



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 marked the 43rd Anniversary of our long journey of **Preserving, Reviving, and Promoting the Christian Heritage of Egypt**. As we are trying to recover from under the cloud of this dreaded pandemic, we are trying to achieve the level of normalcy we had before and move forward. History has taught us to adapt to adverse circumstances and continue to pursue our mission. Divine help has so far sustained us for all these decades and moved the hearts of many of you to help us continue to accomplish this mission. Regardless of the many challenges we faced or will be facing, our faith is this work is Divinely inspired and thus worthy to continue regardless. We need to always remember that our heritage is a precious gift, and we are all called to preserve it for the present and future generations in a better shape than we received it. This has always been our aim and motivation for the many years of our existence.

At the risk of sounding repetitive, it is still important to learn the basic components of our Coptic Heritage. Our heritage stands on four distinct pillars: Language, Literature, Art, and History. Multiple languages and cultures have shaped these pillars over the many centuries of our past. However, 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 subsequently not only our survival but dare to say our heart and soul! It is the genuine link that binds us Copts in the Diaspora together with our brethren in Egypt not in just mere words and grammar! Though an essential tool, it is not all we thrive to preserve. Along this path, our activities focused on understanding and studying the past and rebuilding the future to re-establish our true identity that would accurately bridge our past with the present in shaping our future. Such activities included education, publishing, gathering of resources needed to accomplish such work, and encouraging and guiding those that are pursuing the study of our heritage. As the pioneers in reviving the Coptic Heritage among the Diaspora Copts, we are continuing to inspire many throughout the lands of immigration to follow suit and become our collaborative partners. *St. Shenouda Center for Coptic Studies* in Los Angeles, founded in September 1992, represents the focal point of all such activities. Now I would like to share with you the activities and accomplishments that you have generously supported this past fiscal year.

1. **The Relocation of the Main St. Shenouda Center:** We are in the construction stage of having a new permanent location for the Society and its Center. Currently we were asked to move into a somewhat small space as of the end of October 2022 for a second time. We do not expect an appreciable increase in the rental expenses. Nearly a third of the library holding have been moved away and kept at the future location but are mostly not accessible. We are still hopeful for having the permanent place, God willing, by the end of this current fiscal year, 2022-2023.
2. **Coptic Bible App:** The flagship of our heritage preservation effort has been the development of the Coptic Bible App. Since its release a little over a year ago, it was installed in over 3000 devices worldwide. We had a major release with most of the texts from the Sahidic Old Testament on the 42nd anniversary of our founding, December 22, 2021. We elected to keep it as a free app to make it more available for the maximum number of Copts and others.
3. **Coptology @UCLA:** The Society continued our annual celebration of Coptic Studies at UCLA with the 23rd Conference. This was the first time since 2019 that we returned to the usual in-person format on July 22-23, 2022. There were 22 participants associated with about 20 academic institutions. The two-day program included only six online presentations from different time zones with the rest being in person from the US, Egypt, and Australia. It included scholars from 18 different cities on three different countries spread over three continents. About 70 people attended parts or all of the sessions along with a number of online guests. More information about the conference along with audio and video recordings of all the presentations will be available at <http://www.stshenouda.org/23conferencereg>.

4. ***The St. Shenouda Coptic Cultural Museum:*** Over the past year we continued to maintain the *Bible in Egypt* exhibit. The manuscript collection grew to 295 manuscripts. The most notable of the seven manuscripts acquired is a 16th century Horologion (Agbeya) in Arabic as well as a tiny manuscript of possibly a Melkite Horologion also in Arabic. Both are important in the study of the evolution of this important liturgical book. We also acquired an 1833 Arabic Bible that was printed in England as part of the effort of the Church of England to provide printed bibles to the Coptic Church. We also acquired an important early 1900s Arabic Van Dyck bible that has a long-handwritten note about the early history of making this edition of the Arabic Bible.
5. ***The Society Library System:*** We continued developing our collections, albeit conservatively. We acquired several volumes thanks to suggestions by our members. Dr. Gesine Robinson was generous enough to donate her specialized library of Gnosticism and Early Christianity to the Society this past fiscal year. Also Mr. Magdy Michel also donated a large number of Coptic Church books that added to our collection of that category.
6. ***Support of Coptic Studies at Claremont Graduate University (CGU):*** The collaboration with CGU continued in multiple facets. First, we provided financial and academic support to four students or graduates at various stages of their doctoral work. Ms. Tawadros is continuing her part-time work as a Research Assistant at the St. Shenouda Center to catalog the digital manuscripts collection of the Society and other activities. Our most significant cooperation is still our support of the further growth 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, Dr. Sidrak, and Ms. Ghattas. The new site for the CCE is: <https://ccd.cclaremont.edu/digital/collection/cce>. Honorariums were also provided to multiple scholars involved in the contributing or editing work of new entries in the encyclopedia. This fiscal year Mr. Hany N. Takla was named as a Co-editor of CCE.
7. ***The Continued Collaboration with St. Mark Foundation for Coptic History (SMF):*** Despite the sudden passing of Dr. Fawzy G. Estafanous, the founding president of SMF we are continuing our cooperation. Both of our organizations have collaborated on the publication of the *Coptica* annual periodical as well as organizing several international symposia that studied and published an important series on the study of Christianity and Monasticism in Egypt. The eighth and last of the volumes was appropriately dedicated to him. The long-awaited Symposium on the Coptic Bible is scheduled for January 29-February 2, 2023. It will be organized jointly by both of our organizations. The Society is also continuing to provide 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. Only 23 volumes were scanned during this reporting period.
9. ***The Society on Web:*** The Society's new website is continuing to expand with addition of new pages. The online Coptic Introductory course is continuing to be used for the Coptic Language curriculum at the St. Athanasius Theological Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee.
10. ***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 Ms. Briana Grenert of PTS. Her winning research paper was titled, *The Fire of Putrid Desire: The Story of the Mare Woman in the Syriac Life of St. Macarius*. Even though the initial understanding was for a four-year commitment, its success encouraged us to go for at least a Fifth-year installment of this \$5,000 at PTS. It is scheduled to be paid in October 2022. 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 usual. We encourage all to contribute toward this endeavor on the special webpage set at <http://www.stshenouda.org/bishopepiphaniusaward>.
11. ***Education & Publications:*** The Society in collaboration with ACTS completed a new Coptic Liturgical Manuscripts course in addition to the regular Summer Bohairic Coptic language course. The total enrollment in both courses was 24 students from several parts of the US, Canada, Egypt, UK. Also, an intensive 6-week course in Sahidic Coptic with some Bohairic was taught at University of Notre Dame, IN. Volume 19, 2020 of *Coptica* was published and sent to the members and subscribers. Preparation of volume 20 and 21 (2021/2022)



is ongoing. We welcome Dr. Lisa Agaiby of the Melbourne, Australia's University of Divinity as a co-managing editor of the journal. The Society also participated online with a paper on the Coptic US diaspora at a conference titled: *Rewriting Global Orthodoxy: Oriental Orthodox Textual Traditions in the Present*, held at Radboud University in Nijmegen, the Netherlands. Further Mr. Takla delivered two lectures on Coptic Bible and Coptic Literature for a Coptic group in Ottawa, Canada. Also, recently Dr. Lydia Wilson published an article in *New Lines Magazine* on the Preserving the Coptic Language, which in part featured the work of the Society in that regard.

12. ***The European Academy for Coptic Heritage (TEACH)***: The Society continued to collaborate this year with this newly formed online Coptic theological institution in the UK. The cooperation was two-fold. First, we sponsored a class titled, *the Introduction to the Coptic Old Testament*, taught by Mr. Hany N. Takla, which is offered annually. Second, some of our members are part of the editorial board of its new *Journal of Christian Studies (JCS)*, including Dr. Gawdat Gabra, and Dr. Saad Michael Saad. For more information go to <https://teach.eu.com/>.
13. ***Proceedings of the 11th Congress of Coptic Studies***: After years of delay and change of editors, the approved articles were submitted to the Peeters Publishers, Belgium, in late September 2021 and the proofs were sent to the authors in mid-June of this year. We are hoping that the volume(s) will be out in print in the next few months.
14. ***In Memorium***: It is with great regret that we announce the passing in August 2022 of one of the great proponents of the Coptic Heritage, the Coptologist Dr. Rachad Shoucri of Kingston Canada. He is the son of the late renowned Coptic Historian Dr. Monir Shoucri, and brother of Dr. Merit Shoucri, one of the founding members of the Society, and Dr. Magdi Shoucri of Canada. We also lost another Coptologist and friend of the Society, Dr. Monica Rene, the wife of the famed Coptic Iconographer Stephane Rene. Last but not least, we lost this year one of our esteemed members that helped us to grow to what we are now, Mr. Magdi Abdou. May their memories and efforts be an example for us all.

In this upcoming fiscal year, we have set the following main goals in addition to those mentioned above:

The St. Shenouda Center of Coptic Studies and New Regional Center: Our fixed expenses are primarily the rent and the maintenance of the now consolidated Los Angeles main Center. 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. We are hoping to be able to transfer the collections gradually to its new permanent location nearby the existing physical location. The estimated cost in the budget is \$50,000.

Society Electronic Activities: Cloud storage and web-based programs are becoming indispensable tools in carrying out 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 main expenditure is scheduled for development of a new App for handheld devices called the Coptic Literature which will include all the Coptic and Arabic literary and liturgical texts of our Heritage. We are also working on making available digital resources using the Flipping Book technology. The estimated cost is at least \$11,000.

Funding the 2022-23 Coptic Studies at CGU and Other Academic Activities: Our projected support for CGU includes students' scholarships, compensation for CCE editing activities, Coptic Studies lectures, and perspective offered courses 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 still contemplating the offering of an online comprehensive curriculum of survey courses of the different aspects of the Coptic Heritage. The first one was the Coptic Liturgical Manuscripts course with ACTS. We are planning a similar course with the University of Divinity, St. Athanasius College in Melbourne in 2023. Estimated costs \$37,000

Coptology at UCLA: We have tentatively scheduled the 24th St. Shenouda-UCLA Conference of Coptic Studies for July 14-15, 2023. The estimated cost is \$7,500 for covering housing and travel grants. Other possibilities of cooperation will be covered in budgeting for the academic programs.

Publications: Volumes 20 and 21 of *Coptica* is in the planning. 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. Estimated cost is \$20,000.

Enhancement of the Coptic Bible App: The Society is contemplating new development enhancement of the current system with more texts and possibly a critical apparatus module. The cost for the Society will be from the computer budget.

Coptic Bible Symposium: The Society will be organizing the Scientific program of this important symposium on site at the Logos Center in Wadi al-Natrun, hosted by H.H. Pope Tawadros II, during the period of January 29 through February 2. Scholars from the US, Australia, Europe, and Egypt will be presenting in person.

Financially, our General Fund income was about \$155,633 (including \$5,000 direct contribution to PTS) with expenditures of about \$110,468. The surplus was primarily due to deferring of academic and library expenses as well as less than projected office rental increase during the fiscal year. This time, the Society is looking into setting up an endowment fund for the future maintenance of the Society activities. To continue maintaining and expanding our work as we pursue the avenues that the Lord sees fit to open for us, we would need about \$138,500 for the projected activities. The expenditures for last year as well as the projected ones for the upcoming year are as follows:

Category	21-22 Expenditure \$ (% Of 110,468 K)	22-23 Proj. Expenditure \$ (% Of 138,500K)
Fixed Office Expenses	\$49,288 (44.62%)	\$50,000 (36.10%)
Annual Conference/Honoraria	\$ 7,328 (6.63%)	\$ 7,500 (5.41%)
Scholarships/Financial Asst.	\$ 5,000 (4.52%)	\$12,000 (8.67%)
Computers /Software/Equipment/Internet	\$ 1,967 (1.78%)	\$11,000 (7.95%)
Printing & Mailing Costs	\$ 5,243 (4.75 %)	\$ 6,000 (4.33%)
Books/Manuscripts/Microfilms/Museum	\$20,586 (18.64%)	\$25,000 (18.05%)
SSEICS/Academic Programs	\$19,400 (17.56%)	\$25,000 (18.05%)
Office Furniture/Supplies/Misc.	\$ 529 (0.48%)	\$ 1,000 (0.72%)
Items for redistribution	\$ 1,128 (1.02%)	\$ 1,000 (0.72%)

In our nearly 43 years of stewardship of this work, we have taken steady and persistent strides toward our ultimate goal. However, maintaining the progress and continuing to expand our efforts is still needed. Through your continuing prayers and support, we will be able to continue with our mission. From our inception, this work was for the benefit of not just this generation but for those who will follow us. We see this work as both Divinely inspired as well as mandated. **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, President

Membership Form: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScPJ-y04pLkbbkHai7ecWHHUKUhmY2FpiACxtOLUTen0YABcQ/viewform>

Contribution: <http://www.stshenouda.org/society/donation>

Website: <http://www.stshenouda.org>

Charity Store: <https://ssacs.ecrater.com/>