

Graffiti as Devotion along the Nile and Beyond

edited by Geoff Emberling and Suzanne Davis

DESCRIPTION:

Graffiti – unsanctioned marks in public built spaces – are increasingly recognized as worthy of study in contexts both ancient and modern. For ancient societies, graffiti are personal expressions that are otherwise rare in the archaeological and historical record.

This volume is focused around a group of ancient and medieval figural graffiti found in 2015 by an archaeological project of the Kelsey Museum, University of Michigan, at the site of El-Kurru. Located in northern Sudan, El-Kurru was a royal pyramid burial ground of kings and queens of Kush from about 850 to 650 BCE. Written in conjunction with the exhibition "Graffiti as Devotion along the Nile" at the Kelsey Museum (on view 23 August 2019-29 March 2020), essays by an international group of seven scholars present the site of El-Kurru and its graffiti in historical context. Chapters discuss the history of Kush, ancient graffiti in a funerary temple and medieval graffiti on a pyramid at El-Kurru, and graffiti at other sites in Kush and Egypt (Musawwarat es-Sufra, Philae, and Banganarti) and beyond (Pompeii). Other chapters discuss the rock art of Sudan and methods used for the conservation and documentation of graffiti at El-Kurru. The volume concludes with an annotated catalog of graffiti from El-Kurru and a photo essay of the contemporary Nile Valley practice of "hajj images" that commemorate Muslim pilgrimage.

Written to engage non-specialist readers, the book will be of interest to archaeologists, ancient and medieval historians, and art historians working in the Nile Valley and beyond, and to a broader community interested in these subjects.

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Introduction

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