

The Symbolism of colors in Exodus Chapel in Al- Bagwat tombs in Kharga Oasis in the New Valley

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Abstract:

Al-Bajwat cemetery is located in Kharga Oasis in the New Valley Governorate In addition to some large chapels that contain oriental items that were most likely used in religious ceremonies.

Its importance is due to the fact that it is the only place in Egypt includes a large group of early Christian monuments, in addition to being the only place that remained as it is for nearly two thousand and two hundred years and in a good preservation condition because of its remote geographical location, which allowed it to be far from the eyes of the rulers in the Roman and Byzantine eras.

The chapel is one of the most important shrines of Al-Bagwat tombs because it includes a large number of images taken from topics from the Bible, which the Coptic artist used a number of colors in coloring these images to indicate a special purpose and, such as white - red - pink - gold and others, which will be displayed in a detailed way in the research.

1 باحث دكتوراه بقسم ارشاد سياحي بكلية السياحة والفنادق بالفيوم

الملخص العربي

تقع جبانة البجوات بالواحة الخارجة بمحافظة الوادي الجديد وتنتشر مزاراتها فوق منطقة يبلغ طولها حوالي 500 متر وتحتوي هذه المنطقة على 263 مزار هذا بالإضافة إلى بعض المزارات الكبيرة التي تحتوي بداخلها على شرفيات كانت على الأرجح تستخدم في الإحتفالات الدينية.

ترجع أهميتها إلي أنها المكان الوحيد في مصر الذي يضم مجموعة كبيرة من الأثار المسيحية المبكرة بالإضافة إلى كونها المكان الوحيد الذي ظل كما هو لمدة تقرب من ألفي ومائتي عام بحالة حفظ جيدة وذلك بسبب موقعها الجغرافي النائي الذي سمح لها أن تكون بعيدة عن أعين الحكام في العصرين الروماني والبيزنطي.

يعد مزار الخروج من أهم مزارات مقابر البجوات لأنه يضم عدد كبير من التصاوير المأخوذة من موضوعات من الكتاب المقدس والذي إستخدم الفنان القبطي عدد من الألوان في تلوينه لهذه التصاوير للإشارة إلى هدف خاص وهي مثل الأبيض- الأحمر- الوردى- الذهبى وغيرها والذي سيتم عرضه بشكل مفصل في البحث.

المصطلحات الواردة بالبحث

مزار الخروج- البجوات- واحة- العهد القديم- العهد الجديد- الفرسكو

Al-Bagawat throughout Ages

The presence of Christianity in the Oases had a great impact in building Al-Bagawat necropolis. A document found in 1893 next to Qasr Douch in the southern part of Al-Kharga Oasis, which describes the writings and letters of Christianity in the Oases.

Some say that Christianity introduced to the Oasis at the hands of Saint "Bartholomew" who was the first to call for Christianity there.

One of the oldest proofs reached us concerning the beginning of the appearance of Christianity to the Al-Kharga Oasis in general, is a letter from a church official called Petosiris in which he tells the fate of an exiled woman who died and was buried in the Kharga Oasis¹.

The Roman emperors were also interested in al-Kharga Oasis due to its importance as a trade path between the Sudan and the Nile Valley. In addition, they built castles, watchtowers and camps near the water fountains on Darb Alarbain to

Meinardus, F., A., Two Thousand Years of Coptic Christianity, ¹
AUCP, 2002, P.255.

*Oasis: It is an Egyptian word meaning the resting place. It is a fertile green land or a commercial link between many areas and a defense line against periodic invasions. It consists of different pieces of agricultural land in the middle of the desert. Egypt has six oases, namely Dakhla, Farafra, Bahareya, Alheiz- Wadi Natrun and Siwa Oasis.,
-Baha el Din, S., A., A Guide to the reptiles and amphibians of Egypt, AUCP, 2006, P.18-19.

-Vivian, C., The Western Desert of Egypt/ An Explorer's handbook, AUCP, 2003, P.9.,

-Fakhery, A., Bahriyah and Farafra, AUCP, 2003, PP.97-98.

secure commercial caravans. Al-Kharga Oasis was an important pilgrimage way connecting between North Africa and Mecca through Egypt by a place called Darb Al-Arbaen and this lasted for several centuries¹.

As a result of the prosperous trade, they constructed temples, such as the Temple of Hibis and the region's population of Christians began to receive good religious teachings that prompted them to challenge their pagan's neighbors by building and decorating wonderful tombs.

All of these reasons led to the construction of Al-Bagawat cemeteries the way we can see today. Al-Kharga Oasis in the era of the Pharaohs was an administrative region to the ruler of Abydos (Baliana nowadays), i.e., "Al Araba El Madfouna" west of Qena, which was called the Oasis of Thebes in the past which means the Luxor Oasis.

Al-Bagawat is a distortion of the word "Qabawat", a slang pronunciation dates back to the region's population as these tombs of this region taking the form of the domes. It was also called the necropolis, or the city of immortality.

-Brugsch, H., Reise Nach der Grosse Oase el Kharga in der Libyschen¹ wuste Beschreibung Ihrer Denkmaler und Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen, Leipzig, 1878, P.59.,

-Morey, C., R., Early Christian Art/An Outline of the Evolution of Style and Iconography in Sculpture and Painting from Antiquity to the eighth century, Princeton, 1942, P.33.,

-Shaw, W., B., K., An Exploration in the South Libyan desert in Sudan/ Notes and Records, Khartoum, Vol. Xi, 1928, P.103.

This cemetery is characterized by its fine architecture as it contains many important religious scenes such as what found in the Chapel of Exodus and the Chapel of Peace.

Al-Bagawat cemetery is located behind the Temple of Hibis in the lower southern foothills of Gebel El Teir and its chapels spread over an area of about 500 meters long and no more than 200 meters of width. The surface of the hill slopes from north to south and the main entrance locates in the south side of the city. This area contains 263 chapels but about 30 of them vandalized and kept us no sufficient remains. In addition, there are some other distant and unimportant chapels to some extent. There is only one church, namely number (180) in addition to some big chapels with eastern niches that were used probably in the religious ceremonies¹.

Al-Bagawat cemeteries are important as they are the only place in Egypt, which has a large collection of the early Christian relics. In addition, it is the only place that remained unchanged for nearly a thousand and two hundred years in a good state of preservation to chapels, domes, vaults and a large amount of the Christian religious scenes depicted in it with using frescoes. These cemeteries still preserve their elegance because of their remote geographical location which allowed them to be far from the eyes of the rulers in the Roman and Byzantine Eras. These paintings are of great significance as they were the good start point of Coptic Art

Karge, P., *Durch die Libyische wuste zur Grossen Oase*, Leipzig, ¹ 1920, P.322.

and its distinct position in spite of the fame of the Byzantine Art.

Al-Bagawat cemetery is the main burial ground for Al-Kharga City throughout many centuries. Therefore, the beginning or end of this period is unknown. However, the burial chapels indicate that it is likely that were started since the middle of the 4th century AD and lasted until the 7th century.

Another view says that Al-Bagawat burials belong to pagans and not only to Christians. The reason for this guessing that they go back to the Roman Era, i.e., the days of Nero, or shortly thereafter. This is because of the existence of one of this Emperor's currencies as a pendant in those burials¹.

Al-Bagawat cemeteries were used for burying the dead before the introduction of Christianity to the region of Oases. After the spread of Christianity, the Christian families were able to build cemeteries in another site far from Al-Bagawat, but they continued to bury their dead in the same place near their relatives and also near their pagan neighbors.

Therefore, it seems that Al-Bagawat is the place that included the dead Christians along with the dead pagans. This is reflected in what was discovered from intact burials of poor people buried in the grave pits between the chapels of the wealthy without shrouds. Their bodies were wrapped in many thick fabrics then tied from outside with wide intersected bands. They were laid on their backs with heads in the direction of the West.

Munier, H., Oasis de Khargah/ Note sur le Christianisme a Khargaha ¹ bibliographie d'Al-Bagawat , Le Caire, 1940, P.223.

The visitors of Al-Bagawat chapels in the Medieval Ages used to express their admiration by writing their names on them. It is noticed that they did so more in the chapels decorated with paintings, namely chapel no. 25, and 80 that these actions ruined the chapels. In addition, some residents removed the wooden panels of flat ceilings and doors installed at the entries because of the scarcity of wood at that time. They needed stones as well, so they removed the stone lintels and stone jambs of doors and windows (Fig.1).



Fig.(1)

Writing on the walls, Al-Bagawat Funerary Chapels, Chapels no. 159, 25,
Photocopied by the researcher

The Theme of Depiction in the Coptic Art

Art was associated with religion in the Christian Testament as the case with the Ancient Egyptian Art and the Coptic artist depended on this notion when introducing his artworks. Therefore, most of his topics serve the beliefs, religion and teachings and this was the reason for dividing the topics of mural painting in the Coptic art into two basic types as follows:

-Themes Inspired from the Old Testament (Torah)¹

It is the depiction of the Old Testament prophets' stories such as what was depicted in the Chapel of Peace and the Chapel of Exodus in Al-Bagawat area located in Al-Kharga Oasis. This demonstrates the relevance of the written text and the depicted story.

This is like the story of the Israelites Exodus inspired from the Book of Exodus and the story of Adam and Eve inspired from the Book of Genesis. The Coptic artist tried to highlight two things, the first is the idea of divine punishment to the sinners and the idea of sufferings such as what Jesus suffered.

-Themes inspired from the New Testament (The Bible)

These themes were inspired from the three Bibles "Matthew, Mark, Luke," in addition to the Gospel of "John" at the beginning of the second period of mural paintings. The themes of this period tell the historical events of the life of Christ, the Virgin, the Christian beliefs and morals as well as the struggle of saints, hymns and prayers. These themes of mural paintings included the impacts of Ancient Egyptian, Hellenistic and Roman Arts and although there were substantial differences between these arts but the connection still relevant².

Hence, we conclude that the issue of depiction in the Coptic Art is restricted to the portrayal of the religious themes inspired from the Bible, depicting the

¹ - جلال أبو بكر، الفنون القبطية، مكتبة الأنجلو المصرية، القاهرة، 2011، ص 87.

² - عزت زكي حامد قادوس، محمد عبدالفتاح السيد، الآثار القبطية والبيزنطية، الإسكندرية، 2002، ص 125.

saints, angels, virtues and supplicants. These will be dealt with in detail in the following:

First: portraying the religious themes inspired from The Holy Bible

Moses and the Exodus

The Exodus is to the second Book of Moses and the second Book of the Old Testament as well. It is a record of the history of the Israelites exodus from Egypt heading to Palestine. The most important event mentioned in this book is Moses' birth, life, mission with Pharaoh and struggle against the injustices that befell the Hebrews. The scholars differed in determining the date when the Israel left Egypt whether it was in the 13th or 16th century BC. Moses was born in a period of the Pharaoh's persecution, oppression and murder of the children of Israel. He had an older sister, Miriam and after her Aaron and Moses was the smallest one. After Moses' mother placed him in a box, Pharaoh's daughter found him and raised him with the help of a Hebrew nurse that was his mother. After Moses grew up and matured, God ordered him to go to Egypt to drive them away from there and thus he became the leader of the people of Israel¹.

Moses leading his people

This scene (Fig.2) is located at the northeastern corner of the Chapel of Exodus and depicts Moses reaching a garden of fig trees. The artist drew them superbly as we can see five bushes and a big tree that Moses stands beneath holding a

¹ - بطرس عبدالملاك، قاموس الكتاب المقدس، دار الثقافة، القاهرة، 1995، ص 339.

stick and looking towards the left. The artist used here the brown color in coloring the leaves.



Fig.(2)

**Moses leading his people, Chapel of Exodus,
Photocopied by the researcher,**

أحمد فخرى، الصحراء الغربية/ جبانة البجوات فى الواحة الخارجة، ص 81.

The Israeli follow Moses

This scene (Fig.3) in the Chapel of Exodus begins with depicting Moses leading his people. The artist painted him with a beard, a piece of cloth on his head, catching a stick in his right hand, wearing a pink shirt reaching to his knees and sandals but they are not clear now¹.

¹ يحيى يوسف رمضان، التصوير القبطى المبكر فى مقابر البجوات، المعهد المصرى للدراسات الإسلامية فى مدير ودار كانتارابيا للنشر، 2012، ص 101.

There is an oval red light-colored shape behind Moses. As for the Israeli, the artist depicted them explaining the extent of their labor and sufferings in their journey. He began with (Jethro, his father in law), a reclining on the ground and leaning his head on his arm. His name inscribed above him and next to him a person sitting on the ground. Next to him, there is someone else standing holding a stick in his right hand, a bundle of clothes in the left one. The fourth person is a child carrying also a stick in his hand. Despite the fact that the details of the paintings of this scene are similar even the clothes they put on a shirt lowering down to their knees with a few decorations, the presence of this child next to the fourth person shows that this person is a woman. This may be attributed to the damage factors or that the painter himself may be inefficient. But it is certain that the artist depiction of the Hebrews' clothes is different from those of Moses' and the clothes of the Pharaoh soldiers as well¹.

Cutts, E., Tradition of Christian art, AJA, Vol. 2, 1876, P. 86. ¹



Fig. (3)

**The Israeli follow Moses, Chapel of Exodus,
Photocopied by the researcher,**

أحمد فخرى، الصحراء الغربية/ جبانة البجوات فى الواحة الخارجة، ص 82.

The Egyptian soldiers led by guide

In the Chapel of Exodus behind the last person of the Israelites (Fig.4) there is a guide leading them on foot and followed by the Egyptians. This is apparent in this scene as we can see the Egyptians' guide putting on his head a yellow Phrygian helmet. In addition, he puts on a pink shirt up to his knees as that put on by the other soldiers. He holds in his right hand a gear and bayonet and followed by two soldiers

riding their horses while carrying gears and bayonet in one hand and the horse bridle in the other. We can see above them an inscription of "the Red Sea" that they cross¹.



Fig. (4)

The Egyptian soldiers led by guide, Chapel of Exodus
Photocopied by the researcher,

أحمد فخرى، الصحراء الغربية/ جبانة البجوات في الواحة الخارجة، ص 83.

Pharaoh and his soldiers rushing behind the Israelites

It is next to the scene of guide followed by the Egyptian soldiers in the Chapel of Exodus (Fig.5). We can see seven soldiers wearing the same costumes of the previous soldiers

¹ أحمد فخرى، الصحراء الغربية/ جبانة البجوات في الواحة الخارجة، ترجمة عبدالرحمن عبدالنواب، مراجعة أمال العمري، هيئة الآثار المصرية، القاهرة، 1989، ص 83.

and behind them the Pharaoh riding his horse and guarded by two troopers. The three put on the same costumes in the same details, i.e., a long shirt of brown color¹.



Fig.(5)

**Pharaoh and his soldiers rushing behind the children of Israel,
Chapel of Exodus, Photocopied by the researcher,**

أحمد فخرى، الصحراء الغربية/ جبانة البجوات فى الواحة الخارجة، ص 84.

¹ - أحمد فخرى، المرجع السابق، ص 84.

Moses arrives to the Promised Land

This is one of the significant scenes frequented by the visitors to this chapel, Chapel of Exodus as it depicts Moses and his arrival with his people to the Promised Land (Fig.6).

The artist painted this scene with three entrances. At first, we can see to the right of the scene a man standing next to the stairs. He wears a pink shirt up to the knees and holds in his right hand a stick. There is a stick too in his left hand and a cloth bag hanging out of it. It rests against his shoulder. He is believed to be Moses on arriving the Promised Land. As for the entrances, they start with the entrance on the left. It is a side entrance surmounted by a cross inside a pyramidal shape. There is also an arched middle entrance with a gate consisting of wooden cross veins and a cross in the middle.

The entrance on the right hand is more visible and there are eleven flights of steps leading to it. It is also topped with a pyramidal shape and a cross inside it. They all take the apparent form of the "Ankh" sign that is meant to represent the cross. On both sides of the central entrance, there is a porch of six columns surmounted with marble columns connected with the thresholds as high as the arch over the gate. The Coptic artist used many colors in coloring these columns such as the dark red with yellow dots and other pillars colored with light red and decorated with the yellow. We can see also some other yellow pillars decorated with crossed black lines¹.

Rodly , L, Byzantine Art and Architecture , CUP, New York, ¹
1994, P. 36.

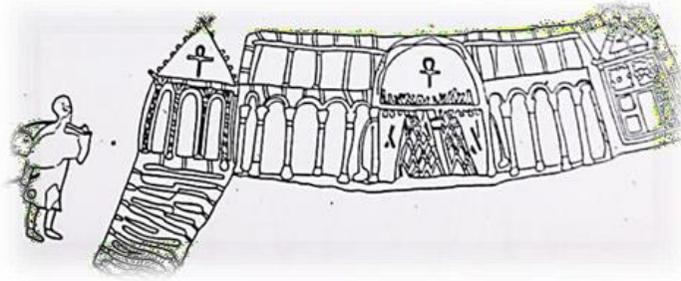


Fig. (6)

Moses arrives to the Promised Land, Chapel of Exodus,
Photocopied by the researcher,

أحمد فخرى، الصحراء الغربية/ جبانة البجوات فى الواحة الخارجة، ص 84.

The scenes show that the artist was well acquainted with this story and its successive events since the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, their journey in the desert, the chase of Pharaoh and his soldiers to them, and then their arrival led by Moses to the Promised Land.

Noah and the Ark

Noah is the second father of humans after Adam. Noah is a sublime name means "comfort" and Noah was a believer in God but humans were spoiling the earth.

Therefore, god commanded Noah to make the ark of wood for protection, because he would plunge all creatures on the earth. God commanded Noah to take his family, some of animals, his wife and his three sons (Ham - Sam Japheth) and their wives as well as a male and a female from all creatures.

After the outbreak of flood and drowning of everyone, Noah sent a raven then a dove several times that returned to him in the last endeavor carrying in its mouth an olive branch and this was a sign of the Lord to the complete retreat of water from the earth

This scene (Fig.7) depicts Noah's Ark in the Chapel of Exodus. The artist drew it with two high beaks. The ark has two cabins. A female is coming out from the left that seems to be Noah's wife. To the right of Noah's wife, there is the right cabin.

The artist painted Noah leaning on the edge of the ark and his name inscribed above him but it is not clear now. There is a dove next to Noah holding a small branch in its peak in an indication for the end of the flood that referring to peace between humans peace¹.

Lewis , J, Noah and the flood in Jewish , Christian and Muslim tradition, American Schools of Oriental Research, Cairo, Vol 47 ,1984, P. 229.

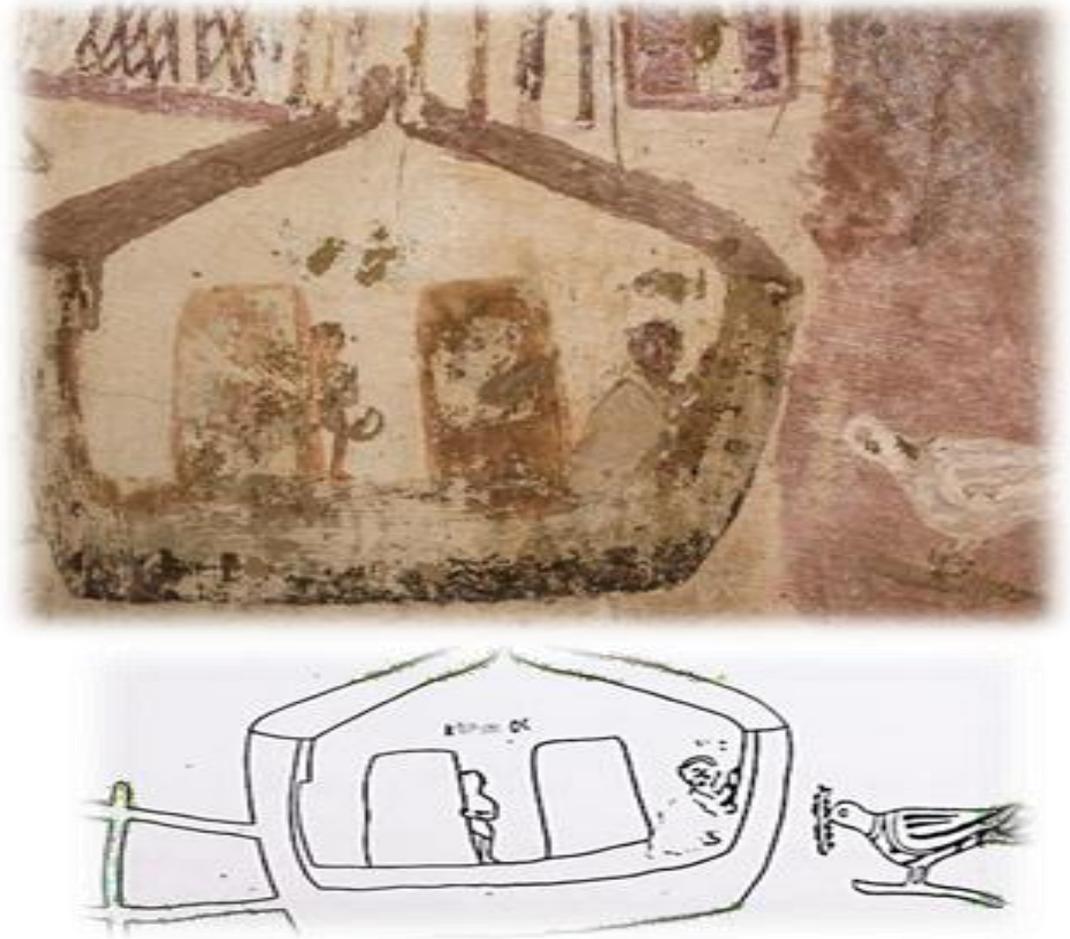


Fig. (7)

Noah and the Ark, Chapel of Exodus, Photocopied by the researcher,
جمال هرمينا، الفن القبطي/ الرسوم الجدارية، ص 12.

Adam and Eve

Adam is a Hebrew name. It is a general term for "mankind" or refers to the humankind. God created him as a male, and then Eve was taken out of him as he was the first man. God commanded him to cultivate the land and honored him by entering to the Garden of Eden and he commanded him not to eat from the tree of knowledge, but he disobeyed his god and expelled from Paradise. Then Eve gave birth to Cain and Abel and third son named Seth. As for Eve's in Hebrew it means the mother of all human beings).

(She succumbs to the Satan's temptation and ate of the forbidden tree and urged Adam to eat with her. Therefore, both were dispelled out of Eden. The story of Adam and Eve depicted so often in the early Christian Art.

This scene (Fig.8) is in the Chapel of Exodus. It depicts Adam and Eve in Paradise standing near the closed door. This scene is seen next to the left of Noah's Ark, in the northern corner of the west wall. The artist drew them naked but reserved to show bodies. Adam stands next to the door and his name inscribed over him but ravages affected largely the painting. Therefore, it became unclear. Eve stands next to him and above there is her name clear. She looks to Adam by the side of her eyes and talks to him while the serpent comes down her shoulder and picks the fruits of the tree that is found on the left of Eve which the artist colored it in dark red

with three branches and a few leaves. Despite the simplicity of the painting of this scene, it explains well the full story¹.

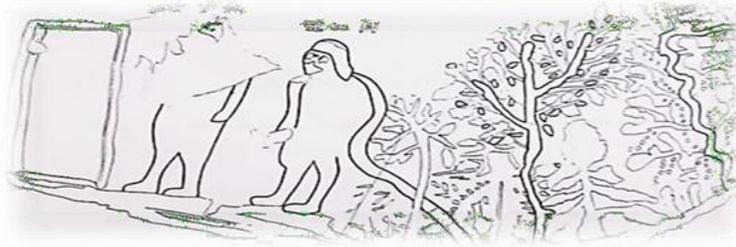


Fig. (8)

**Adam and Eve before the sin, Chapel of Exodus,
Photocopied by the researcher,
جمال هرمينا، الفن القبطي/ الرسوم الجدارية، ص 13.**

¹ - جمال هرمينا، الفن القبطي/ الرسوم الجدارية، تقديم عبدالحليم نور الدين، الجزء السادس، القاهرة، 2011، ص 12.

Jonah and the Whale

Jonah is a Hebrew name means a dove. He is one of the owners of the Old Testament. His prophecy relied on saving the Israelites from the oppression of the Aramaeans.

Jonah's story was with the people of Nineveh as the God commanded him to go to its people to guide them, but Jonah did not go and sailed on a ship directing for Spain. Therefore, the God punished him with making a huge storm in the sea. The sailors knew that the God was angry, so they throw him out of the ship. Jonah swallowed by a large whale in whose belly he spent three days, then the whale spew Jonah out. Jonah thanked his God and went to the people of Nineveh and guided them. They all repented to the God and he forgave them

This scene (Fig.9) is in the chapel of Exodus depicts the story of Jonah and the whale, where we can see the ship painted with a high foredeck and rear. The artist depicted in his painting the details of the ship in terms of the two oars, the square sail and people operating it as there are two people, one next to the oar and the other by the foredeck. In addition, there is a third person in the middle catching one of the ropes of the sail. We can see also two people next to him holding Jonah of his feet and throw him into the sea. The artist drew the sea waves in red mottled paintings. To the left of this scene, there is a scene depicting the whale spewing Jonah to the mainland. There is also a word written on it,

which means the sea monster or huge fish but it isn't clear now¹.



Fig. (9)
Jonah and the Whale, chapel of Exodus,
Photocopied by the researcher,
 يحيى يوسف رمضان، التصوير القبطي المبكر في مقابر البجوات، ص 117.

¹ - يحيى يوسف رمضان، المرجع السابق، ص 117.

Job

He is the owner of the Book of Job. It is one of the wisdom books of the Old Testament. He was mentioned in the Bible with the prophets, the righteous like Noah and Daniel. Scientists differed in explaining the name of Job.

Some said it is close to the Arabic term which means the "repentant to God" and others say it means the "plagued by the devil". Job suffered so much because of losing his Wealth, his children and then his health, nevertheless, he prevailed by his firm faith.

This part in the Chapel of Exodus (Fig.10) shows Job sitting heading his body towards a person in front of him. This scene shows the period in which he enjoyed good health. As for the person he talks to, it seems standing and his name is inscribed above him.



Fig. (10)
Job, The first part of his life, chapel of Exodus,
Photocopied by the researcher,
 يحيى يوسف رمضان، التصوير القبطي المبكر في مقابر البجوات، ص 122.

There is another scene (Fig.11) next to this one telling the second part of Job's life by describing the period of his illness and pain. We can see Job lying on the ground under the trees of vine, putting his hands over his head and his right leg bent in a signal from the artist that he moves it as a result of feeling pain¹.



Fig. (11)
Job, The second part of his life, Chapel of Exodus,
Photocopied by the researcher,
 يحيى يوسف رمضان، التصوير القبطي المبكر في مقابر البجوات، ص 122.

¹ يحيى يوسف رمضان، المرجع السابق، ص 122.

Susanna

Susanna is a Hebrew name meaning the flower of iris. She was one of the women who served Christ by their money.

This scene (fig.12) locates to the triangular corner on the eastern wall of Chapel of Exodus. We can see Susanna sitting on a chair with backrest and above there is a word referring to her name.



Fig. (12)

Susanna, Chapel of Exodus,
Photocopied by the researcher,
جمال هرmina، الفن القبطي/الرسوم الجدارية، ص 24.

The Seven Virgins

The kingdom of Heaven was likened in the Bible by ten virgins and the number of virgins depicted here by the artist is seven. The reason for this may be the symbolic of number "seven" to perfection and completeness in the Bible¹.

As for the representation of these Virgins, some say that they believed in the Chalcedon faith. Therefore, they were exiled from Alexandria to the Libyan Desert. Another opinion says they were on their way to a pilgrimage to the Temple of the Goddess (Dave), which devoted to saint Takla in the Egyptian desert. This scene (Fig.13) in the Chapel of Exodus depicts the seven virgins as the artist drew their features alike as they all wear the same dark red cloak that covers women from their head to toe which is customary with the saints. Each of them carries a golden cresset in a hand and a black censer in the other. They are surrounded by some short plants and they are all heading with their bodies to Jerusalem Temple. There are some remnants that means "Virgins", and in front of them a small depiction for ladders and simple form for the door at the end².

1

Matthew 25:1-3

Stern , H, Les Peintures du Mausolee de L'exode a el Bagwat , ²

London, 1960, P.119.

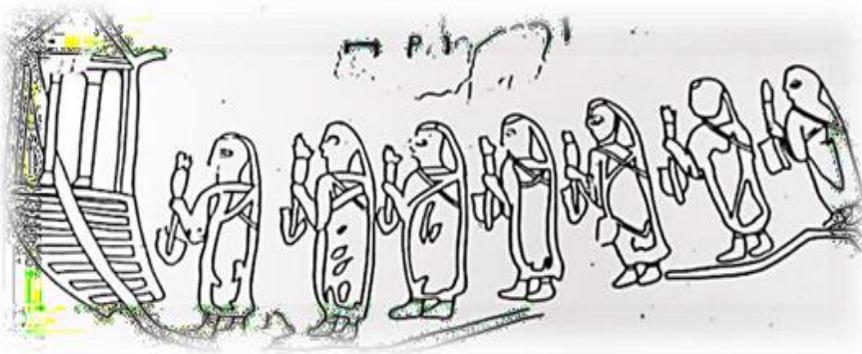


Fig. (13)

The Seven Virgins, Chapel of Exodus,
Photocopied by the researcher,

يحيى يوسف رمضان، التصوير القبطي المبكر في مقابر البجوات، ص 131.

Abraham Sacrificing Isaac

Abraham or Abram is the Prominent Patriarch or the Honorable Patriarch. The Old Testament mentions that Abraham was dubbed Khalilullah, i.e., "The Friend of God" whereas the New Testament mentions that he has been called the chief father of Israelis, the father of Christ and father of all Christians the believers. The Old Testament mentions that

Abraham is an example of faith and good deeds by which faith is completed. He married to Sarah that gave birth to Isaac¹. This scene (Fig.14) locates in the center of the eastern wall in the Chapel of Exodus. It depicts Abraham sacrificing Isaac. We can see Abraham standing in front of an altar of raging fire.

He puts on a white shirt and above him his name. To the right, one can see the hand of the God, which the artist painted by red color, and beside the altar Isaac stands intersecting his arms on his chest.



Fig. (14)

Abraham Sacrificing Isaac, Chapel of Exodus, Photocopied by the researcher,

أحمد فخرى، الصحراء الغربية/ جباتة البجوات فى الواحة الخارجة، ص 95.

The Old Testament: Joshua: 41:8, the new Testament: Matthew:1:1 ¹

Next to Isaac (Fig.15) Sarah stands under the tree craning her face and her arms to the sky praying for her son. The scapegoat appears under the tree next to Abraham¹.



Fig. (15)

Abraham Sacrificing Isaac, Chapel of Exodus, Photocopied by the researcher,

أحمد فخرى، الصحراء الغربية/ جباتنة البجوات فى الواحة الخارجة، ص 95.

Prophet Jeremiah in front of the temple

Jeremiah is one of the prophets of the Old Testament and was called the "Weeping Prophet". He predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and that the people would fall in captivity of their Assyrian enemies, but Jeremiah himself remained in Jerusalem by orders of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of the Assyrians. They treated him well and he remained weeping all the period of people's captivity. He was persistent upon

¹ - أحمد فخرى، المرجع السابق، ص 94.

praying and crying in front of the temple for the liberation of the city.

The depiction of the Prophet Jeremiah in front of the temple is in the Chapel of Exodus (Fig.16) to the upper left of the scene of Susanna. The artist depicted him standing in front of the temple. His name is above him that is now corrupt and can hardly be identified. As for the temple, it made of several stairs with a high arched entrance topped with a pyramidal ceiling colored in bright dark red and there are two branches of plant on both sides¹.



Fig. (16)

**Prophet Jeremiah in front of the temple, Chapel of Exodus,
Photocopied by the researcher,**

أحمد فخرى، الصحراء الغربية/ جبانة البجوات فى الواحة الخارجة، ص 94.

Stern, H., Les peintures du Mausolee de L'exode a el-Bagaouat, ¹
Cahiers, 1960, P.119.

Access to the House of Rebecca

This scene locates in the Chapel of Exodus under the story of Jonah. This scene depicts the arrival of Abraham's servant and another servant to the house of Rebecca. We can see both of them riding two laden camels next to each other and a donkey at the back. The artist depicted Abraham's servant in white shirt and carrying a stick in his hand. As for the other servant, he appears almost in the same details except for holding a stick on his shoulder (Fig.17). Rebecca appears in front of the well to pull water from it and her name written above her head.

At the back, one can see her house and a tree in front of it (Fig.18)¹.



Fig. (17)

The arrival of Abraham's servant to the house of Rebecca, Chapel of Exodus,
Photocopied by the researcher,

جمال هرمينا، الفن القبطي/الرسوم الجدارية، ص 34.

Schwartz , J, Noavelles Etudes sur les Fresques d' el Bagawat, ¹
London, 1962, P. 5.

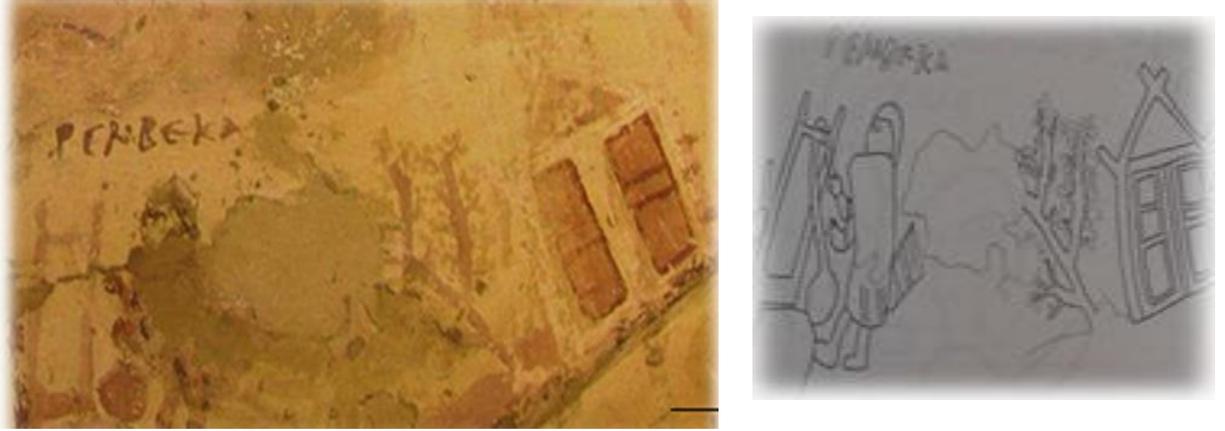


Fig. (18)

The arrival of Abraham's servant to the house of Rebecca, Chapel of Exodus,
Photocopied by the researcher,
جمال هرمينا، الفن القبطي/الرسوم الجدارية، ص 34.

The Shepherd

This scene (Fig.19) depicted in the Chapel of Exodus. It shows a shepherd taking care of sheep. The artist depicted him standing and putting on a long shirt colored in dark brown. He appears holding a stick with his right hand and five sheep in front of him. The artist depicted them simply in clear white color. There is a tree next to them with a number of branches and some leaves colored with light brown¹.

¹ - جمال هرمينا، المرجع السابق، ص 27.



Fig.(19)

The Shepherd, Chapel of Exodus, Photocopied by the researcher,

جمال هرمينا، الفن القبطي/الرسوم الجدارية، ص 30.

The Garden

The Chapel of Exodus has a garden under the scene of the seven virgins (Fig.20). It locates to the northeast corner of the chapel. It depicts a garden as we can see a door, a number of trees and two men pulling behind two laden camels. Each of them holds a stick in his hand. They put on long shirts. Ahmed Fakhry says that this scene may be traced back to one of the Old Testament narratives, but no one knows which because of the bad state of preservation of this scene¹.



Fig. (20)

The Garden, Chapel of Exodus, Photocopied by the researcher,
جمال هرمني، الفن القبطي/الرسوم الجدارية، ص 30.

Schwartz, J., op, cit., P.6

1

The Three Hebrews in the furnace of Fire

The three young men or Hebrews are (Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah) as mentioned in the Bible. They descent from noble origins from the Judah taken into captivity to Babylon by orders of (Nebuchadnezzar) after preoccupying Jerusalem. After their captivity, their names changed to (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego¹). Their story tells that (Nebuchadnezzar) made a statue of gold and ordered all his servants to prostrate to him, but the three young men refused. Therefore, he ordered throwing them into the furnace of fire as a punishment for their disobedience to him. After a period of their presence in the fire, Nebuchadnezzar found that the fire did not affect them and they came out unharmed and intact. Moreover, they came out with the angel of the God who sent it to save them. As a result, Nebuchadnezzar believed in the God of the three young men and assigned them rulers to Babylon².

This scene in the Chapel of Exodus depicts the three Hebrews in the furnace of the fire (Fig.21). The artist depicted them in somewhat similar details as the three were standing in a position of supplication, raising their hands for praying. As for their features, the artist drew them carefully in small lines and points whereas he outlined the hair and eyes with black. They put on their heads the so-called Phrygian cap that is a Persian Cap because the story of three young men took place

The Old

1
Testament: Isaiah:41:8

The Old Testament: Book of Daniel:3:1-30

2

in Babylon. They all dressed in white short tunics that almost reached up to their knees and the rest of what appeared from their bodies was colored with dark red.

In addition, we can see the angel of the God standing behind them. The artist depicted him in the same style of the Hebrews, but with a slight difference in coloration as its eyes, nose and beard are all in dark red and the rest of its face in bright red.

The flames of the fire of the furnace are behind them, they are painted with dark red. It is noticed that it is the same colors of the bodies of the Hebrews as the artist wanted to explain to us they were burnt with fire. Above the scene, there is the remaining letters of a word which means "the furnace. "

There is someone sitting and fueling the furnace in front of the angel. They are standing in a position of confrontation and their feet moving towards the right that is somewhat similar to the Egyptian tradition. They look smiling confidently and believing in the salvation of the God. The word "kaminos" that means the "flames" is inscribed above the scene¹.

¹ جمال هرمينا، المرجع السابق، ص 18.



Fig.(21)

The three Hebrews in fire, Chapel of Exodus

Photocopied by the researcher,

يحيى يوسف رمضان، التصوير القبطي المبكر في مقابر البجوات ، ص. 115.

The Conclusion

the Coptic artist was able to prove through his technical skills and abilities that were marked by clear artistic characteristics as what was mentioned previously. As a result, much interest was paid to these religious sites to preserve the walls of these monasteries and churches with their depictions and great murals. Moreover, there are many other depictions on wooden panels with colors dissolving into glue. These combine the simplicity of quality and raw material used in drawing alongside the distinct technique. In addition to the achievements of the Coptic artist in the art of icons and

Fayoum Portraits, he succeeded in drawing on the walls and immortalizes wonderful artistic works like Al-Bagawat cemetery is one of the most important areas in Egypt which maintains a large amount of the Christian religious scenes using frescoes The fresco style is characterized by mixing colors directly with water without the use of any intermediary between them. Then, these colors are used in painting the walls before they dry. It differs from the tempera technique in which colors are mixed using an intermediary such as glue and then used in painting on the wall after covering it with a layer of a completely dried up lime. Painting with fresco is easy, cheap and survives over time more than any other methods.

There are a number of colors used in coloring the frescoes of Al- Bagawat chapels as follows:

The white in coloring men's wear, as it symbolizes purity and the invisible presence of God to the Lord, bishops and priestly symbols. The green in coloring women's wear in the robe itself, the white for the shawl or veil with the exception of a few cases where other colors were used. For example, Jacob's robe that was colored in gray, the symbol of justice in purple in addition to the virgins who appeared in black.

Red was used so often in Al-Bagawat depictions and in many degrees, i.e., the normal, light and dark. The artist used the normal red in coloring the paintings of Adam and Eve, Takla's chair, sea waves in the story of Jonah and the word "Body" in the story of Job. The dark red appeared in coloring the body of the three. Hebrews and the oval shape

next to Moses in the Chapel of Exodus. The light and dark red was used in coloring the columns of the entrance to the Promised Land where Moses came. This shows the value of this color to the Coptic artist in terms of its symbolism to the purple, or power or the martyrs' blood, in all, to the blood of Christ.

The pink was used significantly in coloring Moses' shirt in the Chapel of Exodus, the bodies of Adam and Eve in the Chapel of Peace.

The golden was used in coloring most of Al-Bagawat depictions in coloring the hair of figures, whether men, women or children. The reason for this could be that the artist used the conventional holy aura instead of the hair in depicting any sacred figure. This is because the symbolism of this color to the sun, the holy energy or luxury.

The black was used a little in representing the Virgins, the columns of the entrance to the Promised Land where Moses came as it symbolized the human existence.

Thus, it seems that the Coptic artist depended in his paintings in Al-Bagawat on some specific colors including the red with its tones, the golden, yellow, green, white, purple, gray and pink. He used or rarely used other colors such as the blue, orange, brown. This is contrary to what can be found in the icons, in which the artist used almost all colors clearly.

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