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MANUSCRIPT DISCOVERIES OF THE FUTURE

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MANUSCRIPT DISCOVERIES OF THE FUTURE*

The question, important even at the theoretical level, as to how future discoveries of highly important manuscripts should be handled, has of course been posed to us all by the recent publicity about the unpublished fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls. There was a similar instance of mismanagement in the case of the Nag Hammadi codices, until, through the intermediary of the UNESCO, it became possible to gain access to the codices themselves and publish *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, which ended that monopoly and gave everybody ready access. How should the academic community at large handle the next major manuscript discovery, to prevent such undesirable situations from ever arising?

Such discoveries of important manuscripts are bound to take place regularly, if one may extrapolate from the steady stream of major manuscript discoveries throughout the Twentieth Century: The Manichaean codices of Medinet Madi discovered in 1929 and still largely unpublished (a facsimile edition of the Dublin part has been published, and I am currently preparing a facsimile edition of the Berlin part), the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri published promptly and in exemplary form in the 1930s; the Toura Papyri of patristic texts discovered by the British army during the Second World War near Cairo and published without fanfare; the Nag Hammadi gnostic codices discovered in Upper Egypt in 1945; the Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in 1947 and the immediately following years, followed by nearby discoveries at Wadi Murabbaʿat, Wadi Daliyeh, Khirbet Mird, and Naḥal Ḥever, the recent manuscript discoveries at St. Catherines's Monastery at Mt. Sinai — not to speak of the important discoveries of clay tablets in Syria from ancient Ugarit in the 1920s and from Ebla in the 1970s.

Thus we may assume that there will continue to be manuscript discoveries of such importance that it is well worth our while to be better prepared to handle them than we have been in the past. There is of course a steady stream of discoveries of commercial texts, such as documentary papyri and clay tablets, where the problem is neglect, rather than monopoly, and any qualified scholar willing to edit them can easily gain access. But what can be done to see to it that new discoveries of important literary and religious texts are not processed with the chaotic and unsuccessful procedures that marred a number of past discoveries?

If the Twentieth Century has succeeded in moving beyond the widespread destruction of manuscript discoveries characteristic of earlier centuries, and at least has preserved most of

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the recent discoveries for posterity, can we make a comparable leap forward in procedures, to see to it that they are properly handled and promptly made available to the scholarly world and the cultured public? What can be done now, to see to it that future discoveries will not end up in a fiasco similar to the one in which we now find ourselves?

I would like to make six concrete proposals, based in large part on my having been deeply involved in setting straight the situation with regard to the very mismanaged Nag Hammadi codices. When seen from the inside, there are problems but also possibilities not always noticed from the outside.

1. A new ethos for *editiones principes*. The ethos should gain ascendency among us, that the person who accepts an assignment for a prestigious first edition, which we still honor with its Latin designation *editio princeps*, does so on behalf of and for the benefit of all the academic community, not to the exclusion of and hence the detriment of most of the present generation of colleagues. The Dead Sea Scroll scholars agreed around 1950 to publish these texts for us all. Yet we have waited all our professional careers for access to some that are still not accessible. Whatever moral justification and appropriateness may have been in the arrangements of 40 years ago have long since ceased to be applicable. If the question had been posed to the editors then, as to whether the arrangements made then should be still enforced 40 years later, if they still had not completed their assignments, all of those sensible and decent young men would have agreed that of course the assignments they were setting up should not be maintained if still unpublished 40 years later. But there were no contingency plans envisaged then for the situation that actually evolved. For contingency plans were not customary. It was at the time less a problem of the individuals involved than of the scholarly community at large. This lack of collective foresight should not be permitted to happen again. A new ethos, a new consensus, is not impossible, especially given the widespread protest against the monopoly of the unpublished Dead Sea Scroll fragments.

The scholarly ethos has in other regards changed for the better over the years. What we today would brand as plagiarism was not so considered in antiquity, when it was considered normal scholarship to incorporate in one's own writing large segments of one's predecessors' writings without any acknowledgement at all. It even happened in the Bible itself. Today the academic ethos has so fully changed that a scholar guilty of plagiarism is ostracized from the guild. The time may soon come when we will look back in amazement at how we showered our highest academic honors on those publishing the Dead Sea Scrolls — or, more exactly, those <u>not</u> publishing many of them, but withholding them from us all, throughout their and our professional lifetimes. Scholarly monopolies of

our cultural heritage will probably soon come to be seen as simply beyond the pale of respectability.

It is reminiscent of the debate at the time of the Renaissance and Reformation, as to whether the Bible should be kept in Latin only, and thus under the control of scholars and the church, or whether it should be translated into the vulgar tongues, and thus be laid open to unscholarly distortion and the creation of unwanted sects. Although these undesirable consequences did follow the Bible translations, no one today, not even those in the same tradition that sought to block translations 500 years ago, would regret that the Bible was opened to those risks by being translated into all modern languages. The Dead Sea Scroll monopoly makes one think also of another Medieval book policy, the Index of forbidden books, except that the Dead Sea Scroll policy has been to ban even the publishing of editions that are not authorized by the monopolists. The Index has in our time been quietly deactivated, as so embarrassing and ineffective as to be counterproductive. Manuscript monopolies will also soon be universally recognized as a price too high to pay for the superior quality of the exclusive scholarship the monopolists promise us.

In fact any first translation, no matter how qualified the scholar, is also the first mistranslation. Over the years ongoing scholarly discussion corrects and improves the *editiones principes* until we have achieved standard editions that can stand the test of time. We have to put our trust, in the case of critical editions, just as in the case of the rest of our scholarship, in the ongoing free debate within the scholarly community, to weed out untenable views and foster views that can last.

Actually, the monopolistic efforts did not in effect keep out untenable views. Prof. Dupont-Sommer of the École pratique des Hautes-études in Paris shocked us with the revelation that Jesus was not the first founder of a Jewish sect to have been crucified. For the Teacher of Righteousness behind the Dead Sea Scrolls had also been crucified! But when it became clear to other scholars that the text reporting the crucifixion of the Teacher of Righteousness was Dupont-Sommer's own restoration of a lacuna in a text, his sensationalism disappeared almost as fast as it had appeared. Probably persons beginning their study of the Dead Sea Scrolls in more recent times have never even heard of that long-forgotten sensation. In any case their study is not hindered by it, for at most they have heard of it only as the wild and irresponsible kind of speculation to be carefully avoided. Thus we are none the worse for it. But we are all worse off for the kind of monopolistic protection of the Dead Sea Scrolls that sought unsuccessfully to prevent that kind of sensationalism.

It is a matter of collective guilt that we have tolerated as a group what we as individuals could hardly justify. We have left it to the most directly victimized to lodge their protests, and we have usually not hearkened to their calls for support. Monopolists have known that they could get by, and that if they ever succeeded finally in producing their *magnum opus*, everything will be forgiven and forgotten, and they will go down in history as great scholars.

But we are a transition generation. This truism of the past is no longer fully valid today, and will increasingly cease to be acceptable in respectable academic circles. Already senior scholars locked into monopolies are suffering the anguish of humiliation at precisely the moment when their otherwise distinguished careers should be earning them the laurels of scholarly distinction. In a sense they are more to be pitied than blamed. But young scholars, be on your guard — do not be tarred all your professional careers with a stain that you will never erase or outlive! You are the generation where inheriting the monopoly will ruin you early on, for you have witnessed the ruin of the careers of your mentors, and hence are forewarned and forearmed. The ethos has in fact already changed.

2. **A Policy Commission on Future Manuscript Discoveries.** Before the next discover is made and mismanaged, a commission to set up policies for the correct handling of future manuscript discoveries should be in place and busily at work. It should be disinterested and functional. There is already a Biblical Manuscripts Committee of the American Schools of Oriental Research. But, though founded at the insistence of Elizabeth Hay Bechtel, the main patron of the Dead Sea Scrolls, in her frustration over the slowness with which they were being published, it nonetheless has been composed of the sluggish editors themselves and their supporters, and hence has played no constructive role in breaking the monopoly over the Dead Sea Scrolls and advancing their publication. It has been more nearly a sanction for the *status quo*, and is only now making sounds of moving to the side of the angels, once the monopoly has been broken without their assistance. Foxes are notoriously inept custodians of chicken coops.

Of course we are talking about international scholarship and discoveries relevant not just to the USA. Hence one thinks of such organisms as UNESCO. It was the International Committee for the Nag Hammadi codices, nominated and partially funded by UNESCO, that broke the monopoly on the Nag Hammadi codices by publishing The *Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices*. But that was only because some activist (myself) pressured UNESCO finally to convene a committee and put it to work. Then I was willing to be exploited to do the project for UNESCO. Hence, as the American delegate on that Committee, I was made Permanent Secretary to produce the facsimile edition.

Prior to that UNESCO had done practically nothing for a decade. Its staff consists not of academics but of bureaucrats, functionaries from the participating states. My superior was an Afghan, who has to this day never written me a letter; his superior explained to me that I should understand that he came from an oral culture. UNESCO's biannual budget consists of projects proposed by the member states. As long as the Ministry of Culture of the Arab Republic of Egypt did not put the Nag Hammadi project at the top of its requests for

UNESCO funding, nothing happened. That funding is in any case normally limited to meetings of international committees to make recommendations, and is not directed to funding the actual work itself. We hence had to raise most of that money ourselves. Incidentally, the USA is no longer a member of UNESCO. Hence American participation on a UNESCO committee would now be excluded.

There are of course learned societies both at the international and at the national level. There is an International Association of Egyptologists, an International Association for Coptic Studies, an International Society of Papyrologists, an international Society for New Testament Studies, international Congresses for Old Testament Studies, and, of course, equivalent American organizations, such as the American Schools of Oriental Research, the American Research Center in Egypt, the Society of Biblical Literature, the Catholic Biblical Association, the American Papyrological Society, the American Philological Society, etc.

The leadership of scholarly societies is also often more proficient at bureaucracy and politics than at identifying and advancing the cutting edge of the discipline. In such matters as here concern us, lethargy often prevails. But it is conceivable that an effort might be launched, e.g., to name only one option with which I am somewhat familiar, through the Research and Publications Committee of the Society of Biblical Literature. Once a commission to plan for future manuscript discoveries had been initiated, membership in such a commission might be broadened to include a variety of scholarly organizations, to avoid the appearance of one learned society wanted to control future discoveries to the exclusion of others. It should not however be permitted to become so unwieldy and politically determined as to be ineffective. The cause should not be simply turned over to a committee to die.

This Commission on Future Manuscript Discoveries would be entrusted with setting up policies and procedures, such as those suggested in a quite preliminary way in what follows. It is to be hoped that its planning would not await a manuscript discovery, but would be carried out without needing to have a specific discovery in view. For then it would not be a matter of being confronted with the *fait accompli* of those on the inside track introducing the same kind of self-serving but counter-productive structures as have plagued the Nag Hammadi and Dead Sea Scroll discoveries in our lifetime. Such a commission, planning in the abstract, would thus not be competing with anybody for anything, nor criticizing anyone for what they are doing or not doing, nor favoring one nationality or language over another, but rather seeking to serve impartially the world-wide academic and cultured community for the benefit of us all. It is the cultural heritage of us all that is at stake.

Of course the literal specifics of each manuscript discovery are unique, and the problems are never identical, though it is often striking how specifics from one story sound like twice-tole tales when compared with the specifics of another. Thus, though one cannot anticipate every aspect calling for attention in not-yet-identified new discoveries, there are certain givens that can be anticipated. Hence some procedures should already have been worked out and should be ready to go.

3. On-Call teams of technicians. Much of the physical damage to manuscripts is not due to the ravages of time, rats, mildew, and the like, but to peasants with clumsy hands trying to turn fragile pages, or even using manuscripts to light water pipes or cook tea; antiquities dealers throwing away dirty fragments to make the rest look cleaner, and keeping the leaves from breaking apart with the help of Scotch tape; conservators at museums cutting out the leaves one by one with their pocket knives, all without photographic records of how things were before inflicting such damage — to mention only instances familiar from recent manuscript discoveries. The greatest damage is at the very beginning, both in terms of conservation and in terms of persons getting monopolistic control.

There are medical teams that are on call for world-wide emergencies. A French team, "Medecins sans Frontières," "Doctors without Borders," flew within hours to help the Kurdish refugees. A California medical team flew instantly to help earthquake victims in Mexico City a few years ago. In our case too, there could be expert technicians identified in advance who would be ready on a moment's notice to fly to the repository of the next manuscript discovery, to seek to stop the damage that may already be underway and replace it with correct procedures.

Between the two World Wars Hugo Ibscher of the Berlin Papyrus Collection was called upon to provide his expertise as conservator of papyrus all over Europe, from the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris to the Chester Beatty Library then in London; Anton Fackelmann of Vienna played a similar role during the past generation. Steve Emmel, conservator of papyrus at the Beineke Library of Yale University, as well as a leading Coptologist, could perform a similar function today (and, in fact, already has, in the case of the Nag Hammadi codices, in our conservation activities at the Coptic Museum in Cairo, though only after the damage had been done).

The photography of manuscripts is a special science distinct from normal professional photography, since it is a matter of achieving photographs that make legible the maximum amount of text (and of other scientific information). The Semitist Bruce Zuckerman of the University of Southern California and his brother, Kenneth, a skilled photographer, have demonstrated their ability to improve on the legibility of the manuscripts themselves, in Jerusalem and Ammon (and Claremont) with regard to the Dead Sea Scrolls, in Leningrad with regard to a very ancient Massoretic text of the Hebrew scriptures located there, and, this past summer, working with me in Berlin with regard to the hardly legible Manichaean codices of Medinet Madi.

This kind of state-of-the-art competence in highly specialized fields could be identified and enlisted in advance, ready to be sent in on a moment's notice.

The policies worked out by such a planning commission as has been suggested above should have been distributed in writing as a quasi-official policy document of the academic community to the museums and libraries where new manuscript discoveries might be expected to crop up. But an authorized spokesperson for such policies should also be on

call to go promptly to the repository of the new discovery and to seek to negotiate compliance with the approved procedures. For one can count on there being already on hand, by the time the news of the discovery reaches us, persons eager to make their own fortune and/or reputation by such self-seeking and unprofessional procedures as have characterized previous discoveries. Such persons ingratiate themselves with those who control the discovery, and present themselves as representing the scholarly community. The local dealer or museum or library is interested in scholarly recognition and connections, and thus grants favors to the familiar and well-liked scholar who is on the scene, in some cases much to the detriment of the scholarly community at large. There needs to be some effective disinterested spokesperson for the broader scholarly community arriving promptly on the scene, to lobby for what are the real interests of the broader scholarly community and the culture at large. Such diplomats should be part of the on-call staff.

4. Policies for pre-publication accessibility. There is nothing wrong with careful scholars preparing editions with only deliberate speed, even if that means a generation, as in the case of the Jung Codex and the Dead Sea Scrolls. What is however basically wrong with such procedures is when the rest of the scholarly community has had to wait for access until the lucky few have demonstrated their scholarly excellence to the last detail before publishing the *editio princeps* of the text, which then is the first time the rest of us can see the text at all. Modern technology makes this monopolistic procedure obsolete, quite unnecessary, and hence perverse. Part of the agreement to assign a text for publication to a scholar should be the scholar's written agreement to conform to new non-monopolistic procedures.

The monopoly on the Nag Hammadi codices, discovered in 1945, was broken by the publication in 11 volumes of *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, from 1972 to 1978 (all out in less than a decade after getting access to the material through the UNESCO in December 1970), followed by a volume of Introduction in 1984. This is being accompanied by a 15-volume critical edition, appearing at Brill under the series title *The Coptic Gnostic Library* — twelve volumes already in print (1975-1991), and three at the stage of copy-editing. The existence of a facsimile edition prior to the critical edition has been accepted by the publisher Brill as well as by the team members who have been preparing the edition.

Since the English-language team I led got access to the unpublished texts first, we duplicated and circulated our draft transcriptions and translations widely, leading to the formation of teams in East Germany and French Canada (who had been excluded by West

German and French colleagues) to publish German and French editions, both of which began their work with our draft transcriptions and translations at their disposal. There was no monopolistic talk of their having robbed us of our scholarship prior to our publication — we had given it to our colleagues gladly, to help them get started. This spirit of cooperation, rather than competition, much less exclusion, has characterized the ongoing work of the three teams, all of whom have profited greatly from the joint effort, even if in many cases it is nowhere stated just who lit upon a given insight first.

Thus the scholarly community does not have to wait on the English critical edition, but already has access to the text from the facsimile edition, and in some cases in another language's edition, prior to the English edition (which thus in some cases has lost the highly overrated privilege of being the *editio princeps*).

A one-volume preprint of the English translations of all the texts, *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, made the whole discovery promptly available to a more popular audience, which thus did not have to wait for the completion of the critical edition.

As a result of such measures, the public can be grateful for the twelve volumes of *The Coptic Gnostic Library* that have been published rather than being resentful of the three that have not yet been published.

That facsimile edition had a retail price between $ 1,000 and $ 1,500 when published in the 1970s. The price of excellent collotype reproductions such as are used there has more than doubled since then, so that a comparable facsimile edition today would either require a massive subsidy or be far out of reach of individual scholars and even most libraries. But average reproductions of photographs in books have now become quite common, and hardly more expensive than a page of printed text, if one does not insist on the quality of reproduction promised by collotype plates. And a microfiche edition of facsimiles of a comparable discovery could well retail for less than $100. They could be studied on a microfiche reader, or, more practically, one could print from a microfiche reader at a dime a page xerox-quality hard copy in one-to-one size, i.e. the size of the original manuscript itself.

Massive machine-readable databases of ancient texts are already in existence and are being constantly augmented with rather comprehensive inputting projects. One need only refer to the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* directed by Prof. Theodore Brunner at the University of California at Irvine and the comparable project to input Latin literature at the Packard Humanities Institute of silicon valley. In connection with these projects the Coptic text of the Nag Hammadi codices was input at the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity into the Ibycus computer, which was invented for just such purposes by David Packard, Jr. The Coptic text of the Nag Hammadi codices has thus been available to scholars in machine-readable form on request for years prior to the completion of our critical edition. This is something that the team members preparing the critical edition and the publisher Brill have accepted without hesitation. Access to new manuscript discoveries does not have to be held up pending the completion of

the *editiones principes*, if the editors do not wish access to be held up.

5. Practical policies for the editiones principes themselves. We all recognize the moral right of a conscientious and careful scholar who year after year works on a critical edition of a previously unpublished text. It would not be fair to that serious scholar for some facile, fast-moving colleague to look briefly over his shoulder and get into print first with a half-baked edition or just a sensational and often misleading headline, incidentally claiming credit for himself for the discovery. It is the truth of this insight that has established the standard ethos that had led us thus far. This moral position, however, should not be permitted to function as the justification for the very immoral outcome at which we find ourselves today. Exclusive publication rights without cut-off dates have clearly not been successful.

The Egyptian Antiquities Organization, i.e., the umbrella organization for antiquities in the Arab Republic of Egypt, has the policy that an authorized archaeological excavation has seven years of exclusive rights in which to publish what it excavates, after which anyone who wishes can publish those discoveries. Actually, almost all important manuscript discoveries do not come from such authorized archaeological excavations, but rather from illicit peasant digging — and yet the monopolists have been given unending exclusive rights! Of course persons editing discoveries from authorized excavations have sought for themselves such open-ended rights. In Egypt they have negotiated the interpretation that the seven years of exclusive rights do not date from the year of the discovery, but rather from the date of the conclusion of the excavation. Thus if the excavation can be continued year after year for an indefinite period of time, those assigned to publish the discoveries from the early years have in effect no deadline, and the original purpose of the legislation has been frustrated. But the official excavations in the caves around the Dead Sea, led by Père Roland deVaux, to follow up on the illicit discoveries by the local peasants, have long since terminated, before the death of Father deVaux. Any statute of limitations that the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan may have granted for exclusive rights to the discoveries of those authorized excavations would long since have expired. In any case, control passed from Jordan to Israel at the Six Day War. The Israeli Antiquities Authority has no official relation to the excavations.

William Brashear, the American papyrologist of the Egyptian Museum of West Berlin, points out that it has become customary among papyrologists now to consider five years as the duration of an assignment to edit and publish a papyrus. The *Jerusalem Post* recently reported: "Under Israel's new antiquities law, archaeological material can be reassigned if not published

within five years." How can this new ethos be implemented with regard to important manuscript discoveries?

In the future, should a scholar be assigned the scholarly task of preparing an *editio princeps* to the exclusion of other scholars? The invidious distinction made above between the "conscientious and careful scholar" and a "facile, fast-moving colleague," often used to justify such exclusion, may in fact not correspond to reality. The situation could be the very reverse: The scholar with exclusive rights may merely be selfish, perhaps less than careful, and not of the highest quality, whereas the colleague(s) excluded by the exclusive right could be much more deserving of open access. The way the one obtained exclusive rights may have been precisely by being "facile, fast-moving." The rights of the excluded are in any case in principle just as valid as the rights of the included.

An ideal arrangement would be where no exclusive rights need be awarded at all. The normal common sense of dividing the work among colleagues rather than duplicating what others are doing, and the normal courtesy among colleagues, could in most cases lead to a sensible solution. Perhaps the risk of abuse of such a policy would be less than the proven risk of exploiting an award of exclusive rights.

If one were nevertheless to continue the policy of according exclusive publication rights, because of the desire to protect the assigned editor, how could it be done in such a way as to minimize the risk of ending in the quite immoral outcome we have witnessed? A time limit should in any case be put on an assignment. If the text were not published in that period of grace, exclusive rights should not be extended, either to the original editor or to a successor. The turn of the public at large to open access, including the right to publish the text, would have surely come.

In the case of the Dead Sea Scrolls, if such a time limit had been originally envisaged, the period of grace would have expired in the 1950s. To seek to extend exclusive right to these texts to young, tender scholars in the 1990s, on the grounds that there would be now a time limit to such extensions, is utterly indefensible. According to the most recent reports, an effort to this effect has finally been abandoned by the monopolists themselves.

If exclusive rights even for a limited time are awarded for new manuscript discoveries, specific conditions should be imposed on such an exclusive assignment: The editor and publisher would agree that the first tasks, to be achieved in a specified time, such as a year, would be in the nature of first aid, to preserve the material from loss or damage and to give prompt preliminary access to the academic community.

The conservation should come first, with photographic documentation of each stage, and without delay. One should then prepare a photographic file of the restored pages, to be published promptly and inexpensively, and a preliminary transcription, to be published promptly in machine-readable form.

Only if the preliminary photography and transcription were thus published on schedule, would the assignment of the editio princeps in hard copy to the assigned scholar be confirmed. Incidentally, this would provide a rapid check as to whether the assigned scholar would work energetically and not develop monopolistic tendencies — if one did not work the first year for us all, one would not be awarded the next phase of the assignment, which would instead be awarded to a more reliable scholar. But if the first phase is completed successfully, the editor would then be given, e.g., four further years to publish a critical edition, during which period of time users of the photographic and machine-readable publications might be requested as a courtesy to refrain from publishing a critical edition, though they would be encouraged to publish studies of the texts and to prepare their own critical edition to appear after the designated time period had elapsed. It might well take about that much time to prepare a careful edition in any case. Then at the end of the five year period other scholars would be encouraged to publish their own critical editions as they see fit, irrespective of whether the *editio princeps* had appeared or not. This would be a major incentive for the scholar with the assignment to stay on schedule.

The moral claim of the scholar assigned to prepare the *editio princeps* would have been met by the scholarly community in according the five year period of grace. The scholar for his or her part would assume the moral obligation to give priority to this editing assignment, rather than suspending that work from time to time to do other scholarly tasks that might emerge in one's career, not to speak of the diversions that can distract one from scholarship as a whole. If the scholar has not published within that time, the scholarly community has no moral obligation to extend exclusive rights beyond a five year period, though of course the scholar who had made a beginning would be given every other encouragement to complete the task. The moral obligation would rather be to honor the commitment to the rest of the scholarly community that they would be free to publish their editions after the five years have passed.

The initial assignment to a scholar to be editor should be explicit and firm as to the limitation of exclusive

rights to one plus four years to publish a critical edition and should limit the size of the assignment to what a scholar could be expected to publish during that time. If the new manuscript discovery is too extensive for one person to publish in five years, the material should be divided among a sufficient number of scholars that each could reasonably be expected to complete one's assignment within the time frame envisaged; or, if the scholarly resources are too limited, not all the material should be assigned the first round.

One of the problems with the editing of the Dead Sea Scrolls is that the very extensive fragmentary discoveries from Cave 4 simply swamped the few editors who controlled the material. The material should have been assigned *seriatim*, with one unit of material assigned only when the previous assignment was completed, and a much larger team should have been trained that could have had a reasonable expectation of completing the publication within a limited time. The small group that assigned everything to themselves reasoned that there were not qualified scholars other than themselves. In the Nag Hammadi case, this argument was used by the French to maintain the monopoly in the hands of a few, with the actual result that this prevented even younger French scholars outside the charmed circle from equipping themselves to edit the texts. The Americans, the Germans, and the French Canadians, who broke that monopoly and gave open access to the texts, now each have more Coptologists qualified to work on these texts that there are in all of France.

The monopolistic procedure often takes the form of insisting that the first publication of the text itself be bound into the same volume with the monopolist's follow-up scholarship, with the result that the rest of us must wait on their scholarship to be completed. The *editio princeps* should be clearly defined as not including any of the editor's own scholarship that goes beyond the minimum needed for the edition itself. That is to say, learned history-of-religions parallels and commentaries or notes on the meaning of the text should be reserved for a separate follow-up volume, rather than the critical edition itself being held up so as to include this learnedness of the editor.

The purpose of the inclusion of such extensive notes in the case of the Nag Hammadi codices was unfortunately to insure that the editors' detailed scholarship would be forced upon anyone who wants to get access to the text. The effect was endless delay. The official edition of *The Gospel of Thomas* never appeared, since the main editor, Henri-Charles Puech, died thirty years after the edition was begun, with his commentary still incomplete. How fortunate we are that a pre-print consisting only of transcription and translation was made promptly (once a preliminary facsimile edition of a few tractates had forced his hand by breaking the monopoly on this text). The publication of the Jung Codex from the Nag Hammadi discovery was dragged out over a generation because the same great scholar, who controlled that project as well, was himself not a Coptologist capable of translating the text,

but a patristics scholar well qualified to comment on the text. He was able to block all efforts to separate the two tasks, lest his own contribution not be included in the *editio princeps*.

Perhaps foundations and other funding bodies could be enlisted in the enterprise, to see to it that the lucrative grants, no doubt an important if unmentioned fringe benefit of being inside a monopoly, are restricted to those who conform to the practises that are to the advantage of the whole academic community. In the area of field archaeology one has succeeded in getting most funding bodies to stipulate the observance of modern archaeological techniques, and hence the excavations, dependent on such funding, have had to conform. One may also think of the efforts currently underway in the American Schools of Oriental Research to prevent field archaeologists from returning to dig (and destroy) year after year if they do not publish (and to this extent preserve) their results. (Incidentally, Father deVaux died without having published the results of the excavations at Khirbet Qumran that he led.) A concerted effort could in a brief amount of time gain acceptance for a comparable set of standards among funding and sponsoring bodies for the publication of manuscript discoveries.

In the case of the Nag Hammadi codices, the equivalent to Arnerica's National Endowment for the Humanities in the Netherlands funded photography on the condition that prints be deposited at a number of Dutch scholarly centers available to the scholarly public. The ways in which those inside the monopoly avoided honoring this commitment, which they had had to sign off on in order to get their funding, is among the least pleasant Dutch reading in the Nag Hammadi Archives of the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity. Incidentally, one of the realities of the modern technological world that we all should realize, at least since Watergate, is that it is no longer possible realistically to expect embarrassing aspects of one's activity to be kept permanently out of public scrutiny. The truth will out.

Of course the defense of that long drawn-out procedure is that, in the collection of the parallels and the interpretation of the text, the filling of lacunae in the transcription and the translation itself are improved. But meanwhile the filling in of the lacunae and the improvement of the translation by the rest of the scholarly community is completely blocked. The *editio princeps* must be accepted for what it is or should be: a first transcription and translation intended to put the text promptly before the scholarly community so that it can be followed up by the whole community's conjectural restorations and translational efforts and interpretations, from which a definitive edition can result.

6. The elimination of the conflict of interest inherent in the same persons administering and editing. All of such discussions of procedure presuppose one basic

change in the way things are organized: the scholars who do the editing should not be the same persons as the administrators who assign and monitor publication rights.

In the case of the Nag Hammadi codices, the Directeur of the Service des Antiquités was a Frenchman who had taught in Paris. The Copt who was the Directeur of the Musée Copte in Old Cairo had been trained in France as his pupil. A female classmate, who had been courted by the Copt when they studied together in Paris, married another French Coptologist; the young married couple then had no difficulty in establishing close working relations with the Directeur of the Musée Copte to co-edit the material there, under the patronage of the above-named monopolist at the École pratique des Hautes-études in Paris. The French establishment thus controlled the assignments, some of which are still not published, and never will be.

The deposition of King Farouk led to the naming of a Copt as the head of the Department of Antiquities, and produced a new Director for the Coptic Museum. He had studied in Berlin; it is no coincidence that the old assignments to the French were not fully honored, and that new assignments were only made to German scholars from Berlin (with the condition that the Museum Director's name be put on the title page of the publications as co-author). Some of these assignments made a generation ago are still not published, and never will be. But since both the French and the German monopolies have been broken, it makes no difference.

In the case of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Board of Trustees of the Palestine Museum in Jerusalem, which had obtained the scroll fragments, assigned them to young and promising scholars from the nationalities represented on the board. With the nationalization of the Palestine Museum by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and then shortly thereafter the Israeli conquest of East Jerusalem, where the Museum is located, that Board of Trustees ceased to exist. There followed an extended period of time when there was hardly even as much as titular supervision by a competent disinterested body set over the work of the editors. For the Department of Antiquities in Israel has only recently appointed a supervisory committee to administer the committee of editors.

There was about a generation during which there was no effective administrative control other than the self-control by the editors themselves. How could they enforce deadlines on each other when they had not met their own deadlines? Just as each must have said to the others that one would soon be publishing one's overdue assignments, each would have had to take at face value such hollow assurances from the others. How could one pressure the others to divide up their all-too-massive assignments, without raising the question as to whether one's own all-too-massive assignment should not be broken up and reassigned to several persons? It was obviously a circular, self-serving procedure that emerged as the editorial practise. No one had an interest in standing up to the others.

No doubt the owner of a manuscript or the owner's official representative, when the manuscript belongs to a state, wishes to retain ultimate control over the publication. But the

good offices of the scholarly community, through its on-call teams of technicians and diplomats, ultimately through its Policy Commission on Future Manuscript Discoveries, might well succeed in putting a certain healthy distance between the owner or representative of the owner and the scholars to whom editing assignments have been made.

When UNESCO first got involved in the Nag Hammadi codices, it sent a representative to the Coptic Museum to meet with those already there to prepare an inventory and made recommendations. As a result of the report that was produced, it became clear that the German-trained Director of the Museum and the German scholar working at the Museum had in fact coordinated their efforts to block access by UNESCO and obscure from UNESCO their *de facto* monopoly. This almost led UNESCO to withdraw completely, even before it actually got involved. But when the UNESCO Committee was finally appointed to plan the facsimile edition, and its Technical Sub-Committee authorized to work in the Museum to prepare that edition (and incidentally to advise the Museum staff), no such sweet deals were made. This was a significant aspect in achieving the final outcome of free access. For example, when I advised the Director to let any Coptologist in the world come and study the texts when they were brought out of sake-keeping and made accessible to the Technical Sub-Committee (there was officially a state of war), he was as willing to go along with that open policy as his predecessor and mentor had been a decade earlier to go along with the restrictive policy of his German friend who, to judge by the assignments, must have advised excluding others than Germans.

Such proposals as these — the creation of a new ethos for *editiones principes*, a Policy Commission on Future Manuscript Discoveries, on-call teams of technicians and diplomats, policies for pre-publication accessibility, policies for the *editiones principes* themselves, the elimination of the conflict of interest inherent in the same persons administering and editing — should be worked out in detail and adopted by representative scholarly bodies, to be in place before new manuscript discoveries emerge to be mismanaged as in the past.

When one considers the massive efforts undertaken in our times to rationalize the scholarly enterprise, in terms of international organizations and congresses, library science, machine-readable access, and the like, there is no reason why the processing of manuscript discoveries need remain a jungle. Ultimately, it is our responsibility, and we should individually and collectively assume responsibility for such a better future.

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