

COPTIC LEATHERWORK

The importance and craftsmanship of Coptic leatherwork is well attested. Yet, despite the extraordinary climatic conditions of Egypt, which had a paramount role in preserving ancient artifacts and particularly those made of organic material otherwise prone to disintegrate, only rare samples of leatherwork have been preserved except for the bookbindings.

Among the more frequent finds, sandals, which are scattered in various museums throughout the world, are most common. Some [sandals](#) were found in graves. The overwhelming majority are open sandals, with a sole and strips on the top to hold the feet.

Less usual is the flat shoe, with a covered upper surface (*Koptische Kunst, Christentum am Nil*, 1963, p. 290-92 no. 228). The [decoration](#) may be openwork, exploiting colorful effects from different shades of leather or sometimes painted.

Few pouches have been preserved, and a fragment with an interesting [decoration](#) may belong either to a pouch or to a saddle. Most of the techniques used for the decoration of such [items](#) are similar to those encountered in the major field of leatherwork, for which our information is the widest—that of BOOKBINDING.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- *History of Bookbinding 525-1950*. The [Walters](#) Art Gallery. Baltimore, 1957.
- *Koptische Kunst, Christentum am Nil*. Villa Hügel, Essen, 1963.

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