

Summary

The Coptic Deir Anba Hadra monastery is located on the west bank of the Nile, opposite the southern Egyptian city of Aswan. It is the largest and best-preserved monastery in the region and has been examined since 2013 by an interdisciplinary project as part of a DAI license. The goal is to better understand the function of the monastery. The question encompasses both the religious, social and ecological roles of Deir Anba Hadra.

The so-called economic complex on the upper terrace was examined in the context of this project in terms of building history and archaeology. 16 building phases could be identified in the evaluation, which could be associated with various functions. It is possible to identify this building complex as a location for food production. Bread, castor oil, wine and garum were produced here.

The core of the complex originally served as an oratory for the monks' hourly prayers. After the addition of several functional rooms, the complex was extensively redesigned after the 6th/7th century and used as a bakery. The Deir Anba Hadra was probably enlarged at the same time as a new monastery wall was built in the south of the bakery. The bakery's production was subsequently improved by building a grain store, an additional mill and another adjoining room. With the construction of a crushing basin for castor seeds and in

a second step the construction of a surrounding room unit, castor oil could be produced in the northern part of the building complex. A wine press was built north of this location afterwards, subsequently enclosed by walls. Two tanks built in the immediate periphery of the wine press at the same time as the walls were probably used to make garum. In the course of the redesign of these tanks, three adjoining rooms were added in the west. The construction of a courtyard in the east of the building complex is the last major expansion of the complex. A silo and at least two ovens document the food production in this yard. In addition to the deliberate dismantling of individual walls, fireplaces and feeding troughs document the use of various spatial units as accommodation and stables even after the end of the use of Deir Anba Hadra as a monastery.

The production facilities identified in Deir Anba Hadra were compared to installations in the (late) ancient Mediterranean region. These comparisons not only explain technical details, but also production processes. It turns out that the amount of bread, castor oil, wine and garum produced was probably intended for the needs of residents and guests of the monastery. It is unlikely that these goods made in the Deir Anba Hadra served trade.