

HEIKE BEHLMER

Recent Work on Coptic Literary (and Semi-literary) Texts (1997–2000)*

0. Introduction

To begin my survey I shall state what I am not going to discuss, namely the concept of “literary (or semi-literary) text”. I shall instead without further reflection take into consideration all those texts which are not strictly documentary. Coptic literary texts in this broader sense are usually surveyed at Coptological congresses in five or six plenary sessions, such as Coptic Literature, Codicology and Paleography, Gnosticism and Manichaeism, Monasticism, Linguistics, or Liturgy. To cover all this ground in detail in one survey article would seem to me duplicating the work of some of the bibliographical aids I shall discuss in the following paragraphs. I shall instead give a subjective selection of the material which is informed by the following criteria:

My selection of new finds and editions has been made with a eye on overviews, research aids and tools which will help to master the ever-growing output. Thus the first two sections of my survey cover overviews and research tools, while the third section contains new editions and translations in the different sub-fields of Coptic Literature. “Work on literary texts” signifies not only philological or editorial work in the narrower sense, but people doing things with these texts, i. e. new interpretations and interdisciplinary approaches. Some titles from this area of research can be found in the fourth section. Finally, I shall cast a brief look at novelties in the electronic publishing sector.

The timeframe covered consists of the years 1997–2000. I have tried, if possible, to pursue titles which appeared in 2001 and added a few items of imminent publication which I thought important. A full bibliography for this time span will soon be found in the various progress reports to be published in the Acts of the International Congress of Coptic Studies in Leiden (28 August – 2 September 2000). An immensely useful research tool is the report on Coptic literary texts which appears regularly in the *Archiv für Papyrusforschung*. For several years reports on literary texts were produced with meticulous care by Martin Krause together with those on documentary texts. He has now passed on one half of the torch — the literary part — to Siegfried Richter and Gregor Wurst, and their report, covering the years 1998–2000, has just been published (see below § 2.1).

1. General introductions to Coptic Literature

In recent years there has been quite a decent harvest of recent survey articles which can be profitably consulted by specialists and non-specialists alike. Of course they differ somewhat in their scope and intention. Mark Smith’s article “Coptic Literature, 337–425” gives a useful survey of the original literature and the translations of the fourth and fifth centuries. Terry Wilfong’s contribution to the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* is a concise treatment of the entirety of Coptic Literature with special attention to the different genres. Tito Orlandi incorporates much of his own research in his longer survey “Letteratura copta e cristianesimo nazionale egiziano”, of which the German article “Koptische Literatur” is a shorter extract. Both of Orlandi’s surveys firmly assign to the individual text its place in the religious history of Christian Egypt.

* I am very grateful to Hermann Harrauer for inviting me to speak on this topic and to Stephen Emmel, Jürgen Horn, Siegfried Richter, and Terry Wilfong for providing me with valuable information, unpublished manuscripts and photocopies of articles. I also wish to thank all the colleagues who drew my attention to other interesting new publications, even if I — owing to my choice to privilege studies of a more general scope — may have decided not to incorporate them into my overview. In the following, the titles of my bibliography mentioned in the main text are marked with an asterisk (*). — To improve readability, I do not use abbreviations for journals and series, with the exception of BCNH “Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi”, and of TU “Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Altchristlichen Literatur”.

Boud'hors, Anne, *L'écriture, la langue et les livres*, in: *L'art copte en Égypte. 2000 ans de christianisme. Exposition présentée à l'Institut du monde arabe, Paris du 15 mai au 3 septembre 2000 et au musée de l'Éphèbe au Cap d'Agde du 30 septembre 2000 au 7 janvier 2001*, Paris 2000, 52–91.

*Orlandi, Tito, *Letteratura copta e cristianesimo nazionale egiziano*, in: Alberto Camplani (ed.), *L'egitto cristiano. Aspetti e problemi in età tardo-antica* (Studia Ephemeridis Augustianum 56), Roma 1997, 39–120.

id., *Koptische Literatur*, in: Martin Krause (ed.), *Ägypten in spätantik-christlicher Zeit: Einführung in die koptische Kultur* (Sprachen und Kulturen des Christlichen Orients 4), Wiesbaden 1998, 117–147.

*Smith, Mark, *Coptic Literature, 337–425*, in: Averil Cameron and Peter Garnsey (eds.), *The Late Empire, A.D. 337–425* (The Cambridge Ancient History vol. 13), Cambridge 1998, 720–735.

*Wilfong, Terry, *Coptic Literature*, Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt 1 (2001) 295–302.

2. Recent research and study aids

2.1 Bibliographies

What is true for survey articles, i. e. the good harvest, is true as well for bibliographical aids. One sub-subject which has been well documented for decades now is the Nag Hammadi library. Its bibliography is brought up-to-date annually by David Scholer in the journal *Novum Testamentum*, and in the 2001 volume of the journal, the year 1998 is included. The articles of the years 1970–1994 now offer easy access in one single volume. A comprehensive bibliography is now available for Manichaeism as well, which has come back into the center of interest in the last decade.

Many of the titles I shall present here can also be found in the bibliographies by Krause, Richter and Wurst, which I already mentioned, some accompanied by comments which amount to a real book review. This is also the place, however, to find the numerous articles with a smaller scope, those which contain editions of interesting fragments or which treat the finer points of Coptic philology. To name just one example I shall have to pass by: the new editions of leaves from the Shenoute corpus from Vienna and elsewhere which Dwight Young regularly presents us with in various journals¹.

Bethge, Hans-Gebhard, Ursula Ulrike Müller und Uwe-Karsten Plisch, *Bericht über Editionen von koptischen Texten und Publikationen von Hilfsmitteln*, Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum 3 (1999) 184–201.

*Emmel, Stephen, Martin Krause, Siegfried G. Richter and Sofia Schaten (eds.), *Ägypten und Nubien in spätantiker und christlicher Zeit*. Akten des 6. Internationalen Koptologenkongresses, Münster, 20.–26. Juli 1996. 2 vols (Sprachen und Kulturen des Christlichen Orients 6), Wiesbaden 1999 (contains various progress reports on Coptic codicology and paleography, literature, liturgy, linguistics, monasticism as well as gnosticism and manichaeism for the years 1990/1992–1995/1996).

Ephemerides Theologicae Lovaniensis 76 (2000): Elenchus Bibliographicus 2000.

*Krause, Martin, *Referat der koptischen literarischen Texte und Urkunden von 1992–1995*, Archiv für Papyrusforschung 44 (1998) 140–171.

*id., *Referat der koptischen literarischen Texte und Urkunden von 1996 und 1997*, Archiv für Papyrusforschung 45 (1999) 281–301.

*Mikkelsen, G. B., *Bibliographia Manichaica. A Comprehensive Bibliography of Manichaeism through 1996. Corpus Fontium Manichaeorum* (Subsidia I), Turnhout 1997.

*Richter, Siegfried G. and Gregor Wurst, *Koptische literarische Texte (1998–2000)*, Archiv für Papyrusforschung 47 (2001) 198–230.

*Scholer, D. M., *Nag Hammadi Bibliography 1970–1994* (Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 32), Leiden 1997.

*id., *Bibliographia Gnostica: Supplement II, 1* (1995), *Novum Testamentum* 40 (1998) 73–100; *Bibliographia Gnostica: Supplement II, 2* (1996), *Novum Testamentum* 41 (1999) 58–93; *Bibliographia Gnostica: Supplement II, 3* (1997), *Novum Testamentum* 42 (2000) 39–85; *Bibliographia Gnostica: Supplement II, 4* (1998), *Novum Testamentum* 43 (2001) 39–88.

¹ Dwight W. Young, *With Respect to the Fourth Work of Shenute's Sixth Canon*, Göttinger Miscellen 179 (2000) 85–106, *Additional Fragments of Shenute's Eighth Canon*, Archiv für Papyrusforschung 44 (1998) 47–68, *Two Leaves from a Copy of Shenute's Ninth Canon*, Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 88 (1998) 281–301; *Five Leaves from a Copy of Shenute's Third Canon*, Le Muséon 113 (2000) 263–294.

2.2 Research Tools

The research tools appeared in the field of Nag Hammadi studies will be discussed more in detail together with the new editions in this field (see § 3.4). Instead I shall focus on two tools concerned with biblical material. Last year has seen the completion of the first volume of Karlheinz Schüssler's "Biblia Coptica" which has collected and described textual witnesses of the Sahidic Bible. In the third fascicle, 44 witnesses were included, and the 28 of the fourth fascicle bring the total number to 120. The final installment also contains addenda and corrigenda and detailed general indexes to the entire volume. Anyone working with Coptic biblical material, which means anyone working at all with Coptic literature, will be more than grateful to Schüssler for facilitating the task of tracking down biblical codices and fragments in the numerous collections world-wide. The other tool which will be greatly appreciated by biblical scholars is Philippe Luisier's book on the Old Testament quotations in the Coptic gospels. Both volumes, however, are not only tools in a restricted sense, but offer a wealth of original observations.

Clackson, Sarah et al., *Dictionary of Manichaean Texts, Vol. I: Texts from the Roman Empire: Texts in Syriac, Greek, Coptic and Latin* (Corpus Fontium Manichaeorum, Subsidia II), Turnhout 1999.

*Luisier, Philippe, *Les citations vétéro-testamentaires dans les versions coptes des évangiles. Recueil et analyse critique* (Cahiers d'Orientalisme XXII), Genève 1998.

*Schüssler, Karlheinz, *Biblica Coptica. Die koptischen Bibeltexte, Bd. 1. Das sahidische Alte und Neue Testament*, Lieferung 3: sa 49–92, Wiesbaden 1998; Lieferung 4: sa 93–120, Wiesbaden 2000.

3. New Editions and Translations

3.1 Bible and Apocrypha

The central part of my survey consists of the discussion of recent finds and new editions. I shall start with the biblical texts and the apocrypha, and among these with one recent find which has attracted attention not only among scholars, but also among the general public. It is also an excellent example of the possibilities and surprises museum archaeology can offer. In 1991 Paul Mirecki discovered fragments of a new gospel in the Berlin papyrus collection. The seven leaves plus more than 20 unplaced fragments, all in a bad state of preservation, are the remains of a Sahidic parchment codex from Egypt, dated tentatively to the sixth century. They had been acquired and inventoried by the Berlin Museum in 1967, and after that had remained unnoticed. In 1999 a critical edition was published together with photographs and an English translation and commentary by Mirecki and Charles Hedrick. The apocryphal work which may go back to the second century was termed "Gospel of the Savior" by the critical edition. Hans-Martin Schenke who published a German translation in the *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* of 1998 called it instead "Unbekanntes Berliner Evangelium". The extant leaves of the gospel present events situated in the timespan after the Last Supper and before the arrest of Jesus. The events are seen from the perspective of the group of disciples, and the text consists of dialogs between the Savior and the group. The text also contains a heavenly vision the disciples have, and a speech in which Jesus addresses the Cross and in which the crucifixion and the resurrection are anticipated. This characteristic of the text led Schenke to raise the question whether it might not be a part of the apocryphal Gospel of Peter in which a dialog with the personified Cross plays an important role.

The editio princeps has one serious problem though — the pages are in the wrong order. In an article published recently in the *Harvard Theological Review* Stephen Emmel offers a rearrangement of the sequence of pages, based on a thorough codicological examination. However, it has already been possible for some time to profit from Emmel's research, because the new sequence was incorporated in Uwe-Karsten Plisch's German translation of the text in his selection of Early Christian non-canonical texts called "Verborgene Worte Jesu — Verworfenne Evangelien". This book, by the way, which is aimed at a wider public, is also very useful for teaching purposes. The Coptic texts of which Plisch gives a partial translation include in addition to the "Gospel of the Savior" some apocryphal writings as well as some of the Nag Hammadi texts.

Most of the Coptic texts published in recent years were written either in Sahidic or those forms of Lycopolitan/Subakhmimic used by the non-Sahidic Nag Hammadi and the Manichaean texts. However, research on texts in other dialects continues to be carried out even if not on the same scale. I especially want to mention the work on Middle Egyptian (or Mesokemic, or Oxyrhynchite) texts by Hans-Martin Schenke. A new witness to the gospel of Matthew in Middle Egyptian promises to be of considerable interest not only for the small band of Coptologists but for the much larger cohorts of scholars doing research on the synoptic

gospels. This papyrus codex was acquired in 1999 by the Norwegian collector Martin Schøyen and dates probably to the first half of the 4th century. It shows interesting linguistic phenomena, but more than that, it seems to be a translation of a Greek Vorlage which is so different from the canonical text of Matthew as to exclude any dependence. Its text is also independent of the other known Mesokemic translation of Matthew edited by Schenke in 1981. Schenke reconstructs a translation process from Hebrew into Greek, in which the version of Matthew represented by the Schøyen codex is translated later than the canonical Matthew and for a different and much smaller public, and he invites New Testament scholars to reconsider the traditional text history of the Greek Matthew.

I have somewhat reversed the usual sequence of treating the Bible by starting with the apocrypha and then going on to the New Testament. I shall complete this reversal by ending with the Coptic Septuagint. There is no doubt that establishing the text of the Old Testament in Coptic is one of the greatest desiderata in Coptic studies. In recent years, a project based at the University of Halle-Wittenberg has worked on the Sahidic Old Testament. It aims at producing an edition which might be termed an *Editio critica minor*, a readable, continuous text of a Biblical book, within the limits of textual preservation, of course, but which is nonetheless based on a critical examination of the witnesses. A progress report was given by Walter Beltz, the project director, in the 2000 issue of the *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte*. The prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel are now being prepared for the press. The same applies to Deuteronomy, and the work on the Minor Prophets is far advanced. Unfortunately, the financing is stalled at the moment, and the future of the project is uncertain.

*Beltz, Walter, *Der gegenwärtige Stand des hallischen Forschungsprojekts ‚Koptische Septuaginta‘*, *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 39 (2000) 57–60.

Boud'hors, Anne, *Catalogue des fragments coptes de la Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire de Strasbourg, vol. 1, Fragments bibliques*. (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 571, Subs. 99), Louvain 1998.

Dochhorn, Jan and Anders Klostergaard Petersen, *Narration Joseph: A Coptic Joseph Apocryphon*, *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period* 30 (1999) 431–463.

*Emmel, Stephen, *The Recently Published Gospel of the Savior (‚Unbekanntes Berliner Evangelium‘): Righting the Order of Pages and Events*, *Harvard Theological Review* 95 (2002) 45–72.

Feder, Frank, *Ägypten und frühes Christentum. Die ägyptische (koptische) Version des Alten Testaments in der Form der sogenannten Septuaginta*, *Das Altertum* 42 (1997) 195–207.

*Hedrick, Charles W. and Paul A. Mirecki, *Gospel of the Savior: A New Ancient Gospel* (California Classical Library), Santa Rosa 1999.

Horn, Jürgen, *Die koptische (sahidische) Überlieferung des alttestamentlichen Psalmenbuches. Versuch einer Gruppierung der Textzeugen für die Herstellung des Textes*, in: Anneli Aejmelæus and Udo Quast (eds.), *Der Septuaginta-Psalter und seine Tochterübersetzungen. Symposium in Göttingen 1997* (Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens 24), Göttingen 2000, 97–106.

*Plisch, Uwe-Karsten, *Verborgene Worte Jesu — verworfene Evangelien. Apokryphe Schriften des frühen Christentums* (Reihe “Brennpunkt: Die Bibel”), Erfurt 2000.

*Schenke, Hans-Martin, *Das sogenannte ‚Unbekannte Berliner Evangelium‘ (UBE)*, *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 2 (1998) 199–213.

*id., *Das Matthäus-Evangelium im mittelägyptischen Dialekt des Koptischen (Codex Schøyen)* (Manuscripts in the Schøyen Collection I: Coptic Papyri vol. 1), Oslo 2001.

3.2 Homiletica / Hagiographica / Monastica — New Editions

In the section on hagiographical and homiletic texts we encounter more new texts excavated in museums and libraries. An interesting discovery was made by Hans Förster among the parchments of the Vienna collections: a leaf containing the story of Joseph discovering Mary's pregnancy. This narration shows some parallels with other Coptic non-canonical material on these two biblical figures. Förster's suggestion that it might be part of a homily seems the most probable origin for the fragment.

Another not-quite-as-recent discovery is the so-called Berliner Koptisches Buch, the Berlin Coptic Book, on which several articles have appeared in the last four years. The “book” (P. 20915) is a fourth-century papyrus codex written in Sahidic containing a treatise by an unknown author on the creation of man and the wrath of God. That the manuscript is now even beginning to look like a papyrus codex is due to years of painstaking work which Gesine Schenke Robinson has devoted to the codicological reconstruction of the papyrus from innumerable fragments. The final edition will appear in the *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* series, with every page of text facing the corresponding facsimile

of the original. It has progressed so far that Gesine Robinson at the 2000 International Congress of Coptic Studies was able to give a final report on the text, which she interprets as a translation of a much older Greek work and locates in an Alexandrian milieu of the second to early third centuries.

If one speaks of Coptic Literature, one cannot pass by Shenoute. Research on Shenoute in the 1990s has greatly profited from the work of Stephen Emmel, whose codicological reconstruction of the corpus of the abbot's writings as transmitted in his monastery has laid the foundation for any further progress. The state of the question in Shenoutean studies can be found in his article "Editing Shenoute: Problems and Prospects" in the Acts of the 1996 International Coptological Congress. Almost 2000 leaves of Coptic texts, the remains of more than 90 codices, which almost exclusively come from Shenoute's monastery (widely known as the White Monastery), are dispersed in nearly two dozen museum and library collections. Emmel estimates that originally there were at least 12500 leaves, or 25000 pages of text preserving Shenoute's works. Of some codices only a few leaves are preserved, others are almost complete, such as the White Monastery codex with the siglum XO, most part of which consists in the manuscript Copte 2 of the Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale in Cairo. This manuscript is in the process of being edited by Anne Boud'hors. Emmel's research has shown that Shenoute's writings were basically organised into two sets of works: the Canons and the Discourses. The Canons consist of nine volumes and are concerned mainly with matters of monastic discipline. They show traces of Shenoute himself intervening in their compilation. The eight volumes of Discourses, which include the well-known speeches Shenoute gave in the presence of lay audiences, were the source for liturgical lections widely used throughout the year in his monastery. Recently a new international project was inaugurated under the general editorship of Stephen Emmel. It plans to publish Shenoute's writings according to the structure in which it was transmitted to us in the White Monastery codices, starting with the nine volumes of Canons. Nonetheless, existing or future publication projects working with single textual witnesses such as Anne Boud'hors' work on French Institute manuscript Copte 2 will be integrated into the general project. An inaugural workshop for the editorial board in March 2000 was sponsored by the Beinecke Library of Yale University, and at the Leiden Coptological congress further progress was made in discussing the normalization of texts and general questions of editorial policy.

*Emmel, Stephen, *Editing Shenoute: problems and prospects*, in: Emmel et al. (eds.), *Ägypten und Nubien*, vol. I (s. § 2.1), 497–503.

*Förster, Hans, *„Josef, Sohn Davids, fürchte dich nicht“. Eine koptische Evangelienparaphrase (P.Vindob. K 2608)*, in: H. Lang and H. Harrauer (eds.), *Mirabilia Artium librorum Recreant Te tuosque Ebriant. Dona natalicia Ioanni Marte oblata. Festschrift zum 66. Geburtstag für Hans Marte, Generaldirektor der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek (Biblos-Schriften 177)*, Wien 2001, 49–59.

*Schenke, Hans-Martin, *Das Berliner „Koptische Buch“ (P. 20915) und seine Geheimnisse*, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache* 126 (1999) 61–70.

id., *Mittelägyptische Nachlese III: Neue Fragmente zum Martyrium des Cyri(a)cus und seiner Mutter Julitta im mittelägyptischen Dialekt des Koptischen*, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache* 126 (1999) 149–172.

*Schenke Robinson, Gesine, *Codex Berolinensis P 20915: A Progress Report*, in: Emmel et al. (eds.), *Ägypten und Nubien*, vol. 2, 169–177.

ead., *Sethianism and the Doctrine of Creation in a Partially Restored Coptic Codex (Papyrus Berolinensis 20915)*, *Le Muséon* 119 (2000) 239–262.

Sheridan, Mark, *Evodius of Rome, A Homily on the Death of the Virgin Mary. A Critical Edition of the Coptic (Sahidic) Text with an English Translation* (www.coptica.net).

id., *Rufus of Shotep. Homilies on the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Introduction, Text, Translation, Commentary* (Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari), Rome 1998.

Sellew, Philip, *An Early Coptic Witness to the Dormitio Mariae at Yale: P.CtYBR inv. 1788 Revisited*, *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 37 (2000) 37–69, pls. 2–5.

Shoemaker, Stephen J., *The Sahidic Coptic Homily on the Dormition of the Virgin Attributed to Evodius of Rome. An Edition from Morgan Manuscripts 596 and 598 with Translation*, *Analecta Bollandiana* 117 (1999) 241–283.

Vivian, Tim, *Monks, Middle Egypt and metanoia. The Life of Phib by Papohe the Steward*, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 7 (1999) 547–571.

Westerhoff, Matthias, *Auferstehung und Jenseits im koptischen „Buch der Auferstehung Jesu Christi, unseres Herrn“* (Orientalia Biblica et Christiana 11), Wiesbaden 1999.

3.3 Manichaeism — General

Another large-scale publication project has been launched in the field of Manichaean studies. The story of the publication of the Coptic Manichaean texts from Medinet Madi is well-known. The find of seven papyrus codices which appeared on the antiquities market in 1929 was acquired partly by the collector Chester Beatty and found its way via London to Dublin. The other part was bought by Carl Schmidt for the Berlin Museum. After the initial publications by C. R. C. Allberry, Hans Jakob Polotsky and Alexander Böhlig, work on the Manichaean texts was slow for decades. Now, however, the publication of the Dublin Manichaica has resumed, the work of Polotsky and Böhlig on the Berlin papyri is being continued, and the remaining texts have been assigned for publication. The recent discoveries of Manichaean doctrinal texts together with documentary texts from a Manichaean community and in an archaeological context in the Dakhleh Oasis sheds new light also on these older discoveries. For the most succinct presentations of this material from Kellis see Gardner and Lieu's article "From Narmouthis to Kellis" in the *Journal of Roman Studies* of 1996. The impressive speed with which the publication of Manichaica has resumed becomes clear when one looks at two contributions in the collection of essays on the Manichaean sources published in 1997: Wolf-Peter Funk's report on the "Reconstruction of the Manichaean Kephalaia" and Iain Gardner's "The Manichaean Community at Kellis: A Progress Report". The state of research presented in these two recent articles has already been superseded by new editions, as will emerge from the next paragraph.

*Funk, Wolf-Peter, *The Reconstruction of the Manichaean Kephalaia*, in: Paul Mirecki and Jason BeDuhn (eds.), *Emerging from Darkness. Studies in the Rediscovery of Manichaean Sources* (Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 43), Leiden 1997, 143–159.

*Gardner, I. M. F. and S. N. C. Lieu, *From Narmouthis (Medinet Madi) to Kellis (Ismant El-Kharab): Manichaean Documents from Roman Egypt*, *Journal of Roman Studies* 86 (1996) 146–169.

*Gardner, Iain, *The Manichaean Community at Kellis: A Progress Report*, in: Mirecki and BeDuhn (eds.), *Emerging from Darkness*, 161–176.

3.3.1 Manichaeism — New Editions and Studies

A volume of literary Greek and Coptic texts from Kellis was edited by Gardner in 1996², and two handsome fascicles of Kephalaia, doctrinal discourses attributed to Mani, have appeared in 1999 and 2000 respectively, edited by Funk. The final fascicles of the Kephalaia edition will not only contain the final leaves, but also an introduction to the work and complete indices to all parts of the edition including the pre-war work by Hans Jakob Polotsky as well as Alexander Böhlig's. Editions of Mani's Epistles, the Manichaean Church History, and the Synaxeis will also be prepared by Wolf-Peter Funk and various other Coptologists.

I already mentioned that the work on the Dublin Manichaica has also come to a fresh start. Siegfried Richter has published a new critical edition of the so-called Herakleides psalms including the Coptic text, a German translation and a critical apparatus. This is the second volume in the Coptic series of the *Corpus Fontium Manichaeorum* series published by Brepols. Parallel to this edition Richter has published an exegetical study on this group of texts in the new series *Sprachen und Kulturen des Christlichen Orients*. The Herakleides psalms, ascribed to a disciple of Mani's by this name, are contained in the second part of the Manichaean Psalm-Book in the Chester Beatty Library. The intention of this group of psalms is to assist the soul of the deceased during its ascension to the realm of light. Richter's book not only interprets the sources with considerable acumen and much attention to detail, he also offers a general introduction to the theological and cultic background of the psalms, including the conception of the post mortem ascension of the soul in the related systems of Gnosticism and Mandaicism. He traces in detail the path the soul takes after death and the different steps its ascension consists of. His main interest, however, lies in the reconstruction of a Manichaean mass for the deceased and its liturgical components, which serves as background and frame for the Herakleides psalms.

² Iain Gardner (ed.), *Kellis Literary Texts, volume I* (Dakhleh Oasis Project: Monograph 4), Oxford 1996.

- *Funk, Wolf-Peter, *Kephalaia I. 2. Hälfte, Lieferung 13–14* (Manichäische Handschriften der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin Band I), Stuttgart, Berlin, Köln 1999.
- *id., *Kephalaia I. 2. Hälfte, Lieferung 15–16* (Manichäische Handschriften der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin Band I), Stuttgart, Berlin, Köln 2000.
- *Richter, Siegfried G., *Die Aufstiegspsalmen des Herakleides. Untersuchungen zum Seelenaufstieg und zur Seelenmesse bei den Manichäern* (Sprachen und Kulturen des Christlichen Orients 1), Wiesbaden 1997.
- *id., *The Manichaean Coptic Papyri in the Chester Beatty Library. Psalm Book, pt. 2, fasc. 2, Die Herakleides-Psalmen* (Corpus Fontium Manichaeorum, Series Optica 1.2.2), Turnhout 1998.

3.4 Nag Hammadi — General

If the renewed scholarly interest in Manichaeism has led to a rapidly increasing output of publications, the literature on Gnosticism and the Nag Hammadi texts does not seem to know any limits at all. Scholer's exemplary bibliography (s. above § 2.1) becomes more voluminous by the year, and the number 9846 at which the continuous count of publications has arrived, is daunting enough for anyone wanting to familiarize himself or herself with the field — even if many of these items are “only” book reviews.

Three major edition projects have been working on the Nag Hammadi codices for several decades. The only one completed so far is the Coptic Gnostic Library, which between 1975 and 1996 produced English-language editions and translations of all the texts. The original fourteen-volume hardback edition, which appeared in the series Nag Hammadi Studies, has now become more accessible in paperback.

The series Nag Hammadi Studies has adapted to the new situation created by the completion of the English-language edition and the shift of interest to the Manichaica. It has changed its name to Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies and now publishes studies in both these fields. The other two edition projects, the Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi (BCNH) at the Université Laval in Québec and the Berliner Arbeitskreis für Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften still produce new editions and French and German translations.

Recently, Louis Painchaud gave two progress reports on the Bibliothèque Copte, in which he delineates the characteristics which distinguish it from other projects, especially the Coptic Gnostic Library. He particularly mentions the extensive commentaries which accompany each volume and the advances brought about by the “Concordances” which make possible the analysis of a text on the microscopical level.

In the “Concordances” section, volumes 5 and 6 have appeared covering Codices VIII through XIa. As in other volumes of the series, one gets the bonus of the most up-to-date form of the complete Coptic text following the concordance properly speaking, and a complete index of wordforms which amount to a genuine grammatical analysis. Codices VIII and IX, grouped together in one volume, are particularly badly preserved, and the concordance by Wolf-Peter Funk has called for extraordinary efforts.

The sixth volume of the “Concordances” contains Codex X which consists of one work only: “Marsanes”, and the first part of Codex XI with the two treatises “The Interpretation of Knowledge” and “A Valentinian Exposition”, together with the eucharistic and baptismal prayers and benedictions attached to it. These texts were grouped together because of dialectal reasons. As Codex I, they were written in that variety of the Lycopolitan dialect commonly known as L6.

Camplani, Alberto, *Sulla trasmissione di testi gnostici in copto*, in: Alberto Camplani (ed.), *L'egitto cristiano. Aspetti e problemi in età tardo-antica* (Studia Ephemeridis Augustianum 56), Roma 1997, 121–175.

*Funk, Wolf-Peter, *Concordance des textes de Nag Hammadi. Les codices VIII et IX* (Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi (in the following: BCNH), section “Concordances” 5), Québec, Paris, and Louvain 1997.

*id., *Concordance des textes de Nag Hammadi. Les codices X et XIa* (BCNH, section “Concordances”, 6), Québec, Paris, and Louvain 2000.

*Painchaud, Louis, *L'édition de la bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi à l'Université Laval prend un nouveau départ*, *Studies in Religion/Sciences religieuses* 28 (1999) 231–215.

*id., *Le projet d'édition de la bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi à l'Université Laval*, *Studies in Religion/Sciences religieuses* 27 (1998) 467–480.

*Robinson, James M. (General Editor), *Paperback Reprint — The Coptic Gnostic Library. A Complete Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, Leiden 2000.

*Turner, John D. and Anne Mc Guire (eds.), *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years, Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration* (Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 44), Leiden 1997.

3.4.1 Nag Hammadi — New Editions

“Marsanes”, the only work preserved of the fragmentary Codex X, is also the last treatise to have been edited in the section “Textes” of the BCNH, in which four recent editions were published. This text relates the otherworldly travel of the name-giving character and belongs to the platonizing Sethian wing of the Gnostic movement. Christian elements are notably absent. It shows affinities to other Sethian texts such as “Zostrianus” from Codex VIII which was also recently edited in the series. A third apocalypse to have just appeared in the Bibliothèque Copte is the “Paraphrase of Shem” from Codex VII. The fourth edition is “Eugnostos”, a religious-philosophical tractate which describes a region beyond the visible world and the beings ruling it and which is transmitted doubly in codices III and V. The research group has recently obtained new funding and hopes to complete its editorial work by the year 2005. A complete translation is also being prepared, to appear in the renowned series *Encyclopédie de la Pléiade*.

The third research group working on Nag Hammadi texts, the Berliner Arbeitskreis, has recently produced three handsome new editions. Hans-Martin Schenke’s edition of the “Gospel of Philip” is the fruit of a pluriennial study of the text and contains an exhaustive commentary of almost 400 pages. Hans-Gebhard Bethge’s “Letter of Peter to Philip” sees the writing as part of the Acts literature and adduces parallels from the Coptic Acts of Philip. The third edition presents the “Apocalypse of Peter” from Codex VII.

- *Barry, Catherine, Wolf-Peter Funk, Paul-Hubert Poirier and John D. Turner, *Zostrien (NH VIII, 1)* (BCNH, section “Textes” 24), Québec, Louvain, and Paris 2000.
- *Bethge, Hans-Gebhard, *Der Brief des Petrus an Philippus. Ein neutestamentliches Apokryphon aus dem Fund von Nag Hammadi (NHC VIII, 2)* (Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Altchristlichen Literatur [in the following: TU] 141), Berlin 1997.
- *Funk, Wolf-Peter, Paul-Hubert Poirier and John D. Turner, *Marsanes (NH X)* (BCNH, section “Textes” 27), Québec, Louvain, and Paris 2000.
- *Havelaar, Henriette W., *The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter (Nag-Hammadi-Codex VII, 3)* (TU 144), Berlin 1999.
- *Pasquier, Anne, *Eugnoste, Lettre sur le Dieu transcendant (NH III, 3 & V, 1)* (BCNH, section “Textes” 26), Québec, Louvain, and Paris 2000.
- *Roberge, Michel, *La Paraphrase de Sem (NH VII, 1)* (BCNH, section “Textes” 25), Québec, Louvain, and Paris 2000.
- *Schenke, Hans-Martin, *Das Philippus-Evangelium (Nag-Hammadi-Codex II, 3)* (TU 143), Berlin 1997.

3.4.2 Nag Hammadi — New Translations

The Italian series *Testi del Vicino Oriente* publishes paperback editions of Ancient Near Eastern texts by renowned scholars in the field. The third volume in its sub-series “Letteratura egiziana gnostica e cristiana” is a highly recommendable translation of the three Hermetic treatises from Nag Hammadi Codex VI authored by Alberto Camplani. The translation is complemented by a comprehensive introduction to Hermetism in Egypt and the textual and literary characteristics of the three tractates. In the previous paragraph I have mentioned that the research group which publishes the BCNH is working on a French translation of the entire Nag Hammadi library. A complete German translation prepared by the Berliner Arbeitskreis will soon be on the market as well. It should supplant a translation published recently by two New Testament scholars under the title “Bibel der Häretiker” — a translation judged to be faulty by members of the Arbeitskreis. And last but not least I wish to mention Peter Nagel’s translation with commentary of the “Tripartite Tractate”, the complicated unfolding of the Gnostic cosmic drama from Codex I.

- *Camplani, Alberto, *Scritti ermetici in copto* (Testi del Vicino Oriente antico, sub-series 8: Letteratura egiziana gnostica e cristiana 3), Brescia 2000.
 - *Lüdemann, Gerd and Martina Janßen, *Die Bibel der Häretiker. Die gnostischen Schriften aus Nag Hammadi*, Stuttgart 1997.
 - *Nagel, Peter, *Der Tractatus tripartitus aus Nag Hammadi Codex I (Codex Jung)* (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 1), Tübingen 1998.
 - *Plisch, Uwe-Karsten, *Textverständnis und Übersetzung: Bemerkungen zur Gesamt-Übersetzung der Texte des Nag-Hammadi-Fundes durch den Berliner Arbeitskreis für Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften*, *Hallesche Beiträge zur Orientwissenschaft* 26 (1998) 73–87.
- id., *Verborgene Worte Jesu — verworfene Evangelien* (s. above § 3.1).

3.5 (Other) Ritual Texts — Liturgical and Magical

Turning to other texts of ritual power, to borrow a phrase from one of my titles, I am going to focus briefly on the Coptic magical texts. The middle of the 1990s was a particularly good time for magical studies, with volume 18.5 of *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* containing overviews of Greek, Demotic and Coptic spells from Egypt by William Brashear, Robert Ritner and Sergio Pernigotti, respectively. Especially the exhaustive overview of the Greek Magical Texts by Brashear, an entire book in itself, is a valuable research basis for Coptologists as well. Almost contemporaneously, Marvin Meyer and Richard Smith gave a selection of Coptic spells grouped according to their contents and provided with an introduction and very helpful notes. The end of the century has not been as productive in this field. It may nonetheless be worthwhile to signal that “Ancient Christian Magic. Coptic Texts of Ritual Power”, first published in 1994, has been available in paperback since 1999.

Henner, Jutta, *Fragmenta Liturgica Coptica. Editionen und Kommentar liturgischer Texte der koptischen Kirche des ersten Jahrtausends* (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 5), Tübingen 2000.

MacCoull, Leslie, *Oral-Formulaic Approaches to Coptic Hymnography*, *Oral Tradition* 14 (1999) 354–400.

*Meyer, Marvin and Richard Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic. Coptic Texts of Ritual Power*, Paperback Edition, Princeton 1999.

Pernigotti, Sergio, *La magia del quotidiano nell’Egitto copto: introduzione*, *Ricerche di Egiptologia e di Antichità Copte* 1 (1999) 77–94.

id., *Testi della magia copta* (Piccola biblioteca di egiptologia 5), Imola 2000.

4. Doing Things with Literary Texts

The book by Meyer and Smith mentioned above is not only a sourcebook, but places itself as a study in its own right at the intersection of philology, social anthropology and religious studies. It makes use of models developed by the different disciplines in order to observe the Coptic magical texts functioning in their social context. In other areas of Coptic literature there have also been interesting shifts in approaching texts, and well-known sources have been re-interpreted in the light of interdisciplinary questions. In my fourth paragraph I shall give just one or two examples each in the categories I have labelled “Literature and Archaeology”, “Literature and Gender”, “Literature and Linguistics”, and “Literature and Religion”.

4.1 Literature and Archaeology

In 1995 a programmatic article by Ewa Wipszycka on the contribution of archaeology towards understanding Egyptian monasticism appeared in the Acts of the International Colloquium “The Spirituality of Ancient Monasticism”³. Here she reviews the integration between philology and archaeology in the last thirty years of monastic archaeology in Egypt exemplified by the excavations of Esna, Kellia and especially of Naqlun, a monastic settlement in the Fayyum, which shows the peaceful co-existence between a cenobitic form of monasticism and the laura-type right up to the Arab conquest. She presents the results of this integration in four basic observations: the variety of organisational types among the monks which coexisted up to the eighth century, the abundance of means many of the monks had at their disposal, the lack of restraint they showed when it came to displaying these riches architecturally, and finally the growing clericalisation of the monks. Two recent studies, by Catherine Thirard and Leonard Rutgers, pursue the same line of research. They have in common the study of the architectural organisation of monasteries, and in particular of the sixth/seventh century monastery of Epiphanius in Western Thebes. However, with all the detailedness and abundant apparatus these studies possess, they do not seem to me to go beyond the results Wipszycka presents as preliminary observations. But more new studies have been announced, and we can be certain that recent excavations such as the ongoing work at Kellia or Naqlun are availing themselves of all types of resources to obtain a complete picture of life in these communities.

³ Ewa Wipszycka, *Apports de l’archéologie à l’histoire du monachisme égyptien*, in: Marek Starowieyski (ed.), *The Spirituality of Ancient Monasticism. Acts of the International Colloquium Cracow-Tyniec, 16.–19. 11. 1994*, Cracow 1995, 63–78.

Grossmann, Peter, *Zu Moses von Abydos und die Bischöfe seiner Zeit*, Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte 38 (1999) 51–64.

*Rutgers, Leonard Victor, *Auf den Spuren eines frühchristlichen Lebensideals. Hagiographie und Archäologie im spätantiken Ägypten*, Mitteilungen zur spätantiken Archäologie und byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte 1 (1998) 9–27, addenda pp. 1–2.

*Thirard, Catherine, *L'organisation architecturale des monastères d'après les textes et l'archéologie (Les monastères d'Épiphane et du Hān el-Aḥmar)*, in: Emmel et al. (eds.), *Ägypten und Nubien* (s. above § 2.1), vol. 1, 388–400.

4.2 Literature and Gender

Another area of growth production in the last thirty years has been the field of Gender Studies. The construction of the body and of femininity or masculinity in ancient societies has been the object of innumerable studies, but the language threshold has caused the Coptic sources to remain relatively unnoticed. There have been some recent attempts to fill this lacuna. Among the titles I have collected, I am going to point out one of Terry Wilfong's studies, because it examines a wide range of literary, medical and magical texts. In his article "Reading the disjointed body in Coptic" Wilfong concludes that in most of the sources, the female body is presented as the sum of its parts, a collection of fragments which does not form a cohesive whole. The male body does not suffer this fragmentation except only in the vivid descriptions of torture and death in the Coptic martyrdoms. More than explaining this phenomenon, Wilfong raises new questions about the textual strategies of feminization and masculinization which could be the starting point for further research.

Behlmer, Heike, *Weibliche Körper im Mönchsgewand. Formen von Androgynie in der christlich-ägyptischen Literatur*, in: Carmen Franz und Gudrun Schwibbe (Hrsg.), *Geschlecht weiblich. Körpererfahrungen — Körperkonzepte*, Berlin 2001, 12–34.

ead., *Koptische Quellen zu (männlicher) Homosexualität*, Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur 28 (2000) 27–53.

Krawiec, Rebecca, *Space, Distance and Gender: Authority and the Separation of Communities in the White Monastery*, BASP 35 (1998) 45–63.

Petersen, Silke, *"Zerstört die Werke der Weiblichkeit": Maria Magdalena, Salome und andere Jüngerinnen Jesu in christlich-gnostischen Schriften* (Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 48), Leiden 1999.

*Wilfong, Terry, *Reading the Disjointed Body in Coptic: from Physical Modification to Textual Fragmentation* in: Dominic Montserrat (ed.), *Changing Bodies, Changing Meaning. Studies on the Human Body in Antiquity*, London and New York 1998, 116–136.

id., *'Friendship and physical desire': The discourse of female homoeroticism in fifth century CE Egypt*, in: Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz and Lisa Auanger (eds.), *Among Women: from the Homosocial to the Homoerotic in the Ancient World*, Austin 2002, 304–329.

4.3 Literature and Language

In recent years, Coptic linguistics has reached a level of sophistication often quite beyond the scope of the everyday philologist. Even so, one of the most widely used comprehensive treatments of Sahidic Coptic is still a pre-war grammar such as Walter Till's "Koptische Grammatik" which does not even incorporate the so-called Standard Theory of Coptic language tied to the name of Hans Jakob Polotsky. There have been recent endeavors to change this situation. Out of five new Coptic grammars which were announced in recent years, two have appeared⁴. Bentley Layton has recently presented a new reference grammar of Sahidic Coptic which makes full use of Polotsky's writings. In its detail and volume it aims at replacing even more than Till's "Grammatik" or Steindorff's "Lehrbuch des Koptischen", Ludwig Stern's seminal reference grammar of Coptic published in 1880. The reason for including Layton's grammar in this overview is the extensive use it makes of Shenoute's writings. Apart from these Layton also incorporates Biblical and Ecclesiastical literature, but to call his grammar a grammar of Shenoutean Coptic would be fully justified since it virtually includes thousands of examples from his works. There have been earlier attempts at a grammar of Shenoutean Coptic; both Shisha-Halevy's "Grammatical Categories" of 1986 and

⁴ Two grammars of/introductions to Sahidic Coptic are in preparation by Chris Reintges, and (to appear in the series Languages of the World/Materials published by Lincom Europa) Andrea Eberle and Regine Schulz, respectively. Ariel Shisha-Halevy is working on a new reference grammar of Bohairic Coptic.

his “Grammatical Chrestomathy” of 1988⁵ are essentially Shenoute-based. Layton, however, has had the advantage of profiting from Stephen Emmel’s codicological reconstruction of Shenoute’s corpus and can therefore much more easily distinguish Shenoutean material from such of doubtful authenticity, which used to be one of the major difficulties in dealing with this author in the past.

Another grammar based on Polotsky’s and Shisha-Halevy’s work, in particular Polotsky’s theory of Coptic syntax as expressed in his last important book, “Grundlagen des Koptischen Satzbaus”, is Uwe-Karsten Plisch, “Einführung in die koptische Sprache”. Plisch as well widens the textual base of older grammars by taking his examples not only from the Bible but also from those Nag Hammadi texts written in Sahidic.

*Layton, Bentley, *A Coptic Grammar* (Porta Linguarum Orientalium N. S. 20), Wiesbaden 2000.

*Plisch, Uwe-Karsten, *Einführung in die koptische Sprache (sahidischer Dialekt)* (Sprachen und Kulturen des Christlichen Orients 5), Wiesbaden 1999.

4.4 Literature and Religion

To conclude this section, I wish to signal two among the studies on religion in Late Antique Egypt which have thrown fresh light on two types of ancient sources, namely the hagiographical texts and the Pachomian material.

In his magisterial survey of Egypt from the late third to the early fifth centuries, “Egypt in Late Antiquity”⁶, Roger Bagnall includes one chapter with the programmatic title “Temples in Decline”. He discusses the third-century drying up of documentation for pagan temples and religious practices, which leads him to postulate a decline of the old religion preceding the advent of Christianity. This thesis, which has found wide acceptance, is challenged in David Frankfurter’s book “Religion in Roman Egypt”. Despite the title the book is not a general introduction to the theology and cult practice of the first three or four centuries CE. It is instead a new interpretation of the papyrological, literary and archaeological source material available from CE 100–600. Drawing extensively on anthropological studies, Frankfurter argues that even if the official cults were in decline throughout the Roman period, their functions were shifted into the sector of personal piety and private cult practices. He also argues that Christianity eventually asserting itself was due to certain cultural predispositions which were typically Egyptian. To give just one example: the function of pagan shrines for believers seeking healing and spiritual guidance could easily be assumed by the Coptic martyr shrines. The particular reason why I have included Frankfurter’s book is the use it makes of well-known literary sources, especially Coptic saint’s lives, to substantiate his claims, such as the narration of the conversion of the sanctuary of Isis at Menouthis into a Christian shrine in the year 484 or the sermons of Shenoute. According to Frankfurter, these texts show that small temples were still patronised in the fifth century, even if they did not have a priesthood of their own any more.

The second book is a collection of papers by James Goehring. It consists of ten articles previously published and two essays written expressly for the volume, as well as a general introduction to Egyptian monasticism which sets off the collection. It is divided into three major parts: “Ascetics, Society and the Desert”, “Ascetic Organization and Ideological Boundaries”, and “Pachomian Studies: The Later Years”. Using as his point of departure both literary and documentary sources, Goehring examines the impact and power of desert imagery in the historiography of Egyptian monasticism and even relocates back into the villages and cities ascetics which were situated in the desert by earlier scholarship. The second part focusses under various aspects on the selective processes monastic sources have undergone. The third part is devoted to the Pachomian movement after Theodore’s death, the point where the well-known literary sources relating the Life of Pachomius leave off. Seen as a whole, Goehring’s collected essays show that two tenets long cherished by historians of Coptic monasticism are not substantiated by his research: i. e. the clear division between the anchoritic and the cenobitic lifestyle and the clear separation between the city and the desert. This leads us back to questions discussed earlier: the pertinent observations on monastic archaeology by Ewa Wipszycka.

⁵ Ariel Shisha-Halevy, *Coptic Grammatical Categories. Structural Studies in the Syntax of Shenoutean Sahidic* (Analecta Orientalia 53), Rom 1986; id., *Coptic Grammatical Chrestomathy* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 30), Louvain 1988.

⁶ Princeton 1993.

Frankfurter, David (ed.), *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 134), Leiden 1998.

*id., *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance*, Princeton 1998.

*Goehring, James E., *Ascetics, Society, and the Desert. Studies in Early Egyptian Monasticism* (Studies in Antiquity and Christianity 10), Harrisburg 1999.

5. Coptic Literature on the Internet

In my final paragraph I shall look very briefly at the presence of Coptic literature on the Internet, and at one electronic edition in particular. A text which has found attention from more than one side is the “Homily on the Death of the Virgin Mary” attributed to Evodius, bishop of Rome. There are different Sahidic and Bohairic versions of this text. The one in question here is preserved in two manuscripts from the Pierpont Morgan Library: M596 ff. 19 vso – 26 rto b with its parallel M598 ff. 1 rto – 8 vso. Only the final part of the homily narrates the death of the Virgin, while the rest is concerned with the divinity and incarnation of Christ. In the journal *Analecta Bollandiana* of 1999, Stephen Shoemaker published the text together with an English translation. At the same time Mark Sheridan was working on an electronic edition, and he was able to take note of Shoemaker’s edition and express his disagreements with some of the translations. Sheridan places the historical setting of its composition at a time when the orthodox, i. e. anti-Chalcedonian faith was under pressure, more precisely to the patriarchy of Damian (585–607). His edition contains everything one would expect in a paper publication, including the Coptic text both in diplomatic format and in a critical edition, an index of biblical references and an index of names and non-Coptic words. Still under construction is the index of Coptic words. The advantages of electronic publishing are shown by a link to Tito Orlandi’s ongoing project of the *Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari*. The reader can thus directly access the electronic edition of the patriarch Damian’s “Homily on the Nativity”, which Sheridan cites as a parallel for the text on the death of the Virgin.

* (1) CMCL – *Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari*, maintained by Tito Orlandi, Università di Roma: <http://rmcisadu.let.uniroma1.it/~cmcl/>

* (2) Mark Sheridan, Evodius of Rome: Homily on the Virgin Mary (s. above § 3.2): <http://www.coptica.net> (cf. also Shoemaker, *Analecta Bollandiana* 117, 1999, 241–283; s. above § 3.2)

(3) The Coptic Network, maintained by Azer Bestavros, Computer Science Department, Boston University: <http://www.coptic.net>

(4) St. Shenouda the Archimandrite Coptic Society, maintained by Hany Takla, President of the Los Angeles-Based Society (now including the journal “Coptologia”): <http://www.stshenouda.com>

(5) BCNH – La Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, maintained by Jacynthe Goulet, Faculté de théologie et de sciences religieuses, Université Laval: <http://www.ftsr.ulaval.ca/bcnh/>

6. Conclusion

In summary, I should like to present some general observations on the recent work on Coptic literary texts starting with my last point:

- Electronic publishing and dissemination of information is not as far advanced in the field of Coptic literature as in some other research fields. The *Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari* is more than helpful for the specialist, thanks to the efforts of Tito Orlandi, but not easily accessible for scholars of neighboring disciplines. To share some of the problems which I encountered while doing research on my subject: I was unable to access either the *Corpus Fontium Manichaeorum* or the International Association for Manichaean Studies from any of the links I found. A trial search for keywords such as “Coptic gnostic” or “Nag Hammadi” in most of the search engines (with the laudable exception of www.google.de) led me first to all kinds of “gnostic” websites, but not to the informative homepage of the Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi — you have to know it is there to find it. Thus a more co-ordinated presence on the Internet might be desirable.

Other general characteristics of the work on Coptic literary texts in the last four years are in my opinion:

- First, the fact that there has been little work on Bohairic texts – can it be that everybody is waiting for the new reference grammar of Bohairic Ariel Shisha-Halevy is working on?

- Secondly, the mixed news which come from the work on Biblical texts: while the “Biblia Coptica” is steadily progressing, the Coptic Septuagint is stalled at the moment.

- Thirdly, there have been some interesting new finds, some due to museum archaeology, some due to field archaeology, such as the Dakhleh Manichaean texts which offer the unique possibility of studying texts in their social context and vice versa. The antiquities market continues to be a problem, even if the Mesokemic Matthew (see above § 3.1) has been rescued for scholarly investigation. This is clearly shown by one fourth-century codex which among other texts contains parallels to the “Letter of Peter to Philip” from Nag Hammadi and which has been circulating on the market for twenty years.

- On the up side, projects which have been pursued for a long time, such as the Bibliothèque Copte de Nag Hammadi or the series Nag Hammadi (now Nag Hammadi and Manichaean) Studies, continue strong or have adjusted well to new demands and changing situations by shifting their direction.

- Finally, promising new projects, such as the Shenoute edition or the resumption of work on the Manichaica will offer vast possibilities for people interested in doing things with these literary texts.

Taken as a whole, prospects for work on Coptic literary (and semi-literary) texts seem to be bright. At the beginning of a new century, there are both many things being done and enough things left to do.