ST. SHENOUDA THE ARCHIMANDRITE
COPTIC SOCIETY

SOCIETY PROGRESS
OCTOBER 2002 TO SEPTEMBER 2003

(By Hany N. Takla)

LOS ANGELES
OCTOBER, 2003
FIFTH ST. SHENOUDA COPTIC CONFERENCE

Beginning August 22, 2003, the Society held its fifth general conference of Coptic Studies. This two-day event was held on the campus of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), through the courtesy of the University authorities and the hard work of the Coptic Collegiate Club there. There were about 17 presentations delivered by scholars, students, clergy, and laymen from the US, Canada, and Egypt. About 60-70 people attended some or all the presentations. This was the seventh Society-sponsored scholarly event in the field of Coptic Studies in Los Angeles. It helped to further the Society's efforts to promote scholarly research among the Coptic Community in this field.

TREASURES OF THE COPTIC CHURCH (TCC)

The Society's monumental work in publishing the treasures that the Coptic Heritage possesses is continuing at a slower pace. A preliminary literal English translation of that text has also begun. So far the first draft of the translation was completed for Genesis, 50% of Psalms, the three Synoptic Gospels, and 75% of Gospel of St. John. Volume 2 of the Coptic CD will include texts from CB1 through CB60 as well as the literal English translation of the Bohairic texts included. Projected date will be announced in the upcoming issues of the St. Shenouda Coptic Newsletter.

COPTIC TEXTILES COLLECTION

During the past year the Society acquired ten Coptic textile pieces from galleries and individual sellers from the US, Canada, Australia, and the Netherlands. Sizes and conditions of these pieces differ and their ages range from the 4th to the 8th centuries. The material is predominantly linen, while the colors are either stitched or painted. The largest piece is over a meter wide and in spite of the imperfect state of its preservation, it does show it is a cowl or hood piece of ancient tunic with traces of painted circles. There is another piece with very fine black embroidery, depicting a frontal view of a Centaur. Two others round pieces have colorful stitched figures. One has an animal figure and the second has two rows of Dancing figures. A more detailed description of each piece will be available on our website soon.
a. COEPA: The Society is continuing its cooperation with COEPA to promote and distribute their excellent products in the US, which is related to our work. Of their three audio titles, only St. Basil Liturgy and Midnight Psalmody are still available. There are more CD-ROM titles planned for the upcoming year that will be announced in the upcoming issues of the Newsletter. COEPA is still holds the distribution rights for our Coptic CD in Australia.
b. Digitizing of Coptic Microfilms: The entire digitized collection of manuscripts has been installed and is accessible to visitors of the Coptic Center through its new-networked system.
c. Image Digitizing: The Society also is working on digitizing the existing offprint collection, catalogs of Coptic and Christian Arabic manuscripts, and rare volumes dealing with Coptic Studies. Several thousand images have been scanned so far. Seven of these titles have been announced so far. This work will be made available to scholars and students involved in Coptic Studies and related fields. It will be furnished in PDF format on CD-ROMs, and will be announced when ready.
d. Computers at the Coptic Center: This year, thanks to the efforts of Mr. Sameh, we redesigned our network by adding three servers and six workstations. We also added two new 21-inch monitors. We currently have the entire set of Digitized microfilms that were done last year installed on the server and is accessible through all the workstations there. We also added a DSL high-speed internet connection to allow the users to gain access to all the resources on the internet including the new CMCL Internet Journal. Work is now on-going to host www.stshenouda.org address directly from the Center.
e. Global Access (Internet): This year we continued our solid presence on the Internet. HTTP://WWW.STSHENOUDA.COM is still our current website address. The traffic grew to an average of about 50,000 hits a month with visitors over the last year from nearly every state in the US as well as over 120 different countries from six continents.

THE COPTIC LIBRARY

During the past year the library grew to over 2,000 volumes of material in the different branches of Coptic Studies. We expanded the library in every section of its more than 14 different sections. We are continuing the expansion and the development of the library to contain all the
necessary references required by those who want to learn and/or to research the Coptic Heritage. The notable additions were as follows:


c. **Coptic Festschriften and Conference Proceedings:** Anonymous, *St. Mark and the Coptic Church* (1968); Hanna, *Studies Presented to


Commentary on St John (Chap 1-8) (1874); C. Wessely, *Griechische und Koptische Texte Theologischen Inhalts I-V* (Reprint: 1966-7).

k. **Coptic Liturgy:** F. E. Brightman, *Eastern Liturgies* (Reprint: 2002).


**THE COPTIC MiniConferences**

The Society began a program of limited one-day miniConferences at the Coptic Center on a quarterly basis. So far two of them have been held this year in December 2002 and April 2003. Each included 2-3 short presentations on a variety of subjects, and one single major presentation on Coptic History. There was an accompanying Library Book exhibit for each meeting. The first featured publications on different aspects of Coptic Art as well as the unveiling of our Coptic Textile collection. The second featured books on Coptic Architecture. Between 15-17 persons attended these meetings.

**EDUCATIONAL CLASSES:**

The Advanced Coptic Seminar, continued its work primarily on selections from the Bohairic text of the Book of Genesis. Several sessions of Coptic I and Coptic II classes were held at our Coptic Center. The enrolled students ranged in age from the teens to 50s. The Coptic Manuscript workshop or Coptic III has continued for three young Coptic students. The instruction was based on a Coptic text from the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, found in an electronic copy of an Oxford manuscript in our collection. The instruction utilizes a six-step method that start with the transcription of the text to a literal English translation of it. Instructions are primarily done using Power Point electronic presentations. The ones used in Coptic I were developed by Mr. Joseph Fahim who also taught one of these sessions at the Center this year. Those used in Coptic II and III were developed by Mr. Hany N. Takla, the other instructor at the Center. Also a group from UCLA, studying Sahidic Coptic, has been conducting a Translation Seminar at the Los
Angeles Coptic Center since March 2001. The group includes six adult students and the instructor is Dr. Monica Bontty, currently of California State University at Fullerton. During that past year they have been working on a three literary Sahidic texts that will be published in the near future.

PUBLICATIONS

a. **Newsletter - Subscriber's Edition:** Four issues of volume six of the Subscriber's Edition were published and mailed to our members and other selected individuals throughout the world.

b. **Coptica:** The work on the second and third issues are on going. They will include papers presented in the Wadi al-Natrun Symposium (February 2002).

GIFT PRESENTED TO THE NEW LIBRARY OF ALEXANDRIA

In February 2003, H.H. Pope Shenouda III made a historical appearance at the new Library of Alexandria. At the conclusion of his address to an audience of several thousands, he graciously presented, alongside Dr. Fawzy Estafanous of St. Mark Foundation a gift to the library in the form of 16 CDs filled with scanned electronic images of Coptic and Christian Arabic Manuscripts. This represented a joint gift from St. Mark Foundation and our Society, taken from the Society's New Digitized collection of Coptic manuscripts, originally stored in microfilm format.

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