In 1945, a collection of thirteen papyrus codices written in Coptic was discovered in Egypt. This collection of texts has been named "The Nag Hammadi Library", after the place where they were found. Of the fifty-one discovered texts, forty-nine were previously unknown. Subsequent research on these texts led to conclusion that most of the Nag Hammadi texts can be identified nowadays as Sethian scriptures.

The work of Hans-Martin Schenke was a breakthrough in researching and describing Sethian Gnosticism. In his publications, he drew attention to the categories indicating belonging to the Sethian corpus. Schenke defined thirteen distinguishing features of Sethianism, e.g.: sense of being the offspring of Seth, recognizing Seth as a savior or the prominent presence of the heavenly trinity: Father-Mother-Son. It allowed to include in the Sethian corps such texts as: the *Apocryphon of John*, the *Hypostasis of the Archons*, *Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit* (or the *Gospel of the Egyptians*), the *Apocalypse of Adam* and *Trimorphic Protennoia*.

Sethian Gnosticism, with a rich system of concepts and ideas, was born and developed under specific historical conditions and under their influence. This provided an incentive to search for answers to questions about a more precise picture of the political, social, intellectual and religious situation in which the Sethian texts were created and which of this factors influenced the ideas and forms expressed in these texts. The exploration and presentation of the circumstances conducive to the creation of the Sethian texts and the richness of their content became the motivation to study the topic of historical conditions for the development of Gnostic ideas in Egypt in the light of Sethian texts from the Nag Hammadi library.

This dissertation contains a detailed analysis of the history of discoveries, the history of texts and the historical background of Gnosticism. Besides, the literary nature of the source texts has been analyzed. The identification and detailed analysis of these conditions, which both influenced the creation of the texts and determined their specific content, has become the main objective. A synthetic presentation and exposition of the results of my own detailed analyzes have been carried out in the context of the review of the existing studies.

First, the source texts from the Nag Hammadi library were presented. Then, the background of the times when the Sethianism idea was alive was shown. Next, political issues were presented, including the Ptolemaic and Roman periods in Egypt. As part of social issues, the social hierarchy and the consequences of the social order of that time were discussed. The analysis and presentation of the intellectual background was focused on the issues of culture, education and philosophical schools. Religious backgrounds were also presented, from the ancient

Egyptian religion, through religious syncretism, mystery cults, hermeticism, to Alexandrian Judaism and Christianity.

Another topic was Gnosticism and its characteristics. The attempts to define the term "gnosticism" were analyzed and, in relation to them, the adopted definition of gnosticism was indicated. Later on, the concepts of the origin of Gnosticism and their consequences were presented. To complete the historical picture of gnosticism, the opinions of heresiologists, i.e. the oldest Christian researchers of gnosticism, were presented.

Finally, the Sethian ideas were analyzed. For this purpose, they were divided into three content groups: cosmological and cosmogonic (ideas of divinity and ordering the world), soteriological and eschatological (ideas of the spiritual seed of Seth, the savior and salvation) and also anthropological and anthropogenic (ideas of human origin, human structure, femininity and masculinity). These ideas were presented in the light of the source texts and then confronted with the historical background. This allowed for a synthesis, containing the knowledge of what had the strongest influence on the shape of the specific idea.

It turned out that an important social factor that influenced the shape of Sethian ideas was attachment to conservative thinking. This condition was clear in the social environment which treated the institution of marriage and the family very seriously. An example of this thinking was the indication of the father's right to abandon the newborn child (*ius vitae ac necis, ius exponendi*) in terms of Sophia's idea. Similar conditions were present in the idea of the cosmos and the ordering of the world, expressed in a language describing relations in the family understood patriarchally, with the implicit expression of the *pater potestas* principle.

It was connected in an unusual way with Sethian approach to the role of woman and femininity. In Sethian Gnosticism, the woman was portrayed in the ideological tension between the high importance and independence of the Egyptian woman and Roman patriarchal law and customs. The Roman mentality in this regard was best expressed by laws on permitted and illicit sexual behavior, especially rape. Roman customs and legislation did not so much protect women's dignity as they cared for the woman as an indispensable member of the family in the procreative sense and indicated the need to protect the dignity of a man, her husband or guardian.

The Sethian ideas were greatly influenced by Platonic philosophy. The impact of Platonism can be indicated in practically each of the studied Sethian ideas. This is confirmed by numerous direct references to Platonic literature. Platonic philosophy can also be considered as the basic conditioning of the ideas of the cosmos, chaos, heimarmene, pleroma or anthropological ideas.

The most important religious background of Sethian gnosticism was Alexandrian Judaism. The Sethian texts from the Nag Hammadi were very much related directly and indirectly to the biblical content. The first chapters of Genesis are especially important for understanding the Nag Hammadi library. They were the starting point for many comments, exegesis and paraphrases that appeared in large numbers in the analyzed texts. The Old Testament and the Judaic Haggadas deeply conditioned the idea of a savior and salvation.

To sum up, the conclusion of this work can be a statement that Sethian Gnosticism was "a child of its age." In Sethian texts, we recognize echoes of the historical processes and changes that took place on many levels, especially in the social, intellectual and religious space.

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