



December 17th, 2013

Dear colleagues,

we cordially invite you to participate in the workshop **“Early Medieval Pottery in Egypt (7th – 10th century AD)”**, to be held at the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) and the French Institute (IFAO) on September 24th and 25th, 2014.

Pottery is a highly sensitive marker for cultural change and cross-cultural influence. The introduction of glazing and other innovative techniques in the production of pottery is one of the most visible changes to be seen in the archaeological material after the Islamic conquest of Egypt. According to a generally held view, glazed pottery was introduced into Egypt during Abbasid times from Iraq as a “cheap copy” of Chinese luxury wares and thus exemplifies the opening of Egypt to influences from Mesopotamia and the Far East. New evidence from sites in Egypt seems to suggest a much earlier date for the appearance of glazing techniques in Egypt, however, possibly even predating some glazed wares in Iraq and thus calling into questions the traditional model of diffusion from east to west.

Several major issues in the study of early medieval pottery in Egypt remain unsolved, reflecting the paucity of well stratified material on the one hand and a lack in rigor in describing pottery wares on the other. Two major tasks remain:

1. to define pottery wares found at early Medieval sites in Egypt and identify their provenance e in Egypt or in neighbouring countries
2. to clarify the relative and absolute chronology of these wares

With these aims in mind, and to facilitate discussion between specialists working at different sites, we would like to organize a two-day workshop in Cairo. On the first day, to be held at the DAI, we would ask participants to share information on the archaeological context of pottery at Early Medieval sites, particularly any stratigraphical information, as well as ideas on a the relative and absolute chronology of pottery wares. As a format we would suggest 20 minute presentations, with ample time for discussion. On the morning of the second day, to be held at the IFAO, participants will have the chance to discuss the identification of pottery wares based on samples and thin sections held in the laboratory of the institute. The afternoon will be reserved for a general discussion and planning for future work on the subject.

In order to facilitate a working atmosphere, the workshop will not be held in public and the participants will not be asked to publish their presentations. One possible outcome of the meeting, however, might be the planning of an international conference on the subject in the future, possibly with participation of scholars working in neighbouring countries.

Please let us know as soon as possible if you will be able to attend. Many of you will be in Egypt at the time. For those of you who will have to come especially for the workshop to Cairo, we will do our best to reimburse travelling expenses, should your institution be unable to do so.

Looking forward to a productive meeting, and with the best wishes for the New Year,

Felix Arnold, DAI

Sylvie Marchand, IFAO

Preliminary list of projects/ participants:

Aqaba	Donald Whitcomb	Oriental Institute Chicago
El-Tur	Mutsuo Kawatoko	Waseda University
Alexandria	Grzegorz Majcherek	Polish Centre
Abu Mina	Felix Arnold	DAI Cairo
Wadi Natrun	Alexandra Konstantinidou Anka Poludnikiewicz	IFAO
Fustat	Jean-Christophe Trégli Roland-Pierre Gayraud	IFAO
Fustat	George Scanlon	AUC
Babylon	Alison Gascoigne	Univ. of Southampton
Tebtynis	Sylvie Marchand	IFAO
Bawit	Alexandra Konstantinidou Anka Poludnikiewicz Sylvie Marchand	IFAO
Sohag	Gillian Pyke	Yale University
Bahariya and Kharga	Sylvie Marchand	IFAO
Deir el-Bakhit	Thomas Beckh	LMU Munich
Elephantine	Felix Arnold Gregory Williams	Swiss Institute Cairo
Aswan	Wolfgang Müller	Swiss Institute Cairo