

**Material Realities, Belief and Aspiration in the Later
19th Century Rock Engravings of the Williston
District of the Karoo.**

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A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Science, University of Cape Town, in fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree Master of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation interrogates the process of culture change and continuity among the 19th century Khoesan in the Karoo who were the descendants of precolonial hunter-gatherer and pastoralist populations. It looks at how local Karoo dwellers experienced and possibly mediated global impacts through ‘older’ cultural practice and belief. These impacts started in the 18th century in the Northern Cape when the trickle of Trek Boers of Dutch and German descent began to interact with, displace and disrupt San hunter-gatherers and Khoe pastoralists. This trickle turned into a torrent in the 19th century when the British displaced the Dutch East India company as administrators of the Cape and Empire asserted itself on the Cape hinterlands. In this context new creole identities were formed, especially that of ‘Bastaards’ whose attempt to adapt, progress and particularly to own land, were progressively marginalized. This intensified through from the 1830s when merino wool production increasingly pulled the Cape into a global export economy that was intensified by the rush to the Northern Cape diamond fields in the late 1860s. As the lattice of colonial roads, towns and railways gathered pace, the networks and nodes of Khoe and San dwelling withered. Most often classified as ‘coloured’, they were reduced to physical and social immobility as rural farm workers.

This dissertation addresses aspects of this experience using their engraved rock art that is thematically dominated by the materiality of a colonial landscape. Horses, wagons, houses, steam engines and clothes are prominent motifs. At a glance these images seem to be disconnected from the precolonial styles and motifs of Khoekhoen and San artists. This dissertation, consequently, asks questions about the nature of this representation and the dislocation between the marginality and poverty of the artists and the material abundance and progress of the colonial world and the evidence of continuity of ‘older’ social practice that was expressed in new ways. It is argued that because of the diverse context of the 19th century and the undoubted continuity of Khoesan belief and practice, some of these images cannot be taken at face value and that they should be seen as creole expressions and continuities of Khoesan beliefs. Equally, however, there are aspects of these representations that are difficult to read in this way, and engravers are expressing the immediacy of their context and material marginality.

DECLARATION:

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This Is Not a Woman in a House

(It is an engraving of a woman in a house)

Colonial period rock engravings have received relatively little research attention over the years. One of the major reasons for this has to do with the fact that few historical painting and engraving sites have been recorded, let alone systematically studied. Moreover, the crude manner of the historic engravings and their reference to recent historical contexts encouraged the view that these images were trivial and not important. This colonial period art has tended to be neglected in favour of the San fine-line paintings and rock engravings. With respect to this, the rock art of the colonial period has often been seen as inconsequential to the cosmology and belief of Khoesan descendants in the 19th century. This belief has consequently, resulted in an assumption that Khoesan beliefs and practices had been destroyed and lost and had become obsolete in the 19th century. Additionally, Khoesan cultural practice in the Karoo were displaced, and even in conditions of marginalisation and poverty, rural people of Khoesan descent fully embraced the new materialities of colonialism and settler beliefs and practice. Given this, it is not surprising that little attention has been given to colonial period rock engravings

In this dissertation I pay attention to the 19th century rock engravings located at Grootfontein farm in the Williston district of the Northern Cape. Contrary to the situation described above, I join a growing group of researchers who argue for cultural continuity and transformation of Khoesan beliefs and practice in the 19th century (Yates et.al. 1993; Hall & Mazel 2005; Ouzman 2005; Challis 2012; McGranaghan 2015). Furthermore, I reject the view that Khoesan beliefs and practice were simply cast away in the historic period. Essentially, the aim of this dissertation is to show that despite the undoubted negative impacts upon 19th century Karoo dwellers, they still retained beliefs and agency of their Khoesan forbearers in the face of a new materiality.

The 19th century in the Karoo was one of immense social and economic disempowerment, where Khoesan communities rapidly lost their economic and social independence in the face of exclusion from land ownership, the work of missionaries and entry into a fast globalizing

capitalist world (Noble 1875; Penn 2005; McGranaghan 2015). The establishment of the merino wool trade from the 1830s, and the diamond and gold rush from the 1870s are all examples of opportunities for self-advancement, but people of Khoesan descent were increasingly denied opportunities for self-advancement in this context. More specifically, groups such as the Bastards, who were racial and cultural creoles who straddled the colonial and indigenous worlds, had ambitions of progress in the 19th century but their ability to get ahead soon became out of reach as the 19th century progressed. The legislation put in place favoured land purchase, trade and economic empowerment for white farmers, and denied these opportunities for Khoesan, Bastard and Black groups, and these opportunities become a few and far between. In particular, land from the 1830s increasingly became beyond their legal reach and effectively pushed out communities and groups who had once owned land or had accessed it as a commonage over the centuries (Penn 2005; McGranaghan 2015).

It is the increasing marginalisation of people through the 19th century that provides the context within which the Grootfontein rock engravings are approached. In the face of these challenges, the issues explored in the Grootfontein rock engravings are an engagement with ‘older’ Khoesan belief, practice and cosmology and changes to them that were actively tied up with both global and local pressures of identifying self. There are images which are enigmatically linked to the ‘older’ precolonial period, while at the other end of the spectrum there are also images which only represent the material culture of the 19th century colonial world and are seemingly divorced from any precolonial narratives. I explore these images that represent the materiality of the colonial world for expressions of Khoesan cosmology and cultural continuity and how this expression relates to the agency of these groups in difficult and marginalised conditions. There is an active remoulding of imagery so as to re-express beliefs and practice in a newly globalized world. I shall further argue that these images are painfully reminiscent of the frustrations of existence in this era – the need to get ahead, in a world laden with opportunity and the denial of that opportunity.

Perceiving 19th century Rock Engravings

The manner by which we perceive images and the representations of self in the rock art is important. This focus fully rejects the feeling that these images are trivial. In this context mimetic images exist both as expressions of the colonial world and potentially as expressions of Khoesan cosmology. These images are enigmatic because of their apparent duality which makes them a great visual representation of frontier existence. I view these images as expressions of group and individual agency and this approach shall influence the perspective used to understanding these engravings and make inferences about the meaning of engravings and art that references the everyday whilst also referencing the larger story of cosmology and memory (Thomas 1991; Taussig 1993; Silliman 2001).

Our understanding of these visual images needs to be critically re-evaluated. Images, whether they be photographic, drawn, engraved or painted are simply representations and within these representations is a 'code' specific to communicating a specific message - a message which can only be understood by having an understanding of the context of the production of the image. Our society favours the accurate and perfect images therefore devices such as the camera have come to be highly valued. Therefore, pictorial representations that are 'crude' or abstract have been less valued. Consequently, as rock art researchers we need to be aware of this immediate bias as it is likely to influence the level of attention we give to the less beautiful or accurately drawn images (Wright 2008). We need to be aware that there is no perfect reproduction. I turn our attention to the sub-heading that opens up this chapter, 'This is not a woman in a house, it is an engraving of a woman in a house', a statement that echoes similar sentiments from Foucault (1982) -who refers to Magritte's 1929 painting 'The Treachery of Images' - 'C'est ne pas une pipe' translated to 'this is not a pipe' and the idea is that the drawing itself is not the object but a representation of the object and within that representation is a code or idea that is culturally specific. Therefore, when we think about mimetic images we have to remember that the important thing about them is not the image or the accurate rendering of the image, but the idea behind the engraving or drawing of that image. Once again, this perspective rejects these colonial period engravings as trivial and shallow.

We therefore, have to be cognisant of the cultural assumptions and biases that might influence our approach to 19th century rock art. The images we see engraved on the boulders of the Karoo are tied up within a specific history and cultural context and therefore, in order

to understand their significance, we have to be familiar with the particular cultural history. Therefore, it is important that we immerse ourselves within the specificities of the culture from which the art is coming (Gell 1998; Layton 2003).

This then further highlights the agency of groups, and the idea that images and motifs cannot be viewed in isolation from both their global and specific histories. Objects do not exist in and of themselves. Therefore, in the same way by which humans have agency, objects also have a certain degree of agency. Knappett (2002) brings into view the idea that “objects have social lives” (Knappett 2002:97). He argues for a two-way feedback system in which objects are influenced by agents and where objects themselves are the agents that influence society. The idea is that humans exist in a hybrid world, where they are themselves not in any way pure humans and are caught up in the technological and influenced by the ‘object’. He therefore, argues for an alternative perspective in the way in which, “the human mind, body and world are seen as co-dependent ...the mind is rarely fully understood without some form of tangible expression...and vice versa, an object cannot be properly grasped independently to how it relates to the body” (Knappett 2002:98). Therefore, the mind is embodied and extended through objects which is an opinion shared by Gell (1998). Therefore, agency is not a polarized concept, it exists within a wider network – a network where agency is constantly shifting between the object and the human.

Therefore, by approaching the rock art of the 19th century not simply as a crude expression, but as a culturally relevant expression imbued with agency we are likely to find that our interpretations of this type of rock art will become further enriched by the application of both the ethnography and historical context.

In order to examine the processes of culture change and continuity I therefore examine the 19th century rock engravings of Grootfontein, and give particular attention to the motifs by combining both the ethnography and the historical context. The aim of this is to show that Khoesan beliefs and practice were active in the Northern Cape and that the changes we see in the rock art are reflections of the cultural, social and economic pressures acting on groups of Khoesan ancestry.

Chapter 2 will focus on elaborating the theoretical framework for approaching rock engravings of this nature. It shall focus on both historic and contemporary perspectives of the region in order to analyse these rock engravings within the complexity of frontier experiences.

Chapter 3 will describe the event history in order to set up the different contextual scales within which the engravings were rooted. I outline the Khoesan period prior to colonial administration, the impact on the Khoesan of genocide, the coming of industrialization through the merino wool trade and the Kimberley diamond rush and local missionary activity that eventually lead to the establishment of the town of Williston (Amandelboom). Finally, we shall zoom into the specific farm history of Grootfontein farm in order to establish the most likely identity of those doing the engravings.

Chapter 4 will review studies that have paid attention to historical rock engravings and paintings in the Northern Cape and approaches to their analysis and interpretation. Additionally, this review raises the issue that rock art is place specific and that local circumstances have a heavy bearing on authorship, what they choose to express and how it is expressed. In this regard the ethnography is important, however, on its own it falls short and the local historical context is equally important in coming to robust conclusions about this type of rock art.

Chapter 5 will discuss the methodology applied to the Grootfontein engravings. It is divided into two parts. The first part discusses the context and setting of the engravings and the second part outlines the data collection techniques used in recording the engravings.

Chapter 6 is the data chapter that details and describes the rock art motifs from Grootfontein. In this chapter I isolate the most prominent and recurring motifs and consequently the interpretive themes that are taken forward into Chapters 7 and 8 where I discuss the issue of authorship. I return to the relationship between the socio-cultural context of the engravers, the materiality of the 19th century, and the cosmology of Khoesan descendent groups in this region. Chapter 7 is divided into three parts. The first part explores images that are relatively easy to locate with reference to the ethnography and the precolonial record. The last two parts explore images which seem incongruent to Khoesan belief and cosmology. Finally, Chapter 8 will offer up a summary and concluding remarks on the ideas elaborated in the dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The 19th and 20th century was the stage for the collapse of once historically distinct identities such as the Khoe and San. The Northern Cape frontier facilitated a process of cultural destruction as well as mutual acculturation resulting in the creation of new creole identities. Moreover, the advances of industrialization and the merino wool trade catapulted Cape society into an industrial stage that introduced a whole new range of material culture. This material culture provided the potential to be worked into the cosmology and belief systems of these creolized societies. The new identities that were developed out of this diverse and pressurized environment where the Bastards, Griqua, Korana and Amatola to mention a few (Ouzman 2005; Hall & Mazel 2005; Challis 2012; McGranaghan 2015). This chapter provides a theoretical review of the nature of frontiers and how the phenomenon of acculturation and creolization occur.

The 19th century rock engravings of Grootfontein farm pose a particular problem for interpretation as they are seemingly quotidian in nature. However, regardless of the mundane focus of the art, in looking at these representations we must consider processes of creolization and mutual acculturation where cultural ‘remnants’ form part of new material conditions and expressions. Therefore, part of my theoretical discussion has to do with how we come to interpret these images which are part of the everyday lived experience but seem to make no clear reference to the Khoesan beliefs and values that are distinctively evident in ethnographic sources such as the Bleek and Lloyd archive (Deacon 1997; Hoff 2011). Consequently, this chapter provides some theoretical contexts that establish the framework I shall use to approach these 19th century rock engravings. These theoretical considerations will then be followed by a chapter on the event history which will frame our understanding of the macro and micro-historical scales and context for our analysis.

The South African Frontier

The expansion of the Cape colony in the 18th century progressed more rapidly through the Southern Cape towards the east towards the summer rainfall frontier where Xhosa mixed farmers dominated the landscape. The progression of the colonial frontier and its establishment in the Eastern Cape has tended to dominate South African studies and relative to the Northern Cape, the Eastern Cape frontier, has received a significant amount of

scholarship (Penn 2005). The title of Nigel Penn's major contribution to raising the profile of the Northern Cape frontier is called "The Forgotten Frontier" and makes this point explicitly. Penn (2005) notes that the trend was to understand South African history and the development of racial conflict through the framework of the Eastern Cape. However, studies of South African 18th and 19th century frontiers have expanded through comparative analyses that show that the events and experiences of the Eastern Cape frontier were distinctly different to those of the Northern Cape frontier. In his seminal work, Penn (2005) discusses that the differences between these two frontiers were defined by the availability of and nature of the resources. The Eastern Cape climatically supported mixed cereal and cattle farmers while the Northern Cape was marginal due to the arid climate and dry landscape. It was a land of small stock pastoralism and hunting and gathering. The Northern frontier only began to gain prominence in the eyes of the British administration towards the mid-19th century with the rise of the merino wool trade and the Northern Cape diamond rush. In light of this, there have been specific historical developments in the development of frontier studies which have contributed to how we understand the frontier. I first provide an overview of scholarly research on the way in which frontiers have been conceived and how frontier theory has developed. Interlinked with this will then be a discussion of how discourse on material culture, and archaeological approaches and conceptions of material culture in frontiers has changed and progressed.

Theoretical approaches to the Frontier

Influential in frontier theory was Turner (1893), who argued that frontier societies functioned as two distinct zones of isolation where a distinct boundary separated colonial and indigenous identities, colonizer and the colonized, and a meeting place between savagery and civilization. This notion of frontier was specific to the development of the American frontier, but was applied to understanding the development of the South African frontier (Fouche 1909; Penn 2005). However, this concept soon proved insufficient in describing the South African frontier, where the frontier has been argued to be so much more and an area of both contact, inclusion and separation (Legassick 1972; Penn 2005:11).

The case of the Northern and Eastern frontiers best exemplifies the complexity of frontier zones and brings to the forefront the idea that frontier theory must also encompass place specific factors. As noted, the Eastern Cape was much more attractive as a place to colonise due to the climate and environment, and consequently the availability of resources in this

region. As a result, the authorities at the Cape invested effort and resources in competing for it and claiming land. The later 18th and 19th century frontier wars with the Xhosa, who were mixed farmers resulted in them defending their land and resources from British expansion and the settlers they supported. (Penn 2005).

The abundance or scarcity of resources determined whether a frontier zone remained ‘open’ or if it ‘closed’ as in the examples of the Northern Cape frontier and the Eastern Cape frontier. In the South African context, the opening or the closing of the frontier is important in our understanding of how the societies on the frontier developed. Moreover, it is essential that we outline the factors at work that influence how long a frontier stays ‘open’ or ‘closed’ and what the opening and the closing of the frontier meant for communities on the frontier.

The open frontier means that there is a “rough balance of power between societies competing for land or resources” (Penn 2005:11). However, the closed frontier is when that balance of power has shifted in the favour of the group that has the backing of governmental powers and the group with the most economic power. Therefore, the dynamic on the Eastern frontier was such that the frontier closed relatively soon after a new geographic gain had been made (Penn 2005). However, the Northern Cape frontier experienced something wholly different. While the Eastern frontier had greater economic potential and higher population densities, the Northern frontier had less potential for economic growth and a lower population density (Legassick 1972; Penn 2005:12). In contrast to the Eastern Cape, the Northern Cape was marginal with low populations of San hunter-gatherers and Khoe pastoralists. There was not as much to compete for, and additionally in the 18th century, when European Trek Boers expanded into the Karoo, there was less administrative control from the Cape because the area was seen as offering very little and not worth administrative resources. Therefore, the different cases of these frontiers must consider different levels and types of violence, cultural contact, inclusion and separation in combination with the specific histories so as fully understand the differences in change and transformation of groups on the frontier.

The 1970s ushered in a new way to think about the frontier in response to Turner (1893) and the boundary idea of frontier in which the colonial core was seen as being recreated on the frontier and which encouraged a view of coloniser and colonised societies as culturally homogenous, which was a generally colonialist perspective (Legassick 1972; Lightfoot & Martinez 1995; Penn 2005). In South Africa, Legassick (1972) introduced a new way to think about the frontier where he described the frontier in a South African context as an area of

contact and inclusion between two societies. Therefore, the relationship is not simply about a passive periphery receiving from the parent society, but it's about the nuanced interactions between the different groups on the frontier. Extending this, Legassick (1972) argued for the agency of periphery societies who actively defined their identity and did not simply passively take on ideologies and cultural practice from the colonising society.

The idea of the frontier was then redefined by Lamar and Thompson (1981) and further expanded on by Penn (2004), who elaborated the definition given by Legassick (1972), where the frontier was seen as a zone of interaction and intercultural mixing between two previously distinct societies. They suggested that the frontier stays open as long as there are ongoing processes of intermingling and cultural sharing of practices and traditions. The frontier is closed, for example, in the case of the Eastern and Northern Cape when the political economy of the colonizer has a strong controlling presence in the region (Thompson & Lamar 1981; Penn 2005). It is relevant that at the same time Kopytoff (1987), in writing about internal African frontiers drew attention to movement of African societies, and the process of interaction as a complex cyclical process, where small groups split from their 'metropolises' and in mixing with other groups in an institutional vacuum, grew into new polities that used general principles of African political institutions but drew on multiple influences in the make-up and details of new societies (Kopytoff 1987).

We can apply these ideas to our understandings of the Northern Cape frontier which remained open for a relatively longer time than the Eastern frontier. We can infer that the Northern Cape frontier went through a more fluid process of opening and closing, propelled by the different opportunities and potentials that arose through time. This contrasted with the pace of the Eastern Cape frontier that closed as soon as it was open due to the higher economic stake it held for the colony (Penn 2005), and the cyclical process of opening and closing may have been less prominent. Therefore, we have to view frontiers as holding the potential to be complex and dynamic spaces where identity is constantly shifting and being reformed and is not seen as a binary of homogenous colonisers on the one hand, and homogenous colonised, on the other hand.

These thoughts on the frontier are significant as they characterize the frontier as a dynamic zone of intermingling and cultural admixture. They further establish the idea that the frontier is mediated by the shifting power relations between different groups with different modes of production. In the case of the Northern Cape frontier the merino wool production and trade

that gathered pace from the 1840s increasingly alienated Khoe pastoralists and San hunter gatherers from both their economic resources of land and concepts of landscape and this led to the eventual closure of this frontier zone (Penn 2005).

From these observations, problems with the earlier frontier models as proposed by Turner (1893), become apparent. Firstly, the view that ideas and innovation are wholly mediated by the core is problematic as it negates the agency of communities and the agency of the individual on the frontier. It assumes that the periphery or indigenous communities are passively accepting of ideas and innovations from the core society through a form of directed acculturation, “whereby peoples on the periphery give up their traditional lifeways and assimilate the traits of the dominant culture over time” (Lightfoot & Martinez 1995) which is in itself problematic. It is a top down model “that views indigenous populations as subordinate labourers or producers who extract surplus for dominant colonial societies” (Lightfoot & Martinez 1995:472-473). The colonialist perspective in essence is largely focused on boundary maintenance which segregates relatively homogenous populations of newcomers and indigenous from each other (Lightfoot & Martinez 1995:473). The exchange of ideas and materials is wholly unidirectional, from the active core society transmitting ideas and innovations to the passive periphery. Therefore, the colonialist perspective is focused on the “macroscale analyses of broad regions and research has been at the organizational infrastructure of core-periphery relations, especially the political, economic communication, and military linkages that bolster the maintenance of frontier zones” (Lightfoot & Martinez, 1995:473).

These insular and binary approaches do not examine the dynamic relationships between groups on the frontier, that can be between colonialists and indigenous communities and between different economic or social categories. The next section will examine this theoretical review in view of the material culture available from the Northern Cape.

Theory and the Scales of Analysis

As noted, Lightfoot and Martinez (1995) note that new research on the frontier has resulted in new realizations about what the frontier zone represents. The shift has been towards viewing frontier zones as zones of mutual acculturation (Lightfoot & Martinez 1995), and these are not “cultural borders that largely inhibit and constrain intercultural relationships, but as interaction zones where encounters take place between peoples from diverse homelands” (Lightfoot & Martinez 1995:474). The Korana, and Griqua, were a diverse group of people

who were of Khoekhoen descent, and are a good representative of the interaction of diverse groupings of people on the Northern Cape frontier. They are categorized as a magical raider nation, particularly expressed through the association of the horse and raiding art that is linked with the San fine-line modes of expression, tradition and motifs. What is interesting about this group is that the association was not determined by race but by the coming together of a variety of beliefs and practice (Ouzman 2005). The Korana therefore embody this frontier interaction of different groups, and Ouzman (2005) identifies that there are elements of cross-cultural communication in their rock art where the different groups exhibit an understanding of iconography from different cultures whilst simultaneously re-moulding it to fit into the cosmology of the raider nation.

The frontier is therefore a space of creolization and the creation and transformation of people and their identity through combining and changing cultural practice (Lightfoot & Martinez 1995). Frontier zones are important because they, “represent ideal places to study interethnic interactions between diverse peoples; the development of new material culture and cultural innovations; and the construction, negotiation, and manipulation of group identities” (Lightfoot & Martinez 1995: 475-476).

It is consequently important that we start to think about the scales by which we understand the dynamics on the frontier and as alluded to above, one of the other problems within frontier theory has been the tendency to rely on the macro-scale as a means of understanding frontier politics (Lightfoot & Martinez 1995). Lightfoot and Martinez (1995) therefore argue for ‘multi-scale approaches’ that will “enable us to address not only macroscale issues in archaeology such as world systems, technological development, social evolution, and ecological adaptation, but also the microscale issues of individual intentionality and social action, cultural construction of gender, and other ideologies” (Lightfoot & Martinez 1995:477). The ‘macro-scale’ only pays attention to the core-periphery relationship, however, what has become clear is that this relationship alone is not a sufficient representation of the frontier dynamics. The interethnic interactions along frontier zones are likely to be shaped by the spatial and temporal fluidity of ethnic groups and boundaries which cut across class lines; these interactions can be shaped by political developments, or can be used consciously as strategies of material gain (Lightfoot & Martinez 1995). Studying the “micro-historical processes are important for understanding how individuals and segmentary groups respond to encounters with ‘others’ and how new cultural constructs are created, transformed, and syncretized on the frontier” (Lightfoot & Martinez 1995:476).

Therefore, there needs to be a balance between examining both the ‘macro-historical’ process which look at the long term effects of cultural contact and the ‘micro-historical’ processes which focus on the specific local histories that reveal agency and the individual. This dissertation will apply the ‘multi-scale approach’ in understanding the nuances of cultural change. In light of thinking about the macro and micro historical scales, the work by Hall and Mazel (2005) asked the question of 19th century colonial period rock art in the Cederberg as to what deeper time cultural continuity was expressed in the images. Their discussion reveals the difficulty in seeing cultural continuity in their examination of colonial period rock art in the eastern Cederberg. On the one hand, the sample of rock art they examine boasts of industry, trade, travel and the development of transport and the opening of the Northern Cape diamond fields. On the other hand, this imagery also addresses a different scale in which women in crinoline dresses are painted within circles of finger dots and images are painted in the most visually inaccessible places; in low overhands and deep recesses that are hard to access and see, let alone paint within. Therefore, such rock art requires an application of different scales as we see local experiences of global historical process interacting with the much more nuanced and place specific histories. It is with this perspective of interacting scales that the Grootfontein engravings will also be addressed.

The boundary settler model is thus completely inadequate in aiding our analyses as it assumes that groups on the frontier act as homogenous entities. A conventional assumption arising from this view is that there will be discrete spatial patterns of diagnostic material culture and that material culture can be interpreted un-problematically in terms of its original face value function (Lightfoot & Martinez 1995:478). Additionally, the assumption is that there will be markers of group identity that will intensify in situations where groups are competing for land and resources, where, in the settler model, there are discrete frontier boundaries clearly delineating the space between the colonizer and the colonized. However, this need not be the case, and in the examples I have noted, the material culture exhibits a great amount of diffusion and overlap. This overlap is wholly driven by the challenges that particular groups on the frontier have to face. Therefore, when we envision frontiers as zones of interaction we cannot assume that colonial material culture can be read at its face value. As indicated above, if the frontier is a zone of culture exchange, we expect to see diffusion and sub-diffusion in the material culture as new identities and creolization are the result of this interaction.

Two examples of research that have made important contributions that consider this approach as necessary to our understandings of culture change and cultural expression in frontier zones in South Africa are Challis (2012) and Kramer (2012). Challis in particular focuses on the hybrid nature of the Amatola, a group of frontier raiders who had come together on the Eastern Cape in the late 18th and 19th century frontier. He argues that this group represents both genetic and cultural creolization in the context of the 19th century. The Amatola style of rock art is emblematic of San styles and motifs whilst also merging Nguni motifs that share some common meanings and beliefs that inclusively create a common identity. The rock art of the Amatola thus reflects the creole dynamics of their identity. As Challis (2012) argues, exchanges on the frontier are not simple, they are dynamic and unique, and the beliefs that usually survive through the process of acculturation are the shared ideas that bring these different societies together. The rock art expresses the ideas that bind people together.

Therefore, at the first stages of intercultural mixing the expectation is that we find a great amount of difference between types of material culture. However, over time the chances are that finding the discrete markers of identity becomes a much more difficult task. This is especially the case in contexts where contact between San and Xhosa has progressed over a longer period of time prior to the colonial period.

The second example comes from Kramer (2012), who looked at the development of a corbelled architecture for domestic dwellings in the Karoo and Northern Cape starting in the 1830s. She argues that this was a hybrid architectural style, emblematic of Khoe pastoralist mat domed houses (*matjehuis*) but using unconventional stone as the building material. These structures developed through the 19th centuries to incorporate architectural features that increasingly incorporated European features. This style of housing Kramer argues, was likely an amalgam of Khoe and European cultural practice driven by the scarcity of wood resources with which to build pitched roofed houses in the Karoo. Furthermore, written, oral and archaeological evidence suggests that this type of housing was likely to have been used by white settlers, Bastards, Khoesan farm labourers and bywoners. As such, it is in part an architecture that comes to express increasingly marginalised communities in the Karoo, who especially were denied access to land ownership. This is an important issue to be taken up below in the context of Williston and Grootfontein, where Bastard communities were a significant identity, and like the corbelled structures that they built, were the progeny of European and Khoe interaction and intermarriage. Therefore, it was a mode of housing that was a product of the processes of mutual acculturation but was expressive also of families

that were increasingly marginalised from economic opportunities that developed as the 19th century progressed (Kramer 2012).

The scarcity of resources on the Northern Cape frontier and the arrival of an increased number of people resulted in greater competition for resources. This competition resulted in egregious acts of genocide and economic disenfranchisement, especially of San hunter-gatherers (Adhikari 2010) and moreover, this conflict also affected the range of cultural responses and the extent of cultural change. Material culture, therefore, theoretically provides one window into identifying processes of cultural change and continuity, and as the examples used above show, constructive ideas about the nature of change and the specifics of the historic context. The material culture alerts us to the difficulty of tracing cultural continuity and change because there can be ambiguity in how it may be 'read'. There are no simple and exclusive binaries in the frontier, even when excessive power and force may be imposed.

In summary the Northern Cape frontier was viewed as a land of opportunity by European trek farmers of Dutch and German descent, who moved away from the Cape because they already were to a certain extent marginalised within it because of their lack of capital to purchase land. It is in this context that the frontier dynamics discussed above developed, groups such as the Bastards arose who experienced the same increasing marginalisation in the Northern Cape frontier as the 19th century progressed. This was also the case for other groups such as the San, early 19th century Xhosa migrants from the Eastern Cape and European trek farmers (Ouzman 2005; Penn 2005; Zachariou 2013). As I will discuss in the following chapters, the historical record shows that the Bastard inhabitants of Grootfontein farm were financially secure enough to sustain the management of the Rhenish mission at Amandelboom (Strassberger 1969). However, in the second half of the 19th century as the grip of the colony tightened and the land ownership became restricted, the opportunities available to different groups tilted in favour of those with capital and enforced by the British administration. Khoekhoen, San and Bastard groups in the region found themselves socio-economically marginalized. These are the 'macro' and 'micro historical scales' and frontier processes acting on the inhabitants of Grootfontein farm and in the Williston district. With this discussion of frontiers in place, I, shall now look at the historical detail in the following chapters.

This dissertation will focus on using the framework of the frontier as a zone of mutual acculturation. The analysis and discussion will pay attention to the agency and power of

individuals and groups in mediating their identity even in the face of increased control from the Cape colony. The dissertation will attempt to broaden the scale of analysis so as to utilize the multiscale analysis of frontier zones that Lightfoot and Martinez (1995) have argued for. Our broadening of these scales will be apparent in the Event History and Shared Landscape chapter where we shall first look at the wider forces acting on the Northern frontier and finally we shall zoom into the specific context of Grootfontein farm. Therefore, the lens by which we shall examine the frontier is based on the ideas of creolisation, mutual acculturation and agency.

CHAPTER 3

THE EVENT HISTORY AND SHARED LANDSCAPES

Introduction

This chapter will discuss what I refer to as the event history so as to establish the wider social context for the production of the rock engravings at Grootfontein farm. Identity and change to identity is mediated and negotiated within a specific social and economic context. The events happening within and around the nineteenth century Cape colony and the local context must in a general way be reflected in the details of the engravings at Grootfontein. The importance of establishing this event history is an attempt to bring to light the different scales of socio-cultural and political influence that may have affected the material culture imprint we find engraved onto the boulders of Grootfontein farm.

Broadly, the images are representative of various themes to do with changing industrial society such as new ways of dwelling, new industrial and technological landscapes and importantly, access and denial to land. These themes play out in the context of a growing disenfranchisement of indigenous people. The first section will focus on introducing the San and Khoekhoen before colonial administration. Looking at who these people were before colonial administration is important in our quest to evaluate how the frontier and interactions affected their beliefs and practices.

This approach is based on the critical idea that, “any historical anthropological study that attempts to understand the long-term implications of culture contact must consider the archaeology of pre-colonial contexts” (Lightfoot & Martinez 1995:200). Without this pre-colonial perspective, one cannot undertake comparative analyses of cultural transformation that took place, during, and after European contact and colonialism (Lightfoot & Martinez 1995:200). People do not suddenly start engraving houses, horses, carriages and women in houses, and while the Grootfontein engravings represent a shift in the cosmology of the engravers, establishing the precolonial is important in detecting the degree of cultural continuity and change. Of course, while the absence of colonial imagery does not necessarily imply a precolonial date, I apply this distinction in defining what are precolonial images. Moreover, in order to gain a better understanding of the motifs at Grootfontein we need to understand the events that influenced and underpinned the cultural residue left at Grootfontein. I will begin with a quick overview on who the San and Khoekhoen were and

how the establishment of the Cape colony affected them. This will then be followed up with a broad discussion on the ‘macro-scale’ events and forces that were likely to have influenced the forces of culture change while simultaneously zooming in on the microscale events and influences on culture change and continuity. These events are the increasing industrialization of the Cape, the rise of the merino wool trade, the establishment of the mission stations, and the Kimberly diamond rush. How did these factors, some of which are global in scale, impact upon people in the local small towns and farms such as Grootfontein? The importance of examining these different scales of influence is in that they establish the multiple influences that are likely to have affected belief and identity on this frontier.

The Khoekhoen and the San

The San are largely seen as the first people of southern African. In the historic period the cultural distinctions between Khoekhoen and San becomes blurred as the period is characterised by a breakdown and collapse of social and cultural norms through the introduction of a new world order. Penn notes that the term Khoesan, “means one thing when used in the pre-colonial context and another in the colonial context. In the former, the word implies the transition of societies of individuals from a predominantly hunting and gathering mode of existence to a predominantly pastoralist mode and vice versa” (Penn, 2005:8). In the latter, the term Khoesan reflects the multiplicity of identity when culture and cosmology begins to merge. Therefore, we have to wonder to what extent precolonial social and cosmological distinctions persisted into the colonial era. As noted in Chapter 2, the frontier is a space of mutual acculturation (Lightfoot & Martinez 1995) and it is expected that the 19th century relations on the Northern Cape could give us insight into the complicated processes of ‘mutual acculturation’. I shall use the term ‘Khoesan’ to identify these indigenous groups in the 19th century Northern Cape whose earlier economic and cultural identities have been reduced and partially destroyed. However, when addressing the specific cosmological and/or ethnicity based distinctions I shall refer to either a Khoekhoen cosmology or a San cosmology, and to new identities as they arose, especially Bastaard and Orlam.

This section will focus on outlining the cultural distinctions between the Khoekhoe and the San as well as detailing their early interactions on a shared landscape. The evidence from the archaeological record suggests that the San had a monopoly over the South African landscape. However, at about 2000 years ago, the narrative changed. The record starts to show an influx of domesticated sheep as well as pottery, “the Vredenburg Peninsular offers

the earliest evidence of small stock husbandry in South Africa” (Smith 2008:48). The faunal evidence has been linked to the pottery, “indicating the probable coeval nature of the earliest sheep and ceramics” (Smith 2008: 49). It is debated as to whether this initial ‘package’ 2000 years ago can be attributed to the Khoekhoen (Sadr 2008; Fauvelle-Aymer & Sadr 2008).

The Khoekhoen pastoralist people introduced the transhumance lifestyle into the Cape interior as they lived in tandem with the San people. The evidence from the rock art further supports this introduction (Parkington, et.al. 1986). The Khoekhoen introduced a new way in which the individual could interact with their landscape. The Khoekhoen were part of the first stages in the establishment of a pluralistic socio-political economy.

There is debate over the degree to which pastoralist and hunter-gatherer lifestyles and cultural practice could shift and change. Elphick and Giliomee (1989) feels that if Khoekhoen fell on hard times and if they lost livestock, they could change to hunting and gathering as a means of sustenance and, alternatively, that a hunter-gatherer could acquire livestock thus changing their status to become a pastoralist (Penn, 2005). Therefore, this model champions the mutability of identity on the basis of owning livestock or a lack livestock (Elphick & Giliomee 1989). However, this model of cyclic identity is problematic for Smith (1999, 2000) who sees that identity, belief and cosmology is not easily changed by the possession of livestock or the loss of livestock.

The presence of Nguni-speaking mixed farmers on the Eastern Cape also created cultural and economic frontiers between them, San hunter-gatherers and pastoralists (see Challis 2012). Although the San were foragers and egalitarian there is mention of the San entering into serf relations which included hunting animals for meat and skins. In many cases, there was a great deal of trade and intermarriage between the San and different groups. Historically, the San were quite renowned for their rainmaking expertise and respected for their ritual competence and they became acknowledged rainmakers, for example, among the Xhosa and other Nguni-speakers (Campbell 1986). The Pondomise for instance, “often sent cattle to the San as an application for rain. In addition, as a token of thanksgiving for the rain provided, the San were given the right to collect a small share of the harvest” (Campbell 1986:255-256). Therefore, although there was value in acquiring livestock to maintain a more sustainable lifestyle, the San maintained their hunter-gatherer lifestyle while mutually benefitting from the herder economy. Thus, we should not assume that the identities mutability was heavily dependent on the ownership of livestock or lack thereof.

This discussion illustrates that there is a deep and long experience of sharing the landscape and identity is complex. However, simply explaining it as a function of livestock possession limits our understanding of what Khoesan identity truly entails. The idea is that changing a mode of production does not necessarily mean that a group has become 'other' in terms of their ideology, beliefs and practice as this would entail crossing an ideological barrier (Smith 2000). Therefore, from a structural standpoint the differences between hunters and herders are not easily overcome by having more or less access to herds of livestock. The structural mantle of herders cannot be easily shaken off for a hunters mantle and vice versa. Therefore, the rock art is important in this regard as it provides a window into the nuanced evolution of identity in the Northern Cape. There are certain objects, beliefs and practices that have mutable characteristics, and this may be seen, for example, in the representation of bulls in the place of eland (representative of the water creatures). At the same time, there are objects that may be denied access into the social and cosmological practices of groups and individuals and some which easily gain access (Decorse 1992; Thomas 1991).

This is not to say that the presence of different groups did not affect any aspects of San society, however, it means that while we might recognize responses to change and the adoption of material culture that is 'other', these adaptations do not necessarily affect the core structural beliefs of the Khoekhoen and San. They might represent the reinterpretation of a belief in a new context. Therefore, because certain beliefs and practices are mutable we should expect that the material culture expression of that belief is likely to change. However, the social template of being Khoekhoen and San stayed the same with influences from the new social contracts and social hierarchies. The economies alone do not highlight what is Khoekhoen and what is San or an amalgam of other multiple identities.

With this in mind the social, historical and political landscape of the 19th century Cape offers another layer to further explore this arena of identity politics. The forces that facilitate culture change were in motion from the moment "the Dutch East India Company (VOC) refreshment station at the Cape developed into a colony, it produced a diverse number of fugitives whose greatest desire was to remove themselves from the strictures of the colony's laws" (Penn 1995:73). The Cape Town of that era was under the strict jurisdiction of the VOC. The opening up of the frontier meant that there were greater opportunities for social integration and cultural mixing, for escaped slaves, people of Khoe and San descent who had already been economically and socially marginalised and trek farmers of European descent.

As noted earlier, frontiers were traditionally seen as areas of isolation from the parent society, however, in the South African context the frontier also acted as an area of contact and inclusion between societies, “it was also clear that the frontier offered many examples of interracial cooperation...much better opportunities for self-advancement for non-whites than did the more effectively colonised areas of the colony” (Penn 2005:11). Cape society was highly structured and individual identity was mediated by a person’s social and economic standing and legally enforced through the sumptuary laws. This control paired with the opening up of grazing rights, encouraged the exodus of Trek Boers outside of the colony towards the Karoo and this started as early as 1700. As a result, this movement sparked a heightened level of conflict between the Khoesan and the Trek Boers as the competition for land and resources intensified. Penn (2005) notes that this conflict was intensified on the Northern frontier because of the scarcity of resources, such as land and water. Unlike the Southern boundary of the colony, the North was a hostile environment where some of the gross atrocities of the 1700-1800s played out. Escape to the North became synonymous with freedom and economic enfranchisement and for the Dutch pastoralist, it represented new beginnings.

Although the opening of the frontier signified opportunity for people, the closing of the frontier represented something completely opposite. The closed frontier signalled the loss of liberty for individual groups as they could no longer assert themselves and maintain their interests. Particular groups could establish a hegemony over others and an external power was able to put an end to social and cultural interaction as well as relative anarchy of the open frontier (Elphick & Giliomee 1989; Penn 2005).

In the case of the Northern Cape, the status of the non-European deteriorated, in some instances they became farm labourers and found themselves at the lowest stratum of society (Elphick and Giliomee 1989; Penn 2005). The Northern Cape frontier was also a place of extreme violence and this contributed significantly especially to the decimation of San hunter-gatherers.

The 1700s were a tumultuous period in the history of the Cape, and it was characterised by intensified expansion into the interior that resulted in an increase in acts of violence against the Khoesan. With colonial expansion and the desire of European trek farmers to be independent from the rule of the colony, grazing and hunting rights were threatened and competition for resources was created.

Reports of conflict between the colonialists and indigenous groups are noted by Penn (2005) who makes mention of “men journeying inland to distant Khoikhoi...they had attacked the KhoiKhoi and with violence, murder and death and stolen their cattle” (Penn 2005:43). There are a number of accounts of colonialists travelling outside of the borders of the colony to acquire sheep and cattle from the Khoekhoen, however, there are also instances of violence and intimidation against the San. Outside of the Trek Boers a number of other individuals left the Cape colony. These were groups who felt that their interests were not being represented by the colonial administration. Such groups comprised of run-away slaves as well as people of mixed descent and miscegenation between Europeans and slaves, Europeans and Khoekhoe and Slaves with Khoekhoe who were referred to as Bastards (Penn 2005). Offspring from these unions experienced a steady decline in social status throughout the eighteenth century and with increasing discrimination many of them left the colony so as to avoid the status of inferiority placed on them (Penn 2005).

As noted, this period saw the rise of intensified stress on the land and resources and ultimately this threatened the livelihoods of Khoesan groups who had accessed the land and its water sources freely for years. The company stipulated that the European Free Burghers could acquire a loan farm for annual payment to the company, a system that championed private access to land at the expense of the Khoekhoen and San who were increasingly marginalised from communally accessing the land (Penn 2005). The year 1713 saw the spread of the small pox epidemic, where hundreds of Khoesan people died, and many also fled into the interior to escape the disease (Penn 2005). Along with the devastation this disease had on these groups, the violence against the San continued as they were despised for their livestock raiding. Therefore, the Trek Boers retaliated through the commando system.

The Commandos arose in the 18th century in response to threats from the Khoekhoe and San, and as this intensified, the impact on the San was significant and a policy of eradicating San men and enslaving women and children developed. Commandos were responsible for genocide and were an “institution which linked the interior to the exterior” thus establishing the power of the colony in the interior and the European presence (Penn, 2005:108). The Khoesan intensified their resistance to the growing colonial encroachment, however, they were ultimately fighting a losing battle. The climate was such that the Khoesan had to adapt to survive. As a new mercantile and subsistence economy developed on the frontier many Khoekhoe were forced into labour for the Trek Boers on the Northern frontier but whilst still trying to maintain elements of their independence. However, they slowly lost this

independence as a result of the laws that increasingly restricted their access to land. For the San, who were outside the formal livestock economy it was a question of either finding work with the colonists or suffering complete breakdown. It is against this background that the term Khoesan as a collapsed indigenous identity is used. It is also important for thinking about what cultural continuities there possibly could be in the rock engravings to be discussed below.

An Industrial Cape Town

In addition to the above the later 19th century saw the Cape undergoing transformation that echoed the rise of industrial change happening around the world. Britain was leading the charge of the industrial revolution, with new technologies of production that were aimed at exploiting resources from its colonies. Moreover, Britain was strategically positioned in terms of its transport industry and thus the country was ready to take on the demands of industrial society. The 19th century saw the arrival of the 1820 settlers in the Eastern Cape who encouraged the merino wool trade. This and the takeover of the Cape by the British in 1806 introduced significant change on the Cape frontiers (Ross 1983; Johnson 1972; Thompson 1966).

Ross (1983) notes that to understand the how Cape society transformed one must consider its colonial forbearers – the Dutch East India Company (VOC). He notes that, “the ending of Company rule ...did do much to stimulate the growth of a Cape Town mercantile class. Previously a large proportion of the colony’s import trade had been in the hands of the Company or of its officials in their private capacity” (Ross 1983:34). Thus, the VOC exercised a virtual monopoly and a very large market share (Ross 1983). However, the British Empire changed this, by introducing an “increased liberalization of commerce” (Ross 1983:34).

The interest in the Northern Cape was in favour of the British and white stock farmers and not Bastards who had their own flocks and farming ambitions. From 1809, the inception of the Calendon code severely impacted the movement of Khoesan communities, effectively outlawing any groups which were outside of the governance of a magistrate or mission and therefore, impacting transhumance lifestyles. Moreover, in 1847, Sir Harry Smith moved the northern border to the Orange River, placing a diverse range of people who were free from central governance under the rule the British crown. Coupled with this, the British administration changed the grazing laws in the 1800s by opening the grazing rights to the

settlers for a nominal fee (Strassberger 1969) thereby creating competition with the Khoekhoen. Moreover, the British restricted cultivation in the Northern Cape, meaning that communities who relied on agriculture were at a disadvantage. Beinart (1998) notes that some of the indigenous groups did adopt the merino wool sheep but at the end of the day, the Boer and British held sway over the wool industry. The government interest in the Northern Cape resulted in considerable investment and technical improvements of the areas and tighter control of the Northern Cape (Beinart 1998).

Merino wool sheep proved to be rugged enough to survive the climate of the Northern Cape and their wool was in high demand all over the world. Possession of these sheep provided a new economic opportunity and encouraged migration into the Northern frontier and intensified the acquisition and control of suitable grazing land. The 19th century wool trade drastically shifted the economic potential of the Northern Cape, which until the early 1800s was relatively unimportant in the economy of the Cape colony. Merino wool became a wide spread practice, and by the 1840s sheep farming had become the economic mainstay of the Colony (Tamarkin 2009). Despite less suitable land, compared to Australia and North and South America the arid interior supported a significant number of merino sheep which allowed for the Cape entry into the global market (Beinart 1998:17).

It goes without saying that the impact on land felt by Khoe and the San was tied to their cosmology where the natural environment was not just a means of subsistence, but intrinsically linked to their belief systems and their perception of interaction between the spiritual and natural world. The transformation of the landscape represented an ideological shift in the way Khoesan groups interacted with their environment. In instances where there was suitable land for cultivation, there were regulations put in place that would limit the extensive tilling of land in favour of the rearing of livestock and the needs of pastoralism were prioritised and indigenous stock owners were increasingly side-lined. The impact of an increased interest in merino sheep and increased demographic shift into the Northern frontier affected much of what had been Khoesan territory, further increasing the pressure on land. The importance of wool as a resource resulted in considerable investment and technical improvements of the area and tighter administrative control of the Northern Cape (Beinart 1998; McGranaghan 2015). By 1872, £3,275,150 was earned in wool exports (Noble 1875).

In this climate, missions were a refuge for indigenous economic ambition and consequently also a target for legislation that curtailed this. The Amandelboom mission at Williston (to be

discussed below) did focus on the cultivation of crops on the local commonage grounds, while other parts of the district were used for pastoralism. Pastoralism was also prevalent around the mission, because the historical record makes mention of the male herders being away from the mission while the women and children stayed home at the mission (Herbst 2004). In this context the areas around Amandelboom supported close to 400,000 fat tailed sheep and 81,432 merino sheep through the efforts of the Bastaard farmers, and the number of merino sheep increased further with the arrival of more white pastoralist settlers. Consequently, there was a call for strict control over the access to land, which the Bastaard and Khoesan inhabitants had used as commonage. There is mention of a Bastaard named Fredrick Viever who travelled from Schietfontein (Carnarvon) all the way to Moordenaarsgat, the farm adjacent to Grootfontein, so as to make use of the springs and abundant water to manage the effects of a local drought (CCP 3/1/3G7). A letter from the Amandelboom Erfholders Committee complained about how the Bastards had misused one of the springs and that cultivation and pastoralism was fast becoming difficult to manage in the area due to the scarcity of land (CO 4208' A39 and A42).

Therefore, the prosperity spurred by the merino wool trade created competition between the Khoesan/Bastaard occupants and the white settlers. Legislation effectively pushing out Bastaard and Khoesan groups from this economy and new legislation prevented missions from cultivating land, therefore, the Amandelboom community, for example, that had once sustained the mission was soon marginalized, and the majority moved to the Orange river. Those who stayed either became farm labourers or tried to own land in vain.

This exclusion was encouraged in the late 1860s by the diamond rush which spurred the transport industry, the establishment of towns and an increase in the scale of agricultural production to support them and the significant demographic increase. Ross (1983) notes the discovery of diamonds and later gold, added considerably more economic weight to South Africa and the effect on the lives of people in the Cape led to the systemization of agricultural practices which then facilitated the introduction of heavy industry transport.

The systemization of farming practices “comprised the enclosure of farm boundaries, the internal grazing of land into camps, the free range of livestock within them, and the provision of artificial watering points where natural sources of drinking water were inadequate for desired livestock numbers” (Archer 2000:675). The intensive maximisation of the land through the implementation of wire fences and windmills had the impact of inducing

innovation (Archer 2000:683). The limitations of the Karoo's environment spurred farmers to actively search for ways to, "raise the productivity of their land" (Archer 2000:683). Thus, the investment in windmills to facilitate access to water and the introduction of wire fencing, which challenged the "shepherding system of grazing which had existed for millennia" (Archer 2000:685). While independent Khoesan access to land had been limited earlier in the 19th century, increasing closure of the land through new grazing and management systems may have affected cosmological relationships with the landscape.

Additionally, the discovery of minerals in the interior created an urgent need for much more efficient forms of transportation, roads and scheduling. Karoo towns and rural areas witnessed the flood of transport of goods and people to the mines and later in the 19th century and early 20th century, the replacement of horse and ox wagons by the rail system. The development of mining also created a great demand for labour. "It stimulated migration within South Africa, leading to the 'Second Great Trek' from the Cape to the Vaal and beyond, and also to the movement of Indians from Natal to Kimberly and the Transvaal. It stimulated immigration, helping quadruple the European population of South Africa between 1875 and 1911" (Bickford-Smith 1988:129). Moreover, Bickford-Smith further notes that the mineral discoveries radically changed the face of the frontier history with Kimberly becoming South Africa's first industrial community and as a consequence the most populous settlement outside Cape Town. Therefore, the transformation that came with the discovery of mines was of great significance to the Cape and the history of the Karoo. The diamond rush effectively introduced a new range of material culture.

The Coming of the Missionaries and the establishment of Williston

I have already made mention of the mission station of Amandelboom (Williston) that is located at the south western end of the Kareeberg Mountain range (Figure 5.1). I give more specific detail here because it is important to the development of the farms on which the engravings occur and to the issues of land and Bastaard access to it.

The Rhenish Mission Society (R.M.S) arrived in Cape Town in 1829 and by that time the Cape settlement was already 178 years old. The Dutch remained largely unconcerned with the task of converting the indigenous groups and before 1737, there were no attempts by an overseas society to do missionary work in South Africa. This changed with full British occupation from 1806 (Strassberger 1969).

The London Mission Society (LMS) including the R.M.S set its eyes on the Cape, Strassberger (1969) and the influx of different mission societies had a significant impact on the social fabric of society in South Africa. When the R.M.S arrived in the Cape they sought to operate their mission station under the same guidelines as the London Mission Society. These guidelines were centred on the idea of reaching out to the indigenous groups and converting them. The work of the R.M.S was focused in fourteen districts of the Cape colony (Strassberger 1969). They started in the Cederberg, and then extended to the south in Stellenbosch, Tulbagh, and Worcester and north to Namaqualand. Their last region of focus in the Cape is where this research finds itself - the Karee Mountains or the Kareeberg (Strassberger 1969).

In 1829, four missionaries of the R.M.S were sent from Cape Town to gain information about the possibility of establishing a mission station in the Kareeberg. These missionaries were part of what was known as the Commission of Inquiry which had been sent to survey the land and motivate for the establishment of a mission station at Amandelboom. They gained invaluable information from the L.M.S about the mission field that the 'field for labour among the Hottentot, Griqua, Namaqua and Bechuana in South Africa was open' (Strassberger 1969:9; Herbst 2004).

The (R.M.S) took particular interest in this area after their efforts to establish a mission station among Xhosa immigrants at Schietfontein had proved difficult. Importantly they were drawn to the self-sufficiency and willingness of the Khoesan and mixed Bastaard communities who were already resident there. Although the missionaries' objective was to convert the native inhabitants of the region, the presence of this mission station was a way in which the inhabitants of Amandelboom could interact with their world both economically and socially (Herbst 2004).

The establishment of the Amandelboom mission station gave rise to the town of Williston. At its establishment Williston was known as Amandelboom meaning Almond tree. The mission was established through the efforts of the R.M.S. missionaries J.H. Lutz and F.W. Beinecke in 1845 (Strassberger 1969). The work was started in the Kareeberg in the 1840s, when the Rev. Mr Leipoldt and the Rev. Mr Zahn journeyed from Wupperthal in the south. Strassberger (1969) notes that from this journey the missionaries gained the impression that the mixed coloured communities in this region would be receptive to the gospel.

The initial settlement is described in glowing and positive terms when,

In 1845 the Rev. Mr Lutz and the Rev. Mr Beinecke were sent to the coloured people. They pitched their tents under an almond tree in a vast desert land. The conscientious coloureds soon brought clay, reeds and wood and within a short time there was a school at Amandelboom. School started at six in the morning and was diligently attended by the children. (Strassberger 1969:79).

The R.M.S sought to establish self-sufficiency among the Khoesan and Bastard communities who equally, were eager to have the mission station established in the region (Herbst 2004). Moreover, the information gained by the Commission of Inquiry noted that there was sufficient water and that there were good pastures (Strassberger 1969; Herbst 2004).

The Kareeberg region was also home to a group of migrant Xhosa who had lived in the region since 1816, and by 1846 their number had increased to about a thousand (Strassberger 1969). The Xhosa in this region added another cultural dimension to an increasingly complex mix of identities. Zachariou (2013) notes that the Xhosa diaspora into the Northern Cape was in part due to the growing frontier wars in the Eastern Cape. Between 1800 and 1805, Xhosa settled along the Orange river and thrived as they traded with San, Korana and Sotho-Tswana Tlhaping groups to the north east (Zachariou 2013). The migration to the Northern Cape was such that, “by 1824, there were 40 Xhosa families living peacefully in the Kareebergen” (Zachariou 2013:30) and by 1846 when the Rhenish mission was well settled into the region there was a strong population of about 1000 Xhosa people in the region (Strassberger 1969). Importantly, a significant and successful Xhosa community also settled on the Pramberg in the early 1800s near present-day Victoria West. However, by the mid-1800s they were progressively displaced from the Pramberg by the advance of the colony’s land acquisition for merino farms and wool production. This displacement added to the Xhosa presence in the Kareeberg (Zachariou 2013).

The Cape government facilitated permanent settlement in the Karee Mountains (Strassberger 1969) (Penn 2005) where the San were known for their raiding in the region, however, Strassberger (1969) also notes that the San had some reverence for the Xhosa and land grants to the Xhosa were a strategic means of keeping the peace on the frontier. The Xhosa land

grant included, “up to 700 square miles and ten of the best fountains in the area” (Zachariou 2013:30), their territory was to the “east of the Karee Mountains, Schietfontein and Harmsfontein” (Strassberger 1969:79). Additionally, the missionaries at Amandelboom tried to secure rights for the coloured community in the area, however, this campaign was dismissed by the Cape government. Strassberger (1969) notes that, “the 700 coloureds that lived in the area attended the Sunday services as much as possible...the people were very helpful to the missionaries and did not resist them. Their mode of dress also changed. A naked person was now seldom seen. But it was a struggle” (Strassberger 1969:80). Strassberger also outlines that the missionaries influenced the Xhosa style of building houses and they taught them how to garden in the arid environment (Strassberger 1969).

As noted above, the land around Amandelboom was contended because it provided good pastures and water which were resources that white farmers wanted for the grazing of their livestock. When in 1847 the boundary of the Cape Colony was pushed to the Orange River. “Farmers were allowed grazing for any number of cattle, and they simply had to pay a small fee for every animal. The coloured people had the same rights, but they were hampered in not being able to plough and sow to make gardens because the area was reserved for cattle grazing” (Strassberger 1969). These rights however, were increasingly contested and a drought that ravaged the area placed further pressure on Khoesan herds. The Bastaard herders in the region were quite wealthy and they sustained themselves through their livestock and through trade with the neighbouring towns (Herbst 2004). The competition that came with the opening up of the grazing rights from as early as the early to late 1700 to the Trek Boers further compounded the economic disenfranchisement that the Bastaard communities in this region were experiencing (Penn 2005).

The R.M.S missionaries tried to secure 9,000 morgen for the coloured people of Amandelboom which were then divided into plots. However, after the declaration of the Bushmanland as a communal grazing area with the frontier change, the economic sovereignty of the Khoesan continued to shrink at a steady pace and as new magistrates were established in Calvinia, Namaqualand and Fraserburg in the 1850s the Khoesan were forced into the most arid places where they remained unsafe (Strassberger 1969; Penn 2005).

The continual arrival of white farmers threatened the work of the missionaries in Amandelboom. This soon led to the decline of the mission station towards the end of the 19th century due to the impoverishment of the coloured inhabitants, the drought and competition

from the Trek Boers. As they became poorer and they could no longer support the mission station by their own means, a task which they had been doing from the inception of the mission station in 1846 (Strassberger 1969).

Strassberger (1969) notes that the R.M.S had gone through three stages in the “Karree Mountains, which were between 1845-60,1860-1902 and 1903-36. The first period was a time of prosperity and rapid economic growth; the second and the third period brought much suffering and economic misery and decline...During the third period the congregation remained mission congregations until they were transferred to the D.R.C (Dutch Reformed Church)” (Strassberger 1969: 80). Therefore, the impact of the missionary’s work cannot be overlooked. They had laid the foundations for the establishment of a town, they had introduced a new cosmology to the Khoesan in the region and we can infer that their work had a significant impact on the existing beliefs and cosmologies.

Tension on the Missionary Fields

One thing we cannot ignore is the state of the colony at the time that the Rhenish mission established itself in Williston. We cannot forget the tension that had characterised the Northern Cape. The previous section is largely based on the account of Strassberger (1969) whose writing emphasises mission ideals, and reaching out to the coloured groups in the region. This perspective ignores the responses these people had to the bigger issues in the Cape colony. Moreover, although the work compiled by Strassberger (1969) is informative, it paints a descriptive picture of the success and struggles of the mission, and we have to acknowledge bias and omission, especially as he dedicates his report to the memory of his parents who were Rhenish missionaries. Most of the information is cited from letters and extracts from diaries as well as annual reports which the missionaries had to submit. Strassberger’s work does not highlight any indigenous commentaries, and only refers to the welcoming attitudes of Bastaard and Khoesan people. There is no active or authentic Bastaard voice and the narrative is of the passive ‘native’. This perspective highlights the role of archaeology in written contexts and in particular how the engravings might be viewed.

Herbst (2004) addresses this issue and suggests that the Rhenish mission was out of touch with the history of the inhabitants of the Kareeberg. He suggests that the focus on the spiritual conditions of the inhabitants of the Kareeberg was naive and they failed to engage with the issues of people that found themselves on the margins of a fast growing colonial empire. He further notes that, the Rhenish missionaries often saw the lived experience of the

inhabitants of Amandelboom as the will of God, and therefore, were not active about the rights of the Khoesan groups in that region and passive about the “position of the Bastards in the broader sphere of Cape colonial politics and their socio-economic position in that society” (Herbst 2004:3-4). This attitude contrasted greatly with the approach of the L.M.S.

Consequently, while the mission was seen as advantageous we have to ask about Khoesan and Bastard agency and their exchanges with the missionaries. The coloured people were active and conscientious about education and helped in building the school (Straussberger 1969; Herbst 2004:43). However, Bastards continued with seasonal transhumance contrary to the wishes of the R.M.S who wanted them to settle down (Herbst 2004). This practice was against the Caledon code that reinforced the subjugation of Khoesan groups and kept white settlers happy and required that every Khoekhoe within the boundaries of the colony needed to have a fixed place of residence whose locality had to be registered with the colonial authorities and movement within localities required the “possession of a valid pass, obtainable from either his or her master, or from the fiscal or local landdrost” (Penn 2005:461). Those who fell within the protection of a mission station were documented by the state, however, those “Groups of ‘Khoikhoi who were not in colonial service, or resident at mission stations, would not be granted a pass and therefore be regarded as vagrant and subject to punishment” (Penn 2005: 462).

Additionally, while the mission station offered Khoekhoen, Khoesan and Bastards a place of refuge from having to work for the colonists, the Caledon code, as well as the expansion of white farmers into Amandelboom, threatened this freedom (Penn 2005). The rise in the number of white farmers in the region signalled its decline (Straussberger 1969). It is possible that traditional transhumant practice contributed to the mission’s wellbeing but competition from Dutch farmers meant that this contribution waned and they had to find work elsewhere. In this context the mission station would have been welcomed because it legitimized the presence of Bastards and Khoesan in the Kareeberg (Penn 2005). While the law did not undermine the work of the missionaries it is not surprising that the R.M.S. frowned on the continuity of pastoralist practice in the wider region. They seemed to have held an either/or view, while the Bastards adopted a flexible approach that combined longstanding economic (and cultural?) practice from within a beneficial mission base. Bastards were probably living in a dual cultural world that merged deeper time cultural practice with the new.

Williston was established as a town in this context, the Caledon code and changed grazing rights that negatively impacted Bastard and Khoesan, who steadily lost their economic agency. The tension and competition for resources was at an all-time high. indigenous groups welcomed the mission station but this was not a one-way passive response, because it legitimized their movements in and around the land. The mission station on several occasions also bargained with the state to secure land for both the Khoesan and Xhosa in the region. Therefore, the open arms reception the mission station received was in many ways a mutually beneficial relationship which was later undermined by the slow demise of the mission station. Therefore, Williston was established among many paradoxes of economic and social tension. The establishment of the mission station and as a consequence the establishment of the town is encapsulated in a tension for economic and social agency. The mission station in a sense was the Khoesan and Bastards means of asserting their agency in the wake of the Caledon code and their continued economic and social disenfranchisement.

Lastly, I change the scale of this historical review and consider the history of the farms within which the engravings are found. This history continues in part, the issue of disenfranchisement of Khoesan and Bastard people living there.

The Farm Histories

This biography is an introduction to some of the lived experience of the individuals who owned Grootfontein and established the farm within the context of the increased movement into the Northern frontier and the competition for resources. It addresses the specific historic scale within which this research is embedded, and the more local and specific activities that could have had an impact on group identities and their overall expression, rather than the wider context – a macro-scale. This acknowledges that the imagery found at Grootfontein was a local expression informed by wider events.

Grootfontein farm is located 40km outside of Williston a small Karoo town in the Northern Cape (Figure 5.1). The farm lies adjacent to two other farms Banksfontein in the East and Moordenaarsgat in the West, and the present day farmstead is located at the North East end of the farm. The farm has been the property of the Hodgson family since the 1890s. There is very little information available on the Khoesan presence at Grootfontein, save for information extracted from the missionary journals by Herbst (2004) and some archival information.

The Commission of Inquiry sent out in the early 1840s to survey the Kareeberg, observed that Grootfontein was an advantageous place to settle due to the abundance of springs and grazing pasture for sheep and cattle (Herbst 2004:41). Concurrently, merino wool production, and industrial developments drew attention to the area by the British and private individuals. Amschwand (2014) notes, that the authorities had leased all the chief fountains and pools in the trek veld. Prior to this in 1848, the government had already realized the importance of the trek veld and so they issued grazing licences for 6d for every hundred sheep and 6d for every ten cattle or horses. This blocked Khoesan groups from working the land and drove them to labour on white farms.

From the 1850s the loan farm system and the increase in the private ownership of land resulted in the gradual controlled access to land. Therefore, Khoesan herders who had accessed the land freely up until this time gradually lost any land rights they had. The title deed record from Moordenaarsgat farm gives us a glimpse into the intensity of movement into the area. Moordenaarsgat is adjacent to Grootfontein, and went through multiple hands, approximately 12 families between 1858 and 1890, when it was sold to Augustus Frederick Hodgson and it was transferred within the Hodgson family which still owns the farm (Amschwand 2014).

The mission diaries point to the fact that a large number of Bastards led a nomadic lifestyle as there was good pasture and water in the region. Therefore, the residents of Grootfontein farm were largely a wealthy group of Khoesan or Bastards (Herbst 2004). The first official mention made of Grootfontein is in 1858 when the residents of Amandelboom requested to be joined with the Magistrate of Fraserburg. When Cornelis van Wyk arrived in 1845 he noted that there was a sowing land. A meeting was convened with people who had been 'squatting' on land at Amandelboom and Schietfontein, where these individuals claimed land from the state. Of these land claims only 4 from Amandelboom were granted (CCP 3/1/1/3G7-'59). Adrian van Wyk claimed the farm in 1848, with his brother Cornelis then claiming the farm in 1856. Both these brothers were Bastards. Grootfontein, and the other farms granted to Bastards were leased "to the present occupiers" for £5-00 per annum (CCP 1/2/1/18 A13-'67), Grootfontein was leased to both Adriaan and Cornelis in 1864.

The archival record also shows that there was a house on Grootfontein which had been built by Reverent Lutz which he wanted to use as an auxiliary church due to the travelling distance between Amandelboom and the Grootfontein community. The house was sold over to Adrian

van Wyk by Lutz, and there were two other structures on the property, one was lived in and the other was a shed. On the 27th of April 1869 Cornelis sold his share of Grootfontein to Adriaan including the improvements for £147-0-0 which was payable within three months at an interest of 6s per 100. However, it is likely that this sale never went through, as there is a letter inscribed by Cornelis where he complains about his brother not paying him for the farm (CO 4160.195). Further evidence of this is noted in the title deed of Fraserburg Quits 1.1 on the 13th of January 1870 to Cornelis van Wyk and Adriaan van Wyk.

In this context the inhabitants of Grootfontein engaged in regional trade which the missionaries sought to distance themselves from (Herbst 2004). There are some reports of informal trade and that Reverend Lutz was quite outspoken against any trade contracts save for during the drought when trade became a necessary evil (Herbst 2004). The status of the Grootfontein community is also emphasised through their complicated and profitable trading network. For example, they received regular visits from vendors from Cape Town and there are reports of itinerate traders named Mrs Brink and Daniel Keleher settling close to Grootfontein (Herbst 2004:62).

The title deed records further support a Bastaard economic presence on Grootfontein farm. Herbst (2004) notes that within the Bastaard herders there were great class differences and these were largely based on material possessions. The spectrum spanned from the extremely wealthy to the landless workers. Of the wealthy Bastaard herders, Herbst (2004) mentions the Brils and Jansens as well as the Van Wyks as esteemed Baster families who enjoyed great prestige by virtue of their wealth. The Van Wyks are noted to have leased part of Grootfontein between 1856 up until 1893. Therefore, when trying to understand the identity of the Khoesan groups in this region it is important that we are aware of the class differences and access to wealth that they had. An understanding of the wealth these groups had is an important window into understanding the degree of loss experienced by this group spurred by the arrival of white farmers who had the protection of the state.

The activities happening around Grootfontein farm reflect on the larger developments in the Cape colony. Although the events leading up to the relinquishing of the lease by the “indignant old Baster” at Moordenaarsgat (Amschwand 2014) remain largely unknown to us, we can infer that this relinquishment of the lease and consequently ownership of the farm was largely the consequence of the greater economic disenfranchisement that the Khoesan communities were going through. Adriaan van Wyk gave up his lease of Moordenaarsgat, to

which he had made significant improvements, for £244.00. This was a consequence of negatively disposed bureaucratic process. Moreover, the sum of £244.00 is not a trifling sum, especially at this time, and the effort the van Wyk's put into improvements on the farm is an even greater signifier of their wealth.

Although Moordenaarsgat is not Grootfontein, the scale of events that occurred on this farm were also representative of the larger social tensions and pressures in the region. There was intensified competition for land which is highlighted by the multiple leases over Moordenaarsgat. These leases also highlight the financial burden of owing property on the frontier, particularly for the Baster farmers. Therefore, we can infer that occupation of the Kareeberg and the extension of the Cape colony was rapid from the beginning of the 1800s, a fast pace activity that owes its success to the extension of grazing rights onto the Trek Boers as well as the restricted cultivation laws.

This chapter has given an overview of the events experienced by and lived by the individuals who likely created the rock engravings at Grootfontein. This context is one of increased economic denial. The closing of the frontier represents a space in which these groups economic and social value is increasingly undermined. At the same time the economy of South Africa was experiencing a significant change. Towns had been established and capitalist society was on the rise. The Kimberley diamond rush was emblematic of this and it represented a significant event in the Karoo and specifically for Williston and the regions inhabitants. However, Khoesan and Basters found themselves caught in-between a system of rapid economic growth and increased economic and social disenfranchisement. The engravings are wrapped in this broad context. Before the description of engravings, I briefly review research on Karoo engraving and ideas that others have posed about them.

CHAPTER 4

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the few studies that have paid attention to historical rock engravings and paintings of the Northern Cape dated within the 18th, 19th and even early 20th centuries (Deacon 1988, 1997; van der Merwe 1990; Morris 1988; Yates et.al. 1993; Hall and Mazel 2004; Smith and Ouzman 2004; Ouzman 2005 and McGranaghan 2015). This period has to a large extent been neglected because of historical biases in rock art research that have tended to favour the precolonial San fine-line imagery, while the historical engravings have been seen as crude doodles done by herders in the veld. Additionally, historic engravings have often been viewed as simplistic and literal and as earlier forms of graffiti with negative associations of mindless defacement. As a consequence, few historical rock art sites are known or have been systematically recorded.

As outlined above, a fundamental guiding principle in this discussion and of the authors cited is that this historic period rock art is meaningful and relevant as well as contextually representative of the 19th century. While their appearance in the 19th century record is sudden and they are seen as a complete departure from the precolonial styles, themes and meanings, on closer inspection these images have an element of cultural continuity. The ‘old’ precolonial themes are expressed through the materiality of the colonial world. Consequently, this chapter reviews the main themes in rock art research in the Northern Cape so as to establish a comparative context for the study of the Grootfontein engravings. This considers the different styles, recurring motifs and the location of the art. Additionally, I consider the age and context of the rock art, the use of the Bleek and Lloyd archive as a means of interpreting the rock art, the question of cultural continuity as well as the application of a historical context in interpreting the rock art. I start with the chronology.

The Question of Age

Establishing the age of the rock engraving sequence in the Northern Cape has been integral in understanding possible relationships between the historic and the pre-colonial rock engravings. The colonial contact period resulted in a new range of materiality and means of cultural expression. Lightfoot notes that “the tendency has been to view native responses to European culture in a segregated manner where these communities rejected traditional

lifeways and adopted European culture” (Lightfoot & Martinez 1995:200). This segregated view is problematic as it fails to consider the diverse range of responses groups have when they exist in pluralistic societies. Therefore, there is a need to examine pre-contact material culture so as to come to a better understanding of these interactions. Without a longer time-perspective ‘measuring’ change and continuity is not possible. Additionally, cultural change and continuity is place specific, and therefore, any study on cultural change and continuity needs to also consider the details of the historical context. This has been given in Chapter 3.

The advantage historical rock art imagery has over precolonial art is that it is easier to date. The motifs represented in historic period can be cross referenced with the archival records (see Hall & Mazel 2005). In contrast to historical rock art, precolonial art is much more difficult to date. Researchers who have paid particular attention to the age and sequencing of rock engravings in the Northern Cape are Beaumont and Vogel (1985) and Morris (1988). These rock engravings are largely found on dolerite boulders “a hard dense rock with a high concentration of iron. As a result, the outer surface weathers to a dark rust colour” (Beaumont & Vogel 1985:74-75) and when an image is made by removing the outer surface through incision, pecking or rubbing, the lighter coloured rock below is exposed and the colour contrast highlights the image (Deacon 1997:19 also see McGranaghan 2015). There are three techniques of engraving which are prevalent on engraved boulders; incising, scraping and pecking (Beaumont and Vogel 1985). Beaumont and Vogel (1985) used these three techniques and created a model which they argued indicated different spatial distributions and thus represented different cultural groupings.

The fine-line engravings are the hardest to see, indicating that they are the oldest and that their distribution is dependent on finding smooth patinated dolerite boulders, “...the ideal landscape for artists.” (Deacon 1997:19). Pecked engravings are created using a percussion technique and scraped engravings are created by removing the dark outer surface over large areas. The distribution of this technique (scraping) seems to be restricted to the Upper Karoo within the area of Kenhardt in the north, Beaufort West in the south and De Aar in the east. (Beaumont and Vogel 1985). Furthermore, they argue that “scraped and pecked engravings were probably coeval and that their first appearance corresponded with the advent of ceramics in the Cape interior” (Beaumont & Vogel 1985:73; see Morris 1988). This relative sequence replaces Goodwin’s unilinear sequence which suggested that fine-line engravings were replaced by pecking, that was in turn replaced by scraping (Beaumont and Vogel 1985).

Morris extends the study by Beaumont and Vogel (1985) by looking at the distributions of both rock engravings and finger paintings in the Northern Cape and Karoo (Morris, 1988:109). He pays particular attention to how they vary in technique, form and content both between and within sites. He notes that finger paintings are recent and that the scraped engravings probably date from the 19th century (Hykkerud 2006). The author relies on a spatial-temporal methodology as a means of mapping out the distribution of the rock art and in turn establishing authorship. Morris also reports that the engravings (scraped, incised and pecked) are usually distributed along the semi-arid central plateau in areas of the Northern Cape (Morris, 1988). There are cases of paintings and engravings occurring together in close proximity in a number of the sites in the Karoo and Northern Cape (Morris, 1988). However, the painted sites are largely restricted to localities close to bodies of water (Hykkerud 2006). Interestingly, the pecked and painted art use a significant number of geometric motifs.

In summary, both Beaumont and Vogel (1985) and Morris (1988) suggest that the fine-line engravings of the Northern Cape are the oldest and therefore we can infer that they were authored by Later Stone Age people. Secondly, the pecked and incised/scraped engravings are coeval, therefore, we can infer that they were most likely created by two groups of people. More specifically, it is suggested that both the pecked engravings and finger paintings coincide with the advent of pastoralism in the Cape. The two techniques make use of geometric motifs which suggests that they were made by groups who shared a similar belief system. The differences between these two techniques being that the painted sites are located closer to bodies of water. Generally, engravings can also occur elsewhere in the dry arid regions of the interior in elevated areas (see Morris 2004).

Therefore, we can be sure of two particular things, the first is that there are two, or three possible cosmological expressions that have been documented in the engravings of the Cape interior. Secondly, we can attribute two of these expressions to either a hunter-gatherer world view, a pastoralist cosmology or a combination of the two.

The Question of Authorship

The historic period is problematic as we have to ask what the precolonial categories of Khoe and San mean in the context of the frontier in the nineteenth century. Establishing authorship is one of the primary concerns in rock art research, it allows archaeologists to view the rock art from the perspective of the makers and as a consequence it reduces the amount of subjectivity that accompanies this type of research.

Writers whose research focuses on tracing these cultural signatures through rock art of the Northern Cape are Ben Smith and Sven Ouzman. The work by Smith and Ouzman (2004) introduces the idea that Khoekhoen groups expressed their cultural identity through, “finger-painted and rough geometric and basic ‘representational’ rock art” (Smith & Ouzman 2004: 511-513). Although the geometric tradition could be mistaken as an expression of San entopic art, they argue that this is not the case as the geometric tradition exhibits less variety and that it is incorporated into a multi-component representational image cluster (Smith & Ouzman 2004).

In order to prove that this rock art tradition is Khoe their approach was to examine the imagery’s “relationship to time and place” (Smith & Ouzman 2004:501) an approach championed by Beaumont and Vogel (1985) and Morris (1988). Their first approach was to date the rock art and they were confident that this “non-entopic geometric rock has the best dating support” (Smith & Ouzman 2004:500-501). Their evidence suggested that this art is not older than 2000 years and that this age range would suggest that it is likely to have been the product of the Khoe pastoralist period (Smith & Ouzman 2004). They progressed to looking at the distribution of the rock art and suggested this contributed to eliminating hunter-gatherers from the list of possible authors. They note that this type of art is usually found near water sources, which they argue is a pattern you would expect from stock-dependent people (Smith & Ouzman 2004). Moreover, they note that Iron Age farmers did not settle permanently in the Central interior of the country, instead they favoured the regions close to Botswana and the edges of the Central Limpopo basin due to the fact that the rainfall in the Central interior did not favour their millet and sorghum crops (Smith & Ouzman 2004). There is also “a complete absence of these images as one moves into Lesotho and KwaZulu-Natal” (Smith & Ouzman 2004:501). Therefore, their evidence for distribution and the chronological implications shows that the art was most likely Khoekhoen authored (Smith & Ouzman 2004).

However, as stated earlier, the issue with authorship in the historic period is compounded by the pluralistic nature of the eighteenth and nineteenth century Northern Cape frontier. Therefore, we have to question to what extent the categories of Khoekhoen and San are still applicable. Moreover, we have to question to what extent we can apply the topophilia method outlined in the earlier sections of this chapter. The recent Northern frontier was a space in which identity was continuously being negotiated, therefore, the extent to which ideas and beliefs continued, and in turn, the extent to which the categories of Khoekhoen and

San remained relevant is an issue to be considered when looking at the rock art from the historic period.

The Historical Context – Using the Bleek and Lloyd archive

The Bleek and Lloyd archive is a compilation of the verbatim record of the historic |Xam in the Northern Cape. It details the continuity of hunter-gatherer belief systems in the 19th century. It started from a linguistic concern to preserve the |Xam language and turned into an exercise that recorded their myth, beliefs and cosmology. What is particularly poignant about these accounts is that for the most part they reflect very little on the nineteenth century socio-economic context (but see Bank (2006) for more information on this). The accounts are generally ahistorical and they are based on the myth and cosmology of the |Xam –kukummi (Penn 2005:4-6). These accounts are significant because they tell history from a |Xam cosmology and this is a rarity especially in the deeply prejudiced historic record.

Deacon (1988; 1997) and McGranaghan (2015) are two researchers who have paid particular attention to applying the Bleek and Lloyd archive to the rock engravings as a means of understanding Khoesan identity in the 19th century through the comparative use of the Bleek and Lloyd archive. The archive was compiled in the 19th century and although it pays less attention to the socio-economic setting of the 19th century, it interestingly provides references to interpret the pre-colonial rock art, and therefore, we can infer that there is a level of continuity in the cosmology of the |Xam people in the 19th century with precolonial beliefs and practices. Deacon (1988) uses this record as a means of situating the myth and stories of the |Xam in their actual geographic locations. Deacon (1988) achieves this by using the sketches from the archive and she manages to establish that the sites referred to in the archive are isolated to the Kenhardt, Brandvlei and Vanwkysvlei areas. Deacon (1988) shows that the rock art in this region is mostly in the form of rock engravings. The research on the spatiality of the engravings in this region are corroborated by the information gathered by Beaumont and Vogel (1985) and Morris (1988).

Deacon (1988)'s approach is centred around the importance of place in the belief and cosmology of the |Xam people. Interestingly, this approach coincides quite poignantly with the approaches used by Beaumont and Vogel (1985) and Morris (1988). The differences in their approaches are that Deacon (1988) relies on the historical archive as a means of showing this continued belief in the importance of place in the historic period, whereas Morris (1988) and Beaumont and Vogel (1985) rely on the distributions of the precolonial

rock engravings and paintings as a means of showing the importance of place not just in a |Xam or hunter-gatherer cosmology but their work shows that place is important to both hunter-gatherers and Khoekhoen pastoralists. The Bleek and Lloyd archive is important as it highlights through |Xam cosmology this continued belief in the importance of place. In light of this, Deacon notes that “if there is indeed a link between the folklore and beliefs of the nineteenth century |Xam and the rock art, then it is most likely to be discernible in the most recent engravings – the scratched or incised engravings” (Deacon 1988:130-131 and see Beaumont and Vogel 1985 and Morris 1988).

Deacon (1988) emphasises the importance of place in |Xam belief and practice. In particular, her analysis of the Bleek and Lloyd archive shows us that these groups of people pay particular attention to the type of sites they select. While there is an abundance in the type of dolerite boulder sites at which to engrave, however, of those available dolerite sites we find that the rock art is concentrated in specific locations. Furthermore, the Bleek and Lloyd archive makes note of two distinctions between the |Xam populations of the Northern Cape – the Flat Bushmen and the Grass Bushmen. In the case of the Flat Bushmen in the Strandberg hills, //Kabbo one of the informants, makes note of a particular tale that has gone on to shape the way the Flat Bushmen relate with their environment. These hills are incorporated in the tale of ‘The Death of a Lizard’ – agama, a lizard who “tried to pass through the mountains but was squeezed and broke in the process. His front part fell over and became the western hill and the small one to the north and his hind part became the eastern hill” (Deacon 1988:134). The lizard is said to affect the rain as “it lies up on the thorn tree, it keeps its head towards the place where the north wind blows and bewitches the rain clouds and the rain will come only when it comes down off the thorn tree” (Deacon 1988:134-135). Deacon (1988) notes that these hills have been identified and that there are engravings on all three hills and they are most common on the small hill which faces the north and this hill is presumed to be the lizards head (see McGranaghan (2015) for the identifications of these hills). The bulk of the engravings on this hill are of eland, antelope and elephants which feature quite prominently in the Upper Karoo.

Deacon further notes that, “the power of a rainmaking place would be enhanced by permanent signs and metaphors of living animals that held ritual significance” (Deacon 1988:135). However, there is an indication from Biesele (1993) who worked with the Kalahari San, that the metaphor for rain may have changed over time, but the significance of a place or landmark would have retained its power (Deacon 1988). The “places in the vicinity

of known living sites of the nineteenth century |Xam San can be associated with rainmaking metaphors... They suggest that particular places may be near waterholes, on north-facing hillslopes or on landmarks that have legendary connotations for rain where used repeatedly by rainmakers” (Deacon 1988:136). There was some significance attached to particular places by the informants, in particular the Flat Bushmen who referred to themselves as the ‘Brinkop men’ a reference to the brown coloured hills (Deacon 1988). Hills seemed to have held some importance especially if these hills were north facing. Furthermore, Deacon (1988) makes mention of a farm in the Strandberg where a north facing permanent spring has more than 50 engraved rocks including the older fine-lines, pecked and recent scratched engravings. The themes and metaphors are different and this could represent the change over time, however, the importance of place continues. Therefore, Deacon’s (1988) work reveals through the use of the Bleek and Lloyd archive that motifs are likely to change, they have mutable characteristics which are affected by context, however, place seems to have an immutable quality.

Therefore, this is something to be considered for sites at Grootfontein and that if the rock engravings have any links to rainmaking, then they will most likely be located near a water source or be on north facing slopes or hills and in cases therefore, linking the site to the importance of place. The idea put forward in the work by Deacon (1997) is that place is identity and this can be particularly noted in Bleek and Lloyd’s informants reference to himself as the Brinkop men (Brown/bruin). Therefore, it is an open question as to whether historic period rock engravings occur in places that still held cosmologically significance.

In light of this, McGranaghan further extends the work done by Deacon (1988;1997), and uses the Bleek and Lloyd archive in conjunction with the historical context to analyse and interpret historic period engravings. He looks at the younger historical contact engravings and his work seeks to explore the multiplicity of authorship in the region by placing the art within “the context of the expanding global markets, the violent interaction over resources of the Karoo and the shifting subsistence options that characterised this region in the late nineteenth century” (McGranaghan2015:157-158). McGranaghan (2015) notes that there are some thematic continuities between Bushmen art and the historic art in the Strandberg, with the artist’s imagery focusing on quadrupeds such as bovids and equids. The historic images in the Strandberg also seem to be closely related to the practice of rain making. The Strandberg localities have direct references to precolonial art (McGranaghan 2015) and this points to an aspect of a continuity in the artist’s beliefs. The referential nature that certain motifs have

with the precolonial period, emphasises the mutability of certain aspects of |Xam cosmology in the 19th century. In essence we can refer to these persistent motifs as having inalienable characteristics (Thomas 1991:23). McGranaghan (2015) notes that although certain aspects of Khoesan or |Xam life were threatened by genocide and that the arrival of certain technologies challenged the subsistence lifeways the inhabitants of the Northern Cape were accustomed to, there is a strong sense of adapting their beliefs to the new world order. Ethnographic work in the region shows that the rural communities in the Karoo are made up of people who were of |Xam and Khoesan descent. Moreover, “anthropological and folkloric work appears to confirm that specific elements of |Xam tradition did continue into the twentieth century and the historic Strandberg points to this continuity” (McGranaghan 2015).

In summary, the work by Deacon (1988), Deacon (1997) and McGranaghan (2015) brings to light the idea that understanding precolonial and historic period rock art is place specific and in the Upper Karoo there seems to be a direct correlation between the precolonial rock art and the historic rock art. However, while some sites might have closer links and correlations with the precolonial period rock art, this is not likely to be the case for all sites. Therefore, what is mutable in one context might be immutable in the other. The stage for the exchange and mediation of values and beliefs is complex. Hence, if context is a factor in determining the mutability or immutability of an idea or a belief, it requires that a significant amount of attention be given understanding that specific context.

Historic Art and the Multiple expressions of Identity?

With respect to this topic on authorship and the methodology used to arrive at it Ouzman (2005) introduces an art tradition which he argues is a new rock art expression likely to be authored by the Korana. The distinguishing characteristics of Khoekhoen herder art have been outline above. Therefore, the style Ouzman (2005) is looking at is not likely to be a tradition of direct Khoekhoen origin. The European and Bantu-speaking mark on the landscape was such that, “Europeans left dates and place markings and that Bantu-speakers have initiation- related rock arts with recent political protest iterations” (Ouzman 2005:101). Hence, he notes that the style of art examined is distinctly different from the traditions noted above. The style is an amalgam of expressions and content and the motifs are distinctly colonial. However, although Ouzman (2005) looks at place in order to establish authorship, he also uses a few more factors in his methodology such as “site preference, pigment, iconography, archaeology, ethnography and historiography” (Ouzman 2005:101). As

indicated Ouzman (2005) identifies a new type of 18th-19th century rock art which he argues is authored by the Korana, a group of people known to have been descendants of Khoekhoen groups and other groups on the frontier.

The study focuses on 31 sites whose iconography is representative of phantasmal militant and magical images known as 'Kora'. This group of people was specifically adept to exploiting the frontier conditions (Ouzman 2005). The Korana were a group of people that thrived in the Northern frontier. Their desire to distance themselves from colonial administration and the need to assert the legitimacy of their identity was facilitated by the open frontier. Korana identity "had nothing to do with race and more to do with class and lifestyle. The idea was that anyone could be Korana as long as they were willing to separate themselves from their kin groups" (Ouzman 2005: 104).

Ouzman (2005) notes that Korana art is distinguished by inaccessible locations which are hidden, the arts pigmentation is often a slurry and the iconography comprises of horses, guns, hunts, human figures and serpents, geometrics and smears and splatters. Moreover, he notes that there are cross cultural juxtapositions in some of the art which is to be expected of a group of people made up of multiple identities. The conclusion from the art is that there is a need to revisit the ethnography and historiography of the area so as to understand any assemblage as there are many social constituents that contribute to an assemblage. Therefore, his work points to the need of understand the local frontier history of an area. He examines the most reoccurring images and what their frequency could say about the overall meaning. Ouzman (2005) notes that here are some striking similarities between this art and the San and Khoekhoen arts. Therefore, in understanding the multiple voices in the frontier there is a need for archaeologists to deploy multiple data recovery methods.

The next section will continue to review historic period rock art, paying particular attention to the work by Yates et.al. (1993) and Hall and Mazel (2004), who focus on colonial rock paintings in the South-western Cape region. We shall start by examining the work by Yates, et.al. (1993), as a means of framing colonial art from the closing of the frontier. Yates, et.al. (1993) argue that the images produced within the colonial period are not simply depictions of events that affected the region and give attention to particular colonial motifs that signals much more to the art (Yates et.al. 1993).

They focus on the period between 1652 and 1850 by situating their research in colonial and indigenous context and they contextualize their research within the frontier and its harsh

conditions. They argue that the rock art has a pastoral influence (Yates, et.al. 1993) and they refer to the art as a representational as it has quite a few recognizable motifs such as human figures and animals. They suggest also that the ochres, red and yellows colours, as well as black and white are linked to shamanistic ritual practices.

However, the images they are looking at seem to make no direct reference to shamanistic rituals or indigenous culture, therefore, the interpretation of the represented iconography is much more challenging because of the apparent non-ritualistic nature of the images, the images are usually interpreted as attitudes towards the colonial masters. However, this view is quite problematic as there are motifs that hint to some complexity such as the exaggerated male genitalia common in southern African rock art and the finger dots encircling colonial period women paintings found at Stompiesfontien. Therefore, a little more thought needs to go into analysing this art.

Hall and Mazel (2004) conduct a study that further compounds the complexity of the historical motifs. Their study was based in the “Swartruggens and parts of the Koue Bokkeveld that lie on the eastern margins of the Cape fold belt” (Hall & Mazel, 2005;127). Their focus area lies in the “Skurwerberge range of the Cederberg mountains which lies immediately to the west of the Swartruggens and the Tankwa Karoo or Ceres Karoo to the east” (Hall & Mazel, 2005: 127). They looked at colonial rock art motifs and sought to answer these questions: the age of the rock art and the meaning of the rock art (Hall & Mazel, 2004). They believed that being able to outline a specific age to the rock art would yield pertinent information on specific events and that this in turn would shed light on meaning.

The first subject that Hall and Mazel (2005) sought to shed light on was the age of the rock paintings. They note that dating the rock art is much more approachable in the historical period as “specific content, forms and depicted artefacts can be tied more securely to events, given the contextual control and informing resonance provided by written and oral evidence” (Hall & Mazel, 2005: 125). They go on to further note that the motifs in the Western Cape allude to a very specific period – perhaps from the later 18th and 19th century, and that the broad time period becomes in itself very problematic as it makes it very difficult to pin-point a specific date and time to the rock art panels. The problem of being able to give an age to the rock paintings in this particular region is overcome by some of the motifs that are painted on these rock panels. They look at the female style of dress depicted where, “the artists have emphasised the long bell shape of the dress and a cinched, possibly tight corseted waist”

(Hall & Mazel 2005:131) this suggests that the dresses the artists sought to depict are “crinoline dresses that dominated western female fashion between 1830 and 1860” (Hall & Mazel 2005: 132).

Therefore, Hall and Mazel (2005) extrapolate a late 19th century date from the painted motifs. However, as Hall and Mazel (2005) note, the most pertinent strand of chronological evidence coming from this region comes through from the depictions of wagons and horses and mules (Hall & Mazel 2005). The depiction of the Cape Spring Wagonette is one of the most significant of these painted images as it is representative of the Kimberly Diamond Rush. Hall and Mazel (2005) note that, “the development of a better road system in the Cape in the nineteenth century was first directed at the route from Cape Town, into the southern Cape and on towards Grahams Town and the Eastern Cape frontier” (Hall & Mazel 2005:136). This was done in response to the need to provide fast and efficient transportation of mail which was a necessity for the command of the military and economic enterprise (Hall & Mazel 2004).

They note that, the Ceres Basin, Koue Bokkeveld, Ceres and the Tanqwa Karoo remained isolated from these developments (Hall & Mazel 2005). Therefore, they note that because of the slow development of transport in this region, we are to assume that the wagons depicted were not representing a period before 1850 (Hall & Mazel 2005). As noted earlier, Hall and Mazel (2005) note that the majority of wagons represented in this region are most likely Cape Spring Wagonettes. They note that these wagonettes were manufactured in both Wellington and Paarl, a South African development that reached the apex of its construction in the last third of the nineteenth century (Hall & Mazel 2005). Moreover, they note that these wagons were only, “fully developed from the 1870s with the discovery of diamonds in the Northern Cape and in response to the huge demand for transport from the Cape, northwards to the diamond diggings” (Hall & Mazel 2005:138). They go on to further note that some of the distinctive design features of the wagons, are a rectangular body with a straight, flat and thick wood panelled bed, which was a feature constantly painted by the artists.

Hall and Mazel (2005) date some of these motifs to the later 19th century and link them to specific historic events. Their suggestions of meaning focus on the personal experiences of people possibly working in the context of these events, or the images as parody that made fun of white land owners and were, therefore, a means of ‘talking back’. Although they consider

some aspects of the colonial art as expressions of earlier meanings and beliefs, especially location, their emphasis is on the art as representations of experience of the later 19th century.

This chapter has focused on exploring rock art research done in the Northern Cape and in parts of the South Western Cape and in establishing the proxies for approaching rock art research in these regions. There have been some important points which have been noted from this literature review which will be used to build on our analysis of the Grootfontein engravings. The first is that the quest for the identity of an author is heavily reliant on place. Geography is central in identifying the author of the rock art. This has been a strand of thought that has been central to the work of the researchers we have examined from both the historic and precolonial periods. With respect to the more historic rock images, we have seen that the degree of separation between the iconography of the images in the historic and precolonial era is quite high, although some connections and continuities are specified. This makes the process of tracing continuity of earlier values and beliefs relatively difficult.

The second idea that has framed the historical studies is that historical context is of great importance in establishing meaning. I have followed this in the previous chapter. This issue has shown that reliance on the ethnographic record alone is not sufficient for any understanding of particular historic period rock art sites. As we have noted understanding rock art is place and context specific. Therefore, although the Bleek and Lloyd archive is a useful comparative source it is important that we are aware that on its own it cannot fill in all the gaps. It is therefore imperative that we use the historical context as a means of supplementing our analysis and methodologically there is much to be gained from combining the ethnography with the historical context. The idea is that rock art, and consequently identity, is place and event specific and this has been given attention in Chapter 3. In the next chapter, I establish the physical and landscape context of the Grootfontein rock engravings.

CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology applied to recording the rock engravings at Grootfontein farm. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part gives the context and setting of the engravings (details on the history of the farm to be found in the Chapter 3). Secondly, I outline the data collection techniques.

Site Context

Grootfontein farm is located 40km north east of Williston, a small Karoo town in the Northern Cape (Figure 5.1). The farm lies adjacent to Banksfontein in the East and Moordenaarsgat in the West. The present day Grootfontein farmstead is located in the North East end of the farm. The history of Grootfontein farm is wholly intertwined with that of Moordenaarsgat. Therefore, the site context is relevant to both the histories of Grootfontein and Moordenaarsgat.



Figure 5.1. The location of Grootfontein in the Northern Cape.

Grootfontein passed through a number of hands, and first comes into the archival record in 1848 when Adriaan van Wyk claimed it. Cornelis van Wyk claimed Grootfontein in 1856 at a meeting about “Claims of Certain Natives Residing at the Missionary Institutions of Amandelboom and Schietfontein” (CCP 3/1/1/3/G7-59). From what is known about the farm, Cornelis notes that when he arrived in 1845, there was a “sowing land” (CCP 3/1/1/3/G7-59) that had been developed by a previous coloured/Bastard community who had moved to the Orange River. Conversely, Moordenaarsgat comes into the historical loan farm records in 1858, when Moordenaarsgat is mentioned in the residents request to join the Kareeberg to the district of Calvinia. On the 27th of April 1869 Cornelis sold his share of Grootfontein to Adriaan including the improvements for £147-0-0 (CO 4160.195). The two farms were then sold. Moordenaarsgat came into the ownership of Augustus Frederick Hodgson in 1890 (Amschwand 2014), and Grootfontein was also sold to him in 1893 and it has been in the hands of the Hodgson family since then. It is likely that Moordenaarsgat was sold on prior to the death of Hodgson in 1906 as his death notice makes no mention of Moordenaarsgat (MOOC 6/9/546.1319).

Moordenaarsgat had two main farm house locations, it is noted that Hodgson moved the Moordenaarsgat farm house to the next valley. The farm house was connected to the old corbelled house (referred to in the historical record as a round house which historically is the property of the Hodgson family. The majority of structures such as houses, corbelled buildings and other improvements on the farm were likely to have been made by the Basters who occupied the farm between 1830 and 1865. The Moordenaarsgat buildings are located about 3 km away from the engravings. The majority colonial lease holders therefore lived on the Moordenaarsgat subdivision.

We know very little about the Grootfontein occupation. The corbelled house which forms part of the complex of Grootfontein farm buildings is located 2 km away from the engravings. We do know that Cornelis owned this property until he sold off the deed to his brother. What is significant about the location of both the Moordenaarsgat and Grootfontein farm buildings and houses is their distance from the engraving site. The engravings are in an isolated location and not linked to any farm buildings or domestic structures. Additionally, after a controlled survey of the site, we also found that there was no visible material culture around the Grootfontein engraved boulders. (Figure 5.2.)



Figure 5.2 The immediate area around the Grootfontein engravings Boulders 1,2 and 3.

In contrast, the Moordenaarsgat farm yard that included a small corbelled hut was surrounded by the same type of boulders and hence the same opportunity to engrave as was present at the Grootfontein site, however, there were no historic engravings (Figure 5.4). What we did find were rubbed and scratched boulders.



Figure 5.3 The terrain just above the Moordenaarsgat farm yard.



Figure 5.4 Remnant of hut at Moordenaarsgat.

There is a midden behind the corbelled hut at Moordenaarsgat that is also associated with the ruin of a small rectangular dwelling (Amschwand 2014). The Refined Earthenware ceramics from this midden all date from the mid-19th century (Figure 5.5).



Figure 5.5 Ceramics from the Moordenaarsgat midden.

The Rock Engraving Site

The Grootfontein engraved boulders are located approximately 2 km from the Grootfontein farm house in an isolated area of the farm (Figure 5.6). In total we located fourteen engraved boulders. Boulder 1, is the largest and most engraved of the boulders and is located a latitude of S31.11902 and a longitude of E21.15545, it was reported to us by Pat Kramer. Boulder 1 is well known in the region but it interesting that outside the immediate area around Boulder 1, none of the other engraved boulders were known. Survey located further 13 engraved

boulders. All these boulders are visible on Google Earth images (Figure 5.6). Boulder 1 is located on the west end of farm with the rest of the boulders distributed along the base of hill in a North and North-westerly direction.



Figure 5.6. Google Map Image showing the location of Boulder 1 and Boulders 5 to 14. Boulders 2,3 and 5 are near to Boulder 1.

Data Collection Methods

The Grootfontein historic rock engravings are located either on the top surfaces of boulders or on sloping faces or vertical faces. When located on sloping surfaces they commonly occur on the northern aspect of the boulders. The boulders are exposed to a variety of weathering processes (Figure 5.7), however, they are well preserved and clearly visible because they are relatively recent.



Figure 5.7. The general location of Grootfontein Boulder 1.

The engravings were surveyed and recorded during two site visits. The techniques used to record the engravings were the best practice techniques that would not threaten the integrity of the art. This resulted in both a physical and digital record using photographic documentation and tracing respectively (Figure 5.8).



Figure 5.8 Tracing Boulder 1.

Boulder 1 (B1) proved to be the most challenging to document because of the density of the engravings (Figure 5.9). Boulder 1 has a palimpsest of engravings that were engraved over a succession of visits. These were distributed around the base of the boulder on the eastern, northern and western aspects. The southern aspect (upslope) and the top of the boulder have not been engraved (Figure 5.9)



Figure 5.9. Grootfontein Boulder 1.

The curvature of the B1 (Figure 5.9) made it very difficult to establish a planimetric view of the whole boulder. Therefore, in order to counter this a series of photographs were taken from the east to the north west end of the boulder (Appendix B). These photographs were then accompanied with close up shots of specific motifs. In contrast, for example, Boulder 2 posed significantly less problems as the boulder has fewer engravings on a flat and vertical face. Most of the other engraved boulders in the sample also had fewer engraved motifs compared to Boulder 1 and recording them was straightforward.

In addition to photography we used polythene wrap and a variety of different permanent marker pens to trace the engravings. We found that 0.3 to 0.5mm pens generally matched the thickness of the engraved lines. We divided B1 into 7 panels, which were individually traced from right to east to the north west (Figure 5.8) (Appendix A). This method proved to be the most effective in establishing an approximate planimetric replication of the engravings. Furthermore, the heat from the rocks resulted in the continuous detachment of the polythene from the rock surface and smaller sheets were easier to manage. In the case of Boulder 1 the subdivision of the tracings into smaller areas was arbitrary and we made no assumptions about distinctive panels, sub-panels or ‘scenes’. As noted Boulder 2 proved to be less problematic because the boulder is engraved less and only two sheets of polythene (Figure 5.10). Boulders 3a to 14 also proved less problematic as they only had one or two engravings each which would fit on one piece of polythene.



Figure 5.10 Tracing of Boulder 2.

The tracings were then scanned on an A2 flatbed scanner. However, because of the size of some of the polythene sheets the scanning was divided up into smaller sections which were stitched together using Adobe Photoshop. The scanned tracings were then imported into Adobe Illustrator and re-traced in the program. I utilized a colour coding system in the preliminary tracing stage as a means of defining the stratigraphy. Black ink was used for the youngest engravings, red for engravings that followed close behind the youngest, blue for the third and green for the faintest and consequently the oldest of the engravings. All the tracings, re-drawings and digital records are filed and on file in the Department of Archaeology at the University of Cape Town.

In the next chapter I go onto describe the engravings from Grootfontein.

CHAPTER 6

ROCK ART MOTIF DESCRIPTIONS

In this chapter I compile a detailed description of the rock engravings from Grootfontein farm. I identified fourteen distinct boulders that have engravings on them but only give attention to ten. These are boulders, 1, 2, 3a, 3b, 5,8,9,11,13 and 14. Boulder 1 (B1) is the most prominent and locally known boulder (Figure 5.8) (S31.11902, E21.15545). Boulder 1 is densely engraved and has the most diverse array of engravings of all the boulders. Other boulders have far fewer engraved motifs. The number of specific motifs on each boulder can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Grootfontein Farm Boulder Engraving Descriptions

<u>CATEGORIES</u>	B 1	B 2	B 3a	B 3b	B 5	B 8	B 9	B 11	B 13	B 14	Total
Houses (with gables)											
Houses (no chimney, no ladder)	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	10
Houses (chimney and ladder)	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Houses (ladder, no chimney)	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Houses (with one end-gable, ladder and chimney)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Flat-top house (no gables/no ladder) incomplete?	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTALS	15	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	20
Windmills	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTALS	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Women											
Women in houses	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	6
Stick figure/geometric line women	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3

Possible woman (in house or passengers)	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
TOTALS:	7	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	12
Men											
Men on horses (guns/no guns)	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Incomplete men on horses (gun/no guns)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Men with hands on hips	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Men in houses	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Men with modifications	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3
Men just standing	19	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	23
Men driving carriages	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Stick figure men	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	7
TOTALS:	37	2	6	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	51
Fight Scenes	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
TOTAL:	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Horses											
Incomplete horses	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Four-legged creatures (possible horses)	12	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	14
Horses (with shaded legs)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Horses (without shading/not halting)	0	0	6	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	10
Horses halting	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
TOTALS	24	0	6	0	0	3	2	1	0	1	37
Wagons:											
One-wheel Cart (with people/cargo)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Four Horse Cart (with people)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Four Horse Cart (without people)	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Four Horse Cart (with cargo)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cape Spring Wagonette (with people and guns)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cape Spring Wagonette (with people and no guns)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTALS	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7

Abstract Designs											
Geometric shapes/objects	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Geometric shapes (with wheels/attachments)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Geometric lines	0	3	1	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	9
Zigzag Patterns	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Indeterminate Scratchings	6	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	7
TOTALS:	9	4	1	0	1	1	4	0	1	0	21
Writing											
Names	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Names and dates	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Dates	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
TOTALS:	3	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	6
Bulls											
Bulls (no modifications)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4
Bulls with hatching	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
Rain Bull	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Bull (being milked?)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Fragmented Bull/Cow	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
TOTALS:	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	11
Ostrich											
Bird/Ostrich	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	5
Bird/Ostrich (with details - possible three prong tail)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTALS:	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	6

Recurring images and motifs are: houses, people, fight scenes, horses, cape spring wagonettes, abstract designs and writing as well as animals (bulls and ostriches).

Houses

Houses are a recurring motif engraved on the Grootfontein boulders. Their presence is unique, as houses or any kinds of structures are a rare motif in the Karoo and indeed, elsewhere. The houses are obviously engraved in a two dimensional format but there are enough features to indicate that most, if not all houses have pitched rooves with prominent end-gables. This is indicated in some of the engraved houses by external ladders that lead up to a loft, below what appear to be depictions of thatched rooves in some of the engravings. Doors and windows indicate the ground floor. Some of these are elaborate with multiple panes of glass in both windows and doors and suggest that the house being depicted is quite large and elaborate (Figure. 6.1). In several of the house engravings, parallel lines run vertically from floor through the roof, from which they protrude. Initially it was thought that the squared off sections at either end of the rooves marked chimneys but it is these parallel lines that indicate the chimney. If correct, the artist is also depicting the interior of the house. The squared off features at either end of the rooves are square pinnacles that finish off the end gables.

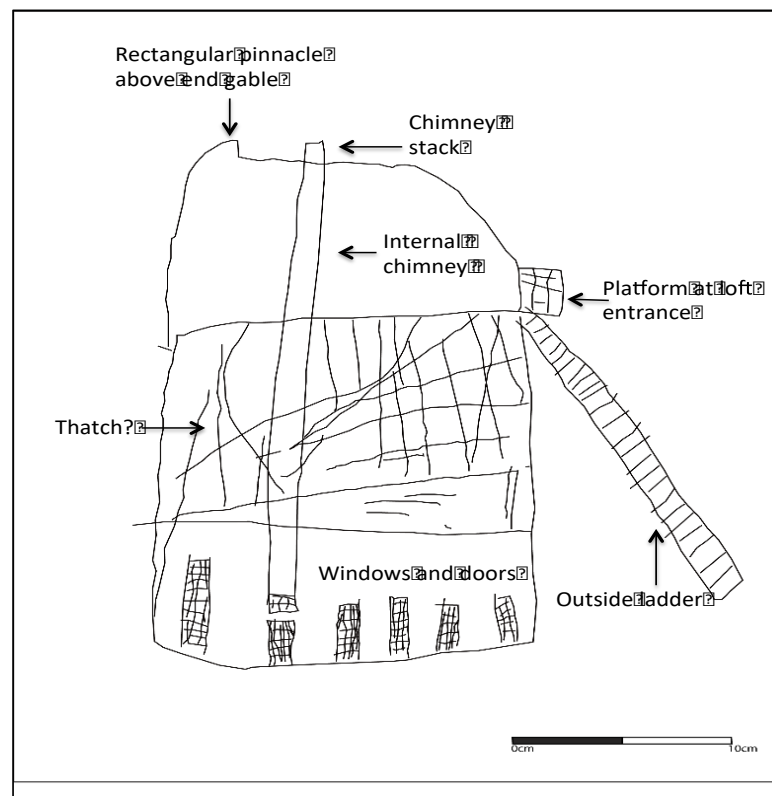


Figure 6.1 Stylistic features of Grootfontein houses.

Some of these features and others referred to below are illustrated in an 1880s photo of Williston (Figure 6.1.1)

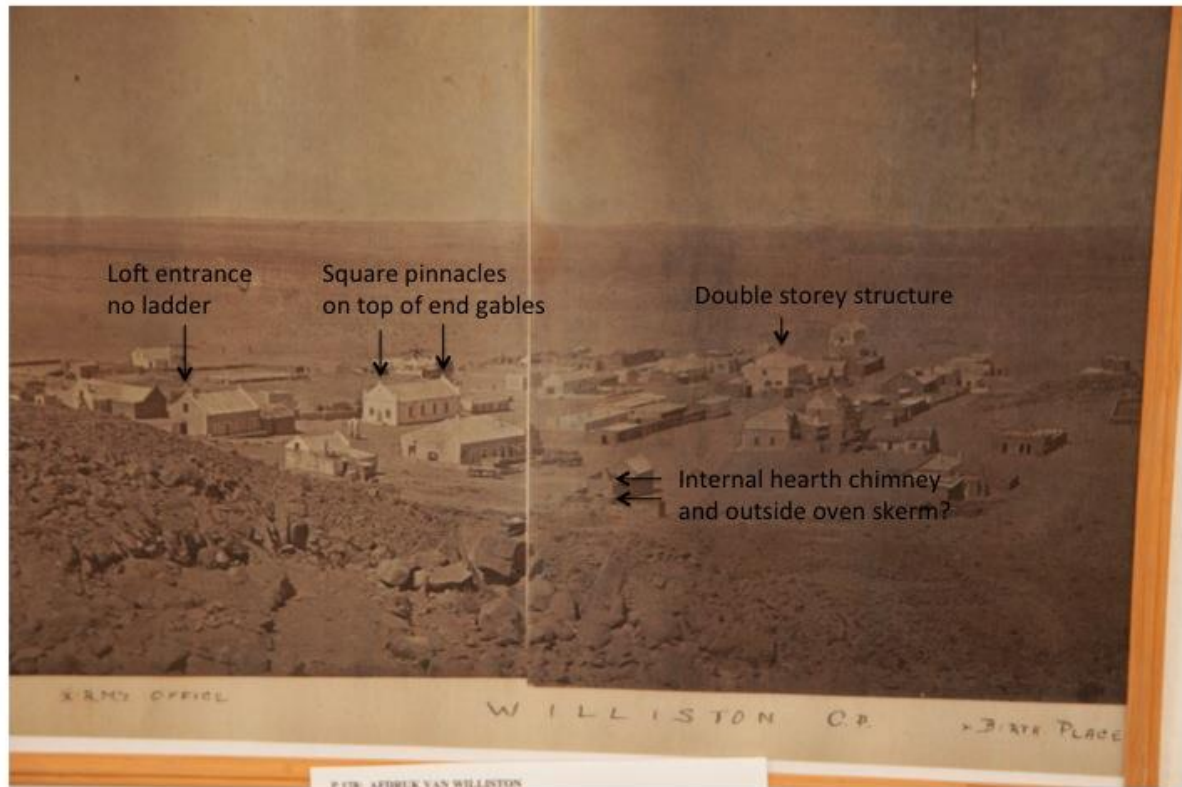


Figure 6.1.1. An 1880s photo of Williston showing some of the architectural features depicted in the Grootfontein house engravings.

I briefly describe the house engravings below but point out here that not all of them depict complete houses. House 1 (H1) located on the west-end of B1, for example, is a possible house because of what seems to be the end gable of the house to the left of the ‘scene’ (Figure 6.2).



Figure 6.2. Incomplete house engraving on the west-end of Boulder 1.

There are other motifs included but it is not clear whether they are contemporary or are other engraving events. One motif on the extreme right (Figure. 6.2) is the central pole of an agave plant (*Agave Americana*) that is an exotic from America and was introduced from the 1820s by British settlers. The wheel like attachment at the bottom of the sisal plant in Figure 6.2 is likely to represent the spray of fleshy ‘leaves’ from which the central pole grows. (Franck 2005).

The sisal is also depicted together with another engraving of what seems to be two end gable houses (Figure. 6.3 depicting Houses 2 -4 respectively). Here the distinctive end gable pinnacles are clearly shown, as well as an outside loft ladder. This cluster of houses seems to be drawn into each other, like a cross section of a Russian nesting doll. There is a ladder which seems to straddle diagonally across the houses. The ladder is fragmented as it does not extend all the way to the roof, and instead of horizontal lines going across the supporting beams of the ladder, there is distinctive cross hatching comprised of diagonal lines (Figure. 6.3), a style that reoccurs on a number of motifs on different boulders. The lines of the hatching are quite bold in comparison to the lines of the three houses and might indicate that they were added to the ladder at a later stage.

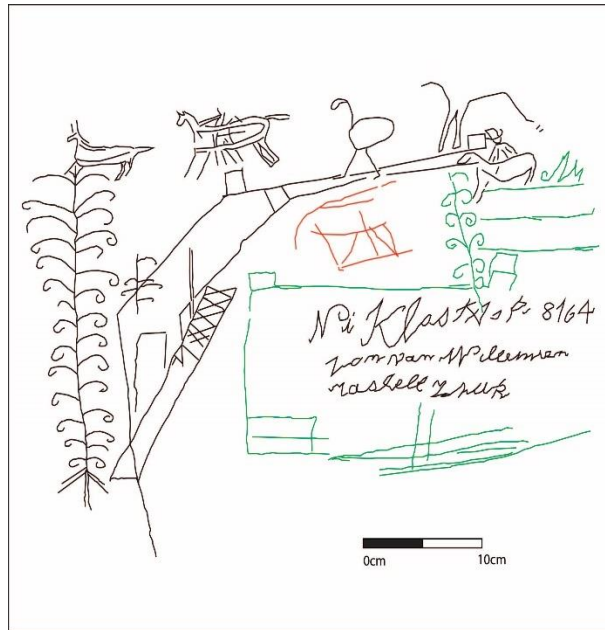


Figure 6.3 Incomplete houses on Boulder 1 (House 2,3 and 4).

The third house depicted in (Figure 6.3) is significantly smaller than the other houses and could be interpreted as a flat roofed structure. However, once again the square pinnacle suggests that this house also has a pitched roof. The agave plant motifs seem to accompany these houses and the plants and the houses may be part of the same engraving event. This combination seems to go together because the agave plant has not been seen engraved with other motifs. I return to the agave plant in the discussion.

On the east facing mid-section of Boulder 1 are another four visible houses (H5, H6, H7 and H8). At the top right hand corner is H5 an indistinct and incomplete house that is identified as a pitched roof house because of the ladder (Figure 6.4). Superimposed over the house is a man, a horse and rider as well as wagon drawn by four horses. It is possible that these motifs of men, horses and riders are a deliberate superimposition onto the house and intend to contrast motifs of travel and movement with the fixed position of a house, but this is unlikely.

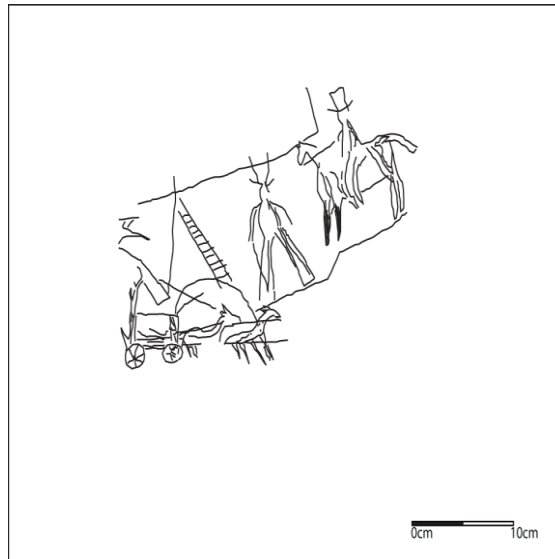


Figure 6.4 Grootfontein Boulder 1 House 5.

House 6 is also difficult to decipher but may have a chimney but a window is clear. Out of all the engraved houses it could possibly be a flat roof house because it lacks any clear attributes of a pitched roof house (the ladder and gables) (Figure 6.5).

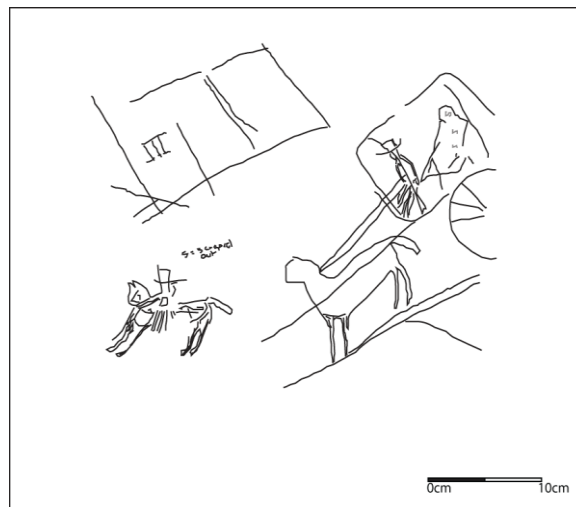


Figure 6.5 House 6 (H6) Possible flat roofed house.

House 7 is located at the lower left corner of boulder one (Figure 6.6). What is interesting about this house is that there is an attempt to show what seems to be some of the inner details of the house, in a similar way to the chimney's mentioned above. There are three figures engraved into this house, one man and two women. The woman on the left side of the house has some scraping on her dress, however there is no further detailing on her dress. Her head is not very clear and it seems to be rubbed off. The second woman is located on the right of the "doll-house" looking house. The skirt of the dress seems to have some pleating and there

seems to be some pleat detail on the neck line of the dress. Stylistically H7 adheres to the expectations of the other engraved houses, because it has two end gables, however, there is no outside ladder or chimney. The end gables are more elaborately depicted in an attempt to show the end walls. This is achieved by changing the angle of the wall inwards to meet the square pinnacle at the gable apex.

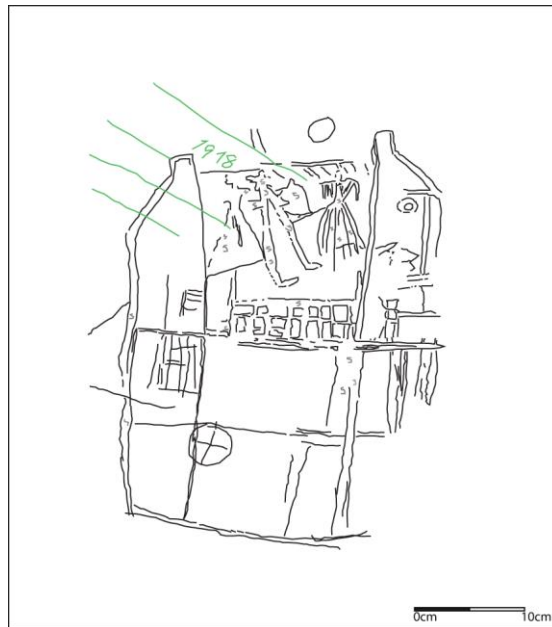


Figure 6.6 Grootfontein, Boulder 1, House 7.

This house could be interpreted as a three storey building. In the first 'storey' there are two women, and one man. Below these three figures is a semi-regular arrangement of rectangles that can be interpreted as a wooden balustrade at the front of a stoep. If correct then the three figures are not necessarily inside the house but outside on the stoep. The two other layers below the suggested balustrade are difficult to interpret. An examination of the 1880s photo of Williston shows that there is only one proper two storey building and this does not appear to be a house (Figure 6.1.1). It is possible that the rest of the engraving is the artist's imagination, or alternatively the perspective has changed from front view to plan view and that it is either the ground in front of the house, or a plan of the house interior that is depicted. Whatever the case the artist, in engraving these 'lower' sections, has sub-divided the space in roughly rectangular forms that are clearly proportional to the length of the building. The sub-rectangles in the lower sections are filled with a crossed-circle and line clusters. The line clusters are placed within the rectangles and clearly depict features or things within them but the crossed circle could be a later superimposition. The diagonal lines and the '1918',

presumably a date, are superimposed on top of the house engraving, but obviously the time elapsed between the two is not known (Figure 6.6).

The final house in this cluster is located in the mid-section of B1 is H8 (Figure 6.7). This engraving also attempts to depict the interior of the house. The house has two end gables and what appears to be the internal representation of a chimney. This is in the form of two parallel lines that start from on the right side of a front door and which intentionally protrude above the roof. In the room from which the chimney starts there appear to be two seated figures, perhaps a man and a woman, and other lines that could depict furniture. The figure in the bottom right corner seems to be reclining, perhaps on a chair. This 'glimpse' into the interior of this house indicates that it is not simply the form of the house that is engraved, but also the activities and social interactions that take place within it. Of note in the houses just described is that they are not accompanied by the sisal plant.

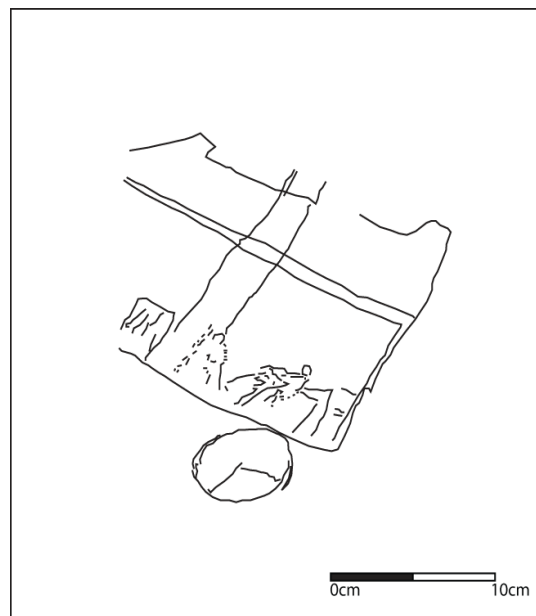


Figure 6.7 House 8 (H8) showing inner detail.

H9 (Figure 6.8), has all the typical features representative of the houses we have seen so far. There are two end gables, a ladder and the 'landing' from which entry to the loft is made. This house also has a chimney and as with the previous houses (Figure 6.7), the lines protrude above the roof suggesting the chimney stack. The left side of the image is crosshatched and the intention may be to show the end wall of the house including the gable. This is supported by the semi-circular attachment on the left side of the house that looks like a tea cup handle perhaps could be an attempt to show an outside oven although an outside structure could also be intended (see Figure 6.1.1). There is also an attempt to show some

interior detail of the house. Adjacent to the possible outside oven is a small sub-rectangular feature that could depict the oven interior. The left hand room is interesting in terms of the possible kitchen emphasis because there is probably one woman depicted with a lined crinoline dress and to her right is a possible second woman. The other crosshatched features in this room cannot be interpreted although the central one could mark the front door. In contrast, what would have to be the right hand side room has no people depicted, but blocky motifs could represent furniture. The ceiling between the rooms and the loft above seem to be shown by parallel lines.

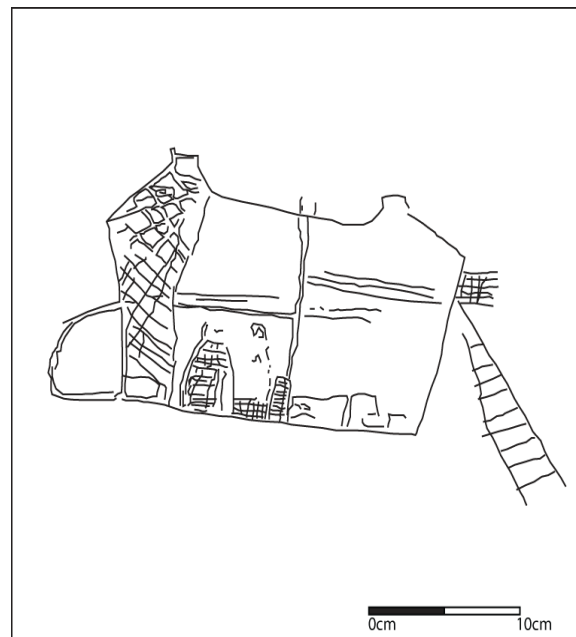


Figure 6.8 House 9 (H9) showing end wall and gable, a possible oven and women in what could be the kitchen.

House10 has two gables, a ladder on the left hand side of the house and what seems to be an extremely long chimney stack. There are two windows symmetrically placed on either side of a door and there may be an attempt to show some detail on the house (Figure 6.9). The house is cross hatched and attention is drawn to the door of the house in this way. A circular motif and other lines are later superimpositions.

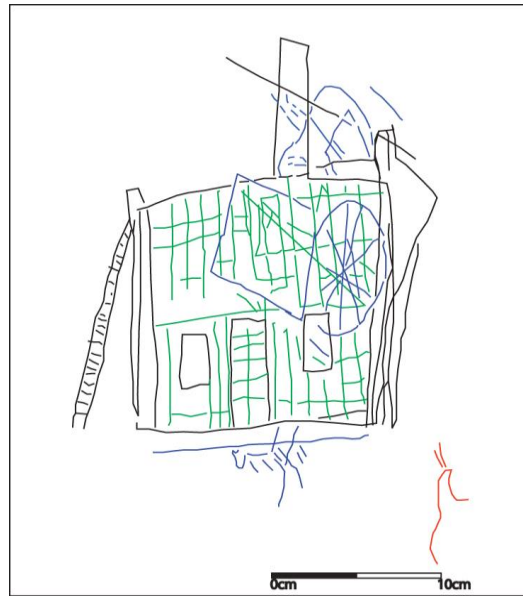


Figure 6.9 House 10 (H10) with gables, ladder and a symmetrical arrangement of windows and doors.

House 11 (Figure 6.10) shows some of the same detail we found in House 9 (Figure 6.8). These comprise a ladder on the right and a possible outside oven on the left. There also seems to be an attempt to depict the left hand end wall and gable although there is no gable pinnacle. Additionally, there is an internal chimney with the protruding chimney stack. There are two windows on the right hand side of the house but no clear symmetry in their placement in relation to a door. There is an attempt to show some interior details of the house as well as an attempt to show a sub-division of space within the house. The motif in the right hand room could potentially depict a bed, or at least some form of furniture.

House 12 (Figure 6.11) is a slightly smaller house located on the lower west facing end of B1. Unlike the other houses described so far, this house seems to be structurally simple. Although the prominent details of both end gables are shown, the interior perspectives seem to show only a single room. It may be significant that no end ladder is depicted and no internal chimney. There is an attempt to show some details of contents in the house and there are rectangular features that look like tables. Most importantly there is one clear female figure on the right and a possible other figure on the left, separated by what could be a table.

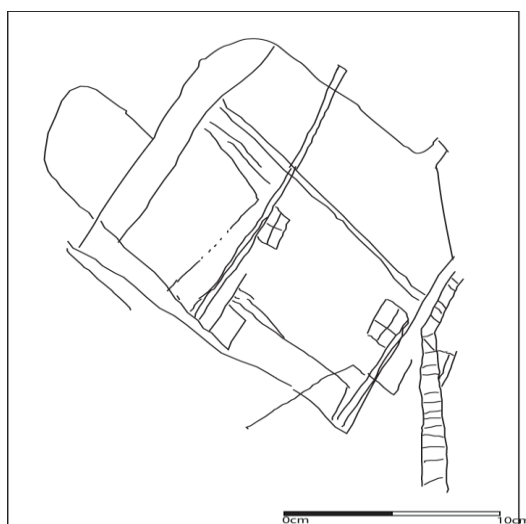


Figure 6.10 House 11 (H11) with outside ladder and possible outside oven.

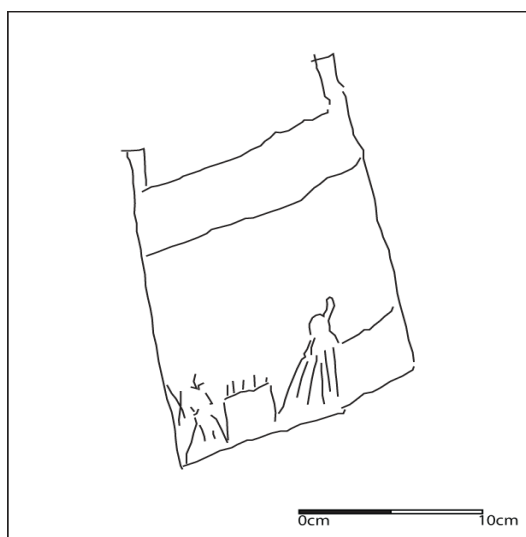


Figure 6.11 House 12 (H12) smaller house with end-gables and no ladder.

Boulder 2 (B2) has a few houses engraved on it. These are H13, H14 and H15 (Figures 6.12, 6.13 and 6.14). The houses are all engraved onto the north and north-east face of Boulder 2. H13 (Figure 6.12) is on the left end of B2 and shows a simple structure with, the gables and some hatching on the roof. H14 (Figure 6.13) depicts the two end gables and an outside ladder on the left side as well as a door with a line dividing it into sides. There is a chimney that may be linked to the internal fireplace. The final house on B2 is H15 (Figure 6.14) which is engraved at the northern end of B2. The identification of this engraving as a house is based on the depiction of one possible window and a door. Otherwise the block form and lines within it possibly depict the internal structure of the house, but the usual features such as

gables are not obvious. There is some writing superimposed on this house that perhaps was engraved at a later stage.

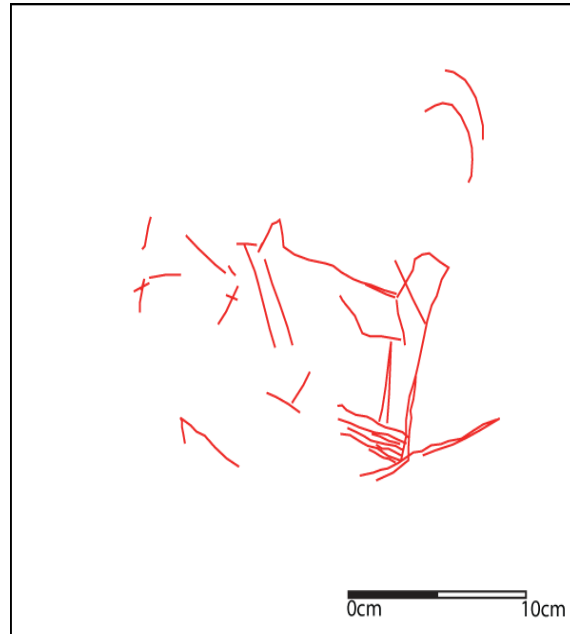


Figure 6.12 House 13 (H13) House with markings on gables.

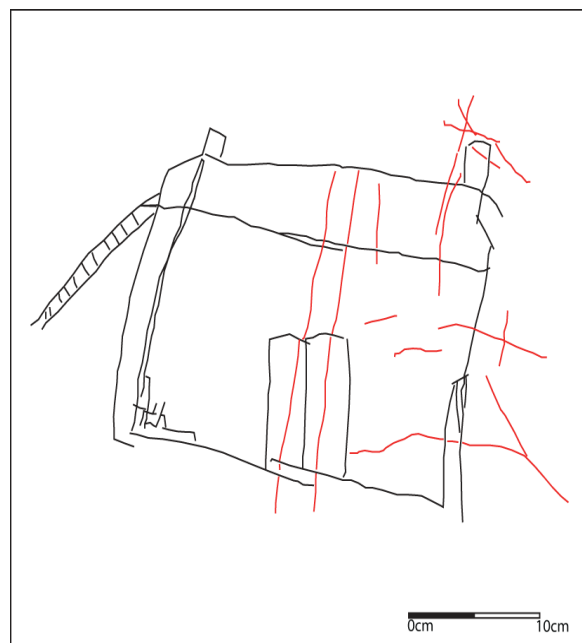


Figure 6.13 House 14 House with gables, outside ladder and a possible double door.

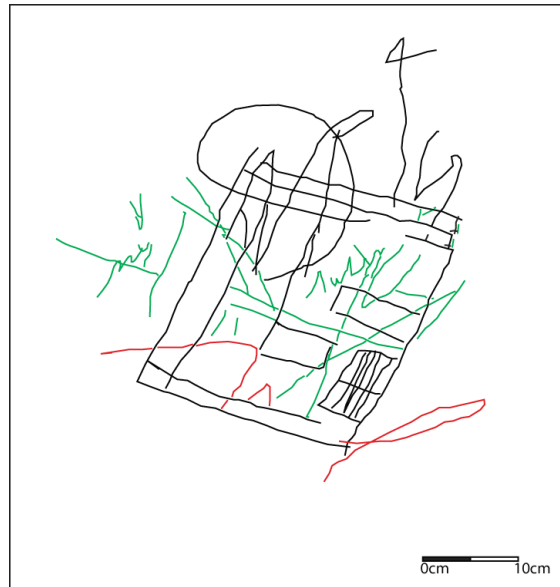


Figure 6.14 House 15.

Boulder 3b has one engraving of a house (H16) that seems grander than the other houses described so far (Figure 6.15). The house has one end gable on the left, though the presence of a ladder and landing on the right implies that there is also a gable on the right. There is a chimney and a chimney stack protruding from the roof. What makes H16 seem grander than the others, is the attention to detail given to the windows and door (Figure 6.16). There are all cross hatched and give the impression of long windows with multiple panes of glass. The front door seems to have a fanlight above it and the artist has depicted the chimney starting from this feature. The house also has a distinct set of geometric and diagonal lines that fill in a middle section of the house. This is difficult to interpret because the ladder clearly gives entrance to a loft above it and so probably does not represent thatching, and a line above the door and windows may indicate the ceiling of the front rooms. This middle section may be a second storey though this is unlikely on the basis of the historical photos of Williston and other Karoo houses (see Figure 6.1.1) (Fagan 2008).

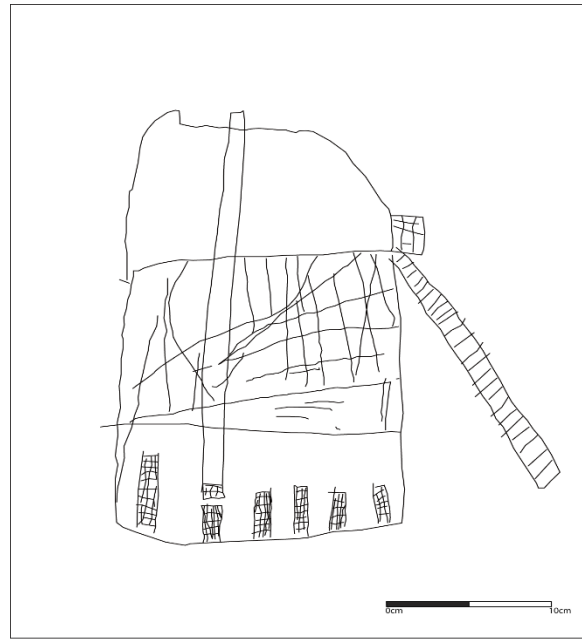


Figure 6.15 House 16 (H16) ‘grand house’ with hatching and long wide windows.

After Boulder 3 the next engraved house is only on Boulder 11 (B11) (Refer to Figure 5.8 for location of Boulder). B11 only has one house (Figure 6.17) and the details are relatively simple. There are two end gables and hatching on the roof. That may depict thatch. Of interest is that the interior of the house is filled with two women and one animal. What is particularly distinct about these two women is the detail on the skirts as well as their size. The first woman on the left side of the house has a distinctive bow tunic attached to the skirt with an attempt to show a box like detail on the train. The zig-zag pattern on the train of the dress is very similar to the zig-zag patterns observed earlier in B1. Other details on the dress include the parallel lines radiating from the top of the dress to the bottom of the dress creating a pleated or ruching effect. The second woman is far more prominent in the frame and the skirt is much more imposing. The skirt has a zig-zag pattern at the bottom and there seems to be an attempt to show the texture or ruching on the sides of the dress. The artist has given significant detail on the dresses, especially the depiction of zig-zags on the hem, possible aprons, tiered dresses or peplum’s (Figure 6.16). The animal must be an intentional inclusion because the house is the only engraving on this boulder. It is not possible to identify what kind of animal is depicted though horse could be intended given their significant emphasis in the Grootfontein sample (Table 1). The animal above the house is an ostrich.



Figure 6.16 House 17 (H17) Boulder 11, house with women in house and thatching/hatching on the roof.

Boulder 13 (Figure 6.17) is also relatively similar to boulder 11 in the style of house depicted. There is a simple detail given of the gables. Additionally, as with Boulder 11, the real focus of the engraving is on two women inside the house. The same dress detail is given and the front on view elaborates this. This boulder has two women depicted in the house. The style of depicting the women is very similar, we have one woman in the background, who seems less prominent or diminutive and in the foreground there is a much more prominent woman. The prominence of this woman is less dependent on the positioning and it is more reliant on the style of dress and her size. The dress in the background is less embellished – very simplistic. The woman in the foreground has a much more embellished dress, the dress has two layers and the train of the two layers seem to be embellished by the same zig-zag pattern we noted earlier. There is also a focus on vertical lines radiating from the top of the skirt to the bottom of the skirt which could be emblematic of pleats on the skirt of the dress. Perhaps the differentiation in the dresses is symbolic of class or status or age.

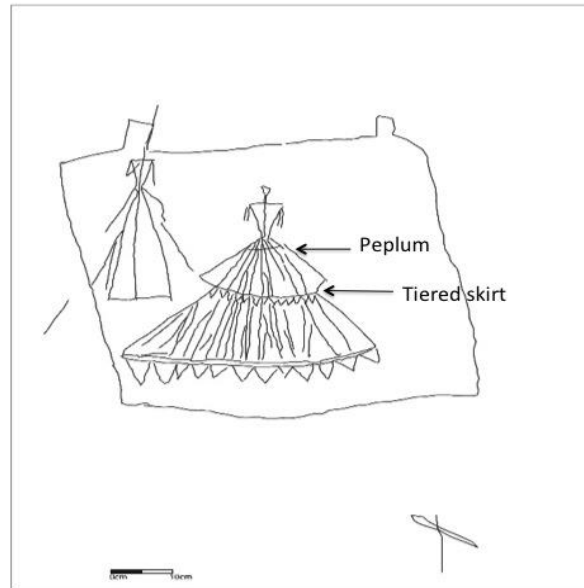


Figure 6.17 Boulder 13 House 18 (H18) with two women.

The houses described above are relatively standardised in terms of their form and features. A significant feature of the houses is the depiction of people in them, especially women. There are, however, some engraved women that are not linked to houses (Table 1). One is of a woman as a passenger in a cart. She seems to be reclining in the back seat of a two wheel/one horse dog cart (Figure 6.18). One distinguishing feature about this woman is her posture, that resembles the posture of the women in H12 (Figure 6.11). The wagon is covered, not open, and on the basis of the hat, it is clearly being driven by a man.

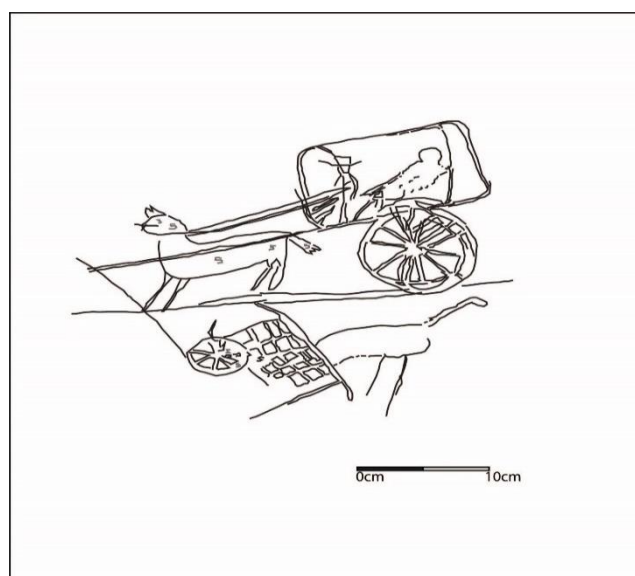


Figure 6.18 Woman reclining in the back of a carriage.

Other engraved women are simple stick-figures or 'geometric'. These are isolated to Boulders 1, 2 and 3. In (Figure 6.19) a woman is constructed using triangles with the upper body triangle inverted over a larger body triangle. The body triangle has some hatching in the form of diagonal lines and represents pattern on the bottom skirt. This woman seems to be part of multiple engravings including an agave plant, a wagon, a group of men and a man on a horse. Another woman on B1 (Figure 6.20) is considerably cruder. The skirt has a zig-zag pattern on it that could represent the tiered skirt described above. The emphasis is on the skirt and the arms and the head are depicted with simple lines. This woman is associated with a number of other motifs that include an agave plant, horse and riders and an ostrich. A figure/geometric woman is from boulder 3a (Figure 6.21) and is the image just described. The skirt is also drawn using a triangle and there is also an attempt to show detail on the dresses with parallel lines spreading out from a focus at the waist.



Figure 6.19 Woman constructed using triangles.

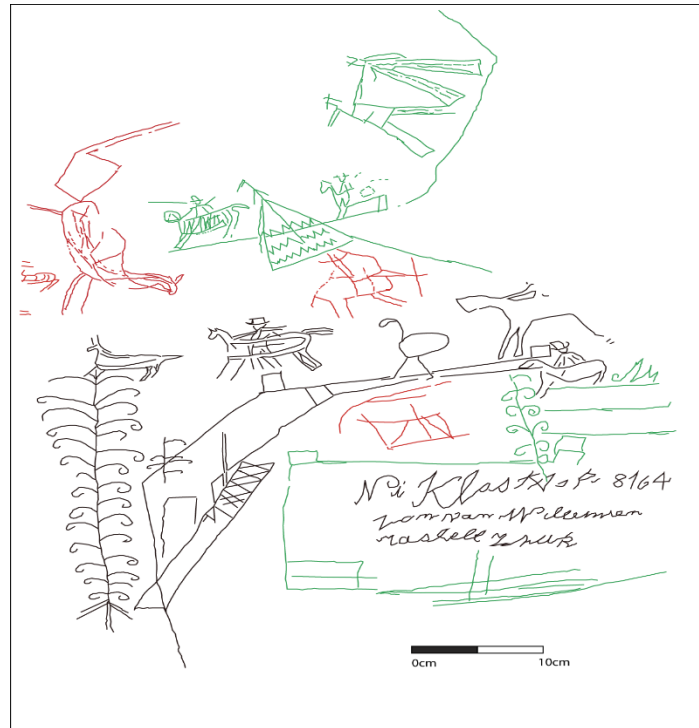


Figure 6.20 Woman with zig-zags on the dress.

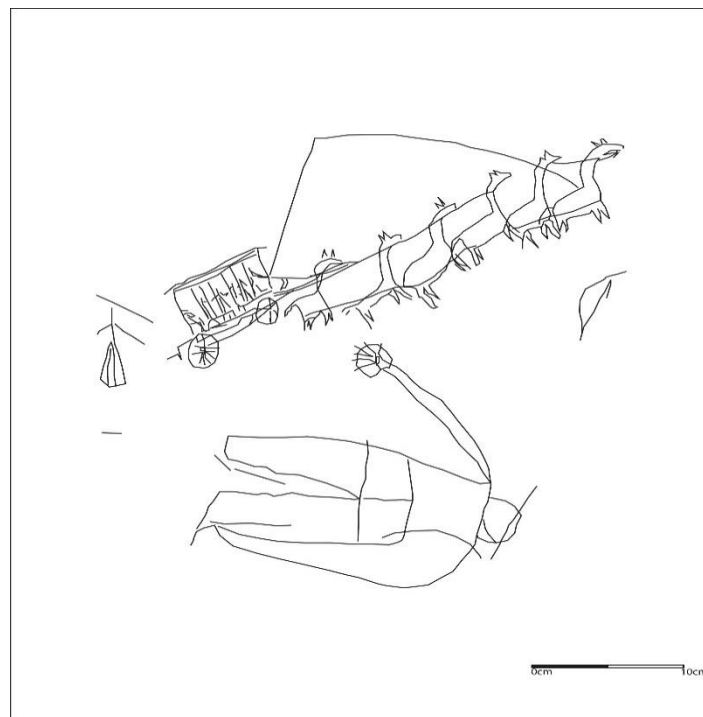


Figure 6.21 Woman with a triangular skirt.

Before I move on to describe the contexts in which men are engraved at Grootfontein, Table 2 clearly shows that when the artists depicted people inside the houses, the emphasis was on women. Out of a total sample of 12 women, 9 (81.8%) are depicted inside houses. In contrast only 2 (18.2%) of engraved men are depicted in houses. This difference is even more marked because engravings of men far outnumber those of women (Table 2).

Table 2: The frequency of men and women in the Grootfontein sample.

Gender	Total	% of total	In houses	% in houses
Women	12	19	9	81.8
Men	51	77.2	2	18.2

Windmills

Other than the houses, there is only one other engraving that might represent another type of structure – the windmill (Figure 6.21.1). The windmill is engraved on the north-eastern end of Boulder 2 and is the only example engraved.

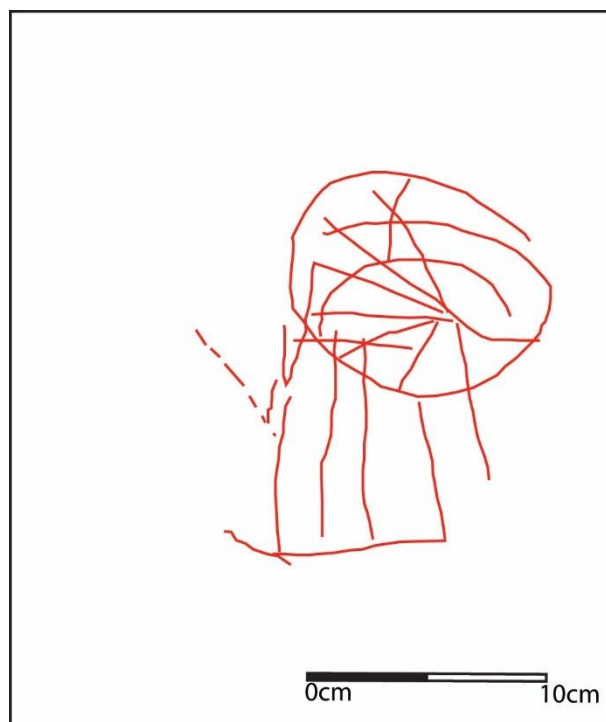


Figure 6.21.1 Windmill from Boulder 2.

The engraving is simple, with a rectangular shape below representing the framework upon which the propeller is located. Importantly, wind mills in the Karoo provide an important chronological marker as they only became part of farms and rural technological infrastructure from about the 1880s (Archer 2000).

I now go on to describe the male engravings and their associations.

Engravings of men and their contexts

As noted in Table 2 the engravings of men far outnumber the engravings of women. Boulder 1 as noted earlier has a high concentration of images, and thus it is to be expected that the highest number of engraved. Rather than describe these individually, I focus on describing the activity themes in which men are involved. There are a number of themes that include men on horses (possibly with guns), men and violence, men driving carriages, men with hands on hips, men in houses, and stick-figure men.

Men on horses (with guns/no guns), occur for example, on the east facing side of B1 (Figure 6.22). There is nothing about these engravings that suggests any specific activity other than simply riding. The hats however, have relatively straight brims and are rectangular in profile. This profile suggests a top hat and this distinction may be relevant because other men have hats with upturned brims and rounded tops, and suggest more of a working hat or slouch hat (Figure 6.23). Additionally, it seems that attention is given to the horses such as the 'shading' given to the front or hind legs (Figure 6.22 –Appendix A – Figure 9.2). This may indicate that specific men and horses are depicted, rather than a generic man on horse.

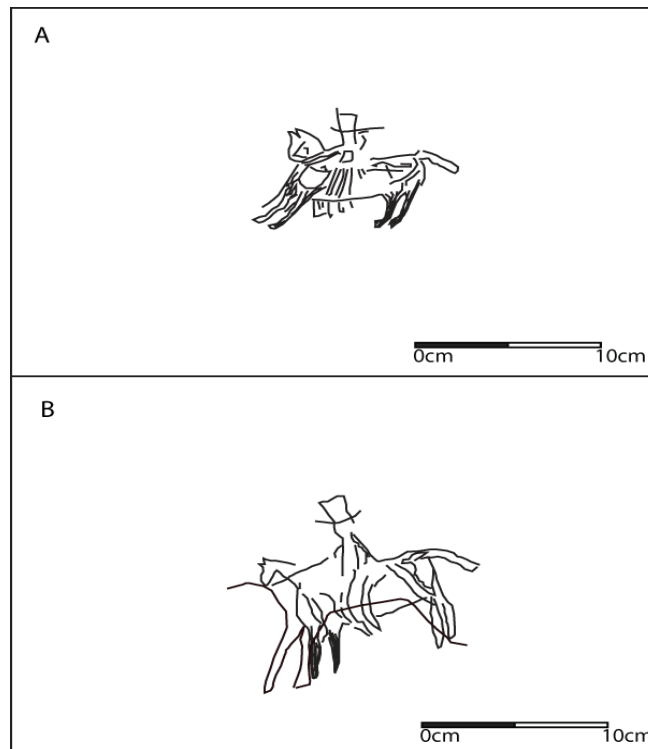


Figure 6.22 Sample of men on horses from B1.

The men depicted in Figure 6.23 represent a number of other male themes that include violence, wagons and transport. In most instances these men are inscribed in association with horses, wagons and ‘scenes’ with other men. The man on the horse may be holding or carrying a gun, though this is not clear. The line from the horse’s muzzle connects with one of the horses pulling the wagon (see below) but this does not seem to represent shooting. With this in mind there are other engravings of men on horseback that are not clear or are incomplete (Appendix A – Figure 9.2, Boulder 1, Panel 2).

It is clear in this ‘scene’ (Figure 6.23) that the horse and rider is next to a woman-in-house engraving. It is only on Boulder 1 that women in houses and men on horses co-occur and whether ‘scenes’ with riders on horseback are deliberately linked to ‘scenes’ of the women in houses. Whether deliberate or not, the contrast between women depicted within the boundaries of a house in domestic settings and men walking, riding, driving wagons and fighting outside is notable. Additionally, as noted above, men are rarely depicted in domestic settings and there are only two probable instances of this. The first is a man in the elaborated house on Boulder 1 (Figure 6.6). The man is found in the middle between two women and the style in which he is engraved is distinctly different from the engraving style of the women. A second possible man in a house seems to be reclining in a chair (Figure 6.7).

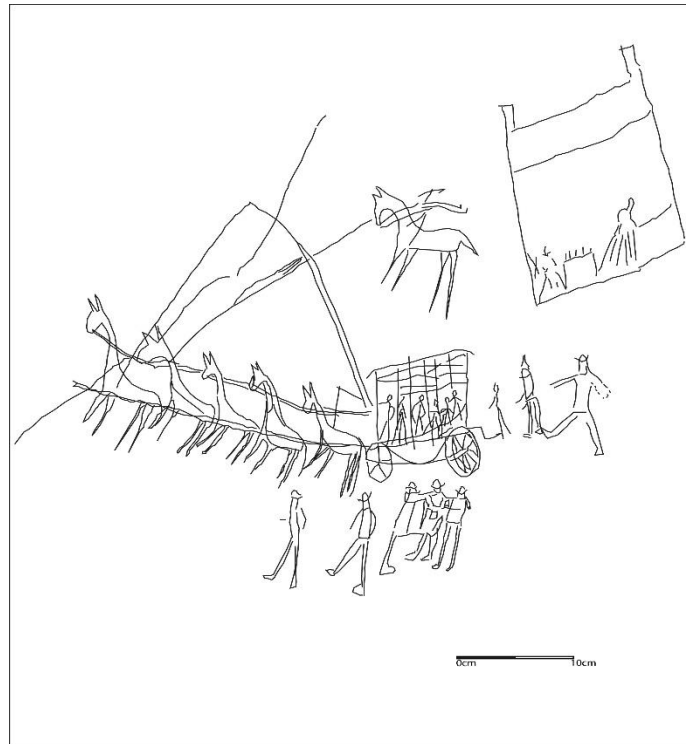


Figure 6.23 Man on horse pointing gun in association with Cape Spring Wagonette.

There are a number of engravings that depict men with their hands on their hips (Figure 6.24) (Appendix A – Figure 9.3, Boulder 1 Panel 3). This posture is interpreted as typical of colonial period men and women, as a posture of power and arrogance (see for example Hall & Mazel 2005). The style in which these men is engraved is quite varied. In most instances they are simply outlines however, there are instances where the rock surface within the figure outline has been deliberately scraped (Figure 6.24a).

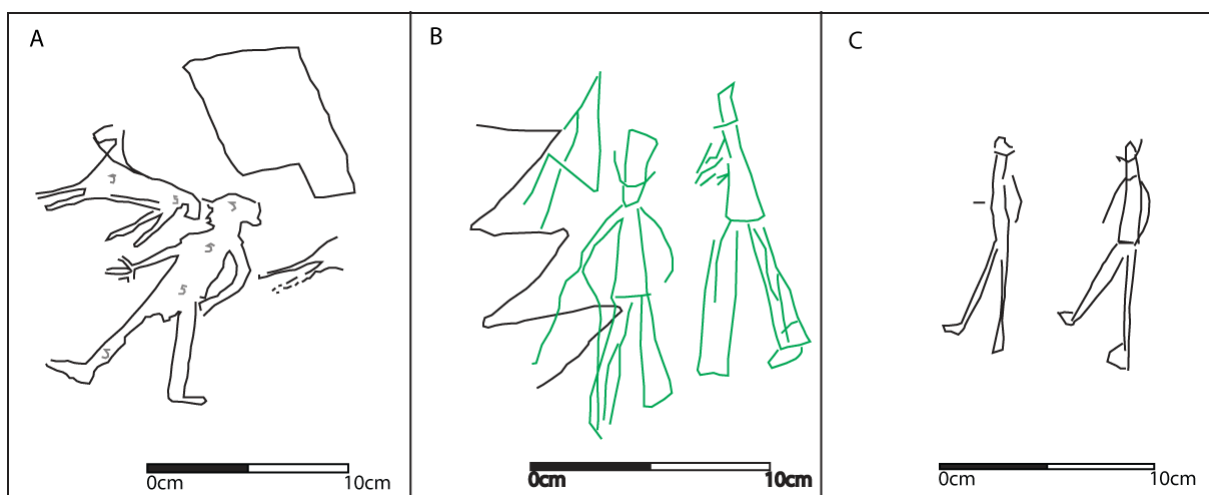


Figure 6. 24 A Sample of men standing with hands on hip.

Additionally, there are instances of engraved men who do not fit within the general male style, for example, the man on Boulder 3a (Figure 6.25a). The man, has one exaggerated left arm that may be intended to be a hand on hip posture and attention is drawn to his right hand where fingers are depicted with an engraved circle around the hand. Another man located on Boulder 9 (Figure 6.25b) has a flat brimmed hat, however, the lower body is depicted as a spray of lines from the neck or upper torso. This treatment would be more appropriate in an engraving of a woman.

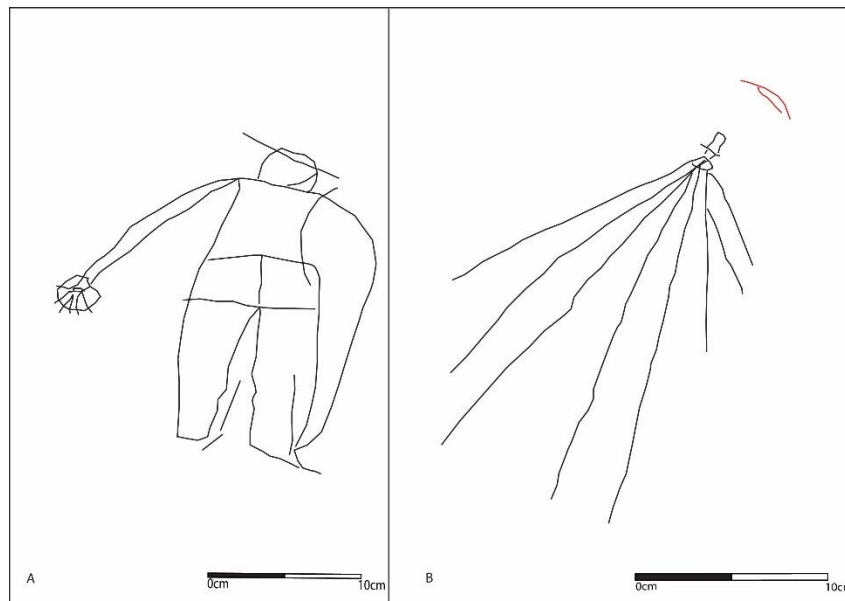


Figure 6.25 'a' and 'b' Men with modifications from Boulder 3 and Boulder 9.

Fight Scenes

What can be interpreted as violence and fight 'scenes' are limited to Boulder 1. Figure 6.26 'a' and 'b' (Appendices A and B). The first seems to depict four men in this fight scene. This scene is part of the larger panel shown in Figure 6.23. Two of the men and their features are not very distinct, however, there is one man who is pointing what seems to be a gun down at one of the indistinct figures. This figure is indistinct because he has been erased through aggressive pecking of the original image (Figure 6.27). If this is a fight scene, then it seems to show three men in conflict with the fourth who is assaulted twice; once in the engravings of the original event with a gun, and a second time when his figure in the engraving was obliterated from the 'scene'.

The second fight scene is represented in Figure 6.26b and it shows a group of men who are kicking, beating and perhaps pursuing. This 'scene' is also part of the larger panel shown in

Figure 6.23 and takes place in the foreground of the Cape Spring Wagonette (see below). One man has his left leg and his arms raised in kicking and boxing postures respectively. The other two men are engraved in close proximity and seem to be the targets of aggression. It is possible that the man in the middle of the fight scene is being held by the man on the right, with the man on his left kicking him in the groin (Figure 6.26b).

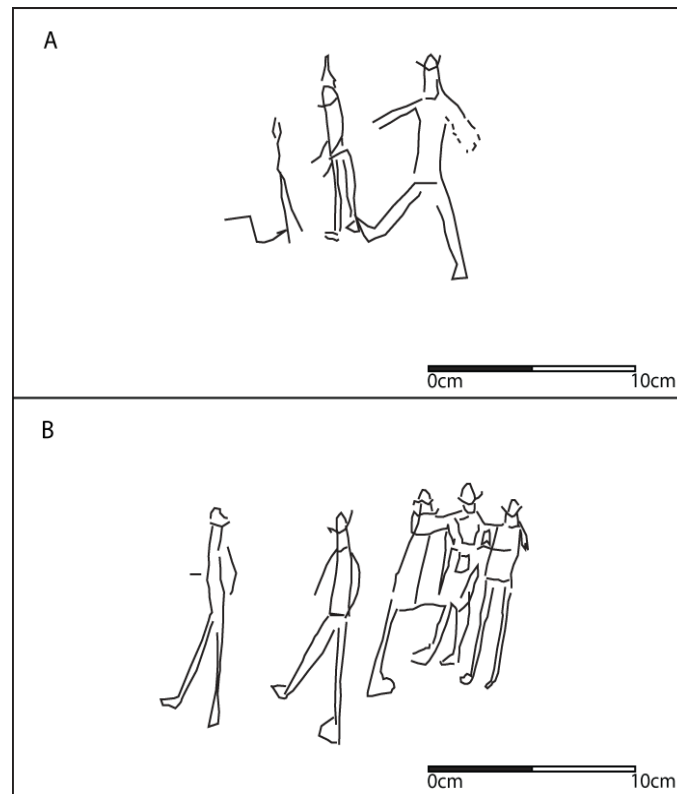


Figure 6.26 Possible Fight Scenes on Boulder 1.



Figure 6.27 Aggressively pecked man.

Horses

As indicated above, men are invariably associated with the engravings of horses and are depicted riding them. Additionally, horses are also associated with a variety of wagons and it is reasonable to assume that it is also men who are the wagon drivers. Horses are concentrated on Boulders 1, 2 and 3. There are 27 horses, either depicted in isolation or depicted pulling a variety of carts and wagons (Table 1) (the horses from the Cape Spring Wagonettes have been excluded from this total because this wagon type is given special attention below). The highest concentration of horses is on Boulder 1.

Horse depictions are sometimes faint and weathered but there is sufficient detail to make the identification, especially when there seems to be an associated rider (Figure 6.28a and Figure 6.28b) or what appear to be reins linked to the mussel (Figure 6.29b). On Boulder 14 there is an indistinct equid (Figure 6.28b) and though the head is missing, it is probably a horse.

As noted above, some are depicted with 'shaded' legs as though trying to show the detail of the colouring on their coat (Figure 6.2) and that specific horses are being portrayed (Figure 6.23).

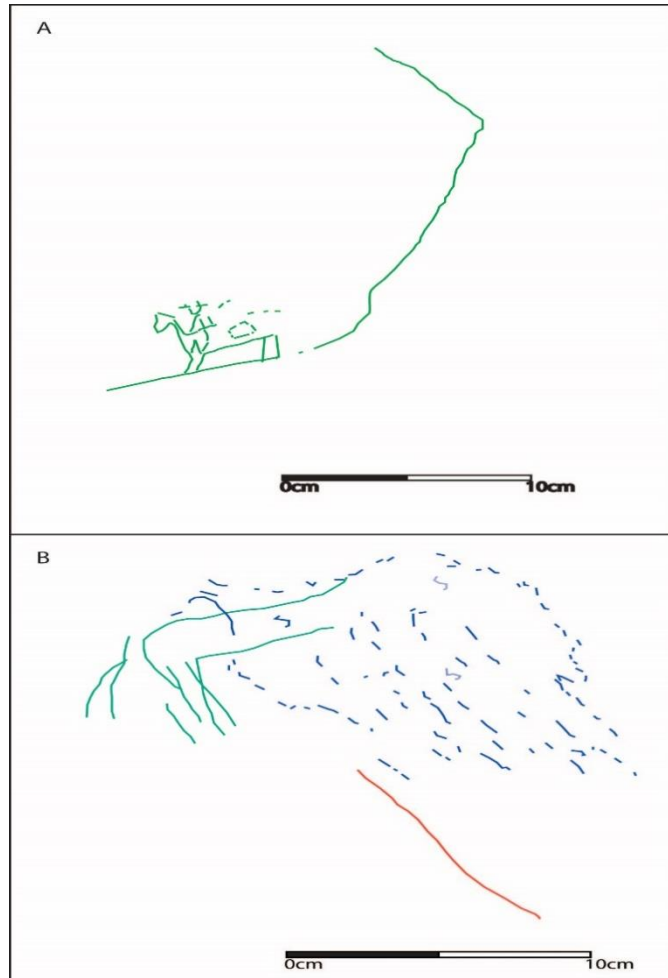


Figure 6.28 Indeterminate horses 'a' is probably a horse and rider' and 'b' is a possible horse.

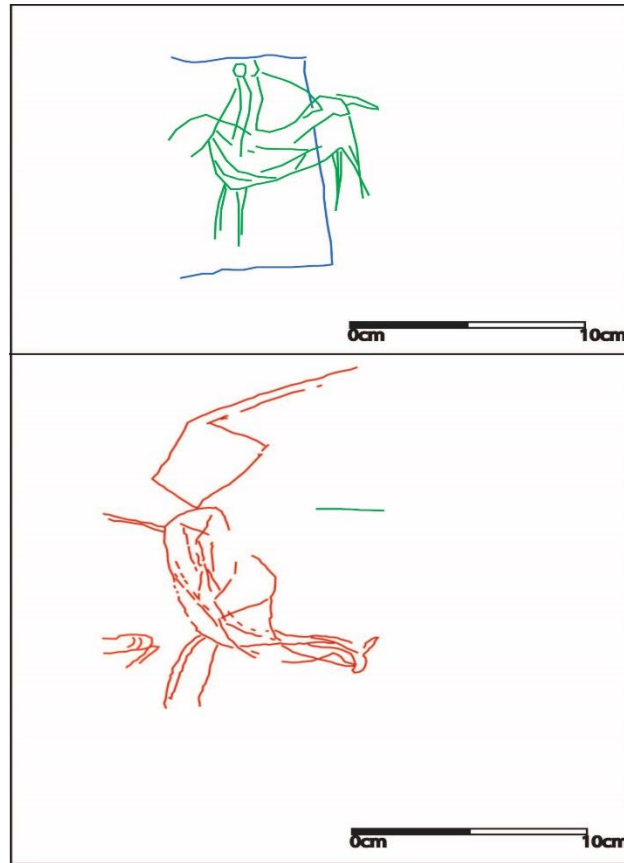


Figure 6.29. Probable horses identified by rider and reins.

As noted, horses are associate with wagons and carts, either transporting people or goods. There is a two wheeled cart drawn by one horse (Figure 6.30a) and possibly a second one below. There is no question that the figure driving this cart is a man because of the hat. There may be a single passenger behind the driver. Four wheeled wagons or carts are the norm (Figure 6.30b and c) and may be pulled by oxen.

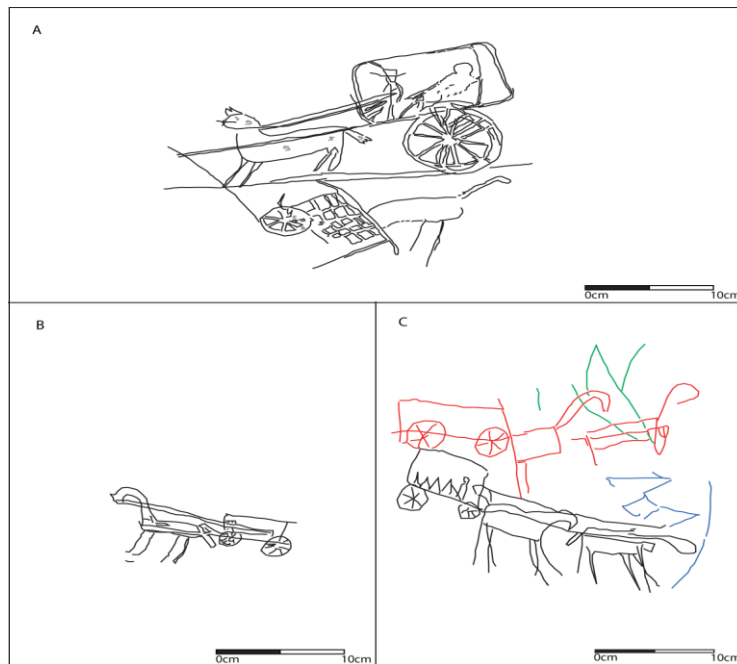


Figure 6.30 A selection of some of the wagons engraved at Grootfontein.

Cape Spring Wagonettes

Two engravings of wagons at Grootfontein can be identified as a particular type. These are referred to as Cape Spring Wagonettes (Figure 6.31) and these engravings show that they were transporting people and that the horse or donkey teams harnessed to pull them were large. They are particularly interesting because they are emblematic of the Kimberly diamond rush. They are signifiers of the dawn of the industrial revolution in Southern Africa. There are two instances of these wagonettes, the first on Boulder 1 Figure 6.31a and the second on Boulder 3a Figure 6.31b. In the first wagon there seems to be an attempt to show the passengers in the wagon as well as what seem like guns. The second wagonette shows that there is an attempt to show the passengers riding the wagonette however, on this wagon there is no attempt to show any cargo such as the guns depicted in the wagonette on Boulder 1.

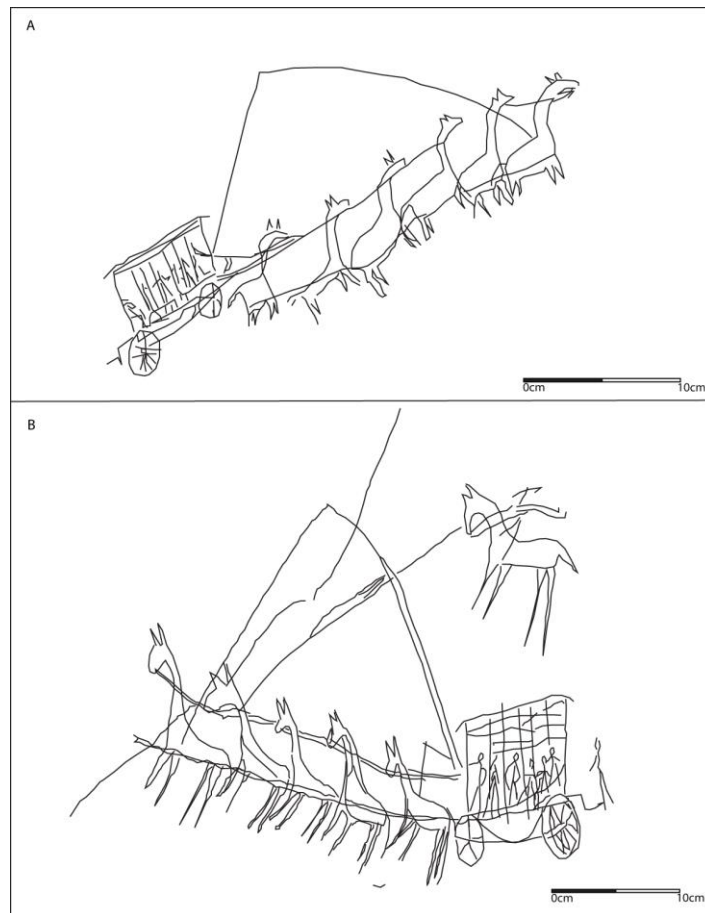


Figure 6.31. The two Cape Spring Wagonettes engraved on Boulders 1 and 3 respectively.

These wagons were made in increasing numbers from the late 1860s and through the 1870s in response to the massive demand for transport generated by the opening up of the Northern Cape diamond fields in Kimberley (Hall & Mazel 2005). They are signifiers of the growth of an economy and the entry of South Africa into global markets. This wagon type can be identified in these engravings because of the emphasis on passengers, the back boot or trunk for luggage, the curve in the roof in the front and back and the lattice or lines on the side of the wagon that provide the frame for canvas ‘blinds’ that could be rolled up and down (Figures 6.31 and 6.32).



Figure 6.32. An example of a Cape Spring Wagonette.

The presence of engraved Cape Spring Wagonettes at Grootfontein indicates its proximity to Williston and the road through to Carnarvon and on up to Kimberley. Furthermore, rock paintings of the same wagon type in the eastern Cederberg near Ceres, is indicative that Ceres was the main departure point for transport to the diamond fields (Figure 6.33) (see Hall & Mazel 2005).



Figure 6.33. A rock painting of a Cape Spring Wagonette in the eastern Cederberg near Ceres.

These engravings also indicate that these wider events in the Cape were recorded in this local context.

Abstract designs and writing

'Abstract' designs are a common occurrence with the highest concentration of these designs found on Boulder 1. There are, for example, isolated 'wheels' attached to houses as well as two agave plants, and an abundance of zig-zag patterns and numerous engraved lines, scribbles and indeterminate scratchings. The significance of these engravings is complicated by the uncertainty of whether they were intended as part of identifiable motifs and 'scenes' or whether they are random and are chronologically later than the initial engraving event. Some consideration was given to the stratigraphic relationships between motifs and random lines and scratches do occur on top of identifiable motifs but much more attention can be given to motif and engraved sequence.

One other engraving type that can add to sequencing and provide a date are bits of writing, especially names and associated dates. Writing is a prevalent characteristic of Boulder 1 as well as boulder 8 and 9 (Figures 6.34 up to 6.38). In Figure 6.34 there are three names, all 'Bergh' with initials C, N d A and g g. Presumably they are all related and some indeterminate other writing may give the reason for the engraved signatures which are associated with the date of July 1882. Much of the random lines and scratching seem to have been done after the signatures were engraved.

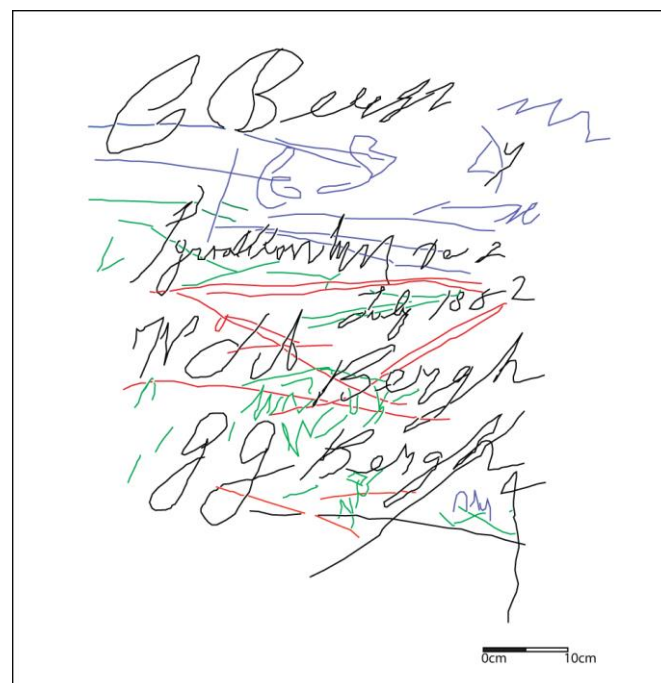


Figure 6.34. Writing Sample 'A' from Boulder 2.

Other names and dates on Boulder 1

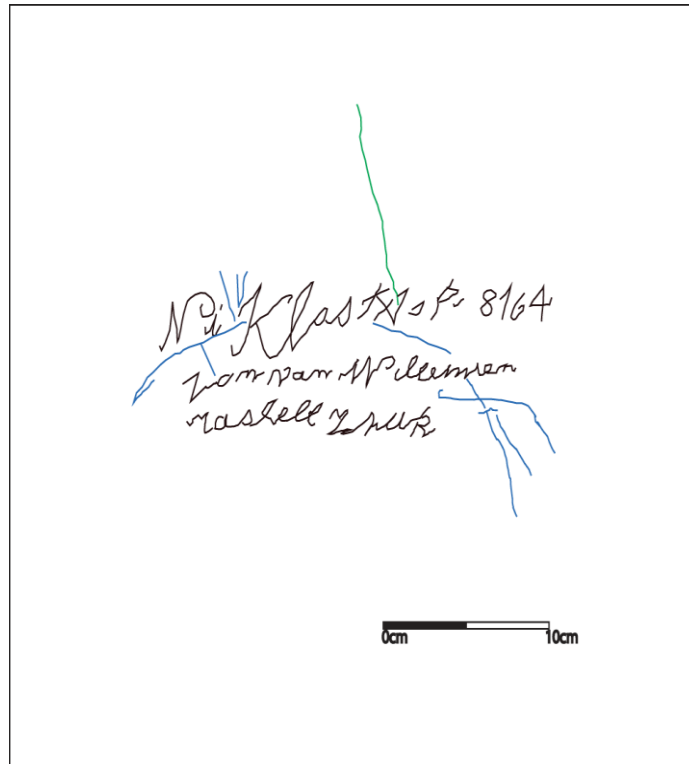


Figure 6.35 Writing Sample 'B' from Boulder 1.



Figure 6.36 Writing Sample 'C' from Boulder 1.

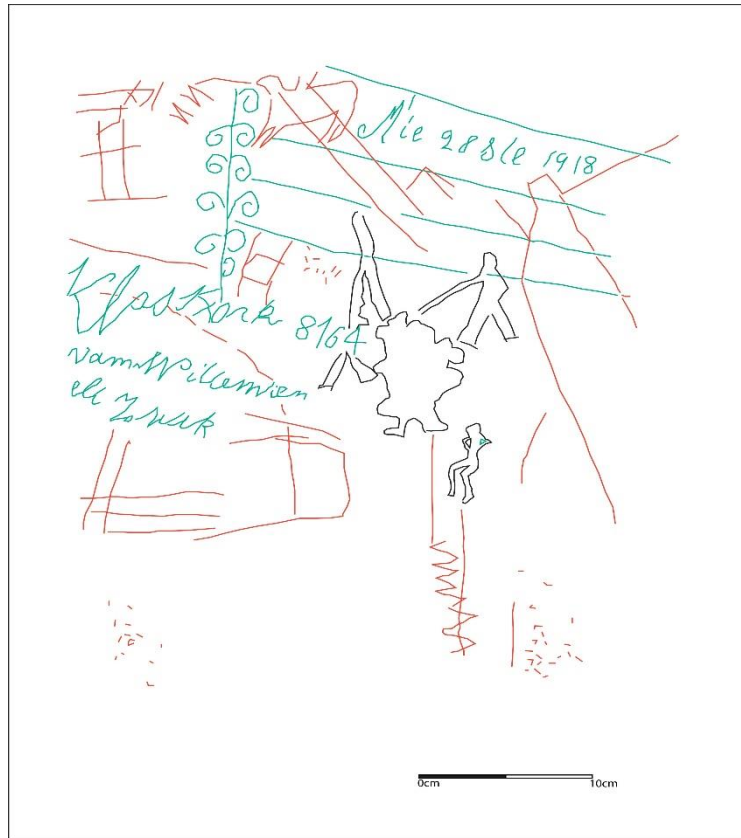


Figure 6.37 Writing Sample 'D' from Boulder 1.



Figure 6.38 Writing Sample 'E' from Boulder 8.

Bulls

I now turn to engravings of cattle or bulls and others that reference cattle or bulls. These are found on Boulders 1, 9 and 14 (Figure 5.6). I start with the engravings on Boulder 14 which is the most northern engraved boulder in this sample and is the most isolated.

Boulder 14 has the highest concentration of engraved cattle or bulls. This boulder is split into two sections. There are seven animals on the right hand section of which six are cattle with the last uncertain (Figure 6.39). These animals can be identified as cattle or oxen by the shape of the horns and the depiction of the tail, which comprises a single engraved line that ends with three or four short lines at the end which represents the tail tuft. There are both large and small animals in this 'scene' suggesting a herd with calves. A man below the animals may be associated and part of the same 'scene'. The bodies of the two largest animals on this section of the boulder have been crosshatched. This hatching has been added to on at least two other occasions and suggests repeat visits to elaborate the same animals. Additional re-engraving is also evident on the legs.



Figure 6.39 Cattle or oxen on Boulder 14.

The second panel on Boulder 14 is immediately to the left of the first panel and separated by a crack in the boulder. There is one cow that may be depicted in the process of being milked (Figure 6.40). Above this animal is an elliptical leaf-shaped form with engraved parallel lines from the upper and lower surface. From the left hand point of the form there is distinctive

cattle tail with the short lines representing the tuft at the tip of the tail. As with the two crosshatched cattle in the right hand panel, the tail has been re-engraved on a second occasion. From the right hand, front of the form there is a single engraved line that has two lines across it at right angles. Inside the form there are two rough shapes. The tail on this engraving indicates that it represents a cow or oxen though not in a form that makes this identification obvious.

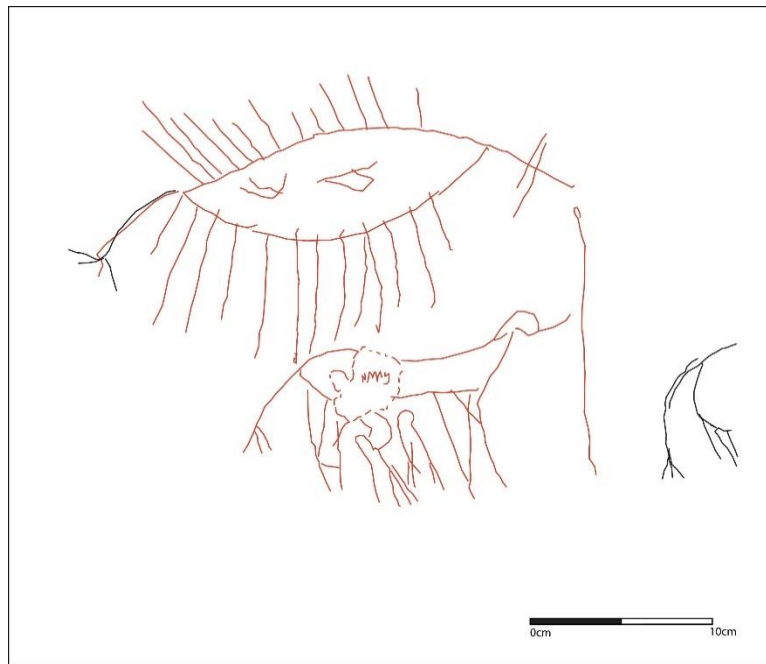


Figure 6.40 Cow and cattle form on Boulder 14.

This same form was first recorded as an isolated engraving on Boulder 9, but its identification with cattle or oxen only became clear once the Boulder 14 engravings were found and recorded (Figure 6.39). The Boulder 9 (Figure 6.41) engraving has the same leaf-form, the lines at right angles to the lower and upper surface and sub-circular motifs within the body. The tail is present but not clear. Additionally, this engraving is isolated on the sloping east face of Boulder 9 which has weathered in a series of closely packed parallel ridges that run from the top edge of the boulder down to its base. There are other engravings on the northern face of Boulder 9, which provides a normal smooth surface. The inference is that the cow-like form had been deliberately engraved on the ridged surface. When the Boulder 9 and Boulder 14 engravings were seen to be similar, and the cattle and oxen link made, the issue arises as to whether these forms can be linked to Khoesan narratives about the mythical rain bull. I return to this below.

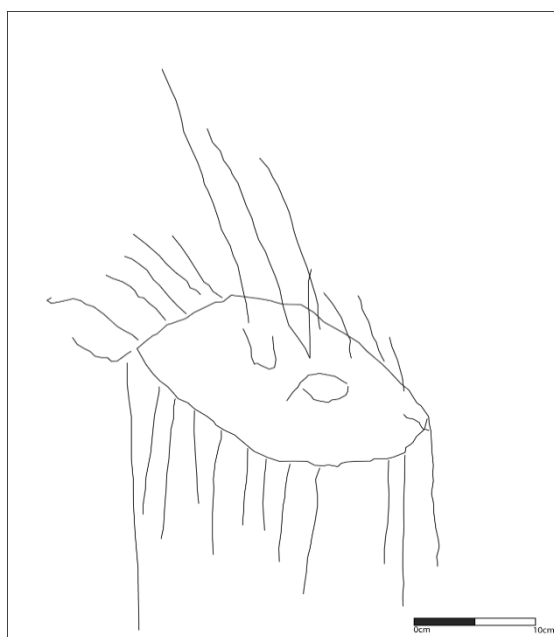


Figure 6.41 The cow form on Boulder 9.

There are two cattle or bulls on Boulder 1. Both are ‘decorated’ and may be an attempt to illustrate the hide of the animals. (Appendix A – Figure 9.4) The bull does not have a clear tale, however, the horns are quite distinctive of a bull. The second bull has the iconic cow tail as well as large curved horns which are characteristic of cattle.

Ostriches

There are a number of ostriches on Boulder 1 (Figure 6. 42), these ostriches seem to always be in association with riders on horses though there is no way of being absolutely certain. If this link can be made, then the ostriches would date from the mid-19th century onwards when attempts were made to ‘farm’ them for feathers. The large stone wall pens on both Grootfontein and Moordenaarsgat (Figure 5.6) were built to manage ostrich for this purpose. One of the ostrich engravings gives particular detail of plumage. Boulder 11 has an ostrich drawn above in women in the house and is distinctly different from the ostriches that were examined on Boulder 1 (Figure 6.16) (Figure 6.42). The association here may have been deliberate.

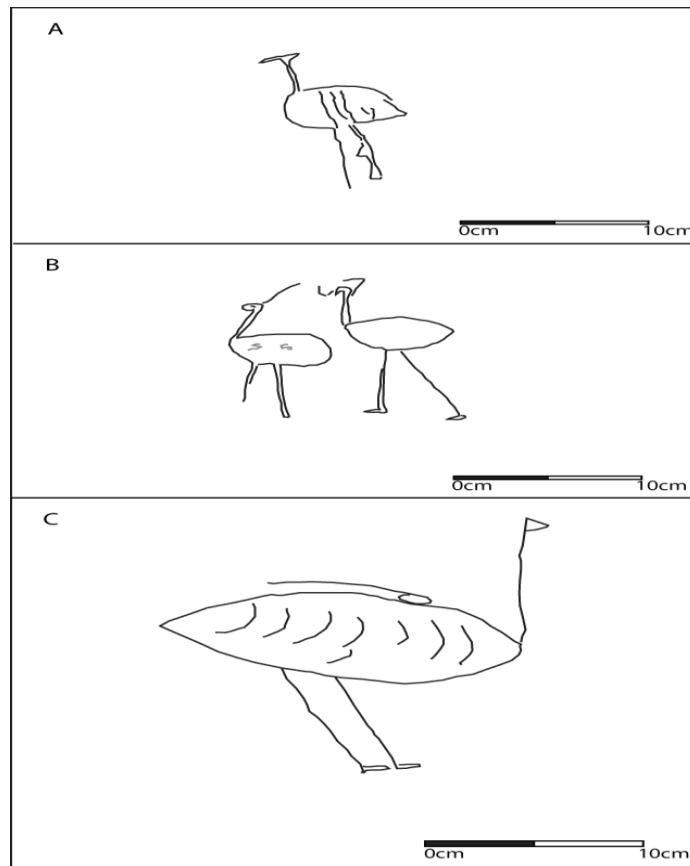


Figure 6. 42. Ostriches engraved at Grootfontein farm.

Discussion

This discussion focuses on some of the main themes coming out of the descriptions. These are the chronology of the engravings and consequently, the links to farm occupation and biography, the representation of men and women and those engravings that may directly reference Khoesan beliefs such as the rain and rain making practices.

It goes without saying that Boulder 1 is a key engraving site because it contains the highest density of engravings out of all the boulders and these are representative of most of the themes. Boulder 1, however, is a palimpsest of engraving episodes (Figure 5.11), and while this should help the process of formulating a definitive relative chronology from this one boulder, this has proved difficult and has not been a focus. However, what we start to see is a much simpler image stratigraphy as we move away from Boulder 1. From B3, there are only a few or even single engraving episodes that focus on a particular theme. The advantage that these other boulders give us is they perhaps allow us to identify different periods of engraving and thus unravel the palimpsest of engraving episodes from Boulder 1. At the

moment it is not obvious what relevance, if any, there might be to the close packing of motifs on Boulder 1.

These are however, specific motifs that have absolute chronological implications and these point broadly to the second half of the 19th century. These place the engravings within the critical events and the biography of Grootfontein farm outlined in Chapter 3.

Chronology

The historic record highlights that the farm was occupied before 1848 and again from about 1848, when the Van Wyks (a Baster family) claimed the farm from the state. The record also makes note of a previous occupation on the farm comprised of individuals of a Khoesan or Baster origin, but who moved to the Orange river after the 1840 drought (Herbst 2004). Of the engraved motifs, the exotic plant *agave Americana*, offers us the earliest date as it was introduced into South Africa from the 1820s by English settlers in the Eastern Cape, but more probably in the Williston area it dates after 1850. It has been noted that this plant is associated with house engravings and if so this would confirm the date. What we do know about this agave plant is that it generally flowers only once between December and March, when the stem grows to about 5 m tall thereafter it dies (Franck 2005). It is interesting that all the agave plants are represented in this state in the engravings and this 'ornamental' state may make the link to the houses even firmer. Therefore, while the date estimate we get from this could be from the 1820s, the possible association with houses indicates a later date.

After this date, an early date comes from the engraving of '1841' and the youngest date from an engraving is 'Mei 28 1918'. Therefore, we can infer that the majority of the engravings were completed within the much later Van Wyk occupation of the farm in the second half of the 19th century. The 1918 date coincides with a time when the farm no longer belonged to the van Wyks and was now the property of the Hodgson's. We do not know what the direct significance of these written dates are but probably reflect on a particular event or occurrence that was specific to the engraver. The 1918 date does coincide with the end of World War 1 but this was in November and not May 1918. Whatever the case this period signified a time when Baster families such as the van Wyks could no longer own or occupy land. Outside of these wide dates, there are a few other motifs which are indicative of specific dates and events.

The ostrich engravings focus on the ostrich feather trade that developed from the 1850s (McGranaghan 2015) and identify specific episodes within the broad timeline which indicate

the farms greater involvement in the activities of the global ostrich feather trade. The ostrich trade gained importance in the Cape from about 1860 and it continued to be of importance up until the end of the 19th century (Douglass 1881; Douglas 1886; Tamarkin 2009; McGranaghan 2015). The presence of extensive stonewall ostrich pens around the main Grootfontein farm house (Figure 5.6) supports the involvement in the ostrich farming by the Baster van Wyk family.

The engravings of the houses can architecturally be linked to typical Karoo town and farm dwellings (Figure 6.16) and they would also fit within this broad later 19th century date. The date for the possible windmills also coincides with that of the implementation of wire fencing. We have one windmill engraved on Boulder 2, we do know that windmills in the Karoo gained prominence in late in the 19th century (Archer 2010). An 1880 letter from a disgruntled resident S. H Kuhn details a complaint about the dirtying on a spring by nomadic Baster herders in the Amandelboom area (CO 4208' A42). This may indicate a pre-windmill date when natural springs and their upkeep were critical.

A Prominent motif, that is present on both Boulders 1 and 3 is the Cape Spring Wagonette. These types of wagon gained popularity in the Cape during the Kimberly Diamond rush. They were locally manufactured in Paarl and Wellington, the wine land regions of the Cape. The Northern Cape diamond rush started late in the 1860s and therefore, we can most probably date the specific engraving episode to the 1870's (Hall & Mazel 2005). We can infer that one of the routes to the diamond fields passed through Williston and close to Grootfontein farm.

The style of women's dress is also an important marker in establishing the date of the engravings. The ladies style of dress is particularly interesting because the 19th century was known for the crinoline dress (Hall & Mazel 2005) which relies on a metal wire cage to hold the form of the dress. The engraved dresses are less bell shaped and have much more of a flat front, referred to as flat front crinolines, and this shift towards this flat front dress occurred in the 19th century (Figures 6.16 and 6.17) (Appendix B). The dresses have long trains and an abundance of flounces and ruching, both styles fit in well with the 1870s in Europe (Victoria and Albert Website -vam.ac.uk/content/articles/h/history-of-fashion-1840-1900/). Therefore, the emphasis placed on the front of the skirts of these dresses supports a later 19th century date in keeping with the other chronological markers already discussed.

In the case of male dress, there is a heavy emphasis on hats. These hats are important as they may be markers of status, but also useful in establishing dates. We have what seems to be two hat styles. One is a formal top hat and the other a working, everyday slouch hat. Ross (1990) notes that top hat became a strong marker of social significance with the British administration in the 1820's, and it was known as a marker of elite males. As the 19th century progressed the item became known much more for its ritualistic use, for example in church ceremonies such as weddings and baptisms (Ross, 1990). Therefore, the presence of this hat style in the engravings of men also fits within the date range already outlined.

The absolute chronological indicators from the engravings establish dates for the engravings that range from the 1840s through to the first quarter of the 20th century.

Representations of men and women

A second theme in the Grootfontein engravings is the attention given to the representation of men and women. In particular, there is a high density of men in comparison to women (Table 2). In a majority of the instances the men are represented outside in juxtaposition with objects of industry such as wagons and horses. They are also some 'scenes' that can be interpreted as episodes of violence. The women, in contrast, are depicted in a domestic setting and specifically enclosed within the walls of houses. About 64.2% women engraving are linked to houses. Therefore, what starts to become clear is a clear delineation of social spaces which is an indicator of the possible perceived gender roles of the 19th century and the activities of the domestic space. The men are deeply embedded into scenes of violence and the materiality of movement while the women are part of the material world but their scenes have to do with femininity and the extravagant expression of femininity. Therefore, there is a clear delineation of social spaces which is an indicator of gender roles of the 19th century as perceived by the engravers, a difficult issue to see in the archaeological record. The engraved distinction may have been done by men and women engravers separately but this is an assumption.

Engravings with a direct reference to Khoesan cosmology

Finally, the Grootfontein engravings pay quite a bit of attention to motifs which may be linked to Khoesan rain making cosmology. Boulder 14 has a concentration of bull or cow imagery and what we have classified as a mythical bull (Figure 6.42 and Figure 6.43) and the same mythical form is identified on Boulder 9. What is interesting about these images is the relative isolation of these engraved boulders. This isolation, could be applied to all the

engraved boulders, and although Boulder 1 has quite a concentration of motifs, it is nevertheless isolated when, as noted above, the closet dwellings are two or more kilometres away and that there is no evidence of any domestic debris in the vicinity of the engravings. The question, therefore, is what was it about these boulders and this place that attracted engravers and engraving through the second half of the 19th century? In respect of highlighting the importance of ritual and the issues to do with rain and bulls I shall elaborate more on these issues in the succeeding chapter.

The chronology suggested for the engravings is significant in the overall narrative of this dissertation because it links them to the local and wider historical context. Thus, the importance of the particular chronology is that it mediates the interpretation of the engravings within different historical scales.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

Introduction

One of the issues at the core of this dissertation has to do with authorship. Tracing authorship will ultimately guide our analysis of the rock engravings in tracing cultural continuity. What is evidently clear about the inhabitants of Grootfontein farm is that they were of ‘Baster’ origin. Throughout the 1800s, the historic records emphasis the prominent presence of Baster and Khoesan individuals in the Amandelboom area. The site of Grootfontein farm had been preferred for the establishment of the Rhenish mission, which had been financially sustained by these same ‘coloured’ (Khoesan and Baster) inhabitants (Nobel 1875; Strassberger 1968; Herbst 2004). As noted in earlier chapters, the mission located in this area because of the economic strength and initiative of the inhabitants. The historical evidence indicates that the farm was claimed by Cornelis van Wyk (a Baster) and possibly the brother of Adrian van Wyk who leased Moordenaarsgat which is the neighbouring farm to Grootfontein. Adrian - also laid claim to Grootfontein when he had arrived in 1848 (CCP 3/1/1/3/G7-59). Therefore, it would be an oversight to not acknowledge that the Grootfontein engravings were most likely done by people of Baster origin, people who themselves embodied the concept of creole.

In light of this, the interpretation of these engravings will be guided by the ‘Baster’ social and economic presence in this region. Baster identity was already a form of creole and therefore, this creole identity must, in part, have held some Khoesan belief or re-moulded it to work within a new context. Part of that context has to do with their aspirations in the face of the increased economic and social disenfranchisement they progressively experienced. This was due to the grazing laws, the Caledon code and through the implementation of laws prohibiting subsistence farming and the extension of the Cape colony border to the Orange River. This was linked to the rise of merino wool production and competition over land and grazing. The capitalist world opened up new opportunities but the ‘rules’ closed these off for Basters, Xhosa and people of Khoesan descent. At the same time Khoesan people were challenged by new perceptions of a world that was becoming a much bigger place that was filled with a range of new material culture. However, this seemingly cosmologically incongruent material culture was part of the lived and experienced lives of the Baster and

Khoesan communities, and its juxtaposition to previous models of their precolonial expressions cannot be overlooked.

This chapter is divided into three sections; the first section will look at the continuity of meaning, paying particular attention to the Rain Bull engravings. The second section will explore images that may partially express prior ideas and beliefs but with new materiality and the last section will look at imagery that is enigmatic of the industrial world and globalization.

Rain Bulls

There are two distinct types of bulls. The first is bulls with iconic features such as the horns, the hump on shoulders and the three prong tail. The second type of 'bull', does not look like a bull and instead is the leaf-shaped form with the iconic cow tail attached at the end. The second type of bull has been categorised as a mythical bull (Figure 7.1).

These engravings are of great significance because they encourage interpretation through ethnographic information we have about the rain bull and water snake. Ansie Hoff (1969, 1997, 1998) has documented these beliefs from Khoekhoen and |Xam descendants in the Northern Cape. The continuity of these beliefs into the 20th century makes them relevant for thinking about the earlier colonial engraved record.

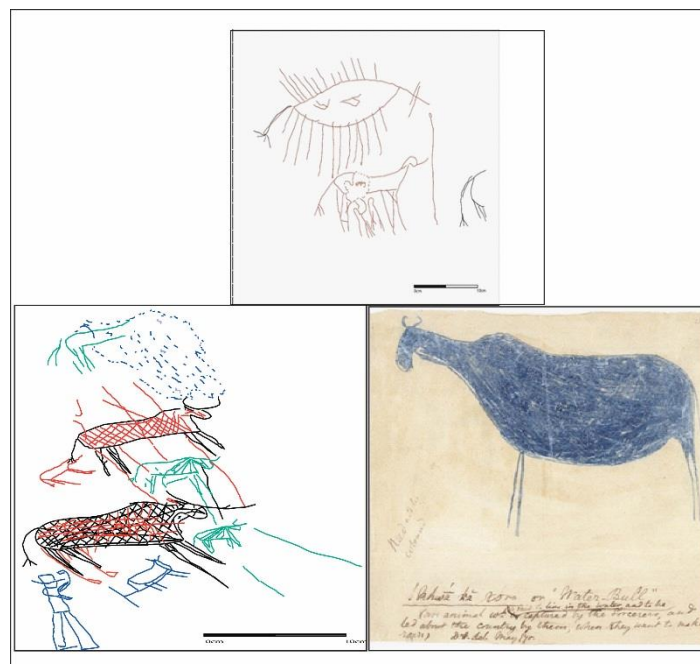


Figure 7.1 Bulls or cows, and the rain bull from Boulder 14 and a bull from the Bleek and Lloyd archive (emphasis on the tail) (Image on the far right from the Bleek and Lloyd digital archive).

Boulder 14 has a two prominent bulls engraved on it (Figure 7.1), outside of this, there are 7 other less prominent bulls or cows on the same boulder (Figure 7.1). Boulders 1 also has bulls or cows engraved on it (Appendix A – Figure 9.4). The engravings are located in a very secluded area, and despite the range of available boulders, it seems as though these engravings have been specifically positioned out of sight as the engravings on Boulder 1 are positioned in the direction of the North behind a hill. Perhaps this is linked to the ethnographic and archaeological information we have on place and the meaning of place in Xam and Khoekhoen belief (Deacon 1997). If this is the case, it aligns the ideology of the Baster groups doing the engravings within a Xam and Khoekhoen cosmology of understanding place, we shall further elaborate on this towards the end of this chapter and in the conclusion.

Bulls have been linked to the water snake, a creature of great significance in Khoesan cosmology, sometimes referred to as the water or rain bull. Khoesan people highly revered the water snake as it was intrinsically linked to their life cycles and survival (Hoff 2011). The rain bull/water snake have a dualistic nature- its characteristics are described as life giving and life taking by the /Xam. The life giving characteristics of the rain bull are described as soft and in turn more feminine in contrast to the violent, life taking force that is described as male (Hoff 2011:17; See Hoff 1997 and Hoff 1998).

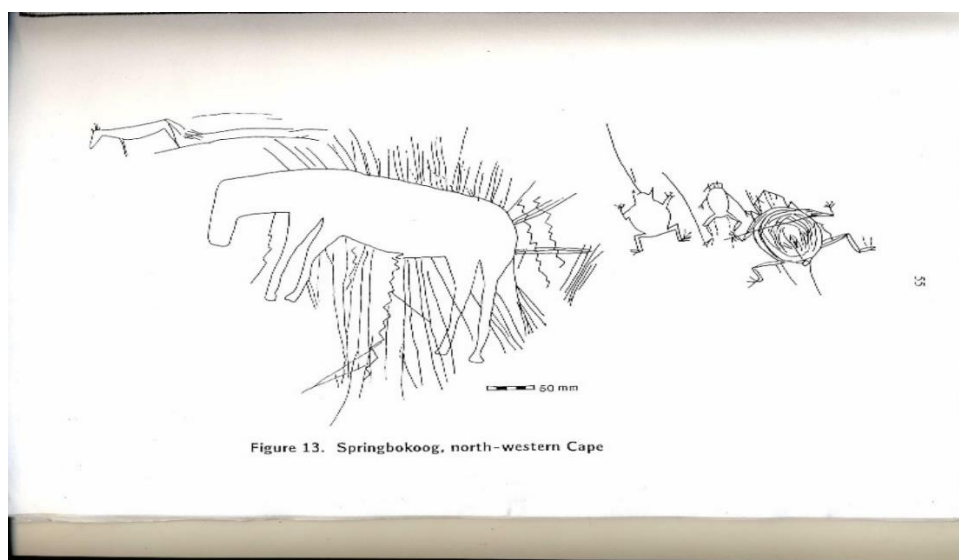


Figure 7.2 Rain animal with lines (emphasis on tail and rain animals) (van der Merwe 1990).

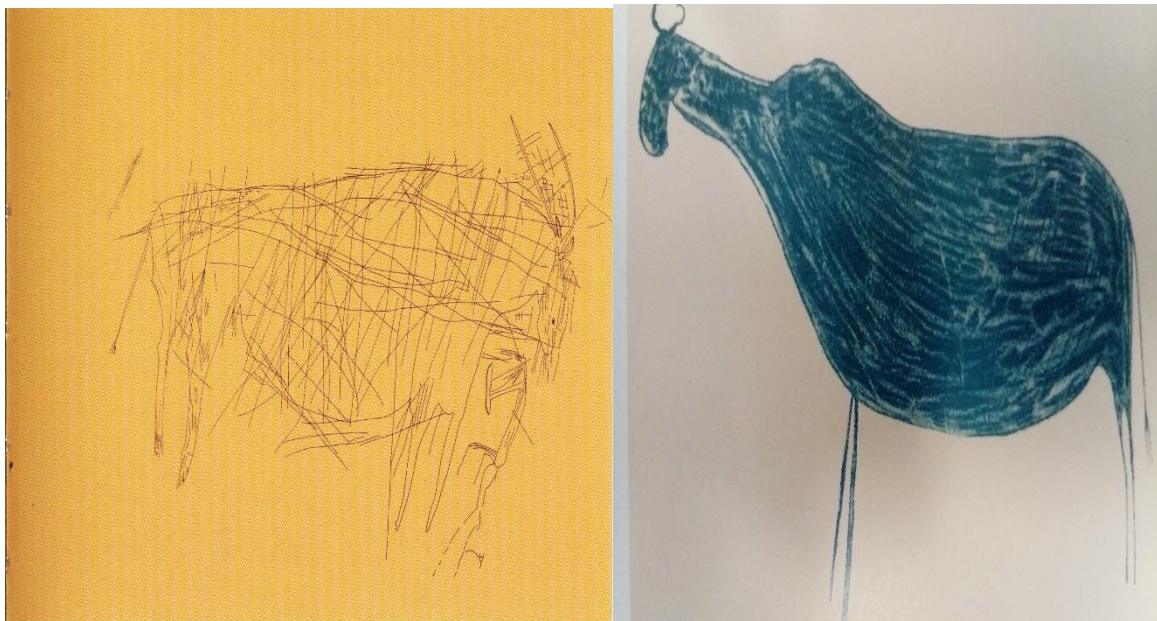


Figure 7.3 Comparative eland and possible rain bull from an engraving and the Bleek and Lloyd archive by Hankasson (Deacon 2005).

The nature of the water animal either meant a drought or life giving rain. The violent water animal could potentially lead to the death of a human, either by drought or through being lightning (Hoff 2011). Therefore, the iconography and the associated ideology continues into the 19th century at Grootfontein and has to do with water, a resource that is both vital and scarce in this region (see Figures 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 for references to comparative Khoesan images).

In earlier chapters I discuss the importance of place in Khoesan belief (see Deacon 1986 and McGranaghan 2015). Different geographic locations were associated with different aspects of ritual practice by Khoesan people. Therefore, if we apply this concept of the importance of place we can perhaps begin to see some links between the Grootfontein rain bull engravings and the pre-colonial narrative. Khoekhoen and San groups picked particular regions close to water sources or on hills because these sites were embedded in the local narratives and cosmology for the purpose of summoning rain creatures and as a consequence, the rain. With respect to this, seclusion played a large role in Khoesan ritual and practice, for example, in the initiation rituals of young girls. The location for such rituals was in seclusion, and in the more recent ethnographic record, seclusion usually occurs in a ‘hok’ a hut close to a domestic setting (Hoff 2011).

Therefore, the expectation is that engravings to do with rain making practices are located on an elevated area, usually up on a hill, for example, in the case of the 'Brinkop man' Diakwain refers to his father engraving water animals on a hill (Deacon 1986). In contrast the Grootfontein site and the location of the engravings seems to be different from what we expect as the site is neither on a hill or near a water source, yet, it seems to directly reference water creatures. The farm itself is named Grootfontein due to the abundance of large springs, therefore, it is not an unfair assumption to infer that this particular site might have been known in pre-colonial times as a place revered for water, rain bulls in water holes and rain making practices. Herbst (2004) makes note that this region was favoured because the rainfall was considerably higher than in other parts of the Kareeberg (Herbst 2004:65). The location of the engravings is possibly relevant in this instance as they are located close to the mouth of a drainage (Figure 5.6) that drains towards the main farm house. Therefore, the location of the rain bulls might be directly linked to the location of the mouth of the drainage basin. For the Xam, the mouth of a river, or the source of water was highly revered as it was seen as the place from which the water snake entered our world (Hoff 2011). Accompanied with the relative isolation of the engraving sites, and the absence of any domestic infrastructure in the area, the argument that was for rain making practices or expressive of rain belief by the Bastaard herders in the area is not unreasonable. Additionally, the bulls are hatched and this has been repeated several times and we can therefore infer that the site was revisited and that the repeated cross hatching represents the re-expression of beliefs held by these people and the re-interpretation of these beliefs at different visits to the site.

The bulls engraved at Grootfontein might very well encapsulate the cosmology of the rain bull or water snake. The association these engravings might have with rain making is further supported by the aspect of the engravings. They are found on the North facing side of the boulders – in the direction of the rain bearing winds. Therefore, the absence of a hill or visible water features around this site does not immediately negate the potency and the overall cosmological connection this site may have had for the engravers. The isolation of the engravings is even more important as it could further emphasise the ritual importance of this place. Hoff (2011) notes that, the place where the water snake lived was revered, and any harm to that place would result in a drying up of the water sources and environmental devastation through drought. The seclusion of this site could very well be tied to these ideas.

How do we interpret images that seemingly, have very little to do with cultural continuity?

The last section focused on ideas of cultural continuity, in light of this, it will be interesting for us to engage with the ethnography as a substrate of talking about the theme of women in houses. I pay attention to the thoughts on seclusion, I highlighted earlier. The engravings at Grootfontein stand out because of the unique presence of women in dresses and their presence in a domestic setting. The engravings of these women are quite different from anything else we find in the locally known rock art record and further afield of South Africa as they are the only known engravings that focus on women in houses. However, we might find more engravings that focus on this theme if more surveys are done in the area.

Hays-Gilpin (2004) notes that gender has in many ways has been proved to be a challenging study due to its 'largely arbitrary and capricious nature' (Hays-Gilpin 2004:2). However, what is alluring about the Grootfontein engravings is the clear gendering of space and a very direct way of thinking about female space as being predominantly domestic. Patriarchal readings of the archaeological record have resulted in research that overlooks the presence of women. However, the unequivocal focus on women in houses alerts us to the direct presence of women in the record of the 19th century Karoo. The question is who was doing the engraving? We noted earlier that these engravings are likely the work of Basters. If this is the case, we can infer that it was perhaps Baster women doing the engraving of women in houses on the basis of the local farm biography and the historical notes from the region, it is therefore, reasonable to assume that these are Baster engravings. If so, then we have to further wonder if these are engravings of themselves or the colonial other? In each case the issue of aspiration and transformation are equally relevant. Additionally, in support of this it is interesting to note that there are no engravings of Corbelled houses or the more diminutive structures mentioned in the farm history records. Therefore, we are thrust into the social cosmology of the Baster individuals in this region, highlighting how they view themselves and the world around them. The theme of houses and women in houses is one that reoccurs at Grootfontein and is clearly a pattern. This could then be specific to the context of Grootfontein.

The types of houses represented are quite standard and the features of these houses encourage us to think that this setting is likely to be a town setting. The architecture and form say very little about a rural setting the specific focus on the very grand style of house alludes to a town

setting. However, it very well could be a rural setting, as there are no engravings of corbelled houses or the huts and small houses mentioned in the farm history records, it really could be either one or the other, the important thing is not the house, it is the concept behind the engraving of the house. What is even more striking in the representation of structures is the absence of church iconography, especially when we consider that the inhabitants of Grootfontein and Amandelboom village were deeply embedded in the fabric and management of the mission station. There seems to be a focus on representing houses, as well as the feminine detail inside the house.

This brings to the foreground issues of aspiration; we have to ask to what extent the engravings represent a lived experience versus an imagined experience. The issues to do with aspiration could also reveal the internal class differences in the area. Herbst (2004) notes that the class differences among the Bastard groups were largely based on material possessions. It therefore spanned the entire spectrum of the Bastard herders from the extremely wealthy to the landless worker (Herbst 2004:54). Herbst (2004) therefore alerts us to the internal dynamics centred around materiality and acquiring possessions, where he notes that the wealthy in the region enjoyed great prestige among the residents by virtue of their wealth and the Van Wyks were among this group (Herbst 2004:54), the Van Wyks were so well esteemed within their community that Cornelis was nominated to represent the community in all matters concerning Amandelboom and the state (CA 4189' A20). In essence, the engravings of these houses could be an important representation of the desire to get ahead, at the same time, echoing the denial of that experience. At the same time, the expression of aspiration asks about the significance of a house in the psychology of a person.

The Psychology of the House

Houses are part of the larger thematic representations at Grootfontein. Houses are interesting because of their permanent visibility on the landscape. Therefore, the presence of these houses needs to consider concepts to do with the house and space in the nineteenth century. At one end of the spectrum the house, is a structure and at the other end, a house is a 'home'. Houses are interesting because they mediate personhood and with respect to children, the early experiences of the household are important as they can have lasting effects for how children socialize and make sense of their world. Therefore, this section addresses the question of how the house engravings could reflect on another layer to our understanding of identity and social politics.

The house has been seen from a psychological standpoint as relating to the manner in which individuals interact with the world around them. We have already noted that the house can exist both as a structure – the house and as a ‘home’. However, there are a few more social or cultural definitions for the house (Marc 1977). Bailey (1990) notes that the house can be a place of worship, a building for the entertainment of people, or a building used for the purpose of education. Therefore, the term ‘house’ can take many different shapes and forms. Bailey (1990) is particularly interested in establishing what can be referred to as the psychology of the house and she argues that tradition of spatial archaeology has failed to question what houses mean for different cultures. He notes that because of these broad ethnological definitions, one thing is clear, there are a multitude of meanings for the term ‘house’ and the materiality of these are yet to be explored.

Therefore, Bailey notes that for archaeologists, the ‘concept’ of the house is important in two particular respects. Firstly, the ‘house’ is a “building which serves as ‘the ordinary dwelling place of a family’. The family includes ‘ancestors’ and dependants, a lineage or a race, especially one having continuity of residence” (Bailey 1990:23-24). Therefore, the meaning of the house is contextually dependent and secondly, the house represents a continuity and repetition of actions and he further argues that to define the house outside of the limits of three-dimensional space is to build a much better understanding of the meaning of ‘house’.

In light of these thoughts around the ‘house’, Bailey raises some relevant issues with regards to how we understand ‘house’. These issues raised are particularly important for how we frame our interpretations for the houses engraved at Grootfontein. The thoughts Bailey (1990) raises position the house within the concepts of the everyday and mundane highlighted by Silliman (2001). The question of context and individual agency is further highlighted in these thoughts, therefore, applying these theoretical considerations to our study of the Grootfontein engravings is important. How might these theoretical leanings intersect with the history of displacement and subordination in the Northern Cape?

With respect to these reflections on the house, it will be important for us to consider biases that might influence our interpretation of the engravings of houses at Grootfontein. These engravings could quite simply be described as crude and that they lack any stylistic sophistication. However, we should not let this cloud the possible interpretations available to us. To reimagine Foucault’s iconic recollections based on Magritte’s 1929 painting ‘This is not a pipe’ (Foucault 1982) we can say the same for the Grootfontein engravings, ‘this is not

a house, it is an engraving of a house'. Therefore, it doesn't really matter if it is crude, what is important is the ideology behind the engraving of the house. To better understand the engravings of these houses we need to consider Gell (1998) who argues that the aesthetic properties can be assessed only in terms of the intended effect of an art object in the context of its use (Layton 2003). As already stated, the ethnography offers important ideas for us to consider along these lines especially of seclusion, enclosure and transformation among women.

Women, Liminality and Seclusion

Of the women engraved on the boulders of Grootfontein, over two thirds of them are found in a domestic setting – the home. An application of the ethnography can be powerful in aiding our interpretations of this sample of rock art. One of the ethnographic strands we might link to these ideas of domesticity and seclusion, is the concept of the 'hok-meisie'. Hoff (2011) notes that the |Xam regarded a girl going through puberty as vulnerable as her transition to womanhood was linked to the overall |Xam life cycle where human actions were linked to the weather and the water and consequently the groups survival. Therefore, the actions of initiates in their transitional states had to be carefully monitored. and "at the beginning of her first menstruation, a |Xam girl was regarded as "unsafe" and had to be secluded and cleansed prior to being re-introduced to the world as a new person" (Hoff 2011:42). The Khoekhoen and San cosmologies are tied to concepts of metamorphosis and progressing from one stage of life to the next (Waldman 2003). The initiation practices were embedded in the processes of transformation. The transition from childhood into womanhood, for example, was highly revered by the Khoekhoe and San. Therefore, this belief could be reflected in the Baster engravings at Grootfontein

Again the seclusion of the engravings, as well as the positioning of women in a house – a hok - and the emphasis on a diminutive and prominent woman could consider a matriarch guiding an initiate in seclusion and the whole expressive of a creole cosmology of the possible Baster 'initiates'. Therefore, when we start thinking about the home in this instance, the house becomes a physical manifestation of protection -the home (hok) as a place that protects both the individual and society.

Furthermore, there is the link between an individual's life and water, a transaction that occurred right after birth. New born babies were introduced to the water so as to allow the child to form a bond with the water (Hoff 2011). The water source was linked to the

underworld and therefore |Xam and for Khoekhoen they were linked to it through the water. Therefore, it is noted that boys and girls experienced supernatural potency when they reached puberty. For example, a girl could cause the lightning to strike someone by snapping her finger. Moreover, “a menstruating woman could cause aggressiveness in carnivores and the weather, leading to the girl and/or her close relatives being killed” (Hoff, 2011:40). Moreover, other stories of the Woman of the Early Race and the Rain Bull relate to how the water bull pursued the menstruating woman. Buchu was used to ward off the rain animal as in one case, the bull intended to transform the woman into a frog and carry her to the underworld. Therefore, because of the potent state of the initiate women, she was often confined to a domestic space as a means of protecting both herself and her community (Hoff 2011). These reflections on the potency of a women in transition further supports the idea of having the home (hok) function as a place of protection and seclusion.

In light of this, the transformation from childhood was often signified by an article of jewellery or clothing (Hoff 2011). For example, within the Khoekhoen tradition of finger painting close to water sources, some of the geometric motifs have been identified as karosses worn by Khoekhoen women due to their style and shape. The trend in Khoekhoen geometric painting is such that particular motifs are usually encircled by finger dots (Smith & Ouzman 2004; Ouzman 2005; Hykkerud 2006). The majority of these encircled paintings have images associated with initiation practices. In light of this, there are high concentrations of women in the rock art are at secluded sites that are relatively difficult to get to. One instance of these engravings was recorded by Hall and Mazel (2005) from Stompiesfontein in the Swartruggens (Figure 7.4) Hall and Mazel (2005) include images of women in crinoline dresses that are enclosed by finger dots (Figure 7.4). These paintings are interesting because of the seeming merger between two worldviews. A Khoekhoen expression and a European mode of dress.



Figure 7.4 Two women, one prominent, one diminutive encircled by finger dots.



Figure 7.5 Women encircled by finger dots and Cape Spring Wagonettes at Stompiesfontein.

One could infer that the subject of this art are Europeans. However, this inference fails to evaluate this type of art within the nuanced existence of the engravers. They might have been painting their colonialist counterparts, however, I shall offer a different interpretation and argue that these are paintings and engravings of the artists and were farm labourers of

Khoesan descent. Although the women are wearing European dress, it does not necessarily mean that the people represented are European. One other instance of this is from a secluded site in the Cederberg (Figure 7.6) In both instances, the focus is on paintings in secluded areas that are hard to get to. The occurrence of these painted women in these secluded locations is a pattern that we cannot easily neglect.



Figure 7.6 Secluded site in the Cederberg.



Figure 7.7 Women in crinoline dresses in a secluded area in the Cederberg site shown in Figure 7.6.

The enclosure of women and the seclusion of these Cederberg paintings may be similar to what we are seeing in the Grootfontein engravings. In the case of Grootfontein, I argue that it

is Bastaard people who were engraving themselves. From the range of historical material available we can see that European clothes were widely embraced because of the benefits they gave the lower working classes, especially in the Rhenish mission context and women in dresses may have expressed the process of initiation and transformation.

At face value it is about domesticity, but I have tried to suggest that these images provide a range of meanings that are not mutually exclusive. It is possible that women engraved in houses is a model for seclusion. The engravings, along with the painted sites are usually found in hard to reach, isolated areas. What is even more striking about boulders 11 and 13 is the emphasis placed on the details of the dresses, in comparison to the simplicity of the houses. The houses are almost a shell and they are likely a representative of the 'hok'. The idea of house and home being modelled as a place of protection and safety for both the community and the individual

Dress in the 19th Century

Dresses and the detailing of dresses prominently dominate the engravings of women from Grootfontein farm. As a secondary approach to assist in bolstering the arguments detailed above is to understand how female identity was communicated and mediated in the nineteenth century and to understand both Dutch and Victorian perceptions of womanhood. This contributes to the discussion of how Baster communities re-imagined initiation rituals in the 19th century. As already noted in previous chapters, the nineteenth century was a period of great industrial and social transformation not only South Africa but globally. The industrial revolution, merino wool trade and the mineral revolution resulted in an increased amount of migration from Cape Town into the Northern frontier. Capitalist society was opening up new opportunities.

As a precursor to attitudes to dress in the 19th century, Dutch ideology about dress in the 18th century held an important place in mediating one's identity, therefore, we cannot underestimate the social dialogue of aspiration and position being mediated by the dresses we see engraved at Grootfontein. Therefore, in order to understand how perceptions of dress affected the individual, we shall briefly look at how the VOC used clothing as a means of mediating identity.

The Dutch Influence

The VOC administered Cape society under sumptuary laws which regulated your position in society by virtue of your dress. As a consequence, objects and the things one possessed influenced day-to-day interactions. Therefore, your rank and authority was readily signalled by the clothes on your back. Consequently, you could not aspire to own clothes from another class, for examples, slaves had to wear entirely plain clothes without cuffs or collars of another colour. Slaves always had to go barefoot and without a hat, however, as soon as a slave was enfranchised he was allowed to wear shoes, stockings and a hat as a mark of freedom (Ross 1999). This note from 1902 (Figure 7.8) (Smuts 1988) clearly exemplifies how these strict ordinances around dress perpetuated into the 20th century, to the extent that individuals had to possess special permits if they wished to own a second pair of clothes. One story from Penn (1999) tells a story of labourers who had gruesomely murdered their master, when one was asked why he had committed such a crime, he responded by saying because his master had not given them their annual allowance of clothes. The motivation for this crime might seem unnecessarily reckless and perhaps psychopathic from our own context, however, when we view this story from the frustrations of the early 18th and 19th century we can imagine the extent to which a denial of clothes triggered such behaviour. Therefore, if we are to keep this context in mind we can imagine that clothing up until the 19th and the 20th century played an important role in mediating social interactions (also see Ross 2006 for more information on this).

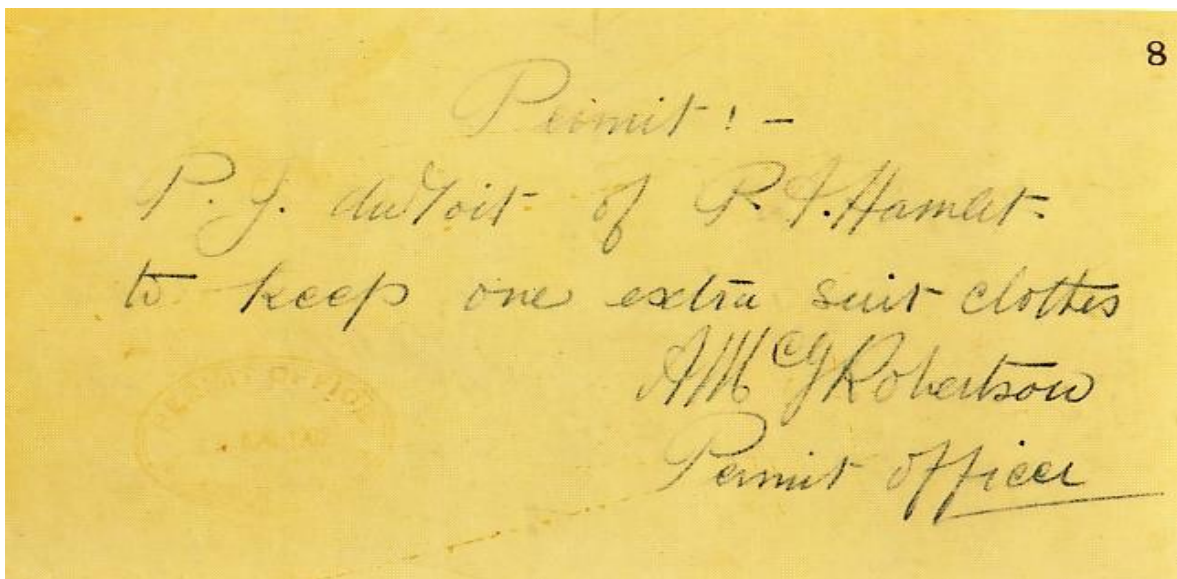


Figure 7.8 An excerpt from 'The Forgotten Highway' from 1902 requesting allowance to own an extra suit of clothing (Smuts 1988).

The Victorian Influence

It is important that we reflect on the Empire's influence and the impact that British culture had on Cape society. Although the VOC had ruled how dress mediated identity, the 19th century ushered in new ways for the individual to express identity and self. The British also introduced their own ideologies with regards to women and their place in society. Industrial society in the Cape encouraged the rise of a middle class society and the pursuit of middle class standing was pervasive also for indigenous communities in the Cape (Bradlow 2009). and on the frontier.

English society in the Cape brought with it a “moral code of respectability” (Bradlow 2009:52). With respect to women, the expectations were based on a moral code where women in “their exclusion from many areas of activity solely by virtue of their sex, they were also cast in the role of chief guardian of morality” (Bradlow 2009:52). Women were seen as the gentler sex and their agency in society was readily defined by men, subordinated to men and that they were inferior to men (Bradlow 2009). The gentler sex was therefore predestined for “marriage and childbearing; intellectually inferior and submissively devoted to a father/husband figure” (Bradlow 2009:51). Therefore, these perceptions of women and womanhood were imported into the Cape. How though did these values interact with indigenous values as well as Dutch society? How might the Grootfontein engravings reflect on how Baster women were seen in the world? There were very few ways in which women could assert their agency. It is noted that colonial women were deeply interested in their appearance and they engaged in occupations such as millinery, dressmaking– a heightened interest in fashion (Bradlow 2009).

Bradlow (2009) notes that there was a certain amount of taste, elegance and simplicity in Cape fashions. The Russian author Ivan A. Goncharov “was amazed at the toilette of a Stellenbosch farmer's wife and daughter – he wondered if the two were even peasants” (Bradlow 2009). Therefore, the love for fashion and self-expression was not only a middle class pursuit but also a rural pursuit. Basters at Grootfontein, held distinct class differences based on material possessions (Herbst 2004). Therefore, it is probable that these perceptions and images of women and dress had spread through to this small village in the Northern Cape.

The 1800s saw an increased migration of people from the Cape into the Northern frontier. The merino wool trade and the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley spurred an even greater

amount of migration towards the North as there was a promise of economic enfranchisement. As a consequence, style had also become an import and became a mix of Cape simplicity and middle class pursuits. The extensive reach of trade was equally felt in the Amandelboom region and the coloured herders maintained ties with visiting vendors from the Cape, when, for example, Mrs Brink and Daniel Kelehr, a group of merchants settled in the area (Herbst 2004). Therefore, access to clothing likely mediated social interactions in the region.

Therefore, we can envision that fashion became a mode of ideal self-expression for the disenfranchised underclass woman in the Cape. However, these middle class ambitions remained relatively unattainable for the working class as they were in a sense subjugated to living below this standard. Rural working class women lived far away from the ideal of 'moral respectability' and some lived for example as prostitutes. (Bradlow 2009). In this context, the likely catalyst that spurred the forces of aspiration.

Middle class society and middle class pursuits can be seen as one of the proponents of aspiration. The working class Khoekhoe, San, Xhosa and Malay women "showed as keen an interest in fashion as their superiors. The Khoe women were the most ardent patrons of the crinoline in the Karoo village of Murraysburg. While in Cape Town a young Muslim bride was dressed in a stylish ensemble of white satin skirt...loose Garbaldi body which all Malays wear on this occasion...white gloves and boots" (Bradlow, 2009:73). All groups were incorporating British styles into their indigenous expressions of identity.

Therefore, there was a tension between access and inaccessibility. On the one hand capitalist society meant opportunity and social mobility for all and on the other hand, social mobility was not accessible for all. With respect to the Grootfontein engravings and the amount of detail in the dresses we can interpret them either as declarations of status or as aspirations to middle class life. These depictions could easily represent both ways of thinking. Dress was a public way of asserting identity and at the same time it reinforced the lifestyle that a large majority of the working class could only aspire to. These aspirations were not only a symptom of Cape Town, but potentially feelings that were rippling throughout the Crown Lands. In light of these considerations we must remember that the discussion of transformation and initiation practices and the idea that aspiration and the cosmological are not mutually exclusive.

Towards the end of the mission in Williston, the arrival of more white settlers in the region came with an increased number of general stores and shops, some shops could be found in

Carnarvon, and this meant that there was direct access to goods (Herbst 2004). Perhaps even more considering that Khoesan and Bastaard groups could easily access clothing and goods items. However, towards the end of the 19th century, the majority of the coloured farmers saw their economic grip loosen. Strassberger (1969) notes, that a majority of the coloured inhabitants had to find work on white farms. The issue of dress can be taken much further for example by examining Dorothea Bleek's photographs from the early 20th century of people in Prieska as well as Thomas Bain's images reflecting the earliest forms of painting/etchings of colonial clothing. Therefore, access to clothes possibly became more difficult for the working class man, however, we can infer that the aspiration to possess items of clothing became even greater as it readily expressed your social and economic standing.

Under the British administration fashion further expressed social standing. As highlighted earlier, this continued in the same way by which the VOC had established Cape societal norms in the 1700s. The value of clothes persisted well into the 19th century. The middle class women of Cape society could rise through the social order based on who they married and therefore, be able to access a wider range of clothes. Marriages across the different cultures were allowed, however the women who married into white society were often kept out of the social gaze, therefore, their agency was greatly reduced in situations where white women found their agency. Access and aspiration to clothing was perhaps a way in which both middle and lower class women found a means of self and social expression. The long Victorian dress style of the Herero women is a significant example of indigenous women adapting colonial dress styles to suit their expression of self and culture (see Hendrikson 1994 for more information on this). Perhaps this need to express 'self' was felt more in working class communities as the 'dress' became the symbol of their ideal existence (Bradlow 2009).

Further up in the North in the Transvaal a completely different context to that of the 19th century Cape, where a Lutheran mission had established itself, there were reports of outrage over the public's obsession with crinolines (Ruether 2002). The Sotho people in this region had begun the process of re-interpreting European dress styles into their culture. The idea is about how image meditates both personal and cultural identity. Dress in this context became a means of self-realization and protest. Therefore, in understanding the presence of dresses on the boulders of Grootfontein we need to shift from viewing the engravings as crude and perhaps childish musings and view them within this context of social contention – power and powerlessness.

Ruether (2002) notes that, “clothes did not make the people’s identity in any simple way, but certainly created an image. They served as symbols that allowed observers to perceive the distinctions claimed by the wearers. Consequently, the use of dress was not confined to the private sphere but was part of popular self-representation, and in turn, of public admiration or critique” (Ruether 2002:365). The mission then required that the local communities burn their crinolines as a sign of pious devotion to the faith. The local groups at the Lutheran mission in the Transvaal had begun to interpret European fashion in unique ways and the missionaries found this expression of individual identity problematic as from the ‘1880s European clothes were traded as a mass commodity, available not only to chiefs, elders and councillors’ (Ruether 2002). However, the mission still held a certain amount of influence over women and their bodies as they “were subjected to both materials moral scrutiny and control” (Ruether 2002:368).

In the case of Amandelboom, Strassberger (1969) notes that half way through the 1800s there was scarcely a person found who was naked at the Williston station. Clothes determined one’s access to the resources of the mission station. The mission station offered education to the coloured children of Williston - access to that education was readily mediated by one’s dress – “clothes were at once commodities and accoutrements of a civilized self. They proved to be a means for constructing new forms of privilege, value, personhood and history on the colonial frontier” (Comaroff 1996:24-25).

Comaroff (1996) states that there was an active British effort to incorporate African communities into a global economy of goods and signs, therefore, the new stylized transactions were representations of a new cultural economy (Comaroff 1996). The pressures of assimilating into colonial society must have been felt even more on the frontier. As we noted earlier, the mission station at Williston was used as a means of establishing one’s legal presence on the landscape due to the limitations of the Caledon code. Therefore, aligning with the mission was desirable, and dress was a means of accessing the church – leaving the nakedness and clothing oneself into the mission. Therefore, the importance of clothes as a means of legitimizing an individual’s identity on the landscape cannot be overlooked. What is distinctly apparent when we contrast what was happening with the Sotho - their use of clothing as a means of protest versus the uncontested acceptance of European dress we possibly see at Grootfontein, interestingly there is no evident resistance to the clothes. In the case of Grootfontein, clothes are readily accepted as they legitimized one’s participation in the colonial economy.

Missions had particularly strict dress codes, and indigenous communities were forced to be dependent on them, the majority would adopt a dress that which more than any other medium would make visible their marginal place in society (Comaroff 1996:24). Therefore, there was a clash between what nineteenth century missionaries looked at as indecent exposure as it was not a state of indecency in indigenous eyes (Comaroff 1996). We then have to ask to what extent the change of dress resonated with Khoekhoen or |Xam beliefs. Clothing existed in a place of tension, on the one hand it was welcomed because it gave access to the church and the protection of the missionaries to those who wished to associate with the church (Comaroff 1996:24). The idea is that some goods were welcomed and some were not. European clothing existed in a place of duality. In one example “Chief Montshiwa of Tshidi Rolong in Kuruman ordered his daughter to cast off the European clothing and return to her traditional attire” (Comaroff 1996: 25) -but other objects that had come before the influx of Europeans in the area were welcomed for example the Thlaping chief addressed his warriors prior to battle in a white linen garment and his heir wearing an officers coat (Comaroff 1996). Clothes occupied a place where they could either readily fit into the world view of indigenous communities or be rejected from the world view.

Therefore, we have to question in what way the European style of dressing we see engraved onto the boulders of Grootfontein fits into a Baster world view – by examining the ways in which a change in dress is used to articulate or re-express an old idea in a new context. In examining the ideas, we put forward earlier on seclusion and the ‘hok meisie’, perhaps the motif of the woman in the house fits into the model for female initiation practices. The emphasis placed on the dresses may very well be a part of this idea of transformation, from the figurative pupa to the embellished beautiful butterfly. These thoughts are supported by the great amount of detail the engravers place on the larger image of the woman in a house. Therefore, the emphasis on dress could be a re-expression of the process of transformation. In light of this, we should not view the ideas expressed on the materiality, transformation and initiation practices as mutually exclusive.

In many ways, it appears that European dress was readily accepted at Amandelboom with little or no apparent contestation, this perhaps is not entirely surprising considering the close links the community members had with the Rhenish mission as well as the eagerness the community had to have the mission in the area. Moreover, this emphasis on dress could echo the wider social issues, at this time Grootfontein and the whole region is undergoing a shift in economic wealth, with the Bastaard community losing their ownership of land and access to

the communal land for grazing. Therefore, access to good quality clothing might have become more difficult, therefore, the engravings of these dresses could symbolize the greater desire to assert one's presence in society.

Although the engravings of women in houses are quite striking, there are a considerable amount of 'other' engravings, these are of men, engravings to do with ostrich farming, sheep rearing and the diamond rush. The images powerfully contrast with those of women in houses. On the one hand, we have the finery of feminine dress and domestic life and in stark contrast the almost opulent finery represented in the engravings is the expansive focus on the industrial world and the outside. This imagery has to do with openness and in many ways stereotypically depicts a division of space. The male body is the one engraved in association with the outside interacting with the rest of the world. Therefore, when we think about the authorship of these particular engravings we can suggest that it is men who are doing the engravings of men and women who are engraving women.

Wagons and Globalization

The other imagery represented on the Grootfontein boulders is distinctly about the issues of land, landscape, global expansion and the place of men in this ever expanding world. What is strikingly evident about these engravings is the clear identity of space; the world of industry is clearly defined as a man's world. The men formulate close to 80 percent of the human images we see at Grootfontein, therefore, there are clear issues to do with masculinity being portrayed which deserve our attention. There is a clear distinction between the delineation of space where men are represented on the outside interacting and being part of globalization. Whereas, the images of women interact with the globalizing world from a very domestic and feminised space. In a very simple way these engravings represent the ideology of manhood and womanhood on the frontier.

The 19th century opened South Africa up to the world, however, at the same time it placed particular groups in a place of subordination. Thus, the world was opening up but the opportunities available to lead in industry soon became scarce. The inception of the Caledon code was one of the first steps towards the disenfranchisement of Khoekhoen and other groups such as the Bastard and Griqua who had lived almost free from colonial administration. The other motifs engraved on these boulders are therefore interesting because of their focus on land and perhaps, at a much deeper level, they echo the frustration and fear at being able to participate or be excluded from capitalist society. For example, there were

opportunities for Bastaard, Khoesan and Black individuals to apply for land ownership, and Grootfontein is a great example of the issues to do with accessibility. When Grootfontein and the other 4 farms were leased for £5-00 to “the present occupiers”, indicating that the occupants who had claimed the property were most likely already squatting there. In addition to the lease, there was a requirement that there be a few developments on the property, if they failed to do so they would consequently lose the property (CCP 1/2/1/18 A13-67). Therefore, there were quite a few rules and regulations that made the maintenance of property challenging.

Other than the bulls, the boulders at Grootfontein are covered with a range of other animals such as ostriches and horses. The interesting thing about these two motifs is that the context in which they are drawn is less arbitrary than the context in which the bulls are drawn. For instance, for the majority of the time the bulls are drawn in a context where it seems as though they are floating. However, the ostriches and horses seem to be anchored by a particular scene or event. We can infer from the manner in which they are engraved that these particular engravings are potentially linked to a story. The problem these types of engravings pose is perpetuated by this dualistic existence within the metaphysical. Therefore, interpreting these engravings requires that we apply both a physical and cosmological explanation for the engravings as these creatures are most likely embedded into the Khoesan experience of land. Perhaps what we are seeing here is an expression of frustration on the access and inaccessibility of land. From what we do know about the claims process for land, it became harder and harder for Bastaard and Khoesan individuals to own property towards the end of the 19th century.

There are specific motifs which are representative of the local participation in the global world – the ostrich feather trade, the wool trade and most prominently the diamond trade. From the archaeological evidence on Grootfontein farm there is unequivocal evidence that the farm was a part of the ostrich feather trade. A short distance from the main farm house there are the remnants of the old ostrich pens. This goes on to support the idea that embedded in these images are dialogues of globalization and the pursuit of materiality. The emphasis on the Cape Spring Wagonettes, ostriches and wagons, as well as the violence of the frontier resonates with the material pursuits and ambitions on the frontier and the pervasiveness of trying to get ahead in a world where the legislations keep shifting against the Bastaard, Black and Khoesan groups. In many ways these engravings are about the new horizons available to people, the horizons of travel, and the opportunities offered up by rearing animals - these new

horizons are powerfully juxtaposed with the image of the man and the painful reality of being subordinated.

The image of the Cape Spring Wagonette is perhaps one of the most compelling images associated with the engravings of men. Strategically positioning the local context of Grootfontein within the wider context of the expanding world, the presence of the Cape Spring Wagonettes positions these engravings within the diamond field trade route. In particular, the historical record is rife with the tension of the Van Wyk brothers over the sale of Grootfontein from Cornelis over to Adriaan. What is even more striking was the indignation Adriaan felt when he sold Moordenaarsgat and received considerably less for the improvements he had made. Bastaard groups in this region were continually being edged out, and the access to the land communally was becoming problematic.

One example of this is from a letter where the committee of Amandelboom erfholders sent in a request for stricter land regulations, to facilitate a more sanitary use of the land. The committee did not receive a response with regard to this, and they went on to send a second letter where residents complained about how some of the Bastaard groups had turned his fountain into a tar pit. The committee complained about the abuse they received from some of the Bastards when they were admonished about their misuse of the fountain. The letter also makes mention of some of the Bastards being erf-holders who “brought all their sheep and cattle in the village pasturage at the same time infringing on the right of water erven holders” (CO 4208. A39andA42). It is quite evident from these exchanges that the tension between the Bastaard and white farmers was intensifying.

This conflict and competition is particularly heightened when we consider the continued disenfranchisement of people in this region. In a meeting voting on whether black residents in Schietfontein should be allowed to have ownership of land. The arguments for them to own land were quite positive. However, despite the valid arguments for land ownership there was a great amount of resistance from white land owners who believed that they should not be granted access to land. At Amandelboom, the situation was quite similar, close to 50 claims for land where made with only 4 being permitted and the farm Grootfontein fell within this group and Cornelis could claim the farm for 5 pounds. Therefore, these images engraved onto the boulders are representative of the social economic conflict, and frustrations – the fight scene engravings embody the violence and frustration of the frontier (Figure 6.27)

What is possibly being expressed in these engravings is the frustration, anger, and disenfranchisement of Bastaard communities in the region. In many ways these engravings could be a form of venting. This interpretation is supported by the idea of isolation and seclusion we highlighted earlier. It is interesting that there is no christian iconography engraved on the boulders, especially considering the connectedness individuals in this community had with the Rhenish mission. Moreover, these engravings are heavily concerned with materiality and the pursuits of material gain, these are embodied by the engravings of ostriches, and transportation. These emotions expressed in these engravings are starkly incongruent with the ideals of the church. Therefore, it makes sense that they are secluded and that there is no church iconography. These engravings resonate with an intimacy of lived experience and denial – a frustration and aspiration for a better life. Therefore, this further supports the sentiments on authorship we highlighted earlier, these engravings were most likely done by men of Bastaard birth, who saw the world around them get larger while the opportunities available to them significantly lessened.

As we stated, these images, have to do with land and the contestation around land. This is particularly important when we think on the information on Khoekhoen and San cosmological relationship with the land. At Grootfontein and the Amandelboom township, the Bastaard communities grazed and cultivated commonage. However, the move towards division of property and regulation of movement around erfs greatly challenged the sharing of land, undermining the communal access people had.

The following chapter will offer some concluding remarks.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has explored 19th century colonial period rock engravings from Grootfontein farm in the Williston district of the Northern Cape province in South Africa. While these engravings may in terms of their aesthetics, be described as ‘crude’, I have tried to explore what they may socially represent and that they are far from trivial. Although these engravings are mimetic and mundane, in their focus on the everyday, I have argued that it is in the everyday, that issues of cultural continuity and transformation of Khoesan beliefs and practice into the 19th century may be identified. In the quest to identify the authorship of the engravings, I have used the historic and archival records to suggest that the engravings were authored by people, of mixed descent who were historically referred to as Bastards and who may have been individuals who had an association with the Van Wyk family which occupied Grootfontein from the mid-1800s. I interpret the engravings as Bastard expressions of their creole identity within their economic and political context and in the face of new materialities and socio-economic pressures that undermined any ambitions these communities had of getting ahead.

The details given in these images is wide and varying. Of these images, I have established interpretive themes that have centred on the continuity of ideas about rain and the mythical rain bull, and the manner in which women and men were represented. The rain bull is an image which is iconic in both the ethnographic and precolonial record as being symbolic of a rain or water animal. However, as I have stated, the majority of the images represented on these boulders seemingly have very little to do with any Khoesan cosmology. They mimic the colonial world in some detail. However, I have suggested that the while engravings of women in houses clearly represent perceptions of gender and female roles in the domestic domain, they may also provide an appropriate template for ideals of femininity, and furthermore, a template for initiation practices and female transformation in the 19th century. This idea is possibly reinforced by the ‘enclosure’ of women compared to the ‘openness’ of men and the secluded location of the engravings. These engravings are both part of a social dialogue to do with aspiration, the feminine self and self-expression, while playing a part in the Khoesan cosmology of initiating young women who have come of age. These images exist in this dualistic space and as a consequence, the significance of this 19th century rock art is even

more paramount. Not only is it spiritual but it also embodies some of the frustration and striving of living on the frontier.

This frustration I talk about may even be more apparent in the images of men, where there is a clear delineation of gender and the space occupied by males and females. The world of men is about being outside and engaging with commerce, trade and the globalizing world. The images are also about violence and struggle. In many ways these images represent materiality, striving, ambition and consciously or unconsciously echo the loss of opportunity. The second half of the 19th century was about change, and 'Bastaards' like the Van Wyks – saw their social standing dwindle, and in many ways these images are potentially about a contextual commentary about their place in the world. These sentiments are an interpretation of the context in which the rock engravings were made.

As stated these engravings are explicit about how gender is expressed and defined by the spatial settings within which men and women are represented: through the 'enclosure' of women and the 'openness' of men, Therefore, these engravings are part of this process of continuity and transformation. Khoesan descendant groups did not simply give up their cosmology in the face of adversity and the new materialities of colonialism. Quite conversely, I suggest that what we see is an active re-moulding and re-shaping of these beliefs to fit into or stand out from the social and economic milieu of the 19th century. With this in mind, one question that comes to light is how particular colonial pressures or processes determine what beliefs or ideas remain the same or if the expression of that idea changes to fit into a particular context. What might be socially 'strategic' in the continuity, retention and re-expression of belief in a new context? We have to question whether there is a predictability to this or if the process itself is entirely random and determined by the type of expression that is particular to a specific social context. In the Grootfontein engravings, for example, one very specific emphasis is women engraved in houses, but on present knowledge, this motif has not been found elsewhere. In contrast, men riding horses, herding ostriches and depictions of wagons are widespread in the rock art. What might this selection say about different scales of experience within the 19th century?

In this regard future work in the Williston area should focus on survey to see if this theme occurs elsewhere. Additionally, a broader archaeology should also focus on the material remains of Bastard households within the Kareeberg. A focus on the archaeology of

households in all its expressions, will expand our understanding of culture change, continuity and identity transformation in this region.

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Primary Sources - Archival Records from the Cape Town Archives Repository (CA).

CO	4160' 195	Memorial. Cornelis van Wyk. Regarding Improvements on the farm Grootfontein near Fraserburg (1869).
CO	4145' 45	Memorial. Amandelboom Erfholders Indicating that Mr Van Wyk has been appointed to act for them (1867).
CO	4189' A20	Memorial. Amandelboom Inhabitants Requesting establishment of a Periodical Court at Amandelboom (1876).
CO	4171' W81	Memorial. Adriaan van Wyk regarding sale of church At Amandelboom (1880).
CO	4208' A39	Mermorial. Amandelboom Inhabitants Regarding Municipal Regulations (1880).
CO	4208' A42	Memorial. Regarding Approval of their Municipal Regulations (1880).
CCP	3/1/1/3/G7'59	Claims of Certain Natives Residing at the Missionary Institutions of Amandelboom and Schietfontein (1856).
CCP	1/2/1.18 A13'67	Leasing of land in Amandelboom and Schietfontein (1864).

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Appendix A: Panel Tracings

BOULDER 1:



Figure 9.1 Panel 1 tracing of boulder 1.

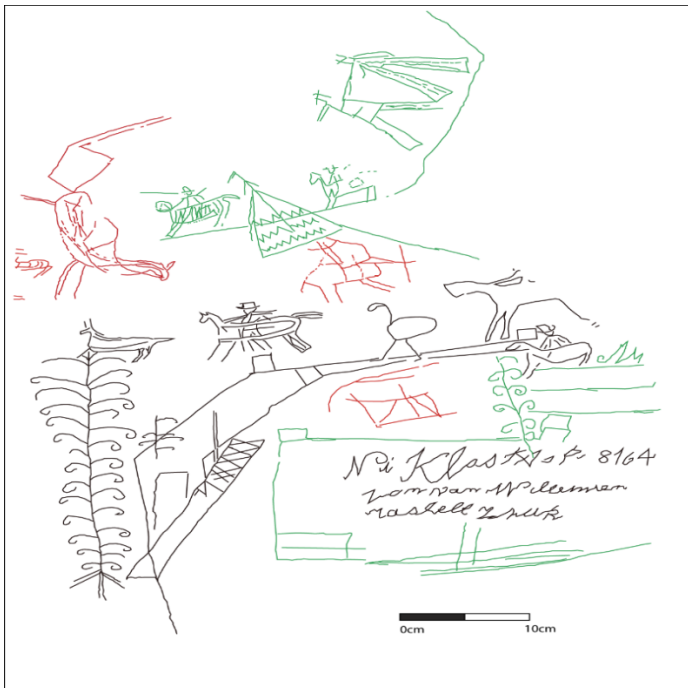


Figure 9.2 Panel 2 tracing of boulder 1.

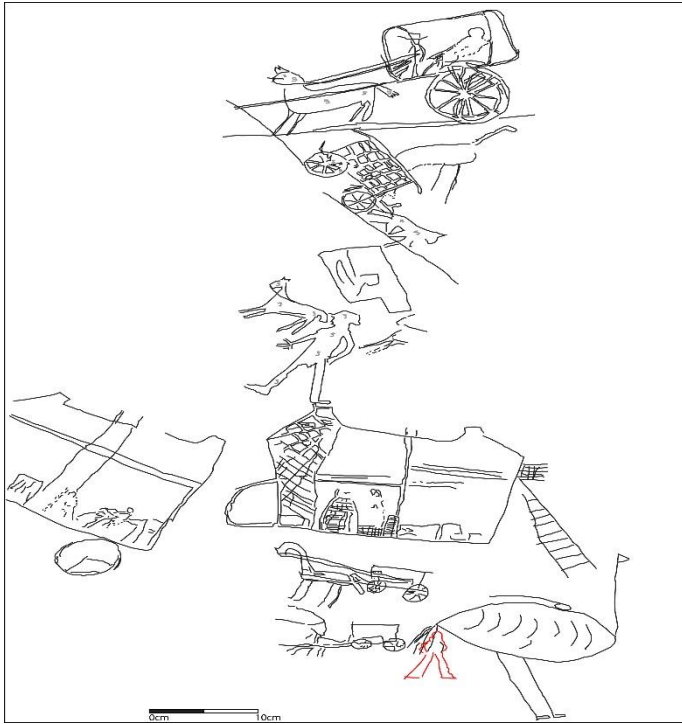


Figure 9.3 Panel 3 Overlay tracing of boulder 1.



Figure 9.4 Panel 3 Complete on Boulder 1.

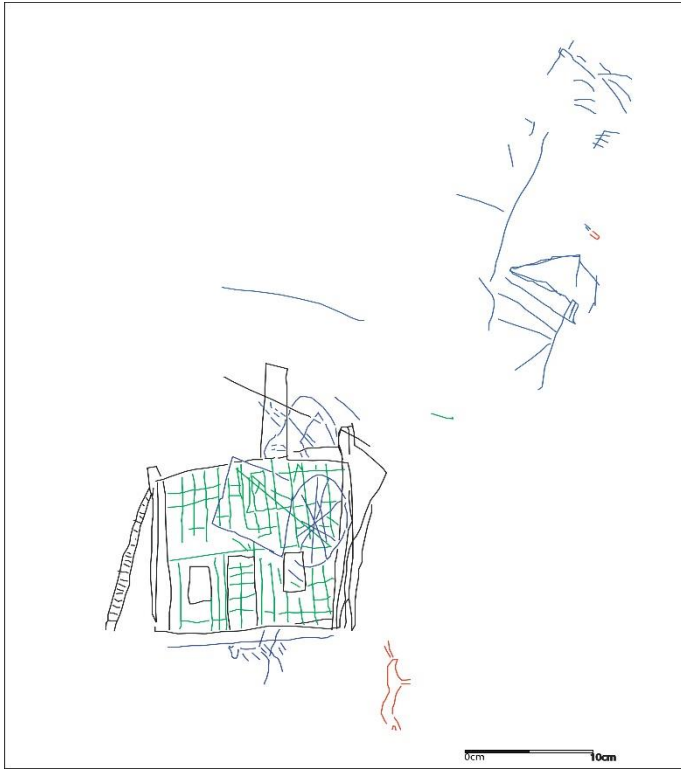


Figure 9.5 Panel 4 tracing of Boulder 1.



Figure 9.6 Panel 5 tracing of boulder 1.

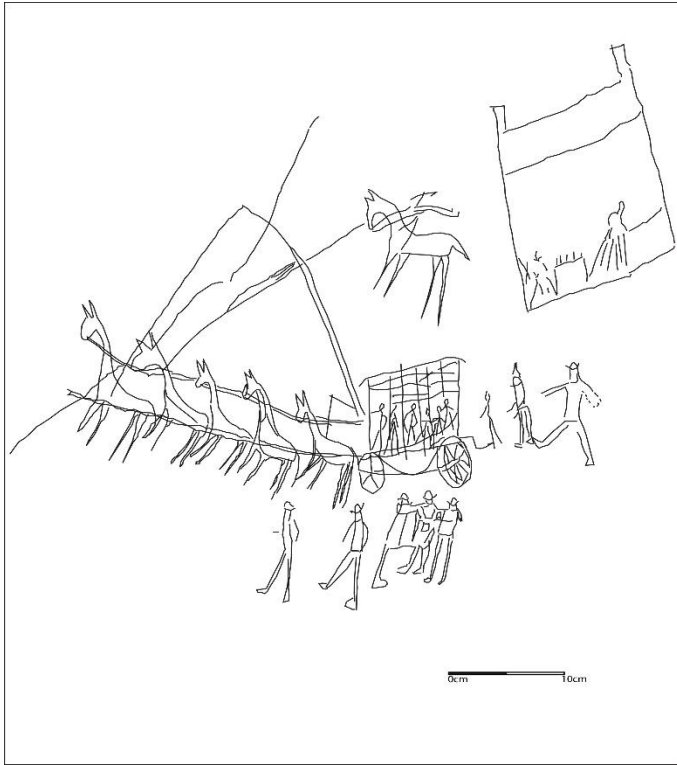


Figure 9.7 Panel 6 tracing of Boulder 1.

BOULDER 2:

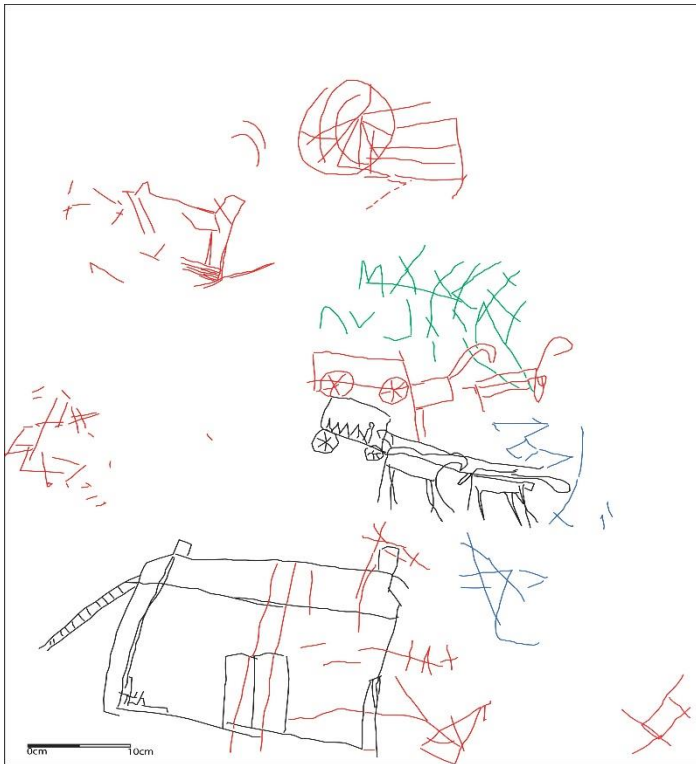


Figure 9.8 Panel 1 tracing of boulder 2.

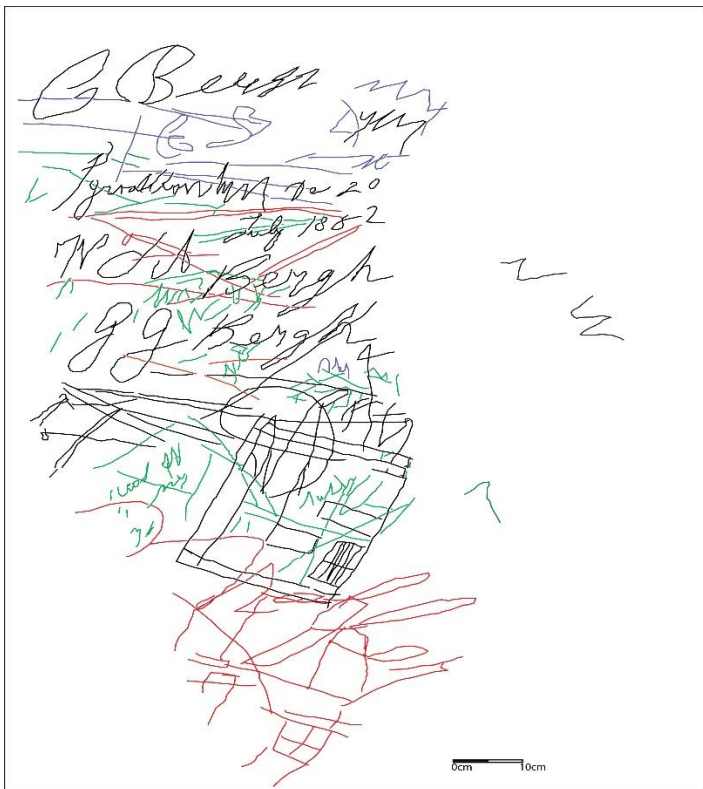


Figure 9.9 Panel 2 tracing of boulder 2.

BOULDER 3:

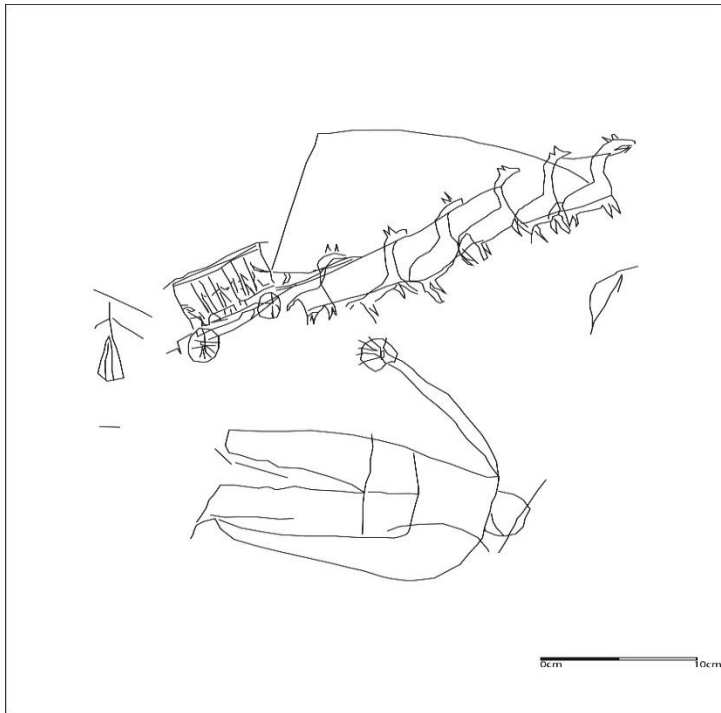


Figure 9.10 Panel 1 boulder 3a.

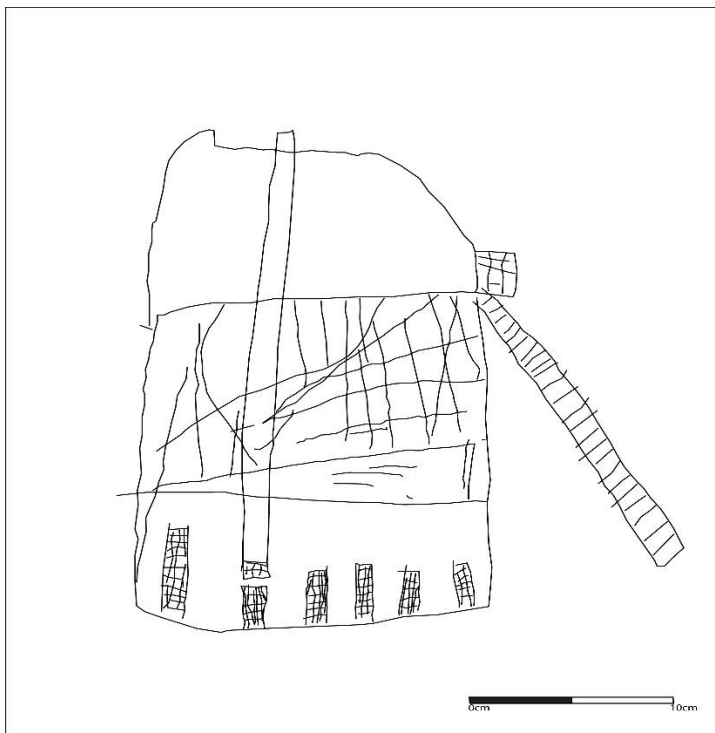


Figure 9.11 Panel 1 boulder 3b.

BOULDER 5:

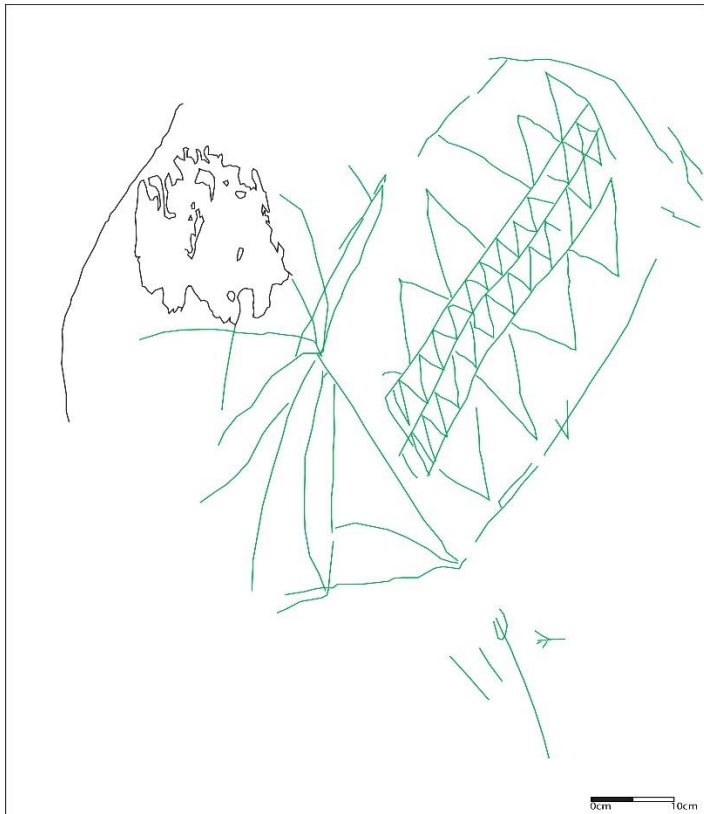


Figure 9.12 Boulder 5.

BOULDER 8:

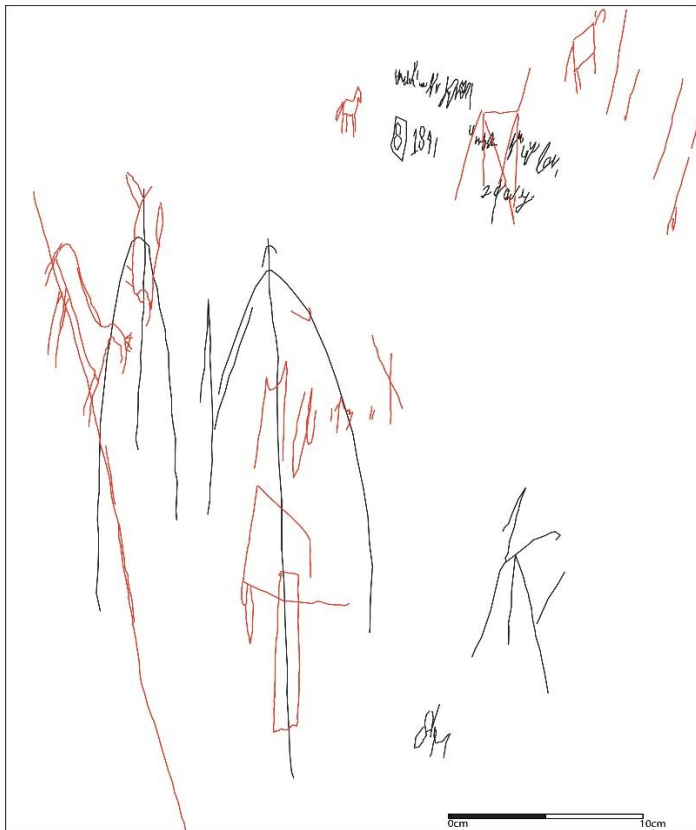


Figure 9.13 Boulder 8.

BOULDER 9:

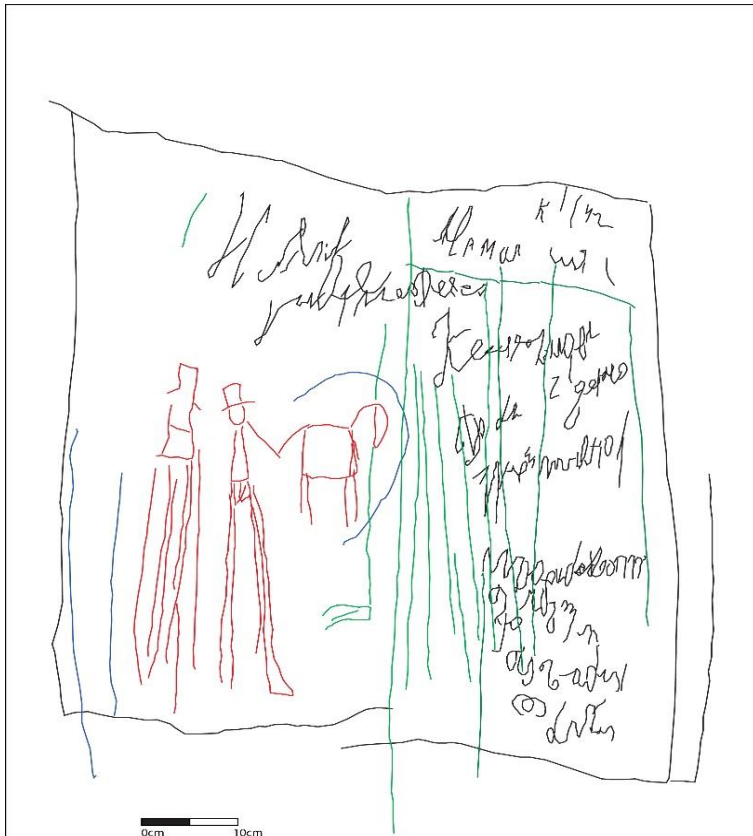


Figure 9.14 Boulder 9 panel 1.

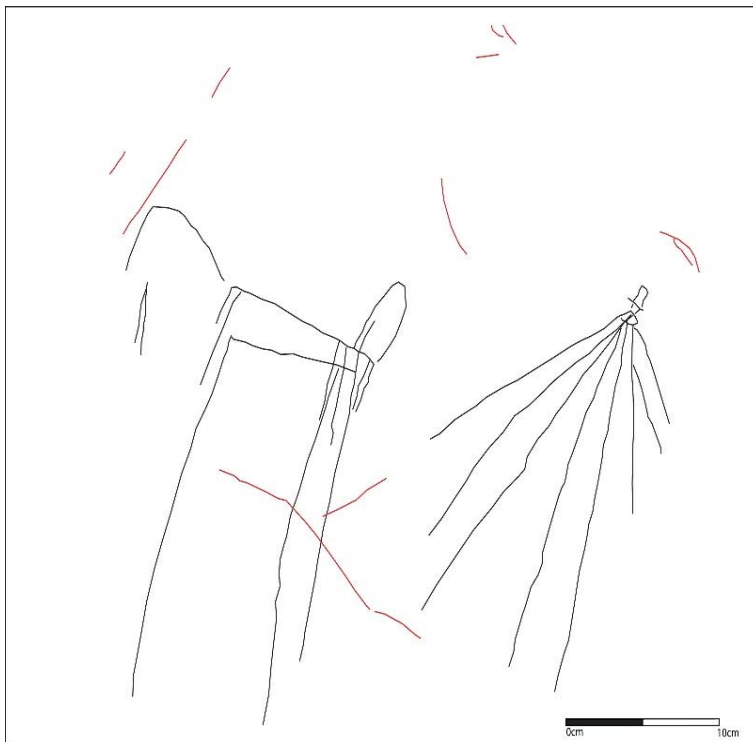


Figure 9.15 Boulder 9 panel 2.

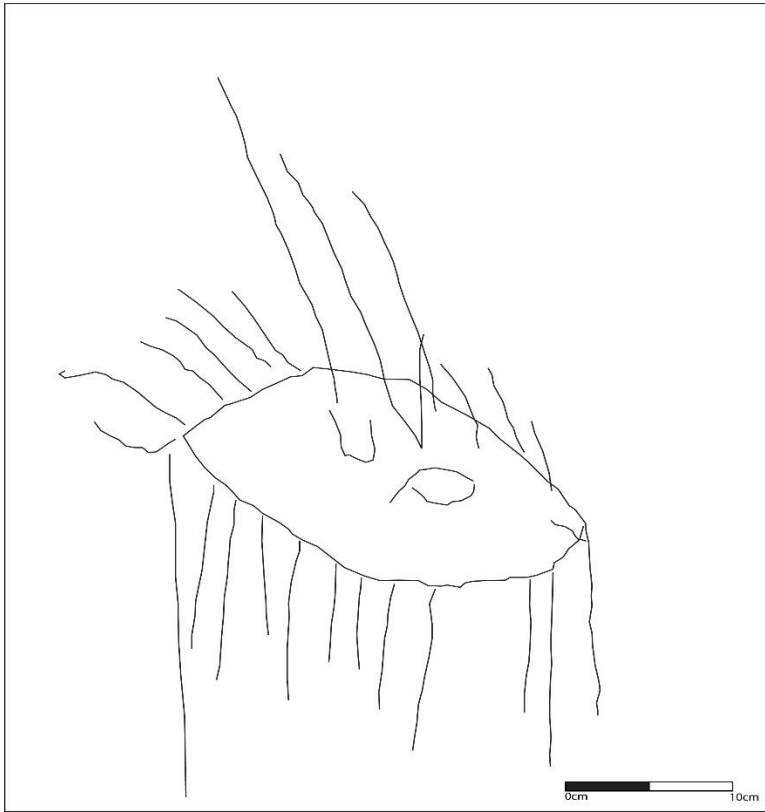


Figure 9.16 Boulder 9 panel 3.

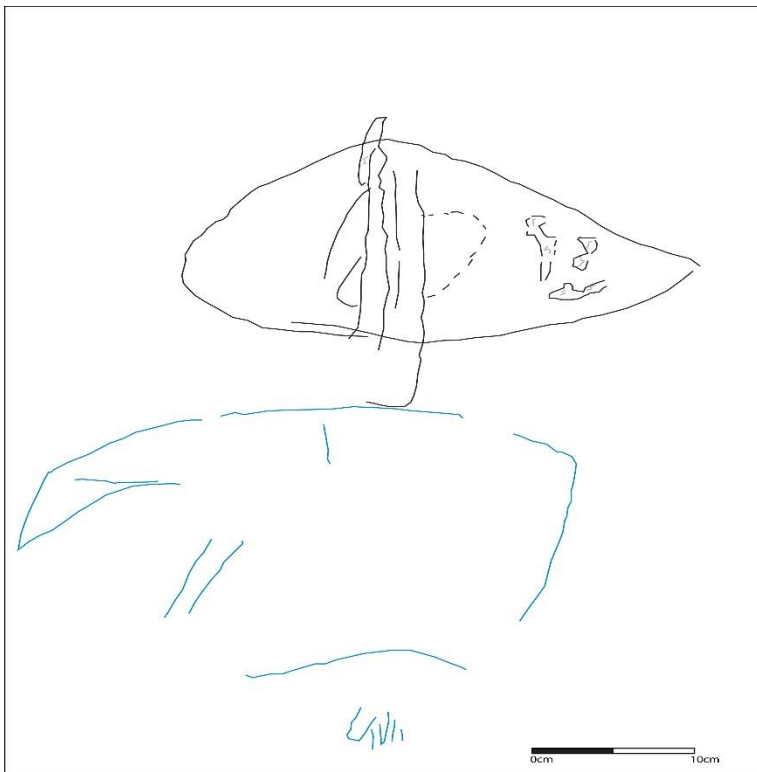


Figure 9.17 Boulder 9 panel 4.

BOULDER 11:

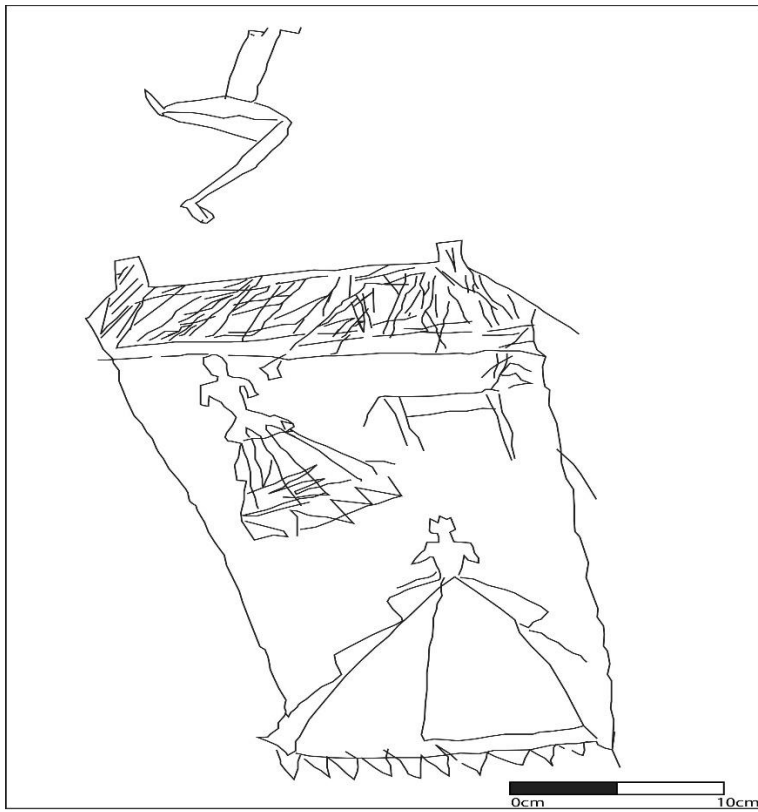


Figure 9.18 Boulder 11.

BOULDER 13:

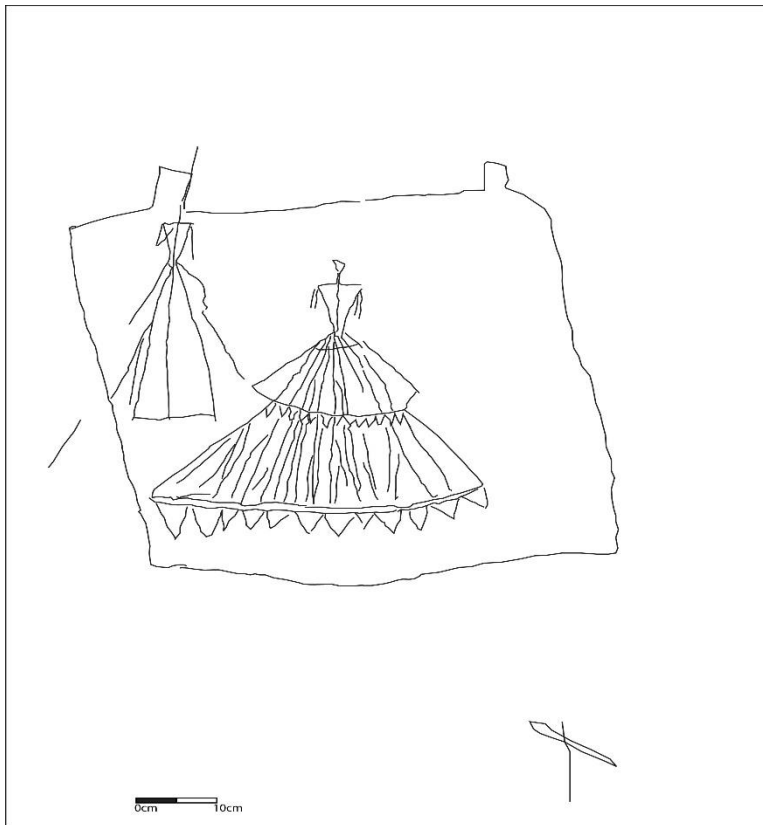


Figure 9.19 Boulder 13.

BOULDER 14:

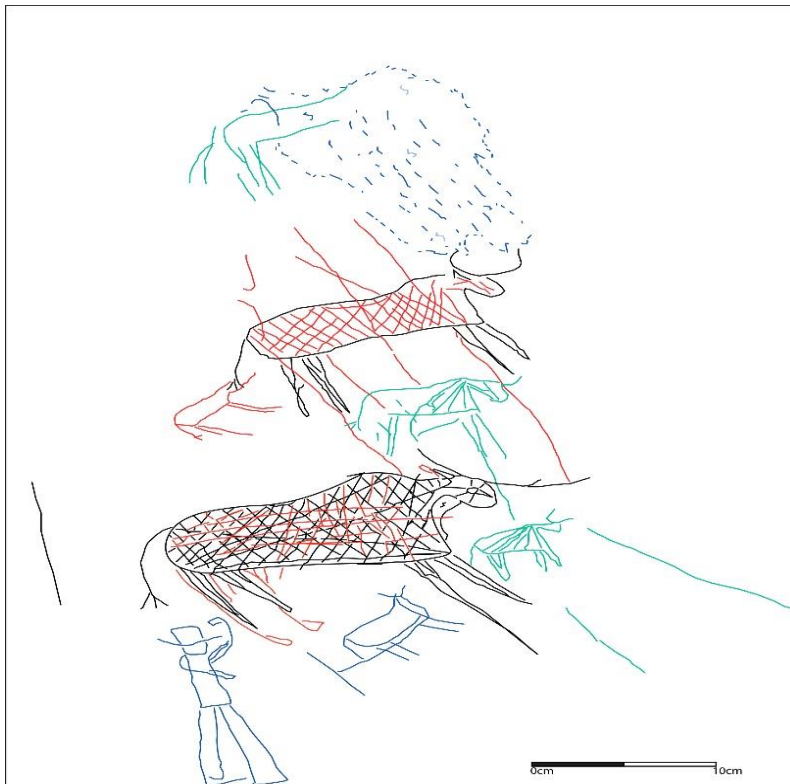


Figure 9.20 Boulder 14 panel 1.

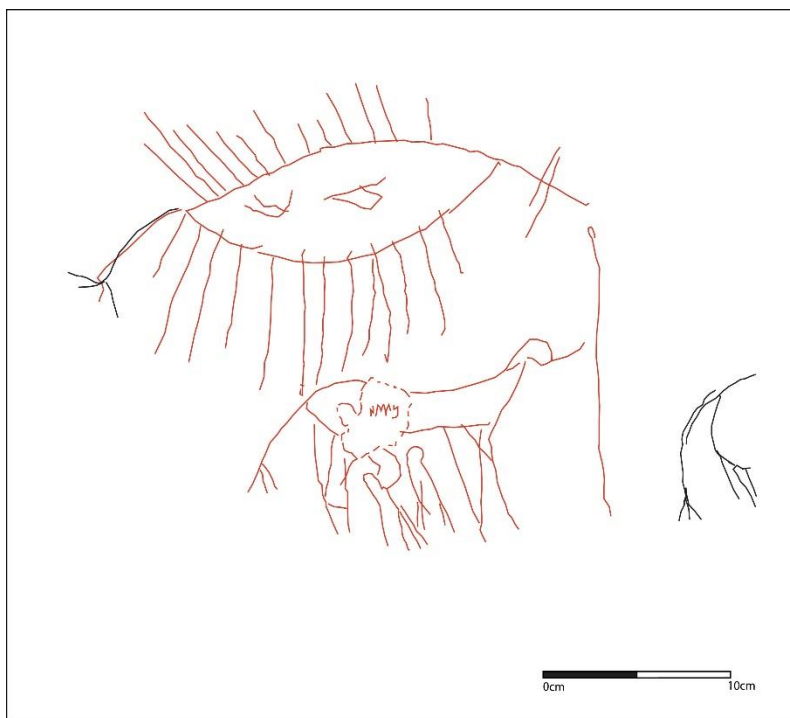


Figure 9.21 Boulder 14 panel 2.

Appendix B – Selection of Photographs from Grootfontein



Figure 10.1 Eastern view of Boulder 1.



Figure 10.2 Close up of Boulder 1 Panel 1.



Figure 10.3 Close up of writing on Boulder 1.

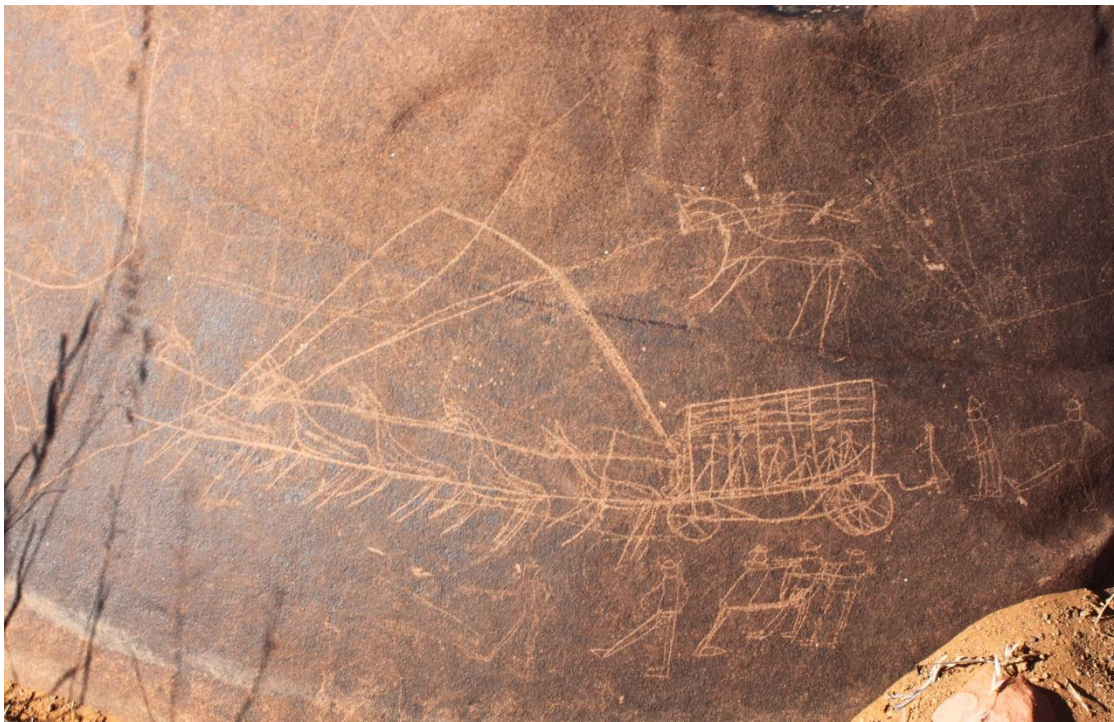


Figure 10.4 Close up of Cape Spring Wagonette from Boulder 1.



Figure 10.5 Close up on shading detail on boulder 1 panel 1.



Figure 10.6 Close up on wagon detail and halting detail on horses.



Figure 10.7 Close up on detail from boulder 1 panel 3.



Figure 10.8 Grootfontein farm A.



Figure 10.9 Grootfontein farm B.



Figure 10.10 Boulder 1 full view.

Appendix C – Fashion and Style of the 19th Century

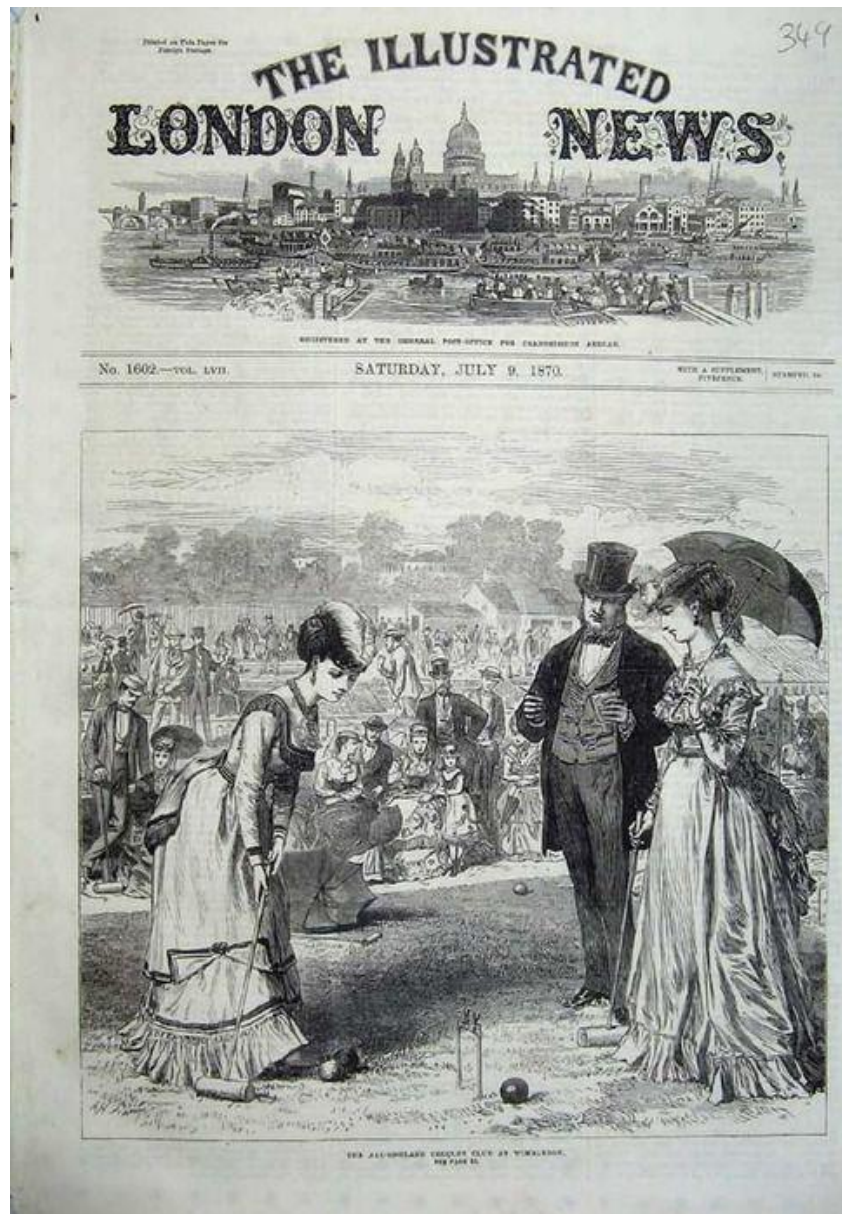


Figure 11.1 Women's style in 1870 London (emphasis on frills and A-line skirts) (<https://za.pinterest.com/pin/143622675586202013/>).



Figure 11.2 Selection of dresses from Victorian London 1840-1890.

(<http://www.victoriana.com/Victorian-Fashion/crinoline.htm>)



Figure 11.3 Comparison between elegant dresses and a riding outfit (emphasis on tiers and peplum). (<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/h/history-of-fashion-1840-1900/>)



Figure 11.4 Fashion Plate from a women's magazine.

(<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/h/history-of-fashion-1840-1900/>)



Figure 11.5 Fashion Plate from a women's magazine.

(<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/h/history-of-fashion-1840-1900/>)



Figure 11.6 Late 19th century ladies dress (emphasis on tiers and peplum)

(<https://bellatory.com/fashion-industry/Fashion-History-Victorian-Costume-and-Design-Trends-1837-1900-With-Pictures>).