



Preserving Artefacts at the Museum

The Museum had the privilege of hosting Father Bigoul el-Suriany, Curator of al-Surian Monastery Library, Wady el' Natrun from March 23 to April 5. Fr. Bigoul's main mission was to review and advise the Museum on the conservation and preservation needs of our manuscripts and rare book collection in Coptic, Greek and Arabic. Museum volunteers also learned some basic conservation skills and were made aware of a wealth of insights into the science and art of conservation and preservation.

After Fr. Bigoul put together loose pages of an Agpeya, he assessed that it is one of few remaining Agpeyas from the early Coptic tradition. While the manuscript is not dated, it is likely to have been printed before 1775AD. The explanation for this dating may be deduced from the Biblical reading for the Eleventh Hour which is from the Gospel of St. Mark (1: 29-34) — on Jesus Christ's healings in Simon's house. The Coptic Church's current Agpeya reading is from the Gospel of St. Luke (4:38-41). This change

occurred after Roman Catholic missionaries sought to establish the Coptic Catholic Church in Egypt in the first half of the 18th century. The missionaries arranged to send three young Copts to be trained in the Vatican. The most notable of them was Raphael al-Tukhi (1701-1781).

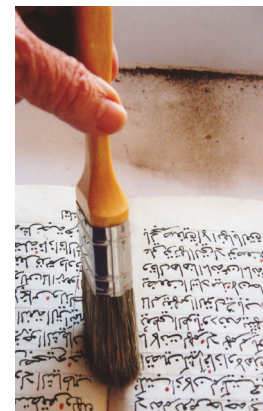


*Fr. Marcos observing Fr. Bigoul at work
Each page of a manuscript is a precious "piece" of
our Coptic heritage and has to be handled with
greatest of skill and care.*



Cleaning a rare book

In Rome, al-Tukhi translated several Coptic liturgical books for use to the soon-to-be-established Coptic Catholic Church in Egypt. The publications were modified to reflect some of the dogmatic differences between the Roman Catholic Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church; otherwise they would replicate those in use in the Coptic Orthodox Church. The first books of the Agpeyas were printed at the Romayya Printshop ca1775AD. Since the two Gospels did not differ significantly on Jesus Christ's healings in Simon's house, the Coptic Church accepted this printed version and continues to do so to this day.



Dusting a rare book

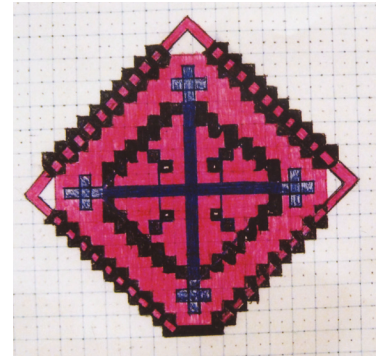
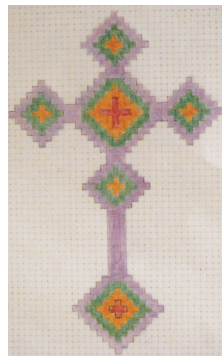
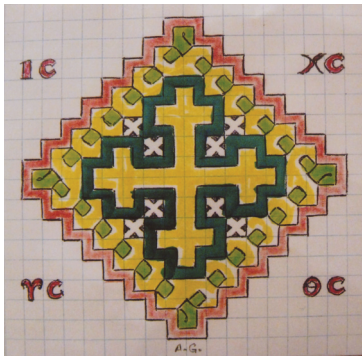
"THANK YOU" to a Volunteer!

A special "thank you" is extended to Shiyanthi Thavapalan who volunteered this summer to get our Museum started with researching and cataloguing our ancient Coptic textile collection. Shiyanthi graduated this June with an Honours B.A. in History with special focus on ancient Israelite and Biblical Studies at York University. We wish her the best of success as she continues her studies towards an M.A. in Assyriology at Yale University.

The Museum can offer a number of volunteer opportunities, such as conservation of manuscripts and textiles, continuing the work Shiyantha started or in another area of Coptic cultural heritage, entering the Museum collection in a data base. Email the Museum with your interests and skills!

Celebrating Artistic Talents

On Saturday, March 28, ten members of our Church participated in a workshop facilitated by Fr. Bigoul el-Suriany on Pope Makarios III's Yota style crosses — sometimes called “geometric” crosses because they are drawn on geometric paper. Fr. Bigoul generously offered the Museum a book with designs of these crosses which will allow us to offer such workshops again.



Yota style crosses created by some students in Fr. Bigoul's workshop

Level II Neo-Coptic Icon Writing Class with Mrs. Seham Guirguis as the instructor was held on Monday evenings from March 16 to July 16. The icons of Level I & II classes were displayed on Sunday August 16.



On Monday May 11, an enthusiastic group of fourteen grades five and six students from Brimwood Blvd. Public School and their teacher, Mrs Liliane Bagloul, visited the Museum. The focus of their visit was art, culture and history. The day started with exploring the Museum's coin collection and learning about Marguerite Nakhla's folkloric style biblical paintings. The students then visited the Church where they learned about the symbolism and spirituality of icons and the architecture of a Coptic Church. After lunch the children painted their “impressions” of the day (see collage of paintings). Mrs Bagloul wrote back thanking the Museum volunteers for the day and said that the children all felt that this was their “best activity of the year”. We certainly enjoyed their keen questions!

For the first time the Museum has offered an Introductory Painting Class — “exploring artistry of nature and God's creations”(July 6 to August 24). The instructors were artists and Museum volunteers Sandy and Marina Saad. The response was beyond our expectations! Twenty students enrolled for the 16+ years old class and sixteen students for the 10-15 years old class. The first month was devoted to drawing and painting skills and the second to painting on a canvas. One of the class sessions was held outdoors. An exhibition of the final paintings will be held on Sunday August 31 from 10am – 2.00pm



Capturing beauty in the “wilderness”!

Book on Marguerite Nakhla Launched!

Marguerite Nakhla: Legacy to Modern Egyptian Art — a book on the life and work of this leading Egyptian artist will be launched at the St. Mark's Church Ninth Annual Coptic Festival on Saturday, September 12 at 2pm. The book is authored by Fr. Marcos Marcos, Dr. Helene Moussa and Carolyn Ramzy. Marguerite Nakhla was considered one of the pioneers of the twentieth-century Modern Egyptian Art Movement. The Museum has the privilege of having six of her Biblical scenes in Coptic Folkloric Style and an icon.