

Archaeological Site Report	SiteNo	9/2/102/0002
	Site Name	Heerenlogement Cave, Vredendal District
	Date	31/12/1938 - 22:00
	Project	
	CaseNID	
	Coords	-31.962728, 18.552850

Page No: 1

SiteAutoID: 17844

AlternateCode:

9/2/102/0002

Site Category: Rock Art

SiteComments:

Archive Import History: From Bergfontein one can see the equally historic Heerenlogement Cave in the mountain which takes its name from the cave. That colourful figure Pieter van Meerhoff must have been within reach the cave in 1661. Various other well-known travellers visited the cave after him during the seventeenth century but did not record their names in it. These included Oloff Bergh who on 9th November, 1682, referred to, the spring as 'Dassen Bergh's Fontijn' because they 'saw some dassies (hyraxes) amongst the stones' and Governor Simon van der Stel (1685—1686) who also refers to the 'Dassenbergh'. The earliest name and date recorded on the wall of the cave is that of Kaie Jesse Slotsbo, 1712. He was a member of the Council of Policy and took part in a punitive expedition against the Namaqua Hottentots in the northern Sandveld in that year. Soon other names appeared on the north wall of the cave, like those of Ensign I. T. Rhenius (1721), the botanist C. P. Thunberg (1774) and Hendrik Swellengrebel (19 January, 1777) who was the first to mention the wild fig or milkwood tree (*Sideroxylon inerme*) which is still growing in a crack at the back of the cave. His description of the cave is possibly the oldest on record: 'These mountains bear the name of Heerenlogement because there are several cavities amongst the rocks piled against one another, including two that are like very large rooms; at the end of one of these there is a natural stage as in a theatre; both of them resemble amphitheatres. Here several trees grow out of the rock without any earth round them'. In 1783 the French traveller Francois le Vaillant also wrote his name on the wall and not only described the cave and the tree, but made a drawing which accurately and clearly depicts the outspan with the hill in the background. During the nineteenth century the cave was visited by many well-known travellers, all of whom added their names to those of their predecessors: the Rev. Barnabas Shaw (1816); Capt. James Alexander on his journey to South West Africa; the Rev. James Tindall (1839; James Backhouse (1840); Andrew Geddes Bain, the famous road-builder (1854) and others. The first person to attempt to make a list of the names in the cave was the traveller Dr. Andrew Smith, in 1828. In 1940 Prof. P. R. Kirby made a similar survey and recorded a total of 174 names and initials. Many of these inscriptions were undated and many had apparently already been obliterated, and it must be assumed that there were many visitors who did not record their names on the walls. The cave, with its record of the names of so many of the early travellers is a monument to the pioneers who endured so many hardships in opening up the route to the interior. Old Iron Fort Near the road and a few hundred metres below the Heerenlogement Cave there is a small corrugated iron fort. It resembles a rondavel and is about 5 metres in diameter. This is one of the series of small forts built by the British Army in the northern Cape during the Anglo-Boer War (1899—1902) for the purpose of cutting off any incursion by the Boer forces into the Cape Colony. The series of forts extended from Noupoot via Williston to Lambert's Bay. This fort was originally built on a farm between Graafwater and Lambert's Bay. Shortly after the war it was bought by someone from Heerenlogement and taken there. At first it served as a dwelling but it was subsequently used as a store-room. Leopard Trap About 150 metres from the Heerenlogement Cave, on a level place on top of the mountain that contains the cave, there is a leopard trap or as they are sometimes called, a 'wolwehok'. It is reached by means of a footpath from the cave. Traps of this kind were used to trap leopards, hyenas and other wild animals. The structure fell into disrepair some years ago but has been well restored. Proclaimed 1939" Visual Description: Colours: Site Features: Condition: Construction Date: Materials: Catalogue: , No: , Significance Category:

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Bibliography archive: Kirby, P R 'The Heerenlogement and its visitors', SA Journal of Science, Vol 38, 1942, p. 352-386

Damage Types: