

The Canadian Society for Coptic Studies

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The purpose of The Canadian Society for Coptic Studies (CSCS)¹ is to bring together individuals interested in Coptic studies, and to promote the dissemination of scholarly information through the organization of meetings and conferences, and the publication of a scholarly journal. The offices of the Society are at the University of Toronto Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations (NMC).

The key factor in the establishment of the CSCS was the beginning of offering courses in Coptic Language in 2006 at the Department of NMC. With the arrival in Canada (in 2008) of Dr. Ramez Boutros, these offerings have expanded to history, art, and archaeology. This extension of course offerings was made possible by generous financial contributions from St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church in Toronto, under the leadership of Fr. Marcos Marcos (1929–2020), the first Coptic priest in North America, and private members of the community. Successive Chairs of NMC have supported the development of Coptic Studies and in 2012 the University established an endowment fund to secure a robust Coptic studies program for scholarly and public education.

In the tradition of various regional and country programs and independent research groups at the Department of NMC, the CSCS had its genesis at its first symposium on 28 March 2008. The CSCS was incorporated with the Canadian federal government as a not-for-profit organization in 2009. The first annual general meeting of the CSCS was held on 21 March 2009. The Society is managed by a board of directors and its membership. For the current board of directors, refer to the CSCS website.

The CSCS holds its annual Coptic Studies symposium at the University of Toronto, cosponsored by the Department of NMC and the Coptic Museum of Canada. Peer-reviewed papers presented at the first symposium (2008) were published by Gorgias Press.² Since then, the *Journal of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies* (print ISSN 2161-878X; online 2165-0756) is published annually on behalf of the CSCS by Lockwood Press (Atlanta, Georgia).³ Over the years the Society has also sponsored lecture series featuring leading scholars in the field.

The annual symposium themes explore the diverse areas of Coptic civilization and culture and encourage interdisciplinary engagement. In addition to papers delivered by leading scholars, the Society has also had as its goal to encourage graduate students at Canadian universities pursuing academic careers in anthropology, art, ethnomusicology, history, patristics, religious studies, and theology whose research involves Coptic studies.

¹ Website of the CSCS: <http://csopticstudies.weebly.com>; on FaceBook: <https://www.facebook.com/CanadianSocietyCopticStudies>

² <https://gorgiaspress.com>

³ <https://www.lockwoodpress.com/>