



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 45th Anniversary of our blessed journey to *Preserve, Revive, and Promote the Christian Heritage of Egypt*. This past fiscal year we continued our emphasis on education and raising the awareness of the literary aspects of the Coptic heritage. We have taken great strides in laying the framework for making available the entire corpus of Coptic literature that has survived so far. As the Coptic language is the cornerstone of our heritage, we established two applications to preserve the wealth of our literature: The Coptic Bible and the Coptic Literature. In the future, we are hoping to create another application for the viewing of the original sources, the manuscripts. Such applications are designed to enhance the knowledge of the language, as well as the study of our heritage that is preserved in these texts. With regards to liturgical texts, we will restrict our efforts to textual material while encouraging others to work on preserving the musical heritage. We are hoping in the future to launch an application for the art and architecture of our heritage, or encourage and support others to do this essential component of our culture.

Currently, the Society maintains two separate physical centers for research within close proximity. The first, is the new physical Center which houses all the libraries of the Society, which represent the wealth of research material for the study of the Coptic Heritage in all its aspects, ecclesiastical and non-ecclesiastical. It also houses the microfilm and digital collections of the Society, along with the scanning and viewing equipment. The second Center is our St. Shenouda Coptic Cultural Museum, which is primarily the home of the Bible in Egypt Exhibit, along with other authentic items of our heritage.

I want to re-emphasize for this generation, and those that follow us, 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, the revival however, 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 authentic identity, that would accurately bridge our past with the present in shaping our future. Such activities included education, publishing, gathering of the resources needed to accomplish such work, and encouraging and guiding those who 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 Main St. Shenouda Center:** The new location has been setup as a fully functional research center, with libraries that deal with all aspects of the Coptic Heritage, from its ancient Egyptian roots to modern times. The libraries were both in print and digital, including nearly 300 original manuscripts. It also serves as a place for conducting online as well as physical classes related to different aspects of our Coptic heritage.
2. **Coptic Literature App:** On July 2024 the Society released the second of its heritage preserving Apps, the Coptic Literature App. This, along with the Coptic Bible App, are envisioned to be the focus of our heritage preservation efforts. Since their release, there were installed in over 8100 devices for the Coptic Bible and over 800 for the new Coptic Literature worldwide. The Coptic Literature App was released initially with 17 texts over four categories: Hagiography, Patristics, Canon Law, Liturgical. The text of the life of St. Shenouda included correspondence of the Bohairic, and the larger Arabic version. Only one Sahidic text was added in the initial release, the Life of St. Antony. We will be continually adding texts over the years as they become ready. These Apps are excellent tools to researchers in Coptology who can search for any Coptic text string over a

multitude of texts. In one instance, we were able to identify a tiny parchment fragment in our collection as a Sahidic Psalm fragment. Currently, we are still keeping both Apps 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 25th Conference. This year's conference was the fifth Conference dealing with the Life and Times of St. Shenouda the Archimandrite. It was further dedicated to the illustrious academic career of Prof. Dwight W. Young, who spent about half a century in the Study of the writings of our Abbot. There were 18 participants associated with about 16 academic institutions. The two-day program included only three online presentations from different time zones, with the rest being in-person presentations from the US, Germany, and Japan. It included scholars from 14 different cities, from five 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 specialists on the study of our patron saint. More information about the conference, along with video recordings of all the presentations, is available at <http://www.stshenouda.org/25onference2024>.
4. **The Society Library System:** We continued developing our collections, albeit conservatively. We acquired a complete set of the periodical *Enchoria* along with several new volumes in the field of Coptology.
5. **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 for two 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. Several new articles have been contributed by renowned Coptologists worldwide. 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 Dr. Ghattas, who was recently awarded her PhD from CGU. The new site for the CCE is: <https://ccd.ccl.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.
6. **The Collaboration with St. Mark Foundation for Coptic History (SMF):** We have continued our collaboration with SMF during this past fiscal year. Aside from our joint collaboration on the publication of the *Coptica* annual periodical, we assisted in part with Prof. Fr. Arsenius Mikhail in the organization of the upcoming Coptic Liturgy Symposium, February 3-7, 2025. Also, we assisted in forming a scientific advisory committee for SMF to consult on new projects for the Foundation to work on. The members are, Dr. Lisa Agaiby, Prof. Fr. Arsenius Mikhail, Prof. Maged (Saweris) S. A. Mikhail, Dr. Samuel Moawad, Prof. Ibrahim Saweros (Secretary), Hany N, Takla (President) and Dr. Gertrud van Loon. The Society has also supported the Manuscripts documentation project of SMF, which is working on the 800+ manuscripts in Asyut, upon Bishop Youannis' invitation.
7. **The Society on Web:** The Society's new website is continuing to expand with the additions of new pages, including the Society progress reports, and annual conference information. The online Coptic Introductory course is continuing to be used for the Coptic Language curriculum at the St. Athanasius Theological Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee.
8. **The Coptic Bible Symposium:** The publication of the 2023 Symposium proceedings is still in the editing stage.
9. **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. Ben Hancock of PTS. His winning research paper was titled, "The First Origenist Controversy: A Late Battleground for Spiritual Authority." Throughout the year, we renewed our commitment to continue with offering this Award until it is mutually agreed by both parties to discontinue it, at the annual amount of \$5,000 at PTS. The next installment is scheduled to be paid in October 2024. This 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 towards this endeavor on the special webpage set at <http://www.stshenouda.org/bishopepiphaniusaward>.

10. **Word Processing Grants:** To support addition of more texts to our New Coptic Literature App we have provided grants to five students to digitize the required texts along with a number of volunteers.
11. **Education & Publications:** The Society in collaboration with ACTS, completed two separate semester long Coptic Language graduate courses for two levels of Bohairic. Also, the Society in collaboration with St. Athanasius College (SAC) of the University of Divinity has concluded the first course of the Coptic Liturgical Manuscripts, attended by seven clergy and lay students from three different countries. The second part of this course is being offered at this time until early November 2024. Volume 21-2, 2022-23 of *Coptica* was published and sent to the members and subscribers. Currently, we are continuing our collaboration 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):** This year, the Society continued to collaborate with the 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:** Publication date is still not set by the publisher.
14. **In Memorium:** This fiscal year we have lost two important members of our Society. On July 12, 2024, Mr. Nabih F. G. Youssef passed away. He was one of the seven original founders of the Society. Aside from his humble service of the Society and the Coptic Church, he was one of the top Structural engineers in the world leaving a legacy of inventive methods of earthquake design in addition to mentoring many in this field. Shortly after on August 27, 2024, Prof. Dwight W. Young passed away. He was one of the eminent scholars in the writings of St. Shenouda the Archimandrite for about half century. He participated in our first conference about our Abbot in 2004. He set for us a great example of scholarship and humility. The Society is planning an online publication of all his works, pending the necessary copyright approval.

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, the 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 \$66,000.

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 2024-25 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, and the two with two similar



courses with the University of Divinity, St. Athanasius College (SAC) in Melbourne in 2024. Included also, grants to people working on texts related to the Coptic Literature App. Estimated costs \$16,000.

Coptology at UCLA: We have tentatively scheduled the 26th St. Shenouda-UCLA Conference of Coptic Studies for July 18-19, 2025. This conference will return to usual theme of general Coptic Studies. The estimated cost is \$2,000 for covering basic costs. Housing and honorarium are projected to be covered by contributions and book sales. Honoraria are usually budgeted in the academic programs.

Publications: Volumes 21 and 22 of *Coptica* are in the preparation stage. The estimated cost is \$6,000, 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 \$140,947 (in addition to \$5,000 direct contribution to PTS) with expenditures of about \$108,456. The surplus was primarily due to deferring library expenses. 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	23-24 Expenditure \$ (% Of 108,456 K)	24-25 Proj. Expenditure \$ (% Of 120,000K)
Fixed Office Expenses	\$64,037 (59.05%)	\$66,000 (55.00%)
Annual Conference	\$ 663 (0.61%)	\$ 2,000 (1.67%)
Scholarships/Financial Ass/Honoraria.	\$15,680 (14.46%)	\$16,000 (13.33%)
Computers /Software/Equipment/Internet	\$ 988 (0.91%)	\$ 2,000 (1.67%)
Printing & Mailing Costs	\$ 5,056 (4.66 %)	\$ 6,000 (5.00%)
Books/Manuscripts/Microfilms/Museum	\$ 3,210 (2.96%)	\$10,000 (8.34%)
SSEICS/Academic Programs	\$16,205 (14.94%)	\$16,000 (13.33%)
Office Furniture/Supplies/Misc.	\$ 1,977 (1.82%)	\$ 1,000 (0.83%)
Items for redistribution	\$ 640 (0.59%)	\$ 1,000 (0.83%)

In our nearly 45 years of stewardship of this work, we have taken steady and persistent strides towards our ultimate goal set above. 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 this sacred and vital 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 in the growth of our UCLA conferences. We see this work as both Divinely inspired as well as mandated. **WE INVITE THE NEW GENERATION TO CONTINUE TO STEP UP AND WORK WITH US TO 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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