Carving interactions: rock art in the nomadic landscape of the Black Desert, north-eastern Jordan
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Propositions

1. The Safaitic rock art of the Jebel Qurma region depicts selective, standardised representations of the daily and significant aspects of the desert nomadic way of life, in which animals are a key focus.
2. The carvers of the Jebel Qurma rock art made use of technique, composition, and sometimes the rock itself to create visual emphases and narratives with an awareness of the later audiences that would view them.
3. Through the creation of carvings at places of strategic and historical significance in the Jebel Qurma region, the nomads created and maintained visual histories and interacted with the landscape and each other through time and space.
4. The frequency, style, and context of the dromedary camel figure in Safaitic rock art suggests that this animal had an important socio-ideological position in the nomadic societies of the Black Desert, which was part of a wider development of the significance of the dromedary camel in ancient Arabia from at least the Iron Age onwards.
5. The ubiquitous depiction of wildlife and hunting by the herding societies of the Black Desert reveals that we must reconsider both what is implied by a ‘pastoral ideology’ and the often-cited dichotomy between pastoral and hunter-gatherer societies in their relationship with animals.
6. The study of how animals are represented in rock art can provide unique and significant insights into human-animal relationships in past societies.
7. A material approach to rock art, which integrates the study of content, production, and consumption, is essential for understanding rock art as a cultural practice and thus the societies that created it.
8. The importance of studying the spatial context of rock carvings and their traces of production and consumption entail that these features should always be documented in the field.
9. Rock art provides a unique, important insight into past societies and is, as of yet, an under-utilised source of information about ancient Arabia.
10. If “a camel is a horse designed by a committee” (proverb), then this committee should be praised for designing an animal that, if not quite as handsome as a horse, is certainly more interesting and intelligent.