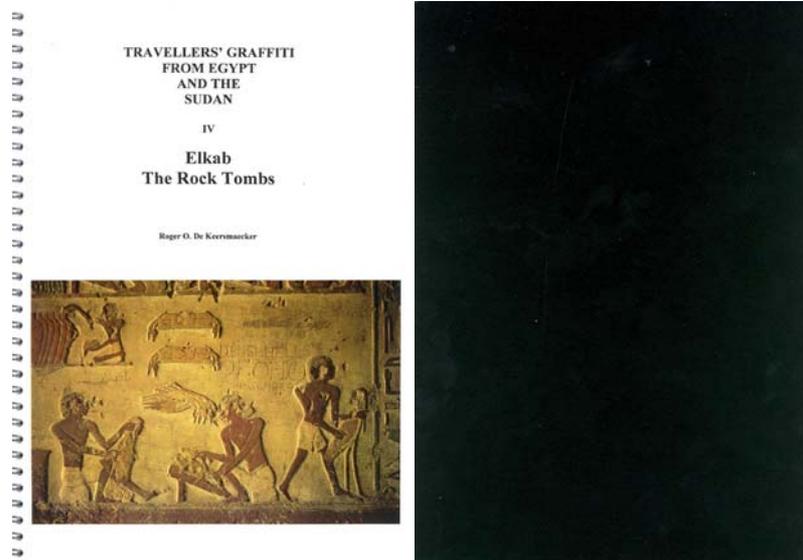


De Keersmaecker, R.O. 2005. Travellers' graffiti from Egypt and the Sudan. IV. Elkab, the rock tombs. –
www.egypt-sudan-graffiti.be

Book review by A. Bednarski



As the title states, this volume is the fourth in a series dedicated to recording inscriptions left by visitors to archaeological sites in Egypt and Sudan. The first volume was dedicated to the Kiosk of Kertassi, the second to the Temples of Semna and Kumma, and the third to Philae's Kiosk of Trajan. With this work, De Keersmaecker continues the important task of documenting often undervalued texts. The volume spans sixty pages in which the graffiti are organised, their geographic position noted, facsimiles offered, bibliographical information cited and references to graffiti by the same authors at other locations mentioned. When cataloguing the graffiti within the tomb of Paheri fourteen images from the Napoleonic 'Description de l'Égypte' are included, along with a plan from Porter and Moss. Among other images, the author includes eleven of his own photographs.

This volume is the culmination of painstaking efforts by the author and offers the researcher a rich source of historical data. As stated, the texts that De Keersmaecker records are often not regarded as historically significant. Yet much could be done with the information presented by him to help us better understand the site-history of el Kab. At times, for example, the author offers us anecdotal material with regard to the graffiti's authors. This information might be expanded to explain why certain individuals visited el Kab. More broadly, it would appear that something might be said about the popularity of el Kab, and its importance, to nineteenth-century, European travellers. I suggest this largely on the fact that, in the tomb of Paheri, the earliest graffiti recorded by De Keersmaecker dates to 1799, while the latest dates to the end of the nineteenth century. It would appear, therefore, that the information contained in this volume might be combined with other 19th century sources to better explain the role that the site played in Europeans' interactions with Egypt. As a result, this work presents an exciting, and useful, 'first-step' in a much larger historical project.

De Keersmaecker, R.O. 2005. Travellers' graffiti from Egypt and the Sudan. IV. Elkab, the rock tombs. Published and printed by the author. 60 pp. Price € 15.00 (excluding packing and postage). See www.egypt-sudan-graffiti.be.