

ROCK ART

OF JOE GQABI DISTRICT
EASTERN CAPE HIGHLANDS

Dawn Green





San rock painting redrawing by RARI.

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*Amatola rock painting
Redrawn by Sam Challis*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Joe Gqabi District has incredible wealth in its heritage and I celebrate, acknowledge, and honour the many diverse people who have lived in this multifaceted landscape, leaving us their stories in their rock art. Today, many people contribute to the conservation of this precious heritage, including headmen, land-owners and site custodians, who are thanked for their support and for providing access to rock art sites. Rock art enthusiasts in local communities also contribute much to rock art research and conservation by surveying and sharing information and ideas.

George Stow recorded rock art in this region in the 1870s and 1880s, followed by Helen Tongue and Otto Moszeik in the early 20th century. Walter Battiss spent some time here in the 1940s, Bert Woodhouse and Neil Lee recorded and published many sites during the 1970s and 1980s, and Jalmar and Ione Rudner a few sites in 1970. San rock art was largely misunderstood until the early 1980s when David Lewis-Williams (1981) published his doctoral research predominantly based on paintings found in the Joe Gqabi District. He has made a lasting and invaluable contribution to the understanding, appreciation and conservation of the art. Other South African researchers who have made valuable contributions to understandings of the art of the area are Thomas Dowson, Colin Campbell, Geoff Blundell, David Pearce, Lara Mallen, Sam Challis, Leila Henry, Edward Eastwood, Benjamin Smith and Sven Ouzman.

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San rock painting. Redrawn by RARI.

INTRODUCTION

Rock art is the way in which people have marked the landscape, usually in the form of paintings and engravings on rocks. Different groups of people paint and engrave using different techniques to portray a range of things. These include paintings of animals, people, clothing, equipment, weapons, vehicles, sometimes plants, geometric shapes, lines, dots and strokes. Our understanding of different types of rock art depends on who made the rock art and what we may know about their beliefs and daily lives. The Joe Gqabi District is important because it contains a variety of paintings and markings made by different groups of people. Studying these can give us insights into how people in the past thought and lived, what their beliefs were and how they coped with changes in their lives.

This booklet focuses on the diverse rock art found in the Joe Gqabi District. The geology comprises sandstones from the Karoo Supergroup in the Grassland biome of the Oviston, Steynsburg, Venterstad, Burgersdorp, Jamestown and Aliwal North areas, and continues in the Alpine and Mountain Grassland biomes of the Drakensberg range where the towns of Sterkspruit, Lady Grey, Barkly East, Rhodes, Rossouw, Ugie, Maclear and Mount Fletcher are situated. These sandstones are porous and provide an ideal surface for paints to adhere to. The rock art is found in shelters created through erosive processes, ranging from large boulders to small overhangs and also caves. Generally, the sites are located close to the main rivers, as well as the tributaries and streams feeding these rivers.

While only a small portion of the Joe Gqabi district has been surveyed, there are estimated to be more than a thousand sites where paintings, some engravings, other markings, and archaeological artefacts are found. All these are evidence of different people living in and moving through the diverse landscape. In the following pages, all forms of rock markings will be described, even those that may not necessarily be considered 'art' or an 'image', as in the case of graffiti or circle imprints.



Korana rock painting redrawn by Sven Ouzman

PAINTS AND DATING

Paints were made from naturally occurring pigments (colours) in iron-rich clays or ochre found throughout the Joe Gqabi region. The red, orange and yellow rocks were ground into a fine powder and mixed with a variety of binders such as plant sap, water, animal blood and fat to obtain the consistency needed for painting. Red ochre darkens when heated and yellow ochre becomes permanently red. White pigment was made from clays or raptor droppings, while black consisted predominantly of charcoal or manganese. By mixing these primary pigments – black, white, red and yellow - a wide range of colours may be produced, as is often seen in the shaded polychrome paintings of the San. In recent times, coarser-grained hydrous ferric oxides appear to have been used more frequently. These fade more quickly than others and this gives some indication of the age of the paintings.



An example of the colour gradations created by mixing pigments.

Photograph by Stephen Townley Bassett



Samples of pigments and the colours they make.

Photograph by Janette Deacon

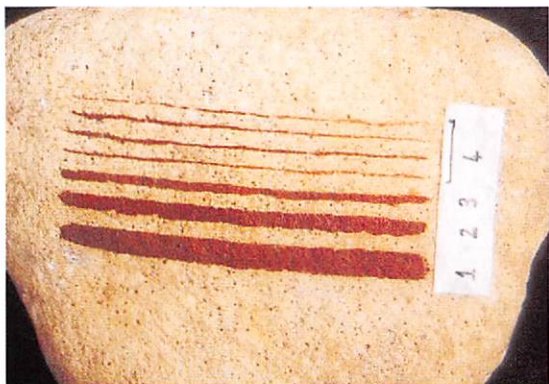


Brushes and pens made from natural materials:

- (1) Porcupine quill
- (2) Stick pen
- (3) Hog-hair brush
- (4) Springhare brush
- (5-7) Feather brushes



Example of a rough brush
Photograph by Dawn Green



*Different line widths using different types of brushes from fine feathers to rough bristles.
Photograph by Stephen Townley Bassett.*



*Example of finger painting.
Photograph by Dawn Green.*

Only paints that contain blood or other biological matter and black paint made from charcoal can be dated. While the rock art of Joe Gqabi is poorly dated, recent research in the Maclear area indicates that certain San paintings were made more than 2 000 years ago. Others date to as recently as 70 years ago. The rock paintings of other people are believed to have been made more recently – over the past 1 000 years.

A LANDSCAPE WITH MANY VOICES

The techniques used in applying paint or making engravings on rocks differ amongst different cultural groups and can be helpful in identifying who made the rock art. The San generally used a fine-line painting technique, while Khoekhoe and Sotho people used a finger-painting technique and some mixed groups used both a rough-brush and finger-painting technique.

Sometimes the names of groups were chosen by the groups themselves and sometimes they were imposed by others as was often the case when European settlers arrived in South Africa. Both the words San and Bushman have derogatory associations. My preference is to use the name San in this booklet and I do so with respect.

The San people of today are not the same as the San people of 500 years ago. It is important to recognise that cultural groups change over time. People came into contact with people in other groups, lived together, intermarried and adopted aspects of each other's cultures.

Thus, the Korana were not only descendants of the Khoekhoen, but also included San, Nguni, Sotho and some European people living with them. Opposed to what apartheid led us to believe, people of San, Khoekhoe, Nguni, Sotho, European, and Asian descent intermarried and mixed across supposed cultural divides for hundreds of years. All racial, cultural and ethnic words and terms that are used in this booklet are applied with respect, and recognise the dynamic and complex histories of group identities.



Sterkspruit area. Photograph by Roger C Fisher.

THE SAN

Archaeological evidence from excavations show us that hunter-gatherers have lived in the Joe Gqabi area for at least 30 000 years. The term hunter-gatherer describes a way of life in which people moved on specific routes, living off seasonally available plant food and hunting animals. They may have moved from the high Drakensberg to lower-lying areas during the winter months.

The San are descended from these hunter-gatherers and their paintings are the most commonly found in Joe Gqabi. They used a fine-line brush technique and their paintings are generally finely detailed and shaded, using one, two, three or more colour pigments. Their painted images usually represent animals, people, clothing, equipment, weapons and various spirit-world creatures and experiences. There is a small geometric element of dots, lines, zigzags, nested u's and so forth. San rock engravings were made using a pecked, scraped or incised technique.

A great deal of research has been done on San rock art and through this we understand that most of their art is deeply spiritual, with a focus on supernatural potency, the experiences of altered states of consciousness and, in certain cases, ceremonies such as initiation.



*San rock painting of female figures with what appear to be Khoekhoe finger paintings to the right.
Photographed by Dawn Green.*



San rock painting photographed by Renaud Ego

THE KHOEKHOEN

Approximately 2 000 years ago, a herding way of life became established in southern Africa.

These people are called the Khoekhoen (formerly spelt Khoi). Their livelihood was based on domesticated animals – sheep, goats and, at a later time, cattle – but they also relied on hunting, gathering and trading. Because they were stock herders, their rock art sites occur near water sources and rivers. Evidence suggests the Khoekhoen travelled along the Orange River, making it likely that the largest proportion of Khoekhoe rock art sites occur in the Aliwal, Burgersdorp and Gariep areas.

Khoekhoe rock art appears in the form of finger-painted geometric shapes, hand prints, dots, strokes and aprons, but there is also a small representational element. Usually the finger paintings were made in one or two colours, with black, red, orange and white dominating. Interpretation of Khoekhoen images is still in the early stages, but it is likely that they are associated with girls' and boys' rites of passage and group identity. In contrast to San rock engravings, Khoekhoe engravings are usually rough pecked.



Fingerdots



Microdots



Fingerstrokes



The circle and its variations



The oval and its variations



Rectangles



Triangles



Other geometrics



Complex geometrics



Handprints



People and animals



Women's aprons

San rock engravings are usually made using a pecked, scraped or incised technique. Khoekhoe rock engravings are usually rough pecked.



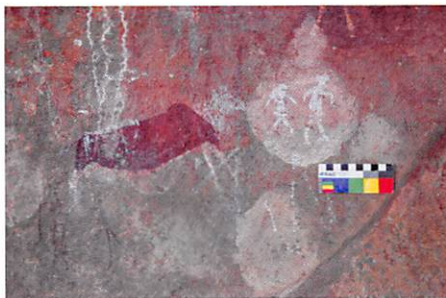
On the left, examples of the range of Khoekhoe finger paintings and photograph of a geometric finger painting. Table by Edward Eastwood. Photograph by Dawn Green.

THE SOTHO AND NGUNI

Iron-working communities who farmed with crops and cattle moved south of the Limpopo roughly 1 900 years ago. Relatively soon after this, the early Nguni, from whom the Xhosa are descended, moved south, probably along the eastern foothills of the Drakensberg where the pasture was good for cattle farming. Some 600 years ago the Sotho people had established themselves in Lesotho and had adapted to the harsh winters. While several rock painting traditions have been recognised, only one has thus far been identified in the Joe Gqabi district. These are the circular markings left from drying dung patties on rock shelter walls by various groups of women and children.



Circle imprints photographed by Dawn Green.



EUROPEAN SETTLERS

Richard Collins reconnoitred the Stormberg region in 1809 and reported that the only people living in these parts were 'Bushmen', although there are likely to have been other cultural groups he did not see. By 1832, Trekboer families began moving into the areas east of the Stormberg Spruit and by 1845 a handful of farmers were living along the Kraai River. After Burgersdorp and Aliwal North were founded, more European settlers moved into the area during the 1870s as they believed it offered greater protection from mixed raiding parties. Europeans also created a type of 'rock art', namely graffiti consisting of people's names and drawings of domestic animals.



All sites older than 60 years are protected and governed by the National Heritage Resources Act (25) of 1999. Any changes made to or work undertaken at or near archaeological sites need a permit from the relevant governing heritage authority. In the Eastern Cape it is the Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources Authority.



Two views of early European graffiti, photographed by Dawn Green.

MIXED GROUPS

Before the 1700s, contact between people of different cultures in South Africa occurred mainly between the San and the Khoekhoe during hunting or gathering expeditions, European castaways from shipwrecks who often settled with local populations, and slaves escaping from the Cape Colony. During the 1700s this changed primarily due to the Bushman Wars, Frontier Wars, continuing into the 1800s with the Mfecane. The lifestyle of hunter-gatherers and herders became more and more difficult to sustain as land was no longer freely accessible. In many instances, this forced people of different cultures to come together into groups. Some of these followed what was largely a raiding lifestyle and such groups at times became quite powerful. What followed was a creolisation of people and ideas that was specific to each group.

One such mixed group was the AmaTola, which comprised San, Khoekhoe, Xhosa, Sotho and a handful of Europeans. Their fine-line, unshaded, representational paintings were predominantly painted in one or two colours, generally in black, orange and bright red colours. These paintings are found in the Mount Fletcher area, as well as the KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg and Lesotho.



AmaTola rock painting photographed by Sam Challis

Another mixed group was the Korana, which were usually led by captains. They included similarly mixed members as the AmaTola. Korana rock art has been identified

as being characterised by rough- brush and finger-painted representational and geometric imagery in a variety of colours in a coarse, thin pigment. Korana rock paintings have been found in the Alwal North area towards the Gariep dam.



Korana rock paintings and redrawings by Sven Ouzman

Close to and south of Maclear is another set of raider paintings that have not as yet been associated with any specific group, but is thought to be a mixed group of people, like the AmaTola and Korana. Researchers have suggested that these paintings be named Type 2 rock art as they may form part of one tradition painted by one group of people. Type 2 rock art is both brush and finger painted in powdery and watery pigments. Subject matter includes representational, enigmatic (difficult to identify) and geometric images.



Three categories of Type 2 rock art. Photographed by RARI.

INTERPRETING THE ROCK ARTS OF JOE GQABI

Most people who visit rock art sites want to know why the paintings were made and what they mean. It is important to remember that rock art interpretation should be supported by evidence. We cannot merely guess at the meaning according to what we think it may or should be. Peoples' cultures and ways of thinking differ. Guesswork does little to further our understanding and can provoke people to damage rock art because they do not understand the significance and the value of it.

A range of evidence is used to obtain some understanding of the various rock art traditions that have been identified. One of the most significant of these is information about what a specific group's beliefs and ideologies were. If we have some knowledge of what a people thought and believed in, we can then see if these beliefs can be identified in the art they made. Of course, in the case of more recent rock art, people can explain why they painted specific images. Additional information is provided by the historical and archaeological context of a site. Knowing what occurred in people's lives can help us to understand why they made the images they did. Thus, it is not only helpful to know what people believed in but also what was happening around them. This will differ from area to area and from time to time, so we need to be careful not to make assumptions.

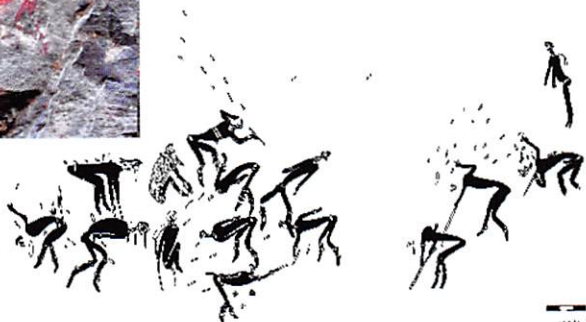
We cannot assume that all Xhosa people believed in the same thing or reacted to circumstances in the same way. Similarly, we also cannot assume that Khoekhoe people today adhere to the same beliefs and ideologies of Khoekhoe people 2 000 years ago. The further back in time we go, the more cautious we need to be in our assumptions. The similarities between a groups' culture today and in the past need to be clearly identified before we can use this information to understand their art. The following interpretations relate specifically to the rock art of the Joe Gqabi district and may not be relevant for other areas.



Maclear District photographed by Dawn Green

SAN ROCK ART

Over the past 100 years, San rock art has received a great deal of attention, possibly because of the Western appreciation of the San's artistry. However, early interpretations of the art were often wrong because it was seen as the dabbling of a primitive, simple-minded people expressing their daily existence and hunting magic. We now know they were wrong because of the written records of Wilhelm Bleek, Lucy Lloyd, and Joseph Millerd Orpen dating to the 1870s. These reports describe some of the beliefs and rituals that were central to San people living in the Northern Cape and the Drakensberg mountains. Furthermore, since the 1950s, anthropologists have spent much time living with the San people of the Kalahari and recording their belief systems. These two research approaches have shown that the medicine or healing dance of the San was central to the San way of life. Ritual specialists would use supernatural potency to enter altered states of consciousness. Researchers have been able to demonstrate by meticulous comparisons and examination of San rock art that many of the images found in the Joe Gqabi area are closely related to the medicine dance, supernatural potency and the sensations and experiences of altered states of consciousness.



*San painting of a medicine dance with a redrawing by RARI.
Photographed by Dawn Green.*

At the medicine dance, women would sit around a central fire clapping a rhythm and singing special songs while mostly men, wearing dance rattles, would dance in a circle around the women. The repeated movement and sound, combined with the power of the songs, helped to generate a supernatural potency that allowed the ritual specialist to enter an altered state of consciousness. While in this altered state, the male and female ritual specialists or medicine people would be able to perform tasks that

ordinary people could not, such as providing good hunting, healing the sick, protecting people from malevolent forces, bringing on rain and visiting people at camps far away from them.



Going into trance. Photographed by Dawn Green.

Supernatural potency was essential for ritual specialists to enter altered states. The activation of such potency resulted in what were sometimes painful physical sensations. Ritual specialists speak of a sensation of potency travelling or 'boiling' up their spines (above), raising hairs on their backs and necks, and bleeding from the nose (above right), tingling in the top of the heads, stomach pains that make them bend over and use dancing sticks to support them (below centre), a tightening around the waist as if constricted by a metal band (below right), experiencing a sensation of having extra limbs or digits (polymelia)(redrawing below), and feeling very tall (below left) or small.



*Photographed by Renaud Ego.
Redrawing by RARI.*

The San believed that ritual specialists were filled with supernatural potency as were animals such as eland, rhebok, hartebeest, gemsbok, kudu, giraffe, springbok, etc. Eland were the most important of all animals for the San, not only because they were the best source of meat and fat, but because they were believed to be their god's favourite animal and filled with supernatural potency. Eland played a primary role in all San rituals, namely the medicine dance, girls' puberty rites, boys' first kill rites, and marriage. It is not surprising then that the eland is the most frequently painted animal in Joe Gqabi district



Paintings of rhebok.

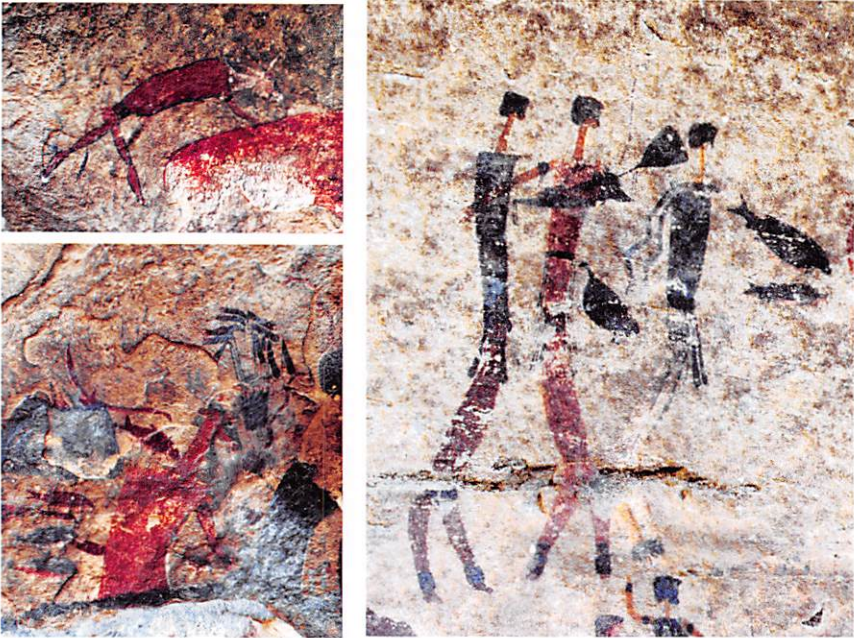
Paintings of eland.

Photographed by Renaud Ego.

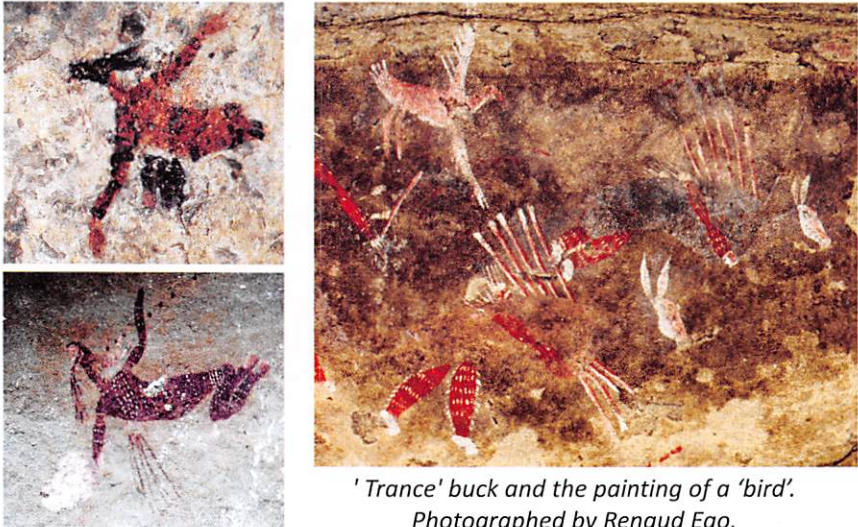
Ritual specialists were said by some to 'own' the potency of a specific animal. One of the sensations of altered states of consciousness is becoming an animal. Many people, no matter their culture, report the experience of thinking of an animal and then being transformed into that animal. Rock art images known as therianthropes – part-human, part-animal – are explained in this way. When ritual specialists used the potency of an animal and 'became' that animal, they saw what the animal saw and felt what it felt. There are many images in Joe Gqabi that represent therianthropes, which often have the head of an antelope, the body of a human and the hooves of an antelope.

Many ritual specialists also reported that when they are in altered states they have the sensation of swimming under water or flying. These metaphors of altered-state experiences are believed to be expressed in rock art through paintings of fish, eels and

birds. Another expression of altered states experiences are images of trance or flying buck. These therianthropic images usually show kneeling or possibly flying humans with antelope heads and hooves, arms in the backward position, trailing streamers, and sometimes lines flowing from the top of the head



Various therianthropes with fish and eels. Photographed by Renaud Ego.



*'Trance' buck and the painting of a 'bird'.
Photographed by Renaud Ego.*

Certain animals were closely associated with rain and water, especially eland but also elephants and serpents or snakes (the word serpent describes paintings of snakes of an unknown species that sometimes may have the head of an antelope). Researchers believe that some paintings of rounded, four legged animals of unknown species are rain animals. Amongst certain San groups, ritual specialists could enter an altered state, catch a rain animal with ropes or reins, lead it across the sky and slaughter it. Its blood and milk would fall as rain. 'Male' rain manifested itself in powerful and frightening lightning storms that could be destructive, while female rain was soft and gentle and restored the land. Ritual specialists would try to encourage the latter but also had to be proficient in dealing with the powerful potency of some of the water creatures, such as the water snake/serpent that could be both destructive and beneficial.

Felines and lions are often depicted in San rock paintings of Joe Gqabi (when we cannot identify the species, the word felines is used as a general term for wild cats such as lion



*Paintings of elephant, serpents and what may be a rain animal (top right).
Photographed by Renaud Ego.*

and leopard). The San believed lions were very similar to ritual specialists since they could become invisible, have supernatural power to make things happen, and knew things that ordinary people did not. Ritual specialists had the ability to take on the form of felines and malevolent ritual specialists would often take on the form of lions.



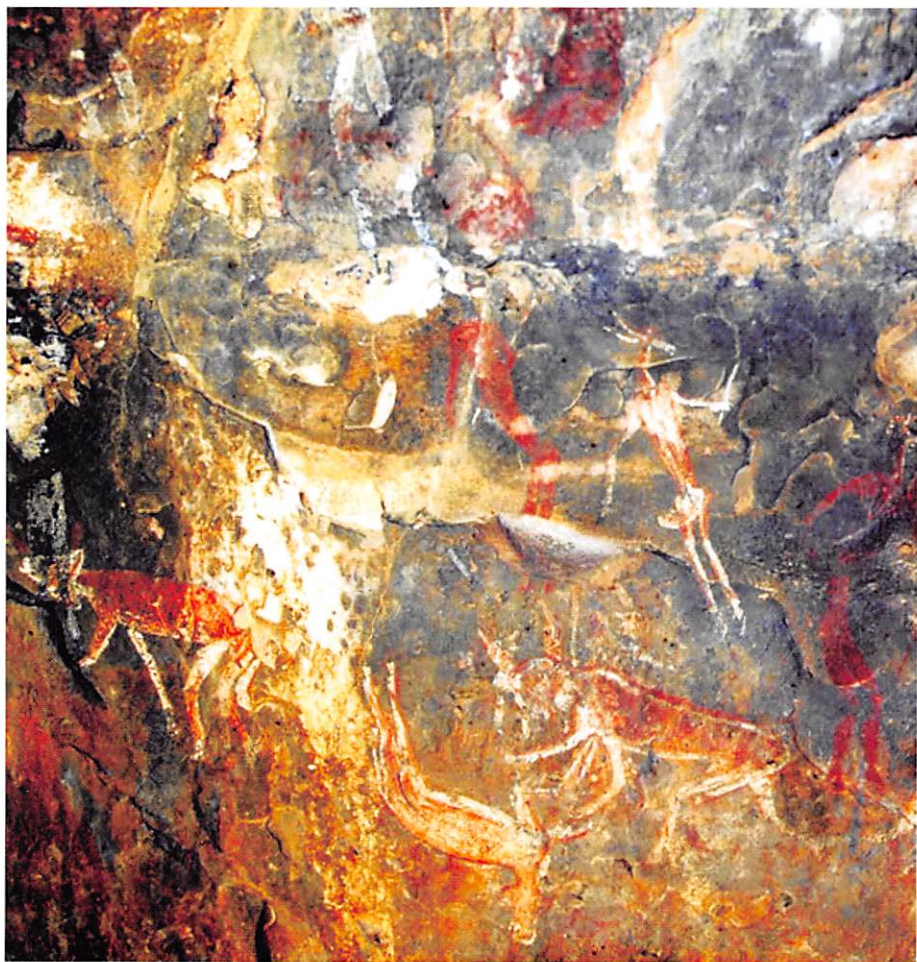
Painting of feline photographed by Renaud Ego

Things began to change for the San, especially with regard to their contact with other groups, about 2 000 years ago. These changes can be seen in the emergence of paintings of cattle, shields and people, such as the first farmers and, much later, Europeans. Sometimes ritual specialists are painted with features of other races. Certain San began to form groups with people of other cultures – evidence for this lies in the appearance of mixed-group rock art as described below. Current research is investigating these changes and the influence such contact may have had on their beliefs.



Paintings of cattle and detailed faces. Photographs by Dawn Green.

When looking at San rock art, it is important to remember that both the real and non-real may appear in the same painting. You may see figures clapping at a dance and ritual specialists seemingly going into an altered state, as well as images of animals and spirit-world experiences seen and felt by the ritual specialist while in an altered state of consciousness. Not all images and image clusters are understood by researchers and many questions still need to be investigated. New knowledge will be found to increase our understanding of this incredibly symbolic art.



Complex cluster of San paintings photographed by Renaud Ego.

KHOEKHOE ROCK ART

The Khoekhoe finger paintings that have been identified in Joe Gqabi are dots, geometric shapes and strokes. These images, usually made by finger with a fine to medium-grained paint, is either painted on top of San rock art, to one side of shelters away from San rock art or, more rarely, on its own. Research to understand Khoekhoe finger paintings is still in its early phase, but the geometric images may be closely associated with the decorations painted on young girls' faces during Khoekhoe puberty rites and the beaded patterns sewn onto new front and back aprons initiates receive on completion of the ritual. These motifs could be associated with the moon and beliefs about rain and water. While Khoekhoe rock art may not appear to be as 'artistic' as San art, it is nevertheless important and must be conserved.



Khoekhoe finger paintings of dots and geometrics. Photographs by Dawn Green.

SOTHO AND NGUNI CIRCLE IMPRINTS

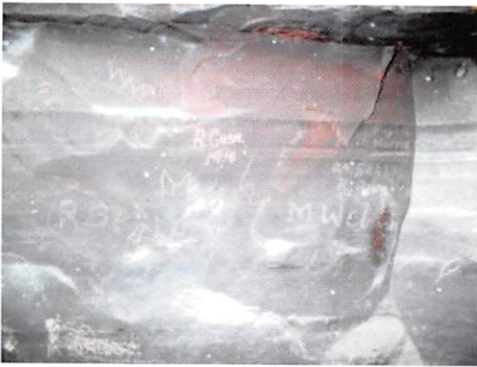
A recently identified class of markings, rather than paintings, are the circle imprints found in sandstone overhangs. These circular, clay-like marks are about 15 cm in diameter and were made by Nguni and Sotho women and children drying dung patties on the walls of shelters. The dried dung patties, sometimes mixed with clay, were used in cooking fires in wood-poor areas. Where this practice still continues, people should use sandstone shelters that do not contain rock paintings. Dung should never be placed over rock paintings as this will damage them.



*Dung patties and the circular imprints they make.
Photographs Dawn Green.*

EUROPEAN SETTLERS

Europeans have marked shelters and overhangs in Joe Gqabi district predominantly with graffiti. Graffiti was made by early European settlers and explorers to the area, soldiers during the Frontier and South African wars, and landowners and visitors thereafter. Some of the early graffiti is engraved or scratched into the rock face, although it was at times also painted on the walls. The earlier forms of graffiti can be important as a record of people living in and moving through the landscape. It is against the law to make changes to or damage any archaeological or historical sites, which includes all rock art sites.



European graffiti from different times. Photographs by Dawn Green.

MIXED-GROUP ROCK ART

Paintings of horses, and horses and riders, who at times are shown to carry weapons, are a theme that seems to link the mixed-raider rock art that has been identified. Paintings of horses allow us to date these paintings since horses were first introduced into the Joe Gqabi district in the late 18th century. The paintings may thus be 200 years old, or even slightly older.

AMATOLA ROCK ART

Like classic San rock art, AmaTola rock paintings were painted using the fine-line technique, but executed predominantly in one or two colours in a flat, unshaded, two-dimensional method. The subject matter includes horses, horses and riders, cattle, a few 'British' soldiers and wagons, but also eland being hunted or butchered. The weapons depicted include guns, but more often knobkerries and spears. Figures have knobbed headdresses or brimmed hats with feathers or just feathers without a hat. Baboons and baboon therianthropes are also depicted.

The paintings are believed to reflect a creolisation of the beliefs of the Nguni, the Sotho and the San, in the process forming a new identity around the symbols of baboons and horses. Baboons were believed to provide protection and to be impervious to evil and sickness. Their potency could be used by ritual specialists to provide protection during raids or heal those in need. Horses were closely associated with eland and rain, and their potency was used for rain-making. They were another important element in successful raids.

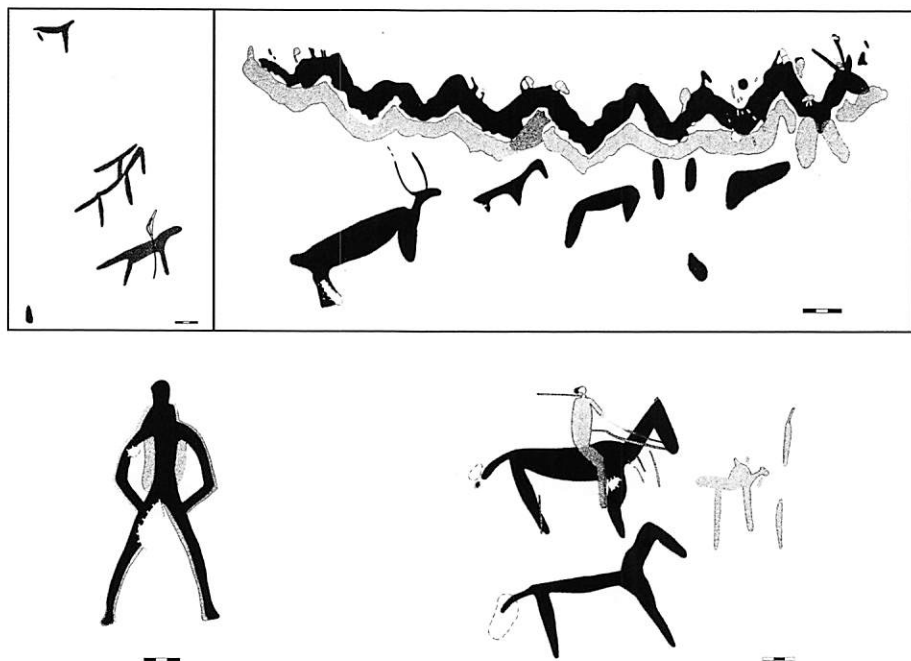


Paintings and a redrawing of baboons, horses, riders and dancing figures wearing feathers. Photographs and redrawing by Sam Challis.

KORANA ROCK ART

IN Korana paintings, large-grained paint was applied by finger or by a roughly bound brush – either a macerated stick or a grass bundle. There is only one known instance of a Korana engraving using a grinding technique. The subject matter of Korana rock art includes horses and riders, weapons, hunting scenes, human figures with their hands on their hips that could represent dominant European, Nguni and Sotho outsiders, figures holding hands believed to represent Korana people, serpents, aprons and apron decorations.

Korana rock art is argued to represent an amalgamation of beliefs deriving from the different cultures of the people that made up the group. The art shows how they coped, changed, and forged a new identity within a volatile and changing colonial landscape. The horses, riders and weapons refer to the Korana's military and raider prowess, while the serpents and aprons emphasise the magical element of their mixed beliefs, which include both puberty rites for boys and girls but also medicine dances and rainmaking rites similar to those of the San.



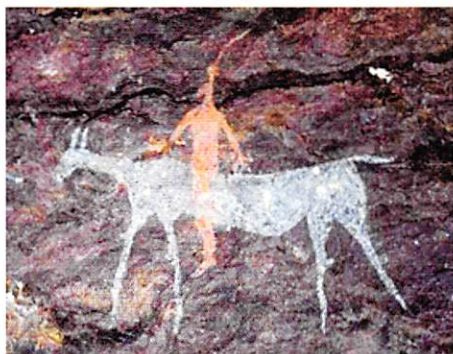
Redrawings of Korana paintings of a serpent, outsiders, horses and riders by Sven Ouzman.

TYPE 2 ROCK ART

Around Maclear and Tsolo, mixed but as yet unidentified (unnamed) raider groups produced what has been tentatively called Type 2 rock art, which is subdivided in types 2a, 2b and 2c. It is argued that they are part of one tradition. Type 2a comprise brush-painted images in one or two colours, either red, white or yellow in powdery pigments. The subject matter includes antelope, but also a few horses and riders. Paintings are generally situated apart from classic fine-line paintings.



Type 2a paintings
Photographs by RARI.



Type 2b images are rough-brush and finger-painted in predominantly red and pink-red, thick and coarse powdery or watery pigments. Subject matter includes horses and riders, human figures, traditional weapons, clothed figures and felines painted over fine-line rock paintings and in association with features of the rock face.



Type 2b paintings. Photographs by RARI.

Type 2c rock art is also of the rough-brush and finger-painted style in a variety of colours of thick and coarse, powdery and watery pigments. The subject matter is wide and includes human figures, horses and riders, guns and traditional weapons,

quadrupeds, antelope, geometrics and enigmatic images painted over fine-line paintings, but also in association with features of the rock face.

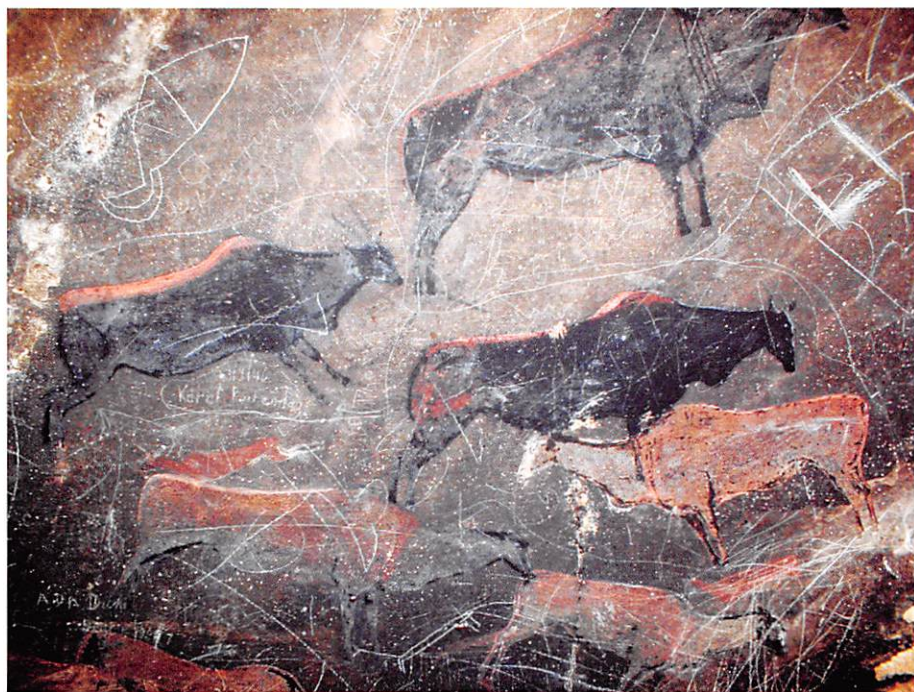
The three types of Type 2 rock art may be chronologically related, with one developing from the other in the numbered order given. The rock art may reflect changing ideological contestations in a contested landscape.



Type 2c paintings. Photographs by RARI.

CONCLUSION

The Joe Gabi district has an incredible wealth of rock art that reflects the diversity of people and their beliefs who lived in and moved through this area. It is impossible to detail every aspect of the art and its interpretations in this booklet, but you are encouraged to read further. A deeper understanding of rock art will heighten your experience when viewing the art. Take time to identify the painting technique and the paints used as this can give an indication of who made the art and when. At the same time, remember to enjoy the landscape and the surroundings as this often adds to the experience and understanding of these people of the past and their lifeways. Rock art is a vital part of southern African history and it is essential that we conserve it for future generations.



*San paintings that have been damaged by scratching and graffiti.
Photograph by Dawn Green.*

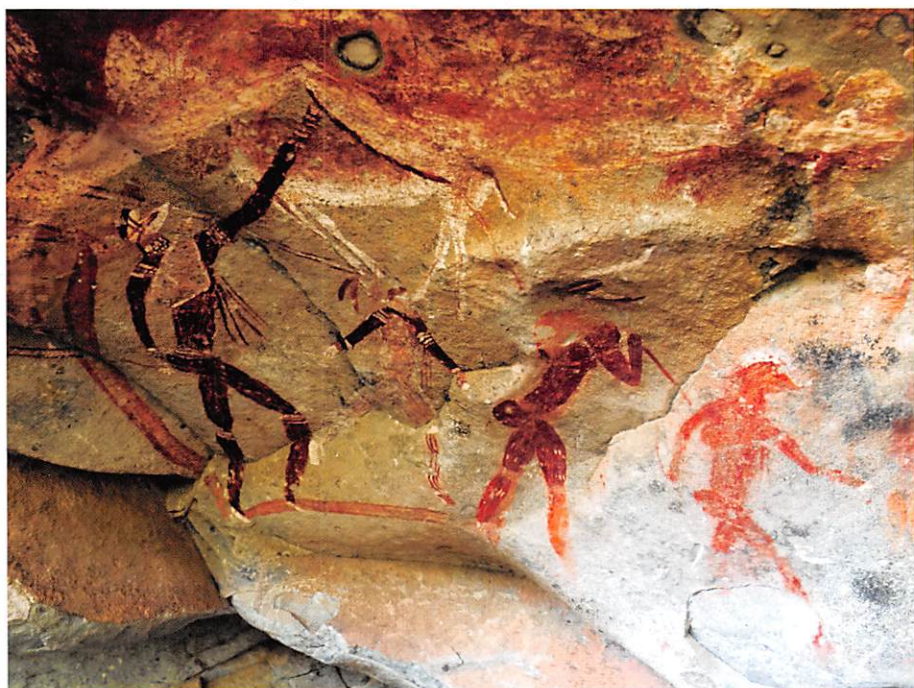
CONSERVING OUR ROCK ART

According to the International Cultural Tourism Charter of 1999, heritage is a broad concept that includes the sustainable conservation of both the natural and the cultural environment. It encompasses landscapes, historic places, archaeological sites and built environments, as well as bio-diversity, collections, past and continuing cultural practices, knowledge and living experiences. It records and expresses the long processes of historic development that form the essence of diverse national, regional, indigenous and local identities, and is an integral part of modern life. It is a dynamic reference point and positive instrument for managed growth and change. The specific heritage and collective memory of each locality or community is irreplaceable and an important foundation for development, both now and into the future.

South Africa's rock art is protected under the National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999. It is an offence to damage rock art sites in any way and contravention is punishable by a high monetary fine or a jail sentence. Rock art and their surrounds are

very vulnerable and all visitors need to take the following precautions:

- Take as many photographs as you want
- Do ask questions of your guide
- Do enjoy and respect the paintings and the landscape
- All site visits are at your own risk
- Certain sites can only be viewed in small groups of fewer than ten people at a time to prevent damage to the paintings
- Stay with the group, walk on the paths and do not wander off on your own
- Remove your backpack before entering a shelter to avoid the backpack brushing against paintings
- Do not remove any archaeological artefacts from rock art sites and their surrounds
- Leave artefacts as you find them
- Move carefully so as not to generate dust
- Do not touch paintings with your hands or your clothes
- Do not wet paintings and take care not to cough or sneeze on paintings
- Do not light fires in shelters with rock paintings or close to shelters
- Do not litter or throw cigarette butts on the ground in rock shelters or nearby



San rock painting photographed by Dawn Green

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION AND WEBSITES

BARKLY EAST MUSEUM

12 White Street
Barkly East
Lubabalo Mapuko 045 971 9063

BURGERSDORP MUSEM

49 Piet Retief Street
Burgersdorp
Dalene Bredenkamp 051 653 0266

ALIWAL NORTH MUSEUM

22 Smith Street
Aliwal North
Hannes van der Berg 082 672 2739; vanderberghannes@gmail.com

JOE GQABI DISTRICT TOURISM

EASTERN CAPE HIGHLANDS
045 979 3129, www.jgdm.gov.za

HERITAGE MANAGEMENT & CONSERVATION

For more information and recording archaeological sites contact
archaeologist Dawn Green at dawn@beddgelert.co.za

National Museum Bloemfontein: www.nasmus.co.za

East London Museum: www.elmuseum.za.org

Albany Museum: www.ru.ac.za/albanymuseum

South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA)

www.sahra.org.za

Eastern Cape Provincial Heritage Resources

Authority (ECPHRA): www.ecphra.org.za

Heritage Kwazulu-Natal (AMAFA): www.heritagekzn.co.za

Association of Southern African Professional Archaeologists (ASAPA):
www.asapa.co.za

Rock Art Research Institute (RARI): www.wits.ac.za/rockart/

South African Rock Art Digital Archive (SARADA): www.sarada.co.za

UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO): www.en.unesco.org



BECOME A MEMBER OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

www.archaeologysa.co.za

archsoc@iziko.org.za



MANAGED ROCK ART SITES

All rock art site visits are by appointment only!

WALTER SISULU MUNICIPALITY (Burgersdorp, Steynsburg, Venterstad & Oviston, Aliwal North & Jamestown)

Burgersdorp Museum

Dalene Bredenkamp, 051 653 0266

Aliwal North Museum

Hannes van den Berg, 082 672 2739

Leliekloof Valley of Art

Minnie de Klerk, Jamestown, sanart@nokwi.co.za; www.leliekloof.co.za



ELUNDINI MUNICIPALITY
(Ugie, Maclear & Mount Fletcher)

Woodcliffe Trails

Maclear

045 932 1550; 082 925 1030

www.woodcliffe.co.za ; www.woodcliffecavetrails.co.za

Sheila Bell-Cross

045 932 1437; sheilabellcross@gmail.com

Adriaan & Angela Badenhorst

The Falls Backpackers

045 932 1138, 083 993 1524; 073 020 8801

Mount Fletcher

Thabathane Tshaka, 073 242 6952

Matatiele

Mehloding Community Project

Puseletso Lecheko, 0727965457



*San rock painting
Redrawing RARI*

SENQU MUNICIPALITY (Sterkspruit, Lady Grey, Barkly East, Rhodes & Rossouw)

Vasie & Margy Murray

Rhodes

045 974 9868 082 920 2008

Allan Isted

Wartrail

084 6030883

allan@bidstonecottages.co.za

Loekie & Rassie Smith

Rhodes

045 974 9201

Graham & Margy Frost

Wartrail

045 974 9228 frost@balloch.co.za

Gavin Small

Barkly East

082 780 0650

Denise Ross

Lady Grey

051 603 7034

www.lupelalodge.co.za

STERKSTROOM

Please make an appointment to visit international artist and author Stephen Townley Bassett in his studio for demonstrations of ancient paint-making techniques and methods.

Sewefontein Farm, Sterkstroom, Eastern Cape

083 774 9565, 045 966 9017

stephen@stephentownleybassett.co.za

www.stephentownleybassett.co.za

RECOMMENDED READING

Some of these books and other publications are available at the Barkly East and Burgersdorp Museums.

SAN ROCK ART

Lewis-Williams, JD & Pearce, DG. 2004. *San Spirituality: roots, expressions and social consequences*. Cape Town: Double Storey.

Blundell, G. 2004. *Nqabayo's Nomansland: San Rock Art and the Somatic Past*. Stockholm: Elanders Gotab.

Lewis-Williams, JD & Challis, S. 2011. *Deciphering Ancient Minds: the mystery of San Bushman rock art*. London: Thames & Hudson.

Townley Bassett, S., Lewis-Williams, JD. & Smith, B. 2008. *Reservoirs of Potency: the documentary paintings of Stephen Townley Bassett*. RARI Monograph No.1. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Press.

Morris, D. 2010. Snake and veil: on the rock-engravings of Driekopseiland, Northern Cape, South Africa. In: Blundell, G, Chippindale, C & Smith, B (eds), *Seeing and Knowing: understanding rock art with and without ethnography*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. 37–54.

KHOEKHOE ROCK ART

Smith, BW & Ouzman, S. 2004. Taking stock: identifying Khoekhoen herder rock art in southern Africa. *Current Anthropology* 45: 499–526.

Eastwood, EB & Eastwood, CJH. 2006. *Capturing the Spoor: an exploration of southern African rock art*. Cape Town: David Philip.

SOTHO AND NGUNI CIRCLE IMPRINTS

Green, D. 2012. Circle imprints in the rock art of the southern Drakensberg. Honours dissertation, University of South Africa (Pretoria).

EUROPEAN SETTLERS AND TRAVELLERS

Eastwood, EB & Eastwood, CJH. 2006. *Capturing the Spoor: an exploration of southern African rock art*. Cape Town: David Philip.

MIXED RAIDER GROUPS

KORANA

Ouzman, S. 2005. The magical arts of a raider nation: central South Africa's Korana rock art. *The South African Archaeological Society Goodwin Series* 9: 101–113.

AMATOLA

Challis, W. 2008. The impact of the horse on the *Amatola 'Bushmmen': a new identity in the Maloti-Drakensberg mountains of southern Africa*. DPhil thesis, University of Oxford (Oxford).

TYPE 2 ROCK ART

Blundell, G. 2004. *Nqabayo's Nomansland: San rock art and the somatic past*. Stockholm: Elanders Gotab.

Mallen, L. 2008. *Rock Art and identity in the north-eastern Cape Province*. Masters Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg).

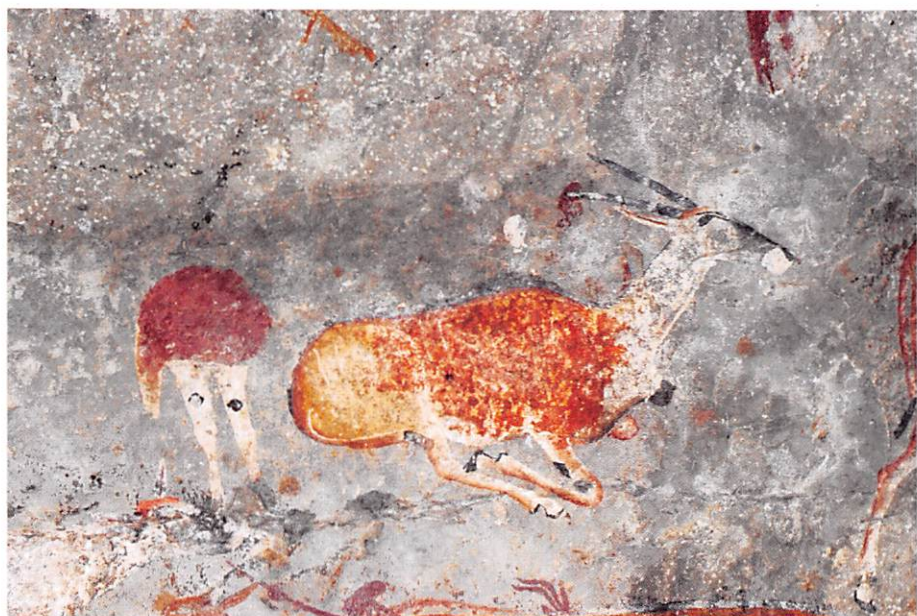
Henry, L. 2010. *Rock Art and the contested landscape of the north-eastern Cape, South Africa*. Masters Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg).



San rock painting photographed by Dawn Green

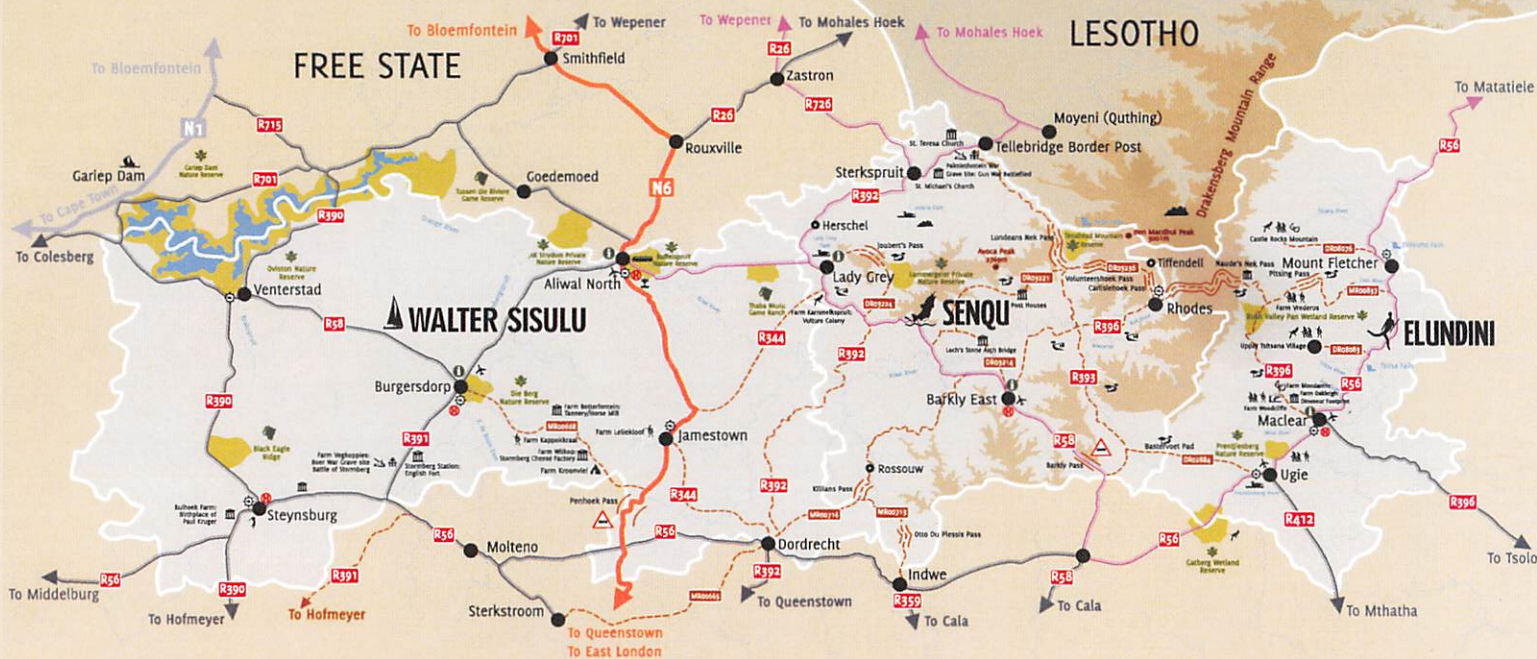


San and Khoekhoe paintings photographed by Dawn Green



San rock painting of eland photographed by Dawn Green

JOE GQABI DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY MAP



- | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Nature Reserve | River | Police | Bus Stop | Inland Water | Waterfall | Rock Art |
| Major Town | Major Road | Hiking Trail | Memorial | Farming | Country Club | National Monument |
| Minor Town | Gravel Road | Birding | Museum | Horse Trail | Historic Battlefield | Lake or Dam |
| Friendly N6 Route | Airstrip | Visitor Information Centre | Berg/Mountain | Hot Springs | Camp Site | |
| Drakensberg Maloti Route | Hospital | Game Park | Fishing | Scenic | Historic Cemetery | |



The rock art of the Eastern Cape Highlands is renowned for being among the best in the world. This booklet describes the paintings, how they were made and, in part, why they were made. The aim is to increase public awareness about rock art so as to ensure the future conservation of this precious heritage.