

## Unification of the Date of the Feast of Resurrection and the Length of the Apostles Fast

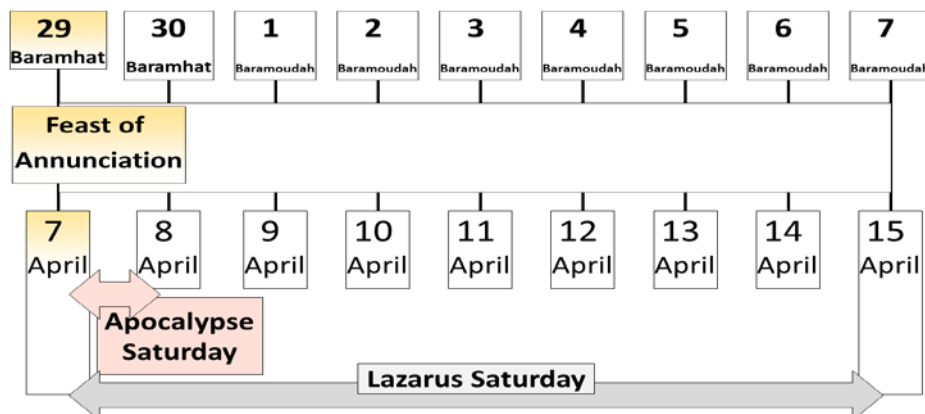
I would like to present this short article in order to serve my Coptic Orthodox Church, so that I may shed some light on the outcomes resulting from the proposals that relate to unifying the date of the feast of the Coptic Orthodox feast of Resurrection with its western counterpart. I would like to make it perfectly clear that I do not undermine any other calendar, or arithmetical formula, being used by other denominations. I would just like to assert that I am very proud of my forefathers' calendar, the calendar of the martyrs, and the Apokty calculation (*Apokty* is the Coptic derivative of the Greek word for epact (ἐπακτα)), both which proved to me their accuracy and precision from the scientific point of view.

### Unification of the date of the Feast of Resurrection:

I am aware that there are some proposals that were mentioned with regards unifying the date of the feast of Resurrection amongst various denominations, so that it either falls on the second Sunday in April, or the Sunday after the second Saturday in April. In both those cases, the date would become in the interval between 8 April – 15 April.


Certainly, there would be many disadvantages befalling the Coptic church if such a proposal was even considered. I will list such disadvantages from a scientific point of view, in the form of some bullet points as follows:

1. In all cases whereby the feast of Resurrection would fall on the Gregorian dates above (8 – 15 April), which correspond to the dates of 30<sup>th</sup> of Baramhat – 7<sup>th</sup> of Baramoudah. That way, the feast of Annunciation will be neglected altogether (29<sup>th</sup> of Baramhat – 7<sup>th</sup> of April Gregorian), since it will inevitably fall on a day in between the period from Lazarus Saturday to the Apocalypse Saturday.



2. The Apokty calculation will be omitted altogether, that which determines the date of the feast of Resurrection with precision, as it has always succeeded the Jewish day of the slaughtering of the Lamb with no exception whatsoever. We have inherited this from Anba Demetrius the Vinedresser, from the end of the second century AD. Also, it is the calculation that was selected by all the churches in the world, albeit gradually, after the decisions of the Council of Nicaea were disseminated.

**The symbolised (Resurrection) precedes the symbol (Pascha) contradicting Christ's Gospel events and Biblical references**



Year	1739 AM (2023 AD)	1740 AM (2024 AD)	1741 AM (2025 AD)	1742 AM (2026 AD)	1743 AM (2027 AD)	1744 AM (2028 AD)	1745 AM (2029 AD)	1746 AM (2030 AD)
Jewish Pesach	27 Baramhat (5 April)	14 Baramoudah (22 April)	4 Baramoudah (12 April)	23 Baramhat (1 April)	13 Baramoudah (21 April)	2 Baramoudah (10 April)	21 Baramhat (30 March)	9 Baramoudah (17 April)
Proposed unification dates	1 Baramoudah (9 April)	6 Baramoudah (14 April)	5 Baramoudah (13 April)	4 Baramoudah (12 April)	3 Baramoudah (11 April)	1 Baramoudah (9 April)	30 Baramhat (8 April)	6 Baramoudah (14 April)

3. Also based on the previous point, the feast of Resurrection will not coincide with the appearance of The Holy Fire on a yearly basis, that which occurs on the Saturday *preceding* the feast of Resurrection according to the Apokty calculation with such an absolute precision. The other fact is that this would undermine the miracles which are mentioned in the Synexarium, which have their witness in the Holy Sepulchre church building itself. We must also not forget that it was thanks to Pope Tawadros II, that the tradition of receipt of The Holy Fire was revived in Egypt. One would ask therefore, what would happen to such a tradition in the light of the proposed unification of the date of the feast of Resurrection in the first place?
4. Indeed, that would also lead to the feast of Resurrection preceding the slaughtering of the lamb (the eve of the Jewish Pesach – please refer to the above figure) in some years, and that is what our forefathers warned us of, not only in the Council of Nicaea, but also in other periods. Here is where the precision of the Apokty calculation shines through: that is, despite the fact that the *most important* aim of such a calculation was to determine the feast of Resurrection, regardless of the Jewish calendar,

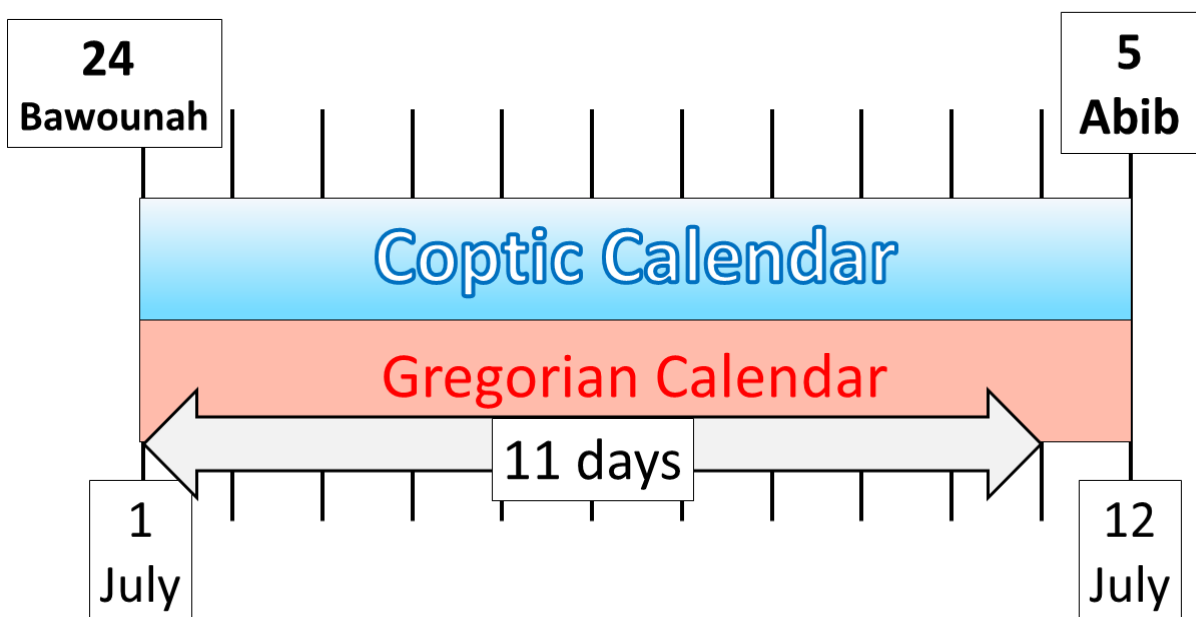
yet it *never happened* that the feast of Resurrection *coincided with*, or *preceded* the slaughtering of the lamb date at all – whether previously, currently, or in the future. There is a simple scientific basis to that, which is that the Apokty calculation relies on the mathematics of the metonic cycle, on which the Jewish calendar also relies.

5. The length of the fast of the apostles will vary between 38 to 45 days always. This, of course, indicates the shortening of the length of Nativity non-fasting days (between the feast of Nativity and the start of the Great Lent).

### The Fast of the apostles:

I have also come across another suggestion which was presented to the secretariat of the Synod, to fix the fast of the apostles, so that it starts on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, and ends on the 12<sup>th</sup> of the same month (which coincides with the 5<sup>th</sup> of Abib in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries). As far as I am concerned, whosoever has presented such a suggestion ignores several points:

- ❖ Firstly, the Coptic Church *always* encourages us to increase our fasts.
- ❖ Secondly, in this manner, the apostles fast will only be 11 days long, instead of 12 (perhaps the number 12 was chosen based on the number of the disciples, even though in the feast of the apostles we celebrate one disciple's and one apostle's martyrdom), except when the 12<sup>th</sup> of July falls on either a Wednesday or a Friday.



- ❖ Thirdly, the 5<sup>th</sup> of Abib, the feast of the apostles, will *not* fall on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July from the last year of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, 2100 AD onwards. This is due to the rules of the tropical Gregorian Calendar, which does not comply with the rules of the more accurate solar Coptic Calendar (or indeed the Julian).

	From 1900 to 2099 AD	From 2100 to 2199 AD	From 2200 to 2299 AD
<b>Coptic Calendar</b>	<b>5 Abib</b>	<b>5 Abib</b>	<b>5 Abib</b>
Julian	29 June	29 June	29 June
Gregorian	12 July	13 July	14 July

- ❖ Fourthly, and scientifically speaking, this will also contravene the Apokty calculation on all fronts, with its formulae, which has connected the Christian faith to science, and ensured that the spiritual knowledge is coupled with intellectual faculties.
- ❖ Fifthly, what would happen to the Qatamaros in the Sundays of the second half of Bashons, and the month of Bawounah, which revolve around the work of the Holy Spirit (i.e., linking the subject of the feast of Pentecost to the month of Abib, where the readings discuss the Lord's support to the apostles)? Also, what will happen to the hymnody that is prayed during such a period, for example the hymn "Asoman", that continues through all the days starting from the feast of Pentecost through the apostles fast as mentioned? Or would the expectation be that those hymns continue, while Copts entertain a passive position, i.e., *without* fasting, disregarding the importance of such a fast? Such an importance that comes from taking the apostles as role models, and also to seek God's benevolence, especially the Person of The Holy Spirit, who guides us to separate the works of the body from those of the spirit, and hence instil in us the duty to fast.

I hope that this short article contribute in serving my Coptic Orthodox Church, that has invariably remained an example of the straight path in traditions, heritage, and always continues to focus on the values of sciences, in parallel with the Christian teachings, patrology, and the duty of any Coptic servant more generally.

For the sake of avoiding prolongation, I do not wish to discuss the fact that the Coptic Calendar is superior to its Gregorian counterpart, and the Apokty calculation to the western computus, not only in their utility in determining the date of the feast of Resurrection. I have already discussed this issue over and over again in other pieces of work, and there is therefore no place to do that again in this short an article.

I also wish to thank some friends for their continued support and encouragement for me, and especially in writing this short article. I would like to mention (based on alphabetical order) Dr Bishoy - Alexandria, Mr Magdy - Cairo, Mr Mina - USA. In the end, I request that the readers of this article to increasingly pray for me and for my family.

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