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The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices by Hugo
Lundhaug and Lance Jenott (review)

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Journal of Early Christian Studies, Volume 26, Number 3, Fall 2018, pp.
497-499 (Review)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/earl.2018.0044>



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merging Paul's charismatic and covenantal theologies in the context of her own historical and geographic situation. Montanus is shown, by comparison, to be influenced much more by the prophetic texts of the Hebrew Bible as translated in the Septuagint, by the philosophical/exegetical interpretation of at least Gen 2.21–24 of Philo of Alexandria, and by the book of Revelation. Both prophets, nonetheless, according to Mader, share a view of the role of the prophet as a “passive instrument” and oracular prophecy as a sign of the immanent eschaton and of the fulfillment of a new covenantal theology.

Mader's book not only contributes substantially to scholarship on Montanism but is also a model for all who wish to undertake a diachronic approach to the critical study of ancient texts utilizing the TLG.

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Hugo Lundhaug and Lance Jenott

The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices

Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 97

Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015

Pp. xvi + 332. €89.00.

According to the authors, the purpose of their study is to demonstrate that “available evidence concerning the provenance of the NHC is best explained by a Christian monastic origin in Upper Egypt” (1). As it is clear from this formulation, the evidence is examined in order to defend a thesis according to which the NHC were produced by, destined to, and owned by Christian monks.

Entitled “The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics,” Chapter One is devoted to a brief history of the question and the dating of the codices. The authors adopt the *post quem* terminus of 348 C.E. provided by a fragment of papyrus recycled in the cartonnage of codex VII. They argue that it may have been many years before these papyri were recycled for use in binding the codex.

Chapter Two is devoted to the monastic diversity in Upper Egypt in the time period of the Nag Hammadi codices as it is attested by literary evidence (travelogues, hagiographies, Shenoute), archaeological evidence, and documentary evidence (mainly Meletian or from the Nag Hammadi covers). In conclusion, the authors believe that the Pachomian hypothesis “still has much to recommend” (55).

Chapter Three (“Gnostics?”) successively reviews three questions: “Sethian Gnostics?,” “Gnostics in Fourth- and Fifth-Century Egypt?,” and “Gnostics in Egyptian Monasteries?” The authors conclude that “we do not find ‘gnosticism’ or ‘Gnostic’ to be helpful categories for theorizing about the origins of the Nag Hammadi codices and their owners” (73).

Entitled “Contrasting Mentalities,” Chapter Four is devoted to the alleged gap between the contents of the Nag Hammadi codices and the monastic mentality as it is mainly described by Khosroyev, as well as to a refutation of his hypothesis of “urban literati” shared with Emmel. Again, this chapter leads to the conclusion

that “the theory that the books were produced and read by Christian monks accounts well for all the textual, paratextual and artefactual evidence concerning the provenance of the Nag Hammadi Codices” (103).

Chapter Five, the longest of the book, is devoted to the cartonnage of the covers. Again, the conclusion of the chapter is that “the monastic community witnessed in many of the cartonnage documents, most prominently from the cover of codex VII, but showing traces here and there in other covers too, would be the most likely setting in which the Nag Hammadi Codices themselves were produced and read” (144).

Chapter Six is devoted to the well-attested circulation of apocryphal books in Egyptian monasteries, especially within the Pachomian federation, as it is attested in the fifth century by Dioscorus and Shenoute. In the conclusion, it is stated that this circulation of apocryphal texts provides “a model for understanding the monastic community that read the Nag Hammadi Codices” (177), this single “monastic community” being taken for granted.

Chapters Seven and Eight are devoted respectively to the colophons and to the codices. The general conclusion is that “the scribes of the Nag Hammadi Codices belonged to the communities who used them” (206). It is interesting to note that in the conclusion of Chapter Six, there was one monastic community, while here, there are a number of “monastic communities.” In the conclusion to Chapter Eight, the authors state that the classification of the NHC into subgroups does not rule out the possibility that they were “produced in a monastery or in a network of monasteries” (231).

Chapter Nine is devoted to different categories of monks: Meletian, Origenist, and Pachomian. Once again, the conclusion is that the Pachomian monks who lived close to the Jabal al-Tarif are “the most likely people to have owned the Nag Hammadi Codices” (256).

Chapter Ten works as a general summary and conclusion, and the last paragraph is noteworthy: “In the final analysis, it seems the only way we can hope to understand the Nag Hammadi codices in their proper historical context is by acknowledging a much higher degree of complexity than we may be accustomed to” (268). The present reviewer certainly agrees with this conclusion.

While this book is extremely well-documented and completed by useful bibliography and indices, the present reviewer is not convinced that replacing “Gnostics” with “Pachomian monastics” is acknowledging the high degree of complexity involved in the production, destination, circulation, and final ownership of the various codices discovered at the Jabal al-Tarif. Moreover, this study leaves aside the codices Bruce, Askew, and Tchacos, which are closely related to the Nag Hammadi collection. A more nuanced approach should examine the issues of production and destination of Nag Hammadi codices separately for each sub-collection that has been distinguished, without ever assuming that the conclusions that apply to one sub-collection are equally valid for the others. It should also distinguish the question of the production and the destination of these sub-collections from the question of the last owners of all the codices. Finally, a study of the reception of Nag Hammadi’s texts and their literary and doctrinal contents in the context of Egypt in the fourth and fifth centuries implies a set of

considerations that have nothing to do with the physical manufacture of codices and the copies of the texts they contain.

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Yancy Smith

The Mystery of Anointing: Hippolytus' Commentary on the Song of Songs in Social and Critical Contexts

Gorgias Studies in Early Christianity and Patristics 62

Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2015

Pp. xxxviii + 614. \$243.00.

This book is a substantial revision of Smith's 2009 dissertation, completed at Brite Divinity School. The majority of the book (Chapters 1–10) is comprised of a wide-ranging study of Hippolytus's *In Canticum canticorum*, attending especially to what the text reveals about the social realities, rituals, and beliefs of its author and audience. The book's final chapter presents the extant texts and new English translations of the *In Cant*. The work concludes with a bibliography, a brief index of scriptural passages and passages from Hippolytus, and a general index.

Smith opens with a ninety-page discussion of date, provenance, and authorship. There are, of course, long-standing debates about the identity of Hippolytus and the extent of his corpus. Broadly speaking, Smith aligns himself with the perspective of Allen Brent (*Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century: Communities in Tension before the Emergence of a Monarch-Bishop*, Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 31 [Leiden: Brill, 1995]). The Hippolytus who wrote biblical commentaries is someone other than the "Pseudo-Hippolytus" who wrote the *Refutation of All Heresies*, but both figures were a part of the same Roman "church-school," and Hippolytus the commentator knew the writings of Pseudo-Hippolytus. Smith argues that that "Hippolytus was a culturally eastern writer living in the West (Rome)" (xxvi), who might have emigrated from Alexandria, Syria, or Asia Minor.

Smith adds a few new arguments for locating Hippolytus in Rome. Namely, Smith asserts that Hippolytus's belief that Easter (Pascha) was the suitable time for baptism (*Comm. Dan.* 1.17.2), and his references to post-baptismal anointing (a possible deduction from *In Cant.* 2.8–9), both indicate a Roman context. Since the evidence from this period for Easter baptism is so slender (the only reference besides the *Comm. Dan.* is Tertullian, *Bapt.* 19), such arguments are unlikely to persuade those scholars who hold that Hippolytus wrote in the East.

Smith proposes a new way to date the *In Cant*. The text describes the thirty denarii Judas received for Jesus as "an easy price," meant to show that "the poor also could easily attain him" (*In Cant.* 2.31). In Smith's view, the assumption that thirty denarii would be accessible to the poor reflects the hyperinflation of 211–17 C.E.

As for the *Sitz im Leben* of the *In Cant.*, Smith revives, and greatly elaborates