

DAKHLEH OASIS: RESEARCH ON ROCK ART, 1993

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Petroglyph investigations were continued in the eastern part of the Dakhleh Oasis in February and March 1993, as part of the program of the Dakhleh Oasis Project.¹ This year the fieldwork accomplished three objectives.

Firstly, some of the petroglyphs recorded in the test area known as the Rock Art Basin (square 61-39/E3) were in need of additional photographic documentation following laboratory processing at the museum of materials gathered in the previous seasons. In addition, the zoologist of the D.O.P., Professor C.S. Churcher, identified the species of animals depicted in areas he had not studied previously (sites E3/10-18 and D3/1-2).

This completed the survey of the area bringing the overall number of identified sites to 21 and the number of individual petroglyphs to a total of 290. The majority belong to Winkler's

¹ The fieldwork was done by Prof. Lech Krzyżaniak (Poznań Archaeological Museum and Polish Centre of Archaeology in Cairo) and Dr. Karla Kroeper (Egyptian Museum in Berlin), members of the Petroglyph Unit of the Dakhleh Oasis project (D.O.P.). The D.O.P. and the Polish Centre collaborated to set up this Unit. The members of the unit wish to express their gratitude to the Heads of both organizations: Professor Anthony J. Mills and Professor Michał Gawlikowski.

Cf. L. Krzyżaniak, Dakhleh Oasis: research on the rock art, 1992, *PAM IV*, 1992 (1993), pp. 80-82 (contains earlier bibliography); L. Krzyżaniak and K. Kroeper, The Dakhleh Oasis Project: interim report on the second (1990) and third (1992) seasons of the recording of petroglyphs, *The Journal of the Society for Study of Egyptian Antiquities*, XX (1993), pp. 77-88.

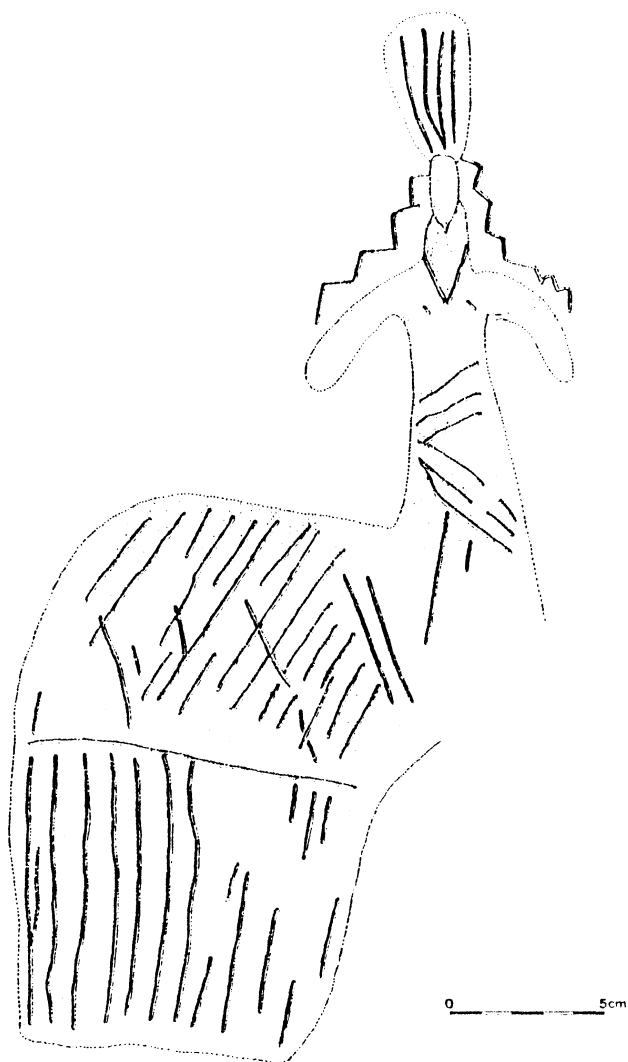


Fig. 1. Dakhleh Oasis. Engraving of a "goddess" from Winkler's site no. 63. Drawing by the author.

"Earliest Hunters" and "Early Oasis Dwellers"² styles; petroglyphs of Old Kingdom times are much less frequent. Most of the petroglyphs depict animals. Among them the most frequent are giraffes with Oryx antelopes a close second. Reedbuck, gazelle, hartebeest, gerenuk, Barbary sheep, warthog, ostrich and domestic cattle are represented in much smaller numbers. Future studies of the typology, style and chronology of the petroglyphs will undoubtedly shed light on the dynamics of the fauna of Eastern Dakhleh, possibly reflecting a changing natural environment.

The second objective of the season was to relocate Winkler's petroglyph sites. His sites Nos. 64 and 66 were thus successfully relocated and recorded in part (sites no. 62, 62, 67 and 68 had been located again during previous seasons). Site No. 64 turned out to be a cluster of sites/hills, while site No. 66 constitutes an individual hill. The two sites have yielded a large number of petroglyphs, of which Winkler had published only a few.³

The third objective of the season was to record in full Winkler's site No. 63, which is endangered by the modern motor road running nearby. Methods successfully used by the mission in Dakhleh in the previous seasons were applied here as well (Fig. 1).

A rather unexpected discovery was made in the northeastern corner of the Oasis. Several engravings of griffons of apparently Dynastic date were found there in the course of a reconnaissance (Fig. 2).

² H.A. Winkler, *Rock-Drawings of Southern Upper Egypt*, vol. II, London 1939, Egypt Exploration Society, passim.

³ Idem.

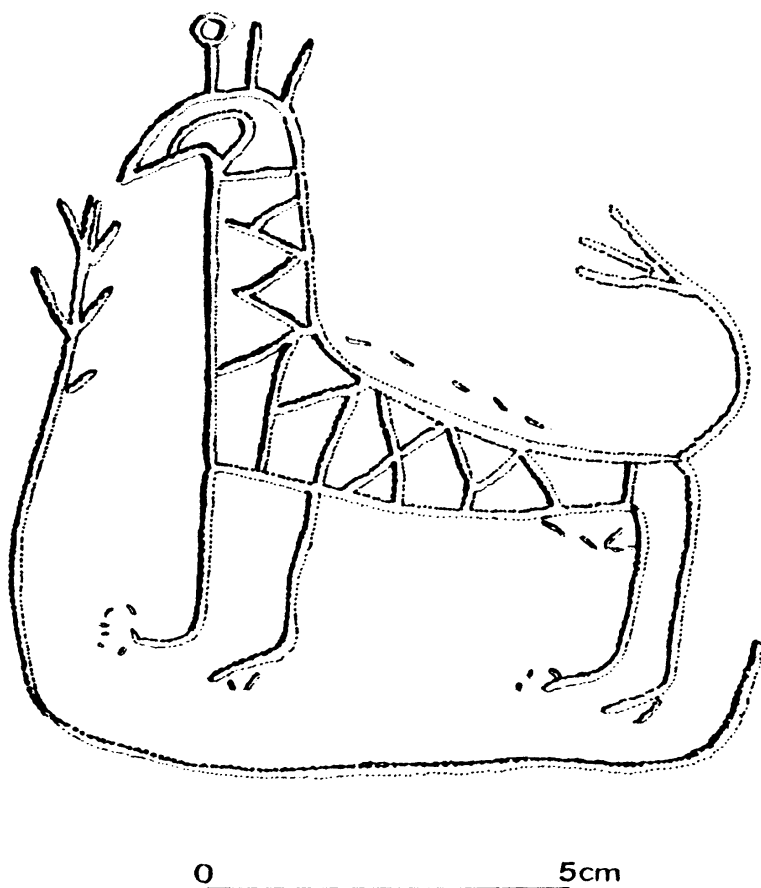


Fig. 2. Dakhleh Oasis. Engraving of a griffon found in the northeastern part of the Oasis. Drawing by the author.

The fieldwork carried out so far should be considered as an introduction to extensive and systematic research on the petroglyphs in different parts of the Oasis, planned for the future seasons.