

# DAKHLEH OASIS PROJECT, PETROGLYPH UNIT: SEASONS 2012 AND 2013

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**Abstract:** In the 2012 and 2013 seasons the Petroglyph Unit concentrated on two major assignments: first, recording rock art sites in the Central Oasis, in the area of the so-called Painted Wadi and in adjoining areas, either unexplored or only partly explored earlier, and second, locating again and documenting Winkler's sites 66 and 67, both in the eastern part of the Oasis. These two sites are of mostly homogeneous, Neolithic origin, while rock art recorded in the Central Oasis dates from the Neolithic through very recent times.

**Keywords:** rock art, petroglyph, oasis, giraffes, female figures, sandal motif, animals

Research of the Petroglyph Unit, which is part of the international interdisciplinary Dakhleh Oasis Project (DOP) and is coordinated by the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw (PCMA UW), was concentrated in 2012 and 2013 on two major assignments in two different areas of the Dakhleh Oasis. The first was to record rock art sites in the Central Oasis, in the

area of the so-called Painted Wadi, already investigated by the Petroglyph Unit, and to survey some adjoining, previously only partly explored or unexplored areas. The second was to relocate and document Winkler's sites 66 and 67 in the eastern part of the Oasis (Winkler 1939: 8). Both tasks met with considerable difficulties in the field due to political unrest following the events of 2011 in Egypt.

## CENTRAL OASIS

The area of the Central Oasis has been surveyed by the Petroglyph Unit in search of rock art since 2003. Research has been conducted mainly in the so-called Painted Wadi [*Fig. 1*], which is in the eastern part of the sandstone Tawil Anticline

formation. Two additional surveys were undertaken west of the Painted Wadi: in 2007 (Kuciewicz, Jaroni, and Kobusiewicz 2010: 309) and 2009 (Kuciewicz and Kobusiewicz 2012). The goal in 2012 was to resurvey the area of the Painted Wadi

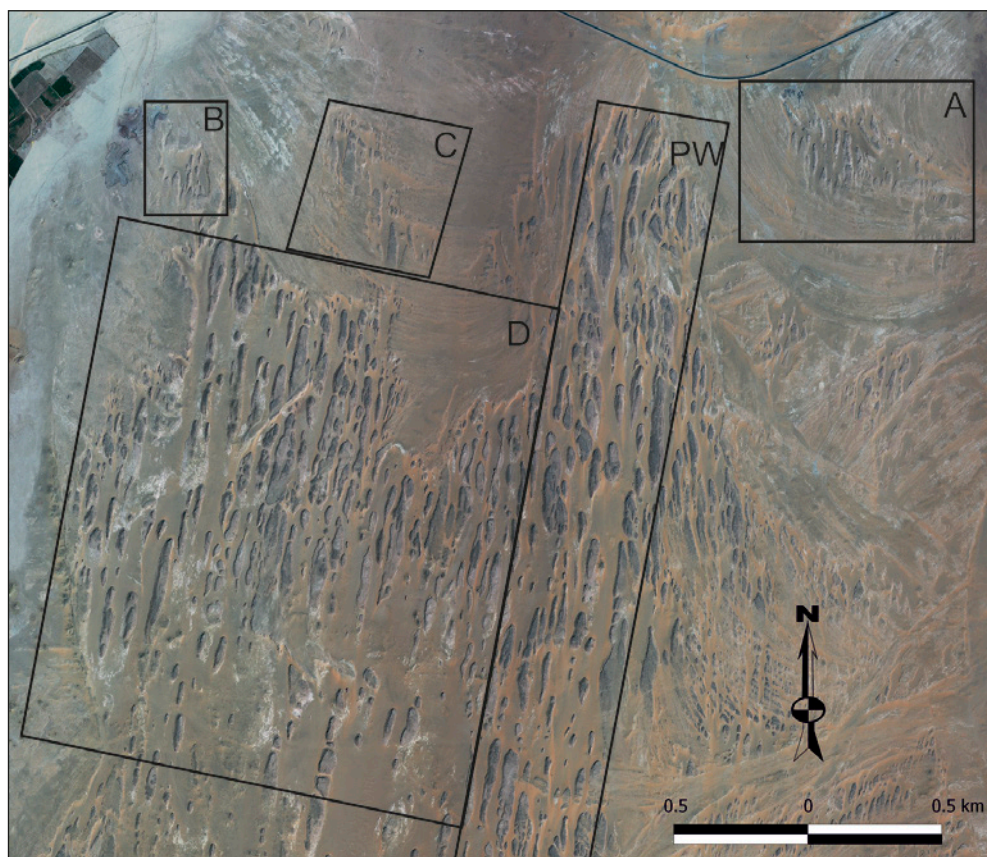


Fig. 1. Northern part of the Tawil Anticline formation in the Central Oasis with marked areas of the survey in 2012 and 2013: PW – Painted Wadi and areas A–D (Processing P. Polkowski)

#### Team

*Dates of work:* 16 February–18 March 2012; 12 February–2 March 2013

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and to finish the photographic documentation of post-prehistoric sites. In 2013, it was the investigation of previously unexplored areas in the Central Oasis as well as the recording of rock art in parts that had already been surveyed to some extent (areas A–D in *Fig. 1*). GeoEye 1 satellite imagery of 0.50 m resolution was used to map rock art panels and other landscape features, including archaeological remains. Petroglyphs were described, photographed in detail and selected compositions traced onto transparent foil.

#### PAINTED WADI

Fieldwork documented 37 new rock art sites. Some were located in the Painted Wadi itself and some on rocks flanking the wadi not visited earlier by the Unit. Ten sites were registered in the vicinity of site 06/09 to the west (Kuciewicz and Kobusiewicz 2012; Polkowski and Kobusiewicz 2012; Kuciewicz, Polkowski, and Kobusiewicz 2014).

In terms of chronological diversity, the rock art in the Painted Wadi runs from the Neolithic period through very recent times, indeed, a living tradition continued today in the form of Arabic inscriptions and drawings. Many of the sites are not homogeneous and contain tens or hundreds of petroglyphs which are densely stratified and difficult to discern. Some sites date to the Old Kingdom period, but most of the recorded petroglyphs seem to refer to the Late to Roman periods. The most widespread type, possibly from the latter period, is the foot and sandal motif. It is very differentiated, however, in terms of technique, style and execution. Sandals and feet were engraved on horizontal surfaces as a rule, but at least one example

was found on a vertical wall. Many other signs occur (e.g., swastika, pentagram, various types of crosses) as well as animal depictions, inscriptions (e.g., Greek, Coptic, Arabic, Hieroglyphic, hieratic, demotic), lines and abstract designs. These kinds of palimpsest sites are often associated with dense scatters of pottery sherds. They could be resting places or some kind of stations en route.

In this rock-art melting-pot some new Neolithic sites were discovered and examined in the central section of the Painted Wadi. The petroglyphs found there represent the meandering line motif. They are pecked and usually very patinated and most often located on horizontal surfaces (Polkowski 2015). A new site with “female anthropomorphic figures” (not all researchers are agreed that these images are clearly female, e.g., James 2012) was found in the northeastern part of the Painted Wadi. The three panels are located in a place resembling a shrine, high on a steep slope, sheltered by an overhang. One of the panels is on a big bright boulder, the surface of which reflects sunlight and is well visible from a distance [*Fig. 2*].

#### AREA A

Area A is a small depression situated close to a modern asphalt road, although not visible from it, located in the northeastern part of a sandstone ridge. The depression is filled with relatively small hills oriented north–south. The smooth rock surfaces were very promising, but preserved no rock art. Packs of wild dogs rummaging in modern rubbish kept the Unit from exploring the entire area. Any rock art on hills in the middle of these burning piles of rubbish is highly endangered.



*Fig. 2. Panel with “female” anthropomorphic figures in the northeastern part of the Painted Wadi  
(Photo P. Polkowski)*



*Fig. 3. Petroglyphs depicting anthropomorphs and animals. Site CO33, view from the east  
(Photo P. Polkowski)*

## AREA B

Area B is formed by another small depression, like A not visible from the road, located on the northwestern fringe of the sandstone formation in the Central Oasis. A few new rock art sites were found on the numerous sandstone hills in the depression, most of them tentatively dated to the Neolithic period. In this area the “female anthropomorphic figure” motif seems to be the most common.

The “Bashendi Ladies”<sup>1</sup> were first discovered on sites CO30 and CO33 (CO=Central Oasis). The petroglyphs at the latter site were cut on a smooth surface facing west. This panel is well visible from a distance and its public character suggests that it was probably meant to be seen. There is no shade or shelter available near this panel.

The representation consists of three human figures [Fig. 3]. One is almost 40 cm high; two others are much smaller and are located just above the big one. They were executed in a technique resembling sunken relief, rubbing the inner surfaces of the petroglyphs. The shape of the figures is typical, that is, the lower bodies are exaggerated, heads are oval, arms or breasts short, as well as supposedly pregnant bellies. The rest of the images are not clearly visible. There are some quadruped animals superimposed upon the large anthropomorph, although identification of the species is difficult. An oryx antelope with long, scimitar-shaped horns appears in the lower parts of the panel.

An inaccessible panel at site CO32 with some very well executed animal depictions

is noteworthy. The bodies of the animals were rubbed and only the legs and horns were engraved. There are at least three oryx antelopes with typical long, curved horns. Animals in the central part of the panel are more difficult to identify. They resemble ostriches and may have been transformed into quadrupeds at a later time by the addition of features like the front legs. The panel is not accessible, meaning the landscape must have changed dramatically since the execution of the images.

## AREA C

This area had only one rock art site, namely, site CO29. It is a small rock outcrop with one big smooth horizontal surface covered with outlines of sandals and feet motifs. There are at least three pairs of sandals oriented towards the east and one single foot with toes [Fig. 4]. The foot has eight toes, which may suggest that anatomical precision was not required. Sandals were executed in diverse styles, from schematic and rough to naturalistic. Several superimpositions occur on the panel, suggesting a gradual accumulation of petroglyphs.

There are also older and less visible drawings located on the panel. Most of them are difficult to identify, but there is one figurative motif among them. It is a zoomorphic image with a very long neck. The rest of the body is missing. It resembles a giraffe, but the ears of the animal are similar to those of a dog, making identification to species uncertain.

A few places in the vicinity yielded pottery scatters, mostly from the Roman period.

<sup>1</sup> Certain indirect assumptions: iconographic, stylistic, degree of weathering, relation to other archaeological remains, have led the present authors to attribute carvings of this type tentatively to the Neolithic Bashendi B culture.

## AREA D

This is the largest area surveyed this season with more than 65 sites recorded and given site numbers. Some had been discovered earlier, but had not been properly recorded. For the purpose of this short report only a selection of sites and petroglyphs divided into chronological categories is discussed.

## Prehistoric drawings

Prehistoric images fall into two subcategories: images of the “female anthropomorphic figure” and zoomorphic depictions. Images of adult human females were discovered on eight sites (CO37, CO39, CO55, CO65, CO72, CO75, CO79, CO99). Style and technique

differed from site to site; one can see engraved and pecked examples, as well as combinations of both [Fig. 5]. Most were depicted in profile with just a few being shown *en face*. They all have exaggerated lower body anatomies, sometimes filled with a decorative(?) pattern. In two cases, legs were depicted. Arms were mostly schematized and in few cases there were representations which could be taken as breasts. In at least one example, both arms with fingers and breasts were depicted [see Fig. 5, bottom row, center], leaving no doubt about the gender of the figure. Another typical feature observed in many “female” figures is their potential pregnancy. Heads are oval and usually lack any features.



Fig. 4. Sandals and feet. Site CO29, view from the west  
(Photo P. Polkowski)



Fig. 5. Selected examples of the “female anthropomorphic figure” motif from sites in Area D (Photos P. Polkowski)



Fig. 6. Three giraffes pecked on a smooth horizontal slab. Site CO66, view from the south (Photo P. Polkowski)



Fig. 7. Giraffe and three superimposed sandals in outline. CO67 site, view from the east (Photo P. Polkowski)

Drawings of animals constitute the next group of Neolithic imagery. Giraffes and antelopes prevailed. In most cases they were pecked, only sometimes engraved. Three big giraffes were found on site CO66 [Fig. 6]. The largest animal has a neck more than 70 cm long. Whole bodies of giraffes were pecked, which made them clearly visible from afar. Horns and ears were depicted, as were tails, which are very long. Two animals were oriented in a different direction than the third one, suggesting that the ground line was of no importance in such compositions.

Another interesting group of images is located on site CO67. An outcrop with a horizontal surface on top of the hill is covered with a composition consisting of three sandals superimposed on a giraffe. The sandals, which are clearly of dynastic origin, were engraved and subsequently pecked, apparently intentionally produced in a place with older zoomorphic figure already present [Fig. 7]. Oryx antelopes are mostly pecked figures. They are often executed on rocks patinated to dark blue color. The most characteristic features are the long curved horns, which sometimes are pecked, but often also engraved. They have rather small dimensions, almost always smaller than the representations of giraffes. Sometimes they may be associated with abstract designs, for example, meandering lines. They often share with them similar techniques of execution.

Meandering lines are one of the most common motifs found in Area D. They are always pecked and almost all are located on horizontal surfaces, very often on tops of hills. Nevertheless, some were recorded on vertical walls. Their shape usually resembles that of a snake, but it is

extremely difficult to say with certainty that a depiction of a reptile was actually intended. In one case, an ending of the line resembling a cobra's head could stand in favor of this suggestion. Meandering lines and associated motifs, mostly very abstract in form, are very patinated and weathered (although not always completely).

### Dynastic drawings

This category consists mostly of sandals and feet drawings. They were found in large numbers on many sites. A single hill may contain just one sandal or up to dozens, often superimposed. One can

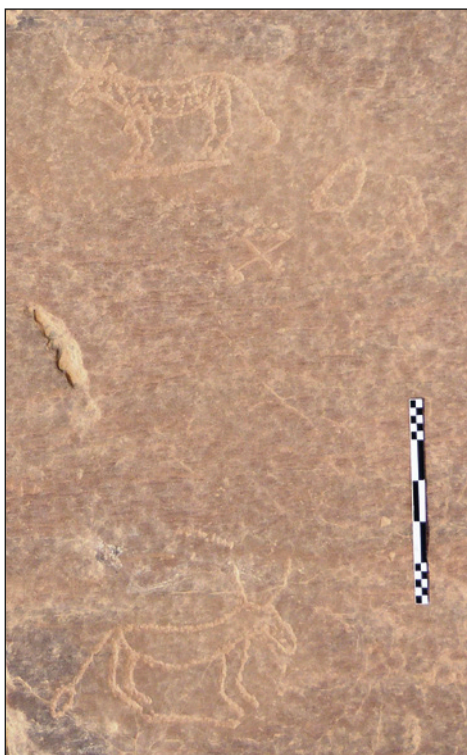


Fig. 8. Two bovinds. Site CO91, view from the south/southeast (Photo P. Polkowski)



find very schematic and rough examples, simple outlined images and detailed forms, even very sophisticated and naturalistic types [Fig. 9]. Some of the sandals occurred in pairs, but most of the images seem to have acted as singular figures. Very often they were merely outlined. There were examples containing straps near the heel, straps inside a shoe or projecting from the tops or sides of the sandals. Sometimes toes were indicated. In case of the feet, some had depicted not only the toes, but also the toenails. Most were engraved, but there was a substantial number of pecked petroglyphs. Almost all of the sandals and feet were produced on horizontal surfaces, which is typical of this type of rock art.

Another category of dynastic imagery comprised representations of animals, cattle included. Bulls were found on some sites and they exhibited much stylistic variation, like the exceptional images from site CO91 [Fig. 8]. The animals were depicted standing on a ground line or some kind of base. The images may depict statues, not real animals.

Three boats should be mentioned among the multitude of dynastic petroglyphs, all of them of the sickle-shaped type [Fig. 10]. A boat discovered on site CO102 is furnished with a steering oar and some unidentified features at the prow. It is superimposed on a pecked image of an ostrich, possibly older. Another boat

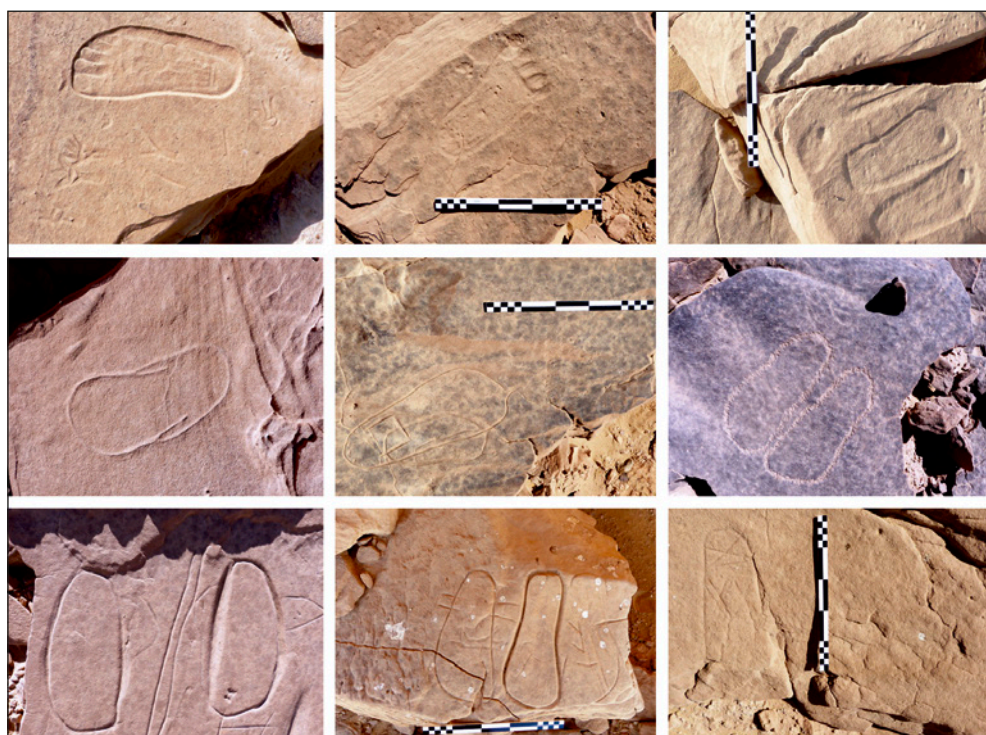


Fig. 9. Selection of sandals and feet petroglyphs discovered in Area D  
(Photos P. Polkowski)

found on site CO110 has a steering oar, too, but also a central cabin on the deck and inside the cabin a depiction resembling a lotus flower.

One motif that frequently occurs on rock art sites in Area D (however, not so frequently as in the Painted Wadi area) is the pubic triangle. It is very often associated with engravings of sandals and feet.

### Post-Pharaonic drawings

Large amounts of petroglyphs found in Area D should be dated probably to post-Pharaonic periods, because their state of preservation is relatively good and in some cases there is no trace of patina and/or



Fig. 10. Boat with central cabin and lotus flower(?). CO110 site, view from the north (Photo P. Polkowski)

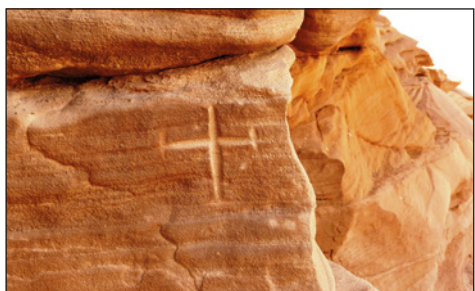


Fig. 11. Potent cross from the Byzantine Period. CO105 site, view from the east (Photo P. Polkowski)

changes of color. There is little doubt that the cross motif derives from late Roman and Byzantine periods and such images were found on several sites [Fig. 11]. The most common type of cross recorded in Area D is the variation of the so-called potent cross.

It is possible that some of the pubic triangles and other figures resembling feminine anatomical features (including breasts) should also be dated to the post-Pharaonic era. Also some human figures, often specifically stylized, with exaggerated hands, share features in common with later petroglyphs.

A number of motifs, which for the purpose of this report have been labeled as “marks”, occur in places yielding large quantities of potsherds. These “marks” differ in shape and style, and were executed certainly across a long time span. It is still difficult to identify many of them, so the general term, *wusum*, is applied provisionally to many such motifs. *Wusum*



Fig. 12. Horizontal surface covered with a number of different signs, possibly from post-Pharaonic times. CO99 site, view from the south (Photo P. Polkowski)

is plural for a tribal mark used by camel breeders across the Arabic world (King 1925: Appendix III). Many of the signs occur in more than one location, which may suggest the existence of local routes. They are often intermingled with older signs and figures, which makes entire panels often difficult to interpret [Fig. 12].

In many cases, they are accompanied by inscriptions.

The figure of a camel on site C098 is one of the few representations known from the Central Oasis. The hump is strangely depicted at the back of the animal. A rider may have been shown sitting between the camel's hump and neck.

## EASTERN OASIS: WINKLER'S SITES 66 AND 67

German explorer Hans Alexander Winkler first visited these sites as a member of Sir Robert Mond's Desert Expedition in 1937/1938. In his important research book, *Rock Drawings of Southern Upper Egypt II*, he described their location: (with regard to site 66) "About 2.8 km north east of site 63. Two parallel hills, rocky on the north site" and (regarding site 67) "... several hills, the first of them about 700 m north-east of site 66; the others are east, south-east and south of it" (Winkler 1939: 8). Their location resembles a maze of rocky hills, making it difficult to locate sites based on such vague descriptions. In the early 1990s, Lech Krzyżaniak succeeded, at least in part (Krzyżaniak 1994: 99), because the range for site 66 was relatively easy to estimate, but for site 67 Winkler's way of putting it made territorial identification difficult to say the least. Research in 2012 and 2013 concentrated on locating all the hills featured in Winkler's book as site 67 and additionally on a thorough documentation of rock art panels from site 66 and from the hills already confirmed as belonging to site 67.

Both sites are in the eastern part of Dakhleh Oasis, on the northern fringes of the so-called Southeast Basin, a small depression about 12 km east of the village of Teneida, and north of the road to Kharga oasis (McDonald 1991: 44, Fig. 2). Site 66 (N 25°25'21.6" E 29°24'34.5") consists of two parallel elongated yardangs,<sup>2</sup> each about 70 m long. Rock art panels are concentrated mainly in the eastern and northern part of the easternmost hill. Petroglyphs are situated both on solid vertical surfaces of the hill and on individual stone blocks scattered at the foot of the hill and on the slopes. Site 67, which starts approximately 350 m (site 67/1; N 25°25'22.9" E 29°24'53.4") east of site 66, is of a different nature. It is a conglomerate of 11 hills covering an estimated 0.5 km<sup>2</sup> (at least to date, but its radius may yet be expanded as the Unit has still to locate all the rock art panels published by Winkler as site 67). These are also elongated yardangs surrounding a spacious playa.<sup>3</sup> In addition to abundant rock art, there is also other evidence of intense human settlement in this area.

<sup>2</sup> A yardang is a streamlined hill carved from bedrock or any consolidated or semi-consolidated material by the dual action of wind abrasion, dust and sand, and deflation.

<sup>3</sup> Playa or dry lake; ephemeral lakebed, or remnant of an endorheic lake. Such flats consist of fine-grained sediments infused with alkali salts.

The summits of some of the hills held circular stone structures (about 3 m in diameter), presumably huts of unidentified provenance (on site 67/1: five huts, with petroglyphs on some of the blocks; on the top of site 67/5, at least twenty huts) [Fig. 14]. The area of site 67 yielded numerous stone implements (grinding stones and grinders) and ostrich eggshells; they were especially concentrated in the vicinity of hill 67/6 [Fig. 13]. Additionally, there were at least three rock shelters incorporated into the slope of the hill at site 67/7.

The area of Winkler's sites 66 and 67 appears to be fairly homogenous, with a few of the recorded petroglyphs being associated with the Dynastic period in an otherwise Neolithic cultural horizon. This is different than in the Painted Wadi, where both petroglyphs and other archaeological remains date to almost all periods of human habitation.



Fig. 13. Stone implements scattered on site 67/6 (Photo E. Kuciewicz)

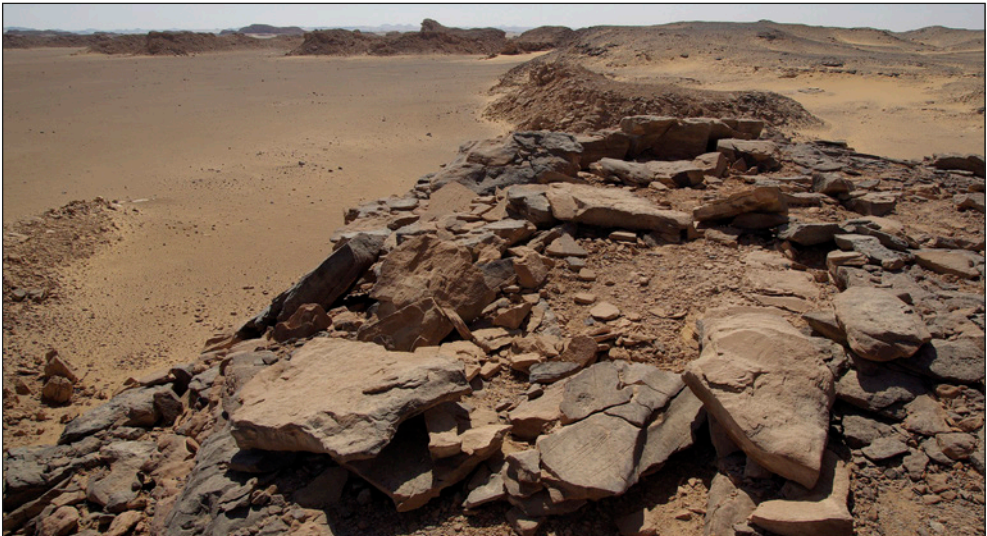


Fig. 14. Circular stone structures, presumably huts, recorded on hill tops (Site 67/1) (Photo E. Kuciewicz)

As in the Central Oasis, the most intriguing iconographic motifs in the visual repertoire of prehistoric petroglyphs are the anthropomorphic representations, commonly referred to as the

“Bashendi Ladies” (see above). Altogether 41 new figures of the type were recorded, executed on 23 separate rock panels. The figures appear alone, in pairs, often as mirror reflections [Fig. 15 top right], in

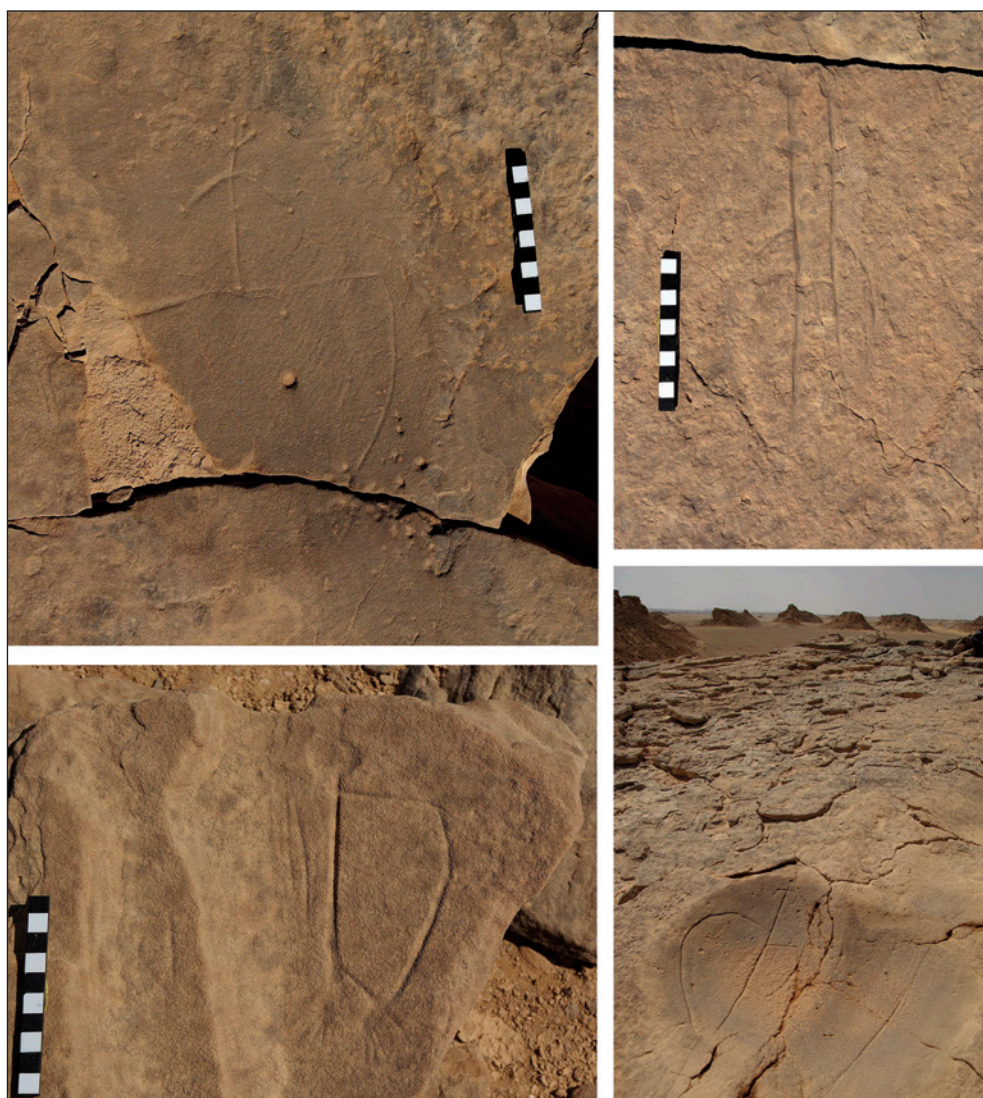


Fig. 15. “Female anthropomorphic figures”: top left, shown en face (Site 67/4); top right, in mirror reflection (Site 67/4); bottom right, executed inside a shallow scoop (Site 67/2); bottom left, a “Bashendi Lady” with feet visible (Site 67/1, panel 11) (Photos E. Kuciewicz)

bigger groups or in relation to animals. Most of them are depicted in profile, but some are shown *en face* [Fig. 15 top left]. The degree of particularization of the figures differs considerably, from extremely schematic forms consisting of just a few lines, through diverse variants and variations, to sophisticated depictions executed in diverse techniques. In the area of sites 66 and 67, most of the “female” figures were produced by means of incision and additionally sunk relief. Pecking technique seems to be the least common. The anthropomorphic representations in question share certain iconographic traits, such as schematic upper body with barely marked head, stick-like trunk and truncated arms, and a strong, even excessively emphasized lower body. A bulging belly on many of the depictions could be suggestive of pregnancy (site 66; 67/1, panel 3; 67/2, top; 67/2, panel 6; 67/3, panel 1; 67/4, panel 2; 67/4, panel 5, 67/7; see also above, Figs 2, 3 and 5, examples from the Central Oasis). In one case, the feet are shown as well (67/1, panel 11) [Fig. 15 bottom left]. The possible interpretation of these representations is expectedly difficult and there is an ongoing discussion as to their meaning for the prehistoric societies inhabiting Dakhleh Oasis in the Neolithic period (Polkowski et al. 2013). It seems legitimate, however, to consider the traits of a broadly understood fertility cult associated with reproduction, fecundity and abundance in the interpretation of the “female” representations from Dakhleh Oasis.

Meriting particular interest are sites 67/2 and 67/4, where “female” representations appear inside hollows scooped out of the rock on the northern sides of flat-topped hill summits; these scoops are

believed to be stationary querns (Winkler 1939: 8, Pls XLIII 2, XLIV 1,2). As many as 19 shallow scoops of this kind were observed at the top of site 67/2. In one of them was a depiction of a “Bashendi Lady” [Fig. 15 bottom right]; 27 scoops were recorded on site 67/4, and schematic “female” representations were observed in at least seven of them. The hollows were probably made by grinding either grain or some kind of minerals for making pigments. The rock here is so soft that the carvings would have been obliterated had such a hollow been used again, even if only once. It is open to debate whether these images inside the “querns” were carved anew after usage every time or were executed much later, when the scoops had already been abandoned. Another site with scoops and “female anthropomorphic figures” carved inside the hollows was located unexpectedly in the past season, meaning that more sites of this kind can be expected.

Another five silhouettes of the described kind can be seen on site 67/2 mentioned above, on a vertical, exposed wall facing west and visible from a distance. Two of these drawings are especially interesting, although their lower parts are badly damaged due to rock face destruction. On the basis of what remains, it can be concluded that they were originally about 80 cm high and executed by means of incision as well as rubbing in the lower, enlarged body parts. The “skirts” of the figures were decorated with zigzag decoration [Fig. 17]. An image of a quadruped was inscribed inside one of the figures; the species could not be identified due to damage to the front part of the animal. This is as in a panel from the Central Oasis [see above, Fig. 3], where,

however, a later superposition is possible; at site 67/4, the combination of human and animal silhouettes seems to be intentional.

“Female anthropomorphic figures” were also found carved in relation to animals. Site 66 preserved a large, almost 1 m high, image of a “Bashendi Lady” surrounded by numerous little, mostly unidentified depictions of animals; some of them are inscribed into the anthropomorphic figure [Fig. 16]. The site also yielded another “female” figure depicted in relation to a giraffe and antelope [Fig. 18]; the interesting thing about that panel is the rope hanging from the giraffe’s neck (more about giraffes with ropes below). Panel 1 from site 67/3 is also worth mentioning, showing as it does remains of a petroglyph depicting an antelope next to six “female”



Fig. 16. “Bashendi Lady” surrounded by numerous animal images, some inscribed into the anthropomorphic figure (Site 66) (Photo E. Kuciewicz)



Fig. 17. “Bashendi Ladies” with zigzag decoration on their “skirts” (Site 67/2) (Photo E. Kuciewicz)

figures proceeding in a row (one of them with rather elaborate coiffure). Unfortunately, the rest of the panel was badly damaged, so it was not possible to determine whether there were any more animals. The panel is situated in the eastern

part of the hill, on a vertical, exposed stone surface visible from a distance.

Giraffes (without relation to human figures) are the most prevalent species represented in the rock art of the Oasis. The project recorded about 80 individual



Fig. 18. *“Female” figure depicted in relation to a giraffe and antelope (Site 66)*  
(Photo E. Kuciewicz)





*Fig. 19. Heads of three giraffes intercrossing or touching a cupule (Site 67/1, panel 15)  
(Photo E. Kuciewicz)*



*Fig. 20. Traces of grinding visible inside the trunk of the middle giraffe (Site 67/1, panel 21)  
(Photo E. Kuciewicz)*

figures on 25 different rock art panels at Winkler's sites 66 and 67. Giraffe representations revealed a wide stylistic range, from very schematic outlines of figures executed with just a few lines to images featuring elements like horns, ears, mane and hooves. Some of the panels are especially noteworthy. Panel 15 on site 67/1 was carved on a horizontal, flat surface of a quadrilateral stone block (measuring about 2 m by 1.50 m) found at the base of a yardang. It presents at least five silhouettes of giraffes along with circular hollows of various diameters. The heads of at least three of the animals cross or at least touch the holes in question [Fig. 19].

Whether these are the so-called cupules<sup>4</sup> or possibly grinding hollows<sup>5</sup> of some kind is not entirely clear.

Another scene of particular interest appears on panel 21, also at site 67/1. On a loose stone block are three giraffes [Fig. 20], arranged in such a way that they match the shape of the stone surface (the lines of the animals' necks follow the edges of the stone) and fill them in a deliberate way. Inside the trunk of the middle one are traces of grinding, creating shallow hollows, quite similar to the scoops at sites 67/2 and 67/4, often described as having anthropomorphic figures engraved inside them.



Fig. 21. Giraffes depicted with lines, maybe some kind of ropes attached to their heads or necks (Site 66) (Photo E. Kuciewicz)

<sup>4</sup> A cupule is a hemispherical petroglyph, created by percussion, on a horizontal or vertical surface (Bednarik 2008).

<sup>5</sup> A grinding hollow is a deep circular hollow or depression, functioning like a mortar for pestles, used for grinding materials like food, medicines, pigments and the like. Grinding hollows tend to be wider and deeper than cupules and generally occur only on horizontal surfaces.

At least seven giraffes are depicted with lines, maybe ropes of some kind attached to their heads or necks. On panel 1 at site 67/10 is a single animal engraved high on a vertical, protruding panel, presently inaccessible (below there is yet another figure of a giraffe, oriented differently; the two of them do not seem to be in relation to one another). A different situation appears on the next three panels (two on site 66 [Fig. 21] and another one on panel 4 at site 67/8), where giraffes with ropes appear together with other animals, such as giraffes (without lines), antelopes, unidentified quadrupeds and ostriches, creating intentionally composed scenes. Meriting special interest is panel 14 on site 67/1 [Fig. 22], a loose stone block located at the foot of the hill, at a certain distance from the slope. Covering its flat

surface are tens of petroglyphs of various kinds, executed in various techniques and in varying orientations. Engravings include geometric motifs, simple incisions, small holes arranged in lines, animals of different species and stick-like human figures. On the left edge of the block, as if treading on its margin, is the engraving of a strongly stylized, 'rectangular' giraffe. It has an exaggerated bushy tail and a double line going all the way from the head to the break of the block. It is uncertain whether its presence on the panel is in correlation with other engravings on the block.

In general, the lines connected to giraffes either go all the way to the bottom of the depiction or hang loosely, ending somewhere half-length of the neck. There are no depictions of human figures leading



Fig. 22. Engraving of a strongly stylized, 'rectangular' giraffe with bushy tail and double line coming from its neck (Site 67/4, panel 14) (Photo E. Kuciewicz)



Fig. 24. Images of an antelope (left) and an ostrich (right) (Sites 67/1 and 67/2 respectively) (Photos E. Kuciewicz)

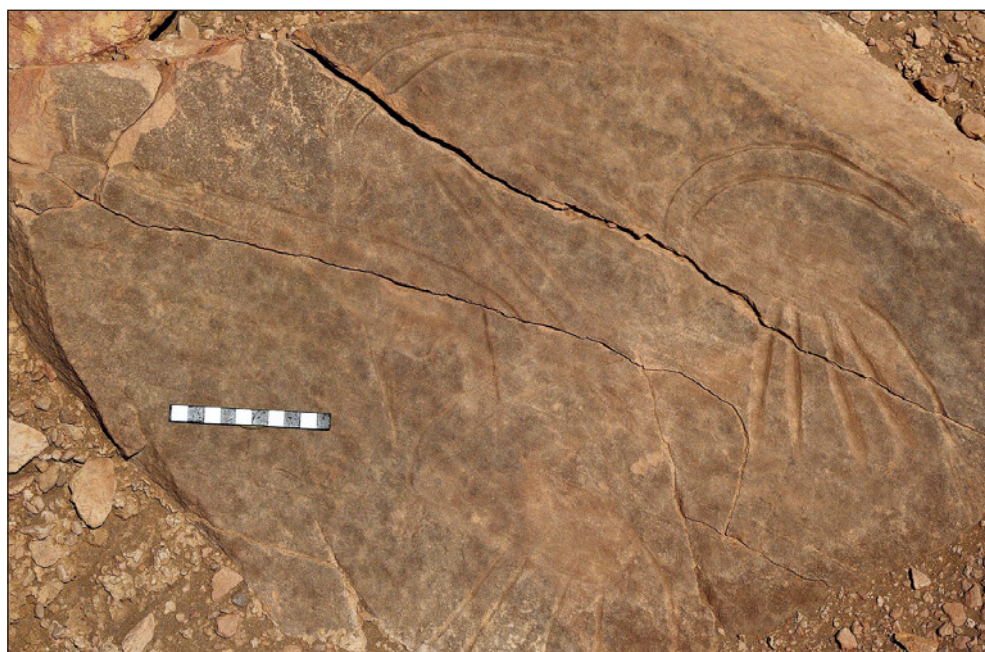


Fig. 23. Giraffe with clearly emphasized protrusion on its belly (Site 67/1, panel 6) (Photo E. Kuciewicz)

the animals or controlling them in any way (see Krzyżaniak 2004: 184, Fig. 4). In only one case the giraffe on a rope appears to be connected with an anthropomorphic figure (see above, panel from site 66, *Fig. 18*).

While the images of giraffes with lines (often called tethered giraffes or “giraffes à lien”) may reflect processes of domestication or at least attempts at taming these animals (Krzyżaniak 1990), there is another possible explanation. In many African cultures, the giraffe, also tethered, is connected with bringing rain and/or evoking fertility (van Hoek 2003: 60). It should be noted that similarly to the “Bashendi Ladies” described above, some of the engravings of giraffes from the Oasis show clearly emphasized protruding bellies (e.g., Polkowski et al. 2013: Fig. 11). Also at Winkler’s sites 66 and 67 cases like that were noted, e.g., panels 6 [*Fig. 23*] and 20 at site 67/1 (see also above, *Fig. 7*, example from the Central Oasis).

In this context, the recurring association of “females” and giraffes, sometimes with possible signs of pregnancy, together with depictions of tethered giraffes, giraffes with cupules and with rubbed belly, support the suggested fertility theory in the interpretation of both “female” and giraffe representations from Dakhleh Oasis.

Other animals are less numerous, but they appear nonetheless in the rock art of sites 66 and 67. These are diverse species of antelopes [*Fig. 24* left], mostly oryx, possibly addax and occasionally hartebeest, and also ostriches [*Fig. 24* right]. The few examples of motifs which could be ascribed to the Dynastic period include depictions of bovids and ornamented sandals.

With this detailed documentation of Winkler’s sites 66 and 67 the Unit continues a larger project aimed at recording all of the sites published provisionally by the German scholar. Winkler’s sites 63 and 64 are planned to be investigated in forthcoming seasons.

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