

## A pictorial genealogy: the rainmaking group from Sehonghong Shelter

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### ABSTRACT

The rainmaking group from Sehonghong Shelter (Lesotho) is one of the most publicized and iconic groups of hunter-gatherer rock paintings from the Maloti-Drakensberg range of southern Africa. A variety of manual copies that are representative of the history of rock art copies in the region are sorted into two lineages. The first comprises a family of copies that descend from a freehand sketch created by Joseph Orpen in 1873. The second originated with a tracing made by Patricia Vinnicombe in 1971. This genealogical approach reveals how the group has been isolated from its context, reproduced in a diagrammatic form and studied in a primarily non-pictorial way. Making use of a wider selection of pictorial records pertaining to Sehonghong, the rainmaking group is relocated within the rock shelter, illustrating how digital restoration can potentially restore lost visual qualities of the original. Reconciling pre-digital and digital modes of imaging in this way enables us to capture the instability and specificity of the original rock painting.

KEY WORDS: Sehonghong Shelter, Maloti-Drakensberg, San, Bushmen, rock paintings, historical copies, photographs, digital imaging, restoration, remediation.

### A VISUAL QUESTION

Rock paintings are image artefacts that have throughout the history of their study inspired a vast and diverse body of pictorial copies. The fact that many people over many years have been moved to record and copy the paintings suggests that their visual aesthetic and affective qualities are an essential part of their appeal, without, or prior to, any knowledge of the semantics of their symbolic constituents. My interest is similarly a visual one.

I argue here that, beyond the painted rock face, following the initial transition from original to copy, the rock paintings have not remained frozen in the extinction of the culture that produced them, but have continued to change pictorially, accumulating different meanings as images reproduced in the literate world. They have had, so to speak, a “life of their own” (Leibhammer 2009: 43). One might then argue that the study of the art itself is or should be distinct from that of the copies, with the former being the central scientific aim of disciplines such as archaeology, and the latter a more reflexive enterprise subsumed into visual studies or art history. But here I show that although each copy is, inevitably, a product of its time, it should never be seen as detached from its own fundamental role in creating understandings of the past. I furthermore argue that in iconographic studies of rock art there is often too seamless or unquestioning a shift from the original art to the copies. My genealogical study aims to make visible and ultimately rupture that seam.

In this paper I examine the copies on an empirical level in the first instance. What does one observe when the copies are compared with the rock paintings? How accurate are they? To what extent can they mediate or facilitate the study of the original? To what extent can they replace the original?

Beyond the empirical, the nature of the copies also has epistemological implications for understanding and attributing meaning to the original. How have the copies been

used in formulating explanations of what the art means? Have their visual qualities determined or been determined by verbal interpretations? I touch on these implications here but hope to deal with them in more detail elsewhere.

#### LOCATING THE ORIGINAL THROUGH THE COPIES

In an attempt to address these broad questions of regional and theoretical significance, I focus on a small group of paintings, the rainmaking scene from Sehonghong Shelter, located near the modern village of Sehonghong in Lesotho. This mountainous region contains what is considered to be one of the world's great concentrations of rock art sites. While writing this paper, I chose not to visit the site to see what it was possible to discover about the position of the original purely through the pictorial record.

I selected the rainmaking group because of its status as “one of the most celebrated southern African rock paintings” (Lewis-Williams 2003: 64). It was one of the first works of hunter-gatherer art to appear in the literate world, as part of a compilation of four groups of paintings copied from different sites by Joseph Millerd Orpen (1874: frontispiece). Orpen created three during a military expedition into the Maloti range in 1873–74 and the fourth at an earlier time in the eastern Cape Colony. The Sehonghong group was captioned “From the Cave Mangolong in the Maloti” and was described in the accompanying article as an underwater scene involving the capture or leading of an animal by men using a long rope (Orpen 1874: 10, 12). Mangolong was possibly an erroneous name or an alternative used for the site at that time. Today the cave is locally known as Lehaha-la-Sehonghong or Lehaha-la-Soai, meaning Sehonghong Cave or Soai's Cave (Mitchell 2010: 149).

Although the cave still contains many paintings, they have degraded badly since James Grant, the other British officer on the expedition, described their colours as “most brilliant” (Mitchell & Challis 2008: 434). Over time, the paintings brought attention to the site that was probably, paradoxically, an important factor in their demise. In addition to the natural weathering the paintings have suffered, many are today obscured behind layers of graffiti. Almost a century after it was first copied, Patricia Vinnicombe found that the rainmaking group was very indistinct and difficult to photograph (1976: 337; cf. Lewis-Williams 2003: 64). A wall display at the Origins Centre (University of the Witwatersrand) describes the demise of the site as a “tragedy”.<sup>1</sup> Mitchell (2010: 167) sees a bleak future for Sehonghong's painted imagery and calls for “fuller publication and interpretation of the site's paintings”, drawing on archival sources and what is left of the paintings today.

Since Orpen's 1874 article, the rainmaking group has appeared many times in print, perpetuated through a genealogy of copies. Tables 1 and 2 (after the references) list some of its illustrated published appearances and provide an overview of how these have been used in the literature over time. The recent publication of Grant's 1873–74 expedition diary (Mitchell & Challis 2008) contains three different versions: a schematic monochrome redrawing of Orpen's freehand four-group compilation, a colour photograph of the rock panel where the rainmaking group occurs and a painted redrawing produced from a tracing (Mitchell & Challis 2008: 430, 434–5). Although the three illustrations all depict the same cluster of figures, the visual relationship between them is not in the first instance obvious (see Figs 1–3).

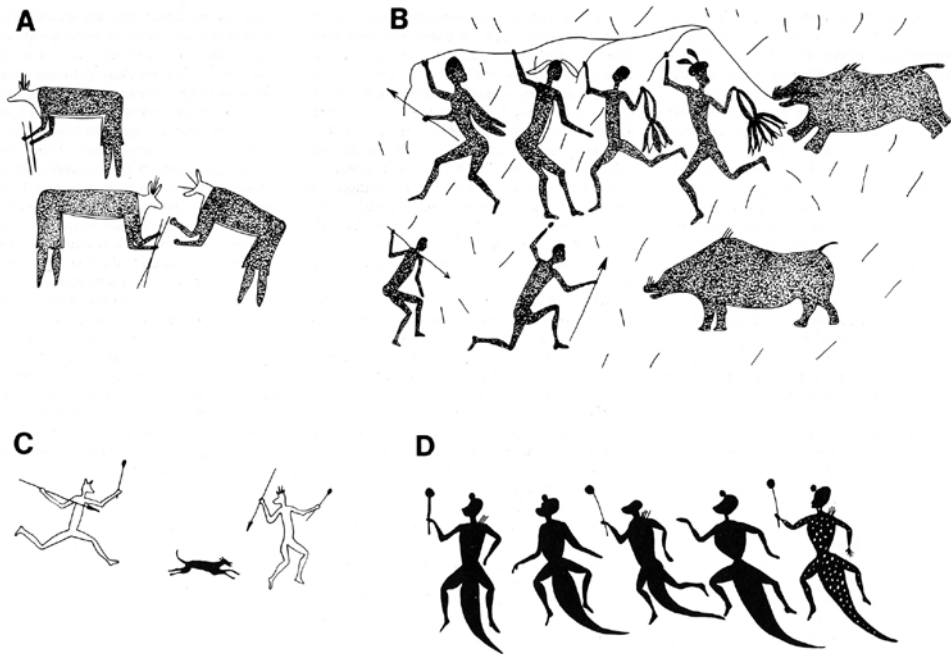


Fig. 1. Adapted redrawing of Orpen's 1874 four-group compilation recently re-published in Mitchell and Challis (2008: 430, fig. 8b) after Lewis-Williams (1981: 33, fig. 9). B indicates the rainmaking group.

The photograph (Fig. 2) shows a rock surface with a number of indistinct painted figures that we know from the caption to be the rainmaking panel. Among the discernible shapes, two dark-ochre and white eland stand out, while the two redrawn versions (Figs 1B and 3) contain no eland. The photograph's original caption points to elements that are not immediately obvious, relating it to the redrawings:

The two rain animals are one above the other in the upper right of the frame, both of them below the large downward trending discontinuity in the rock face. Their two bodies are visible as large faded red areas of paint, while the thong connected to the nose of the upper animal and at least two of the human figures associated with it can also be made out (Mitchell & Challis 2008: 434).

The distance between the photograph and redrawings draws attention to the difference between the way rock paintings are illustrated and the way they actually look. I explore this disjuncture by tracking the published and unpublished history of Sehonghong's now iconic group.

#### COPIES AS MEDIATORS

Copies play a central role in rock art literature where they are often used as unmediated representatives (cf. Leibhammer 2009: 43). Most of the time, a copy stands in for the original artwork, representing and even replacing it; interpretations are carried out via the copies rather than the originals and published interpretations are in turn usually illustrated by some form of copy.

Researchers have occasionally examined how copies mediate between the original rock paintings and the viewer of the copy, but have been primarily concerned with

whether copies faithfully reflect the figural iconographic content of the originals, in this light establishing certain copies as inaccurate, whimsical or fraudulent. The study of the varied interpretations of the “White Lady of the Brandberg” (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1989: 6–7)<sup>2</sup> and the question of George Stow’s possible forgery of a group of blue ostriches (Dowson et al. 1994; Prins 2005; Lewis-Williams & Dowson 2008; Skotnes 2008: 15, 18) figure among the best known southern African examples of this interest. For the KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg, several studies assessing the accuracy of the work of individual copyists have been undertaken (Ward & Maggs 1994; Ward 1997; Flett & Letley 2007). Copies have also been examined as indicators of the state of preservation of the paintings at the time at which they were copied, a practice which is useful for assessing deterioration (e.g. Ward & Maggs 1994; Ward 1997; Le Quellec et al. 2009). And finally, they have been studied and appreciated as artworks, for their aesthetic qualities and historic significance (e.g. Skotnes 2008).

Frequently underpinning this literature is the idea that recording techniques used today provide a more accurate reflection of the paintings than techniques used by early, non-specialized copyists. Leibhammer (2009), however, in her examination of the phenomenological difference between originals and copies, concludes that no copy is perfect, each excluding, including and manipulating information in a unique way. It is not only these early attempts at copying that have limitations; all techniques have them. But, she states, the currently most widely accepted convention of black-ink illustrations is “possibly the most useful for the purpose of academic investigation and scholarship”, enabling the copyist to capture the “salient form of the image” (Leibhammer 2009: 58). Definitions of usefulness and accuracy in documentation and analysis nevertheless need to be questioned continually. While this interrogation is not new (e.g. Lewis-Williams & Loubser 1986; Lewis-Williams 1990a, 2006), it has not often been extended to the study of images, which remain under-theorized and enigmatic. In the words of W.J.T. Mitchell, “instead of providing a transparent window on the world, images are now regarded as the sort of sign that presents a deceptive appearance of naturalness and transparency concealing an opaque, distorting, arbitrary mechanism of representation, a process of ideological mystification” (1984: 504).

In a study of copies of rock paintings, the relationship to the original parietal imagery must serve as a guiding principle in any attempt to understand this mechanism of representation. If there exists a complex connection between original paintings and copies—new ones as well as old, and in some cases copies of copies several times removed—the copies are nonetheless identifiable when they capture something specific about the originals. Indeed, for all their different positions, inaccuracies and omissions, there can be no doubt that any one of the images discussed in this article descends specifically from the rainmaking panel at Sehonghong.

#### A TIME OF PICTORIAL TRANSITION

Orpen created the founding image of the Sehonghong genealogy at a pivotal moment in history. As a colonial officer, he travelled through mountains still largely unexplored by Europeans during a terminal phase of hunter-gatherer occupation as the land was



Fig. 2. The rainmaking panel, photographed by Peter Mitchell in 1985, published by Mitchell and Challis (2008: 434, fig. 11a) and Mitchell (2010: 161, fig. 8). Courtesy of the photographer.



Fig. 3. Patricia Vinnicombe's painted redrawing from a tracing of the rainmaking group, both created in 1971. Previously published in Mitchell and Challis (2008: 435, fig. 11b) among others (see Table 2 after the references). Courtesy of the KwaZulu-Natal Museum.

increasingly settled by black farmers and administered by white colonists (Wright & Mazel 2007: 88–95). Also at around this time, Bushman culture was beginning to become a subject of in-depth academic inquiry (Bleek 1874). Herein lies a tragic colonial irony, for the most informed producers and viewers of the art were being eliminated or assimilated into encroaching societies with different ways of life. The members of these new farming communities settled in Bushman territory, displacing their herds of eland with herds of cattle and disrupting their hunting, gathering and painting (Nettleton 1985: 52). It was a time of transition from a living painting culture to a dead one, from originals to copies, from paintings to attempts to explain them, and from a world in which the art was created by and for members of hunter-gatherer communities to one where it was viewed by outsiders as an enigmatic trace of a lost way of life.

#### THE NARRATIVE OF THE RAINMAKING MYTH

Orpen expressed curiosity for paintings showing “a mythological meaning, or representing quasi-religious rites” (1874: 1). He sought the guidance of Qing, reportedly one of the last Maloti Bushmen, and encouraged him to impart, “when happy and at ease smoking over camp-fires, ... stories and explanations of the paintings” (1874: 2). This is perhaps one way of understanding why Orpen chose to copy seemingly ‘narrative’ scenes, by which I mean images that support or illustrate stories, or which are related to story-telling.

Orpen’s article includes a string of story fragments recounted by Qing, portions of which can be related to the illustrations. These images arouse a particular fascination because they represent the only paintings to be explained *in situ* by a member of the culture that produced them. The significance of Orpen’s article as a major nineteenth-century source of Bushman ethnography in the production of rock art knowledge has been explained in many publications (e.g. Lewis-Williams 2003, 2006, 2008, 2010; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2004); I include a brief overview here.

In 1874 Orpen sent his manuscript to the editor of the *Cape Monthly Magazine*, who forwarded it to Wilhelm Bleek for comment (Lewis-Williams 2008: 472–3). Bleek, in collaboration with Lucy Lloyd, was recording the folklore of [Xam Bushmen from the central Cape Colony. The scene from ‘Cave Mangolong’ elicited more comment from their informants than any of the other copies (Lewis-Williams 1980: 469). They interpreted it as depicting rainmaking and described the type of animal it contained as a “water cow” (Bleek 1874: 12). Vinnicombe (1976: 336–7) and Lewis-Williams (1981: 34) later returned to Qing’s underwater explanation and showed that it is compatible with rainmaking. Similar rainmaking scenes involving rain animals being pulled along by “medicine men” or “shamans of the rain” have been identified in paintings elsewhere in the Maloti-Drakensberg and further afield, as well as in engravings and other verbatim accounts (e.g. Deacon 1988).

The Orpen and Bleek sources have since been used in triangulation with twentieth-century San ethnography to propose a “pan-San” culture (Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2004: xix–xx) supporting what is now the dominant paradigm for the interpretation of the art (e.g. Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1989). Further, the complementary work of Orpen and Qing, and Bleek, Lloyd and their informants, has intrigued researchers since its rediscovery in the 1970s and catalysed the study of Bushman or San culture into an “academic industry” (Lewis-Williams 2006: 350, note 2).

## ORPEN'S MISSING FIELD SKETCH

The four painted groups in Orpen's article were printed together on a foldout plate in the first published instance of chromolithographic technology in the country (Dubow 2006: 109; Fig. 4). Production of the three-colour plate would have required the preparation of three separate limestone slabs, one for each of the tints of reddish-brown, black and tan. Thus the lithographer would have redrawn the sketches supplied by Orpen, modifying the images to refract them into separate flat colours.

Four watercolours in the collections of the South African National Library are attributed to Orpen and it has been suggested that these are his original field copies (Lewis-Williams 1981: 32). At first glance, this appears to be the case, but the watercolours too once formed a single large sheet of paper, reportedly cut into four circa 1970–80.<sup>3</sup> I digitally reassembled the separate watercolours following the layout of the 1874 plate. The dimensions of the pieces are consistent with this hypothesis, as are stains and scuff marks that continue across the joins from one watercolour to another (Fig. 5).

Outlined faintly in pencil and painted in with coloured washes on brown paper, the figures depicted in the watercolours are also uncannily similar to the lithographic images. Brush strokes and faint variations in pigment concentration, with some overlapping and bleeding of colours, give the figures some depth, but this was not a deliberate attempt to



Fig. 4. The foldout lithographic plate with four groups from four different sites (Orpen 1874), photographed by the author. The scale is approximate because of possible distortion. Scale bar = 20 cm.

create an illusion of corporeality; the figures are essentially like shadows projected onto a flat plane. The published plate presents flatter, crisper, and more intense but similar colours—reddish-brown and black, against a tan background printed on white paper. The rectangular tan-coloured background field of the lithographic print corresponds with the natural brown colour of the paper in the watercolour, while what is painted white in the watercolour is simply left blank—the white colour of the paper underneath the printed lithographic image. The same handwritten captions also appear on both the watercolours and the lithograph. Thus, it seems more likely that the watercolour was a preparatory colour separation guide created by the lithographer.

Whatever the case, the four watercolours are not the original field sketches I had hoped to find; the large sheet is an unwieldy format for mountain expeditions and, furthermore, it is a compilation of paintings copied at different times. This raises a question: how closely did the plate resemble Orpen's field sketches? The field sketches may have been collected in a portable notebook-type format, as suggested in a film comprising a dramatized re-enactment of Orpen's encounter with Qing loop-screened at the University of the Witwatersrand's Origins Centre (*broken threads* 2006<sup>4</sup>; Fig. 6; also Table 1), but if Orpen kept a diary of the 1873–74 expedition, it has never been found (Lewis-Williams 2008: 470).



Fig. 5. Four watercolours that once formed a single compilation with possibly the same layout as the published 1874 plate (Fig. 4), as shown in this collage. Scans courtesy of the National Library of South Africa, digitally reassembled by the author. Scale bar = 20 cm.



Fig. 6. A frame from the film *broken threads* (2006) showing Orpen making painted sketches in a notebook.

#### THE ORPEN DIAGRAM

The watercolours and lithographic plate are very closely related, but in the inferred transposition from the one to the other, a few elements were lost: the white belly of one of the rope-pulling men and the faint dashes occurring in amongst the figures of the rainmaking group. Orpen's transcription of Qing's story describes the dashes as "things growing under water" (1874: 10). Various authors have commented on their absence from the published 1874 illustration (Frobenius 1931: 23; Vinnicombe 1976: 336; Smits 1973: 33) and from most subsequent reproductions (Lewis-Williams 1980: 469) because they play an important role in the interpretation of the group as water-related.

The first phase of subsequent reproductions of the group comprises simplified or modified copies of the Orpen versions (see Table 1). Pictures belonging to this lineage were either copied from the preparatory watercolour sketch or the lithographic print, and are very similar. They are 'diagrammatic'—that is, they depict the simplified shape and features of the image required to support a verbal explanation, rather than the actual appearance of the original paintings. Even without being familiar with the original, the viewer can observe that these versions are purged of detail, stylized, and much clearer and flatter than the actual rock paintings could ever have been.

Also copied from Orpen, the Frobenius version (1931: 23; Fig. 7) goes one step further in terms of translating the rock painting into a diagram. It not only reduces the image to smooth contours, but it communicates an idea of colour through a monochrome graphic code. The image is made up of black values only, but a colour legend informs the viewer that fields of solid black should be read as red-brown, a cross-hatched pattern as black, and a hatched pattern as white. I prefer to designate such redrawings as monochrome, as opposed to black-and-white as they are sometimes



FIG. 4. MANGOLONG-GROTTE, MALUTI, NACH J. M. ORPEN  
 Menschen und Tiere rotbraun (■) Speere, Leine, Haare oder Kopfbedeckungen schwarz (■), weiss (|||)  
 Striche, von denen auf S. 18 und 22 die Rede ist, fehlen auf der Kopie

Fig. 7. The rainmaking group illustrated in Frobenius (1931: 23) after Orpen (1874).

referred to in the literature (e.g. Lewis-Williams 1981: 33), because they are executed in one colour only and demonstrate little or no awareness of the role of negative space (the void between the figures).

#### VINNICOMBE'S TRACING

In 1971 a small expedition from Roma campus (Lesotho), at that time part of the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland,<sup>5</sup> trekked into the upper Senqu Valley, retracing part of the journey followed by Orpen and Grant in 1873–74 and recording rock art sites along the way. They identified a prominent sandstone shelter alongside the Sehonghong River as “Orpen’s long-lost ‘Cave Mangolong in the Maluti’” (Smits 1973: 32).

But an older source shows that the connection between Mangolong and Sehonghong had already been made (Webb 1950: i. 133, 282; ii. 31; Smits 1973: 32). It is indeed difficult to establish the exact moment Orpen’s ‘long-lost’ cave was ‘found’ again. Patricia Vinnicombe visited and confirmed it as Orpen’s site in 1957 (Mitchell 2010: 151). In 1967 Smits independently rediscovered that Mangolong was identical to the site previously visited by Vinnicombe (Lucas Smits pers. comm. 2010).

Vinnicombe traced the vast majority of the paintings at Sehonghong in 1971 (Mitchell 2010: 152) but she followed Orpen’s lead by selecting “Orpen’s rainmaking group” out from other paintings, placing it separately on its own sheet of polythene (Fig. 8) and isolating it in subsequent redrawings. From this tracing was born the second lineage of reproductions (Table 2).

Vinnicombe created her tracing with prepared watercolour paints on a thin polythene sheet, according to a field technique developed during her extensive recording expeditions in the region (Vinnicombe 1960; Olofsson 2009). Although it is difficult to find a more appropriate term, the term ‘tracing’ is somewhat misleading when used in this



Fig. 8. The polythene tracing created by Patricia Vinnicombe in 1971, photographed in sections on a lightbox at the Rock Art Research Institute and digitally reassembled by the author. The scale is approximate because of possible distortion. Scale = 20 cm.

context, because it implies a ‘dry’ technique of direct copying using traced outlines. The term more accurately refers to the technique currently used by the Rock Art Research Institute of the University of the Witwatersrand, which employs thin-leaded mechanical pencils on transparent paper (Lewis-Williams 1996: 38). In an approach akin to mimesis (Vinnicombe 2010: 245), Vinnicombe copied the paintings more on their own terms by using paint and repeating the strokes and gestures of the first painters. But in the field, she did not strive for complete naturalism; instead she used abbreviated forms, annotations and a tailor-made colour code, creating a more veristic synthesis at a later stage when she transferred the information onto paper in her studio using a custom-made rendering technique (Olofsson 2009: 52).

Unlike Orpen’s missing field copies, Vinnicombe’s tracings are preserved in an archive,<sup>6</sup> but the tracing of the rainmaking scene has not been published before. Because of the logistical challenges of creating hand-drawn pictures in the mountains, manual field copies have often been conceived as transitory mnemonic devices enabling the creation of more permanent or presentable versions later on. They are prepared with materials adapted to the field and not necessarily to archival longevity. Tracings on polythene sheets are fragile, and require specialized curation, restoration or transfer to more archivally stable paper if they are to be preserved. They are also inherently difficult to digitize because they are transparent and brittle, and often creased, wrinkled and warped because of the ageing of the plastic and the way they have been stored. Cleaner, more definitive copies tend to be used for dissemination and publication, whereas the dirtier and more fugitive field versions are kept in closed archives.

Field copies, however, embody a significant step between the originals and subsequently redrawn versions and often contain information about the originals and their wider context that is not translated into redrawings. For example, Vinnicombe’s tracings included notes and symbols indicating where the rainmaking figures were situated in relation to other paintings and their vertical orientation. Furthermore, the way the polythene sheets are cut in places follows the natural shapes of the rock.

When the site was rediscovered, it was confirmed that Orpen had copied the group freehand (Smits 1973: 33). Orpen’s version has nonetheless always been considered essentially correct in terms of its iconographic content (Vinnicombe 1976: 337) with one significant ‘error’ described above and noted in a number of earlier publications: the absence of water strokes, an example of loss of information from one generation of copies to the next. For a “modern, accurate tracing of this painting”, Lewis-Williams (1981: 37 note 6) refers us to two different redrawings created by Vinnicombe from the 1971 field copy, illustrated here in Figure 9 and Table 2 respectively.

#### VINNICOMBE’S REPAINTING

The first ‘modern’ reference is a painted redrawing—perhaps ‘repainting’ is a better term—created in 1971 shortly after the expedition (Fig. 3).<sup>7</sup> It was first published in black and white (Vinnicombe 1976: 337) and more recently in colour (Mitchell & Challis 2008: 435; Vinnicombe 2009: 329).

Because Vinnicombe’s repainting is based on a tracing, it tracks the shapes and contours of the original paintings much more closely than the Orpen versions. In a comparison of different versions of the equally iconic therianthrope group from Melikane Shelter (Fig. 1A), Leibhammer observes that the figures in Orpen’s version

have “proportions that are more anthropomorphically normative when compared with the copy by Vinnicombe” (2009: 46); this is also true of the rainmaking group. Orpen changed the proportions of the figures’ bodies so that they appeared less elongated and exaggerated, in some cases shortening the length of the torsos in relation to the legs, and thighs to shins, and reducing the curvature of the legs and torsos. The postures of the human figures generally show greater restraint in terms of physical movement. Each figure has been confined to a narrower and more standardized space that does not overlap as much with that of the other figures.

An examination of the layout and spatial organization of the scene allows a related observation. The Orpen rendering features figures of a standard height arranged into two horizontal text-like rows, where there is no sense of space or depth beyond this flat plane. The lower rain animal has been made to resemble the upper one closely in shape, size and posture. The overall arrangement has been orthogonally adjusted in its transposition onto the two-dimensional, rectangular surface of the paper: the ‘rows’ of activity are clearly separated, flattened and made horizontal, almost hieroglyphical, where the space between them functions as a hiatus.

There is no such separation in Vinnicombe’s version, where the two ‘rows’ are mixed together in a single swirling, eddy-like movement. The lower rain animal is much larger, has more exaggerated, adult-like features and looks more firmly planted on an imagined ground than the upper one, which appears by its pose to be flying. Writing about Orpen’s version of the Melikane therianthrope scene, Leibhammer observes that “a sense of balance in a determinate realm with gravitational forces is implied in the image” (2009: 46). This observation applies equally to his version of the rainmaking scene. The composition and dynamism of the Vinnicombe copy can be described as simultaneously more floating, centric and non-linear. There is a sense of depth and movement, where the space between the figures is a zone of tension—a “significant void” (Groenewegen-Frankfort 1951: 1). This floating or flying quality also invokes the interpretation of the paintings in the light of other worlds and altered states of consciousness (Lewis-Williams 2002a: 144–8) and points to another important visual aspect that would not have been easy for Orpen to make sense of.

The Vinnicombe repainting perfectly illustrates the ‘painterly’ trend in rock art copies, which is to say, it is characterized by that which is specific to the act of painting (colour, colour blending, stroke, gesture and texture) rather than of drawing (lines and contours). Because it was both traced and redrawn in a painterly fashion, ‘errors’ of colour, shape, proportion, relative position, composition, space and dynamism present in the Orpen copy were to a large degree ‘corrected’. Furthermore, Vinnicombe included incomplete figures, conveying the brokenness and uncertainty of the original. Examples include the fragmentary red monochrome human figures in the lower part of the group, and the larger rain animal, whose feet gradually fade into nothing.

#### VINNICOMBE’S REDRAWING

Lewis-Williams’s second ‘modern’ reference is a black-ink redrawing that was prepared by Vinnicombe for a journal publication (Fig. 9; Smits 1973: 32). It differs significantly from her painted version and also from constituents of the Orpen lineage.

In this monochrome redrawing, a legend mediates colour as in the Frobenius example discussed earlier (Fig. 7; 1931: 23). Rock art authors have made extensive use

of such legends alongside monochrome diagrams. When based on careful tracings, such illustrations are considered highly accurate for capturing the figural iconographic content of the original paintings, but on other levels they are highly inaccurate (Dowson 1996: 316–18; Leibhammer 2009). Not only are viewers faced with the challenge of visualizing colour through the medium of a monochrome graphic code, but they are often presented with ambiguous information. As Smits observed (1973: 33), in the Vinnicombe example under discussion (Fig. 9), black cannot be differentiated from bright orange, both being represented by solid black. White poses a similar problem, as there is confusion between white in the painting (represented by negative space in the diagram, in this case the white colour of the paper) and the empty ground on which the figures are painted—the true negative space in the original (also white paper in the diagram). The importance of the negative space must not be underestimated; because the rock is an integral part of the paintings, the unpainted zones are meaningful (Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2004: 181).

Although conventions shaping such diagrams have become more methodical, problems of colour value and void have not been resolved. A related problem surrounds the difference between line and field. In diagrams of rock paintings, a line can represent a black or otherwise coloured line, but it can also represent the edge of an un-outlined field (without contour in the painting). So in the Vinnicombe ink redrawing, a thin black line can indicate any one of three things—a black line, a bright orange line, or the edge of an otherwise coloured un-outlined field. It is impossible to translate the monochrome diagram back into any semblance of the original colour painting. What we need then is a more effective use of the coding system so that it takes cognisance of problems of black, white and colour, line and field, and figure and ground.

#### TRACING AS PROCESS AND PRODUCT

Rock art scholars point out that tracings and the monochrome diagrams created from them can reflect details and features of the original paintings that are not always simultaneously visible in photographs or even the original paintings. According to

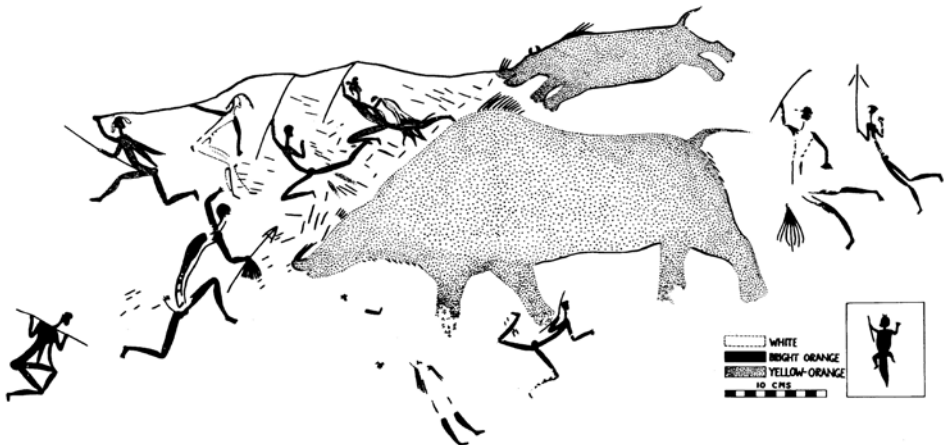


Fig. 9. The monochrome diagram prepared for a journal publication by Vinnicombe (Smits 1973: 32) from the tracing illustrated in Figure 8. Courtesy of Lucas Smits.

Lewis-Williams (1996: 38), to record every aspect of the original effectively, the “rock has to be inspected under varying lighting conditions at different times of the day”. There has been much debate in recent decades about whether photography or tracing should be used as the primary recording technique (Leibhammer 2009: 45) and today the position of the Rock Art Research Institute (University of the Witwatersrand) is that the two techniques are complementary and that recording should ideally employ both. However, tracing is considered the more indispensable, as Lewis-Williams states that “it is probably true ... that a panel of any complexity cannot be considered to have been adequately studied until it has been traced” (1996: 38).

Tracing involves long hours spent observing the shifting visuality of the paintings and the tracer undoubtedly gains a uniquely intimate knowledge of them, but in actual fact the process is geared towards extracting a monochrome diagram that embodies precisely the kind of clarity and simultaneity that does not always exist in the originals. A tracing is a synthesis that enables a clear rendering of the figural iconographic content by purging colour and context, and eliminating any uncertainties or subtleties that may have been part of the originals. Tracings are akin to models or hypotheses in the sense that they capture the essence of a problem; mask-like, they reduce complex images to binary values, evoking a sense of precision and visual solidity and hiding the messiness and ambiguity in the original.

While the monochrome redrawing from tracing is currently considered to serve mainstream rock art research best, it is an intensely distilled version. The originals are images in the fundamental sense of the word, offering a field of simultaneously visible information (not only figural) across which one’s eye has the opportunity to wander. Warnings against selective copying of the paintings have often been formulated (e.g. Lewis-Williams 1981: 16–24; 2006: 358) but, as with all data capture, the recording and publishing of rock art is inevitably carried out with some kind of focus or hypothesis. At a very basic level, selectivity must inevitably operate when a colour painting in a three-dimensional sandstone shelter is transposed onto the pages of a book or journal, or into a website or an illustrated lecture format; short of taking viewers to the actual site, framed and flattened views are unavoidable. The question is more around the nature and awareness of the selection—what the recorder or copyist chooses, consciously or sub-consciously, to give form to or leave out.

#### PHOTOGRAPHS

Colour photographs are in several respects at the opposite end of the spectrum to monochrome drawings. Photography can produce many detailed images in as many blinks of a shutter and, technical limitations aside, the photographic eye does not discriminate within the field captured by the camera. As a result, photographs reflect more of the continuity, colour, texture, natural rock morphology, presence and spatial distribution of the paintings, providing a more naturalistic impression of what they truly look like, where figures merge into and emerge from the rock surface. But photography has its own kinds of ambiguity and selectivity. The photographer divides the rock surface into rectangular zones in an ordering and subjective way according to personal interest and visual acuity. There is also often confusion in photographs between what is painted and the natural rock patterning.

In contrast to the numerous published appearances of drawn or painted copies, I know of only one published photograph of the rainmaking panel—my Figure 2 (Mitchell & Challis 2008: 434; Mitchell 2010: 161)—though there are many unpublished photographs in existence.<sup>8</sup>

Most published representations of Sehonghong as a site of rock paintings refer only to the rainmaking scene. This is a highly selective focus, for the cave is a large crescent-shaped sandstone refuge about 90 m wide and 20 m deep, with numerous paintings all along the back wall. Over four days in late October/early November 1985, a team, which included Peter Mitchell and Taole Tesele of the Analysis of Rock Art in Lesotho (ARAL) project, recorded fifty-two different painted panels at the site in notes, photographs and sketches.<sup>9</sup> They lettered the many panels and photographed them with scales in consecutive fashion. The photographer zoomed in and out, at times focusing on individual groups, figures and details.

Because it is relatively complete, the ARAL recording is considered the “definitive” recording of the site’s paintings (Benjamin Smith pers. comm. 2009). The photographs are almost panoramic and some can be pieced together to create a continuous field. However, they were never taken at more than a certain maximum distance from the rock wall and, as a result, there is a notable lack of ‘middle-distance’ information, by which I mean any information relating the painting to the site or landscape, enabling it to be situated in a wider context. The ARAL photographs do not generally show the relationship of the paintings to the floor, the edges of the shelter, or to the other panels (except sometimes inadvertently the immediately adjacent ones).

The ARAL team could not locate the rainmaking scene (Peter Mitchell pers. comm. 2010). It was, however, incidentally recorded within ARAL’s Panel Q (Fig. 10). A wide view of the panel (Fig. 11) shows numerous images on a portion of rock wall that measures about 2 m wide and 1.5 m high. Within this zone the rather inconspicuous rainmaking cluster covers an area measuring about 90 cm wide and 50 cm high. A white glare on the rock surface caused by the light spraying of the paintings to enhance their colours for photography (Mitchell 2010: 152) and/or water seepage contributes further to the image’s photographic indistinctness. The photograph provides an opportunity to reflect on the selectivity of Orpen’s copy; he was evidently faced with many different paintings to choose from.

How can an outsider begin to make sense of such an abundantly painted panorama?

#### MAKING ORDER IN CHAOS

Lewis-Williams identifies four modes of relative position that can be applied to rock paintings: activity group, juxtapositioning, superpositioning and conflation, specifying that the four modes are not mutually exclusive (1981: 10). The rainmaking group falls neatly into the category of activity group, while the wider Panel Q provides examples of other modes in close proximity.

Lewis-Williams proposes that the activity group is the mode most familiar to the ‘Western’ viewer. The fact that the rainmaking group would have appeared to Orpen as a distinct cluster of activity (presumably brighter and easier to distinguish than it is today), referred to and thus rendered more intelligible by Qing’s mythical stories, is one way of explaining why he chose to omit elements that would have been more difficult for him to make sense of. These could have included adjacent images that were, in



Fig. 10. In black, the sketch of Panel Q from ARAL site report 658. Document courtesy of the Rock Art Research Institute (University of the Witwatersrand). In faint grey I have superimposed the Vinnicombe diagram (Fig. 9) to indicate the approximate position of the rainmaking scene.



Fig. 11. Panel Q photographed in 1985 by Taole Tesele of the Analysis of Rock Art in Lesotho (ARAL) project. Courtesy of the Rock Art Research Institute (University of the Witwatersrand).

his view, unconnected, incoherent or interfering. Structures of composition can be helpful in making sense of the paintings, but one must remain wary of assumptions early on in the research process that some images are arbitrarily placed and without relationship to other images in their immediate vicinity, even if there does not appear to be iconographic or temporal contiguity. Single figures or clusters may be read as independent units, which leads to the tendency for the copyist to separate certain images out from others as constituting particular illustrative (usually story-based or activity-linked) scenes, while images right next to them are ignored. Orpen's copy can be seen as the visual equivalent of his making sense of Qing's fragmented stories by placing them into an understandable consecutive narrative.

Not only Orpen's but all other attempts to 'frame' the rainmaking group demonstrate that there is an unresolved question around where it ends. Vinnicombe followed Orpen's selection by leaving the superimposed eland out of her tracing, but indeed it is difficult to know exactly what he saw. Recent photographs depict the eland as standing out much more than the rainmaking scene but the situation may well have been different in 1873. If the rainmaking group was painted over the eland, it may have been created with less indelible pigments that vanished more quickly than the older paintings beneath. This would be consistent with what Ward and Maggs (1994) found at Giant's Castle with regard to nineteenth-century paintings. If the eland was painted over the rainmaking scene, there is the possibility that it post-dated Orpen's visit. Several sources point to the possibility that Bushman painters were still active at Sehonghong in the early 1870s (Mitchell 2010: 156), and although the presence of hunter-gatherers in the area was severely dwindling, recently interwoven strands of historical evidence indicate that a date as late as 1910 might be considered a *terminus ante quem* for a living Bushman presence at Sehonghong Shelter (Mitchell 2010: 165).

Vinnicombe added four extra human figures to the Orpen group but Smits (1973: 33) points out that she omitted "two squatting or kneeling figures in orange and fragments of two near-horizontal orange figures to the left of the scene, [and] a faded running figure on the right" (Smits 1973: 33). He goes on to describe "an elongated red and white eland, which badly confuses the lower part of the apparently superimposed scene", inferring that certain figures are interfering with the rainmaking group. Smits further observed that, "[t]he Sehonghong site contains, in addition to the Orpen scene, many other very interesting paintings, among these an elaborate cattle-scene" (1973: 33). Mitchell describes the rainmaking scene as "only part of a much larger panel that extends upward some 2 m from the rock-shelter floor" (2002: 209) that was so unobtrusive and faded that even in 1992, when researchers were living inside the shelter, it took two complete and detailed inspections of the rock face to locate it (Peter Mitchell pers. comm. 2010). Challis also noted that the rainmaking panel is "not prominent in the shelter and one has to search carefully to find it among hundreds of other images" (2005: 15). In the published pictorial record, by contrast, the rainmaking group dominates to the virtual exclusion of all other paintings.

#### LOCATING THE RAINMAKING GROUP IN THE SHELTER

A collectivity of interconnected sources can provide much more information than an isolated image or document. However, just as the link between the copies of the Orpen lineage and the actual site was lost for a long time, links between the documentation

and the original paintings could still disappear as these fade away. I set out to see if I could establish the location of the rainmaking scene within the shelter through the pictorial record alone (without visiting the site myself).

A trail of clues led me through a number of unpublished pictures. David Pearce took photographs at Sehonghong Shelter in 2004.<sup>10</sup> In one of these, Panel Q can be identified even though the rainmaking group is barely discernible (Fig. 12). By contrast, the dark bodies of two bichrome eland stand out, forming the most obvious visual link between this and the Mitchell photograph (Fig. 2). A diagonal rock ledge, part of the natural sandstone morphology above the rainmaking panel, cuts across the top left-hand corner of both photographs, constituting another common feature.

In another Pearce photograph, the panel is shown from a greater distance with a young boy posing next to it (Fig. 13). The eland are still discernible in this view, and white chalky writing running between the two animals (that probably reads “MANYETSE K 1959”)<sup>11</sup> provides another clear link with the two previous photographs (Figs 11 and 12). The boy gives an idea of the panel’s scale, and of its height off the ground. The shelter wall behind the boy appears to be receding off to the viewer’s right (the boy’s left). Direct sunlight falls onto the boy and part of the rock wall behind him. The shelter is located on the south bank of the Sehonghong River and faces west-northwest (Mitchell 1994: 15) but it is wide and deep and none of the photographs show the sun reaching the back wall. Two site plan sketches in the ARAL report (Tesele 1985: 2) appear to indicate that Panel Q is situated somewhere in the shallower margins of the shelter, but whether it is located on the left-hand or right-hand side is unclear. Another hint to location is what looks like the tip of a free-standing rock on the far right-hand side of the bottom edge of the photograph, to the boy’s left (Fig. 13).



Fig. 12. The rainmaking panel, photographed by David Pearce in 2004. Courtesy of the Rock Art Research Institute (University of the Witwatersrand).

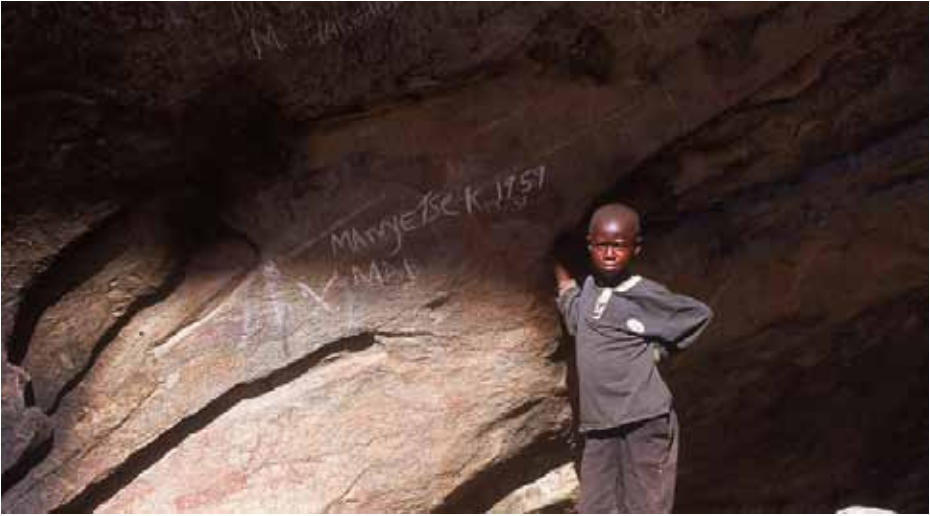


Fig. 13. A wider view of the rainmaking panel by David Pearce in 2004. Courtesy of the Rock Art Research Institute (University of the Witwatersrand).

An oblique frontal view of the shelter taken by Bronwen van Doornum in 2005 (Fig. 14) shows an assemblage of loose rocks on the left-hand side of the shelter (looking in). This picture includes two people standing close to the wall in the vicinity of these loose rocks, just outside of the part of the shelter that is in shadow. Just to the left of the spot one individual is gazing at, is a rock formation with oblique fissures, accentuated by shadows, that is compatible (taking into account changes of light and



Fig. 14. Schonghong Shelter in 2005. Courtesy of Bronwen van Doornum.

perspective) with the rock morphology of the wall around Panel Q visible in Figure 13. The two figures in Figure 14 also provide a scaled reference. Thus, by connecting records spanning more than a century, I located the Orpen group on the left-hand side of the shelter (looking in) behind a pile of free-standing stone slabs.

The fact that I was able to establish its location and visually restore it to a more original position and context is accidental—an unintended result of it having been recorded in different ways by different people over a long period of time. I call this ‘relinking’ of scattered historical records ‘digital restoration’ (Guy & Wintjes 2009). Digital restoration is a research process that creates meaningful relationships between previously isolated images, and is also an opportunity to create enhanced composite images—visual syntheses—that incorporate varied pictorial moments (Figs 15 and 16). A digitally restored image cannot, however, claim to replicate the ‘original’, which no longer exists as it was when it was first painted or copied. Furthermore, because it is linked to other moments in time and space, it is no longer strictly two-dimensional. Digitally restored images published in a paper-bound article such as this one must be seen as stills from an animated sequence; they do not stand on their own and their dynamism is perhaps best expressed in a moving format.

#### OLD PICTURES SEEN IN NEW WAYS

This digital restoration of Sehonghong’s rainmaking group points to a number of important relationships that have only marginally, or not at all, been studied in the past, thereby opening up avenues for future research. The most basic relationship is



Fig. 15. A digital restoration of the rainmaking scene (upper right corner) merging Patricia Vinnicombe’s painted redrawing and a 1967 or 1971 photograph by Lucas Smits. Photograph courtesy of the Rock Art Research Institute (University of the Witwatersrand) and painting courtesy of the KwaZulu-Natal Museum (Pietermaritzburg). Composite digital image by the author.

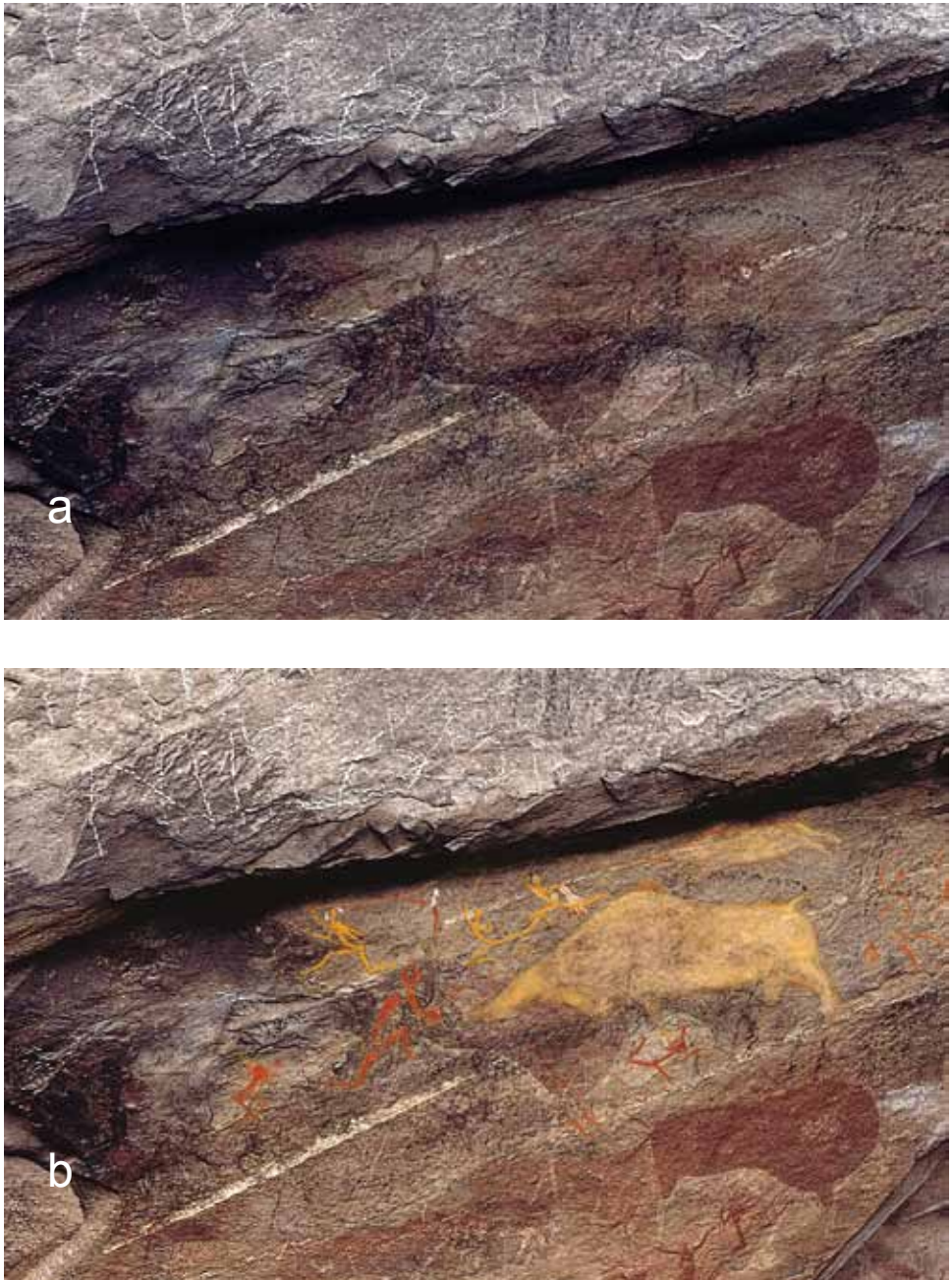


Fig. 16. Stages in the digital restoration. 16a: unmodified detail from the Lucas Smits photograph (Fig. 15); 16b: Vinnicombe repainting without colour adjustment superimposed and warped onto 16a.



Fig. 16 cont. Stages in the digital restoration. 16c: same as 16b, but with the colours of the repainting and photograph made more compatible with one another; 16d: same as 16c, but with the repainting 'granulated' to blend with the photograph. Photograph courtesy of the Rock Art Research Institute (University of the Witwatersrand) and painting courtesy of the KwaZulu-Natal Museum (Pietermaritzburg). Composite digital images by the author.

the link between scattered elements of the archive. Because the focus has been on the figural iconographic content of the paintings, reproductions have tended to exclude information about the paintings' original context. If the originals disappear or their location is lost, links between copies and originals can also vanish. If a site has been adequately documented, it may be possible to restore links between isolated elements of the archive—to reconfigure the archive according to the original paintings.

Researchers who have focused on establishing connections between the iconographic content of the paintings and the ethnography have made an indisputable contribution to a more complex and nuanced semantic reading of the paintings and broader, more comprehensive approaches are now being explored in light of this ethnographically situated content (Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2009: 42). Reproductions, however, generally continue to distil the paintings into diagrams, accompanying research that deals with them in a primarily non-pictorial way, that is, as signs that are given verbal and narrative equivalents. The fact that the interpretative study of rock art began with and continues to use copies in such a central manner means that they have played an essential role in the production of rock art knowledge. Their study should not be considered the domain of historically or visually minded archaeologists alone. A deeper understanding of how rock paintings have been isolated, decontextualized and transformed for study could enable the detection of other, different layers of visual and experiential meaning, leading to a more contextual approach, and to new modes of reproduction that reflect these other levels.

Restored views show the rainmaking group embedded in a wider sandstone canvas with its own natural shapes and colours. The painters deliberately incorporated the natural features of the rock into the paintings (e.g. Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990; Lewis-Williams 2002a: 148–9; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2004: 179–81, 2009: 53–4); in other words, the rock surface itself is meaningful (Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2004: 181). Mitchell (2002: 207) noted that the Sehonghong rainmaking scene constitutes a “particularly striking example” of the physicality of the paintings, because the rain animals appear to “move to the left away from a slight fissure in the rock face through which water seeps after even a slight shower—making rain where the animals have already walked, as it were.” This highly evocative dimension is difficult to represent in a drawing that eschews the veristic, and points to one of the shortcomings of the diagrammatic illustrative form.

The restoration process furthermore reaffirms that the study of rock paintings should not limit itself to the individual image, or group scene, or isolated cluster. Rather, the paintings are part of—or they are—a larger compositional whole, a panoramic sequence that is continuous with the natural rocks on which they occur. In the case of Sehonghong, the rainmaking group is but one small part of a wide panel inhabited by many other paintings. Various studies have demonstrated the usefulness of the notion of continuous field or panorama (e.g. Pager 1971; Nettleton 1985; Ouzman 1997; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2009) but it, too, remains a marginal approach and a challenge to illustrate using conventional diagrammatic forms.

At a larger scale, the paintings are restored into a landscape. Landscape approaches to rock art also remain peripheral, controversial or experimental (e.g. Deacon 1988; Smith & Blundell 2004; Skotnes 2010) but there is nevertheless a growing consensus around the significance of these place-related dimensions—physicality, panorama, landscape,

site-specificity—and the idea that sites need to be approached more as wholes and not just collections of isolated images (Ouzman 1997; Solomon 1997: 10; Mitchell 2002: 207; Challis et al. 2008; Jeremy Hollmann pers. comm. 2009).

And finally, the Sehonghong rainmaking scene is restored within the visible realm. To the unassisted eye, the rainmaking group is hardly discernible *in situ*, but a careful study of the copies can enable a visualization of the original. Despite its absent presence (or incompleteness), copies can improve our knowledge of the original painting. Our understanding of the copies is influenced in turn by the fact that the original once existed (or still exists in part). Some applications of digital visualization can be geared towards resurrecting the disappearing and the disappeared—making virtually invisible paintings ‘virtually’ visible—that is to say, not physically existing but made visible through digital enhancement or manipulation. Rock paintings that have faded or disappeared altogether may function as ghosts or spectres. The argument that old pictures can be seen in new ways would support the case for detailed digital recording of sites, even those that are badly damaged.

#### DIAGRAMMATIC – PAINTERLY – PHOTOGRAPHIC – DIGITAL

This pictorial genealogy is a kind of historical transect of visual media. With one of the oldest and longest pictorial traditions as its point of departure, it illustrates three major pre-digital trends in the visual documentation of rock art. One is shaped by a set of drawing conventions borrowed from scientific illustration that translates sketches or tracings of the polychrome paintings into diagrammatic monochrome redrawings. Another comprises painterly ‘real colour’ renditions often created by artists rather than archaeological copyists. A third is the tradition of rock art photography. With digital photography increasingly replacing ‘chemical’ or ‘analogue’ photography, this category straddles the pre-digital/digital divide.

My analysis is embedded in a fourth—digital—age of rock art visualization, heralded by the digitization of old images and the digital creation of new types of images. We are still in the early years of the digital era and are currently denied a full understanding of its implications due to a lack of distance. It has nonetheless become clear that the advent of digital media represents a certain kind of revolution, a radical break with the past.

Several consequences of digitization are already visible in the realm of rock art studies. There is an ambivalence about them. One consequence is the creation of digital versions of pre-digital documents, such as drawings, painted copies, sketches, slides and negatives, making them more accessible and, some would say, permanent. The supposed permanence of digital archives is nevertheless questionable, because their long-term security over that of conventional archives is by no means certain. Digitization reduces the conservation risk of handling fragile materials, but at the same time separates us from the full tactile and visceral experience of viewing the original copy. For instance, the scans of the Orpen watercolours provided to me by the South African National Library were cropped in such a way as to exclude the edges of the original sheets of paper. For my purposes, the frayed and faded edges were important because I wanted to restore the four sheets to their original relationship. Something of the originals was lost in the scanning.

Another consequence closely related to accessibility is the centralization of increasing numbers of digital and digitized records into web-based databases, creating a pool of

material that can be drawn from rather than a set of isolated images (e.g. SARADA). This allows for an unprecedented level of pictorial ‘networking’. A third consequence is the creation of new, qualitatively different kinds of images because of new image-making technologies and the malleability of digital material (e.g. Guy & Wintjes 2009; Le Quellec et al. 2009; Hollmann & Crause 2011).<sup>12</sup>

But the advent of the digital era, despite its impressive qualities, is not an unequivocal advance over older image technologies. The increased accessibility and ease of digital photography has in many ways overtaken other modes of recording, compounding an already marked decrease of manual techniques such as freehand drawing, tracing and painting. Further, the ease and inexpensiveness of digital photography has generated an enormous quantity of inadequate compositions; photographic skills are apparently no longer regarded as necessary. Another important point is that an image, however accurate or powerful it is perceived to be, can never replace the original. Rock art researchers should ideally not rely too heavily on one preferred mode. They are deeply involved in perpetuating ancient art forms, after all, and should be acutely aware of their participation in interpreting and preserving these for the future. New technologies can never completely overtake or transcend earlier kinds of media; they must engage in a dialectical relationship with them, as each new form has had to do in the past. What we nevertheless can already see as being new and specific to digitization are the rapidity with which it has developed and the particular way in which it interacts with traditional media, refashioning and ‘repurposing’ them—a process that Bolter and Grusin (2000) insightfully call ‘remediation’. This term encompasses a number of ideas around the potential in the digital era to repair relationships and mediate between old images and new ones, to explore the role of images in history and to use images in new ways.

Rock paintings and their varied copies are an ideal subject with which to research the contribution images have made to archaeology and related disciplines. In exploring new kinds of archaeological images that reflect indeterminacy, provisionality, dialectical practice and the uncertainty of knowledge (Smiles & Moser 2005: 11), it is appropriate that we can begin to learn from rock art, since so much in recent years has been learnt about it (Inskeep 1971: 101; Lewis-Williams 1986: 171). First-hand experience of rock paintings—and of attempts to capture them in images—brings home the fact that they are always changing, that they are not static, disconnected images. They could never have been conceived of as fixed or isolated, and will always be an inextricable part of a harsh and uncontrolled environment. The implications of this instability should hold some warnings for those who seek to attach absolutely stable meanings to the paintings.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Sehonghong Shelter display last viewed in February 2011.

<sup>2</sup> A lightbox display at the Origins Centre (University of the Witwatersrand) also provides an overview, last viewed in February 2011.

<sup>3</sup> This approximate date, “supplied by David Lewis-Williams 6.7.1992”, is included in the notes associated with the four records (ARB 7355, ARB 7356, ARB 7357 and ARB 7358) in the online database of the Visual Collection of the National Library of Parliament (Cape Town): <http://198.54.80.51/search~S7>. Website last visited 13 February 2011.

<sup>4</sup> Film last viewed on 24 November 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Today known as the National University of Lesotho, the institution had close ties with tertiary institutions in Botswana and Swaziland until 1975.

<sup>6</sup> Vinnicombe archive, Rock Art Research Institute (University of the Witwatersrand).

- <sup>7</sup> Vinnicombe archive, KwaZulu-Natal Museum.
- <sup>8</sup> Among many other site visits, photographs of paintings at Sehonghong were taken by Lucas Smits in 1967 and 1971; Taole Tesele in 1985; Peter Mitchell in 1985, 1992, 1995, 1998, 2006 and 2007; David Pearce in 2004; Bronwen van Doornum, David Pearce and Lara Mallen in 2005; Jeremy Hollmann and Sam Challis in 2009.
- <sup>9</sup> ARAL archive, Rock Art Research Institute (University of the Witwatersrand). The written report on Sehonghong (ARAL 658) compiled by Taole Tesele in 1985 includes a site plan and schematic sketches of each of the painted panels lettered A to Z and A1 to Z1. Photographs credited to Joe Alferts and Lucas Smits have been digitized and can be viewed on the SARADA website [www.sarada.co.za](http://www.sarada.co.za), last visited on 1 May 2011. According to Peter Mitchell (pers. comm. 2010), who was present during the 1985 site visit, the photographs currently credited to Joe Alferts on the website were actually taken by Taole Tesele.
- <sup>10</sup> Photographic archive, Rock Art Research Institute (University of the Witwatersrand).
- <sup>11</sup> In Sesotho *manyetse* are locks of plaited hair. The name is probably someone's nickname, possibly a *lethuela* (diviner) or a Rastafarian with dreadlocks. The number probably indicates his birth year (Stephen Gill pers. comm. 2011).
- <sup>12</sup> The potential of high-end digital imaging technology in this regard is being explored in the work of Kevin Crause, who has developed a digital recording toolset for rock art sites, one objective of which is to enhance photographs in order to reveal painted images that are not apparent to the naked eye. See [www.fingerprintsintime.com](http://www.fingerprintsintime.com), website last visited on 13 February 2011.

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