Coptic Monasteries

Egypt, 2007
Coptic Monasteries of Egypt, 2007

Introduction

In early 2007 a project was initiated to document the current state of the Coptic Monasteries and Churches in Egypt with a pilot at Deir al-Salib, The Monastery of The Cross, in Naqada. The project was launched by The Saint Mark Foundation through Dr. Fawzy Estafanous. It will ultimately result in a compilation of photographs and documents in book and digital format deposited in The Coptic Culture Center in Cairo, Egypt.

A photographic team recorded the exteriors and interiors of Deir al-Salib, prioritizing the key artifacts and the state of the buildings. Other monasteries in Naqada under the auspices of His Grace Bishop Biemen were also photographed. These monasteries were catalogued to a lesser extent than Deir al-Salib, given the initial focus of the pilot, and will need more extensive work in the future.
Satellite map of monasteries in Naqada.
Map of monasteries in Naqada.
The Monasteries of Naqada

The focus of the pilot project was Deir al-Salib, The Monastery of The Cross. The monastery has two churches, one of which, the west church, has been extensively renovated. The east church, which is older, is particularly noteworthy for the two altars it has on its center altar, one of which is extremely old.


The photographs of the other monasteries were done as part of an initial survey process and consequently may not be the same level of quality as the photographs at Deir al-Salib. They are intended to capture the scope of the project as each monastery and church offers its own unique challenges. While maintaining the quality of these scouting photographs was a concern, most were taken either handheld, or with flash, and consequently are not as sharp and clear as would be expected from the final product.

(Note: Numbers on the floor plans for Deir al-Salib are referenced in the legends of the photographs on the following pages.)
Looking across front gate to domes of the east church.
Deir al-Salib, The Monastery of The Cross. Interior of east church from entrance, looking south (3).
Deir al-Salib, The Monastery of The Cross. Main altar of east church, view from south altar (above left and lower right). Note original column in photo above left. View from north altar (upper right) (5).
Deir al-Salib, The Monastery of The Cross. Main altar of east church, detail of original altar (above left). Main altar of east church, original altar (above right) (5).
Deir al-Salib, The Monastery of The Cross. Original columns with icon, interior of east church, looking north (above left). Original columns with icon, center of east church, looking south (above right).
Deir al-Salib, The Monastery of The Cross. Interior of east church, looking north, door to exterior (left side of photo) and door to monks' quarters (right side of photo).
Interior of side chapel, east church, north altar (6).
Deir al-Salib, The Monastery of The Cross. Floor plan, west church (B on satellite map).
Deir al-Salib, The Monastery of The Cross. Interior of west church, center aisle (3).

Interior of west church, north aisle (above left) (2). Interior of west church, center altar (above right) (4).
Deir al-Salib, The Monastery of The Cross. Icons from east church (3).
Deir al-Salib, The Monastery of The Cross. Detail of columns from east church (3).
Deir al-Salib, The Monastery of The Cross. Monks' quarters (upper left, upper right, lower left). Dining area (lower right).
Floor plan of monastery (above left). Satellite image of monastery (above right).
Abu Seifien, The Monastery of Saint Philopater. Floor plan of monastery (above left) and roof detail (above right).
Abu Seifien, The Monastery of Saint Philopater.
Deir al-Magma, The Monastery of Saint George.
Deir al-Magma, The Monastery of Saint George.
Views are from inner courtyard.
Deir al-Magma, The Monastery of Saint George. Views are from inner courtyard.
Deir al-Magma, The Monastery of Saint George.
Deir al-Magma, The Monastery of Saint George.
Deir Mari Buqtur, The Monastery of Saint Boktor.
Deir Mari Buqtur, The Monastery of Saint Boktor.
Deir Mari Buqtur, The Monastery of Saint Boktor.
Deir Mari Buqtur, The Monastery of Saint Boktor.
Deir Mari Buqtur, The Monastery of Saint Boktor. North church has three altars in its older chapel (above left). North altar in north church (upper right) and south altar in north church (lower right), older chapel.
Deir Mari Buqtur, The Monastery of Saint Boktor.
Deir Mari Buqtur, The Monastery of Saint Boktor.
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