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ROCK ART RESEARCH ON THE FOURTH CATARACT IN 2007

Eliza Jaroni and Ewa Kuciewicz

The fieldwork in the eastern part of the PCMA concession on the Fourth Cataract in 2007 also included rock art research, which was carried out between 18 November and 2 December.¹ Three main regions were covered: around Shemkhiya (Gebel Gurgurib), Hagar el-Beida and Keheili.

The findings are generally consistent with what has been recorded so far for other parts of the Sudanese Nile Valley (most recently, cf. Kleinitz, Koenitz 2006). Further examination of the rock art from the Fourth Cataract region should contribute inestimably to the study of the category.

GEBEL GURGURIB (SHEMKHIYA REGION)

A brief reconnaissance in 2006, conducted by Ewa Kuciewicz (Kuciewicz 2009), resulted in one wadi being chosen for thorough documentation. About half its length was recorded then and 22 rock art sites were noted. The present work covered the rest of the wadi extending toward the north [Fig. 2], noting 20 new rock-art sites. A schematic drawing and description was made of all the newly discovered petroglyphs, the entries in the field journal following a separate numbering system for individual sites. GPS coordinates were also entered for each drawing.

Spots chosen for individual petroglyphs or their groups are invariably well visible from a distance. Representations occur either singly or in clusters consisting of a few boulders and about 10 rock depictions. They were executed mostly by pecking (hammering), but also by incising and grinding, or by a combination of these techniques.

Overall, this season's yield of recorded petroglyphs does not vary substantially from that reported in the previous year. Camels and camels with riders greatly predominate over the occasional long-horned bovid. They are depicted either

¹ The research was carried out by Ewa Kuciewicz, Eliza Jaroni and Agata Drejer, all from the Poznań Archaeological Museum, and NCAM inspector Musa El Fadul Abdalla El Tayeb.

walking or running, their humps like triangles rendered with straight short lines. The images are either pecked in full or just in outline [Fig. 1]. In one case, a rider on a horse(?) and a scene with two ostriches were found.

The long-horned bovid images appear to be older than the camels, as indicated by subject-matter, style and patina. There are, however, some types of cattle depictions which can be contemporary with the camel motifs (Kleinitz 2004).

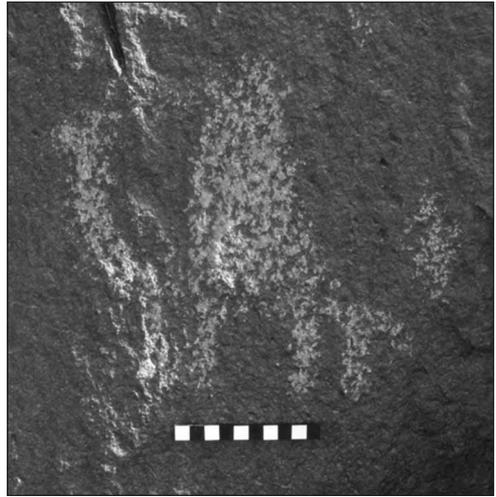


Fig. 1. Camel glyph from Gebel Gurgurib, site 16 (Photo E. Kuciewicz) ▶

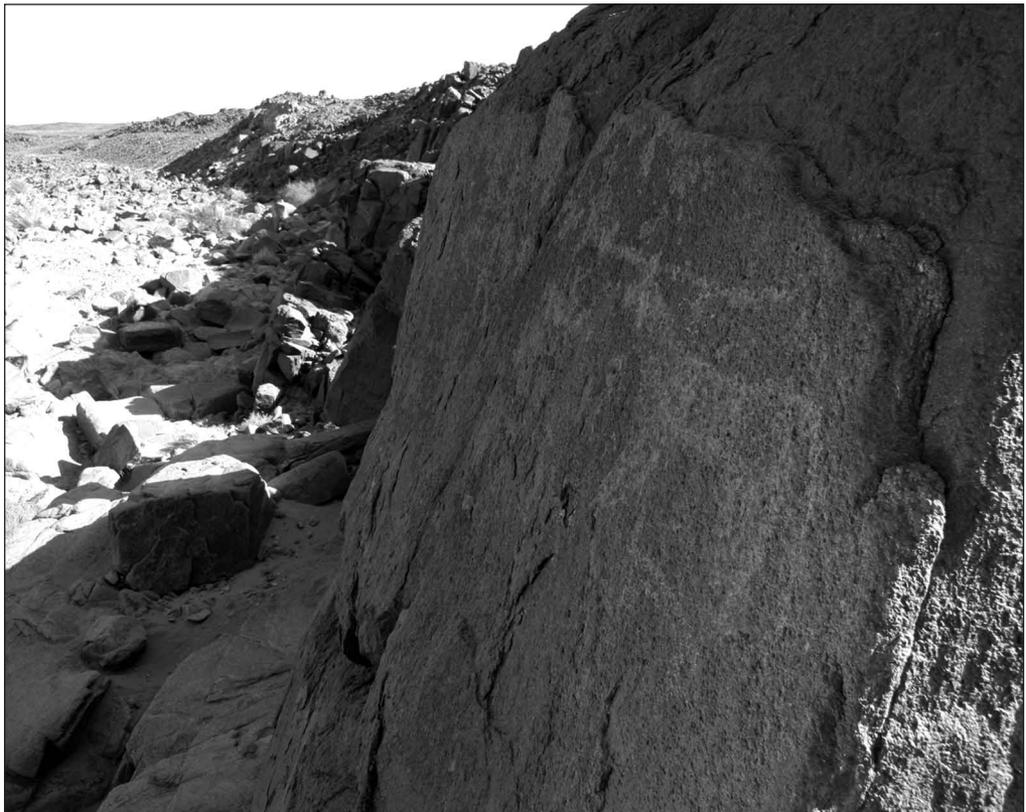


Fig. 2. The wadi in the Gebel Gurgurib area, looking north (Photo M. Jawornicki)

EL-GAMAMIYA 67

The site is a massive hill of granite located in the eastern part of el-Gamamiya village (orientation NNE–SSW) [Fig. 3]. Its naturally isolated and exposed situation, coupled with the quantity and quality of the rock art found here, as well as the predominance of one motif over all others, suggests its exceptional status for the rock art makers. About 70 individual panels with rock art have been noted, at the base of the hill, in the middle and at the top. Most of the petroglyphs represent cattle, but also human figures (shown in association with cattle) [Fig. 4], giraffes and antelopes (or gazelles?). Cattle bodies and heads are depicted in profile, while the horns are shown in frontal view (in one case a cow's head was also shown frontally). The bodies are usually

pecked in outline, sometimes treated additionally with a single or double vertical line and in a few cases with dots or rubbing forming a variety of figures [cf. Fig. 4]. The legs are represented almost canonically — two lines joined at the bottom — but not so the horns, which demonstrate several possible variants. They are mostly long. Their shape reflects both natural and intentional deformations, including single crooking, closed or almost closed oval forms, lyre- and heart-shaped examples [cf. Fig. 4]. Most frequently they are curved up in an arch. Some form of pendant suspended from the neck is shown in a few cases, while depiction of the udder is more frequent. Cows with calves were also shown in some cases [Fig. 4, bottom right].



Fig. 3. *El-Gamamiya 67, view of the eastern side with the village in the distance*
(Photo M. Jawornicki)

FOURTH CATARACT
SUDAN

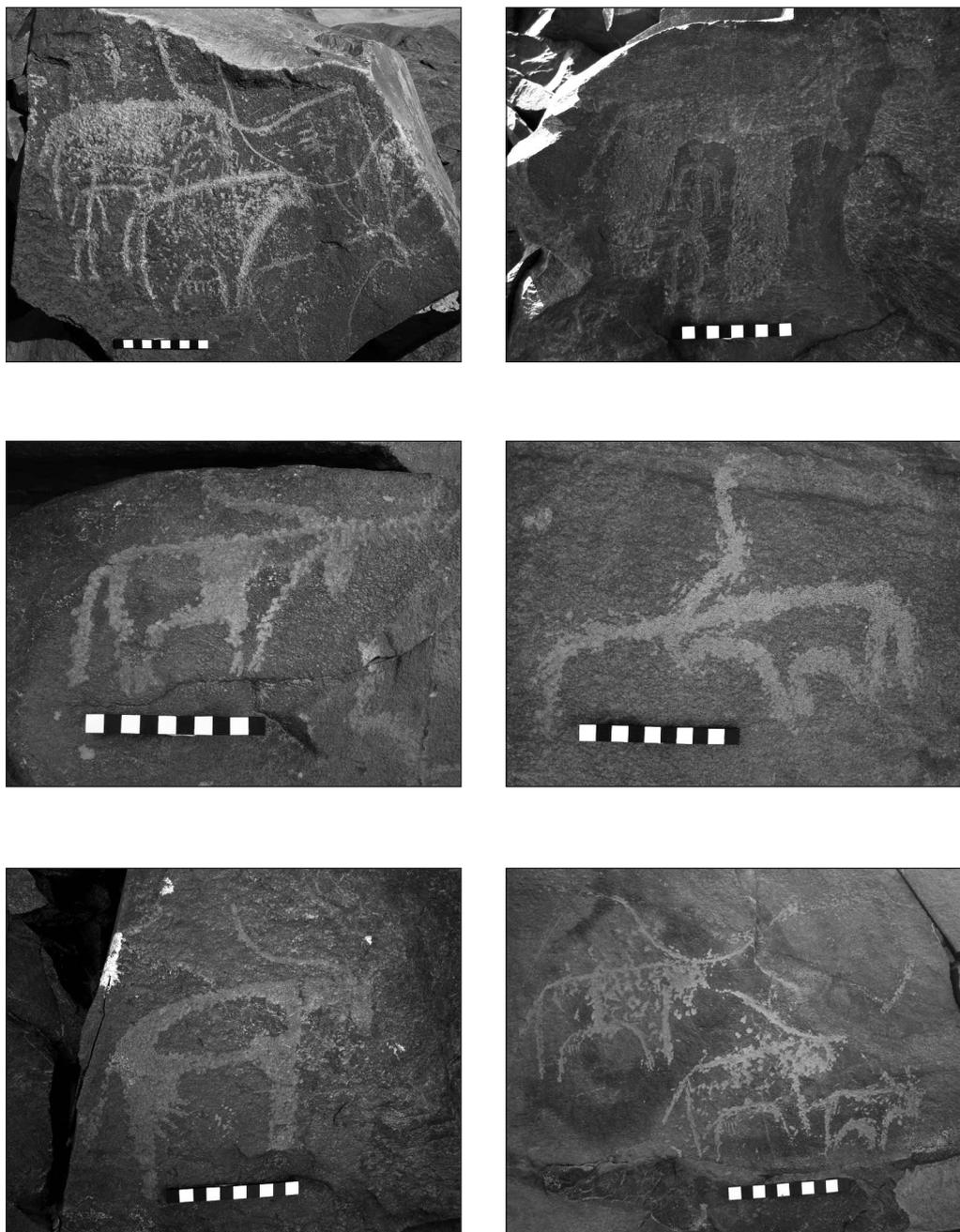


Fig. 4. *El-Gamamiya 67: panels depicting humans and cattle (no. 17, top left; no. 1, top right), cattle (no. 9b, center left; no. 4, center right; no. 7, bottom left) and cow with calf (no. 21a, bottom right) (Photo E. Kuciewicz)*

No pattern has been observed as to the positioning of the depictions. Petroglyphs can be vertical or horizontal and they can face to the right or left of the panels. Superimposition of images will naturally help to establish a relative chronology of the rock art on the site, but judging by the style and degree of patina on the representations, generally considerable, it should be considered as representing the same chronological horizon

All of the petroglyphs were photographed and sketched, and this season tracings were made of a few select examples.

Evidence of human habitation on the top of the hill is extensive. It takes on the form of stones arranged in circles. The absence of surface pottery excludes an easy dating of these features. Excavation is planned in order to determine the chronology of the site, including possibly its rock art.

KEHEILI 5

A brief survey of the Keheili region recorded petroglyphs on another massive granite hill (around 30 positions with rock art). The pictures executed on vertical rock surfaces form a kind of rock-art gallery [cf. above,

Fig. 3 on 399]. Themes here cover a range of pecked and incised cattle images, in a few instances associated with human figures [*Figs 5–6*]. The animals feature angular and irregular body shapes. Long horns take on a



Fig. 5. Keheili 5: panel depicting cattle (Photo E. Kuciewicz)



Fig. 6. Keheili 5: panels depicting humans and cattle (no. 20a, top, and no. 19) (Photo E. Kuciewicz)

different form. Coat markings or humps are seldom indicated.

Generally speaking, the motif of cattle in the rock art of the Nubian Nile Valley dates to

the Kerma period. Younger representations often have accompanying figures of camels which are similar in style and the degree of the patina.

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