



ST THEOSEVIA CENTRE FOR CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY
OPEN STUDY DAYS IN TRINITY TERM 2017
at St Theosevia House, 2 Canterbury Road, Oxford OX2 6LU
An Ecumenical Centre for Christian Spirituality in Oxford
www.theosevia.org

Saturday 20 May 10.30 am – 4 pm

Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity: an African Cultural Repertoire

*Ralph Lee (SOAS), Tom Boylston (Edinburgh
University), Eloi Ficquet (Sorbonne)*

Saturday 3 June 10.30 am – 4 pm

Art and Architecture of Coptic Egypt

Illustrated talks by Dr Nicholas Gendle

*St Theosevia House, 2 Canterbury Road, left off Banbury Rd just after North Parade.
Study days **FREE** for students with card. Non-students £5 (on door). No booking needed,
just come, for all or part of the day. Lunch break 1-2 pm (please provide your own lunch).*

Director: Revd Dr Liz Carmichael, St John's College

*Enquiries: Asst Director of Studies: Fr Tikhon Vasilyev, Wolfson College,
Tikhon.vasilyev@wolfson.ox.ac.uk, 01865 310341*

The St Theosevia Centre for Christian Spirituality

2 Canterbury Road, Oxford OX2 6LU Tel (01865) 310 341

Director: Revd Dr Liz Carmichael, St John's College; Asst Director of Studies: Fr Tikhon Vasilyev, Wolfson College, Tikhon.vasilyev@wolfson.ox.ac.uk, 01865 310341

From the Director

Revd Dr Liz Carmichael

Tel (01865) 277351

liz.carmichael@sjc.ox.ac.uk

April 2017

Dear Friends of St Theosevia's,

Thank you for your support of last term's programme. Nicholas Gendle took us on a fascinating tour to Georgia; and the day on concepts of purgatory provided much food for thought on personal growth and eternal life.

On **Saturday 20 May** (Fourth Week) we host a group of scholars, organised by Dr Cressida Marcus, doing interesting new work for a book on the **Ethiopian Orthodox Church in its African Cultural Context**. Ralph Lee of SOAS explores the Book of Enoch, which is uniquely preserved and regarded as canonical by the Ethiopian and Eritrean Orthodox Churches. Interestingly, it was made use of in ancient times by the Dead Sea Scrolls community, where portions of the text are preserved.

Tom Boylston (Edinburgh Univ.) presents fascinating research on the use of media and lively new thinking among Ethiopian Orthodox youth.

Eloi Ficquet (Sorbonne) considers the dietary rules, which encompass not only those surrounding meat as a marker of faith (and a boundary marker between Christians and Muslims) but also taboos taken from Jewish precepts, as well as orthodox food avoidances that accompany a complicated calendar of feasts and fasts. Extra papers will be given, possibly after 4 pm, by two students, on Holy Water and on ancient and modern painting.

The African theme continues on **Saturday 3 June** when Dr Nicholas Gendle will be with us again to explore the art and architecture of Coptic Egypt. All are welcome, we look forward to welcoming you to these Study Days.

LIZ CARMICHAEL

Newsletter subscriptions for 2016-17: Please send at least £3 (cheques to 'St Theosevia Trust') to Newsletter, St Theosevia House, 2 Canterbury Rd, OX2 6LU.

- If you would like to receive newsletters and reminders by email, you can subscribe by sending a blank email to: theosevia-subscribe@yahooogroups.com
- Free tea and coffee are available at Study Days, from 10 am and at lunch-time. Lunch break is about one hour, 1-2 pm. Bring packed lunch, or you can find food nearby in North Parade.
- If you are willing to help serve coffee for a study day you will have a free place. Please contact the Assistant Director of Studies if you would like to help in this way.

DETAILS OF EVENTS IN TRINITY TERM

Saturday 20 May 10.30 am – 4 pm

Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity: an African Cultural Repertoire

Ralph Lee, Tom Boylston, Eloi Ficquet

Ralph Lee (Centre of World Christianity, SOAS, London) speaks on **Historic and Contemporary interest in *The Book of Enoch*: Its literary contribution to the Ethiopian Orthodox Faith and Cosmology**, presenting the place in Ethiopian Orthodox tradition of 1 Enoch - a Second Temple Jewish text attributed to the great-grandfather of Noah, preserved in full only in Ethiopic. Presumably translated in the C5th, its acceptance into the canon was emergent. It is revered by Ethiopian Orthodox Christians, in cosmology and thought, as bringing together all salvation history. Its presence in the canon provides a significant source of identity for contemporary Ethiopian Orthodox Christians.

Tom Boylston (School of Social and Political Science, Edinburgh Univ.) speaks on **Orthodox Education Today: traditional scholarship and the 'New Theology'**. Tom has researched on the use of media by young orthodox Christians. The Mahebar Kiddusan is a youth organisation that uses media and has flourished in the past decade or so, establishing itself on the national scene. Young people have flocked to the Church, and are involved in the spiritual and practical work of making a space of their own. As well as para-church activities, such as Bible classes, liturgical performance and theatre, and festival events they are also shaping thought for their generation. A new generation of urban youth, many without jobs and with some education, are seeking out extra education and social, sexual and spiritual deliverance. Their place is historically unprecedented. Boylston explores this in relation to their intellectual take on the tradition of the fathers of the Church.

Eloi Ficquet (EHESS-Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, CEIFR (Centre d'études interdisciplinaires des faits religieux), Sorbonne) speaks on **Flesh Soaked in Faith: orthodox dietary rules, and the embodiment of faith**. Ficquet examines a new aspect of a topic at very core of the Ethiopian Orthodox faith and practice. His acclaimed essay concerns the marker that divides the Muslim and Christian populations of Ethiopia, who live side by side, and some intermarry. Meat is the marker of that boundary, and is also a shared substance. Meat symbolism in everyday life infuses the profane with a sacred embodiment. To this is added the sustenance of coffee, long associated with pagan spirit possession, but which is commonplace for orthodox Christians. Coffee is provided as a substitute for a proper meal in poor households. Is coffee therefore, a symbolic form of food, or broth, to be interpreted as an extension of the food consumption practices of orthodox Christians?

Saturday 3 June 10.30 am – 4 pm

Art and Architecture of Coptic Egypt

Illustrated talks by Dr Nicholas Gendle

Egypt was one of the first oriental provinces of the Roman Empire to be Christianised in the first centuries AD, traditionally by the evangelist St. Mark. But also from the 3rd century, Egypt was the principal seed-bed of the monastic movement, starting with St. Anthony, who withdrew into the desert for contemplation. Indeed, the importance of monks for the life of the church can

hardly be exaggerated and several ancient monasteries will be studied. Christian lay people often made arduous journeys into the desert to sit at the feet of monks for spiritual instruction; they were also attracted by churches commemorating the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt. Many of these shrines (frequently rebuilt) survive, of great religious (but not usually architectural) importance. In addition, we will study the remarkable medieval churches of Cairo, all dating from after the Moslem occupation. Illustrated with slides. Audience participation is encouraged.

THE UNICORN GROUP

An Ecumenical group founded by Professor Nicolas Zernov in 1959

Friday 5th May 'Ignorance, Arrogance and Intolerance - a toxic cocktail' Brian Fidler MA, LLB, FCCA, Fellow of Harris Manchester College, professional businessman, amateur historian is sure to engage his audience on a wide range of current affairs, injustices and interfaith issues

Friday 19th May 'Care for Creation: An Ecumenical Perspective' Revd Dr Laura Biron-Scott is Curate of the Parish of Kidlington with Hampton Poyle in the Church of England. Laura previously worked as a Junior Research Fellow in Philosophy at Queens' College, Cambridge, and a Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Kent.

These meetings are open to all and are held in the House of St Gregory and St Macrina, 1 Canterbury Road, Oxford. We welcome everyone from **12.30 pm** when tea and coffee are served. Packed lunches may be brought. The talks, followed by discussion, run from **1.00 pm to 2.00 pm**. Donations to cover expenses are welcome. **Enquiries** (no booking needed) to Judith Baker 07981 345 125, jpbaker@hotmail.co.uk

MEDIEVAL ARTS GROUP

The Medieval Arts Group with Dr Nicholas Gendle, will not be meeting this term; but please note the Study Day on Coptic Egypt with Dr Gendle, 3 June. A summer tour is to be planned. Enquiries: Valerie Sansom, 0118 947 9471, Ann Weizmann 0118 948 1884

CHRISTIAN MEDITATION GROUP

This group meets every Tuesday evening at 7 pm at St Theosevia House, 2 Canterbury Rd, for one hour of reflection and silent prayer, 7 - 8 pm. All are welcome. Please contact Patricia Simon, patriciasimon@tiscali.co.uk

FELLOWSHIP OF SS ALBAN & SERGIUS (OXFORD BRANCH)

Enquiries: fr.stephen.platt@googlemail.com

OXFORD CENTRE FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

For programme please contact info@ocsg.uk.net or call 07803 031 977