



ORIENTALIA LOVANIENSIA
ANALECTA

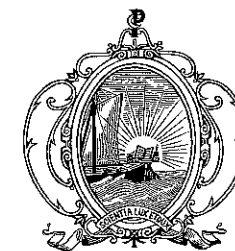
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D. BUMAZHNOV, E. GRYPEOU,
T.B. SAILORS und A. TOEPEL



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“BE PLEASING TO GOD, AND YOU WILL NEED NO ONE”

THE CONCEPT OF RELIGIOUSLY MOTIVATED
SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND SOLITUDE IN *THE*
TEACHINGS OF SILVANUS 97,3–98,22 (NHC VII,4)
IN ITS LATE ANTIQUITY CONTEXT*

Dmitrij F. BUMAZHNOV

The statement of *The Teachings of Silvanus* (= Silv)¹ 98,18–20 “Be pleasing to God, and you will need no one” is an unusually radical appeal for detachment from society² which calls for further examination. Because the passage Silv 97,3–98,22 to which the sentence belongs is partly transmitted also apart from Silv, we shall first study the state of transmission of this passage. Then some observations concerning the place of Silv 98,18–20 in the history of the Christian asceticism in its broader Late Antiquity context shall be presented.

* The works and names of the classic Greek authors are abbreviated according to the abbreviation list in H.G. LIDDELL, R. SCOTT, *A Greek-English Lexicon revised and augmented throughout* by H.S. JONES, Oxford, 1989⁹, p. XVI–XXXVIII, for the ecclesiastic ones we used the abbreviation system of G.W.H. LAMPE, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford, 1972, p. IX–XLIII.

¹ The only copy of Silv known so far is a part of the Coptic codex VII found in Nag Hammadi. General introductions into Silv and the problems of its interpretation are numerous; we find useful M.L. PEEL, J. ZANDEE, “*The Teachings of Silvanus*” from the *Library of Nag Hammadi* (CG VII: 84, 15–118, 7), in *Novum Testamentum* 14 (1972), p. 294–311, Y. JANSSENS, *Introduction*, in *Les Leçons de Silvanos* (NH VII, 4). *Texte établi et présenté par Y. JANSSENS* (Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi, Textes 13), Québec, 1983, p. 1–23, M. PEEL, *Introduction to VII,4 The Teachings of Silvanus*, in B.A. PEARSON (ED.), *Nag Hammadi Codex VII* (Nag Hammadi and Manichean Studies 30), Leiden et al., 1996, p. 249–276 and H.-M. SCHENKE, W.-P. FUNKE, *Die Lehren des Silvanus* (NHC VII,4), in H.-M. SCHENKE et al. (eds), *Nag Hammadi Deutsch. 2. Band: NHC V,2–XIII,1, BG 1 und 4* (Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller. Neue Folge 12), Berlin, 2003, p. 601–608.

² W.R. SCHOEDEL, *Jewish Wisdom and the Formation of the Ascetic*, in R.L. WILKEN (ed.), *Aspects of Wisdom in Judaism and Early Christianity*, Notre Dame – London, 1975, p. 183, finds it “more radical” than 1 Cor 7:29–31 and the Stoic exhortations to detach from “externals”; the English translation of Silv 98,18–20 is by Schoedel himself, op. cit., 179.

1. SILV 97,3–98,22 AND RELATED TRADITIONS

1976 Wolf-Peter Funk published a Coptic text written on the recto side of a single parchment sheet (10th–11th century) from the British Museum (BM 979) which corresponds to Silv 97,9–98,22³. On its top the passage bears the author's name: **ΑΠΑ ΑΝΔΩΝΙΟΣ**⁴. In the same article, Funk pointed out that another cognate text is known as part of the so-called *Spiritualia documenta* (= SD) attributed likewise to St Antony the Great⁵. In order to discuss Funk's theses concerning the mutual relations of these three texts they shall be presented in full; SD 3–4, the Arabic text, which was not available to Funk, is cited according to the Cairo edition of 1899. In the English translation, places of BM 979a and SD different from Silv 97,9–98,22 are set in italics.

1.1. Texts

Silv 97,3–98,22 (ZÄS 103, 10–12)

Ant BM 979a (ZÄS 103, 11–12 Funk)

- ἸΑΠΑ ΑΝΔΩΝΙΟΣ**
- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (1) Ἰ ³ ἠπρῖ ἠοῦφαχε Ἰ ⁴ ἠπονηρια $\bar{\zeta}$ ἡ
τεκνηωμη | (1) <i>Ἰ</i> απα ανδωνιος |
| (2) Ἰ ⁵ ρωμε γαρ νιμ ἠπονηρος Ἰ ⁶ qr-
βλαπτεῖ ἠπερζητῖ. | (2) |
| (3) οὔ ⁷ ρωμε γαρ ἠαθῆτ φαρβωκ
Ἰ ⁸ οὔαα εζοῦν επερωρωρ | (3) |
| (4) Ἰ ⁹ οὔρωμε δε ἠσοφος qcoἰ ¹⁰ οῦν
ἠτερ $\bar{\zeta}$ ἡ. | (4) Ἰ ⁹ οὔρωμε ησοφος: φαρειμε ετε-
ερ $\bar{\zeta}$ [ἡν μιματε:] |
| (5) οὔρωμε δε Ἰ ¹¹ ἠαθῆτ μαρ $\bar{\zeta}$ αρ $\bar{\zeta}$
εφαχε ἠ ¹² μῦστηριον. | (5) Ἰ ⁹ οὔρωμε ηατcbω: μερ $\bar{\zeta}$ αρ $\bar{\zeta}$ εῦ-
φα[χε μιμς] Ἰ ¹² τηριον: |
| (6) οὔρωμε ἠcoἰ ¹³ φος μαρνεχ φαχε
νιμ εβολ | (6) οὔρωμε ησοφος: μερνεχ [φαχε]
Ἰ ¹⁵ ἡνιμ εβολ ζιναῖ |
| (7) Ἰ ¹⁴ αλλα qναωπε ἠρερωεω ¹⁵ ri
ἠνετcωτῖ. | (7) αλλα φαρ $\bar{\zeta}$ ζητηρ ε[νετcω] ¹⁶ tm
εροοῦ: |
| (8) ἠπρνεχ Ἰ ¹⁶ φαχε νιμ εβολ | (8) ἠπεροϋεν $\bar{\zeta}$ φαχε ἡνιμ εβ[ολ] |

³ To cite this text, we use further the abbreviation BM 979a.

⁴ W.-P. FUNK, *Ein doppelt überliefertes Stück spätägyptischer Weisheit*, in *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 103 (1976), p. 10–12.

⁵ W.-P. FUNK, *Weisheit* (cf. n. 4 above), p. 15. *Spiritualia documenta* are easily available in *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 40, col. 1073–1084 in the Latin translation of Abraham Ecchellensis from the Arabic. For the Arabic transmission of this text, see G. GRAF, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, Bd. I *Die Übersetzungen (Studi e testi 118)*, Città del Vaticano, 1944, p. 457–458. Following B. CONTZEN, *Die Regel des heiligen Antonius*, in *Schulprogramm Humanist. Gymn. Metten für das Schuljahr 1895/96*, p. 7, W.-P. FUNK, *Weisheit* (cf. n. 4 above), p. 9 speaks about “ein arabische[s] Manuskript” of SD “aus dem 8. oder 9. Jahrhundert”.

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (9) εκζην εζοῦ ¹⁷ ενετ $\bar{\kappa}$ σοοῦν ἡμοοῦ
αν· | (9) ηαζρν] Ἰ ¹⁷ νετcωοῦν ημοοῦ αν· |
| (10) Ἰ ¹⁸ κα οῦμνηωε ηακ ἠωβηρ | (10) κααῦ ηακ τηροῦ [ἠωβηρ] |
| (11) Ἰ ¹⁹ αλλα ἠρμῖνωχνε αν· | (11) Ἰ ¹⁸ μπερκααῦ δε ηακ ηρερω $\bar{\zeta}$ ωχνε |
| (12) αρῖ Ἰ ²⁰ αοβιμαζε ἠωρωρῖ ἠπεκ
Ἰ ²¹ ρμῖνωχνε· | (12) μαρερωωπε Ἰ ¹⁹ ερωχοντ ητοοτκ
ἠωρωρῖ: |
| (13) ρωμε γαρ νιμ Ἰ ²² εφαρκωρ $\bar{\omega}$ ἠπρτ-
αειορ ²³ ποῦφαχε μεν ρολεβ ἠθε
Ἰ ²⁴ ἠπεβιω· περζητ δε μερ Ἰ ²⁵ ἠελ-
λεβορον· | |
| (14) ροταν γαρ Ἰ ²⁶ εῦφανμεεεε δε αῦ-
ωω ²⁷ πε ἠωβηρ ερταχρ $\bar{\omega}$ ειτ· Ἰ ²⁸ το-
τε $\bar{\zeta}$ ἡ οῦκρορ cεηακοἰ ²⁹ τοῦ εροκ
ἠcεη-ο $\bar{\zeta}$ κ επιτῖ Ἰ ³⁰ επβορβοροc· | |
| (15) ἠπρτανῖ ³¹ ροῦτκ ἠμν λααῦ ἠωβηρ | (15) ἠπερτανρ $\bar{\zeta}$ οῦτκ μν Ἰ ¹⁰ λααῦ ἠωβηρ: |
| (16) Ἰ ³² πεῖκοcμοc γαρ τηρ $\bar{\eta}$ ἠ ³³ ταρω-
πε $\bar{\zeta}$ ἡ οῦκρορ· | (16) πῖκοcμοc γαρ τηρ $\bar{\eta}$ ερcμοντ Ἰ ¹¹ ζἡ
[οῦκρ]ορ: |
| (17) αῦ ³⁴ [ω ρωμ]ε νιμ ερωτρ $\bar{\omega}$ τ[ρ]ῖ
Ἰ ³⁵ επ $\bar{\chi}$ ιν]χη· | (17) αῦω ρωμε ἡνιμ ωτρ $\bar{\omega}$ τ $\bar{\omega}$ ρ: επ $\bar{\chi}$ ινχη |
| (18) ρωβ νιμ [N]τ[ε] Ἰ ^{98,1} πκοcμοc ρεν-
ρ $\bar{\omega}$ ου αν νε· | |
| (19) Ἰ ² αλλα εῦωωπε $\bar{\zeta}$ ἡ οῦπετωοῦ ³ ειτ· | Ἰ ¹² αῦω επρα: |
| (20) ἠἡ λααῦ <ἠωβηρ>· οῦδε ἠἡ cον· | (20) {μν ωβηρ αῦ} ἠἡ ωβηρ αῦω ἠἡ cον |
| (21) Ἰ ⁴ ερεπογα πογα ωιηε ἠca Ἰ ⁵ τε-
ρ $\bar{\omega}$ ορε· | (21) Ἰ ¹³ παρα τερ $\bar{\omega}$ ορε |
| (22) παωηρε | (22) ω παωηρε |
| (23) ἠπρ ⁶ κα ρωμε νιμ ηακ ρωc ωβηρ | (23) ἠπερκα ρωμε ἡνιμ Ἰ ¹⁴ ηακ ρωc ωβηρ: |
| (24) Ἰ ⁷ ερωαν $\bar{\chi}$ πορ δε | (24) εκωανκω δε ηακ: |
| (25) ἠπρταακ Ἰ ⁸ ἠτοοτ $\bar{\eta}$ · | (25) ἠπερῖ ¹⁵ τανρ $\bar{\zeta}$ οῦτκ ημμαρ: |
| (26) ταακ ητοοτ $\bar{\eta}$ ἠ ⁹ π $\bar{\omega}$ οῦτε οὔααρ | (26) βαλωκ επ $\bar{\omega}$ οῦτε: Ἰ ¹⁶ μμ[α]τε: |
| (27) ρωc ειωτ Ἰ ¹⁰ αῦω ρωc ωβηρ· | (27) ἠθε νοῦ $\bar{\zeta}$ ωτ μν οῦωβηρ: |
| (28) ρωμε γαρ Ἰ ¹¹ νιμ εῦμοωε $\bar{\zeta}$ ἡ οῦ-
κρορ· | (28) ερερωμε ἡνιμ Ἰ ¹⁷ μοωε ρἡ οῦκρορ |
| (29) Ἰ ¹² πκαρ τηρ $\bar{\eta}$ ερμερ ἠ $\bar{\zeta}$ ῖce $\bar{\zeta}$ ἡ
Ἰ ¹³ ἠκαρ· | (29) αῦω πκαρ τηρ $\bar{\eta}$ μερ Ἰ ¹⁸ η $\bar{\zeta}$ ῖce ρἡ
μραρ: |
| (30) ηαῖ εμἡ ρηῦ ἠρ $\bar{\zeta}$ ητοῦ· | (30) ρἡ μ $\bar{\tau}$ επρα: |
| (31) Ἰ ¹⁴ εωωπε εκοῦωε ερ πεκ ¹⁵ αρε
εκcβραρ $\bar{\tau}$ | (31) εωωπε κοῦωω Ἰ ¹⁹ ερ πεκωνρ ρἡ
οῦβρατ: |
| (32) ἠπρ $\bar{\mu}$ οωε Ἰ ¹⁶ ἠμἡ λααῦ· | (32) εἶε ἠπερτωρ μν λααῦ[:] |
| (33) καη εκωανμοἰ ¹⁷ ωε ἠμ $\bar{\mu}$ αῦ | (33) Ἰ ²⁰ ερωαντωρ δε |
| (34) ωωπε εω $\bar{\chi}$ ε Ἰ ¹⁸ ἠ $\bar{\mu}$ οωε αν· | (34) αρῖ πεcμοτ εω $\bar{\chi}$ ε η<Γ>τηρ αν: |
| (35) ωωπε εκ $\bar{\rho}$ ¹⁹ αναρ ἠπ $\bar{\omega}$ οῦτε | (35) Ἰ ²¹ οῦωω επραηαρ επ $\bar{\omega}$ οῦτε: |
| (36) αῦω ἠ $\bar{\eta}$ ναἰ ²⁰ ρ $\bar{\chi}$ ρεἰα αν ἠλααῦ· | (36) αῦω ηη $\bar{\eta}$ ωωωτ αν Ἰ ²² ηλααῦ: |
| (37) αρῖπολι ²¹ τεεε ἠἡ πε $\bar{\chi}$ c | (37) πολῖτεεε μν πε $\bar{\chi}$ c |
| (38) αῦω qηαναρ ²² μεκ· | (38) αῦω qηαναρ ²³ μ $\bar{\kappa}$ |

Silv 97,3-98,22

- (1) ¹³ Do not put a word ¹⁴ of maliciousness (πονηρία) in your judgment (γνώμη)
 (2) ¹⁵ for (γάρ) every malicious (πονηρός) <man> ¹⁶ harms his heart.
 (3) ¹⁷ For (γάρ) only a foolish man goes ¹⁸ to his destruction,
 (4) ¹⁹ but (δέ) a wise (σοφός) man knows ¹¹⁰ his way.
 (5) And (δέ) a foolish ¹¹¹ man does not guard against speaking ¹¹² <a> mystery (μυστήριον).
 (6) A wise (σοφός) man, <however,> ¹¹³ does not blurt out every word,
 (7) ¹¹⁴ but (ἀλλά) he will be discriminating (θεωρεῖν) ¹¹⁵ toward those who hear.
 (8) Do not mention ¹¹⁶ everything
 (9) being together with ¹¹⁷ those whom you do not know.
 (10) ¹¹⁸ Make a great number of friends,
 (11) ¹¹⁹ but (ἀλλά) not counsellors.
 (12) ¹²⁰ First, examine (δοκιμάζειν) your ¹²¹ counsellor,
 (13) for (γάρ) do not ¹²² honour anyone who flatters. ¹²³ Their word, to be sure (μὲν), is sweet as ¹²⁴ honey, but (δέ) their heart is full ¹²⁵ of hellebore (ἐλλέβορον).
 (14) For (γάρ) whenever (ὅταν) ¹²⁶ they think that they have become ¹²⁷ a reliable friend, ¹²⁸ then (τότε) they will deceitfully turn ¹²⁹ against you, and they will cast you down ¹³⁰ into the mire (βόρβορος).
 (15) Do not trust ¹³¹ any friend,
 (16) ¹³² for (γάρ) this whole world (κόσμος) ¹³³ has become deceitfully,
 (17) and ¹³⁴ every [man] is troubled ¹³⁵ [in vain].
 (18) All things [of] ¹³⁶ the world (κόσμος) are not profitable,
 (19) ¹³⁷ but (ἀλλά) they happen in vain.
 (20) ¹³⁸ There is neither <a friend> nor (οὐδέ) a brother,
 (21) ¹³⁹ since each one is seeking ¹⁴⁰ his own advantage.

Ant BM 979a

Apa Antonius

- (1) (1)
 (2) (2)
 (3) (3)
 (4) ¹² [Only] a wise (σοφός) man knows his w[ay].
 (5) ¹³ An ignorant man does not keep a word of mystery (μυστήριον).
 (6) ¹⁴ A wise (σοφός) man does not ¹⁵ blurt out every word like that,
 (7) but (ἀλλά) he pays attention toward those who hear ¹⁶ it.
 (8) Do not speak out everything
 (9) in the presence of ¹⁷ those who do not understand it.
 (10) Make all to be your friends,
 (11) ¹⁸ but (δέ) do not make them advisers.
 (12) Be he (i.e. your adviser) ¹⁹ tested by you first.
 (15) Do not trust ¹¹⁰ any friend,
 (16) for (γάρ) this whole world (κόσμος) is established ¹¹¹ in deceitfulness,
 (17) and every man is troubled in vain
 (20) There is neither a friend nor a brother
 (21) ¹¹³ beyond (πέρα) his own advantage.

- (22) My son,
 (23) do not ¹⁶ have anyone as (ὥς) a friend.
 (24) ¹⁷ But (δέ) if you do acquire one,
 (25) do not entrust yourself ¹⁸ to him.
 (26) Entrust yourself to ¹⁹ God alone
 (27) as (ὥς) father ¹¹⁰ and as (ὥς) friend.
 (28) For (γάρ) everyone ¹¹¹ goes along deceitfully.
 (29) ¹¹² The whole earth is full of suffering and ¹¹³ pain —
 (30) things in which there is no profit.
 (31) ¹¹⁴ If you wish to pass your ¹¹⁵ life in quiet,
 (32) do not keep company ¹¹⁶ with anyone.
 (33) And if (κἄν) you do keep ¹¹⁷ company with them,
 (34) be as if ¹¹⁸ you do not.
 (35) Be pleasing ¹¹⁹ to God,
 (36) and you will ¹²⁰ not need (χρεία) anyone.
 (37) Live (πολιτεύειν) ¹²¹ with Christ (Χριστός),
 (38) and He will save ¹²² you.
 (22) My son,
 (23) do not have anyone ¹¹⁴ as (ὥς) a friend.
 (24) But (δέ) if you do,
 (25) do not entrust ¹¹⁵ yourself to him.
 (26) Entrust yourself to God ¹¹⁶ alone
 (27) as father and friend.
 (28) Everyone ¹¹⁷ goes along deceitfully,
 (29) and the whole earth is full ¹¹⁸ of suffering and pain
 (30) and vanity.
 (31) If you wish ¹¹⁹ to pass your life in quiet,
 (32) then do not get along with anyone.
 (33) ¹²⁰ But (δέ) if you do,
 (34) have the appearance as if you do not.
 (35) ¹²¹ Strive to please God,
 (36) and you will not be lacking ¹²² for anyone.
 (37) Live (πολιτεύειν) with Christ (Χριστός),
 (38) and He will save ¹²³ you.

Ps. Ant., Spiritualia documenta 3-4 (146,2-14, Cairo 1899)⁶

(4) رجل حكيم يعرف طريق سلوكه (6) فلا يبادر بالكلام (7) بل يتأمل فيما يقول يسمع (8) رجل قليل الادب فلا يحفظ ما يقال له من الاسرار (8) يا ابني لا تظهر كلمتك (9) لمن لا يعرفها (10) واجعل سائر الناس احياء (11) ولا تجعلهم كلهم مشيرين (12) بل اتخذ لك قبل كل شيء تجربة (23) ولا تجعل لك كل الناس اصدقاء (24) وان صاروا لك اصدقاء (25) فلا تأمن لهم (16) لان العالم قد ثبت في المكر (20) بل اجعل لك اخا واحدا يخاف الرب (26) والتصق بالله فقط (27) مثل ولد مع ابيه (28) لان الناس باجمعهم يسلكون بالغش ما خلا ⁷ النذر اليسير منهم (29) والارض قد امتلأت من الباطل والانتعاب (30) والاحزان (31) فان كنت يا ابني تحب المعيشة في الهدوء (32) فلا تختلط مع المهتمين بالباطل (33) وان حصلت في الاختلاط (34) فكن كمن ليس مختلطاً بهم (35) ان كنت تحب ان ترضي الله يا ابني (37) تعبد للمسيح (38) فهو يخلصك ويعتقك

- (4) A wise man knows the way of his travelling.
 (6) Therefore he does not hurry up with speaking,
 (7) but considers what he speaks and hears.

⁶ The Arabic Text is quoted according to ANBĀ MURQUS AL-ANṬŪNĪ, Kitāb raḍat al-nufūs fī rasā'īl al-qiddīs Anṭūniyūs, Kairo 1899. For the Latin translation, see Patrologia Graeca, vol. 40, col. 1077A-B.

⁷ Probably, to be read as النذر.

⁸ A misspelling of الهدوء.

- (5) But an uncultivated man does not take care of secret things *spoken to him*
 (8) My son, do not make known your words
 (9) to someone who does not understand them.
 (10) Make *all people* <your> friends,
 (11) but do not *make them* advisers.
 (12) Rather subject <them> *first of all* to a test *in your own interest*.
 (23) And do not make all people your friends.
 (24) And if you get friends,
 (25) do not trust them,
 (16) for the world is established in deception;
 (20) *but make your friend one brother fearing the Lord*,
 (26) and adhere to God alone
 (27) like *a son* to his father.
 (28) For the people altogether go along in deception *except a small insignificant*
 <number> of them,
 (29) and the earth is full of vanity, trouble
 (30) and sadness.
 (31) Then, *o my son*, if you like the life in quietness,
 (32) do not associate with *those who are concerned in vain things*.
 (33) And if you happened to be associated,
 (34) then do⁹ as someone who is not associated *with them*.
 (35) *If you like* to please God, *o my son*,
 (37) *serve* Christ,
 (38) and so He will save you *and make you free*.

1.2. W.-P. Funk's hypothesis

Funk rightly observes that in all cases when Silv and BM 979a differ, SD follows not Silv, but BM 979a; on the other hand, SD and Silv have no or almost no readings in common missing, at the same time, in BM 979a¹⁰. Funk's conclusion is that, in terms of textual criticism, we can only speak about relationship between BM 979a and Silv on the one hand, and between BM 979a and SD on the other¹¹. Then Funk states that SD adapts the most radical advice found in Silv and BM 979a to the needs of the monastic "organised asceticism", as in verses 15, 17–19, 29, 32 and, especially, in 20–21¹². So, according to Funk, SD is a defi-

⁹ Literally: be.

¹⁰ W.-P. FUNK, *Weisheit* (cf. n. 4 above), p. 18.

¹¹ W.-P. FUNK, *Weisheit* (cf. n. 4 above), p. 18.

¹² W.-P. FUNK, *Weisheit* (cf. n. 4 above), p. 18. The reference to verses (v.) means numbers set in brackets. The simple reference to Silv (e.g. Silv 98,22) means the page and line(s) in the 7th Nag Hammadi codex marked within the text.

nately later version than Silv and BM 979a despite its transmission in a manuscript older than BM 979a.

Then Funk analyses the relationship between Silv and BM 979a which is, in his opinion, less evident. He notes that Silv has more text at three places, namely in v. 1–4; 13–14 and 18–19¹³. Whereas v. 1–4 are indisputably original and were omitted in BM 979a in a secondary way, the two other passages deserve a thorough examination.

As for v. 13–14, Funk understands the passage as an explanatory note on the "advisors" (v. 11–12) on the part of the author of Silv and remarks that it is somehow stylistically unfitting¹⁴. The presence of "mire" in v. 14, the word which occurs several times in Silv, is in Funk's eyes a further indication that the hand of the Silv's author was at work in v. 13–14¹⁵. Verses 18–19 are, according to Funk, likewise a secondary addition "ad vocem vanitatis" in v. 17¹⁶. So, though Funk shows himself less certain than in the case with v. 1–4, he eventually sees v. 13–14 and 18–19 as secondary additions to the original text of BM 979a.

This leads Funk to the conclusion that the whole passage Silv 97,3–98,22 is a text composed earlier than Silv — presumably, in the 3rd century as a part of an unknown sapiential writing — and incorporated in Silv in the 3rd–4th century¹⁷. Funk reconstructs the original form of the passage taking over verses 1–4 from Silv and reading the rest according to BM 979a.

2. W.-P. FUNK'S HYPOTHESIS RECONSIDERED

Looking closely on Funk's argumentation concerning the "mire" in v. 14, one could observe that it is valid only if the rest of the passage in question (Silv 97,3–98,22), except presumably "Silvanic" additions at v. 13 and v. 18–19, does not have much in common with the main body of Silv in terms of style and content. Otherwise v. 13–14 can be explained much more convincingly either as being a later omission in BM 979a or as a later scribal addition in Silv inspired through related places. The same is also true for v. 18–19: to decide whether or not these verses

¹³ W.-P. FUNK, *Weisheit* (cf. n. 4 above), p. 18.

¹⁴ W.-P. FUNK, *Weisheit* (cf. n. 4 above), p. 19: "Exkurs apropos, Ratgeber", der auch stilistisch etwas aus dem Rahmen fällt."

¹⁵ W.-P. FUNK, *Weisheit* (cf. n. 4 above), p. 19.

¹⁶ W.-P. FUNK, *Weisheit* (cf. n. 4 above), p. 19.

¹⁷ W.-P. FUNK, *Weisheit* (cf. n. 4 above), p. 19.

tell us anything about the provenance of whole passage Silv 97,3–98,22, one has to analyse the latter in the context of the whole Silv.

Not pretending to exhaust this subject, we will try in the following to specify some details sufficient, in our opinion, to decide the question whether Silv 97,3–98,22 is really an independent text added to Silv as suggested by Funk. In particular, we will see how Silv 97,3–98,22 does fit in its nearest context and whether or not it shares common themes with the rest of Silv. Finally, the question whether this passage has lexical peculiarities which set it apart from Silv shall be dealt with.

As for the immediate context of Silv 97,3–98,22, this passage is placed¹⁸ between an exhortation to accept Christ in Silv 96,19–97,3 on the one hand, and Silv 98,22–28, on the other, a passage which provides arguments for another exhortation to live with Christ formulated in Silv 98,20–22. Thus, the main part of Silv 97,3–98,22 is framed with two appeals to accept Christ and to live with him: Silv 96,19–97,3 and Silv 98,20–28, the second of which has two common verses with the passage in question, namely, Silv 98,20–22.

The first of these two exhortations, Silv 96,19–97,3 reads as follows:

Silv 96,19–97,3 (NHMS 30, 308,19–310,3 Peel)¹⁹

^{p.96,19} χι ει²⁰ροκ μηπεχς παϊ ευνη βομ
μη²¹μοφ εβολκ εβολ· πενταφ²²χι εροφ
νηκοτς μηπετμη²³μαγ· δεκαας ριτη ναϊ
εφ²⁴ναρκαταλυε μημοφ ρη ογ²⁵κροφ· παϊ
γαρ πε πρρο ετε²⁶ογνητακφ εμαχχρο
εροφ²⁷λλαγυ νογοειω· παϊ εμνη²⁸λλαγ
ναφ † ογνηφ· ογ²⁹δε εχε φαχε ναφ·
παϊ πε³⁰πεκρρο αγω πεκειωτ³¹· μμη
πετ³²τητων γαρ εροφ· πετ[α]ρ³³νηειοσ
φηατ[ηκ νογ]^{p.97,1}οειω νημ φο νβον-
θοσ· φτω³⁴μητ³⁵· δε εροκ ετβε τνοφρε
³⁶ετηνητκ·

^{p.96,19} Accept ²⁰Christ (Χριστός) who is able ²¹to set you free, and who has ²²taken on the devices of that one²⁰ ²³so that through these he ²⁴might destroy (καταλύειν) him by ²⁵deceit. For (γάρ) this is the king ²⁶whom you have who is invincible ²⁷forever, against whom ²⁸no one will be able to fight nor (οὐδέ) ²⁹say a word. This is ³⁰your king and your father, ³¹for (γάρ) there is no one like him. ³²The divine (θεῖος) teacher is with [yo]u ^{p.97,1}always. He is a helper (βοηθός), ³³and (δέ) he meets you because of the good ³⁴which is in you.

Hereby the author of Silv closes a sequence of warnings about the Adversary in Silv 94,33–96,18. In one of these he says:

¹⁸ M.L. PEEL, J. ZANDEE, “The Teachings of Silvanus” (cf. n. 1 above), p. 299–300 provides a brief outline of the content of Silv.

¹⁹ Translation by M. Peel and J. Zandee slightly adapted.

²⁰ I.e. of the Adversary (ἀντικείμενος), cf. Silv. 95,1.

Silv 95,12–22 (NHMS 30, 306,12–22 Peel)²¹

^{p.95,12}μηπως ηρει ερογν φαροκ¹³ μηπε-
μοτ¹⁴ μηπετ¹⁵κωρω· †¹⁶ζωσ φβηρ μημε
εφχω μη¹⁷μοσ δε †ρσυμβουλεγε¹⁸ νακ
ενητναογογ· ητοκ¹⁹ δε εμπεκειμε
εμμητ²⁰· †²¹πανογροσ μηπαϊ· εφχε²² ητα-
κχιτφ νακ ηφβηρ μη²³μοε· μηεεγε γαρ
εθοογ²⁴ †²⁵γνογχε μημοογ επεκζητ²⁶
²⁷ζωσ νητναογογ·

<...> ^{p.95,12} lest (μήπως) he (i.e. the Adversary) come in to you ¹³ in the guise of a flatterer, ¹⁴ as (ὅς) a true friend, saying, ¹⁵ “I advise (συμβουλεύειν) ¹⁶ for you good things.” ¹⁷ But (δέ) you did not recognize the ¹⁸ deceitfulness (παυόργος) of this one when ¹⁹ you received him as a true friend. ²⁰ For (γάρ) he casts into your heart ²¹ evil thoughts ²² as (ὅς) good ones.

Despite Pell and Zandee’s translation of Silv 95,12 ηρει ερογν φαροκ as “he come into you”,²² we are of the opinion that the situation described in this passage presupposes not a pure spiritual creeping in of sinful thoughts inspired by the Adversary. A medium in this process is a fellow human being through whom the evil one acts. This false friend, coming as a “flatterer”,²³ is mistaken for a “true friend”²⁴ and in this way gets the chance to give his seemingly good advice²⁵ which turns out to be “evil thoughts”²⁶. Silv emphasizes how difficult it is not to be taken in by this and similar tricks²⁷ and sees the only efficient remedy in accepting Christ²⁸.

Turning back to Silv 97,3–98,22, we can observe that the sequence “warning about (false) friends — acceptance of Christ (or, respectively, God) as the solution” has evident parallels in this passage. Cf. e.g.

Silv 95,12–15

He (i.e. the Adversary) comes in to you in the guise of a flatterer, as a true friend, saying, “I advise for you good things.”

Silv 95,17–19

But you did not recognize the deceitfulness of this one when you received him as a true friend.

Silv 96,19–21

Accept Christ who is able to set you free.

Silv 97,18–22

Make a great number of friends, but not counselors. First, examine your counsellor, for do not honour anyone who flatters.

²¹ Translation by M. Peel and J. Zandee slightly adapted.

²² The correction “in to” is ours.

²³ Cf. Silv 95,13.

²⁴ Cf. Silv 95,14,19.

²⁵ Cf. Silv 95,15–16.

²⁶ Cf. Silv 95,21–22.

²⁷ Cf. Silv 94,33–95,4; 96,14–19.

²⁸ Cf. Silv 96,19–25: “Accept Christ who is able to set you free, and who has taken on the devices of that one so that through these he might destroy him by deceit.”

Silv 98,5–8.10–11

My son, do not have anyone as a *friend*. But if you do acquire one, do not entrust yourself to him. <...> For everyone goes along *deceitfully*.

Another parallel is the stability and uniqueness of one's relationship with God and Christ as opposed to the untrustworthiness of interpersonal relations, cf.

Silv 96,29–97,1

This (= Christ) is your king and your *father*, for there is *no one like him*. *The divine teacher is with [yo]u always*. He is a helper.

Thus, in several of its ideas and to some degree also in its structure, Silv 97,3–98,22 seems to be a sort of variation on the previous passage Silv 94,33–97,3. At the same time, the end of Silv 97,3–98,22, namely Silv 98,20–22, fits well into the next section (Silv 98,22ff) dealing with accepting Christ as a true light, cf.

Silv 98,20–23 (NHMS 30, 314,20–23 Peel)²⁹

ἰρ.^{98,20} ἀριπολι²¹ τεγε μῆ πεχ̄ς ἀγῶ φνα-
ναρ²² μεκ̄ ἡτοῦ γαρ πε πογο²³ εἰν ἡμε
ἀγῶ πρη ἡπῶν²

Silv 98,20–22

Live with *Christ*, and He will *save you*.

Silv 98,8–10; 98,18–20

Entrust yourself to God alone as *father* and as friend.

Be pleasing to God, and you will *not need anyone*.

ἰρ.^{98,20} Live (πολιτεύειν) ²¹ with Christ (Χριστός), and He will save ²² you. For (γάρ) He is the true light ²³ and the sun of life.

The general impression is that Silv 97,3–98,22 can be easily understood as an integral part of its immediate context. The same is also true with regard to the whole text of Silv: the number of common themes and ideas which Silv 97,3–98,22 shares with the rest of Silv is considerable, and it should be enough to adduce here only some of them.

Testing the words before uttering them:

Silv 97,12–13: A wise man does not blurt out (νοῦχ εβολ) every word (ψαχε νιμ).

Silv 117,30–32: Put all words (ψαχε νιμ) to the test first before you utter (νοῦχ εβολ) them³⁰.

²⁹ Translation by M. Peel and J. Zandee slightly adapted.

³⁰ Silv 117,30–32 (NHMS 30, 366,30–32 Peel): ἀριαοβιμαζε ἡφορπ ἡψαχε νιμ ζαην εμ[πα]τεκνοχοῦ εβολ, translation by M. Peel and J. Zandee.

Christ or God as friend:

Silv 98,8–10: Entrust yourself to God alone as father and as friend.

Silv 90,33: [Accept] Christ (Χριστός), [this true] friend³¹.

(Spiritual) profit (Coptic: ζηγ):

Silv 97,35–98,1; 98,12–13: All things [of] the world are not profitable (ζενζηοῦ ἀν νε); the whole earth is full of suffering and pain — things in which there is no profit (ζηγ).

Silv 117,23–25; 118,6–7: Gain profit (ζηγ) for yourself, my son, by not proceeding with things in which there is no profit (ζηγ); God's way is always a profit (ζηγ)³².

Finally, two passages bear strong resemblance, Silv 103,13–19 and Silv 98,10–18.20–22, which we present in full, setting the corresponding terms in italics.

Silv 103,13–19 (NHMS 30, 326,13–328,18 Peel)³³

ἀγῶ ἡπρκα τοοτκ εβολ εκμοοϰε ζι
οἰη ἡπεχ̄ς· μοοϰε ἡζητ̄ς χεкас εκ-
ναχι πεμτον ἡνεκζιϰε· εκψανμοοϰε
ἡν κε οϰει τεζιη ετκναααε ἡμν ζηγ
ἡζητ̄ς·

And do not cease *walking* (μοοϰε) in the way of *Christ*. *Walk* (μοοϰε) in it so that you may receive *rest* (μτον) from your *labours* (ζιϰε). If you *walk* (μοοϰε) in another <way>, the way you will go will be without *profit* (ζηγ).

Silv 98,10–18.20–22 (NHMS 30, 314,10–18.20–22 Peel)

ρῶμε γαρ νιμ εγμοοϰε ἡν οϰκροϰ-
πκαζ τηρ̄ ερμεζ ἡζιϰε ἡι ἡκαζ· ναἰ
εμῆ ζηγ ἡζητοῦ· εϰωπε εκοϰωϰε
ερ̄ πεκαζε εκεβραζτ̄ ἡπρμοοϰε ἡμῆ
λααγ· καν εκψανμοοϰε ἡμῆμαγ ψωπε
εϰχε ἡμμοοϰε ἀν· <...> ἀριπολιτεγε
ἡν πεχ̄ς ἀγῶ φνααρμεκ̄·

For everyone *goes along* (μοοϰε) *deceitfully*. The whole earth is full of *suffering* (ζιϰε) and pain — things in which there is no *profit* (ζηγ). If you wish to pass your life *in quiet* (εβραζτ̄), do not *keep company* (μοοϰε) with anyone. And if you do *keep company* (μοοϰε) with them, be as if you *do not* (μοοϰε). <...> Live with *Christ*, and He will *save you*.

³¹ Silv 90,33 (NHMS 30, 296,33 Peel): [χι ερ]οκ ἡπεχ̄ς [πι]ψβ[ηρ ἡμε], translation by M. Peel and J. Zandee. Cf. also Silv 110,14–15.

³² Silv 117,23–25 (NHMS 30, 366,23–25 Peel): ὅν ζηγ ἡμοκ παωηρε εκκμοοϰε ἀν ἡν νετεμῆν ζηγ ἡηητοῦ. Silv 118,6–7 (NHMS 30, 368,6–7 Peel): οϰζηοῦ ἡο[γ]οειω νιμ τε τεζιη ἡπνογ[τ]ε, translation by M. Peel and J. Zandee slightly adapted.

³³ Translation by M. Peel and J. Zandee slightly adapted.

We give here also the results of the lexical analysis of Silv 97,3–98,22 which we restricted to the question whether this passage does show any lexical peculiarities absent in other parts of Silv. We could find seven words which occur only in Silv 97,3–98,22: **ΕΒΙΩ** (honey): 97,24; **ΕΛΛΕΒΟΡΟΝ** (hellebore): 97,25; **ΤΑΝΖΟΥΤ** (trust): 97,30–31; **ΧΙΝ-ΧΗ** (vanity): 97,35; **ΨΟΥΕΙΤ** (vain): 98,2–3; **ΑΖΕ** (life) 98,15; **Ῥ ΧΡΕΙΑ** (need): 98,20.

Given, that, according to the indexes in the edition of Y. Janssens, about 140 Coptic lexemes and about 100 Greek borrowings are used on 34 pages of Silv only once, the 7 *hapax legomena* on two pages (Silv 97,3–98,22) are clearly below the average. To be noted is also that two of them — **ΕΒΙΩ** in 97,24 and **ΕΛΛΕΒΟΡΟΝ** in 97,25 — should not be taken into consideration because they occur in the lines which Funk holds to be an interpolation on the part of the author of Silv³⁴. We can also state that Silv 97,3–98,22 do not have more words which could be regarded as “non-Silvanic” than other parts of Silv.

Our final observation has to do with the second place which Funk considers to be a “Silvanic” interpolation, namely Silv 97,33–98,3. We bring this passage together with its counterpart from BM 979a:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| (17) $\lambda\chi^{34}$ [ω ρωμ]ε νιμ ερωτῖρωτ[ρ ³⁵ επ-
χιν]χη. | (17) $\lambda\chi\omega$ ρωμε νιμ ωτρωτρω: επχινχη |
| (18) $\zeta\omega\beta$ νιμ [ν]τ[ε] $\rho^{98,1}$ πκοσμος ζεν-
ζηου αν νε. | ¹² $\lambda\chi\omega$ επρα: |
| (19) β αλλα εγωπωπε $\zeta\eta$ ουπετψογι ³ ειτ. | |
| (17) and ρ^{34} every [man] is troubled ρ^{35} [in vain]. | (17) and every man is troubled in vain |
| (18) All things [of] $\rho^{98,1}$ the world (κόσμος) are
not profitable, | |
| (19) β but (ἀλλά) they happen in vain. | ¹² and for nothing. |

V. 17 (= Silv 97,33–35) coincides with BM 979a completely; for v. 18–19 (= Silv 97,35–98,3) we find only $\lambda\chi\omega$ επρα (and for nothing) which corresponds semantically with $\zeta\eta$ ουπετψογιειτ (in vain) in v. 19 (= Silv 98,2–3). This evidence opens the possibility — though no more than that — that the text of Silv 97,35–98,2 (= v. 18–19) could have been omitted in BM or in its Vorlage and, if so, shall be considered as original.

³⁴ Cf. above, n. 15.

Summarizing the evidence one can say that the analysis of the nearest and the general context of Silv 97,3–98,22 speaks against the hypothesis that this passage is an interpolation in the text of Silv. Therefore, letting aside the question about the provenience of Silv 97,21–30 and Silv 97,35–98,2 (= v. 13–14 and 18–19) where Silv has more text than BM 979 a³⁵, we will in the following consider Silv 97,3–98,22 as an integral part of Silv.

3. SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND SOLITUDE ACCORDING TO SILVANUS. AN IMMANENT ANALYSIS

The conclusion to which we have come in the previous section is of great importance for the analysis of Silv 97,3–98,22 and its concept of self-sufficiency and solitude: unlike W.-P. Funk who drew several parallels from the pagan Egyptian literature of early dynasties in order to elucidate some central themes of the passage³⁶, we shall first of all try to understand this text from Silv itself, paying a special attention to Silv 98,18–20: “Be pleasing to God, and you will need no one”.

As it seems, what one could call “the concept of self-sufficiency and solitude of Silv”³⁷ is embedded into the general conception of this writing about the right spiritual way of human beings. This way has two dimensions or sides: an outward and an inward one, cf. Silv 117,25–28³⁸: “My son, (26) first purify yourself toward the outward life (πολιτεία) (27) in order that you may be able (28) to purify the inward.” As for external behaviour, Silv gives only a few suggestions; the texts cited above continues³⁹: “And (29) be not the merchants (30) of the Word of

³⁵ In the second case, as we showed above, the later omission in BM 979a or in its Vorlage cannot be excluded and has probably more chances to be the preferable explanation than an interpolation into Silv; in the first case, neither possibility seems more probable than the other.

³⁶ W.-P. FUNK, *Weisheit* (cf. n. 4 above), p. 20.

³⁷ Silv 97,20–98,22.

³⁸ Silv 117,25–28 (NHMS 30, 366,25–28 Peel): $\rho\alpha\omega\eta\rho\epsilon$ τοϋβοκ $\rho\omega\rho\pi$ ετ'πολιτια ετ'ζιβολ· κεκαας εκναω $\beta\mu$ $\beta\omega\mu$ $\eta\tau\omega\upsilon\beta\epsilon$ ταφοϋν. Translation by M. Peel and J. Zandee.

³⁹ Silv 117,28–32 (NHMS 30, 366,28–32 Peel): $\lambda\chi\omega$ $\eta\pi\rho\omega\omega\pi\epsilon$ εκο $\eta\eta\epsilon\omega\omega\tau$ $\eta\pi\omega\alpha\chi\epsilon$ $\eta\pi\omega\upsilon\tau\epsilon$ $\alpha\rho\iota\alpha\omega\beta\iota\mu\alpha\zeta\epsilon$ $\eta\omega\rho\pi\eta$ $\eta\omega\alpha\chi\epsilon$ νιμ ζαεν εμ[πα]τεκ-
νοχοϋ εβολ, translation by M. Peel and J. Zandee slightly adapted. J. ZANDEE, *The Teachings of Sylvanus (Nag Hammadi Codex VII, 4). Text, Translation, Commentary (Egyptologische Uitgaven 6)*, Leiden, 1991, p. 479 suggests quite unfounded that the subject of Silv 117,25–30 is “the purity of inner man”.

God. Put (31) all words to the test (δοκιμάζειν) first (32) before you utter them.”

We already know a similar admonition from Silv 97,10–21:

And (δέ) a foolish ¹¹ man does not guard against speaking ¹² <a> mystery (μυστήριον). A wise (σοφός) man, <however,> ¹³ does not blurt out every word, ¹⁴ but (ἀλλά) he will be discriminating (θεωρεῖν) ¹⁵ toward those who hear. Do not mention ¹⁶ everything being together with ¹⁷ those whom you do not know. ¹⁸ Make a great number of friends, ¹⁹ but (ἀλλά) not counsellors. ²⁰ First, examine (δοκιμάζειν) your ²¹ counsellor.

Because the “Word of God” (Silv 117,30) and “mystery” (Silv 97, 12) are mentioned, little doubt can be about the main concern of Silv: he does not simply provide some rules of wise behaviour but is instructing his fellow Christians how to speak about their faith. Though we are not informed about his reasons, Silv’s tenor stressing the need of precaution points towards some considerable external difficulties accompanying the preaching of his form of Christianity⁴⁰. Accordingly, caution and prudence are the chief attitude recommended for relations with unknown people. The main adversaries to the spiritual life are, after death and ignorance, the evil counsels⁴¹; quite comprehensibly, the audience is invited to hear and follow the author’s — and not somebody else’s — advice⁴².

Surprisingly, Silv deals far less extensively with the religious and mundane everyday contacts of his audience than with those with strangers. Silv has almost nothing to say about community and church⁴³, mission⁴⁴, friendship and marriage⁴⁵, helping the poor, showing love and mercy⁴⁶ etc. In his usage, father, mother, brother, friends are not designations of real people but labels for death, ignorance, evil counsels⁴⁷ or, conversely, for God, wisdom and angels⁴⁸.

⁴⁰ A sort of confrontation within some large Christian group is as easily imaginable as the situation of persecution; to the last point see W.-P. FUNK, *Weisheit* (cf. n. 4 above), p. 20.

⁴¹ ἄσυνβοῦλια εἶσοῦ cf. Silv 90,19–27 (NHMS 30, 294,19–27 Peel), quotation Silv 90,25–26.

⁴² Silv 91,20–21 (NHMS 30, 296,20–21 Peel): σωτῆρ πατρὸς ἀτασυνβοῦλια.

⁴³ Though silent about the Church as community, Silv presupposes a certain community with angels (cf. Silv 91,25–32 and 114,1–13). οὐρανὸν καὶ ἐπουράνιον in Silv 114, 11–12 can be also understood as referring not to the angels but to the saints in heaven.

⁴⁴ Some sort of positive teacher-pupil relationship is, however, given through the situation of Silvanus’ teaching his audience.

⁴⁵ Much attention is, however, paid to avoidance of the πορνεία, cf. Silv 104,31–105,17.

⁴⁶ Silv 87,8–10 admonishes doing good without any specification.

⁴⁷ Cf. Silv 90,23–27.

⁴⁸ Cf. Silv 91,14–16.25–32.

As one could guess, Christ in Silv has little chance to be with those coming together in his name; the experience of the Lord according to Silv is a highly personal and inward one: “Let him (i.e. Christ) dwell in the temple which is within you.”⁴⁹ With that, the focal point of Silv — namely, the inward dimension of the spiritual way and the role of Christ therein — is reached.

Silv is often speaking about the way of Christ or of God, as e.g. at two places cited above, cf. Silv 103,13–15.17–19: “Do not cease walking in the way of Christ. <...> If you walk in another <way>, the way you will go will be without profit” and Silv 118,6–7: “God’s way is always a profit”. The following quotation shows that God’s way is understood as a completely internalized one⁵⁰:

He (i.e. Christ) ²⁵ is the Life, the Power (δύναμις), ²⁶ and the Door. He is the Light, ²⁷ the Angel (ἄγγελος), and ²⁸ the Good Shepherd. Entrust ²⁹ yourself to this one who became ³⁰ all for your sake. Knock ³¹ on yourself as upon ³² this Door, walk downward ³³ yourself as (ὡς) on a straight way. ³⁴ For (γάρ) if you walk on the way, ³⁵ it is impossible for you to go astray (πλανᾶν).

Thus, the way of Christ is the way within oneself, cf. Silv 103,11–15⁵¹: “Do not tire (12) of knocking on the door of Word (λόγος), (13) and do not cease (14) walking in the way of (15) Christ.” This way is more or less identical with “knocking on yourself” (Silv 106,30–34) which, at the same time, is the knocking “on the door of Word (λόγος)” (Silv 103,12)⁵². Such identifications are only possible if one believes that the human mind is of divine nature, which is, in fact, the case with our author⁵³. Summarizing, one can say that, as Christ is the

⁴⁹ Silv 109,17–19 (NHMS 30, 344,17–19 Peel): μαρεζμοος ἄμ περπε ετ’ωοοπ ζραῖ νζητκ, translation by M. Peel and J. Zandee.

⁵⁰ Silv 106,24–35 (NHMS 30, 336,24–35 Peel): ἄτορ πε πωνῆρ ἀγω ταγναμικ ἀγω προ ἄτορ πε πογοειν ἀγω παγγελος ἀγω πωως ετ’νανοογφ ταακ ἄτοοτῆρ ἄπαῖ ἄταρωωπε ἄπητηρ ετβηητκ τωῶρ ἐροῦν ἐροκ οὔαακ ἄεε ἄνιρο ἀγω ἄτμοοωε ζραῖ νζητκ ζωκ ζην εφσοῦτνω εκφωανμοοωε γαρ ζι τεζι[η] ἄμν φβομ ἄρππλανα. Translation by M. Peel and J. Zandee slightly adapted.

⁵¹ Silv 103,11–15 (NHMS 30, 326,11–15 Peel): ἄπρζικε εκτωῶρ ἐροῦν ἐπρο ἄπλογοκ ἀγω ἄπρκα τοοτκ εβολ εκμοοωε ζι οἴν ἄπεχκ. Translation by M. Peel and J. Zandee slightly adapted. Cf. also Silv 103,25–26 (NHMS 30, 328,25–26 Peel): χι ἐροκ ἄπεχκ τεζιη ετ’λοῶρ.

⁵² Cf. the latter identification *expressis verbis* in Silv 117,7–9 (NHMS 30, 364,7–9 Peel): τωῶρ ἐροῦν ἐροκ οὔαακ χεκαακ ἐρεπλογοκ ναοῶων νακ. “Knock on yourself that the Word (λόγος) may open for you.” Translation by M. Peel and J. Zandee. The quotation shows that the Word does not mean the human reason.

⁵³ Cf. Silv 92,25–27 (NHMS 30, 300,25–27 Peel): πνοῦκ μεν ἄειοκ οὔῆταρ ἄμαγ ἄπογογκια εβολ ἄμ πῆειον. “The divine (θεῖον) mind (νοῦς) (+ μέν) has substance (οὐσία) from the divine (θεῖον)”. Translation by M. Peel and J. Zandee. Cf.

he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god: he is no part of a state."⁶⁶

Against this background, Silv's statement⁶⁷ "Be pleasing to God, and you will not need (χρεία) anyone" seems odd. Yet, taken by itself, it clearly belongs to a line of ancient thinking intimated in its core already in Aristotle's words saying that a *god* does not need to live in society because he is "sufficient for himself"⁶⁸. This line can be pursued further if we look closely at some parallels to Silv's maxim found in the sentences of Sextus and Clitarchus and in the so-called Pythagorean Sentences⁶⁹.

Sent. Sext. 49 (TaS 5, 18,49 Chadwick)	Sent. Clit. 4 (TaS 5, 76,4 Chadwick)	Pythag. sent. 39a (TaS 5, 87,39a Chadwick)
ὁ μὲν θεὸς οὐδενὸς δεῖται· ὁ δὲ πιστὸς μόνου θεοῦ·	ὁ μὲν θεὸς οὐδενὸς δεῖται· ὁ δὲ σοφὸς μόνου θεοῦ·	θεὸς δεῖται οὐδενός· σοφὸς δὲ μόνου δεῖται θεοῦ·
God does not need anything (or: no one), the faithful man <needs> only god.	God does not need anything (or: no one), the wise man <needs> only god.	God does not need anything (or: no one), the wise man needs only god.

Henry Chadwick rightly points out that the reading "πιστός" in Sent. Sext. 49 is a Christian interpolation for the original "σοφός" transmit-

⁶⁶ Arist., Pol. 1253a 27–29 (BSGRT, 4,27–29 Imm.): ὁ δὲ μὴ δυνάμενος κοινωνεῖν ἢ μηδὲν δεόμενος δι' αὐτάρκειαν οὐθὲν μέρος πόλεως, ὥστε ἢ θηρίον ἢ θεός. Translation according to S. EVERSON, (cf. n. 64 above), p. 4.

⁶⁷ Silv 98,18–20.

⁶⁸ δι' αὐτάρκειαν, cf. quotation in the footnote 66.

⁶⁹ Sextus's sentences are generally thought to be compiled in the 2nd century A.D. by a Christian editor, probably on the basis of some non-Christian collection or collections, cf. H. CHADWICK, *Internal Evidence*, in: *The Sentences of Sextus. A Contribution to the History of Early Christian Ethics* by H. CHADWICK (*Texts and Studies* 5), Cambridge, 1959, p. 138. Two bibliographical lists of works about Sextus are to be found in H. CHADWICK, *The Sentences of Sextus*, p. 182–183 and in *The Sentences of Sextus. Edited and translated* by R.A. EDWARDS and R.A. WILD (*Society of Biblical Literature. Texts and Translations* 22), Ann Arbor, 1981, p. 9–10. Whether Clitarchus' collection of sayings was one of Sextus' sources or, rather, its compiler drew upon the main source Sextus likewise was using, is a question which Chadwick leaves undecided, cf. H. CHADWICK, *Internal Evidence*, p. 158–159. Αἱ γνώμαι τῶν Πυθαγορείων are transmitted in two Byzantine manuscripts of 10th and 15th centuries and in some additional sources and show many parallels to Sextus, cf. H. CHADWICK, *Internal Evidence*, p. 140–141. Apart from these documents, the maxim is also known from Porphyry's letter to Marcella 11 in the form: θεὸς μὲν γὰρ δεῖται οὐδενός, σοφὸς δὲ μόνου θεοῦ, cf. PORPHYRY, *Vie de Pythagore. Lettre a Marcella. Texte établi et traduit* par É. DES PLACES (*Collection des universités de France*), Paris, 1982, p. 112,5–6. According to H. CHADWICK, *Internal Evidence*, p. 148 both Sextus and Porphyry (who has much material closely related to Sextus, Clitarchus and Pythagorean Sentences) "drew independently upon a prior pagan collection."

ted in Clitarchus, Porphyry and the Pythagorean Sentences⁷⁰. Like god in Aristotle⁷¹, the wise man in the sources cited does not need anything except god himself and, to a certain degree, is elevated to the same level as god⁷². In Late Antiquity, the tradition of setting the wise one apart from human society and associating him closely with the divine sphere had a well-established classical heritage: "Die Weisheit wird in der ganzen Antike als eine Seinsweise aufgefasst, als ein Zustand, in dem der Mensch sich in seinem Sein radikal von anderen Menschen unterscheidet, eine Art Übermensch darstellt. <...> In jeder [philosophischen] Schule ist also die Gestalt des Weisen die transzendente Norm, welche die Lebensweise des Philosophen bestimmt."⁷³

An illustrative series of glimpses into an understanding of the wise in Late Antiquity is to be found in the Sentences of Sextus. The wise man is an image of God⁷⁴, he is to be honoured after God⁷⁵, he knows the things divine in a proper manner⁷⁶ and presents Divinity to human kind⁷⁷, God likes him most of all His works⁷⁸ and shares with him His

⁷⁰ H. CHADWICK, *Internal Evidence*, (cf. above, n. 69), pp. 147, 157.

⁷¹ Cf. note 66 above.

⁷² According to Heinrich Niehues-Pröbsting, the Cynic philosopher Diogenes of Sinope, when imitating animal behaviour, chose a quite opposite model of autarky, cf. H. NIEHUES-PRÖBSTING, *Der Kynismus des Diogenes und der Begriff des Zynismus (Humanistische Bibliothek. Abhandlungen* 40), München, 1979, p. 157: "Nach Aristoteles repräsentieren die tierische und die göttliche Existenz die zwei Formen der für den Menschen unmöglichen individuellen Autarkie. Bei Diogenes orientiert sich die Autarkie <...> nicht allein und nicht überwiegend an der göttlichen Variante <...> Sein Leitbild ist nicht so sehr die göttliche als vielmehr die animalische Existenz." About Diogenes in Late Antiquity, see D. KRUEGER, *Symeon the Holy Fool. Leontius's Life and the Late Antique City (The Transformation of the Classical Heritage* 25), Berkeley – Los Angeles – London, 1996, 72–89.

⁷³ P. HADOT, *Wege zur Weisheit oder Was lehrt uns die antike Philosophie?*, Frankfurt am Main, 1999, p. 256. About the convergence of the image of the wise man with that of gods in the classical philosophical tradition, cf. P. HADOT, *La figure du sage dans l'Antiquité gréco-latine*, in: *Les sagesses du monde. Un colloque interdisciplinaire sous la direction de G. GADOFFRE*, Paris, 1991, p. 12: "on identifie la figure du sage à celle de Dieu, et il en résulte que la description de Dieu dans les différentes écoles correspond à l'idée que chacune se fait du sage." For the influence of the image of the Stoic wise man in early Christian literature, see J. STELZENBERGER, *Die Beziehungen der frühchristlichen Sittenlehre zur Ethik der Stoa*, München, 1933, p. 277–306.

⁷⁴ Sent. Sext. 190 (TaS 5, 34,190 Chadwick): σέβου σοφὸν ἄνδρα ὡς εἰκόνα θεοῦ ζῶσαν.

⁷⁵ Sent. Sext. 244 (TaS 5, 40,244 Chad.): σοφὸν τίμα μετὰ θεόν.

⁷⁶ Sent. Sext. 250 (TaS 5, 40,250 Chad.): ὁ τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄξίως εἰδὼς σοφὸς ἄνθρωπος. Cf. also Sent. Sext. 415b–418.

⁷⁷ Sent. Sext. 307 (TaS 5, 46,307 Chad.): σοφὸς ἄνθρωπος θεὸν ἀνθρώποις συνιστᾷ. Cf. also Sent. Sext. 24.

⁷⁸ Sent. Sext. 308 (TaS 5, 46,308 Chad.): ὁ θεὸς τῶν ἰδίων ἔργων μέγιστον φρονεῖ ἐπὶ σοφῷ.

possessions⁷⁹, the relations between God and the wise man are as close as possible⁸⁰ so that the wise man acts almost as a second god⁸¹.

If, thus, Sextus says that the faithful one or, respectively, the sage does not need anything but God⁸², this statement is to be seen among other sayings emphasizing the unique position of the wise man as second after God. In Sextus, this position, however, does not imply the wise man's seclusion from the world. On the contrary, he is said to be the εὐεργέτης of his fellow human beings⁸³, he purifies their souls through the word of God⁸⁴, and, though these relations are not always pleasant⁸⁵, their ideal goal is love between the sage and his audience⁸⁶.

The only point of contact of Silv 97,3–98,22 with these ideas is merely the name of the sage knowing his way⁸⁷. As we have seen, his way leads him away from other people without any attempt to serve them⁸⁸. Likewise, the relationship to God is different in both texts. In

⁷⁹ Sent. Sext. 310 (TaS 5, 46,310 Chad.): ὅσα θεοῦ κτήματα, καὶ σοφός.

⁸⁰ Sent. Sext. 421 (TaS 5, 60,421 Chad.): σοφός. Cf. also Sent. Sext. 144.

⁸¹ Sent. Sext. 176 (TaS 5, 32,176 Chad.): σοφός ἀνὴρ εὐεργέτης μετὰ θεόν.

⁸² See the quotation above.

⁸³ See note 77.

⁸⁴ Sent. Sext. 24 (TaS 5, 14,24 Chad.): ψυχὴ, cf. Sent. Sext. 307 (TaS 5, 46,307 Chad.) cited above: σοφός ἀνὴρ θεὸν ἀνθρώποις συνιστᾷ, "A wise man presents God to humans."

⁸⁵ Sent. Sext. 246 (TaS 5, 40,246 Chad.): ὁ τὸν σοφὸν οὐ δυνάμενος φέρειν τὸ ἀγαθὸν οὐ δύναται φέρειν, "Whoever is unable to endure a sage is unable to endure goodness", translation according to R.A. EDWARDS and R.A. WILD, *The Sentences of Sextus* (cf. above, n. 69), p. 45.

⁸⁶ Cf. Sent. Sext. 226 (TaS 5, 38,226 Chad.): σοφὸν, "Whoever does not love a sage does not love even himself", translation according to R.A. EDWARDS and R.A. WILD, *The Sentences of Sextus* (cf. above, n. 69), p. 43. This is not the place to attempt a comprehensive presentation of the social role of the sage according to the classical and post-classical Greek thought. It should suffice here to highlight that both Aristotle and the Stoics saw the sage interwoven at least in small group of friends, cf. EN 1169b 15–16: ἕτοπον δ' ἴσως καὶ τὸ μονώτην ποιεῖν τὸν μακάριον, quotation according to J. BURNET (ed.), *The Ethics of Aristotle (Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle)*, New York, 1973 [Reprint of the 1990 ed.], 425,15–16; cf. also EE 1244b 16–17 οὐ χρήσεως ἕνεκα ὁ φίλος οὐδ' ὀφελείας, ἀλλὰ δι' ἀρετὴν φίλος μόνος (Aristotle speaks here about the truly happy man, cf. 1244b10, which, in his understanding, is the sage in the same time; quotation according to F. SUSEMHL (ed.), [Aristotelis Ethica Eudemia] Eudemi Rhodii Ethica (*Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana*), Amsterdam, 1967, p. 103,15–16) and EN 1169b3–1170b19. For the Stoics, cf. D.L. VII 121 πολιτεῦσθεσθαι φασὶ τὸν σοφὸν ἀν μὴ τι κωλύη, ὥς φησι Χρῆστυπος, quotation according to M. MARCOVICH (ed.), *Diogenis Laertii Vitae philosophorum* vol. I, Libri I–X (*Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana*), Stuttgart – Leipzig, 1999, p. 514,21–515,1. For the Neoplatonic notion see below.

⁸⁷ Cf. the beginning of the passage: Silv 97,7–10: "For only a foolish man goes to his destruction, but a wise man (σοφός) knows his way.

⁸⁸ Cf. Silv 98,14–16: "If you wish to pass your life in quiet, do not keep company with anyone."

Sextus, the sage is in perfect harmony with the Divinity⁸⁹, whereas in Silv the contact with God is far from being well established and needs permanent efforts on the part of the believers to whom Silv speaks⁹⁰. Thus, despite a few points of contact, Silv's idea that anyone pleasing to God does not need any kind of human relations seems not to be inspired by a wise man concept like that found in Sextus.

In order to provide some more parallels to Silv's notion of self-sufficiency and solitude we shall now deal briefly with the question of how the Late Antiquity thinkers — and especially the Neoplatonic ones — understood the role of the philosopher in society⁹¹. As in many other cases, the formative paradigm was coined by Plato himself. The dynamic of a philosopher's life, according to Plato, is determined by striving to contemplate the good. He describes this contemplation both as an ascent experience and as a kind of escape from the material world⁹². Though the natural desire of a philosopher would be to remain in constant contemplation, Plato is of the opinion that a descent — even against a philosopher's own wishes — has to follow for the sake of the community of human beings because, as Plato points out in his *Republic*, an accomplished philosopher is, at the same time, the best ruler⁹³. The ascent and descent are likewise explored by Plato in his famous allegory of the cave⁹⁴ where they represent the coming up out of the cave of darkness into the light of knowledge and the return of the liberated prisoner, the philosopher, into the cave in order to share this newly acquired knowledge with his former fellow-prisoners.

⁸⁹ Cf. Sent. Sext. 416 (TaS 5, 60,416 Chad.): σοφοῦ, "Through God the soul of the sage is attuned to God", translation by R.A. EDWARDS and R.A. WILD, *The Sentences of Sextus* (cf. n. 69 above), p. 69.

⁹⁰ Cf. Silv 103,11–15: "Do not tire of knocking on the door of Word, and do not cease walking in the way of Christ."

⁹¹ About the role of pagan philosopher in the Late Antiquity society, see e.g. E.C. HOBBS, W. WUELLNER (eds), *Protocol of the thirty-fourth colloquy: 3 December 1978 The Philosopher and Society in Late Antiquity* [main communication by] P. BROWN (*Protocol series of the colloquies of the Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture* 34), The Graduate Theological Union and The University of California, Berkeley, California, 1980, J. HAHN, *Der Philosoph und die Gesellschaft. Selbstverständnis, öffentliches Auftreten und populäre Erwartungen in der hohen Kaiserzeit* (*Heidelberger Althistorische Beiträge und Epigraphische Studien* 7), Stuttgart, 1989 and B.CH. EWALD, *Der Philosoph als Leibbild. Ikonographische Untersuchungen an römischen Sarkophagreliefs* (*Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts. Römische Abteilung* 34), Mainz, 1999.

⁹² Pl., *Tht* 176b, R. 519c–d.

⁹³ R. 473c–d. The related questions are discussed by T.A. MAHONEY, *Do Plato's philosopher-rulers sacrifice self-interest to justice?*, in *Phronesis* 37 (1992), p. 265–282.

⁹⁴ R. 514a–517d.

Both ascent and descent motifs in their original Platonic notion of the philosophical withdrawal from the material world and the following return in order to serve the society are discernable also in the Neoplatonic writings, whereas the main interest unmistakably rests on the former. This feature clearly distinguishes the classical Platonic tradition with its pronounced idea of social service of the philosopher from Neoplatonism where the accent is moved to the withdrawal into the self⁹⁵. In this latter respect, one could compare the knocking on the door of the divine Logos in one's own mind in Silv⁹⁶ with Plotinus' intellectual mysticism, where the One "is always present"⁹⁷ in the soul, which is potentially identical with its divine ground and is called to come to itself and meet the One⁹⁸.

But, though the predilection for introvertive withdrawal clearly is a common point of Silv and the Neoplatonics⁹⁹, we find in Silv's *Teachings* no hint of reverse motion of descent from inward withdrawal back to the people of the world. Yet the Neoplatonics, alongside of several theoretical considerations on this subject¹⁰⁰, gave also some convincing examples of the practical fulfilment of the descent¹⁰¹.

⁹⁵ Willy Theiler called Plotinus characteristically "Plato ohne Politik"; cf. W. THEILER, *Plotin zwischen Platon und Stoa*, in *Les sources de Plotin (Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique 5)*, Genève, 1960, p. 67.

⁹⁶ Cf. Silv 103,12 and Silv 106,30–34, both texts are cited above.

⁹⁷ Plot. VI,9,34–35: "That One, therefore, since it has no otherness is always present, and we are present to it when we have no otherness", translation according to *Plotinus with an English translation* by A.H. ARMSTRONG, vol. VII, Enneads VI. 6–9, Cambridge, MA – London, 1988, p. 333, Cf. VI,9,11,38 [ἡ ψυχῆ] ἤξει οὐκ εἰς ἄλλο, ἀλλ' εἰς ἑαυτὴν and II,8,6,40; VI,9,7. For Plotinus's introvertive mystic, see E.R. DODDS, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety. Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine*, Cambridge 1965, p. 83–91.

⁹⁸ For Plotinus's concept of the immanent and in the same time transcendent presence of the One in the soul and the world, see R. ARNOU, *Le désir de Dieu dans la philosophie de Plotin (Collection historique des grands philosophes)*, Paris, 1921, p. 156–187 and A.H. ARMSTRONG, *The Apprehension of Divinity in the Self and Cosmos in Plotinus*, in A.H. ARMSTRONG, *Plotinian and Christian Studies (Variorum Reprint)*, London, 1979, XVIII.

⁹⁹ Silv's attitude in this respect could be adequately described with Plotinus's famous definition of philosophical life as *φύγη μόνου πρὸς μόνον* (the flight of the alone to the alone), cf. Plot. VI 9,11,50. For the backgrounds of Plotinus's formula, see E. PETERSON, *Herkunft und Bedeutung der MONOS ΙΠΟΣ MONOS Formel bei Plotin*, in *Philologus* 88 (1933), p. 30–41.

¹⁰⁰ Plotinus's distinction between 'political' and 'purificatory' virtues, the latter being achieved through the former on the way to the progressive divinisation of the soul, was interpreted by J. DILLON, *Plotinus, Philo and Origen on the Grades of Virtue*, in H.-D. BLUME, F. MANN (eds), *Platonismus und Christentum, Festschrift für H. Dörrie (Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum. Ergänzungsband 10)*, Münster (Westfalen), 1983, p. 101 as "an ethic for the world-renouncing sage of later Platonism", cf. also J. DILLON, *An Ethic for the Late Antique Sage*, in L.P. GERSON (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to*

Apart from the Neoplatonic philosophers Sopater and Maximus who were consulted by the emperors Constantine and Julian the Apostate¹⁰², one could recall Julian himself describing in one of his sermons a vision of the god Helios he had been worthy to receive. During that vision, Julian's pleading to Helios for permission to stay with the gods was not granted, instead he was sent back into the world as ruler with the promise to be admitted to the contemplation of Zeus some time later again¹⁰³. An even clearer allusion to Plato's teaching about a philosopher's descent can be found in 6th century Platonic philosopher Boethius, who distinguished himself at the court of the Goth emperor Theoderich¹⁰⁴ only to be eventually slandered and executed in 525. Seeking consolation in prison and addressing himself to Philosophia, Boethius says¹⁰⁵:

It was you who established through the words of Plato the principle that those states would be happy where philosophers were kings or their governors were philosophers. You, through that same Plato, told us that this was why philosophers must involve themselves in political affairs, lest the rule over the cities be left to the base and wicked, bringing ruin and destruction on the good. It was in accordance with that teaching that I chose to apply in the public administration what I learned from you in the seclusion of my private leisure. You, and God, who has set you in the minds of philosophers, know me well, and that I undertook office with no other motives than the common purpose of all good men.

Summarizing this evidence, we can say that neither the philosophical concept of the sage nor the notion of a Platonic philosopher's ascent in the realm of pure ideas can fully account for Silv's understanding of a

Plotinus, Cambridge, 1996, 315–335. Yet D.J. O'MEARA, *Platonopolis. Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, Oxford, 2003, 40–44, 73–81 correctly points out that neither Plotinus's teaching about the different kinds of virtues nor its extended form in later Neoplatonism should be interpreted as something preventing a Neoplatonic philosopher from political and social actions, the model for the latter being the imitation of the Divine, see D.J. O'MEARA, *Platonopolis*, p. 74–78.

¹⁰¹ Cf. the statement about social activity of one of the most "otherworldly" Neoplatonics, Plotinus, by A.H. ARMSTRONG, *The Apprehension of Divinity*, XVIII, p. 194: "Contemplation is primary, and is best pursued alone. Communication is secondary, and hinders rather than helps contemplation, though it is the philosopher's duty to impart what he has seen to others and help them to see it for themselves. <...> In practice, however, he (i.e. Plotinus) by no means withdrew from the world or shunned society <...> However different his theory was, in practice philosophy seems to have been for him almost as much of a social activity as it was for Plato."

¹⁰² Cf. Eun., VS, 462–463 (VI 2,1–12) (Sopater); 473–478 (VII 1,1–4,15) (Maximus).

¹⁰³ Jul., Or. VII,22 227c–234c.

¹⁰⁴ 522 Boethius became *Magister officiorum*.

¹⁰⁵ Boethius, Cons. I,4,4–8. The last two examples and the slightly adapted translation of the passage by Boethius are taken from D.J. O'MEARA, *Platonopolis* (cf. n. 100 above), p. 79–80.

believer's position in the world bereft of any positively judged contacts with other human beings. Both an ideal sage as found in the sentences of Sextus and a Platonic philosopher were supposed to serve humanity, which is not the case with Silv's audience.

4.2 Some Christian parallels

The opinion that Silv is in one way or another connected with early monasticism has been expressed by several modern scholars without, however, demonstrating any concrete cases of dependence¹⁰⁶. Though no systematic examination of all possible points of contact can be provided here, we shall try in the following to compare Silv with three different notions of self-sufficiency and solitude found in the coenobitic monasticism of St. Basil the Great as well as in the semi-eremitical and eremitical monastic traditions in Egypt of the 4th century.

4.2.1 Coenobitical monasticism

Organizing monastic life in Asia Minor in the second part of the 4th century, bishop Basil of Caesarea was confronted with several ascetical excesses and abuses in his diocese¹⁰⁷. St. Basil's answer thereupon was the so-called monastic rules composed as dialogues with ascetics. Question seven in the *Long Rules* reads as follows: "We consider it logical to inquire whether one who retires from society should live in solitude or with brethren who are of the same mind". The bishop's answer admits no alternative: "I consider that life passed in company with a number of persons in the same habitation is more advantageous in many respects. Firstly, because none of us is self-sufficient as regards corpo-

¹⁰⁶ See e.g. M.L. PEEL, *The decensus [sic] ad inferos' in the Teachings of Silvanus' (CG VII, 4)*, in *Numen* 24 (1979), p. 25–26, Y. JANSSENS, *Les Leçons de Silvanos et le monachisme*, in: B. BARC (ED.), *Colloque international sur les textes de Nag Hammadi (Québec, 22-25 août 1978) (Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi. Études 1)*, Louvain et al., 1981, p. 352–361, A. VEILLEUX, *Monasticism and Gnosis in Egypt*, in B.A. PEARSON, J.E. GOEHRING (eds), *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity (Studies in Antiquity and Christianity)*, Philadelphia, 1986, p. 293–299 and R. VALANTASIS, *Nag Hammadi and Asceticism: Theory and Practice*, in *Studia Patristica* 35 (2001), p. 184–185.

¹⁰⁷ It is general admitted that Basil was reacting against some ascetical groups whose views had been condemned at the council of Gangres, cf. J. GRIBOMONT, *Le monachisme au sein de l'Eglise en Syrie et en Cappadoce*, *Studia Monastica* 7 (1965), p. 20 and J. GRIBOMONT, *Le Monachisme au IV^e s. en Asie Mineure: de Gangres au Messalianisme*, *Studia Patristica* 2 (1957), p. 408. About the controversial date of the council (341 or 343), see A. LANIADO, *Note sur la datation conservée en syriaque du Concile de Gangres*, in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 61 (1995), p. 195–199.

real necessities, but we require one another's aid in supplying our needs."¹⁰⁸

Two allusions to authoritative texts can be recognised in these lines. First, St. Basil certainly had in mind the words of Socrates in Plato's *Republic* which we cited above: "I think <...> a city comes to be because none of us is self-sufficient, but we all need many things."¹⁰⁹ Secondly, St. Basil's speaking about the "life passed in company with a number of persons in the same habitation" (τὴν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ τῶν πλειόνων διαγωγὴ) reminds us of Act 2:44: "All the believers were together and had everything in common."¹¹⁰

Both allusions are valuable. Opposing independent monastic tendencies, St. Basil founded his rules of ascetical life upon the basis of the New Testament¹¹¹, avoiding special monastic terminology and addressing himself not to a separate group, but to Christians as such¹¹². In this context, any eremitical inclination is highly unwelcome, and, as we have seen, Basil sought to exclude it by recalling the ideal of the original apostolic community from Acts 2 and by alluding to the classical philosophical notion of the man as ζῶον πολιτικόν. It is needless to say that while Silv stresses that a human being, if he pleases God, does not have any χρεία of other people¹¹³, Basil expresses a quite opposite point of view.

¹⁰⁸ Bas., reg. fus. 7: Πρὸς πολλὰ χρησιμότερα καταμανθάνω τὴν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ τῶν πλειόνων διαγωγὴν. Πρῶτον μὲν, ὅτι οὐδὲ πρὸς τὰς τοῦ σώματος χρείας ἕκαστος ἡμῶν ἑαυτῷ αὐτάρκης, ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ πορισμῷ τῶν ἀναγκαίων ἀλλήλων χρῆζομεν. Quotation according to *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 31, col. 928C; translation from SAINT BASIL, *Ascetical Works. Translated by M. M. WAGNER (The Fathers of the Church 9)*, Washington, 1970, p. 248.

¹⁰⁹ Pl., R. 369b–c (SCBO, 369b–c Burnet): Γίγνεται τοίνυν <...> πόλις, ὡς ἐγῶμαι, ἐπειδὴ τυγχάνει ἡμῶν ἕκαστος οὐκ αὐτάρκης, ἀλλὰ πολλῶν ὧν ἐνδείης. Translation from Plato, *Republic*, Translated by G.M.A. GRUBE, Revised by C.D.C. REEVE, Indianapolis/Cambridge 1992, 44 with small modifications. Concerning the influence of Plato's *Republic* on ascetical writings of St Basil, see P. SCAZZOSO, *Reminiscenze della Polis platonica nel Cenobio di S. Basilio*, Milano, 1970 (non vidi).

¹¹⁰ πάντες δὲ οἱ πιστεύοντες ἦσαν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ εἶχον ἅπαντα κοινά, translation according to the New International Version. Later in his answer, he brings also several Old Testament quotations which likewise favour being together, e.g. Eccles 4:10 "Pity one who falls and has no one to help him up." The text of Eccles 4:11 develops the theme: "Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone?", translation according to the New International Version.

¹¹¹ Cf. J. GRIBOMONT, *Les Règles Morales de saint Basile et le Nouveau Testament*, in *Studia Patristica* 2, 1957, p. 416–426.

¹¹² Cf. J. GRIBOMONT, *Saint Basile*, in: *Théologie de la vie monastique. Études sur la Tradition patristique (Théologie 49)*, Paris, 1961, p. 99.

¹¹³ Cf. Silv 98,18–20: "Be pleasing to God, and you will not need (χρεία) anyone."

4.2.2 Semi-eremital monasticism

Let us look now at two examples of semi-eremital attitudes towards relations with other human beings. In this regard of particular interest are the writings of St. Paul of Tamma. According to all that we know about him, Apa Paul must have lived in the second part of the 4th century in Middle Egypt¹¹⁴. A small corpus of his writings edited in 1988 in the original Coptic by Tito Orlandi¹¹⁵ is dedicated to the question of the monastic life in the desert. Like Silv, Apa Paul is indebted to the Old Testament sapiential tradition, sometimes being very close to the sayings found in Silv, cf., e.g., the admonition about rest and knowing his own way in saying 50 from the tract *De cella*¹¹⁶:

In fact (γάρ), the wisdom (σοφία) of a sage knows his ways; his heart rejoices (εὐφραίνεται) in God who gives him rest (ΜΤΟΝ) in his cell.

and several passages from Silv:

<...> but a wise (σοφός) man knows his way¹¹⁷

If you wish to pass your life in quiet¹¹⁸ <...>

Do not tire of knocking on the door of Word, and do not cease walking in the way of Christ. Walk in it so that you may receive rest (ΜΤΟΝ) from your labours¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁴ Like Shenute of Atripe, he is only mentioned in the Coptic sources or in the Arabic ones translated from Coptic. On the life and work of this Egyptian saint, see *Koptische Papyri theologischen Inhalts herausgegeben und in das Italiennische übersetzt von T. ORLANDI*, Wien, 1974, p. 155–156, R.-G. COQUIN, *Paul of Tamma, Saint*, in A.S. ATIYA (ed.), *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, vol. 6, New York et. al., 1991, p. 1923–1925, M. PEZIN, *Nouveau fragment copte concernant Paul de Tamma (P. Sorbonne inv. 2632)*, in *Christianisme d'Égypte. Hommages à R.-G. Coquin (Cahiers de la Bibliothèque Copte 9)*, Louvain, 1995, p. 15–20, E. LUCCHESI, *Trois nouveaux fragments coptes de la vie de Paul de Tamma par Ézéchiél*, in U. ZANETTI, E. LUCCHESI (eds), *Aegyptus christiana. Mélanges d'hagiographie égyptienne et orientale dédiés à la mémoire du P. Paul Devos bollandiste (Cahiers d'orientalism 25)*, Genève, 2004, p. 211–213 and E. LUCCHESI, *Entretiens d'apa Paul sur le discernement*, in L. PAINCHAUD, P.-H. POIRIER (eds), *Coptica – Gnostica – Manichaica. Mélanges offerts à W.-P. Funk (Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi. Études 7)*, Louvain et. al., 2006, p. 529–533.

¹¹⁵ PAOLO DI TAMMA. *Opere. Introduzione, testo, traduzione e concordanze a cura di T. ORLANDI (Unione Academica Nazionale. Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari)*, Roma, 1988.

¹¹⁶ Paul of Tamma, *De cella* 50 (94,50 Orlandi): $\omega\alpha\rho\epsilon\ \tau\sigma\phi\iota\alpha\ \gamma\alpha\rho\ \nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\alpha\beta\epsilon\ \epsilon\iota\mu\epsilon\ \epsilon\pi\epsilon\varrho\zeta\iota\sigma\omicron\upsilon\gamma\epsilon\ \pi\epsilon\varrho\zeta\eta\tau\ \epsilon\upsilon\phi\rho\alpha\pi\epsilon\ \zeta\mu\ \pi\pi\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon\ \varrho\upsilon\alpha\uparrow\ \mu\tau\omicron\upsilon\eta\ \nu\alpha\varrho\ \zeta\eta\ \tau\rho\iota$

¹¹⁷ Silv 97,9–10.

¹¹⁸ Silv 98,14–15.

¹¹⁹ Silv 103,11–17 (NHMS 30, 326,11–17 Peel): $\bar{m}\bar{p}\bar{r}\zeta\iota\varsigma\epsilon\ \epsilon\kappa\tau\omega\bar{z}\bar{m}\ \epsilon\zeta\omicron\upsilon\eta\ \epsilon\pi\rho\ \bar{m}\bar{p}\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma\ \lambda\gamma\omega\ \bar{m}\bar{p}\bar{r}\kappa\alpha\ \tau\omicron\omicron\tau\kappa\ \epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda\ \epsilon\kappa\mu\omicron\omega\epsilon\ \zeta\iota\ \epsilon\iota\eta\ \bar{m}\bar{p}\epsilon\chi\ \mu\omicron\omega\varsigma\ \bar{n}\zeta\eta\tau\epsilon\ \chi\epsilon\kappa\alpha\varsigma\ \epsilon\kappa\eta\alpha\chi\iota\ \pi\epsilon\mu\tau\omicron\eta\ \bar{n}\bar{n}\epsilon\kappa\ \zeta\iota\varsigma\epsilon$. Translation by M. Peel and J. Zandee slightly adapted.

But the similarities between *De cella* and Silv go beyond common sapiential roots. We supply here only a few examples concerning Silv 97,3–98,20.

Like Silv 98,8–10¹²⁰ St Paul says that the withdrawal from society makes one to be a friend of God, cf. *De cella* 69¹²¹: "Blessed is a wretched poor man who withdraws ($\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\chi\omega\rho\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$) <from the world>; he is a friend of God like Abraham."

Both texts advise their respective audiences to reduce contacts with other people, cf. Silv 98,15–18: "Do not keep company with anyone. And if you do keep company with them, be as if you do not" and *De cella* 78–79¹²²: "Do not look at anyone, neither let anyone look at you."

Finally, we find in *De cella* as well as in Silv the idea of living alone with God, cf. Silv 98,15–16: "do not keep company (ΜΟΟΨΕ) with anyone"; Silv 98,8–9: "Entrust yourself to God alone" and *De cella* 81: "You shall prove ($\delta\omicron\kappa\iota\mu\acute{\alpha}\zeta\epsilon\iota\nu$) the teaching according to which you live walking (ΜΟΟΨΕ) alone whereas God is with you."¹²³

But unlike Silv, in Paul of Tamma this idea is not driven to its utmost consequences. In *De cella* 10 the monk is advised to attend Sunday services¹²⁴ and another saying, *De cella* 80, states that a counsellor should be chosen out of a thousand men.

This statement is of particular interest for a comparison with Silv. On the one hand, it contradicts directly Silv 97,18–19: "Make a great number of friends, but not counsellors" implying that St Paul's monks had a close contact either with each other or with people from the outside. No less important is also the source of this admonition, Ecclesiastes 7:28: "I found one upright man among a thousand."¹²⁵ Together with the allusion to the prophet Elijah being alone by the brook Kerith in 1 Kings 17, in *De cella* 82 this biblical allusion provides a kind of scriptural foundation for St Paul's monasticism. The great difference with regard to Silv is, therefore, that the latter text does not try to provide any support from the Christian holy books for its solitude theory at all.

¹²⁰ "Entrust yourself to God alone as father and as friend."

¹²¹ Paul of Tamma, *De cella* 50 (94,50 Orlandi): $[\omega\ \eta]\ \lambda\iota\alpha\tau\eta\ \nu\omicron\upsilon\zeta\eta\kappa\epsilon\ \nu\epsilon\beta\iota\eta\eta\ \epsilon\varrho\alpha\eta\alpha\chi\omega\rho\iota\ \sigma\upsilon\gamma\omega\beta\eta\rho\ \mu\pi\pi\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon\ [π\epsilon\ \eta]\ \theta\epsilon\ \nu\alpha\beta\rho\alpha\zeta\alpha\mu$.

¹²² Paul of Tamma, *De cella* 78–79 (98,78–79 Orl.): $\mu\pi\rho\beta\omega[\omega\tau\ \zeta\eta]\tau\eta\ \eta\rho\omega\mu\epsilon\ \mu\pi\rho[\kappa\alpha]\ \rho\omega\mu\epsilon\ \omicron\eta\ \epsilon\varrho\beta\omega\omega\tau\ \zeta\eta\tau\kappa$

¹²³ Paul of Tamma, *De cella* 81 (98,81 Orl.): $\epsilon\kappa\epsilon\lambda\omega\kappa\iota\mu\alpha\zeta\epsilon\ \eta\tau\epsilon\varsigma\beta\omega\ \epsilon\tau\kappa\omicron\upsilon\eta\eta\zeta\ \eta\varsigma\omega\varsigma\ \epsilon\kappa\mu\omicron\omega\epsilon\ \omicron\upsilon\alpha\kappa\ \epsilon\rho\epsilon\ \pi\pi\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon\ \eta\eta\mu\alpha\kappa$

¹²⁴ Cf. Paul of Tamma, *De cella* 10 (88–90,10 Orl.).

¹²⁵ Cf. also Sir 6:6.

The same differences in the understanding of solitude are visible if we look at some modifications of Silv's text which have been made in a semi-eremitic milieu similar to those of St. Paul of Tamma. They are transmitted to us in SD. Instead of Silv's admonition to not trust anyone, in SD we read that a monk shall have at least one friend who fears God. The reason for this correction can be seen in SD, line 28: unlike the original text of Silv, we learn here that not all people without exception have gone astray:

Silv 97,5–8.10–11	SD
(22) My son,	
(23) do not have anyone as a friend.	(23) And do not make all people your friends.
(24) But if you do acquire one,	(24) And if you get friends,
(25) do not entrust yourself to him.	(25) do not trust them,
	(16) for the world is established in deception;
	(20) <i>but make your friend one brother fearing the Lord <...></i>
(28) For everyone goes along deceitfully.	(28) For the people altogether go along in deception <i>except a small insignificant <number> of them.</i>

Though the statements of SD are pessimistic enough, they are in full accordance with the sapiential tradition represented e.g. by Sirach 6:6–7: “Let your acquaintances be many, but for advisers choose one out of a thousand. If you want to make a friend, take him on trial, and do not be in a hurry to trust him”, cf. also Sirach 6:14–15: “A loyal friend is a powerful defence: whoever finds one has indeed found a treasure. A loyal friend is something beyond price, there is no measuring his worth.”¹²⁶

According to Sirach, however untrustworthy people in general may be¹²⁷, one can try and find a good friend among them. It is against this background that the interpolator of SD rewrote the final lines of our passage from Silv, cf. Silv 98,18–20: “Be pleasing to God, and you will not need anyone” and SD, l. 35–37: “If you like to please God, o my son, serve Christ.”

We can conclude that a semi-eremitic monk, according to our evidences from *De cella* by St. Paul of Tamma and SD, was not so essentially alone and self-sufficient as Silv had required of his audience. These observations let us assume that, despite some striking similarities,

¹²⁶ Translation according to The New Jerusalem Bible.

¹²⁷ Cf. also Jer 9:4–5.

no direct line leads from Silv to the semi-eremitic monasticism in Egypt. In my final section I will try to show that neither can be claimed, at least, for one “pure” Egyptian hermit, St. Onophrius.

4.2.3 *Eremitic monasticism*

We learn about him from the narrative attributed to a certain Paphnutius which was written probably at the end of the 4th or at the beginning of the 5th century in Egypt¹²⁸. Paphnutius meets the holy man after a long journey in the desert, listens to his story and, as Onophrius dies shortly afterwards, buries his body. As Onophrius says to him, after leaving the monastery where he had lived together with several brethren, he spent sixty years alone in the desert without seeing anyone except an old hermit who had instructed him about the eremitic way of life in Onophrius's very first year outside his monastery.

A remarkable passage in Onophrius's talk deals with his reasons for leaving the monastery. These are essentially the imitation of the Old and New Testament holy men and trusting in God's promise to help the afflicted likewise expressed in the Bible, cf. *Vita Onophrii* 11.¹²⁹:

The great ones (i.e. the elders in the monastery) were perfect as the angels of the Lord are perfect. I heard them speaking about our father Elijah the Tishbite, saying that in every way he was powerful in God. There lived in this desert also John the Baptist. <...> I said to them: My fathers, aren't then those who live in the desert the elect — more so than we? Look, we see each other every day and we gather together for worship. <...> When we're weak the brothers help us and when we want a plate or a pot to eat from we serve each other out of love for God. <...>

¹²⁸ See R.-G. COQUIN, *Onophrius, Saint*, in A.S. ATIYA (ed.), *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, vol. 6, New York et. al., 1991, p. 1841–1842, T. VIVIAN, *Paradise Regained: Saint Onophrius. Introduction, in Journeying into God. Seven Early Monastic Lives. Translated, with Introductions by T. Vivian*, Minneapolis, 1996, p. 166–172, J. TUBACH, *Die Prolepsis des Eschatons in der Onophrios-Vita*, in W. BELTZ, J. TUBACH (eds), *Zeit und Geschichte in der koptischen Frömmigkeit bis zum 8. Jahrhundert. Beiträge zur VIII. Internationalen Haleschen Koptologentagung vom 15.-18. Mai 1998 (Hallesche Beiträge zur Orientwissenschaft 26)*, Halle/Saale, 1998, p. 89–95 and R. STIEGLECKER, *Die Renaissance eines Heiligen. Sebastian Brant und Onophrius eremita (Gratia. Bamberger Schriften zur Renaissanceforschung 37)*, Wiesbaden, 2001, p. 178–190. For further scholarly literature about St. Onophrius and his *Vita*, see R.-G. COQUIN, *Onophrius*, p. 1842 and J. TUBACH, *Die Prolepsis*, p. 90, n. 5.

¹²⁹ Translation from *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt and The Life of Onophrius by Paphnutius. Translated, with an Introduction by T. VIVIAN (Cistercian Studies Series 140)*, Kalamazoo, 1993, p. 152–153. For the Coptic text, see E.A.W. BUDGE (ed.), *Coptic Martyrdoms etc. in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*. Coptic Texts, vol. 4, London, 1914, p. 210,28–212,7 (fol. 7a–9a).

[They said to me], Indeed, when they begin their lives as anchorites they greatly rejoice on account of hunger and thirst <...> If trouble overtakes them <...> they immediately stretch out their hands and pray to Jesus the King until his help quickly comes to them. <...> Have you not heard that which is written: <...>, The poor man cries out. The Lord hears him and rescues him from all his afflictions.¹³⁰

According to this text, and quite opposite to St Basil's opinion¹³¹, needed help shall be provided to the anchorites not by the — in their case — deficient fellow brethren, but by God Himself. Is, thus, the Life of St Onophrius in a perfect agreement with Silv 98,18–20: “Be pleasing to God, and you will not need anyone”? Yet, as in the case with St. Paul of Tamma, the Life of Onophrius is unacquainted with the spiritual way into the depth of one's mind which is decisive for Silv's concept of self-sufficiency and inward solitude. On the other hand, Silv, as I mentioned above, does not argue with biblical examples of the solitary life — the prophet Elijah and St John the Baptist — who are most important for St Onophrius. Thus, we must conclude that neither semi-eremitic nor eremitic monastic solitude ideals — as far as the evidence analysed lets us see — seem to directly depend upon a spirituality akin to that depicted in Silv.

5. SOME FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As our previous analysis has hopefully shown, Silv's self-sufficiency and solitude concept is a *sui generis* development among the more or less related ideas of Late Antiquity¹³². Yet, what accounts for this rather

¹³⁰ Ps 34:6.

¹³¹ Cf. Bas., reg. fus. 7: “In the solitary life, what is at hand becomes useless to us and what is wanting cannot be provided, since God, the Creator, decreed that we should require the help of one another.” Translation from M.M. WAGNER (trans.), *Ascetical Works* (cf. n. 104 above), p. 248. For the Greek text, see *Patrologia Graeca* 31, col. 928D.

¹³² As I mentioned above, this analysis do not pretend to be exhaustive. So I allow untouched the parallels to Silv concept of solitude and self-sufficiency from Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Gnosis writings partly because an adequate treatment would require a more or less separate study, and partly because I am not aware of any precise parallels. The concept of solitude in Origen and in Gnostic writings is briefly dealt with in D.F. BUMAZHNOV, *Some Ecclesiological Patterns of the Early Christian Period and Their Implications for the History of the Term MONACHOS (Monk)*, in A.A. ALEXEEV, CH. KARAKOLIS, U. LUZ (eds), *Einheit der Kirche im Neuen Testament. Dritte europäische orthodox-westliche Exegetenkonferenz in Sankt Petersburg 24.–31. August 2005 (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 218)*, Tübingen, 2008, p. 255–260, for Clement of Alexandria see e.g. W. VÖLKER, *Der wahre Gnostiker nach Clemens*

strange wish to see Christian men and women as independent and unrelated monads without any hint of a possible joining link?

When confronted with this problem, Wolf-Peter Funk proposed to see the reasons of Silv's *Weltfremdheit* in the general crisis of the 3rd century and, more specifically, in the situation of persecution to which Silv's Christian environment was probably exposed. Though neither can be simply discarded, we know a large number of Christian texts written in similar circumstances, yet not disposed to take the pastoral steps like those we find in Silv.

Though no exhaustive treatment of this problem can be proposed here, I would like to suggest that one of the obvious reasons for Silv's reserved attitude to the contacts between human beings is his negative view of the world, matter, and body in general. In his insightful article about the *Descensus ad inferos* in Silv, Malcolm Peel has shown that Silv identifies Christ's incarnation with His descent into Hades and in this way considers the present world to be hell¹³³. Silv's devaluation of matter and the body are considerable and verges on the Gnostic views, though neither the “Gnostic” nor the “moderate Gnosticism”¹³⁴ labels are particularly helpful to define its exact place in the history of the early Christian theological thought. At the present stage of our knowledge about this text, one would probably not be wrong by saying that, sharing in the atmosphere of interiorised spirituality of his time¹³⁵, Silv took one further step in this direction and closed behind himself the door on which he as many others was knocking.

Alexandrinus (Texte und Untersuchungen 57), Berlin, 1952, pp. 153–160, 549–559 and F. HOFMANN, *Die Kirche bei Clemens von Alexandrien*, in *Vitae et Veritati, FS K. Adam*, Düsseldorf, 1956, p. 11–27.

¹³³ M.L. PEEL, *The descensus [sic] ad inferos* (cf. n. 106 above), p. 32–34.

¹³⁴ J.L. SUMNEY, *The Teachings of Silvanus as a Gnostic work*, in *Studies in Religion* 21 (1992), p. 205.

¹³⁵ A.-J. FESTUGÈRE, *Personal Religion among the Greeks (Sather Classical Lectures 26)*, Berkeley – Los Angeles, 1954, p. 53–67 illustrated this feature of the Late Antiquity culture by analysing the term ἀναχωρεῖν. See also F. WILHELM, *Plutarchos ΠΕΡΙ ΗΣΥΧΙΑΣ (Stob. IV 16, 18 p. 398f. H.)*, in *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 73 (1920–1924), p. 466–482, G. FOWDEN, *The Pagan Holy Man in Late Antique Society*, in *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 102 (1982), 33–59 and esp. 57–58 as well as the article of Maria Dzielska in the present Festschrift.