

***LERC participates in seminar at USEK***

1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> June 2011, USEK

Reported by Liliane Haddad

The Phoenix Centre for Lebanese Studies at the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik held a training seminar in collaboration with the CNRS-France-training seminar entitled: *Les archives monastiques: entre Orient et Occident historiographie, fonds, analyse et études comparatives*.

The Lebanese Emigration Research Center was represented at the seminar by Ms. Liliane Haddad, Chief Indexer and Archivist at the Lebanese Emigration Archives and Data Base, the electronic archiving wing of LERC.

Over six days, Mr. Daniel-Odon Hurel, Historian and Deputy Director of the Laboratory for the Study of Monotheism in France, shared his expertise on the studies of the Historiography of Western Monasticism (XVI-XXI century) and the great works on the history of monasticism published since the seventeenth century.

The history of Christian monasticism in modern times is still underdeveloped, he said.

However, several monographs showed the role of traditional monasticism in the cultural history of modern Christianity, as witnessed in the adherence and resistance to Roman authority especially in the Christian East.

In discussing the history of monasticism, mainly in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, Mr. Hurel drew on various sources that focused on the scholarly and religious practices of monasticism and compared both the Oriental and Occidental approach.

The seminar aimed to explore the question of this comparative approach by drawing objects of analysis of sources such as the following:

1-The Corpus of correspondence in the Modern era that was based on the experience acquired around the correspondence of Mabillon and Maurists (French monks of the period.) This correspondence often emanated from individuals or institutions and concerned the foundation of monastic projects, or scholarly projects. This reflects a certain vision of history and monastic identity that allows us to locate precisely the location and modes of contact between Eastern and Western monasticism.

2- Libraries located in various geographical areas as places for the transmission of knowledge including the comparative study of unpublished and published catalogues of the European and Eastern monasteries. This includes scholarly works, manuscript copies, translations and edited versions of theology, liturgy, and spiritual.

3- The books themselves, liturgical, scholarly and spiritual.

Mr. Hurel then gave an overview of the archives maintained by the monasteries in France, archives and documentation in terms of type, location, and private and public fonds, as well as a few comparisons between religious fonds in France and Lebanon.

Representatives from several research centers and documentation archives attended the seminar, including the Center of the National Archives, the Lebanese University Faculty of Information and Documentation, the Center for Maronite Documentation and Research, the Municipality of Baabda, the Phoenix Center at USEK, and the Lebanese Emigration Research Center at NDU.

Participants at the seminar were then introduced by their representatives to three presentations of large monastic archives in Lebanon namely the Monastery of Khenchara, the Maronite Fond Patriarchate in Bkerke, and the collection of the Order of the Society of Jesus.

LERC's Mrs. Haddad then described to the audience her own working experience with the LERC electronic archives and the Lazerfiche application that allows the Center to manipulate this tool through the use of keywords.

She also explained that LERC uses its archives to instantly retrieve material for immediate use by researchers, students and all people interested in migration.



Letters, Documents, Photos from LERC's private collection at the Lebanon Migration Museum at NDU.

Father Joseph Moukarzel, director of the Phoenix Center, brought the seminar to a close with a panel discussion on future projects. He expressed his concern for the preservation of all archives, since archives are the collective memory of history and culture and should be used to serve all research.

Father Moukarzel then suggested a meeting of participants in September 2011 for them to continue to pursue and promote cooperation between experts in the field, and to share information by developing activities such as symposiums and publications.

He urged those present to attend all future forums, to further an exchange of knowledge through scholarships, partnerships with universities and national and international institutions.

In conclusion, all the seminar participants agreed that though each group had its own archiving system: archives in general should be open to the public and made accessible for historic, cultural or scientific purposes.