Hugo Lund Haug
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The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices
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Preface

The monastic provenance of the Nag Hammadi Codices is a topic that has been at the back of our minds for a number of years while researching the Nag Hammadi texts. In light of an increasing tendency in scholarship to dismiss the monastic *Sitz im Leben* for this fascinating collection of early Christian codices, we both felt the need to examine the evidence more closely from as many angles as possible, and to assess the various alternatives. Research for this book thus began in early 2013 as an attempt to co-write an article on the topic, but the work quickly grew well beyond the boundaries of an article, and it became clear to us that it would require the kind of detailed treatment that only a book allows.

The composition of this book has taken place within the research project New Contexts for Old Texts: Unorthodox Texts and Monastic Manuscript Culture in Fourth- and Fifth-Century Egypt (NEWCONT), a five-year endeavor funded by a Starting Grant from the European Research Council (ERC) awarded to Hugo Lundhaug in 2011, and hosted at the University of Oslo’s Faculty of Theology for the period of 2012–2016.¹ It is this generous ERC funding that has facilitated the close collaboration that resulted in this book, and for that we are deeply grateful.

There are indeed many colleagues and institutions that deserve thanks for their help and support. We would first of all like to thank the other members of the NEWCONT project, postdoctoral research fellow Christian Bull and PhD-students Kristine Toft Rosland and Paula Tutty, for their inspiring collaboration and conversations. The Faculty of Theology with its former and current deans Trygve Wyller and Aud Tønnesen, as well as its head librarian, Svein-Helge Birkeflet, also deserve gratitude for wholeheartedly supporting the project.

Special recognition is due to René Falkenberg, Michael Williams, Ingvild Sælid Gilhus, Christian Bull, Paula Tutty, and Christian Askeland for proof-reading, commenting upon, and improving drafts of the chapters. Each of them has significantly enhanced the quality of the book. Thanks also to Paula Tutty for putting together the index of modern authors. We would also like to thank the chief theology editor at Mohr Siebeck, Henning Ziebritzki, the series editors, Christoph Markschies, Christian Wildberg, and Martin Walraff, and the production team, Susanne Mang and Martin Fischer, for their careful, patient, and detailed efforts.

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Research for this book has also benefited from our tour of archaeological sites and Coptic monasteries throughout Egypt in May 2014, in both the Eastern Desert and the Nile valley, from Luxor to Alexandria. The visit proved to be highly illuminating for our understanding of the region's geography and terrain, especially with regard to the Dishna plain and the area around the Jabal al-Tarf where the Nag Hammadi Codices were discovered. We would like to thank our traveling companions in Egypt, first and foremost Samuel Rubenson, who organized and led the trip in connection with his research project Early Monasticism and Classical Paideia (MOPAI) at Lund University, along with members of his research team, Lillian Larsen, Jesper Blid, Bo Holmberg, Britt Dahlman, Jason Zaborowski, and Johan Ahlfeldt, as well as NEWCONT’s Kristine Toft Rosland. Our guide in Egypt, Beshoy Amir, deserves special praise for his tireless efforts and endless humor.

The book has also been enhanced by the generosity of a number of individuals. We would like to thank in particular Stephen Emmel for sharing with us his excellent set of maps of the Jabal al-Tarf and its environs, as well as photographs and transcriptions of White Monastery manuscripts of texts by Shenoute; James Goehring, for his wonderful images of monastic graffiti at the Wadi Sheikh Ali; and Martin Schøyen, who provided images of papyri from his invaluable collection of manuscripts and antiquities, and generously donated samples of the leather cover and cartonnage papyri from Nag Hammadi Codex I for radiocarbon analysis. A number of institutions have also been helpful in making their materials available to us, including the Fondation Martin Bodmer, the Scheide Library, the Claremont Colleges Digital Archives, the British Library, and Google. Thanks are also due to the Beinecke Library and Brendan Haug for facilitating our research there.

Finally, we owe an indelible debt to our wives, Linn Lundhaug and Virginia Clark, for their love, support, encouragement, and toleration, not only through the process of writing this book, but throughout our lives.

Oslo, July 2015

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Lance Jenott
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