

PAINTED PETROGLYPHS AT BALERNO IN THE LIMPOPO VALLEY, TRANSVAAL.

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FOR A FEW MILES south of the Limpopo River west of Messina and extending some 30 miles from East to West rocks of the Stormberg Series are exposed with cave sandstone koppies rising from the plains. These have provided rock shelters in which at a dozen sites rock paintings have been found.^{1, 2} Engravings of animal spoor have been recorded from one site in the area and engravings of humans and animals from another.²

On a recent trip I was enabled to make by the aid of an expenses grant from C.S.I.R. a new art site was discovered on the farm Balerno M.S. 18 on which farm at another site paintings had already been discovered.² At the new site in a large rock shelter petro-

glyphs were found some of which had been painted. Except for those above noted and one other possible case these are the only known engravings on cave sandstone and the painted examples the only indubitable painted petrolypghs so far discovered, for the other reputed occurrences are all doubtful.

The petrogllyphs are executed by different techniques and include pictures of animals and geometrical forms. No human figures were found. The methods of execution are two, (1) by a grooved outline only and (2) by removing the whole surface within the outline so that the petrogllyph is sunk a few millimetres below the surrounding area. These will be referred to as types 1 and 2 respectively.

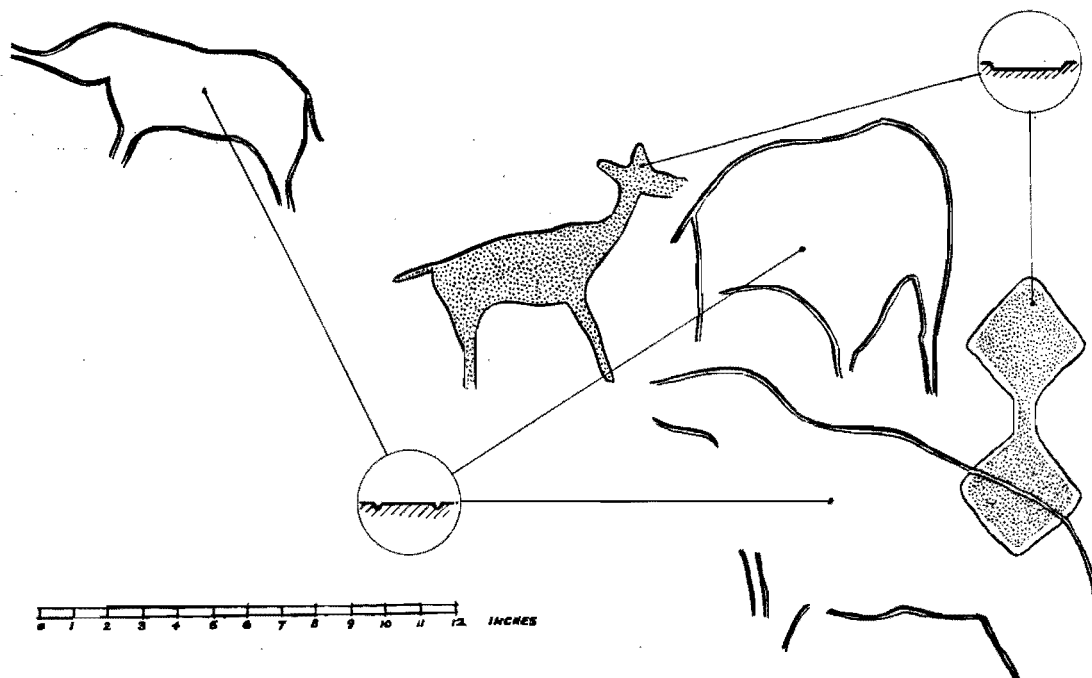


Fig. 1.

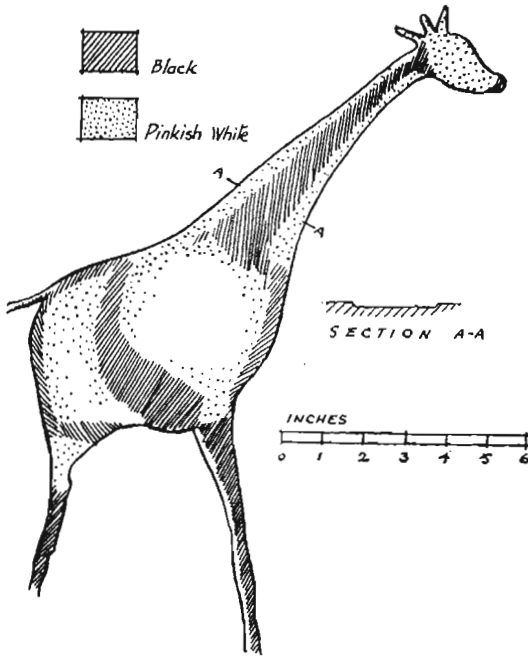


Fig. 2.

Detailed descriptions are as follows:

A group of three elephants (type 1), one buck (type 2), and a figure of two diamond shapes joined together (type 2). There are no signs of paint on these but they are much weathered and may once have been painted. (fig. 1.)

The groove forming the line of the back of one elephant was clearly superimposed upon the double-diamond figure. The group is about 4' 0" from the ground.

A giraffe (type 1) with no paint. This figure also was much weathered and may have once been painted. It is 5' 0" from the ground. Not illustrated.

A rhinoceros (type 1) with traces of paint remaining in the grooved outline and within it. This petroglyph is 11" long and about 10' 0" from the ground (fig. 3).

A giraffe (type 2). The whole figure was painted and nearly all the paint, in two colours, still remains. This figure about 8' 0" from the ground. (fig. 2).

A design of four concentric ovals with a dot in the centre, (type 1). This had

been painted in two colours but little paint remained. The figure is 8 inches high and about 10' 0" from the ground. (fig. 4).

An almost perfect square and the spoor of an antelope (both type 2) and probably never painted. Not illustrated.

Around an angle of the kop and only a few yards from the large shelter was a smaller shelter with faded remains of animal paintings without engraving.

The question of whether the rock paintings and the petroglyphs of South Africa are expressions of different cultures, or whether they are the work of artists of the same culture (or even the same artists) adapting their artistic techniques to different circumstances, is one of the most difficult problems to resolve in South African archaeology. The present writer favours the latter view for reasons fully stated elsewhere⁴ and this occurrence of painted petroglyphs provides further supporting evidence.

Unlike the dolerite and other igneous and metamorphic rocks on which almost all the petroglyphs of the Republic occur cave sandstone yields only an indistinct and visually uninteresting engraving with little contrast between the cut and uncut surfaces.



Fig. 3.

Endeavour Prizes

Prizes totalling 100 guineas are offered by Imperial Chemical Industries Limited, publishers of the international scientific review ENDEAVOUR, for essays submitted on scientific subjects. In addition to the cash prizes, the prizewinners will receive invitations to attend the whole of the British Association meeting at Aberdeen from 28th August to 4th September, 1963. Accommodation will be provided in Aberdeen, and travelling expenses within the United Kingdom will be paid.

The competition is restricted to those whose twenty-fifth birthday falls on or after 1st June, 1963.

Five prizes will be awarded: A first prize of 50 guineas, a second prize of 25 guineas, a third prize of 15 guineas and two special prizes of 5 guineas each for competitors who have not passed their eighteenth birthday on 1st June, 1963.

The subjects for the essays are as follows: (1) *Space research: its scientific significance*; (2) *Response to viral infection*; (3) *Photosynthesis*; (4) *The mechanism of muscular contractions*; (5) *High-temperature chemistry*; (6) *The concept of aromaticity in chemistry*.

The essays, which must be in English and typewritten, should not exceed 4,000 words in length, and only one entry is permitted from each competitor. All entries should be addressed to: The Deputy Secretary, British Association for the Advancement of Science, 3 Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, S.W.1, and the envelope should be clearly marked 'ENDEAVOUR Prize Essay'. The latest date for receipt of entries is 1st June, 1963. The essays must be submitted without signature. The competitor's full name and address and date of birth should be disclosed in a sealed covering letter attached to the essay and addressed to the Deputy Secretary of the British Association, who will acknowledge all entries. The essay winning the first prize will be published in THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE, journal of the British Association.



Fig. 4.

This is probably why engravings on this rock are so rare and why in this case some of them were coloured in.

Debitage of a microlithic industry with some thumbnail scrapers was present on the surface of the engraved cave site at Balerno in a variety of material apparently derived from river pebbles.

REFERENCES

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4. WILLCOX, A. R., *The Rock Art of South Africa*, in press.

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