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The Nag Hammadi Apocalyptic Corpus: Delimitation and Analysis

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Résumé

Ce mémoire est une tentative de délimitation et analyse du corpus apocalyptique de la bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi. Le deuxième chapitre contient un survol sur l'histoire de la recherche sur la littérature apocalyptique à Nag Hammadi. Le troisième chapitre expose la problématique de recherche, c'est-à-dire, les questions qui seront posés pour l'analyse des textes, de même que la délimitation du corpus à analyser et une première classification de son contenu. Les chapitres 4 à 8 proposent une analyse du contenu apocalyptique des textes inventoriés au chapitre trois. Le dernier chapitre est une conclusion générale sur la délimitation et analyse des apocalypses et textes apocalyptiques à Nag Hammadi.

This dissertation is an attempt to delimit and analyse the Nag Hammadi apocalyptic corpus. The second chapter contains a survey on the research history on Nag Hammadi apocalyptic literature. The third chapter presents the research problematic, i.e. questions that will lead the dissertation, the delimitation of the corpus and a first classification of its content. Chapters 4 to 8 contain commentaries on texts, divided into the four categories suggested in chapter 3. The final chapter is a general conclusion about the delimitation and analysis of the Nag Hammadi apocalyptic corpus.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1- Introduction	3
2- Research Conditions	6
2.1- Apocalyptic Literature	7
2.2- Gnosticism and Nag Hammadi	17
2.3- Francis T. Fallon	22
2.4- Madeleine Scopello	29
2.5- Birger Pearson	38
2.6- George MacRae	51
2.7- Françoise Morard	53
2.8- Harold Attridge	57
3- Research Problematic	68
4- Texts with the Title ‘Apocalypse’ in the Manuscript	77
4.1- <i>The Apocalypse of Paul</i>	78
4.2 – <i>The First Apocalypse of James</i>	93
4.3- <i>The Second Apocalypse of James</i>	99
4.4- <i>The Apocalypse of Adam</i>	105
4.5- <i>The Apocalypse of Peter</i>	115
5- Sethian Apocalypses with Philosophical Content	125
5.1- <i>Zostrianos</i>	133
5.2- <i>Marsanes</i>	142
5.3- <i>Allogenes</i>	149

6- Other Apocalypses	158
6.1- <i>The Paraphrase of Shem</i>	158
6.2- <i>Melchizedek</i>	167
7- Texts with an Apocalyptic Section	181
7.1- <i>The Hypostasis of the Archons</i>	181
7.2- <i>The Letter of Peter to Philip</i>	192
8- Texts with Apocalyptic Elements	197
8.1- <i>The Tripartite Tractate</i>	198
8.2- <i>The Apocryphon of John</i>	201
8.3- <i>The Gospel of Thomas</i>	209
8.4- <i>Eugnostos</i>	211
8.5- <i>On the Origin of the World</i>	215
8.6- <i>The Concept of Our Great Power</i>	225
9- Conclusion	229
10- Bibliography	232

1- Introduction

Since the discovery of Nag Hammadi texts, scholarship has devoted many studies to several aspects of this literary corpus. However, even after more than 50 years of research, at least one of these aspects has been neglected by scholars: the Nag Hammadi apocalyptic corpus. Among the 52 Nag Hammadi treatises, there are five tractates that present the title of “apocalypse” in the manuscript. Other texts in this collection do not present the title of “apocalypse” in the manuscript, but they contain a few characteristics that are normally associated to the apocalyptic literary genre. There are also some writings that could be considered apocalypses, even if they do not present such title in the manuscript. And finally, this collection also contains certain writings that could be considered as being inspired by apocalyptic literature.

Thus, considering that the Nag Hammadi collection amounts to 45 texts and that the 18 ones that are somehow linked to the apocalyptic literary genre, form a considerable proportion of the whole, therefore, bearing in mind this significant number of texts, it is possible to envisage an apocalyptic corpus inside this collection. This dissertation intends to delimit and analyse this Nag Hammadi apocalyptic corpus.

Since the apocalyptic literature is one of the main topics of this dissertation, we shall present a survey on its research history, consecrating more attention to a specific study¹ that, despite the critics made by certain scholars, represents a landmark in apocalyptic literature research.

¹ Collins, J., 1979.

Another important aspect of this dissertation is the Nag Hammadi library. Generally speaking, the public at large considers that the Nag Hammadi library is a gnostic collection of texts. This consideration was also shared by scholars during the first years of research on this corpus. However, after more than 5 decades of research, scholarly opinion on what Nag Hammadi library is may have changed. Since the Nag Hammadi library is the literary corpus of this dissertation, we will also present a survey on its research history, linked to the history of research on gnosticism. Subsequently, a discussion on Nag Hammadi and gnostic apocalyptic literature research history will be made. We will discuss the main studies about this precise subject that, as already said, never received much attention from scholarship.

Thus, after a discussion on the history of research on gnosticism and Nag Hammadi, on apocalyptic literature, and on apocalyptic literature in Nag Hammadi, or in gnosticism, this work will present an inventory of texts that are linked to the apocalyptic literary genre, and discuss and analyse them.

The first step will be the delimitation of the corpus of texts that could be considered apocalypses and could be considered influenced by apocalyptic literature. Then, this dissertation will suggest a categorization of this apocalyptic corpus, dividing the texts into five groups: texts with the title “apocalypse” in the manuscript; sethian apocalypses with philosophical content; other apocalypses; texts with an apocalyptic section; texts with apocalyptic elements. The pertinence of the suggested categorization will be explained in chapter 3, where the inventory of texts will also be presented.

It is also important to emphasize that commentaries on texts will intend to focus the apocalyptic features, not doctrines, theologies or other aspects, since the goal of the present study is the analysis of Nag Hammadi apocalyptic corpus.

After the commentary on texts, a conclusion will be presented, which will try to respond the questions made in chapter 3.

2- Research Conditions

More than fifty years after the discovery of the Nag Hammadi texts, research about its apocalyptic content is not very developed. If we compare the number of studies on the so-called Nag Hammadi gospels, for example, specific studies about the Nag Hammadi apocalypses are almost inexistent. The majority of observations on this topic are normally placed in the context of general commentaries devoted to the collection, or in specific commentaries on texts. But a large analytical survey of the apocalyptic contents of the Nag Hammadi Library is still lacking².

Some scholars however have already written on this topic. The first particular study linked to Nag Hammadi apocalyptic was made by Francis T. Fallon³, and published in *Semeia* 14, devoted to apocalyptic literature. In his article, he discusses Gnostic texts from Nag Hammadi and from other sources, such as the Berlin, Bruce and Askew codices. Even today, this article is the most frequently quoted work about the Nag Hammadi apocalyptic, or more generally, the Gnostic apocalyptic.

² Concerning translations and critical editions of the Nag Hammadi library, I would like to draw attention to the Spanish translation (Piñero, 1997), the only one that places the texts according to their content or title, and not according to their placement in the order of the codex. This publication contains three volumes, one dedicated to the “apocalypses” and other writings (*Apocalipsis de Adán; Apocalipsis de Pedro; Apocalipsis de Pablo; Primer Apocalipsis de Santiago; El pensamiento de nuestro Gran Poder; Paráfrasis de Sem; Segundo Tratado del Grand Set; Melquisedec; Tratado sobre la resurrección; Testimonio de la verdad; La interpretación del conocimiento; Exposición valentiniana; Las enseñanzas de Silvano* and *Sentencias de Sexto*). Therefore, as far as I know, it is the only complete translation of Nag Hammadi texts that divides the texts, devoting a volume to the “apocalypses”. However, this edition considers as “apocalypses” only the texts that have the title of “apocalypse” in the manuscript, leaving aside some other texts that could be considered as such because of their content.

³ Fallon, 1979, pp. 123-158.

Other contributions specific to the topic were made by Madeleine Scopello⁴, Birger Pearson⁵, George MacRae⁶, Françoise Morard⁷ and Harold Attridge⁸.

Before discussing these works in detail, we shall first discuss the research conditions in the field of apocalyptic literature on the one hand and Gnosticism on the other hand, starting with the former.

2.1- Apocalyptic Literature.

The word “apocalypse” is well known in present-day Western world. One may associate it with the end of the world, eschatological destruction, flood and fire, or even with certain cinematographic productions of Hollywood. However, despite these colloquial meanings, scholars use the word “apocalypse” as a reference to a literary genre.

Between the 2nd century B.C.E. and the 2nd Century C.E. Judaism produced a great volume of literature. One specific type of this literature was labelled apocalyptic by modern scholars. This sort of literature found partisans, followers and readers not only in Judaism, but also in early Christianity.

Scholars of the 20th century tried to define the common elements of this literature. However it has not been easy, because this corpus includes in spite of some common features, a great variety of texts. In the words of John J. Collins “the genre apocalypse was not clearly recognized and labeled in antiquity.”⁹

⁴ Scopello, 1987.

⁵ Pearson, 2002.

⁶ MacRae, 1983.

⁷ Morard, 1993.

⁸ Attridge, 2000.

⁹ Collins, J., 1984, p. 3.

In the last fifty years however, scholarship has realized the importance of apocalyptic literature in the formation of early Christianity and Judaism. Since canonical Scriptures of Jews comprise only one apocalyptic book, *Daniel*, also present in the Christian Old Testament and the Christian canon contains another apocalyptic book, the apocalypse par excellence: the book of *Revelation*, one may think that this small number of apocalypses in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures is not a demonstration of the influence of apocalyptic literature in these religions.

James VanderKam thinks differently. For him, the presence of two ‘apocalypses’ in the Bible shows the great importance given to the Jewish apocalyptic tradition by the Christians:

The New Testament itself gives eloquent witness to the heavy influence from Jewish Apocalypticism. Several passages in it qualify as apocalypses (e.g., the Synoptic Apocalypses), and apocalypse as the name of a literary genre comes from the Greek title of The Revelation of John. But the legacy of the Jewish apocalypses by no means ended with the New Testament period; it continued in varied ways for centuries and has left a permanent imprint on Christian theology¹⁰.

Therefore, scholarship has tried to outline these influences and find the common elements that bound this group of “apocalypses”. In 1979, an important contribution to the research about apocalyptic literature was published: edited and introduced by J. J.

¹⁰ Vanderkan, 1996, p. xi.

Collins, in *Semeia*. This edition of *Semeia* was the result of the work of the “Apocalypse Group of the Society of Biblical Literature’s Genres Project”¹¹. The most important contribution of this work was the definition of the literary genre “apocalypse”. There is no consensus among scholars about this definition¹², nonetheless, the attempt to define this literary genre is a landmark in the study of apocalyptic literature. Despite the disagreement of certain scholars, it is important to say that it has become the most known and the most used definition of apocalyptic literature, being the most operational one, i.e. the one that embraces the majority of characteristics normally associated to an “apocalypse”.

Here is the definition proposed by Collins:

‘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 world¹³.

Collins begins his introduction explaining what he and the “Apocalypse Group of the Society of Biblical Literature’s Genres Project” understands by literary genre. In his words:

¹¹ This group consisted of Harold W. Attridge, Francis T. Fallon, Anthony J. Saldarini, Adela Yarbro Collins and John Collins. Cf. Collins, A. 1986, p. 1.

¹² See, for example, Adela Collins’ report in the introduction of *Semeia* 36, some years later, about the disagreements of some scholars, overall David Aune, David Helholm, Christopher Rowland and Martha Himmelfarb, about the definition in question. Cf. Collins, A. 1986, pp. 1-11.

¹³ Collins, J., 1979, p. 9.

By “literary genre” we mean a group of written texts marked by distinctive recurring characteristics which constitute a recognizable and coherent type of writing. The texts which make up the genre must be intelligible as independent units. This does not necessarily mean that they have ever existed as independent works. In many cases recognizable units are embedded in larger works and we cannot be sure whether they ever circulated independently. If they constitute coherent wholes which are intelligible without reference to their present context, they can qualify as members of a genre¹⁴.

This edition of *Semeia* also proposed a division between two basic types of apocalypses, those without an otherworldly journey (type I), and those with an otherworldly journey (type II). Under this division, Collins also proposed a sub-division: those with a historical review (sub-type a), those with a cosmic eschatology (sub-type b), and those with a personal eschatology (sub-type c). *Semeia* 14 also enumerates the characteristics of apocalyptic literature considering four main aspects: the manner of revelation¹⁵, the con-

¹⁴ Collins, J., 1979, p. 1.

¹⁵ Concerning the manner of revelation, *Semeia* 14 (Cf. Collins, J., 1979) considers that an apocalypse presents:

- 1- visual revelations, in the form of visions, where the content of revelation is seen, or epiphanies, where the apparition of the mediator is described, auditory revelation usually clarifies the visual; Epiphanies are always followed by auditory revelation in the form of a discourse or dialogue; it may present an otherworldly journey, where the revelation in the course of journey is normally visual; writing, when the revelation is contained in a written document, usually a heavenly book;

tent (temporal axis)¹⁶, the content (spatial axis)¹⁷ and the concluding elements¹⁸. We will discuss these main elements later in this dissertation.

Also in 1979, an important colloquium devoted to apocalyptic literature was held at Uppsala, sponsored by the Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities of Sweden

-
- 2- An otherworldly mediator communicates the revelation or interprets the vision; he may also guide the visionary in his journey; the mediator is normally an angel, in certain Christian texts, Christ himself.
 - 3- The human recipient is usually pseudonymous; "the disposition of the recipient notes the circumstances and emotional state in which the revelation is received"; the reaction of the recipient is normally described as perplexity or awe.

¹⁶ Concerning the temporal axis, *Semeia* 14 (Cf. Collins, J., 1979) considers that an apocalypse may present:

- 1- Protology: discussion or/and interpretation of the beginning of history or pre-history; theogony or/and cosmogony; primordial events;
- 2- History may be reconsidered as explicit recollection of the past or *ex-eventu* prophecy;
- 3- Present salvation by knowledge (in Gnostic texts);
- 4- eschatological crisis, "which may be described in form of persecutions or other eschatological upheavals which disturb the order of nature or history";
- 5- eschatological judgment or destruction, where sinners may be condemned or destructed and justs may be saved or rewarded;
- 6- description or discussion of otherworldly beings' role in history ;
- 7- Eschatological salvation; cosmic transformation; personal afterlife; it may also present resurrection in bodily or spiritual form.

¹⁷ Concerning the spatial axis *Semeia* 14 (Cf. Collins, J., 1979) considers that an apocalypse may present:

- 1- otherworldly elements that may be good or bad; otherworldly regions, described specially in otherworldly journeys; otherworldly beings, angelic or demoniac;
- 2- "Paranaesis by the mediator to the recipient in the course of the revelation is relatively rare and is prominent only in a few Christian apocalypses.

¹⁸ Concerning the concluding elements *Semeia* 14 (Cf. Collins, J., 1979) considers that an apocalypse may present:

- 1- Instructions to the recipient, normally the task of publish or disclose the revelations to a chosen public;
- 2- Narrative conclusion, where the awakening or the return of the visionary to his body is described; the departure of the mediator; references to possible persecutions of the recipients of the revelation.

and the Faculty of Theology at the University of Uppsala and chaired by Professor Geo Widengren. Concerning the specific field of Gnostic apocalyptic, we shall emphasize the paper of George MacRae about Gnostic apocalyptic eschatology¹⁹ that will be discussed latter in this dissertation.

The number 36 of *Semeia* updated the definition proposed by John Collins in 1979. Adela Yabro Collins, with the collaboration of other famous scholars in the field of apocalyptic literature, such as David Aune and Martha Himmelfarb, proposed the addition of some elements to the definition of 1979. According to them, apocalypses:

intend to interpret present, earthly circumstances in light of the supernatural world and of the future, and to influence both the understanding and the behavior of the audience by means of divine authority²⁰.

The first element pointed by J.J. Collins in his 1979 definition is the revelatory goal of apocalyptic literature; revelation is a fundamental component. However, apocalyptic literature presents a particular kind of revelation. Other literary genres, as prophecy, for example, contain revelatory goals. What distinguishes the revelations presented in apocalypses from other kinds of revelation is first of all the content. The revelations in apocalyptic literature deal with otherworldly matters or the end of the world, the judgment of the souls and their punishment or reward.

The manner in which the revelation is transmitted is also important. The existence of a celestial being who works as a mediator is almost always present in apocalypses.

¹⁹ MacRae, 1983.

²⁰ Collins, A., 1986, p. 7.

Normally, this mediator explains the revelation to the visionary or guides him in his ascent to the heavens. In some cases he makes a revelatory discourse, or participates in a revelatory dialogue with the seer. This presence of a mediator means somehow, that humanity is not worthy anymore of God's direct revelation. Different from prophetic times, when revelation was given directly by God to a human recipient, the present era of apocalypses is a time of impurity; consequently man is not able to receive a direct revelation. Moreover, the revelation itself is transcendent; in J. Collins words "the manner of revelations requires the mediation of an otherworldly being; i.e., it is not given directly to the human recipient and does not fall within the compass of human knowledge". That is why the presence of a heavenly being as a mediator is required in apocalyptic literature²¹.

There are several examples. In the case of historical apocalypses, the celestial being helps the visionary to interpret the visions. In the book of *Daniel*, for example, an angel explains the visions that Daniel just had in a dream²², permitting him to achieve the knowledge that the dream conveys. Without the presence of the angel and his explanations, Daniel would not be able to understand the revelation at all. In the book known as *4 Ezra*, the angel Uriel also gives the visionary, Ezra, an explanation of the visions²³.

In ascent apocalypses, the otherworldly being is responsible for guiding the visionary on his journey, and eventually, he also explains to him the visions during the ascent. In the Nag Hammadi corpus, we can see a good example of this in the Coptic *Apocalypse of Paul*²⁴, where the celestial being is a child who is later identified as the Holy Spirit²⁵.

²¹ Collins, J., 1979, p. 10.

²² The apocalyptic section of *Daniel*, where he has the dream visions and the angel helps him to interpret them, comprises the chapters 7 to 12.

²³ 4, 1-3; 7, 1-2; 10, 29-31 (Cf. Stone, 1990 and Metzger, 1983).

²⁴ NH V, 2 (Cf. Rosenstiehl and Kaler, 2005).

He is the one who meets and questions Paul, encourages him to come in a journey to the heavens and guides him along his ascent.

Another important element that is often underlined concerns the apocalyptic literature's esoteric aspect. In the words of Adler:

these secrets were to be entrusted only to the wise and those capable of receiving and understanding their meaning. Unlike the Hebrew prophets, who conveyed the divine message through the spoken word, apocalyptic seers like Enoch or Ezra were preeminently scribes who received and recorded heavenly secrets for the benefit of future generations. The preservation of the revelation in a book guaranteed its immutability. After reading and recording heavenly tablets, Enoch, the 'scribe of righteousness' and the 'wisest of men', entrusted his book to Methuselah as a legacy to be preserved with utmost care and delivered to the generations of the world. Because the very words of the revelation are inviolable, the book must be carefully preserved and zealously guarded against sinners who pervert the words of his revelation and 'alter and take away from my words',²⁶

That means that only a few shall have access to the revelations and their contents. Therefore, the language used in apocalyptic literature is very metaphorical. The descriptions of visions that contain incredible beasts and monsters, scenes of flood and destruction of the world and judgment of souls are amazing and fantastic. And many of them

²⁵ NH V, 2: 18, 5-6; 18, 21-22 (Cf. Rosenstiehl and Kaler, 2005).

²⁶ Adler, 1996, pp. 12-13.

have a hidden meaning that is not easy to be interpreted. Thus there is also a strong symbolism in apocalyptic visions and revelations.

As we have already mentioned, *Semeia* 36 adds that the intention of an apocalypse is to “interpret the present and earthly circumstances in the light of the supernatural world and of the future and to influence both the understanding and the behavior of the audience by means of divine authority”²⁷. This means that apocalyptic authors are concerned somehow with the present conditions and the attitude of their readers. The iniquity of the present world, its sins and its lack of respect for God are normally some of these concerns. And also, in the case of some apocalypses, preoccupation with the present is related to political questions, i.e. governors that are seen as bad and unjust, that do not respect God’s laws and will²⁸, which, in the vision of some of these apocalypses, deserves a divine intervention and punishment. Therefore, apocalypses are a call for a life of righteousness and respect of God’s will, inside a world of iniquity, and also, a punishment warning to those who act differently.

Concerning authority the most common way of its manifestation in apocalyptic literature is pseudonym or pseudepigraphy²⁹. The apocalypses are almost always attributed

²⁷ Collins, A. 1986, p. 7.

²⁸ This political aspect of apocalyptic literature is widely known. It is possible to cite several examples (Cf. Dobroruka, 2002). See, for example, the book of *Daniel*, a clear response to the Macabbean crisis (Cf. Nodet, 2005). In addition, *4 Ezra* is a latter response to the Jewish Revolt in the 60’s and 70’s of C.E. (Cf. Stone, 1981 and 1990) and *2 Baruch* is a response to another Jewish revolt, around the year of 133 C.E (Cf. Murray, 1984). And finally, the book of *Revelation*, which makes a clear propaganda against the Roman Empire and the emperor’s cult. (Cf. Harland, 2000; Friesen, 2001).

²⁹ Another element that gives divine authority to an apocalyptic text, and is closely related to the pseudonym is the so-called *ex-eventu* prophecy, i.e. “the prediction of events which had already taken place” (Cf. Collins, 1984). When an apocalypse presents an event as a prediction of an important character-when in fact, this event is already accomplished-the reader may believe that if this text is right about this event, it is

to important figures of Judaism's past, such as Enoch, Moses or Abraham. According to Gruenwald:

Pseudepigraphy was sometimes regarded as a literary lie, a forgery, which enabled the apocalyptic writers to acquire authority for their writings by using a borrowed identity. However, we now know that Pseudonymity and Pseudepigraphy were common literary practice – even a fashion – in antiquity and that in most cases this practice revealed no malicious intention³⁰.

Therefore, divine authority is present through the figure of an important and just person, someone who is worthy of God's revelations.

Pseudepigraphy or pseudonym is not an essential feature of apocalypses, but in the case of Jewish apocalypses, it is present in all texts that we know today. However, some apocalypses, notably the *Apocalypse of John*³¹, are not pseudonymical.

Besides the definition of apocalyptic literature, scholars have tried to distinguish three concepts: “apocalypse”; “apocalyptic” and “apocalypticism”.

The first one refers to the texts themselves. The word “apocalypse” is simply the Greek word for revelation. However, because of the opening verse of the book of *Revelation* this word took a specific connotation and it has been used to designate a literary

probably right about the rest too, trusting in its message. Normally, these *ex-eventu* prophecies are presented in accounts of the periodization of history. Collins gives some examples in historical Jewish apocalypses (Cf. Collins, 1984).

³⁰ Gruenwald, 1988.

³¹ There is a general agreement that the book of Revelation is not pseudonymical. See for example, Gruenwald, 1988, p. 23.

genre³². The adjective “apocalyptic” is used to refer to “apocalypses”. The last term, apocalypticism is used to designate an apocalyptic worldview. According to Hanson³³ apocalypticism is “the symbolic universe in which an apocalyptic movement codifies its identity and interpretation of reality”, or, to use Collin’s expression, the “apocalyptic imagination”³⁴. So, this definition proposed by Hanson presupposes the existence of apocalyptic groups³⁵.

We shall now move on to the discussion on the research conditions about Nag Hammadi and Gnosticism.

2.2- Gnosticism and Nag Hammadi.

It is clear that the study of ancient religious manifestations should be based on historical sources. But in some cases, mostly in the case of marginal religious manifestations³⁶ like Manichaeism or “Gnosticism”, and even some sectors of Judaism³⁷, the quantity of direct sources was considerably small before certain archeological discoveries

³² Collins, 1979, p. 2.

³³ Hanson, 1976, pp. 29-31.

³⁴ Collins, 1984.

³⁵ We can suggest several examples of apocalyptic groups, in antiquity and even in contemporary times. One may consider early Christian communities, or at least some of them, as apocalyptic groups, for example. Some scholars consider the Dead Sea Scrolls and the archeological findings near Qumran as an evidence of the existence of an apocalyptic group in Judea in the Second Temple time (Cf. Pearson, 2002, Martinez, 2003, Collins, 1998). In contemporary times, it is possible to cite many examples of apocalyptic groups, such as certain groups in the 19th century Brazil which challenged the governors several times and built parallel civilizations in desert places, to live away from the “impious society” and awaited the end of the world by God’s hand (Cf. Dobroruka, 1997).

³⁶ And also those which were considered “heretics” by proto-orthodox authors of the second century.

³⁷ The Dead Sea Scrolls reveal certain diversity in Second Temple Judaism that could not be analyzed in depth before their discovery.

made in the 19th and 20th centuries³⁸. The lacking of direct sources until these discoveries was mainly due to religious persecutions carried out by the Roman Empire³⁹ until the 4th century, along with the institutionalization of an official Christianity and a canon in the Nicean Council, which contributed to the disappearance of several religious texts.

One of these discoveries was made in 1945, near the modern town of Nag Hammadi, Upper Egypt. More than 50 inedited ancient texts were found. They are written in Coptic, probably later translations made from Greek originals. Since the discovery took place near the modern town of Nag Hammadi, the collection is called the Nag Hammadi library. Generally speaking, the Nag Hammadi manuscripts can be dated around the second half of the 4th century. This discovery considerably increased the number of direct sources for the study of Christianity and especially of “gnosticism”⁴⁰. However, the circumstances of Nag Hammadi library discovery are somewhat obscure⁴¹, and the publication of its texts took a considerable amount of time, mostly due to political and scholarly conditions in Egypt during the 40’s and 50’s⁴².

³⁸ Especially the discovery of the Oxyrhynchus papyrus by Grenfell and Hunt; the discovery of Manichaean sources in Turfan (central Asia) and Medinet Madi (Egypt); and also, probably, the most notorious, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

³⁹ Notably the persecution of Diocletian started in 303 C.E., which persecuted many marginal religions inside the Empire. Besides martyrdoms, places of cult were destroyed and religious texts were burned and wiped out. (Cf. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastic History*, III, 17).

⁴⁰ This term and its signification will be briefly presented and discussed soon.

⁴¹ See, for example, the accounts of James Robinson in the introduction of the facsimile edition of Nag Hammadi texts (Robinson, 1984) and his article published in the BCNH collection in 1981 (Cf. Robinson, 1981).

⁴² But also because of the separation of codices, which were only reassembled in the beginning of the 50’s. However, with the death of Togo Mina, the director of the Coptic Museum of Cairo, the codices remained sealed in a case until 1956. (Cf. Robinson, 1981 and 1984).

Finally, in 1961, an effort to publish all the texts started. H.-Ch. Puech and A. Guilaumont suggested that UNESCO should support the entire publication of the Nag Hammadi texts. Thus, between 1972 and 1984, under the patronage of UNESCO, the International Committee for the Nag Hammadi Codices directed by James Robinson published the Facsimile edition of Nag Hammadi codices⁴³.

In 1977, the first complete translation was published. Edited by James Robinson, the texts of this publication were translated by scholars, mostly Americans and some Europeans⁴⁴. This publication was of great help for Nag Hammadi studies, but today it has been surpassed.

The first scholars who read the texts quickly associated them to the so-called gnostics⁴⁵. They did so because of the titles of some texts, sometimes cited by the heresiologists, or due to the similarity of doctrine and content presented in the texts, and those attributed to the so-called gnostics. This was a chance to have direct contact with the doctrine produced by the gnostics themselves, not through the heresiologists or some other indirect source. And indeed, this group of texts is regularly considered today, at least by the public at large, as a collection of gnostic writings.

However, scholars quickly realized that the texts did not have a doctrinal unity. In the last two decades, scholars realized the heterogeneity of Nag Hammadi library concerning several elements, such as the literary genre of texts, their doctrine and their content. Thus, the idea of a monolithic gnostic collection was gradually left aside by scholars. Moreover, there are several material differences between Nag Hammadi codices,

⁴³ Robinson, 1972.

⁴⁴ Robinson, 1977.

⁴⁵ Doresse, 1960 and Puech, 1956.

such as the manufacture of the leather covers and papyrus, the different scribes who took part in their writing, and the presence of several Coptic dialects. Furthermore, we have more than one copy or version of certain texts, such as the *Apocryphon of John* and the *Gospel of Truth*⁴⁶. Thus, scholars generally believe that the Nag Hammadi library is a collection of collections, which were put together to be buried. Since there were many Pachomian monasteries near the place of discovery during the 4th century, scholars tend to believe that Nag Hammadi library was a gathering of monastic collections⁴⁷.

Nevertheless, a considerable number of Nag Hammadi texts may be considered as gnostics. We must have in mind though that the term “gnosticism” was shaped by modern scholars to designate an ensemble of ancient religious doctrines, mostly Christians, which were labeled as “heresies” by heresiologists, i.e. Fathers of the Church and other proto-orthodox authors of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th centuries. The term “gnosticism” comes from the Greek word *gnôsis*, generally translated as knowledge. Generally speaking, the adepts of these ancient religions cultivated knowledge⁴⁸ as a path of salvation. The term “gnostic” designates the adepts of these ancient religious doctrines⁴⁹. In Williams’ words “what is

⁴⁶ Robinson, 1984.

⁴⁷ Emmel, 1997.

⁴⁸ One may say that the present salvation by knowledge cultivated by the adepts of these ancient religions consisted in the understanding of the existence of the supreme and transcendent God, above the Creator, his spheres and his material world. Hans Jonas in the 50’s (Cf. Jonas, 1958) and thereafter Layton in the 80’s (Cf. Layton, 1987) tried to explain and summarize this ensemble of doctrines and their understanding of knowledge of the supreme and transcendent God as a path of salvation.

⁴⁹ Tardieu suggests that the term “gnostic” is used by ancient, modern and contemporary authors, in eight different ways: the epistemological sense, the obvious sense, the heresiological sense, Clement’s sense, Evagrius’s sense, esoteric sense, syncretic sense and psychological sense. (Cf. Tardieu and Dubois, 1986, pp. 21-37). He also adds that “les auteurs modernes et contemporains précisent rarement en quel sens ils utilisent le mot *gnostique*”. (Tardieu and Dubois, 1986, p. 22). For this dissertation, the important senses are those related to religious doctrines of 2nd, 3rd and 4th century, i.e., the obvious sense and the heresiologi-

today called ancient “gnosticism” includes a variegated assortment of religious movements that are attested in the Roman Empire at least as early as the second century C.E.”⁵⁰.

Karen King affirms that the term “Gnosticism” is an “artificial entity”. She goes further, stating that the category “gnosticism” was associated to the Christian construction of orthodoxy and heresy⁵¹. King’s book is the latest discussion on the use of the term “gnosticism”. Since it embraces a great variety of religion movements, she believes that scholars must create subdivisions for the term “gnosticism” and limit or even eliminate its usage⁵².

Williams for his part, makes use of ancient Judaism to exemplify that we have no evidence to consider the existence of a Gnostic religion, arguing as follows:

Thus, for example, Judaism is indeed a tradition that takes observance of law seriously, but to focus only on this feature, and to fail to appreciate variety within Judaism on this question, is to fail to understand Judaism.

“Gnosticism”, I will argue, is an even more problematic case, for in the

cal sense. Tardieu defines the obvious sense as follows: “Le sens obvie du mot *gnostique*, définissant ce qu’on peut appeler la gnose hérétique ou gnosticisme historique, s’est développé du I^{er} au V^{ème} siècle, en Orient (Syrie, Arabie, Égypte, Mésopotamie) comme en Occident (Italie, vallée du Rhône), chez des auteurs et dans des courants chrétiens antilégalistes, au nom d’un savoir interprétatif (*gnōsis*) d’origine platonicienne” (Cf. Tardieu and Dubois, 1986, p. 23). Concerning the heresiological sense, Tardieu remarks that sometime, in the heresy catalogues composed by the Fathers of the Church, the word “gnostic” was used to label and classify authors and doctrines that were not gnostics (Cf. Tardieu and Dubois, 1986, pp. 26-27).

⁵⁰ Williams, 1996, p. 3.

⁵¹ King affirms that the term heresy was used by proto-orthodox Christians in their attempt to shape an identity; they had to create categories to differentiate themselves from others. (Cf. King, 2003, pp. 3-38).

⁵² King, 2003, p. 216.

case of Judaism we at least have such as a shared story in the Torah, or ethnicity perhaps, lending further shape to Judaism as a tradition. Nothing comparable exists for the large assortments of sources and movements that are today usually treated as “gnosticism.” Nevertheless, the constant repetition in modern studies of clichés such as those mentioned above, and the continual reference to what “the Gnostics” believed about this or that, or what features characterized “the Gnostic Religion”, have created the impression of a generalized historical and social unity for which there is no evidence and against which there is much⁵³.

Personally, I believe that even as modern constructions, the terms “gnostic” and “gnosticism” can be used, but it is always necessary to specify what is being discussed, and not to use these terms as a general denomination for ancient religions that were considered as “heretics”.

We shall now move on to discussion on precise studies about Nag Hammadi and Gnostic apocalyptic.

2.3- Francis T. Fallon

Among the articles published in *Semeia* 14, Fallon’s contribution⁵⁴ deals more specifically with the gnostic apocalypses. In accordance with the rest of the issue, Fallon adopted the definition of apocalypse presented in the introduction. His article, like all the

⁵³ Williams, 1996, p. 6.

⁵⁴ Fallon, 1979.

others in this edition of *Semeia*, provides a table to classify the texts which are analysed, according to the elements which were considered as part of the apocalyptic literary genre.

Fallon simply accepts the definition proposed in the introduction and then, after some discussion about particularities of the gnostic apocalyptic⁵⁵, gives abstracts of the texts that he considers as being apocalyptic. Fallon's article represents an important contribution to the field, because it was the first study about gnostic apocalyptic literature, the first step of this research. Fallon also delimited his corpus of gnostic apocalypses, excluding the hermetic texts from Nag Hammadi, since they would be discussed by Harold Attridge in his article about the Greek and Latin apocalypses in this same issue of *Semeia*⁵⁶. This delimitation of an apocalyptic corpus in Nag Hammadi will be discussed later in this work.

Fallon did not intend to offer an in-depth treatment of gnostic apocalyptic. The purpose of his essay was "to introduce gnostic apocalypses to those who are interested in studying the genre "apocalypse" across a wide spectrum of literature"⁵⁷. Therefore, it is only an introduction to the subject, in accordance to the definition proposed in the introduction of *Semeia* 14, i.e., the demonstration of the existence of gnostic texts which present apocalyptic elements.

Fallon also recognized that the number of studies about gnostic apocalyptic was not substantial. He summarizes studies previous to 1979 citing four works which deal with the gnostic apocalyptic. The first one is Vielhauer's study⁵⁸ on the apocalyptic in general.

⁵⁵ Such as present salvation by knowledge and the preference for revelatory dialogues and discourses, rather than fantastic revelatory visions. (Cf. Fallon, 1979).

⁵⁶ Collins, J., 1979.

⁵⁷ Fallon, 1979, p. 123.

⁵⁸ Vielhauer, 1975.

This study discusses some differences between Jewish and gnostic apocalyptic. Fallon cites Vielhauer's concept that Jewish apocalyptic constitutes eschatological apocalyptic material and gnostic apocalyptic, a cosmological and soteriological material. Then, Fallon reinforces that Vielhauer understands that "the term "apocalypse" in the title of some gnostic writings should not be considered as a designation of a literary genre, but rather in a more general sense as the revelation of the redeeming gnosis",⁵⁹.

The second survey cited by Fallon is Kurt Rudolph's article on gnostic revelation dialogues⁶⁰. According to Fallon, Rudolph "considered the revelation dialogue to be an original gnostic creation"⁶¹. However, Rudolph traces its origins to platonic dialogues and other types of Hellenistic literature.⁶² Rudolph's article can be linked to apocalyptic literature because it suggests another literary label, the revelatory dialogue, which can be applied to certain gnostic writings that are generally considered as apocalypses⁶³.

Another work cited by Fallon is a dissertation by Douglas Parrott⁶⁴, a study that does not deal specifically with gnostic apocalyptic. Parrot combs Christian, Jewish and gnostic revelatory texts, "which contain dialogue or discourse but do not contain visions, dreams or cryptic modes of speech"⁶⁵. Contrary to Rudolph, Parrot suggests that the origins of gnostic revelatory dialogues should be linked to Jewish Wisdom tradition⁶⁶.

⁵⁹ Fallon, 1979, p. 123.

⁶⁰ Rudolph, 1968.

⁶¹ Fallon, 1979, pp.123-124.

⁶² Fallon, 1979, p. 124.

⁶³ Such as the *First* and the *Second Apocalypses of James*. The concept of gnostic revelation dialogue will be discussed later.

⁶⁴ Parrott, 1970.

⁶⁵ Fallon, 1979, p. 124

⁶⁶ Parrott, 1970.

The last work cited by Fallon is Pheme Perkins' dissertation⁶⁷. This study also deals with gnostic revelation dialogues and concludes, contrary to Rudolph, that "its origins are to be found in Jewish apocalyptic literature."⁶⁸ Nonetheless, according to Fallon, in his argumentation, Perkins agrees with Rudolph that the gnostic revelatory dialogue has been widely influenced by Hellenistic literature⁶⁹.

Considering these studies, we may conclude that scholarship before Fallon was concerned with the definition of a literary genre that would comprise and explain the gnostic revelatory texts. Vielhauer suggests that the term 'apocalypse' should be understood in gnostic texts as an indicative of revelations concerning cosmology and soteriology, not an indicative of eschatological and apocalyptic material, such as in the Jewish apocalypses. Rudolph for his part shaped the literary category of the "gnostic revelation dialogue". Perkins and Parrott do not agree with Rudolph concerning the origins and influences of these Gnostic revelation dialogues, but they do accept the literary genre and develop further its analyses in their studies. Thus, Fallon was the first scholar to consider the gnostic revelatory writings in a wide spectrum of literature, the apocalyptic one.

Fallon proposes in his article a brief analysis of what he considers to be gnostic apocalypses and revelatory writings, including revelatory dialogues. Contrary to Vielhauer and Rudolph, he considers the term "apocalypse" as an appropriate designation of a literary genre in the case of gnostic writings. He justifies his opinion as follows:

⁶⁷ Perkins, 1972. This dissertation resulted in a book published in 1980. (Cf. Perkins, 1980).

⁶⁸ Fallon, 1979, p. 124.

⁶⁹ Fallon, 1979, p. 124 and Perkins, 1972; 1980.

we shall use the term “apocalypse” to refer to a literary genre when speaking of gnostic writings. The basis for this usage is a phenomenological study of the characteristics present in Jewish, Christian, Greco-Roman, and Persian, as well as gnostic, writings that may be identified as apocalypses⁷⁰.

Contrary to Vielhauer, he also adds that the eschatological material, an important, however not essential, element of apocalyptic literature, is also present in gnostic apocalypses⁷¹.

He adopts the division of two types of apocalypses⁷² proposed by Collins in the introduction of *Semeia* 14 to analyse the gnostic apocalypses. However, he identifies no apocalypses with historical review⁷³.

He also identifies the revelatory dialogue as being a particularity of gnostic apocalyptic, where the emphasis is on the spoken word, not on the fantastic visions⁷⁴, which is normally the case in other groups of apocalypses, particularly Jewish ones. Therefore, according to him, the main gnostic revelations are transmitted through a dialogue or a discourse⁷⁵.

⁷⁰ Fallon, 1979, p. 124.

⁷¹ Fallon, 1979, p. 124.

⁷² Those without (type I) and those with (type II) an otherworldly journey. And also a sub-division: those with an historical review (subtype a), those with cosmic eschatology (subtype b) and those with only personal eschatology (subtype c). (Cf. Fallon, 1979, p. 125).

⁷³ Types Ia and IIa.

⁷⁴ He says that “there are no allegorical visions”. He identifies some exceptions, as the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the *Apocalypse of Peter*. (Cf. Fallon, 1979, p. 125).

⁷⁵ Fallon, 1979, p. 125.

Concerning the otherworldly mediator, he says that it is normally an angel, or a pleromatic being. In the specific case of some Christian texts, the mediator is the Lord Jesus himself⁷⁶. The epiphany of the mediator exists, and is normally “associated with light, involved with a self-predication, and placed upon a mountain”⁷⁷. He also underlines the phenomenon of pseudonymity in all texts in which a human recipient is concerned.

Regarding the temporal axis, the origin of man and his fall are a subject of importance, with exceptions such as the *Apocalypse of Peter*.

According to Fallon, the idea of present salvation by knowledge is another peculiarity of gnostic apocalypses, present in each one of them. This interest in present salvation by knowledge is expressed in gnostic apocalypses through the ascent of the soul or the return of the divine element to the divine realm, which demonstrates an interest in personal afterlife and eschatological salvation. Concerning eschatology, Fallon considers that some of these gnostic apocalypses, such as the *Hypostasis of the Archons* and the *Paraphrase of Shem*, show interest in cosmic destruction⁷⁸. But no text demonstrates interest in cosmic transformation at the end of time, since the cosmos itself is evil⁷⁹.

Fallon proposes a classification of texts that he considers to be apocalypses, according to the types and subtypes proposed in Collin’s introduction.

The first group is type I: otherworldly revelations but with no otherworldly journey. And as a sub-division, he proposes the differentiation between discourses and dialogues. Therefore, he places in this type I category with discourses the following texts: *The*

⁷⁶ He underlines that the revelations mediated by Christ normally take place after the resurrection. Cf. Fallon, 1979, p. 125.

⁷⁷ Fallon, 1979, p. 125.

⁷⁸ We may also add other texts, such as *On the Origin of the World*.

⁷⁹ Fallon, 1979, p. 125.

Apocalypse of Adam; Allogenes; The Second Apocalypse of James; and Melchizedek. In the type I category with dialogues, he places: *The Sophia of Jesus Christ; The Apocryphon of John; The Gospel of Mary; The Hypostasis of the Archons; The First Apocalypse of James; The Apocalypse of Peter; The Letter of Peter to Philip; Hypsiphrone and Pistis Sophia.*

The type II category, otherworldly revelation with otherworldly journey, is also divided in two sub-categories: discourses and dialogues. He defines as type II discourses only *The Paraphrase of Shem.* As type II dialogues, he defines the following texts: *Zostrianos and the Apocalypse of Paul.*

He then proceeds to the inventory of what he calls “related types”, i.e. revelatory treatises whose “study may be helpful to an understanding of the gnostic apocalypses”⁸⁰. He includes among these treatises, the following gnostic revelatory dialogues: *The Book of Thomas; The Dialogue of the Savior; The First Book of t Jeu; and The Second Book of Jeu.* As gnostic revelatory discourses, he defines *The Thunder, the Perfect Mind; Trimorphic Protennoia; The Second Treatise of the Great Seth; and The Concept of Our Great Power.*

And finally, he identifies revelatory texts and apocalypses in the Nag Hammadi corpus that are not exactly gnostic, but rather Christian. He labels as such the *Apocryphon of James*⁸¹ and the *Acts of Peter*⁸². He also defines the *Three Steles of Seth* as a revelatory stele, not as an apocalypse or revelatory dialogue or discourse, arguing that it is “clearly

⁸⁰ Fallon, 1979, p. 139.

⁸¹ He classifies it as a Christian apocalypse. Cf. Fallon, 1979, pp. 145-146.

⁸² This is the last text labeled by Fallon. He says that it is a “revelation journey and epiphany”. Cf. Fallon, 1979, pp.146-147.

not a gnostic revelation in the sense of a revelation by an otherworldly being to a pseudonymous seer, the 3 StSeth should probably be examined in the context of the stele as a mode of revelation in Hellenistic and Greco-Roman literature”⁸³.

As already mentioned, Fallon’s study has a capital importance for the study of Nag Hammadi and gnostic apocalyptic, since it is the first work devoted to this specific theme. However, Fallon does not provide any complex commentary on any text. Another lack of his work is that he presents the collection of Nag Hammadi texts without any in-depth consideration about its heterogeneity, which manifests itself clearly on the level of doctrine or theology, for example. He classifies the texts according to their literary form, making no remarks about any doctrinal, theological or philosophical content and similarity⁸⁴. He makes no comments on doctrinal divisions and classification of texts, i.e. if they may be considered Valentinians or Sethians⁸⁵, for example. And only the *Apocryphon of James* is considered as a Christian text rather than Christian-gnostic. Moreover, at least one important text from Nag Hammadi library that is generally considered an apocalypse, *Marsanes*, even because of his similarity with *Allogenes* and *Zostrianos*, is not present in his list.

2.4- Madeleine Scopello

⁸³ *The Three Steles of Seth* is evidently a gnostic text; however, Fallon’s position concerning its gnostic character is not clear at all, since he affirms that “this tractate is clearly not a gnostic revelation”. (cf. Fallon, 1979, p. 146).

⁸⁴ I believe that some doctrinal, theological and philosophical links could facilitate the literary analysis of Nag Hammadi and gnostic apocalyptic corpus. That is clearly the case of *Zostrianos*, *Marsanes* and *Allogenes*. These texts will be discussed in chapter 5.

⁸⁵ Even if these classifications are a matter of scholarly conjectures, I believe they are useful in the study of Nag Hammadi corpus.

A second work that deserves to be analysed is Madeleine Scopello's contribution to a book about apocalypses and otherworldly journeys⁸⁶, where she discusses some texts from Nag Hammadi which are generally understood as being apocalypses.

Contrary to Fallon, Scopello does not intend to deal with the "gnostic apocalypses", but only with the documents of Nag Hammadi that she considers as "traités apocalyptiques". Therefore, compared to Fallon, she presents an evolution concerning the delimitation of a literary corpus. She intends to examine only texts from Nag Hammadi that are clearly, at least from her point of view, apocalyptic treatises. According to her, gnosticism is an essential feature of all the texts she analyzes. Her analyses are deeper too, even though about a smaller number of texts.

Scopello proposes a division into two groups of Nag Hammadi apocalyptic texts: "contes apocalyptiques" and "apocalypses philosophiques". She defines each one of these categories. The first one:

Certains textes portent le mot « apocalypse » dans leur titre, au début ou à la fin du traité. D'autres textes, tout en ayant un genre apocalyptique, ne le déclarent pas en toutes lettres. Toutes ces apocalypses font état de traditions juives et chrétiennes. On les appellera *contes apocalyptiques*⁸⁷.

And the second:

⁸⁶ Scopello, 1987.

⁸⁷ Scopello, 1987, p. 324.

La Bibliothèque de Nag Hammadi nous a également conservé quelques textes de révélation et de contenu philosophiques. Ces traités ont été conçus dans une ambiance intellectuelle influencée par le moyen et le néoplatonisme. On les appellera *apocalypses philosophiques*⁸⁸.

Concerning the *contes apocalyptiques*, Scopello argues that they belong to the literary genre of “tales”, “novels” or even “preaching”, and that they are written in a style that aims the attention of the reader or the audience⁸⁹. According to her, this kind of text in Nag Hammadi normally has as narrative framework, the ascension of a privileged being, an important figure, such as an apostle or a prophet. Therefore, Scopello recognizes the important role of the pseudonym in this particular genre, *les contes apocalyptiques*, inside the apocalyptic of Nag Hammadi.

Furthermore, she pays attention to the widespread usage of the ascension to heavens in Jewish literature. She even gives some examples: The *Ascension of Isaiah*⁹⁰, 1, 2 and 3 *Enoch*, the *Apocalypse of Baruch*, the *Apocalypse of Abraham* and the *Testament of Abraham*⁹¹. She justifies the use of the celestial journey theme in the Nag Hammadi apocalyptic tales:

Les maîtres de la gnose reprirent maintes fois ce schéma pour illustrer un thème qui leur était cher: la remontée de l'âme vers Dieu par une ascension

⁸⁸ Scopello, 1987, p. 324.

⁸⁹ Scopello, 1987, p. 325.

⁹⁰ There is a great discussion about the real Jewish character of the *Ascension of Isaiah*. Some scholars believe that it is a Christian text. (C.f. Norelli, 1993).

⁹¹ Scopello, 1987, p. 325.

périlleuse à travers les sphères. De même, l'initié, figure de l'âme élue, ravi durant son sommeil ou en extase, monte au ciel, guidé par une entité divine qui le prend en charge et l'instruit. Les lieux privilégiés qui marquent le début du voyage ne sont pas choisis au hasard: il s'agit souvent d'une montagne ou d'un endroit désertique⁹².

This justification of Scopello is closely related to the definition of "apocalypse" proposed in *Semeia* 14⁹³. Even if she is not aware of the similarities, she borrows some elements emphasized by J. Collins, such as the presence of a celestial guide, and the otherworldly goal of the journey.

As an example of this kind of treatise in Nag Hammadi, Scopello chooses the *Apocalypse of Paul*. This choice is quite surprising, as the *Apocalypse of Paul* is a text that never received much attention from scholars. But indeed, it is an excellent example for the analysis that Scopello proposes. She makes a description of the content of the text and a complex commentary. We shall not discuss this description and this commentary now, as long as the *Apocalypse of Paul* will be discussed later in this work.

However, it is important to pay attention to Scopello's conclusions about the apocalyptic features in the *Apocalypse of Paul*. She clearly recognizes the Jewish character of this text, though, in a gnostic form:

Ces thèmes d'origine juive qui s'insèrent dans le cadre d'un voyage céleste ont reçu dans l'Ap. Paul une interprétation gnosticisée. Comme dans

⁹² Scopello, 1987, p. 325.

⁹³ Collins, J., 1979.

d'autres textes de la gnose, l'imagerie qui servait dans les pseudépigraphes à décrire les périls de l'exploration d'un univers dangereux, parce que divin et secret, se charge ici d'un accent bien plus tragique. C'est la lutte de l'âme contre les puissances cosmiques, qui la gardent prisonnière dans l'engrenage de l'*Heimarménè*, qu'illustre la remontée de Paul à travers les sphères. Paul est le symbole du gnostique et en même temps du Sauveur, un *Salvator salvandus* qui veut regagner le lieu d'où il est venu, après avoir réveillé son intelligence, pour avoir accès aux secrets divins⁹⁴.

Thus, she emphasizes the ascent of the soul as the primary goal of the text.

After the commentary on the *Apocalypse of Paul*, Scopello cites two other texts from codex V which could be included in the category of apocalyptic tales, the two *Apocalypses of James*. She does not comment on the first one, going straight to the second. For Scopello, the *Second Apocalypse of James* deserves its title of "apocalypse", simply because it "rapporte les révélations et les enseignements secrets que Jésus transmet à Jacques"⁹⁵. She justifies this categorization saying that the Greek word ἀποκάλυψις means "revelation" and the Greek verb ἀποκαλύπτειν means "to reveal", therefore, as long as the *Second Apocalypse of James* contains revelations, it should be considered an apocalypse. About the ascension, an element that she had judged to be important in this sub-type of apocalypse, she only says that the *Second Apocalypse of James* pre-

⁹⁴ Scopello, 1987, p. 332.

⁹⁵ Scopello, 1987, p. 333.

sents one. However, she says about this ascension that “il ne concerne pas Jacques pendant sa vie – comme ce fut le cas de Paul – mais son âme après la mort”,⁹⁶.

At the end of her commentary on the *Second Apocalypse of James*, Scopello underlines the esoteric character of this document, a common element in many apocalyptic writings:

Les révélations que Jacques a reçues durant ses conversations avec le Seigneur doivent être gardées secrètes; tout au plus pourra-t-il les communiquer à ceux qui seront dignes de les recevoir. Ceci est un thème commun à tout écrit apocalyptique qui se veut nécessairement ésotérique. (...) La plupart des textes de genre apocalyptique insistent sur la transmission secrète, et réservée à quelques élus, des révélations. Toute une imagerie faite de mystère et de silence, de lieux solitaires, de mise par écrit des enseignements reçus se retrouve dans ces apocalypses, qu’elles soient d’origine juive, chrétienne ou païenne⁹⁷.

Scopello also considers two other Nag Hammadi documents as apocalyptic tales: The *Apocalypse of Adam* and the *Concept of Our Great Power*. However, she does not make any complex commentary on these texts, as she did on the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the *Second Apocalypse of James*. She says that the *Apocalypse of Adam* is a kind of spiritual testament that Adam transmits to his son Seth about the end of time and the seed of Seth, the only group that will be saved. And about the *Concept of Our Great Power* she

⁹⁶ Scopello, 1987, p. 333.

⁹⁷ Scopello, 1987, pp. 336-337.

underlines the fact that although this text does not contain the word “apocalypse” in its title, it still has apocalyptic characteristics⁹⁸.

She then moves on to the discussion about philosophical apocalypses. For her, philosophical apocalypses contain a message of revelation and salvation quite different from apocalyptic tales. According to Scopello the revelations in philosophical apocalypses are shaped in an intellectual way⁹⁹. In her own words:

Le côté spectaculaire, haut en couleur, riche en actions des « contes apocalyptiques » disparaît de ces textes pour faire place à une réflexion abstraite et à une action qui ne se déroule que sur le plan intellectuel. Si les contes apocalyptiques étaient imprégnés de traditions juives et chrétiennes, les apocalypses philosophiques, quant à elles, sont influencées par les mouvements de pensée de la fin du paganisme, essentiellement par le moyen et le néoplatonisme¹⁰⁰.

She argues that the apocalyptic tales come from gnostic environments which had a close contact with Judaism and Christianity. On the other hand, the philosophical apocalypses were intended for a different milieu: the philosophical schools and academies of Alexandria, where platonic ideas and theories were constantly discussed and re-elaborated¹⁰¹.

⁹⁸ Scopello, 1987, p. 338.

⁹⁹ Scopello, 1987, p. 339.

¹⁰⁰ Scopello, 1987, p. 339.

¹⁰¹ Scopello, 1987, p. 339.

Concerning pseudonym, Scopello argues that philosophical apocalypses are again different from apocalyptic tales. The latter are attributed to important figures of Christianity or Judaism, supported by the authority of the founder of a religion (Jesus, for example), or someone who belongs to a chosen race (Adam-Seth, the seed of Seth). But in the case of philosophical apocalypses, according to Scopello, the authority lies in the philosophical tradition, and not in the figure of an important character:

Elle (the authority) se charge par contre de l'héritage de la tradition philosophique grecque où le maître transmet à son disciple un enseignement réservé à quelques élus. Le maître est en même temps père spirituel de son élève. Les personnages mis en scène dans les apocalypses philosophiques n'ont pas une valeur historique mais seulement mythique¹⁰².

As an example, she cites *Allogenes*, where Allogenes transmits a revelation that he has received from an angel, to his son Messos. And Messos “met par écrit les enseignements que son père spirituel a reçus. Le fils assure la continuité de la révélation car il se charge de la transmettre aux générations futures qui en seront dignes”¹⁰³.

She also underlines the fact that these philosophical apocalypses are gnostic texts as well. According to her, their messages of salvation are gnostic and their goal of knowledge of God and the self is gnostic. For her, the originality of these texts lies in the meet-

¹⁰² Scopello, 1987, pp. 339-340.

¹⁰³ Scopello, 1987, p. 340.

ing of Greek philosophy and gnostic doctrine, using as pseudonymous authors and characters figures from the gnostic pantheon¹⁰⁴.

Scopello gives two examples of philosophical apocalypses in Nag Hammadi: *Allogenes* and *Zostrianos*. She presents commentaries on the both texts, underlining certain differences between these texts concerning their ideas about the cosmos, the material universe¹⁰⁵. In her final words about *Zostrianos*, Scopello claims that this text is a real apocalypse. She says:

C'est dans le traité de *Zostrien* que la notion d'*Apocalypse* s'épanouit à sa juste valeur : apocalypse comme révélation, mais apocalypse aussi comme fin des temps actualisée, moment privilégié où l'homme se sépare d'un univers imparfait qui ne lui est pas propre, pour pénétrer dans une dimension autre, divine, secrète, parfaite¹⁰⁶.

The final paragraph of Scopello's article emphasizes the utilization of apocalyptic elements by the gnostic authors, along with mythological aspects or philosophical discourse, to express their desire to leave the material world and their belief in belonging to a transcendent and heavenly world¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁴ Scopello, 1987, p. 340.

¹⁰⁵ Scopello, 1987, p. 350.

¹⁰⁶ Scopello, 1987, p. 350.

¹⁰⁷ Scopello, 1987, p. 350.

2.5- Birger Pearson

In September 1995, an International Conference was held at the Royal Academy of Sciences and Letters in Copenhagen on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Nag Hammadi discovery. The proceedings of this conference were published in 2002. Among the papers there is an important contribution to the research on Nag Hammadi apocalyptic and gnostic apocalyptic, by Birger Pearson¹⁰⁸.

Pearson starts his paper recognizing, as other scholar before him, that “The topic (...) is one that would not have been of central concern in the scholarly discussion of Gnosticism prior to the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Codices”¹⁰⁹. After this brief verification about the research situation in the gnostic apocalyptic field, Pearson cites George MacRae’s claim that gnosticism has its origins in Jewish apocalyptic¹¹⁰, which will be discussed later in this work.

Considering this statement of MacRae, Pearson proposes three sub-topics for discussion in his article: “1) gnostic “apocalypses” in the Nag Hammadi corpus; 2) the use of Jewish apocalypses in some of the Nag Hammadi texts; and 3) the transformation of the “apocalyptic” worldview in the gnostic religion”¹¹¹.

In his discussion on the first sub-topic, Pearson raises the question: “what is an “apocalypse”?” In his words: “This question, at least as I intend it, has to do more with

¹⁰⁸ Pearson, 2002.

¹⁰⁹ Pearson, 2002, p. 146.

¹¹⁰ “The fact that Gnosticism arose out of Jewish apocalyptic (and wisdom) traditions, however radical the revolt against the Jewish matrix may have been, is now very broadly acknowledged, especially in view of the prominent Jewish elements in the Nag Hammadi texts”. Cf. MacRae, 1983, p. 319.

¹¹¹ Pearson, 2002, p. 146.

literary form, or genre, than with specific content”¹¹². Subsequently, he adopts the definition proposed by J. Collins in *Semeia* 14, and also its sub-divisions. He comments that the divisions proposed in *Semeia* 14 are “quite useful in treating the Gnostic material”¹¹³.

Observing that the Nag Hammadi corpus contains five writings that are identified as “apocalypses” by their titles in the manuscripts¹¹⁴, he classifies them only very summarily¹¹⁵. Since his interest in the article is to discuss the correlation between the Jewish apocalyptic and gnosis, he goes on to the discussion on the *Apocalypse of Adam*, for him, “a parade example of literary works that attests to the transition from Jewish apocalyptic to Gnosis”¹¹⁶.

He argues that the four other apocalypses cited, being Christian, represent an early stage of apocalyptic literature and “exemplify the full-blown development of a Christian gnosticism out of a previously existing non-Christian gnosticism, and an appropriation on the Christian side of the genre “apocalypse” that developed in pre-Christian Jewish circles”¹¹⁷. Concluding his statement, he says that the *Apocalypse of Adam* can be considered as an example of Jewish gnostic literature.

For him, since the *Apocalypse of Adam* is a historical apocalypse without an otherworldly journey, it could be formally compared to other Jewish works in the same genre,

¹¹² Pearson, 2002, p. 146.

¹¹³ Pearson, 2002, p. 146.

¹¹⁴ He cites five treatises: *the Apocalypse of Paul*; *The (first) Apocalypse of James*; *The (second) Apocalypse of James*; *The Apocalypse of Adam*; *The Apocalypse of Peter*. Cf. Pearson, 2002, p. 147.

¹¹⁵ He classifies the five texts with the title “apocalypse” as follows: *ApcPaul* belongs to the category of otherworldly journey; the *1ApocJas*, *2 ApocJas* and *ApocPeter* are apocalypses without an otherworldly journey. Cf. Pearson, 2002, p. 147.

¹¹⁶ Pearson, 2002, p. 147.

¹¹⁷ Pearson, 2002, p. 147.

such as *Daniel* 7-12, the *Animal Apocalypse* in *I Enoch* 83-90, the *Apocalypse of Weeks* in *I Enoch* 91-104, *Jubilees* 23, *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*¹¹⁸.

Concerning the genre of the *Apocalypse of Adam*, Pearson, in accordance with Scopello, considers that it is a testament, since its framework is a testamentary revelation from Adam to his son Seth, and “the apocalyptic testament,” or “testamentary revelation,” is a widely known category in the history of Jewish literature”¹¹⁹. Pearson presents his own outline of the *Apocalypse of Adam*, and analyzes parallels between this text and what he calls “Jewish Adam literature”¹²⁰, principally the *Life of Adam and Eve* and the *Apocalypse of Moses*. Citing Nickelsburg¹²¹, who claims the existence of a common source for the redaction of the *Apocalypse of Adam* and the *Life of Adam and Eve*, Pearson says that “it is clear that *Apoc. Adam* is closely related to the Adam circle of Jewish revelatory literature, for which an early date can be posited”¹²². Concluding his analysis of the *Apocalypse of Adam*, he says:

It is not possible here to treat *Apoc. Adam* in greater detail. Suffice it to say that, whatever its date (a much disputed point), it is a non-Christian Gnostic text¹²³ that exemplifies probably better than any other Gnostic text known to us the transition from Jewish apocalyptic to Gnosis¹²⁴.

¹¹⁸ Pearson, 2002, p. 147.

¹¹⁹ Pearson, 2002, p. 147.

¹²⁰ Pearson, 2002, p. 148.

¹²¹ Nickelsburg, 1981, p. 537.

¹²² Pearson, 2002, pp. 148-149.

¹²³ This is not a unanimous opinion among scholars, and it will be discussed later in *Apocalypse of Adam*'s commentary on chapter 4.

¹²⁴ Pearson, 2002, p. 149.

He continues his article with the discussion on the apocalyptic character of other Nag Hammadi documents. He cites the famous passage from Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* 16 about the usage of revelation (*apokalypseis*) treatises by Christians and other sectarians¹²⁵. Pearson correctly affirms that "four of the five personages named as authors of "apocalypses" appear in the Nag Hammadi Codices"¹²⁶. However, he automatically assumes that the texts from Nag Hammadi which have the names of the personages cited in the passage of Porphyry are necessarily the texts cited in the same passage. I do not believe that such an affirmation could be supported. However, it is most likely that we are in presence of the same texts.

Pearson continues his comments arguing that Porphyry's use of the term "apocalypse" may designate a literary genre, since *Zostrianos* and *Allogenes* are clearly type II apocalypses, i.e. otherworldly journey apocalypses¹²⁷. However, we cannot be sure if the word "apocalypse" is referring to a literary genre or just simple revelations¹²⁸.

¹²⁵ "There were in his (Plotinus') time many Christians and others, and sectarians who had abandoned the old philosophy (scil. of Plato), men of the schools of Adelphius and Aculinus, who possessed a great many treatises of Alexander the Libyan and Philocomus and Demostratus and Lydus, and produced revelations (ἀποκαλύψεις) by Zoroaster and Zostrianus and Nicotheus and Allogenes and Messus and other people of the kind..." (Cf. Armstrong, 1966, pp. 44-45). This passage will be discussed latter in this work.

¹²⁶ Pearson observes that a "book of Zoroaster" is cited in the *Apocryphon of John* (II 19, 10) and Zoroaster is also cited in *Zostrianos* (132, 6-10). There is also the document named *Allgenes*, which, beside the personage of Allogenes himself, presents Messos. The last one is a mistake of Pearson, since it is named in a "gnostic" text, but not from Nag Hammadi, but from the Bruce Codex (the *Untitled Text*, ch. 7 Cod. Bruce). Cf. Pearson, 2002, p. 149.

¹²⁷ Pearson, 2002, p. 150.

¹²⁸ This question will be discussed in-depth further, in the chapter devoted to the Sethian philosophical apocalypses.

Pearson goes on to comment on the treatises, emphasizing that they have no Christian features. He comments on *Allogenes* and suggests that the “other people of this kind”, cited by Porphyry, may comprise *Marsanes*.

Pearson believes that these four non-Christian apocalypses (*Apocalypse of Adam*, *Zostrianos*, *Allogenes* and *Marsanes*) are somehow related, being all Sethian texts. He goes further and mentions that the last three “belong phenomenologically”¹²⁹, to a common “system” “sharing a common vocabulary drawn from Platonism”¹³⁰. His opinion is thus closely related to Scopello’s idea of “philosophical apocalypses”, classifying the same texts as showing a platonic philosophical influence.

Pearson underlines the importance of Seth in these documents. For him, in the *Apocalypse of Adam*, “the heavenly savior, after whom Adam’s son is named, is Seth”¹³¹. *Allogenes* could be another name for Seth, and both, *Zostrianos* and *Marsanes* could be considered as avatars of Seth.

After that, he lists the other Sethian texts in the Nag Hammadi corpus – the *Apocryphon of John*, the *Hypostasis of the Archons*, the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, the *Three Stiles of Seth*, *Melchizedek*, the *Thought of Norea* and *Trimorphic Protennoia* - and he discusses each one briefly. In *Melchizedek* he observes the use of Jewish traditions with parallels in the Dead Sea Scrolls concerning the priest of *Genesis*¹³².

¹²⁹ Pearson, 2002, p. 150.

¹³⁰ Pearson, 2002, p. 150.

¹³¹ Pearson, 2002, p. 150.

¹³² Pearson, 2002, p. 151.

He identifies four other non-Sethian Nag Hammadi documents as being “apocalypses”- the *Sophia of Jesus Christ*, the *Letter of Peter to Philip*, *Hypsiphron* and the *Paraphrase of Shem*- along with another text from the Berlin Codex, the *Gospel of Mary*.

Pearson also discusses the use of Jewish apocalypses in the Nag Hammadi texts. He recalls the close parallels between the *Apocalypse of Adam* and what he calls “the Jewish Adam books”¹³³. He also defends the existence of a common source for the redaction of the *Apocalypse of Adam* and *Life of Adam and Eve*, probably, a Jewish apocalyptic testament of Adam. In addition, he cites the reference to an Adam “apocalypse” in the Cologne Mani Codex, presuming that it is a gnostic Work, and “other books known to Mani reporting visions of Adam, books that could have included non-Gnostic Jewish apocalypses”¹³⁴. Lastly, he adds that it is possible to find references of a lost *Apocalypse of Adam* in various patristic sources¹³⁵.

Pearson claims that it is not necessary to speculate about the use of lost Jewish apocalypses as primary sources for the Nag Hammadi texts, since we have at least two well-known Jewish texts that are largely used by them: *1 Enoch* and *2 Enoch*. He underlines the parallels between *1 Enoch* and the *Apocalypse of Adam* relating to the sequence of flood, fire and end-time¹³⁶. He agrees with Nickelsburg¹³⁷ concerning the portion of *1 Enoch* known as *Apocalypse of Weeks*. For them, it was of great influence on the common source of the *Apocalypse of Adam* and the *Life of Adam and Eve*; for Pearson, it is

¹³³ Pearson, 2002, p. 152.

¹³⁴ Pearson, 2002, p. 152.

¹³⁵ He cites as an example, Epiphanius (*Panarion* 16.8.1), who refers to an *Apocalypse of Adam* that was used by Nicolaitan gnostics, and also a *Gospel of Eve* and several books in the name of Seth. (Cf. Pearson, 2002, p. 152).

¹³⁶ Pearson, 2002, p. 153.

¹³⁷ Nickelsburg, 1981, pp. 537f.

probable as well that the author of the *Apocalypse of Adam* was familiarized with the *Apocalypse of Weeks* and even with other parts of *I Enoch*¹³⁸.

He also points to the use of *I Enoch*, precisely the *Book of Watchers* in the *Apocryphon of John*, i.e. the appropriation of the myth of the descent of angels (*I Enoch* 6-11). For him, “the main passage in *Ap. John* that utilizes this myth in *I Enoch* is part of a running commentary on the opening chapters of Genesis, presented in the text as we now have it as part of a dialogue between the Gnostic revealer, Jesus, and his interlocutor, John”¹³⁹. He summarizes this revelatory dialogue between Jesus and John, adding that the author of the *Apocryphon of John* not only uses *I Enoch*, but also reinterprets it¹⁴⁰. His conclusion on this topic is as follows:

The Jewish Enoch traditions played an important role in the elaboration of Gnostic mythology and the production of Gnostic literature, and other examples of the use of these traditions in Gnostic texts from outside the Nag Hammadi corpus could be cited, including Manichaean texts. *I Enoch* and *Ap. John* are among the most important texts of “Jewish Apocalypticism” and “Gnosis” respectively. Taken together they represent paradigmatically the transition from the one to the other, “from Jewish Apocalypticism to Gnosis”¹⁴¹.

¹³⁸ Pearson, 2002, p. 153.

¹³⁹ Pearson, 2002, p. 154.

¹⁴⁰ According to Pearson, the most important reinterpretation concerns the identification of the “chief archon” with the demonized version of the biblical Creator. (Cf. Pearson, 2002, p. 154).

¹⁴¹ Pearson, 2002, p. 154.

Pearson proceeds then with a discussion on “the transformation of the Jewish apocalyptic worldview in the Gnostic religion”, in order to “explain what was only implicit in our previous discussions, i.e. the differences between the religiosity reflected in the Jewish apocalypses and that reflected in the Gnostic ones”¹⁴². He believes that he can answer these questions by responding to three other questions: “What is Jewish Apocalypticism? What is Gnosis or Gnosticism? And how does one assess and interpret the relationship between them?”¹⁴³

He mentions then the conferences held in Upsala in 1979, about apocalypticism, and in Messina in 1966, about Gnosticism. Both conferences tried to reach a consensus in the definition of apocalypticism and gnosticism¹⁴⁴, respectively¹⁴⁵. However both failed in the quest for such a consensus.

Since the failure to reach a consensus concerning gnosticism at the 1966 Messina colloquium and concerning apocalypticism at the 1979 Uppsala colloquium, Pearson adopts the elements pointed by Christopher Rowland in his discussion on apocalyptic¹⁴⁶:

Apocalyptic seems essentially to be about the revelation of divine mysteries through visions or some other form of immediate disclosure of heavenly truths (...) The content of the material revealed is diverse, so are the modes of revelation. Heavenly ascents, dream-visions, with or without interpreta-

¹⁴² Pearson, 2002, p. 155.

¹⁴³ Pearson, 2002, p. 155.

¹⁴⁴ In the specific case of Messina, scholars did not find a consensus about the origins of gnosticism either.

¹⁴⁵ Pearson, 2002, p. 155.

¹⁴⁶ For Pearson, apocalyptic and Jewish apocalypticism are almost the same thing. He follows the discussion of Rowland to talk about Jewish apocalypticism.

tion, and angelic or divine pronouncements are all typical ways of communicating the divine will and the mysteries of the heavenly world¹⁴⁷.

Citing another passage included in Rowland's book¹⁴⁸, an extract from the Mishnah about the content of the heavenly mysteries, Pearson outlines four subjects which are present in "Jewish apocalypticism" and "Gnosis" speculations: what is above; what is beneath; what was beforetime; and what is to come¹⁴⁹.

Discussing the first element of speculation, "what is above", Pearson argues that apocalyptic texts constantly draw a scenario of the heavenly world, with visions of God on his throne surrounded by angels¹⁵⁰. Therefore, concerning the presence of angels in apocalyptic literature he says that "the development of angelology in Second Temple Judaism was one way of emphasizing the transcendence of God vis-à-vis the world below"¹⁵¹. He adds that this topic also includes the discussions about astrology and the solar calendar, such as in *I Enoch*¹⁵². The discussion about the solar calendar is also present in

¹⁴⁷ Pearson, 2002, p. 155. (Cf. Rowland, 1982, pp.71-72).

¹⁴⁸ "The forbidden degrees [Lev. 18:6ff.] may not be expounded before three persons, nor the story of creation [Gen 1] before two, nor the chariot-chapter [Ezek 1 and 10] before one alone, unless he is a sage that understands his own knowledge. Whoever gives his mind to four things, it were better for him if he had not come into the world – what is above, what is beneath, what is beforetime, and what will be hereafter. And whosoever does not take thought for the glory of his creator it were better for him if he had not come into the world".

¹⁴⁹ Pearson, 2002, p. 156.

¹⁵⁰ He cites *I Enoch* 14, a quotation from *Ezekiel* 1, 5 ff. (Cf. Pearson, 2002, p. 156).

¹⁵¹ Pearson, 2002, p. 156.

¹⁵² 71-75; 78-79.

Qumran literature¹⁵³. Pearson concludes that “the life of God’s elected people on earth is expected to reflect patterns existing in the world above”¹⁵⁴.

In relation to gnostic literature, Pearson uses as example the *Apocryphon of John*, with its “elaborated statement on the transcendent God and the heavenly world (II 2, 27-9,24)”¹⁵⁵. For him, “the heavenly world in this gnostic system (the *Apocryphon of John*’s, i.e. Sethianism) is quite comparable to that of the Jewish apocalypses, even if it reflects important influences from Middle-Platonism”¹⁵⁶. As a last point, he identifies a capital difference between Jewish and gnostic speculations on this topic: for the gnostic systems, the transcendent God is not the Creator¹⁵⁷.

About the second topic, “what is beneath”, Pearson once again points to Enochic literature as an example, saying that it “provides detailed treatments of other aspects of cosmology than the heavenly bodies and their movements: visions of the underworld, including the place of punishment of the fallen angels (*I Enoch* 21), Gehenna (ch. 27), Paradise, and other areas of the world inaccessible to ordinary people”¹⁵⁸. He also emphasizes that the destiny of human souls is a widespread theme in apocalyptic literature, i.e. what is the final destiny of souls (sinners and righteous) after death or the destruction of the world. He remarks as well that there is a profound gloom concerning the human race

¹⁵³ Pearson, 2002, p. 156.

¹⁵⁴ Pearson, 2002, p. 156.

¹⁵⁵ He cites too, some parallels to these statements as in *Allogenes* (62, 27-63, 25). (Cf. Pearson, 2002, p. 158).

¹⁵⁶ Pearson, 2002, p. 158.

¹⁵⁷ He identifies Platonism as an important influence to the constitution of this difference. However, he also recognizes that gnostic dualism is much more drastic than anything founded in Platonism, as attested by Plotinus (*Enneades* 2. 9). (Cf. Pearson, 2002, p. 158).

¹⁵⁸ Pearson, 2002, p. 156.

in late Jewish apocalyptic texts, such as *2 Baruch*, *4 Ezra* and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*¹⁵⁹. Therefore, in the worldview of these apocalypses, the world is a place of evil and sin, and only a divine intervention can save the righteous, bringing an act of destruction and punishment of the world and sinners respectively.

Concerning the gnostic literature on this topic, Pearson says that the cosmos, the space-temporal universe is already a bad place, a “baneful prison for human souls entombed in material bodies”¹⁶⁰. Therefore, he understands this conception of the universe as an analogy with the underworld, or hell, in Jewish apocalypses, a place to avoid.

The third topic, “what is beforetime” is also widely known in apocalyptic literature. Normally, the discussions about the “beforetime” in apocalyptic literature, at least in Jewish and Christian ones, are reinterpretations or developments of the cosmogony narrative in *Genesis*¹⁶¹. Pearson cites as examples the book of *Jubilees*, *4 Ezra* and *2 Enoch*. He emphasizes as well the interest of the *Life of Adam and Eve* for the same subjects¹⁶².

The concern of gnostic texts about primeval history and specifically *Genesis* is widely known. The creation’s account, its interpretations and reinterpretations, and the addition of new elements to it, are all elements present in many gnostic texts. Once again, Pearson mentions the *Apocryphon of John* and the *Apocalypse of Adam* as examples. He believes that the role played by the Creator in gnostic texts is similar to the role of Satan

¹⁵⁹ Pearson, 2002, p. 156.

¹⁶⁰ Pearson, 2002, p. 158.

¹⁶¹ In Pearson’s words: “(...) cosmogony is equally important, i.e. the subject matter and meaning of *Genesis*. What is involved here is not only the interpretation of the meaning of *Genesis* 1 and a recounting of Creation, but the addition of other details into the story...” (Cf. Pearson, 2002, p. 156).

¹⁶² For Pearson, the most important thing in these reinterpretations and additions of new details are the narratives about the expulsion of Satan from heaven and equally the narratives about the fall of angels. (Cf. Pearson, 2002, p. 156).

in Jewish apocalypses. However, he underlines again the differences between the meaning of this topic in Jewish apocalypses and in gnostic texts¹⁶³. Pearson also identifies a last common point between some Jewish apocalypses and some gnostic texts relating to this third topic - the periodization of history presents a particular concern on the salvation of the chosen ones - Although, he does not cite any specific example of this.

Regarding the fourth topic, "what is to come", Pearson emphasizes eschatology as "an essential feature of apocalypticism". For him, however, there is no standardization among apocalyptic texts concerning the "end time and the age to come"¹⁶⁴. He cites as an example the presence of a messianic idea, a thought that was present in Judaism even before the development of apocalyptic, which is not necessarily present in apocalyptic writings. For him, "the essential point is that human history is moving to an end, after which evil will be no more and God's elect will live in eternal bliss"¹⁶⁵. He also adds that, considering this diversity, "it is not historically accurate to speak of a single 'apocalyptic movement'"¹⁶⁶.

For Pearson, eschatology is also important to the gnostic worldview¹⁶⁷. The basic difference is that in Jewish apocalypses the elected will live in a reconstructed world, free

¹⁶³ "The "Fall" of Adam and Eve in the Gnostic sources is not due to their disobedience of the divine command, but rather to the vengeful envy on the part of the Creator of their exalted status. The creator and his archons fetter Adam in a material body and attempt to hold him and his progeny in thrall". (Cf. Pearson, 2002, pp.158-159).

¹⁶⁴ Pearson, 2002, p. 157.

¹⁶⁵ Pearson, 2002, p. 157.

¹⁶⁶ For him, the Essene sect is an example of an apocalyptic group, reflected in Qumran literature, and the Christian community could be also considered as one. Pearson, 2002, p. 257.

¹⁶⁷ "The future salvation of the elected is just as important in Gnosticism as it is in Jewish apocalyptic". (Cf. Pearson, 2002, p. 159).

from sin and evil, while in gnostic writings the cosmos, i.e. the material world will be destructed, and the gnostics will return to the heavenly world¹⁶⁸.

In his final considerations, Pearson reinforces his theory that gnosticism originated from Jewish apocalypticism. He recognizes the differences between the gnostic world-view and Jewish apocalypticism, but he also believes that it is clear that “one cannot account for the former without reference to the latter”¹⁶⁹. As a last point concerning the transition from Jewish apocalypticism to gnosis he says that

we can extrapolate from our evidence a plausible enough theory: they (the Gnostics) were intellectual Jews, somehow disaffected with the current interpretations of their ancestral traditions and in search of a new understanding of their place in the world. Thus, one can say the same thing about Gnosticism as about Christianity: both of them emerged out of a Jewish matrix¹⁷⁰.

Pearson's goal is to identify gnostic texts, above all apocalyptic ones, that are somehow linked to the Jewish apocalyptic, and to attempt to show that these texts illustrate the transition “from Jewish apocalypticism to Gnosis”. Although he does not comment on all the writings that are normally classified as apocalypses in the Nag Hammadi corpus, he supplies an excellent commentary of those he presents, showing parallels with

¹⁶⁸ Pearson, 2002, p. 159.

¹⁶⁹ Pearson, 2002, p. 159.

¹⁷⁰ Pearson, 2002, p. 159.

Jewish texts, which helps to perceive the clear influence of the Jewish apocalyptic on some specific texts.

However, he almost completely neglects the Christian influence on some Nag Hammadi texts, as well as their Christian character. Since his goal is to demonstrate the transition from Judaism to gnosticism, he does not show any interest in the Christian features of the Nag Hammadi apocalyptic texts, which is, from my point of view, an important omission in his discussion.

Even when he discusses the Jewish elements and their clear influences on the gnostic literature, he does not give much importance to the differences between them which could indicate that these influences came from other sources, Christian ones, for example. He also seems to consider the Nag Hammadi library as a monolithic collection, not considering the diversity of its components.

2.6- George MacRae

George MacRae was a very active scholar in the field of “gnostic apocalypses” making various introductions and translations of texts in the first English translation of the Nag Hammadi texts, such the *Apocalypse of Paul*.

In 1979, at the Uppsala colloquium on apocalyptic literature, MacRae presented a paper about apocalyptic eschatology in gnosticism, which begins by pointing out that scholarship is quite aware that “the phenomenon of apocalyptic cannot be understood or defined by the exercise of cataloguing elements or characteristics found in apocalypses or in literature that is widely acknowledge to contain apocalyptic features”¹⁷¹.

¹⁷¹ MacRae, 1983, p. 317.

He refers to Carl-A. Keller's¹⁷² list of points of contact between apocalyptic and gnosticism¹⁷³: a) apocalyptists and Gnostics use the same forms of literature (apocalypses, dialogues, etc.); b) both groups of texts are permeated with Old Testament citations and reminiscences; c) in both there is the communication of a knowledge that is revealed, essentially secret, and necessary for salvation (also with similarities in content); d) both literatures teach that there is a split or conflict in the celestial world that is determinative of certain aspects of human life on earth; e) in both cases knowledge leads into a clearly circumscribed ethic of ascetical stamp¹⁷⁴; f) apocalyptic and Gnostic writings have in common an expressly polemical attitude against those who live in error and are destined to be lost. MacRae argues that such a list does not discern clearly "among literary, theological, and social dimensions of either apocalyptic or Gnosticism"¹⁷⁵. And I would add that most of these points of contact could be also extended to Judaism and Christianity.

For his discussion on the apocalyptic eschatology in gnosticism, MacRae adopts Hanson's definition of apocalypticism¹⁷⁶. He assumes that gnosticism arose out of Jewish apocalyptic and wisdom traditions. He goes on to observe that gnosticism is the supreme

¹⁷² Keller, 1977, pp.70-72.

¹⁷³ MacRae, 1983, p. 317.

¹⁷⁴ MacRae remarks about this topic that "Keller rightly observes that extant Gnostic literature advocates asceticism; whether "Gnostic libertinism" is excluded or not deserves further discussion". (Cf. MacRae, 1983, p. 317).

¹⁷⁵ MacRae, 1983, p. 318.

¹⁷⁶ "The symbolic universe in which an apocalyptic movement codifies its identity and interpretation of reality". (Cf. Hanson, 1976, pp. 29-31).

example of realized eschatology, since “it is knowledge of self in the present that is the saving principle, even if that knowledge can deal with past and future in its content”¹⁷⁷.

MacRae claims that apocalyptic eschatology is generally characterized by the periodization of history that leads to the end time. Thus, one should expect to find such periodization in gnostic apocalypses¹⁷⁸. He cites as examples the *Apocalypse of Adam* and the *Concept of Our Great Power*, emphasizing that the first one follows the Jewish apocalyptic scheme of flood and fire in the end time¹⁷⁹. He also emphasizes that what is most distinct in gnostic apocalyptic eschatology is “the total absence of new creation”¹⁸⁰, since creation is an error. Because of this according to MacRae, gnostics can only see the end time as the destruction of the material world.

2.7- Françoise Morard

Françoise Morard’s article, entitled “Les apocalypses du codex V de Nag Hammadi” was published in the collection supported by Laval University, Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi¹⁸¹. As the title suggests, the article is about the codex V of Nag Hammadi, more precisely about placement and arrangement of the texts within this codex. There are 4 texts in codex V entitled “apocalypse”, the exception being the first one, *Eugnostos*. Morard raises the question: “cette ordonnance est-elle intentionnelle ou n’est-

¹⁷⁷ MacRae, 1983, p. 319.

¹⁷⁸ MacRae, 1983, p. 323.

¹⁷⁹ MacRae, 1983, p. 323.

¹⁸⁰ MacRae, 1983, p. 323.

¹⁸¹ Painchaud and Pasquier, 1995.

elle que le pur produit du hasard?”¹⁸² She believes that the arrangement was not made by chance, and she tries to explain why in the article.

She begins with a discussion on the precise genre of a gnostic apocalypse. For her,

l’apocalypse gnostique recouvre essentiellement un discours de *révélation* concernant le salut procuré par la gnose. Cette révélation s’exprime le plus généralement sous la forme littéraire d’un discours, beaucoup plus que sous celle d’une vision, et plus volontiers encore, d’un dialogue¹⁸³.

She cites Kurt Rudolph¹⁸⁴, who considers the revelation dialogue as an original gnostic creation, a statement already discussed by Fallon. However, she goes further in her analyses of Rudolph’s idea, and underlines the presence of a celestial mediator in the gnostic revelation dialogues¹⁸⁵: the Spirit in the form of a child in the *Apocalypse of Paul*; in the *First Apocalypse of James*, the mediator is Christ who instructs his disciple before and after the Passion; in the *Second Apocalypse of James*, it is James who becomes the mediator of the revelation; and finally, in the *Apocalypse of Adam*, Adam is the mediator¹⁸⁶.

Concerning *Eugnostos*, Morard believes that it is a particular case in the context of codex V, because it is not a revelation dialogue, but an initiation discourse in the form of a letter addressed to disciples. Therefore, according to Morard, *Eugnostos*

¹⁸² Morard, 1995, p. 341.

¹⁸³ Morard, 1995, p. 341.

¹⁸⁴ Rudolph, 1968.

¹⁸⁵ Morard, 1995, p. 342.

¹⁸⁶ Morard, 1995, p. 342.

ne mérite donc pas le titre d'apocalypse à proprement parler, mais il entre cependant bien dans la perspective des autres traités. En effet, 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 salut¹⁸⁷.

Regarding *Eugnostos*, Morard's theory is:

Eugnostos sert d'introduction à l'ensemble du volume. Il se présente comme un exposé de révélation, une sorte d'initiation à ce qu'il est nécessaire de connaître des origines pour avoir la certitude d'être admis à y retourner un jour¹⁸⁸.

Morard also discusses the attributed authorship of codex V texts. For her, the fact that three treatises are attributed to Paul and James, two important figures who were not part of the original group of twelve apostles, shows the lack of attachment to the "Grande Église"¹⁸⁹. And about the *Apocalypse of Adam*, she thinks that it demonstrates in the whole codex that the message of salvation will be preached at all times, being proclaimed to all, but accepted only by few, the chosen ones from the seed of Seth¹⁹⁰.

¹⁸⁷ Morard, 1995, p. 342.

¹⁸⁸ Morard, 1995, p. 342.

¹⁸⁹ Morard, 1995, p. 342.

¹⁹⁰ Morard, 1995, pp. 342-343.

Concerning the use of the word “apocalypse” as titles for the texts of codex V Morard holds that:

Il s’agit donc bien pour l’homme d’entrer, par la *révélation*, dans le mystère de la connaissance de ses origines divines, et de retrouver, ce faisant, le chemin du salut. C’est à la nécessité de cette initiation que me semble consacrer le codex V dans sa totalité¹⁹¹.

Morard presents her final considerations about the whole of codex V giving short commentaries on the five texts and its genre and literary function and signification. She underlines the presence of hymns in the *Second Apocalypse of James* and in the *Apocalypse of Adam* and their possible liturgical and catechetical usage as a way of assimilation of the doctrine¹⁹², concluding:

(...) 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 les 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. Sa construction, sans doute voulue, peut nous interroger sur ce qui représentait le but essentiel d’un regroupement d’*apocalypses* destiné à entraîner une première adhésion au mystère de la Connaissance et à susciter la foi demandée au gnostique. Il serait donc

¹⁹¹ Morard, 1995, p. 343.

¹⁹² Morard, 1995, p. 356.

dommageable, me semble-t-il en conclusion, de ne pas respecter la structure de cet ensemble et d'en démanteler les différents traités¹⁹³.

In my opinion, the great contribution of Morard's article is the way she analyzes codex V as coherent whole. It was quite innovative to analyze the codex V as a collection in a fourth century context, not only analyze the isolated texts in their environment of original composition¹⁹⁴. Although she does not supply detailed commentaries on the texts, she tries to demonstrate that they are somehow linked together by a precise goal: serve as initiation to the Gnostic salvation.

2.8- Harold Attridge

In his article, Attridge¹⁹⁵ examines the relationship between apocalyptic and gnostic traditions, "on the assumption that global definitions of those phenomena are problematic"¹⁹⁶. In his examination, Attridge focuses on the Valentinian and Sethian texts of the Nag Hammadi corpus.

He believes that Valentinian tradition normally does not attest a large influence of apocalyptic literature or particular elements of apocalyptic, such as eschatology, apart from certain late treatises which conserve traces of Valentinian theology. He argues that Valentinian eschatology is generally based on philosophical cosmology and psychology.

¹⁹³ Morard, 1995, p. 357.

¹⁹⁴ Stephen Emmel, in a good article published in 1997, points out the lack of studies about this specific topic, the Nag Hammadi library as a collection of collections in the fourth century. (Cf. Emmel, 1997).

¹⁹⁵ A version of this article was presented to the joint session of the Nag Hammadi and Pseudepigrapha groups at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical literature, in Orlando, November of 1998. The meeting's subject was the relationship between apocalyptic and Gnosticism.

¹⁹⁶ Attridge, 2000, p. 173.

On the other hand, Sethian texts largely use Jewish apocalyptic features, such as heavenly ascents¹⁹⁷.

To justify these two statements, Attridge presents a summary of the main ideas on research about the relationship between apocalyptic and gnosticism. The first study cited by Attridge is Grant's book about gnosticism and early Christianity¹⁹⁸. He also emphasizes that recent scholarship on gnosticism has pointed out "the diverse phenomena covered by that label"¹⁹⁹.

Afterwards, he specifies that his work will deal with two related textual collections, testing their particularities concerning appropriation of Jewish apocalyptic motifs. He adds that three sorts of data are pertinent: a) literary accounts of revelatory experiences; b) eschatological scenarios; c) the quest for revelatory experience²⁰⁰. He goes on specifying that the main argument of his article can be summarized in two complex propositions: 1)"Valentinian teachers eschewed the literary trappings of Jewish and early Christian apocalyptic literature; although occasionally interested in "visions", they presumed that the major ascent was eschatological. In their eschatology, while disposed to interpret apocalyptic scenarios in an allegorical or realized sense, they maintained a philosophi-

¹⁹⁷ Attridge, 2000, p. 173.

¹⁹⁸ Grant suggested that gnosticism arose out of disappointed apocalyptic hopes. (Cf. Grant, 1959, pp. 27-38). We saw that this suggestion was widely discussed, and sometimes adopted by scholars (Cf. Pearson, 2002 and MacRae, 1983). Attridge deals with Grant's statement critically. He draws attention to the variety of terms involved in Grant's equation, emphasizing that one may "see diversity rather than unity" (Cf. Attridge, 2000, pp. 173-174). Then, he goes on citing and commenting recent studies on apocalyptic literature that are somehow linked to gnosticism (Cf. Collins, A, 1996; VanderKam, 1996; Frankfurter, 1993, 1997; Daley, 1991)

¹⁹⁹ He cites Michael Williams' study (Cf. Williams, 1996). We can also cite Karen King's study, another try to show the diversity of what has been called "Gnosticism" (Cf. King, 2003).

²⁰⁰ Attridge, 2000, p. 178.

cally respectable view of the consummation of history but could occasionally draw upon apocalyptic descriptions of the end, particularly from early Christian texts that had achieved some authoritative status, to give expression to their belief. 2) “Sethians”, much closer to their Jewish literary roots, used apocalyptic literary conventions and apparently did engage in practices designed to provide revelatory experience. Nonetheless, they distanced themselves from their Jewish roots, particularly in texts with evidences of a ritual setting for revelatory experience. Like the Valentinians, their eschatology focuses on the fate of the soul and they use eschatological categories metaphorically, however, their interest in cosmic or historical eschatology remains and perhaps serves as one basis for several of the late apocalypses from Nag Hammadi²⁰¹.

He begins the discussion on Valentinian apocalyptic tradition talking about Valentinus, his disciples and evidences about his doctrine and his disciple’s in heresiological sources. He emphasizes that what we know today about Valentinians, from Irenaeus’ and from other indirect sources, clearly shows that they were “resolutely Christians”²⁰².

Attridge draws attention to the fact that the fragments of Valentinus normally “yield little evidence of an apocalyptic literary form”. However, he shows an example of visionary experience, citing the famous passage of Hippolytus: “For Valentinus says he saw a newborn babe, and questioning it to find out who it was. And the babe answered him saying that it was the Word”²⁰³. Attridge comments on this passage saying that a dream experience is certainly possible, but nothing indicates that Valentinus had an ascent experi-

²⁰¹ Attridge, 2000, pp. 178-179.

²⁰² Attridge, 2000, p. 179.

²⁰³ *Ref.*, 6.42.2, in Layton, 1987, pp. 230-231.

ence or had a revelatory conversation with an *angelus interpretis*²⁰⁴. He goes on showing several examples of fragments attributed to Valentinians or Valentinus himself with visionary or eschatological elements²⁰⁵. His conclusion about these fragments is that they “show at best a secondhand, metaphorical appropriation of the categories of traditional apocalyptic literature and thought”,²⁰⁶.

After this brief commentary on Valentinian fragments, Attridge asks which texts from Nag Hammadi count as Valentinian, citing Einar Thomassen’s survey of a Valentinian corpus²⁰⁷. For Attridge, the literary form of an apocalypse is absent from these texts. The only treatise with Valentinian elements presented in apocalyptic way is the *First Apocalypse of James*, a revelation dialogue in which Jesus speaks to James, disclosing several mysteries about the supreme Father, the archons and the fate of “Gnostics”, as well the “passwords” which are necessary to pass through the celestial levels.

Attridge asks in what sense does this text demonstrates the heritage of Jewish apocalyptic in Valentinian tradition²⁰⁸. He argues that the framework adopts a Christian hero (Jesus himself), not a Jewish one, i.e. an “Old Testament” character; the fact that James is the human recipient of the revelation reflects an early Christian tradition about the appearance of Jesus to James, which may “represent a stage in the development of Jacobean traditions, when the hero of the Jerusalem community and of Torah-observant Christianity became the warrant for the authenticity of a particular revelation”,²⁰⁹. He con-

²⁰⁴ Attridge, 2000, p. 180.

²⁰⁵ Hippolytus, *Ref.* 6.37.8; Clement, *Stromat.* 4.89.1-3 and 2.36.2-4.

²⁰⁶ Attridge, 2000, p. 181.

²⁰⁷ Thomassen, 1995.

²⁰⁸ Attridge, 2000, p. 183.

²⁰⁹ Attridge, 2000, p. 183.

cludes saying that none of these elements are particularly Jewish. But he draws attention to the number of 12 archons in 72 heavens, which could betray a clear Jewish influence. However, he argues that such numbers are somehow familiar to Christian traditions, and they do not play an important role in the treatise²¹⁰.

Concerning April De Conick's²¹¹ recent suggestion that behind the terms for the ascent of soul in *I Apocalypse of James*²¹², which presents clear Valentinian elements, "lies an ancient, non-Gnostic Jewish tradition about ascent mysticism, paralleled in *Gospel of Thomas* 50"²¹³, he thinks that *I Apocalypse of James* and patristic testimonies to Valentinian rituals for the dead do not describe mystical ascents.

Subsequently, Attridge raise the question: Did Valentinians eschew apocalypses? He tries to answer the question saying that nothing in heresiologists' accounts or at Nag Hammadi²¹⁴ show that Valentinian teachers used or produced apocalypses "of the sort found at Nag Hammadi or among Jewish pseudepigrapha". Therefore, he concludes that Valentinians did not use apocalyptic traditions²¹⁵.

After this conclusion, he moves on to the discussion of apocalyptic eschatology in Valentinianism. He does not propose an in-depth discussion on this subject, but he points out certain important elements. He starts discussing the testimony of Irenaeus about cosmic conflagration²¹⁶. For Attridge, the idea of eschatological destruction at the period of

²¹⁰ Attridge, 2000, p. 183.

²¹¹ Conick, 1996, pp.51-55.

²¹² 33,11-35,25.

²¹³ Attridge, 2000, p. 183.

²¹⁴ He precises the possible exception of *I Apocalypse of James*.

²¹⁵ Attridge, 2000, p. 184.

²¹⁶ *Adv. Haer.* 1.7.1: "When this has taken place, then (they assert) the fire that is hidden in the world will blaze forth and burn; when it has consumed all matter it will be consumed with it and pass into nonexis-

end time is widely known in Jewish, early Christian and Sethian sources. But the idea of a complete consummation of matter, according to Attridge, is not present in any known Jewish or Christian source. He concludes then, that “the testimony is obviously a combination of several strands of the intellectual heritage of the Valentinian school”²¹⁷, saying however, that cosmic eschatology and apocalyptic notions are always vestigial.

Subsequently, he moves on to the discussion on precise aspects of eschatology in Valentinian texts, such as the *Gospel of Truth*, the *Treatise on the Resurrection*, the *Tripartite Tractate* and *On the Origin of the World*.

The apocalyptic heritage attenuated in Valentinian circles is widely present in “another body of “gnostic” literature”, the Sethian corpus²¹⁸.

Attridge says that the connection between Irenaeus’ *Adversus Haereses* 29 and the *Apocryphon of John* shows that Sethian cosmogony was already developed around 180. Attridge also says that certain texts cited by Porphyry are apparently identical with those surviving at Nag Hammadi²¹⁹. For him texts such as *Allogenes*, *Zostrianos* and *Marsanes* were read in Rome around the middle of the third century by “sophisticated people interested in mystical experience and hoping for post-mortem reintegration into the divine realm”²²⁰.

tence”. Attridge remarks that this text is regularly cited by scholars who discuss the topic, such as MacRae (MacRae, 1983, p. 321), and Daley (Daley, 1991, pp. 8-9).

²¹⁷ The idea of a destructive fire proposed by Stoics for the renewal of the world with an eschatological belief that this destruction would not be repeated. This eschatological idea is probably an influence of Jewish and early Christian apocalyptic hopes (Cf. Attridge, 2000, pp.184-185).

²¹⁸ He points out to the delimitation proposed by H. M. Schenke (Schenke, 1981) and others, such as Sevrin (Sevrin, 1986).

²¹⁹ *Allogenes* and *Zostrianos* (Cf. Attridge, 2000, p. 190).

²²⁰ Attridge, 2000, p. 190.

Attridge adopts Fallon's classification scheme²²¹ to define Sethian apocalypses in Nag Hammadi, also adopting the proposition of apocalypses with an otherworldly journey²²² and those without such journey²²³. He goes on summarizing each one of these texts, drawing more attention to the group with otherworldly journey. He also remarks the Jewish influence on the *Apocalypse of Adam*.

Afterward, he moves on to the discussion on cosmic eschatology in Sethian apocalypses, saying that "the legacy of Jewish apocalypses in the Sethian text is, nonetheless, much more apparent and much richer than it is among Valentinians"²²⁴. He goes on saying that this legacy requires further explanation and that normally the eschatological focus is on the fate of individual soul²²⁵. He points out to the eschatological elements in Sethian apocalypses such as the *Apocalypse of Adam*, the *Apocryphon of John* and the *Hypostasis of the Archons*. He concludes that "among Sethians, then, it is clear that apocalyptic eschatology survives, sometimes as a metaphor for the transformation that comes with revelation, but also as part of the temporal horizon within which salvation takes place"²²⁶.

He moves on, then, to the discussion on Sethians' quest for vision. He says that "ascent is matter of literary form, used to cloak a gnostic teaching"²²⁷. He discusses then, the influence of Jewish apocalyptic texts in ascent visions in Sethian apocalypses. He

²²¹ Fallon, 1979. Attridge notes that Fallon does not include *Marsanes* in his list (Cf. Attridge, 2000, p. 191).

²²² *Zostrianos, Marsanes and Allogenes*.

²²³ *Apocryphon of John, Hypostasis of the Archons and Melchizedek*.

²²⁴ Attridge, 2000, p. 192.

²²⁵ Attridge, 2000, p. 192.

²²⁶ Attridge, 2000, p. 195.

²²⁷ Attridge, 2000, p. 197.

concludes this discussion saying that “ascent is a matter of literary form, used to cloak a “Gnostic” teaching. The form has close Jewish parallels, and perhaps even direct Jewish inspiration, and the venerable character of the form serves the rhetorical function of “evoking readers’ respect”. At the same time the cultural connections of the form have been deliberately obscured”²²⁸.

Then, he suggests that a significant path for the transmission of apocalyptic literary and conceptual features from Jewish sources to the Sethians was liturgical. He says that “literary parallels are to be explained, at least in part, by the social and cultic situation of the texts”²²⁹. He concludes then: “The Sethian ascent apocalypses thus raise in an acute form the question of continuity and discontinuity in the transmission of apocalyptic literary forms, conceptual schemes, and perhaps even ritual practices”²³⁰.

Attridge then, tries to explain the connection between the Sethian ascent texts and their “Jewish cousins”. He suggests two models: the first one:

emphasizes a steady stream of continuity from Jewish apocalypticism visionaries, who sought ecstatic visionary experiences and cloaked their experience in a pseudepigraphical guise, through Jewish and eventually Chris-

²²⁸ Attridge, 2000, p. 197.

²²⁹ To justify this opinion, Attridge cites Frankfurter (Cf. Frankfurter, 1996, pp 160-161), who notes liturgical elements in the *Sacred Book of the Great Invisible Spirit* (2, 2-4, 2). Frankfurter also notes liturgical elements in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, the *Ascension of Isaiah*, *2 Enoch* and the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*, concluding that “we might see the Jewish apocalypses’ idealization of heavenly liturgy as a principal contribution to Gnostics literature and ritual, and the Gnostics’ emphasis on secret liturgies as a context for studying apocalypses”. Attridge also cites John Turner’s suggestion of a primitive Sethian baptismal ritual of ascent grounded in Syrian baptismal practice (Cf. Turner, 1980; Attridge, 2000, p. 198).

²³⁰ Attridge, 2000, p. 199.

tian baptists who located their experimental quest for vision in a ritual setting. The Sethians would stand squarely in that trajectory²³¹.

The second model suggests that, since Jewish ascent apocalypses are not direct evidence of mystical practice, one may believe that when this apocalyptic tradition became associated with Platonic circles, it “gained new currency as a literary expression for the new form of piety, but the form was evacuated of its specifically Jewish elements in order to enable it to have more general appeal”²³².

In his conclusion on the whole article Attridge recognizes the clear influence of Jewish apocalyptic texts on “Gnostics of various sorts”²³³, precisising that the influence on Sethians is much more clear than on Valentinians.

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None of these studies offer a complete inventory of the apocalyptic phenomena in Nag Hammadi, discussing and analyzing not only texts that can be considered as apocalypses, but also the literary apocalyptic influence that can be observed and identified in certain texts that are not exactly apocalypses, but present apocalyptic features²³⁴. Many examples can be found, and they will be discussed later in this dissertation.

²³¹ Attridge, 2000, p. 202.

²³² Attridge, 2000, p. 202.

²³³ Attridge, 2000, p. 204.

²³⁴ We may cite *On the Origin of the World*, a text that presents certain apocalyptic elements, such as its eschatological conclusion and the destruction of Sabaoth's throne, clearly inspired in *Revelation*. This is an example of an apocalyptic influence on a Nag Hammadi text that has never been analyzed for any study about Nag Hammadi apocalyptic.

Moreover, all these authors seem to agree on one point: the influence of Jewish apocalyptic on the Nag Hammadi apocalyptic. Some of them, especially Pearson and MacRae, clearly defend the idea of a Jewish apocalyptic origin of gnosticism²³⁵.

However, none of these studies present a complete and exhaustive analysis of Nag Hammadi apocalyptic content. In their discussions of gnostic apocalyptic, MacRae and Pearson almost completely ignore texts like the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the two *Apocalypses of James*, since they do not manifest, at least not clearly, an ensemble of elements that points to a Jewish origin, let alone a Jewish influence. But we must not forget that in the Nag Hammadi corpus, at least four of the five texts that have the word “apocalypse” in their titles are obviously Christian treatises²³⁶.

Fallon presents only brief résumés of gnostic apocalypses and apocalyptic texts, and he even forgets to include an apocalypse in his study, *Marsanes*. Morard, for her part, analyses only the Codex V, not considering many other apocalypses and apocalyptic texts in Nag Hammadi. And Attridge comments on only the Valentinian and Sethian apocalyptic traditions, leaving outside his study other apocalypses, such as the *Apocalypse of Peter* and the *Paraphrase of Shem*, which cannot be directly linked to those traditions.

Thus, the goal of this dissertation is to supply an exhaustive analysis of the apocalyptic phenomena in Nag Hammadi corpus.

²³⁵ The influences of Jewish apocalyptic on Nag Hammadi apocalypses, and even on Nag Hammadi and Gnostic texts in general is clear and incontestable. However, one may not deny the influence of other sources and religions. Jewish apocalyptic is important for the understanding of the Nag Hammadi apocalyptic corpus, but other kinds of apocalyptic literature must also be considered in this analysis.

²³⁶ There is a discussion on the Christian character of the *Apocalypse of Adam*. Pearson, for example, believes that it has no Christian traces (Cf. Pearson, 2002). Morard, however, believes that it is a Christianized treatise (Cf. Morard, 1985).

We shall now proceed to describe the research problem which will be explored in this thesis.

3- Research Problematic

Before starting the discussion on gnostic apocalyptic or Nag Hammadi apocalyptic, I believe that we should define what we mean by literary genre, and for this, I intend to adopt the definition given by J.J. Collins: "By literary genre we mean a group of written texts marked by distinctive recurring characteristics which constitute a recognizable and coherent type of writing."²³⁷ The texts must present some phenomenological similarity and sometimes, but not necessarily, historical derivation. When a group of texts forms an intelligible and coherent corpus without a historical, geographical or linguistic context, they must present some other kind of similarity. And it is the phenomenological similarity that shall define a literary genre in these terms. The common use of expressions and themes, the kind of authorship, the authority that the texts intend to have, the literary framework, (a narrative one, for example) and the goal of the writing. It is also important to say that the definition of a literary genre is a conjectural category. Moreover, a single text may comprise or even be linked to several different literary genres. We may find apocalyptic sections inside texts that are not apocalypses at all, such as gospels²³⁸ or epistles²³⁹, or even texts that use apocalyptic elements, such as the trumpet of the final judgment at the end of the *Tripartite Tractate*. Thus, this dissertation will deal not only with the apocalypses, but also with the Nag Hammadi texts that comprise apocalyptic sections or make use of apocalyptic elements.

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²³⁷ Collins, J. J., 1979, p. 1.

²³⁸ See, for example, Jesus discourse about the end-time in Mat 29: 3-29.

²³⁹ See, for example, the ascension account in 2 Cor 12: 2-4.

Most scholars like to emphasize the influence of Jewish apocalyptic on gnostic apocalyptic. Certain scholars even point out to a Jewish origin for gnosticism, showing several parallels and quotations between Jewish and gnostic apocalypses. However, few scholars draw enough attention to Christian influences on gnostic apocalypses. Thus, this dissertation will deal not only with the Jewish elements and influences on Nag Hammadi apocalyptic, but also with Christian influences, identifying specific Christian elements, such as the identification of apocalyptic heroes and visionaries and the identification of possible influences and quotations from Christian apocalypses.

But first of all, we shall limit the literary corpus. As said before in the introduction, the Nag Hammadi collection is the basic corpus of this dissertation²⁴⁰. Therefore, the first question that should be asked is which texts in the Nag Hammadi corpus could be defined as apocalypses and which texts could be considered influenced by the apocalyptic literature. Since we are working with the definition proposed by J. J. Collins²⁴¹ and updated by Adela Collins and other collaborators, it is necessary to link and analyze these texts according to this definition. Therefore, the second question that should be asked is do these texts correspond to the apocalyptic genre as it is normally defined and stated. It

²⁴⁰ The idea is to limit this analysis on Nag Hammadi texts, however, certain texts, such as the *Apocryphon of John*, are also present in other corpus.

²⁴¹ This definition has already been presented in this dissertation: "'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 and intend to interpret present, earthly circumstances in light of the supernatural world and of the future, and to influence both the understanding and the behavior of the audience by means of divine authority." (Cf. Collins, J.J., 1979, p. 9. and Collins, A., 1986, p. 7).

is important to notice that in some cases, the selected texts will not show all features of “apocalypse” proposed by Collins²⁴².

*

The first step is the definition of the literary corpus. I suggest the division in five groups as follows:

1- Texts with the title ‘apocalypse’ in the manuscript:

- *The Apocalypse of Paul* (NH, V-2)
- *The first Apocalypse of James* (NH, V-3)
- *The second Apocalypse of James* (NH, V-4)
- *The Apocalypse of Adam* (NH, V-5)
- *The Apocalypse of Peter* (NH, VII-3)

2- Sethian apocalypses with a philosophic content:

- *Zostrianos* (NH, VII-1)
- *Marsanes* (NH, X-1)
- *Allogenes* (NH, XI-3)

3- Other apocalypses:

- *The Paraphrase of Shem* (NH, VII-1)
- *Melchizedek* (NH, IX-1)

²⁴² I believe that the title of certain texts is important in this analysis. Certain texts have the word “apocalypse” in their titles, but I am not sure that some of these texts could be properly considered as apocalypses only because of a title. We will discuss this question in the next chapter.

4- Texts with an apocalyptic section:

- *The Hypostasis of the Archons* (NH, II-4)
- *The Letter of Peter to Philippe* (NH, VIII-2)

5- Texts with apocalyptic elements

- *The Tripartite Tractate* (I, 5)
- *The Apocryphon of John* (NH, II-1; II-1: IV-1)
- *On the Origin of the World* (NH, II-5 ; XIII-2)
- *The Gospel of Thomas* (II, 2)
- *The Concept of Our Great Power* (NH, VI-4)
- *Eugnostos* (III, 3; V1)

This division does not necessarily follow doctrinal or theological features, but rather typological and literary concepts. Contrary to Attridge's approach, I will not put together texts according to their doctrine or presumed theological tradition²⁴³, but according to their literary similarities.

Thus, the first section contains the texts which contain the word "ἀποκάλυψις" in their titles in the manuscript. The second section contains what scholars have called "Sethian apocalypses with philosophical content". These texts present doctrinal and theological similarities but also literary ones. The third section contains other apocalypses. Two texts are placed in this section, the *Paraphrase of Shem* and *Melchizedek*. The first

²⁴³ Thus, I do not put together Valentinian or Sethian texts respectively only because of their doctrine.

one could be hardly exclusively linked to a single gnostic tradition. The latter is normally classified as a Sethian text, but it does not present the same framework and philosophical content of texts in section 2. The following category contains texts that are not completely apocalypses, but contain apocalyptic sections and elements, such as visions, intermediated revelations, eschatological scenarios or speculations and ascents. And the last section presents specific apocalyptic features that can be found in Nag Hammadi texts, such as the trumpet of the final judgment at the end of the *Tripartited Tractate* and the enthronement of Sabaoth in *On the Origin of the World*.

Other divisions are possible, such as Scopello's²⁴⁴ – “contes apocalyptiques” and “apocalypses philosophiques” – and Fallon's²⁴⁵ – otherworldly revelations without otherworldly journey and otherworldly revelation with otherworldly journey. But I believe that this division that I suggest is more pertinent because it takes in account features that almost never received scholar's attention, such as the discussion on texts' title and the implication of it in the definition of a literary genre. The next chapter will directly deal with this subject.

Finally, it is important to remember that texts' analysis suggested by this dissertation will concentrate on apocalyptic features. Thus, a complete study and comment on each text is not the goal of this dissertation.

Once we have an apocalyptic corpus in Nag Hammadi and we have identified in what measure these texts correspond to the adopted definition, we can start the discussion on influences. The first step should be to identify for each text the apocalyptic features which appear and those which are lacking. Then, the first question that should be asked

²⁴⁴ Scopello, 1987.

²⁴⁵ Fallon, 1979.

in this regard is: does this presence of apocalyptic texts and elements in the Nag Hammadi corpus show some influence of apocalyptic on gnostic literature? Following certain scholars, we shall also discuss some particularities of gnostic or Nag Hammadi apocalyptic literature.

Attridge made an important contribution with his analysis on the particular use of apocalyptic elements in two different traditions which are labeled as gnostic, Valentianism and Sethianism. Since we have a considerable number of texts of each tradition in Nag Hammadi library, I believe that Attridge's differentiation is important in Nag Hammadi's apocalyptic literature analysis. It is also important however to consider other texts which are not exclusively or directly linked to these traditions, such as the *Paraphrase of Shem*.

The analysis of the cited elements may enable to date or at least to propose a relative chronology for some texts. Then, at least in some cases, it would be possible to raise another question concerning chronology: do any of these texts illustrate an early or a new stage in gnosticism's evolution?

I believe that a last question should deal with one of scholar's favorite subjects, the influence of Jewish apocalyptic on gnosticism and gnostic apocalypses. But it is also important to consider the possibility of direct Christian influences. The influence of apocalyptic and apocalypticism is clear, but sometimes, the origin of this influence is not. Thus, a last question should be made: does this influence come directly from the Jewish apocalyptic, (i.e. the Hellenistic or the Qumran apocalyptic) or is it mediated by the Christian apocalyptic?

These are some questions that shall guide this work.

I would like to introduce in this discussion a category or literary genre proposed by Rudolph²⁴⁶, briefly commented by Fallon²⁴⁷ and developed by PHEME PERKINS²⁴⁸, the “Gnostic dialogue”. I believe that this idea is important because certain Nag Hammadi texts that are generally considered as apocalypses are closer to the gnostic dialogue genre defined by Rudolph and Perkins than that of an “apocalypse” suggested by J. J. Collins. And also because certain scholars even consider that this kind of revelation dialogue named as gnostic is an original creation of gnosticism²⁴⁹.

The general idea of a dialogue presupposes the existence of two speakers. In the case of gnostic revelatory dialogues, similarly to apocalyptic literature, we have the recipient of the revelation²⁵⁰, and the revealer. Comparisons with apocalyptic literature and Platonic dialogues are inevitable. However, gnostic revelatory dialogues, despite the similitude with these literary genres, also present specific elements. Concerning apocalyptic literature, gnostic revelatory dialogues normally lack incredible visions. The emphasis in a gnostic dialog is always in the spoken world, in the discourse of the revealer²⁵¹. Con-

²⁴⁶ Rudolph, 1968.

²⁴⁷ Fallon, 1979.

²⁴⁸ Perkins, 1980.

²⁴⁹ Rudolph, 1968.

²⁵⁰ According to Perkins: “The heroes in the Gnostic Dialogues are either figures from primordial times or apostles and others from the New Testament. Several dialogues clearly indicate that these New Testament figures belong several generations in the past²⁵⁰. For the Gnostic, then, contact with the divine is mediated through the rituals of the cult and not through its association with particular, contemporary teachers, seers or holy men. In this respect, the Gnostics remain firmly rooted in the second century. They do not share the movement which will come to associate divine power on earth with a limited number of exceptional human agents.” (Cf. Perkins, 1980, p. 11).

²⁵¹ Fallon, 1979, p. 125.

cerning Platonic dialogues, according to Perkins “unlike the lively drama of the Platonic dialogue or the more pedantic style of the philosophic dialogue employed by Cicero or Augustine, the Gnostic dialogue does not aim at an exchange of ideas and an examination of philosophical positions. The Gnostic dialogue sets off statements of Gnostic myth and teaching”²⁵².

Certain texts in the Nag Hammadi library are closer to this literary genre suggested by Rudolph and supported by Perkins²⁵³. However, it is important to remember that both concepts, “apocalypse” and “Gnostic revelatory dialogues”, are modern constructions, definitions of literary genre made by scholars. As J. J. Collins says “the genre apocalypse was not clearly recognized and labeled in antiquity”²⁵⁴. Nonetheless, we have the word “apocalypse” as the title of five treatises in Nag Hammadi library. That may indicate that at least in the second half of fourth century – the time when we believe that Nag Hammadi codices were made – the word “apocalypse” was used as a title²⁵⁵. We also have Porphyry’s account in *Life of Plotinus*, already presented in this dissertation, about people who produced revelations (ἀποκαλύψεις)²⁵⁶:

²⁵² Perkins, 1980, p. 19.

²⁵³ This question will be discussed on specific commentaries on texts.

²⁵⁴ Collins, J., 1984, p. 3.

²⁵⁵ The usage of a word as a title does not necessarily indicate a literary genre. We may find examples in modern time, such as Jose Saramago’s novel called *O Evangelho segundo Jesus Cristo*, but also examples in antiquity, such as the *Gospel of Philip* (NH II, 3), a text that is not a gospel at all. In the specific case of Nag Hammadi apocalyptic, we may cite the *First* and the *Second Apocalypses of James*; both texts have the word “apocalypse” in their titles, but they do not correspond to the apocalyptic literary genre. This point will be analyzed latter in chapter 4.

²⁵⁶ The usage of this term in the plural to designate an ensemble of texts may be a sign of Porphyry’s conscience about the existence of a literary genre which these texts belonged to, since he attributes the same title to them all. This passage will be discussed in chapter 5.

There were in his (Plotinus') time many Christians and others, and sectarians who had abandoned the old philosophy (scil. of Plato), men of the schools of Adelphius and Aculinus, who possessed a great many treatises of Alexander the Libyan and Philocomus and Demostratus and Lydus, and produced revelations by Zoroaster and Zostrianus and Nicotheus and Allogenes and Messus and other people of the kind²⁵⁷.

There is not such an account about "revelatory dialogues", and there is not an ancient text with such title either. In any case, I believe that the concept of a revelatory dialogue, even being a modern construction, answers to the proposal of a literary genre. And this literary genre is close to the apocalyptic one.

We may now move to the commentary on texts.

²⁵⁷ Armstrong's translation. (Cf. Armstrong, 1966).

4- Texts with the title ‘apocalypse’ in the manuscript

The Nag Hammadi library has certain texts with the word ‘apocalypse’ in their titles: the *Apocalypse of Paul*; the *(First) Apocalypse of James*²⁵⁸; the *(Second) Apocalypse of James*; and the *Apocalypse of Adam* in Codex V²⁵⁹ and the *Apocalypse of Peter* in Codex VII. The presence of the word ‘apocalypse’ in the title of these texts may indicate an understanding of a literary genre. J. J. Collins argues that the apocalyptic genre was not clearly recognized and labeled in antiquity²⁶⁰. However, I believe that the presence of these five treatises in the Nag Hammadi library may show that, at least in the second half of 4th century the word ‘apocalypse’ was used to designate not only a “revelation”, but also a specific sort of text. Veilleux²⁶¹, discussing on the precise literary genre of the *First* and the *Second Apocalypse of James*, says that those who copied and used these documents (the apocalypses of James), in the third and fourth century, were not aware of our modern distinction between apocalypse, gnostic dialogue and revelatory discourse. Thus, if they named those texts as “apocalypses”, they probably considered them as apocalypses, even if these texts do not correspond to modern definitions of this literary genre.

²⁵⁸ Concerning the *First Apocalypse of James*, it is important to mention the existence of a new copy, in Codex Tchacos. Even if this new copy is not published yet, we know that its title in Codex Tchacos is *James*. (Cf. Kasser, Meyer and Wrust, 2006).

²⁵⁹ On Codex V, see the commentary on Morard’s study in chapter 1, and also Williams’ study (Cf. Williams, 1995). Kaler’s remarks on the introduction to the commentary on the *Apocalypse of Paul* are also pertinent. (Cf. Rosenstiehl and Kaler, 2005, pp.149-153).

²⁶⁰ Collins, J. J., 1984, p. 3.

²⁶¹ Veilleux, 1986, p. 15.

Generally speaking, Nag Hammadi texts are Coptic translations of Greek originals. These copies can be dated from the second half of 4th century²⁶². However, the Greek originals' date of composition may vary from the second half of the 2nd century to the 4th century. Stephen Emmel suggests four stages of transmission concerning Nag Hammadi texts. The earlier would be the phase of pre-composition in Greek, followed by the composition in Greek phase, then, the translation from Greek into Coptic phase, and finally, the Coptic monastic phase²⁶³. The final phase of transmission, the Coptic monastic, represents the stage in which Nag Hammadi texts were found. Thus, it is not possible to assure in which of these stages of transmission the word apocalypse started to figure in the title of these five treatises²⁶⁴. We cannot know for sure if the word 'apocalypse' was part of the original compositions or if it was added at any stage of their transmission²⁶⁵.

We may now move on to the discussion on these texts.

4.1- Apocalypse of Paul (NH V, 2).

*The Apocalypse of Paul*²⁶⁶ never received too much attention from scholars. The number of precise studies on it is quite small²⁶⁷. The *Apocalypse of Paul* occupies less

²⁶² See the preface of the Facsimile edition of Nag Hammadi library (Robinson, 1984).

²⁶³ Emmel, 1997.

²⁶⁴ For a further discussion see Poirier, 1997.

²⁶⁵ We now know that there is another recension of the *First Apocalypse of James*, in the Codex Tchacos. However, Codex Tchacos' version presents another title in the manuscript, only *James*. (Cf. Kasser, Meyer and Wurst, 2006). This shows us that the *First Apocalypse of James* was trasmitted also without the title of "apocalypse". This will be discussed in the conclusion of the present chapter.

²⁶⁶ It is important to distinguish the *Apocalypse of Paul* of Nag Hammadi from another text that was named by scholars as *Apocalypse of Paul*. This last text, however has another name in the manuscript, *Visio Sancti Pauli*, and has no direct relation to our text.

than eight pages of Codex V (17 to 24)²⁶⁸. These pages are relatively well preserved, with the exception of the beginning, around lines 20 to 29 of page 17, where almost everything is lost, and only the title could be reconstituted ([ΤΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ ΜΠΑΥΛΟΣ)²⁶⁹. Other parts of the text are lost, such as the section between lines 22 to 33 of page 18 and the top of other pages is damaged.

In 1963, Böhlig and Labib published the *editio princeps* of Codex V apocalypses²⁷⁰, including the *Apocalypse of Paul*. The first English translation and also the first extensive examination was Murdock's Ph.D. dissertation in 1968²⁷¹. In 1979, the Nag Hammadi Studies collection published in its volume 11²⁷², the critical edition and translation of the *Apocalypse of Paul*²⁷³, with the other apocalypses of Codex V²⁷⁴, the entire Codex VI and the *Papyrus Berolinenses*. In 2005, the BCNH collection published it in volume 31, devoted to the critical edition, French translation and commentary of the *Apocalypse of Paul*.

It is not possible to determine an exact date and environment for its composition. If we consider that the *Apocalypse of Paul* is a gnostic work, more precisely a Valentin-

²⁶⁷ An excellent summary on the *Apocalypse of Paul*'s history of research is made by Michael Kaler (Cf. Rosenstiehl and Kaler, 2005, pp.117-127).

²⁶⁸ This is the only known manuscript of the text in question.

²⁶⁹ According to the text established by Rosenstiehl. (Cf. Rosenstiehl and Kaler, 2005). The title also appears at the end, where it is clearly written ΤΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ ΜΠΑΥΛΟΣ.

²⁷⁰ Böhlig and Labib, 1963.

²⁷¹ Murdock, 1968.

²⁷² Edited by D. Parrott. (Cf. Parrott, 1979).

²⁷³ MacRae and Murdock, 1979.

²⁷⁴ *Eugnostos* was not included in this edition. See the comment on *Eugnostos* in chapter 7.

ian²⁷⁵ one, following MacRae, Murdock²⁷⁶ and Kaler²⁷⁷, the mid 2nd century would be a plausible date²⁷⁸.

Because of the lacunas, it is not possible to know for sure how the *Apocalypse of Paul* begins. But we can presume that the beginning's context is the meeting of Paul with a child²⁷⁹, who will play the role of the celestial being who intermediates the revelation and guides Paul in his journey. Before the meeting, Paul was going to Jerusalem. Once he meets the boy, he asks him what path he should take to reach Jerusalem, then the boy questions Paul about his origins and nature, and the whole process of ascent begins.

The text starts to describe the celestial journey in the fourth heaven, omitting the first three ones. The text does not even mention the first and the second heavens, citing that Paul was snatched up to the third heaven (19, 22-23). In the fourth heaven, the text starts to describe the visions that the apostle supposedly had.

In the fourth heaven, Paul sees the judgment of souls and in the fifth, he sees angels taking other souls to be judged (19, 26-22, 13). In the sixth heaven he looks above and sees a great light that seems to come from the next celestial sphere (22, 14-24). Once he reaches the seventh heaven he contemplates an old shining man, seated on a resplendent throne with white and clean garments (22, 25-23, 29). This old man tries to stop

²⁷⁵ However, certain scholars, such as Daniélou and Rosenstiehl, do not consider the *Apocalypse of Paul* as a Valentinian work. The first one does not even consider it as a Gnostic work. (Cf. Daniélou, 1966; Rosenstiehl and Kaler, 2005).

²⁷⁶ MacRae and Murdock, 1979, p. 49.

²⁷⁷ Rosenstiehl and Kaler, 2005.

²⁷⁸ MacRae and Murdock argue that "the portrayal of Paul as exalted even above the other apostles is at home in second century Gnosticism, especially Valentinianism...". Cf. (MacRae and Murdock, 1979, p. 49)

²⁷⁹ This boy will be identified later in the text as the Holy Spirit.

Paul's ascent, but the apostle, guided by the child, shows him a seal, and passes to the next heaven.

Paul continues his ascent and passes through the eighth and ninth heavens, reaching the tenth heaven, where he salutes his fellow spirits (23, 30-24, 8). During his journey, Paul also salutes his fellows, the apostles.

There is a general agreement that the *Apocalypse of Paul* is a literary interpretation of Paul's ascent account in *2 Corinthians* 12:2-4²⁸⁰:

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up 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 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 utter²⁸¹.

Different groups of Christians interpreted this account. The *Apocalypse of Paul* is one of these interpretations. According to MacRae and Murdock, *Adversus Haereses* II, 30, 7 shows that "there was a Gnostic tradition of interpreting Paul's experience in *2 Corinthians* 12, 2-4"²⁸². However, this argument extrapolates Irenaeus' text. The bishop of Lyon uses Paul's account in *2 Corinthians* to refute the gnostic idea of the existence of ten heavens. Since Paul says in this account that he went up to the third heaven, to para-

²⁸⁰ The ascent experience is told in third person. However, the Christian tradition always considered Paul himself as the voyager of this account. See, for example, Irenaeus' *Adversus Haeresis* II, 30, 7.

²⁸¹ All the biblical texts cited in this dissertation are the *English Standard Version*'s translation.

²⁸² MacRae and Murdock, 1979, p. 49.

dise, Irenaeus argues that if the great apostle Paul just achieved the third heaven, how could someone else claim to reach more than that, more than the apostle? The *Apocalypse of Paul* for its part, presents the existence of ten heavens, and considers the third heaven as the beginning of Paul's journey upwards to the tenth heaven. We cannot establish a direct relation between the *Apocalypse of Paul* and *Adversus Haereses*, but the existence of this topic of discussion in both texts shows, as Kaler, Painchaud and Bussi res argued, the existence of a battle for Paul's legacy between different groups of Christians in second century²⁸³.

Another biblical text that seems to have inspired the *Apocalypse of Paul* is *Galatians* 1:15-17. In this account, the author says that he did not go to Jerusalem to meet the apostles. And this is exactly the context of the beginning of the *Apocalypse of Paul*; he is going up to Jerusalem when he is stopped by the child who questions him and the whole process of ascent begins (18, 3-23). In this passage the apostle also says "But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles"²⁸⁴. Besides, there is a passage in the *Apocalypse of Paul* where the seer says "I know who you are, Paul. You are he who was blessed from his mother womb" (18, 14-17).

Vielhauer points out certain elements present in Jewish ascent apocalypses²⁸⁵. The *Apocalypse of Paul* also presents these elements. They are as follows:

²⁸³ Kaler, Painchaud and Bussi res, 2004.

²⁸⁴ This passage is an allusion to *Jeremiah* 1: 5²⁸⁴: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations"; *Isaiah* 49: 1: "The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name"; and 49:5: "(...) he who formed me from the womb to be his servant (...)".

²⁸⁵ Vielhauer, 1975.

- 1-Pseudonym;
- 2- A biblical fundament as a pre-text;
- 3- Seer's incertitude concerning the nature of the visionary experience, i.e. if he went up to heavens inside or outside his body;
- 4- The presence of a divine mediator;
- 5- Journey through several heavens and the return of the seer to earth with a special mission.

The pseudonym has been widely discussed earlier in this dissertation. We may almost consider it as a fundamental characteristic of apocalyptic literature²⁸⁶. Generally speaking, we may say that our author attributes the authorship of his text to Paul, an extremely important figure to early Christians²⁸⁷. The delegation of an authorship to Paul gives authority to a text²⁸⁸. Concerning the usage of the personage of Paul as the author,

²⁸⁶ Remembering that certain Christian apocalypses may not be pseudonymical, overall, the book of *Revelation*. For this discussion, see Gruenwald, 1988 and Collins, A., 1979.

²⁸⁷ The identification of the authorship is problematic in the case of the *Apocalypse of Paul*. Paul is cited in the third and in the first person. However, the change in the person of the discourse is a quite common feature in Jewish apocalypses. See for example, the apocalyptic section of *Daniel*. Thus, even if Paul is cited in first and second person, we may consider that he is the putative author of our text. Kaler also considers Paul as the putative author of our text. (Cf. Rosenstiehl and Kaler, 2005, pp.169-171).

²⁸⁸ "To turn someone into a legend is to subsume his or her human complexity and ambiguity into a grand archetypal image, into a myth. The myth that Paul personifies in the *Apocalypse of Paul* is that of the apocalyptic hero, the human being who because of his saintliness or great efforts is granted a vision of the hidden divine mysteries that God has established and of the means by which God organizes and directs the cosmos. Often, the revelation of these mysteries involves the protagonist, seeing the characteristics activities that go on in them, such as the judgement and punishment of souls". (Cf. Rosenstiehl and Kaler, 2005, p. 170).

Kaler points out to an aspect that he named heroic Paulinism, i.e. "Paulinism which is focused more on the image or legend of Paul than in his theology",²⁸⁹.

The second topic, somehow, has already been discussed. The biblical fundament used as pre-text by the *Apocalypse of Paul* is, first of all, the account of Paul's ascent in 2 *Corinthians* 12:2-4. Another biblical text, *Galatians* 1:15-17, is also used as a pre-text, since at the beginning of our text Paul is going to Jerusalem to meet the apostles. We should compare this feature at least to one example of biblical texts that was used as a pre-text on a Jewish apocalypse.

One of the best examples is the story of Enoch in *Genesis* 5:18-22. This passage tells that Enoch, one of the patriarchs before the flood, lived 365 years and was taken to heaven by God²⁹⁰. Enoch is different from the other patriarchs for two basic reasons: he did not live very long compared to the others, only 365 years, and at the end of this period, he was snatched up to heaven by God. This passage contains a mysterious component: the patriarch did not die, but in fact, was snatched up to heaven by God himself. And this mysterious component seems to be the origin of many Jewish apocalyptic speculations. Most of these speculations are written in three Jewish apocalypses, preserved in late translations: the *Ethiopic Book of Enoch* (1 *Enoch*), the *Slavonic Apocalypse of Enoch* (2 *Enoch*) and the *Hebrew Apocalypse of Enoch* (3 *Enoch*). All these texts are somehow based on the enigmatic component cited below: the ascension of Enoch narrated in *Genesis* 5:18-22.

²⁸⁹ Rosenstiehl and Kaler, 2005, p. 168. For the discussion of the usage of Paul's theology by gnostics see Pagels, 1975.

²⁹⁰ "Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him".

Concerning the third topic, Paul expresses his incertitude about the nature of his journey, “in the body or out of the body I do not know”²⁹¹. The *Apocalypse of Paul* answers indirectly to this question when Paul looks down and sees himself (19, 26-20, 4), what suggests that the ascent happened out of his body. Normally, the gnostic ascent is seen as the final stage in the path of salvation. The ascent happens after the material death, when the gnostic goes up to the Pleroma, passing through celestial spheres, facing the archons and the creator²⁹². However, in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the ascent takes place when Paul is alive, which approaches it to Jewish apocalyptic traditions²⁹³.

The *Apocalypse of Paul* also contains a divine mediator. Normally, in Jewish apocalypses the mediator is an angel²⁹⁴, in the case of the *Apocalypse of Paul*, he is a little child (18, 5), who latter in the text is identified with the Holy Spirit (18, 21; 19, 21; 20, 4; 21, 24; 22, 15-16; 23, 5 and 23, 22). It is the child who questions Paul about his nature (18, 14 and 19-10); he also invites and takes Paul through heavens (19, 15 and 21, 25-24, where the child says “follow-me”). He also helps Paul to escape from the old man in the seventh heaven (23, 22-25). Thus, this heavenly mediator has a great importance in the *Apocalypse of Paul*.

The last topic deals with the several heavens presented in the *Apocalypse of Paul*. Our seer passes through several heavens, similar to other ascent apocalypses. The *Apocalypse of Paul* does not pay attention to the first three heavens, the visions start only in the

²⁹¹ 2 Corinthians 12: 3.

²⁹² See, for example, the *First* and the *Second Apocalypses of James*.

²⁹³ See Gruenwald discussion on Jewish *merkavah* mysticism, where ascent experiences during lifetime were common religious practices. (Cf. Gruenwald, 1988, p. 193).

²⁹⁴ See, for example, the mediator in *Daniel* 8: 15, called Gabriel. In *4 Ezra*, the mediator is called Uriel, also an angel. We also have many examples in Christian (See *Revelation*) and Jewish apocalyptic literature (see *1, 2 and 3 Enochs*). For a study on the *angelus interpres* see Reichelt, 1994.

fourth, where the visionary sees a soul being judged (20, 10-21, 21). At the fifth heaven he sees souls being taken to judgment (22, 7-10)²⁹⁵. The ascent continues until the tenth heaven, where Paul meets his “fellow spirits” (24, 8).

These elements show the close relation between the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the Jewish apocalyptic. Fallon says in his study that the emphasis on gnostic apocalypses is never on the visions, as the majority of Jewish and even Christian apocalypses, but on the discourse of the mediator, or the dialogue between the mediator and the recipient of revelation. However, one may consider that the *Apocalypse of Paul* is an exception²⁹⁶.

More precisely, the apocalyptic visions presented in the *Apocalypse of Paul* show more than simple relations or influences, but even the usage of precise Jewish apocalyptic texts. The first case is the vision at the seventh heaven, where the visionary sees a shining old man dressed with white garments. This is probably a reference to the vision of God on His throne, a literary *topos*, present in several Jewish apocalypses, such as 1 *Enoch* and *Daniel*.

The description in *Daniel*:

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 (7: 9).

²⁹⁵ These judgments scenes are closely related to a Jewish apocalyptic text named *Testament of Abraham*. We will discuss this relation later in this work.

²⁹⁶ Fallon himself recognizes that the *Apocalypse of Paul* is an exception concerning the lack of metaphorical and revelatory visions on Gnostic apocalypses (Cf. Fallon, 1979).

Now in *I Enoch*²⁹⁷:

At that place, I saw the One to whom belongs the time. And his head was white like wool (46, 1).

In those days, I saw him – the Antecedent of Time, while he was sitting upon the throne of his glory, and the books of the living ones were open before him. And all his power in heaven above and his escorts stood before him (47, 3-4).

Now, the passage of the *Apocalypse of Paul*:

[And we went] up to the seventh [heaven]. [I saw] an old ma[n]
the light [] white [] in the seventh heaven [] [sh]ining [seven]
times more than the sun (22, 21-30)²⁹⁸.

Despite the lacunas, it is possible to understand this vision: Paul gets into the seventh heaven, where he sees an old man with something white, maybe the garments, according to MacRae and Murdock. He also sees something that is seven times brighter

²⁹⁷ E. Issac's translation (Cf. Chalersworth, 1983). For the critical edition of *I Enoch*, see Knibb, 1978.

²⁹⁸ This translation is mine, according to the Coptic text established by Rosenstiehl (Cf. Rosenstiehl and Kaler, 2005). MacRae and Murdock suggest a different Coptic text for this passage with most of the lacunas reconstituted: "[Then we went] up to the seventh [heaven and I saw] an old man [] light [and whose garment] was white. [His throne,] which is in the seventh heaven, [was] brighter than the sun by seven times" (cf. MacRae and Murdock, 1979, p. 59).

The Coptic text suggested by MacRae and Murdock approaches even more the *Apocalypse of Paul* to the descriptions of the vision of God and his throne in *I Enoch* and *Daniel*.

than the sun²⁹⁹, maybe the old man himself, or his throne, according to MacRae and Murdock. It is also important to notice that he sees this old man and this brightness in the seventh heaven.

It is clear that the old man in the seventh heaven is the creator god, the God of the Scriptures, considered to be the supreme deity by Jews and non-gnostic Christians, but only the creator-ruler of the material world by gnostics³⁰⁰. Kaler says about this passage that our author “combined the respective climaxes of both sorts of accounts”³⁰¹, i.e. the apocalyptic and the gnostic ascent accounts. But this climax has two different meanings. In Jewish apocalypses, the meeting with God represents the greatest moment of the revelation for the visionary, the contemplation of God, his throne and his glory. But for gnostics this meeting has another meaning. The creator god is the supreme enemy of salvation. He is the last and most powerful obstacle met by the gnostic during his ascent. Thus, the *Apocalypse of Paul* uses this apocalyptic literary *topos*, the contemplation of God’s throne, to illustrate the gnostic idea of trespassing the creator.

Another apocalyptic text, *3 Enoch*³⁰², contains a similar passage to what follows the contemplation of the old shining man in the *Apocalypse of Paul*. In our text, Paul is addressed by the old man, who asks him where he is going (23, 2) and where he came from (23, 11). According to Kaler, the dialogue between Paul and the old man “uses a

²⁹⁹ So bright that he could foresee it from the sixth heaven (22:17-18).

³⁰⁰ Rosenstiehl contests this identification arguing that the passage is too fragmentary. However, I believe that we should consider the old man’s location, the seventh heaven. The seventh heaven was considered the place of God by several non-gnostic and gnostic texts. Moreover, the *Apocalypse of Paul* itself refers later to the cosmos as a creation of this old man (23, 27). (Cf. Rosenstiehl and Kaler, 2005, pp.55-62 and p. 252).

³⁰¹ Rosenstiehl and Kaler, 2005, p. 251.

³⁰² Mopsik, 1989.

motif that is common to many gnostic texts³⁰³, namely that of a formal series of statements dealing with the nature, origin and destination of the gnostic". Paul's answers to the old man's questions make possible the continuation of his ascent. Similarly, in *3 Enoch*, the seer is also questioned at the seventh heaven³⁰⁴, and he only continues his journey after answering the challenge made by the angel guards of seventh heaven gate³⁰⁵.

Another passage from the *Apocalypse of Paul* that has a parallel with a Jewish apocalyptic text is the judgment of soul's scene, comprised between pages 20-22. This passage is closely related to the *Testament of Abraham* 23, 2-17³⁰⁶:

And as Abraham was standing and marveling, behold (there was) an angel of the Lord driving six myriads of souls of sinners to destruction (...) And when they went, they found an angel holding in his hand one soul of a woman from among the six myriads (...) Then Michael took Abraham onto a cloud, and he brought him to Paradise. And when he reached the place where the judge was, the angel went and gave that soul to the judge. The soul said, "Have mercy on me, lord." And the judge said, "How shall I have mercy on you, since you did not have mercy on the daughter whom

³⁰³ See Kaler's inventory (Cf. Rosenstiehl and Kaler, 2005, p. 255).

³⁰⁴ See chapter 1 of *3 Enoch*.

³⁰⁵ Since the discussion on the precise date of *3 Enoch*'s composition is still open, even if it seems to be a later composition (Cf. Alexander, 1983; Milik, 1976), it is not possible to know if the *Apocalypse of Paul* was influenced by it, or the contrary, or the subject in question was a simply literary *topos*, common to both texts.

³⁰⁶ See also the judgment of souls' scene in chapter 4 of the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* (Cf. Wintermute, 1983).

you bore (...) The judge commanded the one who writes the records to come. And behold, (there came) cherubim bearing two books (...) And that man opened one of the books which the cherubim had and sought out the sin of the woman's soul, and he found it. (...) Then they took her too and handed (her) over to the tortures³⁰⁷.

Now, the *Apocalypse of Paul's* passage:

And I³⁰⁸ saw {angels of all sorts in the fifth heaven, and I saw that these³⁰⁹} angels were bringing a soul out of the land of the dead. They set it at the gate to the fourth heaven, and the angels were whipping it. The soul spoke up and said, "What sin did I commit in the world?" The toll-collector who sits in the fourth heaven responded, saying, "It was not right

³⁰⁷ This is E.P. Sander's translation of 'B' recension of the *Testament of Abraham*. (cf. Sanders, 1983). For the critical edition, see Stone, 1972.

³⁰⁸ The narrative changes to the first person here, and will remain in the first person until the end of the text. The change between third and first person is a common element of ascension apocalypses. (Cf. Kaler, 2006).

³⁰⁹ ³⁰⁹ This phrase αἰναὺ δε ζῆντ' μεζῳτο ἔπε κατὰ γενος αἰναὺ δε ἐνιαγγελος εὐεῖνε ἡνοῦτε ἐνιαγγελος εὐεῖνε ἡνοῦψυχῃ, may be literally translated as follows: "but I saw in the fifth heaven according to type, I saw angels looking like gods, angels that were bringing a soul" (Kaler's translation). However, this literal translation is not completely coherent in the text as we have it. I may adopt Wolf-Peter Funk's suggestion, shared by Kaler, that the phrase as we have it has become garbled, and that it should be originally read αἰναὺ δε ζῆντ' μεζῳτο ἔπε ἐζενιαγγελος κατὰ γενος αἰναὺ δε ἐνιαγγελος εὐεῖνε ἡνοῦψυχῃ. For further presentation of Funk's hypothesis and discussion, see Rosenstiehl and Kaler 2005, pp.214–216.

to do all those lawless deeds that are in the land of the dead.” The soul re[pl]ied, saying, “Bring witnesses! Let them [tell you] in what bod[y] I behaved lawlessly.” [“I want to bring] a book [to read from.”] And [the th]ree witnesses came. The first one spoke [up,] saying [“Wasn’t it] I who was [in] the body at the second hour [...] ? I rose up against you un[til you wer]e filled with anger [and] wr[at]h an[d en]vy.” And the second spoke, [say]ing, “Wasn’t it I who was in the world, and who came in at the fifth hour? And I saw you, and I desired you. And behold, now I am accusing you on account of the murders that you committed.” The third spoke up, saying “Wasn’t it I who came to you at the twelfth hour of the day, when the sun was about to set, and I gave you darkness until you had completed your sins?” When the soul heard these things it stared down, sorrowfully, and then it gazed upwards. They cast it down. When they cast it down, the [s]oul [went] into [a] body that had been prepared [for it. An]d with that, the trial was over (20,5 – 21, 23)³¹⁰.

And also:

I saw a great angel in the fifth hea[ven], holding an iron rod³¹¹ in his hand, three other angels with him. And I gazed at their faces. They were quarrel-

³¹⁰ Kaler’s translation (Cf. Kaler, 2006).

³¹¹ According to Kaler, “this iron rod is probably a messianic symbol (cf. *Revelation* 2:27; 12:5; 19:15; *Psalms of Solomon* 17.24). However, this passage parodies orthodox Christian messianic hopes, by

ling with one another, with whips in their hands, goading the souls on to the judgement (22, 2-10).

We saw that the *Apocalypse of Paul* is a type II apocalypse (otherworldly journey) that presents a pseudonymous seer, an otherworldly mediator and an otherworldly journey. Concerning the temporal axis, it presents what may be considered the judgment of sinners³¹² and the idea of present salvation by knowledge. If we follow McRae and Murdock, and Kaler's idea that the *Apocalypse of Paul* is a Valentinian work, we may consider that this tradition used apocalyptic literature and themes, contrary to Attridge's opinion. I believe that the *Apocalypse of Paul* is the Nag Hammadi text that contains the largest number of apocalyptic clichés. Despite its Christian features, I believe that, concerning the apocalyptic framework, the *Apocalypse of Paul* is more influenced by Jewish apocalyptic than Christian apocalyptic³¹³. We saw the scheme of Jewish ascent apocalypses proposed by Veilhauer, and the *Apocalypse of Paul* is close to this scheme, what may indicate a strong influence of Jewish apocalyptic. Moreover, the clear usage of Jewish apocalypses, such as *Daniel*, *1 Enoch* and the *Testament of Abraham*, reinforces the statement of a Jewish apocalyptic influence.

This usage of so many apocalyptic elements may be intentional. Our author surely knew apocalyptic literature and he was probably using those clichés to reach a specific audience, which were familiarized to apocalyptic themes. That may indicate a close un-

putting the rod in the hands of a fierce angel, busily engaged in herding souls to judgement". (Cf. Kaler, 2006).

³¹² Even if this judgment is made by the archons.

³¹³ This question will be discussed in the general conclusion of this dissertation.

derstanding of a literary genre. Seeing the *Apocalypse of Paul*, one may consider that its author had the idea of an apocalyptic literary genre in mind.

4.2- The First Apocalypse of James (NH V, 3)

The denomination of 'First' is a convention used by scholars to differentiate this text from the following treatise in Codex V since both have the same title in the manuscript: the Apocalypse of James (ΤΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ ΝΙΑΚΩΒΟΣ). Thus, the first text in order of appearance in Codex V was named the *First Apocalypse of James* and the second the *Second Apocalypse of James*.

The *editio princeps* of the *First Apocalypse of James* was published by Böhlig and Labib³¹⁴. In 1968, Kasser published the first French translation of the *Apocalypses of James*. In 1979, the Nag Hammadi Studies collection published its volume 11³¹⁵, with the critical edition and translation of the *First Apocalypse of James*³¹⁶, along with the other apocalypses of Codex V³¹⁷, the entire Codex VI and the *Papyrus Berolinenses*. In 1986, the BCNH collection published its section texts volume 17, with the critical edition and French translation of the *Apocalypses of James*, by Armand Veilleux³¹⁸.

It is also important to mention that the Codex Tchacos contains a new version of the *First Apocalypse of James*³¹⁹. The state of conservation of Codex Tchacos version is better than Nag Hammadi version, mostly in last pages of the text in question. The Nag

³¹⁴ Böhlig and Labib, 1963. See the commentary on the *Apocalypse of Paul*.

³¹⁵ Edited by D. Parrott. (Cf. Parrott, 1979).

³¹⁶ Schoedel, 1979.

³¹⁷ *Eugnostos* was not included in this edition. See the comment on *Eugnostos* in chapter 7.

³¹⁸ Veilleux, 1986.

³¹⁹ Kasser, Meyer and Wurst, 2006.

Hammati version is really damaged in the last pages. We know, even if it is not published yet, that the last pages of Codex Tchacos version are better preserved. We can also affirm that the title in the manuscript of Codex Tchacos is different: only *James*, not *Apocalypse of James*, as in Nag Hammadi Codex V.

The date of composition of the *First Apocalypse of James* cannot be fixed with certainty. Brown suggests the beginning of third century³²⁰. Concerning the place of its composition, there is no sufficient evidence to determine it. However, our text has close relations to Valentianian traditions³²¹, more precisely, eastern Valentianism³²². Moreover, it presents the personage of James, the Just, or the Lord's Brother, which could indicate a close relation to Jewish-Christian circles³²³.

The text can be divided into two parts. The first part contains revelations disclosed to James by the Savior before his Passion. The second part contains revelations from the Savior to James after the resurrection. Each of these parts can be subdivided: the

³²⁰ Brown, 1972, p. 270.

³²¹ Many elements can be cited, but I believe that the most impressive one is brought us by Irenaeus' account of a rite attributed to Marcosians (*Adversus Haereses* II, 11-21). Epiphanius conserved part of Irenaeus' Greek text and he also witnesses this rite, attributing it to Heracleon's disciples. In these accounts, Epiphanius and Irenaeus describe a rite where the initiates would recite prayer formulas. These formulas are extremely similar to the passwords that Jesus tells to James as a way to pass through the archons (33, 15-35, 16). Certain features of the *First Apocalypse of James* also approach it to the doctrine of the *Extracts of Theodotus*. (Cf. Veilleux, 1986).

³²² For a discussion on Eastern Valentianism, see Thomassen's study. (Cf. Thomassen, 2006).

³²³ See Veilleux's discussion. (Cf. Veilleux, 1986). These possible close relations to Jewish-Christian circles led certain scholars to suggest that Valentianian elements in the *First Apocalypse of James* could be interpolations. (Cf. Brown, 1972 and Kasser, 1968).

first group of revelations, before the Passion, into seven revelatory discourses of the Savior³²⁴; the second into two revelatory discourses of the Savior.

These revelations deal with two basic points, cosmogony (the highest God, the origin of the Pleroma, and the lower material world and its archons, including Sophia Achamoth) and the soteriological ascent of soul after the material death.

Concerning the apocalyptic character, Veilleux argues that “those who copied and used these documents (the *First* and the *Second Apocalypse of James*) in the third and fourth century, and were not aware of our modern distinctions between apocalypse, gnostic dialogue and revelatory discourse, considered the *First Apocalypse of James* as an apocalypse³²⁵. However, the *First Apocalypse of James* does not fit accurately in modern definitions of ‘apocalypse’.

Certain elements of the *First Apocalypse of James* have parallels in apocalyptic texts. There are revelations in the text concerning celestial matters and personal eschatology. Concerning the manner of revelation, Fallon considers that the *First Apocalypse of James* presents an epiphany scene, a revelatory dialogue, an otherworldly mediator and a pseudonymous seer. Concerning the temporal axis, he considers that the text presents cosmogony, salvation by knowledge and personal afterlife. Concerning the spatial axis, it presents otherworldly elements and paranaesis, and finally, concerning the final elements, it presents instructions to the recipient of revelation and a narrative conclusion. At least

³²⁴ Each discourse is followed by an intervention of James, which makes of our texts a revelatory dialogue. The fifth intervention is a hymn about the spiritual relations between James and the Savior. All the other interventions are small, generally questions.

³²⁵ This statement is also valid for the *Second Apocalypse of James*. (Cf. Veilleux, 1986, p. 15).

one of the elements pointed out by Fallon is usually considered as gnostic, salvation by knowledge.

Despite the presence of these apocalyptic features, I believe that the *First Apocalypse of James* is not exactly an apocalypse, but rather a text with apocalyptic characteristics. The lack of important features makes it impossible to consider this text as an apocalypse. Fallon classifies it as a type I apocalypse. However, there is no *ex-eventu* prophecy or any periodization or review of history³²⁶. It is not possible either to consider it as a type II (otherworldly journey) apocalypse, even if the text mentions it, it does not exactly happens³²⁷. Thus, the *First Apocalypse of James* is closer to the revelation dialogue literary scheme already presented in this dissertation. But I mentioned that it presents certain apocalyptic features, and these features deserve to be commented.

Following Fallon's outline of apocalyptic elements in the *First Apocalypse of James*, we should start with the epiphany scene. The first revelation sequence has no epiphany scene. But the second revelation scene starts with an apparition of the Savior:

When James heard of these sufferings and was much distressed, they awaited the sign of his coming. And he came after several. And James was walking upon the mountain, which is called "Gaugelan" with his disciples who listened to him [because they had been distressed], and he was [

³²⁶ However, one may consider the prediction of James' martyrdom as an *ex-eventu* prophecy.

³²⁷ As already said, one of the text's main subjects is the soteriological ascent of soul. However, this ascent does not actually happen, the Savior only teaches James about it, telling him how to escape and pass through the archons and the creator. Moreover, this ascent does not show any revelatory features, but soteriological ones, and it is not properly an apocalyptic otherworldly journey, because there is no revelation and the soul who ascends does not come back.

] ... a comforter, [saying]: "This is [] the second [Then the] crowd dispersed, but James remained [] prayer [], as was his custom. And the Lord appeared to him. Then he stopped the prayer and embraced him. He kissed him saying: "Rabbi, I have found you! I have heard of your sufferings, which you endured. And I have been much distressed. My compassion you know (30, 13-31, 9)³²⁸.

This passage presents many common elements of apocalyptic writings. Firstly, we may draw attention to the epiphany itself. Contrary to many apocalypses, there is no shining element or any visual manifestation of the mediator's divinity or superiority, the Savior simply shows up to James, without any visual effects. In his comment on this passage, Veilleux argues that the fact that Jesus shows up to James just after the end of his (James) prayer represents the end of the ancient economy and the beginning of the new one, the economy of gnostic salvation. He says:

Même après la résurrection, c'est avec la foule des disciples de Jésus qu'il (Jacques) attendait la venue de celui-ci. Mais quand, après la dispersion de la foule, le Seigneur lui apparaît, il abandonne la prière. Ce geste exprime de toute vraisemblance la fin de l'économie judaïque, caractérisée par la prière³²⁹.

³²⁸ Schoedel's translation (Cf. Schoedel, 1979, p. 81).

³²⁹ Veilleux, 1986. p. 83.

I believe that the text does not clearly express Veilleux's idea of the end of Jewish economy, characterized by the prayer. The text tells that James stopped his prayer just after Jesus' appearance, thus, I believe that this passage shows the usage of a literary apocalyptic element. In many apocalypses, visions start when the visionary is doing ascetic practices or when he is praying³³⁰.

Another element in this passage that deserves to be commented is the place where James is, a mountain called Gaugelan. As already discussed in the *Apocalypse of Paul's* commentary, mountains are often present in apocalypses as a place for revelations.

The pseudonymous seer is James, the Lord's brother. There where many traditions about this character in several ancient texts³³¹. He is also called James, the Just, and he should not be confused with the apostle James. For the author of the *First Apocalypse of James*, the brotherhood of Jesus and James is spiritual³³². James was considered by Jewish-Christians and gnostic-Christians as an important figure, someone worthy of particular revelations of the Savior. Thus, he was an excellent personage to attribute an authorship³³³.

The *First Apocalypse of James* presents other apocalyptic elements. The revelatory dialogues deal with cosmogony and otherworldly elements. Mostly, these elements are related to gnostic doctrines, such as the existence of Sophia Achamoth, the archons, and the existence of the supreme God who dwells in the Pleroma. Salvation by knowl-

³³⁰ See, for example *Daniel* 10: 2-3, and also the chapter 9. See also *4 Ezra*, where the angel tells him to fast and pray before receive the revelations (5, 20-21/ 31). (Cf. Stone, 1990).

³³¹ See Veilleux's inventory of ancient texts about James, the Lord's brother.

³³² "For not without reason have I called you my brother, although you are not my brother materially" (24, 14-16). Schoedel's translation. (Cf. Schoedel, 1979, p. 69).

³³³ Veilleux, 1986, pp.1-7.

edge is a specific feature of gnostic treatises, and the *First Apocalypse of James* presents it. For its closing elements, the *First Apocalypse of James* tells that the seer shall transmit the revelations to Addai, who shall write it down, similarly to apocalyptic texts, such as *4 Ezra* (14, 38-44)³³⁴.

We saw that the *First Apocalypse of James* presents certain apocalyptic elements, such as the presence of an otherworldly mediator, a pseudonymous seer, the idea of present salvation by knowledge and personal afterlife. It also contains certain common features with apocalypses, such as the need of praying before receive revelations. Some other elements could be considered apocalyptic, such as the epiphany scene; however, this scene in the *First Apocalypse of James* presents no apocalyptic elements, i.e. brightness, lights and the manifestation of the divinity or otherworldly mediator's glory. Moreover, the lacking of certain fundamental elements, such as the incredible visions, moves our text away from apocalyptic literature. It is indeed, closer to the revelatory dialogue literary genre. Thus, despite the presence of apocalyptic elements and its title, the *First Apocalypse of James* is not an apocalypse, but rather a text with apocalyptic characteristics, whose author was certainly familiarized with apocalyptic texts and traditions.

4.3- The Second Apocalypse of James (NH V, 4).

The *Second Apocalypse of James* is the fourth treatise of Codex V. Only two of its twenty pages (44-63) have the bottoms preserved. Some other lacunas show up at some points of the manuscript. Thus, generally speaking, the state of the manuscript is fragmentary, but there is no entire section missing.

³³⁴ Stone, 1990.

The *editio princeps* of the *Second Apocalypse of James* was published by Böhlig and Labib³³⁵. In 1968, Kasser published the first French translation of the *Apocalypses of James*. In 1979, the Nag Hammadi Studies collection published its volume 11³³⁶, with the critical edition and translation of the *Second Apocalypse of James*³³⁷, along with the other apocalypses of Codex V³³⁸, the entire Codex VI and the *Papyrus Berolinenses*. In 1986, the BCNH collection published it in the section «texts» volume 17, with the critical edition and French translation of the *Apocalypses of James*, by Armand Veilleux³³⁹.

According to Veilleux, the main idea of the *Second Apocalypse of James* lies, as the *First Apocalypse of James*, in the process of gnostic salvation³⁴⁰. Even if James' martyrdom's account³⁴¹ appears in the text, the battle against the creator of the material world and his archons for salvation is the central idea. The text is presented as a report of Jesus' revelations to James. These revelations are presented as an account of a Jewish priest named Mareim. The beginning of the text tells that Mareim brought James' discourse preached in Jerusalem to Theuda, the father of the Just (44, 13-20). However, the fragmentary condition of the manuscript does not allow us to define exactly when the reports of Mareim start and end³⁴².

³³⁵ Böhlig and Labib, 1963. See the commentary on the *Apocalypse of Paul*.

³³⁶ Edited by D. Parrott. (Cf. Parrott, 1979).

³³⁷ Hedrick, 1979.

³³⁸ *Eugnostos* was not included in this edition. See the comment on *Eugnostos* in chapter 7.

³³⁹ Veilleux, 1986.

³⁴⁰ Veilleux, 1986, p. 12.

³⁴¹ We may consider that it is the same James as in the *First Apocalypse of James*, the Just, the Lord's Brother. There were several traditions about the martyrdom of James, the Just (Cf. Veilleux, 1986, pp.5-7). Wolf-Peter Funk has suggested that the martyrdom of James was a late addition to our text (Cf. Funk, 1976).

³⁴² Hedrick, 1979, p. 106.

The title is present only at the beginning of the treatise (ΤΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ ΝΙΛΑΚΩΒΟΣ). Part of the title is missing in the lacuna, but the reconstitution is certain. Veilleux believes that the final account of James' martyrdom was not part of the original composition, being added later³⁴³. For him, the fact that this account was added may explain why the title is not present at the end of the text, the regular model in Nag Hammadi texts³⁴⁴. Veilleux also notes that the text has many poetic passages introduced between prose passages. These poetic and prose passages, however, form a coherent unit, attesting that they are not interpolations³⁴⁵.

Hedrick suggests the following division of the text: I) Prologue (44, 11-20); II) The report of Mareim (44, 21-63, 32): a) Mareim comes to Theuda with the report (44, 21-45, 30); b) the discourses of James (46, 1-60, 29)³⁴⁶; c) the death of James (61, 1- 63, 29)³⁴⁷. Veilleux suggests the division of the primitive text, i.e. the section without the added account of James martyrdom. He divides it as the *First Apocalypse of James*, in two revelatory sequences, one before the Passion and other after the resurrection³⁴⁸.

³⁴³ There is a general agreement between scholars on this issue. Funk argues that there is a difference of styles and perspective between the two distinct parts of the *Second Apocalypse of James*, which leads to the conclusion that these two parts were two different documents brought together in our text. (Cf. Funk, 1976).

³⁴⁴ Veilleux, 1986, p. 158. Brown shares this opinion. (Cf. Brown, 1972, p. 156). For a discussion on titles in Nag Hammadi treatises see Poirier, 1997.

³⁴⁵ Veilleux, 1986, p. 13.

³⁴⁶ He subdivides section II b as follows: 1- James claims to be the revelation bearer (46, 1-47, 30); 2- the first discourse of Jesus reported by James (48, 1-49, 30); 3- the report of James on the appearance of Jesus (50, 1-30); the second discourse of Jesus reported by James (51, 1-57,11); 5- the reaction of James to the appearance of Jesus (57, 12-19); 6- the final exhortation of James 57, 20-60, 29).

³⁴⁷ He subdivides this section as follows: 1- the setting (61, 1-14); 2- the account of the stoning (61, 15-62, 12); 3- the prayer of James (62, 12-63, 29); 4- conclusion (63, 30-32). (Cf. Hedrick, 1979, p. 106).

³⁴⁸ Veilleux, 1986, p. 12.

The *Second Apocalypse of James* as a whole may be considered a gnostic text. It contains certain gnostic elements, such as the aeons (53, 8) and archons (56, 19) and also gnostic themes, such as the salvation through knowledge (57, 4-8) and the differentiation between the creator and the supreme god (56, 20-57, 3; 54, 10-15)³⁴⁹. Nevertheless, our text presents many affinities with Jewish-Christian traditions³⁵⁰, similar to the *First Apocalypse of James*. It is not possible to determine an exact date and place for the composition of the *Second Apocalypse of James*. But since it presents many similarities to Jewish-Christian traditions, and gnostic elements at the same time, we may suggest an early date, such as the second century.

Fallon classifies the *Second Apocalypse of James* as a Christian-gnostic apocalypse with otherworldly revelations but no otherworldly journeys. However, I believe that the *Second Apocalypse of James*, like the *First Apocalypse of James*, does not fit in the modern definition of 'apocalypse' either. It is closer to the revelation dialogue literary genre³⁵¹.

But the *Second Apocalypse of James* contains certain apocalyptic elements beside its title. Fallon considers that it presents an epiphany scene, an otherworldly mediator, pseudonymous seer, reaction of the recipient, judgment of otherworldly beings and ac-

³⁴⁹ However, it does not present explicit Valentinian elements.

³⁵⁰ The fact that James is considered to be the exclusive recipient of special Jesus revelations. Moreover, as we saw in the commentary on the *First Apocalypse of James*, there were many traditions about the martyrdom of James, and according to Böhlig, the stoning, the tradition chosen and described by our author, shows exactly the Jewish legal rules for execution described in the Mishnah (Sanh. 6.6). (Cf. Hedrick, 1979, p. 108 and Böhlig, 1968, pp. 107-110, 114-116).

³⁵¹ Hedrick argues that it is difficult to describe the literary form of the *Second Apocalypse of James*: "The title (44, 11-12) refers to it as an apocalypse, and the incipit (44, 13-15) describes it as a discourse. In the sense that James relates a revelation received from the resurrected Jesus, it may be called a revelation discourse". (Cf. Hedrick, 1979, p. 106).

count of primordial events. Fallon also cites other elements, such as salvation by knowledge and personal afterlife³⁵², but I do not consider these elements as exclusive characteristics of gnostic apocalyptic literature. We find these elements in other kinds of gnostic texts. Nevertheless, the apocalyptic elements pointed out by Fallon deserve to be commented.

The epiphany scene, similar to the *First Apocalypse of James*, shows no shining elements or glory, which is expected in apocalyptic texts³⁵³. The appearance of Jesus is described as follows: "Once when I was sitting deliberating, he opened the door. That one whom you hated and persecuted came in to me" (50, 5-10). It is Jesus who appears to James after the resurrection. There are many accounts of Jesus' appearances after the resurrection, mostly in gospels³⁵⁴. Thus, the simple fact that Jesus appears to someone after the resurrection to disclose revelations cannot be considered as an apocalyptic element.

Concerning the otherworldly mediator, one may consider that Jesus plays this role in the *Second Apocalypse of James*. Once again we should turn our attention to the ensemble of ancient Christian literature. The number of writings where Jesus plays the role of a revealer is amazingly huge. But no one considers the canonical gospels, for example, as apocalypses. There are lacks of apocalyptic elements, such as the incredible visions, in

³⁵² Fallon, 1979.

³⁵³ I believe that the epiphany scenes of both apocalypses of James show that they are not directly linked to the apocalyptic tradition. Jesus only shows up, like in many other Christian texts. The apocalyptic epiphany of the mediator generally shows shining elements and a specific reaction of joy and fear by the visionary, as we will discuss in the comment on the *Apocalypse of Peter*.

³⁵⁴ If we consider only the canonical gospels, there are many accounts of Jesus's appearances after the resurrection. See, for example, *Matthew* 28:9-10; 16-20; *Mark* 16: 9-11; 12-18; *Luke* 13:13-34; 36-49.

the revelations disclosed by Jesus. Thus, I believe that the revelations disclosed by Jesus in the *Second Apocalypse of James* are not directly linked to the apocalypse tradition.

Regarding the pseudonymous seer, our text uses the same authority as the *First Apocalypse of James*: James, The Just, the Lord's brother. As said before, he was considered to be someone who received special exclusive revelations from the Lord. Pseudonym was not a particular characteristic of apocalyptic literature, but rather a common literary practice in antiquity³⁵⁵.

The content of Jesus' discourses is found in many gnostic treatises. He proclaims the evil purposes of the creator (53, 1-21), a brief account in a gnostic perspective of original creation of man (54, 10-20). Fallon argues that there is a passage (53, 12-29) that presents a prediction of judgment and destruction of the creator³⁵⁶. There is the passage:

And his gifts are not blessings. His promises are evil schemes. For you are not an (instrument) of his compassion, but it is through you that he does violence. He wants to do injustice to us and will exercise dominion for a time allotted to him. But understand and know the father who has compassion. He was not given an inheritance that was unlimited, [nor] does it (his inheritance) [have] a limited number of days, but it is as [the] eternal [day].³⁵⁷

³⁵⁵ See Gruenwald, 1988.

³⁵⁶ Fallon, 1979, p. 128.

³⁵⁷ Hedrick's translation (Cf. Hedrick, 1979, p. 129).

Fallon extrapolates the text, since this passage only says that the evil deeds of the creator will come to an end, presenting no clear reference to his judgment or destruction. However, this passage also says that the creator “will exercise dominion for a time allotted to him” (53, 20-21); the time allotted is a common feature in type I apocalypses³⁵⁸. The time of the creator is cited in contrast to the time of the Father; while the time of the creator will come to an end, the time of the Father is eternal (53, 25-29).

Concluding, one may say that despite its title, the *Second Apocalypse of James* does not fit in modern definitions of apocalyptic literature. As we have seen, the elements presented in the *Second Apocalypse of James* that could be considered as apocalyptic, are also present in other literary genres. Thus, one may even affirm that its author had a different literary tradition in mind.

4.4- The Apocalypse of Adam (NH V, 5)

The *Apocalypse of Adam* is the last treatise of Codex V, covering pages 64 to 85. It is the best preserved text of the entire codex. None of its pages is completely preserved, but lacunas are often small and normally, reconstitutions can be made with confidence³⁵⁹. The title shows up at the beginning, where it is written ΤΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ ΝΑΔΑΜ, and at the end of the treatise, where it may be reconstituted as ΤΑΠΟ[ΚΑΛΥ]ΨΙΣ ΝΑΔ[ΑΜ].

The *Apocalypse of Adam's* *editio princeps*, along with the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the *Apocalypses of James*, was published in 1963 by Böhlig and Labib³⁶⁰. In 1979, the

³⁵⁸ See chapter 2.

³⁵⁹ MacRae, 1979, p. 152.

³⁶⁰ See the commentary on the *Apocalypse of Paul*.

Nag Hammadi Studies collection published its volume 11³⁶¹, with the critical edition and translation of the *Apocalypse of Adam*³⁶², along with the other apocalypses of Codex V³⁶³, the entire Codex VI and the *Papyrus Berolinenses*. In 1980 Hedrick³⁶⁴ presented a literary study on the *Apocalypse of Adam* and its sources. And finally, in 1981, the BCNH collection published its texts volume 15, with the critical edition and translation of the *Apocalypse of Adam*, made by Françoise Morard³⁶⁵.

According to Morard, the author of the *Apocalypse of Adam* was acquainted with Greek literature and mythology, and even when he refers to the Bible, he uses the Septuagint. Morard also points out to grammatical particularities that permit to assume that the *Apocalypse of Adam* was originally composed in Greek³⁶⁶.

Scholars normally suggest an early date for this original composition in Greek, such as the beginning of second century³⁶⁷ or even the first century³⁶⁸. Certain scholars such as Pearson³⁶⁹ and Nickelsburg³⁷⁰ see in the *Apocalypse of Adam* a pre-Christian work which could have used earlier Jewish apocalyptic treatises as sources. Morard, for

³⁶¹ Edited by D. Parrott. (Cf. Parrott, 1979).

³⁶² Made by G. MacRae. (Cf. MacRae, 1979).

³⁶³ *Eugnostos* was not included in this edition. See the comment on *Eugnostos* in chapter 7.

³⁶⁴ Hedrick, 1980.

³⁶⁵ Morard, 1981.

³⁶⁶ Morard, 1985, p. 5.

³⁶⁷ Morard, 1985, p. 7.

³⁶⁸ MacRae, 1979, p. 152.

³⁶⁹ Pearson, 2002.

³⁷⁰ Nickelsburg, 1981.

her part, considers that the *Apocalypse of Adam* presents certain Christian features³⁷¹, which justifies the early second century as a date for its composition³⁷².

The existence of Apocalypses of Adam was pointed out by Epiphanius³⁷³, and the Cologne Mani Codex³⁷⁴ also cites an "Apocalypse of Adam". In the Hierosolymitanus Codex³⁷⁵, a gloss in the *Epistle of Barnabe* mentions that a passage of the text is present in the Psalm 51 (50), 19 and in the *Apocalypse of Adam*³⁷⁶. However, the *Apocalypse of Adam* from codex V cannot be surely identified with any of these texts.

The *Apocalypse of Adam*, according to certain scholars, such as Pearson³⁷⁷ and Morard³⁷⁸ is part of a larger cycle of literature related to the personage of Adam. This cycle of literature is clearly Jewish and has revelatory features³⁷⁹, and was probably also known by Christians. Nickelsburg points out to the existence of a common source for the redaction of the *Apocalypse of Adam* and one of these Jewish-Adam texts, the *Life of Adam and Eve*³⁸⁰. The references to the first chapters of *Genesis* are also numerous, which is common in both literatures, apocalyptic and gnostic.

³⁷¹ These possible Christian features will be discussed later on this chapter.

³⁷² Morard, 1985, pp.5-7.

³⁷³ *Panarion*, 26, 8.

³⁷⁴ 48,16-50,7.

³⁷⁵ Dated around 1056. (Cf. Morard, 1981, p. 8).

³⁷⁶ Morard, 1985, p. 8.

³⁷⁷ Pearson, 2002, pp.148-149.

³⁷⁸ Morard, 1985, pp.7-8.

³⁷⁹ Other ancient texts are part of this cycle, such as *Life of Adam and Eve* and *Apocalypse of Moses* (Cf. Pearson, 2002, p. 7). Morard also adds to this cycle texts such as the *Combat d'Adam*, *Pénitence d'Adam* and *Testament d'Adam* (Cf. Morard, 1985, p. 8).

³⁸⁰ Nickelsburg, 1981, p. 537.

For certain scholars, such as Pearson³⁸¹ and Nickelsburg³⁸², the *Apocalypse of Adam* presents no clear reference to Christian tradition. This characteristic alongside with the early date of our text, its close relation to Jewish revelatory literature circles and its well developed redeemer myth with gnostic features lead some scholars to believe in a pre-Christian gnosticism. Thus, many scholars, such as Pearson, see in the *Apocalypse of Adam* a literary demonstration of the transition from Jewish apocalypticism to gnosis³⁸³.

However, Morard argues that the *Apocalypse of Adam* contains Christian features³⁸⁴. This is also the opinion of Shellrude, who wrote an article pointing out certain evidences for a Christian gnostic provenance for our text³⁸⁵. And indeed, it seems to me that, despite the clear and direct influences of Jewish apocalyptic literature, and the cited Adam circle of literature, the *Apocalypse of Adam* presents Christian features. Shellrude emphasizes certain possible quotations and parallels to certain Nag Hammadi texts, such as the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, the *Apocalypse of Peter*, the *Concept of Our Great Power* and the *Second Treatise of the Great Seth*, mostly concerning the redeemer myth presented in the *Apocalypse of Adam*. These evidences could lead to a Christian Gnostic provenance³⁸⁶.

³⁸¹ Pearson, 2002.

³⁸² Nickelsburg, 1981.

³⁸³ Pearson's discussion, already presented earlier in this dissertation, is very clear and complete. (Cf. Pearson, 2002).

³⁸⁴ Morard, 1981, p. 7.

³⁸⁵ Shellrude, 1981.

³⁸⁶ He argues that in the *Apocalypse of Adam*, it is quite possible that the Illuminator is the heavenly Seth (65, 6-9; 72, 6-7; 77, 1). If we consider that this is the case, then the *Gospel of the Egyptians* offers a close parallel to this redeemer myth. And the *Gospel of the Egyptians* clearly identifies this personage with Jesus (64, 1-3). (Cf. Shellrude, 1981, p. 84). He also cites that in the *Apocalypse of Adam*, the departure of the redeemer is followed by the creator's tentative to invalidate his work, which is a quite common feature in

The *Apocalypse of Adam*, with its clear Jewish influences, is a gnostic writing, more precisely, a Sethian text³⁸⁷. Despite the title, the authorship is not attributed to Adam. The narrator, whoever he was, tells the whole story, and cites Adam and his son Seth in the third person. Moreover, it is Seth who plays the main role. He is the one who receives the revelation. Then, it is important to link our text with other Nag Hammadi writings which are normally classified as Sethians, such as the *Apocryphon of John*, the *Hypostasis of the Archons*, and the *Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit*.

Concerning the discussion on the apocalyptic elements, we may say that the *Apocalypse of Adam* contains several revelatory features common in ancient Jewish revelatory literature. Firstly, Adam receives a revelation through a dream-vision (65, 24-66, 23). Then, Adam discloses these mysteries to his son Seth, and these mysteries, for their part, should be only disclosed to those from the seed of Seth (85, 20-24). Additionally, the framework of the *Apocalypse of Adam* is analogous to the Testament literary genre, since Adam's disclosure takes place just before his death³⁸⁸.

The manuscript clearly presents the word "apocalypse" in the title of this treatise twice, at the beginning (64, 1) and at the last line (85, 31). The last line, however, has some lacunas, but they can be easily reconstituted. Thus, the title of this treatise is surely *the Apocalypse of Adam* (ΤΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ ΝΑΔΑΜ). Beside the title, the first phrase of

certain gnostic Christian treatises, such as the *Apocalypse of Peter* (73, 23; 79, 31), the *Second Treatise of the Great Seth* (59, 19-60, 3; 60, 13-35) and the *Concept of Our Great Power* (42, 31-43, 2). (Cf. Shellrude, 1981, p. 85).

³⁸⁷ According to Schenke's categorization. (Cf. Schenke, 1974).

³⁸⁸ Perkins finds four literary elements of Jewish testament tradition: the presence of a patriarch; the approach of his death; the transmission to his offspring of a revelation disclosed by a heavenly mediator; and this revelation deals with the periodization of history and the final destiny of souls (Cf. Perkins, 1977, pp.382-395).

the text uses the word “apocalypse”³⁸⁹. These are the first signals to consider our text as an apocalypse. Moreover, the text presents certain apocalyptic characteristics. According to Morard, its title, clear in the manuscript, its characters and its framework show that the *Apocalypse of Adam* is firmly rooted in a Jewish milieu. She also argues that the literary scheme has elements classically attributed to the apocalyptic genre, such as the revelation disclosed to a human recipient through a dream vision of divine secrets, the origins and the end-time to come³⁹⁰. Thus, I consider that the *Apocalypse of Adam* is an apocalypse without an otherworldly journey but with a review of history.

The review of history is closely related to the first chapters of *Genesis*, mostly to the creation’s accounts (64, 6-8). The *Apocalypse of Adam* develops and interprets *Genesis*’ accounts in a gnostic way (64, 12-65, 23). Then, the *Apocalypse of Adam* divides history in three periods. Each period is marked by a question of the creator³⁹¹ (66, 17; 71, 17; and 77, 6). The first question is “Adam, why were you sighing in your heart?”³⁹², and it is followed by an affirmation of the creator himself about the creation of Adam: “Do you not know that I am the god who created you? And I breathed into you a spirit of life as a living soul?”³⁹³. This passage is a quotation from *Genesis* 2, 7, where God creates man and breaths in him a breath (*pneuma*) of life. This quotation is not a coincidence.

³⁸⁹ “The revelation (ἡ ἀποκάλυψις) which Adam taught his son, Seth...” (NH V, 5. 64, 2-3). MacRae’s translation (Cf. MacRae, 1979, p. 155).

³⁹⁰ Morard, 1981, p. 288.

³⁹¹ Morard says about these questions that they demonstrate the *Apocalypse of Adam*’s point of view that the creator is ignorant of the mysteries of the Pleroma and salvation. (Cf. Morard, 1985, p. 76).

³⁹² 66, 17-18. MacRae’s translation (Cf. MacRae, 1979, p. 159).

³⁹³ 66, 19-23. MacRae’s translation (Cf. MacRae, 1979, pp. 159-161).

The author of our text wanted to show deliberately that the god of Scriptures and the Demiurge are the same being³⁹⁴.

This first question symbolizes the first period of salvation history, in which the creator procreates with the material Eve³⁹⁵: “Then, the god, who created us, created a son from himself [] [] your mo[ther]”³⁹⁶.

The second question represents the second period of history of salvation and concerns Noah. The creator is reproaching him for having disobeyed his orders, as he did to Adam and Eve (Gn 3, 11): “And god will say to Noah: “Why have you departed from what I told you? You have created another generation so that you might scorn my power””(71, 17-20).

According to Morard :

Ainsi Dieu, dans le récit biblique, reproche-t-il aux premiers parents d’avoir voulu goûter au fruit de la connaissance du bien et du mal (Gen 3, 11) et d’avoir voulu rivaliser avec lui, puisque, d’après le tentateur, Dieu n’ignore pas que cette connaissance donnerait à Adam et Ève une puissance semblable à la sienne. Il y a donc ici une reprise ironique du récit biblique de la chute, en même temps qu’une preuve de la possibilité conservée à Noé et à sa descendance de faire encore un choix. Mais Noé, so-

³⁹⁴ Morard, 1985, p. 76.

³⁹⁵ This episode is also told in the *Apocryphon of John* (BC 62, 3-63, 12; III 31, 6-32, 6; II 24, 8-34, 1) , the *Hypostasis of the Archons* (89, 26-31 and 91, 11-15) and *On the Origin of the World* (117, 3-18).

³⁹⁶ The translation is mine, based on the Coptic text established by Morard. MacRae suggests another Coptic text where the name of Eve is reconstituted in one of the lacunas. Even if we do not consider this reconstitution, we may assume that the text is telling that the creator had procreated with Eve, since she is the earthly mother of Seth.

lennellement, prend à témoin la puissance du créateur (« Je témoignerai en présence de ton bras ») qu'il n'est pas le père de cette génération. Il rejette donc toute appartenance au monde de la Lumière et reconnaît officiellement la puissance du démiurge sur lui³⁹⁷.

Thus, this is the beginning of the creator's worship by mankind. One may also draw attention to another quotation from Genesis³⁹⁸.

The third question represents the last period of the history of salvation and concerns what Morard calls "l'Envoyé des derniers temps"³⁹⁹: "Then the god of the powers will be disturbed, saying: "What is the power of this man who is higher than we?" (77, 4-7). This man is a savior who will inaugurate the last period which is marked by the eschatological times and the final judgment⁴⁰⁰.

One last remark should be added about these three questions made by the creator and his powers. As already said, each one of them represents a particular period of salvation, and all these periods are presented as *ex-eventu* prophecies. The *Apocalypse of Adam* also "predicts", as *ex-eventu* prophecies, floods (69, 1-17) and destruction by fire (75, 9-16). The flood is produced by the creator as in the account of *Genesis* 7. However, in the *Apocalypse of Adam* the account of *Genesis* 7 is reversed. We may extend to our text Bernard Barc's comment on *Hypostasis of the Archons* 92, 4-18:

³⁹⁷ Morard, 1985, p. 87.

³⁹⁸ "And Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him" (*Genesis* 7, 5).

³⁹⁹ Morard, 1985, p. 98.

⁴⁰⁰ Morard, 1985, pp. 95-96.

Le mythe de Genèse est totalement inversé; alors que dans le texte canonique, la perversité des hommes était à l'origine du déluge, ici, au contraire, c'est la beauté des séthiens qui va provoquer la jalousie des archontes et leur décision d'exterminer les hommes par un déluge⁴⁰¹.

Thus, according to the *Apocalypse of Adam* and other Sethian writings, the flood was caused by the archons and the creator to destroy the chosen race, the seed of Seth⁴⁰².

The fire destruction marks the end of second period⁴⁰³. Morard and Nickelsburg draw attention to certain parallels between the *Apocalypse of Adam* and the *Apocalypse of the Weeks* from *I Enoch* (91-93). Both mention three judgments: the flood of water (*I Enoch* 93, 4); destruction by fire (*I Enoch* 93, 8); and the final judgment (*I Enoch* 91, 11-15). Moreover, *I Enoch* and the *Apocalypse of Adam* talk about a chosen race that will face an evil generation (93, 10). These close parallels led Nickelsburg and Morard to the belief that the *life of Adam and Eve* and the *Apocalypse of Adam* derived from a common source, an apocalyptic testament of Adam strongly influenced by the *Apocalypse of Weeks* in *I Enoch*⁴⁰⁴.

Concerning the presence of a divine mediator in the *Apocalypse of Adam*, we may analyze it from two different levels. Firstly, Adam says that he had a dream vision:

⁴⁰¹ Barc, 1980, p. 110.

⁴⁰² *The Sacred Book of the Great Invisible Spirit* (III 61, 4-5) confirms this interpretation of *Genesis* 7.

⁴⁰³ Morard remarks that this fire flood is not related to Sodom and Gomorra destruction by fire (*Genesis* 19, 24). (Cf. Morard, 1985, p. 92).

⁴⁰⁴ Cf. Morard, 1985, p. 63 and Nickelsburg, 1981.

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]. They surpassed [] glory, and [] men [] saying to me: 'Arise, Adam, from the sleep of death, and hear about the aeon and the seed of that man to whom life has come, who came from you and Eve, your wife (65, 24-66, 8)⁴⁰⁵.

One may consider this dream-vision as an apocalyptic vision. The "three men" who "were not from the powers of the god who had [created us]" could be considered as heavenly mediators of this little apocalyptic revelation disclosed to Adam.

At the second level, Adam himself is the heavenly mediator. Since he is "pneumatic", the resemblance of the primordial man, he is a pleromatical being, someone who is superior to the material world. And he is the mediator of the main revelation disclosed to his son Seth. Adam can be considered a divine mediator, the *angelus interpretes* of the *Apocalypse of Adam*. Moreover, this point also deals with the pseudonymous character of the text. Normally, the authorship is attributed to the presumed visionary. Adam had a dream-vision, but it is Seth who receives the main revelation. One may argue though, that Adam is only transmitting the revelation that he had in his dream-vision, as a testamentary discourse⁴⁰⁶.

⁴⁰⁵ George MacRae's translation (Cf. MacRae, 1979, pp. 161-162).

⁴⁰⁶ Morard says about this that "En fait, la révélation d'Adam à Seth est au second degré : Adam transmet à son fils ce qui lui a été dévoilé à lui-même au moyen d'un songe (65, 26 et ss.). C'est ce que A. J. Festugière (Cf. Festugière, 1944) appelle les types de révélation directe et indirecte. La révélation directe est reçue par Adam au cours d'un entretien, durant son sommeil, avec trois personnages célestes. La révélation indirecte est la «*traditio*» du père au fils, c'est le testament proprement dit". (Cf. Morard, 1985, p. 79).

We saw that the *Apocalypse of Adam* is a type I apocalypse (without otherworldly journey) that presents many common elements in apocalyptic literature. Moreover, we saw its close relationship to what we called “the Adam circle of literature” and to certain Jewish apocalypses, such as the books of Enoch. We also saw the discussion on the presence or lack of Christian features in the *Apocalypse of Adam*, presenting arguments on both parts, but finally choosing to consider that it presents Christian features. Nevertheless, in a more precise doctrinal perspective, the *Apocalypse of Adam* is a Sethian text, being also related to other Nag Hammadi texts, such as the *Hypostasis of the Archons*. It expresses its doctrine, however, in the form of an apocalyptic account, closely related to the Jewish apocalyptic literature.

4.5- The Apocalypse of Peter (NH VII, 3).

The *Apocalypse of Peter* is the third treatise of Codex VII. It is very well preserved and lacunas are almost inexistent. Despite the good conditions of the manuscript, the text has several textual difficulties that raise problems for translators and interpreters⁴⁰⁷. Some of these grammatical difficulties and particularities suggest that the *Apocalypse of Peter* was originally composed in Greek⁴⁰⁸.

The *Apocalypse of Peter* can be divided according to Peter’s visionary experiences and their subsequent interpretations by the Savior. Thus, Brashler suggests the following division: Introduction (70,14-72,4); First vision and interpretation (72,4-80,23);

⁴⁰⁷ Desjardins, 1996, p. 201.

⁴⁰⁸ The title in the manuscript was preserved in Greek (ἀποκαλύψις πετροῦ), another evidence of an original composition in Greek. However, our text should not be confused with the *Greek Apocalypse of Peter* (Cf. Marrassini and Bauckham, 1997).

second vision and interpretation (80,23-82,3); third vision and interpretation (82,4-83,15); and conclusion (80,15-84,13)⁴⁰⁹. Desjardins suggests another division. He considers that the *Apocalypse of Peter* deals with two main issues: the inner-Christian polemic and Christ's passion. The discussion on the inner-Christian polemic is more important in the *Apocalypse of Peter*'s intrigue than Christ's passion. But the first discussion is polarized by the second. And since introduction and conclusion deal with the same subject, he suggests a concentric structure (A, B, C, B, A): A) introduction (70,13-72,4); B) first visionary sequence (72,4-73,10); C) central revelatory discourse (73,10-81,3); B1) second visionary sequence (81,3-82,16); A1) conclusion⁴¹⁰.

Desjardins also argues that there are sufficient connections between these sections to consider the *Apocalypse of Peter* in its present form as a unity. But, since 70, 13-83, 15 stands satisfactorily without 73, 10-81,4a, it is possible that the author has used pre-existing sources in the redaction of the *Apocalypse of Peter*⁴¹¹. And since he uses Christian writings from the first two centuries⁴¹², the third century is the probable time for its composition. This date can also be supported by the fact that the *Apocalypse of Peter* contains a doctrine similar to that of second-third century gnostic literature. Moreover, the anti-episcopal polemic suggests a developed stage of episcopal organization in the

⁴⁰⁹ Brashler, 1977, pp. 144-147.

⁴¹⁰ Desjardins, 1996, p. 202.

⁴¹¹ Desjardins, 1996, p. 203.

⁴¹² Desjardins presents an inventory of New Testament texts used by the author of the *Apocalypse of Peter*. The strongest links are probably to *2Peter* and the *Gospel of Mathew*, but allusions to *Acts* and the *Gospel of John* also exist. (Cf. Desjardins, 1996, pp.210-211).

early church. Following Pearson's arguments, we can suggest Egypt as the place of its composition⁴¹³.

The title is well preserved at the beginning and at the end of the text. Moreover, the *Apocalypse of Peter* presents several apocalyptic elements. Desjardins argues that the *Apocalypse of Peter* contains ten out of thirteen characteristics of the apocalyptic master paradigm defined by Collins⁴¹⁴. He classifies them as follows⁴¹⁵:

1-Revelation is disclosed through visions (72, 4-73, 10 and 81, 3-82, 16), which comprise auditory revelations (72, 28-73, 10), dialogue and epiphany (72, 24-26 and 82, 9-14).

2- The revelation is mediated and interpreted by an otherworldly being (the Savior).

3- The human recipient is pseudonymous (Peter) and he reacts with fear and joy (72, 22).

4- There is *ex-eventu* prophecy, as part of a review of history.

5- In gnostic apocalypses, according to Fallon, salvation is acquired through knowledge (71, 15-21).

6- The end-time will bring punishment for false Christians (75, 21-22; 76, 18-23; 78, 23-24; 79, 17).

7- The end-time will bring salvation for the chosen ones.

8- There are discussions on otherworldly beings, elements and places, including a negative view of the lower region and its creator (73, 27).

⁴¹³ Pearson argues that the author of the *Apocalypse of Peter* widely uses *2Peter*. One of these usages is the expression 'waterless springs' (2Pet 2:17). According to Pearson, the author of the *Apocalypse of Peter* has adapted this expression to fit in an Egyptian context, using 'dry canals' (79, 30-31). These 'dry canals' are an allusion to the drying up of the Nile river and its canals, a common element in the "description of apocalyptic woes on Egypt in such Hellenistic texts as the *Oracle of the Potter* (see P.Oxy 2332, II. 73-74; and also *Alcelpius* NH VI, 8, 71, 16-19.)" (Cf. Pearson, 1997, p. 93). However, I believe that Pearson's argument is not convincing, the *Apocalypse of Peter*'s place of composition is still an open question.

⁴¹⁴ Collins, J.J., 1979. See chapter 2.

⁴¹⁵ Desjardins, 1996, pp. 209-210.

9-The mediator gives a mission to the recipient.

10- At the end of revelations, the seer awakes of his visionary experience or return to earth.

Desjardins also adds that the author of the *Apocalypse of Peter* might have been “frustrated by events which left him and his group powerless”, choosing the apocalyptic to express his message⁴¹⁶.

I believe that Desjardin’s outline of *Apocalypse of Peter*’s apocalyptic elements is a good starting point for the analysis of its real apocalyptic content. The first point comprises revelations through visions and epiphany. The first vision presented in the *Apocalypse of Peter* is narrated as follows:

And as he was saying these things, I saw the priests and the people running toward us with stones, as with they were about to kill us. And I was afraid that we were going to die. And he said to me, “Peter, I have told you many times that they are blind ones who have no leader. If you want to understand their blindness, put your hands <and> your robe over your eyes and describe what you see”. But when I had done it, I did not see anything. I said, “There is nothing to see.” Again he told me, “Do it again.” And fear came over me <and> joy, for I saw new light greater than light of day. Then it came down upon the Savior. And I told him what I saw. And he said to me again, “Lift up your hands and listen what the priests and the people are saying.” And I listened to the priests as they sat with the

⁴¹⁶ Desjardins, 1996, p. 210. As already discussed earlier in this dissertation, the political protest element is present in several Jewish and Christian apocalypses, such as *4 Ezra*, *Daniel*, *2 Baruch* and *Revelation*.

scribes. The multitudes were shouting with their voices. When he heard these things from me he said to me, "Prick up your ears and listen to the things they are saying." And I listened again. "As you sit, they are praising you"(72, 4-73, 10)⁴¹⁷.

Obviously, this is a metaphorical vision. The visionary does not see what is really happening, but what will happen according to our apocalypse. This passage has a very strong apocalyptic connotation: the vision itself is not a revelation, but it requires an explanation of the heavenly mediator to constitute a revelation⁴¹⁸. Thus, Peter has visions that are followed by an explanation made by the Savior, who plays the role of the celestial mediator⁴¹⁹. This passage also presents an epiphany of the heavenly mediator: "I saw new light greater than light of day. Then it came down upon the Savior", similar to many other apocalypses⁴²⁰.

The framework of the second sequence vision is similar. The visionary has another sequence of visions followed by explanations of the heavenly mediator, the Savior:

When he said those things, I saw him apparently being seized by them.

And I said, "What am I seeing, O Lord? Is it you yourself whom they take? And are you holding on to me? Who is this one above the cross,

⁴¹⁷ Desjardin's translation. (Cf. Desjardins, 1996, p. 241).

⁴¹⁸ Similarly to many apocalypses, such as *Daniel*, where after the visions, an angelic being explains to him the meanings of what he has seen (7: 17-27; 8: 16-26; 10: 11-14). *4 Ezra* is also an example (4, 1-3; 7, 1-2 ; 10, 29-31).

⁴¹⁹ And this comprises the second topic pointed out by Desjardins.

⁴²⁰ See, for example, *Revelation* 10: 1.

who is glad and laughing? And is it another person whose feet and hands they are hammering?" The Savior said to me. "He whom you see above the cross, glad and laughing, is the living Jesus. But he into whose hands and feet they are driving the nails is his physical part which is the substitute. They are putting to shame that which is in his likeness. But look at him and me". But I, when I had looked, said, "Lord, no one is looking at you. Let us flee this place". But he said to me, I have told you, 'Leave the blind alone!' And notice how they do not know what they are saying. For the son of their glory, instead of my servant, they have out to shame." And I saw someone about to approach us who looked like him, even him who was laughing above the cross. And he was <filled> with a pure spirit, and he (was) the Savior. And there was a great ineffable light around them and the multitude of ineffable and invisible angels blessing them. And it was I who saw him when this one who glorifies was revealed (81, 3-82, 16)⁴²¹.

The third topic pointed out by Desjardins deals with pseudonymous and visionary's reactions to the visions. Our visionary is obviously pseudonymous. Pearson argues that the *Apocalypse of Peter* widely uses 2 *Peter* quotations, which could explain the use of Peter as the pseudonymous author of our text. Moreover, the anti-episcopal polemic makes Peter, the figure of clerical organization *par excellence*, an excellent character

⁴²¹ Desjardins' translation (Cf. Desjardins, 1996, pp. 241-243).

with authority to talk against this kind of organization⁴²². And finally, he acts with joy and fear: “And fear came over me <and> joy”, similar to other apocalypses⁴²³.

The fourth topic, *ex-eventu* prophecy, is present in many apocalypses with history’s review or periodization⁴²⁴. In the *Apocalypse of Peter*, the account of Jesus death and the development of Christianity (facts that are already accomplished at the time of *Apocalypse of Peter*’s redaction) are disguised as future predictions.

Concerning the fifth topic, the *Apocalypse of Peter* pays attention to knowledge:

But you, yourself, Peter, become perfect in accordance with your name, along with me, the very one who chose you. For from you I have made a beginning for the remnant whom I have summoned to knowledge (71, 15-21)⁴²⁵.

Desjardins says that the *Apocalypse of Peter* considers knowledge as the path for salvation. However, I do not see it clearly in this passage. It is obvious that this passage draws attention to knowledge, but it is not clear that it considers it as the path for salvation.

The sixth and the seventh topics deal with the final fate of souls 75, 21-22; 76, 18-23; 78, 23-24; 79, 17, an eschatological element present in many apocalypses⁴²⁶. One of these passages says it as follows: “But those of this sort (the adversaries) are the workers

⁴²² Pearson, 1997, pp. 97-98.

⁴²³ Such as *Daniel* (7: 15; 8: 17).

⁴²⁴ The whole apocalyptic section of *Daniel*, chapters 7 to 12, is full of *ex-eventu* prophecies.

⁴²⁵ Desjardins’ translation (Cf. Desjardins, 1996, p. 221).

⁴²⁶ Such as *4 Ezra* (7, 42[112]-45[115]; 8, 1-3; 7, 35).

who will be cast into the outer darkness, away from the children of light” (78, 23-24)⁴²⁷. This passage clearly distinguishes the final destiny of just (children of light) and unjust people (those of this sort, the adversaries).

There are discussions on otherworldly beings, elements and places, including a negative view of the lower region and its creator.

Several apocalypses show us the designation of a mission to the visionary as a final act of the mediator⁴²⁸. In the *Apocalypse of Peter*, the visionary also receives a mission from the celestial being: “These things, therefore, which you saw you shall present to those of another race who are not of this age” (83, 15-18)⁴²⁹.

The last topic pointed out by Desjardins deals with the return of the visionary to his senses: “When he (the Savior) had said these things, he (Peter) came to his senses” (84, 13)⁴³⁰. This is also present in many apocalyptic texts.

We saw that the *Apocalypse of Peter* presents an epiphany scene, an apocalyptic vision, a pseudonymous seer and an otherworldly mediator concerning the manner of revelation. Concerning the temporal axis, it presents the idea of present salvation by knowledge, personal afterlife and judgment of sinners or ignorant. And concerning the spatial axis, it presents otherworldly elements. Analyzing those features, I believe that the *Apocalypse of Peter* is very similar to many apocalypses of type I: otherworldly revelations without otherworldly journey. Even if some of its characteristics approach it to the revelatory dialogue literary genre, similar to the *Apocalypses of James*, the *Apocalypse of*

⁴²⁷ Desjardins’ translation (Cf. Desjardins, 1996, p. 237).

⁴²⁸ 4 *Ezra* is an example. Ezra is told to write the revelations on several different books (14, 23-26).

⁴²⁹ Desjardins’ translation (Cf. Desjardins, 1996, pp. 245-247).

⁴³⁰ Desjardins’ translation (Cf. Desjardins, 1996, p. 247).

Peter shows precise elements of apocalyptic literature. The *Apocalypses of James* show no shining and fantastic elements at the epiphany scene, for example, while in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, some components, as already commented, illustrate its close relation to apocalyptic literature. Moreover, the visual element, so important in apocalyptic literature⁴³¹, is present in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, since one of the major elements of the revelations disclosed to the seer is introduced by a vision of the Christ being crucified. Thus, differently from the *Apocalypses of James*, the *Apocalypse of Peter* can be considered a real apocalypse.

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As already commented in this dissertation, certain important scholars, such as J. Collins⁴³², believe that the apocalyptic literary genre was not clearly labeled and recognized in antiquity. However, these five Nag Hammadi texts with the word 'apocalypse' in their titles are an evidence for a different statement. Even if we consider that the titles in Nag Hammadi manuscripts are later additions, not being present in the original Greek compositions, we may consider that at least in the 4th century, those who copied and used these five texts considered them as apocalypses⁴³³.

Moreover, these texts do more than just present the word apocalypse in their title. As explained in their analysis and commentaries above, at least three of these texts (the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the *Apocalypse of Adam* and the *Apocalypse of Peter*) correspond to the adopted definition of 'apocalypse'. And even if the *Apocalypses of James* are not ex-

⁴³¹ See chapters 2 and 3.

⁴³² Collins, J., 1984.

⁴³³ Veilleux, 1986, p. 15.

actly apocalypses, they largely present apocalyptic characteristics and common topics⁴³⁴. Thus, I strongly believe that these five Nag Hammadi treatises are an evidence for an understanding of an apocalyptic literary genre in late antiquity. In the case of the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the *Apocalypse of Adam*, and the *Apocalypse of Peter*, the apocalyptic literature is more than a simple influence, but rather the literary genre itself, recognized, labeled and even named.

⁴³⁴ As we saw in the commentaries, the *First Apocalypse of James* presents more apocalyptic characteristics than the *Second Apocalypse of James*. We even stated that the author of the *Second Apocalypse of James* may have had a different kind of literature in mind when he composed it. And once again we may cite (see chapter 3) that sometimes, the title does not exactly indicates the literary genre of the text (see chapter 3).

5- Sethian Apocalypses with Philosophical content.

The Nag Hammadi library preserved some texts with philosophical content and revelatory features, closely related to apocalyptic literature⁴³⁵. This philosophical content for its part is strongly connected to and influenced by Middle and Neo-Platonism, a fact which may suggest an intellectual environment for the original composition of these texts. On the other hand, the presence of certain apocalyptic elements and motifs may also indicate that these writings were linked and influenced by apocalyptic literature, overall by otherworldly apocalypses. The connection of these texts to both traditions, Neo-Platonism and apocalyptic, leads certain scholars to name them as 'philosophical apocalypses',⁴³⁶.

Besides the combination of apocalyptic and Neo-Platonic elements, these texts present similar doctrines, cosmogony and theology to those of other Nag Hammadi texts, such as the *Apocryphon of John* and the *Sacred Book of the Great Invisible Spirit*. This similarity of doctrine, cosmogony and theology, lead Hans-Martin Schenke to define a category of texts based on common characteristic features presented by them, such as the great importance accorded to the biblical personage of Seth⁴³⁷. He named this category as

⁴³⁵ *Zostrianos* (VIII, 1), *Marsannes* (X, 1) and *Allogenes* (XI, 3).

⁴³⁶ Scopello, 1987, p. 324.

⁴³⁷ Schenke classifies as Sethian texts the following treatises: *The Apocryphon of John*; the *Hypostasis of the Archons*; the *Gospel of the Egyptians*; the *Apocalypse of Adam*; the *Three Steles of Seth*; *Zostrianos*; *Melchizedech*; the *Thought of Norea*; *Marsanes*; *Allogenes*; the *Trimorphic Protennoia*. (Cf. Schenke 1974 and 1981). He states that "the texts of this group shed light upon one another if compared synoptically; and the proportion and relationship of common, shared material to special, unique material, permits a process of deduction that leads to considerable insight not only into the development of the teaching they contain, but also into the history of the community that transmitted them". (Cf. Schenke, 1981, p. 589). He also affirms

that “the occurrence of the figure and name “Seth” (along with his equivalents such as “child of the child” or “Allogenes”) in our text group seems to me essential and basic”, however, “what counts is not the fact that Seth appears in a writing (or that he is the reputed author), but the way in which he appears”. (Cf. Schenke, 1981, p. 591). And in Sethian texts, Seth, or his equivalents, appears as the first being of a chosen race (the seed of Seth).

Schenke also affirms that the group of Sethian texts is held together, not only by the fact that Seth plays an important role in them, but “rather by the role of Seth plus the fundamental identity of the system”. (Cf. Schenke, 1981, p. 593). And part of this identity may be defined by connections between the texts. He defines as connections between Sethian texts the following elements: special prayer (*Three Steles of Seth* and *Allogenes*); a specific deployment of negative theology (*Apocryphon of John* and *Allogenes*); the division of Autogenes into the triad of Kalyptos, Protophanes, Autogenes (*Three Steles of Seth*, *Zostrianos* and *Allogenes*); specific philosophical terminology (*Three Steles of Seth*, *Zostrianos*, *Allogenes*, *Marsanes*); obvious (secondary) Christianization (*Apocryphon of John*, *Hypostasis of the Archons* and *Melchizedek*); the presupposition of a second tretad (Gamaliel, Gabriel, Samblo, Abrasax [or the like]) alongside the four lightgivers (*Gospel of the Egyptians*, *Apocalypse of Adam*, *Zostrianos*, *Melchizedek*, *Marsanes* and *Trimorphic Protennoia*); the designation (in Coptic) “Pigeradamas” for Adamas (*Apocryphon of John* NH II, *Three Steles of Seth*, *Zostrianos* and *Melchizedek*); the concept of Eleleth as cause of the terrestrial world (*Gospel of the Egyptians*, *Trimorphic Protennoia*); and the name and figure of Mirothea/Mirotheos or the like (*Gospel of the Egyptians*, *Three Steles of Seth*, *Zostrianos*, *Trimorphic Protennoia*). (Cf. Schenke, 1981, pp.593-594).

Concerning the common features of Sethian texts, we should also cite Turner’s statement: “In the hands of Sethian Gnostics, the biblical functions of Sophia as creator, nourisher, and enlightener of the world were distributed among a hierarchy of feminine principles: an exalted divine Mother called Barbelo, the First Thought (“Protennoia”, Pronoia) of the supreme deity (the “Invisible Spirit) who is ultimate savior and enlightener, a lower Sophia responsible for both the creation of the physical world and the incarnation of portions of the supreme Mother’s divine essence into human bodies, and the figure of the spiritual eve (“Epinoia”) who appears on the earthly plane to alert humankind (“Adam”) to its true filiation with the divine First Thought. Salvation was achieved by Mother’s reintegration of her own dissipated essence into its original unity”. (Cf. Turner, 2001, p. 57).

Finally, Schenke also emphasizes the cultic elements, i.e. baptism and ascension, present in certain Sethian texts (Cf. Schenke, 1981, pp.602-607). For a detailed discussion on Sethian baptism, see Sevrin, 1986.

For a different approach concerning the category of Sethian texts, see Rasimus, 2006.

Sethian texts⁴³⁸. Our three philosophical apocalypses fit in this category proposed by Schenke. Thus, they have been called Sethian apocalypses with philosophical content⁴³⁹ by many scholars in the last decades.

According to Scopello, who proposed the division of Nag Hammadi apocalyptic corpus in two groups (*contes apocalyptiques* and *apocalypses philosophiques*), the spectacular component, so common in apocalyptic tales, disappears in philosophical apocalypses, providing the place for abstract reflections and intellectual actions. She adds that differently from apocalyptic tales, which were strongly influenced by Jewish and Christian traditions, philosophical apocalypses were influenced by “pagan” intellectual movements, such as the Middle and Neo-Platonism. Scopello also argues that these texts are more than simple treatises inspired by late Platonism; they are gnostic writings, and their originality “réside dans la rencontre entre doctrine philosophique grecque et doctrine gnostique. Les deux sagesses s’enchevêtrent dans ces traités et donnent lieu à un nouveau système de pensée qui combine habilement les théories du platonisme tardif avec les personnages du panthéon gnostique”⁴⁴⁰.

Considering the close relation to Neo-Platonic philosophy, one may suggest the second half of the second century or the early third century as a plausible date for the composition of our treatises. Additionally, one may even suggest philosophical environments, such as the alexandrine philosophical academies, where Platonic theories and

⁴³⁸ This category of texts is a modern construction. However, the name was borrowed from patristic sources, such as Hippolytus, Epiphanius, and Theodoret. (Schenke, 1974 and 1981, p. 590).

⁴³⁹ About Sethianism and Platonic tradition see Turner, 2001.

⁴⁴⁰ Scopello, 1987, p. 339-340.

ideas were continuously discussed and re-elaborated, as a place for the original composition of these philosophical apocalypses⁴⁴¹.

Turner affirms that *Zostrianos*, *Marsanes* and *Allogenes*, among the Sethian writings, belong to a special class known as the “Platonizing Sethian treatises”. Concerning these “Platonizing Sethian Treatises”, he argues as follows:

They are unique among Sethian literature in that they focus, not on a diachronic, temporal, horizontal/linear axis of a sequence of cosmic events, but instead, upon the synchronic, atemporal, vertical axis of a hierarchy of ontological realities and modes of cognitive experience. Unenlightened humanity, evil, and the world they inhabit are to be overcome, not by reform or restoration, but by transcending them⁴⁴².

Thus, the eschatology of Sethian apocalypses with a philosophical content is “focused on neither cosmos nor society at large, but on the prospects of the individuals comprising a small, elite group”⁴⁴³.

Turner goes on affirming that many Sethian writings⁴⁴⁴ outside this group use apocalyptic elements, such as the periodization of history. However, periodization of history is not present in Sethian philosophical apocalypses. Moreover, their doctrine is “centered on the phenomenon of individual enlightenment in the here and now”. This focal

⁴⁴¹ Both suggestions, date and place of composition, are Scopello's. (Cf. Scopello, 1987, p. 339).

⁴⁴² Funk, Poirier and Turner, 2000, pp. 25-26.

⁴⁴³ Funk, Poirier and Turner, 2000, pp. 25-26.

⁴⁴⁴ See, for example, the *Apocalypse of Adam*.

point is normally absent in Jewish apocalypses. Thus, concerning this matter, Sethian philosophical apocalypses are closer to mythical portions of Platonic literature⁴⁴⁵.

However, considering their frameworks, Sethian philosophical apocalypses are closely related to Jewish apocalypses, overall the type II apocalypses, those with an otherworldly journey⁴⁴⁶. Our three texts present ascents where the main character receives heavenly revelations. Moreover, the presence of celestial mediators in our three texts shows another point of close relation to apocalyptic literature.

We may also consider the interesting account of Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus*⁴⁴⁷, already presented in this dissertation⁴⁴⁸. Two of the three titles discussed in this chapter, *Zostrianos* and *Allogenes*, are cited in this passage⁴⁴⁹. The Greek word "apocalypse" is employed in this passage to designate that certain people were producing "revelations" (ἀποκαλύψεις). It is impossible to affirm with certainty if the word "apocalypse" is employed in this passage to designate a literary genre or simply revelations, disclosure of mysteries. Certain scholars⁴⁵⁰ considered that the names *Zostrianos* and *Allogenes* are to be identified with Nag Hammadi texts of such title. However, this identification cannot be made with certainty. Nag Hammadi itself, gives one clear example of two completely different texts that have the same exact title on the manuscript, the *Apocalypses of James*⁴⁵¹.

⁴⁴⁵ Funk, Poirier and Turner, 2000, pp. 26-27.

⁴⁴⁶ See chapters 1 and 3.

⁴⁴⁷ *Life of Plotinus*, 16.

⁴⁴⁸ See chapters 1 and 2.

⁴⁴⁹ *Life of Plotinus*, 16.

⁴⁵⁰ Such as Pearson. (Cf, Pearson, 2002).

⁴⁵¹ It is also important to mention the new Codex Tchacos, which contains the *Gospel of Judas* and copies of the (First) *Apocalypse of James* (named in this codex only as *James*) and the *Letter of Peter to Phillip*,

At this point of our discussion, I would like to introduce an interesting article by H-C. Puech⁴⁵². The first part of the article in question was written in 1960⁴⁵³. Puech starts affirming that until that moment, there were basically two documents that could help us identifying the gnostics combated by Plotinus: *Life of Plotinus* 16, by Porphyry, and the ninth treatise of *Enneade* by Plotin himself⁴⁵⁴. He identifies that in the *Life of Plotinus* 16 account, the word “ἀποκαλύψεις” should be understood as the designation of texts:

Apokalupsis (*gelyōnā*, en syriaque) désigne, en général, un écrit d'un genre bien déterminé, bâti sur un patron schématiquement commun, répondant, par sa structure et ses formules, à un type conventionnel : en des circonstances exceptionnelles, un Révélateur dévoile à un voyant, ou à un petit groupe d'adeptes privilégiés, des mystères sublimes, des vérités qui dépassent l'entendement commun. Des telles révélations doivent rester secrètes ou, plus exactement, n'être transmises qu'à des intelligences pures, à des initiés ou à des disciples discrets et capables de n'en faire qu'un saint usage⁴⁵⁵.

and also a short text, terribly preserved, whose hero's name is Allogenes. (Cf. Kasser, Meyer and Wurst, 2006).

⁴⁵² Puech 1, 1978. I would like to thank Wolf-Peter Funk and Paul-Hubert Poirier for having pointed out the questions and remarks raised by Puech in this article. A special credit must be given to Mr. Poirier, since he gave me the reference of Puech's article.

⁴⁵³ Actually, a *résumé* of a conference made in august 27th 1957 for Hardt Foundation.

⁴⁵⁴ Puech 1, 1978, p. 83.

⁴⁵⁵ Puech 1, 1978, p. 87. Note that, after affirming that the word “apocalypse” designates in general a writing, Puech defines what this writing is and contains. And this “definition” presents many common elements with *Semeia* 14 definition. (Cf. Collins, J., 1979).

It is important to notice that at the time when Puech wrote this article, most of Nag Hammadi treatises were not published yet, including the three treatises analyzed in this chapter. This *résumé*, written in 1960, was published in 1978 with an appendix⁴⁵⁶. In this appendix, Puech analyzes, if the “apocalypses of Zostrianos and Allogenes”, cited by Porphyry can be identified with *Zostrianos* and *Allogenes* from Nag Hammadi library.

In *Zostrianos* case, according to Puech, this identification can be made with sureness. He argues as follows:

Nul doute, en ce cas : le *Zōstrianos* ainsi retrouvé dans sa version copte est à confondre avec la deuxième des « Apocalypses » énumérées par Porphyre, l'*Apokalupsis Zōstrianou*. Remarquer que le nom (assez singulier, mais connu d'ailleurs) du personnage qui patronne l'ouvrage est ici et là le même, ne suffit pas. Plus qu'un indice, la confrontation du contenu de l'un de ces écrits avec celui de l'autre (ou, plutôt, avec ce qu'il nous est donné d'en connaître) fournit une preuve – la preuve – alors décisive. Il n'est, en effet, que de parcourir le début de l'écrit copte pour constater que s'y retrouvent les plus caractéristiques des termes techniques et plus ou moins étranges, dont Plotin, dans le deuxième Traité de la neuvième *Ennéade*, relève et condamne l'usage chez ses adversaires...⁴⁵⁷.

Puech then, analyzes the similarities between the content and technical vocabularies in the first pages of *Zostrianos* to those condemned by Plotinus in *Ennéade* II, 9 10,

⁴⁵⁶ Puech 1, 1978, pp. 110-116.

⁴⁵⁷ Puech 1, 1978, p. 113.

11. 19-29. Puech affirms that the “terre aérienne”⁴⁵⁸ (5, 18) seen as a “model” (NH VIII 1 8, 11), is similar to the “terre nouvelle” criticized by Plotinus. He gives other examples, such as the $\bar{\text{N}}\bar{\text{N}}\bar{\text{I}}\bar{\text{A}}\bar{\text{N}}[\text{TITY}]\text{ΠOC } \bar{\text{N}}\bar{\text{N}}\bar{\text{E}}\bar{\text{Ω}}[\bar{\text{N}}]$ ⁴⁵⁹ (5, 19; 8, 13; 11, 13; 12, 4.22)⁴⁶⁰. After showing the similarities of *Zostrianus* first pages with the doctrine combated by Plotinus, Puech concludes saying that:

De là à inférer que le *Zōstrianos* du Codex VIII de Nag Hammadi ne peut qu’être identique à l’*Apocalypse de Zostrien* dont Porphyre fait mention, il n’y a qu’un pas. Mais il est possible d’aller plus loin. On tend à avancer non seulement que c’est très ou plus précisément le *Livre*, l’*Apocalypse de Zostrien* que vise le neuvième Traité de la deuxième *Ennéade*, mais encore que, si Plotin s’est contraint à prendre connaissance de cette Révélation pour entreprendre de la réfuter, il n’a pas poussé la lecture de l’ouvrage au-delà de ce qui en est, dans le manuscrit de Nag Hammadi, la douzième ou treizième page⁴⁶¹.

Concerning *Allogenes*, Puech thinks that the identification cannot be made with certainty, but it is quite probable that the “Apocalypse of Allogenes” mentioned by Por-

⁴⁵⁸ $\text{ΠΙ}[ΚΑΖ] \text{ΝΑΗΡ}$. Translated by Sieber as “ethereal earth” (Cf. Sieber and Layton, 1991, p. 41) and as “atmosphère” by Barry, Funk and Poirier (Cf. Barry, Funk, Poirier and Turner, 2000, p. 245).

⁴⁵⁹ Translated as “aeon copies” by Sieber (Cf. Sieber and Layton, 1991, p. 41) and as “copies des éons” by Barry, Funk and Poirier (Cf. Barry, Funk, Poirier and Turner, 2000, p. 245).

⁴⁶⁰ For all Puech’s examples see Puech 1, 1978, pp. 113-114.

⁴⁶¹ Puech 1, 1978, p. 114.

phyry is Nag Hammadi the treatise⁴⁶². He argues that the mention of an “Apocalypse of Messos” in the passage is a signal that the text mentioned by Porphyry may be identified with *Allogenes*, since that in this text, the name Messos is mentioned at the end (68, 35-69, 1; 69, 16) as the interlocutor of Allogenes, in other words, Messos is responsible for keep the revelations disclosed to Allogenes.

We may move on to the commentaries on the texts.

5.1- *Zostrianos* (VIII, 1)

Zostrianos is the first treatise of Codex VIII. Generally speaking, the condition of Codex VIII papyrus is very deficient. Before the conservation, many leaves or leaf fragments were in numerous pieces⁴⁶³. Concerning *Zostrianos* itself, the text presents several lacunas due to the fragmentary state of certain passages. The size of lacunas varies from little gaps to sequences of entire lines missing⁴⁶⁴. These lacunas make difficult sometimes the complete understanding of the text.

The *editio princeps* of *Zostrianos* was published in 1991 in the Nag Hammadi Studies collection 31⁴⁶⁵. In 2000, the BCNH collection published its volume 24 in the section «texts», with the critical edition, introduction, French translation and commentary on *Zostrianos*⁴⁶⁶.

As said earlier, *Zostrianos* was probably composed in the late second or early third century in a philosophical Middle-Platonic environment, maybe Alexandria. The

⁴⁶² Puech 1, 1978, p. 116. See also Puech 2, 1978.

⁴⁶³ Layton, 1991, p. 3.

⁴⁶⁴ See, for example, page 8, lines 25 to 28.

⁴⁶⁵ Sieber and Layton, 1991.

⁴⁶⁶ Barry, Funk, Poirier and Turner, 2000

text is a pseudonymous account of a celestial journey performed by Zostrianos, who is probably a kinsman of Zoroaster⁴⁶⁷.

The text tells that the visionary Zostrianos, after a period of inquiring and perplexity, is guided by four angels (each one at a time) into a celestial journey. In this journey, he passes through several aeons. At each aeon he is informed of the names of those who settle there. He is also baptized in each aeon he passes through in the name of the beings that dwell there⁴⁶⁸. After he has seen all the aeons, his ascent ends and he returns to the material world.

Barry suggests the following outline⁴⁶⁹ for *Zostrianos*:

- a) Le livre écrit par Zostrien (1, 1-7a);
- b) Louange au vrai Dieu (1, 7b-10a);
- c) Prologue autobiographique : phase préparatoire à la révélation (1, 10b-4, 20a) :
 - 1- le rejet de la matière et du psychique (1, 10b-29);
 - 2- la vision de l'enfant parfait par l'élévation de l'âme (1, 30-2, 13a);
 - 3- la recherche spirituelle (2, 13b-3, 13);
 - 4- méditation et souffrance intérieure (3, 14-28a);
 - 5- l'apparition de l'ange de la connaissance : l'appel à la prédication (3, 28b-4, 20a);
- d) La montée spirituelle de Zostrien (4, 20b-129, 16a) :
 - 1- Un nuage lumineux emporte Zostrien (4, 20b-5, 17a);
 - 2- La traversée de l'atmosphère terrestre et des copies des éons (5, 17b-23);
 - 3- Accès au séjour, à la repentance, et aux éons autogènes (5, 24-56, 23) :
 - 4- Zostrien parvient devant Protophanès (56, 24-64, 7);
 - 5- Zostrien pénètre l'éon de Protophanès (64, 7b-129, 16a);

⁴⁶⁷ Sieber and Layton, 1991, p. 7.

⁴⁶⁸ On the importance and meaning of baptism in *Zostrianos* and other Sethian writings see Sevrin, 1986.

⁴⁶⁹ For the complete outline suggested by Barry, see Barry, Funk, Poirier and Turner, 2000, pp. 30-32.

- e) La descente (129, 16b-130, 1a);
- f) Le testament de Zostrien (130, 14b-132, 5);
- g) La prédication de Zostrien aux égarés (130, 14b-132, 5);
- h) Colophon (132, 6-9).

Fallon classifies *Zostrianos* as a type II apocalypse (otherworldly revelations and otherworldly journey) with a revelatory dialogue. He states that *Zostrianos* presents, concerning the manner of revelation, an otherworldly journey guided by an otherworldly being and a pseudonymous seer. Concerning the temporal axis, he affirms that our text presents a cosmogony and theogony, presents salvation by knowledge and judgment of ignorant. Regarding the spatial axis, *Zostrianos* discusses otherworldly elements. On its concluding elements, it presents a narrative conclusion, where the visionary preaches the revelations he has received⁴⁷⁰.

Sieber emphasizes that *Zostrianos*, as a non-historical apocalypse, shows specific interest on life after death and otherworldly knowledge. He also argues that the earliest account of this sort is Er's story (Plato, *Respublica*, X). Thus, "the purpose of the revelation received by Zostrianos is to provide an otherworldly gnosis as the means of salvation for the chosen race of Seth. Towards this end the book describes the mystical experiences of Zostrianos, and the names and relationships of the inhabitants of the otherworld through each every soul must pass"⁴⁷¹.

We may start then the discussion of *Zostrianos*' apocalyptic elements.

⁴⁷⁰ Fallon, 1979, pp. 137-138 and 148.

⁴⁷¹ Sieber and Layton, 1991, p. 10. We may also remember Turner's general remarks on Sethian philosophical apocalypses in the introduction of the present chapter. Those remarks also concern *Zostrianos*.

Concerning the otherworldly mediator, *Zostrianos* presents four different angelic figures. The first angelic being, who guides Zostrianos through the lowest levels of the Autogenes aeon, is named Authrounis. The second angelic being is Ephesech. He is also called “Perfect Child” and according to Sieber he may be identified with the heavenly Seth⁴⁷². He guides Zostrianos for more than a half of the text, disclosing to him knowledge about the Autogenes aeon. The third mediator is called Yoel (or Youel). He is also called the “male virgin glory”. He may be identified with the angelic being that plays the role of the heavenly mediator in *Allogenes*. He guides Zostrianos through the Protophanes aeon. The fourth angelic being is Salamex, who plays the role of the heavenly mediator in the second half of the text. He is also one of the “Lights in Thought”⁴⁷³.

The pseudonymous seer is Zostrianos. According to Sieber, the last lines of the text establish his relation to Zoroaster: “Zostrianos. Oracles of truth of Zostrianos. God of truth. Teachings of Zoroaster”⁴⁷⁴. Thus, one may consider that he is a kinsman of Zoroaster, someone closely related to him, close enough to know his teachings. Thus, the authority of Zostrianos lies in his relationship to Zoroaster and his ability to disclose the truth.

However, concerning the final title, Turner has a different opinion, arguing as follows:

⁴⁷² Sieber and Layton, 1991, p. 8.

⁴⁷³ Sieber and Layton, 1991, p. 8.

⁴⁷⁴ 131, 6-9. Sieber’s translation. He adds that the purpose of this phrase is to show the text “as authentic wisdom from the East and thus to enhance the authority of the book”. He also argues against Doresses’s opinion (Doresse, 1960, pp. 255-263) that the text should be named “*Apocalypse of Zostrianos and Zoroaster*”. He furnishes two ancient testimonies of the name Zostrianos (Porphyry’s *Life of Plotinus* 16 and Arnobius’ *The Case against the Pagans*) to justify his opinion. (Cf. Sieber and Layton, 1991, p. 225).

The Greek title, “Words of truth of Zostrianos, God of Truth, Words of Zoroaster has the effect of characterizing Zostrianos’ [book] of the [glory] of the words [that] are alive forever” (1, 1-2) as a collection of oracles or sayings or discourses communicated by Zostrianos, although the work is technically an apocalypse. The phrase “eternally living words” (1, 2) reminds one of the “secret words” of the “living Jesus” mentioned in the *incipit* of the *Gospel of Thomas* and *The Book of Thomas (the Contender)*. The subtitle rephrases the *incipit*’s “living words” to “words of truth” perhaps under the influence of Zostrianos’ mission of “preaching the truth” (!30, 9) and the initial kerygmatic pronouncement of the entire work “The God [of] truth lives in very truth [and] knowledge and eternal light!” (1, 7-10), as well as the repeated characterization of the Aeon of Autogenes and its inhabitants as seeking and possessing the truth (...) The juxtaposition of “God of Truth” with the name of Zostrianos has the effect of identifying the two, but the remainder of the text provides no warrant for conceiving Zostrianos as a “god”, even though he becomes “divine”...⁴⁷⁵

Concerning the relation between Zostrianos and Zoroaster, Turner argues that “there is no warrant for considering any of the content of *Zostrianos* as related to the teachings of Zoroaster”⁴⁷⁶. Thus, for Turner, *Zostrianos* has the function of providing a model of spiritual progress, and on this matter, it “also functions to authorize its own

⁴⁷⁵ Barry, Funk, Poirier and Turner, 2000, pp. 661-662.

⁴⁷⁶ Barry, Funk, Poirier and Turner, 2000, p. 662. See also Turner’s commentary on 1, 3-4 (Cf. Barry, Funk, Poirier and Turner, 2000, pp. 483-484).

message not only by the supernatural status of the revealers and revelations, but most significantly, by its intention to effect a rapprochement with authoritative traditions: not those of the Hebrew Bible, but instead the tradition of *Zostrianos*' misty but ancient origins, the ritual tradition of Sethian baptism and intellectual authority of Platonic metaphysical philosophy. All apocalypses, including *Zostrianos*, have a tendency to be encyclopedic, to incorporate many traditions and genres with a view of things⁴⁷⁷. In the process, many other traditions of varying provenance and authority become subordinated to the view of time, space, and human possibility in a given apocalypse⁴⁷⁸. Thus, *Zostrianos* owes its authority to other elements, not only to pseudonymous authorship.

In *Zostrianos*, ignorant people will be destroyed. Two main passages (128, 8-14 and 131, 20-132, 5) mention the end of those who do not possess the knowledge of the true divinity. The first passage affirms:

But as for all the rest that reside in matter, they were all left (there). It was because of their knowledge of majesty, their audacity and power that they came into existence and adorned themselves. Because they did not know god, they shall pass away⁴⁷⁹.

The second passage, placed just before the final title, declares more explicitly that the final destiny of ignorant will be the punishment:

⁴⁷⁷ See, for example, *Daniel*, which incorporates other literary genres than apocalyptic, such as the stories in chapters 2 to 6.

⁴⁷⁸ Barry, Funk, Poirier and Turner, 2000, p. 52.

⁴⁷⁹ Sieber's translation. (Cf. Sieber and Layton, 1991, p. 219).

Do not be led astray. Great is the aeon of the aeons of the living ones, yet (so also is) the [punishment] of those who are unconvinced. Many bonds and chastisers surround you. Flee quickly before death reaches you. Look at the light. Flee the darkness. Do not be led astray to your destruction⁴⁸⁰.

For its concluding elements *Zostrianos* mentions that the visionary returns to the earth and writes down the knowledge he has received for those who come after him. He also preaches the truth to everyone:

I came down to the aeon copies and I came down here to the ethereal [earth]. I wrote three wooden tablets (and) left them as knowledge for those who would come after me, the living elect. Then, I came down to the perceptible world and put on my image. Because it was ignorant, I strengthened it (and) went about preaching the truth to everyone (129, 26-130, 9)⁴⁸¹.

The recipient of the revelation is told to transmit it to others in many apocalypses⁴⁸². However, this transmission normally aims a particular public, a group of chosen ones, people worthy of revelations, but in *Zostrianos*, the visionary preaches “the truth to everyone” (130, 9).

⁴⁸⁰ Sieber’s translation. (Cf. Sieber and Layton, 1991, pp. 223-225).

⁴⁸¹ Sieber’s translation. (Cf. Sieber and Layton, 1991, p. 221).

⁴⁸² See the commentaries on the texts on chapter 3.

The section between pages 42 and 44 is an account about the human types. Placed between the revelations made by Ephesech, this section presents certain apocalyptic features, since it divides human beings in five categories: those who are dead; those whose living souls are in a dead reality; those whose souls are in “sejour”; those whose souls are repented; and those whose souls are saved. The description of the human being whose soul is saved emphasizes the search for its own intellect. Similarly, an anterior section, between pages 26 and 28, categorizes the souls in three groups: those of rest; those of repentance; and those of autogenes. The last are those who possess a word of truth that is in knowledge. This demonstrates then that our text preaches present salvation by knowledge.

Zostrianos also offers interesting parallels and similarities with certain Jewish apocalypses. These parallels and similarities concern, however, the framework and literary genre, not the content itself. We may emphasize the similarities between our text and chapters 17 to 36 of *1 Enoch* and chapters 22 and 24 of *2 Enoch*⁴⁸³. Sieber adds on this matter that the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the *Paraphrase of Shem* represent the closest genre parallels from Nag Hammadi⁴⁸⁴.

A final observation should be made on *Zostrianos* apocalyptic content. The text starts with a praise to the true divinity (1, 7b-10a), followed by a preparatory phase to the revelation (1, 10b-4, 20a). This preparation phase includes a rejection of matter and psychic reality (1, 10b-29). After the rejection, the visionary sees the “Perfect Child”, then, the preparatory ritual restarts. The visionary goes on a spiritual search (2, 13b-3, 13) for

⁴⁸³ Pearson, 2002, pp. 152-153.

⁴⁸⁴ Sieber and Layton, 1991, p. 10. See also Scopello, 1980.

the “Father of All”, and then, he begins the period of meditation and interior suffering (3, 14-28a), as the following passage shows:

While pondering these things to understand them, then after the custom of my race, I kept bringing them up daily to the god of my fathers. I kept praising them all, for my fore-fathers and fathers who sought found. As for me, I did not cease seeking a place of repose worthy of my spirit where I would not be bound in the perceptible world. Then, as I was deeply troubled and gloomy because of the discouragement which surrounded me, I dared to act and to deliver myself to the wild beasts of the desert for a violent death⁴⁸⁵.

Just after this account, an angel appears to *Zostrianos* (3, 28b-4, 20a) and then, the visionary ascent begins. This whole and complex ritual of prayers, praises, rejections, pre-visions and offerings clearly function as a preparation for the main revelations that will take place during the ascent. These ascetical practices – prayer, suffering and weeping, offerings to the true divinity – have parallels in many apocalyptic writings, mostly in the Jewish ones⁴⁸⁶. Thus, this shows another point of contact of *Zostrianos* with the Jewish apocalyptic literature.

We saw that *Zostrianos* is a type II apocalypse (otherworldly journey) and also concerning the manner of revelation, it presents a vision, epiphany scene, and otherworldly mediators and a pseudonymous seer. Concerning the temporal axis, it presents a

⁴⁸⁵ Sieber’s translation. (Cf. Sieber and Layton, 1991, pp. 36-37).

⁴⁸⁶ See the commentary on the texts in the chapter 3.

theogony and cosmogony, the idea of present salvation by knowledge and judgment of sinner or ignorant. And finally, concerning the spatial axis, it presents otherworldly elements and geography. *Zostrianos* content and doctrine is Sethian, but it makes use of two ancient traditions to preach its doctrine, the Neo and Middle Platonism and the Jewish apocalyptic. The influence of Jewish ascent apocalypses concerning *Zostrianos* framework is clear, we saw the many points of contact between our text and this tradition. Thus, I believe that a direct link between this tradition and our text can be established, at least on the literary framework level.

5.2- *Marsanes* (NH X, 1)

Marsanes is probably the only text of Codex X⁴⁸⁷. The title occurs only once, at the end of the codex. According to Pearson, Codex X “surviving material has been assigned a minimum pagination of 68 inscribed pages, comprising pages from the first part of the codex, the middle part and the last part”⁴⁸⁸. At least 14 of these 68 pages are entirely lost⁴⁸⁹, and many others subsisted only as fragments. Thus, this indicates that the state of conservation of Codex X is not good. Pearson suggests that at least 59% of the text is completely lost. Thus, it is very hard to obtain a complete and clear understanding of the text. Since the beginning of the treatise (pages 1 to 10) and the middle (pages 25* to 42*) are the most preserved parts, one may have a better understanding of these sec-

⁴⁸⁷ The most credible reconstruction of this codex led to the conclusion that it contains this single text, *Marsanes*. (Cf. Pearson, 1981, p. 229).

⁴⁸⁸ Pagination may not be accurate in certain cases. For details see Pearson, 1981, pp. 211-227.

⁴⁸⁹ Pages 11; 12; 23*; 24*; 47* to 54*; 59* and 60*. I follow Pearson's pagination. The asterisk indicates doubt of the pagination. (Cf. Pearson, 1981, p. 229).

tions⁴⁹⁰. The title is partly preserved in one fragment of page 68* (....**ANHC**). Pearson argues that the title is clearly a proper name, and the only proper name that fits and is known from other sources is Marsanes (**MAPCANHC**)⁴⁹¹.

Marsanes was not included in Fallon's⁴⁹² Gnostic apocalyptic inventory. It never received much attention from scholars, maybe because of its fragmentary state of conservation. Its English critical translation was published in 1981 in volume 15 of Nag Hammadi studies collection⁴⁹³. In 2000, the BCNH collection published its text volume 27, with the critical edition, French translation and commentary on *Marsanes*⁴⁹⁴.

Turner suggests the following structural outline⁴⁹⁵ to *Marsanes*:

I- Exordium on the steadfastness and confidence of the recipients of the revelation (1, 1-2, 11);

II- Marsanes' vision of the nature, structure, and deployment of the entirety (2, 12-18, 14a):

- a) The thirteen seals (2, 12-4, 24a);
- b) Marsanes' insight into the nature of incorporeal and corporeal reality (4, 25b-6, 1);
- c) The saving descent of Autogenes (6, 12-16);

⁴⁹⁰ Pearson suggests that since the state of the second half of Codex X is too fragmentary, one may consider the possibility of having a second treatise in this codex. (Cf. Pearson, 1981, p. 230).

⁴⁹¹ Pearson, 1981. This is also the reconstitution proposed by Funk. (Cf. Funk, Poirier and Turner, 2000).

⁴⁹² Fallon, 1979. See the comment on Fallon's study in chapter 2.

⁴⁹³ Pearson, 1981.

⁴⁹⁴ Funk, Poirier and Turner, 2000.

⁴⁹⁵ Since the state of conservation of *Marsanes* is very fragmentary, Turner emphasizes that, except for pages 1-10 and 25-42, "the major divisions are a matter of conjecture based on remaining traces". (Cf. Funk, Poirier and Turner, 1981, pp. 22-23).

- d) The deployment of the Barbelo aeon from the Triple Powered One (6, 17-9, 29a);
- e) Marsanes receives the power of the Barbelo aeon (9, 29b-10, 12a);
- f) Through Marsanes the Barbelo aeon urges the ascent towards the Invisible Spirit (10, 12b-14, 15a);
- g) Marsanes' ascent to the Triple Powered One (14, 15b-16, 3a);
- h) Marsanes sees the supreme deity (16, 318, 14a);

III- The nomenclature of the cosmic powers of the soul (18, 14b-39, 17):

- a) The need to know the nomenclature of the cosmic powers and of the soul (18, 14b-20, 16a);
- b) The blessed authority's instructions on preparing the soul (?) (20, 16b-29?);
- c) The configurations and powers of the zodiacal signs (21, 1?-24, 21a);
- d) The alphabet and the configurations of the soul (25, 21b-39, 17);

IV- Being worthy of and safeguarding the revelation (39, 18- 45, 20?);

V- Marsanes' concluding vision concerning the destiny of souls (45, 21?-68, 17):

- a) The (baptismal?) names (45, 21?-55, 16?);
- b) Marsanes' query about the baptismal powers (55, 17-57, 28?);
- c) (Response?) (58, 1?-62, 4a?);
- d) Marsanes' (apocalyptic) vision of the fearsome angels (62, 4b?-64, 17a?);
- e) Gamaliel comes to Marsanes aid (64, 17b?-65, 5a?);
- f) Gamaliel's revelation (65, 5b?-66, 16?);
- g) Marsanes' vision of the judgment of souls (66, 17?-68, 17).

Despite the similitude between *Marsanes* and the other two Nag Hammadi philosophical apocalypses, Fallon did not include it in his inventory of gnostic apocalypses⁴⁹⁶. However, *Marsanes* presents many apocalyptic elements.

⁴⁹⁶ He may have considered that the extremely fragmentary state of *Marsanes* could not lead to precise conclusions on this matter.

Concerning the apocalyptic character of *Marsanes*, Turner argues that technically its basic genre is the revelatory discourse rather than that of an apocalypse⁴⁹⁷. However, similarities between *Marsanes*, *Zostrianos* and *Allogenes* are more than doctrinal. *Marsanes* integrates many elements typical of apocalyptic literature. And Turner himself admits that *Marsanes* has apocalyptic features⁴⁹⁸. We may analyze those apocalyptic features, following Turner's detailed structural outline and his table of apocalyptic elements present in *Marsanes*⁴⁹⁹.

The untitled treatise of the Bruce Codex says that there are certain great ones who have the skill to speak revelations. One of these great ones is named Marsanes⁵⁰⁰. Pearson believes that this untitled tractate is strongly related to *Marsanes*, and he even suggests that its author could have read our text. Pearson also argues that a prophet named Mar-

⁴⁹⁷ He argues that the most crucial phenomena indicative of an apocalypse is the narrative framework. And even considering its badly damaged state, *Marsanes* does not seem to present this element. (Cf. Funk, Poirier and Turner, 2000, p. 26).

⁴⁹⁸ "Thus, it appears that as a whole, *Marsanes* does not belong to the literary genre of "apocalypse", even though it is obviously an apocalypse in the general sense of a "revelation", an authoritative transmission of a secret, otherworldly teaching or technique". (Cf. Funk, Poirier and Turner. 2000, p. 26).

⁴⁹⁹ He uses Hellholm's contribution to *Semeia* 36 (Hellholm, 1986, pp.16-34) to identify *Marsanes*'s apocalyptic elements. He identifies that in *Marsanes*, concerning the content, we may find eschatology as history in future form; description of the otherworld; combat between dualistic micro-cosmic powers and/or group; otherworldly mediators or revealers; this worldly recipients addresses of recipient's revelation; command to recipient to reveal and/or to write by otherworldly mediator; and systematization of numbers. Concerning the form, He identifies that *Marsanes* presents a heavenly journey to an otherworldly place of revelation; discourse of mediators; dialogues between mediator (s) and receiver; communication embodiment; and combination of smaller forms. Finally, concerning the function/communication situation, he identifies that *Marsanes* is intended for a group in crisis; presents an exhortation to steadfastness and/ or repentance; promise of vindication and redemption; and authorization of message.

⁵⁰⁰ "The powers of all the great aeons worshipped the power which is in Marsanes. They said 'Who is this who has seen these things in his very presence, that on his account he (Marsanes) appeared in this way!' Pearson's translation. (Cf. Pearson, 1981, pp. 230-231).

sianos in Epiphanius account about the “Archontics”⁵⁰¹ is virtually the same as Marsanes. In this account, Epiphanius says that Marsianos was caught up to the heavens and returned after three days. Thus, Pearson concludes that Marsanes was a prophet who was credited with great visions and a celestial journey⁵⁰². If we consider Pearson’s idea, we may assume that the authorship of our text is attributed to an important prophetic personage who was considered to be worthy of otherworldly revelations⁵⁰³.

Despite the fragmentary state of conservation of *Marsanes*, one may identify at least one section where an otherworldly mediator appears. In the final section, between pages 64*, 17b? to 66*, 16?, an angel called Gamaliel comes to help Marsanes. Gamaliel also discloses mysteries to him. Gamaliel is a known character in many Nag Hammadi texts, such as *The Sacred Book of the Great Invisible Spirit* (NH III, 52, 19-22 and 64, 22-26)⁵⁰⁴.

The section between pages 2, 12 to 18, 14a relates Marsanes’ vision of the nature, structure and deployment of the Entirety. In the beginning of this passage, a revelatory discourse about thirteen seals is made to Marsanes. The seals’ theme is widely known from *Revelation* 6. However, in *Revelation* there are seven seals, while in *Marsanes* we have thirteen. The theme of the seals will reappear at the end of *Marsanes* (66*, 3-5), where the text tells that someone was sealed and adorned with the “seal of heaven”. We may also add that in the *Apocalypse of Adam* there are also 13 kingdoms⁵⁰⁵, and in the

⁵⁰¹ Epiphanius, *Haereses*, 40.7.6.

⁵⁰² Pearson, 1981, pp. 230-231.

⁵⁰³ Turner agrees with Pearson, since he practically only quotes Pearson’s comments on *Marsanes* authorship. (Cf. Funk, Poirier and Turner. 2000, pp. 2-4).

⁵⁰⁴ Funk, Poirier and Turner, 2000, p. 467.

⁵⁰⁵ 82, 10-11.

Gospel of Judas, the number 13 is also present, but quantifying stars⁵⁰⁶. In Zostrianos the number of aeons is also 13⁵⁰⁷.

The final section of *Marsanes* (45*, 21?-68*, 17), according to Turner's structural outline, presents a concluding vision concerning the destiny of souls. As already discussed in this dissertation, the final destiny of souls is an apocalyptic literary *topos*, present in many Jewish and Christian apocalyptic writings⁵⁰⁸. Generally speaking, this passage is in a very poor state of conservation and most of the text is missing. Thus, its exact content cannot be known with precision. However, some remarks can be made about this section.

Poirier argues that on page 57*, line 21, the word $\alpha\lambda\iota\omega\omega\mu\epsilon$ (I become), also attested in pages 6*, 14 and 14*, 17-18, may indicate a transformation of the visionary, or also, his access to a superior degree during his ascent⁵⁰⁹. The transformation during an ascent process is a current theme in *3 Enoch*, where the visionary receives new clothes during his journey, becoming someone like the angels⁵¹⁰.

The section between pages 62*, 4b to 64*, 17a is particularly interesting concerning apocalyptic features. This section, despite the fragmentary condition of the text, offers an account of Marsanes' apocalyptic vision of the fearsome angels. This vision is described with lights and fire, in the apocalyptic style⁵¹¹. Marsanes also describes the celestial beings that he meets as wild animals (lines 6, 9-11). After that, an angel called Gama-

⁵⁰⁶ *Gospel of Judas*, 55, 10-11. (Cf. Kasser, Meyer and Wurst, 2006).

⁵⁰⁷ 4, 27.

⁵⁰⁸ See chapter 1 and also the commentary on texts in chapter 3.

⁵⁰⁹ Funk, Poirier and Turner, 2000, p. 465.

⁵¹⁰ See chapters 3 to 16 of *3 Enoch*.

⁵¹¹ See, for example 64, 1-5: "I [] because I [saw] all of [the lights] around [me, blazing] [with] fire. [And me in their mist]". Pearson's translation. (cf. Pearson, 1981, p. 341).

liel comes to help Marsanes (64, 17b?-65, 5a?) and then reveals other mysteries (65, 5b?-66, 16?). What takes place next (65-66) should probably be interpreted as an account of revelations from Gamaliel in a baptismal context⁵¹².

But the climax of this final section is comprised between pages 66*, 17? to 68*, 17. In this particular section, we have the description of Marsanes' vision of the judgment of the souls. In page 67*, an image of a woman in travail is presented⁵¹³. One may establish a relation to *Revelation* 2, 1-2: "And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth". This is probably a metaphor to indicate the end-time⁵¹⁴.

Concerning the concluding elements, Poirier argues that the expression **ΝΕΤΑ-
CAY[NE** (those who will know)⁵¹⁵ designates the addressees and readers of the text. He adds that those addresses are "appelés à partager la connaissance à laquelle le visionnaire et prophète Marsanès a seul eu directement accès et dont il est désormais le médiateur". Poirier concludes saying that the use of the future in this final phrase may indicate an eschatological orientation⁵¹⁶.

⁵¹² See Poirier's comment. (Cf. Funk, Poirier and Turner, 2000, pp.467-468).

⁵¹³ "[] a woman [] while she is in [travail] [] when she gives birth" (67*, 3-6). Pearson's translation. (Cf. Pearson, 1981, p. 345).

⁵¹⁴ Poirier suggests another parallel, *John* 16:21: "When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world"; and *Micah* 4:9: "Now why do you cry aloud? Is there no king in you? Has your counselor perished, that pain seized you like a woman in labor?" (Cf. Funk, Poirier and Turner, 2000, p. 468).

⁵¹⁵ 68, 17.

⁵¹⁶ Funk, Poirier and Turner, 2000, p. 468.

Despite its fragmentary state, we may state that *Marsanes* is a type II apocalypse (otherworldly journey) that presents, concerning the manner of revelation, a pseudonymous seer and otherworldly mediator. Concerning the temporal axis, it presents eschatological elements. Concerning the spatial axis, it presents otherworldly elements, such as the combat between otherworldly powers. Due to its fragmentary state, a complete understanding and analysis of *Marsanes*' content is not possible. Concerning the apocalyptic influences, one may affirm that *Marsanes* presents allusions to Jewish and Christian apocalyptic texts. Possible allusions and similarities to *Revelation* in particular are numerous. Thus, we may consider that the author of *Marsanes* was probably aware of Christian apocalyptic traditions.

5.3- *Allogenes* (NH XI, 3)

Allogenes is the third treatise of Codex XI whose state of conservation is extremely poor. Only three leaves (59/60, 61/62 and 63/64) survived completely, but just after reconstructions made from two or four fragments. In most pages, only the lower fourth survived entirely. Since the pagination is expected to be on upper margin, it is missing on several pages, with the exception of fragments of pages 19-20. Two different scribes copied Codex XI; the first one did it from page 1 to 44, and the second from page 45 to 72⁵¹⁷. The first scribe used the Subachimimic dialect, while the second used the Sahidic⁵¹⁸. In the particular case of *Allogenes*, we have a Sahidic text with sporadic

⁵¹⁷ *Allogenes* was copied by the second scribe.

⁵¹⁸ For detailed information on Codex XI see John Turner introduction to it in the Nag Hammadi Studies 36. (Cf. Turner, 1990, pp. 4-20).

Bohairic elements⁵¹⁹. Compared to the rest of Codex XI, *Allogenes* is not much damaged. It contains the three complete leaves, for example. However, the text presents considerable lacunas, such as the top of pages 45 to 48 and 51 to 58, where the first lines- in some cases the first eight lines - are missing.

In 1990, the Nag Hammadi Studies collection published its volume 36, edited by Charles Hedrick, devoted to Nag Hammadi codices XI, XII and XIII. *Allogenes* English critical translation was made by John Turner and Orval Wintermute, and its introduction by A.C. Wire⁵²⁰. In 2004, the BCNH collection published its volume 30 in the section «texts», devoted to the critical edition and French translation of *Allogenes*⁵²¹.

One may suggest a division of *Allogenes* in three parts. The first part (45, top-58, 7) tells the first sequence of revelations disclosed by an otherworldly being called Youel to Allogenes. This first sequence of revelations works as a revelatory dialogue, where Youel reveals otherworldly mysteries and Allogenes interferes with questions and answers. The second part is the apocalyptic ascent section (58, 8-68, top). In this part, Allogenes is guided by Youel on an otherworldly journey, one hundred years after the first revelatory sequence. He is caught up to the superior aeons, where he beholds many of the revelations which were disclosed to him before, in the first revelatory sequence. The third and final part (58, 8- 69, 19) is the designation of a mission to Allogenes. He shall write down the revelations on a book and transmit them to Messos. Turner suggests a detailed structural outline as follows⁵²²:

⁵¹⁹ Wire suggests that *Allogenes* was translated from Greek in or near the Bohairic area, maybe even in Alexandria, around 300 C.E. (Cf. Wire, Turner and Wintermute, 1990, p. 173).

⁵²⁰ Wire, Turner and Wintermute, 1990.

⁵²¹ Funk, Poirier, Scopello and Turner, 2004.

⁵²² Funk, Poirier, Scopello and Turner, 2004, pp. 26-27.

- I- Authorial ascription in missing *incipit* (45, top);
- II- Youel's initial revelations to Allogenes (45, top-58, 8):
 - a) Youel's first revelation discourse and response (45, top-50, 17):
 - 1-The Barbelo becomes an Aeon: a visual metaphor (45, 15-47, 7);
 - 2- The Triple Powered Invisible Spirit (47, 7-49. 38);
 - 3- Allogenes' response (49, 38-50, 17);
 - b) Youel's second revelation discourse and response (50, 17-52, 12):
 - 1- Allogenes has the power of intellect (50, 17-51, 7);
 - 2- The Aeon of Barbelo (51, 8-52, top);
 - 3- Allogenes' response (52, top-52, 12);
 - c) Youel's third revelation discourse and response (52, 13-55, 17):
 - 1- Difficulties in comprehending the Triple Powered one (52, 13-53, 23);
 - 2- Barbelo becomes an Aeon: an auditory metaphor (53, 23-54, top);
 - 3- Allogenes praises the Triple Powered one (54, top-37);
 - 4- Allogenes' response (55, 12-17);
 - d) Youel's fourth revelation discourse and response (55, 17-31):
 - 1-The Triple Powered One's transcendence of all being (55, 17-30);
 - 2- Allogenes' response (55, 31-32);
 - e) Youel's fifth revelation discourse and response (55, 33-58, 7):
 - 1- The advent of the Luminaries and the Problem of positive knowledge (55, 33-57, 23);
 - 2- Allogenes' response and Youel's departure (57, 24-58, 7);
- III- One hundred years later: Allogenes' ascent and the final revelation (58, 8-68, top):
 - a) Allogenes' initial vision: the Barbelo Aeon (58, 8-26);
 - b) Allogenes is caught up to a pure place (58, 26-59, 3);
 - c) The revelation of the Powers of the Luminaries (59, 4-68, top);
 - 1- Instructions on ascending through the Triple Powered one (59, 4-60, 12);

- 2- Allogenes' response: the ascent through the Three Powers (60, 13-61, 22);
- 3- The Powers of the Luminaries: negative theology (61, 22-64, 36);
- 4- The Powers of the Luminaries: positive theology (64, 37-68, top);
- IV- Conclusion (68, top-69, 16):
 - a) Instructions for writing the book (68, top-25);
 - b) Allogenes writes the book and commissions Messos (68, 25-69, 16);
- V- Subtitle and title (69, 16-20).

Fallon considers *Allogenes* as a Type I apocalypse (otherworldly revelations but no otherworldly journey). It is hard to understand Fallon's categorization of *Allogenes*. The text clearly presents an otherworldly journey⁵²³, and Fallon himself affirms that "and then in a second part (57, 27-69, 20) he is taken up in an otherworldly journey to receive further revelations". He even asserts that there is a combination of both categories of apocalypse in *Allogenes*⁵²⁴. Thus, Fallon's categorization of *Allogenes* is not correct, since the text presents an otherworldly journey full of ascent apocalyptic elements.

Turner considers *Allogenes* as an apocalypse, arguing that even Porphyry named it as an apocalypse⁵²⁵. And indeed, *Allogenes* presents many apocalyptic elements. Turner himself considers J. J. Collins definition of "apocalypse" to classify *Allogenes* as an apocalypse⁵²⁶. Concerning the manner of disclosure, our text presents otherworldly revelations disclosed by an otherworldly mediator, an otherworldly journey with visions

⁵²³ 58, 8-68, top

⁵²⁴ Fallon, 1979, p. 127.

⁵²⁵ Turner refers to the passage in *Life of Plotinus* 16, already discussed in this dissertation. (Cf. Funk, Poirier, Scopello and Turner, 2004, p. 27). See the discussion on the introduction of the present chapter.

⁵²⁶ He affirms that *Allogenes*, like *Zostrianos*, provides a model of spiritual progress and individual salvation. (Cf. Funk, Poirier, Scopello and Turner, 2004, pp. 30-32).

and a pseudonymous visionary. Regarding the temporal axis, it presents a cosmogony, present salvation by knowledge and judgment of sinners. It also presents revelations about otherworldly beings, concerning the spatial axis. Finally, our text presents in its concluding elements instructions to the visionary and a narrative conclusion.

Concerning the celestial journey in *Allogenes*, Scopello argues that it represents more than a simple journey to otherworldly spheres, but a “voyage à l’intérieur de soi-même”. The different celestial spheres through which *Allogenes* passes are actually the different levels of intellectuality. Each level represents a stage on the path that the chosen may survey to achieve the divinity⁵²⁷. One may even consider that the first revelatory sequence (45, top-58, 8) is a preparation for the visions that *Allogenes* will see during his ascent⁵²⁸.

Our text also presents a pseudonymous authorship. The name *Allogenes* means stranger, foreigner. Scopello justifies the choice of this name as follows:

Le nom d’Allogène est significatif et justifie le choix dont il a été l’objet, car *Allogenes* signifie étranger. Étranger au monde, étranger aux méfaits de la création, Allogène est le symbole du gnostique qui garde sa liberté face aux archontes du mal, et s’échappe vers les régions de l’intellect pour atteindre la divinité enfouie au plus profond de lui-même⁵²⁹.

⁵²⁷ Scopello, 1987, pp. 340-341.

⁵²⁸ The first revelatory sequence deals with celestial beings, such as the Triple Powered One, Barbelo and his Aeon and the Invisible Spirit. These descriptions of the celestial beings are made with a Platonic philosophical language. (Cf. Scopello, 1987, p. 341).

⁵²⁹ Scopello, 1987, p. 342.

In *Allogenes* we may also find a celestial being that plays the role of otherworldly mediator. This being, also called “[Mother] of the Glories” (55, 17) is named Youel. He discloses revelations to Allogenes through five revelatory discourses. However, he only appears in the first half of the text, not being present during the ascent process. He reveals in his speech though, what Allogenes will contemplate during his ascent.

The origins of otherworldly characters are disclosed in 45, 6-57, 24 by Youel’s revelatory discourse to Allogenes. The nature of the Invisible Spirit is clearly transcendent as the following passage shows:

[to] you [a] form [and a revelation of] the invisible spiritual Triple Powered One outside of which [dwells] an undivided incorporeal [eternal] knowledge (51, 6-11)⁵³⁰.

Fallon argues that there is no clear discussion on the evil nature of the material world; however, it is probably implicit in the need for escape from it⁵³¹, as the following passage shows:

O, Allogenes. A great power was out on you, which the Father of the All, the Eternal, put upon you before you came to this place, in order that those things that are difficult to distinguish you might distinguish and those things that are unknown to the multitude you might know, and that you

⁵³⁰ Turner and Wintermute’s translation. (Cf. Wire, Turner and Wintermute, 1990, p. 205).

⁵³¹ Fallon, 1979, p. 127.

might escape (in safety) to the One who is yours, who was first to save who does not need to be save (50, 24-36)⁵³².

At the end of the first part, *Allogenes* is told to search for the good that is in him⁵³³ and to wait 100 year to receive further revelation. This further revelation will be disclosed during his ascent, 100 years after the meeting with Youel. In its concluding elements, a mission is assigned to *Allogenes*⁵³⁴. He shall write down the revelations in a book and transmit them to Messos, his son. Messos designates the seed of the chosen ones. This book should be left on a mountain. As said before, mountains are often seen as a good place for revelations in apocalyptic literature⁵³⁵.

We saw that *Allogenes* may be considered a type II apocalypse (otherworldly journey) that presents, concerning the manner of revelation, visions, an epiphany scene, a pseudonymous seer and an otherworldly mediator. Concerning the temporal axis, it presents theogony and cosmogony, the idea of present salvation by knowledge, judgment of sinners and personal afterlife. And finally, concerning the spatial axis, it presents otherworldly elements. It has a first section that may be classified as a revelatory dialogue full of apocalyptic elements. This dialogue works as a revelatory preparation for the visions that the seer will contemplate 100 years later, in his ascent. This ascent approaches *Al-*

⁵³² Turner and Wintermute's translation. (Cf. Wire, Turner and Wintermute, 1990, p. 203).

⁵³³ "If you [seek with a] [perfect] seeking, [then] you shall know the [Good that is] in you; then [you will know yourself] as well, (as) one who [derives from] the God who truly [pre-exists]" (56, 15-20). Turner and Wintermute's translation. (Cf. Wire, Turner and Wintermute, 1990, p. 215).

⁵³⁴ Similar to other apocalypses. In the specific case of *Allogenes*, where the visionary is told to write down the revelations, one may see a close parallel to *4 Ezra*, where the visionary is also told to write down the mysteries on several different books (see the commentaries on the chapter 4).

⁵³⁵ See chapter 4.

logenes to the two previous treatises, full of apocalyptic and philosophical elements. Also like the two previous treatises, lacunas are also a problem in *Allogenes*, not permitting a complete understanding of the text. However one may identify an influence of Jewish apocalyptic in *Allogenes* literary framework.

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As already suggested in the introduction of this chapter, we may consider these texts as a distinct group among Nag Hammadi treatises. After analyzing their apocalyptic characteristics, we may conclude that they present not only doctrinal and theological similarities, but also literary ones. Our three texts may be classified as type II apocalypses. Moreover, they present similarities to Jewish ascension apocalypses framework.

These similarities may be understood as simple influences, but also as literary *topos*. I believe that our three Sethian philosophical apocalypses were composed not only for a public who knew middle- and neo-Platonism, but also a public who was aware of Jewish ascent apocalypses themes and framework, a public that could understand the allusions and similarities of our texts with Jewish ascent apocalypses.

Once again, we should remember Porphyry's account on certain "apocalypses" that were produced at Plotinus time. As Puech showed, one of our Sethian philosophical apocalypses, *Zostrianos*, can be identified with one of these "apocalypses" cited by Porphyry, and it is also probable that *Allogenes* could be identified with the "apocalypse of *Allogenes*" also cited by Porphyry. This shows that at least one of our texts, *Zostrianos* and maybe also *Allogenes* were understood and classified as apocalypses in antiquity.

Even if they do not present the title of “apocalypse” in the manuscript, they present many apocalyptic features, and they were even named as “apocalypses” by Porphyry⁵³⁶.

⁵³⁶ *Life of Plotinus*, 16. (Cf. Armstrong, 1966).

6- Other Apocalypses

Two other Nag Hammadi texts can be clearly classified as apocalypses according to the proposed categorization⁵³⁷, the *Paraphrase of Shem* and *Melchizedek*. However, differently from the texts analyzed in chapter three, they do not present the word 'apocalypse' in their titles in the manuscript. It is not possible either, to categorize them as Sethian philosophical apocalypses, since they do not present precise philosophic elements and discussions, even if Schenke considers *Melchizedek* as a Sethian text⁵³⁸. Since it is not possible to classify these texts in any of the two precedent categories, we shall analyze them separately in this chapter.

6.1- *The Paraphrase of Shem* (NH VII, 1).

The *Paraphrase of Shem* is the first text in Codex VII. This Codex is extremely well preserved, the best preserved codex in the Nag Hammadi collection. Its leather cover, for example, was found intact, and just a blank stub which held pages 29-30 has been lost⁵³⁹. Thus *the Paraphrase of Shem* is really well preserved and lacunas are almost inexistent, with the exception of the bottom lines of pages 32, 36-38 and 40.

In their presentations of Codex VII, Puech⁵⁴⁰ and Doresse⁵⁴¹ considered the first two texts as being one⁵⁴². Scholars know today, that pages 1 to 49, 9 are part of a distinct

⁵³⁷ Collins, J., 1979.

⁵³⁸ Schenke, 1974 and 1981.

⁵³⁹ Wisse, 1996, p. 1. See also Roberge, 2000, pp. 1-8. For a detailed description of Codex VII see Robinson, 1984, pp.vii-xii.

⁵⁴⁰ Puech, 1950, p 123

⁵⁴¹ Doresse, 1958, pp.173.

treatise, the *Paraphrase of Shem*, while in 49, 10 to 70, 12 we have the *Second Treatise of the Great Seth*. In 1996, the Nag Hammadi Studies collection published its volume 30, devoted to Nag Hammadi Codex VII, the *Paraphrase of Shem*'s critical edition and English translation was made by Frederik Wisse⁵⁴³. In 2000, the BCNH collection published its text volume 25, devoted to the critical edition, French translation and commentary on *Paraphrase of Shem*⁵⁴⁴.

The title is only presented at the beginning of the text (ΤΠΑΡΑΦΡΑΣΙΣ ΝΣΗΜ), probably an abbreviated form of the full title that is in the incipit: "The Paraphrase of Shem which was about the unbegotten Spirit. What Derdekeas revealed to me, Shem, according to the will of the Majesty" (1, 2-5)⁵⁴⁵.

Wisse argues that the *Paraphrase of Shem* presents no clear traces or influences of Christianity. He mentions a written source used by Hippolytus in his *Refutatio omnium haeresium* (5. 19-22). This source is named as Paraphrase of Seth⁵⁴⁶ and according to Wisse has common features with our text and could be attributed to Sethians⁵⁴⁷. Wisse

⁵⁴² Roberge, 2000, p. 5.

⁵⁴³ Wisse, 1996.

⁵⁴⁴ Roberge, 2000.

⁵⁴⁵ Wisse's translation. (Cf. Wisse, 1996, p. 25).

⁵⁴⁶ See Bertrand, 1975.

⁵⁴⁷ He argues as follows: "Apart from sharing the designation 'paraphrase' there is a remarkable agreement between the two in the description of the primeval powers, but the common material does not extend in a significant way beyond the early pages of the tractate. Furthermore *ParaphShem* has at best only a few ambiguous Christian allusions, while the *Paraphrase of Seth* has many clearly Christian elements. Thus, the relationship is at best distant; there are no indications that the one tractate depended upon the other. Perhaps both made use of a now lost document which had the designation paraphrase in the title. *The Paraphrase of Seth* also does not help in determining the *terminus ad quem* for *ParaphShem* since the one does not clearly presuppose the other". (Cf. Wisse, 1996, p. 15).

also suggest the second half of the second century as a probable date for the *Paraphrase of Shem*'s composition.

Roberge, however, has a different opinion concerning the lack of Christian features in the *Paraphrase of Shem*. He considers that the section 38, 28b-40, 31a is an allusion to the crucifixion. Additionally, he interprets that the section 30, 4b-38, 28a contains allusions to the baptism of the Savior. He also affirms that it seems that the author of the *Paraphrase of Shem* knew the gospel traditions concerning Jesus' baptism⁵⁴⁸ and also the *Gospel of John*'s interpretation of the crucifixion⁵⁴⁹. Thus, following Roberge's arguments, we shall consider that the *Paraphrase of Shem* presents Christian elements.

Roberge suggests⁵⁵⁰ the following detailed outline for the *Paraphrase of Shem*:

I- Titre (1, 1-5a);

II- L'Apocalypse (1, 5b-42-11) :

a) Introduction : Sem ravi en extase (1, 5b-16a);

b) La révélation de Derdekeas (1, 16b-41, 21a) :

1- Cosmogonie et anthropogonie (1, 16b-24, 29a)

2- Le déluge (24, 29b-28, 8a);

3- La destruction de Sodome 28, 8b-30, 4a);

4- Le baptême du Sauveur (30, 4b-38, 28a);

5- La remonte du Sauveur par sa crucifixion (38, 28b- 40, 31a);

6- Adresse à Sem : sa mission sur la terre (40, 31b-41, 21a);

⁵⁴⁸ Roberge, 2000, pp. 85-87.

⁵⁴⁹ Roberge, 2000, p. 114. He also argues that the verb πῆσσειν (39, 30), translated by Wisse as "to stabilize", should be translated as "stick or fix in" (Liddell and Scott, 1996, p. 1399). He also cites two usages of this verb with the cited meaning: in Cyrillus of Jerusalem (*Commentarius in Johannem*, 12) and in Oecumenius' *Commentarius in Apocalypsin* 4, where it designates the fixation on a cross. (Cf. Roberge, 2000, pp. 87-89).

⁵⁵⁰ Roberge, 2000, pp. 44-50.

- c) Conclusion; retour de l'extase (41, 21b-42, 11a);
- III- Le premier discours eschatologique de Desdekeas (42, 11b-45, 31a) :
 - a) Fonction cosmique de la foi (42, 11b-23);
 - b) Eschatologie individuelle (42, 24-43, 28a);
 - c) Eschatologie cosmique (43, 28b-45, 31a);
- IV- La montée de Sem (45, 31b-47, 32a):
 - a) Récitation du mémorial et du témoignage (45, 31b-47, 7a);
 - b) Vision des sphères (47, b-32a);
- V- Le second discours eschatologique de Derdekeas (47, 32b- 48, 30a);
- VI- La conclusion: adresse à Sem (48, 30b- 49, 9).

Concerning the literary genre, the title describes our text as a paraphrase. However, only the section comprised between pages 32, 27 and 34, 16 can be considered as a paraphrase⁵⁵¹, and the text as a whole is a type II (with otherworldly journey) apocalypse. Roberge emphasizes the plurality of literary genres present in the *Paraphrase of Shem* as follows:

La diversité des genres littéraires, les doublets, les digressions, les retours en arrière, les inconséquences, le vocabulaire flottant, la confusion des interlocuteurs dans les dernières pages laissent supposer que nous sommes en présence d'un texte où se sont agglomérées, par les soins d'un ou de plusieurs rédacteurs peu soucieux d'unité et d'ordre logique, des pièces de provenance et de date diverses⁵⁵².

⁵⁵¹ Wisse argues that section 32, 27-34, 16 "is a kind of commentary on the identity of some twenty personages who are listed in a litany called "memorial" or "testimony" in 31, 4-32, 5. Thus the term "paraphrase" appears to refer to a piece of text to which further explanations have been added". (Cf. Wisse, 1996, p. 16).

⁵⁵² Roberge, 1981, pp. 328-329.

In his introduction to *Paraphrase of Shem*'s French translation, he also argues that surely, the text presents traces of glosses and redactional transformations. He also affirms that certain pieces may have had an independent written existence before being integrated into the actual text⁵⁵³.

However, despite its literary heterogeneity⁵⁵⁴ Roberge himself recognizes that the *Paraphrase of Shem* is an apocalypse. He argues that it contains an introduction and a conclusion typical of apocalyptic literature, which gives it an apocalyptic narrative framework. He goes on affirming that "À partir de ce cadre narratif, il sera possible de dégager la structure générale de l'écrit dans son état actuel et de préciser les grandes articulations du message transmis par le révélateur à la fois selon l'axe temporel et selon l'axe spatial"⁵⁵⁵.

Fallon characterizes the *Paraphrase of Shem* as a type II apocalypse (otherworldly revelation and otherworldly journey) with a discourse. He argues that concerning the manner of revelation, it presents an otherworldly journey, a pseudonymous author, an otherworldly being as mediator of revelations, an epiphany scene and reaction of the recipient. Concerning the temporal axis, it contains theogony and cosmogony, an account of primordial events, *ex-eventu* prophecy, present salvation by knowledge, judgment of

⁵⁵³ Roberge, 2000, p. 26.

⁵⁵⁴ On its doctrinal and theological character and plurality see Roberge's introduction in the French translation (Cf. Roberge, 2000, pp. 99-114).

⁵⁵⁵ Roberge also cites Vielhauer's article (Cf. Vielhauer, 1964) to attest the *Paraphrase of Shem* apocalyptic character. In this article, Vielhauer suggests three elements as constitutive characteristics of an apocalypse: pseudonym, the usage of vision, and the presence of other smaller literary genres inside the apocalypse. Roberge argues that the *Paraphrase of Shem* presents these three elements. We will discuss it soon. (Cf. Roberge, 2000, pp. 26-29).

sinners or ignorant and personal afterlife. Concerning the spatial axis, it presents otherworldly elements, instructions to the recipient of revelation and a narrative conclusion⁵⁵⁶.

We may start the discussion by its ascension aspect. The *Paraphrase of Shem* narrative framework presents an account of an ecstatic experience supposedly performed by the biblical personage of Shem. The beginning of the visionary experience is described as follows:

My thought which was in my body snatched me away from my race. It took me up to the top of creation, which is close to the light that shone upon the whole area there. I saw no earthly likeness, but there was light. And my thought separated from the body of darkness as though in sleep (1, 7-16a)⁵⁵⁷.

The first element that should be discussed in this passage is the nature of the ascent experience, i.e. if it happens inside or outside the body⁵⁵⁸. The text leaves no doubt that the hypothetical experience took place out of the visionary's body, since it affirms clearly that "my thought separated from the body of darkness" (1, 14-14). Moreover, the text tells that the experience took place while the visionary was sleeping, which characterizes it somehow as a dream-vision. And dream-visions are a quite common way of disclosing revelations in apocalyptic literature⁵⁵⁹.

⁵⁵⁶ Fallon, 1979, pp. 136-137 and 148.

⁵⁵⁷ Wisse's translation. (Cf. Wisse, 1996, p. 25).

⁵⁵⁸ See the discussion on the *Apocalypse of Paul* in chapter 4.

⁵⁵⁹ See, for example, *Daniel* 7:1: "In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream and visions of his head as he lay in his bed".

Concerning the pseudonymous seer and the otherworldly mediator, we must consider Roberge's remark on what he calls "la confusion des interlocuteurs"⁵⁶⁰. The *Paraphrase of Shem* presents two interlocutors: the pseudonymous visionary, called Shem, and the heavenly mediator, called Derdekeas. After having been snatched up to heavens on an ecstatic dream-vision experience, Shem listens to a voice⁵⁶¹ (1, 16-17) that discloses him revelations about the origins of universe and the sense of history. Derdekeas continues to discourse addressing revelations to Shem⁵⁶², until Shem wakes up from his ecstatic dream-vision experience (41, 21b-42, 11a). However, after the end of the visionary experience, Shem's considerations are followed by verbal interventions, i.e. new revelations, about the role of faith, individual eschatology (42, 11b-43, 28a) and cosmic eschatology (43, 28b-45, 31a). Roberge presumes that these new revelations are disclosed once again by Derdekeas, even if he is not mentioned⁵⁶³.

Just after these new revelations, Shem talks again without a transition, telling how he has gone up through the celestial spheres (47, 7b-32a). Once again, without transition, the revealer pronounces an eschatological discourse (47, 32b-48, 30a). Lastly, the revealer tells Shem his mission on earth (48, 30b-49, 30a) and predicts his final ascent after material death.

Thus, the *Paraphrase of Shem* presents a very complex dialogue structure, which starts as a revelatory discourse and then turns into a revelatory dialogue, without clear

⁵⁶⁰ Roberge, 2000, pp. 26-28.

⁵⁶¹ It is Derdekeas' voice: "Again I shall appear. I am Derdekeas, the son of the incorruptible, infinite light" (8, 23b-25). Wisse's translation. (Cf. Wisse, 1996, p. 43).

⁵⁶² See, for example, 9, 34; 11, 35; 24, 17; 26, 1.11.24.30; 28, 20.35; 31, 4; 32, 19; 34, 17.24.32; 37, 6.19 and 40, 32.

⁵⁶³ Roberge, 2000, p. 27.

transitions of interlocutors⁵⁶⁴. Nevertheless, one may assume that the interlocutors, even if they are not mentioned, are to be identified with the two precedent characters, Shem, the visionary, and Derdekeas, the heavenly mediator⁵⁶⁵.

The pseudonymous seer, Shem, must be identified with the biblical personage of such name. Shem is one of Noah's sons (Gn 10), and should probably be identified as the first being of a chosen seed, since he is called in the text as "the first being upon the earth" (1, 20-21)⁵⁶⁶. Derdekeas, for its part, is called "Son of perfect light".

The *Paraphrase of Shem* also includes *ex-eventu* prophecies, predicting primordial history and events, such as the destruction of Sodom (28, 34-29, 33). The destruction of Sodom, like other catastrophic events in primordial history, is interpreted by the *Paraphrase of Shem* as a tentative of the creator to wipe out the chosen seed from earth.

There is also a prediction that the revealer shall open "the eternal gates which are shut from the beginning. To those who long for the best of life, and those who are worthy of the repose" (36, 2-6)⁵⁶⁷. This prediction shows a soteriological element, the salvation is promised to those who deserve it. Those who deserve salvation are previously defined as "those who possess the particle of the mind (**NOYC**)⁵⁶⁸ and the thought of the light of the Spirit" (35, 2b-6a)⁵⁶⁹, in opposition to those who will not achieve salvation, defined as follows:

⁵⁶⁴ For a detailed outline of the dialogue's structure see Roberge's introduction. (Cf. Roberge, 2000, pp. 27-28).

⁵⁶⁵ Roberge, 2000, pp. 26-28.

⁵⁶⁶ Wisse's translation. (Cf. Wisse, 1996, p. 25).

⁵⁶⁷ Wisse's translation (Cf. Wisse, 1996, pp. 99-101).

⁵⁶⁸ On the role of **NOYC** in the *Paraphrase of Shem* see Roberge, 1981.

⁵⁶⁹ Wisse's translation (Cf. Wisse, 1996, pp. 97-99).

For many in the race of Nature will seek the security of the Power. They will not find it, nor will they be able to do the will of faith. For they are the seed of the universal Darkness (35, 7-13a)⁵⁷⁰.

The following section predicts the suffering of those saying that “it is they who will be found in much suffering” (35, 13b-14a). Then, our text predicts the destruction of “those who do not share in the Spirit of light and in faith” (35, 31b-33), saying that they will “dissolve in the [Darkness], the place where repentance did not come” (35, 34-36, 1)⁵⁷¹. Another eschatological passage is comprised in page 48, where the *Paraphrase of Shem* predicts the destruction of the cosmos (48, 19-21) and the separation of the minds of “those who guard themselves against the heritage of death” (48,8-10) from Darkness (48, 21-22)⁵⁷². All these passages show the *Paraphrase of Shem*’s eschatological apocalyptic character. One may also point out that the *Paraphrase of Shem* often emphasizes the need of transmitting and preaching the revelation to the offspring of the chosen seed (26, 17-25; 28, 34-29, 6; 41, 2-5; 48, 30, 49, 9).

We saw that the *Paraphrase of Shem* is an otherworldly journey apocalypse that presents, concerning the manner of revelation, an epiphany scene, an otherworldly journey, a pseudonymous seer and an otherworldly mediator. Concerning the temporal axis, it presents a theogony and cosmogony, discussion of primordial events, *ex-eventu* prophe-

⁵⁷⁰ Wisse’s translation. (Cf. Wisse, 1996, pp. 98-99).

⁵⁷¹ Wisse’s translation. (Cf. Wisse, 1996, p. 99).

⁵⁷² “When the consummation has come and Nature has been destroyed, then their thoughts will separate from the Darkness. Nature has burned them for a short time. And they will be in the ineffable light of the unbegotten Spirit without a form” (48, 19-27). Wisse’s translation. (Cf. Wisse, 1996, p. 125).

cies, present salvation by knowledge and personal afterlife. And finally, concerning the spatial axis, it presents otherworldly elements.

We also saw that the *Paraphrase of Shem* presents Christian influences, what may indicate that its apocalyptic elements did not come only directly from Jewish sources, but were also intermediated by Christian sources. The presence of such a clear apocalyptic framework, i.e. an otherworldly journey performed by a pseudonymous author, intermediated by an otherworldly being and the disclosure of heavenly mysteries, in the *Paraphrase of Shem*, shows us that its author was familiarized with apocalyptic literature and was probably composing it to an audience that could understand the allusions and the apocalyptic scheme.

6.2- *Melchizedek* (NH IX, 1)

Melchizedek is the first treatise of Codex IX. This codex is extremely damaged. Entire portions are completely missing, and some others are preserved only in fragments. However, the section between pages 27 and 48 is comparatively well preserved⁵⁷³; since our tractate is placed at the beginning of codex IX, pages 1, 1 to 27, 10, its preservation is extremely poor. Pearson argues that the text contains around 745 lines, but only 19 are completely preserved. The other 467 are partially preserved, and 199 have been entirely restored by the editors. Thus, less than 50% of the text is readable, and, since most of

⁵⁷³ For detailed codicological and papyrological descriptions see Pearson's introduction to Codex IX (Cf. Pearson, 1981. pp. 1-18) and Robinson's preface to the Introduction volume of The Facsimile Edition (Cf. Robinson, 1984).

transcriptions are matter of conjectural reconstruction, we have only a “very imperfect picture” of the real contents of *Melchizedek*⁵⁷⁴.

The *editio princeps* of *Melchizedek* was published in 1981⁵⁷⁵, in Nag Hammadi Studies collection volume 15, devoted to Nag Hammadi codices IX and X. This *editio princeps* was used by Gianotto in his Italian translation, in 1984⁵⁷⁶. In 2001, the BCNH collection published its text volume 28⁵⁷⁷, devoted to the critical edition, French translation and commentary on *Melchizedek*.

Pearson points out Egypt as the place of *Melchizedek*’s original composition, arguing that “Egypt was the country where speculations on the figure of Melchizedek were especially rife⁵⁷⁸. In addition the Egyptian coloration of the brief theogony beginning at 9, 2 supports a theory of Egyptian origin for the document (or, at least its final redaction)”⁵⁷⁹. No precise date for its original composition can be stated, one may indicate the late second or the early third century. Mahé also affirms that the choice of Melchizedek as protagonist of our text suggests the Egypt as a probable place for its composition⁵⁸⁰.

⁵⁷⁴ Pearson adds that “it is evident, too, that what does remain of the tractate, even as restored, is susceptible of various interpretations”. (Cf. Giversen and Pearson, 1981, p. 19).

⁵⁷⁵ Giversen and Pearson, 1981.

⁵⁷⁶ Gianotto, 1984.

⁵⁷⁷ Funk, Mahé and Gianotto, 2001.

⁵⁷⁸ See Epiphanius, *Panarion*. 55.9.18

⁵⁷⁹ Pearson, 1981, pp. 39-40.

⁵⁸⁰ Funk, Mahé and Gianotto, 2001, p. 55. Mahé cites Epiphanius (*Panarion*, 55, 9, 18). In this account, Epiphanius cites the “Melchizedekiens”, and compares them to a beast (μυογαλίδιον), a particular common species in Egypt. He also cites monastic speculations on the figure of Melchizedek in Egypt, during the 4th and 5th centuries. (Cf. Funk, Mahé and Gianotto, 2001, pp. 55-56).

There is a general agreement that *Melchizedek* is a Sethian text⁵⁸¹. However, differently from philosophical apocalypses of the precedent chapter, *Melchizedek* presents many Christian features, and it even talks clearly about Jesus⁵⁸². Generally speaking, *Melchizedek* is related to a group of Jewish-Christian Sethian texts, such as the *Apocryphon of John* and the *Sacred Book of the Great Invisible Spirit*⁵⁸³. Considering *Melchizedek*'s doctrine, Mahé argues as follows:

Melchisédek représente une combinaison complexe de différentes tendances. Son cadre apocalyptique judéo-chrétien très accentué le rapproche de la tradition séthite, mais les listes d'entités célestes, bien qu'elles ne soient pas aussi compliquées que celles d'*Allogène*, *Marsanès* ou *Zostrien*, s'inscrivent en quelque sorte en amont de cette tradition. Le rythme ternaire, le genre hymnique et les visées liturgiques de sa partie centrale évoquent les *Trois Stèles de Seth* et la *Prôtennoia Trimorphe* ; l'insistance sur le baptême est conforme au *Livre sacré du Grande Esprit invisible*, à la *Prôtennoia Trimorphe* et à la fin de l'*Apocalypse d'Adam*. Enfin la forte christianisation du texte semble à certains égards prolonger celle de l'*Apocryphe de Jean*⁵⁸⁴.

⁵⁸¹ Schenke, 1974 and 1981; Funk, Mahé and Gianotto, 2001; Pearson, 1981.

⁵⁸² Fallon, 1979, pp.128-129. See also Mahé's introduction. (Cf. Funk, Mahé and Gianotto, 2001, pp. 16-19.

⁵⁸³ Funk, Mahé and Gianotto, 2001, pp. 24-25.

⁵⁸⁴ Funk, Mahé and Gianotto, 2001, p. 25.

Despite its many lacunas, Mahé⁵⁸⁵ suggests the following detailed outline for *Melchizedek*:

I - Apocalypse de Gamaliel (1, 2-14, 15):

a) L'Église d'en bas (1, 11-5, 17) :

- 1- Annonce de la venue de Jésus Christ (1, 2-3, 11) ;
- 2- Diffusion et déformation de la doctrine (4, 4-5, 17) ;

b) L'Église d'en haut et le sacerdoce véritable (5, 17-8, 11) :

- 1- Évocation du monde supérieur (5, 17-6, 22) ;
- 2- Oblation vivante et sacrifice de mort ;
- 3- Melchisédek et le baptême (7, 25-8, 10)

c) Histoire et destinée de la descendance élue d'Adam (9, 1-14, 9) :

- 1- Création et chute (9, 1-10, 9) ;
- 2- La semence élue à travers les âges (10, 9-12, 15) ;
- 3- La fin des temps (13, 1-14, 9) ;

Conclusion : une part de cette révélation seulement pourra être transmise. Le reste devra être réservé aux élus (14, 9-15)

II- Liturgie de Melchisédek (14, 15- 18, 20) :

a) Préface (14, 23- 15, 7) :

- 1- Action des grâces pour l'envoi de Gamaliel (14, 23- 15, 7) ;
- 2- Affirmation de la vocation du Grand Prêtre (15, 7-16, 6) ;
- 3- Oblation et baptême (16, 7-16) ;

b) Trishagion (16, 16-18, 7) ;

c) Exhortation finale (18, 7-22) ;

III- Apocalypse des fils de la génération de la vie (19, 2-27, 6) :

- a) Affrontement de deux sacerdoce (19, 16-21, 20) ;
 - b) La passion du Christ (25, 1-9) ;
 - c) Exhortation à Melchisédek (25, 9-27, 3) ;
- Conclusion : recommandations ésotériques (27, 3-6) ;

⁵⁸⁵ Funk, Mahé and Gianotto, 2001, pp. 7-12.

IV- Épilogue : Melchisédek reprend la parole et constate la remontée des fils de la génération vivante au-dessus des cieux (27, 7-11).

Concerning the apocalyptic character of *Melchizedek*, Pearson argues that “formally this tractate can be defined as an apocalypse”. He goes on arguing that the term “apocalypse” appears at 27, 3, where the visionary is told by the otherworldly mediator not to divulge “these revelations” (ΝΕΕΙΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙC) to anyone in the flesh⁵⁸⁶. However, we cannot affirm with any certainty that the word “apocalypse” used in this passage designates a literary genre; actually, it probably means only revelations, disclosure of heavenly mysteries. On this matter, answering to Pearson, Mahé argues that :

Bien que le mot « apocalypse » apparaisse à deux reprises dans notre texte, on ne pourrait définir celui-ci comme une apocalypse à proprement parler. En effet, le Grand Prêtre ne nous relate pas une vision particulière, qui lui aurait été accordée à un moment déterminé de sa carrière. Bien plutôt, il nous fait partager une expérience apocalyptique dont il a été témoin depuis les origines les plus anciennes de l’humanité jusqu’aux temps ultimes et à la consommation des siècles. Cette expérience est à la fois directe et indirecte. En effet, Melchisédek a eu connaissance des apocalypses accordées aux fils élus d’Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noé et quelques autres dont le nom est perdu (12, 4-9). Mais d’un autre côté, il a lui-même directement bénéficié de visions extatiques et de révélations surnaturelles, qu’il relate dans le texte (1, 1-14, 15 et 19, 10-27, 6). Il en résulte une structure narrative complexe où

⁵⁸⁶ Pearson, 1981, p. 20.

deux apocalypses – l’une dans les premiers temps, à l’origine de la vocation de Melchisédek, l’autre dans le dernier âge, au terme de sa carrière – encadrent la célébration d’une liturgie intemporelle qui nous introduit de plain pied dans le monde divin où tout n’est que lumière et sainteté pour les siècles des siècles (14, 23-18, 7)⁵⁸⁷.

Nevertheless, *Melchizedek* can be considered, in the light of the adopted definition⁵⁸⁸, as an apocalypse. It presents a pseudonymous authorship, otherworldly and eschatological revelations that are disclosed on a presumably visionary experience, an otherworldly being that plays the role of mediator of revelations, periodization of history, and *ex-eventu* prophecies. For Mahé, precisely speaking, two parts of *Melchizedek* are apocalyptic portions, he names them, as we saw in his outline, as “Apocalypse de Gamaliel” – since the revelations are mediated by an otherworldly being of such name- and “Apocalypse des fils de la génération de la vie”. We may consider that *Melchizedek* as a whole is an apocalypse, since it deals with periodization of history in ages⁵⁸⁹, and other apocalyptic aspects, such as the presence of a divine mediator who discloses mysteries to a human recipient.

We may then, start the discussion on precise apocalyptic aspects of *Melchizedek*.

The title is partially preserved in the first line of Codex IX: ΜΕΛΧΙ[ΕΔΕΚ].

The name Melchizedek appears six times in our treatise (5, 15; 12, 10; 14, 16; 15, 9; 19,

⁵⁸⁷ Funk, Mahé and Gianotto, 2001, pp. 3-4.

⁵⁸⁸ See chapter 2 discussion.

⁵⁸⁹ This topic will be discussed soon in this dissertation.

13 and 26, 3)⁵⁹⁰. It is also possible that other occurrences of the name are lost in lacunas. Thus, this title probably designates the name of the presumed visionary and pseudonymous author of our text, Melchizedek⁵⁹¹. This character is, of course, an allusion to the *Genesis* High Priest (*Genesis* 14, 18-20) who is described as follows:

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

The account is short, but clear enough to attest that Melchizedek was the high priest of the God Most High. About the shortness of the passage in question, Mahé argues that the rarity of data about Melchizedek seems to have stimulated the "glossateurs"⁵⁹². Concerning the importance of the personage Melchizedek, we may turn to Epiphanius account in the *Panarion*, already cited in this dissertation. In *Haeres* 55, Epiphanius has conserved a report about a dissident group of followers of Theodore of Byzantium. It seems that this group accorded a great importance to the personage of Melchizedek. According to Epiphanius account, Theodore of Byzantium was put under arrest and interro-

⁵⁹⁰ Since the name is not complete in any of these passages, "Melchizedek" has been conjecturally restored. (Cf. Pearson, 1981, p. 19).

⁵⁹¹ Since the name Seth appears in 5, 20, Doresse argued that the text may be attributed to the "Great Seth" (Cf. Doresse, 1960, p. 142). But generally scholars agree with the idea that Melchizedek is really the putative author of the present tractate (Cf. Funk, Mahé and Gianotto, 2001 and Pearson, 1981).

⁵⁹² Funk, Mahé and Gianotto, 2001, p. 12.

gated. In this interrogatory, he affirmed that Christ was born from a human seed, and Melchizedek was superior. For Theodore, Christ came after Melchizedek, and his dignity came from Melchizedek priesthood⁵⁹³. Pearson argues that “all these assertions, except for the express subordination of Jesus Christ to Melchizedek, can be paralleled in *Melchizedek* (and even the subordination doctrine may simply reflect a misunderstanding on Epiphanius’ part)”⁵⁹⁴. Mahé also cites Hyppolytus (Ref. VII, 36, 1), who affirms that disciples of Theodore were teaching that Melchizedek was superior to Christ.

However, Mahé disagrees with Pearson on the opinion that Theodore’s disciples cited by Epiphanius and Hyppolytus were Jewish-Christians who may have produced our text. He argues that “Il paraît donc exclu que Melchisédek soit initialement issu d’un milieu judéo-chrétien qui exaltait la figure du mystérieux pontife pour réduire Jésus Christ à une condition proprement humaine”⁵⁹⁵. Even if Melchizedek cannot be identified with these groups cited by Epiphanius and Hyppolytus, we may assume, considering all these ancient accounts⁵⁹⁶, that certain groups accorded a great importance to the personage of Melchizedek, which may justify his use as a pseudonymous author and an apocalyptic seer.

In *Melchizedek*, there is also the presence of an otherworldly mediator. This celestial being plays the role of mediator of the revelation during the first part of our treatise.

⁵⁹³ Mahé cites the Psalm 109, 4 LXX: “You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”

⁵⁹⁴ Pearson, 1981, p. 39.

⁵⁹⁵ On this matter, he argues that “la littérature hérésiologique abonde en présentations tendancieuses, en déformations maladroites ou polémiques. C’est peut-être le cas ici”. (Cf. Funk, Mahé and Gianotto, 2001, pp. 18-19).

⁵⁹⁶ Mahé also cites other ancient sources that mention Melchizedek, such as the parchment of *Deir el-Bala'izah*, the *Second Book of Jeu* (chapters 45-46) from Bruce Codex and the *Pistis Sofia* (Cf. Funk, Mahé and Gianotto, 2001, pp. 20-21).

His name is not clear in any part of the text; however, it has been reconstituted as Gamaliel by Pearson⁵⁹⁷.

Melchizedek also presents a common topic present in many other apocalypses. This topic is called the Four Ages Myth, and it is found in many ancient texts, even in certain apocalyptic texts, such as *Daniel*⁵⁹⁸ and *4 Ezra*⁵⁹⁹. *Melchizedek* is divided in four parts, and each part represents an age of the history of the chosen seed. The first age starts when Adam and Eve are expelled from paradise and ends with the flood. The flood is an attempt to wipe out the “Sethians” from earth, but they are saved by the intervention of Great Angels, like in the *Apocalypse of Adam* (69, 19-25). The second age ends with a fire flood, another attempt of the creator and the archons to destroy the “gnostics”, but once again, they are saved by Great Angels (*Apocalypse of Adam*, 75, 21-25, and *Hypostasis of the Archons* 96, 29). The third age lasts until the passage of the third Illuminator of knowledge, whose presence disturbs the Powers and the archons (*Apocalypse of Adam*

⁵⁹⁷ In 5, 18, only three letters can be seen (ΓΗΛ). Since the lacuna is too large for only four letters, it seems that the name of this angelic being is Gamaliel rather than Gabriel. Moreover, Gamaliel is known from other Nag Hammadi texts, such as the *Apocalypse of Adam* (75, 17-26), the *Sacred Book of the Great Invisible Spirit* (III, 52, 20-22), *Trimorphic Protennoia* (48, 27) and *Marsanes* (64, 19-65, 5). (Cf. Pearson, 1981, p. 22 and Funk, Mahé and Gianotto, 2001, pp. 22-23).

⁵⁹⁸ In chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar has a dream that is interpreted in the light of the four ages. His dream is about a statue composed with a gold head, silver chest and arms, bronze middle and thighs, iron legs and iron and clay feet. Daniel's interpretation of the dream says that these 4 metals represent great kingdoms that will rule the world one after the other. Then, in the apocalyptic section of *Daniel* (chapters 7-12) Daniel sees four beasts, and an angel interprets this vision in the light of the four ages: each beast represents a kingdom that will rule the world, each one at a different age. It is important to remember, though, that these are *ex-eventu* prophecies, since the presumed prediction of these kingdoms is already accomplished.

⁵⁹⁹ In *4 Ezra* the visionary also sees four beasts. The *angelus interpretes* associates this vision with *Daniel's*, interpreting them in the light of the four ages, once again, each beast representing a kingdom that will rule the world, each at a different age.

77, 2-3). The fourth and final age is characterized by the destruction of the material world, the evil angels and their adepts (*Apocalypse of Adam* 83, 15-17)⁶⁰⁰.

Clearly, *Melchizedek* gives more importance to the first and the fourth ages. Moreover, the great apocalyptic revelations are disclosed in these two periods. In the present state of the text, it is not possible to know for sure what do the predictions of second and third age deal with. Even the revelations concerning the first and fourth ages are hard to be defined, also due to the fragmentary state of *Melchizedek*. However, one may affirm that they insist on the coming of Christ (1, 2-4, 10) and on the eschatological destruction of the material universe and its adepts⁶⁰¹, another apocalyptic literary *topos*.

At the fourth age, the second ensemble of revelations is disclosed to the visionary. Mahé argues that this revelation is probably situated at the end-time, after the resurrection of Christ. He goes on affirming that *Melchizedek* situates Christ's crucifixion in the

⁶⁰⁰ This structure of history is not clearly suggested in *Melchizedek*. Due to the several lacunas, we cannot be sure of such configuration. However, Mahé has suggested this periodization of history based on the four ages' myth. He argues as follows: "Les lacunes de Melchisédek ne nous permettent pas de vérifier dans quelle mesure cette conception de l'histoire structurait les révélations de Gamaliel et des autres envoyés célestes. À vrai dire, dans ce qui nous reste, nous n'avons aucune allusion directe au déluge, ni aux cataclysmes passés. Les calamités et les châtements décrits en 13, 28-14, 3, à quoi le Sauveur soustrait les siens (14, 4), se situent à la fin du monde, puisque la mort est alors abolie (14, 8-9). Mais tout indique que le mythe des quatre âges et sous-jacent au texte. En effet, les quatre Luminaires apparaissent à deux reprises (6, 4-5; 17, 6-19), exactement dans le même ordre (Harmozêl, Orôiaêl, Daveïthê, Êlêlêth). Il est même précisé que Harmozêl [est dans le premier] Éon (1, 8), c'est-à-dire dans le premier âge, ce qui laisse entendre que ses collègues président chacun l'un des âges suivantes. Plus encore, alors que les Luminaires des âges intermédiaires, Orôiaêl et Daveïthê, portent le titre de stratège (17, 11.14), Harmozêl et Êlêlêth, qui ont la responsabilité d'ouvrir et de fermer la marche, semblent bien avoir mérité le grade supérieur d'archistratège (17, 7.18), qui leur donne le rang de Jésus Christ, Archis [tratège du To]ut (18, 5)!" (Cf. Funk, Mahé and Gianotto, 2001, p. 28).

⁶⁰¹ Funk, Mahé and Gianotto, 2001, pp. 28-29.

past⁶⁰² and announces the victory of Melchizedek (26, 1-12). Mahé concludes his comments on the four ages' myth as follows:

On peut donc former l'hypothèse que, dans son état intégral, notre texte, tout en professant la théorie des quatre âges, insistait surtout sur le premier et le dernier, où prenaient place les deux apocalypses (...) le sacerdoce de Melchisédek se situe entre deux, c'est-à-dire qu'il assure une sorte de continuité entre tous les âges à la suite. Cependant, outre la mention des Luminaires, il est possible que le chiffre quatre soit encore apparu dans les nombres des envoyés. Si Gamaliel, serviteur du premier Luminaire, délivre la première prédiction au début des temps, il serait logique de supposer que ses trois collègues venaient annoncer la récapitulation finale. Mais cela reste évidemment une hypothèse⁶⁰³.

Thus, it is possible to see that Melchizedek widely uses the four ages' myth, even with the present deteriorate state of the manuscript.

References to the end of material world and its Powers are quite clear, though. These references can be found in 6, 19b-22; 14, 1-10⁶⁰⁴ and 26, 1-27, 3. This last passage contains an account of an eschatological war, where Melchizedek will prevail over his enemies, the archons, who will be destroyed. Another probable reference to this eschato-

⁶⁰² "And [] you (pl.) struck me, [] you threw me, [] corpse. And [you crucified me] from the third hour [of the Sabbath-eve] until [the ninth hour.] And after [these things I arose] from the [dead.]" (25, 1-9). Pearson's translation. (Cf. Pearson, 1981, p. 81).

⁶⁰³ Funk, Mahé and Gianotto, 2001, pp. 29-30.

⁶⁰⁴ This passage also clearly mentions that the weak will be punished.

logical war is 13, 1-16⁶⁰⁵. In this passage, *Melchizedek* talks about the origins of the two personages that will start the war. Pearson suggests a possible relation of this passage to *Revelation* 11, 3-11⁶⁰⁶, where is told that the two Lord's witnesses will prophesy, and "the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them".

In his comment on this passage, Mahé argues that in page 13, the context of Melchizedek becomes explicitly eschatological, evoking many typical end-time scenes. Concerning the two characters of the eschatological wars, he also suggests a possible parallel to *Revelation* 11, suggesting their identification with biblical personages, such as Elias and Moses or John the Baptist and Jesus, or Peter and Paul, and even Enoch and Elias⁶⁰⁷. He also argues that despite the fragmentary state of this passage, it is possible to affirm that they are begotten in an eschatological context⁶⁰⁸.

In the concluding section, the visionary in *Melchizedek* is told not to reveal the mysteries to anyone in the flesh: "These revelations do not reveal to anyone in the flesh,

⁶⁰⁵ "They will make [war]" (13, 15). Pearson's translation. (Cf. Pearson, 1981, p. 65).

⁶⁰⁶ Pearson, 1981, pp. 25-63.

⁶⁰⁷ "Les exégètes ne s'accordent pas sur l'identification de ces deux personnages : on a suggéré les noms d'Élie et Moïse, puisqu'ils accomplissent les mêmes miracles (Ap. 11,6 : Élie contrôle la pluie; cf. 1 R 17,1; Moïse transforme l'eau en sang; cf. Ex 7,14-25); ou bien ceux du nouvel Élie et du nouveau Moïse, c'est-à-dire Jean Baptiste et Jésus, tous les deux mis à mort par des souverains mauvais, émanation de la « bête »; une variante de cette interprétation historicisante renvoie à Pierre et Paul, tués à Rome, la « grande ville » (Ap. 11,8) par Néron, la « bête »; ou encore les noms d'Énoch et d'Élie, les deux personnage de l'AT dont la mort n'est pas mentionnée (cf. Gn 5, 24 pour Énoch et 2 R 2, 1-11 pour Élie; c'est la solution adoptée par l'*Apocalypse copte d'Élie*, où les deux personnages interviennent dans le combat final contre l'Antéchrist). Mais, malgré les analogies (contexte de la fin des temps ; hostilité que les deux personnages devront subir), leur identification précise nous échappe, d'autant plus que le contexte est détérioré. De toute façon, on peut constater que l'auteur de *Melchisédek* utilise un *topos* littéraire tiré de la tradition apocalyptique juive et chrétienne". (Cf. Funk, Mahé and Gianotto, 2001, pp. 144-145).

⁶⁰⁸ Funk, Mahé and Gianotto, 2001, p. 145.

since they are incorporeal, unless it is revealed to you (to do so)” (27, 3-6)⁶⁰⁹. As already said in the discussion on the precedent chapters, the order to tell the revelations only to a few chosen ones is widely known in many other apocalyptic writings⁶¹⁰.

Thus, it is possible to affirm, despite its fragmentary state, that *Melchizedek* is an apocalypse according to the definition adopted in this dissertation⁶¹¹. One may even classify it as a type I apocalypse (otherworldly revelations but no otherworldly journeys). It is also possible that *Melchizedek* has used other apocalyptic writings, such as *Revelation*, as its sources. However, this utilization of apocalyptic traditions cannot be evaluated with precision, due to the several lacunas of the text. Nevertheless, that *Melchizedek* has apocalyptic context and motifs is undeniable. We saw that concerning the manner of revelation, it presents an epiphany scene, and an otherworldly mediator who discloses mysteries to a human and pseudonymous recipient. Concerning the temporal axis, it presents *ex-eventu* prophecies, the discussion on theogony, cosmogony, primordial events, present salvation by knowledge and judgment of the world. Concerning the spatial axis, it presents the discussion of otherworldly elements.

Despite the presence of certain Christian features, *Melchizedek*, concerning its literary framework, seems to be directly influenced by the Jewish apocalyptic literature. One of the clearest apocalyptic speculations, the four ages’ myth, is a common feature of certain Jewish apocalypses, such as the already cited *Daniel* and *4 Ezra*. Thus, concerning this particular feature, the influence seems to come directly from Jewish apocalyptic. However, our text presents a number of possible parallels with *Revelation*, what may in-

⁶⁰⁹ Pearson’s translation. (Cf. Pearson, 1981, p. 83).

⁶¹⁰ See the commentary on texts in chapters 4 and 5.

⁶¹¹ Collins, J., 1979.

dicating a possible direct influence of Christian apocalyptic. Nevertheless, the answer of this question is lost in the several lacunas of *Melchizedek*. We cannot know for sure in what measure the Christian apocalyptic may have influenced our text. But it is clear that the four ages' myth can be traced back to Jewish apocalyptic.

7- Texts with an apocalyptic section

The Nag Hammadi library also contains documents that are not entirely apocalypses but embrace the apocalyptic genre. Some of these texts present only apocalyptic features, such as the presence of an otherworldly being, or an entire apocalyptic section. The present chapter intends to discuss and comment on the Nag Hammadi texts that are not exactly “apocalypses”, but present an apocalyptic section.

7.1- *The Hypostasis of the Archons* (NH, II-4)

The *Hypostasis of the Archons* is the fourth text of codex II. This codex is generally well preserved, excluding some damages caused by insects, mostly at the two outer corners (worst near the center of the quire)⁶¹². Initially, Codex II was composed of 76 unnumbered leaves of which the first was a stub. We now have 74 leaves and 18 fragments. There is no ancient Coptic pagination, but a modern one in Arabic⁶¹³. The *Hypostasis of the Archons* is comprised between pages 134 to 145 in the modern Arabic pagination and pages 86 to 97 of what should be the original pagination of Codex II⁶¹⁴.

To date, a considerable number of studies about the *Hypostasis of the Archons* have been published. Among many articles and books consecrated to this text, we may emphasize the critical editions and translations. In 1970 P. Nagel published a German translation with the Coptic text, an index, a concordance and retroversion in Greek⁶¹⁵. At

⁶¹² Layton, 1989, p. 3 and Robinson, 1984.

⁶¹³ Layton, 1989, p. 2 and Böhlig and Labib, 1962.

⁶¹⁴ We may adopt this pagination in this commentary. It starts in line 20 of page 86 and ends at line 23 of page 97.

⁶¹⁵ Nagel, 1970.

the same year, an English edition was published by R. Bullard⁶¹⁶. In 1976, B. Layton⁶¹⁷ published a summary of precedent studies on the *Hypostasis of the Archons* with a new English translation and a commentary with many linguistic notes. In 1980 the BCNH published the volume 5 of its text section, containing the *Hypostasis of the Archons*, translated and commented by Bernard Barc, and *Norea*, translated and commented by Michel Roberge⁶¹⁸. Finally, in 1989, the critical English edition of codex II was published in the Nag Hammadi Studies collection, edited by Bentley Layton⁶¹⁹.

Bullard suggests the 3rd century as a probable date for the original composition in Greek of the *Hypostasis of the Archons*. He justifies his statement arguing that the text presents “an extended Gnostic background of developing tradition and “midrashic” handling of the relevant scriptural material”. Moreover, the probability that the *Hypostasis of the Archons* and *On the Origin of the World* depend on an earlier Gnostic document reinforce this statement⁶²⁰. Bullard also suggests that “Coptic-speaking circles may have played a part in the formation of some elements of the myth”, which could indicate Egypt as a place for its original composition⁶²¹.

The main title is well preserved at the end of the tractate (ΤΟΥΠΟΚΤΑΣΙΣ ΝΝΑΡΧΩΝ), in a colophon at lines 22 and 23 of page 97. Moreover, the first line of the text also presents the Greek word ὑπόστασις, followed by ἐξουσία (authorities)⁶²². Barc

⁶¹⁶ Bullard, 1970.

⁶¹⁷ Layton, 1976.

⁶¹⁸ Barc and Roberge, 1980.

⁶¹⁹ Layton, 1989.

⁶²⁰ Bullard, 1989, p. 222.

⁶²¹ Bullard, 1989, p. 221.

⁶²² ΕΤΒΕ ΟΥΠΟΚΤΑΣΙΣ ΝΝΕΞΟΥΣΙΑ: “On account of the reality of the authorities” (Layton’s translation. Cf. Layton, 1989, p. 235).

argues that this first phrase may be considered as a secondary title introduced in the Greek fashion way by the Greek word περί, or may be attached to what follows: “On account of the reality of the authorities, inspired by the spirit of the father of the truth...”⁶²³ (86, 20-21). We intend to adopt the first hypothesis, since it solves the problem of the repetition of the term “authorities”, already mentioned in line 20, in line 22⁶²⁴.

We may suggest the following outline for the *Hypostasis of the Archons*, based in Bullard’s plot⁶²⁵:

PROLOGUE: Topic and occasion; author addressee (86, 20-27);

THE RULERS:

- 1- Ignorance and blasphemy of the chief ruler (86, 27-87, 4);
- 2- His fall; establishment of his offspring as a lower spiritual hierarchy (87, 4-11);

THE PROTOPLASTS AND THE RULERS (87, 11-91, 11):

- 1- Apparition of a divine image (87, 11-20);
- 2- Creation of man as a snare for the image (87, 20-88, 10);
- 3- Vivification, naming, and gift of voice to man by the spirit; man names the living creatures (88, 10-24);
- 4- Man’s appointed career in Paradise (88, 24-89, 3);
- 5- Creation of woman; the rulers pursue her (89, 3-17);
- 6- Spirit passes from Adam into woman; from woman into a tree; and then into a snake; snake instructs the woman and the protoplasts discover they are naked of spirit (89, 17-90, 19);
- 7- The rulers curse the protoplasts, snake and mankind (90, 19-91, 11);

CAIN AND ABEL (91, 11-30);

SETH AND NOREA (91, 30-92, 31):

⁶²³ Layton’s translation. (Cf. Layton, 1989, p. 235).

⁶²⁴ Barc, 1980, p. 75. Barc and Bullard (Cf. Bullard, 1970, p. 42) argue in favor of the first hypothesis, while Layton (Cf. Layton, 1976. P. 362 and Layton, 1989, p. 235) adopt the second.

⁶²⁵ Bullard, 1989, pp. 229-231.

- 1- Foundation of the spiritual generation (91, 30-92, 4);
 - 2- Sabaoth saves mankind (Noah) from the rulers' deluge (92, 4-14);
 - 3- Norea burns the ark (92, 14-18);
 - 4- Norea struggle with the rulers (92, 18-92, 31);
- APPARITION OF THE ANGEL ELELETH (92, 33-93, 6)
- GNOSTIC DIALOGUE BETWEEN NOREA AND ELELETH (apocalyptic section) (93, 6- 96, 35):
- 1- First question (angels identity) and response (self-identification and promise of instruction (93, 6-13);
 - 2- Description of the angel by Norea, speaking as a narrator (93, 13-17);
 - 3- Speech of consolation by Eleleth (93, 18-32);
 - 4- Second question (origin and genesis of the rulers) and response (the veil dividing two realms; creation of Yaldabaoth) (93, 32-94, 19);
 - 5- His first blasphemy rebuked (94, 19-26);
 - 6- Descent of Wisdom and light into the region of chaos (94, 26-34);
 - 7- Yaldabaoth creates a lower spiritual hierarchy (94, 34-95, 4);
 - 8- His second blasphemy rebuked; banishment to Tartaros (95, 4-13);
 - 9- Elevation of Sabaoth: repentance, installation in seventh heaven, chariot and retinue (95, 13-96, 3);
 - 10- The envy of Yaldabaoth yields another spiritual hierarchy in Tartaros (96, 3-14);
 - 11- Summary of the second response; third question (do Norea and the rulers share a common origin?) and response (heavenly origin of Norea and her offspring means they cannot be injured by the rulers because of an indwelling spirit of truth) (96, 15-28);
 - 12- Appearance of the spirit of truth will take place after three generations (96, 28-31);
 - 13- Fourth question (When will the three generations have been accomplished?) and response (at the incarnation of the true man, who will disclose the existence of the spirit of truth) (96, 31-35);

ELELETH ESCHATOLOGICAL POEM: Deeds of the final generation (97, 1-20);
TITLE (97, 21-22).

Before discussing the *Hypostasis of the Archons*' precise literary genre and its apocalyptic section, we may cite Barc's statement of two different redactions for our text. He argues that

la première rédaction serait un travail de synthèse opéré à partir de trois sources gnostiques juives; la seconde, un remaniement de cette synthèse en vue de la présenter à un public chrétien. Parmi les indices de cette double rédaction on notera particulièrement des contradictions touchant l'organisation du monde archontique⁶²⁶.

It is hard to define the *Hypostasis of the Archons* literary genre. It clearly presents a narrative framework, mostly concerned with the exposition of a primeval myth. The

⁶²⁶ Barc suggests the existence of a theogonical and an anthropogonical source for the *Hypostasis of the Archons*. If we leave aside the introduction (86, 26-27) and the theogonical abstract (86, 28-87, 11) at the beginning of the *Hypostasis of the Archons*, we may consider that the anthropogonical source may have been used for the redaction of the first part of the tractate (87, 12-92, 18), while the theogonical source may have been used for the redaction of the second part (92, 18, 97, 21), i.e. the apocalyptic section. Considering these two sources, Barc suggests that the first redactor may have written sections 86, 26-27 (introduction); 86, 28-87, 11 (theogonical abstract); 87, 12-88, 17; 88, 18-89, 11; 89, 11-91, 7; 91, 11-92, 4; 92, 4-18 (anthropogonical source); 92, 18-94, 3; 94, 4-96, 11; 96, 15-17 (theogonical source); and the title; while the second redactor may have written sections 86, 20-25 (introduction); 87, 14-23; 88, 7-11; 90, 34-91, 3; 91, 7-11 (anthropogonical source); and 93, 25-32; 94, 4-96, 17; 96, 17-97, 21 (theogonical source). For a complete and detailed exposition of this hypothesis and its outline see Barc's introduction to the *Hypostasis of the Archons*. (Cf. Barc, 1980, pp. 45-48).

exposition of this myth is widely based on *Genesis* account. The narrative is made in the third person until the story of the deluge starts (92, 3 and following), then, two new characters appear in the narrative, Norea and an otherworldly being named Eleleth (92, 33). This is exactly when the apocalyptic section begins (92, 33), mainly in the form of a revelatory dialogue. Norea plays the role of the human recipient of the revelation and Eleleth the otherworldly mediator. Following the main subject of the tractate, Eleleth's revelations concern the primeval history and myth, a common subject in type I (no otherworldly journey) apocalypses.

And indeed Fallon classifies the *Hypostasis of the Archons* as an apocalypse without an otherworldly journey and dialogue. He considers that the *Hypostasis of the Archons* is a "treatise with a Christian introduction and two parts, a Gnostic version of *Genesis* and an apocalypse with dialogue"⁶²⁷.

As already mentioned, the dialogue is performed by Norea and Eleleth. Norea is the biblical character of *Genesis*, daughter of Eve. In the *Hypostasis of the Archons* she is considered as a spiritual being, similar to Seth (a son by the Highest God), someone of divine parentage⁶²⁸. One may consider Norea as the pseudonymous seer of the *Hypostasis of the Archons*' apocalyptic section; however, some remarks should be made on this issue. If we consider the treatise as a whole, we may remark that Norea is one of the characters, often cited in the third person⁶²⁹. When the apocalyptic section starts, she contin-

⁶²⁷ Fallon, 1979, p. 132.

⁶²⁸ Bullard, 1989, p. 227.

⁶²⁹ "But Norea turned, with the might of [...]; and in a loud voice [she] cried out [up to] the holy one, the God of entirety: "Rescue me from the rulers of unrighteousness and save me from their clutches-forthwith" (92, 33-35). Layton's translation. (Cf. Layton, 1989, p. 251).

ues to appear in the third person⁶³⁰. Later, the person of the discourse changes, and Norea appears in the first person⁶³¹. However, as already mentioned in this dissertation, the change in the person of the discourse is a common feature in many apocalypses⁶³².

The name Eleleth, according to Schenke⁶³³ and Barc⁶³⁴, is related to a Gnostic terminology perfectly elaborated that is not much compatible with the archaism of the theogonical source. Barc argues as follows:

On a proposé plusieurs étymologies du nom d'Éléleth⁶³⁵. La plus intéressante est celle qui le fait dériver de l'hébreu *hélél*, *l'astre de matin* dont parle Isaïe, 14, 12-15. Si on rappelle que ce texte d'Isaïe est à l'origine du mythe de chute de Lucifer, le rapprochement entre le nom du prince des démons et celui de l'ange instructeur peut paraître surprenant; il est pourtant très plausible, car dans la traditions gnostique le rôle d'Éléleth est ambigü, au même titre que celui de Sophia⁶³⁶.

⁶³⁰ When the angel appears (93, 2-4), Norea is cited in the third person; "Norea said, "Who are you?" (3, 6). Layton's translation. (Cf. Layton, 1989, p. 251).

⁶³¹ See, for example, the questions made to Eleleth.

⁶³² See the commentary on the *Apocalypse of Paul* in chapter 4.

⁶³³ Schenke, 1974, pp. 165-173.

⁶³⁴ Barc, 1980, p. 113.

⁶³⁵ Barc cites Giversen, 1963, p. 185 and Doresse, 1966, pp. 342-343.

⁶³⁶ Barc, 1980, pp. 113-114.

Moreover, it is important to remember that a celestial being called Eleleth is present in other Nag Hammadi treatises, such as the *Sacred Book of the Great Invisible Spirit* and the *Trimorphic Protennoia*⁶³⁷.

The transcendent features of the revelations disclosed to Norea by Eleleth are undeniable. They mainly concern primeval history, such as the origins of the rulers, celestial hierarchies and places and destiny of souls. Moreover, in the dialogue between Norea and Eleleth, the questions made by the visionary concern apocalyptic matters. Norea's second question deals with the origins of the rulers (93, 6-13). The third question also deals with rulers' origins, along with Norea's origins (96, 15-28). Eleleth also announces the upcoming of the spirit of truth⁶³⁸. And finally, the fourth question has an eschatological meaning, since it deals with the accomplishment of generations (96, 31-35).

Concerning the generations presented by the *Hypostasis of the Archons*, one may remark that they are four, which may reflect an influence of the four ages' myth, a common feature in many apocalypses⁶³⁹. In the *Hypostasis of the Archons*, Barc remarks that

⁶³⁷ Barc emphasizes that in the *Trimorphic Protennoia*, Eleleth "est à l'origine de la royauté de Saklas sur le monde inférieur, comme Sophia est à l'origine de celle de Samaël. Dans la liste des « quatre grands Luminaires qui se tiennent en présence du grand Esprit invisible » il occupe la dernière place, de même que Sophia est le dernier éon du monde céleste. À noter de surcroît que dans cette liste comme dans l'*Hypostase des Archontes*, il a comme attributs la Sagesse et l'Intelligence. En fonction de ces indices on peut se demander si dans certains cercles gnostiques Éléleth n'a pas joué, à un moment donné, un rôle identique à celui de Sophia dans notre mythe, ce qui justifierait qu'on lui ait donné le nom d'hélél, l'astre du matin tombé des cieux". (Cf. Barc, 1980, p. 114).

⁶³⁸ The true man will reveal the spirit of truth (the Savior) (96, 34-35). Barc argues that "pour l'auteur de l'*Hypostase des Archontes* la venue du Sauveur a déjà eu lieu. Le discours eschatologique n'est donc futur que par rapport à Noréa; pour l'auteur de l'écrit les temps eschatologiques qui verront la fin du règne des Puissances sont déjà commencés". (Cf. Barc, 1980, p. 128). The true man will come at the accomplishment of the fourth generation.

⁶³⁹ See the commentary on *Melchizedek* on chapter 5.

each period of Sethian history is marked by the presence of feminine character, the first generation (Adam's generation) by the presence of Eve, also called "spirit-endowed woman" (89, 11), "mother of the living" and "the female instructing" (90, 11); the second generation (Seth's generation) by the presence of Norea, Eve's daughter, also called "virgin" (91, 35) and identified with the Norea of the fourth generation; the third generation (protoplasts' generation) by the presence of Orea, the adversary of the archon (92, 15). She is also identified with the Norea of the fourth generation. Finally, the fourth generation (the final generation, the time of revelation) is once again marked by Norea (92, 20-25)⁶⁴⁰.

The apocalyptic section of the *Hypostasis of the Archons* shows parallels and quotations from other apocalypses and apocalyptic texts. We may demonstrate that our text contain some similarities to the *Ascension of Isaiah*. Barc argues that in the *Ascension of Isaiah*, the splendor of the angel cannot be described (VII, 2), similar to the *Hypostasis of the Archons*⁶⁴¹, where Norea says that "now as for that angel, I cannot speak of his power" (93, 13-14) and "No, truly, my mouth cannot bear to speak of his power and the appearance of his face" (93, 16-17)⁶⁴². Although, another phrase is pronounced by Norea in the epiphany scene to describe Eleleth: "his appearance is like fine gold and his raiment is like snow" (93, 14-15)⁶⁴³. This last description is similar to the description of God in *Daniel* 7, 9, where God's cloth is white like snow. In *1 Enoch* 46, 1, God's head is

⁶⁴⁰ Barc, 1980, p. 115.

⁶⁴¹ Barc, 1980, p. 113.

⁶⁴² Layton's translation. (Cf. Layton, 1989, p. 251).

⁶⁴³ Layton's translation. (Cf. Layton, 1989, p. 251).

white like wool. And finally in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, something of the old man in the seventh heaven is white and shining (22, 21-30)⁶⁴⁴.

Another similarity between the *Hypostasis of the Archons* and the *Ascension of Isaiah* concerns the number of heavens. Many Jewish texts state the existence of seven heavens, being the seventh the place where God dwells. According to Barc, the description of seven heavens in the *Ascension of Isaiah* is very similar to the *Hypostasis of the Archons*⁶⁴⁵. One may also emphasize that in the *Hypostasis of the Archons*, the seventh heaven is the place where Sabaoth is installed⁶⁴⁶. The installation of Sabaoth is described in the apocalyptic style⁶⁴⁷, with references to chariots and cherubim: "Now, when these (events) had come to pass, he made himself a huge four-faced chariot of cherubim and infinitely many angels to act as ministers, and also harps and lyres" (95, 13-96, 3)⁶⁴⁸.

The final section of the *Hypostasis of the Archons* is an eschatological poem. This poem may be attached to the preceding section, the apocalyptic one, since it is pronounced by the celestial revealer, Eleleth, and it presents many apocalyptic features. It starts saying that those who will be saved⁶⁴⁹ will ascent into the light (97, 1-4). Then, it predicts the destruction of the lower world and its authorities in the apocalyptic style⁶⁵⁰:

⁶⁴⁴ See the commentary on the *Apocalypse of Paul* in chapter 4.

⁶⁴⁵ Barc, 1980, p. 113.

⁶⁴⁶ The enthronement of Sabaoth is an account present in other Nag Hammadi treatises, always with allusions to *Revelation*. These allusions will be discussed in detail later, in next chapter, on the comment on *On the Origin of the World*.

⁶⁴⁷ This will be discussed later in next chapter.

⁶⁴⁸ Layton's translation. (Cf. Layton, 1989, p. 255).

⁶⁴⁹ That demonstrates a clear concern with personal afterlife and destiny of souls.

⁶⁵⁰ It is an eschatological account. See chapter 1.

“Then, the authorities will relinquish their ages: and their angels will weep over their destruction: And their demons will lament their death”⁶⁵¹.

The poem ends stating that “all the children of the light will be truly acquainted with the truth (...) They will all say with a single voice: ‘The father’s truth is just, and the son presides over the entirety’: And from everyone unto the ages of ages, ‘Holy-holy-holy! Amen!’”⁶⁵² (97, 13-14, 16-20)⁶⁵³.

We saw that the *Hypostasis of the Archons* is not an apocalypse as a whole, but rather a text with an apocalyptic section. This apocalyptic section may be classified as type I (no otherworldly journey). Concerning the manner of revelation, the apocalyptic section in the *Hypostasis of the Archons* presents an epiphany scene, an otherworldly mediator and a pseudonymous seer. Concerning the temporal axis it presents theogony and cosmogony, present salvation by knowledge, the discussion of primordial events, judgment of otherworldly beings, and the idea of personal afterlife. Concerning the spatial axis, it presents otherworldly elements. The *Hypostasis of the Archons* presents a mixture of Christian and Jewish apocalyptic influences. Moreover, it presents similarities to other Nag Hammadi texts that are influenced by apocalyptic literature, such as *On the Origin of the World*. Thus, it seems that the author of our text was aware of many apocalyptic motifs and he was making use of them to reach a specific public who was also familiarized to Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature.

⁶⁵¹ (97, 10-13). Layton’s translation. (Cf. Layton, 1989, p. 259).

⁶⁵² Layton’s translation. (Cf. Layton, 1989, p. 259).

⁶⁵³ Compare to *Revelation* 4:8: “and day and night they never cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!””

7.2- *The Letter of Peter to Philip* (NH, VIII-2)

The *Letter of Peter to Philip* is the second treatise of Codex VIII. It fills almost the nine finishing pages of this Codex (from line 10 of page 132 to line 27 of page 140), after the long tractate *Zostrianos*. There are no close doctrinal and theological relations between these two texts. Meyer argues that the *Letter of Peter to Philip* “most likely was included in Codex VIII because it was an appropriate length to fill the pages at the end of the codex”⁶⁵⁴.

Compared to *Zostrianos*, the *Letter of Peter to Philip* is well preserved. Except from little gaps, lacunas are almost inexistent from page 132 to 137, but tops of pages 138 to 140 present some considerable lacunas⁶⁵⁵. Meyer suggests the late 2nd century or the early 3rd century as a date for its original composition in Greek⁶⁵⁶, based on parallels with the *Apocryphon of John* and Irenaeus⁶⁵⁷. It is also important to mention the new version of the *Letter of Peter to Philip* in Codex Tchacos⁶⁵⁸.

Untill now, not many studies have been devoted to the *Letter of Peter to Philip*. In 1977 the BCNH collection published its first text section volume. This volume was consecrated to the *Letter of Peter to Philip* and was edited by Jacques Ménard⁶⁵⁹. In 1991, the edition of Codex VIII in the collection Nag Hammadi Studies, volume 31, brought an

⁶⁵⁴ Meyer, 1991, p. 227.

⁶⁵⁵ For considerations and discussion on Codex VIII material conditions see *Zostrianos* discussion below.

⁶⁵⁶ Greek loan words may be identified in the Coptic text, such as particles, technical terms, conjunctions and prepositions. (Cf. Meyer, 1991, p. 231 and Ménard, 1977, pp. 50-51).

⁶⁵⁷ Meyer, 1991, pp. 227-231.

⁶⁵⁸ According to Kasser, Meyer and Wurst (Kasser, Meyer and Wurst, 2006, p. 49), the *Letter of Peter to Philip* fills pages 1-9 of Codex Tchacos, presenting the same title and approximately the same text of Nag Hammadi Codex VIII.

⁶⁵⁹ Ménard, 1977.

English critical translation and the Coptic text of the *Letter of Peter to Philip* with notes⁶⁶⁰. Meanwhile, other studies were done, such as the unpublished doctoral dissertation by H.G. Bethge⁶⁶¹, and the edition of the papers read at the “First International Congress of Coptology” in 1978⁶⁶², which presents two articles consecrated to the *Letter of Peter to Philip*⁶⁶³.

The title is clearly presented at the beginning (ΤΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ Μ̄ΠΕΤΡΟΣ ΕΤΑΔ ΧΟΟΥΣ Μ̄ΦΙΛΙΠ̄ΠΟΣ)⁶⁶⁴. Similar to all letters in antiquity, the *Letter of Peter to Philip* starts with the nomination of its sender and its addressee, followed by a salutation⁶⁶⁵: “Peter, the apōstle of Jesus Christ, to Philip our beloved brother and our fellow apostle and the brethren who are with you: greetings”⁶⁶⁶ (132, 12-15). Meyer argues that the *Letter of Peter to Philip* may be placed in the context of a “large epistolary tradition developed around Paul and the Pauline School, so also a more modest collection of letters came to be ascribed to Peter”⁶⁶⁷.

⁶⁶⁰ Meyer, 1991.

⁶⁶¹ Bethge, 1984.

⁶⁶² Wilson, 1978.

⁶⁶³ Luttikhuisen, 1978 and Ménard, 1978.

⁶⁶⁴ “The letter of Peter which he sent to Philip” (132, 10-11). Meyer’s translation. (Cf. Meyer, 1991, p. 235).

⁶⁶⁵ Ménard, 1977, p. 40.

⁶⁶⁶ Meyers’s translation. (Cf. Meyer, 1991, p. 235).

⁶⁶⁷ Meyer argues later that the *Letter of Peter to Philip* is clearly a Christian gnostic text and it may be considered as a part of the Petrine tradition, since Peter is the leader and preacher and the only other apostle whose name is cited is Philip, “who is submissive to the authority of Peter and whose place in the tractate seems intended to highlight the preeminent authority of Peter”. (Cf. Meyer, 1991, pp. 227-229). Bethge, for his part, suggests that our text is part of the Gnostic *Acts of Philip* (Bethge, 1978), and Ménard believes that it is clearly a Gnostic dogmatic manual, rather than a letter, that exposes in a schematic form many Gnostic

However, despite the title and the typical epistolary salutation, the *Letter of Peter to Philip* cannot be entirely labeled as a letter. The text may be divided in two main parts: the letter itself (132, 10-133, 8) and a narrative account of the apostles' meeting with Jesus (133, 9-140, 27). This narrative piece constitutes what may be considered as an apocalyptic section.

Ménard suggests the following outline for the *Letter of Peter to Philip*⁶⁶⁸:

- 1- La Lettre de Pierre à Philippe (132, 12-133, 8);
- 2- Rassemblement, prière et apparition du Sauveur (133, 8-134, 18);
- 3- Questions des disciples (134, 18-135, 2) ;
- 4- Réponses du Sauveur (135, 3-137, 13);
- 5- Questions complémentaires des disciples (137, 13-17);
- 6- Réponse du Sauveur (137, 17-138, 3) ;
- 7- Disparition du Sauveur et propos sur la souffrance (138, 3-140, 3) ;
- 8- Prière de Pierre (140, 3-7) ;
- 9- Répartition des disciples pour l'annonce de l'Évangile (140, 7-27).

Fallon classifies the *Letter of Peter to Philip* as a type I apocalypse (without an otherworldly journey) with a dialogue. He also suggests that the text may be divided in three parts, the letter itself (132, 12-133, 8), the apocalyptic section, in which Jesus appears in the Mount of the Olives and dialogues with the apostles (133, 8-140, 3), and a final sermon of Peter (140, 3-27). Concerning the apocalyptic section, Fallon states that Jesus revelations deal with the origins of the lower world and the evil powers (135, 8-136, 15). Jesus also reveals that he came to gather the chosen seed and to conduct them

doctrinal points, and may probably be attached to the apocryphal tradition concerned with the *Acts of the Apostles*, since the epistolary section is small compared to the rest. (Cf. Ménard, 1979, pp. 4-6).

⁶⁶⁸ Ménard, 1979, p. 4.

back to the pleroma (136, 16-137, 9). For its concluding elements, the apostles are instructed to preach the gospel, combating the evil powers (137, 20-138, 3). The text ends with a final account about the preaching of the apostles⁶⁶⁹.

Scholars do not agree on the precise genre of the *Letter of Peter to Philip*. I believe that the most coherent idea is to consider it as a multi genre text with an apocalyptic section. We may consider it a text with an apocalyptic section rather than a text with apocalyptic elements because the section in question presents a narrative framework in which a celestial being (the resurrected Jesus) discloses transcendent mysteries to human recipients. Moreover, the section presents an epiphany of the revealer with lights in the apocalyptic style. We may then, proceed to the discussion of these elements in this apocalyptic section.

The authorship of the text is a complex issue. It is clear that the authorship of the first section, i.e. the letter piece, is pseudonymously attributed to Peter. However, in line 10 of page 133, Peter is mentioned in the third person. One may argue that the change of first person to the third and vice-versa is a common feature in apocalyptic literature⁶⁷⁰, but in the case of the *Letter of Peter to Philip*, the change in the person of the discourse coincides with the change of literary genre, i.e., the end of the epistolary section, and the beginning of the narrative revelatory section. Moreover, in the second section, all the apostles are cited in the third person. Thus, I believe that Peter cannot be considered as the pseudonymous author of our tractate, either Philip.

As already mentioned, the mysteries disclosed by the revealer, and also the questions asked by the human recipients, concern otherworldly matters, such as the origins of

⁶⁶⁹ Fallon, 1979, p. 134.

⁶⁷⁰ See the commentary on the *Apocalypse of Paul* in chapter 4.

the evil powers and the mission of the Savior. We may also emphasize that the epiphany of the revealer and the revelations take place in the Mount of Olives, and mountains are a common place for revelations in apocalyptic literature⁶⁷¹. A final element may be analyzed: before the apparition of the revealer, the apostles make a long prayer, followed by the epiphany scene. As already commented⁶⁷², in many apocalypses, prayer and ascetic habits are quite normal features for the seer before apocalyptic visions and revelations.

We saw that the *Letter of Peter to Philip* is not an apocalypse, but rather a text with an apocalyptic section. And this apocalyptic section may be considered a type I (without otherworldly journey). Concerning the manner of revelation it presents an epiphany scene, an otherworldly mediator and a pseudonymous seer⁶⁷³. Concerning the temporal axis it presents theogony and cosmogony, the idea of present salvation by knowledge and personal afterlife. Concerning the spatial axis, it presents otherworldly elements. It also presents many apocalyptic *clichés*, even being a small text. It is clearly a Christian text, and there is no reason to believe that it was not influenced by Christian apocalyptic.

⁶⁷¹ See the commentary on the *Apocalypse of Paul* in chapter 4.

⁶⁷² In the commentary on the *First Apocalypse of James* in chapter 4.

⁶⁷³ But with some remarks, as discussed earlier.

8- Texts with apocalyptic elements

Certain Nag Hammadi texts are not properly apocalypses and do not contain apocalyptic sections, but they do present one or more apocalyptic characteristics⁶⁷⁴. These texts cannot be considered as apocalypses because they lack one or more essential characteristic of the literary genre as it is defined by J. Collins⁶⁷⁵, such as the narrative framework or the presence of an otherworldly mediator. Mainly, these texts present apocalyptic subjects, such as primeval history, eschatological destruction of the world or concern with destiny of souls. But since these subjects are not presented in the apocalyptic way (by means of fantastic visions with the interpretation of an otherworldly being, or revelation dialogue or discourse pronounced by an otherworldly being, both seen and heard by a human recipient and told in a narrative framework) we may not consider them apocalypses or texts with an apocalyptic section.

It is also important to remember that simple revelatory discourses or dialogues that do not concern apocalyptic matters, i.e. transcendent subjects, such as eschatological destruction, destiny of souls, celestial geography and hierarchy, primeval end pre-history and review of history, are out of this analysis.

We may now proceed to the analysis of the apocalyptic elements in Nag Hammadi texts that were not discussed yet: *The Tripartite Tractate*, the *Apocryphon of John*, *On the Origin of the World*, *Eugnostos*, the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Concept of Our Great Power*.

⁶⁷⁴ *The Tripartite Tractate, the Apocryphon of John, On the Origin of the World, Eugnostos, the Gospel of Thomas and the Concept of Our Great Power.*

⁶⁷⁵ Collins, J., 1979.

8.1- *The Tripartite Tractate* (NH I, 5)

The *Tripartite Tractate* is the fifth text of Codex I. It is one of the longest (88 pages) and best preserved texts in Nag Hammadi corpus. It does not present any title in the manuscript⁶⁷⁶, but since it is divided by scribal decoration into three parts⁶⁷⁷, the first editors have called it the *Tractatus Tripartitus*⁶⁷⁸. It is hard to define its precise literary genre, Attridge and Pagels argues that “in its detailed, comprehensive and systematic theological speculation it is virtually unparalleled among Nag Hammadi texts. Only *A Valentinian Exposition* follows a similar program. Among other theological literature of the second and third centuries Origen’s *De principiis* may offer the closest parallel in terms of genre”⁶⁷⁹. Thomassen defines it, comparing to other Nag Hammadi treatises such as *On the Origin of the World*, as a “traité didactique général sur l’histoire du salut”⁶⁸⁰.

Certain scholars discussed its affiliation to the different Valentinian traditions⁶⁸¹ and philosophical schools⁶⁸². Attridge discussed specifically its apocalyptic content con-

⁶⁷⁶ Thomassen argues that the title could have been written on the last folio of the text, which is badly conserved. However, since the scribe did not give any titles to two of the three texts that he copied in Codex I, we may presume that he did not give a title to the treatise in question either. He also cites other Valentinian treatise in Nag Hammadi library without title in the manuscript, the *Valentinian Exposition*, as an example. (Cf. Painchaud and Thomassen, 1989, p. 9).

⁶⁷⁷ The first part is an account of the Father and its divine emanations (51, 1-104, 3), the second part is an account of the creation of mankind and Adam’s fall (104, 14-108, 12) and the third part is a description of the Savior’s coming and human reactions to it (108, 13-138, 27).

⁶⁷⁸ Attridge and Pagels, 1985, pp. 176-177.

⁶⁷⁹ Attridge and Pagels, 1985, p. 177.

⁶⁸⁰ Painchaud and Thomassen, 1989, p. 9.

⁶⁸¹ See, for example, Attridge and Pagels, 1985 and Thomassen, 1982. See also Thomassen’s discussion in the French critical translation (Cf. Painchaud and Thomassen, 1989, pp. 11-17).

⁶⁸² See, for example, Puech and Quispel, 1954 and Zandee, 1961.

cerning Valentianism. He argues correctly that the literary form of apocalypse is absent from the *Tripartite Tractate* ⁶⁸³.

Due to the lack of essential apocalyptic features in the *Tripartite Tractate*, such as the narrative framework and the presence of an otherworldly mediator who discloses mysteries to a human recipient, we may not classify it as an apocalypse. However, its general subject, i.e. pre- and primordial history and speculations on these matters ⁶⁸⁴, is a common topic of apocalyptic literature ⁶⁸⁵. The section 118, 14-122, 12 states the existence of three different human races. In 119, 16-27, the *Tripartite Tractate* explains the final destiny of these three sorts of races, and in 119, 28-122, 12 it elucidates the final destiny of the different categories of psychic race. The final destiny of souls is a widely known subject in apocalyptic literature ⁶⁸⁶.

Moreover, its final pages contain what may be considered apocalyptic eschatology ⁶⁸⁷. Despite its fragmentary state, the passages comprised between lines 9 to 11 of page 137 and lines 6 to 27 of page 138 present an eschatological scenario:

while the hylics will remain until the end for destruction, since they will not give forth for their [names], (...) all [...] angels [...] word and [the sound of] a trumpet he will proclaim the great complete amnesty from the beauteous east, in the bridal chamber which is the love of God the Father

⁶⁸³ Attridge, 2000, p. 182. See chapter 2 discussion.

⁶⁸⁴ Such as the following sections: 60, 1-75, 17, which deals with the formation of Pleroma; and 90, 14-104, 3, which deals with the creation of the world.

⁶⁸⁵ As already explained in chapters 2 and 3, and also in many commentaries on texts in precedent chapters.

⁶⁸⁶ See chapter 2.

⁶⁸⁷ Attridge, 2000, pp. 186-187.

[...] according to the power which [...] of greatness [...] the sweetness of [...] of him, since he reveals himself to the greatnesses [...] his goodness [...] the praise, the dominion, [and] the [glory] through [...] the Lord the Savior, the Redeemer of all those belonging to the one filled with love, through his Holy Spirit from now through all generations forever and ever. Amen⁶⁸⁸.

The passage starts mentioning the destruction of hylics. Hylics are seen as the opposite of spirituals, i.e. the chosen ones who shall be saved, thus, hylics shall be destroyed at the end-time. This passage also mentions that a “trumpet will proclaim the great complete amnesty from beauteous east”. The trumpet is a widely known apocalyptic element, present in many Christian sources, such as *Revelation* 8, 2⁶⁸⁹. As a final remark, one may cite Attridge’s argument that “complete amnesty” may be an influence of “Jubilee eschatology and the promise of eschatological release, forgiveness of debts and the like attributed to such figures as Melchizedek”⁶⁹⁰.

We saw that the *Tripartite Tractate* is a didactic treatise on the history of salvation that presents apocalyptic elements. It presents a pre-history account and also an account of the creation of the world. It also deals with the final destiny of souls and it contains an eschatological account that may present an allusion to *Revelation* 8 and may also

⁶⁸⁸ Attridge and Pagels’ translation. (Cf. Attridge and Pagels, 1985, pp. 335-337).

⁶⁸⁹ Attridge argues that “that motif, along with the eastern epiphany, presumably, but not explicitly of Christ, is orthodox Christian eschatology. Its roots may lie in Jewish apocalyptic eschatology, but the immediate source of the scenario is the millennialism of the third century Christian Egypt”. (Cf. Attridge, 2000, p. 186). See also Frankfurter, 1996, pp. 163-174.

⁶⁹⁰ *11QMelch* 2, 2-7. (Cf. Attridge, 2000, p. 186).

be based, according to Attridge, on Egypt Christian millennialism and Jewish apocalyptic treatises, such as *Jubilee* and *11QMelch*. Thus, it seems to me, contrary to Attridge arguments, that the *Tripartite Tractate*, being a Valentinian text, presents influences of apocalyptic literature, both Jewish and Christian, and this influence is more than doctrinal, but also literary. The author of the *Tripartite Tractate* makes use of apocalyptic motifs to transmit its message of final redemption for gnostics and final condemnation for hylics.

8.2- *The Apocryphon of John* (NH, II-1; III-1: IV-1)

The *Apocryphon of John* is present in three different Nag Hammadi codices. It is the first text of Codex II, III and IV⁶⁹¹. Moreover, the Berlin Codex also contains a version of the *Apocryphon of John*⁶⁹². These four copies of the *Apocryphon of John* basically represent three different and independent Coptic translations from two different Greek⁶⁹³ versions, normally called by scholars as short and long versions⁶⁹⁴. Since this dissertation deals with the Nag Hammadi apocalyptic corpus, we may emphasize the commentary on the three Nag Hammadi copies of the text in question.

⁶⁹¹ For a detailed description of each codex see Waldstein and Wisse introduction (Cf. Waldstein and Wisse, 1995). For a detailed codicological description, see Robinson, 1984.

⁶⁹² BG 8502, 2.

⁶⁹³ Waldstein and Wisse emphasize that the translators did a terrible job, mostly in the philosophical pieces of the tractate. They state that "one cannot escape the conclusion that Greek was often not understood. Inflections was at times misinterpreted or ignored, participles and dependent clauses were associated with the wrong noun or sentence, lists of names were scrambled, apposition and genitival constructions were misunderstood, subjects and antecedents were lost track of, etc. as a consequence the intend sense was often lost in one version or another, and sometimes, it would appear, in all three". (Cf. Waldstein and Wisse, 1995, pp. 6-7).

⁶⁹⁴ Waldstein and Wisse, 1995, p. 1.

Waldstein and Wisse suggest that the *Apocryphon of John* was originally written in Greek in the early part of the 3rd century. Shortly later, during the 3rd century it experienced a larger redaction, i.e., the long version. According to Waldstein and Wisse, both versions were translated separately to Coptic in the late 3rd or early 4th century, the short version at least twice. We now have three of these translations, in three different codices, among Nag Hammadi texts. The *Apocryphon of John*'s copies in Codices II and IV are clearly copies of the same translation of the long version, while the copy in Codex III is a translation of the short version⁶⁹⁵. Although the redactions in Greek of the two different versions of the *Apocryphon of John* are normally dated during the 3rd century, there are evidences that point to an earlier existence of a document that may have been a source for the revelatory discourse in the text in question. These evidences are provided by Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses* 1, 29, around 180 C.E.⁶⁹⁶. The *Apocryphon of John* is normally classified as a Sethian⁶⁹⁷ text with clear Christian features⁶⁹⁸.

To date, many studies have been consecrated to the *Apocryphon of John*. Despite its linguistic difficulties (the Coptic translations, as already mentioned, are terrible), its complex philosophical system and the existence of different versions, our text received enough attention from scholars. This is probably due to the fact that the *Apocryphon of John* was almost certainly widely known and used in late antiquity, since we now have four different copies of the text in question⁶⁹⁹. There is no space for a complete history of

⁶⁹⁵ Waldstein and Wisse, 1995, p. 1.

⁶⁹⁶ For a detailed description of Irenaeus' parallels see the English translation synopsis and appendix 4. (Cf. Waldstein and Wisse, 1995, pp. 12-177 and 188-193).

⁶⁹⁷ Schenke, 1974.

⁶⁹⁸ Waldstein and Wisse, 1995, p. 1.

⁶⁹⁹ Fallon, 1979, p. 130.

the *Apocryphon of John*'s research, though; we may emphasize certain important translations and critical editions. The *editio princeps* of Nag Hammadi Codices II, III and IV was edited in 1962 by Martin Krause and Pahor Labib⁷⁰⁰. The *editio princeps* of BG 8502 was edited by Walter C. Till and Hans-Martin Schenke in 1955 and republished in 1972⁷⁰¹. The first English translation was published by Giversen in 1963⁷⁰². Rodolphe Kasser published a French translation divided in four issues of the *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie*⁷⁰³. In 1995 the Nag Hammadi and Manichaean collection published its 33rd volume, consecrated to the *Apocryphon of John* versions in Nag Hammadi Codices II, III and IV and BG 8502, 2⁷⁰⁴.

Considering both versions, long and short, and the four known copies (II, 1; III, 1, IV, 1 and BG 8502, 2), Waldstein and Wisse suggest the following outline for the *Apocryphon of John*⁷⁰⁵:

OPENING FRAME STORY (1, 6-5, 2);

PART ONE: discourse on theogony and cosmogony (5, 3-34, 12):

I- Upper theogony and cosmogony (5, 3-23, 12):

b) Upper theogony: The divine Triad: Father, mother and son (5, 3-17, 6);

c) Upper cosmogony: The All (17, 7-23, 12);

II- Lower theogony and cosmogony (24, 1-34, 12):

a) Lower theogony: Wisdom and Yaldabaoth (24, 1-26, 15);

b) Lower cosmogony: Yaldabaoth creates a lower world (26, 16-34, 12);

PART TWO: Dialogue on soteriology and anthropogony (34, 13-82, 4):

⁷⁰⁰ Krause and Labib, 1962.

⁷⁰¹ Till and Schenke, 1972.

⁷⁰² Giversen, 1963.

⁷⁰³ Kasser, 1964, 1965, 1966 and 1967.

⁷⁰⁴ Waldstein and Wisse, 1995.

⁷⁰⁵ References are to Waldstein and Wisse Synopsis double page and line numbers. (Cf. Waldstein and Wisse, 1995, pp. vi-vii).

- I- Wisdom repentance and restoration (34, 13-37, 5);
- II- The first creation of Adam, in the image of God, the psychic Adam (37, 6-51, 3);
- III- The second creation of Adam: the psychic Adam, given spirit and cast into a body (51, 4- 56, 10);
- IV- The story of paradise (56, 11-63, 14);
- V- False and true offspring: Cain, Abel, Seth, the offspring of Seth and Destiny (63, 15-76, 4);
- VI- The flood and Noah's spiritual escape (76, 5-77, 8);
- VII- The summit of evil: copulation between angels and women (77, 9-79, 4);
- The providence monologue: salvation through awakening (79, 5- 82, 4);
- CONCLUDING FRAME STORY (82, 5- 83, 11).

The title is well attested, but it is presented in three different forms; ΠΑΠΟΚΡΥΦΟΝ ΝΙΩΖΑΝΝΗC⁷⁰⁶ (the *Apocryphon of John*) in Codex III and in BG 8502; ΚΑΤΑ ΙΩΖΑΝΝΗΝ ΝΑΠΟΚΡΥΦΟΝ (the *Apocryphon according to John*) in Codex II; and ΚΑΤΑ ΙΩΗΝ⁷⁰⁷ ΝΑΠΟΚΡΥΦΟΝ (the *Apocryphon according to John*). Codex III copy also presents the title at the beginning (ΠΑΠΟΚΡΥΦΟΝ ΝΙΩΖΑΝΝΗC)⁷⁰⁸.

Fallon classifies the *Apocryphon of John* as a type I apocalypse (those without an otherworldly journey) with dialogue. He considers that the text presents an epiphany scene, where the revealer appears to the visionary in a stream of light, a review of pre and primordial history (a gnostic interpretation of *Genesis*), the origin of pleroma and description of the highest God, and theogony and cosmogony. Moreover, according to Fallon the

⁷⁰⁶ The final Sigma is missing in Codex III and it was reconstituted by scholars. (Cf. Waldstein and Wisse, 1995, p. 176).

⁷⁰⁷ An abbreviated form of ΙΩΖΑΝΝΗΝ. (Cf. Waldstein and Wisse, 1995, p. 177).

⁷⁰⁸ Waldstein and Wisse, 1995.

Apocryphon of John shows a great concern in personal eschatology and destiny of souls after the material death⁷⁰⁹.

However, the lacking of incredible apocalyptic visions in the *Apocryphon of John* does not permit classifying it as an apocalypse. It is closer to the gnostic revelatory dialogue, since the revelations are disclosed to the human recipient by means of a dialogue rather than visions. But even being a gnostic revelatory dialogue, the *Apocryphon of John* presents many apocalyptic features.

At the beginning of the text, John goes to a mountain after having discussed with the Pahrisee (1, 6-5, 2). As already discussed, mountains are a common place for apocalyptic revelations⁷¹⁰, and it is on a mountainous place that the revelations are disclosed to the visionary in the *Apocryphon of John*. Moreover, when John arrives on the mountain, he starts a prayer⁷¹¹ (2, 7-17) that is followed by the epiphany of the heavenly revealer (2, 18-3, 12).

The epiphany scene is described in the apocalyptic style⁷¹² as follows:

Straightway, [while I was contemplating these things,] behold, the [heavens opened and] the [whole] creation [which is] below heaven shone, and [the world] was shaken. [I was afraid⁷¹³, ... and behold, I] saw in the [light

⁷⁰⁹ Fallon, 1979, pp. 130-131.

⁷¹⁰ See the commentary on the *Apocalypse of Paul* in chapter 4.

⁷¹¹ As already mentioned in this dissertation (see the commentary on the *Apocalypse of Peter* in chapter 4) prayers and ascetical practices generally precede apocalyptic revelations.

⁷¹² See the commentary on the *Apocalypse of Peter* in chapter 4.

⁷¹³ One may emphasize the visionary's reaction of fear, another common feature in apocalyptic writings (see the commentary on the *Apocalypse of Peter* in chapter 4).

a child who stood] by me. While I looked [at it, it became] like an old man. And he [changed his] likeness (again), becoming like a servant⁷¹⁴.

This revealer is Jesus Christ; he plays the role of the otherworldly mediator in the *Apocryphon of John*. The pseudonymous seer is John, the disciple, also called in the text “the brother of James” (1, 7) and son of Zebedee” (1, 8). John, the apostle, is obviously a very important personage for early Christianity. As we know, at least 5 books of the New Testament are attributed to the personage of John, what shows the great importance accorded to this personage by early Christians.

The *Apocryphon of John* also deals with pre and primordial history. Both themes are quite common in apocalyptic literature, mostly in type I apocalypses, those without an otherworldly journey. In the *Apocryphon of John*, the review of pre-history is a description of the Highest God and the origin of pleroma. The primordial history is a Gnostic account of the creation of man and the material world in light of *Genesis*. It is also important to emphasize that certain events narrated in *Genesis* and reinterpreted by the *Apocryphon of John*, such as the flood (*Genesis* 6: 6-18; 7: 7-10) and the copulation between angels and women, are also discussed in other apocalypses or texts with an apocalyptic features. The flood is presented in the form of an *ex-eventu* prophecy in the *Apocalypse of Adam*, and it is also important in the *Paraphrase of Shem* and in the *Hypostasis of the Archons* accounts. The copulation between angels and women is the theme of the *Book of the Watchers*, a section (chapters 91-93) of the Jewish apocalypse known as *I Enoch*.

⁷¹⁴ Codex II Waldstein and Wisse's translation. (Cf. Waldstein and Wisse, 1995, pp. 15-16)

Concerning the personal eschatology and destiny of souls, we may turn our attention to the visionary's questions. During the revelatory process, the seer makes ten questions. The first three questions concern the primordial history account made by the revealer. Questions four to nine concern the destiny of souls and personal eschatology. The questions are as follows⁷¹⁵:

4- "Will all be saved?" (68, 1) In the answer to this question, Jesus reveals the first class of souls: the true knowers and their reward.

5- "What will happen to those without meritorious deeds?" (69, 16) Jesus answers that this second class of souls can be saved.

6- "Where will the first two class of soul end up?" (70, 19) Jesus answers that they will end up in the repose of aeons.

7- "What will happen to the third class of souls, ignorant souls?" (71, 12) Jesus answers that their salvation may take place by re-incarnation and awakening.

8- "How is the third class of souls transformed?" (72, 10) Jesus answers that they can be transformed following classes one and two.

9- "What will happen to the fourth class of souls: apostates?" (73, 3) Jesus answers that the fourth class of souls is the only class that will not be saved and will receive eternal punishment.

For its concluding elements, John receives the task to write down the mysteries which were disclosed to him, similar to many apocalypses. He shall transmit these mysteries to his fellow spirits secretly⁷¹⁶. After the departure of the revealer, John goes to his

⁷¹⁵ According to Waldstein and Wisse's translation.

⁷¹⁶ "And I have said everything to you that you might write down and give them secretly to your fellow spirits..." (NH II 31, 28-30). Waldstein and Wisse's translation. (Cf. Waldstein and Wisse, 1995, p. 175).

fellow disciples to preach the revelations to them. It is important to notice that these revelations must be communicated secretly to a chosen seed or group, not to anyone. After telling John to write down the mysteries, Jesus even pronounces a curse to “everyone who will change these things (i.e. these mysteries) for a gift”⁷¹⁷ (82, 17-18). That underlines the sectarian goal of the revelation. Moreover, one may also argue that the fact that these secret revelations are supposed to be written down justifies the title of the text: **ΑΠΟΚΡΥΦΟΝ**, which means “secret book”.

We saw that the *Apocryphon of John* is not an apocalypse but rather a text with apocalyptic elements, since there is a lacking of the visionary component. Concerning the manner of revelation, the *Apocryphon of John* presents an epiphany scene, an otherworldly mediator and a pseudonymous seer. Concerning the temporal axis, it presents theogony and cosmogony, primordial events, the idea of present salvation by knowledge, personal afterlife and judgment of sinners or ignorant. Regarding the spatial axis, it presents otherworldly elements.

Even if the *Apocryphon of John* is a text that presents Christian features, its apocalyptic framework seems to be influenced also by Jewish apocalyptic texts, such as the *Book of the Watchers*. However, the two main characters, the revealer and the seer, are obviously product of a Christian influence. The author of the *Apocryphon of John* uses the apocalyptic framework to disclose a message and to explain a specific theology, showing acquaintance with the apocalyptic genre.

⁷¹⁷ Waldstein and Wisse translation of Codex II copy. (Cf. Waldstein and Wisse, 1995, p. 175).

8.3- *The Gospel of Thomas* (NH II, 2)

The *Gospel of Thomas* is certainly the most studied text among Nag Hammadi treatises. Many studies were made on many aspects of the *Gospel of Thomas*, thus, a comment on its content as a whole would be useless and out of place in this dissertation. Similarly, a presentation of its research history would take several pages and would probably be incomplete⁷¹⁸. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that the goal of this commentary is to present and analyze the *Gospel of Thomas* apocalyptic elements.

Concerning its literary genre, we may only mention that despite its title, the *Gospel of Thomas* is not exactly a gospel. Koester argues that it belongs to the genre called saying collections⁷¹⁹. And indeed, the *Gospel of Thomas* does not present a narrative framework, but a collection of sayings attributed to Jesus. Thus, since it does not present a narrative framework, it may not be considered an apocalypse. Moreover, several other main characteristics of apocalyptic literature are lacking, such as the otherworldly mediator⁷²⁰. However, the *Gospel of Thomas* presents certain apocalyptic elements and passages that may have been influenced by apocalyptic literature.

Generally, the *Gospel of Thomas* presents many parallels to certain apocalypses, such as *Revelation*⁷²¹ and other apocalyptic texts. Attridge⁷²² emphasizes a parallel of the

⁷¹⁸ For a summary of the studies on the *Gospel of Thomas* see *Nag Hammadi bibliography* and its supplements in *Novum Testamentum*. Cf. (Scholer, 1971).

⁷¹⁹ Koester, 1989, p. 38.

⁷²⁰ I believe that Jesus cannot be considered an otherworldly mediator in the apocalyptic style in the case of the *Gospel of Thomas*, since there is no epiphany scene or any other evidence that point out to a heavenly or angelic figure. It is only Jesus himself, preaching before his passion and resurrection.

⁷²¹ For a detailed summary of these parallels, see Evans, Webb and Wiebe, 1993.

⁷²² Attridge, 2000, p. 11.

logion 50 of the *Gospel of Thomas* to the *First Apocalypse of James* 33, 11-35, 25. The logion 50 of the *Gospel of Thomas*:

Jesus said, "if they say to you, 'Where did you come from?', say to them 'We came from the light, the place where the light came into being on its own accord and established [itself] and became manifest through their image.' If they say to you, 'Is it you?', say 'We are its children, and we are the elect of the living father.' If they ask you, 'What is the sign of your father in you?' say to them, 'It is movement and repose'"⁷²³.

The passage in question in the *First Apocalypse of James* stipulates passwords for the ascent of the soul. However, the passage in the *Gospel of Thomas* does not describe an ascent of soul, but the formulas are similar to those employed in the *First Apocalypse of James* concerning the ascent of souls.

Logion 12 also seems to be inspired by apocalyptic features:

Jesus said, "This heaven will pass away, and the one above it will pass away. The dead are not alive, and the living will not die. In the days when you consumed what is dead, you made it what is alive. When you come to dwell in the light, what will you do? On the day when you were one you became two. But when you become, what will you do?"⁷²⁴

⁷²³ Lambdin translation. (Cf. Layton, 1989, p. 73).

⁷²⁴ Lambdin translation. (Cf. Layton, 1989, pp. 57-59).

This passage has a clear eschatological meaning; predicting that heavens will pass away and the living will not die. It also shows a clear concern with personal afterlife, indirectly affirming that Jesus' interlocutor will dwell in light. One may also consider that logion 10 also deals with apocalyptic eschatological elements, since it says that Jesus has cast fire upon the world, and he is guarding it until it blazes.

Thus, the *Gospel of Thomas* is not an apocalypse, but rather a text that presents certain apocalyptic motifs, such as eschatological elements. Additionally, it presents formulas that are similar to those employed in the *First Apocalypse of James* concerning the ascent of souls. The influence of apocalyptic literature on the *Gospel of Thomas* is almost inexistent.

8.4- *Eugnostos* (NH III, 3; V, 1)

Eugnostos is the third text of Codex III, being also the first text of Codex V. Its relationship with the treatise that follows in Codex III, the *Sophia of Jesus Christ* was widely discussed by many studies and critical editions⁷²⁵. However, we may concentrate our analysis on *Eugnostos* apocalyptic elements especially in the context of Codex V, which is known as the "apocalyptic codex", since it presents four texts with the word "apocalypse" in their titles⁷²⁶.

Definitely, *Eugnostos* does not belong to the apocalyptic literary genre. Pasquier argues that it presents three basic genres: letter, apocalypse and theogonical discourse,

⁷²⁵ See, for example, the volume XXVII of the *Nag Hammadi Studies* collection, totally dedicated to *Eugnostos* and the *Sophia of Jesus Christ*. (Cf. Parrott, 1991) and Tardieu's study (Cf. Tardieu, 1984). See also Pasquier, 2000.

⁷²⁶ These texts were already discussed in chapter 4.

being this last one the predominant. Certain scholars discussed specifically the structure of *Eugnostos*⁷²⁷, but Pasquier emphasizes its rhetorical arrangement, suggesting the following outline⁷²⁸:

- I- Exorde (70, 1-71, 18)⁷²⁹;
- II- Exposé (71, 18-74, 12); *Propositio* (73, 18-74, 7);
- III- Confirmation (74, 12-90, 4);
- IV- Péroration (90, 5-11).

Considering this rhetorical arrangement and its content, Pasquier concludes that *Eugnostos* “propose un enseignement théologique en utilisant les techniques des écoles de philosophie, toutes les ressources de la rhétorique lui sont nécessaires”. We may consider *Eugnostos* as a letter⁷³⁰ that presents a theogonical discourse, making use of ancient rhetoric and of apocalyptic elements. I believe that *Eugnostos* should be considered a text with apocalyptic elements rather than an apocalypse or a text with an apocalyptic section because it lacks some important elements of an apocalypse according to J. Collins’ definition, such as the narrative framework and the presence of an otherworldly being as mediator of the revelation. It is also important to remember that *Eugnostos* is placed as the first text of Codex V. On this matter, Kaler says that “leaving to one side the precise

⁷²⁷ Pasquier makes an excellent summary of the discussion on *Eugnostos* structure. (Cf. Pasquier, 2000, pp. 16-32).

⁷²⁸ This outline corresponds to Aristotle’s model. (Cf. Pasquier, 2000, p. 17). For a detailed outline, see Pasquier, 2000, pp. 20-21.

⁷²⁹ References are to Codex III pagination.

⁷³⁰ See Pasquier’s explanation of *Eugnostos* similarities with Hellenistic epistolary literature. (Cf. Pasquier, 2000, p. 25).

genre and role of *Eugnostos*, it is safe to say that its initiatory and apocalyptic features make it an appropriate choice for the opening text of a codex made up of apocalypses”⁷³¹.

Eugnostos’ main subject is a theogonical exposition, which deals with pre-history matters, such as the origins of aeons and divine emanations from the Proto-Father. This subject is widely discussed, presented and disclosed in many Hag Nammadi apocalypses⁷³². But a specific passage in *Eugnostos* has a parallel in *On the Origin of the World*⁷³³. The passage in *Eugnostos* is presented in two different sections⁷³⁴. The section 88, 11-89, 3 illustrates the great number of apocalyptic elements, such as the description of heavens, thrones and charriots⁷³⁵:

Since the imperishabilities had the authority, each provided great kingdoms in all immortal heavens and their firmaments, thrones, (and) temples, for their own majesty. Some indeed, (who are) in dwellings and

⁷³¹ Rosenstiehl and Kaler, 2005, p. 150.

⁷³² As already discussed in chapter 2 and exemplified in many comments on texts in the precedent chapters.

⁷³³ On this matter, see Painchaud, 1995. The similarities between *Eugnostos* and *On the Origin of the World* never received much attention from scholars. In fact, scholarship preferred to discuss similarities between *Eugnostos* and the *Sophia of Jesus Christ* than similarities between *Eugnostos* and *On the Origin of the World*. However, these similarities exist and are many. The nature of these similarities is diverse (Cf. Painchaud, 1995), but what interests us is the apocalyptic content of both treatises, thus, for a complete survey on similarities between *Eugnostos* and *On the Origin of the World* see Painchaud, 1995. As a conclusion on this matter, we should cite Painchaud’s opinion that *Eugnostos* was written first but “the only hypothesis that can account for these similarities is that at an early stage in their literary history, *Eugnostos* and *Or. World* were written in the same milieu and intended as two complementary parts of a single design”. (Cf. Painchaud, 1995, p. 99). We may also emphasize that there are similarities between these two treatises and *Revelation*, but this topic will be discussed soon.

⁷³⁴ In codex V version the pieces are 6, 19, 21-22, 25-34 and 16, 5-14. In codex III version the pieces are 77, 16-22 and 88, 11-89, 3.

⁷³⁵ See chapter 2.

chariots, being in ineffable glory and not able to be sent into any creature, provided for themselves hosts of angels, myriads without number for retinue and glory, even virgin spirits, the ineffable lights⁷³⁶.

A similar passage is also present in the *Sophia of Jesus Christ* (NH III 112, 11-17.113, 3-12 and BG114 1-9. 115, 4-11). One may also emphasize that this passages may be compared to *Revelation* 4, where God's throne is surrounded by angels and archangels who praise him at all times⁷³⁷. This relation to *Revelation* may indicate a later date for the original composition of *Eugnostos*, contrary to Kasser's⁷³⁸ and Parrott's⁷³⁹ opinion, who claim an early date to our tractate, such as the first or early second century. This relation to *Revelation* also points to a Christian influence, if not on the doctrine and theology of *Eugnostos*, at least on its apocalyptic framework.

We saw that *Eugnostos* is not an apocalypse, but rather a letter that follows the rhetorical model. However, *Eugnostos* presents certain apocalyptic elements, such as the discussion of pre-history and cosmogony, and the description of the imperishabilities in 88, 11-89, 3, which presents some allusions to *Revelation* and could be also considered a parallel to the next text to be commented, *On the Origin of the World*.

⁷³⁶ Parrott's translation. (Cf. Parrott, 1991).

⁷³⁷ Since this passage has also a parallel in *On the Origin of the World*, we will comment later at great length the similarities and quotations to *Revelation*. Those elements may also be found in other apocalypses, such as *I Enoch* (chapter 14. Cf. Isaac, 1983 and Knibb, 1978), and *2 Enoch* (chapter 20 of manuscript BAN 13.3.25. Cf. Andersen, 1983 and Vaillant, 1952).

⁷³⁸ Kasser, 1974, p. 26.

⁷³⁹ Parrott, 1991, p. 5. Parrott argues that the polemic against the views of "all the philosophers" (III, 70, 15) may indicate an early date, since "the brief descriptions of these views" identifies the philosophers as Stoics, Epicureans and theoreticians of Babylonian astrology, and the latest time that this polemic could be possible is the late first century.

8.5- *On the Origin of the World* (NH, II-5; XIII-2)

This text does not have a real title in the manuscript. However, since it widely deals with primeval history, i.e. the origin of the world, it was named by scholars as *Treatise without Title on the Origin of the World*. It is the fifth text of Codex II⁷⁴⁰, being also present in Codex XIII.

The *editio princeps* of *On the Origin of the World* was published in 1962 by Böhlig and Labib⁷⁴¹. In 1975, Bethge Ph.D's dissertation⁷⁴² offers a new edition, a German translation and a commentary on our text. In 1989, the Nag Hammadi Studies collection publishes its volume 21⁷⁴³, with texts 2-7 of Nag Hammadi Codex II. *On the Origin of the World's* introduction and translation were made by Bethge and Layton, with the support of the *Societas Coptica Hierosolymitana*. And finally, in 1995, the BCNH collection published its text volume 21, with the critical edition, commentary and French translation of *On the Origin of the World*⁷⁴⁴.

Primeval history, as already discussed before, is a common subject of many apocalypses. Moreover, *On the Origin of the World* deals with the destruction of the material world (126, 12-127, 7 and final destiny of souls (125, 7-126, 12; 127, 7-17), another two widely known elements of apocalyptic literature⁷⁴⁵. However, despite the presence of these elements, *On the Origin of the World* cannot be considered as an apocalypse, mostly because it lacks essential elements of this genre, such as the narrative framework,

⁷⁴⁰ We may refer to the pagination and lines in Codex II version.

⁷⁴¹ Böhlig and Labib, 1962.

⁷⁴² Bethge, 1975.

⁷⁴³ Layton, 1989.

⁷⁴⁴ Painchaud 1, 1995. This edition also presents an excellent history of research on the text in question.

⁷⁴⁵ See chapter 2.

the presence of an otherworldly mediator and a human visionary who is the recipient of the revelation.

Nevertheless, *On the Origin of the World* presents certain apocalyptic elements, parallels and influences of certain Jewish apocalypses, such as *I Enoch* and *Jubilees*⁷⁴⁶, and other Nag Hammadi treatises, such as the *Hypostasis of the Archons*⁷⁴⁷. In his discussion on the precise literary genre of *On the Origin of the World*, Bullard argues that in certain ways, it is

more similar to Jewish or Christian Sibylline literature. Above all it seems to have been written with the purpose of disseminating Gnostic ideas, offering to the interested public a defense of the Gnostic world view. Against the assumption that *On the Origin of the World* belongs to the literary genre of apocalypse is the fact that the author presents his material soberly, without pathos, and argues in a distanced and factual manner. With a view to the entirety of the work, one could best designate it as treatise of apologetic essay⁷⁴⁸.

On this matter, Painchaud says that

⁷⁴⁶ Bethge, 1989, p. 12. Mostly, these allusions are in the eschatological account (123, 31-127, 17) and will be discussed later. See also Painchaud 1, 1995, pp. 517-519.

⁷⁴⁷ Painchaud argues that it may have used the same Gnostic sources of the *Hypostasis of the Archons*. (Painchaud 1, 1995, pp.11-12). See also Barc, 1980, pp. 1-48.

⁷⁴⁸ Bethge, 1989, p. 12.

l'analyse de la *dispositio* et de l'*inventio* à la lumière de la rhétorique gréco-romaine confirme cette opinion (i.e. Bethge's opinion), et permet à la fois de dégager le plan qu'a suivi l'auteur pour aménager son œuvre, l'utilisation qu'il a faite de ses sources, et, indirectement, la situation dans laquelle ce traité a été rédigé et l'intention qu'il poursuivait⁷⁴⁹.

We shall move on to the discussion on the apocalyptic elements of *On the Origin of the World*. For this, we may adopt Painchaud's outline, suggested in his structural translation⁷⁵⁰:

PROLOGUE (97, 24-98, 11);

EXPOSÉ (98, 11-123, 2);

Préambule narratif (98, 11- 99, 2);

- a) Engendrement de la jalousie qui est un avorton (99, 2-22);
- b) Formation du gouvernement du monde matériel et origine des archontes (99, 23-102, 11);
- c) Blasphème de l'Archonte et réponse céleste (102, 11- 103, 32);
- d) Conversion de Sabaoth (103, 32-106, 19);
- e) Engendrement de la mort par l'Archonte jaloux (106, 19-107, 17);
- f) Éros et les arbres du Paradis (107, 17- 112, 25);

PREUVE (123, 2-31);

ÉPILOGUE (123, 31-127, 17) :

- a) But de la présence en ce monde de ceux qui appartiennent à l'Homme immortel (123, 31-125, 7);
- b) Rétribution à venir (125, 7-126, 12);

⁷⁴⁹ Painchaud 1, 1995, p. 69. See also Painchaud's outline according to Greco-roman rhetoric. (Cf. Painchaud 1, 1995, pp. 69-101.

⁷⁵⁰ Painchaud 1, 1995, pp. 122-143.

- c) Apocatastase finale jusqu'à la dissolution de la première œuvre 126, 4-127, 7);
- d) Seuls les parfaits entreront dans la non royauté (127, 7-17).

The first section, called *exposé*, mainly deals with primeval history. It narrates many pre- and primordial history events from a gnostic point of view, such as the formation of the material world and the origin of the archons. Moreover the sub-section f, called “Éros et les arbres du Paradis”, is widely based in *Genesis* creation account. But the sub-section, called “Conversion de Sabaoth”⁷⁵¹ is the most interesting one concerning apocalyptic literature. This section narrates, making use of many apocalyptic elements and clichés, the enthronement of Sabaoth⁷⁵². Painchaud emphasizes the allusions of the passage in question to *Revelation*⁷⁵³. Firstly, *On the Origin of the World's* passage:

And as he has the authority, he made himself first of all a mansion. It is huge, magnificent, seven times as great as all those that exist [in the] seven heavens. And before his mansion he created a throne, which as huge and was upon a four- faced chariot called “Cherubin.” Now the Cherubin was eight shapes per each of the four corners, lions forms and calf forms and human forms and eagle forms, so that all the forms amount to sixty-four forms and (he created) seven archangels that stand before it; he is the eight and has authority. All the forms amount to seventy-two. Furthermore, from this chariot the seventy-two gods took shape; they took shape so that

⁷⁵¹ (104, 31- 106, 5).

⁷⁵² For a detailed study on the enthronement of Sabaoth, see Fallon, 1978.

⁷⁵³ Painchaud, 1993.

they might rule over the seventy-two languages of the peoples. And by that throne he created other serpent like angels, called "Saraphin," which praise him at all times. Thereafter he created a congregation of angels, thousands and myriads, numberless, which resembled the congregation in the eighth heaven, and a firstborn called Israel, which is "the man who sees God"; and another being, called Jesus Christ, who resembles the savior above in the eighth heaven and who sits at his right upon a revered throne. And at his left there sits the virgin of the holy spirit, upon a throne and glorifying him. And the seven virgins stand before her, possessing thirty harps, and psalteries and trumpets, glorifying him. And all the armies of the angels glorify him and they bless him. Now where he sits is upon a throne of light <within a> great cloud that covers him" (104, 31-106, 5)⁷⁵⁴.

Now, *Revelation's*⁷⁵⁵ passage:

From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God, and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third

⁷⁵⁴ Layton's translation. (Cf. Layton, 1989, pp. 45-47).

⁷⁵⁵ 4, 5-7.

living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight.

The allusions to *Revelation* are clear⁷⁵⁶. The designation of seven archangels who stand before the throne (105, 10) is an allusion to the seven torches of fire that also stand before God's throne in *Revelation* 4,5⁷⁵⁷. Before the mention of the seven archangels, *On the Origin of the World* mentions four corners in Sabaoth's throne, each one of these corners with eight shapes or forms and between these shapes there were lion forms, calf forms, human forms and eagle forms. In *Revelation* 4, 7 there are also four living creatures, one at each corner of God's throne: "the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight". The description of Sabaoth's throne in *On the Origin of the World* also cites "a congregation of angels, thousands and myriads, numberless", similar to *Revelation* 5, 11: "Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands". It is also important to emphasize that this is the description

⁷⁵⁶ Painchaud defines 'allusion' as follows: "l'allusion comme procédé littéraire consiste à activer simultanément deux textes en insérant dans un premier texte un signal discret référant à un autre texte, ce signal pouvant être un seul ou quelques mots, une figure, un motif ou un schème narrative. Le sens du texte où est insérée cette allusion – le sens voulu par l'auteur – ne réside alors plus dans le texte lui-même ni dans l'autre texte, mais dans la relation établie entre ces deux textes. Et ce sens n'est accessible qu'à un lecteur capable de saisir l'allusion en tant qu'allusion". (Cf. Painchaud, 1993).

⁷⁵⁷ Painchaud, 1993, p. 342. He adds that in *Revelation* 8, 2 there are also seven angels who stand before God.

of the Lord's throne (Revelation 4, 8), like in *On the Origin of the World*, where we have the description of Sabaoth's throne, also called "Lord" (104, 9-10)⁷⁵⁸.

For Painchaud, these allusions, along with other allusions to *Revelation* in *On the Origin of the World* have the clear purpose of identifying Sabaoth with the beast of *Revelation*⁷⁵⁹. The beast is described as follows in Revelation:

As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction. And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. These are of one mind and hand over their power and authority to the beast⁷⁶⁰.

In *On the Origin of the World*, Sabaoth is also described as the eighth⁷⁶¹ in his enthronement account. Painchaud argues that

il me paraît en effet improbable de rencontrer dans une même passage des allusion intentionnelles à un texte et des rencontres fortuites avec ce même texte. Cette allusion à la bête d'Ap 17, 11-13 enchâssée au beau milieu de la description du trône de Sabaoth, ne peut alors avoir d'autre intention que de signaler au lecteur qu'il faut lire ce passage en référence à un autre

⁷⁵⁸ Painchaud, 1993, p. 342.

⁷⁵⁹ Painchaud, 1993, pp. 343-345.

⁷⁶⁰ *Revelation* 17, 11-13.

⁷⁶¹ "He is the eighth and has authority". Layton's translation. (Cf. Layton, 1989).

texte, celui d'Ap 17, 11-13 et qu'il faut identifier Sabaoth, élevé au septième ciel et fait Seigneur des puissances, à la bête elle-même qui, toute comme Sabaoth, monte et siège sur un trône⁷⁶².

Also according to Painchaud, there are other allusions to *Revelation* in *On the Origin of the World* that leads to the identification of Sabaoth with the Beast. In *Revelation* 12, 7 we read that "Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back". A great combat at the seven heavens are also in question in *On the Origin of the World*. In *Revelation* 13, 7, the beast has the authority over "every tribe and people and language and nation". In *On the Origin of the World*, it is from Sabaoth's chariot that the "seventy-two gods took shape; they took shape so that they might rule over the seventy-two languages of the peoples" (105, 12-16)⁷⁶³.

Concerning again Sabaoth's enthronement, it is important to add that this account is full of other apocalyptic elements and features, such as the fact that Sabaoth is placed in the seventh heaven, the place where many Jewish apocalypses and certain Nag Hammadi texts places the creator⁷⁶⁴. One may also cite the description of his throne, which is illuminated by a great light⁷⁶⁵.

The final section, named in Painchaud's outline as "Épilogue", is normally considered as another passage with many apocalyptic motifs. This section is indeed eschato-

⁷⁶² Painchaud, 1993, p. 343.

⁷⁶³ Painchaud, 1993, p. 344.

⁷⁶⁴ See the comment on the *Apocalypse of Paul* in chapter 4 and on the *Hypostasis of the Archons* in chapter 7.

⁷⁶⁵ See the commentary on the *Apocalypse of Paul* in chapter 4 and the references to *1 Enoch* and *Daniel*.

logical and presents a concern with personal afterlife and destiny of souls. The author of *On the Origin of the World* starts this section saying that “I come, therefore, to the main points... (123, 31)”⁷⁶⁶. It means that for the author what follows is the most important subject of the present treatise. He explains why those who belong to the immortal man are in the material world⁷⁶⁷, differentiating the four sorts of races: “three that belong to the kings of the eighth heaven. But the fourth race is kingless and perfect, being the highest of all” (125, 4-7)⁷⁶⁸.

Then, the eschatological section starts, predicting that the “perfects” “shall enter the holy place of their father. And they will gain rest in repose and eternal, unspeakable glory and unending joy” (125, 7, 11)⁷⁶⁹. This shows a clear concern with the final destiny of souls. And also:

and the glory of the unbegotten will appear. And it will fill all the eternal realms (...) those who – in contrast – have not become perfect in the unbegotten father will receive their glory in their realms and in the kingdom of the immortals: but they will never enter the kingless realm (127, 5-14)⁷⁷⁰.

⁷⁶⁶ Layton’s translation. (Cf. Layton, 1989, p. 83).

⁷⁶⁷ 123, 32-125, 1

⁷⁶⁸ Bethge and Layton’s translation. (Cf. Layton, 1989, p. 87).

⁷⁶⁹ Bethge and Layton’s translation. (Cf. Layton, 1989, p. 87).

⁷⁷⁰ Bethge and Layton’s translation. (Cf. Layton, 1989, pp. 91-93).

This last passage shows a concern not only with the final destiny of the “perfects” but also with those who “have not become perfect in the unbegotten father”, stating that they will also gain a sort of salvation, but not the “kingless realm”.

What follows is a prediction of a great eschatological destruction of the material world and its rulers, widely narrated in the apocalyptic style. The wisdom of the rulers is said to be put in shame, while their fate will be the condemnation and their lordship will be dissolved (125, 25-32). The eschatological prediction continues, saying that “before the consummation [of the age], the whole place will shake with great thundering”. The description is clearly based on many apocalyptic eschatological accounts, with references to shakes, floods and firefloods⁷⁷¹.

Painchaud also argues in favor of some allusions to *I Enoch*. In 126, 23-24, *On the Origin of the World* compares the evil powers to “volcanoes”⁷⁷². This is also attested in *I Enoch* 18, 13⁷⁷³. In 126, 29-30, we read that “their heavens will fall one upon the next and their (the rulers) forces will be consumed by fire”⁷⁷⁴. Skies or heavens falling is an apocalyptic topic, as we can see in *I Enoch* 83, 3-4, where we read: “I saw in a vision the sky being hurled down and snatched and falling upon the earth”⁷⁷⁵.

We saw that *On the Origin of the World* is not an apocalypse, but rather a treatise with many apocalyptic elements. It presents an account of Sabaoth’s enthronement, full of allusions to *Revelation*. We also saw that these allusions may lead to the identification

⁷⁷¹ See chapter 2 discussion on eschatology. See also the commentary on the *Apocalypse of Adam*.

⁷⁷² Layton’s translation (Cf. Layton, 1989, p. 91). Painchaud translates it as “des montagnes qui s’embrasent” (ἄνωγτοῦ ἐτξεπεκωζτ). (Cf. Painchaud 1, 1995, p. 215).

⁷⁷³ See Painchaud’s commentary. (Cf. Painchaud 1, 1995, p. 517).

⁷⁷⁴ Bethge and Layton’s translation. (Cf. Layton, 1989, p. 91).

⁷⁷⁵ Issac’s translation. (Cf. Charlesworth, 1983, p. 61).

of Sabaoth to the beast of Revelation. We also analyzed the eschatological account and its allusions to Jewish apocalyptic, mostly *I Enoch*. And finally, we saw that *On the Origin of the World* shows concern on the final destiny of souls. Surely, the author of *On the Origin of the World* knew apocalyptic literature quite well. His allusions to *Revelation* and *I Enoch* are clear, and show that his public was also aware of these apocalyptic traditions. Even if it is not an apocalypse, it makes use of many apocalyptic motifs, being the Nag Hammadi text that not being an apocalypse, presents the major number of apocalyptic elements.

8.6- The Concept of Our Great Power (NH VI-4)

The *Concept of Our Great Power* is the fourth text of Codex VI. To date, not many studies have been consecrated to this text⁷⁷⁶; consequently, its apocalyptic character has not been analyzed in-depth. Williams argues that “as it now stands the document is a complete salvation-history cast in an apocalyptic form, with a number of ideas and expressions which would be congenial to Gnostics”⁷⁷⁷. William also argues that the text is extremely unclear at some passages, which may suggest serious corruption. Mainly, the text employs the third person, but the first person appears nine times, employing an unidentified “I”. One may also find sporadic exhortations pronounced in the second person plural. All these changes in the person of the discourse along with the unclear passages do not let us identify who is the speaker in our tractate⁷⁷⁸.

⁷⁷⁶ We may emphasize Wisse and Williams’ critical translation in volume XI of *Nag Hammadi Studies* collection (Wisse and Williams, 1979).

⁷⁷⁷ Wisse and Williams, 1979, p. 291.

⁷⁷⁸ Wisse and Williams, 1979, pp. 291-292.

We may consider the *Concept of Our Great Power* as a text with apocalyptic elements rather than an apocalypse because it lacks certain capital characteristics of an apocalypse, such as the disclosure of heavenly mysteries to a human recipient. However, the tractate discusses certain heavenly mysteries, and we may consider this as a presence of apocalyptic elements. It deals with pre-history and primordial history events, such as the origin of evil, creation and the flood; it presents a savior, who descends into Hades and faces the evil archons; and also a final consummation account. Moreover, history is schematized into three periods: “the age (aeon) of the flesh” (38, 13-14), destroyed by the flood⁷⁷⁹; the “natural age (aeon)” (39, 16-18; 40, 23-27), in which the savior shows up; and the “indestructible age (aeon)” of a time to come (43, 11).

The account of creation mentions the origin of soul (37, 34-38, 9), and subsequently, the story of Noah and the flood is mentioned (38, 22-39, 13). Also in line 13 of page 39, a judgment of flesh is mentioned⁷⁸⁰. At the end, “the firmaments [will fall] down to the depth” (47, 5-6) and the sons of matter are to be destroyed (47, 7-8), while those “who are holy through the light of Power” (47, 10-11) will be in “the aeon of beauty of the aeon of judgment, since they are ready in wisdom, having given glory to him who is the incomprehensible unity”,⁷⁸¹ (47, 15-20).

Our text also shows the importance of knowledge for salvation: “He who would know our Great Power will become invisible. And fire will not be able to consume

⁷⁷⁹ The flood in question is the flood faced by Noah. As already commented, the flood is a widely present topic in Nag Hammadi apocalyptic texts, such as the *Apocalypse of Adam* (see the commentary on this text in chapter 4) and the *Hypostasis of the Archons* (see the commentary on this text in chapter 7).

⁷⁸⁰ “And the judgment of the flesh was unleashed” (39, 13-14). Wisse’s translation. (Cf. Wisse and Williams, 1979, p. 303).

⁷⁸¹ Wisses’s translation. (Cf. Wisse and Williams, 1979, p. 321).

him”⁷⁸². In 39, 20-33 a list of defilements and evil deeds is mentioned, probably one of the causes of the judgement (39, 13) and the eschatological destruction (47, 5-6)⁷⁸³. In 45, 1-4 is wrote that the archons will send an imitator who will bore great signs and rule over the earth and over those who dwell under heaven (45, 4-10). This is probably an allusion to the antichrist, who is described in *2 John* 1:7 as a deceiver. After the mention of the imitator and his deeds, our texts describes great signs of eschatological destruction, such as the springs that will cease, the rivers that will stop flowing and the stars that will grow in size (54, 33-46, 5). At the end, our text cites the punishment of souls (47, 28).

As a final remark, we may comment the savior’s role⁷⁸⁴ presented in the *Concept of Our Great Power* as an *ex-eventu* prophecy. He is presented in an apocalyptic way, descending into Hades facing the evil archons and opening the gates of heavens (41, 7-42, 11)⁷⁸⁵:

And he opened the gates of the heavens with his words. And he put to shame the ruler of Hades; he raised the dead, and he destroyed his domin-

⁷⁸² Wisses’s translation (Cf. Wisse and Williams, 1979, p. 295).

⁷⁸³ As we commented in chapter 2, evil deeds of mankind are seen as cause of God’s intervention and eschatological destruction in many apocalyptic texts.

⁷⁸⁴ This savior may be identified with Jesus, since the text says that “he will speak in parables” (40, 30-31).

⁷⁸⁵ Christian apocalyptic literature conserved many accounts of Jesus going into Hades to open the gates of heaven and bring the righteous with him. See, for example, chapter 4 of the *Greek Apocalypse of Peter* (Cf. Grébaut, 1910 and Marrasini and Bauckham, 1997). In another Christian text, the *Visio Sancti Pauli*, in chapter 44 (Cf. Silverstain and Hilhorst, 1997), Christ descends to hell to grant sinners Sunday respite. In the *Greek Apocalypse of Ezra*, Christ does not go into Hades, but the pseudonymous visionary Ezra sees the depths of *Tartarus* (Cf. Bergren, 1990). In a Jewish text called *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* (Cf. Wintermute, 1983), chapters 6-8, the visionary is taken by an angel through brass gates into a beautiful city, but the gates become fiery and a sea of fire appears and rushes at him. But a magnificent angel comes into the sea to take him out. For a good study on the “tours of hell”, see Himmelfarb, 1983.

ion. Then a great disturbance took place. The archons raised up their wrath against him. They wanted to hand him over to the ruler of Hades. Furthermore, they knew one of his followers. A fire took hold of his (Judas') soul. He handed him over, since no one knew him (41, 7-23) ...And he was victorious over the command of the archons, and they were not able by their work to rule over him (42, 8-11)⁷⁸⁶.

We saw that the *Concept of Our Great Power* contains many apocalyptic elements, such as the primordial history, the schematization of history, eschatological accounts and *ex-eventu* prophecies. However, the lack of basic literary elements, such as the narrative framework and the presence of a heavenly mediator who discloses mysteries to a human recipient do not allow us classify the *Concept of Our Great Power* as an apocalypse. It seems that its author was aware of many apocalyptic motifs, and used them to transmit his message.

⁷⁸⁶ Wisses's translation (Cf. Wisse and Williams, 1979, pp. 307-309).

9- Conclusion

After having analyzed the Nag Hammadi apocalyptic texts, we should make certain final considerations, trying to answer chapter 3 questions.

We started asking which texts in the Nag Hammadi corpus could be defined as apocalypses and which texts could be considered influenced by the apocalyptic literature. I believe that this question was already answered in the commentary of texts; since we saw in what measure each text can be considered and classified as an apocalypse according to the proposed definition. The proposed division was also an attempt to consider the different levels of apocalyptic usage in Nag Hammadi texts. As we saw, the *Gospel of Thomas*, for example, presents apocalyptic features, but not as much as the *Apocalypse of Paul*, that, indeed, can be classified as an apocalypse. In certain specific cases, texts in chapter 8, such as *On the Origin of the World* and the *Concept of Our Great Power* present more apocalyptic features than certain texts in chapter 4, such as the *First* and the *Second Apocalypses of James*.

We also saw that, despite its title, the *Apocalypses of James* does not correspond to the adopted definition of apocalypse. In the particular case of the *First Apocalypse of James*, we saw that the new version in Codex Tchacos presents a different title in the manuscript, *James*. That may be an indication that the text in question was not understood and considered to be an “apocalypse” for all its readers. It is also important to remember the apocalyptic “tonality” of Codex V⁷⁸⁷. I believe that it is not absurd to think that a scribe could add the word “apocalypse” to a text called James just to make it look

⁷⁸⁷ See Morard, 1995 and the commentary made on this dissertation in chapter 2.

like an apocalypse in a codex with at least to other apocalypses, the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the *Apocalypse of Adam*.

We also saw that it is quite likely that two Nag Hammadi treatises, *Zostrianos* and *Allogenes*, commented in chapter 5, are cited by Porphyry in *Life of Plotinus* 16⁷⁸⁸. We also saw that Porphyry called these texts “apocalypses”. In other words, he used “apocalypses” to designate a particular group of texts, what may indicate the recognition of a literary genre.

The second question concerns the influence of Jewish or Christian apocalyptic. As we already saw, many scholars like to emphasize the clear influence of Jewish apocalyptic in Nag Hammadi texts, but they usually forget to point out the direct influences of Christian apocalyptic texts. The relationship between some Nag Hammadi apocalypses, such as *Zostrianos* and the *Apocalypse of Adam*, and Jewish apocalypses such as *1 Enoch* was widely discussed by scholars, such as Pearson. We also saw that, in some cases, Nag Hammadi texts, such as *On the Origin of the World* presents clear allusions to Christian apocalypses, such as *Revelation*.

The subject of influences in Nag Hammadi corpus must take in consideration the plurality of this corpus. Trying to find a single branch of influence would be useless and inexact. Even what is called “Jewish apocalyptic” and “Christian apocalyptic” embraces many categories and texts, from different times and places; texts that preach different doctrines and theology. Moreover, we must consider that the bondary between what we call “Jewish pseudepigrapha” and Christian apocrypha was not clear at the time⁷⁸⁹. Even

⁷⁸⁸ See the discussions in chapters 2, 3 and 5.

⁷⁸⁹ I would like to thank Lorenzo DiTommaso for having authorized me to use his outstanding paper (Cf. DiTommaso, 2006).

what is considered to be “Jewish pseudepigrapha” was, in several cases, preserved and consumed by Christians. Thus, to trace back influences to these static categories could be simplistic and inexact.

Anyhow, the Nag Hammadi apocalyptic corpus shows us that the apocalyptic literature was known and used in antiquity. The usage of apocalyptic elements varies from simple eschatological motifs, such as in the *Gospel of Thomas*, to clear clichés, such as in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, and allusions to *Revelation*, such as in *On the Origin of the World*. I believe that these usages show us that the apocalyptic literature, in its various forms, was known by the audience of Nag Hammadi texts. It seems that in some cases, such as in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the usage of apocalyptic elements was concient and intended to reach a public who was aware of apocalyptic literature. Our authors used the apocalyptic literature not only as literary *topos*, but also as a rhetorical element, reaching a public able to understand and decode the allusions and parallels.

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