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Victor Ghica

# Sasabek and Beroth (NHVI,41,28–30): A Theonymic Mixed Marriage

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# Sasabek and Beroth (NH VI,41,28–30)
# A Theonymic Mixed Marriage

VICTOR GHICA

The purpose of this paper is twofold: to discuss the names of two Gnostic archons, specifically their meaning and origin; to evaluate the results of this semasiological analysis from the perspective of the historical origins of *The Concept of Our Great Power* (*Great Pow.*), the Nag Hammadi treatise in which these hieronyms are attested.

The passage concerned is *Great Pow.* 41,28b–30a, the Coptic text and the translation of which are presented here according to the latest reading of the text:

ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲩⲧⲁ|ⲁϥ ⲉⲧⲟⲟⲧϥ ⲛ̅ⲥ̅ⲁ̅ⲥ̅ⲁⲃⲉⲕ | ⲁⲍⲉⲛⲃ̅ⲉ̅ⲣ̅ⲱ̅ⲧ̅ⲟ̅ (Cherix 1993)[1]

*Et Il fut remis à Sasabek et Berōth.* (Schenke 1985)[2]

Prior to Schenke, who proposes this reading in a review of Cherix's study of *Great Pow.*,[3] the interpretation of this passage was determined by the analysis of ⲃⲉⲣⲱⲧ as a variant of *BFSLA* ⲃⲁⲣⲱⲧ / ⲃⲁⲣⲟⲧ (var. *S* ⲃⲁⲗⲱⲧ), "brass, bronze",[4] based on the analogy established by the first editor[5] with Mt 26:15; 27:3:

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1 P. Cherix, *Concordance des textes de Nag Hammadi. Le codex VI*, *BCNH*, section "Concordances" 2, Sainte-Foy/Leuven–Paris, 1993, p. 439, 441.

2 H.-M. Schenke, Review of P. Cherix, *Le Concept de notre grande puissance (CGVI, 4): texte, remarques philologiques, traduction et notes*, *OBO* 47, 1982, in *Enchoria* 13, 1985, p. 237-238.

3 The reference by Schenke to the "sieben Bronzemünzen" of Krause's translation —who renders "neun"— is a typographical error.

4 Cf. W.E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, Oxford, 1939, p. 43b–44a; R. Kasser, *Compléments au dictionnaire copte de Crum*, *BEC* 7, 1964, p. 9a.

5 M. Krause, P. Labib, *Gnostische und hermetische Schriften aus Codex II und Codex VI*, *ADAIK*, *Koptische Reihe* 2, Glückstadt, 1971, p. 157b.



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- Krause–Labib 1971 (*editio princes*)
  ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲩⲧⲁⲗⲁ ⲉⲧⲟⲟⲧⲟ ⲛ̄ⲥⲁⲥⲁⲃⲉⲕ | ⲁ2ⲉⲛⲃⲉⲣⲱⲧ ⲑ̄ .
  *Und sie | lieferten ihn aus an Sasabek | für neun Bronzemünzen.*[6]

- Wisse–Williams 1979
  ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲩⲧⲁⲗⲁ ⲉⲧⲟⲟⲧⲟ ⲛ̄ⲥⲁⲥⲁⲃⲉⲕ | ⲁ2ⲉⲛⲃⲉⲣⲱⲧ ⲑ̄.
  *And they handed | him over to Sasabek | for nine bronze coins.*[7]

- Cherix 1982
  *Et Il fut remis à Sasabek pour 9 pièces de bronze.*[8]

- Wisse 1996
  *And they handed | him over to Sasabek | for nine bronze coins.*[9]

Beyond the fact that the New Testament reference put forward by Krause is not a parallel and therefore cannot determine the interpretation of the passage of *Great Pow.*,[10] this reading raises several problems, as Schenke has demonstrated:

1. the word ⲃⲉⲣⲱⲧⲟ is —in its entirety— surmounted by the hieronymic supralinear stroke;
2. the numeral is never preceded by the indefinite article, even in indefinite utterances;
3. the numeral modifier precedes the modified noun;
4. the preposition ⲁ" does not have the meaning "for."

These considerations invalidate *per se* the reading ⲁ"2ⲉⲛ"ⲃⲉⲣⲱⲧ ⲑ̄ and the translation "for nine bronze coins." Nevertheless, they were not immediately taken into account:[11] even if French-speaking scholars embraced them (Cherix 1993[12] and Roberge 2007[13]), the editions

6 *Ibid.*

7 Fr. Wisse, Fr.E. Williams, "The Concept of Our Great Power. VI,*4*: 36,1–48,15", in D.M. Parrott (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2–5 and VI with Papyrus Berolinensis 8502, 1 and 4*, *NHS* 11, Leiden, 1979, p. 308-309.

8 P. Cherix, *Le Concept de notre grande puissance (CGVI, 4): texte, remarques philologiques, traduction et notes*, *OBO* 47, 1982, p. 16.

9 Fr.E. Williams, Fr. Wisse, D.M. Parrott, "The Concept of Our Great Power (VI,*4*)", in J.M. Robinson (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, 4th ed., Leiden–New York–Köln, 1996, p. 314.

10 The edition of Krause and Labib shows a wide comprehension of the notion of parallel. In this particular case, no pertinent relation could be established between the thirty silver coins of Matthew —the price of a slave (Exo 21:32)— and the nine bronze coins of *Great Pow.*, which allusion —supposing that there is one— remains obscure.

11 The reading of Krause–Labib 1971 was adopted by several studies of which I will list here only three: J.-M. Sevrin, *Le dossier baptismal séthien: étude sur la sacramentaire gnostique*, *BCNH*, Section "Études" 2, Québec-City, 1986, p. 156, n. 29; C.A. Evans, R.L. Webb, R.A. Wiebe (eds.), *Nag Hammadi Texts and the Bible. A Synopsis and Index*, *New Testament Tools and Studies* 18, Leiden–New York–Köln, 1993, p. 277; A. Piñero, J. Montserrat Torrents, Fr. Garcia Bazán, F. Bermejo, M.L. Mangado, A. Quevedo, *Textos gnósticos. Biblioteca de Nag Hammadi*, vol. 3 (*Apocalipsis y otros escritos*), *Colección Paradigmas: Biblioteca de Ciencias de las Religiones* 27, Madrid, 2000, p. 125.

12 See *supra*.

13 M. Roberge, "L'entendement de notre Grande Puissance. Traduction," in J.-P. Mahé, P.-H. Poirier (eds.), *Écrits gnostiques. La bibliothèque de Nag Hammadi*, *BiPleiade* 538, Paris, 2007, p. 915: "Puis il fut remis à Sasabek et à Beroth"; M. Desjardins, M. Roberge, "L'entendement de notre Grande Puissance. Notes," in J.-P. Mahé, P.-H. Poirier (eds.), *Écrits…*, *op. cit.*, p. 915.


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which resulted from the work of the Institute of Antiquity and Christianity of Claremont did not adopt them until 2007.[14]

The only grammatically acceptable interpretation of the passage is that suggested by Schenke, who reads ⲁϩⲉⲛ as a variant of the preposition *L* ⲁϩⲛ̄, "and," itself an alternative form of *L* ⲁϩⲁⲛ: "Et Il fut remis à Sasabek et Berōth."[15] However, this reading requires some comments, which have already been expressed by W.-P. Funk. Whether it is a "'vocalisation' de la variante ⲁϩⲛ̄–" or a "'sahidisation' superficielle de la variante ⲁϩⲁⲛ–,"[16] the form ⲁϩⲉⲛ poses a dialectal problem in a text which —to an as-yet undetermined extent— can be defined as Sahidic. Indeed, ⲁϩⲁⲛ and ⲁϩⲛ̄ are attested solely in the dialect *L4*, where the former is much better represented.[17] The presence of ⲁϩⲉⲛ in *Great Pow.* is to be explained, according to Funk —and this analysis was not called into question—, by an *L4* background of the text (qualified by Funk with a word that suggests a certain history of the text transmission: "traces"). The occurrence in the *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles* (NH VI,1) of a preposition ϩⲉⲛ, variant of the *S* ϩⲛ̄, could lend support to the first of the two solutions proposed by Funk for the ⲁϩⲉⲛ of *Great Pow.*, i.e. that of the re-vocalisation of ⲁϩⲛ̄. If elsewhere in the text of *AcPe12Ap* the preposition ϩⲛ̄ maintains its classic form, in 6,23 it appears as ϩⲉⲛ (6,23b–24a: ϩⲉⲛ|ⲑ̄ ⲛ̄ⲣⲟ), whereby ⲉ notes an anaptyxis of /ɛ/ rather than a Northern written form of the *Murmelvokal*.[18] However, Funk opts in this case for the former explanation, that of a Northern vocalisation, and draws a parallel between ϩⲉⲛ and the form interpreted by him as "bohaïrisante" of the following numeral (ⲑ̄ for ϥⲓⲥ in 6,24a). This Bohairic or Bohairic-like dialectal "nest" of *AcPe12Ap* is, for Funk, an argument for an initial stage of the transmission of this text related to a "dialecte nord-égyptien (près du bohaïrique)."[19] The fact remains that variants of this preposition comprising an epsilon, equally adventitious, so to speak, as that occurring in *AcPe12Ap*, are attested in Sahidic texts which do not exhibit other Northern features.[20]

These remarks are essential for the following discussions.

14 M. Meyer, "The Concept of Our Great Power. Translation," in *id.* (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures. The International Edition*, New York, 2007, p. 398: "They gave him over to Sasabek and Berotth."

15 See *supra*.

16 W.-P. Funk, "L'orthographe du manuscrit," in P.-H. Poirier, W.-P. Funk, *Le tonnerre, intellect parfait (NH VI,2)*, *BCNH*, section "Textes" 22, Sainte-Foy/Leuven–Paris, 1995, p. 25.

17 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 25, n. 104.

18 In *F* it can be spelled ϩⲉⲛ (in complementary distribution with ϩⲛ̄, ϩⲓⲛ, ϩⲉ and ϩϩ) and in *B* it is always written ϧⲉⲛ; cf. W.E. Crum, *A Coptic…*, *op. cit.*, p. 683a.

19 W.-P. Funk, "L'orthographe…," *op. cit.*, p. 24-25.

20 See e.g. S. Giversen, "Acrostical St. Menas-Hymn in Sahidic," *AcOr* (C) 23, 1959, p. 21; G.P. Sobhy, "Two Leaves in the Coptic Dialect of Middle Egypt (S F[1])," in *Mélanges Maspero*, vol. 2 (*Orient grec, romain et byzantin*), *MIFAO* 67, 1935, p. 246; W.C. Till, "Ein sahidisches Baruch-Fragment," *Le Muséon* 46, 1933, p. 36 (11), 37 (13[x3], 22), 38 (26). The preposition ϩⲉⲛ appears also in a graffito of the Dayr Muṣṭafā Kāšif monastery in Kharga Oasis. The graffito, still unpublished, begins with the invocation ϩⲉⲙⲡⲁⲛ ⲛⲧⲙⲟⲩⲧⲉ, which is all but Bohairic. The issue of the vernacular Coptic dialect of Kharga Oasis will be dealt with in G. Roquet, V. Ghica, *Bagawat. Inscriptions et graffites coptes et copto-grecs*, forthcoming at the Institut français d'archéologie orientale.


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ⲥⲁⲥⲁⲃⲉⲕ

Prior attempts to explain this name relate it either to the Egyptian god Sobek[21] or to "'l'arbre de Sabek' (LXX Gn 22,13), symbole de la croix".[22] An *ad hoc* Middle Persian etymology was also proposed, which interprets this name —pretending to stem from an unattested *sās-ābīg*— as "aqueous bug," "a Gnostic Charon flowing in the waters of hell-river."[23] Even if vaguely formulated, the first hypothesis is not utterly unfounded. However, its lack of accuracy misleads research into the name's origin and the possible role of this archon in *Great Pow.*'s economy. The case of Fr.E. Williams is telling in this regard. Williams considers that the Egyptian deity, that he characterises as being a "monster,"[24] personifies "the worm that does not die" of Mt 9:48, as described by the *Martyrdom of St. Macarius of Antioch*. When attributing to the "snake which never slept" a crocodile head, this Coptic text calls, in effect, upon a symbolic bestiary well-known in Egyptian ascetic literature, whose inspiration is not drawn from the reptile class alone. There is no need to dwell on the numerous examples one can cite in this connection. It should simply be underlined that nothing in the Christian demonic imagery supports Williams' assertion that "The crocodile-headed monster would (…) seem to be a combination of the worm that never dies and the crocodile Sebk."[25] It comes as no surprise that the monstrous Sobek depicted by Williams becomes in the latest French translation of *Great Pow.* "le dieu infernal égyptien Sebk."[26] Of course, the crocodile-god is in no way definable as an infernal deity, and his outwardly frightful aspect denotes only his power, identical to the strength of the animal which is his *ba*.[27]

Sasabek is simply an Egyptian male name, one among many others in a long series of filionyms involving *s3-*. Transmitted in various spellings (, , , , dem. [28]), it is amply attested especially from the Middle Kingdom onwards[29] and

21 Fr.E. Williams, *Mental Perception. A Commentary on NHC VI,4*. The Concept of Our Great Power, *NHMS* 51, Leiden–Boston–Köln, 2001, p. 119-120; M. Desjardins, M. Roberge, "L'entendement…," *op. cit.*, p. 915.

22 M. Desjardins, M. Roberge, "L'entendement…," *loc. cit.*

23 E. Albrile, "Oltre le soglie di Ade. Un *excursus* mitografico," *Laurentianum* 47, 2006, p. 346. The same interpretation is given in: *id.*, "Coptica iranica," *Kervan* 4–5, 2006–2007, p. 14. It is not the purpose of this paper to discuss the methodological relevance of the comparative mythology applied in these two articles. However, two points ought to be made: 1. MP **sās-ābīg* [*s's 'p̄yk*$^{l}$] is not attested as such; 2. the phonetic rules that govern the transformations undergone by the few Middle Persian, Avestan or New Persian words adopted in Coptic are too badly known to demonstrate the borrowing MP **sās-ābīg* > ⲥⲁⲥⲁⲃⲉⲕ. Nevertheless, several Persian etymons prove that /g/ becomes in Sahidic Coptic /c/ (ϭ) (*S* ⲁⲃⲁϭⲏⲓⲛ and var., *B* ⲁⲃⲁϫⲓⲛⲓ and var., "crystal, glass" < NP اَبْگِينَة; *S* ⲃⲁⲥⲛϭ, "tin" < ⲃⲁ + NP سَنْگ; *S* ϫⲁⲣⲁϭⲱⲟⲩϣ and var., *B* ϧⲁⲣⲁϭⲱⲟⲩⲧⲥ, *F* ϭⲁⲛϭⲱⲱϣ, "hare" < NP خَرْگوش) and only once /k/ (ⲕ) (*SA* ⲕⲁϣⲁⲃⲉⲗ, "earring" < NP گوشْوَارة); cf. J. Černý, *Coptic Etymological Dictionary*, Cambridge–London–New York–Melbourne, 1976, p. 3, 27, 67, 163; W. Westendorf, *Koptisches Handwörterbuch*, Heidelberg, 1977, p. 2, 73, 196, 495; W. Vycichl, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue copte*, Leuven, 1983, p. 32, 91a, 197a, 343b. It should also be noted that Albrile gives an erroneous reading of the passage 41,28–30 ("Oltre…," *op. cit.*, p. 339). He actually retains the old ungrammatical reading of Krause-Labib because of "questioni mitografiche" ("Oltre…," *op. cit.*, p. 339) that I will not discuss here.

24 Fr.E. Williams, *Mental…*, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

25 *Ibid.*

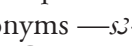
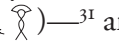
26 M. Desjardins, M. Roberge, "L'entendement…," *op. cit.*, p. 915.

27 For a recent summary and relevant bibliography, see J.-P. Corteggiani, *L'Égypte ancienne et ses dieux. Dictionnaire illustré*, Paris, 2007, p. 508a-510a.

28 Cf. H. Ranke, PN, vol. 1, Glückstadt, 1935, p. 284a.

29 For references, cf. H. Ranke, PN, *loc. cit.* To these occurrences may be added the following: N.K. Reich, "Eine ägyptische Urkunde über den Kauf eines bebauten Grundstückes. Eine Philologisch-Historische Urkunde,"


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becomes frequent in Ptolemaic times under the form *sj-śbk*.[30] It is also part of three composed anthroponyms —*sȝ-śbk šrj* (), *sȝ-śbk ʿnḫ(.w)* (), *sȝ-śbk wȝḥ (.w)* ()—[31] and, in the Hellenistic and Roman periods when it is largely documented, it is rendered by Σισοῦχος, "the son of (the god) Suchos," Σοῦχος being the Greek name of Sobek.[32]

As a rather frequently attested personal name, it is impossible to connect Sasabek to any memorable figure who could possibly throw light on the association which may be the basis of the archontic theonym of *Great Pow.* However, the vocalisation with *ȝ* points to an archaic hieroglyphic source, which opens new perspectives for the study of the background of the text's redactor or of one of its redactors. One should recall in this connection that Sobek haunts the memories long after his cult had fallen into abeyance. Indeed the name of Σοῦχος and several of his attributes are still known in the 6th century by Damascius, "the last of the Neoplatonists."[33]

## ΒΕΡΩΤΘ

Before questioning the inspiration behind this hieronym, we ought to draw attention to the expletive character of the tau. It is obviously a mere graphematic anomaly, a sort of "phonetic complement" which is not without parallels in Coptic.

The name and function of Beroth were related by Fr.E. Williams[34] to those of Nimrod (נִמְרֹד) of Gn 10:8–9, rendered by LXX as Νεβρώδ. It is well established that the LXX, which translates גִּבֹּר־צַיִד לִפְנֵי יְהוָה (Gn 10:9) by γίγας κυνηγὸς ἐναντίον Κυρίου —probably under the influence of the Greek tradition about the giants' revolt against the Olympian gods[35]—, opens the way for the negative image that the hero of the post-diluvian times takes on up to Dante[36] and beyond.[37] This is the main reason why, prior to Williams, F. Cumont[38]

*RecTrav* 33, 1911, p. 120, 153-154; A.C. Mace, "A Group of Hitherto Unpublished Scarabs in the Metropolitan Museum, New York," *JEA* 7, 1921, p. 36 (no. 12); D. Devauchelle, J.-Cl. Grenier, "Remarques sur le nome hermonthite à la lumière de quelques inscriptions de Tôd," *BIFAO* 82, 1982, p. 159.

30 Cf. E. Lüddeckens, H.J. Thissen, W. Brunsch, G. Vittmann, K.-Th. Zauzich, *Demotisches Namenbuch*, vol. I.12 (*htp-hr–sn-snw*), Wiesbaden, 1993, p. 904-905.

31 Cf. H. Ranke, PN, *loc. cit.*

32 The Coptic person names ϲⲁⲃⲉϧ / ϲⲁⲃϩⲕ and ⲗⲉϧⲁⲃⲉϧ / ⲗⲉϧⲁⲃϩⲕ / ⲗⲉϧⲉⲃϩⲕ (cf. M. Hasitzka, *Namen in koptischen dokumentarischen Texten*, p. 56a, 87b [http://www.onb.ac.at/sammlungen/papyrus/publ/kopt_namen.pdf, 22.01.2007]; R.-G. Coquin, M.-H. Rutschowskaya, "Les stèles coptes du Département des antiquités égyptiennes du Louvre," *BIFAO* 94, 1994, p. 121) are most likely not connected with *śbk*. W. Till (*Datierung und Prosopographie der koptischen Urkunden aus Theben*, *SAWW* 240/1, 1962, p. 81) considers them to be diminutives of Elisabeth.

33 *Vita Isidori*, ap. Photium, *Bibliotheca* codd. 181; 242; frag. 99, l. 1, trans. R. Asmus, *Das Leben des Philosophen Isidoros von Damaskios aus Damaskos*, *Der philosophischen Bibliothek* 125, Leipzig, 1911, p. 62.

34 Fr.E. Williams, *Mental…*, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

35 Cf. C. Uehlinger, "Nimrod," in K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, P.W. van der Horst (eds.), *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Leiden–New York–Köln, 1995, p. 1185.

36 *Divina Commedia Inf.* xxxi, *Pg.* xii, *Pd.* xxvi.

37 For a recent and well documented survey of the literature concerning Nimrod, see K. van der Toorn, P.W. van der Horst, "Nimrod Before and After the Bible," *HTR* 83, 1990, p. 1-29.

38 *Recherches sur le manichéisme*, vol. I (*La cosmogonie manichéenne d'après Théodore Bar Khôni*), Bruxelles, 1908, p. 74.


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and more recently A. Böhlig, Fr. Wisse, P. Labib,[39] and G.A.G. Stroumsa[40] already identified this biblical character with Namrael (mentioned in Theodor bar Konai's *Liber Scholiorum*[41]) and Nebrūēl[42] (known through Michael the Syrian,[43] Priscillian of Avila,[44] and the *Gospel of the Egyptians* – NH III,57,18; 22[45]), the consort, in one of the Manichaean anthropogonic myths, of Ašaqlūn (correlate of the Gnostic demiurge Saklas[46]) and mother of Adam and Eve. Following a well-represented tradition of scholarship,[47] Williams goes further and finds another avatar of the re-mythicised Nimrod / Nebrod in the Mandean demonness Namrus (Rūhā), who, together with her sons —the seven planets—, embodies the evil forces of the creation.[48] Yet it is just as true that the phonetic mutations implied by the identification of ⲃⲉⲣⲱⲧⲑ with Νεβρώδ remain unexplained.

Beroth is actually an ancient god of the Phoenician theogony, if we are to believe Philo of Byblos. According to his *Phoenician History*, Bērouth (Βηρούθ)[49] —that is the Greek rendering of the name— is the spouse of Elioun (Ἐλιοῦν), "called the Most High, (…) who settled the area around Byblos".[50] This primeval divine couple gives birth to Epigeius, or Autochton —later called Ouranos (Heaven)—, and Gē (Earth),[51] and lies at the origin of the Phoenician pantheon, populated by the descendants of the incestuous union between Ouranos and his sister Gē. Philo of Byblos (*PE* 1.10.15) and Nonnus of Panopolis (*Dionysiaca* XLI.364–367)[52] describe Bērouth (called by Nonnus Βερόη, the name by which Beirut is known in the 5th century)[53] as

39 *The Nag Hammadi Codices III,2 and IV,2. The Gospel of the Egyptians (The Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit)*, *NHS* 4, Leiden, 1975, p. 183.

40 *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology*, *NHS* 24, Leiden, 1984, p. 160, n. 79.

41 *Theodorus Bar Koni. Liber Scholiorum* II, ed. A. Scher, *CSCO* 69, *Scriptores Syri* 26, Paris, 1912, p. 317; Fr. Cumont, *Recherches…*, *op. cit.*, p. 42; H.H. Schaeder, R. Reitzenstein, *Studien zum antiken Synkretismus aus Iran und Griechenland*, *Studien der Bibliothek Warburg* 7, Leipzig–Berlin, 1926, p. 346; A.V.W. Jackson, *Researches in Manichaeism*, New York, 1932, p. 248-249; G.A.G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed…*, *op. cit.*, p. 159; J.C. Reeves, *Heralds of That Good Realm: Syro-Mesopotamian Gnosis and Jewish Traditions*, *Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies* 41, Leiden–New York–Köln, 1996, p. 79.

42 Cumont (*Recherches…*, *op. cit.*, p. 42, n. 3, and 74) considers Namrael and Nebrūēl a one and the same Babylonian demon who, once the Babylonian Manichaeism penetrated the Roman world, was assimilated to the already demonised Nimrod. The latter assumption was criticised by G.A.G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed…*, *op. cit.*, p. 160, n. 79. The identity of the two characters is supported by Theodor bar Konai's text which mentions the name under different spellings: ⲛⲁⲙⲣⲁⲏⲗ, ⲛⲁⲙⲣⲁⲉⲗ, ⲛⲁⲙⲣⲁⲁⲗ, ⲛⲁⲙⲣⲁⲗ.

43 *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, patriarche jacobite d'Antioche*, ed. J.-B. Chabot, vol. 4, reprinted, Brussels, 1963, p. 118.

44 Cf. H. Chadwick, *Priscillian of Avila: The Occult and the Charismatic in the Early Church*, Oxford, 1975, p. 94.

45 The first half of the name is lost in a lacuna; the first edition to restore it is that of A. Böhlig, Fr. Wisse, P. Labib, *The Nag Hammadi…*, *op. cit.*: p. 122.

46 For this identification, see Fr. Cumont, *Recherches…*, *op. cit.*, p. 73-74.

47 Cf. J.C. Reeves, *Heralds…*, *op. cit.*, p. 98, n. 73.

48 In this connection, cf. G. Furlani, "Nimusa, Nimrus e Namrus negli scritti dei Mandei," *RAL* ser. 8, 6, 1951, p. 519-531.

49 Eusebius of Caesarea, *Præparatio evangelica* 1.10.15, ed. H.W. Attridge, R.A. Oden, Jr., *Philo of Byblos*, *The Phoenician History*, *CBQ-Monogr.* 9, Washington, 1981, p. 46.

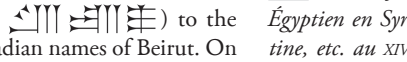
50 Eusebius of Caesarea, *Præparatio evangelica* 1.10.15, *ed. cit.*, p. 46-47.

51 For a recent evaluation of the long-debated relation between Philo's work and Hesiod's *Theogony*, see A.I. Baumgarten, "Philo of Byblos," in D.N. Freedman (ed.), *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 5, New York, 1992, p. 342-343.

52 Ed. F. Graefe, vol. 2, Leipzig, 1826, p. 380.

53 On the relation between the two Greek names of the city, see G.F. Hill, "Some Graeco-Phoenician Shrines," *JHS* 31, 1911, p. 58, n. 9.


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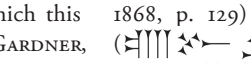
the tutelary deity and the personification of the city of Beirut.[54] The connection between the city and its patron goddess is reflected in the coins struck by the former under Elagabalus, on which Beroē is portrayed together with Poseidon, her paredros in Berytus' mythology.[55] The same scene is attested almost four centuries earlier, in the xenon belonging to the temple of the establishment of Poseidonists in Delos.[56] It is the episode of Poseidon's seduction of Beroē, a nymph daughter of Kythereia (Afrodite) and Assyrian Adonis (*Dionysiaca* XLI.155), given by Zeus as bride to the Earth-shaker (*Dionysiaca* XLIII.372). The mosaic of Lillebonne apparently displays the same motif.[57] In any case, Philo's and Nonnus' assertions suggest a common origin for the toponym and the theonym. Now, the etymology of Beirut is well established: Akk. *URU.be-ru-ta*,[58] *KUR.bi-ru-tu*,[59] and *KUR.bi-ru-ú/ut-ti*[60], as well as Can. *Bērōt* (MT בְּאֵרוֹת; sg. *bēr* [< **bi'r*, MT בְּאֵר]),[61] Eg. *Bi-ru-ta* (in syllabic writing ; *P. Anast.* I 20,8),[62]

54 On the typology to which this association belongs, cf. P. Gardner, "Countries and Cities in Ancient Art," *JHS* 9, 1888, p. 55-56.

55 Cf. G.F. Hill, *A Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the British Museum. Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Phoenicia*, London, 1910, p. xlvii, lviii, pl. x, 8; O. Morkholm, *Sylloge nummorum græcorum (Denmark). The Royal Collection of Coins and Medals. Danish National Museum Copenhagen*, part 37 (*Phoenicia*), Copenhagen, 1961, p. 118; H.C. Lindgren, *Ancient Greek Bronze Coins: European Mints from the Lindgren Collection*, San Mateo, 1989, p. 120 (2268). See also M.B. Comstock, "Greek Imperial Coins," *Boston Museum Bulletin* 65/342, 1967, p. 168.

56 Cf. Ch. Picard, "Le Poseidon lysippique de Bérytos et la surprise de la Nymphe Néroé, éponyme de Bérytos," *RevArch* 47, 1956, p. 225-227.

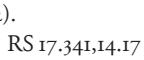
57 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 227.

58 Cf. *EA* 92:32; 101:25; 114:13; 118:28, 31; 138 *passim*; 141:4; 142:12; 143:21, 25; 155:67. For the syllabic writing of the name, see the facsimile of H. Winckler, L. Abel, *Der Thontafelfund von El Amarna*, *MOS* 2, vol. 2, Berlin, 1890, p. 54 (*EA* 118:28, 31). For the other forms, see *The Tell el-Amarna Tablets in the British Museum*, London, 1892, p. 147. E. Norris (*Assyrian Dictionary Intended to Further the Study of the Cuneiform Inscriptions of Assyria and Babylonia*, part I, London–Edinburgh, 1868, p. 129) adds also *bīt-birūtaš* () to the ancient Akkadian names of Beirut. On the pattern to which this toponym conforms, see M.C. Astour, "Aegean Place-Names in an Egyptian Inscription," *AJA* 70/4, 1966, p. 316 and n. 46. On the vocalisation of the toponym, see Sh. Izre'el, "Vocalized Canaanite: Cuneiform-Written Canaanite Words in the Amarna Letters. Some Methodological Remarks," *Dutch Studies in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures* 5, 2003, p. 23, n. 4.

59 RS 11.730,1 (Ch. Virolleaud, "Lettres et documents administratifs provenant des archives d'Ugarit", *Syria* 21, 1940, p. 247-249; Cl.Fr.-A. Schaeffer, *Le palais royal d'Ugarit*, vol. 3 [*Textes accadiens et hourrites des archives est, ouest et centrales*], *MRasShamra* 6, Paris, 1955, p. 12).

60 RS 17.341,14.17 (J. Nougayrol, *Le palais royal d'Ugarit*, vol. 4 [*Textes accadiens des archives sud*], *MRasShamra* 9, Paris, 1956, p. 162 and pl. L).

61 Cf. W.F. Albright, "The North-Canaanite Epic of ʾAlʾêyân Baʿal and Môt," *JPOS* 12, 1932, p. 190; St. Wild, *Libanesische Ortsnamen. Typologie und Deutung*, *Beiruter Texte und Studien* 9, Beirut, 1973, p. 122; *id.*, "Zu aramäischen Ortsnamen in Palästina," in *La toponymie antique. Actes du colloque de Strasbourg 12–14 juin 1975*, *TCRPOG* 4, Leiden, 1977, p. 66.

62 See Fr.J. Chabas, *Voyage d'un Égyptien en Syrie, en Phénicie, en Palestine, etc. au XIV^me^ siècle avant notre ère*, Chalon-sur-Saône, 1866, p. 161-162; M. Burchardt, *Die altkanaanäischen Fremdworte und Eigennamen im aegyptischen*, vol. 2, Leipzig, 1910, no. 366. The designatum of the toponym is well established; cf. W.M. Müller, *Asien und Europa nach altägyptischen Denkmälern*, Leipzig, 1893, p. 184; G. Maspero, *Études de mythologie et d'archéologie égyptiennes*, *BiEg* 27, vol. 5, 1911, p. 154; E.A.T.W. Budge, *An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary*, vol. 2, London, 1920, p. 978; H. Gauthier, *Dictionnaire des noms géographiques contenus dans les textes hiéroglyphiques*, vol. 2 (*De*  *à* ), Cairo, 1925, p. 25; R. Hannig, *Großes Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch-Deutsch*, Mainz, 2006, p. 1137. The Eg. *Bi-'a-ru-tu* (); K.H. Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, vol. 3 [*Urk.* 4/3], Leipzig, 1907, p. 782) attested by Thutmose III's Topographical List (no. 19) was also identified with Beirut (A. Mariette, *Les listes géographiques des pylônes de Karnak, comprenant la Palestine, l'Éthiopie, le pays de Somâl*, Leipzig, 1875, p. 19-20; A.Fr. Rainey, "Linguistic Notes on Thutmose III's Topographical List", in S. Israelit-Groll [ed.], *Egyptological Studies* [*Scripta hierosolymitana* 28], Jerusalem, 1982, p. 340, 350; for E. Edel [*Die Ortsnamenlisten aus dem Totentempel Amenophis III* [*Bonner Biblische Beiträge* 25], Bonn, 1966, p. 86-87],


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Gr. Βηρυ(τ)τός and Βήρυθος, Lat. *Beritus* and *Birito*, Syr. ܒܝܪܘܬ and ܒܝܪܬ, and Ar. بيروت, all stem from the Ug. *B'urt*, "wells."[63] The same toponym, בְּאֵרוֹת, designating however another town of the Canaanite-speaking region, is mentioned in Jo 9:17, 18:25, and 2 Sm 4:2.[64] To return to the Can. *bērōt* of the derivational chain of Beirut, it implies the meaning "wells" for the hieronym Bērouth and so the name transfer from the city to the goddess. Indeed it is not only the name of the nymph that is related to the water; among other details offered by the myth related by Nonnus, the iconography of Beroē systematically represents her bearing a pitcher. It is certainly not without reason that, in his *Commentary on Dionysius Periegetes*, Eustathius of Thessalonica connects the name of the city to the sea.[65]

Two other hypotheses have been advanced concerning the meaning of the theonym Bērouth, mentioned in the *Phoenician History*. For Ernest Renan, both Elioun and Bērouth are definitely Semitic names: in the former he recognises —quite rightly—[66] עֶלְיוֹן, "the Most High" of Gn 14:19, translated by Philo Ὕψιστος (*PE* 1.10.15), and in the latter בַּעַל בְּרִית, a deity worshiped by the inhabitants of Sichem, according to Jgs 8:33, 9:4. Renan explains the mutation בְּרִית > Βηρούθ thus: "Le deuxième mot de cette appellation (*i.e.* בְּרִית), étant féminin, a donné lieu de croire qu'elle s'appliquait à une femme."[67] This explanation was not accepted,[68] and it is in effect weakened by the fact that the plural remains unexplained.

As for L.B. Paton, he considers Βηρούθ as an abbreviation of Baʿalat Bērūth, "mistress of Beirut" or "mistress of the cypress" —hieronym unattested—, in view of the fact that in Aramaic *Bərōth* would mean "cypress."[69] For precision's sake, one should note that the Aramaic actually transmits two lexemes that correspond to this meaning, the spellings of which are בְּרוֹתָא and בְּרָתָא respectively. The Aramaic etymology this proposal invites is worthy of attention.

it is *Bi-'-ru-tu* [ ], another toponym of Thutmose III's Topographical List [no. 109], that stems from בְּאֵרוֹת). This identification was disputed by G. Maspero who locates *Bi-'a-ru-tu* "dans la région que traverse le Jourdain à sa sortie du lac de Tibériade" (*Études…*, *op. cit.*, p. 33). He recognises in this toponym the בְּאֵרוֹת designated by Josephus (*Ant.* 5,1,18) as location of the battle run by Joshua against the Canaanites, and identifies it with present ʿAytarūn, in South Lebanon (*Études…*, *op. cit.*, p. 125-126). H. Gauthier supports this identification and associates ʿAytarūn with the בֵּרוֹתָה of Ez 47:16 (*Dictionnaire…*, *op. cit.*, p. 2). A. Jirku considers that either *Bi-'a-ru-tu* or *Bi-'-ru-tu* are to be related to the בְּאֵרוֹת of Jos 9:17, 18:25, and 2 Sm 4:2 (*Die ägyptischen Listen palästinensischer und syrischer Ortsnamen in Umschrift und mit historisch-archäologischem Kommentar*, Leipzig, 1937, p. 8). W.F. Albright equals *Bi-'a-ru-tu* with the Ῥεηρώθ (var. Ρεηθα) of the LXX version of Jos 19:19 ("The Topography of the Tribe of Issachar," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 44, 1926, p. 229). R. Hannig (*Großes Handwörterbuch…*, *op. cit.*, p. 1137) distinguishes between , which he identifies with al-Bīra, a locality in Syria-Palestine, and , which he tentatively identifies with Berut, north of al-Ṣanamayn in Bashan.

63 ; cf. Ch. Virolleaud, *Le palais royal d'Ugarit*, vol. 2 (*Textes en cunéiformes alphabétiques des archives est, ouest et centrales*), *MRasShamra* 7, 1957, p. 18. See also N. Jidejian, E. Lipiński, "Beyrouth," in E. Lipiński (ed.), *Dictionnaire de la civilisation phénicienne et punique*, [Turnhout], 1992, p. 71. The Ugaritic toponym underlies as well the personal name Birtn / Bîrutanu; see Fr. Grøndahl, *Die Personennamen der Texte aus Ugarit*, Rome, 1967, p. 27, 114.

64 In this regard, see P. Dhorme, "Amarna (Lettres d'el-Amarna)," *SDB* 1, 1928, col. 212; M.E. Moulton, "Beeroth," in D.N. Freedman, A.C. Myers, A.B. Beck (eds.), *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, Grand Rapids (Mich.), 2000, p. 160-161.

65 Ed. E. Henri, W. Hill, London, 1688, p. 168 (911).

66 Cf., *i.a.*, W.F. Albright, *loc. cit.*

67 E. Renan, *Mémoire sur l'origine et le caractère véritable de l'Histoire phénicienne qui porte le nom de Sanchoniathon*, *MAIBL* 23, 1858, p. 269.

68 Cf. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Præparatio evangelica*, *ed. cit.*, p. 86.

69 L.B. Paton, "Sanchuniathon," in J. Hastings, J.A. Selbie (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. 11, New York, 1920, p. 179b.


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One has to observe that the etymon of the two aforementioned lexemes, the Akk. *bu-ra-šú* (𒀀 𒄑𒂵𒍪 [GIŠ.LI], 𒄑𒂵𒍪𒀀 [LI.GIŠ], 𒀭𒊑𒆳𒆳), is outstandingly productive in the Semitic field, wherein it leaves lexical traces up to Ge'ez and Gurage. It even found its way into Coptic as the foreignism ⲓⲃⲣⲉⲧ.[70] The derivation בְּרוֹתָא > Βηρούθ would certainly have the phonetic advantage of accounting for the dental fricative /θ/ (whose presence in the hieronym —though not problematic— is not explained by the hypothesis of the etymon Can. *Bērōt*) and the semantic one of a theonymy related to one of the most notorious natural attributes of ancient Beirut's region, "where —according to Nonnus— grow the big trees; the ivy, in the airs, marries the cypress" (*Dionysiaca* XLI.8–9).[71] This etymology assumes however that between the goddess Bērouth and the city of Beirut there is no semantic connection, given that the meaning of the toponym is assured by its Akkadian forms written in the Amarna Tablets with the sumerogram PÚ meaning "wells" (𒉺𒀀 𒅆 𒁾, 𒉺𒀀 𒄩𒁍 𒅆 𒁾, 𒉺𒀀 𒁾 𒅆 𒀸𒀸, 𒉺𒀀 𒁾 𒅆 𒄩𒁍 𒀸𒀸, 𒉺𒀀 𒁾 𒅆 𒁾 𒄿𒄿, 𒉺𒀀 𒁾 𒅆, 𒀭 𒅆).[72] In this case, to which no formal objection can be raised, the identification made, on the basis of the above mentioned passage of Philo, between the city of Beirut and the place where the goddess Bērouth would have established herself together with her paredros Elioun, would be erroneous.

The first etymology, that which relates the city of Beirut to the Phoenician deity Bērouth and lends to their respective names the same etymon, Can. *Bērōt*, "wells", is the most persuasive one from a semasiologic point of view.

Last but not least, a short comment should be made about the sequence ΒΑΡΩΘ within a palindromic *vox magica* in the Apollonian invocation of *PGM* I.262–347: ΑΕΜΙΝΝΑΕΒΑΡΩΘΕΡΡΕΘΩΒΑΒΕΑΝΙΜΕΑ.[73] Prima facie, one could be tempted to consider this a case of glossolalic abracadabra. This category and the ideologically founded preconception which fuelled its career from Epiphanius onwards —he is the first to charge the Gnostics with intentional βαρβαρωνυμία[74]— are seriously called into question by several recent studies dealing with the *voces magicae* and *nomina barbara*. Regardless of the partisan approaches which either refuse any possible signification to these two categories or attach to them meanings at all costs, it is undeniable that these constructions may —and quite a few of them demonstrably do— contain meaningful elements. This is perhaps the case for this *vox magica*, in which the vocalic oscillation ϵ/ϧ does not stand in the way of the identification of Berōth's name.

70 For a detailed discussion on the circulation of this lexeme in the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond, see V. Ghica, "Avatars méditerranéens de l'assyrien *burāšu*," *BIFAO* 102, 2002, p. 231-245.

71 *Ed. cit.*, p. 363.

72 See *supra*. Cf. also P. Dhorme, *loc. cit.*; R. Mouterde, *Regards sur Beyrouth phénicienne, hellénistique et romaine*, Beirut, 1970, p. 9-10, 13.

73 *PGM* I.295, trad. H.D. Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation Including the Demotic Spells*, Chicago–London, 1986, p. 10.

74 *Panarion* 25,3,6, in K. Holl (ed.), *Epiphanius (Ancoratus und Panarion)*, vol. I, *GCS* 25, Leipzig, 1915, p. 270,15-271,2.


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Central to the argument of this paper is rather the Semitic, Eastern-Mediterranean origin of this hieronym, which is assured. ⲃⲉⲣⲟⲑⲉ is, of course, not the only *nomen barbarum* of Semitic origin.[75] Hybrid names, at once Hebrew and Greek or Coptic, are also present,[76] as well as purely Greek[77] or Egyptian names in the vein of ⲥⲁⲥⲁⲃⲉⲕ.[78] What does this Semitic theonymy, so close geographically and culturally to the Jewish-Palestinian world, tell us about *Great Pow.*? Not necessarily the Jewish origin of the treatise but far more than the diversity of the literature with which the Alexandrian intellectual circles which are the source of *Great Pow.* were familiar. The hand responsible for these two archon names in *Great Pow.* knows Philo's *Phoenician History*, draws liberally from it a name which is, of course, exotic and barbaric but not meaningless, and marries it with an Egyptian one. The reasons for this marriage, which may appear curious, should be searched for in the personality and origin of the deities to which the names allude.

Indeed, the choice of these two infernal powers' names in the range of a theonymy associated to Phoenician and Egyptian traditional cults could hardly be considered casual. *Great Pow.* gives these two archons, the only ones whose names are mentioned in the text, a significant

75 This is also the case for Abalphe, Daveithe, Eleleth, Harmozel, Oroiael, Saklas, Samael, Sambathas, Yaldabaoth, etc.; cf. M. Roberge, "Paraphrase de Sem. Notes," in J.-P. Mahé, P.-H. Poirier (eds.), *Écrits…*, *op. cit.*, p. 1100, note at 44,6-45,8; S. Giversen, *Apocryphon Johannis*, *Acta Theologica Danica* 5, Copenhagen, 1963, p. 183-185; M. Black, "An Aramaic Etymology for Jaldabaoth?," in A.H.B. Logan, A.J.M. Wedderburn (eds.), *The New Testament and Gnosis: Essays in Honour of Robert McL. Wilson*, Edinburgh, 1983, p. 71-72; B. Barc, "L'Hypostase des archontes. Traité gnostique sur l'origine de l'homme, du monde et des archontes (NH II, 4)," in B. Barc, M. Roberge, *L'Hypostase des archontes (NH II, 4). Norea (NH IX, 27,11–29,5)*, *BCNH*, section "Textes" 5, Québec-City/Leuven, 1980, p. 113-114. For Yaldabaoth, we must retain Black's solution; following a suggestion of G. Scholem (*Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition*, 2nd ed., New York, 1965, p. 71-72, n. 23), he interprets this name as "the son of the shame" (יֶלֶד בֶּהוּתָא, wherein *בֶּהוּתָא < ). In a subsequent contribution ("Jaldabaoth Reconsidered," in *Mélanges d'histoire des religions offerts à Henri-Charles Puech*, Paris, 1974, p. 405-421), Scholem proposes a less convincing etymology: *yald-(s)abaoth*. Concerning these names of Semitic aspect, we should however reread this affirmation of F.C. Burkitt: "… the nomenclature does not suggest any real acquaintance with Semitic languages or Semitic alphabets, but only a superstitious veneration for Hebrew names found in the Greek versions of the Old Testament, eked out by scraps of ill-digested bits of Hebrew supplied (no doubt) by Jews" ("Pistis Sophia," *JTS* 23, 1922, p. 279). H.M. Jackson reinforces the same idea: "In the specific case of the Semitic-looking names their motive may rather, or additionally, have been the desire to endow the possessors of the names with the flavour of authenticity lent by the Hebrew / Aramaic look of the names, which the Sethians used, after all, to designate divine beings with similar functions and origins as those to whom the names are given in the magic papyri" ("The Origin in Ancient Incantatory *Voces Magicæ* of Some Names in the Sethian Gnostic System," *VigChr* 43, 1989, p. 77-78).

76 A good example of mixed theonymy is Aberamenthō, built of אֲבִיר מָיִם + qw(o)uq, "Thot, mighty of the waters"; cf. M. Tardieu, "Aberamenthō," in R. van den Broek, M.J. Vermaseren (eds.), *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions Presented to Gilles Quispel on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, *EPRO* 91, 1981, p. 416. Tardieu's hypothesis is rejected by Jackson ("The Origin…," *op. cit.*, p. 78, n. 5) because of its more daring and innovative aspect, i.e. the mixed etymons. The Egyptian origin proposed by Jackson (< *ỉmntt*, ⲁⲙⲉⲛⲧⲉ; *ibid.*, p. 70) does not explain the first part of the name; it remains highly conjectural.

77 Two examples will suffice to illustrate the point: Phorbea and Chloerga (*Paraph. Shem* 44,16-21); cf. M. Roberge, "Paraphrase…," *op. cit.*, p. 1100, note at 44,6-45,8.

78 Thus ⲃⲁϊⲛⲭⲱⲱⲱⲱⲭ / ⲭⲁϊⲛⲭⲱⲱⲱⲱⲭ (*Pistis Sophia* 137; 147), explained by Th. Hopfner as "Seele der Finsternis" (*bꜣ n kkw*) ("Orientalisch-religionsgeschichtliches aus den griechischen Zauberpapyri Aegyptens," *ArOr* 3, 1931, p. 329; *id.*, "Ein neues Θυμοκάτοχον. Über die sonstigen θυμοκάτοχοι, κάτοχοι, ὑποτακτικὰ und φιμωτικὰ der griechischen Zauberpapyri in ihrem Verhältnis zu den Fluchtafeln," *ArOr* 10, 1938, p. 134).


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role in the Gnostic history of salvation. With "the ruler of Hades," they are those to whom Jesus is delivered after his condemnation to death by Pilate and those over whom he triumphs (41,28–42,9). Sasabek and Beroth are the kingpins of the Darkness (37,30). Both names hint at water, the former relating to the Egyptian crocodile-god associated particularly with the Faiyum, the latter that of a Phoenician deity described by Nonnus as a nymph. And yet, as in *ParaShem* 1,36–2,1, the "immeasurable (and) incomprehensible" water (37,7–8) is in *Great Pow.* the symbol and the materialisation of the primordial chaos.

This hellish pair gets its symbolic significance probably not only from the original functions of the divinities to which the two names refer but also from their cultural and religious origins. Celsus leads us to believe that Phoenician cults, or at least Phoenician prophetism, were not the most esteemed religious traditions amongst the educated *milieux* during the second half of the 2nd century in Alexandria,[79] where Ἀληθὴς Λόγος but also *Great Pow.*[80] were written. On the other hand, among Alexandrian Jews the contempt for Egyptian idolatry is at least as old as the *Wisdom of Solomon*. Writings such as *3 Maccabees*, the *Letter of Aristeas*, the *Sibylline Oracles*, as well as Philo[81] express it openly. Another Nag Hammadi text, of Jewish or Judaising origin,[82] *The Thunder: Perfect Mind* (16,6–7),[83] mirrors the same rebuke of Egyptian idolatry. These two treatises, transmitted in the same codex, *Great Pow.* and *Thund.*, inherit in a direct line the pre-Christian Jewish polemic over idolatry.

79 Origen, *Contra Celsum* VII,9, ed., trans. and notes M. Borret, *SourcChr* 150, p. 34-35.

80 Fr.E. Williams (*Mental…*, *op. cit.*, p. lxii) places the origin of one of the sources of *Great Pow.* —the "Christian Instruction"— in Egypt. Albeit the distinction made by Williams between the sources of the Christian and Non-Christian material in *Great Pow.* remains to be proved conclusively (see the criticism expressed by J.-P. Mahé, M. Desjardins, M. Roberge, "L'entendement de notre Grande Puissance. Notice," in J.-P. Mahé, P.-H. Poirier [eds.], *Écrits…*, *op. cit.*, p. 902, n. 1), his argument for the Egyptian provenance of the treatise or of part of it (the etymology of Sasabek) is credible, yet inadequately handled, as I hope to have shown.

81 On this topic, see P. Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria, an Exegete for His Time*, *NovTest-Suppl.* 86, Leiden, 1997, p. 44, 187, 234.

82 Cf. P.-H. Poirier, "Le Tonnerre, Intellect parfait. Notice," in J.-P. Mahé, P.-H. Poirier (eds.), *Écrits…*, *op. cit.*, p. 847.

83 Cf. P.-H. Poirier, "Le Tonnerre, Intellect parfait. Notes," in J.-P. Mahé, P.-H. Poirier (eds.), *Écrits…*, *op. cit.*, p. 857, note at 16,6-9.

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