

Paper Abstracts of the First International Coptic  
Studies Conference

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# Life in Egypt during the Coptic Period

## **From Coptic to Arabic in the Christian Literature of Egypt**

Adel Y. Sidarus  
Evora, Portugal

After having made the point on multilingualism in Egypt under Graeco-Roman domination (2008/2009), I intend to investigate the situation in the early centuries of Arab Islamic rule (7<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> centuries). I will look for the shift from Coptic to Arabic in the Christian literature: the last period of literary expression in Coptic, with the decline of Sahidic and the rise of Bohairic, and the beginning of the new Arabic stage.

I will try in particular to discover the reasons for the tardiness in the emergence of Copto-Arabic literature in comparison with Graeco-Arabic or Syro-Arabic, not without examining the literary output of the Melkite community of Egypt and of the other minority groups represented by the Jews, but also of Islamic literature in general.

### **Was There a Coptic Community in Greece? Reading in the Text of Evliya Çelebi**

Ahmed M. M. Amin  
Fayoum University

Evliya Çelebi (1611–1682) is a well-known Turkish traveler who was visiting Greece during 1667–71 and described the Greek cities in his interesting work "*Seyahatname*".

Çelebi mentioned that there was an Egyptian community called "Pharaohs" in the city of Komotini; located in northern Greece, and they spoke their own language; the "Coptic dialect".

Çelebi wrote around five pages about this subject and mentioned many incredible stories relating the Prophets Moses, Youssef and Mohamed with Egypt, and other stories about Coptic traditions, ethics and language as well. Moreover, Çelebi provided us with a text showing the language or dialect of the Copts of Komotini and their numbers as well. It should be noted that there is a Greek translation for the texts of Çelebi.

This paper will discuss the text of Evliya Çelebi which is related to a group of people who lived in Komotini, and whether this community was truly Coptic "Egyptian" or not? It also makes a comparison between the original work of Evliya Çelebi and the Greek translation.

## **Coptic Typography in Egypt: History of its Emergence**

Ahmed Mansour  
Calligraphy Center-Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Coptic typography did not arrive until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The only printed texts available to the Copts were those provided from Europe by Catholic and Protestant bodies. In 1860, the modernizing Patriarch Kirillus IV (1816–1861) arranged for four young Copts to receive training in printing techniques at the *Bulaq Press*, and for printing equipment to be imported from Europe for the use of the Coptic community. It was established in Cairo as *al-Qibtiya al-Ahliya* (Coptic Domestic Press), but later changed its name to *Matbat al-watan* (Homeland Press). The bulk of its output was in Arabic, but some bilingual biblical and liturgical texts were printed, such as the Coptic grammar.

The author will tackle the history of first Coptic printing house as well as its publications.

## **The Individuality of Nubian Architecture: Similarities, Differences and Diversities between Nubian and Coptic Architecture**

Ahmed Mounir Soliman  
Alexandria University

Nelly Shafik Ramzy  
Sinai University

Kash, Land of Kush, Land of the bow, Wawat, Te-Seti, Te-Nehesy, Nubadae, Napata, Kingdom of Meroe, and more; all refer to what was once "The Great African Civilization of Nubia", which used to extend between the First Cataract of the Nile; South of Aswan in Upper Egypt and the Sixth Cataract; South of Khartoum in Sudan.

This great civilization has been handled with great negligence. The importance of the archaeological discoveries in the Nubian territory in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has led to the creation of a completely new discipline in social sciences; *Nubiology*, which started to be somehow distinguished from Egyptological studies.

The objective of the paper is to introduce an overview about this civilization, its development, its culture and how it was related to both the Byzantine culture and the culture of Coptic Egypt. It is argued that the art and architecture of Christian Nubia followed in a broad sense, although not in so many detail, the development of Coptic architecture in Egypt and it was actually originated from it and this was apparent in so many aspects. The research highlights a historical analysis encompassing the form, as well as furnishings and technique, that seem to be methodologically understandable for Nubian architecture and determining of its position, including a Coptic perspective together with the aspirations of a royal court in Nubia. The hypothesis of the research is that the Nubian architecture—in spite of these relations—is related to its culture and environment and it is neither a copy of Egyptian nor Byzantine architecture.

It concluded that Nubian architecture—unlike Coptic architecture in Egypt—developed under a strong influence of a royal court and central authority in both civil and religious lives. This royal Nubian court had often had ambitions to follow Byzantine customs and was far more dependent upon local centers of culture than directly upon Egypt.

In order to examine this hypothesis the following points are to be overviewed:

- 1. Historical Background**
  - a. Pre-Christian states in Nubia: Nobatia, Makuria and Alodia
  - b. Christian Kingdoms in Nubia: The United Kingdom of Makuria and The Kingdom of Alodia
- 2. General Features of Architectural Findings in the Region**
  - a. Churches
  - b. Civil Architecture
- 3. Classification and Development of Church Architecture**
  - a. The Early Period: 6<sup>th</sup>–mid 9<sup>th</sup> centuries
    - Phase I: 6<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries
    - Phase II: 8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries
  - b. The Classical Period: 9<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries
    - Phase I: 9<sup>th</sup> – mid 10<sup>th</sup> centuries
    - Phase II: mid 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries
  - c. The Late Period: 12<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries
- 4. The Development of Characteristic Features in both Nubian and Coptic Churches**
  - a. Features in Common
  - b. Splits and Differences
- 5. Conclusion**

**Astronomical and Cosmographic Elements in the *Scalae*:  
A Comparison with their Ancient Egyptian Equivalents  
How Astronomy influenced Life during the Coptic Period?**

Amanda – Alice Maravelia  
CES/RAS-Moscow-Russia and RIEC-Cairo-Egypt

There are many purely astronomical and cosmographic terms found in the medieval Coptic *Scalae*, as Adel Sidarus has shown [SIDARUS, 1999]. In his brief related paper, he has presented a preliminary list of such terms, most of which have an explicit astronomical meaning. In our study, we are examining these terms in comparison with their ancient Egyptian counterparts; something that the former scholar had not done in his related paper. Knowing the great importance of astronomy and cosmography in the ancient Egyptian cosmovision, we endeavour to present here a comparative analysis of the most important terms, trying to examine if these terms, and consequently astronomy, were also important for the social (and religious) life of the Coptic people, whose immediate ancestors were the ancient Egyptians. Archaeoastronomy, as an

interdisciplinary and methodical science connected to both Archæology and Egyptology, is always keen on providing clues concerning the *forma mentis* of the ancient people, not only by obtaining the azimuths of orientations of monumental buildings, but also through the textual analysis of written monuments.

## **The Impact of Copts on Civilization**

Amin Makram Ebeid  
Costal Surgical Group Pasadena & Houston-Texas-USA

**A-The Impact on the Universal Christian Church:** This deals with the pioneering role of Egyptian Christians on the Universal Church; such as the establishment, in Alexandria, of the first theological school in the world, the introduction of church hierarchy and organization, and the initiation of monasticism. The Copts in the early centuries also witnessed the blood of their martyrs, not only in Egypt but as far as Europe, and by their missionaries in Libya, Nubia, Ethiopia, Arabia and Ireland.

**B-Secular Contributions:** Coptic advances, or contributions and discoveries in mathematics, astronomy, medicine, philosophy, music, literature, art, architecture, naval skills and textiles are described.

**C-The Civilizing Role of Copts in Europe:** This included the introduction of the principles of hygiene and of Mediterranean civilization by St. Verena who should also be remembered for representing nascent feminism at its most sublime level.

## **From Coptic to Arabic: the So-Called Testament of Our Lord according to Ms. Borg. Arab. 22**

Andreas Ellwardt  
Christian Oriental Research Center-Eichstätt Catholic University

The hitherto unedited manuscript Borg. Arab. 22 from CE 1348, going back to a Coptic original from CE 926, have several times already incited scholarly interest. Containing the particular Coptic reception of

ecclesiastical preceptions pretending to be directly of Apostolic origin, it can be considered a witness of a very special approach to the Arabic language as a means of transportation of Coptic liturgical and canonical heritage. These interesting linguistic phenomena shall be illustrated, analyzed and interpreted by presenting some representative samples from this text, thus enabling new insights to this particular facet of Coptic medieval literature in Arabic language shall be given.

## **The Dioceses of Aswan and Egyptian Nubia and Their Bishops 4<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> Century**

Atif Naguib

Aswan Museum-Museums Sector-Supreme Council of Antiquities

The spreading of Christianity in early periods in Aswan and Nubia was shaped by many factors. One of those factors was the Roman persecutions against Copts who escaped as far as Upper Egypt and Nubia. Another factor was that Christian individual travelers and merchants crossing Nubia.

The Episcopal See in Aswan was established in the time of Pope Athanasius (CE 327–372) and Nilamun was 1<sup>st</sup> the bishop. Bishop Hedra was in the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

Some bishoprics were established in Nubia at the time of its evangelization and others were probably founded soon afterwards. The Episcopal Sees depending on the Patriarchal See of Alexandria (675–703) mention the following Sees in Nubia:

- 1) Philae, (in Arabic) "Jazirat al-birba".
- 2) Nubia, (in Arabic) "an-Nuba".
- 3) Tathis, (in Arabic) "Tafa".
- 4) Katarakte Nilou (in Arabic) "ash– shalālāt".

A later document gives the following names of Episcopal Sees in Nobatia:

- 1) Taifa (Tafa), which was replaced by Talmis (Kalabsha) as of CE 710.
- 2) Kurta (Qurta).
- 3) Ibrim.

4) Pachôras (Faras); once the capital of Nobatia.

The history of Nubian bishoprics, old and new textual materials concerning the bishoprics of Kurta, Ibrim, Faras, Dongola and Sai, is scrutinized in some detail. Attention is also given to the problems posed in our sources by those bishops who are named without any mention of their dioceses. This would in any case be in keeping with the traditionally centralized character of the Egyptian Coptic Church.

It is not possible to give a definite date for the final disappearance of Christianity from Nubia. On the basis of historical and archaeological evidence, we can state that Christians lived in some areas of the Kingdom for many years after the throne of Dongola had passed from Christian into Muslim hands in CE 1323.

1) In the year 1372, Bishop Timotheos was enthroned at Ibrim as "Bishop of Pachôras and Ibrim" as written in his scroll.

2) The small kingdom Dotawa as late as 1484 suggests that Christian kings and bishops were still around at about the turn of CE 1500, and in Qasr Ibrim as late as 1528.

3) Sicard, who visited Egypt in 1714, mentioned that the Coptic bishop of Naqada had also under his jurisdiction Qift and Ibrim. The preservation of this title (Ibrim), even assuming that Christians were no longer to be found there, seems to indicate that their disappearance was an event still fresh in the memory of the Egyptian Hierarchy.

The Coptic Church, until now, used to concentrate its work on its faithful, without carrying out proselytizing work among animists.

### **Life in a Coptic *Manshubiya* in Wadi Natrun**

Darlene L. Brooks Hedstrom  
Director for the Yale Monastic Archaeology Project-North

This paper surveys the material life of a Coptic monastic *manshubiya* being excavated by the Yale Monastic Archaeology Project-North (YMAP-N). Drawing upon the archaeological indicators of monastic life, the building serves an example of the type of structures which comprised the monastic village in Wadi Natrun, just southwest of Deir Anba Bishoi. This building is unique for it includes dated prayers from the tenth

century and includes ceramic evidence spanning the ninth to the eleventh centuries. Therefore, the *manshubiya* offers an opportunity to consider monastic life in medieval Coptic Egypt—a period not well examined in monastic archaeology.

The numerous modifications to the building and individual rooms, the installations of at least twelve ovens and kanoons, and the presence of two rooms with significant markers of religious life, all suggest the inhabitants in the tenth century were part of a highly developed community. The close proximity of the 90 *manshubiyyat* and the placement of middens between the structures also point to specific settlement planning in the layout of the monastic village. This one structure provides ample evidence for a monastic life equally informative as the earlier communities at *Kellia* and *Bawit*. The YMAP excavations demonstrate the importance and need for more sustained archaeological work in later periods of monastic life.

### **Why did Egyptians Write Coptic? The Rise of Coptic as a Literary Language**

Ewa D. Zakrzewska  
University Library of Amsterdam

The rise of Coptic as a literary language was preceded by a period of some two hundred years, roughly from the second to the fourth century CE, when only Greek was used as a medium suitable for written communication. Of course, the Egyptian population also used the indigenous language; "Proto-Coptic", but almost exclusively as a spoken language (leaving the so-called Old Coptic aside). When Coptic appears in written documents, it seems so heavily influenced by Greek that, at least according to some scholars, it can be qualified as a "bilingual language variety", with two "parent languages"; Egyptian and Greek (Reintges 2001, 2004). Is this qualification actually applicable to Coptic?

Given the fact that the use of Coptic as a literary language must have been a matter of choice rather than of necessity, we cannot fail to observe that meta-linguistic reflection on its use is conspicuously lacking. Even Shenoute; a bilingual and highly cultured author, apparently did not consider it worthwhile to reflect upon his choice for Coptic, leaving us to

speculate about his possible motives. Is it possible that the multilingual experience was such a matter of course for the inhabitants of Late Antique and Early Medieval Egypt that it did not deserve any attention from intellectuals?

Another conspicuous fact is that the writers of literary Coptic apparently did not feel any pressing need for supra-regional standardization. This manifests itself in a multitude of regional varieties (so-called dialects with their subdivisions) and in considerable linguistic differences between various corpora. This marks a clear contrast with the highly standardized literary Greek. Also, school exercises in Coptic grammar are quite uncommon, in contrast to Greek ones. What explanations can we postulate for these conspicuous differences?

In my paper, I will try to answer these questions with the help of modern sociolinguistic theories and parallels from other languages. I will also try to reconstruct the possible linguistic attitudes of the users of Coptic at crucial moments of their history.

In this way I hope to arrive at a comprehensive explanation in which linguistic and social aspects of the rise of Coptic in the given historical and cultural circumstances are accounted for as a coherent whole.

### **Beautiful Dwelling: A Contribution to Economic and Social History in Egypt and the Region of the Red Sea in Late Antiquity**

Gabriele Ziethen  
Jinan University-China and Cairo University-Egypt

The lecture is focused on the subject of private living, trading and merchandise in Late Antique Egypt during the periods of religious change and cultural conflict between the wealthy entrepreneurs and pertinacious preachers of new beliefs. From perspective of ancient history the difficult and confronting definitions discussed between several social groups will be analysed. During the 3<sup>rd</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> centuries CE, entrepreneurs and their families, bankers and churchmen, all followed their specific role of economic life and design of their personal living style. However, the social relation between these inhabitants of Late Antique Egypt was more and more on a way to become a frozen atmosphere thanks to conservative circles, which started to criticize the traditional ideal of a comfortable and

successful economic life. Finally, the public and economic lives in many fields were touched by these discussions which also marked their influence not only on the Nile valley but also on the Red Sea trading places and the Mediterranean coast sites where the second heartbeat of Egypt controlled the economic life. The lecture will discuss the possibilities of interpretation of the various literary records (e.g. Helidoros, early Christian authors), the special records of trade (Periplous-texts; Late Roman laws on trade and tax). In addition, the coherence of trading routes, market places, pilgrimage and personal communication allows reconstructing living styles and self-consciousness in public and private lives during the period of change from Late Antiquity to early Christian and Islamic societies. The contribution is a final part of a couple of previous essays which were prepared for a comprising monographic study.

### **Through the Keyhole: Monastic Life at the North Tombs Settlement at Amarna**

Gillian Pyke  
Director-Panehsy Church Project

The archaeological survey of the North Tombs settlement at Amarna provides a snapshot of monastic life in the fifth to sixth centuries. The disposition, organization and construction of the dwellings show a degree of standardization, with specific criteria in mind. A few buildings, such as the church and several adjacent structures, are distinguished by their architecture and choice of building material.

The choice of the desert life by monastics is often said to be in order to follow an isolated existence, rejecting the material world of the Nile valley. Indeed, the extreme topographical setting of the desert cliffs creates a sense of isolation. This is, however, counteracted by the interlinking of the dwellings by paths and staircases, their intervisibility and the easy access to the Nile. The settlement may also have formed part of a wider community spread around the Amarna plain, including an isolated cave-dwelling at the head of the Great Wadi and the monastery at Kom el-Nana to the South of the site.

Architectural and ceramic evidence further indicates that interaction with the outside world was maintained. The lack of any possible cultivable

land near the settlement would suggest that it had to be supplied from the Nile valley, whether from its own land holdings or via trading with the local villages. An economic aspect to the community is suggested by its numerous loom emplacements.

Elements associated with supplying the settlement are also visible in the use of staging points half-way up the cliff-slopes and the associated loss of an amphora or two on the way up well-used access paths. The presence in midden deposits of amphorae that once held imported wine and oil, and fine table wares from Tunisia and Aswan show that there was access to an extensive trading network, and a degree of high living.

The monastic community at the North Tombs seems to have enjoyed a slightly bipolar existence. On one hand it was located in a harsh environment, isolated from the Nile valley and from each other. On the other hand, the dwellings were well-built, well-organized and quite well-appointed. A degree of economic independence is indicated, as well as supply of everyday and luxury goods.

In fact, the North Tombs monastic settlement can arguably be seen, from a material and economic perspective at least, as comparable to a contemporary village community.

### **Byzantium Meta-Byzantium in Egypt after the Arab Conquest: Continuity or Discontinuity?**

Hasan Badawy  
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki-School of Philosophy Department

The Arab conquest of Egypt is a significant historical event which widely influenced the Mediterranean region, and if combined with the conquest of Morocco that followed, it also influenced the Western Civilization. However, the process of the conquest and of the eventual Arabization of Egypt hasn't been sufficiently studied.

Has the duration of the life of the Byzantium Meta-Byzantium in Egypt got limits and forms? Are these limits located in a particular era? Are they transformed or do they remain as they are? If they are transformed, in which shape and form do they ensure the continuity of their existence, maybe up to now if they do exist?

There is an abundance of primordial historical sources concerning the governing system which the Arabs enforced after the conquest of Egypt. These sources refer to orders, institutions, social structures, administrative practices and reformations during the first Arabic period and they interest young history researchers because they confirm that the conquest of a place does not bring about direct changes in the inhabitants' every-day life and moreover, that the new reality of power will project its ideological characteristics when the views of the new power will be socially acceptable in the every-day life of the majority of its citizens.

## **Research and Conservation of Egyptian Textiles in the Victoria and Albert Museum**

Helen Persson  
Curator-Asian Department-Victoria and Albert Museum

Elizabeth-Anne Haldane  
Senior Textile Conservator-Victoria and Albert Museum

The Victoria and Albert Museum houses one of the largest collections of Coptic textiles in the UK. The textiles were mainly collected in the late 19th century from prominent excavation sites such as Akhmim, Antinoë and Hawara, and encompass all the different structures typical of Coptic textiles; tapestry weaving, looped, taqueté and silks. The collection also includes many complete garments, footwear and headwear. This paper will provide an overview of the collection and its significance and will also discuss conservation approaches past and present.

This paper will also highlight current approaches at the V&A to research and conservation of archaeological textiles through the case study of a rare red woolen tunic, with Coptic tapestry decoration. The tunic was treated in preparation for the display "Dressing the Dead" in the V&A's new Medieval and Renaissance Galleries which opened in 2009. Due to a lack of archaeological records the tunic had been dated by stylistic comparison with other textiles of known provenance to circa AD 600-799. The tunic was in poor structural condition and was heavily stained from burial; the seams had been altered to adjust the length and fragments of the tapestry panels were rearranged to fill in gaps on the tunic front.

A research project was set up with the aim of expanding our understanding of the object's biography from its use as a garment for the living, as clothing for the dead, as a valuable antiquity and, finally, as a museum artifact; and to provide more specific information relating to the tunic's age and provenance. To do this the V&A formed a collaborative partnership with the University of Bradford to carry out a comprehensive programmed of scientific analysis of the tunic including multi-spectral imaging, analytical scanning electron microscopy and gas chromatography-mass spectrometry. Dye analysis (HPLC-DAD) was commissioned from the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage in Brussels, and Carbon 14 dating was supported by the European Commission on Roman Clothing Dress-ID Project. This scientific study was complemented by art historical and technical research by the authors.

This case study highlights the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in revealing the hidden stories of an object. The research project has resulted in a more accurate date for the tunic and study of the staining has provided information on the burial method. Technical study of the tunic revealed details of the original construction, which were used to create a replica for education purposes. The results of the research project also informed the conservation treatment, including the decision to return the tunic and tapestry decoration to its original pre-burial configuration. Research and conservation methods will be discussed in detail.

## **Two Biblical Ostraca from the Coptic Museum in Cairo**

Hind Salah Eldin Somida  
Faculty of Archaeology-Cairo University

Coptic ostraca are considered to be one of the most important sources in studying Coptic language and its history, with its various dialects in Egypt, as well as in throwing the light upon Egyptian life from at least the beginning of the Roman rule.

The aim of this article is to publish two unique Coptic ostraca from the Coptic Museum in Cairo. They are from pottery and are in a good condition of preservice, dating back to the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> centuries CE, of an unknown provenance.

The first ostrakon bears no. 4530/174, and is written in good handwriting with black ink. It contains a text of 13 lines bearing a rare recorded part from the Book of Deuteronomy which is grouped among the books of the Old Testament. The second ostrakon bears no. 3588, and is partly damaged and written in clear handwriting with black ink. Its text is recorded in 11 lines and bears a scarce Coptic list for some books of the Old Testament which could be related to some of the rare ancient canons of the Old Testament.

The study in this essay is divided into two parts. The first part deals with translating and analyzing the texts of these ostraca from a lingual, orthographical and caligraphical view, while the second part is concerned with the historical, cultural and religious aspects of the texts recorded upon them.

### **Philoponoi at the Ss Cyrus and John Healing Shrine of Menouthis**

Ioannis K. Grossmann

Institute of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies of the Vienna University

The "Philoponoi" are well known as a group of ascetic members of the Christian community who were organized in confraternities, which were usually attached to a parish church. The Miracles of the Ss Cyrus and John were composed by Sophronios before he became patriarch of Jerusalem. Miracle 5 tells the story of a certain Menas who was the head of the confraternity (philoponeion) of the Church of St. Andreas at Perone and was cured at the shrine of Menouthis. Apart from this, occasionally Sophronios called the male nurses at the healing shrine of Ss Cyrus and John at Menouthis equally "philoponoi". Because of this, it is believed until now that these male nurses belonged to a confraternity of philoponoi. However, these male nurses were mainly former sick clients who had been cured at the shrine and offered their help in return, out of gratitude to the saints.

In order to learn more about those male nurses, a careful examination of the use of the word philoponos (in substantive, adjective and verbal forms) in the Miracles is undertaken, leading to the conclusion that not members of a confraternity are meant but merely "persons who care for the sick" for which the ancient Greek language has the technical terms

philoponos and philoponeo. This is the only way to understand the explanation of Sophronios that "some of them (sc. the philoponoi) are the strong ones among the sick" (Mir 35, 6). It is clear that the reason for calling those people "philoponoi", is that they were strong enough to help and not because of their membership to a certain confraternity.

## **A Bishop and His Flock Saint Pistentios of Coptos (569–632) and His Networks**

Jacques van der Vliet  
Leiden University-Department of Egyptology-School of Middle Eastern Studies

Among the memorable bishops appointed during the episcopacy of Damianus of Alexandria (576–605), Pistentios of Coptos (Qift) has remained one of the best known. He is still today venerated as a saint, in particular in the region of Naqada.

His life is a fine example of Late Antique hagiography, preserved in various redactions in Sahidic and Bohairic Coptic and in Arabic. Homiletic works that claim to be written by him are likewise known in Coptic and Arabic. In addition to these literary works, however, also parts of his episcopal archive have survived, which makes the case of Pistentios unique among Late Antique saints.

Over sixty papyri in Coptic can be attributed with more or less certainty to the archive of Pistentios. The fate of these papyri has not been a happy one. Discovered under undocumented circumstances in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, probably in the ruins of the Monastery of Epiphanius in Western Thebes, they soon were scattered over various collections. A considerable number could be acquired by the *Musée du Louvre* in Paris, while others are in private hands still today.

The Louvre papyri have been edited in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by E. Revillout, but his edition is totally unreliable. Currently, a team of the *Musée du Louvre* and Leiden University is preparing a new edition of the entire archive.

Many of the Pistentios papyri were originally administrative documents in Greek that have been washed or trimmed for re-use as letters or short notes. Most are written by professional scribes in Sahidic Coptic and are addressed to the bishop. Their subject matter ranges from violence

between villages and taxation problems to questions of church discipline and, in particular, matrimonial problems. These various complaints, petitions and reports provide a fairly representative picture of the administrative tasks of a Late Antique bishop. His archive shows us Pisenhios not as a saint, priest or monk, but as the policeman of his diocese.

His correspondents appear to include members of all strata of society, not only subordinate clergy but also fellow-bishops, and local magnates as well as poor widows. In reviewing Pisenhios' archive, various historically important questions can be raised. What was the nature and quality of his social networks? Were they mainly rural or did they cover the cities as well? Is the fact that Pisenhios belonged to the oppositional, anti-Chalcedonian Church a discernible influence? What is the role of monks and monasteries in his correspondence? and how did clergy and civil authorities interact? Can patterns of patronage be discovered? By addressing these and similar questions the Pisenhios papyri can at last be made to take their place in the social history of Late Antique Egypt.

## **Looms in the Architecture of Monk Dwellings from Coptic Egypt**

Johanna Sigl-MA  
Institute for Egyptology-Ludwig Maximilian University-Munich

The production of cloth for the living and the dead was one of the most important activities in the daily life of a monk in Coptic Egypt. It was said that it keeps the body busy while the mind has time to pray. Unfortunately no pictorial evidence has survived showing the loom the weavers worked on. Textual data does not help either. Therefore, for its reconstruction, we have depended on the archaeological and architectural data from excavations.

In his publication of the Monastery of Epiphanius in Western Thebes. H.E. Winlock mentions several architectural features he identified as pits for the installation of looms. The following description of a horizontal treadle loom he thought to have been installed in them was affected by him visiting a weaver in the nearby village of Sheikh Abd el-Qurna. For a long time, this hypothesis was copied by other scientists without

questioning. Solely R.A. Farag, J.P. Wild and L.T. Whites express doubts when studying similar pits in Abydos and looking at H.E. Winlock's report again.

In the course of writing my Master thesis in 2005 and during the years following, I tried to collect further examples of these strange pits from all over Egypt and to proof or disproof H.E. Winlock's hypothesis. As not much more but the architectural features—the pits and several surrounding structures—have survived, the reconstruction of the loom is more difficult than the author of the publication of the Monastery of Epiphanius might have suggested. In any case, there is no proof at all of a horizontal treadle loom. The best hints for the true form of the loom of the early Copts come from the necropolis of Tell el-Amarna and a very recently studied pit in TT 99 at the hill of Sheikh Abd el-Qurna. The discussion of this so far unnoticed evidence and a new hypothesis for the loom of the Coptic weavers will be the central point of my presentation.

## **Historical Study of the Religious Dress in Church in Coptic Egypt**

Khaled M. A. Abdo  
Women's College-Ain Shams University

This paper is a study of garments, types of fabrics, embroidery, and accessories belonging to churchmen in Coptic Egypt. This study will highlight one aspect of the religious life in Coptic Egypt.

## Coptic Music in Monasteries, Towns and Villages

Magdalena Kuhn  
University of Leiden

Coptic liturgical music is principally music that is handed down by oral tradition. It has a long tradition, but can also be heard today in Coptic churches and cloisters.

In order to find out more about this unusual and very different sounding version of musical expression, I began to record and collect Coptic hymns, as well as to examine their structure. I was allowed to make recordings in cloisters and churches, or I obtained cassette tapes that the music teachers had put together for their pupils. Melodies from the song book *Psalmodia*; sung by professional singers of different ages from different parts of Egypt, are a particularly good choice for research on the structure, composition and tradition of Coptic liturgical music. The hymns of the *Psalmodia* are known to nearly all religious Copts and are often a valuable reminder of their childhood. Furthermore, Coptic believers like to sing this ritual also when they are older.

Manuscripts from the *Psalmodia* from different cloisters have been known to exist since the fourteenth century. The texts of this hymn book in the Bohairic/Coptic language were printed for the first time in 1724. The melodies are functional and linked to the texts. They are prayers used for contemplation and meditation.

The various melodies of the *Psalmodia* do not always exactly fit the beginning and the end of the text periods, which means that a Coptic melody has its own structure and therefore its own function.

My research shows that vocalises are composed from formulae. The first formula of a melody serves as a kind of recognition melody. Melodies can be made longer or shorter with respect to formulae. In different melodies with different characters, one finds similar combinations of formulae.

On the basis of transcriptions and analysis of various melodies of the *Psalmodia* we can clearly see that a traditional basic melody has been preserved over the years, which every singer can interpret and vary in his own way. The singer does this by making rhythmic changes in the melodies and by embellishing them each time with other ornaments. The variations of the different chanters do not decrease the power of this

music; they give this Coptic musical tradition a special vigour and keep it continually alive.<sup>1</sup>

## **A Monastic Settlement in the Valley of the Queens**

Magdi Fekri  
Faculty of Hotels and Tourism-University of Minoufya

The Deir Rumi; a rare example that can evoke many monasteries built in Western Thebes, is the centerpiece of a monastic settlement in the Valley of the Queens, where the remains of the Coptic evidence of occupation are apparent throughout the necropolis. A number of tombs have been reused. For example, tomb no. 1, located on the opposite side to the Deir at the entrance of the Valley, seems to hold the last access of the Valley; the walls of tomb no. 73 were coated with *muna* to conceal pagan representations; and one of the rooms of tomb no. 60 is decorated with two crosses. Traces of structures that were found by the CNRS in tombs nos. 58 and 60 also confirm the importance of Coptic occupation, as a series of small cells carved into the cliff that form the bottom of the valley of Prince Ahmose.

## **Unpublished Coptic Ostraca from the Civilization Museum in Cairo**

Maher A. Eissa  
Faculty of Archaeology-Fayoum University

Documentary texts (papyri, ostraca, etc...) offer evidence that is unique to the ancient world. They deal with every aspect of life and offer a level of detail not available from other sources. Documentary texts range from royal ordinances to personal letters, from contracts to invitations. They are important for the study of language, law, administration, economics, social relationships and religion. The Coptic documentary texts are

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<sup>1</sup>The book *Koptische Liturgische Melodien, Die Relation zwischen Text und Musik in der koptischen*

valuable not only for what they reveal of the life affairs of Egyptians over a long period of time, but also for what they tell us about the non-literary Coptic idiom.

This paper will list a few unpublished Coptic ostraca, relating to daily Coptic life.

## **Monastic Agriculture and its Products: An Archaeological Perspective**

Mennat-Allah El Dorry

Institut für Ägyptologie und Koptologie-Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster

The role of agriculture in monastic communities is often overlooked. Textual sources, which have been so far the foundation of our understanding of monastic daily life, have often neglected the more practical aspects of living in a monastic community and also represent an idealized view, which is often quite far from reality. Agricultural products and by products were not only used for sustenance, but also used as building materials, fodder, fuel and medicines.

Recent archaeobotanical research focusing on plant remains at the monastery of Saint John the Little in Wadi el-Natrun can pave the way towards a better understanding of what the actual monastic diet was like and where this sustenance was procured from, as well as shedding light on other aspects of monastic life that was reliant on agriculture; such as building materials and fuel. Ongoing excavations at the monastery of Saint John the Little has so far revealed a monastic cell dating to between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries CE.

This cell includes storage areas, cooking areas, and a midden; all of which have been sampled for botanical remains.

This paper will also explain what archaeobotany is, and how it can be a very powerful tool to better understand diets and agricultural practices in monastic contexts.

## Sāwīrus of Ashmūnain: The Nicene Creed in Arabic

Mlada Mikulicova  
Charles University Prague-Catholic Theological Faculty

Sāwīrus, bishop of Ashmūnain (c. 910–1000) was born into the critical period of Egyptian history when, three centuries after the conquest of Cairo and Alexandria in 640, the new lifestyles began to reform the ancient Coptic culture. The paper will discuss his Arabic exposition of the faith as attached to the concluding chapter of his "History of the Councils". In introducing and explaining the Nicene formula against heretic teachings of the 4<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> centuries, Sāwīrus pioneers the way of Arabic Christian terminology. His choice of topics reflects the position of Copts who struggle for proper understanding of Christian doctrine. Through his catechesis given in Arabic, he aims to reconstruct Christian life within the flourishing Islamic society.

Sāwīrus explained the articles of the Nicene Creed in various extents. In discussing the unicity of God, he advocated God's transcendence against polytheism and Gnosticism. In the Christological articles, he presented a thorough survey of various doctrines on Christ's divinity and humanity, and supplied the Scriptural and Patristic language of the Nicene teaching with *kalām* terminology on the un/createdness of God's Word and the definition of the Divine substance and attributes. Of similarly essential importance is the article of Christ's death and resurrection in which he refutes Arian and Nestorian theories, debated and condemned at the Ecumenical Councils, but also apparent in the Arabic Koranic teachings. It seems as if Sāwīrus considered Muslims as advocates of somewhat different views which were corrigible through a catechesis based on apology against past heresies. His exposition of the Creed is therefore a paraphrase of the Council disputations. He refutes various *tawā'if*: Christian Arians and Nestorians, Jewish gnostics, Ebionites, and Mu'tazila all alike.

Sāwīrus believed that education is the key to correction and a good lead towards understanding the value of baptism. In the foreword to his other writing, "The Lamp of Understanding", Sāwīrus wrote to an unknown recipient: "You have asked me to write all of our doctrines and explain to you the deep sense of our religion. That is, indeed, our first and noblest task and it is necessary to show it and explain it so that the one who was ignorant might learn them again, and the one who knew something might reflect upon them." (Samīr Khalīl, 1978, 5).

The bishop of Ashmūnain had spent much time discussing matters of faith with various opponents, even as guest to the Fatimid caliph *al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh* (The Lives of the Patriarchs of Alexandria: *Anbā Avrām*). Sāwīrus' Arabic idiom reflects knowledge of contemporary Islamic issues passed down from schools in Damascus and Baghdad. In his exposition of the Creed, he offers a model apology for his time, shown on the history of the Christian creed. Without naming his contemporary opponents, he offers a catechesis in Arabic, so that, in the language understood by all, he might expose the correct version of faith against corruptions. He believes that those who properly understand the words will themselves take the appropriate steps in their religious life.

### **Daily Life Scenes in Coptic Art until the Sixth Century CE**

M. Elweshahy  
Suez Canal University

Coptic art comprises many monuments in the field of Coptology. Coptic heritage holds a unique status in the work of art, especially the daily life scenes which were taken from the ancient Egyptian civilization; such as grape harvest scenes, fishing and hunting scenes, and scenes of swamp and aquatic animals. This research aims to study the daily life scenes in Coptic art in works of wood, stone, tapestry and metal.

### **History of the Sponsorship of Christian Monasteries and Churches from the Early Islamic Period until the End of the Fatimid Era in Egypt**

Mohamed Abd El-Wadood Abd El-Azim  
Faculty of Archaeology-Fayoum University

The Christian Egypt—the Copts—under the Muslim rule, enjoyed their entire freedom of religion that was taken from them by the rulers of Byzantium, because the teachings of Islam state that all people shall

coexist in tolerance and satisfaction. This is the first motif that made them live together.

In fact, it is very difficult to track the methods of sponsoring the Coptic Church, especially in the Islamic period, because there weren't any official documents or monumental texts in churches recording such information. We can only find some writings by historians commenting on this sponsorship to Coptic buildings.

If we track the financial movement of buildings and constructions of the Egyptian Church through the Islamic period, we will find significant care in the innovation and construction movement of the Coptic Church, whereas, the Coptic buildings depended on the government for the financing of reconstruction and the life of the monks themselves inside these buildings.

The attention paid by Muslim rulers to the Church was a very important factor in the architecture of Christian churches. Therefore, we aim to track the financial means of Coptic churches and monasteries in these Islamic eras:

- The Umayyad Era (CE 660–750/40–132H)
- The Abbasid Era in Egypt (CE 750–868/132–254H)
- The Tulunid Era in Egypt (CE 868–905/254–292H)
- The Ikhshidid Era (CE 935–969/323–358H)
- The Fatimid Era in Egypt (CE 969–1171/358–567H)

## **Egypt and Constantinople in Greek Papyri from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

Mohamed Gaber Elmaghrabi  
Faculty of Education-Alexandria University

Upon the death of Theodosius I in CE 395, the link between Egypt and Rome was definitively broken, with the division of the Empire between Arcadius; ruling the East from Constantinople, and Honorius who ruled the West. Accordingly, a new sphere of relations had taken place with the new center of imperial power. Egyptians; the wealthy of them, travelled to Constantinople. Some of them had the opportunity to pursue political careers at Constantinople, and they played an active role in the imperial government and politics throughout the Late Antique period. From the late fourth century to the sixth, Egypt produced at least two urban

prefects of Constantinople, and at least seven praetorian prefects of the East. Some even had property in Constantinople. In the field of education and letters, the geographical mobility of teachers and students between the great educational magnets; Athens, Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria, became more pronounced than before from Late Antiquity onward. Libanius, for example, mentions that young men from Egypt attended his school; Rhetorius taught in Constantinople, and so did Harpocration later. On the economic level, the structure of the land would have afforded elites—via the Nile—a relatively inexpensive long-distance export trade with the great markets beyond Alexandria (e.g. Constantinople). The aim of this paper is to examine the web of links (administrative, educational, and economic) between Egypt and the Byzantine center, and the evidence of these links manifested in the Greek papyri, especially in the Apion and Dioscorus archives.

### **The Orientation of the Ancient Coptic Monuments toward the Arc of the Sun**

Mosalam Shaltout

Chairman of Egyptian–Spanish Mission for Archaeoastronomy-SCA-Cairo-Egypt

The arc of the sun has an Azimuth ranging between 62 and 118 degree on the east Horizon in Egypt. Where the sun rise at 62 degree from the North at the summer solstice (21 June) and 118 degree at the winter solstice (21 December). From the Measurements of the Egyptian–Spanish Mission for Archaeoastronomy in December 2006, for the main axis of five Altars in Five Monasteries (Deir El–Teir, Muharraq, Apa Antonius, Apa Baulus, Apa Jeremiah) all the orientations are inside the arc of the sun.

The only preliminary conclusion, we may reach for such a tiny set is that all the monuments are orientated in the arc of the sunrise which is in agreement with the Gospel, where you can read that Jesus is the (New sun of Justice). Indeed, much more data are needed before concluding anything special or before stressing any parallelism or continuation of ancient Egypt tradition.

During 2012, when the finance support will be available from our Partner in the Mission (Canary Astrophysical Institute, Tenerife, Spain), two missions (each one for 15 days) will be carried out to scan about 20 monasteries around all of Egypt, to reach to definite conclusions.

## Defensive Arrangements in Coptic Architecture

Nelly Shafik Ramzy  
Sinai University

Roman persecution against Copts started as early as the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE. And even after Christianity had become the official religion in Egypt, intolerance against the Copts took the form of annihilation as they refused to espouse the Emperor's sect.

In the Eastern and Western Deserts, another critical relation was arising between the monks and the Bedouins, who started to regularly attack them.

For four centuries following the Arab conquest, Egypt remained basically Christian, despite the additional sumptuary laws imposed on Copts.

At the beginning of the second millennium, Copts who suffered more disabilities in addition to the head tax "*Gezya*", occupied an inferior position and lived in some expectation of Muslim hostility, which periodically flared into violence.

Based on the above considerations, the hypotheses of this research is that Coptic architects had developed a very peculiar religious architecture with exceptional defensive arrangements and this research is an attempt to overview those peculiar arrangements.

The objective of the paper is to introduce an overview about these arrangements and how unique they were. It also traces their development throughout the centuries and how they differed from one region to the other.

The paper concluded that—unlike any other religion—architecture safekeeping was one of the most important factors that influenced Coptic buildings, especially in desert convents and that the development of these buildings and compounds (in form, inner components, site selections...etc) was mainly influenced by this factor.

**In order to examine this hypothesis, the following points are to be overviewed:**

- 1. Church Designs**
- 2. Defensive Elements**
  - a. Keeps
  - b. Fences
  - c. Gates and Doorways

- d. Monastic Housing
- 3. Sites**
  - a. Site Selection
  - b. Site Organization
  - c. Rock-cut Churches
- 4. Conclusion**

## **The Sacred Shrines of St. Mark in Alexandria and Cairo**

Nevine Abd El-Gawad  
Faculty of Tourism and Hotels-University of Alexandria

St. Mark; one of the most eminent figures in Christianity in general and in Egyptian Christianity in particular, is widely known not only to be the first to preach Christianity in Egypt in the first half of the first century CE, but also to be martyred and buried in Alexandria in CE 68. St. Mark to be known among the Copts, according to church tradition, as the Founder of the Egyptian Church (the Church of Alexandria) and the first in a long line of bishops (Alexandrian patriarchs), was one of the major factors that formed the distinguished identity of this Church.

In fact, connecting the establishment of the Church of Alexandria with St. Mark, the Evangelist, granted it the legitimacy to be one of the oldest Christian churches in existence. The story of the martyrdom of St. Mark, the Apostle, was mentioned in religious and historical sources as part of his hagiography. Both of the fourth-century church historian *Eusebius of Caesarea* [CE 260–340] in his work "History of the Church", as well as the Greek document "Acts of Mark", of which traditions are traceable at least to the late 4<sup>th</sup> or early 5<sup>th</sup> century, referred to the story of St. Mark's martyrdom. Medieval historical sources of the Coptic church and its patriarchs starting from the work popularly attributed to *Sawirus ibn al-Muqaffa* (10<sup>th</sup> century), are also important sources about St. Mark and his martyrdom in Alexandria.

Later on, his relics became a subject of interest in Christian tradition which referred to his head as a distinguished part of his relics to have been preserved in Alexandria. On Babah 30/November 9 of every year, the Coptic Orthodox Church commemorates the apparition of his holy head and the dedication of his church in Alexandria.

This paper is primarily concerned not only with the story of transferring the relics of St. Mark, but also with his sacred shrines, first in Alexandria and then in Cairo.

His holy shrines in the cathedrals of St. Mark in Alexandria, and in both *al-Azbakiyyah* and *al-‘Abbasiyyah* in Cairo are very important religious destinations for Copts. As a result, it is important to clarify the appearance of the cult of relics among Christians and Copts, and the development of Coptic reliquaries.

This paper tries as well to shed light on the shrines of St. Mark as Coptic pilgrimage centers and the rituals practiced there, whether religious or secular. It also discusses tourist development of such shrines as cultural tourist destinations on the Egyptian tourism map. Thus, it is proposed to add these sacred shrines as tourist sites in Egypt. Other than their religious significance, they represent a valuable part of the Coptic culture and heritage. It is noticeable that keeping such destinations well preserved cannot be ignored when planning to attract thousands of tourists to visit them.

### **O. Col. inv. 55: A Greek Tax Receipt from Roman Egypt**

Noha A. Salem  
Ain Shams University

This ostrakon is an interesting piece from the Columbia collection. It is almost complete except from both the right and the lower sides. Few letters are missing. It dates back to the 7<sup>th</sup> year of the Emperor Caesar Vespasian rule (c. CE 75). It is a receipt of wool tax. It seems that the amount of wool is somewhat large; more than two hundred fleece.

The interesting point of this document is that it has very few parallels. In this document, I will try to shed light on this kind of tax. I will also try to identify the provenance to which this document belongs and the personal names which are mentioned in it.

## **The Festal Letters of the Patriarchs of Alexandria: Evidence for Social History in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries CE**

Pauline Allen  
Centre for Early Christian Studies-Australian Catholic University Limited

Traditionally, it was left to the Church of Alexandria to determine the date of Easter because of the superior scientific skills of Alexandrians in the area of computation. Once arrived at, the date was announced to the Egyptian church, and indeed to the universal church, by means of annual letters written by the Patriarch in Greek and translated where necessary into Coptic for monks and laity. We have three significant collections of these letters: those of Athanasius (295–373), Theophilus (d. 412), and Cyril (d. 444). This body of material provides us with insights not only into the self-image and leadership style of three important figures in early Christianity, but also gives us a window onto the life of ordinary Egyptian Christians and their attitudes to Jews, pagans, and heretics.

## **The Four Living Creatures and their Paintings through Centuries**

Pauline Todary Assad  
Coptologist

The four living creatures; the lion, the calf, the man, and the eagle, appear in the early Christian and Coptic Art. They are mentioned in (Rev 4: 6–8): {before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come}.

From these statements we can know their jobs and their honors. They are before the throne of God immediately, and holding the throne, they also give glory to God all days and nights.

Because the Church now is an image to Heaven, and it wants believers to share the life of Heaven from here; on Earth, their paintings were placed on the walls of alters in churches.

Many of the early Fathers were interested to talk about their work, honor, shape ... and they used to explain the meaning of their symbols; the lion, calf, man, and eagle.

My research will include the definitions of the four creatures, their honors, work, shapes and symbols. I will also show their paintings in many churches through centuries.

### **New Discoveries in the Town of Antinopolis**

Peter Grossmann  
Professor of Coptology-German Institute of Archaeology

Apart from some minor investigations in the northern cemetery of Antinopolis, main efforts of the last seasons of excavation were devoted to the two large churches D2 and D3 in the southern part of Antinopolis beyond the wadi which traverses the town from East to West. Church D2, which we like to interpret as the Episcopal Church, had a cruciform ground-plan with a central square unit defined by four huge corner columns. One base, two column shafts and all the four capitals of Corinthian style survive; the one mentioned base even remained at its original place *in situ*. Church D3 was a large basilica with numerous lateral chambers on all sides. It is built of a series of re-used 2<sup>nd</sup> century columns with Ionic capitals.

Interestingly, in both churches, the arrangements of the sanctuaries are different from the usual way in Upper Egypt. Both churches do not have an eastern transverse aisle, which is on the other hand a common feature in nearly all churches in Upper Egypt of early Christian times. Instead the apses of both churches are supplied in front with a broad but not especially deep fore-choir opened to the nave with a huge primary triumphal arch. It seems that these fore-choirs in both churches, which correspond in their spatial proportions roughly with the usual eastern transverse aisle, replaced the latter at a slightly different position, which is, at least from the engineering point of view, a much more elegant

solution than the former arrangement with two high but relatively weak columns separating the transverse aisle from the central nave. But surprisingly that new shape has only rarely been copied in other churches.

In addition, the basilica D3 served as a healing center where incubation rites were performed. The church is full of beds (*klines*) with the typical head rests along the walls and between the columns. Furthermore, among the side chambers at the southern side of the church there is a long apsidal hall, which has at its western end a spacious niche that probably once contained a shrine for the production of holy oil to be distributed as *eulogia* among the believers.

### **Lower Nubia Church Type 8<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> Centuries CE**

Rageh Zaher Mohamed  
Nubian Museum-Aswan

The plan adopted appears, at first glance, to be of the type known as the "Basilica Plan"; a misnomer given to the type of building most suited to congregational assemblies.

The adjective employed by the Byzantines for a long church with aisles and clerestory was "dromic", a term which is more fitting than "basilican", for there is but a small connection between this type of building and Roman basilicas. Although there are no clerestories in Nubian churches owing to the normal arrangement of the aisles in two stories, the term "dromic" is well adapted to them.

The type of dromic plan adopted by the Nubians consisted of a nave and two aisles separated by piers and arches, and a sanctuary with an apsidal end. Two small chambers, probably used as sacristies, were situated on either side of the sanctuary, and the latter was always separated from the body of the church by a wall with an arched opening or by an imposing arch resting on columns. The sanctuary thus seems to have been considered as a separate chamber, a treatment which suggests the prevalent Eastern idea of a holy place apart from the more or less public space in a building designed for purposes of religious rituals.

## **Coptic Medicine between Religion, Magic and Traditional Medicine**

Randa Baligh  
Department of Egyptology-Mansoura University

For a variety of reasons, very little is known about medicine in the Coptic period. The entire Coptic period, according to my understanding, is from around the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE until around the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Some people would argue that the period they are calling Coptic is still on-going. Others would say that the Coptic period was mainly until the 9<sup>th</sup> century or so since the period following that is generally known as the Middle Ages. The early period of Coptic Christianity has certain main features; such as the Roman occupation of Egypt at the time. The Romans wanted to punish Egypt for what Cleopatra had dared to try to do; to establish an empire in the East to rival the Roman Empire, and to achieve supremacy over the Mediterranean by controlling the two main male figures in Rome; namely Julius Caesar and Mark Anthony. The Romans did not encourage knowledge and science and with the exception of agricultural projects, they did not try to make improvements in Egypt. They needed "the bread basket of the Roman empire"—meaning Egypt of course—to produce agricultural goods. They tried to appease the people and avoid their wrath by making additions to the existing temples of the gods. Slavery was widely spread in the Roman Empire. The Romans wanted the Egyptian population ignorant, poor and subservient. Christianity came to Egypt in the latter half of the first century CE. It spread very quickly for a variety of reasons. Its message of love and acceptance was very appealing. It also spoke of a wonderful afterlife if you did good things on earth during your lifetime. Moreover, Egypt already had a holy virgin; namely the goddess Isis who was supremely important in the Late Period. The early Christians suffered persecution from the Romans because of their new religion. Egypt had one of the worse persecutions in the area where around 8,000 people were killed in one day in Esna. The Coptic calendar which is derived from the ancient Egyptian calendar is known as the "Calendar of the Martyrs". It was a period where the people were very separate from the occupying Roman government. They were persecuted and suffered from the famous triangle; poverty, ignorance and pestilence. Egypt during the time of the Pharaohs is portrayed in the Holy Books as a great land; rich, powerful, knowledgeable and confident. They had the best known doctors in the ancient world and foreign dignitaries of the time often bragged that they had an Egyptian doctor in their court. Coptic art displayed all these characteristics. It was not a predominantly royal or

nobility-directed art as the majority of what has reached us from ancient Egypt. It was an art of the people, by the people, for the people. In some cases; such as the two famous chapels (Exodus and Peace) in the Cemetery of El Bagawat in Kharga Oasis, the art almost resembles the drawing of children in its simplicity and crudeness of execution. It is also one of the most touching forms of art. The large, sad soulful dark eyes are a main characteristic of Coptic art. Other characteristics are upraised arms, religious subjects, halos around the head for saints and holy figures, and a general poorness which is reflected in the choice of materials used.

Regarding medicine, quite a lot is known about ancient Egyptian medicine and Islamic medicine. The period in between or the Coptic period is not as famous as either these two forms of medicine in Egypt. A proper book about medicine in the Coptic period is required, but for now a simple research paper will have to do. A lot has also been written about the Alexandria school of medicine which flourished during the Greek period and continued throughout the Middle Ages with many unconventional treatments including preparing a black medical ointment made out of human mummies. During the golden age of Coptic Christian monasticism, between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries when monasteries and churches were built in abundance, priests and monks seem to have provided medical care as we can see from several sources including letters which explain medical cures. We shall have to refer to medicine in the Roman period. Unfortunately this is not really concentrated on Egypt, but includes several other countries as well. A lot of information has been gathered through research in mostly Coptic Christian villages and among monks and religious figures that still have remnants of the ancient Coptic medical tradition. Herbal remedies are quite common in the material medica, although faith-healing, chants, and organic, mineral and salt remedies were also used in treatment. In the course of the paper, we shall be discussing the different forms of Coptic medicine from religious healing based on reading certain holy verses, expecting miracles, anointing with holy oil and bathing with holy water. Other forms include using traditional remedies such as a variety of herbs we shall discuss for curing simple ailments. Crude forms of surgery were also practiced on occasion. More evidence of that seems to be concentrated in the Roman period.

## **A Multi-Cultural Collection from the Coptic Museum in Cairo**

Samah A. Mahmood  
Faculty of Tourism and Hotels-Minia University-Egypt

Samar M. Kamal  
Faculty of Tourism and Hotels-Minia University-Egypt

Assmaa Bahgat  
Faculty of Tourism and Hotels-Minia University-Egypt

Coptic art; the distinctive Christian art of Egypt, includes works of a diverse character. From burial grounds, there are objects like funerary stelae, or tombstones, cartonnage sarcophagi and fragments of woven textiles from clothing in which the deceased were laid to rest. Monastic centers, churches and shrines provide stone and wood-carvings, metalwork, wall and panel-paintings, as well as a wealth of utilitarian objects like ivory combs, wooden seals, pottery and glassware.

Coptic art, like any other form of artistic expression, was inspired by two main sources: Hellenistic art and ancient Egyptian art. Objects made in Greek style include stone carvings that display Greek legends and fabulous creatures such as winged victories or cupids bearing garlands, the vine branches of Bacchus, Aphrodite, Leda, and Hercules. However, monuments of mixed Greek-Egyptian character are relief slabs that were probably used as wall decorations in churches; they frequently feature pilasters surmounted by stylized Corinthian capitals, sphinxes or fish; the earliest symbol of Christianity. Ancient Egyptian influence is well depicted in funerary stelae, which have survived in large number throughout Egypt. In addition to the classical, Egyptian and Greek-Egyptian heritages in Coptic art, there are also Persian, Byzantine and Syrian influences.

The studied collection is now preserved in the Coptic Museum in Cairo. The collection displays different forms, functions, decorations and techniques. The study takes a broad approach, covering art, technique, and aesthetics. Based on the descriptive and analytical methodology, the study examines the decorative motifs employed to investigate the classical art styles that influenced the production of the objects of the studied collection.

## Depictions of Saints on Coptic Stelae

Semenov Nikita  
State Hermitage Museum-Saint Petersburg

The presentation "Depictions of Saints on Coptic Stelae" deals with several Coptic stelae with relief images of saints. Detailed analysis of these images allows tracing the development of main iconographic types; implicitly these reliefs also give evidence on the formation of various ornament motifs in Coptic plastic art.

The general classification of Coptic stelae with images of saints developed by the author includes two main groups. The first group refers to the so-called stelae *in memoriam*. The second group includes funeral stelae (tombstones). The authors make an assumption that some stelae depict not the deceased, but their patron saints. The period when such reliefs with saints were created is the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> centuries. It should be pointed out that the stelae of the first group were made not later than middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century; some of them were created immediately after the death of the saint, while the stelae of the second group were made not earlier than the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. The article introduces for scientific use a previously unknown Coptic relief with images of a woman and a beast. For this relief, the author suggests as interpretation "The Hagiographic Scene of Entombment of Mary of Egypt".

## The Scenes of Apocrypha at Dair El Syrian: A Dialogue between Two Cultures

Shaza Gamal Eldin  
Faculty of Tourism and Hotels-Helwan University

The relationship between the Coptic Church and the Church of Antioch started long ago. The Monastery of the Syrians was erected as a result of the sixth century Schism caused by the Theodosian monks. The followers of the doctrines of Severus of Antioch left the monastery of Saint Pishoi to start their own monastery nearby. The cultural diversity in the area of Wadi Al Natrun had always left its influence in the art of the different

monasteries, specially the Monastery of the Syrians. This is not surprising since a number of the Syrian monks had lived there for a while ever since it was purchased by 710 Syrian merchants for 12,000 dinars.

This paper aims to focus on the cultural diversity and interaction between the Coptic Church and the Syrian Church through the scenes of the Apocrypha. The idea of the Apocrypha is not the main core of this paper but it is the great popularity of them which continued into a late period to a time when the Apocrypha had become unknown in the West. Although the Coptic Apocrypha is very different from its Syriac-speaking sister churches and the great volume of Ethiopic Apocrypha but yet it explains and ensures the strong ties between the two churches.

### **An Edition of Unpublished Greek Ostraca from the Cairo Museum**

Shereen A. Aly  
Faculty of Arts-Ain Shams University

This paper contains the text of an unpublished Greek ostrakon of the Roman period. This ostrakon is from Elephantine. It belongs to the Cairo Museum, and is registered under number 18955.

The text is a receipt for the taxes that were paid in Egypt during the Roman Period. The name of the tax, its rate, the date fixed for the payment of the tax, the tax-payer, and the tax-collector will be identified through the scientific publishing of the document.

### **Unpublished Early Byzantine Sculptures**

Sobhy Ashour  
Art and Archaeology-Helwan University-Egypt

The representations of individuals were very common in Egypt during Ptolemaic and Roman ages, which reflect the flourishing of classical traditions of public honoring, especially in Roman times. These statues

were carved in very elegant and fashionable styles, reflecting the social rank and qualities of their owners and attesting the public exhibition of some of these sculptures. Interestingly, some female statues of monumental size and for some examples, public exhibition context, are known. The same types were used for funerary monuments: tomb statues, funerary stelae and altars.

The funerary stelae of Ptolemaic and Roman ages are very well known, despite the unbalanced scale of painted examples in Ptolemaic period, and the sculpted ones in Roman times. The Alexandrian funerary stelae show various types, styles and subjects, which enrich our knowledge about the cultural, religious and social life of Egypt in Ptolemaic and Roman ages.

A group of funerary stelae carved in local limestone, some of them excavated in Bahnasa, dating back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries CE, conform to previously known examples. These stelae are very important to trace funerary traditions in Byzantine Egypt. These stelae are funerary monuments for specific individual females, without any Christian symbols or iconographic elements. These stelae should reflect the social, cultural and religious life of the metropolis and town elites within the transitional period from Roman to Byzantine art and culture.

The iconographic type of these stelae and their technique is very comparable to other stelae from Middle Egypt kept in many museums in Egypt and Europe. The Hermopolis Magna group should enlarge the ensemble and confirm the concentration of the type in Middle Egypt. Further investigation will be paid to the archaeological context and iconographic conceptions, in addition to the typological and stylistic analysis, to understand how female members in the nome-capitals and towns used the vocabulary of self-representation, which rooted deeply in classical traditions, regarding the Ptolemaic unique phase of such cultural mixture in Egypt.

## Who is Saxo?

Sohair S. A. Ahmed  
Faculty of Arts-Ain-shams University

The word "saxo" represents a job, name or a title, referring to men only. It is a Coptic word of ancient Egyptian origin written in three forms as ca, o, ca, w and ca, a. Perhaps these three forms are different in their meanings or they represent the same word written in various dialects.

It was also used as a proper name. Scholars have different opinions concerning the meaning of this word; they explained it either as an office-name referred to the public scribe of the village or as a title of reverence meaning "the esteemed" or "the master".

So in many cases, it is preferred to translate this word into English as "saxo", same as the Coptic word. Therefore, I found myself interested with this word and tried to know what its meaning is exactly, to know who the "saxo" is.

Last year, I suggested some meanings to this word which are different from the meanings suggested by the scholars before and I have published that in my electronic booklet entitled "Professions, Trades, Occupations and Titles in Coptic (alphabetically) on the Internet". But now, after I have studied other Coptic texts, I can add other information and also add a new suggested meaning of this word.

Finally, there are two other important questions that should be answered in the paper: when did the saxo appear in Egypt? And were the men who held these positions Copts only?

## **Some Aspects of Daily Life according to Coptic Texts**

Youhanna Nessim Youssef  
Centre for Early Christian Studies-Australian Catholic University

Daily life in Ancient Egypt had been the subject of several studies. For the Coptic period, some attempts had been done. R.F. L. Regnault, had studied the daily life according to the Sayings of the Desert's Fathers (*Apophthegmata Patrum*). Badawi, in his monumental book about art and archaeology had consecrated a chapter discussing this issue. His information is mainly based on archaeological data as well as some texts.

In this paper, I will highlight some aspects of daily life according to the Coptic texts which are still living till now in Egypt. Despite that most of these texts are religious, we find many realistic details giving image of a society similar to what we can still see nowadays.

Tips

The Apprenticeship

Assiut and Stability

Burial and Lamentations

## **La Vie au Monastère à travers l'Étude d'une Eglise de Baouit**

**(VIII<sup>e</sup> – X<sup>e</sup> siècles)**

Dominique Bénazeth  
Musée du Louvre

L'Eglise de l'Archange Michel, connue sous le nom de l'« Eglise Nord », dans le Monastère de Baouit, fait actuellement l'objet d'une étude en vue d'une publication aux presses de l'IFAO. Ce monument recèle des informations sur le fonctionnement d'une église aux VIII<sup>e</sup> – X<sup>e</sup> siècles. Source de connaissance sur les saints moines dont on a voulu perpétuer le

souvenir en ce lieu, l'église renseigne aussi sur les habitants du monastère qui la fréquentaient et y ont laissé des témoignages.

### 1. L'Eglise de l'Archange Michel et son mobilier liturgique

- L'église de petites dimensions (12m x 20m) est construite sur un plan basilical transformé par la présence d'un *khurus*. Le cloisonnement des espaces et la circulation dans l'église mettent en évidence la répartition du clergé et des fidèles, en l'occurrence les moines, en fonction du rituel.

- Les vestiges du mobilier constituent de rares témoignages, pour cette époque, sur le fonctionnement d'une église. L'emplacement de l'autel dans la partie centrale du sanctuaire n'est pas une surprise. En revanche, l'aménagement de la niche orientale, la barrière séparant le *haïkal* du *khurus*, la cloison isolant ce dernier des trois nefs et l'emplacement au fond de l'église d'une chaire qui ressemble à un *minbar* sont autant d'éléments inédits.

### 2. Les témoignages sur les hommes et leur hiérarchie

- Les peintures appliquées sur les murs, les colonnes et les piliers, montrent plusieurs étapes de réfection du décor. Un programme iconographique se dévoile à travers la difficile reconstitution des vestiges. Il comprend des personnages bibliques (Moïse et Aaron, le roi David, Zacharie, le Christ et sa Mère, les Apôtres), des puissances célestes (anges et archanges) et des saints militaires protecteurs (Saint Georges et Saint Théodore). Il s'agit alors d'une allégorie de l'Eglise introduite à la hiérarchie humaine. Des évêques et des moines importants du monastère sont portraiturés avec une mention de leurs noms et titres, tels le fondateur, Apollô, un *proeistos*, un économiste, un *papa*, un scribe, des frères. Quelques-uns sont également peints sur des panneaux de bois.

- D'autres textes fournissent un intéressant répertoire des fonctions attribuées dans le monastère. Ce sont des inscriptions pariétales, des titres notés sur les boiseries ainsi que des graffitis laissés par les usagers. Ils font revivre pour nous les personnes et le rôle qu'elles jouaient au sein du monastère (le supérieur, l'économiste, le prêtre, le diacre, le psalmiste, le peintre, le frère).

## Texte Copte Inédit

### Une Controverse entre un Archevêque et un Hérétique

Ophélie El-Pharaony  
Département Classique-Université du Caire

Le document en langue copte dont nous préparons l'édition provient du monastère Saint-Macaire. Constitué de deux pages écrites sur un parchemin, il est maintenant déposé au Musée Copte du Caire sous le numéro 2539.

Le fragment préservé contient une partie du dialogue mené entre un archevêque anonyme et un chaldéen.

L'étude du document comporte deux parties :

- une étude codicologique et paléographique ;
- une étude du contenu.

Nous pouvons, en ce qui suit, jeter la lumière sur la problématique de ce fragment.

**Premièrement** : L'un des plus grands problèmes soulevés par le contenu de ce texte réside dans le fait que les deux interlocuteurs sont anonymes.

**Deuxièmement** : Quelles sont les caractéristiques de ce fragment ? Ou plutôt quelle est sa valeur ?

Nous allons essayer d'éclaircir les points obscurs l'un après l'autre pour mieux apprécier ce texte et en saisir la valeur.

# **La Scène de la Rencontre d'Abraham et de Mélchisédek du Monastère Saint-Antoine à la Mer Rouge**

## **Etude Comparative**

Sherin Sadek El-Gendi  
Faculté des Lettres-Université d'Ain Shams

Cette étude traite d'une des scènes artistiques les plus importantes et les plus rares de l'art copte au cours de l'époque médiévale. Elle est également en rapport avec l'histoire de Mélchisédek, un des personnages les bien connus de l'Ancien Testament. Le but de ce papier de recherche est, tout d'abord, d'analyser les divers éléments décoratifs composant cette scène, qui est exécutée avec une finesse surprenante dans la coupole surmontant la chapelle centrale de l'église archéologique du Monastère Saint-Antoine-le-Grand à la Mer Rouge. L'autre pôle de notre recherche se base, ensuite, sur la comparaison de cette scène avec d'autres exemples identiques existant encore dans d'autres monastères coptes en Egypte.