



ST. MARK'S COPTIC MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

SECOND ANNUAL MYSEUM INTERSECTIONS FESTIVAL

“Myseum” is not a typo! It is a not-for-profit organization which makes it possible to experience and celebrate Toronto’s history, art and artefacts in an innovative way and in different places, online, at events and through exhibitions all year long. Rather than have one large museum for the City of Toronto, the city is itself “the” museum with the multiplicity of museums, galleries, and historical sites being part of “my” museums of Toronto.

The annual festival is held in March and this year the launch was on March 6, the city of Toronto’s birthday, at City Hall. Throughout the month of March thirty-six selected exhibits/events were held in the GTA. One of the criteria for selection to participate in the festival was to propose an event or exhibition in collaboration with another “group”. This year, applicants also had to feature how they envisioned Toronto on Canada’s 150th anniversary.

On Saturday March 25, St. Mark’s Coptic Museum and St. John’s Don Mills Anglican Church Hand Bell Ringers collaborated to offer A Cross-Cultural Experience Through Art and Music. We celebrated Canada’s 150th anniversary in several ways, by sharing our heritage as Copts and with the Anglican church’s handbell ringers (themselves from different cultural backgrounds) who also performed a program of songs from different cultures. This was also a celebration for the senses: over eighty participants could “see” artefacts, some of which are more than 2000 years old, and experience Coptic architecture while sitting in the first Coptic Orthodox church in North America; “hear” (or listen to) music; “touch” and create a Canadian “tree” with mosaic tiles; “touch” and ring a handbell; and “taste” and “smell” Egyptian style snacks!



On March 19, Fr. Shenouda Meleke and St. Mary and St Joseph Coptic Orthodox Church (Richmond Hill) volunteers spent an afternoon in the Museum exploring Coptic Culture.

“Coptic Heritage: St. Shenouda the Archimandrite and the Extraordinary Scope of His Writings.”



On April 1, The Canadian Society for Coptic Studies (CSCS) celebrated its 10th Jubilee with a symposium devoted to the writings of St. Shenouda the Archimandrite:

Front row: Prof. Ariel Shisha-Halevy (The Hebrew University), Prof. Janet Timbie (Catholic University, Washington DC), Prof. Anne Moore (University of Calgary & CSCS Vice President), Hany Takla (President & Founder of the St. Shenouda the Archimandrite Coptic Society, Los Angeles)

Back row: Dr. Ramez Boutros (U of T Lecturer & CSCS President), Dr. Frank Feder, (Project Director & Senior Researcher, Digital Edition and Translation of Coptic Sahidic Old Testament, Göttingen University, Germany), Prof. Andrew Crislip (University of Virginia Commonwealth, Richmond), Dr. Helene Moussa (CSCS Secretary), Prof. Stephen Emmel (Münster University, Germany and Secretary, International Association for Coptic Studies), Prof. Jitse Dijksma (University of Ottawa), Joseph Youseph (CSCS Treasurer and PhD Candidate, U of T Department of Anthropology).

Coptic Studies in the Digital World



“Preserving the heritage and advancing global knowledge of Coptic Studies” the theme of the University of Toronto Faculty of Arts launch of the Endowment Campaign for Coptic Studies on Friday, March 31, 2017. Professor Alain Beaulieu, Interim Chair, Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations gave an overview of the department’s course offerings in Coptic Studies. Since 2006 two courses in Coptic studies (introduction to Coptic Studies, language, archaeology, art monasticism, history) have been offered each academic year. This was made possible thanks to the generosity of St. Mark’s Coptic Church, the Coptic Churches of Southern Ontario and private members of the Coptic community. He also outlined how an endowment for a chair in Coptic Studies would provide the University of Toronto with the financial resources to recruit a distinguished scholar who would provide leadership in research and teaching in the field. Greetings and endorsement of the campaign were expressed by Professor Stephen Emmel, Secretary, International Society for Coptic Studies, H. G. Bishop Makar, President, Board of Directors St. Mark’s Coptic Orthodox Church, Scarborough, Ontario, and Professor John Magee, Vice-Dean Humanities, University of Toronto Faculty of Arts.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Frank Feder, Project Director and Senior Researcher, Digital Edition and Translation of Coptic Sahidic Old Testament. Göttingen University, Germany. His topic, “The Digital Coptic Old Testament: Towards the Virtual Reconstruction of a Unique Linguistic, Literary, and Religious Monument” explains how the manuscripts of ancient bible are dispersed in museums, libraries, and monasteries around the world.

In most cases the manuscripts have survived in fragments only, and, for over 100 years scholars have struggled in vain to reconstruct the Coptic Old Testament.

In order to accomplish this gigantic task (likened to a jig-saw puzzle!), the Göttingen project will make full use of the technical advancements of the digital age.

Its research focuses on developing a web platform and building a comprehensive database of the Coptic Biblical manuscript. In the future, anyone interested will be able to browse the manuscript leaves that have been virtually reassembled as codices (books), and would also be able to access the text in German, English, and Arabic translations.

“Coptic Studies and the many meanings of ‘Diaspora.’”



First Annual Coptic Canadian History Project Conference, York University, Thursday 6 April 2017

The Coptic Canadian History Project (CCHP) is a non-profit community outreach organization which aims to identify, acquire, digitize, preserve, and provide free access to source materials that reflect the knowledge, collective memory, and experiences of Egypt’s Coptic population, Coptic immigrants in Canada, and their descendants. This is the first such initiative in Canada and the first ever repository to prioritize the history and memory of the Coptic emigrant population. Michael Akladois, PhD candidate, History Department, York University is the creator of the CCHP and was the organizer of the conference.