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Excavations at the Monastery of St Antony at the Red Sea

The Monastery in Literary Sources during the Period of Study

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Excavations at the Monastery of St Antony at the Red Sea



Fig. 1. *The Monastery of St Antony; seen from the north* (J. Blid).

Abstract:

This paper discusses the results from recent archaeological investigations at the Monastery of St Antony in Egypt, including the remains of a number of building phases predating the current church, locally produced pottery, and manuscript fragments written in Coptic, Arabic, Hebrew, and Ge'ez.

Keywords: Monastery of St Antony, Coptic monasticism, Coptic material culture, Coptic manuscripts, monastic cells, monastic church architecture

Introduction

BY JESPER BLID

St Antony is, according to tradition, the early 4th-century initiator of Christian monasticism, and his monastery, located some 30 km from the Red Sea coast and about 125 km south of Suez, is regarded as the oldest still-inhabited monastery (Figs. 1 and 2).¹ As for the chronology of the actual material forma-

tion of a monastery at the site, Antony must have settled here sometime before 337, if we are to believe the biography written by Athanasius of Alexandria shortly after his death.² Several sources from the end of the 4th century mention the disciples of Antony staying at his desert retreat after his death in 356.³ Medieval sources refer to the monastery as built in the reign of Julian the Apostate, between 361 and 363.⁴ Ancient sources provide little information about the early monastery, and nothing that can be firmly associated with the standing structures within the precinct. The oldest extant remains are of a mural painting that was uncovered inside the Chapel of the Four Living Creatures (also called the Deesis Chapel) at the Church of St Antony during restoration work in the late 1990s (Fig. 3). According to Elizabeth S. Bolman's analysis, "the shortest span of years that we can posit for the early painting in the Church of St Antony is a 150-year period between c. 550 and 700".⁵ Up until recently, however, no archaeological investigations had

¹ Monastery is here, as in ancient sources, taken in the general sense of a monastic settlement independent of architectural design or the number of monks staying at the place.

² Athanasius Alexandrinus, *Vita Antonii* 49 and 69–71 (visit to Alexandria in 337).

³ Rubenson 1995, 163–191.

⁴ Evetts 1895, 161.

⁵ Bolman 2002, 33.



Fig. 2. Map of the location of the Monastery of St Antony (from Ahlfeldt 2015).

been conducted at the monastery, which makes the project presented in this article the first systematic excavation at the site. The study has, for instance, shed new light on the chronology, development, and economic networks of the monastery during the Middle Ages.

The excavations were conducted inside the Church of the Holy Apostles from 2004 to 2006 as part of larger restoration works at the church; both assignments were conducted under the direction of Fr Maximous el-Antony. The restoration and excavation were undertaken with the permission of the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities and were funded by both the monastery and the American Research Center in Egypt. As a result of his previous work in late antique and Byzantine archaeology, Jesper Blid was invited by the monastery in 2014 to conduct find processing and to jointly prepare the publication of the excavations, as part of the project *Early Monasticism and Classical Paideia* of Lund University, which was financed by the Stiftelsen Riksbankens Jubileumsfond. The main authors of this study are Jesper Blid and Fr Maximous el-Antony; the additional authors

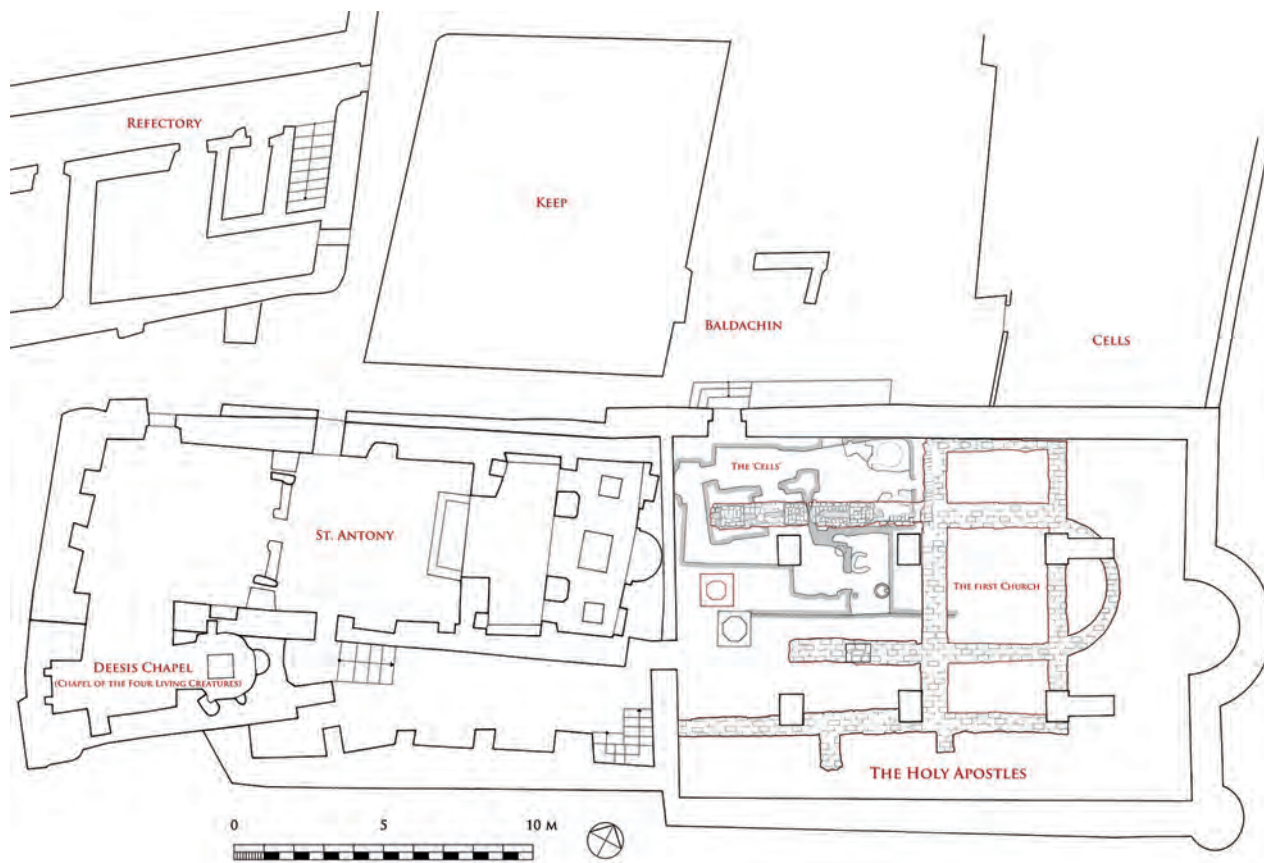


Fig. 3 (below). Plan of the church nucleus of the monastery (J. Blid & M. el-Antony).

are Hugo Lundhaug from the University of Oslo, Jason Zaborowski from Bradley University, Meira Polliack from Tel Aviv University, and Mengistu Gobeze Worku and Samuel Rubenson from Lund University.

The excavation and restoration work at the Church of the Holy Apostles

THE EXCAVATION AND RESTORATION PROJECT
BY FR. MAXIMOUS EL-ANTONY

In 2003, the Supreme Council of Antiquities initiated an extensive restoration project at the Monastery of St Antony with the aim of preserving Coptic heritage sites in Egypt. Among the restored buildings is the Church of the Holy Apostles, which was last renovated in the 18th century (*Fig. 4*). This is the largest church of the monastery, and it is still used for daily worship. The church is equipped with three sanctuaries dedicated to Ss Peter and Paul, St Antony, and the Virgin Mary (*Fig. 5*).



Fig. 4. Top: the Church of the Holy Apostles; bottom: the Church of the Holy Apostles and the Keep (J. Blid).



Fig. 5. The Church of the Holy Apostles; looking towards the south-east (J. Blid).

The general aims of the restoration were to clean, preserve, and consolidate the church structure, including the floors and the woodwork. The documentation of the site was collaboratively conducted by The American Research Center in Egypt, based in Cairo (ARCE), the German archaeologist Kai-Christian Bruhn, and the monastery, under the supervision of the Supreme Council of Antiquities. Additional conservation work on archaeological remains (see below) was performed by two Italian conservators from the De Cesaris team (supported by ARCE).⁶

A second assignment, related to the restoration project, was to find a water basin (*lakan*), which, according to Coptic tradition, is normally located in the westernmost bay of the nave of the church and used three times a year for the water mass. A submerged water basin of this type had previously been found under the floor tiles of the Church of St Antony, which is adjacent to the Church of the Holy Apostles. However, as the search for the water basin inside the Church of the Holy Apostles began in 2004, several subterranean walls from a previously unknown structure were identified, which initiated an excavation aimed at scrutinizing these earlier remains. The lost water basin was soon identified in the western section of the nave; however, this was followed by an additional discovery: adjacent to the basin was another, similar structure, but at a different level (*Fig. 6*). This raised the questions of why there were two water basins underneath the church floor, and could one of them possibly be associated with the walls that were discovered at the same time? The restoration project now

⁶ The conservators cleaned, consolidated, and restored the excavation site in 2006: the stone floor of the excavated cell (Room 1), the ovens, and the walls were cleaned, and all the mudbrick and the floors were consolidated with a special kind of resin to protect the surface.



Fig. 6. Two excavated basins at the westernmost bay of the nave (M. el-Antony).

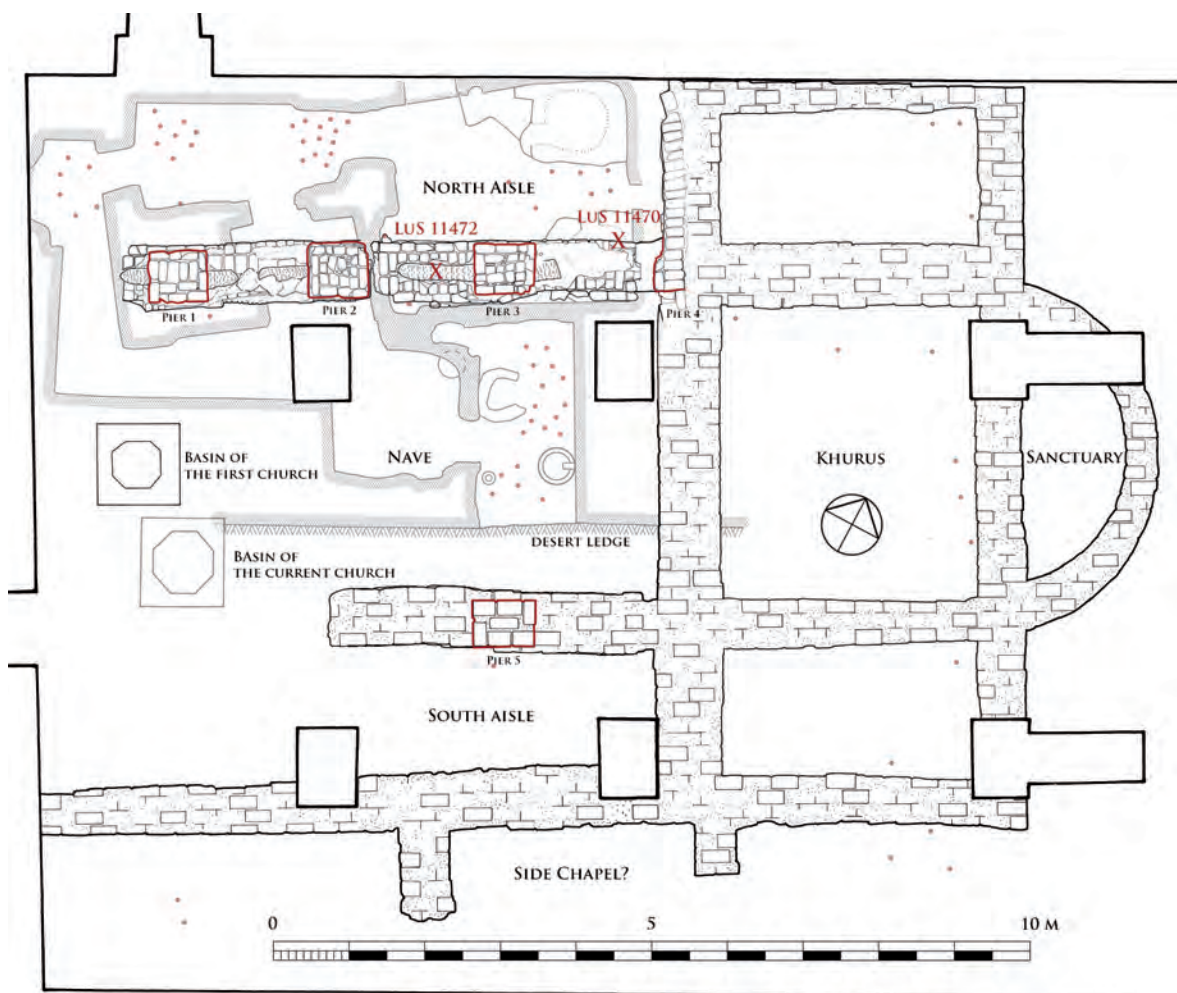


Fig. 7. Plan of the First Church, with the five piers highlighted in red (M. el-Antony & J. Blid).

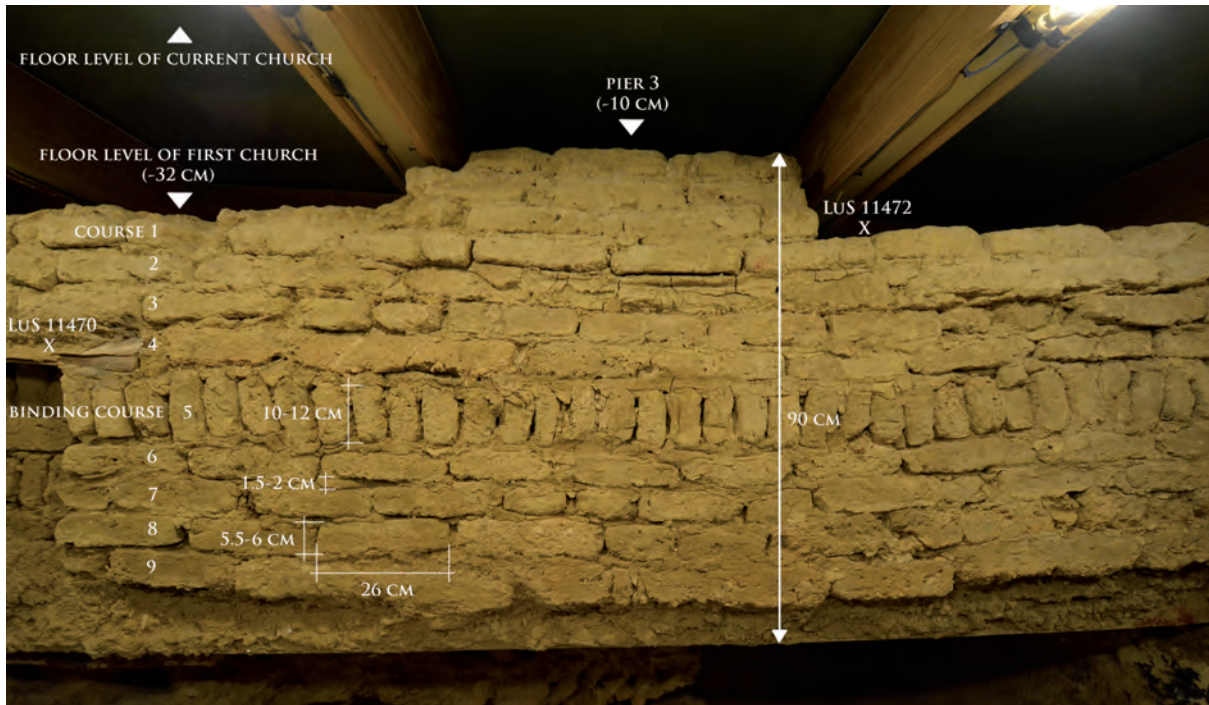


Fig. 8. The stylobate and Pier 3 (J. Blid).

took on an additional venture, namely to determine if the revealed walls could be attributed to an earlier church under the present building, to which the second basin belonged. This process involved excavating the remainder of the nave, aisles, and sanctuary.

THE FIRST CHURCH

BY JESPER BLID & FR MAXIMOUS EL-ANTONY

The excavations soon revealed more walls under the present church. These walls are constructed from mudbrick⁷ and stand atop a layer consisting of ash, straw, clay, and palm leaves. As the plan of the unearthed structure gradually became clearer, it was apparent that it was indeed the remains of an earlier church, here referred to as the First Church (Fig. 7). The second basin, which was excavated at a lower level, was thus originally situated on the centre-axis in the nave of this First Church. The foundations comprise well-preserved exterior walls and two parallel interior stylobates (c. 0.90 m deep and 0.70 m wide), with the remains of five square piers on

top (Fig. 8). The stylobates were reinforced with palm trunks, some measuring more than 2 m in length. The dimensions of the building are c. 10 m in width and 15 m in length, thus showing rather harmonious proportions of 2:3. The southern half of the building rests on bedrock (c. 0.30 m below the current floor level), while a c. 0.90 m-deep building trench was prepared for the northern half of the building. This rather shallow building trench and the lack of proper foundations for the stylobate in the northern part of the church indicate that the construction was not carefully executed.

The aisles of the First Church occupy about 40% of the width of the nave (c. 1.60 m and 4 m respectively). The church is equipped with a *khurus* and a projecting apse in the east. Five square piers built from mudbrick are preserved, with a maximum height of four courses, c. 0.26 m. The superstructure can only be tentatively reconstructed; yet, given the narrow intercolumniation of the piers and the limited width of the nave as well as the aisles, barrel vaults rather than domes probably surmounted the church. This heavy superstructure placed considerable stress on the northern stylobate, which was not properly constructed, and led to the major subsidence between Piers 1 and 2 (Figs. 9 and 15). This must certainly have resulted in a partial collapse of the church (possibly not very long after its construction).

⁷ The bricks measure c. L. 26 cm, H. 5.5–6 cm, and W. 10–12 cm, and the mortar joints are c. 1.5–2 cm thick. The courses are arranged as follows: a continuous course of headers is placed at every fifth course. Remaining courses consist solely of stretchers.



Fig. 9. The subsided stylobate section of the early church; Pier 2 is seen to the left (J. Blid).



Fig. 10. Pier 2 dressed in stucco showing remains of paintings (J. Blid).

The brick walls of the church were coated with stucco decorated with wall paintings. Some remains are still preserved *in situ* on Pier 2 (Fig. 10). Owing to the overall regularity of the church plan, it is suggested that the building was constructed *ex novo* in one single building phase. Furthermore, two parallel protruding walls on the southern side of the church may have been an accentuated entrance or possibly a side chapel.

As the excavation continued, structural consolidation had to be conducted on the two north-western piers of the current church. These were reinforced with a steel structure from the bottom (under the floor level of the church) and faced with *tafla* mortar (the same materials as the foundations of the current church), thus hiding large portions of the steel construction. This measure gave the pier foundations a more natural appearance.

THE “CELLS”

BY JESPER BLID AND FR MAXIMOUS EL-ANTONY

The excavation inside the Church of the Holy Apostles revealed yet another building phase, hidden under the First Church. It appeared as if the southern half of the First Church was built atop a bedrock plateau that makes a sudden drop and forms a presumed desert ledge facing an infilled gully to the north. Just north of this ledge were remains of earlier structures, here referred to as the “Cells”, built against the rough rock surface (Fig. 11).⁸ It gradually became clear that

the structures were built inside a shallow gully and demarcated on the southern side by the desert ledge (i.e. the structures were demarcated). The interior walls of these buildings were all dressed with thick layers of plaster.⁹ It seems that each built structure under the First Church contained at least two main rooms. The rooms of these buildings were connected by means of arched doorways, and each exterior doorway was equipped with three steps leading down to a pathway inside the gully. Owing to the previous discoveries in the adjacent buildings of the monastery, such as the Keep, the Old Refectory, and the cells north of the church, the dimensions of this long-since built-over gully and the buildings inside it can be estimated. The estimated length of the gully is about 170 m, and it measured approximately 26 m across. Several other discoveries of ancient mudbrick walls in the area of the church suggest that the previous monastery buildings, which were later replaced by the current ones, were mostly located inside the same shallow and narrow gully, and it appears as if there were buildings on both sides of the gully built directly onto the desert ledge, with a narrow corridor in the centre towards which the doors of the buildings faced.

In total, six rooms were unearthed beneath the First Church. The largest chamber (Room 1) was originally surmounted by a domical vault, which was destroyed either before or in connection with the construction of the church on top (Fig. 12). This room was equipped with no fewer than three baking ovens on two different levels, indicating that the

⁸ The rooms that were discovered at the lower section of the trench (Units 1–2 and 5–6) have since the excavation been referred to as the “Cells”. For the sake of consistency, this term will be kept; however, the function of these rooms may differ from the traditional perception of a monk’s cell.

⁹ The walls of all rooms are covered with two types of plaster; the first is natural *tafla* mixed with straw and ash, and the second is whitish plaster made from lime and gypsum.

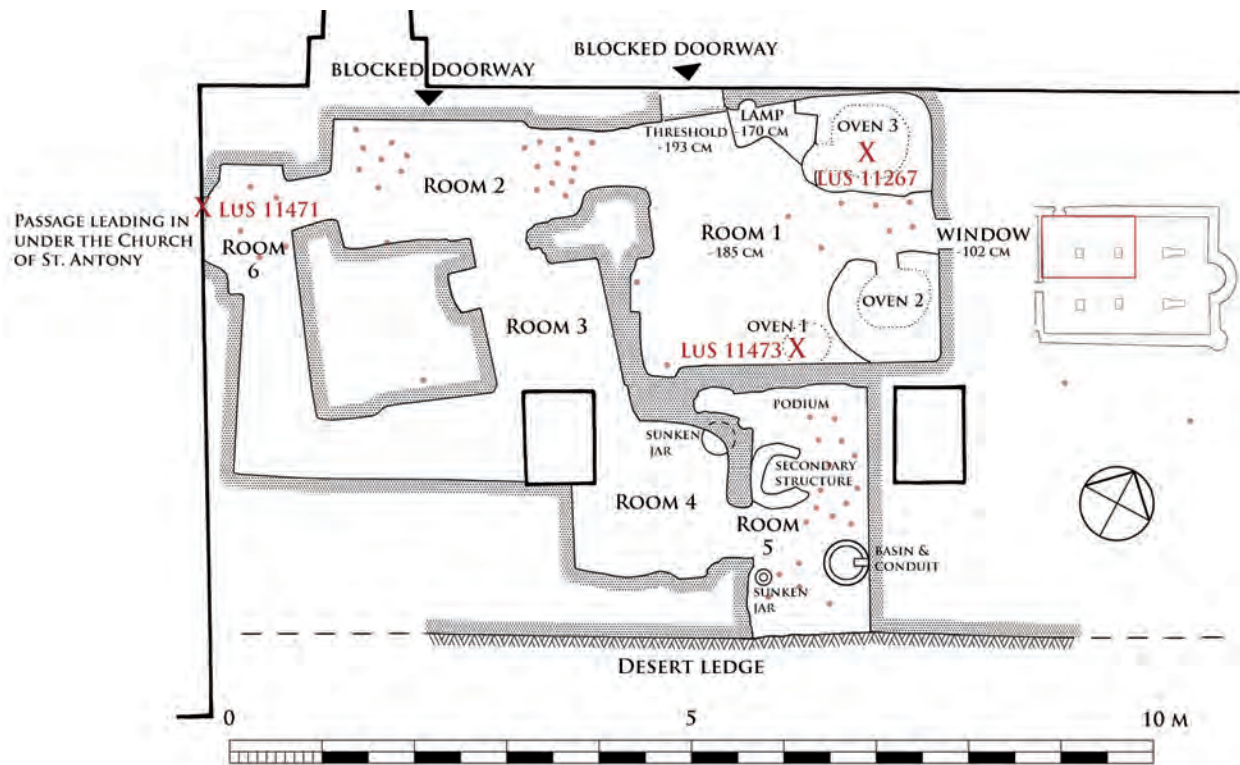


Fig. 11. Plan of the "Cells" (J. Blid after K-C. Bruhn).

Fig. 12 (below). Room 1 with demonstrated stratigraphies and architectural features; looking towards the east (J. Blid).





Fig. 13. Blocked doorway of Room 1 (J. Blid).

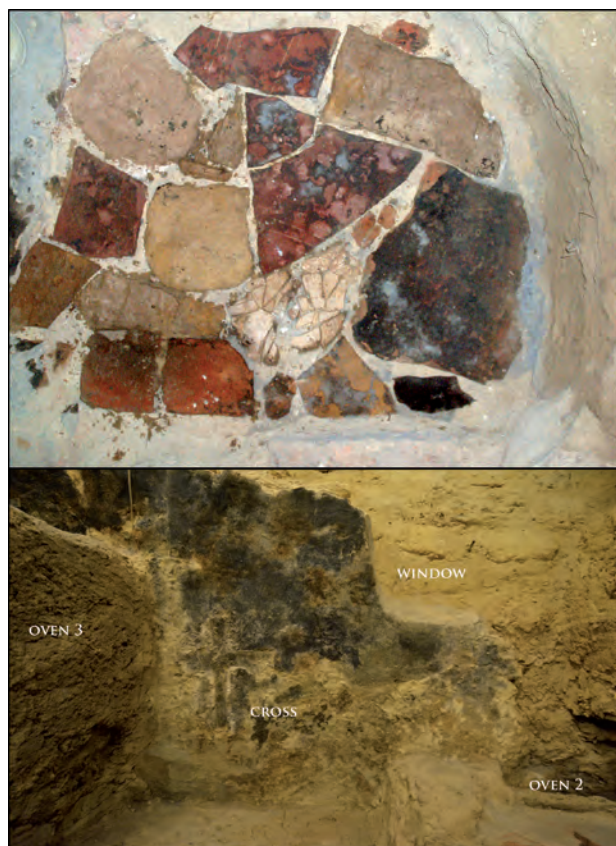


Fig. 14. Top: stone floor of Room 1 (M. el-Antony); bottom: detail of cross incised into the soot on the wall of Room 1 (J. Blid).

floor of the room was raised at some point.¹⁰ Oven 3 in the north-eastern corner of the room is better preserved than the others, and, adjacent to it, by the northern wall, is an oil lamp constructed in a niche on the floor.¹¹ Next to the lamp is a blocked doorway in the northern wall (Fig. 13).

Room 1 has a well-preserved floor paved with slabs of variously coloured stones (Fig. 14, top). The walls were all covered with black soot, as a result of heavy use of the ovens. The symbol of the cross has been incised on the wall between Ovens 2 and 3, and there is a window opening next to it (Fig. 14, bottom). The presence of the window, which the other rooms seem to lack, may suggest that this was the outermost room of the building complex towards the north-east.¹²

West of Room 1 is another corridor-like chamber (Room 2), which communicates with other rooms further to the west and south (Fig. 15). There is evidence that the doorways of this room underwent rebuilding, as there are remnants of an earlier door along with a stone threshold in the northern wall. This door, which originally led to the gully outside, was

¹⁰ For similar bakery ovens at the Monastery of St Epiphanius, see Winlock & Crum 1926, 53f. At Kellia, several well-preserved examples can be observed, for instance at Hermitage 306; Kasser 1984, 49.

¹¹ Another similar oil lamp can still be seen built into the floor at the southern entrance of the Church of St Antony on the first entryway step.

¹² The similar practice of placing kitchens with bread ovens at the outer sections of a hermitage is for instance known from Kellia; Descœudres 1989, 39.

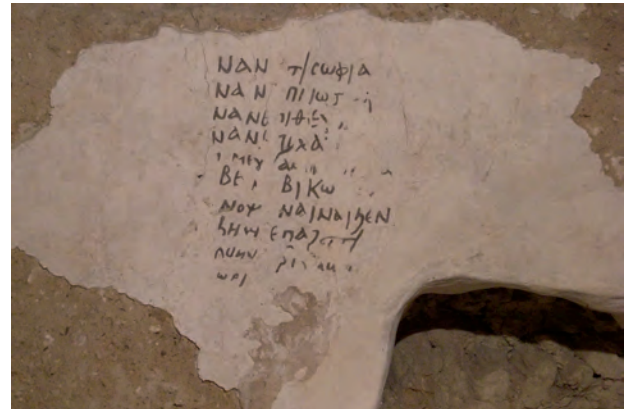


Fig. 15. Room 2, looking towards the east (J. Blid).

Fig. 16. Top: Coptic inscription from Room 5; bottom: basin and terracotta conduit from Room 5 (M. el-Antony).

blocked with mudbrick (probably from the outside), creating an interior niche that replaced the previous doorway. It seems, therefore, that access from the north to both Rooms 1 and 2 was blocked in a secondary phase. The adjacent corridors (Rooms 3 and 6) do not display any specific characteristics apart from a narrow passageway in the western wall of Room 6, which led under the sanctuary of the adjacent Church of St Antony. A wooden reinforcement from this wall has been radiocarbon dated (see below), and a glazed decanter (cat. no. 141) was also located in the passage under the Church of St Antony, which, together with the radiocarbon datings, may offer an earliest possible date for the construction of the sanctuary of the adjacent church.

South of Room 1 is a somewhat smaller compartment (Room 5), which is built directly against the desert ledge. This area was interpreted as a monk's private quarters. A raised part of the room, which is 0.20 m above floor level, may have been used as a podium for sleeping. A round chair-like structure was constructed on top of the edge of the podium in what appears to be a secondary phase. Over the podium, on the northern wall of the room, is a preserved fragmentary Coptic inscription (Fig. 16, top).¹³ In the southern part of the room, there is a sunken jar in the floor, perhaps for the storage of



¹³ Transcribed and commented on by H. Lundhaug below.

drinkable water.¹⁴ An obvious water installation was recorded along the eastern wall, where there is a basin constructed from mudbrick and stones and placed underneath a terracotta conduit, which channelled water here from outside the room (*Fig. 16*, bottom). The floor of Room 5 comprises three layers of plaster, which may indicate that the floor level was raised at various phases, similarly to Room 1. The raising of the floors of the “Cells” may be related to a possible flooding of the shallow gully, which can be very severe because of the occasional rains.

Next to Room 5 is Room 4, which has two main features; the first is a sunken jar in the north-eastern corner of the room. At the bottom of this jar, remains of dried oil are still observable, which led to the conclusion that the vessel was used for oil storage. The second feature is a shelf in the northern wall of the room, where an oil lamp was located built *in situ*.

DOCUMENTATION AND RESTORATION

BY FR MAXIMOUS EL-ANTONY

At the end of the excavations, we had to make the decision to either cover the excavation site with sand, as is traditionally done in archaeological sites in Egypt, or cover the site with a floor. As the results of the excavations are important for shedding further light on early monastic life in Egypt, the idea came about to build a glass floor, which would allow visitors to enjoy the cells from above (*Fig. 17*). A steel structure was designed to support the glass floor, with consideration to the sensitivity of the mudbrick structures beneath. H-shaped steel supports were erected, with an additional set of beams designed to support the glass floor. All steel members were painted with a protective coating and covered with wood to give it a more natural look, which matched the mudbrick. Lighting, which can be remotely controlled by a timer, was fixed under the steel beams to illuminate the ruins. This allows for better viewing of the excavation site. A ventilation system was also set up. The glass floor was made by Saint Gobin in Vienna, Austria, and transported to the monastery. It can bear a load of about 800 kg/m² and is 33 mm thick.

¹⁴ Storage spaces in the shape of a bin in the floor have been found in other Coptic monks' cells, for instance inside hermitages at the Deir el-Naqlun; Godlewski 2004, 159.



Fig. 17. Top: preparation of the steel supports for the glass floor (M. el-Antony); bottom: current glass floor of the Church of the Holy Apostles, displaying the excavated structures below (J. Blid).

Stratigraphy

BY JESPER BLID

A reconstruction of the stratigraphy of the excavation has proved a methodological challenge, as the archaeological record consists of brief notes placed alongside a selection of finds deposited at the monastery. The total number of find bags is 101, of which 69 are tagged with either find-spots, depth under the current church floor, or both. The recorded depths are often imprecise, for instance 0.10–0.40 m, 0.10–0.70 m, or 1.50–2 m, and the accuracy of the re-established stratigraphies are consequently somewhat inaccurate. It often

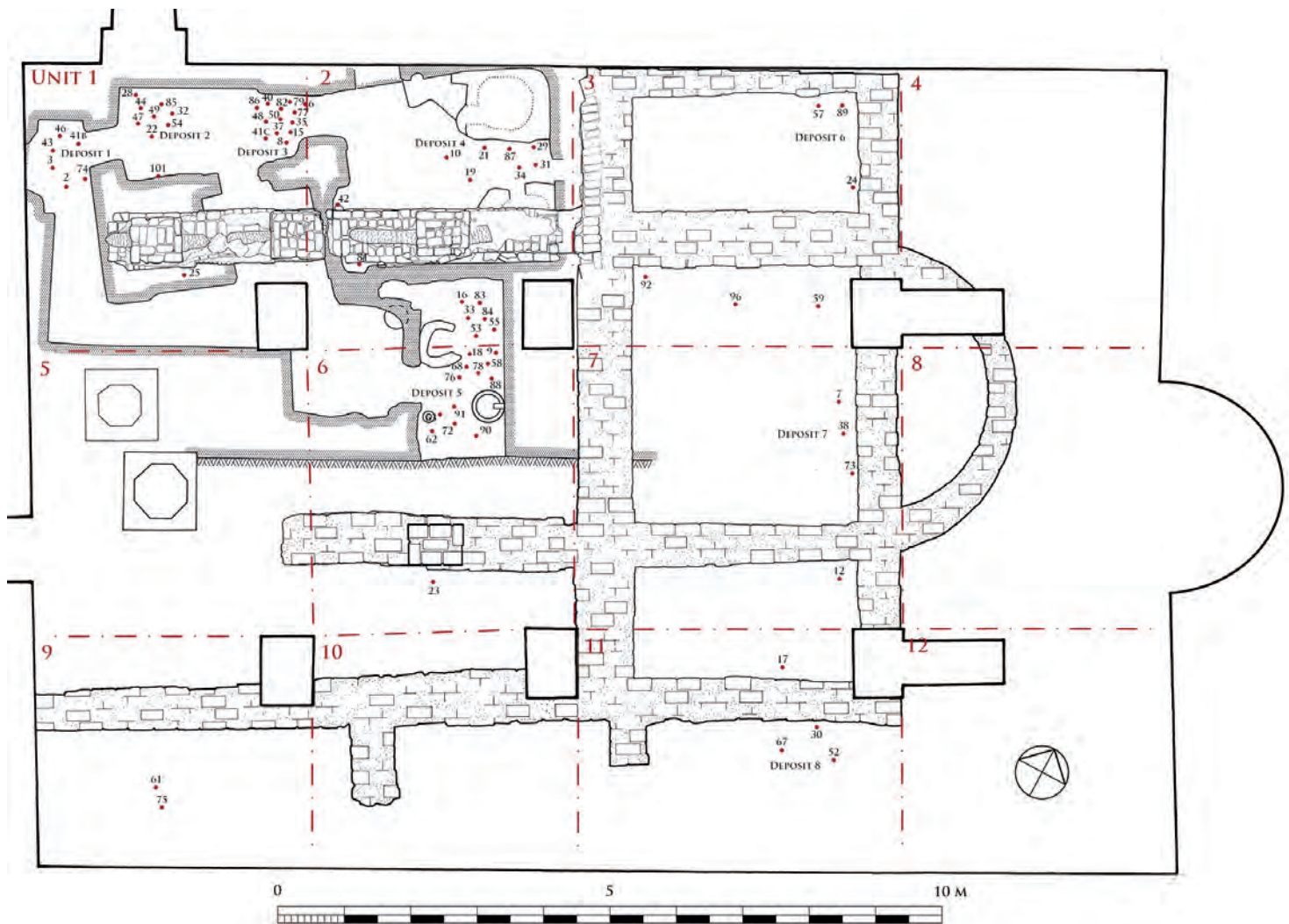


Fig. 18. Plan of the Church of the Holy Apostles including excavated structures and find deposits (J. Blid & M. el-Antony).

seems that recorded depths relate to architectural features such as the stylobate of the First Church or the floor levels of the “Cells”, etc. Only the bags with established find-spots are marked on the different plans of this article. Yet, extra evidence does surface, as some of the untagged bags contain pottery sherds that could be associated, and physically fit together, with vessels from tagged bags. It was therefore possible to link many unmarked deposits of finds with the recorded find-spots and to re-stratify some of the unstratified materials. In addition to the 101 find bags (containing *c.* 20 litres each), I identified five or so larger bags containing woven baskets, and another with fragments of wall paintings.

The reconstructed stratigraphies, as described below, are occasionally tentative, relying, on the one hand, on find-spots mentioned in tagged bags, and, on the other hand, on standing architectural features. All measurements are given as distances from the current glass floor of the Church of the Holy Apostles. In general, the lower strata (4 and 5) are more reliable as they represent clearly closed deposits from confined trenches that, additionally, were more precisely documented during the excavation. The names of the different rooms of the “Cells” were established during the excavation, and the twelve Units of the find plan were created by Jesper Blid to enable the reader to localize the various deposits (Fig. 18).

STRATUM 1 (0.10–0.39 M)

This layer must be considered to relate primarily to the First Church.

STRATUM 2 (0.40–0.99 m)

This is basically the level of the foundations of the First Church. Many of the objects from Stratum 2 actually belong to the same period as Stratum 3. The explanation is probably that a large building trench was created for the foundations of the First Church, and the layer order of the soil from the ditch (originally from Stratum 3) became inverted when up-cast onto the contemporary ground level.

STRATUM 3 (1.00–1.49 m)

As a result of the building trench of the First Church, Stratum 3 is disturbed in many places. It seems that the “Cells” had been deserted for some time before the construction of the First Church.

STRATUM 4 (1.50–1.99 m)

This layer marks a secondary use of the “Cells”, and it seems that Ovens 2 and 3 in Room 1 were used at this time.

STRATUM 5 (2.00+ m)

The deepest trenches reach about 2.50 m below the current floor. Here, the (original?) remains of a paved floor were found. This is also the threshold level of the blocked doorway in Room 1.

Chronology

BY JESPER BLID

While two red-slipped pottery fragments, possibly of late antique date, were discovered during the excavation (cat. nos 74 and 115), these are both fragmentary and are isolated cases that can hardly be related to any of the architectural remains. As for the excavated standing structures (the “Cells” and the First Church), a more reliable chronology can be established based on chronometric dating of finds and organic remains from walls and charcoal samples from the ovens of Room 1. The general result has been to discern two distinct occupation phases of the “Cells” (Phases 1 and 2), a transitional and possibly abandonment period (Phase 3), and finally the construction of the First Church (Phase 4). As for the current Church of the Apostles, we can only assume that it was built after a known period of devastation and abandonment of the monastery, caused by a Bedouin attack on the community probably

during the end of the 15th or beginning of the 16th century.¹⁵ The chronological examination will be presented from the earliest phase to the most recent.

PHASE 1

The earliest dated evidence from the architecture itself comes from a radiocarbon-dated wooden reinforcement in the lower part (-2.50 m) of the western wall of Room 6 of the “Cells” (Unit 1, sample LuS 11471), where the passage under the Church of St Antony starts.¹⁶ This wall is in itself very suitable for dating, as it apparently supports both the wall of the Church of the Holy Apostles and the easternmost part of the sanctuary of the Church of St Antony (Figs. 3 and 11). As only one wooden sample has been dated from the walls of the “Cells”, we cannot be certain that all walls have a corresponding chronology. However, a common construction phase seems likely as many of the walls are bonded. The sample LuS 11471 from Room 6 is dated Cal. AD 685–890, which, therefore, marks the *terminus post quem* of both the “Cells” and, in my opinion, the sanctuary of the Church of St Antony.¹⁷

The radiocarbon dating of the Coptic manuscript cat. no. 137 (Cal. AD 800–990 [LuS 11567]) is the closest parallel to the dating of the western wall of Room 6 even though the manuscript lacks a recorded find-spot. The bell-shaped bowl (cat. no. 41) of Deposit 3, Stratum 5 can stylistically be dated to between the 8th and 9th centuries, which may give a further chronological indication for Stratum 5 and thus for Phase 1. Finally, the bag-shaped jugs/flasks that appear already at Deposit 5, Stratum 5 (cat. nos 90–91), and also in later deposits (Strata 3 and 4) in a number of varieties of fabrics and shapes, can in comparison with finds from Deir el-Naqlun be dated between the 9th to 11th centuries.¹⁸

PHASE 2

The second phase of the “Cells”, during which the floor level of Room 1 was raised about 0.65 m to the current level of -1.85 m, offers more material for dating. Two charcoal samples from Ovens 1 and 3 were radiocarbon dated to respectively Cal. AD 1115–1260 and 1115–1250.¹⁹ The Ovens 2 and 3 were probably used simultaneously. The considerable amount of soot on the walls of Room 1 could certainly be a result of this.

¹⁵ Meinardus 1989, 13.

¹⁶ All radiocarbon dating was conducted under the supervision of Mats Rundgren in the Department of Geology at Lund University.

¹⁷ This may in fact support Michael Jones’ hypothesis that the sanctuary is a later addition to the church. However, the new radiocarbon dating cannot confirm the alleged late construction in the 13th century. Cf. Jones 2002, 30.

¹⁸ Danys-Lasek 2011, 622f. (Nd.11.157), 628f. (Nd.11.228).

¹⁹ LuS 11473 (Oven 1) and LuS 11267 (Oven 3).



Fig. 19. Photo of excavation; seen towards the north (M. el-Antony).

PHASE 3

It is likely that Phase 3, which also equals Stratum 3, was marked by a period of hiatus before the upper parts of the “Cells” were finally levelled in order to make way for the construction of the First Church. As such, the area was probably filled with debris, including the Hebrew manuscript (cat. no. 12) which was radiocarbon dated to Cal. AD 1020–1165. This date could certainly place the origin of this manuscript in Phase 2 and its discard in Phase 3.

PHASE 4

The foundations of the First Church contain numerous wooden reinforcements of palm tree trunks and planks. In order to achieve a more reliable chronology, samples were taken from both further down (in the fourth course of) the stylobate in Room 1,²⁰ and at the very top, between Piers 2 and 3 (Figs.

8, 12, and 45).²¹ The dates do in fact correspond (Cal. AD 1035–1225 [LuS 11470] and 1160–1270 [LuS 11472]), which places the likely felling of the trees in the 12th to the 13th century. The construction probably followed at the same time, as fragments from wall paintings can be identified with both the Coptic style of Theodore, who painted the Church of St Antony during 1232/1233, and the more Byzantine style of the slightly later 13th-century “Figural Master”.²² Another body of evidence could perhaps bolster a hypothesis that the church was interiorly decorated at the same time as it was constructed, thus sometime during the second quarter of the 13th century: two different bowls with remains of colour pigments of what seem to be both the Coptic style pigments and the Byzantine equivalent²³ (from two different yet chronologically closely related phases) were found under the floor level

²⁰ LuS 11470.

²¹ LuS 11472.

²² Cf. cat. nos 131–132.

²³ Cat. nos 64 and 114.

of the First Church. Thus, we can theoretically imagine that the church was in fact under construction at the time the interior murals were put in place (perhaps first by Theodore and additionally by the Figural Master), and, after the Figural Master (or the somewhat later painter who imitated his style) finished working at the church, the final floor was paved and consequently covered the remaining equipment of both painters.

The architectural layout of the First Church may furthermore offer somewhat close analogies to the suggested chronology. The tree-trunk aisled structure had a wide nave, a *khurus*,²⁴ and sturdy piers to support a brick superstructure. This oblong plan is perhaps best paralleled by the 11th-century church at the Monastery of St Hatre in Aswan.²⁵

The time of the final abandonment of the First Church cannot be pinpointed from the finds at hand; however, the cause is obvious from the state of the collapsed stylobate. It is furthermore not known if the church stood deserted and in ruins for a long time before the construction of the current Church of the Holy Apostles.

Finds

BY JESPER BLID

The archaeological objects from the excavation of the Church of the Holy Apostles will be presented below according to deposits rather than individual categories of finds. As such, the scrutiny acknowledges the importance of a holistic approach to cohesive find clusters. Hence, we can benefit from chronometric dating of organic materials as a cross reference for typologies of the ceramics, which are primarily based on stylistic criteria. We also gain a more precise idea of the use of different spaces by a comparative analysis of the full material assemblage. Directly after the catalogue, four sections will follow with more detailed descriptions and analyses of the manuscripts in Coptic, Arabic, Hebrew, and Ge'ez.

Owing to the rather limited two-month field study of the objects (including the architectural remains) which I conducted, the catalogue will present only a brief selection of finds, which equals about one-third of the total excavated sample. However, I have tried to select the most diagnostic

finds and also to cover all sections of the trench in order to reach a statistically accurate cross-section of the larger body of material.

THE POTTERY

An estimated number of about 3,000 pottery sherds were gathered from the excavations. Many exhibit fresh breaks, and about 900 fragments of various types were studied, catalogued, and restored during the recent find processing. This equals about 115 restored vessels, all of which are included in the catalogue below. The published material equals slightly less than one-third of the total sample. The selected objects are, nonetheless, considered characteristic of most other finds as well, and represent, in general, the best-preserved items.

Some common features of the ceramic materials are that they are wheel-made and mostly produced from a number of desert clays. There are, however, also several samples of Nile silt fabrics. The quality of the preparation of the clay varies often from one vessel to another within a certain fabric, and even among the same shapes. As such, a certain type can exhibit both very high-quality and very poor-quality objects. A longer discussion on the various objects, shapes, and fabrics will follow after a brief survey of a possible pottery production site at the monastery itself, as well as a petrographic analysis.

The pottery kiln

Just south of and outside the eastern gate of the monastery stand the remains of a 6.70 m-long kiln, most probably used for pottery production (*Fig. 20*). The structure was partly unearthed at an uncertain date, and much of the circular chamber is exposed almost down to the base. The wall of the chamber is aligned with a 0.26 m-wide recess that separated the pottery and the fire-chamber below. The chamber is well preserved and measures *c.* 2.60 m across. The walls of the lower parts of the structure are built from mortared rubble, containing local limestone, but the superstructure of the domed chamber and the corridor in front of the fire-door are constructed from brick. Most of the superstructures have, however, collapsed. Both inside and around the kiln lay heaps of scattered pottery fragments. Some shapes parallel finds from the Church of the Holy Apostles, for instance the characteristic bell-shaped bowls. A visual examination conducted by Professor Anders Lindahl at the Department of Geology in Lund University suggests that the selected kiln sample is identical to the bell-shaped bowl cat. no. 64 from the excavation: what we hereafter call Fabric 1. This kiln, maybe along with others, was hence used to fire the ceramic materials of the monastery, which actually seems to be the majority of the pottery sample from the Church of the Holy Apostles. It seems, consequently, that the monastery was mostly self-sufficient in terms of pottery pro-

²⁴ An element that was first introduced into Coptic church architecture during the 7th century: Brooks Hedstrom 2012, 27.

²⁵ The aisles of the Church at St Hatre may, however, be a secondary addition: Brooks Hedstrom 2012, 28. For a longitudinal section, see Gabra 2002a, 110f. The First Church also bears resemblances to the second phase of the Monastery Church at Dayr al-Kubbaniya (arguably 10th/early 11th century). For a discussion on building phases, the dating of the Dayr al-Kubbaniya, and further bibliography, see Dekker 2013, 93–100.

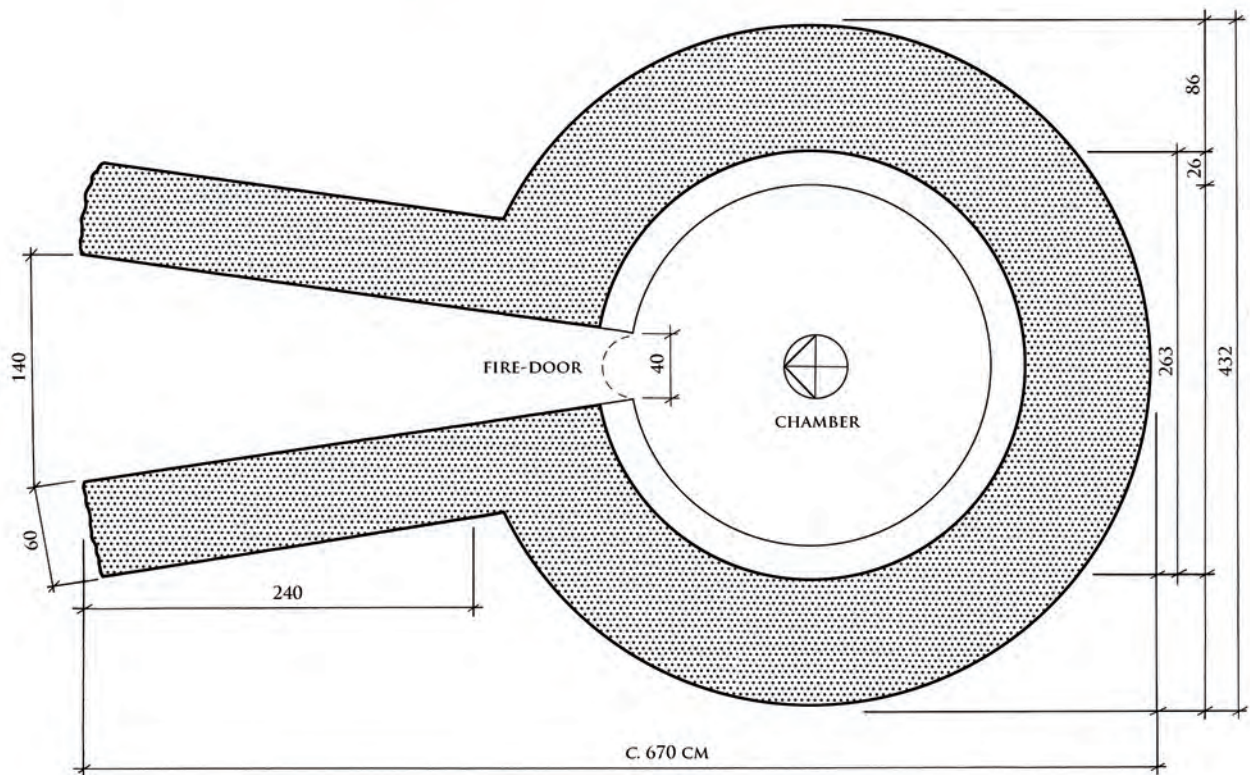


Fig. 20. Extra-mural kiln (J. Blid).

duction. A comparable kiln can also be seen in rather good condition outside the gate area of the Monastery of St Paul the Hermit on the other side of the al-Qalzam mountain range.

Petrographic analysis and description of various fabrics

As early as during the initial find processing, certain indications pointed towards a local, large-scale production of pottery at the monastery during the period under study (and also probably later). The discovery of the extra-mural pottery kiln on the eastern side of the old monastery wall may confirm in the future this assumption, as a pottery sample retrieved from within the kiln—a small fragment of a bell-shaped bowl (*Fig. 21*)—was identified with a numerically over-represented type of calcareous fabric, here classified as Fabric 1. To learn more about the chemical composition of Fabric 1, a bell-shaped bowl from the excavation (cat. no. 64) was chemically analysed.²⁶ The study revealed that the vessel was fired at about 800°C and that the composition of the clay contained calcites (shown as large white inclusions in *Fig. 21*, upper left corner). The smaller inclusions, which to the naked eye appear somewhat dark, are in fact quartz. On the thin-section from the same vessel (upper right corner), the quartz inclusions show as translucent white, whereas the lime inclusions are larger, angular, and dark. This calcareous composition is typical of desert clay, commonly referred to as marl clay.²⁷

As a comparison, some clay samples were also gathered from both the eastern and western valleys outside the old monastery walls. Even though calcareous, they also contained inclusions of shale, which is not characteristic of Fabric 1. The exact source of clay for the ancient production is therefore yet to be identified.

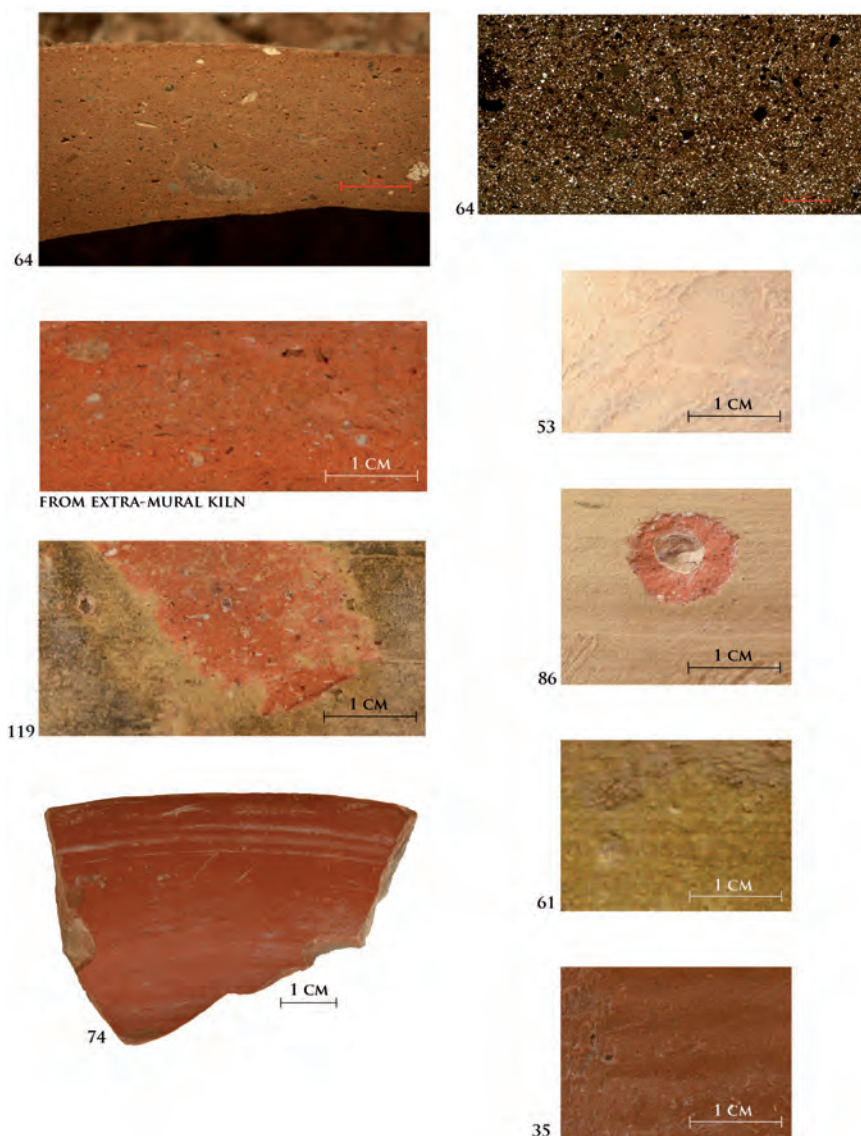


Fig. 21. Various marls and Nile silt fabrics (J. Blid).

Nile silt fabrics

Only a fraction of the total find sequence can be identified as Nile silt fabrics. It is apparent that high-quality red slip- and glazed wares are over-represented in this category. There are also a number of bag-shaped jugs/flasks among the Nile silt fabrics.

²⁶ The study was conducted by Anders Lindahl at the Chemical Research Laboratory of the Department of Geology, Lund University.

²⁷ Cf. Konstantinidou 2012, 45 (including a lengthy bibliography).

Red slips

Two fragmentary sherds, which can be identified as Nile fabric red slip wares,²⁸ which is the same as Hayes' Egyptian red slip B,²⁹ have been identified in Units 2 and 6 (cat. nos 74 and 115). The large dish cat. no. 74 was found in Stratum 1/2, and the second dish (cat. no. 115) has no recorded stratigraphic affiliation. The fabric is red (2.5YR 5/6) to reddish brown (5YR 5/4).³⁰ The slip of cat. no. 74 is thick and lustrous (*Fig. 21:74*) and comparable to high-quality manufactures of late antiquity, such as African red slip ware (ARS). The shape is also comparable to certain late antique dishes of ARS, yet the production of such forms in Egypt is known to have continued for a much longer time than elsewhere. A similar shape from Hermopolis Magna (el-Ashmunein), with a flaring knobbed rim and slightly carinated exterior wall, has, for instance, been dated to 650–800+.³¹

The thickened rim of cat. no. 115, which is very characteristic of 5th- to 6th-century Phocaean red slip ware (Hayes' Type 3),³² was correspondingly produced in Egypt for many centuries, for instance in the Aswan region (Hayes' Egyptian red slip A).³³ A close comparison in shape, yet of a different fabric, is published among the ceramic finds from the Monastery of Epiphanius.³⁴ Another example, which shows the long continuity of the form (however, of a smaller vessel, also of Aswan red slip ware), has been identified at the Monastery of Baramus in Wadi al-Natrun and dated to between the 6th and 8th(+) centuries.³⁵ As cat. nos 74 and 115 cannot be connected with any clear archaeological context, it is difficult to estimate an exact date.

Glazed wares

Glazed wares first appear in Stratum 1–3, which ought to place them in the time span of the 11th to the 13th century.³⁶ Among the glazed objects, we can identify bowls and lamps (cf. cat. nos 32–33, 36, 63, 111, 118, and 129), mostly of red or light-to-dark reddish-brown (2.5YR 5/4 and 5/6) fabrics. The bowls cat. nos 63 and 118, and lamps cat. nos 111 and

129 are covered with a plain, lead-green glaze. The bowls cat. nos 32, 33, and 36 are similar in shape to the common category of Fayyumi ware, with close parallels among 9th- to 10th-century examples from the Monastery of Baramus and Hermopolis Magna.³⁷ The glazed decoration is, however, different, with incised decorations accentuated with yellow, brown, and whitish glaze. The clay applied is usually well prepared with only microscopic inclusions of sand (?). The willow green ring base cat. no. 113 and decanter cat. no. 141 appear closely related to a vase found in a 12th century burial context at Deir el-Naqlun.³⁸

St Antony Fabric 1

The monastery is believed to be the point of production for this fabric, which has a calcareous composition, containing large, angular inclusions of lime, together with smaller grains of quartz. The colour of the fabric seems to vary owing to different firing temperatures. For instance, the bell-shaped bowls, all of which seem to have been produced from this fabric, were fired at about 800°C and have a light red to light reddish-brown colour, and the size and number of inclusions vary much throughout the sample. The vessels that were subjected to higher firing temperatures (c. 900°C) developed the characteristic white calcareous surface layer (*Fig. 21:53* and *86*), and a few objects that were fired at even higher temperatures (c. 1,000°C) developed a glazed, olive-green surface (*Fig. 21:61*).³⁹ It is obvious that the firing was not always fully controlled, as revealed by the uneven quality of the vessels. The clay has in general also been levigated to a very uneven degree, which often leaves large lime inclusions within the fabric that expand during the firing and can fracture the surfaces (cf. *Fig. 21:86*).

Fabric 1 appears both in plain wares and red slips. The slip tends to be rather dull and ranges in colour from red (c. 10R 4/6) to reddish brown. The slipped objects are often fired at a slightly higher temperature, as a calcareous crust frequently formed under the slip. At least one glazed example of Fabric 1 has also been recorded in Deposit 8, Stratum 2 (cat. no. 112). It has a splashed-out glaze and a shape that is firmly rooted in the Fayyumi morphology; the exterior wall is also vaguely carinated in the style of cat. no. 33.⁴⁰

²⁸ Using the recent term by A. Konstantinidou; see Konstantinidou 2012, 90f.

²⁹ Hayes 1972, 399.

³⁰ Referring to the Munsell soil color charts (1975 edition).

³¹ Bailey 1998, 51 (cat. no. D 443 bis), pl. 27. Another comparable example is published from Kellia and dated to 650–730; Egloff 1977, 86f. (cat. no. 66), pl. 42:9.

³² Cf. "Late Roman C", Hayes 1972, 323–370.

³³ Hayes 1972, 387–397.

³⁴ Winlock & Crum 1926, 85f.

³⁵ Konstantinidou 2012, 72f. (cat. no. 71), fig. 3.15.

³⁶ The only exception is the glazed decanter cat. no. 141 found in the passageway between Room 6 and a subterranean space under the sanctuary of the Church of St Antony, which most probably dates to between the 12th and 13th century.

³⁷ Bailey 1998, 113, pl. 74 (R1 and R2); Konstantinidou 2012, 123–125, fig. 33.3 (cat. no. 263).

³⁸ Danyś-Lasek 2011, 636f. (Nd.10.053).

³⁹ See discussion in Konstantinidou 2012, 45f. and Bourriau *et al.* 2000, 122.

⁴⁰ Cf. Konstantinidou 2012, cat. no. 263, fig. 3.33.

St Antony Fabric 2

This clay is a Nile silt fabric but the exact origin of production is not known. The quality of the fabric is often somewhat coarser than vessels made from Fabric 1 (Fig. 21:35). It is usually dark reddish brown in colour (c. 2.5YR 3/6) and is used, for instance, in bag-shaped jugs, which are rather common (cf. cat. nos 35, 83–84, and 90–91). The composition of the clay has not yet been chemically analysed, but, from visual inspection, it is possible to distinguish some dark inclusions. Fabric 2 solely comprises plain wares.

Other marl fabrics (St Antony Fabrics 3 and 4)

At least two additional marl fabrics have been identified besides Fabric 1. Fabric 3 is a high-quality fabric, which has been fired at a very high temperature so that the surfaces are slightly olive green in colour. The colour of the clay is pale yellow with some minor black inclusions of unknown type (cf. cat. nos 56–58). Fabric 4, another marl composition, is found in the glazed bowl cat. no. 113. It has a rather sandy and porous texture with a light yellowish-brown colour (10YR 6/4).

Shapes

Tablewares

One of the most characteristic tablewares, and also most frequently found during the excavation, are the bell-shaped bowls (Fig. 22:16, 24–25, and 34).⁴¹ These bowls vary somewhat in form, with the most elaborate having a curved, S-shaped wall (cf. cat. nos 9 and 41), a slightly knobbed rim, and sometimes a vaguely carinated exterior wall. All bell-shaped bowls are wheel-made and have rather plain proportions, and they are equipped with ring-bases. The quality of the fabric (Fabric 1) varies a lot, however. Some examples are more stylized in shape, possibly owing to a progressive development of the form. The bell-shaped bowls are found in all strata, but only Deposits 3 and 4, Stratum 5 are ensured, closed contexts. The earliest likely date of the “Cells” (Room 6) is the 8th to the 9th century, and a red-slipped bowl from Hermopolis Magna, akin to cat. nos 41–42, was similarly found in an 8th- to 9th-century context.⁴² The shape of the bowls certainly goes back



Fig. 22. A sample of tablewares: a cup, bowls, and a white-slipped dish (J. Blid).

to late antique red slip wares,⁴³ and both plain and white- and red-slipped examples can be found among the sample at the Monastery of St Antony.

Apart from bell-shaped bowls and regular small-scale bowls, large dishes and basins of plain and white- and red-slipped style are common throughout the sample. Among the more well-preserved vessels, we find the white-slipped dish

⁴¹ These are all further specified in the catalogue.

⁴² Bailey 1998, 53 (cat. no. D 503), pl. 29.

⁴³ E.g. 4th- to 5th-century bowl from Elephantine; Gempeler 1992, 114 (cat. no. T 400), ab. 60:7. A 5th- to 7th-century example of Nile fabric red slip ware from the Monastery of Baramus, Wadi al-Natrun; cf. Konstantinidou 2012, 98 (cat. no. 140). From Amarna: Faiers 2005, fig. 3:24; 107 (cat. no. 184), fig. 110; from the Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes, see Winlock & Crum 1926, 88f. (cat. nos A–C), fig. 41.

cat. no. 97, which has a projecting rim, high ring-base, and a rouletted exterior decoration (*Fig. 22*).⁴⁴ Other white-slipped dishes and basins are cat. nos 18 and 50, and comparable red slips are also found in several strata (e.g. cat. nos 20, 28, 51–52, 87, 96, and 109).

Jugs and amphorae

Jugs make up the largest part of the closed forms. Most of the jugs can be placed in two categories. The first is made from Fabric 1, and tends to have well-processed clay (cf. cat. nos 53, 86, and 121), whereas the second type is made from the slightly coarser Nile silt Fabric 2 (cat. nos 35, 83–84, and 90–91). The latter is the most common type. The shapes are similar between the two categories: a bag-shaped body with a high neck (some having pierced strainers).⁴⁵ The Fabric 2 type also has ribbed exterior walls. The Fabric 3 jugs are preserved only in small fragments (cat. nos 56–58) and were most probably used for water. The jug cat. no. 86 had an interior coated with pine resin (see below). The type 1 jugs made from Fabric 1 should perhaps be sorted under the category of tablewares, as they are well executed and are comparable to the finer wares of the ceramic finds.

Only a small number of amphorae have been excavated, and the majority of the sample have been reworked. Cat. nos 7, 62, 76, and 116 have all been sawn, with necks, parts of the body, and/or handles removed and thereafter used long enough for these new surfaces to get worn. The secondary use cannot have been to store substances that needed to be sealed, and the vessel cat. no. 7 shows clear interior traces of mortar, which means that it was most probably used during the construction work of the church (see further discussion below). Owing to the low quantity of amphorae, it is assumed that the “Cells” were most likely not a place for permanent storage of, for instance, wine or oil. The amphorae are, in general, bag-shaped, and most are made from Fabric 1. The handles are attached directly to the neck, and the body is widest at the lower section and gets narrower towards the neck. Cat. no. 69, from Deposit 4, Stratum 4, demonstrates that these amphorae were being reused as early as Phase 2. I have not found any close parallels from elsewhere, which may indicate a somewhat indigenous morphology for the shape. It seems likely that these amphorae were produced at the monastery and initially used during Phase 1 (or earlier).

⁴⁴ Possibly deriving from the Aswan white slip ware tradition; Baramus, second half of 6th to 9th century: Konstantinidou 2012, 86 (cat. no. 114–116), fig. 3.22. Elephantine, third quarter of 6th century to second half of 7th century: Gempeler 1992, (T 252–253), Ab. 24:4–8. See also further variations from Kellia, dated 650–730; Egloff 1977 (e.g. cat. no. 63), pl. 42:11, 113.

⁴⁵ Most probably used for water; see Konstantinidou 2012, 98.

Jars

The jars are another common vessel type found in all strata. They appear in Stratum 4 and 5 (cat. nos 55 and 103) and tend to be among the finest vessels of the sample. No chemical analyses have yet been conducted, but the general appearance and decoration, such as the inscription $\Delta\text{ΡΙ}\text{Τ}\alpha\text{Μ}\epsilon\Upsilon\text{Ι}$ on cat. no. 55, imply, in my opinion, a somewhat distinguished function. The form of 103 is again rather bag-shaped, with an accentuated flaring rim and a flat ring-base that finds some parallels in earlier versions from 7th- to 8th-century deposits at Kellia.⁴⁶

Cooking vessels and lids

The finds do not include many cooking vessels, perhaps because the area was mostly used for baking bread rather than other types of cooking. The most common type of cooking pot is cat. no. 92. The wall is thin and has a globular shape, and the composition of the fabric (Fabric 1) contains a large portion of calcite inclusions—all these aspects are proven to save fuel.⁴⁷ Additionally, a large number of lids have been excavated, which further enabled more effective heating (cf. cat. nos 11, 73, and 81). There are also a number of minor lids and stoppers, which were used to seal storage vessels (cf. cat. nos 5, 27, 82, 102, and 126). Apart from the cooking pot, cat. no. 92, there are also some different types of casseroles (e.g. cat. nos 95 and 110), although these originate from the upper strata.

Lamps and censers

The vast majority of the lamps found at the excavation are bowl/cup-shaped, and they were either made as lamps or reused as such. Most are plain, but, among the reused examples, some are red slipped. The shapes share many similarities with finds from the monasteries of Baramus and Epiphanius.⁴⁸ One double-walled censer (cat. no. 75) has also been identified. It has a richly moulded ring-base and a dark red slip.

Inscriptions and *dipinti*

A total number of six vessels have been identified with either *dipinti* or incised inscriptions made before firing. Most inscriptions are in Coptic, but there is also a single fragment with a *dipinto* in Greek, which reads [A]ντωνιου (cat. no. 89). The name may refer either to the vessel as the property of the monastery or a monk with the same name as the legendary founder of the community. This is the only text in Greek that

⁴⁶ Egloff 1977, pl. 113: 248.

⁴⁷ A. Konstantinidou has gathered much evidence from previous studies on the thermal qualities of cooking vessels; see Konstantinidou 2012, 126.

⁴⁸ Cf. Konstantinidou 2012, 232f., fig. 3.78; Winlock & Crum 1926, 88, fig. 38.

was identified during the excavation. The remaining inscriptions follow the same formula: $\Delta\text{ΡΙ}\Pi\text{Α}/\Delta\text{ΡΙ}\Pi\text{Α}\text{Μ}\text{Ε}\Upsilon\text{Ι}$ (“remember me” in Coptic). In one case, it appears as $\Delta\text{ΡΙ}\Pi\text{Α}\text{Μ}\text{Ε}\Upsilon\text{Ι}$ (cat. no. 55) on a large jar; on the remaining four objects, it appears as $\Delta\text{ΡΙ}\Pi\text{Α}$ (cat. nos 59, 61, 86, and 121). All vessels displaying Coptic texts are made from Fabric 1, and are thus of local manufacture.

Analysis of organic residues

In order to better understand the use of the distinct category of locally produced vessels with the incised inscriptions or *dipinto* $\Delta\text{ΡΙ}\Pi\text{Α}/\Delta\text{ΡΙ}\Pi\text{Α}\text{Μ}\text{Ε}\Upsilon\text{Ι}$ (cat. nos 55, 59, 61, 86, and 121), a chemical analysis of organic residues was undertaken to trace the possible contents of the bag-shaped jug cat. no. 86 (Deposit 5, Stratum 3/4).⁴⁹ The result of the characterization revealed a clear profile of pine resin (Pinaceae) that had been heated to a high degree of oxidation (Fig. 45), which is similar to what was previously identified in a so-called ointment jar at Antinoe, Egypt.⁵⁰ At Antinoe, the pine resin was also found along (but possibly not mixed) with tar and pitch derived from plant resins, which could be characteristic of “medicine, antiseptic, or ritual balms”.⁵¹ Pine resin is also known as a sealant for wine storage containers,⁵² and bag-shaped jugs/flasks have also been identified at Deir el-Naqlun with resination inside.⁵³ However, a Coptic manuscript (cat. no. 137) mentions resin as a medical ingredient, which makes it tempting to propose a medical use for the analysed vessel. I hope in the future to get permits for further analyses of the remaining sample, not only of the jugs but also the jar cat. no. 55 and the basin cat. no. 59 (which, in a secondary context, was used as a brazier). However, since it is assumed that the analysed jug (cat. no. 86) is of local manufacture, the pine resin must have been brought to the monastery from outside, while the actual processing was conducted on site.

GLASS

Only a small amount of vessel glass has been found, mostly represented by small fragments of ring-bases or walls. Thus, it is not very diagnostic and therefore not included in the catalogue. The exception is a single glass lamp of the suspended type which was found somewhere in Unit 1 “under the church foundation” (cat. no. 117). This slightly translucent, olive-green glass paste is irregular in appearance and filled with large

air bubbles, which suggests a less-specialized production site. It is likely that the lamp was made in the monastery. These so-called *polykandela* lamps were very common from late antiquity onwards, yet it is apparent from the excavations that the cells were primarily lit by bowl- or cup-shaped terracotta lamps.

The largest body of glass material is constituted by the rectangular red and green window panes (45 fragments in total). They are mould-blown and made from a rather high-quality glass paste with only a few visible air bubbles. The edges of some of the panes still preserve traces of lute for their attachment to window frames. The largest preserved dimension of a pane is *c.* 26 × 9 cm.

LITHIC MATERIALS

Several fragments from a polychrome stone floor (*opus sectile*) were excavated from Stratum 1–2 in Deposits 2 and 5, which equal respectively the northern aisle and the nave of the First Church. The depths of the finds are known only in the case of cat. no. 85, which was unearthed at a level of about 0.50 m below the floor level of the current church.

The sample consists of triangular, square, rectangular, decagonal, and hexagonal elements cut from various types of stone: white, black, and yellow limestone, along with two triangular pieces of red limestone. The configurations of the elements bear close similarities to both churches and mosques of medieval Cairo such as, for instance, the Hanging Church and the Mamluk period Mosque of Sultan Hassan (Fig. 23). As for the composition of the floor of the First Church, the longer, rectangular fragment (cat. no. 21) was most likely part of a frame, encircling various geometric compositions similar to that of the floors at the previously mentioned 14th-century mosque in Cairo.

ORGANIC MATERIALS

Baskets

The Life of Antony tells us that this monastic pioneer, among other things, spent his time in the desert “... weaving baskets, which he gave to those who came in return for what they brought him”.⁵⁴ The art of basket-weaving has, since the time of Antony himself, been an important occupation for the monks of the monastery, which is vividly illustrated in the ethnographic section of the Monastery Museum, which recently opened in 2016. Perhaps, therefore, it is not surprising that the largest quantity of organic materials found during the excavations within the Church of the Holy Apostles were baskets of plaited palm leaves. Only one object has been included

⁴⁹ The study was conducted by Sven Isaksson at the Archaeological Research Laboratory, Stockholm University.

⁵⁰ Colombini *et al.* 2005, 85f.

⁵¹ Colombini *et al.* 2005, 89.

⁵² Robinson 1959, 8. For a survey of wine consumption in Egyptian monasteries, see Larsen 2013; Bacot 1998.

⁵³ Danys-Lasek 2011, 622 (Nd.11.157).

⁵⁴ *Vita Antonii* 51.

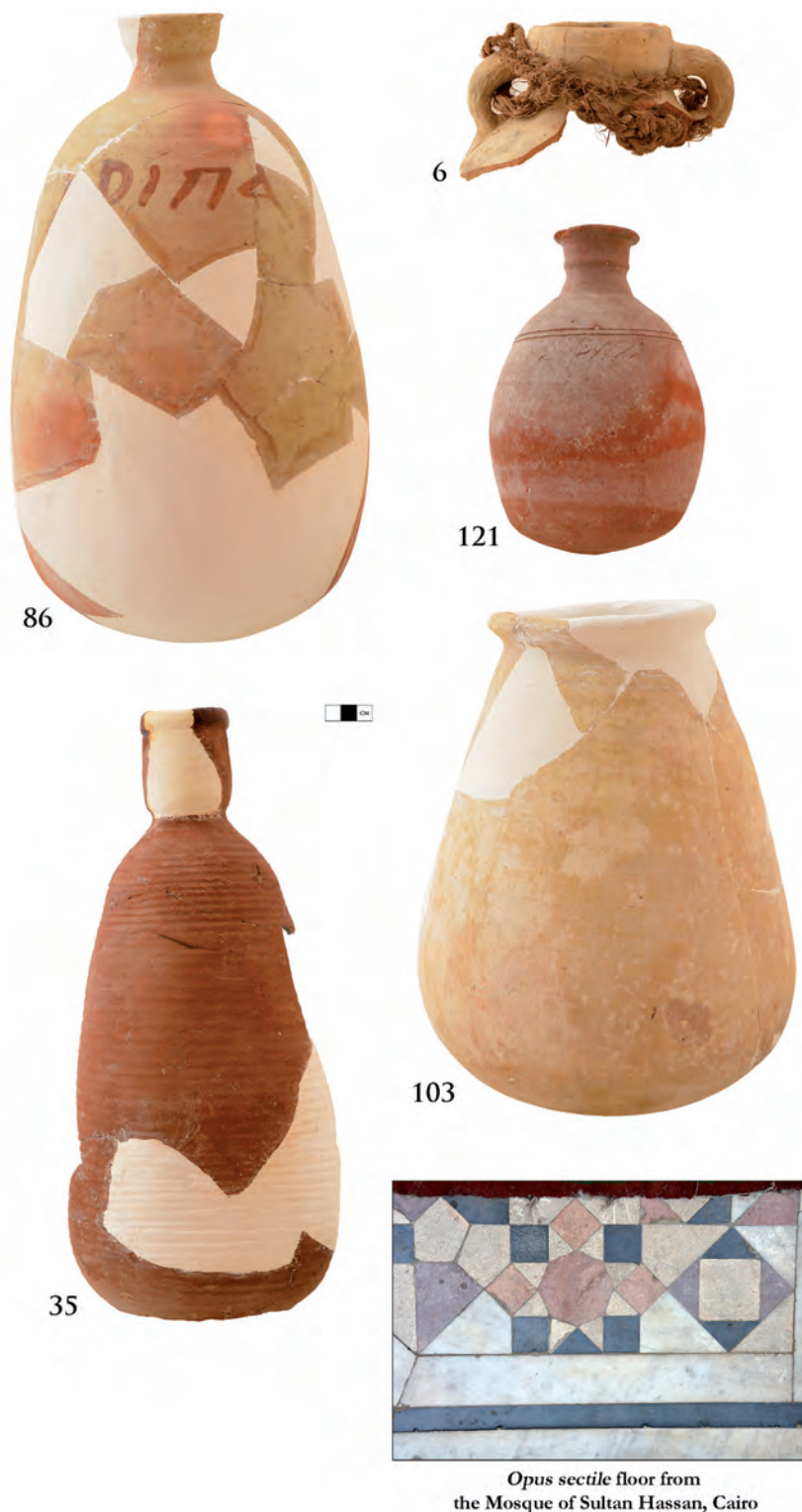


Fig. 23. Jugs, jars, amphora, and opus sectile floor (J. Blid).

in the catalogue (cat. no. 135), but many more baskets still await further scrutiny. The baskets all seem to be stratigraphically related to the “Cells”, and should thus be dated before the construction of the First Church. However, to date, no chronometric dating has been conducted on these baskets.

Textiles

To my knowledge, only one textile was found during the excavations (cat. no. 37). This square linen piece from Deposit 3, Stratum 3 features three preserved red crosses sewn with cross-stitches onto a white background. The narrow dimensions (22.5 × 24 cm) could perhaps suit a small tablecloth.

Wood

Three wooden fragments were excavated from Deposit 3, Stratum 3 and Unit 5, Stratum 1. The first (cat. no. 38) is a lathed baluster of a screen or leg that could possibly originate from some sort of furniture.⁵⁵ The other two fragments (cat. no. 108) are painted members of a perpendicular corner of a frame. Black curved lines are placed on a white background flanked by red details. Apart from these finds, there are many wooden building elements both within the walls of the “Cells” (Room 6) and in the stylobate of the First Church (in Units 1 and 2).

Manuscripts

A total of twelve parchment and paper manuscripts were unearthed at various locations and depths. Seven manuscripts have an identified find-spot; however, this is not always related to an exact vertical, stratigraphic location. Of the identified find-spots, 86% belong to Unit 1, Stratum 2–3 (Rooms 2 and 6), and the maximum recorded depth is 1.25 m (cat. no. 31) under the current church floor.

⁵⁵ For a comparable sample from the Monastery of St Epiphanius, see Winlock & Crum 1926, 55f., pl. XV:C–D.

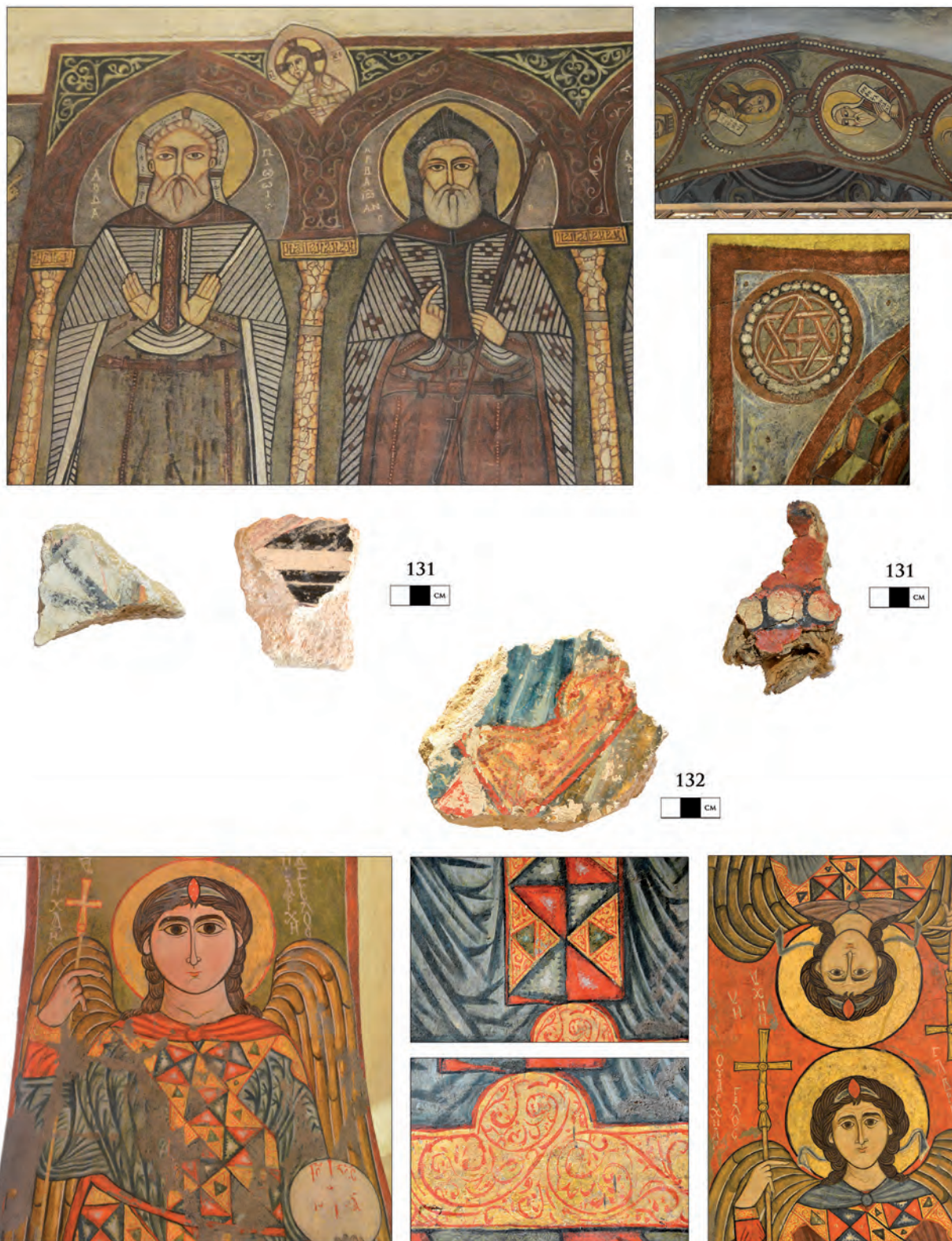


Fig. 24. Wall paintings from the Church of St Antony and similar fragments from the excavation (J. Blid).

Most of the identified stratigraphic affiliations have a depth of about 0.50 m.

Of the twelve manuscripts, six are Coptic, four Arabic, one Hebrew, and one in Ge'ez. Two manuscripts, cat. nos 12 (Deposit 1, Stratum 3) and 137 (unknown find-spot), have been radiocarbon dated (LuS 11568 and LuS 11567) with a calibrated date of AD 1020–1165 and AD 800–990 respectively. The manuscripts will be further described, transcribed/translated, and discussed below.

METALS

Among the metal finds (all of which have an unidentified find-spot) are a lead cross (cat. no. 133) and iron compasses (cat. no. 134). The cross has a truncated attachment on the back, which implies that it was originally an appliqué of some sort, maybe for a candelabrum. The compasses preserve a set of four parallel lines on the upper side, with the spacing of 1.4 cm, 1.4 cm, and 1.2 cm, which could perhaps relate to some form of measure module. It seems probable that the compasses were used in the shaping of the interior painting of the church, given the circular designs seen in excavated mural fragments (cf. cat. no. 132), as well as in the many similar examples preserved in the adjacent Church of St Antony.

WALL PAINTINGS

A number of fragments from wall paintings (about 40–50 in total) were unearthed during the excavations, and these can be divided into two clear categories, which are paralleled by the preserved murals in the adjacent Church of St Antony. The first category (cat. no. 131) belongs to the local Coptic tradition of painting, which displays great similarities to the repertoire of the painter Theodore, who decorated the neighbouring Church of St Antony in 1232/1233.⁵⁶ The technique is *al secco*, which is characteristic of Coptic wall painting in general.⁵⁷ Not only the colour and techniques but also the motifs can be discerned in light of the remains from the Church of St Antony. There are several fragments of alternating black and white lines, which is characteristic of clothing, as well as the frames of white pearls within a red border which are recognized as part of Theodore's style.⁵⁸ The latter is presumably a repair as it is not attached to plaster, which is the normal case; instead, a thin painted mortar surface is applied directly to what seems to be animal hair in some form of binding substance. The pearl frame is slightly curved, which indicates that

it was either framing a niche or arch or functioned as a medallion encircling a portrait (cf. *Fig. 24*).

The second category of frescoes belongs to the Byzantine style, featuring brighter colours, similar to the manner of the so-called Figural Master, who was active in the Church of St Antony, presumably shortly after Theodore.⁵⁹ The most easily distinguishable fragment is part of blue drapery, which in the neighbouring church is characteristic of the archangel Michael.⁶⁰ The blue drapery is lined with an embroidery-imitation of red lines on an ochre-yellow background. There is also a fragment of three adjacent, seemingly triangular fields of red, blue, and yellow, which equal the *loroi* of the archangels in the Church of St Antony. It is tempting to suggest that the *khurus* archway of the First Church was also decorated with two archangels, in a manner similar to that of the Church of St Antony. An additional third fragment seems to depict a white pearl on a blue background next to a red line. I have not found any direct parallels for this motif.

It has already been suggested that the iron compasses (cat. no. 134) may have been used during the making of outlines for the mural designs, but there are some additional finds that may be related to the decorating process of the interior of the First Church. During the excavations, two bowls (cat. nos 80 and 114) were found in Deposit 5 and in Unit 11, at a depth of about 0.30–0.40 m under the current church floor. Both bowls contain reddish pigments; cat. no. 80 is brighter and closer to the Byzantine style, whereas cat. no. 114 has a duller appearance, similar to the programme of Theodore. There is also a reworked amphora from Deposit 1, at a depth of 0.50 m (cat. no. 7), whose interior is covered with white mortar, which is seemingly very akin to the mural fragments as well as the *in situ* remains on Pier 2. It could, therefore, be suggested that the mortar for the murals was kept in the reworked amphora and that the previously mentioned bowls held the pigments for wall paintings. After the decoration process was complete, the equipment of the painters was discarded, somehow ending up under the final floor paving of the church. This may also be the case with the iron compasses.

⁵⁶ Bolman 2002, 37.

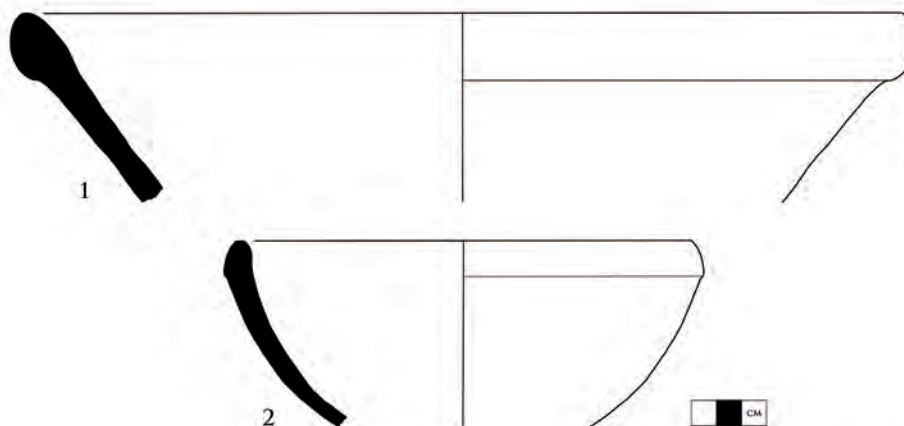
⁵⁷ Bolman 2002, 31.

⁵⁸ Bolman 2002, 79f.; see also figs. 4.32–33, 4.39, and 5.9–10.

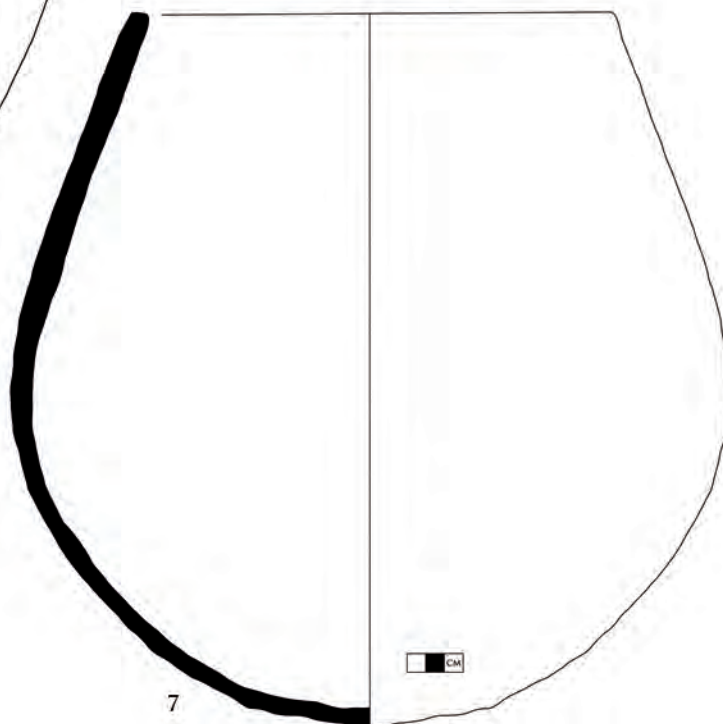
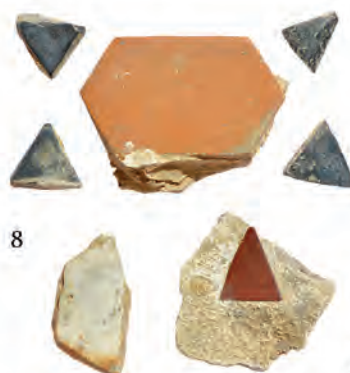
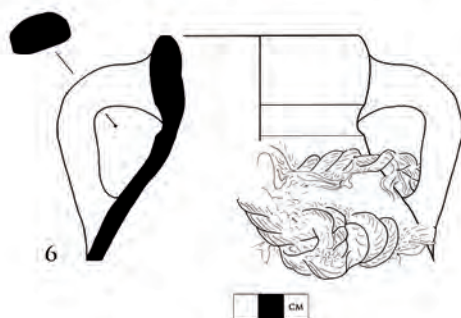
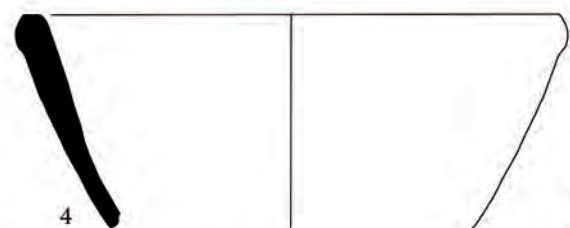
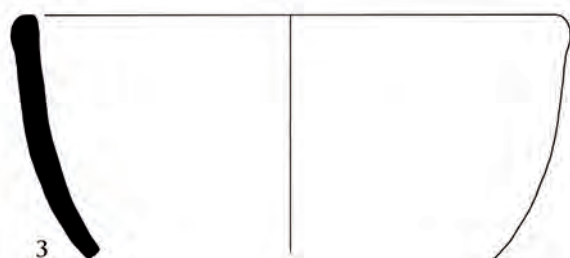
⁵⁹ Bolman 2002, 127–140.

⁶⁰ This is true for both the Figural Master's paintings in the *khurus* archway and the later, similar additions in the archway between the Deesis Chapel (or *Annex*, as it is referred to by Bolman) and the nave of the Church of St Antony. See *Fig. 24*; see also Bolman 2002, figs. 8.21–22.

DEPOSIT 1
STR. 1



STR. 2



Catalogue

BY JESPER BLID

DEPOSIT I

Stratum I

Desert clay,⁶¹ basin

1 Rim and wall (74:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 6); depth: 0.40 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 6/6, light red. Hard, dense fabric that makes sharp breaks. The fabric contains microscopic lime inclusions, *c.* 0.1–0.3 mm in size; distribution: *c.* 5–7 in 0.5 cm².

Description: Ø 36 cm, H. 8.5 cm. Exterior and interior fully covered by a calcareous layer, *c.* 0.5 mm thick.

Desert clay, bowl

2 Rim and wall (3:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 6); depth: 0.40 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 6/6, light red. Hard, dense fabric that makes slightly irregular breaks. Some sparse remains of small lime inclusions, *c.* 0.3–0.5 mm in size. There are also some sparsely distributed dark grains (quartz).

Description: Ø 19 cm, H. 7.5 cm. Exterior remains of brownish slip.

Stratum 2

Desert clay, bell-shaped bowl

3 Rim to base (2:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 6); depth: 0.90 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/8, red. The fabric contains lime inclusions, *c.* 1 mm in size; distribution: *c.* 4–5 in 0.5 cm². Some dark, sparsely distributed inclusions (quartz).

Description: Ø 22 cm, H. 9 cm.

4 Rim and wall (46:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 6); depth: 0.50 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/8, red. The fabric contains lime inclusions, *c.* 2–4 mm in size; distribution: *c.* 2–3 in 0.5 cm². Some sparsely distributed dark inclusions (quartz).

Description: Ø 22 cm, H. 8.5 cm. Exterior of wall is partly covered by patchy remains of brownish-red slip.

Desert clay, lid

5 Full section (2:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 6); depth: 0.90 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/6, red. Hard, dense clay that makes slightly irregular breaks. Angular lime inclusions, up to 2 mm in length; distribution: *c.* 3–8 in 0.5 cm².

Description: Ø 9 cm, H. 3.2 cm. Both the exterior and interior are covered with a calcareous layer, *c.* 0.2 mm in thickness.

Desert clay, amphora

6 Rim, two handles, and wall (65:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 6 (Cell, Room 6); depth: 0.50 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/6, red. Hard, dense clay that makes sharp breaks. Angular lime inclusions, up to 3 mm in size; distribution: *c.* 1–2 in 0.5 cm². Also dark inclusions, up to 0.5 mm in size.

Description: Ø 8.5 cm, H. 9 cm. Both the exterior and interior of the wall are covered by a whitish calcareous layer. There is a well-preserved rope tied between the two handles.

Desert clay, bag-shaped amphora

7 Wall and base (46:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 6); depth: 0.50 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/6, red. Hard, dense clay that makes sharp breaks. Angular lime inclusions, up to 2 mm in length; distribution: *c.* 3–8 in 0.5 cm². There are also dark inclusions, up to 0.5 mm in size.

Description: Ø (of secondary rim) 26 cm, H. 38 cm. Similarly to cat. no. 62, this amphora has been reworked in a secondary phase. The original neck and handles were sawn off, and the secondary rim is considerably worn, which shows a long reuse of the vessel. Both the exterior and interior are covered with a patchy calcareous layer, *c.* 0.2 mm in thickness. There are also remains on the interior of the wall of a thick layer of whitish mortar.

Elements of *opus sectile* floor

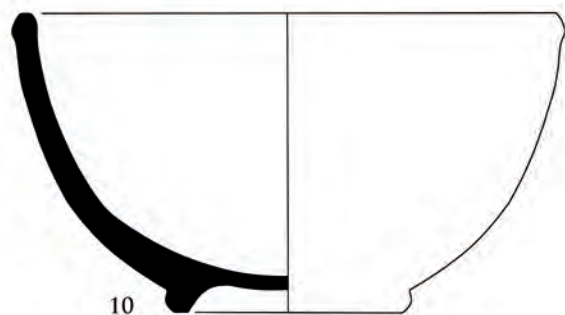
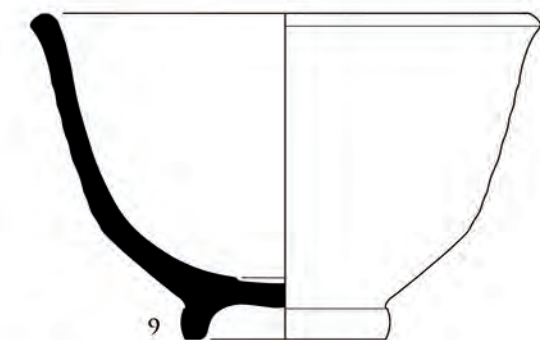
8 Five triangular, one hexagonal, and one decagonal fragment (41b:S1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 6); depth: unknown.

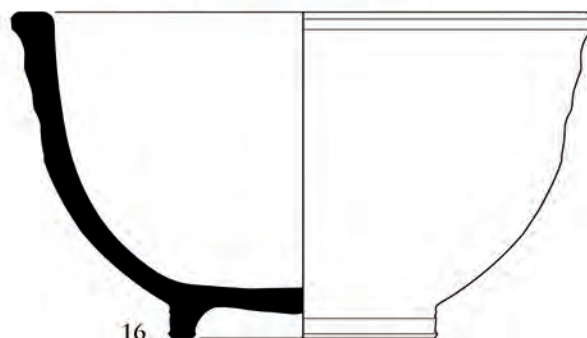
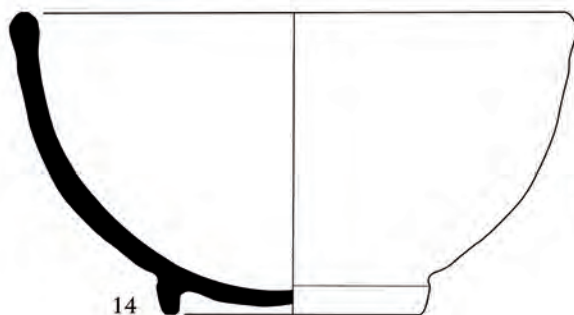
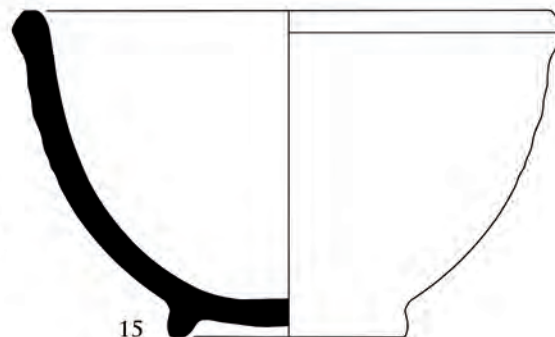
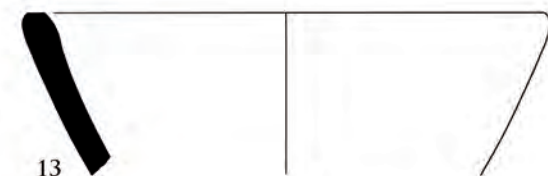
Description: The triangular fragments measure *c.* H. 3 cm, L. 2.5 cm, max. Th. 1.3 cm. Four of the fragments are cut from black limestone, and the last from red limestone. The red limestone fragment is still embedded in white mortar. The hexagonal fragment is cut from yellow limestone, and the decagonal from white limestone (cf. cat. no. 85). The fragments have an equal H. of 5 cm and Th. of 1.6 cm. The yellow limestone fragment is completely preserved and measures 8.5 cm in length. It is attached to white mortar on the underside.

⁶¹ Estimated to be Fabric 1, unless otherwise noted.

DEPOSIT 1
STR. 3



DEPOSIT 2
STR. 1



Stratum 3**Desert clay, bell-shaped bowl****9** Rim to base (43:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 6); depth: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 6/4, light reddish brown. The fabric contains lime inclusions, *c.* 2–4 mm in size; distribution: *c.* 2–3 in 0.5 cm².

Description: Ø 20 cm, Ø of base 8 cm, H. 11–13 cm. White calcareous scum on the exterior surface has been partly removed, which makes the appearance patchy red. The exterior wall shows clear traces of shallow grooves from the potter's wheel. Interior traces of a dark, oily substance.

10 Rim to base (41b:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 6); depth: 1.25 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 6/6, light red. Hard, dense fabric that makes sharp breaks. Angular lime inclusions, *c.* 0.3–2 mm; distribution: 2–3 in 0.5 cm². Some small black inclusions, *c.* 0.3–0.4 mm in size.Description: Ø 22 cm, Ø of base 9.5 cm, H. 12 cm. The whole vessel shows traces of very worn slip on top of a thin calcareous layer: *c.* 10R 4/6, red.**Desert clay, lid****11** Full section (43:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 6); depth: 1.25 m.

Fabric: Greyish-yellow clay with reddish nuances. Fired at a high temperature. The fabric is porous and sandy with many small cavities. Large lime inclusions, up to 3 mm in size; distribution: *c.* 1–2 in 0.5 cm². There are also dark inclusions of a similar size and distribution.

Description: Ø 14.2 cm, H. 2.5 cm. Both the exterior and interior surfaces are covered with a white calcareous scum with frequent imprints of straw.

Paper manuscript written in Hebrew (*Book of Lamentations*)**12** Top corner of page (43:Ms1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 6); depth: unknown.

Description: H. 12.3 cm, W. 5.6 cm. 13 lines preserved on both sides of the page. H. of lines: *c.* 3–4 mm. Spacing between lines: 3–4 mm. Average dimension of letters: *c.* 3 × 3 mm; for thin letters: *c.* 3 × 2 mm. The letters are written in dark brownish ink.**DEPOSIT 2****Stratum 1****Desert clay, bell-shaped bowl****13** Rim and wall (28:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 0.30 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/6, red. Hard, dense clay that makes sharp, slightly irregular breaks. The fabric contains lime inclusions, up to 1 mm in size; distribution: *c.* 2–3 in 0.5 cm².

Description: Ø 22 cm, H. 13 cm.

14 Rim to base (28:P3).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 0.30 m.

Fabric: 10R 6/8, light red. Hard, dense clay that makes sharp breaks. The fabric contains inclusions of lime, *c.* 1.0–1.3 mm; distribution: *c.* 2 in 0.5 cm². There are also very sparsely distributed dark inclusions, up to 1.0 mm in size.

Description: Ø 22 cm, Ø of base 10 cm, H. 12 cm. Exterior of wall is slightly grooved (wheel-made). Thin, patchy calcareous layer on both exterior and interior surfaces. Also, patchy remains of a reddish-brown slip on the exterior of the wall, applied on top of the calcareous layer.

15 Rim to base (13:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 0.30 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/4, reddish brown. The clay makes laminated breaks and contains a large quantity of lime inclusions; distribution: *c.* 7–8 in 0.5 cm². Size of inclusions varies between 0.3 and 4 mm. At certain areas, inclusions are as many as 20 in 0.5 cm².

Description: Ø 22 cm, Ø of base 9 cm, H. 13 cm. Some remains of the calcareous layer can be seen on the interior surface. No slip on exterior. Numerous small cavities/blisters in the exterior and interior façades. Three tiny holes drilled in the ring-base. Exterior shows clear grooves from the potter's wheel.

16 Rim to base (51:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 0.50–0.70 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 6/4, light reddish brown. Hard fabric that makes razor sharp breaks; very high quality. Microscopic lime inclusions, *c.* 0.3–0.4 mm; distribution: 3–4 in 0.5 cm². Occasionally some larger inclusions, *c.* 5 × 8 mm.

Description: Ø 23 cm, Ø of base 10.5 cm, H. 13 cm. Slip: 10YR 8/2, white. Surface is covered with a slip on top of a calcareous scum. The surface is slightly coarse with some reddish patches where the clay is shining through the slip. Slightly flared rim. The exterior shows clear grooves from the potter's wheel.

Desert clay, bowl-shaped lamp**17** Rim to base (13:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 0.30 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/4, reddish brown. The fabric makes somewhat irregular breaks and contains a few, fine lime inclusions, which are very sparsely distributed. There are a large number of fine, dark inclusions; distribution: *c.* 5–6 in 0.5 cm².

Description: Ø 10 cm, Ø of base 1.9 cm, H. 2.8 cm. Remains of burnt oil on the interior of the wall.

Desert clay, basin**18** Rim and wall (28:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 0.30 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 6/6, light red. Fabric is hard and dense and makes slightly irregular breaks. Some sparsely distributed lime inclusions, up to *c.* 1.2 mm in size. There are also some microscopic black inclusions.

Description: Ø 55 cm, H. 7 cm. Both exterior and interior are covered by white calcareous layer, possibly with some additional white slip: 10YR 8/2, white. The exterior wall is decorated with an irregular rouletted band.

Stratum 2**Desert clay, bell-shaped bowl****19** Rim and wall (49:P4).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 0.50–0.70 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 6/6, light red. Hard, dense clay that makes sharp breaks. Some small cavities in the fabric, and a few angular lime inclusions, *c.* 0.2–0.5 mm in size. Also, some small black inclusions, *c.* 0.2–0.3 mm in size.Description: Ø 20 cm, H. 8.5 cm. The exterior exhibits small patches of red slip applied on top of a *c.* 0.2 mm-thick calcareous layer.**Desert clay, dish****20** Rim and wall (77:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 4/4, reddish brown. Hard fabric with some smaller cavities. It makes clean breaks and contains rather irregular lime inclusions; distribution: *c.* 3–5 in 0.5 cm². Also small dark inclusions.

Description: Ø 51 cm, H. 8 cm. Slightly blackened rim. The exterior and interior are covered by a thick slip: 10R 4/6, red.

Elements of an *opus sectile* floor**21** Two fragments of one floor slab (85:S1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: unknown.

Description: Two fragments of a rectangular floor slab in black limestone. H. 30.2 cm, max. W. 7 cm, Th. 2.7 cm.

Stratum 3**Desert clay, bell-shaped bowl****22** Rim to base (44:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 1.20 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/6, red. Hard, dense fabric that makes sharp breaks. Only a single dark inclusion is visible, *c.* 1.0 mm in size. Description: Ø 20 cm, Ø of base 9 cm, H. 12.5 cm. Thin, patchy calcareous layer on both exterior and interior surfaces. There are also patchy remains of a smooth reddish-brown slip on the exterior wall (applied on top of the calcareous layer).**23** Rim and wall (32:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 1.30 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 6/6, light red. Hard, dense fabric that makes sharp breaks. Angular lime inclusions, *c.* 0.3–2 mm; distribution: 2–3 in 0.5 cm². Some small black inclusions, *c.* 0.3–0.4 mm in size.Description: Ø 22 cm, Ø of base 10.5 cm, H. 14 cm. The whole vessel shows traces of very worn slip: *c.* 10R 4/6, red.**24** Rim to base (32:P3).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 1.30 m.

Fabric: 10R 6/8, light red. Hard, dense clay that makes sharp breaks. The fabric contains inclusions of lime, *c.* 1.0–1.1 mm; distribution: *c.* 3 in 0.5 cm². There are also very sparsely distributed dark inclusions, up to 1.1 mm in size.

Description: Ø 21 cm, Ø of base 9 cm, H. 12.5 cm. Exterior wall is slightly grooved (wheel-made). Thin, patchy calcareous layer on both exterior and interior surfaces. Also, patchy remains of a reddish-brown slip on the exterior wall, applied on top of the calcareous layer.

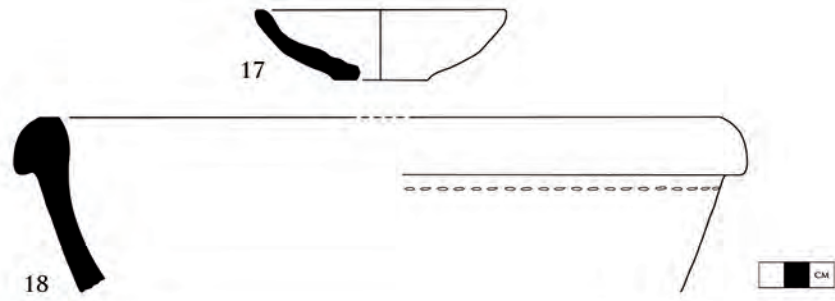
25 Rim to base (32:P4).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 1.30 m.

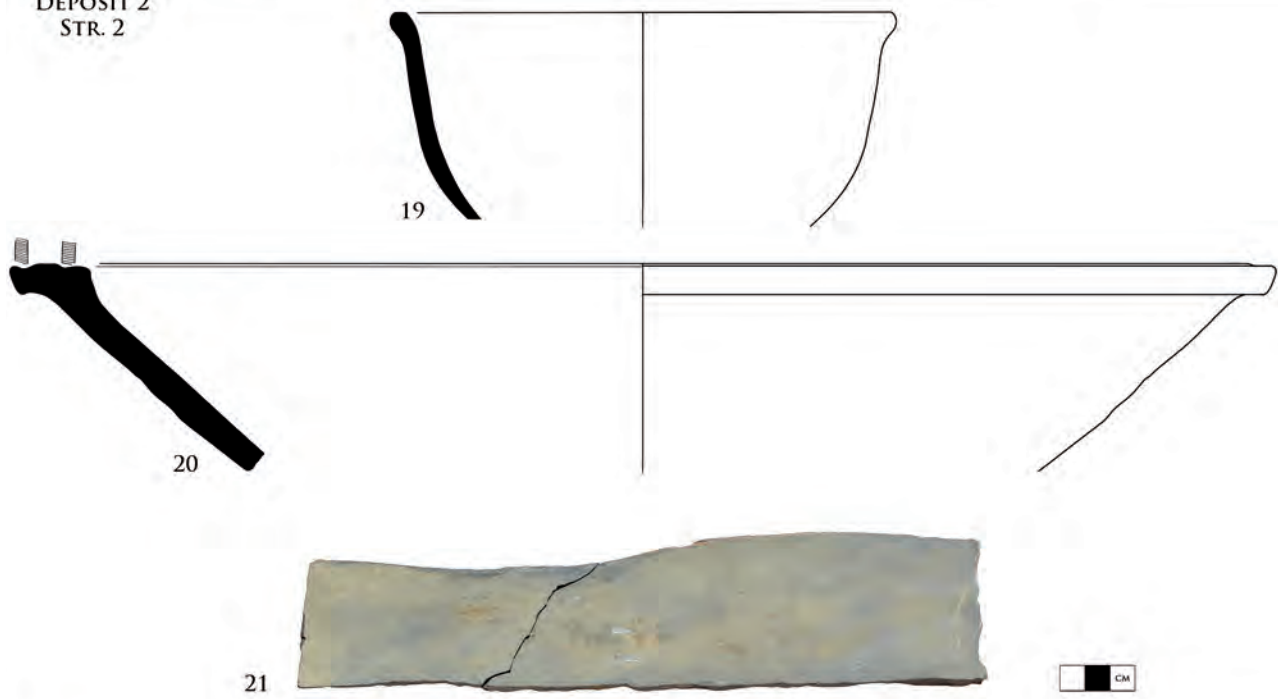
Fabric: 10R 6/6, light red. Hard, dense clay that makes slightly laminated breaks. The fabric contains lime inclusions, *c.* 1.0–1.1 mm; distribution: *c.* 2 in 0.5 cm². There are also very sparsely distributed dark inclusions, up to 1.0 mm in size; distribution: *c.* 2 in 0.5 cm².

Description: Ø 21 cm, Ø of base 9 cm, H. 12.5 cm. Exterior wall is slightly grooved (wheel-made). Thin, patchy calcareous layer on both exterior and interior surfaces. There are also patchy remains of a reddish-brown slip on the exterior of the wall, applied on top of the calcareous layer.

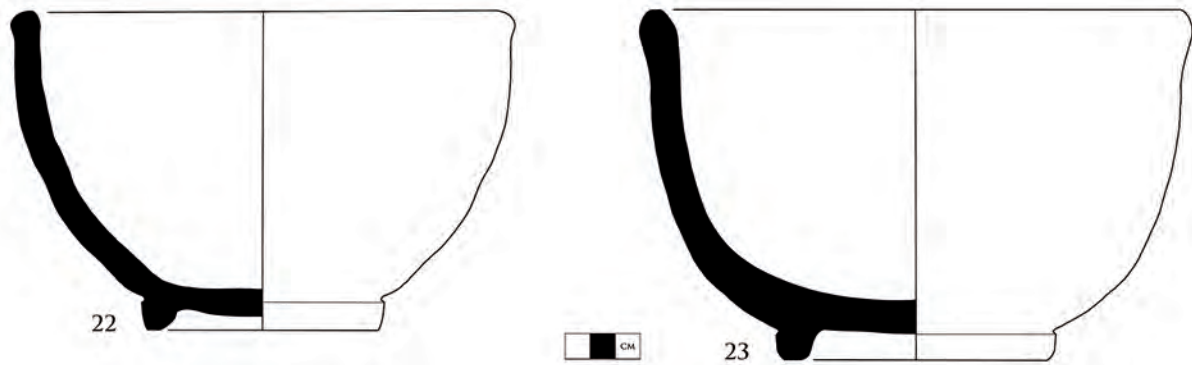
DEPOSIT 2
STR. 1



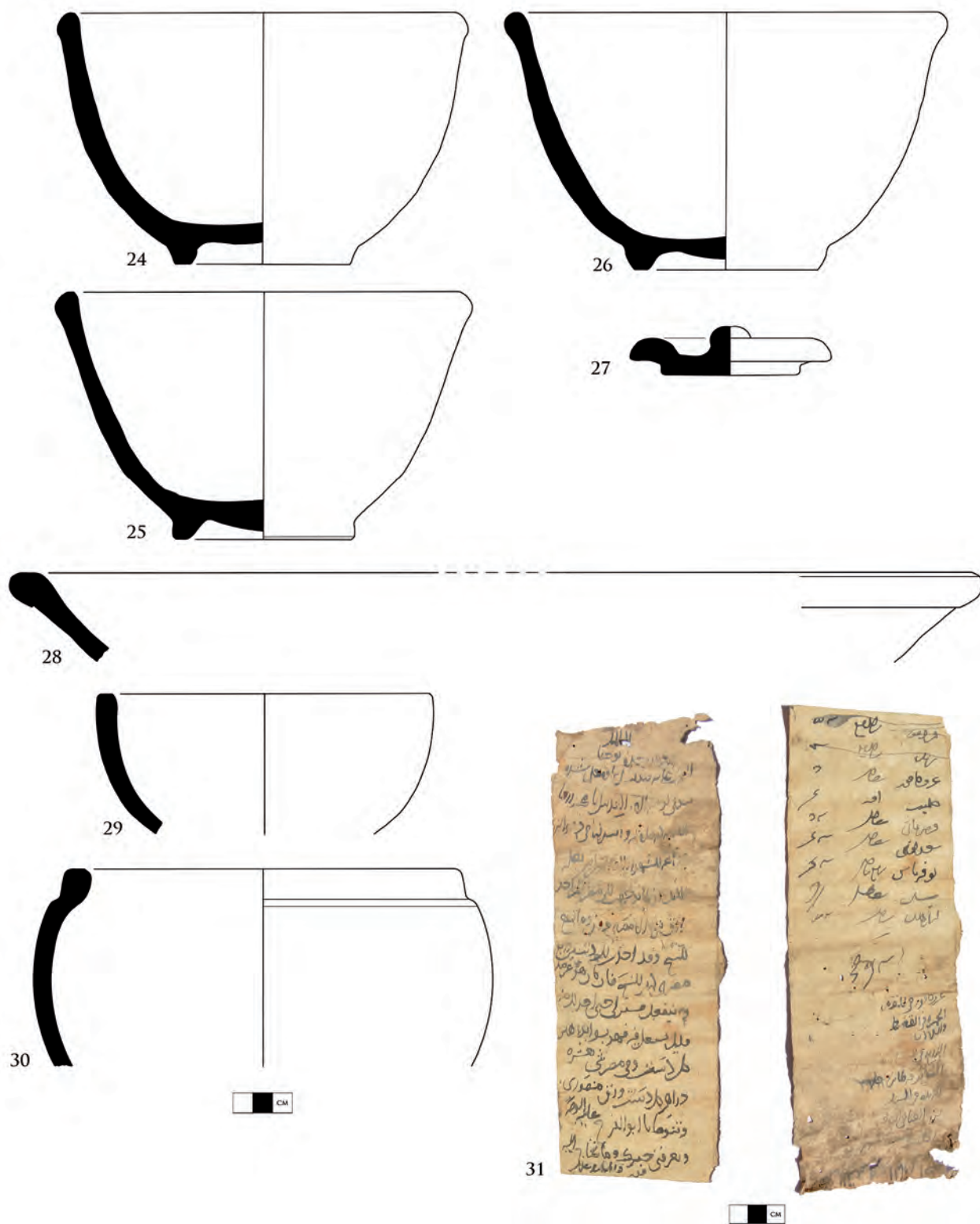
DEPOSIT 2
STR. 2



DEPOSIT 2
STR. 3



DEPOSIT 2
STR. 3



26 Rim to base (32:P5).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 1.30 m.

Fabric: 10R 6/6, light red. Hard, dense clay that makes sharp breaks. The fabric contains inclusions of lime, *c.* 1–2 mm; distribution: 3–4 in 0.5 cm². There are also very sparsely distributed dark inclusions, up to 2.0 mm in size.

Description: Ø 22 cm, Ø of base 9 cm, H. 13 cm.

Desert clay, lid**27 Fragment with fully preserved profile (32:P2).**

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 1.30 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/6, red. Hard, dense fabric that makes clean breaks. Many microscopic lime inclusions; distribution: up to 15 in 0.5 cm².

Description: Ø 10 cm, H. 2.5 cm. The exterior surface is completely covered with a calcareous layer, *c.* 1 mm thick.

Desert clay, dish**28 Rim and wall (49:P2).**

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/4, reddish brown. Very well-fired, dense clay (no visible cavities) that makes clean, sharp breaks. The fabric contains irregular lime inclusions; distribution: *c.* 3–5 in 0.5 cm². Also, small black inclusions of a similar distribution.

Description: Ø 57 cm, H. 4.5 cm. The rim and the interior wall are covered by slightly glossy slip: 10R 4/6, red. Vague traces of calcareous crust on the exterior wall. There are two drilled holes in the wall (Ø 5 mm): probably an ancient repair.

Unidentified fabric, bowl**29 Rim and wall (49:P1).**

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 4/8, red. Coarse, dense clay with whitish inclusions, *c.* 5 mm in width. Presumably not desert clay.

Description: Ø 17 cm, H. 7 cm. Slip: 10R 3/6, dark red.

Unidentified fabric, cooking vessels**30 Rim and wall (49:P3).**

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/4, reddish brown. The clay is dense, makes clean breaks, and contains very small white and black grains.

Description: Ø 20 cm, H. 10 cm. The interior is covered by red slip: 2.5YR 4/6, red. The exterior is patchy, mostly in the colour tone: 10R 5/6, yellowish brown.

Paper manuscript written in Arabic**31 Complete sheet (100:Ms5).**

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 1.25 m.

Description: H. 24.5 cm, max. W. 9 cm. 19 lines, and 17 lines on the reverse of the page. H. of lines: 1 cm. Spacing between lines: *c.* 1 cm. The letters are written in black ink.

DEPOSIT 3**Stratum 1****Nile clay, glazed bowls****32 Rim and wall (41c:P1).**

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 6); depth: 0.30–0.40 m.

Fabric: Dense clay: 2.5YR 5/4, reddish brown; no visible inclusions and it makes uneven breaks.

Description: Ø 23 cm, H. 9 cm. Decorated on both exterior and interior with a knobbly, thin, and fragile glaze in yellow, white, and dark brown. The exterior has a more greenish glaze. Incised decoration is accentuated by coloured glaze.

33 Rim and wall (41c:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 6); depth: 0.30–0.40 m.

Fabric: cf. cat. no. 32.

Description: Ø of base 4.5 cm, H. 5 cm. The decoration follows a similar concept to that of cat. no. 32, but the surface treatment is more developed and carefully executed.

Stratum 3**Desert clay, bell-shaped bowl****34 Rim and wall (8:P1).**

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/4, red. The fabric is of rather poor quality and makes saw-toothed breaks. It contains large inclusions of lime and what looks like gravel, *c.* 5 mm in size. The vessel is very heavy.

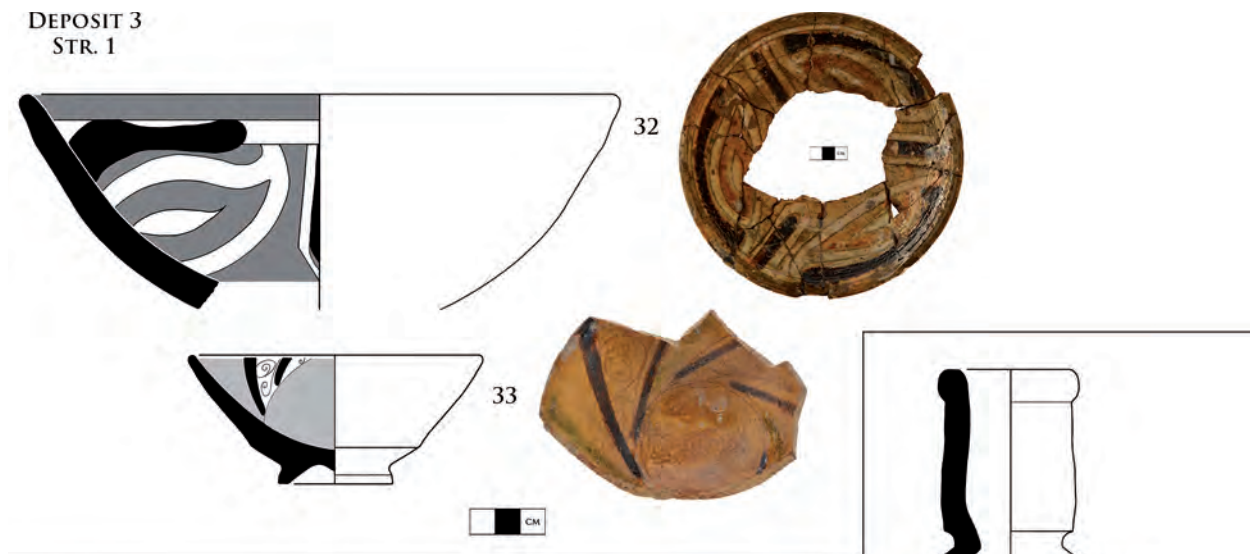
Description: Ø 24 cm, Ø of base 12 cm, H. 13 cm. Exterior of wall: 10R 7/3, very pale brown. Rather irregular vessel, especially at the base.

Nile silt (Fabric 2), bag-shaped jug**35 Rim to base (48:P1).**

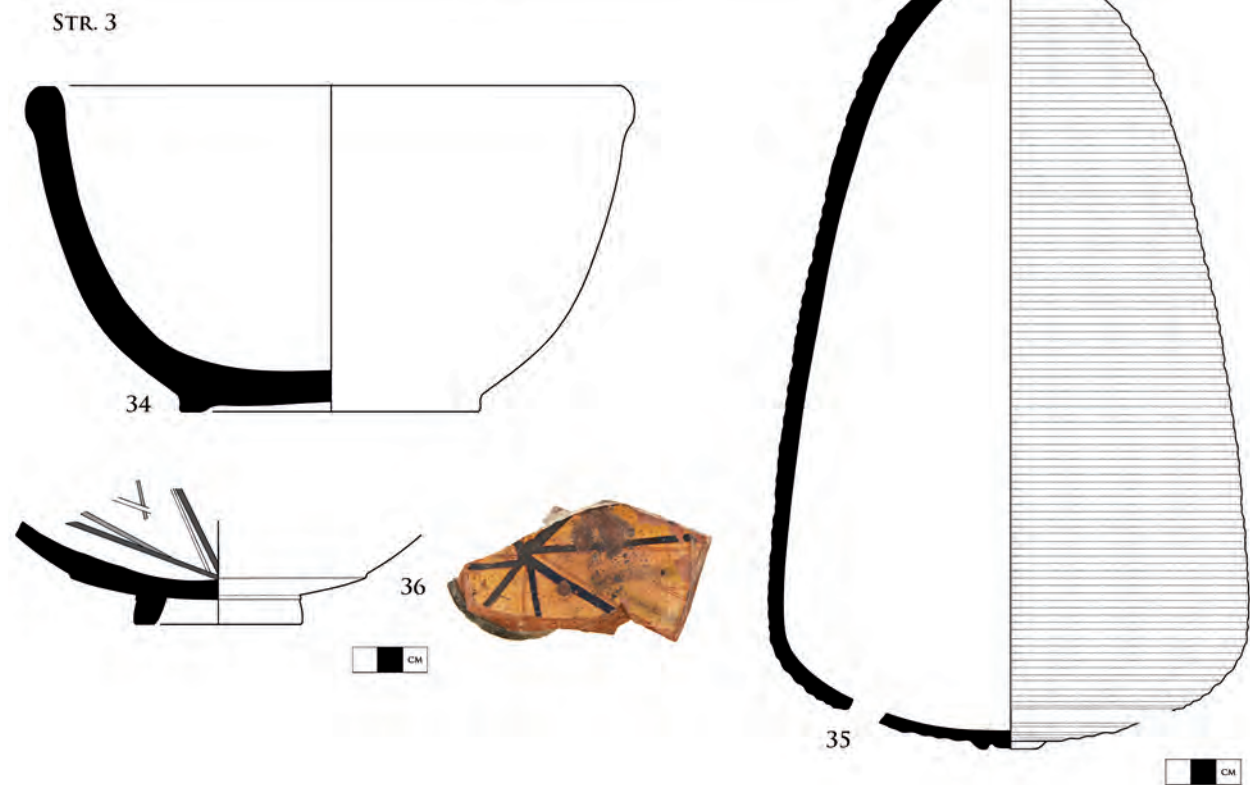
Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: unknown.

Fabric: The colour of the fabric varies between 2.5YR 3/4, dark reddish brown, and 2.5YR 3/6, dark red. The fabric was not properly fired, and the inner half is blackish grey/greyish black. The clay is filled with small (*c.* 1 mm large) inclusions of lime. The fabric is dense and hard and makes clear, sharp breaks.

DEPOSIT 3
STR. 1



STR. 3



Description: Ø 5.5 cm, Ø of base 2 cm, H. 38 cm. The exterior wall is ribbed. The interior of the wall is partly covered with an oily substance (resin?).

Unidentified fabric (presumably Nile silt), glazed bowl

36 Wall and base (48:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 3/6, dark reddish brown. Hard, dense fabric that makes slightly irregular breaks. Some sparsely distributed, microscopic dark grains.

Description: Ø of base 6.4 cm, H. 4.1 cm. The surviving section of the exterior is coated in dark yellow glaze. The interior has an incised decoration of thick, dark lines flanked by thin, light brown lines on an ochre-yellow background.

Textile with cross decorations

37 (48:Te1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: unknown.

Description: H. 22.5 cm, W. 24 cm. The height is fully preserved, and the full width is preserved at the centre. Two of the corners are damaged by fire. The background of the textile is white, and two red cross-stitched crosses (3 × 3 cm) adorn the two preserved corners. One large cross (6 × 6 cm) is situated at the centre.

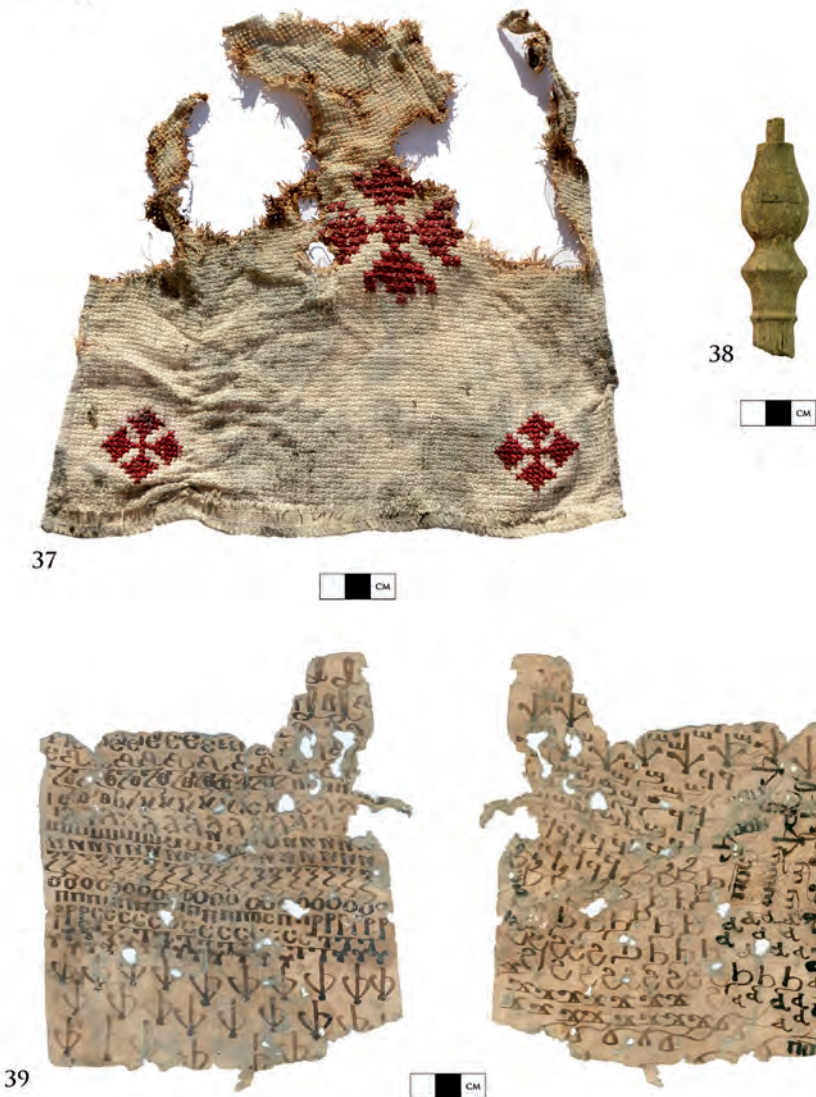
Lathed wooden fragment

38 (48:W1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 6); depth: unknown.

Description: H. 9.5 cm, max. W. 2.6 cm. Lathe wooden fragment; presumably belonging to a screen or some sort of furniture. The top part contains a dowel meant for connecting it to another member.

**DEPOSIT 3
STR. 3**



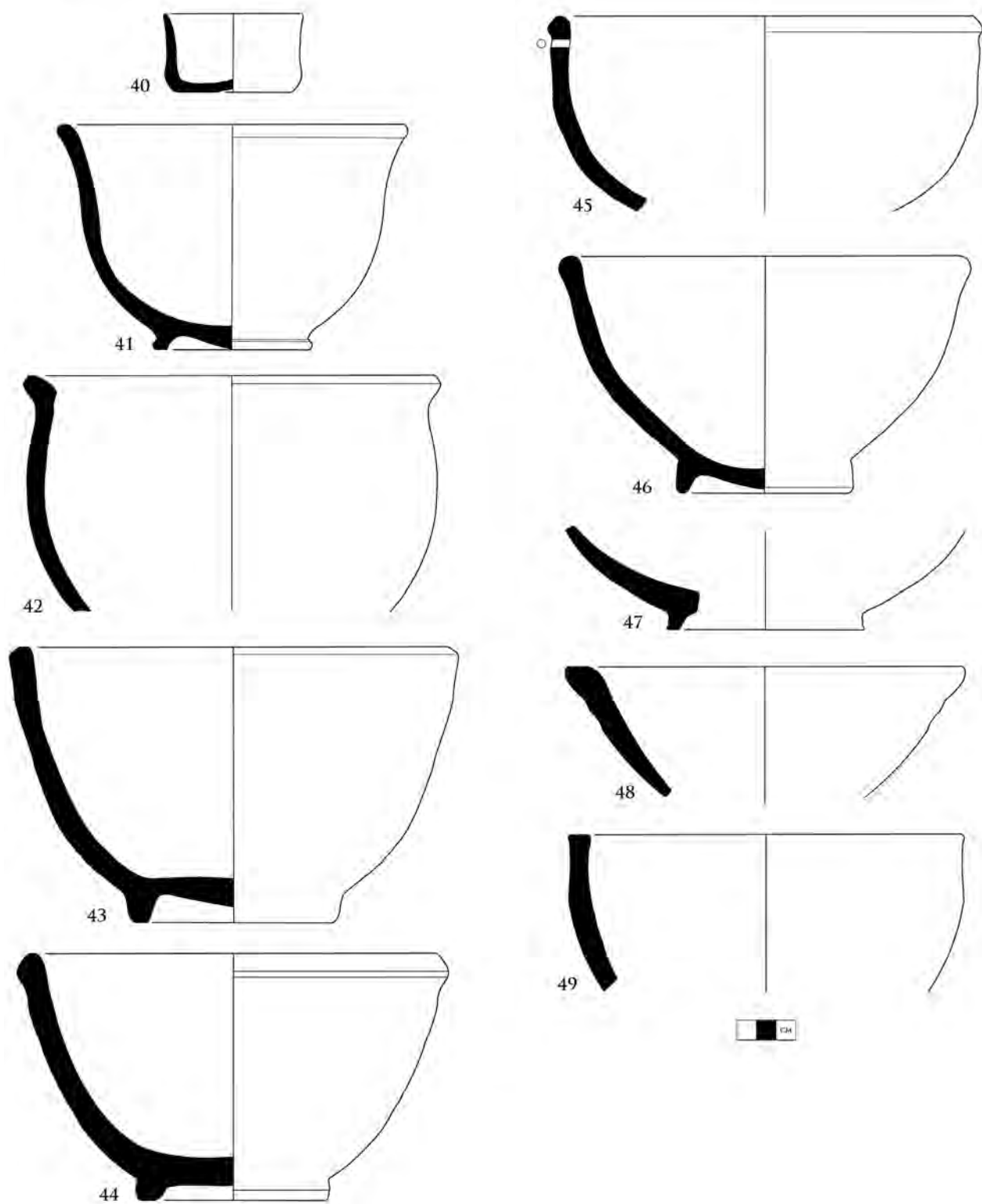
Paper manuscript written in Coptic (scribal exercise)

39 Fragment (48:Ms1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 6); depth: unknown.

Description: H. 17 cm, W. 14.5 cm. The letters, which often follow the order of the alphabet, are written with dark brown ink. Individual letters are repeated, sometimes over several lines. The H. of the letters varies between 4 and 15 mm. The syllable $\pi\alpha\epsilon$ is used four times.

DEPOSIT 3
STR. 5



Stratum 5

Desert clay, cup reused as lamp

40 Base and wall (50:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 2.00 m.

Fabric: *c.* 10YR 6/2, light brownish grey. Hard, dense clay with small, angular lime inclusions, 0.4–0.7 mm in size; distribution: *c.* 4–5 in 0.5 cm². The fabric makes clean, sharp breaks. Description: Ø 7 cm, Ø of base 5.2 cm, H. 4 cm. The exterior wall and rim are covered with a calcareous layer with small irregular cavities and whitish inclusions. Most of the interior is covered with soot.

Desert clay, bell-shaped bowl

41 Rim to base (82:P3).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 2.10 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 6/6, light red. Hard, dense fabric that makes clean, sharp breaks. Both rounded and angular inclusions of lime, 0.1–0.5 mm in size; distribution: *c.* 5–10 in 0.5 cm². Also some black grains with dimensions of up to 0.5 mm.

Description: Ø 18 cm, Ø of base 8 cm, H. 11.5 cm. Surface covered with a calcareous layer, *c.* 0.3–0.5 mm in width. Some small red spots on the exterior wall may imply that the vessel was originally red slipped.

42 Rim and wall (14:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 2.00 m.

Fabric: 10R 5/8, red. The colour of the fabric occasionally shifts with whitish and yellowish nuances. The fabric is hard and dense and makes very clean breaks. The clay is perfectly fired. The fabric contains some angular lime inclusions, up to 0.5 mm in size; distribution: *c.* 4–7 in 0.5 cm².

Description: Ø 21 cm, H. 11.5 cm. The surface is not slipped but is occasionally covered with patches of a calcareous layer, particularly on the rim.

43 Rim to base (82:P4).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 2.00 m.

Fabric: 10R 6/4, pale red. Hard, dense clay that makes rough breaks. The fabric contains inclusions of lime, *c.* 1.0 mm; distribution: *c.* 2 in 0.5 cm².

Description: Ø 22 cm, Ø 10 of base cm, H. 14 cm. Exterior of wall is slightly grooved (wheel-made). Thin, patchy calcareous layer on both exterior and interior surfaces. Also, patchy remains of a reddish-brown slip on the exterior wall, applied on top of the calcareous layer.

44 Rim to base (36:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/4, reddish brown. The clay makes laminated breaks and includes a large number of small lime inclusions;

distribution: *c.* 7–8 in 0.5 cm². The inclusions measure *c.* 0.3–4 mm in size. In certain areas, inclusions are as many as *c.* 20 in 0.5 cm² (cf. cat. no. 15).

Description: Ø 22 cm, Ø of base 9.5 cm, H. 12.5 cm. Slip: 10R 4/6, red. Vague traces of whitish layer on interior wall.

45 Rim and wall (6:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 2.00 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/6, red. Hard, dense clay that makes somewhat irregular breaks. The fabric contains very small and loosely distributed lime inclusions, 0.1–0.2 mm in size; distribution: *c.* 2–3 in 0.5 cm². There are also some dark inclusions with a less-frequent distribution.

Description: Ø 22 cm, H. 10 cm. The vessel was originally slipped on both exterior and interior: 10R 4/6, red. An ancient repair is evidenced by two Ø 4 mm drilled holes, which remain preserved in both remaining wall fragments of the vessel.

46 Rim to base (6:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 2.00 m.

Fabric: 10R 6/6, light red. Hard, dense clay that makes sharp breaks. The fabric contains inclusions of lime, *c.* 1.0–1.2 mm; distribution: *c.* 4 in 0.5 cm². Also, very sparsely distributed dark inclusions, up to 1.1 mm in size.

Description: Ø 21 cm, Ø 9 of base cm, H. 12 cm. The exterior wall is slightly grooved (wheel-made). Thin, patchy calcareous layer on both exterior and interior surfaces. Also, patchy remains of a reddish-brown slip on the exterior of the wall, applied on top of the calcareous layer.

47 Base and wall (29:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 2.00 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/6, red. Hard, dense clay that makes irregular breaks. The fabric contains very small and loosely distributed lime inclusions, 0.1–0.2 mm in size; distribution: *c.* 2–3 in 0.5 cm² (cf. cat. no. 45). There are also some dark inclusions with a less-frequent distribution.

Description: Ø of base 10 cm, H. 5 cm. Somewhat coarse slip preserved on both exterior and interior surfaces: 10R 4/6, red.

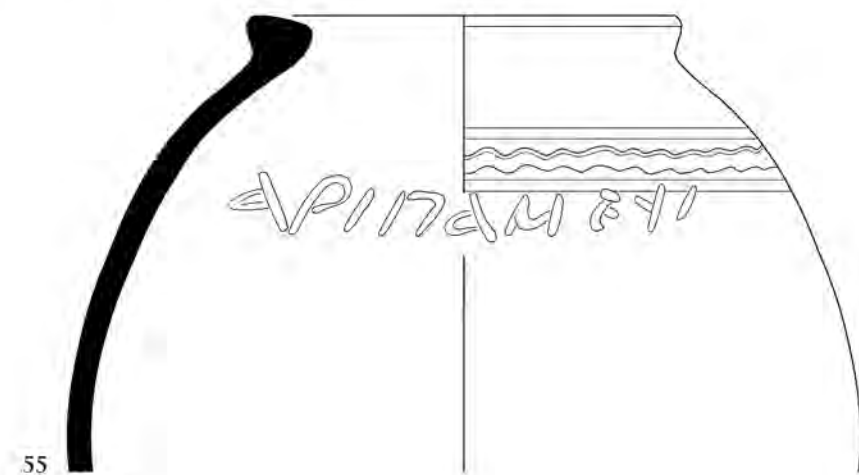
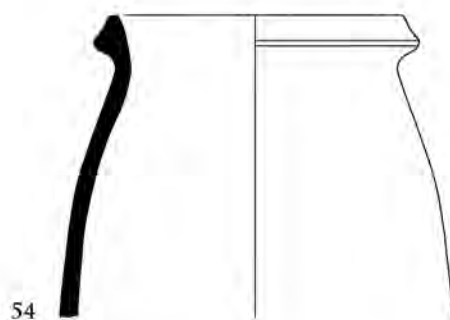
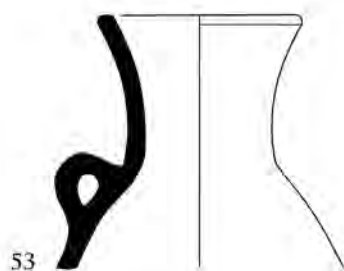
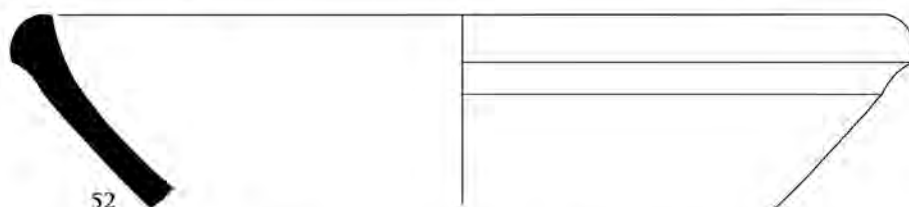
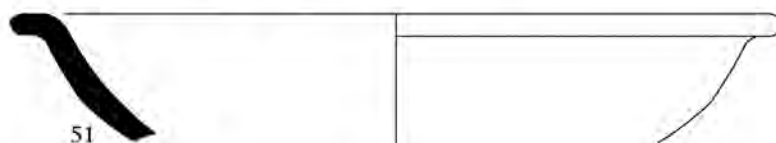
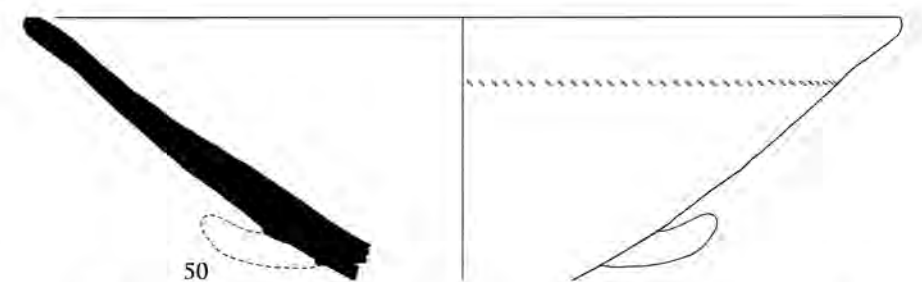
48 Rim and wall (82:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 3/6, dark red. The clay is dense and hard with microscopic (0.2–0.4 mm) inclusions of lime and quartz. The clay makes irregular breaks.

Description: Ø 21 cm, H. 7 cm. The exterior and interior surfaces have a partly preserved slip: 10R 4/8, red. The interior surface is patchy: buff, whitish, pinkish, and red (from the slip). Patchy, thin calcareous crust under the slip.

DEPOSIT 3
STR. 5



49 Rim and wall (82:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/6, red. Dense fabric that makes slightly laminated breaks. Includes rounded lime inclusions, *c.* 0.2–0.4 mm.

Description: Ø 20 cm, H. 8 cm. The exterior and interior surfaces are covered with slip: 10R 3/6, dark red.

Desert clay, dish**50 Rim and wall (40:P2).**

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 2.15 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/6, light red. The fabric is hard and dense and contains lime inclusions, *c.* 0.3–6 mm in size; distribution: up to 12 in 0.5 cm². The fabric makes somewhat irregular breaks.

Description: Ø 35 cm, H. 10 cm. Both exterior and interior surfaces are covered with whitish slip: 10YR 8/2, white. The exterior wall is decorated with a somewhat irregular rouletted band. One broken-off handle was found preserved at the lower part of the wall.

51 Rim and wall (4:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: unknown.

Fabric: The colour of the clay is orange to light brownish red, and the core is greyish. The fabric is dense and hard and makes laminated breaks. There are many large lime inclusions, *c.* 1.5–2 mm in size. There are also black inclusions (quartz).

Description: Ø 31 cm, H. 5 cm. Slip: leather coloured slip with a light reddish tone: 5YR 5/3, reddish brown.

52 Rim and wall (4:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 4/4, reddish brown. Dense, hard clay with a few microscopic lime inclusions. The fabric makes clean breaks.

Description: Ø 36 cm, H. 7.5 cm. Slip on exterior and interior: 10R 4/6, red.

Desert clay, jug/decanter**53 Rim and wall (15:P1).**

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 2.10 m.

Fabric: 10R 6/8, light red. The clay is dense and makes clean breaks. It contains lime inclusions and small dark grains.

Description: Ø 7.5 cm, H. 10 cm. The surface is white slipped. One handle is attached to an everted neck.

Desert clay, jar**54 Rim and wall (15:P2).**

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 2.10 m.

Fabric: The fabric was very well fired and at a high temperature. The clay has a light grey colour with nuances of olive green. There are some microscopic inclusions of lime and black grains.

Description: Ø 15 cm, H. 12 cm. The whole exterior and interior surfaces are covered with a greyish-white calcareous surface, with nuances of olive green (not glazed). The fragment was probably fired at a temperature of about 1,000°C.

55 Rim and wall (79:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 2.00 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 4/6, red. The clay is dense and hard and makes clean breaks. The core of the fabric is darkish and was not fired properly. The fabric contains many large and irregular lime inclusions, up to 5 mm in length; distribution: *c.* 4–6 in 0.5 cm².

Description: Ø 17.5 cm, H. 18 cm. A yellowish-greyish white calcareous crust covers the exterior of the vessel. The exterior of the wall is decorated with the incised inscription in Coptic ⲁⲣⲓⲡⲁⲙⲉⲩⲓ (79:i1): H. 1.6–2.5 cm, L. 18 cm. The inscription is surmounted by a wave pattern. The jar has a knobbed rim and globular body.

Desert clay (Fabric 3), strainers**56 Neck (6:P3).**

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 2.00 m.

Fabric: 5Y 8/3, pale yellow. The fabric was fired at a very high temperature (showing nuances of olive green) but is slightly porous and contains a large number of small cavities. The clay makes slightly irregular breaks. Small black inclusions, up to *c.* 0.6 mm.

Description: Ø of neck 8.4 cm, H. 4.1 cm.

57 Neck (36:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 2.00 m.

Fabric: cf. cat. no. 56.

Description: Ø of neck 6.6 cm, H. 4 cm. Vague remains of white slip on the exterior of the neck.

58 Neck (86:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 2.00 m.

Fabric: cat. no. 56. Small black inclusions, up to *c.* 1 mm in size; more densely distributed than 56–57: *c.* 4–7 in 1 cm².

Description: Ø of neck 7.6 cm, H. 6.4 cm.

Desert clay, brazier**59 Wall (40:P1).**

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 2.15 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/6, red. The core of the vessel is dark as it was not fired properly. The clay contains lime inclusions of various sizes, up to c. 5 mm; distribution: c. 5–6 in 0.5 cm². There are also dark grains of quartz.

Description: Ø 62 cm, lower Ø 43 cm, H. 22 cm. There is an incised inscription on the interior of the wall (oriented upside down) reading ⲁⲣⲓⲛⲁ (H. 3.4–5.2 cm, L. 14 cm). The interior wall is completely covered with soot. The base of the vessel is a rough, secondary recut; this also goes for the c. 40 cm-long and 6.5 cm-high interstice at the bottom of the wall. The original layout of the vessel probably had the present rim as a base, hence the current upside-down orientation of the inscription. The exterior of the wall is decorated with a series of incised bands, and the surface is covered with a thin whitish calcareous crust. The original function of the vessel is uncertain.

Desert clay, jar?**60 Rim and wall (15:P3).**

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 2.10 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/6, red. Hard, dense clay that makes sharp, slightly irregular breaks. The fabric contains lime inclusions, up to 1 mm in size; distribution: c. 2–3 in 0.5 cm². There are also dark inclusions, up to c. 1 mm in size; very sparse distribution.

Description: Ø 18 cm, H. 5 cm.

Desert clay, jug (?) with inscription in Coptic**61 Wall (6:i1).**

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 2.00 m.

Fabric: The fragment was probably fired at a temperature of about 1,000°C, which turned the fabric olive green. Coarse clay with many cavities and black inclusions.

Description: H. 6.4 cm, W. 8.9 cm. The exterior surface is whitish with nuances of olive green. There is an incised inscription [ⲁⲣⲓ]ⲛⲁ (H. 2.6–3.6 cm, L. 4.8 cm), which is oriented 90° clockwise from the wheel-made grooves.

Unknown stratum**Desert clay (unknown origin), bag-shaped amphora****62 Wall and base (100:P1).**

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: unknown.

Fabric: The colour of the fabric varies between 2.5YR 3/4, dark reddish brown, and 2.5YR 3/6, dark red. The fabric was not properly fired, and the inner half is blackish to grey/greyish black. The clay is filled with small (c. 1 mm large) inclu-

sions of lime. The fabric is dense and hard and makes slightly irregular breaks.

Description: Ø (of secondary rim) 21 cm, H. 36 cm. The neck and the handles of the amphora were removed, and the vessel was thereafter used for a long period of time. The secondary rim is worn and covered with soot. A purplish-grey coating covers the exterior of the wall, perhaps a miss-coloured calcareous surface. Both the exterior and interior of the body are grooved.

OTHER FINDS FROM UNIT I**Stratum I****Unidentified fabric (presumably Nile silt), glazed bowl reused as lamp****63 Rim to base (25:P1).**

Find-spot: Unit 1; depth: unknown.

Fabric: c. 2.5YR 3/4, dark reddish brown. Slightly porous clay that makes laminated breaks. No visible inclusions (for the fabric, cf. cat. no. 118).

Description: Ø 12 cm, Ø of base 4 cm, H. 5 cm. Interior is coated with a green glaze. The glaze is hardly visible owing to an irregular, flaky, and oily layer which covers the whole interior of the vessel.

Stratum 2**Desert clay, bell-shaped bowl****64 Rim and wall (101:P1)**

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 2); depth: 0.65 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 6/6, light red. Hard, dense fabric that makes clean, sharp breaks. Both rounded and angular inclusions of lime, 0.1–0.5 mm in size; distribution: c. 5–10 in 0.5 cm². Also, some black grains with dimensions of up to 0.5 mm.

Description: Ø 22 cm, H. 11 cm. Clear remains of dull red slip on the interior of the wall: 2.5YR 4/6, red.

Paper manuscripts written in Arabic and Ge'ez (respectively)**65 Fragment (100:Ms3).**

Find-spot: Unit 1; depth: 0.50 m.

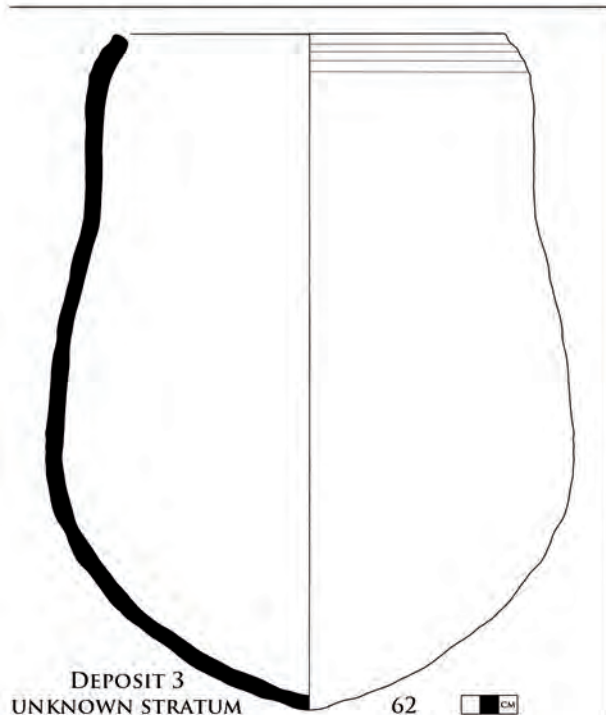
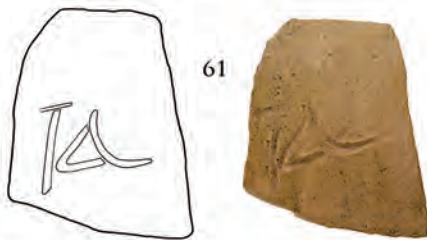
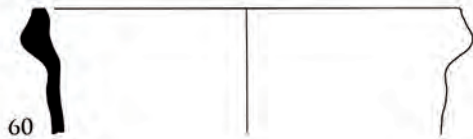
Description: H. 22.5 cm, max. W. 17.5 cm. 14 lines (with three on the side), and 12 lines (and five on the side) on the reverse. H. of lines: 1 cm. Spacing between lines: c. 1.5 cm. The letters are written in black ink.

66 Fragment (100:Ms4).

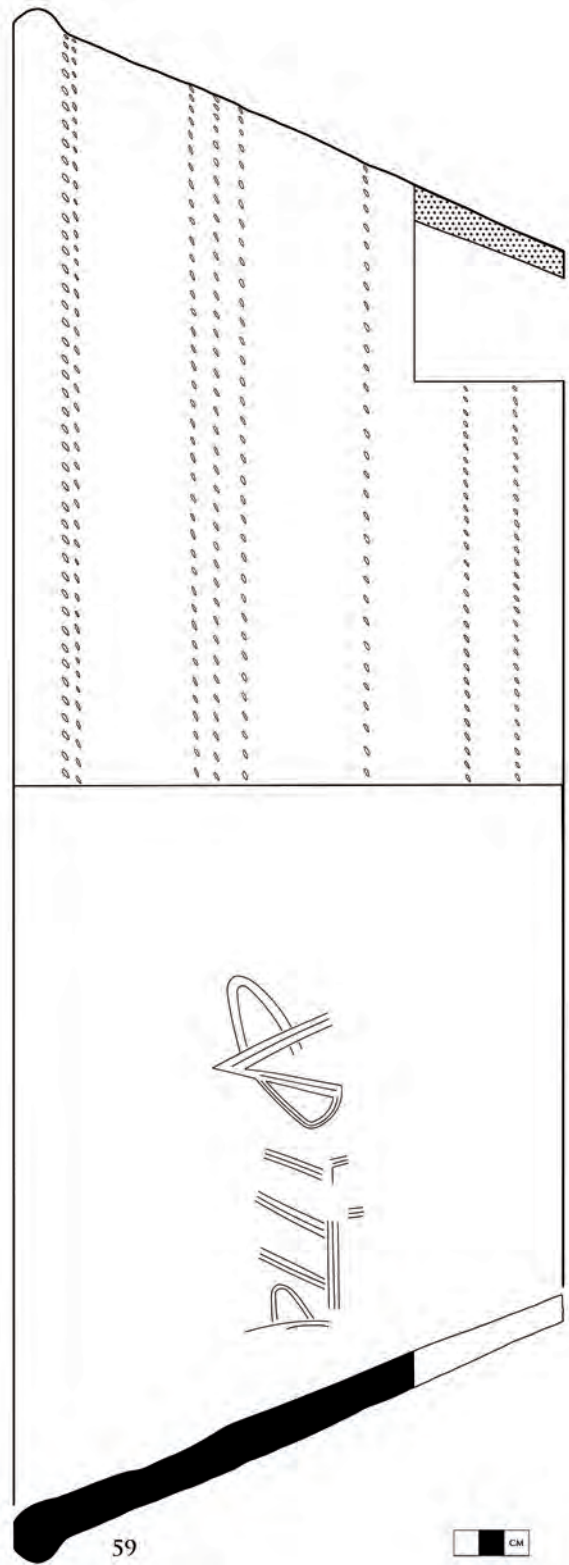
Find-spot: Unit 1; depth: 0.50 m.

Description: H. 9.5 cm, W. 7 cm. *Recto*: 10 lines preserved. H of lines: 0.5–1.0 cm. Spacing between lines: 0.5–1.0 cm.

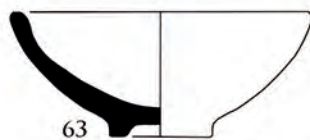
DEPOSIT 3
STR. 5



DEPOSIT 3
UNKNOWN STRATUM



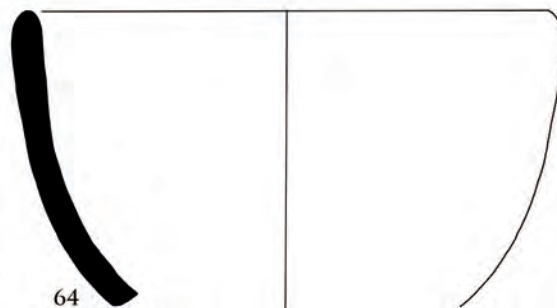
OTHER FINDS FROM UNIT 1 STR. 1



63



STR. 2



64



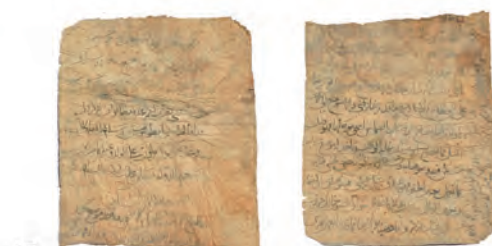
65



UNIT 1 UNKNOWN STRATUM



66



67



Average dimension of letters: 0.5×0.8 cm; for thin letters: 0.4×0.4 cm. Most of the letters are written in dark brownish ink, including the four decorative red dots at the end of the first line. 40 letters are legible. There is also a decorated item in the heading. *Verso*: 10 lines preserved. H of lines: *c.* 0.3–0.6 cm. Spacing between lines: 0.5 cm. Average dimension of letters: 0.4×0.6 cm; for thin letters: 0.2×0.4 cm. The letters are written in dark brownish ink. 47 letters are legible.

Unknown stratum

Paper manuscript written in Arabic

67 Fragment (100:Ms1).

Find-spot: Unit 1, just north of the stylobate of the church; depth: unknown.

Description: H. 13 cm, W. 11 cm. 10 lines (two lines on the side), and 12 lines on the reverse. H. of lines: 1.3 cm. Spacing between lines: *c.* 5 mm. The letters are written in black ink.

DEPOSIT 4

Stratum 4

Desert clay, jar

68 Rim and wall (87:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 6 (Cell, Room 1); depth: 1.50 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/4, reddish brown. Well-fired clay with a uniform colour. The fabric is dense and makes clean, sharp breaks. There are a few microscopic inclusions of lime, *c.* 0.3–0.4 mm in size; distribution: *c.* 2–3 in 0.5 cm^2 .

Description: Ø 16 cm, H. 6.8 cm. The whole vessel is covered by a calcareous layer, *c.* 0.2 mm in thickness. Exterior wall is decorated with four parallel incised lines (cf. cat. no. 55).

Desert clay, amphora

69 Rim, two handles, and wall (21:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 6 (Cell, Room 1); depth: unknown.

Fabric: Yellowish-white fabric with nuances of olive green. Hard, dense clay that makes clean, sharp breaks. Both the fabric and the exterior and interior surfaces have a homogeneous colour. The vessel was fired at a very high temperature, and there are no visible inclusions of lime. Sparsely distributed black inclusions, up to 1.2 mm in size.

Description: Ø 10 cm, H. 12 cm. There are traces of white slip on the exterior of the wall.

Desert clay, bowl

70 Rim and wall (10:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 6 (Cell, Room 1); depth: 1.90 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/8, red. Hard, dense clay that makes sharp breaks. Sparsely distributed angular lime inclusions, up to 1.2 mm in length. There are also some microscopic dark grains.

Description: Ø 20 cm, H. 8.5 cm. Exterior and interior are partly covered by a whitish, patchy calcareous layer.

Desert clay, bell-shaped bowl

71 Rim to body (34:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 6 (Cell, Room 1); depth: 2.00 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 6/4, light reddish brown. Well-fired clay with a uniform colour. The fabric is dense and makes clean, sharp breaks. There are a few microscopic inclusions of lime, *c.* 0.3–0.4 mm in size; distribution: *c.* 2–3 in 0.5 cm^2 .

Description: Ø 20 cm, Ø of base 8 cm, H. 12 cm. A yellowish-white calcareous layer covers the whole vessel. The vessel is completely covered in a hard mortar and ash layer.

72 Rim and wall (10:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 6 (Cell, Room 1); depth: 1.90 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 6/6, light red. Hard, dense fabric that makes slightly irregular breaks. There are some large angular and sparsely distributed lime inclusions, up to 2 mm in size. There are also plenty of fine dark inclusions of sand; distribution: *c.* 3–4 in 0.5 cm^2 .

Description: Ø 22 cm, H. 8 cm. There is a very thin calcareous layer preserved on the rim and exterior of the wall.

Desert clay, lid

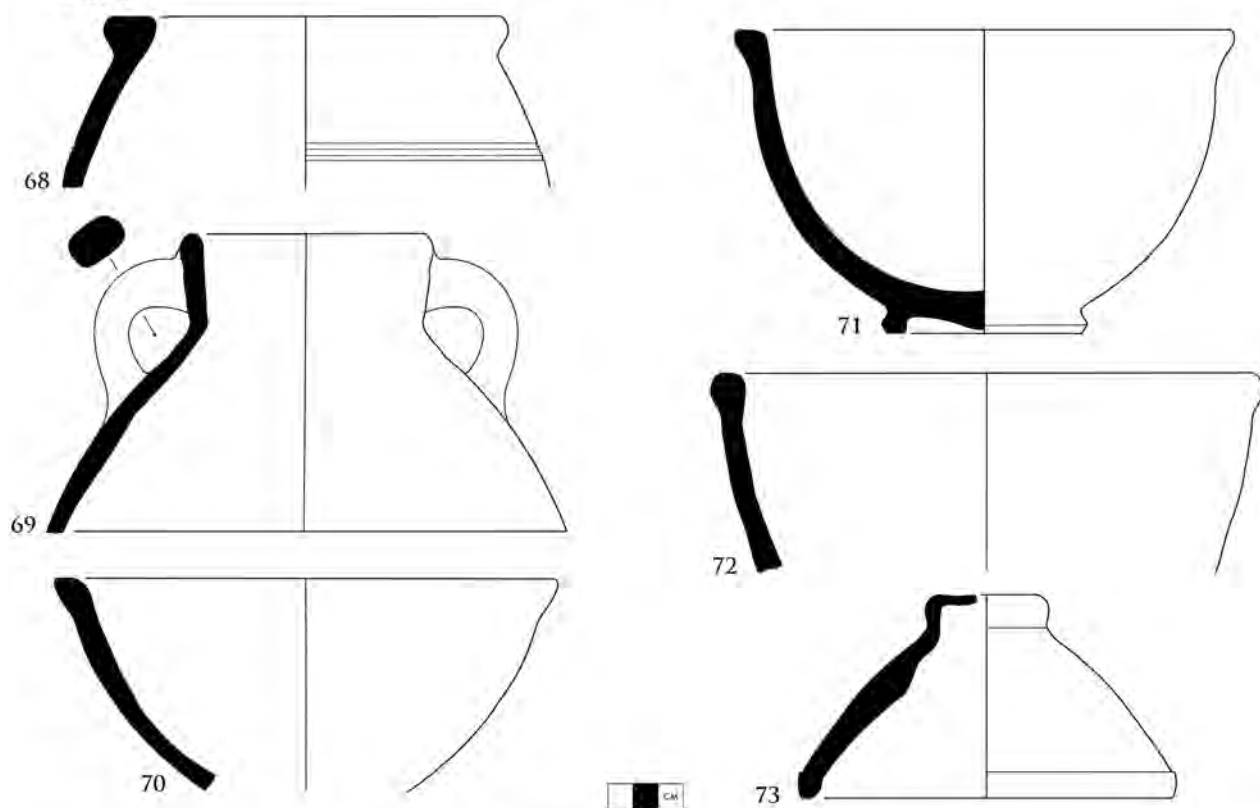
73 Rim to body (34:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 6 (Cell, Room 1); depth: 2.00 m.

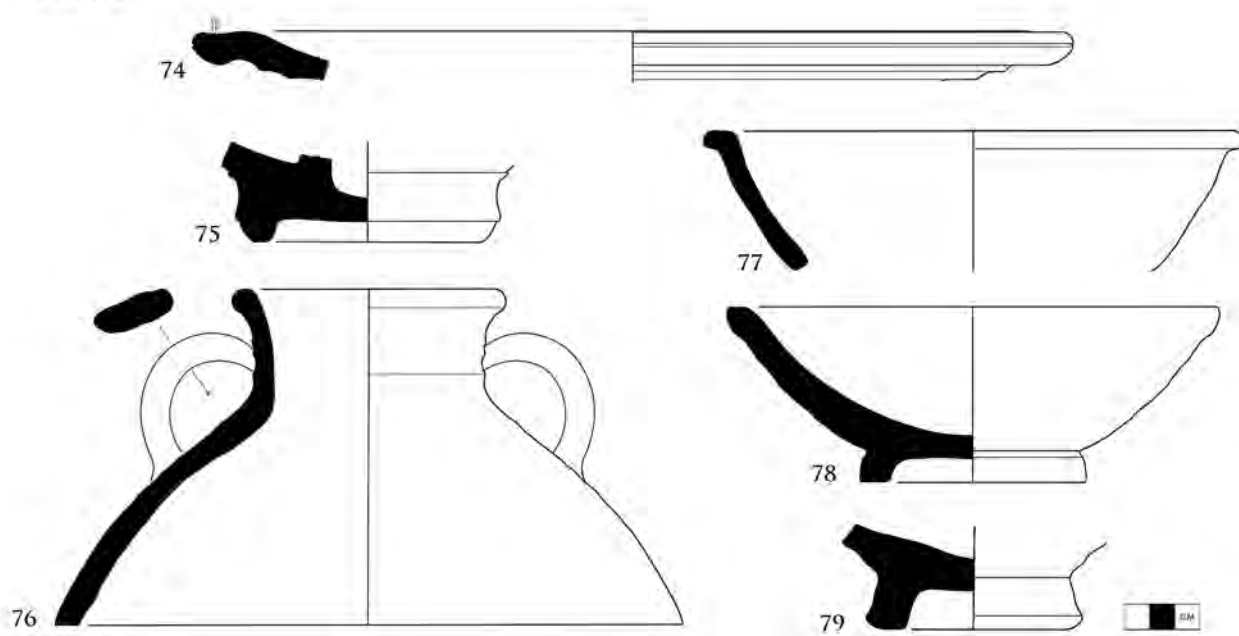
Fabric: 2.5YR 6/4, light reddish brown. cf. cat. no. 71; there are however, more and larger (angular) lime inclusions in cat. no. 73, *c.* 0.3 cm in length; distribution: 5–6 in 0.5 cm^2 .

Description: Ø 15 cm, Ø of handle 4.4 cm, H. 8 cm. A yellowish-white calcareous layer covers the whole vessel. There is a drilled hole in the handle (Ø 6 mm).

DEPOSIT 4
STR. 4



DEPOSIT 5
STR. 1/2



DEPOSIT 5**Stratum 1/2****Nile fabric red slip ware, dish (mould-made)****74** Rim (18:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 6 (Cell, Room 5); depth: unknown.

Fabric: 5YR 5/4, reddish brown. Hard, dense clay that makes slightly laminated breaks. No visible inclusions.

Description: Ø 35 cm, H. 2.3 cm. Thick, deep, and glossy slip: 10R 4/8, red. Flaring rim, decorated with incised lines on the side and top. The fragment has a slightly carinated exterior wall.

Nile clay, censer?**75** Base and wall (88:P3).

Find-spot: Unit 6 (Cell, Room 5); depth: unknown.

Fabric: 5YR 5/4, reddish brown. The core of the fabric is not properly fired and is therefore dark grey. Some small, angular lime inclusions.

Description: Ø of base 13 cm, H. 4 cm. Both exterior and interior are covered with thick slip: 2.5YR 3/6, dark red. The slip includes clear imprints of straw. The vessel is equipped with a double wall and a richly moulded ring-base.

Desert clay, amphora**76** Rim, neck, two handles, and wall (72:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 6 (Cell, Room 5); depth: 0.10–0.70 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/8, red. The fabric is dense and hard and makes sharp breaks. The inclusions (lime and grains of quartz) are microscopic and very sparsely distributed.

Description: Ø 11 cm, H. 13.5 cm. The exterior and interior surfaces are covered by a whitish calcareous layer. The preserved top of the vessel has been carefully removed with a saw from the rest of the amphora (similar to cat. nos 7 and 62), but the remaining part has not been located.

Desert clay, bowls**77** Rim and wall (88:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 6 (Cell, Room 5); depth: unknown.

Fabric: Colour ranging between 7.5YR 5/4, brown, and 7.5YR 6/4, reddish yellow. The clay is dense and makes irregular breaks. Angular inclusions of lime, *c.* 0.5 mm in size, and also small black grains, *c.* 0.1–0.2 mm in size.

Description: Ø 22 cm, H. 4 cm. Leather coloured slip: 5YR 5/3, reddish brown. Slightly darker tones on the exterior wall.

78 Rim to base (16:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 2 (Cell, Room 5); depth: unknown.

Fabric: Colour ranges between buff and brownish red. The clay is generally very dense and fine; however, there are some larger inclusions of lime, *c.* 5 mm in size. The clay is coated with a thin, patchy calcareous surface.

Description: Ø 20 cm, H. 7 cm. The bowl is slipped on both the exterior and interior: 2.5YR 4/6, red. The interior shows some traces of soot.

79 Base and body (90:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 6 (Cell, Room 5); depth: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/4, reddish brown. Very well-fired, dense clay (no visible cavities) that makes clean, sharp breaks. The fabric contains very small lime inclusions; distribution: *c.* 10–15 in 0.5 cm².

Description: Ø of base 14.5 cm, H. 4 cm. Very worn slip: 2.5YR 3/6, dark red.

Desert clay, Bell-shaped bowl**80** Wall and base (100:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 6 (Cell, Room 5); depth: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 6/6, light red. Hard, dense fabric that makes sharp breaks. Angular lime inclusions, *c.* 0.3–2 mm; distribution: 2–3 in 0.5 cm².

Description: Ø of base 9 cm, H. 3 cm. The vessel preserves a thick and irregular layer of red paint on the interior wall. The bowl must have been used as a container for pigments for, most likely, wall paintings. The colour of paint has a very bright nuance of 10R 5/8, red (with a slight orange tone).

Nile silt, lid**81** Wall (88:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 6 (Cell, Room 5); depth: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 4/4, reddish brown. Hard fabric that makes rather clean breaks. No visible inclusions.

Description: Ø 20 cm, H. 3 cm. Covered with red slip on both exterior and interior wall: 10R 4/6, red.

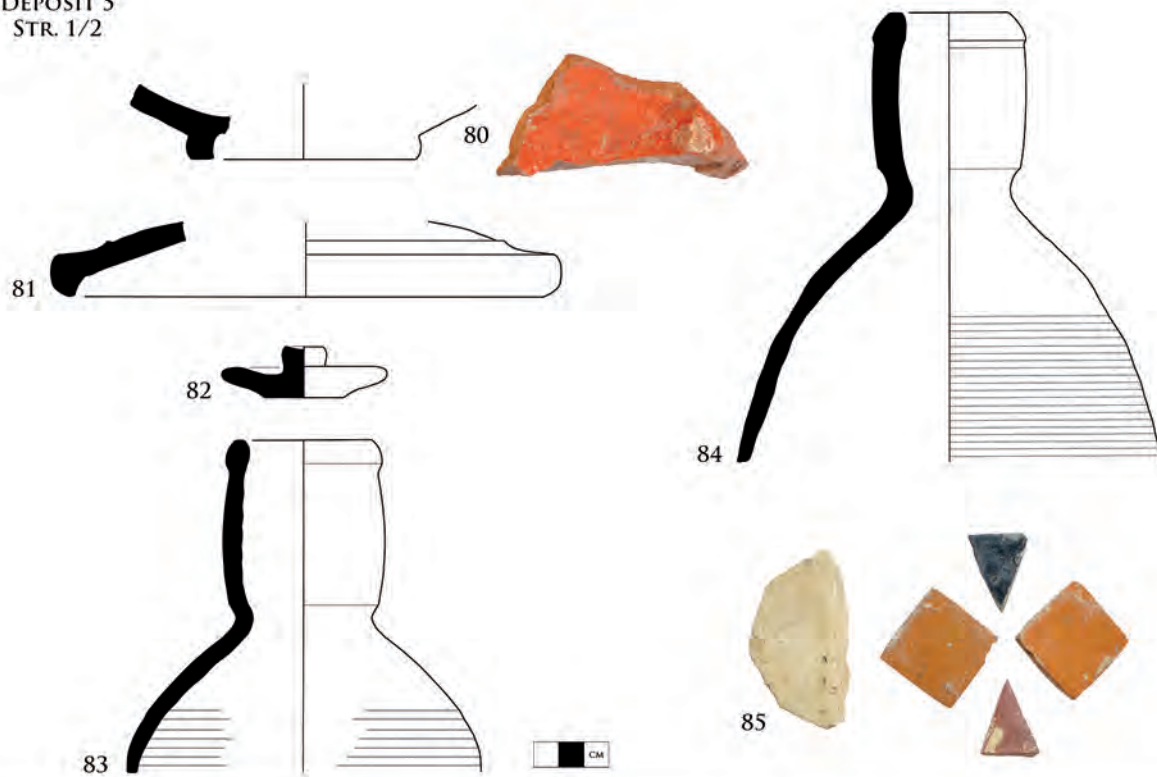
Nile silt (Fabric 2), stopper**82** Complete section (36:P3).

Find-spot: Unit 6 (Cell, Room 5); depth: 2.10 m.

Fabric: The colour of the fabric varies between 2.5YR 3/4, dark reddish brown, and 2.5YR 3/6, dark red. No visible inclusions.

Description: Ø 6.5 cm, H. 2 cm.

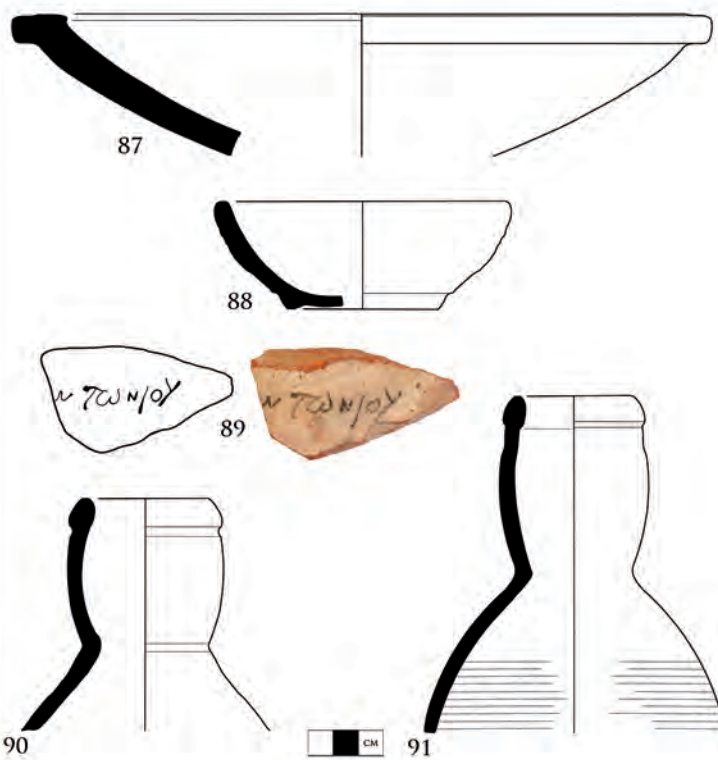
DEPOSIT 5
STR. 1/2



STR. 3/4



STR. 5



Nile silt (Fabric 2), bag-shaped jug**83** Neck and wall (90:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 6 (Cell, Room 5); depth: 0.70 m.

Fabric: The colour of the fabric varies between 2.5YR 3/4, dark reddish brown, and 2.5YR 3/6, dark red. The vessel was not properly fired, and the inner half of the section is blackish grey/greyish black.

The fabric is dense and hard and makes slightly irregular breaks. There is a dense distribution of black inclusions, up to 1.5 mm in size.

Description: Ø 6 cm, H. 13.3 cm. Both the exterior and the interior of the wall are ribbed. A very thin, patchy purplish coating, presumably a calcareous layer, covers the exterior of the vessel. A dark, oily substance covers the interior of the wall. For the preserved shape of the vessel, cf. cat. no. **35**.**84** Neck and wall (88:P4).

Find-spot: Unit 6 (Cell, Room 5); depth: 0.70 m.

Fabric: cf. cat. no. **83**; however, there are no visible inclusions.Description: Ø 6 cm, H. 18 cm. cf. cat. no. **83**.**Elements of *opus sectile* floor****85** Two triangular, two square, and one decagonal fragment (100:S1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 6); depth: 0.50 m.

Description: The triangular fragments (one in black limestone and one in red limestone) measure c. H. 3.3 cm, W. 2.5 cm, Th. 1.3 cm. The two square fragments measure H. 3.8 cm, W. 3.8 cm, max Th. 1.5 cm, and are cut from yellow limestone. The decagonal fragment in white limestone is broken in half and measures H. 7.4 cm, W. 4.1 cm, max. Th. 2.3 cm.

Stratum 3/4**Desert clay, bag-shaped jug****86** Wall (33:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 6 (Cell, Room 5); depth: 0.70–1.75 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/8, red (at some places, more orange to brownish). The interior surface is coarse, but the fabric is dense and hard and makes sharp breaks. Large dark inclusions on the interior and exterior walls, up to 2 mm in size.

Description: Ø 6.5 cm, Ø of base 5 cm, H. 40 cm. The exterior of the vessel is completely covered by a c. 0.1 mm-thick, patchy calcareous layer (pinkish and yellowish white). There are two *dipinti* in red on the exterior wall; one cross (preserved H. 4 cm) and the Coptic word ⲁⲣⲓⲛⲁ (33:i1) (H. 2.6–3.5 cm, L. 17 cm). The interior surface shows some flaky traces of a dark content (pine resin).**Stratum 5****Desert clay, dish****87** Base and wall (1:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 2 or 6 (Cell, Room 5); depth: 2.00 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 4/4, reddish brown. Dense, hard fabric that makes clean breaks. The core was not properly fired. Some angular lime inclusions, up to c. 1 mm in size.

Description: Ø 28 cm, H. 5.5 cm. Thin slip on both the exterior and interior: 10R 4/6, red.

Desert clay, bowl**88** Rim to base (1:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 2 or 6 (Cell, Room 5); depth: 2.00 m.

Fabric: 10R 5/6, red. Dense, hard fabric that makes clean breaks. There are lime inclusions of varying size, up to c. 2 mm in diameter, yet with a very sparse distribution. There are also large dark inclusions, up to 1 mm in size, with a sparse distribution.

Description: Ø 12 cm, H. 4.3 cm. The bowl is white slipped on the exterior of the rim and wall. The craftsmanship is coarse, and there are deep grooves in the exterior wall as a result of the production process, and clear imprints of straw on the interior.

Desert clay, jug (?) with *dipinto* in Greek**89** Wall (1:i1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Cell, Room 5); depth: 2.00 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/6, red. The clay is coarse with some cavities and microscopic inclusions of lime, up to 0.3 mm; very sparse distribution.

Description: H. 4 cm, W. 7.2 cm. *Dipinto* in a dark colour reading [A]ντωνίου on exterior (H. 0.5–1.1 cm, L. 5 cm) on top of a yellowish-white calcareous layer. The interior is covered by a dull, brownish slip.**Nile silt (Fabric 2), bag-shaped jug****90** Neck and wall (80:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 6 (Cell, Room 5); depth: 2.0 m.

Fabric: The colour of the fabric varies between 2.5YR 3/4, dark reddish brown, and 2.5YR 3/6, dark red. The fabric was not properly fired, and the inner half of the section is blackish grey/greyish black.

The fabric is dense and hard and makes slightly irregular breaks. There is a dense distribution of black inclusions, up to 1.5 mm in size.

Description: Ø 6 cm, H. 9.3 cm. A very thin, patchy purplish coating, presumably a calcareous layer, covers the exterior of the vessel. A dark, oily substance covers the interior of the wall.

91 Neck and wall (79:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 6 (Cell, Room 5); depth: 2.0 m.

Fabric: cf. cat. no. **90**.

Description: Ø 5.5 cm, H. 13.4 cm. Cf. cat. no. **90**.

OTHER FINDS FROM UNIT 2

Stratum I

Desert clay, cooking vessel

92 Rim and wall (45:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 2; depth: unknown.

Fabric: 5YR 4/4, reddish brown. The fabric is dense and makes very clean, sharp breaks. Some lime inclusions.

Description: Ø 17 cm, H. 10 cm. Exterior is slightly ribbed and completely covered with soot. One preserved handle remains. Dark traces of oil (?) on the interior wall.

Stratum 3

Desert clay, bell-shaped bowl

93 Rim to base (42:P1)

Find-spot: Unit 2 (Room 3, in niche under the church sub-structure); depth: 1.65 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 6/6, light red. Dense, hard clay that makes slightly irregular breaks. The fabric contains inclusions of lime, up to c. 1 mm in size. Distribution: c. 3–4 in 0.5 cm². There are also large, dark, angular inclusions of quartz and gravel, up to 8 mm in size. Description: Ø 22 cm, Ø of base 9 cm, H. 13 cm. Vague traces of reddish slip on the exterior of the rim. The exterior surface of the vessel is very roughly executed.

DEPOSIT 6

Stratum 2

Desert clay, basin

94 Rim and wall (24:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 3; depth: 0.40 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/6, red. Coarse, sandy fabric with large, angular inclusions of lime, up to c. 1.5 mm in size; distribution: c. 3–4 in 0.5 cm². There are also dark inclusions, up to 0.5 mm in size, sparsely distributed.

Description: Ø 36 cm, H. 6.5 cm.

Desert clay, casserole

95 Rim and wall (24:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 3; depth: 0.40 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 4/6, red. Coarse fabric that makes irregular breaks. Black inclusions, up to 1 mm in size; sparsely distributed.

Description: Ø 30 cm, H. 7 cm. The exterior of the wall is slightly ribbed. The interior surface is very smooth. Both the

rim and the exterior and interior walls are darkened by soot. One preserved irregular knobbed handle remains.

OTHER FINDS FROM UNIT 3

Stratum I

Desert clay, dish

96 Rim and wall (92:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 3; depth: unknown.

Fabric: Colour is orange to brownish red, and the core is greyish, owing to irregular firing. The fabric makes irregular breaks and includes many large lime inclusions, as well as smaller black grains, c. 1.5–2 mm in size.

Description: Ø 38.5 cm, H. 6 cm. Slip: 2.5YR 4/6, red. The exterior of the wall is decorated with a wave band.

DEPOSIT 7

Stratum 2

Desert clay, dish

97 Rim to base (7:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 7; depth: 0.40 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 6/6, light red. The fabric is hard, dense, and well fired. Hardly any visible inclusions. The fabric makes clear, clean breaks.

Description: Ø 40 cm, Ø of base 13 cm, H. 13 cm. Both exterior and interior are covered with white slip: 10YR 8/2, white. The exterior of the rim and wall is decorated with five, somewhat irregular, rouletted bands.

Desert clay, bell-shaped bowls

98 Rim and wall (7:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 7; depth: 0.40 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/4, reddish brown. The clay is hard, dense, and well fired. It makes clear, sharp breaks. Both rounded and angular inclusions of lime, 0.3–3 mm in size; distribution: c. 3 in 0.5 cm². Also, some black grains of sand with dimensions of up to 0.2 mm.

Description: Ø 20 cm, H. 7.5 cm. Both the exterior and interior are covered with a white calcareous layer.

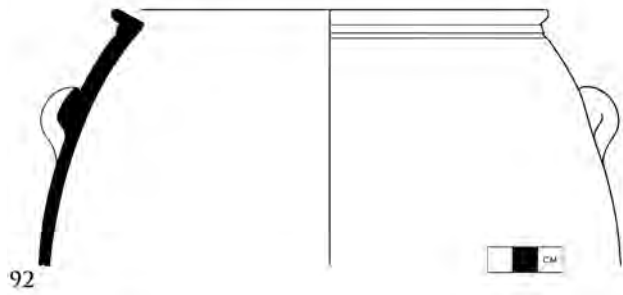
99 Rim and wall (7:P3).

Find-spot: Unit 7; depth: 0.40 m.

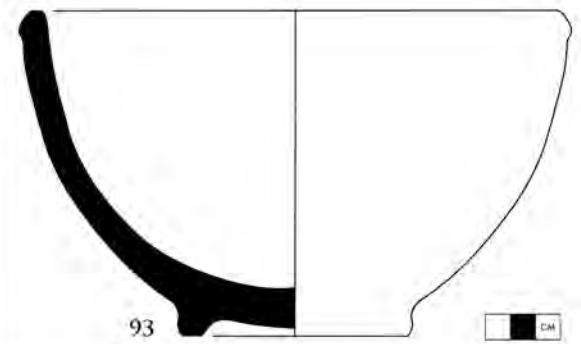
Fabric: 2.5YR 5/4, reddish brown. The clay is hard, dense, and well fired. It makes clear, sharp breaks. Both rounded and angular inclusions of lime, 0.5–1.5 mm in size; distribution: c. 1 in 0.5 cm². Also, some black grains with dimensions of up to 0.5 mm.

Description: Ø 22 cm, H. 8 cm. Both the exterior and interior are covered with a white calcareous layer.

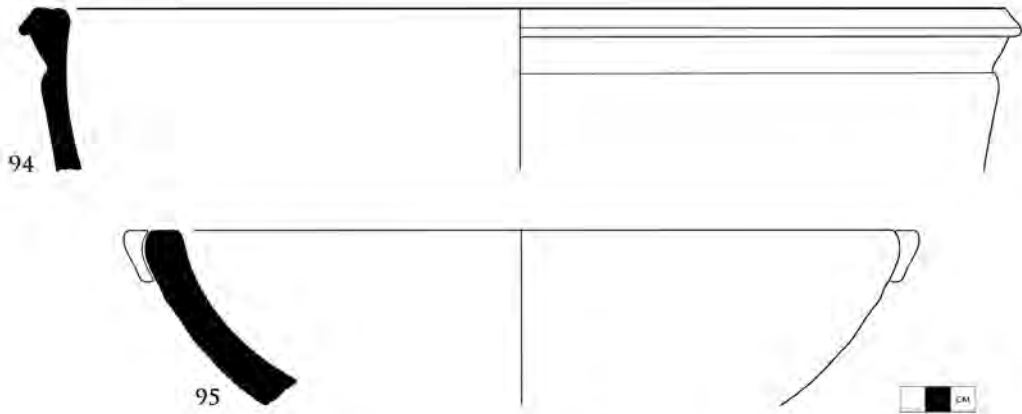
OTHER FINDS FROM UNIT 2
STR. 1



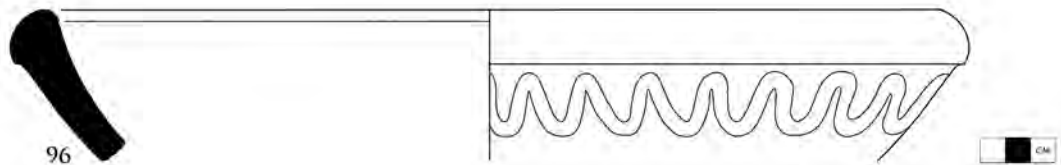
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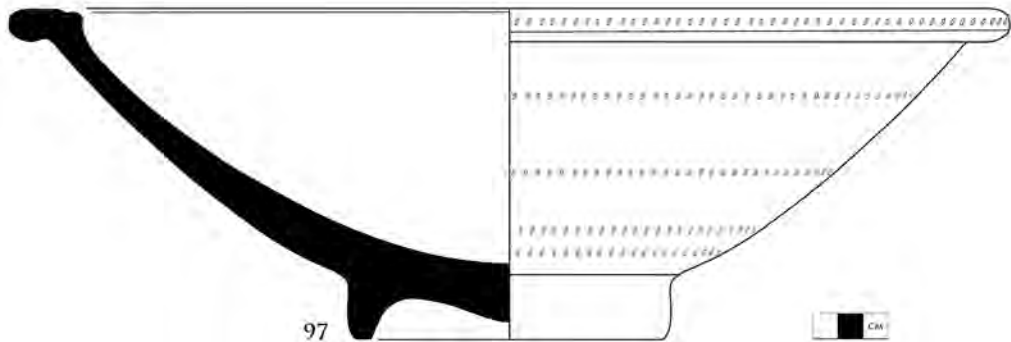
DEPOSIT 6
STR. 2



OTHER FINDS FROM UNIT 3
STR. 1



DEPOSIT 7
STR. 2



Stratum 3**Desert clay, bowls****100** Rim and wall (73:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 7; depth: 1.0 m.

Fabric: 10R 5/4, weak red. Hard, dense clay that makes clean breaks. Many large inclusions of lime, up to 2.5 mm in size; distribution: *c.* 1–2 in 0.5 mm². There are also dark inclusions, up to 1 mm in size; very sparse distribution.

Description: Ø 18 cm, H. 5.7 cm. There are partly preserved remains of slip on the exterior wall: 10R 5/6, red.

101 Rim and wall (73:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 7; depth: 1.0 m.

Fabric: Buff to reddish brown and the grey colour of clay. Hard, dense fabric that makes clean breaks. No visible inclusions. Presumably fired at a high temperature.

Description: Ø 23 cm, H. 6 cm. The original colour of the smooth surfaces of both the interior and exterior, which bear darkened remains of a slip, is now lost.

Desert clay, stopper**102** Complete section (73:P3).

Find-spot: Unit 7; depth: 2.0 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/6, red. Coarse, sandy fabric with large, angular inclusions of lime, up to *c.* 1.5 mm in size; distribution: *c.* 3–4 in 0.5 cm². There are also dark inclusions, up to 0.5 mm in size; sparsely distributed.

Description: Ø 17 cm, Ø of base 7 cm, H. 30 cm. Both the exterior and interior are covered by a thick calcareous surface.

Stratum 4**Desert clay, jar****103** Rim to base (38:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 7; depth: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 6/6, light red. Generally well fired, but the core of the body is slightly darker. The clay contains some small, irregular lime inclusions.

Description: Ø 17 cm, Ø of base 7 cm, H. 30 cm. Both the exterior and interior walls are covered by a thick calcareous surface coated with a white slip; cf. cat. no. 97 (7:P1).

OTHER FINDS FROM UNIT 7**Unknown stratum****Paper manuscript written in Arabic****104** Fragment (100:Ms2).

Find-spot: Unit 7; depth: unknown.

Description: H. 7.5 cm, W. 6.7 cm. 6 lines, and 7 lines on the reverse. H. of lines: *c.* 7 mm. Spacing between lines: *c.* 3 mm. The letters are written in black ink.

OTHER FINDS FROM UNITS 4, 5, 8, AND 9**Stratum I****Desert clay, dish and basin****105** Rim and wall (75:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 9; depth: 0.30 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 4/6, red. The clay makes irregular breaks and includes lime inclusions, *c.* 0.5–2 mm in size.

Description: Ø 33 cm, H. 6 cm. The sherd has a thick, knobbed rim, and a calcareous layer covers the surfaces of the walls.

Desert clay, bowl-shaped lamp**106** Rim to base (75:P3).

Find-spot: Unit 9; depth: 0.30 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 4/6, red. The clay is hard and dense and makes irregular breaks and includes large lime inclusions, up to *c.* 3 mm in size; distribution: *c.* 5–8 in 0.5 cm². There are also sparsely distributed dark inclusions, up to 2 mm in size.

Description: Ø 13 cm, Ø of base 4.3 cm, H. 4.5 cm. Remains of soot on both the exterior and interior wall.

Unidentified fabric (Nile silt), bowl-shaped lamp**107** Rim to base (75a:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 9; depth: 0.30 m.

Fabric: The colour of the fabric varies between 2.5YR 3/4, dark reddish brown, and 2.5YR 3/6, dark red. The fabric is dense and hard and makes slightly irregular breaks. There is a dense distribution of fine lime and sand inclusions, up to 1 mm in size; distribution: *c.* 2–3 in 0.5 cm².

Description: Ø 11.5 cm, Ø of base 4.5 cm, H. 4.5 cm. Remains of soot on both the rim and the interior of the wall.

DEPOSIT 7
STR. 2



99

STR. 3



100



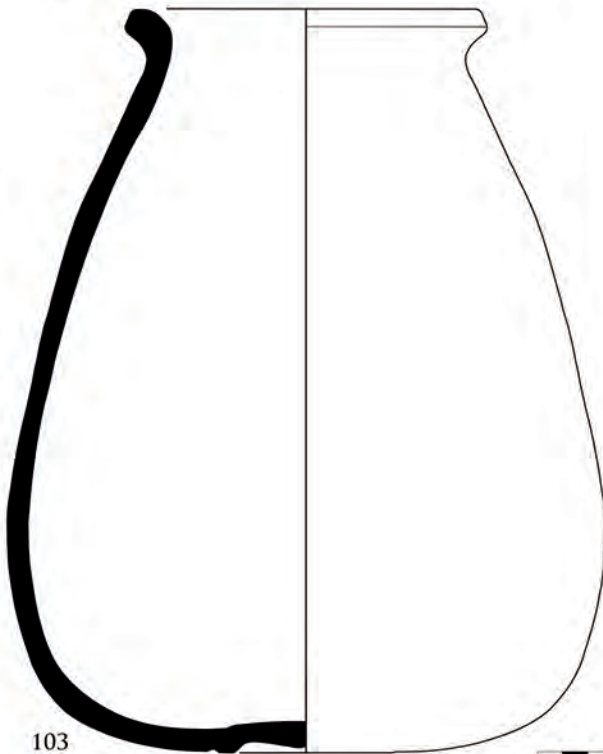
101



102



STR. 4



103



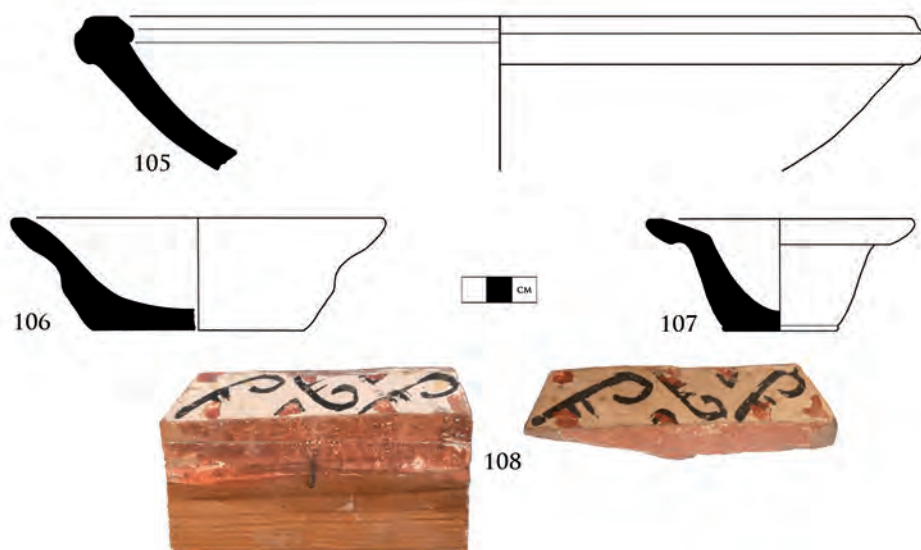
OTHER FINDS FROM UNIT 7
UNKNOWN STRATUM



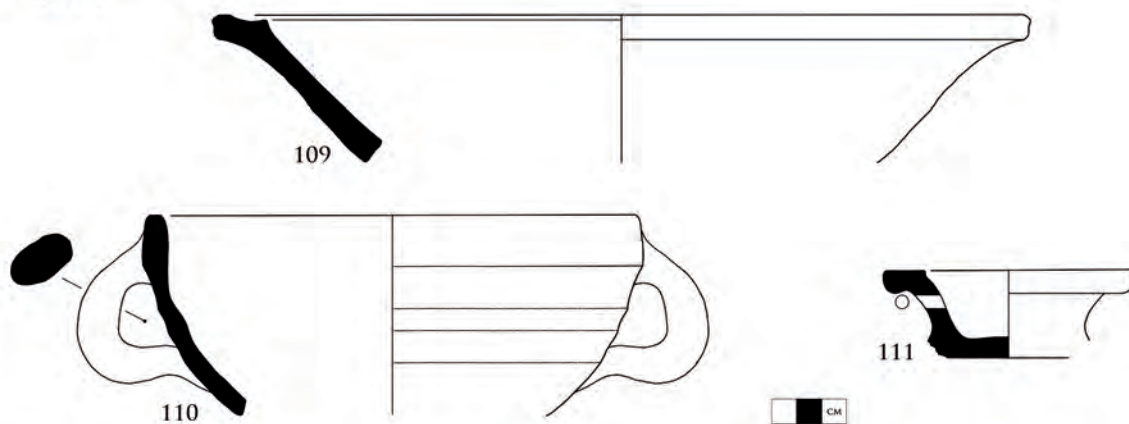
104



OTHER FINDS FROM UNITS 4, 5, 8, AND 9
STR. 1



DEPOSIT 8
STR. 1



STR. 2



Polychrome wooden frame**108** Two complete members (100:W1).

Find-spot: Unit 5; depth: 0.30 m.

Description: Two fragments of similar proportions from a polychrome wooden frame. L. 11.4 cm, H. 2.1 cm, W. 7 cm. Decorated with black and red designs on a white background. The two pieces meet at an angle of 120°. One iron nail is still preserved in one of the fragments.

DEPOSIT 8**Stratum 1****Unidentified fabric (probably Nile silt), large bowl****109** Rim and wall (67:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 11; depth: 0.30 m.

Fabric: 5YR 4/4, reddish brown. Porous clay with a number of small cavities, *c.* 0.5–1 mm in size. Imprints of small fragments of straw in the clay. Some microscopic inclusions of grains of sand. The fabric makes irregular breaks.

Description: Ø 17 cm, Ø of base 7 cm, H. 30 cm. Slip: 2.5YR 4/6, red.

Desert clay, casserole**110** Rim, wall, and one handle (67:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 11; depth: 0.30 m.

Fabric: From buff to 2.5YR 6/6, light red. Hard, dense fabric that makes sharp breaks. Fired at a very high temperature. Some, sparsely distributed, dark grains: *c.* 1–2 in 0.5 cm².

Description: Ø 20 cm, H. 8 cm. The whole vessel is covered with a thick calcareous crust.

Desert clay (unidentified origin), glazed bowl-shaped lamp**111** Rim to base (52:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 11; depth: 0.30 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/6, red. Hard, dense fabric that makes slightly irregular breaks. The clay includes fine inclusions of lime and sand, sparsely distributed. The lime inclusions are angular in shape and measure *c.* 0.3 mm in size. The dark sand grains measure, at most, 0.5 mm in size.

Description: Ø 10 cm, H. 3.5 cm. A dark green glaze with some streaks of light olive green covers the whole vessel. There are two drilled holes in the wall (Ø 5 mm), and the interior is partly covered with remains of burnt oil.

Stratum 2**Desert clay, glazed bowl****112** Rim, wall, and base (30:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 11; depth: 0.40–0.50 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/6, red. Hard, dense fabric that makes slightly irregular breaks. There are some fine, sparsely distributed, lime inclusions, up to 0.3 mm in size. There are also some fine dark inclusions; distribution: *c.* 1–2 in 0.5 cm².

Description: Ø of base 15 cm, H. 5 cm. The rim and the interior of the wall are glazed in yellow, green, and very dark reddish brown (colour range is similar to cat. no. 32).

Desert clay (Fabric 4), glazed bowl**113** Wall and base (30:P2).

Find-spot: Unit 11; depth: 0.40–0.50 m.

Fabric: 10YR 6/4, light yellowish brown. Porous, sandy clay with some microscopic dark inclusions. The fabric is soft and makes irregular breaks.

Description: Ø of base 8 cm, H. 3.6 cm. The exterior of the vessel is covered with a thin patchy green glaze, and a dark Latin cross (*c.* 5 × 5 cm) is inscribed into the underside of the ring-base. The interior is coated with a thicker (0.3 mm), turquoise glaze with nuances of darker streaks.

OTHER FINDS FROM UNIT 11**Stratum 1****Desert clay, bowl****114** Rim and wall (17:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 11; depth: 0.30–0.40 m.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/6, red. Hard, dense fabric that makes somewhat irregular breaks. Both rounded and angular inclusions of lime, 0.1–0.5 mm in size; distribution: *c.* 3–5 in 0.5 cm². Also, some black grains with dimensions of up to 0.5 mm.

Description: Ø 22 cm, H. 6 cm. There are remains of red paint on the interior of the wall: *c.* 10R 4/6, red. The bowl most likely contained pigments for wall painting.

Finds from identified units, without stratigraphic affiliation**Nile silt red slip ware, dish****115** Base and wall (19:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 2; depth: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 5/6, red. Dense, hard fabric that makes slightly irregular breaks. There are small lime inclusions, *c.* 0.5–1 mm in size, and small black grains of similar size; distribution: *c.* 4–5 in 0.5 cm².

Description: Ø of base 36 cm, H. 3 cm. Glossy slip on both the exterior and interior: 10R 3/6, dark red.

Desert clay, amphora**116** Rim, two handles, and wall (54:P1).

Find-spot: Unit 1 (Deposit 2), (Cell, Room 2); depth: unknown.

Fabric: Yellowish-white fabric with nuances of olive green. Hard, dense clay that makes clean, sharp breaks. Both the fabric and the exterior and interior surfaces have a homogeneous colour. The vessel was fired at a very high temperature, and there are no visible inclusions of lime. Sparsely distributed black inclusions, up to 1.2 mm in size.

Description: Ø 9.6 cm, H. 14 cm. There are traces of white slip on the exterior wall. The body has been sawn apart and the lower part of the vessel has not been found in the excavations. Clear signs of reuse.

Stemmed suspended glass lamp (polykandela type)**117** Full section (98:G1).

Find-spot: Unit 1, under the foundations of the church; depth: unknown.

Description: Ø 6.4 cm, H. 9.1 cm. Light green glass with vast distribution of air bubbles inside the paste, 1–4 mm in length. The underside of the knobbed base is somewhat damaged.

VARIOUS FINDS WITH UNKNOWN FIND-SPOT**Nile silt, bowl****118** Base and wall (5:P1).

Find-spot: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 3/6, dark reddish brown. Hard, dense fabric without any visible inclusions.

Description: Ø of base 6 cm, H. 4 cm. Interior is covered with a glaze which shifts in colour from dark to light green: 5GY 7/4, moderate yellowish green, and 10GY 3/2, dusky yellowish green. The exterior is covered with soot. There is also a small drilled hole in the wall (Ø 3 mm): an ancient repair. The interior is decorated with an incised wave-band within a double tondo.

Desert clay, bowls**119** Rim to base (98:P4).

Find-spot: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 4/6, red. Hard, dense fabric with lime inclusions, *c.* 0.5–1.5 mm in size; distribution: 7–10 in 0.5 cm². There are also inclusions of small black grains.

Description: Ø 16.6 cm, Ø of base 7.3 cm, H. 7.2 cm. The exterior and interior of the vessel are covered with a calcareous surface.

120 Rim to base (98:P3).

Find-spot: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 4/6, red. Hard, dense fabric with lime inclusions, *c.* 0.5–1.5 mm in size; distribution: 7–10 in 0.5 cm². There are also inclusions of small black grains.

Description: Ø 9.5 cm, Ø of base 5 cm, H. 5.8 cm. The calcareous layer, which covers the fabric, was painted red: 10R 4/6, red. The vessel was probably reused as a lamp, as evidenced by the remains of soot on the wall.

Desert clay, jug**121** Rim to base (98:P10).

Find-spot: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 4/6, red. Dense, yet coarse, fabric with small lime inclusions, *c.* 0.5–1.5 mm in size. Also black grains, *c.* 0.1–0.3 cm in size; distribution: 4–5 in 0.5 cm².Description: Ø 6.5 cm, H. 23 cm. The exterior surface is partly covered with patches of a calcareous crust. The exterior is decorated with the incised Coptic inscription $\alpha\rho\iota\mu\alpha$ (98:i1): H. 1.3–2 cm, L. 7.5 cm.**Desert clay, bowl-shaped lamps****122** Rim to base (98:P1).

Find-spot: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 4/6, red. Hard, dense fabric with lime inclusions, *c.* 0.5–1.5 mm in size; distribution: 7–10 in 0.5 cm². There are also inclusions of small black grains.

Description: Ø 11 cm, Ø of base 7 cm, H. 6.9–7.2 cm. Interior traces of oil. The interior and the rim are partly covered with soot. The surface of the fabric is covered with a calcareous crust: 10R 8/2, white.

123 Rim to base (98:P2).

Find-spot: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 4/6, red. Hard, dense fabric with lime inclusions, *c.* 0.5–1.5 mm in size; distribution: 7–10 in 0.5 cm². There are also inclusions of small black grains.

Description: Ø 10.2 cm, Ø of base 5.5 cm, H. 5–5.3 cm. The whole vessel is covered with soot, and there are preserved remains of burnt oil on the interior. There is a light grey calcareous layer on the surface of the fabric: 10YR 7/2, light grey.

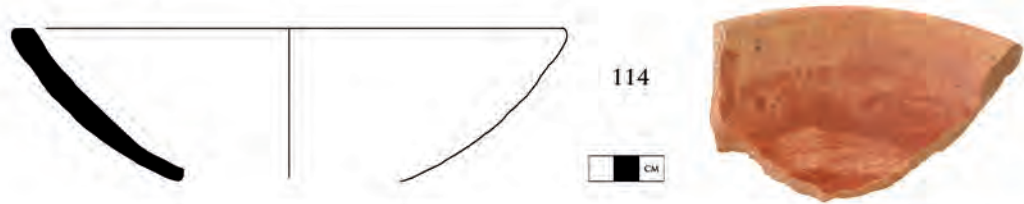
124 Rim to base (98:P6).

Find-spot: unknown.

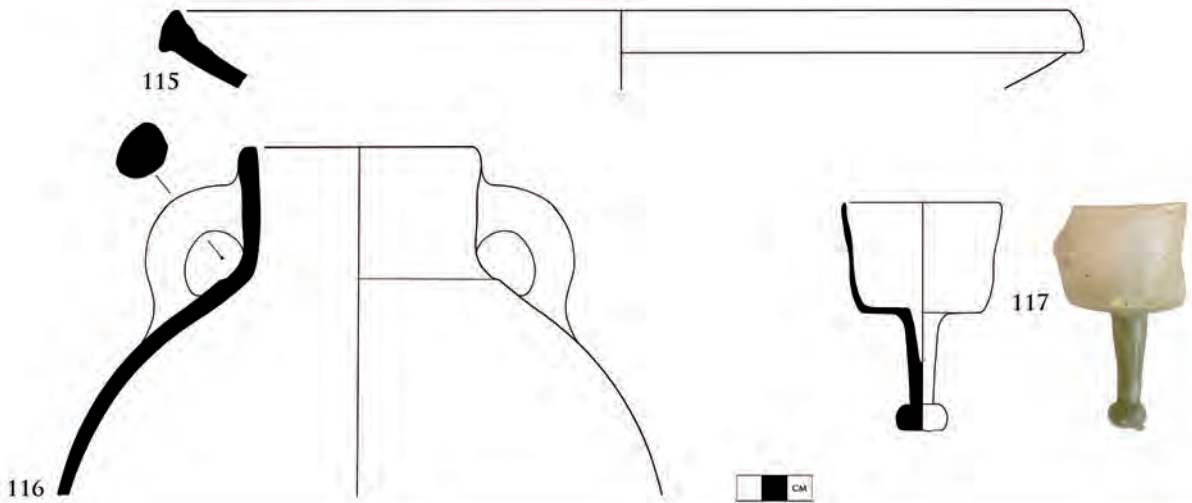
Fabric: Not possible to discern, but most likely desert clay.

Description: Ø 6.4 cm, Ø of base 3 cm, H. 1.8 cm. The exterior and interior surfaces are completely covered with soot and burnt oil.

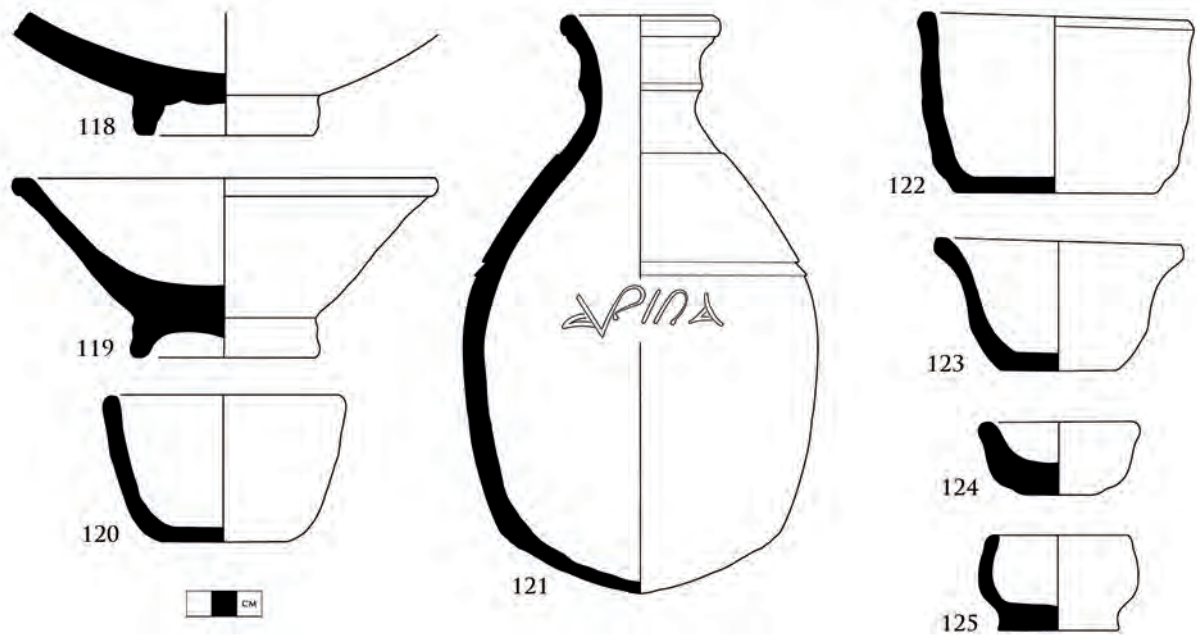
OTHER FINDS FROM UNIT 11
STR. 1



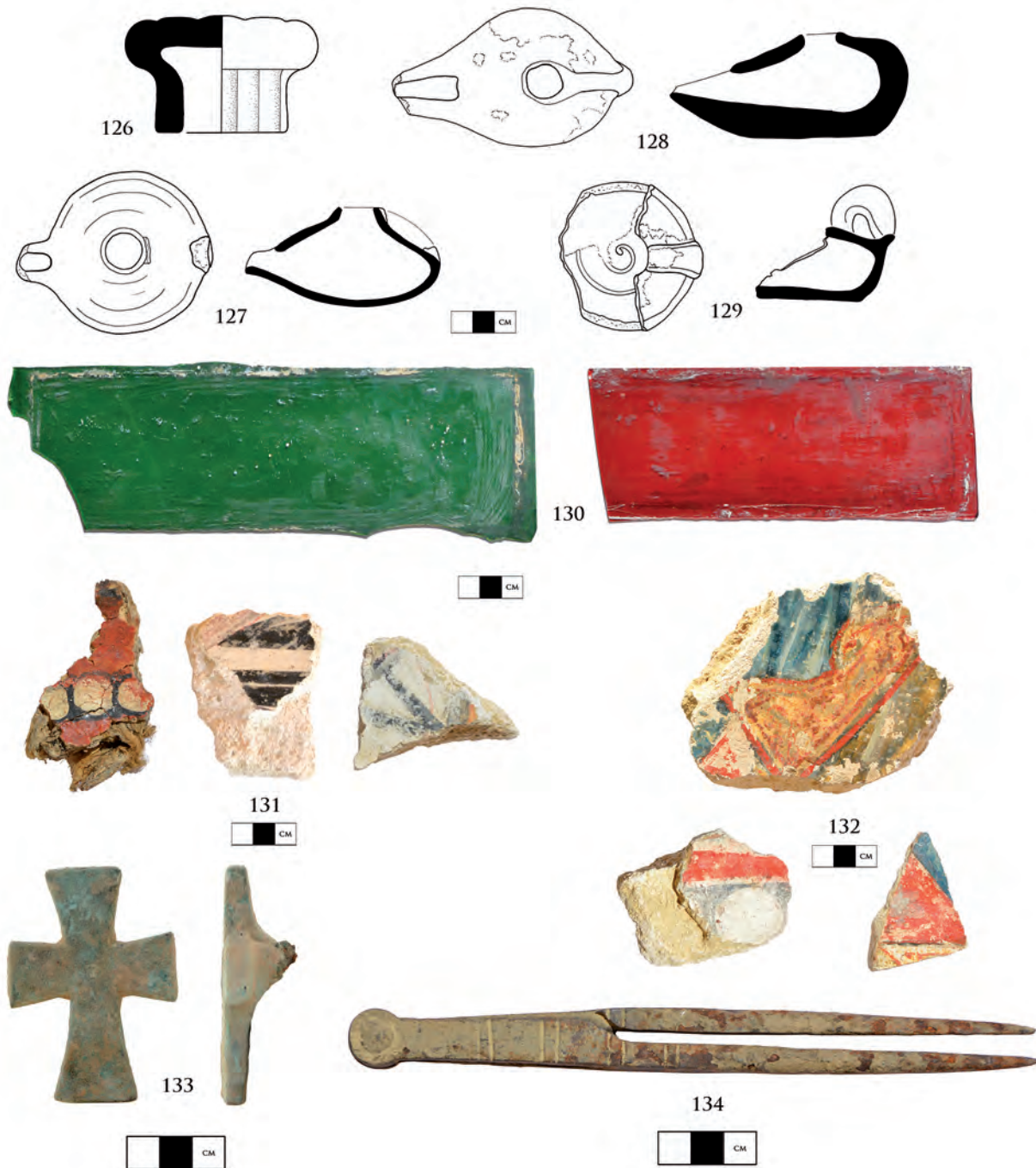
FINDS FROM IDENTIFIED UNTIS
WITHOUT STRATIGRAPHIC AFFILIATION



UNKNOWN FIND-SPOT



UNKNOWN FIND-SPOT



125 Rim to base (98:P5).

Find-spot: unknown.

Fabric: Not possible to discern, but most likely desert clay.

Description: Ø 5.3 cm, Ø of base 5 cm, H. 3.8 cm. The exterior and interior surfaces are completely covered with soot and burnt oil.

Desert clay, stopper**126 Rim to base (95:P1).**

Find-spot: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 4/6, red. Hard and dense, yet slightly coarse, fabric with lime inclusions, *c.* 0.5–1.5 mm in size; sparse distribution. There are also inclusions of small black grains.

Description: Ø 8.5 cm, lower Ø 6 cm, H. 5.5 cm.

Unidentified fabric, lamps**127 (98:P7).**

Find-spot: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 3/6, dark red, to 2.5YR 4/6, red. The fabric contains angular mica inclusions.

Description: Ø 3 cm, Ø of disc *c.* 7.5 cm, H. 4.5 cm, L. 9.5 cm. The lamp is completely covered with soot and the remains of burnt oil. There are clear signs of wheel marks on the disc. The handle is broken off.**128 (98:P8).**

Find-spot: unknown.

Fabric: 2.5YR 3/6, dark red, to 2.5YR 4/6, red. The fabric contains angular mica inclusions.

Description: Ø 2 cm, Ø of disc *c.* 6.5 cm, H. 4.5 cm, L. 11 cm. Slip: 10R 4/6, red. The lamp is, to a large extent, covered with soot and the remains of burnt oil.**129 (98:P9).**

Find-spot: unknown.

Fabric: Well-fired, uniform dark brown colour throughout the section. Microscopic mica inclusions, *c.* 0.1–0.2 mm in size.Description: Ø of disc *c.* 6.8 cm, H. 5.3 cm, L. 6.2 cm. Both the exterior and interior are covered with green glaze. Partly broken.**Mould-made, rectangular window panes****130 In total, 45 fragments (97:G1).**

Find-spot: unknown.

Description: 33 fragments of dark red window glass: max. H. 18.9 cm, max. W. 7.6 cm, max. Th. 2 mm. 12 fragments of dark green window glass: max. H. 26.2 cm, max. W. 8.8 cm, max. Th. 2.5 mm. All of the glass has a very homogenous colour range and texture, and the preserved edges still show traces of lute for their attachment to window frames.

Fragments of mural paintings (*al secco*), Coptic style**131 Unknown number of fragments (three selected for the catalogue).**

Find-spot: unknown.

Description: Various fragments in red, white, and black.

Fragments of mural paintings (*al secco*), Byzantine style**132 Unknown number of fragments (three catalogued).**

Find-spot: unknown.

Description: Preserved parts of an archangel's drapery, presumably Michael's.

Lead cross**133 (98:Me1).**

Find-spot: unknown.

Description: H. 7.2 cm, Th. 0.9–2 cm, Weight 162 g. Originally an appliqué, but the attachment has been broken off.

Iron compasses**134 (98:Me2).**

Find-spot: unknown.

Description: L. 20.4 cm, Th. 1.1 cm, Weight 175 g. Complete compasses of iron with four pairs of incised lines on one side (spacing between lines: 1.4 cm, 1.4 cm, and 1.2 cm).

Basket made from plaited palm leaves**135 (98:B1)**

Find-spot: Under church foundation (Rooms 1 or 2, Stratum 2–3); depth: unknown.

Parchment manuscripts written in Coptic**136 Fragment (98:Ms1).**

Find-spot: unknown.

Description: H 11.1 cm, W. 7.7 cm. 7 lines preserved on both sides of the page. H. of lines: *c.* 6 mm. Spacing between lines: 2–3 mm. Average dimension of letters: *c.* 6 × 6 mm; for thin letters: 6 × 3 mm. The letters are written in dark brownish ink.**137 Fragment (98:Ms4).**

Find-spot: unknown.

Description: H. 10.7 cm, W. 13.1 cm. 19 lines preserved on both sides of the page. H. of lines: *c.* 4 mm. Spacing between lines: 2 mm. Average dimension of letters: *c.* 4 × 4 mm; for thin letters: 4 × 2 mm. The letters are written in dark brownish ink with some orange red details. (Medical text).

UNKNOWN FIND-SPOT



135



136



137



138 Complete page (98:Ms3).

Find-spot: unknown.

Description: H. 23.2 cm, W. 17.2 cm. Flesh side has a "header" at the top of page which is followed by 28 lines; the hair side has 29 lines. *Verso* H. of lines: c. 3 mm. Spacing between lines: 2–3 mm. Average dimension of letters: c. 4 × 4 mm; for thin letters: 4 × 2 mm. The letters are written in dark brownish ink.

Paper manuscripts written in Coptic

139 Fragment (98:Ms2).

Find-spot: unknown.

Description: Written in both Coptic and Arabic. H. 16.1 cm, W. 11.7 cm. 17 lines, and 16 lines on the reverse. H. of lines (in Coptic): c. 4–5 mm. H. of lines (in Arabic): c. 7–10 mm. Spacing between lines: c. 4–6 mm. Average dimension of (Coptic) letters: c. 4 × 4 mm; for thin letters: 4 × 2 mm. The letters are written in dark brownish ink.

140 Complete page (98:Ms5).

Find-spot: unknown.

Description: H 13.1 cm, W. 9.1 cm. *Verso* has 22 lines, and *recto* 24 lines. H. of lines: 2 mm (goes for both scripts). Spacing between lines: c. 4–6 mm. Average dimensions of letters (both scripts): c. 2 × 2 mm; for thin letters: 2 × 1–2 mm. The letters are written in dark brownish ink with light red highlights, and also some light red initials.

POTTERY FROM THE PASSAGE UNDER THE SANCTUARY OF THE CHURCH OF ST ANTONY

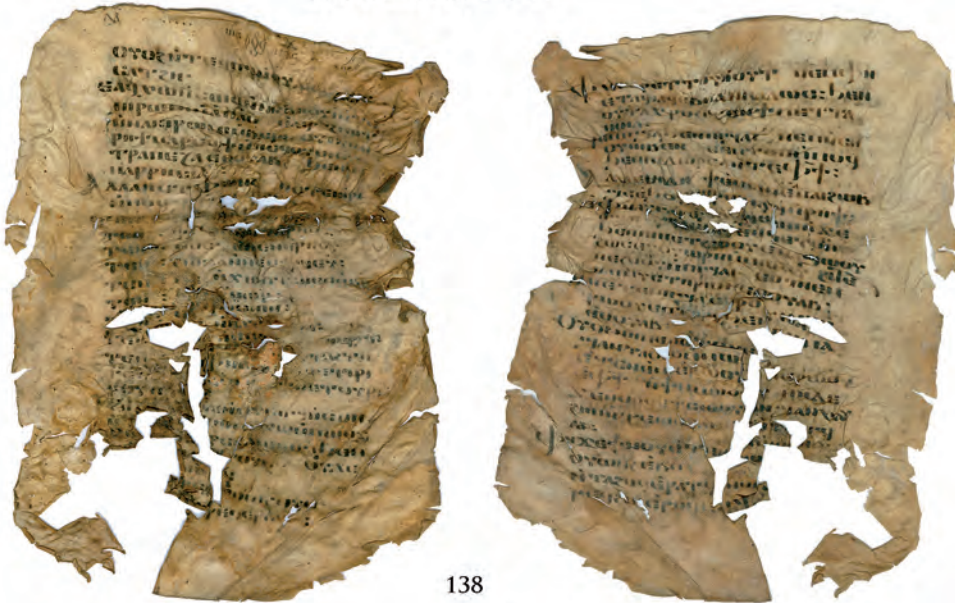
Marl clay (?), glazed decanter

141 Rim, body, and partly preserved handle (102:P1; initially catalogued as 98:P11).

Find-spot: found inside the passage leading from Room 6 under the sanctuary. The find-spot is hard to relate to the stratigraphies of the "Cells". It is suggested that the decanter chronologically dates to the 12th and 13th centuries. Fabric: 10YR 8/3, very pale brown. Thin, but rather coarse, buff coloured fabric. No visible inclusions.

Description: Ø of rim 4.5 cm, max. Ø of body 14 cm, max. H. 17.5 cm. The whole exterior is covered with a patchy, green glaze; ranging from 5GY 7/4, moderate yellow green, to 10GY 4/4, dark yellowish green.

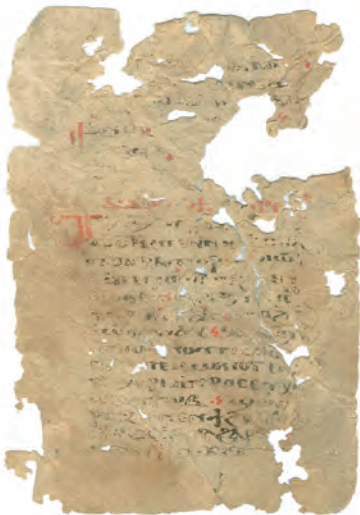
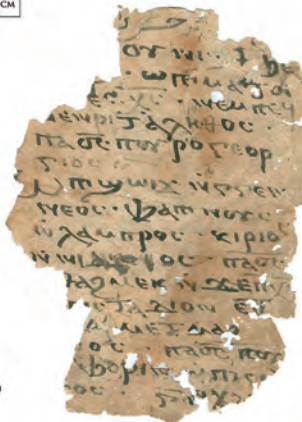
UNKNOWN FIND-SPOT



138



139



140



FROM THE PASSAGE LEADING UNDER THE SANCTUARY OF THE CHURCH OF ST. ANTONY



Synopsis of the find deposits

BY JESPER BLID

The original documentation of the discoveries from the excavation was occasionally brief, as previously addressed. Some deposits and (re-created) stratigraphies are confused in terms of chronology and regularity within the find sequence. This may be a result of the excavations, or possibly an ancient occurrence. What can be said with confidence is that the deepest excavated deposits, *c.* 2–2.50 m below the current church (Stratum 5), in Rooms 3 and 5, are closed deposits, and the analyses of these finds thus offer enhanced reliability. The majority of deposits in Stratum 5 are tablewares, including smaller jars and jugs. The bell-shaped bowls were probably used as the primary vessels for individuals during the monastic meal, and they are all rather similar in appearance. Clearly, some have slightly more elaborate profiles. Large dishes were presumably used for transporting and serving the food, and smaller jars and jugs were used for the temporary storage of food and drink: all point towards a dining context. I would, therefore, argue that the finds from Stratum 5 represent a large quantity of tablewares and apparently a deposit not for a single monk but for the larger monastic community.

The deposits 4–5 and 7, Stratum 4, demonstrate a similar character to Stratum 5 but with a more fragmentary body of finds. Stratum 4 in Room 1 was occupied by three baking ovens (two of which were used simultaneously), which points towards an almost industrial-scale production of bread. The

heavy use of the area is revealed by the thick layer of soot on the walls of Room 1 but also, I would argue, by the marked fragmentation of the archaeological sample. The finds still mainly comprise tablewares, including bowls, jars, and jugs.

Strata 3 and 2 reveal an additional layer of complexity owing to less attention being given to the stratified material during the excavation. It seems that Stratum 3 was at least partly built up by the accumulation of debris and sand in a transitional period before the erection of the First Church. However, the western section displays a slightly different find sequence. Here, in Unit 1, at both Stratum 3 and 2 (recorded depth between 0.50–1.25 m), the vast majority of all manuscripts found in context were recorded. The fragmentary state of the manuscripts may, however, imply that these were undesirable objects that had been thrown away. It seems, therefore, unlikely that a cohesive deposit of manuscripts was kept in these rooms. At any rate, the uneven distribu-

tion remains puzzling. The rest of the sample from Stratum 3–2 consists of a large variety of finds, including elements of polychrome stone floors, most probably belonging to the First Church. Unfortunately, it seems that parts of Stratum 3–2 are mixed, possibly as a result of the inverted stratigraphy that occurred when making the building trench for the First Church. The ceramic materials display many similar features to the lower layers: tablewares, some reused amphorae, and cooking wares. The new features are a larger quantity of organic materials such as baskets, textiles, and wood. We also find the first identified glazed wares in Stratum 3, at the largest recorded depth of about 0.50 m below the current church floor. Some of these glazed objects display characteristic Christian symbols, such as the cross, which implies that they were made within a Coptic community. Most of the glazed objects appear to have been imported.

The formation of Stratum 1 is related to the First Church. However, the layer was partly disturbed during the construction of the current church. Nonetheless, several remnants from the First Church remain, such as wall paintings, elements of the stone floors, and wooden interiors.

The Coptic manuscripts⁶²

BY HUGO LUNDHAUG

CAT. NO. 39 (48:MsI)

Paper fragment, approx. 16.5 × 14.0 cm, containing what appear to be scribal exercises in the form of strings of letters of the Bohairic alphabet in unimodular script.

CAT. NO. 136 (98:MsI)

Bottom corner of a leaf from a parchment codex, approx. 11.3 × 8.0 cm,⁶³ written in the Sahidic dialect. The script is bimodular, with the middle bar of the line-ending epsilons and the tail of the alpha extending into the uneven right margin on the flesh side. The fragment contains no decoration.

In appearance the fragment is similar to several manuscripts deriving from the White Monastery, dating from the 9th to the 11th centuries. Too little has been preserved to allow identification of the text, but the reference to “divinity” (ⲙⲏⲛⲧⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ) and the use of the phrase ⲛⲟⲩⲩⲱⲧⲧ ⲧⲉ indicates that the text may be dealing with Christological matters.

Text and translation

Hair side

.. [... [
ⲡⲱⲛⲓⲣⲉ	the [Son
ⲡⲉⲡⲓⲛⲓ ⁶⁴	the [
ⲕⲁⲩⲱⲩ ⁶⁵	he says [
ⲡⲉⲩ . [... [
ⲁⲉⲡⲓ	... [
ⲉⲣⲟⲓ	to me [
ⲡⲁ . [... [

⁶² The Coptic manuscripts have been studied on the basis of photographs only. The present transcriptions may be significantly improved by autoptic inspection and should thus only be regarded as preliminary. I would like to thank Christian Askeland, Christian Bull, Lance Jenott, John Møller Larsen, Alin Suciu, Paula Tutty, Jason Zaborowski, and especially René Falkenberg for discussions and feedback on the reading of these Coptic fragments.

⁶³ Bottom margin (hair side): 4.5 cm; left margin (hair side): 4.5 cm; right margin (flesh side): approx. 4.5–5.0 cm; bottom margin (flesh side): approx. 5.0 cm.

⁶⁴ Perhaps ⲡⲉⲡⲓⲛⲓⲟⲩⲧⲉ or ⲡⲉⲡⲓⲛⲓⲉⲩⲙⲁ.

⁶⁵ Perhaps ⲕⲁⲩⲱⲩ [ⲙⲏⲟⲩⲩ ⲁⲉ].

Flesh side

] ⲡⲁ]
ⲡⲓⲉⲕⲕⲟⲛ	] her brother
] . ⲟⲩ]
]ⲙⲏⲛⲧⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ	] divinity
] ⲟⲩⲓ]
ⲛⲟⲩⲩⲱⲧⲧ ⲧⲉ	] is a single one
ⲛⲟⲩⲩⲱⲧⲧ ⲧⲉ	] is a single one

CAT. NO. 137 (98:Ms4)

A single leaf from a single-column parchment codex written in the Sahidic dialect. The script is bimodular, and red ink is used to accentuate punctuation and division marks as well as parts of initials (here attested in one instance). Dimensions: approx. 12.4 × 11.5 cm. No margins have been preserved. The fragment has been radiocarbon-dated to the 9th or 10th century.⁶⁶

This is a medical text consisting of recipes and instructions for the treatment of various ailments. The use of medical codices appears to have been widespread in Coptic monasteries.⁶⁷ It is attested in what is likely the oldest preserved Coptic book list, on a limestone ostrakon dating probably to the late 7th/early 8th century, from the otherwise unknown monastery of Elijah in western Thebes, where a medical work is mentioned as the only non-Christian text in a list comprising 80 titles in all.⁶⁸ The remains of Coptic medical texts have been preserved on papyrus, parchment, paper, ostraca, and even in graffiti.⁶⁹ Several of these Coptic medical manuscripts have contents similar to this fragment from the Monastery of St Antony.⁷⁰ Both the ailments and the ingredients for the recipes mentioned in our fragment are well known from other Coptic medical manuscripts.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Radiocarbon date 1130±35BP. Calibrated using OxCal v3.10, this result gives us a calendar date span of 800–990 with 91.1% certainty.

⁶⁷ On medicine in Coptic monasteries, see Crisp 2005.

⁶⁸ IFAO 13315. This text has been published by Bouriant 1889, 131–138; and later by Coquin 1975, 207–239. See also Harbauer 1995, 72; Machler 2008, 43–44.

⁶⁹ See Krause 1991. On Coptic medical texts in general, see also Till 1951; Kolta 1991.

⁷⁰ These include, among others: the remains of a papyrus roll from the 9th century, now at the IFAO in Cairo, published by Chassinat 1921; a handful of leaves from a Sahidic parchment codex currently in the Carlsberg papyrus collection in Copenhagen (P. Carlsberg 500), published by Erichsen 1963 and dated on palaeographical grounds to the early 6th century; three leaves of a parchment codex published by Bouriant 1887 (one leaf), and Zoega 1810: *Typis sacrae congregationis de propaganda fide*, 626–630 (two leaves); and a parchment leaf dated to the 7th century, now in Berlin (P. Berol. 8109), published by Beltz 1984, 88–89.

⁷¹ See the references to Till 1951 below.

Hair side?

]λε . [
]μννεγερη[γ] . [. . .] . [. . .] . [. . . .] . . [. .] . [
]η· νΓΘΜΟΘΥ ΚΑΛΟΣ ΖΗ[ΟΥΝΟ]Θ ΝCΠΘ[ΥΔΗ
]ΜΟΥΡ ΕΞΟΥΝ ΝCΕΧΡ . [. .] ΝΑΥ ΕΤ[
]ΡΕ· ΒΟΛΪ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΙΝΕΖ ΝΟΥΗΡΤ· ΗΓ[
] . C ΝΓΚΑ<ΤΑ>ΠΛΑCCE ΜΠΜΑ ΕΤΩΩΝΕ:----[
 ΕΥ]ΩΑΝΧΙΝΟΫC ΕΚΟΥΤ· ΗΜΔΕΛΦΑΚΙΝ· . [
]ΜΑ ΕΤΩΩΝΕ· ΚΝΑΕΡΩΠ[Η]ΡΕ ΝΤΕ[
]ΚΕ . . Δ ΕΚΩΑΝΧΙΠ[Ι]ΕΙΒ [
 ΜΟΟ]Υ ΖΙΝΕΖ ΝΟΥΗΡΤ ΜΝΖΝCΑΥΖΕ Μ[
]CΩΛC ΕΠΜΑ ΕΤΩΩΝΕ ΨΝΑΕΡΤ[
] . ΔΗ ΤΑΖCΪ ΟΗ ΝΟΥΕΡΩΤΕ ΝCΑΥ Κ[
]CΟΗ:----- [
]ΩΕ ΝΤ[ΕΡ]ΕΪΜΟΥ ΛΟΧΗ ΖΑCΗ Ζ . . . [
] ΚΕΟΥΑ ΕΚΩ[ΔΗ
]ΚΖ· ΝΓΤΑΖC ΜΝΟΥΚΟΥΙ . [
]ΗΓ· ΕΡΟC ΟΥΩΠΗΡΕ ΠΕ . [
] . Π ΜΝΕ ΚΡΟΚΟC· ΖΑC Ν . [
] . Ζ ΝΖΕ ΗΗΗΝΕ· ΙΔΑΥ ΕΒΟΛ[

] . . [
] with each other [
] and warm them well [with great] ze[al
] join together and they [. . .]
] dissolve it in rose oil⁷⁹ and [
] and plaster the sick place. -----[
] if [he] comes to his senses, you [. . .] the pigs [
] sick place, you will [marvel] at [
] . . . [. . .] if you take the lamb [
 water] and rose oil and eggs [
] smear on the sick place, it will [
] anoint it also with sheep's milk⁸⁰ [
] power. ----- [
 when] the water⁸¹ brings forth natron⁸² . . . [
] Another, [if] you [
] and anoint with a little [
] and fight it/her. It is a wonder [
] true [. . .] saffron,⁸³ dung of [
] way daily. Wash it away [

⁷⁹ Till 1951, 81.

⁸⁰ Till 1951, 76.

⁸¹ Or: death.

⁸² Till 1951, 79–80.

⁸³ Till 1951, 90.

CAT. NO. 139 (98:Ms2)

Paper fragment written in the Bohairic dialect in a single column. It may derive from a codex, but no margins or edges have been preserved. The dimensions of the fragment are 16.2 × 12.2 cm at its widest. The hand is irregular. There is writing in Arabic at the top of side a and below the divider on side b.

The fragment contains parts of two hymns. One hymn, which seems to start after the division marks on what appears to be the *recto* and continuing on the *verso* is directed to St George, mentioning his name and making reference to his martyrdom in the arena. The text before the dividers may also be a hymn to St George, but no name is mentioned in that part of the fragment. It is also directed to (or through) a martyr.

Text and translation

Side a

[.] . [.] OC · B · [[...]
ἰΟΥΡΑΝΟΣ [	heavenly [
ΤΕΝΤΩΒΕ . [	we pray [
ΠΗΡ · ΠΗΑΤ[ΟΙ ἰ]	martyr, sold[ier]
ΤΕΠΧ · ΤΩΒΕ . [	of Christ, pray [
ΕΞΡΗΙ ΕΧΩΝ · ΕΘ	for us that
ΡΕΦΧΩ ΝΑΝ ΕΒΟΛ //	he may forgive us.
-----//-----//-----//-----	-----//-----//-----//-----
lh 'r'm	
ΝΘΟΚ ΟΥΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΣ ·	You are a blessed one,
Ω ΠΙΓΕΝΝΕΟΣ · ΘΩΞ ⁸⁴	O noble one,
ΠΙΩΤΠ ἰΗΡ · ΠΕΘ[ΟΥΑΒ]	chosen martyr, the [holy
ΓΕΟΡΓΙΟΣ // [	George,
ΠΗΑΤΟΙ ἰΧΩΡ[	the strong soldier [
[.] ἰΗΜΩ ἰΩΦΗΡ[	many friends [
ΜΕΝΡΙΤ ΠΧ · . [	beloved Christ [
. ΘΟCΙ ΝΕΜΟΥΝ[	exalted with a [

⁸⁴ The scribe has crossed out these letters.

Side b

] ḡrḡs. w'[	] <i>George and</i> [
[. . . .] ΟΥΝΩΤ ἰΕ[	[...] a great [
[. . .] . [.] · Ω ΠΗΑΤΟΙ	[...] O soldier,
[. . .] ΕC ΧC · ΝΕΜΠΕC	[...] Christ and his
ΜΕΝΡΙΤ ΑΛΗΘΟΣ ·	truly beloved,
ΠΑΘC· ΠΟΥΡΟ ΓΕΟΡ	my Lord, the king, Geor-
ΓΙΟΣ // ---	ge. // ---
Ω ΠΩΩΙΧ ἰΓΓΕΝ	O noble athlete,
ΝΕΟΣ · ΦΑΠΠΟΥC	of the radiant
ἰΛΑΜΠΡΟΣ · ΚΙΡΙΟΣ·	mind, lord
ἰΝΙΑΓΙΟΣ · ΠΑΘC	of the saints, my Lord,
[. . .] . ΑΞΜΕΚ ἰΧΕΠΧC	Christ [...] . . . you
[. . .] ΠΙCΤΑΔΙΟΝ Ε·	[...] the arena
[. . .] ΕΤΜΕΤΜΑΡ	[...] to the mar-
[ΤΥ]ΡΟΣ · ΠΑΘC ΠΟΥ[ΡΟ	[ty]rdom. My lord, the ki[ng
[. . .] ΦΟΡΙ ἰ . ΠΙΓ . . [	[...] coming forth of . . . [
[. . .] OC · ῥ ἰΧΛΟ[Μ	[...] three [crowns

CAT. NO. 138 (98:Ms3)⁸⁵

A single leaf from a parchment codex written in the Bohairic dialect in a single column. The script is unimodular, thick and thin style, with initials in *ekthesis* that are sometimes enlarged. There is no decoration apart from an ornament centrally placed in the upper margin on the flesh side. The flesh side also bears a page or folio number. Dimensions: approx. 23.5 × 17.0 cm. The leaf is crumpled and torn, and the text is in many places badly faded, making significant portions of the text difficult to read from the photographs. The leaf closely resembles several manuscripts deriving from the Monastery of St Macarius in Wadi al-Natrun.⁸⁶

The text is unidentified, but deals with liturgical matters relating to the Eucharist and, probably, baptism.

⁸⁵ The manuscript is quite damaged and substantial portions of it are very difficult to read. The tear in the middle of the bottom half of the leaf constitutes an especially difficult problem, as the lines in that part of the fragment are no longer correctly aligned. In some places there are also folds that obscure parts of the text. This transcription, made on the basis of photographs, must therefore only be regarded as a preliminary reading.

⁸⁶ See, e.g., Evelyn White 1926, plates VIII (no. XXXI) and XI.A (no. XXXIII, frag. 2).

Verso (flesh side)

λβ ἰη̅ς <> π̅χ̅ς

32 Jesus <> Christ

1 ογορ̅ ἡ̅τεφ̅σι̅μο̅υ̅ α̅ ς
 ςα̅τ̅ρ̅η̅
 εα̅φ̅α̅ ἡ̅ς̅α̅ ἡ̅ν̅ι̅β̅η̅ο̅γ̅ι̅ ἡ̅τ̅ε̅
 π̅ι̅ρ̅ω̅μ̅ι̅ ἡ̅α̅π̅α̅ς̅ ε̅α̅φ̅τ̅ρ̅ι̅ω̅τ̅ι̅
 5 ἡ̅ν̅α̅π̅ι̅ρ̅ω̅μ̅ι̅ ἡ̅β̅ε̅ρ̅ι̅ ογορ̅ π̅α̅ι̅
 ρ̅η̅τ̅ μ̅α̅ρ̅ε̅φ̅τ̅ ἡ̅π̅ε̅φ̅ο̅υ̅α̅ ε̅τ̅
 τ̅ρ̅α̅π̅ε̅ζ̅α̅ ε̅θ̅ο̅υ̅α̅β̅ β̅ε̅ν̅η̅
 π̅α̅ρ̅ρ̅η̅ς̅ι̅α̅ :
 α̅λ̅λ̅α̅ π̅ε̅τ̅φ̅ω̅κ̅ π̅ε̅τ̅ε̅ν̅ι̅ρ̅ι̅
 10 ἡ̅μ̅ο̅ς̅ [̅
 τ̅ε̅ν̅⁹⁰ . . . [̅
 τ̅ε̅ν̅ : τ̅ . . . ε̅ . . . ε̅ν̅ε̅ν̅ε̅ρ̅η̅ο̅υ̅
 τ̅ε̅ν̅ : . ο̅ς̅ . . . ε̅ν̅ε̅ν̅ε̅ρ̅η̅ο̅υ̅
 τ̅ε̅ν̅ : ς̅α̅ . α̅ ἡ̅ν̅ε̅ . . . ω̅ρ̅ε̅υ̅:
 15 τ̅ε̅ν̅ : . ε̅ ἡ̅ς̅ω̅ν̅τ̅ : ν̅ε̅μ̅ ἡ̅ε̅ι̅
 τ̅ε̅ν̅ : θ̅ω̅ρ̅⁹¹:
 τ̅[ε̅ν̅]: [̅] ο̅ν̅η̅ν̅ :
 τ̅ε̅ν̅ [̅] . . ἡ̅ν̅ :
 τ̅ε̅ν̅ [̅] ω̅ρ̅ε̅ω̅ι̅
 20 τ̅ε̅ν̅ . [̅ . . .] τ̅α̅ς̅τ̅η̅
 ρ̅ο̅υ̅ . . . [̅ . . .] ε̅τ̅ι̅ρ̅ι̅
 [̅ . . .] τ̅η̅ε̅τ̅ο̅υ̅ρ̅ο̅
 ἡ̅τ̅[̅ .]ε̅
 ξ̅ε̅ [̅] α̅ι̅ ἡ̅ο̅υ̅μ̅η̅ω̅ ἡ̅ς̅ο̅π̅ι̅
 25 . . [̅ . . .] . . . ε̅ ξ̅ω̅ ἡ̅μ̅ω̅ο̅υ̅
 [̅] ρ̅ε̅ο̅υ̅ε̅ . ς̅α̅ β̅ε̅ν̅
 [̅] . . ο̅υ̅ . . . ο̅υ̅α̅ε̅
 [̅ Δ̅ω̅] ρ̅ε̅α̅ . . :
 [̅] . ο̅ι̅ ἡ̅ξ̅ο̅υ̅ο̅
 30 [̅] ρ̅ε̅φ̅ε̅ρ̅ . . . :

and let him take/receive water [̅
 henceforth.
 Having renounced the works of the
 old man, and having put on
 those of the new man and this
 manner,⁹² let him give his pledge to the
 holy table
 with confidence.⁹³
 But we do that which is
 yours⁹⁴ [̅
 We . . . [̅
 We give . . . to one another
 We . . . to one another
 We . . .
 We . . . anger and love.
 We . . .
 W[e . . .] . . .
 We [̅ . . .]
 We [̅ . . .] . . . mockery.
 We [̅ . . .] . . .
 . . . [̅ . . .] . . .
 . . . [̅ . . .] . . . the kingdom
 of . . .
 . . . many times
 . . . say these things
] . . .
 . . . neither/nor
 [̅ . . . gift] . . .
 [̅ . . .] . . . increase much
 [̅ . . .] . . .

⁹⁰ For similar layout with the repetition of a word or morpheme in succeeding lines, see Evelyn White 1926, 159 (no. XXIX, frag. 2), 173 and plate XI.A (no. XXXIII, frag. 2), plate II.B (no. V, frag. 3).

⁹¹ Perhaps: ξ̅α̅θ̅ω̅ρ̅.

⁹² Cf. Eph. 4:22–24; Col 3:9–10.

⁹³ Or: openly.

⁹⁴ Reading π̅ε̅τ̅φ̅ω̅κ̅ for π̅ε̅τ̅φ̅ω̅ι̅κ̅.

CAT. NO. 140 (98:Ms5)

A single leaf from a single-column paper codex written in the Bohairic dialect, approx. 13.5 × 9.0 cm. Enlarged initials in *ekthesis*. The superscript title, initials, and punctuation are written in red ink. The script is somewhat similar to that of 98:Ms2, but far more carefully written. Unfortunately, most of the text is faded or partly scraped off, making it very difficult to read.

This highly damaged leaf probably derives from a horologion. The date is unknown.

Text and translation⁹⁵

Side A

ⲧ . ⲛ . ⲱⲱ . ⲛⲛ . . . [. .] .	
. [. . .]	
. . [. . .] . ⲉⲣⲉⲛⲓⲥ . [. . .] .	
. . [. . .] . ⲧⲉ . . ⲛⲉ . . .	
[.] . ⲛⲛ . . . ⲓ	
[.] . ⲡ . . . ⲱⲱ	
[.] ⲉⲁⲗⲏⲛⲓⲣⲓⲥ	... to mount the cross
[.] ⲉ	
ⲡ [. .] . [. .] ⲉⲃⲟⲗ	
. [. .] ⲉⲓⲧ	
. . [. .] ⲱ .	
ⲉ . . ⲱ ⲓ	
. ⲧⲏⲣⲓ	... entire ...
ⲃⲉⲛⲟⲩⲣⲁⲱⲓ ⲟ . ⲓ	with joy ...
ⲉⲧⲁⲕⲓ ⲉⲣⲃⲟⲛⲟⲩⲓⲛ ⲉⲡⲓ	have you come to help the
ⲕⲟⲥⲙⲟⲥ ⲓ [. . .] .	world?
. . ⲥ ⲓ	
ⲡ ⲉ . ⲛⲉⲛ ⲓ	
ⲱⲧ ⲥⲛ . [. .] ⲓ	... as if thrown out
ⲧⲉ . . ⲗⲱⲥ ⲣⲟⲗⲡ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ	through/by ...
ⲗⲓⲧⲉⲛ . . ⲡⲉ ⲛ . ⲉ . . . .	... he fell/found ...
ⲱⲛ . . . ⲁⲩⲣⲉⲓ ⲛⲕⲉ ⲁⲛ . ⲓ	
[. .] . ⲗⲁⲩ . [. .] . ⲣⲓ ⲛⲕ	
[. .] . Ⲯ [. .] . . .	
[. .] . ⲛⲧⲟⲟⲧ . [. .] . .	

Side B

[. . .]	
[. . .]	
. [. .] .	
. [. . .] ⲓ	
. . . ⲃ . ⲓ [
.	
. . [. . .] . [
ⲁⲗⲛ ⲣⲉⲗ ⲉ	... hour ...
ⲧⲉⲛⲱⲉⲡⲓⲙⲟⲧ ⲛ	We give thanks
ⲧⲟⲧⲕ ⲡⲉⲛⲛⲏⲃ ⲡⲡⲁⲧ	to you, our master, the
ⲧⲟⲕⲣⲁⲧⲱⲣ ⲓ ⲫⲓⲱⲧ	Almighty, Father
ⲏⲡⲉⲛⲟⲥ ⲟⲩⲟⲗ ⲡⲉⲛ	of our Lord and our
ⲛⲟⲩⲧ ⲓ ⲟⲩⲟⲗ ⲡⲉⲛⲥⲱ	God and our Savior
ⲧⲏⲣ ⲏⲥ ⲡⲧⲥ ⲓ ⲟⲩⲟⲗ ⲧⲉ	Jesus Christ, and we
ⲧⲱⲟⲩ ⲛⲁⲕ ⲓ ⲁⲉⲁⲕⲕⲱ	glorify you, for you have made
ⲛⲏⲟⲩⲛⲟⲩ ⲛⲏⲕⲁⲗ	the hours of suffering
ⲛ[ⲧⲉ]ⲡⲉⲕⲙⲟⲛⲟⲩⲉⲛⲏⲥ	of your only begotten
ⲛⲱⲛⲣⲓ ⲏⲡⲣⲟⲥⲉⲕⲭⲏ	Son the prayers
. ⲉ . . . ⲱⲃ ⲓ ⲱⲱⲡ ⲉ	... Accept
ⲣⲟⲕ ⲛⲛⲉⲛⲧⲗⲟ ⲟⲩⲟⲗ	our supplications and
. . ⲗⲁ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲗⲁⲣⲟ[ⲛ]	... against [us]
. . . ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲁ . . [

SUMMARY

Looking at all the Coptic fragments together, it is striking how diverse they are. Not only do none of them come from the same codex, but they are also very different from one another. It is clear that they were not all produced at the Monastery of St Antony, and perhaps none of them were. We have both parchment and paper fragments, written in both Bohairic and Sahidic, in very different hands ranging from the highly skilled literary hands of 98:Ms4 and 98:Ms1 to the more careless and irregular style of 98:Ms2. The contents are also highly diverse, from the medical recipes of 98:Ms4 to the hymns of 98:Ms2 and the prayers of 98:Ms5. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the codices to which these fragments once belonged were produced at different times in different places and were probably also brought to the monastery at different times. There is little reason to believe that any of the Coptic parchment fragments are older than the radiocarbon dated

⁹⁵ The following transcription has been made on the basis of photographs. The manuscript is quite damaged and very difficult to read. The present transcription must be regarded as preliminary.

98:Ms4, which dates from the 9th or 10th century, while the paper fragments are of significantly later date.

GRAFFITI

Written on the plaster on the wall of one of the cells (Room 5) with black paint is a partly preserved Coptic inscription of unknown date. The extent of the original text is unknown, and there are very few traces of text left apart from the easily readable parts. It is both palaeographically and orthographically irregular. The function of the text is unclear, but the appearance of the words “Wisdom” (ⲧⲓⲥⲱⲫⲓⲁ) and “the Father” (ⲡⲓⲱⲧⲧ), and the repetition of ⲛⲁⲛ in succeeding lines indicate that it may be a prayer.

Text

ⲛⲁⲛ [.] ⲧⲓⲥⲱⲫⲓⲁ
 ⲛⲁⲛ [.] ⲡⲓⲱⲧⲧ [.] .
 ⲛⲁⲛ ⲉⲡⲓⲱⲉϥ .
 ⲛⲁⲛ . ⲙⲓⲗⲁ .
 . ⲙⲉϥ [.] ⲁ . . [.] . [.] .
 . [.] ⲃⲉⲛ [.] ⲃⲓⲕⲱ [.] .
 ⲛⲟϥ [.] ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲃⲉⲛ
 ⲫⲏⲱ ⲉⲡⲁϩⲧⲓ ⲡ
 ⲡⲓ . . [.] ⲡ
 ⲱⲡⲓ

The Arabic manuscripts

BY JASON ZABOROWSKI

The excavations at the Monastery of St Antony unearthed some valuable Arabic manuscript evidence attesting to the relationship between the Monastery of St Antony and those in the Fayyum. Although fragmentary, the Arabic manuscripts that were discovered may someday complete a larger puzzle portraying many dimensions of daily life in the monastery, including their educational practices, their relationships both within and outside the monastery, and their literary habits. Fragment cat. no. 104 (100:Ms2) is particularly interesting for its stylized use of Arabic.

Apparatus

{ } supplies correction for the text
 [] suggested reading where the orthography is uncertain
 (?) literal interpretation of a word that is clear, but its meaning in the greater context is uncertain.

CAT. NO. 31 (100:Ms5)

This narrow leaf contains some instructions that are of commercial interest. One of the readable segments of text on the *recto* offers an inventory of items with cursive Coptic numerals in the left column. The *verso* expresses a letter to an Abu al-Farah, a disciple of the monastery. The letter comments on the cost, in dirhams, of producing transcription copies.

Text and translation

Recto

	[فرد فعليس رصفع سد]	1
{Coptic numeral 2}	{unknown}	
	[رند رصيفع]	2
{Coptic numeral 3}	Sweet bay (aloeswood) {unknown}	
	[عرف كافور رصمي]	3
{Coptic numeral 1}	Fragrance of camphor {unknown}	
	[حلیم افر]	4
{Coptic numeral 4}	Milk {unknown}	
	[فصرهان رصمر]	5
{Coptic numeral 1}	Palm fruit(?) {unknown}	

{Coptic numeral 4} [meaning unknown unknown]	6	<i>Verso</i>	1
{Coptic numeral 4} [meaning unknown]	7	To the [disciples](?)	2
{Coptic numeral 1} basket	8	[...] John	3
{Coptic numeral appears to be a 30}	9	[...] the condition of his evil(?)	4
red in the gravel(?)	10	he shall inform [...] the saint, [that our caution]	5
(?)	11	الله [بركته] صلة [تزور سير] لنا حرك[ته] تواتر	6
[...]	12	God [his blessing] connection(?) [you shall visit] to us; [his movement is] continuous	7
[...]	13	[...] to the martyrs and [...] he arrives	8
[...]	14	اللمدان لما توجه[ه] [الي مصر لمر]ادته	9
[...]	15	the humbled one when he turns himself toward Egypt, to [his rebelliousness]	10
[...]	16	[...] وفي ن [ان مصرى و] [ن وما ينفع	11
[...]	17	[...] in [...] an Egyptian [...] and was not beneficial	12
[...]	18	للتسخ وقد احذر لك دستر وربع	13
[...]	19	for transcription, and I had warned you(?) a copy(?) and a quarter(?)	14
[...]	20	مصري كبير للتسخ فان كان هو عرص[ك]	15
[...]	21	Egyptian is a great {amount} for the transcription; for if he was to [appear to you]	16
[...]	22	ينفعل ميرلى حتى افر لدمه	17
[...]	23	he would complete a provision for me until [...]	18
[...]	24	قليل ين {ف} عل في فهر بو ابراهيم	19
[...]	25	a little, he would complete {it} in the <i>fibr</i> (?) of {A}bu Ibrahim.	20

N.B.: The bottom line is upside down:

- 13 كل دستر وفي مصر شي بعشرة
Every copy(?), and in Egypt {it is} something for ten
14 دراهم كل دستر ورق منصوري.
dirhams; every copy(?) of supported {subsidized(?)} paper.
15 ونتوصا يا ابو الفرخ غائبة الوصى
And we shall advise, O Abu al-Farah, [] the instruction,
16 وتعرفني خبرك وما تحتاج اليه
and inform me of your news, and of what you need
17 في [هالدو] عنك
in [?] about you.

CAT. NO. 65 (100:Ms3)

Cat. no. 65 is damaged with large holes throughout one side of the leaf. Insect holes and reddish splotches stain the paper. The leaf suffers from a fold that interrupts the flow (covering at least a full line) of text on the *verso*. The top is unevenly torn, however this was done at the time when the scribe wrote, because beneath the tear, the text begins with the typical Arabic Christian invocation, "In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God." From that point the text appears to initiate a monastic hagiography about a monk named George. Spots of the text are readable, though frequently streams of text are interrupted by badly faded ink and holes in the leaf. The *recto* begins addressing Girgis (George) with appellations such as "pure," "chaste," "star of the monastery," and "crown of the children [belonging to the blessed monasteries]". Girgis is a very popular Christian name in Egypt, long associated with St George the Dragon Slayer, identified in the Coptic tradition as George of Melitene, whose martyrdom is celebrated on the 23rd of Barmoudeh. This leaf does not appear to testify to that martyr tradition, although its flowery language for its George is reminiscent of the Diocletianic martyrdom's style. The marginal lines in particular exhibit interesting wordplay. The text requires significant analysis to determine its comprehensive message. It employs theological language, such as "bearing witness to its image", and "the glory given to the Christ".

Text and translation

Recto

- 1 بسم الاب والابن وروح القدس اله واحد
In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, One God.
2 تلميذ العلامة الابوية الطاهرة النقية [الباهر المرط] ما فيه [الروح جرجس]
Girgis the disciple of the pure, chaste, paternal, erudite [dazzling ... in it the spirit]
3 وكوكب البرية سيد العباد وتاج الاولاد [ديار المبارك]
and the star of the monastery, chief of the worshippers and crown of the children belonging [to the blessed monasteries]
4 الناسك اسم الله [سيره و ملات الدارس الح وحوه ولا] the hermit, the name(?) of God [...]
5 بسيرة روحانية في باطنه [وسيرة] ما دام يوماً موخودا []
in a spiritual biography in his interior [and the biography(?)] continues daily, present(?) [...]
6 التلميذ يسرح بعض ما يحده و الاشتاق والنا []
the disciple leaves some of what hinders him, and the desire, and the [...]
7 مشاهد صورها لالري []
bearing witness to her/its image [...]
8 واضجر مكبراً وكان في ذلك [وا اطنب مص] and he caused great anger [] and he remained [...]
9 ذلك على المجد للمسيحي [قرة ملا في ال] that upon the glory given to the Christ [...]

- 3 للرهبان معترف بعصلهم للروح []
to the monks, confessing through their grace belonging to the spirit [...]
- 4 ولما سمع سي[كمل]ها عندهم وسائرة []
and when he heard [...] of theirs and the rest [...]
- 5 فرح ل[] وهنا نفس [هناك] [يما ومن []]
he rejoiced [...] and here a soul [...]
- 6 هر عبر قيل تصاريح على []
[... saying statements about...]
- 7 ي[م]ر []
N.B.: Large hole in the text.
- 8 [سفكه و مرض []
[his bloodshed (? cf. line 2) ...]
- 9 على [منف []
upon [...]
- 10 و[تسالهم ياكون] تلميذهم [غضب هابهم كما []
and [...] their disciple [shall be(?) angry...]
- Written lengthwise in the righthand margin.*
N.B.: the first c. 2 cm of each line of the marginalia are unreadable because they are covered by the fold of the top of the leaf.
- 1 [الفدي والملك ال[زمن]ي يكون د[ي]ر [] ولنا تلك عيس []
[the redemption, and the [worldly] king, [...] and we have this [...]
- 2 [ه] ير وروحه قدس امين [ت]شهني ليوتر[نا ابن] تنوت عر لممثل يعا
[...] and His Holy Spirit(?), amen. [You] desire to [cheat us...]
- 3 [ن] للقد[يس]ين للطاهر للنفيس [انتاعر صل] و[ع]دل الر[ر لديه الميذت]
[...] to the saints, to the pure, to the precious, [...]
- 10 ال[ح]مية ومع هذا فما افترقنا الا بالاجساد بل النفوس
the zeal and with this, we did not make division either in the bodies or the souls
- 11 عربه ولا ابعاد ان قلب عب[ث] لما قلبي نصدو
(?) and not ... if changed, mixed, then it was not my change
- 12 النفس لم تعب او فلت ما عب[ث] قال الطرف يا [كبر]
the soul was not tired nor mixed. The part said [...]
- Written lengthwise in the righthand margin:*
- 1 [العهد] يسوع المسيح [طادريس] وجميع [ه]د او الفن سير
[The testament] of Jesus Christ [...] and all [...] and the art(?) [...]
- 2 جعل الله لامامها مضية وافعالها مرضية وحاجاتها مقضية التلميذ مرع هامته
N.B.: A rhyme: jā'ala allah lamāmihā maḍiyyatan wa af'alahā maḍiyyatan wa ḥājātahā maqḍiyyah.
the disciples. God made her suffering pass and her actions pleasant, and her works accomplished
- 3 المدلهم بالاوزار يحب اذلهم المقدمة
N.B.: A wordplay: al-madlahhim bi-lāwzār yuḥibbu āḍalmahā [or, āḍāmahā] al-muḍlamahuh.
the gloominess in the burdens (...?)
- Verso*
- 1 [من] يصدق و[الكذب] يقبل اخبرا من[ها] وقال الله بعا[]
[who] believes, and the [lie] shall receive news from [it], and God said
- 2 برومها برهه والزم[ان سفكه به خ سوف]العلق لح[]
in its desire briefly and the [time of his bloodshed (? cf. line 8)] the relationship to [...]
- N.B.: Top two lines (above) are on folded-over portion of the folio; unreadable text of the verso is underneath the fold.*

N.B.: Lines 4 and 5 of the margin contain writing folded over from the recto: see lines 1 and 2 of the recto marginalia.

4 هذا والفن ليه [صلولنه واوقات خلواته لنساخ [برلانه
و[ي]ترك له هنواته

[... his prayers] and the times of his seclusion for the scribe
and [he] will leave behind his fears

5 [و السبح لل[د ابها لبرا

[...] and praise be to [...]

CAT. NO. 67 (100:MsI)

Cat. no. 67 is the most readable of the two full-leaf fragments. It measures c. 14 × 12 cm; the top is torn unevenly, removing at least one and a half lines of text, and the bottom corners are damaged. The author has made the most of the space on the leaf by writing lengthwise in the margin. Even in its damaged condition, it reveals interesting details about specific persons.

The main author of the letter seems to offer an update about his bout with an illness that gripped him with “a feverish shiver and feeling of much pain” for more than ten days. The letter serves as an introduction for the author’s emissary, the “Deacon Isaac”, who will be visiting the letter’s addressee. The author of the letter asks that the Deacon Isaac be treated like his own “eyes”. The Deacon Isaac will bring some kind of “instruction” to the recipient of this letter (or, perhaps receive instruction from the letter’s recipient). The letter seems to indicate that the Deacon Isaac and a man named Baw ‘Ali are “protecting” the author in some way, and that the author is accompanied by another person name Khaled Kharuf, who also sends his greetings through the letter. The author of the letter also mentions an unspecified matter relating to a man named Taw al-Rida, a matter about which he is “unable to do anything”.

The marginal writing on the *verso* is intriguing because it demonstrates an event linking the Monastery of St Antony to the Fayyum. It is not clear whether the writing in the margin is a continuation of the ideas in the body of the text of the *verso*. The marginal writing states that an unnamed person (Taw al-Rida?) “went to the City of the Fayyum” with his “monastic children”.

On the macro-level of identity, the letter references St Antony and the biblical place name of Zion.

Text and translation

Recto (?)

1 [ال]ى حل[لو]ات

(?)

2 قد حضرت ربت عندا [بك] واخوك ذو الكرم في

ال[مكا]ن {ل}ذي

I had prepared [?] for your father(?) and your brother, the generous one in the place

3 فيه فقد انسحف مخطر في وت[را]ت انا والقف

وتحسى منه الم

wherein he is. I was contrite(?), informing(?) {you} about [?] I, and the feverish shiver and feeling of much pain

4 كثير بعد رواحكم بعشرة ايام ان الوجع في اجنابي

حين مركب

from it, after your departure for ten days there was pain in my sides while riding

5 يافي مكتب ذكرت ان خالد خروف يطلع هو و[ابن]ك

تو الرضا

[?] and I thought that Khalid Kharuf is coming—he and your son, Taw al-Ridā—

6 على الغطاس ف[لولا]ي حل وجع ما قدر يسفارني

وانا متوجع الى الان

upon Epiphany [or, the baptism], and if(?) the pain is not resolved, he would not be able to visit(?) me. And I am in pain until now.

7 ويا ولدي ما احتاج اوصيك بالشماس اسحق يوصلها

فهو قليل

My son: I need not instruct you about [what] the Deacon Isaac is bringing, for it is less [significant]

8 إليك مما احتاج اوصيك عما به الوصية وتأخذ له موضع

جيد

to you than the instruction about which I need to instruct you. Keep for him a good place

9 يسكن فيه وتتوصا به وتذ[ك]ره و[تعر بر] حنى نحي
[كانه]

in which he shall dwell, and instruct him, and remember him [?], his []

10 بما تعمل يعرف الخبر فهو عندي مثل عيني فهو ضاف
[شأن الله]

about what you do, he will know the news, for he is like my eyes, a guest(?) in the will(?) of God(?).

11 وتعرف الوالد بو عالي ذكره الله يحرسوا لي عنه وخالد
خروف

And you know the father Baw 'Ālī: may God remember him. They are protecting me from(?) him. And Khalid Kharūf

12 يسال عنك كركر واما قضية تو الرضا فما قدرنا نعمل
معه شي

asks about you also. And as for the matter of Taw al-Riḍā, we are not able to do anything with him.

Right-hand marginal writing:

١ بانه اسفل من الحرة وراح الى مدينة الفيوم هو واولاده

for he is lower than the heat(?), and he went to the City of the Fayyūm—he and his {monastic} children

٢ وارادة الله تكون وصاني كأن ي[سرت] وتشكر اولادك
وهم في سالم {او, سلام} عافية

and may God will that you instruct me [?] and to thank your {monastic} children, may they be sound and healthy.

Verso (?)

N.B.: The leaf is flipped so that the beginning of the writing on the recto (?) is opposite the bottom line of the verso(?)

1 ومحارم ال [؟] ولده يسلم عليك ويستر حسن [متكرب]

... and the forbidden things(?) ... his son, peace be upon you and goodness forgive worries(?) ...

2 وتسل لنا على الاب منا وجع [و] اخوه وتسل لي

And you are contacting us about the father of ours who was in pain and his brother, and you are contacting me

3 على القس [] حسن منه

about the priest [?] good from him.

4 ويسكني يطرب لكم عدة مطانوات نذكروني

And he reassures/relieves me, [expressing] delight to you, many obeisances [*metanoias*] I am remembered/reminded

5 قدام القديس انطونيوس ويسالم []

before St Antony, and peace [?]

6 وعليه صهيون [مك]ون على الولد وعنده امر امر

and upon him Zion, [created] by the Son, and He has authority!

7 [ي]بعيد الدولة يسلم عليك كركر [بسلام]

The nation is distant (?); may peace be upon you again, with peace.

8 والمسيح لله كلما []

And the Christ unto God is all [?]

9 وما احتاج اوصيك [ب]الشماس اسحق وتأخذ

موضع جيد {او, خير}

and I do not need to instruct you [about] the Deacon Isaac, and keep a good place.

10 والله الله [] وصاه فهو يابني عندك وهو عوضى

And God, God [?] instructed him; for he—my son—and he is a substitute (?)...

CAT. NO. 104 (100:Ms2)

Cat. no. 104 consists of a mere corner of a leaf (7.5 × 6.7 cm) containing six incomplete lines of text. The *recto* preserves the last three or four words of the text strings, and the *verso* preserves the first three or four words of the text strings. Despite the limited scope of the fragment, its text offers strong clues that it belongs to a literary piece. Given more time, a scholar may be able to identify the source of this fragment, which exhibits poetic alliteration as well as metaphoric speech, drawing on the imagery of the lion, gold, and the metal lead, to instruct its reader.

Recto

- 1 لي عنان السما
I have clouds of heaven [*or*, the bridle of heaven]
- 2 وجمر كما يحمر الاسد
and embers, just as the lion is red
- 3 حاهن بالرصاص وقد
with lead [substance] and
- 4 [س]له من الذهب تحران
from the gold make hot
- 5 نت الاغيد وقالوا علمي
the graceful, and the two said “my knowledge
- 6 ة الارواح وجالبه الافراح
the spirits, and the festivities attracted him
- 7 ان هذا
that this {n.b., these two words cue the incipit of the *verso*}

Ms 2 (I)

Verso

- 1 الذي قد صنمك ا
which is your idol (?)
- 2 من مرید وكان
from illness, and it was

3 وقد اصطنع هذا اللو {ح}

and he had created this slab

4 و يربوح روحه راحت

and his spirit was benefitted, it passed {away?}

5 يخطوا خطوة تحقق ال

they are taking steps verifying

6 فزعق زعقة ادوي لم

he cried out, “illness(?) has not

Comment:

The fragment exhibits an alliterative, poetic style. For example, consider the Arabic in Latin transcription of the following line fragments:

Recto

- 1.2 *wa jamr kama yaḥammaru l-āsad*
and embers, just as the lion is red
- 1.6 *al-ārṣāḥ wa jālibahu al-āfrāḥ*
the spirits, and the festivities attracted him

Verso

- 1.4 *wa yarbūhu rūḥu rāḥat*
and his spirit was benefitted, it passed {away?}
- 1.5 *yakhṭū khaṭwah taḥaqquq*
they are taking steps verifying
- 1.6 *fā-za‘qa za‘qah ādawī*
he cried out, “illness(?) has not

Hebrew Masoretic text of *Lamentations* 2:20–22 and Judaeo-Arabic translation of *Lamentations* 2:19–21

BY MEIRA POLLIACK

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF FRAGMENT

The fragment cat. no. 12 contains the Hebrew Masoretic text and a periphrastic Judaeo-Arabic translation of the Masoretic text of *Lamentations* 2:19–22. The *recto* begins with the Judaeo-Arabic translation of the end of verse 19, and is followed by the full Hebrew text of verse 20 and its Judaeo-Arabic translation. The *verso* starts at the beginning of verse 21, which is also supplied in full and is followed by a Judaeo-Arabic translation, and then by the full Hebrew text of verse 22. The surviving sections of the Hebrew verses of *Lamentations* 2:20–22 are fully vocalized according to the Tiberian System. This article contains a transcription of the fragment. The English translation of the Hebrew verses (according to The Revised Standard Version) has been provided for the reader's consultation, as well as an appendix of comparative Judaeo-Arabic versions.

NOTES ON THE JUDAEO-ARABIC TRANSLATION

The Judaeo-Arabic translation which has survived in the fragment is partial and truncated. It does not concur with any of the known Judaeo-Arabic versions of *Lamentations*, which include those of Rabbi Sa'adiah Gaon (first half of the 10th century, Iraq) and the Karaite sages Salmon ben Yeruham and Yefet ben 'Eli (second half of the 10th century, Jerusalem). These translations have been appended herein, so as to supply a source for comparison. The style of the fragment's translation reflects a more periphrastic-type version, which might have been composed *ad hoc*. It does not follow the Hebrew text word-for-word, but rather appears to summarize it, although there are some lexical features in common with the known versions (see common lexemes noted in red in the transcription of the translation fragment and in the appendix samples), such as *בטשת* = *בטשת*: to attack with violence; and *ג'וע* = *ג'וע*: famine. A more detailed study of these common features is clearly a *desideratum*. The periphrastic Judaeo-Arabic translation contained in the fragment is sometimes designated “popular”, and its type is attested in Cairo Genizah sources, which contain a large number of Judaeo-Arabic Bible translation fragments that cannot be traced to a particular known version. They may well have served as didactic aids or

drills in the medieval Jewish study of the Hebrew text.⁹⁶ My thorough search of identifiable Judaeo-Arabic *Lamentations* translation fragments preserved in the Cairo Genizah has not yet yielded any match.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, our fragment does resemble the style of fragments known from the Genizah, and, since the vicinity is the same, it is possible to surmise that it may have reached the monastery through a Jewish contact or convert. In general, the fragment is written in classical Judaeo-Arabic orthography and style, which reflects Arabic *maters lectionis*, and the differentiation of Arabic *ض* and *ص* through the use of a dot above Hebrew *sadi* (as in *אלארין*—see *verso* line 5). Such features suggest a date of around the 10th century, when this orthography became common. Yet, there are also some particularities such as the distancing between the “al” particle and the noun in some cases, as in *פי יומך אל כלב* (= in your day of the anger [Arabic: *كلب*; *verso* line 9]). There are also some expressions such as *וליס מגיית* (“without a saviour?”), which suggest the influence of colloquial Arabic. The Hebrew writing is fine, square, and has common casual Arabic pointing, such as the *fathateyn* mark above *חקא* (*recto*, line 11).

TRANSCRIPTION OF HEBREW AND JUDAEO-ARABIC TEXT

Cat. no. 12 *recto* (the Hebrew text of *Lamentation* 2:20 is in blue)

- | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | [ב] : ובאלג'וע פי כל |
| 2 | [] יכמרן וליס מגיית |
| 3 | [] אלדי נשב: |
| 4 | [ראה] יה [נה] והב'יטה למי [עולקת] |
| 5 | [כ] ה אים-תאכלנה [נשים] |
| 6 | [פרי] מ עללי טפחים [אם] |
| 7 | [ימרג] במקנש אדני [פנהו ונביא] |
| 8 | [] או אלאהי תגל |
| 9 | [] לם בטשת בי [] |
| 10 | [] סוא י [] |
| 11 | [] וי תרף חקא פי |
| 12 | [] קתל בלא סבב |
| 13 | [] ומנ[ת]ג [] |

⁹⁶ Polliack 1998, 35–61.

⁹⁷ For a list of some 30 fragments, see Baker & Polliack 2001, 591–592. All of these have been checked against digitized photos in The Friedberg Genizah Project Site, but they do not match our fragment in any way. A further search of all the Genizah Collections is advisable, since some fragments have still not been fully catalogued, while others may have escaped our attention.

Cat. no. 12 *verso* (the Hebrew text of *Lamentation* 2:21–22 is in blue)

- 1 שִׁקְבוּ לְאַרְץ חַיִּים צוֹת נֶעֱר]
- 2 וְזָלוּ בְּתוֹלְתֵי וּבְחֹרֵי [רִי נָפְלוּ]
- 3 בְּחֶרֶב הִרְגֹתָ בָנִים [אֶפְדָּ]
- 4 טָבַחְתָּ לֹא חֶמְלָה
- 5 [נִאמְרוּ?] עָלֵי אֶלְאֶרֶץ אֱלֹשֶׁרָא]
- 6 צָבִי וְשִׁיךְ בָּאֵל מֵהוּ]
- 7 שְׂבֹאֲבִי וְאַבְכָּא [ר]
- 8 וְלֹם תִּכְן שְׁפִיקָא ב]
- 9 פִּי יוֹמֵךְ אֵל כֹּלֵב:
- 10 [תִּקְרָא] כִּיֹּם מוֹעֵד מִגְדֹרִי [מִסְכִּיב]
- 11 וְלֹא הָיָה בָנִים אֶפְרָיִם [יְהוֹה]
- 12 פָּלִיט וְשָׂרִיד אֶשְׁ-רֵטְפַחְתִּי
- 13 וְרִבְיָתִי [אֶבֶר כָּלָם:]

REVISED STANDARD VERSION (RSV) :

[19] Arise, cry out in the night,
at the beginning of the watches!
Pour out your heart like water
before the presence of the Lord!
Lift your hands to him
for the lives of your children,
who faint for hunger
at the head of every street.
[20] Look, O LORD, and see!
With whom hast thou dealt thus?
Should women eat their offspring,
the children of their tender care?
Should priest and prophet be slain
in the sanctuary of the Lord?
[21] In the dust of the streets
lie the young and the old;
my maidens and my young men
have fallen by the sword;
in the day of thy anger thou hast slain them,
slaughtering without mercy.
[22] Thou didst invite as to the day of an appointed
feast
my terrors on every side;
and on the day of the anger of the LORD
none escaped or survived;
those whom I dandled and reared
my enemy destroyed.

APPENDIX: THE KNOWN JUDAEO-ARABIC VERSION OF LAMENTATIONS 2:19–22

2:19:

Saadiyah Gaon⁹⁸

פקומי ורנני באלליל וכ'אצה פי אואיל אלנווב וכאן קלבך יסיל
כאלמא בין ידי אללה וארפעי אליה צ'נך עלי נפוס צביאנך
אלמתצ'ורין מן אלג'וע פי אטראף אלאסואק:

Salmon ben Yeruham⁹⁹

קומי רנני באלליל פי אול אלנווב אספכי
מת'ל אלמא קלבכי חדא ג'לאלה יוי ארפעי
אליה כפיק עלי נפס צביאנך אלמצ'ורין
באלג'וע פי ג'ומלה אלאסואק:

Yefet ben 'Eli

קומי כברי באלליל לאול אלנווב אספכי מת'ל אלמא קלבך חד'י
קדם אללה ארפעי כפיק אליה עלי נפס אטפאלך אלמתצ'ורין
באלג'וע עלי ראס כל אלאזקה:

2:20:

Saadiyah Gaon

אלהם אנצ'ר לי וארחמני פאנה מן ד'א בטשת בה כד'י אין תאכל
אלנסא אולאדהן אלמצביאן אלמרתפהון ואן יקתל פי קדס אללה
אמאם ונביא

Salmon ben Yeruham

אנט'ר יא רב ואלתפת למן בטשת במת'ל
הד'א חתי צאר אלנסא תאכלן ת'מרם
צביאן אלתרביה פהל יקתל פי קדס אללה
כהן ונביא:

⁹⁸ See Kafih 1962.

⁹⁹ My deep gratitude goes to Dr Jessica H. Andruss (University of Virginia) for supplying me with the typed texts of the Judaeo-Arabic versions of Salmon and Yefet to these verses. The edition she used for Salmon is Mohammed Abdul-Latif Abdul-Karim's *Commentary of Salmon Ben Yeruham on Lamentations: A critical edition* (Ph.D. thesis; University of St Andrews, 1976), for which the main source is MS BL Or 2516. Prof. Daniel Frank was gracious to pass on to her his reading of Yefet, based on MSS RNL Evr-Arab I.213 and RNL Evr-Arab I.3806. My thanks to him, as well as to Prof. James T. Robinson. I am also grateful to Roni Cohen for his kind help in typing the text of the fragment and the RSV version and to Dr Amir Ashur, Research Associate at the Biblia Arabica Project, Tel Aviv University, for his kind help in going over comparable Genizah material.

Yefet ben 'El

אנט'ר יא רב אלעאלמין ואלתפת למן פעלת מת'ל הד'א אם
יאכלן אלנסא ת'מרהן אטפאל קבצ'את אם יקתל פי קדס אללה
אמאם ונבי:

2:21:

Saadiah Gaon

ואנצ'ג'ע **עלי אלארק'** כ'ארגא אלצבי מנהם **ואלשיך'** ואבכאר
ושבאבי וקעו באלסיף קתלהם פי יום גצ'בך וד'בחתהם בג'ר
שפקה

Salmon ben Yeruham

אנצ'ג'עו **עלי אלארק'** פי אלזקה אלגלאם **ואלשיך'** עדארי וש'
באבי וקעו פי אלסיף קתלת פי יום גצ'בך קצבת ומה שפקת:

Yefet ben 'Eli

נאמו **עלי אלארק'** פי אלזקה אלחדת' **ואלשיך'** עאתקי **ושבאני**
וקעו באלסיף קתלת פי יום גצ'בך ד'בחת למ תשפק:

2:22:

Saadiah Gaon

צרת תדעו באהל חד'רי מת'ל יום אלמחצ'ר חואלי, ולם יבק פי
יום גצ'ב אללה פלית ולא שריד אלד'י תרפתהם ורביהם אפ'
נאהם אלעדו:

Salmon ben Yeruham

תנאדי מת'ל יום אלעייד אהל חד'רי חואליי ומה כאן פי יום גצ'ב
אללה פלית ולא שריד אלד'י רבית וכברת עדויי אפנאהם:

Yefet ben 'Eli

תנאדי מת'ל יום אלמוסס מג'אורי דאירא ולם יכן פי יום גצ'ב
אללה שריד ולא פלית אלד'י קבצ'ת ורביית אפנאהם עדויי:

The Ge'ez manuscript

BY MENGISTU GOBEZIEWORKU

INTRODUCTION

A manuscript fragment written in Ge'ez, cat. no. 66, was found in Unit 1, Stratum 2 in 2004. Ge'ez inscriptions are already known from the Monastery of St Antony where examples have earlier been identified on three walls in the Church of St Antony, and thus attest to a past Ethiopic presence at the Monastery.¹⁰⁰ According to Otto Meinardus, Ethiopian monks of a considerable number did stay at the Monastery in 11th century.¹⁰¹ The excavated manuscript may consequently have been left by one of these visiting monks. The date of the manuscript will be further discussed below.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Ge'ez manuscript cat. no. 66 is an individual leaf (single paper) in which hand-written vocalized Ge'ez words and letters are found on both sides of the page. The text is written with black ink except for the four red¹⁰² dots at the end of the first line of the *recto*, which appear to be a decoration or punctuation. The words are demarcated from one another using two dots between them. There is also a decorated item in the heading; it is a monochrome drawing at the upper margin of the *recto*.

Because of the fragmented character of the manuscript, it is difficult to confirm the character of the text. It seems that the manuscript is written in one column on both sides of the paper, which is the major feature of Ge'ez prayer books.¹⁰³ The text lacks adequate information to understand the context. But from the few easily readable words and phrases, it is possible to assume that it could be a kind of personal prayer that asks the help of God to be quiet and humble.

At the end of the first line of the *recto* we find the Ethiopic letter Ḫ repeated twice.¹⁰⁴ On the *recto* there are ten text lines

¹⁰⁰ Griffith 2002, 189f. The medieval relations between the Monastery of St Antony and the Ethiopian Church are further discussed in Gabra 2002b, 176.

¹⁰¹ Meinardus 1999, 259–260.

¹⁰² Ge'ez texts of ancient Ethiopic manuscripts are usually written in black and red colours. Black is for regular texts, while red is reserved for holy words such as God, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, Mary, Apostles, and Angels.

¹⁰³ There are various ways of layouts of Ge'ez manuscripts. It could be written in three columns like a synaxarion; in one column like the Psalms, or written in two columns as it is observed in many of the liturgical books.

¹⁰⁴ It is common to see such kind of mystical and symbolic Ethiopic letters in some of the oldest Ge'ez prayer books written in such a repeated manner. They often represent the hidden names of Divinity.

and only one word, repeated on the fourth, the fifth and the six (consecutive) lines, gives a meaning. It is the word *ከርምም* which means “keep quiet”. The *verso* has relatively better readable words. There are nine words in this side of the paper that gives meaning as mentioned below.

DATING

The archaeological context of the manuscript as well as its palaeography suggests that this is among the earliest extant Ethiopic manuscripts.¹⁰⁵ As the Ge'ez manuscript was unearthed from within the foundation level of the First Church, Stratum 2 (-0.50 m), it must likely pre-date the 13th-century building itself. In fact, it seems that the manuscript was most probably discarded already in Stratum 3, similarly to the dated manuscript cat. no. 12 (Cal. AD 1020–1165), and unintentionally raised to the following stratum by the making of the construction trenches for the stylobates and walls of the church. The manuscript may therefore be dated to the 11th to 12th century in comparison with cat. no. 12 and the relative chronology of Stratum 3 (Phase 3). Palaeographically, the text displays features of the first period Ethiopian manuscripts, which has previously been dated back to the middle of 14th century. Among these features are the monumentality and angular nature of the scripts, widely spaced individual scripts which led the text lines to possess only a small number of letters, lack of uniformity of the letters, and a letter height surpassing their width.¹⁰⁶

7 ፍክ:

8 ሀ ት

9 ርን

10 ር:

Verso

1 ርጽክ: ዘይፈ

Help (support)

2 በ ሐሊና

By Conscience

3 በእግዚአብሔር (ር)

By God

4 ዘ ያጎብእ

Who can give

5 ሥ ወበትዕቢት

Without humility

6 ኅቤክ ሐሊና

Gave Conscience

7 ዘንተ ኩሎ

All this

8 ርክብ

9 ቄ

10 ከ

Transcriptions

Note that only the legible words or phrases are written in red and the English translation is given in front of them.

Recto

English translation

1 ስንስ: ጳጳ ::

2 አቢ: በከ

3 ምም: ትዓ

4 ት: *ከርምም*: ከ keep quiet5 ገስ: *ከርምም* keep quiet6 ህር: *ከርም* (*ም*) keep quiet

¹⁰⁵ This aspect of the Ethiopic manuscript will be treated in a separate publication by Jesper Blid and Aaron M. Butts.

¹⁰⁶ Uhlig 1990, 23–25.

The monastery in literary sources during the period under study

BY SAMUEL RUBENSON

The Monastery of St Antony is most probably the oldest monastic settlement still in use. Its origins date back to the first half of the 4th century, when St Antony established himself as a solitary monk in the Eastern desert of Egypt on the route from the Nile to the Red Sea. Its remote location (until the introduction of cars) has, however, limited the number of visitors and thus literary records, in particular until the advent of European travellers in the second half of the 16th century.¹⁰⁷ Its early history, up until the 13th century, the main period of our concern here, is thus largely unwritten and even unrecorded. For its early and medieval history, we are thus, in addition to the study of its frescoes, the result of which have been published,¹⁰⁸ dependent on archaeological examinations, the first of which are published here. The purpose of this historiographical survey is simply to collect the information found in literary texts up until the 13th century, the period of a significant revival that is attested by buildings, frescoes, and literary output.

The decision by St Antony to leave the Nile valley and retreat to the inner desert is vividly depicted in the *Vita Antonii*, the biography written soon after his death by Athanasius of Alexandria.¹⁰⁹ In it, we hear that Antony was troubled by the multitude seeking his help and decided to move away. Not knowing if he should go north or south, he heard a voice telling him to join a caravan that was travelling east through the interior desert towards the Red Sea. In it, we read:

He journeyed with them three days and three nights and came to a very high mountain. At the base of the mountain there was water, crystal-clear, sweet, and very cold. Spreading out from there was flat land and a few scraggy date-palms. Antony, as though inspired by God fell in love with the place, for this was what he meant who spoke to him on the riverbank. He made a beginning by getting some loaves of bread from his companion travellers, and stayed alone at the mountain, with no one to keep him company. For the future he regarded this place as though he had found his own home.¹¹⁰

Although the biography is a strongly apologetic work and clearly marked by the interests of the author, there is no reason to doubt the historicity or location of Antony's retreat into the desert. A number of independent sources testify to Antony's fame during his lifetime and give support to the historicity of his establishment, probably sometime around 330, at the site of the present monastery.¹¹¹ The first establishment was, without doubt, no more than a few cells and a garden, akin to monastic establishments known from archaeological excavations in other areas. The cave in which St. Antony himself had stayed, located 276 m above the monastery on the hillside, may have been used as a retreat, but there is no explicit reference to it in any of the early sources.

The *Vita*, as well as other sources, mentions a few disciples, who most probably took over the site after Antony's death in 356 and gradually expanded the establishment with more cells. Most probably, cells were originally dug out on the bank of the stream flowing from the spring at the foot of the mountain. A first church may well have been constructed early, but probably on a very limited scale. It may well have included the saint's tomb, even though the *Vita* specifically says that the site of his burial was not to be revealed. An early veneration at the site is in any case very likely. According to the *History of the churches and monasteries* by the 13th-century writer Abu al-Makarim, the body of St Antony was walled up inside the monastery.¹¹² His statement that the monastery was constructed during the time of Emperor Julian (361–363), although often repeated, has no firm foundation.¹¹³ The early tradition was, and remains, semi-anachoretic, with the elders and their disciples living independently in cells, joining one another only for common meals and prayers on a daily or weekly basis. Thus, there was most probably little need for communal buildings except for churches.

Owing to Antony's fame, but also to attacks on monasteries closer to the Nile and Alexandria, as well as conflicts between the monks and the authorities, there seems to have been a flow of monks from these areas towards the Red Sea, as well as Sinai and Palestine in the late 4th and throughout the 5th century, adding to the number of monks at the monastery.¹¹⁴ But the remote position of the monastery in relation

¹⁰⁷ The literary records about the monastery, and in particular about European travellers, are collected in Meinardus 1989, 5–26.

¹⁰⁸ See Bolman 2002.

¹⁰⁹ For scholarship on the *Vita Antonii*, see Gemeinhardt 2013 and Rubenson 2006, 191–208.

¹¹⁰ *Vita Antonii* 49–50, Bartelink 1994, transl. Meyer 1950.

¹¹¹ For a detailed discussion of the sources about Antony, see Rubenson 1995.

¹¹² Evetts 1895, 160. Evetts mistakenly attributed the work to the owner of the manuscript, the Armenian Abu Salih.

¹¹³ Evetts 1895, 161.

¹¹⁴ In addition to numerous references to visits to the place, several sources mention monks who are said to have left the more accessible and crowded, but also more easily raided, monastic settlements of Nitria and Scetis for the Monastery of St Antony. See, for e.g., Abba Sisoës in the alphabetic collection of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* (Migne 1868) and Evelyn White 1926, 244, and the reference in *The Life of John the Little*

to inhabited lands most probably kept the numbers down and also contributed to the lack of references to it in later sources. The monastery, no doubt, never attained a size and influence comparable to the monasteries along the Nile or close to Alexandria known from pilgrims' accounts or the writings of Shenute. It is not referenced in any late antique pilgrims' accounts, except perhaps for the brief remark in the *Dialogues* of Sulpitius Severus, whereby he states that he visited two monasteries of St Antony and saw the Red Sea.¹¹⁵

Of the history of the present-day monastery in the following centuries, very little is known. After the schism between the Melkite (Chalcedonian) and the Coptic (non-Chalcedonian) traditions due to the Council of Chalcedon in 451, the Monastery of St Antony, as well as that of St Paul, may have belonged to the Melkites, owing to their close connections with monasticism on Sinai.¹¹⁶ A certain Anastasius is mentioned as head of the monastery and friend of the Melkite patriarch at the time of the Persian occupation of Egypt in the early 7th century.¹¹⁷ The Chalcedonian possession of the Monastery of St Antony is also made likely by the reference to them holding the relics of John the Little in connection with the transfer of his relics in the 8th century.¹¹⁸ A note by al-Maqrizi (1364–1442) mentions that the monastery was handed back to the Melkites in the early 9th century, which indicates that it had changed hands sometime before this date.¹¹⁹ Probably due to the monastery being in Melkite hands for most of the period, only one monk from St Antony's monastery is mentioned in the Coptic *Synaxarium* during the period from the Council of Chalcedon up to the 11th century.¹²⁰

In the 8th and 9th centuries, the situation of the Coptic Church and its monasteries was in decline, not the least due to Coptic resistance to and revolts against Muslim rule. The remote position of the Monastery of St Antony, and perhaps its allegiance to the Melkites meant that it was less affected. The establishment of Fatimid rule in Egypt in 969 inaugurated an era of prosperity for the church in Egypt as well as its monasteries. By this time, perhaps in connection with the establishment of Fatimid rule, the Monastery of St Antony had transferred from the Melkite to the Coptic tradition. A curious incident in the relations between the two traditions, testifying to the importance as well as the remoteness of the monastery, was the internment of the popular preacher

Murqus Ibn Qanbar in the monastery in 1174. He had, after serious conflicts with the Coptic patriarch, become a Melkite, but, dissatisfied with this, had decided to return to the Copts. In order to mend his ways, he was taken to the monastery and shaved, and released only after he had sworn upon Antony's body that he would repent.¹²¹

Being positioned close to the route along the Red Sea, the Monastery of St Antony was also on the pilgrimage route from Ethiopia to Jerusalem. A first mention of direct contact is found in the *Life of Minas*, who is said to have visited Ethiopia during the time of the patriarch Cosmas III (920–932), where he became part of a conflict involving the metropolitan of Ethiopia.¹²² The Ethiopian connections were strengthened at the end of the 12th century, when we hear about several monks of the monastery being consecrated metropolitans of Ethiopia. Ethiopian sources also refer to the monastery and its importance during the 12th century.¹²³

After the turbulence of the last decades of Fatimid rule, the establishment of the Ayyubids in 1171 led to a revival in the Coptic Church and in its monasteries. An important aspect of this revival was the transition from Coptic to Arabic as the language of the Church, except in liturgy.¹²⁴ The process had started earlier, but the end of the 12th century, the 13th century, and the early 14th century are marked by an astonishing production of Christian Arabic literature in Egypt. Some of this, for example translations into Arabic of the Coptic corpus of writings by St Antony, took place in the monastery at the same time as the famous wall paintings of the Church of St Antony (dated to 1232/1233) were executed.

It is, moreover, from this time that we have our first real description of the monastery. In his *History of the churches and monasteries*, Abu al-Makarim states:

This monastery possesses many endowments and possessions at Misr. It is surrounded by a fortified wall. It contains many monks. Within the wall there is a large garden, containing fruitful palm trees and apple trees and pear trees, and pomegranates and other trees; besides beds of vegetables, and three springs of perpetually-flowing water, with which the garden is irrigated and of which the monks drink. One feddan and a sixth in the garden form a vineyard, which supplies all that is needed; and it is said that the number of the palms which the garden contains amounts to a thousand trees; and there

by Zaklaharias of Sakha, § 77 (Mikhail and Vivian 2010, 124), although the second is somewhat vague about the place.

¹¹⁵ Sulpitius Severus, *Dialogue* I.17 (Fontaine 2006).

¹¹⁶ Meinardus 1989, 6–8; Vivian 2002, 14.

¹¹⁷ *The life of John the Almoner* 9 (Dawes & Baynes 1948, 203–204).

¹¹⁸ See the Coptic *Synaxarium*, reading for Misra 29 (Mikhail & Vivian 2010, 296–297).

¹¹⁹ See Wüstenfeld 1979, 59.

¹²⁰ Coptic *Synaxarium*, Hathur 7 (Bassett 1904, 182–183).

¹²¹ The story is recorded in the history of the monasteries of Egypt by Abu Salih. See Evetts 1895, 20–43.

¹²² See Burmester 1948, 116–118.

¹²³ See Burmester 1970.

¹²⁴ For details, see Rubenson 1996.

stands in it a large and well-built keep. The cells of the monks overlook this garden. The monastery possesses property and gardens also in Itfih. There is nothing like it among the other monasteries inhabited by Egyptian monks. It is in the possession of Jacobite monks.¹²⁵

In spite of, or perhaps also partly owing to, its remoteness and isolation, the Monastery of St Antony was at this time not only the oldest and probably most prestigious monastery in Egypt but also the wealthiest one. The presence of the relics of St Antony and the ownership of cultivated lands along the Nile from the earliest period had, in combination with its location at a distance from political turmoil and raiding Bedouins, contributed to its fame and wealth, which were manifested in buildings, art, and literary activity.

Summary

BY JESPER BLID

The archaeological project inside the Church of the Holy Apostles at the Monastery of St Antony has yielded remains of a number of building phases that predate the current church. At the deepest excavated level, which measures about 2.50 m below the current church floor, the archaeological record reveals a building complex made from mudbrick, which was constructed in a shallow gully and has its back against the rock of the desert ledge. The complex had at least six rooms and was in the first phase entered from the north, which is evident from two secondary blocked doorways in Rooms 1 and 2. Room 1 was already equipped with a baking oven during the initial phase, and there was a window in the easternmost wall, which may mark the end of the building complex. Room 5 probably had a more private character, and was possibly the cell of a monk, owing to facilities such as a sleeping podium and water installations. A Coptic graffito was also identified above the podium.

Radiocarbon dating of wooden reinforcements from within the westernmost wall of Room 6, where a passage leading under the sanctuary of the Church of St Antony is located, indicates a *terminus post quem* in the 8th to 9th century. The ceramological analysis supports the chronometric dating and also reveals that Rooms 1 and 2 probably served as storage areas for the tableware of the monastic community, as the assemblages seem to be too large for individual use. The pottery is significantly standardized in appearance in terms of decora-

tion, shape, and dimensions, which could attest to a materially egalitarian structure for the monastic meal setting. The bulk of the ceramic sample is made from desert clay; this was arguably produced locally, and a pottery kiln has been identified outside the ancient walls of the monastery. The ceramological study has been supplemented by petrographical analysis of the alleged local fabric, and a chemical analysis of organic residues has been conducted on a jug of local production, which bears a *dipinto* reading “remember me” in Coptic. The jug was apparently prepared with a sealant of pine resin, which must have been imported and applied on site. It is argued that the vessel was a so-called ointment jar, for which there are parallels in Egypt, and because resin is mentioned as an ingredient in a medical manuscript found at the excavations. Since the monastery appears to be the production site for the majority of the excavated ceramics, we can expect a resident specialization in pottery production throughout the studied period, either by the monks themselves or by hired laity. These potters were, however, aware of current trends despite the remote location of the monastery, as many shapes compare to finds from production centres closer to the Nile. The number of imported vessels during the initial phase of the “Cells” is relatively low but increases somewhat during the course of the following centuries. As the majority of the identified ceramic imports originate in Nile workshops, it seems that the commercial compass of the monastery was primarily set on the inland markets. The commodities presumably reached the monastery via pilgrims and passing caravans travelling through the valley (*Wadi al-ʿArabah*), between the Nile and the Red Sea, as vividly portrayed in the *Life of Antony*. Correspondingly, it seems that the catchment area for pilgrims during the period of study was primarily oriented westwards towards the Nile and Delta communities.

During the late 11th or 12th century, it appears that the floor level of the “Cells” was raised by c. 0.65 m, maybe as a result of flooding in the valley. Two further baking ovens were installed in Room 1, and most likely used simultaneously and therefore being the monastery’s general area for the production of bread. The ceramic material still comprises mainly tablewares, smaller jugs, and jars for the temporary storage and conveyance of food.

The find sequence from Stratum 3 suggests that the area stood abandoned for some time, accumulating debris, before the First Church was built on top of the ruined “Cells”. At this time, the shallow gully was completely filled up to the level of the desert ledge, and there is a thick layer of ash, clay, straw, and palm leaves at the lower segment of the foundations of the First Church. Among the discarded objects found in Stratum 3 is a concentration of manuscript fragments written in Coptic, Arabic, Hebrew, and Ge’ez, which were found in the western section of the “Cells”, Unit 1. The fragmentary Coptic

¹²⁵ Evetts 1895, 160.

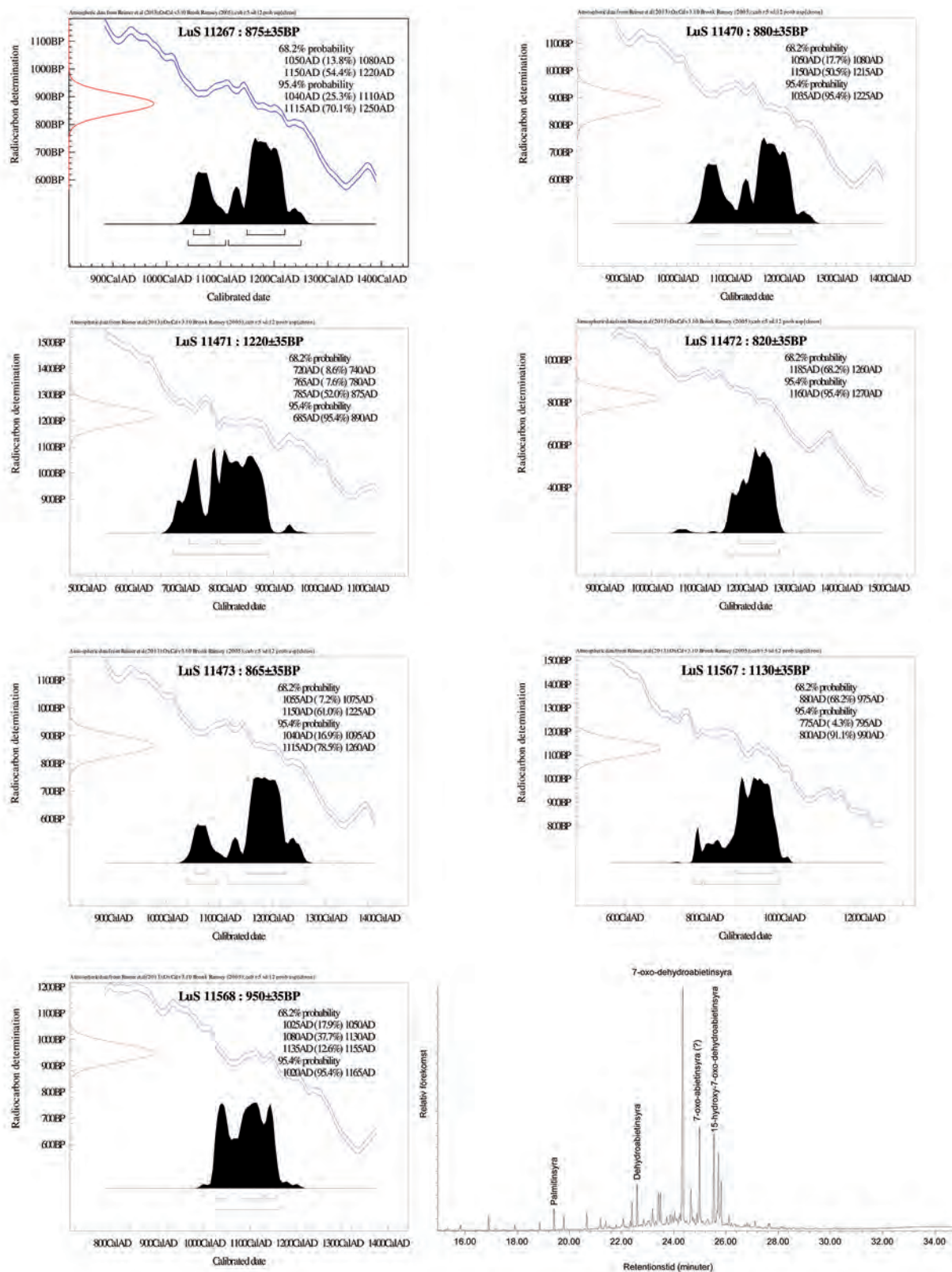


Fig. 45. Radiocarbon samples and total ion chromatogram for the characterization of the organic residues from cat. no. 86 (M. Rundgren and S. Isaksson).

manuscripts, which are written in both Bohairic and Sahidic, show great diversity in terms of content, preservation, and skill of hand. One of the best-preserved examples is a medical recipe, which has been radiocarbon dated to the 9th to 10th century, and which suggests a cure for some sort of swelling or tumour. There are also scribal exercises, prayers, and liturgical texts among the Coptic parchment and paper manuscripts. The Arabic manuscripts are also fragmentary and all are written on paper. Their contents are diverse and comprise, for example, poetry, letters, hagiographies, instructions that are of commercial interest, and an intriguing event linking the Monastery of St Antony to the Fayyum. The manuscript written in Hebrew script contains a Judaeo-Arabic translation of *Lamentations* 2:19–21, which has been radiocarbon dated to the period 1020–1165. The text may have reached the monastery through a Jewish contact or convert. The manuscript in Ge'ez is fragmentary but shows certain characteristics of a prayer book, and it possibly belonged to the community of Ethiopian monks who are known to have stayed at the monastery in the 11th century.

The chronology of the construction of the First Church on top of the “Cells” has been investigated by means of radiocarbon datings of wooden elements from the northern stylobate, which give a *terminus post quem* in the late 11th to mid-13th century. The three-aisled plan, which stylistically originates in church architecture of the late Fatimid period, was built from mudbrick and equipped with a *khurus* and projecting apse in the east. Evidently, the church had a heavy superstructure that, at an uncertain period in time, caused the substructures to subside, and a partial collapse must have been unavoidable. The strata related to the church, particularly Stratum 1–2, display somewhat larger proportions of imported pottery, for instance glazed wares made from both Nile silts and marl fabrics. In the upper strata, there are also remains from the church's interior. Stone elements from an *opus sectile* floor were unearthed, as were fragments of wall paintings, which are akin to similar, still-preserved murals in the adjacent Church of St Antony. These murals are arguably part of the programme of the Coptic painter Theodore, who decorated the Church of St Antony in 1232/1233, and also of the so-called Figural Master, who was active at the monastery soon after Theodore. It is argued that the excavated church was actually under construction at this time, namely the second quarter of the 13th century. The role of multiple churches of comparable size in the Monastery of St Antony during the 13th century is perhaps puzzling; however, it is a phenomenon that is often observed at Coptic monasteries. We can only speculate whether there was a separation among the monastic community, for instance between monks and laity/pilgrims, or merely a display of wealth. It is also difficult to say whether

passages ran between the two adjacent churches or whether they functioned as separate entities.

The topsoil, Stratum 1, seems to be closely related to the First Church, and no archaeological evidence has, to my knowledge, been identified that could assist in the dating of the current Church of the Holy Apostles. It is, nonetheless, suggested that the construction of the present building followed the abandonment and destruction of the monastery during the first years of the 16th century.

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