

# HEINZ KUHN

Karl Heinz Kuhn

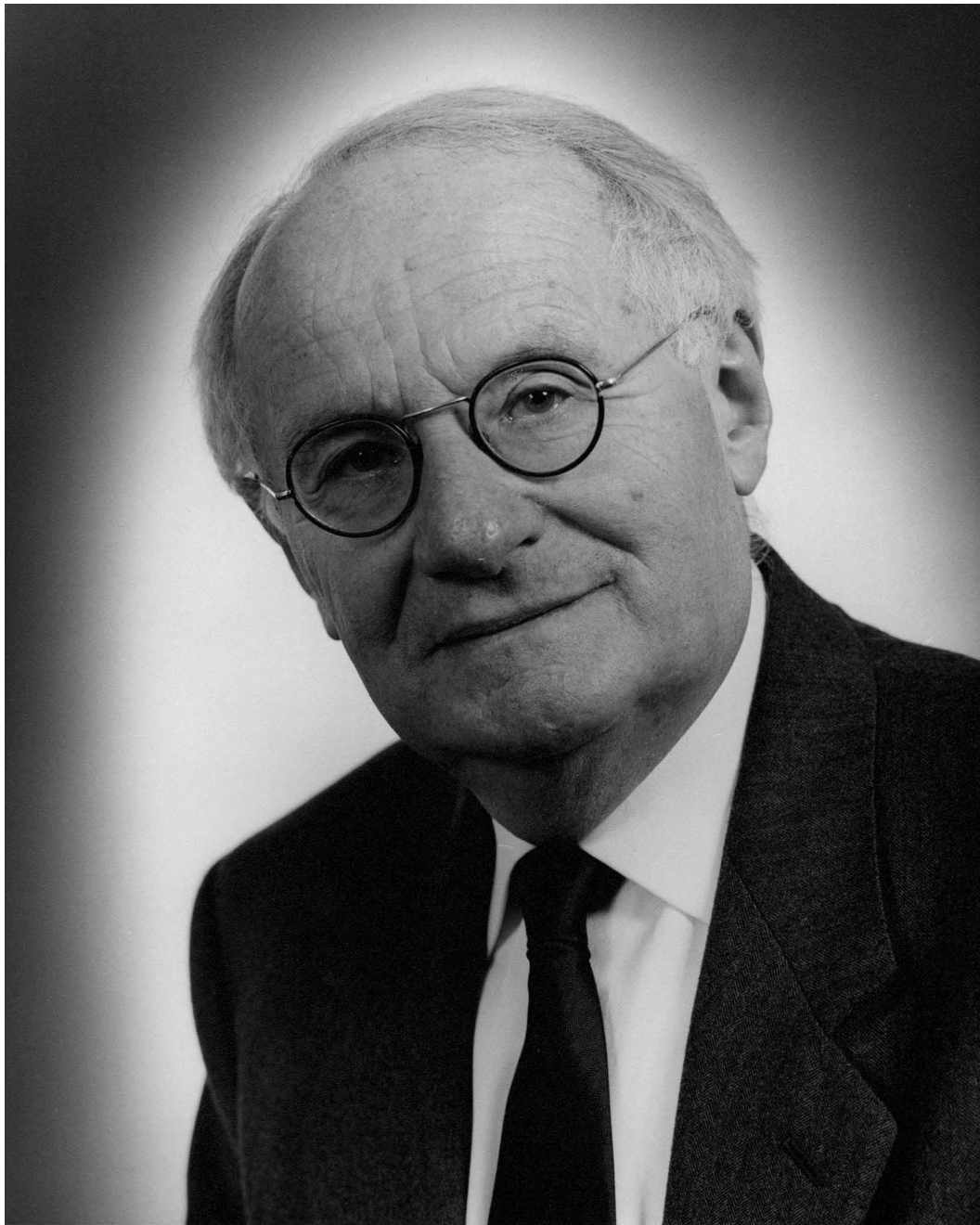
2 August 1919 – 10 June 2013

elected Fellow of the British Academy 1987

by

JOHN TAIT

*Summary.* Karl Heinz Kuhn, emeritus Professor of Coptic in the University of Durham, was the leading Coptic scholar of his day in the United Kingdom. His most notable publications were editions, with accompanying volumes of English translations, of Coptic texts written by or piously attributed to major figures in the early development of the Coptic Church and of Coptic monasticism. These were published in the authoritative international series *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, and for thirty years from 1970 he was himself the editor of its Coptic sub-series.



K. H. Kuhn.

## I

Heinz was born, less than a year after the end of the First World War, in the Prussian city of Danzig (now Gdańsk in Poland), just over a year before it became formally established as the Free City of Danzig. He and his older sister, Lotte, were the children of reasonably well-off parents of Jewish descent, although the family did not associate with any observant Jewish community. His father, Max Kuhn, was a senior railway official, and thus had been an employee of the Prussian state. He was proud to have served in the War. He and Heinz's mother, Gertrude Kuhn (née Hiller) came from the same small Prussian town of Leobschütz, near Oppeln in Upper Silesia (now Opole in Poland). Gertrude's father owned a distillery there. When Heinz was still a baby, his parents moved south to Görlitz in Lower Silesia (now in Saxony), but before long they returned to live close to their origins in Oppeln. The region was predominantly Catholic. However, in 1927, Heinz was baptised as a Protestant. In choosing to take this step, the family asserted that they belonged to a more liberal and progressive sector of society.

Heinz saw his earlier childhood as a happy time. In 1929, he began to attend the Hindenburg Realgymnasium, over 500 km distant. As a child, his health was not robust, and he had a minor curvature of the spine. In an optimistic attempt to correct this, he was made to hang from the wall-bars. Thus his slight stoop, studious and attentive, was not just something that appeared late in his life. The family soon began to sense the threat of the rise of the Nazis. According to his son, Heinz remembered 'when the Nazis banned Jews from holding firearms, walking nervously through town with his father until they found a quiet bridge where they could throw his WWI pistol into the Oder, rather than hand it in to the Nazi authorities'. His parents perhaps sensed not actual danger, but that their children had no future in Germany. They did not make any attempt to go abroad themselves, but they began to plan that both their children should move to 'South West Africa' (now Namibia), the former Deutsch-Südwestafrika, at that time administered by the Union of South Africa. Heinz's sister went there in 1936, and stayed till the end of her life. Heinz took his Abitur (the final examinations in secondary school) in 1937. In the same year his father was forced into retirement. The family moved to Breslau in the mistaken belief that some of what they had already witnessed was provincial hooliganism and that they would be better off in a larger city and somewhat nearer Berlin. Heinz remembered hurrying home through the backstreets when he heard the lorry-loads of 'louts' arriving for Reichskristallnacht. He briefly took a job in the packing department of the Carl Zeiss optical firm in Rathenow, some 75 km West of Berlin. As the dangers became ever more apparent, it was decided that Heinz should travel to Britain, with the aim of immediately moving on to join his sister in Africa. He was able to leave Berlin in May 1939, but only with the spontaneous help of complete strangers: a Nazi official at

the last moment demanded an additional payment, which Heinz's family could not produce. A French couple happened to overhear, and kindly provided the money.

## II

Alone, a young man of nineteen, Heinz reached England safely, but the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939 put an end to any idea of his travelling to be reunited with his sister in southern Africa. He had only a transit visa, and was effectively a refugee. Initially, he was sheltered and cared for by the Quakers; he greatly appreciated their kindness, and always felt a debt of gratitude towards them. Then, however, like so many others, some of whose stories are only now coming to light, he was interned and moved from place to place, with a period on the Isle of Man, where thousands of German citizens were confined as 'enemy aliens'. More frightening and stressful experiences were the perilous Atlantic crossings, when, again like many others, he was shipped to Canada, and then back: there was an ever-present threat from the German fleet, and numerous Allied ships were sunk with a terrible loss of life. Notoriously, the *Arandora Star* was torpedoed and sunk off the coast of Ireland on 2 July 1940, while transporting internees and prisoners of war to Canadian internment camps; 805 lives were lost.

In 1941, Heinz was released in Britain, and began working as a farm labourer under the War Agriculture Executive Committee. For a time he was based at Sunningwell near Abingdon, three to four miles south-west of Oxford; he would later recall cycling over Boar's Hill to attend concerts in Oxford's Holywell Music Room. Eventually, he also became prepared to joke sardonically about his experience of the harsh realities of farm work. But this had been a distressing and frustrating time, when his wish was to do anything he could to rescue his parents from Germany. This was impossible, and for long he was not able to find out what had happened to any of his family. According to his son, 'The last he heard, his parents had been taken to a small ghetto at Tormersdorf, from where he still received a handful of letters. It was only in the last year of his life that he learnt that his father was deported on 3 May 1942 to the Lublin concentration camp (Majdanek) and to his death'.

## III

Heinz had the good fortune to receive a scholarship to read Theology at Durham University, a leading centre for the subject. Theology as an academic discipline had been practised there since the foundation of the university in the 1830s. It had a strong tradition of teaching Greek and the Semitic languages for undergraduate students. Heinz

became a member of St John's College, which for the half a century of its existence had had as its chief aim the preparation of students for ordination in the Church of England. It was the natural choice of college within Durham for a Theology student who had been brought up as a Protestant in Germany, and who had no leanings towards high church traditions. For some time, he entertained a sincere wish to return to Germany as a pastor, to help to steer the country back to sanity and civilisation. During the course of his undergraduate degree, several factors led him to change his mind. For one, he met and became close to a fellow student, Rachel Wilkinson, the daughter of an Anglican clergyman. She was enrolled to read English, but she switched to join him in the Theology degree. They were married after the completion of their studies in 1949. Heinz gave as one reason for abandoning his plans to return to Germany that his wife could not speak German, and would have found such a move very difficult. It is also likely that his view of ordination and indeed of Christian faith itself had changed. Over later years, it seems that his attitude to formal religion was not unwavering, although he never appears to have swung to out-and-out atheism. However, this was not a topic he ever talked about, at least not with colleagues. In addition, he became fascinated by the possibilities of academic work on early Oriental Christian textual sources, especially Coptic manuscripts.

#### IV

Coptic Christianity, Coptic language, and Coptic texts are studied by students and scholars for a variety of reasons, and several of these—but not quite all—inspired Heinz.

The Coptic language was the direct descendant of the ancient Egyptian language, although it displays many features clearly distinguishing it from the preceding 'Late-Egyptian' and 'demotic' stages of the language. Up to the present day, for the past one thousand years, the Coptic language has survived only as a liturgical language, sung and recited in church services, but generally not understood, and certainly not spoken in everyday speech; Arabic had increasingly taken over that role for the whole Egyptian population around the 10th to 12th centuries CE.

The original shift from demotic-Egyptian language to Coptic was not a simple one. Over the Ptolemaic Period (305–30 BCE) and the early Roman Period (30 BCE to 3rd century CE), the use of the traditional Egyptian scripts (hieroglyphs, hieratic, demotic) became increasingly confined to the milieu of the elite priests of the native Egyptian temples, and restricted to religious and literary material, not practical communications or documents; changes in the spoken language were reflected in writing only to a limited extent. Over the same timespan, Greek was a rival to Egyptian: from the beginning of the

Greek-Macedonian rule of the Ptolemaic Period, Greek language and Greek script were the language and writing of the court in Alexandria, of the urban elites, and of the administration, and the use of Greek spread ever more widely. It is therefore not surprising that for some centuries the Coptic Church (reputedly founded around the mid-1st century CE), within its primary base in Alexandria, where the Coptic Pope or Patriarch had his seat until after the Arab conquest (complete by 642 CE), operated in Greek, written and spoken, and interaction with other branches of Christianity outside Egypt would naturally be conducted in Greek.

In the decades before the arrival of Christianity, we may assume that a sizeable section of the Egyptian population — mostly, but not entirely, the least privileged, including the rural workforce — spoke a form of the Egyptian language, and many, but not all, could understand little or no Greek. Almost the only writing they would encounter (but might never make any use of) was Greek. When the young Coptic Church came to engage with the rural population, this had to be in their language: the bible had to be translated from the Greek of the Septuagint and the New Testament, and circulated in book-form. Books and everyday documents began to be written in the vernacular language, but in Greek script, the natural model to hand, with a few modified demotic Egyptian characters added to write the Egyptian consonants<sup>1</sup> that do not occur in Greek. These were the beginnings of what we term true ‘Coptic’ language and script.<sup>2</sup> However, these are not developments of which we should claim to be able to chart the early stages with precision, as written Coptic only begins gradually to be attested for us from the 3rd century CE onwards. The prevalence and prestige of both written and spoken Greek in Egypt from the later 1st millennium BCE down even to the Arab conquest meant that the Coptic language was at all stages influenced by Greek, most notably in vocabulary. The bible-translation process itself surely had an effect upon the nature of literary Coptic, while a high proportion of surviving Coptic religious texts (sermons, formal letters, hagiographies, etc.) were translations of originals in Greek; this is sometimes known for certain, sometimes a matter of inference, or even of debate.<sup>3</sup>

Subsequently, Christian communities, especially of the countryside, and the numerous growing monastic settlements could maintain the Coptic language as a way of distinguishing themselves from Greek-speaking pagans — and from other outsiders. However, this did not involve only the rural poor: Saint Athanasius, who was raised in

<sup>1</sup> For example, the *sh* sound (*/ʃ/*).

<sup>2</sup> There were various much-studied earlier attempts to write Egyptian in Greek characters, but the unqualified term ‘Coptic’ is usually reserved for the developments of the 2nd century CE at the earliest.

<sup>3</sup> This issue was of much concern to Heinz: see, for example, K.H. Kuhn, *A Panegyric on John the Baptist Attributed to Theodosius Archbishop of Alexandria* (*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, 268–269; *Scriptores Coptici*, 33–34; Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1966), text vol., pp. xviii–xx.

Alexandria, and became Coptic Patriarch (with interruptions) 328–373 CE, could preach in Coptic, and is claimed to have written some works in Coptic as well as Greek.

## V

The Coptic language in itself has many fascinations, and Heinz's sheer delight in it was always obvious. As it derived from the Egyptian language, it remains today a valuable tool for the understanding of the prior stages of Egyptian, just as it had been vital in the original decipherment of the hieroglyphic script. In fact, Heinz never turned his attention to earlier Egyptian. Of course, he always had colleagues in Durham who worked on multiple aspects of Pharaonic Egypt, and he may have felt that all such things were well left in their hands. Egyptian together with Coptic-Egyptian as a truly living language is attested in written form for over four thousand years, allowing study across an unparalleled depth of time. Dialect variations must have existed in earlier Egyptian, yet they can scarcely be detected in the standard written forms of the language; but a wide variety of dialects (some with clear regional backgrounds, some still difficult to locate exactly) are found in Coptic, notably from the earlier centuries. Thus, Coptic continues to present numerous problems and opportunities for study, including research within linguistics, and publications in this field have multiplied in recent decades. Heinz took a keen interest in this work, insofar as it contributed to a better understanding of the texts, or of literary traditions. When Heinz was a student, Polotsky's *Études de syntaxe copte* was a recent work,<sup>4</sup> which both broached new ideas and began to force all Coptologists (and Egyptologists) to rethink how issues in grammar were to be tackled. In later years, Heinz also admired the insights and thorough reading of the texts displayed by Ariel Shisha-Halevy.<sup>5</sup> However, he himself was essentially trained as a philologist, and had no wish to embark upon work lying fully within linguistics.

Church History was a field in which Heinz was at home, above all when he could relate the texts that he studied to wider issues. The Coptic Church (particularly its leading figures based in Alexandria) played a major role in the developments and controversies of early Christianity, although the Coptic Church became somewhat isolated after the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE). The Council upheld the doctrine of the two natures of

<sup>4</sup>H.J. Polotsky, *Études de syntaxe copte* (*Publications de la Société d'Archéologie Copte*, 9; Le Caire: Imprimerie de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1944); for Hans Jacob Polotsky (1905–1991), see M. L. Bierbrier (ed.), *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, 5th revised edn (London: The Egypt Exploration Society, 2019), p. 373.

<sup>5</sup>For example A. Shisha-Halevy, *Coptic Grammatical Chrestomathy: a Course for Academic and Private Study* (*Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, 30; Leuven: Peeters, 1988), drawing on the writings of Shenoute, to which Shisha-Halevy has devoted a number of studies.

Christ, while the Copts resolutely persisted in asserting the doctrine that Christ has one nature, fully human and fully divine (often loosely referred to as *monophysitism*). Thereafter, the Coptic Church has, to the present day, never been so close to the other Eastern churches, except for its varying degrees of authority over the Ethiopian Church (which became formally independent only from 1959).

Egypt was a major cradle of traditions of hermetic and monastic withdrawal, and these feature copiously in Coptic literature. This is only partly due to the circumstance that so many of our manuscripts survive from monastic libraries. Egypt was the home of the ‘Desert Fathers’ of the 3rd century CE onwards, hermits revered for their holiness and asceticism, such as the 3rd- to 4th-century St Anthony of Egypt. They chose a solitary existence, or lived in small, loose communities. However, it was also, around the beginning of the 4th century CE, the birthplace of regulated, communal, ‘cenobitic’ monasticism. The most celebrated figure from the beginnings of organised monasticism was Saint Pachomius (died 348 CE), although he was not quite the first to found a monastic community. He initially established and became Abbot of a monastery at Tabennesi in Upper Egypt, and subsequently a monastery further south at Pbow, and other Pachomian monasteries followed. His ‘Rules’ for monastic life were widely translated and can be seen as influential in both Eastern and Western Christianity.<sup>6</sup> Two monastic libraries in particular have yielded substantial numbers of Coptic religious literary manuscripts, although very different in their state of preservation. Heinz edited material from both of them. In 1910, an assemblage came to light of well over fifty relatively well-preserved manuscripts, still in their elaborately decorated bindings, deriving from the abandoned library of the monastery of the Archangel Michael at Hamouli in the Fayum. They are mostly of the 9th and 10th centuries CE. Of these, forty-nine were purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, and are now in The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York (other volumes or fragments are in Cairo or elsewhere). The worn-out manuscripts from the large library of the White Monastery, or ‘Monastery of Abba Shenouda’, near Sohag in Upper Egypt, were dumped, mostly in one small store-room. They are chiefly of the 9th to 12th centuries CE. Portions of the books, single leaves, and mere fragments began to be acquired by European collectors from the 18th century onwards, and the largest purchases were made in the later 19th century. The material is now scattered among numerous collections worldwide.

Heinz took an especial interest in the works of two writers who were Abbots of the White Monastery. Saint Shenoute was the third Abbot of the monastery, and during a long incumbency (he died at a great age, probably around 465 CE) he built it up into a powerful organisation, with impressive buildings. The monastery’s library particularly

<sup>6</sup>For Pachomius’s *Rules* in English, see A. Veilleux, *Pachomian koinonia II: Pachomian Chronicles and Rules* (Cistercian studies series, 46; Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1981).



sought to preserve and curate the extensive works of Shenoute himself, copying and re-copying them in large, systematic codex-volumes. Much work has been done over the last sixty years to reconstruct the library's shattered books, so as to recover the scheme within which Shenoute wrote, and within which his compositions were organised and preserved. In the early years, Heinz played a part. In recent decades, many scholars have contributed to the progress achieved, but it may not be unfair to single out Tito Orlandi and Stephen Emmel. Heinz twice visited Orlandi in Rome, discussing Coptic texts, and availing himself of the resources of the *Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari*. This was founded by Orlandi at the Istituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente,<sup>7</sup> and originally concentrated mainly upon the manuscripts of Shenoute. Heinz first visited, when the *Corpus* was in its very early days, for his 1978 publication of *A Panegyric on Apollo*,<sup>8</sup> and again at the time of the Second International Congress of Coptic Studies in Rome, in September 1980. Emmel's doctoral thesis, published in a revised form in 2004,<sup>9</sup> was a codicological study of the White Monastery manuscripts. In it, he deliberately refrained, as a point of method, from attempting to judge authorship on stylistic grounds. It therefore had to confine itself to what the personnel of the monastery's library thought on questions of authorship. Heinz wrote the original entry for Shenoute in *The Coptic Encyclopedia*.<sup>10</sup> In view of the wealth of subsequent research, it is not surprising<sup>11</sup> that an updated account has appeared in the online version.<sup>12</sup> Curiously, Heinz seemed to steer clear of publishing works patently by Shenoute,<sup>13</sup> possibly because he saw that others were concentrating on

<sup>7</sup>The *Corpus* currently has a base in Hamburg: see <<https://www.aai.uni-hamburg.de/en/ethiostudies/research/cmcl.html>>.

<sup>8</sup>K.H. Kuhn, *A Panegyric on Apollo Archimandrite of the Monastery of Isaac*, by Stephen, Bishop of Heracleopolis Magna, 2 vols (*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, 394–395; *Scriptores Coptici*, 39–40; Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1978; see the note of thanks to Orlandi, text vol., p. v.

<sup>9</sup>S. Emmel, *Shenoute's Literary Corpus*, 2 vols (*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, 559–600; *Subsidia*, 111–112; Lovanii: In Aedibus Peeters, 2004).

<sup>10</sup>K.H. Kuhn, 'Shenute, Saint', in A.S. Atiya (ed.), *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, 8 vols (New York: Macmillan, 1991, pp. 2131–2133; also available on-line: <<https://ccdl.claremont.edu/digital/collection/cce/id/1749/rec/2>>. In all, Heinz contributed eight articles to the *Encyclopedia*.

<sup>11</sup>Emmel (*Shenoute's Literary Corpus*, v. 1, p. viii) wrote 'Our picture of Shenoute as an author and as a monastic leader, and our understanding of his role in the religious and secular society of his time, is likely to change entirely in the third century of Shenoute studies that is now [i.e. 2004] beginning'.

<sup>12</sup>H. Behlmer, 'Shenoute: Update': <<https://ccdl.claremont.edu/digital/collection/cce/id/2178/>>.

<sup>13</sup>As the result of an invitation to publish Vienna material, Heinz did contribute 'Two Shenoute Texts', in Anonymous (ed.), *Festschrift zum 100-jährigen Bestehen der Papyrussammlung der österreichischen Nationalbibliothek: Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer (P. Rainer Cent.)*, 2 vols (Wien: Brüder Hollinek, 1983), v. 1, pp. 187–193. See also K.H. Kuhn, 'The Observance of the "Two Weeks" in Shenoute's Writings', in K. Aland & F.L. Cross (eds), *Studia Patristica Vol. II. Papers presented to the Second International Conference on Patristic Studies held at Christ Church, Oxford, 1955* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957), pp. 427–434 [= *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, Band 64, 427–434].

that task, possibly out of a wish to study relatively neglected literature. He was deeply interested in the problems of identifying the authors of fragmentary works; one of his *CSCO* volumes is devoted to a discourse attributed in the manuscripts to Shenoute, but which he published, with discussions of the issues, as ‘pseudo-Shenoute’.<sup>14</sup> Shenoute’s successor as Abbot, Besa, was the focus of Heinz’s PhD thesis.<sup>15</sup> Some of Besa’s writings were included within codices that chiefly comprised works by Shenoute. Therefore, there has been a particular risk of misattribution in modern times. Much of Heinz’s views as to what was written by Shenoute and what by Besa have stood up to scrutiny in later research, while a few have not.<sup>16</sup> Heinz’s entry for Besa in *The Coptic Encyclopedia*<sup>17</sup> has not as yet been updated, although this is also an area in which recent research has flourished.<sup>18</sup>

## VI

When Heinz embarked upon a career of work upon Coptic manuscript sources, Coptic Studies in Britain were going through a difficult period. Two eminent Coptic scholars whose work Heinz particularly admired were W.E. Crum<sup>19</sup> and Sir Herbert Thompson.<sup>20</sup> They both reached a good age, but both had died in 1944, just before Heinz began his undergraduate degree. James Drescher published a number of Coptic texts from 1947 onwards, but for very many years was based in Egypt.<sup>21</sup> The Austrian Walter Till<sup>22</sup> was a

<sup>14</sup> K.H. Kuhn, *Pseudo-Shenoute on Christian Behaviour*, 2 vols (*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, 206–207; *Scriptores Coptici*, 29–30; Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1960); cf.

K.H. Kuhn, ‘Pseudo-Shenoute on Christian Behaviour’, *Le Muséon* 71 (1958), 359–380.

<sup>15</sup> K.H. Kuhn, ‘The Works of Besa, from a MS in the British Museum (Or.8810): Edited with Translation and Commentary’, PhD thesis (Durham, 1957). Available at Durham E-Theses Online: <<http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/10336/>>. The texts were revised and published as K.H. Kuhn, *Letters and Sermons of Besa*, 2 vols (*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, 157–158; *Scriptores Coptici*, 21–22; Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste L. Durbecq, 1956).

<sup>16</sup> How Heinz’s handling of attributions compares with the results of Emmel’s codicological work can be gleaned from Emmel’s Appendix 1: Emmel, *Shenoute’s Literary Corpus*, v. 2, pp. 885–908; cf. pp. 937–938.

<sup>17</sup> K.H. Kuhn, ‘Besa’, in Atiya (ed.), *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, pp. 378–379; also available on-line: <<https://ccdl.claremont.edu/digital/collection/cce/id/345/rec/1>>.

<sup>18</sup> See for example R. Krawiec, ‘Besa and the Women of the White Monastery’, in A. Boud’hors (ed.), *The Rediscovery of Shenoute: Studies in Honor of Stephen Emmel (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 310)*; Leuven; Paris; Bristol, CT: Peeters, 2022), pp. 321–345.

<sup>19</sup> Walter Ewing Crum (1865–1944); see Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, pp. 114–115.

<sup>20</sup> (Sir) Henry Francis Herbert Thompson (2nd Bart) (1859–1944); see Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, pp. 457–458.

<sup>21</sup> James Anthony Bede Drescher (1902–1985).

<sup>22</sup> Walter Curt Franz Theodor Karl Alois Till (1894–1963); see Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, p. 458.

quarter-century older than Heinz; he held a lectureship in Manchester from 1951 till 1959, eventually returning to Austria, and Heinz at least came to know him. His wide-ranging publications included much on documentary texts; Heinz own interests did not lie in that direction, and he may also have thought that Till's work took care of this branch of Coptic. Paul Kahle,<sup>23</sup> a few years younger, he did not meet: he was the son of a distinguished Professor of oriental languages at Bonn, who, although not Jewish, was persecuted by the Nazis for associating with Jews; the whole family escaped and were welcomed in Britain in 1939.<sup>24</sup> Paul began a career as a Coptologist at Oxford, but died tragically in 1955, with just one major publication to his name,<sup>25</sup> which included a significant contribution to the study of Coptic dialects. Charles Allberry,<sup>26</sup> who devoted himself to Manichaean texts, especially in Coptic, had died on service in the RAF in 1943 at the age of thirty-one. Jack Martin Plumley<sup>27</sup> had studied theology at Durham (1929–1932), over twenty years before Heinz. In 1948 he had published a practical Coptic grammar,<sup>28</sup> but he was chiefly engaged in following a career in the Church of England, until appointed to the Herbert Thompson Chair of Egyptology at Cambridge in 1957; his varied publications thereafter include nothing in the way of editing substantial Coptic literary manuscripts. Peter Shore<sup>29</sup> was a few years younger than Heinz, but took his Cambridge BA in 1949, the same year that Heinz graduated at Durham; he was rather known for his publications of demotic and his museum work until in 1963 he edited his first Coptic text, a Coptic biblical codex from the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, John Barns<sup>31</sup> published only minor articles on Coptic until his joint publication with Eva Reymond<sup>32</sup> of four martyrologies in 1973,<sup>33</sup> while Reymond (despite holding a lectureship in Coptic at Manchester from 1960) had no Coptic publications until that 1973 volume.

<sup>23</sup> Paul Eric Kahle (1923–1955); see Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, p. 245.

<sup>24</sup> See M. Black, 'Paul Ernst Kahle, 1875–1965', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 51 (1966), 485–495.

<sup>25</sup> P.E. Kahle, *Bala 'izah: Coptic texts from Deir el-Bala 'izah in Upper Egypt*, 2 vols (Oxford: Griffith Institute; Oxford University Press, 1954).

<sup>26</sup> Charles Robert Cecil (Augustine) Allberry (1911–1943); see Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, p. 12; <<https://egyptology.christs.cam.ac.uk/person/charles-allberry/>>.

<sup>27</sup> (Revd) Jack Martin Plumley (1910–1999); see Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, pp. 371–372.

<sup>28</sup> J.M. Plumley, *An Introductory Coptic Grammar (Sahidic dialect)* (London: Home & Van Thal, 1948).

<sup>29</sup> Arthur Frank Shore (1924–1994), always referred to as 'Peter'; see Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, p. 429–430.

<sup>30</sup> A.F. Shore, 1963. *Joshua I–VI and other passages in Coptic: edited from a fourth-century Sahidic codex in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin. (Chester Beatty Monographs, 9; Dublin: Hodges Figgis, 1963).*

<sup>31</sup> (Revd) John Wintour Baldwin Barns (1912–1974); see Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, p. 36.

<sup>32</sup> Eva (Eve) Anne Elizabeth Reymond (Jelinková-Reymond); see Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, p. 391.

<sup>33</sup> E.A.E. Reymond, & J.W.B. Barns, *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973); reviewed by Heinz: *The Journal of Theological Studies, New series* 25, ii (1974), 527–529.

## VII

Immediately after his graduation, Heinz was awarded a Scarbrough Research Studentship,<sup>34</sup> and began study for a PhD under the Egyptologist Miles Macadam.<sup>35</sup> Heinz had been taught Coptic language by Macadam at the Durham School of Oriental Studies. The School regularly provided teaching for the Theology department (and, later, for many years Heinz did the same, including Syriac language-teaching). In the Preface to the published form of his thesis, Heinz expressed his gratitude to Macadam as his Supervisor, adding that he ‘has since with invariable kindness answered so many questions’.<sup>36</sup> Heinz long remembered him with warmth, although Macadam had not been quite happy in Durham, and moved back to the south on his retirement, and they barely kept in touch. Macadam was an Egyptologist who studied Coptic language as an adjunct to his main interests, of which the chief were Nubian archaeology, history, and texts; he was also keenly attracted towards museum-work, and put in much effort on the setting-up of the displays of the new Oriental Museum at Durham, then known as the Gulbenkian Museum of Oriental Art and Archaeology. He was no theologian, and Heinz recalled with good-natured puzzlement that he had needed the help of a thumb-index to find his way about the less familiar parts of the bible. It was at this time that Heinz began to attend Durham’s weekly New Testament Seminars. Kingsley Barratt<sup>37</sup> had become a Lecturer in Divinity at Durham in 1945, and had been one of Heinz’s teachers in his undergraduate degree; he was a leading member of the Seminar, and soon became its chair. Heinz wrote the Introduction to the volume of studies published in honour of Barratt, in which he made clear the respect in which he held both his scholarship and the example of his life.<sup>38</sup> For, in addition to being one of the foremost New Testament scholars of his time, Barratt served tirelessly as a Methodist minister, and for many years preached regularly on Sundays in Durham and in chapels in the surrounding countryside.

Heinz’s thesis was submitted promptly in 1952, and he graduated with a PhD in the same year.<sup>39</sup> His career in Durham University was then assured by the growth of its School of Oriental Studies. Heinz was a Research Fellow in Arts at Durham from 1953 to 1955, and in 1955 was made Lecturer (and later Senior Lecturer) in Hebrew and

<sup>34</sup>Set up after the 1947 Report of the *Interdepartmental Commission of Inquiry on Oriental, Slavonic, East European and African Studies*, of which Lord Scarbrough, 11th Earl of Scarbrough, was chairman.

<sup>35</sup>Miles Frederick Laming Macadam (1909–1997); see Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, p. 295.

<sup>36</sup>Kuhn, *Letters and Sermons of Besa*, text vol., p. i.

<sup>37</sup>(Professor) Charles Kingsley Barrett FBA (1917–2011).

<sup>38</sup>M.D. Hooker & S.G. Wilson (eds), *Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honour of C.K. Barrett* (London: SPCK, 1982), pp. 1–3.

<sup>39</sup>See n. 15 above.

Aramaic, with a secure position within the School. The School was the creation of T.W. Thacker.<sup>40</sup> Thacker had come to Durham's Theology Department in 1938 as Reader in Hebrew; after war service in the Foreign Office, he became Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Languages. In the wake of the Scarbrough Report, he worked enthusiastically to create in Durham a broadly-based centre for Oriental Studies, and the School, independent of the Theology Department, opened fully in October 1951. Thacker was its Director until his retirement in 1977. Heinz held Thacker in the highest regard. The two men were very different personalities, although both had no appetite for grandstanding or for personal confrontation. Thacker avoided the limelight, and preferred to work behind the scenes, or by producing written submissions. Heinz fully espoused Thacker's vision for the School, and admired his tireless networking and lobbying to defend and enhance it. However, he did on occasion express a fear that the staff of the School, on Elvet Hill, were not only located physically outside the heart of the city and the university, but also were perceived in the university to be eccentric, even maverick, and perhaps aroused some resentment, for being treated over generously in university finances. He often thought that the School's staff should go out of their way to explain their work better to non-specialists. Towards the end of his directorship in 1977, although his campaigning days were mostly past, Thacker prepared the ground for Heinz's promotion to Reader in Coptic. Under Thacker's successor as Director, John Harris,<sup>41</sup> he was given a personal chair in Coptic, which he held from 1 September 1982 until he reached retirement age in 1984.

John Harris had previously spent one year (1969–1970) as Reader in Egyptology at Durham, and he and Heinz were cordial friends from that time. Their friendship survived a crisis when John Harris became incensed that the top brass of the university casually let him know that changes in the School's staffing had been decided upon behind his back, and behind the backs of the teachers in the School; he precipitately resigned from his position of Dean of the Durham Faculty of Arts. At a gathering of teachers in the School, both Heinz and Raymond Thornhill,<sup>42</sup> then the two most senior members of staff, spoke with sadness and apprehension: John Harris was a 'fighter', and as Dean had been in a position to stand up for the School; that was now lost.

Certainly, thenceforth there was mutual mistrust between Harris and the university administration: in due course after Heinz's retirement, he was unable to persuade the

<sup>40</sup> Professor Thomas William Thacker (1911–1984); see Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, p. 455; 'Obituary: Professor T. W. Thacker', *The Times*, 11 May, 1984; J.R. Harris & K.H. Kuhn, 'Thomas William Thacker (1911–1984)', *Archiv für Orientforschung* 31 (1984), 237–238.

<sup>41</sup> Professor John Richard Harris (1932–2020); see P. J. Frandsen, 'John Richard Harris, 23. december 1932 – 24. februar 2020', *Papyrus*, 40, i (2020), 41–44.

<sup>42</sup> The Rev. Raymond Thornhill, who taught Hebrew first in the Theology Department and then in the School; he retired in 1981.

university to replace Heinz's post, which was an ominous incident for the whole School. Although the Parker Report of 1986<sup>43</sup> offered the hope of fresh government support for oriental studies, the University Grants Committee's subsequent view of how the Report should be implemented, and as to how the limited finances that were available should be shared between universities, led Durham to decide that it could no longer afford to maintain the School as a broadly-based centre of oriental studies; the School should be dismantled, with the abandonment of all teaching on the ancient Near and Middle East. Heinz saw Harris's complete unwillingness at this point to compromise or to try to salvage anything from the wreck as part of a betrayal of all that Thacker had built up, and clearly he told him as much. Their friendship was at an end; although neither of them thereafter sought to malign the other, they could no longer speak of each other with any warmth.

## VIII

The focus of Heinz's research was always the editing — the making accessible, and the understanding — of Coptic religious literary texts from the first few centuries of the Church. Already in his earliest work upon the writings attributed to Besa, he saw the restrained approach of the volumes of the *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* as an ideal discipline. There, it was expected that the pages of Introduction would be brief, and would concentrate upon essential matters concerning the manuscripts and the status of the texts edited. Annotations would be succinct, and not venture far into wider matters of interpretation or context. Heinz's *CSCO* publications were therefore, in every case, supplemented by journal articles, in which he discussed the various issues that most engaged him, or published additional fragments that had come to his attention.<sup>44</sup> These at first appeared in *The Journal of Theological Studies*, reflecting his ongoing commitment to theology, but then almost consistently in the Belgian journal *Le Muséon*, devoted to Eastern Christianity of the ancient and mediaeval periods.<sup>45</sup> He published a number of reviews of text publications, in which he always took care to point out the

<sup>43</sup> P. Parker, *Speaking for the Future: a Review of the Requirements for Diplomacy and Commerce for Asian and African Languages and Area Studies* ([London]: [University Grants Committee], 1986).

<sup>44</sup> In one case, twice, over a period of 17 years: *A Panegyric on John the Baptist* of 1966 was followed by K.H. Kuhn, 'Three Further Fragments of a Panegyric on John the Baptist attributed to Theodosius, Archbishop of Alexandria', *Le Muséon* 88 (1975), 103–112, and K.H. Kuhn, 'Four Additional Sahidic Fragments of a Panegyric on John the Baptist attributed to Theodosius, Archbishop of Alexandria', *Le Muséon* 96 (1983), 251–265.

<sup>45</sup> The journal is historically linked with the Catholic University of Leuven, the publishers, in collaboration with the Catholic University of America, of the *CSCO*.

strengths<sup>46</sup> (in conversation, he was scathing about colleagues only when he felt they had been guilty of laziness). Although he did not participate in the large-scale projects that have been given over to the Gnostic manuscripts from Nag Hammadi, he had a lively interest in the material, and in Manichaean literature, as is shown by some book-reviews, and especially by his substantial contribution to the 1983 translation of Kurt Rudolph's *Gnosis* — essentially a new edition made in consultation with Rudolph himself.<sup>47</sup>

Heinz's last book publication was completed in collaboration with the present writer.<sup>48</sup> It was an honour to be invited to join in the work, but a surprise that Heinz firmly insisted on joint names on the title-page, even if previously a review and a minor text publication had been done jointly. Although a partial draft of an edition already existed, there in fact remained much work to be done, and much still to discuss. Frailty was in no way a factor: Heinz was as sharp as ever; he did declare that he felt that eighty (an age he would reach in 1999) was an age at which to stop work — and perhaps he had long thought this. A little later he chose to stand down from his editorship of the *CSCO* Coptic series, around the time that he reached eighty, explicitly wishing to give way to younger scholars. As one contribution, the present writer could conveniently examine in the Cambridge University Library one of the ten distributed copies of the photographic publication of the Pierpont Morgan manuscripts from Hamouli, a publication overseen by Henry Hyvernat.<sup>49</sup> The Durham library had acquired and bound up a complete xerox-copy of the volumes, which were always at Heinz's elbow, but these were of the everyday standard of black-and-white xerography of the time,<sup>50</sup> and they were not always good enough to rely upon for the details of work towards an edition. The M574 manuscript is nowadays accessible in excellent colour images online.<sup>51</sup>

The Pierpont Morgan Library manuscript containing the hymns had been elaborately studied by Hans Quecke in his *Untersuchungen zum koptischen Stundengebet* of 1970;

<sup>46</sup>For just one example: K.H. Kuhn, [Review of] 'Les citations vétéro-testamentaires dans les versions coptes des évangiles. Recueil et analyse critique. By Philippe Luisier...', *The Journal of Theological Studies* NS 51, ii (2000), 699–700.

<sup>47</sup>K. Rudolph, *Gnosis: the Nature and History of an Ancient Religion*; ed. by R.M. Wilson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Limited, 1983): Heinz was responsible for pp. 275–376; note also K.H. Kuhn, 'Some observations on the Coptic Gospel according to Thomas', *Le Muséon* 73 (1960), 317–323.

<sup>48</sup>K.H. Kuhn & W.J. Tait, *Thirteen Coptic Acrostic Hymns from Manuscript M574 of the Pierpont Morgan Library* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, 1996).

<sup>49</sup>Pierpont Morgan Library, *Bybliothecae Pierpont Morgan codices coptici photographice expressi: Codices ordinavit tabulas omnes photographicas membranis contvlit titulos adposvit indices digessit Henricvs Hyvernat*, 56 vols (Romae, [no publisher], 1922); for the acrostic hymns, see v. 13, pls 154–180.

<sup>50</sup>Heinz referred to them as 'photostats' (Kuhn, *Pseudo-Shenoute on Christian Behaviour*, text vol., p. iii), and as 'xerographic reproductions' (Kuhn, *A panegyric on John the Baptist*, text vol., p. x).

<sup>51</sup>The pages for the acrostic hymns begin at <<https://www.themorgan.org/collection/hermeneiai-various-hymns/77276/158>>.

the hymns he briefly discussed, omitting any edition of them.<sup>52</sup> He had told Heinz that he felt that they presented problems that he had not yet been able to resolve to his satisfaction. Quecke died in 1998, and it was never clarified what problems Quecke had had in mind<sup>53</sup> or if the *Thirteen Coptic Acrostic Hymns* book had elucidated any of them. Although Heinz had a definite interest in Coptic poetry, and indeed contributed the article on poetry in the *Coptic Encyclopedia*,<sup>54</sup> he was not inclined to let the publication stray far beyond questions of descriptive and analytical bibliography, of philology, and (a matter at which Heinz excelled) the tracking down of quotations and echoes of biblical and patristic writings.<sup>55</sup> The verse-by-verse translation was intended merely ‘as an aid to the study of the Coptic’, and laid no claim to ‘literary elegance’,<sup>56</sup> and has surprised those who expect more effort to be made to bring out the poetry.<sup>57</sup>

## IX

It may be hoped that much of Heinz’s personality may have emerged from the paragraphs above. Although some have described him as shy, or as a very private man, none who knew him or worked with him saw him as withdrawn or aloof. His life was unpretentious, but far from austere. He enjoyed good food, good literature, and good music, but he had no time for any ostentation. He dressed conventionally, almost drably, although that was much the norm among academics of his generation; in retirement, he was relieved no longer to feel he had to wear a tie. Whether with friends or with strangers, he would be not merely courteous, but welcoming and cordial, and he did not lack a sense of humour. In company, he politely avoided or sidestepped some topics: above all, for example, his own and his family’s sufferings under the Nazis. About these, he never showed any sign of self-pity; he certainly did not regard them as a fit subject for mere conversation. Whatever his feelings may have been about post-war Germany, he was

<sup>52</sup> H. Quecke, *Untersuchungen zum koptischen Stundengebet (Publications de l’Institut orientaliste de Louvain, 3; Louvain: Université catholique de Louvain, Institut orientaliste, 1970)*, esp. pp. 87 n. 41, 90, 101–104, 342, 388–389. Quecke also published a very different acrostic from Toronto in 1992: H. Quecke, ‘Eine koptische alphabetische Akrostichis’, *Orientalia* 61, i (1992), 1–9.

<sup>53</sup> However, see perhaps Quecke, *Untersuchungen zum koptischen Stundengebet*, p. 103 n. 21.

<sup>54</sup> K.H. Kuhn, ‘Poetry’, in Atiya (ed.), *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, pp. 1985–1986; also available on-line: <<https://ccdl.claremont.edu/digital/collection/cce/id/1599/rec/1>>.

<sup>55</sup> The review by Leslie MacCoull (*Chronique d’Égypte*, 73, i (1998), 197–199) very reasonably suggested that there was more to be said on aspects of hymnology and versification; cf. the review of H. Satzinger, *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, 92 (2002), 221–223.

<sup>56</sup> Kuhn & Tait, *Thirteen Coptic Acrostic Hymns*, p. 14.

<sup>57</sup> Although Terry Wilfong in his review (*The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*, 36 (1999), 183–186) found them ‘elegant renditions’.



prepared to drive through the country for family holidays in Austria, and eventually in Germany itself. Towards the end of his life, he made a trip with his son to Poland, to Gdańsk and the areas he had known as a child; he declared that he was happier to see the Poles living there than he would have been to see Germans. His personal thoughts on matters of religion, too, were a private matter, although he sometimes seemed to regard the Church of England as congenial, and its architecture — for example, that of Durham Cathedral — as inspiring. For many years his modest upstairs study at home had a view across the course of the River Wear towards the West front and tower of the cathedral. He seems never to have been moved to revive his ideas of ordination, nor did he take any active interest in the present-day Coptic Church, or present-day Eastern Christianity in general. Although he hated unpleasantness or confrontational arguments, yet he was always prepared, after due consideration, to speak frankly or with courage when he saw someone or something as wrong.

Heinz's marriage was a very happy one. His wife, Rachel, was of immense support to him; her character was complementary to his: she was forthright and she stood no nonsense. She could sometimes affectionately chide Heinz for his overcaution or gently tease him for over complicating things. Although she was not a Coptacist, Heinz clearly discussed with her all manner of problems in his work, as he succinctly recognised in the Preface to his first *CSCO* publication, acknowledging '... the constant assistance which my wife has given me in numerous ways',<sup>58</sup> and similar brief tributes appeared in all his *CSCO* Prefaces, most explicitly: 'Finally, I cannot let this book go out without grateful mention of the many ways in which my wife has assisted in its preparation'.<sup>59</sup> Rachel was for many years a teacher at Durham High School for Girls, and also a Tutor at the University's St Mary's College. Thus in some ways she became a figure more widely known about Durham than her husband. They had two children. Their son, Tom, became Professor of Twentieth-Century German Literature at Oxford and Fellow of St Hugh's College, retiring in 2023. His chief research lies in political literature in the 20th century, working particularly on Bertolt Brecht. Their daughter, Kate, became a doctor in General Practice. Sadly, she died at an early age in 2009, a blow which hit the family hard. Rachel died, three years after Heinz, in January 2016.

Heinz was a dedicated teacher. His Coptic courses made great demands of his students, although he was always kind and patient, very willing to support and reassure any who were struggling. Similarly, of his teaching of Syriac for students from the Theology Department, Canon Elizabeth Fisher has noted: 'As a teacher he was meticulous and encouraging, showing no hint of impatience at devoting so much time to a

<sup>58</sup> Kuhn, *Letters and Sermons of Besa*, text vol., p. i.

<sup>59</sup> Kuhn, *Pseudo-Shenoute on Christian Behaviour*, text vol., p. i.

solitary student working at a basic level'.<sup>60</sup> He had the opportunity to remodel the Durham undergraduate syllabus for Coptic, which was an integral part of the Egyptology degree. He took the step, unusual in Britain at that time, of incorporating study of all the major dialects of Coptic. His ideas were soon taken note of for a revision of the teaching at Oxford, and have proved influential. The number of students enrolled for the Egyptology degree at Durham was always small, and none of those whom Heinz taught has gone on to follow him in the editing of Coptic literary manuscripts. In the wider sphere of Coptic scholarship, however, Heinz kept in touch with many colleagues around the world. Although most of his books and articles were sole publications, he was glad to exchange ideas with researchers from the most varied backgrounds. He had particular friendships with two of the executive editors of the *CSCO*. Professor René Draguet<sup>61</sup> was *Secretarius generalis* at Louvain. He had effectively re-founded the *CSCO* in 1948. His own publications of Syriac texts for the most part concerned the traditions of monasticism in Egypt. He would seem to have been of a markedly reserved temperament. Fr David Johnson, S.J. (1938–2011) was a Coptic scholar, with a strong involvement with the contemporary Coptic Church, and noted for his work with the homeless in Washington. He was Representative of the Catholic University of America on the Board of *CSCO*. These two, although of very different characters, shared many of Heinz's interests; but he was always glad to advise or help any who approached him with queries or requests. Heinz's meticulous, acute, and perceptive style of scholarship has inspired and encouraged a wide range of students and researchers in many countries. His colleagues remember him with affection and respect: on learning of Heinz's death, Tito Orlandi wrote, with a concision that Heinz himself would surely have applauded, 'I have a very pleasant memory of a mild man and deep scholar'.

### *Acknowledgements*

For many aspects of Heinz's life in Durham I can draw upon my own experiences in the Durham School of Oriental Studies and Oriental Library, and upon my continuing friendship with him thereafter, and upon conversation over the years with my former Durham colleagues. I am deeply grateful to his son Tom for indispensable information about many details, above all of his early life. Some of the tenor of this memoir must resemble that of the *Times* obituary (*The Times*, 25 June 2013, p. 50), of which I was part compiler, part writer (a comment on Heinz's Syriac teaching was added the next day by Canon Elizabeth Fisher, who studied Theology at Durham from 1965–1968: *The Times*, 26 June 2013, p. 49). For any errors or misunderstandings, I alone must be held responsible.

<sup>60</sup> E. Fisher, *The Times*, 26 June 2013, p. 49.

<sup>61</sup> René Henri Ghislain Draguet (1896–1980): see for example G. Garitte, 'Notice sur René Draguet', *Annuaire de l'Académie Royale de Belgique*, 148 (1982), 115–141.

In this memoir I have often provided references to the entries for Coptic scholars in what is currently the latest (fifth) edition of *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, as this generally gives references to further biographical information, and it is envisaged that the work will soon become available in an online form, and be constantly updated.

*Note on the author:* John Tait is emeritus Professor of Egyptology in the Institute of Archaeology of University College London.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

*Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the British Academy* (ISSN 2753–6777) are published by  
The British Academy, 10–11 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1Y 5AH  
[www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk](http://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk)

