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The Dead Sea Scrolls, the Nag Hammadi Codices, and the Joys of Weak Comparison

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DOI

[10.1163/9789004517561_002](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004517561_002)

Publication date

2022

Document Version

Final published version

Published in

The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Codices

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Citation for published version (APA):

Burns, D. M., & Goff, M. (2022). The Dead Sea Scrolls, the Nag Hammadi Codices, and the Joys of Weak Comparison. In D. M. Burns, & M. Goff (Eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Codices: Selected Papers from the Conference "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Codices" in Berlin, 20–22 July 2018* (pp. 3–30). (Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies; Vol. 103). Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004517561_002

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The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Codices

*Selected Papers from the Conference
“The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Codices”
in Berlin, 20–22 July 2018*

Edited by

Dylan M. Burns
Matthew Goff



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Contents

Acknowledgments	XI
List of Figures and Tables	XII
Abbreviations	XIII
Notes on Contributors	XVIII

PART 1

Introduction

- 1 The Dead Sea Scrolls, the Nag Hammadi Codices, and the Joys of Weak Comparison 3
Dylan M. Burns and Matthew Goff

PART 2

New Antiquities: Initial Receptions of the Qumran and Nag Hammadi Corpora

- 2 Artifact Migration and the Transport of Ancient Knowledge into Modernity: The Role of Human Cognition in the Process of Immigration 33
April D. DeConick
- 3 The Impact of the Qumran and Nag Hammadi Discoveries on New Testament Scholarship: Dualism in John and Jesus's Eschatology as Paradigms 66
Jörg Frey
- 4 Finding Stories: A Literary Critique of Certain Themes in the Story of the Discovery of the Nag Hammadi Codices and the Dead Sea Scrolls 93
Christoph Markschiefs

PART 3

Texts, Manuscripts, and Canons: Scripture, Scribes, and Exegesis at Qumran and Nag Hammadi

- 5 Material Philology and the Nag Hammadi Codices 107
Hugo Lundhaug
- 6 Jewish Scrolls, Monastic Codices, and Material Philology 144
Matthew Goff
- 7 The Biblical Canons after Qumran and Nag Hammadi: Some Preliminary Observations 152
Jens Schröter

PART 4

Portrayals of Patriarchs in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Codices

- 8 From Adam to the Patriarchs: Some Biblical Figures in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Library 177
George J. Brooke
- 9 Celestial Landscapes and Heavenly Ascents: The Slavonic *Book of the Holy Secrets of Enoch the Just* (2 *Enoch*) 196
Florentina Badalanova Geller
- 10 It Didn't Happen the Way Moses Said It Did: Exegesis, Creativity, and Enochic Traditions in the *Apocryphon of John* 238
Matthew Goff
- 11 Enochic Literature in Nag Hammadi Texts: The Enochic Myth of Angelic Descent as Interpretative Pattern? 262
Claudia Losekam
- 12 Blenders of the Lost Arks: Noah's Ark and the Ark of the Covenant as One in Gnostic and Other Judeo-Christian Literature 301
Tuomas Rasimus

PART 5

“Weak Comparison” in Praxis: Interdisciplinary Investigations of Themes in the Qumran and Nag Hammadi Literatures

- 13 Revealers and Revelation from Qumran to Nag Hammadi 329
 Harold W. Attridge
- 14 There Is No Soul in a Sect, Only Spirit and Flesh: Soteriological
 Determinism in the *Tripartite Tractate* (NHC I,5) and the
 “Vision of Hagu” (4QInstruction) 359
 Dylan M. Burns
- 15 The Visionary’s View: Otherworldly Motifs and Their Use/Reuse in Texts
 of Qumran and Nag Hammadi 388
 Kelley Coblenz Bautch
- 16 Expressions of Pseudepigraphy in the Qumran Aramaic Fragments
 and First Impressions of the Nag Hammadi Codices 409
 Andrew B. Perrin
- Index of Citations of Ancient Texts 429
 Index of Modern Authors 453

The Dead Sea Scrolls, the Nag Hammadi Codices, and the Joys of Weak Comparison

Dylan M. Burns and Matthew Goff

The two most important textual discoveries of the twentieth century for the study of ancient Judaism and early Christianity occurred at roughly the same time—the codices found near Nag Hammadi (Upper Egypt) in 1945, and the Dead Sea Scrolls, in the waning days of the British Mandate, uncovered near Qumran in 1947.¹ The emergence of these texts sparked a great deal of interest among scholars and the public at large. But despite the chronological proximity of the Qumran and Nag Hammadi discoveries, and the importance of both finds, there has been relatively little scholarship that examines these corpora in relation to one another. There are good reasons for this. Firstly, the artifacts are of very different provenance, with the Qumran scrolls produced between the third century BCE and the first century CE, and the Nag Hammadi Codices made in late antiquity, probably in the fourth century.² The evidence also takes differing material forms: Jewish scrolls against Christian codices. Third, the core languages needed to work with them at the appropriate philological level are different (Aramaic and Hebrew, versus Greek and Coptic). Moreover, the cultural, intellectual, and religious milieux in which these texts were written are strikingly different. For instance, the view espoused in many Nag Hammadi texts, that the God of the Septuagint who created the world is in fact an evil or ambivalent demiurge, would have been unthinkable for members of the Dead Sea sect.

But the fact that texts have stark differences does not mean they should not be compared. It is a common issue in the comparative enterprise: diversity within a data set is a feature, not a bug. Despite all the notable differences between the Qumran and Nag Hammadi texts, there is a wealth of reasons to compare them. Each corpus constitutes a rare example of ancient texts for which the vast bulk of material evidence is actually ancient. This is atypical in

1 See the essay in the present volume by Markschie.

2 On the manufacture of the Nag Hammadi Codices in the fourth century or possibly later, see Emmel, “Coptic Gnostic Texts”; now Lundhaug, “Dating and Contextualising.” For the dating of the Qumran scrolls, see VanderKam and Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 20–33.

the study of early Judaism and ancient Christianity, disciplines which so often rely on medieval copies of much older texts. Moreover, both sets of texts engage a common scriptural tradition, allowing a context for comparison regarding a range of issues such as biblical exegesis, genre, and scribal culture. In addition, there are a range of themes and issues that come up in both corpora. Altogether, while it is important to be sensitive to the development of traditions, it is also true that it can be valuable to compare texts and communities even if one does not posit some sort of direct, historical continuity between them. As Jonathan Z. Smith has stressed, one can, by emphasizing not only similarity but also difference, appreciate what sorts of new questions, perspectives, and insights can be generated when two things are compared together.³

Earlier in the history of scholarship of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi corpora there was some recognition of and initial exploration into the possibilities of such comparative scholarship. The proceedings of the famous 1966 Messina conference on the origins of Gnosticism includes a section on “Lo Gnosticismo e Qumrân,” which contains three articles.⁴ But over the last fifty years or so there has been very little scholarship bringing these two corpora together.⁵ The present volume contains the proceedings of the first conference devoted to an interdisciplinary, comparative exploration of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Codices. Funded by the Fritz Thyssen-Stiftung, the meeting was held in Berlin, July 20–22, 2018, hosted at the Faculty of Theology at Humboldt Universität zu Berlin. The fact that no such collaborative project took place until over seventy years following the initial discovery of the manuscripts in question is itself in need of some reflection, a task that may usefully situate this volume in its scholarly context.

3 “Comparison requires the acceptance of difference as the grounds of its being interesting, and a methodical manipulation of that difference to achieve some stated cognitive end. The questions of comparison are questions of judgment with respect to difference: What differences are to be maintained in the interests of comparative inquiry? What differences can be defensibly relaxed and relativized in light of the intellectual task?” (Smith, *To Take Place*, 14). See also idem, “In Comparison A Magic Dwells,” 21; Altieri, “Close Encounters,” 66. Note also Patton and Ray, *A Magic Still Dwells*.

4 Bianchi, *Le Origini dello Gnosticismo*, 370–410. The three essays are by Ringgren, Mansoor, and Philonenko (see the bibliography below).

5 For survey of additional discussion of the Dead Sea Scrolls as related to the Nag Hammadi Codices, see Lahe, *Gnosis und Judentum*, 128–34. Further examples can be found in Franzmann, “Use of the Terms”; Scopello, “Apocalypse of Zostrianos,” 380–81; Trompf, “Jewish Background,” 84–85. An important investigation making use of both corpora presents itself in Pearson’s work on the figure of Melchizedek, who is portrayed as an eschatological holy warrior in 11Q13 and NHC IX,1 alike. See Pearson, “Introduction,” 33.

Today it is common for scholars of the Qumran scrolls to know relatively little about the Nag Hammadi texts, and vice-versa. This been the case for over a generation of scholarship. This is a consequence, it seems, of how the significance of these texts was conceptualized in early research. The Nag Hammadi texts sparked intense scholarly interest in Gnosticism, which had been a major topic of academic discussion prior to their discovery. When the codices came to light it was common to understand Gnosticism as a form of religion that was distinct and perhaps even older than Christianity.⁶ An important aspect of this perspective was making an association between Gnosticism and Judaism. The notion of Jewish Gnosticism (*jüdische Gnosis*), for example, was important for Gershom Scholem in his construction of the history of Jewish mysticism.⁷ Even up to the previous generation of scholarship, leading Nag Hammadi experts such as Birger Pearson argued that Gnosticism began as a type of pre-Christian heterodox Judaism in philosophical circles in Alexandria.⁸ The Nag Hammadi Codices were regarded as significant because they were thought to provide material confirmation for the existence of Gnosticism, as a discrete intellectual and theological system that was often held to be older than Christianity and thus a crucial context for understanding Christian origins.⁹ Even though the Nag Hammadi texts were produced in late antiquity, it was common to interpret them in the context of their putative authorship, as preserving Jewish Gnostic documents from the first century CE, as for example Pearson argued

6 See above all Jonas, *Gnostic Religion*. On scholarship about Gnosticism prior to the Nag Hammadi discovery, see e.g. King, *What is Gnosticism?*, 55–148; Burns, “Gnosticism,” 9–10. On the question of ‘pre-Christian’ Gnosticism, see the recent survey of Smith, “Ancient Pre-Christian ‘Gnosticisms’”

7 See Scholem’s influential *Jewish Gnosticism*. On ‘Jewish Gnosticism,’ see Burns, “Gnosticism,” 16. On Nag Hammadi and the history of Jewish mysticism, see *idem*, “Import.”

8 A *Leitmotiv* of Pearson’s collection of pioneering, influential essays, *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity*, particularly “Friedländer Revisited” and “Jewish Elements.” This view is still vital in scholarship (see e.g. Lahe, *Gnosis und Judentum*). Gilles Quispel also argued vigorously and influentially, on many occasions, in favor of the pre-Christian, Jewish origins of Gnosticism (see e.g., “Judaism and Gnosis,” 556–64). For a recent *Forschungsbericht* on the alleged Jewish origins of Gnosticism, see Trompf, “Jewish Background.” For a different hypothesis on the emergence of ‘the Gnostic religion’ that sees Judaism as only one of a set of factors in a pre-Christian syncretism, see Rudolph, *Gnosis*, 275–94.

9 See e.g. Rudolph, *Gnosis*, 51–52. Cf. also Arthur Darby Nock’s remarks (“Coptic Library” [pub. 1958]), on the significance of the Nag Hammadi discovery: “The historical importance of this discovery may fairly be set on a level with that of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The latter throws new light on intertestamental Judaism and on Christian beginnings; the former does something comparable for subsequent Christian development.” Notably, Nock found the notion of pre-Christian, Jewish origins of Gnosticism (as argued by Quispel) to be unlikely (*ibid.*, 322).

with regard to the *Apocryphon of John*.¹⁰ So understood, the value of the Nag Hammadi Codices was that they furnish a window into earliest Christianity's encounter with the pre-Christian Gnosticism, and thus offer invaluable data on the background of the struggle with Christian strains of Gnosticism such as Valentinianism. The extensive efforts to relate Gnosticism to Judaism dominated an earlier generation of scholarship, when scholars such as Hans Jonas and Mircea Eliade loomed large, and an overriding interest in the Nag Hammadi texts was to develop overarching theological constructs and the creation of systems of belief and doctrine. Such grand theories became naturalized in twentieth-century scholarship and were a typical part of the intellectual landscape in the study of antiquity.

These perspectives had implications with regard to historical understanding of the social identities that lay behind the production of these newly-discovered sources. If one presumes the existence of a distinct system of theological beliefs called Gnosticism, it is an easy step to imagine communities of people who held these beliefs—the Gnostics. There was similar excitement about the Dead Sea Scrolls. Since the earliest days of the Qumran discoveries the conviction that the scrolls are the products of an Essene sect of Judaism animated interest in the material.¹¹ The sense of the value of both corpora was increased by the supposition that they are textual discoveries from heterodox sectarian groups that were different from and opposed to mainstream, normative Judaism and Christianity.¹² As DeConick's essay in the present volume discusses, the production of this sort of scholarly knowledge was not simply an objective assessment of new data but also involved the usage of key terms, Gnostic and Essene, both of which have an important intellectual history as

10 Pearson, "Gnosticism as a Religion," 217–18. Cf. further Pearson's discussion of ostensibly 'pre-Christian, Jewish Gnostic' sources that may be discerned prior to their "Christianizing" redaction extant in the Nag Hammadi Codices ("Jewish Sources").

11 Collins, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 33–66.

12 Cf. the comparison suggested by Kurt Rudolph in his classic monograph on Gnosticism, first published in 1977: "it is interesting to observe that these two discoveries show certain parallels. Both belong to communities which stand at the fringe and took a critical view of the official religion, the Qumran community (the Essenes) over against the Judaism of Jerusalem, the Gnostics over against the orthodox church. Both collections of manuscripts were evidently concealed in times of crisis and under external pressure. In their ideology, also, despite all the clear differences, there are certain points of agreement: both communities cherish a dualistic way of thinking and stand in hostility over against the world, they hope for a redemption either through an eschatological and apocalyptic victory of the 'sons of light' over darkness or through the liberation of the soul, the divine spark, to the kingdom of light beyond this world" (*Gnosis*, 35 [Eng. tr. pub. 1987]; cf. also Nock, "Coptic Library" 321).

ciphers for communities that preserve lost or forbidden but legitimate esoteric knowledge; this heritage was mapped onto and shaped the early study of both the Qumran and Nag Hammadi writings.¹³

The scholarly postures towards both terms—"Gnostic" and "Essene"—have changed a great deal since those heady days of early research into the new discoveries. It used to be the case that to be considered a legitimate Qumran scholar one had to show adherence to the Essene hypothesis, the view that the scrolls were written by an Essene sect. This position is based on valid parallels between the Dead Sea Scrolls and classical accounts of the Essenes in Josephus, Philo and Pliny; alternative hypotheses, like those offered by Norman Golb in the 1990s, were regarded as iconoclastic and obtuse.¹⁴ The tension between these two alternatives—one orthodox, the other heterodox—was never formally resolved. Rather, Qumran scholarship has expanded and become more diversified in ways that move beyond a simplistic binary opposition regarding the nature of "the Qumran community." The full publication of the scrolls roughly fifteen years ago has complicated and enriched our understanding of the varieties of community organization attested in the scrolls in ways that do not always map neatly onto the classical accounts of the Essenes, opening up many lines of inquiry for which the Greek descriptions of the Essenes are of little or no value.¹⁵

The shift in scholarly evaluation of the word "Gnostic" and related terminology, above all their application to the Nag Hammadi Codices, has been much more profound. Gnosticism as a category of academic analysis began to come under serious critique in the 1990s. Michael Allen Williams articulated a substantial case against the view that Gnosticism denoted a single religious tradition or social entity from antiquity, and sounded a clarion call for abandoning use of the term.¹⁶ Karen King argued in the 2000s quite successfully that scholars of Gnosticism such as Hans Jonas were not recovering the lost testimony of a forgotten religion but rather reinscribing as objective academic knowledge the project of early Christian heresiologists, who described and condemned "Gnostics."¹⁷ Even though a case can be made that "Gnostic" still has value as a term that describes a certain philosophical perspective that involves a

13 For an exploration of popular reception of the 'Essene hypothesis' in conversation with Gnostic sources in one New Religious Movement, see Kreps, "Reading History."

14 Golb, *Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls?*

15 Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community*. Some of these modes of research for which the old Essene Hypothesis is not particularly important involve the conceptions of textuality and authorship preserved in the scrolls, as discussed below.

16 Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism."* See now also idem, "On Ancient 'Gnosticism'."

17 King, *What is Gnosticism?*

devaluation of the created, material world and a corresponding emphasis on transcendent realities that are the true home of human beings—a perspective that seems to have been espoused by ancient thinkers who called themselves *gnōstikoi*—the old-fashioned, grand narrative of “the Gnostic religion” that helped frame the initial interest and scholarship on the Nag Hammadi discoveries is no longer viable.¹⁸ To compound matters, the 1990s also witnessed heavy and successful interrogation of the very notion of origins in the history of religions,¹⁹ rendering moot the search for the “origins of Gnosticism,” within Judaism or otherwise.

These intellectual developments help explain the relative absence of comparative scholarship on the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Codices. Once the “grand narrative” of Gnosticism and the search for its origins collapsed, so did the main conceptual framework scholars had employed to relate the Nag Hammadi texts to Judaism. One unexpected consequence of this shift, it seems, was a decline in appealing to Jewish texts or traditions when interpreting Nag Hammadi literature. While more recent years have witnessed a burst of Nag Hammadi scholarship focusing more on the texts themselves and less on scholarly reconstructions of Gnostic beliefs or practices, this new scholarship, despite its high quality, often includes relatively little comparative work vis-à-vis ancient Judaism or, for that matter, the contemporary Judaism of late antiquity.²⁰

At the same time, in recent years the study of ancient Judaism has blossomed. The field has progressed and become richly diversified. A major defining feature of the last thirty or so years of scholarship has also been the development of Second Temple Judaism as an independent field of study in its own right. The Dead Sea Scrolls and the completion of the publication of the full corpus in the 2000s play a crucial role in this story. Over time the view became prominent that the corpus of Qumran scrolls was significant not simply for providing insight into a particular sect, but that the scrolls open up a larger window into the Judaism of the late Second Temple period. Milik’s important 1976 volume, *The Books of Enoch from Qumran*, demonstrated that the Dead Sea Scrolls include manuscripts of Enochic texts that were produced

18 Burns, “Providence, Creation, and Gnosticism.”

19 Per the critique of Masuzawa, *In Search of Dreamtime*.

20 To take up two recent collections of essays—Lundhaug and Jenott, eds., *Nag Hammadi Codices*; Crégheur, Painchaud, and Rasimus, eds., *Nag Hammadi à 70 ans*—not a single contribution engages ancient Judaism in a sustained way. These volumes are literally ‘state-of-the-art,’ in both senses of the phrase: they are exemplary in terms of scholarly quality, and they also reflect how far the trajectory of Nag Hammadi studies has traveled away from the Judaisms of Roman and late antiquity.

in the third century BCE, helping trigger the rise of scholarship on Jewish apocalypses and apocalypticism that has been and remains a major scholarly concern. This, as have the scrolls in general, helped usher in a strong interest, among scholars and a broader readership, in ancient Jewish texts that are not in the biblical canons of Western Christianity or Judaism, such as, for example, *Jubilees* or the *Temple Scroll*. At the same time, these new sources do more than provide new information about ancient Judaism. With every new piece of data that emerges from the ancient world, the challenge is to discern not only how this increases our knowledge of the ancient world, which is based on very incomplete evidence, but also how it challenges and forces us to revise our understanding of antiquity. The evidence of the scrolls for example has in recent years, as exemplified in the work of Najman and Mroczek, prompted scholars to re-examine their conceptions of textuality or authorship that they bring to bear on the study of ancient texts.²¹

But despite the current richness and intellectual vibrancy of the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, there is a ringing silence when it comes to the Nag Hammadi corpus. One sign of the growth and development of the study of Second Temple Judaism is that scholars of this literature have focused not only on understanding texts from this time period in their own contexts. There is also great interest in the transmission and reception of Second Temple themes, texts and genres in later historical periods, bringing Qumran texts in conversation with a range of Jewish and early Christian texts. This is part of a broader generational shift away from the study of origins of texts to their reception. An interest in the origins of the Bible or of the Jesus movement do not serve as driving catalysts of scholarly interest in the Qumran scrolls in the way that they used to. There is a great deal of interest in showing how the evidence of the scrolls improve our understanding of later texts and traditions. One of the best examples of this type of scholarship is Annette Reed's 2005 volume which traces the use of Enochic literature in later Judaism and Christianity.²² But in such scholarship engagement with Nag Hammadi literature is on the whole noticeably absent.

There are several reasons as to why Nag Hammadi is in general not on the maps of scholars working on the reception of ancient Jewish sources in early Christianity and late antiquity. Firstly, the situation may be a vestige and consequence of earlier scholarship that relies on an implicit construction of Christianity, despite a spate of current scholarship that problematizes the "parting of the ways" between Judaism and Christianity and its reification of

21 Najman, *Seconding Sinai*; Mroczek, *The Literary Imagination*.

22 Reed, *Fallen Angels*.

both as ontological wholes. There is an unexamined assumption that, however one defines Christianity, it does not include the Nag Hammadi texts. This may be, as DeConick suggests in this volume, a form of implicit continuity with older scholarship on Gnosticism and its reinscription of efforts by early Christian heresiologists to identify Gnostics and their beliefs as heretical and not authentically Christian. A second reason has already been mentioned in the above: earlier scholarship on Gnosticism, Nag Hammadi, and Judaism tended to focus on the question of “Gnostic origins” vis-à-vis Second Temple Judaism. These lines of enquiry ultimately did not establish themselves as scholarly consensus, and as questions of “origins” went out of fashion in religious studies in general, the complex “Nag Hammadi-ancient Judaism” fell by the wayside as well. A third, no less significant factor is that the current flowering of scholarship on Second Temple Judaism is taking place after Gnosticism had already become a disputed category, as discussed above.

All three of these issues are evident, for example, in Reed’s excellent scholarship. She, along with John Reeves, has in recent years pushed scholars of ancient Judaism to think beyond conventional definitions of our fields of inquiry and encouraged them to explore other traditions and examine trajectories of traditions evident in the scrolls beyond antiquity into not only Judaism and Christianity but also Islam and Manichaeism.²³ But despite her laudable promotion of new lines of inquiry and intellectual boundary crossing, a lack of engagement with the Nag Hammadi material is noticeable. Her groundbreaking study of the reception of Enochic literature in Judaism and Christianity only brings up Nag Hammadi texts at the very end, even though they include significant iterations of the watchers myth. Rather than engage the Coptic texts on their own terms as receptions of the watchers myth, her analysis of them is geared towards disputing the validity of Gnosticism as a category.²⁴ For scholars of ancient Judaism, the critique of the category championed by scholars such as Williams or King did not lead to a new orientation

23 Reeves and Reed, *Enoch*.

24 Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 276. She expresses skepticism about the influence of Enochic literature on “Gnosticism,” using scare quotes. She encourages future scholarship to examine the lack of engagement in the Nag Hammadi texts with regard to the figure of Enoch and the watchers myth (cf. also Trompf, “Jewish Background,” 87). The absence of Enoch in this corpus is indeed a valid subject of inquiry. But the watchers myth is attested in important ways in the Nag Hammadi Codices, as the essays in this volume by Goff and Losekam discuss.

towards the Nag Hammadi texts but rather the opposite—keeping them on the periphery, consigned to oblivion.²⁵

All this helps explain the relative lack of comparative scholarship, in recent years and in the history of scholarship, on the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Codices. Articulating this absence in turn provides an impression of the value of our 2018 conference in Berlin and thus also the present volume. This book is not about “Gnosticism and Judaism”; nor it is about “the Gnostics and the Essenes”; and above all, it is not about “the Jewish origins of Gnosticism”! Its focus is the comparative, interdisciplinary investigation of two textual corpora, the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Codices. The current state of affairs regarding the study of ancient Judaism, with its renewed interest in later texts and traditions, should more robustly take the Nag Hammadi texts into consideration, which has heretofore essentially not been the case. As for scholars of the Nag Hammadi literature, the time is ripe for them to take a renewed look at ancient Judaism, the scholarly understanding of which has changed so dramatically since the days of Jewish Gnosticism. The study of ancient Judaism has viability for these scholars not simply because the textual dataset of late Second Temple literature has been expanded by the full publication of the Qumran scrolls but also because of the renewed critical scrutiny going on in this field with regard to established topics that are also relevant for Nag Hammadi specialists, such as scripture, exegesis, and the study of texts as material artifacts produced by scribal cultures. Our 2018 Berlin conference was borne out of the conviction that the comparative study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Codices, a project in which there was some interest when both corpora were initially discovered, is in genuine need of a reboot.

1 The Present Volume: Initial Forays

However one explains the lack of comparative studies on these corpora, this lacuna offers for scholars today a very interesting opportunity—to explore the relatively unexplored significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for specialists of the Nag Hammadi texts and likewise the value of the Nag Hammadi Codices for scholars of Second Temple Judaism. There is a need for this type of research, grounded in the critical spirit of our own moment of scholarship,

25 To be fair, as noted above, the earlier scholarship on Gnosticism vis-à-vis Judaism did not actually produce much direct study of Nag Hammadi vis-à-vis Qumran literature either, perhaps because of its emphasis on overarching theological systems of belief—an unproductive line of comparison for these two corpora.

which continues a long-standing interest in textual study but with a renewed focus on issues of theory and method. The latter point is critical for the comparative study of texts, and Bruce Lincoln's work on this subject is particularly helpful.²⁶ The goal of the present volume is to bring texts from the two corpora together not in terms of what Bruce Lincoln calls "strong comparison"—the pursuit of broad, universalist constructs (à la Mircea Eliade) but rather "weak comparison"—comparison focused on discrete texts that is context-driven and sensitive to the constructed nature of our categories of analysis. Weak comparison prioritizes the texts themselves, not their contribution to overarching constructs. Lincoln's mode of weak comparison encourages the comparative study of texts from very different cultural and historical contexts, as he illustrates with an examination of the Middle Persian *Bundahišn* of Zoroastrianism and the Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf*.²⁷ The value of comparing them, he suggests, is not to articulate their common Indo-European background or better understand the diffusion of traditions across vast distances and historical periods. Rather, comparing them helps illustrate that they engage similar themes which address inequities in their respective societies which the constructions of reality in each text seek to legitimate.²⁸ By comparing them in relation to one another one can get a new angle or perspective on them both.

Lincoln's call for "weak comparison" offers a model for scholars of the ancient Mediterranean world and the Near East. Comparison should not be restricted to issues of similarity or the articulation of direct lines of influence or dependence. Comparing texts of different provenances has the potential to be mutually illuminating. Studying texts from different contexts in relation to one another can produce new insights whether one delineates some sort of genetic relationship between them or not.

The interest among scholars of ancient Judaism in the reception of texts and traditions should no longer exclude the Nag Hammadi texts. Conversely, scholars of these Coptic codices can benefit from more appreciation as to how the Qumran scrolls have enriched and complicated our understanding of ancient Judaism and scripture. There are also other corpora that scholars of both the Qumran and Nag Hammadi texts turn to, such as the writings of Philo and Paul. One of the overarching rationales for this volume is the realization that scholars in both fields are asking similar questions about different texts

26 See, for example, his *Apples and Oranges*, 11, 25–27. The starting point for reflection of this sort in our own times has often been Smith, "In Comparison a Magic Dwells"; see also idem, *Drudgery Divine*, esp. 36–53. Note also now Gil, *The Proper Study of Religion*.

27 Lincoln, *Apples and Oranges*, 27–33.

28 Ibid., 32–33.

and contexts and that it is of mutual benefit to ask them together. It is our hope that the present volume serves as an initial foray of a kind of comparative scholarship that will lead to new studies on both corpora that will achieve better and more refined results.

If the present volume is a first step of interdisciplinary scholarship on the Qumran scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Codices, what kind of first step is it? What do the essays of this volume accomplish? They illustrate that there is a range of topics germane to both corpora that are worth exploring in relation to one another—revelation, scriptural exegesis, heavenly journeys, and the ancient material production of texts. The essays of this volume, to invoke the language of Lincoln, offer specific examples of successful “weak comparison” between texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Codices.

The first part of the volume after this essay (part 2), “New Antiquities: Initial Receptions of the Qumran and Nag Hammadi Corpora,” includes three essays that in different ways engage the issue of previously unknown ancient texts coming to light in the modern world. “Artifact Migration and the Transport of Ancient Knowledge into Modernity: The Role of Human Cognition in the Process of Immigration,” by April D. DeConick, investigates the impact of discoveries of ancient texts on contemporary culture. She theorizes the phenomenon of artifact migration, or the transfer of knowledge from antiquity to modernity. She emphasizes that this is not a simple or objective process but involves understanding how the brain responds to new knowledge, which includes mapping the discovered material onto existing cognitive templates, which essentially transforms the new knowledge from however it was mentally processed in antiquity. DeConick robustly takes the “cognitive turn” and successfully shows how a cognitive science approach complicates histories of reception that rely upon notions of a neat, stable tradition or trajectory and its journey throughout history. The article helpfully shows that how scholars and the general public understood and were excited about the Qumran and Nag Hammadi discoveries was modulated by established scripts and templates in our social and cultural memory that involve Christianity and traditions established earlier in the modern West regarding how the Essenes and the Gnostics were associated with speculation about esoteric knowledge and the preservation of ancient wisdom.

Jörg Frey, in “The Impact of the Qumran and Nag Hammadi Discoveries on New Testament Scholarship: Dualism in John and Jesus’s Eschatology as Paradigms,” makes an important contribution to this volume by focusing on the study of the New Testament. Both corpora have significantly impacted New Testament studies, and so this discipline has a distinctive history of prolonged orientation towards them both. The Dead Sea Scrolls forced a reevaluation

of the Jewish cultural milieu out of which the earliest Christian movement emerges and the Nag Hammadi texts offer crucial information about the early reception of New Testament texts and may, as scholarship on the Gospel of Thomas has stressed, contain texts that are older than the canonical gospels and would thus be critical for research on the historical Jesus. Frey offers an insightful review of the study of the New Testament in the middle of the twentieth century, when the field was dominated by Rudolph Bultmann. For Bultmann, Gnosticism—more than Judaism—constituted a crucial background for understanding New Testament texts, particularly with regard to the Gospel of John and its prominent dualism, a topic for which now the Dead Sea Scrolls are more important. Frey argues that the Qumran scrolls have made a more extensive impact on the study of the New Testament than the Nag Hammadi texts because of their chronological priority. In different ways, he stresses, the impact of both corpora on the study of the New Testament reflects the philosophical or theological interests of the scholars carrying out the research.

Christopher Marksches, in his “Finding Stories: A Literary Critique of Certain Themes in the Story of the Discovery of the Nag Hammadi Codices and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” compares the origin myths of the Qumran and Nag Hammadi texts. The historicity of commonly told stories of how both corpora were discovered has been questioned in recent years, and Marksches asks how they function as “legends” aside from the issue of how they were actually discovered. In both cases the theme of local Arabs who do not properly understand the finds is prominent, and that they found them through chance rather than skill or knowledge of the local terrain (the Bedouin, fellahen). In both stories a local priest, of a religious tradition differing from that of the Arab discoverers, plays an important mediating role (Mar Samuel, al-Qummu Basilyus ‘Abd al-Masih). In both contexts the quasi-legal antiquities trade also is important, and scholars in these legends play an almost mythic role of salvation, rescuing the texts from danger and oblivion by acquiring and preserving them.

Part 3, entitled “Texts, Manuscripts, and Canons: Scripture, Scribes, and Exegesis at Qumran and Nag Hammadi,” includes three essays that explore ways both corpora contribute to our understanding of scripture and exegesis. The article by Hugo Lundhaug, “Material Philology and the Nag Hammadi Codices,” illustrates the value of the Nag Hammadi texts as late antique material objects. While the *Tendenz* of scholars has been to read these manuscripts as a pure window into their putative original context in which the texts they contain were written (often the first or second century CE), this intellectual act often ignores the potential for extensive textual change in the gap between a

text's original context and the time in which the manuscript in which it is found was produced. Changing the focus to the time of production centralizes rather than ignores a context for which we have actual evidence, as advocated by a material philology approach. Lundhaug extensively investigates paratextual features of the Nag Hammadi texts, such as the tricolon or the *paragraphus*, scribal corrections of texts, and glosses. Appreciation of the physical details of the manuscripts allows us to better understand the late antique reception of the Nag Hammadi texts and for such work, Lundhaug advocates, "Gnostic" as a descriptor is less valuable than "monastic." This approach opens up a new range of productive investigations for understanding the Nag Hammadi texts in the context of late antique Egyptian monasticism, a key issue long ignored in the study of these documents.

Matthew Goff responds to Lundhaug in "Jewish Scrolls, Monastic Codices, and Material Philology," highlighting useful comparisons between materially oriented philological approaches to the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Codices. While such approaches to both corpora share a healthy interest in scribal practices and the construction of the textual artifacts themselves, they also differ with regards to practice in significant ways: perhaps most importantly, the scrolls are preserved in a more fragmentary state, while the Coptic texts that are preserved enjoy a certain stability and clarity, relative to the scrolls. On the other hand, the scrolls offer many cases of texts preserved in many copies, attesting to comparable modes of textual fluidity highlighted by Lundhaug in the Nag Hammadi Codices, and study of scribal practices such as punctuation has been conducted on both corpora with reference to the greater study of ancient Mediterranean scribal cultures.

Jens Schröter, in his "The Biblical Canons after Qumran and Nag Hammadi: Some Preliminary Observations," lays out the contribution of both sets of texts to our understanding of the formation of the Jewish and Christian Bibles. Each corpus of texts, he emphasizes, illuminates in its own way the social and religious contexts in which scripture was conceptualized in antiquity. Despite the significant differences between the two groups of texts, the Qumran and Nag Hammadi literatures have points in common. Both for example engage scripture in ways that reflect an apocalyptic worldview and show an interest in redeemer figures.

Part 4 is devoted to "Portrayals of Patriarchs in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Codices." George J. Brooke, "From Adam to the Patriarchs: Some Biblical Figures in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Library," compares how biblical figures are utilized in each corpus. Figures such as Adam, Noah, and Abraham are examined. In the Dead Sea Scrolls there are some hints that Adam has some sort of cosmic or eschatological significance,

whereas in the Nag Hammadi material Adam frequently has a prominent role in complex metaphysical scenarios. With regard to Noah, comparison with the Nag Hammadi material makes it easier to discern key issues regarding his portrayal at Qumran. Comparison highlights that interest in Noah in the scrolls can relate to the pre-Aaronic foundation of the priesthood, and that Noah is associated with the theme of proper occupation of the land, since this theme is not prominent in the Nag Hammadi texts. The Dead Sea Scrolls also appeal to the patriarchs as ethical models to be emulated; the Nag Hammadi texts, by contrast, are more likely to legitimate claims based on their ability to offer corrections and supplements to scripture (and offer what the truth 'really' is) rather than claim they are following it.

The transmission and appropriation of Enochic traditions, as mentioned above, is a vibrant topic of contemporary scholarship. While the figure of Enoch is not a prominent figure in the Nag Hammadi corpus, the watchers myth is adapted and reformulated in several texts of this find.²⁹ While this issue has been explored by Nag Hammadi specialists, it has by and large not been touched on by scholars of ancient Judaism, despite all the current interest in the reception of Enochic traditions. Three articles in this part explore this issue in various ways. In "Celestial Landscapes and Heavenly Ascents: The Slavonic *Book of the Holy Secrets of Enoch the Just*," Florentina Badalanova Geller analyzes the Slavonic *Book of the Holy Secrets of Enoch the Just* (*2 Enoch*) against the background of data encountered by scholars prior and after the discoveries of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Library. She critiques the peripheral status traditionally assigned to *2 Enoch* in the study of ancient Judaism, which she attributes to the views of scholars such as Józef Milik.³⁰ The author endorses the earlier scholarship of Madeleine Scopello, who examined several intriguing parallels between *2 Enoch* and the Sethian apocalypse *Zostrianos* (NHC VIII,1), and, on the basis of those affinities, suggested that a Greek *Vorlage* of *2 Enoch* was utilized in the composition of *Zostrianos*. In Badalanova Geller's view, engagement with Nag Hammadi literature should prod us to transform our understanding of *2 Enoch*. She passionately

29 The comprehensive treatment here remains Losekam, *Die Sünde der Engel*.

30 This is one thread in a complex scholarly landscape. R.H. Charles argued that *2 Enoch* was produced in the first century CE by a Hellenized Jew, probably from Alexandria, and that the text likely influenced several early texts, including the gospel of Matthew, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, and the *Ascension of Isaiah*. See Morfill and Charles, *Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, xxi–xxii, xxvi. Some more recent scholarship has also argued for the antiquity of at least portions of *2 Enoch*. Böttrich, for example, contends that *2 Enoch* 69 predates the destruction of the temple in the first century CE. See his "The Book of the Secrets of Enoch," 56.

contends that it should not be regarded as a late or derivative Enochic composition but that it rather contains extensive ancient and authentic material and should be reconceptualized as an important and primary text of ancient Judaism.

In “It Didn’t Happen the Way Moses Said It Did: Exegesis, Creativity, and Enochic Traditions in the *Apocryphon of John*,” Matthew Goff examines the incorporation of the watchers myth into the *Apocryphon of John*, a major text of the Nag Hammadi corpus. The essay also explores why this text presumably utilizes some form of the *Book of the Watchers* but never cites it or invokes Enoch as an authoritative figure. This issue affords an opportunity to examine how the *Apocryphon of John* regards its source material and assess the reception of Enoch in late antique Egypt. The composition exhibits a loose and creative style of exegesis in which material is freely adapted into its elaborate cosmogonic scenario. That is more important in this document than appealing to textual sources. Also Enoch in the era when the Nag Hammadi manuscripts were produced was revered as an eschatological scribe, associated with the final judgement. In that sense it is understandable that the *Apocryphon of John* does not invoke him as a source of authority since the emphasis of the composition is not on the end of history but the origins of the cosmos.

Claudia Losekam in her “Enochic Literature in Nag Hammadi Texts: The Enochic Myth of Angelic Descent as Interpretative Pattern?” offers an extensive survey of the reception of the watchers myth in the Nag Hammadi corpus. She focuses on three Coptic texts, the *Secret Book of John* (the *Apocryphon of John*), the *Nature of the Rulers*, and *On the Origin of the World*. In various ways these texts, and others, reformulate the first chapters of Genesis in ways that include elements of the watchers myth. The *Secret Book of John*, for example, adapts this Enochic myth to depict the archons as lustful and having sex with women (so too *A Valentinian Exposition*), and *On the Origin of the World* and *Pistis Sophia* (from Codex Askewensis) adapt the motif of the watchers giving illicit knowledge to humankind, including sorcery and idolatry. Losekam argues that the core structural patterns in the adaptation of the watchers myth in the Nag Hammadi corpus include: a thematic affinity between the Enochic watchers and the archons, the adaptation of the trope of the watchers’ having sex with women to represent a form of oppression against the elect, and that the theme of forbidden knowledge serves as a tool of control over humankind by distracting them. These elements of the watchers myth contribute to an overarching theme in the Nag Hammadi corpus, that evil cosmic powers are constantly striving to keep humans from understanding their true nature.

Tuomas Rasimus, in his “Blenders of the Lost Arks: Noah’s Ark and the Ark of the Covenant as One in Gnostic and Other Judeo-Christian Literature” (in

the editors' opinion, the best title in the volume), argues that the unusual iterations of the story of Noah's flood in the *Nature of the Rulers* and the *Apocalypse of Adam*, which include (in *Nat. Rulers*) the burning of the ark by a woman named Norea, become intelligible by positing that both texts have 'blended' Noah's ark with the ark of the covenant. This terminology, as does Rasimus's article as a whole, draws extensively from the study of metaphors from a cognitive science perspective, not unlike the essay in this volume by DeConick. From this perspective the semantic work of a metaphor, understanding one thing in terms of another, is a process in which one conceptual domain is mapped onto another. This cognitive act can create a new, blended image. This is a generative, creative process and the production of the new images can often incorporate other factors beyond the two things being connected in a metaphor. Rasimus illustrates that the blending of the two arks is a surprisingly common phenomenon in ancient Jewish and Christian literature and he situates this theme in Nag Hammadi literature in that broader context.

The final part of the volume, "Weak Comparison' in Praxis: Interdisciplinary Investigations of Themes in the Qumran and Nag Hammadi Literatures," offers a selection of specific studies on particular themes in the two corpora. Each can be understood as a particularly clear example of the kind of scholarship suggested by Lincoln's model of "weak comparison." Harold W. Attridge, in his "Revealers and Revelation from Qumran to Nag Hammadi," investigates the various ways both sets of texts articulate a concern for "revealed truth" and have a set of traditions that help them articulate how access is provided to it. His study surveys broadly the various ways this issue is present across both corpora. In the scrolls for example dream visions and their mediating figures are important, and Attridge devotes particular attention to the *raz nihyeh* ("the mystery that is to be" or "the mystery of existence"), the study of which is central to the acquisition of revealed knowledge in 4QInstruction. As for the Nag Hammadi texts, there is an emphasis on a divine first principle that is removed from ordinary human experience, generally without an emphasis on the patriarchs as mediating figures, in contrast to the Dead Sea Scrolls (the *Apocalypse of Adam* is an exception). The codices also include their own rich array of figures who reveal knowledge, including angels, such as Eleleth in the *Hypostasis of the Archons* or Derdekeas in the *Paraphrase of Shem*, or Christ, as in the *Second Discourse of the Great Seth*. The Nag Hammadi texts often exhibit more complex models of revelation than the Qumran scrolls. Sometimes the revealer can be polymorphic and his appearance can change, as in the *Apocryphon of John* or the *Gospel of Philip*, adding levels of complexity to the issue of the physical form of the revealer of heavenly knowledge. Motifs

from the New Testament can be integrated in this material with metaphysical and epistemological thought, as in for example the Valentinian *Gospel of Truth*, to a degree that is not attested in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Dylan M. Burns, in “There is No Soul in a Sect, Only Spirit and Flesh: Soteriological Determinism in the *Tripartite Tractate* (NHC I,5) and the ‘Vision of Hagu’ (4QInstruction),” offers a focused text study that nicely illustrates the value of comparing the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Codices. He offers a close study of the Valentinian *Tripartite Tractate* that investigates how to understand its anthropology. The work divides humankind into three “races,” spiritual, animate, and material, but Irenaeus suggests that this mode of thought, in an eschatological context, has instead a bipartite anthropology, those who will receive postmortem rewards and those who will not. Burns argues that the animate category does not play a role in Valentinian eschatology, and that we can discern a shift from a tripartite anthropology, which is important in this world, to a bipartite model, which dominates the next. Why this is the case, he suggests, is better illuminated through comparison with 4QInstruction, in particular its “Vision of Hagu” passage which divides humankind into fleshly and spiritual types. The Valentinian anthropological category which is the most ambiguous (the animate) has no counterpart in the Hagu passage. He reasonably suggests that the anthropological reflection evident in 4QInstruction was shaped by its sectarian context. The sectarian mindset fostered an insider/outside dichotomy and this yielded a more consistently bipartite anthropology, operative in the current world and the next alike. The *Tripartite Tractate* by contrast was not produced by a sect with the same sort of dynamics; the absence of such a dualizing sectarian mentality helps explain why the anthropology of the *Treatise* is tripartite and has more ambiguity than that of 4QInstruction.

Kelley Coblenz Bautch, in her “The Visionary’s View: Otherworldly Motifs and Their Use/Reuse in Texts of Qumran and Nag Hammadi,” examines otherworldly topoi in both corpora. Motifs such as visionary travels and interpreting angels occur for example in the book of Ezekiel and the Enochic *Book of the Watchers*. Coblenz Bautch suggests that such material in both the Qumran and Nag Hammadi literatures were influenced by a broad set of early Jewish traditions. This may be a context for understanding the trope of a visionary experiencing an otherworldly journey evident in the Nag Hammadi text *Zostrianos*. It may incorporate this tradition about vision journeys into a very different thought-world that disparages the material cosmos, thus making the seer experience a more “contemplative ascent” into an idealized Platonic realm, as opposed to a physical heavenly ascent.

Andrew B. Perrin, in his “Expressions of Pseudepigraphy in the Qumran Aramaic Fragments and First Impressions of the Nag Hammadi Codices,” offers an instructive exploration of the theme of pseudepigraphy, or the attribution of authorship to someone else, often to an important figure from the past. Pseudepigraphy and pseudepigrapha are topics that have been much critiqued in recent years, particularly the use of the latter as a basis of categorizing texts. Perrin, an established authority on the Aramaic texts from Qumran, examines the theme of authorship in this material. It is common in this literature to attribute texts to important figures from the pre-Sinai past. *Genesis Apocryphon* for example presents iterations of Genesis stories involving figures such as Noah and Abraham, putting them in the first person, effectively making the composition a kind of “pseudepigraphic anthology,” as Perrin argues. He also emphasizes the attribution of Aramaic texts to priestly figures such as Levi or Qahat. Perrin examines strategies of pseudepigraphic attribution in the *Apocryphon of John*, addressing several authorization techniques evident in the composition, such as the use of the first person, not unlike the Qumran Aramaic texts, apostolic attribution, or the assertion that figures who disclose information have preserved their knowledge in a book (the Book of Zoroaster). Declining to attribute influence of the Dead Sea Scrolls on the Nag Hammadi Codices, he suggests that the situation is better characterized as a set of common or similar scribal-authorial strategies evident in both corpora.

2 Directions for Future Scholarship

This proceedings volume was not designed to comprehensively examine all the intersections and possible comparisons between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Codices. Rather it is hoped that this volume can encourage further scholarship and collaboration between these two fields. To this end we briefly examine here (in alphabetical order) some possible directions for future scholarship in which the two corpora of texts can be mutually enlightening which are not taken up substantively in the present volume.

2.1 *Apocalypses*

Since the 1970s, with the publication of *Semeia 14* and the Aramaic Enoch texts from Qumran, the study of apocalyptic literature has blossomed, with regard to Jewish and Christian texts alike. *Semeia 14* even included a section on “Gnostic apocalypses.”³¹ A great many Nag Hammadi texts—nearly half of the entire corpus!—accord with the leading definition of an apocalypse developed

31 Fallon, “The Gnostic Apocalypses.”

in *Semeia* 14.³² Scholars of the Nag Hammadi literature such as Madeleine Scopello and Dylan Burns have started to situate these texts in the broader context of apocalyptic literature.³³ Among specialists of ancient Jewish apocalyptic texts there is increasingly more willingness to examine the genre comparatively and analyze apocalypses from late antiquity, as evident for example in the scholarship of Lorenzo DiTommaso, but this perspective has by and large not been extended to the Nag Hammadi apocalypses. There are ample opportunities to examine these writings and assess their contribution to our understanding of ancient Jewish and early Christian apocalypticism.

2.2 *Demonology*

There is a wealth of scholarship on demonology in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the importance of the Qumran corpus for understanding the development of traditions regarding diabolism, Satanology, and demons more generally in ancient Judaism and earliest Christianity.³⁴ The array of demons, authorities, powers, and above all archons at Nag Hammadi is generally much less well-understood.³⁵ Comparison of demonological traditions in Qumran and Nag Hammadi would undoubtedly yield fruitful and unexpected results. Such investigation can also prove to be useful in understanding Manichaean sources, and Badalanova Geller reminds us how important Gnostic and Manichaean sources can be for understanding the portrayal of the Watchers in pseudepigrapha such as *2 Enoch*.

2.3 *Philosophy*

A striking insight that came up on multiple occasions at the 2018 Berlin conference—in papers and discussion alike—is the gulf between the Nag Hammadi and Qumran texts as regards the Greek philosophical tradition. The importance of the Nag Hammadi texts for the history not just of ancient religion, but of ancient philosophy, is well-known and has become a more vigorous trajectory of investigation than ever.³⁶ As several papers in this volume (e.g., Schröter, Attridge, Burns, Coblenz Bautch) emphasize, the vocabulary,

32 For this reckoning, see Burns, “From the Gnostic Dialogues,” 345–46.

33 See e.g., Scopello, “Youel et Barbélo”; eadem, “Apocalypse of Zostrianos”; eadem, “Contes apocalyptiques et apocalypses philosophiques”; more recently, Burns, *Apocalypse of the Alien God*; idem, “From the Gnostic Dialogues”; see further the contribution of Badalanova Geller, in this volume.

34 See recently e.g., Keith and Stuckenbruck, eds., *Evil*; Reed, *Demons*; Stokes, *The Satan*.

35 For an early and still instructive effort, see Pagels, “The Demiurge”; see further Kaiser, *Hypostase*, 138–41.

36 Primary remains the magnum opus of Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism*; see also Burns, *Apocalypse*. More recently, see Miroshnikov, *Gospel of Thomas*; Linjamaa, *Ethics*.

concerns, and exegetical intertexts and prooftexts of Greek and especially Platonic thought are commonplace and important in the Nag Hammadi collection, but for the most part without analogue in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Recent scholarship on the Qumran texts has tried to read some of them as engaging, or at least usefully comparable to, Greek philosophical ideas.³⁷ A question we were left with at the end of our conference—and one which the papers in this volume pose—is if the Nag Hammadi texts, with their effusive Platonizing, show us the limits of weak comparison between the Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek philosophical literature.

2.4 *Pseudepigraphy*

Related but distinct to the question of the Nag Hammadi texts and the study of apocalypses and apocalypticism is the study of these Coptic manuscripts with respect to the greater history of biblical pseudepigrapha. Remarkably, in the flagship collection of *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. Charlesworth, 1983–1985), a single, lonely Nag Hammadi text—the *Apocalypse of Adam* (NHC v,5)—is included. As the essays in this volume by Schröter and Perrin make clear, pseudepigraphy is a practice that is widespread across the Nag Hammadi corpus, but that has only begun to undergo evaluation in terms of the study of biblical pseudepigrapha. Conversely, the contributions by Goff, Losekam, and Badalanova Geller all show that even the relatively well-known case of the reception of the watchers myth in Gnostic literature still has many insights to yield under careful investigation. Further research along these lines is also invited by recent efforts to read the Nag Hammadi texts not simply in terms of the history of Gnosticism, but the history of Christian (especially Coptic) apocryphal literature.³⁸

2.5 *Redeemer Figures*

Redeemer figures are a central topic in the Nag Hammadi literature. Christ plays a central role in the corpus, as do figures that are not obviously identified with the person of Jesus but may be related to him in some capacity (such as the female redeemers of the long version of *Apocryphon of John* and *First Thought in Three Forms*) or who may be avatars or incarnations of biblical

37 Two careful explorations of this direction can be found in Popović, “Apocalyptic Determinism,” 263–67; Najman, “Jewish Wisdom.” For an early suggestion of this trajectory (with respect to Nag Hammadi), see Nock, “Coptic Library,” 320.

38 See e.g. Lundhaug and Jenott, *Monastic Origins*, 7, 265–66, passim; Burns, “From the Gnostic Dialogues,” 369–75. Cf. now the ERC-funded project at the University of Oslo, *Storyworlds in Transition: Coptic Apocrypha in Changing Contexts in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods (APOCRYPHA)*.

figures (such as Seth).³⁹ Thanks to the Dead Sea Scrolls, we now have important new evidence concerning the ancient Jewish context out of which arose the messianism that is central to Christianity. Messianic expectation plays a role, although not necessarily a central one, in the sect associated with the Dead Sea. The *Community Rule* for example expresses the expectation for two messiahs, the messiah of Aaron and the messiah of Israel, a dual office in which two distinct figures, one priestly, one Davidic, are combined together as a pair (1QS IX, 11). The scrolls also illustrate that angels could play a messianic role in helping implement the eschatological salvation of the righteous. The archangel Michael, as the head of the heavenly host that destroys the forces of Belial, in the War Scroll is called “the Prince of all the Congregation” (1QM v, 1) which is clearly a messianic title elsewhere in the scrolls (4Q285 5 4), and Melchizedek destroys the lot of Belial according to 11QMelchizedek. Scholars now have a fuller sense of ancient Jewish messianism, its chief concerns and its variety. This can provide new context for understanding the utilization of these traditions in Nag Hammadi texts with regard to how they articulate the motif of redemption.

2.6 *Wisdom and Pedagogy*

While the wisdom genre has come under attack in recent years, it still has value as an etic category and moreover there are instructional and didactic texts from antiquity.⁴⁰ The Dead Sea Scrolls include instructional texts that have been classified as wisdom texts, such as 4QInstruction, and this has in part prompted the re-evaluation of the genre.⁴¹ There are also Nag Hammadi texts that have been usefully classified as sapiential, such as the *Teachings of Silvanus*. The composition encourages the addressed to study and be guided by reason. In keeping with the didactic spirit of the composition, *Silvanus* explicitly quotes the Wisdom of Solomon, showing engagement with an explicitly didactic text that was part of the scriptural tradition it inherited. As the essay by Lundhaug in this volume discusses, one new fruitful direction of scholarship examines *Silvanus* and other related texts such as the *Sentences of Sextus* as instructional writings within the context of Egyptian monasticism.⁴² The extensive evidence that is available for pedagogy and the cultural status

39 On the female savior-figures Pronoia and Protennoia in *Ap. John* and *First Thought*, see the contribution of Attridge in this volume. For Seth and his avatars in the Nag Hammadi and related texts, see Attridge's contribution, as well as Burns, *Apocalypse*, 78–86.

40 Kynes, *An Obituary*. See the rebuttal by Collins, “Wisdom as Genre.”

41 Goff, *Discerning Wisdom*.

42 On sapiential literature at Nag Hammadi in general, see also Burns, “Jewish Sapiential Traditions,” 413–20.

and roles of teachers and students, and the composition of texts specifically intended to promote learning, in late antiquity is extensive and this is by and large an under-utilized resource for scholars of Second Temple Judaism interested in these topics.

The personification of wisdom as a woman is an important trope in the Nag Hammadi corpus. This is an established motif in ancient Israelite and Jewish literature, perhaps best known from the book of Proverbs, where wisdom, reconfigured as a woman, urges people to love her and embrace a life characterized by study, ethics and righteousness. Proverbs 8 also depicts the figure of wisdom as giving eye-witness testimony to the divine creation of the natural order. This articulates the idea that God made the world with wisdom, as a way to understand the world as intelligible and having a coherent structure (Prov 3:19). This tradition is extensively appropriated and reconfigured in Nag Hammadi literature, with Sophia (wisdom) playing an important role in the cosmogonic teachings that are prevalent in this corpus.⁴³ She experiences a type of fall and is construed as the mother of the demiurge, giving a decidedly negative interpretation to the older association evident in Proverbs between personified wisdom and the cosmic order. The ancient Jewish testimony for the personification of wisdom as a woman, however, is not limited to Proverbs. There are extensive adaptations of this trope in Ben Sira and the Wisdom of Solomon. While not extensive, some new evidence for this tradition is now available in the Dead Sea Scrolls, in particular 4QBeatitudes.⁴⁴ This evidence opens up new opportunities to understand a Jewish tradition that Nag Hammadi texts clearly draw upon.

2.7 *Mysticism*

Before concluding one brief comment on mysticism is in order. While comparative scholarship that looks at issues pertaining to mysticism, such as heavenly ascents, remains a subject with much potential, there is of course already ongoing, important work on ancient Jewish and early Christian mysticism, some of which engages both the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Codices.⁴⁵ At the same time, much of this work is consumed with the key task of debating the contours and viability of the category of mysticism altogether. The study of ancient Jewish and Christian mysticisms, and the relationships between them,

43 The classic treatment remains MacRae, "Jewish Background." For an update, see Burns, "Jewish Sapiential Traditions," 420–25.

44 Goff, *Discerning Wisdom*, 198–229.

45 See, for example, DeConick, ed., *Paradise Now*; Davila, *Descenders to the Chariot*; Reed, "Categorization."

is vital and should continue, but we, the editors, preferred to set it aside at the conference out of which the current volume emerged, because a primary aim of the symposium was to explore new and different avenues of comparison.

The papers collected here will, we hope, stimulate further comparative work on both the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Codices, with respect to a wide variety of topics—including those that, as we have noted here, the present volume does not treat directly. For there are ample directions for comparativist scholarship that can make substantive contributions to the study of both of these very fascinating, and very ancient, corpora of texts.

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