

PART TEN

**Sharing Resources and
Experience: Managing
Archaeological and Rock Art
Sites in Southern Africa**

Introduction

Janette Deacon

The papers in this part report on initiatives that have enabled conservators and managers of archaeological sites in the region to share their experience and resources. The results have neatly encapsulated some of the hotly contested issues that challenge the standard methods used, particularly at rock art sites. They have also provided some hope for political commitment to sustainable development of rock art and other heritage sites.

All the contributors draw attention to mistakes that have been made in the past and suggest strategies that could avoid them in the future. It is interesting that the problems are seen to lie not so much with the “hardware”—the sites themselves and the conservation methods used—as with the “software”—the intangible heritage, intercommunity relationships, and the decision-making processes regarding presentation, conservation, and management.

The eternal local residents/outside experts dichotomy that planners face on a daily basis is played out time and again at heritage sites, where it is often magnified by mutual misunderstanding. In southern Africa the vast majority of rock art and other archaeological sites are in rural areas. The gap between locals and experts therefore remains wide. Webber Ndoro and George H. O. Abungu give examples of what can happen when one party acts without proper and sustained consultation with the other. In some cases it may be preferable

to do nothing. As Johannes Loubser points out, there are no miracle cures, and preventive care is often preferable to intervention. The same applies to the presentation of sites to the public. Sven Ouzman warns against “freezing” artifacts and sites when a wider diachronic approach would extend their lives in the present and the future. World Heritage listing has had an impact on rock art sites in the region, and Phenyo Churchill Thebe describes the interdependence of the intangible and tangible heritage of the World Heritage Site at Tsodilo in Botswana. Where local beliefs and practices are ignored, they add to the byproducts of dissatisfaction that local people feel when they have been left out of the decision-making process.

Despite these problems, light can be found at the mouth of the cave. Benjamin Smith’s paper cites initiatives in South Africa to address the presentation of rock art in a positive way by using San indigenous knowledge and ensuring that local communities benefit directly from opening sites for tourism. The lessons learned in this and other projects throughout the region have been shared in the workshops and courses offered by the Southern African Rock Art Project (SARAP) that are described in my own paper. Thanks to assistance from the Getty Conservation Institute in the initial stages of the project, it could serve as a model for other regions of the world as well. The challenge is to stay connected.

Sharing Resources: Issues in Regional Archaeological Conservation Strategies in Southern Africa

Janette Deacon

Abstract: *Many countries in southern and eastern Africa share a similar range of rock art and archaeological sites and a similar philosophy regarding their conservation and the intangible heritage related to them. It is therefore possible, at least theoretically, to apply lessons learned in one country to issues that arise in another. Several programs stimulated by the World Heritage Centre, the Getty Conservation Institute, the Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation (NORAD), the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (SIDA), and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and the Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) over the past two decades have begun to build capacity and integrate heritage research practice and conservation at a regional level in southern Africa. This paper discusses the Southern African Rock Art Project (SARAP), which has identified rock art as a shared resource in the region and has played an important role in encouraging participating countries to nominate rock art sites for World Heritage listing and to develop appropriate conservation management plans. To succeed, archaeological conservation programs require close cooperation with local communities, as well as an external stimulus, agreement on appropriate behavior toward the sites or resources, and a governmental infrastructure capable of funding, implementing, and monitoring management plans.*

Common Issues

Archaeological sites in Africa, particularly in eastern and southern Africa, cover a longer record of human history than those on any other continent. That many sites are well preserved is the result of both natural preservation factors and the philosophies of most traditional African societies, which

call for conserving the intangible heritage of places and not interfering with natural processes.

The countries in the southern African region that are the subject of this paper, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, and Lesotho, also shared a colonial history over the past few centuries. Except for those few countries that saw European settlement in the seventeenth century, all were colonized in the nineteenth century and by the late twentieth century had regained independence. This means that they not only have similar archaeological heritage conservation practices and challenges but also deal with them in much the same way, using principles and legal structures borrowed mainly from the United Kingdom and other western European countries. Common issues that are related more to the recent and current economic situation and that therefore also have parallels with countries elsewhere in Africa and beyond are

- the perception that archaeological sites are of low priority because they do not generate income, create jobs, or otherwise stimulate the economy;
- a consequent lack of secure long-term financial commitment from governments for archaeological heritage management;
- limited opportunities for training in cultural heritage site management;
- a resultant history of reliance on short-term, project-related donor funding for training initiatives, research, conservation projects, and the purchase of equipment; and
- a lack of institutional memory at cultural heritage institutions because of rapid staff turnover.

Conservation Issues at Archaeological Sites

All archaeological sites are protected under general legislation in southern Africa, and there is a reasonably efficient permit system that controls excavation and the collection of artifacts and, less often, environmental impact assessment. The main management issue highlighted at the Tenth Congress of the Pan-African Association for Prehistory and Related Studies in Zimbabwe in 1995 (Pwiti and Soper 1996) was the need for specialist proactive conservation at archaeological sites. Those most at risk had been affected by excavation or other forms of research, natural erosion, public visitation, and agricultural, commercial, and social development.

Sites Selected for Research

One would expect that sites selected for research would be better conserved than those that are not excavated, but this is not always the case. Whether excavation programs are undertaken by local researchers or by visiting archaeologists from abroad, the funding is available only for the period of excavation and, possibly, analysis of the materials for a year or two thereafter.

There is a real need for integration of archaeology and conservation at an early stage in all excavation projects (Deacon 1995, 1996; Deacon and Brett 1993; Pwiti and Soper 1996). This should be applied through legislation as well as other incentives. Funding agencies could insist on a description of the long-term protection measures that will be instituted, with a budget line item for the excavation to be filled in. To date there has been remarkably little documentation and monitoring in southern Africa of methods such as backfilling with and without sand bags, the use of plastic sheeting versus geotextile, hardening of exposed surfaces, roofing methods, drainage options for sites on slopes and the effects of tracing on rock paintings or engravings.

Sites Vulnerable to Natural Erosion

Archaeological deposits, dry stone walls, and especially rock paintings and engravings are vulnerable to natural erosion where they are exposed by excavation or other forms of research intervention, as well as by fire, sun, wind, or water. The challenge for conservation is to know when to intervene and what methods to use. In most cases the intervention tries to slow down the erosion or divert the causes.

Sites Open to the Public

Long-term and regular visitation at archaeological sites usually has a negative effect on the deposits and structures that

people come to see. McKercher and Du Cros (2002:2) suggest that this happens when the cultural resource management and cultural tourism sectors have not formed a true partnership. Tourism values may therefore be compromised to protect the archaeological values, or the archaeological and other cultural heritage values are compromised to promote tourism. In southern Africa the latter is more often the case, although there are notable exceptions, for example, the Laetoli footprints in Tanzania (see Demas and Agnew this volume).

As Ndoro and Thebe point out in this volume, African rural communities have successfully protected sites for thousands of years by continuing to use them, controlling access to them, or avoiding them in the course of agricultural activities. The older Stone Age deposits have been protected by virtue of the fact that local communities are unaware of their significance and value.

Sites Affected by Development

Population growth that leads inexorably to land development for housing, food production, commerce, and infrastructure is taking its toll on archaeological sites in southern Africa just as it is elsewhere. Environmental impact assessments are required in some countries, but not in all. Cultural heritage conservation authorities are faced with decisions about mitigation and whether to sample sites before destruction or disturbance or to insist that they be protected regardless of the cost.

Southern African Archaeological Conservation Initiatives

Generally, southern African countries have limited financial resources and expertise for archaeological site conservation, even when legislation provides protection. They have relied heavily on donor funding for specific projects, usually initiated by a crisis. A critical issue is raising awareness among politicians and officials at all levels of government of the need for conservation of archaeological and other heritage sites. The prestige of World Heritage Sites has helped considerably in this regard.

For all the problems it may bring in terms of management, the decision by the World Heritage Centre in 1995 to pay special attention to sub-Saharan Africa has paid dividends. The purpose of their meeting, held in Harare in 1995 (Munjeri et al. 1996), was to encourage southern African countries to become signatories to the World Heritage Convention and to thereby increase the number of World Heritage Sites in the region and overcome some of the biases inherent in the listing

system. As a result, in the past eight years South Africa, Botswana, and Namibia have signed the convention and submitted tentative lists, joining Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Angola, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Only Lesotho and Swaziland are not yet states party to the convention. In addition, eight new sites have been added to the World Heritage List, nomination dossiers and management plans have been drafted for five more sites, and plans are afoot to draft at least two more. Of these fifteen sites, ten have a strong archaeological component and eight include rock art.

I want to focus here on the results of an initiative to integrate the conservation needs of southern African rock art with training and networking to share expertise. The needs that were identified have been addressed through the infrastructure and encouragement provided by World Heritage listing.

The Southern African Rock Art Project

Delegates at the meeting organized in Harare by the World Heritage Centre in 1995 identified the need for a regional management strategy for rock art in southern Africa. Funded initially by UNESCO with assistance from the Getty Conservation Institute, representatives from the member countries met in South Africa in 1996 and in Zimbabwe in 1997 to plan the way forward. The first step was to conduct a survey of the existing rock art records and assess the gaps (Deacon 1997).

In May 1998, at a meeting in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, the Southern African Rock Art Project (SARAP) was established as a collaborative program of the South African National Monuments Council, the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe, the Getty Conservation Institute, and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and the Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCRROM). The aim of SARAP was to address a perceived need for regional collaboration in rock art conservation and management, and it set out to

- raise awareness and understanding of the wealth of rock art in the subcontinent;
- enable those unfamiliar with rock art outside their own countries to get a better perspective on the rock art of the region as a whole;
- encourage southern African countries to identify rock art sites in need of protection and conservation;
- generate criteria for assessment of southern African rock art sites as tentative World Heritage listings;

- develop a collective strategy for conservation and the nomination of rock art sites for the World Heritage List; and
- assist member states to acquire the necessary skills and expertise to nominate rock art sites for the World Heritage List and draw up management plans.

To address priorities identified in Pietermaritzburg, it was decided to arrange a series of workshops and courses at rock art sites suggested for World Heritage nomination. The workshops would be attended by directors and senior heritage managers in decision-making positions for the nomination and management of World Heritage Sites. The courses would take place at rock art sites on the tentative list and participants would be drawn from staff responsible for day-to-day management of these sites to encourage networking among rock art specialists in the subcontinent and to share knowledge and experience.

It was generally agreed that

- the most pressing need was assistance in real-life situations on how to manage with limited resources and capacity;
- courses should address general issues for all levels of management, at the national, regional, and site levels;
- courses and workshops should have a cascade effect on cultural resources management and at the same time build awareness and capacity in collaboration with the projected rock art training course at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg;
- lobbying at the governmental level would be needed to encourage funding and follow-through;
- every participant would be expected to deliver a project at the end of the course, for example, the drafting of a management plan; and
- networking after the course should be built into the planning.

The first course on management plans for rock art sites—dubbed COMRASA, an acronym for the Conservation and Management of Rock Art Sites in Southern Africa—was supported by ICCROM and the Getty Grant Program and was held at the Matobo Hills in Zimbabwe in July–August 1999. There were twenty participants from all countries in the region except Angola and Swaziland. The program was led by Sharon Sullivan, former director of the Australian Heritage Commis-

sion, and focused on the development of a management plan. A manual was compiled, a library of reference works was made available, and meetings were held with local stakeholders and local and national government officials. Basic recording methods were demonstrated at a rock art site (Silozwane), and each of the four groups of participants developed a management plan for this site that was presented on the last day. After the course, each participant was expected to submit a report within six months on a project that he or she had initiated to apply management principles at a rock art site. About half the participants complied with this requirement.

In July 2000 a workshop was held in Dar es Salaam and at rock art sites near Kondoa in Tanzania for the decision-making group to assess the significance of the rock paintings and to assist Tanzania with a plan of action to survey and document the sites, write the nomination dossier, and prepare a management plan. The program was led by Sharon Sullivan with the assistance of Joseph King from ICCROM. Participants met with the relevant minister at the national level and as with the local residents who were most affected by nomination of the site. The draft documents were completed by the Antiquities Department in Tanzania in 2003 for submission in 2004.

The second COMRASA course was held in Kasama, Zambia, in July 2001 and this time focused on rock art documentation. There were eighteen participants from all the countries involved, and staff were drawn from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Norway.

Kasama was chosen as the venue for the course for two reasons. First, it is the rock art site that Zambia intends to nominate to the World Heritage List; second, the rock paintings are at risk from rock quarrying and forest clearance for charcoal in the area. It was hoped that by meeting there, attention would be drawn to the need for decisive action to curb the quarrying that has already destroyed several rock art sites. A site with the only painting of an elephant recorded in the 1990s had been virtually destroyed by soot from fires built in a small rock shelter to crack the rock before breaking it up for building material.

Funding for the course was generously provided by NORAD as a regional program through a cooperative program with the South African Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT). The implementing agent was the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), assisted by the National Heritage Conservation Commission in Zambia and the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe. In addition, ICCROM's AFRICA-2009 program, established

to train English- and French-speaking heritage practitioners in Africa between 1999 and 2009, provided funding for the writing and production of the course manual.

The course was officially opened by the minister of tourism in Zambia, the Hon. Michael Mabenga. The event was reported on national television, and Mabenga was enthusiastic about the development of Kasama rock art for tourism. The expected outcomes of the course were to enable participants to

- complete a documentation project of real use and benefit to the Zambian authorities;
- acquire general familiarity with the range of documentation methods available; determine which of these types of documentation programs would meet particular needs for varying situations; and design and carry out or commission documentary projects to meet research and management needs;
- have an understanding of how to interpret, analyze, and use different types of site documentation;
- obtain hands-on skill and experience in basic documentation techniques;
- obtain hands-on skill and experience in the development of site data systems; and
- acquire experience in consulting with local communities and addressing their needs and concerns.

About two hundred villagers (in addition to about seventy inquisitive children), five headmen, and seven members of the local Rock Art Conservation Committee met the COMRASA staff and participants at a traditional meeting place on the outskirts of Kasama. They divided into three groups according to their villages, and the participants' groups met with them and sought answers to the questions that had been drawn up the previous day.

At the end of the course each of the three groups of participants presented a proposal to potential funding agencies planning to commission a survey of the Kasama rock art in preparation for the nomination of the site for World Heritage listing. The presentations were made on the last day, and the permanent secretary for the Northern Province, Sylvester Mpishi, was the guest of honor.

In February 2002 the Botswana National Museum made use of the COMRASA infrastructure and raised funding for a two-week workshop on rock art recording and documentation that was held at the newly declared World Heritage Site at

Tsodilo. On this occasion, nineteen museum staff members attended, and the manual developed for Kasama was used a second time.

Participants gained hands-on experience of various methods of rock art recording and identified key issues for management of the rock art at Tsodilo. The results are summarized in a revised rock art site record form for Botswana and in proposals for a conservation management plan for rock art at Tsodilo that were developed by the participants.

In addition to these SARAP initiatives, workshops to assist with management planning and the nomination of rock art sites for World Heritage listing have also been held in Mozambique, Malawi, and Namibia with the assistance of staff from the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe, the University of Bergen, and the Rock Art Research Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand.

New Initiatives

There has been a great deal of interest in continuing the SARAP-COMRASA program, but problems with administration of funding were experienced. An initiative spearheaded by NORAD in 2003 led to a meeting in Malawi in March 2004 to reestablish the COMRASA courses with assistance from the AFRICA-2009 program. As a result, individual countries are now responsible for identifying their needs and raising funds to run courses that will be assisted by expertise from SARAP members and ICCROM administration.

Such a partnership will be mutually beneficial. ICCROM's ten-year training strategy for the conservation of immovable cultural property in Africa, AFRICA-2009, has worked in collaboration with other African cultural heritage organizations, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, and CRATerre-EAG. Three-month courses are held for about twenty participants in alternate years in English in Mombasa, Kenya, and in French in Cotonou, Benin. The goal of the program is to increase national capacity in sub-Saharan Africa for the management and conservation of immovable cultural heritage.

Reflections

The SARAP experience has highlighted issues at both ends of the management spectrum. At the local level, it was evident that the people living closest to sites must be recognized and involved in decision making even if they are not indigenous to

the area and have no connection with the belief system that generated the rock art. Such communities need to have some tangible or intangible benefit from site conservation and management that may not necessarily be financial. It is therefore crucial to understand the sociopolitical environment of local communities and local government structures before introducing conservation methods and to identify and then apportion the benefits.

At a broader level, the SARAP program suggests three main requirements for a regional program of this kind that is aimed at the long-term conservation of archaeological sites.

An external stimulus. In this case it was the World Heritage Centre's program in Africa and the prestige associated with the nomination of rock art sites for World Heritage listing, together with the availability of donor funding to compile dossiers and develop management plans.

Guidance on how the work should be done. In the SARAP case this took the form of workshops and courses that identified the needs and provided on-site, hands-on training. Participants developed policies, guidelines, and management plans that were appropriate to their needs but that also conformed to internationally acceptable standards. In the process they were able to interact with local stakeholders, network with their peers, and compare sites and priorities in several countries.

Establishment and maintenance of an effective infrastructure for implementation and long-term monitoring of the site and the management plan. This phase received the least attention during the SARAP program and should be the focus of future initiatives. It requires close cooperation at two levels: with the local community living closest to the site who must be consulted at all stages because they will always be the most directly affected by the management program; and with the official administrative bodies responsible for the legal and practical management of sites so that long-term conservation is not neglected. This would include strategy plans, budgeting for staff salaries and ongoing training, and visitor management and professional conservation intervention when required. It is the stage that can be done only by official staff dedicated to the site(s) and suggests commitment at all levels of government.

The challenge for the future is to successfully integrate these issues regarding the conservation of archaeological sites with the plans and strategies of local, provincial, and national governments.

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Intangible Heritage Management: Does World Heritage Listing Help?

Phenyo Churchill Thebe

Abstract: *This paper examines selected issues regarding cultural resource management as a means of exploring the effectiveness of World Heritage listing. The Tsodilo Hills in the northwest of Botswana provide a useful case study for questioning the success or failure of World Heritage listing in the country. A key argument is that it is necessary to conduct additional consultation and public awareness programs to ensure a greater level of protection of the site. It is further argued that some aspects of intangible heritage management have a key bearing on understanding the conservation and management of the site. While the World Heritage listing is helpful to the government of Botswana, its benefits to the local community have not yet been realized. This has resulted in the community's dissatisfaction with the management of the site.*

My ancestors have lived in Tsodilo for centuries. Throughout this time, they have looked after this area. They have not destroyed it. You and I also find an unblemished area. This is important because in future if the area is destroyed, you will have witnessed it in its original form.

These words were spoken by Kgosi Samochao in his speech at the official opening of Tsodilo World Heritage Site in 2001. They can be interpreted in two ways: as an expression of the community's desire to share the management of cultural heritage with the rest of the world and rhetorically—as an expression of the community's dissatisfaction with international methods for the conservation and management of Tsodilo.

To interpret intangible traditions, which are preserved in the Tsodilo community, we must understand their role in society. Here “intangible heritage” refers to the belief systems,

behavior, folklore, oral traditions, myths, thoughts, aspirations, legends, and spiritual aspects of a people's culture. It also takes account of nonphysical elements rather than the material elements that have symbolic and spiritual connotations (Deacon 1994; Luxen 2001). “Tangible heritage” refers to various forms of material culture, including rock art, ritual objects, structures, and buildings. All of these testify to the practices pertaining to living cultures in traditional societies. These issues are also crucial in the management of archaeological sites. Saouma-Farero (2001) argues that the quest for the message of intangible heritage requires us to identify the ethical values, social customs, beliefs, and myths of which the physical heritage is the sign, the expression, in time and space. He states further that the concept of cultural representation of space is more important than the object itself.

Luxen (2001) argues that the distinction between physical heritage and intangible heritage is artificial, that physical heritage attains its true significance only when it sheds light on its underlying values. Intangible heritage must be personified in tangible representation, for instance, by visible signs, if it is to be conserved. This dialectic may prove especially fruitful in providing greater representation of cultures of the world that place more importance on oral traditions than on sophisticated artistic expression (Luxen 2001). Similarly, Turner (1967) argues that one cannot analyze ritual symbols without studying them in relation to other “events.” That is, symbols are essentially involved in the social process. I extend these ideas to Tsodilo by arguing that to understand the characteristic elements of intangible heritage at the site, we have to study social institutions that have a bearing on the rock art. These include rainmaking ceremonies that are currently conducted at various parts of Tsodilo.

I attempt here to construct plausible arguments to counter those that claim to undermine the rationality of intangible heritage. I also examine closely the importance of intangible heritage to the communities at Tsodilo and challenge the claims that make such living cultures a myth. Here “myth” refers to stories, legends, and tales. I argue that contrary to the popular view, intangible heritage plays an important role in the authenticity and integrity of the site.

Geographic Setting

Tsodilo is in Ngamiland in northwestern Botswana and about 1,400 kilometers from the nation’s capital, Gaborone. The mountains of Tsodilo rise majestically from the surrounding Kalahari; at 1,395 meters, they are Botswana’s highest point and a sacred landmark that has been attracting people to trade, visit, and live there for thousands of years (figs. 1, 2). These

FIGURE 1 Land use map of Tsodilo. Courtesy of Botswana National Museum

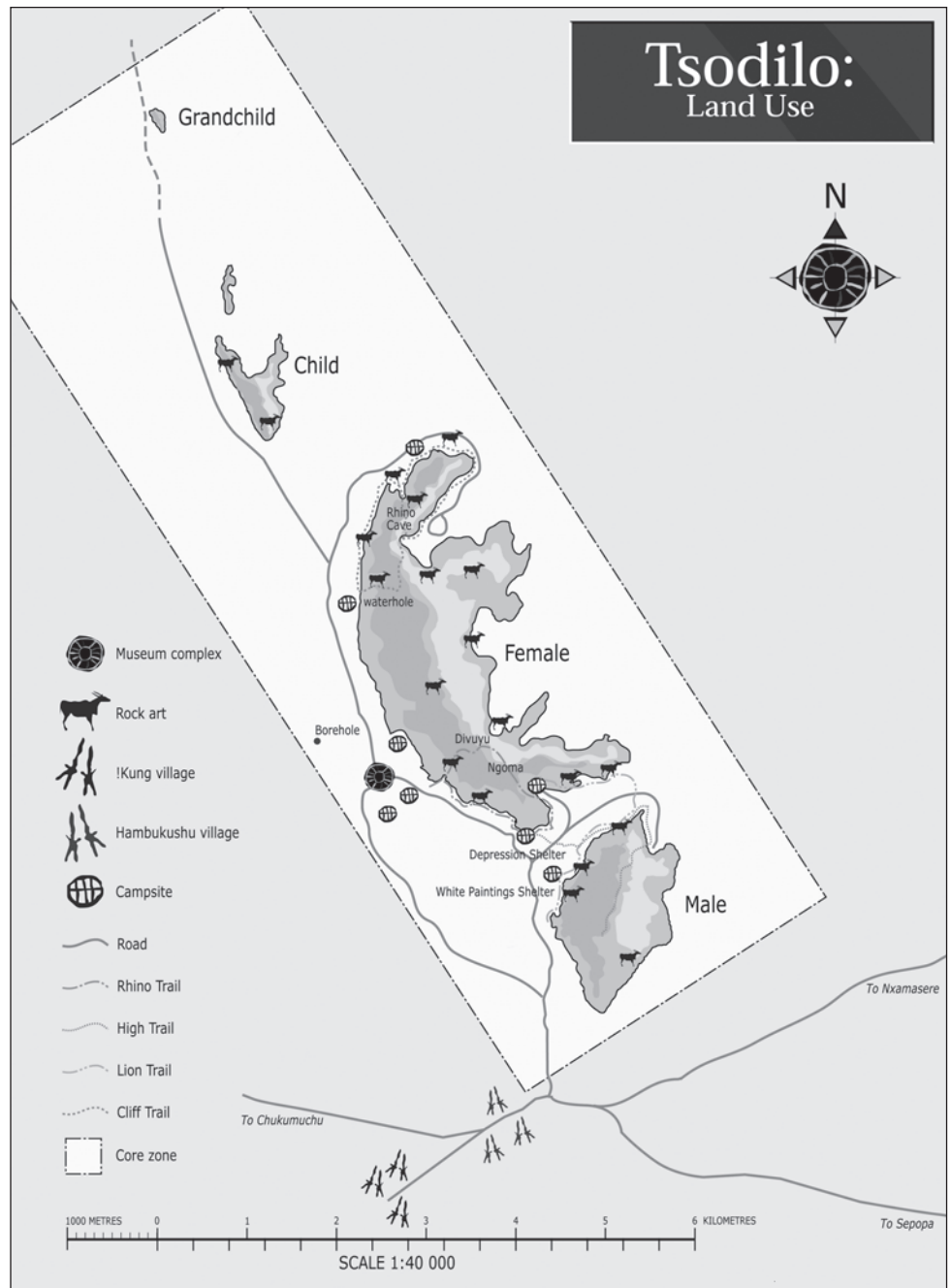


FIGURE 2 View of Tsodilo Hill.
Photo: Pheny Churchill Thebe



mountains have been referred to as “hills,” a misnomer that does little justice to their imposing presence (Munjeri 2000).

Local Communities

Two ethnic groups, the click-speaking !Kung and the Ham-bukushu, Bantu speakers, live at Tsodilo today in separate villages (fig. 3). The !Kung trace their ancestry to hunter-gatherers in the Nxauxau and Qangwa regions, where they still have relatives (Munjeri 2001).

The Tsodilo Hills

The Tsodilo Hills are one of Africa’s premier rock art sites. More than 4,500 paintings have been painted at 400 sites, most of these dating from 850 and 1100 c.e. Consisting of red and white paintings (the red are older), they portray wild and domestic animals, geometric patterns, humans, and what appears to be a whale (Munjeri 2001) (figs. 4, 5). According to Campbell (1994), these images were finger painted and made

with pigments from hematite (red), charcoal, and calcrete (white), possibly mixed with animal fat, blood, marrow, egg-white, honey, sap, or urine. Tsodilo rock art is essentially religious in nature. It is generally accepted that the ancestors of the San, or river “Bushmen,” made Tsodilo rock art. In reality the picture is much more complex: there are a number of San communities that are passionate about Tsodilo rock art that was painted by their ancestors (Walker 1998).

Archaeological Diversity

In addition to rock paintings, Tsodilo is rich in archaeological finds. Three rock shelters, White Paintings Shelter, Depression Shelter, and Rhino Cave, have been excavated. More than twenty mines and the remains of two villages, Divuyu and Nqoma, dating to 800 c.e. have been uncovered. Pots, metal spearheads, stone tools, glass beads, and fish bones have been found and help us to form a picture of ancient life at Tsodilo. Denbow (1980) argues that the artifacts indicate that local communities were involved in long-distance trade from Congo to the Kalahari.



FIGURE 3 Hambukushu village. Photo: Pheny Churchill Thebe



FIGURE 4 White paintings, elephant and geometric shapes.
Photo: Pheny Churchill Thebe



FIGURE 5 Red painting, rhinos. Photo: Pheny Churchill Thebe

Flora and Fauna

Tsodilo's timeless cultural heritage is matched by its natural beauty. It is visited by many animals, including leopards, hyenas, and elephants, and is home to the diminutive Tsodilo rock gecko that is found nowhere else.

Spiritual Attributes

There are a number of reasons why the local people are attached to Tsodilo. First, it is considered home to their ancestors, which creates both emotional and personal attachments to the place—as does its beauty. Second, for a long time the place has provided sustenance: water, edible plants, and a variety of game animals. Third, many creation myths are associated with the area. And fourth, the place is used for ritual and religious purposes. Among the latter are the San trance dance, which plays an important social, political, and economic role in community life (fig. 6). It is conducted in designated places around Tsodilo. The harvesting of local fruits, such as mongongo, motsintila, and morethwa, has a close link with the hills. Rainmaking rituals also have importance both to the community and to the site. Tradition and custom prohibit visits to rainmaking sites by the local community. This and other taboos help to protect the site and can be useful in developing laws and policies for the care and management of Tsodilo.

Tsodilo's Nomination to the World Heritage List

In order to understand whether the World Heritage listing has value to the local community at Tsodilo, it is necessary to discuss it in the context of the nomination dossier. Tsodilo is significant because of the following values:

- **Spiritual:** Healing waters, offering and prayer sites, creation sites, rainmaking places, and continuing pilgrimages by people of several religious denominations.
- **Aesthetics:** Natural beauty and isolation have made Tsodilo a Kalahari landmark. It has at least two rock art traditions.
- **Scientific:** Results of archaeological, rock art, geologic, seismic, zoological, botanical, paleoenvironmental, and anthropological research.
- **Historical:** 100,000 years of human occupation, from the middle Stone Age to the Iron Age, and mining, as well as oral histories of the villages from the 1850s to the present day.
- **Traditions:** Rainmaking and healing are still practiced, and local communities have strong ties to the hills.

FIGURE 6 Painting depicting the San trance dance. Photo: Phenyo Churchill Thebe



- Environmental: Its inaccessibility has helped to conserve its significance.

Methodology

Based on a number of research methods, a more comprehensive approach to intangible heritage is advocated here. Ethnographic sources were used regarding pertinent aspects of intangible heritage. Interviews with the San and the Hambukushu (twenty individuals from each group) helped to define the issues regarding intangible heritage and its continuity over time. Folklore, beliefs, and stories about the area were compiled.

Translators were not necessary as I was able to communicate with both communities in a common language, Setswana. I used questionnaires that covered personal data, views on World Heritage listing, and subsistence strategies, taking into account appropriate forms of address and the people's diverse cultural traditions and customs. Initially, the questionnaires were written in English and translated into Setswana for use in the field. This is necessary because the medium of communication is primarily Setswana.

Clearly, an ethnographic survey of this nature requires a large sample. It is therefore essential to devote considerable time and resources in the future to interviewing in detail at least one hundred people. Because there are substantial numbers of San and Hambukushu in the study area, it will not be difficult to find a large sample.

Survey Results and Analysis

Eighty percent of those who were interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with the World Heritage listing. They argued that it does not help to improve their lives because they are not in joint venture with the Botswana government. Table 1 summarizes the results of my research.

The survey attempted to assess awareness of the World Heritage listing. As mentioned above, the ethnographic survey forms were designed to elicit specific information about intangible heritage and its relevance to World Heritage listing. Sixty percent of the sample indicated a low level of understanding; 40 percent had some understanding. The most frequent criticism was that no benefits have been realized by the community. That is, all the people interviewed expressed hope regarding the economic potential of the site as a tourist destination. Generally, many were not opposed to the Botswana government's "occupation" of the site. However, they com-

Table 1. Summary of Interviews at Tsodilo Hills

Interviews	Yes (%)	No (%)
Idea of a WHS	8	40
No idea of WHS	12	60
Satisfied with World Heritage listing	2	1
Not satisfied with World Heritage listing	18	90
World Heritage listing helps	4	20
World Heritage listing does not help	16	80
Site economic potential	20	100
No economic value of site	0	0
Need a fence around site	14	70
No need for fence around site	6	30
Road from Nxamasere should be graveled	20	100
Road from Nxamasere should not be graveled	0	0

plained that there were not sufficient efforts to make people aware of the advantages and disadvantages of the listing. Some even thought that the nomination of Tsodilo as a World Heritage Site meant that the site was being "taken" from them. For instance, one of the informants, Mareko Motlhaba, remarked, "It appears that this listing business has given our monument to the rest of the world."

A related question analyzed in the surveys was to what extent national or international involvement affects local or traditional care. Respondents were given the following options: very well, quite well, and not at all. Sixty percent of the respondents stated that they were not satisfied with the involvement of the government and UNESCO. Most people claimed that they had not been given the opportunity to become involved in the management of the site. Thus the respondents agreed that the presence of national and international involvement reduces local care.

Respondents were also asked whether the local community needed the fence around Tsodilo. Seventy percent of the respondents said the fence is needed to control visitors and livestock movements. Only 30 percent said that the fence interferes with their access to the monument and with the movement of livestock and wildlife. Regarding improvement of the Nxamasere and Tsodilo access road, all respondents wanted it to be improved with gravel because that would promote development in the area.

The surveys at the Tsodilo Hills have yielded crucial information regarding whether World Heritage listing provides

benefits in Botswana. Clearly, the World Heritage listing has not met the expectations of the Tsodilo community. This is not because there are no benefits but because there has been little public education on the value and the benefits.

The Tsodilo Management Plan: What Do We Seek to Preserve, and for Whom?

To protect, study, and develop the site, the Botswana National Museum formed an advisory committee and prepared an Interim Management Plan in 1992, supported by a Scheme of Implementation in 1994. Pierre de Maret (1995) conducted an evaluation of the Tsodilo Hills Management Plan and its implementation for UNESCO and the Botswana National Museum. In his view, these documents are among the “best of their kind produced south of the Sahara to date.” He states also that they are both thorough and practical. The overall strategy of the Tsodilo Management Plan is to harmonize infrastructure with the surroundings. It also seeks to keep development to a minimum. The idea is to have all developments reversible where possible to allow for easy rectification should any of them subsequently prove to have been ill founded. The plan also calls for limiting development to the periphery of the site as much as possible (Campbell 1994).

Regarding ongoing activities at the site, de Maret (1995) states that the Zion Christian Church members “tramping” around the area during rituals is a matter of concern and must be addressed. On the contrary, it can be argued that we need to ask more fundamental questions: What is the meaning of the dance? How to do we conserve the site without denying people access to it? For whom are we conserving it?

A number of strategies are recommended for addressing the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage of Tsodilo. One of these is to develop a management plan that makes the local community joint owners of the site. Modalities for such a partnership should be carefully reviewed with the local community. The current organization of the Botswana National Museum (BNM) is not ideal for such a partnership. Nongovernmental organizations should also be involved. The ongoing talks with the Trust for Okavango Development Initiative (TOCADI) should also be encouraged because this will enhance the management of the site. Other benefits include shared technical and financial resources.

There should also be continuous dialogue. The San and Hambukushu communities that currently reside at Tsodilo are the real stakeholders. They have the knowledge to carry

out restoration projects. They should be given authority, responsibility, and accountability. They should be part of the conservation process. They have long realized and preserved the positive, intangible aspects of their culture. But the current management plan does not discuss aspects of intangible heritage.

A study conducted by Keitumetse (2002) identifies components of cultural heritage and strategies employed in managing them at Tsodilo and Tlokweng. She argues that there is little attention to living traditions that are recognized by the local community as culture. She also points out that this approach to cultural resources management is influenced by several factors: the origins of the concept of heritage management, the disciplinary approach that determines cultural heritage, and the internationalization of cultural heritage management. She concludes that the way cultural resources are perceived and valued in most African countries is a result not only of specific government programs but also of outside factors (Keitumetse 2002).

Intangible Heritage Management

In Botswana a number of paintings were chipped in what appears to be the removal of pigments for ritual purposes. In Zimbabwe some Christians were reported to have removed paintings because they considered them devilish (Walker 1998).

In 1999 Walker and I observed that a number of paintings at Tsodilo were destroyed by what appeared to be removal of pigment for ritual purposes. All of these were eland paintings associated with rainmaking. Unfortunately, this was termed “vandalism.” This is clearly a complex issue, and a better system of solving the problem has to be devised. We conducted an experiment to restore an eland painting. By the time we completed the restoration process, it started to rain. Some members of the local community argued that this was a clear testimony that Tsodilo is an ancient temple.

This brings up issues of identity—whose land and property? The fundamental issue is, should members of the community be allowed to “activate” the paintings at Tsodilo. Another question is, is it acceptable to restore the managed heritage? Members of the community argued that it was wrong, that it is against the wishes of the ancestors. I suggest that the community be consulted on this matter. A dialogue should be promoted between the BNM and the two local communities, perhaps using existing venues such as the public meetings (Kgotla), the Village Development Committee

(VDC), and the Tsodilo Development Committee (TDC). These forums will facilitate related tourism income-generating activities, for example, craft production, local transportation (by donkey cart), performances, nature trails, and tracking. Local staff should be trained to be future managers of the site. Museum staff should practice “engaged anthropology.” While governments’ efforts to consult and be sensitive to the needs of the people can be appreciated, it seems that more grassroots work has to be done. This should be implemented initially in the form of workshops that actively involve the community.

Another problem is that archaeological research has been concentrated on the San and rock art. More attention should be devoted to the later Iron Age, to recent history, and to the ethnography of Tsodilo communities. The Hambukushu

should be encouraged to participate in tourism-related activities at Tsodilo.

Conclusion

This paper attempts to provide an up-to-date summary and interpretation of the intangible heritage of the Tsodilo communities from a management perspective. I have argued that both the !Kung and the Hambukushu feel that they are not yet receiving the full benefit of World Heritage listing. Their concern can lead the villagers to be uncooperative regarding the management of the site.

Ten local people are employed by the museum at Tsodilo (fig. 7), but all members of the community should have opportunities and outlets to sell crafts. The villagers have also



FIGURE 7 Tsodilo Museum. Photo: Pheny Churchill Thebe

expressed the desire to be involved in all stages of site development. There are tensions that exist between the Hambukushu and the !Kung that seem to arise from competition for resources. These tensions require delicate handling.

I have suggested that we need to be less patronizing and more inclusive. For example, we should combine training of heritage managers and the community. Learning has to be a two-way process. Although the Tsodilo Management Plan has a number of limitations, Tsodilo was hailed as a unique and innovative cultural resources management project.

There is a dialectical relationship between the government and the local community regarding the management of the site. The government has the duty to conserve the site using “modern technology”; the community sees the site as its “spiritual home.” For many years, they preserved the paintings very well. Furthermore, the local community initially saw the World Heritage listing as an “apple from heaven”; now, they fail to see its benefits.

I want to conclude with a call for action. Aspects of intangible heritage must be actively incorporated in the management planning of the site. Intangible heritage should not be regarded as “myths,” “superstitions,” or “barbaric.”

Appendix. Tsodilo Anthropological Survey (Interviews)

- | | | |
|---|-----|-----|
| 1. Name | M/F | Age |
| 2. Marital status | | |
| 3. Village | | |
| 4. Date of interview | | |
| 5. What is your main important economic activity? | | |
| 6. What is a WHS? | | |
| 7. What type of heritage is found at Tsodilo? | | |
| 8. Who were the prehistoric painters at Tsodilo? | | |
| 9. Do you know the symbolic meaning of rock art? | | |
| 10. Are traditional ceremonies conducted at Tsodilo? | | |
| 11. What time of the year are they conducted? | | |
| 12. What is intangible heritage management? | | |
| 13. Is there a particular word associated with intangible heritage management? | | |
| 14. Has World Heritage listing improved/not improved economic activities at Tsodilo? How? | | |

15. Describe how you would like the heritage at Tsodilo to be managed and shared.
16. Is the local community getting its share of benefits from World Heritage listing?
17. Is the fence around the WHS necessary?
18. Should the road from Nxamasere be graveled?

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Rock Art Tourism in Southern Africa: Problems, Possibilities, and Poverty Relief

Benjamin Smith

Abstract: *This paper considers successes and failures in the history of rock art management and presentation in southern Africa. It argues that public rock art sites have a key role in national identity, poverty relief, and job creation and makes a strong case for a management process in rock art tourism development based on carefully negotiated partnerships between landowners, local communities, archaeologists, and heritage managers.*

Rock Art Tourism

On 27 April 2000 President Thabo Mbeki unveiled the new South African coat of arms. At its heart is a pair of human figures derived from San rock art. President Mbeki explained that San rock art, which is found throughout southern Africa, was chosen because it unites everyone in a common humanity (fig. 1). It is also among the finest art traditions in the world, a reminder of a proud history of cultural achievement in Africa extending back to the dawn of time.

In 1864 Charles Darwin predicted that Africa would be shown to be the cradle of humankind (Darwin 1864). Today a large body of evidence suggests that he was correct. Africa has revealed the oldest hominid bones, the oldest human bones, and the oldest cultural objects. Genetic research indicates an unparalleled antiquity for the peoples of Africa (Cavalli-Sforza 2000). Blombos Cave, in South Africa's Western Cape (Henshilwood et al. 2002), has revealed the world's oldest pieces of art: two complex patterned engravings dated to 77,000 years ago. They are more than twice as old as the acclaimed earliest paintings from France, those of Chauvet Cave. And if art and culture began in Africa, so too should have language and religion.

No wonder then that President Mbeki chose to put San rock art at the heart of his new coat of arms, and no wonder that he also chose to write the new national motto—*!ke e:*



FIGURE 1 The new South African coat of arms with rock art at its heart.

/xarra //ke—in a San language. San heritage represents the nation's link to an unparalleled antiquity. In a previously divided nation, the oldest human remains evoke a time when all of humanity lived in Africa, when all people were Africans. This is the “common humanity” captured in the coat of arms and this is the “unity in diversity” that is referred to in the South African national motto.

In 2001 South Africa's most recently developed public rock art site, Game Pass Shelter, was opened in KwaZulu-Natal. This site was developed as the first of a new generation of public rock art sites that will showcase the rock art treasures of South Africa. In his opening address, Premier Lionel Mtshali spoke of the great national pride that he derives from an understanding of the San rock art of Game Pass Shelter. He referred to the deep spirituality contained in the art, a power that brought generations of earlier communities together, healing sickness, spite, and malice. It is this ancient magic that Thabo Mbeki hopes we can use to heal South African society.

This is a deeply inspiring vision. In the past, however, rock art did not unite South Africans in the way Mbeki envisages. Apartheid politics could not allow it. This paper sets out the new public rock art developments within the broader history of public rock art in South Africa, so as to show how it may be possible to develop sites in such a way that we overcome the serious problems experienced at public rock art sites in the past.

Site Protection

In 1993 Janette Deacon reviewed the history of the declared national monuments of South Africa. She noted that before 1993 of more than 3,800 declared national monuments, only 38 were precolonial sites and just 10 were rock art sites. Seven of the ten rock art sites were declared between 1936 and 1943. The sites of Nooitgedacht and Driekopseiland were two of these (Deacon 1993:122) and were among the first of all South African national monuments to be declared. Their listing was achieved thanks to the forceful personality of Maria Wilman, director of the McGregor Museum in Kimberley. Wilman saw official listing as the only practical way to protect the sites. At the time Nooitgedacht was in imminent danger of being destroyed by diamond mining. Driekopseiland was threatened by submersion under a dam. The listing of the sites and their preservation was won through a series of feisty letter exchanges with Clarence van Riet Lowe, secretary of what became the National Monuments Council. The current

national status of the sites of Nooitgedacht and Driekopseiland, even their continued existence, is thus a product of a particular historical circumstance and personality.

The motivation for the listing of the other rock art sites seems to have been similar. Most were declared for “protective” purposes: to safeguard them from destruction, vandalism, and encroachment. Schaapplaats in the Free State is a typical example. Here a fence was erected across the front of the shelter to protect the art and a National Monument plaque was installed to indicate the site's special status. The fence was more than 2 meters high and comprised multiple strands of barbed wire. Schaapplaats offers a vivid picture of the defended site: public rock art, shielded from a range of hostile forces. The need for Schaapplaats-style defenses was real; even at the ten declared sites, perhaps especially at these, graffiti and other serious damage were prevalent (Deacon 1993:123–24).

The extent to which the fences protected the rock art is unclear. Graffiti and other damage continued. Blundell (1996) has suggested that the fences may have served to increase the amount of damage because their authoritarian nature called out to be challenged. Wherever they were used, fences were breached. Some sites were then allowed to return to being unfenced; others were reinforced with dramatic cages such as those at the White Lady site in the Brandberg, Namibia, the white rhino shelter in the Matopos, Zimbabwe, and a range of sites around Kondoa in Tanzania. Heavy-duty wire mesh or iron bars were used to block off entire rock shelter frontages (fig. 2). But even the cages were violated. In Tanzania, of more than twenty cages erected, all but one were removed and reused by local communities.

Site Presentation

It was those sites that had been declared National Monuments for protective reasons that, almost by default, became the first public rock art sites. In South Africa they were marked on maps, road atlases, and signposts, and visitors were thereby channeled to them. And yet the sites were not presented; they were only protected. In cases such as Schaapplaats the ugly fence guaranteed a poor visitor experience. The rock art was scarcely visible between the wires, and photography was impossible. It is no wonder that such fences were cut and removed. For eight of the nine rock art sites declared before 1990, funding was not provided for presentation materials. The single exception was Nooitgedacht, where the McGregor Museum erected a small site display in the late 1970s. This was

FIGURE 2 The caged site of the White Lady Shelter, Brandberg, Namibia. Courtesy of Rock Art Research Institute, University of the Witwatersrand



an important precedent, and it helped to inform visitors of the importance of the site; however, without an on-site custodian, the display was vandalized and graffiti continued (Morris pers. com. 1989). In almost all cases, this minimalist approach to public site management had a serious adverse impact on site conservation.

Beyond the conservation and aesthetic problems of the minimalist approach lie more serious intellectual problems. Blundell (1996) argues that leaving sites unmediated cannot be an option in South Africa. In a country where pejorative racial misconceptions have been so prevalent, cultural heritage sites need to be explicitly interpreted so that their sophistication is exposed and their indigenous values revealed. For San rock art, this must involve the juxtaposition of San indigenous knowledge with the art, because it is only from a San understanding, an insider's view, that it is possible to appreciate the unparalleled symbolic and metaphorical sophistication of the art.

In the absence of mediation, one is faced with a dangerous alternative—an outsider's view. In such a view, sometimes referred to as the colonial gaze (Blundell 1996; Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1993), the human and animal images of San art are often read as simple pictures of hunting and gathering: a rendering of an old and idyllic primitive lifeway in which the San were a seamless part of nature. This reading is, of course,

merely a mirrored reflection of the prejudices of the viewer. Those with an insider's view of San art know that it was every bit as complex as Western art; it is a profoundly spiritual art. By failing to explicitly interpret San rock art, the early public rock art sites perpetuated the colonial gaze and thereby unwittingly reinforced past prejudices and misconceptions (Blundell 1996). No doubt this suited the political agenda of the time, but this cannot be allowed to continue today. Sites must be mediated, and an insider's view must be presented.

By using San indigenous knowledge, the colonial gaze can be confronted, challenged, and overcome. This is an explicit aim of the presentation at a newly opened public rock art site in South Africa's Northern Cape Province. Wildebeest Kuil is on land owned by the !Xun and Khwe Khoi-San communities. Visitors to Wildebeest Kuil start by viewing a twenty-minute film about !Xun and Khwe history and indigenous knowledge. The film seeks to create excitement and anticipation for the site visit to come. After the film a community guide leads the visitor up the small hill on a one-hour circuit of the site. There are many stops along the way where additional information is provided. It is only toward the end of the tour, when visitors have gained a detailed understanding of the history of the site, its past inhabitants, and the ancient stories and traditions that give meaning to its rock art, that the path winds upward to the massive concentration of rock engravings on the

summit (fig. 3). The rock art experience of Wildebeest Kuil is profoundly moving, and one takes away a genuine understanding of the magic of San culture and art.

Sites, Their Communities, and Their Management

As at Wildebeest Kuil, visitors to the Tandjesberg rock painting site in South Africa's Free State Province are also carefully managed. They access the site along a fixed route with an authorized guide who ensures that correct visitor etiquette is adhered to and that the art is not damaged by visitation. Tandjesberg was the first rock art national monument at which such visitor controls were put in place (Ouzman 2001). Within the site, visitors were guided along an elegant wooden boardwalk fronted by a handrail to protect the art. On the rail were placed lecterns showing enhanced reproductions of the rock art, thus helping visitors to view fine details in the art that

they might otherwise miss (fig. 4). The site was a model of good management until, in 1998, a wildfire wreaked havoc. The boardwalk and the lecterns burned, with such intensity that many of the paintings were seriously damaged. This damage has since been mitigated as a result of the combined efforts of professional archaeologists, conservators, and community members (Morris, Ouzman, and Tlhapi 2001). Though the fire at Tandjesberg has forced professional archaeologists to reconsider the use of wooden boardwalks at rock art sites, the experience has shown the critical importance of maintaining good relationships between archaeologists and landowners and communities. Before, during, and after the fire, the owners of Tandjesberg have acted as model custodians; that the site is still accessible to visitors, and even still exists, is largely thanks to their good efforts. Unfortunately, not all rock art sites enjoy such care and attention.

Seeking quick profits, some private guest houses, hotels, and farms have sought to exploit rock art by laying out rock



FIGURE 3 San guides sharing their pride in their indigenous knowledge and ancient heritage at the newly developed rock engraving site of Wildebeest Kuil, Northern Cape, South Africa. Courtesy of Northern Cape Rock Art Trust

FIGURE 4 The boardwalk at Tandjesberg, Free State, South Africa, before the devastating 1998 fire. Courtesy of Rock Art Research Institute, University of the Witwatersrand



art trails. Most of these trails are self-guided, and the sites have neither presentations nor visitor controls. These sites perpetuate the minimalist approach of the early national monuments, and the resulting damage has been similarly heartbreaking: some have been reduced to pigment smears or walls of graffiti. This situation does not, fortunately, represent the majority of landowners but the actions of a few individuals who have made minimal profit at the risk of, and sadly often at the expense of, art treasures that are beyond value.

To avoid these problems requires the establishment and implementation of sensitive and sustainable management and presentation practices. The South African Heritage Resources Agency has recently laid down a set of minimum standards that must be met before a rock art site can be opened to the public. It is to be hoped that this move will bring an end to unsustainable profiteering from rock art. Truly sustainable rock art tourism requires a considerable injection of time, energy, and money. To use Wildebeest Kuil as an example, the visitor facilities are the product of more than eight thousand days of work and required an investment of R2.5 million. Even with this large investment, the construction was subsidized: most of the professionals donated their services or worked at cost. The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) funded the development as a grant, and it is only through grant funding that such a development can be viable in South Africa; a loan of R2.5 million could not have been

serviced by turnover. In practice, turnover at Wildebeest Kuil is proving barely sufficient to cover the costs of upkeep. Fortunately, DEAT has taken a farsighted perspective that looks beyond short-term profit and recognizes the huge social benefits that an investment like this produces. Wildebeest Kuil has created new, permanent jobs for people who were previously unemployed. In addition, spin-off craft production and sales provide sizable additional incomes to dozens of families. The site is not only empowering the !Xun and the Khwe communities, it is also becoming an important tourist draw for the wider Northern Cape area.

But in Zimbabwe, the case of Domboshava provides a graphic reminder that even well-intentioned government investment may not be the whole answer. Domboshava is a large painted shelter, 35 kilometers northeast of Harare. It is a national monument curated by the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ) and one of the finest rock art sites in northern Zimbabwe. It has important economic value to the region because, like Wildebeest Kuil, it draws in local and international visitors. On 14 May 1998, the night before a large new interpretation center was due to open, a local community member broke into the site and smeared the main rock art panel with dark brown enamel paint (fig. 5). In the follow-up inquiry it transpired that there was great resentment toward the NMMZ and their management practices at the site (Taruvunga and Ndoro 2003). By the NMMZ's taking

of gate revenues, the local community felt that it was stealing their revenue. The NMMZ saw the gate takings as small recompense for their large and ongoing investment at the site. Equally, they felt they had done much to assist the community: they had built a special structure at the site in which locals could sell curios.

As the investigation of the causes of the incident continued, it became clear that financial issues were only part of the problem. For many years NMMZ had received complaints that tourists were being stung by bees living in a small but deep hole in the ceiling of the main painted shelter. The bees were smoked out from time to time but always returned. NMMZ therefore took the decision to block the hole with concrete. We now know that this hole played a key role in the rainmaking ceremonies of the local community. During the ceremony, sacrifices were made in the shelter and a fire lit. If smoke passed through the hole and out of the top of the hill, then all knew that rain would come. If the smoke did not appear, then something was wrong and rain would not come until the community had identified and dealt with the cause. For a number of years before the paint incident these ceremonies had been conducted in secret. The blocking of the hole brought this broader discontent to a head.

Domboshava stands as testimony to the vital importance of consulting with and involving local communities in

all aspects of site management. Pearson and Sullivan (1995) have argued convincingly that all the significances of a site should be considered in its management and that the preservation of the physical heritage at the site need not always be the first priority. Domboshava, like many sites in southern Africa, was part of a living ritual landscape every bit as important to local people as the ancient art. Pearson and Sullivan would argue that this living heritage was as important as Domboshava's San rock art and that it should have been at the heart of both the management and the presentation of the site. This need not mean that all aspects of the living heritage should be revealed to visitors; most likely, the community would not want this. It could mean, however, that the site would need to close on certain days to allow ceremonies to be conducted in private.

The management process advocated by Pearson and Sullivan was developed at Cook University to avoid the pitfalls at Domboshava. It involves the preparation of a detailed management plan that is drawn up by a facilitator but which is driven by key stakeholders. It is based on a statement of significance. This statement captures all the stakeholder significances of the site, not just the need for the protection of the physical site remains. The second phase in the process is to identify, with the stakeholders, the key issues affecting the site. The final phase is to develop

FIGURE 5 Modern brown oil paint smeared over San rock art at Domboshava, Central Mashonaland, Zimbabwe. Courtesy of Terje Norsted



strategies to address these issues and draw out as much of the site's potential as possible. This process is inevitably one of compromise. Stakeholders often want different things, and a middle path has to be found that is satisfactory to all or to most. This model of site development has proven remarkably successful in Australia, where it has often succeeded in bridging traditional Aboriginal site management requirements and the interests of archaeological conservation and tourism. If this process had been followed at Domboshava, there seems little doubt that the paint incident would have been avoided.

The Cook University management process is now starting to be implemented by rock art managers throughout southern Africa thanks to the COMRASA training workshops (Deacon 1997). Rock art managers from Tanzania southward have embraced the process, and we are now starting to see the benefits. Both Wildebeest Kuil and Game Pass were developed using this model. They are the first major public rock art sites to be developed in South Africa in full partnership with local communities. It is to be hoped that they represent the future of public rock art in South Africa, a heritage developed for the benefit of all, not just the few.

In discussing the role of local communities in rock art management at a conference in 2002, Webber Ndoro emphasized that acknowledging the role of local communities in management can, in itself, ensure the preservation of sites. He pointed out that those sites that we seek to manage survive only because they have been successfully managed and protected by a complex system of indigenous management practices. He encouraged managers to recognize the effectiveness of these traditional practices and to use them as the bedrock for modern site management plans. I support this suggestion; traditional management practices are usually those best suited to maintaining the significances of each site: they have been developed and fine tuned over many centuries. The example of Mwela Rocks outside Kasama in northern Zambia, however, offers a cautionary note.

At Mwela Rocks more than seven hundred rock art sites were protected within a sacred forest managed by a spirit guardian and various traditional leaders. In 1992 the sacred forest was intact and the rock art sites were well preserved; however, within three years, and in spite of the protests of the traditional authorities, the sacred forest had been cut to the ground and many of the rock art sites had been mined to make builders' gravel (fig. 6). This destruction occurred simply because of economic need and economic opportunity. Charcoal burners moved in from villages outside the area and

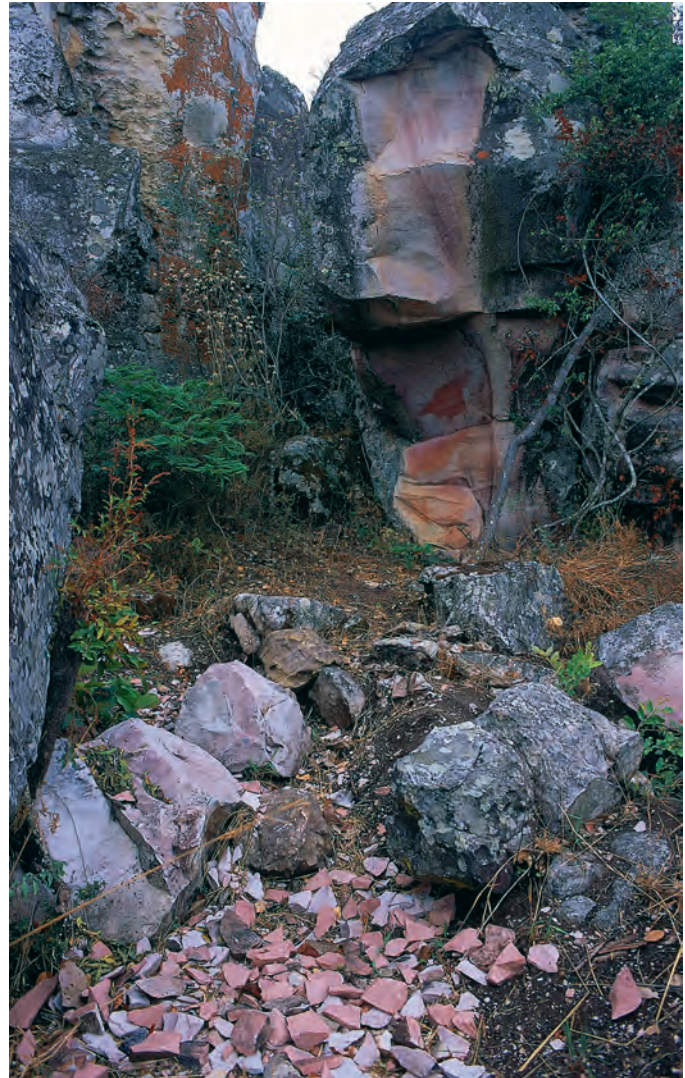


FIGURE 6 Stone quarrying prior to NHCC intervention among the rock art sites of Mwela Rocks, Northern Province, Zambia. Courtesy of Rock Art Research Institute, University of the Witwatersrand

felled the sacred forest before the local community could mobilize to stop the damage. With the sacred status of the area defiled, hundreds of rock breakers descended to quarry stone to fuel a building boom in nearby Kasama town. Without legal authority, the traditional custodians were powerless to stop the destruction. The government department with the appropriate legal authority, the National Heritage Conservation Commission (NHCC), was based at the opposite end of



FIGURE 7 Game Pass Shelter, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, where national government and rural communities are working together to preserve heritage and create jobs. Courtesy of Rock Art Research Institute, University of the Witwatersrand

Zambia. Once the NHCC became aware of the extent and pace of damage they acted swiftly, even setting up a regional office in Kasama, but massive and irreparable damage had already been done.

Mwela Rocks shows the terrible consequences of traditional conservation regulations losing effectiveness in a modern developmental context in the absence of active support from national government institutions. With state law superseding traditional law, the old indigenous site conservation practices, while effective in the past, are becoming difficult to enforce. In some cases they also need to adapt to deal with the unforeseen circumstances of modern times, such as global tourism. Like Ndoro, I believe that many aspects of indigenous management practices should be fostered and retained, but the most effective management process in my view will come from a Cook University-type management plan that is drawn up and implemented through a partnership between community members and appropriate heritage and conservation professionals. The community brings knowledge of the significance and meaning of the site and a wealth of experience as to how the site was protected in the past. The professionals bring broad experience of practices that have worked effectively in other places and complex scientific skills that can help to conserve the significances of the site. The challenge is to create a workable partnership between the two, one in

which issues and concerns are made explicit by both sides and compromises reached and effected. To get this to work is a fine balancing act. Success often depends on the personalities involved.

It is in this spirit that Wildebeest Kuil and Game Pass Shelter have been developed. Both sites are owned and managed by nonprofit trusts made up of all the key stakeholders who are willing to serve as trustees. As these are San heritage sites, these communities have strong representation on both trusts. But because the trusts comprise a range of individuals and organizations, they cannot be manipulated by particular agendas or sectional interests; instead, they operate by the consensus of a range of stakeholders. Since a trust must be nonprofit, commercial interests cannot overpower other issues in site management and presentation, and all income from the site is ploughed back into preserving the significances of the site.

It is through this shared ownership and by embracing and celebrating indigenous knowledge both in site presentation and site management that we can achieve President Mbeki's dream of public rock art sites that help to heal society (fig. 7). There will always be room for improvement at our public sites. Presentation and management practices will continue to progress, but the premises and processes we use to build our presentation and management structures are now

on a firm and stable footing. At sites such as Wildebeest Kuil we are seeing the new face of public archaeology in Africa. It is a face that will restore national pride by celebrating Africa's unparalleled history of achievement and innovation. And it is a face that will create jobs by bringing people from all over the world to see the sites where humanity, art, and culture began. These sites are symbols of this great African legacy.

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Rock Art Management in Eastern and Southern Africa: Whose Responsibility?

George H. O. Abungu

Abstract: *Rock art is an important part of Africa's heritage and is found in most parts of the continent. However, its study has been the preserve of comparatively few professionals. Although hunter-gatherers created the majority of rock art, particularly in southern Africa, the Bantu and other groups have also contributed to this heritage. Today, the questions persist: Whose heritage? Whose responsibility? This paper views rock art conservation as the responsibility of diversified stakeholders and examines ways in which the local community can be involved in the ownership and protection of heritage. The study and practice of rock art is everybody's business; it must move away from the traditional elitist approach to encompass various voices and the apportionment of responsibilities.*

The African continent is extremely rich in terms of cultural and natural heritage. As the cradle of humankind, producing the earliest evidence of hominids and stone tools, Africa has witnessed a deep relationship between humans and the environment. Many of Africa's landscapes have been shaped by the spiritual and physical needs of the people. Its cultural landscapes are imprinted by human action; in many cases they continue to appeal to people's spiritual aspirations by functioning as sacred places for local communities, in addition to serving today's commercial needs as tourism destinations.

The spectacular cultural and natural landscapes—sacred forests, hills, caves, rock shelters—have become part of human experience. Animal life in Africa, which is unparalleled elsewhere, has played a major part in the lives of Africans; interaction with the environment and its resources has therefore shaped human thought and actions on the continent.

The results of this interaction are numerous; they include spectacular archaeological and rock art sites of varying concentrations all over the continent. Northern and southern Africa are particularly rich in rock art heritage, but nearly every part of Africa has some kind of rock art, with regional distinctions.

Rock Art of Africa

African rock art dates back 27,000 years to the so-called Apollo 9 site in Namibia. It is probably the earliest form of human communication remaining on the continent today and is much more graphic than written text. Rock art points to human social activities, cognitive systems, abstract thought, and concepts of reality that together give meaning to our lives; it tells us a great deal about how people perceived their world. It provides insight into the earliest ways in which humans thought and survived in a more or less untamed and challenging environment. Rock art is unique; once lost, it can never be regained.

African rock art has been a contested heritage, particularly in regard to its origins and creators. Today it is more or less accepted that the bulk of early eastern and southern African rock art was likely created by the ancestors of the hunter-gatherer peoples of the region. These are the ancestors of the Khoisan of southern Africa, the Sandawe and Hadza of Tanzania, and the Twa, with descendant groups in central and southern Africa.

The Khoisan were probably the earliest inhabitants of eastern and southern Africa. In eastern Africa, their descendants are the Hadza and Sandawe. In southern Africa, they

came to influence many of their neighbors not only through spiritual roles but also through language as many present-day non-Khoisan groups, especially the Bantu groups, have acquired clicks in their language.

These were the people encountered by Bantu-speaking farmers and acknowledged as the original landowners; they knew the country and its resources and not only had access to its spirits but also controlled the circle of nature. They were acknowledged to have natural abilities to enter the land's supernatural environment and control natural phenomena such as rainmaking and environmental vitality. They were the people who had tamed the environment, giving it spiritual and symbolic meaning and tapping its natural resources through hunting and gathering.

It has been shown that the religious and everyday activities of groups such as the Khoisan are intertwined and that earth—from which all life springs—has mystical powers. Humans and animals can communicate but only when humans move from the physical to the intangible realm in the Khoisan's mythology. Certain animals are valued for their meat as well as for their metaphysical properties to the extent that they are seen to possess a force that helps humans to administer health, harmony, the weather, wild animals, and human rights of passage (Coulson and Campbell 2001:31). Through special dances using animal powers, men and sometimes women can achieve a trance state, then pass through stages into the supernatural realm. It has been argued that these actions dominate the rock art of Africa, particularly in southern Africa (see Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1989:91). They are of great value, for they provide not only spiritual nourishment but also an understanding of the world's intangible aspects and a way to control the otherwise inexplicable (Coulson and Campbell 2001:32).

In many places, for example, in Chongoni (Malawi), Kisami (Zambia), Matopo (Zimbabwe), and Kondoa (Tanzania), the tradition of rock art was continued by the Bantu groups. These were agropastoralists; art for them, just as for hunter-gatherers, was a means of controlling and understanding their surroundings. The role of the Bantu in creating rock art has been underestimated. Their contribution, however, has provided an important learning opportunity for rock art scholars.

Rock art has been of great importance to the well-being of Africans as far back as the prehistoric period. As a spiritual medium, it has helped them to understand their environment and the forces that interact with it and to interpret those things beyond the human realm. It ensured the ordered

process of society. In some cases, rock art was used for initiation and ceremonies. It is therefore imperative to incorporate in the conservation and interpretation of rock art sites an understanding of the way in which local communities view their world. This is even more important now, in a time of changing cultures and disappearing oral history. We must find out how local people view their art, how it has been used in the recent past, and how it fits into their reality.

Rock art was first viewed by colonialists as a Western-introduced concept and art form, as the indigenous people were seen as incapable of innovation without external intervention. When it was grudgingly accepted as African, colonialists termed the art "primitive." This attitude has of course had an impact on the study and conservation of rock art in Africa.

In some cases, rock art has been used for political purposes such as land claims. For example, because rock art was perceived to have been the preserve of the Khoisan, who had been more or less wiped out, those who occupied the land considered themselves, rather than the Bantu, the rightful owners. It is no coincidence that rock art studies were dominant in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s, during apartheid. The protection of rock art throughout this time can be attributed to the local communities who owned and used it; systematic studies and formal government protection came late in Africa.

Africa's incredible rock art paintings and engravings did not attract serious attention from archaeologists until the 1960s. Colonial governments enacted laws protecting rock art from theft and vandalism but rarely enforced them. Even today the art's uniqueness and value is not fully recognized by many independent African countries as an extremely valuable heritage that should be the responsibility of all, not just of private rock art societies. The whole issue of ownership is contested, as are the roles of various stakeholders, including conservation bodies, governments, and local communities. This has resulted in a huge challenge to the posterity of rock art in Africa.

Challenges to Rock Art Conservation

Today rock art is threatened by many factors, ranging from local to international. As the tourism industry expands, more people are visiting rock art sites. As visitorship increases, so do threats to the rock art. People pour water on the art to make it more visible and scrawl graffiti across it to add detail; visitors often touch the paintings, steal engravings on loose stones, or

cut pieces of paintings from the rock face. Moreover, the large volume of visitors has an impact on the environment in which the art is found. Of even greater concern are threats from mining, the spread of agriculture, and the construction of roads and dams in environments where rock art is found. There is a need for concerted efforts to address the issue. How can this be achieved when the various stakeholders are suspicious of one another? The questions arise, Who owns the rock art? Who is best placed to conserve it? It is even argued that because most people living around the rock art sites may not have been the creators, they have no stake in it. This argument is touted even when the rock art is of spiritual significance to the people and when the surrounding communities own the land on which the sites are found.

Africa is at a disadvantage in terms of development. Many African states have no meaningful industries, and governments are confronted with numerous problems, including the lack of infrastructure, education, health facilities, roads, and clean water. Rock art conservation is not a government priority in countries requiring the provision or improvement of such services. As a result, there is little if any investment in rock art heritage. In addition, governments—apart from a few such as South Africa—are making little meaningful contribution to the development of legal and administrative frameworks within which to manage the heritage. Where they have, they have done so by imposing state control on sites without consultation or the concurrence of the local community, resulting in hostile resistance and, in some cases, destruction of the sites. In many places this heritage is not appreciated as part of a living environment that could serve as inspiration in the quest for social well-being, improved quality of life, and sustainable development—sustainable development in this case being a process that takes into account the social, cultural, economic, and environmental needs of an area and its community. Archaeologists are partly to blame for distancing rock art from the present inhabitants and for portraying it as a specialized subject that cannot be appreciated by the uninitiated.

In many African countries environmental impact assessments are rarely carried out; where they are, they are funded and controlled by developers, who are given free rein. It is not uncommon to see roads being cut across rocks containing artwork, or the quarrying of such rocks for road construction or mineral exploration. (Botswana was once a case in point; however, it now has one of the best cultural impact assessment programs in Africa.) There are constant changes

to the cultural landscape without concern for the adverse impact of these actions on local communities. This ignorance or simple lack of acceptance by government that Africa's diverse heritage remains an integral part of the continuing, living environment for many communities is a great threat to rock art.

It is not only governments that are responsible for the various challenges facing rock art sites. As noted above, problems caused by tourism are evident. Other problems result from greedy developers, lack of community participation, ignorance on the part of potential beneficiaries, illicit trafficking, and the assumption by scholars and professionals that they have a monopoly on conservation knowledge and therefore should be the sole players. In addition, the tendency of professionals to look for conservation solutions in faraway places rather than use locally accumulated knowledge has in some cases added to the problems of managing rock art sites.

While the exchange of ideas, information, experience, and techniques of rock art conservation is a healthy exercise, local and regional experience should form the basis of any management strategy. Cases are given below in which the community has not been engaged either in dialogue or in the day-to-day management of the site and, as a result, the heritage has been destroyed.

Outside Harare, Zimbabwe, on the red rock outcrops of the Domboshawa area, are some of the most spectacular rock art sites in southern Africa. Like many other spiritual sites, there is a sacred forest with the same name adjacent to the site. The Domboshawa rock art site and sacred forest, which is probably one of the most visited sites in Zimbabwe apart from the site of Great Zimbabwe, is now under the management of the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe. The site has been completely fenced and secured from the local community and is a good example of state/community conflict. It is a typical example of a hotly contested heritage site where the state shows its muscle by imposing control. It appears that the site was appropriated from the local community without consultation and without considering a plan to benefit the community. Nor were its spiritual needs, based on usage of the rock shelter, considered. The resulting conflict between the state and the community led to defacement of the rock art. Today, rather than being joint custodians with the government, the local community has been pushed to the periphery, the site secured, and access controlled. Although it is rumored that the rock art could have been defaced by a

disgruntled former museum staff member who had been sacked, there is no doubt that the local community of Dom-boshawa feels aggrieved.

In western Kenya at the Kakapel rock art site stands probably the most elaborate artwork of its time, representing different periods over a span of nearly three thousand years. This site has attracted the attention of scholars and has had intermittent visitors for some time. For years the site saw no damage; however, since interest in it has increased and dialogue with the locals has decreased, the site has been defaced by graffiti. It is said that as the site started to attract high-profile visitors, jealous neighbors of the owner on whose land the site is located, decided to destroy it so that the owner did not benefit. Until recently there had been little dialogue to explain the potential economic importance of the site to the community as a whole and to involve them in its study and conservation.

Botswana is known for its rich rock art heritage, including the site of Tsodilo, which is on the World Heritage List. The rock art is in constant danger from a rich and powerful elite, who indulge in mountaineering and helicopter rides on the rough terrain. In addition, the act of moving communities, particularly hunter-gatherers, from their natural environment into permanent settlements takes them away from their spiritual sites and renders the heritage meaningless. It only encourages conflicts and resistance and results in the state taking control of the heritage.

It was not uncommon, especially during colonial times, to find cases in which archaeologists or palaeontologists physically assaulted members of the local community just because their herds strayed into archaeological sites. Even today some researchers treat sites as their personal property divorced from the real owners, the local community. In such cases it is difficult to develop a positive relationship with the locals. The results are disastrous.

Conflict Resolution and a New Conservation Strategy

Conflicts of interest at archaeological sites are mostly the result of the competing interests of the various stakeholders, including government, local communities, and scholars and professionals. Successful site management requires dialogue and a participatory approach to the whole issue of conservation and use.

In the past, community knowledge, interest, and involvement have been placed at the periphery either by gov-

ernments, scholars or professionals, or sometimes a combination of the latter two groups. The communities feel alienated from their heritage as they see “foreign” bodies turning their sites into research and public use areas without their involvement, and the communities are seen to be and are treated as threats to heritage. To avoid this continuous conflict, management strategies should be based on a participatory approach whereby all stakeholders have a role, especially local communities. It is important to begin by acknowledging that ownership of the sites rests with the local population. Government and professionals are facilitators whose role is to ensure that there are appropriate conditions, facilities, and support for heritage management.

There is a need to establish channels of communication, roles, and responsibilities and to include the local community in management. The professional must build capacity from within the local community and, where possible and appropriate, incorporate local conservation knowledge. Site management plans should take into consideration all the stakeholders’ interests and engage the local communities in building better management systems. Heritage management itself must be incorporated in the development framework of the local area or region; it must be understood and owned by the local community.

The government has the responsibility to invest in sites to attract responsible tourism that will create job opportunities and other economic benefits. If this is done the communities will appreciate, protect, and conserve the heritage. Thus archaeological sites, including rock art sites, must contribute to employment and empowerment of the people. Conservation is not simply about care of the fabric; it is also about creating the right atmosphere and marshaling community support for preventive care, including guarding against vandalism, as opposed to physical intervention once the problem has arisen.

Governments must invest seriously in conservation of national heritage through adequate financing. Communication efforts should include constant public awareness programs aimed at a variety of stakeholders rather than rock art lovers alone.

There may be negative consequences to opening sites to community participation, as raised expectations, if not met, may lead to the destruction of sites by the very same communities. These expectations may include job creation, financial gains through visitorship, and opening up of markets for local products, which, if not met, could lead to disgruntlement. However, the benefits of involving the community outweigh

the potential disadvantages, especially as these people have lived with and protected the heritage all along.

As long as the study of rock art remains the preserve of a small elite, it will not attract attention from governments with an eye solely on numbers that translate into votes. It is local community involvement that will attract their attention, not a few elite groups of rock art scholars. Moreover, rock art sites are so widespread and numerous in southern Africa that they cannot be taken care of by professionals alone. This is all the more reason why local communities must be involved.

In managing rock art sites, the potential power of goodwill from the young people must not be taken for granted. In many cases, they come into contact with rock art sites only during school visits. Urbanization and lack of contact between these young people and their elders—whose storytelling used to provide the opportunity to explain the heritage and its importance—pose a threat to heritage protection. These are tomorrow's stakeholders, yet they hardly understand the importance of this heritage and are prone to destroying it by adding their own "art."

It is important, in addition to the local communities, art societies, government, scholars, and professionals, that undiscovered audiences or stakeholders be involved in rock art conservation. This may include the formation of friends-of-rock-art groups from adjacent schools, which can be involved in frequent cleanups, tree planting, and community sensitization. The youth can also take part in "research" by helping to record the art, which may produce the only records that remain when the art itself has gone.

Conclusion

Any management initiative, including the conservation of rock art, must adopt an inclusive approach that involves all stakeholders. It must be a participatory process in which the voices and needs of local communities are given as much—if not more—weight as the others. It is imperative that local people be empowered through capacity building; the day-to-day management of sites can be in their hands when it is not provided by other agencies. Rock art is a unique, nonrenewable resource that is faced with various challenges—both manmade and natural. It must be properly protected for all of humanity.

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Building the Capacity to Protect Rock Art Heritage in Rural Communities

Webber Ndoro

Abstract: *This paper focuses on the need to involve local communities in managing their own rock art heritage. It emphasizes the importance of establishing a dialogue between heritage managers and local communities by involving all stakeholders from the beginning. In most of Africa, community involvement is necessary given the limited capacity of many heritage organizations to effectively manage sites in rural areas.*

Rock art sites exist throughout southern Africa. In Zimbabwe alone, more than three thousand sites have been recorded, and it is estimated that this represents perhaps less than half the number that actually exist (Garlake 1995). Given the limited resources and capacities of most heritage management organizations and the way they operate currently, it is impossible to protect every site.

At most rock art sites, managers tend to concentrate on the art as the paramount resource to manage. This approach does not clearly define the important aspects of a place's cultural heritage or the context of the art. The paintings are usually treated as museum objects to be studied, curated, and separated from the larger context of the sociocultural environment. As directed by the World Heritage Convention, we need to adopt general policies that give cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community. Very often when we talk about the importance of a rock art site, we emphasize its attractiveness to the scientific community and to tourists. In some instances this is important; however, this suggests that only scientific values and tourist-generated income are important.

The economic situation, often with sociopolitical overtones, inevitably affects the preservation and presentation of a heritage site. The view that rock art sites are scientific speci-

mens to be treated as though they were in a museum has meant that in most countries they are omitted from the general development plans of the area. This is compounded by the fact that there is a tendency to view rock art as a specialized field that can be handled only by the initiated few. This generally leads to management practices that do not consider the interests or attitudes of the local communities regarding the paintings or the sites in general. Thus it is academic researchers who alone are involved in the process of protecting the sites. Often, managers regard the local people as a problem. There is a tendency to think that global or international interests are more important than local and indigenous ones; thus the interests of the communities and the ways in which they have traditionally been custodians of the heritage place are ignored.

During the precolonial period, most places of cultural significance enjoyed protection in the sense that no one was allowed to go to them without the sanction of religious leaders. Any meaningful management system of rock art places has to recognize the following factors: (1) the definition of rock art as heritage does not always coincide with the concepts held by local communities, and generally one has to consider African heritage in its totality, including nonphysical elements such as spiritual and sacred values and the special notion of cultural landscapes; (2) a management system may already exist and still be in use today, and the system often has an element of sustainability for local people; (3) local communities have inalienable rights of access to heritage sites and to earn a livelihood from them; and (4) the aspirations of local communities must be taken into account. Unless the communities have been removed from the sites, generally a passive protective system is in place (explicit or implicit, institutionalized or

not). The problem lies in understanding the system. Management planning should incorporate these factors as guidelines for developing an improved system.

Present-day heritage managers also need to recognize the general characteristics of the traditional and customary management systems that apply to any given site, be it a rock art site or another place of significance. These characteristics are as follows:

- The systems are unwritten and passed orally from generation to generation.
- They are prone to change.
- A series of rites and taboos generally regulate the use of resources.
- Regulation differs in application from one section to another of the same site.
- Regulation differs from group to group.
- The site is linked to life sustenance.
- The approach to nature and culture is holistic.
- There are penalties for infringement, varying from death to excommunication from the clan or tribe to occurrence of misfortune.
- Group solidarity is of primary importance.
- The intangible aspects of the heritage are of the utmost significance.

Culture and Nature Issues

Rock art sites are part of the cultural landscape. In some traditions in southern Africa, caves and rocks are the abode of ancestral spirits. It is no coincidence that places like Silozwane and Domboshawa in Zimbabwe, Chongoni in Malawi, and Kondoa in Tanzania are considered shrines by the local communities. Caves especially have important functions in the religious lives of many Bantu societies. Because in African tradition and custom rocks and caves have special roles as intermediaries with the divine, the relationship between nature and culture is also important. Traditional African heritage management, though not thought of in these terms, finds natural expression in environmental knowledge and technical and ritual practices. For example, the ritual of rainmaking requires a clear understanding of the environment as well as the technique. Heritage resource management is therefore embedded in the belief systems that have in turn contributed to the preservation and sustainable use of both cultural and natural features. Usually shrines represent a quintessential natural source of culture where the two are inseparable, so

that human society has no meaning without the rocks, the pools, the caves, and the trees; and these are given meaning only by the residence among them of human beings (Ranger 1999).

Given the controlled management applied at a number of rock art places, several observations can be made. It is normally assumed that the subsistence methods of the indigenous communities ignore the ecological carrying-capacity threshold of the area and thereby threaten the paintings. At times outright ignorance among the local population of the significance of the rock art is assumed. Authorities forget that nature and people coexisted in the area from time immemorial, and the paintings were not deliberately harmed. There is mounting evidence that many natural landscapes that have historically been considered to be deteriorating as a result of human impacts are in fact deteriorating because humans are excluded from the systems. This has been demonstrated in New Guinea (Fairhead and Leach 1996) and in Australia (Jones 1969). Research in Australia has found that the distribution and diversity of biota across the continent are artifacts of Aboriginal people's intentional management. This is also seen in Namibia in the Nyae Nyae area where the ecology is a result of careful strategic burning. The local community, the Ju/hoansi, argue that many places in the northern reaches of Nyae Nyae have degraded, claiming that this is due to the absence of a burning regime during the colonial period (Powell 1998). In addition to recognizing the relationship between nature and culture, any heritage management system in Africa needs to recognize the way in which community looks at the heritage as a resource rather than as an artifact. It can also be argued that the opening up of sites by present-day managers has led to many problems, including graffiti.

Kondoa-Irangi Rock Paintings

The example of Kondoa in Tanzania illustrates some of these issues. The majority of painted shelters in the Kondoa-Irangi area occur on the slopes or around the base of a steep eastward-facing escarpment that forms the rim of the Masai Steppe bordering the Great Rift Valley. The Kondoa-Irangi area contains an impressive concentration of rock shelters with prehistoric paintings. The rock paintings are spread out over a wide area in the Kondoa district.

Some of the sites were declared national monuments by the Department of Antiquities in 1937 in recognition of the exceptional qualities of the paintings in the area. According to the Department of Antiquities, the paintings do not seem to

have any significant meaning to the local communities. However, at least some of the painted sites have spiritual significance to the local agropastoral Irangi people, who have continued to carry out ceremonies such as healing and rain-making rituals at these sites (see Leakey 1983:17; Loubser, this volume).

These activities have not been recognized by the Department of Antiquities. For example, the resulting millet spatters are considered detrimental to the preservation of the paintings. In relation to the use and function of the place, the present management system and legislation fail to recognize a number of issues. Although the inhabitants no longer paint, the most significant shelters, such as Mungume wa Kolo, have been associated with their belief systems from time immemorial. The hunter-gatherer art in the area is related to shamanistic belief systems. The later white paintings, which in many instances in Kondoa are superimposed on the hunter-gatherer art, are related to the initiation ceremonies of the farming communities. The same shelters play a role in the ritual and healing potency of the people today; thus there has been continuity in terms of use and function. The rock shelters have been used in the cosmology of the inhabitants of the place. Unless the communities' aspirations are taken into account and recognized under Tanzanian law, there will always be antagonism over the management of these heritage places.

The paintings are part of a cultural landscape that is dynamic, and they cannot be frozen within the defined boundary of a single time period. This cultural landscape is regulated by a series of customary practices that do not recognize the relevant state legislation. According to customary law and traditions, the paintings are part of a large cosmological environment and cannot be treated as single components.

Furthermore, sites like these cannot be owned by an individual. They are owned by the community, and they have traditional custodians. Their boundaries are amorphous for the simple reason that they fluctuate according to use and seasons. An adjunct to the issue of boundaries is that of ownership, which implicitly carries with it the issue of legislation. A protected site must have fixed boundaries.

Capacity Building

Management policies that seek to exclude populations from the management of their own heritage emanate in part from the training received by heritage professionals. When we talk of capacity building in heritage management, often this refers to capacity building among professionals. Hence most train-

ing initiatives target the professional heritage manager. They include a certain degree of rigidity and centralization, as well as a bias toward the traditional view of what constitutes cultural heritage, that is, monuments and sites. Generally capacity building emphasizes that communities have to be educated about and made aware of their own heritage. It is generally held that communities should have limited access because they are ignorant of what is significant and might harm the paintings.

Moreover, the protective legislation operating in most parts of Africa was enacted during the colonial period and has not been revised. Most of the laws therefore remain antagonistic to public and community interests (Mumma 1999). South Africa, however, has taken steps to rectify its heritage protection legislation so that it reflects the aspirations of the majority of its citizens.

Currently, the type of training provided to professionals gives rise to a number of problems in accommodating local values and alternative management systems. In most instances the training is highly technical in content and does not equip managers with the skills to engage the public. Given the limited resources, particularly trained personnel, and the number of heritage places to be protected, it is doubtful that such training efforts will achieve the intended goals of protecting heritage places. Training initiatives must recognize that heritage sites are situated within communities that in most cases have provided limited care of these places. It is myopic to think that the public always poses a threat to heritage sites. The development of management plans that take into consideration all the stakeholders' interests affords us a chance to involve the surrounding communities in better heritage management systems. With this approach, the creation of a meaningful dialogue is encouraged between professional heritage managers and communities by making sure that no side imposes unrealistic management regimes on the other. This also helps to incorporate heritage management in a developmental framework.

It is essential that issues relating to community participation and indigenous practices be considered and dealt with from the beginning of the process of managing heritage sites. In building capacity, an explicit process for the involvement of stakeholders and the identification of all heritage values should be established. Provision has to be made for the conservation of all the values identified, for the identification of potential conflicts in this area, and for the management system to address the economic and social issues of local communities and traditional custodians. The following steps would be

useful in developing this joint cooperation to protect the sites: (1) social assessment, identification of stakeholders, and formation of an inclusive management committee, aided by social scientists trained to understand and analyze social organization at sites; (2) data gathering that fully involves the local community; (3) data analysis to determine the values of the site, which entails identification of “universal” as well as community values, analysis that requires community involvement; (4) a collectively agreed-upon action plan; and (5) a collectively agreed-upon management system. The latter is a formal agreement among all the stakeholders as to the future management and use of the site.

Conclusion

Capacity building is a never-ending process. It not only involves technical training; it involves means of developing a dialogue with communities that interact with the site on a daily basis. It should emphasize dialogue between site managers and the communities around them. It should be initiated at various levels, both technical and political. It should draw on the wisdom and human resources already existing in local communities rather than import solutions.

There is also the issue of ownership. As long as heritage organizations treat sites as scientific specimens, the local com-

munities will be alienated. This would be detrimental to the heritage, given that most heritage authorities have limited manpower and capacity to protect all sites.

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Conservation of Non-Western Rock Art Sites Using a Holistic Medical Approach

Johannes Loubser

Abstract: *This paper addresses the role of specialist conservators and site managers in conserving and managing rock art sites that are still used by non-European people. Citing ethnographic examples from Tanzania and the northwestern United States, it proposes that the indigenous people in these regions view rock art sites and the human body in similar ways. And it recommends that when assessing and treating rock art sites in non-Western contexts, specialist conservators and site managers should acknowledge, consult, study, understand, and incorporate traditional concepts.*

A conventional archaeological conservation premise is that only well-trained conservators with the necessary skills are entitled to undertake treatment at rock art sites and only those versed in generally accepted site management principles should write management plans. An important reason for this position is that botched conservation and management attempts by unqualified people with insufficient skills have been expensive and time-consuming to rectify. A number of objections can be raised against such a premise. First, it wrongly assumes that qualified people never make mistakes; mistakes may in fact occur when “first world” specialists are not properly versed in local conditions and traditions. Second, the paucity and comparatively high cost of the services of trained rock art conservators suggests that it is not always practical or affordable to hire such specialists. Third, considering the various interest groups involved in a rock art site, sometimes from different cultural backgrounds with divergent worldviews, the question arises as to who identifies and prioritizes conservation problems and appropriate remedial actions. Additional questions are: Under what circumstances does it become necessary to involve a specialist conservator

and/or management planner? Where do specialists fit into the site management process?

This paper presents an analogy with medical practice as one way of thinking about these questions. As in the case of medicine, currently prevailing Eurocentric conceptions about conservation differ from the traditional conceptions held by nonindustrial societies in a variety of ways; to try to remedy problems in indigenous settings by exclusive reference to Western paradigms and practices often is bound to be futile. Although conservators tend to think in Eurocentric terms, knowledge and acknowledgment of traditional practices are vital prerequisites for any conservation action to be acceptable and workable in an underdeveloped rural setting. Whereas the autochthonous inhabitants of the “third world” realize the value of European, or Western, medicine, the use of alternative “traditional” treatments and remedies is still pervasive. Consequently, when drawing up a management plan for a rock art site and recommendations for hands-on conservation actions, it is important to investigate and incorporate established “non-Western” beliefs and patterns of site use.

Rock Art Sites as Human Bodies

That some traditional users and custodians of rock art sites view them as similar to human bodies is strongly suggested by at least two ethnographic instances, the people of the Masai Steppe in central Tanzania and the people of the Columbia Plateau in the northwestern United States. The geographic and archaeological contexts of each rock art tradition are outlined below, prior to discussing the relevant ethnographic contexts of each tradition.

In central Tanzania, the majority of painted shelters in the Kondoa-Irangi area occur on the slopes or around the base of a steep eastward-facing escarpment that forms the western rim of the Masai Steppe. Painted shelters within the escarpment are part of exposed and relatively resistant granite rim rock. The shelters occur mostly along exposed cliff lines, although a few are found underneath isolated boulders. Mary Leakey's 1983 publication of *Africa's Vanishing Art: The Rock Paintings of Tanzania* first brought to the world's attention the colorful Kondoa-Irangi paintings.

Radiocarbon dates for excavated charcoal from the Kiseke 2 shelter suggest that the first pastoralists occupied the Kondoa-Irangi area approximately fifteen hundred years ago. The white and black pastoralist paintings of cattle on top of red hunter-gatherer paintings indicate that the red paintings are even older (Leakey 1983). If this minimum age estimate for the underlying red paintings is accepted, then they must have withstood millennia of natural deterioration. Archaeological evidence, collected by Ray Inskip and Fidel Masao, has shown that in addition to hunter-gatherers and pastoralists, agropastoralist ancestors of the current Irangi inhabitants used the shelters as well (Leakey 1983). According to oral histories, the more recent white and pale red paintings of grids and other geometric patterns are the work of Irangi agropastoralists. Chipping of a few early red hunter-gatherer paintings and numerous other human activities in the painted rock shelters, such as the spattering of millet beer against the hunter-gatherer paintings, are material evidence that the Irangi people continue to interact with the painted rock surface.

According to Louis Leakey (1936), the earliest written mention of rock paintings in the Kondoa-Irangi area is in a short paper by Nash published in 1929. Even at that relatively early date of European presence in the area, Nash (1929:199) noted that "most of them [the paintings] are in a rather bad state of preservation." This remark suggests that by the early twentieth century, natural conditions and/or human actions had already damaged at least some of the rock paintings. Local Irangi agropastoralists thought that the various scholars who intermittently visited the Kondoa-Irangi paintings during the first half of the twentieth century were treasure hunters (Leakey 1983:16). One result of this mistaken perception was that Irangi people started to dig the deposits in front of some rock paintings (Amini Mturi pers. com.). Partly as an attempt to discourage this practice, which not only destroyed the archaeological deposits but also posed a dust threat to the paintings, the conservator of Tanzanian Antiquities at that

time, Hamo Sassoon, had wooden frames and wire cages erected on stone and cement walls at selected shelters between 1965 and 1968. These cages proved ineffective; Irangi people from nearby settlements soon dismantled the frames and wire mesh for alternative use as building material for human and animal shelters. Fortunately, the removal of the wooden frames and wire fence did not seem to have caused any noticeable damage, as the cages were not attached to the rock surface in any way. All that is left now of the cages are the stone and cement walls within the rock art shelters (fig. 1).

The cages also proved an obstacle to Irangi ritual practitioners who continued to visit the more prominent rock art shelters for their healing and rainmaking ceremonies. This practice has some antiquity, as evidenced by Louis Leakey's 10 July 1951 entry in his field journal: "five local elders . . . told us that before we could start work we would have to provide a goat for a sacrifice to propitiate the spirits of the painted site, which are regarded as very powerful" (Leakey 1983:17). Sacrificing goats to the ancestor spirits as part of rainmaking and healing ceremonies is an ongoing practice at one of the most prominent rock art sites on the landscape, locally known as Mungumi wa Kolo (Amini Mturi and Jasper Chalcraft pers. com.). Moreover, local Irangi people have told Mturi that diviners demonstrate their supernatural potency by staying in a cavernous hollow below the painted site for two weeks. Informants told Chalcraft that this is the same hollow into which half of the sacrificed goat bones were placed. Weathered prehistoric fragments of a goat's cranium and tooth enamel from looted archaeological deposits in the nearby Kwa Mtea rock shelter could be the remains of such a ritual sacrifice too.

As part of the healing rituals, female Irangi supplicants spatter millet beer using castor oil leaves (known as *méraa*) at the prehistoric paintings. Dried leaves of the castor oil plant seen on the floor of the Mungumi wa Kolo rock shelter in November 2001 show that this practice is ongoing (Loubser 2001). Interestingly, the ritual sprinkling of the rock art is reminiscent of *simbó* rituals among the neighboring Sandawe, where "a woman takes a *méraa* twig, dips it in beer and sprinkles the dancers with it" (Van de Kimmenade 1936:413). Some of the millet spatter against the rock wall at Mungumi wa Kolo is pink and resembles pigment. Similar-looking but fainter white pigment spatters, some of which are covered by silica-like skins, have been documented at both Mungumi wa Kolo and the nearby Kwa Mtea. In terms of their granular texture and overall shape and size, these white marks likely are older millet spatters. The spattering of the rock surface and the spattering of dancers with millet beer by ritual practitioners



FIGURE 1 Stone wall of dismantled cage in front of Mungumi wa Kolo rock art panel with spatters of millet beer. Photo: Johannes Loubser

with the leaves and branches of castor oil plants suggest that the same underlying cognitive principles are involved.

That these ritualized activities tend to occur in secret makes them difficult to detect in the conventional way, as done by Gale and Jacobs (1986) when they observed tourist behavior at rock art sites in Australia. To conduct proper research on ritual activities at the Tanzanian rock art sites, a necessary first step would be to gain the trust and permission of Irangi practitioners. Without due consultation, rock art site managers and conservators might find it necessary to remove beer spatters that obscure “aesthetically pleasing” prehistoric rock art. Of course, this would not stop the spattering of the rock or the roasting of goat near the rock face. Denying ritual practitioners access to the sites would be even a more disas-

trous management decision, as can be seen by the defiant defacement of rock art in Zimbabwe by disgruntled local people barred from accessing rainmaking shrines near Harare (Webber Ndoro pers. com.).

Compared to the African example, the Indians on the Columbia Plateau of Oregon and Washington have less direct access to most of their traditional rock art sites; mainly they live in small reservations that are scattered across the region. Despite this physical separation, some of the most detailed ethnography related to rock art comes from the Columbia Plateau Indian groups, and indications are that a significant proportion of these people still revere rock art sites as places with special spiritual powers (Keyser and Whitley 2000). The vast majority of rock art sites on the Columbia Plateau are

small panels that can be found scattered along a line of basalt cliffs or in a boulder field. Rock art on the plateau dates from roughly seven thousand years ago to the early twentieth century (Keyser 1992). Primary rock art motifs on the Columbia Plateau include abstract designs such as rayed arcs, tally marks, and zigzags that are associated with stick-figure humans and block-body animal figures.

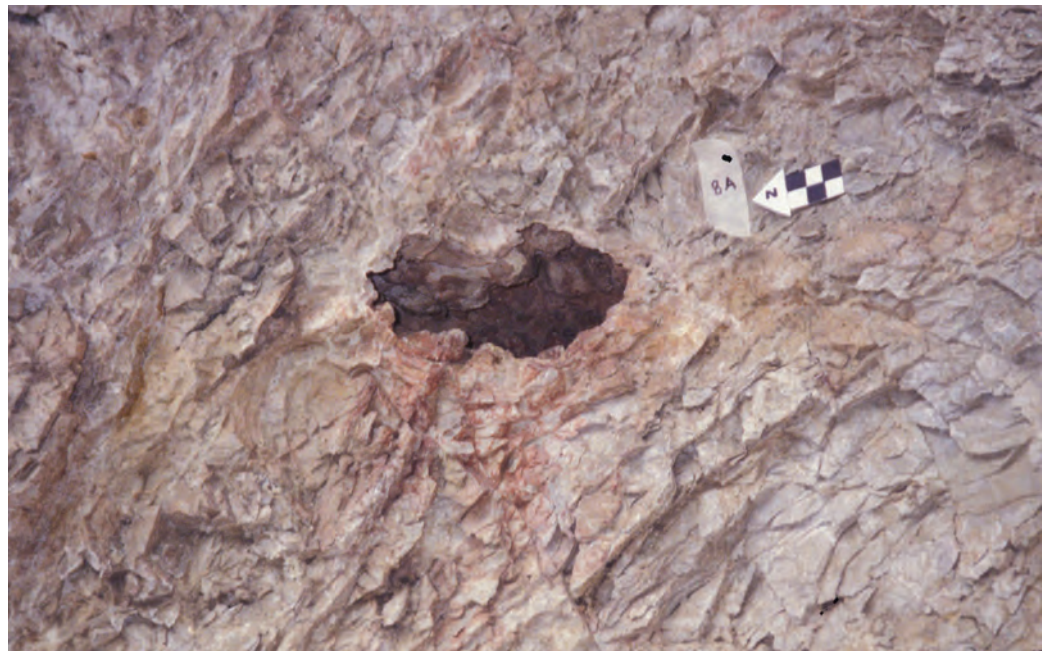
According to ethnographic information from the Columbia Plateau, rock art sites are associated with body symbolism in at least two instances: scratched motifs from the Columbia and Snake River drainages and red ocher smears from the western Montana foothills. Scratched motifs primarily comprise a variety of geometric designs, several of which are also common in pecked and painted examples on the plateau. Smears are not merely areas where paint-covered hands were cleaned; they represent application for the purposes of deliberately coloring certain areas of the rock wall, notably within and directly below natural hollows in the rock (fig. 2). On closer inspection, palm prints and finger lines are detectable in well-preserved smears (Loubser 2004).

Paintings and scratches of generally the same kind as the rock art also occur on the faces of Columbia Plateau Indians (e.g., Teit 1909). Moreover, the personal spirit helper of an individual is depicted both on the rocks and on the face. To become acceptable members of their communities, all Indian

children had to acquire spirit helpers through vision quests at isolated places believed to possess supernatural powers. Frequently these quests involved “fixing” one’s spirit helper or other aspects from the spirit world on the rock face by means of paint or on one’s face by tattooing (e.g., Teit 1918). Later in life adults might revisit the sites where they first acquired their spirit helpers in order to receive personal help from the spirit world, such as to cure disease or to reverse bad luck in hunting or gambling (Teit 1928). Sometimes supplicants might leave at the sites painted tally marks, repainted motifs, or gifts.

Application of red smears to the rock surfaces and in natural hollows of the Big Belt Mountains in Montana might also reflect an interaction with the rock surface and the spirit world believed to reside within the rock (e.g., Cline 1938). Among the Shuswap of the Columbia Plateau, Teit (1909:616) documented that whenever a certain healer shaman “rubbed his fingers over his face to wipe away the tears, blood oozed out and he became terrible to behold.” Shuswap Indians told Teit (1909:616) a similar story of another shaman who cured a patient by rubbing “his fingers four times across the man’s face.” “Blood came out in great quantities. This shaman had blood for one of his guardians.” The comment of another informant that blood and the color red “stood for the power of healing” (Cline 1938:44) probably sums up the significance of the smeared red pigment.

FIGURE 2 Hand-applied red pigment emanating from a natural hollow, west central Montana. Photo: Johannes Loubser



Throughout the Columbia Plateau, the shaman is distinguished from other members of the community as one who has greater but not necessarily qualitatively different powers (Park 1938). The shaman's greater powers came from more vision quests, more spirit helpers, more clearly defined spirit helpers, and better skills to benefit from spiritual assistance, such as curing diseases, than the rest of the population (Ray 1939). Unlike other cultures in the world, then, such as the southern African San, entire communities partook in the production of rock art on the Columbia Plateau. Today descendants of the rock artists still visit certain sites, often leaving behind small material items, ranging from coins to ocher powder, as testimony of their visits.

Europeans might mistake the ostensibly random scratches and smears on the rock surfaces for historic period graffiti. To prevent the accidental removal of such "graffiti" at rock art sites, conservators should first conduct background research and consultations, both on and off site. Moreover, managers who try to market these rock art sites simply in terms of their aesthetic appeal not only miss the point of their significance but also might create false expectations among visitors.

Implications

Bearing in mind that the indigenous people considered here do not view or use rock art sites as art galleries, it behooves managers and conservators trained in a Western scientific tradition to acknowledge, consult, research, and understand indigenous views and wishes. If a rock art site is viewed as a patient in need of care, then it is after all the most immediate family (i.e., people with the closest connections or most vested interests) who must decide what is best for the patient. For example, relatives might not necessarily feel that the tattooing of a family member is a bad thing, or that graffiti at a rock art site is unfavorable. Accordingly, consultation with indigenous people is necessary before removing or reintegrating the graffiti.

Another ramification of the medical analogy is that preventive care is preferable to intervention; the specialist conservator and manager should at least advise people on what is bad for the longevity of rock art, such as throwing water on the pigment. Moreover, hands-on treatments by specialists should be avoided until absolutely necessary. For example, if the site has flakes that pose no threat to the rock support, then there is no need for stabilization. If treatment is necessary,

then it is prudent to keep it minimal; like back surgery, hands-on treatments and interventions at rock art sites have a way of creating subsequent complications.

Consultation with indigenous stakeholders before intervening or implementing management decisions is always necessary. It is important that custodians and other interested parties agree on whether intervention is necessary, and, if so, what kinds of treatment should be employed. Local communities should get basic training to identify problems and to be able to conduct noninvasive treatments. It is highly advisable that workshops be arranged where local custodians receive basic training in site condition assessments and regular maintenance, such as dust removal.

As in the case of current medical practice, it is best that professional assistance be sought during emergencies or difficult situations, such as reaffixing loose slabs or removing harmful graffiti on top of rock paintings. Also, specialists should convey to interested parties that there are no miracle cures at poorly preserved sites and that as a last ditch effort alternative treatments can be explored.

Different levels of care and expertise are involved in rock art conservation; specialists and the surrounding community play different but supportive roles. As is the case in current Western medical practice, the trained specialist is expected to conduct basic condition assessment checkups, archive site records, and limit intervention only to severe cases. To do an acceptable job, the rock art specialist operates not merely within a preexisting natural landscape but also in one informed by ongoing cultural notions and practices that might have considerable antiquity.

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Why “Conserve”? Situating Southern African Rock Art in the Here and Now

Sven Ouzman

Abstract: *The language of archaeological “conservation” is often passive, officious, and removed from conditions on the ground. The fundamental question—why conserve?—is seldom asked. Yet it is often assumed a priori that conservation is both necessary and beneficial. In the reflexive spirit of regularly questioning accepted practices, this paper situates “conservation” at three southern African rock art sites. These sites help to foreground indigenous notions of materiality and history that both embrace and eschew curatorial intervention. They also speak of imperial, colonial, and apartheid pasts that carry their burdens into the present. Finally, restoring to prominence the role of the present, along with conservation’s benefits to the past and the future, offers multiple temporal, spatial, and cultural perspectives that situate conservation as a set of negotiated, evolving practices.*

Why conserve? And why, “conserve”? The first question addresses a first principle. The second question asks how words shape actions. I engage with these questions by turning archaeology’s gaze less on the past than on the present and consider how indigenous and nonindigenous attitudes to the past and its products intertwine—in positive and in conflictual ways. This intertwining is often burdened by recent and remembered histories in which inequality and violence were, and sometimes remain, prominent. Southern African¹ rock art is a powerful and accessible link between past and present, between malice and reconciliation. It is also an artifact that challenges conservation as a theory and a practice. Before moving to three rock art case studies, I offer some general thoughts on conservation as tempered by the material, human, and historic contexts.

Contexts—Competencies and Compromises

The stuff of archaeology and conservation—material culture—is invariably fragmented and its original context absent, destroyed, or radically displaced. Conservation attempts to piece these fragments into coherence by arresting or improving the artifact’s physical state or even substituting a more complete simulacrum (see Eco 1986). Best practice? For archaeologists, conservators, and museologists—perhaps. But what of the people represented by these artifacts and the artifacts’ audiences? Conserving artifacts can harden our imaginations of people of deep time, separating them from people such as ourselves who exist in shallow time (Werbart 1996). We try to overcome this separation anxiety with a continuum approach whereby the past inevitably arrives at the present, making it possible for us to work back from “our” present to “their” past. Furthermore, curators and researchers often seek out pristine artifacts that act as metonyms—microcosms of whole cultures and epochs—that conservation science is able to nudge toward a physical wholeness that substitutes for conceptual wholeness. But such conservation tends to be predicated on the principle that an artifact’s “original” state can be ascertained and restored, effectively freezing the artifact synchronically rather than adopting a wider diachronic approach that stresses its biography (Hoskins 1998) so that its life—and death—is considered as important as its putative original state. Alternatively, “preservationists” try to retain the widest possible sample of artifacts and types of artifacts given the constraints of available time, skill, and resources. Both conservative and preservative approaches try to compensate for the violation of a key archaeological principle—context.

Indeed, conservation can attract as much attention to its own technical and theoretical prowess as to the artifacts conserved—leading to a fetishization of the archaeological “record” at the expense of the makers and users of that record (Hamilakis 2003).

Indigenous Notions of Materiality and History

One critically important context that is still not routinely institutionalized in the ever-growing “audit culture” (Ouzman 2003; Strathern 2000) experienced by the heritage sector is that of indigenous and descendant voices. This is simply bad science; indigenous perspectives, where they exist, are another source of information that needs to be included in any comprehensive, durable plan for the management of any given past and its products (Stocking 1985). At a social and political level, conservation is often applied to artifacts and sites without the permission or input of the original or custodial communities that generated them. Similarly, conservators and academics usually choose etically to represent those communities via archaeological artifacts and their staging in contexts such as books and museum displays (Brown 2003). Artifacts and heritage sites are the “contact zones” (Clifford 1997) at which much intercultural imagining takes place, and can be contested terrain. We need to be aware, rather than just conscious, of the political and ethical dimensions of our work (van Drommelin 1998). For example, we must question powerful words like *heritage* (a cognate of *conservation*) that imply common interest and access but often disguise sectional interests and exclusive ownership (Omland 1997; see also Hardin 1968). Self-examination of disciplinary terms and practices can be difficult, so it is useful to use Johannes Fabian’s (2001) insight that anthropology is a form of “out of body” experience that allows us to step outside of our familiar frames of reference and adopt, however imperfectly, the perspectives of the people whose histories and identities we typically study and display.

Contextualizing Southern African Rock Art Sites

I had a glimpse into such an alternative perspective in June 2000 when consulting with resident Zhu² at Tsodilo Hills in northwesternmost Botswana prior to that site complex’s UNESCO World Heritage Site nomination. At one of Tsodilo’s more than six hundred rock art sites, I initially suggested—informed by standard conservation practice—installing a nonobtrusive dripline in one rock painting shelter to prevent

rainwater from damaging the spiritually important rock art. But Zhu adviser Toma said this was not necessary because the rock art’s authors were gone and the mountain was reclaiming its images. Toma’s comment offered a way for archaeological conservation to respond to conditions on the ground rather than uncritically apply an unvarying conservation template. Furthermore, Toma’s “folk” view is consonant with archaeological research that suggests that the rock artists believed in a spirit world located behind the rock and that the rock art “images” were understood as real Beings emerging from the San spirit world. Given the violence of imperial, colonial, and apartheid southern Africa, it is perhaps appropriate for these images/Beings to return to their home rather than be gazed upon by strangers. Toma’s insight was informed by the understanding that artifacts have lives—and also deaths. Conservation can therefore interrupt an artifact’s or site’s life cycle, upsetting the balance of life and death. Tsodilo is but a single example, and we must take care that we do not apply generalizations but rather adopt a case-by-case approach. For example, the life cycle approach can veer dangerously close to neoliberal romanticizing, creating the impression that heritage specialists condone all artifact decay and site death. This approach can also create the perception that heritage specialists are not vigilant and encourage vandalism and the illicit antiquities trade (Renfrew 2001). Fortunately, the indigenous world is inclusive of numerous conservation strategies, many of which are compatible with our own such practices.

One such instance of compatibility between indigenous and academic conservation occurred while repairing fire damage to Tadjesberg rock art national monument in central South Africa (Morris, Ouzman, and Tlhapi 2001). In September 1998 a bush fire badly damaged this site, which was popular both with tourists and with sectors of the local community, especially schoolchildren. The severity of the fire damage—extensive spalling of painted rock wall, soot covering approximately 40 percent of the over 350 rock paintings, alteration of the rock shelter’s sandstone’s crystalline structure—meant that not repairing and closing the site to public visitation was a viable conservation strategy. After all, bush fires and sandstone spalling (and frost-freezing, earth tremors, etc.) are larger processes that create these rock shelters in the first place and that are part of their ongoing lives and eventual physical deaths. But a combination of the site’s allure, personal and situational ethics, and local demands mitigated for a more active conservation intervention. None of the local communities—in their considerable diversity—had any demonstrable immediate genetic link to the site’s rock art.

The San of this region were killed or assimilated into immigrant Bantu-speaking and, later, European groups by the early 1800s. Combined with the displacement of people caused by nineteenth-century British colonialism and twentieth-century apartheid, the state had the greatest binding claim on the site as a heritage resource. As I was a civil servant at the time and in the heart of the beast, this claim seemed too exclusive, such that my colleague Gabriel Tlhapi and I felt it necessary to consult with genetic and moral descendants of Tandjesberg's rock artists. To this end the Khwe and Xun San from Angola—settled in central South Africa in 1990—provided opinions on how to intervene. That these San were, at the time, not even South African citizens was a clear irony in our site management plan. Heritage sites in southern Africa are inextricably linked to contemporary identity politics. It was therefore critical to be clear that we were driving the site's rehabilitation and would take responsibility for the consequences thereof.

Nonetheless, the broad consultative process helped us to realize that directing attention to the fire-damaged rock art rather than concealing the damage better conveyed the life history of this site. For example, one painted rock fragment was too large to reattach to the rock wall. The site's legal owner and long-term custodian, John Ligouri, wanted us to take this painted fragment to the National Museum in Bloemfontein 120 kilometers away for safekeeping. Instead, we convinced him to let us display the fragment on site in a metal cradle with interpretive notice boards that outlined the site's history, fire damage, and rehabilitation. Similarly, rather than make all of the spalled rock wall blend in with the unspalled wall, we left most spallings unaltered, except where Mike van Wieringen, a geotechnical engineer, felt this would promote structural faults. Showing visitors Tandjesberg's fire damage (fig. 1a) and our conservation interventions (fig. 1b), with their necessarily imperfect results (fig. 1c), has helped people to



FIGURE 1 Tandjesberg rock art national monument, South Africa: (a) Fire damage; (b) rehabilitation; (c) site museum. Photos: Sven Ouzman

understand that the people and products of the past are not static. Visitors also better appreciate the skills and limits of conservation professionals—information that would go unnoticed had we selected a “passive” approach by leaving the site in a seemingly pristine condition via complete restoration or by closing it to public visitation.

The “original” meanings of the Tsodilo and Tandjesberg rock art sites are by no means unimportant contexts. But because these meanings are necessarily approached via the present, the present needs must intrude into our conservation interventions. This intrusion is nowhere made clearer than in a rock art site that simultaneously exists in two geographically distinct locations and within a national consciousness.

Linton rock shelter commands a majestic view over the southern Drakensberg mountains that abut Lesotho (fig. 2a). Linton is one of hundreds of San rock art sites for which the Drakensberg was accorded UNESCO World Heritage Site status in 2000. Long before this, in 1916, the fine, detailed Linton rock paintings attracted the attention of Louis Péringuey, then director of the South African Museum (SAM) in Cape Town. Eager to bolster the museum’s rock art collection and to protect what was then perceived as a fast-fading heritage,

Péringuey arranged to have two approximately 1.85-by-0.850-meter “panels” of Linton’s rock art chiseled out (leaving behind two holes of about 5 square meters) and transported 1,050 kilometers to Cape Town (SAM archives and correspondence). The removal took place on and off between 1916 and 1918 and cost about £122-00 (SAM correspondence). Through this violent intervention (fig. 2b) the material life of Linton’s rock art fragments extends to a museum context. This geographic extension has been followed by a conceptual extension: one of Linton’s painted human figures was included in South Africa’s new coat of arms (see fig. 1 in Smith, this volume), unveiled on 27 April 2000 (Barnard 2003; Smith et al. 2000), and thus impressed into a national identity. Accordingly, the 150,000-plus people who annually view the Linton fragments ensconced in a softly lit display hall generally report feeling reverence and mystery. Yet no contextual information helps visitors to imagine where the artifact came from or what it “cost” in terms of money, effort, or destruction to the site to preserve it. Understanding these costs and the intertwining of past and present reveals a critical absence—the voices of Linton’s authors. The Linton San succumbed to colonial genocide after a protracted war of resistance, and their silence is



(a)



(b)

FIGURE 2 (a) Linton rock shelter; (b) South African Museum display (1918–present). Photos: Sven Ouzman

painful, eloquent, and especially acute at the South African Museum. On 20 March 2001 the (in)famous Bushman diorama, located in the hall next to Linton and intervisible, was closed for fear of public offense, though the diorama was one of the museum's oldest (ca. 1911) and most popular exhibits (Davison 2001):

Within the changing social context of South Africa, museums have a responsibility to reconsider their roles as sites of memory, inspiration and education. . . . In this context a decision has been taken to “archive” the famous hunter-gatherer diorama while its future is reviewed. It will not be dismantled but will be closed to the public from the end of March 2001. This move shows commitment to change and encourages debate within the museum, with the public and especially with people of Khoisan descent.³

This officious and unilateral closure of the diorama caused controversy—especially among the majority of then self-identified KhoeSan descendants who were receptive, even insistent, on keeping the diorama open. The variables that determined that it was acceptable to display rock art but not body casts of people—both artifacts collected during a particular and unequal period in history—powerfully demonstrate the complexities of conservation as concept and practice. Hiding or ameliorating the effects of violence on artifacts through conservation and simulacra-like displays patronizes visitors. The multiple processes by which the Linton fragments came to the museum are easily accommodated into standard display techniques and would seem more true to life for most South African museum visitors, who are conversant with violence and its effects (Coombes 2002). Displays that appear politically disengaged even when the material displayed speaks explicitly of destructive histories (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1993) contribute to accusations of the heritage sector's “irrelevance.”

“Of the Past, for the Future”—And What of the Present?

The perceived disjuncture between artifacts of the past and circumstances of the present can lead to decisions not to preserve certain pasts. “Sites of hurtful memory” such as sites of genocide and humiliation are often left unmemorialized and their attendant material culture allowed and encouraged to decay (Dolf-Bonekämper 2002). But too complete an absence of material cultures that are primary evidence of human

events can lead to willful amnesia. Therefore, reembedding artifacts in their physical context—in whatever state of decay or repair these artifacts or contexts may be—in the form of site museums helps to push “conservation” into a more informed and socially responsive role. Most archaeological sites are not located in cities, though the museums, archives, and universities located there do valuable expository work. But this work is necessarily derivative, and we should always be encouraged to travel beyond our familiar surrounds and experience the intangibles and tangibles of heritage sites. Among these, rock art sites enjoy good public engagement, both because of their visual nature and because of the multiple levels at which sensory input, site, and audiences intersect. Site museums have a further human dimension in that many are run by local people who transfer knowledge visually, aurally, and kinetically by invoking the power of landscape, carefully framed by curatorial interventions such as notice boards, site flow, planned surprises, and the like. On site, storytelling is immensely important and empowering (Joyce 2002). Sites are “conversation pieces” that skilled interlocutors use to discuss ongoing site and artifact biographies. In aftermath circumstances, site visits can also help to heal dislocations of people from their places (Bender and Winer 2001) by situating the site and its audiences in a wider flow of human history.

This paper is overtly political to counter common perceptions of “conservation” as politically conservative rather than as a varied and constantly evolving set of practices. Using alternative perspectives such as indigeneity, artifact biographies, and violence more closely connects our research and curation with the tenor of the societies in which we operate and which permit us to operate. But we must be aware that this connection between past and present makes us susceptible to manipulation by vested political interests. David Lowenthal observes:

Archaeology has long capitalised on public fascination with death and treasure, but its current popularity stems, I suggest, from three further attributes specific to the field. One is archaeology's unique focus on the remotest epochs of human existence, imbued with an allure of exotic, uncanny secrets hidden in the mists of time. A second is archaeology's concern with tangible remains, lending it an immediacy and credibility unique among the human sciences. The third is archaeology's patent attachment to pressing issues of identity and possession—of post-imperial hegemony and of ethnic cleansing, the retention or restitution of land and bones

and artifact—that embroil First and Third World states, mainstream and minority people. Devotion to priority, to tangibility, and to contemporary relevance have brought the discipline many genuine benefits. Archaeology, however, would benefit from acknowledging the harm as well as the good that such devotion has wrought. It might enable archaeologists to face up more frankly to often justified public doubts about the rectitude of the discipline. (2000:2)

Facing up to disciplinary rectitude in the face of public scrutiny places the present foresquare as a non-negotiable element of conservation. The challenge to archaeological conservation that seeks both epistemic rigor and contemporary relevance (Appadurai 2001) is how to let people marvel at artifacts while being aware of their place in a continuum of practice and existing in a continual state of always already becoming something else. This volume is titled *Of the Past, for the Future*, into which I would insert *in the Present*. It is true that the “present” is fleeting—as this fragment of Thomas de Quincey’s *Savannah-la-Mar* reminds us:

Look here. Put into a Roman clepsydra one hundred drops of water; let these run out as the sands in an hour-glass, every drop measuring the hundredth part of a second, so that each shall represent but the three-hundred-and-sixty-thousandth part of an hour. Now, count the drops as they race along; and, when the fiftieth of the hundred is passing, behold! forty-nine are not, because already they have perished, and fifty are not, because they are yet to come. You see, therefore, how narrow, how incalculably narrow, is the true and actual present. (1845:n.p.)

If the present is “incalculably narrow,” then so too are the specific pasts we seek to understand. Ditto the futures we hope for. But it does not mean that conservation has to be similarly narrow. Acknowledging and foregrounding the present most clearly presences our responsibility and accountability. It is also our recompense. Archaeology and conservation are solitary, laborious, and mostly unthanked activities. Our rewards should not be deferred but enjoyed now. The present lets us appreciate artifacts in this moment, in addition to imagining their past and future lives and deaths.

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Notes

- 1 Here “southern Africa” refers to the modern countries of Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Moçambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe.
- 2 The Zhu are one of the many “San” or “Bushman” communities resident in southern Africa. These communities are descendants of the region’s First People, who are responsible for making much of the region’s rock art.
- 3 Available at www.museums.org/za/sam/resources/arch/bushdebate.htm. Accessed 8 June 2002.

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Omara Khan Masoodi has worked at the National Museum in Kabul, Afghanistan, since 1976. When the museum was bombed and looted in 1993, he inspired other members of the staff to assist him in safeguarding whatever was possible and assessing and recording the damage. Taking extraordinary risks to preserve the most important items, secretly removing some to safe places and disguising others, Masoodi was directly responsible for saving a large proportion of what remains of the museum's unique collections. In 2001 he was named director of the National Museum. He has continued his efforts to rehabilitate the museum building and restore its collections, as well as prevent the plunder of Afghanistan's important historical and cultural sites. He is president of the ICOM National Committee of Afghanistan and recipient of the Prince Claus award for his courage and his continuing commitment to defending and promoting culture in the most extreme circumstances.

Frank G. Matero is professor of architecture, chair of the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation at the Graduate School of Design, and director and founder of the Architectural Conservation Laboratory at the University of Pennsylvania. He is also a member of the Graduate Group in the Department of Art History and is a research associate of the University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. His teaching and research is focused on historic building technology and the conservation of masonry and earthen structures, surface finishes, and archaeological sites, and issues related to preservation and appropriate technology for traditional societies and places.

Webber Ndoro is working for ICCROM in the Africa 2009 Programme, which seeks to develop capacity to manage and conserve sub-Saharan Africa's immovable heritage. From 1994 to 2002 he taught heritage management at the University of Zimbabwe, and before that he was involved with the conservation program at the Great Zimbabwe World Heritage Site.

Sven Ouzman is former head of the Rock Art Department, National Museum, South Africa (1994–2002), and currently a Fulbright Scholar at the University of California, Berkeley. His research interests include contemporary visual culture,

nonvisual aspects of artifacts, indigenous intellectual property rights, rock art, and origin sites. His conservation interests center on developing nonurban sites for community empowerment.

Gaetano Palumbo is director of archaeological conservation for Africa, Europe, and the Middle East at the World Monuments Fund and Honorary Lecturer at the University College London. Previously, he taught management of archaeological sites at the University College London and was a project specialist at the Getty Conservation Institute. He has consulted for UNESCO, ICOMOS, the World Bank, and the European Community on training, site management, site interpretation, and development.

Jerry Podany is head of antiquities conservation at the J. Paul Getty Museum. His archaeological conservation fieldwork has included projects in Syria, Egypt, Greece, Peru, Italy, and Tanzania. He has led collections management projects and training seminars related to protecting collections from earthquake damage for the Turkish Ministry of Culture at the Topkapi Palace and the National Archaeological Museum; conducted seismic risk assessments for museums in Taiwan and in Kobe, Japan; and has advised a number of U.S. museums on seismic mitigation for exhibitions. He currently serves on the Board of Heritage Preservation, a nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C., dedicated to advancing the preservation of cultural heritage. In addition, he is an adjunct professor at the University of Southern California and an advisor to the Cultural Affairs Council of the City of Los Angeles.

Nelly Robles García is senior researcher with the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) in Mexico and Director of the archaeological zone of Monte Albán, a World Heritage Site. She was trained as an archaeologist at the National School of Anthropology and History in Mexico City, in pre-Hispanic architectural restoration at the National School of Conservation, Restoration, and Museums in Mexico City, and as an anthropologist at the University of Georgia. Her professional interests lie in the areas of Mesoamerican archaeology, archaeological heritage conservation, management of archaeological resources, cultural tourism, and the history of Mesoamerican archaeology. She is an active member of ICOMOS and ICAHM and a member of the Society for American Archaeology Board of Directors. She is a member of the governing council of ICCROM and of INAH's Council of Archaeology.

Neil Silberman is coordinator of International Programs at the Ename Center for Public Archaeology and Heritage Presentation in Belgium. He is a historian with a special interest in the politics and policy of public heritage. He served for ten years as a contributing editor for *Archaeology* magazine in the United States and is a frequent contributor to other archaeological and general-interest periodicals.

Benjamin W. Smith is director of the Rock Art Research Institute and acting head of the Archaeology Division of the School of Geography, Archaeology, and Environmental Sciences at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. He is treasurer and secretary of the Association of Southern African Professional Archaeologists and the African Representative for the Society of Africanist Archaeologists. Smith was educated at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne (B.A. hons., 1991) and Cambridge University (Ph.D., 1995). His research interests include cognitive archaeology, theory and method in rock art studies, rock art management, and the past and present meanings of the rock arts of Africa.

Sharon Sullivan is adjunct professor in the School of Natural and Rural Systems Management, University of Queensland, and adjunct professor in the Department of Archaeology and Paleoanthropology, School of Human and Environmental Studies, University of New England. Previously, Sullivan was deputy executive director of the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service and executive director of the Australian Heritage Commission. She is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and a member of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. She has worked extensively in the field of cultural heritage management.

Hedley Swain is head of Early London History and Collections at the Museum of London and has worked in London archaeology for many years. He is an honorary lecturer at the Institute of Archaeology, University College, and also teaches at Birkbeck College, University of London and Royal Holloway, University of London. He is currently chair of the British Society of Museum Archaeologists and Archaeological Archives Forum. In 1998 he published a major survey of archaeological archives in England.

Phenyo Churchill Thebe is senior curator of archaeology at the Botswana National Museum, responsible for coordinating

the Research and Rock Art Unit. Previously, he was site manager at Tsodilo, where he was responsible for the successful implementation of the Tsodilo Management Plan and the nomination of the monument as a World Heritage Site. He received a B.A. degree from the University of Botswana in October 1966. In September 2002 he was a Fulbright Scholar at the graduate school of the University of Texas at Austin. Among Thebe's research interests are lithic micro-wear studies and cultural resource management.

Wang Jingchen has been director of the Liaoning Provincial Cultural Relics and Archaeology Research Institute since 2000 and is executive chief editor of Liaoning *Provincial Cultural Relics Journal*. For some seventeen years prior to that, he worked as director, deputy director, and a staff member in the Liaoning Provincial Cultural Relics Management Office and was responsible for several national- and provincial-level protected sites. He is a graduate of the Department of History, Liaoning University, and has published on the stele of Liaoning and the restoration of Zhaoyang Pagoda and has compiled publications on Liaoning archaeology.

Willeke Wendrich is associate professor of Egyptian archaeology at the University of California, Los Angeles. She co-directed the excavations at the Greco-Roman Red Sea harbor town of Berenike for eight years (1994–2001) and at present is co-director of a large survey and excavation project in the Fayum. Wendrich received her Ph.D. in 1999 from Leiden University, the Netherlands.

Gamini Wijesuriya is project manager, Heritage Settlements, at ICCROM. Prior to November 2004 he was principal regional specialist with the Department of Conservation of the Government of New Zealand. From 1983 to 1999 he was director of conservation, Department of Archaeology, for the Government of Sri Lanka. He has worked closely with the World Heritage Centre and the two advisory bodies, ICOMOS and ICCROM, and is currently vice president of the World Archaeological Congress.

Jim Williams, art historian, anthropologist, and archaeologist (National Autonomous University of Mexico and University of Paris, Sorbonne), has worked for UNESCO since 1990, first as a consultant in culture and education and in the Executive Office of the Director-General and later as program specialist in the Culture Sector. For two years, he was UNESCO culture adviser in Afghanistan. Currently, he is head of the Africa

Unit, which includes all the sub-Saharan Africa member states and is also in charge of sixteen European member states, including the Russian Federation, in the Europe-Africa region at the Division of Cultural Heritage. His tasks consist of direct assistance to these countries in the development of policies and strategies for the preservation of their cultural heritage through fund-raising, preparation, implementation, and evaluation of extrabudgetary projects. Williams is an expert in antique oriental carpets, and in 1990, after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, he undertook a mission for UNESCO to Kabul and Mazar-i Sharif to reintroduce natural dyes and traditional designs to the Afghan carpet industry. This program was repeated in Herat in 1994 and is still ongoing and self-sufficient.

Rita Wright has conducted archaeological research in Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan and is currently assistant director of the Harappa Archaeological Research Project and director of the Beas Regional Survey. Her principal areas of research are urbanism and state development and the negotiation of power relations on local (gender, class, ethnicity, and age) and regional and interregional levels (technology, social boundaries, trade, and exchange). Wright is also associate professor of anthropology at New York University, where she teaches courses in cultural heritage, stewardship, and ethical issues in archaeology, and president of the New York City Society of the Archaeological Institute of America.

Wu Xiaohong is associate professor and vice director of the Department of Conservation Science and laboratory director at the School of Archaeology and Museology, Beijing University, China. She has a Ph.D. in chemistry. Wu's special field of interest is archaeological sciences. She has been involved in a variety of nationally ranked research projects and has published many academic research papers.

Wolfgang W. Wurster received a diploma in architecture from the Technical University in Munich. He later specialized in archaeological investigations, the history of architecture, and town planning. His doctoral research was on a classical Greek temple at Aegina. After field research in Greece, Italy, and Turkey with the German Archaeological Institute, he dedicated his research to the pre-Hispanic cultures of Latin America, especially Ecuador, Peru, and Guatemala. In 1980, after directing the excavation of the Dionysos theater in Athens for the Greek government, he became scientific director of KAVA,

the Commission for Extra-European Archaeology of the German Archaeological Institute. He was the first director of this institution from 1992 until his death in late 2003. He published 130 articles and 5 books, mainly on historical architecture, archaeology, and town planning.

Yang Zhijun is director of the Department of Protection of Monuments and Sites in China's State Administration of Cultural Heritage. Previously, he was deputy director of the Heilongjiang Provincial Cultural Relics Bureau and director of the Heilongjiang Provincial Museum. A graduate of Beijing University's Department of History with a major in archaeology, Yang Zhijun has expertise in archaeological survey and excavation, survey and research at the national level, museum interpretation and exhibition, and conservation administration and management. He has published widely in the field of archaeology, particularly with regard to sites in northeastern China.

Yuan Jiarong has been director of the Hunan Provincial Cultural Relics and Archaeology Research Institute since 1982. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the Department of Archaeology at Beijing University. From 1975 to 1982, he conducted archaeological work at the Hunan Provincial Museum. His expertise is in the Paleolithic period, specifically the environment in the Hunan area. He is also a visiting researcher at the Ancient Civilization Research Center of the Chinese Social Science Academy, the Lingnan Archaeology Center of Zhongshan University, and the Longgupo Wushan Ape-man Research Institute. Under his guidance, some two hundred Paleolithic sites were discovered, making Hunan province one of the most well documented Paleolithic regions in China. Among these, the Dao County Yuchanyan site project was selected as one of the top ten archaeology projects in 1995. He has published more than thirty works, on topics ranging from the origins of rice to Hunan Paleolithic stoneware.

Eugenio Yunis is a civil engineer and development economist who worked for many years as consultant throughout the world, advising governments, local authorities, and the tourism industry on development, marketing, organization, and the environment. From 1982 to 1989 he was in charge of the World Tourism Organization's (WTO's) activities in the Americas and Europe and was deputy director for technical cooperation. In 1990 he was appointed director general of the National Tourism Board of Chile, his home country. Yunis

returned to the WTO in 1997 to head the Sustainable Development of Tourism Section. He is responsible for the organization's program on the development and management of all forms of sustainable tourism. He handles WTO relationships with UN agencies involved in sustainable development mat-

ters, including the preparation and outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. He directed WTO's activities related to the International Year of Ecotourism and the World Ecotourism Summit.

Errata for *Of the Past, For the Future: Integrating Archaeology and Conservation, Proceedings of the Conservation Theme of the 5th World Archaeological Congress*

COVER

Tell Mozan/Urkesh (northeastern Syria), one of the most important urban centers of early Hurrian civilization. The mud-brick walls of the Royal Palace are being preserved using a simple protective system using canvas covering over a metal structure. Photo: Courtesy Giorgio Buccellati, International Institute for Mesopotamian Area Studies.

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Figure 2. KM 5.2465 Sebbakh train at area allotted to Daira at close of season 1926-27, Karanis, Egypt, Kelsey Museum of Archaeology.

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Figure 1. Courtesy of Roland Besenval, director, Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan (DAFA).