The Earthenware Trays of Lobed Design and the Problem of Communion by Intinction in the Eleventh–Thirteenth Century Nubia
The discovery of a huge eight-lobed earthenware tray (Inv. No. S1.117/2011) was one of the highlights of the second season of excavation in the church at Selib (Fig. 1a). It was found broken into two pieces in the sondage dug along the northern1 wall of the church, three meters east of the northern entrance (Fig. 1b). The layer in which it was found was composed mostly of the mud brick debris resulting from the destruction of the latest church on site (the Red Brick Piers Church, cf. Fig. 1c) and the building to the north.2

The object in question is an earthenware tray (Fig. 2) of maximum outer diameter 80cm, handmade of the rather soft, porous clay, with a conspicuous carbon core streak (Fig. 3). The depression in the centre of the bottom adds nine cm to the twenty cm height of the main body. Four of its eight lobes are bigger than the others and angular, thus forming a cross-like shape with rounded lobes in between the arms. The inner terminations of the lobes (where they met with [cross] arms) end with columnar elevations (protruding three cm above the rim) decorated on top with an incised cross with dots in between the arms. Additionally, the corners made by the lobes with the arms are bridged by the double applique bands of c. 7.5cm in overall length. The exterior of the tray has a pinkish-brown slip and an extensive orange wash. The upper rim (painted light violet) is decorated by a simple row of deeply impressed dots. A similar dotted pattern is seen on the upper surface of the bridges above the corners between arms and lobes. Each of the four plane side walls of the central cross is decorated with a cross elegantly drawn with black paint on the light violet background. The crosses are filled alternately either with rows of dots or guilloche, the arms of all four terminating in black filled dots. All the decoration, painted and impressed, was executed before (poor) firing. In general ceramological appearance S1.117/2011 fits the repertoire of Late/Terminal Christian handmade containers. Its most probable date is eleventh/twelfth century AD.

The interior surface of the tray shows traces of intense use; the erosion of the slip is uneven – the inside of the central depression and its upper edge are more abraded than the rest of the base interior. There are also irregular patches where the slip has been rubbed off inside the apsidal compartments (the four in which it has been most erased are all on one side of the tray). The side walls are well preserved with only occasional voids, both on their interior and exterior faces. The underside was left unworked. The intense use would be probably accounted for the total abrasion of the four pillars that once stood at equal intervals around the central depression. These were modeled in plan as rounded rectangles. Nothing can be said about their height. There is also no evidence for their being connected with the scalloped rim of the tray. The purpose they served remains enigmatic, however, a suggestion for their purpose is given below.3

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1 All the directions are ‘liturgical’ instead of geographical; i.e. the longer axis of the church, although diverging by 15°, is assumed to run E-W.

2 Notably, in roughly the same place a huge fragment of the mandatum tank (Stone Inv. No. Sel.1/22/2011), and a fragment of the Eucharistic chalice (Inv. No. Sel.1/134/2011-2012) were found.

3 Cf. infra, pp. 778ff.
Probably the closest parallel to S1.117/2011 was found outside the northern wall of the katholikon of the Wadi Ghazali monastery (Fig. 4). Its eight lobes (of which only three survived) and the depression in the center provide the main points of similarity. The Ghazali tray is much smaller (diam. 50cm, height 10.5cm); its upper rim being covered with an inscription in Greek. The lobe terminations on the interior are each decorated with incised sketches of a human face (alternately, man and woman).

Ghazali excavations provided also another object of this kind (Fig. 5). It is a quatrefoil of four lobes arranged around the central depression. Its outer dimensions are 58 x 58cm, the average height of the main body is c. 15cm (judging from the photograph, the depression is flattened at the bottom and generally shallower than that of the Selib tray). A ring of impressed dots encircles the central depression whereas a repeated irregular stamped motif adorns the upper rim. The Ghazali quatrefoil tray is now kept in the Sudan National Museum (S.M. 11261).

A farfetched analogy to the Selib tray is provided by the handmade pottery vessel (Inv. No. 7. 2008/2009) found in the Lower Church at Banganarti (Fig. 6). Its five fragments were discovered in the niche in the eastern wall of the passage behind the apse. The only hint at the dating of the object is that it must have been made before mid-eleventh century when the ruin of the Lower Church was overbuilt with the Upper Church.

In contradistinction to the poly-lobed trays from Selib and Ghazali the Banganarti tray is made in the shape of a perfect circle. It is also much smaller (its outer diameter is only 38cm). The depression in the centre, on the contrary, is disproportionate as compared to the Selib and Ghazali trays – it takes up half of the vessel’s diameter. The interior of the depression and its upper edge are much worn out with use. The inner surface of the base is decorated with an incised zig-zag that is outlined on both sides with rows of dots. A similar row of dots encircles the central depression, whereas the upper rim is covered with two parallel rows of dots separated by a deeply incised line. The exterior of the body is impressed with two lines of large dots running below the rim (Fig. 6a).

Needless to say, the find spot of the Banganarti tray (in the niche behind the apse together with the objects of definitely liturgical use) proves beyond doubt that the object was used during Mass.

The eight-lobed Red Ware tray (coarse, pinkish washed with carbon core streak) found in 1964 (Fig. 5) in the nave of the Abdallah-n Irqi central church, forms another moderately

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5 The inscription is unpublished. Adam Łajtar (personal communication) kindly delivered some observations on the text: in the right section there is (right from the incised cross) ΙΩ(Α)Ν(ΗΣ) ΠΡ(ΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΟΣ) ΑΡΧ(Ι), ‘Ioannes archipresbyteros’. In the left section is incised name ΙΑΚΑΒΟΣ (written Ιακαβος). In the middle section there is supposedly ΘΗΣ ΔΙΗΜΑΣ. The meaning of the later is highly conjectural, nevertheless the feminine pronoun that opens the phrase is certain.
6 Shinnie, Chittick, Ghazali, p. 28, Pl. XIIb.
7 That two Communion trays were found in Ghazali is probably due to the fact that monks in the second millennium received communion more often that the commonfolk, cf. A.P. Kazhdan (Ed.), Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium, Oxford 1991, s.v. Communion.
close parallel to the Selib tray. Although the diameter given in the description is 8cm only (which would qualify the object rather as lamp), the scaled drawing (cf. Fig. 7) suggests an object having a diameter of c. 40cm.8

If the latter is true the Abdallah-n Irqi object provides a fitting parallel to the Selib tray. The Central Church at Abdallah-n Irqi was almost certainly built in Early Christian times9 and according to the pottery found within and the painting decorations revealed on its walls, it was in use until the Terminal Christian Period.10

Another vessel that could easily be included within the category of Nubian earthenware poly-lobed trays was found in 2007 in the church on Us Island (the building known as SR022.A or US022.A).11 In its quatrefoil form it resembles the smaller vessel from Ghazali (vide supra). Neither the photograph nor the description of the object preclude a central depression (Fig. 8). The points of similarity to the Selib tray are the eight roundels decorated with incised crosses attached at equal intervals to the upper rim (the rim itself is decorated with a dots and [double] stick design).

The shape of the Nubian earthenware trays (that are either poly-lobed or circular) does not seem to make any difference to their purpose. U. Monneret de Villard found near the Shaima Amalika church two trays made of stone, both with shallow central depression in the bottom (Fig. 9). The larger one (68cm diameter), is eight-lobed, the smaller one (56cm diameter) – circular.12 Both have the same height of 14cm. The similarity of execution, the material used and a common find spot strongly suggests that they were used for the same purpose at roughly the same time.

The Shaima Amalika church (provided with the eastern passage behind the apse) was assigned to Type 4 by W.Y. Adams and consequently dated to 1150–1400 (given its larger size than other Type 4 churches, it could be even earlier). P. Grossmann postulated a narrower time limit: 1150–1200.13 The basis of this claim was W.Y. Adams’ statement that the eastern passage behind apse disappears from Nubian churches after the end of the twelfth century.14

H.D. Schneider claimed that the Abdallah-n Irqi poly-lobed tray served as a ‘holy water basin’,15 an opinion shared by D. Billig in case of the vessel from Us Island.16 The purpose of the Ghazali vessels was defined by P.L. Shinnie as the containers used to hold bread

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10 Loc.cit.
11 D. BILLIG, H.U.N.E. 2007 – die Kirche SR022.A., Der Antike Sudan. MSGB 18, 2007, pp. 89–98 [= Kirche] p. 89 (Fig.1) and p. 97 (Fig. 32). The object in question is presented on p. 97 (Fig. 30).
12 U. MONNERET DE VILLARD, La Nubia Medievale I, Cairo 1935–1957 [= Nubia], p. 82 and Fig. 69.
13 P. GROSSMANN, Elephantine II. Kirche und spätantike Hausanlagen im Chnumtempelhof, AV 25, Mainz a/Rhein 1980, p. 100.
15 SCHNEIDER, Objects, p. 24.
16 BILLIG, Kirche, p. 89.
for the Communion service. The present writer shares the latter’s opinion with a small reservation, however. According to my humble opinion that I shall try to support by some arguments set out below, the Nubian poly-lobed trays, were used to hold the Holy Bread in the lobed compartments whereas the central depression was intended to contain the Eucharistic Wine. Both elements were administered jointly to the laity by intinction during the Holy Communion. Therefore the S1.117/2011 was a sort of paten (Greek – diskos, Arabic – siniyah) which combined the function of chalice and the paten itself. If so, the four pillars around the central depression imitated the asterisk (Arabic – qubbah), i.e. that consists of two half-hoops of silver crossed at right angles and riveted together and in Coptic usage is placed over the paten to prevent the paten veil (Coptic – mappa, Arabic – lifafah) from touching the Holy Bread.

The full blown Nubian poly-lobed trays are dated to the first centuries of the second millennium AD, at the time when intinction replaced the older method of administering the Body and Blood of Christ to the congregation (cf. infra), and the Selib and Ghazali trays are convincingly dated to the eleventh-twelfth century.

The reasons behind H.D. Schneider’s and P.L. Shinnie’s opinions on the purpose these trays served were not specified. As mentioned above, they appeared in the Middle Nile after the tenth century AD and continued in use until the end of organized Christianity there. The lack of textual evidence associated with the use of these containers in the church rituals makes us look closer at the trays themselves and to search for parallels from outside the Middle Nile.

The formal analogy of the Selib tray to patens and to the group of so-called altar mensae, of either round or sigma shape with lobed borders, discussed by A.A. Barb is apparent. His remark that these lobes or absides on altars may have been useful for efficiently distributing Holy Communion in batches is worth quoting here. He perhaps went too far in saying that (...) the round pattern was the original one, as the arrangement of the lobes on a semicircular or square table obviously leads to difficulties in shaping the corners(...). Poly-lobed circular table tops are well known from the repertory of Christian art. When they were initially found in an ecclesiastical context they were labeled as altar mensae (Fig. 11).

17 SHINNIE, CHITTICK, Ghazali, p. 28.
18 By modern standards the Byzantine patens were exceedingly large, e.g. the six patens from the Sion Treasure (Asia Minor) measured from 58 to 77.5cm, weighting from 4.23 to 5.2kg and the paten of Bishop Paternus measure 62cm (weight 6.2kg), cf. L. MATZULEWICH, Byzantinische Antike. Studien auf Grund der Silbergefäße der Ermitage, Archäologische Mitteilungen aus russischen Sammlungen II, Berlin-Leipzig 1929, pp. 102–108, Figs 21–22, Pls 26–27.
19 A.J. BUTLER, The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt II, Oxford 1884 [=Churches], p. 39; O.H.E. BURMESTER, The Egyptian or Coptic Church, Cairo 1967 [= Coptic Church], pp. 23–24 and Pl. XVIb.e.
20 Ibid., p. 24.
22 Ibid., p. 43.
23 Loc. cit.
A classic contribution on the subject by Nussbaum provides some suitable parallels to those in the Middle Nile context, although made of stone. Though their usual designation links them with the Christian altar, their purpose and their setting within the church building remains mostly unknown.

The circular trays with scalloped rim that interest us more, are usually grouped together with the so-called sigma-shaped altars. They mostly come from secondary contexts, therefore nothing can be said about their position within the church, if any. A rare example found in situ was embedded in the pavement of the Tebtunis’ Church C (in the entrance to the South Chapel). It was said to serve as a baptismal font. A circular poly-lobed marble tray was found in a more unambiguously baptismal setting, in the baptistery of the basilica in Tebessa (Fig. 6d). All in all, only a couple of the sigma shaped stone plates were found used as altar tops. The association of this class of objects with the ceremony of the blessing of the offerings was suggested by E. Thomas in 1955. Their sepulchral use has also been emphasized.

As far as the recorded circumstances of the Selib and Banganarti finds are concerned, we are in a somewhat privileged position in an attempt to determine the possible use of the poly-lobed trays in the church. Apart from their suggested position in the church interior we can also speculate on the possible association of the ritual behind their use with the cult of the Theotokos (cf. infra).

The Nubian poly-lobed trays resemble the putative table tops in the similar arrangement of the interior space into apsidal compartments. They differ from them by having a central depression. The latter must have been essential for the tray’s function in the ritual because it made the object very difficult to handle, awkward and – most importantly – impossible to put on any flat surface. Since it needed a special stand or support the question should be asked, where was its place within the church building? Luckily enough in the Selib church such a place was found: the stone capital with a circular hollow in the middle of its upper surface that was found in its original position (Fig. 12), on the

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24 O. Nussbaum, Zum Problem der runden und sigmaformigen Altarplatten, *JaAC* 4, 1961, pp. 18–43, Fig. 2a-c.

25 A fragment of such a slab (?) was found in Old Dongola (B. Żurawski, The Monastery on Kom H in Old Dongola. The monk’s graves. A preliminary Report, [in]: P. Nagel, P.O. Scholz (Eds), *Nubica et Aethiopica IV/V*, Bonn-Warszawa 1999, p. 203, Fig. 2 and nn. 6–7.


28 Flood, *Muqarnas* 18, 2001, p. 42, n. 44, Fig. 5; Butler, Churches II, pp. 7–8, Fig. 2. E. Kitzinger argued against the hypothesis that the sigma-shaped slabs were used as altar tops (Kitzinger, *DOP* 14, 1960, p. 29).


western side of the north-west pier near the northern entrance (cf. also Figs 1b and c; 10a and b). This is all the more so in that the hollowing in the abacus exactly fits the size of the protrusion on the tray and the capital itself makes a solid support for such heavy and sizeable object.

The evidence unearthed in other Nubian churches also suggests that the place near the northern entrance was the customary position for objects of this kind. For example, in the Upper Church at Baganarti two red brick pedestals were found set against the western faces of both western piers in the light from the northern and southern entryways (Fig. 13). The middles of the upper surfaces were carefully hollowed before the pedestal was covered with hard crust of lime plaster. The resemblance to the hollowed capital at Selib is striking, as is also the common situation within the building’s interior (i.e. against the western walls of the N-W pier close to the northern entrance).

It must be said, however, that the excavations in the Baganarti church did not yield any object that could be labeled as a parallel to the Selib poly-lobed tray. Instead, a group of at least six ceramic Eucharistic chalices was found (Figs 14–15). All of them were found in the easternmost part of the church and probably used to serve Communion to the clergy; this was administered in a manner totally different to the Communion of the laity. The Eucharist for the priests was administered at the altar, then the gifts for the Communion were brought out from the sanctuary and placed at the communion table within the church from where they were distributed to the laity.

The reasons for this were manifold. First of all the famous canon 69 of the Quinisext Council ‘in Trullo’ prohibited the entrance to the sanctuary to all the faithful save the emperor. Whereas the priests took Communion in the sanctuary at the main altar the Eucharistic Bread was distributed to the laity from the small altars (antimensia, credences). Taft quotes in support the anonymous Narratio de S. Sophia (dated to the eighth/ninth century) that lists ‘four silver tables on columns’ set by Justinian in the presbytery of Hagia Sophia. The location of these credences must have changed later since the sources from twelfth–fourteenth centuries know them employed all over the solea, galleries, ambo and in the Augustaion. The Chronicon paschale (for the year 624) explicitly mentions the side-tables (paratrapezia) from which Communion was given to the faithful. The credences were attested also in the eleventh century Order of the Holy Liturgy (in an eleventh century codex in the British

31 The abacus depression fits the knob that protrudes from the bottom of the tray. Notably, the hollowed-out capital was put close to the northern entrance to the church i.e. not far from the place where the tray S1.117/2011 was found.
32 The record number found in the Upper Church is probably due to the seven sanctuaries (hayakil) which were provided with altars at which the clergy and other privileged persons could receive Communion.
36 L. Dindorf (Ed.), Chronicon Paschale I, CSHB, Bonn 1832, p. 714.
The association of the Communion tables mentioned by Taft with the sigma-shaped marble table tops was first advanced by De Angelis d’Ossat in 1974.38

The place near the north-western pier (in the so-called tetraptylon churches, i.e. those having the central section supported by four columns/piers) directly in front of the entrance seems to be an exceptional spot within the Nubian church building. Apart from its being the location of the putative Communion trays it also accommodated other objects of liturgical use. One is a stone bowl usually identified as *laqqan*, or *mandatum* (Maundy tank), the other is the Epiphany tank (?)

In the very early Church on *Kom* E (CE), also known as the Mosaic Church, the position against the western side of the north-west column was taken by a huge stone bowl (*Fig. 16*). A similar bowl (of c. 56cm diam.) was probably placed in a similar position in one of the earlier phases of the Selib church (as the huge fragment found outside of the northern entrance to the church might suggest, see *supra*, n. 2). Notably, the putative *mandatum* tank in the Mosaic Church was found in the form of a rectangular red brick container smeared inside with lime (a similar container was located in the analogous position in the southern nave). Such containers were probably made for slaking lime used for plastering the church’s interior. In this case, it was apparently left intact after the plastering was completed. What for? Its second life could have been associated with the Epiphany bath.39

To sum up, although the Selib tray was found outside the church, the excavation brought to light enough evidence to reconstruct its original position within the church building. Needless to say, it strengthens the association of this object with the Communion to the laity.

Moreover the close scrutiny of the Selib tray itself reveals some traces of its likely use (in the church ritual?). As said above, the diagnostic feature of the tray, apart from its scalloped rim, is the central depression, apparently intended to contain liquid. Its upper edge and its interior are worn, apparently from abrasion resulting from frequent use. There is of course a slight chance that the tray served as a holy water container and the central depression made the cleaning of the vessel and the emptying of the water easier – but this is hardly possible. First of all the holy water hypothesis raises more question that answers. Why, for example, is the interior of the vessel divided into eight regular compartments? Needless to say such an arrangement finds slight justification if the water was involved. This

37 The texts mentions the deacon carrying the *diskos* who follows the bishop going to the first communion table (*antimension*) (R.F. TAFT, S.J., The Pontifical Liturgy of the Great Church According to a Twelfth-Century Diataxis in Codex British Museum ADD. 34060, *OCP* 45, 1979, pp. 302ff.
39 Similar containers were found in Banganarti in both southern and northern porticos, and in Selib in a row outside the southern wall of the church (but within the rectangular *peribolos* that surrounds the church). The hypothesis that in Selib they served as Epiphany tanks is difficult to defend, because the Epiphany bath, at least in the later Christian period, was probably performed there in the rectangular basin located between the entrance to the enclosure and the church. Water for the tank was drawn by the *saqiya* located east of the church (cf. *Fig. 1*).
would make more sense if the tray was intended for tangible objects e.g. for Eucharistic bread. The central depression could have held the wine, and the pieces of the Bread, could have been moistened in it and given by the priest directly into the mouth of the communicant. This is exactly the mode of administering Communion by intinction that became popular in the Byzantine rite from the tenth century onwards (cf. infra). Such a mode of Communion is still practiced in the Church of the Assyrians, Ethiopians and Copts.

The foregoing is not particularly strong argument, but the eight-lobed circular marble tray of Besançon (cf. Fig. 11c) until the eighteenth century was filled each Maundy Thursday (the day of the Last Supper) with red wine that was solemnly blessed and then drunk first by the canons of the cathedral and then by the faithful. This is perfectly reasonable since the Eucharist was performed in commemoration of the Last Supper. The practice of intinction for lay communion already appeared in the East and the West in the seventh century. The Body and Blood of the Lord contained together in one and the same chalice is known from miracle 12 of St St Kyros and John and later from the Narrationes of St. Anastasius of Sinai.

As for the Byzantines, they did not practice Communion by intinction in the first millennium. This mode of administering the Eucharist whereby the consecrated Bread is dipped into the consecrated Wine before being given to the communicant appeared in the Byzantine rite in the eleventh century. Notably, in the middle of this century the Byzantines were fiercely attacked by the Latins for this breach of ancient custom of administering the sacrament of communion. Despite the opposition from many sides in the twelfth and the thirteenth century the practice of Communion via intinction became exceedingly popular in the Byzantine world.

Interestingly, by the twelfth century Communion by intinction (administered with a spoon) was deemed equal with the Communion from the hand of the priest – the point of controversy was the intinction itself (as opposed to the way of administering both parts separately). In the twelfth century an anonymous Nestorian tract indicted the Byzantines and Jacobites for no longer administering the Body and Blood separately.

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40 E.S. DROWER, Water into Wine: A study of Ritual Idiom in the Middle East, London 1956, p. 149.
41 Ibid., p. 166.
42 Ibid., pp. 194–195.
43 Ibid., p. 184; BUTLER, Churches II, p. 40.
44 BARN, JW1 19/1–2, Jan.–Jun. 1956, p. 45.
46 Ibid., DOP 50, 1996, p. 221.
47 Ibid., p. 223.
48 Ibid., p. 224.
49 Ibid., p. 225.
50 Ibid., p. 226.
51 I leave aside the problem of the Communion spoon in the ritual because these objects are virtually absent from the Nubian liturgical items.
52 Ibid., DOP 50, 1996, p. 228.
53 Ibid., p. 228.
The study of euchology texts and liturgical commentaries to the Byzantine rite led Taft to sum up as follows: … *communion via intinction first appears in the course of the eleventh century, though the use of the spoon is attested only from the twelfth.* It must be stressed, however, that until the end the Byzantines recognized the twofold way of administering the Communion to the priests and to the laity, the latter receiving it as both parts together, *via* intinction (with or without a spoon).

The northern of the two putative Communion tables in the Upper Church at Banganarti stands under the mural representing the *Theotokos* with the Child (Fig. 17). This painting, belonging to the later period of the church decoration, is accompanied by an inscription (to the right of the spectator). The lacunose text has been provisionally translated by A. Łajtar. It contains the words the Mother of God said to Archangel Gabriel during Annunciation, according to Luke (1.38): *Mary said, ‘I am the servant of the Lord. Let this happen to me as you say!’ Then the angel departed.*

The association of the Banganarti putative Communion table with the Annunciation, as suggested by the mural and the quotation from Luke, inevitably brings to mind the class of Byzantine *panagiaria*, the parallel being strengthened by the peculiar shape of the latter (Fig. 18).

Although the *panagiaria* that have survived to the present are small objects of a diameter rarely exciding 15cm their sectioned interior and scalloped rim are similar to the poly-lobed trays. The reason behind the characteristic shape of some of the Byzantine *panagiaria* is probably their common ancestry with the Eucharist patens. All known examples of the *panagiaria* do not have the central depression, however. They are also much smaller that the Nubian poly-lobed trays. Nevertheless, the peculiar scalloped design of both advocates the common ancestry from the paten (*diskos*). The Banganarti evidence suggests that in the period after the eleventh century the Communion was administered under two kinds to the people leaving the church in a ritual that was performed in the similitude to the later *panagia*, i.e. the ritual of the ‘elevation of the Virgin’s bread’.

All together, the introduction of the Communion by intinction into the eleventh/twelfth century Nubian church ritual, apparently under the influence of the Byzantine model, testifies to the closer than expected ties linking the Middle Nile region with Constantinople in the relevant period.

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54 Taft, DOP 50, 1996, p. 228.

55 Inscription No. 875 in the Catalogue of the inscriptions in the Upper Church at Banganarti, in preparation for publication as The Late Makourian Society in the Light of the wall Inscriptions in the Upper Church in Banganarti by A. Łajtar.


1. a – Aerial (kite) photograph of the enclosure at Selib after the 2011–12 season; b – Bird’s eye view of the Red Brick Piers Church after the first (2010) season; c – Master plan of the Selib church (Phot. B. Żurawski, Drawing: T. Włodarski, T. Stępnik, B. Żurawski).

4. Pottery tray from the Ghazali church (S.M. 11668), courtesy of the Sudan National Museum (Phot. B. Żurawski).

5. The quatrefoil tray from the Ghazali monastery (after SHINNIE, CHITTICK, Ghazali, Pl. XI).
7. The earthenware tray from Abdallah-n Irqi (after SCHNEIDER, Objects, Fig. 31 p. 30). The central depression is not marked because this part was missing and the preserved fragments did not allow such a reconstruction.

8. Quatrefoil vessel from the church on the Us Island (after BILLIG, Kirche, Fig. 30).

9. Two stone trays found outside the Shaima Amalika church (after MONNERET DE VILLARD, Nubia I, Fig. 69).

11. a – Eight-lobed tray from Delos (after Mensa Sacra, Fig. 5b); b – Sigma-shaped mensa from Ephesos (after BARB, JWI 19/1-2, 1956, Fig. 6a); c – Altar mensa from Besançon (after Ibid., Fig. 5a); d – Poly-lobed marble tray used in the baptismal font in the great basilica at Tebessa (after KITZINGER, DOP 14, 1960, p. 30, Fig. 16).
12. a – The vertical view of the hollowed capital; b – The oblique view of the Red Brick Piers Church with the hollowed capital marked with an arrow (Phot. B. Żurawski).
13. a – The Upper Church at Banganarti, the two pedestals are marked with arrows (Drawing: M. Momot, M. Drzewiecki, B. Żurawski); b – The section NS through the Upper Church interior, with the pedestals (marked with arrows) in side view, looking east (Drawing: M. Momot).

15. Four Eucharistic chalices (a & b reconstructed in the drawing) from the Upper Church at Banganarti, all found in the corridor-like space behind the row of eastern chapels (Drawings: M. Osypińska, B. Żurawski).
16. The Mosaic Church (EEC) in el-Ghaddar: with the stone *mandatum(?)* tank marked with an arrow: Plan (a) and bird’s eye view (b) (Drawing and Phot. B. Żurawski).
17. The mural representing the *Theotokos* with the Child. The inscription No. 875 is to the right of the mural. The upper part of the pedestal with the circular depression in its upper surface is seen in the lowermost part of the picture (Phot. B. Żurawski).

18. a – The *Panagiarion* of Alexios Komnenos Angelos, Constantinople(?) second half of the twelfth century. Carved steatite (diam. 9cm). In 1845 seen in Kouloumousiou Monastery, then transferred to the Monastery of Saint Panteleemon (both on Mount Athos); lost since the late nineteenth century (after Y. PIATNITSKY, The Panagiarion of Alexios Komnenos Angelos and Middle Byzantine Painting, [in:] O.Z. Pevny (Ed.), Perceptions of Byzantium and Its Neighbors (843–1261), *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Symposia*, New York 2000, pp. 40–55; Fig. 1); b – Byzantine *Panagiarion* from Ravenna, twelfth century (after C. Ricci, Raccolte artistiche di Ravenna, Bergamo 1905, p. 39, Fig. 14).