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Stefan Kröpelin (University of Cologne), Frank Förster and Heiko Riemer, Pre-dynastic links between Dakhleh and Dongola (Sudan) areas

Recent discoveries in remote parts of the Libyan Desert of Southwest Egypt and Northwest Sudan have basically changed our knowledge about the past of the regions far west of the Nile and the role they have played in the early development of the pharaonic empire. Unexpected evidence from the West Nubian Desert adds essentially to this new picture, posing at the same time an array of new questions.

The recent discovery of two sites in the desert west of Dongola (northern Sudan), one of which with exceedingly rich prehistoric rock engravings, gives fresh impetus to the problem of the onset of trans-Saharan traffic in Northeast Africa. The chapel-like rock shelter holds more than hundred representations of a very specific design ("water mountain emblems") otherwise only known from a relatively limited area west of the Dakhleh Oasis, some 800 km to the north. Possible implications of these new finds are discussed in view of environmental and climatic conditions during predynastic times, and economic and subsistence strategies of people who might be regarded the first trans-Saharan travellers.