

*ST. SHENOUDA THE ARCHIMANDRITE  
COPTIC SOCIETY*

**SOCIETY PROGRESS  
OCTOBER 2010 TO SEPTEMBER 2011**

**(By Hany N. Takla)**

*LOS ANGELES  
OCTOBER, 2011*

## THIRTEENTH ST. SHENOUDA COPTIC CONFERENCE

Beginning July 15, 2010, the Society held its 13<sup>th</sup> conference of Coptic Studies. This two-day event, held on the campus of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), continued our tradition of partnership with the UCLA's Near Eastern Languages and Cultures Department (NELC) since 1999. The conference returned to the regular theme of general Coptic Studies. There were 18 presentations delivered by and for scholars, students, and members of the Society from the US and Australia. The majority of the participants were members of academia. Six of them were presenting for the first time at our conference. They represented 9 different institutions of learning. They had one common denominator, the love for Coptology. This was the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Society-sponsored scholarly event in this field in Los Angeles since 1997. It helped to further the Society's efforts to promote scholarly research among the Coptic Community in this field as well as to attract wider participation by universities throughout Southern California. A full report about the Conference will be included in one of the upcoming issues of the St. Shenouda Coptic Quarterly (SSCQ).

## COOPERATION WITH SAINT MARK FOUNDATION (SMF)

The SMF sponsoring of the Coptic Congress in Cairo in 2008 has energized Coptic Studies in Egypt as we saw from news of scholarly activities in the field being sponsored by the Coptic Church as well as by the Egyptian government. Our Society, through its designated representative, will be assisting in the electronic resources acquisitions as well as the books collection for the new *St. Mark Coptic Cultural Center's* Library. The number of pages included in these electronic resources is about 800,000 at present.

Dr. Gawdat Gabra and Hany N. Takla completed the new volume of *Christianity and Monasticism in Upper Egypt*, v. 2 *Nag Hammadi-Esna*. It appeared this month in the series that AUC Press is publishing in cooperation with SMF. It contained the proceedings of the last Symposium that SMF convened in Naggada in 2008. Work will start shortly on volume 3, containing the proceedings of the Aswan symposium of 2010.

## COMPUTERS AND COPTIC

**a. COEPA:** The Society is continuing its cooperation with COEPA to promote and distribute their excellent products in the Western US, which

is related to our work. This includes the 4-CD set, *The Holy Bible – MP3 Audio*, and their 2-CD set of the Coptic Orthodox electronic Reference Library. (<http://www.coeпа.org>)

**b Coptic Digital Library (CDL):** The Society continued its strides in expanding its digital library of Coptology. This included items from the Society's offprint collection, catalogs of Coptic and Christian Arabic manuscripts, and rare and essential volumes in the field. The CDL in addition to its vast scanned resources includes a complete digitized collection of the 120 manuscripts in the Society's possession. Several of these CDL titles will appear in our upcoming Coptic Heritage website (CH). This work also can be made available to scholars and students involved in Coptology and related fields for nominal fees. They will be made available within the *CH* website. Inquiries and requests for other titles not appearing in *CH* can be mailed or emailed to the Society.

**c. Global Access (Internet):** During the year we maintained and expanded our solid presence on the Internet, which began in late 1995. Our current website address is still <http://www.stshenouda.com>. We also continued to update our other sites for our manuscript collection, <http://www.copticmanuscripts.org>, and for our educational endeavor, <http://www.sseics.org>. The latter site houses the material for the classes we are conducting. In addition we continued our presence in the popular internet site, Facebook, to showcase and announce our activities as well as to establish a communication link with those interested in learning and studying the Coptic Heritage.

**d. Coptic Heritage Site (CH):** As previously announced we have launched our new subscription site, *CH*, this past year. Subscribers can now have access to all the Society previous and current publications: *St. Shenouda Coptic Newsletter*, *Bulletin of the St. Shenouda Coptic Society*, *St. Shenouda Coptic Quarterly*, and *Coptica*. Other resources available include a lectionary, Bohairic-English, of the Days Commemorations in the Coptic Church; contents of the Coptic New Testament CD in Bohairic, Sahidic, Lycopolitan, Mesokemic, Greek, and English; and the first 24 items in our manuscript collection. More items will be added from the vast resources of our CDL collection. More details and subscription information is currently available at the following address: <http://demo.stshenouda.info/tc.htm>.

## THE COPTIC LIBRARY

During the past year the Coptic library, including books and periodicals, grew to about 3,900 volumes of material in the different branches of

Coptic Studies. We expanded the library in many of its 21 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:

- a. **Coptic Art/Architecture/Inscriptions:** Brooklyn Museum. *Unearthing the Truth: Egypt's Pagan and Coptic Sculpture* (2009).
- b. **Coptic Bible, Old & New:** Schüssler, *Biblica Coptica* 4.2 Sa 621-672 (2009); Tovar, S. T. *Biblica Coptica Montserratensia* (2007).
- c. **Canon Law and Legal Texts:** Lajtar, A & Van Der Vliet, J. *Qasr Ibrim: The Greek Inscriptions* (2010).
- d. **Coptic Festschrifts and Conference Proceedings:** Grypeau, E, Swanson, M, Thomas, D. *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam* (2006); Hovhanessian, V. (ed) *Exegesis and Hermeneutics in the Church of the East. Selected papers from the SBL Meeting in San Diego 2007* (2009); Mar Mina Society. *Commemorative Book on the Occasion of the Passing of 17 Centuries on the Martyrdom of the Egyptian Martyr Mar Mina, the Wonderworker* (Ar, 2009); Papacostantinou, A. (ed) *The Multilingual Experience in Egypt From the Ptolemies to the `Abbasids* (2010); Redmount, C. A. and Keller, C. A. *Egyptian Pottery – Proceedings of the 1990 Pottery Symposium at University of California, Berkeley* (2003).
- e. **Coptic History and Geography:** Al-Falaki, M. H. *Memoire sur l'Antique Alexandrie* (Reprint 2010); Awwad, C. *The Shabushti's Book of Monasteries - Al-Diyarat* (2008); Griffith, S. *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque* (2008); Mariette. *Itineraire des Invites aux Fete, d'Inauguration du Canal de Suez* (2007 Reprint with Ar Transl. of the 1869 ed.); Payne, R. *The Holy Fire – Story of the Early Centuries of the Christian Church in the Near East*. (Reprint of 1957 ed.); Swanson, M. *The Coptic Papacy in Islamic Egypt 641-1517* (2010); Werthmuller, K. J. *Coptic Identity and Ayyubid Politics in Egypt 1218-1250* (2010).
- f. **Coptic and Other Languages:** Labib, E. *πρωτοτυπερ*; Sterling, G. E. *Coptic Paradigms* (2008).
- g. **Coptic Literature/Patristics:** Athanasius, St. *On the Incarnation* (New ed. 1996); Bagnall, R. *Early Christian Books in Egypt* (2009); Bunge, G. *Earthen Vessels. The Practice of Personal Prayer according to Patristic Tradition* (2002); Drobner, H. R. *The Fathers of the Church. A Comprehensive Introduction* (2007); Froehlich, K & Reuseh, C. *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church* (Reprint

- 1984); de Lubac, H. *History and Spirit. The Understanding of Scripture According to Origen* (2007); Maloney, G. A. *Pseudo-Macarius. The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter* (1992); Moawad, S. *St. Shenouda the Archimandrite: Life, Sermons, Canons* (Arabic, 2009); Thomas, D. and Roggema, B. *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographic History v.1 600-900* (2009); Winston, D. (ed), Dillon, J. (ed) *Philo of Alexandria: The Contemplative Life, Giants and Selections* (1981).
- h. Coptic Liturgy:** Anonymous. *Holy Qurbono. The Divine Liturgy of St. Jacob Bar Salibi* (2009).
- i. Coptic Monasticism:** Brakke, D. *Evagrius of Pontius – Talking Back – Antirrhetikos – A Monastic Handbook for Combating Demons* (2009); Budge, E. A. W. *The Paradise of the Fathers*, 2v. (Au Reprint 2009); Driscoll, J. *Steps to Spiritual Perfection. Studies on Spiritual Progress in Evagrius Ponticus* (2005); Luiheid, C. *John Cassian: Conferences* (1985); Macarius, Bp. *The Ethiopian Servant of God: The Life of Fr. Abd el Masih the Ethiopian* (2009); \_\_\_\_\_. *Stories from the Egyptian Desert* (2010); Srubas, R. M. *City of Prayer: 40 Days with Desert Christians* (2008); Stewart, C. *The World of the Desert Fathers. Stories and Sayings from the Anonymous Series of the Apophthegmata Patrum* (1995); Swan, L. *The Forgotten Desert Mothers: Sayings, Lives, and Stories of Early Christian Women* (2001); Vivian, T. et al. *The Lives of the Jura Fathers* (1999).
- j. Periodicals:** *Coptic Church Review* 30.2 (2009), 31.1 (2010); *Coptica* 8 (2009); *Irenikon* v.82:2-3,4 (2009), 83:1 (2010); *Studia Orientalia Christiana Collectanea* v.40 (2007).
- k. Coptic Theology:** Fitzgerald, T (ed) & Gratsias, E. (ed) *Restoring the Unity in Faith – The Orthodox-Oriental Orthodox Theological Dialogue* (2007); Oden, T. C. (ed) *Ancient Christian Doctrines*, 5 vols (2009); Rusch, W. G. *The Trinitarian Controversy* (Reprint 1980); Rusch, W. G & Norris Jr, R.A. *The Christological Controversy* (Reprint 1980).
- l. Coptic Manuscript Collection:** Ms. 121.

#### ACADEMIC EFFORTS AT CGU:

The Society has successfully completed its fundraising goal of \$26,000 to fund the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the 2<sup>nd</sup> 2-year Clinical Professorship in Coptic Studies for the 2009-2010 calendar years. The reduction in funding was achieved through the investment return of a sizable contribution made

toward establishing a permanent chair of Coptology at CGU. Unfortunately this investment return is not enough to continue this reduction for the coming years due to the current economic conditions. Dr. Gawdat Gabra, the designated visiting professor of Coptic Studies, has continued teaching multiple classes, advising graduate students, and being the scholar guide to a group of students and faculty from CGU and other institutions at the Claremont Schools on their annual tour of Coptic Egypt in January 2010. Most notably among the 20 faculty and students on this tour was Prof. Anselm Min, the new Dean of the CGU's School of Religion. This 3<sup>rd</sup> annual trip reinforced the association of Coptic Studies with CGU throughout Egypt thanks to the exposure that this guided tour achieved.

During this short time period multiple students have either completed their MA theses or are continuing their PhD dissertations in Coptology or in a related field. In addition to the multiple students that are using Coptic Studies within their chosen graduate work, there were three students that have either completed their master theses (MA) in the field or already engaged in preparing their doctoral dissertation With Dr. Gabra. Ms. Sarah Mehany is now enrolled in the PhD program with Ms. Prinny Stephens under Dr. Gabra's direction. Ms. Stephens presented the findings of her MA at this year's 12<sup>th</sup> St. Shenouda Conference at UCLA. Ms. Patricia Eshagh, the first recipient of the Fr. Antonious Henein Scholarship Fund is continuing her doctoral dissertation about the dispersion of Coptic Monasticism in Western Europe. She presented her findings this year at the same conference. More students are joining the program in this upcoming year. This is continuing the impressive results for this program, now in its 4<sup>th</sup> year. It is a testimony to the cooperation between CGU and the Society as well as the able teaching of Dr. Gabra.

There were also two public lectures sponsored during this reporting period. The first was by H.G. Bishop Youssef of the Southern States Diocese, titled: "*Living Between Two Worlds: Egyptian Christians in America*" on December 1, 2009. The second was by Prof. Sergei Plekhanov of York University in Canada, titled: "*Christians and the State: Comparing Russian and Egyptian Experiences*" on February 17, 2010. Both lectures were well attended and very positively received.

In addition the School of Religion's Council for Coptic Studies participated in CGU's 3rd annual conference on *Religion in Conversation* with two papers dealing with the conference theme of *Food and Faith: Comparative Religions Dietary Codes*. Dr. Elhamy Khalil and Mr. John Isaac gave presentations on the Coptic perspective of food among the Copts as a practice as well as an education tool in the Church.

This Coptic Council has been meeting at the St. Shenouda Center as well as at the University throughout the year. Dr. Saad Michael Saad is the Council's chair as well as currently serving as the chair of the School's Board of Visitors, whose members also include Mr. Ramses Wassif, the Society's Vice President.

### **THE SOCIETY MANUSCRIPT EXHIBITS**

The Society held a one-day exhibit of the expanding Society's Manuscript collection on December 26, 2009. Twenty-seven manuscripts, which were acquired during the 2009 calendar year, were displayed. Another special exhibit was held on July 16, 2010 for the participants at the 12<sup>th</sup> St. Shenouda Conference. This one displayed several new manuscripts that were not previously displayed before.

### **EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AT THE CENTER:**

a. *SSEICS*: We completed two classes in Bohairic Coptic within the curriculum of the *St. Shenouda Electronic Institute of Coptic Studies* (SSEICS). The two classes in Bohairic Coptic were for introductory and intermediate levels. A total of 7 students enrolled in these classes. Even though the students were physically attending these classes, the preliminary steps to allow external students to participate were being implemented. This included making lecture notes and recordings available on our secure SSEICS site as well as student assignments and their graded work.

b. *Classes (non-SSEICS)*: The two advanced Coptic Seminars continued their work on the Sahidic Gospel of John and the Bohairic Genesis. A session of Introductory Bohairic Grammar was also completed with 5 students.

c. *Visits*: The Society conducted multiple individual and group private exhibits of its collections during the year. The list included distinguished Copts from Egypt and Australia as well as the United States.

### **PUBLICATIONS**

a. *St. Shenouda Coptic Quarterly (SSCQ)*: The second double issue of volume 4 of this quarterly journal was published and mailed to our members. Mr. Joseph Sanzo will serve as an associate editor of this publication beginning with volume 5, in addition to his new position as research assistant at the St. Shenouda Center for Coptic Studies. Mr.

Nabil I. Guirguis of the Society is to be commended for his tireless efforts in coordinating our publication mailing throughout the year.

*b. Coptica:* Volume 8 was published and distributed to members and subscribers. It included multiple papers from previous Society Conferences as well as by scholars in the field. The Coptica editor is Dr. Maged S. A. Mikhail. He is currently an Assistant Professor in the History Department of the California State University, Fullerton.

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