



ST. SHENOUDA COPTIC NEWSLETTER

Quarterly Newsletter Published by the Staff of the
St. Shenouda Center for Coptic Studies

1494 S. Robertson Blvd., Ste. 204, LA, CA 90035

Tel: (310) 271-8329 Fax: (310) 558-1863

October, 1996

Volume 3, No. 1

In This Issue:

The Sixth International Coptic Congress by Hany N. Takla.....	1
A Forgotten Coptic Martyrdom (2) by Hany N. Takla	4
St. Shenouda's Writings (6) by Ashraf Hanna.....	7
Observations of a Young Copt ... by Joseph Fahim	8
The Library of the Monastery of St. John the Little - A Colophon by Hany N. Takla....	10
A Curious Coptic Manuscript in Münster by Hany N. Takla.....	11
News by Hany N. Takla.....	12

THE SIXTH INTERNATIONAL COPTIC CONGRESS

MÜNSTER, JULY 20-26

(by Hany N. Takla)

Introduction: The long-awaited Coptic Congress was held at the *Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität* in Münster, Germany, between July 20 to July 26, 1996. There, scholars and students of Coptic Studies gathered from all over the globe in this University town. They came to present the work they have been doing during the past four years in the different fields included under the discipline of Coptic Studies. They all shared a common bond, a love for the different aspects of Coptic Egypt. They met at the University that has the best educational institute for Coptic Studies in the world, *Institut für Ägyptologie und Koptologie*. They witnessed its well-founded reputation as attested in its former graduates and current students. At the conclusion they paid a deserving tribute to the great man responsible for such reputation, the Congress Secretary, Prof. Martin Krause on the occasion of his retirement.

The Attendees: The attendance at this congress was much higher than the last one in Washington DC. They came from 19 different countries spread over four continents. Germany had the most

number of attendees, 77. Out of that number were 11 Egyptians who are either living or studying in Germany, including Bishop Demian, the Coptic Bishop of Germany, Fr. Pigol Bassili of Frankfurt, and Fr. Mikhail al-Baramousy of St. Antonious Coptic Monastery in Germany. The next largest group hailed from the US and they were 22 in numbers. Seven of those were Egyptians, including six directly affiliated with our Society. From Poland 16 attended, mostly their work dealt with Nubia and Coptic Art and Archaeology. Our favorite group from the Netherlands had 15 participants, a number that will surely multiply in the 7th Congress in Leiden in the year 2000. The rest of the participants were from Austria 9, France 9 (one Copt), Italy 7, Switzerland 6, Egypt 7 (only 4 were Copts), Canada 5 (4 were Copts), Belgium 4, Great Britain 4 (one Copt), Russia 4, Denmark 2, Israel 2, Portugal 2 (one Copt), Czech Republic 1, Finland 1, and Sweden 1.

There were many notable persons absent this time around for health and schedule conflict reasons among others. Absent among the Egyptians were

Bishop Samuel of Shabin Al-Qanater, Dr. Lola Atiya of Utah, Dr. Nossi Abdel-Shahid, Dr. Kamal F. Ishak of the Cairo Coptic Institute, Mrs. Samiha Abdel-Shahid and Mrs. Fatima Mahmoud of the Cairo Coptic Museum, and Dr. Ashraf Iskander of France. There were also several notable American Scholars absent. This group includes, Prof. Dwight Young of Chicago, Dr. Van Minnen of Duke Univ., Dr. Leslie S. B. MacCoul of Washington DC, Dr. Scott Carroll and Dr. John Sharpe III of the Scriptorium, Dr. Paul Mirecki of Kansas, Dr. Tim Vivian of California, Dr. Terry Wilfong of Michigan, Prof. Wintermute of Duke, Dr. Donald Spanel of the Brooklyn Museum, Mr. Richard Smith of Claremont CA, Ms. Monica Blanchard of the Catholic Univ. of America, Dr. Janet Timbie of Maryland, and Dr. Marianne Robertson-Wilson of Utah. Other notable no-show were Fr. Veilleux of Rome, Fr. Samir Khalil of Lebanon, Dr. Samuel Rubenson of Sweden, Prof. Kuhn of England, Dr. Lucia Papini of Italy, and others.

The Program: The schedule was arranged over a seven-day span. The first day, Saturday, was devoted to Congress registration in the afternoon and a get-acquainted session in the evening. The second day, Sunday, marked the official opening ceremony of the Congress. The participants were welcomed by the Rector of the University, the president of the IACS, Prof. Giverson, and the esteemed Congress Secretary, Prof. Krause. The day concluded with a bus trip to the nearby town of Hamm. There we viewed the beautiful new Coptic Art Exhibit opening at the Town Museum. It was titled "*Ägypten - Schätze aus dem Wüstensand. Kunst und Kultur der Christen am Nil*". It mainly featured Coptic items from German collections, including textiles, manuscript, and many other art objects. The last five days were devoted to the participants communications (presentations).

The communications presented were arranged in two groups. The first was a group of 5 plenary (hauptvorträge) sessions and the second consisted of eleven specific sections. The plenary sessions

contained 15 presentations (one canceled due to illness of presenters). The specific sections contained 116 presentations (at least 12 were canceled due to absence of presenters). Due to the volume of the presentations in the later group, they were arranged in two or three concurrent sessions. This made it very difficult to attend everything that was of interest.

The plenary sessions were arranged in 30-minute format with no follow-up questions. Each essentially dealt with a general survey of the research done since 1992 in each of the fields representing the Coptic Studies Discipline. This included Architecture, Art, Christian Nubia, Linguistics, Literature, Bible, Codicology and Paleography, Liturgy, Church History (canceled), Monasticism in Egypt, Gnosticism in Egypt, Manichianism in Egypt, Papyrology, Christian-Arabic Literature, and the story of the Coptic Museum. Without exception, each presenter ran out of time recounting the accomplishment of his respective field. This should tell us that such gatherings need to be done a lot more often than every four years.

The presentations of the special sections were arranged in 20-minute format with 10-minute question-and-answer session. Due to the special workshops on the Last day and the business meeting of the IACS, held the day before, Monday through Wednesday were arranged in three concurrent sessions. Thursday had two concurrent sessions and Friday had only one. These presentations were arranged in the following sections:

Coptic Art and Archaeology, 29 papers over three days (2 by Copts).

Coptic Linguistics, 11 papers (2 by Copts) plus a Workshop.

Coptic Liturgy and Church History, 9 papers (5 by Copts).

Coptic Literature and Coptic Bible, 11 papers (2 by Copts).

Coptic Papyrology and Epigraphy, 11 papers.

Coptic Monasticism, 4 papers.
Coptic Codicology and Paleography, 3 papers.
Coptic Gnosticism, 7 papers.
Christian Nubia, 12 papers over two days.
Coptic Manichianism, 5 papers.
Christian Arabic Literature, 2 papers.

Papers presented by Copts: There were about 11 papers presented by members of the Coptic community in Egypt as well as abroad. They were, arranged in the order of delivery, as follows:

1. The Architecture Elements newly discovered in the area of John the Little Monastery in Wady Natrun, by bishop Samuel of Egypt and delivered by Dr. P. Grossmann.
2. Les Rituels de la Reconsecration, by Dr. Youhanna Y. Nessim of Egypt.
3. The Copts in North America, by Dr. Zachariah Wahba of Maryland USA.
4. The Orthodox Eschatological and Ontological Metaphysics of Being and Incessant Quest after Supernal Knowability, by Prof. Fayeck Ishak of Canada.
5. Contribution des Scalae Medievales à la Lexicologie Copte. Rapport sur un Project de Recherche, by Prof. Adel Sidarus of Portugal.
6. Plato at Heliopolis of Egypt. A Critical View at the Relation between Egyptian Philosophy and Alexandrian Theology, by Dr. Rachad M. Shoucri of Canada
7. The Anti-Chalcedonian Movement in Byzantine Egypt: An Evaluation of Current Interpretation and Past Scholarship, by Mr. Mark Moussa of the St. Shenouda Society.
8. Projet d'Édition. Le Manuscrit Copte 44 de Paris, by Mr. Fouad Khouzam of France.
9. The Restoration of Coptic Wall Paintings from the Coptic Museum, by Mr. Ashraf Nageh.
10. The Thought of St. Shenouda of Atrię, by Mr. Maged S. Mikhail of the St. Shenouda Society.
11. The 13th Century Coptic Martyrdom of St. John of Phanidjoit, Reconsidered, by Mr. Hany N. Takla of the St. Shenouda Society.

The Role of the Society: There were many objectives for the Society's presence at the congress. Primarily we wanted to establish an acceptable presence in this the most illustrious body of Coptic Scholars. This is essential to our main goal of the Revival and Promotion of the Coptic Heritage. We participated in the form of three papers that were presented by our delegation as well as informal discussions with the notable scholars in the different fields of Coptic Studies. It is premature at this time to say that this primary object has fully been met. However, it is safe to say that great strides has been taken toward achieving it. The impression gotten from the scholars was that the Society's publications and activities has for the most part been well received. They were even acknowledged during one of the presentations. This is a great improvement over what was experienced in 1992 during the previous congress. The road is still long and dues have not been fully paid yet!

The Copts in Germany: This trip allowed us to have a first-hand look at the Coptic community living in Germany. Unlike the main Coptic immigrant communities in the US, Canada, and Australia; this community is highly assimilated in the German Society. Many of its members have been in the country for up to 30 years and most of those have German wives. There is relative concentration in the big cities like Frankfurt, Hamburg, and Berlin; but the numbers are rather small. According to Bishop Demian, the Coptic bishop of Germany, there is about 800 families scattered throughout Germany. They are served by seven churches and a new monastery, but not every church has a resident priest to pray regularly. There is also a good number of students enrolled in German Universities which apart from their excellent academic reputation are tuition-free! There is also two young Copts who will be

enrolling at the Coptic Studies Institut in Münster for advanced degrees in the field, a very hopeful sign.

A Last Word about the Host: Only good things can be said about the effort and the accomplishment of the congress organizers. Under the guidance of the Congress Secretary Prof. Martin Krause, everything went or was made to go smoothly. He spared no effort to make everyone, especially us, feel welcomed and at home. My personal apprehensions about how we would be received were not only alleviated but rather replaced with very warm feelings. However a general can not be successful on a difficult mission unless he had an excellent staff. Dr. Sofia Schatten and Dr. Cácelia Fluck were just the right people for that task. Their tireless efforts prior, during, and even after the congress concluded can only be admired and praised especially in our regards. There were many other students helping and all performed beautifully.

On behalf of the Society, THANK YOU, you made this experience memorable!

Conclusion: It was a great experience to put it mildly. It is necessary for our youth to be exposed to such atmosphere to broaden their horizon and such objective was successful with the three youth that were part of the Society's delegation. However, not many are afforded that opportunity. Also it has become obvious that this gathering needs to be more frequently held. For these two reasons the Society will be making an attempt to get the scholarly communities as well as the Coptic Diocese in Los Angeles to arrange for a smaller regional gathering in 1998. More details will be coming on the subject in the next issues of this newsletter. Meanwhile we and more of our Coptic youth should plan for a stronger presence in the 2000 Congress in Leiden. A presence in terms of more Copts and more scholarly-grade papers presented.

A FORGOTTEN COPTIC MARTYRDOM FROM THE 13TH CENTURY ST. JOHN OF PHANIDJOIT (2)

(by Hany N. Takla)

Martyrdom (continued):

The day of the trial coincided with a major event. It seems that a naval parade was under way. This brought people from nearly every known nation, rank, and profession. The summoned Saint was brought before the king amid the customary noise that one would expect from such a gathering. There, the king made another attempt to dissuade the Saint from his intentions by such lucrative offers as royal gifts, money, and high government appointment. The response was made in the same polite way that the Saint has done before. Either to give him back his faith or purify him by the edge of the sword.

The king took the advice of his chief justice and his Elder of Elders, the chief religious cleric. The latter suggested, on religious grounds, the punishment of

beheading; and the king agreed. However he drafted the services of a mamluke knight, named Philim, to use unduly force to persuade the Saint to abandon his firm stand. This Philim, a European Christian that converted to Islam, failed in his mission. He eventually was ordered by the king to carry on the Elder of Elders sentence. The gallantry of the Saint apparently made Philim nervous enough to fail to completely sever the head from the body!

The execution of the sentence unleashed the mob feelings that was brewing throughout the trial. They directed their actions toward stoning the body of the Saint, which the king ordered it to be hung upon a wood column just north of where the Saint was martyred. Then their anger turned toward any Christian they could find in the area. We are also told of the severe beating that some Non-Coptic

Christians were subjected to when they petitioned the king for the body of the Saint.

The author recounted some of the wonderous scenes that occurred that night. This included viewing of intense light coming from the hung body of the Saint. Such was witnessed by Christians as well as Moslems who actually went to investigate and were shocked by its miraculous origin. One of them even testified to the glorious scene of the ascending to heaven of the Saint's soul.

The Body was hung from Thursday night until early Monday, when the king ordered the discreet disposition of the body. This was accomplished by throwing it, wrapped in a sack filled with the stones that were stoned with, in the Nile. The king rather nervous edict was carried on as a result of the nightmares that he experienced the previous two nights. There the Saint appeared gloriously to king and threateningly ordered him to lower the body from where it was hanged. It is interesting to note that body, according to the author, was never found!

Why was it written in Coptic?

This is the most intriguing question about this text. Early in the 13th century, new compositions in Coptic are almost unheard of except for liturgical hymns. At least in a text designed to be read to the people, a parallel Arabic translation would be

included. Of course this is not the case. Narrative are almost an exact rendering from Arabic possibly to distinguish their origin, i.e. they were originally said in Arabic. Also the writer may have been translating from Arabic notes that he gathered during his 11-month investigation. So why is it in Coptic only?

The primary objective for using Coptic instead of Arabic, in my opinion, is to hide it from the Moslems; while still be able to read it publicly. It is very clear that some of the facts and opinions expressed in the text would be of grave consequences for those involved if such is revealed to the Moslems or the Moslem authorities. I base this conclusion on the combination of two sets of data in the text. The first is the marginalia that a scribe or a reader of the manuscript has recorded in the heading of the pages. The second is textual examples that record statements and information that can be understood either as anti-Islamic or anti-government.

The first set is a collection of short headings that seem to me reflective of that person's fear of what may happen if this falls in the wrong hand. No correlation is apparent between these headings and the text included on such page. It seems almost like a Christian magical formula that someone is applying to protect the text. These headings are as follows:

Folio Number	Text	Translation
f. 40v, 51v, 54v	Φ† ηαγιετ	God save me
f. 41v, 45v, 49v, 53v	Φ† ηαι ηηι	God have mercy on me
f. 42v, 50v	Φ† αριβονεη ερο	God help me
f. 43v	Φ† ηαι ηαη	God have mercy on me
f. 44v, 52v	Φ† χω ηηι εβ	God forgive me
f. 46v	Φ† εωτεη ερο	God hear me

The second set is the reason for writing the first, and it is a collection of citations from the text that would be considered unwise for a Christian to write during Islamic times. In fact it would be suicidal if

the text was to be read publicly in churches. Some of these textual examples are as follows:

a. The author exhorts the Christians to resist conversion and uphold the faith;

f.40r l.21-4 αλιωνι τηρον ψυχον ω πιπιστος ουρος πιψηρι ητε πιβαπτισμα γινα ητενηαι μπιναργεν ετχολι ητε πενσωτηρ ηαγαθος

Come you all today O the faithful ones and the sons of the baptism in order that we carry the sweet yoke of our Good Savior

b. Author labels (some?) Moslems as adulterers and sinners:

f.40v l.20-4 φαι πε πιψηρι ητε τιμετατωτει εταφσι ητονια ητε πεψιωτ ουρος αφκωρ μιουρ εβολ πει πιπορνος πει πιρεψερνοβι

This is the son of disobedience who took the wealth of his father and dispersed it with the adulterers and the sinners.

c. The use of a Biblical quotation by him to label the generation as a sinning adulterous one:

f.42r l.26-8 φη εενατψιπι εονοητ εβολ πει πασαχι <φεη παικων> ηπωικ ηρεψερνοβι

He who will be ashamed to reveal me and my words <in this> adulterous sinning <generation>.

d. Describing Salah al-Din, as having a prior faith other than Islam:

f.43r l.25-6 ητε φηναρ ηπιαταριπηνος

of the faith of the Agarinneos.

e. Existence of a refuge village in Upper Egypt for Christians who converted to Islam and came back.

f.44r l.11-20 αλιγε πιων ψα ουτιι εεσαρης μιων επεεραν <πε> πεπλευ εεκεχε πεεζονιαστης εψμει ηπιχρηστιανος... μαλιστα Δε ... πη εηαγκεονα ηηατασεων επονηραγ ...

They went to a village south of them which its name <is> Pepleu because its ruler was loving to Christians ... and especially ... those who has returned to their faith ...

f. Abu Shaker, hinting to the martyr that the Coptic officials sometimes have declared their Islam in appearance only!

f.45r l.23-7 ρε άριειι πακ ρε {π}<η>ιαχι ετακχοτον γανχεονα αη {π}<η>ε αλλα μφρητ ηγαναμεθονα ουρο αηον τενχε μεθονα ηπαν πιβει

"It is known to you that the word<s> that you spoke are not blasphemies but as a lie-maker and we tell lies at every time."

g. Abu-Shaker labeling Moslems and probably the Mamlukes as very evil.

f.45r l.31-2 πακειι πακ αη πε ρε παιεθος γανπετχων εηαψω

Do you not know that these nations are very evil.

h. The priest Arous praising the martyr for wanting to be martyred.

f.46v l.23-7 ρε ωογηιατκ πασον δατεη πσε εψωπ ακψαηρι μφαι ηηαερψωιτ ηχε πεκραν δεη χηιι τηρο πει πεσθοψ εψοπ

"Blessed are you O my brother before the Lord. If you do this matter, your name will be famous in all Kemi and its surroundings together."

i. The author using the words of king David to uncomplimentary describe the king's servants who were verbally abusing the martyr while confined in prison.

f.48v l.25-7 ἀγκωτ̄ ἐποι ḥξε οὐθεο ḥνονχωρ
οὐοσ οὐεγηατωρη ḥνακακωη πε
ἐτασὰμονι ἡμοι

"They gathered around me namely a bunch of dogs and a company of evil chiefs has grabbed me."

j. The king is described as being afraid as a result of the martyr's second appearance to him after his death.

f.54v l.15-6 αφμαχη ḥροτ̄ οὐοσ αφχοπη ἐβοη
ελροη

He was filled with fear and he hid himself from him

Why is our Saint not included in the Coptic Synaxarium?:

This is another puzzling question about this text. We know that the Synaxarium of the Coptic Church was written around that time period. So why is not there? Fr. Marcos, the priest who recorded this martyrdom, intended it to be used in the celebration of this martyr. From the rather pristine shape of the manuscript, it did not seem to have been ecclesiastically used. The manuscript does not have any mention of being donated to St. Macarius Monastery. So under what circumstances did it arrive there? Are all these things related. In any case the following scenarios are possible:

1. The manuscript was transported to the monastery to be used by the compilers of the

Synaxarium; who, for some reason, did not think it should be included.

2. The manuscript, judging by its sensitive nature, was smuggled to the monastery and hidden among manuscripts of earlier dates for safe keeping. Thus making it unavailable to the compilers, or rejected by them for its sensitive nature. Or was it the deficiency of miracles that made it unfavorable!

But there is no doubt that when such text would have been OK to include, it was not available to those doing the work. As one can see there is more questions than answers. However, now that it is available again, the Coptic Church should seriously consider its inclusion in the Synaxarium.

(to be continued)

ST. SHENOUDA'S WRITINGS (6)

(by Ashraf Hanna)

This is a text translation from a second Arabic sermon of St. Shenouda read on the 1st Sunday during Lent in the Coptic Church. The text was transcribed from a microfilm copy of Paris Arabe 4761 (CML 1592).

(4v) ... A Second Sermon to be read on the first Sunday of the Holy Fast:

In the name of the living, holy God, Creator of the bodies and the souls, who made thanksgiving due upon us forever. And made us praise and glorify Him for his great mercy and favor for us. For as we fell down, He raises us up, and as we sinned and repented, He forgave us. Behold now He congratulates you O the Christian people, gathered

in this holy church, for acceptance of this fast. And makes you from among those who pleased God with their good deeds so God will have compassion and pity upon you.

As it is written in the book of Exodus which (5R) is the second book of the Holy Torah, "I have mercy upon whom I want to have mercy on, and have pity upon whom I want to have pity on, and have compassion upon whom I want to have compassion

upon." And Asking and entreating God so as He gives life up to 100 years while you are abiding in the commandments, taking care and forgiven from the sins, and being away from doing the abominable, inappropriate matters. Know you O the blessed brothers that this fast became an obligation and a commitment for us and for all the baptized ones.

And the evidence for that is our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom is glory, fasted forty days and forty nights without needing that. Because fasting and prayer were made for forgiveness of the sin, and our Lord Jesus Christ did not commit a sin that necessitate (5v) that. For He, being blessed and exalted, resembled us in every thing except the sin only. He also said in His holy Gospel, "I did not come to abolish what is written but to complete it." So when Moses the prophet and Elijah fasted forty days and forty nights, He himself fasted the fast for the sake of completing the Law. And He obliged us Christians, to (follow) that.

And Our Master, to whom is glory, increased the fast to hide His divinity from the devil, lest He makes it known to him about the great plan (?) that He planned for our salvation. As the apostle Paul said that if through the cross of Christ is salvation, then they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Let us be diligent now, O my blessed brothers, and purify our souls, and do what pleases Him from the fasting and the prayer. So that it (6r) be acceptable before Him.

And we should(?) pray and not be wearied of [incessant(?)] prayer. And He gave us the parable of the unjust judge, not fearing God. So a woman came to him in order that he takes revenge for her upon her adversary. And he did not give her attention. And when she repeated the request, he took revenge for her upon that one. For the prayer is one of the lawful requirements along with the fasting. Because our Lord Jesus Christ said that it casts out the demons. As for him who say that he has no knowledge of prayer, let him hear His saying, "Carry my yoke for it is light." And He, His name be glorified, when His disciples asked Him saying, "Teach us to pray", He said to them, "Say our Father who is in the heavens, hallowed be Your name..." and what follows. He thanked the tax-collector and praised him with one word for he was praying saying, "O God(?) forgive me for I am a sinner". And God accepted (6v) his prayer because of this word for the prayer is not lots of talking but by honesty and [sincerity]. For our Lord, to whom is glory, say in the Gospel of Luke, "Do not increase your talk like the pagans who thinks that they will be heard by the abundance of their talk, and do not resemble them in that. But if you pray then say Our Father who art in the heavens..."

And Master Paul, tongue of the fragrance and teacher of the church, says, "Five words with understanding are better than multitudes of talk." And he also said, "He who talks with tongue, he does not know(?), resembles talking to the air." So now, no one argue and say, "I do not know (how) to pray." For the Law of God commanded that prayers is not by the abundance of talk".....

OBSERVATIONS OF A YOUNG COPT AT THE SIXTH COPTIC CONGRESS IN GERMANY

(by Joseph Fahim)

My main task, as a representative of the Society in Germany, at the Coptic Congress was to present myself well among the many scholars of Coptic

Studies. I had to closely observe how the Coptic heritage is scholarly approached. Also observe how to talk to scholars in such field, in and out of the lecture rooms. In other words we had to learn to

speak the language of scholars. When I attended the Congress in July 1996, I also learned some other non-scholarly issues.

First, when I talked to many of these scholars, I found out that not all of them were just mobile banks of knowledge as I imagined. Some of them were simple and would speak about personal experiences without difficulty. This kind of scholars could be easily approached. However, they still were well-disciplined and committed when it came to the issue of Coptic Studies. In many cases, also, and at different levels, they valued their relationship with God. On the other hand, there was that kind of scholars who valued knowledge more than most other issues. To those, one had to show some level of intelligence to get them interested in carrying on a conversation.

Another thing that grabbed my attention at the Congress was the subject that was being studied; i.e. the Coptic Heritage. There were almost 200 in attendance, most of whom were scholars and students in a field directly or indirectly related to Coptic Studies. Out of the two hundred, only ten or twenty were Copts, include those who live in the lands of immigration like myself. The rest were mainly from Europe and some were from the US. There must be a good reason for this number of highly intellectual people to gather from the most civilized parts of the world to study whatever they are studying. Our forefathers must have possessed some very unique and precious jewels, characters of faith, that these people are trying to uncover. It proved to me what my teacher once said, "Egyptians taught the whole world, not only civilization, but also religion!" If so, then where are the Copts, whose heritage is being studied? Should we not be doing more than these scholars are doing? Even worse, where is our heritage or the jewels of our Coptic Church? When I think of all of that, I wonder how can someone ask, "Why is it

important to keep our Coptic Heritage and why we do not stick to the "American" way of worship?"

We are definitely taking things for granted. We are ignorant about our very own church. We do not know why are so many things done in the liturgy the way they are. Then it becomes easy to deviate because things do not make sense to us. As a result, people when they cannot find logical reasons for such practices, they will abandon the Church. They will leave all together and go somewhere else where people are doing things based on some logical "Biblical Reasons". Or they would just start their own church, that will be based on their own understanding of the Bible. Thus because of our negligence we became a stumbling block for many. Furthermore, if things do not make sense to us, we might even start changing it around so it may make sense. Then we start to lose the main characteristics that were keeping the Church together the way it should be. As a result, the church will become strange-looking and not understood. The only way out of this is to go back to the roots of our Heritage and find out how and why things were done before. That is why, I personally think that I have a lot of studying to do about my Church.

Also I learned more than how to speak the language of scholars and how to present myself to them. I learned to have some confidence about my self-image as a Copt with such a great heritage, in the presence of the many cultures that we have in the US. However my ignorance about my own Church gives me a great deal of humility as well. The last question this congress raised in my mind was about the nature of Coptic Studies itself. How much scholarly can I get in trying to learn about my Coptic Church, and yet keep the great deal of simplicity of faith that I need to get close to God and live in peace without too much doubts in my life.

**THE LIBRARY OF THE MONASTERY OF ST. JOHN THE LITTLE
A COLOPHON FROM A VATICAN-PRESERVED COPTIC MANUSCRIPT
(by Hany N. Takla)**

The successful excavation seasons of the Scriptorium (1995-1996) in ruins of the Monastery of St. John the Little in Egypt's Wadi 'N Natrun sparked widespread interest in the Monastery and its founder. So far, no remains of the Library has not been excavated. There is however at least one Bohairic-Arabic Manuscript in the Vatican that can be traced directly to this ancient library. This is Vatican Copt. 21, a complete codex of the Liturgy of St. Cyril. It is dated 1059 AM (1343 AD). Its transmission history from the monastery to the Vatican is not definitely known. What is known is that it is mentioned among six Coptic Manuscripts inventoried in MS. Vat. Lat. 7136, from the Papacy of the Roman Catholic Pope Julius II, 1503-1513. Keep in mind that the last time the monastery was mentioned to be inhabited was in 1493 AD. There is another Bohairic colophon of a Horologion, published by Dr. Burmester in 1965, that came from that library. Three Arabic Manuscripts is known to have come from the Monastery and are currently preserved in European Libraries.

Below is the Bohairic text of the colophon of Vatican Copt. 21. The text reflects the old style Djinkim, customary of pre-1400 AD Bohairic manuscripts. Editor's modifications to the text is marked with '[]' for lacuna, '{ }' for errors by scribe, and '<>' for additions by the editor. Further, an underlined text indicates above line scribal additions, and strikethrough text indicates portions of text crossed out by scribe.

(f.66v) Φέν φραπ ἐφιωτ νει πωμηρι πει
πιπά εθ Τθειας ήμοουχιος: ουμεθηντ
ηνωτ τεν<ον>ωμητ ἐμοφ τεντώνη παφ.
ψα ἐπερ ἀμην.
αψωπι ηνωκωκ ἐβολ ἡπαιλγωη ετ-
χεαρωντ. ἐτε πατ πε +{ἄγια}<απα-
φορα> ήτε πιλγιος (f.67r) Εριτερι κυριλ-
λος. {ή}φεν πικλ ήλβοτ εμωιρ: ἐβολ
φεν χ[α]ηρομπι χρ ἐμφ αλθ: νει εβολ
θ[ε]η ουρομπι {ή}ετε πεπωμηρι ήρεκερ
ψιλ[τ] φεν ουγιρ[η]ην [ή]τε φτ ἀμην:
ουοσ [φη ε]ταψφιρωουχι ή[θητφ] φιωτ
πειμουη[αχος π]ιλγιος πιου[ηβ ήτε] φτ
ουοσ ψ[εμωιτφ]φ πιρεεβητ[ερο]c ιωη
πωμηρι ήτε Τληια ήεκκλησια ήτε πεπιωτ
ήργουχμενος αββα ιωη: (f.67v) φεν
πτωον ήψιρητ: ήψαφε ήτε πεπιωτ αββα
ιακαρι: αψφιρωουχι ήθητφ φεν πεψ-
τις<ι> ἐμηι ετ{ρ}εφερμελεταη ήθητφ
ουοσ ήτεψωπι ηνωερφμενη παφ ψα ἐπερ
ἀμην.

(f66v) "cross" In the name of the Father and the Son
and the Holy Spirit, the equal Trinity: one
divinity, we worship Him, we glorify Him for
ever Amen

He made a completion to this blessed labor. Which is the Anaphora of Saint **Gregory** Cyril. on the 24th of the month of Amshir: From years of the martyrs 1059: and from a year which is (of) the sons of Hagar 743 in peace of God Amen:

And he who took care of it, the monk father, the holy one, the priest of God and His servant, the presbyter John, the son of the holy church of our hegumen father Abba John (f.67v) in the mountain of Shiet: The wilderness of our Father Abba Makari: He took care of it with his true labor which he meditated in it and it became a memorial for him for ever Amen.

გინა ჩთე πάχε πεπνουτ εφὲთ იაფ ჩმაτფე:
ჩთუები ჩმაპკაგი: თავა ენეგ ჩთუები
ჩოლიპროსოუზი დემ ჩახა ჩთე ამან
ეცეუაპი: ამან

In order that Christ our God shall give him the heavenly things in place of the earthly things: The eternal in place of the temporal in Jerusalem of Heaven Amen let it be: Amen

A CURIOUS COPTIC MANUSCRIPT IN MÜNSTER

(by Hany N. Takla)

As part of the program of the Coptic Congress in Münster this year, a tour was set up to view an exhibition of the nearby Bible Museum. There, I saw an impressive display of the history of biblical research, including manuscripts and old editions of the Bible in several formats and languages. There was also a display of some of the Coptic manuscripts owned by the New Testament Research Institute, who operates the Bible Museum. Among these few Coptic manuscripts, I noticed one small-size manuscript opened to a page displaying a Bohairic Coptic text of the Prayer of the Angels. A prayer, used in the Coptic Church in its Agbeyia (or Horologion). The title-card in the display case said it was from the book of the Morning and Evening Prayers. This meant some kind of an abridged edition of the Coptic Horologion. However from earlier studies conducted at the Coptic Center in Los Angeles, I knew that the text of this prayer was included in manuscripts of the Horologion by reference only. Such mention usually occurred in the Arabic rubrics (instructions) of the text. In fact the only time that I sighted this text in full was in manuscripts of the Coptic Psalmodia. With the prospect of seeing a contradiction to my long established beliefs about the placement this prayer, I found myself constantly going back to that display case.

Our guides, Dr. Wolfgang Richter and Dr. Schmitz, were kind enough to take the manuscript out from behind the glass and allow me to examine it. Due to time limitation, I restricted my examination to figuring out the contents of the manuscript. What I

found was that it began with the morning doxologies that are usually recited prior to the Coptic Service of the Morning Raising of Incense. It concluded with the prayers just preceding the chanting of the Doxologies during the Coptic Raising of Incense Services. The manuscript apparently was part of the Coptic Psalmodia and its place in the text was between the Theotokias (hymns praising the Virgin) and the Doxologies. Despite lack of page or folio numbers, the manuscript seemed complete. This raised very interesting possibilities on the how the Book of the Psalmodia was structured.

My curiosity about the manuscript was still not fully satisfied. So the next morning when I saw Dr. Schmitz at the Congress, I asked for permission to examine the manuscript more closely. I was given a late-morning appointment on Friday, July 26. There I was given the opportunity not only to examine it but to take a complete set of photographs of this 39-folio, pocket-size manuscript. As I was looking at the contents, I discovered several sections in the Morning Doxologies part being crossed out. This gave an indication that such sections were not to be used in the prayer. Looking closely at these marked sections, I observed the following:

1. Those sections are not included in the text, currently used in the Coptic Church.
2. Only the Coptic portion, not the Arabic was marked as deleted.
3. Some of the deleted texts had mentions of St. Macarius.

My preliminary conclusions about the manuscript is that it belonged to the monastery of St. Macarius in Wadi 'N Natrun originally. It then was transported outside of the Monastery to another monastery or church, where peculiar parts to the originating monastery were crossed out so as not to be recited. As for why only the Coptic text was crossed out, it is a clear indication that only the Coptic was being

recited. Arabic was, as it always has been, provided as a reference translation and not for use. This conclusion is further supported by the lack of any marks within the verses in Arabic to divide the text as is customarily done in Coptic. More work need to be done on how this manuscript fits in the Coptic Liturgical system. (*to be continued*)

News

(by Hany N. Takla)

1. History of the Coptic Orthodox Church: This book by the Rev. T. Hall Partrick, Ph.D. of Greensboro, North Carolina has been a great success. In a matter of six weeks, about 1,500 copies of the book were sold to individuals and churches through out the US and several other countries. This success is a fitting tribute to such a fine accomplishment of a much-needed work. The author, in an excellent and fluent English style, takes the reader on a quick journey beginning with the early roots of the Church in the first century to its present-day revival. He then concluded that the Coptic Church, with its glorious past, has survived the persecutions of many; and is currently growing in a vibrant fashion. It is suitable for general reading as well as a starting point for doing extensive study on a specific period in history.

Keep in mind that this work is a history of the Coptic Church and not a book of the saints. In such context we will encounter painful lessons that God has allowed to happen. To hide or water-down such events we will be doing a disservice to ourselves and the generations that will follow us. History is a collections of lessons learned in the present from events of the past to help us shape our future. This work is a good start toward the writing of a comprehensive history of the Coptic Orthodox Church. A history that would address the ecclesiastical issues as well as those of the forgotten populace.

The retail price for a single copy is \$14.95. As a benefit to our dues-paying members, we offer it at \$10, limited to a maximum of 5 copies. Others in US Eastern and Midwestern States and Canada should order through our distributor, Dr. George M. Bassaly, Tel/Fax No. (201)229-0412. Members worldwide and others living in Southern and Western US States, should order through the Society. Quantity discounts are available:

10-49 copies for \$13.50 each, and 50 or more copies for \$12.50. Organizations or individuals, interested in distributing the book in Australia or Europe, should contact the Society. A special discount will be given to such distributors for order of 50 or more copies.

2. The Society on The Internet: We are still at the same address, "<http://www.stshenouda.com>". In this next quarter we are planning to expand Coptic Language section that was started by including introductory lesson in Bohairic Coptic. This is made possible by the availability of the Microsoft Word Viewer, distributed free on the internet through Microsoft Corp. This viewer, after installation, can be configured through Netscape Viewer to view any Word documents. You will need first to download and install the Coptic fonts available through our site to be able to see the Coptic characters. Also we are preparing a list of all the available microfiche of Coptic Studies research material. This material can be ordered electronically through our Coptic Store on the web. Further we are working on an on-line summary listing of the microfilm-of-manuscripts holdings of the Society, arranged by subject. Tune in on the web for more developments.

Starting with the last edition of the Newsletter (Vol. 2, No. 3) we made it available to our electronic mailing list. Such edition had the full text of the printed edition except for any Coptic text included. With the introduction of the Word Viewer, mentioned above, any one can view the full text including the Coptic via a Link that we are providing in the HTML version of the Newsletter. We are still working on a directory listing of persons with a particular expertise in the different disciplines related to Coptic Studies. The idea was submitted by Mr. Shenouda Mamdouh of Cairo, Egypt

(cop@idsc.gov.eg). This will be incorporated as part of our Manual of Coptic Studies Section.

3. The Sixth International Coptic Congress: During the period of July 20-26, the International Association for Coptic Studies held its 6th International Coptic Congress in Münster, Germany. This is held once every four years. More information is included in a separate article in this newsletter. A more expanded version will be available on the internet by October 15, 1996. Its address will be:

["http://www.stshenouda.com/society/ccngrs2.htm".](http://www.stshenouda.com/society/ccngrs2.htm)

4. The California Orange County Coptic Regional Center: Since its official opening on July 22, 1995, the center completed two consecutive Introductory Coptic Grammar Class. The instructor is Mr. Joseph Fahim, center's assistant director. A new session started on Fridays, beginning September 13, 1996. For more details about the Regional Center, contact Mr. Fahim at (714) 842-1344 or e-mail to jfahim@stshenouda.com. If you are in the Orange County area, be sure to visit the Regional Center, located within the confines of Archangel Michael Coptic Orthodox Church at 4405 Edinger Blvd., Santa Ana CA 92704.

5. Coptic Word Games Handbook: Vol. 1 of the Coptic Word Games Handbook is in distribution. Only a few hundred copies of the original 2,000 copies printed are left. The reaction was very favorable to this publication, a truly proud fruit of the effort of 18, predominantly college-age, Coptic students in our Orange County Regional Center. It is an excellent tool to pleasantly introduce our younger and even older generations to the language of our fathers. We are hoping to include this in the Coptic Language curriculum that the Los Angeles Diocese is planning. The nominal price charged is \$2.00 for members and \$3.00 for non-members.

6. The Scriptorium in Egypt: We received information that the Scriptorium's 1997 Excavation season in the St. John the Little Monastery in Egypt was suspended. We hope this suspension is limited to this upcoming season only. The very significant yield from that site last year shows how important that site is to piece together Coptic monastic history. May the Lord direct all such work for the Glory of His Holy Name. For more information on the activities as well as the

educational programs of the Scriptorium, please contact Prof. Jerry Pattengale at (800) 333-8373.

7. Research Projects: We reported last time on three important projects that were being worked on by our staff at the center. The first draft of the encyclopedia entry on the Copts, in Macmillan upcoming Encyclopedia of Immigrant America, was utilized to a great extent by Dr. Zakariah Wahba in his paper that he submitted to the Coptic Congress in July. The transcription of Coptic glosses of the famous Hibat Allah ibn Al-Assal's 13th century critical Arabic translation of the Coptic Gospels, is about 85% complete. In early August we were honored by a visit of Dr. Staal to the Center, where he met with our students working on this project. The Life of St. John Kolobos (the Little) project is progressing. During the Coptic Congress, we were able to discuss with Prof. Horn of Göttingen, Germany, the possibility of obtaining a copy of the Arabic Life of the Saint which is preserved in the Göttingen University Library. We will be sending an order a microfilm copy soon through Prof. Horn.

Mr. Ashraf Hanna, of our Center's staff is currently working on collation of the different manuscripts of the Coptic (Arabic) Synaxarium. Similarly, Mr. Sherief Sorial is working on the Coptic Psalmodia, Mr. Emad N. Georgy is working on the Coptic Horologion, and Mr. Peter Mankarious will be starting on Coptic Liturgy of St. Basil. All of these projects are designed to trace the development history of these important books in the Coptic Church. The extensive manuscript-on-microfilm holdings of the Society is what made these projects a reality. Through the assistance of Dr. Gawdat Gabra of the Cairo Coptic Museum (who visited the Center in mid August), Mr. Mark Moussa will be doing a textual study of the Life of St. John Kame, a famous 9th century Coptic monk.

8. Coptic Book Library: Several more volumes were added to our Coptic library. A list of the more significant items is included in the separate Progress Report accompanying to this newsletter.

9. Coptic Classes: A new Intermediate Bohairic Coptic Class began on August 17 at the Center. This class will deal with the translation of smaller, simpler Bohairic texts. The class meets on Saturdays from 6-7:30 p.m. Also at the Center, we have the Advanced Coptic Seminar. This is held on Sundays from 6-7:30 p.m. It is divided up into two sessions, one translating more

advanced Bohairic literary texts, and the second dealing with Sahidic monastic texts. The Intermediate Coptic class at the Coptic Theological Seminary in Los Angeles started on September 12. This course will be 8, 3-hour sessions and will deal with translation of short Bohairic texts, introduction to Sahidic as compared to Bohairic, and principles of reading Coptic manuscripts. All the above classes are taught by Mr. Hany N. Takla, the Society's president.

Prof. Loprieno of UCLA will be offering either a 4- or 8-unit Coptic Sahidic class in the Winter Quarter, (January 97). We are hopeful that this upcoming class will be as popular among the Coptic students there as the first one was in 1995.

10. Analysis of the Coptic Liturgy of St. Basil: Mr. Monir B. Raphael of Chicago IL has enriched Copts and Coptic liturgical studies alike with a most important publication. It is designed to aid in the comprehension of the Coptic Liturgy. The book is titled *The Coptic Liturgy of St. Basil - Coptic Language Analysis*. This 3-vol. set publishes the text of the Liturgy of St. Basil in 3 columns, Arabic, Coptic, and English. The Coptic text is coded with numbers that one can use to look up the meaning as well as the grammatical analysis of the word on the opposing page or in the footnote section. There are also detailed appendices on the Coptic as well as the Greek grammar used in the liturgy. It is a must-reference to any Copt or any person interested in learning the proper meaning of the Coptic Liturgy. The price for members is \$32.00 for all three volumes (vol. 1 \$17, vol. 2 \$7, vol. 3 \$8) and for non-members \$38.00 (vol. 1 \$20, vol. 2 \$8, vol. 3 \$10). Multiple-copy discount is available. Vol. 2 requires vol. 1, and vol. 3 requires vol. 1&2. This set is an enlarged as well as an enhanced edition of what the author has produced in Egypt nearly 30 years ago in Coptic and Arabic only.

11. Lay Coptic Organizations and Activities: Several Lay Copts have formed organizations and/or publications, dealing with religious and cultural projects in the US, Canada, Europe, and Egypt. Unfortunately the independance of such people from the authority of the church has caused them to go unknown among Copts especially in North America. It is our sincere hope that our Coptic community will lend a hand of support to such organizations before they fade away and we all get deprived from their benefits. The following is a list of

such organizations or publications, excluding those of strictly charitable activities:

A. In English:

i. *The American Association of Coptic Studies:* This organization was formed recently in Portland, Oregon to promote on a scholarly basis the study of the Coptic Culture. A function that will greatly complement the work of the Society in the Academic community. Its organizing members are Scholars from among the Copts, headed by the esteemed professor, Sami Hanna of Portland, Oregon. It is a membership organization with one of its major objectives, is the publication a scholarly journal of Coptic Studies with emphasis on the more Modern history. The Society, through its affiliation with this organization, will contribute works on the more ancient times. More information and membership applications can be obtained by writing to the Society's address. Annual subscription rate is \$25 (not including subscription to the Journal). This year is the first membership year for the Association.

i. *Coptic Church Review:* A publication edited by Dr. Rodolphe Yanni of Pennsylvania, a noted Coptic scholar in the fields of Liturgy and Patristics. It is published quarterly since 1980. It covers many topics related to the Coptic Heritage and addressing an audience of intellectuals who are interested in the Coptic Church, whether Copts or others. Many notable personalities publish their works in this publication. Its business address is: Society of Coptic Church Studies, P.O. Box 714, E. Brunswick, NJ 08816 USA. Its Annual subscription rate is \$8. Back Issues are also available.

ii. *Coptologia:* A publication edited by Prof. Fayek Ishak of Ontario, Canada. Since 1980, such publication brought out many important articles dealing with our Coptic Heritage and written by prominent scholars, Copts and others. Its audience are the educated Copts and other educated Americans interested in the Coptic Heritage. Their business address is: Coptologia Publications, P.O. Box 235, Don Mills, ON, Canada M3C 2S2. It is published once a-year, and its subscription rate is \$8. Back Issues are also available.

B. In Arabic:

i. *Mari Mina Society:* A society formed in the 40's by the best minds that the Church had from among its lay population. It included the likes of Dr. Georgy Sobhy, Dr. Pahor Labib, Dr. Monir Shoucri, and Mr. Yassa Abdel-Massih. Its current president is Prof. Mina Abdel-Malek, a Professor of Mathematics in the University of Alexandria. In the last two decades it published many important works in Coptic History by the late Dr. Monir Shoucri, a noted Coptic Historian and member of our Society. Its most recent publication is an Arabic Dictionary of Who's Who among the Copts in Egypt during Modern times. Inquiries can be directed to our Address.

ii. *Sunday School Magazine:* A monthly magazine that was founded by His Holiness Pope Shenouda in his layman years. Now it is a forum for many of the intellectual Copts to contribute toward many subjects related to the Church from a layman perspective. Business Address: Sunday School Magazine, P.O. Box 17 Hadaik Shubra, Cairo, Egypt. Its subscription rate is \$20.

iii. *St. Antonious Patristic Center:* A center, founded by Dr. Nossi Abdel-Shahid in Cairo. It promotes the Study of the writings of the Fathers in the Church (Patristics), the essence of our orthodoxy. It has sponsored several students studying in this field in European Universities. The center has an extensive library in such field of study. It also hosts a monthly lecture series on the topic given by prominent scholars in the field. A monthly publication with topics related to patristics is published by the center in Arabic. The Subscription mailing address is: Mr. Onsy Asham Pilatos. P.O. Box 9 Al-Fagalla, Cairo, Egypt. The Annual subscription rate is \$15.

C. In French:

i. *Le Monde Copte:* A semi-annual publication in French, that deals with many aspects of Coptic Culture, Ancient and Modern. It is very professionally done and suitable for an educated audience. Every Article is followed by a summary, written in English and in Arabic. It is published by the tireless Dr. Ashraf Sadek in France and many notable writers participate in it. Its subscription rate is \$80 for 2 years, or 400 French

Francs. The Society is the US Correspondent of this publication.

D. In German:

i. *Kemet:* A quarterly publication in German, dealing with cultural topics related to the Ancient Egyptian culture as well as the Coptic Culture. Many of the prominent names in both of these fields contribute their writings to it. This is a tribute to the hard-working efforts of its publisher, Mr. Adel Kamel of Berlin, Germany. The mailing address is: A. Kamel, Koptischstr. 1, 10965 Berlin Germany. The Annual subscription rate is 32 DM in Germany, 40 DM in Europe, and 50 DM outside of Europe

12. Work by Egyptians in the Field of Coptic Studies: It is important to acquaint our readers with work that Copts and other Egyptians are doing in the different fields of Coptic Studies. The following is a partial list of such projects:

- + Dr. Gawdat Gabra (Egypt) has edited an Egyptian Festschrift for Prof. Martin Krause. This will be published as one of the volumes of the Bulletin of the Society of Coptic Archaeology. This volume includes works by Egyptians who studied under this esteemed professor. He is also involved in an extensive study of the Coptic Difnar, to be published soon.
- + Prof. Adel Sidarus (Portugal) is continuing his work on the Coptic Lexicographic manuscripts, Muqadamat and Salalem.
- + Mr. Fouad Khouzam (France) is working on an edition of the Paris Coptic Codex 44. This includes many Lexicographic works that survived from the medieval times. A sample of volume 1 of his upcoming addition was on display at the Coptic Congress.
- + Mr. Ramses Wassif, the Secretary of the Society, is currently doing a study on the development of the office of the Laqan in the Coptic Church.
- + Mr. Assad Henes and Mr. Nashaat Mikhail will be starting this year their Graduate Studies in the Field of Coptic Studies under Prof. Steven Emmel in Münster, Germany.

13. The NKCSC Project: No new applications have been released during this past quarter. Work is under way on the Pentateuch of the Old Testament in Bohairic with a Septuagint English translation. The Bohairic/English Annual Lectionary, programmed in

Word for Windows like NK CSC-CL1, is scheduled to be released by November 1, 1996. The order number will be NK CSC-CG1. This will include all daily, non-seasonal, readings in the Coptic Church, arranged in Coptic with a parallel KJV English version. The Sundays readings will be included in a separate release in the future. The work on the new version of the Coptic New Testament Viewer has been delayed due to the many projects that the Society is involved in this year. We are hopeful for a release date by January 1997. This version will have the Bohairic in parallel with the Sahidic with a word-concordance listing for both versions. The order number for this title will be NK CSC-CB2 (for regular Windows) and NK CSC-CB2M (for Windows 95). Work is also under way on the Coptic Life of St. Shenouda the Archimandrite and the 13th century Coptic Martyrdom of St. John of Phanidjoit in Coptic and English. May God help us in accomplishing these worthwhile efforts.

Also when ordering any title from the NK CSC software, address all order and payments in the Society name and its mailing address. The NK CSC designation is for identification purposes only.

14. Coptic Multimedia: Photographs of Coptic Sites in Egypt become more and more important with age. This is due to the unstable atmosphere that the Copts live in these days. We were fortunate over a year ago to be able to secure a slides copy of a collection of such

photographs made but a professional photographer, Mr. Paul Kuiper, back in 1971. The time has come for the Copts to try to bring these treasures to the our youths in an appropriate format they would be familiar with. This would be a multi-media CD (Computer) production. The material available can yield several of these CD's. We sincerely hope someone will step in with the knowledge and/or the resources for such an endeavor. In such case, the Society will try to arrange an acceptable agreement with all the parties involved. We sincerely hope that the Los Angeles Coptic Diocese will undertake this great task.

15. The First St. Shenouda Coptic Symposium: The Society has tentatively planned a new annual Symposium of Coptic Studies. The first one will be devoted to Coptic Liturgy and Church History. It will be a one-day event, tentatively scheduled on the last Saturday of June 1997. More details will be forthcoming in future editions of this Newsletter. The objective of this symposium is to allow Copts to participate in a scholarly atmosphere and present their research in areas more applicable and practical to the Coptic Church. This will act also as the professional training grounds for better participation by the Copts in the Leiden Congress in 2000. We encourage all Copts, not only in Southern California, to attend and/or participate.



ST. SHENOUDA COPTIC NEWSLETTER

Quarterly Newsletter Published by the Staff of the
St. Shenouda Center for Coptic Studies

1494 S. Robertson Blvd., Ste. 204, LA, CA 90035

Tel: (310) 271-8329 Fax: (310) 558-1863

January, 1997

Volume 3, No. 2

In This Issue:

The Coptic Heritage (1) - The Coptic Bible (1) by Hany N. Takla.....	1
Judas at the Feast of Cana of Galilee by Maged S. Mikhail.....	2
A Forgotten Coptic Martyrdom from the 13th Century - St. John of Phanidjoit (3) by Hany N. Takla.....	3
St. Shenouda's Writings (7) by Ashraf Hanna and Hany N. Takla.....	4
News by Hany N. Takla.....	6

THE COPTIC HERITAGE (1)

THE COPTIC BIBLE (1)

(by Hany N. Takla)

Introduction: The Coptic Church like any Christian Church is primarily founded on the Bible. Biblical readings and quotations are found in abundance in its liturgical services. The Bible was the constitution that its saints have lived by, and the inspiration of the writings of its fathers. Its iconography abounds in Biblical themes. It was used by its theologians to define the faith of the Church. In fact, the Bible was, is, and will always be the heart and soul of the Coptic Church.

History of Coptic Version: Translation of the Bible into Egyptian, written in the Coptic Script, dates back to the second century AD. At first, some missionaries translated orally or informally from Greek into Egyptian, certain passages to use in their missionary work. In the last half of the Second Century, Pantaenus the missionary philosopher, came to Alexandria and became the head of the Theological School. Later on St. Demetrius the first became the Bishop of Alexandria. He was the first known Egyptian to be bishop of that city. The presence of those two sparked a concerted effort to spread Christianity among the Egyptian peasants. Thus the Coptic script was officially christianized for use in translating the Scriptures as needed in the

missionary work. This was done to insure the uniformity of the Christian teachings to be given to the new converts.

The first translations were in the form of passages mainly from the Gospels. Later on, the whole books were translated. Probably the Gospels were translated first, followed by the Acts in the New Testament. Among the Old Testament books, Psalms followed by Genesis was probably the early order of translation. Eventually the entire New Testament was translated, followed by the Books of Moses, the Prophets, the Poetic Books and the Historical Books in that order. Based on manuscript as well as inscription evidence, the whole Bible was translated in Sahidic. This is probably not the case with the Bohairic, which is deficient in the Old Testament Historical Books and most of the Poetic Books also. This translation process may have lasted about a century or even more. Keep in mind that all the translations were done from the Greek whether it Old or New Testament Books. Except on rare occasions, the Hebrew Old Testament was never utilized by the Christians of Egypt.

As Egypt rapidly turned to Christianity in the fourth and fifth centuries, more uniform and accurate

translations began to appear. The later translations were not always done directly from Greek. Some probably were improvements to the Coptic to give it a better linguistic format.

Christians revived the dying literary dialects of the Egyptian language to facilitate the spread of Christianity to all of Egypt. So one sees many Biblical manuscripts written in Achmimic, Asyutic (Lycopolitan), Middle Egyptian, and Fayoumic along with the two main dialects of Bohairic and the Neutral Sahidic. Eventually, those regional dialects died as literary ones some centuries later, giving way to the Bohairic and the Sahidic ones. Only the Bohairic and the Sahidic versions were independent translations from the Greek. The text of the other dialects was based on the Sahidic version except for the Fayoumic which was a product of the neighboring Bohairic.

When Bohairic became the official version of the Coptic Church in the 11th century, the Sahidic version began to disappear. The 12th or the 13th century is probably the last time that any Biblical manuscript in Sahidic has been copied, except in a Lectionary format.

Value of the Coptic Version: The Coptic version is considered by scholars to be an excellent witness to the Greek Bible. This is due to the careful and literal style of the Coptic translator. This literal nature has allowed some of the Biblical scholars to conclude that this Version reflects Greek originals that no longer are in existence. However to the Copts, this version reflects a lot more than that!

Copts have recorded in their translation of the Holy Scriptures not only an equivalent text to an original Greek one, but rather a careful interpretation of some of the difficult words and passages that the original have. In other words, this version represents the way the Copts of the early centuries of Christianity understood the Greek. Such understanding is valuable due to their constant exposure to Greek in Egypt as well as the presence of the solid orthodox teaching of the Christian Fathers there. Keeping in mind that Coptic is relatively constant in its linguistic evolution, it can be easily concluded that it provided us with a more accurate rendering of the original Greek meaning than any other ancient version available.

JUDAS AT THE FEAST OF CANA OF GALILEE

(by Maged S. Mikhail)

Recently, under the guidance of Prof. Antonio Loprieno, UCLA, I have begun a translation of a homily titled:

οὐλοῖος ἐαφταονος ἡκε πεπιωτ εθονᾶ
ἀπηταφορος αββα βενιὰμ
πιαρχηπισκοπος ἡτε ρακο† εεβε πιχοπ
εταφωπι δεη τκανα ἡτε τγαλδιλεά

A homily given (by) our holy father, the Spirit-clad abba Benjamin the Archbishop of Alexandria concerning the wedding feast which (took place) in Cana of Galilee.

The text of this seventh century homily is published in at least two places: Prof. C. Detlef. G. Müller's *Die Homilie über die Hochzeit zu Kana und weitere Schriften des Patriarchen Benjamin I. von Alexandrien*, which is a superb edition; containing the Bohairic text, Sahidic fragments, and an Arabic version; all accompanied by German translations; and also in Henri de Vis' *Homélies Coptes de la Vaticane*, which only contains the Bohairic text and a French translation. This Homily provides us with a number of interesting elements, both linguistic as well as historical. Here I would like to quickly focus on one of them.

In the beginning of the Homily the Patriarch exhorts his audience to listen and to implement what they shall hear (μαρεμωτει οτεμπι). He then proceeds to quote John 2:1,2. First, he comments as to the presence of the Virgin Mary at the wedding, and then he proceeds to give reasons as to why each of the disciples was invited, along with Christ, to the wedding.

The homily lists the twelve in the order given in the Gospel of St. Matthew (10:2-4). In most cases there are two elements. The first emphasizes the role of that individual disciple as a witness to the miracle in particular, or to Christ in general. The second element emphasizes that after witnessing, that disciple later went on to preach of what he saw (see 1 Jn 1:1). For instance, "Simon the Canaanite was invited in order that he may see the men filling water (jugs) to their brim. Afterwards, through the power of Christ, wine was drawn. And he went forth and preached of the miracles which he saw." We can find a major exception to this pattern in the case of Judas, who is given a direct command. For while the Eleven are in the midst of the wedding, Judas is depicted as sitting on the side, braiding a rope;

ζεμεις ηκρωκ ω ιονδας ηει θη
εταστασιοκ επαισοσηι ετρωογ ετε θαι
τε τεκσιιι ητεκσοβ+ ηκρη ηονηοσ ψα
ουχον ητεκοκχρ μμοφ ητεκμον
ητεκτακο ητεκψυχη φεη αληηη+ φεη
πιμα ετεκηαρωλ εροφ.

Sit yourself down O Judas with she who gave (lit. told) you this evil advice, that is, your wife. And prepare for yourself a rope until the time you strangle yourself with it, and die, and your soul perish in Hades, in the place which you will go to.

The contrast between the mood of the wedding and Judas' disposition is incredibly vivid. And in the beginning of a long sermon, this dichotomy acts as a great attention grabber.

A FORGOTTEN COPTIC MARTYRDOM FROM THE 13TH CENTURY

ST. JOHN OF PHANIDJOIT (3)

(by Hany N. Takla)

Historical Information as recorded in the Martyrdom: This martyrdom affords us a look at circumstances that the Copts lived in under the rule of the Ayyubite dynasty. This coincided with the early Crusades which brought enormous perils on the Copts in Egypt. As we read this text, we come face to face with a man, directly or indirectly, describing the Copts of his time and their rulers. Such information greatly enhances our knowledge of the History of the Copts. The following is a short list of such material:

1. Osman the son of Joseph, was one of the Ayyubite kings of Egypt (AD 1193-98). During his reign Christians such as our Martyr were coerced into Islam as a result of a seemingly illicit affair.
2. The existence of a refuge village in Upper Egypt called Pepleu, governed by a Moslem with benevolent feelings toward the Christians. There, Christians who were probably coerced into conversion, were

allowed to live in peace after they decided to retain their Christian Faith again.

3. Conversion from Islam to any other faith, including Christianity, required a royal sanction or pardon. A sanction that rarely was granted, which explains the Martyr's readiness to die as a result of such appeal.
4. El-Kamel, the son of El-Adel the reigning Ayyubite king, was being referred to as a king even though his official reign started in AD 1218. This supports the fact that El-Adel appointed his sons, during his lifetime, to rule certain parts of his kingdom (apprentice kings!).
5. The author held Upper Egyptian in high esteem. He labeled them as "the faithful Christians". This is an indication of the solid Christian presence in Upper Egypt in comparison to that in Lower Egypt.

6. Monks were highly regarded at the time. They were frequently visited by Christians seeking advice.
7. The Martyr's failure to pursue an audience with the Patriarch seemed to indicate that the ecclesiastical authorities were perceived to be in fear of the secular Moslem authorities.
8. Copts in high places were held in great esteem by fellow Copts. This explains the Martyr opting to meet with Abu-Shaker the physician, instead of the Patriarch.
9. Some Coptic officials in the government sometimes converted to Islam probably to keep their jobs. Most of the time the conversion was nominal and it was not perceived by them as a deadly sin in consequence. This testimony comes from Abu-Shaker, as he tried to lessen the burden of guilt that the Martyr had.
10. Conversion to Islam was perceived by the masses to be a form of apostasy.
11. The Upper Egyptian Christians held a celebration for St. George on the 7th Sunday of the Paschaltide. This is probably a different one than the one normally celebrated in the Church. The discovery of the second volume of the Upper Egyptian recension of the Synaxarium may shed light on such celebration.
12. A church in the name of St. George was located outside of Cairo, west of the Nile.
13. The spending of the night in prayers in the Church during commemorative feasts of saints was practiced at the time.
14. The king usually rode in the company of his chief-judge and the Moslem chief-elder and was surrounded by his mamlukes.
15. The way that public trials were staged in Cairo in the midst of mob scenes.
16. El-Kamel was preparing Navy ships to be sent for the war against the Crusaders.
17. Coptic Christians regarded the Mamlukes as apostate Christians, which explains their despise for them, e.g. Philim the executor of the Martyr.
18. El-Kamel deferred the legal matters to his chief justice.
19. The author furnished important information on the genealogy of Ayyubite kings of his time. He even mentioned the alternate names that such rulers were known by. El-Adel was known as Mohammed son of Abu Bakr son of Job.
20. Unruly mobs forced the Christians to hide in fear, as occurred after the Martyr gave up the spirit.

ST. SHENOUDA'S WRITINGS (7)

(by Ashraf Hanna and Hany N. Takla)

This is the second part of a text translation from a second Arabic sermon of St. Shenouda read on the 1st Sunday during Lent in the Coptic Church. The text was transcribed from a microfilm copy of Paris Arabe 4761 (CML 1592).

... Because (7r) fasting and prayer prevent (lit. from) occurrence of temptations, according to the our Lord Jesus Christ's saying, "Pray lest you enter into the temptations." Whereas the alms for the poor and the wretched along with the repentance, it forgives the sin. According to Daniel the Prophet's saying to Bakhtanassar the king, "Hide your sins

with alms for the poor and the wretched". In the Psalm, he says, "he gave alms and gave his goodness, and his goodness endures forever." And our Lord Jesus Christ, Glory be unto Him, says, "Fasting and prayer and alms-giving and performing the commandment is not completed except by the love for all people, the near and the far ones, and

the forgiveness to whomever offends us." For our Lord gave us an example of the servant who asked his master about how much money he is indebted to him. And he said, "My master, I am very poor and I have nothing to pay back to you." His master had compassion (7v) upon him and he forsook all the money he had owed him. Then this servant went to another servant like him, who owed him some dirhams (or pennies), and he demanded (it) of him. So he (the second servant) began to appeal to him and request him to grant him a delay, and afterwards he would pay him what he owed him. But (the first servant) did not grant him a delay but grabbed him and he choked him and took him to the lock-up and the prison. When the master of that servant was informed, he commanded that he appears before him, and he began punishing him saying, "O evil servant, O the spiteful one, O the wrathful one. When you asked me concerning what you owed me I gave it up to you. So why have you substituted what good I have done to you with the evil (that you did) unto your companion." [According to] our Lord's [saying], Glory be unto Him, in the Gospel, "All that you want people to do unto you, do it unto them." And He said, "With this commandment, rests the whole law [...] that you do unto another (8r) as he does with you." "So why did you not have mercy upon your friend as I had mercy upon you?" He then orders his servants saying, "Take this evil servant, stretch his hands and legs and throw him in prison until he repays what he owes." For our Lord said, "If you do not forgive whoever offends you, I would not forgive you your offenses. If you judge you shall be judged, and if you forgive, you will be forgiven. And by the measure that you give with, you will be given. And as I said, love precedes(?) all the virtues. By this our master Paul testified saying, "If I speak with the tongue of angels and know the mysteries and all

knowledge, and if all wisdom is in me, and I move the mountains from their places and feed the wretched everything that is mine, and sacrifice my body to the burning (8v) fire, and there is no love in me; then I gain nothing. Do not ye (dare), beware and beware O brethren, that one fast, or pray, or do any of the Gospel commandments and in his heart toward his brother enmity or spite or fury. For his deed will become void and will anger God by his deed. But hurry up in removing the spite and the fury out of your hearts so that your fasting be acceptable and appreciated before God. According to our Lord Jesus Christ's saying in the Gospel, "If you brought your offering upon the altar and knew that your brother is unhappy(?) with you, then leave your offering upon the altar and go and reconcile with your brother and afterwards come and present your offering. Look my brethren how the offering has come after the sanctification for the forgiveness (9r) of the sin and wiping of the transgressions. So He commanded the reconciliation of the brother before the offering. Woe and much sorrow for who begrudges his brother and do not forgive him his wrongdoings unto him from all his heart. For St. John Chrysostom (lit. tongue of gold) said, "He who fasts and does not pray, he is not fasting. He who fasts and he is spiteful toward his brother, he is not fasting. He who fasts and he swears, or lie, or steals, or testify falsely, or gossip upon his brother, he is fasting. He who fasts and does not pay to the needy as much as he is capable of, like a loaf of bread or a cup of cold water, as our Lord said in the Gospel, he is not fasting. Be it known to you that the gift of the little according to capability is preferred over the gift of the rich. And the witness to that is the widow that dropped two mites in the (treasury) box, (9v) the Lord praised her more than the rich ones... *(To be continued)*

News

(by Hany N. Takla)

1. NKCSC Project Progress: The latest product in our computer software series is out. It is the Lectionary of the Coptic Church for the Days of the year. The order no. of this title is NKCSC-CG1. It requires the Antonious Coptic fonts which are available in -CL1 (Coptic Lessons) and -CB1(a) (Coptic New Testament). It requires also Windows 3.1 or higher (not Win95) and Word for Windows version 2 or 6. The program has the same look as the Coptic Lessons (-CL1) and will generate the readings of the Coptic Church in Coptic and English. The English is taken from the KJV except for the Psalm readings which were translated anew from the Coptic for the first time. The price is \$8.00 for members and \$12.00 for non-members.

The other software titles that we have are: -CL1, Bohairic Lessons (\$8/\$12); -CL2, Coptic-English Dictionary (\$8/\$12) [Requires Coptic Fonts], -CB1, Coptic New Testament [Boh/English/Sah/Gr.] (\$30/\$45); -CB1a, Coptic NT [Boh/English] (\$16/\$23); -CB1b, Coptic NT [Sah/Gr.] (\$16/\$23). Only -CL1 requires Word for Windows, all the rest require only Windows. A version for Win95 is also available with the added designation of 'M'.

2. Books Available Through the Society: Copies of Rev. Partrick's, "*Traditional Egyptian Christianity - History of the Coptic Orthodox Church*" are still available. The price is \$10.00 for members and \$14.95 for non-members.

Coptic Puzzles and Word Games vol.1 is also available at the special price of \$2.00 for members and \$3.00 for non-members. This is an excellent introduction to Coptic Language for kids and adults, that will insure hours of fun and learning for all. Such work was a product of love of many of our Coptic youth associated with the Coptic Regional Center of Orange County, California.

Analysis of the Coptic Liturgy, Mr. Monir B. Raphael is available in 3-volume set which covers the St. Basil Liturgy including the Raising of Incense service. This is a valuable work for all interested in gaining a better understanding of the language of the Liturgy. Price is \$32.00 for members and \$38.00 for non-members.

Future volumes covering the other Coptic Liturgies are in the work by the same author.

Other important titles available are the 2-volume *Coptic Art Pictorial* set (\$35 for members/\$40 for non-members), and Dr. Gawdat's Gabra's "*Cairo - Old Coptic Churches*", (\$12 for members/\$15 for non-members).

3. Bulletin of the Society: The third volume of the Annual Bulletin of the Society is being prepared. The list of papers included in this edition is as follows:

1. H. N. Takla, The Sahidic Book of Tobit
2. Dr. T. Vivian, Introduction to 'Discourse on St. Onnophrius' by Saint Pisentius.
3. M. R. Moussa, I am Amazed: St. Shenute of Atriene Endorsement of Alexandrian Theology in the White Monastery.
4. R. Wassef, Bishop Severus ibn Al-Muqafaa of Ashmunain - Historical Survey
5. M. S. Mikhail, Late Antiquity in Egypt: Toward a Positive Definition.
6. Dr. H. Messiah†, The Church of Virgin Mary at Haret ar-Roum (Ghoria, Cairo): History and Description.

Dues paying members receive a complimentary copy, as part of their membership fees. For other members and dues paying members needing extra copies, the price will be \$5.00. Copies of Volume 1 and 2 are still available for sale.

4. The Society on The Internet: We are still at the same address, "<http://www.stshenouda.com>". Based on the e-mail response that we receive, the site was visited by people on every continent, except for Antarctica. During the last period we added a course in Coptic Bohairic Grammar, this is viewable using the Microsoft Word Viewer plus the Coptic fonts. We are still working on a list of all the available microfiche of Coptic Studies research material. This material can be ordered electronically through our Coptic Store on the web. Further we are working on an on-line summary listing of the microfilm-of-manuscripts holdings of the Society,

arranged by subject. Tune in on the web for more developments.

Starting with the last edition of the Newsletter (Vol. 2, No. 3) we made it available to our electronic mailing list. Such edition had the full text of the printed edition except for any Coptic text included. With the introduction of the Word Viewer, mentioned above, any one can view the full text including the Coptic via a Link that we are providing in the HTML version of the Newsletter. We are still working on a directory listing of persons with a particular expertise in the different disciplines related to Coptic Studies. The idea was submitted by Mr. Shenouda Mamdouh of Cairo, Egypt (cop@idsc.gov.eg). This will be incorporated as part of our Manual of Coptic Studies Section. Work is still pending on the report for the 6th International Coptic Congress. Its address will be eventually: "<http://www.stshenouda.com/society/ccngrs2.htm>".

5. Request for Grants: In the past month, Prof. Ariel Shisha-Halevy, of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, informed us that he is working on a major work on the Grammar of the Bohairic Coptic. This work is based on the Vatican and Paris oldest Pentateuch manuscripts. Both of these manuscripts have a parallel Arabic version. In order to insure the accuracy of work, the Arabic translation need to be considered. For such task, Dr. Ofer Livneh, a student of the prominent Christian Arabic scholar Prof. Joshua Blau, was selected. Christian Arabic is not a subject that the Hebrew University offer research grants for, so Prof. Shisha-Halevy is requesting a grant for Dr. Livneh to enable him to pursue such a task. Those who can offer such grants are encouraged to contact Prof. Shisha-Halevy at 'The Hebrew Univ. of Jerusalem, Mount Scopus 91905 Jerusalem Israel'. He can also be reached via e-mail address 'ferretti@cc.huji.ac.il'.

6. Lives of the Coptic Monks of Wadi 'N Natrun: The work done on the Coptic Version of the Life of St. John the Short has advanced into a possible full series of the lives of the Coptic Fathers of Wadi N' Natrun. This series, if approved would be made under the editorship of Dr. Tim Vivian of Bakersfield California, and would be published by the Cistercian Publication in Michigan. The work will include translations from all available original texts of these lives, including Coptic, Arabic, and Syriac. The Bohairic Coptic and the Arabic will be our responsibility, the Syriac will be handled by Prof.

Greer of Yale Univ., and Sahidic Coptic and the introductory work will be by Dr. Vivian. More details will be published as they become available on this exciting new project.

7. Coptic Microfilm Library: In the last quarter we received microfilm of 20 Coptic and Christian Arabic manuscripts from the National Library of France which includes more than 5000 frames. We also concluded a deal with the Austrian National Library, through the good offices of Prof. Dr. Hermann Harrauer to procure 19 microfilm reels of the Coptic material in the collection. The total number of frames is nearly 16,000. The order will be divided into two separate ones. The first including the first 9 reels is due to arrive soon, and the second will arrive two months after. We also received a full-size copy of K391, Life of St. John of Lycopolis, which was not microfilmed as part of the collection. A lot of bibliographic work will have to be done on these films once they arrive because of the much scattered information available about the collection. Many of the fragments included in the collection has come from the Library of the Monastery of St. Shenouda, an important target of our collection. This would be the largest collection received by the Society after the collection of the Cairo Coptic Museum. We can now safely say that the Society's microfilm holdings of Coptic and Christian Arabic Manuscripts of Egyptian provenance is the largest of its kind in the world, of course with a price to match!

8. Coptic Book Library: About 40 new important volumes were added to our Coptic library. These included books on history, Art, Patristics ... etc.

9. Coptic Classes: The Intermediate Bohairic Coptic Class, dealing with the translation of smaller, simpler Bohairic texts, is continuing at the Coptic Center. The class meets on Saturdays from 6-7:30 p.m. Also at the Center, we have the Advanced Coptic Seminar. This is held on Sundays from 6-7:30 p.m. It is divided up into two sessions, one translating more advanced Bohairic literary texts, and the second dealing with Sahidic monastic texts. The Intermediate Bohairic Coptic class at the Coptic Theological Seminary in Los Angeles concluded on December 19, 1996. All the above classes are taught by Mr. Hany N. Takla, the Society's president.

Prof. Loprieno of UCLA will be offering either a 4- or 8-unit Coptic Sahidic class in the Spring Quarter,

(April 97). We are hopeful that this upcoming class will be as popular among the Coptic students there as the first one was in 1995.

10. The Scriptorium: The Scriptorium is continuing to provide quality educational programs in the field of Biblical Studies. The last ones deal with the study of the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts of the New and Old Testaments respectively. For more information on these classes as well as other educational programs of the Scriptorium, please contact Prof. Jerry Pattengale at (800) 333-8373.

11. Research Projects: The final corrections for the 'Copts' entry in Macmillan upcoming Encyclopedia of Immigrant America, were submitted and were approved. The transcription of Coptic glosses of the famous Hibat Allah ibn Al-Assal's 13th century critical Arabic translation of the Coptic Gospels, is about 95% complete. The final review has started and is expected to be complete by April or May 1997. The article about the Life of St. John Kolobos (the Little) that includes the translation only of the Coptic texts with an introduction by Dr. Tim Vivian has been submitted to 'Coptic Church Review'. Because of the size of the work, its publication date has been pushed back to early 1998. Mr. Maged S. Mikhail of the Coptic Center's staff was the primary translator of the Bohairic Version. We are still awaiting an answer from Prof. Dr. Horn of Göttingen, Germany, concerning obtaining a microfilm copy of the Arabic Life of the Saint which is preserved in the Göttingen University Library. Our request include other Coptic and Arabic items as well.

Mr. Ashraf Hanna, of our Center's staff is continuing his work on collation of the different manuscripts of the Coptic (Arabic) Synaxarium. Similarly, Mr. Sherief Sorial is working on the Coptic Psalmody, Mr. Emad N. Georgy is working on the Coptic Horologion, and Mr. Peter Mankarious is working on Coptic Liturgy of St. Basil. All of these projects are designed to trace the developmental history of these important books in the Coptic Church. The extensive manuscript-on-microfilm holdings of the Society are what made these projects a reality.

12. American Coptic Studies Association: As we indicated in the last issue, a new organization for the promotion of Coptic Studies has been born in Portland,

Oregon. The first newsletter of the Association has come out. Its president is Professor Sami Hanna of Portland Oregon. Annual membership dues is \$25. For more information contact Prof. Hanna at e-mail address sami11@juno.com. The Association's mailing address is: 2625 SE Market Street, Oregon 97214.

13. Coptic Multimedia: Photographs of Coptic Sites in Egypt become more and more important with age. This is due to the unstable conditions that the Copts are subjected to in these days. We were fortunate over a year ago to be able to secure a slides copy of a collection of such photographs made by a professional photographer, Mr. Paul Kuiper, back in 1971. The impeccable credentials of the photographer is a testimony to the quality of the material. The time has come for the Copts to try to bring these treasures to our youths in an appropriate format they would be familiar with. This would be a multi-media CD (Computer) production. The material available can yield several of these CD's. The Los Angeles Coptic Diocese has not been able to pursue this great task due to lack of expertise available to them at this time. It is our sincere hope that some of our community members in the US will help in the start of this endeavor. Funds as well as expertise will be needed. For those interested, the material is available as graphic images in CD-format at the Coptic Center in Los Angeles.

14. The First St. Shenouda Coptic Symposium: The Society has tentatively planned a new annual Symposium of Coptic Studies. The first one will be devoted to Coptic Liturgy and Church History. It will be a one-day event, tentatively scheduled on the last Saturday of June 1997. More details will be forthcoming in future editions of this Newsletter. The objective of this symposium is to allow Copts to participate in a scholarly atmosphere and present their research in areas more applicable and practical to the Coptic Church. This will act also as the professional training grounds for better participation by the Copts in the Leiden Congress in 2000. We encourage all Copts, not only in Southern California, to attend and/or participate.



ST. SHENOUDA COPTIC NEWSLETTER

Quarterly Newsletter Published by the Staff of the
St. Shenouda Center for Coptic Studies

1494 S. Robertson Blvd., Ste. 204, LA, CA 90035

Tel: (310) 271-8329 Fax: (310) 558-1863

Mailing Address: 1701 So. Wooster St. Los Angeles, CA 90035, U.S.A.

April, 1997

Volume 3, No. 3

In This Issue:

The Coptic Heritage (1) - The Coptic Bible (2) by Hany N. Takla	1
St. Shenouda's Writings (8) by Ashraf Hanna and Hany N. Takla.....	3
The First St. Shenouda Coptic Symposium by Hany N. Takla.....	4
News by Hany N. Takla	5

THE COPTIC HERITAGE (1) THE COPTIC BIBLE (2) (by Hany N. Takla)

The State of Preservation of Biblical Texts In Coptic: Manuscripts containing Coptic biblical texts did not survive in great numbers. Even though the Bible, Old and New Testament, was probably all translated in Bohairic as well as Sahidic dialects. Each version was translated independently from the Original Greek. Texts in regional dialects other than Bohairic and Sahidic, though very ancient, were usually translations from the above mentioned dialects. They survived, but in even smaller numbers. There is no indication that they were complete translations of the entire Bible. The state of current preservation of the texts was affected by many of the changes that occurred within the Church in the Middle Ages. These can be summarized in the following points:

1. The decrease of the number of educated Copts that were well-versed in the Coptic Language not long after the Arab Conquest of Egypt in the 7th century AD. This came gradually and was caused by the new emphasis placed by them on learning the Arabic Language to keep their government jobs.
2. The transfer of the Patriarchate to the new capital Cairo in the 11th century AD. This caused the more standard Sahidic version to

slowly go into oblivion in favor of the local dialect of the region, Bohairic.

3. Introduction of Arabic into ecclesiastical circles further retarded the use of Coptic and subsequently of Coptic biblical texts in the Church.
4. The institutions of strict lectionary system for all Coptic services from the 12th century AD and up, made the use of full texts of biblical books not necessary and eventually their production, in manuscript form, slowly gave way to those of the lectionaries. This was especially true of Old Testament texts.
5. As Coptic lost ground in the church, monastic circles gained more prominence in its use. Thus reading Coptic biblical texts began to be influenced by the monastic habits. In other words, the less emphasized biblical books tended to disappear in Coptic. This can be seen from the visible loss of texts of the Historical books of the Old Testament which may not have given the monks the same benefit that they derived from other books of the Bible.

In summary, the dwindling number of Educated Copts, reading Coptic, adopting Arabic for use in the ecclesiastical services, reorganization of church readings in regimental lections, and the prominence of Monastic practices has led to the present sad state of preservation of complete Coptic biblical texts. As a result we have a Coptic Bible with some incomplete and many fragmentary sections that survived in a far smaller number of manuscripts than would be expected from such an Ancient biblical-based Church!

Extent of Preserved Biblical Texts: On the basis of the identified texts, the text of the Coptic Bible has been preserved as follows:

A. *Old Testament:*

a. Pentateuch: The five books of the Pentateuch are complete in Bohairic. In Sahidic, only Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy were preserved in complete manuscripts with small lacunas. The Sahidic Genesis survived in several manuscripts but in a very fragmentary condition. Approximately 71% of the number of verses have survived in whole or in part. The Sahidic Exodus, though has a smaller number of manuscripts that survived, however it is less fragmented. About 65% of the number of verses has survived. Most of these verses are complete. In Fayumic, very small fragments of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers are preserved. In Akhmimic, an even smaller number of fragments survived of Genesis and Exodus.

b. Historical Books: In Bohairic, only a small number of lectionary readings has survived from Joshua, Judges, I&II Samuel, I&II Kings, and I&II Chronicles. Ruth, Judith, Tobit, Esther, Ezra, and Nehemiah, I&II Maccabees are completely missing in Bohairic. In Sahidic, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I&II Samuel, Judith, Esther, and Tobit are complete with a few textual gabs. On the other hand I&II kings has 16% and 32% of the verses, respectively, survived. Only a few verses survived from II Chronicles and a couple of chapters from I Maccabees. Missing books in Sahidic include,

I Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah. A small portion of II Maccabees survived in Akhmimic.

c. Poetic Books: In Bohairic, Psalms and Job are complete. Proverbs only has the first 14 chapters preserved in manuscripts with a small lection reading toward the end of the book. Only lectionary readings have been preserved of the Bohairic; Song of Songs, Wisdom of Solomon, and Wisdom of Jesus Ibn Sirach. Ecclesiastes on the other hand did not survive in any known manuscripts in that dialect. In Sahidic, with the exception of a sporadic lacunas, all the Poetic books are preserved complete, i.e. Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom of Solomon and Wisdom of Jesus Ibn Sirach. In other dialects, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs are complete (with lacunas) in Fayumic (F7), Psalms is complete in Middle Egyptian (Mesokemic), and Proverbs is complete in Akhmimic and substantially complete in Dialect P. Very small fragments of Fayumic Job and Psalms, and of Akhmimic Wisdom of Jesus Ibn Sirach have also survived.

d. Major Prophets: In Bohairic; the Major Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah (including Lamentations, Baruch, and Epistle of Jeremiah), Ezekiel, and Daniel (with the Deuterocanonical sections) are complete. In Sahidic, only Isaiah, Lamentations, Baruch, and the Epistle of Jeremiah are complete. On the bases of number of verses, only 52% of Jeremiah, 57% of Ezekiel, and 40% of Daniel (including Deuterocanonical sections) were preserved.

e. Minor Prophets: In Bohairic, all 12 books in this category are complete. In Sahidic, only Jonah is preserved in whole. On the basis of number of verses, what survived of the rest is 43% of Amos, 36% of Hosea, 63% of Joel, 67% of obadiah, 25% of Nahum, 75% of Micah, 53% of Habakkuk, 26% of Zephaniah, 63% of Haggai, and 42% of Zachariah. Sahidic Malachi did not survive in any biblical manuscript identified. In Akhmimic, the entire text of the Minor Prophets is preserved with some lacunas, mostly in the Book of Amos.

B. New Testament:

- a. Gospels: In Bohairic, all gospels are preserved in complete texts. In Sahidic, all the Gospels are complete with the noticeable missing section of John 7:53-8:11. In Mesokemic, the whole Gospel of St. Matthew is preserved and over one-half of the Gospel of St. John. In Asyutic (Lycopolitan) we find most of the Gospel of St. John preserved but only a small number of fragmentary verses survived in Akhmimic. Also a number of fragments survived in Fayumic of all four Gospels.
- b. Pauline Epistles: Bohairic and Sahidic have all 14 epistles complete. In Mesokemic, fragments survived of 10 of the 14 epistles. More substantial fragments from 10 of these epistles also survived in Fayumic. Other small fragments survived in newly identified I7 and X1 dialects.
- c. Catholic Epistles: All seven Catholic Epistles are preserved complete in Bohairic and Sahidic. Small fragments survived in Akhmimic and Fayumic.
- d. Acts: Again Acts is preserved complete in Bohairic as well as Sahidic. Mesokemic preserved a complete first half of the book. Small fragments in Fayumic were also identified.

ST. SHENOUDA'S WRITINGS (8)
(by Ashraf Hanna and Hany N. Takla)

This is the Third and final part of a text translation from a second Arabic sermon of St. Shenouda read on the 1st Sunday during Lent in the Coptic Church. The text was transcribed from a microfilm copy of Paris Arabe 4761 (CML 1592). Uncertain translation of the Arabic text is marked with '(?)'.

Also the prostration of the week and his prayer and his rising is better than the strong. For our master David the prophet says in the Psalm, "God does not wish the strength of the plant and is not pleased with flexibility(?) of the mighty man, but the Lord is pleased with those who revere Him. those who are hoping for His mercy, He will have mercy upon them. Let us go back to being brief in this meaning, lest the talk prolongs and the listener become wearied. Let it be known to you, O those present, that you are standing amid the hands of God. Also

e. Apocalypse: Only Bohairic and Sahidic have complete texts of this book. No fragments were identified to date in any other known Coptic Dialect.

Conclusion: From the brief survey above, the reader can see that the Old Testament is substantially complete but not totally complete. For the members of the Coptic Church, the usable portion is even smaller. This is an unfortunate fact that need to be rectified. The Bible is the foundation of the Church and to have a vibrant Coptic Church, a complete Coptic Bible need to be in existence. To accomplish this we need first to gather what we have available in all dialects and carefully reconstruct the missing sections primarily by translating from the Sahidic and then from the Greek version, whenever the Sahidic is lacking. This would involve a careful and delicate emulation of the translation process that our forefathers have used in translating from the Sahidic and/or Greek into the Bohairic. The resultant, rather neutral text, may not be appealing to scholars but it will be essential to the well-being of the Coptic Church and its members. May God crown such efforts for the glory of His Holy Name.

know the greatness of this grace that God has graced us with, and the salvation became unto us after being astray(?) and blindness, by the presence in the presence of our present priests and honored deacons in this orthodox, universal, apostolic Church. So now no one is permitted to speak during (10r) the prayers and the liturgies one word even for the greatest necessity. As our fathers the apostles commanded in their canons, "not only men but women too. For our master Paul says, "As for the women, they are not permitted to speak in the

Church. If they would like to learn, let them ask their husbands in their homes." Meaning that if a woman hears an instructing word and does not know its meaning and how it is explained, she is not permitted to ask anyone about the word inside the Church. But she (would) ask her husband in her house lest her talking among the men becomes improper and unnecessary(?). Great woe (for) a woman that comes to the Church of God, talking in words other than asking God for mercy in private and openly. Like Hanna, the mother of Samuel, for she was barren and the (10v)Book of Kings testified that she used to go to Bait al-Maqdas (or Jerusalem) and ask of God to grant her a son, and she used to move her lips in petition without speaking, fearing that one of the men would hear her. So God heard her petition and she was granted Samuel the prophet and he a judge over the sons of Israel. And he was the one that God has sent to David the prophet and anointed him king over the sons of Israel after Saul. And David was the second king over the sons of Israel. And the reign Saul ibn-Kais was not terminated except for the reason of disobedience to one commandment, and whoever reads the Book of the Kings would know it. And that is God said to him, "The city that you control it, burn it with fire and slay all that are in it by the edge of the sword and do not leave (11r) in it (even) a dog urinating on a wall." So he did this and kept some of them. Then they looked good before his eyes and did not slay them. God then became angry at him and removed the dominion from his off-spring.

Look, O the faithful ones, at the wrath of God toward whom violate His commandment. When our father Adam violated His commandment because of one meal, it befallen him and his off-spring following him this hardship, sorrows, and great toils which we are present in it. Saul, God made him king, and the dominion was far from him. So with one commandment, God removed the dominion from him and from his off-springs. So how will our response be between the hands of God, and we commit the destructive harmful sins, which necessitate the destruction upon their doers, like murder, adultery, theft, giving false witness, false faith, (11v) gossip, hatred, envy, and all the vices that He commanded that we do not commit. What will be our response, and what shame and disgrace we will be in on the day we stand between his hands. Let ask for God's help out of the hour of forgetfulness and the day of the fearful predicament, to judge each one according to his deed.

May God, O the gathered people in this church, make you among those who repented and God accepted their repentance, and grant you unshaken joy. And submit(?) the devil under your feet and keep you alive up to a hundred year and make you hear the joyous voice, saying, "Come unto me O the blessed one of My Father. Inherit the inheritance that was prepared for you before the foundation of the world." And repose the souls of all the sons of baptism through the intercessions of the pure Virgin Mary, Mother of Light, and the prayers of the martyrs and the saints, and keep the lives of the faithful priests and honored deacons. Amen.

The First St. Shenouda Coptic Symposium (June 28, 1997 - Santa Monica California)

(by Hany N. Takla)

Introduction: After attending the past two Coptic Congresses as well as the Mingana Symposium within the span of the last four years, it was felt that the time has come for the Society to sponsor a similar, yet on a smaller scale, event. There are two

objects behind such an endeavor, and they are as follows:

1. To bring the flavor of such events to our community.

2. To train our members for a more improved and wider scale participation in the next Coptic Congress, scheduled for the Summer of the year 2000 in Leiden, the Netherlands.

Papers: The following papers are scheduled to be delivered, time permitting, at the Symposium:

A. *Coptic Liturgy:*

- + Coptic Horologion - TCC vol. CR1, Project Update, by Emad Georgy
- + Coptic Psalmody, Annual - TCC vol. CR2, Project Update, by Shereif Sorial
- + Coptic Liturgy of St. Basil - TCC vol. CR9, Project Update, by Peter Mankarious
- + Synaxarium of the Coptic Church - TCC vol. AR1&2, Project Update, by Ashraf Hanna
- + The use Psalm 50 in the Coptic Liturgical Services, by Joseph Fahim
- + Coptic Music, a descendent of Egyptian Music - Preliminary Remarks, by Samuel Youssef
- + 'The Holy Spirit', as referred to in the Coptic Liturgy, by Hany N. Takla
- + Coptic Liturgy - Overview (A plenary paper), by Hany N. Takla

B. *Coptic History:*

- + Coptic History - Overview (A plenary paper), by Ramses N. Wassif
- + Church Democracy in Habib Girgis's thought, by Dr. Saad Michael Saad
- + St. Mark in Egypt - Historical Investigation, by Mary Farid and Hani Abdel-Sayed.

- + Historical Perspectives in Pope Benjamin's Sermon of the Wedding at Cana of Galilee, by Maged S. Mikhail

Format: Each plenary paper will be a 15-minute presentation with no follow-up discussion. The other papers will be structured in a 20-minute format with a 10-minute discussion.

Abstracts: Each participant shall submit a brief abstract of his proposed paper no later than May 15, 1997. A copy of these abstracts will be included as part of the registration packet.

Schedule: The following tentative schedule has been made by the Organizing Committee:

8:30-9:00	a.m.	Registration
9:00-10:45	a.m.	Introduction and presentations
10:45-11:00	a.m.	Break
11:00	a.m. - 12:30	p.m. Presentations
12:30-1:15	p.m.	Lunch Break
1:15-3:15	p.m.	Presentations
3:15-3:30	p.m.	Break
3:30-5:00	p.m.	Presentations

Registration: All interested persons can pre-register through our website. The address is '<http://www.stshenouda.com/society/csypreg.htm>' A nominal registration fee for the Symposium will be charged as follows:

Members and Students: \$10.00
Non-Members: \$15.00

Publication of Proceedings: The papers presented at the Symposium will be published in the 4th volume of the Society's bulletin for the year 1997-98. A final draft of each paper shall be submitted by the presenter, no later than August 31, 1997.

News

(by Hany N. Takla)

1. The Coptic Life of St. John Kolobos (in English):

The Coptic Church Review (CCR) has published a special double-issue volume on the Coptic Life of St. John Kolobos (the Short). It includes translations of the

Bohairic life from a Vatican Manuscript and the surviving fragments of the Sahidic version with an excellent introduction. Dr. Tim Vivian of Bakersfield, California, and Mr. Maged S. Mikhail, a member of the Center's staff, are the contributors to this volume. This

is the first time that this life appears in English and in such a well-done fashion. By permission of the Editor of the CCR, Dr. Rodolph Yanney, The Society will be distributing the book as a separate publication. Of course, the subscribers of CCR will get their own copies as part of their annual membership. Others can get it through the Society or their local distributors of Coptic Church Books. The price for a single copy is \$5.00. Discounts will be available to distributors for quantity purchases of 25, 50, and 100 copies. Members of the Society will be given an introductory 20% discount until May 30, 1997. All orders to be sent to the Society's mailing address: 1701 So. Wooster St. LA, CA 90035.

2. NKCSC Project Progress: The Lectionary of the Coptic Church for the Days of the year is now available. The order no. NKCSC-CG1. It requires the Antonious Coptic fonts which is available in -CL1 (Coptic Lessons) and -CB1(a) (Coptic New Testament). It requires also Windows 3.1 or higher (not Win95) and Word for Windows version 2 or 6. The program has the same look as the Coptic Lessons (-CL1) and will generate the readings of the Coptic Church in Coptic and English. The English is taken from the KJV except for the Psalm readings which were retranslated from the Coptic for the first time. The price is \$8.00 for members and \$12.00 for non-members. A version compatible with Windows 95 will be available by April 30 of this year.

The other software titles that we Have are: -CL1, Bohairic Lessons (\$8/\$12); -CL2, Coptic-English Dictionary (\$8/\$12) [Requires Coptic Fonts], -CB1, Coptic New Testament [Boh/English/Sah/Gr.] (\$30/\$45); -CB1a, Coptic NT [Boh/English] (\$16/\$23); -CB1b, Coptic NT [Sah/Gr.] (\$16/\$23). Only -CL1 requires Word for Windows, all the rest requires only Windows. A version for Win95 is also available with the added designation of 'M'.

3. Books Available Through the Society: Copies of Rev. Partrick's, "*Traditional Egyptian Christianity - History of the Coptic Orthodox Church*" are still available. The price is \$10.00 for members and \$14.95 for non-members.

Coptic Puzzles and Word Games vol.1 is also available at the special price of \$2.00 for members and \$3.00 for non-members. This is an excellent introduction to Coptic Language for kids and adults, that will insure hours of fun and learning for all. Such work was a product of love of many of our Coptic youth associated

with the Coptic Regional Center of Orange County, California.

Analysis of the Coptic Liturgy, Mr. Monir B. Raphael is available in 3-volume set which covers the St. Basil Liturgy including the Raising of Incense service. This is a valuable work for all interested in gaining a better understanding of the language of the Liturgy. Price is \$32.00 for members and \$38.00 for non-members. Future volumes covering the other Coptic Liturgies are in the work by the same author.

Other important titles available are the 2-volume *Coptic Art Pictorial* set (\$35 for members/\$40 for non-members), and Dr. Gawdat's Gabra's "*Cairo - Old Coptic Churches*", (\$12 for members/\$15 for non-members). Fr. Matthias F. Wahba's edition of the Agbeyia (\$4 for members/\$5 for non-members) and that of the Coptic Liturgy (\$12 for members/\$15 for non-members). Fr. Wahba's editions included contributions by the Society to the translation of many of the Coptic Texts in them.

4. Bulletin of the Society: The third volume of the Annual Bulletin of the Society is running a bit later than expected. Availability of that volume will be sometimes in the second quarter of 1997. Dues-paying members will automatically get their copies in the mail. For non-members, and dues paying members needing extra copies, the price will be \$5.00 (\$4.00 for members). Copies of Volume 1 and 2 are still available for sale.

5. The Society on The Internet: We are still at the same address, "<http://www.stshenouda.com>". We are currently working on enhancing the information available in our Manual of Coptic Studies Section of the site. One of the projects we are currently working on is that of a list of all available Biblical texts of the Coptic New Testament.

6. Coptic Microfilm Library: In the last quarter we received the long-awaited 19 microfilm reels of Coptic manuscripts from the Austrian National Library in Vienna. The total number of frames is nearly 16,000 from about 8,500 shelf-mark items in the collection. A lot of bibliographic work will have to be done on these films because of the much scattered information available about the collection. Many of the fragments included in the collection have come from the Library of the Monastery of St. Shenouda, an important target of our collection. This would be the largest collection

received by the Society after the collection of the Cairo Coptic Museum. We can now safely say that the Society's microfilm holdings of Coptic and Christian Arabic Manuscripts of Egyptian provenance is the largest of its kind in the world, of course with a price to match!

We also received approval from the authorities of the Göttingen University Library for obtaining microfilm copies of 8 Coptic and Arabic-Christian manuscripts from the Library collection. Many of the projects being performed by our staff involve these important manuscripts. The manuscripts originally were part of the Library of the Coptic Monastery of Anba Bishoy in Wadi' N Natrun, Egypt.

7. Coptic Book Library: The Library is still growing. We added many volumes, too many to list here. The most notable is volumes 2 and 3 of the Corpus Patricorum Gracorum (CPG), the most important publication for research in the field of Patristics. We also secured a rare copy of Jean Maspero's volume on the Byzantine Manuscripts preserved in the Cairo Egyptian Museum. A complete list of these volumes will be included in our Society's Progress Report in October of this year.

8. St. Shenouda Coptic Newsletter: Beginning with volume 4 of this newsletter [October 97], a new and more expanded '*Subscriber Edition*' will be issued. This edition will be send to all members-in-good-standing of the Society. Non-members on our mailing list will receive an abridged version of the Newsletter. Also, we will be offering a separate subscription to the Newsletter for those wishing to receive this enlarged version but are not interested in having a full membership in the Society. Details will be forthcoming.

9. Coptic Classes: A new class will be offered for translation of selected Coptic (Bohairic) Biblical texts at the Center. This would include separate sessions for Old and New Testament Texts. The class will tentatively be held on Saturdays 6-7:30 p.m., starting May 10, 1997. Also we have the Advanced Coptic Seminar. This is held on Sundays from 6-7:30 p.m. It is divided up into two sessions, one translating more advanced Bohairic literary texts, and the second dealing with Sahidic monastic texts. All the above classes are taught by Mr. Hany N. Takla, the Society's president.

Prof. Loprieno of UCLA will be offering a 4-unit Coptic Sahidic class in the Spring Quarter, (April 97). We are hopeful that this upcoming class will be as popular among the Coptic students there as the first one was in 1995. We are also hopeful that one or two of our Center's staff, studying at UCLA, will be enrolled in an independent study class with Prof. Loprieno. This individual-type class will involve the participants in working with the manuscript copies of liturgical manuscripts available at the Coptic Center. This represent the first cooperative endeavor between us and the Academic community at UCLA. This cooperation was only possible through the ever-willing help of Prof. Loprieno.

10. The Scriptorium: The Scriptorium is continuing to provide quality educational programs in the field of Biblical Studies. The last ones deal with the study of the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts of the New and Old Testaments respectively. For more information on these classes as well as other educational programs of the Scriptorium, please contact them at (800) 333-8373. Excavation work at the Wadi 'N Natrun site of the Monastery of St. John Kolobos is expected to resume next year, God's willing. The student program that was part of the earlier season, however, will not be included this time. We wish them the best on such a task so dear to the hearts of all Copts interested in the preservation of our Christian Heritage.

11. Research Projects: The transcription of Coptic glosses of the famous Hibat Allah ibn Al-Assal's 13th century critical Arabic translation of the Coptic Gospels, is about 95% complete. The final review of the first three Gospels was completed and the whole project is expected to be complete by April or May 1997. Mr. Ashraf Hanna, of our Center's staff is continuing his work on collation of the different manuscripts of the Coptic (Arabic) Synaxarium. Similarly, Mr. Sherief Sorial is working on the Coptic Psalmodia, Mr. Emad N. Georgy is working on the Coptic Horologion, and Mr. Peter Mankarious is working on Coptic Liturgy of St. Basil. All of these projects are designed to trace the developmental history of these important books in the Coptic Church. The extensive manuscript-on-microfilm holdings of the Society is what made these projects a reality. Some of the works of Mr. Sorial and Mr. Mankarious will be conducted (hopefully) as part of an Independent Study class at UCLA, as indicated above.

12. American Coptic Studies Association: The first newsletter of the Association has come out. Its president is Professor Sami Hanna of Portland Oregon. Annual membership dues are \$25. For more information contact Prof. Hanna at e-mail address sami11@juno.com. The Association's mailing address is: 2625 SE Market Street, Oregon 97214.

13. Important Events: The Los Angeles Area was blessed by two events related to Coptic Studies in the past quarter. The first was a four-week Coptic Iconography Exhibition of the works of the renowned Coptic Iconographer, Dr. Stephane Rene of London. The exhibition featured 25 icons of varying sizes. A lecture about the sacred art of Coptic Iconography was delivered by the Artist and attended by about 80 persons, the majority of whom were non-Copts. The exhibition was at the Judson Gallery in the Highland Park District of Los Angeles, and it was held from February 2, 1997 to March 1, 1997.

The second event was a two-lecture series by the renowned German Coptic Scholar, Prof. Dr. Jürgen Horn of Göttingen University. These were held during the afternoons of March 3 and March 6, 1997; at the

campus of UCLA. The first dealt with the subject of Coptic Literature, Origins and Types; and the Second one was on Coptic Monasticism, Forms and Concepts in the 4th Century. 20-25 persons, mostly students, were in attendance. Among them were several Coptic students, enrolled at the University. We thank Prof. Loprieno of UCLA for inviting Prof. Horn, an Old colleague of his, and making this opportunity possible.

14. The First St. Shenouda Coptic Symposium: The Society has tentatively planned a new annual Symposium of Coptic Studies. The first one will be devoted to Coptic Liturgy and Church History. It will be a one-day event, tentatively scheduled on the last Saturday of June 1997. More details will be forthcoming in future editions of this Newsletter. The objective of this symposium is to allow Copts to participate in a scholarly atmosphere and present their research in areas more applicable and practical to the Coptic Church. This will act also as the professional training grounds for better participation by the Copts in the Leiden Congress in 2000. We encourage all Copts, not only in Southern California, to attend and/or participate.



ST. SHENOUDA COPTIC NEWSLETTER

Quarterly Newsletter Published by the Staff of the
St. Shenouda Center for Coptic Studies

1494 S. Robertson Blvd., Ste. 204, LA, CA 90035

Tel: (310) 271-8329 Fax: (310) 558-1863

Mailing Address: 1701 So. Wooster St. Los Angeles, CA 90035, U.S.A.

July, 1997

Volume 3, No. 4

In This Issue:

The First St. Shenouda Coptic Symposium (2) by Hany N. Takla..... 1

News by Hany N. Takla..... 6

The First St. Shenouda Coptic Symposium (June 28, 1997 - Santa Monica, California) (2)

(by Hany N. Takla)

Introduction: The Society is holding its first Coptic Symposium of Coptic Studies. This symposium is designed to promote Coptic Studies in the Southern California Area in general and among the Coptic Community in particular. The subject matter was restricted to Coptic History and Coptic Liturgy. Such subjects has generated much interest within the Coptic community in the past years. It is also reflective of the work that the Society is sponsoring at the present time. We were very fortunate that HG. Bishop Serapion, the Coptic Bishop of Los Angeles, has accepted our invitation to attend this symposium. Several Coptic priests as well as Coptic Scholars from the Southern California area are expected to be in attendance.

It is our sincere hope that such conference will be fruitful and will turn into an annual event. The subject matter will expand to include other area of Coptic Studies as participant in these areas become available. It will continue to be the Society's main objective to encourage Coptic Studies among the Copts especially among the youthful generations.

Schedule: The Symposium schedule is set as follows:

8:30-9:00 a.m.	Registration
9:00-9:15 a.m.	<i>Opening Address</i> , by HG. Bishop Serapion of Los Angeles
9:15-9:30 a.m.	<i>Coptic History - Overview</i> , by Ramses N. Wassif
9:30-9:45 a.m.	<i>Coptic Liturgy; Past; Present, and Future</i> ; by Hany N. Takla
9:45-10:15 a.m.	<i>St. Mark in Egypt - Historical Investigation</i> , by Mary Farid
10:15-10:30 a.m.	Morning Break
10:30-11:00 a.m.	<i>Historical Perspectives in Pope Benjamin's Sermon of the Wedding at Cana of Galilee</i> , by Maged S. Mikhail
11:00-11:30 a.m.	<i>In search for the Lost Egyptian Identity</i> , by Maged S. Mikhail, MD
11:30-noon	<i>Habib Girgis: A Theologian and Reformer</i> , Saad Michael Saad, Ph.D.

noon-12:30 p.m.	<i>The transport of Coptic Culture and Spirituality to Australia</i> , Maged Attia
12:30-1:15 p.m.	Lunch Break
1:15-1:45 p.m.	<i>Coptic Music, a descendent of Egyptian Music - Preliminary Remarks</i> , by Samuel Youssef
1:45-2:15 p.m.	<i>The use Psalm 50 in the Coptic Liturgical Services</i> , by Joseph Fahim
2:15-2:45 p.m.	<i>Coptic Psalmodia, Annual - TCC vol. CR2, Project Update</i> , by Shereif Sorial
2:45-3:00 p.m.	Afternoon Break
3:00-3:30 p.m.	<i>Synaxarium of the Coptic Church - TCC vol. AR1&2, Project Update</i> , by Ashraf Hanna
3:30-4:00 p.m.	<i>Coptic Horologion - TCC vol. CR1, Project Update</i> , by Hany N. Takla
4:00-4:30 p.m.	<i>'The Holy Spirit', as referred to in the Coptic Liturgy</i> , by Hany N. Takla

Format: Each plenary paper will be a 15-minute presentation with no follow-up discussion. The other papers will be structured in a 20-minute format with a 10-minute discussion. The maximum time allotted to each paper, including the discussion will be 30 minutes.

Abstracts: The following abstracts (arranged in order of the contributor's last name) have been submitted:

The transport of Coptic Culture and Spirituality to Australia, Maged Attia

The coming of the Egyptian Christians (Copts) to the Australian Continent represents the coming of a most ancient culture which has continued in unbroken succession for thousands of years.

Actually they bring with them, not financial riches but riches of culture and the benefit of good education and training in many professions. They bring also the ability to retain their own culture while becoming loyal citizens of their new homes. More importantly, these people have brought to this modern country the richness of Alexandrian Theology and Spirituality.

The Egyptians, from ages past, were very much tied to their land and to their church. All through their long history they were known to be non-migrating people. For them, to migrate meant to be cut off from your roots to whither and to die. However as a result of a complexity of factors a significant one which is the population explosion in Egypt in the past few decades, we saw a mild wave of immigration to Australia taking shape in the mid 1960's. Being separated both from their land and their church, the first Egyptian settlers who were small in number found it very difficult to survive.

Consequently, they started voicing to their church in Egypt their earnest desire for the priest to cater for their spiritual and pastoral needs. At the same time the church in Egypt was becoming concerned about the welfare of her migrating flocks. As a result of this mutual feeling, his Holiness, the late Pope Kyrillos VI (1902-1971) selected the deacon Edward Labib Nemattalla to be ordained as a priest (as Fr. Mina) to serve the Egyptian Orthodox community of Australia. He arrived on January 24, 1969 and prayed the first Egyptian Orthodox liturgy on Australian soil in Melbourne. Thus the transplant from one of the most ancient churches started to take root in the new world. The 1970's and the 1980's saw a large influx of Egyptian orthodox migrants to Australia. Today there are 21 vibrant churches served by 33 priests: ten in Sydney; six in Melbourne; two in Queensland; and one in Adelaide, Perth, and Canberra.

This paper will deal with the Coptic Theology brought in through the Christian education activities, as well as the spirituality embodied in

our ancient monastic system that was brought into Australia

The use Psalm 50 in the Coptic Liturgical Services,
by Joseph Fahim

Psalm 50 is a popular psalm in the prayers and liturgical services of the Coptic Church. It is a reflection of the Church reverence to the use of psalms since the beginning. This paper represents an investigation of the usage of this psalm in the various services. The purpose was to reconcile some of the discrepancies between current practice and manuscripts of the Horologion (or Agbeyia) in particular. Such usage can be summarized in six different types. Primarily all these types placed it following the Prayer of Thanksgiving, a typical prayer in Coptic liturgical services. However, it showed that it was placed after all other introductory prayers found in the Agbeyia, which has come into use in these services. Specifically those of the morning and the Midnight prayers. This placed it in the Agbeyia in the logical place of directly preceding the psalms of the hour regardless of what introductory prayers are there. This agreed with the extant Coptic manuscripts of both the Agbeyia as well as the Psalmodia.

St. Mark in Egypt - Historical Investigation, by Mary Farid

Saint Mark as the founder of the Coptic Church is a central issue in the ecclesiastical history of the Orthodox Church of Egypt. The fact that his head, which was severed when he was martyred, is authentically preserved in Egypt is undisputed. However, his role in introducing the Christian Faith and establishing the Church in Alexandria has come under attack in recent times by some scholars. This paper will attempt to survey all the direct and indirect evidence that are available to establish that St. Mark did actually come and preach in Alexandria in the middle of the first century AD. Also it will present the traditional

view of the Church on the subject which is substantially based on the account given by Eusebius of Caesaria in his Ecclesiastical History.

Synaxarium of the Coptic Church - TCC vol. ARI&2, Project Update, by Ashraf Hanna

"Synaxarion" is the Coptic and Greek term for the Latin "synaxarium", and is the formal compilation of the lives of the martyrs, saints, and religious heroes of the Coptic Church. These biographies, which are sometimes reduced to a mere citation of each martyr or saint, are read in the course of the liturgy, after reading selections from the Book of the Acts during the liturgy service on the day of the passion of each saint.

This book, which has become a liturgical manual, is very important for the history of the Coptic Church, and is a result of various endeavors.

The development of the Coptic Martyrology was a reflection of the historical atmosphere in which the Christian Church lived during the first four centuries and up until recent times. The successive persecutions of the Christians produced an ever increasing number of martyrs, whose steadfastness and perseverance was considered an inspiration, and whose death for the Faith called for an annual commemoration by the Church, this was usually presented in the form of an encomium or homily for the edification of the congregation. Those encomiums were read in either Sahidic or Bohairic, or in Arabic (in the Middle Ages) where in most cases, they were translated into Arabic from Greek and Coptic originals.

The current Arabic text includes a number of extraneous entries besides these biographies, in which certain notable events are commemorated on given dates, such as the Crucifixion, the feasts and fasts of the church, the apparition of an Archangel or the Virgin Mary, the Coptic New Year, the dedication of a church, and so on.

The Coptic Synaxarion also includes, in addition to the local saints and martyrs, some non-native figures like Greek, Syrian, Armenian, Roman, and Persian saints and martyrs.

The first Arabic recension of the Coptic Synaxarion is attributed to Anba Butrus al Jamil, Bishop of Malij (12th-13th century). This was followed by a recension made by Anba Mikhail, Bishop of Atrib and Malij(1243-1247), though others are known to have participated in this task, including Anba Yuhanna, Bishop of Parallos (Burullus). The evolution of the Synaxarion has continued to the present day by the constant inclusion of successive saints, martyrs, and bishops.

The Synaxarion, therefore, through its development, bears constant witness to the life of the Coptic Church, militant and triumphant.

In search for the Lost Egyptian Identity, by Maged S. Mikhail, MD

Usage of the terms "Copt" and "Coptic" in the English language is widely accepted but is very problematic with regard to both denotation and connotation. This applies to both scholarly as well as common usage. This fact has already been alluded to by Pierre du Bourguet in the Coptic Encyclopaedia.

First both terms are linguistically unnecessary in the English language and should be replaced with "Egyptian". Since English directly borrows the words "Egypt" and "Egyptian" from Greek, the use of "Copt" and "Coptic" is not necessary. Second, when the terms are used to indicate a Christian Egyptian or pertaining to Egyptian Christianity they can be misleading and are imprecise. Whether the terms are used with reference to a historic period, language, religion, or culture their use causes confusion and in many instances invokes many established biases. On the balance, usage of these words have done more harm and will continue to harm the people, their history, and their language.

Habib Girgis: A Theologian and Reformer, Saad Michael Saad, PhD

It is undisputed that Habib Girgis (1876-1951) was the leading Coptic theologian throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Though visionary and passionate in his writings on Coptic Church reformation, no serious analysis has been published about Habib Girgis as a reformer.

A critical analysis of Habib Girgis's thought reveals in it a profound conviction in the church as a living democracy. Such a belief has amazingly penetrated into the depth of his passion for the Coptic Orthodox Church to which he dedicated his whole being.

In Girgis's thought, doctrine and vision, church democracy is a requirement if reformation and progress are to be achieved. In his book, Practical Means for Coptic Reformation, Cairo 1942, Girgis constructs an elaborate system of church organization, activities, government, and life. To that end, he does not consider church democracy as a modern philosophy, an imitation of Western culture, nor a product of the political democratization of Egypt. On the contrary, he regards it as an ancient tradition in the Coptic Church, a tradition that has been kept alive in the church's conscience and praxis. He goes further to ground (or found) church democracy on biblical truth, the teaching of the apostles, and the praxis of the early church.

Coptic Psalmody, Annual - TCC vol. CR2, Project Update, by Shereif Sorial

The Coptic Psalmody is one of the most important Coptic hymns collections. Some of its hymns had their roots very early in Church history. The evolution of the book seems to be mostly done in a monastic setting. In fact for the longest time, it was predominantly used in the monasteries. This project is performed using the manuscripts on microfilm available at the St. Shenouda Center for Coptic Studies. The preliminary work presented here is based only on fine of these manuscripts.

This paper will attempt first to give an introduction to the history, the current arrangement, and usage of this liturgical book. Discussion of the manuscripts and methodology used will follow, along with a survey of some of the interesting observation found in the collation of the Doxologies Section. In conclusion, a list of future work planned for the project will be mentioned.

Coptic Horologion - TCC vol. CRI, Project Update, by Hany N. Takla

One of the early research projects of the Treasures of the Coptic Church (TCC) was that of the Coptic Horologion (Agbeyia). This paper will deal with the monastic origin of the book, its current usage, and the approach taken in its study. Primarily this work is performed on the basis of the manuscript microfilm copies available at the St. Shenouda Center for Coptic Studies. These manuscripts used will be described briefly and the unique features found in them will be discussed. In conclusion, the future direction of the project will be discussed.

Coptic Liturgy; Past; Present, and Future; by Hany N. Takla

The Coptic liturgy was one of the first manuscriptal evidence of the Coptic Culture that was introduced in the west since the 16th century AD. In combination with the travel of some learned pilgrims, interest began to be directed to such material as an entry point to understanding this ancient Christian Church.

This paper will briefly survey the history of work being done in this field since the 14th AD to the present as well as the future on the basis of the needs of the Coptic Church and its members. This work can be divided into five distinct period: a) 14th-15th century AD (primary sources), b) 16th century AD - 1860's AD, c) 1860's-1930, d) 1930-the present time, e) the future.

'The Holy Spirit', as referred to in the Coptic Liturgy, by Hany N. Takla

The Holy Spirit is one of the most mystical concepts of Christianity. In Coptic, three grammatical expression has been used to reference it in the New Testament as well as the Euchologion, as follows:

- a. πιπᾶ εθονᾶ
- b. ογπᾶ εφονᾶ
- c. πεκπᾶ εθονᾶ (or sim.)

These expressions seems to be used when referring to the Holy Spirit as a Hypostasis, its role in Baptism, and its gifts given to man. This paper will survey citations found of each expression under the above-mentioned topics. This is merely a preliminary investigation of very complex and sensitive theological question.

Coptic History - Overview, by Ramses N. Wassif.

This is a brief presentation on the main primary and secondary sources for the study of the Coptic Church History, with a note on the desired future work on certain areas of that history. This survey will include the following sources:

- + Eusebius and the Early Church Historians
- + The writings of the Early Church Fathers and their contribution to the History of the Coptic Church
- + Foreign and native monastic sources
- + The time of the Arab Conquest of Egypt
- + Most important Arab Historians from Abd-el-Hakam to al-Gabarti
- + 'History of the Patriarchs' and works of Coptic medieval scholars
- + Modern works from diaries of travelers to Egypt in the 17th century to the histories by modern writers from the 19th and 20th centuries
- + Contemporary currents and future needs in the study of the Coptic Church History

Coptic Music, a descendent of Egyptian Music - Preliminary Remarks, by Samuel J. Youssef

The Coptic hymnic tradition, like any son's relation to his father, is undoubtedly related to the hymnic tradition used throughout the ancient Egyptian period. This paper will survey some of the similarities between various works of the Coptic Church and those of Ancient Egyptian literature. Such similarities are based on structure and form rather than content. These preliminary remarks are designed to promote more detailed study of the relationship of the music of the Coptic Church to that of the ancient descendants of its members.

Contributors:

The following is a list of the contributors to this symposium in their presenting order:

Bishop Serapion: Coptic Orthodox bishop of Los Angeles and Southern California since 1995.

Ramses Wassif: Secretary of the St. Shenouda the Archimandrite Coptic Society, holds a MA. in History, and the Church History instructor at the Los Angeles Coptic Theological Seminary.

Hany N. Takla: President of the St. Shenouda the Archimandrite Coptic Society, Director of the Coptic Center in Los Angeles, and the Coptic Language instructor at the Los Angeles Coptic Theological Seminary.

Mary Farid: A junior student at UCLA, studied Coptic there under Prof. Loprieno.

Maged S. Mikhail: A research assistant at the St. Shenouda Center for Coptic Studies, holds a MA. in Coptic History and working toward his PhD (UCLA), and also a Research Assistant at the Coptic Center for the past two years.

Maged S. Mikhail, MD: Anesthesiologist at USC Medical Center, and Member of the board of the Society. He is also the author of publications in the Medical field.

Saad Michael Saad, PhD: An electrical engineer, member of the board of the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity at Claremont, California, and member of the Society.

Maged Attia: Lawyer, practicing in Sidney Australia. He has represented the Coptic Church in many regional and International youth conferences. He is also the author of a book on the History of the Coptic Church in Australia.

Samuel Youssef: A Pre-Med freshman student at UCLA, studied Coptic there under Prof. Loprieno.

Joseph Fahim: A Senior Biomedical Engineering student at California State University, Long Beach and the Assistant Director of the Society's Orange County's Regional Center.

Sherief Sorial: A Senior Biology Student at UCLA, he just concluded a Independent Study course there on the Coptic Psalmodia with Prof. Loprieno. He is also a staff member of the Coptic Center.

Ashraf W. Hanna: A Civil Engineer and a staff member of the Coptic Center.

Publication of Proceedings: The papers presented at the Symposium will be published in the 4th volume of the Society's bulletin for the year 1997-98. A final draft of each paper shall be submitted by the presenter, no later than August 31, 1997.

News

(by Hany N. Takla)

- 1. St. Shenouda Coptic Newsletter:** Beginning with volume 4 of this newsletter [October 97], a new and more expanded '*Subscriber Edition*' will be issued. This edition will be send to all members-in-good-standing of the Society. Non-members on our mailing list will

receive an abridged version of the Newsletter. Also, we will be offering a separate publication subscription, including Newsletter and Annual Bulletin, for those wishing to receive this enlarged version but are not

interested in having a full membership in the Society. The annual subscription rate is \$15 (\$10 for students).

2. Fire at a Historic Coptic Church in Los Angeles: In the early hours of April 14, 1997, a major fire occurred at St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church in Los Angeles, the first church established by the Copts in Los Angeles. The fire resulted in great losses to the original church building which would need extensive rebuilding. Although the congregation can use the adjoining chapel for services, the overall capacity of the church was substantially reduced. The cause of the fire was of suspicious origin, but no definitive answer given yet. Aside from its historic value, several religious paintings on wood panels as well as canvas and stained glass panels were destroyed.

3. The Coptic Life of St. John Kolobos (in English): The Coptic Church Review (CCR) has published a special double-issue volume on the Coptic Life of St. John Kolobos (the Short). It includes translations of the Bohairic life from a Vatican Manuscript and the surviving fragments of the Sahidic version with an excellent introduction. Dr. Tim Vivian of Bakersfield, California, and Mr. Maged S. Mikhail, a member of the Center's staff, are the contributors to this volume. This is the first time that this life appears in English and in such a well-done fashion. By permission of the Editor of the CCR, Dr. Rodolph Yanney, The Society will be distributing the book as a separate publication. The price for a single copy is \$5.00. Discounts will be available to distributors for quantity purchases of 25, 50, and 100 copies. Members of the Society will be given an introductory 20% discount. All orders to be sent to the Society's mailing address: 1701 So. Wooster St. LA, CA 90035.

4. NKCSC Project Progress: The Lectionary of the Coptic Church for the Days of the year is now available. The order no. NKCSC-CG1, and -CG1M (Win95). It requires the Antonious Coptic fonts which is available in -CL1 (Coptic Lessons) and -CB1(a) (Coptic New Testament). It requires also Windows 3.1 or higher (not Win95) and Word for Windows version 2 or 6. The program has the same look as the Coptic Lessons (-CL1) and will generate the readings of the Coptic Church in Coptic and English. The English is taken from the KJV except for the Psalm readings which were retranslated from the Coptic for the first time. The price is \$8.00 for members and \$12.00 for non-members.

The other software titles that we have are: -CL1, Bohairic Lessons (\$8/\$12); -CL2, Coptic-English Dictionary (\$8/\$12) [Requires Coptic Fonts], -CB1, Coptic New Testament [Boh/English/Sah/Gr.] (\$30/\$45); -CB1a, Coptic NT [Boh/English] (\$16/\$23); -CB1b, Coptic NT [Sah/Gr.] (\$16/\$23). Only -CL1 requires Word for Windows, all the rest requires only Windows. A version for Win95 is also available with the added designation of 'M'.

5. Books Available Through the Society: Rev. Patrick's, "*Traditional Egyptian Christianity -History of the Coptic Orthodox Church*" is still available. The price is \$10.00 (\$14.95 for non-members).

Coptic Puzzles and Word Games vol.1 is also available at the special price of \$2.00 for members and \$3.00 for non-members. This is an excellent introduction to Coptic Language for kids and adults, that will insure hours of fun and learning for all. Such work was a product of love of many of our Coptic youth associated with the Coptic Regional Center of Orange County, California. The same group is working now on the second volume of that series with a projected publication date of January 1998.

Analysis of the Coptic Liturgy, Mr. Monir B. Raphael is available in 3-volume set which covers the St. Basil Liturgy including the Raising of Incense service. This is a valuable work for all interested in gaining a better understanding of the language of the Liturgy. Price is \$32.00 (\$38.00 for non-members). Future volumes covering the other Coptic Liturgies are in the work by the same author.

Other important titles available are the 2-volume *Coptic Art Pictorial* set (\$35 (\$40 for non-members)), and Dr. Gawdat Gabra's "*Cairo - Old Coptic Churches*", (\$12 (\$15 for non-members)). Fr. Matthias F. Wahba's edition of the Agbeyia (\$4 (\$5 for non-members)) and that of the Coptic Liturgy (\$12 (\$15 for non-members)). Fr. Wahba's editions included contributions by the Society to the translation of many of the Coptic Texts in them.

6. Bulletin of the Society: The third volume of the Annual Bulletin of the Society is now available. Dues-paying members will automatically get their copies in the mail. For non-members, and dues-paying members needing extra copies, the price will be \$5.00 (\$4.00 for

members). Copies of Volume 1 and 2 are still available for sale.

7. The Society on The Internet: We are still at the same address, "http://www.stshenouda.com". We are currently working on enhancing the information available in our Manual of Coptic Studies Section of the site. One of the projects we are currently working on is that of a list of all available Biblical texts of the Coptic New Testament. Also we expect to develop the Coptic History section by end of August 1997!

8. Coptic Microfilm Library: In the last quarter we received the long-awaited copies of eight Coptic and Christian Arabic manuscripts from the Göttingen University Library. These manuscripts originally were part of the Library of the Coptic Monastery of Anba Bishoy in Wadi' N Natrun, Egypt.

9. Coptic Book Library: The Library is still growing. We added many volumes, too many to list here. The most notable is Kuhn's *Thirteen Coptic Acrostic Hymns from the Morgan Library*. A complete list of these volumes will be included in our Society's Progress Report in October of this year.

10. Coptic Classes: The new class for translation and study of selected Coptic (Bohairic) Biblical texts at the Center, was delayed due to preparation for the Coptic Symposium. New Date for this class will be Saturday, July 26, 1997, 6-7:30 p.m. This would include separate sessions for Old and New Testament Texts. Those who wish to participate should contact Mr. Hany N. Takla, the instructor, as soon as possible. Also we have the Advanced Coptic Seminar. This is held on Sundays from 6-7:30 p.m. It is divided up into two sessions, one translating more advanced Bohairic literary texts, and the second dealing with Sahidic monastic texts. These classes are also taught by Mr. Hany N. Takla, the Society's president.

Prof. Loprieno of UCLA has completed the instruction of a 4-unit Coptic Sahidic class in the Spring Quarter, (April 97). Apparently the class was as popular among the Coptic students there as the first one was in 1995. Also Mr. Shereif Sorial of our Center's staff, studying at UCLA, has concluded an independent study class with Prof. Loprieno. This individual-type class involved the study of the Coptic book of the Annual Psalmody, using the manuscript copies of that text available at the Coptic Center. This represented the first cooperative endeavor

between us and the Academic community at UCLA. This cooperation was only possible through the ever-willing help of Prof. Loprieno.

11. The Scriptorium: The Scriptorium is continuing to provide quality educational programs and scholarly seminars in the field of Biblical Studies. For more information on these classes as well as other educational programs of the Scriptorium, please contact them at (800) 333-8373. Excavation work at the Wadi 'N Natrun site of the Monastery of St. John Kolobos is expected to resume next year, God's willing. We wish them the best on such a task so dear to the hearts of all Copts interested in the preservation of our Christian Heritage.

12. Research Projects: The transcription and the review of the Coptic glosses of the famous Hibat Allah ibn Al-Assal's 13th century critical Arabic translation of the Coptic Gospels, is complete. This manuscript will be edited with an English translation as part of the Arabic Series of CSCO. Mr. Ashraf Hanna, of our Center's staff is continuing his work on collation of the different manuscripts of the Coptic (Arabic) Synaxarium. Similarly, Mr. Sherief Sorial is working on the Coptic Psalmody. All of these projects are designed to trace the developmental history of these important books in the Coptic Church.

13. American Coptic Studies Association: The second issue of the newsletter of the Association has come out. Its president is Professor Sami Hanna of Portland Oregon. Annual membership dues are \$25. For more information contact Prof. Hanna at e-mail address sami11@juno.com. The Association's mailing address is: 2625 SE Market Street, Oregon 97214. They are currently in the planning stages of establish a Coptic University in the United States.

14. Open House at the St. Shenouda Center for Coptic Studies: The Society will have an open house at its Coptic Center on July 19, 1997 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This is designed to showcase the accomplishments that the Society has done in the past years.