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An interpretation of rock art imagery from the Brandberg /Daures, Namibia

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2012-08-24
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/11795

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Abstract

Whilst there has been extensive cataloguing of the rock art of the Brandberg/Dâures Massif in Namibia there has been comparatively little interpretative work done on the masses of rock art imagery located there. Many of the images remain unexplained or misunderstood. Some imagery has been interpreted but without the necessary ethnographic and theoretical frameworks that should accompany such interpretations.

This dissertation seeks to resolve some of the interpretative problems that exist regarding the art in the area. It focuses on a particular set of imagery — giraffes and giraffe-snake conflations— and interprets the significance of these images. In doing so it uses a theoretical framework rooted in the study of the body and tackles issues relating to the current use of ethnography in rock art research and the Later Stone Age in general. The conclusions reached demonstrate that by using this approach different and far more applicable interpretations can be reached, particularly with regard to the set imagery central to this dissertation.