



PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS:
THE IACS AND COPTIC STUDIES, A REPORT

TITO ORLANDI
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA LA SAPIENZA

THE IACS WAS FOUNDED in Cairo in December 1976, during the First International Congress of Coptic Studies, as the natural continuation of the work of the International Committee for the Publication of the Nag Hammadi Codices. In the words of R. McL. Wilson, the Committee «envisaged a... greater activity in Coptic studies in general, and in this connection it was observed that the founding of an international Coptological learned society would be desirable.»¹ One of the most important tasks of the Association is the organization every four years of a congress of Coptic studies, a task to be performed through the appropriate institutions of the host country.

Beginning with the Second International Congress in Rome (1980), it became customary to open the sessions of the congress with a presidential address, a formula that was interpreted by successive presidents according to personal inclinations. I shall briefly recall that Martin Krause delivered a specialized paper *Zur Möglichkeit von Besitz im apotaktischen Mönchtum Ägyptens*.² Bentley Layton's choice for the Third International Congress in Warsaw (1984) fell on the life and achievements of the IACS: *The Future of Our Association*.³ He commented on its organization and made proposals for the future. Of great impact certainly was the proposal (soon accepted) to include reports in which «a knowledgeable scholar would critically evaluate four years' progress as it related to Coptic studies.» This represents perhaps the most distinctive feature of our congresses, starting with the fourth one. Through these reports one can follow with amazing precision and amplitude, and also with critical remarks, the development of the different branches of Coptic studies. Coming back to the presidential addresses, Rodolphe Kasser (Fourth International Congress, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1988) chose a very specialized subject: *Le Papyrus Vaticanus Copto 9, codex des Petits Prophètes (note préliminaire sur la variété subdialectale B74*

¹ R. McL. WILSON (ed.), *The Future of Coptic Studies*, p. 1-22, Leiden, Brill, 1978 (Coptic Studies 1, p. 10).

² In T. ORLANDI, F. WISSE (ed.), *Acts of the Second Int. Congress of Coptic Studies*, p. 121-134, Roma, CIM, 1985.

³ In W. GODLEWSKI (ed.), *Coptic Studies: Acts of the Third Int. Congr. of Coptic Studies, Warsaw, 20-25 Aug. 1984*, p. 1520, Warsaw, PWN, 1990.

de ce témoin «bohairique ancien,» quatrième siècle).⁴ Peter Nagel (*ICCoS* 5) briefly dealt with the life of the Association.⁵ Søren Giversen (*ICCoS* 6) spoke of *Münter and Zoëga: Coptic Studies in Denmark*, but it has not been published, as far as I know. Stephen Emmel (*ICCoS* 7) delivered a specialized paper on the subject of *Coptic Studies before Kircher*,⁶ as an homage to the Coptological tradition of Leiden.

The quadrennial congress is a special occasion, when coptology shows the full range of its activities, beyond the individual specializations inside of which the scholars generally carry on their research. I think that it is desirable that the presidential address have a general scope and interest, on the example of Layton's and Nagel's addresses, so that it can be useful also for those present at the inaugural session of a congress who are not directly working in coptology, in order to better understand what we do and what our problems are.

My purpose is to give a general idea of the progress of Coptic studies—which is after all the main concern of our Association—during the thirty years since its foundation, especially from the point of view of its academic organization and social impact, and in relation to the work done in comparable fields, which also have seen the constitution or the continuation of associations like ours, and in the framework of the general evolution of Coptic studies from the beginning. I suppose that some of my remarks may be provocative, other perhaps not entirely correct; but reactions and discussions will contribute to the progress of our discipline.

The IACS and Sister Associations

With learned associations comparable to the IACS there is no spirit of competition, even with those which include Coptic studies in their scope, such as those of egyptology or papyrology; but neither, we may note, is there active collaboration. I would call it something like a tacit and benign mutual neglect. This is a field where certainly more can be done in future.

The International Association of Egyptologists was founded like ours in the seventies, with the aim of publishing the *Annual Egyptological Bibliography*,⁷ exchanging information, holding congresses every four years, and helping in the preservation of Egyptian heritage. Its web page⁸ is rather poor: there is not even a history of the Association; no list of its congresses; no memory of its past officers. The Association does not publish a newsletter. From what it is possible to learn,

⁴ In M. RASSART-DEBERGH and J. RIES (ed.), *Actes du IV^e congrès copte, Louvain-la-Neuve, 5-10 sept. 1988*, vol. 2, p. 64-73, Louvain-la-Neuve, Institut orientaliste, 1992.

⁵ PETER NAGEL, «Presidential Address», in *ICCoS* 5, II, Part 1-2, Papers from the Sections, p. 1-4, Roma, CIM, 1993.

⁶ In *ICCoS* 7, 2004, I, p. 1-14.

⁷ <http://www.fak12.uni-muenchen.de/aegyp/IAEPage.html>, with link.

⁸ <http://www.fak12.uni-muenchen.de/aegyp/IAEPage.html>.

we can observe that Coptic studies are present, but not really integrated, in the activities of its Congresses. In one of the sessions in Cairo 1998, papers such as *Germans in Early Byzantine Egypt* and *Traces of the «Beautiful Feast of the Valley» in the Western Christian Tradition* were read. These fell within Coptic, conceived as a historical period.

The Association francophone de coptologie may be considered a daughter of the IACS, having the same scope, but specially intended for the French speaking scholarly community. It has a considerable activity, culminating every two years in the Journées d'études coptes, which are then published in the special series «Cahiers de la Bibliothèque copte»; the latest one is the eleventh Journées (2003) published in volume 14 of the «Cahiers.» There is no newsletter, and a web site is being restructured.

The International Association of Papyrologists is much older than ours (1947), and has grown very large, as has also the participation in its perhaps too huge congresses. It does not publish a newsletter and its web page is poor.⁹ This association shows a particular interest in coptology, for obvious reasons. Unfortunately the domain of papyrology suffers from the problem of definition, because except for a common material support (but here also ostraka etc. should be included), it is difficult to see how the Herculaneum papyri have much to do with, say, the documents from Aphrodito. Anyhow, the discipline is well established in the academy, and surely coptology and papyrology have much to gain from a collaboration, which hopefully will grow also in the institutional field. I like to mention here the American Society of Papyrology,¹⁰ which in its prestigious *Journal* gives much space to Coptological contributions, and the International Society for Arabic Papyrology, founded only in 2002, but very active.¹¹

The International Society for Nubian Studies publishes a newsletter, but it has no web page, except for the individual congresses, which are very specialized. Here also some kind of collaboration is desirable.

The Society of Biblical Literature¹² pays great attention to coptology, as one can see from the program units of its annual meeting: e.g., Religion in Roman Egypt; Nag Hammadi and Gnosticism; Manichaean Studies.

The Association internationale des patrologues, founded in 1976, has an important *Newsletter*, dedicated above all to the announcement of research in progress. It is very ample, and rather up to date, thanks to the efforts of a team under Angelo Di Berardino, something that our Association presently cannot do. On the other hand, the Association has no web page. Its main manifestation is the rightly famous Patristic Conference of Oxford, which is otherwise independent and existed before the Association was founded. Coptic texts are not often on the

⁹ <http://www.ulb.ac.be/assoc/aip/>.

¹⁰ <http://www.papyrology.org/>.

¹¹ <http://www.princeton.edu/~petras/>.

¹² <http://www.sbl-site.org/>.

stage, except for Gnosticism and Nag Hammadi texts, which have been debated also in separate seminars, sometimes published apart from the official publication of the Congress, *Studia Patristica*. It is a fact that the Christian Orient has not been very popular among patrologists. A great turn is represented by the *Dizionario di Patrologia* and the *Patrologia*, volume 5, directed by Angelo Di Berardino.¹³

The Society for Manichaean Studies has no web page, but has a lively newsletter with articles, reviews, bibliography, and reports, and it seems on the way to becoming a true journal.

The venerable Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft¹⁴ is not very active in Coptic studies, but deserves a mention here for the Deutsche Orientalistentage, where coptology has often occupied a good place, especially in the past.

Also I think that I can mention at this point those Egyptological institutes—of a very different kind than the associations mentioned above—which give much space to Coptological research: the Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire,¹⁵ the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Kairo,¹⁶ and the Nederlands-Vlaams Instituut in Cairo (NVIC).¹⁷

Coming to our own Association, we all know that the statutes state that it «is designed to encourage and contribute to the progress of all aspects of Coptic studies.» In more practical terms, we are invited to engage in the efficient organization of existing academic and similar structures, which are the basis of our life and our work on Coptic texts, monuments, and people; and in the construction of a friendly personal environment, harmonizing entities that as a matter of course remain autonomous in their aims and organization. In fact our Association is remarkable for the spirit of harmony and friendship that prevails among its members. Also cooperation is often demonstrated, as in cases where members have contributed to endowing a chair of Coptic studies at the American University in Cairo, or when the Association has protested against the possible extinction of a chair at the University of Munich. But we must also note that in general the idea of cooperation is mainly restricted to personal acquaintance, not e.g. to the continuous sharing of information on scholarly work in progress through institutional organization. Our Association has a regular *Newsletter*,¹⁸ in which everybody is encouraged to announce information related to Coptic studies. The web page¹⁹ contains information on Coptic academic teaching, publications in press, Coptic centers outside Egypt, congresses in related subjects; and allows for the direct insertion

¹³ Angelo Di BERARDINO (ed.), *Patrologia*, vol. 5: *Dal Concilio di Calcedonia (451) a Giovanni Damasceno (m. 750). I padri orientali*, Genoa, Marietti, 2000.

¹⁴ <http://www.dmg-web.de/frame2.html>.

¹⁵ <http://www.ifao.egnet.net>.

¹⁶ <http://www.dainst.org/index.php> (I did not find any page for the Abteilung Kairo).

¹⁷ <http://www.nvic.leidenuniv.nl>.

¹⁸ It may be consulted in the web page of the Association (cf. above).

¹⁹ <http://rmcisadu.let.uniroma1.it/~iacs/>.

of communications by everybody. In spite of this, so far only a few members have regularly contributed announcements.

The Association does not have the possibility, i.e. money and structures, to directly promote Coptic studies. It can from one side register progress and achievements in coptology, and from the other encourage research in neglected fields or call the attention of the authorities to coptology. The foundation and support of the *Journal of Coptic Studies*²⁰ is a remarkable exception, and it has found devoted editors, who have been willing to expend much of their time and effort for its success. Apart from this, it is especially important that there exists at least five foundations that can allocate considerable sums of money to help Coptic studies, and we mention them with great satisfaction and gratitude: the Brigitte und Martin Krause-Stiftung;²¹ the St. Shenouda the Archimandrite Coptic Society;²² the Atiya Foundation,²³ which regularly gives important grants; the St. Mark Foundation;²⁴ and finally the recently established Sarah Clackson Coptic Fund.²⁵ I mention also the Michela Schiff Giorgini Foundation,²⁶ because its Egyptological prize has been awarded also to scholars in coptology.

Coptology and Coptic Studies

One interesting feature that our Association has in common with most of those mentioned above is that in its statutes it does not offer a definition of the discipline that it is supposed to represent. Contrary to what one would believe, namely that this happens because the scope of the disciplines in question is obvious, the essence of coptology, just like patrology and papyrology, is far from obvious. It is even possible to say that the existence itself and the liveliness and remarkable activity of associations dedicated to such disciplines, in comparison with older but duller ones, is due just to the fact that the corresponding disciplines are in a sense young, not completely defined, and need to be established in the scientific world.

It is a peculiar characteristic of coptology that it cannot be taken for granted as a discipline, as for example Latin literature or Byzantine art can, but it must be negotiated among a group of disciplines, sharing parts of this and that,

²⁰ <http://www.sbg.ac.at/flka/jcopts.htm>.

²¹ <http://www.stifterverband.de/flash/intro.html>, then search for Brigitte und Martin Krause-Stiftung.

²² <http://www.stshenouda.com/index.htm>.

²³ The Middle East Center, The University of Utah, 200 S. Central Campus Dr., Rm #153, Salt Lake City, Utah 84112-9157.

²⁴ <http://www.coptic-history.org/>.

²⁵ Established at the Griffith Institute in Oxford in January 2004. The fund will help projects furthering the study of Coptic Papyrology.

²⁶ c/o Ofisa SA., chemin des Charmettes, 1003 Lausanne; c/o Bisys, 243 Fifth Avenue, New York NY 10016.

incorporating others, while giving to the result a specific meaning. Martin Krause has been especially concerned with this problem, and it is not by chance that his lecture on *Die Disziplin Koptologie* opens the volume *The Future of Coptic Studies*,²⁷ which contains most of the papers read at the first Coptological congress (Cairo 1976). He also wrote the important article on *coptology* in the *Coptic Encyclopedia*.²⁸ It is important to keep our attention alert to this question, not only for the sake of our mutual recognition as peers around a sufficiently clear identity, but also for more practical reasons—for example, in fostering the establishment of new chairs of coptology, or in the organization of the Coptic bibliography.

As for the constituents of coptology, it is by now well understood, I hope, that while fields like Coptic linguistics are clearly established, the same is not true for the definition and delimitation of fields like Coptic history, geography, literature, and art, because of the conflict between the general concept of an Egyptian culture (the only absolute certainty being that Coptic has to do with Egypt), and its «Copticity», or rather the Copticity of a part of it, in comparison with other parts. So also, Coptic manifestations in literature and art (especially architecture, etc.), in comparison with other Egyptian manifestations in the same cultural activities.

After long meditation, I believe that the following statements may be widely accepted, if considered without prejudice and with a fair mind. First, it is important that the question of the definition of coptology as an academic discipline be neither forgotten nor passed over in silence, when and where it is opportune for it to be discussed. At the same time it seems idle or scarcely relevant to try and establish a precise definition, valid in every case; rather, we should recognize a core made up of a few disciplines, and a group of others equally important, but whose legitimacy depends on the existence of the former ones. The blend will produce a flexible, but sufficiently consistent identification of coptology.

In my opinion—just to provide some elements for discussion, because every kind of taxonomy is both debatable and necessary—the core disciplines certainly include: the study of the Coptic language in its synchronic aspects, because diachrony makes it rather a part of the study of the Egyptian language; the study of Coptic literature in its specific aspect of being written in Coptic, because from the intertextual and historical point of view it cannot be distinguished from contemporaneous Greek, Arabic, and perhaps Demotic literatures; the study of the Egyptian church in all its aspects, but only after Chalcedon (because previously it was simply part of the «catholic» international Church, although with some peculiarities of its own); the study of Coptic palaeography, which of course has its specificity because of the script, while codicology cannot be distinguished from Greek, Latin, etc.; the study of ecclesiastical and monastic Egyptian art after Chalcedon; the study of papyri and

²⁷ MARTIN KRAUSE, «Die Disziplin Koptologie», in R. McL. WILSON (ed.), *The Future of Coptic Studies*, Leiden, Brill, 1978 (Coptic Studies 1).

²⁸ *CoptEnc*, vol. 2, p. 616-618. Cf. also M. KRAUSE, «Die Koptologie im Gefüge der Wissenschaften», *ZAS* 100 (1974), p. 108-125; *Id.*, «Koptologie und Papyrologie», in *Atti XVII Congr. Intern. Papirologia*, vol. II, p. 735-754, Napoli, Centro Internazionale per lo Studi dei Papyri di Ercolano, 1984.

similar documents, written in Coptic. The related disciplines are those to which the addition of the adjective «Coptic» alludes to some special character of the subject, in an otherwise unitary discipline, as in codicology, archeology, Christian theology, political history, Biblical philology, monasticism, etc. Each of these has special Coptic documents and monuments, but in this case Coptic is rather a part inside of a structurally and methodologically coherent whole.

Finally, there is a question that I for one, and possibly most of us, would like to see clearly answered: whether we can say that there existed a «Copticity» (*copticité*)—a kind of peculiar spiritual attitude or character that informed the documents, facts, and monuments that are studied by Coptologists, in religion, literature, art, history, music, etc., and which can be shown to form a common cultural ground for them. I mean, whether the word «Coptic» may refer not only to a historical and geographical periodization, but to one, more or less coherent, unifying spiritual factor.

All these problems are in any case far from settled, even perhaps not extensively and seriously debated. This explains why general introductions to «the Copts» are unsatisfactory in many ways. Six or seven of them have been published since the seventies, and there is no lack of meritorious authors: Meinardus,²⁹ Brunner-Traut,³⁰ Du Bourguet,³¹ and Cannuyer.³² They are all very useful, but often not in tune with the achievements of current research. More reliable, but covering only some subjects, are general books by R. Bagnall,³³ Gerhards and Brakmann,³⁴ Capuani³⁵ (with splendid photos), Partrick³⁶; and the collective works edited by M. Krause³⁷ and A. Camplani.³⁸

²⁹ OTTO MEINARDUS, *Christian Egypt: Faith and Life*, Cairo, 1970; *id.*, *Christian Egypt: Ancient and Modern* (CHE), Cairo, 1965, 2d ed., Cairo, American Univ. Press, 1977; *id.*, *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Deserts*, Cairo, American Univ. Press, 1961; *id.*, *Two Thousand Years of Coptic Christianity*, Cairo, American Univ. Press, 1999.

³⁰ EMMA BRUNNER-TRAUT, *Die Kopten, Leben und Lehre der frühen Christen in Ägypten*, Köln, Diederichs, 1982.

³¹ PIERRE DU BOURGUET, *Les Coptes*, Paris, PUF, 1988 (2d ed. 1989) (Que sais-je? 2398).

³² CHRISTIAN CANNUYER, *Les Coptes*, [Turnhout], Brepols, 1990 (Fils d'Abraham).

³³ ROGER S. BAGNALL, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, Princeton, Univ. Press, 1993.

³⁴ *Die koptische Kirche. Einführung in das ägyptische Christentum*, A. GERHARDS and H. BRAKMANN (ed.), Stuttgart, Berlin, und Köln, Kohlhammer, 1994.

³⁵ MASSIMO CAPUANI, *Egitto copto*. Contributi di Otto Meinardus e Marie-Hélène Rutschowskaya, Milano, Jaca Book, 1999.

³⁶ THEODORE HALL PARTRICK, *Traditional Egyptian Christianity*, Fisher Park 1996 (reprint 1999).

³⁷ *Ägypten in spätantike-christlicher Zeit: Einführung in die koptische Kultur*, MARTIN KRAUSE (ed.), Wiesbaden, Reichert, 1998.

³⁸ *L'Egitto Cristiano: Aspetti e Problemi in Età Tardo-antica*, ALBERTO CAMPLANI (ed.), Roma, Inst. Patr. Augustinianum, 1997 (StEA 56).

Outline of a History of Coptic Studies

It seems convenient to introduce here the subject of the history of Coptic studies, because I have often remarked that young scholars rarely have a feeling of what coptology was in the past, even, for example, when I myself began to be interested in it, a mere trifling forty years ago; and for better or for worse, these have been years of great change, even of revolution. On the other hand, an increasing interest in the history of Coptic studies is to be noted. M. Krause has produced a leading article for the *Coptic Encyclopedia*,³⁹ I have contributed a paper in the volume *Documentation patristique*,⁴⁰ S. Aufrère has written a beautiful book on Peiresc and his times⁴¹ and important contributions in the catalogue *Égyptes*,⁴² S. Emmel has written several articles on particular aspects,⁴³ and notably the presidential address at the Leiden Congress (see above); H. Behlmer has written on Lagarde;⁴⁴ and finally P. Buzi is publishing an interesting book on Cardinal Borgia's Coptic collection and one on Georg Zoega.⁴⁵

Prehistory. First of all we should note that Coptic studies have no real beginning; there never was a real discontinuity between the age (ca. eighth to tenth centuries) when the Copts (who of course called themselves by other names) studied their own language, their theology, their literature—as can be deduced especially from the headings of the Coptic homilies⁴⁶—and the age (ca. ninth to thirteenth centuries) when Coptic was fading, and grammatical reference tools were produced for those Christians who understood only Arabic. In the European, Latin environment, we can speak of a beginning of Coptic studies based on those Copto-Arabic grammatical

³⁹ M. KRAUSE, art. «Coptological Studies», in *CoptEnc*, vol. 2, p. 613-616.

⁴⁰ TITO ORLANDI, «La documentation patristique copte», in J.-CL. FREDOUILLE and R.-M. ROBERGE (ed.), *La documentation patristique: Bilan et prospective*, p. 127-148, Québec-Paris, Presses de l'univ. Laval/Sorbonne, 1995.

⁴¹ SYDNEY H. AUFRÈRE, *La Momie et la Tempête: Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc et la «Curiosité Égyptienne» en Provence au début du XVII^e siècle*, Avignon, 1989.

⁴² S. AUFRÈRE, «La redécouverte de la langue copte aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles», in NATHALIE BOSSON and SYDNEY H. AUFRÈRE (ed.), *Égyptes... L'égyptien et le copte*, Lattes, Musée archéologique H. Prades, 1999, p. 91-108.

⁴³ STEPHEN EMMEL, «Specimens of Coptic Type from the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide in Rome», *YULG* 61 (1987), p. 96-104; *id.*, «Robert Curzon's «Very Large Folio»: Coptic-Arabic Gospel of Matthew, and Ms Coptic 1 in the Beinecke Library», *YULG* 63 (1989), p. 158-163; *id.*, «Robert Curzon's Acquisition of White Monastery Manuscripts», in M. RASSART-DEBERGH and J. RIES (ed.), *Actes du IV^e congrès copte*, vol. 2, p. 224-231, Louvain-la-Neuve, Institut orientaliste, 1992; *id.*, «The Coptic Manuscripts Collection of Alexander Lindsay, 25th Earl of Crawford», in S. GIVERSEN, M. KRAUSE, P. NAGEL (ed.), *Coptology: Past, Present, and Future: Studies in Honour of Rodolphe Kasser*, Leuven, Peeters, 1994, p. 317-326.

⁴⁴ HEIKE BEHLMER, «Schenute, Besa und Lagarde: Eine unbekannte Episode der Forschungsgeschichte», *JCoptStud* 5 (2003), p. 55-66.

⁴⁵ In preparation.

⁴⁶ PAOLA BUZI, *Titoli ed Autori nella Letteratura Copta: Studio Storico e Tipologico*, Pisa and Roma, 2005.

treatises, starting with the time of the Council of Florence (1440) and then the first attempt by Leonardo Abela,⁴⁷ in an ecclesiastical environment; this gave a particular character to the Western investigations of Coptic, namely, the perspective of the Catholic Church at first, and then also of the Reformed churches. It was the period of the declining Renaissance, when the original spirit of Italian *umanesimo* was giving way, for what concerns us here, to erudition and philology.

The development of Coptic studies at that time may be understood from the following simple and reasonable presupposition. Given that the goal of scholars was to know the tiny and remote Christian group existing in Egypt—its history, its confession, its liturgy (of a Coptic literature, let alone art or architecture, there was as yet not even a hint)—this knowledge could be obtained mainly from written documents in the Coptic language. Accordingly the immediate necessity was to learn Coptic and, together with the effort to visit the Copts themselves, to acquire more documents. And of course, this was in tune with a general interest in ancient, classical times that was typical of the Renaissance. At that time (the seventeenth century) coptology coincided with egyptology as being the study of pre-Islamic Egypt in its entirety. The case of Athanasius Kircher,⁴⁸ though unfortunate on both scores, is nonetheless exemplary. It is also interesting to note in this regard that a similar identification of coptology and egyptology continued after the decipherment of hieroglyphs, but with a remarkable reversal by which Coptic language and literature were now considered to be an appendix to egyptology.

The modern foundation. The eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries may be considered the foundational stage, when philology made good progress with Rafael Tuki, La Croze, Jablonsky, Schwartz, Wilke (Wilkins), Woide, Mingarelli, Zoega and others, and history, after the precursor Vansleben, with E. Renaudot.⁴⁹ The grammar and dictionary of Peyron⁵⁰ were to become the standard before Stern⁵¹ and Crum;⁵² and a lot of literary texts, not only Biblical ones, came to be known.

The modern heroic age. After this, the decipherment of hieroglyphs brought a radical shift in the attention of the scholarly world towards egyptology, now seen as the study of pre-Christian Egypt. This is why in the period ca. 1850-1950, when not only a number of outstanding persons devoted their splendid intelligence

⁴⁷ Cf. the words of A. PETRUCCI in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 1, Roma, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1960, p. 46.

⁴⁸ ATHANASII KIRCHERI... *Lingua Aegyptiaca restituta; Opus tripartitum*, Roma, H. Scheus, 1643 and 1644.

⁴⁹ ÉTIENNE MARC QUATREMÈRE, *Recherches critiques et historiques sur la langue et la littérature de l'Égypte*, Paris, Imprimerie Impériale, 1808 is still the most useful survey.

⁵⁰ VITTORIO AMEDEO PEYRON, *Grammaticae Linguae Copticae Accedunt Addimenta ad Lexicon Copticum*, Turin, Ex Regio typographeo, 1841; *id.*, *Lexicon linguae copticae*, Torino, Ex Regio Typographeo, 1835.

⁵¹ LUDWIG STERN, *Koptische Grammatik*, Leipzig, T. O. Weigel, 1880.

⁵² WALTER EWING CRUM, *A Coptic Dictionary, Compiled with the Help of Many Scholars*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1939.

and application to Coptic studies but also wonderful discoveries of documents were made, we must also take note of a kind of ghettoization of coptology, which is best represented, in my opinion, by the career of J. Leipoldt,⁵³ who, after an extraordinarily brilliant beginning, turned his ambitions in different directions, until the discovery of the Nag Hammadi texts brought coptology back onto the stage.

The fathers of Coptic studies were scholars like O. von Lemm, W. E. Crum, L. Th. Lefort, W. Till, H. Hyvernat, C. Schmidt.⁵⁴ Their names, and those of their *epigonoï*, like G. Garitte or A. Elanskaya or H. Quecke or A. Guillaumont—H. J. Polotsky stands alone—are sufficient to evoke splendid examples of scholarship, incredible knowledge, and a heritage of invaluable scholarly tools that have withstood the test of time. This was the heroic age, when Coptic scholars more or less mastered the whole range of documentation; later on, Coptic studies was divided into many independent fields: (Egyptian) linguistics, Oriental patristic studies, Gnosticism and Manichaeism, history of the Christian church of Egypt, Byzantine art, etc.

Contemporary

The present. The contemporary period, after 1950, is characterized by the eruption onto the stage of two amazing discoveries, the Manichaean manuscripts (known after 1933)⁵⁵ and above all the Nag Hammadi manuscripts (known after 1946).⁵⁶ They have certainly brought coptology to the attention of many people who were previously not very much interested in Christian Egypt; but they have created three fields of research of their own—the Coptic literature proper, the Manichaean texts, the Gnostic texts—, tied to coptology because the required linguistic knowledge is still the province of relatively few scholars, but also separated from the study of the Coptic past in general. The three fields have progressed more or less independently, and only recently is the gap narrowing. Apart from this, the main feature of contemporary coptology seems to be some kind of globalization and popularization. It is global, because all aspects of Coptic civilization are studied, much more than before; and it is popular, or at least more popular than it used to be, because many scholars interpret Coptic documents in order to explain phenomena that are of interest to many disciplines, e.g. monasticism, Gnosticism, art, or ecclesiastical organization from the point of view of sociology or anthropology or (religious)

⁵³ His biography by KLAUS-GUNTHER WESSELING in *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, vol. 4, Nordhausen, Bautz, 1992, cols. 1391-1395.

⁵⁴ See the respective biographies (mostly by M. Krause) in the *CoptEnc*, or in W. DAWSON, E. UPHILL, *Who was Who in Egyptology* (2d ed. London, 1972).

⁵⁵ C. SCHMIDT, H. J. POLOTSKY, H. IBSCHER, «Ein Mani-Fund in Ägypten», *SPAW* 1933, p. 4-90.

⁵⁶ JAMES M. ROBINSON, «Nag Hammadi: The First Fifty Years», in JOHN TURNER and ANNE MCGUIRE (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years*, Leiden, Brill, 1997, p. 3-33 (NHMS 44).

politics. It is an evolution that I have personally experienced. We need only compare the approach of Garitte or Quecke with that of scholars like Frankfurter, Clark, Frend, or S. Frank, in whom the interest for philology is less cultivated, and the desire of introducing the Coptic world into the general framework of late antiquity and Byzantine history has replaced it.

In this context it is necessary to say a few words about the contribution of the contemporary Copts to Coptic studies, which is of increasing importance in many sections. For the older days, we should mention the creation of the Coptic Museum in Cairo and of its library (early twentieth century),⁵⁷ where the Coptic manuscripts formerly in the Egyptian Museum were deposited, and others were added later, notably the Nag Hammadi codices. It was a remarkable effort in the right direction, as was the foundation of the *Société d'archéologie copte*⁵⁸ and its important *Bulletin*, though the articles that it published were written mainly by Western scholars. The Coptic Church does not seem to have a special office concerned with its cultural heritage. Recently we have seen the foundation of a number of journals, with various aims and various results: *Le monde copte*, *The Copts*, *Coptologia*, *Coptic Church Review*; and the journal of the already mentioned St. Shenuda Coptic Society, *Coptica*.⁵⁹ It is only natural that Coptic scholars tend to direct their interest to contemporary issues: history, liturgy, the revival of the Coptic language. Many of them have contributed to relevant parts of the Coptic Encyclopedia. We hope that the scientific quality of their efforts may soon reach sufficiently high standards.

Institutional Progress

Bearing all this in mind, I shall outline the main achievements of coptology during the last thirty years, arranged according to the branches that I have identified and discussed above (under Coptology and Coptic Studies). In doing this, I shall also take this opportunity to make some general comments, for example on important gaps and the desirability of filling them as soon as possible. My perspective will mainly be the possible institutional organization, in a loose sense, of Coptic studies: on the one hand, collaborative enterprises of vast scope; and on the other hand, institutions collateral to scientific research (museums, exhibitions) but capable of bringing coptology to the attention of scholars in other disciplines and the lay public, and also capable of facilitating the gathering of funds necessary for research. It is inevitable that some important items may be left out of my review, but the effort will at least produce an initial repertory, which can be made more complete with time.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Cf. the web page: <http://www.copticmuseum.gov.eg/English/default.htm>.

⁵⁸ Cf. MIRRIE BOUTROS GHALI, in *CoptEnc*, vol. 7, p. 2142.

⁵⁹ See the respective entries in the *Coptic Bibliography* (part of CMCL, note 65), subject: *Generalia, Riviste viventi*.

⁶⁰ Except for special cases, the bibliographic references will be found in the *Coptic Bibliography*, cf. n. 59.

The most remarkable collaborative enterprise of the past decades is the *Coptic Encyclopedia*, conceived and produced thanks to the vision and energy of Aziz and Lola Atiya, of really blessed memory. It was not only an effort to provide a reference to the present state of the studies in all fields of coptology, but also an operational demonstration of the existence and vitality of the discipline coptology and its branches. But in the nature of the case, an encyclopedia is not sufficiently structured so as to reflect the form of the field. There is need for a kind of handbook of Coptic studies, like that provided by O. Montevecchi for papyrology,⁶¹ not to speak of the monumental *Handbücher der Altertumswissenschaft* of Munich. The wonderful group created by J. M. Robinson to organize the *Facsimile Edition* of the Nag Hammadi codices, their publication, translation, and commentary,⁶² is another splendid example of collaborative enterprise. It was initiated before the creation of the IACS, but finished during its existence, and the IACS was able to give a kind of distant help. Following its example the team that is producing the series *Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi* was created,⁶³ In Berlin the Arbeitskreis für koptisch-gnostische Schriften was founded by H.-M. Schenke very early, and although its activities have not been regular, it finally produced the important *Nag Hammadi deutsch*. In Münster we take note of the already mentioned Krause-Stiftung, which publishes remarkable monographs in an Oros Verlag series (Altenberge),⁶⁴ and in Rome an analogous series, the *Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Lettarari*,⁶⁵ and its web portal.⁶⁶

I cannot say for certain whether the number of academic chairs of coptology has grown in the last thirty years, or if so, how much, because there does not exist any assessment of the previous situation. But I think that it has improved, and in any case we can count today at least forty-seven institutions with more or less regular courses of coptology.⁶⁷ The latest success to be celebrated is the establishment of a chair at the American University in Cairo;⁶⁸ and an entire masters degree in Sydney.⁶⁹ I can point also to the fact that to the traditional sites of Rome, Paris, Berlin, Halle, Louvain, new ones have been added like Abilene, Belgrade, Chapel Hill, Göttingen, Liverpool, Madrid, Ottawa, Québec, Salzburg; of course Jerusalem, Münster, Claremont, Genève, and Yale deserve special acknowledgment.

⁶¹ ORSOLINA MONTEVECCHI, *La Papirologia* (2d ed.), Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 1988.

⁶² The series Nag Hammadi Studies, subsequently Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies, published by Brill, Leiden; the *Facsimile Edition*; and JAMES M. ROBINSON (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, Leiden, Brill; San Francisco etc., Harper Row, 1977; revised 3rd ed., 1988, with an afterword by R. Smith.

⁶³ <http://www.ftsr.ulaval.ca/bcnh/>.

⁶⁴ *Arbeiten zum spätantiken und koptischen Ägypten*.

⁶⁵ «Publications of the CMCL», Roma, CIM; later «Letteratura Copta, serie testi.»

⁶⁶ <http://cmcl.let.uniroma1.it>.

⁶⁷ Cf. the list in the web page of IACS (cit.), under the heading *Courses*.

⁶⁸ <http://catalog.aucegypt.edu/undergrad/fields/egy/egy.html#minor>.

⁶⁹ http://www.coptic.org.au/modules/coptic_studies/.

The IACS encourages the holding of congresses of general coptological character, although of smaller scope, which are evidence for the growing importance of the discipline. We register with satisfaction one well established regular event, the Journées d'études coptes organized by the Association francophone de coptologie (see above); the congresses regularly held in Los Angeles by the St. Shenuda Coptic Society (see above); another recently conceived series, the Egyptian «Symposia» (first, a Wadi Natrun Symposium; second, a Faiyum Symposium; and one in preparation);⁷⁰ and several one-time events, like that in Leiden on the territory of Panopolis;⁷¹ at Yale (New Haven) on Gnosticism;⁷² in Bologna, of general character.⁷³

Especially remarkable in this period is the number of exhibitions of Coptic art and civilization, which are an instrument to promote studies, while at the same time they inform the public on coptology: Newark 1986,⁷⁴ Rhode Island and Baltimore 1989,⁷⁵ Périgueux 1991,⁷⁶ Wien 1995,⁷⁷ Hamm etc. 1996/98,⁷⁸ Lattes 1999,⁷⁹ Paris etc. 2000/01.⁸⁰

With special regard to Coptic culture, we like to mention in this context the publication of many catalogues of manuscripts: B. Layton for the British Library;⁸¹ L. Depuydt for the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York;⁸² A. Elanskaya for the Pushkin Museum Library in Moscow;⁸³ and, in preparation, P. Buzi for the National Library in Naples and C. Louis one for the Coptic manuscripts of the

⁷⁰ *Proceedings of the Wadi Natrun Symposium* (Coptica 2), 2003.

⁷¹ A. EGBERTS et al. (ed.), *Perspectives on Panopolis*, Leiden etc., Brill, 2002.

⁷² BENTLEY LAYTON (ed.), *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism* 1, *The School of Valentinus*, 2, *Sethian Gnosticism. Proceedings of the Conference...* Yale, March 1978, Leiden, Brill, 1980, 1981.

⁷³ *Egitto e Storia Antica dall'Ellenismo all'Età Araba* (ed. CRISCUOLO and GERACI) Bologna 1987.

⁷⁴ SUSAN H. AUTH, *Coptic Art of Ancient Egypt*, Newark, NJ, 1986.

⁷⁵ FLORENCE D. FRIEDMAN (ed.), *Beyond the Pharaohs: Egypt and the Copts in the Second to Seventh Centuries A.D.*, Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art, 1989.

⁷⁶ *L'Égypte en Périgord: dans les pas de Jean Clédat* (catalogue raisonné de l'exposition, musée du Périgord 16 mai-15 septembre 1991) <J.-M. ROSENSTIEHL (ed.)>, Louvain and Paris 1991 (CBC 7).

⁷⁷ HELMUT BUSCHHAUSEN et al. (ed.), *Der Lebenskreis der Kopten: Katalog zur Ausstellung Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, Wien, 1995.

⁷⁸ *Ägypten: Schätze aus dem Wüstersand, Kunst und Kultur der Christen am Nil*, Wiesbaden, Reichert, 1996.

⁷⁹ Catalogue de l'exposition: *Égyptes... l'Égyptien et le copte*, NATHALIE BOSSON and SYDNEY AUFRÈRE (ed.), Lattes 1999.

⁸⁰ *L'art copte en Égypte. 2000 ans de christianisme*. Paris, IMA, Gallimard, 2000.

⁸¹ BENTLEY LAYTON, *Catalogue of Coptic Literary Manuscripts in the British Library Acquired since the Year 1906*, London, British Library, 1987.

⁸² LEO DEPUYDT, *Catalogue of Coptic Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library*, 2 vols., Leuven, Peeters, 1993.

⁸³ ALLA I. ELANSKAYA, *The Literary Coptic Manuscripts in the A. S. Pushkin State Fine Arts Museum in Moscow*, Leiden, Brill, 1994 (VigChr-Suppl. 18).

Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire. For museum objects, the project «Catalogue général du musée copte» was initiated in 1986;⁸⁴ M.-H. Rutschowskaya has produced books for the Louvre.⁸⁵ Important cooperative realizations are also the facsimile editions of the Nag Hammadi⁸⁶ and Manichaean codices.⁸⁷

Mention should be made on computer and web activities, which are still in a pioneering stage: the web site of the IACS and other societies have already been indicated. A scientific enterprise completely on the web, and using database management systems and automatic linguistic analysis is the «Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari».⁸⁸ There and in many other web pages it is possible to download Coptic fonts.

Progress in the Individual Branches of Coptic Studies

Linguistics. Among the many linguistic publications about the Coptic language, the *Coptic Grammar* of B. Layton⁸⁹ is the most remarkable achievement. It is a masterfully conceived, comprehensive and detailed description of the Coptic (Sahidic) language, a work destined to last as a reference book for decades, like the *Dictionary* of Crum or the *Bibliography* of Kammerer. It is true that at about the same time «the» treatise of Polotsky, a scholar whom we all honor (in fact honorary president of the IACS, and teacher of Layton himself), was also published: *Grundlagen des koptischen Satzbaus*.⁹⁰ But, interesting and suggestive as it may be, it seems nonetheless to be a tormented recapitulation of esoteric reflections based on the study of an entire lifetime rather than a clear, instructive model of linguistic structure. This is not so much a personal statement as it is an elaboration on the

⁸⁴ Cf. GAWDAT GABRA in *ICCoPtS* 5 II, 1, p. 179-182.

⁸⁵ MARIE-HÉLÈNE RUTSCOWSKAYA, *Catalogue des bois de l'Égypte copte*, Paris, Musée du Louvre, 1986; *id.*, *L'Égypte copte*, Louvre, Guides des collections, p. 139-143, Paris, RMN, 1989; *id.*, *La peinture copte*, Paris, Louvre, Département des antiquités égyptiennes, RMN, 1992.

⁸⁶ JAMES M. ROBINSON, *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices: Introduction*, Leiden, Brill, 1972. Printed also in JAMES M. ROBINSON *et al.*, *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices. Introduction* (IAC Occasional Papers 4), Leiden, Brill, 1984.

⁸⁷ SOREN GIVERSEN, *The Manichaean Coptic Papyri in the Chester Beatty Library*. Vol. 1, *Kephalaia*. Facsimile Edition, Genève, Cramer, 1986, Vol. 2, *Homilies and Varia* 1986, Vol. 3, *Psalm Book*, Part 1, 1988, Vol. 4, *Psalm Book*, Part 2, 1988.

⁸⁸ <http://cmcl.let.uniroma1.it>.

⁸⁹ BENTLEY LAYTON, *A Coptic Grammar with Chrestomathy and Glossary, Sahidic Dialect*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz (PLO 20).

⁹⁰ HANS JACOB POLOTSKY, *Grundlagen des koptischen Satzbaus*, Decatur GA, Scholars Press, 2 vols., 1987, 1990 (ASP 28, 29).

important remarks of Funk at Louvain⁹¹ and Layton at Washington.⁹² Such a model is, on the contrary, Layton's book. If I am permitted to make a remark here, which concerns the study of Coptic linguistics in general rather than this particular book, one notes the tendency to mix strictly grammatical features of Coptic with its use by individual authors, so that the grammatical and the stylistic appreciation are not clearly distinguished. This is perhaps the most important reason why there have scarcely existed independent stylistic studies on Coptic authors, which in turn has delayed, for example, acknowledgment of the immense value of Shenoute in this respect. Shisha Halevy has treated specific problems⁹³ but with a wide horizon, and he has given many new suggestions of general value. Also his idea of producing a Shenoute chrestomathy has been a very good one.⁹⁴

Dialectology. For dialectology the linguistic section of the *Coptic Encyclopedia* (volume 8, mainly by Kasser and Funk) is an invaluable tool. Coptic dialects remain theoretically an awkward question as Layton has opportunely reminded us.⁹⁵ In general I would like to praise Layton for his iconoclastic attitude, in his capacity of both linguist and philologist, which is welcome in an area where students often tend to repeat conventional statements. I shall add that Ariel Shisha Halevy can be also unconventional in his observations⁹⁶ and that I wish such observations would be made in art and archeology. The great number of new documents in the Oxyrhynchite dialect published in this period has produced great progress in the field of dialectology. I mention also with hesitation my effort to produce a computational grammar, which was already mentioned by Mink,⁹⁷ but to date I have not found a colleague willing to discuss the problems raised by this initial effort.

Literature. In regard to literature, I have lamented in one of the Congress reports⁹⁸ that the status of Coptic literature still needs to be correctly understood, because of the tendency to extract some of its branches and form independent fields, with bad consequences for its general historical assessment. Biblical translations, Gnostic texts, and apocrypha are mostly considered separately from the development of Coptic literature proper, and all is left in a vague environment where the sources of

⁹¹ WOLF-PETER FUNK, «Coptic Linguistics, 1984-1988», in M. RASSART-DEBERGH and J. RIES (ed.), *Actes du IV^e congrès copte*, vol. 2, p. 53-63, Louvain-la-Neuve, Institut orientaliste, 1992; cf. p. 54.

⁹² BENTLEY LAYTON, «Four Years of Progress in Coptic Linguistics», in *ICCoPtS* 5, Vol. 1, *Reports on Recent Research*, p. 97-110, Roma, CIM, 1993; cf. p. 98-99.

⁹³ ARIEL SHISHA-HALEVY, *The Proper Name: Structural Prolegomena to its Syntax, A Case Study in Coptic*, Wien, VWGO, 1989 (Beihefte zur WZKM 15); *id.*, *Coptic Grammatical Categories: Structural Studies in the Syntax of Shenoutean Sahidic (AnOr 53)* Roma, Pontificum Institutum Biblicum, 1986.

⁹⁴ ARIEL SHISHA-HALEVY, *Coptic Grammatical Chrestomathy: A Course for Academic and Private Study*, Leuven, Peeters, 1988 (OLA 30).

⁹⁵ *ICCoPtS* 5, vol. 1, p. 99.

⁹⁶ *ICCoPtS* 6, p. 323.

⁹⁷ Cairo 1976.

⁹⁸ *Actes du IV^e congr.*, vol. 2, p. 211-212.

the texts are important and not the form that they have assumed in Coptic, except for linguistic investigations. I have made an effort to react against this situation, to try and delineate the history of Coptic literature as a whole, its chronological progress, and its comprehensiveness; and I have challenged many traditional mistakes: e.g. the effect of the Arab invasion on literary production; supposed translations that were instead pseudepigrapha and cyclical creations; the cultural position of Shenoute; the importance of the Origenist controversy.⁹⁹ On the other hand a comparison between these new ideas and the traditional vision of Coquin published in *Christianismes orientaux* (1993) will always be useful.

The central event in the specialized study of Coptic literature, the indispensable basis for the research of the next decades, is the dissertation (1993) of S. EMMEL, *Shenoute's Literary Corpus*, published this very year in the series *Subsidia* of the Corpus Scriptorum Orientalium Christianorum.¹⁰⁰ It is too important an achievement to be described in the time allowed for this address. It has already been commented on (in its form as a dissertation) in the reports of past congresses; and I shall say only that everybody who studies Coptic culture will have to read at least some parts of it. For the Bible, I shall mention the exemplary editions of the invaluable Hamburg papyrus by Diebner and Kasser;¹⁰¹ of the Oxyrhynchite Psalms by Gawdat Gabra;¹⁰² of three of the Gospels by Quecke (from the Barcelona codex);¹⁰³ of two of the Gospels by Aranda;¹⁰⁴ of Acts and Matthew in Oxyrhynchite by Schenke;¹⁰⁵ and the first attempt, after the rudimentary though always useful edition of Horner, of a critical edition of the Catholic epistles by Schüssler.¹⁰⁶ For the Old Testament

⁹⁹ These views can be seen in various articles; the most extensive description in « Letteratura copta e cristianesimo nazionale egiziano », in A. CAMPLANI (ed.), *L'Egitto cristiano*, Roma, Augustinianum, 1997, p. 39-120; cf. also « Testi patristici in lingua copta », in A. DI BERARDINO (ed.), *Patrologia*, vol. 5, Genova, Marietti, 2000, p. 497-576. They are extensively represented in the web page of CMCL (cf. above).

¹⁰⁰ 2 vols., Leuven, Peeters, 2004 (CSCO 111-112 Subsidia).

¹⁰¹ BERND JÖRG DIEBNER and RODOLPHE KASSER (ed.), *Hamburger Papyrus Bil. 1: Die alttestamentlichen Texte des Papyrus Bilinguis 1 der Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg*, Genève, Cramer, 1989 (CahOr 18).

¹⁰² GAWDAT GABRA, *Der Psalter im oxyrhynchitischen (mesokemischen/mittelägyptischen) Dialekt*, Heidelberg, Heidelberg Orientverlag 1995 (ADAIK, Koptische Reihe 4).

¹⁰³ HANS QUECKE, *Das Markusevangelium sahidisch*, (PapCastr, Studia et Textus 4), Barcelona, 1972. *Id.*, *Das Lukasevangelium saidisch* (PapCastr, Studia et Textus 6), Barcelona, 1977; *id.*, *Das Johannesevangelium saidisch* (PapCastr, Studia et Textus 11), Roma-Barcelona, 1984.

¹⁰⁴ GONZALO ARANDA PÉREZ, *El Evangelio de San Mateo en copto sahidico* (Textos y estudios « Cardenal Cisneros » 35), Madrid, Inst. Arias Montano, 1984; *id.*, *El Evangelio di san Marcos en copto sahidico* (Texto de M 569 y aparato critico), Madrid, Instituto de Filología, CSIC, 1988 (Textos y estudios « Cardenal Cisneros » 45).

¹⁰⁵ HANS-MARTIN SCHENKE, *Apostelgeschichte 1, 1-15, 3 im mittelägyptischen Dialekt des Koptischen* (Codex Glazier), Akademie-Verlag, Berlin 1991 = TU 137; *id.*, *Das Matthäus-Evangelium im mittelägyptischen Dialekt des Koptischen* (Codex Scheide), Berlin, Akademie, 1981 (TUGACL 127).

¹⁰⁶ KARLHEINZ SCHÜSSLER, *Die katholischen Briefe in der koptischen (sahidischen) Version*, Louvain, Peeters, 1991 (CSCO 528-529, Scriptores Coptici 45-46).

the project of Peters¹⁰⁷ is certainly courageous, but unfortunately the philological standard is not sufficient. We should note the lists of manuscripts by Schüssler,¹⁰⁸ Schmitz-Mink,¹⁰⁹ and Nagel,¹¹⁰ which make an important contribution in a field where much remains to be done. The documentation has been extended very much in these years, and this in itself is no small improvement, but the philological work on the Coptic Biblical translations, which has seen contributions especially by Metzger and Aranda,¹¹¹ is far from satisfactory. I also suggest that a minor edition of the entire Bible in Sahidic that is easy to consult, remains a *desideratum*. For the Gnosticizing texts, the major event is the completion of the critical editions in the series Nag Hammadi Studies, and the progress in its French counterpart, Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi; as well as the complete English translation edited by J. Robinson and the vast anthology done by B. Layton¹¹² (*Gnostic Scriptures*). On the other hand, I notice a certain decline in the number of studies, which is not alarming, rather to be welcomed, because probably it is due to the necessity of rethinking and ultimately rejecting many prejudices common to older studies. This is why in recent years some interesting studies in this sense have been published, notably the books of K. King¹¹³ and of M. Williams (*Rethinking «Gnosticism»: An Argument for dismantling a dubious Category*¹¹⁴), which challenge the traditional view of Gnosticism as a whole. Fresh attention has instead been devoted to the Manichaean texts, with the continuation of the edition of the *Kephalaia*, splendid work by Funk, and the beautiful *Facsimile Edition*. The new astonishing documents found at Kellis¹¹⁵ will certainly contribute to keeping the attention for this subject high. New attention has been given also to magical

¹⁰⁷ MELVIN K. H. PETERS, *A Critical Edition of the Coptic (Bohairic) Pentateuch*, Atlanta Georgia, Scholars Press: 1 Genesis, 1985, 2 Exodus, 1986, 5 Deuteronomy, 1983.

¹⁰⁸ KARLHEINZ SCHÜSSLER, *Biblia Coptica: Die koptischen Bibeltexte*, Bd.1, *Das sahidische Alte und Neue Testament: sa1-20*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1995.

¹⁰⁹ F.-J. SCHMITZ, G. MINK (ed.), *Die sahidischen Handschriften der Evangelien*: Part 1, Berlin and New York, De Gruyter, 1986, part 2, fascicule 1, 1989; part 2, fascicule 2, 1991.

¹¹⁰ PETER NAGEL, « Studien zur Textüberlieferung des sahidischen Alten Testaments », part I ZÄS 110 (1983), p. 51-74; part Ib ZÄS 111 (1984), p. 138-164; « Sahidische Pentateuchfragmente », ZÄS 114 (1987), p. 135-166.

¹¹¹ BRUCE M. METZGER, *The Early Versions of the New Testament: Their Origin Transmission and Limitations*, Oxford, Univ. Press, 1977 (p. 99-152: II. The Coptic Versions). GONZALO ARANDA, « La versión fayúmica del Monasterio Blanco (Mc 8.24-9.12): Ensayo metodológico para el estudio de las versiones coptas », RSO 53 (1979), p. 71-93, 223-233 = *Muséon* 95 (1982), p. 357-384; *id.*, « La versión sahidica de San Mateo en Bodmer XIX y Morgan 569 », *EstudBibl* 46 (1988), p. 217-230.

¹¹² BENTLEY LAYTON, *The Gnostic Scriptures: A New Translation with Annotations and Introductions*, Garden City, Doubleday, 1987.

¹¹³ *What is Gnosticism?*, Cambridge MA, Harvard Univ. Press, 2003.

¹¹⁴ Princeton Univ. Press, 1996.

¹¹⁵ See publications in the DOPM, Oxbow Books.

texts, e.g. the useful anthology in English translation by M. Meyer,¹¹⁶ and it is probable that the future will provide interesting developments. For the apocrypha the splendid *équipe* of the Association for the Study of the Apocrypha,¹¹⁷ founded by F. Bovon, has produced detailed editions of many texts (JUNOD-KAESTLI, *Acta Iohannis*; PRIEUR, *Acta Andreae*, etc.) based on documents in all relevant languages, and others will come; and the volume of the Pléiade series. Independently, the tradition on the *Transitus Mariae* has been deeply studied by van Esbroeck, Aranda and Mimouni. An important contribution is finally the new assessment of the so-called *Gospel of the Savior*: after its publication by Hedrick and Mirecki, S. Emmel is clarifying its content and tradition on the basis of more manuscripts. For the fourth century the interest has been centered on works by Athanasius (CAMPLANI, *Lettere Festali*; MARTIN, *Athanase d'Alexandrie*), and Antony (RUBENSON). These studies are a good example of intertwining Greek, Coptic, and Syriac philology and historical research; and in both cases new, even revolutionary perspectives have been acquired. The Pachomian dossier has seen the well conceived collection of English translations by Veilleux, and the studies of Joest on the intriguing «mystical alphabet»; but the field is rather neglected. On the contrary, new and unexpected Coptic documents of Evagrius have been published (Schenke, Quecke, etc.), which show that the Origenist philosopher has managed to survive *damnatio memoriae* also in Coptic.¹¹⁸ In this regard, one should not forget the interesting dossier of Agathonicus, which comes from the same milieu, but remains neglected. Finally it should be mentioned that a considerable number of texts from the Hamuli find of the Pierpont Morgan Library have been published by a team led by L. Depuydt; and that T. Vivian is doing meritorious work translating many texts.

Coptic literature in Arabic. Literature of the Copts written in the Arabic language is not in itself really separate from literature in Coptic but is conveniently treated apart because of the different linguistic competence that is required. It is certainly desirable that in due time we have scholars equally competent in Coptic and in Medieval Christian Egyptian Arabic, but so far the separation remains. The main achievements made in the last few years, by J. den Heijer for Mauhub (ex-Severus),¹¹⁹ Augusto Righi for Severianus of Gabala, and Bishop Samuel for Abu al-Makarem (ex-Abu Salih), will be treated below under history. The study of the

¹¹⁶ MARVIN MEYER and RICHARD SMITH (ed.), *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power*, San Francisco, Harper, 1994.

¹¹⁷ FRANÇOIS BOVON, «Vers une nouvelle édition de la littérature apocryphe chrétienne: la *Serie Apocryphorum* du *Corpus Christianorum*», *Augustinianum* 23 (1983), p. 373-378. Cf. also <http://www2.unil.ch/aelac>.

¹¹⁸ Cf. VEILLEUX in *ICCoS* 5, vol. 1, p. 212-213; HANS-MARTIN SCHENKE, «Ein koptischer Evagrius», in P. NAGEL (ed.), *Graeco-Coptica*, Halle 1984, p. 219-230; *id.*, «Das Berliner Evagrius-Ostrakon (P.Berol. 14700)», *ZAS* 116 (1989), p. 90-107; HANS QUECKE, «Auszüge aus Evagrius' «Monchsspiegel» in koptischer Übersetzung», *Orientalia* 58 (1989), p. 452-463.

¹¹⁹ JOHANNES DEN HEIJER, *Mauhub Ibn Mansur et l'historiographie copto-arabe: Étude sur la composition de l'Histoire des Patriarches d'Alexandrie*, Louvain, Peeters, 1989 (CSCO Subsidia 83).

medieval Arabic grammatical and lexical treatises on Coptic is alive (mainly studied by Sidarus) but not as productive as one might wish.

Palaeography. No general treatise on palaeography has been published recently. B. Layton is theoretically right in insisting that this study be based on dated mss; but short of them for the earlier period, we need in any case to formulate a model in which the different types of script are attached to a provisional chronology. After the classic (and mainly wrong) attempts by Stegemann, Cramer, etc., nothing important has been produced in this field. Perhaps one should recognize a distinct field of the history of the manuscripts, both before and after their modern discovery, and a parallel study of the bibliological units, i.e. the ancient libraries or collections. In such a field, palaeography and codicology should be included. The contributions by J. Robinson on the Nag Hammadi and Dishna manuscripts, although much debated, have been an example of this kind of work; as also the work of S. Emmel on the Shenoute manuscripts and the data base of the *Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari* (both mentioned above).

Archeology. Many new important excavations have been made and reported. I shall mention the ones that are most important, in terms of the relevance of the ancient sites and the objects and documents found. These are: Kellia, which has seen work by the French¹²⁰ and the Swiss;¹²¹ Neklone;¹²² Kellis (cf. above); Abu Mena;¹²³ and Abu Fana. Coptic archeology has experienced and is still experiencing much rivalry with Egyptian archeology. Archeology as a science was born late; and among the archeologists, interest in Egypt was scarce at the beginning, simply because the monuments were or seemed to be already there, ready to be drawn and studied rather than excavated. Mariette was a pioneer ca. 1850; then came Maspero, Birch, Petrie, *et al.* So the interest in Egypt coincided with the triumph of egyptology, and Coptic sites were left aside or taken into consideration only because they coexisted with more ancient monuments, and they were even destroyed to «restore» the others, as a kind of retaliation for the destruction wrought by ancient monks. The classic sites, memorable thought they be, were not sufficiently described nor thoroughly investigated (Saqqara, Bauit, Wadi Natrun), and they have been neglected for a long time, but today there are plans to resume excavations. One exception is Esna¹²⁴

¹²⁰ PASCALE BALLE, NATHALIE BOSSON, MARGUERITE RASSART-DEBERGH, *Kellia: L'ermitage copte QR 195*, Cairo, Ifao, 2003.

¹²¹ Mission suisse d'archéologie copte, *EK 8184 Projet international de sauvetage scientifique des Kellia. Explorations aux Qouçour Er-Roubaiyat. Camp. 1982 et 1983*, Louvain, Peeters, 1994, 2 vols.; *id.*, *EK 8184. Survey archéologique des Kellia (Basse-Égypte): Rapport de la campagne de 1981*, Louvain, Peeters, 1983, 2 vols.; *Les Kellia, ermitages coptes en Basse-Égypte*, Genève, Éditions du Tricornet, 1989.

¹²² News in *PAM*.

¹²³ News by P. GROSSMANN in *MDAIK*.

¹²⁴ SERGE SAUNERON, *Les ermitages chrétiens du désert d'Esna*, Cairo, Ifao, 1972.

and another Antinoe, though for Antinoe we lack detailed reports.¹²⁵ An exhaustive list can be found in the many reports by Peter Grossmann.

Art history. For art history no reliable reference handbook has been produced. The best is probably the book of A. Effenberger,¹²⁶ which is not up to date. An important project has been initiated by J. Leroy and S. Sauneron, namely the «Corpus de la peinture murale copte au Moyen Âge»;¹²⁷ on the other hand one notes a tendency towards study of the «minor arts.» Notable exceptions are the studies by M. Rassart-Debergh on paintings especially of Kellia and Saqqara, and those of P. Van Moorsel and the Dutch team, on Wadi Natrun (Deir Suriani, Baramus, Bishoi) and the Red Sea monasteries.

History. It is difficult to define the field of history, and not only for coptology. Even if we avoid theoretical questions about what is the study of history (in principle it could encompass anything), there are chronological problems (When does Coptic history begin? Only after Chalcedon?) and subtle distinctions—for example, if Coptic studies have to do with Christian Egyptians, then Coptic history is the history of the Christian churches of Egypt, and it is reasonable to maintain that liturgy is a part of that history when it is studied to understand its development *historically*, as one of the manifestations of the life of the church. Be that as it may, I think that the following items can be put under the general label of history.

For history in its traditional sense we welcome the publication of the Cambridge History of Egypt, especially for two chapters (by Kaegi and Wilfong) touching on the Coptic church. The book of Griggs¹²⁸ does not go beyond conventional views that can be read in older handbooks. More interesting for some new ideas are the books of Winkler¹²⁹ and Partrick.¹³⁰ Ewa Wipszycka has consecrated many essays to Coptic history, which are assembled in one important volume.¹³¹ For the literary sources of Coptic history I shall mention the new complete edition (in electronic form) of the *Historia Ecclesiastica Coptica*,¹³² which has seen also many individual studies, notably by D. Johnson and Th. Baumeister; the important book by J. den Heijer (cited above) that sheds new light on many aspects of the *History of the Patriarchs*, setting a firm ground for future research; and the discovery and edition by Bishop Samuel of the work formerly known under the name of Abu Salih on

¹²⁵ Cf. GROSSMANN in *Actes... Louvain* (cit.), p. 147-149.

¹²⁶ ARNE EFFENBERGER, *Koptische Kunst*, Leipzig, Koehler & Amelang, 1974.

¹²⁷ Cf. RASSART in *Actes... Louvain* (cit.) vol. 1, p. 4-5.

¹²⁸ C. WILFRED GRIGGS, *Early Egyptian Christianity from its Origins to 451 C.E.* Leiden etc., Brill, 1990; 2d ed. 199 (Coptic Studies 2).

¹²⁹ DIETMAR W. WINKLER, *Koptische Kirche und Reichskirche*, Innsbruck, Tyrolia, 1997 (Innsbrucker theologische Studien 48).

¹³⁰ THEODORE HALL PARTRICK, *Traditional Egyptian Christianity*, Fisher Park 1996 (reprint 1999).

¹³¹ *Études sur le christianisme dans l'Égypte de l'Antiquité tardive*, Roma, Inst. Patr. Augustinianum, 1996.

¹³² In the web page of CMCL, cit.

medieval Christian Egypt.¹³³ I think that I can also announce that a few years ago an important Ethiopic text was discovered, from a Greek original of a history of the Alexandrian church. When it is published it will improve our knowledge of the fourth and fifth centuries.

Documentary sources. For the documentary sources on the Coptic population, i.e. papyri, ostraka, inscriptions, etc., I suggest that today the main task is that of providing comprehensive treatments of large archives, instead of publishing items individually. Only in this way will it be possible to extract the maximum of information from the documents. In this respect the important publications are: a precise and exhaustive book by W. Godlewski on the archives of the Apa Phoibammon cloister¹³⁴; the work of C. Fluck Wietheger on the Apa Jeremias cloister;¹³⁵ two studies on Dioscorus of Aphrodito, including an impeccable volume of Jean-Luc Fournet,¹³⁶ and another, full of sentiment, by L. MacCoull;¹³⁷ a book by S. Clackson on the papyri from Apa Apollo cloister¹³⁸; a book on the women of Djeme by T. Wilfong;¹³⁹ an edition of the Melitian papyri by B. Kramer.¹⁴⁰ Important new enterprises have been also recently initiated, especially by Petra Sijpesteijn.¹⁴¹ This has been a long neglected field, like that of school organization, on which R. Cribiore and M. Hasitzka have published important studies. The edition of the peculiar papyrus codex Chester Beatty 1499¹⁴² belongs also in this field.

Theology. In theology Grillmeier, in his monumental work, has produced an important contribution to the study of the Egyptian and Coptic sources.¹⁴³

¹³³ Cf. above.

¹³⁴ WŁODZIMIERZ GODLEWSKI, *Le monastère de saint Phoibammon* (Deir el-Bahari 5), Warszawa, PWN, 1986. Cf. KRAUSE, in *Actes... Louvain*, p. 100-101.

¹³⁵ CÄCILIA WIETHEGER, *Das Jeremias-Kloster zu Saqqara unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Inschriften*, Altenberge, Oros Verlag, 1992 (ASKÄ 1).

¹³⁶ JEAN-LUC FOURNET, *Hellénisme dans l'Égypte du VI^e siècle: La bibliothèque et l'œuvre de Dioscore d'Aphrodité*, 2 vols., Cairo, Ifao, 1999.

¹³⁷ LESLIE S. B. MACCOULL, *Dioscorus of Aphrodito: His Work and His World*, Berkeley CA, Univ. of California Press, 1988 (The Transformation of the Classical Heritage 16).

¹³⁸ SARAH CLACKSON, *Coptic and Greek Texts Relating to the Hermopolite Monastery of Apa Apollo*, Oxford, Griffith Inst., 2000 (cf. also the review by E. Wipszycka).

¹³⁹ TERRY G. WILFONG, *Women of Jeme: Lives in a Coptic Town in Late Antique Egypt*, Ann Arbor, Univ. of Michigan Press, 2002.

¹⁴⁰ B. KRAMER, J. C. SHELTON, and G. M. BROWNE, *Das Archiv des Nephros und verwandte Texte*, Mainz, von Zabern, 1987 (AegTrev 4).

¹⁴¹ International Society for Arabic Papyrology: <http://www.princeton.edu/~petras/isap/isapframe.html>.

¹⁴² ALFONS WOUTERS, *The Chester Beatty Codex Ac 1499: A Graeco-Latin Lexicon on the Pauline Epistles and a Greek Grammar*, Leuven Paris, Peeters, 1988 (CBM 12).

¹⁴³ ALOIS GRILLMEIER, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche. 2/4: Die Kirche von Alexandrien mit Nubien und Äthiopien nach 451*, Freiburg etc., Herder, 1990.

Goehring, Sheridan, and Wipszycka have written a number of important essays, less than book length, on monastic history and spirituality.¹⁴⁴ *Liturgy* is also a field where great scholars (we mention Quecke, Brakmann, Zanetti) have produced valuable studies, but no general handbook. One special desideratum, also for those interested in literature, is a reconstruction of liturgical non-Biblical lessons from the typica. For *magic* the contribution by M. Meyer has already been mentioned. *Modern history* has been treated in a handful of comprehensive studies.¹⁴⁵ For *geography* a formidable repertory has been produced by S. Timm in the series Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients,¹⁴⁶ but a good historical map for the Coptic period, with locations and especially with names correctly reported, is still lacking.

In conclusion, we are certainly entitled to announce that Coptic studies is flourishing, notwithstanding the very difficult situation that Humanities have been experiencing in these last two or three decades, and the particular difficulties that specialized studies encounter in academic institutions. Nevertheless, some factors have helped: the remarkable interest recently concentrated upon late antiquity; a renaissance of religious studies, perhaps due to the anthropological and sociological unrest of contemporary society; and the new documents that the ground of Egypt continues generously to supply. I think that this presidential address can be concluded in an optimistic mood, once more recalling what I think are the most interesting events of the last thirty years: the *Coptic Encyclopedia*, B. Layton's *Coptic Grammar*, and S. Emmel's ordering of the works and manuscripts of Shenoute. But also there are desiderata still waited for: institutional collaboration of the IACS with another association or associations; a history of Coptic art; an ongoing repertoire of archeological sites and activities; a historical atlas; a handbook of liturgy; a comprehensive history of the Coptic church; a minor but complete edition of the Coptic Bible; a history of the Copto-Arabic literature. There is no shortage of things to be done. Bon travail à nous tous.

¹⁴⁴ JAMES GOEHRING, *Ascetics, Society, and the Desert. Studies in Early Egyptian Monasticism*, Harrisburg PA, Trinity Press, 1999 (Studies in Antiquity and Christianity). M. SHERIDAN, cit., and E. WIPSZYCKA, cit.

¹⁴⁵ PARTRICK (cit.); B. L. CARTER, *The Copts in Egyptian Politics*, London etc., Croom Helm, 1986; WINKLER (cit.).

¹⁴⁶ STEFAN TIMM, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit* (TAVO B 41,1-6), Teil 1 (A-C) 1984, Teil 2 (D-F) 1984, Teil 3 (G-L) 1985, Teil 4 (M-P) 1988, Teil 5 (Q-S) 1991, Teil 6 (T-Z) 1992, Wiesbaden, Reichert.