

The Way We Were: Rock Art in the Khomas Region of Namibia

by André du Pisani

All thought draws life from contacts and exchanges.

---- Fernand Braudel

Abstract

The smouldering embers of an older civilization, an integral part of the “evolutionary epic”, to paraphrase Edward O. Wilson¹, is very much alive in the rock art of the Khomas Region and beyond, even if the original artists are no more. Research into rock art shows that the region has more than 320 known rock art sites—clearly there are many others still to be discovered. My active research into the rock art of the region started more than a decade ago. Since then, I have visited and recorded rock art in 55 sites at various farms. Most of these sites have hitherto been un-documented and un-researched.

The purpose of this article is to highlight four rock art sites visited and recorded by the author at two farms in the region. To my knowledge, three of the four sites have not previously been recorded or researched. These have also not been included in the comprehensive survey of the late Dr Ernst Rudolf Scherz, published in 1986, or in the more recent admirable guide book by Prof. Peter Breunig (2014) on the archaeology of Namibia. The sites have been selected for the quality of the art and the wider significance of the paintings in cosmological and ethnographic terms. The article concludes by locating the paintings within a wider body of southern African rock art literature.

Neu-Heusis

The first important site is on the farm *Neu-Heusis* 332 of approximately 9,480ha, 50km. west of the Capital City of Windhoek, along the C-28 gravel road. *Neu-Heusis* nestles in the Khomas Hochland Plateau, a large ridge of higher ground in the heart of the country. Altitudes range between 1,700 and 2,000m above sea level in most places. Much of the Khomas Hochland Plateau consists of undulating hills, especially in the west, where a

number of ephemeral rivers have eroded many deep valleys (Map 2216, Windhoek, 1997: 1:250). This site was recorded in the 1986 book by Ernst Rudolf Scherz (pp. 339-342) and earlier in a slim guide to some of the country's rock art (Scherz & Scherz, 1974: 118-119). Before describing and commenting on the significance of the site and the paintings on the panels, it is important to sketch briefly the history of the farm for it played an important role in the agricultural life and economy of the country long before independence in 1990.

The farm was the nucleus of the Liebig's Extract of Meat Company Ltd (LEMCO), registered in London. LEMCO purchased an area of some 210,000 hectares of land in the Khomas Highlands from the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft für Südwestafrika on 18 September 1907 and established the *Deutsche Farmgesellschaft* (German farm association). The land was acquired for cattle breeding to ensure a steady supply of beef for the production of extract. *Neu-Heusis* became LEMCO's headquarters in the former German colony, along with a production facility in Fray Bentos in Uruguay, which had been in operation since 1862 (Rockstroh, 2015, p. 50).

An imposing dwelling, Liebig House, was built in 1911/12 as the director's residence. The house was meant for the company's first director, Dr R. Hartig, and was apparently modelled on *Schweringsburg Castle* in Pomerania, Germany. The *Deutsche Farmgesellschaft* was disbanded after the First World War. The South African Government then bought the extensive holdings from the Liebig Company in 1939²¹ and divided the property into several farms mainly for new white settlers from South Africa. Liebig House, which was still the director's residence, was sold to the Courtney-Clarke family in 1945. Mr J.A. Courtney-Clarke was the Secretary of the then South West African administration, a position that he held from 1926 to 1939. The celebrated Namibian photographer, Margaret Courtney-Clarke, spent her childhood there in the 1950s. In 1964 the Hoff family acquired *Neu-Heusis*. The family still owns the farm and continues their farming activities.

There are several interesting panels of rock art at the farm *Neu-Heusis*, mostly in close proximity to the Bismarck and Heusis rivers that join the Kuiseb River further south and have water holes that last for several months during a good summer rainy season. The *Eulental* (Valley of the Owls) hosts a number of particularly impressive paintings. There are also paintings close to an earth dam and on impressive rock formations at the southern end of the *Eulental*. The paintings that interest me most are in the *Eulental*, along the western side of the river, well protected by a prominent rock overhang of mica schist visible from a distance. Moreover, there are also interesting paintings, among these a painting of a black-backed jackal, further south near a fence that crosses the river and that forms the boundary of a camp on the farm, approximately 100m south of an existing water installation.

The rock art on the farm resembles those in style, motif and age at many farms in the vicinity, among these, the paintings at Heusis, Baumgartsbrunn, Landmeister, Stanco, Kuiseb, Terra Rossa and Harmonie (du Pisani, 2020: 1-75). There are also paintings further afield in the Karibib district broadly similar to those at *Neu-Heusis* and adjacent farms, notably at Wilsonfontein, Onanis and Kraaiipoort. The archaeological record, inclusive

of artefacts and environmental evidence found at these sites, suggests that hunting and gathering was the predominant lifestyle at the time. These sites are widely associated with the San people³¹ and are estimated to belong to the *Later Stone Age* (LSA), that dates back from 10,000 to 2,000 years ago and more recently, from the last 2,000 years (Mendelsohn et al. 2002: 128-129).

Geologically, the Khomas Hochland Plateau (Highlands) forms part of the Damara Supergroup and on average dates back 850 million years. The dominant rocks are schist, sandstones and granites. The dominant soil type is *Lithic Leptosols*, meaning that the soil is very thin or shallow. With a few notable exceptions, such as the productive fractured aquifer around Windhoek in the Auas Mountains, the region has little or no groundwater. During the rainy season, humidity varies from 50-60 per cent, with a median precipitation of 200–300mm per year (Mendelsohn et al. 2002:84-85). In terms of biomes and vegetation types, Highland Shrub Land dominates. Grassland and low shrubs and scattered trees punctuate the hilly landscape. The vegetation is suited to a variety of large herbivorous mammals such as kudu (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*), red hartebeest (*Alcelaphus buselaphus*), springbok (*Antidorcas marsupialis*), mountain zebra (*Equus zebra hartmanae*), gemsbok (*Oryx gazella*), common duiker (*Sylvicapra grimmia*) and klipspringer (*Oreotragus oreotragus*).

The paintings along the *Eulental* are special for reasons that will soon become clear.

The *Eulental* has a number of smaller aquifers and in close proximity to the first site, there is evidence of an ephemeral spring. Painted on the smoother surface of a large overhanging rock is a series of eight impressive animals that seem to represent rain animals. Rendered in the shape reminiscent of warthog (*Phacochoerus aethiopicus*) and/or hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) the images show bovine-like animals, 25cm long, with heavy, bald heads, no ears, gaping mouths, bent tails, and hooves; all are on the move. Two of the paintings show the hooves/feet of the animals resembling those of humans. These could depict shamans. There are 16 other recognizable paintings of humans, some rendered with bows and arrows and some carrying carrying bags, and long sticks above their heads. The same panel also shows blots of paint in close proximity to the human figures. All paintings have been rendered in ochre and most are well preserved notwithstanding some surface exfoliation of the rock face.

The painting of various rain animals is well-known in numerous sites across southern Africa and is linked in the cosmology of the San with one of the important tasks of the shaman, who was responsible for controlling the rain. To do so, the shaman searched the spirit world through the trance dance for a waterhole where a rain animal lived. The animal would be captured and led across the sky to where the shaman wanted the rain to fall. At this point, the animal would be milked if it was a female (rain is widely associated with female animals such as elephant) or slaughtered if it was a male. The milk or blood became rain, which fell over the parched land (Vinnicombe, 1976; Dowson, 1998; Hollman, 2004: 163-196; Whitelaw, 2009: 139-143; Lewis-Williams & Pearce, 2004: 199-228; Eastwood, 2006: 96-98, Rust & van der Poll, 2011 and Forssman & Gutteridge, 2012:43).

Several animals served as rain animals. These included, among others: eland, hippopotamus, giraffe, rhebuck, rhinoceros, elephant, crocodile, monitor lizard and pythons or other snakes. From the historical and ethnographic record in South Africa and southern Lesotho, we know from the work of Joseph Orpen (1874)^{4]}, a colonial magistrate, in an article published in the *Cape Monthly Magazine*, of tailed humans that according to his San guide, Qing, were like rain animals. If Qing's account is to be believed, then these humans are shamans who have transformed into anthropomorphic figures associated with *!Khwa*, meaning 'water' or 'rain'. According to Qing, humans with tails may represent partially metamorphosed rain animals. The *Neu-Heusis* site shows no such paintings of humans.

In the case of South African rock art, for example in a panel from Bongani Mountain Lodge in the Limpopo Province, there seems to be a connection between the agile rhebuck, hunting and rain. In such images where the link between rhebuck and the rain is evoked, there are normally rain images as well as animals such as rhinos and hippos (Forssman & Gutteridge, 2012:143).

In San rock art, rain animals are seen by some researchers as 'fantasy animals' that denote the spirit world and may be associated with other spirit world motifs, including therianthropes^{5]}, shamans, threads of light, geometric designs, bags, zigzag lines and grotesque beings. Renditions of rain animals often have large bovine-like bodies or may be fantastical creatures comprising a conflation of more than one species. For example, they may have horns like an eland and the body of a much larger animal like a hippo. The San have no doubt closely studied rainfall patterns and have developed their own words for the different types of clouds. For instance, the *Jul'hoansi* refer to large grey rain clouds as zebras (*!kwesi*) and see high cirrus clouds as 'male' clouds that bring no rain. They hold the view that cumulus clouds are 'female' and bring light rain, not sufficient to end a drought. The arrival of cumulus clouds brings joy as a signal of 'soaking' rains. In contrast, undesirable fierce thunderstorms are said to emanate from 'male' clouds. The gender of the cloud can be identified by the type of 'spoor' the rain makes: 'male' rain has deep spoor, whereas the 'female's' is shallow. The San describe each cloud as having a body (the main cloud), ribs (long stratocumulus clouds) and legs (the rain). Storms are said to 'walk' on these legs. The San believe that rain is actually the rain animal's milk or blood. The word for water is *!khwa*. Rain-making is a social intervention of great import. It is possible that these paintings were intended to portray the shamanic ritual of rain-making (Lewis-Williams, 2002: 22; Hoff, 1998: 109-124).

The availability of water is key in the lives of the different San groups such as the *!Xun*, *Jul'hoansi* and the *Hai!om*. During the rainy season, they get water from surface sources such as springs and waterholes (Marshall, 1976:64; Bieseles and Hitchcock, 2013: 40-43).

An interesting aspect of the relationship between snakes and rain emerges in a comparison of the cosmology of the San with that of the Damara community in this country. Research

by Ansie Hoff (1997: 21-37) and by Sigrid Schmidt (1979) point to some important similarities and differences between the two that lie beyond the scope of this contribution.

Namibia has various sites that represent rainclouds and rain, for instance at Omandumba-West and Ababis in the Erongo Mountains, Koireb in the Windhoek district, *Göllschau*, *Hornkranz-South*, Daurês (Brandberg) and also at a different site at the farm *Neu-Heusis*. Piet van Rooyen (2015:135-150) provides a compelling analysis of one such site at his farm, *Hornkranz-South*, when he considers a panel of paintings in commendable detail.



Figure 1: Rain animals at Neu-Heusis (Photo: André du Pisani)

Note the human-like feet of the rain animals. This may suggest that they are phantasy animals or therianthropes – ‘people animals’ – shamans capturing the rain animals. I also found two cupules used in rain-making and control rituals.

A no less spectacular painting on the same panel is of two birds, 12cm in length, probably swallows, it is not clear if the birds are barn swallows or white-throated swallows, both intra – African migrants – in a flying formation with their wings nearly touching, and feathers beautifully rendered in great detail. There is a round circular hole that was left unpainted on both images. The swallows may be associated with rain, as they often put in an appearance after the first summer rains and have been painted adjacent to the rain animals. This may suggest an affinity between them and the rain animals. As far as I know, these paintings are unique in this country. Paintings of birds in this country are quite rare,

with the exception of paintings of ostriches that appear in a number of different sites, also in the Khomas region. There are also a few paintings of raptors, mostly of vultures, with very few paintings of flamingo, crows and cranes. Scherz (1986:31) mentions one or two paintings that depict swallows. Lenssen-Erz & Erz, 2000:42, in their survey of the rock art of the Daurês (Brandberg), mention paintings of birds in their taxonomy of paintings under a generic category and paintings of ostriches under ‘species’. Compared with their other categories, such a fauna and humans, birds form a small percentage of the rock art in the mountain. Hitherto, I have not found any other paintings of swallows.



Figure 2: Two swallows in formation flight (Photo: André du Pisani)

Hornkranz

Having described the site at the farm *Neu-Heusis*, the focus now shifts to three sites on the farm *Hornkranz 21*, a farm that originally covered approximately 9,661ha—more recently subdivided into other farmland—and that became famous once the legendary Nama leader Kaptein Hendrik Witbooi, made it his headquarters from 1889 to the end of 1893. Hendrik Witbooi and his followers had lived close to the nearby Gurumanas River, some 44km as the crow flies from *Hornkranz* since 1884 (Witbooi 1929, Witbooi 1989). The farm is also the site of the infamous battle of *Hornkranz* of 12 April 1893 in which 87 Witbooi Nama succumbed.⁶¹

Apart from its historical significance, *Hornkranz* has ten known rock art sites, some in close proximity to the Gaub River, while others are widely scattered along smaller rivers and deep gorges and on granite outcrops and rocks a kilometre or more from the Gaub. None of these appear in the literature; I am the first person to record them. There are also two known impressive rock art sites at the farm *Hornkranz-South 121*. These are located along smaller ravines in close proximity to semi-permanent springs (van Rooyen, 2015: 135-150). A third site that is difficult to access is higher up in a large cave visible from afar near the eastern border of the farm.

The rock art of *Hornkranz* and *Hornkranz-South* is broadly similar to paintings found at many adjacent farms in the Gamsberg area and beyond towards the Naukluft Mountains and Namib Desert. The 1986 book by Ernst-Rudolf Scherz documented many such sites on farms in the proximity of *Hornkranz*, but did not include any sites at the farm itself. These include, but are not limited to, *Weissenfels*, *Gamsberg 23*, *Göllschau*, *Mahonda*, *Kraaiport*, *Ruimte*, *Rostock*, *Oase*, *Corona*, *Rooisand*, *Tantus*, *Charé Shelter*, *Miribib*, *Nauzerus*, *Guisis*, *Remhoogte*, *Zais*, *Abbabis*, *Zaris*, *Blässkranz* and *Rietoog*. Spatially this covers a large area of the Khomas region with imposing mountains and inselbergs in the Namib, such as the impressive Gamsberg⁷¹ (2,348.6m, the fourth highest mountain in the country), Klein Gamsberg (2,327.7m), Mount Barry (1,526m), Rantberge (1,731m), Ziegenrücken (2,220.3m), Hakos Mountains (2,098.3m), Tantus Mountain (1,928m), Dordberg, Karikas Mountain, Barrow Mountain (near the Kuiseb Canyon), Goagos Mountain, Quabis Mountain (near Kraaiport), Changansberg, Kosberg (1,632.5m), Horissib Mountains (1,520m), Kamberge, Witberg (1,450m), Rostock Mountain (1,399m), Sandsteenbergs (1,239m) and Habuab (1,299m) (2316 Rehoboth Map 3rd edition, 2003 & 2315BD Rostock, 1:50 000, First Edition, 1991).

The Gamsberg, which is visible from afar, is the highest mountain in the region. It is higher than the surrounding plateau by approximately 450m. The Gamsberg forms the edge of the Great Escarpment. The mountain massif drops about 1,100m down to the Namib further to the west (Grünert, 2009: 135). The Gamsberg was formed about 1,100 million years ago as part of what geologists call the *Rehoboth Sinclair Sequence*. The mountain was formed through magmatic processes and the subsequent rise of magma bodies (plutons), which consisted of granitic melts. During subsequent volcanic activity, the Gamsberg Granite was dissected by younger basaltic dykes, a process that continues up to the present (Grünert, 2009:136, see also Schneider, 2008: 146-147).

Many important ephemeral rivers transect the area, such as the Kuiseb with its distinct Kuiseb schist formation, Rutil River (a tributary of the Kuiseb), Nausgomob, Gaub, Ubib, Chausib, Djab, Ansas River, Natasspruit, Kromrivier, Paradiesrivier, Witberggrivier, Gorob River that interlinks with the Kuiseb River, Koedoerivier (on the farm *Schlesien* 483) and the Haris River that joins the Gurumanas River. During the rainy season these rivers carry considerable volumes of water and with the natural springs in the Gaub River, for example, provide life to humans and game alike. The San were able to gather food (*veldkos*) and hunt for extended periods, and the different sites on the farm suggest that

they moved to where there were water and food; at two of the sites, there are bee hives in the crevices of rocks. Their presence suggests the availability of water. The dominant biome is one of moderate to least tree density along the edge of the central escarpment and Namib grassland with pockets of ephemeral riverine woodland along the Kuiseb and Gaub rivers.

The first site at *Hornkranz* is especially interesting, not so much because it has paintings of an elephant and a giraffe (even if these are significant in their own way), among others, but adjacent to it in a niche in the sandstone rock I found paintings of dancing figures with coordinated action, some painted in miniature. These paintings are truly spectacular for their elegance, composition and energy. The panel is truly remarkable for its compactness, intimacy and spirituality. In the middle of the panel there is an elongated figure that may suggest a shaman. This figure has an elongated torso and limbs. This is not the result of poor ‘scaling’. Shamans have described the process of entering the spirit world as involving their bodies being stretched. The surrounding figures may suggest a dance or a trance-dance (du Pisani, 2017: 4-6).



Figure 3: Dancing figures (Photo: André du Pisani)

The location of the site is far from being spectacular, even if it overlooks a rivulet that has its source 1km higher up, but that does not provide water for any length of time. The

paintings are reasonably well protected by a sizeable rock and I found many broken pieces of earthenware pottery, ostrich eggshell and numerous small stone tools close to the site. These are widely associated with the San and the *Later Stone Age* (LSA). Below the panel, I found bones of a rock rabbit (*Procavia capensis*).

In October 2018, I was accompanied by Mr Ronnie Witbooi, a farmworker at the farm with a keen eye for rock art, who has found a number of other rock art sites at the farm. In a narrow gorge we found four rock art sites. The most southern site hosts a well-preserved painting of an antelope, possibly a kudu that is 9cm long, painted 86cm from the shelter's floor. As at many other sites in the region, the paintings have been done on the smooth surface of black mica schist rocks, with a magnificent vein of quartz embedded in it. I found a well-preserved grooved stone, used for sharpening tools or making eggshell beads, as well as a number of smaller stone tools (microliths), notably scrapers and adze. Approximately four kilometres to the north of the site, I found further examples of grooved stones, numerous microliths and ostrich shell beads, all well-preserved. This latter site only has one fairly clear painting of a single person. All tools are associated with the San.



Figure 4: Painting of a kudu (Photo: André du Pisani)

Kudu (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*) are often painted with large ears, long necks and bulls have spiralling horns. In some cases, even the animal's stripes have been painted. The



Figure 5: Grooved stone (Photo: André du Pisani)

kudu has a link to San mythology and cosmology. According to San folklore, at the beginning of the world, the original *Ju |'hoansi* decided to create supernatural power, which is also known as *n!om* or potency. Kudus are one of the antelopes linked to the *n!ao*, which associates hunting and childbirth with the weather. The kudu is associated with *n!om* or potency. It is used to access the spirit world, where various tasks are performed such as healing, warding off evil spirits, changing the weather and fending off lion and leopard attacks (Forssman & Gutteridge, 2012: 128).

In his 1986 survey of rock art in the country, Scherz listed more than 100 paintings of kudu, more or less the same number for elephant, ostriches, zebra and oryx. According to him paintings of giraffe (684) and springbok (558) dominate (Scherz, 1986:30). In the work of Lenssen-Erz & Erz, published in 2000, on the rock art of the Daurê/Brandberg, the kudu counts as one of the species that appears fairly widespread in the many sites of the mountain (Lenssen-Erz & Erz, 2000:42). Twyfelfontein boasts an 80cm long engraving of a 'dancing Kudu' (Breunig, 2014: 162).

The second site also has some fine examples of paintings of other antelope. One such image is shown opposite top.

This interesting painting has large ears and strong muscles and looks like a horse or a donkey. It may well be a painting of a mountain zebra (*Equus zebra hartmannae*). The front part of the face has been painted in white, while the eye has been left unpainted. The



Image 6: Painting of an antelope (Photo: André du Pisani)

prominent ears are erect. This is a polychrome painting of 7cm in length. The paintings have been executed on fairly smooth rocks of micaceous schist and harder sandstone, even if granite surfaces are often favoured by the painters.

These two sites are approximately 5km away from a much more prominent site on the adjacent farm, *Hornkranz-South*, that contains some remarkable paintings. All these sites are along the same river that fans into a beautiful valley punctuated by countless game footpaths, before joining with the Gaub River. It seems likely that the shelter at *Hornkranz-South* was the main locality where the San could stay for extended periods because of the spring, the protection afforded by the sizeable shelter and the availability of game. The four smaller sites at *Hornkranz* were probably used intermittently during the rainy season when water holes provided water for a few months. I also found a hidden hunting circle under a rock overhang higher up in the same rivulet, that was most probably used for hunting since the animals had to pass very close to the shelter and would have been easy prey for the hunters.

Conclusion

Research shows that radiocarbon C-14 dating of rock art is problematic as one needs a fair amount of pigment to be able to date the paintings. The limited sample size makes accurate dating nearly impossible. Current technology such as the use of portable X-ray fluorescence scanners allow for more accurate dating. While the country has rock art that dates back to the *Middle Stone Age* (MSA), most of the paintings date back to approximately 2000 to 3000 years BP (Before Present) (Lenssen-Ertz, 2001:331). Some paintings at *Hornkranz* may be much more recent, dating back 200–400 hundred years. The presence of glass microliths in at least one site at the farm *Hornkranz-South*, as well as a painting of a woman wearing European clothes, may suggest evidence of paintings that are a few hundred years old (van Rooyen, 2015:135-150). The paintings also tell the story of contact with other people who resided in the region such as the Swartbooi, various Nama groupings and the Herero.

While most of the rock art in Namibia is estimated to be between 2,000–3,000 years old, recent technology using AMS radiocarbon dates shows that southern African hunter-gatherers were creating paintings on rock shelter walls as long ago as 5723-4420 BP in south-eastern Botswana, the oldest such evidence yet found in southern Africa (Bonneau, Pearce, et al. 2017: 322-33). The samples selected for dating were identified as carbon-blacks from short-lived organic materials, meaning that the sampled pigments and the paintings that they were used to produce must be of similar age. Ramsey Bronk (2009:337-360) also offers a most useful summary for the analysis of radiocarbon dates.

Another issue that needs commenting on relates to the paint used in producing the images. The vast majority of paintings at the different sites have been rendered in ochre. Ochre comes from the mineral hematite when it is finely ground. Animal fat, blood and the yolk of an egg are then mixed with the ochre to produce the reddish colour.

Considered within a wider frame of Southern African rock art research, as Lewis-Williams (2006:343-377) wisely reminds the reader, contemporary rock art research is grounded on diverse theoretical and methodological approaches constructed on an ethnographic foundation. Most of these approaches are social and historical in nature. It is simply no longer good enough to record, analyse and compare individual paintings purely in terms of their style, aesthetics and motifs. Rock art has a wider and richer social and historical context and depicts daily experiences, rituals, folklore and cosmology. As such it belongs to humanity's global heritage.

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the encouragement and support of Mr Egbert Hoff of *Neu-Heusis*, Prof. Piet van Rooyen of *Hornkranz-South*, Mr Richardo Cloete of *Hornkranz* and Mr Ronnie Witbooi who accompanied me on two field visits, Mrs Margaret Courtney-

Clarke for believing in me and inspiring me to continue the fieldwork. Collectively and individually all greatly facilitated my work. Prof. David Lewis-Williams of the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa kindly availed more recent literature on dating and the pigments of paint. I owe him special thanks and gratitude.

Endnotes

- ¹ Wilson, Edward O. (1975). *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.
- ² The Title Deeds and transfer of Title for the farm and for the other farms that were subdivided in 1939 are in the Deeds Office, Windhoek, and can be located at: *Transfers*, Vol. 12, 27-28 February 1922, Deeds 147-155 and Deed No 85, dated 28 April 1939, in *Transfers*, Vol.3, Deeds 71-95, 1939 (Windhoek). For details of the actual farms, see du Pisani (1985, pp. 104-105).
- ³ The word “San” refers to hunter-gatherers and foragers. In some Bantu languages the word carries a pejorative meaning of ‘thieves’, hence some researchers prefer the older word “Bushmen”. Both terms are problematic.
- ⁴ Orphen, J.M. 1874. A glimpse into the mythology of the Maluti Bushmen. *Cape Monthly Magazine* 9: 1-13.
- ⁵ Therianthropes (animal people) are images that conflate human and animal forms. If the figure’s limbs, head or body have any animal qualities, it is regarded as a therianthrope. Conversely, some therianthropes are nearly entirely animal. Therianthropes are usually human-animal combinations, albeit rarely combined with elephant, felids and birds. Essentially, a therianthrope is a shaman who has partially or almost entirely transformed into an animal during the trance dance.
- ⁶ German colonial troops under the command of Major Kurt von François launched an unprovoked attack on *Hornkranz* early on 12 April 1893.
- ⁷ In the language of the Nama ‘Gams’ (formerly Gans) means ‘flat rock’.

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JOURNAL 67

Namibia Scientific Society / Namibia Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft
Windhoek, Namibia 2020

ISSN: 1018-7677

ISBN: 978-99945-76-71-5

About the Author

Emeritus Professor André du Pisani (1949) is a Namibian political scientist, photographer, art collector, writer and poet. Born in Windhoek, he completed a bachelor's degree (1971) and an honours degree (1972) in political science and history at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa and in 1975 a master's degree in politics. He continued his education at the London School of Economics (LSE) from 1975 to 1976, where he read philosophy. In 1987, he received his PhD from the University of Cape Town in South Africa and did postdoctoral research on conflict and philosophy at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom from 1995 to 1996. He joined the lecturing staff of the University of Namibia in April 1993.



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