

Archaeological Site Report	SiteNo	9/2/072/0011
	Site Name	Porterville Galleon Site, Heidedal Farm, Porterville
	Date	10/02/2013 -
	Project	10:00 to 12:00
	CaseNID	
	Coords	-32.920690, 19.054250
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Physical Type: Overhang, Cave

Orientation: **W(m):** **D(m):** **H(m):**
 NW 15.00 15.00 15.00

BroadAgeCategory: Stone Age, Colonial, Historical

Site Category: Archaeological, Artefacts, Rock Art, Deposit

Directions:

Previously, the site was erroneously plotted as being on the Noordbron section of the farm Pampoen Fontein. The site is, in fact, on Lot 12 Grootfontein (also Known as Beaverlac, owned by the Olivier family). The site is almost on the southern boundary of Lot 12, as it abuts the northern boundary of Pampoen Fontein. Terrain not especially rugged but bushes scratchy and long pants probably a good idea. Did not search for other sites, but lots of likely-looking spots.

SiteComments:

The site is remarkable. Description: An ideal living site. Flat, sandy floor and gently sloping apron proceeding from a high overhang that has two deep (more than 10 m) inner lobes. Vegetation: There is noticeably more vegetation at this site than in the surrounds. Yvette van Wyk's Masters study of how human habitation of site affects vegetation would here be useful. Photos sent to her and she identifies, provisionally bearing in mind she did not visit the site, she offered the following provisional identifications. The large tree mentioned in the 1958 site visit as Wild Olive *Olea europaea* that Jan Vlok and Eugene Moll, on photos Yvette showed them, consider to be anywhere between 200-1000 years old). The bushes seem mostly to be *Diospyros dichrophylla* (ebony family and known also as Poison Star Apple). Wood that is dark, hard, and good for making fire). The aloe is probably *Aloe comptonii*, though this is meant to be a southern Karoo species, so perhaps out of place; though aloes are notoriously hard to identify. The ID per pic is: *Dodonea angustifolia* - *Diospyros glabra* - *Olea europaea* subsp *africana* (SA_WCP_Clanwilliam_Lot 12 Grootfontein_Galleon Site) *Diospyros dichrophylla* - *Diospyros glabra* - *Solanum tomentosum* - *Crassula* spp - *Ficinia* sp - *Pentaschistus* sp - *Mesemb* sp (SA_WCP_Clanwilliam_Lot 12 Grootfontein_Galleon Site (91)) *Maytenus oleoides* (SA_WCP_Clanwilliam_Lot 12 Grootfontein_Galleon Site (88)) *Olea europaea* subsp *africana* (SA_WCP_Clanwilliam_Lot 12 Grootfontein_Galleon Site (52) and SA_WCP_Clanwilliam_Lot 12 Grootfontein_Galleon Site (44)) Milkwood, *Sideroxylon inerme* [unusual in that a coastal species and not known to occur in Cederberg in historic times] (SA_WCP_Clanwilliam_Lot 12 Grootfontein_Galleon Site (45)) *Aloe comptonii* - *Olea europaea* subsp *africana* - *Diospyros dichrophylla* - *Stoebe* sp - *Ficinia* sp - *Diospyros glabra* or *Euclea racemosa* (SA_WCP_Clanwilliam_Lot 12 Grootfontein_Galleon Site (87)) General: A large rock in front of the famous 'galleon' painting acts as a sediment trap and there may be decent pockets of deposit here and among the bushes. Faces NW but with not as good a view as the previously recording suggests; certainly not extensive 'vlaktes'. Other relevant info: The famous 'elephants in boxes' site at Monte Christo is 2.5 km to the SSW on the lower slopes of the Olifantsrivierberge. 3 km to the north along the Ratel River is a site with what is said to be a 'man on a horse' - another 'contact' element.

Stone Artefact Types: Quartz, Quartz Crystal, Silcrete

StoneArtefactNotes:

A few silcrete flakes and blades on quartz crystal made with bipolar technique (reduction technique rather than the maker being bipolar...) found in area below 'galleon' painting. More intersted in rock art so no thorough search for artefacts, or grinding patches etc.

DetailsOfCulturalMaterial:

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No clear diagnostic artefacts. But sure to exist sub-surface and/or eroding out of path and vegetated area.

Deposit Info: Sandy

Deposit Depth: 10-20cm

DepositComment:

Deposit is sandy and probably not of great depth. However, there is noticeably more plant growth - bushes, tress, aloes at the site than in the surrounds. May be more deposit on scree/talus with main site floor probably having been picked mostly clean. Even after being picked over by previous visitors enough artefactual material remains to substantiate this being a favoured habitation spot. Seems pretty stable bar bioturbation b y roots and burrowing insects etc, so no rush to excavate.

Deposit Disturbance:

The present surface level is quite level, with boulders and dense plant growth forming deposit traps. Deposit is mostly fin sand near rock, becoming both more granular and loamy in vegetated apron/scree. Some water erosion along the dripline and people have taken the beads and pottery mentioned in previous recordings of Rabinowitz et al. This would have been a prime habitation spot. Site has two deep inner lobes (northernmost lobe very deep and ideal leopard lair). Artefacts likely occur in a wide area in front of site. Good view but not quite the view over the 'vlaktes' that Rabinowitz et al mentioned.

Damage Types: Dust, Fire indeterminate, Flaking/Rock Exfoliation, People, Graffiti

Details of Rock Art:

The site of the famous 'Porterville Galleon' or 'Drommedaris' - so named after a singular and remarkable painting of a ship in red.

Overview: This clearly a popular and possibly long-term habitation site. Paintings suggest successive visits by perhaps a variety of different people, making for a complex social life of site. The paintings seem all to be monochrome in various hues of red.

Authorship: There are two and perhaps three macro-painting traditions. First, fine-line, brush painted imagery such as the antelope and human figures probably made by gatherer-hunters ancestral to 'San'. Secondly, the northernmost lobe has hand-prints (at least 12) that may have been made by Khoekhoe herderspeople. The southern wall also a row of vertical, roughly paralell lines probably painted by finger (unless they are torsos of human figures with faded heads and extremities). The southern wall also has lines drawn in ochre crayon - roughly vertical and parallel in a clump - perhaps related to herderspeople art (they seem to have been especially partial to sites with cave-like components). Third, and interestingly, the 'galleon' is something of a hybrid with parts like the 'flags' probably applied with brush or similar, but lower detail almost finger-painted and/or smeared. Could have been authored by multi-ethnic creolised frontierspeople with San, Khoekhoe and other ancestry. Note that another 'contact' element in the form of a possible 'man on a horse' is located 3 km (straight line distance) north on the Ratel River (iziko Site 3219CC 12).

The 'galleon': Approximately 1.8 m above the present surface level, this extra-ordinary painting shows some intent to use rock contours to make the bottom of the hull (see also DStretch manipulations). Much has been made of the one 'flag' perhaps flying the other way to the other three; though this perhaps imposes a certain way of seeing rather than asking how these 'image' came to be in this place. See also Hugo Leggat and Renee Rusts' 2004 article on a charcoal rendering of a ship in the Attakwaskloof (published in The Digging Stick; article attached to this site report under 'attachments'). Interestingly, the Attakwaskllof ship may have

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been drawn on a surface prepared with ochre and this may have some link to the somewhat 'messy' bottom half of the Porterville ship or, more likely, this messiness is simply a by-product of weathering. The Attakwaskloof ship is also associated with finger-paintings. At Valsfontein near Ceres there are ochre crayon-like drawings of ships. The flaked area below the hindmost mast and flag (the one going the other way) seems largely unchanged in last 55 years based on site photos taken by Seef et al in 1958.

Finger-painted human figure: On the southern wall closer to the deep lobe a finger-painted human figure has links with perhaps similar such figures painted throughout the Cederberg and maybe relating to multi-ethnic groups. This figure is situated in a visually prominent position low down but at right angles to the main shelter wall.

Finger stripes: Finger stripes on same wall as finger-painted human figure but further into the lobe, lower down (see photo with Nick Shepherd in for scale and location). This wall has many areas with what are either pigment smears and/or remnants of paintings.

Antelope and human figures: Below the ship are the clearest examples of human figures (at least 3) and antelope - at least 10 and small (less than 5 cm in many cases) but very finely done. Three (3) of the antelope's red pigment has gone a blackish colour either through a change in internal paint chemistry or paint being colonised by some biological/mineral agent.

Hand prints: Quite low down (less than 1 m) on southern wall of northern lobe are at least 12 handprints on somewhat exfoliated rock.

Image manipulation: Note that some of the images have been manipulated by Barbara Dunn using John Harmon's 'DStretch' plug-in. These manipulations help resolve some of the ship's hull detail and focus attention on the paint in front of the ship.

Graffiti: above the galleon removed by Janette Deacon sometime in 1990s not at all visible. There is some stone-scratched graffiti on northern and southern walls, but not much.

Attempted removals: Immediately below ship an attempt was made to chisel out a small buck and human figure. Half-hearted attempt that has nonetheless caused large flake of case-hardened and painted rock either to have been removed, or more likely, to have been destroyed in the attempt. Similar chisel marks at paintings on the northern wall. Janette Deacon reports these attempts were made prior to her visit in 1990s - though they still look remarkably fresh, indicating degree to which site is protected from weathering.

Weathering: Once case-hardened outer rock weather through or gives way, the rock underneath extremely soft and prone to weathering. But inner lobes mean that paintings are quite protected.

Fire: In southern lobe is soot-blackening (oily texture that sets it apart from other black areas more likely to be manganese staining or similar). Does not seem to have done damage to the rock; though may have covered over paintings.