



SPIRITUAL ECONOMY AND SPIRITUAL CRAFT: MONASTIC POTTERY PRODUCTION AND TRADE



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Our present knowledge of the production and distribution of Coptic pottery, greatly due to the work of Pascale Ballet, shows that monasteries were producers, distributors, and consumers of table and utilitarian wares. Archaeological research has located pottery workshops within the monastic compounds or outside their walls in three regions: the Delta, Middle Egypt, and Upper Egypt. One large monastic site, Kellia, had abundant ceramic finds of various provenience, but no evidence of local production. The scarce textual evidence suggests that monastic production and distribution was part of economies of scale in the hands of religious and secular establishments. In relationship with the outside world, the economic role of monasteries in the local and long-distance exchange is tangible. More elusive is their cultural and spiritual role in maintaining Roman red slip wares, in introducing painted wares, and in accepting glazed wares.

The pottery of Egypt between the fourth and eighth century is known from numerous published collections of urban and monastic sites.¹ During the last 30 years, scientific analysis of excavated pottery coupled with distribution studies and archaeological investigations of actual workshops, primarily directed by Pascale Ballet (1991 and 1997), have located the key production centers in three regions: Abu Mina in the Delta, Antinoopolis and Hermopolis Magna in Middle Egypt and the Aswan area in Upper Egypt. Another large production site was found at Gurna in western Thebes (Mysliwiec 1987). Installations for pottery production have been uncovered within two monastic sites, the Monasteries of St. Jeremia at Saqqara (Ghaly 1992) and of St. Simeon at Aswan (Ballet 1991). The evidence for monastic pottery production is limited so far, but considerable consumption of local and distant wares at all monastic sites is well documented archaeologically. Contrary to the archaeological evidence, documentary and narrative sources are mostly indirect, if available at all. The most revealing research of a textual source is B. Layton's study (2002) of the social aspects of food and eating in Shenoute's Canons.² Even this text gives the impression of very limited selection and use of pottery in comparison to the excavated material.

The available publications and my own research on pottery from Akhmim³ led me to investigate the nature and extent of monastic pottery production, consumption and exchange, primarily in relation to those of the urban sites (see map on p. 8). I have compared known monastic production sites among themselves and with the central producers. I looked into the origin and proportion of various table and utility wares in monastic inventories in order to discern which wares and shapes were supplied locally and which were obtained from distant sources. I have also compared ceramic assemblages of hermitages and coenobitic communities. My concern is not only the economic and commercial exchange with the outside world, but I am also looking for evidence of any possible spiritual aspect, such as values and ideas, in the ceramic production and use.

I start with the pottery of one large monastic consumer site in the western Delta — Kellia, dating from the late fourth to mid eighth century.⁴ The pottery's origin is both foreign and Egyptian, but any definite evidence for pottery production at Kellia is so far lacking. My examination of the occurrence of the imported and Egyptian types of wares in the closed deposits, as described and dated by Egloff, revealed a pattern of contacts and consumption through time.⁵

The earliest, Deposit A, a very large rubbish pit, dated from the late 4th to early 5th century, produced a total of 46 vessel types of table and kitchen wares.⁶ Ten tableware types belonged to Roman red slip wares: six were imported African Red Slip Ware and four were Egyptian, imitating African forms. Three of those were made of marl clay and one of Nile silt. Their provenience is still unknown, but presumed to be located in the Delta. The two earliest types of painted water storage jars were found in this deposit. Such jars were made of coarse, reddish Nile silt fabric, again of an undetermined Delta manufacture. Both Egloff and Ballet have noted that the Nile silt fabric was used for most utility ware throughout all periods.

The eight deposits of the 5th to mid 6th century (Deposits B-I) still contained more imported than Egyptian red slip wares.⁷ They were mostly African, but some were Cypriot and Phocaeen. The Egyptian imitations were again of marl clay and Nile silt. The Abu Mina products, fragments of ovoid wine amphorae (Egloff type 186) and buff colored pitchers, were found reused in construction of benches dated 480-700 (Deposits L-R).⁸

The pottery of the closed deposits dated through the first century and a half of the Kellia settlement may not accurately reflect the reality of life and outside contacts of that period, but it does indicate broadly the urban and Mediterranean character of the monastic community and its close connections with Alexandria and Abu Mina. Many of the monks presumably came from the urban society of Alexandria. Imported African tableware is rather rare in Egypt, but it is common in Alexandria. Cypriot and Phocaeen tableware is distributed almost exclusively in the Delta, primarily at Alexandria and Abu Mina. The latter is especially rich in Cypriot ware. The high level of imported pottery consumption at Kellia is difficult to reconcile

with the traditional life style of the ascetic monks. They presumably used and discarded luxury ware that could have been brought in by the settling monks, but more likely made its way to Kellia via Alexandria and Abu Mina, either as exchange for monastic products and services or as gifts from visitors and pilgrims. The richness and variety of the Delta-made pottery is considerable, but so is the consumption in the hermitages of Kellia. One may ask how much has the development and growth of monastic communities in the Delta stimulated the expansion of the regional pottery production. Perhaps the stronger impact came from the increased traffic in visitors and pilgrims, as the development and expansion of Abu Mina potteries show.⁹ Other production sites in the Delta have not been located. The abundance of Nile silt pottery at Kellia, mainly specialized vessels, such as painted water jars, or utility vessels such as cooking pots, would indicate many local workshops in the villages east of Kellia. Most of monks' needs were met by those workshops in an ongoing and, we may assume, direct exchange of monastic and village products.

The ceramic assemblages of the eight deposits dated 630-750 (Deposits S-Z) indicated certain changes in external contacts and a growth of exchange between Kellia and the Nile valley.¹⁰ Imported red slip tableware is now rare, except one type of Cypriot bowl, but Egyptian imitations increase, notably Aswan ware.¹¹ Red slip bowls that are imitations in Nile silt fabric take the second place in numbers. Based on chemical analysis and the investigation of kilns, Ballet has identified these Nile silt bowls as the products of Antinoopolis. Brown wine amphorae (Late Amphora 7, Egloff types 173-177), also found in these late deposits at Kellia, were made at the same location.¹²

Here an interesting comparison in tableware can be made between Alexandria, an urban site and Kellia. I have compared the overall number of vessel types of Aswan manufacture (best quality, long distance) and of Nile silt manufacture (second quality, local or regional) published by Rodziewicz from Alexandria with those numbers published by Egloff from Kellia.¹³ At Alexandria there are 93 types of Aswan ware and 59 types of Nile silt ware. At Kellia the ratio is 20 to 19. One would certainly expect more limited number of tableware types at a monastic site, but the ratio between the two suppliers indicates the nature of exchange. Kellia's exchange was primarily local or in the case of bowls from Antinoopolis, with the area where some of the wine came from. Again, we may suggest that the commercial connections between Kellia and the Middle Egyptian region were through direct exchange. However, almost equal proportion of the Aswan ware speaks of the continuing consumption of high quality tableware in the monastic community. This supply is less likely to have been direct, but could have come through redistribution from Alexandria.¹⁴

In order to examine now the range of wares and shapes at Kellia in the decade before the Arab conquest and the first century after it, we may look at the assemblages of the latest four closed deposits. Two deposits are the last phase of two communal spaces in the largest Building 1: the kitchen (Deposit S) and the basilica (Deposit T). Two deposits come from monastic cells (Deposits W and Z).¹⁵

In the kitchen Deposit S there were 77 vessels of 16 different types. The majority was cooking ware: 62 vessels (56 large pots) of 6 types. There were four amphorae of the Antinopolis manufacture, two painted jugs, one pitcher, one small flagon, one small basin and two bowl-lamps. All of these vessels were made of Nile silt. It is notable that the only two table vessels were high quality, imported shallow bowls, one of Cypriote Red Slip Ware and one of Aswan Red Slip Ware. Their size of 25 cm in diameter would make them serving dishes for multiple portions.

The basilica Deposit T had 6 vessels of 6 types: one painted jug, one painted bowl, one large and deep painted basin and three chalices, of which two were painted. All of the vessels were made of Nile silt.

The two monastic cells had an assortment of storage (amphorae), table (bowls) and special purpose vessels, but no large cooking pots. In both deposits half of the vessel types and counts was red slipped tableware of Aswan fabric or Nile silt. Deposit Z had one Cypriote serving bowl. This tableware was further almost evenly divided between large bowls (3 and 6) and small bowl or cups (4 and 7) for individual use. A type of deep, painted bowl was found in each deposit and Deposit W also had a small, painted basin.

The cell assemblages, like the communal ones show the same functional distinction in the quality and sources of table and utility wares. For tableware, there are Cypriote and Aswan bowls, but also there are their imitations in red slipped Nile silt. The value of the traditional Roman tableware is clear. We may ask if it is due to the urban background of the monks. One category of specialized, perhaps liturgical vessels (painted bowls and basins) was all made of Nile silt and presumably supplied locally.

How typical are these ceramic assemblages of the Kellia deposits for other monastic establishments? I have found remarkable parallels in the vessel types, both of table and kitchen wares in a workshop that clearly produced for monastic needs also in the 6th and 7th centuries. Holeil Ghaly published in 1992 the findings of a pottery workshop for the monastery of Saint-Jeremia at Saqqara. Six kilns were found in the workshop area and two more to the west of it. There were samples of yellow and red ochre and finds of painted but still unfired bowls and jugs of Nile silt. Other attested local products in the same fabric were globular cooking pots and jars, painted water jugs and large shallow bowls, imitating imported and Egyptian red slipped ware. All of those vessel types were almost identical to those found in the kitchen Deposit S at Kellia.¹⁶ The monastery of Saint-Jeremia, like Kellia received fine tableware from a much wider area. Ghaly reported on unspecified findings of African, Cypriot, and Aswan red slip ware, as well as tableware and amphorae from the Middle Egyptian workshops. The amphorae were reportedly found in large quantities.¹⁷

The summary publication of the Saint-Jeremia finds does not allow for detailed comparisons with Kellia, but the general commonality of the assemblages reveals something

about pottery use and supply both for communal and individual needs. How these may relate to textual sources will be discussed later, after the evidence is presented for other monasteries. Another question, that of the nature of monastic pottery production itself should be addressed at this point. There is no direct evidence anywhere that monks themselves were making pottery, even if a workshop was located near or within a monastic site. W. E. Crum has cited two indirect references to such occupations in the Pachomian Rule and in the writing of Esaias of Scete.¹⁸ The labor force in the workshop at Saint-Jeremia is also not documented. Were the monks producing for their own needs or even also for some inhabitants in the area, as Ghaly suggested? If the monks were not engaged in pottery production themselves, perhaps they leased the workshop on their property to a potter or potters from the surrounding villages and received payment in pottery. There is a Greek papyrus text, contained in a sixth century archive from Aphrodite, that deals with such an arrangement.¹⁹

The Kellia assemblages have further parallels with the pottery finds of the 6th to 8th century published by W. Godlewski from the monastery and hermitages of Neklonni or Deir el Naqlun in the Fayum Oasis.²⁰ Beside only a few sherds of African and Cypriot Red Slip Ware, the rest of the tableware belongs to Nile silt bowls and Aswan slipped and painted bowls, all of large size for multiple servings. Another, very common type are small, flanged bowls, which Godlewski identifies as drinking cups for monks. Kitchenware is made of Nile silt and consists of pitchers, water jars, globular cooking pots, and basins. Middle Egyptian brown amphorae with pitch coating inside are very common. All of these wares were found in the monastery and in the hermitages.

On all of these monastic sites the two most common tableware types of Aswan manufacture are shallow bowls with thickened rim, perhaps a set, since they are close in shape but either large or small in size. These bowls are directly connected with the Monastery of St. Simeon near Aswan. The Aswan area was the largest center of pottery production in Coptic Egypt. Here we could speak of a regional industry, such was the output during twelve centuries of this production, attested at consumer sites all over Egypt and in Nubia.²¹ Investigations led by P. Ballet have located four production sites around Aswan.²² The principal workshops must have been on the island of Elephantine, but the Monastery of St. Simeon was another large and attested producer. Within the southern area of the monastic compound, ceramic kilns were installed in courtyards. Other domestic activities were located in the same area; there were bread ovens and winemaking installations.²³ Outside the monastic walls there was evidence of more workshops. Both workshops specialized in making red slip tableware, but there was division of labor; small, shallow and deep bowls were made inside, large bowls outside. The outer workshop also produced cooking pots. The question of monks' involvement in pottery production on their premises cannot be answered without direct evidence. They could have leased the workshop, had outside help or worked alone. Writing about bread baking in monasteries, W. E. Crum cited several documents, some from the Monastery of Epiphanius, which showed that visiting bakers as well as monks baked bread.²⁴

Ballet's description of the kilns at Saint-Simeon differs from that of Ghaly's for the kilns at Saint-Jeremia. The former were all of cylindrical type with distinctive fuel rooms and firing chambers, while the latter were different in type and size, some without distinction in component parts. The whole organization of production would have also been different. Specialized workshops of St. Simeon would have belonged to a network of nucleated workshops (Peacock's model of "nucleated rural pottery industry"). The Saint-Jeremia workshop, which produced numerous vessel forms, but not in sets or series, would conform to the model of "individual workshop industry."²⁵ Pascal Ballet has located two such monastic workshops in the vicinity of Esna. Several koms at Deir el Shohada produced evidence of modest coarse ware production. A workshop outside the walls of the monastery Deir el Fakhuri, i.e. "Potter's monastery" also produced only coarse ware.²⁶ These workshops probably supplied the hermitages of Esna, another site whose rich pottery finds and fine dwellings reveal sophisticated monks.²⁷

In Upper Egypt, the western Theban area is especially rich in monasteries and hermitages. Mortuary temples and tombs were ideal alternative real estate. Finds of table and utility ware have been known from the Monastery of Epiphanius and many anchorite cells in the area for some time before the production center for the entire area was discovered in the vicinity, at Gurna within the Temple of Seti I. The excavators found eight kilns and large amounts of pottery produced there.²⁸ An ostrakon found in the Monastery of Epiphanius may provide an insight into that monastery's role in pottery distribution. The text records "an inventory of two or more camel loads of pottery to be sent to Jeme."²⁹ The exact nature of this transaction cannot be known, but this amount and variety of pottery was most likely made at Gurna. Were the monks involved in transport or a lay wholesaler? Was the monastery selling or reselling this pottery? Perhaps selling if the monks were also involved in production or reselling if the pottery was received as payment for a lease or in exchange for some monastic products.³⁰ In both cases the monastery could have owned parts or the whole production site. The ownership and workforce of the Gurna establishment are not documented. There is some indication that the actual owner of the Gurna potteries and the monastic sites could have been the bishop in the capital of the nome at Armant, a short distance to the south. The will of bishop Abraham from the end of the sixth century addresses the disposition of a monastery in western Thebes.³¹

The inventory ostrakon with its words for a variety of vessel forms brings us back to the issue of other possible textual sources for tableware use and function in communal and individual situations. B. Layton has shown how the place, time and communality of eating were regulated in Shenoute's Canons.³² The meal was served at noon in the refectory, and the monks would eat in groups around low tables. This would require one large dish for each group. Monastics were required to attend a communal meal and not eat alone. These observances were not absolute and hermits would eat alone in their cells away from the monastery. Small, individual vessels, would be suitable in those cases. Layton also mentions the work duties related to serving food. He says that "workers dish out the food into vessels to

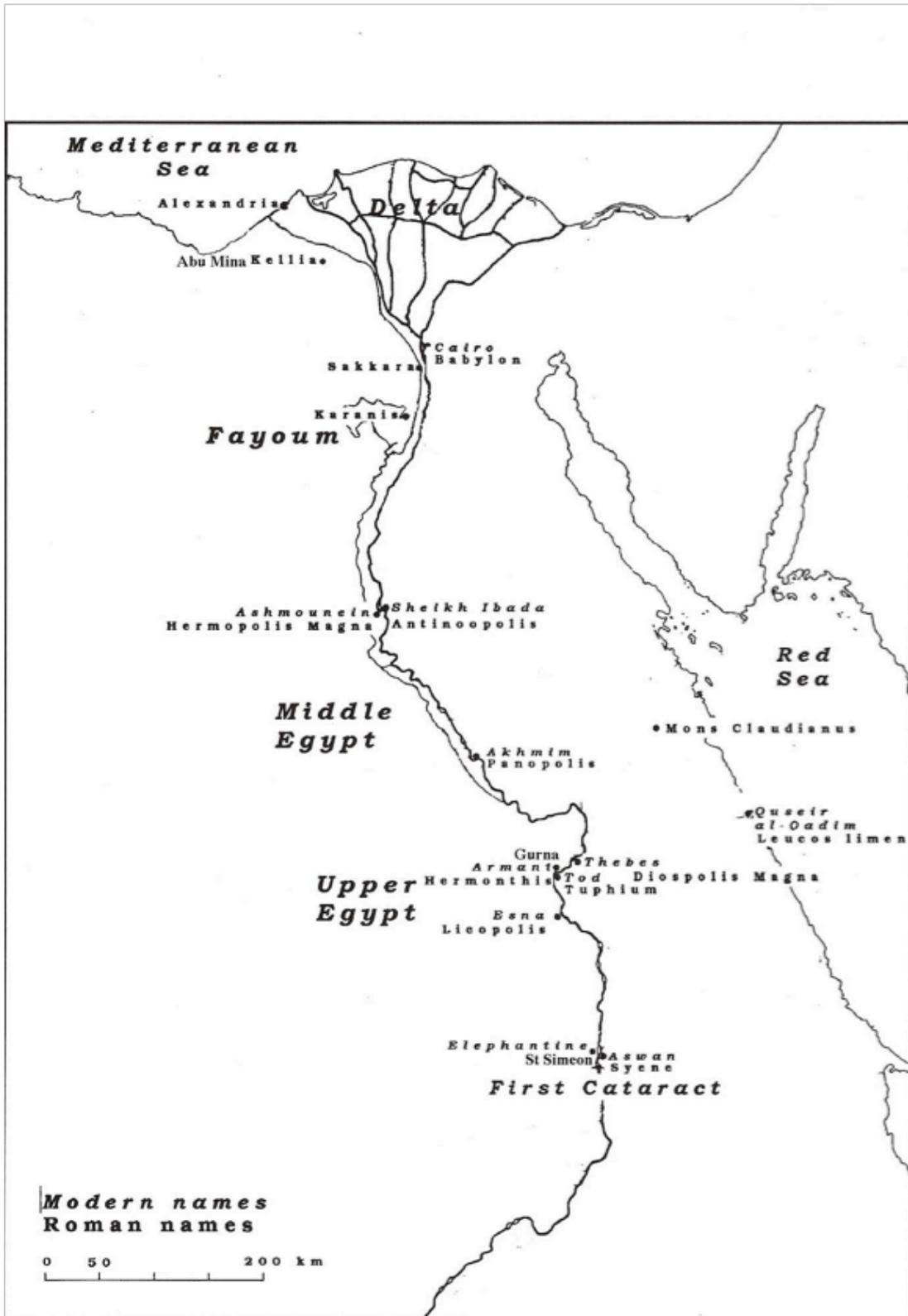
make up servings.”³³ This would again imply small, individual bowls, unless the servings were somehow measured but still dished into a communal dish in the kitchen.³⁴ Food is served in other locations, in infirmaries to sick monks and in the gatehouse to outsiders. Individual vessels may be more suited for those locations. In Layton’s table of word clusters, three words are used for vessels.³⁵ One is associated with prepared food (dish) and food in general. This may be the bowl, large or small. The second word is associated with cooking and may refer to a cooking pot. The third word is associated with drinking and could be either an individual cup/bowl or perhaps a jug. All of these vessel types are basic and common to monastic assemblages. One type is particularly conspicuous and easily related to communal and individual servings. The archaeological evidence from monastic consumption and production sites consistently shows bowls with thickened rims, ranging from small to large in size, to be the most common tableware shape. The inner and outer workshops at the Monastery of St. Simeon produced those very bowls.³⁶ One vessel form clearly absent from monastic assemblages but found in urban sites is a plate. This is a shallow, flat-bottomed vessel with straight sides. It would be best suited for serving meat and fish, and both those foods were in Shenoute’s Canons forbidden to healthy monks.³⁷

In relationship with the outside world, the role of monasteries in rural and urban economies and in local and long-distance exchange is tangible. More elusive is their spiritual and cultural role in the sphere of such common objects as pottery. The first issue is that of monks-potters. Pottery making could have been a “task,” a subsistence related activity or “trade,” an economic activity like weaving and making rope, baskets and mats. Essentially, all work was performed for discipline and spiritual devotion.³⁸ As has been said before, there is only circumstantial evidence for monks being potters. Perhaps that occupation was uncommon and for a good reason. Pottery making would certainly fulfill monastic needs and could be a profitable trade, but I do not see it as suitable for fulfilling spiritual needs, like other “occupations which leave the mind free,”³⁹ spinning, weaving and rope, basket and mat making. Repetitive motions and prolonged, solitary sitting in one location is not likely. Pottery work is variable and prone to sudden changes in conditions. It requires quick decisions and reaction. Pottery making also requires communication and cooperation. Perhaps rather than finding spiritual satisfaction in pottery making, the monks and their establishments had the economic advantage as owners and lessors of pottery workshops which were located on their land.⁴⁰

On a general, cultural level, we cannot say that monastic communities were conscious carriers of Graeco-Roman sigillata traditions rather than just a link in a chain of consumers and perhaps producers of “modern” tableware. We can only observe that the society as a whole did not associate red slipped tableware with religious beliefs. There was nothing “pagan” about the ware, still the preferred fine serving ware in monastic settings. There is no evidence that monasteries introduced painted wares, most commonly known as “Coptic pottery.” We do not even know how much Christianity contributed to the revival and spread of traditional painted pottery.⁴¹ There are many stylistic, chromatic and thematic connections between Coptic pottery, textiles and wall paintings. Monastic surroundings were certainly full

of colorful symbols and figures. The innovation of glaze was first applied to sigillata-derived shapes made of Aswan kaolin clay sometime in the eight century. There is no indication in published reports which of the Aswan workshops produced the new ware. The finds from urban and monastic sites show that glazeware, often called “Islamic pottery,” was used alongside other established wares in the same contexts.⁴² Again, the religion was not an issue here.

In the end, perhaps the most valuable role of pottery, fine and coarse, for those living monastic life was that of exchange and connection with the outside world. The pottery was an object of necessity, but with strong esthetic and economic values. It was one of many connecting threads and supply lines between the inhabitants of the desert and their urban or village base.



Endnotes

1. Alexandria (Rodziewicz 1976), Karanis (Johnson 1981), Hermopolis Magna (Bailey 1982), Tod (Pierat 1991, 1996) and Elephantine (Gempeler 1992). Monastic sites in the Delta (Kellia: Egloff 1977), in the Sakkara and Fayoum area (Apa Jeremias: Quibell 1912; Deir elNaqlun: Godlewski 1990), and in Upper Egypt (Esna: Jacquet-Gordon 1972; Monastery of Epiphanius: Winlock and Crum 1926).
2. I would like to thank Bentley Layton for providing me with his article and making this important connection possible.
3. Schrunk 1993 in McNally and Schrunk 1993.
4. Egloff (1977) published the pottery finds from the Swiss excavations, while Ballet and Picon (1987) scientifically examined those found in the French excavations for their provenience.
5. Egloff's publication divides the tableware of the Roman "sigillata" tradition into three imported types of fabric (African, Phocaeian and Cypriot) and three Egyptian types, now known to correspond to Aswan fabric, Nile silt fabric and marl clay fabric. Egloff further identified vessel types produced in each fabric type.
6. Egloff 1977, 33-34.
7. Egloff 1977, 34-35.
8. Egloff 1977, 36-37. Pascal Ballet (1997, 46-47) has identified three specialized workshops with kilns at Abu Mina using the local marl clay. One produced pilgrim flasks and votive figurines, while two others manufactured an assortment of table and utilitarian vessels and lamps. Chemical analysis done by Ballet and Picon (1987, 30-35) has confirmed that one of the workshops, located south of the great basilica, produced the wine amphorae and pitchers found at Kellia.
9. Ballet 1997, 46-47.
10. Egloff 1977, 37-39.
11. Bowls of Aswan Red Slip Ware were first recorded in deposits dated after 500 (Deposit J, 500-700 and Deposit K, 550-650), cf. Egloff 1977, 35-36.
12. Ballet and Picon 1987, 35-39. Ballet et al. 1991, and Ballet 1997, 47.
13. Rodziewicz 1976, his fabric types O and K respectively and Egloff 1977, 79, fabric types 1 and 2 respectively.
14. Ballet 1990, 46 has already suggested this role of Alexandria in the distribution of Aswan ware and other imported tableware, as part of its overall economic domain over the religious and monastic sites in the area.
15. Egloff 1977, Pls. 111 (Deposits S and T), 113 (Deposit W) and 115 (Deposit Z).
16. Ghaly 1992, 165-168, Figs. 5-12. Ghaly noticed that the same types were also found "in the remains and debris of the Saint-Jeremia monastery."
17. Ghaly 1992, 168-170. Another common type of imported amphora was Late Amphora 1, of the eastern Mediterranean origin, also well represented at Kellia (Egloff type 164) and found in Deposit W as well.
18. Winlock and Crum 1926, 159, notes 5 and 9. It is interesting to note that Esaias' word for pots that monks make is "*angeion*", which would refer to amphorae. Crum notes that *Hist. Laus.* does not mention pottery making as one of the trades. J. Gascou 1991, 1640 also does not discuss pottery making in relation to monastic economy.
19. I have found the reference to this text (*P. Cair. Masp.* I 67110) in a paper by Terry Wilfong "Pottery Manufacture in Byzantine Egypt: Textual and Archaeological Evidence," presented at the 18th Annual Byzantine Studies Conference in 1992. He writes: "In this lease, a potter named Psais leases for the rest of his life the third share of a pottery-works on the property of the Monastery of Sourous, together with a third of all its facilities, including its pitch ovens. This third share of the pottery works belongs to 'the heirs of Helen and Miriam,' who are the otherwise unspecified lessors. In return for leasing their third share of the pottery-works, these heirs are to receive 2400 koupha jars 'without pitch'." W. E. Crum in Winlock and Crum 1926, 159, n. 8 refers to a document in which "a deacon is partner in a potter's kiln," probably another case of ownership or leasing, rather than occupation.
20. Godlewski 1990. He classified the pottery into four categories: tableware, kitchenware, containers for water and amphorae.

21. See above n. 1 and Adams 1986 for Nubia.
22. Ballet et al. 1991, 140-143 and Figs. 21-29.
23. This proximity to other domestic activities is an interesting arrangement for the interior workshop at St. Simeon. Such arrangement may not be unusual for a coenobitic community. A parallel may be seen in a modern community of potters in Old Cairo, researched by Gordon Sinclair in 1988 (published by K. Sinclair in 1990). He observed about 50 potters with their families. Their homes were separate buildings from the workshops, but still formed an integral part of the site.
24. Winlock and Crum 1926, 162-163.
25. Peacock 1982.
26. Ballet et al. 1991, 139-140 and Figs. 18-20.
27. Jacquet-Gordon 1972.
28. Mysliwicz 1987. The most common fabric is that of kaolin clay, comparable to Aswan ware. The workshop supplied the monasteries and the town of Jeme. John Hayes (1972, 387), who personally examined the pottery finds in the area, noted their uniformity. T. Wilfong in the paper cited above, n. 19, confirmed this "striking similarity." He furthermore commented on the uniformity in size and type of the Gurna kilns, which to him implied that they were not specialized in production of certain vessel forms. Indeed, K. Mysliwicz identified 218 vessel types of table and utility wares. Just for comparison, Gempeler (1992) identified 361 vessel types at the site of Elephantine, the largest producer in Upper Egypt.
29. Winlock and Crum 1926, 93. There are eleven words for different vessel shapes recorded on the ostrakon; some of them Winlock identifies as cup, plate, dish, amphora, while others remain unidentified.
30. Winlock and Crum 1926, 155-157 found evidence, both material and textual, of considerable, commercial scale, weaving. On the discussion of economic activities of monasteries, see Gascou 1990, 1639-1645. He questions the independent state of monastic economy in view of the complex property issues and of both lay and ecclesiastical interests.
31. Wilfong 1989, 94.
32. Layton 2002, 34-37.
33. *ibid.*, 36.
34. At Kellia, where there are distinguished kitchen deposits, the evidence is mixed. In the kitchen deposit of the largest building discussed above (Deposit S) there were no small vessels, but one small bowl was found in each of the two kitchen deposits in small buildings. Cf. Egloff 1977, 38-39, Pl. 114, Deposits X and Y. Large bowls were found in these kitchen deposits as well as in other cell deposits discussed above. It is to be expected in the buildings with multiple occupants. At Neklonni (Godlewski 1990, 49), small, flanged bowls were reportedly common in hermitages, but also found in the monastery. Were such vessels used for food portions or for liquids, as Godlewski suggested? At the Monastery of Epiphanius (Winlock and Crum 1926, 86-87), both small and large bowls were found in the main monastery building and in the outlying cells.
35. Layton 2002, 31, Table 2.
36. See above n. 22. The size is not indicated for the bowls found in the workshop of Saint-Jeremia and only two large bowls of this general shape are illustrated, cf. Ghaly 1993, 166, Figs. 6 and 7.
37. Layton 2002, 42, Table 3. The absence of plates may also be due to late dates of most monastic sites. Plate as a tableware form is not found even on urban sites after the sixth century. Two plates of African Red Slip Ware found in the earliest Deposit A at Kellia may be indicative, cf. Egloff 1977, Pl. 36, 2 and Pl. 37, 3. These fine plates could have been used for serving best food to rich or important visitors, cf. Layton 2002, 39, n. 74.
38. Monastic work is defined in such terms and documented by J. Gascou 1991, 1640-1641. Layton 2002, 33-37 *passim*, documents job assignments or tasks related to food growing, preparing and serving.
39. These are H. E. Winlock's words in Winlock and Crum 1926, 67, when talking about monastic trades and occupations.
40. For discussion on monastic and ecclesiastical land holdings, cf. Bagnall 1993, 290-291 and 300-301.
41. The workshop at Saint-Jeremia was making painted water jugs, while some painted bowls and jars were of "doubtful origin," cf. Ghaly 1993, 168, Figs. 10-15. In regard to Christian Nubia, Adams (1981, 10) attributed stylistic innovations in elaborately painted pottery of the Classic Christian Period (850-1100)

to “trained specialists, with previous experience specifically in manuscript illumination,” who “would have been monks, or have been trained and employed in monastic establishments.” He further cited evidence of monastic production of this painted pottery at Faras and Ghazali.

42. As discussed in D. L Brooks Hedstrom’s unpublished Symposium paper (abstract published here).

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