

**Projeto de Estudos Judaico-Helenísticos - PEJ**

Coordenador: Prof. Vicente Dobroruka

Universidade de Brasília  
IHD - Dpto. de História  
Brasília -DF- 70910-900

[www.pej-unb.org](http://www.pej-unb.org)

**"SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON THE COMPILATION OF NAG  
HAMMADI CODEX V AND 4TH CENTURY COPTIC  
LITERATURE"**

**THE (FIRST) APOCALYPSE OF JAMES FROM CODEX TCHACOS: UNIVERSIDADE DO  
CAIRO, 28 DE OUTUBRO - 04 DE NOVEMBRO 2007**

**"NAG HAMMADI AND GNOSTICISM NETWORK 2007"**

Julio César Chaves

Doutorando em Teologia e Ciências da Religião / Université

Laval

Prof.Dr. Louis Painchaud



Resumo / abstract



## Some considerations on the compilation of Nag Hammadi *Codex V* and 4th century Coptic literature

Lately, a call has been made by certain early Christian scholars: to study the Nag Hammadi Library as a product of the 4<sup>th</sup> century Coptic literature<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, since its discovery, most of the studies on the Nag Hammadi Library were consecrated to the texts' original context of composition in Greek. Almost nothing was done concerning the 4<sup>th</sup> century Coptic context of compilation of the Nag Hammadi Library<sup>2</sup>. My PhD, research is somehow a partial response to this call. I study Nag Hammadi *codex V* in its context of compilation, i.e., the 4<sup>th</sup> century Coptic Egypt. In what follows, I will speak of the main points of my research until now, pointing out some of the precedent studies that are linked to my subject.

Other scholars have already gone in such direction, trying to understand the Nag Hammadi library in the large spectrum of Coptic literature. The discussion began with the analysis of the material aspect of the Nag Hammadi codices; the initial analyses led

---

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Stephen Emmel. "Religious tradition, textual transmission, and the Nag Hammadi codices" in: John D. Turner and Anne McGuire. *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years*. Leiden / New York: Brill, 1997: 34-43; and Jacques van der Vliet. "The Coptic Gnostic Texts as Christian apocryphal literature" in: Stephen Emmel et al. *Ägypten und Nubien in spätantiker und christlicher Zeit. Akten des 6. Internationalen Koptologenkongresses Münster*, vol. 2: *Sprache, Schrifttum und Gedankenwelt. Sprachen und Kulturen des Christlichen Orients* 6, 2. Berlin: Wiesbaden, 1999 e Alberto Camplani. "Sulla Trasmissione di Testi Gnostici in Copto" in: *L'Egito cristiano - Aspetti e problemi in età tardo-antica*. Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 56. Roma: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Though, some important studies do exist and they will be briefly discussed here; see, for example John W.B. Barns. "Greek and Coptic Papyri from the covers of the Nag Hammadi codices – a Preliminary Report" in: Martin Krause (ed.). *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honour of Pahor Labib*. Leiden: Brill, 1975; Torgny Säve-Söderbergh,. "Holy Scriptures or apologetic documentation? The *Sitz im Leben* of the Nag Hammadi Library" in: Jacques É. Ménard. *Les Textes de Nag Hammadi*. Nag Hammadi Studies VII. Leiden: Brill, 1975; Charles W. Hedrick. "Gnostic proclivities in the Greek *Life of Pachomius* and the *Sitz im Leben* of the Nag Hammadi Library" in: *Novum Testamentum*, XXII, 1980; Clemens Scholten. "Die Nag-Hammadi-Texte als Buchbesitz der Pachomianer" in: *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 31, 1988; Aleksandr Khosroyev. *Die Bibliothek von Nag Hammadi - Einige Probleme des Christentums in Ägypten während der ersten Jahrhunderte*. Arbeiten zum spätantiken und koptischen Ägypten. Altenberge: Oros Verlag, 1995; Michael A. Williams. "Interpreting the Nag Hammadi Library as 'Collection(s)' in the history of 'Gnosticism'" in: Louis Painchaud e Anne Pasquier. *Les textes de Nag Hammadi et le problème de leur classification*. Québec, Louvain, Paris: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, Peeters, 1995; Louis Painchaud and Michael Kaler. "From the *Prayer of the Apostle Paul* to the *Three Steles of Seth*: Codices I, XI and VII from Nag Hammadi Viewed as a Collection" in: *Vigiliae Christianae* 61, 2007.



to the possibility of a Pachomian origin for our codices. James Robinson<sup>3</sup>, for example, suggested that the Nag Hammadi codices may have been assembled by gnostic Christians who dwelled at the Pachomian monasteries before the increasing orthodox pressure have expelled them out. Once those writings were no longer accepted in the communities, they had to bury them in a safe place; according to Robinson, the state of the books when they were found supports the theory that they were buried to be kept safe, not to be destroyed.

Barns<sup>4</sup>, in a study on the Coptic and Greek papyri from the covers of the Nag Hammadi codices, accepted somehow Robinson's suggestion, also emphasizing the fact that the books were not simply destroyed. He intended to supply further evidence for a correlation between the Nag Hammadi codices and the Pachomian communities assuming as a support the analysis and verification of the Greek and Coptic papyri from the covers of our books. He claims that most of the contents of certain codices (I, VII and VIII) "indicate a monastic background"<sup>5</sup>. He goes further affirming that

*Since it is hardly conceivable that there could have been more than one orthodox monastic organization simultaneously operating in the same place, we should be justified in concluding, even without further evidence, that the Nag Hammadi material came from a Pachomian monastery<sup>6</sup>.*

However, a rapid reading of the *Life of Pachomius* provides enough basis to believe that there were other monastic communities operating near the Pachomian monasteries<sup>7</sup>. Barns statement will also be questioned by Shelton, as we will see later.

Also taking in consideration Robinson's suggestion, Säve-Söderbergh<sup>8</sup> states that it would be improbable that the Pachomian communities would have accepted a gnostic group among them, based on the treatment they received according to the *Lifes of Saint Pachomius*<sup>9</sup>. He proposes that the Nag Hammadi codices could be a heresiologist

---

<sup>3</sup> Jim 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.

<sup>4</sup> Barns, op.cit. p.16.

<sup>5</sup> Idem, p.12.

<sup>6</sup> Idem, p.13.

<sup>7</sup> See Hedrick, op.cit. and James Goehring. "Monastic Diversity and Ideological Boundaries in Fourth-Century Christian Egypt". *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 5.1, 1997.

<sup>8</sup> Säve-Söderbergh, op.cit.

<sup>9</sup> Id.ibid.



collection used by monks in their contest against gnostics; once the heretic trouble was finished, they buried the codices<sup>10</sup>. Against this theory, we may once again emphasize the diverse character of Pachomian monasteries, an element that was pointed out by other scholars after Säve-Söderbergh<sup>11</sup>.

Charles Hedrick<sup>12</sup>, considering Robinson's and Barns' suggestions, and questioning Säve-Söderbergh's, tries to establish some connections between the *Greek Life of Pachomius* and the *Sitz im Leben* of the Nag Hammadi Library. Against Säve-Söderbergh's statement, Hedrick claims that the *Lifes* are a "product of the later community reflecting on the life and work of their founder, who is described by them in bigger-than-life proportions"<sup>13</sup>. Thus, the *Lifes* do not provide us with an accurate record on Pachomius and his first communities, but rather an account made by late disciples who were more concerned with hagiographic than historical elements<sup>14</sup>.

Hedrick tries to point out "proclivities indicating the presence of a gnostic tradition in the Pachomian monastic system as that system is reflected in the *Greek Life of Pachomius*"<sup>15</sup>. Also according to Hedrick, "a Christian gnostic faction would probably not have been, on the basis of their gnostic proclivities, arbitrarily excluded from the monasteries, but would probably have found a tolerant environment"<sup>16</sup>. Thus, Hedrick suggests that the Nag Hammadi codices may have been used for spiritual improvement, and not with heresiological purposes. Hedrick illustrates some possible gnostic proclivities in the *Greek Life of Pachomius*; however, it is interesting that he does not extend his research to the Coptic versions of the text in question, above all, the *Bohairic Life of Pachomius*, which, as we will see, have much in common with *Codex V* on the thematic issues.

In the introduction of the Greek and Coptic Papyri from the cartonnage covers of the Nag Hammadi codices, John Shelton<sup>17</sup> argues against the idea of an assured Pachomian provenance for the books in question. He affirms that the theory of the Pachomian background "requires new consideration", since, many of the cover

---

<sup>10</sup> Idem, pp.11-12.

<sup>11</sup> Hedrick, op.cit and Goehring,op.cit.

<sup>12</sup> Hedrick, op.cit.

<sup>13</sup> Idem, p.79. On this matter, see also Goehring, op.cit.

<sup>14</sup> Id.ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Hedrick, op.cit. p.80.

<sup>16</sup> Id.ibid.

<sup>17</sup> John W.B. Browne et al. (eds.). *Nag Hammadi Codices Greek and Coptic Papyri from the Cartonnage Covers*. Leiden: Brill, 1981.



fragments “are purely secular” and some others that are not, may not necessarily be linked to Pachomian monasticism, but rather to regular Christians or some other monastic community<sup>18</sup>. He concludes saying that on the basis of place names cited in the cover’s fragments, at least codices I, V, VII and IX were “bound using material from the general neighbourhood of the place where the codices were found”, but “there are no certain traces of classical Pachomian monasticism in the cartonnage”<sup>19</sup>.

In the specific case of *codex V*, based on the evidence provided by the cartonnage<sup>20</sup>, one may affirm that they were fabricated in Upper Egypt, in the region known as Thebaid, place of several Pachomian monasteries, including the first one, Tabennesi. Shelton also suggests that those fragments can be dated in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century<sup>21</sup>. Of course, none of these factors is a conclusive evidence for a Pachomian provenance for *codex V*.

Armand Veilleux, in a couple of articles<sup>22</sup>, also questioned the assumption that the Nag Hammadi codices would belong to Pachomian monks. Similarly to Shelton, Veilleux believes that the Pachomian provenience for the Nag Hammadi codices is not excluded, however, there is no positive evidence for such a statement<sup>23</sup>. Veilleux also asks why the Nag Hammadi codices were assembled; and at this point he also questions what he considers to be another equivocated assumption of research: the 367 Athanasian festal letter as the reason for the Nag Hammadi codices burial<sup>24</sup>.

Indeed, the postulation of a Pachomian or even monastic provenience for the Nag Hammadi Library is far from being proved, but it remains as a plausible possibility. One may observe, however, that the many differences in the constructions of the Nag

---

<sup>18</sup> See Shelton’s argumentation in pp.1-11, in: Barns et al..

<sup>19</sup> Idem, p.11.

<sup>20</sup> Certain portions of some papyri cartonnage fragments in *codex V* were “concerned with revenues from or for both the Upper and the Lower Thebaid”. See Barns et al., op.cit. pp.25-38.

<sup>21</sup> Idem, p.36.

<sup>22</sup> Armand Veilleux. “Monachisme et gnose. Première partie: le cénobitisme pachômien et la bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi” in: *Laval théologique et philosophique*. 40, 3, 1984; and “Monachisme et gnose. Deuxième partie: contacts littéraires et doctrinaux entre monachisme et gnose” in: *Laval théologique et philosophique*. 41, 1, 1985.

<sup>23</sup> On the Pachomian provenance for the Nag Hammadi textes, he also affirms that “Depuis la publication des premiers résultats provisoires de Barns la plupart des chercheurs prennent cette conclusion pour définitivement acquise, même si d’autres, en particulier J.C. Shelton, réévaluant les arguments de Barns, on clairement démontré que les choses étaient loin d’être aussi évidentes” (cf. Veilleux, op.cit. pp.283-284).

<sup>24</sup> Idem, pp.287-293. “[...] 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 prouvée”. See also Jon F. Dechow. “The Nag Hammadi milieu: an assessment in the light of the Origenist controversies”. Aar Western Region, Annual Meeting, Stanford University, 26th March, 1982.



Hammadi codices<sup>25</sup>, as well as the dialect variations, point to a diverse origin for our books. If they originate from different places, being copied by several scribes, it would not be absurd to think that they may have been used with different purposes. Thus, the study of each particular codex as a possible independent literary corpus may take place in research for now on, and that is what my research intend to do in regard to *codex V*.

Williams<sup>26</sup> suggested that it would be more accurate to consider the Nag Hammadi Library as a “collection of collections”, rather than a monolithic and cohesive collection; the collection as a whole was probably compiled from smaller subgroups<sup>27</sup>. Indeed, the analysis of each codex in particular shows that there is a scribal concern and a rational arrangement of texts in almost every *codex*<sup>28</sup>.

*Codex V* is somehow, a good example that illustrates the validity of Williams’s statement. At a first sight, he contains, concerning doctrinal elements, a gnostic text whose doctrine classification is not clearly established (*Eugnostos*)<sup>29</sup>, a Christian apocalypse that seems to be valentinian (*Apocalypse of Paul*)<sup>30</sup>, a revelation dialogue with valentinian traces (*First Apocalypse of James*)<sup>31</sup>, another revelation dialogue whose gnostic character is not clear (*Second Apocalypse of James*)<sup>32</sup> and finally a sethian apocalypse (*Apocalypse of Adam*)<sup>33</sup>. This doctrinal diversity, however, does not avoid the existence of a didactical unity, and, according to Morard,

*La composition du Codex V répond à une visée pédagogique délibérée : il se présente comme 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*

---

<sup>25</sup> Jim Robinson. “The construction of the Nag Hammadi codices” in: Martin Krause. *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts*. Leiden: Brill, 1975.

<sup>26</sup> Williams, op.cit.; see also Jim Robinson. *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices - Introduction*. Leiden: Brill, 1984.

<sup>27</sup> Idem, p.3.

<sup>28</sup> Id.ibid.

<sup>29</sup> For the discussion on the gnostic character of *Eugnostos*, see Anne Pasquier. *Eugnoste - lettre sur le Dieu transcendant*. Québec / Louvain / Paris / Dudley : Les Presses de l’Université Laval, Peeters, 2000. See also Tuomas Rasimus. “Paradise reconsidered: a study of the Ophite myth and ritual and their relationship to Sethianism”. PhD. Faculté de Théologie et des Sciences Religieuses, Université Laval, Québec and the Helsinki University, Helsinki. 2006.

<sup>30</sup> See Jean M. Rosenstiehl e Michael Kaler. *L’Apocalypse de Paul*. Québec, Louvain / Paris: Les Presses de l’Université Laval, Peeters, 2005.

<sup>31</sup> See Armand Veilleux. *Les deux apocalypses de Jacques*. Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, section “textes” 17. Québec: Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 1986.

<sup>32</sup> Id.ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Françoise Morard. *L’Apocalypse d’Adam*. Québec: Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 1985.



*permettre d'entrer plus avant dans les arcanes d'un système exposé dans d'autres traités plus élaborés*<sup>34</sup>.

Morard's statement is somehow problematic because of a precise point: what does she mean by "gnostic"? By gnostic she means an adept of a heterodox sect? Or, taking in consideration the possible monastic origin of our codex, she intends to mean that her "gnostic apprentice" is nothing but a monk interested in esoteric and apocalyptic teachings? In her study, she does not develop this element. And I believe that a deep study on *codex V Sitz im Leben* must try to consider precisely who its intended audience was.

Also according to Morard, each text in *codex V* would have a function in the ensemble of this pedagogic goal. Their arrangement would equally answer to this goal: *Eugnostos* works as the codex introduction, being presented as a initiation to the knowledge on the origins, a manner to acquire the necessary to be able to return there ; subsequently, the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the *First* and the *Second Apocalypses of James* illustrate the reality of this return, i.e. the ascension to the plerome through the many celestial spheres; and finally, the *Apocalypse of Adam* closes the volume with an account on the origin's history and the proclamation of the soteriological revelation, full of eschatological features<sup>35</sup>.

Morard's theory is quite coherent, taking in consideration *codex V* revelatory goal; however, any given theory about *codex V* compilation, or any other Nag Hammadi codex, must be considered in the light of its socio-religious and cultural context, i.e. the 4<sup>th</sup> century Coptic Egypt. This statement may look simplistic and too obvious, however, research almost never deal with Nag Hammadi texts in these terms.

If we consider once again Morard's theory, we must agree that a considerable part of this didactical unity is due to the apocalyptic character of our codex. It is not hard to imagine that apocalyptic characteristics abound in a codex that is made of at least four texts with the word "apocalypse" in their titles<sup>36</sup>. According to Parrot and Williams, a

---

<sup>34</sup> Idem, p.357.

<sup>35</sup> Idem, pp.342-343.

<sup>36</sup> We may consider that at least the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the *Apocalypse of Adam* are apocalypses; *Eugnostos* and the *Apocalypses of James* are rather texts with apocalyptic elements, the first is a letter, and the other, revelatory dialogues. On the apocalyptic character of these texts, see Julio C. Chaves. "The Nag Hammadi Apocalyptic Corpus: Delimitation and Analysis". MPhil dissertation. Faculté de Théologie et Sciences des Religions. Québec: Université Laval, 2007.



common theme to the four last texts in *codex V* is the opposition between the celestial and the earthly, from where the faithful must leave to reach salvation. But Parrot believes that *Eugnostos* role in the ensemble of *codex V* is not clear, while Williams thinks that it is an excellent way to initiate the codex, since it presents a systematic vision of the divine world's structure<sup>37</sup>. The description of heaven is a quite common apocalyptic feature<sup>38</sup>.

As mentioned earlier, some thematic issues of the *Bohairic Life of Pachomius* have much in common with Nag Hammadi *Codex V*. I am referring here mostly to the apocalyptic and visionary atmosphere strongly present in both works. As already said, it is not hard to imagine that apocalyptic features abound in a codex that is made of at least four texts with the word "apocalypse" in their titles; but the same consideration may not fit automatically on the *Bohairic Life of Pachomius*. However, a rapid reading of the writing in question should provide enough elements to support the idea that apocalyptic and visionary features permeate the entire work. Other authors have already emphasized the fact that certain visionary elements are expressed by the clairvoyance charisma that seems to give to Pachomius and Theodore their authority<sup>39</sup>. These visions are often full of apocalyptic clichés, such as the presence of angelic beings who work as mediators<sup>40</sup>, fantastic and shining elements<sup>41</sup> and even celestial journeys based on Scriptural extracts<sup>42</sup>. Moreover these visions are described as ecstasies in which many revelations are disclosed. The visionary's preparation and reaction to the visions also

---

<sup>37</sup> See Douglas M. Parrott. *Nag Hammadi Codices III, 3-4 and V, 1 with Papyrus Berolinenesis 8502, 3 and Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 1081*. New York : Leiden, 1991 and Williams, op.cit..

<sup>38</sup> See John J. Collins. *Apocalypse, the Morphology of a Genre*. Semeia 14, 1979. Morard also believes that the revelatory feature, or, we can say, the apocalyptic feature, plays a fundamental role in *Codex V* unity; she affirms that "une lecture globale et attentive de tout le recueil montre qu'il est centré à l'évidence sur le problème de la Révélation et de sa nécessité absolue pour parvenir au salut (cf. Morard, op.cit. p.342.).

<sup>39</sup> See Hedrick op.cit. and Louis Painchaud and Jenniffer Wees. "Connaître la différence entre les hommes mauvais et les bons: Le charisme de clairvoyance d'adam et Ève à Pachôme et Théodore" in : Hans-Gebhard Bethge et al.. *For the Children, Perfect Instruction - Studies in Honour of Hans-Martin Schenke on the Occasion of the Berliner Arbeitskreis für koptisch-gnostische Schriften's Thirtieth Year*. Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2002. Pp.139-155.

<sup>40</sup> There many examples, such as § 108 e § 155 of the *Bohairic Life*.

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, § 73 of the *Bohairic Life*.

<sup>42</sup> I am referring here to a Pachomius' otherworldly journey that in the text is clearly compared to the ascension experience in *2Corinthians*; the Scriptural passage is even quoted (cf. *Bohairic Life of Pachomius* §114).



reminds some apocalyptic clichés<sup>43</sup>; normally, Pachomius and Theodore are praying before the visions, and they react with fear and joy<sup>44</sup>.

There is no space here for a complete inventory of Pachomius and Theodore's visions, let us see, however, one example:

*Then he [Theodore] prayed again to the Lord about the leaders of the communities, asking him what he should do with them. The Lord listened to his request and made a revelation to him. An ecstasy and a vision came upon him. He saw the likeness of our father Pachomius clothed in a garment white as snow and two angels of the Lord shining brightly were with him. When he saw them, he was afraid to approach him. But the angels made a sign to him to approach him [...] One of the angels took hold of the robe which clothed our father Pachomius and showed it off. When he had done this, he made a sign as if to say to him: 'You see the kind of garment he is wearing!' indicating by this that he is in glory like one of the saints [...] For the garment which he wore at the moment in the vision was like royal purple, flashing as lightning. After he had shown him such glory, he told him how to assign the great ones of the communities, naming by name each one and the community which he was to be assigned (Bohairic Life of Pachomius § 144)<sup>45</sup>.*

This passage, along with the cited apocalyptic elements demonstrate what I have called the “thematic issues” that are common between *codex V* and the *Bohairic Life of Pachomius*. Both works were compiled in the Coptic 4th Century. The great importance accorded to apocalyptic in the *Bohairic Life of Pachomius* illustrates that *codex V*, with its “apocalyptic” treatises would be well placed in the context of 4<sup>th</sup> century Coptic literature. Some authors have already underlined the Coptic taste for the fantastic<sup>46</sup>, well expressed in apocalyptic literature. What is most interesting is the fact that the *Greek Life of Pachomius* is much less “apocalyptic” than the *Bohairic Life*; as once affirmed by Frank Hallock, concerning Christian apocrypha, “the Greeks had no taste for the superabundant wonders and miracles that one finds everywhere among the Copts in this

---

<sup>43</sup> On the preparation and reaction to visionary experiences, see Vicente Dobroruka. “Aspects of late Second Temple Jewish apocalyptic: a cross-cultural comparison”. DPhil thesis. Theology Faculty, University of Oxford, 2005.

<sup>44</sup> See, for example, § 184 of the *Bohairic Life*. These elements also appear in many Nag Hammadi texts; see Chaves, op.cit. 2007.

<sup>45</sup> Veilleux's translation (cf. Armand Veilleux. *Pachomian Koinonia I - The Life of Saint Pachomius and his Disciples*. Cistercian Studies Series 45. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1980. Pp. 204-205).

<sup>46</sup> Frank H. Hallock. “Coptic Apocrypha” in: *Journal of Biblical Literature* 52, 1933.



type of writing”<sup>47</sup>. And this is reflected in the differences between the *Greek* and the *Bohairic Life of Pachomius*<sup>48</sup>.

There is no place here for a complete inventory of apocalyptic elements that are presented in the *Bohairic Life* but missing in the *Greek Life*. We can, however, establish two types of differentiations. Firstly, the *Bohairic* paragraphs that tell an episode that contain some kind of apocalyptic element, such as the mentioned above, but have no parallel in the *Greek Life*<sup>49</sup>. The second type of differentiation is made by paragraphs with apocalyptic elements in the *Bohairic Life* that are paralleled in the *Greek Life*, but those parallels present no apocalyptic features<sup>50</sup>. Consequently, one can remark that thematically, the *Bohairic Life* is much closer to *codex V* apocalyptic features than the *Greek Life*.

This thematic proximity, however, must be deeply analysed; that means that this analysis should not stay on the thematic grounds, but it should go further, investigating literary contacts and parallels, the usage of similar and even equal words and expressions to communicate similar events and experiences and the same treatment of Scriptural topics and phrases.

Recently, Louis Painchaud and Jennifer Wees<sup>51</sup> performed a similar work on the *Treatise without Title on the Origin of the World* and one of its specific elements that is also found in the *Bohairic Life of Pachomius*. They discussed an interesting parallel concerning the gift of differentiation of spirits, or, as expressed by both works, “Connaître la différence entre les hommes mauvais et les bons” (NH II, 118, 33; 119, 4 and *Bohairic Life of Pachomius* 107, 5-10). This is the kind of similarity that my research must look for.

Until now, most of my efforts were concentrated on the understanding of the usage of the word “apocalypse” and its meaning in *codex V*. As we know, at least four texts in *codex V* contain the word “apocalypse” in their titles. And as we already discussed, an apocalyptic corpus would fit well in the 4<sup>th</sup> century Coptic literature

---

<sup>47</sup> Idem, p.165.

<sup>48</sup> For a history of research on the versions of the *Life of Pachomius* see Goehring, J. E. *The Letter of Ammon and Pachomian Monasticism. Patristische Texte und Studien* 27. Berlin, New York : Walter de Gruyter, 1986; Veilleux, A. *Pachomian Koinonia I*. Kalamazzo, Michigan : Cistercian Publications : 1980 ; Veilleux, op.cit. 1981 e Veilleux, op.cit. 1982.

<sup>49</sup> Some examples: § 34, 52, 76, 81108, 114, 144, 184.

<sup>50</sup> Such as *Bohairic Life* § 73 and *Greek Life* § 88; *Bohairic Life* § 103 and *Greek Life* § 102.

<sup>51</sup> Painchaud and Wees, op.cit..



context. Thus, an analysis of this word and its employment in the case of each particular case in *codex V* may have much to reveal.

The word in question had an important connotation in early Christian literature. The Pauline Epistles, for example, demonstrate how important “revelation” can be. The apostle constantly emphasizes the fact that the doctrine that he preaches was revealed to him<sup>52</sup>. The book known in English as *Revelation*, also called in some Latin languages as “Apocalypse”, is another astonishing example: the author begins his work with a very strong argument of authority, also evoking a revelation disclosed by Jesus Christ himself by the intermediation of an angel (*Revelation* 1, 1).

The fact that the doctrine or the contents of such texts were revealed or disclosed by God or His angels is in fact an argument of authority, probably, the same kind of authority envisaged by the accounts of Pachomius and Theodore’s visions and ecstasies for example; the fact that Pachomius and Theodore could see in visions or revelations the will of God was an authoritative justification for their government over the communities<sup>53</sup>. Thus we can imagine that, in the context of the 4<sup>th</sup> century Coptic literature, the word “apocalypse” in the titles of certain *Codex V* treatises should evoke the same kind of authority.

Let us analyse then, the title situation of each tractate in *codex V*<sup>54</sup>.

The first tractate in *codex V* is known as *Eugnostos*, however, almost nothing of its title in *codex V* survived neither in the beginning or the end of the text; only two little traces can be seen in the end, in page 17, and they can be the rest of one or two letters. These traces were reconstructed as an omicron (ο) by the French critical edition<sup>55</sup>, what would be part of the title [ϵΥΓΝΩCΤ]Ο[ϸ]. However, *codex V* first tractate was named

---

<sup>52</sup> See, for example, *Ephesians* 3:5 ; *2Thessalonians* 2:8; *Galatians* 1:16 ; *2Corinthians* 2, 10; *Philippians* 3:15.

<sup>53</sup> As we saw in § 144, where Theodore’s vision was surely used as an authoritative justification for the nomination of new leaders in the monasteries. On the authority supplied by visions in Pachomian literature, see Hedrick, op.cit.; Elaine Pagels. “Visions, appearances, and apostolic authority: Gnostic and Orthodox traditions” in: Barbara Aland. *Gnosis: Festschrift für Hans Jonas*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978; Philip Rousseau. *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church in the Age of Jerome and Cassian*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978; Wayne S. Flory. *The Gnostic Concept of Authority and the Nag Hammadi Documents*. Lewiston / Lampeter: Mellen Biblical Press, 1995; Risto Uro. “Who Will Be Our Leader?” Authority and Autonomy in the *Gospel of Thomas*. in: Ismo Dunderberg et al.. *Fair Play: Diversity and Conflicts in Early Christianity : Essays in Honour of Heikki Räisänen*. Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2002.

<sup>54</sup> See the pictures in the appendix.

<sup>55</sup> Pasquier, op.cit.



*Eugnostos*<sup>56</sup> simply because there is another version of the text in question in codex III, where the title is well preserved: >ΕΥΓΝΩΣΤΟΣ ΠΜΑ>ΚΑΡΙΩC> (NH III, 90, 13-14). But once again, it must be emphasized that almost nothing survived from that title in *codex V* version; thus, in my opinion, there is no way we can be sure about the title of *codex V* first treatise.

The recent publication of codex Tchacos supplied an example of two different titles for the same text. The *First Apocalypse of James*, named as “Apocalypse of James” in *codex V* manuscript, is simply named “James” in codex Tchacos<sup>57</sup>. Thus, one may not conclude automatically that two different copies from the same text in two different codices present exactly the same title. On the other hand, we have opposite examples, i.e., texts that are completely different, but present the same title in the manuscripts; one may find an example in our codex, where the texts known as *First* and *Second Apocalypses of James* present in fact the same title in the manuscript: *Apocalypse of James*<sup>58</sup>.

The second treatise in *codex V* is the *Apocalypse of Paul*. The title is well preserved at the end (24, 10), and can be easily reconstructed at the beginning ([ΤΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙC ΜΠΑΥΛΟC – 17, 19).

Subsequently, *codex V* contains the (*First*) *Apocalypse of James* (ΤΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙC ΝΙΑΚΩΒΟC), a text that has much interesting elements concerning its title to tell us. At the end (44, 9-10), the title is preserved in part, but it can be easily reconstructed. But it is the title at the beginning that shows us some surprises, it is clearly pressed between the beginning of the text itself and the end-title of the *Apocalypse of Paul*; it seems that there were no space for it originally and it was lately added in smaller letters, maybe, by *codex V* scribe himself.

It must be also said that lately, new elements were added to the *First Apocalypse of James* discussion. The publication of codex Tchacos provided another version of the text in question, and in that new version, the title in the manuscript is simply “James”. It is quite clear that, despite its title in *codex V*, the *First Apocalypse of James* is not

---

<sup>56</sup> On the meaning of the word “eugnostos” as a title, see Pasquier, op.cit. pp.13-16.

<sup>57</sup> To be discussed soon.

<sup>58</sup> The designation of “First” and “Second” is a modern postulation that intends to differentiate both treatises.



directly linked to what is generally considered to be the apocalyptic tradition<sup>59</sup>. Hence, these facts may suggest an intervention of *codex V* scribe on the *First Apocalypse of James* title; an attempt to “apocalypticize” *codex V*, giving it more authority concerning revelatory matters.

The title of the (*Second*) *Apocalypse of James* (also ΤΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ ΝΙΑΚΩΒΟΣ) is partially preserved at the beginning (44, 11-12); at the end, the space is quite small, what would make difficult, but not impossible, the presence of a title; and effectively, Wolf-Peter Funk has identified as decorative traces at the end of the text what could be the rest of a letter from a title<sup>60</sup>.

The *Apocalypse of Adam* (ΤΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ ΝΑΔΑΜ) shows us another peculiarity regarding its title; at the beginning, its title is completely preserved, but lined up with the pagination. At the end, the title is partially preserved. The fact that the title at the beginning is lined up with the pagination may once again indicate some posterior intervention of the scribe, who may lately added the title “apocalypse of Adam” at the beginning.

My hypothesis concerning *codex V* titles consists in the fact that its scribe may have interfered on it in an attempt to highlight its apocalyptic character<sup>61</sup>. I believe that the many evidences of a posterior added beginning-title for the *First Apocalypse of James* and the *Apocalypse of Adam*, as well as the new title evidence for *codex Tchacos* may support this theory. Moreover, there is no way to be sure about *codex V* first tractate’s title due to the many lacunas, and giving the evidences, I would not be surprised if its title contained the word “apocalypse”, what would reinforce its unity with the rest of the *codex*.

A deeper study on this hypothesis must analyse mainly, the many possible differences between *codex V* and *codex III* versions of *Eugnostos* and *codex V* and *codex Tchacos* versions of the *First Apocalypse of James*; trying to find any kind of attempt to highlight visionary and revelatory matters, for example, and looking for apocalyptic clichés and even going further, searching for typical apocalyptic

---

<sup>59</sup> See Chaves, op.cit., 2007.

<sup>60</sup> See Paul-Hubert Poirier. “Titres et sous-titres, incipit et desinit dans les codices coptes de Nag Hammadi et Berlin: description et éléments d’analyse” in: Jean-Claude Fredouille, et al.. (eds.). *Titres et articulation du texte dans les ouvrages antiques: Actes du Colloque International de Chantilly 13-15 décembre de 1994*. Paris: Institut d’Études Augustiniennes, 1997.

<sup>61</sup> Contrary to Poirier’s hypothesis; he believes that in general, Nag Hammadi scribes respected the originals they had in hands in the making of their copies (cf. Poirier, op.cit).



expressions and formulas. An analogous work to the already suggested research of literary and thematic similitude between the *Bohairic Life* and *codex V*. A clear attempt to place *codex V* in 4th Century Coptic literature .