



## St. Shenouda the Archimandrite Coptic Society

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Dear friends and colleagues:

The peace and love of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ be with you all. This year was our 40th anniversary in the journey to ***Preserving, Reviving, and Promoting the Christian Heritage of Egypt***. Such task has been filled with both hopes and disappointments. As our journey continues, we try to steer our path around roadblocks that we constantly face while marching toward the goal that we set back in 1979. In those 40 years we saw abundant blessings, but we also had our share of obstacles that we had to overcome along the way. To the phenomenal growth and accomplishments that the Society has achieved we are grateful for the Lord and the help that you, our members, have given to make it possible. We still have a long road ahead of us, not only to stay the course but to accelerate toward the finish line. Appreciating past accomplishments is only beneficial as a driving force to navigate in the future toward our ultimate goal. The least we can accomplish in our generation, is to be able to hand it over to the next one in the best shape possible. Considering the state it was handed to us, it continues to be a monumental task!

Our heritage stands on four pillars: Language, Literature, Art, and History. There are multiple languages and cultures that shaped these pillars in the past. However, moving into the future, the revival of the Egyptian (Coptic) language is an essential and indispensable tool that we must promote and develop. For in it lies the essence of our identity and frankly its survival! It is the genuine link that binds us Copts in the Diaspora together with our brethren in Egypt! Throughout our history, our activities centered on understanding and study of the past and rebuilding the future to reestablish our true identity that would accurately connect the past in the present to shape the future. Such activities included education, publishing, and making resources needed to accomplish the work. Though we are the pioneers for this work in the Diaspora, we learned that collaborative efforts with those of like mind are essential. Since 1992, the *St. Shenouda Center for Coptic Studies* in Los Angeles was the shining physical beacon, representing our growth and inspiring those that we are collaborating with. The following accomplishments and future endeavors are listed below, which you have made possible with your prayers and financial support.

1. ***The St. Shenouda Center and its Future:*** This past reporting period we have faced one the most formidable challenges since the founding of this historic, physical entity. Due to unforeseen circumstances, we lost our lease in preparation for the sale of the building. This would mean that the place that Lord has guided us to in 1992, will either at best be too expensive to maintain at the area it has grown to be, or at worse be forced to leave it. This prompted the Board to rethink its future strategy. Consequently, we established a new regional center in the San Fernando Valley area of Los Angeles. This allowed us to extend our community physical reach to an area both near a major Coptic church as well as an academic institution that many young Copts attend. In doing so we creatively reduced our current Center presence from nearly 2,400 sf to a little over 1,400 sf. The Society was never able in the past to establish a large endowment to allow for a purchase of a permanent place. So far, the Lord has thwarted the vigorous sale efforts of the building like He did with Daniel in the Lions' den! Moving out of the area is not a viable option, as it will greatly curtail our activities and eventually lead to irreversible decay. There are more painful plans in the work, if the worse is realized. In any case, we are making sure the collections we are entrusted with, will not be homeless. Please remember this in your prayers!
2. ***The Northridge Regional Coptic Center:*** As mentioned above, on July 1, we leased a 420-sf office space in the Northridge area of the St. Fernando Valley, within a couple of miles of St. Mary and St. Athanasius Coptic Orthodox Church there and the Northridge Campus of the California State University. This regional center will be housing a sampling of the collections of the Society: books, microfilms, digital resources, and Society-sponsored sale books. It will also serve as a physical campus to the

Society online courses. Its director is Mr. Joseph Fahim, a Society Board member, assisted by Mr. Shenouty Hanna. It will also be a home to the Orthodox Bookstore, operated by Mr. Mark Sedrak, a long-time member of the Society. On September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019, an Open House was held there, attended by several Coptic youths from the area. Later that evening it assumed the function of a physical campus for the online Coptic Introductory class that is in session at present.

3. **20<sup>th</sup> St. Shenouda-UCLA Conference of Coptic Studies:** We have continued our annual celebration of Coptic Studies at UCLA with the 20<sup>th</sup> conference on July 19-20, our best so far. It was our fourth special conference on the *Life and Times and St. Shenouda the Archimandrite*. There were 16 presentations, three of which were done with a live-video feed from Rome, Göttingen, and Melbourne. In total, the audience enjoyed experts on the different aspects of that theme from 16 scholars representing 16 different academic institutions from the US, Australia, Italy, and Germany. There were four first-time presenters, the most prominent among them was the face of academic Coptic Literature for the past several decades, Prof. Tito Orlandi of the University of Rome. He was gracious enough to participate with us on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Society by delivering his paper live from Rome. More information about the conference is available at <http://www.stshenouda.org/20conferencereg>. To view the live recordings of the presentations, you will need to come physically either to the Los Angeles Center or the new Northridge Regional Center.
4. ***The St. Shenouda Coptic Cultural Museum:*** Over the past year we continued to maintain the *Bible in Egypt* exhibit. As part of our space consolidation, we brought back the rest of the manuscript collection along with the Ancient Egyptian center piece, the full-size replica of the Rosetta Stone. The manuscript collection grew modestly by the addition of 9 manuscripts. A special viewing of the exhibit was held for attendees of the 20th St. Shenouda-UCLA Conference of Coptic Studies. The exhibit was also viewed by about 20 students from the Eastern Christianity class at the Loyola-Marymount University with their professor, Archimandrite Dr. Cyril Hovrun, and later by about 12 people from Claremont Graduate University with their professor, Dr. Nicola Denzy Lewis. Both groups also conducted their scheduled classes on those occasions at the Coptic Library Suite of the Center.
5. ***The Society Library System:*** Regardless of the difficult circumstances we were dealing with, we continued the development of our collections, albeit conservatively. We acquired several volumes of the most recent Coptology titles from Egypt and elsewhere, including the most recent issues of the Arabic edition of *Journal of the School of Alexandria*. The most notable acquisition was a 1911 volume of the rare first edition of the Deuterocanonical texts, published in Egypt. What transpired after this publication by Ekladius Labib, was the end of his publishing efforts of liturgical books for the church and the delay of publishing the Lent and Pascha lectionaries for a decade!
6. ***Support of Coptic Studies at Claremont Graduate University (CGU):*** The collaboration with CGU continued in three different avenues. First, we provided financial and academic support for four students at various stages of their doctoral work. Dr. Tamara Siuda was awarded her Doctorate at this period on a Coptic Hagiography topic. Rev. Edens Elvéus will be awarded his doctorate on Gen 1:1-5, in November of this year. Both Mary Ghattas and Peter Sidrak are progressing in their dissertation writing. Prof. Gawdat Gabra was either the chair or on the advisory Board for all these students. Also, our new Coptic Studies graduate student there is Maggie Atef Tawadros, who is pursuing her doctorate in Coptic Art. She will start a part-time work as a Research Assistant at the St. Shenouda Center in November 2019. Second, in April of this year we sponsored a Coptic Studies Lecture by Dr. Heather Badamo, an Art Historian professor at University of California Santa Barbara on the topic of Graffiti in the ancient Church of St. Antony in his Red Sea Monastery. Third, we are continuing our support of the *Claremont Coptic Encyclopedia (CCE)*, one of the major contributions of Prof. Gabra during his tenure at CGU and until the present time. The Coptic Council of CGU, chaired by Dr. Saad Michael Saad, is the lead arm of the Society in support of these activities. He is also the managing editor of CCE and its continuing development, with the assistance of Dr. Siuda, Mr. Sidrak, and Ms. Ghattas.
7. ***The Continued Collaboration with St. Mark Foundation for Coptic History (SMF):*** We are now at the proof review stage of the proceedings of the Eighth Symposium of Christianity and Monasticism in

Alexandria, Red Sea Monasteries, and the Western Oases. The Society also participated at the Coptic Literature Symposium held at the Logos Center in Wadi al-Natrun in February 2019. There, we were selected to organize the schedule for the upcoming 2021 Symposium on the topic of the Coptic Bible. The Society is also providing support for the new Digital section of the new Patriarchal Library that H.H. Pope Tawadros II has recently established in Wadi al-Natrun.

8. **Coptic Digital Library (CDL):** The Society has continued to expand its electronic research library for the benefit of the Society and other designated affiliate organizations. It now includes over one million pages of manuscripts and research material in the field of Coptic Studies.
9. **The Society on Web:** The Society's new website is continuing to expand. We have recently added a Coptic Bohairic dictionary and a site for the Coptic Bible including revised texts in Coptic Unicode of Bohairic and Sahidic Gospels of St. Matthew and St. John with more to come. All these texts are cloud-stored via flipping page technology.
10. **Coptic Microform/Digital Manuscript Collection:** The Institut Catholique de Paris (ICP) posted on the *gallica.fr* site, the three digitized Coptic manuscripts that the Society contributed to their digitization. We also received the high-resolution images of them several months earlier. Further, we purchased from the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, high-resolution copies of 46 other manuscripts from St. Macarius Monastery, over 17000 black and white digitized frames from the Vienna Papyrus collection, and 10 digitized manuscripts from the Sbath collection in Aleppo that originated from Egypt. In addition, we were able to secure digital copy from the St. Macarius fragment collection that is currently housed at the Hamburg State University. The cost was over \$10,200.
11. **Bishop Epiphanius al-Maqari Memorial Award:** Based on the recommendation of the review board, headed by Dr. Mary Farag of the Princeton Theological Seminary (PTS), this academic year award was given to Mr. Matthew Neumann of PTS. His winning research paper was titled, Athanasius of Alexandria and Gregory of Nazianzus on Anthropology and Christology. The second-year installment of this \$5,000 at PTS was paid in October 2019. The award will continue to be competitively applied for by students of PTS in the form of a submitted research paper on an aspect of the Coptic Heritage, and judged by the review board of PTS faculty and the Society as before. We encourage all to contribute toward this endeavor on the special webpage set at <http://www.stshenouda.org/bishopepiphaniusaward>.
12. **Education & Publications:** The Society in collaboration with ACTS completed two Coptic language classes: The Advanced Coptic Language course, and the 4th online summer course of Bohairic Coptic. This last one had as many as 40 enrolled students from all over the world, making it the largest academic Coptic Language class outside of Egypt. On September we started a new edition of our Introduction to Bohairic Coptic at the Center and online on September 21, 2019 with over 20 enrolled students. The Society has published volume 17, 2018 of *Coptica*, our joint publication with SMF.
13. **Collaboration with St. Athanasius College, Melbourne Australia:** In the Society tradition of collaborating with all Coptic and non-Coptic academic efforts, we were invited by Dr. Lisa Agaiby of St. Athanasius College to assist in the documentation of the manuscripts of St. Paul Monastery in the Red Sea. This project, led by Dr. Agaiby and her team, is tasked by digitizing, documenting, and eventually restoring this important monastic library. The Society role is to assist in the cataloging and documentation of these manuscripts.
14. **Society Elections:** The results of the Society's Officers elections is final for the term ending September 30, 2022. They are: Mr. Hany N. Takla, President; Mr. Emad S. Hanna, Treasurer; Mrs. Amany Awad-Hanna, Secretary. The at-large members selected are: Mr. Ramses Wassif, Vice-President; Prof. Maged S. A. Mikhail; Mr. Joseph Fahim; and Mrs. Monee T. Hanna.

**In this upcoming fiscal year, we have set the following main goals:**

**The St. Shenouda Center of Coptic Studies and the Northridge Regional Center:** Our fixed expenses are primarily the rent and the maintenance of the now consolidated Los Angeles main Center and the new Regional Center in Northridge, in addition to the possible projected rent increase if the building is sold.



This is the hub of the Society's activities and its physical presence that has gained the Society in particular and the Copts in general, worldwide respect over the decades. It is operated with the least overhead expenses possible and with maximum efficiency. The estimated cost in the budget is \$70,000.

**Society Electronic Activities:** Cloud storage and web-based programs are becoming indispensable tools in carrying our efforts in the preservation and promotion of our Heritage, the secure display of our vast resources of primary and secondary resources, as well as our educational activities. The estimated cost is at least \$2,000 drawn from different budget items.

**Funding the 2019-20 Coptic Studies at CGU and Other Academic Activities:** Our projected support for CGU includes student's scholarships, compensation for CCE editing activities, and Coptic Studies lectures. This may also include allocations to future offering of classes by visiting professors in support of the Coptic Studies Track. Also included is the annual allocation for the PTS' *Bishop Epiphanius al-Maqari Memorial Award*. We are also contemplating the offering of online comprehensive curriculum of survey courses of the different aspects of the Coptic Heritage. These will either be eventually offered through our online institute, SSEICS, or via Society collaborations with other Coptic online education institutions such as ACTS or Agora University. Estimated costs \$25,000

**Coptology at UCLA:** The Society will continue its Coptic Studies Lecture series next year with one on November 21st, by Prof. Nelly Van Doorn-Harder. We have tentatively scheduled the 21<sup>st</sup> St. Shenouda-UCLA Conference of Coptic Studies for August 29, 2020, so it will not conflict with the International Congress in Brussels in mid-July 2020. The estimated cost is \$5,000 for covering housing and travel grants. Other possibilities of cooperation will be covered in budgeting for the academic programs.

**Publications:** Volume 18 & 19 of *Coptica* are in the planning. They will include the proceedings from the 20<sup>th</sup> St. Shenouda-UCLA Conference. The estimated cost is \$5,000, covering printing cost, printing equipment lease, and mailing cost.

**Expansion of the Coptic Book and Microfilm Libraries and St. Shenouda Coptic Cultural Museum:** We are continuing to develop the collections at the Coptic Library and the Museum as prudent and wise as we can. We are also planning to procure digital copies of at least 45 manuscripts that are of Egyptian origin. Estimated cost is \$20,000.

Financially, our General Fund income was about \$144,600 (including \$5,000 direct contribution to PTS) with expenditures of about \$118,320. The surplus was primarily due to deferring of academic and library expenses. To continue maintaining and expanding our work as we pursue the avenues that the Lord saw fit to open for us, we would need about \$130,000 for the projected activities. The expenditures for last year as well as the projected ones for the upcoming year are as follows:

Category	18-19 Expenditure \$ (% Of 118,320 K)	19-20 Proj. Expenditure \$ (% Of 130,000K)
Fixed Office Expenses	\$62,600 (52.91%)	\$70,000 (53.84%)
Annual Conference/Honoraria	\$13,570 (11.47%)	\$ 5,000 ( 3.85%)
Scholarships/Financial Asst.	\$ 5,000 ( 4.22%)	\$ 5,000 ( 3.85%)
Computers /Software/Equipment/Internet	\$ 2,200 ( 1.86%)	\$ 3,000 ( 2.31%)
Printing & Mailing Costs	\$ 4,400 ( 3.72%)	\$ 5,000 ( 3.85%)
Books/Manuscripts/Microfilms/Museum	\$23,200 (19.61%)	\$20,000 (15.38%)
SSEICS/Academic Programs	\$ 6,600 ( 5.58%)	\$20,000 (15.38%)
Office Furniture/Supplies/Misc.	\$ 700 ( 0.59%)	\$ 1,000 ( 0.77%)
Items for redistribution	\$ 50 ( 0.04%)	\$ 1,000 ( 0.77%)

In our 40 years of stewardship of this work, we have accomplished a great deal. There is much more to be done that we are confident with your continuing prayers and support; we will be able to achieve. For this and the coming generations we have toiled all these decades. For us it was a labor of love and not a hobby. **WE**



**INVITE THE NEW GENERATION TO STEP UP AND SUPPORT THE WORK THAT YOUR PARENTS HAVE FAITHFULLY PRESERVED FOR YOU.** May our Lord guide this work and its workers for His glory and bless you all.

Sincerely on behalf of the Society,

*Hany N. Takla*

Hany N. Takla, President