Predynastic and Early Dynastic Rock Art 
and the rise of the state in Egypt

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I. Motivations for Rock Art
II. Huyge’s Horizons
III. The Predynastic and Early Dynastic Evidence
   a. Problems with Dating
   b. Royal Imagery – secure evidence
   c. Rock art of the local elite? Predecessor to royal art?
   d. Contemporaneous non-elite rock art
IV. Conclusions
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Motivations for Rock Art

As argued by Dirk Huyge (2002)

1. Magic
2. Totemism
3. Religion
4. Ideology
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Huyge’s Horizons

Type I boat, diagnostic Horizon II

diagnostic Horizon II
Huyge’s Horizons

diagnostic Horizon III, Naqada III
Huyge’s Horizons

Concerns

- does not investigate the more mundane options motivating the production of rock art
- seems to suggest some sort of universal, shared intention
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IV. Conclusions
The Predynastic and Early Dynastic Evidence: Problems with Dating
The Predynastic and Early Dynastic Evidence: Royal Imagery – secure evidence

- Gebel Sheikh Suleiman
- Wadi Mahamid Site 18, near Elkab
- Gharb Aswan ‘lost’ inscription
- King Den smiting scene in Sinai
- Serekh of Hours Qa’a from “Boat Site 2” in Wadi of the Horus of Qa’a in Western Thebes
Gebel Sheikh Suleiman
Wadi Mahamid Site 18, near Elkab

Gharb Aswan ‘lost’ inscription
King Den smiting scene in Sinai

Serekh of Hours Qa’a from “Boat Site 2” in Wadi of the Horus of Qa’a in Western Thebes
The Predynastic and Early Dynastic Evidence: Rock art of the local elite?

- Wadi Magar panels in Theban Western Desert
- Vingnette of ‘Elephant on the Mountain’ at Wadi Magar
- Wadi of the Horus Qa’a Panel, similar to Tomb 100
- Wadi el-Faras at Gebel es-Soman at Gharb Aswan
Wadi Magar panels
in Theban Western Desert
Vignette of ‘Elephant on the Mountain’ at Wadi Magar
Wadi of the Horus Qa’a Panel, similar to Tomb 100

Wadi el-Faras at Gebel es-Soman at Gharb Aswan
The Predynastic and Early Dynastic Evidence: Contemporaneous non-elite rock art

- Wadi Ramla’s “Commander Rock” panel
- Sidi Osman panels at Wadi el-Tilal
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- Rock art was not exclusively used as a tool to implement ideology or religion.
- The proliferation motifs and forms suggests lack of single codified program at this point.
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- Chronology is not well enough understood. Geometric designs are always described as being earlier on the basis of their geometric nature.
Conclusions

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- Concentration of Motifs
  Royal and Warrior imagery at frontier zones: South Sinai, Nubian border, Western Desert (Central Libyan desert). There is potential for contemporaneous traditions:
  - Ideological campaign,
  - AND localized, non-centralized
Selected Bibliography


Archeo-Nil 19 (2009)

Quellec on Gebel el-Uweinat
Zboray on Gebel el-Uweinat
Reimer on Prehistoric Rock Art Research in Western Desert
Classen, et al on Djara Cave art in Egypt’s Western Desert
Ikram on Kharga Oasis Petroglyphs
J.Darnell on Theban Western Desert rock art
Hendrickx, et al. on A Predynastic royal scene from Gharb Aswan
Huyge on Late Paleo-Epipaleolithic Rock art in Qurta
Storemyr on First Nile Catalact Geometric Rock Art
Fig. 21

Tentative chronology of the most notable clusters of rock art across the southern part of Gharb Aswan. Not all small sites have been included.

Legend
- 1-10 figures
- 11-20 figures
- >21 figures

The numbers are approximate