Sacred Grooves in Ancient Egypt

CONCLUSIONS

The grooves were not condoned or considered sacrilegious.

ABD

grooves

some
grooves

ancient Egyptians to access the religious charge of the temple for pious

expression and/or perceived apotropaic and medicinal effects.

REFERENCES

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Karnak Temples de d’Études Égyptien -

date as early as the New Kingdom (c. 1500 BCE), and persisted through

minimum Dimensions + (Range Averages)

- Over 100 graffiti are also known at the Ptah Temple. Their high quality,

368. - Grooves in dialogue with, but do not destroy, primary or secondary

grooves were the result of multiple activity phases and may have

meanings, such as protecting a magical being, or conferring protection to

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been supported by the Centre Franco-Egyptien de Recherches Égyptiennes, the Centre de Recherches Égyptiennes de l’Université d’Oxford, the Griffith Institute at Oxford University, and the Ministry of Antiquities Egypt. This research has been supported by the "Magia di pratica comune: un convegno dei Templi di Egitto" in order to assess the grooves' spatial distribution and relationship to primary and secondary decoration, in an attempt to distinguish between accidental marks & intentional interventions.


INTRODUCTION

Sacred Grooves are known as "pilgrimage," "temple," or "sanctuary" grooves. They are natural, long gouges affecting multiple walls or surfaces of buildings or monuments, known not just from Egypt, but around the world. The grooves are evidence of prolonged, secondary use of sacred spaces by ancient Egyptians.

The grooves' spatial distribution and relationship to primary and secondary decoration are being studied in order to assess if the grooves were used to access the religious charge of the temple for pious expression and/or perceived apotropaic and medicinal effects. The grooves were the result of multiple activity phases and may have overlapping episodes of different activities.

The grooves are found exclusively on the exterior of the temple, which was considered a sacred space. They are considered along with other graffiti in an attempt to distinguish between accidental marks and intentional interventions.

The grooves are in dialogue with, but do not destroy, primary or secondary decoration. They are found on the exterior of the Ptah Temple, which dates back to the reigns of Hatshepsut & Thutmose III (Dynasty 18). There are easily 10,000 grooves upon the monuments in Karnak, and the temple is considered one of the largest in the world.

Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the sacred grooves in the Ptah Temple.

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