

General Introduction

The Lexicon is conceived as a reference book for the names of spiritual powers attested in the Nag Hammadi “library” presented against the background of the texts of ritual power. It provides the names in their immediate lexical and narrative context without any claims to wider philological or theological analyses, although the body of evidence has been put together with the aim of enabling further investigation also in this field. The main goal of the Lexicon is to establish for the first time a tool for reliable research on interrelations between two source corpora replete with the names of power. In previous scholarship, there were made many dispersed observations regarding the influence of so-called magical material on Gnosticism and on the Gnostic heritage in the texts of ritual power (see below), but the solid source base which would enable quantitative analyses has not been built yet. Preliminary observations made in the introduction lead to the conclusion that, in the area of the names of power, Gnostics were rather innovative, and interdependencies with the texts of ritual power are of minor importance. However, the meticulous analyses remain an agenda for the users of the Lexicon.

The number of entries in the main part of Lexicon is 343, but the way in which this figure has been determined needs some clarifications. The Lexicon does not include all the spiritual powers from the Nag Hammadi texts, but rather those introduced with specific individual names. As such, the Lexicon does not comprise abstract concepts personalized as aeons, such as Ekklesia “Church,” Sophia “Wisdom,” Kalyptos “The Hidden-One,” etc. They abound, especially in the texts of Valentinian background, however, the theological ideas behind them are too complex to be investigated in the present book. The biblical figures are also beyond the scope of interest

here. However, a number of clearly spiritual powers with the names of the biblical characters found their place in the Lexicon. The cases concerned are →Abel, →Iakôb, and →Kain. Furthermore, I decided to exclude the figure of Seth, portrayed in the Nag Hammadi “library” not only as a human character in narrations based on rewritten Genesis but also as an important, spiritual aeonic power and agent of salvation.¹ However, the compound name Emmak^ha Set^h has its entry, regardless of its very probable identification with Set^h himself. The same double, human, and spiritual character has Adam² who is also not listed, although there is an entry on his variant manifestation →Pigeradama. There are also cases where we cannot be completely certain whether or not a given figure represents a human figure or is a spiritual power. The best examples might be →Norea who in *Hyp. Arch.* is certainly a daughter of Eve, but her identity in the text conventionally labelled *Norea* (IX 2) is not so obvious, hence these occurrences are both included in the Lexicon. Other ambiguous figures are the recipients of the divine revelation, →Messos and →Zostrianos, who also have their entries. Although Melchizedek seems to be a supernatural power³ in the *Pistis Sophia* and *Books of Jeu*, in the Nag Hammadi corpus in the text under the title *Melchizedek* (IX 1), the title figure plays a role of a mere receiver of a revelation, and as such is not incorporated into the Lexicon.

In some cases, it was difficult to decide if two names refer to the same power or to two different ones. When there were parallel passages (*Ap. John* and *Gos. Eg.*) generally the names were acknowledged as variants. Few exceptions are always mentioned in the commentaries. It was also relatively easy to equate orthographic variants of Coptic (for example, Elêim and Elêim) or the forms representing Greek case endings retained in the process of translation (for example, Adônaiou for Adônaios). In other cases, the equation of two names was a result of a common characteristic or similar narrative context. Nevertheless, there are still some names, especially those attested only once, which may refer to the same power, but it cannot be clarified in the sources we have to our disposal. In such situations, two names are taken as referring to the two distinct powers.⁴

1 On a figure of Seth, a reasonable amount of scholarly work has been already done, see KLIJN 1977; ONASCH 1980; PEARSON 1981; STROUMSA 1984: 73—77; TURNER 1998; BURNS 2014: 78—89.

2 JACKSON 1981; LUTTIKHUIZEN 2000; BRANKAER 2008: 276—281.

3 DALGAARD 2016.

4 As in the case of Olsên (NHC VIII 47,18, *Zost.*) and Olsês (NHC III 65,2 = NHC IV 76,21 *Gos. Eg.*). The first power is characterized as one of the so-called “guardians of glory,”

The Lexicon does not include *voces* that cannot be identified from the context as proper names. Some uncertainty may arise when the string of letters is preserved only partially. In such cases, I tended to exclude those words, even if they are regarded by some scholars as proper names.⁵ Some of the choices I have made are to some extent arbitrary, however, the number of those cases is significantly limited (virtually all the instances are listed above) and does not disturb the general picture and statistics in any reasonable degree.

Besides the thirteen codices from Nag Hammadi, in the main part of the Lexicon, there are included also two other codices of very similar content: P.Berlin inv. 8502 (known also as Akhmim Codex, *Berolinensis Gnosticus*, further referred to as BG) and *Codex Tchacos* (further referred to as CT). Appendix to the lexicon proper includes also the names of power attested in two further codices, *Codex Askevianus* (CA) and *Codex Brucianus* (CB), sometimes regarded as similar in content to those from Nag Hammadi but in fact essentially different and representing mainly relatively coherent speculative theology of the group labelled Jeuians by the modern scholars.⁶

The names of the spiritual powers attested in the Nag Hammadi codices are presented together with the attestations in the magical material. This category of sources is understood broadly and includes texts on papyri and parchment in Greek, Coptic, and in some cases even in Demotic and Aramaic, curse tablets (*defixiones*), protective spells inscribed on metal leaves (*lamellae*), and texts engraved on amulets (magical gems).

If the given name appears also in the literary texts, such attestations are also listed. The most commonly referred are Coptic texts of Gnostic flavour found in CA and CB. Anti-heretical works of Irenaeus, Pseudo-Hippolytus,

the other presides over the sunrise. The similarity of the names might be accidental, but it might be also the same spiritual power in two different aspects of its activity.

5 An example might be ⲁ]ⲃⲗ[...ⲁⲓⲁⲓ ⲁⲃⲁⲃⲁ in NHC IX 5,24 (*Melch.*) analysed by VAN DER KERCHOVE 2013: 271—272.

6 Both codices, neglected in the past decades, recently attracted significant interest of scholars, esp. a volume on their theology by EVANS 2015; also DAALGARD 2016, and studies by E. Crégheur. Because of the advanced stage of editorial process, I was unable to take into account the recent edition of the Book of Jeu by Crégheur (BCNH T 38) who reconstructed proper organization of the *Codex Brucianus*, and whose index of words and names of power is much wider than the appendix to this book, since Crégheur's aim was to include all *voces* and *nomina magica*, not only proper names. Besides Jeuian *Books of Jeu*, CB includes also so called *Untitled Text* that features many Sethian traits and spiritual powers. They are listed in the entries of the main part of the Lexicon in the section "other texts."

Epiphanius and others are also frequently quoted, as well as Christian Apocrypha. However, the entries on figures very common in Jewish and Christian sources as →Mik^haël, →Gabriël or →Satanas are not appended with full index of source attestations. In those cases, the reader should refer to given literature.

The Lexicon was created on the basis of the only complete edition of the Nag Hammadi “library” published in the series *Nag Hammadi Studies* (NHS), but more recent and in many cases superior editions of *Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi* were also consulted. For the texts of ritual power, it was not my goal to use all the published material, which would be impossible to complete. Nevertheless, I consulted the main corpora and some editions scattered through journals and catalogues (especially in the case of magical gems). Since the volume dedicated to the Coptic texts of ritual power (MEYER & SMITH 1999) includes only translations, I also consulted all the original editions.