

TITO ORLANDI

THE STUDY OF BIBLICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL
LITERATURE, 1988-1992

This report is the third in a series that began with a paper read in 1976 at the Cairo congress¹ (it was a survey of the state of research at that time, though the title was «The Future of Studies...»), and continued in 1988 at the Louvain-la-Neuve congress.² Therefore I shall not repeat the general observations that I made on those occasions, but I shall proceed directly to report on the studies that have appeared in the last four years. This report cannot be exhaustive, because of lack of time, and possibly of information on the most recent publications; but I have tried to mention all the important contributions. More full and detailed bibliographical information may be found in our Coptic Bibliography.³

1. Collections of manuscripts

Alla I. Elanskaya has published a catalogue of the literary manuscripts in Moscow's Pushkin Museum,⁴ thus filling a gap in our knowledge of the Russian collections. Though information on such

1. Tito ORLANDI, *The Future of Studies in Coptic Biblical and Ecclesiastical Literature*, in: R. McL. WILSON (ed.), *The Future of Coptic Studies*, p. 1-22, Leiden, Brill, 1978.

2. *The Study of Coptic Literature, 1976-1988*, in: M. RASSART-DEBERGH – J. RIES, *Actes du IVe congrès Copte*, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1992: vol. II, p. 211-223.

3. *Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterary*, Coptic Bibliography, XI ed., Roma, 1993.

4. Alla I. ELANSKAYA, *Coptic Literary Texts of the Pushkin State Fine Arts Museum in Moscow*, Budapest, Univ. Loránd Eötvös, s.d. (1991). 306 p., 72 pl. = *Studia Aegyptiaca*, 13

collections is still far from satisfactory, we expect that the recent opening of Russia to the West may change also this situation for the better. Elanskaya had already produced a catalogue of the St. Petersburg (then Leningrad) Saltykov-Schedrin Public Library collection,⁵ and her latest catalogue is conceived more or less along the same guidelines, providing not only a list of the material and paleographic information, but also transcriptions of the unpublished fragments. Due—I think—to an inability to travel abroad and also to access all the relevant bibliography, some of the information given about the fragments (especially as they relate to the complementary material in other collections) appears to be incomplete and sometimes erroneous. But on the whole the catalogue remains a very useful tool, also because it is accompanied by extensive reproductions of the fragments; and it is only to be regretted that the distribution is—at least for the time being—almost clandestine.

The Coptic collection of the Beinecke Library of Yale University is a somewhat minor one; but the accurate catalogue of the biblical fragments by Stephen Emmel is no less welcome.⁶ Also we mention the work of Stephen Emmel on the reconstruction of Shenutean codices from the fragments of all known collections, which is not published yet (it will be first presented as a doctoral dissertation at Yale), but by our personal knowledge it is in a very advanced stage and will give an enormous amount of new information on this fundamental part of Coptic studies.

We wish to mention at this point that the catalogue of the Coptic manuscripts of the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York by Leo Depuydt is announced as imminent; and that the archaeological discovery of the remains of the library of the old monastery of Neklone

5. Alla I. ELANSKAYA, *Koptskaya Rukopisi...* = *Palestinski Sbornik* 20 (83), Leningrad, 1969.

6. Stephen EMMEL, *Antiquity in Fragments: A Hundred Years of Collecting Papyri at Yale*, *The Yale University Library Gazette* 64 (1989) 38-58; cp. also Stephen EMMEL, *Marginalia*, *The Yale University Library Gazette* 64 (1990) 174-175; Stephen EMMEL, *Coptic Biblical Texts in the Beinecke Library*, *Journal of Coptic Studies* 1 (1990) 13-28.

(in the Fayum), which are still to be catalogued and investigated, seems to be important also for the literary material.⁷

Finally, the «Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari,» under our direction in Rome, has produced an electronic data base for Coptic manuscripts and the works of Coptic literature, which can be consulted directly from the computer in the Facoltà di Lettere, University of Rome (also by telephone network), or is distributed on a personal basis.⁸ Contacts in order to establish permanent collaboration are being negotiated with the Louvre Museum, the Patristic Bibliography project in Toronto, and the Swiss Apocrypha project.

2. Biblical Texts

Two articles on the general problems relating to the biblical versions have been published in *The Coptic Encyclopedia*: one by Peter Nagel for the Old Testament, and one by Bruce M. Metzger for the New Testament.⁹ Both are unfortunately rather brief and necessarily vague, and in this respect not very different from the articles that can be found in other non-specialized encyclopedias; but they are commendable for the soundness of the opinions which the authors bring forth, though briefly and without discussion, and should be taken more seriously than their length suggests.

Both authors rightly affirm that we are still very far from a good assessment of the «Coptic» versions in the frame of biblical philology. Two points are essential: the relationship of the different versions among themselves, which requires linguistic as well as philological research; and the relationship between the «groups» of manuscripts emerging from that research with the families of Greek manuscripts. It

7. Włodzimierz GODLEWSKI - Tomasz HERBICH - Ewa WIPSZYCKA, *Deir el Naqlun (Neklioni) 1986-87. First Preliminary Report with Appendix from 1988* by Jaroslaw Dobrowolski, *Nubica* 1-2 (1990) 171-208.

8. Cf. T. ORLANDI, *The Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari, Computers and the Humanities* 24 (1990) 397-405.

9. Aziz S. ATIYA, *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, New York etc., Macmillan, 1991. 8 vols. P. NAGEL, *Old Testament, Coptic Translation of: VI 1836-1840*; B. M. METZGER, *New Testament, Coptic Version of the, VI 1787-1789*.

is important to mention that Peter Nagel states that, for the Sahidic version of the Old Testament, the evidence presently available suggests a twofold tradition, represented by the White Monastery codices on the one hand, and the Hamuli codices on the other. On another point, however, we would disagree with both authors. For the date of the versions, they tend to assume as valid the information in Athanasius' Life of Antony: first, that Antony did not understand Greek; and second, that he heard a Bible reading in a church around the year 270. Though the latter statement may be a historical fact, the former is far from sure, especially after Samuel Rubenson's reassessment of Antony's letters (Letters, pp. 141ff.).¹⁰ For this reason, we cannot affirm that Antony in 270 heard the Bible read *in Coptic*, and in any case that he was not able to understand it *in Greek*.

Two important projects continued during the past four years: for the Old Testament, Peter Nagel is carrying on the work for the complete edition, and has continued to publish fruits of the preliminary research. In 1983 and 1984 he had published an accurate and detailed list of the White Monastery codices which can be reconstructed from a sufficient number of presently dispersed folios, preceded by an exhaustive report on the state of studies in this area, but without paleographic or codicological description. In 1987 he published the diplomatic edition (also without paleographical remarks, but with full photographic reproduction) of some fragments not published before, from those in the 1983-84 list.¹¹ This part of the work is necessary, because the apparatus of the future edition will refer to material which is supposed to be already available to the scholars.

All this is impressive, but also leads to some reflections on the feasibility of a «complete» edition in the traditional sense. The use that scholars make of the variant readings of fragmentary manuscripts is very different from that of variant readings coming from well preserved manuscripts. Moreover, the difference between versions and different testimonies of the «same» text is difficult to appreciate, but

10. Samuel RUBENSON, *The Letters of St. Antony: Origenist Theology, Monastic Tradition and the Making of a Saint*, Lund, Lund University Press, 1990.

essential. Problems like these and the many others which could be mentioned, seem to recommend a «diversified» edition, taking advantage also of the new technologies.¹² A kind of database, containing the full texts of the manuscripts easily consulted by means of detailed reference points, accompanying a printed edition of the most important complete (or semi-complete) manuscripts, could be one solution. The use of CD-ROM for the reproduction of the manuscripts might also be envisaged.

For the New Testament, Franz-Jürgen Schmitz and Gerd Mink, working in the «Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung», are carrying on a similar preparatory task, on a larger and more complete scale. In 1986, they had published the first volume of their *Liste der koptischen Handschriften des neuen Testaments, part 1, Die sahidischen Handschriften der Evangelien*, and the remaining two volumes have appeared in 1989 and 1991.¹³ The general project has been described in full by Kurt Aland,¹⁴ and I think that here also the observations made above on the edition of the Old Testament are relevant. The two last volumes testify to the progress in the use of computer technology, but—as it seems—only for printing. The idea of a philological and codicological database is not taken into consideration.

11. Peter NAGEL, Sahidische Pentateuchfragmente, ZAS 114 (1987) 134-166. Cp. the preceding Peter NAGEL, Studien zur Textüberlieferung des sahidischen Alten Testaments, Teil I, ZAS 110 (1983) 51-74; Peter NAGEL, Griechisch-koptische Bilinguen des Alten Testaments, in: P. NAGEL (ed.) Graeco-Coptica, p. 231-257, Halle, Martin-Luther-Univers., 1984; Peter NAGEL, Aufgaben und Probleme einer kritischen Edition der Sahidischen Version der Septuaginta, in: T. ORLANDI, F. WISSE (eds.), Acts of the Second Int. Congress of Coptic Studies, Roma, CIM, 1985; Peter NAGEL, The Present State of Work in the Edition of the Sahidic Version of the Old Testament, in: W. GODLEWSKI (ed.), Coptic Studies. Acts of the Third Int. Congr. of Coptic Studies, Warsaw, 20-25 Aug. 1984, p. 281-284, Warszawa, PWN - Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1990.

12. For such problems and for information on what is going on in this field, one can refer to the very interesting "Electronic Discussion Group" AIBI (Association Intern. Bible et Informatique), on Bitnet (and Internet), address AIBI-L@uottawa.bitnet.

14. Kurt ALAND, The Coptic New Testament, R. H. FISCHER (ed.), A Tribute to Arthur Voobus, p. 3-12, Chicago, 1977.

The list includes sixteen complete or particularly old codices (nos. 1-16), and 255 items (nos. 101-355) of reconstructed fragmentary codices of very different extents. Also the lectionaries are taken into consideration, and every item is provided with an extensive codicological and paleographical description, which is derived from observation of photos, or dependent on publications (vol. 1.1, p. xviii). The authors rightly mention the uncertainty of some statements (p. xxii), which of course cannot be considered a fault in this kind of work. On the contrary, the reader would like very much to have access to the enormous amount of information in a way much more flexible than the indexes provide. But here again, only electronic processing of the data could provide what is wanted.

Such lists are fatally never complete. Apart from manuscripts simply overlooked by the authors (for which an example is the appendix in the 3rd volume), Coptic manuscripts of the gospels are being discovered every day, but also some collections known for a long time are still difficult to manage. For what I have verified, the authors do not have complete information of the material preserved in the Louvre Museum, in the Michigan University Library, in the Vienna Papyrusammlung, in the groups of fragments 661B, 664A-B, 665 of the Morgan Library, in the Cologne Papyrussammlung, and in one so-called Oslo collection, which according to our investigation is now nowhere to be found.¹⁵ A final note should be made on the identification number of the fragments, which sometimes does not coincide with the last reorganization made in the collections.

13. F.-J. SCHMITZ, G. MINK (Bearb.), *Die sahidischen Handschriften der Evangelien. 1. Teil, Liste der koptischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments*, ANT 8, Berlin New York, De Gruyter, 1986. Franz-Jurgen SCHMITZ und Gerd MINK (Bearb.), *Die Sahidischen Handschriften der Evangelien. 2. Teil, 1. Halbband, , Liste der Koptischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments, I*, Berlin - New York, De Gruyter, 1989, *Arbeiten zur Neutestamentlichen Textforschung*, 13; Franz-Jurgen SCHMITZ und Gerd MINK (Bearb.), *Die Sahidischen Handschriften der Evangelien. 2. Teil, 2. Halbband, , Liste der Koptischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments, I*, Berlin - New York, De Gruyter, 1991, *Arbeiten zur Neutestamentlichen Textforschung*, 15.

As for the publication of individual codices, we register first the long awaited edition of the biblical part of the important bilingual papyrus 1 from Hamburg.¹⁶ The long and complicated story of the successive phases of the work on this codex are reported in detail in the preface. Initially (ca. 1930) Carl Schmidt, who was publishing the Greek *Acta Pauli* (pp. 1-11 of the manuscript),¹⁷ had entrusted the late A. Kropp with the edition of the rest. After the war, other scholars in one way or another worked on it, beside Kropp: Christian Voigt, Bernd Jörg Diebner, and Rodolphe Kasser.¹⁸ In the end, the edition took the present magnificent shape, with the collaboration of Enzo Lucchesi, and thanks also to the munificence of the publisher, Patrick Cramer. The book of 532 pages and 53 plates (the biblical part of the manuscript is completely reproduced) is impressive. The very fragmentary Coptic text has been tentatively reconstructed for the benefit of the «general» reader, and on the whole it is a wise choice, because it gives at least an idea of what the original texts might have been. Also a German translation is provided, accompanied by the parallel versions in Sahidic and Bohairic, and by the Greek text. The Greek text of *Ecclesiastes* is reproduced in diplomatic transcription, with a critical apparatus. The so-called «Index of Coptic Words» is really a detailed lexicological study, which shows also the rendering of the Greek words by the Coptic translator. Also to be mentioned are the 90 pages devoted to the Coptic dialect, which is rather a monograph on the Coptic dialects. In a word, the quality of this edition perfectly match-

15. In the famous «*armoir Lefort*», now in the Catholic University of Louvain-la-Neuve, Institut Orientaliste, one of the boxes contains the photos from «Oslo, Université». But they are not (or no more) in the University Library of Oslo, nor—as it seems—anywhere else in Oslo.

16. Bernd Jörg DIEBNER et Rodolphe KASSER (Hrsgg.), *Hamburger Papyrus Bil. 1. Die alttestamentlichen Texte des Papyrus Bilinguis 1 der Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg*, Genève, Cramer, 1989. 532 p., 53 pl. = *Cahiers d'Orientalisme* 18

17. Carl SCHMIDT, *Acta Pauli*, Leipzig, 1904 (II ed. 1905; rist. Hildesheim, 1965).

18. Cp. Bernd Jörg DIEBNER, *Die biblischen Texte des Hamburger Papyrus Bilinguis 1* in: T. ORLANDI, F. WISSE (eds.), *Acts of the Second Int. Congress of Coptic Studies*, Roma, CIM, 1985.

es the importance of the manuscript.

The only preserved semi-complete Sahidic Evangelium is the Morgan Library codex M569, which was fully reproduced in the famous photographic edition, but never published in a critical edition. Gonzalo Aranda had published in 1984 the the Gospel of St. Matthew from this manuscript,¹⁹ and in 1988 he has continued the work with the Gospel of St. Mark²⁰ (in the meantime the variant readings of Luke and John could be found in Hans Quecke's edition of the Barcelona gospel manuscript).²¹ Gonzalo Aranda is particularly keen on the textual problems;²² his general views were expressed in the first volume, and are not repeated in the second. The text is not presented in diplomatic transcription, but in continuous lines. There are two critical apparatuses, one for the non-significant or less significant variant readings, the other for the significant ones.

The so-called Crosby-Schöyen Codex, formerly in the University of Mississippi and then in the private collection of the Norwegian bibliophile Martin Schöyen, has been known for a long time for its antiquity and importance. Besides the text of Melito of Sardis *On the Pascha*, and another homily not identified, three biblical texts are copied: *2 Macchabees* (in part), *1 Peter*, and *Jonah*. It has now been fi-

19. Gonzalo ARANDA, *El Evangelio de San Mateo en copto sahidico*, = *Textos y estudios "Cardinal Cisneros"* 35, Madrid, Inst. Arias Montano, 1984.

20. Gonzalo ARANDA PEREZ, *El Evangelio de san Marcos en copto sahidico (Texto de M 569 y aparato critico)*, Madrid, Instituto de Filologia, CSIC, 1988 = *Textos y estudios "Cardenal Cisneros"*, 45.

21. Hans QUECKE, *Das Lukasevangelium Saidisch*, = *Studia et Textus* 6, Barcelona, Papyrologica Castroctaviana, 1977. Hans QUECKE, *Das Johannesevangelium saidisch. Text der Handschrift PPalau Rib. Inv.-nr. 183 mit den Varianten der Handschriften 813 und 814 der Chester Beatty Library und der Handschrift M 569*, = *Papyrologica Castroctaviana, Studia et Textus* 11, Roma Barcelona, Papyrologica Castroct., 1984.

22. Gonzalo ARANDA PEREZ, *Autour de la version sahidique du Nouveau Testament: s'agit-il d'une tradition textuelle unique? Étude des manuscrits M 569 et Bodmer XIX*, W. GODLEWSKI (ed.), *Coptic Studies. Acts of the Third Int. Congr. of Coptic Studies*, Warsaw, 20-25 Aug. 1984, p.21-26, Warszawa, PWN - Panstwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1990. 506 p.,

nally published, by a team of scholars under the general editorship of James Goehring.²³

Another codex has been published recently, after much delay, due to the decease of the late Paulinus Bellet, to whom the edition had been entrusted. In the meantime, the codex (known as the Glazier codex, after the name of the previous owner) has been deposited in the Morgan Library, and Hans-Martin Schenke has provided the edition, with complete information on codicology, language and textual comparisons.²⁴

Due to circumstances, we cannot make a sufficiently detailed report of the meticulous work done by Goehring and Schenke on these codices, but the readers will appreciate the high level of their achievement.

We wish to mention also two important codices which have been recently discovered, or at least made known: one, of the fourth or fifth century, is in the Vatican Library and contains the text of the Minor Prophets in Bohairic, a dialect rarely attested from so early a period; the other codex is in Cairo, a testimony to the Middle Egyptian version of the Psalms.²⁵ The publication of both codices is announced as imminent, by Hans Quecke and Rodolphe Kasser for the Minor Prophets, and by Gawdat Gabra for the Psalms. Finally we announce that most of the available Coptic text of the Bible has been encoded in machine-readable form under the direction of Robert Kraft at the University of Pennsylvania and is available to interested scholars.

In sum, the work on biblical texts has been very successful on the side of the editions; it is to be hoped that detailed philological studies will be encouraged in the future for the whole of the Coptic versions.

23. James E. GOEHRING, *The Crosby-Schöyen Codex Ms 193 in the Schöyen Collection*, Leuven, Peeters, 1990.

24. Hans-Martin SCHENKE, *Apostelgeschichte 1, 1 - 15, 3 im mittelägyptischen Dialekt des Koptischen (Codex Glazier)*, Akademie-Verlag, Berlin 1991.

25. Cf. e.g. *Newsletter-Bulletin d'Information, IACS*, 18 (April 1986), p. 10.

3. Apocrypha

Apocrypha have always been a special part of Coptic literature. When Coptic texts first began to be known in good numbers, scholars noticed the great quantity of narratives pertaining to Sacred History, but not exactly coinciding with the biblical text. A common opinion was formed that Coptic literature was mainly composed of *apocrypha*. Later, with a better appreciation especially of the fragments, it was understood that such texts generally belong to homilies, which draw inspiration from the Bible, but are aimed at satisfying the listeners' taste for the fabulous and the extraordinary. The texts which could be classified as proper apocrypha after all were relatively few.

Those few presented intricate philological problems, so their study was neglected for a while. It was the constitution of the group around François Bovon, investigating the New Testament apocrypha in all late-antique and medieval languages, which gave new impulse to this work.

Bovon's enterprise, now an official institution with the patronage of the Union Académique Internationale, has initiated a new series of editions and a journal. In the Series Apocryphorum of the Corpus Christianorum, where Junod and Kaestli had published the versions of the *Acta Iohannis*,²⁶ Jean-Marc Prieur has published, together with the Greek and Latin texts, the fragments of the Coptic version of the *Acta Andreae*, with translation and commentary (1989).²⁷ The new journal, named: *Apocrypha: Le champs des Apocryphes*, will certainly publish (inter alia) articles on the Coptic tradition of the apocrypha.

It is to be hoped that the sparse publication of the individual *Acta* does not prevent the continuation of the general study, begun by Françoise Morard,²⁸ of the process by which the Coptic tradition

26. E. JUNOD, J. D. KAESTLI, *Acta Iohannis* (Corpus Christianorum, Series Apocryphorum 1-2), Turnhout, Brepols, 1983, 2 Vols., XXI 949 p.

27. Jean-Marc PRIEUR, *Acta Andreae*. (I) Praefatio, Commentarius. (II) Textus, Turnhout, Brepols, 1989. XXVI 848 p. (= Corpus Christianorum 5-6).

28. *Le recueil copte d'Actes Apocryphes des Apôtres. Un exemple: le codex R, Augustinianum* 23 (1983) 73-82.

brought the individual *Acta* together into some kind of collection, to be found partly in some White Monastery codices, and then in at least one Bohairic codex, as also in Arabic.

In the same field of studies is to be mentioned the new edition, much improved, of the classic work edited by Wilhelm Schneemelcher, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1987; 5. Auflage der von Edgar Hennecke begründeten Sammlung); the English translation by James Charlesworth of the *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*;²⁹ and the volume of the Pleiade collection of the *Écrits Intertestamentaires*.³⁰

4. Ecclesiastical Literature

Given the well known scarcity of studies pertaining to Coptic literature in its entirety, I must begin by mentioning some contributions of my own, which synthesize (following the ideas that I had already set forth in my 1988 report) my view of its development, and should go together with the documentary work done in the frame of the Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari. In *The Coptic Encyclopedia*,³¹ the articles on *Literature; Hagiography, Cycles*, and the articles on individual Coptic authors (real or attributed), form a compendium of Coptic Literature. A contribution for Quacquarelli's *Complementi interdisciplinari di Patrologia* deals with Patristic texts;³² one for Nagel's *Schmidt Colloquium* treats the beginnings of Coptic literature;³³ one for a book edited by Paolo Siniscalco (in the press) deals with the relationship of Coptic literature and Egyptian Church history.

29. J. H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols., Garden City NY, Doubleday, 1983-85.

30. AA VV, *La Bible: écrits intertestamentaires*. Éditions publiées sous la direction d'André Dupont-Sommer, Paris, Gallimard, 1987 (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade).

31. Aziz S. ATIYA, *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, New York etc., Macmillan, 1991. 8 vols.

32. Tito ORLANDI, *La patrologia copta*, in: A. QUACQUARELLI (ed.), *Complementi interdisciplinari di Patrologia*, p. 457-502, Roma, Città Nuova, 1989.

33. *Egyptian Monasticism and the Beginnings of the Coptic Literature*, in: P. NAGEL (ed.), *Carl-Schmidt Kolloquium...*, Halle, 1990, p. 129-142.

I wish to summarize what seem to me the most original interpretations in these works: (1) the Coptic literary language is a cultural acquisition, not necessarily dependent on the pastoral needs of the church; (2) Pachomian and Shenutean literary attitudes should be kept separate, just as should be done with their monastic organizations and their relations with the ecclesiastical and civil authorities; (3) the Origenistic-anthropomorphic controversy represents a turning point also for Coptic literature; (4) the golden age of Coptic literature is the time of Damianus; (5) the clandestine activity of the «cyclical» schools around the eighth century is emphasized; and (6) the synaxarian arrangement of the individual works in the codices of the ninth century is recognized.

Regarding the publication of texts, I shall mention first Iain Gardner's edition of further literary papyri (theological in a broad sense) from the Vienna Papyrussammlung,³⁴ continuing the work done by me some years ago.³⁵ Gardner has identified some of the fragments which I could not identify (I take the occasion to note that no. 20 has been identified by Xavier Martinez as part of Ps.-Methodius' *Apocalypse*),³⁶ and by joining other little fragments has reconstructed what remains of a codex, or possibly two codexes (the explanations at pp. 12-13 are very confusing), which contained a translation of Epiphanius' *Ancoratus* in the first (?) part (foll. 1-13), and other unidentified works in the following parts, including a title of an otherwise unknown epistle of Gregory to Basil (foll. 14-67; no translation is provided for these fragments, mostly very little). Gardner has also reconstructed one folio and part of another, with an exegetical homily, otherwise not identified. The miscellaneous book closes unexpectedly

34. Iain GARDNER, *Coptic Theological Papyri II. Edition, Commentary, Translation, with an appendix: The Docetic Jesus*, Wien, Hollinek, 1988. 2 vols. = *Mitteilungen aus der Papyrussamml. der Österr. Nationalbibliothek N.S.* 21

35. Tito ORLANDI, *Papiri copti di contenuto teologico*, Wien, Osterr. Nationalbibl., 1974.

36. Francisco Xavier MARTINEZ, *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in the Early Muslim Period: Pseudo-Methodius and Pseudo-Athanasius*, Dissertation Washington Cathol. Univ. 1985, Roma, CIM, 1985, Microfiche.

with some notes on the Manichaeian fragments of Vienna, and a contribution on *The Docetic Jesus*.

In 1988 I published what remains of the ascetic writings of Paul of Tamma, one of the monks unknown to the Greco-Latin tradition, but frequently mentioned in Coptic sources.³⁷ There is also a *Life* of him, in more than one version, unfortunately of little historical use. The most important feature of these works is that probably they were written originally in Coptic, in the fourth century. On the other hand, they fit well in the ascetic literature together with, e.g., the letters of Antony, those of Ammonas, perhaps those of Pachomius, the so-called *Teachings of Silvanus*, the *Liber* of Horsiesi, and later the writings of Isaiah of Scetis and perhaps Barsanuphius and Iohannes.

Evagrius Ponticus' work seemed only indirectly attested in the Coptic literary tradition,³⁸ and consequently its influence on Coptic theology had been underestimated. Sometime ago I had pointed to some possible relations between Evagrius (or his school) and Pachomian monasticism, with implications also for the research on the milieu of the Nag Hammadi texts.³⁹ Now two rather large fragments, whose existence has been known for a long time, have been published. They demonstrate the existence of complete Coptic translations, probably fallen under the damnatio of the Origenistic school. An ostrakon from the Berlin Museum with three sentences from the *De octo virtutibus...* has been published and commented on in detail by Hans-Martin Schenke,⁴⁰ and some folios from a little codex (probably some sort of personal monastic vademecum) in Toronto with ample extracts

37. Tito ORLANDI, Paolo di Tamma, Opere, Roma, CIM, 1988.

38. Joseph MUYLDERMANS, Evagriana Coptica, Le Muséon 76 (1963) 271-276; cp. the citation in Walter Ewing CRUM, Der Papyruscodex Saec. VI-VII der Philipps-Bibliothek in Cheltenham. Koptische theologische Schriften, Strassburg, Trubner, 1915, p. 38,29-35.

39. Tito ORLANDI, A Catechesis against Apocryphal Texts by Shenute and the Gnostic Texts of Nag Hammadi, HTR 75 (1982) 85-95.

40. Hans-Martin SCHENKE, Ein koptischer Evagrius, in: P. NAGEL (ed.) Graeco-Coptica, p. 231-257, Halle, Martin-Luther-Univers., 1984 = Wiss. Beitrage 48; Hans-Martin SCHENKE, Das Berliner Evagrius-Ostrakon (P.Berol. 14700), ZAS 116 (1989) 90-107.

from the *Speculum monachorum* have been published and annotated by Hans Quecke.⁴¹

Coming now to studies of Coptic literature, some very good news from the past four years is the beginning of extensive critical work (and consequently of discussions) on some texts published, something that had happened very rarely before. I myself was worried by the fact that, although the number of texts published and made known was not very large (cf. our 1988 paper), the capacity of the «Coptological community» to include them in a living discussion on their value and their historical and cultural position was almost nonexistent.

Fortunately it seems that we are at a turning point, due especially to several monographs, in which Coptic texts play a large part. First, in a new volume of the monumental work of Aloys Grillmeier on *Christ in the Christian Tradition*, in which post-Chalcedonian Egyptian theology is studied in great detail, for the first time the Coptic sources are much in evidence.⁴² The most important of these sources is a work by Shenute, preserved with some lacunae, written (as it seems) at the request of the Patriarch Dioscorus, who had been alerted of the fact that there were in Upper Egypt (Achim) some Origenistic enclaves. I had published this work in 1985 under the title *Shenute contra Origenistas*.⁴³ The attribution to Shenute has been challenged by Lucchesi,⁴⁴ but so far with no evidence.⁴⁵

Grillmeier, who is not a specialist of Coptology, has recognized the importance of this work, not only for our knowledge of the personality of Shenute—who appears much more learned and theologically informed than he was supposed to be—but also for our knowledge of the

41. Hans QUECKE, *Eine koptische alphabetische Akrostichis*, *Orientalia* 61 (1992) 1-9.

42. Alois GRILLMEIER, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche*. 2/4: *Die Kirche von Alexandria mit Nubien und Äthiopien nach 451*, Freiburg etc., Herder, 1990, cf. p. 167-264.

43. Tito ORLANDI, *Shenute contra Origenistas*, Roma, CIM, 1985.

44. 318 ou 319 Pères de Nicée?, *Analecta Bollandiana* 102 (1984) 394-396, note 9.

45. On the contrary, the paper read by S. Emmel, in the vol. 2 of the Acts of this same Congress (in the press), definitely states that the text was attributed to Shenute in the White Monastery tradition.

theological situation of Upper Egypt in the fifth century. The work is directed especially against Nestorians and Origenists. But it is clear from the arguments and quotations that under this second category, Shenute had in mind people who read not only works of Origen, but also works very near in contents to those known to us from the Nag Hammadi codices. This from one side establishes a relationship between Origenism and the Nag Hammadi texts; from the other it puts the Nag Hammadi texts in a very delimited environment, for the first time. It is true that this happens about one century after the codices known to us were written; but this is interesting in order to trace the upward road of the texts (rather than the downward one, as is usually done, if at all). At the end of this road we find together people who held «true» Origenistic opinions (e.g., the interpretation of the Seraphim in Isa 6:2; cf. pp. 185-86; or the question of prayer, pp. 188-91), with late Arian opposers of the *homoousios* (p. 187), readers of apocrypha of the Nag Hammadi kind, possibly sharers of some Manichaean ideas.

The Shenutean position may instead be matched by older Coptic texts like the Life of Aphou and the «revised» Agathonicus. We find the late convergence of many different schools in two main streams, originating in the Origenistic (anthropomorphite) controversy of the beginning of the fifth century. Here is the key to understanding the cultural setting of the Coptic world, and especially the monastic part of it, with a strong Origenistic current in the north (led by Evagrius, and his successors), a strong anthropomorphite current in the south (from which the Atripe-Shenutean orthodoxy seems to derive), with the Pachomians in a less defined position, but probably until about 410 more Origenistically oriented than not. Set in this environment, also the problem of the Pachomian origin of the Nag Hammadi «library» receives new light, and the results of the papyrological, philological, and theological studies so far obtained may be placed on a better basis than is provided by the evidence of the Lives of Pachomius, which are an a posteriori hagiographic arrangement.

As we are dealing with the literary activity of Shenute, this may be the place to mention a strange polemic concerning the original lan-

guage of his works. Enzo Lucchesi has identified the contents of a few fragments from a very ancient bilingual Greco-Coptic codex as being parallel to the text of a papyrus codex in the Turin collection.⁴⁶ Some evidence points to Shenute as the author of the Turin text, and therefore Lucchesi not only attributes also the bilingual fragments to Shenute (adding a note against Shenutean attributions too easily done!), but concludes that Greek was the original language of this, and possibly also of other, works of Shenute, protesting that nobody had recognized Shenute's Greek culture.

This is not the place to enter into details, but some general points may be usefully clarified. The study of Coptic literature is rather peculiar, because of the very particular characteristics of its manuscript tradition. So we have very few certainties, but many realistic possibilities, whose value cannot depend so much from data established above any reasonable doubt, but rather from the coherence with the general picture of Coptic literature and culture in which each particular question is inserted. This is why, from one side, the whole literary situation should be always kept in mind, and from the other, we may expect that some or much of that general situation may change because of the addition of new data, or new appreciation of old data. For what concerns us here, the good theological and literary (and therefore Greek) culture of Shenute had already been recognized before the article of Lucchesi.⁴⁷ But that Shenute is to be considered first of all a Coptic author cannot be put in doubt even after it. And there is more: the bulk of the works that we now attribute to Shenute certainly belong to him, even though this or that fragment may be recognized in the future as belonging to other authors. We have a fairly good idea of Shenute as a Coptic author. The fact that there existed Greek versions of some of

46. Enzo LUCCHESI, *Chenoute a-t-il écrit en grec?*, in: AA VV, *Melanges Antoine Guillaumont*, p. 201-210, Genève, Cramer, 1988 = *Cahiers d'Orientalisme*, 20. Cp. now the reaction of J. HELDERMANN in *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, ***; and it should be stressed that Crum had already recognized the parallelism of the texts, without so much fuss: cp. *Coptic Dictionary*, s.v. EIABE, 76B.

47. Tito ORLANDI, *Shenoute d'Atripe*, *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, t. XIV, coll. 797-804, Paris, Beauchesne, 1989.

his works (so far only one is in question) certainly does not prove that he habitually wrote in Greek; and strictly it does not even prove that this one work was written in Greek and translated into Coptic, rather than vice versa.⁴⁸ As a matter of fact, we personally are in favour of the Shenutean attribution of this work, and of the view that the original was in Greek. But this does not alter very much the general judgment on the work of Shenute as a whole, as it has been recently assessed against the old opinions of Leipoldt.

Another significant improvement in the study of an important part of Coptic literature, historiography, is a splendid monograph dedicated by Johannes den Heijer to the the Arabic History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria.⁴⁹ Den Heijer had previously published some articles which were centered on the problem of the «first» author of this work: not Severus of Ashmunein, as is currently believed, but a much less known Mauhoub al-Mansur. The question is surely important, but given that the attribution to Severus had been no basis for any historical assessment of the work itself, we may leave it to the specialists of Christian Arabic literature. More significant for us is that we have in this monograph a first complete exposition of the philological problems concerning this work, which is still unsatisfactorily published and has not been studied enough in its genesis and use of the sources, which—as it seems—were both Coptic and Greek. The first part of the book treats the (Arabic) manuscripts, which are accurately listed and annotated, as also the differences between the two versions resulting from their comparison. It is now to be hoped that den Heijer himself will publish a complete critical edition and translation at least of the Lives 1-74. The second part of the monograph deals with the problem of the author. Finally the third part, which particularly concerns us here, studies the use of the Coptic sources, and especially the Coptic History of the Church. Here all previous contributions are taken into due account, and properly evaluated, and the synthesis which emerges

48. Leo DEPUYDT, In Sinuthium graecum, *Orientalia* 59 (1990) 67-71.

49. Johannes Den HEIJER, Mawhub Ibn Mansur et l'histoire copto-arabe. Étude sur la composition de l'Histoire des Patriarches d'Alexandrie, Louvain, Peeters, 1989. = CSCO 513 = Subsidia 83

will serve for a long time as the reference point for interested scholars. We cannot enter into detail, of course, but we may say that, as the Arabic text is fundamental in turn to the reconstruction of the fragmentary Coptic history, the synthesis of den Heijer remains a great help for the Coptic scholar who works on a new critical edition of and commentary on the Coptic History of the Church (as I myself am doing).

In another important monograph, Alberto Camplani has studied once again the question of the festal letters of Athanasius,⁵⁰ one of the few cases in which—thanks to the work of Lefort—Coptic texts have assumed relevance in a broader context of ecclesiastical history. But Camplani's work began from the lack of a reliable edition and translation of the Syriac text. The Coptic text also requires a new edition, though that done by Lefort is still very good. But some new fragments have been found, and the improvements in the Syriac text have consequences also for the Coptic. On the other hand, Camplani has reviewed *de novo* the problem of the chronology of the letters, and many other historical problems. From the point of view of Coptology, the main results are: (1) a new basis on which to prepare the new edition of the Coptic text, which in fact Camplani is preparing; and (2) a series of historical assessments relating to Athanasius himself, the Melitians in the time of Athanasius and later on, and the liturgical developments of the Paschal festivities. All this is helpful in many ways also for the study of Coptic literature.

Another book, which though valuable *per se* is also a preparation for a critical edition, is that of Samuel Rubenson on the letters of Antony.⁵¹ It represents a kind of revolution in the appreciation of this long neglected corpus and its author. The attribution of the seven letters to Antony is vindicated against the many doubts which had prevailed so far, and then the Antony who had been regarded as perfectly representative of the uneducated, popular kind of Egyptian monasticism, with no knowledge of Greek, theologically agnostic, and only

50. Alberto CAMPLANI, *Le Lettere Festali di Atanasio di Alessandria*. Studio storico-critico, Roma, CIM, 1989, (Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari).

51. Samuel RUBENSON, *The Letters of St. Antony: Origenist Theology, Monastic Tradition and the Making of a Saint*, Lund, Lund University Press, 1990.

following the teaching of the church and the patriarch, appears from Rubenson's study as an intelligent Origenist (though not an extremist) perfectly conscious of the spiritual debate of his time. And also the Coptic culture of his time is described as much more active and valid than is generally assumed. It must be said that, though we agree in general with these opinions, we are far less enthusiastic than others are about the correct use of the literary evidence. In a Coptological context, we cannot leave unmentioned that the letters are not preserved in «two folios of a papyrus codex dating presumably from the seventh century»; rather they belong to a parchment codex from the White Monastery, dating at least from the ninth century. But what seems especially unconvincing, in Rubenson's method of demonstrating authorship, is the weight given to the contents, in particular the theological contents, of the letters, and the weight given to the lack of contradictory documents. In demonstrating authorship, admittedly a difficult task, one wants above all to have stylistic arguments, with clear divergences from the other possible authors. On the other hand, the content of these texts, interesting as it may be, is not so peculiar that it could not have been written by any educated monk of Lower Egypt in the fourth and fifth centuries.

The book dedicated to Peter of Alexandria by Tim Vivian⁵² may be seen as somewhat preparatory for an edition of the Coptic texts attributed to Peter, as well as being an effort to give a new appreciation of the personality of the Alexandrian bishop, using the Coptic sources alongside the «classical» ones. Here also the use of the evidence does not appear entirely correct, and some conclusions frankly are unconvincing. We may also point out the new conclusions reached by Pearson in the introduction to the edition of the texts (prepared by Vivian, Pearson, and Donald Spanel).⁵³

Now in the press (but already available in its original form as a doctoral dissertation) is Mark Sheridan's complete edition of what re-

52. Tim VIVIAN, *St. Peter of Alexandria Bishop and Martyr*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1988 = *Studies in Antiquity and Christianity*.

53. Birger PEARSON and Tim VIVIAN, with the assistance of D. B. Spanel, *Two Coptic Homilies Attributed to Saint Peter of Alexandria*, Roma, CIM, 1993.

mains of the works of Rufus, bishop of Shotep in the time of the Patriarch Damianus,⁵⁴ and one of the group of literati who wrote the best original Coptic works after Shenute. After Garitte called attention to Rufus in 1956, listing the known fragments, no one took on the job of publishing them. Also providing a historical and theological study and full commentary, Sheridan's book will be an important contribution to our knowledge of late Egyptian biblical exegesis and its relationship to the Alexandrian school.

Just out of the press is a welcome volume in which Leo Depuydt and some collaborators publish a number of homilies from the codices in the Pierpont Morgan Library.⁵⁵ Although the publication of texts is always to be considered with favor, I must say that this book just goes against the recommendation which I presented to the 1998 Louvain congress: «What really matters is the honesty and the clarity of an edition. The editor should make clear which problems he has tried to solve, and which he has devoted less attention to, and the edition should be used according to such declarations".⁵⁶ So, from a literary point of view, there is an introduction by Rowan A. Greer, which simply ignores all the recent studies on Coptic literature and their achievements; and there is no commentary on the texts; while also linguistic notes and accurate paleographic description are absent.

In conclusion, we observe that the study of Coptic literature has progressed in the last four years at least as much as in the previous years. Many important codices have been published, and new texts are now known, even if we are still far from possessing an edition of most Coptic manuscripts. All the main collections of texts (CSCO, Cahiers d'Orientalisme, CMCL...) have published new books, a new journal

54. Mark J. SHERIDAN, *The Homilies of Rufus of Shotep on the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, Ann Arbor, University Microfilm International, 1990. 5 microfiche

55. Leo DEPUYDT (General Editor), *Homiletica from the Pierpont Morgan Library. Seven Coptic Homilies Attributed to Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, and Evodius of Rome*, Louvain, Peeters, 1991.

56. *The Study of Coptic Literature*, cit., p. 219.

sponsored by our Association is being published, and the existing enterprises have been continued.

But above all we think that the most satisfactory feature of recent years is the new interest that scholars have shown in the study of Coptic works as a necessary complement to the other Christian sources for a good knowledge of the history of Christianity and of Christian thought. This is the best proof that the efforts to make Coptic literary works known is appreciated by colleagues in related fields. And of course we hope that such a trend may continue and expand in the future.