

# The Nag Hammadi Codices and Late Antique Egypt

Edited by  
HUGO LUNDHAUG  
and LANCE JENOTT

*Studien und Texte zu  
Antike und Christentum*  
110

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**Mohr Siebeck**

Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum  
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110





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and Lance Jenott

Mohr Siebeck

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Oslo, December 2017

Hugo Lundhaug  
Lance Jenott

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## Abbreviations

ActIr	Acta Iranica
ADAI.K	Abhandlungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo, Koptische Reihe
<i>Aeg</i>	<i>Aegyptus</i>
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
<i>AJP</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>AnBoll</i>	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
ANTF	Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Textforschung
<i>APF</i>	<i>Archiv für Papyrusforschung</i>
<i>Ap. Patr.</i>	<i>Apophthegmata Patrum</i>
<i>ASAE</i>	<i>Annales du service des antiquités de l'Égypte</i>
<i>BAB.L</i>	<i>Bulletin de l'Académie royale de Belgique: Classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques</i>
<i>BASP</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists</i>
BCNH	Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi
BCNH.C	Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, section "Concordances"
BCNH.É	Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, section "Études"
BCNH.T	Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, section "Textes"
BEHE.R	Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Etudes, Sciences Religieuses
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologiarum Lovaniensium
BG	Berlin Gnostic Codex (P. Berol. 8502)
BKP	Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie
<i>BIE</i>	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut Égyptien</i>
<i>BIFAO</i>	<i>Bulletin de l'institut français d'archéologie orientale</i>
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>
<i>BO</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Orientalis</i>
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca sacra</i>
<i>BSAC</i>	<i>Bulletin de la Société d'archéologie copte</i>
<i>ByzZ</i>	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBC	Cahiers de la Bibliothèque copte
CBM	Chester Beatty Monographs
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CCR</i>	<i>Coptic Church Review</i>
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina
CH	<i>Corpus Hermeticum</i>
<i>CH</i>	<i>Church History</i>
<i>ChrEg</i>	<i>Chronique d'Égypte</i>
CM	Cursor Mundi

CNRS	Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique
ConBNT	Coniectanea biblica: New Testament Series
CRAI	<i>Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres</i>
CRINT	Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
CS	Cistercian Studies
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CSCO.S	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Subsidia
CSQ	<i>Cistercian Studies Quarterly</i>
CUFr	Collections des universités de France
ECCA	Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity
ECF	The Early Church Fathers
EPRO	Etudes préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain
ETL	<i>Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses</i>
ExpTim	<i>Expository Times</i>
FH	<i>Fragmenta Hermetica</i>
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
G <sup>1</sup> , G <sup>2</sup> , etc.	<i>First Greek Life of Pachomius, Second Greek Life of Pachomius, etc.</i>
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte
GCS.NF	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte: Neue Folge
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</i>
Hors. Reg.	<i>Regulations of Horsiesios</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
Hyp	Hypomnemata
IBAES	Internet-Beiträge zur Ägyptologie und Sudanarchäologie
ICS	<i>Illinois Classical Studies</i>
JAC	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JARCE	<i>Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JCOptS	<i>Journal of Coptic Studies</i>
JCSCS	<i>Journal for the Canadian Society of Coptic Studies</i>
JEA	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
JECS	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
JJP	<i>Journal of Juristic Papyrology</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JPT	<i>International Journal of the Platonic Tradition</i>
JRH	<i>Journal of Religious History</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LEGC	Letteratura egiziana gnostica e cristiana
LTP	<i>Laval théologique et philosophique</i>
MDAI	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts</i>
MDAI.K	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo</i>
MH	<i>Museum Helveticum</i>
MRE	Monographies Reine Elisabeth
Mus	<i>Le Muséon</i>

NHC	Nag Hammadi Codex/Codices
NHMS	Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies
NHS	Nag Hammadi Studies
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
<i>NPNF</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 2</i>
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies
<i>OCP</i>	<i>Orientalia christiana periodica</i>
OECGT	Oxford Early Christian Gospel Texts
OECS	Oxford Early Christian Studies
OGIS	Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae. Edited by Wilhelm Dittenberger
OLA	Orientalia Iovaniensia Analecta
<i>OLZ</i>	<i>Orientalistische Literaturzeitung</i>
OPIAC	Institute for Antiquity and Christianity Occasional Papers
<i>PAM</i>	<i>Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean</i>
PapyBrux	Papyrologica Bruxellensia
PapyCol	Papyrologica Coloniensia
Paral.	<i>Paralipomena</i>
PatSor	Patristica Sorbonensia
PEES.GR	Publications of the Egypt Exploration Society, Graeco Roman Memoirs
PG	Patrologia graeca. Edited by J.-P. Migne
<i>PGM</i>	<i>Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri</i>
PLB	Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava
Pr.	<i>Praecepta</i>
PTA	Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen
PTS	Patristische Texte und Studien
QSGKAM	Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums und des Mittelalters
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RGRW	Religions of the Graeco-Roman World
<i>RHPR</i>	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</i>
<i>RHR</i>	<i>Revue de l'histoire des religions</i>
<i>RSPT</i>	<i>Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques</i>
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Recherches de Science Religieuse</i>
<i>R&amp;T</i>	<i>Religion and Theology</i>
S <sup>1</sup> , S <sup>2</sup> , etc.	<i>First Sahidic Life of Pachomius, Second Sahidic Life of Pachomius, etc.</i>
SAA	Studia Antiqua Australiensia
SAC	Studies in Antiquity and Christianity
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBo	Recension of the <i>Life of Pachomius</i> represented by the Bo, Av, S <sup>4</sup> , S <sup>5</sup> , S <sup>6</sup> , S <sup>7</sup> , etc. (compiled and translated by Armand Veilleux, <i>Pachomian Koinonia</i> , vol. 1)
SC	Sources chrétiennes
SGM	Sources gnostiques et manichéennes
SH	<i>Stobaei Hermetica</i>
SHR	Studies in the History of Religions (supplements to <i>Numen</i> )
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series

SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and Its World
SPNPT	Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition
STAC	Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum / Studies and Texts in Antiquity and Christianity
StPatr	Studia Patristica
TC	<i>TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism</i>
Theoph	Theophaneia
TLZ	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
TS	<i>Theological Studies</i>
TUGAL	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
TVOA	Testi del Vicino Oriente antico
TynBul	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
VC	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
WGRV	Writings from the Greco-Roman World
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
YCS	<i>Yale Classical Studies</i>
ZAC	<i>Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum</i>
ZÄSA	<i>Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde</i>
ZDMG	<i>Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

## Introduction: The Nag Hammadi Codices in Context

HUGO LUNDHAUG AND LANCE JENOTT

Somewhere in Upper Egypt in the fourth and fifth centuries CE someone manufactured and read the ancient papyrus books that are now known as the Nag Hammadi Codices. They are rather basic, mostly single-quire,<sup>1</sup> codices, inscribed with texts in Coptic, and covered with protective leather bindings stiffened with cartonnage created by bits and pieces of used papyrus pasted together. Although there is sporadic decoration to be found both within some of the books and on one of the leather covers,<sup>2</sup> they have a distinctly utilitarian look. They were clearly made to be read, not to be put on display. In order to understand who read them, and why, however, it is necessary to study them in the context of the religious and literary culture of late antique Egypt. Yet since their discovery in 1945 most research on these enigmatic manuscripts has been directed elsewhere.

The bulk of scholarship on the Nag Hammadi corpus has focused on these texts as examples of “Gnosticism,” in the context of the diversity of Christianity in the second and third centuries. From this perspective, they have been interpreted in light of a range of hypothetical contexts of authorship distributed across the Roman world, from Rome to Edessa, Antioch, and Alexandria, to mention some of the most popular locations.

Less attention has been paid to the Nag Hammadi Codices’ specifically Egyptian context and a reading of the texts as part of Egyptian Christianity at the time when the surviving manuscripts were used, in the fourth and fifth centuries. The contributions in the present volume aim toward remedying this situation by studying the Nag Hammadi Codices, and their texts, in light of the time and place where they were manufactured and read. Thus the following chapters focus on the texts as they appear in extant manuscripts rather than on hypothetical originals, in the Coptic language rather than in Greek, on the fourth and fifth centuries rather than the second and third, on Egypt, and especially Upper Egypt, rather than the

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<sup>1</sup> One exception being Nag Hammadi Codex I, which has three quires of unequal length.

<sup>2</sup> There is decoration on the cover of Codex II.

rest of the Roman world.<sup>3</sup> This approach, which places the producers and users of the manuscripts in focus, also entails an emphasis on monasticism, and on monastic literary culture and manuscript culture in particular. In short, this book participates in a significant turn towards the concrete material reality of these fascinating early Christian texts and the manuscripts that contain them.<sup>4</sup>

In recent years a driving force behind this turn in scholarly perspective has been the research project New Contexts for Old Texts: Unorthodox Texts and Monastic Manuscript Culture in Fourth- and Fifth-Century Egypt (NEWCONT) at the University of Oslo, a project generously supported by a grant from the European Research Council.<sup>5</sup> The goal of the project has been to analyze the production, use, and contents of the Nag Hammadi Codices and similar Coptic manuscripts in the context of the early monastic movement in Egypt.<sup>6</sup> The contributors to this volume consist of members of the NEWCONT project and collaborators who have contributed to the project through seminars, conferences, and scholarly correspondence. Most of the contributions to the present volume were first presented at the NEWCONT conference entitled “The Nag Hammadi Codices in the Context of Fourth- and Fifth-Century Christianity in Egypt,” held at the University of Oslo 16–17 December, 2013.

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<sup>3</sup> This approach is much inspired by the recommendations of 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. John D. Turner and Anne McGuire; NHMS 44; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 34–43; and Tito Orlandi, “Nag Hammadi Texts and the Coptic Literature,” in *Colloque international “l’Évangile selon Thomas et les textes de Nag Hammadi”: Québec, 29–31 mai 2003* (ed. Louis Painchaud and Paul-Hubert Poirier; BCNH.É 8; Québec: Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 2007), 323–34.

<sup>4</sup> Many of the contributions in the present volume can be said to employ a methodology inspired by the so-called New Philology. On the history of New Philology and examples of its application to early Jewish and Christian manuscripts, including the Nag Hammadi Codices, see Liv Ingeborg Lied and Hugo Lundhaug, eds., *Snapshots of Evolving Traditions: Jewish and Christian Manuscript Culture, Textual Fluidity, and New Philology* (TUGAL 175; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> Funded by the European Research Council (ERC) through a Starting Independent Researcher Grant (Starting Grant) under the European Community’s Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007–2013) / ERC Grant agreement no 283741. The grant was awarded to Hugo Lundhaug in 2011.

<sup>6</sup> A representative example of this approach, and a substantial product of the NEWCONT-project, is constituted by the editors’ monograph *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices* (STAC 97; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015). For an up-to-date list of the project’s publications and information regarding its members and activities, see <http://www.tf.uio.no/english/research/projects/newcont/>.

The editors have organized the volume into four sections to highlight special themes: I. The Monastic Life; II. Egyptian Christianity and its Literature; III. Religious Diversity in Egypt; and IV. Scribes and Manuscripts.

The chapters in Part I, The Monastic Life, focus especially on how the Nag Hammadi Codices and their texts supported those who sought transformation in the ascetic life and the monastic communities taking shape from the fourth century onward. The first chapter, by Jon Dechow, “The Nag Hammadi Milieu: An Assessment in the Light of the Origenist Controversies,” has a unique history of its own, as it publishes for the first time a paper he presented in 1982 at the AAR Western Region Annual Meeting, and which has often been cited in scholarship on the Upper Egyptian monastic environment of the codices. Dechow situates the codices within Pachomian monasticism and the theological controversies over the legacy of Origen that erupted toward the end of the fourth century. Through a detailed analysis of evidence from Pachomian sources, he illustrates the economic life of Pachomian monasteries and the logistics necessary for their operations. This picture, in turn, supports the view that the more economically-oriented cartonnage documents from the covers of the codices stem from the practical side of monastery life. In an extended appendix to the original paper, Dechow discusses how the Nag Hammadi Codices could have been understood within Christian orthodoxy of the fourth and fifth centuries before more rigid definitions of orthodoxy were formulated.

The next chapter, by James Goehring, “The Material Encoding of Early Christian Division: Nag Hammadi Codex VII and the Ascetic Milieu in Upper Egypt,” discusses how Codex VII fits into the broader geographical, social, and religious environment of late fourth-century Egypt, which witnessed drastic development, conflict, and consolidation within the monastic movement. Through an intertextual reading of the five tractates in Codex VII, Goehring highlights the unique spiritual identity that the codex as a whole encourages readers to adopt. The design of Codex VII, Goehring suggests, reflects a spiritually-oriented minority group in conflict with clerical authorities, especially over issues of Christology and bodily resurrection.

Next, the chapter by Melissa Harl Sellew, “Reading Jesus in the Desert: The *Gospel of Thomas* Meets the *Apophthegmata Patrum*,” explores how ascetics in late antique Egypt would have found the teachings in the *Gospel of Thomas* (NHC II,2) to be beneficial in their quest for self-transformation. Sellew points to a number of shared themes between the Greek collections of the Sayings of the Desert Fathers (*Apophthegmata Patrum*) and the Coptic *Gospel of Thomas*, including the ancient genre of *chreiai*, which was designed to edify and instruct readers through pithy sayings and short stories unbound to any particular framing narrative.



Readers would have found in the *Gospel of Thomas*, as in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, guidance for discovering the authentic self, for making ethical progress, and for living the interior life of the *monachos*.

The final chapter in Part I, by Blossom Stefaniw, “Hegemony and Homecoming in the Ascetic Imagination: Sextus, Silvanus, and Monastic Instruction in Egypt,” analyzes the *Sentences of Sextus* (NHC XII,1) and the *Teachings of Silvanus* (NHC VII,4) from the perspective of monastic textuality, i.e., the kind of instructional texts read by monks, comparable to the guiding literature produced by figures such as Evagrius Ponticus and Antony (as he appears in his Letters). Such books guided ascetics on the path to master bodily passions and achieve victory over the adverse forces of distracting, troubling thoughts. This path was understood by monks as leading to the ultimate achievement of a masculinity that was characterized by total domination of one’s self. Through progressive detachment from this world, the ascetic sojourner travels the road toward a spiritual homecoming with God.

Part II of the volume, Egyptian Christianity and its Literature, presents three case studies which show how texts and traditions in the Nag Hammadi Codices display continuities in contemporary and later Egyptian Literature. The chapter by Dylan Burns, “Magical, Coptic, Christian: The Great Angel Eleleth and the ‘Four Luminaries’ in Egyptian Literature of the First Millennium CE,” traces lore surrounding angelic figures well-known from Nag Hammadi texts within the much wider world of Egyptian magical spells, amulets, and homilies. Burns demonstrates that these angels took on a life of their own far beyond Nag Hammadi, and suggests that it may have been the popularity and power of such angels that, in part, attracted the interests of those who owned the Codices in the first place. The Four Luminaries, traditionally associated with Gnostic angelology, are thus revealed as important figures within the traditions and ritual practices of Egyptian Christianity.

Next, Julio Cesar Dias Chaves, in “From the *Apocalypse of Paul* to the Coptic Epic Passions: Greeting Paul and the Martyrs in Heaven,” examines common motifs shared between the *Apocalypse of Paul* (NHC V,2) and other Coptic stories of heavenly ascent, especially martyr hagiographies with narratives of the hero’s post-passion entrance to heaven. Chaves pays special attention to the motif of greetings in these narratives, according to which the hero greets, or is greeted by, the heavenly saints upon arrival. According to Chaves, the greeting-motif is far less commonly found in older Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature, but is quite common in Coptic ascents. The *Apocalypse of Paul* thus reflects ascent traditions common to the Coptic literature of its manuscript context and beyond, which would have been recognizable and intelligible to Coptic readers. In-

deed, Chaves suggests the potentially controversial theology of the text, with an assumed subordinate, even adversarial creator-god, may have been less important to Coptic readers than its account of the apostle Paul's journey to heaven and his meeting with the saints.

The final chapter of Part II, by Ulla Tervahauta, "The Soul Flees to Her Treasure where Her Mind Is: Scriptural Allusions in the *Authentikos Logos*," examines how biblical imagery (e.g., the Wheat and the Chaff, and the Treasure of the Heart) are adapted and intertwined into the unique narrative of the soul's turbulent experience in the world and her return to her heavenly home as narrated in the *Authentikos Logos* (NHC VI,3). Tervahauta provides a detailed study of four scriptural allusions in this treatise, with illuminating discussion of how the same images were interpreted by other early Christian authors, including Clement, Origen, and Didymus the Blind, whose writings provided important inspiration for later Egyptian thinkers.

Part III, Religious Diversity in Egypt, features studies of potential interaction between Egyptian Christians and other religious traditions in late antique Egypt. Christian Bull, in "Hermes between Pagans and Christians: The Nag Hammadi Hermetica in Context," investigates how the Hermetic tractates in Nag Hammadi Codex VI might have been understood by the Christians who produced and read the codex. Bull first treats the evidence for Hermetic cult practices in fourth-century Egypt, especially in Upper Egypt, contemporary with and in proximity to the Nag Hammadi Codices; next, he discusses how Christians in late antiquity interpreted Hermetic texts and incorporated them into their theological works; and finally, he offers suggestions for how and why the Hermetic treatises in Codex VI were included in that collection to serve the interests of Christian monks.

The next chapter, by René Falkenberg, "What Has Nag Hammadi to Do with Medinet Madi? The Case of *Eugnostos* and Manichaeism," explores the possibility of a literary relationship between Manichaean texts from Upper Egypt and the treatise *Eugnostos* as preserved in two copies from Nag Hammadi (NHC III,3 and V,1) and in a rewritten version entitled the *Wisdom of Jesus Christ* (NHC III,4 and Berlin 8502,3). Previous studies have suggested that Nag Hammadi texts may have influenced Manichaean thought, based on the assumption that the original versions predate Manichaeism. Falkenberg turns the relationship around, and from the perspective of New Philology, argues that Manichaean theology may have influenced the rewriting of Christian texts such as *Eugnostos*.

The final chapter of Part III, by Paula Tutty, "Books of the Dead or Books with the Dead? Interpreting Book Depositions in Late Antique Egypt," challenges the suggestion that certain Christian books, including the Nag Hammadi Codices, were discovered as grave goods and therefore

might be interpreted as Christian ‘Books of the Dead’ for aiding the soul’s journey to the afterlife. Tutty provides a detailed discussion of the Egyptian Book of the Dead, its history, contents, function, variety of forms, and development, and its eventual demise prior to the Christian period. She critically examines the evidence for Christian books found in graves, and reminds readers that the exact setting in which the Nag Hammadi Codices were buried remains unknown.

Part IV, *Scribes and Manuscripts*, features studies of the Nag Hammadi texts and other Egyptian manuscripts that focus on issues of codicology, scribal practices, and paleography. Hugo Lundhaug, in “The Dishna Papers and the Nag Hammadi Codices: The Remains of a Single Monastic Library?” explores the possibility that the Nag Hammadi Codices and the Dishna Papers may stem from the Pachomian monastic federation. After reviewing the ongoing scholarly debate over which texts belong to the Dishna discovery, Lundhaug provides a detailed comparison of the two manuscript collections, with attention to codicology, paleography, scribal practices, languages, dialects, dating, and doctrinal contents. He responds to alternative theories which have highlighted the differences between the two collections, and ultimately concludes that the diversity of readings found in both groups reflects what one should expect from monasteries such as those of the Pachomians.

The next chapter, by Louis Painchaud, “The Production and Destination of the Nag Hammadi Codices,” argues against the notion that the Nag Hammadi Codices constitute a single library and focuses instead on the identifiable sub-collections, each of which had its own history prior to being united with the others (perhaps only at the time of burial). Through an analysis of duplicate tractates within the overall collection, scribal notes, paleography, dialects, book-binding styles, and cartonnage documents, Painchaud distinguishes between the producers of the various sub-collections and their destinations – that is, the people for whom they were copied.

Next, Michael Williams and David Coblenz, in “A Reexamination of the Articulation Marks in Nag Hammadi Codices II and XIII,” present a statistical analysis of apostrophe marks in NHCs II and XIII, casting new light on old questions concerning how many scribes worked on the codices, the nature of their copying habits, and the relationship of the extant copies to their exemplars. Their analysis suggests that variation in orthographic features found among the seven tractates of Codex II is the result of the scribes’ adhering closely to different exemplars wherein such markings were already present. Furthermore, they find that the noticeable variation in scribal styles as well as usage of articulation marks suggests a

group of scribes who, despite a similar training, also maintained their own personal styles.

The volume's final chapter, by Christian Askeland, "Dating Early Greek and Coptic Literary Hands," critically evaluates the scholarly practice of dating manuscripts by paleography and reassesses the time periods in which many of them, biblical and otherwise, may have been produced. Through a preliminary examination of manuscripts that can be dated on grounds other than paleography, he challenges the widely accepted theory that book-hands developed linearly over time, with a rise, peak, and decline. Other features relevant for dating manuscripts are discussed, such as dialects, djinkim points, material (papyrus, parchment, paper), radiometrics, codicology, and provenance. Askeland ultimately cautions readers that many manuscripts assigned by paleography to dates as early as the fourth and fifth centuries may actually come from later periods, even the eighth and ninth centuries.

In summary, the chapters in this volume contribute to the recent trend in scholarship on the Nag Hammadi Codices that seeks to integrate them into the history of Christianity in Egypt, to understand them as part of Egyptian Christianity's literature, practices, controversies, and cultural productions. It is hoped that the breadth of topics discussed, the sources examined, and the methods used, will inspire further research in this direction.

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## Part I

### The Monastic Life



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