

Sinaiticus



The bulletin of the Saint Catherine Foundation
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ON THE OTHER PAGES

News

Conservation team transferring data,
developing glossary

page 2

ACE joins South Wing project

page 4

Fire safety project inaugurated

page 4

American Associates celebrate
tenth anniversary

page 5

Saint Catherine Foundation sponsors
'Sacred: Discover what we share'

page 5

Cruise planned for October
2007

page 5

Events

'An Evening in the Library'

page 6

'A Weekend in the Library'

page 9

St Catherine's Day

page 10

Les Activités de l'Association suisse

page 13

Articles

From Eastern deserts to Western isles

MICHELLE P. BROWN

page 14

Saint Catherine's Library, Sinai:

Architectural description of
the project

page 15

SOUTH WING PROJECT ADVANCES AS DESIGN PHASE ENDS

Porphyrios Associates have completed the holistic designs for the South Wing, Sinai's iconic 1930s building, and the design development for the Library itself, housed on the second floor. The project involves substantial structural alterations, while protecting the integrity of historical features such as the Justinian Wall and the chapel within the Library. The reconfiguration of the Library, and the second floor generally, is discussed in the article 'Saint Catherine's Library, Sinai: Architectural description of the project', beginning on page 15 of this issue of *Sinaiticus*.



Perspective view of the refurbished Library at Saint Catherine's. Some 2,000 manuscripts will be stored on the main level, in stainless steel boxes within purpose-made cabinets. Manuscripts not requiring stainless steel box protection will be stored on open shelving on the mezzanine level.

Sinaiticus: the bulletin of the Saint Catherine Foundation

Edited by Earleen Brunner with the assistance of Tahani Nadim.

Designed by Lola Design (www.loladesign.co.uk)

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The Saint Catherine Foundation and its related associations in Switzerland and the United States support conservation work at the Monastery of Saint Catherine. The monastery's Library is the present focus of conservation activities. To safeguard this historic archive, the foundation is raising funds for the renovation of the Library building and for the conservation and boxed storage of the manuscripts and early books.

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The Egyptian engineering company ACE is designing the electrical and mechanical systems for the South Wing project. Work on these designs is progressing and should be finalised during the month of June. Bids for construction will then be solicited, with commencement tentatively scheduled for September 2007.

With the Design Phase nearing completion and Phase One of the project soon underway, the Saint Catherine Foundation, the American Associates and Swiss Friends continue to seek funds for the building work, the boxing of the manuscripts and their storage in the reconfigured Library. The help of friends and benefactors is more important now than ever, as the conservation of the Library, eleven years in the planning, at last becomes a reality.

CONSERVATION TEAM TRANSFERRING DATA, DEVELOPING GLOSSARY

NICHOLAS PICKWOOD

Since my last report and the completion of the survey of the 3,306 bound manuscripts in the Monastery Library, we have been very busy, but our work has been largely confined to our office at the Camberwell College of Arts, where the work to transfer all the information collected to the database specially designed for the purpose by our Research Fellow, Dr Athanasios Velios, is being carried out. This work is largely covered by the generous grant given to us by the Arts and Humanities Research Council of Great Britain (AHRC) and announced in the last issue of *Sinaiticus*. This grant allowed us to employ Dr George Boudalis as a Research Assistant, working with Thanasis Velios on the transfer of the data, using the very ingenious process designed by the latter to minimise the amount of

manual inputting required, but still requiring high levels of patience and endurance as some 35,000 pages of data were digested.

We were very fortunate in having George to do this work, as he was not only an experienced and frequent leader of the survey teams but had also completed a doctoral thesis on post-Byzantine Greek bookbinding, based on research carried out both at Saint Catherine's and the Iviron Monastery on Mount Athos. This made him ideally qualified to work on the Anglo-Greek glossary of bookbinding terms, which is also part of the AHRC-funded project. He has since returned to a full-time job as the senior book conservator in the Byzantine Museum in Thessaloniki, but all is not lost. The director of the museum, Dr Anastasia Tourta, has generously agreed to allow him to continue his work on the glossary for one day a week as a part of his duties at the museum, where he will be ideally placed to liaise with Konstantinos Choulis of the Technical Educational Institute in Athens, co-author of one of the few published books to describe Byzantine binding structures, based on the collections in the Vatican, and the group working under the direction of Dr Niki Tsironi in the Institute of Byzantine Research of the National Hellenic Research Foundation, also in Athens, whose own glossary project fits very neatly with ours. They are concentrating essentially on the external appearance of the bindings and their decoration, while we are looking in detail at the structures and materials of the bindings. When both of our projects are completed, we hope to combine them to create a single entity for general access on the web. All of us working on the glossary project work via the web on a centrally held database, so that we can all be aware of what the others are doing wherever we may be.

George's place was taken at the end of January 2007 by Maria Argyrou, also an experienced member of our survey

teams. Maria has worked for several years in the conservation workshop of MIET, the cultural foundation of the Greek National Bank, whose director, Dionysios Kapsalis, has been generous in his support of our project in allowing Maria to take this post for the next two years. She is also working on a part-time doctoral thesis for the Royal Holloway College, part of the University of London, on the trade in printed books in the eastern Mediterranean in the first half of the sixteenth century. Her experience of the surveys means that she will be able to continue the work started by George Boudalis, while her academic work equips her to make a valuable contribution to the glossary project.



Prototype of the stainless steel box and racking system developed for the Library at Saint Catherine's. Each box will be fitted with a custom-made internal wrapper of acid free card and sealed with a specially manufactured silicone gasket.

The glossary project has grown out of the survey work, as it is essential for us to find consistent terms to describe not only material which is already familiar but which lacks an effective and agreed terminology. This also includes details of bindings that have not only not been recorded before but which have in some cases never been observed before. To incorporate this material into a database we have to find unique and appropriate terms to describe them and this quickly becomes a complex process, especially as we hope to establish at least a measure of international acceptance for our terminology. This would mean that the glossary can serve as the basis of a standard in the field of manuscript and printed-book studies. The need for such a terminology has long been felt and our project has come along at just the right time to supply it. Our funding allows for two international symposia, through which we hope to

engage not only the assistance of colleagues from both Europe and the US working on the history of bookbinding structures, but also to obtain their seal of approval of the result. Initially, the remit is for an Anglo-Greek terminology, but we very much hope that our international panel will be able to facilitate the inclusion of other languages.

Thanasis is also very much involved in the glossary project and has persuaded us to compile it using XML (eXtensible Markup Language), which will give, among other benefits, long-term accessibility to the data – an essential feature if it is to be of wider value outside our project. XML hierarchies impose on us a rigid framework in which to fit the data, and this in turn requires us to be very clear and methodical in our approach – two essential qualities for a successful glossary. Our initial task, on which we have already made substantial progress, is to define the components and material for which we are seeking names. This is relatively straightforward, in that the components exist, and have been recorded and photographed and can therefore be described with great accuracy. The second, much more difficult task, is to settle on terms which are unambiguous, generally acceptable and suggest the right meaning to the user. This is where the symposia will, we hope, be of the greatest use, but we are already aware of many instances where single entities have been given different names by different researchers and selecting the best will not always be easy – each of us tends to think that our own term is of course the best. The result will be a tool that will be of value not just to ourselves but to the wider bibliographical community, to whom we hope the name of Saint Catherine will be synonymous with the new terminology.

We are also working on how to make the terminology accessible to those not already familiar with binding structures, as such people will not normally be able to look up the terms, as they will not know them – especially if they are new terms. We are therefore looking at how to compile visual indices which lead the user from the object to the term. This will not be easy, but we are hopeful that we will be able to establish a model for such access tools.



Members of the Camberwell conservation team presented an exhibition about their work at the 2006 St Catherine's Day event in London. Maria Kalligerou (right) discusses the Room 31a project, pictured on the panels behind her.

We have also completed the scanning of the 30,000 slides accumulated during the survey, the latter stages of which were completed almost single-handedly by Heather Ravenburg, an MA student from the conservation course at Camberwell, who is staying on to do a part-time Master of Philosophy on the design and use of databases in book conservation while at the same time assisting with the administration of the Saint Catherine Foundation in London. The slide scanning was carried out with a grant from the Headley Trust, and was, largely thanks to Heather and Thanasis, on time and on budget. The result is that the images will shortly be available to the project team on-line for reference, as we work on the survey database and the glossary. In the longer term, with permission from the monastery, we hope to make them more widely available to researchers.

We had hoped to have started the survey of the early printed books by now, but we will not be able to begin our work in the Monastery until the end of May this year. The work on the design of the survey methodology is, however, well on the way to completion. It is, of course, based on the manuscript survey, but with some differences to accommodate the larger number of western European bindings that are to be found in this part of the collection. It will also make use of the new terminology. Thanks to the expertise of Thanasis Velios, the survey will also be largely electronic, based on the same sort of hierarchical structure as the glossary. The data will be entered onto laptop computers directly from the books, and all photography done with a digital camera. This will save an immense amount of time after the survey, though we will have to be very careful over the long-term preservation of the electronic data.

2006 was also a busy time for the Library at Saint Catherine's in terms of loans to exhibitions, with two major shows, one in the Getty Museum in California ('Byzantium and the West') and the other in the Sackler Gallery in Washington DC ('In the Beginning: Bibles Before the Year 1000'). The Saint Catherine's project was able to assist the monastery in assessing which of the requested items were safe to travel and then to carry out the necessary work to prepare them for shipping and exhibition. The work included extensive repairs to MS Greek 418, a twelfth-century copy of the Ladder of St John Klimakos, carried out by myself and Andrew Honey, senior conservator at the Bodleian Library, who has been seconded by the library to work on the project for one day a week. The work was for both of us a learning experience as we explored the particular demands of the unsupported Byzantine book structure and found, to our delight, once we had properly understood how it worked, that it responded remarkably to the sort of repairs that were needed. We discovered in particular that it lends itself to very strong but very localised repairs that allow the surviving elements of the original structure to remain undisturbed. This work will be included in the notes we intend to compile on the repair of such books for use in the new conservation workshop. Andrew is also writing up the work on this manuscript for

publication later this year. He also worked with his colleague from Bodley, Nicole Gilroy (another survey team member), on the preparation of the manuscript leaves which were sent to the Sackler Gallery, which included a bifolium from the Codex Siniaticus. For both exhibitions, we assisted Father Justin in his negotiations with the organisers to ensure that the correct, very low, relative humidity levels for the manuscripts could be maintained at all times. So far, all seems to have worked well.

We have also been involved with Porphyrios Associates in the plans for the renovation of the Library and creation of the new conservation and digitising studios. This process is not yet finished, but we have in prospect an excellent space in which to carry out a wide range of conservation activities immediately adjacent to a possible four digitising studios, so that conservators can be on hand when complex and vulnerable material is being handled under the cameras. We have also been concerned to make sure that there will be enough room, not only for the existing books, including the extra space needed for the 2,000 manuscripts which are to be housed horizontally in stainless steel boxes, but also to allow some expansion space to accommodate the reference books which are needed to support such a collection. This appears to be possible. The work on the steel boxes, on which Andrew Honey and I are working with Stuart Welch of Conservation by Design, is entering its final stages. A very neat and robust racking system to hold the boxes in the cupboards at the lower level of the library has been designed for them and a prototype of the last remaining component, the gasket to give an effective dust seal to the lid when it is closed, will soon be ready for inspection. If this is found acceptable, it will allow us to finalise all the measurements and declare ourselves ready to start manufacture. The Swiss Friends of the Saint Catherine Foundation have agreed to pay for the initial make of 200 boxes, and Conservation by Design have agreed to store the completed boxes until the Library is ready to receive them.

In addition to the work we have been engaged on, we have also set up three displays to show what we have been doing, one during the 'Weekend in the Library' visit to Camberwell College in June 2006, another at the event put on to celebrate the feast day of St Catherine at Bridgewater House in November, and a third at the Tenth Anniversary celebration of the American Associates in New York.

ACE JOINS SOUTH WING PROJECT

ACE, Arab Consulting Engineers, one of Egypt's most respected engineering firms, is carrying out the design work for the South Wing's electrical and mechanical systems at a cost well below the market rate. The Foundation is grateful to the Chairman, Dr Mourad Michel Bakhoum, for granting the monastery favourable terms. ACE will also serve as the 'architect of record', with responsibility for the project's compliance with local regulations. The Monastery of Saint Catherine is only the most recent of the prestigious projects

with which ACE has been involved. St Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral and the new Royal Meridien Hotel in Cairo, Doha Plaza Tower in Qatar and Hamoud Tower in Kuwait are all products of ACE engineering.

FIRE SAFETY PROJECT INAUGURATED

Following the visit to Saint Catherine's by FPC (Fire Protection Consultants) announced in the 2006 *Sinaiticus*, the Egyptian engineering consultancy ACE inspected the Monastery's electrical infrastructure. Engineers from ACE reported that the monastery's electrical installations need immediate replacement, owing to their age and the number of piecemeal repairs made by the Fathers over the years.

The design of a new electrical system is now underway. This will be the first and most important phase of the Life and Fire Safety Project funded by the UK and US foundations.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATES CELEBRATE TENTH ANNIVERSARY

The American Associates marked the start of their Tenth Anniversary year with a celebration of the Foundation's achievements at the Morgan Library in New York on 29 March. Initiatives such as the new water storage system, emergency power generation, kitchen project, fire safety programme and collaboration with the University of the Arts London - Camberwell College of Arts have all been sponsored by the American Associates, who have funded the Camberwell project since 1997. The New York foundation is working hard to support ongoing conservation work and, above all, the South Wing project, with construction commencing later this year.

The pioneering work at Saint Catherine's was the subject of a special exhibition at the Morgan Library, mounted to commemorate the Tenth Anniversary, and of presentations by Father Justin, Librarian of Saint Catherine's, and Professor Nicholas Pickwood, Leader of the Camberwell conservation team. The Morgan was also the venue for a cocktail reception and Gala dinner for the members of the foundation, chaired by Costas Kondylis, and co-chaired by Robert Shaw and Peter Vlachos – all members of the Board of Directors of the American Associates.

SAINT CATHERINE FOUNDATION SPONSORS 'SACRED: DISCOVER WHAT WE SHARE'

The Saint Catherine Foundation has provided major sponsorship for the British Library's 'Sacred' exhibition, acting on behalf of a friend of the Foundation and Library who wished to remain anonymous. The exhibition dedicated to the three monotheistic faiths of Judaism,

Christianity and Islam is on view in London from 27 April to 23 September 2007. 'Sacred' showcases an exceptional collection of Jewish, Christian and Muslim holy books and allows reflection on the co-existence of the three faiths and their common ground.

Important and beautiful religious texts will be brought together for the first time, including the Codex London, one of the oldest surviving manuscripts of the Torah (the first five books of the Old Testament); the British Library's portion of the Codex Sinaiticus, the oldest complete surviving manuscript of the Old Testament; and the Ma'il Koran, one of the earliest surviving Korans, dating from the early eighth century. The manuscripts will be mounted alongside each other, not individually in separate zones.

A private view and reception especially for members of the Saint Catherine Foundation is planned. There will be a charge for admission of £50 per person, and the funds raised will benefit the work of the Foundation. A full programme of talks, lectures, debates, concerts and performances at the British Library are planned for the exhibition's run.

CRUISE PLANNED FOR OCTOBER 2007

To celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of the American Associates, the Saint Catherine Foundation is organising a trip aboard the *MV Turama*, one of the world's most luxurious megayachts. A journey of ten to twelve days is planned, from Athens to Alexandria and Sinai via the Suez Canal. The highlight of the trip will be private visits to Egypt's newest library, the Library of Alexandria, and to the oldest, not only in Egypt but the world, the Saint Catherine's Library at Mount Sinai.

The trip will go ahead on the understanding that sufficient interest is shown. The costs – including boat, meals, security and land arrangements – would be met by the *Turama's* owners, enabling the Foundation to benefit from all funds raised by the trip. Further details are available from the Foundation, 14 Cleveland Row, London SW1A 1DP, tel +44 207 396 5420, fax +44 207 396 5440.



The *MV Turama*. The cruise planned for October will raise funds to benefit the Foundation.

**‘AN EVENING IN THE LIBRARY’
BRITISH LIBRARY, LONDON
12 JUNE 2006**



The friends of the Saint Catherine Foundation were in celebratory mood as they gathered at the British Library to fête the Foundation’s Tenth Anniversary. The Royal Gala occasion benefited both the Saint Catherine’s Library Conservation Project and the Codex Sinaiticus Project on which the British Library, the Monastery of Saint Catherine and other partners are working.

Guests made their way to the Ritblat Gallery, where they viewed an exhibition specially curated for the Gala, ‘In a Monastery Library: preserving Codex Sinaiticus and the Greek Written Heritage’. In addition to the British Library’s portion of the famous codex, the display brought together for the first time the most beautiful and significant Greek manuscripts from its world-renowned collection.

Dinner was served in the Main Hall, at which time HRH The Prince of Wales was to have addressed the guests. With great sadness, the Foundation and the Library announced the death, the previous day, of Major Bruce Shand, father of HRH The Duchess of Cornwall and expressed their condolences.

TOP
Dinner was served in the imposing Main Hall of the British Library.

BOTTOM
Silver, crystal and roses decorated the Gala tables.



Mr and Mrs Roderick MacLeod.

Strong support ensured the success of the Tombola, which netted substantial funds. A number of companies, institutions and individuals contributed generously to the Tombola: Mr Philippe Allard, Mr David Bernasconi, Blake's, Camberwell College of Arts, Mrs Azia Chatila, Professor Paul Coldwell, Daniel Galvin, Lady Linda Davies, Ms Liz Dempsey, Estiatorio Milos, Ms Joanna Hardy and Sotheby's, Mr Steve Kleiser, Lalique (Bond Street), The Livanos Family and Oceana Restaurant, The Rev Dr Emma Loveridge, La Maison du Chocolat, Mrs Paul McGuinness, The Oxford Philomusica, Oyuna Cashmere, Mr Marios Papadopoulos, Mr Doug Patterson, Mr Nigel Rawlence, Sejour, Mrs Maria Simonds Gooding, Taj Luxury Hotels, Mr Predrag Tomasevic, Miss Oyuna Tserendorj, University of the Arts London, Viamare Travel Limited, Lady Weinberg, Wind Sand & Stars, The Wren Press.

Mr and Mrs Naguib Sawiris generously sponsored 'An Evening in the Library'. Generous contributions to the projects were made by Mr and Mrs George Catsiapis, Mr and Mrs George Gondicas, Captain and Mrs Nikolas S Lemos, Mr and Mrs John Menoudakos, Mrs Lily Safra and Mr and Mrs Samih Sawiris. Chair of the Organising Committee was Mrs Dorothy Latsis.



Mrs Gloria Sawiris, the Lord Eatwell, Mrs Mary Jaharis and His Eminence Archbishop Damianos of Sinai.



Lady Davis, Mr Michael Berger Sandhofer, the Honourable Mrs Laura Weinstock and Miss Clara Wong at the reception.



Mr Simon Blank and Miss Emma Latsis.



Mr and Mrs Brian Carr.



His Eminence Archbishop Damianos of Sinai and His Eminence Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain, Patrons of the Saint Catherine Foundation, and His Grace Bishop Theodoritos of Nazianzos.



His Excellency the Greek Ambassador Anastase Scopelitis, Mrs Dorothy Latsis (Gala Chair), Mr Stacey Polites, Mrs Henrietta Latsis and Sir David Frost.

‘A WEEKEND IN THE LIBRARY’
9-12 JUNE 2006



This fundraising visit to the libraries of Oxford, the Royal Library at Windsor, St Paul’s Cathedral library and the British Library gave participants the opportunity to explore some of the world’s most important libraries while supporting the Codex Sinaiticus and Library Conservation projects.

The Weekend was jointly organised by the Saint Catherine Foundation and the British Library. The substantial funds raised were used to conserve the monastery’s portion of the Codex Sinaiticus. Significant amounts also went towards the digitisation of the codex and the Saint Catherine’s Library Conservation Project. Among the participants were members of the American Associates and Swiss Friends, as well as the UK Foundation.

TOP

Sunday lunch at the Hinds Head in Bray was preceded by a private visit to the Royal Library at Windsor Castle.

BOTTOM

Saturday’s programme featured a visit to Camberwell College of Arts in London. Dr Andrew Honey of the Bodleian Library Oxford, a member of the Camberwell project team, discusses his work to repair MS Greek 418 with Mrs Véronique Walter, a member of the Committee of the Swiss Friends.

ST CATHERINE'S DAY
BRIDGEWATER HOUSE, LONDON
28 NOVEMBER 2006



TOP
The members warmly applaud Marios Papadopoulos's performance.

BOTTOM
Marios Papadopoulos, Music Director of the Oxford Philomusica, and Dimitris Dondos, Chairman of the Saint Catherine Foundation.

Once again in 2006, the friends of the Foundation celebrated St Catherine's Day at Bridgewater House. Professor Nicholas Pickwood and the Camberwell-Saint Catherine's Library Project team presented an exhibition about the Library project, including the digitisation of the Condition Assessment records, repair of MS Greek 418, the boxing programme and plans for assessing the early printed books. While discussing the project with the conservation experts from Camberwell, the guests enjoyed wine and a selection of Akoma's delicious hot and cold canapés kindly sponsored by an anonymous donor.

Highlight of the evening for many was the piano recital by Marios Papadopoulos, Music Director of the Oxford Philomusica, who gave so generously of his time and talent. Particularly known for his interpretation of familiar works, Marios Papadopoulos performed Beethoven's Sonata No 14 in C sharp minor (Moonlight) and Chopin's Polonaise in A flat major, Op 53.

Support for the prize draw in aid of the Foundation was enthusiastic and resulted in substantial contributions. A lively presence on the podium, Ms Joanna Hardy, Director of the Jewellery Department of Sotheby's London, drew the names of the lucky winners.



The Revd Antony and Mrs Salmon.



Mr Leo De Vroomen and Ms Joanna Hardy of Sotheby's London.



Professor Oriana Baddeley, Trustee of the Saint Catherine Foundation and Director of Research at University of the Arts London - Camberwell College of Arts; Miss Heather Ravenberg, Saint Catherine Foundation administrator and member of the Camberwell project team; and Me Nicolas Gagnebin, Secretary and member of the Committee, Swiss Friends.



Dr Michelle Brown, Dr Claire Breay and Ms Charlotte Orrell-Jones.



Mr Jacob Lipton, Dr Peter Lipton, Dr Diana Lipton and Dr Scot McKendrick.

LES ACTIVITÉS DE L'ASSOCIATION SUISSE



Prof. Dusan Sidjanski, member du comité de l'Association Suisse, Prof. Nicholas Pickwood, responsable du 'Camberwell project team', et Prof. Charles Mela, président de l'Association Suisse, à Oxford pour 'A Weekend in the Library'.



Mme Araceli Baer et Mme Michèle Givaudan, member du comité de l'Association Suisse, au Gala à la 'British Library'.

Dans le but de mieux faire connaître la richesse intérieure du monde orthodoxe et de contribuer au rayonnement spirituel du Monastère de Sainte-Catherine, l'Association suisse des Amis de la Fondation Sainte-Catherine a poursuivi en 2006 le cycle de conférences inauguré en 2000 par le Recteur Hélène Ahrweiler.

Le professeur Olivier Fatio a présenté le 27 avril 2006, à l'occasion de notre Assemblée générale une conférence dans la grande Aula de l'Université de Genève, intitulée : « Le grand schisme de 1054 entre l'Orient et l'Occident ». Le professeur Fatio a parlé de la querelle théologique autour du Filioque. Depuis 381, à Nicée, le dogme de la Trinité était fixé : Dieu est un en trois personnes, qui sont consubstantielles. Le Fils est engendré par le Père et le Saint-Esprit procède du Père. Or, on voit ensuite apparaître, notamment en Espagne aux VI-VIIe siècles une formule différente, selon laquelle le Saint-Esprit procède du Père et du Fils (Filioque). Le monde oriental n'accepta pas cette modification pour une raison institutionnelle et une raison théorique. D'abord le texte de Nicée ne parlait pas du Fils, ensuite, faire dépendre le Saint-Esprit du Père et du Fils c'était créer deux origines en Dieu. Au VIIIe siècle, Charlemagne imposa cet ajout au Symbole de Nicée, mais Rome entendait rester en harmonie avec l'Orient et n'introduisit qu'au XIe siècle cette modification qui déclencha la polémique. Des raisons linguistiques, liturgiques, institutionnelles (la question des deux empereurs), des facteurs de civilisation (avec la nouvelle floraison du monde latin au XIe et la lutte d'influence autour du Sud de l'Italie qui était de rite grec) ont creusé peu à peu la distance funeste entre l'Orient et l'Occident, mais c'est la 4e croisade en 1204 qui créa l'irréparable. Il a fallu attendre 1965 pour que Paul VI et Athénagoras lèvent les anathèmes lancés au XIe siècle.

La publication de ces conférences a également repris dans notre série. Aux deux précédentes déjà parues des professeurs Hélène Ahrweiler et Nicholas Pickwood se sont ajoutées à la fin de l'année celles du professeur Michel Lassithiotakis, sur « Le metochion de Sainte-Catherine en Crète aux XVIe – XVIIe siècles : de l'histoire à la légende » et du Père Justin, bibliothécaire du Sinaï, « Une technologie moderne au service des manuscrits anciens », avec des illustrations, traduite en français par le professeur Bertrand Bouvier.

En juin 2006, plusieurs membres de notre Association ont participé à la visite organisée à Londres de plusieurs des plus belles bibliothèques du Royaume Uni, intitulée « A Weekend in the Library », dans le but de soutenir le projet d'édition du Codex Sinaïticus. Outre notre émerveillement, ce fut l'occasion d'approfondir nos contacts avec la Fondation Sainte-Catherine de Londres et d'avoir une meilleure compréhension du progrès de nos projets en faveur de la bibliothèque du monastère Sainte-Catherine et de réfléchir à la meilleure utilisation des fonds jusqu'ici rassemblés. Une exposition présentée par l'équipe du Camberwell-Saint Catherine's Project et les explications données par le professeur Pickwood ont montré l'importance et l'aspect novateur du travail déjà accompli.

PROF. CHARLES MÉLA, PRÉSIDENT

FROM EASTERN DESERTS TO WESTERN ISLES

MICHELLE P. BROWN

What follows is an extract from the catalogue of one of the most important and well attended exhibitions ever staged on the early history of the Bible: 'In the Beginning: Bibles Before the Year 1000', which was held in the Freer-Sackler Galleries, The Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, from October 2006 to January 2007. The catalogue (which can still be ordered via the Freer-Sackler website) was edited by the exhibition's Guest Curator, Michelle P. Brown. Among the foremost stars of the show were some of the manuscript treasures of Saint Catherine's, especially some of the important New Finds – including part of Codex Sinaiticus, the earliest extant Christian Bible.



Greek-Arabic bilingual manuscript of the Psalms and Odes, probably written at Saint Catherine's, Sinai, during the eighth-ninth century. Saint Catherine, Greek 36, f.38v.

During the early Middle Ages, the Christian monastic cultures of two far-flung regions, Egypt and the islands of Britain and Ireland, were both shaped by the blending of the asceticism of the desert fathers, the legacy of the late Roman world, and their own local traditions and styles. They seem often to have shared perceptions of the role of the book and the motivation for its production. The desert sands of the East were translated into the watery seascapes of the North Sea and the Atlantic, where the beehive huts of the monastery of Skellig Michael clung like gulls to a rock in the storm-tossed ocean around Ireland's southwest coast, in emulation of eastern high places such as Saint Catherine's monastery on the lower slopes of Mount Sinai.

The allure of the Holy Land, often visited by Westerners on pilgrimage, and a sense of their own remoteness from the Mediterranean world may have contributed to the fertile reception of eastern influence in Britain and Ireland.

The Coptic Church of Egypt had pioneered desert monasticism from the late third century and perpetuated many ancient Egyptian customs that were transmitted in turn to western Europe. Around the year 400 the earliest Coptic psalter to have survived was lovingly placed beneath the head of an adolescent girl, as a pillow in her grave, reflecting the ancient Egyptian practice of interring the Book of the Dead with the deceased. When the relics of the hermit-bishop-monk Saint Cuthbert were translated to the high altar at Lindisfarne in northeast England in 698, a little copy of Saint John's Gospel, made at Wearmouth-Jarrow but bound using a complex Coptic sewing technique and tooled leather cover, was likewise buried with him. Book-shrines were also made in both regions, the books they contained being revered as relics themselves.

Alongside liturgical and devotional influences, connections between the artistic styles of East and West can also be traced. For example, the colourful Sassanian-style griffins in the margins of the Lectionary of Mount Horeb, from Sinai, find their parallels in the lion symbols of St Mark in early gospelbooks from Irish scriptoria, such as the Macregol Gospels and the famous Book of Kells.

Saint Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai

The Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine is an extraordinary crossroads at which the different traditions of East and West have met over the centuries. One of the most important Byzantine monasteries, it was founded by Emperor Justinian between 548 and 565. Towering 1,500 metres above the Sinai desert, its remoteness ensured its survival, and despite losses it retains mosaics and icons from the time of its foundation and over 3,000 manuscripts – part of the greatest library held by any Greek monastery. This collection began to be known when Count Tischendorf discovered part of the famous Codex Sinaiticus there in 1859, and a further important cache of books has been discovered in recent times.

Mount Sinai (Horeb), where Moses encountered God in the burning bush, has been a place of pilgrimage since the fourth century. It has also been home to Greek, Syrian,

Arab, Georgian, Slavic and Latin-speaking monks, all espousing orthodoxy as expressed at the Council of Chalcedon of 451. The community's first need was for scriptural and liturgical volumes, which were gradually supplemented by works written by the Church Fathers, exegetical and study texts and books in the languages of incoming monks. Around two thirds of the library's books are in Greek; a majority of the rest are Christian Arabic texts; and the remainder are in Syriac, Georgian and Slavic, and (in a couple of cases) Latin. Some are Greek-Arabic bilinguals for use by Arabic Christians and Greek monks raised in Muslim territories (such as Syria, Egypt, and Sinai itself) who spoke Arabic as their first language and Greek as their second. Opposition to Monophysitism – the belief that Christ had only one nature, which was rejected at Chalcedon but retained by the Egyptian and Armenian Churches – accounts for the comparative scarcity of Coptic and Armenian books.

decoration includes fish-shaped initials resembling those of pre-Carolingian Italy and Gaul, perhaps inspired by gifts of books from these areas. The end of iconoclasm in Byzantium, coupled with the wealth of Fatimid Egypt, meant that from the tenth century more opulent illuminated books were made at Sinai, including the Lectionary of Mount Horeb of 967.

A significant number of Georgian manuscripts are also represented. They were made in the tenth to fourteenth centuries, when Georgian monasteries were flourishing in Syria and Palestine and producing recruits for the Sinai community. Sinai's Slavonic books, probably later imports from Macedonia and Croatia, include two eleventh-century items in the Glagolitic language – from which Cyrillic script is derived – which are among the earliest extant Slavonic manuscripts. A few Latin manuscripts made before 1000 also survive, blending northern European, Visigothic, Greek, Syriac and Arabic influences, providing rare and valuable evidence for the presence of Latin speakers in the region, long before the Crusades. In 599 Pope Gregory the Great sent a legate bearing gifts to Sinai, so there were evidently early communications with the West. By the year 1000 Constantinople had re-emerged as the central focus of Byzantine culture, and its influence can be clearly seen in manuscripts subsequently imported into Sinai and produced there. Sinai has always been a meeting place of cultures. It is not surprising that its library collections should reflect this, but perhaps miraculous that they should have survived the holocausts of history.

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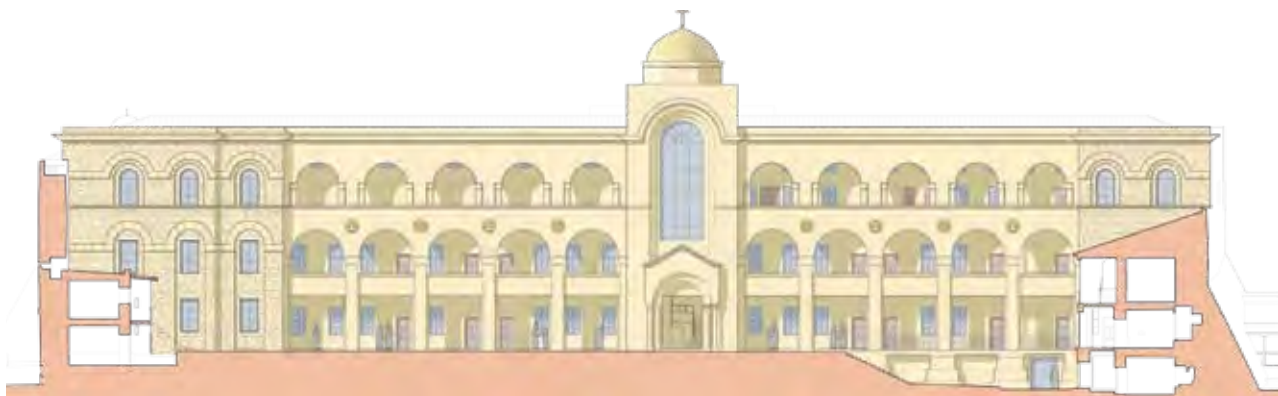


Glagolitic Euchologion, written in Macedonia or Croatia during the eleventh century. Saint Catherine, Slavonic 37, f.86r.

Many manuscripts, mostly servicebooks, were copied at Sinai from the seventh to the ninth century, some written over earlier texts that had been erased, called palimpsests. They are mostly in rounded uncial script, an inheritance from Greece and Rome. Although they do not contain figural imagery, probably influenced in this by Islam, their

SAINT CATHERINE'S LIBRARY, SINAI: ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

*Concept Design by Porphyrios Associates, London.
Dr Demetri Porphyrios, principal of the firm, is an internationally
recognised architect and theorist and the recipient of many awards and
honorary degrees for excellence in architectural and urban design.*



The proposed North Elevation of the South Wing.

This project, funded by the Saint Catherine Foundation, is for the reconfiguration of the Library, and top floor generally, of the South Wing of the Saint Catherine Monastery in Sinai, Egypt. The complete scheme will provide much needed accommodation to house the Monastery's Library, the new and fully equipped conservation and digitisation workshops, as well as the Synodiko or Assembly Hall.

The proposal involves the remodelling of the original 1930s building, whilst retaining important historical features such as the Justinian walls and the chapel embedded in the walls. Substantial structural alterations will be necessary in order to accommodate the two new vertical circulation cores at the east and west ends of the building. Similarly, the roof slab will need to be demolished and rebuilt to allow for a new mezzanine floor that will house the conservation workshops. At the same time, this will give enhanced height to the Library and the Synodiko.

LIBRARY READING ROOM

The Library Reading Room is located at the far east of the building. It is entered via an entrance lobby immediately off the external corridor. In order to accommodate the adjacent vertical core, a substantial part of the room's west wall will be demolished and rebuilt. A new wall divides the Reading Room in order to create a two-level book storage room. This will also help make the room orthogonal and will create symmetry to the wall enclosing the chapel on the south of the space. The two large arch openings on this wall are reduced in size in order to allow for a suspended

coffered ceiling. The Reading Room is finished with a stone floor, painted plaster walls and painted plaster ceiling. The chapel is to be made good and redecorated.

MAIN LIBRARY

The Library proper is entered via a secure lobby, which is supervised and controlled by the librarian in the Reading Room. Part of the existing library floor, at the east end, will be taken up by the new staircase and lift shaft. To make up for this loss of area, the library extends and occupies the rooms to the east of the main staircase.

The Library is organized on two levels. The main level will house the manuscripts, 2,000 of which will be individually stored in specially made stainless steel boxes. These boxes will be housed in purpose-made cabinets, which occupy all available wall space. The cabinets will have stainless steel framed doors with wire mesh finish. Internally they will be fitted with specially designed runners, adjustable at two-centimetre intervals, for the efficient use of shelving space. The mezzanine level will be furnished with open shelving for the storage of books not requiring stainless steel box protection. The mezzanine floor and the two internal staircases will be of stainless steel construction with a perforated metal floor, for a visually lighter structure. Pilasters have been added to all four elevations to pick up the existing concrete beams and to break up the long runs of book shelving. The large ceiling area will be divided into smaller bays which, in turn, will be further articulated by the use of timber coffers.

SYNODIKO (ASSEMBLY HALL)

The Synodiko is situated to the west of the central staircase, with access immediately off the external corridor. It comprises a double-height space with a mezzanine level, and it will accommodate a total of 96 seats. The Synodiko will be used for meetings of the Synaxis, as well as for symposia, lectures and festivities. The seats are therefore removable to allow the Synodiko to be used for a variety of functions.

Some of the existing windows will be blocked up and new windows will be provided at the upper part of the room relating to new windows facing the corridor. The room will be finished with a timber floor and stone border, timber panelling on the walls and a plaster ceiling with timber beams. Ancillary spaces such as kitchen/servery, projection room and toilet are provided in the area below the mezzanine floor.

CONSERVATION STUDIO

A fully equipped conservation studio will occupy the lower and upper levels of the second floor of the west end of the building. The conservation studio will enable the Monastery's manuscript, book and scroll conservation and digitisation programme to progress. It will also house a photography studio and secure storage for manuscripts and scrolls which need to remain in the workshop for long periods of time. Provision has also been made for the computer servers storing the digitisation programme's data to be located within the workshop.

Access to the studio is directly off the external corridor via a secure lobby, while a private staircase serves the two levels. The studio is fully self-contained, with toilet and kitchen facilities, to allow for the segregation of female conservators from other areas of the building.

EXTERNAL CORRIDOR, CENTRAL STAIRCASE AND NEW CORES

The existing external corridor will be refurbished. The floor will be finished in stone and the walls will be made good where necessary and finished in painted plaster. The second floor arches on the north wall will be reduced in diameter and lowered so that a hierarchy is established on the façade.

The main staircase will also be fully refurbished, and the existing openings on the first and second floors will be glazed. Two new cores will be provided at the east and west ends of the building. The east core, entered from the existing ground floor, comprises a thirteen-person lift and staircase. This lift will also serve as a goods lift. The west core, entered from the lower ground floor, comprises an eight-person lift and staircase. This is a new entrance created by excavating the ground floor adjacent to the Justinian reservoir. The provision of an entrance at this level of the building will allow easy access to the floors above by the elderly Fathers and visitors, and afford views into the restored Justinian reservoir.

SOUTH ELEVATION

The existing South elevation is built in a mixture of stone, brick and exposed concrete. The new design will introduce a hierarchy between the different floors. This will be achieved by the introduction of pilasters on the ground and first floors (in render with Byzantine capitals in masonry); the introduction on the ground floor of pilasters supporting the first-floor balcony (in render); and the reduction in diameter of the second floor arches through the addition of quarter-engaged columns and new masonry pilasters. Finally, the east and west ends of the building will be faced in matching masonry, giving to the whole the reading of end pavilions. The masonry of these end pavilions will relate to the Justinian monastery walls, once again embedding the Library in its heritage.



Proposed Synodiko, perspective view.