

The Depiction of Sacred Objects of Distributing the Holy Blood in Coptic Mural Painting

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ABSTRACT

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According to Coptic tradition; The Eucharist is one of the seven sacraments of the Coptic Church. Although all sacraments have their own grace, the Eucharist enjoys the most elevated grace of them all. Bread and Wine become the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ. Prophecies of the Christ's salvation appeared in many verses in both Old and New Testament and as result; Eucharistic scenes were depicted in early Coptic mural paintings to express and confirm the upcoming salvation. This paper aims to study, analyze and trace the depiction of three main objects strongly incorporated in celebrating and demonstrating the holy blood among congregations namely Chalice; Spoon and Napkin in integrate Eucharistic mural painting in Coptic monasteries. Eucharistic scenes were usually depicted in sanctuary walls as figures participate in the actual event taking place on the altar. Chalice and spoon were early main instrument; spoons and napkins were incorporated in a later date and gradually appeared in New Testament scenes.

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Introduction

The Eucharist is one of the “*Seven Sacraments*” in the Coptic Church as it occupies the most elevated grace of them all. In Baptism for instance, water remains water, as does the holy chrism in confirmation, the visible element of the sacraments thus undergoing no change. However, during the Eucharist the bread and the one become no longer mere bread and wine, but the true body and blood of the Christ. Reference to the Christian believe, in the Eucharist God gives his whole self so that the partakers may enter in full and complete communion with him¹.

Religious Aspect: The Holy Sacrament or the Eucharist: is the central act of the Christian worship, and One of the seven² sacraments³ and the greatest sacrament in

¹ M. WHELAN, “The Responsible Body: A Eucharistic Community”, *Cross Currents* 51/3, 2001, pp. 359-378.

² Number seven had its importance and significance in Christianity; in the Old Testament it symbolizes perfection; number seven is incorporated in many incidents as; the week is seven days, seven days before Noah's flood, the number of animals on Noah's ark, seven days till the ark rested after Noah's flood and Pharaoh's dream which was interpreted by Jesus the number of cows and grains were also seven. (Gen. 2:2, Gen.7:4: 8:10, 12, Gen. 7:2, Gen.41:2-7).

the Coptic Church; the word is driven from the Greek *Eucharistein* means to give thanks⁴also known as the Holy Communion; the precious blood and the redemptive chalice"⁵. According to Christian traditions; it is the commemoration of Christ's sacrifice of himself for the redemption of men kind from its sins⁶, during which the transformation of the bread and wine into the blood and flesh of the Christ is accomplished⁷, The Eucharistic prayers for the transformation of the Holy sacrament are accomplished in the church sanctuary⁸. Bread and wine are believed to be shared in God⁹. The priest who serves the Mass and sanctifies the sacrifice is completely responsible for it before God¹⁰and by the act of the Holy Communion the partakers may enter in full and complete communion with him; according to Christian dogma the Eucharist is meant for all humanity and universal in nature; including the living and the dead¹¹.

Historical Aspect: A detailed narration of the Last Supper was mentioned more than one time in the New Testament¹²; according to Matthew; Jesus had instituted the Holy Eucharist on Covenant Thursday, while they were sharing their last meal; shortly before his arrest and trial¹³. "*And as they were eating, Jesus, having taken the bread¹⁴ and blessed, broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And having taken the cup and given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it. For this is my blood, that of the new covenant, that shed for many for remission of sins*" (Matt.26:26-28)¹⁵. Words used by the apostles to narrate the same incident they used words like "take," "eat," and "drink," clearly indicate that; the Eucharist should be taken or fed into the mouth and consumed¹⁶ corresponding to the sacred rite practiced in Coptic churches¹⁷. The first celebration of the Eucharist

³The seven sacraments: are Baptism, Confirmation, Communion (or the Eucharist), Penance (or Confession), Matrimony, Ordination, and Extreme Unction. PETER& L. MURRAY, *The Oxford Companion to Christian Art and Architecture*, Oxford, 1999, p.462.

⁴E.F.S, "Lord Supper ", in V. Ferm (ed.), "*An Encyclopedia of Religion*", 1945, p. 451-452.

⁵أسرار الكنيسة السبعة، القاهرة، 1984، ص. 62 حبيب جرجس،

الدسقولية أو تعاليم الرسل، القاهرة، 1924، ص. 97

⁷ F. E. VOKES, "Eucharistia", *Hermathena* 92, 1958, pp. 31-44.

⁸The hikals the sacred sanctuary in the Coptic Church contains the altar; where all the prayers as well as the preparation for the Eucharistic rituals should be held. P. GROSSMANN, "Architectural Elements of the Church", *CE*, 1991, pp. 220-221.

⁹ C. JOEL, *Theology of Food: Eating & the Eucharist*, Chichester, United Kingdom, 2012, p.67.

¹⁰ M. MAHER, "Communion Sacrifice and Eucharistic Meal", *The Furrow* 20/6, 1969, pp. 7-13.

¹¹A. BASILIOS, "Eucharist", in A.S. ATIYA (ed.), *C.E IV*, 1991, p.1056-1063.

¹² (Matt.26:26-28), (Luk22:17-20) (Mrk14:22-24).

¹³ متي المسكين، الافخارستيا عشاء الرب (مدخل لشرح القداص و تطوره من القرن الأول حتي عصرنا الحالي)، القاهرة، 2007، ص.360

¹⁴ The blessing of the bread took the form of thanksgiving over the bread. G.H. Hamilton, "The Eucharistic Prayer in the Primitive Church", *The Irish Church Quarterly* 8/ 29, 1915, pp. 29-47.

¹⁵J. R.DONAHUE, "Cup or Chalice", *Commonweal*139, 2012, p.p.10-12.

¹⁶R. J. Daly; "Eucharistic Origins from the New Testament to the Liturgies of the Golden Age"; *Theological Studies* 66, 2005, pp. 3-22.

¹⁷ M. WHELAN, "The Responsible Body: A Eucharistic Community", pp. 359-378.

occurred when Jesus Christ shared a meal with his apostles on the eve of his Passion¹⁸; maybe it was one of the Jewish common religious traditions to be shared with friends or families that used to be celebrated on that day or even the Passover meal itself¹⁹.

The earliest Christian communities had repeated a direct imitation of the Last Supper²⁰ of Jesus; in addition to the recitation of the "institution narrative" as a central prayer text; By the end of the 1st century A.D.; the Eucharistic rite was separated into a Eucharist (a morning sacramental ritual), and *Agape* (communal supper).²¹⁻²²The Eucharistic rituals can be interpreted as a meal, shared by early Christian communities²³; as a meal it connected with the most basic human needs; and basic practice necessary for life and its nourishment²⁴.

This holy ritual was linked with solemn meal which may have been the paschal meal. The last supper is composed of three main parts: 1- The introductory prayers and the distribution of the bread²⁵, 2- The holy meal itself, 3- The blessing over the last cup of the sacred wine. Jesus the Christ blessed the Eucharistic bread in the beginning of the meal and the Eucharistic wine by the end of the meal²⁶. This service has developed historically out of the last supper of Jesus and his disciples before the crucifixion. This tradition is illustrated by the verses of the New Testament "*This is my body*", "*this is the new covenant in my blood*", and "*do this in remembrance of me*"(Luk.22:14-20)²⁷. This great event is practiced along with certain instruments on the altar service as a principal element among the church furniture; known by the *Τράπεζα ζα,θούδιαΓήριον*²⁸ or *βωμός*²⁹, while the Coptic altar is usually known by the Lord's Table³⁰. *Isaiah* referred in his prophecy to the altar of Christianity in the land of Egypt; where the living offering is presented to symbol Jesus Christ³¹.

Two visible elements are incorporated to perform the Eucharist; the bread and the wine. The bread used for the Eucharist should be leavened, unsalted, circular and

¹⁸ This meal was the last meal of Jesus with his apostles; so it came to be known as the last supper.

¹⁹ B. GOGAN, "Worship for Small Groups-The Eucharist", *The Furrow*25/ 3, 1974, pp. 127-135.

²⁰Two principal acts were performed during the Last Supper by Jesus, one of which was the giving of thanks, and the other was the distribution of the elements. G.H. Hamilton, "The Eucharistic Prayer in the Primitive Church" pp. 29-47.

²¹A. MC. GOWAN "Rethinking Eucharistic Origins", *Pacifica* 23, 2010, pp. 173-191.

²²According to St. Paul, the Eucharist was linked with a shared meal, or *agape* B. GOGAN, "Worship for Small Groups-The Eucharist", *The Furrow* 25/ 3, 1974, pp. 127-135.

²³ A. MC. GOWAN, "Rethinking Eucharistic Origins", pp. 173-191.

²⁴ M. WHELAN, "The Responsible Body: A Eucharistic Community", pp. 359-378.

²⁵Only leavened baked bread made of unsalted wheat flour is used for baking. C.C. WALTERS, *Monastic Archeology*, England, p. 209. Aris & Phillips, 1974

²⁶ D. J. KILMARTIN, *The Eucharist in the Primitive Church, England*, 1965, p. 143.

²⁷ E.F.S, "Lord Supper ", p. 451-452.

²⁸ S. WILLIAM, *A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities I*, London 1876, p.60.

²⁹According to Clement of Alexandria; the soul is the true Christian altar (*βωμός*) and that the Christianity have no material altars, in later times the same term was used to refer to the Christian altars. S. WILLIAM, *A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities I*, p.60.

³⁰القس منقريوس عوض الله، منارة الأقداس في شرح طقوس الكنيسة القبطية والقداس-الجزء الأول- القاهرة-1979، ص.48

³¹دياكون ميخائيل اسكندر؛ موسوعة طقوس الكنيسة القبطية، الجزء الأول، القاهرة؛ 1998، ص.29

made of the finest wheat flour; stamped with a wooden cross consisting of twelve little squares; each of which is marked with a diagonal cross; before being baked³²; stamped by the Coptic words "*The Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal*"³³. The wheat used for the preparation of the Eucharistic bread; should be of wheat flour. As it was the custom used by the Jews during the time of the Christ. The religious aspect is mentioned in (*John 12:24*) "*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit*"³⁴.

Other Elements and Instruments Used to Demonstrate the Holy Blood:

Eucharistic vessels have to be consecrated before they are first used for the Divine Liturgy; a tradition was first followed in the Old Testament, as God commanded Moses to anoint the tabernacle of the congregation, the altar and its vessels.³⁵ Since Christianity remained illegal until Constantine's reign³⁷ (272-337 A.D), Christians continued to worship in Jewish temples and synagogues, also meeting in private homes to celebrate the "Eucharist" or last supper as there were no proper places for Christian worship yet³⁸ simple materials were first used due to the poor financial sources of the Coptic Church especially during the early days of persecution³⁹; and the continuous plunder of the barbarian tribe; later on vessels were made of silver and other precious materials such as gold studded with precious stones, and were presented as gifts from wealthy people⁴⁰. Thus; most probably ordinary table ware were used in celebrating the Holy Rite The ancient cups were more like bowls, wider and shallower than the normal teacup usually made of pottery, or sometimes metal thus the cup used at the Last Supper was maybe was an earthenware bowl, sufficiently large for all to share (Matt. 26:27).⁴¹ Once Christianity became legal and Constantinople became the center of church life in the eastern Mediterranean, Byzantine emperors lavishly funded the construction of new churches and cathedrals; precious metals became common and pearly chalices were offered by the believers as a love gesture. Sometimes, fathers asked their people not to amplify in offering such valuable chalices while there are many people in terrible need. *St. Clement of Alexandria* vigorously refused using jeweled chalices; while *St. Ambrose* and *St. Chrysostom* blamed the donors of jeweled gold cup.⁴²

A. Chalice (الكأس): The chalice is the cup used in the celebration of the Eucharist that contain the Christ blood; used to feed the congregations the

³²KHS BURMESTER, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church*, Cairo, 1976, 81.

³³A. BASILIOS, "Eucharist", p.1056-1063.

³⁴A. BASILIOS, "Eucharist", p.1056-1063.

³⁵(Exod.30:26-28)

³⁶A. BASILIOS & E. ISHAQ, "Eucharist Vessels and Instruments", in A.S.Atiya (ed.), *C.E IV*, 1991, p.1064-1066.

³⁸GEFFERT, B., & T. G. STAVROU, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity*, London, 2016, p. 375

⁴⁰ القس منقريوس عوض الله، منارة الأقداس في شرح طقوس الكنيسة القبطية والقداس، ص: 56

⁴¹ D. R. W. DOUGLAS & I. H. MARSHALL. *New Bible Dictionary*, Leicester, England 1996, p. 248.

⁴²TADRUS Y. MALAṬĪ, *The Church: The House of God*, Alexandria, 1982, p.516.

sacred blood of Jesus the Christ⁴³; the chalice enjoyed its symbolism and was deeply associated with the Eucharistic rite and used as one of its symbols; in early days the shape of a lamb can be engraved on one of its sides as a symbol of Jesus the Christ and his sufferings⁴⁴. In the Coptic churches the chalice cup is usually small, long, straight sided and usually made of silver, with a long stem and a circular base; angular base were not commonly used in Coptic Church; Butler has also mentioned that Glass chalices only came into use when precious vessels had been plundered or destroyed about the year 700 A.D⁴⁵; like other Eucharistic vessels chalice used to be made of wood, which later on was replaced by chalices made out of polished copper or iron⁴⁶.

The chalice is used during the celebration of the Eucharist to receive the wine poured from the cruet which has to be filled with water again to refill the chalice with the final mixture, once the chalice was not in use during the liturgical prayers and the consecration of the bread and wine it was placed in the Ark or the altar casket; which is usually decorated by the scene of the last supper⁴⁷.

B. Cruet (kārwr^h) **قارورة**: it is a small vessel with a lid; only one cruet can be used during the liturgy; from which the wine should be poured inside the chalice, some churches may use two cruets one to contain the wine and other to contain the water added later. Cruets like the other Eucharistic vessels were made of poor materials especially in the early days of persecutions; later on, there were made out of gold or silver and ornamented with crosses or verses from the Gospel.⁴⁸

C. Spoon (m^l°k^h) **ملقعة**: they came into use by the 6th century A.D. and are now the method established in the Coptic Church Nowadays they are used for administering the sacred wine to the communicants; it is also used for those who are unable to drink directly from the cup. In the Eastern churches it is used for demonstrating the sacred wine to the congregations.⁴⁹

In early times the communicants used to partake of the wine straight from the chalice⁵⁰; spoons were made of silver, or rarely of gold, it has a long straight handle on which certain biblical verses are inscribed ends by a circular ending to

⁴³Priests taking part in the liturgy; are feed the body in the spoon while it is placed on the paten, unlike laymen, who receive the Body in their mouths from the celebrant priest's hands, followed by the Blood from the spoon. R.F. TAFT, "Byzantine Communion Spoons", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 50, 1996, pp. 209-238.

⁴⁴ D. J. KILMARTIN, *The Eucharist in the primitive church, England*, p. 160.

⁴⁵ A. BUTLER, *Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt* II, Oxford, 1884, p.37.

⁴⁶ A. BASILIOS & E. ISHAQ, "Eucharist vessels and instruments", p. 1064-1066.

⁴⁷ G. GRAF, "Ein Alter Kelchthron in Der Kirche Abu Sefen", *BSAC* 4, 1938, p.29-33.

⁴⁸ A. BASILIOS, "Liturgical Instruments", in A.S.Atiya (ed.), *C.E* IV, 1991, p. 1469-1475.

⁴⁹ DONALD, K MCKIM, *The Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, Westminster, 2014, p.304.

⁵⁰ القس منقربوس عوض الله، منارة الأقداس في شرح طقوس الكنيسة القبطية والقداس، ص 72

contain the sacred blood⁵¹; it should be noted here that another type of spoons with a slightly different shape was used to remove any defect from the sacred wine before being demonstrated to congregations; most probably this latter kind was not used for the partaking as it has longer handles and broader and shallower bowl⁵².

D. Eucharistic wine (ābārkhāh) أباركة Copts know the Eucharistic wine by the Arabic term *ābārkhāh*⁵³, meaning "new wine"; which is the wine used for the celebration on the holy rite⁵⁴, dried grapes or raisins were first washed carefully and stored in earthenware pot to be soaked later in water for three days; later on, they were squeezed by hand to extract its juice⁵⁵. The juice is poured into vessels that are not completely filled to allow the process of fermentation; the extracted juice is left for fourty days, after which it can fit for the sacramental use⁵⁶, the priest may pour the Eucharistic wine in a cup or a vessel to assure its quality and that it is free from any defect before being used for the sacramental prayers⁵⁷. water is added and mixed with the sacramental wine as a symbolism of the flow of blood and water⁵⁸ from the Christ deep injury on the cross caused by the Romans soldier to emphasis his death⁵⁹.⁶⁰

E. The Chalice Veil, lifafh, لفافة: The altar is usually surrounded by a set of cloth coverings to provide the right veneration during the liturgy; once the church is consecrated, the altar should not be left uncovered⁶¹; they are the altar veils, chalice veils, mats, paten and chalice veils, and paten veils; **the Chalice Veil** is usually made of silk, about 42cm. by 42 cm. it is similar in shape and color to the paten veil, used to cover the chalice in the ark on the altar; commonly known in Arabic by the word "lifafah"⁶².

⁵¹ KHS BURMESTER, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church*, p24.

⁵² R.F. TAFT, "Byzantine Communion Spoons", pp. 209-238.

⁵³ **The ābārkhāh**: is an Arabic corruption of the Greek word "απαρχή"; meaning; the beginning of the sacrifice. The word is commonly used by the Copts to highlight the symbolism of the sacrifice of the Christ among the men kind. G. GAWDAT, *Historical Dictionary of the Coptic Church*, Cairo, 2008, p.13.

⁵⁴ A. BASILIOS, "The Eucharist wine", in A.S.Atiya (ed.), *C.E IV*, 1991, p.1066.

⁵⁵ The monastery of Anba Hadra once contained a chamber used to extract wine contained mats and remaining of crashed grapes, *Monastic Archeology*, p. 216.

⁵⁶ KHS BURMESTER, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church*, p.82.

⁵⁷ A. BASILIOS, "Liturgical Instruments", p. 1469- 1475.

⁵⁸ The Syrians use half water and half wine, while in Greek Church they used more water in cup than the wine: Tadrus Y. Malaḩī, *The Church: The House of God*, p.516.

⁵⁹ W. LYSTER, *Monastery of St. Paul*, Cairo, 1999, p.83.

⁶⁰ Recent researchers assured that water was not the liquid that fold from Christ's side on the cross but it was the diaphragm fluid which is similar in colour to water. Dr. Milad Sedky; Unpublished symposium of the Council of Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops entitled "the Holy shroud of Jesus the Christ".

⁶¹ A. BASILIOS, "The Eucharist Veils", in A.S.Atiya (ed.), *C.E IV*, 1991, p.1063-1064.

⁶² KHS BURMESTER, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church*, Cairo, p23.

F. Liturgical Mat: another important piece of cloth either square or circular known by mats is used to wrap the Lamb⁶³ (the Body of Christ) and the cruet of wine (the Blood of Christ) during the offertory prayers at the beginning of the liturgy⁶⁴.

G.Paten and Chalice Veil: a rectangular sheet made of silk, measuring about 6 feet by 4 feet (180 by 120 cm). At the beginning of the celebration of the liturgy, this veil remains over the oblations on the altar until the prayers of reconciliation have been said, after which it is removed by the celebrant and a deacon. It is then neatly folded and placed on the altar until the end of the liturgy⁶⁵.

the believers may go into rooms alongside the altar, men to the left of the sanctuary and women to the right, or sometimes all together in front of the door of the sanctuary⁶⁶, while Napkins are rectangular pieces of cloth placed on the hands of the believers while receiving the Holy Sacraments. The body of the Christ is placed directly in the mouth of the believer, while the blood is demonstrated by the liturgical spoon. The napkin or the handkerchiefs are then used to prevent the Gifts from falling. They may drink a sip of water to make sure they have consumed all the Gifts.⁶⁷

Iconographical Study

Monastic Churches were regarded as a religious roofed construction to pray and perform services with simple design⁶⁸; a few exceptions can be seen in the monastery of Saint Shenute and the monastery of Saint Bishoi⁶⁹. The system in which monastic churches were painted is the usages of scenes from the biblical and monastic world; this system distinguishes the Coptic Church from any other Christian church around the world⁷⁰. The painted scenes were mostly depicted on the walls of the eastern section of the church; precisely at the altar and the khurus room. As the eastern section of the Coptic Church has a strong symbolic meaning, it is the sacred place where liturgy is preformed, and the main place, which houses the altar⁷¹.

Mural paintings in Coptic monasteries reveal information concerning their decor and incorporated rituals; the monastery churches are extensively decorated, and have gone under many alternations and repairs, but contain aspects of the religious life⁷². Thus,

⁶³**The lamb:** The text is implying to the symbolism relationship between the lamb and the Christ. PETER& L. MURRAY, *Oxford Companion to Christian Art and Architecture*, p. 267.

⁶⁴ KHS BURMESTER, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church*, Cairo, p23.

⁶⁵ A. BASILIOS, " Eucharist Veils", p. 1063-1064.

⁶⁶G., WAINWRIGHT, &, K. B. WESTERFIEL TUCKER, *The Oxford history of Christian Worship*, New York, 2006, p.138.

⁶⁷ G., WAINWRIGHT, *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, New York, p.138.

⁶⁸B.T.A. EVETTS, *The Churches and Monasteries of Egypt and Some Neighboring Countries, Attributed to AbûSâlih the Armenian*, Oxford, 1895, p. 120.

⁶⁹P. GROSSMAN, "On the Architecture of Wadi Al-Natron", *Coptica* 3, 2004, pp.17-42.

⁷⁰G. GABRA& G. LOON, *The Churches of Egypt*, Cairo, 2007, p.22.

⁷¹G. LOON, *The Gate of Heaven*, Leiden, 1999, p.9.

⁷²M.R. DEBERGH, "Monastery paintings. Coptic", in A.S.Atiya (ed.), *The C.E V*, 1991, p.1659-1661.

most of the Eucharistic scenes that will be addressed in this paper are located on sanctuary rooms as the monastic paintings executed in the main sanctuary are linked to the same celebration in heaven; patronage and angels depicted on walls are taking a part in this heavenly ceremony according to the Coptic Church the faithful Christian should consume these substances to receive grace and the forgiveness of sins⁷³.



Fig.1. a personification of the church as a woman; holding a chalice
After: Clédat, *Le Monastère et la Nécropole de Baouît*, Vol. II, Pl. XLV.

Depicted theme	Chapel XVII-Bawit
Location	Contemporary excavations at the same site were dated to the 6 th / 7 th century A.D.
Dating	6 th century A.D.

Description: A distinguished early Coptic wall painting. It was discovered in by Jean Clédat. It shows as a smiling young lady wearing an elevated ornamented crown decorated with rhombus shapes on the wide strip and surmounted by circular shapes. Also, her thick black hair is ornamented with a string-like beads running down on the hair till the curved end. The facial features are customary Coptic with almond eyes, elongated nose, and a small mouth. The chalice is relatively large with wide opening. The represented lady holds it from the stem while resting her forefinger on its rim. The artist tried to attract the attention to the association between the salvation “represented her in the cup” and the establishment of the church.

⁷³E.S. BOLMAN, *Monastic Visions*, Cairo, 2002, p. 62.



Fig.2. A graffiti, showing the deacon Anthony giving the Eucharist sacred chalice to Anub
After: V. LOON, P.128.

Depicted theme	A graffiti, showing the deacon Anthony giving the Eucharist sacred chalice to Anub
Location	chapel XXXVI -Bawit
Dating	6 th century A.D.

Description: Based on the Fayyumic Coptic written text⁷⁴; we have two characters; the first one is depicted in a standing attitude in a sanctuary-like construction, wearing the ecclesiastical costumes; with some Coptic crosses decorating his tunic and epitrachelion. The scene shows a deacon in a Eucharistic Orthodox liturgy; offering the holy blood through the chalice and the accompanied text affirms that he is a deacon⁷⁵ Anthony the deacon is depicted putting his left hand on the node and the base of the communion cup while his right hand is holding it from the handle. Anub the second character is represented with a slightly bent back and about to drink from the cup. He is holding a remarkable object. Taking the context of the whole scene into account, this piece of cloth most probably is “Chalice Veil”. It is very large in size decorated with geometrical motifs and shapes like crosses. The cup itself had a round body, short stem and two handles on both sides. There is a spoon as well but only its handle can be seen.

The text reads as follows:

⁷⁴The Authors would like to extend their sincere gratitude to **Professor Dr. Maher Eissa**, professor of Coptic language, Faculty of Archaeology, Fayoum University for his genuine assistance in reading and translating the Coptic texts.

⁷⁵ Anthony most probably was an archdeacon not only a deacon to take part in distributing the holy blood. Maybe the writer of the original text miswrote the text or was not knowledgeable enough of Coptic language.

The names of the two characters are mentioned as follows: Deacon Anthony, Amen.

الشماس أنطوني، أمين

Anthony is his name.

أنطوني يكون اسمه

The name of the second character is written above his head as follows:

Anub son of Canteryas.



Fig.3. Jesus Christ as a high priest giving the chalice of communion to his *apostles*

After: G. GABRA, Coptic Civilization: Two Thousand Years of Christianity in Egypt.2014, p. 162.

Depicted theme	The Christ as the high priest giving the chalice of communion to his apostles
Location	The church of Abo Serga (It is about 25 km south of modern Aswan.)
Dating	6 th -8 th century A.D.

Description: This example is unique, unrepeated, and a crucial composition of Jesus Christ himself leading the holy Eucharist (as the highest priest) and demonstrating the H Blood by himself while probably the apostles are flanking him in a lesser position. Jesus the Christ is represented as the middle main theme; unfortunately, the Christ face has been completely ruined but it can be easily recognized through the cross nimbus surrounding his head.

The demonstration of the Christ is easily noticed through his presentation on a larger scale than the surrounding figures; who are most probably his apostles. He is standing in front of the altar; wearing a red garment. He is also holding the sacred chalice; which seems different “a bit large with two handles yellow with a wide red strip bear the rim. Most probably this scene has the earliest representation of the throne of the chalice. It is illustrated in yellow and placed on the altar.

It is quite prominent here to mention that on the altar there is a yellow circular object, most probably the Holy Bread. The bread and the wine together form the concept of the Holy Communion.



Fig.4. Wall painting of a flying angel holding the tools of the Eucharist on a paten, Church of Saint Bishoi, The Red Monastery.

After: https://archnet.org/sites/17025/media_contents/124260, accessed 28, December, 2021.

Depicted theme	A flying angel holding the tools of the Eucharist
Location	Church of Saint Bishoi, The Red Monastery
Dating	6-7th century A.D.

Description: A colorful scene of a flying angel holding a paten on which we can witness the illustration of the sacred chalice, the throne of the chalice, and the spoon. The angel is depicted on the arch surmounting the sanctuary. It gives the impression that the angels not only attend the prayers but also participate on the Holy Communion.

The three tools bare the same brown color with recognizable shapes. The chalice is richly decorated consisting of a (base, node, large cup, and two curved handles). The body of the chalice is ornamented with a flower-like motif (close in shape to the pant decorations covering the surrounding area). The illustration of the spoon in this scene is distinguished by its bent neck, the angel is holding it from the handle as if it will be introduced to someone. The representation of the communion throne is pretty simple; consisting of three narrow vertical bands connected with two circular ones from the bottom and the top forming a throne on which on which the chalice rests.



Fig.5. A scene of an angel holding a vessel

After: E. BOLMAN, "The Red monastery: conservation project, 2004 campaign", in C. Hourihane (ed.), *interactions*, 2007, 267.

Depicted theme	an angel holding a vessel
Location	Church of Saint Bishoi. The Red monastery, Sohag.
Dating	6-7th century A.D.

Description: the scene of a flying angel; the outer line of the body is still visible while the head with the halo unfortunately totally demolished. The angel is illustrated with a large vessel and holding it from the base; he extends it in front of him; most probably the scene represents the pouring of the wine as if the angel is about to take a part in the holy Eucharist by pouring the wine into the chalice. The vessel is marked by a relatively elongated pointed tip with partially decorated wide body.



Fig.6. A scene of the archangel Raphael holding a vessel

After: https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g1051491-d9734925-Reviews-The_Red_Monastery-Sohag_Sohag_Governorate_Nile_River_Valley.html, accessed 28, December, 2021

Depicted theme	archangel Raphael holding a vessel
Location	Church of Saint Bishoi. The Red monastery, Sohag
Dating	6-7th century A.D.

Description: a scene of the archangel Raphael in a standing position. He is depicted with two hand objects; a long staff and a vessel. The staff is one of the hand objects that symbolizes the authority and was commonly carried by the archangels. The vessel here represents one of the Eucharistic tools. The bottom part of the vessel is partially damaged. Most probably the angel is holding it from the foot. It has a wide decorated body, then an elongated neck with a wide lip.

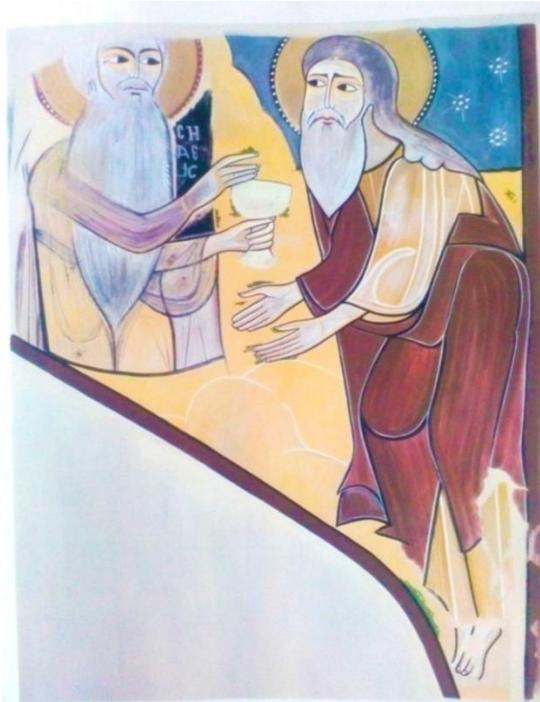


Fig.7. The meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek.

After: LEROY, *Les Peintures des Couvents du Ouadi Natroun*, 1998, p. 70.

Depicted theme	The meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek
Location	St.Mark sanctuary, Deir Abu Makar, Wadi El-Natroun
Dating	12 th century A.D.

Description: Another example shows the meeting between Abraham and Malechazadek “*And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all*” (Gen. 14:18-20). Abraham is depicted in an intercession body pose; leaning forward with calm facial feature; long white beard and he is looking directly to Melchizedek. The latter is standing in a higher position; depicted as an old man with longer white beard and transparent tunic reaches his arms; holding the chalice with his left hand; while his right is blessing the Eucharistic blood within the chalice. Halos are surmounting the two figures; the whole scene gives the impression that Abraham is about to drink from the chalice. The chalice illustrated here is relatively large with no decoration.



Fig.8. "The Meeting between Abraham and Melchizedek".

After: <http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/baramus.htm>, accessed, 28, December, 2021

Depicted theme	The meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek
Location	Church of Virgin Mary. Al- Baramûs Monastery
Dating	12 th century A.D.

Description: A main scene of a symbolic religious feeding is seen in Deir Al Baramous. The scene expresses the traditional meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek; Abraham is depicted as an old man with white hair and long beard and in a three-quarter pose. Halos are surrounding the head of both men. We can also observe the same usual calm facial features of Melchizedek are depicted; holding the sacred chalice. The sacred chalice is represented with a round bowl and decorated rim, and a simple base bare of decorations; the latter figure is standing in a higher position than that of Abraham. Melchizedek is holding a thin spoon by its handle, while putting the tip into Abraham's mouth in an actual communion scene.



Fig.9. A Wall painting representing St. Stephen holding a Chalice

After: SAUNERON, "Les Neuvième et Dixième Campagnes Archéologiques a Esna (Mars-Avril 1967) et (Mars-Avril 1968)", *BIFAO* 67, 1969, Pl. XVII, p.95

Depicted theme	St. Stephen holding a Chalice
Location	The Church of the Monastery of St. Matthew the Potter, Esna.
Dating	12 th century A.D.

Description: It represents *St. Stephen*⁷⁶, known as “*the first martyr*” (Acts7:59), beardless in a standing position.⁷⁷ His figure is painted in the intrados of the church chapel. The saint is depicted here holding the chalice from its stem with his right hand, while touching the bowl with his first two fingers. The chalice is simple in decoration with an elongated stem and wide cup. An important depiction of a white “napkin”, in Arabic “*lifafah*” which is represented as a piece of cloth with two fine bands at the end a wrapped around the forefinger of the saint. This depiction could be the first of its kind in Coptic art. Most probably the artist is influenced by the introducing of using this piece of cloth in liturgy. This tradition is kept till modern time.



Fig.10. The meeting of Abraham and Melechizedek

After: E. BOLMAN, *Monastic Visions: Wall Paintings in the Monastery of St. Antony at the Red Sea*, 2002, P.68

Depicted theme	The meeting of Abraham and Melechizedek
Location	the central sanctuary of St. Antony church at the Red Sea
Dating	13th century A.D.

⁷⁶**St. Stephen:** is an archdeacon who was the first martyr under Diocletian. His feast is on the 1st of Tubah. He is also a leader in the early Jerusalem church whose story appears in (Acts 6:1-8:2). The other references to Stephen is in the New Testament that narrates his story in (Acts11:19; 22:20). His death was associated with the Christ which explains the symbolism of holding a chalice the emblem of salvation. For more information about the life of St. Stephen see: Achtemeier, Paul J., *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary*, San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, HarperCollins Publishers, 1064-1065.

“*And they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."*(Act7:59); Aziz S., Attiya, *Coptic Martyrs*, ed. Aziz S., Attiya, CE, Vol.5, (New York: Macmillan, 1991). For more information about the wall painting see: Atalla, Nabil, *L 'Art Copte, PeinturesMurales*, 125,126.

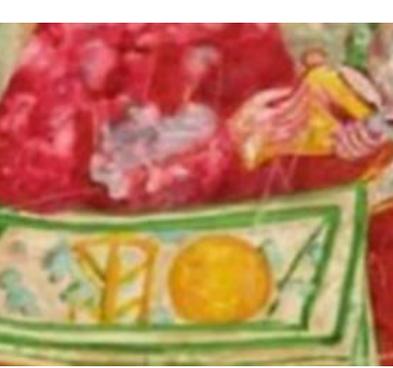
⁷⁷ Du Bourguet, and Maurice, *Dayr Al Suhada*,362.

Description: Melchizedek is depicted on the left side; in a higher position than Abraham who is represented in a three-quarter position; stretching both arms and leaning forward to receive the holy blood from the chalice held by Melchizedek. The size of the chalice is larger than usual surmounted by a decorative band; maybe the artist wanted to attract the viewer to the activity of demonstrating the blood from the sacred chalice. A pair of scissors and a knife a grey blade and a brown handle is placed next to Melchizedek's right hand; an altar is represented covered with red coverings and is also clearly seen in the main scene confirming the main act of demonstrating the holy blood and supported by the inscriptional line read as follows;” The priesthood of Melchizedek”

Analytical Study

- As for the wall paintings, the depiction of the Holy Eucharistic tools started as early as the 6th century A.D. and it continued to appear till the 13th century A.D.
- The positioning of the scene was in all cases very close to the sanctuary where this special event occurs consequently, the depiction of those figures and characters has its symbolic meaning as this event doesn't only happen on the earth, but in heaven too. This is how the saints and the angelic creatures could take part in it.
- The Eucharistic scenes were accompanied by Coptic texts only twice. Both of the scenes date to a close period of time and both were discovered in Bawit; the personification of the church (6th, 7th century A.D.) and the communion scene of the archdeacon Anthony (6th century A.D.)
- The instruments were represented carried by: a personification of the church as a lady, the Christ himself as the highest priest, a priest (St. Stephen, an archdeacon (Anthony)-both have ecclesiastical ranks- to take part in distributing whether the holy blood just like in the case of the archdeacon or to distribute both the blood and the bread like the case of St. Stephen, Melchizedek who is considered as a priest, angel, archangel.
- Considering its prominence and main role in the liturgy of the Eucharist, the *chalice* was the most frequently represented object. According to the scenes discussed in this paper, the chalice appeared 8 out of 10 scenes. It appeared was represented carried by the personified church, St. Stephen, Jesus Christ, Melchizedek, and an angel.
- Throughout the centuries, the *chalice* was illustrated in different sizes, richly decorated or very simple with not accurate proportions and plain of decoration.
- The actual drinking from the *chalice* appeared only three times; twice in representing the meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek and once with the Christ and the apostles.
- It appeared accompanied by the throne of the *chalice*, *spoon*, *Chalice Veil*. and *paten*. On the other hand, it was never represented with a vessel.
- In spite of its strong relation to the chalice, the *throne of the chalice* was not as frequently represented as the chalice.

- The two examples are very close to each other, the earliest dates to the 6th century A.D. and the other to the 7th century A.D.
- They both took the same exact shape with two different colors.
- The *Chalice Veil* is a distinctive element in the Eucharist. It was only represented twice. Tracing its appearance; the napkin or the *Chalice Veil* appeared once during the 6th century A.D. (a graffiti scene) in the hand of the one receiving the holy blood. The second time was during the 12th century A.D. With St. Stephen around his fingers.
- Despite its humble execution, the 6th century A.D. *Chalice Veil* was richly decorated with geometrical decorations and dots that take shapes like crosses. The 12th century A.D. *Chalice Veil* was simple and almost plain of decoration except for two lines forming a band at the bottom and the top.
- Between the 6th and the 12th century A.D., the *Chalice Veil* completely disappeared from the wall paintings.
- The *spoon* was and still an essential tool in demonstrating the holy blood, though Coptic wall paintings don't have many scenes depicting it.
- We can notice its juxtaposition with the chalice. It appeared twice; once carried on a paten by an angel and the other with Melchizedek.
- We can recognize no decoration on both examples, but the size and the shape were a bit different. The earliest was depicted during the 7th century A.D. in Sohag; had a bent neck while the other was depicted during the 12th century in was in El Natrun is very simple and straight.
- The *Vessel* was represented only with angels. Both are relatively large in size and richly decorated.
- They were represented during the early period (7th century A.D.) and never again had an appearance.
- The *paten* appeared also twice; once during the 6th century A.D. Placed on the altar while the Christ was demonstrating the holy blood himself. the second time it was represented carried by a flying angel.

	<p>A personification of the church as a woman. 6-7th century A.D. Description: A smiling woman as a symbol of the Coptic church holds a Eucharistic cup</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="658 301 1864 439"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="658 301 1065 375">Depicted Characters:</th> <th data-bbox="1065 301 1469 375">Used communion instrument/s:</th> <th data-bbox="1469 301 1864 375">Location:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="658 375 1065 439">The church as a lady</td> <td data-bbox="1065 375 1469 439">The sacred chalice</td> <td data-bbox="1469 375 1864 439">Bawit, Chapel no.17.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Depicted Characters:	Used communion instrument/s:	Location:	The church as a lady	The sacred chalice	Bawit, Chapel no.17.
Depicted Characters:	Used communion instrument/s:	Location:					
The church as a lady	The sacred chalice	Bawit, Chapel no.17.					
	<p>Graffiti, the deacon Anthony giving the Eucharist sacred chalice to Anub. 6th century A.D. Description: The archdeacon Anthony is giving the Holy Eucharist to Anub while the latter is holding a piece of cloth "<i>Chalice Veil</i>"</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="658 595 1864 798"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="658 595 1065 669">Depicted Characters:</th> <th data-bbox="1065 595 1469 669">Used communion instrument/s:</th> <th data-bbox="1469 595 1864 669">Location:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="658 669 1065 798">The deacon Anthony and Anub</td> <td data-bbox="1065 669 1469 798">The sacred chalice and <i>Chalice Veil</i></td> <td data-bbox="1469 669 1864 798">Bawit Chapel no. 36</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Depicted Characters:	Used communion instrument/s:	Location:	The deacon Anthony and Anub	The sacred chalice and <i>Chalice Veil</i>	Bawit Chapel no. 36
Depicted Characters:	Used communion instrument/s:	Location:					
The deacon Anthony and Anub	The sacred chalice and <i>Chalice Veil</i>	Bawit Chapel no. 36					
	<p>Christ as the high priest giving the chalice of communion. 6th-8th century A.D. Description: Jesus Christ himself leading the holy Eucharist and demonstrating the holy blood by himself while probably the apostles are flanking him in lesser positions</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="658 983 1864 1173"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="658 983 1065 1058">Depicted Characters:</th> <th data-bbox="1065 983 1469 1058">Used communion instrument/s:</th> <th data-bbox="1469 983 1864 1058">Location:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="658 1058 1065 1173">Jesus Christ and the Apostles</td> <td data-bbox="1065 1058 1469 1173">The sacred chalice and <i>Chalice Veil</i></td> <td data-bbox="1469 1058 1864 1173">The church of Abo Serga (25 km south of modern Aswan)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Depicted Characters:	Used communion instrument/s:	Location:	Jesus Christ and the Apostles	The sacred chalice and <i>Chalice Veil</i>	The church of Abo Serga (25 km south of modern Aswan)
Depicted Characters:	Used communion instrument/s:	Location:					
Jesus Christ and the Apostles	The sacred chalice and <i>Chalice Veil</i>	The church of Abo Serga (25 km south of modern Aswan)					

Continued

	<p><i>A flying angel holding the tools of the Eucharist.</i> 6-7th century A.D. Description: Jesus Christ himself leading the holy Eucharist and demonstrating the holy blood by himself while probably the apostles are flanking him in lesser positions</p>							
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="658 372 1052 451">Depicted Characters:</th> <th data-bbox="1052 372 1473 451">Used communion instrument/s:</th> <th data-bbox="1473 372 1837 451">Location:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="658 451 1052 565">Jesus Christ and the Apostles</td> <td data-bbox="1052 451 1473 565">The sacred Chalice, the throne of the chalice, the spoon, and the paten</td> <td data-bbox="1473 451 1837 565">Red Monastery, Sohag</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Depicted Characters:	Used communion instrument/s:	Location:	Jesus Christ and the Apostles	The sacred Chalice, the throne of the chalice, the spoon, and the paten	Red Monastery, Sohag		
Depicted Characters:	Used communion instrument/s:	Location:						
Jesus Christ and the Apostles	The sacred Chalice, the throne of the chalice, the spoon, and the paten	Red Monastery, Sohag						
	<p><i>Scene of an angel holding a vessel.</i> 6-7th century Description: An angel holding a decorated vessel</p>							
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="658 753 1062 836">Depicted Characters:</th> <th data-bbox="1062 753 1466 836">Used communion instrument/s:</th> <th data-bbox="1466 753 1825 836">Location:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="658 836 1062 836">Jesus Christ and the Apostles</td> <td data-bbox="1062 836 1466 836">A vessel</td> <td data-bbox="1466 836 1825 836">Red Monastery, Sohag</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Depicted Characters:	Used communion instrument/s:	Location:	Jesus Christ and the Apostles	A vessel	Red Monastery, Sohag		
Depicted Characters:	Used communion instrument/s:	Location:						
Jesus Christ and the Apostles	A vessel	Red Monastery, Sohag						
	<p><i>The archangel Raphael holding a vessel.</i> 6-7th century A.D. Description: The archangel is holding a vessel</p>							
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="658 1062 1062 1136">Depicted Characters:</th> <th data-bbox="1062 1062 1466 1136">Used communion instrument/s:</th> <th data-bbox="1466 1062 1825 1136">Location:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="658 1136 1062 1210">Archangel Raphael</td> <td data-bbox="1062 1136 1466 1210">A vessel</td> <td data-bbox="1466 1136 1825 1210">Red Monastery, Sohag</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Depicted Characters:	Used communion instrument/s:	Location:	Archangel Raphael	A vessel	Red Monastery, Sohag		
Depicted Characters:	Used communion instrument/s:	Location:						
Archangel Raphael	A vessel	Red Monastery, Sohag						

Continued

	<p><i>Melechizedek is giving the sacred chalice to Abraham</i> <i>12th century A.D.</i> Description: <i>Melechizedek is giving the sacred chalice to Abraham who is about to drink from it</i></p>							
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Depicted Characters:	Used communion instrument/s:	Location:						
Abraham and <i>Melechizedek</i>	The sacred chalice	Deir Abu Makar, Wadi El-Natroun						
	<p><i>Melechizedek is giving the sacred chalice to Abraham</i> <i>12th century A.D.</i> Description: <i>Melechizedek is giving the sacred chalice to Abraham who is about to drink from it</i></p>							
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="658 736 1065 813">Depicted Characters:</th> <th data-bbox="1065 736 1466 813">Used communion instrument/s:</th> <th data-bbox="1466 736 1860 813">Location:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="658 813 1065 899">Abraham and <i>Melechizedek</i></td> <td data-bbox="1065 813 1466 899">The sacred chalice</td> <td data-bbox="1466 813 1860 899">St. Antony monastery, Red Sea</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Depicted Characters:	Used communion instrument/s:	Location:	Abraham and <i>Melechizedek</i>	The sacred chalice	St. Antony monastery, Red Sea		
Depicted Characters:	Used communion instrument/s:	Location:						
Abraham and <i>Melechizedek</i>	The sacred chalice	St. Antony monastery, Red Sea						
	<p><i>St. Stephen holding a Chalice</i> <i>12th century A.D.</i> Description: <i>St. Stephen is carrying the sacred chalice and warping a <i>Chalice Veil</i> around his fingers</i></p>							
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="658 1107 1065 1184">Depicted Characters:</th> <th data-bbox="1065 1107 1466 1184">Used communion instrument/s:</th> <th data-bbox="1466 1107 1860 1184">Location:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="658 1184 1065 1270">St. Stephen</td> <td data-bbox="1065 1184 1466 1270">The sacred chalice and <i>Chalice Veil</i></td> <td data-bbox="1466 1184 1860 1270">Monastery of St. Matthew the Potter, Esna</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Depicted Characters:	Used communion instrument/s:	Location:	St. Stephen	The sacred chalice and <i>Chalice Veil</i>	Monastery of St. Matthew the Potter, Esna		
Depicted Characters:	Used communion instrument/s:	Location:						
St. Stephen	The sacred chalice and <i>Chalice Veil</i>	Monastery of St. Matthew the Potter, Esna						

Continued



St. Stephen holding a Chalice

12th century A.D.

Description: St. Stephen is carrying the sacred chalice and warping a lifafa around his fingers

Depicted Characters:	Used communion instrument/s:	Location:
St. Stephen	The sacred chalice and <i>lifafa</i>	Monastery of St. Matthew the Potter, Esna

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تصوير أدوات التناول على الجداريات القبطية

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المخلص

طبقا للكنيسة القبطية فإن الأفخارستيا تعتبر أحد الأسرار السبعة فتؤمن الكنيسة بتحول الخبز والخمر إلى الجسد الفعلي للسيد المسيح ودمه وقد ظهرت نبوءات خلاص المسيح في العديد من الآيات في كل من العهدين القديم والجديد ونتيجة لذلك فقد تم تصوير المشاهد القربانية في اللوحات الجدارية القبطية المبكرة للتعبير عن الخلاص القادم وتأكيده. وعادة ما يتم تصوير المشاهد القربانية على جدران الهيكل حيث تشارك الشخصيات في الحدث الفعلي الذي يحدث على المذبح كما كان الكأس من الأدوات الرئيسية المبكرة وقد تم دمج الملاعق والمناديل في وقت لاحق وظهرت تدريجياً في مشاهد العهد الجديد. الكلمة مشتقة من الكلمة اليونانية Eucharistein وتعني "شكر" المعروفة أيضاً باسم المناولة المقدسة؛ الدم الثمين وكأس الفداء". حسب التقاليد المسيحية، هو إحياء ذكرى تضحية المسيح بنفسه من أجل فداء البشر من خطاياها. تهدف هذه الورقة إلى دراسة وتحليل وتتبع تصوير ثلاثة أشياء رئيسية مدمجة مستخدمه في الاحتفال بالدم المقدس وهي الكأس والملعقة والمنديل في التصوير الجداري بالأديرة القبطية.

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كأس، المناديل، ملاعق،
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