



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 our 44th Anniversary of our blessed journey to *Preserve, Revive, and Promote the Christian Heritage of Egypt*. This past fiscal year has revolved around securing a permanent physical place for the Society and its 31-year-old St. Shenouda Center for Coptic Studies. The aftermath of the pandemic has made this process even more challenging due to inflation, material shortage, and shortage of workers. However, through the divine help that was our companion all these years, we persevered and succeeded in this task as you can read below. Historically, adversities taught us to adapt as circumstances dictate and continue to pursue the mission. We are always grateful to our members who believed in this mission and supported us all these years. This support, and our clear vision, have set our Society as a shining beacon to guide the path of many to search and study our heritage. Such heritage is a precious gift that our forefathers have entrusted us with. Consequently, it is our solemn duty to preserve and promote it for the current generation and those that will come after us. Our mission was not merely to preserve it, but to deliver it to those after us in a better shape than we have received it.

It is worth repeating the basic principles of our Coptic Heritage. It stands on four distinct pillars: Language, Literature, Art, and History. Although 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 say, our hearts and souls! 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. 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:*** The massive undertaking of moving the thousands of physical resources of the Society into the new location, began in stages over the past few years. It started with the establishment of a small annex in the final location we have now, which housed the periodicals, patristic and biblical sets, portions of the special collections we have established, along with the majority of the manuscript collection. During the month of June, we were able to move all the remaining assets into the new location, where the Society was founded back in 1979. In the meantime, we are keeping the 9-year-old St. Shenouda Coptic Cultural Museum at its current location. The physical distance between the two locations is a 5-minute walk! So, we upgraded our space from about 900 square feet to a combined space of nearly 2200 square feet. The cost of more than doubling the space with only about 25% cost increase. The new place has already been receiving visiting scholars. We are hoping to have a virtual open house in late December to introduce the new place to our members. Details will be communicated to members electronically at a later date.
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 about 5000 devices worldwide. Over the past year we fixed several textual errors pointed out by the users plus added the Akhmimic Proverb text for comparison with the complete Sahidic and the partial Bohairic text preserved. Currently, we are still keeping

the current version of the App as a free App on iOS and Android devices to make it more accessible for the maximum number of Copts and others.

3. **Coptology @UCLA:** The Society continued our annual celebration of Coptic Studies at UCLA with the 24th Conference. We have continued with our general Coptology theme for this year's conference. There were 19 participants associated with about 15 academic institutions. The two-day program included only four online presentations from different time zones with the rest being in-person presentations from the US, Canada, and the Czech Republic. It included scholars from 12 different cities spread in three different countries spread over three continents. About 70 people physically attended parts or all of the sessions along with a number of online guests. The most significant aspect of the conference was the participation of a large number of young scholars especially from North America. More information about the conference along with audio and video recordings of all the presentations is available at <http://www.stshenouda.org/24conferencereg>.
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 299 manuscripts. We have identified a previously unknown small Sahidic parchment fragment in the collection as one of the Psalms.
5. **The Society Library System:** We continued developing our collections, albeit conservatively. We acquired several volumes thanks to suggestions by our members. Prof. Dwight W. Young generously donated the bulk of the offprints of his lifetime work which is predominately about the works of St. Shenouda the Archimandrite. We are grateful to Prof. Young and his daughter Ms. Cecilia Young for this most valuable gift. We also like to acknowledge Prof. David Bertaina for donating a copy of his latest work on the Coptic writer *Ibn Rajā*'.
6. **Support of Coptic Studies at Claremont Graduate University (CGU):** The collaboration with CGU continued in multiple facets. First, we provided financial and/or academic support to five students or graduates at various stages of their doctoral work. This included the participation of four of them at the last St. Shenouda-ULCA conference. 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.claremont.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 Prof. Tammi Schneider was selected as a Co-editor of CCE.
7. **The Continued Collaboration with St. Mark Foundation for Coptic History (SMF):** The sudden passing of Dr. Fawzy G. Estafanous, the founding president of SMF, necessitated more involvement of our Society in support of SMF. Aside from our joint collaborating on the publication of the *Coptica* annual periodical, we were especially active in the organization of the long-awaited Symposium on the Coptic Bible, January 29-February 2, 2023. 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. **The Society on Web:** The Society's new website is continuing to expand with the 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.
9. **The Coptic Bible Symposium:** The main collaborative effort with SMF has been the organization of the 10th edition of the Symposia series that Dr. Fawzy Estafanous and Dr. Gawdat Gabra began in 2002 for the study of Coptic Egypt. The first eight dealt with Christianity and Monasticism in various regions of Egypt. Since then, the subject matter switched to the study of the different aspect of the Coptic Heritage, This past one dealt with the study of the Coptic Bible: Text, History, Language, and Art. It was hosted by H.H. Pope Tawadros II at the Patriarchal Residence in Wadi al-Natrun. Over 100 people attended, limited only by space. The program included 30 presentations by scholars from 10 different countries over four continents. The Society's role was to prepare and execute the program as well as preparing the eventual publication of its proceedings. The proceedings from the 2019 Coptic Literature Symposium appeared in print during this past fiscal year, edited by Dr. Samuel Moawad and published by SMF.

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's award was given to Ms. Bathany Cok of PTS. Her winning research paper was titled, "Our Bodies Like Christ's Crucified Body: Illness, Liminality, and Holiness in the First Greek Life of Pachomius." Even though the initial understanding was for a four-year commitment, its success encouraged us to go for at least a sixth-year installment of this \$5,000 at PTS. It is scheduled to be paid in October 2023. 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 concluded a semester long Sahidic Coptic Independent Studies course at the Claremont Graduate University. Also, in collaboration with ACTS we completed two-semester long Coptic Language graduate courses for Bohairic and Sahidic. Volume 20, 2021 of *Coptica* was published and sent to the members and subscribers. Mr. Takla delivered a keynote address at the Annual General Membership meeting of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies, titled: "Bridge Building in Quest for Reviving the Heritage." Currently we are collaborating with the Coptic Scriptorium group in a three-year project in an advisory capacity for Bohairic Literature at the invitation of Prof. Caroline Schroeder of the University of Oklahoma.
12. ***The European Academy for Coptic Heritage (TEACH)***: The Society continued to collaborate this year with online Coptic theological institution in the UK, TEACH. The cooperation was two-fold. First, we sponsored a class titled, *the Introduction to the Coptic Old Testament*, taught by Mr. 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***: The publication of the proceedings of the 11th Congress has been announced by Peeters Publishers, Belgium as forthcoming. We are still waiting for the actual date of publication.

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 and administrative office. This is the hub of our Society's activities and its physical presence that has gained Society in particular and Copts in general, worldwide respect over the decades in the academic circles. The plan this year is to further develop the collection and complete the cataloging of the enormous resources that have been moved to the current permanent location. The estimated cost in the budget is \$64,000.

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. Cataloging and scanning of the current inventory of books and microfilms will be part of the activities. Other activities include the word-processing of Coptic and Arabic texts to be included in the two Society-sponsored Apps, Coptic Bible & Coptic Literature as well as in support of our collaboration with the Coptic Scriptorium current 3-year project. Funding is included under the Academic programs and the scholarship budget items.

Funding the 2023-24 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 2024. Estimated costs \$15,000.

Coptology at UCLA: We have tentatively scheduled the 25th St. Shenouda-UCLA Conference of Coptic Studies for July 19-20, 2024. This upcoming year will mark our 45th year of operation. As customary on every 5 years,



the conference theme will be the Life and Times of St. Shenouda the Archimandrite. We are planning to invite several prominent scholars to cover the different Coptological aspects of this topic. The estimated cost is \$12,000 for covering housing and travel grants. Other possibilities of cooperation will be covered in budgeting for the academic programs.

Publications: Volumes 21 and 22 of *Coptica* are in the preparation stage. The estimated cost is \$4,000, 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 \$10,000.

Financially, our General Fund income was about \$133,363 (including \$5,000 direct contribution to PTS) with expenditures of about \$116,429. The surplus was primarily due to deferring academic and library expenses as we were doing the major move of the library assets to the new location. This time, the Society is still working on 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 conservatively need about \$120,000 for the projected activities. The expenditures for last year as well as the projected ones for the upcoming one are as follows:

Category	22-23 Expenditure \$ (% Of 116,429 K)	23-24 Proj. Expenditure \$ (% Of 120,000K)
Fixed Office Expenses	\$62,185 (53.40%)	\$64,000 (53.33%)
Annual Conference/Honoraria	\$13,313 (11.43%)	\$12,000 (10.00%)
Scholarships/Financial Asst.	\$ 6,375 (5.48%)	\$10,000 (8.33%)
Computers /Software/Equipment/Internet	\$10,407 (8.94%)	\$ 2,000 (1.67%)
Printing & Mailing Costs	\$ 4,430 (3.81 %)	\$ 4,000 (3.33%)
Books/Manuscripts/Microfilms/Museum	\$ 5,634 (4.84%)	\$10,000 (8.33%)
SSEICS/Academic Programs	\$12,700 (10.91%)	\$16,000 (13.33%)
Office Furniture/Supplies/Misc.	\$ 1,385 (1.19%)	\$ 1,000 (0.84%)
Items for redistribution	\$ 0 (0.00%)	\$ 1,000 (0.84%)

In our nearly 44 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 sacred mission. From our inception, this work was for the benefit of not just this generation but for the generations that will follow us. The fruit of our efforts was on full display at last year’s conference. We see this work as both Divinely inspired as well as mandated. **WE INVITE THE NEW GENERATION TO CONTINUE TO STEP UP AND SUPPORT THE WORK THAT YOUR PARENTS HAVE FAITHFULLY PRESERVED FOR YOU.** May our Lord guide this work and multiply 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-y04pLlkbkHai7ecWHHUKUhmY2FpiACxtOLUTen0YABcQ/viewform>

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

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