this dissertation. During this long journey, he also followed my progress closely, making precious suggestions and corrections. I would never have been able to accomplish this work without his help. I must also thank Professor Paul-Hubert Poirier, who also made important suggestions during the research and writing of the dissertation. Professor Funk should also figure in this list, for his precious recommendations in regard to Coptic (I would never have been able to figure out some Coptic puzzles without his help). Professors Michel Roberge and Anne Pasquier should also be remembered here; Professor Pasquier in particular for having accepted to join the jury that will analyze the dissertation. Obviously, I could not forget to thank the other member of the jury, Professor Vicente Dobroruka, to whom I owe my interest in Biblical Studies and in Early Christianity back in 2001, when I took one of his lectures. So, without him, I would never be here in the first place. Professor Patrick Duffley – who I can also call a friend – also deserves a special acknowledgement, for having revised the English of my dissertation; when I arrived in Québec in 2004, English was my second language, that is why I choose to write my M.A. thesis and also my dissertation in English. After so many years in Québec, things have changed a bit, and I can say today that I am almost a native French speaker.

Introduction

During the past seventy years, the Nag Hammadi Codices[1] have attracted the attention of many scholars in Biblical and early Christian studies. The group of ancient manuscripts found in the proximity of the modern town called Nag Hammadi[2], in Upper Egypt, brought to light a considerable number of ancient texts, a treasure trove for scholars of early Christianity. This new treasure fortuitously discovered[3] in 1945 is formed by twelve codices of papyrus and a portion of a thirteenth one that were probably produced in the fourth century, containing fifty-one texts written in Coptic, representing forty-six distinct works, among which thirty-six were unattested before the discovery. Although the manuscripts were probably produced in the fourth century, it is generally accepted that the texts were originally composed in Greek, mainly during the second and third centuries A.D.

The first scholars who had contact with these texts linked them to religious doctrines normally associated with "Gnosticism",[4] firmly and intensively denounced and combatted in Late Antiquity by heresiologists such as Irenaeus of Lyon,[5] Hippolytus of Rome,[6] Tertulian,[7] and Epiphanius of Salamis,[8] among others. It is undeniable that many texts that are preserved in the NHC present doctrines that are very similar to those described and condemned by the

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[1] For now on in this dissertation, called NHC.

[2] For now on in this dissertation, called NH.

[3] On the discovery of the Nag Hammadi codices, see James M. Robinson, "From the Cliff to Cairo", in *Colloque international sur les textes de Nag Hammadi* (ed. B. Barc; Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1981), 21-58. Robinson's account was recently questioned by Nicola Denzey Lewis and Justine A. Blount; see Nicola Denzey Lewis and Justine Blount, "Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices," *JBL* 133 (2014): 399-419. See also Mark Goodacre, "How reliable is the story of the Nag Hammadi Discovery?," *JSNT* 35 (2013): 303-22; James M. Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Story* (2 vols.; NHMS 86; Leiden: Brill, 2014); Dylan Burns, "Telling Nag Hammadi's Egyptian Story," *BSR* 45 (2016): 5-11.

[4] For example, Henri-Charles Puech, "Les écrits gnostiques du Codex Jung," *VChr* 8 (1954): 1-51; see also Jean Doresse, *Les livres secrets des gnostiques d'Égypte* (Paris: Plon, 1958).

[5] See *Adversus Haereses*.

[6] Notably in the *Elenchos*.

[7] In writings such as *De praescriptione hereticorum*, for example.

[8] See the *Panarion*.

heresiologists of early Christianity. However, some other texts cannot be identified with any known branch of Gnosticism;[9] this shows the heterogeneity of the so-called collection.[10] Despite this heterogeneity, since their discovery, the NHC have been regularly identified as a Gnostic library[11] or even as a group of heterodox texts, as an example of the diversity and plurality of Early Christianity.

As stated before, it is widely accepted by scholars that the Coptic versions of Nag Hammadi texts are in fact translations; these texts were probably originally composed in

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[9] By "Gnosticism", we understand a religious doctrine that believes in the existence of two distinct divinities: a creator who is not the supreme God and who is identified with the god of the Scriptures and the supreme-God Himself; we owe this definition to Michal Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Priceton/New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 51-52. Given this, we could state that certain texts that are integrated in the NHC do not explicitly profess this doctrine; we could mention, for example, the *Second Apocalypse of James*, the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Exegesis of the Soul*.

[10] As already said, this heterogeneity could be illustrated by the existence of different texts generally associated with different branches of Gnosticism, and some others that cannot be associated with any known types of Gnosticism; on this matter see Paul-Hubert Poirier, "La bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi: sa nature et son importance," *SR* 15 (1986): 303-316. A first group is formed by the Valentinian texts, such as the *Gospel of Truth* (NH I, 3 and XII, 2), and the *Gospel of Philip* (NH II, 3), on this matter, see Einar Thomassen, "Notes pour la délimitation d'un corpus valentinien," in *Les textes de Nag Hammadi et le problème de leur classification* (ed. L. Painchaud and A. Pasquier, Québec/Louvain/Paris: Les Presses de l'Université Laval/Peeters, 1995), 243-254. A second group is formed by the Sethian texts, such as the *Apocryphon of John* (NH II, 1 and VI, 1 [long version]; NH III, 1 [short version]; a copy of the short version is also found in the Codex of Berlin [BG, 2]); on this matter, see Hans-Martin Schenke, "The Phenomenon and Significance of Gnostic Sethianism," in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism* (ed. B. Layton; Leiden: Brill, 1981), 588-616; Hans-Martin Schenke, "Das sethianische System nach Nag-Hammadi-Handschriften," in Hans-Martin Schenke, *Der Same Seths: Hans-Martin Schenkes Kleine Schriften zu Gnosis, Koptologie und Neuem Testament* (eds. G.S. Robinson, G. Schenke and U.-K. Plisch; NHMS 78; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2012), 285-292. A third category is formed by the doctrine identified by Irenaeus of Lyon (*Adversus Haereses* I, 30) as being that of the "ophites", being found in texts such as *Eugnostos* (NH III, 3; V,1); see Tuomas Rasimus, *Paradise Reconsidered in Gnostic Mythmaking: Rethinking Sethianism in Light of the Ophite Myth and Ritual* (NHMS 68; Leiden: Brill, 2009). Other texts cannot be linked to any particular known Gnostic branch, such as the *Apocalypse of Peter* (NH VII, 3), for example; see Poirier, "La bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi", 309. And, finally, the non-Gnostic texts, such as the Hermetic ones, for example; on this matter see Jean-Pierre Mahé, *Hermès en Haute-Égypte vol. I. Les textes hermétiques de Nag Hammadi et leurs parallèles grecs et latins* (BCNH section "Textes" 3; Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1978); Jean-Pierre Mahé, *Hermès en Haute-Égypte vol. II. Le Fragment du Discours parfait et les Définitions hermétiques arméniennes (NH VI, 8.8a)* (BCNH section "Textes" 7; Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1982).

[11] The fact that the critical editions with English translations of NH and BG texts – published through the 70's, 80's and 90's – were later gathered in five volumes forming a collection called "The Coptic Gnostic Library" is symptomatic. The title of the French-Canadian collection of Critical editions along with the French translations of NH and BG texts was much more prudent and precise: *Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi,* with no direct references to "Gnosticism" at all. The German critical edition, *Nag Hammadi Deutsch* is even more prudent.

Greek during the second or the third centuries A.D.[12] However, the texts that are preserved in the NHC are written in Coptic, and were transmitted, received and read in a Coptic environment. Until recent decades, scholarship has not paid much attention to this fact.

In the past seventy years since their discovery, the contents of the texts that are preserved in the NHC have been mainly analyzed by scholars in the light of their original, i.e. Greek, context of composition. Scholars have used the NH texts to shed light on the origins of Gnosticism, the theological discussions in the second and third centuries, the transmission of the tradition of the sayings of Jesus, and their possible links to the origins and spread of Christianity in the first century, etc. Only few scholars have devoted any effort to the study of these texts in the Egyptian Coptic context.[13]

William Adler has drawn attention to a similar phenomenon concerning the study of Jewish pseudepigrapha: although produced in relatively archaic contexts, a major part of these texts was preserved by Christians in the languages of Late Antiquity and the Eastern Middle Ages, such as Slavonic and Ethiopian. Thus these texts have probably passed through a complex process of (re)transmission, (re)edition and reception. However, scholars rarely show interest in these later contexts, seeing them as a "regrettable accident of history" – to use Adler's words – the only alternative left for recovering the original text that, unfortunately, is lost forever.[14]

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[12] The exception is the extract of the *Republic* of Plato. In general, it is possible to deduce that the texts were originally composed in Greek for many reasons. In some cases, Greek fragments of NH texts are known: these are the cases of the *Gospel of Thomas* (P. Oxyrhynchus 1, 654 and 655)*,* the *Sophia of Jesus Christ* (P. Oxyrhynchus 1081), for example. Greek versions of the Hermetic texts are also known (on this subject, see Mahé, *Hermès en Haute-Égypte vol. I. Les textes hermétiques de Nag Hammadi et leurs parallèles grecs et latins*, 15-20). In other cases, the original Greek titles were preserved, this is notably the case for the *Apocalypse of Peter* (NH VII, 70, 13 and 84, 14), for example. On the titles of the NH texts, see Poirier, "Titres et sous-titres" and Buzi, *Titoli e autori nella tradizione copta*, 341-345.
[13] For a complete survey, see the chapter on the *status quaestionis*.
[14] William Adler, "Introduction," in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity* (ed. J. Vanderkam and W. Adler. Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum 4. Assen/Minneapolis: Van Corcum/Fortress Press, 1996)*,* 2. See also Lorenzo DiTommaso, "Jewish Pseudepigrapha and Christian Apocrypha: Definitions, Boundaries and Points of Contact" (paper presented at the Colloquium "Christian Apocryphal Texts for the New Millennium: Achievements, Prospects and Challenges," Ottawa, 2006).

The same mentality has prevailed in the research on the NHC. These texts preserved in Coptic are often considered as being nothing more than late versions of the original Greek texts, the only alternative to the study of Gnosticism of the previous one or two centuries. In the introduction to the *Nag Hammadi Library in English*, James Robinson states in a very symptomatic comment that "meaningful and eloquent myths and philosophic formulations of that radical stance became in their turn garbled traditions, re-used by later and lesser authors whose watered-down, not to say muddied, version may be most of what survived."[15]

One can notice consequently that the interest for the Egyptian Coptic context of NHC production, destination and conservation, as well as their significance and reception remained secondary during these seven decades of research, attracting almost no attention from scholars; the "regrettable accident of history" can be also applied to the study of the NHC and their texts.

Obviously, it is perfectly natural that the primary concern of scholars is the original context of composition of any given text. Normally, this is how things work; the primary interest on Platonic sources, for example, is not how they were transmitted through the centuries neither how they were received in Late Antiquity or Middle Ages, for example, but rather their author and his context. A similar situation could be noticed in relation to the New Testament, for example: the primary interest of scholars is related to its original context of composition. But there comes a time when scholars develop new interests, beginning to be interested in the transmission of these sources, in their reception in different times and places, in their translations, diffusion etc. This is what has been happening to NH texts in the last two or three decades. After several years of an almost exclusive interest in the original context of composition of these texts, scholars have started to show interest in their reception and transmission in Coptic.

This new interest could be shown by the appeal that was recently made by some scholars of early Christianity: to study the NHC and their texts as a product of fourth-century

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[15] James M. Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (Leiden/New York/Köln: Brill, 1996), 2.

Coptic culture.[16] And this is the intention of the present dissertation, concerning specifically Nag Hammadi Codex V. Making use of the theory of reception, we intend to place Codex V in the context of its compilation, comparing it mainly to a specific type of fourth-and fifth-century Egyptian literature: hagiographies. Through this, we hope to give a partial answer to this appeal.

This idea emerged when the present author read a pair of articles written by Stephen Emmel.[17] In one of these articles, Emmel states that

> Some Coptologists of the current generation are inclined to work against a view of Coptic literature as primarily and ancillary resource for New Testament and Patristic scholarship (a view according to which the Greek *Vorlage*, even if hypothetical, is always the primary object of interest), preferring instead to emphasize that even translation literature can and should be understood in its Coptic cultural context. In other words, the interest of a piece of Coptic translation literature should not end once its Greek *Vorlage* has been identified. Rather, one must still ask when, where, and why it was translated, and how and why it was altered during its transmission.[18]

One could say that the statement made by Emmel was precisely the main motivation for the research that culminated in the present dissertation, even if this research finally took a slightly different direction. Following the clue pointed out by Emmel and quoted above, i.e. that the texts that are integrated in the NHC "should be understood in their Coptic cultural context," we decided to explore the great universe of late antique Coptic literature, the literature that

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[16] See, for example, Stephen Emmel, "Religious Tradition, Textual Transmission, and the Nag Hammadi Codices," in *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years: Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration* (ed. J. D. Turner and A. Maguire; NHMS 44; Leiden/New York: E.J. Brill, 1997), 34-43; Alberto Camplani, "Sula transmissione di testi gnostici in copto," in *L'Egito cristiano –Aspetti e problemi in età tardo-antica* (ed. A. Camplani; SEA 56; Roma: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1997), 121-175; Jaques van der Vliet, "The Coptic Gnostic Texts as Christian Apocryphal Literature," in *Ägypten und Nubien in spätantiker und christlicher Zeit. Akten des 6. Internationalen Koptologenkongresses Münster vol. 2: Sprache, Schrifttum und Gedankenwelt* (ed. S. Emmel et al.; Berlin: Wiesbaden, 1999), 553-562; and finally Tito Orlandi, "Nag Hammadi Texts and the Coptic Literature," in *Colloque international "L'Évangile selon Thomas et les textes de Nag Hammadi"* (ed. L. Painchaud and P.-H. Poirier; BCNH section "Études" 8; Québec/Louvain/Paris: Les Presses de l'Université Laval/Peeters, 2007), 323-334.

[17] Emmel, "Religious Tradition, Textual Transmission, and the Nag Hammadi Codices"; Stephen Emmel, "Coptic Literature in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Period," in *Egypt in the Byzantine World, 300-700* (ed. R. Bagnall; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 83-102.

[18] Emmel, "Coptic Literature in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Period", 91-92.

was presumably circulating at the same time as the production of the NHC, circulation and conservation, i.e. late fourth century and possibly early fifth century. After an overview of this literature, we realized that at the thematic level a specific type of texts had much in common with many NH texts. Probably influenced by our own M.A. thesis,[19] that delimitated and analysed the NH apocalyptic corpus, we were more inclined to identify in fourth-century Coptic literature themes and motifs that are generally associated with apocalyptic literature – such as otherworldly journeys and visionary experiences, judgment of souls, otherworldly beings acting as mediators of revelations, etc.[20] These themes and motifs were particularly abundant in Egyptian hagiographies,[21] such as the *Life of Pachomius* and the *Life of Antony*. The pursuit of this quest led us to explore more deeply the whole corpus of late antique Coptic hagiographies, also taking into account later sources probably composed during the fifth century, such as the *Life of Shenoute*, the group of martyrdoms preserved in Coptic known as "Coptic Epic Passions", and other less known lives of monks, such as the *Life of Pambo,* and the *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, for example.

The presence of themes and motifs generally associated with apocalyptic literature was abundant; such abundance could not be ignored. It looked like we had found a clue that should be followed up, since, as demonstrated in our M.A. thesis, many NH texts also made abundant use of the same themes and motifs. We decided therefore that these "apocalyptic themes and motifs" would be the guiding thread of our research. And when it comes to "apocalyptic themes and motifs" and NHC, nothing could be more appropriate than Codex V, the

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[19] Julio Cesar Dias Chaves. "The Nag Hammadi Apocalyptic Corpus: Delimitation and Analysis" (M.A. thesis, Faculté de théologie et de sciences des religions, Université Laval, 2007). This M.A. thesis was published later: Julio Cesar Dias Chaves, *Between Apocalyptic and Gnosis: The Nag Hammadi Apocalyptic Corpus. Delimitation and Analysis* (Saarbrücken: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2010).

[20] This first impression concerning Coptic literature was expressed in some papers presented during the first years of my Ph.D. research: Julio Cesar Dias Chaves, "The 'Apocalyptic Imagination' in Fourth Century Egyptian Hagiography: The Examples of the *Life of Antony* and the *Life of Pachomius*" (Paper presented at the Canadian Society of Patristic Studies Meeting. Montréal, May, 2010) and Julio Cesar Dias Chaves, "The Apocalyptic Worldview and Divine Authority in 4th Century Egyptian Hagiography: the Cases of the *Life of Antony* and the *Life of Pachomius*" (Paper presented at the Nordic Nag Hammadi and Gnosticism Network. Québec, March, 2010).

[21] We speak of "Egyptian hagiographies", instead of "Coptic hagiographies" because some of the texts to which we refer were composed in Greek, such as the *Life of Antony.* More details on that question will be explored in our chapter about the sources.

"apocalyptic codex", as it has been called by Kaler,[22] a characteristic also highlighted by Morard.[23]

The fact that Codex V contains at least two genuine apocalypses – at least according to modern definitions of the genre – (the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the *Apocalypse of Adam*) and two more texts bearing the title "apocalypse" in the manuscript (the two *Apocalypses of James*) made our choice easy. Moreover, a preliminary reading of these two corpora – Codex V and late antique Coptic hagiographies – was enough to bring out the abundant existence of common themes and motifs in both, which deserved a close comparison. In view of the impossibility of achieving such a comparison taking into consideration all the NHC in one single Ph.D. dissertation – due to many reasons, such as the size of this group of manuscripts, but also due to the fact that the many subgroups of codices had different origins,[24] – Codex V seemed to be the most logical and appropriate choice.

If our first impression – that so many literary themes and motifs, especially those generally associated with apocalyptic literature, were abundantly present in both corpora – could be confirmed, the comparison between Codex V and late antique Egyptian hagiographies could shed light on the controversial question about the presumed incompatibility between most of the NH texts and what is generally known of early Egyptian Christianity, particularly in relation to monasticism.[25] The profuse presence of the same themes and motifs in both corpora could demonstrate that NH texts, and Codex V in particular, could have called the attention of late antique Coptic readers, and, Christians in particular, not necessarily due to their Gnostic doctrinal content, but due to certain literary elements generally associated with apocalyptic literature. In other words, texts such as those in Codex V – with accounts of a heavenly journey (*Apocalypse of Paul*), revelations from

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[22] Jean-Marc Rosenstiehl and Michael Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul* (BCNH section "Textes" 31; Québec/Louvain/Paris/Dudley: Les Presses de l'Université Laval/Peeters, 2005), 149.

[23] Françoise Morard, "Les apocalypses du codex V de Nag Hammadi," in *Les textes de Nag Hammadi et le problème de leur classification* (ed. L. Painchaud and A. Pasquier; BCNH section "Études" 3; Québec/Louvain/Paris: Les Presses de l'Université Laval/Peeters, 1995), 341-357.

[24] We will discuss that question in section 2.6.

[25] Such a presumed incompatibility even led Säve-Södeberg to suggest, for example, that the NHC were, in fact, a heresiological library; see Torgny Säve-Södeberg, "Holy Scriptures or Apologetic Documentation? The Sitz im Leben of the Nag Hammadi Library" in *Les Textes de Nag Hammadi* (ed. J. É. Ménard; NHS 7; Leiden: Brill, 1975), 9-17. This issue will be discussed in detail in next chapter.

Christ to a chosen disciple (*Apocalypses of James*), speculations about God and his cohorts of angels (*Eugnostos*) and revelatory dreams (*Apocalypse of Adam*) – could call the attention of late antique Coptic readers, used to reading about these themes in other types of literature that also circulated in late antique Coptic Egypt, such as hagiographies. These Coptic readers would be primarily interested not in speculations about the Demiurge, Barbelo or Sophia, but rather on revelations, heavenly journeys and stories about Jesus and the apostles.

Once this methodological issue concerning the comparison of both corpora on a thematic literary level was settled, our research took a further step; once more, influenced by Emmel, whose words we will quote again, we decided to try to "reconstruct the reading experience of whoever owned" NHC:

> Regarding the Coptic phases of transmission, there is one obvious task that has not yet been carried out thoroughly and consistently, that is, to read the Nag Hammadi Codices as a part of *Coptic literature* (…) The task is to read the texts exactly as we have them in the Nag Hammadi Codices in an effort to reconstruct the reading experience of whoever owned each of the Codices. This reading would have to be undertaken in full cognizance of contemporary Coptic literature, and the culture of Upper Egypt during, say, the third to the seventh centuries. It would be a primarily Coptic enterprise, with nothing directly to do with Christian origins, nor necessarily even with "Gnosticism."[26]

Theoretically speaking, the approach suggested by Emmel is a study of the reception of NH texts in late antique Coptic Egypt. Based on the comparison between the common literary themes and motifs that appear in both corpora, we tried to read Codex V in the light of late antique Coptic hagiographies; through that, we could try to understand how Codex V texts were read, interpreted and received by the late antique Coptic readers who compiled, read and preserved the volume that concerns us here.

Thus to make it clear, we could summarize the two goals of the present dissertation, based on the comparison between NH Codex V and the fourth/fifth-century Egyptian hagiographies as follows:

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[26] Emmel, "Religious Tradition, Textual Transmission, and the Nag Hammadi Codices," 42.

1- To show the existence of many points of literary similarities – expressed either by apocalyptic themes and motifs, or topics – between both corpora (Codex V and late antique Egyptian hagiographies), which could have aroused the interest of the same audience. That could advocate in favor of a possible monastic origin,[27] destination and/or conservation[28] at least for Codex V – eventually; this approach could be also applied to the analysis of the other NHC. It could also shed light on the issue concerning the presumed doctrinal incompatibility between NH texts and what is generally known of early Egyptian Christianity; an incompatibility that has even led certain scholars to suggest, for example, that the NHC were actually part of a heresiological library.[29] A certain late antique Coptic audience may have been interested in Codex V – and in general terms in the NHC and their texts as a whole – due to the abundant presence of literary themes and motifs that could be also found in other texts that circulated in Coptic Egypt at this time. In other words, this interest would be based not on the theological content of Codex V texts but on their apocalyptic literary themes and motifs.

2- To make a comparison between the texts that belong to both corpora, Codex V and late antique Egyptian hagiographies, what could help us to understand and interpret the former from a reception perspective. In other words, the knowledge of the significance of certain themes and motifs abundantly present in late antique hagiographies may allow us to understand how these same themes and motifs could have been interpreted in Codex V texts by late antique Coptic readers. To this end, we will make use of Jauss' reception theory.[30]

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[27] This is not the main concern of this dissertation. However, as the next chapter will show (see particularly section 2.4), the discussion concerning the monastic origins, destination and conservation of NHC has received so much attention that we could not ignore it here.

[28] We speak of "origin, destination and conservation" because this distinction is fundamental but not always taken into consideration by the few scholarly works that dealt with the Coptic aspects of the NHC. We will deal with this question in the next chapter. See also pages 10-11 below.

[29] Säve-Söderbergh, "Holy Scriptures or Apologetic Documentation? The Sitz im Leben of the Nag Hammadi Library."

[30] See chapter 3.

Having said that, we should emphasize that, generally speaking, scholarship on the NHC as late antique Coptic artifacts have focused on three main issues: the material aspects of the codices[31], the pluralistic environment in which they were compiled[32] – normally taking into consideration the possibility of a monastic origin –, and the possibility of literary contacts and similarities between certain NH texts and other types of Coptic literature.[33] The present dissertation could be at a certain rate classified among the third group. The unprecedented character of this dissertation, however, consists in the fact that we are not only presenting a monograph that deals with the subject – on which at present all that has been written is a few articles – but also a methodology designed for dealing with the literary contacts between NH texts and Coptic literature that could be applied to other NHC.

Finally, we must evoke a distinction that was mentioned above in passing – concerning the three phases of the NHC. We believe that such distinction must be highlighted from the beginning despite the fact that the few scholarly studies that have paid attention to the Coptic context of the NHC have barely noted it.[34] In our view it is fundamental, however, to

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[31] See, for example the first studies on the covers of the codices: Berthe van Regemorter, "La reliure des manuscrits gnostiques découverts à Nag Hammadi," *Scriptorium* 14 (1960): 225-234; Jean Doresse, "Les reliures des manuscrits gnostiques coptes découverts à Khénoboskion," *REgypt* 13 (1961): 27-49. Or those concerned with the fragments found in their cartonnage: John Barns, "Greek and Coptic Papyri from the Covers of the Nag Hammadi Codices – a Preliminary Report," in *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honour of Pahor Labib* (ed. M. Krause; NHS 6; Leiden: Brill, 1975), 9-18; John Barns, Gerald M. Browne and John C. Shelton, eds., *Nag Hammadi Codices. Greek and Coptic Papyri from the Cartonnage of the Covers* (NHS 16; Leiden: Brill, 1981). These studies will be discussed soon, in section 2.3.

[32] See, for example Dwight W. Young, "The Milieu of Nag Hammadi: Some Historical Considerations," *VChr* 24 (1970): 127-137; Frederik Wisse, "Gnosticism and Early Monasticism in Egypt," in *Gnosis: Festschrift für Hans Jonas* (ed. B. Aland; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 431-440; Tito Orlandi, "Brevi considerazioni sull'ambiente linguistico e culturale dei testi c.d. di Nag Hammadi," *CRSSTA* 1 (1995): 167-170; and Siegfried G. Richter, "Manichaeism and Gnosticism in the Region between Lykopolis and Nag Hammadi," in *Christianity and Monasticism in Upper Egypt. Volume 1: Akhmim and Sohag* (ed. G. Gabra and H. N. Takla; Cairo/New York: Saint Mark Foundation/The American University of Cairo Press, 2008), 121-129. These studies will be discussed in section 2.4.

[33] See, for example Charles Hedrick, "Gnostic Proclivities in the Greek *Life of Pachomius* and the *Sitz im Leben* of the Nag Hammadi Library," *NT* 22 (1980): 78-94; Louis Painchaud and Jennifer Wees, "Connaître la différence entre les hommes mauvais et les bons: le charisme de clairvoyance d'Adam et Ève à Pachôme et Théodore," 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* (ed. H.-G. Gebhard et al.; NHMS 54; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2002), 139-155; Lance Jenott and Elaine H. Pagels, "Antony's Letters and Nag Hammadi Codex I: Sources of Religious Conflict in Fourth-Century Egypt," *JECS* 18 (2010): 557-589. These studies will be discussed in section 2.5.

[34] One of the few exceptions may be Louis Painchaud. "The Production and Destination of Nag Hammadi Codices" in *The Nag Hammadi Codices and Late Antique Egypt* (ed. Hugo Lundhaug and Lance Jenott, STAC

distinguish these three phases: production – which can also be identified with origins – destination – in practical terms, to whom each codex or each group of codices was originally addressed – and conservation –in practical terms, how and where these codices ended up together. The present dissertation does not intend to deal with any of these phases in particular, but rather analyse Codex V in a reception perspective, interpreting its texts in the light of the hagiographical literature that presumably circulated at the same time and place of the compilation and conservation of the NHC. Additionally, if we succeed in demonstrating the many points of literary contact between Codex V texts and late antique Egyptian hagiographies, we will be shedding light on the issue of the presumed incompatibility between these two corpora. The existence of many literary points of contact between both corpora may show that this incompatibility is more the product of modern scholarship and its understanding of the two corpora, than of the actual literary, cultural and religious reality of late antique Egypt. These basic considerations having been made, we can proceed to a brief presentation of the structure of the present dissertation.

Following the present introduction, the reader will find in Chapter Two a *status quaestionis* that summarizes the research on the Coptic phase of transmission of NH texts and the many issues related to it. This chapter is divided into 8 sections. The first section is an introduction to the chapter; in the second section, we make some considerations on early Christian books and the NHC; in the third, we discuss the studies concerned with the material aspects of the codices; in the fourth, we discuss the studies that have dealt with Gnosticism and monasticism and the NHC; the fifth section comments on the studies that have explored the possibility of literary contacts between NH texts and fourth-century Coptic literature; in the sixth section we deal with studies concerned with the sub-collections within the NHC; and finally, in the seventh section we discuss studies that have dealt with linguistic aspects of the transmission of NHC. This chapter is closed by a conclusion in which we furnish a panoramic view of the studies concerned with the Coptic phase of NH texts, also pointing

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110, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 387-426; Louis Painchaud, "La production et la destination des codices de Nag Hammadi : Le codex III," in *Colloque international. Nag Hammadi à 70 ans. Qu'avons-nous appris ? Nag Hammadi at 70: What Have We Learned? (Québec, Université Laval, du 29- 31 mai 2015)* (eds. E. Crégheur, L. Painchaud and T. Rasimus; BCNH, section "Études" 10; Louvain : Peeters, forthcoming).

new perspectives for future studies on the subject. Needless to say, we have focused our commentaries in this chapter on Codex V, the book that interests us most.

In the following chapter, the third, we present our theoretical frame and our methodology. This is indeed one of the most important sections of our dissertation. In fact, the lack of a proper method in this kind of approach sometimes leads to excessive vagueness. In this chapter we present in detail the comparative approach and the theory of reception as guides for the study of Codex V and its texts in their Coptic phase. The chapter begins with a brief introduction in which we elucidate the importance of a theoretical basis for such an analysis and the challenge of developing a method for such an approach. The following section deals with the theory of reception, in particular with that theorized by H.R. Jauss and how we intend to apply it to the analysis of Codex V. The following section is concerned with the literary comparative approach; in that section we also deal with specific issues of the comparative approach that are particularly important for the analysis of Codex V in relation to late antique Coptic hagiographies, such as the delimitation of literary genres.

Since the present dissertation intends to offer a comparison between two literary corpora, it is necessary to justify the delimitation of the corpus; this is done in Chapters Four and Five. Chapter Four is dedicated to Codex V in particular, while Chapter Five is devoted to late antique Coptic hagiographies.

We start Chapter Four by presenting a brief material description of Codex V; after this, we point out some textual features that may be the first indication of a scribal intervention during the process of its copying; certain of these features have never been pointed out by previous research and could be the first elements that might help to analyze Codex V reception in its immediate context of compilation. We also discuss the titles of Codex V treatises in the manuscript and how these titles could help us in the interpretation of its reception in Coptic. Finally, in this chapter we also include a section on the characters of Codex V. Using the theory of reception, we try to understand how the characters to which the treatises in Codex V are attributed (Paul, James and Adam) could be possibly understood in a late antique Coptic environment.

In the introduction to Chapter Five, we discuss the issues that led us to choose Codex V and late antique Coptic hagiographies as our corpus, also explaining the exclusion of other monastic Coptic sources. A substantial part of this introduction deals with the date of the manuscripts in which late antique Coptic hagiographies have been preserved. Indeed, the fourth/fifth-century Egyptian hagiographic literature was preserved in late manuscripts, in diverse forms, in Greek and Coptic dialects – and in some cases, also in later Arabic versions.

In this chapter, we also present a classification of these hagiographies. This classification divides the hagiographies that are part of our comparative corpus in two basic categories: Monastic Lives and Coptic Epic Passions. The Monastic Lives are subdivided into lives of abbots (the *Lives of Pachomius*, the *Life of Shenoute* and the *Letter of Ammon*) and the lives of anchorites (the *Life of Antony*, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, the *Life of Pambo* and the *Life of Onnophrius*).

The Egyptian cultural and religious background in the fourth and fifth centuries is important in order to contextualize our study. This is why we have included in the dissertation a brief chapter in which some important questions related to the Egyptian cultural and religious milieu are discussed.

Finally, in Chapter Seven, the core of this dissertation, we analyze certain themes and motifs in Codex V from a reception perspective. To this end, we propose a framework that takes into account important themes generally related to apocalyptic literature (ascension to heavens, angelology and mediated revelations, revelatory and ecstatic experiences, etc.) that are present in Codex V texts and find parallels or echoes in late antique Egyptian hagiographies. Each one of these general themes has been subdivided in more specific literary motifs, rendering our comparison more precise. In this chapter, we also devote a section to other motifs that are not necessarily related to apocalyptic literature but could be found in both corpora.

As outlined above, the goal of this section is to illustrate the fact that Codex V texts and late antique Egyptian hagiographies have much more in common that one might initially presume; these literary contacts could show that a given late antique Coptic audience could

be interested in Codex V texts due to the presence of these themes and motifs, and not necessarily due to its "Gnostic content". We also look at Codex V texts in a reception perspective; with the help of the themes and motifs common to Codex V and late antique Egyptian hagiographies, we envisage how this codex – or at least some of its themes and motifs – was read, interpreted and received by late antique Coptic readers.

The dissertation ends with a summary of the results of our research: we provide a summarized discussion on each one of Codex V texts, explaining how they could have been interpreted by a late antique Coptic audience. In these final considerations we also discuss how our conclusions could be useful for certain approaches in the study of the Coptic life of NH texts. We examine, for example, how our conclusions might indicate a link between Codex V and Coptic monasticism, a much-discussed subject these days. We also suggest an approach that could explain why some features considered as heterodox could be read by the readers of Codex V without causing major doctrinal dilemmas.

Before ending this introduction, we would like to mention that if we take a brief look at studies of reception in general, we will see that they do not deny the existence of previous contexts of reception, nor discredit the importance of the study of the original context of composition of texts.[35] Accordingly, we must emphasize that an approach like the one suggested here – which analyzes one or several aspects related to the Coptic phase of Codex V – does not intend in any way to discredit or decrease the importance of studies that deal with the original context of composition of NH texts. It is not our intention to render the "traditional" study of NH texts obsolete or less important. We are only suggesting another approach, an approach that compares Codex V texts with late antique Coptic hagiographies analysing the former in a reception perspective and showing that there is no incompatibility between the two corpora on a thematic level. On the contrary, Codex V texts have much more

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[35] See, for example, the studies on the reception of the Bible. They do not deny the existance of original contexts of composition of biblical texts. For a general survey, see Michael Lieb, Emma Mason and Jonathan Roberts, *The Oxford Handbook of the Reception History of the Bible* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). Similarly, studies on the reception of Augustine in the Middle Ages, for example, never question the composition of an original text in Late Antiquity. For a general survey on the reception of Augustine, see Eric Leland Saak, *Creating Augustine, Interpreting Augustine and Augustinianism in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

in common with other types of literature that were circulating in Coptic Egypt that one might initially presume.

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Status Quaestionis

2.1. Introduction

In more than seventy years of research on the NHC, scholarship has mainly focused on questions related to the original composition of the texts in Greek, in periods varying from the second to the third centuries. Normally, scholars link the NH texts to certain marginal manifestations of Christianity, generally labeled as "Gnosticism". As noted in the introduction, the study of the Coptic phase of the texts preserved in the NHC has remained secondary and the relations between the codices and the Coptic milieu in which they were compiled has not been explored in depth. Orlandi has suggested that this might be explained by the fact that the Coptic milieu in which the NHC were compiled is unknown. In his own words:

> While the discovery of the Manichaean, and then the Gnostic, MS collections in Coptic has provoked a number of studies on the broad cultural context of these two religious movements, the specific Egyptian environment in which the MSS were transmitted remains largely unknown. Lack of documentation generally accounts for this ignorance. Especially in the case of the Coptic Gnostic library, all sorts of ideas and religious sects have been called forth to comment upon the corpus and to explain, it seems, everything except what was common in the Nile valley in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D.[1]

As mentioned in the introduction[2], it is perfectly natural that the primary interest of scholarship for a given source is its original context of composition and the issues directly related to it. The studies on the reception and transmission of the source will naturally come afterward. As Orlandi suggests, an additional difficulty that may have delayed the

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[1] Tito Orlandi, "A Catechesis against Apocryphal Texts by Shenoute and the Gnostic Texts of Nag Hammadi," *HThR* 75 (1982), 85.
[2] See Page 4 above.

development of studies concerned with the transmission and reception of the NH texts is the lack of documentation and data that could help us to understand these contexts.

However, since Emmel's article on the transmission of the NH texts,[3] this kind of research has become the new trend in NH studies.[4] However, the number of studies on topics related to this subject is still small if compared to those related to the original context of composition of our texts.

The present chapter intends to present a review of the studies that deal with the context of compilation of the NH texts, their transmission and reception; we will pay more attention to those directly concerned with Codex V and those that are linked on one way or another to the reception of the texts in Coptic. The first part of this chapter will deal with studies concerned with books and literacy in fourth/fifth-century Egypt, since, as we will see, NHC are undeniably a group of late antique Christian books. In the second part, we will discuss the studies concerned with material aspects of the NHC – such as their fabrication and the Greek fragments from their covers; the third part will discuss the general context in which the NHC were compiled; the fourth part will deal with studies that have discussed literary aspects of the texts – such as possible contacts with contemporary Egyptian literature, the possibility of interpolations, etc.; the fifth section will discuss studies that have dealt with the possibility of sub-collections within the NHC; finally, the sixth section will discuss linguistic issues concerning the context of compilation of the NHC. At the end of the chapter, a brief conclusion will summarize our general impressions on the subject.

2.2. Books and literacy in fourth/fifth-century Egypt

We have included in this *status quaestionis* an introductory discussion that aims to analyse and make a few comments on the NHC as early Christian books. We do this for two reasons: 1- The NHC are not often taken into consideration in studies on books, literacy and reading in late antique Egypt; and 2- when they are taken into consideration in this kind of discussion, they are not necessarily seen as Christian books, but as Gnostic ones (and by this, scholars

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[3] Emmel, "Religious Tradition, Textual Transmission, and the Nag Hammadi Codices."
[4] As our discussion on the *status quaestionis* will demonstrate.

sometimes even mean that they belong to a religion other than Christianity, as we will see soon). To this end, we intend to call upon recent studies that deal with Christian books in Antiquity and their production, reception and transmission. The studies that have been selected are normally concerned with general issues, but also in some cases with the Egyptian context.

Before proceeding to this discussion, we should first make a distinction between text and book at least in regard to what is discussed in the present dissertation. A text is a sequence of words that form phrases, "regarded in terms of its content rather than its physical form; a text could be written or oral."[5] A book is a material object, normally made of papyrus or parchment in Late Antiquity in which texts are written. In Late Antiquity, a book could have the format of a scroll or a codex. In what concerns us here, the books are the NHC. Since books contain texts,[6] sometimes we use the term "book" to designate a text, such as in the cases of the *Book of Thomas* or the *Books of Ieu,* for example.

Having said that, we could ask whether the NHC, as material objects, are undeniably ancient Christian books, even if they were not necessarily seen by scholarship as such. Despite the fact that the NHC constitute one of the biggest known groups of ancient books, they were sometimes either forgotten or mentioned *en passant* by studies on early Christian books, or even mentioned as a Gnostic (and by that they[7] mean 'non-Christian') collection.

To illustrate our first statement, we could mention Bernard Legras' book on the act of reading in Egypt in Antiquity.[8] In this study, Legras mentions the NHC only once, as an

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[5] Oxford on-line Dictionary.

[6] It seems beyond dispute that the NH texts as a whole are Christian writings – Gnostic ones or not, they are still Christian – since they generally display Christian characters and contents; most of them are, generally speaking, New Testament apocryphal texts. What is intended to be discussed in this section is a different issue, more related to the final stage in which the texts were preserved, i.e. the Coptic one, the stage in which they are found in the NHC. In other words, the stage that concerns us here, the stage in which they were read in Coptic. Thus we want to inquire in this section if the NHC, the Coptic books that were produced in Upper Egypt in fourth century, can be seen as Christian artifacts. Not only books that contain Christian texts, but books that were produced by Christians and for Christians.

[7] See, for example, Stephen Emmel, "The Christian Book in Egypt: Innovation and the Coptic Tradition," in *The Bible as Book: The Manuscript Tradition* (ed. J. L. Sharpe and K. van Kampen; London/New Castle: British Library/Oak Knoll Press, 1998), 39.

[8] Legras, *Lire en Égypte: d'Alexandrie à l'Islam* (Antiqua 6; Paris: Picard, 2002).

example of "type B codices", adding that they contain Gnostic texts.[9] A group of thirteen books such as that formed by the NHC, relatively well preserved, probably deserves a deeper analysis and discussion in a study devoted to the act of reading in Ancient Egypt. Our second statement could be illustrated by Emmel's article on Christian books in Egypt,[10] where he establishes a clear distinction between Christian, Manichaean and Gnostic literature, saying that: "Throughout its history, Coptic literature was almost entirely Christian, the only major exceptions being several extraordinary hoards of Manichaean, Gnostic, and related literature",[11] specifying in a foot note that by 'Gnostic' he means "Nag Hammadi Texts (mainly)".[12] Another scholar, Khosroyev, does not make a clear distinction between Christian and Gnostic literature, but suggests that the NHC were very peculiar codices misplaced in the context of Egyptian Christianity.[13] In general terms, the Russian scholar suggests that the NHC could have hardly belonged to Egyptian Christians.[14]

However, if we succeed in demonstrating that the NHC are early Christian books, a material product of Christians, made by Christians and probably addressed to Christians, we should admit that the texts that are integrated in the codices had some use for them. What kind of use was that? The study of their reception in late antique Coptic Egypt as well as the comparison between them and other types of texts that circulated in Coptic at the same time may help to answer this question. Thus the main goal of the present section is to show that

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[9] Legras, *Lire en Égypte: d'Alexandrie à l'Islam*, 91.

[10] Emmel, "The Christian Book in Egypt: Innovation and the Coptic Tradition".

[11] Emmel, "The Christian Book in Egypt: Innovation and the Coptic Tradition," 39.

[12] Emmel, "The Christian Book in Egypt: Innovation and the Coptic Tradition," 42, footnote 13. Emmel's statement is particularly intriguing since he is one of the scholars who has contributed the most to the field of the NHC and their relation to the Coptic literature. As we have shown in the introduction, Emmel even suggests that the study of the NH texts does not need to be necessarily linked to Gnosticism (see pages 5 and 8 above). Emmel's statement in this case could perhaps be justified by the fact that he was writing for an audience that was not necessarily aware of the many details involved in the transmission and circulation of Coptic texts and of the complex context of late antique Egypt. At any rate, at least in this particular study, Emmel clearly classifies the NH texts as non-Christian.

[13] Alexander Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi: Einige Probleme des Christentums in Ägypten während der ersten Jahrhunderte* (Altenberge: Oros Verlag, 1995). This study will be analysed in section 2.4.

[14] Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*, 98. Khosroyev's statements on this matter are particularly interesting – even if we do not agree with him – because they are in a certain way related to the reception of the NH texts in a Coptic milieu. He believes that the NH texts could not have belonged to or been read by Christians because their content is incompatible with what is generally known of Christianity in fourth century Egypt. As the development of our dissertation intends to show, this is not necessarily true at least in regard to Codex V. Khosroyev's study will be discussed in section 2.4.

the NHC were Christian books, and consequently that they were likely read by Christians, the same Christians that probably read late antique Coptic hagiographies.

We should also mention that specific studies on late antique Coptic books, their production and circulation are very rare, which leads us to try to apply and extend the general comments on books in Antiquity – and in some cases on the centuries that preceded or followed the compilation of the NHC – to our corpus.

One last comment should be made before we proceed to our analysis in this section: the existence of sub-collections within the NHC will sometimes not allow us to make general statements that could be applied to the entire group of codices. In other words, a given characteristic that is featured in a certain NH codex – or sub-group of codices – that may allow us to identify it as a Christian book, may not be necessarily present in other codices or sub-collections. Thus the fact that a given codex has a characteristic that indicates its Christian provenance or destination does not prove that all the codices have a Christian provenance or destination, since the codices and the sub-collections seen as whole have different provenances and destinations.[15]

The first step to be taken consists in the identification of common features between the NHC and early books. In his study on early Christian books in Egypt,[16] Bagnall affirms that papyrus could be recycled and reused not only for writing, but also for the construction of a new codex. In the specific case of old codices which were falling apart, the papyrus could not be used later as palimpsests, thus the only way to reuse it "was to use it as stuffing inside the binding of a new codex."[17] This may remind us of the Greek papyri fragments used to stuff the covers of some NHC;[18] even if Bagnall does not mention specifically the case of the NHC, one can apply his comments to our codices – including Codex V, which had old

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[15] For details on this issue in specific, see section 2.6 below.
[16] Roger Bagnall, *Early Christian Books in Egypt* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009).
[17] Bagnall, *Early Christian Books in Egypt*, 59.
[18] For details, see Barns, "Greek and Coptic Papyri from the Covers of the Nag Hammadi Codices"; and Barns, Browne and Shelton, *Nag Hammadi Codices. Greek and Coptic Papyri from the Cartonnage of the Covers*.

financial documents stuffing its covers[19] – concluding that they were in conformity with the general techniques of book production in Late Antiquity. According to him, this reutilisation could be explained by the elevated cost of papyrus. Thus even when pieces of papyri could not be used to be written on anymore, they could be employed in the production of codices.[20]

Haines-Eitzen has also discussed the reutilization of papyri for the construction of book covers.[21] Concerning the particular case of papyri reused by Christian scribes, she affirms that many administrative officers kept documents, of which only one side was used, for a posterior utilisation as drafts or scraps for the copy of literary texts; in the specific case of Alexandria, we know that when official documents became obsolete, many were sold to bookshops and then used again.[22] We can likely imagine similar situations in Upper Egypt in the fourth century. This would explain not only the presence of biblical fragments in the covers of NH Codex VII, for example, but also of bureaucratic and official texts and epistles in the covers of other codices.[23]

Among the NHC, many have recycled papyri inside their covers (I, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, XI), while others do not (II, III, X, XII), and Codex XIII does not have a cover. Among these recycled papyri, many are official documents, as in the case of Codices IV, V, VI, VIII, and IX.[24] The reutilisation of any available papyrus is perhaps best exemplified by the specific case of Codex VII, about which Shelton affirms that "is hard to think of satisfactory single source for such a variety of documents except a town rubbish heap…".[25]

In the case of certain NHC, some of these fragments of old papyri have contents that could be associated with Christianity, which might point to a Christian provenance for them.

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[19] Barns, "Greek and Coptic Papyri from the Covers of the Nag Hammadi Codices", 11.15.
[20] Bagnall, *Early Christian Books in Egypt*, 50-69.
[21] Kim Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters: Literacy, Power and the Transmitters of Early Christian Literature* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
[22] Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters*, 33-34.
[23] For details, see Barns, "Greek and Coptic Papyri from the Covers of the Nag Hammadi Codices", 10-17; and Barns, Browne and Shelton, *Nag Hammadi Codices*, XV-XVI and 121-122.
[24] For a general survey, see Barns, Browne and Shelton, *Nag Hammadi Codices.* See also Painchaud, "The Production and Destination of Nag Hammadi Codices, XV-XVI and 121-122."
[25] Barns, Browne and Shelton, *Nag Hammadi Codices*, 11.

The best example is certainly some of the fragments found in the covers of Codex VII. Fragments 47 and 48, for example, display extracts of *Genesis* in Coptic, *Genesis* 32:4-11 and *Genesis* 42:28-30 respectively.[26] Pieces of private letters are found among these fragments, written or addressed to a certain Sansnos, who was a priest or a monk.[27] These fragments are a material indication of the Christian character of Codex VII at least, but not a confirmation thereof, since these fragments could have been acquired from a seller of old papyri, as it was the case sometimes, according to Haines-Eitzen.[28] However, we can at least affirm that the place in which Codex VII was produced had papyri that could be linked to Christianity.

What other material features could indicate a Christian origin or destination of at least some of the NHC? In a study that intends to demonstrate that early Christian books are also the "earliest Christian artifacts", Larry W. Hurtado identifies a number of features that demonstrate that a given manuscript is a Christian artifact.[29] Among these are, for example, the presence of *nomina sacra*[30] and of Staurograms[31]; Malcolm Choat also points out that the Christian acrostic Chi-ro (Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior) could be certainly identified as a Christian feature.[32] Both can be found among certain NH manuscripts, which shows that the texts they contain were copied by Christians and probably for Christians. Given that, certain scholars have not hesitated to affirm that the Christian character of the NHC is beyond doubt.[33] However, such a statement must be nuanced, since some of the features listed above are not present in all NHC, and nothing can insure that the group of codices ever formed a

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[26] These fragments were already identified by Kasser in December 1970 and later published. See Rodolphe Kasser, "Fragments du livre biblique de la Genèse cachés dans la reliure d'un codex gnostique," *Muséon* 85 (1972): 65-89.

[27] Fragment 64, see Barns, Browne, and Shelton, *Nag Hammadi Codices*, 56.

[28] Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters*, 33-34.

[29] Larry Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2006).

[30] Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 43-94. See also Malcolm Choat, *Belief and Cult in Fourth Century Papyri* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 119-125.

[31] Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 136-139. See also Choat, *Belief and Cult in Fourth Century Papyri*, 114-118.

[32] Choat, *Belief and Cult in Fourth Century Papyri*, 114-118.

[33] Jenott and Pagels alreday pointed out the existence of many of these features in NHC. See Lance Jenott and Elaine H. Pagels, "Antony's Letters and Nag Hammadi Codex I: Sources of Religious Conflict in Fourth Century Egypt", *JECS* 18 (2010), 557-564.

collection or library. In other words, nothing can guarantee that the codices ever belonged to the same owner or were kept together before being buried. Consequently, the Christian character of the codices must be demonstrated in each individual case, determining whether each codex or sub-collection has features that indicate they are Christian or not.

On first analysis, there would seem to be at least four groups of codices: a first one formed by Codices IV, VI, VIII, IX and maybe V (similar material characteristics, no doublets of texts, fragments of papyri used inside the covers consisting of official documents, same school of scribes); a second group formed by Codices II and XIII (same scribe and two identical copies of the same text – *On the Origin of the World* - each one of these copies in one of the codices – NH II, 5 and NH XIII, 2 – which indicates that they were produced for different addressees); a third group formed by Codices I, VII and XI (similar material characteristics and three different scribes, two of them having copied different texts in Codex XI); and finally, a fourth subgroup formed by Codex III alone and a fifth one formed by Codex X alone.[34]

That being said, let us see specific examples of these Christian features appearing in NHC. *Nomina sacra* such as πνα and ιϲ χϲ occur in many occasions throughout the NHC. Just to mention some instances, in Codex II, it is possible to find ιϲ on several occasions, for example, in the *Gospel of Thomas*.[35] In the *Letter of Peter to Philip* in Codex VIII, many occurrences of ιϲ [36] and χϲ [37] also appear. The *nomen sacrum* πνα also appears in many texts, such as the *Teachings of Silvanus*,[38] and *Marsanes*.[39] Some symbols that were used by Christian scribes that are thus undoubtedly Christian appear in certain NHC, such as the Chi-

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[34] These questions were recently discussed by Painchaud, "The Production and Destination of Nag Hammadi Codices," 387-426; Painchaud, "La production et la destination des codices de Nag Hammadi : Le codex III"; see also Julio Cesar Dias Chaves and Louis Painchaud, "A Recepção dos Códices de Nag Hammadi: Gnose e Cristianismo no Egito Romano da Antiguidade Tardia," *Antíteses* 8 (2015): 89-110.

[35] See, for example *Logia* 54 (NH II 42, 23-24) and 55 (NH II 42, 25-29).

[36] NH VIII, 2 132, 12; 133, 1.8.26; 139, 7.11.15.22.26; 140, [3].13.16.27.

[37] NH VIII 132, 13; 133, [1].17.26; 134, 6.17; 139, 7; 140, 4.

[38] NH VII 86, 18; 104, 26; 107, 35; 112, 26; 116, 31; 117, 1.

[39] NH X 4, 17; 6, 5; [9, 29]; 10, [9].19; [15,29]; 64,20.

ro (✸),[40] the Staurogram (⳨),[41] and the Christian acrostic ICHTHUS (ΙΧΘΥΣ),[42] to mention a few examples. Given this, in Jenott and Pagels's words: "The accumulated evidence of these features indicates that the various codices were produced and read by Egyptian Christians".[43] However, as mentioned above, such a statement must be nuanced.

There would thus be at least one text in each subgroup displaying at least one of the Christian features mentioned above. This reinforces the thesis that the NHC, or more precisely, the subgroups within the NHC were in one way or another Ancient Christian books, which would mean that they contain Christian texts and were produced by or for Christians, or maybe both. Moreover, one must not forget that the texts in question were produced and circulated in an area and time when Christianity was the main religion.[44]

At any rate, the presence of *nomina sacra* and of Christian symbols, such as the Staurogram, the Icthus and the Chi-ro, must be treated differently. The former could have been merely copied by the scribes from the exemplars in their possesion, while the latter are surely the product of the piety of the scribes. A given scribe, not necessarily Christian, could have simply reproduced in the copy he was making the *nomina sacra* from the copy he was using. Thus the presence of *nomina sacra* in certain NHC indicates that the texts integrated in them were Christian, or at least were copied by Christians at some point of their transmission; nothing prevents during the same process of transmission they having been also copied by non-Christian scribes who simply reproduced the *nomina sacra*. The cases of the Christian symbols that were mentioned above are different though, mainly because they generally appear in colophons that are very likely written by the scribes themselves, which would undoubtedly attest to their Christian piety.[45]

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[40] In the *Prayer of the Apostle Paul*, for example (NH I B, 10).
[41] In the *Gospel of Thomas*, for example (NH II 42, 8)
[42] In the *Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit* (NH III 69, 14-15) and in the *Teachings of Silvanus*, for example (NH VII 118, 8).
[43] Jenott and Pagels, "Antony's Letters and Nag Hammadi Codex I," 562.
[44] See page 111, footnote 34 below.
[45] Khosroyev, in his attempt to argue that the NHC were not produced by Christians, says that the colophons were not composed by the scribes but simply copied from their exemplars (cf. Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*, 92-97). As argued above, this could be the case for the *nomina sacra,* but hardly for the

Having said that, other clues concerning the Christian character of the subgroups of codices could be found if we take into consideration the possible relationship between the scribes and the addressees of the codices.[46] For example, the scribal note in Codex VI[47] demonstrates that the addressees were formed by a group of people who already possessed certain hermetic texts; the scribe, however, did not know exactly which texts they possessed. Besides this, we can assume that the scribe was not in direct contact with the addressees, since, if that was the case, he could have asked them in person which texts they already possessed.[48] Lastly, the scribe shows a certain indifference towards the texts he is copying, since he is only concerned in justifying why he did not copy them all, even though he had them in his possession. In this case, the relationship between the addresser and the addressees does not show any clear indication of religious affiliation; nothing in this colophon could assure us that either the addresser or the addressees are Christians.[49]The colophon in Codex VII,[50] however, presents a quite different situation: the scribe addresses the addressee making use of a pious expression, calling him father, from a spiritual point of view.[51] In this case, we can likely suggest that they were both Christians.

colophons. For an argument against Khosroyev, see Jenott and Pagels, "Antony's Letters and the Nag Hammadi Codex I," 561. However, this might be the case of the colophon that comes after the *Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit* (NH III 69, 5-18); on this matter, see Painchaud, "La production et la destination des codices de Nag Hammadi."

[46] As discussed by Painchaud, "The Production and Destination of Nag Hammadi Codices" and Painchaud, "La production et la destination du codex III de Nag Hammadi"; see also Dias Chaves and Painchaud, "A Recepção dos Códices de Nag Hammadi."

[47] "I have copied this one discourse of his. Indeed, very many have come to me. I have not copied them because I thought that they had come to you. Also, I hesitate to copy these for you because, perhaps, they have (already) come to you, and the matter may burden you. Since the discourses of that one, which have come to me, are numerous" (NH VI, 65, 8-14). Parrott's translation in Douglas Parrott, ed., *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI and Papyrus Berolinensis 8502, 1 and 4* (NHS 11; Leiden: Brill, 1979), 393. For the Coptic text, see Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 392.

[48] Painchaud, "La production et la destination du codex III de Nag Hammadi," 4; see also Dias Chaves and Painchaud, "A Recepção dos Códices de Nag Hammadi", 98.

[49] Painchaud, "La production et la destination du codex III de Nag Hammadi," 4; see also Dias Chaves and Painchaud, "A Recepção dos Códices de Nag Hammadi", 98.

[50] "This book belongs to the fatherhood. It is the son who wrote it. Bless me, O father. I bless you, O father, in peace" (NH VII 127, 28-32). Robinson and Goehring`s translation in Birger Pearson, ed., *Nag Hammadi Codex VII* (NHMS 30; Leiden/New York/Köln, E.J. Brill, 1996), 421. For the Coptic text, see Pearson, *Nag Hammadi Codex VII*, 420.

[51] Painchaud, "La production et la destination du codex III de Nag Hammadi," 9; Dias Chaves and Painchaud, "A Recepção dos Códices de Nag Hammadi," 98.

These two examples mentioned above demonstrate that the analysis of the colophons of the codices – when they exist or were preserved – may help us in the investigation of their Christian provenance and destination, and, from a certain point of view may also help in the study of their reception; these two examples also show the diversity of situations that can be found in the so-called collection concerning the many issues related to the origin and destination of the codices and the sub-groups of codices.

At any rate, as suggested by Jenott and Pagels[52], although all the evidence put together does not prove that Christians produced the NHC, it at least strongly argues in favor of this. It would be highly improbable that codices that bear so many Christian features were not produced by Christians and for Christians, but rather coincidentally preserved all these features – including pious prayers in colophons with Christian symbols – despite the fact that they were being copied by "non-Christians" for "non-Christians".

Let us now focus in the situation of Codex V, the codex that concerns us here. In the case of Codex V, although Christian symbols such as the Chi-ro, the Staurogram and the Icthus, do not appear, *nomina sacra* do. The *nomen sacrum* that appears the most frequently in what has been preserved of Codex V is π͞ν͞ᾱ. In *Eugnostos*, it can be found twice (NH V 1,19 and 16,10). The same word occurs at least thirteen times in the *Apocalypse of Paul* (NH V [18,21]; 19,16.[21.26]; 20,4; 21,24; 22,1.11.15.22; 23,5.23; 24,8), three times in the *First Apocalypse of James* (NH V 39, 3.[4].6), three times in the *Second Apocalypse of James* (NH V [55,4]; 58,14; [63,25]), and seven times in the *Apocalypse of Adam.* The other *nomina sacra* that appear in Codex V are the ones that designate "Jerusalem", θ͞ι͞η͞μ[53] and ι͞λ͞η͞μ.[54] No colophons were preserved in Codex V. The presence of these *nomina sacra* does not prove that Codex V was produced by Christians and for Christians, but it does strongly argue in favor of that possibility. If we add to this the fact that it contains four texts with biblical characters as protagonists (Paul, James twice, and Adam), the possibility of Codex V being a Christian book becomes even more real. It would be easy to imagine a book such as Codex

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[52] Jenott and Pagels, "Antony's Letters and the Nag Hammadi Codex I," 562.
[53] In the *Apocalypse of Paul* (NH V [18,5.8]), in the *First Apocalypse of James* (NH V 25, 15), and in the *Second Apocalypse of James* (NH V 44,15).
[54] In the *First Apocalypse of James* (NH V 36, 19).

V, full of biblical and Christian characters and *nomina sacra*, being read by Christians in late antique Coptic Egypt. And this was our main goal in this section: to demonstrate that Codex V was likely in the possession of Christians and read by them. This possibility gains even more strength when we compare the many literary themes and motifs common to Codex V and late antique Coptic Christian hagiographies, as the present dissertation intends to demonstrate in Chapter 7.

Taking a further step, we must also take a look at Harry Gamble's study,[55] in which he deals with some features concerning the circulation and transmission of Christian texts in Antiquity. The author emphasises the fact that

> the number of corruptions and variations in early Christian texts indicates that during the first several centuries these texts circulated widely and were frequently copied and that Christian books were not reproduced under highly controlled conditions (…) The relatively free transmission of early Christian texts, which resulted in a proliferation of individual variants and diverse textual traditions, may indicate a greater interest in making these texts available than in the strict accuracy of their transcription.[56]

Such remark could be also applied to some NH texts; we are specifically thinking here about texts that have more than one copy – such as the long version of the *Apocryphon of John* (codices II and IV)[57] and *On the Origin of the World* (codices II and XIII)[58] – or more than one version – such as the *Gospel of Truth* (codices I and XII),[59] *Eugnostos* (codices III and

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[55] Harry Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church* (New Heaven/London: Yale University Press, 1995).
[56] Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, 74.
[57] Even if these two copies are almost identical, they still present some differences, which argues in favor of Gamble's statement. For a general survey, see Michael Waldstein and Frederik Wisse, *The Apocryphon of John: Synopsis of Nag Hammadi Codices II, 1; III, 1; and VI, 1 with BG 8502,2* (NHMS 23; Leiden/New York/Köln: Brill, 1995), 1-8.
[58] Another case of copies that are almost identical, but still present some differences. For a general survey, see Louis Painchaud, *L'Écrit sans titre. Traité sur l'origine du monde* (BCNH section "Textes" 21; Sainte-Foy/Louvain/Paris: Les Presses de l'Université Laval/Peeters, 1995), 1-3 and 107-108.
[59] Hans-Martin Schenke, "'Evangelium Veritatis' (NHC I, 3/XII, 2)" in *Nag Hammadi Deutsch. Vol. 1: NHC I, 1 – V, 1.* (ed. H-M. Schenke; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 27-44.

V),[60] the *Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit* (codices III and IV),[61] and the *Apocryphon of John* (long version in codices II and IV and short version in Codex III)[62]. Recently, the publication of Codex Tchacos brought to light new versions of two texts previously known from NH, the *Letter of Peter to Philip* (NH VIII, 2 and CT 1),[63] and the *First Apocalypse of James* (NH V, 3 and CT 2).[64] Firstly, the number of copies could indicate that these texts were popular in late antique Coptic Egypt; secondly, the many differences between these copies and versions supports Gamble's statement, according to which the availability of texts was more important than the accuracy in their transmission.[65]

In the chapter concerning the publication and circulation of early Christian literature,[66] Gamble focuses his analysis on biblical texts; he discusses the need of translation of biblical texts into regional languages, such as Coptic, when the spread of Christianity reached regions where Greek and Latin were not well known or not known at all. The author, however, shows that the interest in these "regional" versions is mainly linked to the fact that they can be useful in the research of early versions of the Bible itself. Once again, the Coptic context is not important in itself, but only as a means to understand early contexts. The author, however, dedicates a paragraph to the importance of regional versions in their own context:

> These early versions have been valued and studied chiefly by textual critics for the light they shed on the history of the text of the New Testament, but they are eloquent witnesses to the breadth of the diffusion of Christian literature at an early time (…). The early, diverse, and largely uncoordinated renderings of those

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[60] See Anne Pasquier, *Eugnoste. Lettre sur le Dieu transcendant* (BCNH section "Textes" 26; Québec/Louvain/Paris/Dudley: Les Presses de l'Université Laval/Peeters, 2000) and Anne Pasquier, *Eugnoste. Lettre sur le Dieu transcendant: Commentaire* (BCNH section "Textes" 33; Québec/Louvain/Paris/Dudley: Les Presses de l'Université Laval/Peeters, 2010).

[61] Alexander Böhlig and Frederik Wisse, *Nag Hammadi Codices III, 2 and IV, 2: The Gospel of the Egyptians (The Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit)* (NHS 4; Leinden: Brill, 1975).

[62] Waldstein and Wisse, *The Apocryphon of John*.

[63] Jacques Ménard, *La Lettre de Pierre à Philippe* (BCNH section "Textes" 1; Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1977) and Rodolphe Kasser et al., *The Gospel of Judas Together with the Letter of Peter to Philip, James and a Book of Allogenes from Codex Tchacos. Critical Edition* (Washington: National Geographic, 2007), 79-114.

[64] Armand Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques* (BCNH section "Études" 17; Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1986), 19-114 and Kasser et al., *The Gospel of Judas,* 115-176.

[65] Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, 74.

[66] Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, 82-143.

texts into the vernacular attests to the importance that was attached to making those texts available to the remote communities and fostered their spread and use into areas where other literature had little or no currency.[67]

In his final remarks on the publication and circulation, the author states that early Christian texts were normally spread in private chains of transmission; there is no evidence that allows one to believe that commercial book trade existed for Christian literature before the fourth century.[68] Even if the fabrication of the NHC probably took place in the second half of the fourth century, such remarks may remind us of one of NH sub-collections, formed by codices I, VII and XI; as we will see in section 2.6, Painchaud has suggested that this sub-collection could have been made for internal use.[69]

As regards early Christian libraries,[70] according to Gamble, there were basically three types: congregational,[71] monastic and private.[72] One can say that in the case of congregational libraries, books were normally used for public and liturgical readings, while in the case of monastic and private libraries, the reading was normally private and individual,[73] with the exception of liturgical texts in the case of monasticism. When the author deals specifically with monastic libraries, he briefly presents the example of Pachomian monasticism and the possibility of its relation to the NHC is also taken into consideration.[74]

Leaving aside for a moment the question of types of library, we should take a look on Haines-Eitzen's observations concerning early Christian scribes. She concludes that, generally speaking, those who copied Christian texts in the second and third centuries were also their readers; in other words, among early Christians the occupation of scribe was

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[67] Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, 131-132.
[68] Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, 140-143.
[69] Wolf-Peter Funk, Louis Painchaud and Einar Thomassen, *L'Interprétation de la Gnose (NH XII, 1)* (BCNH section "Textes" 34; Québec/Louvain/Paris/Walpole [MA]: Les Presses de l'Université Laval/Peeters, 2010), 4-12. See salso Painchaud, "The Production and Destination of the Nag Hammadi Codices."
[70] Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, 144-202.
[71] Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, 145-170.
[72] Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, 170-176.
[73] The issue of individual reading, especially in the case of monasticism, requires also statements about the literacy of monks and readers in general. We intend, however, to deal with this question in the chapter on Egyptian social-religious milieu in fourth/fifth centuries (See chapter 5).
[74] Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, 170-174.

probably not a professional activity. In general terms, once a text was ordered, it was copied and disseminated by those who produced it, circulating in private chains of textual transmission. Thus manuscripts were not over-produced and texts were not over-copied, being made according to the actual demand and necessity. Starting from the fourth century, with the growing institutionalization of Christianity in the Empire and the end of the persecutions, along with the considerable increasing in the number of Christians, the demand for Christian texts also increased, the chains of transmission were no longer private and the occupation of scribe became a professional job. The first monastic *scriptoria* began to appear;[75] consequently, the number of copies increased along with the diffusion of texts. And indeed, the number of manuscripts from the fourth century that have been preserved until today is much larger than those of previous centuries, which is due not only to temporal proximity, but also to the increase in number and professionalization of Christian scribes. One can notice then that the probable date of production of the NHC is situated just after the period of transition between the phases described by Haines-Eitzen and discussed above, i.e. the second half of the fourth century.

The work of the earliest Coptic scribes was part of this context of transition; when they copied the earliest exemplars of the Scriptures and other Christian texts these first Coptic scribes were probably situated between non-professional and professional activity. Taking into consideration Crum's statement,[76] we believe therefore that the majority of Coptic manuscripts have a link with a certain monastic environment, and, even a monastic *scriptorium*, what necessarily links them to Christianity.

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[75] Even if some scholars have tried to prove the existence of Christian *scriptoria* already in the second and third centuries, Haines-Eitzen demonstrates that this possibility is very unlikely (Cf. Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters*, 77-104).

[76] According to him, every single Coptic manuscript known in his time came from a monastic library (See our commentary on C. Scholten's contribution on section 2.4). One must not forget, however, that Crum was making this statement before the finding of the NHC and of many Manichean Coptic manuscripts; see Walter E. Crum, "The Coptic Papyri," in W.M. Flinders Petrie, *Medum* (London: David Nutt, 1892), 48. For Scholten's comment, see Clemens Scholten, "Die Nag-Hammadi-Texte als Buchbesitz der Pachomianer," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 31 (1988), 172. More recently, Lundhaug and Jenott have also recalled this statement made by Crum; see Hugo Lundhaug and Lance Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices* (STAC 97; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 1.

Taking this information into account, one can formulate some questions concerning NHC scribes: What was their degree of professionalism? In which stage of this period of transition were the scribes of NHC situated? Were they non-professional or professional scribes working in a monastic *scriptorium* or elsewhere? Did they copy the NH texts for themselves? Were there any chains of private circulation for manuscripts? Obviously, we can try at the same time to search for answers for the NHC as a whole or for particular codices or sub-collections, taking into consideration the complexity of the "library" itself; if we accept Robinson's suggestion[77] – that NHC is a group of collections – we should not be surprised by the fact of having different answers for different codices or sub-collections.

At any rate, in regard to the present dissertation, these questions must be asked in the context of attempting to shed light on the reception of the NH texts in late antique Coptic Egypt. As emphasized in the beginning of this section, if we demonstrate that the NHC, or at least Codex V, was produced by Christian and for Christians, our comparison between this codex and late antique Coptic hagiographies, aiming to determine the horizon of expectations of late antique Coptic Christians, is justified.

But to what kind of Christians, or to whom else, could the codices have belonged? About this matter, Richter has formulated the following statements:

> This so-called 'Gnostic Library' includes several non-Gnostic texts, for instance Christian philosophical writings or hermetic tractates. From this point of view, the different religious texts could be read by various readers of different religious faiths, involved in different official or non-official groups. So the readership has to be imagined as a very complex one. It was not possible to clarify the archaeological context of the finding of the library. For this reason, the context of the texts could only be reconstructed by the contents of the codices, observations in the order of scriptures, mysterious colophons, and certain facts such as several versions of the same texts, duplicates, and some documents used for the book binding. The thesis

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[77] James Robinson, *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices. Introduction* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 86. This suggestion was posteriorly used by other scholars, notably Michael Williams, "Interpreting the Nag Hammadi Library as "Collection(s)" in the History of "Gnosticism," in *Les textes de Nag Hammadi et le problème de leur classification* (ed. L. Painchaud and A. Pasqueir; BCNH section "Études" 3; Québec/Louvain/Paris: Les Presses de l'Université Laval/Peeters, 1995), 3-50.

of a relationship to the nearby Pachomian monasteries was discussed in several works, but could not be proved."[78]

Following the clue pointed out by Richter, we should take a look at an article by van Minnen published in the *Journal of Juristic Papyrology*, in which he discusses the different possibilities of ownership of literature in Egyptian villages in the Fayum in the Greco-Roman period.[79] Even if van Minnen's article deals with an earlier period and a slightly different location, some of his discussions could be pertinent for our purpose here, after all, he discusses literature in Ancient Egypt and he is concerned with the ownership of these books, just as we are relatively concerned with the possibilities of ownership of the NHC. He begins by stating that his "interest in the matter is historical, not literary. I am not concerned with the interpretation of these texts, but with their social context: who were the owners of these fragments of Egyptian and Greek literature and what did they use them for?"[80] He points out four possible owners of the papyri he discusses in his article: 1- Egyptian priests, who were probably the most important and numerous owners of literary texts at this time and place;[81] 2- schools;[82] 3- officials of various kinds;[83] and 4- ordinary villagers, farmers and peasants.[84] He emphasizes, however, that villagers, farmers and peasants probably did not have enough money to have many literary texts, or even an interest in them; they could be considered the possible owners of smaller texts, such as little magic papyri written on a single page and other texts of this kind.[85]

[78] Richter, "Manichaeism and Gnosticism in the Panopolitan Region," 123.
[79] Peter Van Minnen, "Boorish or Bookish? Literature in Egyptian Villages in the Fayum in the Graeco-Roman Period," *JJP* 28 (1998): 99-184.
[80] Van Minnen, "Boorish or Bookish?," 99. The fragments analysed by van Minnen are basically literary papyri found in the villages of the nome of Fayum, Middle Egypt (see van Minnen, "Boorish or Bookish?," 99-100). He defines these papyri as "literary texts written in Hieroglyphus, Hieratic or Demotic or in Greek or Latin on a movable surface, not necessarily on papyrus (…) I include anything that might be regarded as a literary text in the broadest possible sense. Magical texts have been excluded as a rule, but school texts have all been included" (van Minnen, "Boorish or Bookish?," 102.) For more details on his selection criteria, see van Minnen, "Boorish or Bookish?," 102-108.
[81] Van Minnen, "Boorish or Bookish?," 108-109.
[82] Van Minnen, "Boorish or Bookish?," 109-110.
[83] Van Minnen, "Boorish or Bookish?," 110-111.
[84] Van Minnen, "Boorish or Bookish?," 111-112.
[85] Van Minnen, "Boorish or Bookish?," 111-112.

Even if the owners suggested by van Minnen correspond to a different reality, in time and space, this reality is not that far from that of the NHC. We could ask thus if these possibilities could also be likely applied to the owners of the NHC.[86] When van Minnen cites Egyptian priests, he is referring to "pagan" priests, those who performed religious duties related to the ancient Egyptian religion;[87] it seems unlikely that "pagan" priests could have owned the NHC codices, even if some of their texts were labeled by scholarship as presenting many traces of "paganism."[88] We should recall, however, from the previous contributions concerning Christian books discussed here, that the clergy was certainly the main consumer and user of Christian literature in Antiquity. When we employ the term "clergy", we refer specifically to those directly related to religious and liturgical duties, mainly priest and deacons, who performed their services in churches. This possibility would initially exclude monks and monasteries, unless we consider that Christian books were also used in liturgical celebrations performed by outsider priests who came to the monasteries for that specific purpose.[89] However, once more, it seems unlikely that the NHC in general could have been used for liturgical purposes. The variety of texts – doctrinally, theologically and in terms of literary genre – could be an objection to that possibility. The fact that canonical texts – surely used in liturgy[90] – do not appear in the NHC also renders that possibility unlikely. Thus if the NHC could have been owned by priests they probably did not use them in liturgy, but for their own spiritual reading.

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[86] Such a comparison could prove to be very speculative, but we believe it is worthwhile, since, apart from the possibility of a monastic ownership and of Greek *literati* (Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*), no other likely suggestion concerning the ownership of NHC was actually made.

[87] Even if some Christian fragments, mainly biblical, can be found among these papyri from the Fayum, van Minnen does not make any specific comments concerning Christianity.

[88] See, for exemple, the recent discussion proposed by Burns specifically in relation to Sethianism: Dylan Burns, *The Apocalypse of the Alien God: Platonism and the Exile of Sethian Gnosticism* (Philadelphia: University of Peensylvania Press, 2014), 6, 50, 78.

[89] We know, for example, that in the specific case of Pachomian monasticism, the monks were never ordained priests, and the Eucharist was celebrated by priests who came from outside the monastery for that very purpose. That was the case because Pachomius believed that it was better for monks not to be ordained (see SBo 25, G[1] 27 and *Letter of Ammon* 371). For details, see Armand Veilleux, *La liturgie dans les cénobitisme pachômien au quatrième siècle* (Roma: Pontificium Institutum S. Anselmi, 1960), 226-248.

[90] On the use of Scriptures for liturgical matters in the specific case of Pachomian monasticism, see Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien au quatrième siècle,* 262-275.

Before exploring the second possibility suggested by van Minnen, let us take a look at the third one. Such a big "library" or "collection" could be hardly owned by a single person – mainly for economic reasons[91] – what would also render unlikely, at least in the case of the NHC together, some other possibilities suggested by van Minnen regarding the papyri of Fayum, i.e. those of officials and villagers, farmers and peasants. Nonetheless, one should note that this possibility is unlikely, but not impossible. A very rich person could afford such a big library, or even a much bigger one, as the *Villa dei Papiri* at Herculaneum attests.[92] But, once more, we should take into consideration that the different subcollections had different origins and destinations, which means that they could have belonged to different private owners, who were not necessarily rich, before they were put together. In the specific case of Codex V, the fact that the codex is a poor one (without ornamentations, for example) may indicate that it may not have been originally addressed to a rich person.

Recently, Nicola Denzey Lewis and Justine A. Blount[93] suggested that the NHC were buried with their owners, probably private Greco-Egyptian citizens. We will discuss this article in detail in this dissertation.[94] For now, it suffices to mention that Lewis and Blount believe that the NHC did not belong to a monastic library, but rather to one or more private Greco-Egyptian owners.[95] In general terms, they argue that the region where the codices where found is known for having lodged the tombs of the members of pharaonic dynasties,[96] recalling that in at least one of the versions of the finding of the codices, it is reported that corpse was laying aside the jar.[97] Obviously, they are not suggesting that the codices belonged to the pharaonic period, but rather that the region may have continued to be a place where Egyptians were buried. Therefore, according to Lewis and Blount, the NHC could

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[91] We should always bear in mind the high costs and the hard work of book production in antiquity. For a general survey on this matter, see Bagnall, *Early Christian Books in Egypt,* 50-69.
[92] For a survey, see David Sider, *The Library of the Villa dei Papiri at Herculaneum* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2005).
[93] Nicola Denzey Lewis and Justine Blount, "Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices," *JBL* 133 (2014): 399-419.
[94] See section 2.4 below.
[95] Lewis and Blount, "Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices."
[96] Lewis and Blount, "Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 406-407.
[97] Lewis and Blount, "Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 404.

have belonged to one of these Egyptians who were buried with their belongings, including their personal library. However, as we will see in section 2.3 below, this theory does not exclude the possibility that, in their final stage of conservation, the NHC belonged to monks, as Pachomian monks were also buried in that region.

There also remains the possibility that schools were the owners of the NHC. Unfortunately, we do not know much about education in fourth-century Coptic Egypt.[98] What we know is normally related to the monastic life and the instruction of monks once they joined a monastery. Festugière's view[99] that monks came mainly from the "lower" uneducated peasant classes has changed in the last few decades; scholars believe today that many monks probably received a previous basic education before joining a monastery.[100] How exactly did this basic education work? It is hard to tell, but if we take into consideration what we know about Classic education,[101] apocrypha were certainly not used in this process, which would exclude the possibility of ownership of the NHC by a school. However, we know that, at least in the case of Pachomian coenobitism, when an individual joined a monastery, he received an education based on Scriptures; if he was not able to read before, he was taught to do so, by reading and learning the Scriptures by heart.[102] Is it possible that some *corpora* other than the Scriptures could have been used in this process of education in one or some of Upper-Egyptian monasteries? Yes, but such possibility is nothing more than a speculation. In any case, even if each one of the subcollections formed by the NHC could have been used in the education of monks, it would still be part of a monastic library or collection. This possibility could be also applied to the final destination of the subcollections, i.e. the phase in which they were put together.

Obviously, one cannot completely rule out other possibilities for the ownership of NHC, such as Manicheans and alchemists, for example. However, as explained above, the

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[98] Some studies have been done, but they are normally more concerned with the Byzantine period. See Ewa Wipszycka, "Le degré d'alphabétisation en Égypte Byzantine" in *REAug* 30 (1984): 279-296.
[99] See, for example, André J. Festugière, *Les moines d'Orient: culture ou sainteté* (Paris: Cerf, 1961), 75-91.
[100] See, for example, Wipzycka, "Le degré d'alphabétisation en Égypte Byzantine".
[101] For a survey, see Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'Antiquité* (Paris: Seuil, 1948).
[102] See Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien au quatrième siècle*, 262-275.

evidence pointed out above regarding *nomina sacra*, Staurograms, etc. shows that the codices and subgroups of codices were produced by Christians and/or for Christians.

In the specific case of Codex V, the presence of Christian texts, with characters generally praised by Christians such as James, Adam and Paul, and even the Lord Himself, and obviously, the presence of *nomina sacra*, lend support to the hypothesis of a codex made by Christians and addressed to Christians. We will not discuss here whether it belonged in any of its stages of transmission to Coptic monks as it is not our goal to demonstrate or challenge the controversial issue of a monastic origin. Our goal is to demonstrate that Codex V was likely owned by Christians and, consequently, read by them; possibly, the same Christians who knew Coptic hagiographies very well.

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We have tried to outline above a brief summary of the situation involving the study of early Christian books and how this study may help us to understand the NHC and their context of compilation and reception. In general, the NHC have not been studied as a group of late antique Christian volumes, but rather as an exotic, Gnostic, heterodox collection. As emphasised above, scholars who are concerned with the study of early Christian books rarely mention or take the NHC into consideration; NH scholars in their turn do not take into consideration general studies on early Christian books very often, as we will see soon. We have thus the example of two "distinct" fields of research that have had little contact, but could certainly produce substantial results working together.

At any rate, for the purposes of the present dissertation, the demonstration of the Christian character of the NHC, and in specific of Codex V – in other words to show that it was produced by Christians and/or addressed to Christians and consequently read by them – allows us to compare them to other types of Christian literature that were presumably circulating in Coptic at the same time and place. Accordingly, the goal of the present section has been to demonstrate that, despite the scepticism of some scholars[103] concerning the

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[103] Notably Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*.

Christian character of the codices, they were very probably Christian artefacts read by Christians, especially Codex V.

We may now proceed to the discussion of studies on the material aspects of the NHC.

2.3. Studies on the Material Aspects of the NHC.

The first attempts to analyse the context of compilation of NHC focused on its material aspects. In 1960, van Regemorter published an article on the bindings of the codices.[104] The author specifies, however, that she only had the opportunity to see some codices in 1957, notably the one that would be called later Codex II. Concerning the bindings, she states that

> celle-ci est tellement primitive qu'elle pose un problème difficile à résoudre : les scribes de ces manuscrits connaissaient parfaitement leur métier ; certaines pages sont même fort belles ; les relieurs par contre étaient absolument des débutants. Quelle est la raison de la différence de niveau entre ces deux sortes d'artisans ? Ces manuscrits ont-ils été écrits en Haute-Égypte dans un monastère qui n'avait pas de relieur à sa disposition[105]?

It is interesting to notice in this first article on the bindings of some of the NHC that firstly, the possibility of a monastic origin was already taken into account and, secondly, that the quality of the bindings themselves was not good; as far as we know, this latter question was never again deeply analysed by scholars. The author mentions examples of earlier codices that had much more sophisticated bindings, which shows that the early age of the NHC could not be an excuse for this situation.[106] In 1961, Doresse also dedicated an article to NHC bindings;[107] his descriptions are more complex than those of van Regemorter, and he also provides pictures of the covers. He starts his article by stating that the NHC are important not only because of their literary content, but also because of their material aspect, since, according to him, eleven codices had their bindings almost completely preserved.[108] Doresse also emphasises that the codices were dismantled and stripped to assure a better conservation

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[104] Van Regemorter, "La reliure des manuscrits gnostiques découverts à Nag Hammadi."
[105] Van Regemorter, "La reliure des manuscrits gnostiques découverts à Nag Hammadi," 225.
[106] Van Regemorter, "La reliure des manuscrits gnostiques découverts à Nag Hammadi," 225-234.
[107] Doresse. "Les reliures des manuscrits gnostiques coptes découverts à Khénoboskion".
[108] Doresse. "Les reliures des manuscrits gnostiques coptes découverts à Khénoboskion,"27.

of their pages.[109] The following paragraphs are dedicated to criticizing van Regemorter's article, pointing out many errors she committed concerning the descriptions of the bindings and the identification of codices and their inventory number.[110] In the rest of the article, Doresse provides a general paleographical and codicological description of the thirteen NHC;[111] the inventory numbers given by Doresse, however, do not correspond to those used today by scholars (for him, Codex V is Codex III, for example). The divergences between Doresse and Regemorter are clearly perceptible; the confusion would only be solved with the complete publication of the facsimile editions.

John Barns also analysed the material aspects of the NHC and, based on that, suggested a Pachomian ownership for them.[112] In a study concerning the Coptic and Greek papyri which reinforce the internal parts of the covers of the codices, Barns accepts Robinson's postulate of a Pachomian origin for the collection, also emphasizing the fact that the volumes were not destroyed.[113] He seeks in this study to furnish additional evidence for the establishment of a clear relation between the NHC and the Pachomian communities in Upper Egypt, basing his analysis in the verification of the Coptic and Greek papyri kept inside the covers. He states that the contents of some codices (I, VII and VIII) point mainly to a monastic background.[114] He also affirms that it would be unlikely that another monastic community – different from the Pachomian – would have existed and operated in the same region at the same time. He concludes thus that it is possible to suggest, even without the support of any other evidence, that the NH material comes from a Pachomian monastery.[115]

[109] Doresse, "Les reliures des manuscrits gnostiques coptes découverts à Khénoboskion," 28.
[110] Doresse, "Les reliures des manuscrits gnostiques coptes découverts à Khénoboskion," 28-30.
[111] Doresse, "Les reliures des manuscrits gnostiques coptes découverts à Khénoboskion," 30-49.
[112] Barns, "Greek and Coptic Papyri from the Covers of the Nag Hammadi Codices." Before Barns, James Robinson had already suggested a Pachomian origin for the NHC; see James M. Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Codices – A General Introduction to the Nature and Significance of the Coptic Gnostic Library from Nag Hammadi* (Claremont: The Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, 1974). Robinson's contribution, however, will be discussed in the section on the possibilities of a monastic origin for the codices.
[113] Barns, "Greek and Coptic Papyri from the Covers of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 9-18.
[114] Barns, "Greek and Coptic Papyri from the Covers of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 12.
[115] Barns, "Greek and Coptic Papyri from the Covers of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 13.

However, one could questions Barns' postulate, since a rapid reading of the *Lives of Pachomius* provides much evidence that could contradict it; we know that Melitian monastic communities, for example, were also operating at the same time and region.[116] It would not be absurd to imagine that Melitian monks could have been the owners of NHC. The Melitian schism in the first half of the fourth century probably lost its *raison d'être* gradually throughout the second half of the fourth century, inasmuch as the survivors of Diocletian's persecution and its stigma were disappearing. We could imagine thus that those who were somehow affiliated to posterior Melitianism saw in "heterodox" religious positions the opportunity to keep their opposition to mainstream Christianity – the attitude that is popularly defined by the proverb "the enemy of my enemy is my friend". From this speculative, but likely, picture would emerge thus another possibility: NHC – or, more precisely, the subgroups of codices – could owe their origin and/or ownership to a Melitian monastic community. This possibility, however, has rarely been raised and/or discussed by scholars.

Also taking as a starting point the possibility of a Pachomian origin, John Shelton, in the introduction of the volume dedicated to the Greek and Coptic papyri from the covers of the NHC, questions Robinson and Barns: according to him, one cannot be sure about the possibility of a Pachomian provenience of the NHC.[117] He believes that the theory in question must be revised, since many fragments from the covers are merely secular while others are not necessarily linked to the Pachomian congregation.[118] He concludes that, considering the names of places cited in the fragments, at least codices I, V, VII and IX were produced with materials from the region where the codices were found; however, there are no conclusive traces of classical Pachomian monasticism in the covers.[119] As discussed above, Kim Haines-Eitzen's study[120] can be useful for understanding the utilisation of papyri for the confection of NHC covers. Discussing the reutilization of papyri, in particular by Christian scribes, the author affirms that many administrative officers kept documents, of which only one side was

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[116] For a general survey, see Victor Ghica, *Les Actes de Pierre et des douze apôtres (NH VI, 1)* (BCNH section "Textes" 37; Québec/Louvain/Paris: Les Presses de l'Université Laval/Peeters, 2017), 148-168.

[117] Barns, Browne and Shelton, *Nag Hammadi Codices. Greek and Coptic Papyri*, 4.

[118] Barns, Browne and Shelton, *Nag Hammadi Codices. Greek and Coptic Papyri*, 2-11.

[119] Barns, Browne and Shelton, *Nag Hammadi Codices. Greek and Coptic Papyri*, 11.

[120] See section 2.2 above.

used, for a later use as drafts or scraps for the copy of literary texts; in the specific case of Alexandria, we know that when official documents became obsolete, many were sold to bookshops, and then used again.[121] Thus we can imagine similar situations occurring in Upper Egypt at the beginning and during the fourth century. This would explain not only the presence of biblical fragments in the NHC covers, but also of bureaucratic and official texts.

In 2006, a very interesting article written by Goehring was published in a volume of essays offered to W.P. Funk.[122] In the article in question, the author deals with a bowl that was found in 1977-1978 in the "archaeological excavations at the great fifth-century basilica of the central Pachomian monastery of Phbow."[123] The main purpose of this contribution is to stress the similarities between this bowl and the bowl – acquired by James Robinson in 1976 – that served as a cap to close the jar in which the NHC were buried.[124] According to Goehring, despite the similarities between the two bowls, the one discovered in the excavations at Phbow has received little attention from scholarship.[125]

Goehring describes the history of the bowl that sealed the jar in which the NCH were found, stressing that it is well preserved and mentioning that it could be dated from the fourth to the fifth century A.D.[126] He minutely describes both bowls, stressing the similarities, but also mentioning the differences between them.[127] The last pages of the article provide photos of the bowl.[128]

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[121] Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters*, 33-34.
[122] James E. Goehring, "An Earlier Roman Bowl from the Monastery of Pachomius at Pbow and the Milieu of the Nag Hammadi Codices," in *Coptica – Gnostica – Manichaica: Mélanges offerts à Wolf-Peter Funk* (ed. L. Painchaud and P.-H. Poirier (BCNH section "Études" 7; Québec/Louvain/Paris: Les Presses de l'Université Laval/Peeters, 2006), 357-371.
[123] Goehring, "An Early Roman Bowl from the Monastery of Pachomius and the Milieu of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 358.
[124] Goehring, "An Early Roman Bowl from the Monastery of Pachomius and the Milieu of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 357-358.
[125] Goehring, "An Early Roman Bowl from the Monastery of Pachomius and the Milieu of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 359.
[126] Goehring, "An Early Roman Bowl from the Monastery of Pachomius and the Milieu of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 360-362.
[127] Goehring, "An Early Roman Bowl from the Monastery of Pachomius and the Milieu of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 63-366.
[128] Goehring, "An Early Roman Bowl from the Monastery of Pachomius and the Milieu of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 367-371.

Goehring's conclusions are prudent, but interesting nonetheless. In his own words:

> In spite of the differences, however, the similarity is striking. The two bowls underscore the common world in which the late fourth and early fifth century owners of the Nag Hammadi codices and the increasingly prosperous Pachomian monks lived. The discovery of the bowl at the Pachomian monastery of Phbow in a sealed datable layer lends support to the oral claims that the other bowl had served as the lid of the jar in which the Nag Hammadi codices were buried by placing just such a bowl in the immediate area during the period most scholars assume the codices were concealed. The similarity of the two bowls offers no direct help, of course, in the debate over the relationship between the codices and the Pachomian monks. The bowl type does not appear to be particularly rare, and even if it were, the similarity of the two bowls offers no evidence of a direct relationship between the two owners (…) The two bowls published here simply indicate that in addition to an interest in the written word and its material production, the Pachomian monks and the owners of the Nag Hammadi codices shared a broader common material culture.[129]

Obviously, the similarities between the bowls cannot be taken as an ultimate proof of the Pachomian origin or ownership of the NHC; however, they might provide evidence in favor of this hypothesis. In sum, although the bowls do not prove a Pachomian origin or ownership of the NHC, they might constitute an important clue in the investigation of this question.

In 2008, another article concerned with archaeological issues in the region where the NHC were found was written, this time by Emmel. The article deals with the Faw Qibli archaeological excavations, in the region where the NHC were supposedly found.[130] The main discovery of this excavation was the ruins of the old Pachomian basilica of Phbow. In the first part of the article, Emmel summarizes these results. Then he summarizes Robinson's quest for information concerning the discovery of the NHC in the same region during the seventies.[131] He consequently cites the possibility of a Pachomian origin for the NHC, as one could expect.[132] In the conclusion of his article, however, Emmel avoids taking a position,

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[129] Goehring, "An Early Roman Bowl from the Monastery of Pachomius and the Milieu of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 366.
[130] Stephen Emmel, "The 'Coptic Gnostic Library of Nag Hammadi' and Faw Qibli Excavations," in *Christianity and Monasticism in Upper Egypt vol. 2: Nag Hammadi-Esna* (ed. G. Gabra and H. N. Takla; Cairo/New York: Saint Mark Foundation/American University of Cairo Press, 2008), 33-43.
[131] Emmel, "The 'Coptic Gnostic Library of Nag Hammadi' and Faw Qibli Excavations," 33-41.
[132] Emmel, "The 'Coptic Gnostic Library of Nag Hammadi' and Faw Qibli Excavations," 41-42.

saying that "the juxtaposition of the 'Coptic Gnostic Library of Nag Hammadi' and the Faw Qibli excavations in the title of this chapter should not be taken to mean that I believe that there was any historical connection at all between the Nag Hammadi Codices and the Pachomian monastery at Phbow".[133] As observed by Emmel himself, judging by his article's title, one could expect to read a text that would try to establish archaeological links between the NHC and the excavations of the Pachomian site, but he does nothing more than provide some data about the excavation itself and its results and then give some information about the discovery of the NHC. At any rate, the article does furnish concrete data concerning the material presence of Pachomian monasticism in the region of the discovery of the NHC; many scholars have discussed the possibility of a Pachomian origin for the NHC arguing that the region was full of Pachomian monasteries, but they rarely specify what that "presence" means. With the publication of precise data, i.e. the remains of Phbow, those who plead in favor of a Pachomian origin can have access to material evidence, not only speculations.

After having described the research concerned with material aspects of the NHC in general, we must now analyse scholarly works concerned with a particular material aspect of the codices: their titles. In 1997, Paul-Hubert Poirier wrote an article on the titles of the NHC and the Codex of Berlin.[134] He starts by stressing that in 1971, Krause already delineated the general situation of titles in NHC,[135] and also that, after him, almost every scholar who undertook the task of editing NH or BG texts dedicated some lines to the question of the titles. Poirier then presents a detailed inventory of titles in NHC and BG;[136] however, since the article in question is presented as a survey on the question of the titles, Poirier could only discuss the issue in general terms. His conclusion is that, in general, NH scribes kept the titles of the writings they were copying.

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[133] Emmel, "The 'Coptic Gnostic Library of Nag Hammadi' and Faw Qibli Excavations," 42.
[134] Paul-Hubert Poirier, "Titres, sous-titres, incipit et desinit dans les codices coptes de Nag Hammadi et Berlin," in *Titres et articulation du texte dans les oeuvres antiques. Actes du Colloque international de Chantilly 13-15 décembre de 1994* (ed. J.-C. Fredouille; CÉA série Antiquité 152; Paris: Institut d'études augustiniennes, 1997), 339-383.
[135] Martin Krause, "Die Titel des Schriften von Codex I-XIII," in *Gnostische und hermetische Schriften aus Codex II und Codex VI* (ed. M. Krause and P. Labib; Glückstadt: J. J. Augustin, 1971), 16-21.
[136] Poirier, "Titres, sous-titres, incipit et desinit dans les codices coptes de Nag Hammadi et Berlin," 341-345.

In 2005, Paola Buzi published a study on titles and authors in Coptic tradition that deals, among many subjects, with the NHC;[137] since it deals with the titles in the manuscripts, we decided to include it in our discussion of material aspects. She dedicates a section to "Gnostic works", in which she discusses NH texts, the *Pistis Sophia* and the *Books of Ieu*.[138] She starts by stating that the complex issue regarding the origins and owners of NHC was already discussed by many scholars, citing many references.[139] Then, she raises cautiously the possibility of manipulation of NH titles even after their translation into Coptic.[140] On the other hand, she does not discard the possibility that the titles remained unchanged, remaining faithful to their Greek originals;[141] this was Poirier's general opinion concerning the NH texts. The fact is that in most cases, it is impossible to know if this is true, since we generally do not have access to NH Greek originals; thus any statement on this issue seems extremely speculative. To attain more precise and certain results, we believe that an examination of each single case must be done. Subsequently, Buzi simply follows Poirier's statements and suggestions concerning NH titles. Concluding her analysis, she states that

> Va inoltre tenuto conto della natura particolarissima dei codici di Nag Hammadi, risultato di un *collage* di opere (o frammenti di opere) copiate su commissione. E sebbene si sia notato che talora il copista abbia una certa libertà nelle selezione dei testi, deve essersi trattato comunque di un'attività solo assai limitatamente libera e per il resto fortemente condizionata dalle richieste del committente.[142]

She considers thus that the NHC were probably produced on commission; she also believes that the scribes could have had a certain freedom for choosing the treatises they would copy, but not the same freedom to modify or interfere in the titles of the texts they had chosen.[143] With all due respect, we feel obliged to disagree here with Buzi; it does not seem likely to us that a given client would be more concerned with the preservation of original titles of the texts he was ordering than with the choices of the titles and their content themselves. If Buzi

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[137] Paola Buzi. *Titoli e autori nella tradizione copta. Studio storico e tipológico* (Biblioteca degli studi di egittologia e di papirologia 2; Pisa/Roma: Giardini, 2005).
[138] Buzi, *Titoli e autori nella tradizione copta*, 79-84.
[139] Buzi, *Titoli e autori nella tradizione copta*, 79.
[140] Buzi, *Titoli e autori nella tradizione copta*, 79.
[141] Buzi, *Titoli e autori nella tradizione copta*, 79.
[142] Buzi, *Titoli e autori nella tradizione copta*, 83.
[143] Buzi, *Titoli e autori nella tradizione copta*, 83.

is right, that means that the client in question could have a codex with any kind of text, as long as the titles were not modified and that he (or she) was little concerned with its content, but only with its titles. It seems more likely to presume that the preservation of titles is the combined result of the work of the scribe, of the choice of texts and of the requirements of the client.

A last remark should be made concerning Buzi's contribution; according to her, typologically speaking, the NH titles do not differ much from those in biblical manuscripts,[144] which she analysed in the previous chapter.[145] That means that in a certain way, i.e. physically speaking and according to their written titles, NHC were in conformity with the Coptic context of Late Antiquity.

Now that the physical comparisons are in place, we must proceed to the search for literary similarities. The search for literary contacts and similarities between NH texts and late antique Coptic literature[146] could also be prolific, showing that NH texts reflect familiarity with the Coptic environment not only in regard to physical aspects, but also in regard to literary characteristics. As we will see later,[147] certain authors have tried to follow this line of inquiry.[148] But before that, we must deal with studies on the general environment of the fourth century, Egyptian Monasticism and its possible relation to Gnosticism and the NHC.

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[144] Buzi, *Titoli e autori nella tradizione copta*, 79.

[145] Buzi, *Titoli e autori nella tradizione copta*, 75-77.

[146] And by that we mean not only the literature that was originally composed in Coptic, but also the literature that was circulating in Coptic at that time, even if it was composed in Greek and then translated. This extension of our analysis can be justified by the fact that for an ordinary reader, the fact that the text he was reading was an original composition or a translation did not really matter. We believe that ordinary readers did not ask many questions concerning these issues; this question will be also analysed in section 3.3.3.

[147] See section 2.5.

[148] We will see, however, that the number of studies which have tried to perform such an analysis is not great. Consequently, we believe that the next step in the research on the context of compilation of the NHC should focus on these issues.

2.4. Gnosticism and Monasticism or Monasticism and the NHC

One of the first studies to approach the NHC as having links with Egyptian monasticism was written by Säve-Söderbergh and published in 1975.[149] He states that "the heterogeneous character of the library (…) the dogmas of the different texts are impossible to bring under one single denominator and all the texts were hardly even acceptable as holy scriptures to one and the same congregation or single Gnostic believer". He recognizes that the versions of the *Life of Pachomius* that we know today – which were compiled later than the fourth century and preserved in much later manuscripts – may have pictured a more orthodox congregation that the reality of the time of Pachomius and his first successors.[150] However, he affirms that it is not likely to presume that the Pachomian congregation could have changed so much in regard to orthodoxy in that period between Pachomius and the redaction of the *Life of Pachomius*.[151]

Thus, according to him, the most plausible situation that would explain the existence of the NHC in Upper Egypt is that they belonged to the Pachomian congregation serving as a heresiological library, i.e. the monks possessed it in order to know the heresies and fight against them.[152] As we will see in the following pages, Säve-Söderbergh's suggestion was not well accepted by scholars after him, who mainly questioned the presupposition that the Pachomian *koinonia* could not be interested in the contents of the codices for their own spiritual profit, based on the supposed orthodox character of the congregation.

In 1978, Frederik Wisse wrote an article on the general aspects concerning Gnosticism and Early Monasticism in Egypt.[153] He begins by pointing out the difficulty in labeling and identifying the so-called Gnostic literature, since "Gnosticism touches on or overlaps other identifiable religious movements of the time."[154] Then he questions the general assumption

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[149] Säve-Söderbergh, "Holy Scriptures or Apologetic Documentation?"
[150] Säve-Söderbergh, "Holy Scriptures or Apologetic Documentation?," 11.
[151] Säve-Söderbergh, "Holy Scriptures or Apologetic Documentation?," 11.
[152] Säve-Söderbergh, "Holy Scriptures or Apologetic Documentation?," 11-13.
[153] Frederik Wisse, "Gnosticism and Early Monasticism in Egypt," in *Gnosis: Festschrift für Hans Jonas*. (ed. B. Aland; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 431-440.
[154] Wisse, "Gnosticism and Early Monasticism in Egypt," 431.

– prevalent until the seventies – which considered NHC as a Gnostic collection,[155] pointing out that the possible relations between Gnosticism and monasticism should be investigated in detail.[156] He considers the fact that the time of decline of Gnosticism coincided with the rise of monasticism in Egypt,[157] and points out issues that would become commonplace in research on NH and monasticism, such as the fact that monasticism itself was not exactly orthodox as once portrayed,[158] and that some colophons and signs in certain NHC indicate that they were not perceived as heretical by their owners.[159] He also discusses Athanasius's *367 festal Letter* as an evidence that apocryphal literature was circulating in Egypt in fourth century, suggesting that it could be the reason for the burial of the codices.[160] Since Wisse's article is one of the first ones that tried to deal with the general aspects concerning NHC and monasticism, it does not offer detailed information or complex analysis, but one can say that it furnished some bases for future discussions; and in fact, future contributions would basically discuss the elements pointed out by Wisse.[161]

More recently, two other scholars, Scholten[162] and Khosroyev,[163] have published two different contributions dedicated to the study of the *Sitz im Leben* of the NHC. Scholten's contribution is extremely pertinent and provides an abstract of the discussions on this matter. In the first part of the article, he discusses the importance and role of books for Pachomian monks,[164] taking into consideration the possibility of writing in their monasteries.[165] In what follows, he discusses books in a wider perspective and context – emphasizing the Coptic context.[166] In the next section of the article, he discusses the possibility of seeing the NHC

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[155] Wisse, "Gnosticism and Early Monasticism in Egypt," 432-433.
[156] Wisse, "Gnosticism and Early Monasticism in Egypt," 433.
[157] Wisse, "Gnosticism and Early Monasticism in Egypt," 433.
[158] Wisse, "Gnosticism and Early Monasticism in Egypt," 433-435.
[159] Wisse, "Gnosticism and Early Monasticism in Egypt," 435-436.
[160] Wisse, "Gnosticism and Early Monasticism in Egypt," 436-437.
[161] See our discussion on Veilleux's articles below (pages 69-71).
[162] Clemens Scholten, "Die Nag-Hammadi-Texte als Buchbesitz der Pachomianer," *JAC* 31 (1988): 144-172.
[163] Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*.
[164] Scholten, "Die Nag-Hammadi-Texte als Buchbesitz der Pachomianer," 145-149.
[165] Scholten, "Die Nag-Hammadi-Texte als Buchbesitz der Pachomianer," 149-153.
[166] Scholten, "Die Nag-Hammadi-Texte als Buchbesitz der Pachomianer," 153-157.

as Pachomian books,[167] providing comments concerning the codices' covers,[168] and discussing also the Bodmer papyri[169] and the notes on the NHC papyri.[170] Summarizing his discussion, one could say that Scholten considers that the possibility of a Pachomian origin for the NHC is indeed the most plausible hypothesis. However, he does not see any valid reason to imagine a group of Gnostic and heterodox monks – or even label them as such – among the Pachomians. In the next section of the article, he discusses the possibility of NHC as a heresiological library;[171] in general, he rejects Säve-Södederbergh's theory[172] on this issue. He also affirms that monastic libraries of this period contained many kinds of books that were kept in specific places where access was controlled; consequently, many books were rarely or never read.[173] To sum up, the NHC could be simply part of a reading material that through the years became obsolete and was forgotten in the corner of a monastic library. In the conclusion of his article, Scholten quotes W.E. Crum, according to whom every known Coptic text came somehow from a monastic library; Scholten than wonders if it would be likely to consider the NHC as the exception.[174]

Khosroyev's contribution[175] is more recent (1995) and consequently provides a more updated *status quaestionis* on the *Sitz im Leben* of NHC. He tries to approach the subject in the light of the fourth-century Coptic context, relating it to questions relevant to the first centuries of Egyptian Christianity. In the first chapter, the author presents a description of NHC technical characteristics, commenting on the main contributions on the subject.[176] The second chapter is dedicated to the question of the language of NH texts.[177] In the third chapter, the author discusses the different positions taken by scholars with reference to the ownership

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[167] Scholten, "Die Nag-Hammadi-Texte als Buchbesitz der Pachomianer," 157-164
[168] Scholten, "Die Nag-Hammadi-Texte als Buchbesitz der Pachomianer," 157-159.
[169] Scholten, "Die Nag-Hammadi-Texte als Buchbesitz der Pachomianer," 159-160.
[170] Scholten, "Die Nag-Hammadi-Texte als Buchbesitz der Pachomianer," 160-164.
[171] Scholten, "Die Nag-Hammadi-Texte als Buchbesitz der Pachomianer," 164-172.
[172] Säve-Södederbergh, "Holy Scriptures or Apologetic Documentation?"
[173] Scholten, "Die Nag-Hammadi-Texte als Buchbesitz der Pachomianer," 169-172.
[174] Scholten, "Die Nag-Hammadi-Texte als Buchbesitz der Pachomianer," 172.
[175] Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*.
[176] Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*, 3-22.
[177] Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*, 23-61.

of NHC.[178] Finally, in the fourth chapter, the author discusses specifically the place of the NHC in the broader Egyptian context.[179] Khosroyev's contribution also includes three annexes: the first one discusses the producers of the NHC,[180] the second one examines the terms "Gnosticism" and "Gnosis",[181] and the third one offers some remarks on Antony's letters.[182] Khosroyev is against the idea of a Pachomian origin for the NHC. For him, the most likely possibility is that the codices were the property of "syncretistic literati"[183] from the Greco-Egyptian cities.[184] Khosroyev invokes the NH texts' "dialectal impurity" as a characteristic that does not match the corpus of Coptic Pachomian texts.[185] This idea, however, does not take into consideration the fact that the corpus of Pachomian literature was preserved in later manuscripts, from the seventh century on, at a time when the dialectal boundaries were clearly defined, which does not seem to be the situation at the time of production and circulation of NHC. Moreover, NH texts are translations of foreign texts, while Pachomian literature is unquestionably the product of an Egyptian milieu.

In 1997, Camplani edited a book on Christianity in late antique Egypt in which he wrote a chapter about the transmission of Gnostic texts in Coptic[186] whose focus was the NHC. He discusses some preliminary questions already raised by other scholars, such as the NH cartonnage and the general environment of Upper Egypt in the fourth century, which necessarily includes monasticism.[187] He also makes some considerations on the material characteristics of the codices,[188] pointing out scribal interventions in the NHC, such as the colophon at the end of Codex II.[189] He also mentions the main hypotheses raised by scholars

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[178] Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*, 61-103.
[179] Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*, 104-135.
[180] Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*, 136-142.
[181] Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*, 143-157.
[182] Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*, 158-166.
[183] Employing Lundhaug and Jenott's expression (Cf. Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 8).
[184] See speacially Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*, 86.
[185] Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*, 23-61.
[186] Camplani, "Sula transmissione di testi gnostici in copto."
[187] Camplani, "Sula transmissione di testi gnostici in copto," 121-124.
[188] Camplani, "Sula transmissione di testi gnostici in copto," 124-137.
[189] Camplani, "Sula transmissione di testi gnostici in copto," 134-135.

concerning the origins and owners of the NHC. These provide a very useful summary of the discussions given by Camplani:

1- Since the number of texts that in one way or another present the character of Seth, the NHC was probably gathered by a Sethian-Gnostic group (this hypothesis was suggested by Doresse);[190]

2- The syncretism of the collection, which contains works from different Gnostic schools, as well as non-Gnostic texts, suggests that it was probably owned by a "private molto ricco" (this was Krause's suggestion);[191]

3- The diversity of Gnostic tendencies showed by the many texts of the collection suggest that it was used as a heresiological library (this was Säve-Söderbergh's suggestion);[192]

4- Since the collection was discovered in a region that was full of Pachomian monasteries in the fourth century, it probably belonged to Pachomian monks; this was possible in a time when orthodoxy was not well defined in Egyptian monasticism (this was the opinion of many scholars, such as Robinson and Wisse);[193]

5- NH codices were simply common reading material, kept inside a monastery independently of their content; not necessarily intended for heresiological purposes neither proving the heterodoxy of a given monastery, the collection was kept as a ordinary reading material, so common in many monasteries, as other collections of books, such as the Bodmer papyri, seem to prove (this is Scholten's opinion);[194]

6- None of these suggestions can be really proved. The real origins and owners of NHC remain unknown and one can question any supposition that tries to define who they were for certain (this sceptical position is mainly represented by Khosroyev);[195]

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[190] Camplani, "Sula transmissione di testi gnostici in copto," 137.
[191] Camplani, "Sula transmissione di testi gnostici in copto," 137.
[192] Camplani, "Sula transmissione di testi gnostici in copto," 137.
[193] Camplani, "Sula transmissione di testi gnostici in copto," 137.
[194] Camplani, "Sula transmissione di testi gnostici in copto," 138.
[195] Camplani, "Sula transmissione di testi gnostici in copto," 138-139.

7-   The possibility of intentional ordering of the texts in the formation of codices could play a major role in the understanding of their context of compilation.[196]

In sections 3 and 4 of his article, Camplani discusses respectively the circulation of "Coptic Gnostic Codices,"[197] and some of the characters of some NH treatises.[198] In what follows, Camplani discusses some issues related to the religious orientation of the presumed owners of the NHC,[199] namely the polemics against the Great Church and asceticism,[200] the possibility of reminiscences of Sethianism and Valentianism in fourth- century Egypt.[201] He also discusses issues concerning neo-Platonism[202] and possible Manichaean elements presented by some texts of the collection.[203] Camplani also discusses many possibilities of interpolations and rewriting of some texts, which could lead scholars to adopt a very careful position when they use these texts to establish conclusions about second-and third-century Gnosticism.[204] In many cases, it is impossible to know if the text we have today is really faithful to the original.

In his conclusion, Camplani presents four questions that could guide future research:[205]

1-   The presence of interpolations and rewritten texts in the collection should lead scholars to a more careful and cautious position concerning the search for the "Gnostic" doctrine of previous centuries when their sources are the NH texts themselves;

2-   Another important issue concerns the relations of these texts with Christianity itself; firstly, one should take into consideration that Christianity was more plural and diverse than the official doctrine of the Great Church; it would be an error to treat NH texts as non-Christian texts; Camplani also states that the idea of a non-Christian Gnosticism,

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[196] Camplani, "Sula transmissione di testi gnostici in copto," 139-140. This is William's theory (Cf. Williams, "Interpreting the Nag Hammadi Library as "Collection(s)" in the History of 'Gnosticism." See the discussion on William's article on pages 83-84).
[197] Camplani, "Sula transmissione di testi gnostici in copto," 140-143.
[198] Camplani, "Sula transmissione di testi gnostici in copto," 143-146.
[199] Camplani, "Sula transmissione di testi gnostici in copto," 146-149.
[200] Camplani, "Sula transmissione di testi gnostici in copto," 146-147.
[201] Camplani, "Sula transmissione di testi gnostici in copto," 147-149.
[202] Camplani, "Sula transmissione di testi gnostici in copto," 150-151.
[203] Camplani, "Sula transmissione di testi gnostici in copto," 154-158.
[204] Camplani, "Sula transmissione di testi gnostici in copto," 158-167.
[205] Camplani, "Sula transmissione di testi gnostici in copto," 172-173.

whose origins could be found in heterodox Judaism, does not find any basis in the NH texts;

3- It could be useful to compare the so-called Gnostic texts with the Manichaean ones;

4- The considerations on fourth-century Egyptian social, cultural and intellectual milieu, and consequently on the context of compilation of the NHC, should also include the analysis of philosophical and astrological elements and influences. Normally, these analyses are concerned only with monasticism and orthodox doctrine.

Camplani's article is very rigorous and complete, with a complete summary of the contributions made on the subject. Even if he does not present any new information, this kind of synopsis is very useful to those who want to have a first contact with the subject, since it is very complete and presented in a very pedagogical way. His analysis, however, is focused on Gnosticism; even if he tries to discuss NH context of compilation, he is clearly concerned with its consequences for the study of Gnosticism. His suggestions though, such as the extension of analyses and the consideration of factors such as Manichaeism and philosophy, for example, could prove to be very useful.

Also in 1997, Emmel wrote an article concerning the transmission of NH texts.[206] He proposed a scheme based on Frederik Wisse's[207] design for the transmission of the *Apocryphon of John*, extending it to the entire NH corpus. According to Emmel one can define four stages of transmission for the NH texts, and these stages would be expressed in a reverse chronology as follows: 1) the Coptic monastic phase; 2) the translation from Greek to Coptic phase; 3) the composition phase and 4) the pre-composition phase. For the strict purpose of the present dissertation, only phases 1 and 2 are pertinent. Emmel defines phase 1 as follows: "The most recent phase is, strictly speaking, whatever circumstance caused these particular books to be buried together in a sealed jar and their condition at that time.

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[206] Emmel, "Religious Tradition, Textual Transmission, and the Nag Hammadi Codices."
[207] Frederik Wisse, "After the Synopsis: Prospects and Problems in Establishing a Critical Text of the Apocryphon of John and in Defining Its Historical Location," in *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years*: *Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration* (ed. J. D. Turner and A. Maguire; NHMS 44; Leiden/New York: Brill, 1997), 1-8.

But more generally, this phase includes the entire history of each codex from the time of its manufacture to the time of its burial."[208]

In what follows, Emmel expresses an important opinion concerning the date of NHC burial, saying that "the typically fourth- or fifth century pottery bowl that was used to seal the jar in which the books were protected indicates that probably the concealment occurred before the Arab Conquest in the seventh century."[209] This remark is particularly important, since the fact that at least some codices were probably produced in the fourth century[210] has led scholars to presume without any further evidence that they were necessarily buried at the same time; certainly, another factor that has led scholars to believe this is Athanasius' *367 Festal Letter* against the apocryphal texts. However, there is no evidence that proves that the burial of the NHC has any link with Athanasius' Festal Letter, as we will in section 2.5. The presumed date of production of the codices – the second half of the fourth century – indicates the date when they presumably started to circulate in Upper Egypt, but not necessarily the date when they were buried. Thus, it is impossible to know for certain for how long these texts circulated in Egypt before they were buried, or when exactly they were taken out of circulation. As Emmel points out, this probably could have happened at any time between the fourth and the seventh century.

Concerning the second phase, Emmel says that

> The phase of transmission prior to the manufacture of the Nag Hammadi Codices was that of translating the individual texts from Greek into Coptic, followed by a history of recopying the Coptic texts (…) Based on what we know generally of the development of written Coptic, it is most likely that the translations were made sometime after the mid-to-late third century (…) for the most part we are dealing with the transmission of individual works – or parts of works – and not with the recopying of entire codices.[211]

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[208] Emmel, "Religious Tradition, Textual Transmission, and the Nag Hammadi Codices," 35-36.
[209] Emmel, "Religious Tradition, Textual Transmission, and the Nag Hammadi Codices," 36.
[210] One should bear in mind that some papyri fragments used in the covers of some NHC can be dated from the fourth century, as discussed earlier in this dissertation (see section 2.3).
[211] Emmel, "Religious Tradition, Textual Transmission, and the Nag Hammadi Codices," 37.

In what follows, Emmel points out some questions that could be asked concerning this phase, such as who translated the texts and how well did they do it.[212] He then discusses Funk's article – which will be discussed eventually in this dissertation – on the linguistic classification of NH texts, concluding that

> Thus a picture emerges, from a linguistic classification of the texts, of a history of transmission involving not just the usual sort of scribal corruption, but also purposeful alteration in linguistically, that is dialectally, diverse circumstances, and we have no way of being sure about the length of time involved, nor about the degree of such alteration.[213]

Subsequently, Emmel discusses phases 3 and 4, emphasising how hypothetical they are.[214] He closes his article by suggesting scholars to pay more attention to phases 1 and 2, inviting them to study concretely and specifically these phases, performing what he calls a "Coptic reading" of the NHC, in other words, a study of their context of compilation.[215]

As one can easily see, Emmel's article is an excellent contribution to the study of the NHC context of compilation, mostly from a methodological point of view. He does not provide any new information concerning the material aspects of the codices or the Upper Egyptian environment and monasticism, but he shows how some of these data should be used and taken into consideration by scholars. Emmel's utilization of Wisse's scheme of transmission is particularly pertinent, since it clarifies two different aspects of the context of compilation of the NHC, i.e. the translation into Coptic and the production of the codices themselves. Many studies on the subject have not taken this differentiation into account. The call for a "Coptic reading" is equally important and could be the *point de départ* of a prolific sub-area of study inside the NHC field of research.

In 2003, Tito Orlandi read a paper about the NH texts and Coptic literature in Quebec City, at an international conference on the *Gospel of Thomas* and NH; the proceedings of this

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[212] Emmel, "Religious Tradition, Textual Transmission, and the Nag Hammadi Codices," 37-38.
[213] Emmel, "Religious Tradition, Textual Transmission, and the Nag Hammadi Codices," 38-39.
[214] Emmel, "Religious Tradition, Textual Transmission, and the Nag Hammadi Codices," 39-41.
[215] Emmel, "Religious Tradition, Textual Transmission, and the Nag Hammadi Codices," 42-43.

Conference were published in 2007.[216] Orlandi makes a very brief summary of discussions and then proposes a revision of Williams' opinion according to which the NHC should be seen as a collection of collections, instead of a homogeneous library. He states that "we have one sure, objective piece of evidence which would enable us to view the texts as a whole, i.e. that the codices have been found together, buried in a sealed jar."[217] He goes on to state that the discovery of the NHC meant for scholars that they would finally have access to a group of direct sources; however, even before that, they had delineated categories related to Gnosticism, thus "the content (of the texts) was in a certain sense already familiar, and therefore it was easier to insert new texts in the frame of already ongoing discussions."[218] On the other hand, for Coptic scholars the situation was different, since they had almost ignored Gnostic literature until the discovery of the NHC. Afterwards, Orlandi points out to an uncomfortable situation that has developed since then:

> A new field of studies was created, that of "Nag Hammadi Studies", almost totally independent from the "normal" Coptic literature. The fact that a NH bibliography was produced, the separate congresses on that subject, the special series dedicated to the NH texts and studies, are specially meaningful. And generally it may be observed that the scholars interested in NH texts tend to neglect Coptic literature. So it happened that, as the study of the Coptic literature had more or less ignored the Gnostic texts, almost as a retaliation the study of the Gnostic texts ignored the Coptic literature.[219]

In what follows, Orlandi argues then in favor of a rapprochement between both fields, i.e. that NH texts should start to be considered as being part of Coptic literature.[220] Then he tries to establish possible connections between the NHC and Origenism and even the Origenist controversy;[221] we find this attempt particularly interesting, since these possibilities had not really been explored by scholars. Finally, Orlandi stresses the pluralism of Egyptian culture

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[216] Louis Painchaud and Paul-Hubert Poirier, eds., *Colloque international "L'Évangile selon Thomas et les textes de Nag Hammadi"* (BCNH section "Études" 8; Québec/Louvain/Paris: Les Presses de l'Université Laval/Peeters, 2007).
[217] Orlandi, "Nag Hammadi Texts and Coptic Literature," 325.
[218] Orlandi, "Nag Hammadi Texts and Coptic Literature," 325.
[219] Orlandi, "Nag Hammadi Texts and Coptic Literature," 326.
[220] Orlandi, "Nag Hammadi Texts and Coptic Literature," 326-329.
[221] Orlandi, "Nag Hammadi Texts and Coptic Literature," 329-333.

and its religious scenario in the fourth and fifth centuries;[222] the heterogeneity of the NH texts also witnesses in favor of such pluralism, and this heterogeneity could only be understood in the light of the great spectrum of Coptic literature.

Orlandi's article points out a very significant problem in NH scholarship at the time in question, the lack of contact with the general field of Coptic studies. Indeed, some scholars who were originally interested in Coptic literature eventually dedicated time to study the NHC, but it is hard to find scholars who did the opposite. The fact that the context of compilation of NHC and its many aspects were almost exclusively discussed by scholars who originally studied Coptic literature or Egyptian monasticism is symptomatic. Orlandi himself is a good example of that reality, since he is a very active scholar in many fields related to Coptic literature. "Gnostic" and "NH" scholars seem to keep their exclusive interest for NH as a product of Gnosticism.

The growing interest of Coptic scholars for NH and Gnosticism can be easily explained by the fact that these fields potentially deal with polemical and popular topics, such as the origins of Christianity, the battle between the Great Church and marginal manifestations of Christianity – at a time when the canon of the New Testament was not yet defined –, the possibility of new sayings attributed to Jesus,[223] etc. These topics have been constantly discussed by scholars in the twentieth century and some of them have even appeared in mass media and in books for the public in general. [224] Therefore, the popularity of certain topics probably caught the attention of Coptic scholars. On the other hand, topics such as Egyptian fourth-and fifth-century monasticism and Coptic martyrdoms, for example, are not very controversial, and so do not "sell books". This does not mean that every scholar in the NH

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[222] Orlandi, "Nag Hammadi Texts and Coptic Literature," 333-334.
[223] We are referring here to the study of the *Gospel of Thomas* in particular, which in many occasions was dominated by the possibility in question. A good summary of the discussions could be found in April Deconick, *Recovering the Original Gospel of Thomas* (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2005).
[224] See, for example, the famous edition of the *Paris Match* magazine, from 1975, on the *Gospel of Thomas*.

and Gnosticism fields is interested in polemics and the mass media, but these aspects probably govern some choices.[225]

In 2008, in a volume entirely dedicated to Christianity and monasticism in Upper Egypt, Siegfried G. Richter wrote an article on "Manichaeism and Gnosticism in the Panopolitan Region between Lykopolis and Nag Hammadi."[226] He starts by reminding his readers that Panopolis is generally accepted as a "test case for religious situation in Egypt in Late Antiquity."[227] He argues that, even if Christianity reached the status of main religion in the course of the fourth century, paganism continued to exist, retaining followers even in aristocratic families.[228] Alongside with paganism, it seems that Manichaeism and Gnosticism also played an important role as the "enemies" of institutional Christianity in the course of the fourth century;[229] however, concerning Panopolis, we have a lot of evidence that points to the existence of paganism, but not much for the existence of Manichaeism and Gnosticism.[230] The author then tries to point evidence of Gnostic and Manichaean activity in the region, mentioning Zosimus of Panopolis.[231]

In what follows, he makes some remarks concerning the fact that one of the most prestigious abbots of late antique Egypt, Shenoute, known for his fidelity to orthodoxy, was located in a region that is associated in modern historiography with Manichaeism and Gnosticism. This is a reference to Lykopolis, a known center of Manichaean activities, and NH, approximately where the NHC were found.[232] The author then tries to point out what

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[225] A very interesting article about this subject was written by Eric Crégheur, "Les facteurs régissant la réception publique d'un texte ancien," *LThPh* 65 (2009): 35-44.

[226] Richter, "Manichaeism and Gnosticism in the Panopolitan Region between Lykopolis and Nag Hammadi."

[227] Richter, "Manichaeism and Gnosticism in the Panopolitan Region between Lykopolis and Nag Hammadi," 121. This is actually a quotation from van Minnen, "Boorish or Bookish?," 180.

[228] Richter, "Manichaeism and Gnosticism in the Panopolitan Region between Lykopolis and Nag Hammadi,"121-122.

[229] Richter, "Manichaeism and Gnosticism in the Panopolitan Region between Lykopolis and Nag Hammadi,"122.

[230] Richter, "Manichaeism and Gnosticism in the Panopolitan Region between Lykopolis and Nag Hammadi," 122.

[231] Richter, "Manichaeism and Gnosticism in the Panopolitan Region between Lykopolis and Nag Hammadi," 122.

[232] Richter, "Manichaeism and Gnosticism in the Panopolitan Region between Lykopolis and Nag Hammadi," 122-123.

could be considered Manichaean and Gnostic activities in these regions;[233] but one could say that he is actually labeling as "Gnostic" whatever is not in accordance with orthodox Christianity.

More recently, a book written in Spanish has discussed the issue of the NHC context of compilation.[234] Although the book was conceived as an introduction to the *Gospel of Judas*, its authors tried to place it, along with the entire Codex Tchacos, in the context of late antique apocryphal Coptic literature; since there are no studies on this issue concerning the Codex Tchacos specifically, they discussed the contributions on the context of compilation of the NHC and tried to extend and apply it to Codex Tchacos itself. The second chapter ("Un posible contexto para el texto copto del *Evangelio de Judas* en el Códice Tchacos") is especially concerned with this issue.[235] It does not bring any new information or ideas, but it is certainly an excellent summary of the discussions around this issue. The authors discuss Athanasius' authority and the level of orthodoxy in the Upper Egypt of the time, Gnostic literature and the monastic background and the advent of monastic libraries.

In 2014, an article by Nicola Denzey Lewis and Justine A. Blount that discussed the discovery of the NHC and the possibility of links between them and monasticism was published.[236] In this article, the authors question two hypothesis: the well known story of the discovery of the NHC – based mainly on the investigation made by James Robinson[237] – and the assumption that they were buried by monks. Concerning the first point, the authors point out inconsistencies in the story narrated by Robinson, and, in relation to the second, they argue that the codices were probably buried with their owner(s), private Greco-Egyptian citizens, not by monks.

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[233] Richter, "Manichaeism and Gnosticism in the Panopolitan Region between Lykopolis and Nag Hammadi," 126-128.

[234] Diego Santos and Pablo Ubierna, *El Evangelio de Judas y otros textos gnósticos - tradiciones culturales en el monacato primitivo egipcio del siglo IV* (BOS 1; Buenos Aires: Bergerac Editiones, 2009).

[235] Santos and Ubierna, *El Evangelio de Judas y otros textos gnósticos*, 71-118.

[236] Denzey Lewis and Blount, "Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices."

[237] See Robinson, "From the Cliff to Cairo." See also Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Story*.

Firstly, we believe that the title of the article ("Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices") does not actually define what the authors try to discuss. In the light of what is said about the origin, destination and conservation in the introduction of the present dissertation,[238] one can say that what the authors really do in this article is not to "rethink the origins of the NHC", but rather to rethink issues about their conservation or final destination. The authors do not discuss when, where and how the NHC were produced (i.e. their origin); rather they suggest another possibility that may explain why they ended up together in a sealed jar that was buried (i.e. their conservation).

At any rate, the article could be summarized as follows: in the first part, they express how suspicious the account(s) about the finding of the NHC is, emphasising its inconsistencies and even the fact that there are more than one version of it;[239] they also mention that the region in which the codices are supposed to have been found is known for having hosted the tombs of the members of pharaonic dynasties.[240] They also emphasise that in at least one of the versions of the finding accounts, it is mentioned that a corpse was laying beside the jar.[241] In the second part of the article, the authors briefly discuss the supposed links between the NHC and monasticism.[242] In that section, the authors argue that the possibilities suggested by scholarship linking the NHC to Pachomian monasticism are not convincing, stating that they were "founded on two main circumstantial facts", the "first is simply the physical proximity of the find-spot to known Pachomian centers,"[243] and the second, the cartonnage of the codices.[244] In relation to the first circumstantial fact, the authors state that Pachomian monasteries were not exactly on the same spot or beside the place in which the codices were supposedly discovered, they were actually situated a few kilometers away; indeed, they argue, what is most common in the area in question are the tombs of pharaohs and caves in which anchorites lived.[245] In relation to the second, they argue that

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[238] See pages 1-14.
[239] Denzey Lewis and Blount, "Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 401-405.
[240] Denzey Lewis and Blount, "Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 406-407.
[241] Denzey Lewis and Blount, "Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 404.
[242] Denzey Lewis and Blount, "Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 405-407.
[243] Denzey Lewis and Blount, "Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 406.
[244] Denzey Lewis and Blount, "Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 407.
[245] Denzey Lewis and Blount, "Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 406-407.

despite Barns' first impression on the covers of the codices,[246] further scholarly investigation demonstrated that there was no conclusive proof of a Pachomian filiation for the majority of the fragments in the cartonnages.[247]

In the third part of the article, Denzey Lewis and Blount discuss what they call "the curious case of the Dishna Papers,"[248] saying that despite the fact that they also constitute a collection of late antique manuscripts found in Upper-Egypt, they "share no common texts" with the NHC.[249] In other words, "there are among the Dishna papers no so-called Gnostic writings."[250] In the conclusion of this section, they state that "in summary, the evidence for a Pachomian provenance for the Nag Hammadi codices is entirely lacking, as is any solid basis for their monastic setting."[251]

After this, in the fourth section of the article, the authors discuss Athanasius' *39th Festal Letter*,[252] saying that "the idea that the letter in any way affected the removal of the Nag Hammadi codices from a Pachomian library is merely scholarly conjecture too often taken as fact."[253] In that same section, they state that "we have attempted to remove the Nag Hammadi codices from a Pachomian monastic origin and place them in the hands of an Egyptian who commissioned them for private use."[254] This phrase somehow illustrates the confusion to which we made reference in our the introduction, just mentioned above between origin, destination and conservation. If the NHC were "commissioned for private use" for an Egyptian, as suggested by Denzey Lewis and Blount, then, from whom, did the Egyptian commission them? To say that he commissioned the codices necessarily implied that he did not produce the codices himself, that he got the codices from someone else and that the task

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[246] See our dicussion above on Barns, "Greek and Coptic Papyri from the Covers of the Nag Hammadi Codices – a Preliminary Report" in section 2.3.

[247] See our discussion above on Barns et al. *Nag Hammadi Codices* in section 2.3.

[248] Denzey Lewis and Blount, "Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 407-410.

[249] Denzey Lewis and Blount, "Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 409.

[250] Denzey Lewis and Blount, "Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 409.

[251] Denzey Lewis and Blount, "Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 410.

[252] Denzey Lewis and Blount, "Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 410-412.

[253] Denzey Lewis and Blount, "Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 410.

[254] Denzey Lewis and Blount, "Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices," 411. And here, we must evoke the question of the sub-collections, discussed above (see section 2.2), which makes unlikely that the codices were produced to the same owner.

of production was performed by someone else. And that very task – the production of the codices and all that is involved in this process (the manufacture of the codices and the copy of texts) – consists in the origin of the codices. Therefore, once more, we state that what the authors are discussing are not the origins of the NHC, but their final destination, their conservation, how they ended up together in a sealed jar. The discussion of the "origins" of the NHC would focus not on how, when and why they ended up in that jar, but how, when, why and by whom they were manufactured.

In relation to the possibility of the codices being buried with their owner, one should also take into consideration that according to certain Pachomian sources, monks were not buried in the monasteries or in their immediate vicinities. Accounts in the Coptic versions of the *Life of Pachomius* bear witness to the fact that normally, deceased monks were taken to the desert/mountain by a funerary cortege to be buried there. In SBo §123, the burial of Pachomius is described as follows: "When they had finished the morning *synaxis*, they prepared his holy body for burial just as they did all the other brothers, and they offered the Eucharist for him. Then they preceded him singing psalms and he was taken to the mountain and buried" (SBo § 123).[255]

The fact that this passage states that Pachomius' burial was conducted like those of other brothers shows that the practice of entombing monks in the desert/mountain – probably in the caves encrusted in the cliffs – was common among Pachomian monks. Moreover, this type of funerary practice is confirmed by S^7 and S^3, for example,[256] and even attested in the *Pachomian Rules*[257]. This attests that not only laypeople were buried in the mountains, but also monks. Given this, the possibility of a monk – or even more than one monk – being buried with his personal books should not be completely ruled out.

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[255] Translation in Armand Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Volume One: The Life of Saint Pachomius and his Disciples* (CS 45; Kalamazoo [Mich.]: Cistercian Publications, 1980), 178-179.
[256] See Louis-Théophile Lefort, *Les vies coptes de saint Pachôme et de ses premiers successeurs* (Louvain: Institut Orientaliste, 1943), 51 for S^7 and 57 for S^3.
[257] *The Rules of Pachomius* 127 and 128; see Armand Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Volume Two: Pachomian Chronicles and Rules* (CS 46; Kalamazoo [Mich.]: Cistercian Publications, 1981), 164.

One last contribution should be discussed in this section, the recently published book of Hugo Lundhaug and Lance Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*.[258] As the title suggests, the main goal of the book is to demonstrate that the origins of the NHC are set in a monastic environment, more precisely, a Pachomian one. As far as we know, this is the first book-length volume that deals with the subject; consequently, it deals with other subjects that are listed in our *status quaestionis* (for example, the material characteristics of the codices and the possibility of literary contacts between NH texts and monastic literature), but we have chosen to place its discussion here due to the fact that the main theme of the book is precisely the possibility of a monastic origin for the codices.

The main thesis of the book is that NHC were produced by Coptic monks and for Coptic monks of the fourth and fifth centuries. It is divided in ten chapters: 1- "The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics" (p. 1-21); 2- "Monastic Diversity in Upper Egypt" (p. 2255); 3- "Gnostics?" (p. 56-73); 4- "Contrasting Mentalities?" (64-103); 5- "The Cartonnage" (p. 104-145); 6- "Apocryphal Books in Egyptian Monasteries" (p. 146-177); 7- "The Colophons" (p. 178-206); 8- "The Codices" (p. 207-233); 9- "The Monks" (p. 234-262); 10- "The Secret Books of Egyptian Monastics" (p. 263-268).

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the volume and discusses briefly the *status quaestionis* on the possibilities of a monastic origin or ownership of the codices. The authors give special attention to Khosroyev's study[259] in this section, since their main goal in the study is to demonstrate that the codices belonged to monks, and Khosroyev is one of the main scholars who deny this possibility.[260] The authors thus emphasize certain aspects of Khosroyev's study in this section – such as, for example, the claim that the codices contain "anti-biblical concepts"[261] and the claim that whoever owned the codices were not traditional

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[258] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*.
[259] Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*.
[260] See our discussion on Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*, above.
[261] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 2, mentioning Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*, 82-83.

Christians[262] – waiting to contradict them until later in the book. In this section, they also make some comments on the dating of the codices[263] and on their discovery[264].

As the title of Chapter 2 suggests, it discusses the monastic diversity in Upper Egypt in fourth and fifth centuries, taking into consideration literary, archeological and documentary evidence, in an attempt to demonstrate that monasticism in Egypt was much more pluralistic than generally portrayed.[265] In the section dedicated to literary evidence,[266] the authors mention travelogues – such as the *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*,[267] and Palladius (the author of the *Historia Lausiaca*),[268] for example – as well as hagiographies – such as the *Lives of Pachomius*[269] and the *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*,[270] for example – and monastic and ecclesiastical authors – such as Shenoute[271] and Dioscuros of Alexandria[272] respectively. In the section dedicated to archeological evidence,[273] the authors mention the discovery and excavations of sites in the region of the Jabal al-Tarif, emphasizing that traces of Christians – such as crosses painted on the walls – were found in caves (such as the cave designated as Cave 65, for example).[274] These inscriptions on the walls of caves that were excavated clearly indicate that they were at least visited by Christians, perhaps monks. In the section on documentary evidence, the authors enumerate and discuss personal letters of monks as well as commercial documents, from collections of monastic archives;[275] they also discuss the documents from the covers of the NHC.[276]

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[262] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 2, mentioning Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*, 62, 85, 98-102.
[263] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 9-11.
[264] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 11-19.
[265] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 8. See also our discussion in section 6.3 below.
[266] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 23-38.
[267] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 23.
[268] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 24.
[269] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 28-32.
[270] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 32-32-33.
[271] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 35-36.
[272] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 36-38.
[273] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 39-42.
[274] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 39.
[275] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 44-46.
[276] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 46-54.

In Chapter 3, the authors focus on scholarly works that have tried to classify the NH texts as Gnostic – such as Doresse[277] and Logan[278] – demonstrating that many of them could not actually be classified as such.[279] In the next two sections, they question the very possibility of the existence of Gnostics in fourth-and fifth-century Egypt,[280] especially in Egyptian monasteries.[281] Lundhaug and Jenott conclude that the NHC could not be classified as a Gnostic collection and also that there is no convincing evidence to support the existence of Gnostics in fourth-and fifth-century Egypt; consequently, they state that terms such as "Gnosticism" and "Gnostics" are not "helpful categories for theorizing about the origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices and their owners."[282]

In the next chapter, the authors return to Khosroyev's study[283] and its main conclusion that "the codices belonged to 'syncretistic' literati from the Greco-Egyptian cities."[284] They state that "the underlying problem of Khosroyev's theory is that it assumes the existence of "Gnostics" in the first place. As we have seen, and this point cannot be emphasized enough, the presence of the Nag Hammadi Codices in Egypt does not testify to the presence of Gnostics in Egypt."[285] They go on to question one of Khosroyev's main assumption that the codices present so many "anti-biblical concepts that no one who regarded the Bible as an authority could have read them sympathetically."[286] In response to that, they recall that Pachomian monks – and monasticism in general – did not necessarily follow the same patterns of orthodoxy that scholars establish today[287] and that "the great majority of Nag Hammadi texts are engaged in the interpretative reception of Scripture, not in attempts to undermine it."[288] Another point they criticize in Khosroyev's theory is the contention that the

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[277] Doresse, *Les livres secrets des gnostiques d'Égypte*.

[278] Alastair H. B. Logan, *The Gnostics: Identifying an Early Christian Cult* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2006).

[279] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 56-64.

[280] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 64-69.

[281] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 69-73.

[282] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 73.

[283] Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*.

[284] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 8.

[285] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 77.

[286] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices* 78. Making reference to Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*, 82.

[287] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 79-81.

[288] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 82-83.

NH texts show "hatred for the god of creation."[289] They present a list of NH texts showing that 21 out of 52 texts clearly present a negative evaluation of the god of creation, i.e., only half of the texts.[290] Finally, they go back to Khosroyev's assumption that the most likely owners of the codices were urban literati, emphasizing once again that for them, monks would be more likely to have owned the codices, stating that nothing is opposed to the possibility of monks also being educated in Greek philosophy.[291]

In Chapter 5, they turn their attention to an examination of the cartonnage of the codices, discussing how the fragments from the covers were used to support the arguments of those who believed in a monastic origin and those who did not.[292] They divide the discussions of this chapter in the following sections: "Commercial Documents",[293] "Official Accounts and Large Quantities,"[294] "Imperial Ordinances,"[295] "Recycled Scripture,"[296] "A Coptic Homily or Epistle,"[297] "Monk's Letters and the Pachomian Connection,"[298] Acquisition of Cartonnage,"[299] and "Cover-Makers and Scribes."[300] In the conclusion of this chapter, the authors argue that

> The variety of cartonnage documents may suggest that that those who made the covers acquired papyri from different channels, and not necessarily from a single source (…) Yet even if one were to entertain some form of the rubbish-heap hypothesis, there is no reason to suppose that those who gathered the papyri could not have been monks. In our view, the fact that one finds so many documents pertaining to a monastic community among the cartonnage papyri makes it more probable that the people who collected them were members of that community.[301]

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[289] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 85.
[290] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 86-87.
[291] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 90-103. Specially, 91.
[292] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 104-145.
[293] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 111-117.
[294] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 117-123.
[295] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 123-126.
[296] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 126-128.
[297] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 128.
[298] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 129-139.
[299] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 139-142.
[300] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 142-143.
[301] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 144.

Chapter 6 is perhaps the most interesting in the book, since it provides a broad and deep analysis of the circulation of apocrypha in Egypt and also the different attitudes from ecclesiastical and monastic authorities toward it in Late Antiquity. Its main goal is to demonstrate that late antique Egyptian monks read apocrypha. According to the authors:

> While some Christians were interested in reading apochryphal books, especially as interpretative supplements to Scripture, others sought to censor apocrypha and have them removed from Egyptian monasteries. Nevertheless, such books continued to be copied and read in Egyptian monasteries well into the medieval period, as indicated by literary sources which speak to ongoing controversy over them, as well as actual manuscript discoveries from monastic libraries containing such texts.[302]

In this chapter, they mention many ecclesiastical and monastic opponents to apocrypha, such as Apa Sopatrus,[303] Athanasius of Alexandria,[304] and John of Parallos,[305] for example, but also those who held a different approach to extra-canonical texts, such as Priscillian of Avila[306] and the author of a pseudonymous homily attributed to Evodius of Rome.[307] What is ambiguous in this section in regard to the authors' theory is that at least one of the censors of the apocryphal literature, John of Parallos, attests that it was read in the "churches of the

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[302] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 8.
[303] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 147.
[304] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 147-148.
[305] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 161.
[306] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 148-149. Generally, we heard of those ecclesiastical authorities who were against the circulation and reading of apocrypha. Therefore, Priscillian of Avila's attitude is quite unusual. Generally speaking, he "defended the benefits of reading them" (Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 148) in a book called *Book on Faith and Apochryphal Writings*. For details, see Virginia Burrus, "Canonical References to Extra-Canonical 'Texts': Priscillian's Defense of the Apocrypha," *SBLSP* 29 (1990): 60-67.
[307] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 149-150. Basically, in the homily, the author describes episodes of Jesus's life (the incarnation, his trial and the resurrection) adding many details that are not found in the canonical gospels. He justifies the additions comparing the Scriptures to the garment of a king, saying that the king may choose to wear garments made of undyed fabric or garments made of fabric dyed in colorful mixtures. Similarly, the Scriptures may become much brighter and beautiful if they are expanded (see Evodius of Rome, *Homily* 40-42). For details on this passage, see Alin Suciu, "O *Evangelho do Salvador* (P. Berol. 22220) no seu contexto: Jesus e os apóstolos na literatura copta," in *Espectadores do Sagrado: Literatura apocalíptica, apócrifos do Novo Testamento e experiência visionária* (ed. J. C. Dias Chaves and V. Dobroruka: Brasília, EdUnb, 2015), 233-234.

orthodox"[308], which would actually indicate that monks were not the main readers of these texts, or at least not the only readers.[309]

In Chapters 7 and 8, the authors discuss material and codicological evidence, on the colophons[310] and on the production of the codices[311] respectively. In Chapter 7, they discuss how the colophons and scribal notes are similar to monastic terminology[312] and also the possible chains of transmission of books between monasteries.[313] In chapter 8, they focus on the production of the codices, discussing the existence of sub-groups of codices,[314] and on the possibility that those who copied the codices could also have copied biblical texts,[315] "by comparing scribal habits and codicological features shared among both groups of manuscripts."[316]

Next, in Chapter 9, there is a discussion on the different types of monasticism in late antique Upper Egypt, Meletian Monks,[317] Origenist monks[318] and Pachomian monks.[319] They state that in their opinion, Pachomian monks were the most likely owners of the NHC.[320] Then, they make some suggestions regarding how the NHC may have attracted the monks.[321] For example, they suggest that the "exhortation to repentance and prayer" found in the *Exegesis of the Soul* is certainly "consistent with contemporary monastic writings";[322] they also suggest, for example, that "detailed information about demons – as found in the

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[308] John of Parallos, *On Heretical Books*, 47, 49.

[309] The authors themselves mention John of Parallos and his homily (Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 161) but they do not notice this detail, that goes against their theory that the main readers of apocrypha – the NHC specifically – were monks. We will go back to this homily in section 4.3.3.

[310] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 178-206.

[311] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 207-233.

[312] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 178-206.

[313] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 197-206.

[314] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 208-217.

[315] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 217-231.

[316] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 9.

[317] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 235-238.

[318] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 238-246.

[319] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 247-256.

[320] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 256.

[321] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 256-262.

[322] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 257.

Apocryphon of John and *On the Origin of the World*, for instance – would also find many echoes in fourth and fifth century monastic literature, in texts such as the *Life of Antony*.[323] This section in Chapter 9 is particularly interesting for us, since it is consistent with at least one of the goals that this dissertation is trying to achieve: to find possible literary contacts between late antique Coptic literature and the NHC (and the next section discusses precisely the scholarly contributions that have searched for this kind of contact). Unfortunately, the authors did not go deeply into the discussion on these literary contacts, since their main purpose was not concerned with literary features, nevertheless in our view the clues they suggest are extremely valuable.

Finally, in Chapter 10, they offer a brief conclusion to their study, reinforcing their thesis that the NHC were produced by monks and addressed to monks and summarizing the main arguments they presented in the volume that support this hypothesis.[324] They close the volume with a paragraph about the importance of "acknowledging a much higher degree of complexity than we may be accustomed to, by discarding all-to-convenient categories that have proven to be unhelpful", when dealing with the context of compilation and circulation of the NHC.[325]

Lundhaug and Jenott's study is also very useful and pertinent to this dissertation. The only detail that could have been explored and explained more in their study is the difference between origin, destination and final destination – as we have already suggested in our introduction. Many times, despite the title of their book, the authors are not exactly making reference to the "origins" of the codices, but actually to their destination. Whenever they state that the codices were addressed to monks or read by them,[326] they are not dealing with their origins, but rather with their destination.

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[323] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 259.
[324] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 263-268.
[325] Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 268.
[326] Especially in chapters 7 and 8 (Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 178-233).

Let us now briefly discuss the contributions on the possibility of literary contacts between the NH texts and fourth/fifth-century Egyptian literature.

2.5. The Possibility of Literary Contacts between the NHC and Fourth/Fifth-Century Egyptian Literature[327]

As far as we know, in 1962, Schenke was the first scholar who tried to find literary contacts between the NH texts and other types of literature that circulated in fourth century Egypt, analysing the possibility of Manichaean interpolations.[328] In 1980, he was followed in this kind of approach by Charles Hedrick, who took as a starting point the suggestions made by James Robinson and John Barns,[329] trying to establish contacts between the *First Greek Life of Pachomius* and the *Sitz im Leben* of the NHC. Disagreeing with Säve-Söderbergh, Hedrick affirms that the *Lives* are a product of a later community which reflects its identity in the life and work of its founder, who is described in hagiographical, and thus exaggerated, proportions.[330] Thus the *Lives* do not povide an exact portrait of Pachomius and the first Pachomian communities, but rather a description made by disciples who are more concerned with hagiographical elements than historical ones.

Hedrick does not mention, however, that the original version of the *Life of Pachomius* was probably composed, either in Coptic or Greek, during the time of Theodore's direction of the *Koinonia*,[331] serving also to exalt and consolidate his authority as the new leader of the Pachomian congregation, describing him as the true and only worthy successor of Pachomius. Therefore the hagiographical elements employed in the description and praise of Pachomius are extended to Theodore, who is actually described as someone very close, from

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[327] By "fourth/fifth-century Egyptian literature", we mean the literature that circulated in Egypt at that time.
[328] Hans-Martin Schenke, "Der Gott 'Mensch' in der Titellosen Schrift über den Ursprung der Welt aus dem Funde von Nag Hammadi." in *Der Gott 'Mensch' in der Gnosis: Ein religionsgeschichtlicher Beitrag zur Diskussion über die paulinische Anschauung von der Kirche als Leib Christi* (H.-M. Schenke, ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), 49-51 (specially, 50, footnote 40).
[329] Hedrick, "Gnostic Proclivities in the Greek *Life of Pachomius* and the *Sitz im Leben* of the Nag Hammadi Library."
[330] Hedrick. "Gnostic Proclivities in the Greek *Life of Pachomius* and the *Sitz im Leben* of the Nag Hammadi Library," 79-80.
[331] For a summary of the discussion, see James E. Goehring, *The Letter of Ammon and Pachomian Monasticism* (PTS 27; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), 3-23.

a theological and dogmatic point of view, to the Alexandrine Patriarchate. Given this, it would not be absurd to presume that the *Life*'s author could present not only an hagiographical portrait of Pachomius, but also of Theodore, what could hide the existence of groups of monks interested in "non-conventional" literature inside the Pachomian monasteries.

Hedrick tries to find literary elements in the *First Greek Life* that could point out to a "Gnostic tradition" among the Pachomian monks; his argumentation seeks to demonstrate that the Pachomian monasteries were not exactly orthodox as one can remark after reading the *Lives*.[332] Also according to Hedrick, a Gnostic group could have found a tolerant environment inside a Pachomian community.[333] Given this, Hedrick holds that the NH texts were gathered and used for the erudition and spiritual development of the monks, and not for heresiological purposes.[334] He provides examples in the *First Greek Life* that, according to him, illustrate the Pachomian monasteries' heterogeneity,[335] such as the episode in which Pachomius admonishes some brethren with "carnal inclinations" who persist in their error and are thus expelled from the community,[336] or even the allusion to older brethren in Phbow who "murmured and did not listen to Pachomius faithfully."[337]

The examples of possible Gnostic elements in the *First Greek Life* pointed out by Hedrick are especially interesting.[338] These examples are focused, according to Hedrick, on

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[332] Hedrick, "Gnostic Proclivities in the Greek *Life of Pachomius* and the *Sitz im Leben* of the Nag Hammadi Library," 81-83.

[333] Hedrick, "Gnostic Proclivities in the Greek *Life of Pachomius* and the *Sitz im Leben* of the Nag Hammadi Library," 83.

[334] Hedrick, "Gnostic Proclivities in the Greek *Life of Pachomius* and the *Sitz im Leben* of the Nag Hammadi Library," 93.

[335] Hedrick, "Gnostic Proclivities in the Greek *Life of Pachomius* and the *Sitz im Leben* of the Nag Hammadi Library," 89-91.

[336] G^1 § 38.

[337] G^1 § 100. Hedrick also emphasises the fact that Pachomius did not expell them out of the monastery, maybe simply because he did not have enough power to do so (Cf. Hedrick, "Gnostic Proclivities in the Greek *Life of Pachomius* and the *Sitz im Leben* of the Nag Hammadi Library," 82).

[338] Concerning the possibility of "Gnostic groups" inside the monasteries, Hedrick says that "Such proof rests ultimately on the evidence that there were individuals in the monasteries who held theological positions that can be characterized as Gnostic. However, I do think that the obvious heterogeneity of the monasteries argues strongly that monks with developed Gnostic tendencies could have survived in the system" (Cf. Hedrick, "Gnostic Proclivities in the Greek *Life of Pachomius* and the *Sitz im Leben* of the Nag Hammadi Library," 83).

the achievement, conservation and extension of knowledge (*gnosis*); knowledge would be the characteristic that would qualify a perfect monk: Christ would save the monk granting him the knowledge of faith.[339] Hedrick also quotes an extract which, according to him, employs "Gnostic language": "For if a man who is blind in his mind, in return for which he does not see the light of God because of his idolatry, is subsequently led to see again by faith in the Lord, and to recognize the only true God, is this not cure and salvation?"[340]

Hedrick's intention in this article is meritorious, and the kind of analysis which he tries to make is very similar to that that this dissertation intends to accomplish. However, his argumentation is not convincing. Firstly, the examples he gives as evidence of heterogeneity are actually very common causes of conflicts in monastic environments;[341] additionally, the expressions employed to designate the conflicts are too vague to allow any precise conclusion concerning their real motivations. Concerning the examples of the presence of "*gnosis*" one may note that this theme is not an exclusivity of what scholars have conventionally called "Gnosticism", but rather a very spread theme, present in many branches of Christianity and even other religions.[342] The passage quoted by Hedrick presents, of course, elements used by so-called Gnostic texts; these elements (blindness concerning the light of God, idolatry, faith in the Lord, and the recognition of the only true God), however, are not exclusively Gnostic and could be found in different types of Christianity. Additionally, the paragraph 135 of the *First Greek Life*, quoted by our author, stresses so much the importance of orthodoxy that it tends to argue against Hedrick's theory, not in favor of it.

Hedrick's discussion of another element, the visionary experiences of Pachomius, Theodore and other brethren, is much more convincing. However, visionary experiences are not an exclusivity of Gnosticism either. Anyhow, the thematic proximity between the *First*

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[339] G[1] § 135. It is interesting to note that the main subject of the paragraph is not only the wisdom, but also the "orthodox faith"; the *gnosis* in question must be in conformity with the orthodox faith. This detail is not mentioned by Hedrick.

[340] G[1] § 47. The translation used by Hedrick is in Apostolos Athanassakis and Birger Pearson, *The Life of Pachomius: Vita Prima Graeca* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975), 68-69.

[341] See, for example, the many crisis Shenoute had to face as the leader of the White Monastery; on this subject see Rebecca Krawiec, *Shenoute and the Women in the White Monastery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 73-91.

[342] *Gnosis* is a current subject in early Christian authors who were never considered to be heretics, such as Irenaeus of Lyon and Clement of Alexandria, for example.

Greek Life and many NH texts, concerning the visionary experiences – in particular those that can be related to the apocalyptic literary genre – is remarkable. Nevertheless, it is striking that Hedrick did not extend his analysis to the Coptic versions of the *Lives*, notably the *Boharic* one, which is full of apocalyptic clichés and is much closer from a thematic point of view to NH texts, especially those that in one way or another make use of apocalyptic literary themes and motifs.

A couple of years after Hedrick, Armand Veilleux, in two important contributions dedicated to the quest of literary contacts between NH texts and Pachomian monasticism, questioned the possibility of a Pachomian origin for the codices.[343] Similarly to Shelton, he asserts that a Pachomian origin remains a possibility, but there is no conclusive proof that could confirm this.[344] Also concerning the possibility of a Pachomian origin, Veilleux affirms that after the publication of Barn's preliminary results, many scholars seem to be completely certain about this possibility, even if posterior studies have shown that the evidence is not that clear.[345] Finally, Veilleux raises a question concerning the reason of the codices being gathered together, criticizing another statement made in the research literature, i.e. that Athanasius's *367 festal letter* is the reason for the gathering and burial of the NHC.[346]

Veilleux's contribution raises certain problems for the supposition of a Pachomian origin for the NHC; he criticizes the tendency of research to accept certain theories without question. We could add to Veilleux's critique the fact that further literature, posterior to Athanasius's festal letter, shows that apocryphal texts continued to circulate and to be read in Upper Egypt after 367.[347] We must thus agree with Veilleux; even though the theory

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[343] Armand Veilleux, "Monachisme et gnose. Première partie: le cénobitisme pachômien et la bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi," *LThPh* 40 (1984): 275-294 and Armand Veilleux, "Monachisme et gnose. Deuxième partie: Contacts littéraires et doctrinaux entre monachisme et gnose," *LThPh* 41 (1985): 3-24.

[344] Veilleux, "Monachisme et gnose. Première partie: le cénobitisme pachômien et la bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi," 276.

[345] Veilleux, "Monachisme et gnose. Première partie: le cénobitisme pachômien et la bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi," 276.

[346] "(…) le rattachement de cette lettre avec l'enfouissement de la BCNH est une de ces hypothèses scientifiques qui sont lancées sans preuves, et puis, répétées comme si elles avaient été prouvées" (Cf. Veilleux, "Monachisme et gnose. Première partie: le cénobitisme pachômien et la bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi," 293).

[347] For a survey, see Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 146-177.

concerning Athanasius's festal letter and the burial of NHC seems likely, it remains a mere possibility. The festal letter in question is at any rate a proof that apocryphal texts were read in monastic environments, which pleads in favor of a much discussed topic in contemporary historiography on early Egyptian monasticism, its presumed orthodoxy.

In the second article in particular,[348] Veilleux tries to find specific relations between Gnosticism and Egyptian monasticism;[349] according to him, at the time when monasticism began to flourish in Egypt, Gnosticism was still present in the same region and both movements had contact with each other. He emphasises, however, that the research for direct literary contacts leads to poor results;[350] the only two texts that are attested in both corpora, monastic literature and the NHC, the *Lessons of Silvanus*[351] and the *Sentences of Sextus*[352] are not exactly Gnostic texts. Additionally, according to Veilleux, we are dealing with two movements – Gnosticism and monasticism – with very different archetypes concerning some points – such as the conception of asceticism – but also with common elements – such as the quest for primordial unity.[353]

Veilleux affirms that "aucun texte copte de Nag Hammadi n'utilise une source monastique au sens strict, égyptienne ou non; et aucune source monastique ne cite un document copte de Nag Hammadi."[354] More recent contributions seem to demonstrate that Veilleux is not correct, as we will see soon. We believe that Veilleux was too sceptical, limiting the category "literary contacts" to exact parallels and quotations, and not taking into consideration categories such as allusions, for example. He also takes into consideration the

[348] Veilleux, "Monachisme et gnose. Deuxième partie: contacts littéraires et doctrinaux entre monachisme et gnose."
[349] Veilleux, "Monachisme et gnose. Deuxième partie: contacts littéraires et doctrinaux entre monachisme et gnose," 3-10.
[350] Veilleux, "Monachisme et gnose. Deuxième partie: contacts littéraires et doctrinaux entre monachisme et gnose," 4.
[351] Veilleux, "Monachisme et gnose. Deuxième partie: contacts littéraires et doctrinaux entre monachisme et gnose," 5-10.
[352] Veilleux, "Monachisme et gnose. Deuxième partie: contacts littéraires et doctrinaux entre monachisme et gnose," 4-5.
[353] Veilleux, "Monachisme et gnose. Deuxième partie: contacts littéraires et doctrinaux entre monachisme et gnose," 4.
[354] Veilleux, "Monachisme et gnose. Deuxième partie: contacts littéraires et doctrinaux entre monachisme et gnose," 3.

Teachings of Silvanus, the *Sentences of Sextus* and the *Gospel of Thomas*, the latter, due to its ascetical content.[355] He ends the article emphasising once more that the Pachomian origin for the NHC remains a possibility, and only a deep and complex comparison of this corpus with Egyptian monastic literature could prove the validity of this possibility.

In 1986, Veilleux published what could be considered the concise English version of his two previous articles written in French;[356] he has structured this article, however, in a more didactic way, starting by defining three questions that could guide the quest for answers. In his own words:

1- Historical contacts that may or may not have existed between Pachomian monks and the manuscripts discovered near NH at the end of 1945;
2- Literary contacts that can or cannot be demonstrated between documents known through the NHC and early monastic literature in general;
3- Points of contact of a historical and doctrinal character between monasticism and Gnosticism.[357]

Before approaching these questions, he discusses a number of preliminary issues, such as the origins of Pachomian coenobitism,[358] the cartonnage of the NHC[359] and the possible reasons for the gathering of the codices.[360] Then, in the last part of the article, he discusses the possible literary contacts between monasticism and Gnosis, taking as example the *Teachings of Silvanus,* the *Sentences of Sextus* and the *Gospel of Thomas*, exactly as he did in his previous French articles.[361]

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[355] Veilleux, "Monachisme et gnose. Deuxième partie: contacts littéraires et doctrinaux entre monachisme et gnose," 10.
[356] Armand Veilleux, "Monasticism and Gnosis in Egypt," in *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity* (ed. B. Pearson and J. E. Goehring; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 271-306.
[357] Veilleux, "Monasticism and Gnosis in Egypt," 272.
[358] Veilleux, "Monasticism and Gnosis in Egypt," 273-278.
[359] Veilleux, "Monasticism and Gnosis in Egypt," 278-283.
[360] Veilleux, "Monasticism and Gnosis in Egypt," 283-291.
[361] Veilleux, "Monasticism and Gnosis in Egypt," 291-301.

In 1985, Phillip Rousseau also tried to argue in favor of the existence of literary contacts between monastic literature – Pachomian, more precisely – and NH texts.[362] The article in question, in his author's own words is not an effort to

> connect the Pachomian communities with the Nag Hammadi texts by looking in Pachomian material for supposedly gnostic ideas. Rather, prompted to some extent by Michael Williams, I have suggested that the catechesis of Theodore and Horsiesios and Horsiesios' *Liber*, were, at the level of exegetical method and literary structure, comparable with treatises that we have been accustomed to associate with a "Gnostic" tradition.[363]

In general terms, Rousseau suggests that the exegetical approach found in the catechetical works of the two most famous successors of Pachomius – Theodore and Horsiesius – is similar to the scheme found in certain NHC: creation, redemption and final perfection. In his attempt to render this suggestion credible, the author states that "in the catechesis of Theodore and Horsiesios, creation and redemption occupy a central position."[364]

Rousseau points out that in Thedodore's *Catechesis 3* in particular, allusions to *Ephesians*, *I Corinthians* and *Matthew* expose "the conviction that a monk's intimate and privileged relation to God is bound up with his capacity to "reveal" his "secret call" to the world. And embedded in the passages just quoted (from *Catechesis 3*) is a clue to the basis of that bound: the notion of rising up and waking from the sleep of death."[365] Consequently, the Pachomian community and its vocation would represent the Kingdom in which monks could somehow be reborn already in this world, sharing the "promised inheritance, as they have shared in suffering."[366] Also according to Rousseau, Horsiesius's *Liber* portrays Pachomius as Moses, saying that 'Let us not abandon God's law, which our father bequeathed to us, receiving it from him' (Horsiesius's *Liber* 35).[367]

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[362] Philip Rousseau, "The Successors of Pachomius and the Nag Hammadi Codices," in *The World of Early Egyptian Christianity* (ed. J. E. Goehring and J. A. Timbie; Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 140-157.
[363] Rousseau, "The Successors of Pachomius and the Nag Hammadi Codices," 155.
[364] Rousseau, "The Successors of Pachomius and the Nag Hammadi Codices," 143.
[365] Rousseau, "The Successors of Pachomius and the Nag Hammadi Codices," 148.
[366] Rousseau, "The Successors of Pachomius and the Nag Hammadi Codices," 149.
[367] Rousseau, "The Successors of Pachomius and the Nag Hammadi Codices," 153.

His conclusion states that

> people who thought like Theodore and Horsiesios would have found the Nag
> Hammadi codices useful once the originally "Gnostic" material had been
> rearranged – recycled – according to the new patterns (…) their comparable
> habits of exegesis and catechesis make it entirely likely that the Nag Hammadi
> documents could have taken their surviving form within Christian ascetic
> society(…) And that in turn supports the view that Theodore and Horsiesios were
> neither attacking nor secretly aping contemporary gnostics: rather, gnostics were
> now so much part of the past that their relics could be taken up in new causes.[368]

This conclusion could lead to very promising clues to a new approach concerning the literary
contacts between NH texts and Pachomian literature[369].

In 1999, van der Vliet published an article[370] with the objective of presenting the Coptic
Gnostic texts – which include those of NHC – as Christian apocryphal literature. In his own
words: "It is Christian in the sense that it is tributary to Judaeo-Christian tradition, if not to
biblical scripture itself, and "apocryphal" by virtue of its marginality vis-à-vis mainstream
theological discourse."[371]

He goes on by stating that two main examples will guide his approach: 1) a
"performative" aspect, which he defines as a "predominantly formal aspect of some mainly
'Sethian' gnostic texts";[372] 2) narrative structures which are focused "on the formative
influence of the mythology of the Devil on the description of the archontic world in some
other Sethian texts."[373]

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[368] Rousseau, "The Successors of Pachomius and the Nag Hammadi Codices," 157.
[369] We find particularly likely his suggestion according to which once 'Gnosticism' was not at stake anymore, 'gnostic' materials could have been reworked serving to other purposes. Such statement needs, of course, to be shaped in more precise terms, but it surely constitutes a promising clue to the study of NH texts in the context of late antique Coptic Egypt.
[370] Van der Vliet, "The Coptic Gnostic Texts as Christian Apocryphal Literature."
[371] Van der Vliet, "The Coptic Gnostic Texts as Christian Apocryphal Literature," 553-554. He adds that "Needless to say that no definition of Christian apocryphal literature is attempted here; innovative contributions in this field do appear regularly in the journal *Apocrypha*".
[372] Van der Vliet, "The Coptic Gnostic Texts as Christian Apocryphal Literature," 554.
[373] Van der Vliet, "The Coptic Gnostic Texts as Christian Apocryphal Literature," 554.

Thus in the first section of his article "Between Magic and Cosmology",[374] the author analyses texts such as the *Books of Ieu*, suggesting that the traditional term "magic", so ambiguous and normally used to describe many features of the text in question, should be replaced by "performative."[375] He affirms that the *Books of Ieu* are normally seen as examples of late or degenerate Gnosticism; thus to prove or question such assumption, one should look for "these performative aspects elsewhere in gnostic literature." Van der Vliet then tries to search for these performative aspects in the *Apochryphon of John.* He provides an analysis of these performative aspects in the *Apochryphon of John*, but one could say that it is not clear why he used the example of the *Books of Ieu* in the first place.[376] We can only think that, since the *Books of Ieu* are examples of late Gnosticism, he considered that its possible links to the *Apocryphon of John*, concerning the performative aspects, could show that an early text had features in common with a later text, preserved in Coptic, which could explain the reception of the first in the Coptic context itself.

In the second part of the article, named "Saklas and Satan",[377] he tries to "relate gnostic scenes from primeval history to (Coptic) apocryphal accounts of diabolic origins."[378] We believe that the second part is much more consistent than the first, since he finds many connections between texts such as the *Hypostasis of the Archons* and *On the Origin of the World* with other texts preserved in Coptic. He closes his article by saying that

> these two examples suggest that Gnostic studies would profit from more attention to other branches of "marginal" Christian literature (apocryphal, magical). Further research in this direction may eventually restore the Coptic Gnostic texts to their proper intellectual milieu, viz to the "wisdom" of the newly emerging, partially coptophone, Christian elite of Egypt.[379]

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[374] Van der Vliet, "The Coptic Gnostic Texts as Christian Apocryphal Literature," 554-557.
[375] "This originally linguistic term was adopted in 1973 by the anthropologist S.J. Tambiah to define what in his opinion was the essence of magic: not an inept kind of science, but a form of ritual behaviour, combining word and deed, which acquires its full meaning, which is persuasive rather than logical, in the act of being performed. Indeed, the lists of *2 Ieu* do not provide scientific knowledge aimed at satisfying the reader's curiosity for the unknown, but ritual knowledge which gets its meaning in being somehow "performed" (Van der Vliet, "The Coptic Gnostic Texts as Christian Apocryphal Literature," 554).
[376] Van der Vliet, "The Coptic Gnostic Texts as Christian Apocryphal Literature," 555.
[377] Van der Vliet, "The Coptic Gnostic Texts as Christian Apocryphal Literature," 557-561.
[378] Van der Vliet, "The Coptic Gnostic Texts as Christian Apocryphal Literature," 561.
[379] Van der Vliet, "The Coptic Gnostic Texts as Christian Apocryphal Literature," 561.

The comparison between the texts proposed by van der Vliet serves to show that some themes and motifs – in the case of van der Vliet's article the motifs concerning the demonic origins – presented in some NH texts find parallels in other texts that circulated in Coptic. This may allow us to affirm that such motifs were popular in the Coptic environment, which could justify the reading of texts such as the *Hypostasis of the Archons* and *On the Origin of the World.*

In a more recent contribution, Painchaud and Wees convincingly argued in favor of a monastic interpolation in *On the Origin of the World*, based on a particular expression that can also be found in the *Boharic Life of Pachomius*.[380] The expression "connaître la différence entre les hommes mauvais et les bons",[381] relatively unusual in Coptic literature, is a reference to the charisma of clairvoyance assigned to Pachomius by the *Boharic* and the *Sixth Sahidic Lives*; the same charisma is assigned to Adam and Eve in *On the Origin of the World*. This article suggests exactly the kind of research that should be done for now on concerning the context of compilation of the NHC and the possibilities of literary contacts with Coptic literature.

In 2010, Jenott and Pagels[382] published an article in which they try to analyse Codex I as a fourth-century Christian collection, comparing its contents to certain themes found in the *Letters of Antony*. They argue that "The fourth-century reader of this codex, far from encountering teachings typically regarded as "gnostic" (dualism, docetism, a "world-hating spirit") would have found a number of themes strikingly compatible with Antony's letters."[383] Before proceeding to that discussion, however, the authors provide an introduction in which they discuss several preliminary, but very important, questions, such as the fact that the NHC were normally seen by scholars as "non-Christian" books[384] – a subject that was already discussed in section 2.2. of this dissertation[385] – and what they call the "domestication

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[380] Painchaud and Wees, "Connaître la différence entre les hommes mauvais et les bons."
[381] See NH II 118, 33-119, 4; SBo § 107; S⁶§ 3.
[382] Jenott and Pagels, "Antony's Letters and Nag Hammadi Codex I."
[383] Jenott and Pagels, "Antony's Letters and Nag Hammadi Codex I," 557.
[384] Jenott and Pagels, "Antony's Letters and Nag Hammadi Codex I," 558.
[385] See pages 17-18.

of charisma"; by that, they mean the attempts made by Alexandrine clergy, represented overall by Athanasius, to control and domesticate the revelations and other supernatural events experienced by monks such as Antony.

They identify four main themes that, according to them, could be found in Codex I and the *Letters of Antony:* "Know yourself,"[386] "the Spirit as guide to Adoption,"[387] "Jesus' Passion, Crucifixion, and the Spiritual Resurrection"[388] and "Restoration to the Father."[389] Throughout the article, the authors emphasize that the Antony portrayed by Athanasius in the *Life of Antony* is idealized and much more aligned with "orthodoxy" than the Antony that speaks through the *Letters*; they point out in particular the proximities between the *Letters of Antony* and Origenist theology,[390] an aspect already discussed and stressed by Samuel Rubenson.[391]

In relation to the similarities they believed to exist between Codex I and the *Letters of Antony*, the authors state that

> such similarities between the letters of Antony and the tractates of Codex I lend further support to the idea that this codex would have appealed to Egyptian monks, especially those interested in the kind of Alexandrian-intellectualist speculation that we know was widespread throughout Egypt in fourth century, including the Thebaid where Codex I was produced.[392]

In their conclusion, the authors declare that the kind of teaching Codex I provides "encourages an open attitude toward ongoing revelation, by contrast with the curriculum that Athanasius would seek to institute within Egyptian monasteries."[393] By that, the authors mean that Codex I encourages its reader to seek revelations and other revelatory and supernatural experiences, experiences that are somehow domesticated by Athanasius in his

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[386] Jenott and Pagels, "Antony's Letters and Nag Hammadi Codex I," 571-575.
[387] Jenott and Pagels, "Antony's Letters and Nag Hammadi Codex I," 575-577.
[388] Jenott and Pagels, "Antony's Letters and Nag Hammadi Codex I," 577-581.
[389] Jenott and Pagels, "Antony's Letters and Nag Hammadi Codex I," 581-584.
[390] See, for example, Jenott and Pagels, "Antony's Letters and Nag Hammadi Codex I," 574.
[391] Samuel Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony: Monasticism and the Making of a Saint* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995).
[392] Jenott and Pagels, "Antony's Letters and Nag Hammadi Codex I," 583.
[393] Jenott and Pagels, "Antony's Letters and Nag Hammadi Codex I," 585.

portrayal of Antony in the *Life of Antony* and would not be part of the role model of a monk that the Alexandrine patriarch offers to Egyptian monks. We do not fully agree with this statement; since the subject of this dissertation is not Athanasius and his relations to monasticism, it would be out of place to discuss this question in depth here; we would only like to mention that, in general terms, Athanasius does not discredit the revelations or supernatural experiences performed by Antony in the *Life of Antony*, he rather uses them in his own favor.[394] The *Life of Antony* is full of accounts in which Antony experiences revelations,[395] battles against the demons,[396] clairvoyance[397] and even otherworldly journeys,[398] and these supernatural experiences are what grants authority to Antony's words when he condemns Arianism.[399] Athanasius was not against visions and revelations, as long as their content was "orthodox".

Finally, the main idea behind Jenott and Pagels' contribution corroborates the approach suggested in the present dissertation: they try to compare literary themes that can be found both in a specific NH codex and in the literature that was presumably circulating in Coptic at the same time of NHC compilation. Through this they also intend to show that the existence of common literary themes between that specific codex and the *Letters of Antony* indicates that fourth-century Coptic readers could have been interested in both. Furthermore, these literary contacts can show that Codex I texts were not necessarily seen as "heretical" by their readers.

More recently, in 2013, Jenott published an article[400] in which he discusses "how Nag Hammadi Codex II could have appealed to monastic readers who were interested in recovering the lost glory of Adam, and who sought to do so by eradicating passions from their bodies through sexual continence and combat with demons"[401]. He does this by

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[394] See section 4.2.2.1 of the present dissertation.
[395] See, for example, *Life of Antony* § 10 and 66.
[396] See, for example, *Life of Antony* § 13 and 24-33.
[397] See, for example, *Life of Antony* §34-35.
[398] See, for example, *Life of Antony* § 65.
[399] *Life of Antony* § 82. See also section 4.2.2.1.
[400] Lance Jenott, "Recovering Adam's Lost Glory: Nag Hammadi Codex II in its Egyptian Monastic Environment," in *Jewish and Christian Cosmogony in Late Antiquity* (ed. L. Jenott and S.K. Gribetz; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 222-236.
[401] Jenott, "Recovering Adam's Lost Glory," 224.

comparing certain features related to Adam in the texts of Codex II and other types of late antique literature that discuss sexual abstinence, such as certain works of Athanasius.

However, before that Jenott discusses preliminary questions concerning the NHC. In one of his preliminary remarks, he states that

> I would like to emphasize that despite an older trend of scholarship that maintains a phenomenological distinction between Gnosticism and Christianity, there can be no doubt that the Nag Hammadi Codices were produced by Christians. The Christian character of the codices is clear not only in the attribution of many of the texts to famous apostles of Jesus, such as Peter, Paul, James, Thomas, and Philip (not to mention Mary in the Berlin Codex), but also in the practices employed by the scribes who copied them, including crucifix icons and forms of Christian *nomina sacra* found in contemporary Christian manuscripts. The Nag Hammadi Codices should therefore be viewed as "primary sources" for Coptic Christianity, and not for Gnosticism.[402]

Firstly, in the quoted passage, Jenott emphasizes the Christian character of the NHC, which is very pertinent and important, and, as seen in section 2.2. However, we do not totally agree with him, especially when he states that the NHC should therefore be viewed as "primary sources" for Coptic Christianity, and not for Gnosticism.[403] As explained in the introduction of the present dissertation,[404] one option does not invalidate the other. We believe that, generally speaking, many NH texts can be used as primary sources for the study of Gnosticism, even if this is not the concern of the present dissertation. The study of the "Coptic phase" of the NHC does not need to deny the existence of previous phases and contexts of transmission, including its original context of composition. The interest of this dissertation is the Coptic phase of the NHC, Codex V in particular, but that does not mean that certain texts preserved in the NHC – those that we can say are "Gnostic" – are completely irrelevant for the study of "Gnosticism" in the second-and-third centuries.

Having said that, we can come back to the discussion of Jenott's article. After the preliminary comments on the Coptic phase of NH texts, Jenott briefly presents the contents

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[402] Jenott, "Recovering Adam's Lost Glory," 224.
[403] Jenott, "Recovering Adam's Lost Glory," 224.
[404] See page 14.

of the texts of Codex II.[405] In what follows, he suggests that Codex II could have served as a book to combat demons, which would relate it from a thematic point of view to Athanasius's *Life of Antony*, in which battles against demons is also largely discussed.[406] Jenott argues that one of Codex II trending themes is the reinterpretation of Adam and Eve's role in *Genesis*,[407] "in ways that encourage readers to live a celibate life, not in union with a human partner, but in union with Christ and/or the Holy Spirit."[408] Combining both themes, he later states that

> the ousting of demons from the body and mind was imagined not only as the assertion of self-control, but, even more so, as *recovering* something that had been lost – the original, spiritual condition in which humanity was first created in Adam. By overcoming passions and allowing the Holy Spirit to guide the mind toward contemplation of the Father, one was restoring the image of God that had become tarnished by humanity's fall into spiritual paralysis. Following the popular legacy of Origen, who united Platonic acumen with Christian myth, the goal of *returning* the soul to God by recovering Adam's original glory in Paradise permeated Egyptian Christianity of the period in various guises.[409]

To support his statement, Jenott recurs to late antique sources that exalt Adam and/or the paradisiacal times, such as Athanasius's *Contra Gentes*.[410] Jenott also mentions other late antique sources that show interest for the "recovering of Adam's original glory", such as the *Apophthegmata Patrum*.[411] In the conclusion, he also mentions the *Historia Monachorum* 22.1, in which a very interesting account that praises celibacy is reported. He then concludes saying that "Codex II encouragement to renounce carnal marriage and observe continence in union with Christ fits nicely in the monastic culture (…). Its detailed descriptions of Adam's original luminosity and superiority over theriomorphic demons would make perfect sense to monks."[412]

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[405] Jenott, "Recovering Adam's Lost Glory," 225-226.
[406] Jenott, "Recovering Adam's Lost Glory," 226-227.
[407] Jenott, "Recovering Adam's Lost Glory," 227-235.
[408] Jenott, "Recovering Adam's Lost Glory," 224.
[409] Jenott, "Recovering Adam's Lost Glory," 227-228.
[410] Jenott, "Recovering Adam's Lost Glory," 228.
[411] Jenott, "Recovering Adam's Lost Glory," 230.
[412] Jenott, "Recovering Adam's Lost Glory," 236.

Jenott and Pagels try to compare certain NHC (Codex I and II) to other types of literature that were circulating in late antique Egypt, identifying similar literary themes and contents between them. Their goal is to show that, far from being considered "heretical", the contents of these volumes match the contents of many other texts circulating in late antique Coptic Egypt. However, in regard to this, we feel obliged to point out a problem in one of the articles in question – the most recent one, written by Jenott alone[413]: the author uses two sources to support his arguments that, we believe, should be used with more caution, the *Apophthegmata Patrum* and the *Historia Monachorum.* The first, due to its composite nature – the *Apophthegmata Patrum* is a group of sources of very different origins that involves a very complex and unknown process of transmission – and the second due to the fact that it is a "foreign" source, i.e. composed outside Egypt and aimed at a non-Egyptian audience, which, *a priori*, makes it a questionable source for the understanding of the mentality of Egyptian Christianity. These are the reasons that led us to exclude these sources from our corpus of comparison by the way.[414]

One last and recent contribution should be mentioned in this section, Hugo Lundhaug's article on Post-Nicene soteriology in the *Gospel of Philip*.[415] One could say that Lundhaug's article could be considered very audacious and revolutionary, since, generally speaking, he tries to demonstrate – by showing presumable traces of Post-Nicene soteriology – that the *Gospel of Philip* is not a second-century Valentinian tractate, but rather a much later composition that shows unquestionable traces of a Christology that was only developed after the Council of Nicaea in 325.[416] This is certainly revolutionary, since it renders impossible an analysis of the *Gospel of Philip* as a second century Valentinian text. To our mind, recalling our statement in the introduction,[417] we believe that it is not necessary to deny or discredit the past history of a text and its transmission in order to analyse it from a reception perspective. The *Gospel of Philip* is not our main subject; thus, it would be outside the scope

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[413] Jenott, "Recovering Adam's Lost Glory."
[414] For details, see section 4.3.
[415] Hugo Lundhaug, "Begotten, Not Made, to Arise in This Flesh: The Post-Nicene Soteriology of the Gospel of Philip," in *Beyond the Gnostic Gospels: Studies Building on the Work of Elaine Pagels* (eds. Eduard Iricinschi et al.; STAC 82; Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 235-271.
[416] Lundhaug, "Begotten, Not Made," 269-271.
[417] See Page 14.

of the present dissertation to scrutinize Lundhaug's article and take a clear and definitive position in relation to his suggestion. We will, however, summarize the contribution in question, following the general approach that has been adopted in this chapter.

In his introductory remarks,[418] Lundhaug discusses the date and provenance of the NHC; he emphasizes the fact that the question has not been discussed in depth. At a certain point, he mentions that

> the only certain historical context we have for the *Gospel of Philip* is provided by the codex which preserves its one extent textual witness. Being the third text of the seven that comprise Nag Hammadi Codex II, the scribe and users of this particular codex are the only people whom we know for certain read the *Gospel of Philip*. It may seem a trivial point, but these users of the text also knew it exactly in the form in which it has been preserved to us, in Coptic, and not in an idealized, hypothetical, Greek – or even Syriac – version.[419]

Lundhaug divides his article in seven sections in which he discusses seven different elements that support his theory: "creedal authority,"[420] "begotten, not made,"[421] "sacramental Adam-Christ soteriology,"[422] "Baptism,"[423] "Resurrection in this flesh,"[424] "Eucharist,"[425] and "Christology and Deification,"[426] Basically, Lundhaug argues in relation to these topics that the way in which they are presented in the *Gospel of Philip* reflects doctrines and positions that could not be anterior to Nicaea; moreover, according to him, many of these issues, instead of being "heretical", are presented in accordance with the thought of prominent Post-Nicene Egyptian ecclesiastical authorities, such as Theophilus and Cyril of Alexandria.[427]

In his conclusion, Lundhaug argues that

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[418] Lundhaug, "Begotten, Not Made," 235-242.
[419] Lundhaug, "Begotten, Not Made," 238.
[420] Lundhaug, "Begotten, Not Made," 242-244.
[421] Lundhaug, "Begotten, Not Made," 244-248.
[422] Lundhaug, "Begotten, Not Made," 248-250.
[423] Lundhaug, "Begotten, Not Made," 250-255.
[424] Lundhaug, "Begotten, Not Made," 255-260.
[425] Lundhaug, "Begotten, Not Made," 260-265.
[426] Lundhaug, "Begotten, Not Made," 265-269.
[427] See, for example, Lundhaug, "Begotten, Not Made," 259-260.

the features discussed above are sufficiently clear for it to be no longer possible to understand the *Gospel of Philip* in the context of second- or third- century "Valentianism" (…) If we were to hold on the traditional (and highly speculative) dating of the *Gospel of Philip* to the third, or even second century, we would have to insist not only that it was far ahead of its time, but even that it might have influenced Alexandrian orthodoxy. Surely, that would be well outside of the realm of possibility.[428]

Firstly, we believe that it would take more than pointing out presumable traces of Post-Nicene theology to prove that the *Gospel of Philip* was composed after 325; furthermore, that does not answer the question concerning many other Valentinian aspects that are present in the text in question.[429] If the text was necessarily composed after 325, how to explain that these typical Valentinian issues were used by its author?

We rather see the question from a different point of view, a reception perspective, taking into consideration the general approach taken in this dissertation. Generally speaking, what may justify the circulation of the *Gospel of Philip* in late antique Coptic Egypt is exactly the fact that it deals in one way or another with theological questions that were in vogue at that time. In addition, it presents theological questions that could have been reinterpreted in light of the Arian controversy and Post-Nicene soteriology. As Chapter Seven of the present dissertation intends to demonstrate, nothing prevents a given motif, or even a theological doctrine, from being (re)interpreted and reused by later readers.

Finally, as stated in the introduction of this dissertation,[430] the study of the Coptic phase of the NHC and their texts does not need to deny the existence of their original contexts of composition and transmission to be justifiable or pertinent. It is possible to study one context without discrediting or refuting the other.

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[428] Lundhaug, "Begotten, Not Made," 270.
[429] We think in particular about the issues involving the "Bridal Chamber"; on that subject, see Thomassen, "Notes pour la délimitation d'un corpus valentinien à Nag Hammadi," in *Les textes de Nag Hammadi et le problème de leur classification* (ed. L. Painchaud and A. Pasquier. BCNH section "Études" 3; Québec/Louvain/Paris: Les Presses de l'Université Laval/Peeters, 1995), 249.
[430] See page 14 above.

2.6. Sub-collections

In this section, we will discuss contributions that deal with the possibility of the existence of sub-collections among the NHC and the ordering of texts in the codices themselves. Basing his analysis on the NHC codicological data, mainly on the examination of the leather covers, Williams tries to establish relations between the codices, suggesting the existence of subgroups – with each subgroup containing codices with the same origin, which could be explained by the similarity in their composition. The existence of subgroups has already been pointed out by James Robinson, also based on the fabrication of the codices.[431]

According to Williams, the NHC could be understood as a collection of collections, a set of different textual compilations with different origins that were in one way or another gathered and buried together. Based on codicological analysis, he affirms that "the overall collection was probably compiled from smaller sub-collections" and that "there are a few definitive indications of scribal concern over not only the selection but also the arrangement of tractates".[432] Williams' hypothesis presents two different questions that must be distinguished: the first one concerns the existence and identification of sub-collections; the second, the choice and ordering of texts inside these sub-collections.[433]

Obviously, the second is more speculative than the first; the identification of sub-collections can be simply assured by the way the codices were produced and the handwriting of the scribes. However, the examination that could lead to a conclusion concerning the deliberate will to choose and organize the order of the texts in individual codices must be more meticulous. The clearest case might be Codex I, copied by two different scribes: the first one, after having copied tractates 1 to 3, seems to have left many blank pages intended specifically for the copying of tractate 4 and only then to have copied tractate 5; this can be verified by the blank space left between the end of tractate 4 and the beginning of tractate 5, almost half of a page; the fact that the first scribe has left so many blank pages could be only

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[431] Robinson, *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices. Introduction*, 71-86.
[432] Williams, "Interpreting the Nag Hammadi Library as "Collection(s)" in the History of 'Gnosticism,'" 3.
[433] Williams, "Interpreting the Nag Hammadi Library as "Collection(s)" in the History of 'Gnosticism,'" 11-38.

explained by the concern of having the *Tractate on the Resurrection* before the *Tripartite Tractate*.[434] Williams goes further, stating that a precise examination of the tractates' dispositions reveals a logic ordering in almost every codex.[435]

Morard argues the same thing in relation to Codex V, which makes her contribution very valuable not only to the general research on the context of compilation of NHC, but also to the present dissertation. According to her, the ordering of tractates in Codex V is not a coincidence, but the indication of an intentional plan that aimed to give the reader pedagogical guidance that would lead him to the understanding of his spiritual journey.[436] Codex V was therefore created as "une sorte de manuel d'initiation, de recueil destiné à éclairer l'apprenti gnostique sur le sens et la valeur de sa démarche, avant de lui permettre d'entrer plus avant dans les arcanes d'un système exposé dans d'autres traités plus élaborés."[437]

Consequently, according to Morard, *Eugnostos* would have served as an introduction to the volume, a tractate that is not presented as an apocalypse or a revelation dialogue, but as an initiatory exposition about the knowledge concerning the origins; and such knowledge would be fundamental to the return of the apprentice to the origins.[438] In what follows, Codex V presents three texts with the title of "apocalypse" in the manuscript (*Apocalypse of Paul*, and the *Apocalypses of James*);[439] three texts that – under the pseudonymous patronage of two important early Christian personages[440] – illustrate this return to the origins: the

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[434] Williams, "Interpreting the Nag Hammadi Library as "Collection(s)" in the History of 'Gnosticism,'" 11-20.

[435] Williams, "Interpreting the Nag Hammadi Library as "Collection(s)" in the History of 'Gnosticism,'" 3. Williams also published a contribution concerning the scribes of codices IV, V, VI and IX: Michael Williams, "The Scribes of Codices IV, V, VI, VII and IX" in *Actes du IVᵉ congrès copte, Louvain-la-Neuve, 5-10 septembre 1988 volume 2: De la linguistique au gnosticisme* (eds. M. Rassart-Debergh and J. Ries; Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut Orientaliste de Louvain, 1988), 334-342.

[436] Morard, "Les apocalypses du codex V de Nag Hammadi," 342.

[437] Morard, "Les apocalypses du codex V de Nag Hammadi," 357.

[438] Morard, "Les apocalypses du codex V de Nag Hammadi," 342.

[439] The designations of "First" and "Second" for the *Apocalypses of James* are modern labels proposed by scholars, in an attempt to differentiate them, following the order of appearance in Codex V. However, despite the presence of the word "apocalypse" in their titles, the *Apocalypses of James* do not fully correspond to the literary apocalyptic genre, on this matter, see Dias Chaves, *Between Apocalyptic and Gnosis*, 53-59.

[440] Morard emphasises the fact that both figures, Paul and James, are not linked directly to the original group of apostles, "ni l'un ni l'autre ne font partie du groupe des Douze et donc ne sont pas rattachés à la Grande

Apocalypse of Paul demonstrates the Gnostic's ascension, passing through the archontic spheres until reaching the Pleroma; in the *Apocalypses of James*, the ascension itself does not really take place, but is merely discussed, with Jesus revealing important information concerning the spiritual journey to the *Pleroma*.[441] Closing the volume, the *Apocalypse of Adam* presents the history of revelation and its developments through the centuries, also speaking about the destruction of the world by fire and flood.[442]

Morard notes that Codex V grants considerable importance to the term "apocalypse."[443] There are at least four texts with this word in their titles; it is also employed in several occasions throughout Codex V, either in Greek or Coptic (ϭⲱⲗⲡ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ). Also according to Morard, one extract in particular in the *Apocalypse of Adam* (65, 19-24)[444] specifies in what sense the word "apocalypse" should be understood in the context of Codex V: the apprentice must enter, through the revelation of mysteries, into the knowledge of his divine origin, finding the path to salvation. She adds that it seems that Codex V is dedicated to the necessity

Église" (Cf. Morard, "Les apocalypses du codex V de Nag Hammadi," 342). The choice of two important characters, who possessed great authority among early Christians, but who did not figure among the original group of apostles and were consequently out of the "apostolic tradition" evoked by the Great Church, could be the original intention of the composers of our texts; an ordinary Christian who, inserted in the second-century context and experiencing the battle for orthodoxy and intra-religious polemics, could seek to grant authority for his texts and message by attributing them to famous characters who were not among the twelve apostles, but who were known for having received post-paschal and privileged revelations. However, our concern, and Morard's concern also, deals with the context of compilation of the NHC and, in the specific case of Morard's contribution, with that of Codex V. When Morard discusses the ordering of texts in Codex V, she must take into consideration that this ordering was probably the product of a Coptic environment, in the fourth-century; consequently, the fact that the characters in question were possibly understood as opponents of the "Great Church" in the second-century cannot be applied to this context, when the battle for orthodoxy consisted in the discussion of very different issues. The possibility of a Christian, or whoever produced and owned Codex V in the fourth-century, being concerned with post-paschal revelations disclosed to Jesus' disciples who were not directed included in the apostolic tradition and were thus necessarily opponents of the Great Church does not seem likely. We believe thus that Morard's statement concerning Paul and James is anachronistic. Nevertheless, in what concerns the context of compilation of the NHC, the choice of tractates for the formation of a codex could, of course, take into consideration their pseudonymous authorship; this issue must be analysed, however, in the light of the late antique Coptic context, considering the meaning of these characters in this enviroment.

[441] Morard, "Les apocalypses du codex V de Nag Hammadi," 342.
[442] Morard, "Les apocalypses du codex V de Nag Hammadi," 342-343.
[443] Morard, "Les apocalypses du codex V de Nag Hammadi," 343.
[444] "Voilà les apocalypses qu'Adam révéla à son fils Seth et que son fils fit connaître à sa descendance, voilà la connaissance secrète qu'Adam a donnée à Seth" (NH V 64, 2-3). Morard's translation in Fraçoise Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam* (BCNH section "Textes" 15; Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1985), 21. For the Coptic text, see Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam,* 20.

of this initiation.[445] Morard also tries to demonstrate the existence of a planned unity and organization in the ordering of the texts of Codex V, which would jibe perfectly with Williams' proposal.

More recently, Kaler has also dedicated some pages to the analysis of Codex V.[446] Concerned specifically with the *Apocalypse of Paul*, Kaler calls Codex V the "apocalyptic codex",[447] since four of its five texts present the title of "apocalypse" in the manuscript; he emphasises, however, the impossibility of knowing at what moment of Codex V transmission history the titles were added. Regarding *Eugnostos*, Kaler says that, leaving aside its precise genre and role, it constitutes an appropriate choice for the beginning of a codex made up of apocalypses. He adds that in the same manner that *Eugnostos* would be the logical choice to open the volume – since it presents a systematic exposition of the pleromatic world – the *Apocalypse of Adam*, with its revision of history, would be the perfect option for its conclusion. Thus the three other texts would occupy the middle of the volume, and, according to Kaler, it would be logical to put together the two *Apocalypses of James*,[448] which would leave for the *Apocalypse of Paul* either the second or the fourth place.[449]

Kaler also emphasises the fact that Codex V texts do not show a doctrinal harmony; there is, however, an editorial unity that is related not to the redaction of texts, but to their selection for the formation of the volume.[450] Similarly to Morard, Kaler also stresses the choice of two texts attributed to important characters, Paul and James, adding that this choice could be an implicit challenge directed to the Great Church, since both characters were not part of the original apostolic succession.[451] We believe, however, that this hypothesis would make sense if the aim was the study of the original context of composition of the texts,

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[445] Morard, "Les apocalypses du codex V de Nag Hammadi," 343.
[446] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 149-153.
[447] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 149.
[448] He even affirms that one could imagine the *Apocalypses of Paul* circulating together in Antiquity. We must recall, however, that the Codex Tchacos contains only the text conventionally called *The First Apocalypse of James* (Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 152).
[449] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 152.
[450] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 150-151.
[451] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 151.

presumably the second half of the second century, when the quarrels between what is generally called the Great Church and early Christianity's marginal manifestations, such as those usually gathered under the label of Gnosticism, were in full sway. Nevertheless, this is not the case in fourth-century Coptic Egypt, the time of compilation of Codex V; we do not consider that such quarrels could be also applied to this context, so distant chronologically from the discussions concerning Jesus' real and authentic successors in the second-century.[452] The theological clashes in fourth-century Egypt were concerned with other issues, such as the Melitian schism[453] and the Arian controversy,[454] and at the end of the century, with the Origenist controversy,[455] for example. However, as already discussed, we do not see any direct relation between the mentioned characters and these controversies. Concluding, Kaler postulates that, due to the tractates' thematic similarity, it would be plausible to imagine that in a time previous to the formation of Codex V, they were gathered from among other texts to compose the volume; it is impossible to know though in what moment of the history of transmission of the texts this selection took place.[456] As far as it concerns Codex V, Kaler's contribution is concise but very useful. His comment on the choice of Codex V tractates is particularly pertinent, since they were probably chosen among many other texts to be part of a volume whose main characteristic would be its "apocalyptic tone". Finally, we would like to emphasise the fact that two contributions analysed in this *status quaestionis* deal specifically with Codex V. This is probably due to the fact that Codex V presents a remarkable thematic unity that has no parallel among the other NHC.

Kaler, in association with Painchaud, has published another relevant contribution concerning the compilation of certain NHC.[457] The authors suggest that codices I, X and VII at first formed a single collection, having thus the same origin.[458] The possibility of a

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[452] See chapter 5 below.
[453] See section 5.1 below.
[454] See section 5.2 below.
[455] See section 5.2 below.
[456] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 153.
[457] Louis Painchaud and Michael Kaler, "From the Prayer of the Apostle Paul to the Three Steles of Seth," *VC* 61 (2007): 445-469.
[458] Concerning the origins of the volumes and the supposed sub-collections, the authors also point out the examples of Codices II and XIII, probably copied by the same scribe, which would consequently establish the

common origin is based on material evidence; the three codices are linked by the way they were bounded but also by the hands of the scribes who copied them.[459] Painchaud and Kaler also suggest, in accordance with Williams, that codices I, XI and VII, in addition to the fact that they formed a sub-collection, had the ordering of their tractates planned.[460] Three scribes, called by Painchaud and Kaler A, B and C, took part in the copying of Codices I, XI and VII. Scribe A would have copied and paginated a part of Codex I, which also had part of its content copied and paginated by scribe B. Scribe B also copied the first two tractates of Codex XI, the rest being copied by scribe C, who, for his part, also copied part of Codex VII.[461]

The authors remark also that the content of these codices is heterogeneous; dialect L6 predominates in the texts copied by scribes A and B, while Sahidic predominates in the texts copied by C.[462] The doctrinal aspects are also diverse, as well as the literary genres.[463] This contribution is very pertinent and makes use of material aspects to establish the existence of sub-collections; the attempt to understand the choice and ordering of tractates within the codices should also take into consideration literary features; Painchaud and Kaler having discussed the material characteristics, further investigations concerning this sub-collection should thus discus literary aspects. As we suggested before, the attempt to find precise literary contacts between this sub-collections and late antique Egyptian literature could help in the understanding of this corpus and its formation.

One last contribution, which also deals with the sub-collection formed by Codices I, VII and XI, should be discussed in this section; we are referring to a specific segment in the

same origin for both; however, one should expect that different volumes which were produced for the same owner and had the same audience would not have repeated copies of the same text. However, the text known as *On the Origin of the World* can be found in both codices. Based on this, the authors affirm that "shared material characteristics such as similarity of the covers or the handwriting point towards the same origin, while the presence of doublets does not point towards different origins, but rather towards different destinations" (Painchaud and Kaler, "From the Prayer of the Apostle Paul to the Three Steles of Seth," 445).

[459] Painchaud and Kaler, "From the Prayer of the Apostle Paul to the Three Steles of Seth," 447.
[460] Painchaud and Kaler, "From the Prayer of the Apostle Paul to the Three Steles of Seth," 447.
[461] Painchaud and Kaler, "From the Prayer of the Apostle Paul to the Three Steles of Seth," 447-448.
[462] Painchaud and Kaler, "From the Prayer of the Apostle Paul to the Three Steles of Seth," 448.
[463] Painchaud and Kaler, "From the Prayer of the Apostle Paul to the Three Steles of Seth," 448-447.

French critical edition of the *Interpretation of Knowledge* from Codex XI.[464] Actually, this section also deals with material aspects and the possibility of a monastic origin and utilization for this very sub-group of codices, but since its focus is in the sub-collection formed by Codices I, VII and XI, we decided to include it in the present section. The segment in question comprises three parts: Milieu and function of the manuscript[465] – which is divided in three parts: 1- "Les codices I, VII and XI, une collection à usage interne;"[466] 2- "Une collection réunie dans et pour un milieu chrétien probablement de type monastique"[467] and 3- "la fonction de cette collection"[468] – the source of the manuscript[469] and place and date of the production of the manuscript.[470]

The section named "Milieu and function of the manuscript" begins by discussing the fact that Codices I, VII and XI can be linked notably by the scribes who copied them, but also by dialectal features.[471] Then, a very pertinent question is raised: the difference between provenance and destination, an issue almost never discussed by scholarship, as mentioned in our introduction.[472] In Painchaud's own words: "Si ces trois codices constituent indéniablement un ensemble du point de vue de leur *exécution*, peut-on dire autant du point de vue de leur *destination*? La chose ne va pas de soi. En effet, des codices copiés par un même scribe ou dans un même atelier pourrait fort bien l'avoir été pour des clients différents."[473]

However, despite this observation, the conclusion, based on the codices' primitive character,[474] is that this sub-collection was intended for "usage interne, exécutées à l'intérieur même du groupe auquel elles étaient destinées, et non un travail exécuté à des fins

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[464] Funk, Painchaud and Thomassen, *L'Interprétation de la gnose*, 4-14.
[465] Funk, Painchaud and Thomassen, *L'Interprétation de la gnose*, 4-12.
[466] Funk, Painchaud and Thomassen, *L'Interprétation de la gnose*, 4-8.
[467] Funk, Painchaud and Thomassen, *L'Interprétation de la gnose*, 8-10.
[468] Funk, Painchaud and Thomassen, *L'Interprétation de la gnose*, 11-12.
[469] Funk, Painchaud and Thomassen, *L'Interprétation de la gnose*, 12-14.
[470] Funk, Painchaud and Thomassen, *L'Interprétation de la gnose*, 14.
[471] Funk, Painchaud and Thomassen, *L'Interprétation de la gnose*, 4-5.
[472] See pages 10-11 above.
[473] Funk, Painchaud and Thomassen, *L'Interprétation de la gnose*, 6.
[474] Funk, Painchaud and Thomassen, *L'Interprétation de la gnose*, 6.

commerciales ou pour un client extérieur."[475] This may be reinforced, according to Painchaud, by the absence of doublets in this sub-collection.[476] Following this clue, Painchaud also takes into consideration the fact Codices I, VII and XI contain texts with different doctrinal content;[477] consequently, he states that "cette juxtaposition à l'intérieur d'un même codex indique au contraire que ces différences n'étaient pas significatives du point de vue des destinataires de ce codex". This kind of analysis contains essentially the same concerns that we are attempting to address in the present dissertation. Instead of analysing the presence of texts in the codices that form that sub-collection in a "Gnostic" perspective – taking into account their Valentinian or Sethian characters, for example – they attempt to analyse them in a reception perspective, arguing that the doctrinal elements that may have been important for their respective original contexts of composition may have not been relevant for the Coptic scribes who compiled them in this final stage of transmission, nor for the final recipients of the codex or sub-collection.

After this, Painchaud elaborates a series of reflections on the environment in which this sub-collection was compiled and its function. These reflections are based on two issues: 1- the material characteristics of the sub-collection (in which, they discuss, for example, the fragments of papyri from the covers of the codices,[478] and personal traces left by the scribes in the codices, such as ornamentations, colophons or notes),[479] and 2- the choice and arrangement of the texts inside the codices.[480] Based on these data, he states that

> il est raisonnable de conclure à partir de l'ensemble de ces indices que la collection de textes copiés dans les codices I, VII et XI a été réunie dans et pour un même milieu chrétien de type monastique, et que ceux qui en ont ordonné la

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[475] Funk, Painchaud and Thomassen, *L'Interprétation de la gnose*, 6-7.

[476] Funk, Painchaud and Thomassen, *L'Interprétation de la gnose*, 7.

[477] For details, see Funk, Painchaud and Thomassen, *L'Interprétation de la gnose*, 7.

[478] Funk, Painchaud and Thomassen, *L'Interprétation de la gnose*, 8. A particular and interesting detail is stressed by the authors. Codex's VII cover contains a letter in Coptic (C4, according to Barn's nomenclature) in which it is possible to read the following phrase: "C'est Dieu qui connaît ce qu'il y a dans le cœur de [chacun]" (Barns, Browne and Shelton, *Nag Hammadi Codices*, 135). Such a motif can be also found in the *Teachings of Silvanus* (NH VII 115, 35-116, 3), but is also a common motif in monastic literature (Painchaud and Wees, "Connaître la différence entre les hommes mauvais et les bons").

[479] Funk, Painchaud and Thomassen, *L'Interprétation de la gnose,* 8-10.

[480] Funk, Painchaud and Thomassen, *L'Interprétation de la gnose,* 8.

copie et les scribes qui l'ont exécutée avaient une perception positive de son contenu.[481]

After that, he discusses the function of this collection, suggesting that

> depuis la *Prière de l'apôtre Paul* jusqu'aux *Trois Stèles de Seth*, aussi bien le contenu des textes que l'alternance des scribes et la variété des doctrines, tout porte à croire que ces écrits ont été choisis et disposés de manière à introduire leurs lecteurs à des doctrines de plus en plus hétérodoxes, et de plus en plus opposées à un parti plus orthodoxe.[482]

Painchaud is thus sympathetic to Thomassen's suggestion according to which these codices were addressed to "des chrétiens sympathiques aux idées gnostiques."[483] He stresses, however, that this suggestion must be nuanced, adding that "ces trois codices étaient destinés *par* des chrétiens membres d'une communauté de type monastique ou d'une confrérie et sympathique à des idées de type ésotérique et hétérodoxe à d'autres chrétiens, probablement membres du même groupe (…)."[484] In what follows, he briefly evokes the pluralistic religious situation of Egypt in the fourth century to justify his statement.[485]

Taking into consideration what was stated above, a monastic origin and destination for this sub-collection is a very likely possibility. We recognize, however, that further investigation of the literary aspects of this sub-collection is needed in order to add evidence to support this hypothesis, independently of its theological position as "orthodox" or "heterodox". As we intend to argue in relation to Codex V, what may have justified the interest of monks in this sub-collection is not necessarily their "Gnostic" or heterodox content, but the fact that they present certain literary motifs that were found in other types of literature circulating in Coptic Egypt at the same time.

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[481] Funk, Painchaud and Thomassen, *L'Interprétation de la gnose,* 10.

[482] Funk, Painchaud and Thomassen, *L'Interprétation de la gnose,* 11.

[483] Einar Thomassen and Louis Painchaud, *Le Traité tripartite (NH I, 5)* (BCNH section "Textes" 19; Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1989), 3.

[484] Funk, Painchaud and Thomassen, *L'Interprétation de la gnose,* 11.

[485] Funk, Painchaud and Thomassen, *L'Interprétation de la gnose,* 11.

2.7. Linguistic Features

The analysis of certain linguistic features is also fundamental for the understanding of NHC context of compilation. We have decided therefore to include in this *status quaestionis* a pair of articles written by Wolf-Peter Funk that deal with this question. In 1993, Funk published an article concerning the classification of Sahidic NH texts.[486] The existence of dialectal differences among many NH texts is clearly perceptible. Although Sahidic is the predominant dialect, this does not entail a "dialectal purity" in any way; NHC Sahidic varies in many "ways and levels."[487] The first and more accepted explanation for this phenomenon stated that the texts were translated into Sahidic by translators who spoke other dialects; this could be explained by the fact that Sahidic was in one way or another becoming a prestigious literary dialect at that time.[488] Funk, however, suggests another theory: according to him, NH texts were translated from Greek into Coptic in several different dialects and as they moved further south, they were "re-translated" into Sahidic, conserving in many instances traces of the previous dialects.[489] This new theory adds another piece of complication to the already complex context of compilation and transmission of NH texts.

In 1995, another contribution from Funk concerning some linguistic aspects of the NHC was published.[490] This contribution is highly technical, being based on philological characteristics. In the first part, he supplies supplementary procedures for classifying the Sahidic NH texts;[491] in the second, he discusses the relations between the linguistic classification and the unity of the 'codex' in the case of NHC.[492] The second part is less

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[486] Wolf-Peter Funk, "Toward a Linguistic Classification of the 'Sahidic' Nag Hammadi Texts," in *Acts of the Fifth International Congress of Coptic Studies: Washington, 12-15 August 1992. Vol. 2 of Acts of the Fifth International Congress of Coptic Studies: Washington, 12-15 August 1992* (ed., D.W. Johnson; Roma: Centro Italiano Microfiches, 1993), 163-177.

[487] Emmel, "Religious Tradition, Textual Transmission, and the Nag Hammadi Codices," 38. We could add to this the unquestionable presence of many traces of other dialects in NHC texts.

[488] Emmel, "Religious Tradition, Textual Transmission, and the Nag Hammadi Codices," 38.

[489] Funk, "Toward a Linguistic Classification of the 'Sahidic' Nag Hammadi Texts."

[490] Wolf-Peter Funk, "The Linguistic Aspect of Classifying the Nag Hammadi Codices," in *Les textes de Nag Hammadi et le problème de leur classification* (ed. L. Painchaud and A. Pasquier; BCNH section "Études" 3; Québec/Louvain/Paris: Les Presses de l'Université Laval/Peeters, 1995).

[491] Funk, "The Linguistic Aspect of Classifying the Nag Hammadi Codices," 107-125.

[492] Funk, "The Linguistic Aspect of Classifying the Nag Hammadi Codices," 125-143.

technical and more pertinent for the discussion of the formation of the codices. Funk starts by affirming that

> one of the results of the comparative analysis presented in section 1 is that, strictly speaking, there can be no "linguistic classification of the Nag Hammadi codices", apart from stating that a certain number of them contain texts superficially edited in some kind of "Sahidic" (…) the foremost feature of most codices within these groups is not a certain linguistic character, but rather their diversity.[493]

In what follows, Funk suggests the division of codices in groups concerning their heterogeneity in regards to linguistic aspects. The first group is formed by "more obvious heterogeneous codices", such as Codices IV, VI, VII, XI B and XII; the second group is formed by "less obvious heterogeneous codices", such as Codices I, II, VIII and XIII; the third group is formed by "fairly homogeneous codices", such as Codices III, V[494] and XI A.

In his conclusion, Funk clearly expresses the complex situation concerning the translation and transmission of NH texts as a whole saying that

> the linguistic aspect of classifying the Nag Hammadi codices suggests that the history of transmission of the individual texts until they were chosen to be copied into the books we posses was extremely diverse. There is no single pattern to be applied to all of them with any probability. To be sure, we have no data whatsoever to enable us to situate these processes with any precise in absolute, or even relative, time.[495]

This linguistic heterogeneity is further evidence of the diversity of the NHC and their texts; it is also a characteristic that supports the hypothesis of the codices' varied origins. Thus once more we believe that further research and investigation on the context of compilation of the NHC must be done case by case, analysing the particular case of each codex or sub-collection.

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[493] Funk, "The Linguistic Aspect of Classifying the Nag Hammadi Codices," 125.
[494] Funk stresses that Codex V is "probably the clearest case of a homogeneous codex in the Nag Hammadi Library" and "also one of the rare volumes that comprise only texts of northern origin" (Funk, "The Linguistic Aspect of Classifying the Nag Hammadi Codices," 139-140).
[495] Funk, "The Linguistic Aspect of Classifying the Nag Hammadi Codices," 143.

In the particular case of the transmission of the NH texts, Funk affirms that

quite evidently, at least some of our 'texts' – in some Coptic version or format – did a great deal of traveling along the Nile valley before they arrived in the Nag Hammadi region. During these travels, they were doubtless part of the luggage of certain persons (who may or may not have been interested in their specific contents). They may have changed carriers from time to time, and they were probably taken out of the bag at a number of places – to be read, modified, copied (thus, in a sense, 'published') so as to multiply into several chains of transmission.[496]

This comment by Funk is particularly significant and illustrates that the NHC are only the 'tip of the iceberg' of a very complex and untraceable chain of transmission. The existence of other Coptic *corpora* such as the Berlin Codex and the Codex Tchacos – which contain texts that can also be found among the NHC – undoubtedly illustrates that some NH texts were widely circulating in late antique Egypt.

2.8. Final considerations

We would like to summarize the conclusions and prospects opened up by above discussions under a number of headings:

1- The belief that NHC necessarily have a link with "Gnosticism" is so strong that it has influenced the research on its context of compilation; we have already expressed here our conviction that "Gnosticism" was not an important issue anymore in fourth-century Egypt, where the religious environment was much more concerned with other theological issues such as those involving the divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit and later on Origenist theology; nevertheless, certain scholars who have written on the NHC context of compilation either focus their analysis on Gnosticism itself or take it as a *point de départ*. They have spoken, for example, of "Gnostic monks" among the

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[496] Funk, "The Linguistic Aspect of Classifying the Nag Hammadi Codices," 145.

Pachomian communities,[497] or of the decline of Gnosticism and the rise of monasticism as simultaneous events;[498] they have even looked for "Gnostic proclivities"[499] in Egyptian monastic texts, or compared "Sethian" motifs with those from apocryphal literature preserved in Coptic.[500] However, Gnosticism should be neither the focus nor the *point de départ* of such research. The legacy of "Gnostic literature" could possibly have influenced certain aspects of the NHC compilation, but in a very peripheral way; and we must emphasise that this remains a possibility. At this point, we would like to share a statement from Stephen Emmel that expresses our position and that could be very useful for future research on the topic in question:

> Regarding the Coptic phases of transmission, there is one obvious task that has not yet been carried out thoroughly and consistently, that is, to read the Nag Hammadi Codices as a part of *Coptic literature* (…) The task is to read the texts exactly as we have them in the Nag Hammadi Codices in an effort to reconstruct the reading experience of whoever owned each of the Codices. This reading would have to be undertaken in full cognizance of contemporary Coptic literature, and the culture of Upper Egypt during, say, the third to the seventh centuries. It would be a primarily Coptic enterprise, **with nothing directly to do with Christian origins, nor necessarily even with "Gnosticism."**[501]

In other words, when it comes to discussing the context of compilation of NHC, one should not treat Gnosticism as a main issue.

2-   The fact that "Gnosticism" should not be the focus of discussions on the context of compilation of NHC does not mean that its results could not help research on Gnosticism itself and on Christian origins. In fact, the understanding of the NHC and their texts as a product of a Coptic environment could be useful in deciphering the texts

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[497] For example, Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Codices,* and Barns, "Greek and Coptic Papyri from the Covers of the Nag Hammadi Codices."
[498] Wisse, "Gnosticism and Early Monasticism in Egypt," 433.
[499] Hedrick, "Gnostic Proclivities in the Greek *Life of Pachomius* and the *Sitz im Leben* of the Nag Hammadi Library."
[500] Van der Vliet, "The Coptic Gnostic Texts as Christian Apocryphal Literature."
[501] Emmel, "Religious Tradition, Textual Transmission, and the Nag Hammadi Codices," 42.

themselves and helping scholars to find solutions for obscure passages, or to fill in lacunas.

3- Even if unproven, the hypothesis of a link between monasticism and the NHC remains the best and most likely option. The quest for precise literary contacts between NH texts and monastic literature could render this possibility more plausible or perhaps even prove it. Those who have denied or tried to demonstrate that this hypothesis is implausible, rarely suggest another option. It seems to us that this hypothesis should be retained as the best lead for finding NHC producers and owners. This does not mean, however, that scholarship should not be open to other possibilities. In the discussion on early Christian books, more precisely on van Minnen's article, we tried to explore other possibilities, based on his suggestions as to who could possibly have owned the Fayum papyri. Even though we believe, however, that these possibilities are unlikely, since the continuation of our discussion demonstrated many obstacles to these kinds of ownership. However, although our conclusions may point in one direction or another, one must not forget that this discussion is not our main concern here.

4- In our introduction we already expressed a concern in relation to three distinct stages in the Coptic life of the NHC, namely their compilation, destination and conservation. The distinction between these three stages is rarely taken into consideration even by those who discuss the NHC in their Coptic context. The material evidence demonstrates that the origin and destination of the NHC was diverse – as discussed in sections 2.3 and 2.6; the existence of sub-collections demonstrates that each sub-collection had a particular origin. That does not mean, however, that these sub-collections cannot be linked to one another; by different origins we mean that each subgroup was probably produced in a different scriptorium (or whatever we call the place(s) that produced the NHC). Concerning the destination – what we could also call the primary ownership – the existence of doublets in the collection indicates that they were not produced for the same patron. And this brings us to the third stage: conservation, by which we mean the stage in which they were brought together. Although one could argue that they were brought together only to be buried, nothing can actually prove that. At any rate, the contribution that the present dissertation intends to provide is not necessarily or exclusively linked to any of these stages. Since we intend to demonstrate that the

existence of many common literary motifs between Codex V and late antique Egyptian hagiographies could justify the interest of late antique Coptic readers – highly probably Christians – in Codex V itself, our conclusions can apply to the question why Codex V was produced (origin), to whom it was addressed (destination) and why it was preserved (conservation). Our attempt to interpret Codex V texts in the light of late antique Coptic hagiographies may also have the same effect.

5- Generally speaking, most of the contributions on the context of compilation of the NHC have focused on general aspects, such as the strong presence of early monasticism in Upper Egypt at the time of the compilation of the collection,[502] the material characteristics of the codices,[503] the plurality of Egyptian Christianity at the time and in the region,[504] evidence of the circulation of apocryphal texts among monastic communities,[505] etc. We believe it is time to focus on research that takes into consideration specific cases of single codices or sub-collections. Since the main studies have focused on material features and the social, cultural and religious environments of fourth-century Upper Egypt, we believe that the kind of research that could produce significant results in the future is one that looks for literary contacts between NH texts and other types of literature that were circulating at the same time and in the same region, either in Greek or in Coptic, but mostly in Coptic; this kind of comparison could show that many themes, motifs and subjects abundantly present in NH texts were popular in fourth-century Upper Egypt, which could justify the ownership of a given NH codex for a Coptic Christian Egyptian, who would be interested not necessarily in its theological content, but in the way this theological content was presented; we believe, for example, that the strong presence of what modern scholarship calls apocalyptic literary elements, themes or motifs, widely present in fourth-and fifth-

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[502] Such as, for example, Wisse, "Gnosticism and Early Monasticism in Egypt" and Scholten, "Die Nag-Hammadi-Texte als Buchbesitz der Pachomianer."

[503] Such as, for example, Doresse, "Les reliures des manuscrits gnostiques coptes découverts à Khénoboskion", and Barns, "Greek and Coptic Papyri from the Covers of the Nag Hammadi Codices."

[504] Such as Richter, "Manichaeism and Gnosticism in the Panopolitan Region between Lykopolis and Nag Hammadi."

[505] Such as, for example, Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 146-177.

century Egyptian literature, could justify the ownership of many NH texts, which also uses many of these elements, themes and motifs.

We must now proceed to the discussion of certain methodological issues concerning the comparative literary approach and the theory of literary reception.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

3.1. Introduction

As summarized at the end of the previous chapter, the research on the context of compilation and circulation of NHC has focused mainly on the material characteristics of the so-called collection and on the possibility of its monastic origin. As has also been observed in the previous chapter's conclusion, approaches that give priority to literary analysis – trying to understand the content of NH texts in the light of the literature that circulated at the same time of its presumable compilation in Coptic – are not numerous. One could say therefore that there is a lack of research of this type. As explained in the introduction this is why we have chosen Codex V: this codex presents many literary themes and motifs that are also abundantly present in many late antique Coptic hagiographies, texts that were probably produced and read at the same time Codex V itself was read and circulated in Upper-Egypt.

In a certain sense, the lack of multifaceted studies[1] on the possible literary contacts between NH texts and late antique Coptic literature bespeaks the lack of an appropriate methodology that could render this kind of approach possible. Thus the present dissertation has no authoritative models to follow, at least not in regard to the NHC. Our enterprise – the analysis of NH texts in the light of late antique Coptic literature and their reception in the late antique Coptic context – requires either the creation of a new method or the adaptation of a method that already exists but has not yet been applied to the field in question. We have

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[1] By this, we mean studies that take into consideration, for example, not a single text or a single motif, but at least a considerable range of texts and motifs, such as those suggested by the present dissertation (see chapter 5), for example. With this comment, we do not intend to depreciate the previous contributions on possible literary contacts between NH texts and Coptic literature, on the contrary, we acknowledge the importance of these punctual contributions as pioneers in the type of work we intend to accomplish here, with the difference that we are adopting a method and a theoretical framework that take into consideration a wider range of texts, themes and motifs.

chosen the second option, applying reception theory, as theorized by H. R. Jauss, and the comparative literary analysis to the research we intend to carry out here, as the body of this chapter will show.

The goal of our utilization of reception theory will be to deal with Codex V from the perspective of its Coptic readership, answering the appeal of certain scholars for studies of this type;[2] we aim to explore the possibilities of how Codex V texts could have been read in Coptic, rather than its Greek Vorlage and their authors. Consequently, our research will not be concerned with Gnosticism and second-century polemics between the Great Church and marginal Christian groups, but rather with how Coptic readers of the fourth and fifth centuries may have interpreted Codex V and its texts. To this purpose, we also employ comparative literary analysis; we compare certain literary themes and motifs present in both Codex V and late antique Coptic hagiographies that presumably circulated in the same general environment that produced and read Codex V, i.e. fourth-and fifth-century Upper Egypt. Our main goal in this comparison is to find similar or parallel literary themes and motifs in both corpora. Through this we hope to demonstrate that the texts of Codex V could have captured the attention of a given Coptic audience and be read without causing major doctrinal problems or dilemmas.

The identification of common literary motifs between Codex V and the literature that circulated in Coptic during the fourth and fifth centuries could also furnish important clues to the interpretation of the volume in a reception perspective. In other words, it could help us to understand how Codex V was interpreted and understood in a late antique Coptic milieu, the environment responsible for its compilation. With the help of the terminology conceived by Hans R. Jauss[3] concerning reception theory, we could say thus that the detection of

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[2] Above all, Emmel, "Religious Tradition, Textual Transmission, and the Nag Hammadi Codices,"
[3] See Robert C. Holub, *Reception Theory: A Critical Introduction* (London/New York: Methuen, 1984), 53-82; see also Hans R. Jauss, *Pour une esthétique de la réception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978) and Hans R. Jauss. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Unversity Press, 1978).

common literary themes and motifs could help us identify the 'horizon of expectations'[4] of a given late antique Coptic reader in relation to Codex V.

Our search for these literary themes and motifs proved to be more fruitful in regard to what could be commonly called Egyptian hagiographies, that being the most important justification for its choice as our corpus of comparison.[5] For reasons that will become evident in the next chapter, we have divided the selected late antique Egyptian hagiographies into two main groups: Monastic Lives and Coptic Epic Passions.

In the following pages we intend to delineate more precisely how we could use reception theory and the literary comparative approach as tools to understand Codex V in a late antique Coptic context. We will explain the main tenets of 'reception theory', and how it can be used properly in our dissertation; then, we will do the same in regard to the comparative approach so as to demonstrate how the two theories can form the theoretical framework that will allow us to analyse Codex V in the light of late antique Coptic literature.

3.2. Reception Theory

3.2.1. Origins, Definition and Diversity of Approaches

In Germany, during the late sixty's and seventy's, a new way of analysing literary works emerged, mainly in the theoretical works of Hans Robert Jauss[6] and Wolfgang Iser,[7] both from the School of Konstanz. In general terms, one could say that both were interested in the role of the reader and in the relationship between the latter and the text, not in the relation between the author and his text. Given this fact, one could define reception theory as "the

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[4] See pages 102-103 below.
[5] Other types of Coptic literature could be used in such a comparison, as monastic rules, instructions and letters, for example. For a list of texts that are excluded from our corpus of comparison, see section 5.4.
[6] For a survey, see Holub, *Reception Theory,* 53-82.
[7] For a survey, see Holub, *Reception Theory*, 82-106.

branch of modern literary studies concerned with the ways in which literary works are received by readers."[8]

Even more than fifty years later, Jauss and Iser are still among the most important theoreticians of the field, even if they have been criticized and revisited by subsequent scholars. However, "reception theory" is far from being a field that reached a consensus: one of the tasks for the present dissertation will thus be to choose the approach that best fits the research goals pursued here; part of this task will also be to adapt this approach to the analysis of Codex V in the light of late antique Coptic hagiographies.

That being said, we have chosen the theoretical framework proposed by Hans R. Jauss, which will be adapted to our research. We intend to make use of one of the main concepts theorized by Jauss, the "horizon of expectations", combining it with the comparative literary analysis as a way to interpret and understand Codex V in the light of late antique Coptic literature and more specifically, hagiographies. In what follows we will explain the main tenets of Jauss's approach and the concept of "horizons of expectations".

3.2.2. The Approach of Hans Robert Jauss

In general terms, Reception Theory as theorized by Jauss could be summarized as follows:

> Drawing on philosophical hermeneutics, Jauss argued that literary works are received against an existing horizon of expectations consisting of readers' current knowledge and presuppositions about literature, and that the meanings of works change as such horizons shift. Unlike most varieties of reader-response theory, then, reception theory is interested more in historical changes affecting the reading public than in the solitary reader.[9]

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[8] Chris Baldick, *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 282.
[9] Baldick, *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 282-283.

As mentioned above, a fundamental concept in 'Reception Theory' as it was conceived by Jauss is what he called the 'horizon of expectations'. It is possible to define this term as follows:

> The set of cultural norms, assumptions, and criteria shaping the way in which readers understand and judge a literary work at a given time (…) Such 'horizons' are subjected to historical change, so that a later generation of readers may see a very different range of meanings in the same work, and revalue it accordingly.[10]

Therefore, in other words, the "horizon of expectations" is a tool that allows readers to understand and decode texts based on the cultural milieu in which they are read. The importance of the reader's background in this approach is therefore essential. According to Jauss, the reader establishes contact with a literary text equipped with the information and understanding acquired from previous contact with other texts.[11] Thus a given late antique Coptic reader who approached Codex V and its texts would do it equipped with previous literary knowledge obtained from contact with other texts. This knowledge would necessarily have an effect on his reading and interpretation of Codex V texts. The challenge of the literary historian is thus to determine this "horizon of expectations". According to the aforementioned definition, the "horizons of expectations" can vary from one generation to another; consequently, trying to find the same concerns in different readers of different generations in regard to the same text may be anachronistic. In the specific case of the subject treated in the present dissertation, we must be cautious so as not to let ourselves be infected by "Gnostic readings" of the texts of Codex V; so-called "Gnosticism" was probably not part of the "horizon of expectations" of late antique Coptic readers. Trying to interpret Codex V texts in the light of Gnosticism is certainly useful – and even necessary – for an approach that is focused on the original context of composition of the texts in the second and third centuries. However, as already stated this is not the intention of the present dissertation, which aims to

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[10] Baldick, *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 157.
[11] See Philip Holden. "Hans Robert Jauss and Literary Horizons of Expectations." *Issues and Theories*. National University of Singapore. Available on line at http://www.usp.nus.edu.sg/curriculum/modules/literature/issues-theories/index.html#jauss. Seen at 20th April 2015.

interpret Codex V in the light of the context in which it was compiled and read. Even if we have evidence of "Gnostics" operating in fourth-century Egypt,[12] they were not as influential as one might imagine, as Chapter 5 intends to demonstrate.[13]

That being said, we must state that the definition of the "horizon of expectations" of a given late antique Coptic reader in relation to Codex V must take into consideration what was in vogue in late antique Coptic Egypt. In general terms, Jauss suggests three basic avenues for the construction and identification of the "horizon of expectations". In his own words:

> First, through familiar norms or the immanent poetics of the genre; second, through the implicit relationships to familiar works of the literary-historical surroundings; and third, through the opposition of fiction and reality, which is always available to the reflective reader during the reading as a possibility of comparison.[14]

In what concerns the present dissertation, we have decided to give priority to the first two aspects, although the third one may be useful for the interpretation of certain visionary experiences reported in Codex V texts. Therefore, in general terms, we intend to establish the "horizon of expectations" of a given late antique Coptic reader in his contact with Codex V by the means of the comparative literary analysis. We will briefly describe this approach in what follows; after that, we will explain how both approaches can be useful in our attempt to understand and interpret Codex V in the light of late antique Coptic hagiographies.

3.3. The Comparative Literary Analysis

The field of research known as "comparative literature" appeared in academic milieus around the middle of nineteenth century, being initially aimed at the comparison of European "national literatures", and extended to the analysis of other kinds of literature in the following

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[12] *Panarion* 26, 17, 4-9.

[13] One must also take into consideration that Epiphanius was simply using a literary procedure, labeling as "Gnostics" his opponents. We should not take for granted thus that the "Gnostics" mentioned by Epiphanius were "real" Gnostics, i.e. people who basically believed in the existence of a creator who was not the Supreme God. See our discussion in 5.3.

[14] English translation of Jauss' words quoted in Holub, *Reception Theory,* 60.

decades.[15] According to scholars, this field is necessarily multidisciplinary and aggregates analyses and approaches common to many areas of the human sciences.[16] Consequently, the questions, issues and motivations that can lead to a comparative approach, as well as its answers and results, are very diverse, although some comparative studies seek to define a kind of "universal literature".

Since the theoreticians of comparative literature have devoted themselves mainly to the analysis of European national literatures, no comparative approach – as far as we know – has ever been theorized in the field of early Christian literature, Ancient religious literature or even Ancient literature. Nevertheless, some scholars have devoted studies to the myth as the basis of a comparative approach to national literatures.[17]

At any rate, the scholar who studies a text which is the product of early Christianity searching for literary contacts, influences and allusions in other texts is using a comparative approach; a modern New Testament exegete who tries to understand the Gospel of Matthew by means of allusions to the Old Testament is in fact a genuine literary comparatist. A scholar who sees in the book of *Revelation* Jewish influences that can be also found in extra-canonical texts is also making use of a comparative approach. The comparative approach is also the basis of the work of the philologist who seeks for evidence of rewriting in a given text. Whoever compares two different texts is making use of the comparative approach. Consequently, this kind of approach is an essential part of the work and theory of early Christian scholars.

As we stressed above, as far as we know, this approach has never been methodologically theorized in the field of ancient Christianity and literature; such a theorization would require a very complex study and would be completely beyond the scope of the present dissertation. We do not intend here to perform such work; we will only make

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[15] For a survey, see Bernard Franco, *La littérature comparée: histoire, domaines, méthodes* (Malakoff: Armand Colin, 2016).

[16] Terry Cochran, *Plaidoyer pour une littérature comparée* (Québec: Éditions Nota bene, 2008), 13.

[17] This is not our concern here. For further information, see Susan Bassnett, *Comparative Literature. A Critical Introduction* (Oxford/Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993) and Pierre Brunel and Yves Chevrel, *Précis de littérature comparée* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1989).

use of some methodological issues that are peculiar to this approach, aiming at a better result for our comparisons between Codex V and late antique Egyptian hagiographies.

As one might expect, the main goal of the comparative approach is not only to find similarities between two texts or groups of texts, but also to look for differences. In Jean-Louis Haquete's words:

> La comparaison est un outil de décision et de compréhension. Cette opération repose non seulement sur l'établissement de points communs, mais aussi sur la prise en compte de la différence. Elle est souvent plus utile par les distinctions qu'elle établit que par les similitudes qu'elle repère et devient ainsi un moyen de discernement.[18]

Thus the present dissertation must also account for the differences between Codex V texts and late antique Egyptian hagiographies. These differences will be pointed out whenever they are pertinent in regard to the specific themes and motifs that are discussed here.

An attempt at a definition of the comparative approach could be given in Brunel's words:

> La littérature comparée est l'art méthodique, par la recherche de liens d'analogie, de parenté et d'influence, de rapprocher la littérature des autres domaines de l'expression ou de la connaissance, ou bien les faits et les textes littéraires entre eux, distant ou non dans le temps et dans l'espace, pourvu qu'ils appartiennent à plusieurs langues ou plusieurs cultures, fissent-elles partie d'une même tradition, afin de mieux les décrire, les comprendre et les goûter.[19]

Thus, we intend to make use in the present dissertation of some of the methods of the comparative approach in order to situate Codex V in the context of fourth/fifth-century Coptic Egypt, comparing it to late antique Egyptian hagiographies. Some of these tools will be also used in our attempt to define the "horizon of expectations" of late antique Coptic readers. This will allow us to deal with Codex V in a reception perspective, trying to interpret it as late antique Coptic readers did.

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[18] Jean-Louis Haquette, *Lectures européennes: introduction à la pratique de la littérature comparée* (Rosny-sous-Bois: Éditions Bréal, 2005), 10.
[19] Pierre Brunel, *Qu'est-ce que la littérature comparée?* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1983), 150.

Indeed, the identification of many common themes and motifs between Codex V and late antique Egyptian hagiographies can shed light on the debate concerning the feeling of strangeness that some doctrines professed by certain NH texts may have caused in a Coptic audience; a strangeness that has even led certain scholars to suggest that NHC were actually part of a heresiological library,[20] as discussed in Chapter Two.[21] In the specific case of Codex V, a given Coptic audience could simply have shown interest for certain motifs present in fourth-and fifth-century Coptic literature – not being concerned necessarily with the doctrine of the text itself.[22] Recalling Samuel Rubenson's statement: "We should not today deny a fourth century monastic reader the capacity of selective reading[23] and intelligent interpretation. The variety of ideas within the Nag Hammadi library plainly excludes the possibility of a group professing everything found in the texts."[24]

3.3.1. The Importance of the Socio-Historical Context

Every theoretician consulted for the composition of this brief summary concerning the comparative literature approach emphasized the fundamental importance of taking into consideration the socio-historical context. In Terry Cochran's words:

> Sans une compréhension de l'histoire, on risque de se tromper, de vivre uniquement dans un monde idéal ou arbitraire (…) Or l'aspect qu'il faut retenir de cette première formulation de la pensée comparatiste, qui continue à habiter la discipline actuelle de la littérature comparée, concerne les tendances à réfléchir sur des questions historiques traversant de nombreuses traditions.[25]

And how is the socio-historical context fundamental for the comparative approach? Differently from other domains in literary and linguistic studies, the comparative approach is not concerned with one single historical, literary or linguistic tradition. According to Cochran: "c'est un domaine de réflexion sur les possibilités de comparer ces traditions

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[20] Säve-Söderbergh, "Holy Scriptures or Apologetic Documentation?"
[21] See section 2.4.
[22] As the forthcoming discussions in this dissertation will show, especially in Chapter 7 and in the general conclusion.
[23] The conclusion of this dissertation will deal with selective reading in more detail.
[24] Rubenson, *The Letters of Saint Antony*, 123.
[25] Cochran, *Plaidoyer pour une littérature comparée*, 16.18-19.

uniques, de comprendre leurs interactions et d'interroger les liens entre des œuvres individuelles et l'esprit humain en général."[26]

In the specific case of our dissertation, we intend to compare Codex V with fourth/fifth-century Egyptian hagiographies. It is imperative then to take into consideration the historical context that produced the texts that belong to this genre, i.e. Egyptian hagiographies. This context is linked to the same context that probably compiled NHC as a whole and Codex V in particular. We intend thus to include a brief chapter in which the religious-historical situation in fourth/fifth century Egypt is summarized. Since the most accepted theory concerning the owners of NHC claims that it was probably produced and/or belonged to a given monastic community – and a major part of our comparison corpus is composed of monastic sources – we also intend to discuss in particular the monastic context in fourth/fifth-century Egypt. The possibility of a monastic origin or a link between Coptic monasticism and the NHC is not the core of our dissertation however. Nevertheless, due to the importance of this discussion[27], we cannot ignore it completely; this is why we discuss this possibility – in the light of the comparison between Codex V and late antique Egyptian hagiographies and the theory of reception – in our general conclusion.

The consideration of the historical context in which the NHC were compiled and read is also important in regard to the shift from approaches that took into consideration only the original context of composition in Greek and its immediate context of circulation to the new approach we are suggesting here, which takes into consideration the contacts between NHC and late antique Coptic hagiographies as a means of defining the "horizon of expectations" of a given late antique Coptic audience.

3.3.2. Translations

Another important issue discussed by the comparative literature approach that is particularly pertinent to the present dissertation is the translation of texts. According to Susan Basnett:

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[26] Cochran, *Plaidoyer pour une littérature comparée*, 23.
[27] As already pointed out in chapter 2, a discussion that was at a certain rate resumed and summarized in Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Library*.

Comparative literature has traditionally claimed translation as a sub-category, but this assumption is now being questioned (…) translation is especially significant at moments of great cultural changes. Evan-Zohar argues that extensive translation activity takes place when a culture is in a period of transition: when it is expanding, when it needs renewal, when it is in a pre-revolutionary phase, then translation plays a vital part.[28]

Later, she adds that

the relationship between comparative literature and the study of translation has been a complex and problematic one. Translation has tended to be regarded as the poor relation, as an activity involving little talent and creativity, as something that could be carried out by trained hacks and financially rewarded accordingly.[29]

Bassbett's affirmation is particularly pertinent for scholars of early Christianity who deal with texts that have survived only through later translations or versions. As already discussed in our Introduction,[30] and also as scholarship on NHC clearly shows, the value accorded by scholars to such translations is sometimes not sufficiently high. In the specific case of NHC scholarship, the Coptic translations have generally been used as the last tool, the only alternative left to the study of Gnosticism.[31] The quest for the original text has even led to attempts to establish a retroversion of certain passages of the *Gospel of Thomas*[32] and *Eugnostos*.[33]

At any rate, NH texts are, generally speaking, a witness to the fact that certain texts produced during the second and third centuries proved to be interesting enough for a fourth-century Egyptian audience, to the point of being translated into Coptic and disseminated and transmitted in this context. When Basbett affirms that "translation is especially significant at

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[28] Bassnett, *Comparative Literature*, 10.
[29] Bassnett, *Comparative Literature*, 138.
[30] See our discussion on pages 3-4.
[31] Once again, see our discussion in pages 3-4.
[32] See Uwe-Karsten Plisch, *The Gospel of Thomas: Original Text with Commentary* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2008), especially page 35.
[33] See Demetrios Trakatellis, *The Transcendent God of Eugnostos. An Exegetical Contribution to the Study of the Gnostic Texts of Nag Hammadi, with a Retroversion of the Lost Original Greek Text of Eugnostos the Blessed* (Brookline [MA], Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1991).

moments of great cultural changes", one cannot avoid thinking about the fact that the NHC were probably compiled at a period of great socio-religious change in Egypt: the spread of Christianity in the most distant regions of the country and the reduction of traditional polytheist cults, the advent and growth of coenobitic monasticism and the adoption of Coptic itself as a literary language.[34]

Thus it is fundamental for the present dissertation – in which we have chosen to adopt a reception literary approach – to consider Coptic translations not as later and possibly corrupted versions of original Greek texts, but rather as bearers of a living literary tradition circulating and being consumed, and also reinterpreted, in late antiquite Coptic Egypt, interacting with other texts in the same cultural milieu.

Concerning this question, Emmel says that

> there is no compelling reason to exclude translations from consideration, as we might do in the case of modern literatures, generally speaking. In fact, there are good reasons to include translation literature within our purview, methodologically because often we cannot distinguish with certainty between translation literature and original Coptic literature, and also fundamentally because it is likely that the majority of Coptic speakers made no such distinction. Translated was for them, so far as we can tell, as much a part of 'Coptic literature' as was original literature, even if they knew (or merely thought they knew, misled by pseudepigraphy or misattribution) that the author of a given work was a non-Egyptian or a non-Coptic speaker. It is not certain that native Coptic speakers could distinguish between original and translated literature any more easily that we can, and quite probably they were much less motivated even to try.[35]

Emmel's observation deals with an important methodological question. According to him, as far as we know, texts that were translated into Coptic – and thus were presumably circulating in Late Antiquity along with native Coptic texts – did not necessarily have a different status

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[34] See Chapter 6. Even if it is known today that "paganism" continued to exist during the following centuries, it is extremely likely that it passed through a process of reduction and decline during the fourth century in Egypt. Recently, Blumell has provided a picture of the increase of Christians in late antique Oxyrhynchus by the analysis of the papyri found there, especially letters. See Lincoln H. Blumell, *Lettered Christians: Christians, Letters, and Late Antique Oxyrhynchus* (NTTSD 39; Leiden/Boston: E.J. Brill, 2012), 89- 162. For a survey on the augmentation of Christianity over Paganism, see Ramsey MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1999).
[35] Emmel, "Coptic Literature in the Byzantine and Early Islamic World," 93.

from native Coptic texts. As Emmel stresses, Coptic readers were probably not even concerned with this distinction. Consequently, a reception approach becomes even more justifiable: the late antique Coptic readers that had access to Codex V texts probably considered them – and NH texts in general – as part of the literary repertoire that they had at their disposal, reading and interpreting them in the light of their 'horizon of expectations'.

3.4. The Literary Genres

Comparative approaches try to define the literary genre of a text for a better comparison between two different texts or corpora thereof. For Brunel, the existence of common themes allows the definition of a literary genre.[36]

> In Jean-Louis Haquette's words:
>
> La notion de genre, entendue au minimum comme une taxonomie des formes littéraires, remonte aux origines de la critique (…) Elle s'appuie en effet sur des textes déjà produits, qu'elle a pour but de classer par affinités. Mais le genre ne se limite pas à une fonction classificatrice ou descriptive. Bien souvent, les réflexions critiques sur les genres visent à légitimer un certain nombre de textes considérés comme des modèles, ou à exclure un certain nombre de pratiques. Le genre a donc une valeur normative et prescriptive.[37]

Later, he adds that "On pourrait ainsi dire que l'étude des genres littéraires est par définition comparatiste, au sens large du mot, puisqu'elle suppose la constitution de rapprochements entre des œuvres dont on suppose qu'elles ont suffisamment de traits communs pour appartenir à des ensembles plus vastes".[38]

When the comparative approach grants such importance to literary genres and their definitions, it is in a certain way moving towards Reception Theory as it was conceived by

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[36] Brunel, *Qu'est-ce que la littérature comparée?*, 118.
[37] Haquette, *Lectures européennes: introduction à la pratique de la littérature comparée*, 87.
[38] Haquette, *Lectures européennes: introduction à la pratique de la littérature comparée*, 92.

Jauss, since, as mentioned above,[39] the first way to define the 'horizon of expectations' of a group of readers is "through familiar norms of the genre."[40]

When dealing with Ancient texts, the attempt to define or approach literary genres may be problematic, as we cannot know for sure if certain genres in Antiquity were clearly recognized. What we have in general are modern definitions. In the specific case of apocalyptic literature, the definitions of the genre in question suggested by different scholars or groups of scholars[41] are generally based on the authority and model represented by a specific text, such as the book of *Revelation*, or a group of texts, such as those normally labeled as "Jewish apocalypses", i.e. the *books of Enoch*, certain chapters of *Daniel*, 4*Ezra*, etc.

Once more, in the words of Haquette, "La définition des genres repose aussi bien souvent sur l'autorité d'une œuvre élevée au rang de modèle, ou d'une théorie critique, qui prend force de loi, sans qu'on n'en examine plus les présupposés".[42] It seems that this is the case concerning the scholarship on apocalyptic literature and correlated themes and motifs. Normally, scholarship on apocalyptic literature has been so focused on these "model" texts that it has forgotten to take into consideration variant or "marginal" texts that also make abundant use of themes and motifs normally linked to the so-called apocalyptic literature. As regards this dissertation, this is notably the case of Egyptian hagiographic literature, which constantly makes use of many fundamental themes and subjects generally associated with apocalyptic literature, but which has almost never been analysed in the light of this genre.[43]

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[39] See section 3.2.2 above.

[40] English translation of Jauss' words in Holub, *Reception Theory*, 60.

[41] The most famous attempt at a definition of the apocalyptic genre is certainly that made by the group directed by John J. Collins, whose results were firstly published in the edition 14 of *Semeia*: John J. Collins, ed., *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre* (Semeia 14, 1979); this definition was updated in the same journal a few years later: Adela Yarbro Collins, ed., *Early Christian Apocalypticism: Genre and Social Setting* (Semeia 36, 1986). Other scholars, however, have also suggested definitions or elements that could lead to a definition or recognition of the genre, such as David Russel, *Divine Disclosure: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1962); David Russel, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964); and Christopher Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1982), for example.

[42] Haquette, *Lectures européennes: introduction à la pratique de la littérature comparée*, 101.

[43] As far as we know, there are only three articles that have discussed, *en passant*, the use of literary themes and motifs normally associated to apocalyptic by Egyptian hagiographic literature: David Brakke, "Canon

In other cases, the patterns of "apocalyptic literature" suggested by certain scholars were so rigidly applied to other texts that the results of their analysis were artificial or not conclusive; we could mention the example pointed out by Brian Daley, concerning "early Christian Apocalyptic and the person of Christ."[44] According to him, the study of apocalyptic literature and thought are so influenced by the works of genre definition, such as that organized by Collins, to the point that scholars have the tendency to apply the conclusions that are pertinent to Jewish and Christian apocalyptic of the first century to the analysis of posterior Christian texts. He provides a specific example, the so-called "protestation literature",[45] that normally could not be applied to patristic literature and other later Christian texts. These texts, however, widely make use of literary motifs that are generally associated with apocalyptic literature to exalt the person of Christ, for example; their eschatology is not concerned with a protest against an impious instituted government that rules over the Christians, but rather with the future return of the Saviour.[46]

Formation and Social Conflict in Fourth-Century Egypt," *HThR* 87 (1997): 395-419; David Frankfurter, "The Legacy of Jewish Apocalypses in Early Christianity: Regional Trajectories," in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity* (ed. J. Vanderkam and W. Adler; CRINT 4; Assen/Minneapolis: Van Gorcum/Fortress Press, 1996), 129-200; Alexander H. Golitzin, "Heavenly Mysteries: Themes from Apocalyptic Literature in the Macarian Homilies and Other Selected Fourth Century Ascetical Writers," in *Apocalyptic Thought in Early Christianity* (ed. R.J. Daly; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic/Holy Cross Press, 2009), 174-192. Himmelfarb mentions the *Bohairic Life of Pachomius* in her inventory of ancient texts containing journeys to hell, without providing any discussion though; see Martha Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell: An Apocalyptic Form in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), 28-29. Finally, Rosenstiehl points out certain literary contacts between Codex V *Apocalypse of Paul* and Pachomian literature; see, for example Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 40, 45, 47, 61-62, 93-94. The author of the present dissertation, in his turn, has presented a few papers in which he discusses the subject, emphasising the literary contacts between Egyptian hagiography and the apocalyptic literature, either in Colloquia focused on the NHC (Dias Chaves, "The Apocalyptic Worldview"), or in Colloquia focused on Patristic Literature (Dias Chaves, "The 'Apocalyptic Imagination'"). In any case, the number of studies concerning the subject is limited.

[44] Brian Daley, "'Faithful and True': Early Christian Apocalyptic and the Person of Christ," in *Apocalyptic Thought in Early Christianity* (ed. R.J. Daly; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic/Holy Cross Press, 2009), 106-126.

[45] By this, he means literature protesting against the impious domination by Rome over Israel and Christians, for example, a literature that aimed at exhorting people to rebel against the power that ruled over Israel or Christians. Such protests would later be materialized in revolts of the Jews against the Romans, for example, such as that lead by Bar Kokhba in 132 a.D. See Peter Schäfer, *The Bar Kokhba War Reconsidered* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

[46] That being said, one must reflect on the differences between apocalyptic literature, apocalyptic eschatology and apocalypticism. The distinction could be summarized as follows: "'apocalypse' as a literary genre, 'apocalyptic eschatology' as a particular religious perspective and structure of thought, and 'apocalypticism'

Given that, one should ask how the study of the apocalyptic literary genre could help in the comparison between Codex V and late antique Egyptian hagiographies. As the present dissertation intends to demonstrate, late antique Egyptian hagiographies make abundant use of themes and motifs generally associated with the apocalyptic literary genre: luminous epiphanies, otherworldly journeys, ecstatic religious experiences, revelations mediated by heavenly beings, etc. Similarly, Codex V contains five texts that also make ample use of many of these themes and motifs;[47] moreover, Codex V has at least four texts that present the title of "apocalypse" in the manuscript, and at least two of them (the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the *Apocalypse of Adam*) do correspond to the definitions of an apocalypse. Thus, nothing could be more natural than to base our comparison on themes and motifs normally associated with apocalyptic literature, a characteristic shared by both of our corpora. This does not mean, however, that our comparison must be limited to the sphere of the apocalyptic literary genre. Other motifs that are not necessarily associated with this genre will also be taken into consideration in our comparison.

Having said this, we must call attention to the fact that, as Haquette observes, a given text can sometimes be read, understood or compared belonging to more than one literary genre: "La question du genre ne peut donc se poser qu'au sein d'un système générique, qui régit des partages entre des genres différents."[48] This is particularly pertinent for our dissertation, since we are dealing with texts, in both corpora (Codex V and fourth/fifth-

as a sociological ideology. While these three concepts are closely related to each other, their referents do not necessarily coincide" (Collins, *Apocalypse: the Morphology of a Genre*, 3). Apocalyptic literature is a genre formed by "writings and ideas which were widespread about the turn of the era in Palestine, in the Israelite diaspora and in early Christian circles; but which can also appear in similar form in other religious situations and mental climates" (Klaus Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic: A Polemical Work on a Neglected Area of Biblical Studies and its Damaging Effects on Theology and Philosophy* [London: S.C.M. Press, 1972], 13). Moving forward, we could mention the well known definition of "apocalypse" provided by J.J. Collins and his team: "'Apocalypse' is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world" (Collins, *Apocalypse: the Morphology of a Genre*, 9). While "the label 'apocalyptic eschatology' should be reserved for the eschatology found in apocalypses or recognized by analogy with them" (Collins, *Apocalypse*: *the Morphology of a Genre*, 4). The last expression, "apocalypticism", could be seen as the apocalyptic ideology or its sociological expression, the sociological phenomenon related to apocalyptic literature and eschatology (Collins, *Apocalypse: the Morphology of a Genre*, 4).

[47] Dias Chaves, *Between Apocalyptic and Gnosis*, 45-66 and 124-126.

[48] Haquette, *Lectures européennes: introduction à la pratique de la littérature comparée*, 106.

century Egyptian hagiographic literature), that are not necessarily apocalypses – in other words, that do not belong to the apocalyptic literary genre – but rather make use, on different levels and modes, of literary themes and motifs normally associated with the genre in question. In the specific case of late antique Egyptian hagiographies, one can notice the mixture of two genres, the hagiographic and the apocalyptic. The texts selected to be part of our corpus of comparison are, strictly speaking, hagiographies, but their use of themes and motifs normally associated with apocalyptic literature is considerable. We have thus a clear example of two different genres interacting in this group of texts.

From these considerations concerning literary themes and motifs generally associated with the apocalyptic literary genre will emerge the comparative issues that will guide our comparison between Codex V and late antique Coptic hagiographies. These are the themes and motifs that we hope to show are shared by Codex V and late antique Egyptian hagiographies. We also hope that the identification and analysis of these similarities will throw light on the discussion concerning the context of compilation and reception of the NHC, a much-debated question nowadays.

3.5. The Elements of Comparison

A common concern among the theoreticians of the comparative literature approach consists in the fact that many scholars who make use of the approach discussed here do not specify the terms and elements of comparison; in other words, they sometimes use terms with different significations, such as 'theme' and 'motif', as if they were synonyms.

Consequently, it is necessary to define these two terms precisely. In our view a theme is a generic element, inside which are contained various motifs, which represents more specific elements. In other words, a theme is formed of one or many motifs. Therefore, we should look for a common theme among texts that are part of a given literary corpus or among texts that are supposed to be compared. Once this general theme is identified, we can look for more precise points of contact, i.e. literary motifs. According to Brunnel " Le motif est tout d'abord un élément concret, qui s'oppose à l'abstraction et à la généralité du thème (…)

Tomachevski a proposé d'appeler « motif » la plus petite particule du matériau thématique."[49]

In the specific case of the present dissertation, a few themes have been chosen in order to guide the comparison between Codex V and fourth/fifth-century Egyptian hagiographic literature; these have then been further divided in more specific units, i.e. motifs. This framework leads us to the following plan:[50]

1. Ascension to the Heavens

    1a. being snatched up

    1b. "whether in the body or out of the body"

    1c. the visionary is greeted by heavenly beings

    1d. the ⲧⲉⲗⲱⲛⲏⲥ in Codex V: from the Toll Collector in late antique Egypt to the Heavenly Beings who Disturb the Ascension of Souls

2. Angelology and mediated revelations

    2a. epiphanies

        2a.1. the Old Man in the *Apocalypse of Paul* (NH V 22, 25-30)

        2a.2. Jesus' second appearance in the *First Apocalypse of James* (NH V 30, 28-31,6) and Jesus' encounter with James in the *Second Apocalypse of James* (NH V 56, 14-20)

        2a.3. three celestial beings in the *Apocalypse of Adam* (NH V 65, 22-34)

    2b. angels and other otherworldly beings

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[49] Brunel, *Qu'est-ce que la littérature comparée?*, 128.
[50] Each number indicates a theme. Each theme is subdivided in motifs, and each motif inside a theme is indicated by a letter.

2b.1. otherworldly mediators

2b.2. other angels and celestial beings

3. (motifs associated with) accounts of visionary experiences

3a. preparation for visionary experiences

3b. dreams

3c. mountains as a favorable place for revelations

3d. the reactions in relation to the experience

3e. secrecy and transmission

4. other motifs generally associated with apocalyptic literature

4a. judgment and final destiny of souls

4b. clairvoyance and prophecy

5. other motifs

5a. the conversation between the master and his disciple(s)

5b. the "ten heavens" scheme in the *Apocalypse of Paul*

Once the theoretical framework is settled, as well as the themes and motifs that will guide our comparative approach in the task of defining the 'horizon of expectations' of late antique Coptic readers, we may proceed to Chapter 4, in which we will discuss Codex V, its material characteristics and other issues related to it, such as its characters.

Codex V

4.1. Introduction

In this section, we intend to discuss important issues related to Codex V that are particularly important for the present dissertation. We will provide a description of the editions of Codex V and a summary of its essential material aspects. Nevertheless, there is no need of a full material description of the volume, since this task has already been accomplished by others, and would not contribute any new knowledge. However, in regard to Codex V material characteristics, we will focus on one particular feature that has not yet been discussed in depth: the titles of its treatises as they have been preserved in the manuscript.

Subsequently, the present dissertation will discuss the characters to whom Codex V treatises are attributed. This kind of discussion has already been undertaken by scholars who have tried to analyse Codex V as a literary unit;[1] however, as pointed out in section 2.6 above, these discussions have been misled from the very outset, since they take as a *point de départ* the original context of composition of Codex V texts, when this discussion must adopt a reception theory perspective. As we will see in section 4.3.2, such discussion must take into consideration how the characters to whom Codex V texts are attributed were seen and understood in late antique Coptic Egypt, the environment responsible for the compilation of the volume that concerns us here.

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In 1963, Böhlig and Labib have published the *editio princeps* of the last four treatises of Codex V (*The Apocalypse of Paul*, the *First Apocalypse of James*, the *Second Apocalypse of*

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[1] Namely, Morard, "Les apocalypses du codex V de Nag Hammadi" and Kaler in Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 149-153. See also our comments in section 2.6 above.

James and the *Apocalypse of Paul*), making clear reference to the word "apocalypse" in their titles.[2] They have been published again in the "Nag Hammadi Studies" collection in 1979, in a volume together with Codex VI and *Papyrus Berolinensis* 8502, 1 and 4.[3] *Eugnostos*, generally associated with the *Sophia of Jesus Christ*, have been published in 1991 in the same "Nag Hammadi Studies" collection.[4] All the texts of Codex V have been published in the "Textes" series of the "Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi" collection.[5] Finally, in the years 2000, German translations of the texts of Codex V were also published in the collection "Nag Hammadi Deutsch."[6]

Let us now proceed to the discussion of certain material characteristics of Codex V.

4.2. Some Considerations on Material Characteristics of Codex V

A complete material description of Codex V can be found in the Facsimile edition,[7] and in the codicological analysis of the volume in question published in the "Nag Hammadi Studies" collection.[8] Thus, there is no need to provide a full report on the material characteristics of the volume that concerns us here; we want only to point out a couple of important issues.

Codex V is composed of 84 pages of text; page 68 was left blank by the scribe, but is included in the numbering of modern editions, which increases the number of numbered pages to 85. The state of preservation of the manuscript is irregular; considerable parts of what we could imagine to be key passages in some texts – such as the very beginning of the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the end of the *First Apocalypse of James* – are missing due to lacunas.

[2] Alexander Böhlig and Pahor Labib, *Koptisch-gnostische Apokalypsen aus Codex V von Nag Hammadi im Koptischen Museum zu Alt-Kairo* (Halle-Wittenberg: Martin-Luther-Universität, 1963).
[3] Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*.
[4] Douglas M. Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices III, 3-4 and V, 1 with Papyrus Berolinensis 8502,3 and Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 1081- Eugnostos and The Sophia of Jesus Christ* (NHS 27; Leiden/New York/København/Köln: E.J. Brill, 1991).
[5] For *Eugnostos*: Pasquier, *Eugnoste* and Pasquier, *Eugnoste: Commentaire*; for the *Apocalypse of Paul*: Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*; for the *First and Second Apocalypses of James*: Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*; and, for the *Apocalypse of Adam*: Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*.
[6] Hans-Martin Schenke, Hans-Gebhard Bethge and Ursula U. Kaiser, eds., *Nag Hammadi Deutsch.* 2 vols (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2001).
[7] James M. Robinson, *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices: Codex V* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975).
[8] Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*.

However, if compared to other NHC – such as codices X and XI, for example – Codex V state of preservation is not that bad. It should also be stressed that the quality of the papyrus used in the confection of Codex V is very poor. In Parrott's words: "This resulted in a good deal of unevenness in the scribe's copying as he attempted to adapt to it. It appears that the scribe left page 68 blank because he found it unsuited and inappropriate for writing, since it is a *protokollon*."[9] Also concerning the quality of Codex V papyrus, Robinson observed that "In general, the quality of the papyrus is relatively poor; when fibres are missing from the surface layer exposing those below, the latter are often inscribed, indicating that the defect existed when the codex was written."[10] These features demonstrate the "poor" character of Codex V and could actually say something about its origin and mostly about its receiver; if we recall the discussion on late antique Christian books and the costs of their production in the second chapter of the present dissertation,[11] we could imagine that the owner of Codex V was probably not very wealthy. One could also imagine that the *scriptorium* that produced Codex V was not aware or did not have access to more developed and expensive techniques of codex production. At any rate, these suppositions are no more than hypotheses at this time. And even if these questions are interesting and represent intriguing avenues for the study of Codex V in a late antique Coptic perspective, we do not have time to discuss them here, since our approach is literary rather than material.

Doresse, the first scholar who analysed the NHC, believed that codices IV, V, VI, VIII and XI were all copied by the same scribe.[12] Further research, however, demonstrated that the scribe who copied Codex V did not take part in the copying of any other NH codex.[13]

In the Facsimile edition of Codex V, Robinson already pointed out that

> the outer edges of the leather were folded over the inscribed cartonnage, which lined the reinforced spine and the front and back covers. The small part of this inscribed cartonnage which has survived has been removed from the cover (…)

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[9] Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 4.
[10] Robinson, *The Facsimile Edition: Codex V, XI*.
[11] See section 2.2 above.
[12] Jean Doresse, *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics: An Introduction to the Gnostic Coptic Manuscripts Discovered at Chenoboskion* (New York/London: Viking Press/ Hollis and Carter, 1960), 141-142.
[13] Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI, 1-2*.

It involves Greek fragments containing official accounts of Middle and Upper Egypt from the nomes Antaiopolites, Hermopolites, Kousites and Panapolites.[14]

Photos of these Greek fragments were published in the introduction of the Facsimile edition of NHC later.[15] If these fragments can provide any clues concerning the origins of Codex V, they may indicate a provenance that points out to somewhere in Middle or Upper Egypt. In other words, they may indicate that Codex V was produced somewhere near these regions. According to Barns, Browne and Shelton "the best preserved papyri from the cover of Codex V come from what must have been an extensive series of official accounts in money and kind, dealing with an area at least as large as the Thebaid."[16]

They go on to observe that some fragments

(…) were written at a time when the *provincia Thebaidos* was divided into two procuratorships, and presumably all parts of the text are to be dated very closely together. The Thebaid may have become a separate province as early as February A.D. 295; it had certainly done so, and been divided into two ἐπιτροπαί, by September of 298, which is therefore the most cautious terminus post quem for this text. It has been suggested that the two subdivisions had been given up by 323, and if so that year forms a terminus ante, but the evidence is very slight: see P. Beatty Panop. Pp. xv-xxi, CPR V 6.7 n. At least those portions of the accounts preserved in **22** (c) and **23** (c) were concerned with revenues from or for both the Upper and the Lower Thebaid. This suggests that they were drawn up by or intended for use in an office higher than that of the procuratorship of either division. The most obvious instance would be that of the *praeses Thebaidos*.[17]

The material evidence thus points to an Upper Egyptian origin. This assumption is supported by the investigation of Codex V Coptic dialect, which can be defined in general terms as being dominantly Sahidic. Nevertheless, as one might expect, Codex V, similarly to the NHC in general, is not written in a pure dialect. The first analyses suggested Fayumic influences;

[14] Robinson, *The Facsimile Edition: Codex V, XI*.
[15] Robinson. *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices: Introduction*.
[16] Barns, Browne and Shelton, *Nag Hammadi Codices*, 25.
[17] Barns, Browne and Shelton, *Nag Hammadi Codices,* 25. One must note, however, that the *terminus ante quem* suggested in the quoted paragraph concerns the fragments used in the cover of Codex V, and not Codex V itself. In other words, these fragments were probably not produced after the year 323. If this suggestion is correct, or at least likely, it means that the production of Codex V itself may have taken place after this date. But, as the quoted paragraph itself states, the evidence is slight and we remain in the field of speculation.

Böhlig believed that there was a considerable influence of that dialect in the texts,[18] while Schenke believed that Codex V had only sporadic traces of Fayumic, being written in a pre-classical Sahidic with substantial Subachmimic characteristics.[19] Both positions were nuanced by Parrott, who affirmed that a "somewhat different, and perhaps more precise, understanding of the dialectal situation in these codices (he was referring to Codices V and VI) will result from the current discussion of the origins of Coptic dialects and their relationship to each other".[20] More recently, Funk[21] and Kaler[22] have also emphasized the occasional presence of Fayumic elements. Kaler, in his commentary on the *Apocalypse of Paul*, also found some Bohairic traces in this particular text.[23] In Funk's own words:

> Probably the clearest case of a homogeneous codex in the Nag Hammadi Library, Codex V is also one of the rare volumes that comprise only texts of northern origin (…) But even in the amount of Sahidic re-editing that these tractates experienced (…) they are very similar. A second important feature of homogeneous character of Codex V seems to be the presence throughout the codex of occasional Fayyumicisms. As these probably call for an explanation separate from the origin of the texts, one may assume there was an intermediate Fayyumic period in the history of these texts."[24]

Funk's commentary shows both that Codex V is a homogeneous volume, if compared to other NHC, and that it manifests northern dialect origins.

4.2.1. Paratextual evidence

If we take an attentive look at the activity of the scribe of Codex V, we notice that, besides the interventions he possibly performed in some of the titles of the treatises he was copying – as we will discuss shortly – he also made some glosses in the margins of the volume; these

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[18] Böhlig and Labib, *Koptisch-gnostische Apokalypsen*, 11-14.
[19] Hans-Martin Schenke, "Review of Böhlig-Labib *Koptisch-gnostische Apokalypsen*". *OL* 61 (1966): 36-37.
[20] Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 2.
[21] Funk, "The Linguistic Aspect of Classifying the Nag Hammadi Codices," 139-140.
[22] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 150.
[23] See, for example, the discussion concerning the verb ϩⲱⲙ (Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 196-202). See also section 6.3.2 in the present dissertation.
[24] Funk, "The Linguistic Aspect of Classifying the Nag Hammadi Codices," 139-140.

glosses may be a first clue about the reception of Codex V and its texts in a late antique Coptic environment. In this section, we will point out and briefly comment these glosses, leaving to the next section the comments on the titles. We call these glosses "paratextual evidence," since they are not part of the texts themselves, being added by a scribe, that of Codex V himself, or maybe another scribe who copied a previous codex that served as the "original" to the copy of Codex V.

It must also be said that at the present stage of the research, one may not be able to explain the very significance of all the glosses that we are about to cite. At any rate, bringing this paratexual evidence to light is of some pertinence, as some of them have not yet been the object of scholarship; and at least in one specific case – as we will see in what follows – this paratextual evidence shows a possible connection between Codex V and another famous late antique Coptic codex.

Let us start by the errors listed by Parrott[25] in his description of Codex V; he pointed out those corrected and those not corrected by the scribe.

Those corrected by the scribe:

1- Omission of letters or words; these omissions were corrected by insertions above the line where the omission took place (NH V 6, 6.24; 26, 6.10.18; 27, 3; 28, 8.22; 31, 9.13, 56, 23). Moreover, he states that a whole line seems to have been inserted in 24, 10.[26] He is referring in this specific case to the title at the beginning of the *First Apocalypse of James*, which we will discuss later, in section 4.2.2;

2- Omission of letter corrected by the addition of the missing letter into the body of the word (NH V 27, 3);[27]

3- Letter(s) erased by dotting (NH V 7, 25-26; 7, 33; 85, 5);[28]

4- Letter(s) erased by crossing out (NH V 14, 4; 73, 7);[29]

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[25] Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 4-5.
[26] Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 4.
[27] Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 4.
[28] Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 4.
[29] Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 4.

5- Letter(s) erased by both dotting and crossing out (NH V 60, 3; 81, 6);[30]

6- Letters erased and replaced by letters over the line (NH V 41, 22; 77, 3);[31]

7- Letters corrected by changing the wrong letter into the correct one (NH V 26, 7.10; 27, 3; 28, 8; 31, 4; 51, 10; 53, 1 [?]).[32]

Those not corrected by the scribe:

1- Omission of letter(s) (NH V 4, 16; 8, 10; 27, 13; 33, 5; 36, 13.22; 45, 22; 49, 20; 51, 14; 54, 21; 55, 8; 56, 22; 59, 22).[33] The case of 27, 13 is peculiar, since it seems that an entire line is missing. This missing line's content would be the changing of person in the discourse, since in 27, 12 Jesus' discourse ends and in 27, 14 James's reply starts. Thus a phrase that would mark the change of who is speaking, from Jesus to James would be necessary, something like <ⲡⲉϫⲉ ⲓ̈ⲁⲕⲱⲃⲟⲥ ϫⲉ ⲁⲣⲁ ⲟⲩⲛ>. On this matter, however, Veilleux states that

> en 27, 13, le copiste a certainement laissé tomber quelque chose. Il n'y a aucun autre exemple, dans toute la 1ApocJac, de changement de locuteur sans que cela soit explicitement indiqué. Mais il faut admettre que restituer une ligne complète est un peu artificiel. Nous le faisons afin de conserver la numérotation désormais reçue des lignes du texte.[34]

Veilleux's position is prudent and raises a very pertinent question concerning the artificiality of restoring an entire line. Indeed, in the *First Apocalypse of James* in Codex V, this would be the only example – in the parts of the text that have been preserved – of a change of speaker without an explicit indication thereof. This is not the case, however, in the Codex Tchacos' version, where "quotation formulae" ("Jesus said", etc.) are often missing".[35] But in the specific parallel passage in Codex Tchacos (CT 14, 6) the change of speaker is not missing, but only an indication of "he" is

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[30] Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 4.
[31] Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 4.
[32] Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 4.
[33] Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 5.
[34] Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 74, footnote 24.
[35] Kasser et al., *The Gospel of Judas*, 116.

expressed: "He answered and said."[36] At any rate, it seems that the possibility of the scribe missing an entire line is the most plausible one in the case of Codex V.

Returning to the omissions, Parrott points out that "also material has been omitted between 24, 18a and 18b, and between 47, 20 and 21, although the extent of the omission in each case is uncertain."[37]

2- Unnecessary letters, most likely due to dittography: 25, 4; 33, 19; 35, 21; 49, 20; 96, 6-9; 84, 23.[38]

3- Mistaken letters: 23, 30; 39, 19.20; 70, 20; 72, 21; 74, 12.[39]

Now, we shall list the cases of glosses in Codex V.

Marginal or interlinear glosses that attest a transdialectal process:

1- 33, 11: ⲥⲧⲉⲣⲉⲥⲓⲙⲟⲥ / ⲛ̄ⲕϣⲗⲡ;[40]

2- 38, 8: ⲍ at the margin plus the signal of insertion between lines 8 and 9;

3- 41, 5: the possible trace of a letter;

4- 80-81: Marking of numbers S and B (80, 9; 80,20; 81,2.14.18);

5- 81, 16: ϭⲏⲡⲉ / ⲕⲗⲟⲟⲗⲉ;

6- 81, 18: ⲛⲟⲩϫⲉ ⲛⲟⲩϫϭ;

7- 81, 19: ⲕⲗⲟⲟⲗⲉ / ϭⲏⲡⲉ.

These glosses have already been pointed out by others scholars. Parrott, for example, describes them as follows:

Of considerable interest in this codex are the glosses, apparently in the scribal hand, that provide alternative letters (81, 18; 82, 12) and words (33, 11; 34, 23; 78, 10; 79, 10; 80, 1.4; 81, 16.19). All but those at 33, 11 and 34, 23 are written

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[36] Kasser et al., *The Gospel of Judas*, 129.
[37] Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 5.
[38] Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 5.
[39] Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 5.
[40] For this case in particular, see picture 3 – Appendix 1.

above the appropriate letter or word. In the case of 33, 11 and 34, 23 (apparently) a Greek loan-word in the text is glossed by a Coptic expression in the margin, to which the reader is referred by a special mark that appears both over the glossed word and in the margin. Böhlig reasonably suggests that the individual letter glosses may be explained by the linguistic uncertainty of the scribe, noting that in 81, 18 the alternative letter has no etymological basis. He also proposes that the glosses of whole words are for clarification.[41] But this does not explain 81, 16 and 81, 19, where the same two words (ϭⲏⲡⲉ and ⲕⲗⲟⲟⲗⲉ) are alternatively glosses for, and glossed by, each other. It may be that at least some of the glosses represent another text tradition to which the scribe had access. Another kind of gloss is the placing of numeral signs either over or (at the end of a line) next to the written number. These all occur in V, 5".[42]

In light of what has been presented above, it seems that two hypotheses could be formulated to explain these hesitations between Sahidic and Bohairic:[43]

1- These marginal or interlinear glosses/corrections could be linked to the transposition of texts written in a Northern dialect, i.e. Bohairic, into the dialectal norm of the South, i.e. Sahidic; the scribe sometimes keeps the Bohairic form adding the Sahidic form in the margin or the interline, and sometimes he does the opposite.

2- The case of ⲥⲧⲉⲣⲉⲥⲓⲙⲟⲥ/ⲛ̄ⲕⲱⲗⲡ is particular, since ⲛ̄ⲕⲱⲗⲡ is a Northern word (the Sahidic equivalent would be ⲛ̄ϫⲓⲟⲩⲉ); if the pattern described above was being strictly followed by the scribe one would expect to see in the margin exactly the Sahidic equivalent. Instead of that, we find the word ⲥⲧⲉⲣⲉⲥⲓⲙⲟⲥ. If we consider the likely possibility that the scribe was being more or less faithful to the "original" copy he was following, in this particular case, ⲛ̄ⲕⲱⲗⲡ would be in the "original" and ⲥⲧⲉⲣⲉⲥⲓⲙⲟⲥ the equivalent chosen by the scribe. The fact that he used a word that is not frequently attested in Coptic is intriguing,[44] but

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[41] Böhlig and Labib, *Koptisch-gnostische Apokalypsen*, 11.
[42] Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 5.
[43] I owe the formulation of these explanations to the help of my advisor, Louis Painchaud.
[44] Besides those of Codex V, Wolf-Peter Funk points out – in his personal concordances – thirteen occurences of ⲥⲧⲉⲣⲉⲥⲓⲙⲟⲥ in what we could call Coptic Gnostic codices, all of them in Codex Bruce - four (87, 1.7.13.22) - and Codex Askew – nine, all in book IV of the *Pistis Sophia* (PS3 263, 17; PS4 359, 24; 360, 3; 361, 8; 362, 13; 363, 13; 364, 13; 365, 20; 365, 21).

approximates Codex V to the Askew and Bruce Codices where we can find the other known attestations of the word in question. Despite the fact that we are now able to identify this specific philological proximity between Codex V and the forementioned Coptic *corpora*, we are not yet able to determine the precise nature of this relation at the present stage of research.

At any rate, given this evidence, we could speculate whether the texts contained in Codex V were copied from one single volume. If the answer is positive, the compiler responsible for the arrangement and the ordering of the texts would not be the scribe of Codex V himself, but a previous one. Thus in this case, the work of the scribe of Codex V was just to copy the texts from their "original" codex transcribing them into a Southern dialect.

Let us now see the other types of scribal interventions.

Glosses introduced into the text (The *Apocalypse of Adam*):

1- 65,9: ⲏ̄ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧϥ̄

2- 83,6: ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲧⲟⲩ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ

Once these features in the manuscript of Codex V have been discussed, we can now proceed to the discussion of another important aspect concerning the activity of its scribe, i.e. the titles used in the manuscript.

4.2.2. The Titles in the Manuscript of Codex V[45]

Another important aspect concerning the material characteristic of Codex V – which could have direct implications for its literary unity – is related to the titles given to its tractates in the manuscript. According to the present stage of the Codex V manuscript, it is possible to affirm that at least four texts in the volume have a title at the beginning – the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the (*First*) *Apocalypse of James,* the (*Second*) *Apocalypse of James*, and the *Apocalypse*

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[45] Some of the characteristics described and discussed in this section have already been covered in Julio Cesar Dias Chaves, "Scribal Intervention in the Titles of Nag Hammadi Codex V," *JA* 4 (2016): 235-253.

of Adam. The beginning of the first treatise of Codex V, normally called *Eugnostos*, was not preserved. According to the present state of conservation of the manuscript, it is possible to state as well that four texts have a title at the end (*Eugnostos*, the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the *First Apocalypse of James* and the *Apocalypse of Adam*). The end of the *Second Apocalypse of James* is damaged; under the line 32 of page 63 – that would presumably be the last line of the texts – Böhlig saw what could be traces of a another line – that would be line 33 of page 63 – that could indicate that this text also had a title at the end.[46] However, Wolf-Peter Funk's rigorous analysis of the manuscript proved that the traces at the end of the tractate in question are rests of decoration signs.[47] Veilleux also states that the *Second Apocalypse of James* does not have a title at the end in Codex V.[48]

Before discussing the situation of the titles of certain texts in Codex V in particular, we must emphasise that the common position of scholarship[49] – as mentioned above – consists in affirming that generally speaking the scribes who copied NHC did not interfere in the titles of the treatises they were copying. This position is however concerned with the codices in general; we are about to see that, at least in the specific case of Codex V, there is enough evidence to question this statement. A preliminary analysis tends to show that the same scribe who copied the texts also wrote the titles, which is important for the continuation of our discussion.

We can now examine the particular situation of the titles of three texts in Codex V (*Apocalypse of Adam*, the *First Apocalypse of James* and *Eugnostos*), beginning with the easiest case and finishing with the more hypothetical one. We will not discuss in detail the

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[46] Böhlig and Labib, *Koptisch-gnostische Apokalypsen aus Codex V*, 85. Böhlig even restores what would be thus the presumable title at the end: ⲧ[ⲁⲡⲟⲕⲁⲗⲩⲯⲓⲥ ⲛ̄ⲓ̈ⲁⲕⲱⲃⲟⲥ] (Böhlig and Labib, *Koptisch-gnostische Apokalypsen aus Codex V*, 85).

[47] Wolf-Peter Funk, *Die zweite Apokalypse des Jakobus aus Nag-Hammadi-Codex V* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1976), 54; see also Poirier, "Titres et sous-titres," 371.

[48] Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 158.

[49] This is Poirier's general opinion (Poirier, "Titres et sous-titres," 339-383), shared by Buzi (Buzi, *Titoli e autori nella tradizione copta*, 83). Poirier, however, states that the title of the *First Apocalypse of James* was indeed added later (Poirier, "Titres et sous-titres," 349.370).

titles of the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the *Second Apocalypses of James*, since they do not present any peculiarities.

<center>*</center>

An interesting situation marks the title at the beginning of the *Apocalypse of Adam*: it is written on the top of the page, almost aligned with the codex pagination (see picture 1 – Appendix 1). The *Second Apocalypse of James* ends exactly at the bottom of page 63, which is clearly due to an effort made by the scribe: since the end of the codex was imminent, he starts writing more lines per page; moreover, we can imagine that starting a text at the top of a new page was desirable for esthetic purposes, giving a more or less wealthy look to Codex V. However, the initial title of the *Apocalypse of Adam* is not written where one would expect it to be, i.e. the first line of page 64: in actual fact it is almost aligned with the pagination of the codex, an unusual place for a title.

If we take into consideration other examples among the NHC, we can affirm at least that a title aligned with the pagination is unexpected. In the case of Codex I, the first text, the *Apocryphon of James,* has no title at the beginning; the other text that starts at the top of a page, the *Tripartite Tractate*, has no title at the beginning either. In the case of Codex II, there are two texts that begin at the top of a page, the first tractate of the codex, *The Apocryphon of John* and the *Book of Thomas* (II, 138); in both cases, there are no initial titles. In the case of Codex III, there are three texts that begin at the top of a page; the first tractate of the codex, the *Apocryphon of John*, *Eugnostos* (III, 70) and the *Dialogue of the Saviour* (III, 120). In the case of the *Apocryphon of John* and *Eugnostos*, there are no titles at the beginning; but in *Eugnostos*, *the* first phrase works as an *incipit* ("Eugnostos the blessed…", III, 70, 1). In the case of the *Dialogue of the Saviour*, there is a title at the beginning, written in the first line of the page (III, 120, 1) and not aligned with the pagination. The first page of Codex IV is heavily damaged, but the top right corner is preserved, which is enough to affirm that its first tractate, the *Apocryphon of John*, had no initial title; the other tractate in Codex

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IV, the *Book of the Great Invisible Spirit*, begins at the top of page 40, where there is no initial title, but the first phrase works as an *incipit* (NH IV, 50, 1).

Codex VI is surely a very important example for this discussion, since it has many treatises that begin at the top of a page. The *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles* is Codex VI's first tractate, and, despite the damages at the top of the first page, we can affirm that it bears no title at the beginning. Its second tractate, *Thunder, Perfect Mind*, begins at the top of page 13 and bears an initial title; despite the fact that the top margin is damaged and the title is not decorated or separated from the beginning of the text, it seems that it is not aligned with the pagination, since it is possible to see traces of the number 13 at the right corner. The next tractate in Codex VI also begins at the top of a page, in this case page 22; but since the top of the page is heavily damaged, it is not possible to affirm with certitude whether or not there was a title at the beginning. The next text is the *Concept of Our Great Power* and it also starts at the top of a page (36); the title occupies the first two lines and is not aligned with the pagination. Finally, the sixth text of Codex VI is the *Ogdoad and Ennead*; the top of the page is damaged, but it is possible to see some traces of ornamentation that belong to a title. Considering the average number of lines per page in Codex VI – around 33 to 35 – it is possible to affirm that this title is probably not aligned with the pagination.

The only text in Codex VII that begins at the top of a page is its first tractate, the *Paraphrase of Shem*, and its title is not aligned with the pagination. The top of the first page in Codex VIII is not well preserved, but considering the average number of lines per page – around 31 to 32 – there is no room for an initial title and the text probably presented an *incipit*. The first tractate of Codex IX, *Melchisedek*, is one of the most poorly preserved among NH texts, and its first page is a clear example of this situation; it is possible, however, to detect some traces of an initial title, but no certitude can be reached concerning the possibility of an alignment with the pagination. Only one tractate was preserved in Codex X, *Marsanes*, and almost one half of the top of the first page is lost, rendering it impossible to make any affirmations concerning an initial title. The situation in Codex XI is similar, most of its first page is lost and it is impossible to know if its first tractate, *The Interpretation of Knowledge*, had an initial title; its second tractate, the *Valentinan Exposition*, also begins at the top of a page, but it is also too damaged to allow any conclusions concerning a title. *Allogenes*, the

third text in Codex XI, also begins at the top of a page; once again, the poor state of conservation does not allow one to conclude much about an initial title. Finally, Codices XII and XIII are not well preserved enough to allow conclusions concerning initial titles.

Another example among the so-called Coptic Gnostic codices may be pertinent for our analysis. We are referring to the Codex Askew, which preserved a very long tractate known as *Pistis Sophia*. In the manuscript, the long tractate is divided into sections. One of these sections starts on page 115 and is entitled "The Second Tome of Pistis Sophia". This title is clearly aligned with the pagination of the codex and is highlighted by decorative signs above and below; the main difference in relation to the *Apocalypse of Adam* consists in the fact that the *Pistis Sophia* is written in two columns. Given this, one may affirm that the placement of *Apocalypse of Adam*'s initial title is quite unusual.

Nonetheless, the first phrase of the text seems to work like an *incipit*: "The revelation which Adam taught his son, Seth…" (NH V, 64, 2-3).[50] Accordingly, we believe that the initial title of the *Apocalypse of Adam* was possibly a gloss, made by the scribe once the copy of the page – or even of the text or the entire codex – was finished. He may have done this with a view to emphasising its revelatory and apocalyptic purport, reinforcing the *incipit* by naming the text as an apocalypse.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

New elements were added to the discussion of the *First Apocalypse of James'* title when another version of the text was published, that of Codex Tchacos, where the text is named simply "James". We will deal with this information shortly; we must first describe however the situation of the title of the *First Apocalypse of James* in the Codex V version.

The title at the beginning of the *First Apocalypse of James* in Codex V is certainly the clearest evidence of a scribal intervention in the titles of this codex. In this case the title really

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[50] MacRae's translation (Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 154-155). We use here the same numeration of lines proposed by MacRae and other critical editions, such as Morard's (Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*, 20-21), even if we consider that the title is not written on a line, but rather on the margin of the page, consisting thus on a gloss.

seems to have been added once the codex – or at least the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the beginning of the *First Apocalypse of James* – was already copied. The title is placed between lines 9 and 10 – or 11, if we consider the title itself as line 10 – of page 24 (see picture 2 – Appendix 1). The size of the letters is clearly smaller than those in the rest of the page, which reinforces the possibility of a later addition. Additionally, the title in question is not centred like the other preserved titles in Codex V, but is placed at the right side of the line. And lastly, it is also surrounded by lines forming a rectangle, probably the means the scribe found in order to make clear its separation from the preceding text – the *Apocalypse of Paul* – since the two texts were really close to each other. It seems to us that in the case of the beginning title of the *First Apocalypse of James* a posterior addition is more than a possibility; it is a certainty. It remains to be seen if this addition was made by the scribe of Codex V himself or by someone else.

As mentioned earlier, the recently published Codex Tchacos contains another version of the text in question in which the title is simply "James". In Codex Tchacos, the text does not have a title at the beginning but only at the end, placed at the bottom of page 30, between two decorative lines. The fact that the text is named differently in the Codex Tchacos, without the word "apocalypse", makes us wonder about the originality of the titles in Codex V. We should also take into consideration the fact that the title at the beginning of the *First Apocalypse of James* in Codex V was clearly added later, and the fact that the text in question does not exactly fit into the category of "apocalypse" despite its revelatory features.[51] Consequently, we believe that we could ask – emphasising, however, that this is nothing more than a possibility – whether the scribe of Codex V added the word "apocalypse" to the title of the *First Apocalypse of James*.

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[51] See Dias Chaves, *Between Apocalyptic and Gnosis*, 53-57.

Almost nothing of the title of the text known as *Eugnostos* has survived in the version of Codex V, with the exception of small traces at the end of the text in page 17 (sse picture 4 – Appendix 1). These traces could be the remains of one or two letters, and were reconstructed as an omicron (o) in the English[52] and French[53] critical editions, which would be part of the title [ⲉⲩⲅⲛⲱⲥⲧ]ο[ⲥ]. But in fact, the title of Codex V first treatise was restituted as *Eugnostos*[54] mainly due to the existence of another version in NH Codex III, in which the title is very visible at the end of the text (NH III, 90, 13-14). Nevertheless, it is incontestable that in the case of Codex V, almost nothing of its title survived, and nothing ensures that it received the same title of its other version in Codex III.

The top of the page is badly preserved, however, and there is no trace of a title at the beginning. In what has been claimed to be the first line of Codex V (1, 1), there are traces that seem to be those of a first line for the text. At the end of the text (NH V 17, 18), there are traces of ornamentation at the end of the line, besides the aforementioned traces of remains of one or two letters, which were reconstructed as an omicron (o) in the English[55] and French[56] critical editions. Below line 18, in the space left blank, there are no visible traces of ornamentation, which strongly suggests that the title of the tractate in question – whatever it was – was written on a single line (NH V 1, 18).

We once suggested[57] that the title of Codex V first tractate could have contained the word "apocalypse", following the pattern of the rest of the Codex – maybe something like "Apocalypse of Eugnostos", for example. However, given the lack of evidence, we no longer hold such position. What can be postulated with confidence nevertheless is that the text in question was named simply as "Eugnostos" in Codex V due to the existence of another copy in Codex III, in which the title is clearly readable. In the copy of Codex V, nothing can guarantee that the title was "Eugnostos". The example of the *First Apocalypse of James*

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[52] Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices III, 3-4 and V*, 166.
[53] Pasquier, *Eugnoste*, 94.
[54] On the meaning of the word "Eugnostos" used as a title, see Pasquier's explanation (Pasquier, *Eugnoste*, 13-16).
[55] Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices III, 3-4 and V,* 166.
[56] Pasquier, *Eugnoste*, 94.
[57] For details, see Dias Chaves, "Scribal Intervention," 246-249.

described above shows that the same text could have circulated in Coptic with different titles. Indeed, the real title that the first tractate of Codex V had in the manuscript remains unknown. It is possible, or even likely, that it was "Eugnostos", but not certain.

After having briefly presented the situation of titles in NH Codex V, we may proceed to the discussion of some aspects concerning the reception of the characters to whom the authorship of its texts is attributed, namely, Paul, James and Adam.

4.3. Codex V Characters in the Late Antique Coptic Context

The signification of Codex V characters, i.e., the characters to whom its treatises were attributed (Paul, James and Adam) may be particularly important for the understanding of its compilation and how it could have been interpreted and used in a fourth/fifth-century late antique Coptic environment. Consequently, one must try to understand the importance and meaning of these characters in the context of the compilation of Codex V. We have decided to exclude *Eugnostos* for a couple of reasons: the name "Eugnostos" does not appear in what have survived of the manuscript of Codex V; moreover, Eugnostos is not a biblical character – such as Paul, James and Adam – and he does not appear in any of the texts that are part of our corpus of comparision. In fact, as far as we know, the only othet text that display Eugnostos preserved in Coptic is the version of *Egnostos* in Codex III.

Having said that, as it was mentioned in the *status quaestionis*,[58] some scholars have already analysed the significance of some of Codex V characters, mainly Paul and James, trying to understand their importance in the selection of tractates that compose our volume. Such analyses, however, have focused on the meaning and understanding of these characters in the context of original compilation of our texts, i.e. the second-century battle between the Great Church and marginal Christian groups, such as those generally labeled as Gnostics. Kaler[59] and Morard[60] saw in the selection of texts attributed to Paul and James the Just, an

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[58] See section 2.6
[59] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 149-153.
[60] Morard, "Les apocalypses du Codex V de Nag Hammadi," 342.

implicit challenge against the Great Church, since both characters were not among the original group of twelve apostles, but were in one way or another detainers of a certain authority linked to the fact that they were seen as receivers of revelations directly delivered from Christ.[61] This argument would fit very well in a discussion concerned with the compilation of a second-century volume. However, this is not the case of Codex V: even if its texts were probably composed in second century, its compilation is probably the product of a fourth-century Coptic environment. The analysis of its characters and how they may have influenced the reception of each of the texts individually and the Codex as a whole should thus take into consideration how Paul, James and Adam were viewed in fourth-and fifth-century Coptic Egypt. And, as we will be discussed shortly,[62] the battle between the Great Church and marginal Christian groups, a current topic in second-century Christianity, was not going on anymore in fourth/fifth-century Egypt.[63] Consequently, Kaler and Morard's proposal for the understanding of the importance of characters in the compilation of Codex V is anachronistic.

Thus, our analysis here intends to understand what Paul, James and Adam could have meant for late antique Coptic readers, i.e. how they were seen, understood, interpreted by these readers. It is very important to note that our goal is not to develop historical considerations on these characters, but to define their meaning in the Coptic context, especially in Late Antiquity. It is also important to take into consideration the fact that there is no time in a single dissertation for a complete survey of these characters, even if such survey is limited to the Coptic context. What the present dissertation intends to do is thus to provide some considerations on these characters and on how their Coptic image could have been understood in a late antique Coptic environment as a possible mediating element between the contents of Codex V and its readers.

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[61] As we intend to show in Chapter 7, the situation in fourth century – the presumable time of Codex V compilation and also the time it presumably started to circulate in Coptic Egypt – the religious situation was different from that of second century, although there were tensions between different groups of Christians in fourth-century Egypt (see chapter 6 below).
[62] See chapter 6.
[63] See chapter 6 of the present dissertation.

As a lead into our discussion, we can mention the words of Robert Holub, commenting Boris Tomashevski's statement:

> '(…) we must remember that creative literature exists, not for literary historians, but for readers, and we must consider how the poet's biography operates in the reader's consciousness.'[64] While the actual biography or curriculum vitae may be interesting as a cultural phenomenon, only the legend of the author's life, the "ideal biography", is important for the literary historian. The reader's image of Pushkin, Rousseau, or Voltaire, for example, is instrumental in an interpretation and evaluation of their works (…) from the reader's perspective, the ideal biography is an essential mediating element between text and audience.[65]

Even though Tomashevski and Holub are dealing with poets and authors of the age of enlightenment, we can adapt their insight to the study proposed in the present dissertation. In regard to a given late antique Coptic reader and to the way he could have understood Codex V, its texts and characters, what matters is not the real biography and the historicity of the characters involved, but rather the "legend of the author's life", his "ideal biography". In a reception perspective, the important clue to be followed is thus related to how these characters were seen by late antique Coptic readers – probably in a legendary way.

Given this, it is fundamental firstly to take into consideration the fact that these three characters are primarily biblical; this would probably suffice to justify their authority and use as authors in a Coptic environment and also the interest of this audience in texts attributed to them. This is particularly relevant in the cases of Adam and Paul, two key characters in the Bible as a whole, the first for his fundamental function in the creation myth according to *Genesis*, the second for his role as protagonist in the spread of Christianity. In the case of James, however, his marginal role in the New Testament, illustrated by a few quick appearances,[66] puts him in a position of lesser celebrity than Paul and Adam. This position, however, should not be discounted, even though it is less important than those of Paul and Adam.

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[64] Boris Tomashevski, "Literature and Biography," in *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views* (ed. L. Matejka and K. Pomorska; Cambridge [MA]: MIT Press, 1962), 47.
[65] Holub, *Reception Theory*, 20-21.
[66] See section 4.3.3.2.

In addition to this, one must also take into consideration the existence of non-canonical writings attributed to these characters that certainly circulated in Coptic Egypt. We believe that such texts are also important for the construction and understanding of these characters in an Egyptian environment. Even if this non-canonical literature probably circulated less than the Scriptures in Coptic environments, it cannot be neglected.[67] Consequently, our attempt to understand what Paul, James and Adam could have meant for a Coptic reader must analyse these writings and how these characters are portrayed in them. We shall proceed to the analysis of each one of these characters in what follows.

4.3.1. Paul

Paul was certainly one of the most popular personalities in early Christianity.[68] The very presence of so many Epistles attributed to Paul in the New Testament – whose canon was in process of formation at the time that concerns us here, i.e. the fourth century, as Athanasius *39th Festal Letter* itself attests[69] –would be enough to attest to his importance and authority in early Christianity. Moreover, the existence of many apocryphal texts preserved in Coptic attributed to Paul – such as the *Third Epistle to the Corinthians*,[70] for example – or others that feature him as the main character – such as the *Apocalypse of Paul* from Codex V itself,

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[67] It is beyond the scope of the present dissertation to establish or trace chains of transmission of New Testament Apocrypha or of Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, or even their reception, in Coptic Egypt. This kind of study would require a very complex research. For the purposes of our study, it suffices to demonstrate that non-canonical writings attributed to Paul, James and Adam circulated in Coptic Egypt and more specifically in Coptic environments. The very existence of versions or fragments of some of these non-canonical texts attributed to the characters in question attests to their circulation in Coptic. Thus Codex V texts were not the only ones circulating in Coptic under the patronage of Paul, James the Just and Adam.

[68] For that very reason, a complete survey on the character of Paul that takes into consideration the entire scope of early Christianity is beyond the scope of the present dissertation. We will therefore limit our analysis to the late antique Coptic context. For a survey on the construction of the character of Paul in early Christianity, see Richard Pervo, *The Making of Paul: Constructions of the Apostle in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010).

[69] See Louis-T. Lefort, *Athanase: lettres festales et pastorales en copte* (CSCO 150-151; Louvain: Imprimerie orientaliste, 1955), 58-64.

[70] On the *Third Epistle to the Corinthians*, see Steve Johnston, "La correspondance apocryphe entre Paul et les Corinthiens: un pseudépigraphe paulinien au service de la polémique anti-gnostique de la fin du IIe siècle" (M.A. thesis, Faculté de théologie et de sciences religieuses, Université Laval, 2004).

or the *Visio Sancti Pauli*,[71] or the *Acta Pauli*,[72] for example – attest to his importance and authority in Coptic Egypt.

One could add to this the fact that Paul is constantly quoted in Egyptian monastic literature. The fact that he is often called "the apostle" in Egyptian monastic literature[73] also demonstrates his authority and serves to reveal that he was not considered an outsider in regard to the group of apostles in this particular context.

We could also take into consideration apocryphal texts attributed to Paul that circulated in Coptic Egypt, such as the *Apocalypse of Paul* of Codex V itself, but also his Latin homonym.[74] The existence of two otherworldly journey apocalypses attributed to Paul – probably a development of *2 Corinthians* 12:2-4 – that circulated in Coptic shows the interest of Coptic readers for works that featured Paul in this kind of journey. This interest can also be witnessed by passages in Egyptian monastic literature that explicitly quote *2 Corinthians* 12: 2-4 in the context of visionary experiences and ascension to the heavens.[75]

Evidently, the passage from *2 Corinthians* 12: 2-4 serves as a biblical base and inspiration for both apocalypses of Paul. That does not mean, however, that these texts necessarily follow Pauline doctrine; in the particular case of Codex V *Apocalypse of Paul*, even though the text explicitly makes allusions to other Pauline writings, its interest in Paul is more mythical than doctrinal. This phenomenon was named by Kaler as "heroic Paulinism" and serves to designate texts that are more concerned with a mythic and heroic figure of Paul than with his genuine doctrine and its interpretation.[76]

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[71] Ernest A.T.W. Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts in the Dialect of Upper Egypt* (Coptic Texts 1-2; London: British Museum, 1915), 534-574 and 1043-1084).

[72] Preserved in Coptic in Papyrus Bodmer XLI (Rodolphe Kasser and Philippe Luisier, "Le Papyrus Bodmer XLI en édition princeps: l'épisode d'Éphèse des *Acta Pauli* en copte et en traduction." *Muséon* 117 [2004]: 281-384) and in the Papyrus Heidelberger; see Carl Schmidt, *Acta Pauli: aus der Heidelberger koptischen Papyrushandschrift Nr. 1* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1904).

[73] See, for example, SBo § 106, where a quotation from *Gal* 6:1 is qualified as "the Apostle's recommendation".

[74] Also known as *Visio Sancti Pauli,* mentioned above, this text is much more famous than the *Apocalypse of Paul* of Codex V. We know that it circulated in Coptic at least in Middle Ages; see Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts*, 534-574 and 1043-1084.

[75] See, for example, Pachomius' journey to heaven in SBo § 114.

[76] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 165-169.

According to Murdock, the goal of the *Apocalypse of Paul* is "to portray the apostle Paul as one who had ascended to the highest heaven and having there been empowered and commissioned was sent forth again into the world as an apostle redeemer (…) the *Apocalypse of Paul* may be appropriately described as an ascension vision of calling."[77] Kaler adds that the *Apocalypse of Paul* "turns Paul into an apocalyptic hero, a visionary who receives a glorious commission."[78] Even though both authors – Murdock and Kaler – are primarily concerned with the original context of composition of our text, we believe that these remarks could be also applied to its reception in a late antique Coptic environment. Paul is portrayed as an apocalyptic hero who performs an ascension to the heavens, similarly to many others already portrayed in other texts that circulated in Coptic environments from the fourth century on; one can find these apocalyptic heroes ascending to heavens either in apocalyptic texts which were preserved and circulated in Coptic, such as the *Visio Sancti Pauli* or the *Testament of Abraham*, or in Egyptian hagiographies, such as the *Life of Pachomius*, where the visionary – as we will see later – also experiences an ascension.[79] The fact that this ascension could be justified and supported by a scriptural base (*2 Corinthians* 12:2-4), as discussed previously, is also very pertinent for monasticism in particular, a context in which Scriptures were probably the foundation of spirituality and rules.[80]

This serves to show that a character such as the Paul in the *Apocalypse of Paul* could also be popular in a Coptic monastic environment due to the fact that he was described as an apocalyptic hero; and more generally, he could be seen as such by any Coptic Christian who read monastic literature. Thus, in the light of what we have discussed above, one could say that the *Apocalypse of Paul* presents a very attractive main character for two main reasons: 1- he is Paul, the apostle, the author of epistles which are part of the Scriptures; 2- he is an apocalyptic hero who ascended to heaven, as a development of a scriptural passage itself.

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[77] William Murdock, "The *Apocalypse of Paul* from Nag Hammadi Codex V: A Translation and Interpretation" (Ph.D. diss., The Claremont Graduate School, 1968), 213.
[78] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 142.
[79] See section 7.1.
[80] See Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien*, 262-275.

Moreover, the end of the *Apocalypse of Paul* reports a very peculiar scene, in which Paul arrives at the tenth heaven and greets (ⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ) the spirits who were already there. As we will see in our discussion in Chapter 7,[81] this scene finds many parallels in Coptic Epic Passions; thus it is not impossible that Paul, as he is portrayed in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, could have been seen or compared to a martyr in a Coptic context, above all in those directly linked to the reception of the Epic Passions.

Thus this is the Paul portrayed in Codex V *Apocalypse of Paul*, the hero. Even though the *Apocalypse of Paul* explicitly refers to Pauline letters, its main goal is not to spread Pauline doctrine or discuss it, but rather to portray a mythic, emblematic and heroic character, whose fame was probably spread among all Christendom. One can thus imagine the impact that the *Apocalypse of Paul* could cause in a late antique Coptic reader: seeing one of the most emblematic characters of Christianity, the apostle Paul, in an otherworldly journey, being guided by the Spirit (NH V 18, 21), passing through celestial spheres (NH V 19, 23-14; 20, 5-6; 21, 28; 22, 13.28; 23, 30-24, 8), beholding judgement scenes (NH V 20, 10-21, 22), dialoguing with angelic beings (NH V 23, 1-26) and finally arriving at highest heaven and greeting its inhabitants (NH V 24, 6-8). Finally, what could be more interesting for a late antique Coptic reader than to know what Paul actually saw in his journey to heavens so laconically described in *2 Corinthians* 12:2-4? We believe thus that a fourth/fifth century's late antique Coptic reader would be more concerned with this heroic[82] and apocalyptic Paul – peculiarly described in the pages of the *Apocalypse of Paul* – than with the Paul "opposed to the Great Church"[83] as Kaler and Morard have argued. For a Coptic reader, there is nothing "heretic" or "orthodox" in the Paul portrayed in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, and there is no implicit challenge to the Great Church either. Probably, for a Coptic reader, this Paul is simply a mythic hero, who loved God and was loved by Him and who was thus worthy of

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[81] See section 7.1.5.

[82] Once more, we evoke Pervo's study (Pervo, *The Making of Paul*).

[83] Given the ecclesiastical situation of Egypt in the fourth century – when the Meletian schism divided the Church (this episode will be discussed in section 6.1) – one may wonder if the Meletian party – or as it called itself, the Church of the Martyrs – could not have used Paul as a charismatic figure who was not part of the original apostolic group as a way to challenge the authority of the Catholic Church, which was based on the apostolic heritage. We do not think this is likely, however, due to the fact that the Church of the Martyrs did not deny the apostolic authority, it only claimed to posses such authority in opposition to the Catholic Church.

such an incredible otherworldly journey, similarly to many other emblematic characters in Egyptian Christianity such as Pachomius and Antony.

4.3.2. James

Among the three pseudonymical authors in Codex V, James – normally called in Christian tradition the "lord's brother" or the "Just" – is the less important and distinguished in the world of the Scriptures. Although he is not so emblematic a character as Paul and Adam, he is nonetheless mentioned in Scriptures in a good number of instances. He is named as the Lord's brother in *Matthew* 13:55 and *Mark* 6:3. In *Galatians* 1:19, he is also called the Lord's brother and considered to be an apostle by Paul.[84] Scholarship tends to agree that he was also the James mentioned in *Acts* 12:17, 15:13 and 21:18 and in *1 Corinthians* 15:7. It has also been suggested that he is the James mentioned in *James* 1:1 and *Jude* 1.[85] Thus according to Scriptural tradition, James was someone who was close to Jesus – to the point of being called His brother – who was also a witness of the Resurrection.

This being said, we must take into consideration that despite this proximity to Jesus expressed in the Scriptures, James did not figure in the original group of the twelve apostles. According to Morard[86] and Kaler,[87] the fact that he was close enough to Jesus to have witnessed the Resurrection but did not form part of the group of the twelve apostles could have led marginal Christians, who were opposed to the Great Church, to choose him as a pseudonymous author. This choice would represent an implicit challenge to the Great Church, a way found by these Christians to show that they could also have access to revelations from Christ while being outside the apostolic college. But, as we have already argued elsewhere,[88] such a statement would make sense if applied to the context of original

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[84] He is also mentioned in *Gal* 2: 9.12.
[85] See Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 3.
[86] Morard, "Les apocalypses du Codex V de Nag Hammadi," 342.
[87] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 149-153.
[88] See pages 88-89 above.

composition of our texts, .i.e. the second century, but probably not for the context of compilation of Codex V, i.e. fourth-century Coptic Christian Egypt.[89]

Many other ancient sources bear important witness to James;[90] one finds examples in patristic literature[91] and even in Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities,* where it is possible to read about his martyrdom in Jerusalem.[92] Among the patristic references to James, the most significant one for the purposes of the present dissertation is that of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* II, 23, 4-18.[93] Two specific points in Eusebius' account are particularly important for our goal here: the way he describes James and the fact that he attests that he died as a martyr. Let us first turn our attention to Eusebius' description of James:

> (…) he was holy from his mother's womb. He drank no wine or strong drink, nor did he eat flesh; no razor went upon his flesh; he did not anoint himself with oil, and he did not go to the baths (…) he did not wear wool but linen, and he used to enter alone into the temple and be found kneeling and praying for forgiveness for the people, so that his knees grew hard like a camel's because of his constant worship of God, kneeling and asking forgiveness for the people (*Ecclesiastical History*, II, 23, 5-7).[94]

The present dissertation intends to deepen in the discussion concerning Eusebius' description of James and its possible implications for an Egyptian context, but for now, let us turn our

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[89] As mentioned above in the discussion on the character of Paul, in the fourth century there were also intra-religious polemics between different groups of Christians, such as the "Church of the Martyrs" and the "Catholic Church". However, each one of these groups saw itself as the true bearer of the apostolic tradition, and not as an esoteric group whose authority was based on secret teachings of disciples of Christ who were not part of the original group of the twelve apostles. For details, see section 6.1 below.

[90] Since the goal of the present dissertation is not the traditions about James, we will only discuss those we believe are the most important for the understanding of the character in question in a late antique Coptic environment. For a complete survey on this matter, see Scott K. Brown, "James: A Religio-Historical Study of the Relations Between Jewish, Gnostic, and Catholic Christianity in the Early Period Through an Investigation of the Traditions about James the Lord's brother" Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 1972). See also Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 1-5.

[91] See Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 2-3.

[92] XX, IX, 197-203. The discussions concerning the authenticity of this passage and those related to Jesus in the *Jewish Antiquities* are beyond the scope of the present dissertation.

[93] Eusebius preserved and reproduced accounts from other sources that are now lost, such as Hegesippus' *Hypomnemata*. For details, see Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 1.

[94] Lake's translation in Kirsopp Lake, *Eusebius: The Ecclesiastical History Vol. I* (Cambridge [MA]): Harvard University Press, 1959), 170-171.

attention to the Coptic questions. As far as we know, apart from the *Apocalypses of James* in Codex V, the version of the (*First Apocalypse of*) *James* in Codex Tchacos, the *Logion* 12 of the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Apochryphon of James*, James the Just is almost never mentioned in Coptic literature.[95] This lack can probably be attributed to the fact that James was also known as the "Lord's brother", as the *First Apocalypse of James* itself attests.[96] However, we believe that this should not be considered an obstacle for the mention of James in Coptic literature, since part of the early Christian tradition tried to portray this brotherhood as an indication of a larger kinship,[97] or as merely spiritual as the *First Apocalypse of James* itself attests.[98]

Nevertheless, it is possible to find a brief mention of James in S[3b], in the middle of an instruction about the resurrection of the Lord,[99] where a quotation of *1 Corinthians* 15: 5-10 is given:

> Et encore nous instruisant sur la résurrection du Seigneur il dit comme ceci : 'Lorsqu'il se leva d'entre les morts, il apparut d'abord à Céphas, puis aux douze; ensuite il apparut en une seule fois à plus de cinq cents frères dont la plupart sont encore vivants, et dont quelques-uns sont morts; ensuite, il apparut à Jacques (S[3b] p. 161).[100]

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[95] He is mentioned, however, in a text preserved in Ethiopic – the *Contendings of the Apostles* – that surely circulated in Coptic in Late Antiquity, as this dissertation intends to discuss.

[96] NH V 24, 14-15. If James was considered to be a true brother of Jesus, in a biological way, this could be opposed to the Christian belief of the perpetual virginity of Mary.

[97] The earliest attestation can be probably found in the *Proto-Gospel of James*. Patristic developments of this question were particularly important at the end of the fourth century, as attested by Epiphanius and Jerome (Cf. Delphine Vieillard, *Jérôme: Les hommes illustres* [Paris: Éditions J.-P. Migne, 2010], 59-61).

[98] "You are my brother, but not according to the flesh" (NH V 24, 15-16); our translation.

[99] The fragments that Lefort classified as S[3b] – generally speaking, part "b" of the *Third Life of Pachomius* (Lefort, *Les vies coptes de saint Pachôme*, 335-350) seem to be more a catechesis or instruction than a real *Life*. The absence of a narrative framework and the fragmentary contents support this position. Indeed, in what is left of the fragment, it is possible to read instructions on varied themes, such as *Genesis* and the resurrection, but no tales about Pachomius, his deeds, miracles, ascetical practices or revelations. The fragmentary state of S[3b], however, renders the task of identifying the one who is instructing – i.e. Pachomius himself or one of his successors – difficult.

[100] Lefort's translation in Lefort, *Les vies coptes de saint Pachôme*, 339. For the Coptic text, see Louis-Théophile Lefort, "Glanures pachômiennes," *Muséon* 54 (1941), 190.

Scholars often emphasize the fact that this James in the apocalypses of Codex V should not be identified with one of the apostles who had the same name[101] and appear in canonical apostolic lists.[102] We must remember, however, that this differentiation was not necessarily taken into consideration by a Coptic reader who possibly saw no difference between these "Jameses".[103] Jerome himself is a proof that in Antiquity this differentiation was not necessarily recognized.[104]

Let us now return to the description provided by Eusebius. This description is particularly pertinent for the present dissertation because it actually portrays what could be considered the stereotype of an early Christian monk. If we can prove that the character of James could be understood as the perfect model of a monk, any text attributed to him or any text that presents him as a character would potentially interest a late antique Coptic audience, particularly a monastic one.

Consequently, the kind of asceticism that Eusebius depicts as having been practiced by James is very similar to that described by many late antique Egyptian hagiographies.[105] We know from many sources that Pachomian monks and monks from the White Monastery almost never drank wine or any other alcoholic drinks, nor ate meat – both being normally allowed only for the sick brothers hospitalized in the infirmary.[106] Continual prayer was also

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[101] Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 1-5.

[102] *Matt* 10: 2-4; *Mk* 3: 13-19; *Lk* 6: 12-16.

[103] One could observe a similar phenomenon, named in French as "télescopage", in regard to other biblical characters such as Mary. Several "Marys" are mentioned in the New Testament and posterior Christian literature often jumbled them. On this matter see Urban Holzmeister, "Die Magdalenenfrage in der kirchlichen Uberlieferung," *ZKTh* 46 (1922): 402-422.556-584; see also Antti Marjanen, *The Woman Jesus Loved: Mary Magdalene in the Nag Hammadi Library and Related Documents* (NHMS 40; Leiden/New York/Köln: E.J. Brill, 1996), 1-3.

[104] See Vieillard, *Jérôme : les hommes illustres*, 59-61.

[105] One can certainly question the veracity and accuracy of Eusebius' description, which seems anachronistic. We must emphasize that we are not concerned with the historical accuracy of Eusebius' account on James, but with the fact that this account circulated in Late Antiquity and was very similar to those of many Egyptian monks.

[106] See Bentley 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): 25–55. See also Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien*, 249-252 and Festugière, *Les moines d'Orient,* 59-74. See also *Pachomian Rules*, 5.

a commonplace in Egyptian monasticism, for both anchorites and coenobitic monks.[107] Moreover, at least one specific description in Egyptian monastic hagiographies shows close thematic similarities to the account of James' life provided by Eusebius; Athanasius, at a certain point of the *Life of Antony*, describes the ascetical practices of the "father of the monks" as follows:

> He kept such lengthy vigils that he would often pass the entire night without sleep. Doing this not once, but many times (…) He ate once a day, after the sun had set, but would also eat every other day, and often he took food only every four days. His food was bread and salt, and his drink water alone. It is superfluous even to speak about meat and wine, for nothing of this sort could be found among those who are zealous (…) Antony declined to anoint himself with oil… (*Life of Antony* § 7, 6-8).[108]

The description of Antony's asceticism focuses on night vigils and prayers, but similarly to the description of James provided by Eusebius, also mentions his abstinence from wine, meat and the anointment with oil. These similarities are particularly pertinent and unite James – or his mythical character – with the most famous anchorite of Egypt, Antony. This would suffice to render the character of James popular in Coptic Egypt. Moreover, the passage in question also mentions that abstinence from meat and wine was common among ascetics, which would also connect James' character to many anchorites and monks in Coptic Egypt or at least to the ideal anchorite.

In another account preserved in Coptic, in the *First Martyrdom of Saint Victor*, the main character[109] is described as follows:

> He was a young man of nineteen years of age, and he worshiped God, and held His commandments in fear. He was a virgin body, he ate only once a week, he prayed all night long (…) he hated the world. He did not drink wine, neither did

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[107] For a survey, specially related to Pachomian monasticism, see Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien*, 276-323.

[108] Athanassakis' translation in Tim Vivian and Apostolos Athanassakis, *The Life of Antony: The Coptic Life and the Greek Life* (CS 202; Kalamazoo [Mich.]: Cistercian Publications, 2003), 75. This is the translation of the *Greek Life*, but the same passage in the *Coptic Life* does not differ much.

[109] Even though the text is a martyrdom, Victor is described as a monk performing ascetical practices and living like an anchorite.

he eat food cooked with fire. He did not decorate his person, and he did not adorn himself with rich apparel and fine raiment.[110]

Once again, we have a description that is similar to that of James provided by Eusebius. Consequently, even if James the Just is not known in what survived of Coptic literature – apart from the aforementioned texts – this similarity in his description would potentially make him an interesting character for a fourth/fifth-century Coptic audience. One could imagine how interesting it would be for a fourth/fifth-century Coptic monastic audience to read a text about a character that, like Antony and other famous monks, did not drink wine, or eat meat, and prayed unceasingly. Besides this, James could also be seen as the model of the perfect monk, someone whose behaviour must be imitated.

However, since the texts in which James appears preserved in Coptic do not mention directly any of the ascetical practices mentioned by Eusebius – at least in what has survived of the texts in question – the validity of our theory depends on the fact that the tradition about James and his asceticism recorded by Eusebius himself was known in Coptic Egypt. We believe consequently that the easiest way to prove the validity of our theory is to demonstrate that Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* was known and circulated in Coptic Egypt. One can easily imagine Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* circulating in any given early Christian milieu after the second half of the fourth century, since the work in question became almost the ecclesiastical history par excellence. However, as far as we know, no copies, versions, manuscripts or fragments of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* have been preserved in Coptic. We have, however, convincing evidence that the work in question circulated in Coptic Egypt in Late Antiquity. In fact, it seems almost certain that the work known as *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*, in its earliest Coptic forms, used materials from Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*.[111]

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[110] Translation in Ernest A.T.W. Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms etc. in the Dialect of Upper Egypt. Coptic Texts 4* (London: British Museum, 1914), 255-256. For the Coptic text, see Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 4-5.

[111] For details, see Tito Orlandi, *Storia della Chiesa di Alessandria: Vol. I: Da Pietro ad Atanasio* (Milano: Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino, 1967). See also Johannes den Heijer, *Mawhūb ibn Mansūr ibn Mufarriğ et l'historiographie copto-arabe: Étude sur la composition de l'histoire des patriarches d'Alexandrie* (CSCO 513; Louvain: Peeters, 1989).

At any rate, another collection of texts bears witness that the tradition in question was circulating in Late Antiquity Coptic Egypt: the *Contendings of the Twelve Apostles*.[112] Among the texts that compose this anthology,[113] two concern James: the *Preaching of James the Just* and the *Martyrdom of Saint James the Just*. The *Contendings of the Twelve Apostles* were preserved in Ethiopic in a couple of late manuscripts,[114] but its previous existence in Coptic is beyond dispute, since a number of Sahidic fragments have been discovered since the 18th century.[115] Moreover, Coptic has already been suggested as the original language of composition of this anthology by Malan, with its date being located between fifth and sixth centuries,[116] although these issues have never been discussed in depth. In any case, it suffices to know late antique and medieval Coptic literature – particularly what Alin Suciu calls the diary of the apostles[117] – to discern the Coptic taste of the text in question. Thus in the light of what has been said, we believe that it is possible to postulate that the texts in question, even if they were not entirely preserved in Coptic, can be useful for the understanding of the personage of James in a Coptic context.

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[112] I owe the knowledge of this text to Alin Suciu.

[113] As far as we know, the most recent edition of the Ethiopic text of the *Contendings of the Twelve Apostles* was edited and translated by Budge in 1899 and 1901, respectively: Ernest A.T.W. Budge, *The Contendings of the Twelve Apostles. Vol I: The Ethiopic Text* (London: Oxford University Press, 1899) and Ernest A.T.W. Budge, *The Contendings of the Twelve Apostles. Vol II: The English Translation* (Oxford University Press, 1901). Before him, Solomon C. Malan had already translated these texts, with a different title however, *The Conflicts of the Holy Apostles: An Apocryphal Book of the Holy Eastern Church* (London: D. Nutt, 1871).

[114] The two manuscripts used by Budge in his edition – Oriental 678 and Oriental 683 – were brought to London by the British army in 1868 and are today part of the collection of the British Museum. According to Budge, the older manuscript is the Oriental 678, probably copied in the 15th century (Budge, *The Contendings of the Twelve Apostles. Vol I: The Ethiopic Text*, v and vi).

[115] For details, see Budge, *The Contendings of the Twelve Apostles. Vol I: The Ethiopic Text*, ix.

[116] Malan was the first one to postulate Coptic as the original language of composition of this anthology (Malan, *The Conflicts of the Holy Apostles*, v). See also Budge, *The Contendings of the Twelve Apostles. Vol I: The Ethiopic Text*, vii-viii. At any rate, many of these fragments have been progresivelly published since 1887: Ignazio Guidi, "Frammenti copti II," *ARAL* 4 (1887): 19-35 and 20-23; Walter Ewing Crum, *Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London, 1906), 128.137-138; Oscar von Lemm, "Koptische apokryphe Apostelacten I," *BAISSP* 1 (1890): 509-58; Oscar von Lemm, "Kleine koptische Studien I-IX," *BAISSP* 10 (1899): 403-434 and 31-32; Hugh Evelyn White, *The Monasteries of the Wadi n' Natrum vol. 1: New Coptic Texts from the Monastery of Saint Macarius* (New York, 1926), 38-40; Alin Suciu, "Three Fragments from a Coptic Codex of the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles," *BASP* 49 (2012): 241-250.

[117] Alin Suciu, *The Berlin-Strasbourg Apocryphon: A Coptic Apostolic Memoir* (WUNT 370; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017). See also Suciu, "O *Evangelho do Salvador*, 215-254. In a personal conversation, Suciu told us that he was completely convinced that Coptic was the original language of composition of the text in question.

In one of these texts, the *Martyrdom of Saint James the Just*, James is described as follows:

> And besides this God Almighty had chosen him and had sanctified from his mother's womb, like Jeremiah the prophet, and he neither drank wine all the days of his life nor ate meat wherefrom the blood had gone not forth; and a razor had never gone up upon his head, and he never took a bath, and he put on no clothing except one loose garment all the days of his life. And he continued in the sanctuary always, and he stood up, and watched, and prayed humbly unto God that He would forgive the sins of the people, until at length his foot swelled by reason of his prolonged standing and prostrations; and it was for this reason he was called 'James the Just.'"[118]

The similarity between this account and that provided by Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History* is undeniable. More than that, one could say that the description in question is almost certainly inspired by that of Eusebius, or at least by the tradition about James compiled by Eusebius and attributed by him to Hegesippus, which would in any case attest to its circulation in late antique Egypt.

At any rate, we have once more a portrayal that could be easily perceived as the description of the ideal monk. Certainly, certain features of this description could be attached to the portrayal of any pious Jew in the first century.[119] But it is undeniable that this kind of asceticism is also attributed to certain Egyptian monks, as discussed above. The present dissertation is not interested in the historicity of this account, i.e. if it is a historical and trustable description of James the Just, but rather in its reception, i.e. in the fact that this description circulated in Coptic as a key for understanding how the character of James was seen by Coptic Christians.

Abstention from wine and meat – and consequently fasting – continual prayers, extreme poverty and material detachment expressed by humble and simple clothes, these are

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[118] Translation in Budge, *The Contendings of the Twelve Apostles. Vol II: The English Translation*, 71-72. For the Ethiopic text, see Budge, *The Contendings of the Twelve Apostles. Vol I: The Ethiopic Text*, 77-78.
[119] Above all, those linked to the priestly class; see Simon C. Mimouni, *Le judaïsme ancien: du VIᵉ siècle avant notre ère au IIIᵉ siècle de notre ère. Des prêtres aux rabbins* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2012), 213-598.

all the qualities of an ideal monk. These are the qualities presented in the description that could allow a Coptic reader to perceive James as a model of asceticism, a model monk. We would like to go further than the possibility of James being seen as the model monk, suggesting another hypothesis linked to it. More than a model monk, James could also be seen in a Coptic context as an abbot or a master of a group of anchorites.[120] As support of this hypothesis, we rely on one particular extract of the *First Apocalypse of James* (NH V 30, 18-30). The passage in question in Codex V is affected by lacunas, but they can be easily filled in with the help of the Codex Tchacos version, in which we read: "(…)James was performing his duties upon the [mountain] called "Galge[la]m". […..].. there [….] with his disciples [who] listened to him as a comforter, saying, "This is the second master" (CT 17, 7-14).[121]

The extract in question portrays James as a second master (the first one being Jesus) surrounded by disciples and performing something – in Codex V "walking" (ⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ) and in Codex Tchacos "serving" (ⲇⲓⲁⲕⲟⲛⲉⲓ)[122] – on a mountain (ⲧⲟⲟⲩ). As other scholars have shown,[123] the meaning of ⲧⲟⲟⲩ or its Greco-Coptic equivalent (ϩⲟⲣⲟⲥ) in an Egyptian context is very broad, due to geographical peculiarities of Egypt. Since in Egypt, geographically speaking, the desert is the equivalent of the mountain,[124] the word in question could also be used to designate "desert" in Coptic texts, or, in the case of ὄρος, in Greek papyri.[125] Some authors even suggested that in specific cases, the word could be used to designate

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[120] And this hypothesis could also be applied to the group who called itself the "Church of the Martyrs", also known as the Meletians, since it had its own hierarchy and monasteries. On this matter, see Ghica, *Les Actes de Pierre et des douze apôtres (NH VI, 1)*", 177.
[121] Translation and Coptic text in Kasser et al., *The Gospel of Judas*, 134-135.
[122] See our discussion in Chapter 7, section 7.3.2.
[123] Ewa Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques en Égypte (IVe – VIIIe siècles)* (JJPS 11; Warsaw: Journal of Juristic Papyrology, 2009), 110-111; and Tim Vivian, *Paphnutius: Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt and the Life of Onnophrius* (CS 140; Kalamazoo [Mich.]: Cistercian Publications, 2000), 18-26. See also our discussion on Chapter 7, section 7.3.2.
[124] Once more, see our discussion on Chapter 7, section 7.3.2. See also Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques en Égypte*, 110-111; and Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, 18-26.
[125] Hélène Cadell and Roger Rémondon, "Sens et emplois de τὸ ὄρος dans les documents papyrologiques," *REG* 80 (1967): 343-349.

"monastery."[126] In any case, one can point out that the ⲧⲟⲟⲩ was the dwelling place of many anchorites – some of them surrounded by disciples – semi-coenobitical communities and even monasteries.[127] Thus, in the passage in question James is portrayed as a "master", surrounded by disciples in a mountain/desert, which allow us to formulate the hypothesis of his character being seen as an abbot or a monastic leader in a Coptic environment. If we accept this hypothesis, any text attributed to James would be of great interest for a Coptic reader, and even more for a monk.

We believe thus that this "ascetical" James described by Eusebius and the *Martyrdom of Saint James the Just* would be a character that would call the attention of a fourth/fifth century Coptic audience, a monastic one in particular.

The Coptic tradition also deals with the martyrdom of James – similarly to Eusebius' account. At least the two *Apocalypses of James*,[128] the *Preaching of Saint James the Just* and the *Martyrdom of Saint James the Just* bear witness to the martyrdom of James. Again, we are not interested in the historicity of James' martyrdoms, nor in the many accounts and versions of this event narrated in various sources. We are interested rather in the fact that traditions concerning his martyrdom circulated in Coptic. At any rate, given that a considerable number of texts concerned with James the Just mention his martyrdom, one could say that it seems quite complicated to separate the character in question from his martyrdom itself. From Josephus' account[129] to late antique texts preserved in eastern languages such as Ethiopic, James is normally portrayed in relation to his martyrdom in the Temple. Why it would be different in the case of the Coptic tradition? And indeed, it is not. Judging by certain texts that mention James the Just and that we know for sure circulated in

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[126] Particularly Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques en Égypte*, 110-111; and Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, 18-26. These authors, however, fail somehow to prove their point, since they do not provide precise references. Consequently, we rather stick to the meanings of "mountain" and "desert", given the more or less hypothetical signification of "monastery". For more details, see our discussion in Chapter 7, section 7.3.2.

[127] Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques en Égypte*, 111-115.

[128] The final section of the *First Apocalypse of James* in Codex V was not readable due to numerous lacunas. However, the codex Tchacos version partially preserved the end of the text, where it is possible to read another account concerned with James' martyrdom.

[129] *Jewish Antiquities*, XX, IX, 197-203.

Coptic – the aforementioned *Apocalypses of James* of Codex V, the version of the *First Apocalypse of James* of Codex Tchacos, the *Preaching of Saint James the Just* and the *Martyrdom of Saint James the Just* – it can be affirmed that James the Just was probably seen as a martyr in the Coptic context.

This characteristic would make James a very interesting character in certain Coptic environments, i.e. those particularly concerned with accounts of martyrdoms, and possibly those that read the Epic Passions that form part of the corpus of comparison of the present dissertation. At any rate, the great number of martyrdoms preserved in Coptic bears witness to the popularity and diffusion of this type of text in Christian Egypt. Obviously, Codex V *Apocalypses of James* are not exactly Epic Passions, nor even martyrdoms, but they do present the theme of martyrdom, which establishes a link between them. Moreover, some of these martyrdoms have much in common with Codex V regarding thematic features, as the present dissertation intends to demonstrate.

Consequently, James could be understood by a late antique Coptic audience as both a kind of "perfect monastic ascetic" – and even as a monastic leader – who performed radical ascetical exercises – similar to many monks and anchorites in Coptic Egypt – and a martyr who died for the sake of Christ – similarly to many other martyrs mythically described in Coptic martyrdoms. Both aspects would thus render James a very interesting character for a Coptic audience, as well as an example to be followed.

4.3.3. Adam

In her commentary on the *Apocalypse of Adam*, Morard states that "L'antiquité a connu un nombre considérable d'écrits mis sous le nom d'Adam qui, tous, appartenaient à un cycle de légendes très répandues dans les milieux juifs et que les chrétiens n'ont pas manqué d'exploiter à leur tour."[130] Among these writings, we could mention the *Life of Adam and Eve*, the *Combat of Adam*, the *Penitence of Adam* and the *Testament of Adam*. Nevertheless,

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[130] Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*, 7.

as far as we know, only the *Life of Adam and Eve* has been preserved in Coptic,[131] in two fragments, Sahidic and Fayumic respectively. In both cases, the Greek text is not literally translated into Coptic, but rather paraphrased. This suffices to show that the NH *Apocalypse of Adam* was not the only text transmitted in Coptic to portray Adam as a main character. In any case, more than to simply recognize the existence of texts attributed to Adam – or texts in which he plays a central role – circulating in Coptic, one must try to establish his profile according to these writings. This can be helpful in the understanding of the role and importance that the character of Adam could have had in a Coptic environment.

That being said, we can start by the example of an Egyptian Bishop from the sixth century, John of Parallos.[132] In a homily against apocryphal texts – of which we only possess fragments today[133] – he affirms that certain Christians, who he calls blasphemers, wrote many heretical books among which there is one called *Teachings of Adam* (ⲛⲉⲥⲃⲟⲟⲩⲉ ⲛ̅ⲁⲇⲁⲙ):

> Pour ce motif, il m'a plu à moi aussi, disciples pieux, ou plutôt enfants de lumière et enfants du jour, de vous instruire au sujet des gens de cette espèce qui ont osé blasphémer Dieu, le créateur de tout homme ; car en vérité ces blasphémateurs-là sont pires que les juifs et les païens criminels, impurs. Ils ont notamment écrit des livres de tous genres de blasphèmes, à savoir : celui qu'on dénomme 'L'investiture de Michel', puis 'La prédication de Jean', 'La jubilation des apôtres', Les enseignements d'Adam', 'Le conseil du Sauveur' (Vienna K 9831, p. 48).[134]

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[131] For details, see Walter E. Crum, *Catalogue of Coptic Manuscripts in the Collection of the John Rylands Library, Manchester* (Manchester/Oxford: Manchester University Press/Bernard Quaritch and Sherratt and Hughes, 1909), 40 and Michael E. Stone, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve* (EJL 3; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1992), 39-41.

[132] We do not know today many biographical information about John of Parallos; a survey can be found in Arnold van Lantschoot. "Fragments coptes d'une Homélie de Jean de Parallos contre les livres hérétiques," in *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati* (Roma: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1946), 296-297.

[133] Preserved at the Bibliothèque nationale de Paris (copte 131, f. 15) and at the National Library of Vienna (K 9831 – K 9838). They were edited and translated into French by Lantschoot: Arnold van Lantschoot. "Fragments coptes d'une Homélie de Jean de Parallos contre les livres hérétiques," in *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati* (Roma: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1946), 296-326. In what survived of the fragments, there is no indication of the precise date of the original composition of this homily. We know only that it was composed between the sixth and seventh centuries, during the lifetime of John of Parallos (Lantschoot, "Fragments coptes," 296-297).

[134] Lantschoot's translation in Lantschoot, "Fragments coptes," 319. For the Coptic text, see Lantschoot, "Fragments coptes," 303.

Unfortunately, John of Parallos does not mention anything about the precise contents of these texts – at least not in what survived in the fragments – with the exception of 'The Investiture of Michael',[135] since later in the text he cites and discusses many passages in the Scriptures concerning the archangel Michael.[136] Although we may not know anything about the contents of these *Teachings of Adam*, on the other hand, we do have access to some information – provided by John of Parallos himself – about their main readers:

> Ces hérétiques pervers ont osé publier des ouvrages pleins de malédictions et d'amertume ; que si les gens simples les récitent dans les villages et les villes de l'Égypte, pendant que des zélants les écoutent, ils pensent que les paroles de ces livres auxquelles on prête l'oreille sont choses véridiques (Vienna K 9831, p. 49).[137]

Thus, according to John of Parallos the main audience of these texts were naïve people (ⲁⲡⲗⲟⲩⲥ),[138] who recited them in public in the cities and villages of Egypt, being listened to mainly by the zealous (ⲥⲡⲟⲩⲇⲁⲓⲟⲥ).[139] While we may not have much information about the life of John of Parallos, we do know some things about his adversaries. And these things may be important clues to the identity of those who read and spread the apocryphal texts mentioned by John of Parallos, especially the *Teachings of Adam*. We know about the presumed adversaries of John through two Dfinār hymns that celebrate his memory, telling

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[135] According to Lantschoot "le premier de ces ouvrages doit sans nul doute être identifié avec le Livre de l'investiture de saint Michel archange conservé par les mss. Pierpont Morgan, en sahidique dans le codex M 614 ; le titre correspond de part et d'autre et les idées combattues par Jean de Parallos dans son homélie se rattachent aux prétendues révélations mises en circulation par cet apocryphe" (Lantschoot, "Fragments coptes," 299.

[136] See Lantschoot, "Fragments coptes," 304-318.

[137] Lantschoot's translation in Lantschoot, "Fragments coptes," 320. For the Coptic text, see Lantschoot, "Fragments coptes," 304.

[138] Lundhaug and Jenott suggest "simple-minded folk" as a translation in English (Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 1610). On the Coptic word, see Arnold van Lantschoot, *Recueil des manuscrits chrétiens d'Égypte. Tome I: les colophons coptes des manuscrits sahidiques. Fascicule 2: Notes* (Louvain: J.-B. Istas imprimeur, 1929), 25, footnote 12. See also Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*, 9-10.

[139] These zealous (known as σπουδαῖοι or φιλόπονοι) were very widespread in Egypt, forming kinds of urban ascetical communities, according to Morard, "menant au milieu du monde une vie plus austère que le reste des fidèles" (cf. Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*, 10). See also Jean Maspero, *Histoire des patriarches d'Alexandrie depuis la mort de l'empereur Anastase jusqu'à la réconciliation des églises jacobites (518-616)* (Paris: E. Champion, 1923), 198, footnote 4; and Gérard Garitte, "Panégyrique de saint Antoine par Jean, évêque d'Hermopolis." *OCP* 9 (1943), 133, footnote 3.

some of his deeds.[140] We know that once at the charge of the episcopate of Parallos, besides combatting the circulation of apocrypha in churches, [141] John started a great battle against dissident Christians, among which there were seven (or five, according to a variant account) sects[142] and two allegedly visionary monks – who claimed to be inspired by heavenly characters, one by the archangel Michael, the other by the prophet Habakkuk.[143] He also confronted the Meletians in his diocese.[144] It is not unlikely to presume that these adversaries were on one way or another involved either on the composition and spread of the apocrypha combatted by John or in their reading, maybe even in both. Maybe the zealous (ⲥⲡⲟⲩⲇⲁⲓⲟⲥ) – mentioned by John of Parallos himself as the main audience of these apocryphal texts[145] – could be identified as one of the sects that are said to be combated by John in later sources.[146] Maybe among those naïve people (ⲁⲡⲗⲟⲩⲥ) – who are said to be the spreaders of these apocryphal texts[147] – we could count these two allegedly visionary monks which are mentioned in later sources as adversaries of John.[148] This last possibility becomes even likely if we take into consideration the fact that one of these monks is said to have claimed that he was inspired by the archangel Michael and that one of the texts denounced by John of Parallos is the 'The Investiture of Michael'.[149]

At any rate, this type of literature was popular enough to disturb an ecclesiastical authority such as John of Parallos to the point that he had to write against it, as Morard

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[140] De Lacy O'leary, *The Difnar of the Coptic Church, fasc. 1* (London: 1926), 90-91. See also Lantschoot, "Fragments coptes", 297.

[141] Lantschoot, "Fragments coptes", 297. Severus of Ašmūnayn also witnesses to the battle carried out by John of Parallos against apocrypha (Lantschoot, "Fragments coptes", 297, footnote 7).

[142] De Lacy O'Leary, *The Difnar of the Coptic Church, fasc. 1*, 90-91. See also Lantschoot, "Fragments coptes", 297.

[143] De Lacy O'Leary, *The Difnar of the Coptic Church, fasc. 1*, 90-91. See also Lantschoot, "Fragments coptes", 297.

[144] Hugh Evelyn White, *The Monasteries of the Wadi n' Natrum vol. 2: The History of the Monasteries of Nitria and Scetis* (New York, 1932), 249. See also Lantschoot, "Fragments coptes", 297.

[145] Lantschoot, "Fragments coptes," 304. 320.

[146] De Lacy O'Leary, *The Difnar of the Coptic Church, fasc. 1*, 90-91. See also Lantschoot, "Fragments coptes", 297.

[147] Lantschoot, "Fragments coptes," 304. 320.

[148] De Lacy O'Leary, *The Difnar of the Coptic Church, fasc. 1*, 90-91. See also Lantschoot, "Fragments coptes", 297.

[149] See footnote 133 above.

observes.[150] Unfortunately, John of Parallos' account does not say anything about the content of the text in question nor about the character of Adam itself, what could be extremely useful to the subject we are discussing here. However, he bears witness of Adam patronizing a text that circulated in Coptic and of his popularity in that context, since John was troubled enough to write a homily against it.

While we may not know anything about the contents of the *Theachings of Adam* mentioned by John of Parallos, other texts preserved in Coptic bear witness to how the character of Adam may have been interpreted in late antique Coptic Egypt. In 1983, Poirier published some fragments that he believed to be part of a Coptic version of the *Cave of Treasures*.[151] These fragments are part of the Pierpont Morgan Library collection (Coptic 665) and were catalogued by Hyvernat as "An apocryphal writing addressed to a certain Theophilus."[152] Seven years later, Coquin and Godron published a Coptic homily pseudominically attributed to Cyril of Alexandria,[153] showing that what Poirier believed to be fragments of a Coptic version of the *Cave of Treasures* were in fact fragments of this homily, whose subject is Mary Magdalene (and, this is why we will call this homily as *Encomium on Mary Magdalene* for now on). Obviously, this homily incorporated a considerable part of the *Cave of Treasures*;[154] it was this part that survived in the fragments published by Poirier in 1983.

For the purposes of the present dissertation, the *Encomium on Mary Magdalene* – or more specifically the extracts of the *Cave of Treasures* incorporated to it – is relevant because it bears witness to a late antique Coptic view about Adam. However, is it possible to affirm

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[150] Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*, 10.

[151] Paul-Hubert Poirier, "Fragments d'une version copte de la *Caverne des Trésors*," *Orientalia* 52 (1983): 415-423.

[152] Hyvernat's catalogue was not published, but certain scholars had access to it. We quote it according to Poirier, "Fragments d'une version copte de la *Caverne des Trésors*," 416. Concerning the identity of "Theophilus", see Paul-Hubert Poirier, "Note sur le nom du destinataire des chapitres 44 à 54 de la *Caverne des trésors*," in *Christianisme d'Égypte: Hommages à René-Georges Coquin* (ed. J.-M. Rosenstiehl; CBC 9; Paris/Louvain: Peeters, 1995), 115-122.

[153] René-Georges Coquin and Gérard Godron, "Un encomion copte sur Marie-Madeleine attribué à Cyrille de Jérusalem," *BIAO* 90 (1990): 169-212.

[154] Coquin and Godron, "Un encomion copte sur Marie-Madeleine attribué à Cyrille de Jérusalem," 169.

that this *Encomium* circulated in Coptic in Late Antiquity? Poirier followed Hyvernat, dating the fragments from the Pierpont Morgan Library to the ninth century.[155] The manuscript in which the *Encomium on Mary Magdalene* was partially preserved was dated by the editors between the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[156] Evidently, the manuscript itself does not say everything about the date of composition of the text – it could, at best, establish a *terminus ad quem*. At any rate, Alin Suciu has classed the *Encomium on Mary Magdalene* among the texts he called "Apostolic Memoirs", a specific type of apocrypha produced in Egypt.[157] On the date of these texts, Suciu argues that they belong to the "post-Chalceldonian period of Coptic literature".[158] Another clue in the evidence brought to light by Suciu[159] is the fact that one of the motifs found in the *Encomium on Mary Magdalene* – that of Adam being venerated by angels,[160] is already attested in at least one Muslim text from the seventh century, the *Annals* of Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari.[161]If the source of Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari is Coptic Apocrypha, in particular the Apostolic Memoirs – such as the *Encomium on Mary Magdalene* – we would have the seventh century as a *terminus ad quem* for our Encomium.

Evidently, this is not enough to show that this text could have had any influence on the understanding of the character of Adam among fourth-and fifth-century Coptic readers. In any case, this is the best clue that we have and the fact that it undoubtedly circulated in Coptic in Late Antiquity allows us to believe that it could in some way reflect how the character in question was seen in the context that concerns us here.

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[155] As expressd above, Poirier refers to a catalogue made by Hyvernart (Catalogue of Coptic Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library) that was never published. Some scholars, however, had access to the manuscript of that catalogue (Poirier, "Fragments d'une version copte de la Caverne des Trésors," 416).

[156] Coquin and Godron, "Un encomion copte sur Marie-Madeleine attribué à Cyrille de Jérusalem," 170.

[157] For details, see Suciu, *The Berlin-Strasbourg Apocryphon*, 2017.

[158] Suciu, *The Berlin-Strasbourg Apocryphon*, 128.

[159] Alin Suciu, "Apocryphal Texts in Egyptian Monasticism after Nag Hammadi: Textual Traditions and Manuscript Evidence" (paper presented at the Colloquim *The Nag Hammadi Codices in Fourth-and Fifth Century Christianity in Egypt*, Oslo, 17 December 2013). See also Alin Suciu and Ibrahim Saweros, "The Investiture of Abbaton, the Angel of Death," in *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*. Vol. 1 (ed. T. Burke and B. Landau; Grand Rapids [MI]: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 531; Suciu, *The Berlin-Strasbourg Apocryphon*, 71.78-79.

[160] This motif is also present in the *Investiture of Abbaton, the Angel of Death* (Suciu and Saweros, "The Investiture of Abbaton, the Angel of Death").

[161] Suciu and Saweros, "The Investiture of Abbaton", 531.

That being said, we must discuss the way in which Adam is portrayed in this *Encomium*, as it is quite striking, particularly before the Fall. Indeed he is described as the type of the Christ, being honored by God with many messianic qualities, the three most important being kingship, priesthood and prophecy. At a certain point, God tells Adam that "Voici que je t'ai établi roi et prêtre et prophète, toi seul es celui à qui j'ai donné la puissance sur toute chose que j'ai créée" (IFAO, Copte 27 f 7 v, a2-a10).[162] In a sort of reinterpretation and expansion of *Genesis* 1:26 it is also said that

> alors, Dieu créa Adam de ses mains saintes à sa ressemblance et son image; les anges virent la ressemblance d'Adam, comme elle était devenue, dans cette grande gloire; ils furent troublés en voyant la ressemblance de son visage, beau, resplendissant comme le soleil, la lumière de ses yeux, comme des rayons (de soleil), son corps lumineux; il brilla comme un cristal; il se tint debout au milieu de la terre, il plaça ses pieds dans le lieu où fut fichée la croix de Jésus-Christ; il le revêtit du vêtement royal; il plaça sur sa tête la couronne de gloire; il le fit roi, prêtre et prophète; il le fit s'assoir sur le trône de sa gloire (IFAO, Copte 27 f 7 r a28-b27).[163]

This passage is a description of Adam in which he is portrayed in a very positive way, as a holy man. However, the most striking feature concerning Adam comes right after this description. It is said that the angels adored Adam due to glory that God gave him; Satan became jealous and refused to adore Adam, that being the cause of his (Satan) fall. The arrival of Adam in Paradise is also described: "Dieu le [fit monter] dans un [char] de feu, dans le paradis, les anges chantèrent des hymnes devant lui, avec les Chérubins et les Séraphins,

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[162] Coquin and Godron's translation in Coquin and Godron, "Un encomion copte sur Marie-Madeleine attribué à Cyrille de Jérusalem," 207. ⲡϫⲟⲉⲓⲥ ϫⲱ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ. ϫⲉ ⲉⲓⲥ ϩⲏⲏⲧⲉ ⲁϊⲕⲁⲑⲓⲥⲧⲁ ⲙⲙⲟⲕ. ⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲣⲟ. ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲏⲏⲃ. ⲁⲩⲱ ⲙⲡⲣⲟⲫⲏⲧⲏⲥ. ⲛⲧⲟⲕ ⲙⲁⲩⲁⲁⲕ ⲡⲉ ⲛⲧⲁⲓϯ ⲛⲁⲕ ⲛ̄ϯⲉϩⲟⲩⲥⲓ̈ⲁ. ⲉϫⲉⲛ ϩⲱⲃ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲓ̈ⲧⲁⲙⲓ̈ⲟⲟⲩ (Coquin and Godron, "Un encomion copte sur Marie-Madeleine attribué à Cyrille de Jérusalem," 190). The last part of this passage is obviously linked to *Gn* 2: 19-20.

[163] Coquin and Godron's translation in Coquin and Godron, "Un encomion copte sur Marie-Madeleine attribué à Cyrille de Jérusalem," 207. ⲧⲟⲧⲉ ⲁ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲧⲁⲙⲓ̈ⲟ ⲛⲁⲇⲁⲙ ϩⲛ̄ ⲛⲉϥϭⲓϫ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲡⲉϥⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲙ̄ⲛ ⲧⲉϥϩⲓ̈ⲕⲱⲛ. ⲁⲩⲛⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲛⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲉⲡⲉⲓ̈ⲛⲉ ⲛⲁⲇⲁⲙ ⲛⲑⲉ ⲛⲧⲁϥϣⲱⲡⲉ. ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲉⲓ̈ⲛⲟϭ ⲛⲉⲟⲟⲩ. ⲁⲩϣⲧⲟⲣⲧⲣ̄ ⲉⲩⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲛⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲙⲡⲉϥϩⲟ ⲉϥⲥⲁ. ⲉϥⲧⲁ ⲁⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲙ̄ⲏⲣⲏ. ⲡⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲛ̄ⲛϥⲃⲁⲗ ⲉϥⲟ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲕⲧⲓⲛ ⲡⲉϥⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲁϥⲉⲣⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ. ⲁϥⲧⲁⲁⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲛⲟⲩⲕⲣⲩⲥⲧⲁⲗⲟⲥ. ⲁϥⲧⲁϩⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲁⲧϥ̄ ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲙⲏⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲕⲁϩ. ⲁϥⲕⲱ ⲛ̄ⲛϥⲟⲩⲉⲣⲏⲧⲉ ϩⲓϫⲙ̄ ⲡⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩⲧⲟⲕϩ. ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲥⲣ̄ⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲓⲥ ⲡⲉⲭⲥ̄ ϩⲓ̈ϫⲱϥ. ⲁϥⲫⲟⲣⲉⲓ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲛ̄ⲟⲃⲥⲱ ⲛ̄ⲣ̄ⲣⲟ. ⲁϥⲕⲱ ϩⲓ̈ϫⲱϥ ⲙⲡⲉⲕⲗⲟⲙ ⲛⲉⲟⲟⲩ. ⲁϥⲁⲁϥ ⲛ̄ⲣ̄ⲣⲟ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲏⲏⲃ. ⲁⲩⲱ ⲙ̄ⲡⲣⲟⲫⲏⲧⲏⲥ. ⲁϥⲉⲙ̄ⲥⲟⲩ ⲉϫⲙ̄ ⲡⲉⲑⲣⲟⲛⲟⲥ. ⲙ̄ⲡϥⲉⲟⲟⲩ (Coquin and Godron, "Un encomion copte sur Marie-Madeleine attribué à Cyrille de Jérusalem," 189).

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bénissant et adorant Dieu, se réjouissant sur Adam, parce qu'il a été reçu au paradis » (IFAO, Copte 27 f 7 v a15-a26).[164]

After the Fall – which is clearly considered as the Devil's fault – the way Adam is portrayed continues to be positive; the text exempts Adam from the Fall, and God promises him that he will receive his heritage back, saying that "Prends courage, Adam; ne crains pas et ne sois pas [pusilla]nime; je te ferai retourner à ton héritage une autre fois; regarde mon [amour] à ton endroit; [moi,] j'ai maudit la terre à cause de toi, et [le serpent] qui [t']a séduit; mais, toi, [je] t'épargne, pour ne pas te mau[dire] » (IFAO, Copte 27 f 9 r a7-a20).[165]

In one of the Coptic Epic Passions that is part of our corpus of comparison, there is one mention of Adam that evokes the general portray presented in the *Encomium on Magdalene*; it is part of a prayer pronounced by Saint Macrobius in the presence of the Roman governor and in the midst of wild beasts: "Dieu, qui nous a aimés au point de nous concéder la dignité d'Adam, avant qu'il eût violé la loi de tes commandements, alors que toute espèce d'animaux étaient soumis et courbaient la tête devant lui, parce que tu l'avais orné, en le faisant à ton image!" (C.V.C. 58 fol. 100-101).[166]

Thus, in the light of the passages mentioned above, one can say that Adam was generally portrayed in late antique Coptic sources in a very positive way, even after the Fall. The emphasis is not on the Fall, but on his close relation to God, in his resemblance to the divine. Thus – always in a reception perspective – we believe that the character of Adam in

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[164] Coquin and Godron's translation in Coquin and Godron, "Un encomion copte sur Marie-Madeleine attribué à Cyrille de Jérusalem," 207). ⲁⲇⲁⲙ ⲇⲉ ⲁ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ [ⲭⲓ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ] ⲙⲙⲟϥ. ϩⲛ ⲟⲩⲕⲗⲟⲟ[ⲙⲉ] ⲛⲕⲱϩⲧ. ⲉⲡⲡⲁⲣ[ⲁ]ⲇⲓⲥⲟⲥ. ⲉⲣⲉ ⲛⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ϩⲩⲙⲛⲉⲩⲉ ϩⲓϩⲛ ⲙⲙⲟϥ ⲙⲛ ⲛⲉⲭⲁⲓⲣⲟⲩⲃⲓⲛ. [ⲙⲛ] ⲛⲥⲉⲣⲁⲫⲓⲛ. ⲉⲩⲥⲙⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉⲩⲟⲩⲱϣⲧ ⲙⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ. ⲉⲩⲣⲁϣⲉ ⲉⲭⲛⲁⲇⲁⲙ. ⲭⲉ ⲁⲩⲭⲓⲧϥ ⲉ[ⲛ]ⲡⲁⲣⲁⲇⲓⲥⲟⲥ. (Coquin and Godron, "Un encomion copte sur Marie-Madeleine attribué à Cyrille de Jérusalem," 190).

[165] Coquin and Godron's translation in Coquin and Godron, "Un encomion copte sur Marie-Madeleine attribué à Cyrille de Jérusalem," 208). ⲧⲱⲕ [ⲛ]ϩⲏⲧ ⲁⲇⲁⲙ. ⲙⲡⲣ ⲣ[ϩⲟ]ⲧⲉ. ⲟⲩⲇⲉ ⲙⲡⲉⲣ ⲉⲣ[ⲕⲟⲩ]ⲓ ⲛϩⲏⲧ. ⲙⲙⲟⲛ [ϯⲛⲁ]ⲕⲧⲟⲕ. ⲉⲧⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲣⲟⲛⲟⲙⲓⲁ ⲛⲕⲁⲓ ⲥⲟⲡ ⲑⲉⲱⲣⲉⲓ ⲙⲡⲁⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲣⲟⲕ. []ⲛⲧⲁⲓⲥ<ϩ>ⲟⲩⲣ ⲡⲕⲁϩ ⲉⲧⲃⲏⲛⲧⲕ. ⲙⲛ ⲡ[ϩⲱ]ⲃ ⲛⲧⲁϥⲁⲡⲁⲧⲁ [ⲙⲙⲟⲕ]. ⲛⲧⲟⲕ ⲇⲉ ϯϯⲥⲟ ⲉⲣⲟⲕ. ⲉⲧⲙⲥⲟⲩⲟ[ⲣ]ⲕ (Un encomion copte sur Marie-Madeleine attribué à Cyrille de Jérusalem," 193).

[166] Hyvernat's translation in Henry Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1977), 238. Ⲫϯ ⲫⲏ ⲉⲧⲁϥⲙⲉⲛⲣⲓⲧⲧⲉⲛ ⲙⲡⲁⲓⲣⲏϯ ⲉⲁⲕⲉⲣϩⲙⲟⲧ ⲛⲁⲛ ⲙⲡⲓⲁⲝⲓⲱⲙⲁ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲁⲇⲁⲙ ⲉⲧⲓ ⲙⲡⲁⲧⲉϥⲉⲣⲡⲁⲣⲁⲃⲉⲛⲓⲛ ⲙⲫⲛⲟⲙⲟⲥ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲕⲉⲛⲧⲟⲗⲏ ⲉⲩⲉⲣϩⲩⲡⲟⲧⲁⲍⲓⲛ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲉⲩϭⲛⲟⲛ ⲛⲭⲱⲟⲩ ⲛⲁϥ ⲛⲭⲉ ⲫⲩⲥⲓⲥ ⲛⲓⲃⲉⲛ ⲛⲍⲱⲟⲛ ϧⲉⲛ ⲡⲭⲓⲛⲑⲣⲉⲕⲥⲉⲗⲥⲱⲗϥ ϧⲉⲛ ⲡⲓⲕⲁⲧⲁϩⲓⲕⲱⲛ (Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 238).

the *Apocalypse of Adam* could be understood in this way by late antique Coptic readers. The fact that Adam is said to be venerated by the angels in the *Encomium of Mary Magdalene* is particularly illustrative for late antique Coptic readers of the *Apocalypse of Adam*, since, in one way or another, the equality between Adam and the angels is expressed in the text of Codex V: "And we resembled the great eternal angels" (NH V 64, 14-15).[167]

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This section has a fundamental role in the development of the argumentation adopted by the present dissertation: situating the pseudonymous characters of Codex V treatises in a reception perspective – i.e. how they were seen and portrayed in late antique Coptic literature – may allow us to understand how Codex V texts were read and interpreted in fourth/fifth century Coptic Egypt. Instead of thinking of a "Gnostic Paul",[168] a chosen Sethian seed beginning with Adam,[169] or as James personifying a challenge to the Great Church,[170] we may rather think of these characters in a reception perspective in a late antique Coptic context. As we suggested above, Paul as the great apostle and hero – as illustrated by the passages of Pachomian literature we mentioned above[171]; James as the perfect model for the ascetic life, but also as a martyr – as witnessed to by Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History* and the *Contendings of the Twelve Apostles*;[172] and Adam as the first human creation of God, resembling the divine and worthy of being venerated by angels – as witnessed to by the *Encomium on Mary Magdalene* and the *Passion of Saint Macrobius*.[173]

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[167] MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI,* 155.
[168] Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Paul: Gnostic Exegesis of Pauline Letters* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975).
[169] See the description of the Sethian character of the *Apocalypse of Adam* in Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*, 10-12, for example. See also Birger Pearson, *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 55.56.67.
[170] Morard, "Les apocalypses du codex V", 342; Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 149-153
[171] See pages 137-142 above.
[172] See pages 142-153 above.
[173] See pages 153-160 above.

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Delimitation, Justification and Description of the Comparative Literary Corpus

5.1. Introduction

One of the main preliminary steps of a study that aims to compare two different *corpora* is the delimitation, justification and description of both literary collections. What has been said above probably has already set the foundation of this delimitation. At any rate, to make it even clearer, this dissertation intends to compare NH Codex V, which includes the texts known as *Eugnostos*, *The Apocalypse of Paul*, *The First* and *The Second Apocalypses of James* and *The Apocalypse of Adam*,[1] and what has been generally called fourth/fifth-century Egyptian hagiographic literature, which we intend to define in detail hereafter. This comparison will be made taking into consideration what both corpora have in common – the fact that both circulated in Coptic in Late Antiquity.[2] Thus we are not concerned here with the original composition of the treatises of Codex V; we are interested in them as texts compiled in Coptic. That being said, the delimitation of our literary corpora involves two different issues, a temporal and a geographical/linguistic one.

The temporal issue concerns the time at which the NHC, including Codex V, were produced and circulated, i.e. some moment in fourth-century Coptic Egypt. Thus if our investigation intends to show that the environment that produced Codex V was interested in literary themes and motifs that are found in this volume, our comparison must take into consideration primarily the literature that circulated in Coptic at the same time. The fact that

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[1] Eventually, the other known versions of these texts, namely *Eugnostos* from Codex III, and (*The First Apocalypse of*) *James* from Codex Tchacos, will be evoked and discussed whenever it is necessary.
[2] The only exception is probably the *Letter of Ammon*, which, as far as we know, was composed and preserved in Greek only. However, since it was written by a former Pachomian monk, who lived in a Pachomian Coptic-speaking monastery for a while, we believe that it could also bear witness to what was in fashion in Egyptian hagiographic literature at the presumed time of Codex V compilation and circulation.

Codex V was probably compiled in the fourth-century does not mean that its use and reception were restricted to that time; in fact, we have only evidence for a *terminus post quem* for the NHC (mid fourth century),[3] but nothing could define its *terminus ante quem*. In other words, nothing can assure us that Codex V and the other NHC were buried, and thus taken out of circulation, in the fourth century; as Veilleux argues, Athanasius' 367 *Festal Letter* as the cause for the burial of NHC is no more than a hypothesis.[4] Later sources, such as Shenoute's *I am Amazed*,[5] also known as *Catechesis against Apocrypha*,[6] and John of Paralos' homilies,[7] demonstrate that apocryphal texts continued to circulate in Upper Egypt after the fourth century. Moreover, it seems that the pottery bowl which covered the jar in which NHC were found can be dated from the fifth century,[8] which might also argue in favor of its longer utilisation, necessarily posterior to the fourth century. Thus the possibility of Codex V being used in later periods, i.e. after the fourth century, allows us to extend our *corpus* of comparison to Egyptian hagiographies that were possibly produced and circulated in Upper Egypt after the fourth century.

Another factor that supports the inclusion of later texts in our corpus of comparison is related to the common scarcity of sources, a situation normally faced by scholarship on Ancient history in general that Early Christianity scholars on their turn have not been able to overcome. The number of hagiographies that can be dated with certainty as belonging to fourth/fifth centuries is not as considerable as one would wish. This situation leads us to call upon possibly later sources in our attempt to understand the Coptic literary mentality that

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[3] This *terminus post quem* is based on the supposed time of the production of the NHC and can be determined by the means of written dates that were preserved in the papyri used to reinforce its covers (See section 2.3). Moreover, as discussed in section 2.3, one can imagine that it could have taken some time for a papyrus to become useless as a written document, and then be discarded and used as scrapbook or as reinforcement to the covers of other codices. Consequently, the production of NHC could have taken place in a later period than the traditionally suggested mid-fourth century.

[4] Veilleux, "Monachisme et gnose. Deuxième partie: contacts littéraires et doctrinaux entre monachisme et gnose." See also our discussion in section 2.5.

[5] Hans-Joachim Cristea, *Schenute von Atripe: Contra Origenistas: Edition des koptischen Textes mit annotierter Übersetzung und Indizes einschließlich einer Übersetzung des 16. Osterfestbriefs des Theophilus in der Fassung des Hieronymus* (ep. 96) (STAC 60; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

[6] See Orlandi, "A Catechesis Against Apocryphal Texts by Shenoute and the Gnostic Texts of Nag Hammadi".

[7] See van Lantschoot, "Fragments coptes d'une homélie de Jean de Parallos contre les livres hérétiques."

[8] See James Robinson, "The Discovery of the Nag Hammadi Codices," *BA* 42 (1979), 212-213.

compiled and received Codex V. Finally, we believe that later texts could also bear witness to earlier contexts, mentalities and cultures, and that Coptic sources composed after the fourth century can also reflect literary issues and motifs in vogue at the time of circulation of NH Codex V.

Accordingly, we believe that these issues allow us to include in our corpus of comparison hagiographies that were possibly composed in later periods. One may think especially of the Coptic Martyrdoms labeled as "Epic Passions". As the present dissertation intends to demonstrate, their precise date of composition has not been fixed by scholarship and opinions on this matter vary from the fourth to the eleventh centuries.[9] However, in the light of what has been discussed above, we believe that no major concerns prevent us from including them in our corpus of comparison.

By later sources we do not mean later manuscripts. A crucial differentiation, which was not always taken into consideration by scholarship on medieval Coptic sources, deals with the fact that a a text can be much older than the manuscript in which it is contained; a tenth-century manuscript, for example, may very well be a copy/translation of a much earlier text. And indeed, as already outlined in the introduction of the present dissertation,[10] the study of early Christianity – and also of ancient history in general – is generally based on later manuscripts. The fact that first-century New Testament manuscripts do not exist – or, more precisely, have not been preserved – never prevented scholars from working on the New Testament itself and on its *Sitz im Leben*, for example. The study of "Gnosticism" – a typical second-and third-centuriy phenomenon – is largely and almost totally based on later manuscripts. We stress this matter for two main reasons: 1) no manuscript of the hagiographies that are included in our comparison corpus dates from the fourth or fifth centuries; they all date from later periods, which does not necessarily prevent us from dating the original composition from an earlier period; 2) one of the main objections raised by certain scholars concerning an earlier date of composition for some hagiographies – and we

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[9] See section 5.3 below.
[10] See speacially pages 3-4.

are thinking specifically of some Epic Passions – was exactly related to the fact that no – or only a few – earlier manuscripts of this genre were known.[11] In the light of what we just discussed, it would take much more than that to propose a later date of composition for any given Ancient or late antique text.

The geographical/linguistic issue deals primarily with the fact that Codex V is probably a product of a Coptic environment. Given that, we do not intend to include hagiographies – or texts related to the hagiographic literary genre – that are not a native product of Egypt. Texts such as the *Historia Monachorum* and the *Historia Lausiaca* may contain valuable and accurate historical information concerning the rising and development of monasticism in Egypt; but they were composed by "outsiders", by foreigners who came out of Egypt, aiming at an audience that was not Egyptian either. This is probably enough to demonstrate that these texts may not provide a sample of what late antique Egyptian literary culture was like.

On the other hand, a text such as the *Letter of Ammon*, composed and preserved only in Greek, is surely a valuable source for our comparison. Even if it probably did not circulate in Coptic, the *Letter of Ammon* is a product of native Egyptian monasticism, since it was composed by a former Pachomian monk, who presumably lived in a Pachomian Coptic-speaking monastery under the guidance of Theodore – the most famous successor of Pachomius. Despite its title, the *Letter of Ammon*, as we will see in detail, was composed for the purpose of exalting Theodore as a saint and can be thus considered a hagiography. And indeed, the *Letter* follows the expected patterns of Egyptian monastic Lives, which allows us to include it in our corpus of comparison.

We will also include in our corpus of comparison the *Life of Antony* by Athanasius of Alexandria. Even though it was originally composed in Greek, it was mainly addressed to Egyptian, including Coptic, monks; and, as we will see below, it sets the standard for the

[11] Willy Clarisse, "The Coptic Martyr Cult," in *Martyrium in Multidisciplinary Perspective: Memorial Louis Reekmans* (ed. M. Lamberigts and P. van Deun; BETL 117; Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1995), 394.

hagiographical literary genre in Coptic and has much in common with late antique Coptic hagiographies.

Having said this, we must turn our attention to the concept of hagiography and what we mean by this term. The best description of this concept is formulated by Delehaye:

> (…) in order to be strictly hagiographic, the document should be of a religious character and should aim at edification. The term may only be applied therefore to writings inspired by devotion to the saints and intended to promote it. The point to be emphasised from the first is the distinction between hagiography and history. The work of the hagiographer may be historical, but it is not necessarily so. It may assume any literary form suitable to the glorification of the saints, from an official record adapted to the use of the faithful, to a poetical composition of the most exuberant character wholly detached from reality.[12]

We can emphasise two issues in Delehaye's definition:

1- Hagiographies are not intended to be accurate historical works; they intend to edify their readers by telling anecdotes related to the life of a saint. In certain cases, hagiographies can provide valuable information concerning the authentic life of a given saint, but this is not their main intention. In any case, the interest of the present dissertation in hagiographies lies in the fact that they bear witness to Egyptian literary culture. The present dissertation is not interested at all in the historicity of Egyptian hagiographies, but in their literary content and form.

2- Hagiographies may assume any form suitable for the glorification of saints. For the present dissertation, we have chosen to deal with two specific forms of hagiographies that are preserved in Coptic: monastic lives and Coptic martyrdoms.

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[12] Hippolyte Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints. An Introduction to Hagiography* (London/New York/Bombay/Calcuta: University of Notre Dame Press, 1961), 2. It must be said, however, that the quoted passage is not presented by Delehaye as an ultimate definition of hagiography.

The first group is constituted by Egyptian monastic lives, i.e. hagiographies concerned with monks, which can be divided in two subgroups, the lives of abbots (the *Lives of Pachomius*, the *Letter of Ammon* and the *Life of Shenoute*) and the lives of anchorites (the *Life of Antony*, the *Life of Pambo*, the *Life of Onnophrius* and the *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*). The second group is made of what scholarship calls "Epic martyrdoms"[13] that were preserved in Coptic and consequently circulated in Coptic Egypt. These Coptic martyrdoms were all intended to recount the deeds of martyrs who died under the Great Persecution of Diocletian. Generally speaking, one may divide them in three sub-groups:[14] 1) those related to the circle of Jules of Aqphas – a pseudonymous author to whom many Epic Passions were attributed; 2) those related to the circle of Basilides – a character who appears in many of these Epic Passions; 3) those that cannot be linked to the previous two groups.

The next step in the delimitation of our comparative corpus must justify the reasons for our choice and the exclusion of other types of texts. We can identify three main reasons to justify this delimitation:

1- The narrative framework of Egyptian hagiographies relates them to the narrative framework of Codex V treatises, except for *Eugnostos*. If we were dealing with an epistolary *corpus*, we would have focussed our comparative analysis on fourth/fifth-century Egyptian letters; if we were dealing with a *corpus* of homilies, we would have focussed our analysis on fourth/fifth-century Egyptian homilies; if we were dealing with a *corpus* of *logia* attributed to Jesus, we would have focussed our analysis on fourth/fifth-century Egyptian sayings attributed to the Desert Fathers and so on. Strictly speaking, Egyptian hagiographies are not exactly apocalypses like the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the *Apocalypse of Adam*, nor revelatory dialogues like the *First Apocalypse of James*, but their literary framework provides a rich field of comparison with Codex

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[13] One must bear in mind that these "Epic Martyrdoms" or "Epic Passions" are different from what scholarship has traditionally called "Historical Martyrdoms". Epic Martyrdoms are known for their taste for the fantastic and implausible. Their accounts are always exaggerated and full of fantastic visions, miracles and unbelievable episodes. For a survey, see Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires* (SH 13 Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1966).

[14] This subdivision was suggested by Orlandi; see Tito Orlandi, *Omelie copta* (Torino: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1981), 5-24; see also Tito Orlandi, "Coptic Literature" in *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity* (ed. B. Pearson and J.E. Goehring; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 78-81.

V treatises. Moreover, we believe that at least the *Apocalypses of James* were likely perceived as a martyrdom by a Coptic audience; we will return to this issue in our conclusions;

2- Our search for literary themes and motifs found in Codex V that can also be abundantly found in late antique Egyptian literature proved to be more fruitful with these kinds of hagiographies, i.e. monastic lives and Coptic martyrdoms;

3- The volume of works preserved in Coptic is huge; this obviously prevents a full comparison within the scope of a Ph.D. dissertation. It would be virtually impossible to compare Codex V to everything that has survived in Coptic – both originally composed in that language and translated into it. We are aware that the comparison between Codex V and other Coptic texts could be fruitful, but that would exceed the limits of a single Ph.D. dissertation. We would however hope that future scholars will show an interest for this approach, continuing the work that we have launched here.

Therefore, we have decided to divide the late antique Egyptian hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison into two groups:

1- The first group is composed by texts that can be somehow called "monastic lives". These texts describe in hagiographical terms the lives of monastic "celebrities"; some of these monastic celebrities were certainly historical characters – such as Antony, Pachomius and Shenoute – while others were possibly legendary – such as Pambo and Onnophrius. Nonetheless, these texts are an original product of Egyptian culture and can thus be useful in our comparison. We established the division of subgroups in this category as follows: a) lives of monastic abbots (Pachomius, Theodore[15] and Shenoute) and b) lives of anchorites (Antony, Pambo, Onnophrius and the *Histories of Monks of Upper Egypt*).

2- The second group is formed by Coptic martyrdoms, also known as Epic Passions. We decided to divide this group into three subgroups: 1) the circle of Jules of

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[15] As stated above, what we call here the life of Theodore is actually the *Letter of Ammon,* clearly written to be a hagiography of this successor of Pachomius.

Aqphas (see section 4.2.1); 2) the circle of Basilides (see section 4.2.1); 3) Martyrdoms that are not necessarily associated to any circle, or, more precisely, due to their fragmentary character, they cannot be associated to any circle (see section 4.2.1).

We shall now proceed to a brief presentation and description of these sources. We must emphasize, however, that our goal is not to provide new and definitive considerations about these texts; that would be completely beyond the scope of the present dissertation. Our description intends only to supply brief considerations concerning these texts, considerations that will lay the foundations for our work of comparison. We thus do not aim to address precise questions concerning these texts, such as their original language or date of composition. For the purposes of the present dissertation, it suffices to state that these texts circulated in Coptic Egypt. For more detailed discussions on the texts, and also for those that are beyond the scope of the present dissertation, the reader can always refer to the bibliography. Concerning the original dates of composition of these texts – even though they are not necessarily crucial for our discussion – we intend to indicate when they are certain and when they are hypothetical. Concerning the texts that have not been analysed in depth by scholarship, we limit ourselves to mentioning the dates suggested by scholars, aware that further research could confirm or challenge these suggestions.

5.2. Monastic Lives
5.2.1. Lives of Abbots
5.2.1.1. The *Lives of Pachomius*

The Pachomian file is certainly one of the most complex collections of texts in Late Antiquity; firstly, Pachomius's fame in Late Antiquity and Medieval times in Egypt, but also in Eastern and Western Christianity as a whole, stimulated the interest in works linked to him, especially his *Life*, and his *Rules*, the latter considered to be probably the first collection

of monastic rules and certainly the most ancient that we know of.[16] This interest produced a great number of versions and translations of these works, in at least four late antique languages, Greek, Coptic, Latin and Arabic, and a diffusion that probably started in Upper Egypt, reached the entire country and even as far as the Western portion of the Roman Empire.[17]

Indeed, the quantity of versions of the *Life of Pahcomius* illustrates the chaotic situation of textual diffusion of the Pachomian sources and renders almost impossible the reconstitution of a *Vorlage* and of a chain of transmission for the *Life* itself. Many scholars[18] have tried to solve this problem but all the suggestions related to these topics remain in the field of speculation and no conclusive postulates have ever been reached. These preliminary aspects serve to justify why this dissertation does not defend any position concerning the *Life of Pachomius* original language of composition. We do not intend either to describe in detail the numerous and possible relations between the different versions of the *Lives*, a task that other scholars have already undertaken.[19]

Among the collection of texts that form the Pachomian file, the many versions of the *Life of Pachomius* shape a particular group that is not easy to analyse. We have many versions in at least four different languages (Coptic, Greek, Latin and Arabic) and the relations between them are not exactly clear. Many efforts have been made to clarify these relations,[20] without ultimately achieving any conclusive results though. Equally obscure are

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[16] This illustrates the importance of the *Pachomian Rules*, since it became in Western and Eastern Christianity the model for the composition of later monastic rules, such as those followed in the White Monastery; on the discussion of the Rules of the White Monastery in particular, see Bentley Layton, *The Canons of Our Fathers: Monastic Rules of Shenoute* (OECS 11; Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[17] Jerome's translation of the *Rules* is evidence of the fact that Pachomius and the works attributed to him and those who spoke about him were known in the West. The fact that the most complete Greek manuscript of his *Life* belongs to an Italian library also bears witness to Pachomius' notoriety in Western Christianity.

[18] See, for example Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien*, 11-158; Goehring, *The Letter of Ammon and Pachomian Monasticism*, 3-23.

[19] See in particular Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. I*, 1-21 and, more recently, Goehring, *The Letter of Ammon and Pachomian Monasticism*, 3-23.

[20] Once more, see Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien*, 11-158, especially 16-132; Goehring, *The Letter of Ammon and Pachomian Monasticism*, 3-23.

the issues involved in the discussion concerning the original language of composition of the *Life of Pachomius*; no consensus between scholars has ever been reached here either.[21]

For the purposes of the present dissertation, it suffices to say that both a Coptic and a Greek version of the *Life of Pachomius* already existed at the end of fourth century and was certainly circulating in Egyptian environments, especially in monastic ones. Since the manuscripts we know today date from a later time – they are, generally speaking, medieval[22]– one cannot reject the possibility of interpolations and other types of changes during the transmission of these texts. In other words, what we have today may not be exactly the same text of the *Life of Pachomius* that circulated in Coptic during the fourth and fifth centuries. And indeed, the differences between some Coptic versions that have been preserved – even if they are not major – point to that possibility.[23] In any case, as already delineated above in our comments concerning the use of later manuscripts for the study of early Christianity in general, this issue is not an insuperable obstacle. We evoke, once again, the fact that almost the entire study of early Christianity is based on later manuscripts.

Let us now proceed to a brief description of the main groups of texts and manuscripts in which the *Life of Pachomius* has been preserved.[24]

The *First Greek Life* (G[1]) is evidently the most important version of the *Life of Pachomious* that subsisted in that language.[25] It is the most complete version in Greek and is attested by three medieval manuscripts: the first and most important manuscript comes from the *Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana* in Florence; the second one comes from the National

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[21] For a survey of the discussion, see Goehring, *The Letter of Ammon and Pachomian Monasticism*, 3-23.

[22] The earliest fragment, written in Sahidic, dates probably from the seventh century. See Louis-Théophile Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vitae Sahidice Scriptae* (CSCO 99-100; Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste, 1952) and Lefort, *Les vies coptes de saint Pachôme*, LXII-LXXXVII.

[23] And this peculiarity applies to other sources used in the present dissertation – particularly certain monastic lives – that were also preserved in later manuscripts, such as the *Life of Pambo*, the *Life of Onnophrius* and the *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, for example.

[24] We adopt here the nomenclature suggested by Lefort (Lefort, *Les vies coptes de saint Pachôme*) and Veilleux (Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. I*).

[25] Other versions were preserved in Greek. For a survey of that subject, see Lefort, *Les vies coptes de saint Pachôme*, XIX-LXI and Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. I*, 5-15.

Library in Athens and was also copied in the eleventh century.[26] The third one is in a very poor and fragmentary state of preservation and is preserved in the *Biblioteca Ambrosiana*.[27]

Despite the fact that the differences between G^1 and the *Coptic Lives* are considerable, research has never really paid much attention to this, nor to the significance of these differences; we have presented a couple of papers in which we discuss this issue[28]. Our analysis focuses mainly on the fact that the *Coptic Lives* pay more attention to fantastic literary motifs normally associated with apocalyptic literature: the *Coptic Lives* contain entire sections – full of fantastic visions and visionary experiences mediated by angels, otherworldly journeys, etc. – that are missing in G^1. As already noted by scholarship, Coptic literature always had a particular taste for the fantastic, a taste that was not necessarily shared by Greek Christian literature.[29] Leaving aside the question of the original language of composition, we believe that – in the actual state of preservation of these sources, i.e. G^1 and the *Coptic Lives* – there is enough evidence to suggest that the *Coptic Lives* are a more reliable witness of the Coptic literary milieu. This does not mean, however, that we cannot eventually make use of G^1 in our comparisons.

Based on all the fragments and codices, one can say that at least 29 witnesses of the *Life of Pachomius* have survived in Coptic, most in Sahidic.[30] Thus, due to the considerable

[26] This manuscript is preserved in fragmentary condition and it was also mutilated during its life; the first three pages disappeared and the pagination is not original (Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien*, 18). However, it fills in the passage that is missing in the Florence's manuscript.

[27] Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien*, 18.

[28] Dias Chaves, "The Apocalyptic Imagination in Fourth Century Egypt" and Dias Chaves, "The Apocalyptic Worldview and Divine Authority in Fourth Century Egyptian Hagiography."

[29] Frank H. Hallock, "Coptic Apocrypha," *JBL* 52 (1933): 163-174. See also Suciu, "O *Evangelho do Salvador* (P. Berol. 22220) no seu contexto." We are not suggesting here that the differences between G^1 and the *Coptic Lives* are limited to what we call here "apocalyptic literary motifs". We are aware that the differences between these two groups of versions are much more complex and deserve more complete study. However, in regard to the present dissertation, we believe that the lack in G^1 of literary motifs that are generally associated with apocalyptic literature, and normally abound in Coptic literature – whether original compositions or translations – is symptomatic. The fact that the three witnesses of G^1 that we know today have survived in European libraries could explain this lack. One could possibly expect to find less differences – mainly in regard to apocalyptic literary motifs – in a Greek version of the *Lives* belonging to Egypt. However, we stress here that this is merely speculative.

[30] As explained above, we do not intend to provide an exhaustive discussion of the sources, since other scholars have already done this. For details on the many fragments and witnesses of the *Life of Pachomius* in Coptic, see Lefort, *Les vies coptes de saint Pachôme*. One must also mention the superb work done by Lefort, the chief editior of all these sources; see Louis-Théophile Lefort, "Glanures pachômiennes," *Muséon* 54 (1941): 111-

number of witnesses, we will abstain from mentioning the manuscripts in which they were preserved; one can easily acces this information in Lefort's editions.[31] Lefort suggests the division of the fragments and manuscripts in four groups[32]. Veilleux considers that the most important groups are the second and the third ones; according to him, these two groups – along with the *Arabic Life of Pachomius* – probably derive from a single Sahidic version, which was probably the first one to be written in Coptic. In Veilleux's words:

> Sahidic, the Coptic dialect of Upper Egypt, was the idiom of Pachomius and his disciples. The *Coptic Life* of Pachomius was evidently written in that dialect. But it is in a translation into Bohairic, the Coptic dialect of the Delta, that the most popular and, as it were, 'standard' *Coptic Life* has been preserved in its most complete form. The *Bohairic Life* is in fact a translation – at times a little clumsy – of the recension represented by the fragments S^4, S^5 and S^{14}. The *Arabic Life* at the Vatican (Av) is a good translation of the same *Sahidic Life*, and S^{3b}, S^6, and S^7 belong also to the same group (…). To this whole group of documents, transmitting basically the same *Life*, we give the siglum SBo.[33]

Consequently, we will mainly use the two groups of manuscripts that Veilleux called SBo in our comparison. Veilleux has also made available the most complete English translation of the *Coptic Life of Pachomius* based on that group of manuscripts. He essentially translated Bo, filling in the gaps whenever it was possible with other fragments that that were part of SBo. In general terms, this is the English translation that the present dissertation will quote; however, since there is no English translation of the single unities that form SBo – the exception are the passages of Bo that present no lacunas and are thus the basis of Veilleux's translation – we will also quote Lefort's French translations of Bo and of SBo's Sahidic

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138; Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Sahidice Scriptae* and Louis-Théophile Lefort, *S. Pachommi Vita Bohairice Scripta* (CSCO 89; Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste, 1953).

[31] Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Sahidice Scriptae* and Lefort, *S. Pachommi Vitae Bohairice Scripta*.

[32] According to Lefort, the first group includes the Sahidic fragments/codices which he names S^1, S^2, S^{13}, S^{19}, S^{20}, S^{10}, S^{11}, S^8, S^7, S^9 and S^3. The second group includes the *Bohairic Life* (Bo), the most complete version of the *Life of Pachomius* known today, and the fragments/codices S^5, S^{14}, S^4 and S^{3a}. The third group is formed by fragments/codices S^6, S^{3b} and S^{3c} and possibly other fragments (see details in Lefort, *Les vies coptes de saint Pachôme*, LXII-XCI and 351-374. And finally, the fourth group comprises the fragments S^{1a}, S^{12}, S^{18}, S^{16}, S^{21}, S^{15} and S^{17}. For practical purposes, we will adopt the nomenclature suggested by Lefort.

[33] Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. I,* 2. We will adopt the siglum suggested by Veilleux.

fragments. Needless to say, our comparisons will be primarily based on the Coptic texts; the modern translations will be used however, to illustrate the examples in a more practical way.

5.2.1.2. The *Letter of Ammon*

Basically, the *Letter of Ammon* survives in three manuscripts; a tenth-to eleventh-century manuscript from the National Library in Athens (manuscript *t*), an eleventh-century manuscript from the *Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana* in Florence (manuscript *F*), and a seventeenth-century manuscript, a copy of *F*, from the Vatican (manuscript *r*).[34] A codicological description can be found in Goehring's edition; for the purposes of this dissertation, we use Goehring's edition, based on the three manuscripts mentioned above, the most updated one.

Since its *editio princeps* in 1680,[35] *the Letter of Ammon* has had a significant place in Pachomian studies. Generally speaking, two opposite positions have been taken by scholars concerning its accuracy and pertinence: one that considers it as genuine work of a former Pachomian monk who knew and lived with Theodore and narrates anecdotes that took place during this period of common life,[36] and one that considers it as a fantasy and apocryphal writing by a non-Pachomian monk.[37] More recently, this polarized view has given way to a more moderate position.[38] The work in question is formulated as a letter allegedly written by a certain bishop Ammon, as a response to a request probably made by Theophilus of Alexandria, who has learned that Ammon was a former Pachomian monk who lived for some time in Phbow under the guidance of Theodore, the most famous of Pachomius's successors. The request was probably made because Theodore's reputation of being a saint and a true successor of Pachomius – also considered a saint – was already spreading throughout Egypt; nothing could seem more natural than for the Patriarch of Egypt to seek valuable and reliable information about this monk by having recourse to people who knew him in person. The

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[34] We use the same nomenclature as Goehring, *The Letter of Ammon and Pachomian Monasticism*, 34.
[35] *Acta Sanctorum Maii* III (Antwerp: Meursium, 1680; repr., Paris: Palmé, 1866).
[36] For details, see Goehring, *The Letter of Ammon and Pachomian Monasticism*, 1.
[37] Lefort, *Les vies coptes de saint Pachôme*, LI-LXII.
[38] Goehring, *The Letter of Ammon and Pachomian Monasticism*.

work is thus the result of this enquiry and is presented as an account given by someone – Ammon – who lived with Theodore in Phbow for some time – before becoming a cleric in the region of Nitria – and who could give valuable information about him; and effectively, Ammon's view of Theodore is positive[39] and one might even say "hagiographic".

Even though it is described as a letter, the work could be nevertheless classified as a hagiography, a *Vita*, as it was composed essentially with the goal of praising Theodore, telling many edifying anecdotes and stories about him, bearing witness to his holy character and narrating many visionary and religious experiences, a trademark of monastic saints in Egypt.[40] This is why the *Letter of Ammon* is of great interest for this dissertation; it is a case of fourth-century Egyptian monasticism being described to an Alexandrine audience by someone who lived and experienced this kind of monasticism from inside, but who also knew Greek-speaking Egyptian Christianity from the ecclesiastical point of view. In addition, the text also makes use of many elements proper to the hagiographic genre, telling both types of experiences, "eyewitness and hearsay."[41]

One might expect a portrait of Theodore more aligned with Alexandrine expectations, trying to emphasize his commitment to orthodox Christianity; however, this does not prevent the work from using many motifs and themes normally associated with the hagiographic genre in Egypt, such as those mentioned above and others like clairvoyance,[42] which seemed to have shocked the Greek-speaking ecclesiastic authorities at least in the case of Pachomius.[43] This means that generally speaking the *Letter of Ammon* does not seem to make any efforts to hide Theodore's ecstatic and visionary experiences, contrary to the *First Greek Life of Pachomius*, as discussed above. Thus even though it is written and preserved in Greek,

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[39] Concerning the identity of the *Letter of Ammon*'s author and the addressee, see Goehring, *The Letter of Ammon and Pachomian Monasticism*, 103-104. In the present dissertation, we accept the possibility that they were Ammon, Nitria's bishop, and Theophilus, Alexandria's bishop.
[40] As one can easily remark reading the *Lives of Pachomius* or the *Life of Antony*, for example.
[41] Goehring, *The Letter of Ammon and Pachomian Monasticism*, 104.
[42] See, for example, *The Letter of Ammon* § 19.
[43] We refer here to the famous case of Pachomius being summoned to a council in Latopolis to explain his charisma of clairvoyance (G1 § 119); this episode is presented only in the Greek *Lives*.

The Letter of Ammon is a valuable witness to the fourth-century Egyptian monastic imagination and a valuable source for our comparison.

5.2.1.3. The *Life of Shenoute*

The *Life of Shenoute* is the third life of an abbot that is part of our corpus of comparison. Among the three lives of abbots analysed here, it is also the last one to be composed, probably being written after Shenoute's death in 466 by Besa, Shenoute's faithful disciple.[44] It was surely composed in Sahidic Coptic,[45] and no Greek versions or translations of it are known. However, only fragments of this original Sahidic life are known today[46], the complete version having only survived in a couple of Bohairic manuscripts.[47] It is this Bohairic version, edited by Leipoldt,[48] and its English translation,[49] that we will use in the present dissertation. It must be said that there is also a later *Arabic Life*, longer and more detailed, clearly based on the *Life* composed by Besa. Amelineau has suggested that this *Arabic Life* could be a more reliable translation/version of the lost *Sahidic Life*,[50] but later scholarship has contradicted this suggestion.[51]

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[44] David N. Bell, *Besa: The Life of Shenoute* (CSS 73; Kalamazoo [Mich.]: Cistercian Publications, 1983), 2, 1-3.

[45] François Nau once suggested that the original *Life of Shenoute* was composed in Greek and that the Coptic version was a translation (François Nau, "Une version syriaque inédite de la vie de Schenoudi," *RSEHA* 7 (1899): 356-363); this assumption was definitely refuted a couple of years later by Leipoldt (Cf. Iohannes Leipoldt, Walter E. Crum and Hermann Wiesmann, eds., *Sinuthii Archimandritae Vita et Opera Omnia I.* (CSCO 41; Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste, 1906), 2). See also Bell, *The Life of Shenoute*, 2.

[46] Concerning the Sahidic fragments, see Emile C. Amélineau, *Monuments pour servir à l'histoire de l'Égypte chrétienne aux IVᵉ, Vᵉ, VIᵉ et VIIᵉ siècles. Vol 1* (Paris : Ernest Leroux, 1888), 237-246 and Emile C. Amélineau, *Monuments pour servir à l'histoire de l'Égypte chrétienne aux IVᵉ, Vᵉ, VIᵉ et VIIᵉ siècles. Vol 2* (Paris : Ernest Leroux, 1895), 633. Other fragments were published in Urbain Bouriant, "Fragments de manuscrits thébains du Musée de Boulaq," in *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes 4* (1883), 1-4 and 152-156.

[47] For a complete survey on Bohairic manuscripts and fragments of the *Life of Shenoute*, see Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Vita Bohairice*, 2-5.

[48] Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Vita Bohairice*.

[49] Bell, *The Life of Shenoute*.

[50] Amélineau, *Monuments pour servir à l'histoire de l'Égypte chrétienne. Vol 1*, vii; see also Emile C. Amélineau, *Les moines égyptiens: vie de Shinoudi* (Paris : Ernest Leroux1889), 230.

[51] See Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Vita Bohairice*.

Despite the fact that the *Life of Shenoute* was almost unknown to Western Christianity until recently,[52] its importance to Egyptian Christianity cannot be underestimated; needless to say, the *Life of Shenoute* is a very significant Coptic monastic life, being full of themes and motifs that abound in Coptic hagiographies.

It must be recalled that our intention here is not to analyse Shenoute historically; over the past few years his figure and literary legacy have been one of the most discussed topics in Coptic studies.[53] We take the *Life of Shenoute* into consideration as a product of Coptic hagiography, a sample of Coptic literary culture and of the many motifs and themes expressed by it that can be also found in Codex V. Similarly, the present dissertation is not interested in Shenoute's literary works either; acknowledging his importance to Coptic literature and its development, we exclude Shenoute's works due to the fact that they not fit in our proposal. They are not hagiographies, which decreases considerably the points of literary contact with Codex V.

Compared to other monastic lives, especially to those of monastic celebrities such as Pachomius and Antony, *the Life of Shenoute* is smaller, but follows the patterns that one would expect to find in this kind of work. Shenoute's life is told from his childhood, passing through his vocation, his monastic life – the most developed and longest part of the text – and death. Obviously, all of these periods of Shenoute's life according to Besa are permeated with miraculous events, many of them performed by Shenoute himself. As usual in monastic lives, an epithet is accorded to Shenoute, who is called throughout the text "the prophet", a clear allusion to his famous charisma of clairvoyance.[54] Particular to the *Life of Shenoute*, in

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[52] Not only the *Life of Shenoute*, but also Shenoute himself and his works, as brilliantly exposed by Emmel in Stephen Emmel, *Shenoute's Literary Corpus, Vol. 1* (CSCO 599; Louvain: Peeters, 2004), 14-18.

[53] To illustrate our affirmation, it suffices to mention that recent scholarly *collectanea* have entire sections devoted to studies on Shenoute (see, for example Gawdat Gabra and Hany N. Takla, eds., *Christianity and Monasticism in Upper Egypt. Volume 1: Akhmim and Sohag* (Cairo/New York: Saint Mark Foundation/The American University of Cairo Press, 2008).

[54] On this matter, see Jennifer Wees, "False Prophets are False Fathers: Clairvoyance in the Career of Shenoute of Atripe" in *Colloque international "L'Évangile selon Thomas et les textes de Nag Hammadi". Québec, 29-31 mai 2003* (ed. L. Painchaud and P.-H. Poirier; BCNH section "Études" 8; Québec/Louvain/Paris: Les Presses de l'Université Laval/Peeters, 2007), 635-649. See also Fabrizio Vecoli, *Lo Spirito soffia nel deserto* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2006), 163-197.

relation to other monastic lives, are his several *entretiens* with Christ, which links it to the *First Apocalypse of James*, as we will see in detail later.[55]

Having discussed the lives of abbots, we can proceed to the discussion of the lives of anchorites.

5.2.2. Lives of Anchorites

5.2.2.1. The *Life of Antony*

Athanasius of Alexandria is certainly the most famous and probably the most important bishop that ever served as the Patriarch of Alexandria; responsible for a considerable literary production – which includes important works such as the *Life of Antony* – Athanasius was also one of the main characters in the so-called Arian controversy, and probably the foremost defender of the Nicene faith in the fourth century.[56] Venerated as a saint and a "champion of faith", both in the West and in the East, considered to be one of the Doctors of the Church, Athanasius himself and his deeds as the Patriarch of Alexandria are being revaluated by contemporary research. Many revisionist approaches – and even accusations that seem anachronistic – are being made towards Athanasius. Accused of being authoritative in his deeds as Patriarch, mostly concerning the Arian controversy and the tentative of controlling Egyptian monasticism, Athanasius and his supporters have even been compared to hooligans.[57]

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[55] See section 7.5.1.

[56] For a general survey on Athanasius, see Annick Martin, *Athanase d'Alexandrie et l'Église d'Égypte au IVᵉ siècle* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1996). See also Thomas Weinandy, *Athanasius: A Theological Introduction* (Aldershot/Burlington: Ashgate, 2007).

[57] This comparison is as absurd as it looks, being also completely anachronistic, but it can be read in some pages written by a very renowned scholar who does not make any efforts to hide his antipathy and aversion towards Athanasius. Hanson in fact writes an entire chapter in which he deeply criticises the behaviour of Athanasius: Richard P.C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God. The Arian Controversy 318-381*. (Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1988), 239-273. We do not see any problems in adopting a revisionist portrait of Athanasius, but we do not believe that such anachronistic and coarse comparisons, based merely on personal opinions, are proper to scholarly work.

In this dissertation, we intend to adopt a more moderate view of Athanasius, focusing especially on one of his writings, the *Life of Antony*, probably the most well-known and significant work attributed to Athanasius whose importance and influence on the formation of the monastic mentality is unique. It has also become the model for the composition of subsequent hagiographies, especially monastic ones.[58]

Even though it was composed in Greek by an Alexandrine, we believe that the *Life of Antony* also expresses the imagination of fourth/fifth-century Egyptian monasticism; firstly because it was probably composed for an Egyptian monastic audience, as one of the main channels of communication between Athanasius and Coptic monasticism.[59] In the *Life of Antony*, the author makes use of a mythical and authoritative character – Antony – to spread among Egyptian monks his message and anti-Arian position; consequently, one would expect him to use literary elements, themes and motifs that would effectively convince this audience. Secondly, as stated above, the *Life of Antony* became the model for further monastic hagiographies, which shaped subsequent literary works and the mentality expressed by them.

In this dissertation we will use the *Life of Antony*'s original Greek version and its Coptic translation, which is very close to the Greek version. Althoug there are many other versions and translations of the *Life of Antony* in ancient languages, we do not believe that they are pertinent for our research (an updated list of critical editions of these versions could be found in Bartelink's edition).[60]

As the *Life of Antony* is one of the most popular and known hagiographies of all times, one would expect to have a considerable number of manuscripts in which its text is preserved. And indeed, we today know more than 165 manuscripts that have preserved its Greek text; it

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[58] As an example, we could mention the battle against the demons, that takes up entire sections in the *Life of Antony* (§ 11-13; § 24-33). Indeed, the battle against demons becomes a literary *topos* in hagiographies (in the *Life of Pachomius*, see, for example, G1 § 3b and SBo 6). For a survey on the subject, see Festugière, *Les moines d'Orient*, 23-40. Battles against demons are even present in modern and contemporary hagiographies, such as that of Saint Jean-Marie Vianney, in which an entire chapter is devoted to the description of his battles against the demons (chapter XI, "Le curé d'Ars et le démon): Francis Trochu, *Le Curé d'Ars: saint Jean-Marie-Baptiste Vianney* (Lyon/Paris: Librarie catholique Emmanuel Vitte, 1925), 281-306.

[59] See David Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 80-200.

[60] Gerhardus J.M. Bartelink, *Vie d'Antoine* (SC 400; Paris: Cerf, 1994), 13-15.

would be completely beyond the scope of this dissertation to present the entire list of manuscripts and discuss them; to this purpose, we may indicate Bartelink's edition[61] and Garitte's study.[62]

Athanasius probably composed the *Life of Antony* a little after Antony's death, around 356, as an attempt to present to Egyptian monks a role model of ascetical life. Some decades later, the "father of the monks"[63] and his biography, composed by Athanasius, were already famous all over the Christian world. Bartelink remarks, for example, that around the year 380, the *Life of Antony* and its author are mentioned by Gregory of Nazianzus. In 392, Jerome explicitly witnesses as to the existence of the text and its attribution to Athanasius. Many other ancient, and one could say almost contemporary to Athanasius, witnesses attest the existence of the text and its attribution to Athanasius.[64] Thus since the fourth century, the *Life of Antony* has been considered an authentic Athanasian composition.

In his conclusion on the authorship of the *Life of Antony*, Bartelink reaffirms his belief that the *Life of Antony* is a genuine Athanasian composition. He proceeds then to the identification of similitude between the *Life of Antony* and other Athanasian compositions, such as the *Contra Gentes* and *De Incarnatione Verbi*. According to him, the similarities are so strong, concerning both, the content and the style, that they can only lead to the conclusion that they were composed by the same author.[65] In accordance with Bartelink we believe that the debate between Antony and the philosophers, in paragraphs 74-79 of the *Life*, are particularly charged with Athanasius' style and ideas. One could point out, however, other similarities between these tractates that are not pointed out by Bartelink, such as the

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[61] This is also the edition that contains the Greek text used in this dissertation (Bartelink, *Vie d'Antoine*, 77-108).

[62] Gérard Garitte, "Histoire du texte imprimé de la vie grecque de saint Antoine," *BIHBR* 22 (1942): 5-29.

[63] As he is called in the *Life of Antony* itself (cf. § 15).

[64] Bartelink, *Vie d'Antoine*, 37-41. Also on Gregory of Nanzianzus' portrayal of Athanasius, see Justin Mossay, *Grégoire de Nanzianze: Discours 20-23* (SC 270; Paris: Cerf, 1980), 111-193; I owe the knowledge of this eulogy on Athanasius to my colleague Gaëlle Rioual.

[65] Bartelink, *Vie d'Antoine*, 37-41.

theological defense of the Incarnation[66] or a clear condemnation of the Arians and even an *ex-eventu* prophecy about the persecutions due to the Arian controversy.[67]

Having said this, we must explain why we have decided to include in our corpus the Coptic version of the *Life of Antony*. This decision is mainly due to the fact that most of the late antique Coptic readers probably had contact with the *Life of Antony* in Coptic. Even if the *Life of Antony* was certainly composed in Greek, its diffusion among Coptic readers was probably only possible through a Coptic translation. The complete Coptic version of the *Life of Antony* was preserved in a Sahidic manuscript found in 1910 in Humuli, a village near the Fayum. This manuscript is today part of the Pierpont Morgan Library collection (M 579, fol. 15v-72r) and was copied in 822/823. Some Coptic fragments are also found in the collections of the British Library and the Bibliothèque nationale de Paris.[68]

The only translation into a modern language of the *Coptic Life of Antony* that we know was made by Tim Vivian and published in 2003 by himself and A. Apostolos;[69] the same edition also contains an English translation of the *Greek Life*. The fact that the *Coptic Life* was only once translated into a modern language can be explained by the fact that it is not a new version, being nothing more than a faithful translation of the *Greek Life*, with some minor differences, but nothing that would substantially change the meaning of the text.

On the other hand, the fact that *The Coptic Life of Antony* is so close to its original Greek version reinforces what we said above concerning the "Egyptian" character of this particular Athanasian work. The fact that the text in question needed only to be translated into Coptic – i.e. there was no need of rewriting or interpolations intended to highlight themes and motifs particularly important in Coptic, for example – in order to circulate in a Coptic environment shows that it was completely at ease in such milieu, even if it was composed by an Alexandrine, i.e., Athanasius. If we compare this case to that of the *Lives of Pachomius*,

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[66] *Life of Antony* § 74.
[67] *Life of Antony* § 82.
[68] For the details concerning these fragments, see Gérard Garitte, *Antonii vitae versio Sahidica* (CSCO 117-118; Louvain: Université Catholique de Louvain, 1949), I-VI.
[69] Vivian and Athanassakis, *The Life of Antony*.

in which one could find major differences between the Coptic and Greek versions,[70] the fact that the *Life of Antony* was ready for a Coptic audience, and probably intended for one, is even more evident.

5.2.2.2. 'Journey' Monastic Lives

One could easily call "forgotten monastic lives" the texts that are discussed in this section, since these monastic sources were almost forgotten by research; these "forgotten" Coptic monastic lives were edited in the beginning of twentieth century by Budge,[71] who published the Coptic texts along with English translations. In the eighties, Layton presented a detailed material description of the manuscripts in which these texts were preserved.[72] Almost ninety years after the edition of the Coptic texts by Budge, Tim Vivian published updated English translations[73] of these "forgotten" monastic lives, but in the meantime, almost nothing was written about them. This lack of interest could be explained by the fact that the main characters of these lives were not monastic celebrities such as Antony and Pachomius, key characters for the development of monastic ideology and ideal monks.

We call these texts 'journey' monastic lives because, in general, they describe the journey of a given monk who travels progressively into the inner desert – what can be understood as a metaphor for the spiritual journey – meeting other monks who are already dwelling there, learning from them about asceticism and holiness.

It must be also said that the attempt to date these monastic lives could prove to be a very difficult and speculative task, since many of them have almost not been studied and analysed by scholarship yet. Thus, in some cases, the date of composition suggested by

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[70] Concerning the possible causes and consequences of these differences, see above, section 4.2.1.1
[71] Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*.
[72] Bentley Layton, *Catalogue of Coptic Literary Manuscripts in the British Library Acquired Since the Year 1906* (London: British Library, 1987).
[73] Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt* and Tim Vivian, *Journeying into God: Seven Early Monastic Lives* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996). Sometimes, Vivian's translations are not literal enough; in certain occasions, he harmonizes the translations too much. When quoting the monastic lives in question, we will preferably use Vivian's translations, since they are more updated than Budge's. However, in some cases, we will make use of Budge's translations. In other cases, we will use Vivian's translations with changes. Anyhow, all these details will be pointed out in footnotes. And obviously, the Coptic text will always follow the English translation in footnotes.

scholars is very speculative and has never been questioned or put to the test. In any case, these kinds of procedures would require very deep and complex analysis and studies, both on the literary, historical and codicological/papyrological level, and these procedures are completely beyond the scope of the present dissertation. Thus, for our purposes we are satisfied with the dates suggested by current research. Further studies could, of course, confirm or disconfirm the suggested dates of composition.

Let us now discuss each one of the monastic lives that make up this section.

5.2.2.2.1. The *Life of Apa Pambo*

The *Life of Apa Pambo* is a small Coptic life, and, according to Vivian, was probably composed between the fifth and tenth centuries;[74] indeed, this date is very approximate, and one could even say speculative, since the text has not been fully studied and analysed by scholars yet.[75] We decided to include it in our corpus of comparison due to the possibility of a fifth-century composition, but also due to its similarity to the *History of Monks of Upper Egypt* and to the *Life of Onnophrius*, texts that will be discussed below. Moreover, as we shall see later, this monastic life presents some interesting similarities to Codex V concerning some specific literary motifs.

The *Life of Pambo* is also known as The *Life of Apa Cyrus*, and actually, this is how the text's *incipit* defines it:

> The life and ascetic practice of our holy father who was glorious in every way, Saint Abba Cyrus, the perfect governor, which Abba Pambo, priest of the Church of Scetis, set down. The Holy Abba Cyrus went to his rest on the fifteenth of July in the peace of God. May his holy blessing come upon us and save us. Amen.[76]

The problem in the identification of whose character is the focus of our hagiography is due to the fact that the lives of both Pambo and Cyrus are told in the few pages of this text. Even

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[74] Vivian, *Journeying into God*, 25.
[75] The fact that the text cites the death of Shenoute (between 465-466) could suggest a *terminus post quem* for its composition (Vivian, *Journeying into God*, 25.34).
[76] Translation in Vivian, *Journeying into God*, 30.

though, according to the *incipit*, only Pambo is supposed to be the narrator of Cyrus' life, some episodes of his own life are narrated in the lines of this hagiography. In other words, this life tells us the spiritual journey undertaken by Pambo until the meeting with Cyrus. A similar situation can be found in another group of monastic lives formed by texts called by modern scholarship as the *Life of Monks of Upper Egypt* and the *Life of Onnophrius* respectively,[77] in which a certain Apa Paphnotius, who is neither one of the monks of Upper Egypt nor Onnophrius himself is somehow the main character of both texts; in the *History*, Paphnutius undertakes a journey through the desert seeking to find a monk who will teach him the way to holiness. In the *Life of Onnophrius*, Paphnutius also undertakes a journey seeking for a holy man named Onnophrius, whose fame of holiness was already spread throughout Egypt; both journeys, that of Pambo and those of Paphnoutius, are described more in terms of a spiritual quest than of a physical voyage. Thus, despite of the titles we can read in the manuscripts, Pambo and Paphnoutius are the main characters of these three monastic lives respectively. In the case of Pambo, the climax of the story he was telling is the meeting with Cyrus.

The *Life of Pambo* was first edited and translated by Budge;[78] almost ninety years later, Tim Vivian published a more recent English translation in the volume entitled *Journeying into God: Seven Early Monastic Lives*. As far as we know, no complex studies have been made on this text. Consequently, any conclusion concerning the precise date of composition, or even the identity of the characters, is extremely speculative.

Vivian, in the introduction to the text, says that we know two Pambos in the history of Egyptian monasticism, a priest from Nitria, who died in 374, and a monk from Scetis, who is mentioned in an account about a visit of Theophilus (Patriarch of Alexandria between 385-412) to this town. Vivian concludes, however, that there is not enough evidence to identify our Pambo with any of these, saying that "it is best to leave the Pambo of this story

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[77] These texts will also be discussed in this section.
[78] Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*.

anonymous".[79] And we would add that one could even take into consideration the possibility of regarding this Pambo as a fictitious or mythical personage.

Besides, such a tale "was never meant to be read as a historical document; it was written for those seeking a deeper understanding of God."[80] In other words, it was composed aiming the edification of its reader. In the beginning of the story, Pambo is told in a vision that he should rise and journey into the desert seeking for an anchorite "whose sandal straps no one on earth is worthy to untie" (cf. Lk 3: 12). According to Vivian, the journey is "a very ancient and universal motif in storytelling."[81] Vivian goes on to emphasise that biblical journeys, such as that of Abraham and Moses – who, similarly to Pambo, are told by God to journey but not told why – are particularly pertinent to the understanding of our story.[82]

The fact that Pambo must enter into the desert to accomplish his journey is also illustrative. We should remember the signification of the desert in Egyptian culture, partially evoked in the remarks concerning the character of James.[83] To accomplish his journey, Pambo needs not only to find he "whose sandal straps no one on earth is worthy to untie", but also face and beat the dangers of the desert. In his journey, Pambo also meets other anchorites before Cyril, what could be seem as previous encounters with holy men, but also as intermediary stages in his spiritual quest for the one "whose sandal straps no one on earth is worthy to untie".

5.2.2.2.2. The *History of the Monks of Upper Egypt* and the *Life of Onnophrius*

The *History of the Monks of Upper Egypt* and the *Life of Onnophrius*[84] are both monastic lives that have almost been forgotten by research. Their authorship is attributed to a certain monk called Paphnutius, who launches a journey through the desert in which he meets several holy monks,

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[79] Vivian, *Journeying into God*, 25.
[80] Vivian, *Journeying into God*, 26.
[81] Vivian, *Journeying into God*, 26.
[82] Vivian, *Journeying into God*, 26.
[83] See pages 142-153 above. See also section 7.3.3 below.
[84] For purposes of convenience, we would like to refer to these works as *History* and the *Life of Onnophrius* respectively.

learning from them and improving spiritually; in the *History,* his journey ends when he meets Apa Isaac, who tells him about Apa Aaron's life, in the *Life of Onnophrius,* the climax of his voyage is the encounter with Onnophrius himself. Each time Paphnutius meets a monk, the history of this monk is told, helping Paphnutius to improve his own life by an edifying account. Thus, in a certain way, the *History* and the *Life of Onnophrius* themes are actually the spiritual journey and improvement of Paphnutius himself.

In any case, these two works gather a collection of accounts concerning the lives and ascetical practices of many monks; thus, one could say that they bear a series of micro monastic lives attributed to a certain Paphnutius; of course, one might wonder if these monks really existed, but, as said many times in this chapter, historicity was not the main goal of hagiographers, which would not be different in the case of the author of the *History* and the *Life of Onnophrius.*

The manuscript of the *History* is kept in the British Library (Oriental 7029);[85] in the edition of the Coptic text, Budge furnishes a description and some pictures of the manuscript (plates XXXII – XXXVIII).[86] According to him, it is composed of seventy-eight papyri leaves, of which two in the beginning are probably lost; added to this, many other pages are heavily damaged, which makes the text very difficult to read and interpret at some points. At the end of the text, the manuscript has preserved a colophon in which the scribe dates its copy to the "708th year of the Era of the Martyrs", what would be the equivalent of the year 992[87] of our era.

The *Life of Onnophrius,* differently from the *Histories*, was preserved in many manuscripts in Sahidic, Boharic and even in Arabic and Latin;[88] the manuscript used in Budge's edition and translations, as well as Vivian's translation, is kept in the British Library (Oriental 7027).[89] Budge

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[85] This volume also contains some biblical texts – for the complete list, see Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts* – and the *Dying Prayer of Saint Athanasius*, and a *Discourse of Saint Timothy of Alexandria on the Feast of the Holy Archangel Michael*.

[86] Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts*, XXXII-LXI.

[87] However, the same colophon later states that the manuscript was written in the 372nd year of the Hijrah, what would correspond, according to Layton and Budge, to the year 982 A.D. For the details, see Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts* and Layton, *Catalogue of Coptic Literary Manuscripts*.

[88] For a list of the other known manuscripts and versions, see Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, 69-70.

[89] This manuscript also contains a *Discourse of Apa Demetrius of Antioch on the Flesh of God, the Word*.

furnishes a description and some pictures of the manuscript (plates XX-XXVI),[90] which is very well preserved.

The real title and the *incipit* of the *History* were not preserved in the manuscript.[91] The title of the *Life of Onnophrius* could be read as follows: "The Life and ascetic practice of our Holy Father Apa Onnophrius the Anchorite who was glorious in every way, and who ended his life on the sixteenth of Paone in the peace of God. Bless us. Amen".[92]

In the introduction to his translation, Vivian discusses the identity of the supposed author of the *History*, possibly a certain Paphnutius Cephalas. Among many Paphnutiuses known in the Coptic monastic tradition, Vivian believes that the most likely one to be our author is an old monk from Scetis, who lived at the end of fourth century and whose existence is attested by certain sources such as the *Lausiac History* and the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*.[93] This Paphnutius would also be the author of the *Life of Onnophrius*.[94]

We admire Vivian's attempt to discover who is the author, or the imputed author, of both works; we believe, however, that the lack of evidence does not allow anyone to emit a sure position concerning the authorship of these texts. Instead of affirming that the text was composed by Paphnutius Cephalas, we find more prudent to affirm that it is attributed to a certain monk named Paphnutius, whose true identity is unknown, but could possibly be identified with a monk from Scetis whose existence is attested by the *Lausiac History* and the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*. At any rate, this would place the original composition of our text, as well as the *Life of Onnophrius*, at the end of fourth century or the beginning of the fifth century.

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[90] Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, XVII-XXIII.
[91] The title we use here was a suggestion made by Vivian; he adds that "since a large portion of the *Histories* is devoted to the life and works of Abba Aaron, and since the narrative ends with his story and appends lectionary readings for his feast day, it is possible that the original title of this work was *The Life of Abba Aaron*" (Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, 51).
[92] Translation in Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, 145.
[93] For more details, see Vivian's discussion in Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, 42-50.
[94] Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, 42-50.

Even if we cannot be sure about the exact time of composition of our text, we can at least know the context in which the narrative is supposed to take place. Vivian traces a chronology based on what the text tells and what we know about the bishops of Philae;[95] he concludes that the text intend to narrate events that took place before 390, which would also be a *terminus post quem* for the composition of the text.

As stated above, the *Life of Onnophrius* is also attributed to Paphnutius; we can extend to this text thus the same comments we made concerning the authorship and dating. The *Life of Onnophrius*' account development is very similar to those of the *History* and the *Life of Pambo*: Paphnutius journeys into the desert/mountain seeking for "brother monks in the farthest reaches of the desert;"[96] he travels meeting several monks until he finally reaches his destination, where he meets Onnophrius, spending some time with him and learning from him. After Onnoprius' death, Paphnoutius journeys back, meeting once again various monks on his way.

Let us now discuss the Coptic Epic Passions, also known as Coptic Martyrdoms.

5.3. Coptic Martyrdoms

By "Coptic Martyrdoms" or "Coptic Epic Passions" we mean martyrdoms that were preserved in Coptic, but not necessarily composed in that language.[97] We are primarily concerned with whether the martyrdoms selected as part of our corpus of comparison circulated in Coptic Egypt, similarly to the already discussed *Life of Pachomius*, questions regarding to the original language of composition of these martyrdoms are secondary, the main issue for the purposes of the present dissertation is related to the fact that they are original products of Egyptian culture, either in Greek or Coptic.

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[95] For the detailed information and chronology, see Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, 52-53.
[96] Translation in Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, 145.
[97] The most widespread position, defended mainly by Delehaye, stated that these texts were originally composed in Greek – even if these compositions were performed in Greek-speaking environments inside Egypt – being possibly translated and modified in Coptic later; see Hippolyte Delehaye, "Les martyrs d'Égypte," *AB* 40 (1922): 149-150. More recent scholarship has tended to consider these texts as later compositions and thus an original product of Coptic language (Orlandi, *Omelie Copte*, 6-17 and Orlandi, "Coptic Literature," 73-81).

The amount of Coptic martyrdoms that have been preserved is not insignificant. Several groups of manuscripts and codices containing such texts are spread among many of the most important collections of Ancient texts in the world in the Pierpont Morgan, the Vatican and the Oxford libraries. However, scholars have never showed great interest for these texts, which can probably be explained by the fact that they were normally considered to form an inaccurate, implausible and secondary type of literature.[98] Even though they supposedly report the martyrdoms that occurred during the Great Persecution of Diocletian, their latter redaction – full of historical inaccuracies – and their fantastic and supernatural tales – mocking the persecutors and excessively exalting the martyrs to the point of constituting a completely unlikely and absurd account – never really allowed them to be considered an accurate source for the study of the period in question.[99] Delehaye himself labeled such texts as a "miserable literature."[100]

Nevertheless, as evoked at the beginning of the last paragraph, the volume of martyrdoms preserved in Coptic is considerable, which bears witness to the popularity of this genre among Coptic Christians in the late antique and Byzantine periods. Consequently, while they may not be a historical source for the study of Diocletian's Great Persecution in Egypt, they are certainly a witness to the popular piety in Christian Egypt, especially in regard to the cult of martyrs. Given this, one would expect to find among the pages of these tales literary motifs that were also present in other types of literature circulating in Coptic environments in Late Antiquity. However, this was not the first impression of the few scholars who devoted time to the study of such martyrdoms. They noted the influence of

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[98] Delehaye, one of the greatest experts on the subject, already remarked in 1922 on the lack of studies on Coptic martyrdoms saying: "Tout en rendant hommage aux savants qui ont eu le courage de remuer ce fatras et de rendre accessibles aux connaisseurs des textes d'une lecture rebutante, on peut regretter qu'il existe si peu d'études de détail sur les Passions coptes et ce n'est pas sans embarras que l'on aborde ces étranges récits" (Delehaye, "Les martyrs d'Égypte," 130). Unfortunately, almost one hundred years after this statement, the situation has not changed much and Coptic Epic Passions remain a marginal type of literature in the list of interests of scholars.

[99] One must bear in mind that we are not dealing here with martyrdoms and passions of saints which were normally called by scholars as "historical passions" or "historical martyrdoms" (See Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*, 15-131), but with those labeled by scholarship as "epic passions" or "epic martyrdoms" (see Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*, 171-226).

[100] Delehaye, "Les martyrs d'Égypte", 148.

Roman and Greek novels in the composition of these texts,[101] for example, or related them to Coptic homilies,[102] but avoided almost any comparisons to other texts possibly circulating in Coptic at the same time. Almost no questions were asked concerning their relation to apocryphal literature, for example; needless to say, no attempts to study these texts in the light of apocalyptic literature have been made, despite their intense use of literary motifs related to this genre.[103]

Another important issue, which has not been discussed often by scholars is related to the date of composition of these texts.[104] Probably, it was thought that either their date of composition was almost impossible to determine, or its determination was completely irrelevant, since these texts were certainly late compositions that would add nothing to the study of Diocletian's Great Persecution and the martyrdom of Christians in general. However, as stated above, these texts can constitute an important witness to the study of popular piety in Coptic Christianity; while they may not help in the study of Diocletian's Great Persecution, they certainly can in the understanding of the origins and development of

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[101] See, for example Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*, 171-226; see also Eve Reymond and John Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 1-19.

[102] Orlandi, *Omelie copte*, 6-24.

[103] The use of some of these motifs – such as revelations mediated by heavenly beings or otherworldly journeys, for example – will become evident in Chapter 7, insofar as we point out them in the Coptic Epic Passions themselves and in the texts of Codex V.

[104] Normally, the editors limited themselves to date the manuscripts in which the texts were preserved. See, for example, Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices,* 19-21. Attempts to date single texts are very rare, and at least in one case completely misguided: we are referring here to the *Martyrdom of Apa Epima*, edited by Togo Mina in 1937: Togo Mina, *Le martyre d'Apa Epima* (Cairo: Imprimerie nationale, 1937). In his introduction, Mina naively takes for granted that the pseudonymous author of the text, Jules of Aqphas – to whom an entire group of martyrdoms is pseudonymically attributed – is actually the real author; since the texts tells that Jules personally witnessed Epima's saga, Mina concluded that the work was composed somewhere in the fourth century (Mina, *Le martyre d'Apa Epima*, xi-xviii). Mina was obviously mistaken, as we will see in the following pages. Other scholars have emphasized the difficulty in dating such texts. In his discussion on epic martyrdoms as a whole – which includes Coptic martyrdoms – Delehaye states that "Le manque de données chronologiques certaines nous condamne à rester dans le vague. Ces récits anonymes si nombreux, si semblables, si souvent retouchés – nous reviendrons sur cette question capitale –, se laissent difficilement situer dans le temps. Si l'on veut ne point sortir des généralités et s'en tenir au genre plutôt qu'à des Passions déterminées, il y a quelques indices à recueillir (…) Les manuscrits sont un point de repère insuffisant" (Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*, 223-224). More recently, Papaconstantinou also emphasized how hard can be to date these texts saying "En fait, le vrai problème posé par les textes hagiographiques provient de la difficulté qu'on a à les dater (…) Pendant longtemps, ces problèmes ont découragé toute tentative d'établir une chronologie" (Arietta Papaconstantinou, *Le culte des saints en Égypte: des byzantins aux abbassides. L'apport des inscriptions et des papyrus grecs et coptes* [Paris: CNRS Editions, 2001], 31).

the cult of the martyrs. In the case of the present dissertation, they may help to demonstrate that certain literary motifs – also present in Codex V – were widely circulating in Coptic Egypt through this type of text, which could lay another foundation for the comparison between Codex V and Coptic literature.

Even though their date of composition, whenever it may turn out to be, there is no reason to exclude them from our corpus of comparison. Nevertheless, we must make some comments on this issue. This is important for the argumentation of the present dissertation, since it concerns our attitude towards the comparison between these texts and Codex V; if we can demonstrate that it is likely that these texts were generally composed from the fifth century on, their comparison with Codex V will produce more concrete results. On the other hand, if they are later compositions, such comparison will result in more speculative results.

Concerning the Epic Martyrdom genre in general, Delehaye – the first scholar who dedicated time to such an obscure subject, and whose works are of a great utility – states that "avant la fin IVe siècle il existait déjà un bon nombre de Passions du modèle épique, on peut l'affirmer avec assurance après la lecture de Prudence, des Pères cappadociens, de S. Jean Chrysostome et d'autres auteurs."[105] In the specific case of the Coptic Martyrdoms selected to be part of our study, since they presumably describe the Acts of martyrs who died during Diocletian's Great Persecution,[106] one can set a *terminus post quem* for their composition at the beginning of the fourth century. A *terminus ante quem* is much harder to define however. Nevertheless, we do not intend to establish a *terminus post quem* for their composition, we only intend to demonstrate that they were possibly already circulating in Egypt at the beginning of fifth century.

The first clue to be followed consists in the fact that these Martyrdoms were most likely composed to justify the cult of the Martyrs and the cerimonies of veneration in the shrines built in their honor. It is easy to imagine the desire of Christians who were venerating a martyr

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[105] Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*, 224.
[106] Even if they cannot be considered accurate and historical accounts to the study of Dioceltian's Great Persecution, these Coptic Martyrdoms obviously base their narrative on the event in question and were obviously composed after it.

and offering donations in his shrine to know about his fidelity to God and how he was martyred. In an Egyptian context, where the taste for the fantastic and supernatural was almost always in play,[107] it would also be easy to imagine that the composition of such tales would be full of miraculous deeds, otherworldly beings and visionary experiences. One can also imagine that the composition of these texts would serve to explain and justify the existence of shrines of martyrs spread all over Egypt. A widespread literary *topos* in these texts consists in the promises of earthly prosperity and eternal life made to those who write down the account of the martyrdom and to those who pray to the martyrs and make offerings in their shrines.[108] The preoccupation with the body of the martyr and the fact that it was kept incorruptible is also almost always present in these tales; in fact, the construction of a shrine in honour of a martyr was normally motivated by the fact that his body was buried in that very place.[109] And how did the body of a given martyr arrive at the place where a given shrine was built? Coptic Epic Martyrdoms tell us how in legendary terms. We believe thus that the circulation of Coptic Martyrdoms, and probably also their composition, is linked to the beginning and spread of the cult of the martyrs in Egypt. And how can we date, at least approximately, this event?

According once more to Delehaye, the development of the cult of the martyrs followed the triumph of Christianity, in the beginning of fourth century:

> Dans les premières années qui suivirent le triomphe de l'Église, le culte des martyrs s'organisa suivant les lois d'un développement normal et logique, sans qu'aucun élément étranger vînt troubler le courant de la tradition. La ferveur et l'allégresse des fidèles, dont rien désormais ne retient plus l'expansion, donnent à la célébration de l'anniversaire le caractère d'une fête populaire autant que d'une solennité religieuse. Le modeste abri du tombeau s'élargit en un temple magnifique ; mais rien n'annonce encore l'abandon de la discipline primitive, qui concentre le culte du martyr dans l'Église d'origine, et l'on ne prévoit pas que les honneurs qui lui sont réservés puissent échoir un jour à ceux qui n'ont pas un droit incontesté à ce titre incommunicable. Mais le temps est proche où la gloire

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[107] See Hallock, "Coptic Apocrypha," 165.

[108] See, for example, the end of the *Martyrdom of Apa Epima.* (Mina, *Le martyre d'Apa Epima*, 37).

[109] In fact, the presumed site of the shrine is considered by scholars one of the few elements that is accurate in Coptic Epic Passions. On this matter, see Delehaye, "Les martyrs d'Égypte", 148. See also Mina, *Le martyre d'Apa Epima,* XXIII-XXXII.

du martyr franchira partout les étroites frontières qui l'enserraient d'abord, et le martyrologue va s'ouvrir à des noms qu'il avait jusque là absolument exclus.[110]

In the case of fourth-century Egypt, at least one ecclesiastical witness assures us that the cult of martyrs was already taking place at the second half of fourth century. This witness is provided by no one less than Athanasius of Alexandria, in two of his *Festal Letters,*[111] composed respectively in 369 (41st) and 370 (42nd).[112] Athanasius does more than testifying to the existence of the cult of martyrs in Egypt, he also complains and censures what are, according to him, exaggerations and distortions in the manner in which these cults are performed. In the *41st Festal Letter*, Athanasius accuses Meletians of disentombing and stealing the body of martyrs from their graves.[113] Evidently, Athanasius' allegation could be seen as an attempt to harm the reputation of his opponents, the Meletians, attributing to them an immoral act. In any case it is widely known that the act of transferring the bodies of martyrs and saints in general from one location to another was a quite common practice not only in Egypt, but in many other locations, and not only during Late Antiquity.[114] As a matter of fact, the allocation of the martyr's body to his final resting place, where a shrine is supposed to be built in his honour is a common *topos* in Coptic Martyrdoms.[115] Thus, Athanasius' claims show that this practice was probably already taking place in Egypt when he wrote the *41st Festal Letter*. The *topos* in question probably served to justify the transfer of the body of a martyr and the construction of a shrine at a given site. What could be more suitable to justify this than an amazing story about his martyrdom, full of miracles and

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[110] Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les origines du culte des martyrs* (Bruxelles: Societé des Bollandistes, 1933), 50.

[111] Lefort, *Lettres festales et pastorales en copte*, 23-28 and 62-67.

[112] On the controversial aspects involving these letters, see David Brakke, ""Outside the Places, Within the Truth": Athanasius of Alexadria and the Localization of the Holy," in *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt* (ed. D. Frankfurter; Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 1998), 445-481.

[113] Athanasius of Alexandria, *41st Festal Letter* (Lefort, *Lettres Festales,* 62-63).

[114] Brakke, "Athanasius of Alexandria and the Location of the Holy".

[115] See, for example, the *Martyrdom of Apa Epima,* Pierpont Morgan f. 55v-f.56v (cf. Mina, *Le martyre d'Apa Epima,* 34-35.82-83); or, for example, the *Martyrdom of Saint Macarius of Antioch*, f. 76. See also Delehaye, "Les martyrs d'Égypte", 148. See also Mina, *Le martyre d'Apa Epima,* XXIII-XXXII.

fantastic deeds? A story that in the end also reports – in legendary terms – how the martyr's body ended up in that place.[116]

In the *42nd Festal Letter*, Athanasius bears witness to a belief that is once again a *topos* in Coptic Epic Passions: shrines of martyrs had a miraculous healing power. Athanasius rectifies this conviction, stating that if that power really exists, it comes from God, not from the location itself.[117] In Coptic Epic Passions, these miraculous powers attributed to the shrines of martyrs are expressed by the promise of prosperity, healing and health to those who honour the martyr and his shrine, particularly with donations.[118]

The examples quoted above are practices that were denounced by Athanasius and also reported in Coptic Epic Passions. This is the first clue that may allow us to state that in the second half of fourth century, the literary genre that concerns us here was already known in Egypt and consequently many texts of this type, as we know them today, were possibly circulating in Coptic environments at that time or at least a few decades later.

The type of reasoning developed above was exactly the basis of the argumentation made by the first scholar who ventured to suggest a dating for Coptic Epic Martyrdoms, Baumeister.[119] This scholar sees in Coptic Epic Martyrdoms, which he calls *koptischer Konsens*, traces of the old Egyptian religion, the most notorious being the marked preoccupation with the preservation of the martyr's body:[120] through the many physical and terrible torments and tortures faced by the martyr, the integrity of his body is always

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[116] See, for example, the *Martyrdom of Apa Epima*, Pierpont Morgan 48 f. 55v-F. 56r (cf. Mina, *Le martyre d'Apa Epima,* 34-35); or, for example, the *Second Martyrdom of Saint Macarius of Antioch*, C.V.C. 59, f. 76 (cf. Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 66).

[117] Athanasius of Alexandria, *42nd Festal Letter* (Lefort, *Lettres Festales,* 28).

[118] Once more, see, for example the *Martyrdom of Apa Epima*, Pierpont Morgan 48 f. 54v-55r (cf. Mina, *Le martyre d'Apa Epima*, 33-34); or, for example, the *Second Martyrdom of Saint Macarius of Antioch*, C.V.C. f. 76 (cf. Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 67).

[119] Theofried Baumeister, *Martyr invictus: Der Martyrer als Sinnbild der Erlösung in der Legende und im Kult der frühen koptischen Kirche* (Münster: Regensberg, 1972).

[120] As already remarked by Coquin: "La signification donnée par l'A. au titre de son ouvrage (…) envisage le martyre comme l'expression symbolique de la rédemption d'une part et comme un certain prolongement de la pensée religieuse égyptienne d'autre part, en ce sens que l'idée dominante dans le culte des morts en Égypte pharaonique, l'intégralité corporelle liée nécessairement à la survie après la mort, se retrouve dans les récits des martyres coptes où la vie du martyr est présentée comme indestructible" Cf. René-Georges Coquin, "Theofried Baumeister, *Martyr invictus: Der Martyrer als Sinnbild der Erlösung in der Legende und im Kult der frühen koptischen Kirche* [compte rendu]," *RHR* 191 (1977): 213-214.

preserved by divine intervention, or restored by it after the punishment inflicted by order of the imperial authority. The bodily integrity preserved or restored – either by an angel or by Jesus Himself – is a key element in these accounts and constitutes the most notorious miracle in which the martyrs take part. In accordance with this preoccupation, the martyr never dies by the means of fire – even though being thrown inside a burning furnace is inevitably one of the torments faced by him/her – or any other agony that could destroy his/her body; what normally causes his/her death – after uncountable efforts from the persecutors – is decapitation. In this case, even if the head is separated from the rest of the body, both remain incorruptible. Thus following the logic of these tales, nothing prevents the foundation of a shrine dedicated to a given martyr where his/her imperishable body will lie forever, performing miracles and bringing prosperity to all those who will honour the sanctuary with offerings and prayers. One can even go further and affirm that the fact that the body of the martyr was kept from any kind of corruption was fundamental to the foundation and efficiency of a shrine. It is needless to point out the similarities between this symbolic system and the beliefs of the old Egyptian religion[121] concerning the preservation and mummification of bodies.[122] This idea of an "indestructible life", certainly present in old Egyptian beliefs, was easily integrated into Egyptian Christianity. And since for orthodox Christianity the restoration and the integrity of the body are fundamental in the resurrection at the End of Times, the martyrs portrayed in Coptic Epic Martyrdoms are thus the stereotype of redemption.[123] Following this logic, a true Egyptian martyr must have his/her body incorruptible for the foundation and future success and preservation of a shrine.

Given this, for Baumeister Coptic Epic Passions were the product and the manifestation of the cult of the martyrs in Egypt, whose practices were related to the ancient and traditional cult of the dead.[124] The clear concern to state the *topos* where the body of the martyr is preserved is always expressed in Coptic Epic Martyrdoms, as observed above. Nothing

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[121] For a survey, see Adolf Erman, *A Handbook of Egyptian Religion* (Boston: Longwood Press, 1977).
[122] For a survey, see Françoise Dunand, *Mummies and Death in Egypt* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).
[123] We have only outlined the main points of Baumeister's theory; a complete survey can be found in his book (Baumeister, *Martyr invictus*, 51-86). For a good summary of his theory, see Papaconstantinou, *Le culte des saints en Égypte*, 5-7 and 31-34.
[124] Baumeister, *Martyr invictus*, 51-86.

would seem more natural than write an account that tells how the body of the martyr was kept from destruction and buried in that *topos* to legitimize the power of his/her sanctuary and cult.[125] Since the cult of martyrs in Egypt seems to be already in motion during the fifth century, Baumeister dates the beginning of the period of redaction of Coptic Epic Martyrdoms in the first half of this same century. Baumeister goes further in his attempt to date these texts; if we accept that these accounts were mainly composed to justify the cult of the martyrs and the construction of shrines dedicated to them, and since the Arab conquest did not provide a propitious environment for the spread of new martyr's cult, nor for the construction of new shrines, we must agree that these martyrdoms were all likely composed before the seventh century.[126]

Despite its coherence, Baumeister's theory has been questioned by recent scholarship. Willy Clarisse presents a number arguments that, according to him, may demonstrate that the redaction of these texts did not take place before the seventh century. We can summarize his arguments as follows: no Coptic Epic Martyrdoms have been found among the oldest Coptic libraries we know, such as the NH, Bodmer and Chester Beatty collections; even in collections from later centuries, i.e. the fifth and sixth centuries, the number of martyrdoms – not necessarily Epic ones – is considerably small if compared to, New Testament texts, apocrypha and patristic works, for example.[127]

To challenge Clarysse's arguments, it suffices to evoke once again our postulate concerning the difference between dating a manuscript and dating the original composition of a given text.[128] The fact that no manuscripts of Coptic Epic Martyrdoms from previous centuries were preserved does not mean that these texts cannot have been composed during

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[125] By the way, the evidence concerning the location of *topoi* in honour of the martyrs is so carefully presented in Coptic Epic Passions that since the first studies, scholars have emphasised that the only accurate information that can be found in these texts consisted exactly in the geographic location of the shrines. See footnote 109 above.
[126] Once again, we are providing only a summary of Baumeister's discussion (Baumeister, *Martyr invictus*, 51-86). See also Papaconstantinou, *Le culte des saints en Égypte*, 5-6 and 31-34.
[127] Clarisse, "The Coptic Martyrs Cult," 394-395.
[128] See the Introduction and section 4.1.

the time in question. As we said before, the entire study of early Christianity is based on later manuscripts. Why would it be different in the case of Coptic Epic Martyrdoms?

Tito Orlandi has also suggested a later dating for the composition of these Epic Coptic Martyrdoms based on a much more convincing argument.[129] Orlandi tends to link these tales, from a literary point of view, to Coptic homilies, whose apogee probably starts around the sixth century; the fact that these tales emphasize the antiquity and oldness of the shrines dedicated to the martyrs could be seen as an attempt to give them authority. More recently, Papaconstantinou has also questioned Baumeister's hypothesis, considering Orlandi's suggestion but also providing other precise arguments. For her, the main obstacle to an early dating of this genre as a whole is the fact that several martyrs whose martyrdoms are told in these accounts are not mentioned in the most ancient catalogues of martyrs and feasts of Egypt.[130] This could mean that their shrine did not yet exist in the fifth century and consequently, a redaction of an Epic Martyrdom intended to justify it could not have yet been made. Additionally, she states that the Arab conquest, instead of simply discouraging the construction of new shrines, could have caused another era of veneration of martyrs, since the development of that very conquest brought further persecution to Christians in Egypt.[131]

For our part, we could say that nothing really opposes an early dating such as that suggested by Baumeister. It is possible to affirm that the genre in question was possibly already circulating at an early stage in Coptic Egypt, since we have fragments of the *Martyrdom of Cyriacus and Julitta* preserved in the M dialect of Coptic.[132] The text in question was preserved in other late antique languages, and the story takes place outside of

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[129] Orlandi, *Omelie copta*, 78-81. See also Papaconstantinou, *Le culte des saints en Égypte*, 5-34.

[130] On the feasts of saints celebrated in Egypt, see De Lacy O'Leary, *The Saints of Egypt: An Alphabetical Compendium of Martyrs, Patriarchs and Sainted Ascetes in the Coptic Calendar, Commemorated in the Jacobite Synaxarium* (London: Church Historical Society, 1937).

[131] Papaconstantinou, *Le culte des saints en Égypte*, 13-34.

[132] I owe the knowledge of these fragments to Wolf-Peter Funk, who kindly alerted me to their existence. They were edited by Schenke: Hans-Martin Schenke, "Mittelägyptische „Nachlese" III: Neue Fragmente zum Martyrium des Cyri(a)cus und seiner Mutter Julitta im mittelägyptischen Dialekt des Koptischen," *ZÄSA* 126 (1999): 149-172.

Egypt, differently from the majority of our Epic Coptic Martyrdoms;[133] it belongs, however, to the same genre of Epic martyrdoms discussed here,[134] narrating terrible but ineffective tortures inflicted on the martyrs, great miracles performed by them, etc. Cyriacus is even accused by the imperial authority of being a sorcerer, a frequent *topos* in Coptic Epic Passions.[135] Since the fragments in question can hardly be later than the fifth century, given that they were written in the M dialect,[136] the hypothesis of the literary genre in question was already known and circulated in Egypt already in the fifth century is at least plausible.

At any rate, the strongest argument in favor of an earlier dating for Coptic Epic Passions – i.e. the fifth century or even the second half of the fourth century – is the witness of Athanasius discussed above.[137]The fact that the Patriarch of Alexandria witnesses the existence of practices – already in the fourth century – so abundantly described in Coptic Epic Passions makes the possibility of this type of texts circulating at the date in question likely, to say the least, as we have argued above.

We have made this effort to summarize the question concerning the dating of the Coptic Epic Passions literary genre because it could have an indirect influence in the results of our comparison. As stated above, if we cannot confirm an early date, i.e. fourth/fifth-century, the comparison between these texts and Codex V would not be forbidden, but its results would be much more speculative. We have also discussed that issue taking into consideration the genre as a whole, rather than discussing each text separately, because this kind of discussion would require more time and would be beyond the scope of the present dissertation and also

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[133] The other known exception is *The Martyrdom of Apa Nahroou*, which takes place in Antioch, but his body is later taken to Egypt by Jules of Aqfahs. See Hugo Lundhaug, "'The Power of Michael Protected Him': A New Fragment of the Coptic Martyrdom of Apa Nahroou," *Clara* 1 (2016): 1-14.

[134] See the following discussion on the general characteristics of the genre in question.

[135] On this and other attributions of the imperial authorities, see Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*, 186-189.

[136] Concerning the particularities that allow it to be identified as text written in the M dialect, see Elinor M. Husselman, "The Martyrdom of Cyriacus and Julitta in Coptic," *JARCE* 4 (1965), 85-86. See also Schenke, "Mittelägyptische „Nachlese" III, 149-172.

[137] See pages 192-194 above.

because these texts form such a uniform collection of literature that it would be improbable that they were composed in very different locations and at widely different times.[138]

Thus, as said above, the establishment of a general dating for these Coptic Epic Passions – instead of dating them separately – is mainly possible due to their uniformity. They all follow the exact same pattern, to the point that one could almost say that the only element that changes is the name of the martyr himself and of those who surround him.[139] Such similarities lead Delehaye to say that the hagiographers who composed these martyrdoms used ink and pen no more than they used paste and scissors.[140] Delehaye went further, affirming that these tales were probably produced on a large scale by a school of hagiographers in Alexandria, being ordered by faithful who were concerned with shrines built in honour of martyrs and their respective festivals.[141]

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[138] On the uniformity of these tales, see Delehaye, "Les martyrs d'Égypte," 149-154 and Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*, 171-226.

[139] One could summarize a Coptic Epic Martyrdom as follows: the *mise en scène* is always the persecution launched by Diocletian, with some variants concerning details. Normally, the Martyr, seeking the crown of martyrdom, presents himself to the imperial authority. The tortures inflicted upon the martyr are generally the same and always very cruel (incandescent spears piercing in his body, being locked inside a burning furnace for days, scalping, cutting off his tongue, exposure of bowels, drinking of poison, etc.); some of these tortures are extremely unlikely. Once the imperial authority realizes that he will not be able to vanguish the martyr's endurance, he sends him to another Egyptian location. The martyr travels through Egypt by the Nile; then the martyr passes through another series of tortures in the hands of another imperial authority. The martyr's endurance is always labeled as magic or sorcery by imperial authorities; this accusation is always refuted by the martyr who attributes his endurance to divine power. And indeed, despite the horrible and unlikely tortures, the martyr is always saved by an angel or Jesus Himself, and his bodily integrity is restored. A scene in which the imperial authority is deeply humiliated always takes place (he becomes voiceless, for example, and is obliged to write that the God of the martyr, Jesus Christ, is the only God); even though he is mocked by the martyr during the entire judgment. Massive conversion of the audience who watches the trial normally takes place; then, these converted are martyred right away by the sword, and their number is always unlikely. The accounts are always full of discourses pronounced by the martyr that praise God, and in some cases, these discourses attempt to discredit polytheism. Thus traveling from one place to another, being tortured by several authorities, the martyr finally accomplishes his combat, being martyred by the sword, with his head being cut off. He is normally taken to heaven by a celestial being, where he salutes the saints who were already there waiting for him. The account then finishes with the transportation of the martyr's body to the place where a shrine in his honour shall be built, and promises of healing and prosperity to those who make offerings there. This is obviously a very brief summary of the contents of Coptic Epic Martyrdoms, but it suffices to show that these texts always followed the same pattern, involving no creative effort, but rather uniformity. For details, see Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*, 171-226.

[140] Delehaye, "Les martyrs d'Égypte," 152.

[141] Delehaye, "Les martyrs d'Égypte," 149-154.

Leaving aside the question of who exactly produced these martyrdoms, we cannot ignore the fact that they are really similar to each other, not to say identical. Their massive use of certain literary motifs can provide an important clue to the investigation of what was in fashion in late antique Coptic literature. Some of these literary motifs, as the present dissertation intends to demonstrate in Chapter 7, can also be found in Codex V. Consequently, we could not leave these texts out of our comparison.

As outlined above, generally speaking, Coptic Epic Martyrdoms can be divided into three groups or cycles: the first cycle is normally called "the cycle of Basilides" and contains the texts whose characters are related to a mythical character called Basilides,[142] normally by kinship. The Martyrdoms that form this cycle are the *Martyrdom of Saint Eusebius*,[143] the *Martyrdom of Saint Macarius of Antioch*[144], and the *Martyrdom of Irai and his Sister*.[145] The second cycle is normally called the "cycle of Julius of Aqfahs", and contains the Epic Martyrdoms pseudonymously attributed to this character,[146] who, according to some accounts, also died as a martyr.[147] We know today at least eleven Coptic Epic Martyrdoms that have been preserved and are attributed to this character: The *Martyrdom of Apa Epima*,[148] the *Martyrdom of Saint Macarius of Antioch*,[149] the *Martyrdom of Saint Dydimus*,[150] the

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[142] In these accounts, Basilides is said to be a high imperial officer, very important in administrative and military business. His relatives are equally important and normally hold important positions in military or administrative ranks. In the *Martyrdom of Saint Eusebius*, for example, Eusebius, Basilides' son, is a very important captain in the Roman Army, along with his military companions, Claudius, Theodore, Apater and Justus, who are all Basilides' nephews. In the end, they are all martyred. The fact that the martyrs of Basilides cycle are supposed to be important and rich persons, sometimes even with direct links to Diocletian, plays a fundamental role in these stories: they give up everything, not only life itself, but also richness and worldly glory, to die for Christ (C.V. 58, fol. 36-64; cf. Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 1-39).

[143] C.V. 58, fol. 36-64; cf. Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 1-39.

[144] C.V.C. 59, fol. 58-84; cf. Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 40-77.

[145] C.V.C. 63, fol. 55-78; cf. Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 78-113.

[146] Julius of Aqfahs is said to be a writer who has many servants and follows the martyrs, writing down their histories. In some cases, the story tells that he makes use of his servants to gather information concerning the official trial of the martyr, a clear attempt made by the author to grant some historicity to the account. Julius of Aqfahs is also said to be the responsible for keeping the body of the martyr after his death, transporting it to its final destination, where a shrine is built in honour of the saint. See, for example, the *Martyr of Apa Epima* (Pierpont Morgan 580, fol. 57r-58v; cf. Mina, *Le martyre d'Apa Epima*, 83-85).

[147] On the traditions about Jules of Aqfahs, see Mina, *Le martyre d'Apa Epima*, XI-XV.

[148] Pierpont Morgan 580; Mina, *Le martyre d'Apa Epima*.

[149] C.V.C. 59, fol. 58-84; cf. Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 40-77.

[150] C.V.C. 62, fol. 253-265; cf. Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 284-303.

Martyrdom of Saints John and Simeon,[151] the *Martyrdom of Apa Anoub*,[152] the *Martyrdom of Saint Ari*,[153] the *Martyrdom of Saint Macrobe*,[154] the *Martyrdom of Chamoul*,[155] the *Martyrdom of Heraclides*,[156] *Martyrdom of Saints Paese and Tecla*,[157] and *Martyrdom of Saint Shenoufe and his Brethren*.[158] Finally, other Coptic Passions that are part of our corpus of comparison could not be attached to any cycles with any confidence,[159] such as the *Martyrdom of Saint Pisoura*,[160] the *Martyrdom of Saints Piroou and Athon*,[161] the *Martyrdom of Saint Sarapamon*,[162] and the *Martyrdom of Saints Apaioule and Ptoleme*.[163]

5.4. Works Outside the Scope of this Dissertation.

In a certain way, the previous pages have already outlined the main reasons for the exclusion of certain works from our corpus of comparison. To make it even clearer, we decided to dedicate a section of the present chapter to explain why some works were excluded. Since this dissertation intends to deal with Egyptian hagiographies from Late Antiquity, more precisely those that were possibly circulating in the fourth and fifth centuries, we have

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[151] C.V.C. 60, fol. 61-85; cf. Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 174-201.

[152] C.V.C. 66, fol. 233-268; cf. Giuseppe Balestri and Henry Hyvernat, *Acta Martyrum I* (CSCO 43; SC 3; Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste, 1907), 200-241.

[153] C.V.C. 61, fol. 69-86; cf. Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 200-224.

[154] C.V.C. 38, fol. 90-107; cf. Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 225-246.

[155] Eric Winstedt, *Coptic Texts on S. Theodore the General, S. Theodore the Eastern, Chamoul and Justus* (Amsterdam: Apa-Philo Press, 1979), 175-188.

[156] Walter Till, *Koptische Heiligen – und Martyrerlegenden Teil 1* (OCA 102; Roma: Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1935, 33-39).

[157] Pierpont Morgan Codex M 591 T. 28, fol. 49-88R; cf. Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices*, 31-79 and 151-184.

[158] Pierpont Morgan Codex M 583 T. 41, fol. 103-138; cf. Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices*, 81-127 and 185-222.

[159] In some cases, due to the poor state of conservation of certain passages in the manuscripts. See, for example, the *Martyrdom of Saint Pisoura*, in which the beginning of the text is lacking (Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 114).

[160] C.V.C. 60, fol. 1-21; cf. Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 114-134.

[161] C.V.C. 60, fol. 22-60; cf. Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 135-173. In this Martyrdom, a character named Sarapamon plays the role played by Jules of Aqfas and his servants in the martyrdoms attributed to him, i.e., Sarapamon takes care of the body of the martyrs after their death until the construction of a shrine in the proper place (Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 171-172).

[162] C.V.C. 63, fol. 173-188; cf. Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 304-331.

[163] MS. Paris copte 78, fol. 16-17; cf. Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices*, 139-143 and 223-228.

excluded from it those that were probably composed in later periods; even though some of them follow the same literary pattern as the hagiographies discussed here.

Additionally, we have excluded from our corpus of comparison some texts that have a hagiographic goal and were composed in the fourth and fifth centuries but are not a product of native Egyptian culture. The most well-known examples are the *Historia Monachorum* and the *Historia Lausiaca*; both texts may have a particular importance for the historical study of Egyptian monasticism, but were produced by non-Egyptians for a non-Egyptian audience; consequently, these texts are not examples of the Coptic literary culture in the fourth and fifth centuries and could not be used for our purposes.

The rest of Coptic fourth- and fifth-century literary production, which includes letters, rules, homilies,[164] etc., is also excluded from our corpus of comparison because our initial analysis of this collection of literature did not prove to be fruitful. By this we mean that the points of literary contacts between this type of literature and Codex V are not abundant; the literary themes and motifs abundantly found in Egyptian hagiographies and Codex V are generally lacking in the rest of Coptic monastic literature. This is probably due to the fact that these works do not present a narrative framework, which further justifies their exclusion, since Codex V is basically composed of texts with narrative frameworks.

Once more, based on chronological and literary patterns, we have also excluded from our corpus of comparison the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*[165] for three reasons: 1- Even though the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers* are hagiographies, their literary framework does not correspond to the kind of text found in Codex V; we believe that a comparison between the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers* and other groups of *Logia*, such as those preserved in the Coptic version of the *Gospel of Thomas* could be more fruitful; 2- Their composite character makes it almost impossible to determine a date of composition for all the various sub-groups

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[164] In this group we could basically include the rest of Pachomian literature (rules, letter and homilies attributed to him or his successors), the Coptic fragments of the letters attributed to Antony, and the works of Shenoute.
[165] For a survey, see Jean-Claude Guy, *Les Apophtegmes des Pères: Collection systématique - chapitres I-IX* (SC 387; Paris: Cerf, 1993); Jean-Claude Guy, *Les Apophtegmes des Pères: Collection systématique - chapitres X-XVI* (SC 474; Paris: Cerf, 2003) and Jean-Clade Guy, *Les Apophtegmes des Pères: Collection systématique - chapitres XVII-XXI* (SC 498; Paris: Cerf, 2005).

of sayings; one can find sayings composed or attributed to monks from the fourth to the tenth centuries, for example; thus we also excluded the *Sayings* from our corpus due to our chronological limits; 3- Finally, their length would probably require a study and dissertation in its own right.

Another question may be asked concerning the comparison of Codex V to fourth-and fifth-century literature preserved in Coptic: why not compare it with Coptic Christian apocrypha – above all the so-called Gnostic texts – and Jewish Pseudepigrapha preserved in Coptic. In fact, this is one of the avenues that scholars have been following since the discovery of the NHC, analysing their texts in the light of the so-called Gnosticism and comparing them to other texts preserved in Coptic considered to be "Gnostic", such as those of the Codex of Berlin, the Codex Askew and the Codex Bruce (and more recently the Codex Tchacos).[166] The quest for the origins of Gnosticism has also led scholarship to seek answers in Jewish pseudepigrapha – in part preserved in Coptic – comparing them to NH texts.[167] Consequently, our comparisons will not focus on similitudes between Codex V[168] and New Testament apocrypha, other Gnostic corpora and Jewish pseudepigraphy preserved in Coptic. These comparisons have been concerned mainly with the original Greek context of composition of the NH texts. The only possible innovation in this sort of comparison would consist in taking into consideration Coptic points of view. We are aware of the fact that a comparison between Codex V and the rest of the NH texts, Christian apocrypha and Jewish Pseudepigrapha preserved in Coptic that would take into consideration Coptic perspectives

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[166] For a survey, see Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 25-30. On the Codex Tchacos specifically, see April DeConick, ed., The *Codex Judas Papers: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Tchacos Codex Held at Rice University, Houston, Texas, March 13-16, 2008* (NHMS 71; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2009).

[167] See, above all, Birger Pearson, "From Jewish Apocalypticism to Gnosis," in *The Nag Hammadi Texts in the History of Religions* (ed. S. Giversen, T. Petersen and J.P. Sørensen; Copenhagen: Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, 2002), 311-342. See also Pearson, *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity*, 124- 135; Birger Pearson, *Gnosticism and Christianity in Roman and Coptic Egypt* (New York/London: T&T Clark, 2004), 11-197; Burns, *The Apocalypse of the Alien God*, 140-159.

[168] *Eugnostos*, for example, has mainly been compared to the *Sophia of Jesus Christ* (see, for example, Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices III, 3-4* and V, 1, 3-5); the *Apocalypse of Paul* has been compared, for example, to *3 Enoch* and the *Testament of Abraham* (for a survey, see Dias Chaves, *Between Apocalyptic and Gnosis*, 45-53); the *Apocalypse of Adam* has been compared to the literature attributed to Adam (Morad, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*, 7-10). The *Apocalypses of James* have been compared to each other, and also to other "Revelation Dialogues" (for a survey, see Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jaques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 14-16).

– instead of second-century and "Gnostic" issues – could be fruitful. However, this is not the goal of the present dissertation, moreover, such an enterprise would probably require a separate study. Nevertheless, whenever necessary, we will mention the presence of motifs in the NH texts or other extra-canonical literature that circulated in Coptic at the same time that concerns us here as proof of their popularity in late antique Coptic Egypt, making use of them to establish the "horizon of expectations" in relation to these motifs.

5.5. Final Considerations: Notes on Quotations and References

When quoting our sources, references will be given according to the division of paragraphs, sections and/or lines suggested by modern and critical editions. When the modern and critical editions do not suggest any division in paragraphs or sections, references will be given according to the inventory number and pagination of the ancient manuscript (pages, folios, columns, etc.).

We will make use preferentially of English translations when quoting our sources; however, the inexistence of English translations of some of the texts obliges us to call upon French translations in certain cases. In some cases, we will suggest certain improvements to these modern translations. Obviously, the quotations of passages of sources in modern languages (English and French) will be accompanied by the Coptic or Greek texts. In general terms, we will provide the text in Coptic or Greek in footnotes. We normally preserve the division of words and phrases of the editions we are referring to.

In regard to Codex V, we use the English translations of Parrott's edition;[169] for the Coptic, we will cite the text established in the French critical editions,[170] since they are more recent that Parrott's edition. In the specific case of the *First Apocalypse of James*, given the fact that the publication of the new version of Codex Tchacos has made possible the

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[169] Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*.
[170] Pasquier, *Eugnoste*; Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*; Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*; Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*.

restitution of several lacunas, we will rather make use in certain cases of the Coptic text established by W.-P. Funk in the Concordance of Codex V.[171]

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[171] Wolf-Peter Funk, *Concordance du Codex V de Nag Hammadi* (unpublished, Québec, 2009).

Some Considerations on the Egyptian Social-religious Milieu in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries

The timespan covered by the present study – the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. – was certainly among the most significant and important periods in the history of Egyptian Christianity.[1] This period began with the great persecution of Diocletian, particularly noteworthy for Egypt, and the later legalization of Christianity;[2] it witnessed schisms, at least two great theological controversies and four Great Councils (Nicaea, in 325, I Constantinople, in 381, Ephesus, in 431, and Chalcedon, in 451).[3] It was also the period in which Athanasius – probably the most famous and important Bishop who ever presided over the Patriarchate of Alexandria – was active[4] and the time that saw the flourishing and climax of eastern coenobitism, especially in Egypt.[5] It is the period of legendary figures of Egyptian Christianity, such as Athanasius, Antony, Pachomius and Shenoute. It was the period in which Christianity spread all over Egypt, reaching the most distant and remotes regions of the country and probably surpassing traditional Egyptian and Greco-Roman cults in number of faithful.[6] And finally, it was the period of the development of Coptic as a literary language, the period in which Coptic manuscripts – for all tastes, from biblical literature to "Gnostic treatises" and to monastic literature – started to be produced on a large scale.[7] Thus in the

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[1] For a survey on the period in question, see Charles W. Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity: From its Origins to 451 C.E.* (CS 2; Leiden/New York/København/Köln: E.J. Brill, 1991), 117-228.

[2] Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity*, 117-169.

[3] For a survey on these concils, see Bernard Sesboué and Joseph Wolinski, *Le Dieu du salut* (Paris: Desclée, 1994). See also William H.C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2008), 1-49.

[4] For a survey, see Weinandy, *Athanasius*.

[5] For a survey, see Derwas J. Chitty, *The Desert a City: An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966).

[6] We do not have access to precise statistics of course; we have evidence that indicates, however, that paganism was overtaken by Christianity in number of faithful probably during the fourth century. A recent study made by Blumell argues in favor of this, using the analysis of Christian letters in late antique Oxyrhynchus (Blumell, *Lettered Christians*), 89-162. See also MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries*.

[7] See Emmel, "Shenoute's Literary Corpus," 1-38.

face of such a complex context, it would be completely beyond the scope of the present dissertation to present a complete survey of the history of Egypt in this period.[8]

Consequently, we have decided to comment briefly on some aspects of this complex social-religious milieu (such as the Great Persecution and the Meletian schism, the theological controversies of the period and Monasticism in late antique Egypt), paying more attention to issues related to monasticism and especially to points that could be pertinent to the understanding of the reception of the NHC and the pluralism of Egyptian Christianity as a whole. The goal of the following paragraphs is to emphasize how plural and fluid the late antique Coptic context was in regard to religion. We want to demonstrate that texts normally labeled as heterodox – such as those of Codex V – could be perfectly appropriate or at least acceptable in this context of religious and theological fluidity, a context in which many dogmas were not yet formulated, known or even taken into consideration. In Rousseau's words:

> To suppose that the Egyptian church, or indeed any other Christian community in the Empire, was divided simply between orthodox rigorists and gnostic speculators would be a grave error. The chief implication of our account so far must be that boundaries between religious groups were slow to form, rarely clear-cut, and constantly adjusted.[9]

Consequently, in this sort of context, Codex V can be seen in a different light than its texts were in the second century, the time of its original composition. We will provide a brief sketch of this pluralistic milieu as a basis for our claim that a non-Gnostic reading of Codex V was possible in late antique Coptic Egypt. The ultimate argument in favor of this claim is

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[8] Other scholars have already done this, such as Harold I. Bell, *Egypt, from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest: A Study in the Diffusion and Decay of Hellenism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948), 65-100; Henry Chadwick, ed., *Alexandrian Christianity* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954); Edward R. Hardy, *Christian Egypt: Church and People* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1952); Harold I. Bell, *Jews and Christians in Egypt: The Jewish Troubles in Alexandria and the Athanasian Controversy, Illustrated by Texts from Greek Papyri in the British Museum* (Milano: Istituto editoriale Cisalpino-La Goliardica, 1977); we would like to refer specifically to Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity*.
[9] Philip Rousseau, *Pachomius: The Making of a Community in Fourth-Century Egypt* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1985), 28.

yet to come however: the comparison of the themes and motifs found in Codex V and in late antique Egyptian hagiographies.

6.1. The Great Persecution and the Meletian Schism

Already in the first years of the fourth century, Christendom had to face what is considered to be the greatest persecution against Christianity in Antiquity, the persecution of Diocletian, also known as "the Great Persecution."[10] This persecution left a permanent mark in Egyptian Christianity and its mentality, also generating consequences that would have an important impact on the future development of Christianity itself in the country, to the point that the Coptic Christian calendar begins to count the years from the year when Diocletian became emperor (284).[11]

The most immediate, and probably also the most important, of the consequences of this persecution for Egyptian Christianity in Late Antiquity was what is generally called the Melitian schism: during the persecution, both Peter, the bishop of Alexandria, and Meletius, bishop of Lycopolis were arrested in Alexandria. According to Epiphanius,[12] it was during the time they both spent in prison that the issue regarding the readmission of the *lapsi* generated by the Great Persecution was first discussed between them. The Bishop of Alexandria was in favor of a more indulgent procedure for the readmission of the *lapsi*, while the bishop of Lycopolis defended a more severe punishment.[13] Leaving aside the historicity

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[10] Our intention here is not to provide an in-depth discussion on the Great Persecution of Diocletian, but only to point out some issues related to it that could be particularly pertinent for the development of the present dissertation. A good survey on the period the Great Persecution in Egypt and its consequences can be found in Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity*, 117-169. The present dissertation itself makes use largely of Griggs' work to summarize this question.

[11] On the Coptic calendar, see O'Leary, *The Saints of Egypt*. See also Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques en Égypte*, 34-36.

[12] *Panarion* 2.68.3. Griggs emphasises that Epiphanius' account was written almost a century later than the presumed episode in prison; Epiphanius, however, alleges that he heard the history from Egyptian bishops. Since it is a third-hand account the history is not completely reliable (Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity*, 117 and 157.

[13] Epiphanius' account continues, acquiring a romantic and fictional character; according to him, the discussion between Alexander and Meletius got serious and passionate, and no consensus was achieved. So Peter placed a curtain in the middle of the cell to avoid any contact with Meletius; the same account tells that the majority of the monks in the cell supported Meletius (Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity*, 117).

of this account in all its particulars, the fact is that this issue generated a great schism in Egyptian Christianity in the fourth century.

According to Griggs, "the question concerned the interval of time before readmission and the status afterward of those who returned, not whether to readmit them into communion or deny it from them permanently."[14] At any rate, it seems that the dispute between the two bishops concerned not only the question of the readmission of the *lapsi*. After a period in prison, they were both liberated, but the persecution carried on. Meletius took measures that affected churches that were in the area of control of other bishops, who were imprisoned or hidden. He ordained priests in 4 dioceses[15] and in 306, he went to Alexandria, where he took advantage of Peter's absence – he was hiding because of the persecution –, excommunicating both priests and lay Christians.[16]

Meletius behaviour meant that the schism involved not only the question of the *lapsi,* but also political-ecclesiastical issues. Meletius was eventually arrested again, remaining in prison until the promulgation of the edict of toleration by Galerius in 311. However, Galerius died in the same year, and the persecution resumed under the government of Maximin; it was during this period that Peter was decapitated. His death, however, was not enough to end the controversy; according to Epiphanius, Meletius, after his liberation, started to travel through Egypt setting up his own church, ordaining "clerics, bishops, elders and deacons."[17] A full-fledged schism thus materialized – in the words of Epiphanius: "And they assumed names, each one in his own church: the successors of Peter, because they possessed the churches that were ancient, claimed the Catholic Church; and those of Meletius, the Church of the Martyrs."[18]

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[14] Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity*, 117.
[15] The details of this dispute can be found in two letters published by Bell (Bell, *Jews and Christians in Egypt*, 38f). One of the letters edited by Bell is a protest by the four bishops in question against the acts of Meletius. The other letter is an excommunication order of Meletius written by Peter.
[16] See footnote 358 above.
[17] *Panarion* 2.68.3.
[18] *Panarion* 2.68.3. Griggs' translation (Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity*, 118).

What followed the establishment of these two churches in Egypt is hard to know for sure.[19] Bell suggests that during the episcopate of Alexander, the relation between the "Catholic Church" and the "Church of the Martyrs" was not necessarily unfriendly or hostile.[20] However, the first episodes that would later lead to the so-called Arian controversy seem to have shaken the relatively "peaceful" relations between the two Churches. Arius seems to have adopted an ambiguous position in relation to Meletius.[21] The fact is that by the time of the episcopate of Alexander, and above all in the time of the episcopate of Athanasius, both parties (Meletians and the so-called Arians) were considered "enemies" of the church of Alexandria. Scholars know today that the Meletians probably built up an entire ecclesiastical system, even having monasteries of their own, whose existence can be proved by papyrological evidence.[22]

It is important to remember therefore that fourth-century Egypt is characterized by an unstable religious situation. This is also the time of the development and consolidation of coenobitical monasticism in Egypt, and probably the time of compilation of the NHC and other corpora of non-canonical literature in Coptic. Given these facts, it is natural to speculate that such an unstable religious context could have been propitious for the circulation and consumption of "heretical" literature. We will deal with the plurality of late antique Egyptian monasticism later on, but for the time being, it suffices to note the existence of Melitian monasteries.[23] As discussed in the *status quaestionis* the possibility of Meletian monks as the owners of the NHC has never really been taken into serious consideration by scholarship, which has concentrated on the hypothesis of a Pachomian origin or ownership.[24]

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[19] This may be due to the fact that we know what probably happened mainly through the accounts of later ecclesiastical historians, such as Sozomen or Socrates, or heresiologists, such as Epiphanius.

[20] For details, see Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity*, 118 and Bell, *Jews and Christians in Egypt*, 39.

[21] For details, see Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity*, 118-119.

[22] See Goehring, *Ascetics, Society, and the Desert*, 187-218. See also Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastique en Égypte*, 80-81.

[23] See Goehring, *Ascetics, Society, and the Desert*, 187-218; Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity*, 126 and Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastique en Égypte*, 80-82. 403-436. As an example, one could mention the Meletian monastic community from the nome of Herakleopolis, in the Upper Kynopolis; this community is probably the place where the Melitian archives published by Bell come from (Bell, *Jews and Christians in Egypt*, 375-408).

[24] See Chapter 2 above, in particular section 2.8, in which our conclusions were summarized.

The cult of the martyrs was also very important among the Melitians, since the readmission of the *lapsi* was one of the main controversies that led to the schism; the fact that the Melitians referred to themselves as the "Church of the Martyrs", according to Epiphanius,[25] also attests to their particular devotion to the martyrs. Moreover, this devotion is attested by no less than Athanasius himself, as discussed in section section 5.3; we can infer from his 41st and 42nd *Festal Letters* that Melitians had a special affection for martyrs, to the point of even disentombing them for public devotion.[26]

Such a particular devotion may have led the members of this "Church of the Martyrs" to be especially interested in texts that feature martyrs and martyrdoms or any literary element that could be linked to these texts; and this could be the cases of the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the two *Apocalypses of James*, as already discussed in section 4.3 and as we will see in chapter 7. Obviously, the "Church of the Martyrs" was not the only group to be interested in martyrdoms and to foster devotion to martyrs; Athanasius's account itself is a critique of what he believes to be the wrong way to practice this devotion – if we consider that Athanasius is telling the truth and not only forging a story to libel his opponents, of course – denouncing the abuses of Meletians, which demonstrates that the "Catholic Church" also valued devotion to martyrs. At any rate, Athanasius`s account demonstrates that the cult of the martyrs was already well established in the fourth century.[27]

After this concise survey on the Meletian schism, we may now discuss briefly the two main theological controversies that marked Egypt in the period covered by the present dissertation.

6.2. Theological Controversies

During the time covered by the present dissertation, one could say that, in general terms, two important theological controversies took place in which Egypt was deeply involved: the Arian and the Origenist. The first was in fact a group of Christological controversies,

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[25] *Panarion* 2.68.3.
[26] Athanasius, *41st Festal Letter*, 189-190 (according to Lefort, *Lettres festales et pastorales en copte*, 62).
[27] See pages 192-194 above.

involving mainly the question of the divinity of Christ and how it should be dogmatically expressed, sparked by the teachings of Arius – a presbyter from Libya who was carrying out his ministry in Alexandria at the time the controversy started – and leading to the Council of Nicaea in 325, but being resolved only at the final quarter of the fourth century by the teachings of the Capadocian Fathers[28] and by the First Council of Constantinople.[29] The second[30] took place in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, and involved Origen's theology and its various interpretations.[31] The Origenists were accused by Epiphanius[32] – quickly joined by prominent theologians of the time like Jerome[33] – of being "anthropomorphites";[34] even though the controversy emerged in Palestine, it soon reached Egypt, where Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria, confronted the partisans of Origenism,[35] and in the fifth century, Shenoute was one of the main opponents of this doctrine.[36] On the other side of the controversy, Rufinus was the main defender "against the charges of Origenism."[37]

It is beyond the scope of the present dissertation to provide detailed discussions of both controversies. The bibliography on the Arian controversy is particularly abundant, so we will mention the studies that we consider more important and the more recent ones.[38] Although

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[28] See Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 676-737.

[29] See Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 791-823.

[30] For a survey on the Origenist Controversy, see Elizabeth Clark, *The Origenist Contorversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

[31] As it is well known, Origenist theology permeated the theology of many Christian theologians during the fourth century; we know that his works were read or known by the monks of Egypt, for example (cf. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy*, 43- 84; Rubenson, *The Letters of Saint Antony*).

[32] Clark, *The Origenist Controversy*, 86-104.

[33] Clark, *The Origenist Controversy*, 121-150.

[34] Clark, *The Origenist Controversy*, 43-84.

[35] Clark, *The Origenist Controversy*, 105-120.

[36] Clark, *The Origenist Controversy*, 151-158.

[37] Clark, *The Origenist Controversy*, 159-193.

[38] Especially because the research on the Arian controversy has changed its focus considerably in the last decades. We could thus mention as important works on the controversy in question the following studies: Sesboué and Wolinski, *Le Dieu du salut*; Michael R. Barnes and Daniel H. Williams, eds., *Arianism after Arius. Essays on the Development of the Fourth Century Trinitarian Conflicts* (Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1993); Rowan Williams. *Arius. Heresy and Tradition* (London: SCM Press, 2001). See also Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*.

the studies on the Origenist controversy may not be as abundant as those on the Arian controversy,[39] one useful handbook about this matter has been produced.[40]

When dealing with the Arian controversy, particularly in Egypt, one cannot lay aside the role played by Athanasius, certainly the most influential personality in this battle for the "Christian doctrine of God."[41] In the period after the Council of Nicaea, Athanasius' activity was fundamental and diverse, since he was active in many levels, politically, ecclesiastically, ideologically and dogmatically. His literary production bears abundant witness to his defense of the Nicene Creed, never missing a chance to attack, reproach and discredit the so-called Arians,[42] ideologically and theologically; even the *Life of Antony*, one of the main sources of our corpus of comparison, attests to Athanasius's action against the so-called Arians on at least two precise occasions: a theological defense of the Incarnation[43] and a clear condemnation of Arians and even an *ex-eventu* prophecy about the persecutions due to the controversy in question.[44]

By means of the *Life of Antony*, Athanasius's battle against Arianism probably reached a monastic audience. One can imagine that if Athanasius made such an effort, to include clear condemnations of Arianism and an apology of Incarnation, it is probably due to the fact that he thought that monastic communities were not unaware of Arianism. And indeed, many texts in the NHC may show the fluidity of the Christian doctrine of God circulating in fourth-century Egypt.[45] If this doctrine was not clearly defined in Egypt yet – and consequently in Coptic environments – one can imagine that texts that presented heterodox views of the

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[39] According to Clark, "although some pieces of evidence have been lost and other points remain obscure in the extant materials, more documents pertinent to social analysis remain for the Origenist debate than for any other early Christian controversy"; see Clark, *The Origenist Contorversy*, 16.
[40] In particular Clark, *The Origenist Controversy*.
[41] This is an expression employed by Hanson (Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*).
[42] We choose to employ the expression "so-called Arians" because they probably never referred to themselves as such; the expression in question was normally used by their opponents, particularly Athanasius. On this matter, see Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition*, 83 ff.
[43] *Life of Antony* § 74.
[44] *Life of Antony* § 82.
[45] See, for example, Lundhaug's discussion (Lundhaug, "Begotten, Not Made"). See also Steve Johnston, "Le motif du blasphème de l'archonte: les multiples visages du Dieu inférieur dans la littérature gnostique" (Ph.D. diss., Faculté de théologie et de sciences religieuses Université Laval, 2012).

divinity, including "Gnostic treatises", such as those of Codex V,[46] may have circulated in this context.[47] Moreover, the controversy in question was so complex, involving so many issues, and lasted so many years that one can imagine that its consequences were not necessarily homogeneous across the entire country.

Later evidence provided by hagiographies such as the *Life of Pachomius* tends to demonstrate that by the end of fourth century the Pachomian congregation was probably aligned with the Alexandrine patriarchate on many questions;[48] the fact that Athanasius took refuge with Upper-Egyptian monks during one of his exiles in 356 is illustrative of this fact.[49] Moreover, the Nicene party seems to have gradually succeeded in obtaining the support of urban ascetic communities in general, as Vaggione has argued, not in Egypt alone, but in the Eastern empire as a whole.[50] On the other hand, Meletian monks, being persecuted by the Athanasian party, were probably closer to the Arians.[51]

Other sources that are part of our corpus of comparison are not concerned as much with this controversy as the *Life of Antony*. The *Letter of Ammon* does condemn Arianism,[52] but not as vigorously as the *Life of Antony*. At any rate, it must be taken into consideration that

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[46] As an example of the fluidity concerning the doctrine on God in Codex V, we can mention the Old Man in the *Apocalypse of Paul* (NH V 22, 25-23, 30).

[47] The opposite situation could be also likely in the case of other NH texts; let us take into consideration, for example, Lundhaug's suggestion, already discussed here in section 2.5, that the *Gospel of Philip* contains post-Nicene soteriology (Lundhaug, "Begotten, Not Made). As we argued in section 2.5, it may not be the case, strictly speaking, that the *Gospel of Philip* contains post-Nicene soteriology, but rather a soteriology that, in a reception perspective, could be interpreted as such in the fourth century or even catch the attention of pro-Nicene partisans. In both cases, the text could be useful in a context of doctrinal fluidity and discussion of the divine nature of Christ.

[48] See, for example, the eulogy of Athanasius and of his *39th Festal Letter* given by Theodore in SBo § 189 and G[1] § 99. If the eulogy in question cannot be attributed to Theodore for sure, it can be at least attributed to the authors of this section of the *Life of Pachomius*, demonstrating that at least at the time it was composed, the *Koinonia* was aligned with the Alexandrinian patriarchate. On the specific subject of this letter and Theodore, see Louis-Théophile Lefort, "Théodore de Tabennèse et la lettre festale de S. Athanase sur le canon de la Bible," *Muséon* 29 (1910): 205-216.

[49] Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism*, 80-141; Bartelink, *Vie d'Antoine*, 37-41.

[50] Richard Paul Vaggione, "On Monks and Lounge Lizards: 'Arians', Polemics and Asceticism in the Roman East" in *Arianism after Arius. Essays on the Development of the Fourth Century Trinitarian Conflicts* (ed. M. R. Barnes and D.H. Williams; Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1993), 181-214. We must always bear in mind, however, that this process may have taken years and may not be applied uniformly to the entire country.

[51] See on this matter Ghica, "Les Actes de Pierre," 177-182. See also Alberto Camplani, *Le lettere festali di Atanasio di Alessandria: Studio storico-critico* (Roma: C.I.M., 1989), 264-265.

[52] *Letter of Ammon* § 11.

the *Lives of Pachomius* do not necessarily bear historical witness to the reality of Pachomian monasteries and the life of their founder and his successors; they are rather hagiographies, written a little later, and their main goal is the edification of their readers. The condemnation of Arianism thus may not be seen as a proof that fourth century Pachomian communities were completely free of any Arian influence, or any heterodox issues concerning the doctrine of God. On the contrary, it may be understood as evidence that there were heterodox positions concerning the divinity of Christ among Pachomian monks, to the point that the author of the *Life of Pachomius* had to make an effort to deal with this issue in his text, inserting a clear condemnation of Arianism.

The Origenist controversy also influenced Egypt in the period covered by the present dissertation, but not exactly at the same time as the Arian controversy. The former took place in the first three quarters of the fourth century, while the latter occurred at the end of fourth century and the beginning of the fifth. Consequently, one may postulate that the Origenist controversy had an influence on the later sources of our corpus of comparison such as the *Life of Shenoute* and the Coptic Epic Passions. However, it is only the *Life of Pachomius* that bears witness to this controversy.[53]

It must be said, however, that the controversy only broke out several decades after the death of Origen himself; even though he was at the source of many polemics during his lifetime,[54] his doctrine was not condemned or officially labeled as heterodox before the controversy at the end of fourth century, and more precisely, in 553 at the Second Council of Constantinople.[55] Thus, despite being disputed, his doctrine was not considered heretical by ecclesiastic authorities before the end of the fourth century. In fact, some scholars have argued that Origenist theology had an influence on the spiritual development of important late antique Coptic personalities: Rubenson, for example, claims that Antony's thought – at

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[53] *G¹* § 31.
[54] For a survey, see Pierre Nautin, *Origène: sa vie, son œuvre* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977).
[55] For a survey, see Francis Xavier Murphy and Polycarp Sherwood, *Constantinople II et Constantinople III* (HCO 3; Paris: Orante, 1973).

least as we know it in the letters attributed to him, that Rubenson believes are authentic – was largely influenced by Origenism.[56]

As in the Arian controversy in the specific case of Egypt, the patriarch of Alexandria played the most important role in the Origenist dispute. If Athanasius was the greatest opponent of the so-called Arians in Egypt, Theophilus, at the end of the fourth century, was certainly the greatest opponent of the Origenists in Egypt. Some ancient authors like Palladius, Socrates and Sozomen considered however that Theophilus's position in the controversy was more political than ideological.[57] Without denying the importance of politics and social networks in the controversy, Clark holds that "an investigation of the distinctive form assumed by the Origenist controversy in Egypt (…) reveals that to concentrate merely on the structure of Origenist and anti-Origenist networks without exploring the ideas circulating through them obscures the complexity of the dispute."[58]

Theophilus also waged an offensive against traditional Greco-Roman and Egyptian cults, particularly in the last decades of the fourth century.[59] This battle was also fought a couple of decades later by Shenoute as witnessed by both his works and his Life.[60] Therefore, despite the decay of paganism in fourth-century Egypt, one cannot affirm that this complex religious phenomenon had completely disappeared. This adds another factor to the already complex religious context of Egypt in the fourth and fifth centuries.

Returning to Origenism, as mentioned above, G^1 makes a clear reference to it and how it may have been understood in certain monastic environments at the end of the fourth century. This text gives an account in which Pachomius orders the destruction of the works of Origen.[61] Is it possible to retrace this condemnation back to the historical Pachomius? Or are we dealing merely with a posterior, hagiographical and edifying account, which tries to

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[56] Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony*.
[57] Clark, *The Origenist Controversy*, 50-58.
[58] Clark, *The Origenist Controversy*, 43.
[59] Clark, *The Origenist Controversy*, 52-55.
[60] See Krawiec, *Shenoute and the Women of the White Monastery*, 107-108; Clark, *The Origenist Controversy*, 151-158; Tito Orlandi, *Contra origenistas: Testo con introduzione e traduzione* (Roma: C.I.M., 1985).
[61] G^1 § 31.

paint Pachomius as someone who was against Origenist theology, in reply to equally posterior ecclesiastical expectations? It is impossible to know the answers to these questions for sure.[62] This account, however, may help us to undesrtand how a given monastic audience at the end of fourth century may have treated Origen, his theology and his works; or at least how ecclesiastical authorities expected them to be treated by such an audience.

Scholars have rarely tried to analyze the NHC in the light of these two controversies and their developments.[63] Nor will we attempt to do this. In general terms, the goal of this section is to show once again how pluralist and litigious the cultural and religious context was at the time when Codex V was probably compiled and circulated. This demonstrates that boundaries between "orthodoxy" and "heterodoxy" were not clearly defined in the Egypt that saw the production and circulation of the volume that concerns us here. Consequently, it would be naïve and imprecise – and one could say even anachronistic – to imagine that the fact that the NHC contain texts that are heterodox would be an obstacle for their circulation and reception in such a pluralistic context.

The analysis of this context also leads us to speculate whether the so-called "Gnosticism" and its branches – certainly fundamental for the understanding of the context of composition of many texts that are part of the NHC[64] – were still active in fourth/fifth-

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[62] Säve-Söderbergh took for granted that the account was necessarily historical, being thus an example of how heretics were treated in the time of Pachomius, what would argue in favor of his theory according to which the NHC composed a heresiological library (Säve-Söderbergh, "Holy Scriptures or Apologetic Documentation"). However, the hagiographical goal of the *Life of Pachomius* is enough to doubt that the account is actually narrating an historical event. This account could be nothing more than a posterior attempt to describe Pachomius and the earliest moments of his congregation as completely orthodox and in accordance with the Alexandrine patriarchate. See our discussion on section 2.4 and 2.5.

[63] The exception is probably Säve-Söderbergh's article (Säve-Söderbergh, "Holy Scriptures or Apologetic Documentation"), mentioned in section 2.4. More recently, some attempts were made, as mentioned in chapter 2, Ghica ascribes the revision and final version of the *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles* to melitians (Ghica, "*Les Actes de Pierre et des douze apôtres*," 177-182); Lundhaug has tried to point out post-Nicene theology in the *Gospel of Philip* (Lundhaug, "Begotten, Not Made"). See also Lance Jenott, "Knowledge of the Father and the Movement of the Logos: Echoes of the Arian Controversy in the Tripartite Tractate?" (paper presented at Colloquim *The Nag Hammadi Codices in Fourth-and Fifth Century Christianity in Egypt*, Oslo, December 16, 2013).

[64] Many, but not all. As observed in Chapter 2, the initial tendency of classifying the NHC as a "Gnostic library" had such a strong influence on scholarship that the idea of a Gnostic collection is still widespread. The contents of some texts, however, do not bear witness to any particular "Gnostic" ideas. In the case of Codex V, the *Second Apocalypse of James* is certainly a text that cannot be labeled as "Gnostic" with certitude.

century Egypt. If we examine the theological controversies and schisms in fourth/fifth-century Christianity, we will certainly not find any mention of "Gnosticism" among the main discussions. As far as we know, no Councils or Synods discussed the issue in the fourth and fifth centuries; no major theological works were written against it. As fas as we know, the only significant mention of "Gnosticism" in the period that concerns the present dissertation is found in Epiphanius' *Panarion*, which reports an episode in which Epiphanius claims to have met in Egypt Gnostic women who tried to seduce him.[65] First of all, one must wonder about the veracity of Epiphanius' claim; he may simply be applying a general and well-known label related to heresy – i.e. Gnosticism – to characterize these women. In any case, even if these women were really "Gnostic", the episode does not prove a massive existence of "Gnostics" in fourth century Egypt; thus we are confident in affirming that Gnosticism was at best a marginal question in the theological debate in fourth/fifth-century Egypt.

6.3. Monasticism in Late Antique Egypt

"The desert became a city;"[66] this phrase, which is found in the *Life of Antony*, has become famous to the point of inspiring the title of a classical book on Eastern monasticism;[67] it is a metaphor used by Athanasius to describe the supposed migration of countless Egyptians to the desert, Egyptians who followed in the steps of Antony, fleeing into the wilderness to become anchorites. Leaving aside the "romantic" and mythical character of this passage, it must be said that it illustrates a new social and religious reality that changed Egypt in the fourth century: monasticism. Even if recent scholarship has challenged the supposition concerning the origins of monasticism and its presumed date,[68] it is undeniable that it gained great strength in the fourth century, mostly after the persecutions, when the concept of the monk as the "new martyr" arose.[69]

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[65] *Panarion* 26, 17, 4-9.
[66] *Life of Antony* § 14.
[67] Chitty, *The Desert a City*.
[68] See Goehring, *Ascetics, Society and the Desert*, 89-109.
[69] In the *Life of Antony* § 46, Antony goes to Alexandria seeking martyrdom, but ends up comforting and strengthening the martyrs with charity, implicitly showing that he is performing a new kind of battle. Later, Jerome, for example, in his *Epist.* 3, 5; 108, 31, sees the monastic life as a continuous martyrdom. In *Tractatus*

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It is surely impossible to know exactly how many Egyptians became monks in the first decades after the advent of monasticism;[70] even if Athanasius was exaggerating, even if the desert did not really became a city, the number of monks – anchorites and coenobites – was enough to change the social, economical and religious reality of Egypt.[71] Thus, such a significant phenomenon could not be ignored by scholarship; the origins of monasticism and its development in Egypt are among the most studied topics in fourth-century Egyptian Christianity.[72] One must emphasise though that the way in which scholarship understands Egyptian monasticism has changed in the last few decades.[73]

Early Egyptian monasticism was originally portrayed by hagiographies – such as the *Life of Antony* and the *Life of Pachomius*, for example – as a very orthodox movement, normally aligned with the Patriarchate of Alexandria and combatting heresies. In these texts, monastic icons are portrayed as guardians of orthodoxy and allies of ecclesiastical hierarchy.[74] One cannot forget, however, that these descriptions have primarily a hagiographical and edifying goal, being redacted by ecclesiastical authorities themselves – by Athanasius in the case of the *Life of Antony* – aiming at a monastic audience[75] and their

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de Ps. 115, he says that as the martyrs praise the Lord with chastity in the land of the living, the monks intone the Psalms before the Lord with the same purity, being martyrs themselves. For other examples of ancient Christian authors comparing monks to martyrs, see Aimé Solignac, *Le monachisme: histoire et spiritualité* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1980), 63-65.

[70] Wipszycka devotes an entire chapter of her *magnum opus* (Chapter 8: "Le nombre des moines dans les communautés monastiques d'Égypte" in *Moines et communautés monastiques en Égypte*, 403-436) to the analysis of the number of monks in Egyptian monastic communities. This number, however, remains an estimation and takes into consideration only monastic communities, leaving aside hermits.

[71] An excellent survey can be found in Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques en Égypte*.

[72] For a survey, see Goehring, *Ascetics, Society, and the Desert*, especially 162-186; see also James E. Goehring, "New Frontiers in Pachomian Studies," in *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity* (ed. B. Pearson and J. E. Goehring; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 236-257.

[73] Once again, see Goehring, *Ascetics, Society, and the Desert*, especially 162-186; Goehring, "New Frontiers in Pachomian Studies."

[74] See, for example, SBo 189, where Theodore eulogyzes Athanasius' guidelines about the Canon, expressed in his famous *47th Festal Letter*: "Let us consider what firm guidelines our blessed father Apa Athanasius, the holy archbishop of Alexandria, has produced for us this year, writing in his paschal letter" (Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 230). This passage has a parallel in G[1] 99. In the case of the *Life of Antony*, one could mention a clear condemnation of Arians and even an *ex-eventu* prophecy about the persecutions due to the Arian controversy (*Life of Antony* § 82). See also *Life of Antony* § 67, where is told about the presumed respect and obedience Antony had in relation to the clergy.

[75] For a survey, see Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism*, 201-260.

obedience and support;[76] or, in the case of the *Life of* Pachomius, aiming at ensuring the support of ecclesiastical authorities, trying to show that the *Koinonia* was aligned and faithfull to bishops since its inception.

Scholarly analyses of this question have been very diversified; studies on the origins of monasticism from the beginning of the twentieth century have tended to portray it as a charismatic and schismatic movement, which arose in opposition to the ecclesiastical hierarchy.[77] According to Veilleux,[78] until the fifties it was possible to find scholars such as Amand de Mendieta who defended that position – especially in regard to Pachomian coenobitism:

> Avant que Basile ait inauguré son activité réorganisatrice et réformatrice, disons avant 360, l'Église officielle, la *Reichskirche* constantinienne d'une part, et l'institution monastique, d'autre part, que ce soit sous sa forme érémitique, semi-anachorétique ou cénobitique (pachômienne), constituaient deux forces, sinon antagonistes, du moins juxtaposées et entre lesquelles (c'est le moins qu'on puisse dire) ne régnaient pas grande sympathie et confiance.[79]

About the same time, Ueding tried to show that the relations between monasticism and the ecclesiastical hierarchy – being often judged in the light of the post-Chalcedonian period – were not antagonistic at all.[80] This is also the position defended by Veilleux, in regard mainly to Pachomian monasticism.[81] Veilleux stresses in particular the good relations between Athanasius and Pachomians, stating that

> on comprend donc facilement les relations d'Athanase non seulement avec Antoine, dont il écrivit la « Vie », mais aussi avec les Pachômiens. Il avait

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[76] Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism*, 80-141.

[77] Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien*, 190. A specific bibliography on this matter can be found in Heinrich Bacht, "Mönchtum und Kirche. Eine Studie zur Spiritualität des Pachomius," in *Sentire ecclesiam. Das Bewusstsein von der Kirche als gestaltende Kraft der Frömmigkeit* (ed. J. Daniélou and H. Vorgrimler; Freiburg: Herder, 1961), 113-114.

[78] Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien*, 190-191.

[79] Emmanuel Amand de Mendieta, "Le système cénobitique basilien comparé au système cénobitique pachômien," *RHR* 152 (1957), 66-67. See also Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien*, 191.

[80] Leo Ueding, "Die Kanonen von Chalkedon in ihrer Bedeutung für Mönchtum und Klerus," in *Konzil von Chalkedon. Geschichte und Gegenwart: II: Entscheidung um Chalkedon* (ed. A. Grillmeier and H. Bacht; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1953), 570-600. See also Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien*, 191.

[81] Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien*, 192-195.

compris quelle force les chefs religieux pourraient trouver dans le monachisme pour la défense de la foi. Et, paradoxalement, si, par la suite, les moines coptes tombèrent en masse dans le monophysisme, ce fut à cause de leur fidélité aveugle à leurs patriarches.[82]

To prove his point, Veilleux mentions mostly the hagiographical sources to which we referred earlier in this section, the *Life of Pachomius* – either SBo or G[1] – the *Life of Antony*, but also the *Letter of Ammon*.[83] However, we must evoke once more what we have already said about the nature of these sources: they are hagiographies and their main goal is the edification of the reader, and not to provide a historical account. It is likely that Athanasius really tried to conquer the support of Pachomian monks – mostly because the bishop of Alexandria, as argued by Veilleux, knew that they could be a strong ally in the defense of the orthodoxy proclaimed by the Catholic Church; but it is hard to judge how the monks may have responded to this attempt using only these hagiographical sources. Moreover, the full support of Pachomian monks may have taken some time to be fully won.

Consequently, we ought to adopt a more prudent position, neither treating monasticism as a schismatic movement of prophets and charismatic leaders who were opposed to ecclesiastical hierarchy, nor as a monolithic group of people completely obedient to bishops and in particular to Alexandria. The attempts made by Athanasius to gain the full support of the Pachomian monks show that there was enough contact between the two institutions – the Patriarchate of Alexandria and the *Koinonia* – but also that the support that would become evident by the end of the century had not yet materialized.

We must therefore stress the pluralism of Egyptian monasticism,[84] a pluralism that did not differ from Egyptian Christianity as a whole. Imagining Egyptian monasticism as a monolithic movement necessarily aligned with the orthodoxy defended by the Church of Alexandria and with its hierarchy may not correspond to the reality of fourth/fifth-century Egypt. For example, in our discussion of the Meletian schism, we have shown that the

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[82] Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien*, 192.
[83] Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien*, 192-195.
[84] See on this issue Goehring, *Ascetics, Society, and the Desert*, especially 162-186.

"Church of the Martyrs" had its own monks in Egypt (according to Ghica, it was even primarily a monastic church).[85] Consequently, since the "Church of the Martyrs" had its own ecclesiastical hierarchy,[86] these monks were not opposed to a hierarchy – they may have been opposed to the hierarchy of the "Catholic Church" but they probably followed the particular hierarchy of the "Church of the Martyrs" to which they belonged.

Another element in this already complex equation is the existence of other types of monastic life, such as anchoretic and semi-anchoretic monks. Many hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison – such as the *Life of Antony,* the *Life of Onophrius*, the *Life of Pambo* and the *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt* – bear witness to this ascetical style of life –showing not only that hermits existed, but also that their existence was important and edifying for early Egyptian Christians.[87] Since these ascetics were normally more isolated from villages and people, they were probably less attached to ecclesiastical obligations and hierarchical fidelity.

Another important issue concerning new perspectives on late antique Egyptian monasticism is related to the degree of literacy of monks. At least one account of a western voyager who had contact with Coptic monks in the nineteenth century, Robert Curzon, qualifies them as ignorant and dirty, to quote only a few adjectives employed by him.[88] Following the same perspective, certain hagiographic accounts tended to describe some monks as more concerned with the tradition they inherited from the Fathers than to reading and studying.[89] Perhaps influenced by this kind of account, Festugière tended to portray late antique Eastern monks –including Egyptian monks – as being generally naïve and illiterate.[90]

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[85] Ghica, "Les Actes de Pierre et des douze apôtres", 177. See also Tito Orlandi, *Vite di monaci copti* (Collana di testi patristici, 41; Roma: Città nuova, 1984), 20.186.
[86] Telfer, "Meletius of Lycopolis and Episcopal Succession in Egypt."
[87] For a survey on anchorites, see Festugière, *Les moines d'Orient*, 41-57.
[88] Robert Curzon, *Visits to Monasteries of the Levant* (New York: J. Murray, 1849); see also Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques en Égypte*, 365, who quotes Curzon.
[89] One could infer that in the light of the fact that in some hagiographies the "philosophers" are seen as petulant and ignorant, true knowledge is found in the Scriptures and the tradition from the Holy Fathers. See, for example, the *Life of Antony* § 72-80 and SBo § 55 and G¹ § 82.
[90] See, for example, Festugière, *Les moines d'Orient*, 75-91.

He even says that "Or voici ce qu'on découvre, chez ces moines d'Orient généralement très illettrés. Ils se donnent, certes, la gloire de condamner toute science humaine."[91]

However, the tendency among scholars today is to consider that the majority of monks were able at least to read;[92] otherwise, how they were supposed to learn the Scriptures, above all the Psalms, if they could not read at all? In Rousseau's words:

> All monks were expected to be lettered, and to learn at least some of the psalter and the New Testament.[93] Pachomius warned them against 'the splendor and the beauty' of books, which could be 'outwardly pleasing to the eye', but this was not so much an attack on ideas as an emphasis on a book's true worth – the contents rather than appearance.[94] Books, like much other monastic property, were guarded very carefully by the *praepositus* of each house,[95] but they could be borrowed with permission for a week at a time.[96]

Wipszycka goes further, affirming that there is enough evidence to affirm that a considerable number of monks could probably write:

> Le degré d'alphabétisation de ce milieu peut être étudié assez bien, à la condition qu'on s'intéresse non seulement aux textes littéraires qui parlent des moines mais aussi aux petits textes produits par les moines eux-mêmes : inscriptions gravées ou peintes sur les parois, *ostraka*, papyrus. Heureusement, certaines communautés monastiques ont laissé de nombreux matériaux de ce genre, ce qui rend possibles des recherches précises sur des cas concrets (…). Dans la masse des matériaux couverts d'écriture qui ont été trouvés dans les cellules et parmi les détritus, il y a des documents qui engagent la communauté donnée dans son ensemble ou des moines particuliers, des déclarations concernant des affaires de divers genres (par exemple des questions disciplinaires), de nombreuses lettres privées, des notes pour mémoire, des comptes, des lettres et des quittances liées à l'activité économique courante (par exemple au transport du moût des vignes

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[91] Festugière, *Les moines d'Orient*, 77.
[92] For details, see Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques*, 361- 365. Concerning the literacy in late antique Egypt in general, see Wipszycka, "Le degré d'alphabétisation en Égypte Byzantine."
[93] See G[1] § 61 and § 88; SBo §34, § 66 and § 99.
[94] This admonition is present in G[1] § 63, but not in SBo.
[95] See, for example, G[1] § 59.
[96] Rousseau, *Pachomius*, 81.

aux magasins du monastère). Tout cela prouve que nous avons affaire à des hommes habitués à se servir quotidiennement de l'écriture.[97]

Even if many of these non-literary sources have grammar and stylistic errors, as Wipiszycka herself emphasises,[98] they show nevertheless that many monks were literate enough to use writing as a mean of communication.[99] All this evidence thus paints a different portray of the ordinary late antique Egyptian monk; instead of an ignorant person who could hardly read, the ordinary late antique Egyptian monk was in fact able to not only read but to write personal letters, take notes, fill in economic records, etc. The fact that Egyptian monks could read, did not mean, however, that they had the habitude of reading regularly; even today, many people learn to read in school but rarely read a book or even a magazine. This means that monks were supposed to know how to read, mainly to read the Scriptures and learn them by heart – especially the Psalms. But once they had learnt to recite them by heart, they did not need to read them anymore. The capacity of reading then became obsolete, unless they wanted to read texts other than the Scriptures, such as monastic lives or (why not) apocrypha.

The level of literacy of monks could also have an impact on the research proposed by the present dissertation; once again, in the words of Wipszycka:

> Si la connaissance de l'écriture est effectivement si générale, il est naturel de se demander ce que les matériaux trouvés dans les ermitages, dans les *laurai* et dans les *koinobia*, peuvent nous apprendre au sujet des lectures pieuses des moines, en particulier de la lecture de textes non-bibliques. Des recherches de ce genre n'ont jamais été faites. Alors que les fragments de papyrus plus ou moins substantiels, s'ils n'avaient pas été détruits par les fouilles (légales ou clandestines), avaient une chance d'attirer l'attention des chercheurs, les minces bouts de papyrus n'intéressaient personne. Pourtant, ils auraient pu constituer des témoignages sur les lectures des moines, même s'il était impossible d'identifier les livres dont ils provenaient.[100]

A research that would take into consideration clues found in non-literary sources that could lead to the identification of what late antique Egyptian monks read besides biblical literature

[97] Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques en Égypte*, 361.
[98] Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques en Égypte*, 364.
[99] We are not referring here to the precise occupation of scribe, an activity that probably required specific skills and training, but simply to the capacity of writing personal letters, taking notes, etc.
[100] Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastique en Égypte*, 364.

would definitely be useful and enriching for the present dissertation. Unfortunately, as Wipszycka brings out, the lack of interest of scholars for this question does not allow us to offer any conjectures; moreover, proposing novel considerations on this issue would be beyond the scope of the present dissertation. At any rate, all these reflections on the level of literacy of late antique Egyptian monks – probably, as we have shown, more elevated than previously thought by scholars – allow us to speculate about the "alternative" types of literature read by monks.

The monastic literature (lives of monks, catecheses of abbots, rules, etc.) was probably among the non-biblical texts read by late antique Egyptian monks. If the present dissertation succeeds in demonstrating the existence of many points of thematic-literary contact between a specific type of monastic literature, i.e. the lives of monks, and Codex V, we could also include this codex among the type of reading that might have interested this audience. A more or less literate monk could read the Bible, monastic literature and, why not, a codex that contains peculiar texts that are full of literary contacts with what he is used to reading.

We have written all these paragraphs about early Egyptian monasticism for a reason; monasticism was certainly one of the most important phenomena in fourth/fifth-century Christian Egypt. It is likely that many of the most lettered Christians in late antique Egypt were monks, for the reasons we have pointed out above. Shenoute, for example, was almost certainly the most preeminent and erudite Coptic author in Late Antiquity; he was a monk, an abbot, not a layman.[101] All of these facts make late antique Coptic monks the most likely readers of the NHC, including Codex V.[102] This is why any given study on the reception of the NHC – or Christian literature in late antique in general – should take issues related to monasticism into consideration.

Furthermore, the possibility of a monastic origin for the NHC has certainly been among the most discussed issues concerning their context of compilation.[103] Even if this is not the

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[101] Emmel, "Shenoute's Literary Corpus," 2.

[102] We will return to this discussion in our general conclusion.

[103] Or, put it more precisely, a monastic connection, since origin and destination are very different realities. On this subject, see section 2.4 of the present dissertation.

subject of the present dissertation, to completely ignore this question would be an error. This is why we intend to discuss this issue, and how it could be influenced by our approach, in the chapter devoted to the general conclusions of this dissertation.

This discussion leads us to questions concerning the consumption of apocryphal literature in late antique Egyptian monastic environments. We do not intend to draw a complex portrait of the situation involving apocrypha and monasticism, since this would be beyond the range of the present dissertation, but rather to point out some important factors concerning this question that may be particularly important for our discussion.[104]

Certainly, the most well-known text that bears witness to the circulation of apocrypha in fourth-century Egypt is Athanasius' *Festal Letter of 367*.[105] There is no need to comment on this letter in-depth here, since others have already done so.[106] As accurately observed by Veilleux,[107] there is no conclusive evidence that this letter was the reason for the burying of the NHC; in fact, this letter only attests to the circulation of apocrypha in fourth-century Egypt. Moreover, we may assume that the circulation of apocrypha at that time was sufficiently broad to lead an important ecclesiastical authority such as Athanasius to warn the monks about it.[108] Additionally, one must take into consideration that even after Athanasius' *Festal Letter of 367*, the circulation of apocrypha in late antique Egypt did not cease, as later sources, such as Shenoute's *I am Amazed*, also known as *Catechesis Against Apocrypha*,[109] and John of Parallos's homily against apocrypha demonstrates.[110]

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[104] A recent survey on the circulation of apocrypha in Late Antiquity, particularly in Egypt, was done by Lundhaug and Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, 146-177.

[105] Lefort, *Lettres festales et pastorales*, 15-22.

[106] See, for example, Alberto Camplani, *Le lettere festali di Atanasio di Alessandria* (Milan: Paoline, 2003), 498-518.

[107] See our discussion on section 2.5.

[108] Athanasius' warning attributed the circulation of apocrypha to Melitians; consequently, this warning probably had two simultaneous goals, to alert its recipients about apocrypha and to also discredit the "Church of the Martyrs". On this matter, see Tito Orlandi, "Gli apocrifi copti," *Augustinianum* 23 (1983): 57-71. See also Camplani, *Le lettere festali di Atanasio di Alessandria*, 271-278.

[109] See Orlandi, "A Catechesis Against Apocryphal Texts by Shenoute and the Gnostic Texts of Nag Hammadi."

[110] van Lantschoot. "Fragments coptes d'une homélie de Jean de Parallos."

The Pachomian file itself bears witness to the circulation of apocrypha; the most well-known example could be found at the end of SBo, § 189, where Theodore mentions Athanasius' *Festal Letter of 367*:

> Let us consider what firm guidelines our blessed father Apa Athanasius, the holy archbishop of Alexandria, has produced for us this year, writing them in the paschal letter. He has established the canonical books of the Holy Scriptures and their number (…) For plentiful are the waters of deceit and wells filled with bitterness which some have dug to their own destruction and to that of those who drink from them. These are the ones about whom he has written: 'They have fabricated for themselves what are called apocryphal books, claiming for them antiquity and giving them the name of saints". In so acting, those who have dared to write these kinds of books have in fact made themselves doubly despicable, for with their false and contemptible knowledge they have blasphemed those who are filled with the true knowledge (…) But let us be vigilant and take care not to read the books composed by these defiled heretics, atheists, and truly irreverent people, so that we ourselves may not become disobedient to the Lord (SBo § 189).[111]

More than attesting to the circulation of apocrypha in late antique Coptic environments, this passage shows that the Pachomian monks had to be warned against it, which implies that they, or at least some of them, had access to and read texts that were not part of the canon institutionalized by Athanasius. Moreover, it provides clues concerning pseudepigraphy, attesting that apocryphal texts were attributed to saints, but also alerting the monks that this attribution was fake. If admonitions concerning the authorship of apocrypha were necessary, we can presume that monks, or, at least some of them, took for granted that the presumed authors of apocrypha were the real authors. In other words, they had no concerns about pseudepigraphy.

Another passage among the many fragments classified by Lefort as versions of the *Life of Pachomius* that bears clear witness to the circulation of apocrypha has been almost completely forgotten by scholars;[112] it is in fact a fragment belonging possibly to S[3b], in

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[111] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. I*, 230-231. For the Coptic text, see Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Bohairice Scripta*, 175-178.

[112] As far as we know, the only scholars who mention this fragment and discuss it as a proof that apocrypha were circulating in Coptic Egypt in the fourth century are Lundhaug and Jenott (Lundhaug and Jenott, *The*

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which according to Lefort it is possible to read an instruction against apocrypha.[113] The fragment is acephalous, but it seems that the instructor is talking about a "heretic" and his texts:

> Remarquons encore son blasphème que nous avons appris être écrit dans l'un de ces livres qu'écrivent les hérétiques; ils l'ont donné sous le nom des saints, comme si c'étaient eux qui l'auraient écrit, pour que ceux qui le liront aient confiance en leur tromperie. On dit donc qu'il écrivit dans ce livre ceci : « Après qu'Ève fut trompée et qu'elle eut mangé du fruit de l'arbre, c'est du diable qu'elle engendra Caïn » (S[3b] fragment 4).[114]

The content of this passage is particularly interesting for a few reasons. More than simply attesting to the circulation of apocrypha in late antique Coptic Egypt, it tells us about the supposed content of certain apocryphal texts. The passage says that according to one specific apocryphal text, Cain was begotten from Eve and the Devil; this allows a thematic comparison with certain NH texts[115], and certainly deserves further investigation;[116] but this is beyond the scope of the present dissertation. For now, we must bear in mind that this is

Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices, 168). They do not, however, discuss it in any depth. We offer a discussion on the contents of this fragment elsewhere: Julio Cesar Dias Chaves and Steve Johnston, "'C'est du Diable qu'elle engendra Caïn': une cathéchèse pacômienne contre les apochryphes", in *Christianisme des origines. Mélanges en l'honneur du Professeur Paul-Hubert Poirier* (eds. E. Crégheur, J.C. Dias Chaves and S. Johnston; JAOC 11, Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 125-136.

[113] As argued above (See section 5.2.1.1), the Fragments that Lefort classified as S[3b] – in general terms, part "b" of the *Third Life of Pachomius* (Lefort, *Les vies coptes de saint Pachôme*, 335-350) see page 145, footnote 99 above. The fragmentary state of S[3b], however, renders the task of identifying the one who is instructing – i.e. Pachomius himself or one of his successors – difficult.

[114] Lefort's translation in Lefort, *Les vies coptes de saint Pachôme*, 370-371. For the Coptic text, see Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vitae Sahidice Scriptae*, 334.

[115] In NH texts, however, it is not exactly the Devil who copulates with Eve begetting Cain, but the archons or Yaldabaoth. For the *Apocryphon of* John, see NH II 24, 8-34; NH III 31, 6-32, 6; the episode is also told in the BG 62, 3-63, 12. In the *Hypostasis of the Archons*, see NH II 91, 11-14. In *On the Origin of the World*, see NH II 116, 33-117, 18. *In* the *Gospel of Philip* (NH II, 61, 5-12) there is an allusion to this episode when it is said that the one who killed his brother (presumably Cain) was begotten in adultery, for he was the serpent's child. In the *Apocalypse of Adam*, there is probably also a brief allusion to this story (NH 66, 25-28), when Adam tells Seth that the god who created them begot a child, mentioning Eve too; the lacunas of this passage, however, do not allow us to be sure that it is exactly the same myth that is being recounted. For a brief commentary on this passage in the *Apocalypse of Adam*, see Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*, 76-77. For details about this motif in the NH texts and the Codex of Berlin, see Dias Chaves and Johnston, "'C'est du Diable qu'elle engendra Caïn.'"

[116] Dias Chaves and Johnston, "'C'est du Diable qu'elle engendra Caïn.'"

further evidence of the wide circulation of apocrypha in late antique Egypt, and that monks somehow had access to these texts.

That being said, one must take into consideration that any given monk or reader in late antique Egypt might have had the capacity of practicing a critical and selective reading. In Rubenson's words, regarding the specific case of the NHC: "We should not today deny a fourth century monastic reader the capacity of selective reading and intelligent interpretation. The variety of ideas within the Nag Hammadi library plainly excludes the possibility of a group professing everything found in the texts."[117] We will return to this question in our general conclusion.

Rubenson's remark is very pertinent, since it tends to deconstruct any simplistic or dualistic attempt to explain the compilation and circulation of the NHC; by that we mean that the monks or any Christian who possibly read NH texts, including those of Codex V, were not necessarily "Gnostic" or "heretics", nor heresiologists. Probably, they were not even concerned with these questions, at least, not in the same way modern scholars are. As we intend to demonstrate in the next chapter, the texts of Codex V could have aroused the interest of late antique Coptic Christians for reasons other than their "Gnostic" content. We will also argue that their content probably had a very different meaning for them than the meaning usually associated by scholars to "Gnostics" and heresiologists in second and third centuries.

6.4. Final Considerations

As stated above, we do not believe that Codex V texts' heterodox character would have been an obstacle for their reading and circulation in late antique Coptic Egypt, among Christians in general and even among monks. This being said, at this point it suffices to make two main points:

1- we must bear in mind that both the modern and the haerisiological understandings of orthodoxy and heterodoxy – which tend to label certain texts, including those of Codex V, as heretical or Gnostic – may not have been shared by late antique Egyptians, above

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[117] Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony*, 125.

all those who were not directly linked to the ecclesiastical hierarchy; that is to say, many ordinary Christians and monks were not necessarily concerned with these issues. In a certain way, this situation is not essentially different from the religious reality of many other times and places in history; it would be naïve to think, for example, that all those who declare themselves as Roman Catholics today never read anything that was not aligned with the official doctrine of Roman Catholic Church.[118] In other words late antique Coptic Christians may not have read these texts thinking they were heretics or heterodox, they were simply not concerned with this question.

2-   Given the fact that Codex V texts share many common literary themes and motifs with other types of literature that were circulating in Coptic in Late Antiquity – as the present dissertation will demonstrate in the next chapter – one may take into consideration the possibility that these texts were read not necessarily because of their theological-doctrinal content, but also due to their thematic content. In other words, Codex V texts may have aroused the interest of late antique Coptic readers because they make use of literary themes and motifs that were familiar to them. It is possible therefore that readers were not concerned with the doctrinal content of Codex V texts, but rather with the way they were presented, i.e. with their narrative content.

Given this, we believe that a non-Gnostic reading is possible for Codex V, and even likely given the context of fourth-and fifth-century Egypt. This is what the present dissertation intends to demonstrate in the next chapter.

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[118] An interesting contemporary example of this reality is given by Dobroruka when he explains the development of modern-day Kardecism in Brazil. Dobroruka explains that "Brazilian Kardecism is essentially a midlle-class phenomenon, often the option of people eager to establish contact with the otherworld while at the same time keeping other religious affiliations (…) syncretism and even the simultaneous practice of more than one cult at a time is a common characteristic of Brazilian religiosity"; see Vicente Dobroruka, *Second Temple Pseudepigraphy: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Apocalyptic Texts and Related Jewish Literature* (Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 64. In practical terms, this means that many people who declare themselves Roman Catholic – and who practice this religion, going to Mass every Sunday and on holy days, asking for the intercession of saints and nourishing a filial respect to the Pope, for example – read mediumship books and even take part in Kardecist cults. Thus, what might look completely ambiguous and antagonistic for a scholar – being a Roman Catholic and at the same time reading and believing in Psychography books – is considered absolutely normal and coherent by a considerable number of Roman Catholics in Brazil. For a good survey on Brazilian Kardecism, see David J. Hess, *Spirits and Scientists: Ideology, Spiritism, and Brazilian Culture* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991).

The Comparison between Codex V and Fourth/Fifth-Centuries Egyptian Hagiographies

The present chapter could be considered the most important part of this dissertation. In a certain way, all the other chapters serve as an introduction and a foundation to what is discussed here. Our goal here is to put into practice the method proposed in Chapter 3. By means of a comparison between certain themes and motifs present in Codex V and in the hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison, we intend to demonstrate that Codex V could catch the attention and arouse the interest of a late antique Coptic audience. In addition, we will define the 'horizon of expectations' of late antique Coptic readers in relation to Codex V texts, and interpret certain motifs in Codex V in the light of their plausible meaning in the late antique Coptic environment. This will demonstrate that a non-Gnostic reading is possible for Codex V in late antique Coptic Egypt, and consequently, many of the objections raised by scholars – such as the feeling of foreignness that the doctrines professed by NHC and Codex V in particular could have caused in Coptic audiences, monastic ones in particular, as well as their heterogeneity[1] –must be revisited and questioned.

In Chapter 3, we suggested a division into themes, and a further division of themes into motifs. What guides the selection of themes and their respective motifs is the apocalyptic literary genre; we chose primarily – but not exclusively – themes and motifs generally associated with apocalyptic literature for two reasons: 1- Codex V is composed of at least 4 texts named as "apocalypses" and has a lot of themes generally associated with apocalyptic literature; 2- these themes and motifs also abound in the hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison. Therefore this choice is not arbitrary, but rather the consequence of a real thematic similarity between Codex V and late antique Coptic hagiographies.

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[1] See in particular Säve-Söderbergh, "Holy Scriptures or Apologetic Documentation?" and Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*, especially 86. See also our discussion in section 2.4.

This suggests that certain literary themes and motifs are not necessarily linked to a single religious or cultural tradition. The same literary theme or motif can be used by different people and adepts of different religious traditions, from different locations and times with different purposes, aiming at different audiences. Moreover, in a reception perspective, a given text that makes use of a given literary theme or motif may be received and interpreted differently in different times by different audiences. The present dissertation intends to demonstrate that Codex V has much more in common in terms of literary themes and motifs with late antique Egyptian literature – hagiographies in particular – than initially presumed. Additionally, certain themes and motifs in Codex V texts, normally interpreted from a "Gnostic" point of view could have been interpreted differently by a late antique Coptic audience.

We shall start by the theme "Ascension to the heavens" and the motifs linked to it.

7.1. Ascension to the Heavens

Ascensions into heaven[2] and otherworldly journeys are certainly among the most prominent themes in Ancient and Medieval literature. Classical Greco-Roman texts,[3] late antique

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[2] For a survey specifically on Christian and Jewish texts, see Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

[3] The theme of the otherworldly journey can be already found in the *Odyssey*, book 11; many other examples in Classical Greco-Roman literature can be found, from Plato's *Republic*, book 10 (the myth of Er) and to Virgil's *Aeneid*, book 6. On this matter, see Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 34-35; see also Harold W. Attridge, "Greek and Latin Apocalypses," in *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre* (ed. J.J. Collins; Atlanta: SBL, 1979): 162-167.

Christian apocrypha[4], Jewish[5] and even Middle Persian literature[6], many texts in Antiquity and Medieval times make use of this theme. We have thus an example of a literary theme that cannot be attached to a single religious tradition.

Among the several texts that contain accounts of otherworldly journeys, one can cite the *Apocalypse of Paul* of Codex V and many late antique Coptic hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison. Probably, the most well-known report of an ascension in late antique Egyptian hagiography can be found in the *Life of Antony*. In the *Sahidic Life of Antony*, for instance, it is possible to read an account in which Antony experiences a heavenly journey.[7] For Brakke, the "myth of heavenly ascent" is fundamental in the portrayal of Antony presented by Athanasius. He argues that "the visions in chapter 65 and 66 provide programmatic depictions of the ascetic life in mythical terms as the eluding of demons who would thwart the monk's progress toward heaven."[8] Unfortunately, this prominence of heavenly visions and journeys in the *Life of Antony* has often been considered as a direct influence of "pagan" philosophy, and consequently an alien motif for a writer like Athanasius. Athanassakis even says that "One of the more acute ironies of the *Life*, with its polemic against pagan philosophy (see § 72-80), is that the myth of ascent was platonic (it

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[4] The examples of Christian apocalypses with otherworldly journey are numerous, we could mention the *Ascension of Isaiah* and the *Visio Sancti Pauli*; for a survey on the first, see Enrico Norelli, *Ascension du prophète Isaïe* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1993); for a survey on the second, see Theodore Silverstein, and Antony Hilhorst, *The Apocalypse of Paul: A New Critical Edition of the Three Long Latin Versions* (Genève: Patrick Cramer, 1997). For a survey on ascension in Christian apocalypses, see Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven* and Adela Yarbro Collins, "Early Christian Apocalypses," in *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre* (ed. J.J. Collins; Atlanta: SBL, 1979): 61-121.

[5] The most famous example is surely the book known as *First Enoch* (*The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*); for a survey on this book see Michael A. Knibb. *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch – Text and Apparatus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978). For a survey on ascension in Jewish apocalypses, see Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven* and John J. Collins, "The Jewish Apocalypses," in *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre* (ed. J. J. Collins; Atlanta: SBL, 1979): 21-59.

[6] We can mention as examples of Persian apocalypses with ascensions the *Arda Wiraf Namag*, the *Jamasp Namag* and the *Zandi-I Wahman* (I own the knowledge of these texts to professor Vicente Dobroruka). For a general survey, see John J. Collins, "Persian Apocalypses," in *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre* (ed. J. J. Collins; Atlanta: SBL, 1979), 207-217.

[7] *Life of Antony* § 65 and 66. This account can be also found in the *Greek Life of Antony*, but we rather give priority to the Coptic version, since our main concern is the discussion of the late antique Coptic context. At any rate, as discussed above, there are no substantial differences between the Coptic and the Greek versions of the *Life of Antony*. For details, see our discussion in the chapter on the corpus of comparison (Cf. section 4.2.2.1).

[8] Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism*, 208.

occurs also in Jewish and Christian apocalypses), figuring prominently in both Plotinus and Origen."[9]

Despite the fact that Athanassakis notes the existence of the theme of heavenly journeys in Jewish and Christian apocalypses, he attributes the presence of this theme in Athanasius's *Life of Antony* to the influence of "pagan" and Platonic philosophy. Whether the presence of this theme in the *Life of Antony* can be ascribed to Jewish-Christian, polytheist Greek cults or platonic philosophy, the truth is that it was probably so widespread and important in late antique Coptic Egypt[10] that Athanasius saw no harm in making use of it; on the contrary, he probably saw a rhetorical application in this motif. As argued above, Athanasius's concern in regard to "paganism" as it was expressed in the *Life of Antony* was doctrinal rather than thematic.[11] Athanasius probably saw no problems in using motifs that could be also found in "pagan" texts, as long as they were also popular among Christian Egyptians, Coptic monks in particular, as the examples in the hagiographies we are about to examine demonstrate.

In what follows, the ascensions presented in the texts that are part of our corpus of comparison will be discussed and compared to ascensions in Codex V texts in various ways, according to the exact nature of each one of the motifs.[12]

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[9] Vivian and Athanassakis, *The Life of Antony*, 195, note 361.

[10] The existence of many otherworldly journey apocalypses preserved in Coptic bears witness to this, those preserved among the texts of the NHC themselves, for example (see Dias Chaves, *Between Apocalyptic and Gnosis*, 45-53.72-91), but also the Sahidic version of the *Visio Sancti Pauli*, and the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah,* to mention just a few.

[11] See section 4.2.2.1.

[12] The reader must be reminded of the differentiation suggested in the chapter on methodology (section 3.5.5): many motifs form a theme. In this section, we discuss the theme of the ascension, subdivided in many motifs together (being snatched up, "whether in the body or out of the body", etc.).

7.1.1. Being Snatched Up

The fact of being snatched up[13] is a literary *topos* which is very widespread in the apocalyptic tradition and other biblical-related literatures.[14] It demonstrates that the visionary is not in control of the situation, but rather in the control of the will of God or of his mediator. In biblical literature, one of the most well-known and ancient examples – that gave origin to certain apocalyptic texts with otherworldly journeys attributed to Enoch[15] – is found in *Genesis* 5:24, where it is said that **"Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him".**[16] Enoch was taken by God, he did not go anywhere by his own strenght.

In *Genesis* 5:24, Enoch's ascent is expressed in Greek by μετέθηκεν.[17] The same expression is used in *Hebrews* 11:5, where this very passage of Genesis concerning Enoch is discussed. In Coptic, the verb used in *Hebrews* 11:5 is ⲡⲟⲟⲛⲉ⳽ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ in Sahidic[18] – literally translated in English as " to be removed from"[19], being also possible to it translate as "to carry out", "to take out" or "to depart"[20] – and ⲟⲩⲟⲑⲃⲉ⳽ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ in Bohairic[21] – meaning basically the same.[22] The same idea of being caught up is expressed in another famous passage, that of *2 Corinthians* 12: 2-4, which is certainly the Scriptural basis for the ascent that interests us here, that of the *Apocalypse of Paul* (NH 19, 20-25):[23]

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[13] This act may be expressed by a series of phrasal verbs in English and other modern languages, such as "carried off", "taken up", "caught up", etc.

[14] For a survey, see Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*.

[15] The books known as *1Enoch*, *2Enoch* and *3Enoch*; for a survey, see Michael A. Knibb, *Essays on the Book of Enoch and Other Early Jewish Texts and Traditions* (SVTP 22; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2009).

[16] English Standard Version translation. In the Greek of the LXX: καὶ εὐηρέστησεν Ενωχ τῷ Θεῷ καὶ οὐχ ηὑρίσκετο ὅτι μετέθηκεν αὐτὸν ὁ Θεός.

[17] For other examples, see μετατίθημι, Geoffrey W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 862a.

[18] George William Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Southern Dialect, Otherwise Called Sahidic or Thebaid, Vol. V. The Epistles of Saint Paul (continued), Register of Fragments, etc.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920), 92.

[19] Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Southern Dialect*, 93.

[20] Walter E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939)*,* 263b.

[21] George William Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Northern Dialect, Otherwise Called Memphitic and Bohairic. Vol. III: The Epistles of Saint Paul* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), 530.

[22] Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 496b-497a.

[23] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 34-38.

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up (ἀρπαγέντα) to the third heaven – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up (ἡρπάγε) into paradise – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows – and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter.[24]

In this case, another expression is used, ἀρπάζω.[25] In the Sahidic New Testament, the verb used to express Paul's rapture is ⲧⲱⲣⲡ/ⲧⲟⲡⲣ⸗,[26] one of the possible translations in Coptic[27] for the Greek expression in *2 Corinthians* 12, 2-4 and the exact same verb used in the *Apocalypse of Paul* (NH V 19, 20-25), generally translated into English as "to seize", "to master", "to carry off" and related expressions;[28] in the English translation, it was translated as "caught", in French as "ravi". The passage in question could be read as follows: "then the Holy [Spirit] who was speaking with [him] caught him up on high to the third heaven."[29]

Scholars are unanimous in affirming that "le prétexte pour attribuer à Paul un voyage au ciel est évidemment fourni par les propres paroles de l'apôtre en *II Corinthiens* 12, 1-4."[30] As Rosenstiehl himself points out, there is a direct allusion to the passage in question in NH V 19, 20-24,[31] where it is said that "then the Holy [Spirit] who was speaking with [him] caught him up on high to the third heaven."[32] Thus, Paul's ascension in the *Apocalypse of Paul* is definitely a development of the report in *2 Corinthians* and this would probably be the case not only for the context of the original composition of our text, but also for a late antique Coptic audience. In other words, the fact that the text mentions the third heaven

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[24] English Standard Version translation.

[25] See Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 228a-229a.

[26] Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Southern Dialect*, 386. See Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 430b - 431b. In the Bohairic New Testament, the verb used is ϩⲟⲗⲙⲉ⸗ (Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Northern Dialect*, 290).

[27] Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 430b - 431b.

[28] As the continuation of our discussion will show, the same action can be also expressed by many verbs in Coptic, such as ⲧⲱⲣⲡ/ⲧⲟⲡⲣ⸗, ⲱⲗⲓ, ϥⲓ/ϥⲓⲧ⸗ ⲉ-) and ϫⲓ /ϫⲓ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟ⸗, etc.

[29] Murdock and MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 53. In Coptic: ⲧⲟⲧⲉ ⲡⲓ[ⲡ̄ⲛ̄ⲁ] ⲉⲧ[ⲟⲩ]ⲁⲁⲃ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲛⲉϥϣⲁϫⲉ ⲛ̄ⲙ̄[ⲙⲁϥ ⲁϥ]ⲧⲱⲣⲡ̄` ⲙⲙⲟϥ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ̈ ⲉⲡϫⲓⲥⲉˑ ϣⲁϩⲣⲁⲓ̈ ⲉ†ⲙⲉ[ϩϣⲟⲙ]ⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉˑ (Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 102).

[30] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 34.

[31] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 34.

[32] Murdock and MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 53. ⲧⲟⲧⲉ ⲡⲓ[ⲡ̄ⲛ̄ⲁ] ⲉⲧ[ⲟⲩ]ⲁⲁⲃ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲛⲉϥϣⲁϫⲉ ⲛ̄ⲙ̄[ⲙⲁϥ ⲁϥ]ⲧⲱⲣⲡ̄` ⲙⲙⲟϥ ⲉϩⲁⲓ̈ ⲉⲡϫⲓⲥⲉˑ ϣⲁϩⲣⲁⲓ̈ ⲉ†ⲙⲉ[ϩϣⲟⲙ]ⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉˑ (Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 102).

would probably lead late antique Coptic readers to connect the report in the *Apocalypse of Paul* to the report in *2 Corinthians*.

Additionally, given the importance of New Testament among Coptic Christians,[33] this ascent described in *2 Corinthians* 12:2-4 is probably the first and most powerful passage that should be taken into consideration when one deals with the shaping of the 'horizon of expectations' of late antique Coptic readers who read the ascent in the *Apocalypse of Paul*. More than that, the passage in *2 Corinthians* probably shaped the 'horizon of expectations' of these Coptic readers in regard to the reading of the entire *Apocalypse of Paul*. The fact that even the same verb is used in both texts lends support to this hypothesis. A Coptic Christian who read the ascension of Paul in the *Apocalypse of Paul* would certainly remember the passage in *2 Corinthians*. This reader would not find it strange to read a text in which Paul's ascent is described in more detail, on the contrary, it would seem interesting to him, even exciting, to know more about Paul's heavenly journey, so laconically portrayed in *2 Corinthians*.

Moreover, examples of visionaries being caught up to heavens or in any otherworldly journey can also be found among the texts that are part of our corpus of comparison. These examples may show that literary accounts of otherworldly journeys in which the visionary was taken up or carried away were popular in late antique Coptic literature; these passages could also be useful in the construction of the 'horizon of expectations' that may allow one to interpret the passage in question in the *Apocalypse of Paul* from a late antique Coptic perspective.

In the *Sahidic Life of Antony*, at the beginning of paragraph 65, one reads that: "now it happened one day that he was about to eat, and when he stood up to pray at the ninth hour he became aware that he was being carried off in thought (…) being guided into the air by some

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[33] See, for example, the importance of Scriptures among Pachomian monks (Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien au quatrième siècle*, 262-275).

sort of beings" (*Sahidic Life of Antony* § 65).[34] One may note that the same native Coptic verb employed in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, ⲧⲟⲣⲡⲉ, is used to describe the situation in this passage in the *Life of Antony*.

In a passage in SBo, it is possible to read that: "Still another day, by the Lord's command, our father Pachomius was **carried away** that he might contemplate the punishments and the torments to which the children of men are subject" (SBo §88).[35] In this case, another Coptic verb is employed, ⲱⲗⲓ,[36] but the idea expressed is similar. Later in SBo,[37] it is said that Pachomius died, his soul left his body but, arriving in heaven, it was commanded to return to his body.[38] In what follows, it is possible to read that:

> After this, he was **carried away** to Paradise many other times. In what manner? God knows; as the Apostle says, either in the body, I do not know; or without the body, I do not know, it is only God who knows; and so it is that that one was **caught up** to the third heaven and he heard secret words which man is not allowed to repeat (SBo 114b).[39]

In this passage, the idea of being carried away, caught or snatched up appears twice (see the verbs in bold type); in the first occurrence, the act is expressed by the Coptic verb ϥⲓⲧⲉ ⲉ-,[40] while in the second occurrence, the verb used to express the act of being caught up is ⲧⲱⲣⲡ, the same verb that appears in the *Apocalypse of Paul*.

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[34] Translation in Vivian and Athanassakis, *The Life of Antony*, 192. ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲇⲉ ⲛⲛⲟⲩϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲉϥⲛⲁⲟⲩⲱⲙ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲧⲉⲣⲉϥⲧⲱⲟⲩⲛ ⲉϥϩⲗⲏⲗ· ⲛⲉⲡⲛⲁⲩ ⲛϫⲡϥⲓⲧⲉⲡⲉ· ⲁϥⲉⲓⲙⲉ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲙⲁⲩⲁⲁϥ ⲉⲁⲩⲧⲟⲣⲡϥ ϩⲙⲡⲉϥϩⲏⲧ (…) ⲛⲉⲣⲉϩⲟⲓⲛⲉ ϫⲓⲙⲟⲉⲓⲧ ⲛϩⲏⲧϥ ⲉⲡⲁⲉⲣ (Garitte, *S. Antonii Vitae Sahidica*, 70).

[35] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. I*, 113. [ⲁⲥ]ϣⲱⲡⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲛⲟⲩϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲱⲗⲓ ⲙⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲡⲁϧⲱⲙ ϩⲓⲧⲉⲛϥⲟⲩⲁϩⲥⲁϩⲛⲓ ⲙⲡⲟⲥ ⲉⲑⲣⲉϥⲙⲟⲩϣⲧ ⲛⲛⲓⲕⲟⲗⲁⲥⲓⲥ [ⲛ]ⲉⲙⲛⲓⲃⲁⲥⲁⲛⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲉⲣⲃⲁⲥⲁⲛⲓ[ⲍ]ⲓⲛ ⲛⲛⲓϣⲏⲣⲓ ⲛⲧⲉⲛⲓⲣⲱⲙⲓ ⲛⲃⲏ[ⲧ]ⲟⲩ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita: Bohairice Scripta*, 97).

[36] See Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 520a-522b.

[37] This passage belongs to § 114 of SBo, but is missing from Bo. Veilleux inserted the paragraph in question in his reconstruction of SBo, taking the text from S[2] and translating it. For details on the reconstruction of SBo, see our discussion in the chapter on the corpus of comparison (section 4.2.1.1).

[38] See SBo § 114a and S[2], pages 52-53.

[39] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 167. ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲁⲩϥⲓⲧϥ ⲉⲡⲡⲁⲣⲁⲇⲓⲥⲟⲥ ⲛϩⲉⲛⲕⲉⲥⲟⲡ ⲛⲁϣ ⲇⲉ ⲛϩⲉ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲧⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ ⲛⲑⲉ ⲉⲧⲉⲣⲉⲁⲡⲟⲥⲧⲟⲗⲟⲥ ϫⲱ ⲙⲟⲟⲥ ϫⲉⲉⲓⲧⲉ ϩⲙⲡⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲛϯⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲛ ⲉⲓⲧⲉ ⲙⲡⲃⲟⲗ ⲙⲡⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲛϯⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲛ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲧⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ· ⲁⲩⲱ ϫⲉⲁⲩⲧⲱⲣⲡ ⲙⲡⲁⲓ ⲛⲧⲉⲓⲙⲓⲛⲉ ϣⲁⲧⲙⲉϩ ϣⲟⲙⲧⲉ ⲙⲡⲉ. ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁϥⲥⲱⲧⲙ ⲉϩⲉⲛϣⲁϫⲉ ⲉⲩϩⲏⲡ` ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉⲧⲉⲥⲧⲟ ⲁ[ⲛ ⲉϫ]ⲟⲟⲩ <ⲉⲣⲱⲙⲉ>. (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vitae Sahidice Scriptae*, 19-20). As mentioned above, the text is actually preserved in S[2], pages 54-55, and was used by Veilleux to fill in the lacuna in SBo.

[40] See Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 620a.

The motif is also present in the *Life of Onnophrius*: when Paphnutius questions him about the Eucharist and how he manages to receive it on Saturday; Onnophrius tells Paphnutius that God sends him angels to ministry the liturgy for the monks who live in the desert, adding that "if they (the monks who live in the desert) desire to see anyone, they are **taken up** into the heavenly places where they see all the saints" (*Life of Onnophrius* § 17).[41] The word employed in this case is the Greek-Coptic verb ⲁⲛⲁⲗⲁⲙⲃⲁⲛⲉ, but, once again, the idea of being taken up is similar to the examples mentioned above.

In the *Second Martyrdom of Saint Victor*, there is an account of an ascension performed by Victor before his martyrdom, in which we read that "And the heart of Apa Victor was carried up into the heights of heaven" (British Library Oriental 7022 fol. 12b).[42] In this passage, the Coptic verb used to express the rapture is ϥⲓ.[43] In another Coptic Epic Passion, the *Martyrdoms of Saints Apaioulle and Pteleme*, it is recounted that after his death Saint Apaioulle is taken to heaven by angels: "Straightway the angels came and took his soul up to heaven" (Pierpont Morgan Library M583, fol. 173 r ii).[44] In this passage, the verb used to express the rapture is ϫⲓ.[45]

The same motif can be also found in an apocryphal text preserved in Coptic called the *Testament of Isaac*, where one reads "After this the angel took me up into the heavens; I saw my father, Abraham and I made obeisance to him". (Pierpont Morgan Library M 577, 22r).[46] In this case, the verb used to express the rapture of the visionary is ϫⲓ ⲙⲙⲟ⸗.[47]

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[41] Translation in Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, 156. ⲉⲩϣⲁⲛ ⲉⲡⲉⲓⲟⲩⲙⲉⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲉ ⲛⲁⲩ ⲉ ⲣⲱⲙⲉ· ϣⲁⲩⲁⲛⲁⲗⲁⲙⲃⲁⲛⲉ ⲙⲙⲟⲟⲩ· ⲉⲛⲉⲡⲟⲩⲣⲁⲛⲓⲟⲛ· ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲛⲁⲩ ⲉ ⲛⲉⲧ ⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ· (Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 214).

[42] Translation in Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 274. [ⲁ]ⲡⲁ ⲃⲓⲕⲧⲱⲣ ⲇⲉ ⲁⲩϥⲓ ⲡⲉϥϩⲏⲧ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ ⲉⲛⲉⲡⲟⲩⲣⲁⲛⲓⲟⲛ ⲛ̄ⲧⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲧⲥⲁⲃⲟϥ ⲉⲙ̄ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲣⲱⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲡⲉ· (Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms,* 22).

[43] See Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 620a-623a.

[44] Translation in Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices*, 228. ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩⲛⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲛ̄ⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲁⲩϫⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ̈ ⲛ̄ⲙ̄ⲡⲏⲩⲉ (Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices*, 136).

[45] Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 747a-752a.

[46] Translation in Karl H. Kuhn, "An English Translation of the Sahidic Version of the Testament of Isaac," *JTS* 18 (1967), 333. ⲡ̄ⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲥⲁⲛⲁⲓ̈ ⲁ̄ⲡⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ϫⲓ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲓ̈ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ̈ ⲉⲙⲡⲏⲩⲉ̄. ⲁⲓ̈ⲛⲁⲩ ⲉ̄ⲡⲁⲉⲓ̈ⲱⲧ ⲁⲃⲣⲁϩⲁⲙ. ⲁⲓ̈ⲟⲩⲱϣⲧ ⲛⲁϥ. See Karl H. Kuhn, "The Sahidic Version of the Testament of Isaac," *JTS* 8 (1957), 235.

[47] Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 747b-752a.

The aforementioned examples show that the motif of being snatched up was not foreign to late antique Coptic readers: they knew it very well both through Biblical texts – such as the aforementioned passages of *Genesis* 5 and *2 Corinthians* – and through the lives of monks that are part of our corpus of comparison. Therefore, one should expect that this motif would catch the attention and the interest of these same late antique Coptic readers in *Apocalypse of Paul* in Codex V. Moreover, a late antique Coptic Christian who read this passage of the *Apocalypse of Paul* would probably think notably of the passage of *2 Corinthians* 12:2-4, but also of the passages in the hagiographies mentioned above.

Furthermore, in a reception perspective, one could use this motif present in *2 Corinthians* and in late antique Coptic hagiographies to define the 'horizon of expectations' of late antique Coptic readers in relation to the *Apocalypse of Paul*. In other words, late antique Coptic readers who had previous contact with the motif of being snatched up in the Bible and in the hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison would read it in the lines of the *Apocalypse of Paul* in the light of the aforementioned texts. That being said, a comparison between Paul – the Paul of *2 Corinthians*, but also the Paul of the *Apocalypse of Paul* – and the monastic heroes (Pachomius, Antony and Onnophrius) was probably inevitable for those who had contact with their monastic lives and the *Apocalypse of Paul* in late antique Coptic Egypt. In their eyes, Paul, just like these Egyptian saints, was worthy of being carried away, experiencing an otherworldly journey. There is nothing "Gnostic" about this: for a late antique Coptic reader, it was an account of an ascension performed by a hero, a holy man, a common episode – already described in the Scriptures (*2 Corinthians*) and portrayed in more detail in the *Apocalypse of Paul* – in many other texts that form its 'horizon of expectations'.

7.1.2. "Whether in the Body or Out of the Body"

The motif discussed in this section is closely related to the previous one. Consequently, many passages quoted in the previous section will be quoted again here. The expression that heads this section is widely known; it can be read once again in the passage of *2 Corinthians* discussed in the previous section and expresses a very common concern of texts that relate

ascension into heaven and similar phenomena,[48] some of them generally classified as "out-of-body experiences" (OBE).[49] We recall this famous expression in *2 Corinthians* because the ascension of Paul in the *Apocalypse of Paul* is certainly a development of that account, as mentioned in the previous section.[50] In the Sahidic version of the New Testament, the expression is reported as follows: ⲉⲓⲧⲉ ⲉϥϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ϯⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ̄ ⲁⲛ. ⲉⲓⲧⲉ ⲉϥⲙ̄ⲡⲃⲟⲗ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ϯⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ̄ ⲁⲛ.[51] In the Boharic version of the New Testament, the expression is described in these words: ⲓⲧⲉ ϧⲉⲛ ⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ϯⲉⲙⲓ ⲁⲛ. ⲓⲧⲉ ⲥⲁⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ϯⲉⲙⲓ ⲁⲛ.[52]

More than the description of the ascension itself, some of these reports express doubt concerning the nature of the experience, if it took place "whether in the body or out of the body". This doubt can be also found in our corpus of comparison. However, rather than discussing here the true nature of the experience, we shall adopt a reception perspective, showing that the motif could be found in Codex V and in late antique hagiographies, shaping thus the "horizon of expectations" of those who read the former in a late antique Coptic context.

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[48] For a survey, see Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 40-41.

[49] In a psychological study dedicated to this kind of experience, Alvarado described OBE saying that: "In an out-of-body experience, (OBE), people feel that their "self", or center of awareness, is located outside of the physical body. The experients' reported perceptions are organized in such a way as to be consistent with this perspective and include such features as sensations of floating, traveling to distant locations, and observing the physical body from a distance" (Cf. Carlos Alvarado, "Out-of-Body Experiences," in *Varieties of Anomalous Experiences: Examining the Scientific Evidence* [ed. E. Cardeña, S. Krippner and S. J. Lynn; Washington: American Psychological Association, 2000], 183). The doubt concerning the true nature of the experience, i.e. "whether in the body or out of the body", has led some scholars to emphasize "the differences between those experiences in which the person has the somaesthetic sense of being located outside of the body (i.e. OBEs) and those other experiences in which a sense of separation from the body is not present or is unclear" (cf. Alvarado, "Out-of-Body Experiences," 184). Thus rigorously speaking, some scholars in psychology and related fields would consider that the experience related by Paul is not exactly an OBE, but rather a similar phenomenon. We believe anyhow that these preliminary comments on OBE are pertinent due to the fact that such differentiation is the product of scholarly research and definitions, the visionaries not being necessarily aware of it. The fact that the doubt concerning the nature of the experience – whether in the body or out of the body – is expressed may be simply a literary *topos,* but could also indicate that the visionary actually experienced an OBE. Having said this, we must emphasize that our goal here is not to discuss or judge the true nature of the experience, but to analyse the fact that this kind of experience is in one way or another described, or at least alluded to, in Codex V and late antique Coptic hagiographies.

[50] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 34-38.

[51] George W. Horner, *Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Southern Dialect: The Epistles of S. Paul* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920), 386.

[52] Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Northern Dialect: The Epistles of S. Paul*, 290.

In the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the passage that deals with the nature of the experience, i.e. "whether in the body or out of the body", is reported once Paul and the Child (Holy Spirit) have already passed through the lower celestial spheres; when they reach the fourth heaven: "The [Holy] Spirit spoke to him saying: 'Look and see your [likeness] upon the earth'" (NH V 19, 25-29).[53] As evoked in the previous section, the ascension of Paul in the *Apocalypse of Paul* is certainly a development of the account in *2 Corinthians*;[54] and that would probably be the case not only for the context of original composition of our text, but also for a late antique Coptic audience. In other words, the fact that the text mentions the third heaven would probably allow late antique Coptic readers to link the report in the *Apocalypse of Paul* to the report in *2 Corinthians*. That being said, we can now see what our corpus of comparison tells us about this.

The *Sahidic Life of Antony* provides an interesting example, since *2 Corinthians* 12: 2-4 is literally quoted:

> Now it happened one day that he was about to eat, and when he stood up to pray at the ninth hour he became aware that he was being carried off in thought (…) and the greater wonder was that he was standing there looking at himself as if he were outside himself and were being guided into the air by some sort of beings (…) and because we know this has happened, let us remember the Apostle when he says 'whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know; God knows'. But when Paul was taken up to the third heaven and heard secret words, he came back down, while Antony on the other hand saw himself going up into the air (*Sahidic Life of Antony* § 65).[55]

The passage of SBo quoted in the previous section could also be quoted here, since the nature of the experience, i.e. "whether in the body or out of the body", is discussed: "Still another

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[53] Murdock and MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 53. ⲁϥⲟⲩ]ⲱϣⲃ ⲛⲁϥ ⲛ̅ϭⲓⲡⲓⲡⲛⲛ̅[ⲁ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ] ⲉϥϫⲱ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ϫⲉ ϭⲱϣ[ⲧ̄] ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲡⲉⲕ̣ⲉ̣ⲓ̣ⲛ[ⲉ ϩⲓ] ϫⲙ̅ ⲡⲕⲁϩ (Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 102).

[54] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 34-38.

[55] Translation in Vivian and Athanassakis, *The Life of Antony*, 192. ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲇⲉ ⲛⲛⲟⲩϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲉϥⲛⲁⲟⲩⲱⲙ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲧⲉⲣⲉϥⲧⲱⲟⲩⲛ ⲉϣⲗⲏⲗ· ⲛⲉⲡⲛⲁⲩ ⲛϫⲡⲓ̅ⲧⲉⲡⲉ· ⲁϥⲉⲓⲙⲉ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲙⲁⲩⲁⲁϥ ⲉⲁⲩⲧⲟⲣⲡ̅ϥ ϩⲙⲡⲉϥϩⲏⲧ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲧⲉϣⲡⲏⲣⲉⲧⲉ ⲛ̅ϩⲟⲩⲟ ϫⲉⲛⲉϥⲁϩⲉⲣⲁⲧϥ̅ⲡⲉ ⲉϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲙⲙⲛⲓⲛ ⲙⲙⲟϥ ⲉϣϫⲉ ⲛⲧⲁϥⲣ̅ⲡⲉϥⲃⲟⲗ ⲙⲁⲩⲁⲁϥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲉⲣⲉϩⲟⲓⲛⲉ ϫⲓⲙⲟⲉⲓⲧ ⲛ̅ϩⲏⲧϥ̅ ⲉⲡⲁⲉⲣ (…) ⲁⲛⲟⲛ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲣⲉⲛⲉⲓⲙⲉ ⲉⲡⲁⲓ ⲛⲧⲁϥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲁⲛⲣ̅ⲡⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ ⲙⲡⲁⲡⲟⲥⲧⲟⲗⲟⲥ ⲉϥϫⲱ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ϫⲉⲉⲓⲧⲉ ⲉϥϩⲙⲡⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲛ̅ϯⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲛ ⲉⲓⲧⲉ ⲉϥⲙ̅ⲡⲃⲟⲗ ⲙⲡⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲛ̅ϯⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲛ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲧⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ. ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲡⲁⲩⲗⲟⲥ ⲙⲉⲛ ⲛ̅ⲧⲁⲩϥⲓⲧϥ̅ ϣⲁⲧⲙⲉϩϣⲟⲙⲛⲧⲉ ⲙⲡⲉ ⲁϥⲥⲱⲧⲙ̅ ⲉϩⲉⲛϣⲁϫⲉ ⲉⲩϩⲏⲡ ⲁϥⲉⲓ ⲉⲡⲉⲥⲛⲧ· ⲁⲛⲧⲱⲛⲓⲟⲥ ⲇⲉ ⲛⲧⲟϥ ⲛⲧⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲉⲁϥⲡⲱϩ ϣⲁⲡⲁⲏⲣ (Garitte. *S. Antonii Vitae Versio Sahidica*, 70-71).

day, by the Lord's command, our father Pachomius was carried away that he might contemplate the punishments and the torments to which the children of men are subject. Was it in the body that he was carried away, was it out of the body? – God knows that he was carried away" (SBo §88).[56]

Also in SBo,[57] in a passage that was already discussed in the previous section, one reads that

> after this, he was carried away to Paradise many other times. In what manner? God knows; as the Apostle says, either in the body, I do not know; or without the body, I do not know, it is only God who knows; and so it is that that one was caught up to the third heaven and he heard secret words which man is not allowed to repeat (SBo 114b).[58]

In the *Life of Shenoute,* the motif appears in an account that depicts Shenoute walking with Jeremiah: "It happened one day that our father the prophet Shenoute was walking with the great prophet Jeremiah – in the spirit? God knows! In body? Again, God knows!" (*Life of Shenoute* § 94).[59]

In the *Second Martyrdom of Saint Victor*, there is an account of an ascension performed by Victor before his martyrdom in which it is written that "And the heart of Apa Victor was carried up into the heights of heaven, and [the angels] instructed him concerning the kingdom

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[56] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 113. [ⲁⲥ]ϣⲱⲡⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲛⲟⲩϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲱⲗⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲡⲁⲃⲱⲙ ϩⲓⲧⲉⲛⲫⲟⲩⲁϩⲥⲁϩⲛⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟ̄ⲥ̄ ⲉⲑⲣⲉϥⲙⲟⲩϣⲧ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲕⲟⲗⲁⲥⲓⲥ [ⲛ]ⲉⲙⲛⲓⲃⲁⲥⲁⲛⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲉⲣⲃⲁⲥⲁⲛⲓ[ⲍ]ⲓⲛ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓϣⲏⲣⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲛⲓⲣⲱⲙⲓ ⲛ̄ⲃⲏ[ⲧ]ⲟⲩ [ⲓⲧ]ⲉ ϧⲉⲛⲡⲓⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲁⲩⲟⲗϥ̄ ⲓⲧⲉ ⲥⲁ[ⲃ]ⲟⲗ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲫϯ ⲡⲉⲧⲥⲱⲟⲩⲛ ϫⲉ[ⲁ]ⲩⲟⲗϥ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita: Bohairice Scripta*, 97).

[57] This passage seems to belong to § 114 of SBo, but is missing from Bo. Veilleux was able to insert the paragraph in question in his reconstruction of SBo, taking the text from S² and translating it. For details on the reconstruction of SBo, see our discussion in the chapter on the corpus of comparison (Section 4.2.1.1).

[58] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 167. ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲁⲩϥⲓⲧϥ̄ ⲉⲡⲡⲁⲣⲁⲇⲓⲥⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ϩⲉⲛⲕⲉⲥⲟⲡ ⲛ̄ⲁϣ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ϩⲉ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲧⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲉⲧⲉⲣⲉⲁⲡⲟⲥⲧⲟⲗⲟⲥ ϫⲱ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲟⲥ ϫⲉⲉⲓⲧⲉ ϩⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ϯⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲛ ⲉⲓⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲃⲟⲗ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ϯⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲛ ⲡ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲧⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ· ⲁⲩⲱ ϫⲉⲁⲩⲧⲱⲣⲡ̄ ⲙ̄ⲡⲁⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲓⲙⲓⲛⲉ ϣⲁⲧⲙⲉϩ ϣⲟⲙⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉ. ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁϥⲥⲱⲧⲙ̄ ⲉϩⲉⲛϣⲁϫⲉ ⲉⲩϩⲏⲡ` ⲛⲁⲓ̈ ⲉⲧⲉⲥ̄ⲧⲟ̄ ⲁⲛ ⲉϫⲟⲟⲩ <ⲉⲣⲱⲙⲉ>. (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vitae Sahidice Scriptae*, 19-20). As mentioned above, the text is actually preserved in S² (pages 54-55), and it was used by Veilluex to fill in the lacuna in SBo.

[59] Bell's translation with changes (see Bell, *The Life of Shenoute*, 70). ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲛⲟⲩⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲉⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲙⲡⲣⲟⲫⲏⲧⲏⲥ ⲁⲡⲁ ϣⲉⲛⲟⲩϯ ⲙⲟϣⲓ ⲛⲉⲙⲡⲓⲛⲓϣϯ ⲙⲡⲣⲟⲫⲏⲧⲏⲥ ⲓⲉⲣⲉⲙⲓⲁⲥ, ϧⲉⲛⲡⲓⲡ̄ⲛ̄ⲁ̄ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲡⲟ̄ⲥ̄ ⲡⲉⲧⲥⲱⲟⲩⲛ ϧⲉⲛⲡⲓⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲟⲛ ⲡⲟ̄ⲥ̄ ⲡⲉⲧⲥⲱⲟⲩⲛ (Iohannes Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Vita Bohairice* [CSCO 41; Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste, 1951], 46).

of heaven" (British Library Oriental 7022 fol. 12b).[60] The fact that the text specifies that his heart, or his spirit, was carried up (ⲁⲩϥⲓ ⲡⲉϥϩⲏⲧ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ) to heavens could be also understood as a speculation concerning the nature of the experience, i.e. whether in the body or out of the body. In this case, it seems that the author is indicating that the rapture took place with the soul being taken up out of the body.

In the light of passages concerning the nature of the ascension, we believe thus that it is possible to affirm that the rapture of Paul in the *Apocalypse of Paul* could have evoked not only the passage in *2 Corinthians* 12:2-4, but also the aforementioned ascensions reported in the monastic lives and in the *Second Martyrdom of Saint Victor* that are part of our corpus of comparison. The fact that the third heaven is mentioned in the *Apocalypse of Paul* would probably be enough to evoke the experience narrated by Paul in *2 Corinthians* 12:2-4; and that would be true for any Christian, late antique Coptic ones included. Furthermore, the fact that certain accounts of ascensions in the monastic lives that concern us here clearly mention a doubt concerning the nature of the experience – "whether in the body or out of the body" or similar expressions – reinforces even more the idea of the ascension in the *Apocalypse of Paul* being interpreted by late antique Coptic Christians in the light of the passage in *2 Corinthians*.

7.1.3. The Visionary is Greeted (ⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ) by Heavenly Beings[61]

In the final section of the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the ascension of Paul is characterized by a series of salutations between Paul and the apostles, Paul and those who are in the ninth heaven and then between Paul and the spirits in the tenth heaven.[62] The concise nature of the passage is certainly an element that makes its interpretation tricky; the text spends many lines

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[60] Translation in Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 274. [ⲁ]ⲡⲁ ⲃⲓⲕⲧⲱⲣ ⲇⲉ ⲁⲩϥⲓ ⲡⲉϥϩⲏⲧ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ ⲉⲛⲉⲡⲟⲩⲣⲁⲛⲓⲟⲛ ⲛⲧⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲧⲥⲁⲃⲟϥ ⲉⲙⲙⲛⲧⲉⲣⲱⲟⲩ ⲛⲧⲡⲉ· (Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms,* 22).
[61] Some of the questions discussed here have been already treated in Julio Cesar Dias Chaves, "From the *Apocalypse of Paul* to Coptic Epic Passions: Greeting Paul and the Martyrs in Heaven" in *The Nag Hammadi Codices and Late Antique Egypt* (ed. H. Lundhaug and L. Jenott; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 163-182.
[62] NH V 23, 29- 24, 8.

describing the previous celestial spheres, but portrays the eighth, ninth and tenth heavens laconically. The final ascension itself, that interests us here and closes the text, is described as follows: "And then the <seventh> heav[en] open[ed] and we went up [to the] Ogdoad. I saw the twelve apostles. They greeted [me], and we went up to the ninth heaven. I greeted all those who were in the ninth heaven, and we went up to the tenth heaven. And I greeted my fellow spirits" (NH V 23, 29 - 24, 8).[63]

The verb used to express the salutation is the Greek-Coptic verb ⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ; the verb is employed three times. In the first time, it is said that the apostles greeted Paul, while in the following occurrences, it is rather Paul who greets the others, in the ninth heaven, all those who were there, and in the tenth heaven, the spirits. This verb is already employed twice earlier in the text, when the little child announces that Paul will meet the apostles: "'Now it is to the twelve apostles that you shall go, for they are elected spirits, and they will greet you'. He raised his eyes and saw them greeting him" (NH V 19, 15-20).[64]

Rosenstiehl has already remarked that this particular motif in the *Apocalypse of Paul* does not find many parallels in the overall apocalyptic tradition.[65] It is also quite unusual among apocalypses with an otherworldly journey; the only two examples known occur in the *Testament of Isaac*[66] and in the *Visio Sancti Pauli*,[67] as noted by Rosenstiehl.[68]

In the *Testament of Isaac*, one reads that "After this the angel took me up into the heavens; I saw my father, Abraham and I made obeisance to him. He saluted me, with all the

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[63] Murdock and Macrae's translation in Parrott (ed.). *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 61.63. ⲁⲩⲱ ⲧⲟⲧⲉ [ⲁ]ⲥⲟⲩⲱⲛ ⲛ̄ϭⲓⲧⲙ[ⲉϩ]ⲥⲟ ⲙ̄ⲡ[ⲉ] ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲛⲉ̂ⲓ ⲉϩⲣⲁ[ⲓ̈ ⲉϯ]ϩⲟⲅⲇⲟⲁⲥ· ⲁⲓ̈ⲛⲁⲩ ⲇⲉ ⲉⲡⲓⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲧⲥⲛⲟⲟⲩⲥ ⲛ̄ⲁⲡⲟⲥⲧⲟⲗⲟⲥ· ⲁⲩⲣ̄ⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟ[ⲓ̈] ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲛⲉ̂ⲓ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ̈ ⲉϯⲙⲉϩ︤ⲯ︥ⲓⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲓ̈ⲣ̄ⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲏ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲉⲧ︤ϩ︦ⲛ︥ϯⲙⲁϩ︤ⲯ︥ⲓⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲛⲉ̂ⲓ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ̈ ⲉϯⲙⲉϩⲙⲏⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲓ̈ⲣ̄ⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁϣⲃⲏⲣ ⲙ̄̄ⲡ̄ⲛ̄ⲁ̄. (Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 110.112).
[64] MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 53. ⲡⲓⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲧⲥⲛⲟⲟⲩⲥ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ⲁⲡⲟⲥⲧⲟⲗⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲉⲕⲛⲁⲃⲱⲕ ϣⲁⲣⲟⲟⲩ· ϩⲉⲛⲡ̄ⲛ̄ⲁ̄ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲉⲩⲥⲟⲧⲡ̄· ⲛⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉⲩⲛⲁⲣ̄ⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲕ· ⲁϥⲧⲱⲟⲩⲛ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉϥⲃⲁⲗ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ̈ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲟⲩ [ⲁ]ⲩⲣ̄ⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ· (Cf. Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 102).
[65] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 20.
[66] *Testament of Isaac* 10, 1-2.
[67] In the *Visio Sancti Pauli*, Paul greets some of the characters he meets during his trip to heaven or is greeted by them; in the Coptic version, these greetings are normally expressed by ⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ (for example, according to the pagination of Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts*, 534, 535, 552, 553, 555, 561, 566, 567, 568, 569 and 572).
[68] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 20.

saints" (Pierpont Morgan Library M 577, 22r).[69] In the Coptic version of the *Visio Sancti Pauli*, this motif abounds. In the context of one of the ascensions performed by Paul, for example, one reads that: "(And the angel) said unto me, 'These are the fathers of the people, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob'. And straightaway when they saw me they saluted me" (British Library Oriental 7022, fol. 21a-21b).[70]

At this point we would like to highlight the fact that in many Coptic Martyrdoms one can find a similar salutation between the person who arrives in heaven and the beings who inhabit there. In these Martyrdoms, right after the death of the Martyr he/she is escorted to heaven, normally by angelic beings, and when he/she arrives he/she is greeted by the saints who were already there. In at least one case, the martyr who arrives in heaven is the one who greets the saints. As observed above, this situation is very similar to the final section of the *Apocalypse of Paul*, with one exception: there is no martyrdom in the *Apocalypse of Paul*. It is also interesting to notice that the same word (ⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ) is used in both accounts.

A group of Coptic martyrdoms preserved among the Pierpont Morgan Library codices furnishes many interesting examples of this literary *topos*. In the *Martyrdom of Saints Paese and Tecla*, one can read that after Paese's decapitation: "At midnight the angel of the Lord came to him (…) and set the holy Apa Paese upon his shining wings and took him to heaven (…) and all the saints came out to meet him, and they greeted him, and showed him the city of Christ" (Pierpont Morgan Library M 591, fol. 77 v ii).[71] Similarly to the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the main character is escorted to heaven by an otherworldly being. In another text from this collection, the *Martyrdom of Saint Shenoufe*, one can read that when the martyr arrives

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[69] Translation (with improvements) in Kuhn, "An English Translation of the Sahidic Version of the Testament of Isaac," 333. ⲙⲛ̅ⲛ̅ⲥⲁⲛⲁⲓ ⲁ̅ⲡⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ϫⲓ ⲙ̅ⲙⲟⲓ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ ⲉⲙⲡⲏⲩⲉ̅. ⲁⲓ̈ⲛⲁⲩ ⲉ̅ⲡⲁⲉⲓ̈ⲱⲧ ⲁⲃⲣⲁϩⲁⲙ ⲁⲓ̈ⲟⲩⲱϣⲧ ⲛⲁϥ. ⲁϥⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ ⲙ̅ⲙⲟⲓ̈ ⲙⲛ̅ⲛⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁ̅ⲁⲃ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ (Kuhn, "The Sahidic Version of the Testament of Isaac," 235).

[70] Translation in Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts*, 1073. ⲡⲉϫⲁϥ ⲛⲁⲓ ϫⲉ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲉ ⲛ̅ⲉⲓⲟⲧⲉ ⲙ̅ ⲡⲗⲁⲟⲥ· ⲁⲃⲣⲁϩⲁⲙ· ⲙⲛ̅ ⲓⲥⲁⲁⲕ ⲙⲛ̅ ⲓ̈ⲁⲕⲱⲃ· ϩⲛ̅ ⲧⲉⲩⲛⲟⲩ ⲛ̅ⲧⲁⲩⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲓ ⲁⲩⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ ⲙ̅ⲙⲟⲓ· (Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts*, 552).

[71] Translation in Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices*, 174-175. ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̅ⲧⲁⲡⲁϣⲉ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲩϣⲏⲁϥⲉⲓ ϣⲁⲣⲟϥ ⲛ̅ϭⲓ ⲡⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲉⲡϫ̅ⲥ̅, ⲁϥⲧⲁⲗⲟ ⲙ̅ⲡⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ⲁⲡⲁ ⲡⲁⲛⲥⲉ ϩⲓϫⲛ̅ⲛⲉϥⲧⲛⲏϩ̅ ⲛ̅ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ (…) ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲛⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲉⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲁϫⲱϥ ⲁⲩⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ ⲙ̅ⲙⲟϥ ⲁⲩⲁⲧⲥⲁⲃⲁϥ ⲉⲧⲡⲟⲗⲓⲥ ⲙ̅ⲡⲉⲭ̅ⲥ̅. (Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices*, 67).

in heaven "the angels and the righteous greeted him in Paradise" (Pierpont Morgan Library M 583, fol. 127 r i).[72]

In a text preserved in the British Library, the *Fourth Martyrdom of Saint Victor*, after the death of the martyr, the saints are waiting for him in heaven; when his soul arrives in heaven escorted by an angel (Ausouel), it is greeted by the saints: "And Horion lifted up his eyes to heaven, and he saw the soul of Apa Victor, which Ausouel carried in a napkin made of byssus, and the saints saluted the soul of Apa Victor" (British Library Oriental 7022, fol. 26a).[73] In the *Second Martyrdom of Saint Victor*, also preserved in the British Library, one can read the account of an ascension performed by Victor before his martyrdom, in which the salutation is present: "And the heart of Apa Victor was carried up into the heights of heaven, and [the angels] instructed him concerning the kingdom of heaven (…) and the saints saluted him" (British Library Oriental 7022 fol. 12b).[74]

It is also possible to find this motif elsewhere. It occurs, for example, in SBo § 82, which recounts the fate of souls after death, according to what Pachomius saw in many visions. It is said that when those who were saved arrive in heaven, the saints come to greet them. The peculiarity in this passage in SBo is that there are different ranks of souls who arrive in heaven, and they are greeted differently:

> According to the merits of each of the dead, the saints come toward those who have done God's good pleasure to meet them solemnly, by the Lord's command. They come toward some of them as far as the door of life and embrace them. They come toward others a distance proportionate to their merits. Others they let come near them before getting up and embracing

[72] Translation in Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices*, 211. ⲁⲛⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲙⲛ̄ⲛⲇⲓⲕⲁⲓⲟⲥ ⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲟⲩ ϩⲛ̄ⲧⲡⲁⲣⲁⲇⲓⲥⲟⲥ (Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices,* 115).

[73] Translation in Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 298. ϩⲟⲣⲓⲟⲛ ⲇⲉ ⲁϥϥⲓ ⲛ̄ⲉϥⲃⲁⲗ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ ⲉⲧⲡⲉ· ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲧⲉⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲛ̄ⲁⲡⲁ ⲃⲓⲕⲧⲱⲣ· ⲉⲁⲩⲥⲟⲩⲉⲗ ⲟⲩⲱⲗⲅ̄ ϩⲛ̄ ϩⲉⲛⲙⲁⲡⲡⲁ ⲛ̄ϣⲛⲥ· ⲁⲛⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲛ̄ⲁⲡⲁ ⲃⲓⲕⲧⲱⲣ (Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 45).

[74] Translation in Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 274. ⲁⲡⲁ ⲃⲓⲕⲧⲱⲣ ⲇⲉ ⲁⲩϥⲓ ⲡⲉϥϩⲏⲧ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ ⲉⲛⲉⲡⲟⲩⲣⲁⲛⲓⲟⲛ ⲛ̄ⲧⲡⲉ· ⲁⲩⲧⲥⲁⲃⲟϥ ⲉⲙ̄ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲣⲱⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲡⲉ· (…) ⲁⲛⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ· (Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms,* 22).

them. Others have not even enough merit to be embraced by the saints; they merely inherit life in the measure of their littleness (SBo § 82).[75]

These examples show similarities to the *Apocalypse of Paul* concerning the motif of salutation between the being who arrives in heaven and others who are there, but also some differences. In the case of these martyrdoms, the martyr is greeted, as in the case of SBo, a situation which is closer to the salutation between Paul and the apostles in the eighth heaven (NH V 24, 1-3), since Paul is greeted by the apostles. However, the final scene of the *Apocalypse of Paul* presents some differences, since in the tenth heaven it is Paul who greets the heavenly beings.

Nonetheless, there is at least one example that is similar to the *Apocalypse of Paul* on this score. It can be read in the *Martyrdoms of Saints Apaioulle and Pteleme*, also preserved in the Pierpont Morgan Library. This text reports that, after the death of Saint Pteleme, Saint Apaioulle is also killed and goes to heaven to meet his friend and predecessor: "Straightaway the angels came and took his soul up to heaven, and they caused him to greet the saints. Thereafter he greeted Apa Pteleme in the kingdom of Jesus Christ" (Pierpont Morgan Library M583, fol. 173 r ii).[76]

It is also possible to find an example in which the visionary greets the saints, instead of being greeted by them, in the *Life of Onnophrius.* In the passage, Onnophrius is questioned about how it is possible for the brothers who live in the desert to attend the Eucharist. Onnophrius answers saying that God sends angels to preside the liturgy, adding that the brothers can journey to heavens to see the saints whenever they want: "if they (the monks

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[75] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 107-108. ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲕⲁⲧⲁⲡⲁⲍⲓⲱⲙⲁ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲁⲓⲡⲓⲟⲩⲁⲓ ⲛ̄ⲛⲏ ⲉⲧⲁⲩⲛ̄ⲕⲟⲧ ϧⲉⲛⲛⲏ ⲉⲧⲁⲩⲣⲁⲛⲁϥ ⲙ̄ⲫϯ ϣⲁⲓ̈ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϧⲁⲭⲱϥ ⲛ̄ⲭⲉⲛⲏ ⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ ⲉⲉⲣⲁⲡⲁⲛⲧⲁⲛ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ϧⲉⲛⲟⲩⲱⲟⲩ ⲕⲁⲧⲁⲡⲓⲟⲩⲁϩⲥⲁϩⲛⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲡⲟ̅ⲥ̅ⲥ̅. ϩⲁⲛⲟⲩⲟⲛ ⲙⲉⲛ ⲛ̄ϧⲏⲧⲟⲩ ϣⲁⲓ̈ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϧⲁⲭⲱⲟⲩ ϣⲁϯⲡⲩⲗⲏ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲡⲱⲛϧ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲉⲣⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉⲥⲑⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲱⲟⲩ. ϩⲁⲛⲕⲉⲭⲱⲟⲩⲛⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ϣⲁⲓ̈ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϧⲁⲭⲱⲟⲩ ϩⲓⲫⲟⲩⲉⲓ ⲕⲁⲧⲁⲡⲟⲩⲙ̄ⲡϣⲁ. ϩⲁⲛⲕⲉⲟⲩⲟⲛ ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ϣⲁⲩϧⲱⲛⲧ ⲉϧⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲣⲱⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲁⲧⲟⲩⲧⲱⲟⲩⲛ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲉⲣⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉⲥⲑⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲱⲟⲩ. ϩⲁⲛⲕⲉⲭⲱⲟⲩⲛⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲙ̄ⲡⲁⲩⲉⲣⲡⲉⲙϣⲁ ⲣⲱ ⲉⲡⲉⲧⲛⲉⲣϥ ⲉⲑⲣⲉⲛⲏ ⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ ⲉⲣⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉⲥⲑⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲱⲟⲩ ⲟⲩⲙⲟⲛⲟⲛ ϣⲁⲩⲉⲣⲕⲗⲏⲣⲟⲛⲟⲙⲓⲛ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲱⲛϧ ϩⲱⲟⲩ ⲕⲁⲧⲁⲡϣⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲧⲟⲩⲙⲉⲧⲉⲗⲁⲭⲓⲥⲧⲟⲥ. (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Bohairice Scripta*, 90).

[76] Translation in Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices*, 228. ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩⲛⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲛ̄ⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲁⲩϫⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ̈ ⲛ̄ⲙ̄ⲡⲏⲩⲉ ⲁⲩⲧⲣⲉϥⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ. ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲥ ⲁϥⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ ⲛ̄ⲁⲡⲁ ⲡⲇⲉⲗⲉⲙⲏ ϩⲛ̄ⲧⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲧⲣ̄ⲣⲟ ⲛ̄ⲓ̅ⲥ̅ ⲡⲉⲭ̅ⲥ̅ (Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices*, 136).

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who live in the desert) desire to see anyone, they are taken up into the heavenly places where they see all the saints and greet them" (*Life of Onnophrius* § 17).[77]

This small difference concerning who performs the act of greeting and who is greeted, apparently insignificant, may actually reveal something about the nature of the salutation and the status of the hero in relation to the inhabitants of heaven even in a reception perspective. We will come back to this point later.

At this point, it is necessary to make it clear that when we bring out the presence of this motif in the *Apocalypse of Paul* and in the Coptic Martyrdoms we are not suggesting that the former was necessarily influenced by the latter, or vice-versa, or that they necessarily depend upon a common source. We can affirm, however, in accordance with the purpose of the present dissertation, that this motif was popular and widespread in Coptic Egypt, as the examples in Coptic Martyrdoms and Monastic Lives clearly attest, and that this situates the *Apocalypse of Paul* organically in the context of fourth/fifth-century late antique Coptic literature. In other words, an audience that was familiarized with these martyrdoms and Monastic Lives and with this motif in particular would probably recognize it in the lines of the *Apocalypse of Paul*. Furthermore, an audience that was particularly interested in hagiographies and more specifically in the saint's ascension to the heavens and the fact that he is greeted by the saints could also show a particular interest in the final lines of the *Apocalypse of Paul*.

We can go further, understanding how the motif in question could influence the interpretation of the whole of the *Apocalypse of Paul* in a Coptic context. This understanding may be quite different from the interpretation suggested by scholars in regard to the original context of composition of our text. According to Kaler, in a Valentinian perspective, the *Apocalypse of Paul* presents Paul as being superior to the apostles, since they would represent main-stream Christianity and do not ascend to the tenth heaven, Paul's final destination,

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[77] Translation in Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, 156. ⲉⲩϣⲁⲛ ⲉⲡⲉⲓⲟⲩⲙⲉⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲉⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲱⲙⲉ· ϣⲁⲩⲁⲛⲁⲗⲁⲙⲃⲁⲛⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲟⲩ· ⲉⲛⲉⲡⲟⲩⲣⲁⲛⲓⲟⲛ· ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲛⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ· ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲩ (Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 214).

where he greets his fellow spirits (NV H 24, 1-8).[78] This interpretation may work perfectly for the original context of composition of our text; however, one can question whether this assumption can be also applied to its interpretation in a late antique Coptic context, where the battle for orthodoxy was not concerned with the opposition of main-stream Christianity versus Gnosticism, and Paul was probably not seen as an opponent of the twelve apostles.[79] For a Coptic audience, the text of the *Apocalypse of Paul*, at least in its present stage, probably meant that the apostles ascended together with Paul to the tenth heaven. We base this assumption on the fact that the spirit in the beginning of the text announces that Paul will meet the apostles (NH V 19, 15-20) and that they will greet him, indicating that this will be Paul's final destination.

The issue concerning the superiority of Paul in relation to the apostles should be thus analysed differently. At this point we would like to return to our previous discussion concerning who performed the act of greeting and who is greeted. Firstly, we should take a brief look at what we know about the status of those involved in a given greeting in Antiquity in general, and then, try to do the same in regard to the Coptic context.

According to Perella, among certain groups of Jews in Antiquity, a particular type of greeting, the kiss, "was given to a leader or master as an act of reverence and homage, the sign of a special bond."[80] This can be attested a couple of times in the Canonical Gospels, mainly in *Luke* 7:45 – where Jesus reprehends Simon for not having received him with a kiss – and Luke 22: 46-47 – where Judas Iscariot kisses Jesus. So, in these cases, the most important person is greeted with a kiss by the less important person. It is widely known that in the context of Early Christianity already in the first century, the mutual kiss between Christians acquired great prominence, even becoming a liturgical act.[81] Obviously, it is beyond the scope of the present dissertation to discuss this question in depth, especially since

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[78] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 296-280.
[79] See the section 4.3.1.
[80] Nicolas J. Perella, *The Kiss Sacred and Profane: An Interpretative History of Kiss Symbolism and Related Religio-Erotic Themes* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press: 1969), 12.
[81] See William Klassen, "The Sacred Kiss in the New Testament: an Example of Social Boundary Lines," *NTS* 39 (1993): 122-135. See also Phillips, L. Edward, *The Ritual Kiss in Early Christian Worship* (Cambridge: Grove Books Limited, 1996).

other scholars have already analysed this issue.[82] For the purposes of the present dissertation, it suffices to say that the kiss between Christians as reported in the New Testament – mainly in *Romans* 16:16, *1 Corinthians* 16:20, *2 Corinthians* 13:12, *1 Thessalonians* 5:26 and *1 Peter* 5:14 – should probably be seen as mutual, expressing communion, and not a relation of superiority. The greeting in the liturgical context of Early Christianity is also a mark and symbol of the welcoming of the new member to the community.[83]

In the broader context of the ancient Roman world, the greeting, and more specifically the kiss, is very well attested. Kisses among kinsfolk and friends were very frequent, generally not being subject to rules or regulation.[84] However, according to the "*Jus Osculi*" any man related within a certain degree had the right under the law to kiss his female relatives."[85] Ceremonial kisses, however, were very well regulated: Roman Governors had to kiss if requested "all men of certain well-defined ranks."[86] Certain important people also had the right to pay homage and adore the emperor;[87] in that specific case, obviously, the less important person is greeting the more important person.

If we take a brief look at Coptic literature as a whole, we can find numerous examples of greetings expressed by the Greek-Coptic verb ⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ, not necessarily in liturgical contexts or during ascensions of apocalyptic heroes or martyrs. Monks greet each other by the means of ⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ when they meet, for example.[88] Angels and other otherworldly beings greet a visionary character when they show up and before departing.[89] If we could establish a pattern, we would say that normally the superior or more important being greets the inferior or less

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[82] See Klassen, "The Sacred Kiss in the New Testament: an Example of Social Boundary Lines"; Edward, *The Ritual Kiss in Early Christian Worship* and Michael P. Penn, *Kissing Christians: Ritual and Community in the Late Ancient Church* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

[83] See our discussion on Justin's *Apology on Behalf of the Christians* below.

[84] Mary B. Pharr, "The Kiss in Roman Law," *TCJ* 42 (1947), 394.

[85] Pharr, "The Kiss in Roman Law," 394. It seems that this custom was used in particular to check if women who did not have the right to drink the wine of the family had broken that regulation; by kissing a woman's mouth, a man could fell the taste of wine or not, determining if she had drank it or not.

[86] Pharr, "The Kiss in Roman Law," 394.

[87] Pharr, "The Kiss in Roman Law," 394.

[88] See footnote 58 in this chapter.

[89] See, for example, *The Martyrdom of Saint Eusebius*, C.V. 58, fol. 39 (cf. Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l`Égypte*, 5).

important being, contrary to the Roman ceremonial kiss. In the case of Epiphanies, for example, the otherworldly being normally takes the initiative, greeting the visionary.[90] When a famous monk or abbot meets an ordinary brother, normally the former takes the initiative and greets the later.[91] The saints who are already in heaven greet the martyr who just arrived.[92]

An account in the the *Life of Pambo* may help us to shed some light on this matter; in this account, Apa Cyrus predicts that he and Apa Pambo will receive that night a visit from Christ: "The Christ will come here today according to his custom, and I will kiss him on the lips" (*Life of Pambo*, Oriental 6783 fol. 27b).[93] Christ arrives and then the scene is described as follows:

> While he was saying these things, to my amazement Christ opened the door of the cell and came in. Now the door opened suddenly of its own accord, and when he came in – believe me, my fathers and brothers – I, Pambo, the least of all men, saw Christ go up to that brother and kiss him on the lips, as a brother does when he has come from a distance and greets his friend. Now I, Pambo, the most unworthy, was not worthy at that time to be greeted with a kiss by him (*Life of Pambo*, Oriental 6783 fol. 27b-28a).[94]

[90] See the examples of the *Testament of Isaac* (Pierpont Morgan Library M 577, 22r; cf. Kuhn, "The Sahidic Version of the Testament of Isaac," 235) and the *Visio Sancti Pauli* (British Library Oriental 7022, fol. 21a-21b; cf. Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts*, 552) above.

[91] See, for example, Pachomius who greets the brothers in Bo § 59 and SBo 108. In SBo § 124, after the death of Pachomius, Petronius becomes the new leader of the congregation, and greets Theodore with a kiss. Also in SBo, in § 126, it is possible to read about a visit that Theodore and Zacchaeus paid to Antony; Antony, clearly described with reverence and superiority, comes to meet them, greeting them with a holy kiss.

[92] See the examples quoted above. This could be linked to the fact that martyrdom was seen as the baptism of blood – as we will discuss below – and Justin attests that after the baptism of the catechumens kisses were exchanged between the members of the community as a sign of welcome; however, in this case, there is no sign of hierarchy, since Justin says that "we cease from prayer and greet one another with a kiss (Justin Martyr, *Apology on Behalf of Christians* 65, 1-2).

[93] Vivian's translation with changes in Vivian, *Journeying into God,* 34. ⲡⲉⲭⲣ̅ⲥ̅ ⲉⲓ ⲉ ⲡⲉⲓ ⲙⲁ ⲙ̅ ⲡⲟⲟⲩ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲧⲉϥⲥⲩⲛⲏⲑⲓⲁ· ⲧⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ ⲙ̅ⲙⲟϥ ⲛ̅ ⲧⲁⲡⲣⲟ ϩⲓ ⲧⲁⲡⲣⲟ (Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms,* 133).

[94] Translation inVivian, *Journeying into God*, 34. ⲉⲧⲉⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲉϥϫⲱ ⲛ̅ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉⲓⲥ ⲡⲉⲭⲣ̅ⲥ̅ ⲁϥⲟⲩⲱⲛ ⲙ̅ ⲡⲣⲟ ⲙ̅ ⲡⲕⲁⲧⲁⲅⲓⲟⲛ· ⲁϥⲉⲓ ⲉ ϩⲟⲩⲛ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲩⲛⲟⲩ ⲁ ⲡⲣⲟ ⲟⲩⲱⲛ ⲙⲁⲩⲁⲁϥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ ⲧⲉⲣ ϥⲉⲓ ⲉ ϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲡⲓⲥⲧⲉⲩⲉ ⲛⲁⲓ̈ ⲛⲁ ⲥⲛⲏⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲁ ⲉⲓⲟⲟⲧⲉ· ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲡⲁⲙⲃⲟ ⲡⲉⲓ ⲉⲗⲁⲭⲉⲓⲥⲧⲟⲥ ⲁⲓⲛⲁⲩ ⲉ ⲡⲉⲭⲣ̅ⲥ̅ ⲉ ⲁϥϯⲙ̅ ⲡⲉϥⲟⲩⲟⲓ ⲉ ϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉ ⲡⲥⲟⲛ ⲉⲧ ⲙ̅ⲙⲁⲩ ⲁϥⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ ⲙ̅ⲙⲟϥ ⲛ̅ ⲧⲁⲡⲣⲟ ϩⲓ ⲧⲁⲡⲣⲟ· ⲛ̅ⲑⲉ ⲛ̅ ⲟⲩⲥⲟⲛ ⲛ̅ⲧⲁϥⲉⲓ ϩⲓ ⲡϣⲙ̅ⲙⲟ· ⲁϥⲁⲡⲁⲛⲧⲁ ⲉ ⲡⲉϥϣⲃⲏⲣ· ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲇⲉ ⲡⲁⲙⲃⲟ ⲡⲉⲓ ⲉⲗⲁⲭ ⲙ̅ⲡ ⲉⲓⲣ̅ ⲡⲙ̅ⲡϣⲁ ⲉ ⲧⲣ̅ϥⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ ⲙ̅ⲙⲟⲓ ⲙ̅ ⲡⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲧ ⲙ̅ⲙⲁⲩ (Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms,* 133-134).

Despite the fact that Cyrus announces that he will greet Christ, when the encounter between them takes place, it is rather Christ who greets Cyrus;[95] we have thus another example in which the more important being greets the less important.

In the *Third Martyrdom of Saint Victor*, Victor greets Jesus: "And it came to pass that when they have finished praying Apa Victor went forward and saluted Jesus – now he knew not who he was – and said unto Him, "Sit Thou down so that I may be able to enjoy Thy face fully …"" (*Third Martyrdom of Saint Victor* – Oriental 7022 fol. 18a).[96]

In the aforementioned passage, one could argue that the less important is greeting the more important; there is however, a very important particularity in this passage that could not be ignored: when Victor greeted Jesus, he was not aware of His true identity ("now he knew not who he was"); this may explain why Victor greeted Jesus instead of being greeted.

Among the aforementioned examples in the Coptic Epic Passions that are part of our corpus of comparison, there is one exception that contains a peculiarity that may also help us to explain the issue discussed here. We are referring to the passage in the *Martyrdoms of Saints Apaioulle and Pteleme*: "Straightaway the angels came and took his soul up to heaven, and they caused him to greet the saints. Thereafter he (Apaioulle) greeted Apa Pteleme in the kingdom of Jesus Christ" (Pierpont Morgan Library M583, fol. 173 r ii).[97]

This passage also displays a peculiarity that should not be ignored; we are referring to the presence of a causative (ⲁⲩⲧⲣⲉϥⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ). In practical terms, it could mean that the martyr who is arriving in heaven is not supposed to greet the saints who are already there – in the case of the *Martyrdoms of Saints Apaioulle and Pteleme*, Apaioulle was supposed to greet Pteleme, since the later was martyred first and was already in heaven when the former

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[95] The passage stresses that Christ kissed him "as a brother does when he has come from a distance and greets his friend", attesting that this was a common act between monks.

[96] Translation in Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 284. ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ ⲧⲉⲣ ⲟⲩⲱ̄ ⲉⲩϣⲗⲏⲗ· ⲁϥϯ ⲡⲉϥⲟⲩⲟⲓ ⲁϥⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ ⲛ̄ ⲓ̄ⲥ̄· ⲛⲉϥⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲛ ϫⲉ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲡⲉ· ⲁⲡⲁ ⲃⲓⲕⲧⲟⲣ ⲇⲉ ⲡⲉϫⲁϥ ⲛⲁϥ· ϫⲉ ϩⲙⲟⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲕ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲥⲉⲓ ⲙ̄ ⲡⲉⲕϩⲟ (Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 30-31).

[97] Translation in Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices*, 228. ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩⲛⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲛ̄ⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲁⲩϫⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ̈ ⲛ̄ⲙ̄ⲡⲏⲩⲉ ⲁⲩⲧⲣⲉϥⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ. ⲙⲛ̄ⲛⲥⲱⲥ ⲁϥⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ ⲛ̄ⲁⲡⲁ ⲡⲇⲉⲗⲉⲙⲏ ϩⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣ̄ⲣⲟ ⲛ̄ⲓ̄ⲥ̄ ⲡⲉⲭ̄ⲥ̄ (Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices*, 136).

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arrived. The act of greeting those who are in heaven is so unexpected that the angels had to induce Apaioulle to greet the saints and Pteleme. The "natural" and expected act would consist in the contrary, Apaioulle being greeted by the saints and Pteleme.

Thus, if we we take this issue into consideration in late antique Coptic hagiographies, we could make the hypothesis that for a Coptic reader, Paul begins his ascension being inferior to the twelve, since he is greeted by them; but he finishes the text being superior to them and even to the spirits who are already in tenth heaven, since he greets them both, instead of being greeted. This statement could be obviously questioned, since there are exceptions in this hierarchy of greetings, as mentioned earlier.

Another important factor could be added to this discussion by Codex V itself. In the *First Apocalypse of James*, when Jesus appears to James for the second time, it is said that James "embraced him (Jesus). He kissed him (Jesus) (NH V 56, 14-15)."[98] Even if the verbs employed in that passage is not ⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ - but rather ⲙⲁⲗϩ⸗[99] to express the first action and ϯ ⲡⲓ (literally "to give a kiss")[100] to express the second – the meaning is similar. In fact, ϯ ⲡⲓ is the native Coptic equivalent of ⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ.[101] In this case therefore Jesus is greeted (kissed by James).

In the light of all these comments concerning the possibility of a hierarchy of importance expressed by who greets and who is greeted, it is reasonable to think, in a reception perspective – i.e. for late antique Coptic readers – that Paul in the *Apocalypse of Paul* could be considered superior in relation to the apostles and the saints in the final moments of the text, since he greets them, instead of being greeted. It must be clear though that this is nothing more than a possibility, since some exceptions in late antique Coptic literature could argue in favor of the contrary position.

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[98] Schoedel's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 81. ⲁϥⲙⲁⲗϩϥ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧϥ· ⲁϥϯ ⲡⲓ ⲉⲣⲟϥ (Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 36).
[99] Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 166a.
[100] Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 260a-260b.
[101] Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 260b.

Finally, the motif discussed here needs to be contextualized in a broader perspective, namely the context of early Christianity as a whole. We are referring specifically to the fact that the martyrdom is viewed as the "Baptism of blood;"[102] given this fact, we must evoke the role and importance of ἀσπάζεσθαι – sometimes translated as "to greet", sometimes as "to kiss" – in early Christian liturgy in general[103] and in the baptismal rites specifically[104]. Even though the "Gnostic kiss" was already pointed out as a Gnostic rite,[105] it is more appropriate and precise to speak of the rite in question from a wider point of view, relating it to early Christianity in general. And indeed the ritual kiss or greeting, generally expressed by the verb ἀσπάζεσθαι, is widely known in the field of Patristic studies.[106]

Maybe, one of the most famous passages in which one finds an example of the ritualistic ἀσπάζεσθαι is the description of what follows the baptismal rite in Justin's *Apology on Behalf of Christians*:

> But we, after the washing done in this way, lead the one who has been persuaded and has thrown in his lot with us to those who are called the brothers in the place where they are gathered. And, after earnestly saying prayers for ourselves and the one who was enlightened and all others everywhere that, having learnt the truth, we might be judged worthy also to be found through our deeds people who live good lives and guardians of what has been commanded, so that we might be saved in eternal salvation, we cease from prayer and greet one another with a kiss

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[102] Origen was probably the most prominent Christian author to compare martyrdom to baptism; he called martyrdom the "Baptism of Blood", even applying a superiority to it in relation to baptism with water (*Homilies on Judges* 7.2); he also classifies Jesus' Passion as a martyrdom and hence the perfect baptism (*Commentary on John* 6,56). Other examples can be found in his work; for details, see Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 417-419. Later, Eusebius mentions in *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.4.3 that Origen spoke of martyrdom as the "baptism of fire" (for details, see Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 417). At any rate, already in the New Testament, the Passion is compared to baptism (*Lk* 12:50 and *Mk* 10:38).
[103] See for example, Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogic Catecheses* 5.3 (Auguste Piédagnel and Pierre Paris, *Cyrille de Jérusalem – catéchèses mystagogiques* [SC 126; Paris: Cerf, 2004], 148-150); see also John Chrysostom's *Baptismal Instructions* 3.10 (Auguste Piédagnel and Louis Doutreleau, *Jean Chrysostome – Trois catéchèses baptismales* [SC 366; Paris: Cerf, 1990], 240).
[104] See, for example, Justin Martyr's *Apology on Behalf of the Christians* 65, 1-2, and John Chrysostom's *Baptismal Instructions* 2, 27; both passages will be quoted and discussed soon.
[105] See, for example, Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 83-84.
[106] For a survey, see Penn, *Kissing Christians*.

(ἀλλήλους φιλήματι ἀσπαζόμεθα, παυσάμενοι τῶν εὐχῶν) (Justin Martyr. *Apology on Behalf of Christians* 65, 1-2).[107]

The thematic contact between this account and what has been said earlier about the martyrdom as the baptism of blood is obvious. Baptism allows the newly-baptized to become part of the community, just as the act of being martyred allows the martyr to be accepted among the saints in heaven. As the mutual greeting between the members of Justin's community expresses their communion – a communion into which the newly-baptized is now integrated – the greeting between the martyr and the saints in heaven marks the communion between them and the welcoming of the former among the inhabitants of heaven.

In another famous passage concerning the baptismal rite in Early Christianity, John Chrysostom, in one of his *Baptismal Instructions*, reports that

> as soon as they come forth from those sacred waters, all who are present embrace them, greet them, kiss them, rejoice with them, and congratulate them, because those who were heretofore slaves and captives have suddenly become free men and sons and have been invited to the royal table (*Baptismal Instructions* 2, 27).[108]

In this account, chronologically and geographically closer to the context of compilation of the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the Coptic Epic Passions, the act of greeting the newly-baptized as a way of welcoming him in the community is even clearer. The act of greeting marks the welcome of the newly-baptized and his acceptance into the community of the saints.

Thus this is probably the context in which the *Apocalypse of Paul* should be understood, at least in regard to its reception in a late antique Coptic context. The abundant presence of the motif discussed here in Coptic Epic Passions, but also the presence of the act

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[107] Minns and Parvis' translation in Denis Minns and Paul Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr: Apologies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 253. For the Greek text of the passage in question, see Minns and Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr*, 252.s

[108] Finn's translation in Thomas M. Finn, *The Liturgy of Baptism in the Baptism Instructions of St. John Chrysostom* (CUASCA 15; Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1967), 197. Εὐθέως γὰρ ἀνιόντας αὐτούς ἐκ τῶν ἱερῶν ἐκείνων ναμάττων πάντες οἱ παρόντες περιπλέκονται, ἀσπάζονται, καταφιλοῦσι, συνήδονται, συγχαίρουσιν ὅτι οἱ πρότερον δοῦλοι καὶ αἰχμάλωτοι ἀθρόον ἐλεύθεροι καὶ εἰς τὴν βασιλικὴν ἐκλήθησαν τράπεζαν (Antoine Wenger, *Jean Chrysostome: Huit catéchèses baptismales inédites* [SC 50. Paris: Cerf, 1957], 147.149).

of greeting in the baptismal liturgy, could have defined the "horizon of expectations" for a given Coptic reader in Late Antiquity. In other words, in a reception perspective, a reader familiarized with this motif – by the means of Coptic Epic Passions, apocalyptic texts such as the *Testament of Isaac* and the *Visio Sancti Pauli* and Christian texts that report baptismal rites in general – would be led to interpret it in the *Apocalypse of Paul* and also in the two *Apocalypses of James* in the light of the aforementioned writings at least when it comes to the specific motif of the kiss. Consequently, one could expect from late antique Coptic readers to think of martyrs arriving in heaven and being greeted by saints when they read the final passage of the *Apocalypse of Paul.*

Having said this, one must note that the native Coptic equivalent of ⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ, the expression ϯ ⲧⲓ,[109] appears, in what has survived of Codex V four times: once in *Eugnostos* (NH V 9, 18), twice in the *First Apocalypse of James* (NH V 31, 4 and 32, 8)[110] and once in the *Second Apocalypse of James* (NH V 56, 14).[111] In *Egnostos*, it is used to designate the act that begets angels ("Now when these angels kiss each other, their embraces [become] angels like [themselves]" - NH V 9, 17-20).[112] In the *First Apocalypse of James* and in the *Second Apocalypse of James*, the expression is used to describe the salutation between Jesus and James. In these specific cases, however, there are no ascensions or a saint being welcome in heaven as a new member of a heavenly community, but rather situations that serve to mark a new stage in Jesus' and James' relation: in the *First Apocalypse of James,* the salutation marks the beginning of the second series of revelations disclosed to James by Jesus, in which the former tells the second the passwords which are necessary for the ascension through the celestial spheres; in the *Second Apocalypse of James*, the greeting precedes Jesus' affirmation

[109] As already stated, the expression in question means literally "give a kiss" and could be used to translate the Greek ἀσπάζειν (Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 260).
[110] See also page 343 and section 7.2.1.2 bellow.
[111] See section 7.2.1.2.
[112] Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices III, 3-4 and V, 1*, 108. ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲧⲙⲙⲁⲩ [ⲉ]ϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲩϣⲁⲛϯⲡⲓ ⲉⲣⲛⲛⲉⲩ ⲉⲣⲏⲟⲩ· ϣⲁⲣⲉⲛⲉⲩⲁⲥⲡⲁⲥⲙⲟⲥ [ϣⲱⲡ]ⲉ ⲛ̄ϩⲉⲛⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲉⲩⲉⲓⲛⲉ [ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲟⲩ·] (Pasquier, *Eugnostes*, 78). One must note that the Codex III version of *Eugnostos* reports basically the same thing, employing the verb ⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ however (NH III, 81, 7-10; cf. Pasquier, *Eugnoste*, 48).

according to which He will reveal to James "those (things) that (neither) [the] heavens nor their archons have known" (NH V 56, 18-20).[113]

7.1.4. The ⲧⲉⲗⲱⲛⲏⲥ in Codex V: from the Toll Collector in Late Antique Egypt to the Heavenly Beings who Disturb the Ascension of Souls

The word ⲧⲉⲗⲱⲛⲏⲥ appears three times in what has survived of Codex V, twice in the *Apocalypse of Paul* (NH V 20, 16 and 22, 20) and once in *First Apocalypse of James* (NH V 33, 8).[114] In the case of the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the ⲧⲉⲗⲱⲛⲏⲥ is working as a gate-keeper, but he also takes part in the judgement of souls in the fourth heaven, while in the case of the *First Apocalypse of James*, his role is augmented, since it is said that more than just collecting tolls, he also takes souls by theft. In both cases, the ⲧⲉⲗⲱⲛⲏⲥ have been interpreted as being the Gnostic archons that guard the celestial spheres and eventually try to disturb, or even stop the ascension of the pneumatic.[115] Certainly, such interpretation is valid for the original context of composition of our texts. However, the question is: is it possible to say more in regard to the interpretation of this motif in a late antique Coptic context?

In the *Apocalypse of Paul*, it is said that a soul was brought by angels to the fourth heaven to be judged;[116] the soul is thus accused by the toll-collector: "The toll-collector who dwells in the fourth heaven replied, saying: ''It was not right to commit all those lawless deeds that are in the world of the dead" (NH V 20, 15-20).[117] Later, another toll-collector is mentioned, this time, as a gate-keeper who opens the passage to the seventh heaven to Paul

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[113] Hedrick's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 133. ⲛ̅ⲛⲏ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲉ [ⲙ̅ⲡ]ⲏⲩⲉ ⲉⲓⲙⲉ ⲉⲣⲟⲟⲩ· ⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲩⲁⲣⲭⲱⲛ· (Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 142).

[114] The same word is used in the Codex Tchacos version (CT 20, 4).

[115] Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 85-86; Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 225-226.

[116] The role of this toll-collector is very precise and is related to the judgement of souls.

[117] Murdock and MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 55. ⲁϥⲟⲩⲱϣ̅ⲃ ⲛ̅ϭⲓⲡⲧⲉⲗⲱⲛⲏⲥ ⲉⲧϩⲙⲟⲟⲥ ϩ̅ⲛ̅ϯⲙⲉϩϥⲧⲟ ⲙ̅ⲡⲉ ⲉϥϫⲱ ⲙ̅ⲙⲟⲥ ϫⲉ ⲛⲉⲣⲉⲙ̅ⲡϣⲁ ⲁⲛ ⲛ̅ⲉⲓⲣⲉ ⲛ̅ⲛⲉⲓ̈ⲁⲛⲟⲙⲓ[ⲁ] ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲉⲧϩ̅ⲣⲁⲓ̈ ϩ̅ⲙ̅ⲡⲕⲟⲥⲙⲟⲥ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲛⲉⲧⲙⲟⲟⲩⲧ· (Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 104).

and the Spirit: "I spoke saying to the toll-collector who was in the sixth heaven: '[Open] to me'. And the [Holy] Spirit [was] before me" (NH V 22, 19-23).[118]

As Kaler has remarked, "the concept of a toll-collector functioning as the guardian of the gates between the heavens is found in Egyptian, apocalyptic (*Ascen. Isa.* 10, 24-27) and later Jewish (*3Enoch* 18, 3-4) sources."[119] He adds that this expression evokes more the synoptic Gospels than the Pauline context, since it – and its derivatives – appears several times in *Matthew*,[120] *Luke*,[121] and *Mark*,[122] but never in Pauline or deutero-Pauline letters.[123] However, the meanings of this word in the synoptic Gospels are not similar to its meaning in Codex V. In the apocalyptic tradition the word does not serve to designate state officials whose job consisted in collecting taxes but rather the heavenly guards who must be faced by the visionary during his ascent.

However, one must not ignore the essential meaning of a technical term such as this one. Even if it is used metaphorically in certain texts to designate the gate-keepers of the heavenly spheres, it does not lose its initial meaning. Consequently, with regard to the 'horizon of expectations' of a late antique Coptic audience, one may ask whether the toll-collector might evoke not only the heavenly powers who try to stop the visionary's ascension, but also the real toll-collectors, the Roman-officers responsible for taxation and customs. What is being suggested here is that one can analyse the ⲧⲉⲗⲱⲛⲏⲥ from three perspectives: first as evoking the state-officers responsible for taxation, but being used as literary allusions that would lead the reader to associate the heavenly ⲧⲉⲗⲱⲛⲏⲥ to real-life beings; secondly, as evoking real state-officers who took part in the interrogation of martyrs in Coptic Epic

[118] Murdock and MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 59 with modifications according to the reconstitution suggested by Rosenstiehl (Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 108). ⲁⲉⲓ[ⲟ]ⲩⲱϣⲃ̄ ⲉⲓ̈ϫⲱ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲧⲉⲗⲱ[ⲛⲏ]ⲥ ⲉⲧⲯⲛ̄ϯⲙⲉϩⲥⲟ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉ [ϫⲉ ⲁⲟⲩⲱⲛ] ⲛⲁⲓ̈ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲓⲡ̄ⲛ̄ⲁ ⲉⲧ[ⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ⲛⲉϥ][ϩⲁⲧⲁ]ⲉϩⲏ ⲁϥⲟⲩⲱⲛ ⲛ̣[ⲁⲓ̈·
[119] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 223.
[120] *Matt* 9:9.10.11; 10:3. 11:19; 18:17; and 21:31.32.
[121] *Lk* 3:12; 5: 27.29.30; 7:29.34; 15:1; and 18:10.11.13.
[122] *Mk* 2:15.16.
[123] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 225.

Martyrdoms; and thirdly, but not less importantly, as the gate-keepers of celestial spheres and heavenly powers who disturb the ascension of souls.

Consequently, one should firstly remark that the word in question was not only used to designate toll-collectors, but also tax-collectors in general, as the synoptic examples mentioned above demonstrate. As mentioned above, their role in Codex V texts may be especially negative. Consequently, the fact that the celestial guards that try to interfere in the ascension are identified as tax-collectors may not have seem strange in a late antique Coptic audience, since they were not necessarily seen in a positive way by ordinary citizens who had to pay taxes.

In an article on the imperial presence and government apparatus in Byzantine Egypt,[124] Palme states that

> a third of the *constitutiones* in the *Codex Theodosianus* and the post-Theodosian *Novels* (some 900 decrees between 313 and 468) are concerned with breaches of official duty. The narrative sources are full of complaints of extortion, coercion, perversion of justice, and excessive tax demands on the part of *officiales*. The topos of a pompous bureaucratic apparatus, which ruthlessly exploited the population, is no more or less true or false than for the preceding centuries.[125]

Given this fact, it would not be stretching it to believe that this negative view of tax-collectors in general may have an influence on the reception of Codex V in late antique Egypt: the fact that the word is used to designate evil beings would seem quite natural to late antique Coptic readers.

Palme also states that "although it was clear to all that it was the emperor who demanded taxes, the tax collectors in the villages of the *chôra* were liturgists from the same area, so taxation had a very local character."[126] Given this, it is not far-fetched to imagine late antique Coptic readers reading and metaphorically identifying the ⲧⲉⲗⲱⲛⲏⲥ in Codex V with local inhabitants, people they knew and dealt with in everyday life, the tax-collectors of

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[124] Bernhard Palme, "The Imperial Presence: Government and Army," in *Egypt in the Byzantine World, 300-700* (ed. R.S. Bagnall; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 244-270.
[125] Palme, "The Imperial Presence: Government and Army," 254.
[126] Palme, "The Imperial Presence: Government and Army," 250.

their area. That would give a very peculiar nature to this particular motif in Codex V, which would in some way lend it a humorous pamphleteering character. The evil beings in this literary piece are described with the help of real-life evil beings, the tax-collectors who exploit the people.

One could therefore imagine that in the specific case of the monastic way of life, some people chose to flee secular life to avoid taxes, either in coenobitic monasteries or in anchoretic life, mainly peasants and those who were poor. Unfortunately, as far as we know, there are no studies on the taxation of monasteries; Wipszycka acknowledges that studies on this matter are still lacking[127], but that in general monks did not have to pay taxes to the State,[128] but occasionally to bishops.[129] The *Life of Antony*, for example, recounts that the anchorites who lived in the desert did not have to be concerned with tax collectors: "No one was mistreated there, nor were there the demands of the tax-collector" (*Sahidic Life of Antony* § 44).[130] But Wipszycka herself states that tax exemption was not enough to encourage someone to join the monastic life, but rather a *raison de plus*: "Il serait certes faux d'imaginer que les gens entraient dans les communautés monastiques seulement pour échapper aux impôts; mais ceux qui, pour d'autres raisons, étaient proches de la décision de se retirer au désert (les vieux, par exemple), avaient maintenant une raison supplémentaire de le faire".[131]

In relation to the second perspective suggested above, one may ask whether the ⲧⲉⲗⲱⲛⲏⲥ might not represent, or evoke, imperial officers in general whose role in the judgement and execution of Christian martyrs is particularly stressed in the Coptic Epic Martyrdoms that are part of our corpus of comparison. This could be particularly the case of the tax-collector in *First Apocalypse of James*. The passage in which he is mentioned could

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[127] Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques*, 472.

[128] This situation changed in eighth century, when monks have started to pay taxes (Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques*, 501-502).

[129] Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques*, 501. See also Ewa Wipszycka, *Les ressources et les activités économiques des églises en Égypte du IVᵉ au VIIIᵉ siècle* (Bruxelles: Fondation égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1972), 122-130.

[130] Vivian's translation in Vivian and Athanassakis, *The Life of Antony*, 152). The tax-collector is designated by the native Coptic word ⲣⲉϥϫⲓϣⲱⲙ (Garitte, *S. Antonii Vitae Versio Sahidica*, 51).

[131] Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques*, 501.

be read as follows: "When [you] are seized, and you undergo these sufferings, a multitude will arm themselves against you, that <they> may seize you. And, in particular, three of them will seize you – they who sit (there) as toll-collectors. Not only do they demand toll, but they also take away souls by theft" (NH V 33, 2-11).[132]

One should note that no ascension is mentioned in the immediate context of this passage, which has been interpreted rather as the first stage of the Gnostic ritual ascent[133] simply due to the parallel with the accounts in Irenaeus's *Adversus Haereses* I, 2, 11-21 and with Epiphanius's *Panarion* 33, 2ff. However, for a late antique Coptic audience, which was not necessarily aware of the existence of *Adversus Haereses* or the *Panarion*, the evocation or identification with an ascension would not be that evident, since the evocation of an otherworldly journey was not necessarily part of the immediate horizon of expectations of late antique Coptic readers who had contact with this passage in the *First Apocalypse of James*. That being said, for a late antique Coptic audience the passage in question would possibly evoke the real ⲧⲉⲗⲱⲛⲏⲥ, a state-officer who could be in one way or another involved in the act of arresting James.

As stressed above, no ascension of James is actually mentioned in the immediate context of the passage in question; what is mentioned is the prediction of James being arrested and his sufferings (NH V 33, 2-3) and its relation to his redemption (NH V 32, 29-33, 1); and after the mentioning of the toll-collectors, Jesus reveals to James some questions that they will ask him (NH V 33, 15). One must not forget that at the end of the text in question – previously unknown until the publication of Codex Tchacos – the martyrdom of James is narrated;[134] one must not forget either that the tradition about the martyrdom of James was known in Coptic, as demonstrated in our section on the characters of Codex V.[135] Thus, it

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[132] Schoedel's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 85). ⲉϣⲱⲡⲏ ⲉⲩϣⲁⲛⲁⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ ⲙ̅ⲙ[ⲟⲕ] ⲁⲩ[ⲱ ⲛ̅]ⲅ̅ϫⲓ ⲛ̅ⲛⲉⲓ̈ⲙⲕⲟⲟϩ· ⲟⲩⲛ̅ⲟⲩⲙⲏⲏϣⲉ ⲛⲁϩⲁⲕⲟⲩ ⲟⲩⲃⲏⲕ ϫⲉ ⲉ<ⲩ>ⲛⲁ<ⲁ>ⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ ⲙ̅ⲙⲟⲕ· ⲛ̅ϩⲟⲩⲟ ⲇⲉ ϣⲟⲙⲧ̅ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̅ϩⲏ̅ⲧⲟⲩ ⲥⲉⲛⲁⲁⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ ⲙ̅ⲙⲟⲕ· ⲛⲁⲓ̈ ⲉⲧϩⲙⲟⲟⲥ ⲉⲛⲧⲉⲗⲱⲛⲏⲥ ⲛⲉ· ⲟⲩⲙⲟⲛⲟⲛ ⲉⲩϣⲉⲧ ⲧⲉⲗⲟⲥ· ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲛⲓⲕⲉⲯⲩⲭⲟⲟⲩⲉ ⲉⲩϥⲓ ⲙ̅ⲙⲟⲟⲩ ⲥⲧⲉⲣⲉⲥⲓⲙⲟⲥ (ⲛ̅ⲕⲱⲗⲡ̅) (Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 40).
[133] Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 85-90.
[134] The episode is narrated in Codex Tchacos (CT 29, 25-30, 26).
[135] See section 4.3.2.

seems likely that, at least for a late antique Coptic audience, the immediate context of the appearance of the toll-collectors in the *First Apocalypse of James* was not a heavenly journey, but a kind of interrogation carried out by state-officers in the process of a martyrdom, such as those described in the Epic Martyrdoms that are part of our corpus of comparison.

This suggestion finds support in the fact that the two first questions predicted by Jesus ("Who are you?" and "Where are you from?")[136] are very common questions in the interrogation of martyrs in Coptic Epic Passions.[137] In the *Martyrdom of Saints John and Simon*, for example, when the martyrs arrive at the tribunal, Armenius, the imperial officer asks them: "Quels sont vos noms? D'où êtes-vous?" (C.V.C 60 f. 82).[138] Another example could be found in the *Martyrdom of Apa Didimus*, where the governor commands one of his subordinates to ask Didimus "D'où es-tu? Quel est ton nom?" (C.V.C. 62 f. 256).[139]

Thus, this could be a possible interpretation of the passage in question in the *First Apocalypse of James* in a late antique Coptic perspective, at least if it is analysed as a single literary unity. However, in the context of Codex V, it was probably inevitable that the ⲧⲉⲗⲱⲛⲏⲥ in the *First Apocalypse of James* evoked the other two ⲧⲉⲗⲱⲛⲏⲥ in the *Apocalypse of Paul*. A reader who read the entire volume following the order of the texts would read the *First Apocalypse of James* after the *Apocalypse of Paul*. This means that the mention of a ⲧⲉⲗⲱⲛⲏⲥ in the *First Apocalypse of James* would remind him of the ⲧⲉⲗⲱⲛⲏⲥ in the *Apocalypse of Paul*. And the ⲧⲉⲗⲱⲛⲏⲥ in the *Apocalypse of Paul* are clearly identified with gate-keepers or judges of souls.

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[136] Schoedel's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 85. ⲛ̄ⲧⲕ ⲛⲓⲛ ⲏ̄ ⲛ̄ⲧⲕ ⲟⲩⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲧⲱⲛ· (Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 40).

[137] A similar question is also asked to Paul by the Old Man in NH V 23, 11: "Where are you from?" (ⲉⲕⲧⲱⲛ ⲡⲉ·). Rosenstiehl had already remarked that this type of question is very common in Martyrdoms (Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 65).

[138] Hyvernat's translation in Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 197. ⲛⲓⲛ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲉⲧⲉⲛⲣⲁⲛ ⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲑⲱⲧⲉⲛ ϩⲁⲛⲉ̄ⲃⲟⲗⲑⲱⲛ (Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 197).

[139] Hyvernat's translation in Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 289. ⲛ̄ⲟⲟⲕ ⲟⲩ ⲉ̄ⲃⲟⲗ ⲑⲱⲛ ⲧⲉ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲉⲕⲣⲁⲛ (Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 289).

We proceed now to the third aspect of the interpretation of the ⲧⲉⲗⲱⲛⲏⲥ in Codex V texts, namely, his identification with the heavenly powers that try to stop the ascension of the visionary. In the texts that are part of our corpus of comparison, although one does not find the exact word ⲧⲉⲗⲱⲛⲏⲥ, or any other kind of designation of a toll-collector working as guardian of gates in heaven or celestial spheres, there are, however, examples of heavenly powers trying to disturb the visionary's ascent.

In the aforementioned report of the ascension in § 65 of the *Sahidic Life of Antony*,[140] this motif is also present. This particular part of the paragraph reads as follows:

> Some other beings, very evil and bitter, were standing in the air; they wanted to seize him so he could not pass by them and go on past them. When those who were leading him fought against them, the evil ones attempted to take an accounting of him in order to find out if he was in their hands or accountable to them. But when those evil ones demanded that Antony give an account of himself from the day he was born, those leading him stopped them and said to them, 'The Lord has wiped clean what concerns him from the day of his birth, [but] from the day he became a monk and vowed himself to God, from that day on you may take an accounting from him'. When those who were accusing him were unable to establish anything or reproach him, the path immediately became free for him and they could not hold him (*Sahidic Life of Antony* § 65).[141]

In § 66, Antony is not performing the ascension himself, but he undergoes a visionary experience in which he sees the ascension of others being stopped by certain beings:

> He looked up and saw a huge and fearsome being, very ugly in appearance, standing before and reaching to the clouds while some beings were ascending as though they had wings. That giant stretched out his hands. Some beings he stopped, while others flew past and ascended to heaven where they were

[140] See sections 7.1.1 and 7.1.2.

[141] Vivian's translation in Vivian and Athanassakis, *The Life of Antony*, 192.194. ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉⲣⲉϩⲉⲛⲕⲟⲟⲩⲉ ⲁϩⲉⲣⲁⲧⲟⲩ ⲉⲡⲁⲏⲣ ⲉⲩϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲧⲉ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉⲩⲥⲁϣⲉ ⲉⲩⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲉⲁⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲧⲣⲉϥⲥⲓⲛⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉϫⲱⲱⲃⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲩ. ⲛⲉⲧϫⲓⲙⲟⲉⲓⲧ ⲇⲉ ϩⲏⲧϥ̄ ⲛⲉⲩ<ⲟⲩ>ⲱϣ ⲉ<ϯ>ⲟⲩⲃⲏⲡⲉ ⲁⲛⲉⲑⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ϫⲟⲛⲧⲟⲩ ⲉϥϣⲡ ⲛⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ϫⲉⲕⲁⲥ ⲉⲩⲉⲉⲓⲙⲉ ϫⲉϥ̄ⲛⲧⲟⲟⲧⲟⲩ ⲏ ϥⲟ ⲛϩⲩⲡⲉⲩⲑⲩⲛⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲩ. ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲣⲟⲩ<ⲟⲩ>ⲱϣ ⲇⲉ ⲛϭⲓⲛⲉⲑⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲉϥϣⲡ ⲛⲙⲙⲁϥ ϫⲓⲛⲡⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩϫⲡⲟϥ ⲁⲛⲉⲧϫⲓⲙⲟⲉⲓⲧ ϩⲏⲧϥ̄ ⲕⲱⲗⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲉⲩϫⲱ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲩ ϫⲉⲛⲁϫⲓⲛⲉⲡⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲙⲉⲛ ⲙⲡⲉϥϫⲡⲟ ⲁⲡϫⲟⲉⲓⲥ ϥⲟⲧⲟⲩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ· ϫⲓⲛⲉⲡⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁϥⲣ̄ⲙⲟⲛⲁⲭⲟⲥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁϥⲉⲣⲏⲧ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲛⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲉϯⲥⲧⲓ ⲛⲏⲧⲛ ⲉϥϣⲡ ⲛⲙⲙⲁϥ ϫⲓⲛⲉⲡⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ. ⲧⲟⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲧⲕⲁⲧⲏⲅⲟⲣⲉⲓ ⲙⲙⲟϥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲣⲟⲩⲧⲙ̄ⲉϣϭ̄ⲙ̄ϭⲟⲙ ⲉⲧⲁϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲁⲧⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲏ ⲉϫⲡⲓⲟϥ ϩⲛⲧⲉⲩⲛⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲁⲧⲉϩⲓⲏ ϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲛⲁϥ ⲛⲣⲙ̄ϩⲉ ⲙⲡⲟⲩⲉϣⲁⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲛⲧⲉⲩⲛⲟⲩ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲙⲙⲓⲛ ⲙⲙⲟϥ ⲉϣϫⲉ ⲉϥⲁϩⲉⲣⲁⲧϥ ⲉⲧⲉϥϩⲉ ⲉⲡⲉϣⲗⲏⲗ ⲛϭⲓⲁⲛⲧⲱⲛⲓⲟⲥ. (Garitte, *S. Antonii Vitae Versio Sahidica*, 70-71).

received. Because of this, that Giant gnashed his teeth, but he rejoiced over those who fell back beneath him (*Sahidic Life of Antony* § 66).[142]

In what follows, the *Life of Antony* § 66 tells that Antony understood that what he was seeing was the ascent of souls being stopped by the giant. Thus, once more, we find a motif in Codex V – certainly in the *Apocalypse of Paul* and possibly in the *First Apocalypse of James* – that echoes the hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison. Thus late antique Coptic readers would probably not find strange the existence of evil otherworldly beings who tried to stop the ascension of the hero/holy man when they read the *Apocalypse of Paul* – and maybe the *First Apocalypse of James* – if they already knew this motif from the *Sahidic Life of Antony*, for example. Consequently, one could expect this motif to evoke in the memory of these same late antique Coptic readers the malign beings from the aforementioned paragraphs of the *Sahidic Life of Antony*.

Similarly, the vision in the *Apocalypse of Paul* in which the visionary sees the judgement of souls being carried out by angels in the fourth heaven (NH V 20, 5-21, 22), as well as that of the fifth heaven, in which he sees angels torturing souls (NH V 22, 2-10), could also evoke the evil beings mentioned above. These two specific cases will be discussed in more detail in section 7.2.2.2.

7.2. Angelology and Mediated Revelations

7.2.1. Epiphanies

7.2.1.1. The Old Man in the *Apocalypse of Paul* (NH V 22, 25-30)

The bottom of Codex V page 22, despite its fragmentary character, partially preserves an account in which the visionary, ascending to the seventh heaven, beholds a heavenly and shining personage. Taking into consideration what was preserved in the manuscript and what

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[142] Vivian's translation in Vivian and Athanassakis, *The Life of Antony*, 196. ⲁϥϭⲱϣⲧ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲟⲩⲁ ⲉⲩⲗⲁϣⲓⲏⲡⲉ ⲛϭⲁⲓⲉ ⲉⲙⲁⲧⲉ ϩⲙⲡⲉϥⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲉϥⲟ ⲛϩⲟⲧⲉ ⲉϥⲁϩⲉⲣⲁⲧϥ̄ ⲉϥⲡⲏϩ ϣⲁⲛⲉⲕⲗⲟⲟⲗⲉ ⲉⲣⲉϩⲟⲓⲛⲉ ⲃⲏⲕ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ ⲉⲣⲉϩⲛ̄ⲧⲛ̄ϩ ⲙⲙⲟⲩ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲛⲉϥⲥⲟⲟⲩⲧⲛ̄ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥϭⲓϫ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ· ϩⲟⲓⲛⲉ ⲙⲉⲛ ⲛⲉϥⲕⲱⲗⲩ ⲙⲙⲟⲩ· ϩⲉⲛⲕⲟⲟⲩⲉ ⲇⲉ ⲉⲩϩⲁⲗ ⲁⲩ̄ⲣ̄ϩⲓⲧⲡⲉ ⲙⲙⲟϥ ⲉⲧⲣⲉⲩϫⲓⲧⲟⲩ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ. ⲁⲩⲱ ϩⲙ̄ⲡⲁⲓ ⲛⲉϥϩⲣⲟⲭⲣⲝ̄ ⲛⲛⲉϥⲟⲃϩⲉ ⲛϭⲓⲡⲗⲁϣⲓⲏ ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ· ϣⲁϥⲣⲁϣⲉ ⲇⲉ ⲛⲧⲟϥ ⲉϫⲛⲛⲉⲧϩⲏⲩ ⲉⲡⲉⲥⲏⲧ ϩⲁⲣⲁⲧϥ̄ (Garitte, *S. Antonii Vitae Versio Sahidica,* 72).

was likely restored, we can read the passage as follows: "[I saw] an old ma[n   ] [….] the light [   ] [……] white [   ] in the seventh heaven, [sh]ining [seven] times more than the sun" (NH V 22, 25-30).[143]

The similarities of this shining character with the well-known Ancient of Days, the famous and emblematic personage in Jewish apocalyptic literature is obvious.[144] And indeed, in his commentary, Kaler does not hesitate in identifying this character with the Ancient of Days, saying that

> here, in the climax of the *Apocalypse of Paul*, Paul is confronted by an Old Man. Despite the considerable damage to the text at the start of this section, it is nonetheless clear that this Old Man is intended to represent the Judeo-Christian creator-god as portrayed in the apocalyptic writings (most famously in the book of Daniel, ch. 7).[145]

One must bear in mind that Kaler is mainly concerned with the original context of composition in Greek of the *Apocalypse of Paul*, and not with its meaning for a Coptic audience. Nevertheless, in general terms, the shining Old Man in the seventh heaven of the *Apocalypse of Paul* may also have evoked the Ancient of Days of *Daniel* 7 for a Coptic audience. In Daniel, the Ancient of Days is described as follows: "As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire" (*Daniel* 7: 9).

In relation to the Ancient of Days in *1 Enoch* 14, 20 mentioned above, despite his similarities with the Old Man in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the possibility that the former could evoke the latter in a given late antique Coptic context is nothing more than a remote

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[143] Kaler's translation in Michale Kaler, *Flora Tells a Story: The Apocalypse of Paul and Its Contexts* (SCJ 19. Waterloo (Ont.): Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008), 4. [ⲁⲓ̈ⲛⲁ]ⲩ ⲉⲩϩ̅ⲗ̅ⲗⲟ ⲛ̅ⲣⲱ[ⲙⲉ…..] [….]ⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ· [……] [….] ⲧⲉ ⲟⲩⲟⲃⲉϣ· ⲛⲉⲣ[ⲉ….] [….]ⲧ̅ⲉ̅ⲛ̅ϯⲙⲉϩⲥⲁϣϥⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲉ […] [….] ⲛ̅ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲛ̅ϩⲟⲩⲟ ⲉⲡⲣⲏ ⲛ̅[ⲥⲁϣ]ϥ̅ ⲛ̅ⲕⲱⲃ ⲛ̅ⲥⲟⲡ[·] (Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 108).

[144] The most famous examples can be probably found in *Daniel* 7:9 and *1Enoch* 14, 20.

[145] Rosensthiel and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 250-251.

possibility, since we have nothing that could demonstrate that *1 Enoch* was circulating in Coptic at the time of compilation and reception of Codex V.

Going back to the analyses suggested by Kaler, one must recall that he stresses that the *Apocalypse of Paul* makes use of two traditions – the apocalyptic and the Gnostic – in its description of the Old Man in the seventh heaven. The fact that the Old Man is placed in the seventh heaven and is described similarly to the Ancient of Days is a clear reference to the Almighty Jewish God, the creator, the one who is normally met and beheld at the climax of Jewish and Christian apocalypses.[146] The Gnostic tradition evoked by Kaler is the basis of the Gnostic vision of this Old Man: he is identified with the creator, but from a Gnostic point of view, he is not the ultimate god, but rather the last obstacle to be overcome. From a Gnostic point of view the Old Man is thus not the climax itself; the climax is rather the fact that he, the Old Man, is surpassed, allowing Paul to reach the furthest celestial regions. In short, the Old Man in the *Apocalypse of Paul,* at least from its point of view of original composition, is, one could say, a negative character, someone who personifies the creator of the Gnostic mythology.

Our concern here is focused, however, on the possible signification that this Old Man could have in a Coptic environment, which other writings and characters he could evoke in the mind of a late antique Coptic reader. The answer to these questions might be found in the comparison between this shining Old Man in the seventh heaven portrayed in the *Apocalypse of Paul* and other characters described in similar terms in late antique Coptic hagiographies.

One could identify the main component of this motif as the appearance of a divine or celestial being, i.e. an epiphany, which is normally described as shining; sometimes, this brightness is compared to the sun, emphasizing the fact that the being shines "seven times more than the sun", as expressed in the *Apocalypse of Paul*. Sometimes, this brightness is

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[146] For a survey, see Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 16-20.

expressed by the color white, once again, depicted in the *Apocalypse of Paul*[147] and in *Daniel*. The book of *Daniel* also makes use of fire metaphors to emphasize the brightness of the Ancient of Days, metaphors that are apparently lacking in the Old Man of the *Apocalypse of Paul* but that could be possibly evoked in the mind of a late antique Coptic reader if one considers the importance of the passage in *Daniel*.

In the case of the description found in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the following key words or expressions can be identified: light (ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ), white or being white (ⲟⲩⲟⲃⲉϣ) and, shining seven times more than the sun (ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲩⲟ ⲉⲡⲣⲏ ⲛ̄ [ⲥⲁϣ]ϥ̄ ⲛ̄ⲕⲱⲃ ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲡ). At any rate, what is important here is that all these expressions and metaphors used to express the brightness of these beings and their respective epiphanies are a manner of stressing their grandness (whether they are God or angels) and the fact that they do not belong to the earthly world. Danielou has rightly observed that

> les vêtements blancs sont symboles de l'état du corps ressuscité. Grégoire de Nysse les compare à la tunique du Seigneur, brillante comme le soleil, qui le revêtait de pureté et d'incorruptibilité, quand il monta à la montagne de la transfiguration (P.G. XLIV 100 C.). De son côté, Tertullien rapproche le thème de celui des vêtements blancs dans l'Apocalypse johannique (XIV, 4), qui est pour lui symbole de résurrection.[148]

The examples selected from our comparison corpus show that late antique Coptic hagiographies are full of shining characters. These examples also show that almost certainly no "Gnostic readings" of this Old Man were possible in a late antique Coptic context. He would likely evoke rather the Ancient of Days of *Daniel* – and maybe that of *1Enoch*, if that text was known in Coptic – but hardly the Gnostic creator. In some cases, this motif could also be used to describe not only God, but celestial creatures in general, such as angels,[149] or

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[147] The lacunas do not allow us to know for sure what exactly is being used to define the whiteness of the Old Man in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, we only know that he is as white as something. Murdock and MacRae were more audacious and restored in line 27-28 "garment" (ϩⲟⲉⲓⲧⲉ) and "throne" (ⲑⲣⲟ][ⲛⲟⲥ), obviously in the light of the motif of the "Ancient of Days" discussed above.
[148] Jean Daniélou, "Terre et Paradis chez les Pères de l'Église," *Eranos-Jb* 22 (1953), 465.
[149] And in fact, this was not a peculiarity of Egyptian literature, since this motif is a commonplace in the description of epiphanies in general, even in the New Testament. See, for example, the angel who rolled back the stone of Jesus' tomb; according to *Mt* 28:3, "his appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow".

other types or characters, such as the Virgin Mary, the apostles, the prophets or the patriarchs, as we will see below. More precisely, it seems that in certain cases the motif of a shining Old Man was actually used to portray the image of holy men, sometimes after their death, rather than to represent God.

This hypothesis is also supported by the fact that bright garments are not used to show the celestial character of holy men or non-divine beings only in Coptic literature. As Alin Suciu has argued – in an article on the so-called *Gospel of the Savior*, comparing it to Coptic texts that belong to the literary cycles known as *Dormitio Mariae* and *Transitio Mariae* – references to bright garments and similar expressions abound in Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature, in which the visionary is clothed in priestly or liturgical garments, which allows him to take part with a certain dignity in the celestial liturgy.[150] In the specific case of Coptic texts belonging to the cycles cited above, the apostles and the Virgin are normally those who are clothed in such garments.[151]

Before quoting some examples in the hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison, we should first mention that in *Eugnostos*, the Father is described with the help of the imagery of light and brightness: "the Father [Who Put Forth] Himself, who [is] [the] principle that the Word dwells, full of shining, [ineffable] light" (NH V 5, 25-29).[152] This passage is not exactly an epiphany, but rather a description of the Father. The fact that he is described with the help of the imagery of light and shining (ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲟⲉ[ⲓⲛ] [ⲉϥⲣ̄ⲟⲩ]ⲟⲉⲓⲛ) is significant and could mean that for a late antique Coptic audience God possessed the aforementioned characteristics. However, as we are about to see, these characteristics are not limited to the Father in late antique Coptic literature. Still in *Eugnostos*, for example, the

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[150] Suciu, "O *Evangelho do Salvador* (P. Berol. 22220) no seu contexto," 239-240. See also Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 20-23.

[151] Suciu, "O *Evangelho do Salvador* (P. Berol. 22220) no seu contexto," 239-240.

[152] Parrott's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices III, 3-4 and V*, 80.82. ⲡⲓⲱⲧ [ⲉⲧ]ⲡ̄[ⲣ̄ⲣⲉ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ] ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲟⲩⲁⲁϥ· ⲉⲧ[ⲉ] [ⲟⲩ]ⲁⲣⲭⲏ ⲡ[ⲉ] ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡϣⲁϫⲉ ϣⲟ[ⲟⲡ] [ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧ]ϥ̄· ⲉϥⲙⲉϩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲟⲉ[ⲓⲛ] [ⲉϥⲣ̄ⲟⲩ]ⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲛ̄[ⲛ]ⲁⲧ[ϣⲁ]ϫ[ⲉ ⲙ̄][ⲙⲟϥ (Pasquier, *Eugnoste*, 70).

angels are also described as such: "The whole multitude of angels, who are called 'Assembly of the Holy Ones,' are the lights (ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲉⲟⲓⲛ) and shadowless ones" (NH V 9, 13-16).[153]

There are also a number examples in the hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison in which otherworldly beings are portrayed with the help of this motif. In a passage in the *Letter of Ammon*, Theodore is awakened up by an angel and has a vision that is described with the help of the whiteness/brightness motif:

> In due time, he finally decided to rest [his] body. He sat down by the door of the monastery church and fell asleep (…) An angel of the Lord appeared and woke him up saying, "Follow me" (…) he entered the church and saw [it] completely filled with light. And a multitude of angels were gathered together in the place where the priests offer service to God (…) he observed both the light and the assembled angels departing (*Letter of Ammon* § 14).[154]

Also in the *Letter of Ammon*, after having heard about the Arians Theodore has a vision of the Trinity: "And as he prayed, he saw [what looked] like three pillars of light, entirely equal, having identity with each other" (*Letter of Ammon* § 11).[155] These examples can be compared to the Old Man in the *Apocalypse of Paul* only in relation to the light, since they do not present beings, but rather places or objects that are luminous. Our corpus of comparison, however, has many examples of beings that are described with the help of this motif.

In S[1], the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are described in this way:

> He looked and saw three men, luminous (ⲛ̄ⲣⲙ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ), eminent, glorious, and grey-haired who came to take the sick man. As he was amazed, the angel told him, 'These are the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob'. And immediately, they

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[153] Parrott's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices III, 3-4 and V, 1*, 106.108). ⲡⲁϣⲉ̈ⲓ ⲧⲏⲣϥ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲉϣⲁⲩⲙⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲉⲣⲟⲟⲩ ⲭⲉⲧⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ⲛⲏ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲉⲟⲓⲛ ⲙ̄ⲛⲛⲓⲁⲧϩⲁⲉⲓ[ⲃ]ⲉ (Pasquier, *Eugnoste*, 78). See also NH V 16, 10-11.
[154] Goehring's translation in Goehring, *Letter of Ammon*, 166. For the Greek text of the passage in question see Goehring, *Letter of Ammon*, 134.
[155] Goehring's translation in Goehring, *Letter of Ammon*, 165. For the Greek text of the passage in question see Goehring, *Letter of Ammon*, 132.

took the soul of the sick brother, carrying it up to heaven with great glory (S¹ §
28).[156]

One should note that an expression that is constructed with "light" (ⲛ̄ⲣⲙ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ) is used to
express the glory of the three patriarchs, which connects them to the description of the Old
Man in the *Apocalypse of Paul*.

The *Life of Shenoute* also provides a couple of examples of Shenoute contemplating
shining beings. In any of these cases, the shining being is the God creator. In the first example
quoted here, the shining being is Paul:

> One day, our father the prophet apa Shenoute was engaged in their worship at
> night, and after he had completed the worship he rested for a little while and saw
> an apparition sent by the Lord. It was like this: he saw standing before him a man
> wholly filled with great glory. There was a great fragrance coming forth from his
> mouth and his face shone with light like the sun (ⲛⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲙ̄ⲫⲣⲏϯ ⲙ̄ⲫⲣⲏ)
> (…) The shining (ⲛⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ) figure replied "I am Paul, the apostle of Christ" (§
> 138b).[157]

In this case, the character that appears to Shenoute is also described with the help of the
brightness motif; this time, the similarity with the description of the Old Man in the
Apocalypse of Paul is even closer, since the imagery used in Bohairic refers not only to the
light (ⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ), but also to the sun (ⲣⲏ).

Later, in paragraph 146, the *Life of Shenoute* reports an account in which Shenoute sees
a shining woman, who is later said to be the Virgin Mary:[158] "Now that night, when the Old
Man had finished praying and lay down for a little while, he saw with amazement a very

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[156] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 441. ⲁϥϭⲱϣⲧ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉϣⲟⲙⲛⲧ ⲛ̄ⲣⲙ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲉⲩϫⲟⲥⲉ
ⲉⲩϩⲁⲉⲟⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲣⲙ̄ ⲛ̄ⲥⲕⲓⲙ· ⲁⲩⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲥⲁⲡⲉⲧϣⲟⲡⲉ· ⲡⲉϫⲉⲡⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲇⲉ ⲛⲁϥ ⲉϥϩⲁϣⲡⲏⲣⲉ· ϫⲉⲛⲁ̈ⲛⲉ ⲁⲃⲣⲁϩⲁⲙ [ⲙ]ⲛ̄ⲓ̈ⲥⲁⲁⲕ
ⲙⲛ̄ⲓ̈ⲁⲕⲱⲃ [ⲙ]ⲡⲁⲧⲣⲓⲁⲣⲭⲉⲥ· ⲁⲩⲱ [ⲛ̄ⲧ]ⲉⲩⲛⲟⲩ ⲁⲩϥⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲯⲩ[ⲭⲏ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲟⲛ ⲉⲧϣ]ⲱⲛⲉ [ⲁⲩⲛ̄ⲧϥ ⲉϩⲣⲁ̈ⲓ ⲉⲧⲡⲏ] (Lefort,
"Glanules pachômiennes," 114).

[157] Translation in Bell, *The Life of Shenoute*, 80. ⲁϣⲱⲡⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲛⲟⲩⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲉⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲙⲡⲣⲟⲫⲏⲧⲏⲥ ⲁⲡⲁ ϣⲉⲛⲟⲩϯ
ⲓⲣⲓ ⲛⲛⲉϥⲥⲩⲛⲁϫⲓⲥ ϧⲉⲛⲡⲓⲉϫⲱⲣϩ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲉⲧⲁϥⲭⲁϯⲥⲩⲛⲁϫⲓⲥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲁϥⲛⲕⲟⲧ ⲛⲟⲩⲕⲟⲩϫⲓ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲟⲩϭⲱⲣⲡ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲧⲉⲡϭ̄ⲥ̄.
ⲙⲡⲁⲓⲣⲏϯ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲟⲩⲣⲱⲙⲓ ⲉϥⲙⲉϩ ⲛⲱⲟⲩ ⲧⲏⲣϥ ⲉⲙⲁϣⲱ ⲉϥⲟϩⲓ ⲉⲣⲁⲧϥ ⲙⲡⲉϥⲙⲑⲟ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲉⲣⲉⲟⲩⲟⲛ ⲟⲩⲛⲓϣϯ ⲛⲥⲑⲟⲓ ⲛⲟⲩϥⲓ
ⲛⲏⲟⲩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϧⲉⲛⲣⲱϥ ⲉⲣⲉⲡⲉϥϩⲟ ϩⲓⲁⲕⲧⲓⲛ ⲛⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲙ̄ⲫⲣⲏϯ ⲙ̄ⲫⲣⲏ (...) ⲁϥⲉⲣⲟⲩⲱ ⲛϫⲉⲡⲓⲣⲱⲙⲓ ⲛⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲉϥϫⲱ
ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ϫⲉⲁⲛⲟⲕⲡⲉ ⲡⲁⲩⲗⲟⲥ ⲡⲓⲁⲡⲟⲥⲧⲟⲗⲟⲥ ⲛⲧⲉⲡⲭ̄ⲥ̄ (Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Vita Bohairice*, 61).

[158] Later, in the same paragraph, the woman says "the heart of my Lord and my Son is satisfied with you…"
Translation in Bell, *The Life of Shenoute*, 83.

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beautiful woman whose whole body shone with light like the sun (ⲛⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲙ̅ⲫⲣⲏϯ ⲙ̅ⲫⲣⲏ)" (§146a).[159] Once more, in Bohairic we have a passage in which the motif discussed here is described with the help of light (ⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ) and the sun (ⲣⲏ).

In the *History of Monks of Upper Egypt* one also finds such descriptions of otherworldly beings. It is recounted, for example, that Apa Macedonius had a vision in which he saw "A man of light" place a crown on his head (*Histories* § 37). The Coptic word to express light, as in the case of the *Apocalypse of Paul,* is ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ. Later, it is also said that "(…) a man of light (ⲛⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ) came to us, with a book in his hand (…)That man of light (ⲛⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ) took hold of me with his hand of light (ⲛⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ)" (*History of the Monks of Upper Egypt* § 40).[160] In all three cases, the word ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ is used. In the *Life of Onnophrius*, during his journey, Paphnouti meets four anchorites who tell him how they ended up in the inner desert. They say that "when we had gone some distance into the desert, an ecstasy suddenly came upon us: a man, wholly of light (ⲁⲩⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲉϥⲟ ⲛ̅ ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲧⲏⲣϥ̅) took us by the hand and brought us to this place" (*Life of Onnophrius* § 31).[161]Once again, the glory of the man is described with the help of the word ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ.

As one might expect, this motif is echoed in Coptic Epic Passions. In the *Martyrdoms of Saints Paese and Thecla,* for example, an angel – praising the charity of Thecla, who is said to clothe the naked – tells the martyr that

> even as thou clothed the naked, I will make you also to be clothed, both thy body and thy soul, in the garments of light; and whosoever shall give graveclothes to your bodies, I will cover their souls with the garments of light, that no power of

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[159] Bell's translation (with changes) in Bell, *The Life of Shenoute*, 82. ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲓ ⲇⲉ ϧⲉⲛⲡⲓⲉϫⲱⲣϩ ⲉⲧⲉⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲉⲧⲁⲡⲓϧⲉⲗⲗⲟ ⲕⲏⲛ ⲉϣⲗⲏⲗ ⲁϥⲣⲁⲕϥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲟⲩⲕⲟⲩϫⲓ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ϧⲉⲛⲟⲩⲧⲱⲙⲧ ⲉⲟⲩⲥϩⲓⲙⲓ ⲉⲛⲉⲥⲱⲥ ⲙⲙⲁϣⲱ ⲉⲣⲉⲡⲉⲥⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲧⲏⲣϥ ϩⲓⲁⲕⲧⲓⲛ ⲛⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲙ̅ⲫⲣⲏϯ ⲙ̅ⲫⲣⲏ (Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Vita Bohairice*, 64).

[160] Vivian's translation with changes in Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egyp*, 91. ⲁϥⲉⲓ ⲛ̅ϭⲓ ⲟⲩⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲛⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲉⲣⲉ ⲟⲩϫⲱⲱⲙⲉ· ⲛⲧⲟⲟⲧϥ̅· (...)[ⲁϥϫ]ⲓⲧ· ϩⲛ̅ ⲛⲉϥϭⲓⲝ· ⲛⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ· ⲛ̅ϭⲓ ⲡⲣⲱⲙ[ⲉ] ⲛⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ· (Budge, *Miscellaneous Texts*, 449).

[161] Vivian's translation with changes in Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, 163. ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲣ ⲛ̅ⲟⲩⲉ ⲇⲉ ⲉ ϩⲟⲩⲛ ϩⲙ̅ ⲡⲧⲟⲟⲩ· ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲩⲛⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲉⲕⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲥ ϭⲉ ⲉ ϩⲣⲁⲓ̈ ⲉ ϫⲱⲛ· ⲁⲩⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲉϥⲟ ⲛ̅ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲧⲏⲣϥ̅ ⲁⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ ⲛ̅ⲧⲛ̅ϭⲓⲝ· ⲁϥⲛ̅ⲧⲛ̅ ⲉ ⲡⲉⲓ ⲙⲁ. (Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 220).

darkness prevail over them (*Martyrdom of Saints Paese and Thecla*, Pierpont Morgan M 591 51Ri-51Rii).[162]

In this passage, the angel promises the garments of light to Thecla and to those who will be responsible for her burial and also the burial of Paesa. The garments of light will be their guarantee against the powers of darkness. In Coptic, the garments are qualified as being of light (ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ).

In the *Martyrdom of Saint Mercurius*, the martyr has a vision in which he sees a man of light; it is said that he "saw the vision of a man of light; and the man was tall, and he was dressed in gorgeous apparel, and he held a drawn sword in his right hand" (Oriental 6801 fol 4a).[163] Once more, we find the Coptic word ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ.

The examples could be multiplied almost endlessly in Coptic Epic Martyrdoms descriptions of epiphanies of otherworldly beings. In the *Martyrdom of Eusebius*, one of the main characters, Justus, relates that "Et je vis entrer dans la maison un homme grand, tout lumineux (ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ), semblable à un roi; il était accompagné de deux jeunes gens ressemblant à des soldats; je vis une grande lumière (ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ) (se répandre) dans la maison" (C.V. 58, fol. 38).[164] We have once more the motif in question describe by the Coptic word – this time in Boharic – ⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ. Also in the *Martyrdom of Eusebius*, Jesus appears to Eusebius and his companions in a dream; the apparition is described by means of the motif discussed here: "Après le repas ils s'endormirent tous ensemble (…) À minuit, voici que le bon Sauveur leur

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[162] Translation in Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices*, 152-153). ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲣ̄ϩⲱⲃ̄ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲧⲕⲏ ⲕⲁϩⲏⲩ, ϯⲛⲁⲧⲣⲉⲩϩⲱⲃ̄ ϩⲱⲱⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩⲯⲩⲭⲏ ϩⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲉⲛⲧⲏⲙⲁ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁϯ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲕⲁⲓⲥⲉ ⲉⲡⲉⲧⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲙⲁ, ϯⲛⲁⲥⲕⲏⲡⲁⲍⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲩⲯⲩⲭⲏ ϩⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲉⲛⲧⲏⲙⲁ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ϫⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲗⲁⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ⲇⲩⲛⲁⲙⲓⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲡⲕⲁⲕⲉ ϭⲙ̄ϭⲟⲙ ⲉⲣⲟⲟⲩ. (Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices*, 35).

[163] Translation in Budge, *Miscellaneous Texts*, 811. ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲩⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲉϥϫⲟⲥⲉ· ⲉⲩ ⲛ̄ϩⲉⲛϩⲃⲥⲱ ⲉⲩⲡⲣⲉⲓⲱⲟⲩ ϩⲓ ϫⲱϥ· ⲁϥⲁⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲥⲏϥⲉ ⲉⲥⲧⲟⲕⲙ̄ ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲉϥϭⲓϫ ⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲛⲁⲙ· (Budge, *Miscellaneous Texts*, 233).

[164] Hyvernat's translation in Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de L'Égypte*, 4. ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲁⲓⲛⲁⲩ ⲉ̄ⲟⲩⲛⲓϣϯ ⲛ̄ⲣⲱⲙⲓ ⲉ̄ⲧⲁϥ ⲉ̄ϧⲟⲩⲛ ⲉ̄ⲡⲓⲏⲓ ⲉϥⲟⲓ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲉ̄ⲙⲁϣⲱ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲙⲟⲧ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲟⲩⲣⲟ ⲉⲣⲉ ⲟⲩⲟⲛ <ⲟⲩⲁ̄ⲗⲟⲩ> ⲃ̄ ⲙⲟϣⲓ ⲛⲉⲙⲁϥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲙⲟⲧ ⲛ̄ϩⲁⲛⲙⲁⲧⲟⲓ ⲁⲓⲛⲁⲩ ⲉ̄ⲟⲩⲛⲓϣϯ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ϧⲉⲛ ⲡⲓⲏⲓ (Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 4).

apparut, monté sur un char lumineux, ayant Michel à sa droite, Gabriel à sa gauche. Et l'endroit tout entier devint sept fois plus lumineux que le soleil" (C.V. 58 fol, 42).[165]

This passage is particularly interesting, since, similarly to the passage in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, it makes use of the expression "brighter than the sun by seven times" or its Bohairic equivalent (ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲩⲟ ⲉⲡⲣⲏ ⲛ̄ⲥⲁϣϥ̄ ⲛ̄ⲕⲱⲃ ⲛ̄ⲥⲟⲡ in the Sahidic of Codex V and "ⲉⲣⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲉϩⲟⲧⲉ ⲫⲣⲏ ⲍ̅ ⲛ̄ⲕⲱⲃ ⲛ̄ⲥⲟⲡ" in the Bohairic of C.V. 58), even though it is not directly applied to a being. In the *Martyrdom of Apa Sarapamon*, an analogous expression is used to describe an epiphany of the Son of God: "Et aussitôt voici que le Fils de Dieu descendit du ciel avec Michel (…) et tout l'endroit où ils étaient devint sept fois plus lumineux que sous l'éclat du soleil (C.V. 63, fol. 178).[166] Once more, a similar expression in Bohairic (ⲉⲣⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲙ̄ⲫⲣⲏϯ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲫⲣⲏ ⲍ̅ ⲛ̄ⲕⲱⲃ ⲛ̄ⲥⲟⲡ) is used in the description.

As Rosenstiehl has remarked, this particular detail – i.e. the brightness that shines seven times more than the sun – is not found in the famous descriptions of the Ancient of Days in *Daniel* 7;[167] however, the application of this property to places – similarly to the cases found in Coptic Epic Passions – or to otherworldly beings – similarly to the case in the *Apocalypse of Paul* – can be found in apocryphal texts that have been preserved in Coptic, such as the *Visio Sancti Pauli*, and the *Epistula Apostolorum*.[168]

In the *Visio Sancti Pauli*, the motif appears in the description of the city of Christ: "the city of Christ, which shone with light that was seven times brighter than the sun" (Oriental

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[165] Hyvernat's translation in Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 9. ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲙⲉⲛⲉⲛⲥⲁ ⲡⲓⲁ̅ⲣⲓⲥⲧⲟⲛ ⲁⲩⲉⲛⲕⲟⲧ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ (…) ϧⲉⲛ ⲧϥⲁϣⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉ̅ϫⲱⲣϩ ϩⲏⲡⲡⲉ ⲓⲥ ⲡⲓⲥⲱⲧⲏⲣ ⲛ̄ⲁ̅ⲅⲁⲑⲟⲥ ⲁϥⲟⲩⲟⲛϩϥ ⲉ̅ⲣⲱⲟⲩ ⲉϥⲧⲁⲗⲏⲟⲩⲧ ⲉ̅ⲟⲩϩⲁⲣⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲉ̅ⲣⲉ ⲙⲓⲭⲁⲏⲗ ⲥⲁⲟⲩ̄ⲓⲛⲁⲙ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲉ̅ⲣⲉ ⲅⲁⲃⲣⲓⲏⲗ ⲥⲁϫⲁϭⲏ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲁ̅ ⲡⲓⲙⲁ ⲧⲏⲣϥ ⲉⲣⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲉϩⲟⲧⲉ ⲫⲣⲏ ⲍ̅ ⲛ̄ⲕⲱⲃ ⲛ̄ⲥⲟⲡ (Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 9).

[166] Hyvernart's translation in Hyvernart, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 313. ϧⲉⲛ ϯⲟⲩⲛⲟⲩ ⲓⲥ ⲡϣⲏⲣⲓ ⲙ̄ⲫϯ ⲁϥⲓ̅ ⲉ̅ⲃⲟⲗϧⲉⲛ ⲧⲫⲉ ⲛⲉⲙ ⲙⲓⲭⲁⲏⲗ (…) ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲁ̅ⲡⲓⲙⲁ ⲧⲏⲣϥ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲭⲏ ⲛ̄ϧⲏⲧϥ ⲉⲣⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲙ̄ⲫⲣⲏϯ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲫⲣⲏ ⲍ̅ ⲛ̄ⲕⲱⲃ ⲛ̄ⲥⲟⲡ (Hyvernart, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 313).

[167] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 59.

[168] See the details in Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 59. In the *Epistula Apostolorum*, Christ announces his second coming saying that he will come as the sun that rises, shining seven times more than it does: ϩⲁⲙⲏⲛ ⲅⲁⲣ ϯϫⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲥ ⲛⲏⲧⲛⲉ ϫⲉ ϯⲛⲏⲩ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲛ̄ⲧϩⲉ ⲛ̄ⲡⲣⲓ ⲉⲧⲡⲣ̄ⲓⲱⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲟⲩ ⲉⲉⲓⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲥⲁϩϥ ⲛ̄ⲕⲱⲃ ⲡⲁⲣⲁⲣⲁϥ ϩⲛ ⲡⲁⲉⲁⲩ (IFAO IX, 5-8).

7022 fol. 30a).[169] Rosenstiehl has noticed that the detail that concerns us here – seven times brighter than the sun – is absent from the Latin and Greek versions.[170] This allows us to formulate the hypothesis that this precise detail in the motif has a particular Coptic background, or at least that it was particularly popular in Coptic.

Having analysed the application of the brightness motif to heavenly beings, we can now proceed to study the application of the same motif being used to describe holy men. The first portrayal of a holy man in which this literary motif appears is found in one of the versions of the *Life of Pachomius*, S[15]. This account describes how Horsiesios, after having what was possibly a revelatory dream,[171] is instructed by an angel to go to the monastery; when he arrives:

> Les frères s'étonnèrent de le [voir…] (…) mais sa face rayonnait de la lumière ; il était très effrayant à voir (…) Apa Bêsarion se prosterna à ses pieds et longuement le pria, en disant : « Je te le jure par le salut d'Apa (Pachôme), comment pourrions-nous demeurer debout et t'écouter parler, car il ne nous est pas possible de regarder ton saint visage » (S[15]. Pp. 173-174).[172]

One should note that ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ is used here to describe the brightness of his face.

In the same account, the text tells that Horsiesius rebuked many brothers who were living in sin. The way in which Horsiesius is portrayed could thus be seen as an attempt to grant him authority, showing his holiness by the means of the brightness motif.

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[169] Translation in Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts*, 1052. ⲧⲡⲟⲗⲓⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲭⲣ̄ⲥ ⲉⲥⲣⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲡⲁⲣⲁ ⲡⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲙ̄ⲡⲣⲏ ⲛⲥⲁϣϥ̄ ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲃ ⲛ̄ⲥⲟⲡ (Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts*, 564).

[170] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 59.

[171] The fragment starts abruptly, thus it is impossible to know for sure what has happened before.

[172] Lefort's translation in Lefort, *Les vies coptes de saint Pachôme*, 401. [ⲛ̄ⲉⲥ]ⲛⲉⲩ ⲇⲉ ⲁⲩⲣ̄ϣ[ⲡ]ⲏⲣⲉ ⲛⲧⲉ[ⲣⲟⲩⲛⲁⲩ] (…) ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲛⲉⲣⲉⲡⲉϥϩⲟ ⲛ̄ⲏⲭⲁⲕⲧⲓⲛ ⲛⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲉⲩϩⲟⲧⲉ ⲉⲙⲁⲧⲉ ⲡⲉ ⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟϥ (…) ⲁⲡⲁ ⲃⲏⲥⲁⲣⲓⲟⲛ ⲇⲉ ⲁϥⲡⲁ[ϩⲧϥ̄] ϩⲁⲛⲉϥⲟⲩ [ⲉⲣⲏ]ⲧⲉ ⲁϥ[ϭⲱ ⲉϥ]ⲥⲟⲡⲥ ⲙ̄[ⲙⲟϥ] ϫ[ⲉϯ]ⲱⲣⲕ ⲛ̄[ⲁⲕ]ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩϫ[ⲁⲓ̈] ⲛⲁⲡⲁ ϫ[ⲉ] ⲛⲁϣ ⲛ̄ϩ[ⲉ ⲧⲛ̄]ⲉϣⲁϩⲉⲣ [ⲁⲧⲛ̄]ⲛ̄ⲧⲛ̄ⲥⲱ[ⲧⲙ̄] ⲉⲣⲟⲕ ⲉⲕϣⲁϫⲉ ⲟⲩⲇⲉ [ⲅⲁⲣ] ⲙ̄ⲛϭⲟⲙ ⲙ̄[ⲙⲟⲛ] ⲉϭⲱϣⲧ ⲉϩ[ⲣⲁⲓ̈] ϩⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲕϩⲟ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vitae Sahidice Scriptae*, 353-354).

Another illustrative example can be found in S[6], when Theodore, after being assigned as the new leader of the *koinonia*, sees Pachomius accompanied by two angels in a vision full of apocalyptic clichés:

> Il se fit ensuite qu'il pria le Seigneur de lui révéler la façon dont il devait agir à l'égard de ceux qui étaient pères des monastères. Pendant qu'il priait il eut une vision et tomba en extase ; il vit le spectre de notre père Pachôme vêtu d'une robe blanche comme neige et accompagné de deux anges du Seigneur (…) En effet, le vêtement qu'il portait en ce moment dans la vision avait un aspect semblable à celui de la pourpre royale, et flamboyait comme des éclairs.[173]

As one could expect, this passage finds a parallel in SBo:

> [Then] he prayed again [to the Lord about] the leaders of the [communities, asking] him to inform him what [he should do with] them. The Lord listened to hi]s request and made a [revelation] to him. An [ecstasy] and a vision [came upo]n him. He [saw the likeness of our fath]er Pachomius [clothed in a garment] white [as snow an]d two angel[s of the Lord]shining bright[ly ± 17 lines missing]. For the garment which he wore at that moment in the vision was like royal purple, flashing like lightning.[174]

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[173] French translation by Lefort in Lefort, *Les vies coptes de saint Pachôme*, 331. ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲇⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲥ ⲁϥϣⲗⲏⲗ ⲉⲡϫⲟⲉⲓⲥ ⲉⲧⲣⲉϥⲧⲟⲩⲛⲉⲓ̈ⲁⲧϥ̄ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲉ̄ⲑⲏ ⲉ̄ⲧⲱϣⲉ ⲉ̄ⲁⲥ ⲉⲧⲃⲉⲛⲉⲧⲟ ⲛ̄ⲉⲓ̈ⲱⲧ ⲉϫⲙ̄ⲙⲉϩⲉⲛⲉⲉ̄ⲧⲉ: ⲉϥϣⲗⲏⲗ ⲇⲉ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲩϩⲟⲣⲟⲙⲁ ⲉⲁⲩⲉⲕⲥ̄ⲧⲁⲥⲓ̈ⲥ ϩⲉ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ̈ ⲉ̄ϫⲱϥ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲡⲉ̄ⲣ̄ⲃ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲛⲉⲓ̈ⲱⲧ ⲡⲁϩⲱⲙ ⲉϥϭⲟⲟⲗⲉ ⲛⲟⲩⲥ̄ⲧⲟⲗⲏ ⲉ̄ⲥⲟⲩⲟ̄ⲃϣ̄ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲛⲟⲩⲭⲓ̈ⲱⲛ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉⲣⲉⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲥ̄ⲛⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲡ̄ϫⲟⲉⲓⲥ ⲛⲙⲁϥ (…) ⲑⲃⲥⲱ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲉⲧⲧⲟ ϩⲓ̈ⲱⲱϥ ⲙⲡⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ϩⲙ̄ⲡϩⲟⲣⲟⲙⲁ ⲛⲉⲣⲉⲡⲉⲥⲉⲓ̈ⲛⲉ ⲟ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲛⲟⲩⲡⲟⲣⲫⲩⲥⲓ̈ⲥ ⲛ̄ⲣⲣⲟ ⲉⲥϯϣⲁϩ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲛ̄ϩⲉⲛⲉⲃⲣⲟϭⲉ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vitae Sahidice Scriptae*, 278-279).

[174] We quote here the English translation, made by Veilleux in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 204, with improvements, mainly concerning the indication of lacunas. This passage corresponds to the beginning of § 144 of Veilleux's translation of the group of manuscripts he calls *SBo*, which combines the translation of what survived of the *Bohairic Life*, filling in the gaps and lacunas, as much as possible, with certain Sahidic fragments, including *S[6],* and the *Arabic Life*. For details, see our chapter on the corpus (section 4.2.1.1). Concerning exclusively the *Bohairic Life*, this passage corresponds to the beginning of § 167, according to the system of paragraphs suggested by Lefort (Lefort, *Les vies coptes de saint Pachôme*). The beginning of this paragraph in the *Bohairic Life* is partially preserved, but lacunas could be restored with the help of *S[6]*. However, approximately seventeen lines from the bottom of page 427 of the manuscript are missing; the text breaks down and becomes unreadable, right after the mention of the bright angel with Pachomius. But the text becomes readable again at the top of page 428, at least until a certain point, then approximately 17 lines are missing again. [ⲙⲉⲛⲉⲛⲥⲱⲥ] ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲁϥⲧⲱⲃϩ ⲉⲡϣⲱⲓ [ϩⲁⲡⲟ̄ⲥ̄ ⲉⲑⲃⲉ] ⲛⲓϩⲏⲅⲟⲩⲙⲉⲛⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲛⲓ [ⲑⲱⲟⲩⲧⲥ ⲭⲉϩ]ⲓⲛⲁ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥⲧⲁⲙⲟϥ ϫⲉⲟⲩ [ⲡⲉⲧⲉϥⲛⲁⲓ̈ⲣⲓ ⲛⲉ]ⲙⲱⲟⲩ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲁⲡⲟ̄ⲥ̄ [ⲥⲱⲧⲉⲙ ⲛ̄ⲥⲁⲡⲉ]ϥ⳨ϩⲟ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲁϥϭⲱⲣⲡ [ⲛⲁϥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ]. [ⲓⲥϩⲏⲡⲡⲉ ⲁⲥⲓ̄ ⲉⲃ̀ⲣⲏ]ⲓ̄ ⲉϫⲱϥ ⲛ̄ϫⲉⲟⲩ [ⲉⲕⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲥ ⲛⲉⲙ]ⲟⲩϩⲟⲣⲁⲙⲁ ⲁϥ[ⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲡⲓⲃⲉⲣⲃ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲛⲓ]ⲱⲧ ⲡⲁⲃ̀ⲱⲙ [ⲉϥϫⲟⲗϩ ⲛⲟⲩϩⲉⲃⲥⲱ ⲉ]ⲥⲟⲩⲟⲃϣ ⲙ̄[ⲫⲣⲏϯ ⲛⲟⲩⲭⲓⲱⲛ ⲟⲩ]ⲟϩ ⲉⲣⲉⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟ[ⲥ ⲥⲛⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲡⲟ̄ⲥ̄ ⲉⲩⲉ]ⲣⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲉⲙ[ⲁϣⲱ ± 17 lines missing] ϯϩⲉⲃⲥⲱ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲉ]ⲧⲁⲓⲛ[ⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲥ ⲉⲧ]ⲧⲟⲓ ⲉϫⲱϥ [ⲃⲉⲛ]ⲡⲓϩⲟⲣ[ⲁⲙⲁ ⲛⲁⲥⲟⲓ ⲙ̄]ⲫⲣⲏϯ ⲛⲟⲩ[ⲡⲟ]ⲣⲫⲩⲣⲁ ⲛ[ⲟⲩⲟⲩⲣⲟⲡⲉ] ⲉⲥⲧⲙⲟⲩⲉ [ⲙ̄]ⲫⲣⲏϯ ⲛⲟⲩ[ⲥⲉⲧⲉⲃ] ⲣⲏⲭ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Bohairice Scripta*, 157-158).

In both accounts, the motif of a shining being that is clothed in white is used to affirm that Pachomius is in heaven and in a certain way authorizes Theodore to perform the designation of new leaders for the Pachomian monasteries. Both accounts portray Pachomius as a holy man who is already in heaven, clothed by glory and accompanied by angels. As stressed above, the motif discussed here, and its characteristics, are used to demonstrate that Pachomius is now in the glory of the afterlife and does not belong to this world anymore.

The accounts add that the angels who were escorting him were "shining brightly". Then, it is said that the garment worn by Pachomius was like "royal purple" – attributing to it a royal characteristic – and "flashing as lightning". It is needless to point out the similarities between this appearance of Pachomius and that of the Old Man in the *Apocalypse of Paul*. Even though the only Coptic term that certainly appears in both accounts is "white" (ⲟⲩⲟⲃⲉϣ in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, ⲟⲩⲟⲃⲱ̅ in S[6] and ⲟⲩⲟⲃϣ in the *Bohairic Life*), the general *mise en scène* of these passages is very similar. There are also some differences, of course. It is not mentioned that Pachomius is in the seventh heaven, as in the case of the Old Man of the *Apocalypse of Paul*; on the other hand, Pachomius is accompanied by angels, while the Old Man is apparently alone in seventh heaven. However, despite these differences, one could imagine that the general setting of the account in the *Apocalypse of Paul* could allow late antique Coptic readers to identify the Old Man with holy men such as Pachomius. That would be already more likely for a late antique Coptic reader than an identification with the Gnostic creator.

In SBo § 65, Pachomius is once more described with the help of the brightness motif:

> That night he had a dream. He saw himself as it were standing over that cistern. He was looking down into it and saw a man shining with glory in the midst of the briskly working brothers. He said to them: 'Receive, all of you, a spirit of obedience and strength, and you, the Old Man, a spirit of faithlessness toward the holy man (SBo § 65).[175]

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[175] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 86. [ⲃ]ⲉⲛⲡⲓⲉϫⲱⲣϩ ⲇⲉ ⲉⲧⲉⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲃⲉⲛⲟⲩⲣⲁⲥⲟⲩⲓ̈ ⲓⲥϫⲉⲕ ⲉϥⲥⲁⲡϣⲱⲓ ⲙ̅ⲡⲓϣⲏⲓ ⲉⲧⲉⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲁϥϫⲟⲩϣⲧ ⲉϧⲣⲏⲓ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲟⲩⲣⲱⲙⲓ ⲉϥⲉⲣⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲃⲉⲛⲡⲉϥⲱⲟⲩ ⲃⲉⲛⲑⲙⲏϯ ⲛ̅ⲛⲓⲥⲛⲏⲟⲩ ⲉⲩⲉⲣϩⲱⲃ ⲃⲉⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩⲛⲟϥ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲛⲁϥϫⲱ ⲙ̅ⲙⲟⲥ ⲛϣⲟⲩⲡⲉ ϫⲉϭⲓⲡ̅ⲛ̅ⲁ̅ ⲛⲱⲧⲉⲙ

Once more, the adjective ⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ is used, this time to describe the glory of the man seen by Pachomius. One should also note that Pachomius is called "Old Man" (ϧⲉⲗⲗⲟ) in this passage, the Bohairic equivalent of ⲅⲗⲗⲟ.

Also in SBo, Pachomius has a vision and relates how after their death the souls of just monks are taken to heaven by angels; it is said that "As for the soul of the holy man, it is beautiful to see and white (ⲟⲩⲟⲃⲱ) as snow" (SBo § 82).[176] Still in SBo, it is possible to read an account about the instruction of Pachomius in which it is said that

> If he repeated the words and their commentary which he had heard from the Lord's mouth, great lights would come out of his (Pachomius') words, shooting out brilliant flashes. And all the brothers would be terribly frightened because of our father Pachomius' words, which resembled flashing lights coming from his mouth" (SBo § 86).[177]

The Bohairic word ⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ appears two times in this passage, describing this time not Pachomius himself, but his words.

In the *History of the Monks of Upper Egypt,* the son of a fisherman asks the help of Apa Aaron, imploring him to save his son, who has got tangled in a fishing net. Apa Aaron tells the fisherman to go back to his son, adding that he is saved. Indeed, when the fisherman goes back, he finds his son safe, and the son tells him that he was saved by a man of light that we could plausibly identify as Apa Aaron himself: "It happened that when I got tangled up in the net and I was about to lose my last breath, I looked and saw a man of light"

ⲙⲙⲉⲧⲣⲉϥⲥⲱⲧⲉⲙ ϩⲓⲭⲟⲙ ⲛⲑⲟⲕ ⲇⲉ ϩⲱⲕ ⲡⲓϧⲉⲗⲗⲟ ⲟⲓⲡⲡⲛⲁ ⲙⲙⲉⲧⲁⲑⲛⲁϩϯ ⲛⲁⲕ ⲉϧⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲛⲏ ⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Bohairice Scripta*, 66).

[176] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 106. ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲛⲑⲟⲥ ϩⲱⲥ ϯⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲛⲧⲉⲡⲓⲣⲱⲙⲓ ⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ ϣⲁⲕϫⲉⲙⲥ ⲉⲛⲉⲥⲱⲥ ϧⲉⲛⲡⲉϭⲓⲛⲓ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲉⲥⲟⲩⲟⲃⲱ ⲙⲫⲣⲏϯ ⲛⲟⲩⲭⲓⲱⲛ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Bohairice Scripta,* 88).

[177] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 112. ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲁϥϣⲁⲛⲥⲁϫⲓ ⲛⲧⲉϥⲧⲁⲟⲩⲟ ⲉⲣⲱⲟⲩ ⲛⲛⲓⲥⲁϫⲓ ⲉⲧⲁϥⲥⲟⲑⲙⲟⲩ ⲛⲧⲉⲡϭⲥ ⲛⲉⲙⲡⲟⲩⲃⲱⲗ ϣⲁⲣⲉⲟⲩⲛⲓϣϯ ⲛⲉⲃⲣⲏϫ ϣⲱⲡⲓ ϧⲉⲛⲛⲓⲥⲁϫⲓ ⲉⲩϩⲓⲉⲃⲣⲏϫ ⲛⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲱⲥⲧⲉ ⲛⲧⲉⲛⲓⲥⲛⲏⲟⲩ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲉⲣϩⲟϯ ⲉⲙⲁϣⲱ ⲉⲑⲃⲉⲛⲓⲥⲁϫⲓ ⲛⲧⲉⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲡⲁϧⲱⲙ ⲉⲩⲟⲓ ⲙⲫⲣⲏϯ ⲛⲟⲩⲉⲃⲣⲏϫ ⲛⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲉⲩⲛⲏⲟⲩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϧⲉⲛⲣⲱϥ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Bohairice Scripta*, 96).

(*Histories* § 101).[178] We find, once more, the word ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ, this time, describing the man who saves the son of the fisherman.

In the *Martyrdom of Apater and Irai*, one of the martyrs has a dream in which he sees his father: "Mon père (Basilides) portait un vêtement royal. Mes yeux étaient éblouis pas la lumière (ⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ) de son visage et par le rayonnement de ses habits (C.V.C. 63 fol. 56-57)."[179]

More examples could probably be found in Coptic literature, but those mentioned above are enough to prove our point: there are numberless descriptions of epiphanies in texts that were circulating in late antique Coptic Egypt, in which the motif of shining beings – sometimes with white clothes or hair – is employed; the presence of this motif is particularly present among the texts of our corpus of comparison. We saw that such descriptions even use the same Coptic words or expressions employed by the description of the Old Man in the *Apocalypse of* Paul: light (ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ), white or being white (ⲟⲩⲟⲃⲉϣ) and, shining seven times more than the sun (ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲩⲟ ⲉⲡⲣⲏ ⲛ̄ [ⲥⲁϣ]ϥ̄ ⲛ̄ⲕⲱⲃ ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲡ). This being said, one can affirm that all these examples serve to establish the 'horizon of expectations' of a late antique Coptic audience in relation to the motif in question: in a reception perspective, the Old Man in the seventh heaven of the *Apocalypse of Paul* would be interpreted by a late antique Coptic audience as being an otherworldly being or a holy man, rather than the Gnostic creator.

Concerning the fact that the Old Man is in seventh heaven, one could argue that this is a characteristic that necessarily identifies him to God or the Creator – regardless of the context and the audience, whether Greek or Coptic – since the seventh heaven is traditionally the place where He dwells.[180] However, at least one Coptic text – that does not belong to our corpus of comparison, since it is not a hagiography, but should be taken into consideration here concerning this specific topic – shows that God is not alone in the seventh heaven, but

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[178] Vivian's translation in Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, 122. ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲙⲙⲟⲓ ⲛ ⲧⲉⲣ ⲉⲓⲃⲱⲕ ⲁ ϩⲣⲁⲓ· ⲉ ⲧⲁⲃⲱ. ⲉϯ ⲇⲉ· ⲉⲣⲉ ⲡⲁ ϩⲁⲛ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓϥⲉ· ϩⲛ̄ ⲛⲁϭⲃⲱⲁ ⲁⲓϭⲱϣⲧ̄· ⲁⲓⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲩⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ (Budge, *Miscellaneous Texts*, 478).
[179] Hyvernat's translation in Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 80. ⲡⲁⲓ̄ⲱⲧ ⲉⲣϥⲟⲣⲓⲛ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲥⲭⲏⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲣⲟ ϩⲱⲥⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲛⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲉⲣϩⲗⲟⲗ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉⲗⲱⲓϫⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡⲉϥϩⲟ ⲛⲉⲙ ⲛⲓⲁ̄ⲕⲧⲓⲛ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡⲉϥϩⲃⲱⲥ (Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 80).
[180] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 252.

is actually accompanied by other otherworldly beings: the *Book of the Resurrection of Christ by Bartholomew, the Apostle*, where the seventh heaven is inhabited by the Father and Jesus, by angels[181] and even by the apostles.[182] Consequently, the fact that the Old Man is placed in the seventh heaven does not allow us to affirm that late antique Coptic readers would necessarily identify him with the Creator. In fact, the variety of otherworldly beings or avatars of holy men described by the means of the brightness motif allows us to say that the most probable scenario would not involve late antique Coptic readers identifying the Old Man with the Creator at all.

That being said, no doctrinal or theological concerns in regard to that motif in particular would prevent the reading and the circulation of the *Apocalypse of Paul* – as it was preserved in Codex V – in late antique Christian Coptic environments, even in those generally considered as being orthodox, such as Pachomian monasteries, or churches. In fact, one would expect a very positive attitude from late antique Coptic monks to the passage discussed above, since the Old Man in the *Apocalypse of Paul* is portrayed similarly to many other celestial beings and holy men in sources that they certainly read, such as the monastic lives that are part of our corpus of comparison.

Let us now discuss Jesus' second appearance in the *First Apocalypse of James* (NH V 30, 28-31,6) and Jesus' encounter with James in the *Second Apocalypse of James* (NH V 56, 14-20).

7.2.1.2. Jesus' Second Appearance in the *First Apocalypse of James* (NH V 30, 28-31, 6) and Jesus' encounter with James in the *Second Apocalypse of James* (NH V 56, 14-20)

Jesus' second appearance in the *First Apocalypse of James* (NH V 30, 28-31,6) is described as follows: "(…) but James remained [by himself] pray[ing a lot] as was his custom. And the

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[181] *Book of the Resurrection of Christ by Bartholomew* 12, 1-7.
[182] *Book of the Resurrection of Christ by Bartholomew* 18, 1.

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Lord appeared to him. Then he stopped his prayer and embraced him. He kissed him saying: 'Rabbi, I have found you!'" (NH V 30, 28-31,6).[183] In the *Second Apocalypse of James* Jesus and James's meeting is described as follows: "And he (Jesus) kissed my mouth. He took hold of me saying: 'My beloved! Behold, I shall reveal to you those (things) that (neither) [the] heavens nor their archons have known'" (NH V 56, 14-20).[184]

Compared to epiphanies in the apocalyptic tradition, neither of the appearances of Jesus mentioned above are very light-filled or stereotyped. There are no mentions of brightness or glory, for example, as one would expect in an apocalypse. In the case of the appearance in the *First Apocalypse of James,* there is at least one element, however, that relates the passage in question to epiphanies in the apocalyptic tradition, James's prayer. However, this aspect in particular will be discussed in another section of this chapter, in which we intend to address the question of preparation for ecstatic experiences.[185] The greeting between Jesus and James was also discussed in a previous section.[186]

One particular aspect of these epiphanies is the fact that the visionary is meeting no less than Jesus Himself, and meetings between Jesus and the saints abound in the texts of our corpus of comparison, forming part of the 'horizon of expectations' according to which the *First* and the *Second Apocalypses of James* would be interpreted.

Before mentioning examples from the Epic Passions, we should first point out that regular meetings between Jesus and Shenoute are reported in the *Life of Shenoute*.[187]

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[183] Schoedel's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 81 with changes based on Funk, *Concordance du Codex V de Nag Hammadi*. ïⲁ̈]ⲕⲱⲃ[ⲟⲥ] ⲇⲉ ⲁϥϣⲱ[ⲭ̄ⲛ̄ ⲟⲩ]ⲁ̣ⲁ̣ϥ [ⲛⲉϥ]ⲡⲣⲟⲥⲉⲩ[ⲭⲉⲥⲑⲁⲓ ⲉⲙⲁⲧⲉ] ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲉⲧⲉⲟⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲁϥ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲧⲱⲡ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁϥⲟⲩ†ⲟ† ⲛ̄ϩ̣ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲛ̄ϭⲓⲡⲭⲟⲉ[ⲓⲥ] ⲛ̄ⲧⲟϥ ⲇⲉ ⲁϥⲕⲁⲧⲉⲡⲣⲟⲥⲉⲩⲭ[ⲏ] ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲁϥⲙⲁⲗ⳨ϥ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧϥ̄· ⲁϥ†ⲡⲓ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲉϥϫⲱ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ ϫⲉ ϩⲣⲁⲃⲃⲓ ⲁ̈ϩⲉ ⲉⲣⲟⲕ (Funk, *Concordance du Codex V de Nag Hammadi*, 391-392).

[184] Hedrick's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 133. ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁϥ† ⲡⲓ ⲉⲣⲱ̈ⲓ ⲁϥⲙⲟⲗ⳨ϥ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧ ⲉϥϫⲱ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ ϫⲉ ⲡⲁⲙⲉⲣⲓⲧ ⲉⲓⲥ ϩⲏⲛⲧⲉ †ⲛⲁϭⲱⲗ̄ⲡ̄ [ⲛ]ⲁⲕ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̄ⲛⲏ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉ [ⲙ̄ⲡ]ⲏⲩⲉ ⲉⲓⲙⲉ ⲉⲣⲟⲟⲩ· ⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲩⲁⲣⲭⲱⲛ· (Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 142).

[185] See section 6.3.1.

[186] See section 6.1.5. However, even though the question has already been discussed, we may debate it again here, but from another perspective.

[187] See, for example, *Life of Shenoute* § 22, 25, 30, 32, 70 and 115. Some of these meetings (specially § 22 and 25) will be discussed in section 6.6.1.

However, in Coptic Epic Passions, the meetings present aspects that relate them to the particular meetings between Jesus and James in the *Second Apocalypse of James*; normally Jesus appears to the martyrs and greets them;[188] on a specific occasion in the *Martyrdom of Piroou and Athom*, a very interesting scene is narrated: "À minuit, comme les saints étaient dans la prison, voici que notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ descendit du ciel (…) Jésus les embrassa et leur dit : '(…) Et toi, Athôm, mon bien-aimé, aie courage, et sois viril'" (C.V.C. 60, fol. 31-32).[189]

One could easily notice the similarities between this passage and the encounter between Jesus and James in the *Second Apocalypse of James*: Athom and James are greeted by Jesus –in the *Martyrdom of Pirou and Athom*, the greeting is expressed by ⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉⲥⲑⲉ, while in *Second Apocalypse of James* it is expressed by ϯ ⲡⲓ – and both are called "my beloved" by Jesus – in Codex V ⲡⲁⲙⲉⲣⲓⲧ, and ⲡⲁⲛⲙⲉⲛⲣⲓⲧ in the Bohairic *Martyrdom of Pirou and Athom*.

In another Coptic Epic Passion, the *Martyrdom of Apater and Irai*, it is a saint, and not Jesus, who calls the martyr "beloved": "Puis saint Juste, frère du père d'Apater, s'avança vers celui-ci, l'embrassa et lui dit : 'Bravo! Bien-aimé de mon âme! Car tu as suivi l'exemple de mon combat. Bravo! Tu es digne d'être le chéri de Jésus-Christ'" (C.V.C. 63 fol. 77).[190] Once again, the word ⲙⲉⲛⲣⲓⲧ is used; even though the martyr is not called "beloved" directly by Jesus, Saint Just says that he is worthy of being the beloved (ⲙⲉⲛⲣⲓⲧ) of Jesus Christ.

Thus, as suggested above, in the light of the Epic Passions mentioned above in a reception perspective the encounter between Jesus and James in both *Apocalypses of James* in Codex V reinforces the perception of James as a martyr in late antique Coptic environments. More than reading the accounts about James's martyrdom in the *Apocalypses of James*, late antique Coptic readers would probably recall the relation between the martyrs

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[188] See, for example, the *Martyrdom of Apater and Irai* (C.V.C. 63 fol. 77).
[189] Hyvernat's translation in Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 144-145. ϧⲉⲛ ⲧϥⲁϣⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲉ̄ϫⲱⲣϩ ⲉ̄ⲣⲉ ⲛⲏ ⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ ϧⲉⲛ ⲡⲓϣⲧⲉⲕⲟ ⲓⲥ ⲡⲉⲛⲟ̄ⲥ̄ ⲓ̄ⲏ̄ⲥ̄ ⲡ̄ⲭ̄ⲥ̄ ⲁϥⲓ̄ ⲉ̄ⲡⲉⲥⲏⲧ ⲉⲃⲟⲗϧⲉⲛ ⲧϥⲉ (...) ⲁϥⲉⲣⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉⲥⲑⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲱⲟⲩ ⲡⲉϫⲁϥ ⲛⲱⲟⲩ ϫⲉ (...) ⲛ̄ⲑⲟⲕ ⲇⲉ ⲱ̄ ⲡⲁⲛⲙⲉⲛⲣⲓⲧ ⲁ̄ⲑⲱⲙ ϫⲉⲙⲛⲟⲙϯ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ϭⲣⲟ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲕ (...) (Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 144-145).
[190] Hyvernat's translation (Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 111). ⲙⲉⲛⲉⲛⲥⲱⲥ ⲁϥϯ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉϥⲟⲩⲟⲓ ⲉ̄ⲁⲡⲁⲧⲏⲣ ⲛ̄ϫⲉ ⲡⲓⲁ̄ⲅⲓⲟⲥ ⲓ̄ⲟⲩⲥⲧⲟⲥ ⲡⲥⲟⲛ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉϥⲓⲱⲧ ⲁϥⲉⲣⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲁⲥⲑⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲡⲉϫⲁϥ ⲛⲁϥ ϫⲉ ⲕⲁⲗⲱⲥ ⲫⲙⲉⲛⲣⲓⲧ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲯⲩⲭⲏ ϫⲉ ⲁⲕⲙⲟϣⲓ ⲛ̄ⲥⲁ ⲡⲁⲅ̄ⲱⲛ ⲕⲁⲗⲟⲱⲥ ⲡⲓϣⲟⲩⲙⲉⲛⲣⲓⲧ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲓ̄ⲏ̄ⲥ̄ ⲡ̄ⲭ̄ⲥ̄ (Hyvernat, *Les actes des martyrs de l'Égypte*, 111).

and Jesus once they read about the proximity between Jesus and James and the acts they accomplish together.

7.2.1.3. Three Celestial Beings in the *Apocalypse of Adam* (NH V 65, 22-34)

In the *Apocalypse of Adam*, the epiphany consists in the apparition of three celestial beings described by Adam as follows: "And after these (events) we became darkened in our heart(s). Now I slept in the thought of my heart. And I saw three men before me whose likeness I was unable to recognize, since they were not from the powers of the god who had [created] [us.]" (NH V 65, 22-29).[191]

What follows that passage is unfortunately lost in the lacunas at the bottom of page 65; the only additional information that can to be obtained about these beings is the fact that "they surpass" (NH V 65, 32). Later, the text also informs about their greatness: ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲛⲟϭ ⲛ̄ⲣⲱⲙⲉ (NH V 66, 10). Morard, in her commentary on the *Apocalypse of Adam*, noted that the three beings evoke Abraham's trimorphic vision in *Genesis* 18:2; later she adds commentaries on the same motif in *Testament of Abraham* and the *Georgian Book of Adam*.[192] And what could the hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison say about this? One finds at least three instances of three celestial beings acting in our hagiographies. In S[1],[193] after the death of a brother, Pachomius sees three beings who come to take his soul: "He looked and saw three men, luminous, eminent, glorious, and grey-haired who came to take the sick man. As he was amazed, the angel told him, 'These are the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob'. And immediately, they took the soul of the sick brother, carrying it up to heaven with great glory" (S[1] § 28).[194]

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[191] MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 157.159. ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛ̄ⲥⲁ ⲛⲁⲓ̈ ⲇⲉ ⲁⲛϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲃⲛ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲉⲛϩⲏⲧ· ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲇⲉ ⲛⲉⲓ̈ⲛ̄ⲕⲟⲧ` ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡⲁϩⲏⲧ· ⲛⲉⲓ̈ⲛⲁⲩ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲡⲉ ⲉϣⲟⲙⲉⲧ ⲛ̄ⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲁⲙ̄ⲧⲟ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲏ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓϭ̄ⲙϭⲟⲙ ⲉⲥⲟⲩⲱⲛ ⲡⲉⲩⲉⲓⲛⲉ· (Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*, 22).
[192] Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*, 74.
[193] This passage was already discussed in section 7.2.1.1, concerning the Old Man in the *Apocalypse of Paul*.
[194] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 441. ⲁϥϭⲱϣⲧ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉϣⲟⲙⲛⲧ ⲛ̄ⲣⲙ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲉⲩϫⲟⲥⲉ ⲉⲩϩⲁⲉⲟⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲣⲙ̄ ⲛ̄ⲥⲕⲓⲙ· ⲁⲩⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲥⲁⲡⲉⲧϣⲱⲡⲉ· ⲡⲉϫⲉⲡⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲇⲉ ⲛⲁϥ ⲉϥϩⲁϣⲡⲏⲣⲉ· ϫⲉⲛⲁⲓ̈ⲛⲉ ⲁⲃⲣⲁϩⲁⲙ [ⲙ]ⲛ̄ⲓ̄ⲥⲁⲁⲕ ⲙⲛ̄ⲓ̈ⲁⲕⲱⲃ [ⲙ]ⲡⲁⲧⲣⲓⲁⲣⲭⲉⲥ· ⲁⲩⲱ [ⲛ̄ⲧ]ⲉⲩⲛⲟⲩ ⲁⲩϥⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲯⲩ[ⲭⲏ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲟⲛ ⲉⲧϣ]ⲱⲛⲉ [ⲁⲩⲛ̄ⲧϥ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ̈ ⲉⲧⲡⲏ] (Lefort, "Glanures pachômiennes," 114). This passage has a parallel in S[3] p. 389.

Also in SBo, in § 82, one reads about a vision in which Pachomius sees how the angels come to take the soul of righteous men who are about to die.[195] Once more, there are three angels. This attests that in certain late antique Coptic environments, there was a belief according to which three angelic figures come to take the righteous to the afterlife. Given that, in a reception perspective, it is reasonable to think that the three celestial beings in the *Apocalypse of Adam* could be interpreted by a late antique Coptic audience as angels who are coming to take Adam to the afterlife. This would be even more logical if we consider that the text could be read as recounting the final words of Adam, a kind of Testament[196] made to Seth before his death.

However, the text could be easily seen as a testament in its original context of composition, due to its similarities to texts belonging to the Jewish Testament genre, and other texts that are part of a cycle of literature linked to the character of Adam.[197] Nevertheless, nothing can garantee that this literature was known in Coptic and could have contributed to shape the 'horizon of expectations' of late antique Coptic readers. Among the texts that were preserved in Coptic and that feature Adam, we could mention a homily attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem, already mentioned and discussed in the present dissertation.[198] In this homily, Seth, Enosh and Mahalalel gather around Adam before his death. Adam blesses the three, but talks directly to Seth only, giving him precise instructions in what could be seen as a testament.[199] This is a very similar situation to the one narrated in the *Apocalypse of Adam*, and this time with the specification that the instructions are being transmitted just before Adam's death. This shows that the tradition concerning Adam's testament being transmited to Seth existed in Coptic. If we take into consideration the possibility that this homily – or at least the tradition to which it bears witness – was part of

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[195] This passage will be discussed in detail in section 6.4.1.
[196] See Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*, 62-63.
[197] Once more, see Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*, 62-63. However, a small detail could be an obstacle to this possibility, Adam's age when he dies. In *Gn* 5:5, it is told that he died when he was 930, while in the *Apocalypse of Adam*, the revelation that he discloses to Seth takes place in the 700 year.
[198] Coquin and Godron, "Un encomion copte sur Marie-Madeleine attribué à Cyrille de Jérusalem." See section 4.3.3.
[199] IFAO copte 27 fol. 10 recto – fol. 10 verso. For the Coptic text, see Coquin and Godron, "Un encomion copte sur Marie-Madeleine attribué à Cyrille de Jérusalem," 195-196; for the French translation, see Coquin and Godron, "Un encomion copte sur Marie-Madeleine attribué à Cyrille de Jérusalem," 209-210.

the 'horizon of expectations' of the late antique Coptic readers who read Codex V, as well as the fact that the motif discussed here is present in our corpus of comparison, we can conclude that the three celestial beings in the *Apocalypse of Adam* would be interpreted by late antique Coptic readers as coming to take Adam's soul.

Having said this, we must mention that there is another occurrence of the motif concerning the appearance of three otherworldly beings in our corpus of comparison, but this time, not engaged in a search for the dying. In the *Life of Shenoute*, there is an account in which Jesus appears to Shenoute warning him that that night three monks would pay a visit to the monastery (*Life of Shenoute* § 115); Shenoute then gathers the brothers to welcome the three monks (*Life of Shenoute* § 116). The arrival of the visitors is described as follows:

> So when they (the monks of the white monastery) had been summoned to assemble that night – for it was winter, and they were sitting by the fire at night reciting by heart – behold! Our father Apa Shenoute came in, and with him in great glory walked three monks. When the brothers saw them, they all arose, paid respects to them and received their blessing. After this, these holy [men] withdrew again, and with them went our holy father the prophet Shenoute (*Life of Shenoute* § 117).[200]

Later, the three monks are identified with John the Baptist and the prophets Elijah and Elisha. In this case, there are no mentions of a righteous person being taken to the afterlife; the three beings, however, are said to be monks and are identified with very important biblical characters. Consequently, one can also imagine the three otherworldly beings in the *Apocalypse of Adam* being interpreted as such by a late antique Coptic audience, i.e. as righteous men or even biblical characters paying visit to another righteous man, in this case, Adam.

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[200] Translation in Bell, *The Life of Shenoute*, 75-76. ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲓ ⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲑⲣⲟⲩⲕⲱⲗⲥ ⲉⲡⲓϣⲟⲩϯ ϧⲉⲛⲡⲓⲉϫⲱⲣϩ ⲉⲑⲣⲟⲩⲉⲣⲙⲉⲗⲉⲧⲁⲛ ⲛⲉϯⲫⲣⲱ ⲅⲁⲣⲧⲉ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲡⲁⲓⲣⲏϯ ⲉⲩϩⲉⲙⲥⲓ ϧⲁⲧⲉⲛϯⲭⲏⲙⲓ ⲉⲩⲧⲁⲟⲩⲟ ⲁⲡⲟⲥⲑⲏⲧⲏⲥ ϧⲉⲛⲡⲓⲉϫⲱⲣϩ ⲓⲥϩⲏⲡⲡⲉ ⲁϥⲓ ⲉϧⲟⲩⲛ ⲛ̅ϫⲉⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲁⲡⲁ ϣⲉⲛⲟⲩϯ ⲉⲣⲉⲅ̅ ⲙ̅ⲙⲟⲛⲁⲭⲟⲥ ⲙⲟϣⲓ ⲛⲉⲙⲁϥ ⲉⲩϧⲉⲛⲟⲩⲛⲓϣϯ ⲛ̅ⲱⲟⲩ ⲉⲙⲁϣⲱ. ⲉⲧⲁⲛⲓⲥⲛⲏⲟⲩ ⲇⲉ ⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲱⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲧⲱⲟⲩⲛⲟⲩ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲉⲣⲡⲣⲟⲥⲕⲩⲛⲓⲛ ⲙ̅ⲙⲱⲟⲩ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲁⲩϭⲓⲥⲙⲟⲩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲓⲧⲟⲧⲟⲩ. ⲙⲉⲛⲉⲛⲥⲱⲥ ⲁⲩⲉⲣⲁⲛⲁⲭⲱⲣⲓⲛ ⲛ̅ⲱⲟⲩ ⲟⲛ ⲛ̅ϫⲉⲛⲏ ⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ ⲉⲧⲉⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲉⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ ⲙⲡⲣⲟⲫⲏⲧⲏⲥ ⲁⲡⲁ ϣⲉⲛⲟⲩϯ ⲙⲟϣⲓ ⲛⲉⲙⲱⲟⲩ. (Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Vita Bohairice*, 54).

In the next section, we will analyse the appearance of other angels and celestial beings in Codex V.

7.2.2. Angels and Other Celestial Beings

In the previous section, a very specific issue related to otherworldly beings was discussed: their epiphanies. In this section, we will rather discuss the angels – and otherworldly beings in general – and their role in Codex V and in fourth-fifth-century Egyptian hagiographies in a broader perspective. Once more, this comparison will show a very specific thematic similarity between Codex V and late antique Egyptian hagiographies – a similarity that would open the door for a late antique Coptic reader to read Codex V not necessarily due to its theological content, but rather for its thematic interest, as argued above.[201] Moreover, the analysis of the role of angels in the hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison can be useful for the establishment of the 'horizon of expectations' of late antique Coptic readers in relation to Codex V texts: in other words, late antique Coptic readers who were used to reading about angels and otherworldly beings in general and their roles in Egyptian hagiographies would tend to interpret them in the light of these same texts in reading Codex V.

Firstly, it is needless to point out that, generally speaking, angels and otherworldly beings have very important roles in ancient Jewish and Christian literature as messengers of God. In the apocalyptic tradition, one could say that the presence of angels and otherworldly beings is even more in the forefront, since they generally play a fundamental role, working as what is generally called *angelus interpres*.[202] This means that angels and otherworldly beings help the visionary in the revelatory process, either by helping in the interpretation of visions and divine messages or by guiding the visionary in his ascension.[203] Thus, in general

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[201] See the discussions in the previous sections of the present chapter.
[202] Collins, *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*, 6; Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 94-112.
[203] Collins, *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*, 6; Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 94-112.

terms, the presence of angels and otherworldly beings in Codex V texts should be firstly, but not exclusively, analysed in the light of this motif, so common in the apocalyptic tradition.[204]

At any rate, the role played by angels and otherworldly beings in Codex V texts is not restricted to the function of *angelus interpres*, as we will see below. As a matter of fact, the angels that appear in Codex V texts perform other sorts of roles than that of *angelus interpres*.[205] They perform rather the role of judging souls[206] or begetting other angels[207] than that of mediator. Consequently, we suggest a subdivision for this section: firstly, we will discuss the characters that in one way or another play the role of otherworldly mediators, and then, we will discuss other angelic or otherworldly beings who appear in Codex V texts.[208]

7.2.2.1. Otherwordly mediators

In his analysis of Gnostic apocalypses, Fallon considers two characters in the texts of Codex V as being otherworldly mediators,[209] the Child in the *Apocalypse of Paul*[210] and Jesus in the *First Apocalypse of James*.[211] Let us thus begin by discussing this issue, and then move on to discuss the angels in general in Codex V texts.

The beginning of the *Apocalypse of Paul* is lost in lacunas; in the first readable lines (NH V 18, 3-8.) one can read what seems to be the meeting followed by a dialogue between Paul and a little child (ⲡⲕⲟⲩⲉⲓ ϣⲏⲙ).[212] In the development of the story, the Child helps Paul

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[204] Another important role played by angelic beings in the apocalyptic tradition – overall in the *Book of the Watchers*, in *1 Enoch* – is that of the myth known as the fallen angels. On this matter, see Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 49-51; see also Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 93-94.

[205] These roles will be discusses and compared to other cases in the hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison below.

[206] In the *Apocalypse of Paul* (NH V 20, 5-22, 10).

[207] In *Eugnostos* (NH V 9, 17-21).

[208] We remind the reader that we have already analyzed one specific type of otherworldly being that appears in Codex V texts, the "toll-collector" (See section 6.1.6). The "toll-collector" was discussed in that section due to its close relation to the theme of ascension.

[209] Francis T. Fallon "The Gnostic Apocalypses," in *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre* (ed. J.J. Collins; Semeia 14; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1979), 123-158.

[210] Fallon, "Gnostic Apocalypses," 138-139.

[211] Fallon, "Gnostic Apocalypses," 132-133.

[212] Curiously, in Coptic Epic Martyrdoms, it is Jesus, not the Holy Spirit, who is described in similar terms. In the *Martyrdom of Saint Eusebius*, for example, (C. V. 58 fol 36) it is said that Jesus appeared to Basilides in

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to awaken his mind (NH V 19, 10). In what follows, the Child is actually identified with the Holy Spirit and snatches Paul up (NH V 19, 20-24) in his journey through the heavens.[213] Before and during the journey, the Child/Spirit helps Paul on many occasions (during the meeting with the Old Man in seventh heaven, for example).[214] This allows us to compare the Child/Spirit in the *Apocalypse of Paul* to otherworldly beings who help the visionaries, particularly in ascensions, in the hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison.

The role of the Child/Spirit in the *Apocalypse of Paul* is remarkably similar to the role of those called ϩⲟⲓⲛⲉ in the beginning of § 65 of the *Sahidic Life of Antony*, already discussed above.[215] Despite the fact that they are mentioned in an unspecified way, the text makes clear that these beings are guiding Antony in his heavenly journey, since it is said that he was "being guided (ϫⲓⲙⲟⲉⲓⲧ) into the air by some sort of beings" (*Sahidic Life of Antony* § 65).[216] In the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the Child/Spirit's role of guide and escort is expressed in NH V 20, 4-5 – where it is said that during the ascension of Paul and the apostles "the Spirit was going before them"[217] – and in NH V 22, 15-16 – where it is said that "the Holy Spirit was leading me before them."[218] Thus in both the visionary is guided by an otherworldly being in his heavenly journey.

The similarities between the guide in the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the one in § 65 of the *Sahidic Life of Antony* are not limited to this: in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the Child/Spirit plays a fundamental role in dealing successfully with the Old Man in seventh heaven, since he orders Paul to talk to him: "But I looked at the Spirit and he was nodding his head, saying to

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the form of a young boy (ⲟⲩⲕⲟⲩⲝⲓ ⲛ̄ⲁⲗⲟⲩ). In the *Martyrdom of Apa Epima*, Jesus appears to Epima as young boy (ⲟⲩϣⲏⲣⲉ ϣⲏⲙ) (Mina, *Le martyr d'Apa Epima*, 6).

[213] On this motif, see section 7.1.1 of the present dissertation.

[214] NH V 23, 5-30.

[215] See sectiona 6.1.1 and 6.1.2.

[216] Vivian's translation in Vivian and Athanassakis, *The Life of Antony*, 192. ⲛⲉⲣⲉϩⲟⲓⲛⲉ ϫⲓⲙⲟⲉⲓⲧ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧϥ ⲉⲡⲁⲉⲣ (Garitte, *S. Antonii Vitae Versio Sahidica*, 70).

[217] Murdock and MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 55. ⲛⲉⲣ[ⲉ]ⲡⲓⲡ̄ⲛ̄ⲁ̄ ⲇⲉ ⲛⲉϥⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ ϩⲁⲭⲱⲟⲩ (Cf. Rosenstiehl and Kaler. *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 104.

[218] Murdock and MacRae's translation (Cf. Parrott. *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 59. ⲡⲓⲡ̄ⲛ̄ⲁ̄ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ⲛⲉϥϫⲓ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲉⲓ ϩⲁⲭⲱⲟⲩ (Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 108).

me: 'Speak with him'" (NH V 23, 5-7);[219] And after the dialogue, he commands Paul to show a sign to the Old Man saying: "Give him [the] sign and [he will] open for you" (NH V 23, 23-25).[220] Therefore, without the intervention of the Child/Spirit, Paul would not be able to deal successfully with the Old Man.

In § 65 of the *Sahidic Life of Antony*, the intervention of Antony's escorts is also fundamental during the heavenly journey. The text narrates that malefic beings tried to stop Antony,[221] but the intervention of his guides allowed him to continue:

> Some other beings, very evil and bitter, were standing in the air; they wanted to seize him so he could not pass by them and go on past them. When those who were leading him fought against them, the evil ones attempted to take an accounting of him in order to find out if he was in their hands or accountable to them. But when those evil ones demanded that Antony give an account of himself from the day he was born, those leading him stopped them and said to them, 'The Lord has wiped clean what concerns him from the day of his birth, [but] from the day he became a monk and vowed himself to God, from that day on you may take an accounting from him'. When those who were accusing him were unable to establish anything or reproach him, the path immediately became free for him and they could not hold him (*Sahidic Life of Antony* § 65).[222]

The similarities between the two accounts are striking; the main difference is that in the *Apocalypse of Paul* the intervention is indirect – i.e. the Child/Spirit commands Paul to talk to the Old Man himself, and to give him something, a sign – while in the *Sahidic Life of*

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[219] Murdock and MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 61. ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲇⲉ ⲁⲓ̈ϭⲱϣⲧ̄ ⲛ̄ⲥⲁⲡⲓⲡⲛ̄ⲁ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲉϥⲕⲓⲙ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥⲁⲡⲉ ⲉϥϫⲱ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲓ̈ ϫⲉ ϣⲁϫⲉ ⲛⲙ̄ⲉϥ· (Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 110).

[220] Murdock and MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 61. ϯ ⲛⲁϥ ⲙ̄[ⲡⲓ]ⲥⲏⲙⲓⲟⲛ ⲉⲧⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲟⲕ· ⲁⲩⲱ [ϥⲛⲁ]ⲟⲩⲱⲛ ⲛⲁⲕ (Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 110).

[221] This passage was already discussed (see section 6.1.2), but the focus was on the beings who try to disturb the visionary's ascent. Now, the focus is on the help of the heavenly guides in the overcoming of these evil beings.

[222] Vivian's translation in Vivian and Athanassakis, *The Life of Antony*, 192.194. ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉⲣⲉϩⲉⲛⲕⲟⲟⲩⲉ ⲁϩⲉⲣⲁⲧⲟⲩ ⲉⲡⲁⲏⲣ ⲉⲩϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲧⲉ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉⲩⲥⲁϣⲉ ⲉⲩⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲉⲁⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲧⲣⲉϥⲥⲓⲛⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉϫϩⲱⲃⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲩ. ⲛⲉⲧϫⲓⲙⲟⲉⲓⲧ ⲇⲉ ϩⲏⲧϥ̄ ⲛⲉⲩ<ⲟⲩ>ϣ ⲉ<ϯ>ⲟⲩⲃⲏⲡⲉ ⲁⲛⲉⲑⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ϫⲟⲛⲧⲟⲩ ⲉϥⲓⲱⲡ ⲛⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ϫⲉⲕⲁⲥ ⲉⲩⲉⲉⲓⲙⲉ ϫⲉϥⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲟⲧⲟⲩ ⲏ ϥⲟ ⲛ̄ϩⲩⲡⲉⲩⲑⲩⲛⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲩ. ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲣⲟⲩ<ⲟⲩ>ϣ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ϭⲓⲛⲉⲑⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲉϥⲓⲱⲡ ⲛⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ϫⲓⲛⲡⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩϫⲡⲟϥ ⲁⲛⲉⲧϫⲓⲙⲟⲉⲓⲧ ϩⲏⲧϥ̄ ⲕⲱⲗⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲩ ⲉⲩϫⲱ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲩ ϫⲉⲛⲁϫⲓⲛⲉⲡⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲙⲉⲛ ⲙⲡⲉϥϫⲡⲟ ⲁⲡϫⲟⲉⲓⲥ ϥⲟⲧⲟⲩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ· ϫⲓⲛⲉⲡⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁϥⲣ̄ⲙⲟⲛⲁⲕⲟⲥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁϥⲉⲣⲏⲧ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲛ̄ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲉϫⲓⲥⲧⲓ ⲛⲏⲧⲛ ⲉϥⲓⲱⲡ ⲛⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ϫⲓⲛⲉⲡⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ. ⲧⲟⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲧⲕⲁⲧⲏⲅⲟⲣⲉⲓ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲣⲟⲩⲧⲙ̄ⲉϣϭⲛ̄ϭⲟⲙ ⲉⲧⲁϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲁⲧⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲏ ⲉϫⲡⲓⲟϥ ϩⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩⲛⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲁⲧⲉϩⲓⲏ ϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲛⲁϥ ⲛ̄ⲡⲙⲏ̄ϩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲉϣⲁⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩⲛⲟⲩ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲙⲙⲓⲛ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲉϣϫⲉ ⲉϥⲁϩⲉⲣⲁⲧϥ̄ ⲉⲧⲉϥϩⲉ ⲉⲡⲉϣⲗⲏⲗ ⲛ̄ϭⲓⲁⲛⲧⲱⲛⲓⲟⲥ. (Garitte, *S. Antonii Vitae Versio Sahidica*, 70-71).

Antony the intervention is direct – the guides themselves talk to the evil beings, even though Antony is asked to "give an account of himself". Moreover, in both cases there is a reference to birth – in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, when it is said that Paul "was set apart from his mother womb" (NH V 23, 3-5),[223] and in the *Life of Antony* when it is said that "from the day he was born" and "from the day of his birth." It is thus safe to say that we have in the *Apocalypse of Paul* in this case a motif that is also present in at least one late antique Coptic text, that of the *Sahidic Life of Antony*.

Besides this example, there are other instances of angels playing the role of otherworldly mediator in hagiographies preserved in Coptic. In SBo, for example, an angel plays that role in the heavenly journeys undertaken by Pachomius. In SBo § 116, we read the story of a spiteful monk. After his death, Pachomius undertakes an otherworldly journey and sees his soul suffering; it is said that Pachomius is accompanied by an angel: "When the latter spotted our father Pachomius walking with the angel who was teaching him about the splendor of the other age…" (SBo §116).[224]

Thus, once more, we have a motif in Codex V that is echoed in the hagiographies – especially the monastic lives – that are part of our corpus of comparison. One can imagine that for readers who knew these texts the way these heavenly mediators act would probably set their 'horizon of expectations' in relation to the Child/Spirit in the *Apocalypse of Paul*. In other words, they would expect the Child/Spirit to guide Paul through heavens and help him in eventual adversities during the ascent. This kind of expectations from late antique Coptic readers are certainly fulfilled, since the Child/Spirit does guide Paul through the heavens and helps him to overcome obstacles.

The absence of celestial beings working as otherworldly mediators in other texts of Codex V may be due to the fact that these other writings do not contain otherworldly journeys. However, as mentioned in the beginning of this section, the other character that is

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[223] In Coptic ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁ[ⲩ]ⲡⲟⲣ̄ⲝ̄ϥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϫⲓⲛⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧⲥ̄ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥⲙⲁⲁⲩ (Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 110).

[224] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 170. Veilleux uses S[7] to fill in the gap in Bo in his reconstitution of SBo. ⲛⲧⲉⲣⲉϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ϭⲓⲡⲁⲓ ⲉⲡⲛⲉⲓⲱⲧ ⲡⲁϩⲱⲙ ⲉϥⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ ⲙⲛⲡⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲉϥⲧⲥⲁⲃⲟ ⲙⲙⲟϥ ⲉⲡⲥⲁ ⲙⲡⲕⲁⲓⲉⲱⲛ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vitae Sahidice Scriptae*, 86).

generally considered as being an otherworldly mediator in Codex V is Jesus in the *Apocalypses of James*. Nevertheless, in the light of the hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison, the role played by Jesus in the *Apocalypses of James* is more similar to that of a master teaching his disciples than to that of an otherworldly mediator. Consequently, this role will be discussed later, in section 7.5.1.

Let us now proceed to the analysis of other kinds of angels and celestial beings in Codex V.

7.2.2.2. Other Angels and Celestial Beings.

Let us now turn our attention to angels, archangels and other celestial beings in Codex V texts that do not necessarily play the role of mediator. Their roles in Codex V texts are very diverse: in *Eugnostos*, for example, they generally perform acts related to creation or the establishment of the heavenly world;[225] in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, they are directly involved in the judgment of souls;[226] in the *First Apocalypse of James*, they are quoted among the hosts of the inferior power;[227] in the *Apocalypse of Adam*, they are compared to Adam and Eve[228] and they perform many acts in the aeons.[229]

Angelology is a very developed theme in the hagiographies of our corpus of comparison. Consequently, one may presume that any text or group of texts circulating in Coptic in Late Antiquity that featured angels and otherworldly beings in general would potentially catch the attention of the same audience that read the hagiographies discussed here; in other words, the presence of angels performing varied acts in the texts of Codex V certainly constitutes a literary contact with late antique Coptic hagiographies that could partially justify its transmission and reception in late antique Coptic Egypt. Going one step further, one can find very close literary contacts in regard to angelology between Codex V texts and the hagiographies of our corpus of comparison. Among these, the examples in the

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[225] See, for example, NH V 9,11.
[226] For example in NH V 20, 6-21, 20.
[227] NH V 26, 25.
[228] NH V 64, 15.
[229] See, for example, NH V 75, 6.

Apocalypse of Paul are those that have the most similarities with the hagiographies in question.

In fifth heaven, for example, Paul says that "And I saw a great angel in the fifth heaven holding an iron rod in his hand. There were three other angels with him (…) But they were rivalling each other, with whips in their hands, guiding the souls on to the judgment" (NH V 22, 2-5).[230] Kaler suggested that the iron rod could be understood as a messianic symbol,[231] adding that "this angel represents the sort of Christian, earthly messianism that the *Apocalypse of Paul* rejects. The true hope for salvation lies with Paul's mission (articulated at 23, 13-17) to take captive captivity – and given that this angel is shown as a captor of souls, Paul's task is thus diametrically opposed to its own".[232]

This possibility obviously explains very well the significance of the angel holding the iron rod in his hand in the context of the original composition of the *Apocalypse of Paul*. However the main concern of the present dissertation is to bring out the literary contacts between Codex V and late antique Coptic hagiographies and thereby to contribute to a greater understanding of how its texts could have been received and interpreted by a late antique Coptic audience.

At any rate, the fact that an angel is holding something in his hand is evidently a way to show his power. As Kaler suggested,[233] this power, however, probably has a negative connotation for the author of the *Apocalypse of Paul*. However, seen from a reception perspective, this power may acquire a new signification. The immediate context that this iron rod may evoke is that of biblical literature, and for late antique Coptic Christians, biblical literature certainly had a positive connotation.[234]The Messiah holding an iron rod as the

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[230] Murdock and MacRae's translation in Parrott (ed.). *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 79.81. ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲓ̈ⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲩⲛⲟϭ ⲛ̄ⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ϩⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲉϩϯ ⲙ̄ⲡ[ⲉ] ⲉϥⲁⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩϭⲉⲣⲱⲃ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲛⲓⲡⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥϭⲓⲝ· ⲉⲩⲛ̄ ϩⲉⲛⲕⲉⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲛⲙ̄ⲙⲁϥ ⲅ̅ (…) ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲟⲩ ⲇⲉ ⲛⲉⲩⲣ̄ⲡⲉⲣⲓⲥⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲣⲏⲟⲩ· ⲉⲣⲉϩⲉⲛⲙⲁⲥⲧⲓⲕⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲟⲧⲟⲩ ⲉⲩⲧⲱⲃⲉⲥ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓϯⲯⲩⲭⲟⲟⲩⲉ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ̈ ⲉⲧⲉⲕⲣⲓⲥⲓⲥ· (Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 108).

[231] Kaler refers to *Ps* 2, 7-9; *Rev* 2, 27; 12, 5; 19, 15 and the *Psalms of Solomon* 17, 24.

[232] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 239.

[233] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 239.

[234] For a survey on the importance of Scriptures for Coptic Christians in general and for Pachomian monks in particular, see Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien*, 262-275.

symbol of his power is mentioned in *Psalm* 2: 9. In *Revelation*, the iron rod is also mentioned as a symbol of the power of the Messiah.[235] The same expression used in the *Apocalypse of Paul* – ⲟⲩϭⲉⲣⲱⲃ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲛⲓⲡⲉ – is used in all the four biblical occurrences in Sahidic.[236] Thus the iron rod mentioned in the *Apocalypse of Paul* in the hands of the angelic figure would probably evoke in the mind of late antique Coptic readers the iron rod of the Messiah in these biblical passages, the latter being the primary element shaping their "horizon of expectations" in relation to this motif.

Having said this, we can now turn our attention to our corpus of comparison. It is also possible to find among late antique Coptic hagiographies passages in which angels are portrayed in similar terms, i.e. holding something in their hands as a way to demonstrate their power. In SBo, for example, it is said that Theodore saw in a vision[237] an angel who is described as follows: "The form of this angel's habit made him resemble a King's soldier, in his hand he held a very bright and fiery sword" (SBo § 84).[238] Also in SBo, in § 108,[239] it is Pachomius' turn to see an angel holding a sword: "While he (Pachomius) was still praying, an angel of the Lord, very terrifying, appeared to him, having in his hand a fiery sword unsheathed" (SBo § 108).[240] In both passages, the angels are not holding an iron rod, but something else, a sword. At any rate, the fact that the angels are holding something in their hands serves to make their power manifest. Moreover, this type of sword may reminds us of

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[235] *Revelation* 2: 27; 12: 5; 19: 15. *Rev* 2: 27 is a quotation of *Ps* 2, 8-9.

[236] For the *Ps* 2, 9, see Ernest A.T.W. Budge, *The Earliest Known Coptic Psalter* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Trübner & CO, 1898), 2. For *Revelation* 2: 27; 12: 5; 19: 15, see respectively George Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Southern Dialect, Otherwise Called Sahidic or Thebaid, Vol. VII. The Catholic Epistles and the Apocalypse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), 286, 392 and 492.

[237] The general context of this vision is that Theodore is commanded by Pachomius to watch over the brothers while he is travelling. During the night, Theodore wakes up and prays, having an ecstasy and experiencing the vision.

[238] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 111. [ⲡ]ⲓⲛⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲭⲏⲙⲁ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲉⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲁϥⲟⲛⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲙⲟⲧ ⲉⲛⲟⲩⲙⲁⲧⲟⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲡⲟⲩⲣⲟ ⲉⲣⲉⲟⲩⲥⲏϥⲓ ⲛ̄ⲭⲣⲱⲙ ϧⲉⲛⲧⲉϥϫⲓⲭ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲉϥⲟⲓ ⲛⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲉⲙⲁϣⲱ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Bohairice Scripta*, 94).

[239] The general context of this paragraph is that Pachomius has learned, by means of his charisma of clairvoyance, that a brother was in a situation of "diabolical sin". Pachomius thus prays the Lord to know what to do about that brother.

[240] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 160. ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲉⲧⲓ ⲉϥϣⲗⲏⲗ ⲁⲟⲩⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲡ⳪ ⲟⲩⲟⲛϩϥ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲉϥⲟⲓ ⲛ̄ϩⲟϯ ⲉⲙⲁϣⲱ ⲉⲣⲉⲟⲩⲥⲏϥⲓ ⲛ̄ⲭⲣⲱⲙ ⲑⲟⲕⲉⲙ ⲉⲥⲭⲏ ϧⲉⲛⲧⲉϥϫⲓⲭ (Lefort, *S.Pachomii Vita Bohairice Scripta*, 150).

the "flaming sword" placed with the cherubim to guard the way that leads to the tree of life in *Genesis* 3: 24. Once more, we have an object that represents an otherworldly power. Thus one could imagine that for late antique Coptic readers who had previous knowledge of these passages, the angel holding an iron rod in the fifth heaven in the *Apocalypse of Paul* would be a portrayal of a powerful celestial being.

Also in SBo, Pachomius sees in a vision the torments endured by the souls of sinners after their death;[241] in the vision in question, the angels torture the souls of sinners and it is said that they held "fiery whips in their hands" (SBo § 88).[242] This passage is even closer to the passage in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, since the torture of souls by angels is also mentioned; moreover, in SBo § 88, the angels are also holding whips in their hands (ⲛⲙⲁⲥⲧⲓⲅⲝ ⲛ̄ⲭⲣⲱⲙ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲧⲟⲩ), just like in the *Apocalypse of Paul* (ⲛⲙⲁⲥⲧⲓⲕⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲟⲧⲟⲩ). Thus one can affirm that there is a clear literary parallel between the *Apocalypse of Paul* and SBo § 88. One should also note that in SBo the angels are performing what is expected of them in this very situation: they are tormenting the souls of sinners, the souls of the condemned. Thus, this is probably how the angels holding an iron rod and whips in their hands, who are also torturing souls, in the fifth heaven in the *Apocalypse of Paul* were interpreted and received by a late antique Coptic audience: as instruments of the divine justice who inflict the torture that sinners deserve.

Other hagiographies in our corpus of comparison also make use of this motif. In the *Life of Shenoute*, Shenoute himself is described as having a flaming sword in his hand. Such description is part of an account in which a Roman officer conducts an army to a battle against the barbarians. During the battle it is said that "He (the Roman officer) then looked up into

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[241] The first part of this paragraph was already discussed in section 6.1.2
[242] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 113. ⲛⲙⲁⲥⲧⲓⲅⲝ ⲛ̄ⲭⲣⲱⲙ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲧⲟⲩ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Bohairice Scripta*, 97).

the sky and saw our father Apa Shenoute in the middle of a shining cloud with a flaming sword in his hands, killing the barbarians" (*Life of Shenoute* § 108).[243]

In the *Martyrdom of Shenoufe and his Brethren,* the motif is also present: "And the holy Apa Shenoufe was sleeping within his church on this day, as an act of self-discipline, not being in his bed. And lo, a man all radiant came to him, having a chisel in his right hand, and stood over him and touched his right side" (Pierpont Morgan M 583 106 Rii).[244]

Another role attributed to angels in Codex V texts, this time in the *Apocalypse of Adam*, is escorting men to the place where the spirit of life inhabits: "Afterwards great angels will come on high clouds, who will bring those men into the place where the spirit of life dwells" (NH V 69, 19-24).[245] If we examine the hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison, we will find passages in which escorting souls of the just is also an attribution of angels.[246] In SBo, for example, Theodore and Pachomius see a soul being escorted by angels:

> Another day, as Theodore was sitting somewhere in the assembly room, he heard in the air angel voices singing a melodious song. He rose at once and went to our father Pachomius, who said, 'It is a righteous soul that has left its body with which they are passing over above us; and we also have the grace of hearing those who are blessing God in front of it'. While they were speaking together they looked up, they saw the one who had been visited" (SBo § 83).[247]

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[243] Translation in Bell, *The Life of Shenoute*, 74. ⲙⲉⲛⲉⲛⲥⲱⲥ ⲁⳓⲁϫⲟⲩⲱⲧ ⲥⲁⲡϣⲱⲓ ⲙⲙⲟϥ ϧⲉⲛⲡⲓⲁⲏⲣ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲁⲡⲁ ϣⲉⲛⲟⲩϯ ⲉϥϧⲉⲛⲑⲙⲏϯ ⲛⲟⲩ6ⲏⲡⲓ ⲛⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲉⲣⲉⲟⲩⲟⲛ ⲟⲩⲥⲏ6ⲓ ⲛⲭⲣⲱⲙ ϧⲉⲛⲛⲉϥϫⲓϫ ⲉϥϧⲱⲧⲉⲃ ⲛⲥⲁⲛⲓⲃⲁⲣⲃⲁⲣⲟⲥ (Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Vita Bohairice*, 52).

[244] Reymond and Barns' translation (with changes) in Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices*, 189. ⲡ6ⲁⲅⲓⲟⲥ ⲇⲉ ⲁⲡⲁ ϣⲛⲟⲩϥⲉ ⲛⲉϥⲛⲕⲟⲧⲕ̄ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲧⲉϥⲉⲕⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲓ̈ϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲉϥ6ⲣⲁⲧⲩⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲥⲁⲛ̄ⲃⲟⲗ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉϥⲙⲁ(ⲛ̄)ⲉⲛⲕⲟⲧⲕ̄· ⲉⲓⲥ ⲟⲩⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲁϥⲉⲓ ⲉⲣⲉⲟⲩϩⲣⲁϥⲧⲟⲥ ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲉϥ6ⲓϫ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲛⲁⲙ ⲁϥⲁϩⲉⲣⲁⲧϥ̄ ϩⲓϫⲱϥ ⲁϥⲕⲓⲙ ⲉⲡⲉϥⲥⲡⲓⲣ (Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices*, 87).

[245] MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 163. ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲥⲁ ⲛⲁⲓ̈ ⲥⲉⲛ̄ⲛⲏⲟⲩ ⲛ̄6ⲓ ϩⲉⲛⲛⲟ6 ⲛⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ϩⲛ̄ ϩⲉⲛⲕⲗⲟⲟⲗⲉ ⲉⲩϫⲟⲥⲉ ⲉⲩⲛⲁϫⲓ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲡ̄ⲧⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲉⲧϥ̄ϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧ[ϥ] ⲛ̄6ⲓ ⲡⲉⲡⲛ̄[ⲁ] [ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡ]ⲱⲛ̄ϩ (Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*, 28).

[246] In section 6.1.6 we saw otherworldly beings trying to stop the soul who was ascending.

[247] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 110. ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲛⲟⲩⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲉϥϩⲉⲙⲥⲓ ⲛ̄ϫⲉⲑⲉⲟⲇⲱⲣⲟⲥ ϧⲉⲛⲟⲩⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲡⲓⲙⲁⲛⲑⲱⲟⲩϯ ⲁϥⲥⲱⲧⲉⲙ ⲉⲧⲥⲙⲏ ⲛ̄ϩⲁⲛⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲉⲩⲉⲯⲁⲗⲓⲛ ϧⲉⲛⲡⲓⲁⲏⲣ ϧⲉⲛⲟⲩϫⲓⲛⲉⲣⲯⲁⲗⲓⲛ ⲉⲥϩⲟⲗϫ. ⲛ̄ϯⲟⲩⲛⲟⲩ ⲁϥⲧⲱⲛϥ ⲁϥ̄ ϣⲁⲡⲉ[ⲛ]ⲓⲱⲧ ⲡⲁϧⲱⲙ ⲡⲉϫⲁϥ ⲛⲁϥ ϫⲉⲟⲩ6ⲯ[ⲩ]ⲭⲏ ⲛ̄ⲑⲙⲏⲓⲧⲉ. ⲉⲧⲁⲥⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϧⲉⲛⲥ[ⲱⲙⲁ] ⲉⲁⲩⲥⲓⲛⲓ

On the occasion of Pachomius' death, a similar event takes place: "And many of the ancients who often had visions said, 'We saw throngs of angels ranked above each other contemplating him. They preceded him singing very joyfully till he was received into his resting place'" (SBo § 123).[248]

Obviously, the context of NH V 69, 17-24 is not exactly the same as in the examples of SBo mentioned above; in the *Apocalypse of Adam*, the men are being taken up on the occasion of the destruction of all flesh by the Almighty (NH V 69, 4-6) – which evokes an eschatological context – while in SBo, Pachomius and the other righteous are being taken up after their natural death. At any rate, in both cases, they take part in the escorting of souls to the highest places.

In *Eugnostos*, celestial beings are mentioned as creations of the Father (NH V, 6, 25-28); it is said that "He ruled [over them all], having created [gods] and archangels, unnumbered myriads for retinue."[249] This may evoke Col 1:16, where the creative power of God, especially concerning celestial beings, is expressed. In S[1], the creative power of God is described in similar terms, evoking celestial beings, in a prayer pronounced by Pachomius: "Seigneur, Dieu béni, qui as créé les choses visibles et invisibles, soit archanges, soit principautés, soit puissances, soit forces, soit dominations, soit trônes, soit gloires" (S[1] p. 60).[250] Thus that the passage in question in *Eugnostos* could evoke in late antique Coptic

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ⲛⲉⲙⲁⲥ ⲥⲁⲡϣⲱⲓ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲛ ⲁⲩⲉⲣϩⲙⲟⲧ ⲛⲁⲛ ϩⲱⲛ ⲉⲑⲣⲉⲛⲥⲱⲧⲉⲙ ⲉⲛⲏ ⲉⲧⲥⲙⲟⲩ ⲉⲫ̄ϯ ϩⲓⲧϩⲏ [ⲙ̄]ⲙⲟⲥ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲉⲧⲓ ⲉⲩⲥⲁϫⲓ ⲛⲉⲙⲛⲟⲩⲉⲣⲏ[ⲟⲩ] ⲁⲩϫⲟⲩϣⲧ ⲥⲁⲡϣⲱⲓ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲩ ⲁⲩ[ⲛⲁⲩ] ⲉⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁϥϫⲉⲙⲡⲉϥϣⲓⲛⲓ (Lefort, *S. Pachommi Vita Bohairice Scripta*, 93).

[248] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol.* 1, 178. This portion of the text is missing in Bo, so Veilleux used S[7] to fill in the gap in SBo (See section 4.2.1.1). ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲩϫⲟⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ϭⲓϩⲁϩ ⲛⲁⲣⲭⲁⲓⲟⲥ ⲉϣⲁⲩⲛⲁⲩ ⲉϭⲱⲗⲡ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛϩⲁϩ ⲛⲥⲟⲡ· ϫⲉⲁⲛⲛⲁⲩ ⲉϩⲛⲁϣⲏ ⲛⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ· ⲉⲩⲟ ⲛⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲉⲓ ⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲉⲓ ⲉϫⲉⲛⲛⲉⲩⲉⲣⲏⲩ ⲉⲩⲑⲉⲱⲣⲉⲓ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲛⲥⲱⲥ ⲁⲩϩⲏⲙⲛⲉⲩⲉ ϩⲁⲧⲉϥϩⲏ· ϩⲛⲛⲟⲩⲛⲟϭ ⲛⲟⲩⲣⲟⲧ· ϣⲁⲛⲧⲟⲩϫⲓⲧϥ ⲉⲡⲉϥⲙⲁ ⲛⲉⲙⲧⲟⲛ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Sahidice Scripta*, 95).

[249] Parrott's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices III, 3-4 and V, 1*, 90, with improvements based on Funk, *Concordance du Codex V de Nag Hammadi*, 341. ⲁϥⲣ̄ⲣ̄[ⲟ ⲉϫⲱⲟⲩ ⲧⲏⲣⲟ]ⲩ· ⲉⲁϥⲥⲱⲛⲧ̄ ⲛⲁ[ϥ ⲛ̄ϩⲉⲛ]ⲛⲟⲩ[ⲧⲉ] ⲙⲛ̄ϩⲉⲛⲁⲣⲭⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗ[ⲟⲥ ϩⲉ]ⲛ̄ⲧⲃ[ⲁ ⲙ̄ⲙ̄]ⲧⲁⲧ̄ϯⲏⲡⲉ ⲉⲣⲟⲟⲩ [ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ̈ ⲉⲩ]ϣ̄ⲙϣ[ⲉ·] (Funk, *Concordance du Codex V de Nag Hammadi*, 341).

[250] Lefort's translation in Lefort, *Les vies coptes de saint Pachôme*, 5. ⲡϫⲟⲉⲓⲥ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲉⲧⲥⲙⲁⲙⲁⲁⲧ ⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁϥⲧⲁⲙⲓⲉⲛⲉⲧⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲟⲩ ⲙⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲧⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲟⲩ ⲙⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲧⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲟⲩ ⲁⲛ ⲉⲓⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲁⲣⲭⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲉⲓⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲁⲣⲭⲏ ⲉⲓⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲉϩⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲉⲓⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ϭⲟⲙ ⲉⲓⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲛ̄ⲧϫⲟⲉⲓⲥ ⲉⲓⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲑⲣⲟⲛⲟⲥ ⲉⲓⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲟⲟⲩ. (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Sahidice Scriptae*, 7).

readers the creative power of God, in particular in regard to celestial beings such as angels and archangels.

7.3. Motifs Associated with Accounts of Visionary Experiences

In this section, we will discuss certain passages in Codex V texts that can be in one way or another related to narratives of visionary experiences. Similarly to the previous sections in this chapter, we aim to show that narratives that make use of this kind of experience – particularly present in apocalyptic texts[251] – can be found in Codex V texts and in the hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison.

7.3.1. Preparation for Visionary Experiences[252]

A passage in the *First Apocalypse of James* states that he was praying before the appearance of the Lord:

> And James was walking upon the mountain, which is called "Gaugelan" with his disciples, who listened to him [because they had been distressed], and him as a comforter, [saying]: "This is the second [master]. [Then the] crowd dispersed, but James remained [by himself] pray[ing a lot] as was his custom. And the Lord appeared to him. Then he stopped his prayer and embraced him. He kissed him saying: 'Rabi, I have found you!'" (NH V 30, 28 - 31,6).[253]

Veilleux, in his commentary on the *First Apocalypse of James*, suggests that James stopping praying might allude to the end of the "Judaean economy": "Mais quand, après la dispersion de la foule, le Seigneur lui apparaît, il abandonne la prière. Ce geste exprime de toute

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[251] See Collins, *Introduction*.

[252] For a survey on the need for preparation for visionary experiences, see David Hellholm, "The Problem of the Apocalyptic Genre and the *Apocalypse of John*," in *Early Christian Apocalypticism: Genre and Social Setting* (ed. A.Yarbro Collins; Semeia 36; Atlanta: SBL, 1986), 43.47; see also Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 228.

[253] Schoedel's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 81, with changes based on Funk, *Concordance du Codex V de Nag Hammadi*. ⲁⲩⲱ ⲓ̈ⲁⲕⲱⲃⲟⲥ ⲛⲉϥⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ ⲡⲉ ϩⲓ̄ⲭ̄ⲙ̄ⲡⲧⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲉϣⲁⲟⲩⲙⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲭⲉ ⲅⲁⲩⲅⲏⲗⲁⲛ ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲧⲉⲛⲱϥ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲑⲏⲧⲏⲥ ⲛⲉⲧⲉⲛⲉⲩⲥⲱⲧⲙ̄ ⲉⲣⲟϥ [ⲉ̄ⲛⲟⲩ]ⲱϣ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧ`· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲁϥⲛ̄[ⲧⲁ]ⲩ̈ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲣⲉϥⲧⲛⲁⲙ[ⲧⲉⲉⲩ]ⲭⲱ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ ⲭⲉ ⲡⲁⲓ̈ ⲡⲉ [ⲡⲣⲉϥⲧⲥⲃ]ⲱ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉϩⲥⲛⲁⲩ· [ⲧⲟⲧⲉ ⲡ]ⲙⲏⲏϣⲉ ⲁϥⲭⲱⲱⲣⲉ [ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲓ̈ⲁ]ⲕⲱⲃ[ⲟⲥ] ⲇⲉ ⲁϥϣⲟ[ⲭⲡ ⲟⲩ]ⲁ̣ⲁ̣ϥ̣ [ⲛⲉϥ]ⲡⲣⲟⲥⲉⲩ[ⲭⲉⲥⲑⲁⲓ ⲉⲙⲁⲧⲉ] ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲉⲧⲉⲟⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲁϥ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲧⲱⲡ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁϥⲟⲩ⁺ⲟ⁺ ⲛ̄ϩ̣ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲛ̄ϭⲓⲡⲭⲟⲉ[ⲓⲥ] ⲛ̄ⲧⲟϥ ⲇⲉ ⲁϥⲕⲁⲧⲉⲡⲣⲟⲥⲉⲩⲭ[ⲏ] ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲁϥⲙⲁⲗϩ̣ϥ̣ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧϥ̣· ⲁϥϯⲡⲓ ⲉⲣⲱϥ ⲉϥⲭⲱ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ ⲭⲉ ϩⲣⲁⲃⲃⲓ ⲁⲓ̈ϩⲉ ⲉⲣⲟⲕ (Funk, *Concordance du Codex V de Nag Hammadi*, 391-392).

vraisemblance la fin de l'économie judaïque, caractérisée par la prière."[254] This might be relevant if the focus of our analysis was the intention of the author of the text and his primary "Gnostic" or Jewish-Christian audiences; however, this is not the case here, since we are dealing with the reception of this text in late antique Coptic Egypt. As we will show in the following paragraphs, for a late antique Coptic audience, what was probably significant in this passage is the fact that James was praying alone before the Lord's appearance, since (continuous) prayer is one of the elements involved in the preparation for visionary experiences in both the apocalyptic tradition and late antique Coptic hagiographies.[255]

Moreover, the description states that James was praying alone, in isolation; continuous praying was a common place in the Ancient descriptions of James,[256] and this detail in the description may be aimed at presenting James as an ideal example to be followed by all monks in a late antique Coptic perspective. Aditionally, as we will see in some examples in our corpus, the fact of being alone, in isolation is also important. One must bear in mind that continuous prayer or recitation of Scriptures was among the main activities of late antique

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[254] Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 83.

[255] Certain scholars in the field of Biblical studies and extra-canonical literature – see, for example Alan F. Segal, "Religiously Interpreted States of Cousciouness: Prophecy, Self-Consciousness, and Life After Death," in *Life After Death: A History of te Afterlife in the Religions of the West* (A.F. Segal; New York/London/Toronto/Sydney/Auckland: Doubleday, 2004), 322-350; John J. Pilch, *Flights of the Soul: Visions, Heavenly Journeys, and Peak Experiences in the Biblical World* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011); and Dobroruka, *Second Temple Pseudepigrapha*, 9-10 – have recently analysed their sources in the light of what is generally called "Altered States of Consciousness" (ASC); what was mainly a neurological and anthropological concept has become an important tool in the attempt to explain certain literary descriptions concerned with visionary experiences and trances widely presented in biblical and extra-canonical literatures. For example, instead of considering reports of otherworldly journeys or visions of the divine as merely literary *topoi*, certain scholars have tried to analyse them as accounts inspired by real visionary or ecstatic experiences generated by ASCs (For a general survey, see Segal, "Religiously Interpreted States of Consciouness, 322-350; Pilch, *Flights of the Soul*; and Dobroruka, *Second Temple Pseudepigraphy*). We acknowledge the importance and the fruitfulness of this kind of approach, and also the fact that it could bring satisfactory results to the fields of NH studies and Coptic Christianity. Recently, Prof. André Gagné, from Concordia University, started a project in which he aims to study NH texts in this perspective (many of Gagné's ideas about ASC's in NH texts were exposed in the course he taught at Concordia University in the winter of 2014: "Cognition and Religious Experience in Early Christian Texts"). However, since we are dealing here with a reception approach, we will seek literary elements present either in Codex V and late antique Coptic literature that are concerned with the preparation for visionary experiences more than analyse them in the light of what has been said about ASCs.

[256] See our discussion in section 4.3.2.

Egyptian monks.[257] Consequently, for a late antique Coptic audience, the act of praying in isolation[258] performed by James was probably not understood as related to the Jewish economy[259] – as it could be the case for the Greek audience of the original text – but rather as a preparation, an inducement for a visionary experience, since, in what follows, Jesus Himself appears to James.

In other words, the fact that James was known as a holy man who performed several ascetical practices[260] – such as fasting, privation of meat and wine, etc. – would allow one to compare him to Coptic monastic celebrities such as Antony, Pachomius and Shenoute. Consequently, the meeting between him and Jesus after a prayer in isolation should be interpreted in a late antique Coptic context in the light of the meetings between Jesus and the aforementioned monastic celebrities.

Without denying the edifying character of late antique Egyptian hagiographical accounts, we believe that in some cases these stories could also reveal that at least certain monks – especially those who eventually became famous and were object of hagiographies such as Antony, Pachomius and Shenoute – performed severe ascetical practices; practices that rendered them different from the others, that put them above the average monks. This is not to say that everything recounted about their lives is historically accurate; we are only

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[257] See, for example, the case of Pachomian monks (Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien*, 276-323; in particular, 287-292).

[258] According to Pilsch, besides continuous prayer: "Elements of the preparation for an ASC include isolation or withdrawal from society (see *Lk* 9:29), fasting (*Matt* 4:1; *Lk* 4:2), prayer (*Lk* 9:28), sexual abstinence, sleep deprivation and/or sight deprivation at night, and the like. Merkur also identified ritual mourning as an induction technique. Lamentation, prayer, fasting, weeping in solitude, and wearing sackcloth and ashes seem to have been elements in a full complement of ascetic practices that related to ritual mourning" (Pilch, *Flights of the Soul*, 53). One must bear in mind that many of the elements mentioned by Pilsch were commonly performed by Eastern monks. In relation to continuous prayer, see, for example, Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien*, 276-323; in particular, 287-292. Fasting was particularly stressed in monastic life. Even in the broader context of early Christianity, fasting had a fundamental role in the development of Christian asceticism and was closely related to visionary experiences. On this matter, see David Frankfurter, *Elijah in Upper Egypt: The Apocalypse of Elijah and Early Egyptian Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 282. Even Athanasius of Alexandria exhorted Egyptian monks to fast, mentioning the case of Daniel and linking this particular ascetic practice to revelations: "Daniel aussi quoique jeune, qui mérita de connaître les mystères, jeûnait et connut les secrets du roi par une révélation divine" (*Festal Letter 329* § 6); see Lefort's translation in Lefort, *Lettres festales et pastorales*, 5.

[259] As suggested by Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Deuxième Apocalypse de Jacques*, 83.

[260] See section 4.3.2 above.

suggesting that these monastic celebrities did things that put them above the level of mediocrity, that allowed them to be considered saints, i.e. models to be followed.

That being said, we can mention at least one particular episode that shows that at least Pachomius had the reputation of being a visionary already in Late Antiquity. According to G[1], Pachomius was summoned to a Council at Latopolis, where he faced accusations concerning his ecstatic experiences and his charisma of clairvoyance.[261] If this episode is true, it demonstrates that Pachomius was known as a visionary in his time. This episode is lacking in SBo and in the other Coptic versions that have been preserved, which may show that what was completely normal to Coptic Christians – i.e. a holy man experiencing trances and supernatural visions[262] – may have seemed strange, causing a certain discomfort, to a Greek audience.[263] We must recall that the Coptic versions of the *Life of Pachomius* remained in Egypt, while G[1] is the version, or one of the versions, that made its way to Western Christianity.[264] Therefore, in many aspects, G[1] may have portrayed a Pachomius that is more aligned with Western expectations.

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[261] G[1] § 119. See also Goehring's discussion (Goehring, *Ascetics, Society, and the Desert*, 171). On this matter, see also Painchaud and Wees, "Connaître la différence entre les hommes mauvais et les bons."

[262] As the reading of the hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison show, by the means of the many examples we have adduced here, examples of otherworldly journeys (see section 7.1) and of contacts between the visionaries and otherworldly beings (see section 7.2). Obviously, we are not saying that this taste for visionary and supernatural experiences is peculiar to Coptic hagiographies, but that in Coptic texts this kind of motifs are abundantly present.

[263] As already noted by Frank H. Hallock, in regard to apocrypha, "the Greeks had no taste for the superabundant wonders and miracles that one finds everywhere among the Copts in this type of writing" (Hallock, "Coptic Apocrypha", 165).

[264] As we saw in the discussion in section 4.2.1.1, the Greek version called G[1], or *Vita Prima*, was preserved in three Medieval manuscripts: Florentinus, XI, 9 (copied in the eleventh century in the Monastery of Apiro in Italy), Atheniensis B. N. 1015 (also copied in the eleventh century) and Ambrosianus D. 69 (copied in the sixteenth century), an exact copy of Atheniensis (for details, see Lefort, *Les vies coptes de saint Pachôme*, XXXVIII). Without taking part in the discussion concerning the originality of this version, we must point out, however, that it was only preserved in Medieval Greek manuscripts foreign to Egypt. Despite the fact that it was generally considered as being the better witness to the primitive *Life of Pachomius* until the first half of the twentieth century (for details, see Lefort, *Les vies coptes de saint Pachôme*, XXXVIII-L; Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien*, 18-21; and Goehring, *The Letter of Ammon*, 3-23), G[1] is in fact a Greek version that circulated outside Egypt and that may have lost many traces of its original Egyptian character during its transmission. And we believe that the taste for the fantastic and supernatural, so important in Coptic *Lives* – as argued above – is one of these lost traces. In other words, the episode of the Council of Latopolis would make no sense to Coptic readers, so used to reading and hearing about visionary experiences and acts of clairvoyance performed by famous monks; but, on the oher hand, an authorization by a Council could empower this type of experiences and supernatural gifts, presenting to a Western audience a portray of

At any rate, even if the accounts of visionary experiences and their respective preparations were nothing more than literary *topoi* we could still compare them to Codex V texts, trying to establish an 'horizon of expectations' for the interpretation of the latter. The only difference would be that, instead of presenting a reality that was ordinary for these monks, Codex V would present a literary *topos* that they would frequently find in late antique monastic lives such as those analysed here. A late antique Coptic Christian who was used to reading about monks fasting, praying incessantly, etc. before undertaking a visionary experience would find it interesting to read the same kind of account in Codex V, in which the character also has to go through a preparation that involved the aforementioned elements before undertaking a visionary experience.

After all these introductory remarks, we can return to the comparison between the passage in the *First Apocalypse of James* referred to above and similar passages in our corpus of comparison. Among the texts that are part of our corpus of comparison, the *Life of Shenoute* is probably the one that gives the greatest number of similar examples of visionary experiences or trances after praying.[265] The nature of these experiences varies and they are not necessarily Epiphanies of Jesus; it should be noted, however, that the author of the *Life of Shenoute* reports that Shenoute was in one way or another praying or worshiping God before these events, similarly to James in the passage under consideration. Moreover, even though the *Life of Shenoute* does not say it explicitly in the passages we will be quoting, Shenoute was a monk and thus supposedly lived in isolation from the world; more precisely, we know that he lived for some time out of the White Monastery, almost completely isolated, away even from his brethren, communicating with them only by letter.[266]

Pachomius that was orthodox, despite its exotic character. Thus, we are suggesting here that the Council of Latopolis, an episode peculiar to G[1] (a Greek manuscript from Europe, not from Egypt, as discussed in section 5.2.2.1) was not part of the original *Life of Pachomius* – originally composed in Egypt, either in Greek or in Coptic – but was rather added during its transmission in Greek outside Egypt due to the foreignness and scandal that Pachomius's alleged supernatural gifts would evoke in non-Egyptian audiences.

[265] In the *Life of Shenoute* there are also many instances in which meetings between Jesus and Shenoute are described, however, not necessarily involving preparation. See, for example, *Life of Shenoute* § 22, 25, 30, 32, 70 and 115. We have already mentioned these passages in section 7.2.1.2.

[266] Krawiec, *Shenoute and the Women of the White Monastery*, 52-55.

Consequently, some examples in the *Life of Shenoute* may help us to understand how the passage in the *First Apocalypse of James* could have been interpreted in a late antique Coptic milieu, particularly a monastic one. In one account in particular, one reads that after praying, Shenoute and his disciple are snatched up to heaven by a cloud, traveling from Alexandria to the White Monastery:

> Then he and his disciple who had gone with him went a short distance away and he stood in prayer, saying: "My Lord Jesus Christ, how will you take me to the monastery?" While he was thinking these things to himself, behold! A shining cloud came down from heaven, lifted up both him and his disciple, snatched him up into the heights, and flew off with him (§18).[267]

The fact that the passage above mentions that Shenoute "went a short distance away" underlines the importance of being isolated. One should note, however, that the word used to express the act of praying in the *First Apocalypse of James* is προσεγχεϲθαι, while this passage in the *Life of Shenoute* employs ϣλнλ. At any rate, προσεγχεϲθαι can be the Greek equivalent of the native Coptic word ϣλнλ.[268]

On another occasion, the *Life of Shenoute* narrates a further ecstatic experience after a prayer of Shenoute.[269] Once again, he is snatched up by a cloud:

> "When evening came, our holy father Apa Shenoute went into the sanctuary, stretched out his hands, and prayed to God that he would show him what he should do. And when he gave the "amen", behold! A shining cloud snatched him up, flew away with him to the royal capital and left him in the middle of the palace…" (*Life of Shenoute* § 58).[270]

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[267] Translation in Bell, *The Life of Shenoute*, 47-48. ⲧⲟⲧⲉ ⲁϥϣⲉ ϩⲓϥⲟⲩⲉⲓ ⲛⲟⲩⲕⲟⲩϫⲓ ⲛⲑⲟϥ ⲛⲉⲙⲡⲉϥⲙⲁⲑⲏⲧⲏⲥ ⲉⲑⲙⲟϣⲓ ⲛⲉⲙⲁϥ ⲁϥⲟϩⲓ ⲉⲣⲁⲧϥ ⲁϥϣⲗⲏⲗ ⲉϥϫⲱ ⲙⲙⲟⲥ ϫⲉⲡⲁϭⲥ ⲓ̅ⲏ̅ⲥ̅ ⲡⲭ̅ⲥ̅ ⲁϣⲡⲉ ⲡⲓⲣⲏϯ ⲉⲑⲣⲉⲕⲟⲗⲧ ⲉⲡⲁⲙⲟⲛⲁⲥⲧⲉⲣⲓⲟⲛ; ϩⲟⲥⲟⲛ ⲉϥⲙⲟⲕⲙⲉⲕ ⲙⲙⲟϥ ϧⲉⲛⲛⲁⲓ ⲓⲥⲟⲩϭⲛⲡⲓ ⲛⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲁⲥⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϧⲉⲛⲧⲫⲉ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲁⲥⲧⲁⲗⲟϥ ⲛⲉⲙⲡⲉϥⲙⲁⲑⲏⲧⲏⲥ ⲁⲥϩⲟⲗⲙⲉϥ ⲉⲡϭⲓⲥⲓ ⲁⲥϩⲱⲗ ⲛⲉⲙⲁϥ. (Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Vita Bohairice,* 16).

[268] Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 559ᵃ.

[269] The context of this passage is the following: The Duke of Antinoë, having heard about Shenoute's fame, sends an escort to invite Shenoute to come to the city in question. But Shenoute, not willing to leave his cell, prays God to know what he should do.

[270] Translation in Bell, *The Life of Shenoute*, 59. ⲉⲧⲁⲣⲟⲩϩⲓ ⲇⲉ ϣⲱⲡⲓ ⲁⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ ⲁⲡⲁ ϣⲉⲛⲟⲩϯ ϣⲉ ⲛⲁϥ ⲉϧⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲡⲓⲑⲩⲥⲓⲁⲥⲧⲏⲣⲓⲟⲛ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲁϥⲫⲱⲣϣ ⲛⲛⲉϥϫⲓϫ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲁϥϣⲗⲏⲗ ⲉϩⲣⲏⲓ ϩⲁϥϯ ϫⲉϩⲓⲛⲁ ⲛⲧⲉϥⲧⲁⲙⲟϥ ⲉⲛⲏ ⲉⲧⲉϥⲛⲁⲁⲓⲧⲟⲩ. ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲉⲧⲁϥϯ ⲙⲡⲓⲁⲙⲏⲛ ⲓⲥⲟⲩϭⲛⲡⲓ ⲛⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲁⲥϩⲟⲗⲙⲉϥ ⲁⲥϩⲱⲗ ⲛⲉⲙⲁϥ ϣⲁⲧⲡⲟⲗⲓⲥ ⲛϯⲙⲉⲧⲟⲩⲣⲟ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲁⲥⲭⲁϥ ϧⲉⲛⲑⲙⲏϯ ⲙⲡⲓⲡⲁⲗⲁⲧⲓⲟⲛ ϧⲉⲛⲡⲓⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲉⲡⲟⲩⲣⲟ ⲛϧⲏⲧϥ (Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Vita Bohairice*, 31).

The fact that Shenoute "went into the sanctuary" could be seen as an attempt to demonstrate that he was seeking isolation in that specific occasion, underlining once more its importance. Again, the Coptic word used here is ϣⲗⲏⲗ, and not ⲡⲣⲟⲥⲉⲩⲭⲉⲥⲑⲁⲓ as in the case of the *First Apocalypse of James*.

Another interesting example in the *Life of Shenoute* tells us that

one day, our father the prophet Apa Shenoute was engaged in their worship at night, and after he had completed the worship he rested for a little while and saw an apparition sent by the Lord. It was like this: he saw standing before him a man wholly filled with great glory. There was a great fragrance coming forth from his mouth and his face shone with light like the sun (§ 138).[271]

Once more, the Coptic word used by the *Life of Shenoute* is ϣⲗⲏⲗ.

The many Coptic versions of the *Life of Pachomius* also provide examples of this motif. In SBo § 84, one reads that "Once Theodore arose in the night and went through the community to watch over the brothers. He stood somewhere and prayed. While he was praying an ecstasy came over him, and this is what he saw on a vision…" (SBo § 84).[272] The Coptic word used in this passage to express what Theodore was doing before the experience is ϣⲗⲏⲗ.

Theodore's first revelatory experience is also preceded by a prayer:

One day, during his first year, Theodore was sitting in his cell plaiting ropes and reciting passages of the Holy Scriptures he had learned by heart. And he would get up and pray (ϣⲗⲏⲗ) every time his heart urged him to do so. While he was seated reciting, the cell where he was lighted up, and he was quite surprised at it.

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[271] Translation in Bell, *The Life of Shenoute*, 80. ⲁϣⲱⲡⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲛⲟⲩⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲉⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲙⲡⲣⲟⲫⲏⲧⲏⲥ ⲁⲡⲁ ϣⲉⲛⲟⲩϯ ⲓⲣⲓ ⲛⲛⲉϥⲥⲩⲛⲁⲝⲓⲥ ϧⲉⲛⲡⲉϫⲱⲣϩ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲉⲧⲁϥⲭⲁϯⲥⲩⲛⲁⲝⲓⲥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲁϥⲛⲕⲟⲧ ⲛⲟⲩⲕⲟⲩϫⲓ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲟⲩϭⲱⲣⲡ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲧⲉⲡϭⲥ. ⲙⲡⲁⲓⲣⲏϯ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲟⲩⲣⲱⲙⲓ ⲉϥⲙⲉϩ ⲙⲱⲟⲩ ⲧⲏⲣϥ ⲉⲙⲁϣⲱ ⲉϥⲟϩⲓ ⲉⲣⲁⲧϥ ⲙⲡⲉϥⲙⲑⲟ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲉⲣⲉⲟⲩⲟⲛ ⲟⲩⲛⲓϣϯ ⲛⲥⲑⲟⲓ ⲛⲟⲩϥⲓ ⲛⲏⲟⲩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϧⲉⲛⲣⲱϥ ⲉⲣⲉⲡⲉϥϩⲟ ⲅⲓⲁⲕⲧⲓⲛ ⲛⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲙⲫⲣⲏϯ ⲙⲫⲣⲏ (Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Vita Bohairice*, 61).

[272] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 110-111. ⲑⲉⲟⲇⲱⲣⲟⲥ ⲇⲉ ⲁϥⲧⲱⲛϥ ⲉⲛⲟⲩⲥⲟ[ⲡ] ⲙ̄ⲡⲉϫⲱⲣϩ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲉϥⲥⲓⲛⲓ ϧⲉⲛⲧⲟϣⲟⲩⲥ ⲉϥⲣⲱⲓⲥ ⲉⲛⲓⲥⲛⲏⲟⲩ [ⲁϥ]ⲟϩⲓ ⲉⲣⲁⲧϥ ϧⲉⲛⲟⲩⲙⲁ ⲁϥϣⲗⲏⲗ [ⲉ]ⲧⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲉϥϣⲗⲏⲗ ⲁⲟⲩⲧⲱⲙⲧ̄ⲓ ⲉϧⲣⲏⲓ ⲉϫⲱϥ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ϧⲉⲛⲟⲩϩⲟⲣⲁⲙⲁ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Bohairice Scripta*, 94). The account continues, recounting Theodore's vision, in which he sees an angel watching over the brothers.

And lo, two angels under the appearance of dazzling men appeared to him (SBo § 34).[273]

The fact that he is described here as "was sitting in his cell" also underlines the fact that he was isolated, alone. In SBo § 86, it is said that "Still another day, while our father Pachomius was praying somewhere alone, he fell into an ecstasy…" (SBo § 86).[274] Once more, we have an account that tells that the visionary was isolated, "praying somewhere alone," and the Coptic word used to express what Pachomius was doing is once more ϣⲗⲏⲗ.

In the *History of the Monks of Upper Egypt,* it is said that Apa Macedonius had a vision after fasting and night vigils:

> "He remained in that place and entreated God through fasting and frequent night vigils (…) he saw a vision, as if [a man] were standing, and the two sons of the priest were kneeling before him, one on his right, and one on his left. A man of light came and stood before them" (*History of the Monks of Upper Egypt* § 37).[275]

Even though the prayer (ϣⲗⲏⲗ) is not expressedly mentioned in this passage, the act of praying is expressed by ⲛϩⲉⲛⲟⲩϣⲏ ⲛⲣⲟⲉⲓⲥ. This example is also interesting because it mentions the fasting undertaken by Apa Macedonius. Although there is no mentioning of fasting in the *First Apocalypse of James*, one can suppose that the character of James the Just was probably associated with other ascetical practices in Coptic environments, in particular fasting, as suggested above.[276] Consequently, a reader who knew the portrayal of monks

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[273] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 58-59. ⲉϥϩⲉⲙⲥⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲛⲟⲩⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲃⲟⲩⲛ ⲃⲉ[ⲛ]ⲧⲉϥⲣⲓ ⲛ̄ⲭⲉⲑⲉⲟⲇⲱⲣⲟⲥ ⲃⲉⲛⲧⲉϥϣⲟⲣⲡⲓ ⲛ̄ⲣⲟⲙⲡⲓ ⲉϥϣⲉϣⲛⲟϩ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲉϥⲉⲣⲙⲉⲗⲉⲧⲁⲛ ⲃⲉⲛⲛⲏ ⲉⲧⲁϥϭⲓⲧⲟ[ⲩ] ⲛⲁⲡⲟⲥⲑⲏⲧⲏⲥ ⲃⲉⲛⲛⲓⲅⲣⲁⲫⲏ ⲉⲑⲟ[ⲩ]ⲁⲃ· ⲛⲉϣⲁϥⲧⲱⲛϥ ⲇⲉⲡⲉ ⲕⲁⲧⲁⲥⲟⲡ ⲉⲧⲉⲣ[ⲉ]ⲡⲉϥϩⲏⲧ ⲃⲁⲑⲟⲩⲃ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥϣⲗⲏ[ⲗ] ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲉⲧⲓ ⲉϥϩⲉⲙⲥⲓ ⲉϥⲉⲣⲙⲉⲗⲉⲧⲁⲛ ⲁ[†]ⲣⲓ ⲉⲧⲉϥⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧⲥ ⲉⲣⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲛ̄ⲑⲟϥ ⲇⲉ [ⲁϥ]ϣⲱⲣⲧⲉⲣ ⲉⲙⲁϣⲱ ϩⲏⲡⲡⲉ ⲓⲥⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥⲃ̄ ⲉⲩϭⲓⲃⲉⲣⲉⲃ ⲛ̄ⲣⲱ[ⲙⲓ] ⲉⲩⲉⲣⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲁⲩⲟⲩⲟⲛϩⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲟϥ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Bohairice Scripta*, 37).

[274] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 112. ⲉϥϣⲗⲏⲗ ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲛⲟⲩⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲃⲉⲛⲟⲩⲙⲁ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩⲁⲧϥ ⲛ̄ⲭⲉⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲡⲁⲃⲟⲙ ⲁϥϣⲱⲡⲓ ⲃⲉⲛⲟⲩⲧⲱⲙⲧ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vitae Bohairice Scripta*, 95). The account continues telling how Pachomius saw the Lord giving an instruction. On the Coptic expression ⲁϥϣⲱⲡⲓ ⲃⲉⲛⲟⲩⲧⲱⲙⲧ, translated as "fell into an ecstasy", see Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 417a.

[275] Vivian's translation with changes in *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, 89. ⲁϥϣⲱⲡⲉ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲙⲁ ⲉⲧ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲉϥⲥⲟⲡⲥ̄ⲡ̄ ⲙ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ϩⲛ̄ ϩⲉⲛⲛⲏⲥⲧⲁ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛϩⲉⲛⲟⲩϣⲏ ⲛⲣⲟⲉⲓⲥ ⲉⲛⲁϣⲱⲟⲩ (…) ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲩϩⲟⲣⲟⲙⲁ ⲉϥϫ[ⲉ] [ⲡⲣⲱ]ⲙⲉ ⲉⲣⲁⲧϥ̄ ⲉⲣⲉ ϣ[ⲏⲣⲉ ⲥⲛⲁⲩ] ϩⲓⲧⲟⲩⲱϥ ⲉⲩⲁⲁϩ ⲉⲣⲁⲧⲟⲩ ⲟⲩⲁ [ϩⲓ ⲟ]ⲩⲛⲁⲙ ⲙⲙⲟϥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲁ ϩⲓ ϩⲃⲟⲩⲣ ⲙⲙⲟϥ ⲉⲩⲛⲕⲟⲧⲕ̄ ⲁϥⲉⲓ ⲛϭⲓ ⲟⲩⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲛ ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲁϥⲁⲁϩ ⲉⲣⲁⲧϥ̄ ϩⲓ ϫⲱⲟⲩ (Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts*, 447-448).

[276] See section 4.3.3.

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receiving revelations, having fantastic visions or undertaking revelatory experiences after continuous fasting and prayer, would tend to interpret this passage in the light of this stereotype. Moreover, a particular monk who had himself undergone this kind of experience after severe ascetical practices would also tend to interpret the passage in question in this way. Therefore, in a reception perspective, the fact that James was praying would be interpreted by a late antique Coptic audience – and particularly a monastic one – as a common preparation for a visionary experience, a necessary step that should be taken in order to achieve this kind of revelation.

7.3.2. Dreams

The *Apocalypse of Adam* provides an example of what could be seen as a visionary experience, this time expressed by means of what seems to be a revelatory dream.[277] The passage in question reads as follows: "And after these (events) we became darkened in our heart(s). Now I slept in the thought of my heart. And I saw three men before me whose likeness I was unable to recognize, since they were not from the powers of the god who had [created][us]" (NH V 65, 21-32).[278]

Dreams are a common, ordinary reality of human life – not necessarily linked to religious experiences. However, the act of attributing to them a religious character was quite common in many cultures in Antiquity.[279] Biblical literature, for example, provides many examples of this phenomenon, from the dreams interpreted by Joseph in *Genesis* (Gn 40: 5-41:32), to the dreams in Chapter Two of *Daniel*, to the dreams of Joseph in Matthew 1:20 and 2:19.[280] Consequently, one can imagine that dreams would also have an important role

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[277] Even though the passage in question does not explicitly mentions a dream, we could presume that Adam is having a dream since the texts tells us that he was sleping (ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲇⲉ ⲛⲉⲓⲛ̄ⲕⲟⲧ - NH V 65, 24).

[278] MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 157.159. ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲥⲁ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲁⲛⲟϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲃⲏ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲉⲛϩⲏⲧ· ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲇⲉ ⲛⲉⲓⲛ̄ⲕⲟⲧ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡⲁϩⲏⲧ· ⲛⲉⲓ ⲛⲁⲩ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲡⲉ ⲉϣⲟⲙⲉⲧ ⲛ̄ⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲁⲙ̄ⲧⲟ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲏ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓϭⲙ̄ϭⲟⲙ ⲉⲥⲟⲩ ⲱⲛ ⲡⲉⲩⲉⲓⲛⲉ· ⲉⲡⲓⲇⲏ ⲛⲉ ϩⲉⲛⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲁⲛ ⲛⲉ ϩ[ⲛ̄]ⲛⲓϭⲟⲙ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲉⲧⲁϥⲧ[ⲁⲙⲓ]ⲟ̣ ⲙ̣[ⲙⲟⲛ… (Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*, 22).

[279] See Patricia Cox Miller, *Dreams in Late Antiquity: Studies in the Imagination of a Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[280] These are obviously a few examples that can be found in biblical literature, we mention these as a sample, as others could be found.

in late antique Coptic Egypt, especially among monks; for them, dreams could also be a channel of communication with the supernatural and the divine. In an article dedicated to the analysis of the role of sleep in early Egyptian monasticism,[281] Charles Metteer devotes an entire section to dreams. He observes that

> the monks of Egypt frequently received direction and inspiration while asleep. Dreams were their "natural language" for the critical moments, the decisive turning points, and the times of vital change that were "dramatized and focussed in sleep."[282] On the night that the young Pachomius was baptized, a prophetic dream informed him that soon he would be raised up as the father over a large group of monks.[283]

Metteer remarks that even Athanasius theorized about the positive role of dreams in the spiritual life of a monk; the famous patriarch of Alexandria wrote that

> often, when the body is quiet, and at rest and asleep, man [the rational soul] moves inwardly, and beholds what is outside himself, traveling to other countries, walking about, meeting his acquaintances, and often by these means divining and forecasting the actions of the day (*Against Heathens* 2.31).[284]

Evagrius[285] and John Cassian[286] for their part believed that dreams could tell about the monks' purity of heart.[287] These two authors, along with Athanasius, bear witness to the importance of dreams in late antique Egyptian monasticism; they also confirm that in that context – one of the contexts in which Codex V was possibly read and received – dreams were commonly linked to spiritual life. Consequently, the aforementioned account in the *Apocalypse of Adam* would find no resistance in a late antique Coptic milieu; on the contrary,

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[281] Charles J. Metteer, "Distraction or Spiritual Discipline: The Role of Sleep in Early Egyptian Monasticism," *SVTQ* 521 (2008): 5-43.

[282] Quoting Norman Russell, *The Lives of the Desert Fathers* (Kalamazoo [Mich.]/London/Oxford: Cistercian Publications, 1981), 41.

[283] Metteer, "Distraction or Spiritual Discipline: The Role of Sleep in Early Egyptian Monasticism," 18. The episode about Pachomius to which he author refers is recounted in SBo § 8.

[284] Robertson's translation in Archibald Robertson, *Selected Writings and Letters of Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria* (NPNFCCS 4; Oxford/New York: Parker and Company/The Christian Literature Company, 1892), 20-21.

[285] See Evagrius Ponticus's *Praktikos*, 56 and 64 and *Philokalia*, 4.

[286] See John Cassian`s on chastity in *De institutis cenobium* 6, 10-11.

[287] On this matter, see Metteer, "Distraction or Spiritual Discipline: The Role of Sleep in Early Egyptian Monasticism," 19.

it would probably catch the attention of late antique Coptic readers interested in the spiritual and visionary charisma of dreams. We shall now analyse some passages in our corpus of comparison that report visionary dreams.

The *Life of Shenoute* provides one example – already discussed in the present dissertation in another section[288] – of what seems to be a dream in which Shenoute sees a bright woman who talks to him:[289] "Now that night, when the Old Man had finished praying and lay down for a little while, he saw with amazement a very beautiful woman whose whole body shone with light like the sun (§146a)."[290]

In SBo, an old monk, who was secretly questioning some decisions of Pachomius concerning the cleaning of the cistern, learns that he was supposed to obey the latter in a dream:[291]

> That night he had a dream. He saw himself as if he was standing over that cistern. He was looking down into it and saw a man shining with glory in the midst of the briskly working brothers. He said to them: 'Receive, all of you, a spirit of obedience and strength, and you, the Old Man, a spirit of faithlessness toward the holy men (SBo § 65).[292]

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[288] See pages 271-272.

[289] The *Life of Shenoute* tells that Psoti used to work in the vegetable garden; he was known for his generosity, frequently giving vegetables to the brothers dwelling on the mountains. Due to this extreme generosity, many brothers complained about him to Shenoute. Shenoute thus has this dream-vision in which he sees the Virgin Mary telling Psoti to continue to be generous giving vegetables to whomever is in need. Because of this vision, Shenoute does not rebuke Psoti, despite the complaints of the other brothers. The whole account can be read in paragraphs 144-150.

[290] Bell's translation (with improvements) in Bell, *The Life of Shenoute*, 82. ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲓ ⲇⲉ ϧⲉⲛⲡⲓⲉϫⲱⲣϩ ⲉⲧⲉⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲉⲧⲁⲡⲓϧⲉⲗⲗⲟ ⲕⲏⲛ ⲉϣⲗⲏⲗ ⲁϥⲣⲁⲕϥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲟⲩⲕⲟⲩϫⲓ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ϧⲉⲛⲟⲩⲧⲱⲙⲧ ⲉⲟⲩⲥϩⲓⲙⲓ ⲉⲛⲉⲥⲱⲥ ⲙⲙⲁϣⲱ ⲉⲣⲉⲡⲉⲥⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲧⲏⲣϥ ϩⲓⲁⲕⲧⲓⲛ ⲛⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲙⲫⲣⲏϯ ⲙⲫⲣⲏ (Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Vita Bohairice*, 64).

[291] This passage was already discussed in the light of another motif in section 6.2.1.

[292] Veilleux's translation (with changes) in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 86. [ϧ]ⲉⲛⲡⲓⲉϫⲱⲣϩ ⲇⲉ ⲉⲧⲉⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ϧⲉⲛⲟⲩⲣⲁⲥⲟⲩⲓ ⲓⲥϫⲉⲕ ⲉϥⲥⲁⲡϣⲱⲓ ⲙⲡⲓϣⲏⲓ ⲉⲧⲉⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲁϥϫⲟⲩϣⲧ ⲉϧⲣⲏⲓ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲟⲩⲣⲱⲙⲓ ⲉϥⲉⲡⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ϧⲉⲛⲡⲉϥⲱⲟⲩ ϧⲉⲛⲟⲙⲏϯ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲥⲛⲏⲟⲩ ⲉⲩⲉⲣϩⲱⲃ ϧⲉⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩⲛⲟⲩ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲛⲁϥϫⲱ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ ⲛⲱⲟⲩⲡⲉ ϫⲉϭⲓⲡⲛ̄ⲁ̅ ⲛⲱⲧⲉⲛ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲧⲣⲉϥⲥⲱⲧⲉⲙ ϩⲓϫⲟⲙ ⲛ̄ⲑⲟⲕ ⲇⲉ ϩⲱⲕ ⲡⲓϧⲉⲗⲗⲟ ϭⲓⲡⲛ̄ⲁ̅ ⲙ̄ⲙⲉⲧⲁⲑⲛⲁϩϯ ⲛⲁⲕ ⲉϧⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲛⲏ ⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Bohairice Scripta*, 66).

In the light of these examples of dreams in our corpus of comparison, one may conclude that the dream reported in the *Apocalypse of Adam* (NH V 65, 22-32) would cause no surprise in a late antique Coptic audience.

7.3.3. Mountains as a Favourable Place for Revelations

The word 'mountain' ('ὄρος' in Greek, being 'ϩⲟⲣⲟⲥ' the Greek-Coptic equivalent and 'ⲧⲟⲟⲩ' in native Coptic) is a very important and significant term in Egyptian culture, literature and geography:[293] in Egyptian monastic literature, mountains are seen as places where anchorites take refuge from the world, as we will see below in our corpus of comparison. Mountains are also a common place for revelations and visionary experiences in the apocalyptic tradition,[294] so we have here a term that is important in both literary traditions. However, before we proceed to an analysis and comparison of the occurrences of the word in question in Codex V and in late antique Coptic hagiographies, we shall analyze the broad semantic field of this term, its meaning in Egyptian geography, as well as its meaning in Egyptian and apocalyptic spirituality. This analysis is particularly important if we want to understand properly the two revelatory experiences that take place on a mountain in Codex V (in the *Apocalypse of Paul* – NH V 19, 11 – and in the *First Apocalypse of James* – NH V 30, 19) from a reception perspective, since the particular meaning of mountains in the Egyptian context has an important impact in the understanding of the passages in question by late antique Coptic readers.

The first meanings of ὄρος are "mountain" and "hill;"[295] in the specific case of Egypt, the term can also mean "desert"[296] – a fact that we will explain in detail below. Lampe's

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[293] Some authors have written about the significance of mountains in the Egyptian environment: Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Eypt*, 18-26; Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques en Égypte*, 110-111. For a survey on the term ὄρος in Greek-Egyptian *papyri,* see Cadell and Rémondon "Sens et emploi de τὸ ὄρος dans les documents papyrologiques."

[294] See, for example, the *Martyrdom of Isaiah* (2:7-11), the *Greek Apocalypse of Peter* (§ 1 and § 15), the *Greek Apocalypse of Mary* (chapters 1 and 2) and the *First Apocryphal Apocalypse of John* (§ 2, 1). Other texts that are not necessarily apocalypses also present accounts of revelations or epiphanies on mountains, such as the text called in French *Le martyre de Saint Mathieu, l'apôtre* (§ 1).

[295] Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1255b.

[296] Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1255b.

Patristic Greek Lexicon also gives "mountain" as the main significance for ὄρος, omitting the specific Egyptian meaning of desert, but adding "region inhabited by monks."[297] In Crum's Coptic dictionary, the first meaning of the native Coptic word ⲧⲟⲟⲩ is also "mountain;"[298] Crum adds, however, many other possible meanings for the word in question, such as "monastery" and "community of monks."[299] One may have the impression that this word has too many different meanings, referring to many different expressions and realities – mountain, monastery and desert. Nevertheless, once one knows the geography of Egypt, things become much clearer.

Indeed, in Egypt the desert and the mountain are almost the same thing. Where the cultivable lands on each side of the Nile's valley bank end, the mountain appears and on its top the 'endless' Egyptian desert begins. Norman Russell's description in his classical book on the Desert Fathers is enlightening: "The Egyptian desert ends abruptly in an escarpment overlooking the flat valley floor of the Nile. *Oros* is therefore barren, uncultivated land, not necessarily rising to any height, as against the irrigated zone of the valley and delta."[300]

Consequently for an Egyptian, geographically speaking, the mountain is a synonym for desert; ⲧⲟⲟⲩ is thus desert land – in opposition to the cultivable lands flooded by the Nile. Ewa Wipszycka however emphasizes the fact that what was so common and evident for an Egyptian was not that obvious for a "foreigner",[301] which probably led to some mistakes in translations from Greek to Latin that survived through the centuries and are maintained even today in modern critical translations.[302]

Summarizing, one could say that geographically the Greek word ὄρος in Egypt and the Coptic word ⲧⲟⲟⲩ could mean:

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[297] Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 974b.
[298] Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 440b.
[299] Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 441b.
[300] Russel, *The Lives of the Desert Fathers*, 125.
[301] Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques en Égypte*, 111.
[302] For a detailed explanations of this "scholarly mistake", see Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques en Égypte*, 111.

1- The 'open' desert, i.e. the "large desert plateaux which overhang the Nile valley"[303]; in the East, this plateau continues to rise until the shore of the Red Sea and in the West, it ends at the beginning of the *Lybiques* Oasis;[304]

2- The near desert or 'hilly escarpment', i.e. the adjoining mountain region between the Nile valley and the open desert, the cliff that could be abrupt or slightly inclined; this was the region where many anchorites also took refuge;

3- "The approach to the desert,"[305] the region between the cliff and the irrigated land; many monasteries were located in this region.

Spiritually speaking, in Egypt the ⲧⲟⲟⲩ is very important for the development of monasticism. As noted by Tim Vivian,

> monasticism, then as now, is a spirituality of the desert. A monk does not enter the desert so much to escape the world as to encounter God and wage war on Satan. As Thomas Merton observed many times, the desert does not have to be a geographical reality; it must, however, be a spiritual reality. For Egyptian monks of the fourth century, the desert was a geographical reality – both in place and memory. In place because they lived outside the immediate area watered by the Nile; in memory because the sacred scriptures told them that the people of Israel had wandered in the desert; Elijah, Elisha and John the Baptist had prophesied in the desert; their Lord and Saviour after his baptism had been driven by the Spirit into the desert.[306]

Thus the ⲧⲟⲟⲩ, or ὄρος, is the monastic dwelling par excellence, the place where one should go to lead an ascetical life.

In the *Life of Antony,* the inner mountain[307] is Antony's dwelling-place, where he usually has his visionary experiences. But it is also where he performs his ascetic practices:

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[303] Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, 19.
[304] Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques en Égypte*, 110.
[305] Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques en Égypte*, 20.
[306] Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, 18-19. See also Chitty, *The Desert a City*, 216-221; Thomas Merton, *The Silent Life* (New York: Farrar/ Straus & Giroux, 1988), 46 and 146.
[307] The "Outer Mountain" is at Pispir, located at the east bank of the Nile, around 50 miles south of Memphis. According to the *Life of Antony*, Antony lived there for twenty years (*Life of Antony* § 14). The "Inner

where he prays, fasts and faces the demons and their temptations. In the words of Vivian: "Separated from the inhabited, arable world, the desert as the *Life of Antony* and subsequent monastic literature show, was the place where a person confronted demons – and the demons of the human hearts."[308] Almost a century later, the *Life of Shenoute* also states that anchorites – and Shenoute himself – were living on the mountains.[309] This battle for holiness against the evil demons, widely famous in Coptic literature, associated with the known natural dangers of the ⲧⲟⲟⲩ, such as wild beasts, solitude and the weather, probably contributed to creating a stereotype of the desert/mountain. A man must be a saint, or really willing to become one, to have the courage and ability to face the dangers, both natural and supernatural, of the ⲧⲟⲟⲩ.[310]

This brief introduction on the meanings and importance of the desert/mountain having been done, we may now turn our attention to the occurrences of the expression in question in the literature that circulated in Coptic in Late Antiquity. One can mention first the New Testament. In the Sahidic New Testament, for example, the word ⲧⲟⲟⲩ appears sixty-four times in diverse contexts; in the Gospels, it is possible to find it in many important passages such as the sermon on the mount (*Matthew* 5, 1), the temptations in the desert (*Matthew* 4, 8), occasions in which Jesus isolates himself to pray (*Luke* 6, 12), and in the episode of the Transfiguration, in which Jesus also prays before appearing in shining glory (*Luke* 9, 28-29). In *Hebrews* 12, 22, Mount Sinai is associated with the heavenly Jerusalem and its countless angels. In *Revelation*, mountains are present in many eschatological descriptions (*Revelation* 6, 14-16; 8, 8; 16, 20), but also as the dwelling-place of the Lamb (*Revelation* 14, 1) and

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Mountain" – the place to where Antony journeyed once he decided to be alone and even more reclused – is in Upper Egypt (*Life of Antony* § 49-50). On this matter, see Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity*, 104.

[308] Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, 22.

[309] See, for example, *The Life of Shenoute* § 9 and 144.

[310] Winifred Blackman's description probably encapsulates the feelings of an Egyptian concerning the desert/mountain: "The vast solitudes of the desert are terrifying to the country folk, most of whom, up to the present day, cannot be induced to traverse even the lower fringes of those wastes after sunset. Fear of hyenas, and, still more, of *afārīt* (demons), forbids any man to venture beyond the cultivation at night. The ordinary peasant, unless he is obliged to remain in the fields either to protect his crops or to watch over his sheep and goats, returns to his village before sunset, remaining there until just before the dawn of the following day"; see Winifred Blackman, *The Fellāhīn of Upper Egypt: Their Religious, Social, and Industrial Life To-day, with Special Reference to Survivals from Ancient Times* (London, 1927), 21.

finally, as the destination to which the visionary is transported in spirit and where he beholds the heavenly Jerusalem coming down from heaven (*Revelation* 21, 10).

If we turn our attention now to native Egyptian literature, we also find the expression mountain/desert in many contexts. In the *Lives of Pachomius*, for example, mountains are described as a place where men seeking spiritual comfort gather around a spiritual guide, normally an anchorite. In one episode, after a sinful brother was tormented by the Devil, at the time Pachomius was still living as a disciple of Apa Palamon, SBo tells us that: "The Old Man Apa Palamon was very sad about the wretched man's soul, and many times he would speak of him to Pachomius, to all the neighboring brothers, and to those on all that mountain, for he was their father and comforter" (SBo § 14).[311]

The mountain was also the place where a brother would be buried, following a special ritual that included the recitation of Psalms and also a nightly vigil. In SBo, for example, it is told that, after a disease, Palamon – Pachomius's master – passed away and was buried at the mountain:

> The Lord visited him in peace, at the tenth hour of the day, on the twenty-fifth of Epip. They spent the whole night reading and chanting psalms around him, till the hour of the *synaxis*. They offered the Eucharist for him, and they brought him to the mountain at a little distance from his cell. They buried him and prayed for him (SBo § 18).[312]

Also according to SBo, the nuns who lived in a nunnery founded by Pachomius's sister were also buried in the mountain:

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[311] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 37. Ⲡⲓϧⲉⲗⲗⲟ ⲇⲉ ⲁⲃⲃⲁ ⲡⲁⲗⲁⲙⲱⲛ ⲁϥⲉⲣⲙ̅ⲕⲁϩ ⲛ̅ϩⲏⲧ ⲉⲙⲁϣⲱ ⲉⲑⲃⲉⲧⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲙ̅ⲡⲓⲧⲁⲗⲉⲡⲱⲣⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲉⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲛⲉϣⲁϥⲥⲁϫⲓ ⲛⲉⲙⲡⲁϩⲱⲙ ⲛⲟⲩⲙⲏϣ ⲛ̅ⲥⲟⲡ ⲛⲉⲙⲛⲓⲥⲛⲏⲟⲩ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲉⲙⲡⲉϥⲕⲱϯ Ⲛⲉⲙⲛⲏ ⲉⲧϩⲉⲛⲡⲓⲧⲱⲟⲩ ⲧⲏⲣϥ ⲉⲧⲉⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲉⲑⲃⲉϫⲉⲛⲁϥϣⲟⲡ ⲛⲱⲟⲩ ⲛ̅ⲓⲱⲧ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲛ̅ⲣⲉϥⲥⲟⲗⲥⲉⲗ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii vita bohairice scripta*, 16).

[312] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 40. Four pages of the Bohairic manuscript are missing; thus Veilleux translates this passage from S³ completing it with the *Arabic Life*. For details, see Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 6-8; 269. ⲧⲉⲡϫⲟⲉⲓⲥ ϭⲙⲡⲉϥϣⲓⲛⲉ ϩⲛ̅ⲟⲩⲉⲓⲣⲏⲛⲏ ⲛ̅ϫⲡⲙⲏⲧⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲛ̅ⲥⲟⲩϫⲟⲩⲧⲏ ⲛ̅ⲉⲡⲏⲡ· ⲁⲩⲣ̅ⲧⲉⲩϣⲏ ⲧⲏⲣⲥ̅ ⲉⲩⲱϣ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉⲩⲧⲁⲗⲗⲉⲓ ⲙ̅ⲡⲉϥⲕⲱⲧⲉ ϣⲁⲡⲛⲁⲩ ⲛ̅ⲧⲥⲩⲛⲁⲍⲓⲥ ⲛ̅ⲥⲉⲉⲓⲣⲉ ⲉϫⲱϥ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉ ⲡⲣⲟⲥⲫⲟⲣⲁ· ⲛ̅ⲥⲉϥⲓⲧϥ̅ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲉⲡⲧⲟⲟⲩ ⲙⲡⲟⲩⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲉϥⲙⲁ ⲛ̅ϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲛ̅ⲟⲩⲕⲟⲩⲓ· ⲛ̅ⲥⲉⲧⲟⲙⲥϥ̅ ⲛ̅ⲥⲉϣⲗⲏⲗ ⲉ̅ϫⲱϥ· (Lefort, *S. Pachomii vitae sahidice scriptae*, 102, 3-15b. The episode of the death of Palamon has a parallel in G¹ (G¹ § 13), where, however, there is no mention of the mountain as the place of his burial.

When one of [the sisters] died, they brought her to the oratory and first their mother covered her with a shroud (…) They proceeded to the assembly room and stood in the entryway chanting psalms with gravity until [the deceased] was prepared for burial. Then she was placed on a bier and carried to the mountain (SBo § 27b).[313]

Vivian suggests that the burial of a monk on a mountain could be a way to express that he was now in a place "where solitaries are laid to rest."[314] Also in SBo, the mountain is the solitary place where Theodore sometimes takes refuge to pray secretly, standing beside Pachomius's tomb: "When he reached the tomb of our father Pachomius on the mountain, Apa Theodore stood over it and, weeping profusely, he prayed to Christ" (SBo § 198).[315]

Mountains are also classic locations for experiences of the divine in the Jewish Scriptures; Moses sees the angel of the Lord on Horeb (*Exodus* 3, 1-2); he also receives, from God Himself, the Ten Commandments on a mountain, Sinai (*Exodus* 19), a place where Moses is allowed, but others are expressly forbidden to go (*Exodus* 19:23). In *Ezekiel* 40, 2, we read that the prophet was taken to a very high mountain by God, where he sees the new Temple. These examples show that mountains have, among other functions, the purpose of serving as a special place for important revelations, visions and religious experiences. One must note that the recipients of the revelations or visions are always alone in these cases – in *Exodus* 19:23 it is even stated that only Moses can go up to Sinai – which denotes the esoteric character of the experience.

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[313] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 50-51. ⲁⲣⲉϣⲁⲛⲟⲩⲓ̄ ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲙ̄ⲧⲟⲛ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲃⲏⲧⲟⲩ ϣⲁⲩⲟⲗⲥ ⲉⲡⲟⲩⲙⲁⲛⲉⲣϣⲁⲓ ⲛ̄[ⲧⲉ]ⲧⲟⲩⲙⲁⲩ ⲉⲣϣⲟⲣⲡ ⲛ̄ϩⲓⲟⲩⲓ̄ ⲉϫⲱⲥ ⲛ[ⲟⲩ]ⲥⲩⲛⲇⲟⲛⲓⲟⲛ (…) [ⲟ]ⲩⲟϩ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉϣⲉ ⲉϧⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲡⲟⲩⲙⲁⲛⲑⲱⲟⲩⲧ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲟϩⲓ ⲉⲣⲁⲧⲟⲩ ϧⲉⲛⲟⲩⲥⲧⲟⲓⲁ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲉⲣⲯⲁⲗⲓⲛ ϧⲉⲛⲟⲩⲙⲉⲧⲥⲉⲙⲛⲟⲥ ϣⲁⲛⲧⲟⲩⲕⲟⲥⲥ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲧⲁⲗⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲁϭⲟⲗⲧ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲩⲗⲥ ⲉⲡⲧⲱⲟⲩ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii vita bohairice*, 27-28). This passage has a parallel in G¹ (§ 32); this time, however, it is mentioned that the nuns are buried in the mountain, and the word used is τὸ ὄρος (Athanassakis and Pearson, *The Life of Pachomius*, 46, 5).

[314] Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt,* 21. The *Life of Shenoute* also states that mountains were a common place for the tombs of martyrs (The *Life of Shenoute* § 119).

[315] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 245. ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲉⲧⲁϥϣⲟϩ ⲉⲡⲓⲙⲁ ⲉⲣⲉⲡⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲡⲁϧⲱⲙ ⲑⲟⲙⲥ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ϧⲉⲛⲡⲓⲧⲱⲟⲩ ⲁϥⲟϩⲓ ⲉⲣⲁⲧϥ ⲛ̄ϫⲉⲁⲡⲁ ⲑⲉⲟⲇⲱⲣⲟⲥ ⲥⲁⲡϣⲱⲓ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲁϥϣⲗⲏⲗ ⲉϥⲣⲓⲙⲓ ϧⲉⲛϩⲁⲛⲉⲣⲙⲱⲟⲩⲓ̄ ⲉⲩⲟϣ ⲉϩⲣⲏⲓ ϩⲁⲡⲭ̄ⲥ̄ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii vitae sahidice bohairice scripta*, 193). This passage has a parallel in G¹ (G¹ § 146), and the word used is once again τὸ ὄρος (Athanassakis and Pearson, *The Life of Pachomius*, 192, 23).

In the apocalyptic tradition[316] – the revelatory literary genre par excellence – one may also find examples of visionary experiences occuring and revelations being given on mountains.[317] In the *Martyrdom of Isaiah*, also known as the *Ascension of Isaiah*, for example, one reads that

> And when Isaiah the son of Amoz saw the great iniquity which was being committed in Jerusalem (…) he withdrew from Jerusalem and dwelt in Bethlehem of Judah. And there also there was a great iniquity; and he withdrew from Bethlehem and dwelt on a mountain in a desert place. And Micah the prophet, and the aged Ananias, and Joel, and Habakkuk, and Josab his son, and many of the faithful who believed in the ascension into heaven, withdrew and dwelt on the mountain (…) all of them were prophets; they had nothing with them, but were destitute, and they all lamented bitterly over the going astray of Israel. And they had nothing to eat except wild herbs (which) they gathered from the mountains (…) And they dwelt on the mountains and on the hills for two years of days (*Ascension of Isaiah* 2: 7-11).[318]

It is striking that this description of Isaiah and his fellows is so close to descriptions of early Eastern Christian anchorites; the fact of being on a mountain in a desert place without any material possessions and following a precise diet is a commonplace in Eastern monastic accounts about the desert fathers[319] and is thus thematically related to fourth-century Christianity. Moreover, the fact that Coptic fragments of the *Ascension of Isaiah* have survived until today attests its circulation in Coptic Egypt.[320]

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[316] As stated in our introduction and in section 3.5, the motifs generally associated with apocalyptic literature will be the guiding thread of our comparisons.

[317] Judging by the specific geographic and topographic characteristics of Egypt, especially in regard to the mountain/desert question, one may imagine that apocalyptic texts that portray mountains as perfect spots for revelations could have particularly caught the attention of Egyptian audiences.

[318] As far as we know, the most updated English translation of the texts in question is provided by Michael Kniib, "The Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Vol 1: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (ed. J. Charlesworth; Garden City: Doubleday, 1983), 143-176. For a critical edition, see Paolo Bettiolo et al., *Ascensio Isaiae* (CCSA 7 and 8; Turnhout: Brepols, 1994) and Norelli, *Ascension du prophète Isaïe*.

[319] For a survey, see Festugière, *Les moines d'Orient*, 41-57. See also Guy, *Les Apophtegmes des Pères: Collection systématique - chapitres I-IX*; Guy, *Les Apophtegmes des Pères: Collection systématique - chapitres X-XVI*; and Guy, *Les Apophtegmes des Pères: Collection systématique - chapitres XVII-XXI*. See also our discussion on the character of James in section 4.3.2.

[320] See Louis-Théophile Lefort, "Fragments d'apocryphes en copte-akhmîmique," *Muséon* 52 (1939) : 1-10; Pierre Lacau, "Fragments de l'*Ascension d'Isaïe* en copte," *Muséon* 59 (1946): 453-467.

In the *Greek Apocalypse of Peter*,[321] we read that "when the Lord was seated upon the Mount of Olives, his disciples came to him" (§ 1) and what follows is a revelatory discourse by the Lord in which he describes many sufferings of sinners' souls in hell. Later, we read that "my Lord Jesus Christ, our King, said to me, 'Let us go to the holy mountain'. And his disciples went with him, praying" (§ 15)[322] and what follows is a vision of holy angels and Old Testament heroes, such as Moses and Elijah, and the reward of just souls in heaven. In the specific case of the *Greek Apocalypse of Peter*, it is likely to affirm that it circulated in Egypt – since Clement of Alexandria mentions it.[323]

To sum up the upshot of these preliminary considerations, one may say that the interpretation of the word ⲧⲟⲟⲩ in Codex V by a late antique Coptic reader would have had as a background both traditions, the Coptic and the apocalyptic.

Instances of mountains as the perfect location for revelations also occur among the NH texts.[324] In the *Apocryphon of John*, for example, one reads at the beginning of the text in Codices II and III that John went to a mountain or a mountainous place, where he met the Lord (NH II 18, 19 and BG 20, 4-6). In the *Sophia of Jesus Christ*, we are also told that after the resurrection, the twelve disciples and the seven women met Jesus on a mountain in Galilee (NH III 90, 19 and 91, 19-20).[325] We have a similar situation in the beginning of the *Letter of Peter to Philip*, where one reads that Peter and the others came up to the mountain

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[321] The text is generally known as the *Greek Apocalypse of Peter*, even though the text was only entirely preserved in Ethiopic and in a very different version in Arabic; we have, however, some Greek fragments, known as the "Akhmin Text". There are also some fragments in Coptic and Slavonic. For a critical edition of the Ethiopic text, see Denis D. Buchholz, *Your Eyes Will be Open: a Study of the Greek (Ethiopic) Apocalypse of Peter* (SBLDS 97; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1988). For the "Akhmin text", see Urbain Bouriant, "Fragments du texte grec du livre d'Énoch et quelques écrits attribués à saint Pierre" in *Mémoires publiés par les membres de la mission archéologique française au Caire* (Paris, 1892). And for the Coptic fragments, see Oscar von Lemm, "Bruchstück einer Petrusapokalypse," in *Koptische Miscellen, 1-148: Unveränd. Nachdr. d. 1907-1915 im "Bulletin de l'Académie impériale des sciences de St. Pétersbourg"ersch. Stücke* (ed. P. Nagel; Leipzig: Zentralantiquariat d. Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1972), 107-112.

[322] This extract has a parallel in the "Akhmin Text".

[323] *Eclogae* 41. 1-2 and 48.1

[324] This dissertation will deal with the occurrences of the word in question in Codex V below.

[325] The episode in the Codex of Berlin version is similar.

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(NH VIII 133, 13-14),[326] where Christ appears in shining brightness (NH VIII 134, 9-13). In the case of these treatises, the mountain is the place where one or more disciples meet the Lord and where the revelation dialogue or discourse takes place. Lastly, at the beginning of the *Paraphrase of Shem* one reads that the visionary was taken to the "summit of creation (NH VII, 1-9),[327] what, according to Michel Roberge, could mean the top of a mountain, following the apocalyptic imagination.[328] Thus Codex V treatises are not alone in this matter: other writings in the NHC also evoke the mountain as a perfect place for a revelatory experience.

Let us now turn our attention to the use of ⲧⲟⲟⲩ in Codex V texts, where the word appears six times (19, 11.12; 30, 19; 78, 11; 81,4; 85, 10). Only three of these occurrences seem to be related to revelatory experiences (19, 11.12 and 30, 19). The first example is found in the *Apocalypse of Paul* where we read that "this mountain upon which you walk, is the mountain of Jericho" (NH 19, 11-13).[329] Later, in the *First Apocalypse of James*, we read that "and James was walking upon the mountain" (NH V 30, 18-19).[330] The word shows up three times in the *Apocalypse of Adam*, where one reads that "And a bird came, took the child who was born and brought him onto a high mountain" (NH V 78, 9-11);[331] "She came to a high mountain and spent (some) time seated there" (NH V 81, 4-5);[332] and also "For they will be on a high mountain, upon a rock of truth" (NH V 85, 9-11).[333] Due to their decreasing

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[326] In the Codex Tchacos version, the passage in question is missing due to the poor conservation of pages 1-8.
[327] Roberge's translation in Michel Roberge, *The Paraphrase of Shem: Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (NHMS 72; Leiden/Boston: E.J. Brill, 2010), 100. ⲉⲡϫⲓⲥⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲕⲧⲓⲥⲓⲥ; see Michel Roberge, *La Paraphrase de Sem* (BCNH section "Textes" 25; Québec/Louvain/Paris: Les Presses de l'Université Laval/Peeters, 2000), 118.
[328] Roberge, *The Paraphrase of Shem*, 130.
[329] Murdock and MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 53. ⲡⲓⲧⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲉⲕ̄ϩⲱⲙ ⲉϫⲱϥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟϥ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲧⲟⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ϩ̄ⲓⲉⲣⲓⲭⲱ (Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 102).
[330] Schoedel's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 81. ⲁⲩⲱ ⲓ̈ⲁⲕⲱⲃⲟⲥ ⲛⲉϥⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ ⲡⲉ ϩ̄ⲓⲭⲙ̄ ⲡⲧⲟⲟⲩ (Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 34).
[331] MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 179.181. ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁϥⲉ̄ⲓ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲟⲩϩⲁⲗⲏⲧ ⲁϥϥⲓ ⲡⲓⲁⲗⲟⲩ (ⲕⲟⲩⲉⲓ) ⲉⲧⲁⲩϫⲡⲟϥ ⲁϥϫⲓⲧϥ̄ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲩⲧⲟⲟⲩ ⲉϥϫⲟⲥⲉ (Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*, 46).
[332] MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 185. ⲁⲥⲉ̄ⲓ ⲉϫⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲧⲟⲟⲩ ⲉϥϫⲟⲥⲉ ⲁⲥⲣ̅ ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓϣ ⲉⲥϩⲙⲟⲥ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ (Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*, 52).
[333] MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 193. ⲥⲉⲛⲁϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲅⲁ[ⲣ ⲉ]ϫⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲧⲟⲟⲩ ⲉϥϫⲟⲥⲉ ϩ̄ⲓⲭⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲡⲉⲧⲣⲁ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲧⲙⲉ (Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*, 60).

complexity, we shall analyze these passages in the opposite order from that of their occurrence.

The mentions of a mountain in the *Apocalypse of Adam* do not seem to be directly linked to what has been discussed above. The mountain in these cases is not part of an apocalyptic revelatory environment; it is not presented as a special place where revelations take place. However, one may find striking the fact that in both cases the same expression is used: a high mountain (ⲟⲩⲧⲟⲟⲩ ⲉϥϫⲟⲥⲉ). It is also remarkable that ϫⲟⲥⲉ and its variations[334] appears in some texts preserved in Coptic associated with mountains, such as the *Paraphrase of Shem*.[335] In the specific case of NH V 85, 10-11, the context leads us to see the high mountain as the place where the angels will teach (NH V 85, 16-17).

The way in which the mountain is presented in the *First Apocalypse of James* however, would fit well in the apocalyptic tradition, since what follows is the appearance of Jesus and his revelatory discourse to James. The visionary is thus in the ideal place for the revelations to take place.

The mention of a mountain in this context also has echoes among the texts that are part of our corpus of comparison. In the *Sahidic Life of Antony*, for example, Antony withdraws to the mountain to resume his asceticism after a sojourn in Alexandria. Before arriving at the mountain, it is said that he had to walk for three days in the company of Saracen travelers: "and he walked with them three days and three nights and came upon a great mountain" (*Sahidic Life of Antony* § 49).[336]It is notable that the verb ⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ is related to the mountain, similarly to the *First Apocalypse of James*. In the Greek version of the *Life of Antony*, the verb employed is ὁδεύειν, 'to go ' or 'to travel';[337] ⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ is one of the possible translations for this Greek verb in Coptic. Thus the idea of travel, going or walking towards a mountain

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[334] Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 788b.
[335] As discussed above, the "top of creation" ⲡϫⲓⲥⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲕⲧⲓⲥⲓⲥ (NH VII 1, 9) could be understood as a high mountain.
[336] Vivian's translation in Vivian and Athanassakis, *The Life of Antony*, 164. ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁϥⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ ⲛⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ϣⲟⲙⲛⲧ̄ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲙⲛ̄ϣⲟⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲛⲟⲩϣⲏ ⲁϥⲉⲓ ⲉϫⲛⲟⲩⲛⲟϭ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲟⲩ (Garitte, *S. Antonii Vitae Versio Sahidica*, 56).
[337] Liddell & Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1198a.

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which is the ideal place for Antony's ascetical practices and consequently revelations is already present in the original Greek text. One should remember, however, that the *Life of Antony*, even though composed originally in Greek, is the product of an Egyptian environment, and was probably influenced by many traces of Coptic culture, as argued above.[338] One must not forget either the propagandistic importance attributed to the *Life of Antony* among Egyptian monasticism in Athanasius' battle for orthodoxy in Egypt. The *Life of Antony* was certainly one of the main channels of Athanasius's popularity among Egyptian monks,[339] and one cannot deny the possibility that he may have emphasized themes, motifs and elements that would be familiar and even peculiar to Coptic culture and Coptic monasticism overall. All this serves to explain that, even being composed in Greek, the *Life of Antony* helps us in the reconstruction of the "horizon of expectations" of a late antique Coptic audience. Its Coptic translation only repeated in Coptic a motif that was already present in Greek.

Obviously, the actions performed by Antony and James are not exactly the same; Antony journeys to be on the mountain, while James is already on the mountain and walking there. The fact that they are both on a mountain is, however, remarkable. In the case of the *First Apocalypse of James*, what follows is the appearance of Jesus and his revelatory discourse, while in the case of *The Life of Antony*, the mountain is the place where Antony practices his asceticism and experiences his visions and revelations. Before going to the mountain, Antony was in Alexandria, but he realized the he should go back to the desert/mountain to resume his asceticism; the text says that he was disturbed by the multitude and decided to go back to the desert. Guided by the divine providence, he meets the Saracens travelers and returns to the mountain where he will be able to resume his asceticism and thus presumably receive revelations (*Sahidic Life of Antony* § 49). It is clear that, according to the text, the solitude required for Antony's asceticism that eventually leads to his ecstatic experiences and revelations can only be provided by the desert/mountain environment. Moreover, the similarities between both texts – the *Sahidic Life of Antony* and the *First Apocalypse of James* – go even further: as we have seen, both characters, James and Antony,

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[338] See pages 178-181 above.
[339] Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism*, 201-265.

behave similarly, performing an act expressed by one of the derivatives of the Coptic verb ⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ. James is walking on the mountain, while Antony is walking to get to the mountain.

In the *Life of Onnophrius*, when Onnophrius is telling Paphnutius how he met his teacher in the desert, he says that he was guided by an angel and "When I have come into the mountain (ⲧⲟⲟⲩ), and I had journeyed in the desert (ⲁⲓⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲭⲁⲓⲉ) for six or seven miles…." (*Life of Onnophrius* § 14).[340] In this passage, the mountain/desert (ⲧⲟⲟⲩ) is mentioned, and also a variant for desert (ⲭⲁⲓⲉ), as well as one of the derivatives of the verb ⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ. In what follows, Onophrius meets his teacher who teaches him about the rules that govern the life of the monk in the "desert" (ⲡⲭⲁⲓⲉ)[341] (*Life of Onnophrius* § 15),"[342] i.e. the rules of asceticism that will permit Onnophrius to become a saint and presumably receive further revelations.[343] At a certain point in the account, we read that "he rose up, and journeyed with me into the desert" (*Life of Onnophrius* § 15).[344] Once more, the verb ⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ is used. The story goes on with Onnophrius telling Paphnutius about his struggles and asceticism and also about some ecstatic experiences that could be linked to the apocalyptic tradition, such as the ascension to the heavens.

Later in the story, Paphnoutius leaves Onnophrius and goes on in his journey through the desert; he finds some other monks who, once again, tell him about their monastic life and how they arrived in that place. At a certain point they say:

> and we four rose up, and we set ourselves on the way to the desert, so that we might live therein quietly until we should see what the Lord had ordained for us. And we took with us a few loaves of bread, sufficient for seven days. And when we had come into the mountain, straightway an ecstasy fell upon us, and a man,

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[340] Translation in Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 462. ⲛ̄ ⲧⲉⲣ ⲓⲉⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲉ ϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉ ⲡⲧⲟⲟⲩ· ⲁⲓⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲭⲁⲓⲉ ⲉⲛⲁⲥⲟⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ ⲙⲏⲗⲓⲟⲛ ⲛ̄ ⲥⲁϣϥ̄ (Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 212).
[341] In this case, as in the following paragraph (§ 15), the Coptic word used is ⲭⲁⲓⲉ, and not ⲧⲟⲟⲩ. ⲭⲁⲓⲉ is the Coptic equivalent of the Greek ἔρημος (desert) and could be used as a variant of ⲧⲟⲟⲩ (see, for example, Ex 19, 1) according to Crum (Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 745b-746a).
[342] Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 462-463.
[343] Later, in § 30, after having journeyed further into the desert, he meets other monks and experiences with them an ecstasy. This paragraph will be discussed below.
[344] Translation in Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 463. ⲁⲩⲧⲱⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲩⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ ⲛⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲓ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲡⲭⲁⲓⲉ (Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 213).

who was all light, laid hold of our hands and brought us into this place (*Life of Onnophrius* § 30-31).[345]

In this passage, the verb ⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ is lacking, but ⲧⲟⲟⲩ is mentioned twice. Thus once again we have an example of a fourth-century Coptic text that defines the mountain/desert as the ideal location for ascetical practices and the leading of a monastic spiritual life that, consequently, may lead to revelations and ecstatic experiences such as those mentioned above. Consequently, one may say that the way in which the mountain is presented in the *First Apocalypse of James* jibes perfectly with the ideas expressed in late antique century Coptic literature and in the apocalyptic tradition. In the case of the *Life of Onnophrius*, the beginning of the story even evoked the fact that the character was walking or journeying (ⲁⲓⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ) after having mentioned that he went to the mountain. The other passages also mention that someone was walking or journeying, associating it not to the mountain specifically, but rather to the desert. We believe that it would not be far-fetched to think that in this case – given Egyptian geography and the actual similarity between the desert and the mountain – the words that are used to express the desert could be interpreted also as referring to the mountain, contributing thus to the shaping of the "horizon of expectations" of late antique Coptic readers who read about this motif in the *First Apocalypse of James*.

In the *Life of Pambo,* at the end of the first paragraph text, one reads that "the blessed Apa Pambo rose and journeyed into the desert/mountain" (Oriental 6783 fols. 23a-23b).[346] The narrative of his journey continues and one finds the mention of similar phrases, such as "And having departed from him and journeyed into the desert/mountain…" (Oriental

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[345] Translation in Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 470. ⲉⲧ ϩⲓ ϩⲟⲩⲛ· ⲁⲛ ⲧⲱⲟⲩⲛ ⲙ̄ ⲡ̄ϥ̄ⲧⲟⲟⲩ ⲁⲛⲧⲁⲁⲛ ⲉ ϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉ ⲡⲧⲟⲟⲩ· ⲉ ⲧⲣⲛ̄ ⲉⲥⲩⲭⲁⲍⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲛ· ϣⲁⲛ ⲧⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲩ ⲉ ⲑⲉ ⲉⲧ ⲉⲣⲉ ⲡⲭ̅ⲥ̅ ⲛⲁⲧⲟⲟϣⲛ̄ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ· ⲁⲛϫⲓⲥⲉ ⲛⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲛ ⲛ̄ ϩⲉⲛⲕⲟⲩⲓ ⲛ̄ⲟⲉⲓⲕ ⲛⲁⲡϣⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ ⲥⲁϣϥ̄ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲟⲩ. ⲛ ⲧⲉⲣ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲉ ⲇⲉ ⲉ ϩⲟⲩⲛ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲧⲟⲟⲩ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲩⲛⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲉⲕⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲥ ϩⲉ ⲉ ϩⲁⲓ̈ ⲉ ϫⲱⲛ· ⲁⲩⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲉϥⲟ ⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲁⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲛ̄ϭⲓϫ· ⲁϥⲛ̄ⲧⲛ̄ ⲉ ⲡⲉⲓ ⲙⲁ· (Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 220). One may note that Budge's translation accounts for the double meaning of the term ⲧⲟⲟⲩ, since he translates it as 'desert' at the beginning of the passage and then as 'mountain'.

[346] Our translation. ⲛ̄ⲧⲟϥ ⲇⲉ ⲡⲙⲁⲕⲁⲣⲓⲟⲥ ⲁⲡⲁ ⲡⲁⲙⲃⲟ ⲁϥⲧⲱⲟⲩⲛ ⲁϥⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲧⲟⲟⲩ (Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 128).

6783),[347] or "When I had journeyed more than a mile further up into the desert/mountain".[348] In what follows, by the power of the Spirit Pambo is taken to the hermitage of some brothers. Thus we have once again a supernatural experience related to the verb ⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ and its derivatives and to the mountain/desert (ⲧⲟⲟⲩ).

The idea of a mountain as the perfect location for a religious or revelatory experience is reinforced by the fact that when Pambo finally meets Cyrus in his monastic cell, they gather with Jesus after praying (Oriental 6783 fols. 27b-28a); the fact that they are on the mountain at the moment they meet Jesus is confirmed by Pambo's affirmation during the experience: "The mountain is crumbling away under us" (Oriental 6783 fol. 27b).[349] Therefore we have here another example of a text that places the episode of walking on a mountain before meeting the Lord; it is also remarkable that, in the *Life of Cyrus*, Pambo has to journey/walk into the desert/mountain to encounter Jesus, similarly to the *First Apocalypse of James* from Codex V.

Finally, in the *Life of Shenoute*, one reads the following account: "Once, when our father Apa Shenoute went into the desert, behold! The Lord Jesus appeared to him and spoke with him. As they were walking together, they came upon a corpse cast upon a mountain (*Life of Shenoute* § 154).[350]

In the specific case of this passage, the act of walking on a mountain is posterior to the meeting with Jesus; however, before the meeting with Jesus the text says that Shenoute was walking in the desert (ⲙⲟϣⲓ ϧⲉⲛⲡϣⲁϥⲉ), which could be considered a similar action. After the meeting with Jesus on the mountain, the Lord himself resurrects the corpse and asks him to tell him how he ended up there. The raised corpse says that he was a glassblower from

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[347] Translation in Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 382. ⲛ̄ ⲧⲉⲣ ⲉⲓⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ ⲉ ⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲓ ⲧⲟⲟⲧϥ̄ ⲉ ϩⲟⲩⲛ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲧⲟⲟⲩ (Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 129).

[348] Translation in Vivian, *Journeying into God*, 32. ⲛ̄ ⲧⲉⲣ ⲓⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ ⲉ ϩⲟⲩⲛ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲧⲟⲟⲩ (Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 131).

[349] Translation in Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 386. ⲉⲣⲉ ⲡⲧⲟⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲁⲥⲱϩⲙ̄ ϩⲁ ⲣⲟⲛ (Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 133).

[350] Translation in Bell, *The Life of Shenoute*, 85. ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲉⲣⲉⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲁⲡⲁ ϣⲉⲛⲟⲩϯ ⲙⲟϣⲓ ϧⲉⲛⲡϣⲁϫⲉ ⲓⲥⲡⲟⲥ ⲓ̄ⲏ̄ⲥ̄ ⲁϥⲟⲩⲟⲛϩϥ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲁϥⲥⲁϫⲓ ⲛⲉⲙⲁϥ. ⲉⲩⲙⲟϣⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲛⲉⲙⲛⲟⲩⲉⲣⲏⲟⲩ ⲁⲩⲓ ⲉϫⲉⲛⲟⲩⲣⲉϥⲙⲱⲟⲩⲧ ⲉϥⲥⲓϯ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲓⲡⲓⲧⲱⲟⲩ. (Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Vita Bohairice*, 66-67).

Siōout who died because of a terrible illness; since he did not have kin relations with his colleagues, they left his corpse on that mountain; finally, the raised corpse worships Jesus, who ascends "into heaven with angels singing before him."[351]

Let us now turn our attention to the parallel of this passage in the *First Apocalypse of James* from the Codex Tchacos, which is surprisingly different: "James was performing his duties upon the [mountain] called "Galge[la]m" (CT 17, 7-9)[352]. It is striking that the Codex Tchacos version uses a different verb (ⲣ̄ ⲇⲓⲁⲕⲟⲛⲉⲓ, instead of ⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ ϩⲓϫⲛ or any of its derivatives) to express what James was performing on the mountain before Jesus' appearance. The very fact that James was "performing his duties" on a mountain would be enough to link the passage in question to the whole of late antique Coptic hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison, which views the mountains as the perfect place for revelation, as discussed above. However, in the specific case of the version of Codex V, the verb ⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ (ϩⲓϫⲛ) makes this connection much more solid and obvious, since in many cases it is what the visionary is doing on the mountain before the revelatory experience takes place.

Thus it could be profitable to discuss the meaning of the verb ⲣ̄ ⲇⲓⲁⲕⲟⲛⲉⲓ.[353] Originally, this Greek verb meant to do or to perform a service, without any mention of a particular context.[354] According to Kahle,[355] in the New Testament period, the word could have four different meanings: 1) the original meaning of general service; 2) service to God; 3) the necessary service for preparing food and meals 4) the service or the help given to the poor and alms, normally associated to the former meaning. According to Kahle, it is possible to find the four senses in question in a Coptic context; however, "it is difficult to find a clear

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[351] The whole account can be found in the *Life of Shenoute*, § 154-160.
[352] The translation and the Coptic text can be found in Kasser et al., *The Gospel of Judas*, 135. ïⲁⲕⲕⲱⲃⲟⲥ ⲁ ϥ ⲣ̄ ⲇⲓⲁⲕⲟⲛⲉⲓ ϩⲓϫⲛ̄ ⲡⲧ[ⲟⲟⲩ] ⲉⲧⲉ ϣ ⲁⲩ ⲙ ⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲉ ⲣ ⲟ ϥ ϫ ⲉ ⲅⲁⲗⲅⲏ[ⲗ ⲁ]ⲙ̄ .
[353] An excellent discussion of the meaning of the word discussed here – with an emphasis on the Coptic context and many pertinent examples – is provided by Paul E. Kahle, *Bala'izah: Coptic Texts from Deir El-Bala'izah in Upper Egypt. Vol. 1* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 35-40.
[354] Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 398a.
[355] Kahle, *Bala'izah*, 35-40.

instance where the word is used without some divine significance." Kahle then states that in the Coptic context, the word acquired two main meanings:

1- The service related to God,[356] not necessarily liturgical. It could be used to describe the mission of Christ or of a man who is sent in the service of God – service that could consist in martyrdom[357] – or even the angelic service;[358] in later periods, from the fifth century on, it could also mean a service related to the monastery;

2- The service necessary for the preparation of a meal; from this meaning derives the sense of service concerning alms.

It is unlikely that in the (*First Apocalypse of*) *James* from the Tchacos Codex, the word discussed here is referring to any kind of service related to the preparation of a meal. If we were simply dealing with the original composition of the text, we could probably retain the original signification of the word, i.e. service; however, as Kahle argues, in the New Testament period the word had already acquired a more specific meaning. More specifically, in the Coptic context and that of the narrative of *James* in the Codex Tchacos, it gives the impression that the text should be interpreted as if James was performing a religious duty or an act related to God; in the critical edition of the Codex Tchacos, the passage was generically translated into English as "performing his duties."[359] The French translation in the same edition, trying to render the text more understandable, translated the passage as "a accompli son service (liturgique)."[360]

The difference between the two versions of the *First Apocalypse of James* is indeed intriguing. There is no way to know, in the present stage of research, which version is closer to the original. However, we believe that one may offer some speculations – and we stress that what follows is nothing more than speculation – making use of textual criticism tools

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[356] For some examples in Coptic literature, in works both preserved and composed in Coptic, see Kahle, *Bala'izah*, 36-40.
[357] See Mina, *Le martyre d'Apa Epima*, 30.
[358] See the Shenoute, *Canons* 73, 33.
[359] Kasser et al., *The Gospel of Judas*, 135.
[360] Kasser et al., *The Gospel of Judas*, 168.

like the *lectio difficilior*. The verb ⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ followed by the preposition ϩⲓ, as in the case of the *First Apocalypse of James* in Codex V, could be used to translate the Greek verb διαπορεῖν.[361] Only two letters – a π instead of a κ and a ρ instead of a ν differentiate it from the verb διακονεῖν. As discussed above, if we consider that walking is the most likely thing for someone to do on a mountain, while performing service does not seem to be a likely task to be done in such a place, we may consider that the *lectio difficilior* in this case is διακονεῖν. The attempt to simplify the text would require, we emphasize, the misreading of only two letters. This could have happened in one of the following stages of transmission of the text:

1- In the transmission of the text in Greek; while it was being copying, a scribe may have committed an error, changing the two letters in question and thus simplifying the text, making it more plausible. Since ⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ ϩⲓ is one of the possible translations for διαπορεῖν we believe that this could be one possible explanation for the use of the verb in Codex V. However, this speculation would make sense only in an Egyptian environment, since, as we argued, the motif of walking on a mountain is possibly peculiar to this milieu. Therefore this would have happened in the Greek stage of transmission but already on Egyptian soil. This would not prevent the circulation in Egypt of the original Greek version with the verb διακονεῖν and consequently the correct translation of this verb into Coptic, which would explain the occurrence of διακονεῖν in the version of Codex Tchacos;

2- The second alternative of misreading and consequent simplification could have occured in the translation from Greek into Coptic. The Coptic translator could possibly have expected to find in this case a man walking on the mountain – a very common motif, as we have argued, in Coptic literature – not a man performing any kind of service; thus he may have misread διαπορεῖν for διακονεῖν and consequently wrote ⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ ϩⲓ instead of ⲣ̄ ⲇⲓⲁⲕⲟⲛⲉⲓ. This alternative would not prevent either the circulation of the original Greek version, which would eventually lead to the correct translation of διακονεῖν, i.e. ⲣ̄ ⲇⲓⲁⲕⲟⲛⲉⲓ, which would explain the Tchacos version.

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[361] Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 204b.

We remind the reader once again that this is nothing more than a speculation based on the *lectio difficilior* method and that the real original Greek verb in this case remains unknown.

At any rate, what must be emphasized here is the fact that this passage in the *First Apocalypse of James* from Codex V reports a common motif in late antique Coptic hagiographies, which would make it a very interesting text to late antique Coptic audiences used to read about revelations taking place on a mountain/desert. Moreover, the fact that in many instances the Coptic verb ⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ or one of its derivatives is linked to what the visionary is doing – just as in the case of the *First Apocalypse of James* in Codex V – makes the passage that concerns us here even more similar to late antique Coptic hagiographies.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

Let us now turn our attention to the *Apocalypse of Paul*. The use of the word ⲧⲟⲟⲩ in the *Apocalypse of Paul* seems to be linked to Paul's ascension – since he meets the boy who will be his heavenly guide during the ascension on the mountain[362] – but also to the visions he will behold. It is also of interest to note that before mentioning that Paul is treading upon the mountain (ⲡⲓⲧⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲉⲕϩⲱⲙ ⲉϫⲱϥ ⲛⲧⲟϥ), the boy orders Paul to awaken his mind (NH V 19, 10-11) and after the mentioning of the mountain, the boy once again speaks, saying "so that you may know the hidden things in those that are visible" (NH V 19, 13-14);[363] he then announces what will take place right afterwards, i.e. the ascension: "Now it is to the twelve apostles that you shall go" (NH V 19, 15-16).[364] Thus it is perfectly acceptable to affirm that the fact of being on a mountain is a point of departure in the visionary's experience described in the *Apocalypse of Paul* – the whole text helps to paint a picture of the visionary environment – which would relate it to the apocalyptic tradition concerning mountains as a classical location for revelations, and also to late antique Coptic hagiographies. Additionally, in a reception perspective, one would expect a late antique Coptic audience that had contact

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[362] The narrative itself does not say that Paul was on the mountain, we know this through the words of the boy. Concerning the boy, see section 7.2.2.1.

[363] Murdock and MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 53. ϫⲉ ⲉⲕⲉⲥⲟⲩⲱⲛⲛⲉⲧ ϩⲏⲡ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ ϩⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲧⲟⲩⲟⲛϩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ (Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 102).

[364] Murdock and MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 53. ⲡⲓⲙ̄ⲛⲧ ⲥⲛⲟⲟⲩⲥ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲡⲟⲥⲧⲟⲗⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲉⲕ ⲛⲁⲃⲱⲕ ϣⲁⲣⲟⲟⲩ (Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 102).

with this motif in the *Apocalypse of Paul* to interpret it in the light of other texts that were circulating in Coptic at the same time and that also make use of the motif in question.

However, the way in which the character acts on the mountain is quite unexpected for a Coptic text. As we saw in the case of the *First Apocalypse of James*, and also in some examples in Coptic literature, one would expect to find in such context the verb ⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ or one of its derivatives; however, the verb used in the passage in question is ϩⲱⲙ, generally translated as "to tread upon,"[365] and normally used to translate the Greek verb πατειν, and translated by modern scholars in this passage as "standing,"[366] "walking"[367] in English or "marche" in French."[368]. Kaler offers a detailed explanation of this peculiar usage of the verb in his commentary on the *Apocalypse of Paul*,[369] a commentary that should be taken into consideration here.

Initially, he affirms that it is possible to see the verb ϩⲱⲙ as a synonym for ⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ which would not be especially extraordinary.[370] However, as we have already emphasized, this is not the normal and expected meaning of the verb discussed here. Kaler goes on trying to understand this peculiar usage of ϩⲱⲙ. He points out that in the Greek New Testament

> πατεῖν is usually associated with the final destiny of the wicked, and thus has a strongly eschatological connotation (Matt 5,13; Lk 8,5; Rev 11,2; 14,20; 19,15). In all these cases it is used with reference to the object which is trodden upon. The sole New Testament exception to this general rule is Lk 10,19 (alluding to Ps 90,13 LXX), where Jesus promises the disciples that they will be given the power to tread upon snakes and scorpions. The treading upon is a symbol of the overcoming of the thing trodden upon.[371]

Since Kaler's main concern is not the Coptic context of the *Apocalypse of Paul*, he does not try to analyze the passages in question in the Coptic New Testament searching for the verb

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[365] Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 674b ff.
[366] Murdock and MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 53).
[367] Kaler's translation in Kaler, *Flora Tells a Story*, 2.
[368] French translation in Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 103.
[369] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 196-198.
[370] This specific suggestion will be discussed again below.
[371] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 196.

ϩⲱⲙ; at any rate, in all the passages evoked by Kaler, the Coptic verb ϩⲱⲙ is employed.[372] However, in the cases of *Matthew* 5: 13; *Luke* 8: 5 and 10: 19 the context is not exactly eschatological, as Kaler observes. In contrast, we see the verb ϩⲱⲙ being used in an eschatological context in *Revelation*, where the verb is indeed employed to express the overcoming, firstly, of the holy city (*Rev*elation 11: 2) and then of the winepress (*Revelation* 14: 20 and 19:15). This is also the meaning, according to Kaler, of this verb in many other texts preserved in Coptic, such as the *Manichaean Psalm Book*,[373] the *Wisdom of Jesus Christ* (NH III 108, 15; 119, 1.7) the fragment of the *Republic* (NH VI 50, 27) and the *Second Treatise of the Great Seth* (NH VI 56, 35).

Thus in the light of these references in *Revelation*, it is not out of place to think that the verb ϩⲱⲙ in the *Apocalypse of Paul* could evoke an eschatological background in the Coptic milieu, but also an idea of a triumph over the "mountain of Jericho". However, this is not Kaler's opinion. He says that

> (…) ϩⲱⲙ is here used to describe something that Paul was engaged in doing before his mind had been awakened by the Spirit's call. It is something that he was doing while in a state of ignorance, and the Spirit's declaration is therefore to be understood as a reproof. When the context is taken into account, Paul's activity in treading upon the mountain is clearly given a negative connotation, unlike the cases cited above – it is something that he should not have been doing, something from which the Spirit's awakening liberates him. Further, since the content of the enlightenment he was in thrall to the worldly powers. The sense of ϩⲱⲙ that we have discussed above is thus not applicable.[374]

To support this affirmation, Kaler introduces into the discussion a passage in *Colossians* (2, 18),[375] in which we find the word ϩⲱⲙ employed in the Boharic version of the New Testament.[376] In the Boharic New Testament, ϩⲱⲙ translates the Greek ἐμβατεύειν, in a context in which there is an "anti-angel polemic" that "would fit well with the *Apocalypse of*

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[372] In the specific cases of *Matt* 5:13 and *Lk* 8:5 we see the variant ϩⲱⲙⲋ. See Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 674a.
[373] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 196. See also Charles R. Allberry, *A Manichaean Psalm-Book* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1938), 2, 12.18; 64, 23; 76, 15; 97, 18; 99, 29; 175, 11.
[374] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 197.
[375] "Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind".
[376] The Sahidic version employs ⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ ϩⲛ⳿.

Paul's views of angels."[377] Kaler goes on quoting W. Carr, who states that ἐμβατεύειν could represent reminiscences of Bacchic and Dionysic rituals, being linked to "ecstasy, dreams and visions, and dancing upon the mountains."[378]

Kaler's statement may fit in the original context of composition of the *Apocalypse of Paul* in Greek, but it does not seem to work for the Coptic context. To attempt to defend such a statement based on a single reference in the Boharic New Testament, while even the Sahidic version employs another word appears excessively speculative. Nonetheless, the motif of being on a mountain, before the ascension, and even being told to awaken his mind to be able to "know the hidden things in those that are visible" is very much in accordance with late antique Coptic literature, since in this literary tradition mountains are the perfect place for revelations and visionary experiences.

We also evoked at the beginning of this discussion that the verb ϩⲱⲙ could be simply understood as a synonym for 'walk' or even 'stand'. It is possible to find at least one instance in Coptic literature that would support this affirmation. In *The Life of Shenoute*, it is said at a certain point that an officer sent by the emperor tried to take Shenoute by force, but the latter presented to the former a letter with the emperor's coat of arms, after having journeyed supernaturally to see the emperor during the night; the officer realizes that the possession of these insignia could only be acquired by the means of a supernatural event and repents saying to Shenoute: "truly, my lord and father, you are a man whose feet should not be allowed to tread (ⲉϩⲱⲙⲓ) the unclean earth" (*Life of Shenoute* § 65).[379] It seems likely that in this specific instance, the verb in question does not have an eschatological connotation; it is not used either to express overcoming or domination; it is employed to affirm that Shenoute is a saint and should not be living in this world, he should not be standing on earth[380], or more

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[377] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 198.

[378] Wesley Carr, *Angels and Principalities: The Background, Meaning, and Development of the Pauline Phrase hai archai kai hai exousiai* (SNTS, Monography Series 42; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 69.

[379] Translation in Bell, *The Life of Shenoute*, 60. ϫⲉⲁⲗⲏⲑⲱⲥ ⲡⲁϭⲥ ⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲛⲑⲟⲕ ⲟⲩⲣⲱⲙⲓ ⲛϣⲟⲩⲭⲁⲛⲉϥϭⲁⲗⲁⲩϫ ⲉϩⲱⲙⲓ ⲁⲛ ⲉϫⲉⲛⲡⲓⲕⲁϩⲓ ⲉⲧϭⲁⲃⲉⲙ (Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Vita bohairice*, 34).

[380] Crum himself mentions the passage in his dictionary (Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 674b-675a) stating that it could be understood as a synonym of ⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ ϩⲓϫⲛ-. In the same entry, Crum suggests that it could translate the Greek verb ἐμβατεύειν, as already mentioned by Kaler.

precisely, he should not be "touching the earth." Thus we believe that it could possibly mean the same for a late antique Coptic reader of the *Apocalypse of Paul*. On a first semantic level, it simply indicates that they, Shenoute and Paul, are standing, walking on earth and on a mountain respectively. On a second, allegorical level, the verb discussed here could also indicate that Shenoute does not belong to this world, the world that he is touching with his feet. His final fate is to be in the after-life; thus "tread the unclean earth" also means that Shenoute has not yet completed his spiritual journey, that he will only do it when he will be in the eternal life, away from the ground he is touching with his feet. Similarly, in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the act of "treading upon the mountain of Jericho" could also be interpreted by late antique Coptic readers as meaning that Paul has not reached his final destination, the final fate of his spiritual journey. He may be as high as someone can be in the material world, i.e. the top of a mountain, but this is not the limit of what he may reach. Thus he must awaken his mind to be capable of ascending and journeying through the heavens and finally leaving mere material existence.

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To end our discussion, it would be profitable to discuss briefly the name of the mountains in the *Apocalypse of Paul* and in the *First Apocalypse of James* in Codex V. Since geographically these mountains do not exist, scholars concerned with the original context of composition in Greek have wondered about the names of the mountains mentioned in both texts, the "mountain of Jericho," in the *Apocalypse of Paul*[381] and the "mountain of Gaugelan," in the *First Apocalypse of James* in Codex V.[382] The fact that these mountains do

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[381] See, for example, Böhlig and Labib, *Koptisch-gnostische Apokalypsen*, 15; Karl-Wolfgang Tröger, *Gnosis und Neues Testament: Studien aus Religionswissenschaft und Theologie* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1973), 43-44; Wihelm Schneemelcher and Edgar Hennecke, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung: Apostolisches, Apokalypsen und Verwandtes* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990), 232-233. 269; Murdock, "The *Apocalypse of Paul*," 159-160; see in particular Rosenstiehl's eight pages discussion (Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 26-34).
[382] See, for example, Schoedel, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 80-81; Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 82-83. For other possibilities, see Alexander Böhlig, *Mysterion und Wahrheit: Gesammelte Beiträge zur spätantiken Religionsgeschichte* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), 104; see also William R. Schoedel, "A Gnostic Interpretation of the Fall of Jerusalem: The *First Apocalypse of James*," NT 33 (1991), 157.

not exist would possibly make no difference for a late antique Coptic reader, who would probably ignore completely the topography of Palestine. At any rate, at least in what concerns the *Apocalypse of Paul,* the mention of a "mountain of Jericho" is not singular; Rosenstiehl points out that there is a mention of this place in a text named *Coptic Jeremiah Apocryphon,*[383] whose date of composition is hard to define. Dealing with the Arch of the Covenant's location, the text mentions that it is "covered with dust on the mountain of Jericho" (ⲁⲥϫⲓ̈ϣⲟⲉⲓϣ ϩⲓ̈ϫⲙⲡⲧⲟⲟⲩ ⲛⲛⲓ̈ϩⲉⲣⲓⲭⲱ). Leaving aside the particular content of this text, it shows that the mention of nonexistent mountains or places was possibly not a concern in Coptic literature and would not especially affect a Coptic reader.

We can conclude then that the motif of the mountain as a perfect spot for revelations and visionary experiences, already presented in some apocalyptic texts found a particular and important echo in late antique Coptic milieus such as those that read Codex V. As we have demonstrated above, the motif is also present in many late antique Coptic hagiographies; thus the scenes that involve mountains in Codex V – that of the *Apocalypse of Paul* and that of the *First Apocalypse of James* – would look quite natural to late antique Coptic readers, used to reading hagiographies in Coptic about monks undertaking supernatural experiences in the desert/mountain.

7.3.4. The Reactions in Relation to the Experience

A very common motif in texts that report visionary and religious experiences is the reaction of the visionary, who normally experiences feelings such as extreme joy, fear or surprise, either after the epiphany of the otherworldly being, or after the revelation or vision.[384] Once more, we are dealing with a motif that is widespread in apocalyptic tradition and literature;[385]

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[383] Karl H. Kuhn, "A Coptic Jeremiah Apocryphon," *Muséon* 83 (1970): 95-135; 291-352.
[384] Collins, *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*, 1-19, especially, 6. See also Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 367.
[385] For a general survey, see Collins, *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*, 1-19, especially, 6. See also Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 367.

consequently, it has been widely discussed by scholarship, even in relation to Codex V texts.[386] However, as one could expect, the goal of the present section is to read the reactions of the visionaries in Codex V text in a late antique Coptic perspective, comparing them to the reactions of the characters in the hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison.

In the *First Apocalypse of James*, James's reaction is not necessarily related to the appearance of Jesus or to the content of revelations, but rather to the fact that James himself heard about the sufferings of the Lord. It is said that "When James heard of his sufferings and was much distressed…." (NH V 30, 13-15).[387] Later, James himself says that "I have heard of your sufferings, which you endured. And I have been much distressed" (NH V 31, 6-8).[388] One should note that the version of *First Apocalypse of James* in the Codex Tchacos reports basically the same thing.

In the *Apocalypse of Adam,* the reaction of Adam and Eve to the words pronounced by one of the otherworldly beings who appear in NH V 65, 26-27 is described as follows: "When I had heard these words from the great man who were standing before me, then we sighed, I and Eve, in our hearts" (NH V 66, 9-14).[389]

It is also possible to find certain examples of reactions to visionary experiences in the hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison. In SBo, for example, in a passage already mentioned in the present dissertation,[390] Theodore's reaction to his first revelatory experience is described as follows:

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[386] For a survey, see Fallon, "Gnostic Apocalypses", 123-158; Dias Chaves, *Between Apocalyptic and Gnosis*, 6.58-59.98.116.121.

[387] Schoedel's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 79.81. ïⲁⲕⲱⲃⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲣⲉϥⲥⲱⲧⲙ̄ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲛⲉϥⲙ̄ⲕⲟⲟϩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁϥⲙ̄ⲕⲁϩ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧ ⲉⲙⲁⲧⲉ· (Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 34).

[388] Schoedel's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 79.81. ⲁⲉⲓⲥⲱⲧⲙ ⲉⲛⲉⲕⲙ̄ⲕⲟⲟϩ ⲉⲧⲁⲕϫⲓⲧⲟⲩ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲓ̈ⲙ̄ⲕⲁϩ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧ ⲉⲙⲁⲧⲉ· (Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 36).

[389] MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 159. ⲧⲟⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲣⲓⲥⲱⲧⲙ̄ ⲉⲛⲉⲓ̈ϣⲁϫⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲟⲧⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲛⲟϭ ⲛ̄ⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ· ⲛⲏ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲩⲁϩⲉⲣⲁⲧⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁϩⲣⲁⲓ̈· ⲧⲟⲧⲉ ⲁⲛϥⲓ ⲁϩⲟⲙ ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲉⲩϩⲁ ϩⲣⲁⲓ̈ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲉⲛϩⲏⲧ· (Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*, 24).

[390] See section 6.3.1 above.

One day, during his first year, Theodore was sitting in his cell plaiting ropes and reciting passages of the Holy Scriptures he had learned by heart. And he would get up and pray every time his heart urged him to do so. While he was seated reciting, the cell where he was lighted up, and he was quite troubled at it. And lo, two angels under the appearance of dazzling men appeared to him. Frightened, he ran out of his cell and scaled the roof, for he had never yet had a revelation (SBo § 34).[391]

SBo also reports Pachomius's reaction after a vision in which he sees the future of the *koinonia* saying that "The man of God Pachomius remained stunned for a long time by the frightening vision he had seen" (SBo § 66).[392] Also according to SBo, some of Pachomius' instructions had the same effect on the brothers: "And all the brothers would be terribly frightened because of our father Pachomius' words, which resembled flashing lights coming from his mouth" (SBo § 86).[393]

In the *Life of Onnophrius*, Onnophrius himself has a vision, becomes frightened, but is comforted by an angel: "Now, when I had left my monastery, I looked and I saw a light before me. I was afraid (…) When he understood I was afraid, he said to me 'Do not be afraid. I am the angel who has dwelled with you and walked with you since you were a child'" (*Life of Onnophrius* § 13).[394]

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[391] Veilleux's translation, with improvements, in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 58-59. ⲉϥϩⲉⲙⲥⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲛⲟⲩⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲛⲃⲟⲩⲛ ϧⲉ[ⲛ]ⲧⲉϥⲣⲓ ⲛ̅ⲭⲑⲉⲟⲇⲱⲣⲟⲥ ϧⲉⲛⲧⲉϥϣⲟⲣⲡⲓ ⲛ̅ⲣⲟⲙⲡⲓ ⲉϥϣⲉϣⲛⲟϩ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲉϥⲉⲣⲙⲉⲗⲉⲧⲁⲛ ϧⲉⲛⲛⲏ ⲉⲧⲁϥϭⲓⲧⲟ[ⲩ] ⲛⲁⲡⲟⲥⲑⲏⲧⲏⲥ ϧⲉⲛⲛⲓⲅⲣⲁⲫⲏ ⲉⲑⲟ[ⲩ]ⲁⲃ· ⲛⲉϣⲁϥⲧⲱⲛϥ ⲇⲉⲡⲉ ⲕⲁⲧⲁⲥⲟⲡ ⲉⲧⲉⲣ[ⲉ]ⲡⲉϥϩⲏⲧ ⲛⲁⲑⲟⲩϫ ⲙ̅ⲙⲟϥ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉϥϣⲗⲏ[ⲗ]· ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲉⲧⲓ ⲉϥϩⲉⲙⲥⲓ ⲉϥⲉⲣⲙⲉⲗⲉⲧⲁⲛ ⲁ[ϯ]ⲣⲓ ⲉⲧⲉϥⲛ̅ϧⲏⲧⲥ ⲉⲣⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲛ̅ⲑⲟⲩ ⲇⲉ [ⲁϥ]ϣⲑⲟⲣⲧⲉⲣ ⲉⲙⲁϣⲱ· ϩⲏⲡⲡⲉ ⲓⲥⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲃ̅ ⲉⲩⲟⲓⲃⲉⲣⲉⲃ ⲛ̅ⲣⲱ[ⲙⲓ] ⲉⲩⲉⲣⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲁⲩⲟⲩⲛ̅ϩⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲁϥⲉⲣϩⲟϯ ⲁϥⲫⲱⲧ ⲁϥ̅ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϧⲉⲛⲧⲉϥ[ⲣⲓ] ⲁϥϭⲟϫⲓ ⲉⲡϣⲱⲓ ⲉⲡⲓϫⲉⲛⲉⲫⲱⲣ ⲉⲑⲃ[ⲉ]ϫⲉⲛⲉⲙⲡⲁⲧⲉϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉϩⲗⲓ ⲛ̅ϭⲱⲣⲡ ⲉⲃⲟ[ⲗ]ⲡⲉ· (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Bohairice Scripta*, 37).

[392] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 87. ⲡⲓⲣⲱⲙⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲫϯ̅ ⲡⲁϧⲱⲙ ⲁϥⲟϩ[ⲓⲉϥ]ⲟⲛϣ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲉⲛⲟⲩⲛⲓϣϯ ⲛ̅ⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲑ[ⲃⲉ]ⲡⲓϩⲟⲣⲁⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲟⲓ ⲛ̅ϩⲟϯ ⲉⲧⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ [ⲉ]ⲣⲟϥ· (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Bohairice Scripta*, 66-67).

[393] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 112. ϩⲱⲥⲧⲉ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲛⲓⲥⲛⲏⲟⲩ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲉⲣϩⲟϯ ⲉⲙⲁϣⲱ ⲉⲑⲃⲉⲛⲓⲥⲁϫⲓ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲡⲁϧⲱⲙ ⲉⲩⲟⲓ ⲙ̅ⲫⲣⲏϯ ⲛⲟⲩⲉⲃⲣⲏϫ ⲛⲟⲩϣⲓⲛⲓ ⲉⲩⲛⲏⲟⲩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϧⲉⲛⲣⲱϥ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Bohairice Scripta*, 96).

[394] Translation in Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, 154, with changes. ⲛ̅ ⲧⲉⲣ ⲓ̈ⲉⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲉ ⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲛ̅ ⲧⲁϩⲉⲛⲉⲉⲧⲉ· ⲁⲓϭⲱϣ̅ⲧ ⲁⲓⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲩⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ ⲙ̅ⲡⲁ ⲙ̅ⲧⲟ ⲉ ⲃⲟⲗ· ⲁⲓⲣ̅ ϩⲟⲧⲉ (…) ⲛ̅ ⲧⲉⲣ ϥⲉⲓⲙⲉ ⲇⲉ ϫⲉ ⲁⲓⲣ̅ ϩⲟⲧⲉ· ⲡⲉⲭⲁϥ ⲛⲁⲓ ϫⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲣ̅ ϩⲟⲧⲉ· ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲉⲧ ϭⲁⲗⲏⲩ ⲉ ⲣⲟⲕ· ⲉⲧ ⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ ⲛⲙ̅ⲙⲁⲕ. ϫⲓⲛ ⲧⲉⲕⲙⲛ̅ⲧ̅ⲕⲟⲩⲓ· (Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 212).

The fact that the characters of Codex V mentioned above had reactions to the experiences are thus generally compatible with the fact that monastic heroes in late antique Coptic hagiographies also reacted in one way or another to the experiences. Even though the words that describe the reactions of James and Adam are not exactly the same that describe the reactions of Pachomius and Theodore, for example, reacting with certain feelings that somehow express the supernatural character of the experience is a response present in both corpora discussed here. Consequently, it would look normal for a late antique Coptic reader to read that James and Adam reacted in the ways expressed above in relation to the experiences they undertook.

7.3.5. Secrecy and Transmission

One of the characteristics of apocalyptic discourse is its secret and esoteric aspect; the fact that the transmission of a revelation is generally reserved to a group of people that are worthy of it. In certain cases, the revelation is supposed to be written down by the visionary, being consequently available to future generations. We have, once more, a widespread motif in the apocalyptic literature and tradition.[395]

In *First Apocalypse of James*, it is said that James must keep the revelation hidden, disclosing it only to Addai, who will be responsible for writing it down, and for transmitting them to Manael: "You are to hide <these things> within you, and you are to keep silence. But you are to reveal them to Addai (…) But let Addai keep in his heart. In the tenth year let Addai sit and write them down. And when he writes them down […...] and they are to give them to Manael (…)" (NH V 36, 13-16; 20-26).[396]

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[395] See Collins, *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*, 9. To mention only a few examples in apocalyptic texts: The *Shepherd of Hermas* (Vis. V, 5-7), *Allogenes* (NH XI 68, 16-23) and *4Ezra* (14, 19-26).

[396] Schoedel's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 91.93, with improvements based on the text established by Funk, in light of the new version of *First Apocalypse of James* of Codex Tchacos (Funk, *Concordance du Codex V de Nag Hammadi*, 398-399). ⲉⲕⲉϣⲱⲡ <ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲩ>[?] ϩⲣ[ⲁⲓ ⲛ̄]ϩⲏⲧⲕ̄· ⲉⲕⲉϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲇⲉ ⲉⲕⲕⲱ ⲛ̄ⲣⲱⲕ· ⲉⲕⲉϭⲟⲗⲡⲟⲩ ⲇⲉ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̄ⲁⲇⲇⲁⲓⲟⲥ (...) ⲁⲇⲇⲁⲉⲟⲥ ⲇⲉ ⲙⲁⲣⲉϥϥⲓⲛⲁⲓ ϩⲣⲁⲓ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧⲧ̄ϥ̄· ϩⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲉϩⲙⲏⲧⲉ ⲛ̄[ⲣⲟ]ⲙⲡⲉ ⲉϥϩⲙⲟⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ϭⲓⲁⲇⲇⲉ[ⲟⲥ] ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉϥⲉⲥϩⲁⲓ̈ⲥⲟⲩ· ⲁⲩⲱ [ⲉϣⲱ]ⲡⲉ ⲉϥϣⲁⲛⲥϩⲏⲧⲟⲩ [ⲉⲩⲉϥⲓ[?] ⲛ̄]ⲧⲟ[ⲧ̄ϥ] ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉⲩⲉⲧⲁⲁⲩ [ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲛⲁⲏⲗ].

The instructions – which echo the apocalyptic tradition of transmitting the revelation only to a selected group – are clear and precise: the revelations must revealed only to Addai, who will keep them in his heart, and after a while write them and then reveal them to Manael.

In the *Second Apocalypse of James*, a relatively similar situation takes place, since at the beginning of the text, the reader is informed that "This is [the] discourse that James [the Just] spoke in Jerusalem, [which] Marein, one of the Priests, wrote. He had told it to Theuda, the father of the Just One" (NH V 44, 13-18).[397] The esoteric character of the revelation is mentioned later, when it is said that "That which was revealed to me was hidden from everyone" (NH V 47, 16-17).[398]

In the *Apocalypse of Adam*, the esoteric aspect of the revelation and the fact that it should be only transmitted to a group of chosen ones is also present; at the end of the text one reads that: "These are the revelations which Adam made known to Seth his son. And his son taught his seed about them. This is the hidden knowledge of Adam, which he gave to Seth (…) (NH V 85, 19-24).[399]

Secrecy is not a characteristic feature of monastic lives or martyrdoms. However, one find this motif concerning the transmission of the narrative in the hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison, with certain differences, however. It is normally reported that the hagiographer undertook the job of writing down the life of a certain saint – either a monk or a martyr – for the profit, consolation and edification of future generations. Even though the esoteric aspect is not stressed, the necessity of transmitting it to future generation is present.

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[397] Hedrick's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 111. ⲡⲁⲓ ⲡⲉ [ⲡ]ϣⲁⲭⲉ ⲉ[ⲧⲁϥϣⲁ]ⲭⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲓ̈ⲁⲕⲱ[ⲃⲟⲥ ⲡⲇⲓ]ⲕⲁⲓⲟⲥ ϩⲛ̄ ⲑ̅ⲓ̅ⲏ̅ⲙ̅· ⲡ[ⲉ]ⲧ̣[ⲁϥ]ⲥⲁϩϥ̄ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲙⲁⲣⲉⲓⲙ̅· ⲟⲩⲁ [ⲛ̄]ⲛⲓⲟⲩⲏⲏⲃ ⲁϥϫⲟⲟϥ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉⲩ̅ⲇ̅ⲁ̅ ⲡⲓⲱⲧ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲇⲓⲕⲁⲓⲟⲥ (Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 118).

[398] Hedrick's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 117. ⲡⲉⲧⲁϥⲟⲩⲱⲛ̄ϩ̄ ⲛⲁⲓ̈ ⲁϥ[ϩ]ⲱⲡ ⲛ̄ⲥⲁⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲟⲛ̣ ⲛⲓⲙ· (Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 124).

[399] MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 195. ⲛ̣ⲁⲓ̈ ⲛⲉ ⲛⲓⲁⲡⲟⲕⲁⲗⲩⲯⲓⲥ ⲉⲧⲁ[ⲁ̅]ⲇ̅ⲁ̅ⲙ̅ ϭⲁⲗⲡⲟⲩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̄ⲥⲏ̅ⲑ̅ ⲡⲉϥϣⲏⲣⲉ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲡⲉϥϣⲏⲣⲉ ⲧⲁⲙⲉ ⲧⲉϥⲥⲡ[ⲟ]ⲣⲁ ⲉⲣⲟⲟⲩ· ⲧⲁⲓ̈ ⲧⲉ ϯⲅⲛⲱⲥⲓⲥ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲡⲟⲕⲣⲩⲫⲟⲛ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉ ⲁ̅ⲇ̅ⲁ̅ⲙ̅ ⲁⲧⲉϥⲧⲁⲁⲥ ⲛ̄ⲥⲏ̅ⲑ̅· (Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*, 60).

Even so, in the *Letter of Ammon*, in an account concerning the forgiveness of sins, there is a passage in which the secrecy of the revelation is emphasized. Theodore says that "God revealed to me long ago what I have to say, but told me to keep silence for a while" (*Letter of Ammon* § 28)[400]. This passage may remind us of the excerpt from the *First Apocalypse of James* mentioned above where Addai is supposed to keep the revelation in his heart for a while (NH V 36, 20-26).

Let us now turn our attention to examples in our corpus of comparison in which the hagiographer is supposed to write down the life of the saint for the profit of future generations. In the *Life of Apa Pambo*, for example, the texts closes with the following statement:

> Now I journeyed and came to the brethren Abba Pamoun and Abba Hierax, and I told them what I had seen, and they glorified God (…) Afterwards I departed to my monastery in Scetis. I wrote the life of the blessed Abba Cyrus and placed it in the church of Scetis for the profit and consolation of those who should hear it read. (Oriental 6783 fol. 30a)[401].

In the *Life of Onnophrius*, the end of the text presents a similar account:

> Now those brothers were lovers of God and champions, worshipers of God with their whole heart. They lived in Scetis. They hurriedly wrote down these words which they heard from Abba Paphnutius. They quickly put them in a book and sent it to Scetis were it was placed in the church for the benefit of those who heard it (*Life of Onnophrius* § 37).[402]

The motif is also present at the end of the *History of Monks of Upper Egypt*. After the death of Apa Aaron, who is buried with other monks, it is said that "I have heard of the lives and

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[400] Goehring's translation in Goehring, *The Letter of Ammon*, 177. For the Greek text, see Goehring, *The Letter of Ammon*, 150.

[401] Translation in Vivian, *Journeying into God*, 36. ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲇⲉ ⲁⲓⲙⲟⲟϣⲉ· ⲁⲓⲉⲓ ⲉ ⲃⲟⲗ ϣⲁ ⲛⲉⲥⲛⲏⲉⲩ ⲁⲡⲁ ⲡⲁⲙⲟⲩⲛ· ⲙⲛ ⲁⲡⲁ ϩⲓⲉⲣⲁⲝ· ⲁⲓⲭⲱ ⲉ ⲣⲟⲟⲩ· ⲛ̄ ⲛⲉ ⲛⲧⲁⲓⲛⲁⲩ ⲉ ⲣⲟⲟⲩ ⲁⲩϯⲉⲟⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ (…) ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ̄ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲁⲓⲃⲱⲕ ⲉ ⲡⲁ ⲙⲟⲛⲁⲥⲧⲏⲣⲓⲟⲛ ϩⲛ̄ ϣⲓⲏⲧ ⲁⲓⲥϩⲁⲓ ⲙ̄ ⲡⲃⲓⲟⲥ ⲙ̄ ⲡⲙⲁⲕⲁⲣⲓⲟⲥ ⲁⲡⲁ ⲕⲩⲣⲟⲥ· ⲁⲓⲕⲁⲁⲩ ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲕ̄ⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ ⲛ̄ϣⲓⲏⲧ· ⲉⲩϩⲏⲩ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲥⲟⲗⲥⲗ̄ ⲛ̄ ⲛⲉⲧ ⲛⲁⲥⲱⲧⲙ̄ ⲉ ⲣⲟⲩ· (Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 136).

[402] Translation in Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, 166. ⲛⲉ ϩⲉⲛⲙⲁⲓⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲥⲛⲏⲩ ⲉⲧ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲉ ϩⲉⲛ ⲁⲅⲱⲛⲓⲥⲧⲏⲥ ⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲣⲉϥϣⲙ̄ϣⲉ ⲙ̄ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲉⲩϩⲏⲧ ⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲉⲩⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ ϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲡⲉ ϣⲓⲏⲧ ⲁⲩϭⲉⲡⲏ ⲇⲉ ⲁⲩⲥϩⲁⲓ ⲛ̄ ⲛⲉⲓ ϣⲁϫⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩⲥⲟⲧⲙⲟⲩ ⲉ ⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲓ ⲧⲟⲟⲧϥ̄ ⲛ̄ ⲁⲡⲁ ⲡⲁⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲁⲩⲧⲁⲭⲩ ⲁⲩⲧⲁⲁⲩ ⲉⲩϫⲱⲱⲙⲉ ⲁⲩϫⲟⲟⲩϥ ⲉ ϣⲓⲏⲧ ⲁⲩⲕⲁⲁϥ ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲕ̄ⲕⲗⲏⲥⲓⲁ ⲉⲩϩⲏⲩ ⲛ̄ ⲛⲉⲧ ⲛⲁⲥⲱⲧⲙ̄ ⲉ ⲣⲟⲩ (Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 223).

practices of these holy men. Moreover, I for my part am going to write them down so that <they> may be set down as authoritative models for future generations" (*History of the Monks of Upper Egypt* § 138).[403]

In Coptic Epic Martyrdoms, the motif concerning the transmission of the life of a saint by the means of writing is also present, particularly in the martyrdoms that belong to the cycle of Jules of Aqphas.[404] In the *Martyrdom of Apa Epima*, for example, the pseudepigraphic hagiographer is said to be the responsible for recording in written form the martyrdoms of many Egyptian martyrs:

> Alors donc je plaçai un de mes serviteurs dans chaque tribunal, depuis Alexandrie jusqu'à l'extrême sud de l'Égypte, pour écrire les mémoires des saints, ainsi que les miracles et merveilles qui s'opérèrent par eux en chaque lieu. Et aussitôt je m'assis et m'appliquais à écrire (ces mémoires) en caractères romaïques. Je les plaçai dans ma maison afin que leur bénédiction y demeurât, et je crois que leur bénédiction et leur grâce ne cesseront pas (d'être) dans ma maison, en moi-même et dans toute ma descendance pendant toutes les générations de la terre (Bibliothèque nationale de Paris cod. 580 fol. 58r).[405]

The end of the *Martyrdom of Saint Shenoufe and his Brethren,* which also belongs to the cycle of Jules of Aqphas, reports almost the same thing:

> And I placed a servant of mine in each law court from Alexandria unto all the south of Egypt, writing the records of the saints in each place, and bringing them to me. And I have sat down and accurately have I written them in the Roman character, and have preserved them in my house, for all generations of the earth,

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[403] Vivian's translation with changes in Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt*, 140. ⲁⲓⲥⲱⲧⲙ̅ ⲉ ⲛⲉⲓ ⲡⲟⲗⲩⲧⲁ ⲉ ⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲓⲧⲟⲟⲧⲕ̅ ⲉⲛⲁ ⲡⲉⲓ ⲡⲉⲧ ⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ⲉ ⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲁⲓ ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ϩⲱ ϯⲛⲁⲥϩⲁⲓⲥⲟⲩ ⲛⲧⲁⲕⲕⲁⲁⲟⲩ ⲉ ϩⲣⲁⲓ ⲉⲩⲡⲣⲟⲥⲧⲁⲅⲙⲁ ⲛⲛⲅⲉⲛⲉⲁ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ (Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts*, 495).

[404] See section 4.2.1 above.

[405] Mina's translation in Mina, *Le Martyr d'Apa Epima*, 84-85. ⲉⲡⲓⲇⲉ ⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲓⲕⲱ ⲛⲟⲩϩⲙ̅ϩⲁⲗ ⲛ̅ⲧⲁⲓ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲇⲓⲕⲁⲥⲧⲏⲣⲓⲟⲛ ϫⲓⲛ ⲣⲁⲕⲟⲧⲉ ϣⲁ ⲧⲣⲏⲥ ⲛ̅ⲕⲏⲙⲉ ⲧⲏⲣϥ̅. ⲉⲩⲥϩⲁⲓ ⲛ̅ⲛⲉⲩϩⲩⲡⲟⲙⲛⲏⲙⲁ ⲛ̅ⲛⲉⲟⲩⲧⲟⲁⲁⲃ. ⲙⲛ̅ ⲛⲉ6ⲟⲙ ⲙⲛ̅ ⲛⲉϣⲡⲏⲣⲉ ⲛ̅ⲧⲁⲩϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉⲃⲟⲗϩⲓⲧⲟⲟⲧⲟⲩ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲙⲁ. ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲩⲛⲟⲩ ⲁⲓϩⲙⲟⲟⲥ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ ⲁⲕⲣⲓⲃⲱⲥ ⲁⲓⲥϩⲁⲓⲥⲟⲩ ⲛ̅ⲥⲩⲙⲓⲟⲛ. ⲛ̅ϩⲣⲱⲙⲁⲓⲕⲟⲛ. ⲁⲓⲕⲁⲁⲩ ⲛ̅ϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲡⲁⲏⲓ. ϫⲉⲕⲁⲥ ⲉⲣⲉ ⲡⲉⲩⲥⲙⲟⲩ ϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲛ̅ϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲡⲁⲏⲓ. ⲁⲩⲱ ϯⲡⲓⲥⲧⲉⲩⲉ ϫⲉ ⲡⲉⲩⲥⲙⲟⲩ. ⲙⲛ̅ ⲡⲉⲩϩⲙⲟⲧ ⲛⲁⲱϫⲛ̅ ⲁⲛ ϩⲙ̅ ⲧⲁⲏⲓ. ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲙⲛ̅ ⲡⲁⲕⲥⲡⲉⲣⲙⲁ ⲧⲏⲣϥ̅. ϣⲁ ⲛⲅⲉⲛⲉⲁ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲙ̅ⲡⲕⲟⲥⲙⲟⲥ (Mina, *Le Martyr d'Apa Epima*, 36-37).

that their blessing and their grace might be continually with all my seed until the consummation of the age (Pierpont Morgan M 583, fol. 138 Rii-138 Vi).[406]

Consequently it is possible to affirm, in light of these passages, that the motif of writing down and transmitting a revelation or a document found in the pages of Codex V would appear quite natural to a late antique Coptic reader, used to find it in martyrdoms such as those attributed to Jules of Aqphas, or monastic lives such as the *Life of Pambo* and the *Life of Onnophrius*.

7.4. Other Motifs Generally Associated with Apocalyptic Literature

The goal of the present section is to analyse other motifs generally associated with apocalyptic literature that were not part of the main themes discussed in the previous sections. The two motifs analysed here are the judgment and final destiny of souls and clairvoyance.

7.4.1. Judgment and Final Destiny of Souls

The judgment and final destiny of souls is another widespread motif in apocalyptic and related literature.[407] As one might expect, this motif occurs in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, when Paul is the fourth heaven:

> And I saw in fourth heaven {…} the angels bringing a soul out of the land of the dead. They placed it at the gate of the fourth heaven. And the angels were whipping it. The soul spoke saying: 'What sin was it that I committed in the world?' The toll-collector who dwells in the fourth heaven replied, saying: 'It was not right to commit all those lawless deeds that are in the world of the dead'. The soul replied saying: 'Bring witnesses! Let them [show] you in what body I committed lawless deeds'. '[I wish] to bring a book to read from' (…) And I saw a great angel in the fifth heaven holding an iron rod in his hand. There were three other angels with him, and I stared into their faces. But they were rivaling each

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[406] Reymond and Barn's translation with changes in Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices,* 222). ⲁⲓ̈ⲕⲱ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲃ︤ϩ︦ⲙ︥ⲥⲁⲗ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲓ̈ ⲕⲁⲧⲁⲇⲓⲕⲁⲥⲧⲏⲣⲓⲟⲛ ϫⲓⲛⲣⲁⲕⲟⲧⲉ ϣⲁⲡⲣⲏⲥ ⲛ̄ⲕⲏⲙⲉ ⲧⲏⲣ︤ϥ︥ ⲉⲩⲥϩⲁⲓ̈ ⲛ̄ⲛϩⲟⲓⲡⲟⲙⲛⲏⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ⲕⲁⲧⲁⲙⲁ ⲉⲩⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲟⲩ ⲛⲁⲓ̈. ⲁⲓϩⲙⲟⲟⲥ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ̈ ⲁⲕⲣⲓⲃⲟⲥ ⲁⲓ̈ⲥϩⲁⲓ̈ⲥⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲥⲩⲙⲓⲟⲛ ⲛ̄ϩⲣⲟⲙⲁⲓ̈ⲕⲟⲛ ⲁⲓ̈ⲕⲁⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲡⲁⲉⲓ̈ ϫⲉⲕⲁⲥ ⲉⲣⲉⲡⲉⲩⲥⲙⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲡⲉⲩϩⲙⲟⲧ ϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉϥⲙⲏⲛ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩ︤ⲛ︥ⲛⲁⲙⲁⲛ̄ϣϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ϣⲁⲛ̄ⲅⲉⲛⲉⲁ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲕⲁϩ· ⲁⲩⲱ †ⲡⲓⲥⲧⲉⲩⲉ ϫⲉ ⲡⲉⲩⲥⲙⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲡⲉⲩϩⲙⲟⲧ ⲛⲁ ϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲉϥⲙⲏⲛ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲙ︤ⲛ︥ ⲡⲁⲕⲉⲥⲡ︤ⲣ︦ⲙⲁ ⲧⲏⲣ︤ϥ︥ ϣⲁⲡϫⲱⲕ ⲛ̄ⲧⲥⲩⲛⲧⲉⲗⲓⲁ ⲙ̄ⲡⲁⲓⲱⲛ. (Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices*, 127).

[407] For a survey, see Collins, *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*, 7.14.25-27.

other, with whips in their hands, goading the souls on to the judgement (NH V 20, 5-25; 22, 2-10).[408]

Angels and otherworldly beings in general working as judges and punishers of souls is not a peculiarity of the *Apocalypse of Paul*. As one might expect, this motif finds many parallels in the Jewish apocalyptic tradition.[409] Thus once more, we are dealing with a motif that was not only present in late antique Coptic hagiographies, but also in apocalyptic texts in general, as mentioned above. At any rate, it seems that such motif was particularly widespread in Coptic magical spells,[410] which tends to support the hypothesis of its popularity in Coptic contexts.

Let us see how the motif in question is treated in the texts that are part of our corpus of comparison. In the *Life of Pambo*, for example, Apa Cyrus tells Pambo about the punishments of souls, who receive a respite on Sundays: "Do not be afraid, my son, that God is coming to inflict punishment. He has commanded the angels who punish souls to give them a respite, because today is the Lord's Day and the day of his resurrection" (Oriental 6783 fol. 27b).[411]

This passage is in fact interesting, but some linguistic observations must be made about it. As long as we know, there are only two modern translations of the *Life of Pambo* (or the

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[408] Murdock and MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 55.57.59, with changes based on the Coptic text established by Rosenstiehl: ⲁⲓⲛⲁⲩ ⲇⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲉϩϥⲧⲟ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉ {…} ⲉⲛⲓⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲉⲩ[ⲉⲓ]ⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲙ̄ⲡⲕⲁϩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲛⲉⲧⲙⲟⲟⲩⲧ. ⲁⲩⲕⲁⲁⲥ ϩⲛ̄ⲡⲡⲩⲗⲏ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉϯⲙⲉϩϥⲧⲟ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉ· ⲁ[ⲩ]ⲱ ⲛⲉⲣⲉⲛⲓⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲣ̄ⲙⲁⲥⲧⲓⲅⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ· ⲁⲥⲟⲩⲱϣⲃ̄ ⲛ̄ϭⲓϯⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲉⲥϫⲱ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ ϫⲉ ⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲃⲉ ⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁⲓ̈ⲁⲁϥ ϩⲙ̄ⲡⲕⲟⲥⲙⲟⲥ· ⲁϥⲟⲩⲱϣⲃ̄ ⲛ̄ϭⲓⲡⲓⲧⲉⲗⲱⲛⲏⲥ ⲉⲧϩⲙⲟⲟⲥ ϩⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲉϩϥⲧⲟ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉ ⲉϥϫⲱ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ ϫⲉ ⲛⲉⲣⲉⲙ̄ⲡϣⲁ ⲁⲛ ⲛ̄ⲉⲓⲣⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲓ̈ⲁⲛⲟⲙⲓ[ⲁ] ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲉⲧϩⲣⲁⲓ̈ ϩⲙ̄ⲡⲕⲟⲥⲙⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲛⲉⲧⲙⲟⲟⲩⲧ`· ⲁⲥⲟ[ⲩ]ⲱϣⲃ̄ ⲛ̄ϭⲓϯⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲉⲥϫⲱ [ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲥ] ϫⲉ ⲁⲛⲓⲙ̄ⲧⲣⲉ ⲙⲁⲣⲟⲩ[ⲧⲁⲙⲟⲕ] ϫⲉ [?] [ⲛ̄ⲧⲁ]ⲓ̈ⲣ̄ⲁⲛⲟⲙⲓⲁ ϩⲛ̄ⲁϣ ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲙ[ⲁ] [ϯⲟⲩ]ϣϣ ⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩϫⲱⲙⲉ [ⲉϣⲁ ϩⲓ̈]ϣⲱϥ· (…) ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲓ̈ⲛⲁⲩ [ⲉ]ⲩⲛⲟϭ ⲛ̄ⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ϩⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲉϩϯ ⲙ̄ⲡ[ⲉ] ⲉϥⲁⲙⲁϩⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩϭⲉⲣⲱⲃ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲛⲓⲡⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥϭⲓϫ· ⲉⲩⲛ̄ϩⲉⲛⲕⲉⲁⲅ`ⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲙⲙⲁϥ ⲅ̄ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲓ̈ϣⲱⲣⲙ̄ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲡⲉⲩϩⲟ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲟⲩ ⲇⲉ ⲛⲉⲩⲣ̄ⲡⲉⲣⲓⲥⲉ ⲙ̄ⲛⲛⲉⲩⲉⲣⲏⲟⲩ· ⲉⲣⲉϩⲉⲛⲙⲁⲥⲧⲓⲕⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲟⲧⲟⲩ ⲉⲩⲧⲱⲃⲉⲥ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲯⲩⲭⲟⲟⲩⲉ ⲉϩⲣⲁⲓ̈ ⲉⲧⲉⲕⲣⲓⲥⲓⲥ· (Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 104.108).

[409] On this matter, see Kaler's commentary in Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 209-244.

[410] David Frankfurter, "Demon Invocations in the Coptic Magic Spells," in *Actes du huitième congrès international d'études coptes. Paris, 28 juin - 3 juillet 2004. Vol. 2* (ed. N. Bosson and A. Boud'hors; Leuven/Paris/Dudley: Peeters, 2007), 453-466.

[411] Translation in Vivian, *Journeying into God*, 34. ⲙ̄ⲡⲣ̄ ⲣ̄ ϩⲟⲧⲉ ⲡⲁ ϣⲏⲣⲉ· ⲛ̄ⲧⲁ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲉⲓ ⲉ ⲡⲉⲥⲏⲧ ⲉϫⲛ̄ ⲛ̄ⲕⲟⲗⲁⲥⲓⲥ ⲁϥⲟⲩⲉϩⲥⲁϩⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ ⲛ̄ϯⲙϣⲟⲣⲓⲥⲧⲏⲥ ⲉⲧ ⲧⲟ ⲉ ⲛⲉⲯⲩⲭⲟⲟⲩ ⲉ ⲧⲣⲉ ⲩϯ ⲁⲛⲁⲡⲁⲩⲥⲓⲥ ⲛⲁⲩ ϫⲉ ⲧⲕⲩⲣⲓⲁⲕⲏ ⲧⲉ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲧⲁⲛⲁⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲥ ⲙ̄ ⲡⲭ̅ⲥ̅ ⲡⲟⲟⲩ (Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 133).

Life of Apa Cyrus, as Budge has called it)[412], that of Budge[413] and that of Vivian.[414] In both, translators have introduced the substantive "angels"; but a first look at the Coptic text of the passage shows that the word "angels" does not figure in the passage at all. Budge and Vivian have translated the expression ⲛ̄ϯⲙⲱⲣⲓⲥⲧⲏⲥ as "angels who punish"[415] and "angels who inflict punishment"[416] respectively; but how they got to that may not seem that obvious at first.[417] ⲛ̄ϯⲙⲱⲣⲓⲥⲧⲏⲥ is actually the Coptic form of a Greek word current in Bohairic and particularly common in martyrdoms; but it does not figure in Greek dictionaries. It is possible, however, to find the verb τίμωρέω, normally translated as "to take revenge", "to punish" or "to torture". In the same entry, Liddell and Scott give the two *nomina agentis*, τίμωρητηρ and τίμωρητης,[418] which could be translated as "be an avenger" or "be a torturer". Liddell and Scott also provide a late variant of the verb, τιμωρίξω, typical of the fourth and fifth centuries. In this case, if we search for a derived *nomen agentis*, we would probably have τιμωρίστης. In W.-P. Funk's words, "Ce ne serait pas le seul mot grec dont l'existence tardive est très plausible et qu'on ne trouve pas dans les dictionnaires (mais en copte)."[419]

The two modern translators, Budge and Vivian, probably understood ϯⲙⲱⲣⲓⲥⲧⲏⲥ this way; following the essence of a *nomen agentis*, they tried to coherently name the entity that was supposed to accomplish the act of inflicting punishment. In the light of the general context of the passage, they decided to name that entity as "angels". Since according to the passage in question God himself will not punish, but rather command someone else, the act of punishing must be performed by someone other than God. At any rate, what must be understood here is that the passage wants to express the fact that celestial beings commanded by God – why not angels? – are responsible for torturing and/or inflicting punishment on the

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[412] See section 4.2.2.2.1 above.
[413] Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 381-389.
[414] Vivian, *Journeying into God*, 30-36.
[415] Translation in Vivian, *Journeying into God*, 34.
[416] Translation in Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms,* 386.
[417] I was particularly puzzled by this issue, and was only able to figure it out with the help of Professor Wolf-Peter Funk, to whom I owe the following commentaries on this expression.
[418] Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1794b-1795a.
[419] In a personal e-mail sent to the author of the present dissertation.

souls (of sinners), similarly to what occurs in the *Apocalypse of Paul* (NH V 20, 7-25; 22, 2-10).

In SBo, a very interesting passage reports that Pachomius saw many times the destiny of souls after the death. Even though the content of the account in question is not concerned directly with the judgment of souls, there are some common points with the two passages in the *Apocalypse of Paul* quoted above. We will quote some excerpts from this passage:

> Here is the way the angels of light visit the good brothers, as the thing was many times revealed to [Pachomius] by the Lord. If the dying man is good, three angels whose rank correspond to the measure of the dying man's conduct come to fetch him (…) The three angels sent to fetch a man are in ascending rank, and the one in lower rank always obeys the one whose rank is higher (…)

> After seeing how the righteous leave the body, he asks further how the soul of the sinner leaves the body (…) When the man is at the point of death, when he no longer recognizes anyone, one of the merciless angels is placed near his head, the other at his feet; and thus they begin to thrash him until his wretched soul is on the point of going up. Then they thrust into his mouth a hooked objet, a sort of fish-hook, and they yank that wretched soul out of his body; it is dark and shady (SBo § 82).[420]

In this case, the tortures and punishments of souls are not mentioned, but the angels are said to be responsible for taking the soul of the sinner out of the body, certainly to conduct it to the eternal damnation.

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[420] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 105-109. ϥⲁⲓ ⲇⲉⲡⲉ ⲡⲓⲥⲙⲟⲧ ⲉϣⲁⲩϫⲉⲙⲡϣⲓⲛⲓ ⲛ̅ⲛⲓⲥⲛⲏⲟⲩ ⲉⲑⲛⲁⲛⲉⲩ ⲛ̅ϧⲏⲧϥ ⲛ̅ϫⲉⲛⲓⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲫⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲕⲁⲧⲁⲫⲣⲏϯ ⲉⲧⲟⲩϭⲱⲣⲡ ⲙ̅ⲡⲓϩⲱⲃ ⲛⲁϥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲉⲛⲟⲩⲙⲏϣ ⲛ̅ⲥⲟⲡ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲓⲧⲉⲛⲡⲟ̅ⲥ̅ ⲉϣⲱⲡ ⲙⲉⲛ ⲟⲩⲣⲱⲙⲓ ⲛⲁⲛⲉϥⲡⲉ ⲉⲁϥⲛ̅ⲕⲟⲧ ϣⲁⲣⲉ̅ⲅ̅ ⲛⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲓ̅ ⲛ̅ⲥⲱϥ(…) ⲡⲓⲅ̅ ⲇⲉ ⲉⲛⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲉϣⲁⲩⲟⲩⲟⲣⲡⲟⲩ ⲛ̅ⲥⲁⲡⲓⲣⲱⲙⲓ ϣⲁⲕϫⲉⲙⲟⲩ ⲉⲩϭⲟⲥⲓ ⲉⲛⲟⲩⲉⲣⲏⲟⲩ ϧⲉⲛⲧⲁⲝⲓⲥ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲉⲩⲥⲱⲧⲉⲙ ⲛ̅ⲥⲁⲡⲉⲧϭⲟⲥⲓ ⲉⲣⲱⲟⲩ ⲛ̅ϧⲏⲧⲟⲩ ⲕⲁⲧⲁⲧⲟⲩⲁⲕⲟⲗⲟⲩⲑⲓⲁ (…) ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲉⲧⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲁϯϫⲓⲛⲓ̅ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϧⲉⲛⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲛⲓⲑⲙⲏⲓ ⲁϥⲉⲣⲉⲧⲓⲛ ⲟⲛ ⲉⲧϭⲓⲛⲓ̅ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϧⲉⲛⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲛ̅ⲧⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲛⲟⲩⲣⲉϥⲉⲣⲛⲟⲃⲓ ϫⲉⲉⲥⲟⲓ ⲛⲁϣ ⲛ̅ⲣⲏϯ (…) ⲁⲣⲉϣⲁⲛⲡⲓⲣⲱⲙⲓ ϧⲱⲛⲧ ⲉϧⲟⲩⲛ ⲉϥⲙⲟⲩ ϩⲱⲥⲧⲉ ⲉϣⲧⲉⲙⲑⲣⲉϥⲥⲟⲩⲉⲛⲣⲱⲙⲓϫⲉ ϣⲁⲣⲉⲟⲩⲁⲓ ⲛ̅ⲛⲓⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲑⲛⲁⲓ ⲟϩⲓ ⲉⲣⲁⲧϥ ϧⲁⲧⲉϥⲁⲫⲉ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲡⲓⲕⲉⲟⲩⲁⲓ ϧⲁⲛⲉϥϭⲁⲗⲁⲩϫ . ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲡⲁⲓⲣⲏϯ ϣⲁⲩⲟϩⲓ ⲉⲩⲉⲣⲙⲁⲥⲧⲓⲅⲅⲟⲓⲛ ⲙ̅ⲙⲟϥ ϣⲁⲛⲧⲉⲧⲉϥⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲛⲉⲃⲓⲏⲛ ϧⲱⲛⲧ ⲉⲛⲓ ⲉϩⲣⲏⲓ. ⲙⲉⲛⲉⲙⲟⲥ ⲛ̅ⲥⲉϩⲓⲟⲩ̅ⲓ̅ ⲉϧⲣⲏⲓ ⲉⲣⲱϥ ⲛⲟⲩⲓⲇⲟⲥ ⲉϥⲕⲟⲗϫ ⲙ̅ⲫⲣⲏϯ ⲛⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲛ̅ⲥⲉϥⲱⲣⲕ ⲛⲧⲉϥⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲛ̅ⲧⲁⲗⲉⲡⲱⲣⲟⲥ ⲉⲡϣⲱⲓ ϧⲉⲛⲡⲉⲥⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ϣⲁⲩϫⲉⲙⲥ ⲉⲥⲭⲏⲙ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲉⲥⲟⲓ ⲛ̅ⲭⲁⲙⲉ ⲁⲙⲁϣⲱ. (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Bohairice Scripta*, 87-92). This passage has a parallel in S[4] and S[5], and these versions were actually used by Veilleux to reconstruct the text of SBo for the translation (For details, see Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 280, notes to § 82).

Also in SBo, there is a very interesting passage, similar to the passage of the *Apocalypse of Paul* in regard to the motif in question, in which Pachomius sees the destiny of sinner's souls during an ascension:[421]

> Having been brought to the north of the paradise of delights, far from this world and from the firmament, he (Pachomius) saw rivers, canals, and ditches filled with fire; in them the souls of sinners were being tormented. And while he walked with the angel, contemplating the torments, he saw those above where he was now going suffering much more than those he had seen at the start. They were delivered up to torturing angels of a very frightening aspect and holding fiery whips in their hands. If some of the souls they were tormenting lifted their heads above the fire, they would whip the hard and thrust the farther into the fire (…) He likewise saw monks subjected to punishments in that place, and he questioned the angel who was walking with him, 'What evil have these done to be brought here?'" (SBo 88).[422]

Given the content of these passages, and making use of the reception theory, we believe that the scene of angels torturing souls in the *Apocalypse of Paul* (NH V 20, 7-25; 22, 2-10) could be interpreted by late antique Coptic readers not as an example of the heavenly demiurgical powers trying to stop the souls who ascend – in a "Gnostic" perspective[423] – but rather as a vision of the punishment of sinner's souls in hell, performed by angels especially designated by God to perform this task.

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[421] Other excerpts of this paragraph have already been discussed above, namely in sections 7.1.2 and 7.2.2.2.
[422] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 113-114. ⲉⲧⲁⲩⲉⲛϥ ⲇⲉ ⲉⲡⲉⲙϩⲓⲧ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲡⲁⲣⲁⲇⲓⲥⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲡⲟⲩⲛⲟϥ ϩⲓⲫⲟⲩⲉⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲁⲓⲕⲟⲥⲙⲟⲥ ⲛⲉⲙⲡⲓⲥⲧⲉ[ⲣ]ⲉⲱⲙⲁ. [ⲁϥ]ⲛⲁⲩ ⲉϩⲁⲛⲓⲁⲣⲱⲟⲩ ⲛⲉⲙϩⲁⲛⲓⲟⲣ ⲛⲉⲙϩⲁⲛϣⲓⲕ ⲉⲩⲙⲉϩ ⲛ̄ⲭⲣⲱⲙ ⲉⲣⲉⲧ̄ⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉϩⲁⲛⲣⲱⲙⲓ ⲛ̄ⲣⲉϥⲉⲣⲛⲟⲃⲓ ⲛ̄ⲟ̄ⲏⲧⲟⲩ ⲉⲩⲉⲣⲃⲁⲥⲁⲛⲓⲍⲓⲛ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲩ. [ⲟ]ⲩⲟϩ ⲉⲧⲓ ⲉϥⲙⲟϣⲓ ⲛⲉⲙⲡⲓⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲉϥⲙⲟⲩϣⲧ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲕⲟⲗⲁⲥⲓⲥ ⲛⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲛⲏ ⲉⲧⲉϥⲛⲛⲟⲩ ⲉϫⲱⲟⲩ ⲉⲩⲙⲟⲕϩ ⲛ̄[ϩ]ⲟⲩⲟ ⲉϩⲟⲧⲉⲛⲓϣⲱⲣⲡ ⲉⲧⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲱⲟⲩ [ⲉ]ⲣⲉϩⲁⲛⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲙ̄ⲃⲁⲥⲁⲛⲓⲧⲏⲥ ⲭⲏ ϩⲓϫⲱⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲉⲡⲟⲩⲥⲙⲟⲧ ϣⲟⲡ ϧⲉⲛⲟⲩⲛⲓϣϯ ⲛ̄ϩⲟϯ ⲉⲣⲉⲟⲩⲟⲛϩⲁⲛⲙⲁⲥⲧⲓⲅⲝ ⲛ̄ⲭⲣⲱⲙ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲧⲟⲩ ⲉϣⲱⲡ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉϩⲁⲛⲟⲩⲟⲛ ϧⲉⲛⲛⲓ†ⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲉⲣⲃⲁⲥⲁⲛⲓⲍⲓⲛ ⲙ̄ⲙⲱⲟⲩ ϥⲁⲓ ⲛ̄ϫⲱⲟⲩ ⲉⲡϣⲱⲓ ϧⲉⲛⲡⲓⲭⲣⲱⲙ ϣⲁⲩⲉⲣⲙⲁⲥⲧⲓⲅ[ⲅ]ⲟⲓⲛ ⲙ̄ⲙⲱⲟⲩ ⲉⲙⲁϣⲱ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲛ̄ϫⲉ[ⲟ]ⲙⲥⲟⲩ ⲉϧⲣⲏⲓ ⲉⲡϩⲟⲩⲟ ϧⲉⲛⲡⲓ[ⲭ]ⲣⲱⲙ (…) ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲉϩⲁⲛⲙⲟⲛⲁⲭⲟⲥ ⲉⲩⲉⲣ[ⲕⲟ]ⲗⲁⲍⲓⲛ ⲙ̄ⲙⲱⲟⲩ ϧⲉⲛⲛⲓⲕⲟⲗⲁⲥⲓⲥ ⲙ̄[ⲡⲓ]ⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲉⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲁϥϣⲉⲛⲡⲓⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟ[ⲥ] ⲉⲑⲙⲟϣⲓ ⲛⲉⲙⲁϥ ϫⲉⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲧϩⲱⲟ[ⲩ]ⲡⲉ ⲉⲧⲁⲛⲁⲓⲕⲉⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲓϥ ϣⲁⲛⲧⲟ[ⲩⲉ]ⲛⲟⲩ ⲉⲡⲁⲓⲙⲁ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Bohairice Scripta*, 97-98).
[423] For a Gnostic interpretation of the passage in question, see Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 221-244.

7.4.2. Clairvoyance and Prophecy

Clairvoyance and prophecy are features extensively present in the literature preserved in Coptic in Late Antiquity, specially, hagiographies. The gifts of clairvoyance and prophecy are commonly attributed to famous monks such as Pachomius, Antony and Shenoute.[424]That being said, we can state that, as concerns these motifs, late antique Coptic hagiographies once again conform to the overall apocalyptic tradition, in which prophecies and clairvoyance are also important features.[425]

One of the main characteristics of famous Egyptian monks was the charisma of clairvoyance; the epithet of "Prophet" is constantly attributed to Shenoute in his *Life*, for example.[426] The *Life of Antony* reports that Antony was able to predict events, such as the

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[424] For a survey on the subject, see Vecoli, *Lo Spirito soffia nel deserto*. See also Painchaud and Wees, "Connaître la différence entre les hommes mauvais et les bons"; Jennifer Wees, "Room with a Limited View: Coptic Clairvoyance in Hellenistic Egypt," *LThPh* 61 (2005): 261-272.; and Wees, "False Prophets are False Fathers: Clairvoyance in the Career of Shenoute of Atripe."

[425] Scholars have theorized about a particular genre of prophecies abundantly present in historical apocalypses and related texts, *ex-eventu* prophecies (see, for example, Ewa Oßwald, "Zum Problem der Vaticinia *ex eventu*," *ZAW* 75 (1963): 27-44; and Collins, *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*, 7.); in the words of John J. Collins, *ex-eventu* prophecies can be defined as "past history disguised as future" (Collins, *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*, 7). More elaborately, we could say that it is a "prophecy" that is written or made after the event that it is supposedly foretelling an episode that has actually already taken place. In other words, the author of the text is disguising as a prophecy – putting it in the mouth of a past famous character – an event that has already taken place. It is widely used in apocalypses and related texts as a literary device to grant authority to the text, and, sometimes, to provide a new interpretation to a key event. Rhetorically speaking, an *ex-eventu* prophecy can authorize the message of a given text. However, a very important feature in relation to *ex-eventu* prophecies – particularly in regard to the present dissertation – and generally neglected by scholars, consists in the fact that its concept cannot be fully applied in a reception approach. The author of a given text and modern scholars are aware of this literary device, but were Ancient readers also aware of it? Did they take for granted that these *ex-eventu* prophecies were real prediction or did they know they were fake? On this complex subject, see Ehrman's study: Bart D. Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery. The Use of Literary Deceit in Early Christian Polemics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). Having said this, and emphasizing that such a complex subject would require an exclusive Ph.D. dissertation to be properly discussed, we have chosen in this dissertation to treat the motif in question simply as prophecies or acts of clairvoyance, comparing the examples of this kind of motif found in Codex V to those found in late antique Coptic hagiographies.

[426] See, for example, *The Life of Shenoute* § 33, 36, 47, 119.

death of certain brothers.[427] Pachomius, besides the ability to discern between good and bad men,[428] was able to see in a dream the future of the *Koinonia*.[429]

Consequently, in a reception perspective, the prophecies reported in Codex V texts would cause no feeling of strangeness in late antique Coptic readers. They would rather reinforce the portrayal of holy men attributed to the characters of Codex V, particularly James and Adam. If we accept, for example, that James in Codex V texts, could have been interpreted and understood as a monk by a late antique Coptic audience – as previously suggested[430] – the fact that he was being informed by no one less than Jesus Himself about what was supposed to take place would cause no surprise in that same audience. The same statement could be in one way or another applied to the character of Adam if we recall how he could have been seen by a late antique Coptic audience; a holy man, made as the image of God and even venerated by angels.[431]

In the case of *First Apocalypse of James*, Jesus is the source of the prophecy transmitted to James; among the revelations disclosed by Jesus to James, for example, there is his redemption, that, as argued above,[432] could have been interpreted by a late antique Coptic audience as the martyrdom narrated at the end of the text. Jesus begins by disclosing a revelation about the origins saying "I, however, shall reveal to you…" (NH V 26, 8-9)[433], a formula that clearly introduces a sort of a prophecy, that shall enlighten James, who is ignorant (NH V 27, 1-5). Later, Jesus also makes a sort of prophecy concerning the transmission of revelation and predicting three wars (NH V 36, 16-38-11).[434]

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[427] See, for example, *Life of Antony* § 86.

[428] See Painchaud and Wees, "Connaître la différence entre les hommes mauvais et les bons."

[429] SBo § 66 and G¹ § 71.

[430] See section 4.3.2 above.

[431] See section 4.3.3 above.

[432] See section 4.3.2 above

[433] Schoedel's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 73. ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲇⲉ ⲧ̇ⲛⲁⲥⲱⲗⲡ̅ ⲛⲁⲕ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ (Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 26).

[434] In the version of Codex V it is possible to read only about the first war, due to the existence of several lacuna in this section of the manuscript; thanks to the version in the Codex Tchacos, we now know that two other wars were predicted by Jesus in the *First Apocalypse of James* (CT 25, 15-27, 4).

In the *Second Apocalypse of James*, James himself is the prophet – in the perspective, however, that he can be seen as Jesus's alter ego.[435] Firstly, he states that he received a revelation (NH V 46, 6-7),[436] then he states that what was revealed to him was hidden from the others and will be revealed by Jesus (NH V 47, 16-19).[437] In what follows, it is said that "These two who see",[438] employing the verb ⲛⲁⲩ, which is used again, in NH V, 54-15: "I saw from the height those (things) that happened".[439] In NH 55, 3-5[440] - employing ⲟⲩⲱⲛⲍ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ - and in 56, 17-18 – employing ϭⲱⲗⲡ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ - , the motif of revelation appears again (in the second instance in the mouth of Jesus).[441] Early in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the verb ⲛⲁⲩ appears many times ([18,17]; 19, 19.30; 20, 1.5.7; 21, 6.[23].29; 22, 2.14.17.[25]; 23, 21; 24,1) to express the visions of Paul. As we will see soon, both ϭⲱⲗⲡ̄ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ and ⲛⲁⲩ are used in late antique Coptic hagiographies to express the revelatory experience and the prophetic visions.

In the case of the *Apocalypse of Adam*, a considerable part of the text can be seen as a prophecy, since Adam is telling his son Seth about what is to come. For example, an entire section in which the flood of *Genesis* (Chapters 7-9) is reported and presented as a prophecy could be seen as a prediction revealed to Adam (NH V 70, 19-23). More precisely, in NH V

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[435] As already remarked by Veilleux (Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 163) the expression ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲡⲉ, which introduces the revelatory discourse that starts in NH V, 46, 13 is the Coptic equivalent of the Greek ἐγώ εἰμί *ego eimi*, generally reserved to Jesus.

[436] ⲁ̣[ⲛ]ⲟⲕ ⲡ̣[ⲉ ⲡ]ⲏ ⲉⲧⲁⲩ[ϭ]ⲱⲗⲡ̄ ⲛ̄[ⲁϥ ⲉⲃ]ⲟⲗ (Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 122). One should also note that more than receiving it, James is the depository of the revelation (Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 164).

[437] This time, instead of ϭⲱⲗⲡ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ, the expression used is ⲟⲩⲱⲛ̄ⲍ: ⲡⲉⲧⲁϥⲟⲩⲱⲛ̄ⲍ ⲛⲁⲓ̈ ⲁϥ[ⲍ]ⲱⲡ ⲛ̄ⲥⲁⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲟⲛ ⲛⲓⲙ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉϥⲉⲟⲩⲱⲛ̄ⲍ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲍ̄ⲓⲧⲟⲟⲧ̄ϥ (Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 124).

[438] Hedrick's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 117. ⲡⲓⲥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲧⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ (Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 124).

[439] Hedrick's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 129. ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲁⲓ̈ⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲛⲉⲛⲧⲁⲩϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲝ̄ⲛ ⲙ̄ⲡϫⲓⲥⲉ (Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 138).

[440] "[I] wish to reveal through you and the [Spirit of Pow]er, in order that he might reveal" (Hedrick's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 131): [ⲉⲓ̈ⲟ]ⲩⲱϣ ⲉⲟⲩⲱⲛ̄ⲍ [ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲉ][ⲃⲟⲗ] ⲍ̄ⲓⲧⲟⲟⲧ̄ⲕ· ⲙ̄ⲛ ⲡⲓ[ⲡ̄ⲛ̄ⲁ] [ⲛ̄ⲧϭ]ⲟⲙ ⲛ̄ϥⲟⲩⲱⲛ̄ⲍ ⲉ̣ⲃ[ⲟⲗ] (Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 140).

[441] "Behold, I shall reveal to you..." (Hedrick's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 133). ⲉⲓⲥ ⲍⲏⲏⲧⲉ ϯⲛⲁϭⲱⲗⲡ [ⲛ]ⲁⲕ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ (Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 142).

67, 14-18, Adam plays the role of the communicator of a revelation: "Now then, my son Seth, I will reveal to you the things which were revealed to me."[442] The Coptic expression used here is ϭⲱⲗⲡ̄ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ, the same one used at the end of the text to state that apocalypses have been revealed to Seth by Adam (85, 85, 19-20).[443] The verb ⲛⲁⲩ ⲉ- also appears in the *Apocalypse of Adam* to express Adam's visionary experience – when he sees the three men – in NH V 65, 25-27 ("And I saw three men before me")[444] and NH V 67, 18-20 ("those men who I saw before me")[445] who disclose the revelations which he will transmit to Seth, as discussed above.

Among the hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison, it is also possible to find examples in which monastic heroes are awarded with prophetic visions and revelations, where the experience is expressed by the Coptic verbs mentioned above, ϭⲱⲗⲡ̄ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ and ⲛⲁⲩ. In SBo § 66, for example, Pachomius has a vision in which he sees the future of the *Koinonia*:

> Once our father Pachomius was engaged with the brothers in cutting rushes. One day they were on their way back to the boat, all loaded down with rushes, following our father Pachomius and reciting the Holy Scriptures. Half way there he looked up to heaven and received great revelations (…) He sat down, addressed them with God's word and said to them, 'I saw the whole community of the *Koinonia* in great pain. Some were surrounded by great flames they could not pass through. Others were in the midst of thorns whose points would pierce them, having no way out. And others, on the bottom of a great, deep, ravine, were struggling desperately, unable either to climb up because of the steepness of that precipice or to throw themselves into the river, for there were crocodiles lying below in wait for them. Now, my children, woe is me, for I think that after my death all this will happen to the brothers (SBo 66).[446]

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[442] MacRae's translation with changes in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 161. ϯⲛⲟⲩ ϭⲉ ⲡⲁϣⲏⲣⲉ ⲥⲏⲑ̄ ϯⲛⲁϭⲱⲗⲡ ⲛⲁⲕˋ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲓ̈ ⲉⲧⲁⲩϭⲟⲗⲡⲟⲩ ⲛⲁⲓ̈ ⲉⲃⲟⲗˋ (Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*, 26).

[443] ⲛⲁⲓ̈ ⲛⲉ ⲛⲓⲁⲡⲟⲕⲁⲗⲩⲯⲓⲥ ⲉⲧⲁ[ⲁ]ⲇⲁⲙ ϭⲁⲗⲡⲟⲩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̄ⲥⲏⲑ̄ ⲡⲉϥϣⲏⲣⲉ (Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*, 60).

[444] MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 159. ⲛⲉⲓ̈ⲛⲁⲩ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲡⲉ ⲉϣⲟⲙⲉⲧ ⲛ̄ⲣⲱⲙⲉ (Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*, 22).

[445] MacRae's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 161. ϫⲉ ⲛⲓⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲛⲏ ⲉⲧⲁⲓ̈ⲛⲁⲩ (Morard, *L'Apocalypse d'Adam*, 26).

[446] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 86-87. ⲉⲣⲉⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲡⲁϩⲱⲙ ⲇⲉ ϧⲉⲛⲡⲱⲥϧⲕⲁⲙ ⲛⲉⲙⲛⲓⲥⲛⲏⲟⲩ ⲉⲛⲟⲩⲥⲛⲟⲩ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲉⲧⲁ�ⳝ ⲉⲩⲛⲏⲟⲩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲉⲡⲓϫⲟⲓ ⲛⲟⲩⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲩⲟⲡⲧ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲕⲁⲙ ⲉⲩⲙⲟϣⲓ ⲛ̄ⲥⲁⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ

This vision is obviously concerned with the succession quarrels that took place after Pachomius' death,[447] a period in which the *Koinonia* was apparently without a leader; some monasteries abandoned the congregation, since their abbots did not wish to remain under the command of Horsiesius. The quarrel only ended with the appointment of Theodore as the new director of the *Koinonia*.[448] At any rate, what should be emphasized here is the fact that this passage uses an analogous expression to that employed by the texts of Codex V to depict the revelation disclosed to Pachomius; in Codex V, the texts use "ϭⲱⲗ̄ⲡ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ" to express the revelations disclosed by Jesus or the three men, while in SBo "ϭⲱⲣⲡ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ" – the Boharic equivalent of ϭⲱⲗ̄ⲡ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ – is used to express the revelations received by Pachomius. The fact that the *Lives of Pachomius* report Pachomius's vision of the future of the *Koinonia* reinforces his gift of clairvoyance to the late antique Coptic reader, who would find it normal and expectable to find another holy man, such as James or Adam, being granted this kind of revelation.

In the *Sahidic Life of Antony*, one of the most famous passages is that in which Antony experiences a prophetic vision about the quarrels of Athanasius`s followers with the Arians (*Sahidic Life of Antony* § 82); in the passage in question the revelation is also expressed by the Coptic verb ϭⲱⲗ̄ⲡ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ: it happened one day as he was sitting working that he had an ecstasy and he groaned a great deal while he was having the revelatory vision";[449] and the Coptic verb ⲛⲁⲩ is also used to describe what Antony saw: "'My children, it is better for me to die before the things I saw take place.'"[450]

ⲡⲁⲫⲱⲙ ⲉⲩⲉⲣⲙⲉⲗⲉⲧⲁⲛ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲅⲣⲁⲫⲏ ⲉⲑⲟⲩ[ⲁ]ⲃ [ⲟ]ⲩⲟϩ ⲉⲧⲁϥⲫⲟϩ ⲉⲧϥⲁϣⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲙⲱⲓⲧ ⲁϥⲥⲱⲙⲥ ⲉϩⲣⲏⲓ ⲉⲧⲫⲉ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉϩⲁⲛⲛⲓϣϯ ⲛ̄ϭⲱⲣⲡ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ (…) ⲛ̄ⲑⲟϥ ⲇⲉ ⲁϥϩⲉⲙⲥⲓ ⲁϥⲥⲁϫⲓ ⲛⲉⲙⲱⲟⲩ [ⲙ̄]ⲡⲁⲭⲓ ⲙ̄ⲫϯ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲡⲉϫⲁϥ ⲛⲱⲟⲩ ϫⲉⲁⲓⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲧⲑ[ⲱ]ⲟⲩⲥ ⲧⲏⲣⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉϯⲕⲟⲓⲛⲱⲛⲓⲁ ⲉⲩⲃ[ⲉⲛ]ⲟⲩⲛⲓϣϯ ⲛⲉⲙⲕⲁϩ ϩⲁⲛⲟⲩⲟⲛ ⲙⲉ[ⲛ] ⲉⲣⲉⲟⲩⲛⲓϣϯ ⲛ̄ϣⲁϩ ⲛ̄ⲭⲣⲱⲙ ⲕⲱϯ ⲉⲣⲱⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩϣϫⲉⲙϫⲟⲙ ⲛⲟⲩⲱⲧ[ⲃ] ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲁⲛⲕⲉⲭⲱⲟⲩⲛⲓ ⲉⲩϩⲓⲡⲉⲥⲏⲧ ⲉⲟⲩⲛⲓϣϯ ⲛ̄ϣⲓⲕ ⲉϥϣⲓⲕ ⲉⲁⲩⲃ̄ⲓⲥⲓ ⲉⲩϩⲉ[ϫ]ϩⲱⲕ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩϣϫⲉⲙϫⲟⲙ ⲉⲛⲓ ⲉⲡϣⲱⲓ ⲉ[ⲑ]ⲃⲉⲡϭⲓⲥⲓ ⲛ̄ϯϣⲱⲙⲓ ⲉⲧⲉⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲟⲩ[ⲟϩ] ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩϩⲣⲓⲧⲟⲩ ⲉϥⲓⲁⲣⲟ ⲉⲑⲉⲛⲓⲙ̄ⲕⲁϩ ⲉⲧϫⲟⲣϫ ⲉⲣⲱⲟⲩ ϯⲛⲟⲩϫⲉ ⲛⲁϣⲏⲣⲓ ⲟⲩⲟⲓ ⲛⲏⲓ ϫⲉϯⲙⲉⲩ[ⲓ] ϫⲉⲙⲉⲛⲉⲛⲥⲁⲡⲁⲙⲟⲩ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲛ̄[ⲁ]ϣⲱⲡⲓ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲥⲛⲏⲟⲩ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Bohairice Scripta*, 66-67).

[447] The quarrel is described in SBo § 139 and G^1 § 127-129.

[448] SBo § 140 and G^1 § 129b.

[449] ⲁϥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲉϥϩⲙⲟⲟⲥ ⲉϥⲣ̄ϩⲱⲃ ⲁϥϣⲱⲡⲉ ϩⲛⲟⲩⲉⲕⲥⲧⲁⲥⲓⲥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉⲛⲉϥⲁϣⲁϩⲟⲙ ⲉⲡⲉϩⲟⲩⲟ ⲉϥϣⲟⲟⲡ ϩⲛⲧⲉⲑⲉⲱⲣⲓⲁ ⲙ̄ⲡϭⲱⲗ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ (Garitte, *S. Antonii vitae versio sahidica*, 88).

[450] ϫⲉⲛⲁϣⲏⲣⲉ ⲥⲥⲟⲧⲡ̄ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉⲧⲣⲁⲙⲟⲩ ⲉⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁⲓⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲟⲩ ϣⲱⲡⲉ (Garitte, *S. Antonii vitae versio sahidica*, 88).

In the *Life of Shenoute*, the protagonist also experiences revelatory visions which are expressed by the Coptic expressions discussed above. In § 138, for example, it is reported that during worship at night, he "saw a revelation sent by the Lord. It was like this: He saw standing before him a man wholly filled with great glory" (*Life of Shenoute* § 138).[451] In § 146, it is said that "Now that night, when the Old Man had finished praying and lay down for a while, he saw with amazement a very beautiful woman" (*Life of Shenoute* § 146).[452]

Both examples use ⲛⲁⲩ to express Shenoute`s vision and the second one even uses ϭⲱⲣⲡ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ. These instances also show that the *Life of Shenoute* contains passages that could be compared to Codex V texts regarding the motif in question here. A late antique Coptic reader would find it normal and interesting to read about visions and prophecies disclosed to biblical characters like Paul, James and Adam, similar to those he was used to reading, in which holy men such as Antony, Pachomius and Shenoute are granted revelations by means of visions.

7.5. Other Themes and Motifs

The goal of this section is to discuss other themes and motifs that are not necessarily associated with apocalyptic literature, but can be found in Codex V and in the texts that are part of our corpus of comparison. Even though these motifs are not necessarily linked to apocalyptic literature – the guiding thread of the present dissertation – their presence in both corpora may witness to important literary contacts that should not be neglected.

7.5.1. The Conversation between Master and Disciple

The *First Apocalypse of James* from Codex V tells us that in one of the meetings between Jesus and James "they both sat upon on a rock" (NH V 32, 15-16).[453] The action takes place

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[451] Translation (with improvements) in Bell, *The Life of Shenoute*, 80. ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲟⲩϭⲱⲣⲡ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲧⲉⲡϭⲥ. ⲙⲡⲁⲓⲛϯ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲟⲩⲣⲱⲙⲓ ⲉϥⲙⲉϩ ⲛϭⲟⲩ ⲧⲏⲣϥ ⲉⲙⲁϣⲱ ⲉϥⲟϩⲓ ⲉⲣⲁⲧϥ ⲙⲡⲉϥⲙⲑⲟ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ (Leipoldt, *Sinuthii vita bohairice*, 61).
[452] Bell's translation with improvements in Bell, *Life of Shenoute*, 82. ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲓ ⲇⲉ ϧⲉⲛⲡⲓⲉϫⲱⲣϩ ⲉⲧⲉⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲉⲧⲁⲡⲓϧⲉⲗⲗⲟ ⲕⲏⲛ ⲉϣⲗⲏⲗ ⲁϥⲣⲁⲕϥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲟⲩⲕⲩϫⲓ ⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲟⲩⲥϩⲓⲙⲓ ⲉⲛⲉⲥⲱⲥ ⲙⲙⲁϣⲱ (Leipoldt, *Sinuthii vitae bohairice*, 64).
[453] Schoedel's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 85. ⲁⲩϩⲙⲟⲟⲥ ⲙⲡⲉⲥⲛⲁⲩ ϩⲓϫⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲡⲉⲧⲣⲁ. (Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 39).

in the second series of revelations from Jesus to James, i.e. the revelations after the Lord's Passion and Resurrection. Before the action of sitting on the stone, Jesus appears once more to James (NH V 31, 2), being kissed by him (NH V 31, 4), and started the second series of revelatory discourses (NH V 31, 15).

Early Christian literature has many examples of conversations between master and disciples, or of religious teaching given by the master to his disciples, that take place with both sitting. Late antique Coptic literature, being part of the great spectrum of early Christianity, is no exception, and one finds many examples of a master teaching or talking to his disciples in this position. The fact that in the passage in the *First Apocalypse of James* James and Jesus were both sitting on a stone could be regarded as an unimportant detail. We will see, however, that the specific example of the *First Apocalypse of James* has explicit parallels in at least one native Coptic text, especially in what concerns the fact of being sitting on a stone along with Jesus. But first, we must give a brief survey of this question in early Christian and Coptic literature.

The first examples of the question discussed here can be found in the New Testament. In the *Luke*, for instance, one reads that Jesus was found by Mary and Joseph sitting among the doctors in the Temple discussing and questioning them (2, 46); the Sahidic New Testament tells us that "But it happened, after three days, they found him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, hearing them, asking them". The sequence of the narrative lets us presume that the child Jesus had a place of prominence in the conversation, since it is said that everybody was amazed by his wisdom and his answers (*Luke* 2: 47).

Many other examples can be found in the New Testament; in the *Gospel of Matthew*, the account of the Sermon on the Mount tells us that Jesus was seated (*Matthew* 5: 1); Jesus is also seated when he preaches on the boat (*Matthew* 13: 2)[454] and when he pronounces the eschatological discourse instructing the disciples (*Matthew* 24: 3).[455] Also in *Matthew*, Jesus says that when he was arrested he was seated among the Jews, teaching in the Temple

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[454] See also the parallels in *Mk* 4: 1 and *Lk* 5: 3.
[455] See also the parallel in *Mk* 13: 3.

(*Matthew* 26, 55). Luke provides other examples, such as the episode when, after reading a passage of Isaiah, Jesus sits and teaches in the synagogue (*Luke* 4: 20), or when he teaches the Pharisees, who were seated (*Luke* 5: 17), or even when it is said that Mary was seated at His feet listening to his teachings (*Luke* 10: 39). Finally, *Acts* also furnishes some examples, such as the passage where Philip instructs the people regarding a passage of *Isaiah* (*Act*s 8, 31), or when Paul teaches some women about the word of God (*Acts* 16: 13).

In the *Second Apocalypse of James*, it is said that James "[would] often say these words, and others also. He used to speak these words while the multitude of people were seated. But (on this occasion) he entered and did <not> sit down in the place, as was his custom. Rather, he sat above the fifth flight of steps" (NH V 45, 15-24).[456] It is impossible to know for sure the exact context and meaning of "these words", i.e. if they are part of a prayer or an instruction from a master to his disciples, since the passage in question is preceded by a lacuna; this means that we cannot know for sure if those who were seated heard an instruction or a prayer from James. Three lines above, in NH V 45, 11, one reads the verb "pray" (ϣⲗⲏⲗ), but once more, lacunas prevent any attempt at knowing the exact context of the passage (it is impossible to know if James said a prayer and then started the instruction). What follows the passage in NH 45, 13-24 is also lost in lacunas, namely the end of page 45 and the beginning of page 46. When the text begins to be readable again – in 46, 6 – James is communicating that he received a revelation from the Pleroma (NH V 46, 6-7), and what follows is a kind of a revelatory discourse. Therefore it is possible to suggest that James stood up to pray and then sat down to instruct the crowd.

If we now turn our attention to the Pachomian dossier, we will find many other examples. As far as we know, Pachomian monks probably had five instructions per week, two given by the housemasters – on Wednesdays and Fridays – and three given by the head of each monastery – one on Saturdays and two on Sundays.[457] There are no clear mentions

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[456] Hedrick's translation in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2-5 and VI*, 113. ⲛⲉⲓ̈ϣ[ⲁ]ϫⲉ ⲅⲁⲣ [ⲛⲉϥ]ϣ[ⲁϫ]ⲉ̣ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩ[ⲙⲏⲏ]ϣⲉ ⲛ̄ⲥⲟⲡ ⲙⲛ̄ ϩⲉⲛⲕⲟⲟ[ⲩ]ⲉ̣ ⲟⲛ ⲛⲉⲓ̈ϣⲁϫⲉ ⲛⲉϥϫⲱ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲩϩⲙⲟⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲡⲁϣⲁⲓ̈ ⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲗⲁⲟⲥ· (Veilleux, *La Première Apocalypse de Jacques et la Seconde Apocalypse de Jacques*, 120).
[457] Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien au quatrième siècle*, 270.

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in the *Rules* of the fact that the monks should be seated during these instructions. However, Rule 21 says that "if someone falls asleep while sitting during the instruction of the housemaster or of the superior of the monastery…", which might lead us to presume that the brothers remained seated at least during a part of the instruction, since Rule 20 says that "and during the instruction the brothers, whether sitting or standing…"[458]

Additionally, it seems that once a day, in the evening, all the brothers used to meet in a kind of get-together to discuss passages of the Scriptures, guided by the father of the monastery.[459] In many occasions, the Sahidic fragments of the *Lives* testify that in these informal instructions, at least the instructor was supposed to take a seat.[460] In other accounts from Pachomian literature, one reads that the encounter with a famous monk, such as Antony, became the occasion for an informal instruction where everybody takes a seat.[461]

In SBo § 86,[462] in a passage partially discussed in section 6.3.1, Pachomius sees the Lord Himself giving a sort of instruction:

> Still another day, while our father Pachomius was praying somewhere alone, he fell into an ecstasy: all the brothers were in the synaxis and our Lord was seated on a raised throne, speaking to them about the parables of the Holy Gospel (…) From that day on, when our father Pachomius wished to address the word of God to the brothers, he would occupy the place where he had seen the Lord seated and speaking to the brothers (SBo § 86).[463]

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[458] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 2*, 148.

[459] Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien au quatrième siècle*, 273. It seems that these get-togethers often took the form of an informal instruction, and the brothers followed it seated, as we will discuss below. The fact that it was probably directed by the father of the monastery could be proven, for example, by the account that states that when Theodore was the superior of Tabenesi, he used to travel every evening to Phbow to listen to these informal instructions given by Pachomius; once it was finished, he returned to Tabenesi to repeat the content of the instruction to the brothers under his charge (Cf. SBo § 73; G[1] § 88). The account may not be historical, and its goal could be merely hagiographical, i.e. to show that even Theodore's instructions were based on Pachomius's teaching; in any case, it makes it plausible that these get-togethers took place and that they were probably led by the head of each monastery.

[460] See, for example, S[5] § 125, 141 and 147.

[461] S[5] § 120.

[462] One should also note that in Bohairic texts, the verb used to express the act of sitting is ϩⲉⲙⲥⲓ, this is the case in the passages quoted here from SBo and the *Life of Shenoute*.

[463] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 112). ⲉϥϣⲗⲏⲗ ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲛⲟⲩⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ϧⲉⲛⲟⲩⲙⲁ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩⲁⲧϥ ⲛ̄ⲝⲉⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲡⲁϧⲟⲙ ⲁϥϣⲱⲡⲓ ϧⲉⲛⲟⲩⲧⲱⲙⲧ ⲓⲥϫⲉⲕ ⲛⲁⲟⲩⲟϩⲓ ⲉⲣⲁⲧⲟⲩ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩⲡⲉ ϧⲉⲛϯⲥⲩⲛⲁⲝⲓⲥ ⲛ̄ⲝⲉⲛⲓⲥⲛⲏⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲉⲡⲉϭ̄ⲥ

On the other hand, there are passages that exemplify that the act of prayer was formally performed with the monk standing, as the account of Theodore's first revelation testifies:[464]

> One day, during his first year, Theodore was sitting in his cell plaiting ropes and reciting passages of the Holy Scriptures he had learned by heart. And he would get up and pray every time his heart urged him to do so. While he was seated reciting, the cell where he was lighted up, and he was quite surprised at it. And lo, two angels under the appearance of dazzling men appeared to him (SBo § 34).[465]

In the *Life of Onnophrius*, it is also said that when Onnophrius journeyed into the desert and met "a very great saint of God"; he says that "I sat down there with him for a few days and learned the rules of the doctrine of God from him" (*Life of Onnophrius* § 15).[466]

In the examples quoted above from the *Life of Onnophrius* and SBo, the Coptic word used to express the act of being seated is respectively ϩⲙⲟⲟⲥ and its Bohairic equivalent, ϩⲉⲙⲥⲓ, just like in the *Apocalypses of James* from Codex V, where ϩⲙⲟⲟⲥ is employed.

However, the most striking example can be found in the *Life of Shenoute*, where one reads that "one day our father Apa Shenoute was sitting by an outcrop of rock, and with him was our lord Jesus Christ and they were talking together" (*Life of Shenoute* § 22).[467] The similarity between this passage and the one in the *First Apocalypse of James* is remarkable.

ϩⲉⲙⲥⲓ ϩⲓⲟⲩⲑⲣⲟⲛⲟⲥ ⲉϥϭⲟⲥⲓ ⲉϥⲥⲁϫⲓ ⲛⲉⲙⲱⲟⲩ ϧⲉⲛⲛⲓⲡⲁⲣⲁⲃⲟⲗⲏ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲡⲓⲉⲩⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲓⲟⲛ ⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ (…) ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲓⲥϫⲉⲛⲡⲓⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲉⲙⲙⲁⲩ ⲁϥϣⲁⲛⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲛ̄ϫⲉⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲡⲁϧⲱⲙ ⲉⲥⲁϫⲓ ⲛⲉⲙⲛⲓⲥⲛⲏⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲥⲁϫⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥϥ̄ ϣⲁϥⲟϩⲓ ⲉⲣⲁⲧϥ̄ ϧⲉⲛⲡⲓⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲁϥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲡⲟ̄ⲥ̄ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲉϥϩⲉⲙⲥⲓ ⲉϥⲥⲁϫⲓ ⲛⲉⲙⲛⲓⲥⲛⲏⲟⲩ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Bohairice Scripta*, 95-96). On the Coptic expression ⲁϥϣⲱⲡⲓ ϧⲉⲛⲟⲩⲧⲱⲙⲧ translated as "fell into an ecstasy", see Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 417a.

[464] Se sections 6.3.1 and 6.3.3 above.

[465] Translation in Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia Vol. 1*, 58-59. ⲉϥϩⲉⲙⲥⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲛⲟⲩⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ϧⲟⲩⲛ ϧⲉ[ⲛ]ⲧⲉϥϧⲣⲓ ⲛ̄ϫⲉⲑⲉⲟⲇⲱⲣⲟⲥ ϧⲉⲛⲧⲉϥϣⲟⲣⲡⲓ ⲛ̄ⲣⲟⲙⲡⲓ ⲉϥⲙⲉϣⲛⲟϩ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲉϥⲉⲣⲙⲉⲗⲉⲧⲁⲛ ϧⲉⲛⲛⲏ ⲉⲧⲁϥϭⲓⲧⲟ[ⲩ] ⲛⲁⲡⲟⲥⲑⲏⲧⲏⲥ ϧⲉⲛⲛⲓⲅⲣⲁⲫⲏ ⲉⲑⲟ[ⲩ]ⲁⲃ ⲛⲉϣⲁϥⲧⲱⲛϥ ⲇⲉⲡⲉ ⲕⲁⲧⲁⲥⲟⲡ ⲉⲧⲉⲣ[ⲉ]ⲡⲉϥϩⲏⲧ ⲛⲁⲑⲟⲩϩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥϣⲗⲏⲗ ⲟⲩⲟϩ ⲉⲧⲓ ⲉϥϩⲉⲙⲥⲓ ⲉϥⲉⲣⲙⲉⲗⲉⲧⲁⲛ ⲁ[ϯ]ⲣⲓ ⲉⲧⲉϥⲛ̄ϧⲏⲧⲥ ⲉⲣⲟⲩⲱⲓⲛⲓ ⲛ̄ⲑⲟϥ ⲇⲉ [ⲁϥ]ϣⲑⲟⲣⲧⲉⲣ ⲉⲙⲁϣⲱ ϩⲏⲡⲡⲉ ⲓⲥⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥⲥⲃ̄ ⲉⲩϭⲓϧⲉⲣⲉⲃ ⲛ̄ⲣⲱ[ⲙⲓ] ⲁⲩⲟⲩⲟⲛϩⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲟϥ (Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vita Bohairice Scripta*, 37). This passage was already discussed in section 6.3.1.

[466] Translation in Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 462. ⲁⲓϩⲙⲟⲟⲥ ϩⲁ ϩⲧⲏϥ ⲛ̄ϩⲉⲛⲕⲟⲩⲓ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲟⲩ· ⲁⲓϫⲓⲥⲃⲱ ⲛ̄ⲕⲱⲧ ⲛ̄ⲧ ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ· ⲉ ⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲓ ⲧⲟⲟⲧϥ̄ (Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 213).

[467] Translation in Bell, *The Life of Shenoute*, 49. ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲛⲟⲩⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲉϥϩⲉⲙⲥⲓ ⲛ̄ϫⲉⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲁⲡⲁ ϣⲉⲛⲟⲩϯ ϧⲁⲧⲉⲛⲡⲓⲗⲁϩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲧⲣⲁ ⲛ̄ⲑⲟϥ ⲛⲉⲙⲡⲉⲛϭ︦ⲥ︦ ⲓ︦ⲏ︦ⲥ︦ ⲡ︦ⲭ︦ⲥ︦ ⲉⲩⲥⲁϫⲓ ⲛⲉⲙⲛⲟⲩⲉⲣⲛⲟⲩ (Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Vita Bohairice*, 18).

The *Life of Shenoute* displays the Bohairic equivalent of ϩⲙⲟⲟⲥ, ϩⲉⲙⲥⲓ. As for the "stone" or "rock", both use the same word, ⲡⲉⲧⲣⲁ. In other occasions the *Life of Shenoute* also tells that Shenoute was talking to Jesus while they were both seated, without mentioning a rock, however.[468]

Other conversations between Shenoute and Jesus are reported in the *Life of Shenoute* where they are not seated at all. In § 154, for example, one reads that "Once, when our father Apa Shenoute went into the desert, behold! The Lord Jesus appeared to him and spoke with him" (*Life of Shenoute* § 154).[469] In another passage, it is written that "The Saviour took the hand of our father Apa Shenoute and walked with him to the cell in the desert and they spoke of great mysteries between them" (*Life of Shenoute* § 160).[470]

The motif is also echoed in the *Coptic Epic Martyrdoms*. In the *Third Martyrdom of Saint Victor*, for example, Victor meets Jesus without noticing His true nature.[471] They pray together and sit down to talk. The scene is described as follows: "And it came to pass that when they have finished praying Apa Victor went forward and saluted Jesus – now he knew not who he was – and said unto Him, "Sit Thou down so that I may be able to enjoy Thy face fully …'" (*Third Martyrdom of Saint Victor* – Oriental 7022 fol. 18a).[472] Once more, the Coptic word used is ϩⲙⲟⲟⲥ.

These examples show that in late antique Coptic hagiographies, generally speaking, the conversation between a master – an abbot, a famous monk or even Jesus – and his disciple(s) – ordinary monks or, when the master is Jesus, a monastic hero or martyr – took place with both or at least one of them sitting. Given this fact, it is possible to establish a literary parallel between the scene in question *First Apocalypse of James* – in which it is said that Jesus and

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[468] *Life of Shenoute* § 25, 70 and 72.
[469] Translation in Bell, *Life of Shenoute*, 85. ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲟⲛ ⲉⲣⲉⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲁⲡⲁ ϣⲉⲛⲟⲩϯ ⲙⲟϣⲓ ϧⲉⲛⲡϣⲁϥⲉ ⲓⲥⲡⲟϭⲭ ⲓⲏⲥ ⲁϥⲟⲩⲟⲛϥ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲁϥⲥⲁϫⲓ ⲛⲉⲙⲁϥ (Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Vita Bohairice*, 66-67).
[470] Translation in Bell, *The Life of Shenoute*, 86. ⲡⲓⲥⲱⲧⲏⲣ ⲇⲉ ⲁϥⲁⲙⲟⲛⲓ ⲛⲧϫⲓϫ ⲙⲡⲁⲓⲱⲧ ⲁⲡⲁ ϣⲉⲛⲟⲩϯ ⲁϥⲙⲟϣⲓ ⲛⲉⲙⲁϥ ϣⲁϯⲣⲓ ⲉⲧϩⲓⲡϣⲁϥⲉ ⲉⲩⲥⲁϫⲓ ⲛⲉⲙⲛⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲛⲟⲩ ϧⲉⲛϩⲁⲛⲛⲓϣϯ ⲙⲙⲩⲥⲧⲏⲣⲓⲟⲛ. (Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Vita Bohairice*, 68).
[471] This passage was already mentioned in section 6.1.5.
[472] Translation in Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 284. ⲁⲥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲇⲉ ⲛ̄ ⲧⲉⲣ ⲟⲩⲱ̄ ⲉⲩϣⲗⲏⲗ ⲁϥϯ ⲡⲉϥⲟⲩⲟⲓ ⲁϥⲁⲥⲡⲁⲍⲉ ⲛ̄ ⲓ̅ⲥ̅· ⲛⲉϥⲭⲟⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲛ ϫⲉ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲡⲉ ⲁⲡⲁ ⲃⲓⲕⲧⲟⲣ ⲇⲉ ⲡⲉϫⲁϥ ⲛⲁϥ ϫⲉ ϩⲙⲟⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲕ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲥⲉⲓ ⲙ̄ ⲡⲉⲕϩⲟ (Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms*, 30-31).

James sat down on a rock (NH V 32, 15-16) – and the *Life of Shenoute* § 22 – where the characters also sat down on a rock. Consequently, the fact that our corpus of comparison provides many examples of conversations between a master and a disciple – and in the case of the *Life of Shenoute*, similarly to the *First Apocalypse of James*¸ between the main character of the text and Jesus – highlights another literary motif present in the *First Apocalypse of James* that could catch the attention of a late antique Coptic audience – a monastic one in particular – helping to justify and explain its production, circulation, ownership and conservation in late antique Coptic Egypt. In other words, the meeting between Jesus and James, as told by the *First Apocalypse of James*, is another literary motif that was certainly familiar to late antique Coptic readers, which would once more explain the reception of this text in late antique Coptic Egypt.

7.5.2. The "Ten Heavens" Scheme in the *Apocalypse of Paul*

The *Apocalypse of Paul* presents a quite peculiar heavenly system, in which, instead of the traditional seven heavens,[473] we find ten. Rosenstiehl,[474] and before him Böhlig,[475] have remarked this same system is also attested in *3Enoch* 21, 6.

The system of ten heavens is not completely alien to a Coptic context; one can find at least one instance in which it is mentioned among the hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison. In a small fragment[476] that could be possibly identified with S^{1a}, Pachomius discusses with some brothers about a vision that he has had, in which he was questioned by an angel.[477] Since the fragment begins abruptly, it is impossible to know the whole content of the vision, but in what is left, the angel asks him three times "Combien d'étages a la maison que l'homme a construite?" After the third time Pachomius finally

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[473] Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, *32*-33.
[474] Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 38.
[475] Böhlig, *Mysterion und Wahrheit*, 89-90.
[476] For details, see Lefort, *Les vies coptes de saint Pachôme*, 376.
[477] Rosenstiehl was the first one to point out the existence of this passage, without making any comments however (Rosenstiehl and Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul*, 40).

answers "Elle a dix étages" and the angel departs. When Pachomius explains to the brothers the meaning of the vision, he says that "les dix étages de la maison sont les sept cieux, avec le firmament, la terre et les enfers".[478]

As stated above, the passage is in a fragmentary state, which makes it difficult difficulty to propose a clear interpretation and contextualization. It does show nevertheless that a ten-level system was not completely alien in Late antique Coptic literature. This being said, in a reception perspective, it would be possible that the ten heavens in the *Apocalypse of Paul* could be interpreted by a late antique Coptic audience in the light of such a conception.

7.6. Final Considerations

Until recently, discussions of the Coptic phase of the NH texts have essentially taken into consideration their heterodox doctrinal content, which was mostly seen by scholars as incompatible with the beliefs of an orthodox Christian milieu in late antique Coptic Egypt, monastic or not.[479] We believe, however, that we have found in a particular type of Christian Coptic literature enough literary motifs that are also present in Codex V to support the hypothesis that at least this codex could have been read by a late antique Christian Coptic audience without causing major doctrinal dilemmas. These literary motifs, mostly framed in narrative structure, strongly suggest that a Coptic Christian who knew the type of literature preserved in Coptic hagiographies could have shown interest in Codex V; more than that, he could interpret the latter in the light of the former, as suggested by the reception approach adopted here. In other words, this literary relationship could have led these late antique Coptic readers to overlook, or perhaps not even notice, the doctrinal heterodoxy of Codex V.

This being the case, we have tried to provide different interpretations for the passages that contained motifs that can also be found in the hagiographies that are part of our corpus

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[478] Lefort's translation in Lefort, *Les vies coptes de saint Pachôme*, 376. ⲧⲙⲏⲧⲉ ⲡⲟⲩⲁϩⲙⲉ ⲙⲡⲏⲓⲡⲉ ⲧⲥⲁϣϥⲉ ⲙⲡⲉ· ⲙⲛⲡⲉⲥⲧⲉⲣⲛⲱⲙⲁ ⲙⲛⲡⲕⲁϩ ⲙⲛⲁⲙⲛⲧⲉ; see Walter E. Crum, *Theological Texts from Coptic Papyri* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 188.
[479] As demonstrated in our *status quaestionis*.

of comparison. From a reception perspective, and making use of Jauss' 'horizon of expectations', we have tried to interpret certain passages in the texts of Codex V in the light of late antique Coptic hagiographies. Consequently, we have also shown that certain key passages in Codex V can be read without any reference to Gnosticism.

In the final chapter of the dissertation, we will set out our conclusions and resume some of the topics we have outlined in this concluding section.

-8-

Conclusion

At the beginning of this section in which we set out our conclusions we would like to evoke the lyrics of a French song that may help us to understand what may have happened to the texts of Codex V in late antique Egypt.[1] The song in question is called *Les trois cloches*[2] and it became very famous in 1945, when it was recorded and released by Edith Piaf (see Appendix 2 for the lyrics).

The lyrics of this song tell the story of the life of a man, Jean-François Nicot, focusing on three key moments: his birth/baptism, his marriage and his death/funeral. Each of these three episodes is marked by the jingle of a bell (this is why the song is called "Les trois cloches"). This song has become a classic Christmas song, even if it has nothing to do with Christmas. How explain this? The song has motifs that are abundantly found in Christmas songs and tales, such as the obscure birth of a child, the starry night, a little village, the jingle of a bell. Even though originally the song was not about Christmas at all, it was received as such by later generations, due to the motifs we have listed.

This example may help us to understand what could have happened to the texts of Codex V in a late antique Coptic context. They were originally composed in Greek in the second century, making use of theological and doctrinal elements that were in vogue at that time (some of them labeled as Gnostic). However, two hundred years later, in late antique Coptic Egypt, they might well have been seen from a different perspective by those who copied and read them. The fact that they presented themes and motifs common to other types of literature, especially hagiographies, that were circulating in Coptic at the same time, allowed them to be read without raising major doctrinal issues.

[1] I owe this idea to my advisor, Professor Louis Painchaud.
[2] The lyrics were composed by Jean Vilard. The song was originally released in 1939 par Marie-Louise Rochat, but it was recorded by Edith Piaf after the Second World War, when it became famous.

One of the main goals of the present dissertation has been to demonstrate that Codex V was a book that could have aroused the interest of late antique Coptic readers. By the same token we have demonstrated that Codex V was not alien to the late antique Christian environment of Coptic Egypt, but, on the contrary, that it was probably a book that could have circulated among Christians without raising any doctrinal or theological problems or quandaries. Codex V had much more in common – as far as the literary themes and motifs are concerned – with the literature that was circulating in Coptic in Late Antiquity – especially hagiographies – than it manifested differences or alien content.

On another level, making use of the "Theory of Reception", we have tried to interpret certain passages of the texts of Codex V in the light of the literature that shaped the "horizon of expectations" of the Coptic readers that read it in late antique Egypt. Rather than offering the "traditional" Gnostic interpretation of these texts – which take into account their original context of composition and their readers in the following years and decades[3] – we have offered an interpretation that could have been made by late antique Coptic Christians who were not concerned with Gnosticism, but rather with theological, doctrinal, religious and literary issues of the fourth and fifth centuries. In other words, we have demonstrated how these texts could have been seen, understood and interpreted by whoever read them in late antique Coptic Egypt. And we have demonstrated this by taking into account what was in vogue from a literary point of view in late antique Coptic Egypt, especially in hagiographies.

In the following sections, we will make a few comments on other issues of general interest.

8.1. From the *Apocalypse of Paul* to *Eugnostos*.

A quick skimming of the present dissertation will probably give the reader the impression that Codex V had many literary themes and motifs in common with late antique Coptic literature, in particular with hagiographies. Perhaps after a more attentive reading, the same reader would probably be surprised by the fact that certain texts in Codex V are closer to late

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[3] Once more, we emphasize that we are not by any means diminishing the importance of this kind of study.

antique Coptic hagiographies from a thematic point of view than others. Given this fact, if we were to make a scale of how close Codex V texts are to Coptic hagiographies and their themes and motifs, the *Apocalypse of Paul* would certainly be in the first place and *Eugnostos* in last. The *First Apocalypse of James* would probably be in second place, followed by the *Apocalypse of Adam* and the *Second Apocalypse of James*.

This type of observation may sound curious or puzzling. How can such a short text as the *Apocalypse of Paul* – which is not among those that have been studied in much depth by scholarship – have so much in common with late antique Coptic hagiographies while others, such as *Eugnostos*, such a big and complex writing, only present a few points of contact? Focusing on the *Apocalypse of Paul* and analysing it from a reception perspective, how could such a short text have so much to say to a late antique Coptic reader?

We admit that we do not have the ultimate answers to these questions; perhaps they can be found in the kind of comparison we chose to carry out and in the fact that the texts that are part of our corpus of comparison all have narrative frameworks. Since late antique Coptic hagiographies have a narrative framework, it would be natural and expected to find more resemblances between them and other texts that have a narrative framework, such as apocalypses, or in the specific case of the research presented here, the last four texts of Codex V. Since *Eugnostos* is not a text with a narrative framework – it is more a letter and a theogonical discourse[4] – the comparison with texts that have a narrative framework was not very fruitful in this case. Even so, some similarities between *Eugnostos* and the hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison were found – see especially sections 7.2.1 and 7.2.2.2 – which allows us to hypothesize that the text in question could have caught the attention of a late antique Coptic audience.

On the other hand, the *Apocalypse of Paul* – despite being such a short text – had a lot to say to late antique Coptic readers. Its lines are full of literary themes and motifs that were familiar to late antique Coptic readers. The character to which the treatise is attributed, Paul,

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[4] Pasquier recognizes that *Eugnostos* also has traces of the apocalyptic literary genre, but what predominates is the epistolary genre and the theogonical discourse (see Pasquier, *Eugnoste*, 25-32).

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was also very appealing to a late antique Coptic audience.[5] The fact that it has a narrative framework certainly contributes to this similarity, but more than that, it seems that its predominant apocalyptic flavour[6] – illustrated by the use of so many themes and motifs generally associated with apocalyptic literature – relates it to late antique Coptic hagiographies.[7]

The *Apocalypse of Adam* also presents some motifs that could be appealing to late antique Coptic readers (the otherworldly beings that appear in Adam's dream, for example).[8] The *Apocalypses of James*, besides the motifs they have in common with the hagiographies that are part of our corpus of comparison could also be seen and interpreted by late antique Coptic readers as a sort of martyrdom, not much different from those they might have known and read. The fact that James the Just was known in Antiquity as a martyr – and, as we have shown, probably in late antique Coptic Egypt too – could be the first clue showing that the two texts that are attributed to him in Codex V were interpreted by late antique Coptic readers as martyrdoms. Accordingly, the *Apocalypses of James* were also texts that were very attractive to late antique Coptic readers. From another point of view, the fact that James was frequently described as the perfect ascetic[9] could also catch the attention of a Christian Coptic audience, so used to reading and hearing about ascetics who lived in the desert or in monasteries performing all kinds of mortifications and ascetical practices. In any case, James would have been seen by late antique Coptic readers not as a "Gnostic" opponent of the Great Church – as he was possibly seen in the second century – but as a Christian hero, whether a martyr or a monk.

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[5] See section 4.3.

[6] The use of themes and motifs generally associated with apocalyptic literature by the author of the *Apocalypse of Paul* is so intense that one could almost say that they were chosen on purpose, to make a stereotypical apocalyptic text (see Dias Chaves, *Between Apocalyptic and Gnosis*, 45-53); as Michael Kaler once said, in a social gathering with other scholars, it is as if whoever wrote the *Apocalypse of Paul* "woke up one day and said: today, I'm gonna write an apocalypse".

[7] See section 5.1.

[8] See section 7.3.2.

[9] As we have shown in section 4.3.2

Gathering together all these texts and characters, Codex V as a whole was thus a very appealing volume to late antique Coptic Christians. Rather than being seen by fourth-and fifth-century readers as a "manuel d'initiation gnostique",[10] Codex V was probably seen as an anthology that brought together three biblical heroes in extra-biblical adventures full of themes and motifs that were appealing to them. These readers did not see "Gnostic proclivities"[11] in these texts, but rather biblical characters in stories with the same themes and motifs as the hagiographies they knew very well. Consequently, taking into account these hagiographies and Codex V from a reception perspective, one might assume that the texts of the latter were not interpreted by late antique Coptic readers in the same way as they were interpreted by heresiologists, Gnostics or Christians in general in the second and third centuries.

Let us now briefly discuss an issue that has become the great trend in Nag Hammadi studies, the possibilities of links between the Codices and Coptic monasticism.

8.2. Monastic links

The reader has probably also noticed that during this dissertation we have avoided to take part in the debate concerning the possibility of a link between the NHC and monasticism or monastic milieus; although this question had become a central issue in the discussions concerning the context of production and preservation of the NHC, it is not the subject of our dissertation. On the other hand, it would be a mistake to ignore this debate completely, given its importance in the recent studies on the context of compilation of the NHC.[12] This is why we must devote a few lines to this issue in our conclusions. We must make it clear from the start that these considerations only take into account the literary characteristics of Codex V – the focus of the present dissertation – leaving aside its material features.

Having said this, we must start by saying that we do not intend to take sides in this debate. The results of our research do however seem to lend some support to the hypothesis

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[10] Using the words of Morard (Morard, "Les Apocalypses du Codex V de Nag Hammadi," 357).
[11] Using Hedrick's expression (Hedrick, "Gnostic Proclivities").
[12] As we have shown in the chapter on the *Status quaestionis*.

of a "monastic link", at least for Codex V. More precisely – and recalling the distinction we pointed out in the introduction concerning the phases of the NHC (production, destination and conservation) – our results could indicate a monastic link in at least one of these stages, as it seems probable that Codex V could have been produced by late antique Coptic monks, addressed to them or preserved by them, or all three. We are not proposing that the codex necessarily belonged to monks in one these stages, we are merely saying that nothing convincingly contradicts this hypothesis, and that monks were probably the main potential readers of Codex V.

We feel confident in affirming this for several reasons. Firstly, we have demonstrated that there are no necessary incompatibilities between Codex V texts and late antique Coptic hagiographies: late antique Coptic Christians – and this includes monks – could have been interested in certain literary themes and motifs abundantly present in Codex V and not necessarily in the theological content of its texts. Thus monks, like any late antique Coptic Christian, could have shown interest for the texts of Codex V for these reasons.

Moreover, the fact that a considerable number of the hagiographies used in our comparisons here feature famous monks such as Antony, Pachomius and Shenoute as main characters is symptomatic. Obviously, one can imagine that, since monks have become the role model of Christianity in Late Antiquity,[13] any Christian could have read these monastic lives, and, consequently, be interested in texts that display other characters who perform similar actions –ascensions, fantastic visions, clairvoyance, etc. However, the main audience of these monastic lives was probably monks; if this type of literature was inspiring for any Christian, one can imagine that it would be much more stimulating for monks and ascetics in general, people who tried to live the same kind of asceticism in their everyday life. Thus monks were probably the main readers of texts such as the *Life of Pachomius*, the *Life of Antony* and the *Life of Shenoute*.

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[13] See the discussion in section 6.3.

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In addition, despite the difficulty involved in tracking down the origins and owners of the countless Coptic manuscripts and fragments that have survived until today[14] and are preserved in a number of libraries and collections – mainly in Europe and North America – we can presume that many of them came from Coptic monasteries, being either produced or kept there. The famous statement made by Crum and endorsed by Scholten[15] – according to which every single Coptic manuscript known at his time came from a monastic library – obviously covers the monastic lives preserved in Coptic that have been analysed in this dissertation. One could mention concrete examples such the Sahidic fragments of the *Life of Pachomius*, which came from the *White Monastery*.[16] And this is even the case of some Coptic Epic Passions, such as those kept today at the Pierpont Morgan Library,[17] found in 1910 in the Monastery of S. Michel in Phantow, at Hamouli in the Fayûm.[18]

Thus, as far as we can tell, the main readers and keepers of Coptic hagiographies like those analysed here were monks; therefore, if we had to point out to the main potential readers of other types of texts circulating in Coptic that displayed the same kind of themes and motifs – such as those discussed here – we would point to monks.

Having said this, however, one question remains: despite the fact that Codex V had much to say to late antique Coptic Christians – and especially to monks – it also contains many doctrinal and theological issues that are alien to fourth-and fifth-century Christianity. How did these Christians deal with that? This is the question that we will address in next section.

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[14] One good example concerns the history of how the manuscripts from the White Monastery of Shenoute left Egypt for libraries and collections in Europe and North America, described by Stephen Emmel, "Shenoute's Literary Corpus. Vol. 1" (Ph.D. Diss. Faculty of the Graduate School of Yale University, 1993), 1-38.

[15] Scholten, "Die Nag-Hammadi-Texte als Buchbesitz der Pachomianer," 172.

[16] According to Lefort (cf. Lefort, *Les vies coptes de saint Pachôme*, LXI-LXXI).

[17] Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices*.

[18] Reymond and Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices*, 1.

8.3. Selective Perception and Selective Reading

Despite all the literary similarities between the texts of Codex V and the hagiographies that circulated in Coptic, one important issue still needs to be addressed here: how to explain the fact that whoever read the codex that concerns us here had to deal with (accept, disapprove, ignore?) theological and doctrinal matters that seem very alien to late antique Coptic Christianity? This kind of theological and doctrinal topic normally labeled as "Gnostic" by scholars. For a long time, their presence in the texts under study here led scholars to be sceptical about any possibility of a link between Coptic monks and the codices[19] or even a link between the codices and Christians.[20] This kind of theological and doctrinal issues has led some scholars to suggest that the codices belonged to syncretistic communities[21] or even to "Egyptian Gnostics."[22]

Whoever read Codex V in late antique Egypt was not only reading about otherworldly journeys, visionary experiences, and other motifs discussed above, they were also reading about "strange" characters such as Achamoth (NH V 34, 3; 35, 9.10; 36, 5) and Saklas (NH V 74, 3.7), about "weird" interpretations of *Genesis* (such as those in the *Apocalypse of Adam*, for example), and about an "Ancient of Days" that was surpassed in knowledge by Paul (NH V 23, 1-28). In other words, they were reading about many familiar topics and motifs, but they were also reading about things that were probably not part of their "horizon of expectation". How did they deal with that? Did these "foreign" topics prevent them from reading the entire codex? Or did they simply ignore them? Or did they neglect them in order to take advantage of the good things the codex could offer?

These are obviously possible explanations to the issue that we are addressing in this section. We would like, however, to suggest another one, making use of a concept developed

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[19] For example, in Doresse's words: "whoever may have possessed them, they cannot have been monks" (cf. Doresse, *The Secret Books of Egyptian Gnostics*, 135).

[20] As Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*.

[21] Khosroyev, *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi*, 86.

[22] A reference to the famous title in English of Doresse's book (Cf. Doresse, *The Secret Books of Egyptian Gnostics*).

by psychology and neuroscience, which is generally called "selective perception"[23] (or, in the specific case of the subject discussed here, what could be called "selective reading"). Selective perception can be defined as the inclination or predisposition to easily forget or not notice stimuli that cause emotional distress or embarrassment or that are opposed to the major principles or that do not make sense to the one receiving the stimuli.

> In Robbins and Judge's words, this may take place because

> any characteristic that makes a person, an object, or an event stand out will increase the probability we will perceive it. Why? Because it is impossible for us to assimilate everything we see; we can take in only certain stimuli. This explains why you're more likely to notice cars like your own, or why a boss may reprimand some people and not others doing the same thing. Because we can't observe everything going on about us, we engage in *selective perception*. Selective perception allows us to "speed-read" others, but not without the risk of drawing an inaccurate picture. Because we see what we want to see, we can draw unwarranted conclusions from an ambiguous situation.[24]

Humphreys, Duncan and Treisman go further stating that

> the behavioural responses we are equipped to make are inherently limited. We may only name one object at a time; we can reach at most to two objects. The information available to our senses needs to be selected, so that only relevant parts of the world are represented for action. In this way, action may interact in important ways with perceptual processing. Scenes may be parsed in different ways according to our intended behaviour. Perception and action may be linked through processes of selective attention.[25]

Applied to the act of reading, one could say that "selective perception" leads the reader to easily forget or ignore information that does not make sense to him, or that is opposed to his beliefs or causes him distress or embarrassment. Given this, a reader will tend to focus on the issues, themes and motifs that make sense to him, with which he is familiar, and, will tend to

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[23] For a survey, see Glyn W. Humphreys, John Duncan and Anne Treisman, "Introduction to Brain Mechanisms of Selective Perception and Action. Proceedings of a Discussion Meeting Held at the Royal Society of London on 19 and 20 November 1997," *PTRSL* 353 (1998): 1241-1244. See also Stephen P. Robbins and Timothy A. Judge, *Essentials of Organizational Behavior* (Upper Saddle River [N.J]: Pearson, 2014), 83.88.173.

[24] Robbins and Judge, *Essentials of Organizational Behavior*, 83-84.

[25] Humphrey, Duncan and Treisman, "Introduction to Brain Mechanisms of Selective Perception," 1241.

ignore or not even notice issues, themes and motifs that he does not know or that somehow cause him a certain discomfort.

To illustrate this phenomenon in the reading and perception of religious texts, we can evoke, for example, the reading and interpretation of the New Testament by adepts of modern-day Kardecism. One of the kardecists' favorite passages of the New Testament is *John* 3:3, where, according to some modern translations, Jesus says to Nicodemus that "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."[26] This passage is seen by modern-day Kardecists – and by Allan Kardec himself[27] – as one of the ultimate proofs that reincarnation is a reality and that Jesus himself stated its existence without hesitation.

Without taking part in the discussion concerning the meaning of this passage, its possible alternative translations[28] and the existence of reincarnation itself, we whish only to stress that Kardecists interpret this declaration of Jesus according to the *Gospel of John* in an almost dogmatic way, as the ultimate proof and argument in favor of reincarnation. For them, Christians, who are supposed to follow Jesus's commands and to believe in his words, should take reincarnation for granted because of this passage. In fact, this passage is one of the most discussed between modern-day Kardecists and Catholics and Protestants in ordinary life in Brazil, where Kardecism is still quite popular. However, other passages in the canonical gospels in which other subjects are discussed are not taken into consideration in the same manner. For example, modern-day Kardecists do not take seriously Jesus' condemnation of divorce[29] – as reported by *Mark* 10: 1-12; *Matthew* 19:1-9 and *Luke* 16:18 – or the passage in which the resurrection of the flesh is discussed (according to *Matthew* 22: 23-34). In a certain way, this could be seen as "selective perception". Modern-day Kardecists, so focused on the question of reincarnation, make a biased reading of the canonical Gospels, perceiving only the passage of *John* mentioned above, and ignoring, or not even remarking other

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[26] This is the English Standard Translation.
[27] This passage is the main theme of the chapter 4 of *L'Évangile selon le spiritisme* (4, 1-23).
[28] Just to provide one instance, the New Jerusalem Bible offers another translation: In all truth I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.
[29] The subject was also discussed by Allan Kardec, but in a very laconic way, in l'*Évangile selon le spiritisme*. See especially 22, 5.

passages that discuss other issues. After a quick and superficial reading of the Gospels, in the face of so much information, modern-day Kardecists are only able to perceive what they consider to be most important or what is directly linked or in accordance with their beliefs.

Could we apply the "selective perception" to the reading of Codex V in late antique Coptic Egypt? Can we imagine that whoever read Codex V in Late Antiquity was more concerned with subjects, themes and motifs he knew and which he was used to reading about in the hagiographies examined in the present dissertation? Could the reader of Codex V have been so entertained and absorbed by the contents that were familiar to him that he may not have even perceived other contents that were so strange and alien to his beliefs? We would answer 'yes' to all these questions. "Selective perception" is one of the possible answers to the question raised at the beginning of this section. In fact, "selective perception" could be the response to the fact that the reading of all the NHC was even possible in Christian Coptic Egypt. Whoever read these codices in late antique Egypt was more concerned with themes and motifs with which they were familiar than with speculations about the differences between the Creator and the true God, Barbello, the Seed of Seth, etc. Or perhaps, they were not concerned with these issues at all. In the face of so much information in these texts, they probably focused on what was more intelligible and meaningful to them. This was "selective perception" at work in the reading of the NHC in late antique Coptic environments.

In a certain way, "selective perception" could also explain why scholars of the first two or three decades after the discovery of the NHC were so focused on their Gnostic content,[30] being unable to perceive their similarities with other types of literature that circulated in Coptic at the same time as the production and circulation of the codices. Scholars only saw in these texts what was more tangible, intelligible and meaningful to them at that time: Gnosticism. This was "selective perception" at work again. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, the progress of the research has enabled scholars to see the similarities of NH texts with other types of literature that were circulating in Coptic in Late Antiquity. We must now be cautious

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[30] By this, we do not intend to deny that these texts – or at least some of them – were Gnostic, or had Gnostic contents or contents that could be linked to Gnosticism in one way or another; we do not intend to deny the importance of the study of these texts in their original contexts of composition either, as clearly stated in the introduction.

not to do things the other way around, that is, not to let "selective perception" disable us from seeing that these texts – that we are now seeing so clearly have much in common with late antique Coptic literature – were also writings which were mostly composed in Greek one or two centuries before and, in many cases, bear witness to marginal religious manifestations – generally referred to under the label of Gnosticism – of the first three centuries of Christianity. It seems that there is enough room in "Nag Hammadi Studies" for both approaches.

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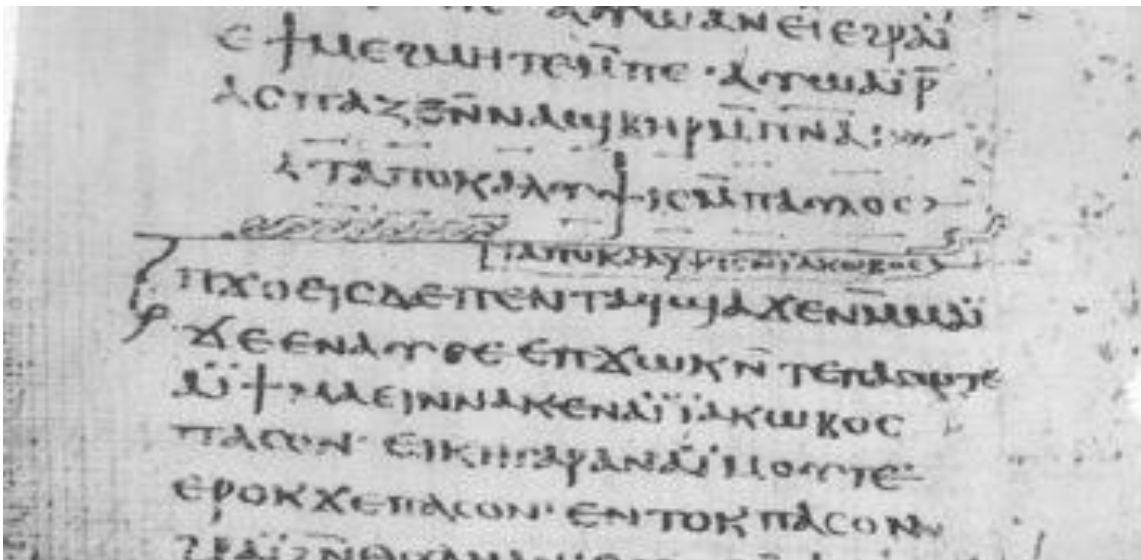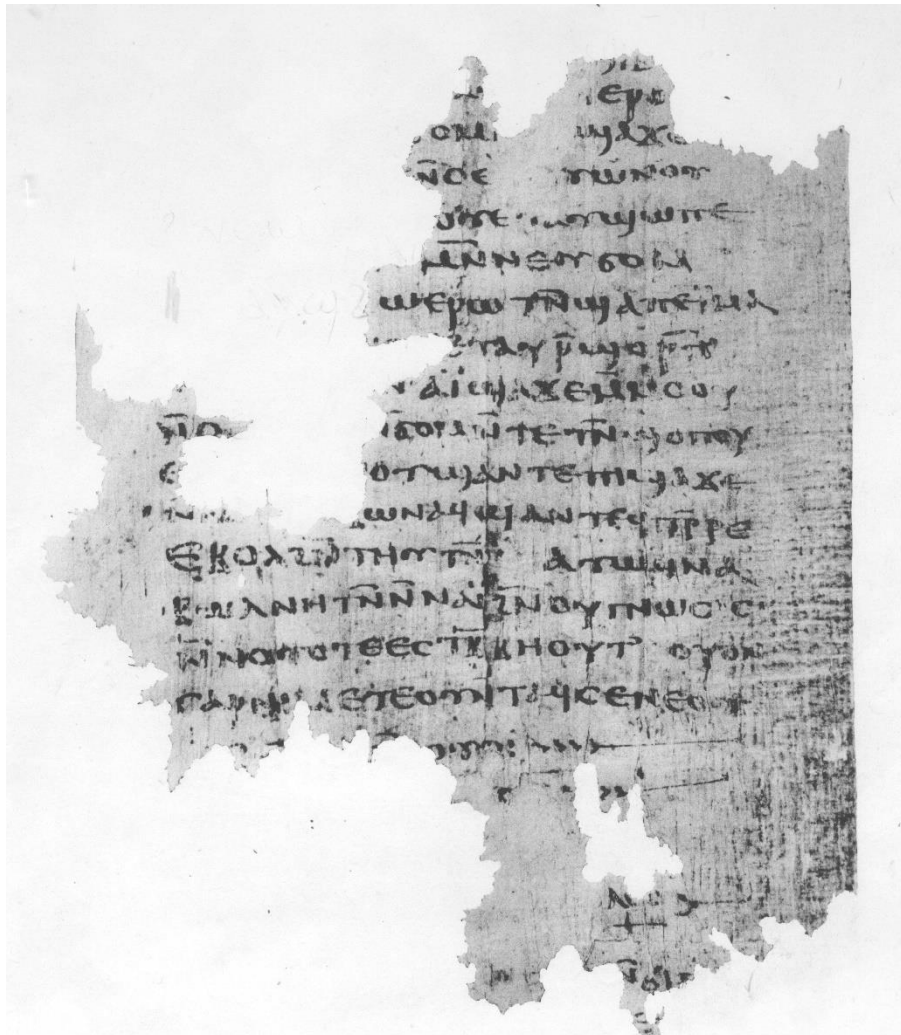# Appendices

Appendix 1:

Pictures of Codex V.
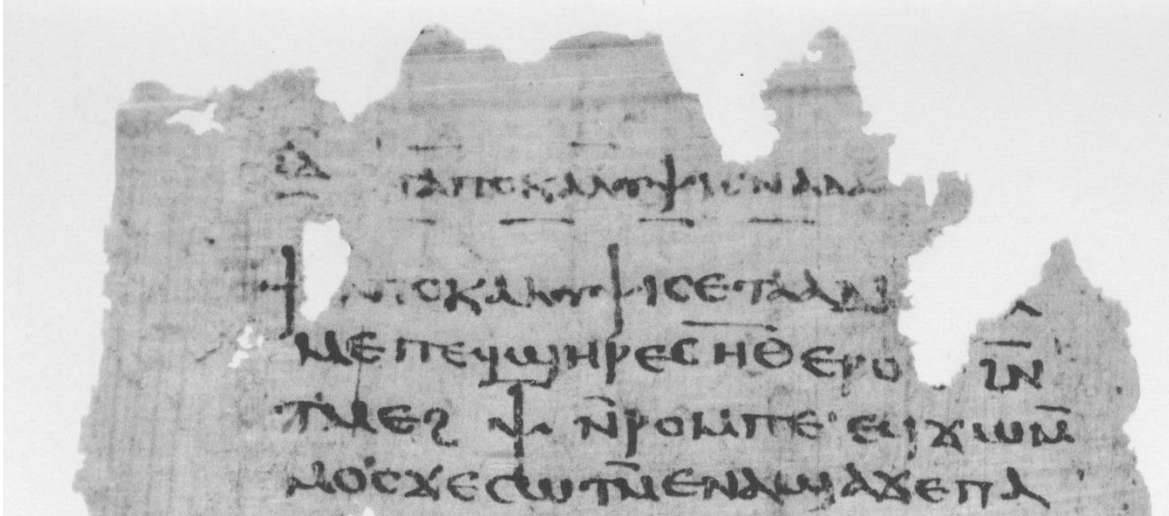
Picture 1: detail of the beginning of the *Apocalypse of Adam*, where the tittle is alsmot aligned with the pagination (NH V, 60 – Robinson, *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices: Codex V*, 74).

Picture 2: detail of the end of the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the beginning of the *First Apocalypse of James* (NH V 24 – Robinson, *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices: Codex V*, 32).
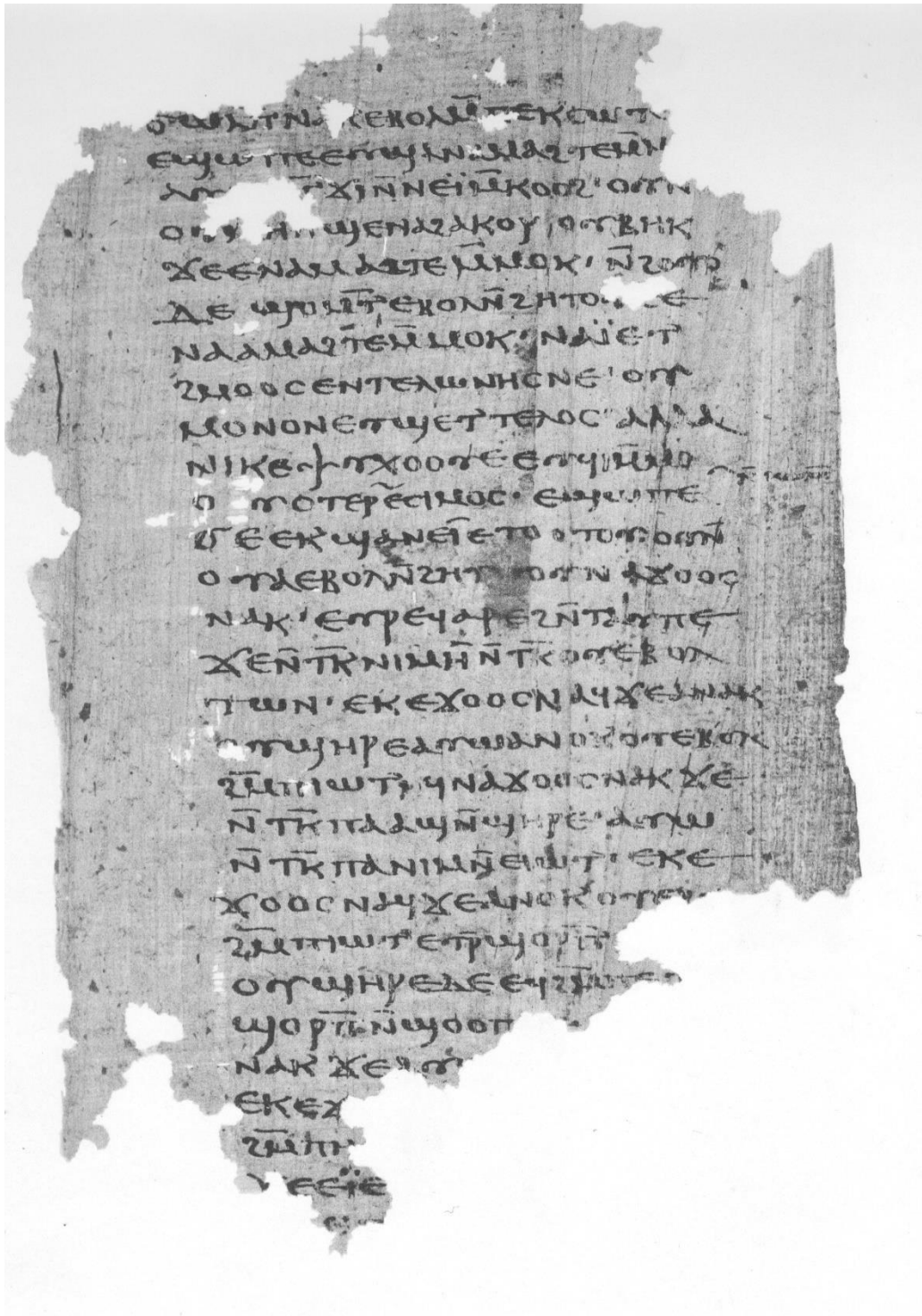
Picture 3: page 33 of Codex V, with the gloss at the right margin (Robinson, *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices: Codex V*, 41).

Picture 4: Page 17 of Codex V, the end of its first treatise and the beginning
of the *Apocalypse of Paul* (Robinson, *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag
Hammadi Codices: Codex V*, 25).

Appendix 2: Lyrics of *Les Trois Cloches*

Village au fond de la vallée,
Comme égaré, presqu'ignoré
Voici qu'en la nuit étoilée
Un nouveau-né nous est donné
Jean-François Nicot il se nomme
Il est joufflu, tendre et rosé
À l'église, beau petit homme,
Demain tu seras baptisé

Une cloche sonne, sonne
Sa voix, d'écho en écho,
Dit au monde qui s'étonne:
"C'est pour Jean-François Nicot
C'est pour accueillir une âme,
Une fleur qui s'ouvre au jour,
À peine, à peine une flamme
Encore faible qui réclame
Protection, tendresse, amour"

Village au fond de la vallée,
Loin des chemins, loin des humains
Voici qu'après dix-neuf années,
Cœur en émoi, le Jean-François
Prend pour femme la douce Elise,
Blanche comme fleur de pommier
Devant Dieu, dans la vieille église,
Ce jour, ils se sont mariés

Toutes les cloches sonnent, sonnent,
Leurs voix, d.écho en écho,
Merveilleusement couronnent
La noce à François Nicot
"Un seul cœur, une seule âme",
Dit le prêtre, "et, pour toujours,
Soyez une pure flamme
Qui s'élève et qui proclame
La grandeur de votre amour"

Village au fond de la vallée
Des jours, des nuits, le temps a fui
Voici qu'en la nuit étoilée,
Un cœur s'endort, François est mort,
Car toute chair est comme l'herbe,

Elle est comme la fleur des champs
Épis, fruits mûrs, bouquets et gerbes,
Hélas! vont en se desséchant

Une cloche sonne, sonne,
Elle chante dans le vent
Obsédante et monotone,
Elle redit aux vivants:
"Ne tremblez pas, cœurs fidèles,
Dieu vous fera signe un jour
Vous trouverez sous son aile
Avec la vie éternelle
L'éternité de l'amour".