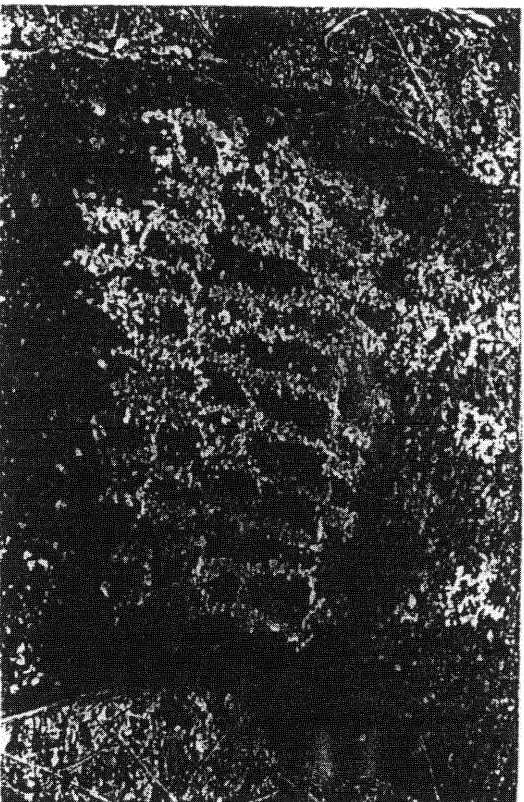


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# OUPLAAS 2 ROCK ENGRAVINGS DANIELSKUIL



David Morris and Peter Beaumont  
McGregor Museum Kimberley  
1994

ASSESSMENT AND RECORD OF ROCK ENGRAVINGS AT DUPLAAS UNION LIME  
MINE (DIVISION OF ANGLO-ALPHA), DANIELSKUL.

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The McGregor Museum was contacted by Mr Charles Naude of Union Lime in connection with rock engravings that lay directly in the way of a large expanding debris dump adjacent to the open cast mine at Duplaas. Engravings from this vicinity were recorded by Friede and others in the early 1970s (Collins 1973; Beaumont pers comm). at a site presumed now either destroyed or buried under mining debris. Further sites have been reported from the area (Wilman 1973; Snyman 1988; Morris 1990) and these have been documented to a greater or lesser extent. Mr F. Higgs (pers comm) has referred to the existence of several additional unrecorded, but apparently similar sites around Limeacres. Engravings of different periods have been noted, the older precolonial ones having a characteristic schematic component, but also including figurative images such as antelope, equids and snakes; the more recent being remarkable for a range of wagon motifs as well as human figures, clothing, as well as stylized houses and possible house-plans. Sites are known to include both older and younger art.

SITE DUPLAAS 2

The site in question, named Duplaas 2 to distinguish it from that documented by Friede and others in the early 1970s, was visited on 4 October 1974, when a complete record was made. It consists

of about 119 individual image elements spread across 22 exposed blocks of dolomite on a gradually eastward-dipping area immediately to the west of an encroaching mine debris dump, at GPS position 28.12.38 S; 23.31.54 E (Figs. 1 & 2). The engraved images on these rocks comprise individual motifs and inscriptions, and clusters of such motifs; and include human figures, 'geometric' forms, animals, and alphabetical elements.

Of interest is the fact that only one period appears to be represented, with the engravings depicting features of colonial culture such as horses with riders, men wearing broad-brimmed hats, women in long dresses, sub-rectangular possible structure plans, as well as engraved initials (though interestingly some letters are back-to-front). None of the ox-wagon images recorded elsewhere in the vicinity was present. Other engravings were found individually at a few places within a radius of some 800 m, with one occurrence being right at the edge of a debris dump, further examples possibly already being buried at that point.

A full photographic record was made of the site, which was also mapped, with each image plotted.

A distribution and orientation analysis of the engravings does not yield any clear spatial patterning. One of the most densely engraved rocks had a hollowed area on it where water remains after rain, but while the images are arranged around this, it is not possible to say whether this was of any significance.

A remarkably high incidence (41 %) of human figures appears. Many have a characteristic rectangular form (Figs. 3-5), although a

few stick figures also occur. One is distinctly obese (Fig. 6). It is difficult except in a few instances to sex these with any certainty - females by their long dresses, triangular in form (Figs. 7 & 8): males by their broad-brimmed hats (Fig. 9). Those with hats are of the 'rectangular' type, which suggests that perhaps the others of similar form are also men. These do, however, occur quite often in pairs, suggesting couples (Fig. 9). As well as being found individually or in pairs, the various figures also occur in clusters, and in linear arrangements. One rock has two rows of such figures (Fig. 3) and, below each, smaller figures which possibly represent children (numbering 25 individuals in all).

The 'geometric' forms (12 %) include several sub-rectangular designs internally segmented, some of them almost as if they were house-plans, in one case a possible stock enclosure, and in another pair having a bilobial design (Figs. 3, 8, 10-12). One of the designs possibly represents a shirt (items of clothing not being unusual at other sites in the area).

Animal images include horses with riders (eg. Fig. 7), a bird (possibly an ostrich - Fig. 13), a possible chameleon, a possible snake, and four indeterminate animals.

Finally, alphabetical inscriptions are found on five of the rocks, probably reflecting people's initials or names, eg. 'R.E.E.', 'I', and 'EVA'. In one instance a 'J' and in another an 'S' are back-to-front, suggesting limited literacy on the part of the engravers (Fig. 14). Relative patination on the site suggests that the inscriptions are of the same order of age as the rest of the engravings. Hats and the long-dressed figures lend further



support to this contention.

## DISCUSSION

There is a diffuse scatter of probably Later Stone Age and earlier lithics in the area, but these plainly do not relate to the engravings in question. Collins argues that the images of wagons, as well as the dress depicted, indicate an early nineteenth century context for the site she describes. However, these features are too indistinct for such minute chronological placement, and the engravings could equally be of more recent - perhaps late nineteenth century - date. Wilman referred to the 'curvilinear designs' on dolomite outcrops on the Ghaap Plateau, which she would have seen in c. 1908, suggesting that the artists were "the yellow piccanins of very mixed race who inhabit these parts. This at least is the case at Daniel's Skuil" (1933:44). She was referring to Griqua youngsters; and in Griqua context for Duplaas 2 seems not unlikely (cf. Collins 1973).

A Griqua missionary outpost under Jan Kars and Jan Hendriks from Griquatown was established amongst the Saan at Kransfontein (on the outskirts of Danielskuil) in 1816, and a group of Griqua led by Barend Barends settled there in the same year (Snyman 1988:7-11). By 1820 a school was being run by a Griqua woman at Danielskuil, and by 1838 almost all the children at school could read the Bible, and most could write.

Initially there was conflict between the Saan and both Griqua and Tswana (who knew the place as Thaka la tlou). But when political

tension arose between the Kok/Barends and Waterboer/missionary factions within the Griqua grouping (with sporadic armed conflict erupting between 1824 and 1828), the Barends clan aligned itself with the 'Bergenaars', who included disaffected Griqua (indeed two Barends family members became 'Bergenaar' leaders), 'Kora', other Khoekhoen, Saan, and even Tswana (Snyman 1988:15). Many 'Kora and possibly other Khoisan became absorbed into the Griqua community at Danielskuil, or Xaub, as the place had been known in the 'Kora tongue.

During the 1830s, however, Danielskuil was brought firmly under Waterboer/missionary control and Kramersfontein was made available for Tswana settlement. This resulted in the displacement and ultimate extinction of the remaining local Saan - in one instance about a hundred people were killed after being cornered in a nearby cave (Snyman 1988:18).

Just how the rock art sites around Danielskuil relate to this history is far from certain and more research is needed to address these issues in more detail. Given the possibility - in view of its content - of an essentially Griqua context for the art at Duplaas 2, it would follow that interpretations forwarded in relation to other rock art in the Northern Cape and southern Africa more widely - predominantly of Saan and hunter-gatherer context - would not apply directly here. In other contexts, an interdigitation of non-Saan beliefs and motivations in a continued rock art tradition has been shown to have occurred (eg. Prins 1994) - and it is conceivable that in situations such as Duplaas 2 the making of rock art could have been derived from a Saan tradition, but significantly transformed within a predominantly non-Saan context. These engravings surely do

reflect aspects of the history and rural ideology of the early Griqua/colonial period and possibly draw in pre-Griqua elements. With the persistence of Griqua initiation and other rites even into the late twentieth century (Waldman 1989), certain ritual aspects - substantially of Khoisan origin - could well be expressed in some of the art. The snake, which occurs in some of the engravings around Danielskuil, features centrally in some Griqua beliefs, as it does in Khoekhoen, Saan and Tswana cosmologies (eg. Morris 1990).

For the interim it may be concluded that some variant of these processes was occurring around Danielskuil. It does appear as if the Ouplaas 2 engravings were made within a predominantly Griqua farming context, by semi-literate people - perhaps indeed by Griqua youths as Wilman maintained - some of whom would almost certainly have had Khoisan ancestry. The engravings are probably at least a century old and could date back up to some 150 years.

#### MITIGATION

Steps taken by the mine to mitigate destruction of this site are greatly to be commended. The dolomite blocks, only small portions of which were exposed to the surface, appeared to be embedded in, or indeed formed part of, the bedrock, and thus could not be removed without considerable expense. This might in any case have resulted in damage to the engravings. Given that other similar sites are known or have been reported to exist in the area, it was the considered opinion of the authors that a total documentation of the engravings would represent the best possible mitigation action under the circumstances.

The full record of the site Duplaas 2 is housed at the McGregor Museum in Kimberley, and copies of this report have been submitted to the Union Lime Division of Anglo-Alpha, as well as to the National Monuments Council Head Office, Cape Town, and Northern Cape Provincial Office, Kimberley.

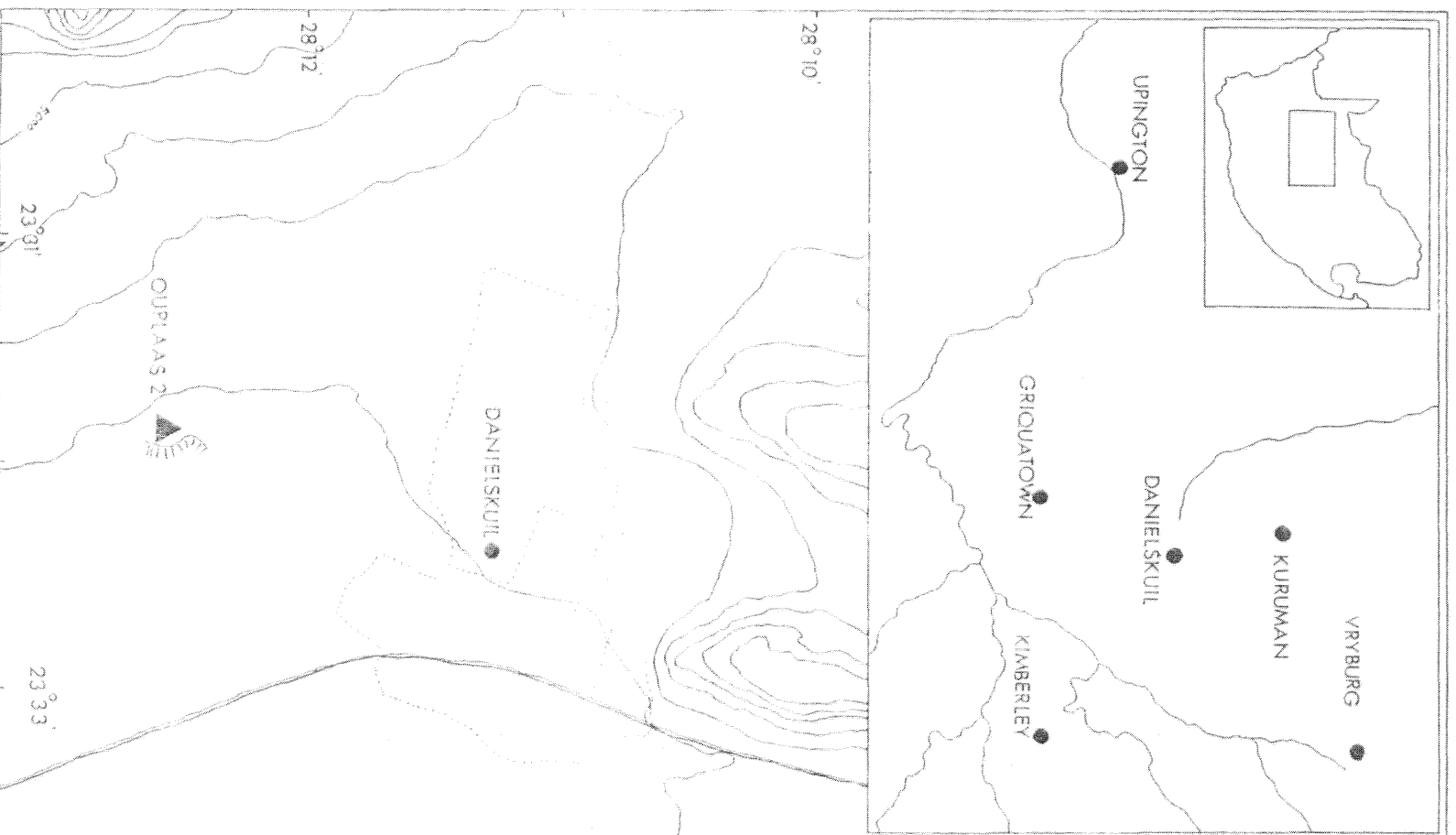


Figure 1A. Map showing the location of the site. The dotted line shows the approximate extent of Danielskuil. The encroaching mine dump is shown immediately to the east of the site. Contours and other details from 1:50 000 Topographical map 2825BA DANIELSKUIL, 1971. Contour interval is 50 feet. Scale 20mm = 1 km.

Figure 2. View eastwards  
across the site to the  
encroaching dump.

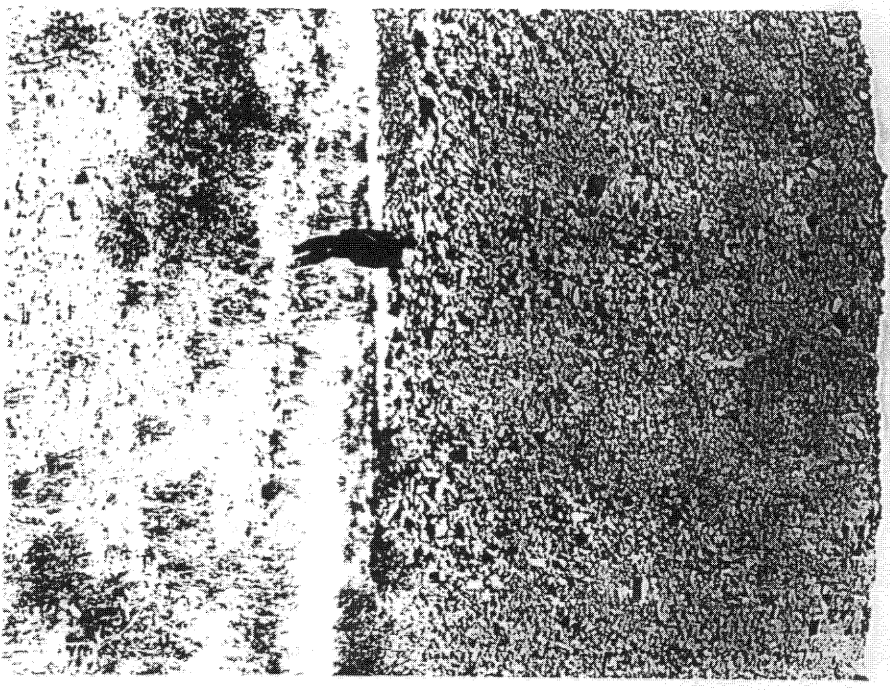


Figure 3. Rows of human  
figures. A similar  
composition facing the other  
way is visible at the top of  
the photo, with segmented sub-  
rectangular and other designs  
between them (10).

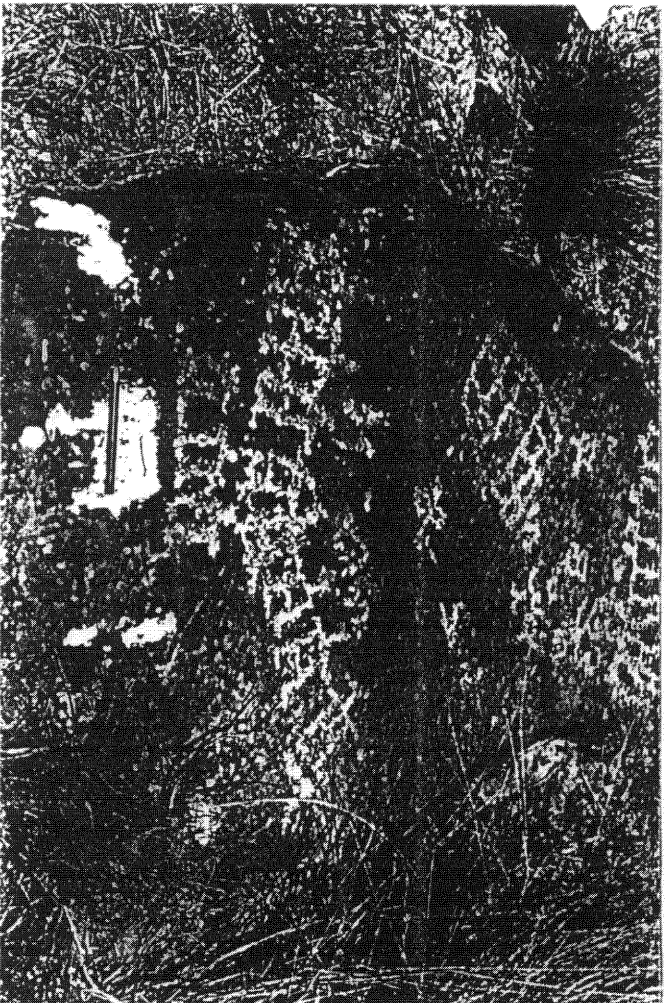


Figure 4. Rectangular human figure - perhaps a male (8).

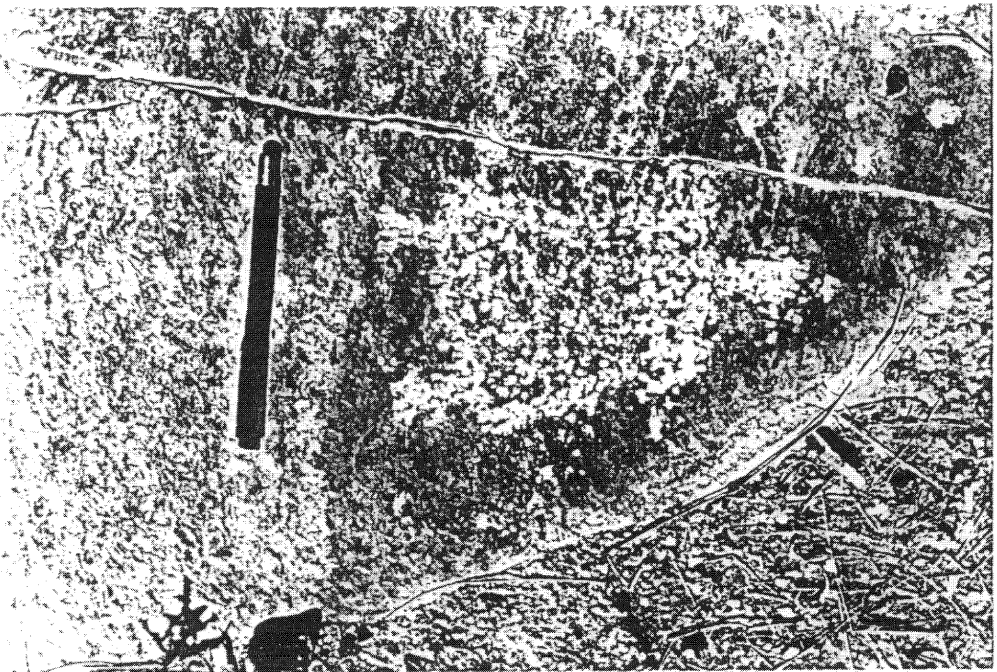


Figure 5. Rectangular human figure (12).

Figure 18. Distribution  
orientation and other  
Museum. Scale 5 mm = 1

2





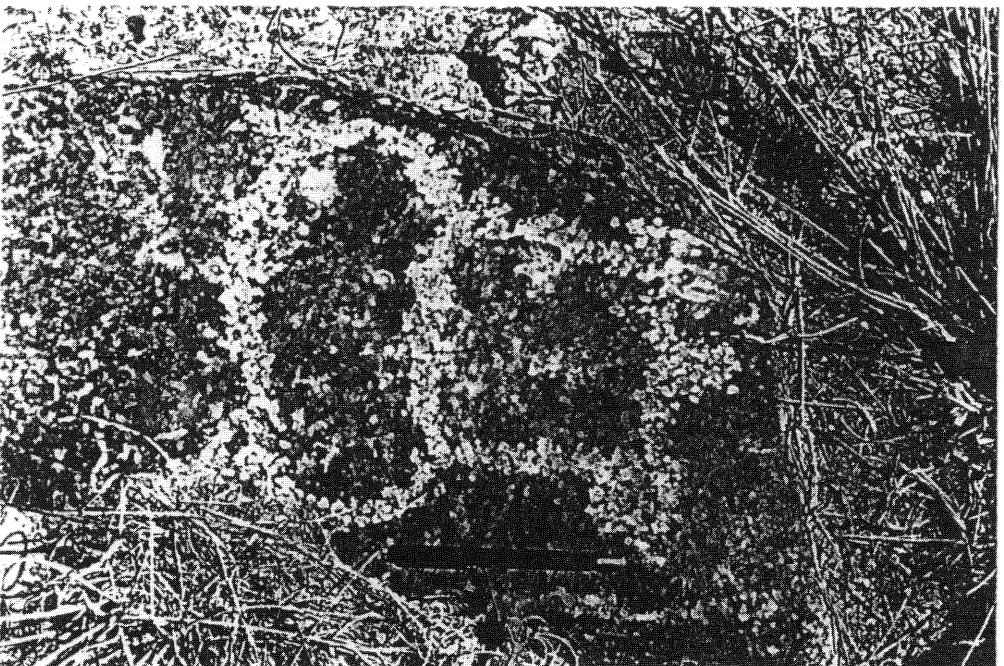


Figure 6. 'Obese' human figure (21).

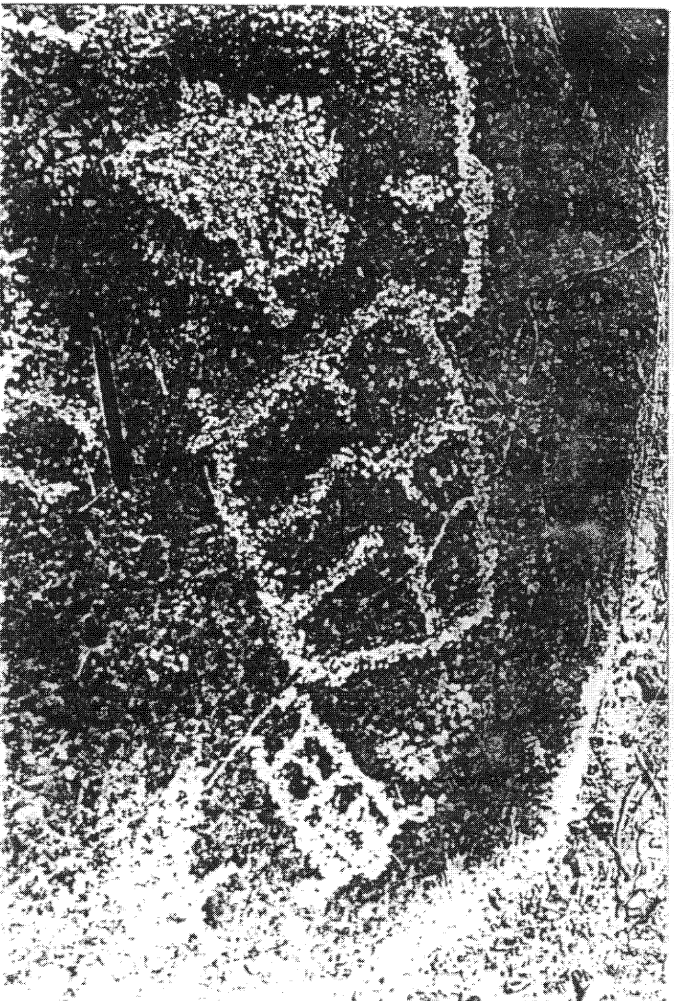


Figure 7. Triangular figure, of a woman,  
with possible house plan and other figures (4-6).

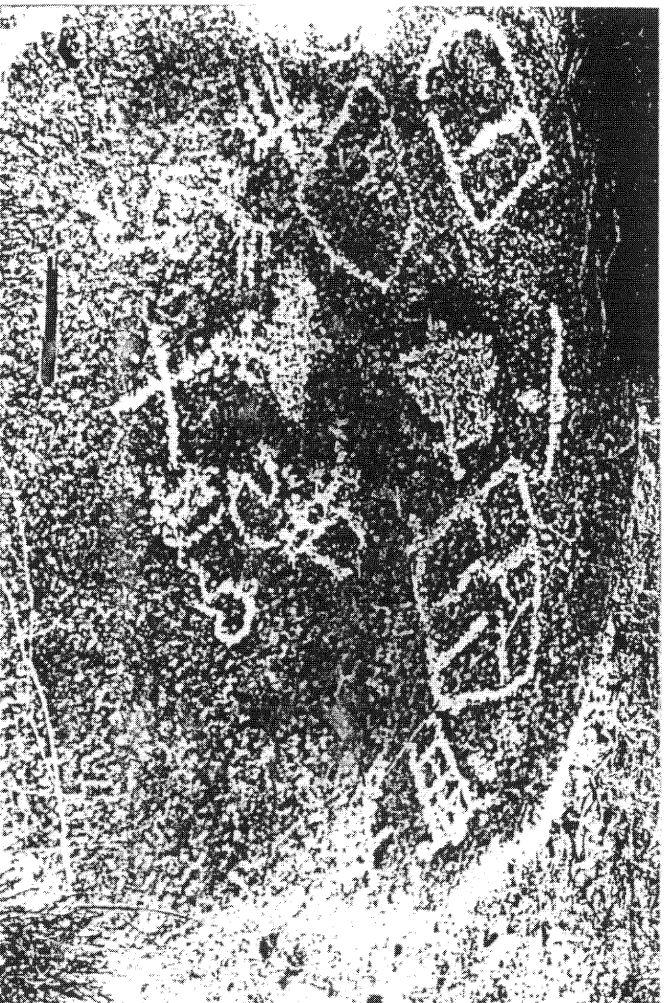


Figure 8. Broader view of engraved rock no 4-6.

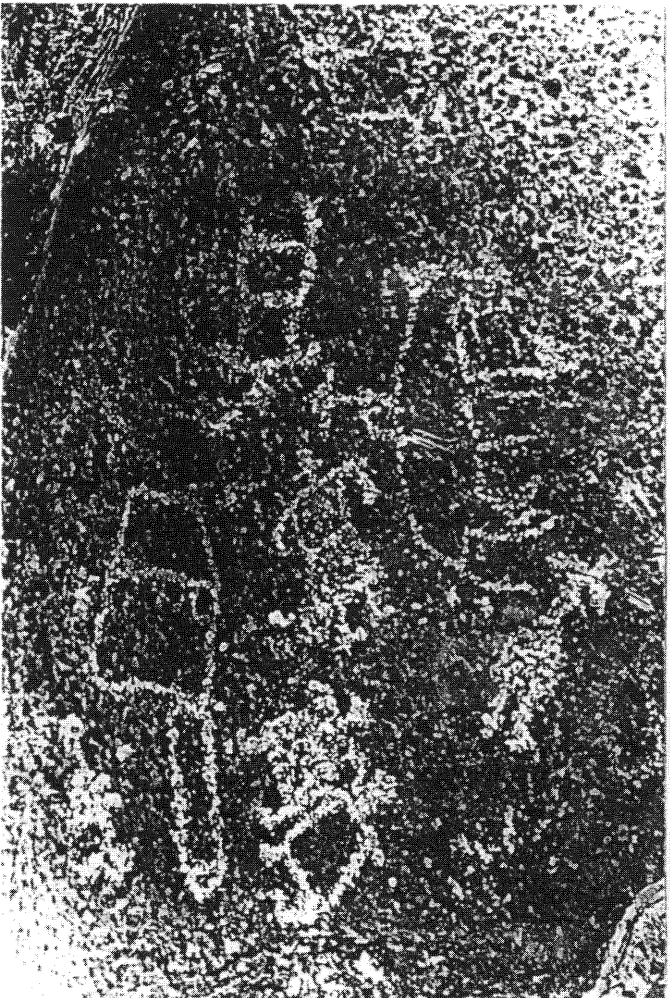


Figure 9. Likely male figures with broad-brimmed hats; also man on horseback (7).

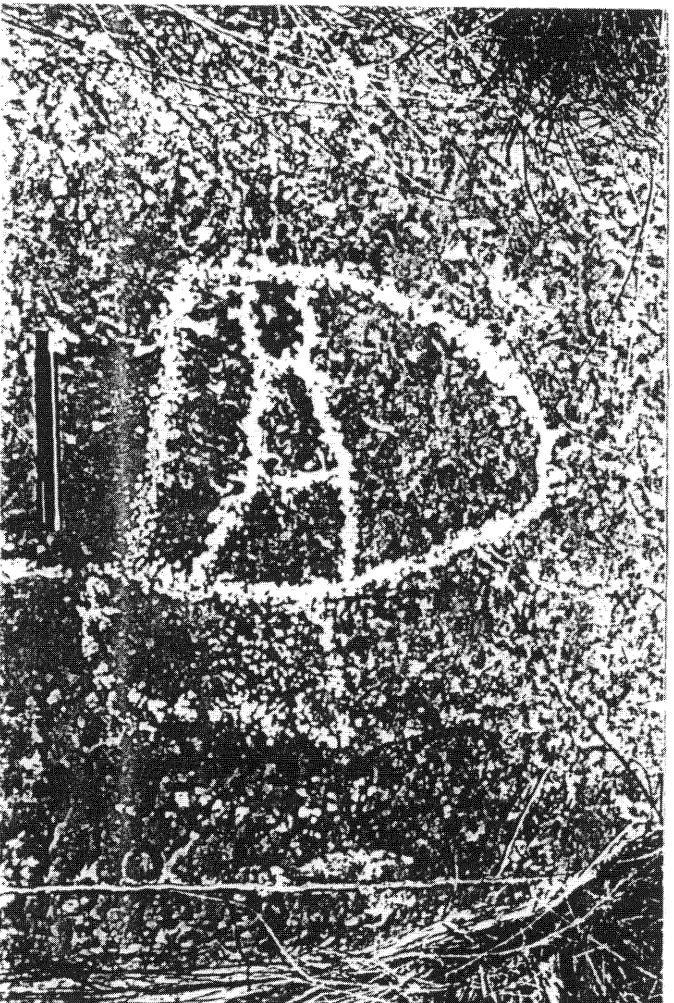


Figure 10. Segmented 'geometric' motif (3).





Figure 11. Segmented sub-rectangular design (9).  
(Compare that in Figure 3).

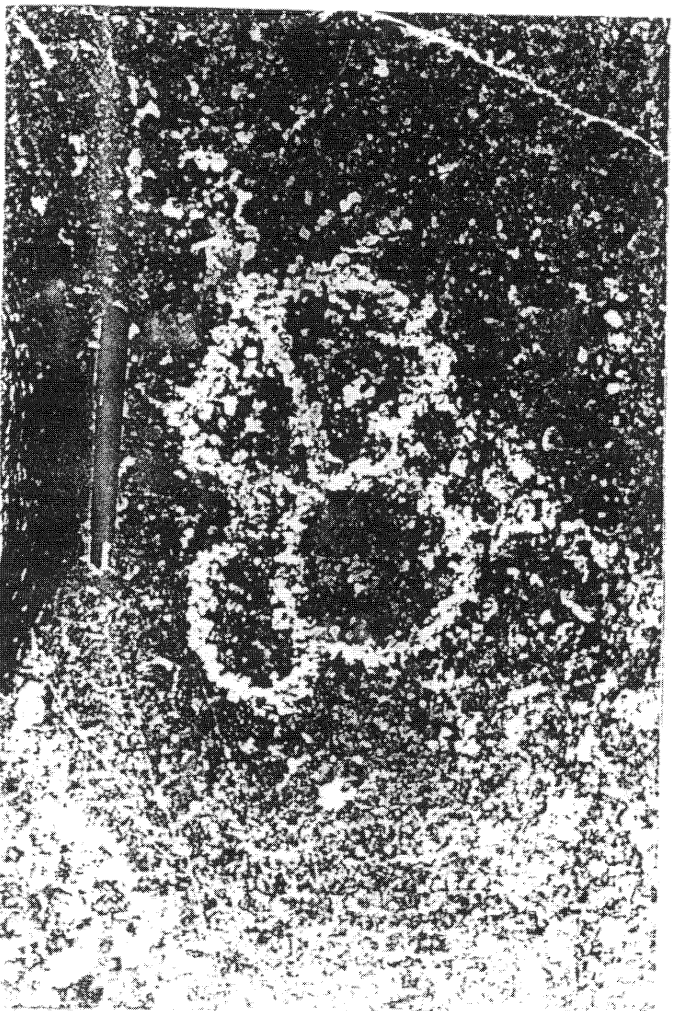


Figure 12. Two 'bilobial' forms (15).

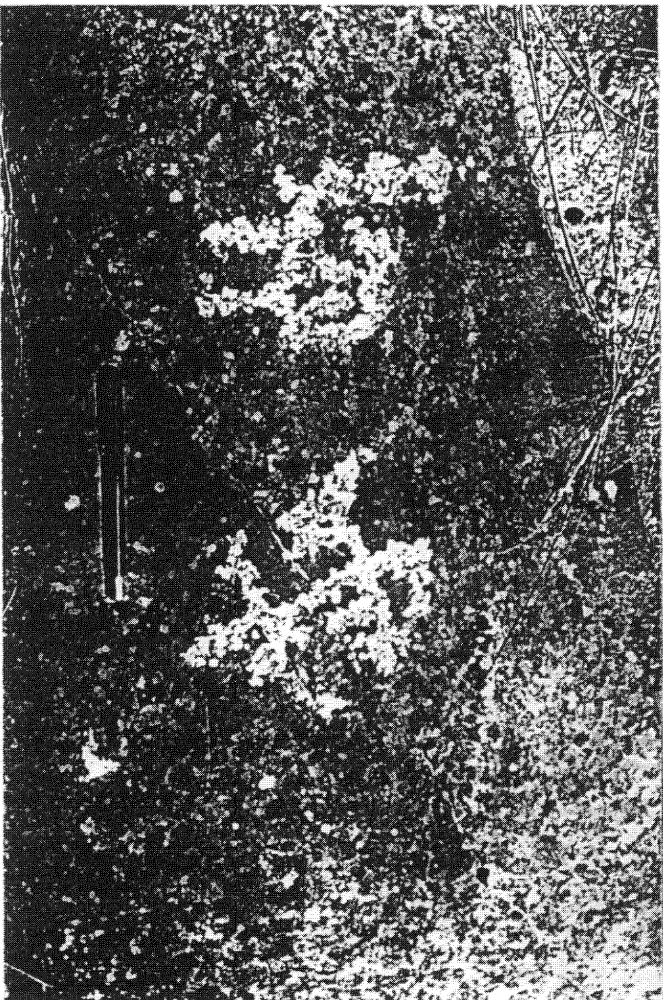


Figure 13. Ostrich or other bird and ?animal (16).

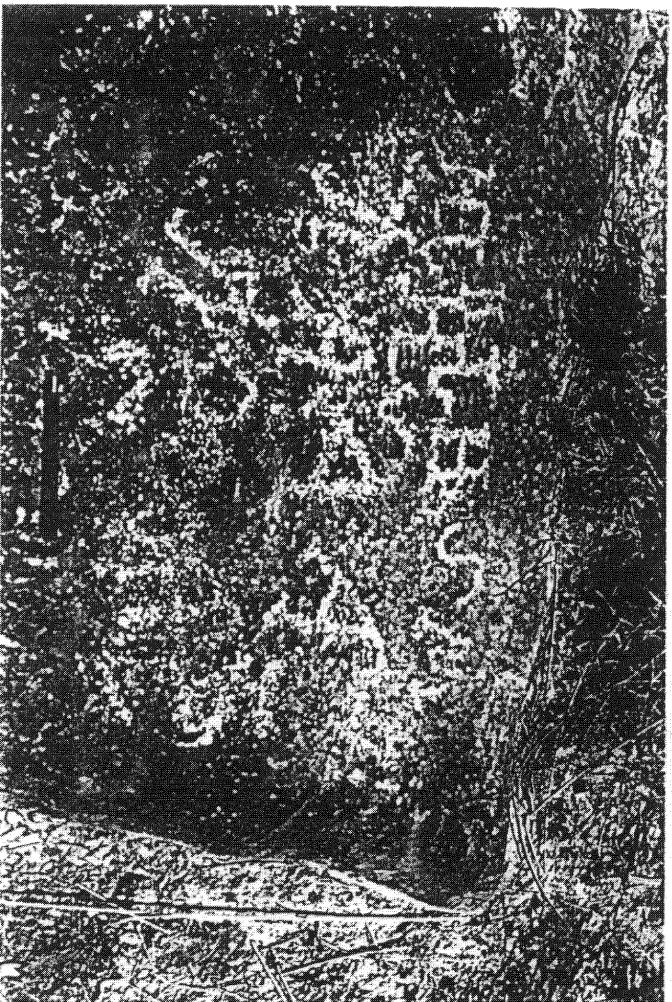


Figure 14. Alphabetical letters including 'A', 'H', 'S' and a reversed 'J'. Also a human figure and other markings (13).

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank Mr Charles Naude and staff of the Union Lime Division of Anglo-Alpha, Danielskuil, for their assistance and hospitality during our investigation at Ouplaas Mine. Lizette Fouché and Natasha Dyer assisted in compiling the report.

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