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2008

ILLUMINATIONS

HILL MUSEUM & MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY



The shrine at Mettancherry, where Archdeacon Thomas led a large group of local Christians in 1653 to swear resistance to Latin and Portuguese ecclesiastical authority. The act became known as “the Oath of the Coonan Cross.” The name denotes how the oath takers all held on to a rope tied to the cross because there were too many people gathered to touch the cross directly, and how the force of so many people holding the rope bent the cross over. “Coonan” means “bent.”





# Illuminations

## CONTENTS

- 2 Director's Letter
- 3 Unlocking the Modern History of the Saint Thomas Christians of Kerala, India
- 9 Where We're Working
- 11 HMML Cares for a Modern Manuscript – *The Saint John's Bible*
- 15 HMML News

ON THE COVER: Mar Aprem Mookan, Chaldean (Assyrian Church of the East) Metropolitan of India, holding a Syriac manuscript from the Diocesan collection in Thrissur, India. Metropolitan since he was 28 years old, he is the author of more than sixty scholarly works and seven books of jokes, including *Laughing with the Bishop*. Here he performs *Jingle Bells* on the sitar.

### Hill Museum & Manuscript Library

In the Benedictine tradition of reverence for human thought and creativity, the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (HMML) preserves manuscripts, printed books and art at Saint John's University and undertakes photographic projects in regions throughout the world.

HMML is the home of the world's largest collection of manuscript images and of *The Saint John's Bible*, a handwritten, illuminated Bible in modern English.

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*Illuminations* is a publication of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library and is published for scholars and friends of HMML twice a year.

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Dear Friends:

In the past three months I have been able to visit almost all 20 of our current manuscript digitization projects. In January a HMML team went to Kerala, southwest India, to advance our new partnership to preserve the heritage of the ancient Syriac Christian communities of that fascinating region. This issue of *Illuminations* will tell you much more about this thrilling project. In late February, I made a grand circuit through our sites in the Middle East. I traveled with our Field Director for the region, Walid Mourad, who is based in Beirut. I began in Turkey, continuing on to Lebanon and Syria, visiting our partners old and new.

Many of these projects have acquired even greater urgency because of the worsening political situation in the region. Some of them must even remain unpublicized until they are completed. In this issue, we highlight one of our projects in Lebanon and one in Syria, complementing the reports you have seen in previous issues of *Illuminations* about other collections "Where We're Working." We intend to do everything we can to ensure that the manuscripts of the Middle East will be photographically preserved as a safeguard against an uncertain future.

As I write this letter I am on my way to Rome, where I and other representatives from Saint John's will participate in the presentation of the "Saint Peter Apostle's Edition" of *The Saint John's Bible* to Pope Benedict XVI. This particular copy is the very first one to become available from the full size, highest quality, facsimile version of *The Saint John's Bible*. This is also the first time any of us have seen a full-size volume of *The Saint John's Bible* bound as a book; it will be several years before the original folios complete their exhibition tour, are sewn together in their seven volumes, and placed between boards of old Welsh oak. This issue also highlights the efforts the HMML and *The Saint John's Bible* staff have taken to conserve this magnificent new manuscript while it travels the world on exhibition.

Thank you for your vital support for our mission of preserving the handwritten legacy of traditional cultures. Never before has our work seemed so urgent, or manuscripts more vulnerable to forces beyond the power of any of us to control. And never have we needed your help more to preserve what they have to tell us.

Sincerely yours,

Father Columba Stewart, OSB  
 Executive Director HMML



Fr. Columba Stewart, OSB admires a Syriac Bible manuscript belonging to the collection of Mar Aprem Mookan, bishop of the Assyrian Church of the East at Thrissur.

## Journal Entry

January 15, 2008

*Our plane rises above the sand, glass and steel of Dubai and soars eastward over the Arabian Sea, following millennia-old sea routes taken by early Christian missionaries from the Middle East to the Malabar Coast of India; routes possibly taken by the Apostle Thomas himself. We are going to visit our preservation project there, which is digitizing manuscripts that may illuminate the mysteries of India's ancient Syriac Christian community, which their tradition maintains was founded by the Doubter himself.*



# Unlocking the Modern History of the Saint Thomas Christians of Kerala, India

HMML helps preserve the palm leaf manuscripts that may trace the origins of Syriac Christians

*By Phil Steger, Deputy Director of Manuscript Preservation*

The Christian community traditionally believed to have been founded by the Apostle Thomas thrives in what is now the modern state of Kerala in

India. Though diverse in ecclesiastical affiliation, the "Saint Thomas Christians" are unanimous in their claim to apostolic origin and share a rich blend of Syriac, European and local traditions that have produced a culture that is both indisputably Christian and unmistakably Indian.

Yet, despite the fact that for centuries they belonged to the robust literary and liturgical traditions of the Syriac-speaking church, the historical record of the Saint Thomas Christians is remarkably sparse. This is



Palm leaf manuscript page bearing the last line of the *Acts of Andrew* and the first lines of the *Acts of Thomas*, translated from Latin into modern Malayalam. The manuscript belongs to the Major Archbishopric of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church.

especially true for the millennium-and-a-half of their history that precedes the arrival of the Portuguese in 1498.

Since 2000, a team of local Indian

scholars and clerics has joined with a determined Hungarian scholar to discover and preserve the primary sources of this history by digitizing Kerala's Christian manuscripts. This January, Fr. Columba Stewart, HMML Executive Director, Wayne Torborg, Director of Digital Collections, and I traveled to Kerala to meet this team and solidify HMML's relationship to the project as its financial co-sponsor, technical consultant, and guardian of its long-term digital archives.

Dr. István Perczel began the manuscript preservation work in Kerala with funding from Central European University in his native Hungary. In 2004, the University of Tübingen in Germany became the primary funder of the project, which HMML joined last year. A Syriac scholar, Dr. Perczel went to India because of its historical and liturgical connections to the Syriac churches of the Middle East. For seven years, he scoured the Kerala countryside, searching for Syriac manuscripts. Aided by Mar Aprem, Metropolitan of India for the Church of the East, Fr. Ignatius Payyappilly, a Syro-Malabar Catholic priest, Dr. Susan Thomas, an Indian historian and Kerala native, and Fabian da Costa, a photographer directly descended from Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama, he began to digitize what he found.

The team soon capitalized on the discovery of previously overlooked source material that detailed Kerala's history after 1498. Besides an unexpected abundance of Syriac manuscripts, they also found other material that was neither in Syriac, nor in what we might think of as "manuscript" form. Rather, they were granite slabs, copper plates and palm leaves inscribed in the diverse scripts of Kerala's local languages, especially Old Malayalam and Tamil.

While Syriac texts remain the most important sources for theological and ecclesiastic matters, the palm leaf manuscripts are the most important sources for the economic and legal history of the community. They are also the most abundant, though they are disappearing rapidly, regularly disposed of by church custodians who simply do not know what they are. Those spared the burn pile fall prey to insects and mold. Digitizing these manuscripts thus not only

makes backup images of the originals, but has also helped to conserve the originals by raising awareness of their importance. These materials in turn have driven changes in HMML's normal digitizing process. Two technicians instead of one prepare the palm leaves, treat them with a natural preservative and pest repellent, mount and photograph them.

The new materials pose scholarly, as well as technical challenges, since they are written in native Indian languages of various periods. These challenges and the opportunities they present are compounded by the discovery of more conventional paper manuscripts written in Malayalam Karshuni – that is, Malayalam written in a mixture of Syriac and Old Malayalam letters. The team in India addressed this problem by creating the Association for the Preservation of the Saint Thomas Christian Heritage, which brings in additional scholars to serve the project's expanded mission. One of these is

Fr. George Kurukkoor, a scholar of Old Malayalam and Malayalam Karshuni.

These materials promise to write the early modern and modern history of the Saint Thomas Christians and re-write the history of southwest India. They also intensify the mystery of India's Christian history before the arrival of the Portuguese. How is it that, despite perhaps fifteen centuries of Christian history before the arrival of Portuguese Catholics, so few manuscripts from that period survive today?

*Continued on page 7*



Fr. Johns Abraham Konat, a Malankara Orthodox Syriac priest, holding a Syriac Bible commissioned by his great-grandfather from a scribe in Mosul in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

HILL MUSEUM & MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY  
Millennium Club Members

Come to *India* with HMML  
January 10-24, 2009

Experience Kerala's rich past and its exciting present with HMML executive director Fr. Columba Stewart, OSB, January 10-24, 2009. Enjoy the beautiful scenery, places of worship, culture and cuisine of India's famed Malabar Coast. Plus, you will meet HMML's partners in preserving Kerala's ancient Christian culture; a culture which has peacefully co-existed with its Hindu neighbors since at least the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

Watch for more details later this summer. Space is limited. Contact Jennifer Cahoy at 320-363-2217 or [jcahay@csbsju.edu](mailto:jcahay@csbsju.edu) if you would like to make a reservation.



*Left:* A crowd of more than 25,000 worshippers gathers around a line of gold-adorned elephants at the climax of the Ernakulam Siva temple's most important feast of the year.

*Bottom left:* The walls of the new church of St. George being built at Malaikurishi ("Cross on the Hill"). The new church is being built around the old church, of which all but the altar has been demolished. The parish has preserved the old church's altar so that the Holy Qurbana (Mass) can be offered while the new church is still under construction.

*Above:* Singer Kalamandalam Prabhakaran presents the paranyan thullal at the Ernakulam Siva temple festival. The paranyan thullal is the slowest of the three *thullal*—solo songs and dances that tell traditional stories in ways known for their frank, outspoken humor.

*Top right:* Left to right, Mr. Fabian da Costa, Fr. Columba Stewart, OSB, Mr. Geejo George, and Fr. Ignatius Payyappilly at Katamattam Church, halfway between Ernakulam and Kothamangalam.

*Right:* Brightly-colored frescoes decorate this Portuguese-era church in Thrissur.





hypothesize that Syriac was not much used before the arrival of the Portuguese, but was revived during the colonial period. Yet, like much of the Saint Thomas Christian past, this interpretation is not certain.

“I am amazed, for example,” says Dr. Perczel, “by the Syriac literary activity of early Jesuit missionaries. Impressive by itself, this is also an indirect indication: for the Jesuits to have been able to communicate with Indian scholars in Syriac, the latter must have known this language very well. This notion was proven by our recent discovery of Syriac poetry by Alexander the Indian, a local hymnographer of the seventeenth century.”

Dr. Perczel believes that pre-Portuguese documents will surface as later materials lead to the discovery of earlier texts written in languages other than Syriac, “like the layers of an onion.” Thus, it may turn out that manuscripts written in Vattezhuttu, Kolezhuttu, Malayanma and Old Tamil – not just Syriac – will tell the Saint Thomas Christian story from before 1498. If so, they will not diminish the role of Syriac in Saint Thomas Christian history, but complement and enrich our understanding of it.

The received wisdom is that the disappearance of this record is due to the decision by Portuguese church authorities in 1599 to burn the local community’s Syriac manuscripts. While large numbers of Syriac manuscripts were in fact destroyed, Dr. Perczel now doubts that this is responsible for the pre-1498 void. The Association’s recent discoveries lead him to



*Above:* Scholar of Old Malayalam and Malayalam Karshuni, Fr. George Kurukkoor and modern historian Dr. Susan Thomas translate a bound, palm-leaf manuscript.

*Left:* Traditional Indian stone oil lamp, topped with a cross, overlooks a coconut palm forest at the hill village of Pushpagiri (“Hill of Flowers”).

*Journal Entry*  
January 25, 2008

*We lift off from Cochin airport. The sun is shining. Endless forests of coconut palm trees surround smaller plantations of rubber, nutmeg, cinnamon and pepper. Soon, we fly over a bright band of beach that marks the border between the information-rich land and the featureless sea. It is like the manuscript record of the Saint Thomas Christians. Going back in time to 1498, the record is thick with sources and voices, but beyond it, there are only a few faint whispers. Yet, who knows? Perhaps tomorrow, new manuscript discoveries may change all this, and India’s ancient Christian past will start to speak.*



*The Acts of Thomas* in 17<sup>th</sup> century Old Malayalam, written in Malayalam Karshuni, a mixture of Old Malayalam and Syriac script. The manuscript belongs to Fr. George Kurukkoor of Ernakulam.

*Key Historical Points in Saint Thomas Christian History*

56 AD – According to tradition, this is the year in which the Apostle Thomas first evangelized India’s Malabar Coast.

ca. 200 AD – The earliest written record of Thomas’ apostolate, martyrdom and burial in India, *The Acts of Thomas*, appears in the Middle East.

ca. 300 AD – All major Christian churches show awareness of the church in India and acceptance of its Thomas tradition.

345 AD – Led by Thomas of Kana, seventy-two families from Edessa (now Urfa in Turkey) settle the Malabar Coast.

ca. 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> Centuries AD – The Thomas Christians choose the formal authority of the Catholicos-Patriarch of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, head of the Assyrian Church of the East in Persia. In practical terms, they are administered by the local “Archdeacon,” a position held by a native Indian.

872 AD – A second wave of Syriac Christians from the Middle East immigrates to the Malabar Coast.

1498 AD – After the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama opens the sea route from Europe to the Malabar Coast, the Roman Church exerts jurisdiction over the Thomas Christians.

1599 AD – A Portuguese bishop presiding in India convenes the controversial Synod of Diamper, which condemns Indian Syriac traditions and orders Syriac manuscript books to be burned.

1653 AD – Archdeacon Thomas leads a large group of Thomas Christians to Mettancherry, where they swear resistance to Latin and Portuguese authority; the act becomes known as “the Oath of the Coonan Cross.”

HMML Legacy Society



Look through any of the 100,000 manuscripts available through the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library and you will find stories of scoundrels and scholars, courtiers and kings, sinners and saints, and misfortunes and miracles.

Bill and Peggy Stott believe these stories are important.

“UNDERSTANDING OUR PAST GIVES DIMENSION AND PERSPECTIVE TO OUR PLACE IN THE WORLD TODAY.”

“But more importantly, it gives us the knowledge we need to work toward a more tolerant and peaceful future for our children and grandchildren. That’s why we plan to leave a bequest to the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library.”

You can join the Stotts in preserving these stories of past cultures and traditions. To learn more about planned giving opportunities at the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, visit our web page at [www.hmml.org](http://www.hmml.org) and click on “Support” or contact HMML Development Director, Erin Lonergan, 320-363-2095 or [elonergan@csbsju.edu](mailto:elonergan@csbsju.edu).

# Where We're Working



*Kitāb at-Ta'lim al-lāhūtī* (Book of Theological Learning). French original by Jean-Claude de la Poype de Vertrieu, Arabic translation by Ya'qūb Arūtīn. Shown: Table of Contents, MS. OBC 409, fols. 6r-5v. Manuscript on paper, 19<sup>th</sup> century. 23 x 17.5 cm. Copyright: Ordre Basilien Chouerite, Khonchara, Lebanon.

## *Chouerite Basilian Order, Khonchara, Lebanon*

The Monastery of Saint John the Baptist sits high up in the hills north of Beirut. For 300 years it has been the home of the oldest monastic congregation in the Melkite Greek-Catholic Church, the Chouerite Basilian Order (“Chouerite” comes from the French transliteration of the traditional name of the place).

Around 1700, the first members of the nascent Chouerite Basilians came from the Orthodox monastery at Balamand in northern Lebanon, hoping to establish a community in union with Rome. After being formally constituted as a religious congregation, they established the first truly indigenous Arabic-language printing press in the Middle East. This great project was the work of the ingenious Deacon ‘Abdallāh az-Zākher (1684-1748), a former Syriac Catholic who had

learned printing in his native city, Aleppo, and who had designed, cut, and cast the Arabic type himself. The Chouerite press was active for more than 150 years, producing a total of 69 complete works of biblical, liturgical, and devotional literature. HMML is fortunate to have an early 19<sup>th</sup> century prayer book from the Chouerite press in its Rare Book Collection.

It is fitting that HMML is working with the Chouerite manuscripts, as their mother monastery at Balamand was the site of HMML's first project in the Middle East, begun in the early days of the Iraq war. Digitization of the Chouerite manuscripts began in 2006 and will conclude this May. The collection consists of almost 1000 manuscripts in Arabic and Greek. Though the original language of the Patriarchate of Antioch was Syriac, Byzantine-rite Christians had replaced it with Arabic by the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The manuscript shown here is the Arabic version of a theological

textbook by the bishop of Poitiers in France, Jean-Claude de la Poype de Vertrieu (bishop 1702-32). The translator was Ya'qūb Arūtīn, a Maronite Catholic monk of Armenian origin. His translation of Vertrieu's work was widely copied and extremely popular, as is evident in this well-worn, and well-cared for, 19<sup>th</sup>-century copy.

## *Syriac Catholic Archbishopric of Aleppo, Syria*

The Syriac Catholic Church is one of the several extant branches of the great church of Antioch. In its earliest centuries, the patriarchate of Antioch was culturally Greek in some of its major cities but Semitic in both the countryside and the great cities to the east such as Edessa and Nusaybin. There the Christian dialect of Aramaic, Syriac, was used in the liturgy and for theological writings. The majority of Syriac Christians resisted the decisions of the Council held in 451 at Chalcedon, near Constantinople, and during the sixth century developed their own ecclesiastical structure with a Patriarch and complete episcopate. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Patriarch moved from Antioch to what is today southeast Turkey; after a golden age of expansion and scholarship, the Syriac Orthodox Church was devastated by the Mongol invasions of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

**IT IS FITTING THAT HMML IS WORKING WITH THE CHOUERITE MANUSCRIPTS, AS THEIR MOTHER MONASTERY AT BALAMAND WAS THE SITE OF HMML'S FIRST PROJECT IN THE MIDDLE EAST.**

Syriac Christians encountered Catholic missionaries in Aleppo, Syria, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and a Catholic party started to grow within the Syriac Orthodox Church. Eventually the Syriac Catholic Church received legal recognition from the Ottoman government, with its patriarch based first in Aleppo and then in Mardin, Turkey, near his Orthodox counterpart. Turkish persecution forced both patriarchs to flee in the 1920s. The Syriac Catholic patriarch is now based in Lebanon.

HMML has just completed a project with Syriac Catholic manuscripts in Aleppo (and will soon complete the Syriac Orthodox collection in the same city). Aleppo has been an historic center for Syriac Catholics, and the community today has a

large, modern, church in the Christian Quarter. The Archbishop exemplifies the current international nature of the Syriac Catholic Church; a native of Aleppo, he spent several years in Venezuela ministering to émigré Syriac Catholics before returning to Aleppo as Archbishop. The collection of some 500 manuscripts at the Archbishopric contains many rescued from churches in Turkey and brought to Aleppo for safekeeping. The manuscripts are in Syriac, Arabic, and Karshuni (Arabic written with Syriac letters). Shown here is the opening page of a 19<sup>th</sup> century priest's ritual book for the conferral of baptism.



*Tekso da'modo qadisho* (Rite of Holy Baptism). Syriac text with Karshuni rubrics. Shown: beginning of the rite. MS. SCAA SL07(9), fol. 1v-2r. Manuscript on paper, dated 1844. 21 x 16 cm. Copyright: Syriac Catholic Archbishopric of Aleppo, Syria.

# HMML Cares for a Modern Manuscript— *The Saint John's Bible*

By Susan Sink



Linda Orzechowski, Coordinator of Public Services and Operations, demonstrates her many talents by carefully sewing the *Ecclesiastes Frontispiece* onto the strainer.

The staff at The Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (HMML) is accustomed to trekking to far-away places to digitally photograph and preserve centuries-old manuscripts. Their efforts ensure that the brittle pages of these ancient documents will be preserved and accessible forever. *The Saint John's Bible*, however, is a contemporary manuscript—a manuscript that is traveling the world and being viewed by over a million people. Meeting the special challenges of conserving this extraordinary new manuscript while it is on exhibition has required creativity, ingenuity, and considerable teamwork among *The Saint John's Bible* staff.

The Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA) hosted the first major exhibition from *The Saint John's Bible*, "Illuminating the Word," in 2005. Roxie Ballard, the museum's exhibition designer, spoke

with artistic director Donald Jackson beforehand about how he would like to see his work presented. According to Ballard, Jackson didn't want to see the pages of *The Saint John's Bible* hung on the wall "like laundry on a line." Jackson's hope was for something more intimate that would engage the viewer.

The solution to both the conservation and exhibition challenges was a set of custom cases, designed by MIA consultant Jeanne Eaton and built by Metropolitan Picture Framing of Minneapolis. The cases take the unbound vellum pages and secure them in a humidity-controlled environment while giving the impression of open pages in a book.

The final result of Eaton's design and construction was so successful for presenting and transporting *Illuminating the Word* that it was decided additional cases should be made for all folios that will be loaned to museums. These cases were not assembled by Eaton and the staff at the MIA, as they were for the first exhibition—but by the staff of *The Saint John's Bible* at HMML's Arca Artium, the repository for the art collection donated in 1995 by Frank Kacmarcik, an Oblate of Saint John's Abbey. Arca Artium is currently housed in the lower level of Saint John's University's Science Hall, and maintains the appropriate humidity level for handling the calfskin vellum pages of the Bible. Following Eaton's specifications, it takes a team of up to four people 20 hours to assemble just one case and install the folios from the Bible inside it.



Careful stitching secures the pages and allows for slight movement of the vellum without abrasion.  
Photo by Donna Kelly, Minneapolis Institute of Arts.



The base of the folio assembly is constructed of 4-ply museum board. Wood brackets are attached to hold the pages lightly. The vellum pages themselves are not attached to the brackets but are sewn along the outer edge to sheets of 2-ply cotton mat board. Since this board touches the pages, it must be carefully sanded smooth so that no sharp edges will come in contact with the vellum pages. The edges with the sewing will be trimmed when the pages are eventually bound. The mat board holds the pages in a curved shape, approximating the open pages of a book. Photo by Donna Kelly, Minneapolis Institute of Arts.



*Top:* Carol Marrin, Director of *The Saint John's Bible* and Tim Ternes, Director of Programming and Exhibitions, prepare the frame and fillet for installation of the strainer holding the Bible pages.

*Middle:* *Wisdom Woman* is gently lowered into the frame. The folio is set into a "strainer," which looks like a canvas stretcher, and the fillet is placed over this set-up. It is covered by a sheet of "Marvel Seal," a 3-ply laminate of polyethylene, aluminum foil, and nylon and is ironed to seal. Foil tape, Marvel Seal, and Rhapsid-gel packets placed inside the layers of the frame provide the climate control system for the case.



*Bottom:* When all these pieces are sealed—with tape, Marvel Seal, silicone, and screws, the outer frame is put in place and a backing of acid-free foam board is attached to provide puncture protection and control of light reflections. In all, the case is sealed ten different ways throughout construction.

After the exhibition of folios from *Prophets* closed last fall at HMML, the staff disassembled the frames and replaced them with pages for the *Wisdom Books* exhibition. Almost immediately, the removed pages demonstrated the success of their finely-crafted micro-environment. "We could see them just relax as we took them out," according to Carol Marrin, director of *The Saint John's Bible*. "This told us that the humidity seal had worked, and also that the vellum was comfortable in this firm but gentle housing."

The cases do more than merely protect the pages; they also allow for intimate viewing of the pages. Says Marrin, "Thanks to these unique cases, people are able to see the folios with as little distance between the viewer and the pages as possible, and tilted forward so that you can see the pages as you walk toward them."

It is Hill Museum & Manuscript Library's job to apply the highest standards of curatorial attention and conservation to the Bible so that centuries from now audiences can have the same kind of intense visual experience that people have today. Marrin continues, "As caretakers of *The Saint John's Bible* we must serve the present as well as the future—not a charge we take lightly. Balancing our commitment to provide access to as many people as possible with the need to respect the integrity of this spiritual and artistic work and to protect it for future generations is a continual process."

*Susan Sink is author of The Art of The Saint John's Bible: Pentateuch, Psalms, Gospels and Acts.*



## *The Saint John's Bible* Exhibition Schedule

The primary touring exhibition in its original cases has completed showings at the Phoenix Art Museum and the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

This summer *The Saint John's Bible* may be seen at the Tacoma Art Museum in Washington from July 11 through September 5, 2008, and this fall at the Mobile Museum of Art in Alabama from October 10, 2008, through April 10, 2009.

Smaller groups of pages have previously been exhibited at The Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the San Diego Natural History Museum, the British Library in London, and the Museum of Biblical Art in New York City. From February 15 to May 24, 2009, the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, Maryland will present *The Saint John's Bible: A Modern Vision through Medieval Methods*. This exhibition will feature forty-four original folios from *Prophets* and *Wisdom Books* in the context of the Walters' historical manuscript collection.

Twenty-eight pages from *Wisdom Books* are on display at HMML through December of 2008. The exhibition, library and gift shop are open to the public free of charge from 8:00 AM-4:30 PM, Monday-Friday; Noon-4:00 PM Saturdays (May 1 to December 15). Walk-ins are welcomed, but it is suggested that large groups schedule in advance by calling Linda Orzechowski at (320) 363-3514. For more information on *The Saint John's Bible*, visit the website at [www.saintjohnsbible.org](http://www.saintjohnsbible.org)



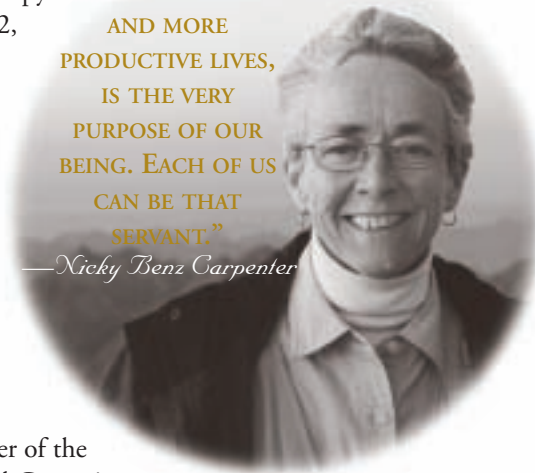
# HMML News

## Nicky Carpenter Named “Outstanding Individual Philanthropist”

Upon nomination by the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Josephine (Nicky) Benz Carpenter was named “Outstanding Individual Philanthropist” by the Minnesota Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. She was honored on National Philanthropy Day, November 22, 2007, at a luncheon with over 500 guests from Minnesota charitable organizations in attendance.

“SERVING THOSE LESS FORTUNATE, THOSE WHO DESERVE BETTER AND MORE PRODUCTIVE LIVES, IS THE VERY PURPOSE OF OUR BEING. EACH OF US CAN BE THAT SERVANT.”

—Nicky Benz Carpenter



Carpenter served as a Regent of Saint John’s University and is currently a member of the university’s Capital Campaign Steering Committee. She joined the board of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library of Saint John’s University in 1994, serving at its chair from 1999 to 2004. Based on her exemplary leadership and commitment, she was awarded lifetime membership on the HMML Board in 2005.

“I am constantly humbled and overwhelmed by Nicky’s leadership and development support for Saint John’s University and HMML,” said Brother Dietrich Reinhart, OSB, president of Saint John’s University. “She is a person of extraordinary generosity, active in so many charitable activities on behalf of the wider human community.”

Carpenter has been self-employed as an educational consultant in Wayzata, Minnesota since 1977. Upon accepting her award Carpenter encouraged everyone to become a philanthropist, saying, “I urge everyone of some means to evaluate carefully and thoroughly opportunities which come their way. They may be able to make a significant difference in our world.”

She is married to Thomas K. Carpenter.

## From Books to Bytes

When the students at the College of Saint Benedict/Saint John’s University select courses, they scrutinize the on-line syllabi, purchase the required books, download others, bookmark class web sites, and Google their research topics. A new humanities course offered by the Department of History, “From Books to Bytes,” is outwardly similar to the institution’s other offerings.

It is, however, the only course in the catalogue that requires the students to dissect a book. “It’s okay,” assured Dr. Theresa Vann, who created the course. “They took apart outdated reference books I pulled out of Alcuin Library’s dumpster.”

“From Books to Bytes” is a history of the book that places it in the context of information technology, not art history or manuscript studies. Vann, the Joseph S. Micallef Curator of the Malta Study Center, designed the course to introduce undergraduates to book history and to HMML’s collections. “The students learned the basics of codicology by taking apart a book to see how it was made. They also learned how content and technology affected book format,” says Vann. “There’s a very real difference between books meant to be read aloud and books meant to be read silently, between books written as scrolls and books written as codexes. We were able to read the texts in translation, and then look at the originals to see the differences.”

The 12 students met at HMML to make full use of its resources. Matthew Heintzelman, the Curator of the Austria and Germany Study Center and the rare books cataloguer, presented the evolution of the printed book using examples from HMML’s collection. HMML’s executive director, Fr. Columba Stewart, lectured on the evolution of Scripture from the Dead Sea Scrolls to *The Saint John’s Bible*. The class also visited Rachel Melis in the Book Arts Studio on the College of Saint Benedict campus, where they printed their own Christmas cards.

The course will be offered again in the spring semester of 2009. Vann is keeping her eye on the library dumpster, and making plans for the next time around. “I think, though,” she said, “I’ll have to warn them about the book dissection part. Some of the students really got upset by it.”

# HMML Board of Overseers

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