

Imagining a ‘pleasant place’: a rock engraving site in the Trans-Gariep Nama Karoo, South Africa

¹Jeremy Hollmann and ²Marlize Lombard

¹Rock Art Research Institute, School of Geography, Archaeology and Environmental Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050 South Africa; jeremy.hollmann@gmail.com

²Palaeo-Research Institute, University of Johannesburg, PO Box 524, Auckland Park, 2006 South Africa; mlombard@uj.ac.za

ABSTRACT

The Keimoes Engraving Site 01 (KES01) north of Keimoes, Northern Cape Province, is a recently documented site with just over 50 recorded instances of rock markings. These comprise engravings of human footprints, animal motifs and smoothed and pecked areas on an outcrop. The KES01 engravings provide an opportunity to investigate the ‘problem of the animals’: the predominance of animal images and their frequent presentation as solitary figures portrayed in a standing posture. This phenomenon has been noted previously but not investigated. Here the concept of ‘wind’, a prominent theme in nineteenth-century *xam* ethnography and twenty-first and twentieth-century anthropological and ethnographic studies, is the basis for imagining what the engraved images ‘do’. It is argued that the engravings themselves have a ‘wind’ that is specific to the potency of the animal depicted. Their presence on an outcrop in the vicinity of a pan, a prominent steep-sided koppie (butte) and several funnel-like structures (kites) is seen as part of an invisible network of interacting winds that contribute to what one of the nineteenth-century *xam* described as a ‘pleasant place’.

KEY WORDS: elephant, giraffe, kites, monitor lizards, animal behaviour, footprints, wind, Bleek and Lloyd Collection.

We recently recorded a rock engraving¹ site that we named Keimoes Engraving Site 01 (KES01), about 23 km north of the village of Keimoes, in the Trans-Gariep (Gariep = Orange River) or northern Nama Karoo, South Africa (Figs 1–3). The engravings seem not to have been previously recorded or published. The site provides an opportunity to explore the nature of a rock art locality and the significance and possible functions of engraved images at KES01 and elsewhere. In the process of recording the site and in subsequent research we realised that the topographical setting of the engravings was rich in cultural associations. We have used our ‘archaeological imaginations’ (Shanks 2012; McGranaghan 2017) to create a scenario about the choices the image-makers made about the location of the imagery, the choice of subject matter and the possible role of this imagery in past southern African hunter-gatherer societies.

Interpretative research on hunter-gatherer engraving sites that overwhelmingly feature animal imagery is relatively sparse when compared with such research into rock paintings. The apparent lack of finer iconographic details in many images and the comparatively few compositions or scenes when likened with the wealth of detail and nuance of rock paintings partially explains why researchers have not done much research on the interpretation of engravings.

Three long-recognised characteristics of many of the hunter-gatherer engraving sites in the Karoo and the Kalahari attracted our attention. First, with some exceptions (e.g. Kinderdam and Verdwaaivlakte, about 410 km east of KES01 near Vryburg,

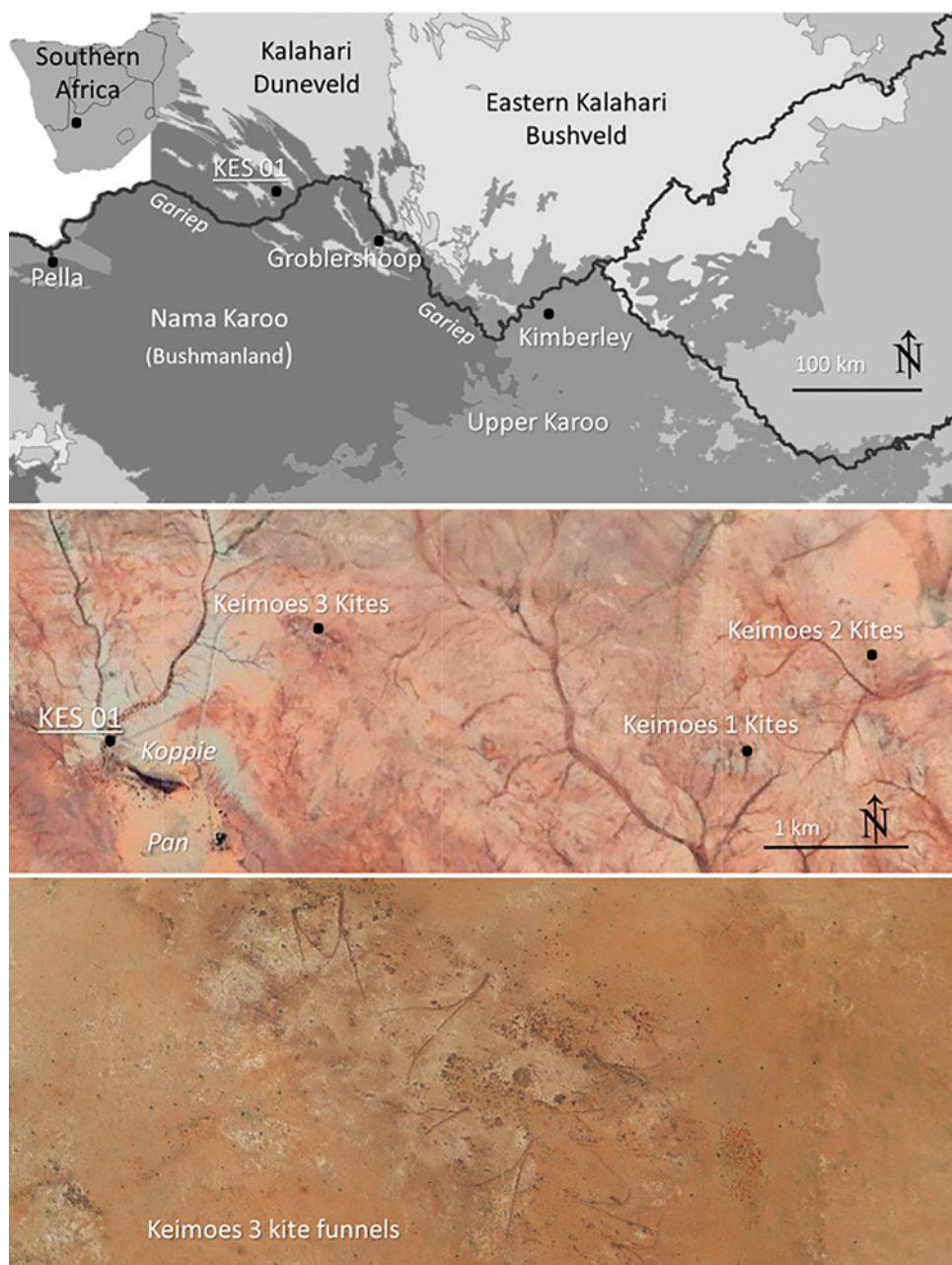


Fig. 1. Top: The location of the Keimoes Engraving Site 01 (KES01) in relation to the surrounding bioregions (Mucina & Rutherford 2006). Middle: The engraved outcrop in relation to the koppie, pan and the three known kite sites. Bottom: These funnel-like structures (“kites”) are located less than 2 km from the pan and the koppie.



Fig. 2. A prominent koppie lies about 400 m east of the engravings. A dark plume of smoke at the far right marks the closest farmhouse. The pan lies about 800 m beyond the bushes in the centre right of the photograph.



Fig. 3. KES01 is a glaciated pavement of gneiss about 67 m long and 15 m at its widest. The outcrop is in a relatively wide, sandy watercourse. It is about 1 m high at its maximum. The engravings are concentrated on the surfaces in the left foreground and right-hand centre of the picture.

North West Province) images of animals outnumber depictions of humans (Morris 1988: 113; Fock & Fock 1989: fig. 197). An anthropomorphic presence, in the form of engraved footprints that are commonly found north of the Gariep (derived from *!garib* the Khoekhoe name for the Orange River), is nonetheless manifest (Morris 1988). Typically, the imagery comprises concentrations of animal images on large and prominent boulders and single animal images on smaller rocks in the vicinity (e.g. Scherz 1970: 123; Dowson 1992: 5; McGranaghan 2016: 160, 162). This tendency is also apparent at KES01: although the images are all on a single large outcrop, there are discrete concentrations of images and single images arranged on different parts of the surface.

Secondly, engraved imagery contains relatively fewer explicit depictions of dance, healing, the ‘taming’ of animals, or recognisable rain-making activities, all of which commonly occur in painted imagery (Lewis-Williams 1981; McGranaghan & Challis 2016). And although the images of eland, elephant, giraffe, etc. are known to be *n|om* (strong or potent) animals, there is very little engraved imagery showing people interacting with them, while this is a common theme in the rock paintings.

Finally, there are far fewer ‘scenes’ or compositions of any sort when we compare the engravings with rock paintings. Often the engraved animals are not depicted overtly interacting with any other images even when several images are closely juxtaposed. They are commonly depicted in stationary postures. In this contribution we aim to explore, unpack and ‘imagine’ aspects of these observations as they may have pertained to hunter-gatherer engraved image-making.

THE KEIMOES ENGRAVING SITE 01

KES01 (Figs 1–3) is situated in a complex geographical region characterised by a range of different geological formations, micro-climates, vegetation and veld types (see Lombard et al. 2020: supplementary material). It is an arid landscape typified by dolerite koppies (buttes and mesas), plains and pans (Parkington et al. 2008: 27; Morris 2012: 53). Although the region has been described as a ‘last frontier’ for Europeans (e.g. Penn 1995a), for millennia it was a heartland for San hunter-gatherers, and later for Khoekhoe pastoralists (e.g. Smith 1995a) whose ancestors migrated south from East Africa and admixed with local hunter-gatherers between about 2000 and 1300 years ago (Breton et al. 2014; Schlebusch et al. 2017).

From the first European encounters with its inhabitants (see Coetsé 1760, Wikar 1779 and Van Reenen 1791 in Mossop 1935; also Raper & Boucher 1988), and from the archaeological and historical accounts (Penn 1986; 1995a, b; Smith 1995a; Parsons 2004, 2008), it is clear that it has been a complex socio-political landscape for at least the past 2000 years. Archaeologically, the region remains relatively underexplored so that only recently we discovered ‘desert kites’ (anthropogenic, stone-built landscape modifications) (Fig. 1, bottom) that further allude to the socio-economic complexity of the region (Lombard & Badenhorst 2019; Lombard et al. 2020).

KES01 is not a large site and there are relatively few engraved motifs—53 by our count—compared with some other Northern Cape engraving sites, such as Biesjespoort West, which has 182 recorded motifs (Fock & Fock 1989: 134; Lange 2013: 5). We have grouped the engravings into eight areas that are roughly based on concentrations

of motifs (Figs 4–10; Tables 1 & 2). The areas were determined based on the degree of proximity of images to each other in a given portion of the engraved part of the outcrop. In the majority of cases, the areas correspond to concentrations of images positioned next to each other. In the other instances, the area demarcated contains a few more widely interspersed images or a single isolated engraving.

The images were pecked on an outcrop of gneiss (Figs 2 & 3), a component of the Namaqua-Natal metamorphic belt (Stephen Tooth pers. comm.). The outcrop lies in a sandy watercourse that would channel water into a pan about 800 m southeast of the engraving site, when it rains sufficiently (Figs 1, 19, 20). The outcrop is about 67 m long, 15 m at its widest, and approximately 1 m above the surrounding ground level at its highest, so that water would flow over and around it when the watercourse is flooded. The engravings are concentrated in an area of about 7 m long and 3 m wide on the northeast side of the outcrop. The outer surface of the gneiss outcrop consists of ‘plates’ about 20–50 mm thick; some of these surfaces are engraved, cracking and breaking off in places (e.g. Figs 3, 4, 6). The coarseness of the substrate and the weathered state of the engravings mean that it was not possible to resolve iconographic details of some of the imagery with a high degree of certainty. Photographic techniques like photogrammetry and reflectance transformation imaging (RTI) recording may help to identify the outlines of the pecked images. Many of the engravings are very shallow (approximately 1 mm in depth). There is very little contrast in colour between the substrate and the areas exposed by the image-makers. Despite these difficulties, we were able to identify many, but not all, animal images to species level.

All of the engravings are pecked; some are outline pecked, and some partially outline pecked with some fully pecked areas, while others are fully pecked (see Morris 1988 for a discussion of the various modes of engraving images on rock). The exclusive use of the pecking technique (rather than scraping or hairline engraving) at the site supports Morris’s (1988: 111) observation that pecked engravings occur north of the Gariep while engraving sites to its south tend to feature scraped engravings. We noted that the rock surface immediately adjacent to the engravings is noticeably smoother than the surrounding rock (Figs 5, 9, 10). The polished appearance of these areas is probably the result of contact between people’s bodies and the substrate.

We have not sought to apply any dating protocols to the KES01 rock art. Absolute dating techniques for engravings are nowhere near as developed as the techniques used for age approximations obtained in rock paintings (Parkington et al. 2008: 53, 87; Hollmann 2018). Nor do there appear to be imminent prospects for any improvement. In the arid climatic conditions of the area the spheroidal weathering of the outcrop is, geologically speaking, slow (Stephen Tooth, pers. comm.), and in the absence of images of animals from the historical period (e.g. sheep, cattle and horses), the engravings could be anything from a few hundred to thousands of years old. Lombard and colleagues (2020) have argued that the nearby kites were used for successive generations between about 2000 and 300 years ago, a time of contact between Khoekhoe herders and San hunter-gatherers along the Central Gariep and its hinterland. However, we do not know whether the making of the engravings at KES01 was contemporary with the use of the kites. Apart from the kites, Zoovoorbij Cave (Smith 1995b: 265–80) is the closest archaeological site to KES01, located just



Fig. 4. Area 1 (digital tracing): a giraffe with prominent tail, neck bent and head hanging. To the right is an antelope or bovid, and above that, an unidentified herbivore.



Fig. 5. Area 2 (digital tracing): there are several giraffe including a giraffe pair, three saurian motifs, an ostrich and another large bird.



Fig. 6. Area 3 (digital tracing): approximately 14 fully pecked images including saurian motifs, an elephant, an ostrich, other large herbivorous mammals, and a single footprint.



Fig. 7. Area 4 (digital tracing): several footprints and animal images including (top right) an antelope with long curved horns, and a saurian motif at bottom right.



Fig. 8. Area 5 (digital tracing): a single, fully pecked depiction of a giraffe, at bottom left. Engravings from Area 4 can be seen in the background.



Fig. 9. Area 6 (digital tracing): two footprints.



Fig. 10. Area 7: one of two areas that have been smoothed and pecked. These are traces of activities that suggest the presence of people sitting and striking the rock, possibly as a percussive accompaniment to other activities, such as singing and dancing.

TABLE 1
Number of images per area and image totals. Results are arranged alphabetically according to motif category.

Number of categories	Motif category	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8	Total motifs
1	Antelope	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
2	Anthropomorph	0	1 (?)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1(?)
3	Elephant	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
4	Footprint	0	1	2	4	0	2	0	0	9
5	Giraffe	1	4	0	1	1	0	0	1	8
6	Ostrich	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
7	Peck marks and smoothed surfaces	0	0	0	0	0	0	2 areas	0	2
8	Quadruped	2	4	4	2	0	0	0	0	12
9	Saurian motif	0	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	7
10	Unidentified motifs	2	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	6
	Total motifs per area	5	20	13	9	1	2	2	1	53

over 10 km to its south. Although artefacts of Middle Stone Age character were reported from the lower units at Zoovoorbij Cave, radiocarbon ages indicated a time depth of only 4 000–3 000 years.

The KES01 engravings are of footprints and animal motifs (Figs 5–7, 9; Table 1). There are no instances of engraved motifs of designs or artefact. As these motifs are almost invariably close to permanent water sources (Fock 1969: 103, 126), their absence from KES01, which is located at an erratically available water source, is not surprising.

The subject matter of the engraved images in central South Africa, with their emphasis on particular animal species and their exclusion of others, seems to have ‘remained fairly similar through ten millennia until the disruptive impacts of the past two thousand years’ (Parkington et al. 2008: 116–17). Throughout this time, there was a sustained emphasis on engraved animal images, and on particular animals. The changes brought about by Bantu-speaking or European farmers reached the Central Gariep only during the nineteenth century—long after the settlement by agriculturalists in more farming-friendly regions (e.g. Penn 1995a, b). We discuss the choice of animal subject matter, and their significances for the hunter-gatherer people who made them, in more detail below, focusing only on certain image categories at KES01. Our selection includes the most thought-provoking and potentially enlightening image categories, including footprints, saurian motifs, giraffe and elephant.

Footprints

KES01 has nine U-shaped footprint images on three distinct parts of the outcrop (Figs 5–7, 9; Table 1). Some are outline pecked, and others fully pecked. Most of the footprints are concentrated in two groups on the outcrop. Each footprint seems to be a single entity on its own, as there appear to be no clear engravings of paired footprints with complementary left and right feet. As is the case with engravings of footprints at other sites, these are not organised into tracks, that is, a succession of footprints (e.g. Walker 1997: 99). With the exception of a single right footprint, we were unable to discern whether a particular engraved foot depicts a left or right foot.

There are engraved footprints (all pecked) at four sites within about 100 km of KES01. They are:

- Biesjespoort, west of KES01 (Fock & Fock 1989: fig. 141; Lange 2006: 105–7);
- Louisvale, southeast of KES01, on the southern banks of the Gariep (Fock & Fock 1989: 134; Lange 2006: 105–7);
- Piet Rooiberg and Eindgoed, both south of the Gariep and southeast of KES01 (Fock & Fock 1989: fig. 141, 133).

Footprint engravings are characteristic of many hunter-gatherer engraving sites north of the Gariep. They have been recorded in Namibia by Scherz (1970), in Botswana by Walker (1997) and in northwestern Zimbabwe by Haynes (2010).

Saurian motifs

We recorded seven engravings of saurian images (Figs 11, 12). Saurians are not common in southern African hunter-gatherer engraved rock art. The only published images of what have been identified as ‘lizards’ (Deacon & Foster 2005: 89) and an ‘agama



Fig. 11. Fully pecked saurian motif, identified here as a Nile monitor lizard, or water leguaan (*Varanus niloticus*). Digital tracing at right. Area 3.



Fig. 12. Fully pecked saurian image. Digital tracing at right. Area 3.



Fig. 13. A Nile monitor lizard, or water leguaan (*Varanus niloticus*) basking on a concrete causeway next to a river. Comparison of the shape and size of the head, position of limbs and the length and thickness of the tail suggest that the saurian motifs at KES01 depict water leguaans. Photograph by Rodger Smith.

lizard’ (Morris 2012: pl. 23, 172) occur at Rooipoort and Klipfontein, respectively, both engraving sites near Kimberley, Northern Cape (about 380 km southeast of KES01).

Closer to KES01, the Focks identified (but did not illustrate) an engraving of what they called a leguaan (Nile monitor lizard, *Varanus niloticus*) at an engraving site about 25 km southeast, near Louisvale (Fock & Fock 1989: 134). Lange could not relocate the site, which might have been destroyed in the process of establishing vineyards on the land (Lange 2006: 107).

As distinct from engravings of other animals whose size is familiar to us, the saurian depictions in themselves provide no idea of scale. Are these small lizards, monitor lizards or crocodiles? Or were the motifs not intended to depict an actual species?

We think it unlikely that the motifs depict crocodiles, on the basis of their morphology and because crocodiles are thought not to have inhabited the Gariep, Vaal, Caledon or Fish rivers, as the water temperatures are too low for them to thrive (Dornan 1934: 495). Bleek and Lloyd’s teachers mentioned ‘lizards’ of various kinds, in particular the agama lizard, whose territorial behaviour was believed to influence the coming of rain (*Digital Bleek and Lloyd* (hereafter *DB&L*): L.VIII.3: 6232 rev.–6234 rev.; 6259–6261; Hollmann 2004: 143–44). The link between agama lizards and the upper Karoo landscape has been explored by Deacon (1988) and Deacon and Foster (2005: 89).

We argue that water leguaans (i.e. the Nile monitor lizard, *Varanus niloticus*) are depicted at KES01. The motifs have characteristic features of these lizards: a narrow, pointed head with a thick neck; short, robust legs extended sideways, not bent at the knee; and a thick tail about the same length as the body. The same features point away from an interpretation of the motifs as agama lizards and, specifically, the ground agama (*Agama aculeata*). Agama lizards have large, heart-shaped heads, almost no neck, rounded bodies, longer and thinner legs that are tucked in,² and a thinner tail (see Diäkwain’s drawings of a male and female *!khan* (lizard) in *DB&L*: UCTLB D Di003, UCTLB

D Di004). We conclude therefore that the image-makers depicted water leguaans at KES01 rather than any other kind of lizard.

Water leguaans are impressive-looking lizards up to 2.4 m in length, half of which comprises a very strong tail (Fig. 13). Their hairless bodies are strikingly and colourfully patterned. They can move very quickly when necessary, have strong legs and sharp claws, and are expert tree climbers and strong swimmers (Szczepaniuk n.d.). They are aggressive and dangerous. Angry water leguaans arch their backs, lash their tails and hiss loudly when cornered, and may bite and 'eject foul-smelling matter' to repel an intruder (Szczepaniuk n.d.). They are scavengers and hunters that stalk and pounce upon their prey using their powerful jaws and claws to kill and dismember victims. Males may fight each other in what have been described as 'violent wrestling matches' (Szczepaniuk n.d.).

From the point of view of their behaviour and habits, water leguaans could have travelled the 23 km overland from the Gariep to this semi-arid area when the pan had filled after good rains, although whether they actually did is not necessarily relevant to our thinking about the water leguaan motifs. In this scenario it is the water leguaan itself and its cultural associations that are salient, as we shall later discuss.

Giraffe

We recorded seven giraffe motifs on the outcrop (Table 1). Their presence at KES01 fits with the more general distribution of engraved giraffe imagery in southern Africa. Engravings of giraffe are much more numerous north of the Gariep and extend into parts of what is now Namibia and Botswana, while they are comparatively scarce south of the Gariep (Morris 2012: 173). None of the giraffe engravings at KES01 depict the striking patterning of giraffe skin; this detail is sometimes included, as at the nearby site of Biesjespoort (Lange 2006: fig. 6.7) and elsewhere (e.g. Scherz 1975: figs 170:3, 171:4, 177:1; see also Dowson 1992: figs 85, 88, 945, 138, 170). The coarse texture of some of the images at KES01 makes it very difficult in some cases to perceive the finer details of the engraved giraffe, especially of the heads of some of the images. The pair of engraved giraffe images in Area 2 is an exception and fine details are visible.

Solitary, standing giraffe

Four of the giraffe images are portrayed standing on their own, apparently motionless except in two cases where the tail is extended (Figs 14, 15; Table 2 after the references). Their static posture does not mean that they are not 'doing anything', however—animals are always 'behaving' (Apps 1992). Images of solitary standing animals (Fig. 16) are potentially as meaningful as images of animals in what some might regard as more dynamic postures. From an animal behaviour perspective, the seemingly motionless individual giraffe engraved at KES01 may be actively practising 'self-exposure' (Walther 1984: 70), a form of long-range communication practised by animals with good vision and living in relatively open habitats. Mature giraffe bulls advertise their dominance widely by standing laterally to display their size and strength to females, and at the same time warn competing males in the area to stay away. As Walther (1984: 70) noted of the dominance displays of wildebeest, the giraffe bull's display communicates a message: 'Here is an adult bull giraffe, see how strong and territorial he is'.

Other nuanced giraffe behaviours are no doubt communicated but are not explored here.



Fig. 14. Fully pecked engraving of a giraffe with its neck bent and head hanging down. Bottom: digital tracing. Area 1.



Fig. 15. Fully pecked engraving of a giraffe with its tail raised. Digital tracing at right. Area 2c.

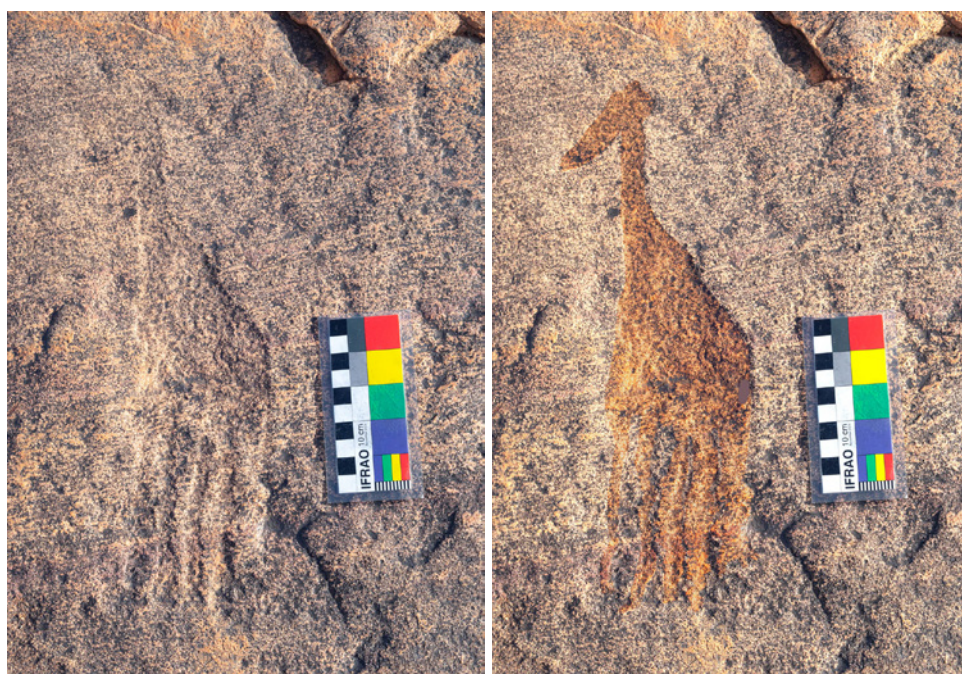


Fig. 16. Engraving of solitary giraffe with long bushy tail. Digital tracing at right. Area 4.



Fig. 17. Fully pecked depiction of two male giraffe engaging in sparring and mounting behaviour. Both have their tails between their back legs. The giraffe on the left is lifting its front legs as it prepares to mount the giraffe on the right. Digital tracing at right. Area 2a.

Sparring and mounting giraffe

Two giraffe engraved in Area 2 are in an unusual composition (Fig. 17). At first glance it seems that the giraffe on the left has a penis and is about to mount the giraffe on the right. However, closer observation and knowledge of giraffe behaviour shows that the ‘penis’ is in fact the giraffe’s tail that is tucked between its legs. The tail of the giraffe on the right is tucked between its legs in a similar position. Both giraffe images have similar sized heads and bodies, a detail that suggests that these two are of the same sex or are still very young.

The position of the tails is important because it suggests a very specific context in which adolescent males mount each other—a form of play known as sparring (Dagg & Foster 1976: 123–24; Pratt & Anderson 1985: 780–81; Estes 1991: 205). When adolescent giraffe mount each other they usually put their tails between their legs (Dagg & Foster 1976: fig. 9.5). At other moments (Pratt & Anderson 1985: 774),

male giraffes stand side-by-side in parallel or reverse parallel position and deliberately swing their heads and necks against each other ... The blows are almost always delivered gently in the tempo of a stately dance, there are sometimes long pauses, and when they stop sparring they are likely to browse side-by-side.

Estes (1991: 205) emphasises the co-ordinated manner in which the young males spar with each other using rhythmic and synchronised movements and counter-movements reminiscent of ‘the sinuous grace of a stylised dance’.

Elephant

There is a single engraving of an elephant at KES01 (Fig. 18). This fully pecked image is very shallow but there can be no mistaking the long legs and the shape of the elephant's feet. To judge by the positioning of the legs, it is standing still. The elephant has its trunk raised in the s-shape known as the 'periscope sniff' (Poole & Granli 2009, 2011: 122–23, fig. 8.16). Elephants raise their trunks in this fashion when they want to detect wind-borne scents, including the smell of approaching rain.

Elephant were formerly plentiful along the Gariep, at least until the end of the eighteenth century (e.g. Mossop 1935; Raper & Boucher 1988; Rookmaaker 1989). Mention is made of people using elephant paths to make their way through the thickets lining the Gariep (Wikar 1799, in Mossop 1935: 41; see Boshoff et al. 2002; Parkington et al. 2008: 29 for more on elephant 'paths'). After good rains elephant herds would move from the Gariep into the surrounding plains, over which they would range for hundreds of kilometres. Elephant may have included the pan at KES01 in their home range and would go there when they knew that conditions in that area would be suitable. By the early nineteenth century, however, elephant south of the river seem to have disappeared completely, as they are not mentioned in the observations of European travellers at the time (Morris 2012: 65–6).

The Focks recorded elephant engravings to the south (Putsonderwater and Eindgoed) and at Biesjespoort, west of KES01 (Fock & Fock 1989: 130, 131, 134). There is also elephant imagery in the nineteenth-century |xam heartland about 200 km south of KES01 in the Strandberg (Deacon 1997; Deacon & Foster 2005: 64, 65). In common with the overall impression that engraved animal imagery tends towards depictions of solitary images and static postures, most of the engraved elephant images stand alone or in concentrations in which they are all stationary (e.g. Fock & Fock 1989: figs 143, 144.2, 144.5; Deacon & Foster 2005: 64, 65). Images of what are probably mother-and-calf groupings (equally static) are another important theme in the engravings. At Keurfontein and Springbokoog (both over 200 km south of KES01, in Northern Cape Province) figures dancing around elephant are depicted (Dowson 1992: 19, 22; Deacon & Foster 2005: 132, 133). The elephant depicted in the images, however, stand calmly.

THE KEIMOES ENGRAVINGS IN TERMS OF 'PLACE'

Narratives by the nineteenth-century |xam teachers and more recent research (e.g. Deacon 1988, 1997; Deacon & Foster 2005; Morris 2002, 2010, 2012) make it clear that topographical features are part of a hunter-gatherer sense of place. Landforms are 'social beings' that are implicated in the circumstances and situations where rock art came to be made (Morris 2012: 51). The image-making hunter-gatherers in the Keimoes area may have regarded certain landforms as relational entities:

- a prominent dolerite koppie about 400 m east of the engraved outcrop (Figs 1, 2, 19 & 20);
- the pan about 750 m southeast of the engravings (Figs 1, 2, 19 & 20);
- the engraved outcrop itself (Figs 2, 3 & 20);
- several sets of kites, although the engravings themselves may pre-date the construction of the kites (Fig. 1, middle).

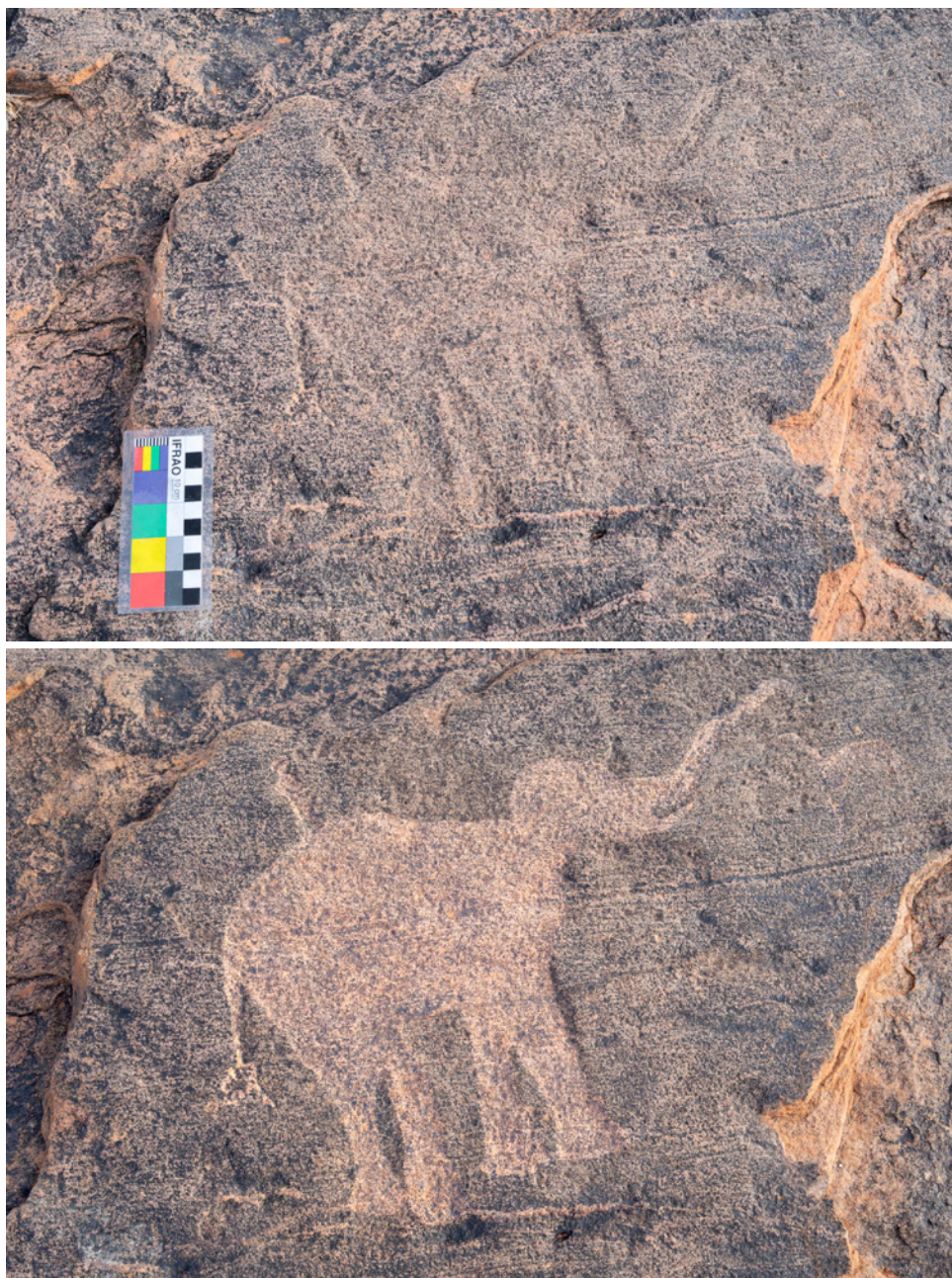


Fig. 18. Fully pecked engraving of an elephant with its trunk raised in the so-called ‘periscope sniff’, performed in order to detect and identify scents and odours in the air. Bottom: Digital tracing. Area 3.

De Prada-Samper (2017: 118) argues that the nineteenth-century |xam teachers distinguished between a mesa—a large, generally flat mountain which they called a ||xau or *brinkkop*—and a smaller ‘round-tipped one’ (a butte) known as a |kao (*DB&L*: L.II.28: 2536 rev.). The koppie in proximity to KES01 is probably the |xam equivalent of a |kao. There are several mentions in the Bleek and Lloyd collection of such steep-sided hills (e.g. *DB&L*: L.II.18: 1688; L.II.24: 2199; L.VIII.18: 7620). In view of the significance attributed to mesas and buttes elsewhere in the Nama Karoo, hunter-gatherers in the past could have regarded the hill at KES01 as a named and distinctive landmark with a background narrative that explained its present location and how it came to be there (see Ingold 1993; Morris 2002: 129–30). As was apparently the case with the nineteenth-century |xam, the KES01 image-makers might have considered the hill to be a ‘male’ entity because of its height and shape (De Prada-Samper 2017: 118).

By contrast the pan, a low-lying, seasonally wet landscape feature, may have been seen as ‘female’ (De Prada-Samper 2017: 118). Pans are ‘broad shallow depressions in the landscape, creating localised drainage basins where run-off water accumulates after good rains—before being evaporated’ (Morris 2012: 54). The shallowness of pans is aptly described by one of the |xam teachers as ‘water which is level with the ground’ (*DB&L*: L.II.12: 629). The pan in the vicinity of KES01 is about 750 m southeast of the engravings. Satellite imagery shows that, when full, the pan is about 440 m long and 190 m wide. It is therefore comparatively small when compared to some of the pans to the south. Three larger watercourses and a few smaller ones feed into the pan from the north (Fig. 19). All the watercourses south and east of the pan drain directly into the Gariep, while those to the northwest flow into the Molopo River. Thus, travelling north from the river, in the vicinity of present-day Keimoes, the pan (when full) would be the first substantial body of water encountered in an area of about 2 635 km² (calculated using Google Earth).

After good rains, all forms of life in and around a pan respond rapidly. Insect populations soar, creating ‘ripple effects all the way up the food chain’ and attracting a variety of animal life, including springbok and larger antelope (Hoffman & Cowling 1987: 2, cited in Morris 2012: 57). If enough rain falls, the presence of abundant water may change the structure and composition of vegetation in the vicinity of a pan for several years to come. In the absence of precipitation in the area, on the other hand, people may not visit a pan and its environs, perhaps for years on end. The presence of water in pans, and the concomitant flush of vegetative growth, and associated insects and other animals, was a factor that enabled people to exploit other parts of their territory (e.g. *DB&L*: L.II.12: 629, 629 rev., 630; L.VIII.10: 6866). They probably camped near the pan when it was full and food resources were available (e.g. *DB&L*: L.II.6: 629–630).³

Some of the Nama Karoo pans were associated with particular people. |haŋkass’o names two individuals who ‘inhabit’ pans (*DB&L*: L.VIII.14: 7214 rev., L.VIII.19: 7657). The association of an individual with a water source was perhaps similar to the |xam practice of custodianship of permanent water sources by a specific individual (Deacon 1986: esp. 141–42; De Prada-Samper 2017). We shall discuss this in more detail below.

The pan at KES01 would no doubt have had a name (or several) and ‘back stories’—narratives and songs about it, its properties, incidents experienced around it, and

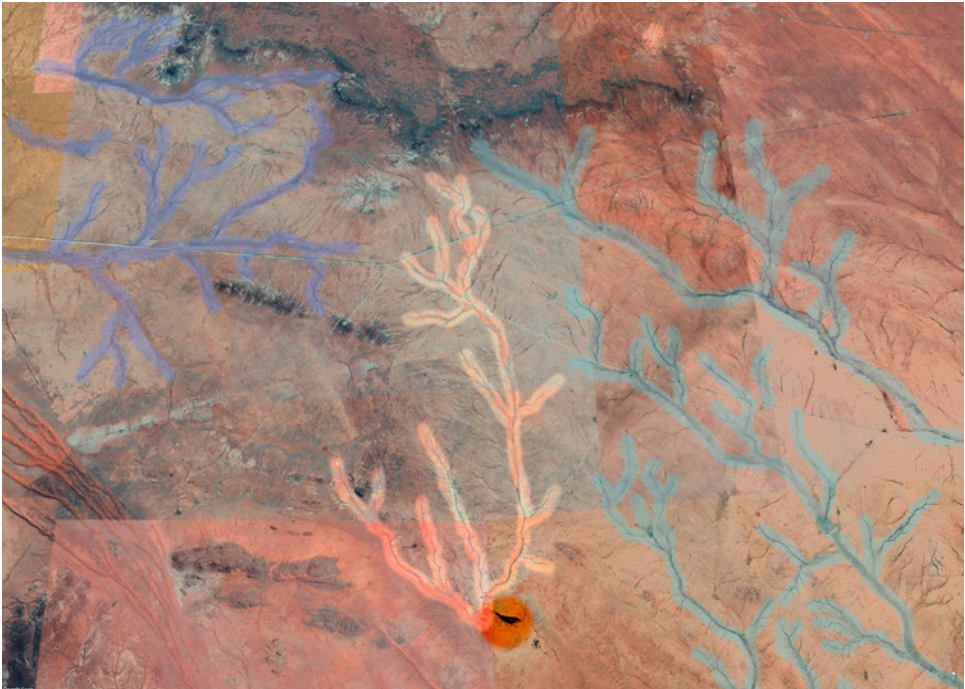


Fig. 19. Satellite image showing that the pan in the vicinity of the engraved outcrop (highlighted area at bottom centre) is fed by three main watercourses (highlighted orange) that would fill it after good rains. The engraved outcrop, koppie and pan are on a watershed. Watercourses to the northwest (highlighted purple) drain into the Molopo River; those to the east (highlighted blue) drain into the Gariep. Image: Google Earth.

phenomena observed in and about the pan (cf. Vinnicombe 2010: 243, 244). Some of these, including the engraved footprints, could have been part of the ‘lore’ of the place (see discussion below).

The engraved outcrop itself is a body of coarse-grained gneiss, although the outer surface of the outcrop is relatively smooth when compared with unmodified gneiss surfaces. The smoothed appearance is probably the result of Dwyka-period glaciation (Terence McCarthy pers. comm., Stephen Tooth pers. comm.) and processes of varnishing and/or patination. The outcrop’s outstanding features—its composition, appearance, and location in a dry watercourse that was inundated at times—might all have been significant elements to the image-makers. As suggested earlier, hunter-gatherer communities might have identified it as a ‘social being’, characterising it in terms of its anomalous properties and weaving it into their narratives.

The kites close to KES01 are landscape-altering, funnel-shaped structures built from locally available boulders and designed to channel animals, especially springbok, into an ambush where they could be killed (Lombard & Badenhorst 2019). The closest and largest complex is about 1.8km east-northeast of the pan; the other four are about 6km to the east of the engraving site. There is as yet no data to positively link the people who constructed and used the Keimoes funnels with the image-makers who

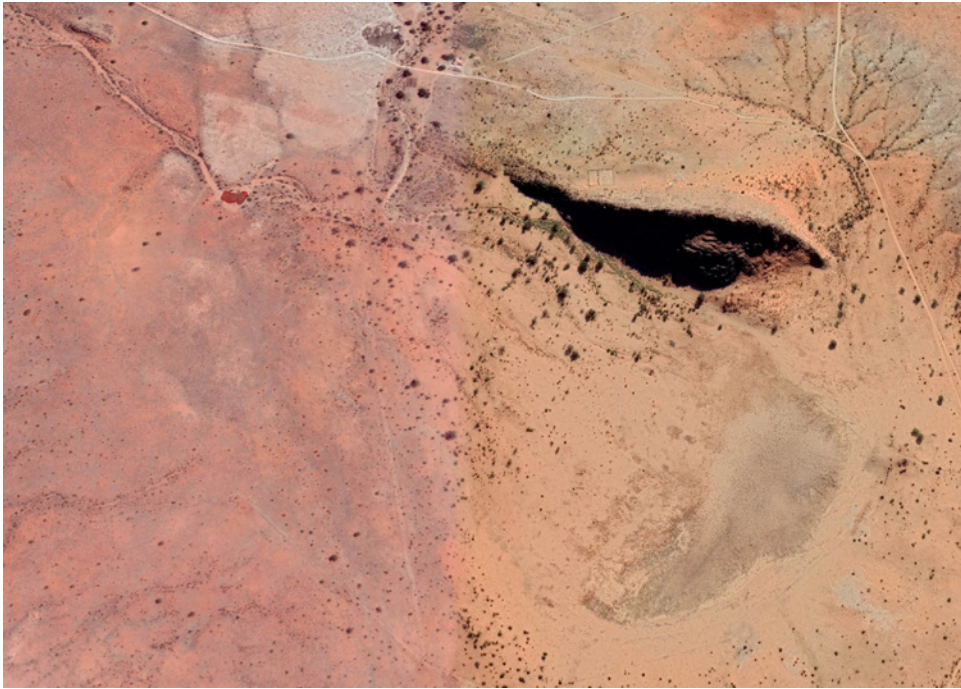


Fig. 20. Three landforms that hunter-gatherers might have regarded as social entities – the glaciated pavement on which the engravings were made (highlighted dark orange at top left), the pan (bottom right), and the dolerite koppie (top right). Image: Google Earth.

made the engravings on the outcrop. Yet, what is important in the context of how hunter-gatherers understood the landscape across generations is that, moving upwind from the pan, animals such as springbok would have moved in the direction of the kites closest to the pan, unaware of being watched from the hill above them. From this vantage point people would probably have been able to see the furthestmost kites, as well as any movement in the landscape for many kilometres in all directions (Lombard, unpublished data).

IMAGINING IMAGE-MAKING AT KES01

Our point of departure is the anthropological proposition that hunter-gatherer image-making is ‘a system of action, intended to change the world rather than [to] encode symbolic propositions about it’ (Gell 1998: 60). We situate image-making in the context of a foraging ‘lifestyle’ (Biesele 1993: 41–2, 2007: 32) with core ‘problem-solving metaphors’—ways of understanding how the world works and how to work with the world (Biesele 1993: 87–8, 2007: 35). These are:

- *!aia* (trance);
- *n|om* (spiritual energy);
- *n!an^h* (powers of the spine linking control of prey, weather and childbirth);
- *!uig'oq* (magical escape from carnivores).⁵

These metaphors ‘spangle the folklore, animate ritual, and potentially illuminate rock art’ (Bieseke 2007: 38). Hunter-gatherer images ‘represent, refract, and endlessly examine these themes’ (Bieseke 2007: 34).

Of these ‘problem-solving metaphors’, the emphasis in rock art research by Lewis-Williams and colleagues has been almost exclusively on *n|om* (potency) and *!aia* (trance), and how these inform our understanding of the painted imagery (Lewis-Williams 1981 and others, but see Peters 2000: 23–5, 30–2).

This approach to understanding the metaphors inherent in rock paintings has been fruitful. And while we agree that the engravings and paintings are not fundamentally distinct (Morris 2012: 138), many researchers have been struck by two particularly noticeable contrasts between the paintings and the engravings (e.g. Scherz 1970: 123; Dowson 1992: 5). Engraving sites are almost invariably in the open air on outcrops and hills. Typically, engraving sites with animal imagery comprise concentrations of animal images on large surfaces, with many individual images engraved separately on the facets of smaller stones in proximity (Dowson 1992: 5; Morris 2012: 174; McGranaghan 2016: 160). The second contrast is the predominance of animal images over human images in the engravings (Dowson 1992: 5; Morris 2012: 175). At KES01 there is an anthropomorphic presence in the form of engraved footprints, but we did not see any human figures and therefore no dance or trance imagery, or rainmaking. Nor are there any ‘non-specific rain-animals’ (Parkington et al. 2008: 60–1). The litany of engraved animals, many of them static and solitary, seems recondite, as Dowson remarks (1992: 6):

Discovering the meaning of animal depictions isolated on individual rocks is no easy task. An engraving of a rhinoceros or an eland says little more to us than ‘This is a rhinoceros and this is an eland’.

Dowson’s comments outline what we might call ‘the problem of the animals’—the preponderance of animal over human imagery, and the solitary and static character of many of the animal engravings. We know that the engraved images are mostly of animals that the ethnography tells us are *n|om* animals. People may have ‘harnessed’ their *n|om* to *!aia* and heal, ‘tame’ animals, and make rain (Dowson 1992: 6–7) at KES01. Given the absence of overt depictions of *!aia*, however, we have to question whether, as Dowson (1992: 5) suggests, ‘the trance dance, its associated beliefs, and the experiences of the shamans make up the subject-matter of Bushman rock art’ in its entirety. We suggest that the engraved imagery forms part of a wider network of appropriate actions and observances (e.g. respect behaviours and avoidances) that is exemplified in the *|xam* idiom *!kēā se*, translated variously as ‘to take care of, herd, be careful about, watch’ (Bleek 1956: 438). The engravings have a role to play in taking care of the local landscape and making a pleasant place.

POTENCY AND WIND

Two distinct forces are central to our imaginings about the ‘phenomenon’ of KES01: potency (*n|om* in *Ju|hoan*, *!gi* in *|xam*) and wind (*n|au* in *Ju|hoan*, *!kēwe* in *|xam*). These two different but complementary concepts are the foundation of our understanding of how the engravings function as ‘problem-solving metaphors’. We question the conception of *n|om* as a single, undifferentiated substance (supernatural potency)⁶ such

that '(s)ome animals are ... more powerful than others, *in that they contain more potency*' (Dowson 1992: 77, our italics). Low (2011: 297) argues that the qualifier 'supernatural' 'obscures analysis and deflects the question about what it is exactly that lies behind ideas of potency'. Rather than potency being a universal 'thing', he suggests that the Khoe and San people he interviewed regard 'potency' as the capacity to 'make things happen' (Low 2011: 297).

The particular physical and metaphysical characteristics of the *n|om* animal (its affordances or potential) define the nature and strength of its potency and consequently what it is good for. An eland, for example, is 'a very "wake up" animal,⁷ it is full and strong with life and it can confer those same qualities ... to people. Similar things are said of ostriches, and ostrich medicine' (Low 2014: 354). In the case of elephant, their size and strength mean that their potency can make 'big and strong things' happen (Low 2007: 74). A *n|om* animal is thus not merely a 'reservoir' filled with a quantity of generalised supernatural potency (see e.g. Marshall 1999: xxxii).⁸ Potency is manifest in parts of particular *n|om* animals, such as fat, marrow, certain bones, certain muscles, horns, tails, blood and urine (Bieseke 1993: 94; Marshall 1999; Low 2007), and in how these may be used for healing and other activities (Low 2007: 299–302, 2014: 352).

We suggest that this modified understanding of potency has important implications for our thinking about how the KES01 engravings may have functioned as a 'system of action, intended to change the world', recalling Gell's (1998: 60) definition. We explore concepts and experiences recorded in the ethnography about *!kebwé* (wind) as a model for such a system.

For the nineteenth-century |xam teachers, wind was manifest in the form of mass movements of air across the hunting ground from particular directions, accompanied by a set of characteristic weather patterns anthromorphised as 'behaviours' (e.g. Hollmann 2004: 118–19). Moreover, human beings and other animals are animated by their own, personal wind, what Low (2014: 352) refers to as the 'breath of life'. The role of wind is preminent in accounts of hunting encounters (Guenther 2017: 4–6). The winds of hunter and hunted become entwined, as Low (2014: 352) explains:

To get the wind of an animal—or for an animal to get wind of you—can hold dire consequences and is the start of a potentially hazardous mingling. The wind or smell links the hunter and the hunted. Taking in the essence of an animal, or person, is a real danger because you are vulnerable to all that they bring—all their potency.

According to the nineteenth-century |xam teachers the mingling of the winds of two actors (human and animal) may be 'pleasant' or 'suitable', or 'unlucky' ('unpleasant', 'unsuitable'). The consequences of this mingling can be observed in the environmental conditions said to be evinced by the encounter. One of the |xam teachers (*DB&L*: L.VIII.18: 7590–7591; Hollmann 2004: 121) recalled, 'My wind has none pleasant (*!twaiteŋ*)⁹ like it, as it is the north wind, for it feels warm, when it blows away the east wind, it is in the north, when I kill the ostrich'.

|hanʃkass'o's killing of the ostrich brought up the north wind, blowing away the east wind, which was characterised as a hard, cold wind that forced people to remain in their bush shelters and warm themselves at the fire (*DB&L*: L.VIII.1: 6099–6101; Hollmann 2004: 118).

Another idiom used mostly in connection with hunting is 'understanding' the wind. The term has two senses—standing under the wind by placing oneself downwind or,

to use the |xam expression, standing in the ‘wind’s mouth’ (e.g. L.II.11: 1110).¹⁰ From this position humans and animals learn about what is happening on the hunting ground through seeing, hearing, smelling and feeling. The other sense of ‘understanding’ is the |xam word ||*kwakka*, ‘to understand, be wise, clever, cunning’ (Bleek 1956: 596). A person who understands is one who ‘works nicely’ and uses their ‘sense’ to evaluate and to intervene in situations to their advantage.

The attention that hunter-gatherers pay to animal behaviour has been widely noted (e.g. Liebenberg 1990; Bieseke 1993: 54, 55; Ingold 2000: 24–6, 40; Sugawara 2001, 2017; Guenther 2017), and is evident throughout the Bleek and Lloyd |xam archive. ‘Feeling the wind’,¹¹ a |xam idiom, is a way to tap into the far superior sense of smell, vision, and hearing of animals to learn about events that cannot be seen. Game ‘does not talk with its mouth but a man who understands can see’ (DB&L: L.V.9: 4640 rev.). Wind was a conduit for carrying other kinds of news. ||kabbo speaks about receiving news that floats into his ears and remarks that ‘a story is the wind’ (DB&L: L.II.32: 2887; Bleek & Lloyd 1911: 301).

Wind and odour

Odour (scent) was also regarded as a form of ‘news’ according to the |xam teachers. Odour is said to ‘bring up wind’,¹² ||kabbo said.¹³ In one instance, dipping dried gemsbok meat in gemsbok fat brought up wind (DB&L: L.II.16: 1526); in another, it was eating the fatty skin from an ostrich’s wing (DB&L: L.II.23: 2128–2129). The odour of the ornaments of the Dawn’s heart star (a !*khwe na ssbo !ke*, or Primal Time person) brought up a sweet wind by which her child could recognise her (DB&L:

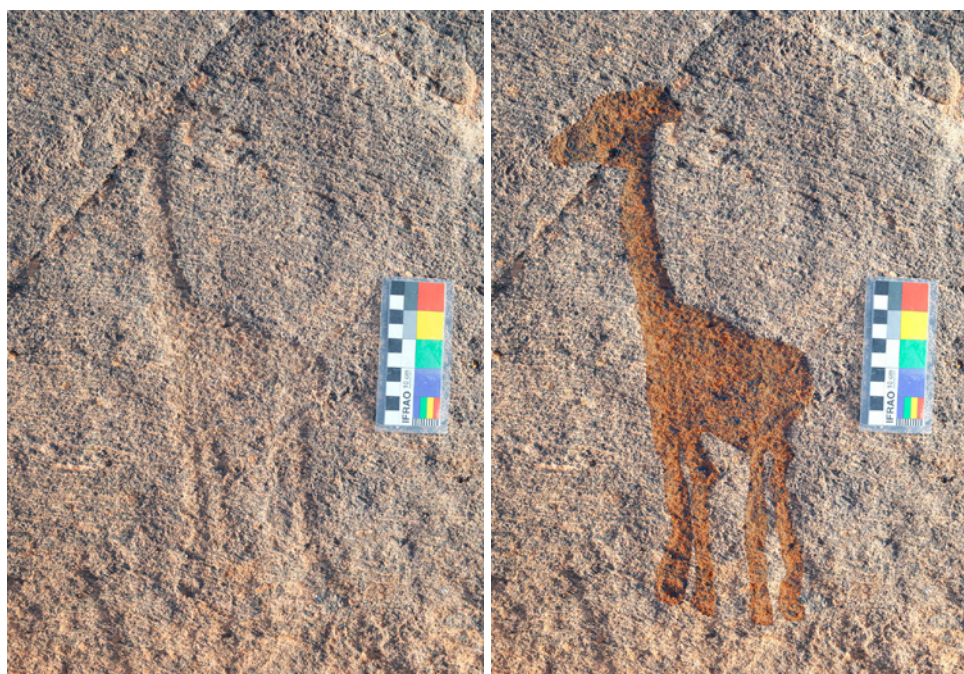


Fig. 21. Fully pecked engraving of a giraffe. Digital tracing at right. Area 5.

L.II.15: 1443). Animals have species-specific odours. Antelope (eland, gemsbok and springbok), quagga, ostrich and bustards all have a pleasant,¹⁴ sweet scent (*DB&L*: L.II.2: 461–466; L.V.III: 4071–4074). On the other hand, the smell of jackal and hyena, amongst others, is unpleasant (e.g. *DB&L*: L.II.15: 1441–1442).

Wind and standing animals

The concept of wind and the idiom of ‘understanding’ relate to ‘standing’ as a metaphor for being. Low (2014: 358) considers that there is

an emphasis on the notion of standing that links it strongly to being alive, upright, a potent person. ‘I stand here’, another common Khomani idiom, is about presence, identity and power. It denotes standing—and not moving from this place or political point. The implied corollary is, if I lie here or walk, I am no longer active and effective in the world.

The nineteenth-century |xam teachers use a similar idiom of ‘standing’ throughout their narratives. The hartebeest ‘stands fast’¹⁵ (*DB&L*: L.II.15: 932) as it scans its surroundings, a posture that might be identified by natural historians as ‘standing proud’. The idiom of ‘standing’ in the ethnography can be linked to the previously mentioned behaviour of certain large mammals, and giraffe in particular, that practice ‘self exposure’ or ‘standing proud’ (Fig. 21). We suggest that image-makers identified this distinctive behaviour as a manifestation of the animal’s wind. Far from being a static representation of an animal doing nothing, these images ‘stand’ on the outcrop in the weather, their winds wafting across the landscape.

Wind, weather and water

Favourable winds bring clouds and rain.¹⁶ Sustained rains swell streams and rivers and fill the pans. The |xam teacher ||kabbo (*DB&L*: L.II.25: 2250, original round brackets) described the effects of the rain-bringing north wind that caused the water to

... flow into the water pits (and pans) ... They will fill up. Then the springbok shall go along and drink them ... The ostriches will also go to wash their flesh ... when the rain liquid makes the ground wet. The springbok comes (when) the rain liquid is a little dried that the springbok might going eat the little *kekerru*¹⁷ which are just come out. Those which, the springbok going swallows them. Which, the rain rained (bringing) out them. That they may grow; while the rain thought that the bushes were dry. They and the grass. They all spring up (out of the ground), and the young bushes grow.

||kabbo’s rhapsodic recreation describes the north wind’s transformation of the landscape from hot dry and barren (‘unpleasant’) to a fecund (‘pleasant’) environment. It mirrors our earlier description of the processes set into motion in and around a pan by the arrival of good rains after many years of drought.

THE KEIMOES ENGRAVING SITE 01 AS A ‘PLEASANT PLACE’

We recall Gell’s (1998: 6) argument for an anthropologically informed ‘action-centred’ approach to the understanding of image-making and images. We imagine a scenario in which the engraved images that populate the anomalously smooth and shiny gneiss outcrop play a ‘practical mediatory’ role. These images are animated by their species-specific potentials, winds and odours. Their ‘standing’ on the rock outcrop in the winds contributed to the pleasantness of the place.

Footprints

One of the motifs particular to landscapes in and around parts of the Kalahari are engraved images of footprints and spoor. Comparatively little has been said about them. The publications of Scherz (1970, 1975) and Fock and Fock (1989) show that there are more engraved footprints than depictions of people. Footprints, however, are less numerous than animal spoor. Single footprints are the most commonly encountered motif, with far fewer paired footprints recorded. Often single footprint images are grouped and aligned at varying angles to each other.

There is something paradoxical about engraved footprints and animal spoor because they show both presence and absence. A footprint suggests that somebody stood there and that they are no longer there because we see only their spoor. But if we can see the traces of their presence in the form of their footprints or spoor, then they are not entirely absent.

According to the oral tradition of the Batswana, a one-legged giant who was the servant of the mythical ancestor/creator named Lowe or Matsieng, emerged from a waterhole in the earth, followed by his animals (Kirby 1940; Breutz 1952, 1953; Walker 1997). After them came the San, the Kgalagadi and then the Tswana *merafe*. According to the myth, these different population groups of Botswana emerged when the earth was still soft and wet, leaving their footprints on the edges of waterholes, but when the soil dried and hardened, the footprints were preserved as the engravings seen today (Wilman 1918, 1919; Van der Ryst et al. 2004). Localities associated with this oral tradition are the engraving sites of Matsieng near Mochudi, Lowe near Molepolole (Tlou & Campbell 1997; Walker 1997), and Riverlee near Dovedale (Van der Ryst et al. 2014).

Although we do not argue that this post-hunter-gatherer interpretation is identical with those of the image-makers, we do find it suggestive. The nearby pan may be part of narratives in which the KES01 footprint images are signs of a primordial presence (the Primal Time owners?), standing in its place on an outcrop that might itself have transformed from an impressionable surface to its current condition (see Marshall 1999 for mentions of contemporary Jul'hoansi primordial beings such as the Gemsbok People, Wildebeest People, and the Knee Knee None). The engraved footprints might be animated by something like the !xam notion of 'wind' in that they 'stand for' the notions of 'presence, identity and power' discussed above.

Water leguaans

Beliefs about the potency of water leguaans in contemporary Khoe and San communities, as well as Bantu-speaking groups (e.g. Prins & Hall 1994: 179–80; David Morris pers. comm. 2019) link these lizards to water, rain, and fertility. Amongst Khoe and San descendants in the Northern Cape, in particular, the water leguaan is considered to be the 'servant' of powerful serpent-like entities (Water Snakes) that dwell in water, including the Gariëp (Hoff 1997: 24; Morris pers. comm. 2019), just over 20 km south of KES01. Hoff (1997: 24, also 1990: 69) recorded comments to this effect by River Khoekhoe and Griqua informants, who reported that the water leguaan smears the dry interior of the Water Snake's house with clay. These specific beliefs are focused on permanent bodies of water like the Gariëp.

Marshall (1999: 112) suggests that the twentieth-century Jul'hoansi people with whom she interacted regarded rock monitor lizards (*V. albigularis*) as 'anomalous creatures

... outside the proper nature of things' because they 'have four legs like many of the mammals the !Kung [i.e. Ju|hoansi] hunt, but they are hairless, they hiss, and they lay eggs—like snakes'.

While the hunter-gatherer image-makers might well have distinguished between rock monitors and Nile monitors, it is nonetheless noteworthy that contemporary Ju|hoansi regard these characteristics—which rock monitors share with Nile monitors—as singular. For the KES01 image-makers, it was perhaps the affordances of water leguaans—their semi-aquatic existence, their habit of basking (perhaps the equivalent of animals 'standing'), their strength, aggression and strong 'wind'—that they associated with the pan full of water and abundance, a place pleasant and sweet smelling even if the water leguaans themselves were not.

Giraffe

The KES01 image-makers probably regarded the giraffe as a potent animal with its own 'wind'. Indeed, the pelage of some giraffe at least, especially bulls (Dagg & Foster 1976: 73), does emit a strong odour (i.e. 'wind') of volatile bacterio- and fungistatic compounds (Wood & Weldon 2002) that can be detected by humans from 250 m away (Percival 1924, cited by Wood & Weldon 2002: 913–14). One account (Percival 1924, cited by Wood & Weldon 2002: 913–14) reports the smell as pleasant (like honey) while Fitzsimmons (1920, cited by Wood & Weldon 2002: 914) remarked that old giraffe bulls smelt unpleasant. This unseen aspect of giraffe, the odour of males especially, might be associated with 'standing proud' (self-exposure) and the animal's strong odour (wind).

The depiction of male giraffe play-mounting (Fig. 19) could be another means by which image-makers could express giraffe potency and wind. Sparring and mounting are energetic activities that require the young males to be fit, healthy and full of energy—in other words, to exhibit potency and to possess a strong wind. The observations made by the animal behaviourists quoted earlier—that sparring had dancelike qualities—could be significant. Sparring is like dancing because it is sensuous, rhythmical and co-ordinated, qualities perhaps most closely associated with youth, sexual vigour and exuberance. These qualities as Low (2007: 71–2) has suggested, give a particular character and form to their potential and their wind—perhaps, like the eland Low (2014: 354) describes, these young giraffe are 'wake-up' animals. In addition to their own wind (odour), the context in which young males engage in sparring might ideally be one of environmental and ecological conditions of abundance and security—in short, pleasantness.

Elephant

We mentioned earlier that Low (2007) suggests that for some of the Khoe and San people with whom he spoke, it is an animal's form—and, we would add, behaviour—that determines the nature and strength of its potentials (i.e. supernatural potency). In the case of elephant, their size, strength and other attributes mean that their potency can make 'big and strong things' happen (Low 2007: 74). Elephants have a distinctive wind of their own, a 'watery, variably faint-to-musky smelling secretion' from the temporal gland that stains the cheeks when they are 'excited or anxious' (Estes 1991: 263). The heavy, musky odour of a bull elephant is surely the epitome of elephant wind. Bulls are renowned for their deadly rages, but all adult elephants are tremendously

powerful, mostly invulnerable to non-human predators, and have the capacity to defend themselves against and kill any other animal that confronts them.

Elephant are closely associated with rain and the presence of water. They have an absolute requirement for standing water and a highly developed sense of smell (e.g. Niimura et al. 2014) that can detect the odour of water from far away. We suggest that the depiction of the elephant sniffing the wind refers to this ability. Their migratory movements across a familiar landscape, following the rain, and visiting rivers and waterholes in their territory, are also an analogue for the lifeways of hunter-gatherers. The depiction at KES01 of an elephant smelling the wind alludes to these qualities and the associations that elephant have with water. Pecking a big, strong thing like an elephant into place on the KES01 outcrop, where it stands in the wind and brings its wind to the place, could have been an important intervention in making the place pleasant.

Deacon (1988: 135–36) has considered the importance of making images in localities that the hunter-gatherer image-makers felt was ‘the right place’. She notes that there is a concentration of elephants engraved at the northern end of the Strandberg hills, facing into the direction of the rain (Deacon & Foster 2005: 62–3). Deacon proposes that the engravings were positioned on this particular hill because the place might have been a locale for ‘rainmaking and other rituals’ (Deacon 1997: 22). Kinahan (1999: 337) argues that image-makers at Rainman Shelter in the Otjohorong massif, Namibia, made paintings of elephant ‘as a practical instrument’ created in preparation for rainmaking in an ‘altered state of consciousness’.

We imagine KES01 as a powerful place in which to hold ceremonies and dance but, as importantly, the engraved outcrop also exuded other more sustained and enduring influences that concerned its permanent presence in the local landscape. One of these forces—ubiquitous, persistent, present even in the absence of people—was the wind, in all its manifestations.

Feeling the wind

We have seen that ethnography and knowledge of characteristic animal behaviours enable us, like the image-makers, to ‘see’ and ‘feel’ the wind inherent in the images. Along this line of thinking, De Prada-Samper (2014) has identified two dynamic |xam perceptual concepts that he translates as ‘signals’ (*!k’!m*) and ‘pictures’ (*!gwe*). These are somatogenic processes in which engraved images form part of ‘an intricate web of invisible signals’ (De Prada-Samper 2014: 237) that constitute a kind of long-distance communication (Parkington & Paterson 2017). These markings on the rock, according to De Prada-Samper (2014: 237), might have formed a ‘bond’ with the animals (especially springbok) that the |xam hunted habitually—but not necessarily the animal species that were engraved. According to De Prada-Samper (2014: 237), the engraved images may thus have ‘attracted’ and ‘guided’ game to the area based on the invisible signals that the game felt in their bodies. He describes this as a form of ‘transformative magic’ that helped |xam hunter-gatherers in the past to manage and coordinate their hunting activities (De Prada-Samper 2014: 238). In a similar vein, Sugawara (2017: 100) writes of a G|ui concept, *ŋ!àre*, which he translates as ‘invisible agency’.

De Prada-Samper’s argument is congruent with our suggestion that the engravings are a constant presence in the landscape and are part of making a pleasant place. His

proposition reinforces our contention that the subtle complexity of the non-visual aspects of the presence of the engravings is important to consider (Ouzman 1998, 2001; Peters 2000: 23).

Custodianship of a place

The KES01 engraving 'site' is not an isolated dot on a map (Ouzman 1998: 38) but rather, to cite Morris (2012: 144), part of a larger 'nexus of converging threads including human activities, geological contexts and the life worlds of plants and animals'. The |xam equivalent of Morris's description of a 'site' is *!xo'e*, translated as 'place, country' (Bleek 1956: 500), a landscape that 'went beyond the more intensively inhabited or used spots of a certain area and covered an extensive tract of land within which these spots were' (De Prada-Samper 2017: 120). De Prada-Samper argues that the people associated with a *!xo'e* assumed 'custodianship' over the area, performing tasks such as clearing the springs and generally 'putting things in order' (Bleek & Lloyd 1911: 305, cited in De Prada-Samper 2017: 121). Interestingly, in the manuscript, Lloyd provided an alternative gloss of the |xam phrase (*tabba akka*) (*DB&L*: L.II.32: 2894) translated above as 'putting things in order'—the same phrase can be rendered as to 'work nicely'. Contemporary and nineteenth-century Bushman ethnographies emphasise the importance of 'good sense', the practice of 'doing things nicely' with 'an aesthetics of care, slowness, skill, thoughtfulness and respect' (Low 2011: 300). An aesthetic analogous to these ways of working may have applied to the engraving of images as a contribution to the pleasantness of the place.

KES01 AND UNDERSTANDINGS OF ROCK ART

The role of archaeological and ethnographic imagination is a component of all reconstructions of the past. The use of analogy is ultimately the only means to arrive at understandings, despite its weaknesses, vulnerabilities and the potential for abuse (e.g. Morris 2012: 120–31; McGranaghan 2017). We have relied almost exclusively on the nineteenth-century |xam ethnography to make direct historical comparisons with the lives of the image-makers. The |xam teachers were still connected with the culture of their ancestors, despite the catastrophic social and economic conditions in which they themselves lived. Notably, Diä!kwain speaks of his grandfather 'chipping' images of 'gemsbok, quagga and ostriches at a place where they used to drink, before the time of the Boers' (*DB&L*: L.V.24: 5963 rev.). Relations of similarity between the |xam ethnography and the imagery are relevant to refining researchers' understandings of engraved and painted imagery.

Our use of middle range theory to link ethnographic sources, anthropological concepts and animal behaviour studies to the engraved artefacts at KES01 provides the framework for our conjectures about the specific potential, or potency and 'wind' of engraved animal images and their situation in the landscape. In our imaginations we see, feel and smell the animals standing on the outcrop, connected to the environment and the people through what De Prada-Samper (2014: 237) describes as an 'intricate web of invisible signals linking rock and flesh, hunter and prey'. Perhaps, as we have suggested, the imagery has a custodial aspect: their 'winds' play a role in making the place 'pleasant'. The consideration of wind when thinking about rock art beyond KES01 might yield interesting results. Peters (2000: 23–5, 30–2) has already argued that rock

paintings incorporate something like the Jul'hoansi concept of *n|lau*, a complex that has much in common with the !xam 'wind'. He argues that its explanatory potential has not been recognised or applied in research into rock paintings (Peters 2000: 23).

Depictions of animal imagery and species-specific behavioural metaphors are one of the defining attributes of southern African hunter-gatherer rock art, with the eland and other large herbivores (elephant, giraffe, kudu, and rhinoceros) amongst the most frequently painted and engraved subjects. Consideration of 'wind' in hunter-gatherer imagery (in addition to the present emphasis on *n|om* and *!aia*) could help us to recognise the nuances and significance of species choice, body posture and characteristic behaviour. The landscape that the engravers inhabited—arid, with scattered perennial and seasonal water sources—may have meant that 'wind' was particularly relevant to the work of the images in the ways we have suggested.

NOTES

¹ We use the term as employed in southern African research, to include abrasive (cutting) and percussive (pecked) forms of marking, i.e. 'engraving' the rock.

² Though not in Di!kwain's drawings.

³ 'we go to look at another water which is level with the ground [628 rev. (de kleine pan, de water so full, shewing the level with the surface of the ground, I think he means)], we have told our wives [630]: we want to move away [629 rev., trek], we will move to the water lying there [629 rev. (they trek and make a house naar bei de water)], we move [629 rev., loop trek] to it, we go to settle at it' (||kabbo, *DB&L*: L.II.6: 629–630 including 628 rev. and 629 rev.).

⁴ There are variant spellings in the literature: Marshall (1957, 1999) uses *n|ow*, Bieseles has used *n|ao* (1993) but subsequently spells it as *n|au* (2007). We use Bieseles's 2007 rendition of the word.

⁵ This metaphor has not yet been recognised in hunter-gatherer engravings but may appear in some of the rock paintings (e.g. the site Balloch in Barkly East illustrated in Lewis-Williams 1981: fig. 31).

⁶ The term used by Lewis-Williams (1981: 77).

⁷ Marshall's interviewees described the eland as 'a happy thing' (Marshall 1999: 199).

⁸ Marshall (1999: xxxii) says the following: 'In my effort to understand these beliefs in their current forms, I came to the conclusion that the !Kung do not believe that there is a single undifferentiated force, like a single essence or substance, some of which exists in different places and operates in different contexts. The forces, instead, are multiple, and they are differentiated.'

⁹ *Tmwai*, 'sweet, sweetly, well, pleasant' (Bleek 1956: 243).

¹⁰ Certain animals (e.g. gemsbok, springbok, quagga) are said to 'understand' the wind by sitting in the wind's mouth (i.e. positioning themselves downwind), listening to, and smelling it. These animals are referred to as 'the wind's thing(s)' presumably because of this strategy. The porcupine is perhaps the creature par excellence that understands the wind, one that '... does truly go with the wind ... while it feels that its nose is its eyes; that which it makes its eyes of ...' (*DB&L*: L.V.7: 4454).

¹¹ *Ta*, 'to feel, try, seem, become aware of' (Bleek 1956: 184).

¹² Bleek 1956: 681: *txwi*, 'to bring up wind'.

¹³ ||kabbo seems to be the only person who uses this expression.

¹⁴ The word used is *tmwai* (*DB&L*: L.II.2: 462). As a verb it may be translated as 'to be comfortable, well, better'; used as an adverb it means 'well, comfortably, nicely' (Bleek 1956: 243).

¹⁵ *be |kau !kebe*.

¹⁶ In the case of the !Xam and also at KES01, it is the north wind (A. Vlok pers. comm., June 2020).

¹⁷ Bleek 1956: 87: 'grass, foliage, vegetation'. The phrase used in the quote is '*!keerru ka !kauken*' which means, literally, 'vegetation's children'—see McGranaghan's annotation in his unpublished transcription of the !xam portions of the Bleek and Lloyd Collection (McGranaghan 2012).

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TABLE 2

Description of the motifs in the eight engraved areas defined at KES01. These motifs are concentrated in an area about 7×3 m on the northeastern side of the 67 m long outcrop oriented along a northwest-southeast axis. The use of terms 'right', 'left', 'top' and 'bottom' are given from the perspective of looking at the engravings such that most of them appear upright. Images within each designated area are described from left to right as far as possible.

Area number	Description of images
Area 1 This is the eastern-most area, on the eastern side of the outcrop.	Giraffe-like quadruped facing left. Possibly with neck arched and head hanging. Quadruped facing left. Possibly with horns and thus perhaps a bovid. Quadruped.
Area 2a Situated about 1 m south of Area 1.	A pair of giraffe facing right, each with four legs, both with tails tucked between the back legs. Quadruped with neck extended, facing left. Located to the right and above the giraffe pair. Saurian motif, vertically oriented, immediately to the right of the giraffe pair. Head is at the top (i.e. facing), tail is at the bottom. Ostrich, facing right, immediately to the right of the saurian motif. Motif with rounded form at the top and contiguous inverted teardrop shape below (possible anthropomorph). Ostrich, facing right, immediately to the right of the possible anthropomorph (see above). Quadruped immediately to the right of the ostrich, oriented upside down in relation to ostrich. Head probably at the upper end of the image.
Area 2b Below the concentration of images to the right of the giraffe pair, between two diagonal roughly parallel cracks in the rock.	Ostrich facing right, below ostrich (Area 2a, 4 above). Unidentified motif immediately to the right of the ostrich. Unidentified motif comprising several lines arranged at varying angles. Saurian motif immediately to the right of the unidentified image (above). Vertically oriented with respect to the adjacent images, with head facing down.
Area 2c Area to the left of the giraffe pair.	An area of rock with traces of engravings, one of which might be a quadruped. Below this area, a single giraffe standing, with tail raised. Neck erect, facing left, only two legs depicted. Saurian motif less finely executed than the others in this area, to the right of the giraffe. Footprint, horizontally arranged and with toes at left-hand side. Giraffe, facing left, to the right of the footprint. Unidentified engravings below and to the right of the footprint.

TABLE 2 (*continued*)

Description of the motifs in the eight engraved areas defined at KES01. These motifs are concentrated in an area about 7×3 m on the northeastern side of the 67 m long outcrop oriented along a northwest-southeast axis. The use of terms ‘right’, ‘left’, ‘top’ and ‘bottom’ are given from the perspective of looking at the engravings such that most of them appear upright. Images within each designated area are described from left to right as far as possible.

Area 3 A dense concentration of engravings approximately 1 m west of Area 2. The surface crust on which the engravings are made is breaking up.	Saurian motif at bottom left. Elephant motif just above the saurian motif. Saurian motif to the right of elephant. Footprint with toes at right-hand side. Grouping of two quadrupeds, one with long muzzle which resembles that of an equid. Circular arrangement of small and shallow circular dots just above equid. Footprint immediately right of circular arrangement of dots. The toes are at the top. Unidentified engraved lines to the right of the footprint. Just below these unidentified motifs is a relatively large motif of a small antelope, facing to the right. It has an uncharacteristically long straight tail. Just above the identified motifs is another area of engraved motifs comprising an ostrich (facing right). To the right of the ostrich is a saurian motif. Directly above the ostrich is an arrangement of two quadrupeds with their dorsal areas parallel to each other.
Area 4 Less than a metre northwest of Area 3. It seems likely that an area of the rock surface about 0.5×0.5 m has broken off. There could well have been engravings on this surface.	Quadruped. Giraffe depicted standing with erect neck, facing left with all four legs depicted. Wildebeest. Grouping of three footprints, each slightly differently oriented. Indistinct quadruped below the footprints. Saurian motif to the right and below the main concentration of images. One footprint.
Area 5 At ground level, directly below Areas 3 and 4. The surface is very rough in comparison with the other engraved surfaces.	Giraffe depicted standing with erect neck, facing left with all four legs depicted. Head pecked over crack in the rock.
Area 6 Towards the southwestern side of the outcrop. Approximately 10 m southeast of Area 1.	Two footprints, each differently oriented and therefore probably not a pair of feet (i.e. left and right foot). The area is approximately 0.5×0.5 m.
Area 7 On the southwestern side of the outcrop, about 11 m west-southwest of the main area of engraving	Two areas of apparently random pecking on a smoothed rock surface about 1,1 m apart from each other. The northernmost area is about 1×2 m in area. The southernmost area is about 1.2×0.6 m.
Area 8 Location not recorded.	A single giraffe motif, standing with neck erect and facing left. Depicted with two legs.