

# Amedeo Peyron and the Coptic papyrus codices from This \*

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*The Egyptian Museum of Turin hosts a group of seventeen Coptic papyrus codices that represent a unique example of an entire, well preserved Late Antique Egyptian library. It is very likely that they originally belonged to the cathedral of This/Thinis, which was located not far from Abydos. They were purchased in Egypt by Bernardino Drovetti in the 1820s. This article aims at describing the neglected role played by Amedeo Peyron — philologist, papyrologist and Orientalist — in the study and valorisation of these important manuscripts.*

Amedeo Peyron (Turin, 2 October 1785 - 27 April 1870) is such a famous and deservedly renowned personage that adding even a brief note on his scientific production as a philologist, papyrologist, and Orientalist may appear totally superfluous.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the fundamental role that he played in the formation and valorization of the newly instituted Egyptian Museum of Turin is internationally known.<sup>2</sup>

There is, however, an aspect of the research of this renowned Turinese scholar that has not been sufficiently emphasized. Compared to his studies devoted to philology and Greek papyrology, the crucial importance for the development of Egyptology and Coptic Studies of his research on the Coptic

\* The present notes have a twofold purpose. On the one hand, they serve to acquaint the public at large with the Coptic codices of Turin, which body of material is not widely known even among specialists. On the other hand, they make public the research that was carried out by Paolo De Silvestri (prematurely deceased) under my supervision in the academic year 2008-2009. Paolo conducted a detailed survey of the «Fondo Peyron» preserved in the *Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino* (heretoforth BNT) (see below for details). Much of what is contained in these brief notes, therefore, depends on Paolo's work.

1. The bibliography concerning Amedeo Peyron and his numerous research interests is very wide. Only bibliographical references related to his relationship with the emerging discipline of Coptic Studies are mentioned here, referring for the rest to the accurate article by G.F. GIANOTTI, *Peyròn, Amedeo Angelo Maria*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 82 (2015), electronic version: <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/amedeo-angelo-maria-peyron\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/amedeo-angelo-maria-peyron_(Dizionario-Biografico))> (last accessed: May 2017).
2. A. PEYRON, *Saggio sopra papiri, codici cofti, ed uno stele trilingue*, in «Memorie della Reale Accademia delle Scienze di Torino» XXIX (1825), pp. 70-82; ID., *Papyri graeci Regii taurinensis Musei Aegyptii*, I, Taurini 1826, and II, Taurini 1827.