

THE FIRST GENERATION OF MANICHÆANS AND OTHER COMMUNITIES IN THE EGYPTIAN DESERTS: METHODOLOGY, THE AVAILABLE EVIDENCE, AND CONCLUSIONS

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Abstract:

Three steps are necessary for a study of the presence of possible Manichæan influence on the first generation of monastic and eremitical life of what is commonly known as the Coptic Orthodox tradition, and to study the interactions of Manichæans with Coptic Orthodox, Origenists, Meletians and others:

- (1) Show the availability of Manichæan materials, teachers or communities, temporally, geographically and culturally, to the Egyptian desert communities and hermits. This would, in effect, be a Manichæan prosopography.
- (2) Show evidence of actual contacts between Manichæans, "Orthodox" Christian ascetics, and others.
- (3) Discover in the texts of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* (*The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*) evidence of Manichæan themes, images, etc. This would require distinguishing actual and verifiable Manichæan literature and theology from that claimed by heresiologists, without other substantiation.

The current study considers the evidence available for each of the areas above, and makes a judgment as to the probability of the thesis: The relationship of the Manichæans to the "Orthodox" appears to have been substantially different than that between the "Orthodox" and other groups. There is evidence of occasional cooperation between Coptic Orthodox, Meletian and Origenist ascetics, but as yet no evidence of a cooperative connection between Manichæans and these other groups, although emerging textual evidence from new finds will be helpful in seeking literary and spiritual connections in future research.

La Première Génération De Manichéens et Autres Communautés Dans les Déserts Egyptiens: Méthodes de Recherche, l'Evidence Disponible et les Conclusions

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Sommaire:

L'étude de la présence éventuelle d'une influence manichéenne sur la première génération de vie monastique et érémitique de ce que l'on appelle communément la tradition Copte Orthodoxe ainsi que l'étude des interactions entre les Manichéens et les Coptes Orthodoxes, Origenistes, Mélétiens et autres, demande trois étapes:

- (1) Montrer la présence d'écrits, de maîtres ou de communautés associées dans le temps, géographiquement et culturellement avec les communautés et les ermites du désert Egyptien. Ceci en effet serait une prosopographie Manichéenne.
- (2) Montrer l'évidence de contacts réels entre Manichéens, ascètes orthodoxes chrétiens et autres.
- (3) Découvrir dans les textes du *Apophthegmata Patrum* (*Les Paroles des Pères du Désert*) évidence des thèmes et des images Manichéennes. Ceci demanderait de faire la distinction précise et vérifiable entre la littérature et la théologie Manichéennes et ce que les partisans des hérésies supportent sans autre justification.

Cette étude considère l'évidence disponible dans chacun des thèmes ci-dessus et fait un jugement quant a

la probabilité de la thèse suivante : les rapports entre les Manichéens et les “Orthodoxes” semblent être très différents des rapports entre les “Orthodoxes” et d’autres groupes. Il existe des preuves de coopération occasionnelle entre les Manichéens et ces autres groupes, bien que de nouvelles recherches en matière de textes doivent être entamées dans le futur pour prouver les connections, tant littéraires que spirituelles.

La Primera Generación de Maniqueos y Otras Comunidades en los Desiertos Egipcios: Metodología, la Existente Evidencia, y Conclusiones

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Resumen:

Se requieren tres pasos para estudiar la presencia de la posible influencia Maniquea sobre la primera generación de la vida monástica y eremita de la que es comúnmente conocida como la tradición Coptica Ortodoxa, y para estudiar las interacciones de los Maniqueos con los Copticos Ortodoxos, los Origenistas, los Melesianos y otros:

- (1) Mostrar la accesibilidad - temporal, geográfica y cultural - de maestros, de comunidades, o de materiales Maniqueos para las comunidades desérticas de Egipto y para los ermitaños. Ésto en efecto sería una prosopografía Maniquea.
- (2) Mostrar evidencia de actuales contactos entre los Maniqueos, los Cristianos “Ortodoxos” ascéticos y otros.
- (3) Descubrir en los textos de la *Apophthegmata Patrum* (*Los Aforismos de los Padres del Desierto*) evidencias Maniqueas de temas, imágenes, etc.. Esto requeriría la actual y verificable distinción entre la literatura y la teología Maniquea y lo que dicen los heresiólogos, sin ninguna otra substantación.

El artículo considera la evidencia disponible para cada una de las áreas indicadas, y expone una opinión sobre la probabilidad de la tesis. La relación de los Maniqueos a los “Ortodoxos” parece haber sido substancialmente diferente a la de aquella entre los “Ortodoxos” y otros grupos. Hay evidencia de cooperación ocasional entre los Ortodoxos Copticos, los Melesianos y los ascéticos Origenistas, pero aun no existe evidencia de una conexión cooperativa entre los Maniqueos y estos otros grupos, aun cuando una emergente evidencia textual de nuevos descubrimientos será de ayuda en la búsqueda de conexiones literarias y espirituales en futuras investigaciones.

A Primeira Geração de Maniqueus e de Outras Comunidades nos Desertos Egipcios: Metodologia, a Evidência Disponível, e Conclusões

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Sumário:

Três etapas são necessárias para um estudo da presença da possível influência Maniqueia na primeira geração da vida monástica e eremítica, a qual é geralmente conhecida como a tradição Coptica ortodoxa, e para o estudo das interações dos Maniqueus com os coptico ortodoxos, Origenistas, Melecianos e outros:

- (1) mostrar a disponibilidade dos materiais Maniqueus, professores ou comunidades, temporal,

cultural e geogràficamente, para os eremitas e comunidades do deserto egipcio. Isto, de fato, seria uma prosopografia Maniqueia.

(2) mostrar a evidência de contatos reais entre Maniqueus, Asceticos Cristãos "Ortodoxos", e outros.

(3) descobrir nos textos de *Apophthegmata Patrum (os provérbios dos pais do deserto)* a evidência de temas, imagens, etc. dos Maniqueus. Isto requereria a real distinção e verificação da literatura e teologia Maniqueia do que aqueles reivindicados por heresiologistas, sem outra constatação.

O estudo atual considera a evidência disponível para cada uma das áreas acima, e faz um julgamento a respeito da probabilidade da tese: O relacionamento dos Maniqueus com os "Ortodoxos" parece ter sido substancialmente diferente daquele entre os "Ortodoxos" e outros grupos. Há uma evidência da cooperação ocasional entre coptico ortodoxos, Melecianos e dos asceticos Origenistas, mas ainda não ha evidência de uma conexão cooperativa entre Maniqueus e estes outros grupos, embora a evidência textual emergente dos novos descobrimentos seja útil em procurar conexões literárias e espirituais na pesquisa futura.

Die Erste Generation Der Manichæer und Anderer Gemeinden in Den Aegyptischen Wuesten: Methodik, Das Verfügbare Beweismaterial, und Schlussfolgerungen

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Uebersicht:

Eine Untersuchung des Vorhandenseins eines moeglichen manechæistischen Einflusses in der ersten Generation des kloesterlichen und eremitischen Lebens der sogenannten koptischen orthodoxen Tradition und der Wechselwirkung der Manichæer mit koptisch Orthodoxen, Origenisten, Meletianern und Anderen, muss in drei Stufen geschehen:

- (1) Darlegung der Verfügbbarkeit des manichæischen Beweismaterials, der Lehrer oder Gemeinden; zeitlich, oertlich geographisch und kultuerell mit Bezug auf aegyptische Wuestengemeinden und Eremiten. Dies wuerde, sozusagen, eine manichæische Prosopography.
- (2) Darlegung des Beweismaterials tatsaechlicher Kontakte zwischen Manichæern, „orthodoxen“ christlichen Asketen und Anderen.
- (3) Entdeckung in den Texten der *Apophthegmata Patrum (The Sprueche der Wuestenvaeter)*, Beweismaterial manichæischer Themen, Abbildungen etc. Dies wuerde ein Unterscheiden voraussetzen von tatsaechlicher und beweisbarer manichæischer Literatur und Theologie, und Solcher die nur aus den Aussagen von Herisiologen besteht, und daher nicht als ueberzeugend gelten kann.

Die vorliegende Untersuchung zieht alle der oben beschriebenen, vorhandenen Beweismaterialien in Betracht und beurteilt die Wahrscheinlichkeit der folgenden These: Die Beziehungen der Manichæer zu den „Orthodoxen“ scheint im grossen Masse anders gewesen zu sein als die Beziehung der „Orthodoxen“ zu anderen Gruppen. Es giebt Anhaltspunkte fuer gelegentliche Zusammenarbeit zwischen Koptisch-Orthodoxen, Meletianischen und Origenistischen Asketen, doch gibt es bis heute noch kein Beweismaterial eines kooperativen Zusammenhangs zwischen Manechæern und anderen Gruppen. Dennoch duerften Ergebnisse neuer Forschungen zu weiteren literarischen und spirituellen Zusammenhaengen fuehren.

THE FIRST GENERATION OF MANICHÆANS AND OTHER COMMUNITIES IN THE EGYPTIAN DESERTS: METHODOLOGY, THE AVAILABLE EVIDENCE, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction and Background

What would be necessary for a study of the presence of possible Manichæan influence on the first generation of Monastic and Eremitical life of what is commonly known as the *Coptic Orthodox* tradition? It seems that three steps are necessary to demonstrate the possible connections¹:

(1) Show the availability of Manichæan materials, teachers or communities, temporally, geographically and culturally, to the Egyptian desert Communities and Hermits. This would, in effect, be a Manichæan prosopography.

(2) Show evidence of actual contacts between Manichæans and “Orthodox” Christian ascetics.

(3) Discover in the texts of the *Apophthegmata* evidence of Manichæan themes, images, etc. This would require distinguishing actual and verifiable Manichæan literature and theology from that claimed by heresiologists, without other substantiation.

The current study will consider the evidence available for each of the areas above, update those studies, and make a judgment as to the probability of the thesis.

Methodological Considerations in studying Manichæism

As in any study of materials, peoples and cultures so distant from our own in time (and in some cases, space), particular care must be taken to avoid eisegesis (reading into the text) and any form of anachronism or retrojection. In the case of Manichæism, this danger is ever present, since, until relatively recently, we have relied heavily upon the judgments of ancient heresiologists and anti-Manichæan polemics for our understanding and identification of the doctrines of the followers of Mani.²

The history of scholarly judgments and approaches to Manichæism is related to the history of modern (19th through 21st Century) views on the relationship of the various communities or schools of early Christianity to one another, and to subsequent Christianity.

Overall, the Historical-Critical method has been widely accepted in textual (*e.g.* Biblical) analysis for most of the 19th - 21st Centuries, but many “extra-academic” factors have influenced the ways in which the findings of the Historical-Critical method have been interpreted and used.

The “Confessional” approach, whether consciously or unconsciously polemic, sought to buttress the claims of one religious body in opposition to those of other groups. Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox³, Catholics, Reformed Christians, and others have all employed this approach from time to time, all using the same scientifically gathered and analyzed data, but interpreted according to denominational standards.

Academic Church historians began attempting to apply the “objective” Historical-Critical method that had been used successfully in literary and scripture studies, hoping to achieve a “higher viewpoint.”⁴ Nonetheless, extra-scholarly beliefs, etc. still made themselves felt. The

interpretation of Athanasius of Alexandria, and indeed of the whole of the “Orthodox” party of ancient Christianity, underwent a considerable change with the seminal work of Walter Bauer in the 1930s, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*. Bauer argues forcefully that the received traditional picture of an Orthodox “Ur-Christianity” beset by diabolically inspired heresies is an inaccurate and confessionally-biased view of the reality of the first several centuries of the Christian era. Ultimately this view, he contends, is a creation of Rome, which finds political and religious advantage in such a stance.⁵

Deconstructionists and other scholars today might see in Bauer’s thesis itself a hint of confessionality (or at least trace some of the motivations for his viewpoint) in his Evangelical Protestant Christianity, since the Reformation was at odds with Roman Catholicism on several fronts. Nevertheless, the *Bauer-thesis* had profound effects in the scholarship of the following decades. His lively defense of the “heretics” as “other forms of early Christianity” was the inspiration for much of the rethinking in historical theology of the early period throughout the 20th Century. Indeed, this approach is not new: for example, some Baptist Christians, as well as Unitarian Universalists officially trace their history back to persecuted individuals and groups in the first centuries of Christianity. Other mystical, esoteric and fraternal groups have established their historical lineage in an analogous fashion.

Coupled with the trend toward the emergence in the late 20th Century of many groups previously excluded from significant societal power in western society (e.g. Women, non-Europeans, et al.), this re-evaluation was both scholarly and culturally popular, and it bore much good fruit. Apostolic, Sub-Apostolic and “Patristic” era texts were reexamined with the tools of literary analysis (historical-critical, genre-critical, etc.) as well as those of archæology, and the social sciences. The view that late antiquity was a rich and complex world into which many differing interpretations of Christ and the Christian message flourished, is by now well established.

This scholarly understanding of the diversity of understandings of Christ and his mission contrasts rather sharply with the trend in North American popular culture during the second half of the 20th Century and the beginning of the 21st. Increasingly rigid orthodoxies in literature, film and preaching popularize approaches to both Christology and Church history which do not seem to accept the evolutionary nature of ecclesial life and doctrine, or its early and foundational diversity.⁶ The phenomenon of fundamentalism is now receiving increased academic attention, using the tools of textual analysis, anthropology, sociology and history of religions.⁷

In the process of this 70-year re-evaluation since Walter Bauer, several significant things have emerged. Hagiographic figures such as Cyril and Athanasius of Alexandria have been re-assessed as political and cultural leaders as well as Churchmen. Since “Saints” were associated with “Orthodoxy,” it was common (as in the case of these two Alexandrian Popes) that the political motivations of early figures were seen as “tarnishing their halos.”

In the most careful academic circles, Church-History data are now analyzed with the same rigor as non-ecclesiastical materials (by analogy with modern literary and scriptural studies). This has led to a clearer picture of the first four centuries of the Christian era, in which indeed many versions of Christian belief and practice competed in the marketplace of Mediterranean religions.⁸

By the early 21st Century, however, the very Historical-Critical methods Bauer employs,

of using all the literary and social science tools available to analyze early Christianity, have resulted in yet another re-thinking of his thesis. If “Orthodoxy” (or “the vector toward Orthodoxy”) was indeed just one of a number of competing versions of Christianity, how did it win out?

At first, the culturally based presumption that triumphant “Orthodoxy” must have been the party favored by the Rome-Constantinople Imperial government is one possibility. Groups with governmental and military power backing often win. Indeed, some have argued for this position during the 20th Century, and it is fairly widely accepted.

Yet the same careful analysis of politics, sociology, etc. which Bauer began, influenced by the natural sciences, makes it clear that the Roman-Byzantine government often backed the “un-Orthodox” side, and that the Arians, Monothelites and other “heretical” parties often held the majority political and military power in the Empire, at least for a time.

The Egyptian world offers an excellent example in Athanasius. Outnumbered and persecuted, his anti-Arian Trinitarian theological viewpoint eventually won the day. The emergence of “The Orthodox Tradition” (which nowadays, even in western textbooks, includes the ancient Eastern Christian Traditions — both inside the Roman-Byzantine Empire and external to it) is still a bit of a puzzle, but at least is no longer understood as a facile triumph of a government-military-religious complex.

While it may be true that forms of Church-State interaction eventually dominate much of subsequent Christian history, in these formative stages, the outcome of each controversy does not seem to be solely dependent on political and military strategies and influence. No clear conclusions are yet available to early 21st Century scholars.

The investigation of the emergence of “Orthodoxy” must employ textual criticism (linguistic, paleographic, etc), the social sciences, prosopography, demographics, and several kinds of hermeneutics. Of these fields, prosopography and hermeneutics have recently come to the fore as important tools.⁹

The prosopographical work that François Decret has done for Roman North Africa in the 4th and 5th Centuries gives a good idea of the necessary methodology for Roman Egypt. In *L’Afrique Manichéenne*¹⁰ he lays out the origins of Manichæans in Africa, their possible communities, a prosopography of known followers of Mani, and the anti-Manichæan polemic of Augustine and others, together with a doctrinal analysis.

This last is particularly vital. In their attempt to be scientific, Church historians can never lose touch with the fact that the theology of each group and period must be taken seriously as important to and understanding of their history. To disregard one of the most important sources of data (theological discourse and reflections of the time and culture) would be unscientific. Another excellent example of this kind of scholarship is the 1992 discussion of the origins of Christianity in the Syriac city of Edessa by Samuel H. Moffett.¹¹

Manichæism therefore, and the communities of its faith, cannot be considered solely in opposition to a putative “Orthodox” mainline group, but in their own right. Indeed, reading the letters and prayers in the most recently translated materials from Kellis,¹² a modern Christian would find little to disturb him or her. It is primarily that certain “keywords” or concepts have been tagged as typically Manichæan that reveals the texts as anything other than what is today considered mainstream.

Although considerable work had been done in the past regarding Manichæism, its beliefs, structure and origins, it is more evident recently, with the discovery of more and more Manichæan Literature¹³, particularly the new Codices unearthed at Kellis in 1991-1993 and subsequently,¹⁴ that a clearer understanding of its place in late antiquity is emerging. Three of these finds, the Kellis materials (1990 - 2004), the Medinet Madi codices (1930), and the Cologne Mani-Codex (deciphered in 1969), come from Egypt.¹⁵ James Goehring, from 1994 to the present, has collated studies from several disciplines to argue persuasively for the complexity of the Manichæan reality, especially in relation to other spiritual trends and developments in 4th Century Egypt.¹⁶

The Kellis finds, in the Dakhleh Oasis in Egypt are of particular interest for the study of Christian culture in Egypt during its first three centuries, since the city was abandoned in the late 4th century and never resettled.¹⁷ This makes it a kind of “time capsule” which has already yielded valuable evidence of the variety and distinctiveness of Christian and other group practices during these vital and formative centuries. Three Christian Churches have been excavated at Kellis so far.¹⁸ Monash University in Australia heads and manages this excavation, providing tremendous benefit to continuing research in this area.¹⁹

For a Methodology, therefore, we must distance ourselves from an ideological framework of “Orthodox” Christian Monks being contaminated by “non-Christians” or “Heretics,” among Manichæan (or Meletian, Origenist or other) groups and consider these as competing – perhaps even complimentary – forms of Christian variety.

The Manichæan Community

Rather than seeing themselves as a rival religion to Christianity, Manichæans may well have understood themselves to be the “true” Christians.²⁰ Thus what had previously seemed to be a conflict of religions (and is still understood as that by some²¹), now appears as a struggle within the larger religious movement of the many approaches to Christianity available in the third and fourth centuries.²²

Even Ephrem the Syrian notes this confusion (or, perhaps for us, similarity). The persecutions that occurred ca. 287 CE in the Sassanian Empire of the Middle East treated “Manichees” and “Christians” in a similar fashion.²³ Ephrem remarks that Marcion had already divided the sheep of Christ, and that Mani only robbed the robber!²⁴

Formerly seen as a Persian religious movement, perhaps primarily because scholars tended to read Diocletian’s edict uncritically (“We have heard that [the Manichæans] have very recently advanced or introduced anew unexpected monstrosities into this world from the Persian race that is hostile to us...”),²⁵ Manichæism has finally been accepted today as primarily a product of the Syriac Edessa region of Osrhœne and the Sassanian province of Asorestan.²⁶

This placed Mani and the beginnings of his movement within the early Christian religious milieu on the borderland between the Persian and Roman Empires. Such a location held both promise and problem for an approach that consciously attempted to present itself as a universal religion.²⁷ “East had been East, and West had been West; and only in Mani had the twain met.”²⁸ Not at the heart of either great Empire, he and his followers could claim universality; yet, they could also be accused of “foreignness,” as the rescript of Diocletian demonstrates.

From the Syriac-speaking areas, as befits a missionary movement sent out by “an Apostle of Jesus Christ,” as Mani called himself, this religious movement spread after Mani’s death (276 CE) to much of the Roman Empire, including Egypt.²⁹ Like other Judæo-Christian related groups, they were able to bridge the gap between Osrhoëne (*quondam* Roman *quondam* Persian), and the Roman *Oriens*.³⁰

In any case, we know that Manichæan communities existed in Egypt by the fourth century CE at the latest, and most probably by the end of the third. The liturgical codex found at Kellis was “submerged in sand” by the end of the fourth century.³¹ We can place the first Egyptian Manichæans earlier than that, however, perhaps as early as 260 CE. The Alexandrian Christian establishment was worried enough to issue a warning about them during the late third/early fourth century,³² and of course, Diocletian’s rescript to the Proconsul Julian places them in neighboring Africa by 297-302 CE.

If indeed, a Manichæan *kloster*³³ existed in Egypt in or about 260 CE, it would mean that this community pre-existed the rise of the classical eremitical monastic movement by some 45 years (Antony having retreated to the desert ca. 305 CE).³⁴

Desert Monasticism

The Fathers and Mothers of the Desert have been studied extensively for their literary and spiritual message. The various collections of the *Apophthegmata* (*Sayings*) are available widely,³⁵ and even their hermeneutical style of Scriptural interpretation is being re-evaluated and appreciated today, most recently by Burton-Christie’s work.³⁶

Nonetheless, it is becoming evident that the earlier studies of desert monasticism are in need of renewed scrutiny, especially in regard to their verifiable historical value. First,

“... analysis of the traditional literary sources has increasingly called into question their value as descriptive documents of actual historical events. While the degree nature of the history preserved in these sources remains a subject of debate, there can be little doubt that the authors and compilers of this literature were fashioning their subjects as saints. The literature has rhetorical and ideological purpose.”³⁷

As Goehring then goes on to note,³⁸ this complicates the use of these literary texts in the study of this history. It does not mean, however that works such as the *Apophthegmata* or Athanasius’ *Life of Anthony* are irrelevant to historical study. Rather, it is the sober acknowledgment that these sources say as much or more about the times, circumstances, purposes, etc. of the persons who crafted them as they do about their subject matter.³⁹ Indeed, the same is true of history written today. Contrast the differences in studies of Communism written in the United States today with those penned during Senator McCarthy’s “red-baiting” spree.

It should be mentioned that although the majority of current scholarship is of this opinion, Graham Gould is a vocal proponent of the older reliance on the more straightforward historical value of the literary texts.⁴⁰ Thus, the debate continues.

Second, the Fourth-Century Egyptian landscape is no longer seen as a battleground

between competing, well-defined sects, but rather a cultural setting in which a wide range of alternative approaches to ascetical life interacted with, and influenced, one another.⁴¹ The presence of very early communities of women ascetics,⁴² ascetic settings within the Cities,⁴³ Melitian finds⁴⁴ all underscore this. In particular, Manichæan communities are now known to have co-existed with other groups,⁴⁵ and to have intermingled with ascetic Communities that would later be claimed as “Orthodox,” even being cited as a formative influence in the development of coenobitic monasticism⁴⁶.

This was possible because members of the various groups were meeting as ascetics, not as theologians or politicians. Although outside power-groups (e.g. Alexandrian factions) and although contemporary (and particularly later) writers may have differentiated the sects into Melitian, Manichæan, Orthodox, etc., these distinctions apparently did not stop the local individuals from mingling and interacting.⁴⁷

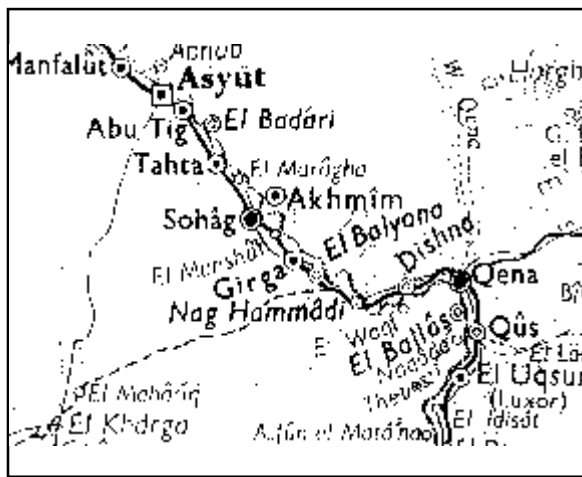


Fig 1: Location of Nag Hammadi

In the world of 4th Century Egypt, there were many currents of religious thought available to those seeking wisdom and the ascetical life. Oldest of these were the pre-Christian Hermetic schools and teaching. Garth Fowden’s study of Egyptian Hermeticism explores in depth this tradition that combines ancient Egyptian teachings, Hellenistic philosophy, and mystery-school revelations.⁴⁸ Although the Hermetic tradition had affinities with emerging Gnosticism, it retained a sufficiently separate existence: “It would be a mistake, then, to imagine that Christian

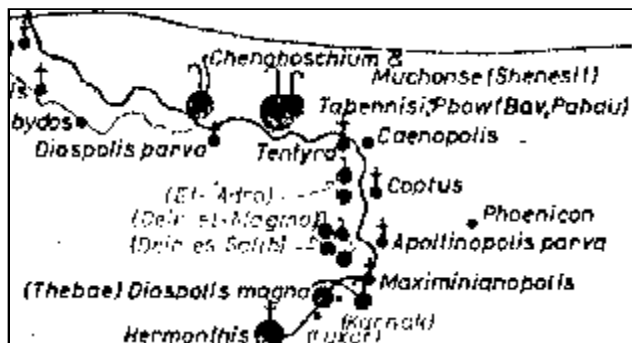


Fig 2: Chenoboschium, where Nag Hammadi Library was unearthed.

Gnosticism either substantially influenced Hermeticism, or can be used to illuminate it, except by way of general analogy.”⁴⁹

Secondly, an approach to the mysteries of Christ appeared in the phenomena we group together under the title “Gnosticism” or sometimes “Christian Gnosticism.” Gnostic teachings and texts were certainly present in 4th century Egypt, but “Gnosticism” as a unified, definable religion is problematic: “The literature on Gnosticism is abundant, but its history still obscure: Gnostic texts being devoid of

historical information.”⁵⁰ Michael Allen Williams’ work argues persuasively that the entire category of “Gnosticism” must be rethought or even discarded as a useful paradigm.⁵¹

It has been previously argued that the library of materials recovered at Nag Hammadi are sufficiently diverse and contradictory as to virtually rule out their being the Scriptures of a

unified sect.⁵² It may well be that the diversity and widespread diffusion of Gnostic and Hermetic ideas, cells, texts, etc. was an important factor influencing other spiritual movements in the 1st through 5th century Coptic world. The putative, highly disputed, location of the Nag Hammadi texts (see Figure 1)⁵³ in a Pachomian Monastery (see Figure 2)⁵⁴ would be strong evidence of this, if it is ever definitively established.⁵⁵ This would accord with Williams' argument that the Nag Hammadi Library is precisely a catechetical tool of an Egyptian Christian Monastery, who saw nothing un-Christian in these varying works.⁵⁶ Even without such proof, however, the eclectic nature of the Nag Hammadi Library is in itself a useful and informative datum:

“More decisive than this philosophical and religious affinity is, however, the evidence they give for the syncretistic setting in philosophy and religion that prevailed in Egypt in the third and fourth centuries. The combination in the Nag Hammadi library of texts gathered from Plato, the Hermetic corpus, Syrian encratism, Gnostic sects, and the Alexandrian theological school in the early fourth century, is impressive.”⁵⁷

As we have seen, Williams uses these data together to suggest that a paleographic analysis of the Nag Hammadi texts, and a comparison with other contemporary Christian collections (including the New Testament) demonstrates that the Nag Hammadi Library was used by a community of “Christian Gnostics” who combined elements of Hellenistic, Coptic, Hermetic and Gnostic scriptures in a clear and rational didactic plan.⁵⁸

Thirdly, using commonly accepted names, the Christ-related schools that are more easily definable were Orthodox, Meletians, Origenists and Manichæans. Meletians were primarily a group based in Alexandrine ecclesiastic politics, and had few theological or ascetical divergences from Orthodox or Origenist groups, followers of Meletius of Lycopolis. Origenists are also closely tied to mainstream Alexandrine Christianity, diverging primarily on the interpretations of the work of the great exegete and teacher Origen.

As we have seen, Goehring has convincingly shown that ascetics from these three groups associated with each other, sometimes lived in relative harmony with each other, and even, on occasion, shared coenobitic communities during the Egyptian period in question. Those findings are significant, especially since they have been established with solid textual, archival and archeological evidence.⁵⁹

The objective nature of the evidence is particularly important in validating such revisionist investigations, no matter how attractive their conclusions may be. The late 20th / early 21st century *zeitgeist* common among academically progressive, enlightened religious scholars, which has contributed so much to these studies, might well find the evidence of religiously diverse ancient ascetics living and praying together in harmony quite appealing. In a period of history when reactionary forces strive to polarize populations on the basis of religious and cultural beliefs, such examples may well be sought.

Nonetheless, any theory proposing such interaction must be established by providing hard evidence. Evidence of previous generations demonstrates how easily contemporary socio-political and religious viewpoints may influence our interpretation of the past. Indeed, it is now widely assumed that the very texts we are studying, the *Apophthegmata Patrum* and others, were successively edited to portray the desert ascetics as hagiographical models of piety acceptable to the prevailing Orthodoxy of the period.⁶⁰

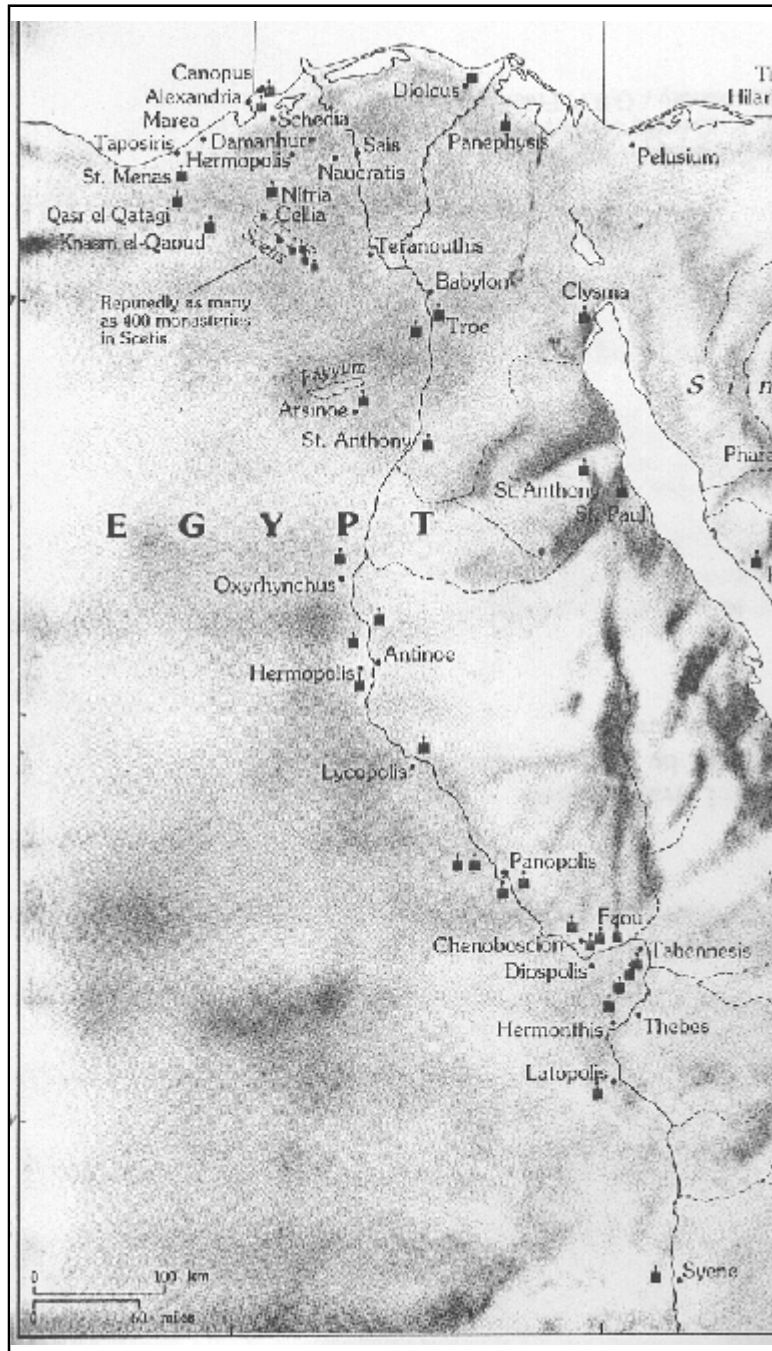


Fig 3: 3rd- 4th century Egyptian Monasteries

various collections was not history in the modern sense, but spiritual edification.

The work that François Decret has done for Roman Africa in the 4th and 5th Centuries gives a good idea of what needs to be covered by scholars for Roman Egypt. In *L'Afrique*

In assessing the case of the Manichæans, we can begin with the following positive affirmations, as we have seen above: (1) A generally eclectic, diverse religious culture existed in Egypt of the 4th century, having many texts and teaching groups available to the seeker. (2) Concrete examples can be found of Origenist and Melitian monks occasionally living in the same coenobitic settings as Orthodox ascetics, or sometimes nearby, in relative peace.⁶¹ On the basis of these two data, we can assume that *it would not be logically or culturally impossible* that Orthodox and Manichæans *might* also have enjoyed such association.

Nonetheless, we must also bear in mind the strong caution to avoid projecting a late 20th / early 21st century ecumenical “wish-list” onto the 4th century Coptic world. Specifically, what can we say about Orthodox and Manichæans in this environment?

A Manichæan Prosopography for 3rd-4th Century Egypt

In general, we know the locations of many of the major Orthodox monastic settlements along the Nile and in the Egyptian desert (see figure 3).⁶² In connection with the monastics represented in the *Apophthegmata*, however, we have less information about specific locations, since the purpose of the

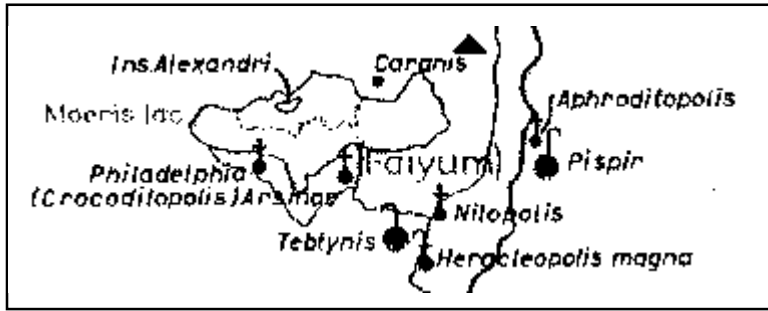


Fig 4: Fayyum

section of the Continent.

Following his inspiration, therefore, let us examine the earliest evidence available about Manichæan presence in Egypt in the mid-3rd to mid-4th Centuries (i.e. the first generation of

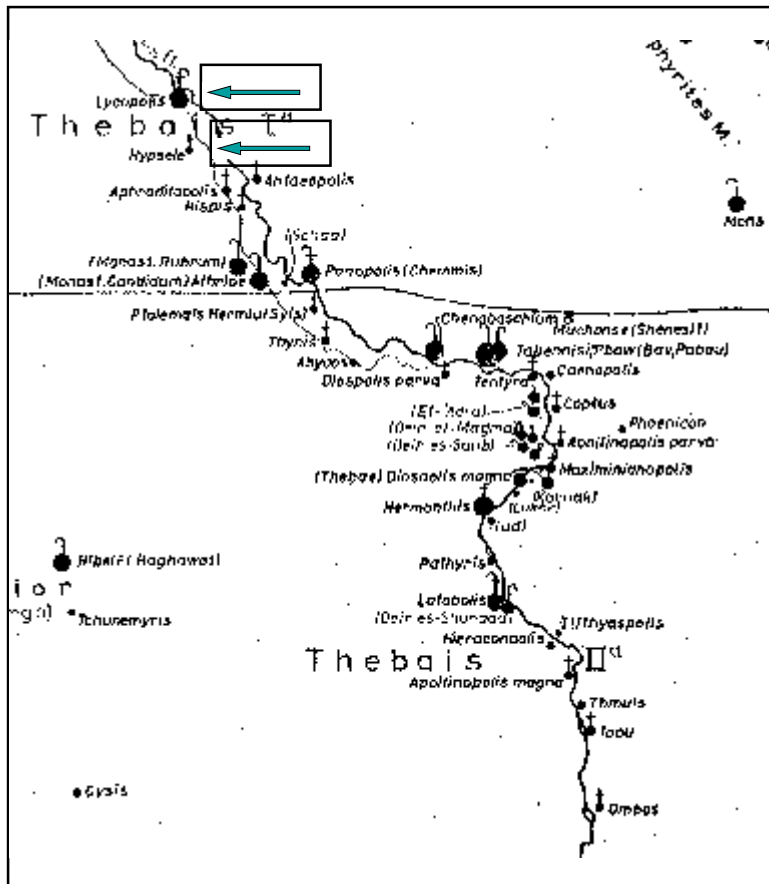


Fig 5: Lycopolis and Hypsele in the Thebaid (top)

Middle-Iranian Fragment, Adda, sent by Mani to Egypt, is said to have "...founded several

*Manichéenne*⁶³ he lays out the origins of Manichæans in Latin North Africa, their possible communities, a prosopography of known followers of Mani, and the anti-Manichæan polemic of Augustine and others, together with a doctrinal analysis.

Although touching from time to time on matters concerning Egypt, his focus is clearly on the Western

Egyptian Manichæan life), and correlate it with the available geographic settings. The first pieces of evidence point to the 260s as beginning of the Manichæan mission in Egypt. In the Medinet Madi codices discovered in the Fayyum (Figure 4)⁶⁴, several pieces are written in Coptic⁶⁵ (sub-Akhminic and Lycopolitan dialects⁶⁶), but the "psalm book"⁶⁷ was probably originally a translation from Syriac,⁶⁸ and Syriac fragments were found along with the Coptic materials.⁶⁹ Further, many Coptic Christian stories echo what is happening in Antioch ca. 260.⁷⁰ All these argue for an early date, if the materials have already had time to be translated and assimilated from Syriac to Coptic dialects.

G. Stroumsa argues for a date in the mid-to-late 200s, perhaps 270, for the establishment of a *Mani-kloster* in or near Alexandria.⁷¹ In a

monasteries, chosen numerous elect and hearers (auditors)...and the religion of the Apostle was advanced (put forward) in the Roman Empire.”⁷²

The *Acta Archelai*, whose historical value is perhaps limited⁷³ does testify that the foundation of the dualist heresy in Egypt was due to a certain (legendary) Scythianos, who began a Mani-Community in the (upper) Thebaïd (Figure 5)⁷⁴, whence his wife came.⁷⁵ The date of this Anti-Manichæan composition has traditionally been placed during the first half of the 4th Century because (1) *homoousios* is used by Archelaus,⁷⁶ and (2) Cyril of Jerusalem quotes an argument in the text from memory in 348.⁷⁷

Epiphanius, more precisely (if more accurately, we cannot say on his reputation alone) places this Mani-Foundation at Hypsele, 7 km south of Lycopolis, the location of modern-day Assiut (Asjut) (See Figure 5).⁷⁸

First, as we have seen, even though the Medinet-Madi collection was unearthed in the Fayyum (in Arcadia-Heptanomis), some considerable distance north of Lycopolis, the Manichæan materials are written in the Coptic dialects prevalent in the Lycopolis-Hypsele region, Sub-Akhmimic and Lycopolitan.⁷⁹

Second, it is probable that the Cologne Mani-Codex also originates from Lycopolis.⁸⁰ Finally, it is from that same region that we hear one of the earliest anti-Manichæan voices: Alexander of Lycopolis. Alexander’s treatise is variously dated from the end of the 3rd to the beginning of the 4th Centuries, but may well be earlier than Diocletian’s edict, as early as 297 CE.⁸¹ This places his experience of Manichæism near the earliest possible dates for the beginning of the Community, and in the geographic region suggested by the *Acta Archelai* and Epiphanius for this first Manichæan *Kloster*.

Alexander himself, aside from his philosophical analysis, makes some interesting points for the historian’s consideration. He begins his critique by mentioning Christian philosophy, with its strong and weak points. Although he finds Christianity philosophically naïve, he is nonetheless favorable to the ethical virtues in Christian preaching: “Ordinary people listen to these precepts and, as you can see with your own eyes, make great progress in virtue...”⁸²

Sadly, however, from Alexander’s point of view, things had gotten more complex for Christians recently: “Since this simple philosophy has been split up into numerous factions by its later adherents...some of [these men], in the long run, became leaders of sects.”⁸³ This view supports the contention that Manichæism was a “sect” of Christians, not a separate religion, at

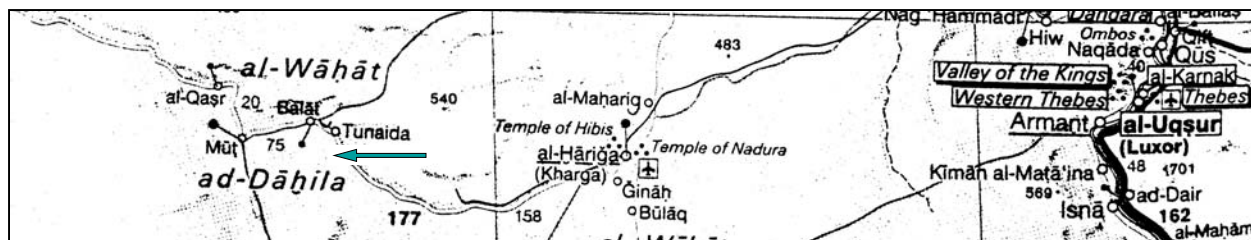


Figure 6: Arrow shows approximate location of Ismant (Kellis) in Dakhleh Oasis

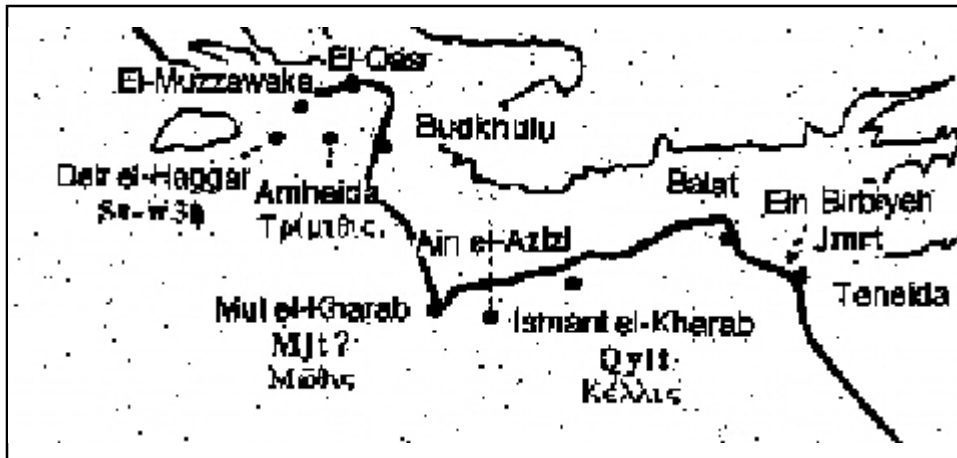


Fig 7: Detail of Dakhleh Oasis & Ismant (Kellis).

least as viewed by a Neo-Platonist. Further, the Manichæan teaching is “recently come to the fore,” in the Upper Thebaïd.⁸⁴ All of this supports the contention that the Lycopolis-Hypsele region is a very likely spot for an early (if not the

first) Mani-Kloster in Egypt.

Alexander names Papos and Thomas as the first Manichæan missionaries he knows of in the area of Lycopolis.⁸⁵ Many attempts have been made to identify these disciples of Mani. Papos has been identified variously with the Paapi abjured in a later Greek heresiological formula,⁸⁶ and with Adda, since Papos is named as the first disciple.⁸⁷ Thomas is mentioned in the *Acta Archelai* (“And Thomas wanted to occupy certain parts of Egypt...”).⁸⁸ More recently, a connection has been made with the *Psalms of Thomas* as well.⁸⁹

Naturally, as with so many stories connected to Edessa and the East Syriac tradition, the name Thomas recurs, and is sometimes reflects a conflation of the Apostle Thomas, Adda (or Addai) and even the Apostle Jude Thaddæus in both Manichæan and other Christian contexts. The discussion of the identity of Papos and Thomas mentioned in Alexander is still inconclusive.⁹⁰

M. Tardieu conjectures that the earliest Manichæan missionaries, Adda and Patteg, arrived with Zenobia’s troops ca. 270.⁹¹ Although this supposition cannot yet be proven, the

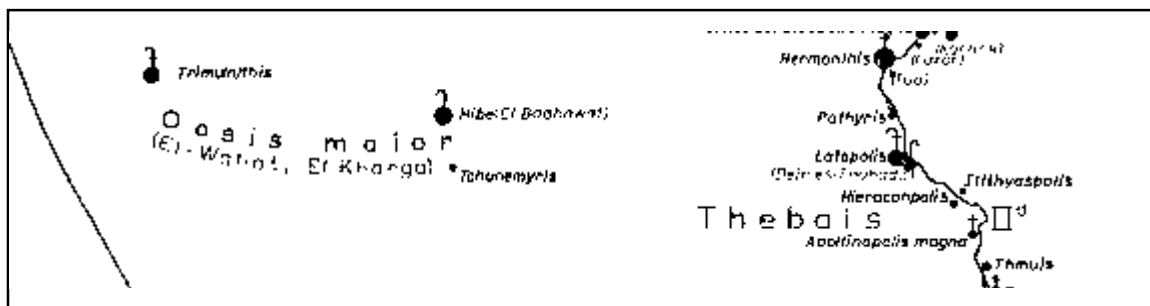


Fig 8: Dakhleh Area

Aramaic nature of the Coptic texts in the Cologne Mani-Codex argues strongly for the Syriac connection.⁹²

The newly discovered Kellis documents may also bolster the position of Lycopolis as an early center of Mani-missions. Ancient Kellis is in the Dakhleh Oasis, at modern-day Ismant el-

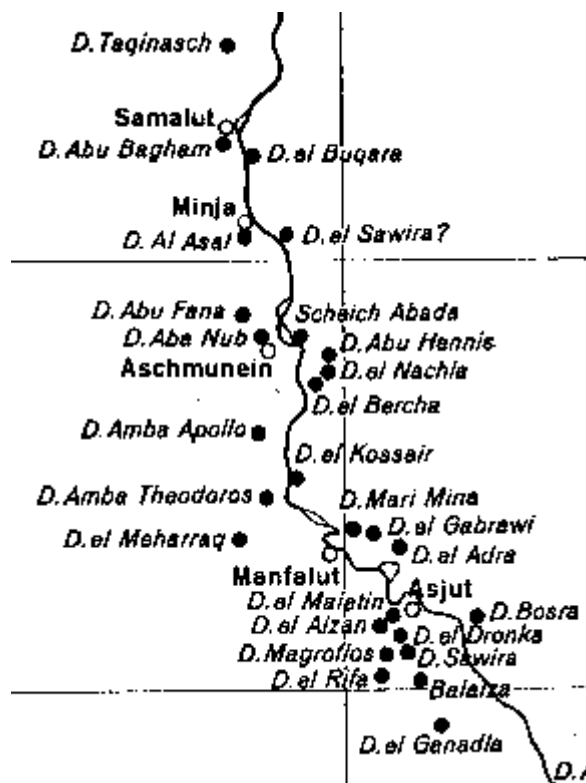


Fig 9: Coptic Monastic life near Lycopolis (Asjut) 4th to 9th Centuries.

original, or at least an early, missionary station and Mani-Kloster for Egypt, they would have had ample opportunity to mix with men and women who were contemplating eremitical or cœnobitic life. Not only that, but the Manichæan teachings would have been in circulation for at least a generation before Antony's retreat to the desert, and even longer before Pachomios' foundations in the mid-4th Century.

The next step in an exhaustive analysis of this prosopography is to identify written materials from the monastic sites near Lycopolis and Thebes, match them to the known occupants of Orthodox hermitages and cœnobia of the putative Manichæan areas of influence, and then search for Manichæan encounters (goal 2) and/or influences (goal 3). At present, no such absolutely clear examples exist, as they do for the Meletians and Origenists, as seen above.

We do, however, have at least three "encounters" mentioned explicitly in the desert literature. The first is in Amma Theodora's section of the *Alphabetic Collection of the Apophthegmata*. She reports the following conversation: "A Christian discussing the body with a Manichæan expressed himself in these words, 'Give the body discipline, and you will see that the body is for him who made it.'"⁹⁷

Kharab. Kellis is at approximately the same latitude as Thebes (Luxor) in the lower Thebaïd, but far to the West in the Dakhleh Oasis, 800 km SSW of Cairo (Figure 6&7)⁹³.

The evidence suggests that the houses in which the materials were found were occupied during the late 3rd Century to the 380s. Several of the texts are written in dialects that have close affinity with Sub-Akhmimic, a dialect of the Lycopolis region, also found in the Medinet Madi codices.⁹⁴

Thus all three major Manichæan textual finds in Egypt have at least some of their materials in the Coptic dialects of the Thebaïd, although their discovery-locations have been widely separated. Preliminary evidence from the Kellis finds include a bi-lingual board with text in both Syriac and Coptic, suggesting a copy-house and missionary planning station for Manichæan efforts aimed at the Upper and Lower Thebaïd,⁹⁵ perhaps near enough to be practical, but far enough to avoid too many probing eyes. As Figure 8⁹⁶ shows, there were only two Orthodox Monasteries in the general district during this period.

If we accept that these areas,

Lycopolis/Hypsele and Thebes were indeed the

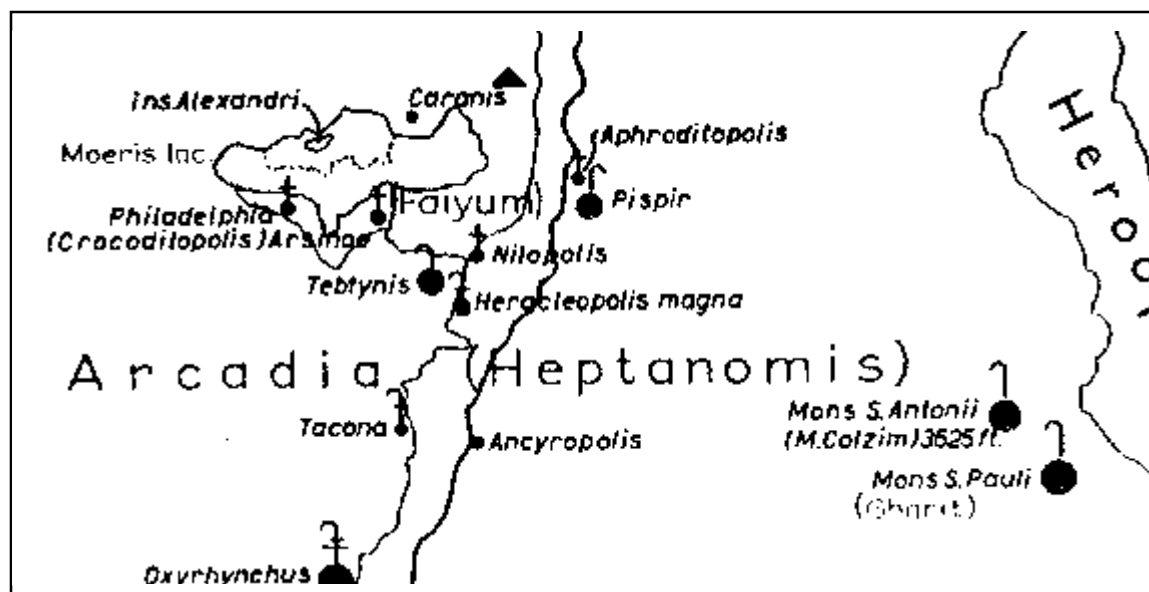


Fig 10: Antony's Locations in the Fayyum & at Red Sea.

If this is the same Amma Theodora (Amba Theodoros) whose hermitage is marked on Figure 9,⁹⁸ she would certainly be near enough to the Lycopolis area (Asjut) to have encountered real Manichæans, or heard stories of them. Of course, the form of the saying is not clearly an historical incident. It may simply be an “Orthodox” teaching about the positive nature of the body, as opposed to presumed dualism in the opposition.

Second, St. Antony the Great is said to have encountered Manichæans, at least philosophically, and to have disliked their beliefs, even as he desired their conversion.⁹⁹ This is clearly a passage proving Antony's Orthodoxy, and enabling Athanasius to express his abhorrence of the Manichæans, Meletians and Arians, all of whom Antony is said to have disagreed with. Although Antony, whether at his Nile-side foundation (Figure 10)¹⁰⁰, or at his *Deir* on the Red Sea was near enough to the Fayyum to have actually spoken with Mani's followers, this passage cannot be seriously invoked to prove the point.

Finally, Rufinus reports the encounter of “a certain old monk” with a Manichæan, in which the “Orthodox” Monk converts the other by his friendliness as a person, coupled with his faithfulness to his own doctrine.¹⁰¹ This passage is of even less help, for although it may contain the kernel of a true encounter, with no names, places or times even suggested, it is prosopographically less than helpful.

These three “encounters” are not rich enough to fulfill goal (2) of our schema. Further research is needed to uncover more explicit accounts of actual Monastic meetings between Manichæans and Orthodox Monks, if indeed any such experiences have survived in writing. With the obvious proximity of these two ascetical religious cultures, one would be led to ask why no such records still exist. The polemical relationship may explain part of this, but other avenues might also be explored. Were “Orthodox” Monks afraid to admit that they had met Manichæans? Or perhaps some were, in fact, the secret Manichæans that Stroumsa proposes.¹⁰²

Given the geographic and temporal proximity of these two religious cultures, it would

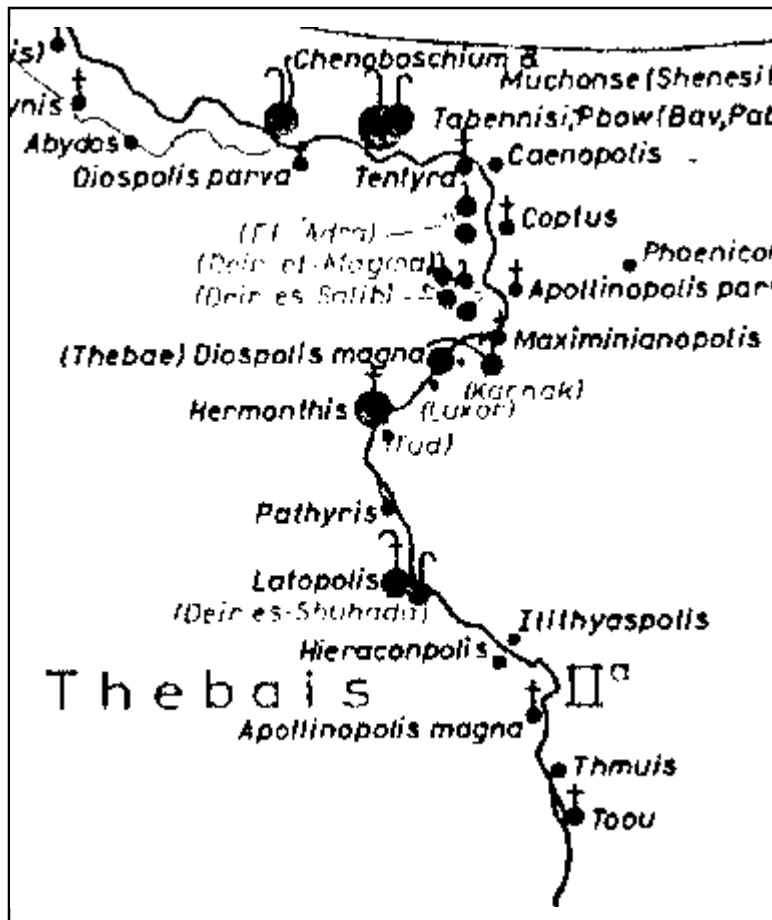


Fig 11: Thmuis in the lower Thebaid

seem unusual, *prima facie*, that there would have been so few contacts as are recorded. Further, when one considers the nature of Manichæan communal life, arguably "monastic" in appearance itself, and influenced by Qumran,¹⁰³ and even by Buddhist monasticism,¹⁰⁴ it is difficult to convincingly argue that the *Mani-Kloster* had absolutely no influence on the development of Egyptian Christian Monasticism, at least as some sort of catalytic agent or ingredient.¹⁰⁵ J. Vergote rehearses the possible origins and influences as well, but also cautions against a too facile conclusion of Manichæan influence on Pachomian Monasticism solely on the basis of perceived similarities. Both communities may spring from common sources, rather than directly influencing one another.¹⁰⁶

A complete analysis of the literary and doctrinal content of the *Apophthegmata* for Manichæan influence, might reveal in such passages as Abba Daniel's a kind of dualism: "The body prospers in the measure in which the soul is weakened, and the soul prospers in the measure in which the body is weakened."¹⁰⁷ However, one must ask whether this is actual Manichæan influence, or an echo of the more mainstream Gospel teachings about the superiority of the spiritual life over the bodily (e.g. losing a hand is better than damnation -- Mt 5:30), or even a positive image of the interrelation of the body and soul. Anthropomorphizing images of God, another trait for which the Manichæans are frequently condemned, will be even more difficult to find in the *Sayings*.

Perhaps indeed, following Heussi, Judge and Stroumsa,¹⁰⁸ the search should focus not so much on "heretical" elements in the *Apophthegmata*, but on the very origins of Monasticism itself, and the Egyptian Mani-Mission's rôle or contribution in those beginnings. Needless to say, this is a study in itself, which then can be correlated with any available Monastic and Manichæan prosopography for concrete (or conjectured) influences.

Later Sources

The testimony of later Manichæan opponents in Egypt, viewed cautiously, does provide

some prosopographical data. Earliest among these is the work of Serapion of Thmuis.¹⁰⁹ A disciple of St. Antony, Serapion is a contemporary and ally of Athanasius in the 4th Century.

Thmuis is south of the main area of Manichæan missionary activity (Figure 11),¹¹⁰ and Serapion seems to have had little actual contact with either Manichæans or their teachings. In this he follows the same pattern as Titus of Bosra.¹¹¹ For the purposes of further prosopography, Serapion's most interesting accusation is that the Manichæans "use the name of Christ while making war upon Him."¹¹² The charge that the followers of Mani use the name "Christian" points in two directions: (1) that they consider themselves as the true Christians (see above) and not as a rival religion; and (2) that they have had to "submerge" themselves in the mainstream or majority Christian culture as a result of persecution.

Although the work of the 4th Century Alexandrian catechist Didymus "the Blind," *Against the Manichees*, follows Serapion's in its abstract tone, a passage in his *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* (among the Tura papyri¹¹³) gives his account of an encounter he had with a Manichæan, and the discussion that followed concerning marriage.¹¹⁴

These sorts of disputations are also reported in the *Historia Monachorum in Ægypto* during the 4th and 5th Centuries. One story in particular tells of an open dispute between Abba Copres and a Manichæan. The Manichæan had been able to preach in public, without fear of persecution, in the latter half of the 4th Century, until the Monk had won his argument through an encounter that combined elements from two Biblical sources.

According to the story told in both the *Historia* and repeated in Palladius' 5th Century *Lausiac History*, Abba Copres challenged the Manichæan to a test by wading into a bonfire. Copres survives the ordeal unscathed, while the unfortunate Manichæan was burned by the fire, and subsequently exiled by the crowd.¹¹⁵ This tale is clearly reminiscent of Elijah's defeat of the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel in I Kings 18:16-40, together with the story of the three young men in the fiery furnace -- Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (Ananiah, Azariah and Mishael) -- in Daniel 3:1-97 (Septuagint numbering).

This harsh image of Manichæans, and their typological identification with the prophets of Baal and the idolatrous Babylonians indicates the animosity with which they were viewed, at least by the compilers of these traditional histories.

Finally, G.G. Stroumsa has highlighted what ancient sources, esp. Eutychios (Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria, 930-940 CE) have already told us about what happened to the Manichæans: they went "underground."¹¹⁶ After the Diocletian persecution (which was particularly severe against them), things once again eased up (as we saw in the *Historia Monachorum*), but pressure increased after 381, with previous laws reinforced against Manichæan assemblies, and forbidding them the use of "a variety of diverse names."¹¹⁷

Eutychios, writing in the 10th Century, is certainly polemical and his historical accuracy is correspondingly suspect. H.H. Schaeder and M. Tardieu reject his evidence as too late and too biased,¹¹⁸ but Stroumsa, Nau and Griffith wish to analyze his historical materials more carefully, hoping that some of them may prove reliable to some extent.¹¹⁹

What the 10th Century Melkite Patriarch tells us is that after the more severe legislation that followed the Council of Constantinople, the *electi* (Elect Ones) and *auditores* (Hearers) of the Manichæans were to be found among Coptic clergy and monks, "masquerading as Christians."¹²⁰ They supposedly flourished among the ascetics, marked by their extremes.¹²¹

Further study along the lines that Stroumsa has proposed¹²² should be able to verify Eutychius' judgment about the "hidden Manichæans" among the clergy and ascetics of Egypt. Even if their surface conversion had been authentic, it is likely that some of the impulses of their previous approach to Christianity would have influenced their monastic and religious life.

Conclusions

From the evidence available, it is clear that one cannot definitively assert that during the 4th century in Egypt, Manichæans and Orthodox ascetics co-existed in any kind of peace, not even the relative (and admittedly occasional) kind that Goehring suggests for the relations of Orthodox with Meletians and Origenists. Even though a somewhat pluralistic attitude may have been sometimes demonstrated in those cases, in the *parlance* of the detective genre, there is no "smoking gun" for the situation of the Manichæans.

Why might this be so? The same kind of geographic and ascetic closeness pertained for the Manichæans with the other groups. As we study further translations of Manichæan texts from Kellis, their content does not seem so extraordinary as to elicit special condemnation.¹²³ What makes these situations different, so that Manichæans had to disguise themselves in Stroumsa's Marranistic fashion?

The answer may lie in the rather different historical connections among the Orthodox, Meletians, Manichæans and Origenists. Although today, Orthodox Christians speak of all these groups alike as Heretics, their historical relations to the "Orthodox" party are considerably different.

The Meletians as a separate group arose from a dispute over Episcopal authority in Alexandria when Meletius, Bishop of Lycopolis, usurped prerogatives of Bishop Peter of Alexandria while the latter was in hiding during the persecutions of 303.¹²⁴ Although some doctrinal disputes arose later during the Meletian schism, this rupture in Church life was essentially a political one. Meletians were merely one faction in the otherwise mainstream or Orthodox Christian community.

Origenists, of course, were those who followed (and perhaps carried further) the teaching of the great biblical exegete, Origen. Once again, Origen worked within the structures of the "Orthodox" world, although running afoul of feuding Bishops and conflicting jurisdictions.¹²⁵ Origenism therefore emerged from the mainstream, and was a product of differing interpretations within that milieu.

Manichæism, on the other hand, had never been part of the Orthodox vector or communities. Mani was a prophet in his own right, neither a Bishop as Meletius was nor a catechist and presbyter as Origen had been. There is a real sense in which both Meletius and Origen were viewed by the Orthodox as "insiders who went bad," while Mani was a brilliant and powerful east Syriac syncretistic preacher whose charismatic Gospel combined elements of Zoroastrian, Buddhist and Christian teachings.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Coptic Orthodox Monks of the 4th century Egyptian desert would have made a distinction between "separated brethren" (Origenists, Meletians) and the Manichæans, and treated them differently. As we have seen, the imagery in the *Historia Monachorum in Ægypto* and the *Lausiatic History* argue for this conclusion.

Until we have further documentary or archeological evidence to the contrary then, we must assume that Manichæans did not share coenobitic life with Orthodox, Melitian and Origenist ascetics. The further question of influence of Manichæism in Orthodox ascetical doctrine and/or practice must also wait until the Kellis and other documents are fully unearthed, translated and studied, and correlated with those of the Medinet Madi, Nag Hammadi, and Manichæan texts from other locations outside Egypt. The archaeological evidence is increasing, and its interpretation is ongoing, particularly in the Dakhleh Oasis excavations.¹²⁶ Only then can we begin a full-scale comparison with the other Coptic Christ-related groups (Christian Gnostics, Orthodox, Meletians, Origenists) as well as with the Egyptian hermetic traditions, to gain a fuller understanding of Manichæism's place in Egypt's religious history.

Nevertheless, the conclusions reached by Williams in *Rethinking Gnosticism* provide a very hopeful prospect for further studies and discoveries in the area of Egyptian religious and spiritual cooperation, openness and diversity during this period. We can have a well-founded expectation of further textual, archaeological and anthropological finds, closer analysis and a clearer picture of the mystical life in the deserts of late antique Egypt.

NOTES TO THE TEXT

¹ Cf. A. Veilleux, "Monasticism and Gnosis in Egypt," in B.A. Pearson & J.E. Gøehring (eds), *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 272.

² For recently discovered and translated Manichæan materials, see Willis Barnstone and Marvin Meyer (eds), *The Gnostic Bible*. (New York: Shambala, 2003); The Gnostic Society Library, *Manichæan Writings*. Web Page. Accessed May 25, 2004. Available at <http://www.gnosis.org/library/manis.htm>.

³ Those Christian Communities that for various reasons rejected the Christological formulations of the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451).

⁴ Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*. Trans. of *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei in ältesten Christentum* (1934), (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), xxi.

⁵ Bauer, *ibid.*

⁶ For an introduction to the concept of development of doctrine, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: a History of the Development of Doctrine*. 5 volumes. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975). 1. *The emergence of the Catholic tradition (100-600)* -- 2. *The spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-1700)* -- 3. *The growth of medieval theology (600-1300)* -- 4. *Reformation of church and dogma (1300-1700)* -- 5. *Christian doctrine and modern culture (since 1700)*; and Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*. 2 volumes. (London: Mowbray, 1965). v. 1. *From the apostolic age to Chalcedon (451)* -- v. 2. pt 1 *From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590-604)*. pt. 2. *The Church of Constantinople in the sixth century*.

⁷ For recent studies on fundamentalism as a cross-cultural phenomenon, see Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God*. (New York: Ballantine, 2000) and Bruce B. Lawrence, *Defenders of God: The Fundamentalist Revolt against the Modern Age*. (University of South Carolina Press, 1995).

⁸ For an example of how this trend has affected the study of “Gnosticism” and its relationship to “Orthodoxy,” see Michael Allen Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

⁹ A succinct introduction to prosopography may be found at: Linacre College, *Prosopography*. <http://www.linacre.ox.ac.uk/research/prosop/prosopo.stm>. (Oxford, 2002). An example of the use of hermeneutics in textual religious analysis is Sandra Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture*. 2nd edition. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999).

¹⁰ François Decret, *L’Afrique Manichéenne I & II*, (Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1978).

¹¹ Samuel Hugh Moffet, *A History of Christianity in Asia Volume I*, (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992).

¹² Iain Gardener. “The Manichæan Community at Kellis: A Progress Report” in Paul Mirecki & Jason BeDuhn (eds), *Emerging from Darkness: Studies in the Recovery of Manichæan Sources*, (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 161- 175. Willis Barnstone and Marvin Meyer, (eds). *The Gnostic Bible*. (New York: Shambala, 2003).

¹³ C. Schmidt & J.J. Polotsky, *Ein Mani-Fund in Ägypten: Originalschriften des Mani und seiner Schüler*, (*Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philol.-Hist. Klasse*, 1933, I.)

¹⁴ Annual reports on the excavations are available at Monash University, *Dakhleh Oasis Project: Annual Reports*. Monash University, 27 October 2003. Accessed May 13 2004. Web Page. Available from <http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/archaeology/index.html> and <http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/archaeology/ismant.html>.

¹⁵ Iain Gardner, “A Manichæan Liturgical Codex Found at Kellis,” *Orientalia* 62:2 (1993) 30-59.

¹⁶ James E. Goehring, “Monastic Diversity and Ideological Boundaries in Fourth-Century Christian Egypt,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 5:1 (1997) 61-83.

¹⁷ Gillian E. Bowen, “Early Christian Burial Practices at Kellis, Dakhleh Oasis, Egypt. *The Artefact* Vol. 26:1 (2003), 77.

¹⁸ Gillian E. Bowen, “The Fourth-Century Churches at Ismant el-Kharab.” In Hope, Collin A. and Gillian E. Bowen, eds. *Dakhleh Oasis Project: Preliminary Reports on the 1994-1995 to 1998-1999 Field Seasons*. Oxford: Oxbow, 2002. 65-85; “The Small Church at Ismant el-Kharab, Ancient Kellis.” *The Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* Vol 11, 29-34 (2000).

¹⁹ Monash University, *Dakhleh Oasis Project: Annual Reports*. Monash University, October 27, 2003. Accessed May 13 2004. Web site. Available from <http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/archaeology/index.html> and <http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/archaeology/ismant.html>; *Dakhleh Oasis Project Bibliography*. Monash University, 2003. Accessed May 13 2004. Adobe Acrobat File. Available from <http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/archaeology/dakhleh/bibliography.pdf>. Titles published by members of the Dakhleh Oasis Project staff on the work of the project; Monash University Library Publications

Committee, *From the Sands of the Sahara: Ancient Kellis and Its Texts*. Monash University Department of Classics and Archaeology, and Monash University Library Rare Books Collection, August 1998. Accessed May 20, 2004. Web site. Available from <http://www.lib.monash.edu.au/exhibitions/egypt/>.

²⁰ G.G. Stroumsa, "The Words and the Works: Religious Knowledge and Salvation in Augustine and Faustus of Milevis," in S.W. Eisenstadt & I.F. Silber, *Cultural Traditions and Worlds of Knowledge*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, n.d.).

²¹ R. Grant, "Manichees and Christians in the Third and Early Fourth Centuries," in *Ex Orbe Religionum: Studia G. Widengren...oblata I*, Supplements to *Numen* 21, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), 438.

²² G.G. Stroumsa, "The Manichæan Challenge to Egyptian Christianity," in Birger A. Pearson & J.E. Gøehring (eds), *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 308.

²³ *Chronicle of Seert, Patrologia Orientalis IV*, pp. 237-238.

²⁴ *Contra Hæreses XX*, 3, E. Beck (ed), *CSCO*, Scr. Syr. LXXVIII, 1957.

²⁵ "Eos audivimus nuperrime veluti nova et inopinata prodigia in hunc mundum de Persica adversaria nobis gente progressa vel orta esse..." Rescript of Diocletian to Julianus, Proconsul of Africa (297 CE or perhaps 302?). Text: E. Seckel & B. Kuebler, *Mosaicarum et Romanarum Legum Collatio XV*, 3, §4, *Jurisprudentiæ anteiustinianæ reliquæ II*, 2, 1927, 381 ff.

²⁶ Peter Brown, *Religion and Society in the Age of St. Augustine*, (NY: Harper & Row, 1972), 96-97.

²⁷ P. Brown, *Religion and Society...* 118.

²⁸ P. Brown, *Religion and Society...* 99.

²⁹ Iain Gardner, "A Manichæan Liturgical Codex Found at Kellis," 32.

³⁰ On this question of the role of Judæo-Christian groups as an information and cultural conduit between the Persian and Roman worlds, see (1) J.F. Duneau, "Quelques aspects de la pénétration de l'hellénisme dans l'Empire perse sassanide," in *Mélanges René Crozet I*, 1966, 13-22 and (2) E. Follieri, "Santi persiani nell'innografia bizantina," in *Persia e il mondo greco-romano*, pp. 227-242.

³¹ Iain Gardner, "A Manichæan Liturgical Codex Found at Kellis," 32. C.H. Roberts believes that this anonymous *Epistle against the Manichees* (Papyrus J. Rylands 469) came from Theonas, Bishop of Alexandria (CE 282-300), or from his staff: C.H. Roberts, *Catalogue of the Greek and Latin Papyri in the John Rylands Library* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 1938), 3:38-39.

³² S.N.C. Lieu, *Manichæism in the later Roman Empire and Medieval China* (Manchester 1985), 74-5; 91-8.

³³ This is the translation suggested by W.B. Henning for the Middle Persian term *manistan*. W.B. Henning, *Selected Papers*, I (*Acta Iranica* 14; Leiden-Teheran, 1977).

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- ³⁴ Douglas Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1993), 41.
- ³⁵ Benedicta Ward, *The Desert Fathers: Sayings of the Early Christian Monks*. (New York: Penguin, 2003), and *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection*. (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications,, 1984). A selection from the *Vita Patrum* (Life of the Fathers) may be found at <http://www.touregypt.net/documents/egyptianfathers.htm>.
- ³⁶ Douglas Burton-Christie, *Ibid.*
- ³⁷ James E. Goehring, James E., "Monastic Diversity and Ideological Boundaries in Fourth-Century Christian Egypt." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 5:1, 61, 1997.
- ³⁸ Goehring, "Monastic Diversity..." 61.
- ³⁹ Cf. Samuel Rubenson, *Letters of Antony* 145-62; Jean-Claude Guy, *Recherches sur la tradition grecque des Apophthegmata Patrum, 2e edition avec des compléments*, (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1984).
- ⁴⁰ Graham Gould, "Recent Work on Monastic Origins: A Consideration of the Questions Raised by Samuel Rubenson's The Letter of Antony," *Studia Patristica* 25 (1993), 405-16.
- ⁴¹ Goehring, "Monastic Diversity..." 61-65.
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- ⁴⁵ Koenen, Ludwig, "Manichäische Mission und Klöster in Ägypten," in *Das römisch-byzantinische Ägypten* (AegT; Mainz am Rhein: Von Zabern 1983), 93-108.
- ⁴⁶ G.G. Stroumsa, "The Manichæan Challenge to Egyptian Christianity," in Birger A, Pearson & J.E. Goehring (eds), *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986).
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⁴⁸ Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind*, Rev. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

⁴⁹ Fowden 114.

⁵⁰ Samuel Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 102, note 2.

⁵¹ Michael Allen Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

⁵² Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony*, 123.

⁵³ Figure 1: *Atlas of the World*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1995).

⁵⁴ Figure 2: F. van der Meer and Christine Mohrmann, *Atlas of the Early Christian World*, (Nelson, 1958).

⁵⁵ See the following for this current debate: Scholten, “Die Nag-Hammadi-Texte”; James E. Goehring, “New Frontiers in Pachomian Studies,” *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, pp. 236-257; Armand Veilleux, “Monasticism and Gnosis in Egypt,” *ibid.*, pp. 271-306 and “Monachisme et gnose,” *LTP* 40 (1984), pp. 275-294 and 41 (1985), pp. 3-24. Philip Rousseau, *Pachomius. The Making of a Community in Fourth Century Egypt*. 27f.

⁵⁶ Williams, 261-262

⁵⁷ Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony*, 104.

⁵⁸ Williams, 235-262.

⁵⁹ Goehring, “Monastic Diversity and Ideological Boundaries in Fourth-Century Christian Egypt.”

⁶⁰ Goehring, James E. , “Monastic Diversity and Ideological Boundaries in Fourth-Century Christian Egypt,” 78; Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony*, 125-162.

⁶¹ Goehring, “Monastic Diversity and Ideological Boundaries in Fourth-Century Christian Egypt.”

⁶² Figure 3: G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville, *The New Atlas of African History* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 29.

⁶³ François Decret, *L’Afrique Manichéenne I & II*, (Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1978).

⁶⁴ Figure 4: Van der Meer & Mohrmann, *Atlas of the Early Christian World*.

⁶⁵ Iain Gardner, “A Manichæan Liturgical Codex Found at Kellis,” 33.

⁶⁶ Lycopolis (Asjut) is some 150 mi south of the Fayyum.

⁶⁷ A selection of these Psalms may be found at Tour Egypt, *Manichæan Psalms*. 1996. Accessed May 14,

2004. Web Page. Available from <http://touregypt.net/manichaeansalms.htm>, in Tour Egypt. *Ancient Documents*. 1996. Accessed May 14, 2004. Web Page. Available from <http://touregypt.net/literature.htm>. Created by InterCity Oz, Inc.

⁶⁸ T. Save-Söderbergh, *Studies in the Coptic Manichæan Psalm-Book*. (Uppsala, Almqvist & Wiksells, 1949).

⁶⁹ F.C. Burkitt, *The Religion of the Manichees*. (1925), 111.

⁷⁰ J. Schwartz, "Dioclétien dans la littérature copte," *Bulletin de la société d'archéologie copte* XV (1960), 151-66.

⁷¹ G.G. Stroumsa, "Monachisme et Marranisme chez les Manichéens d'Egypte," *Numen* XXIX 2 (1982), 186 and 197 n8.

⁷² Middle-Iranian Fragment M2 r. I, 11.1 sv. in W.B. Henning, *Selected Papers*, I (*Acta Iranica* 14; Leiden-Teheran 1977), 198-199. (*My translation of the French in the Stroumsa essay -- SA*)

⁷³ cf. C. Schmidt & H. J. Polotsky, 12 ff.

⁷⁴ Figure 5: Van der Meer & Mohrmann, *Atlas of the Early Christian World*.

⁷⁵ *Acta Archelai* 62 [C.H. Beeson (ed), Hegemonius: *Acta Archelai. Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller* (Leipzig 1897 ff)], 90-91.

⁷⁶ *Acta Archelai*, 36 (Beeson, 52)

⁷⁷ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses* 6, 20ff.

⁷⁸ Epiphanius, *Pannarion*, 66.2

⁷⁹ Iain Gardner, "A Manichæan Liturgical Codex Found at Kellis," 33.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ P. van der Horst & J. Mansfeld, "An Alexandrian Platonist against Dualism," *Theta-Pi* III (1974), 4-5 n.8. (The article includes translation of the *Critique* of Alexander.)

⁸² Alexander of Lycopolis, *Critique of the Doctrines of Manichæus* Pt. 1, [van der Horst & Mansfeld, 50].

⁸³ Alexander of Lycopolis, *Critique* Pt. 1, [van der Horst & Mansfeld, 51].

⁸⁴ Alexander of Lycopolis, *Critique* Pt. 2, [van der Horst & Mansfeld, 52].

⁸⁵ Alexander of Lycopolis, *Critique* Pt. 2, [van der Horst & Mansfeld, 52]. For a discussion of these names, see A. Brinkmann (ed), *Alexandri Lycopolitani contra Manichæi opinionones disputatio*, (Leipzig 1895), XIII n.1

⁸⁶ *Patrologia Graeca* 1, 1468 B ff. See the discussion in I. de Beausobre, *Histoire critique de Manichéisme et du manichéisme* I, (Amsterdam 1734), 77.

⁸⁷ W. Seston, "L'Égypte manichéenne," *Chronique d'Égypte* 14 (1939), 365

⁸⁸ "Et Thomas quidem partes Ægypti voluit occupare..." *Acta Archelai*, 64 (Beeson, 93, 15-17)

⁸⁹ F.F. Church & G.G. Stroumsa, "Mani's disciple Thomas and the psalms of Thomas," *Vigiliæ Christianæ* 34 (1980), 51.

⁹⁰ A. Villey (ed), Alexandre de Lycopolis, *Contra la doctrine de Mani*, (Paris: Cerf 1985), 101-115.

⁹¹ M. Tardieu, "Les Manichéens en Égypte," *Bulletin de la société Française d'Égypte* 94 (1982), 5-19 (8-10 esp.)

⁹² G.G. Stroumsa, "The Manichæan Challenge to Egyptian Christianity," in B. A. Pearson & J.E. Gøehring (eds), *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 310.

⁹³ Figure 6: *The Macmillan World Atlas*, (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1996); Figure 7: Map drawn by Olaf E. Kaper, from the Web Page <http://www.lib.monash.edu.au/hss/rare/xegymaps.htm> .

⁹⁴ Iain Gardner, "A Manichæan Liturgical Codex Found at Kellis," 30-34.

⁹⁵ Bi-lingual board found in House Three. Cf. Iain Gardner, 33.

⁹⁶ Figure 8: Van der Meer & Mohrmann, *Atlas of the Early Christian World*,

⁹⁷ *Apophthegmata Patrum* PG 65:202D-204A. Translated in Benedicta Ward, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, (London: Mowbray 1984), 83.

⁹⁸ Figure 9: Hubert Jedin, Kenneth Scott Latourette and Jochen Martin, *Atlas zur Kirchen-Geschichte: Der Christlichen Kirchen in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, (Freiburg: Herder, 1987), 11.

⁹⁹ Athanasius, *The Life of Antony*, 68, Translated in R.C. Gregg, *The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus*, (NY: Paulist 1980), 82.

¹⁰⁰ Figure 10: Van der Meer & Mohrmann, *Atlas of the Early Christian World*.

¹⁰¹ Rufinus, *Verba Seniorum: De vitis Patrum Liber* 5.13.2 PL 73:945 C-D (11).

¹⁰² G.G. Stroumsa, "Monachisme et Marranisme..." 184-201.

¹⁰³ L. Koenen, "Manichäische Mission und Klöster in Ägypten," in *Das römisch-byzantinische Ägypten* (AegT; Mainz am Rhein: Von Zabern 1983), 93-108.

¹⁰⁴ G.G. Stroumsa, "The Manichæan Challenge..." 309.

¹⁰⁵ G.G. Stroumsa, “The Manichæan Challenge...,” 309. K. Heussi, *Der Ursprung des Mönchtums* (Tübingen: Mohr 1936), 290. E.A. Judge, “The earliest use of *monachos* for ‘Monk’ (P.Coll. Youtie 77) and the origins of Monasticism,” *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 20 (1977), 72-89.

¹⁰⁶ J. Vergote, “L’Expansion du Manichéisme en Égypte” in *After Chalcedon* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 18, Leuven 1985), 471-478, esp. 475-478.

¹⁰⁷ *Apophthegmata*, Alphabetic Collection Abba Daniel 4 [Ward 52].

¹⁰⁸ See note 105 above.

¹⁰⁹ Serapion of Thmuis, *Against the Manichees*. R.P. Casey (ed). *Harvard Theological Studies XV*, (Cambridge: Harvard, 1931).

¹¹⁰ Figure 11: Van der Meer & Mohrmann, *Atlas of the Early Christian World*.

¹¹¹ Casey, 17-18.

¹¹² Serapion of Thmuis, *Against the Manichees* III 1.15-16 [in Casey, 30].

¹¹³ G.G. Stroumsa “The Manichæan Challenge...,” 318.

¹¹⁴ G. Bardy, *Didyme l’Aveugle* (Études de théologie historique 11; Paris: Beauchesne 1910); 33-35; J. Leipoldt, *Didymus der Blinde von Alexandria*, (Texte und Untersuchungen 29; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1905), 14-16.

¹¹⁵ A.J. Festugière (ed), *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* (Subsidia Hagiographica 53; Brussels: Société des Bollandistes 1971), 87-88 (*Historia* Chapter 9). Translation in A.J. Festugière (ed), *Les Moines d’Orient*, (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1964), 4/1:75-76. English translation in Benedicta Ward and Russell, Norman. *The Lives of the Desert Fathers: The Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*. (London: Cistercian, 1981). The text of this encounter may be found on the Internet at <http://www.touregypt.net/documents/aquileia4.htm#Chapter%20IX>. The story is embellished in Palladius of Helenopolis, Bishop of Aspuna. *Lausiac History*. Chapter 52. In Robert T. Meyer, *Palladius, the Lausiac History*. Westminster, Newman Press, 1965. Another translation is available on the internet: <http://www.touregypt.net/documents/lausiacindex.htm>. Chapter 52: <http://www.touregypt.net/documents/lausiac10.htm#Chapter%20LIV>.

¹¹⁶ G.G. Stroumsa, “Monachisme et Marranisme...,” 184-201.

¹¹⁷ *Theodosian Code* 16.5.6 and 16.5.9.

¹¹⁸ H.H. Schaeder, “Review of C. Schmidt & J.J. Polotsky, *Ein Mani-Fund in Ägypten*” *Gnomon* 9 (1934), 342. M. Tardieu “Les Manichéens...,” 15.

¹¹⁹ G.G. Stroumsa, “The Manichæan Challenge...,” 312. F. Nau, “Eutychius,” *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* 5:1609-11. S.H. Griffith, “Eutychius of Alexandria...,” *Byzantion* 52 (1982), 154-90.

¹²⁰ M. Breydy (ed), Eutychios of Alexandria (Sa'id ibn Batr'q), *Das Annalenwerk* (Louvain: Peeters 1985), ch 18 § 213-215, pp 68-69.

¹²¹ G.G. Stroumsa, "The Manichæan Challenge...", 314.

¹²² G.G. Stroumsa, "Monachisme et Marranisme...", 196-197.

¹²³ Iain Gardner, "The Manichæan Community at Kellis: A progress Report" in Paul Mirecki and Jason BeDuhn, *Emerging from Darkness: Manichæan Studies at the End of the 20th Century*, (NY: Leiden, 1997), 161-176. Willis Barnstone and Marvin Meyer, (eds). *The Gnostic Bible*. New York: Shambala, 2003.

¹²⁴ Berthold Altaner, *Patrology*, (Freiburg: Herder & Herder, 1960), 239.

¹²⁵ See Johannes Quasten, *Patrology Volume II*, (Westminster: Christian Classics, 1990), 37-40 for a brief biographical sketch.

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