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The Copts in context

The threats facing the survival of cultural heritage across the near east and north Africa have been brought into sharp focus with the events surrounding the 'Arab Spring' and the subsequent violence that ensued in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Syria over the past decade. These events can be framed in the much wider discourse of cultural heritage in peril across the world with a great number of sites facing uncertainty and destruction in recent times from a wide array of sources, including uprisings, wars, poorly planned government- run construction projects, accidents and natural disasters. To highlight the amount of heritage sites currently under threat, UNESCO have inscribed 53 of its properties onto its List of World Heritage in Danger (UNESCO 2020); the threat to cultural heritage survival is still a sadly topical subject.

The dangers facing cultural heritage is a topical theme at present, recent scholarship on the subject has focused upon the impact the loss of cultural heritage can have on society, particularly to a minority or indigenous population (Loosley Leeming 2020; Nicholas and Smith 2020). It is perhaps the loss of cultural heritage through violent actions that captures the media attention, and whilst this was certainly focused on the cultural atrocities caused in the Middle East by Islamic State and the damage caused during the civil disobedience across the region, other examples had very little coverage and went by relatively unnoticed; take the example of the civil war in Yemen.

The civil war in Yemen has led to the bombing of countless cultural heritage sites, including the historic city of Zarib that contained hundreds of medieval mosques and churches, bombing attempts at the Marib Dam (which is mentioned in the Qu'ran), and the ancient site of Sirwah (Khalidi 2017: 736). The situation in Afghanistan has had slightly more coverage, particularly highlighting the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas, but other cultural heritage destruction such as that of the partial collapse of the Citadel, (known as the Old Ghaznain Fort in Ghazni) which has partially collapsed (Andalib 2019) and has received little media attention. Of course, the turmoil in the Middle Eastern region is not the first-time cultural heritage has been purposefully targeted or become a casualty of war, the civil war in Bosnia during the late 1990's was described by some as the greatest destruction of heritage since World War II (Walasek 2020:225), with hundreds Islamic structures purposefully destroyed (Preljevic 2017). The fear that cultural heritage is being lost through violent actions at an alarming rate across the world was heightened recently when a worrying statement was released by President Donald Trump in response to the increasing tension between the USA and Iran, he detailed how cultural heritage sites could be targeted by US military strikes in the future (Twitter 2019). This was denounced by UNESCO and ICOMOS (2020) in a letter, describing any purposeful act of destruction of a cultural heritage site to be an illegal act contravening the 1949 Geneva Convention. These examples highlight how in times of conflict, heritage often becomes a target for destruction, whether it is purposefully targeted or becomes an accidental casualty.

The destruction caused to historic monuments and sites through violent means gets the lion share of the media spotlight, but other negative actions in recent years have also been detrimental to heritage protection. In Turkey, a project to construct the Birecik and Ilisu hydraulic dams on the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, has resulted in the flooding of hundreds of archaeological sites across the region (Ozdogan 2013: 2), resulting in an irretrievable loss of Prehistoric and medieval sites not previously recorded. In the United States, the current administration has reduced the size of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Parks in Utah, allowing the mining of burial lands and sacred places of the Hopi and Navajo indigenous tribes (Nicholas and Smith 2020: 139). On the other side of the world, China's aggressive development in the past 20 years has led to the loss of an estimated 30,000 heritage sites across the country (Guardian 2009).

Whilst government projects and destruction caused during civil disobedience have placed heritage in peril, sometimes unforeseen accidents have caused heritage to be lost. The damage caused to the medieval cathedral of Notre Dame by fire in late 2019, was believed to have been caused by an accident by one of the conservators working to preserve the cathedral, and has led to the irretrievable loss to the heritage community, and indeed the world. On the other side of the planet and equally as damaging to cultural heritage and indeed intangible heritage to indigenous tribes in Australia are the widespread bushfires; these have raged on for months in late 2019 and early 2020 and have undoubtably damaged or completely destroyed Native Australian heritage sites (Pickrell 2020). Less publicised but equally as devastating was the fire at the Rio de Janeiro National Museum in Brazil. 20,000 artefacts were damaged or destroyed in the blaze (Deutsche Welle 2018).

World heritage clearly faces many challenges to its survival, but the Middle East has undergone a tumultuous period of upheaval in the past decade that has placed several heritage sites in harm's way, with the media dubbed 'Arab Spring' resulting in the government and leaders of Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Syria to be ousted and led to civil disobedience and a breakdown of law and order. The subsequent violence that ensued in these countries perhaps brought

Fig. 1.1. Looting Pits at El Hibeh (Redmount 2013: 41) Reproduced by permission of The American Research Centre in Egypt.

home the stark message that cultural heritage is never truly safe and sometimes unforeseen events can leave heritage suddenly in a perilous condition. Sadly, Christian heritage in peril (monuments, churches, burial places, monasteries, visual culture, etc) is a common theme in the Middle East in recent times and has been particularly overt in Syria and Iraq, where political events usurped the previous status quo (where Muslims and Christians were able to live in relative harmony). A description of the events in the Middle East and Egypt since 2011 is needed to frame the current debates within heritage protection later in the book and to underscore why protection of heritage is so important; political events can change rapidly and leave cultural heritage in a volatile and precarious state.

Into the power vacuum left by the Syrian civil war, Islamic fundamentalist groups such as Islamic State began to eradicate any religious system that was not Islamic (and even sometimes when it was a different branch of Islam such as Sufism) (Parcak 2015; Harmansah 2015; Casana 2015) and began to obliterate any heritage sites they deemed to be un-Islamic. The Pagan Roman Temple of Bel in the city of Palymra, Syria, was one of the first casualties; the temple was built in the 2nd-century CE and had survived nearly 1800 years before it was levelled with explosives in late August 2015 (Guardian 2015a). This followed the execution and public display of the body of Palmyra's chief curator Khaled al-Asaad (Guardian 2015b). In August-September 2014, the Monastery of St Elijah in Mosul, Iraq was razed to the ground. The destruction of this site is important as it was the oldest Christian monastery in Iraq with a construction date of 590CE. Its destruction was only confirmed by satellite photography in January 2016, when it was confirmed nothing of the structure has survived (The Guardian 2016b). In early August 2015, the monastery of Mar Elian near to the town of Quaryatain in Syria, was damaged by shelling and then levelled by extremists (Finneran and Loosley 2005; The Independent 2015a). Commenting on the destruction, Niall Finneran, who excavated at the site in 2003 and 2004, has reviewed the pictures of the complex and they suggest that the complex has been razed by a bulldozer; the saints tomb has been destroyed, the monastery has been totally obliterated and is beyond saving (N Finneran 2016: Pers. Comm). Finally, the Syriac-Catholic Monastery of Mar Behnam 20 miles south-east of Mosul was destroyed in 2014 (The Independent 2015b), while in Libya, many Sufi (a form of Islam) shrines were destroyed (Daily Mail 2015). Whilst the purposeful destruction of cultural heritage sites was occurring within these countries during the period of unrest, the lack of security afforded at heritage sites resulted in an increase of looting portable antiquities.

One of the largest problems that was borne out of the displacement of local communities in Syria and Iraq and the lack of a functioning government (and perhaps more importantly a lack of social order and proper policing), is looting at archaeological and heritage sites across the Arab world. If we examine Iraq, a number of authors (MacGinty 2004; McC Adams 2005) have detailed how, in the aftermath of the fall of Iraq and Saddam Hussein, that mob looting occurred; it should be noted that their discourse focuses upon mass looting and not solely looting of antiquities although this is discussed, but they do provide important background context to the problem in Iraq that shows it not to be a solely stolen antiquities

problem, but a much larger societal issue, particularly at the start of the fall of Saddam's regime. While the looting of shops and museums has ceased with the re-emergence of governmental control, looting of antiquities from archaeological sites has continued. Elizabeth Stone has charted which sites have been looted in Iraq since 2003 and it appears that High Mesopotamian and Ur III have been most consistently plundered (Stone 2015: 180). Part of this problem can be blamed upon the remoteness of these archaeological sites where thieves are highly unlikely to be caught (Stone 2015: 183), and a lack of heritage inspectors to keep the illicit trade in check (McC Adams 2005: 61). The destruction of historical monuments by ISIL for ideological reasons in northern Iraq is also a depressingly topical theme (Bott 2015).

Iraq is not alone in facing this problem, since the civil war began in 2011, looting had occurred at many historic sites. Jesse Casana used satellite imaging to document and collate data to determine the extent of looting within Syria prior to the war and in the ensuing four years. He concluded that prior to the war, minor looting was a common occurrence (Casana 2015: 147), citing archaeological sites such as the multi period Roman site of Dura Europa and the Roman-Early Islamic site of Resafa that displayed signs of small looting holes dating back to at least 2000 (Casana 2015: 147). He concluded from his study that since Islamic State took hold of large parts of Syria, looting increased exponentially with the breakdown of law (Casana 2015: 147). Indeed, the reasons why locals commit illicit looting of archaeological and heritage sites are complex with many looters regarding their actions justifiable and legitimate (MacGinty 2004: 859), for example, members of a poor community needing to feed their children and loved ones may resort to it as a means of survival for instance; these are wholly understandable reasons. Often however, there needs to be what Roger MacGinty calls 'enabling conditions'; these are the availability of the looters and lootable sites, and the absence of restraint and a permissible socio-cultural environment to perform the actions (MacGinty 2004: 861). He also concluded that a key factor in the availability of the looters, was a presence of an organised militant group either state or non-state sponsored (MacGinty 2004: 863). These enabling conditions were met in both Iraq and Syria during the period, with the breakdown of law and order, allowing members of society to illicitly remove antiquities and sell them on the black market. These examples show that heritage across the world is at risk from a multitude of different causes and the Middle East, in particular, has seen a prolonged period of upheaval that caused significant damage and eradication to many cultural heritage monuments, the region is only really now stabilising with the defeat of Islamic State and a return to relative normalcy. So, the question now posed is: Where does Egypt fit into the debate over cultural heritage protection? To answer this question, the events of the past decade must be summarised.

The civil unrest began in January 2011 with anti-government supporters demonstrating against President Hosni Mubarak; buoyed and inspired by the successful uprising in nearby Tunisia, they forced the dissolution of parliament and military martial law was enacted upon the country (Balata 2011: 61), disrupting what some commentators have called the authoritarian status quo (Brynen, Moore, Salloukh and Zahar 2013:1). During the events of 2011 there had been a break down in law and order with little police or army presence to protect not only the citizens of Egypt, but also the many historic buildings, monuments and archaeological sites across the country (Pers. Obs). During this period of unrest, a number of heritage institutions and museums were attacked, burnt and looted, yet in this time of crisis many Egyptians -regardless of faith or religion- stood up and protected their heritage when needed and was typified when a human shield of both Muslims and Christians was erected outside the Grand Egyptian Museum to protect it from looters and vandals seeking to take advantage of the lack of security in place.

During the chaos that followed from the dissolution of Parliament, mass looting of sites and museums became commonplace, Sarah Parcak succinctly summed up the situation by stating that 'as stability decreased, looting apparently increased' (Parcak 2015: 196). One of the first heritage sites to be ransacked was the Egyptian Museum in central Cairo. Eighteen items were stolen and over 70 other objects were knocked over and destroyed (BBC 2011). The ransacking was not limited to the capital with other museums being looted; Mallawi's (Minya Governate) museum, situated 190 miles (305 km) south of Cairo, was ransacked by thieves in a more organised manner than that of the Egyptian museum, with 1041 objects stolen and 48 others destroyed (National Geographic 2013) . UNESCO reported that 589 objects have been recovered, but many more are still missing and are likely to never be recovered (UNESCO 2013a). Finally, the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo was damaged by a bomb blast in January 2014 (BBC 2014). Many of the objects inside were destroyed and the building was severely damaged. The lack of finesse and brute force of the looting at these museums indicates crimes of opportunity, but also a distinct lack of respect for cultural heritage, be it Islamic, Coptic, or pharaonic.

Egypt in 2020, is a stable, democratic country once again, and the issues surrounding the protection of antiquities are not as critical as they might have been in the first half of the decade, but there are still relevant issues to all heritage sites in Egypt, not only Christian; the issues facing worldwide cultural heritage sites should be explored within the Egyptian heritage sphere. With the defeat of Islamic State, the civil war in Syria ending, and Egypt enjoying a stable government and a return to the status quo for the past four years, the questions regarding heritage protection have shifted somewhat. If this book had been written at the beginning of the decade the questions posed would have been focused upon the protection of Christian antiquities and heritage sites from the breakdown in law and order, Islamic fundamentalists, and how to protect heritage in times of war and civil disobedience. These questions,

whilst not fully dismissed, are no longer as relevant as they might have once been. Instead, the questions posed should reflect a much more stable Egypt. In this regard, the questions should focus upon how the current situation is in Egypt; are Christian sites and monuments now protected and monitored by the government? Is there still a threat from Islamic militants upon the built heritage, and more broadly to the Coptic community? And finally, is the Christian heritage only at threat from external forces or are the Copts themselves harming it somehow?

So, having introduced the recent history of Egypt and the tumultuous events of the past decade, this book aims to examine a single segment of this heritage at risk: the heritage sites of the Coptic Christians, the legacy of a historically persecuted minority and one of great antiquity, diversity and meaning; the Coptic Christian community of Egypt is in the words of Niall Finneran (2002: 62), a community of 'great survivors' and one that Stephen Davis has characterised as historically promoting itself as a Church of martyrdom (Davis 2004: 36) . This is an understudied and poorly known heritage, the material culture of an ancient Christian community which once was a dominant force in Egypt, and now faces both internalised and existential threats. This book aims to answer these questions and really delve into how heritage across Egypt is treated, what the big issues are in relation to heritage protection and critically assess the problems that Coptic heritage sites face using three case studies as examples. In order to understand something of its antiquity and cultural diversity, some brief historical context needs to be provided.

The Copts of Egypt: a brief historical context

The Coptic Church has a rich history dating back to the first centuries CE, and this history has been a battle for survival. Prior to Christianity becoming the state religion, Christians suffered under several particularly brutal Roman Emperors, from the Diocletian-era persecution and widespread martyrdom, through Greek Orthodox/ Byzantine domination and then under successive Islamic regimes. The term Copt is derived from the word 'Aegyptos' (Du Bourguet 1971: 9) and originally the term referred to Orthodox Christians, but after the Muslim conquest it was applied to all Christians within Egypt; the term 'Coptic' is therefore an ethnic label (Finneran 2009: 7).[1] Historically it has been an untapped resource into a field often overlooked by scholars of history and archaeology, who, after the more prestigious sites and artefacts of the well-known pharaonic and Muslim periods have ignored a very relevant piece of Egypt's history.

Christianity in Egypt is reported to have been introduced by St Mark in circa 30CE (Kamil 1987: 33) and is still widely practised today; the Coptic Pope still sits as the head of the See of St Mark (Capuani 2002: 45). Christianity had spread from Jerusalem into the neighbouring provinces of the Roman Empire, but Christians living between the 1st and 3rd-centuries in Egypt did not fare well. Persecutions were prolonged and sustained; they lasted between months and sometimes years at a time and many thousands died for their beliefs before Constantine's edict of toleration in 313CE. Some of the first persecutions were enacted under the reign of Septimus Severus (193-211CE), although widespread persecutions did not occur until the Emperor Decius' reign (249-251CE). The ancient historian Eusebius of Caesarea (260/5-3340CE) writing in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* describes the torture and imprisonment of Christians during this period (HE, IV.4I.9-13) and this continued under the rule of Valerian (253-260CE) (Watterson 1988: 24). It was Valerian's son Gallenius (260-268CE) who revoked the edict of persecution and gave back the churches which were seized (Haas 1983).

Yet, this was not to be the worst of the persecutions; this was to be during the reign of Diocletian in 303CE. Primary evidence comes in the form of Eusebius once again, who records the first edict against the Christians ordering the razing of churches (HE, VIII.2.4-5). Other sources such as letters from four Egyptian bishops to Melitius of Lycopolis discuss the imprisonments and trials against Christians during this period (*Ecclesiae Occidentalis* I, p634-5) and show how widespread the persecutions were. The era was considered particularly savage by the Copts and they have now come to be known by the Coptic Christians as 'The era of martyrs' (Capuani 2002: 9). There are debates between scholars of this period who argue over the voracity of the persecutions. The Egyptian Coptologist Gawdat Gabra offers a conservative estimate at between 2500 and 3000 deaths (Gabra 2007: 15) while Montague Fowler takes a more face-value approach and estimates the death rate at 14,400 Christians (1901: 19). Other scholars (eg, Davies; 1952: 13) play down the persecutions as a whole and say that it was a very small part of the first three centuries. It is certain that persecution was a part of daily life for Christians and it was this background of sporadic, but intense oppression from which the Coptic Church was born. Indeed, Diocletian's oppression was so bloody the Coptic calendar begins with the year Diocletian came to power; it is known as the Year of the Martyrs (284 CE) (Papaconstantinou 2006: 65).

It is not unsurprising that after Emperor Constantine's edict of toleration in 312CE,[2] the church began to flourish under

[1] It must be made clear that the Coptic Orthodox Church is an anti or non-Chalcedonian church. The Council of Chalcedon in 451CE resulted in a permanent schism between the eastern and western churches. The Coptic Church along with the Eritrean, Armenian, Ethiopian and Syrian churches believed in monophysitism, or the one nature of Christ; this was against the ruling of the Council of Chalcedon which dictated that there were two natures of Christ (diophysite); the Roman Catholic Church and Byzantine rite churches in particular follows the ruling. This thesis is not a study in theology and so this is the limit as to how far the debate on the schism will go. For further reading see Millar 2008. For the sake of brevity, it is important to note that these Oriental Orthodox Churches, found in north-eastern Africa, the middle east and in southern India have traditionally been seen as apart from mainstream Christian communities

[2] The Edict of Milan was a treaty forged in 313CE by the Western Emperor Constantine I and the ruler of the East, Licinius. They agreed to

the new patriarchs; their new found freedom allowed them to debate openly about their faith; this can be seen within not only the writings of the ancient fathers but also in the art and architecture of the early period. Alexandria in this age was the centre of theological learning and debate, with the Catchetical school (a school of theologians and priests), opening in c. 180CE (Walters 1974: 4). To begin with, it consisted of predominantly wealthy Greeks (Du Bourguet 1977: 22) and included in its members the 'father of theology' Origen (Meinardus 1992: 34), who wrote *De Principiis* and a number of other non-surviving theological works; it is unfortunate as Stephen Davis points out, that much of the first few centuries of the formation of Christianity is shrouded in mystery with a lack of primary sources (Davis 2004: 16), and indeed the loss of many theological works. These early fathers paved the way for the Coptic church to grow and become more involved in future theological debates on the nature of Christ, seen as the Councils of Nicea (325CE), Ephesus (431CE) and Chalcedon (451CE).

The goals of these councils were to discuss various doctrines on the nature of Christ; often ideas were put forward and challenged, and a number of heresies and divisions between the bishops became apparent. The Council of Nicea in 325CE was the first time all the bishops had gathered to talk through the differences they believed were inherent in Christianity, this included schisms owing to Arianism (the belief that Jesus was not God, but mortal), the first of many heresies. Arius was subsequently banished by Emperor Theodosius (Cannuyer 2001: 31) at the council of Nicea for his beliefs. The main focus of the Council of Ephesus 431CE was the Nestorian heresy; Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople believed that Jesus and God were two separate entities and refused to call Mary '*Theotokos*', meaning Mother of God (Cannuyer 2001: 42-3). It ended with Patriarch of Alexandria, Cyril excommunicating him and banishing him to near Antioch (Fowler 1901: 36). He was banished for 55 years according to Al Maqrizi and died in 450CE (Maqrizi 1873: 56). It has been suggested that after the Council of Nicea, the patriarch of Alexandria believed the Christians of the world sympathised with their beliefs and valued their knowledge and genius (Tagher 1998: 2).

It was at the council of Chalcedon, however, that caused the schism from which the Coptic Church would never rejoin the Byzantine church, the Melkites (Byzantine-rite Christians) in Egypt, however, still accepted Byzantine authority (Meinardus 1992: 6). Emperors Zeno (425-491CE) and Heraclius (610-641CE) both sought to reunite the divided Christian kingdom via their policies of *Henotikon* and *Ectheos* respectively (Tagher 1998: 2). These both failed to reunite the warring bishops of Christianity and led to the Coptic Iconoclasts to break away from the Byzantine church and its doctrines. This division is still seen in Egypt with Melkite, Eastern Orthodox, Catholic (Uniate; see below) and Coptic churches and monasteries acting independent from one another; for example, the Monastery of St Catherine in Sinai is an autonomous Eastern Orthodox monastery (Kamil 1991: 1) completely separate from the Copts. In addition, there are the Coptic Uniates; these are a small number of Copts (circa 4000) who are in communion with Rome but retain the Coptic liturgies (Armanios 2011: 120). So, the history of the Coptic Church is seen very much as being written, from an 'Orthodox' viewpoint, in terms of being 'heretical'. This theological narrative has very much set up the study of the Coptic Church, and in particular, its material culture, as being a study of the exotic, the foreign, almost the 'outsider', something that is explored later in this chapter. It has existed on the margins of European Christendom, and this liminal position has framed the study of its rich material culture and heritage.

A large proportion of this material culture focuses not upon the theological nature of Christ, but rather the evidence left behind by early monks who formed early monastic communities. One of the earliest accounts of ascetic monasticism (although the account makes clear he was not the first) is the *Vita Antoni* by Athanasius of Alexandria, written in c. 360CE; the structure of the book focuses upon St Antony's struggles against temptation and the Devil (who primarily takes the forms of animals), but it also provides some illumination on the lifestyle of the ascetic hermit; at one point Antony finds an abandoned barracks, making his life there for twenty years, receiving occasional visitors (*Life of Antony*. 12-13). The archaeological evidence supports this lifestyle, with archaeological excavation in the Scetis (Wadi Natrun) revealing that monasteries were both anchoritic and semi-anchoritic, with monks living together in bands of up to 40 (Gabra 2002; 26-7). The churches and monastic buildings at Kellia in the Wadi Natrun are some of the earliest recorded; Kellia is a large hermitage site 17km west of Nitria (Watterson 1988; 72) and it is thought to have been created by monks wanting a more ascetic life than offered by the quickly growing hermitage site in the Scetis (Kamil 1987: 126 and Watterson 1988: 72). Some scholars have speculated that monastic communities sprung up and became so popular as they represented their own separate hierarchy away from the mainstay of the Church (Davis 2004: 46), offering a freedom from control of the church authority. Archaeological evidence certainly underpins and supports Stephen Davis' point about the popularity of monasticism during the early years of the church; Kellia was first excavated by Archaeologist Antoine Guillaumont in 1964 and then a larger joint Franco-Swiss excavation in 1965 under the direction of Rudolph Kasser (Meinardus 1999; 154). These excavations revealed 1600 hermitages and a number of smaller churches; most importantly they offered a glimpse into the evolution of the small one roomed churches into modest sized two aisled basilicas.

allow the veneration of any deity whoever it may be, and for all churches and lands previously confiscated by the Empire to be given back to the Christians. We know of the edict owing to a surviving rescript preserved by the Christian author Lactantius in Latin and a Greek translation by Eusebius in his book Ecclesiastical History. For a broader analysis on the Edict see Carotenuto 2002.

Fig. 1.2. The Monastic Cells at Kellia (Reproduced with the permission of Metropolitan Seraphim of Glastonbury, Library and Archives of the British Orthodox Church).

The evolution of monasticism from ascetic (solitary) to Pachomian and Antonian can be traced in the archaeology at Kellia and Nitria, but also at the Red Sea Monasteries. St Pachome (292-346CE) is often credited as the first person to create community-based worship (Walters 1974: 3) with his first community set up at Tabennisi, Upper Egypt. The *Rule of St Pachomius* was translated by St Jerome in the early 5th-century, which meant that he gained, what James Goehring notes, as pre-eminence (Goehring 1999: 26), with many monks flocking to his newly founded monasteries. These were settlements where groups of monks lived and worshipped together rather than living a solitary life in a cave. It would make sense that as ascetic hermits turned to Pachomian lifestyles they would build structures to suit their group needs such as a refectory and a mill.

The Muslim conquest of Egypt in 641CE wrestled control away from the Christian Byzantine Empire and placed the Coptic population under subjugation, yet, it would be unfair to paint the initial Muslim conquerors as completely intolerant of the Copts. As Pierre Du Bourguet states, there was a 'relatively favourable atmosphere' (1971: 161) between the two peoples in these early centuries until the rule of the Fatimid Dynasty (969-1171). During this period, and indeed throughout the subsequent centuries of Islamic rule, the Copts retained positions of administration previously held during Byzantine rule, in what today would be considered the civil service. Jacques Tagher believes that the Muslims knew very little about the act of governance in these early years (1998: 36), and retaining the Byzantine structure of administration that was tended to by the incumbent Copts (who understood how to govern Egypt) (Du Bourguet 1971: 28) was a practical move. The Copts, although treated generally with respect, still faced caveats to the Muslim tolerance. For instance, in the 8th-century they were forced to wear distinctive coloured clothes (Du Bourguet 1971: 29), and they were taxed *Jizya*, a yearly tax upon *dhimmis* (non-Muslim subjects). By c. 750CE, the *Jizya* poll tax had caused a mass conversion to Islam (Mikhail 2012: 111); this obviously had a massive impact upon the Coptic Church's coffers and its ability to sustain the upkeep of churches and monasteries.

This minimalist approach by the early Muslim conquerors, as it has been termed (Mikhail 2012: 110), allowed the Copts to rebuild their churches and consolidate their patrimony. It was during this period that some of the earliest surviving medieval churches were constructed. Recent archaeological excavations within the Roman fortress of Babylon have concluded that the initial foundations of Abu Sarga and Sitt Barbara date to the late 7th to the early 8th-century, shortly after the Arab conquest. This certainly indicates that the Copts could continue practicing their faith during this period and relations were semi-congruent for this to occur. Mark Swanson iterates that external forces dealt a blow to the fortunes of the Copts during the Abbasid reign (2010: 31), with a civil war over the continuation of the Caliph line leading to Bedouin tribesmen attacking monasteries in the Scetis region, killing and enslaving monks (Swanson 2010: 32); Lois Farag believes the early reign proved fairly tolerant (Farag 2013), although

Fig. 1.3. Wadi Narun Desert with the monastic site of Kellia in the background (Reproduced with the permission of Metropolitan Seraphim of Glastonbury, Library).

this toleration did not last and throughout the Fatimid period of Egypt persecution, murder and destruction of churches and monasteries was common. Historical accounts certainly paint a more tumultuous period with several instances of persecution and violence recorded through historical accounts. During the reign of Patriarch Christodoulos (1047-1077CE) closure of the Christian churches was ordered and a demand of 10,000 dinars from all Christians (HPCE 2.3: 270-71). The Islamic Chronicler al Maqrizi recorded that the Fatimid Caliph al Hakim razed a large amount of churches (Maqrizi 1813: 89), with Otto Meinardius placing the amount of churches destroyed around 3000 between 1000-1017CE (Meinardius 1992: 8). Scholars suggest that this period was particularly difficult for Christians (Cannuyer 2000: 32), with a great deal of conversions to Islam to escape persecution.

The History of the Patriarchs[3] records a large group of Muslims attacking the church of al Mu'allaqa in Cairo during Patriarch Matthew the First's reign (1378-1409CE; HPCE 3.3: 290-91). A general decline in the amount of clergy within Egypt occurred in this period, with a tax of one Dinar upon each monk levied since 705 (Gabra 2002: 2; Du Bourguet 1971: 29), causing a dearth of monks within the desert monasteries in the Wadi Natrun and near to the Red Sea by the 12th-century. A period of revival occurred in the 13th-century, with the advent of the Abuyyid Dynasty (1171-1250), who were much more tolerant of the Copts than the Fatimid dynasty. Some authors when discussing this era have described it as particularly vibrant (Sheehan 2010: 105) and this can certainly be observed in the sheer amount of restoration and rebuilding of religious buildings during this era. For example, the monasteries of al Baramus and St Macarius in the Wadi Natrun were heavily reconstructed in this century. Further examples are apparent in the churches within the fortress of Babylon in Cairo such as Sitt Barbara, which evidences a rebuilt nave and aisles from this period, whilst Haret Zuwaila contains 13th-century restorations and wooden carved doors. The 13th-century also saw the wall paintings of St Antony and Paul being created; this really was a period of rejuvenation for the church. This period of reinvigoration was complemented by the writings of Islamic Chroniclers such as al Maqrizi, Abu Salih the Armenian and El Bekri; these accounts have survived to this day and have been used by previous historians and archaeologists as primary sources to provide a window into Coptic history.

Unfortunately, this reinvigoration of the Copts gave way to a second period of decline during the Mamluk (1250-1517) and Ottoman (1517-1805) control of Egypt which saw many of the monasteries become abandoned and subsequently fell into disrepair. Pilgrims were still visiting these monasteries in the Middle Ages, with pilgrims such as

[3] The History of the Patriarchs is on one of the primary sources for the history of the Coptic Church. It was initially written by Severus Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ and continued by Mawhub ibn Mansur and Pope Mark III of Alexandria. Scholars have criticised it for mixing myths in with historical fact (Henderson 2005), making It difficult to discern what is true historical fact and what has been embellished. Ultimately, the history of the Patriarchs is a useful book, but should be approached with a certain amount of caution.

Fig. 1.4. The fortress of Babylon and the external view of the Church of al Mu'allaqa (Reproduced with the permission of Metropolitan Seraphim of Glastonbury, Library).

French nobleman Ogier III Seigneur d'Anglure providing first-hand descriptions of the monasteries such as that of St Antony. By 1512, the monastery of St Antony had been inhabited wholly by Syrian Monks, who had replaced the Coptic monks who were previously slaughtered, with scholars believing it was the Bedouin tribes who massacred the inhabitants (Gabra 2002: 174). An indication of how grave the situation was for the church in this period was that there were not enough Coptic monks within Egypt to repopulate these now empty monasteries (Meinardius 1992: 13). This period was particularly grave for the Copts with the Ottoman rulers removing the Copts from their previously held positions in office (Makari 2007: 48); indeed, their greatest achievement has been described as purely surviving through the 14th-century (Mikhail 2014: 50).

Table 1.1. Egyptian historical periodisation

Period	Date
Early Dynastic to Roman	3100 BC-30CE
Roman Period	30AD-312CE
Christian-Byzantine Period	312AD-641CE
Rashidun Caliphate	641AD-658CE
Umayyad Caliphate	659-750CE
Abbasid Caliphate	750-969CE
Fatamid Caliphate	969-1171CE
Ayyubid Caliphate	1171-1250CE
Mamluk Caliphate	1250-1517CE
Ottoman Period	1517-1867CE
Egyptian Khedivate	1867-1914CE

Between 1517 and 1867 Egypt was under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, it was an *Eyalet* (province) of a vast polity which stretched from Syria and Jordan to Romania. Egypt had been conquered by the Ottoman Turks in 1517 ending indigenous Mamluk rule (Armanios 2011: 16). After a century of Ottoman rule, the 17th-century saw the rise of 'Beys', these were high ranking Emirs and Egypt had 24 such functionaries who controlled districts within the country (Winter 1992: 20). These Beys vied for influence over the century which ultimately led to a civil war between the Bey Ifranj Ahmed and the Azab Ottoman infantry (Winter 1992: 23). His defeat and execution in 1711 marked the restoration of the rule of the Ottoman Empire until Ali Bey Al-Kabir deposed the Ottoman Governor in 1768 and assumed the role. His brief rule was tyrannical and marked with assassinations and banishment of those who he perceived as a threat (Winter 1992: 26). He died in 1773 having tried to return Egypt to an antonymous state. After this insurrection, the Ottoman Empire attempted to return direct rule back to Egypt in 1786 but ultimately by this period the Ottoman Empire was in decline and was too weak to defend itself (France 1991: 8); it was during this period of weakness that the French invaded in 1798.

The Copts and the rise of orientalism in Egypt

Before focusing on the Copts during this era, some background context to the underlying changes that occurred in Egyptian society are required to frame their position in this new political and cultural situation. The 19th and 20th-centuries were a time of western colonial expansion, often at the expense of the indigenous populations. In Egypt this took the form of the removal of artefacts from temples and heritage sites to be placed in foreign museums or private

collections. The colonial powers came to dominate the field of archaeology; recording, excavating, and removing artefacts from their homeland. This period has been referred to by past scholars as the 'Rape of Egypt' (Colla 2007: 12). It is easy to see why and, while a powerful image is created through this phrase, it is no less deserved.

The term orientalism has been used to describe the systematic denigrating and superiority of the western culture over the perceived lesser and more exotic eastern ones, with the term first put into public consciousness by Edward Said in 1978 with his book Orientalism. It was used to analyse and study the way colonial powers interacted and abused the indigenous populations of other countries and sparked the debate of how the west interacted with native populations and took advantage of them. Post publication of Orientalism the study of post-colonial discourse opened up with other authors studying this topic, such as Lynn Meskell, Katherine Blouin and more saliently to this book, Elliott Colla's Egyptomania, and Donald Reids' Whose Pharaohs? Archaeology, Museums and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to WWI. The current debate and analysis of the 18th and 19th-centuries is therefore underpinned by this theory.

The 19th and 20th-centuries in Egypt involved large scale theft of antiquities and a disregard for many of the local Egyptians with a singular aim that seems to have been the acquisition and removal of historic objects for 'safekeeping' back to France, England and Russia and a general feeling of superiority over the local population; they were not suitable to be the guardians of their own heritage (Colla 2007: 11). The period of western domination began in the late 18th-century with the arrival of the French army and Napoleon Bonaparte. The period between the late 18th and mid-20th-centuries marked a huge change in the structure of how Egypt was ruled; western powers, particularly France and England gained a strong foothold and wielded immense power. This pervading influence began with Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798, although prior to the invasion there were significant amounts of western travellers to Egypt during the 17th-century. The pyramids at Giza were recorded by a Scottish explorer known only as Melton between 1660-1667, Thomas Shaw in 1720-33 and Anglican priest Richard Pococke in 1737-8 (Wortham 1971: 25-7). All these early explorers recorded the pyramids (in some fashion) at Giza and published their expeditions and travels, but they cannot be classed as performing a scientific exploration of Egyptian monuments, rather they were travellers who published descriptions of their journeys through an exotic land; they cannot be compared with the later Egyptologists who performed much more thorough excavations.

Napoleon's mission was not to only conquer but to also study Egypt, a land which had been seen by Europeans as an exotic curiosity (Jones 2008a: 99). Napoleon's army consisted of twenty-one mathematicians, three astronomers, seventeen civil engineers, ten draughtsmen and three gunpowder experts (France 1991: 9). During the military campaign, groups of scientists from The Commission of Arts and Science travelled throughout Egypt mapping ruins and studying the natural environment. There should be no doubt, Napoleon's mission was to study everything Egypt had to offer and to take this knowledge back to France a victor. The American archaeologist Kent Weeks explains that before Napoleon's expedition there were very few scholars who studied Egypt and even fewer read Arabic and thus it was a heavily under studied area of scholarship (Weeks 2008: 8). This lack of awareness was to be altered and challenged in the coming century; Egypt's physical heritage was to be taken, plundered and destroyed by waves of foreign antiquarians, and although Napoleon and the French expedition can be considered the first western group to protect antiquities in Egypt; the construction of the *Institut d'Égypte* in 1798 was the first step towards the plundering of some of its most important pharaonic treasures.

The French expedition was short lived; Napoleon departed back to France in 1800 defeated, but had opened the doors to western scholars, consuls, antiquarians and frankly anyone who wished to purchase Egyptian antiquities for their own gain and on behalf of foreign museums. The French expedition, with hindsight, has been qualified as a military disaster, but a triumph for French culture (Greener 1966: 1). Greeners attitude may be viewed as an extension of the orientalist attitude of profiting from Egypt's cultural landscape and overlooking much of the damage caused in the process. Many had their interest piqued in the 'exotic other', as Nelly Van Doorn Harder puts it (2010) and reflects a much wider taste in the study of in the 'exotic' or 'oriental' in the 19th-century; the interest was increased by the publication of diaries of 'adventures' across perceived exotic locales such as Egypt, Algeria, and Nepal. These travels were documented by Gustave Flaubert in his diaries during his travels in 1849 throughout Egypt and others such as Joseph Moyle Shearer, who is documented as writing accounts of their journeys travelling across through exotic landscapes to be sent back home (Brooks-Hedstrom 2018: 13). The publication of the *Description de l'Égypte* between 1809-1829 revealed hitherto unknown knowledge on Egyptology and the various scientific discoveries during the expedition to Europeans (Greener 1966: 1). The interest in the 'exotic' Orient was not solely limited to western Europe, in Russia there was also a large interest among the nobility during the first half of the 19th-century. This can be seen in the purchase of large amounts of artefacts in 1824 and the acquisition of two sphinxes dating to Amenhotep III (found in a mortuary temple of Kom-el-Hettan, Thebes) and their transport to St Petersburg, Russia, in 1832 (Koroleva 2004: 1039).

Although the French had departed Egypt, they left (along with the British) behind a consul to keep relations open with Egypt. This ambassador was Bernardino Drovetti who from 1803-1815 was involved in acquiring antiquities for the French state; he was highly successful during this period and owing to his friendship with Muhammed Ali, the ruler of Egypt, controlled the antiquities trade along

the Nile valley (France 1991: 31). The British Ambassador Colonel Ernest Misset was unable to compete with Drovetti and in 1815 was replaced with Henry Salt; his replacement was far more ambitious and proved more than a match for Drovetti. This was a period of intrigue and subterfuge with different agents working for both British and French interests and the privileges extended to both Salt and Drovetti by Mohammed Ali roused a rivalry so intense that 'zones of interest' across Egypt were drawn up between the two men (Greener 1966: 120). John Wortham described the period between 1800-1850 as the time when the professional Egyptologist began (Wortham 1971: 60); although Drovetti and Salt may be called Egyptologists, their methods were far removed from what we may call archaeologists, this was not to occur until the 1850's with the work of Alexander Rhind and the later methodical excavations of Flinders Petrie.

One of these agents hired by Henry Salt was the Italian 'strongman' Giovanni Belzoni; he was employed to recover artefacts to be displayed at the British Museum, while Drovetti, similarly employed Coptic agents to recover artefacts for their return to France (Tokeley 2006: 2). Belzoni and Salt were extremely prolific in restricting French activities (France 1991: 61); Belzoni roamed the Nile in search of artefacts and paid no attention to preservation or conservation (Fagin 1973: 50), recovering many large pharaonic artefacts including the large head of Memnon during this period. His methods have been described as 'crude', which may be an understatement, but he made many important historical discoveries (Wortham 1971: 62). The struggle between the two colonial powers saw many rare artefacts destroyed, it was reported that Drovetti's agents smashed the temple reliefs at Philae so Belzoni could not acquire them (Tokeley 2006: 25); Belzoni was not much better, smashing open tomb doors using battering rams to gain quick access to the treasures inside (Fagin 1973: 50). Henry Salt's death in 1827 mattered very little to the wholesale destruction of Egyptian heritage, unfortunately protection was the last thing on the colonial visitor's minds (Weeks 2008: 7) and the 1830's saw many archaeological sites looted under the guise of excavation. Excavation during this period was tantamount to ripping open the doors to tombs and using dynamite to get to the valuable artefacts; for example, Henry Vyse drilled holes into the Sphinx to see if it was hollow (Weeks 2008: 9). This was not an isolated incident and he is reported to have damaged all of the pyramids in one way or another (Wortham 1971: 73-4). The early 20th-century was a hugely damaging period towards Egyptian heritage; both historical sites and many artefacts were plundered, destroyed or re-appropriated to a foreign museum. The status quo was to alter in the coming decades with the arrival of scholar Auguste Mariette in 1850.

When Auguste Mariette arrived in Egypt, no one would know how much of an important legacy he would leave on Egyptian archaeology and the way it is managed. He was ostensibly sent from Paris to purchase several Coptic manuscripts, instead he spent the money afforded to him excavating at Saqqara, eventually unearthing the pharaonic religious temple, the Serapeum (Weeks 2008: 10). By 1858 he was undoubtedly the most famous archaeologist in Egypt having performed many excavations across Abydos and Thebes; for his dedication to unearthing Egyptian antiquities, the *Khedive* (Viceroy) Ismail Ali Pasha conferred on him the role of Conservator of Egyptian Monuments in 1858, marking the start of the Egyptian Antiquities Service. This role was the first of its kind and marks the very beginning of heritage management in Egypt and is a precursor to the Supreme Council for Antiquities/ Ministry of State for Antiquities. His first act was to create the Museum of Cairo (Weeks 2008: 11). He was supported by Ismail Ali Pasha in these early years of forming an Egyptian Antiquities Service by providing labourers for excavation and giving him the warehouses that would go on to become the Museum of Cairo (Greener 1966: 183). He used his influence as close friend of Ismail Ali Pasha and head of the Egyptian Antiquities Service to stop many other European Egyptologists excavating in Egypt except the French (Wortham 1971: 83); this resulted in a heavy French domination of Egyptology during this period.

His successor in this role after his death in 1881 was Gaston Maspero, who focused upon the cataloguing and publishing of the antiquities stored in the museum in the *Catalogue Générale* and founded the journal, *Annals du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte* (Weeks 2008: 11). While the Egyptian Antiquities Service was in its infancy, *Khedive* Tawfiq Pasha concerned over the state of preservation over Islamic art and architecture formed the *comité* in 1881, it consisted of a mixture of Egyptian and western connoisseurs of oriental art. However, by 1890 westerners dominated the board (Reid 2002: 226); the increase in westerners to the board is unsurprising considering recent critiques of Gaston Maspero's orientalist tendencies (based upon his personal written notes made during his Delta surveys that illustrated his consistent dismissive attitude to the Egyptian government and their representatives; Blouin 2017: 3). The *Comité* focused almost entirely on preserving mosques and mausolea (Reid 2002: 228), and it was during this period that many of the religious *Waqf* buildings were given protected monument status by the *Comite* (Aboukorah 2005: 122), perhaps displaying their penchant for 'oriental' antiquities suited to contemporary exotic tastes.

Despite the *Comité* focusing their preservation efforts upon the Islamic and Coptic heritage sites, the late 19th-century saw a move towards a more methodical approach towards archaeology; archaeologist Flinders Petrie adopted the idea of recording and planning every single layer of archaeology and kept all finds for further study no matter how insignificant it appeared. His methods were not adopted by his contemporaries, but he had a lasting effect upon his students who adopted his methods. Petrie taught Egyptology at University College London when he returned to England and in 1912 began a training course to teach students the practical aspect of methodical archaeological excavation; in addition, he was progressive

in that he also taught female students and let many of them participate in excavations such as Annie Pirie who would later marry the English Egyptologist James Quibell (Janssen 1992: 13). The move towards more methodical excavation practice would not have been possible without the diligent work and funding of Amelia Edwards. She was an important benefactor who formed the Egypt Exploration Fund in 1882, it was borne from a commitment to preserve antiquities and to rescue them from institutions such as the British Museum (France 1991: 156-9). Her interest was piqued during a trip along the Nile river in 1873-4 where she was appalled by the neglect and vandalism of the many tombs and monuments (Janssen 1992: 1). She created the Egypt Exploration Fund to combat this needless destruction and arranged with Gaston Maspero to have sites reopened to non-French archaeologists (Wortham 1971: 109).

This is the background to a hugely tumultuous period in Egyptian history, where much of its treasures were stolen and Egypt was fought over by the French and English for private and national gain; it was also the start of what scholars would call modern forms of archaeological investigation that were in their infancy and heritage protection institutions were created to protect many of the historic buildings in Cairo and Alexandria. The late 19th-century was also a time of great nationalism, spurred by the colonial interference upon their country, a new movement for an Egyptian identity was making itself heard, and at the forefront of this were the Copts, who underwent somewhat of a cultural revival.

The increase in the fortunes of the Coptic community is intertwined with the nationalistic revival in the mid-18th and early 20th-centuries. Several important occurrences in the 19th-century began to increase the fortunes of the Copts. In 1855 the *Jizya* poll tax levied upon non-Muslims was abolished (Sedra 1999: 223), and this improved toleration led to a significant reversal in fortunes for many Copts and a substantial increase in wealth. Prior to the mid-9th-century, many Copts were considered to be the 'middle classes'; this meant that they held positions such as administrators (of which they had held for millennia under the Byzantine and Muslim Empires) (Elsasser 2014: 14), but now a great deal of Copts had become land owning 'elites' (Sedra 1999: 223). Indeed, after 1882 and the occupation by Britain, some authors have suggested this was a 'golden age' for the Copts, where they held 25% of the country's wealth and held 45% of the jobs within the public service industry (Zeidan 1999: 56; Mohamoud, Cuadros and Abu-Raddad 2013: 2). It was in 1908 during this 'golden age' that the Coptic Museum was built, becoming a state museum in 1931 (Basta 1991: 607). The museum houses and promotes important Coptic antiquities, initially consisting of items from Coptic homes, churches and monasteries, it received marble columns, elaborately carved woodwork and archaeological objects of distinction from the Egyptian Museum (Basta 1991: 607). It is perhaps its collection of Coptic manuscripts which is its greatest achievement, preserving thousands of ancient manuscripts including the famous Nag Hammadi manuscripts (Basta 1991: 608). The construction of the museum was down to the efforts of one of the most important men of the period, Marcus Simaika. He was a hugely important figure in political life during the period and influential in preserving many Coptic manuscripts and archaeological artefacts (Hamilton 2006: 276). Other prominent Coptic businessmen and officials began to fund restorations and improvements at monasteries and churches in this period; perhaps the most prominent was Ibrahim al-Jawhari, one of the most important Coptic political figures of the 18th-century. He built a chapel at Haret Zuwaila (Gabra 2014: 33) and funded the construction of the mill, and refectory at St Paul's Monastery amongst other restorations.

This increase in wealth and social standing in Egypt led to another resurgence in Coptic identity. Leading into the early 20th-century a move towards 'Coptism' or 'pharonism' became apparent, this was a movement propelled by young, educated, professional activists who wished to re-evaluate the identity of the Copts and to study the tenets of the 'old' church (Sedra 1999: 225). Within these young activists was a young Nazir Gayyid, the future Pope Shenouda III. Many of the Copts during this period supported and were involved with the *Wafd,* a secular nationalistic political party (Zeidan 1999: 56), indicating young Copts were highly politically motivated in this period. Perhaps the most discussed aspect of the 'Coptic revival' in the 19th and early 20th-centuries is the 'Coptic Question'. It is discussed in much more detail by authors such as Jacques van der Vliet, Mariz Tadros and Sebastian Elsasser, but essentially boils down to examining who the Copts were, ethnically, culturally, and where they fit into Egyptian life. Jacques van der Vliet asserts that this question of Coptic identity is inextricably tied to Egyptian nationalism as a whole (van der Vliet 2009: 282) and perhaps this is why the question has resurfaced during the 2011 and 2013 uprisings, a period where the status quo was upended for the first time in nearly a century. It can also be viewed through the prism of an orientalist lens; the question of who the Copts were, their origins and most importantly; whether they were the true bloodline of ancient Egyptians was at the forefront of many westerners during this era.

One of the primary books of this period that promoted this belief was *The Sons of the Pharaohs* written by S.H Leeder which placed the Copts as the descendants of the pharaohs; it was a clear orientalist text, albeit one that was favourable to the Copts (van der Vliet 2009: 286). One group of western visitors who did not view the Copts as descendants of this bloodline was the various western missionaries who passed through Egypt. Darlene Brooks-Hedstrom recounts and charts the reaction of Protestant and Anglican, amongst other western missionaries to the Copts, with many finding them inferior and expressing dislike of their associated monastic communities and practices (Brooks-Hedstrom 2017: 10-11). Alastair Hamilton's The Copts and the West also highlights this 'distaste' in the Coptic church by the Protestant travellers,

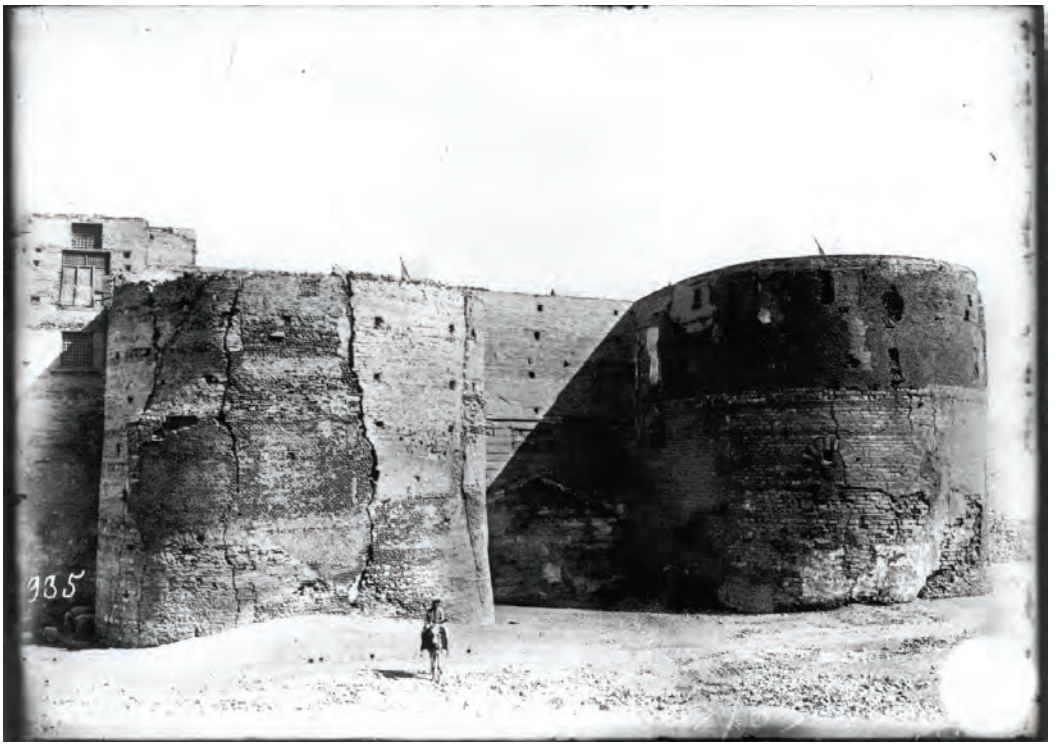

Fig. 1.5. Photograph of George Somers-Clarke at the south gate of Babylon (Reproduced by permission of the American Research Centre in Egypt).

which was fuelled by the spokesman of the Church of Constantinople, Cyril Lucaris (Hamilton 2006: 179).

The interest in Copts as the descendants of the pharaohs, nor as precursors to monasticism was also not universally adopted by western archaeologists; both Flinders Petrie and Amelia Edwards did not find any interest in studying the Coptic remains found during their travels (Brooks-Hedstrom 2018: 16-17). Although the predominant focus of western archaeologists was the pharaonic sites, there were some notable excavations of Christian sites at the turn of the 20th-century and although it could not be viewed as a period with extensive excavations on Coptic sites, a few European archaeologists who had their interests piqued by what information these early Christian sites could offer, began the recording and excavation of the archaeological remains of the Coptic Church. Alistair Hamilton concludes that with an increase in the publication of Coptic manuscripts (which had been stolen and looted from many of the monasteries), so too did the interest in other aspects of Coptology (Hamilton 2006: 275).

The first western historian to record the standing churches and monasteries in Egypt was Alfred Butler (1850-1936) who published *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt* in 1884. This gave an excellent narrative description of the churches of Egypt and described their individual layout, its icons, and any historical facts that he could glean from the historic fabric. It is noteworthy in that it is only one of a few books which recorded the ancient churches of Cairo in any great depth. Shortly after Butler's study of churches, architect George Somers-Clarke wrote a study of the standing church ruins in Upper Egypt with his monograph *Christian Antiquities in the Nile Valley* (1912); this created a basic typology of church styles, building upon Alfred Butler's work. He noted that there were three distinct types of church floor plan- basilica with nave aisles and galleries, a modified basilica church to support a dome and a post conquest flat wooden roofed basilica church (1912: 31). After Butler and Somers-Clarke recorded churches and their history, Hugh Evelyn-White visited some of the same churches Alfred Butler had documented thirty years previously in the Nitria and Scetis region, his book *The Histories of the Monasteries of Nitria and of the Scetis* was published in 1926 and was a re-evaluation of Butler's work[4]. Perhaps one of the most prolific archaeologist in this period was the Italian archaeologist Ugo Monneret de Villard (1881-1954), who excavated a number of monasteries in Aswan (southern Egypt), including the large monastery dedicated to St Simeon (which is more correctly known as the Monastery of the Virgin, Dayr Anba Hatre); his findings were published in his site report *Il Monastero di S. Simeone presso Aswân* in 1927 (Monneret de Villard 1927).

Some of the most important architectural finds were discovered during this period; excavations at the monastic site of Abulla/Apollo (Bawit) in 1902 by the French

[4] Although Alfred Butler is what we may consider the first modern western scholar to document Christian churches in Egypt, he is not the first to do so. Abu Salih the Armenian wrote The churches and monasteries of Egypt and some neighbouring countries in the 13th-century. He travelled extensively across Egypt and described the Copts, their history and their churches; his description of the churches is rather limited however, therefore Alfred Butler should be considered the first 'modern' scholar who gives a full and complete description on the churches of Egypt.

archaeologist Jean Clédat uncovered numerous architectural features such as basket capitals, wooden sculptures and a number of inscriptions which are used today by architectural scholars as a baseline for dating other Coptic sculptures of the period. Much of this material showed clear affinities with Mediterranean classical forms, as well as blending in a distinctive localised artistic style. In his re-edited notes from the excavations (his reports were amalgamized, edited and republished in 1999 by Dominique Benazeth and Marie-Helene Rutschowscaya), he notes similarities and hybridisation of the Egyptian styles from the eighteenth dynasty tombs (1999: 360). This is the motif of Coptic studies, the idea of synergy, or hybridisation, a meeting of the classical and pharaonic worlds. His findings were published in *Recherches sur le kôm de Baouît and Nouvelles recherches á Baouît* (Clédat 1902 and 1904) and was the first example of a large-scale excavation at a Coptic heritage site (Brooks-Hedstrom 2018:24). During the same decade (1906-1910), the English archaeologist James Quibell excavated the extensive monastery of St Jeremiah (Apa Jeremias) at Saqqara; this too, like Bawit, produced some of the finest examples of Coptic architecture (Quibell 1908). The importance of the archaeological evidence found at Bawit and its contribution to the study of early monasticism is evident in the scholarly work which continues today; scholars such as Alain Delattre have continued deciphering and translating papyrus found at Bawit, revealing the links between early monks at the monastery and their relationship with the wider community (Delattre 2012). The first decade of the 1900's also saw the excavations at Abu Mina, one of the most important and monumental Coptic churches. It was initially excavated by Karl-Maria Kauffmann, a German archaeologist from 1905-1907. During the 1940's Charles Bachatly, as part of the Coptic Archaeological Society excavated the monastery of Phoebammon in Upper Egypt, where a great deal of Coptic graffiti was found and recorded. This was published in 1960 and offered examples of inscribed prayers from the monks such as "I Abraham the monk, pray for me" and a multitude of other prayers to the lord (Bachatly 1961: 59, 93). It is no coincidence that these excavations and buildings investigations coincided with the Coptic revival, and should be considered an essential part of this 'golden age' of renewal of Coptic identity through its archaeology.

The second half of the 20th-century saw a decline in Coptic rights, and a move away from participation in public life. The 1952 revolution and particularly the rule of Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1956 oversaw a restructuring of land ownership and a re-appropriation of wealth. The Land Reform Programme took power away from the upper classes who were predominantly Copts (Zeidan 1999: 57) and the Coptic supported Wafd party was dissolved. It was during this period that Pope Shenouda III developed a co-operative relationship with President Nasser to try and maintain the rights and freedoms of the Copts (Haddad and Donovan 2013: 216). Anwar Sadat's rule (1970-1981) was more right-wing than Nasser's, who was supported and by more militant Islamic groups (including the Muslim Brotherhood). This led to Sadat openly accusing the Copts of supporting a conspiracy against the state (Zeidan 1999: 54) and the exile of Pope Shenouda III (Haddad and Donovan 2013: 217).

Whilst the Copts saw a decline in rights, power, and the exile of their patriarch during the second half of the 20th-century, archaeological excavations and evaluation of their art and architecture at Coptic sites continued, primarily by external foreign missions. John Cooney published a series of works (1943-1944) examining the art and architecture of the Copts; he noted at the time that Coptic art produced few spectacular works of art (1944: 38). His viewpoint was not challenged until the resurgence in Coptic studies in the 1970's and 1980's when Pierre Du Bourguet (1971) published perhaps one of the most in depth and complete analysis of Coptic architecture where he refuted these claims (although not Cooney specifically) and was sympathetic to the claims that Coptic art never produced any art which was worthwhile. He concluded that although the art of the Copts was derivative, so was most art. The 1970's saw the re-emergence of the study of Christian churches, something missing since the early 20th-century. Christopher Walters' *Monastic Archaeology in Egypt* (Walters 1974), was a general study in monastic archaeology and covered the early excavations of Kellia and the Red Sea Monasteries. It offered a breakdown of the types of churches found in the desert monasteries, building upon George Somers Clarke's earlier observations, although it was marred by poor illustrations and plans; Darlene Brooks-Hedstrom critiqued this book, pointing out that it was very limited in its scope (2018: 56). Otto Meinardus (1925-2005), the German Coptologist has studied this area in his books *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Deserts* (Meinardus 1961) and *Two Thousand Years of Coptic Christianity* (Meinardus 2000); his work has been cited by other scholars in such works as Massimo Capuani's *Christian Egypt: Coptic Art through Two Millennia* (Capuani 2002).

The greatest contributor to Coptic archaeology and in particular the field of church archaeology in recent years is the German archaeologist Peter Grossmann. He has been active in the field since the early 1970's when he studied the floor plan of the eastern church at Philae (1970). He was joint director with D.M Bailey, of excavations at the south church at Hermopolis Magna (1994), Faw Qibli (1986) and has been excavating the UNESCO world heritage site of Abu Mina since the late 1980's and published the excavation monograph *Abu Mina 1, Die Gruftkirche und die Gruft* in 1989. Aside from the excavations he is the most prolific scholar in Coptology and has written many journal articles on architectural elements such as the introduction of the Khurus (Bema), as well as more general ones on the differences in floor layout of churches between upper and lower Egypt. Since the early 1990's there has been a marked increase in the amount of scholarly work being completed on Coptic subjects.

Aside from these authors who study church archaeology and architecture, there have been several other journal

series and conferences which have furthered study into Coptic heritage. Some of the earliest journals created to publish articles researching Coptic studies include the *Bulletin de l'institute francais d'archaeologie orientale,* first published in 1901 and still ongoing, and the *Bulletin de la societe d'archaeologie copte,* started in 1938. In 1976 the first International Association for Coptic Studies (IACS) was created as a non-profit organisation, bringing together specialists from a wide range of fields including epigraphy, history, and archaeology. This continues to this day with the most recent conference in 2016. In 1990 the IACS began to publish *The Journal of Coptic Studies*, this journal focuses upon a range of different specialisms including epigraphy, history, monasticism and on occasion archaeology. In the same year that the IACS was formed, the journal *Le Monde Copte* was created which, much like the IACS, published a broad selection of articles on a range of subjects relating to Coptic studies; indeed, after journal 13, *Le Monde Copte* devoted each issue to a different subject, including archaeology. Other journals include those such as *Coptica,* which was created in 2001 and replaced the *Bulletin of St Shenouda and Archimandrite Coptic Society* (1984-2001).

In 1991, The *Coptic Encyclopaedia* was produced; this publication is a hugely important reference guide, although it is quite out of date now. Since 2009 it has been replaced with the Claremont Coptic encyclopaedia, an online and updated resource that is edited by some of the top Coptic scholars in their respective areas of study. It is an excellent starting point for any scholar wishing to study a particular subject and covers a wide range of topics written by their relevant specialists. Each monastery, church and archaeological site are referenced, as is church architecture, and historical figures. It is important to recognise that while these journals publish articles relating to Coptic studies, the study of the Copts falls between epigraphy, theology, linguistics and papyrology; archaeology as a whole is very much a minor aspect of these studies.

A series of important and comprehensive archaeological investigations have been carried out since the 1990's up until now. Both the American Research centre in Egypt and the Yale Monastic Project undertaken intensive, multi season excavations and restoration projects across a series of monasteries. The White Monastery Archaeology Project encompassed work at several monasteries with fieldwork beginning in 2005, with the specific aim to excavate specifically targeted areas of the White Monastery to provide stratigraphic evidence for the architectural and standing remains, to survey and map the standing remains and to complete geophysical studies of the area (Bolman and Brooks Hedstrom et al 2011-12: 335). The Yale Monastic Archaeology Project is also continuing investigations at several sites, such as a geophysical surveys at Pherme (2006) and fieldwork at the Monastery of St John the Little in the Wadi Natrun, starting in 2006, with a primary goal of producing a detailed site plan (Brooks-Hedstrom, Davis, Herbich and Ikram 2010: 221) of the monastery and surrounding area.

The American Research Centre in Egypt performs many restorative efforts and archaeological surveys of Coptic monasteries funded by USAID; in particular, Elizabeth Bolman has notably worked to conserve the icons painted on the walls of the church in the monastery of St Antony (Bolman 2002), while William Lyster and Michael Jones have conducted a restorative project of the frescoes in the Church of St Mercurius at the Monastery of St Paul, near to the Red Sea (*The Cave Church of Paul the Hermit at the Monastery of St Paul in Egypt* (Lyster 2008). A team from the Louvre, Paris undertook four excavations between 1993 and 1996 at the Necropolis of Saqqara, importantly, the excavation recovered a lintel with the name Apa Jeremiah inscribed on it, establishing a link to the site 100m to the south of the necropolis, and proving that the necropolis building were in use during the 7th-century (Ziegler, Adam, Andreu et al 1997).

Other than Peter Grossmann and the work by ARCE and the Yale Federation Project, the Dutch archaeologist Karel Innemee has worked extensively at the monasteries of Deir Suryani and al-Baramus in the Wadi Natrun, supported by the University of Leiden, Netherlands. He has directed excavations at the monastery of al-Baramus since 1996, which have uncovered many elements of the original monastery including a church structure and evidence of defensive walls dating to the 9th or 10th-centuries. His work at Deir Suryani focused upon the protection and conservation of the wall paintings in the Church of the Virgin, which date between the 13th and 17th centuries. This conservation project, much like those performed by ARCE have focused on cleaning and restoring previously hidden and damaged wall paintings. Other important projects in recent memory have been completed by Polish archaeologists working at Kom el-Dikka in Alexandria to uncover the auditorium and lecture halls of a Roman-Christian settlement. The important archaeological excavation has led to the creation of The Archaeological Park Project where the site will be preserved and presented as an archaeological tourist site that can be walked around and visited.

The Copts in modern Egypt

The revolution of 2011 altered the political scene within Egypt, President Hosni Mubarak, incumbent since October 1981 was forced to step down in February 2011 following mass demonstrations; part of the media dubbed 'Arab Spring'. An interim government was formed by the army and subsequent democratic elections in June 2012 led to the Muslim Brotherhood and its new president Mohammed Morsi gaining power. Growing dissatisfaction over the running of the country by the Brotherhood led to a further uprising only a year later in June 2013, this led to a coup by the Army and imprisonment of many Brotherhood supporters and members of the party. Pope Tawdros and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar both supported the military coup by General el-Sisi (Kosta 2016:2), further giving legitimacy to the removal of Morsi. Democratic elections were held in June 2014 with General Abdel el-Sisi winning

the presidency, and being sworn in. It is this background to the current situation many Copts find themselves in.

Several studies have been conducted in the recent past which denote the current situation for the Copts in Egypt. This is an obviously delicate and emotive subject when discussing the current situation of the Copts, with an abundance of articles discussing the perceived current situation under the el-Sissi administration and more widely as a Christian minority in a Muslim country. As Randall Henderson has previously stated, it is particularly difficult to find an objective opinion discussing the current situation of the Copts and their daily lives (2005: 159). It should be pointed out at this juncture that the Copts are not a homogenous group (Mosad 2016: 98), they cross socio-economic divides and can be politically divergent. So, when discussing the Copts as a group, it is worth bearing in mind there are no absolutes. The Coptic Christians make up less than 10% of the population, although other studies have erred on the side of caution and placed this figure higher, it seems the real figure is slightly lower (Mohamoud, Cuadros and Abu-Raddad 2013: 10). Many live below the poverty line, but a large amount of Copts hold decent white collar jobs such as engineers and doctors (Mohamoud, Cuadros and Abu-Raddad 2013), evidentially not much has changed in this respect for over a century, with it reported Copts taking up many of these 'middle class' jobs in the early 20th-century. Current data suggests that Copts in the 21st-century largely populate Cairo and Upper Egypt, with 60% of all Copts living in Sohag, Assyyut and Menya (Zeidan 1999: 54).

The 2011 revolution which ousted Hosni Mubarak also left many in the Coptic community once again questioning their identity, with a new nationalism on the rise; the Coptic question has once again become relevant, in an era where the status quo since the 1950's has been upended and a new regime has taken control. It is important to note that the issues of Coptic identity that were vibrantly and openly discussed by young educated professionals in the early 20th-century have re-surfaced recently. While publications in the 19th-century ignored Coptic heritage and identity (Van Doorn-Harder 2010: 479), the 20th-century saw a great deal of publications focus upon these issues, and in the past twenty years, moving towards the end of the 20th-century there has been the production of more multidisciplinary studies, ones which focus upon not just the Christian era of Coptic studies but the post medieval and early modern era (Van Doorn-Harder 2010: 479). Nelly Van Doorn-Harder suggests that this can be directly mapped on the increase on Coptic migration to Australia, the US and UK and has led to new questions being presented related to identity and the roles of youths and children (Van Doorn-Harder 2010: 479). Clearly the issue of Coptic identity is resurfacing and is now being challenged and discussed in a much more open forum across the world.

It is clear from documented evidence, media reports, surveys and external charities that the Copts do suffer a level of persecution, violence and intimidation. External humanitarian charities have highlighted the current situation of Egypt's 10-15 million Christians, insisting it has developed into a worrying trend of violence and intimidation; many of their heritage sites which are used for services and places to pray are increasingly under threat. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2015 annual report (the most current humanitarian report they have issued) concluded that although violence has decreased significantly from previous years (USCIRF 2015: 90), there is an atmosphere of impunity due to a lack of prosecutions for those who enact violence against the Copts (USCIRF 2015: 90).

Threats of violence were greater during the post revolution era with a breakdown in policing and security, with several salient examples demonstrating the level of violence perpetrated. During the commemoration of the Assumption in August 2015 military checkpoints had to be set up to deter any violence or those who wished to re-enact the attacks at The Virgin Mary Church at al-Warraq in October 2013 (Al Monitor 2015). In January 2011, a bomb was exploded outside the al-Qidiseen church in Alexandria killing 24 Copts (Guardian Online 2011a); in May of that year, a protest became deadly when the Army opened fire and killed Christians who were protesting the demolition of one of their churches. This action became known as the Maspiro massacre. The loss of life has been great in the post-revolution era but this period has seen many churches and monasteries attacked, burnt and demolished. Perhaps the most significant attack to Christian buildings was in August 2013 when 42 churches in Minya, Asyut, Sohag and North Sinai were attacked and damaged, some seriously. It was reported by the organisation Human Rights Watch that this was in retaliation for Christians supporting the ousting of the Muslim Brotherhood from political power (Human Rights Watch 2013). Among the churches damaged was the historic church of the Blessed Virgin in Delga, Minya which was burnt down a month later in September 2013.

Whilst external charities and media sources have reported on these incidents, several scholars have undertaken research and surveys within the community. The results suggest many openly avoiding the wider 'Egyptian' community, preferring to stay within their own enclave (Hichy, Coen, DiMarco and Gergis 2013: 495). The authors of this paper analysing the Coptic community suggested this may have been a coping strategy for discrimination, although they cannot conclusively conclude this it should be made clear. Others within the community have signalled that they too have faced persecution during research by other scholars (Mohamoud, Cuadros and Abu-Raddad 2013). The result of this persecution and also other factors such as a better economic wellbeing for their family, means many Copts have emigrated in recent years, in particular to America, Canda and the UK (Lazano 2018).

Whilst the voices of the Copts suggest they feel threatened, other authors have suggested that taken as a whole, the Muslim majority are relatively tolerant, and relations are a

Table 1.2. Table showing population of Copts living in each governate (Mohamoud, Cuadros, and Abu-Raddad 2013: 5)

Governate in Egypt	Amount of Copts living in Governate (Circa)
Cairo	609,000
Sohag	600,000
Assyut	590,000
Menya	500,000
Alexandria	140,000
Aswan	80,000
Red Sea	40,000

lot more complex and nuanced than Muslims vs Christians (Hoffman and Jamal 2016). Certainly, there has not been the overt persecution or state funded cultural heritage destruction by the government such as seen recently in Iraq and Syria with the government and Coptic Church enjoying a relatively peaceful co-existence. Reinforcing this idea of relative good relations, particularly with the current government is Pope Tawadros' support of Abdul el-Sisi's initial coup, on live television alongside the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar (Kosba 2016: 2); this could be perceived as an exercise in protecting the Copts from further reprisals, which increased after the revolution but also as an attempt to strengthen the Copts standing with the government and to facilitate a balance and avoid the poor relations seen under Gamal Nasser's regime.

Conclusion

The orientalism and exoticism of Coptic history in the 19th and first half of the 20th-century and more broadly the discussions brought about post Edward Said's Orientalism, has had a lasting impression upon the landscape of how not only Coptic archaeology and more broadly Egyptology should be tackled, but it brings into focus how western bodies, and individuals should perhaps interact and approach foreign excavations and conservation projects; this is an important topic that is explored in the localism vs global heritage debate in chapter 2. Scholarship since the mid 1990's has tried to focus upon more collaboration between Egyptian departments such as the Ministry of Antiquities, and foreign bodies, and much of the current discourse has tried to frame Egyptian -and Coptic studies- that occurred in the past through a critical orientalist lens. This is no bad thing, and really drives home the extent of colonial interference, theft and wanton destruction during that period, with many Egyptians kept away from their heritage or used as pawns by the colonial powers to plunder heritage sites. Unfortunately, many legacies were left from that era and it has been left up to relatively modern specialists and scholars to really critique these practices and point towards how best to approach the future examinations, and projects of historic Egypt.

Recent publications have explored the changing way westerners interact with Egyptian heritage projects; Darlene Brooks-Hedstrom's most recent book provides an excellent narrative into the history of the study of Coptic heritage and is critical of the orientalist tastes developed in the 19th and 20th centuries. She devotes a chapter to the development of Coptic studies between the 19th and 20th centuries and critiques how up until the 1990's there was a pervasive idea of Coptic identity (1028: 58). Other authors such as Lynn Meskell have written papers on how heritage specialists need to be more mindful of the local population, their institutions and the context of their work, opting for collaboration as the way forward (Meskell 2000). It is clear from more recent projects such as the Yale Monastic Archaeology Project and many of ARCE's conservations projects have become far more collaborative efforts, and rather than some of the excavations in the early 1900's where a western archaeologist would excavate, publish and crucially interpret the Copts own culture, they have become more engaged with the local community (something discussed further in chapters 4 and 5); this is a big move away from the works of the early 20th-century where authors would write about the Copts and not engage with them, nor would they take into account their viewpoints. This is not to say there are still problems with western dominated discourse and excavations in Egyptology on a broader scale and this issue is discussed in more depth in chapter 5. In summary, then, scholarly interest in the archaeology of Egypt's Christian heritage, very much a forgotten heritage, remains vital.

Aims, scope and methods of the study

The central 'problem' then which is addressed in this book (or more accurately, a series of problems) is that here we have a relatively unknown cultural patrimony that is eclipsed in popular and academic thought by pyramids and tombs, and one which has important ideological significance, one which is part of a wider continuum of religious Christian heritage at risk within the Islamic world and one which requires careful management and presentation and interpretation. This is not a topic which has been widely addressed. As we will see from the varied strands of literature reviews in the relevant chapters, the overwhelming focus of Egyptian heritage management planning and policy is on pharaonic sites. This is to be expected; these are great tourist revenues earners for the country. They match tourist expectations. It is hoped that this work will demonstrate that there is another hidden heritage of Egypt that demands our attention, but it also needs our help too.

At this point, it is prudent to discuss the methodology behind the selection of each site within this book. The research methodology was underpinned using a mixture of qualitive and quantitative data collection, known as 'mixed methods'. This was chosen due to its overall balance between its data collection and use of interviews and discussions with relevant parties, and one that scholars have advocated as providing a solid grounding for research that offsets its weaknesses and provides a practical way of researching the topic at hand (Cresswell 2014: 9, 15). The quantitative

phase of this project focused on the data collection of prior management plans, scholarly research in heritage management, conservation, tourism and archaeology and primary documentary evidence of any previous conservation works at the case study sites in conjunction with personally made observations at the case study sites and other heritage sites. This is in keeping with methodologies discussed in papers by scholars (e.g., Onwuegbuzie and Teddie 2003). The qualitive phase included discussions, personal emails and interviews with a selection of Coptic Clergy, such as Father Arsenios at the Monastery of St Paul, discussions with Egyptian archaeologists such as Monica Hanna and Geoffrey Tassie, and also English archaeologists and company directors. Unfortunately, the author did attempt to contact the representatives of the Ministry of Antiquities, but they were unresponsive.

The case studies chosen were made from a mixture of pre-discussion with individual members of the Coptic Church, pragmatism in availability of these sites (gaining access to them) and prior evaluative work on the current issues faced at these Coptic heritage sites. When choosing which sites to provide a conservation assessment, the most important deciding factor was a discussion with members of the Coptic Church to determine which sites in the local area had conservation issues that were important to them as a minority group. Once a site had been identified as suffering from conservation issues, some background research was required to delve into the history of the site and if any prior work has occurred or is planned in the future.

The explicit aims of the present study are to assess the current state of a representative selection of Coptic Christian heritage sites in Egypt, by framing the debate and using current examples at other sites across the world within current discourse in Egyptian archaeology, conservation best practices, and tourism management. This will provide a grounding for the case studies that follow and allow the reader to note why certain conclusions have been made. The book does offer strategies for the care, conservation and tourism for the sites which could form the core basis and starting point of a combined government and centralised Church strategy for the care and promotion of its heritage.

Although each site has differing management and conservative issues, the primary objectives for each of the case studies are to:

- Provide a written evaluation for each site based upon a visual examination of each architectural component such as walls and floors.
- Conduct a photographic survey of each site to document the current physical state of each feature (walls, floor, etc).
- Provide a detailed background to each site using all available historical sources.
- Detail what is actually significant about the site, and what may or may not be altered according to the Coptic liturgical demands.
- Offer tangible ways for conservative remedial action for any damage which has been wrought upon the site.

In order to reach this end point, however, it is essential to provide a deeper contextual study as to the role and meaning of heritage within an Egyptian and global context. In order to do this, wider debates and frameworks of analysis are introduced. Critiques of heritage policy development, heritage theory, praxis and economic implications are offered. The intention is to move from the global analysis, to Egypt and more specifically to Coptic Christian heritage. The recording methodology at each of chosen sites was conducted using the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings of structures* (2014). The primary recording method during these case studies was by using a photographic survey, with full and proper written records kept as appropriate (2014: 12). Photographs were taken of all major architectural elements of each site, including walls, flooring, pillars and religious architectural ornaments. In general, wide shots were taken of each area of site with more detailed photographs of architectural detail such as pediments, artistic designs and architectural iconography. In conjunction with a photographic record of each architectural element, a written record was also made using pro-forma context sheets. These context sheets were used to record individual elements; measurements were taken, materials used in construction, mortar type, and how these parts of the site interact with other areas of the site. The current state of disrepair was recorded between the photographs and the context sheets and any details that were salient to its repair were recorded. A pre-drawn scaled plan of the church/site were used to record where each photograph was recorded, the direction it was taken and given an individual photographic number. A photographic register was retained which recorded each photo's number, direction and a short description of what it is.

The sites that form the case studies in this book were chosen as a cross representative selection of Coptic heritage sites in Egypt. Haret Zuwaila is an urban church, The Monastery of St Paul is a Red Sea living heritage monastic site and Abu Mina is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Combined these sites cover all 'types' of Coptic heritage site in Egypt except perhaps burial sites. Haret Zuwaila was chosen due to its unique conservation issues and is currently one of the most at risk churches in Cairo of irreversible damage. For this reason, it was thought best to use this as a prime example of a church situated in a populated city and how urban influences such as pollution can affect heritage sites. The Monastery of St Paul, like Haret Zuwaila, is a living heritage site that alongside The Monastery of St Antony are the only surviving Red Sea Monasteries. This monastery had previously undergone limited reconstruction efforts by The American Research Centre in Egypt (ARCE) in the mid 2000's and would provide an excellent chance to reappraise their work and to evaluate whether there were further interventions that could be made to consolidate the monastery. In addition, an invitation was offered by

Father Arsenios, former Coptic Priest of Manchester, who provided access to areas of the monastery not open to the general public; this was an excellent opportunity to study a locally important monastery, where full access was not normally given.

The aim of the research was to put the spotlight on a cross-section of Coptic heritage sites across Egypt discover their current state, and to provide a mitigation strategy that could be developed in the future. With this aim in mind, three distinct types of Coptic site can be identified across Egypt; urban churches, desert monasteries and large monumental church complexes. A final fourth group of sites are burial sites, but it was determined early in the writing of this project that studying these proposed a set of ethical and legal challenges that were insurmountable within the confines of this project, namely access and permission were not forthecoming from the Ministry of Antiquities.

The urban church of Haret Zuwaila was decided upon through discussion with members of the local Egyptian Cairo Coptic community, who cited the church complex of Haret Zuwaila as an urban church with many conservation issues that needed investigation, and one which required immediate conservation intervention before the churches in Old Cairo. Through background study of this site, it was clear that it fulfilled the criteria for a medieval urban church and was an excellent candidate for a conservation study. Firstly, it is a historic medieval church with a rich history and tangible link to the local community. It is still in use and visited daily by the local Copts and is therefore not purely a tourist destination. Secondly, background research determined that the church had endemic issues with water damage with a series of conservation interventions had occurred prior to this study. This provided an excellent site to assess the current state of conservation and to provide a critique of the techniques used by local Egyptian conservators and whether international charters were being adhered to, such as the retention of authenticity. Other churches within the Fortress of Babylon were considered for inclusion in this research study but ultimately it was decided that the large amount of problems at Haret Zuwaila and its use as a local church, not a large tourist destination such as Al'Muallaqa would provide a good perspective against the other sites in the book.

While there are sufficient amounts of desert monasteries still in active use in Egypt, particularly in the Wadi Natrun area, it was decided that the Red Sea monastery of St Paul best fit the criteria required for this project to provide a good counter balance to the urban church and monumental World Heritage site. One of the largest determining factors was the amount of access given by local priest Father Arsenios, former Coptic priest of Manchester, England. The monastery also fit the criteria of a consistently used site by the local Copts and as a tourist destination from holidaymakers staying at the local resort of Hugurda. Preliminary background research of the monastery and discussions with Father Arsenios suggested that although conservation work had already been enacted upon some of the buildings at the monastery and at the cave church, a full conservation study had not been completed and would provide opportunity to critique the types of remedial work undertaken at Coptic heritage sites in Egypt.

The final site chosen to be studied in this project was required to provide a counter-balance to the previous 'living' heritage sites. The site of Abu Mina was a UNESCO World Heritage site that acted primarily as a large tourist site. Crucially, it was not a 'living' heritage site like Haret Zuwaila and the monastery of St Paul. It provided a much deeper exploration of the World Heritage management systems and how they interact with the Egyptian national government and local Coptic Church of Mar Mina. It was hoped that the extra level of UNESCO involvement would provide a different process of management to focus upon and that this would present unique challenges to be overcome. Abu Mina is an extremely large site and it was decided to focus on the central ecclesiastical complex and nearby pilgrim housing rather than documenting the whole site which would have taken a few weeks with a small team of people. The ruinous nature of Abu Mina provided a set of issues not found at the desert monasteries or urban churches.

The methodology to determining which elements of each site to focus the photographic survey upon was decided by discussion with the clergy at each Coptic site, for example Father Arsenios at the Monastery of St Paul was consulted to determine what the church believed to be conservation issues. In this example, he suggested the defensive walls had some issues with improper conservation which needed to be addressed. Their input formed an important aspect in deciding what elements to focus upon. The second selection criteria was through prior study of written sources of each site to determine what parts are significant to the Copts, such as using 20th-century *Comité* reports to determine what prior work was completed at the site. Culturally sensitive areas of sites were the focal point of the case studies, and any area which was deemed to be significant by the local Copts was focused upon. In addition, any area that had significant damage or had received previous conservation interventions was chosen to be part of the case study. Owing to the dynamic nature of some of the conservation issues presented in this book, it is possible that some of the issues raised in the case studies may have been remedied; this is unavoidable.

Structure of the study

The book is structured in the following manner and is designed to offer the reader a grounding in current theoretical discussions and good practice: Chapter two takes a more theoretical and philosophical turn and deals with the ambiguous term 'significance' in heritage practice. Significance is an integral part of any heritage management plan and is used in England and further afield. It can take different incarnations and it is important to define what it actually means in the context of Coptic

heritage. Within this debate there are the contrasting idioms of local versus the global heritage and who actually owns a site- if anyone can in fact stake such a claim-. This is an important argument to air in the realms of 'faith heritage' and its management and interpretation. Understanding heritage is a hermeneutic process, not a linear and deductive one. It requires reflection and self-evaluation, and this is especially pertinent in the case of looking at a minority Christian heritage which is at risk.

Chapter three deals with the varying strategies for dealing with conservation of buildings (again drawing mainly upon English practice); it attempts to define the different processes involved in remedial action and to offer salient test cases where both excellent and poor conservative work has taken place. The emphasis here is on praxis. The first act must be to define what we mean by the terms conservation, preservation and reconstruction. Without a clear definition there cannot be a clearly defined heritage plan for each site. The chapter looks at the erosion of authenticity, an often cited problem within conservative circles, and what impact this may have on a heritage site. All conservative efforts, and in particular, reconstruction and renovation can have an impact on authenticity, and it is important to study whether the ends justify the means in some cases. The chapter offers a number of remedies towards this problem and uses test cases from across the globe to prove that these methods can work if properly implemented. Finally, the use of consolidant chemicals within the conservative process is discussed; there are both positive and negative side effects from using chemicals and these are explored fully in the chapter. These issues will of course have relevance in the main case study chapters and will have important practical and financial implications for the development of the final suggested management and conservation plan for standing Coptic Christian monuments in Egypt. Above all, it is emphasised that this approach has to be cost effective and sustainable within an Egyptian context.

Chapter four examines the relatively recent development of heritage tourism and the effects it can have at heritage sites in Egypt. This is where we try to situate the role of the heritage 'consumer'. It explores the different types of tours which are available to tourists and what exactly the phenomenon of heritage tourism actually is and how it differs from previous holidays, this is perhaps best examined in John Urry's *the Tourist Gaze* (2002). It also examines the types of people who venture on these getaways. The types of damage which can be caused by mass visitors at heritage sites is looked at and ways of managing the vast amount of tourists are explored, with non- invasive techniques forming the backbone of the argument. Physical wear and tear is a real concern at heritage sites and it must be controlled. The second half of the chapter explores the theme of visitor satisfaction and what makes a visit a fulfilling one; to examine this idea further, Gianna Moscardo's 'mindfullness' theory (Moscardo 2002) is visited to determine whether having a non passive and active tourist site is the ideal path to follow and if it stops visitors from being bored and in turn teach them about the history of the site, culture and impart knowledge, so they leave having gained knowledge of the Copts. These issues are important to clarify and discuss, as there are many tourists who come to Egypt and do visit Coptic heritage sites; their needs and wants are clearly important if they are to have a pleasant visit but there does need to be a balance; they cannot do whatever they like at the site and therefore there must be ways of limiting the impact of their visit. Therefore, this chapter forms a partial link to chapter three in that it is examining ways of preserving the site using non-invasive techniques but also moves forward in the very important debate over how best to present the site to visitors.

Chapter five will focus upon Egyptian heritage policy within a global context, focusing on the development of Egyptian cultural heritage management legislation and how this compares to England. England has a rich and well documented (and well critiqued) history of protecting its monuments through varying legislation which has been implemented throughout the late 19th and 20th-century. This chapter examines the role in which both the varying heritage agencies such as Historic England and the independent, non-governmental organisations such as the National Trust and the Council for British Archaeology play in protecting heritage sites across England. The introduction of PPG16 in 1990 was an important step in integrating archaeology into the building industry. Egypt in comparison has very few heritage protection laws and a number of problems which need to be addressed. This is not to suggest that the English experience is a paragon of perfect heritage practice, but the present author has had extensive experience of working within that sector. He is more familiar with this framework and is aware of its strength and weaknesses and the potential it offers for signposting directions in Egyptian antiquities legislation relating specifically to the management of historic Christian sites. It offers a useful basis of comparison.

Chapter six presents the first case study which is based upon my primary fieldwork in Egypt in 2012 and 2019. The study focuses on the Church complex of Haret Zuwaila, which comprises the churches of Al Adra (Church of the Virgin Mary), Abu Sefain Church and the convent of St Girgios (St George) in Cairo. This case study examines the history of the churches and examines all historical data known to try and form a detailed historical background to the site. One of the main aims is to examine each individual architectural feature in the churches including the walls, floor, and pillars. A detailed description of their current state will be accompanied by a photographic survey to highlight any conservation and management issues. Finally, an assessment of the past remedial action and and if there can be any improvements to the maintenance, conservation and running of the site will be offered. This case study is important as Haret Zuwaila is one of only a handful of historic churches with Cairo and its deterioration affects not only the wider archaeological community but also the local Copts who pray and worship there.

Chapter seven examines the monastery of St Paul, situated next to the Red Sea. The case study offers a contrast to the church site of Haret Zuwaila discussed in the preceding chapter as it differs in scale and function. This chapter examines the history of the site, from its foundations in the 4th-century, up until the construction of modern buildings in the 20th-century. There are many extant buildings which have grown up around the original cave church of St Paul including a mill, tower (or Kasr) and monastic cells. All of these buildings will be studied to determine whether a date can be ascertained, and what their overall significance is to the local Coptic community, to visitors and to scholarly study. It will examine the latent conservation issues such as the rising water table which is destroying the frescoes within the Church of St Mercurius, the re-pointing of the historic defensive walls and the impact tourism has had on the monastery. The chapter examines what can be improved from a tourism perspective and whether management can be improved at the site.

Chapter eight examines the World Heritage Site of Abu Mina. Again, this is another contrasting site, being a historical rather than living place of worship, and being a large pilgrimage centre dating from late antiquity. The case study examines the problems facing the 4th-century ruins; these include rising water damage to the foundations of the walls. Abu Mena has many complex management issues and has been at the centre of a disagreement with the Ministry of State for Antiquities over ownership. As it is a UNESCO Heritage Site, this also brings another facet of management to the site where standards must be maintained and international charters must be adhered to. The case study is a good comparison with the others in this book as it is not a site which is currently in use by the local Coptic community, it is a 4th-century Roman city which sprang up around the monumental church and is now in a ruinous state. Therefore, it is a good comparison to the living monastery of St Paul and the urban churches of Cairo which are still in use; it will have different problems and tourism issues. The chapter also examines the damage and improper conservation efforts of previous management plans and looks to ways of addressing these previous poorly enacted plans.

Chapter nine concludes and summarises the main themes running throughout this book. It will examine if there are general issues which are prevalent at all Coptic heritage sites and whether there is anything which may be done to alleviate the problems in the long term. It examines the main threats to Christian heritage sites which are visible across the country and have been recorded at each site such as water damage from the rising water table, vandalism, improper conservation techniques and general mismanagement, and what safeguards can be put in place to ensure these problems do not occur again, and offers ideas for the promotion and protection of a heritage that really is very much at risk and which has all manner of significance to varied stakeholders.