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Examining the remaining Rock Art at Linton, Eastern Cape, and its relationship with the Linton Panel at the Iziko South African Museum in Cape Town

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EXAMINING THE REMAINING ROCK ART AT LINTON, EASTERN CAPE, AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LINTON PANEL AT THE IZIKO SOUTH AFRICAN MUSEUM IN CAPE TOWN

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A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Science, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

Johannesburg, 2023

DECLARATION

I declare that this Dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Master of Science at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.



_____

(Signature of candidate)

On the 26th day of March 2023 in Johannesburg

ABSTRACT

The Linton panel has been the subject of great awe for many decades. It has been displayed in various exhibits worldwide and the subject of multiple research publications. However, its history and origin are not nearly as well understood as once believed, as a large part of its past has been omitted or forgotten. In this dissertation the images of not only the Linton panel are discussed, but those that remain in the shelter from whence it came are brought out of obscurity. How the panel came to be where it is today and the images' relationship with the shelter and the remaining paintings are examined. Lastly, a forgotten piece of the shelter, a second panel, will be examined in greater detail than ever before: how it fell into relative obscurity and what its images tell us about the Linton shelter and its artists' beliefs and purposes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Introduction

Once you enter the Iziko South African Museum in Cape Town and stroll about its many displays, you will come across a large rock slab. Upon its surface are painted figures of all creeds, humans engaging in an array of activities, eland, fish and odd creatures you cannot identify. Upon the little plaque the museum has assigned to this rock art, you may learn that its artists were the San people who have lived in South Africa for thousands of years. This particular painting you are examining was recovered from a rock shelter in the Eastern Cape in 1918 by Mr G.S.T. Mandy, courtesy of the farm and shelter owner Mr S. Naude. In brief, the plaque mentions that the rock art depicts the shamanic experiences of trance, where it came from and explains some of its motifs. Having read this, you may leave and never give the panel a second thought, or if you were curious, you may do your own research and find that a whole plethora of work has been published on the meaning behind the figures in the Linton panel, and the figure that was ultimately chosen to form part of South Africa's Coat of Arms. However, you will walk away with only half the story.

This research examines the remaining rock art at the Linton shelter, Eastern Cape, and its relationship with the Linton panel at the Iziko South African Museum in Cape Town. It also examines a previously unresearched and largely forgotten second panel, the Sister panel, which comes from the same shelter as the Linton panel. The objective of this dissertation is to complete a comprehensive object biography and broaden the interpretation and wider understanding of the Linton paintings.

In short, this project aims to record and interpret the art remaining in the Linton site and link it to the Linton panel in Iziko Museum.

The Linton panel is one of the most viewed pieces of rock art in South Africa and has even been exhibited internationally (Phillips 1996). In 2000 a figure from the Linton panel was included in South Africa's new Coat of Arms (Smith *et al*.

2000). A detailed interpretation of the art on the Linton panel has been published (Lewis-Williams 1988). This dissertation draws heavily on Lewis-Williams's work to interpret the remaining rock art and draw links between the images. This dissertation draws heavily on Lewis-Williams's (e.g., 1988, 1990, 2006, 2010, 2016) work to interpret the remaining rock art and draw links between the images. This dissertation also focuses on the largely unstudied context from which the panels came and the remaining imagery at the site. This research remedies this lack of broader contextualisation by studying the remaining art in the Linton shelter as well as the second slab called the Sister panel. In this way, a more complete understanding of this iconic object may be achieved.

This dissertation seeks to find the hidden and lost history of the panel and its origin, thus completing its currently spotted object biography. It reconstructs its full meaning and purpose by linking its imagery to the depictions still within the shelter, thus piecing together the fragments like a puzzle, albeit a puzzle with missing pieces. Chapter 2 commences with an overall introduction to the known history, interpretations and meaning of the area, the Linton panel paintings and the San cosmological belief system. Chapter 2 first touches upon the regional background of the panel; from the earliest evidence of hunter-gatherers living in the region 22 000–29 000 years ago up until the recent past (Opperman & Heydenrych 1990; Opperman 1996). Chapter 2 also looks at the history of the panel, from when it was first removed over one-hundred years ago to its subsequent travels and the interpretations that have accompanied it since. Explanations on the importance of the trance dance and the eland (*Tragelaphus oryx*) within the San communities follow, so as to better understand the meaning and purpose of later discoveries within the shelter and how the San possibly interacted with the paintings.

Chapter 3 gives an explanation of the methodology, including object biography, mapping the site location with GPS, completing the site record form, giving a detailed description of the site, and the removed panel along with the remaining art, producing digital photography, measuring the panel scars and speaking with

the owners or custodians to gather information on the shelter's preservation and history. Chapter 4 discusses the research results, including new information gained on the panel's history and the previously unpublished rock shelter; as well as a detailed description of the paintings and shelter, including location, preservation, style, colour and size. Chapter 5 elaborates on the findings of the previous chapter and tries to interpret the imagery, how the images may link back to the Linton panel and other insights. Chapter 6 looks at a previously unresearched panel from the Linton shelter.

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Regional Background

The area from which the Linton panel hails has been the home of hunter-gatherers from at least 29 000 years ago until the recent past (Fig. 2.1) (Opperman & Heydenrych 1990; Opperman 1996). These dates come from archaeological excavations, which yielded numerous radiocarbon dates (Opperman & Heydenrych 1990). Linton is in the Maclear District of the Eastern Cape Province which is part of a larger region called 'Nomansland' by former colonial administrators and it contains at least 300 recorded rock art sites (Bonneau *et al.* 2017). The northern regions of the Eastern Cape have incredibly well-preserved rock art, probably due to their inaccessibility deep in the high mountains and inland plateaus (George 2013).

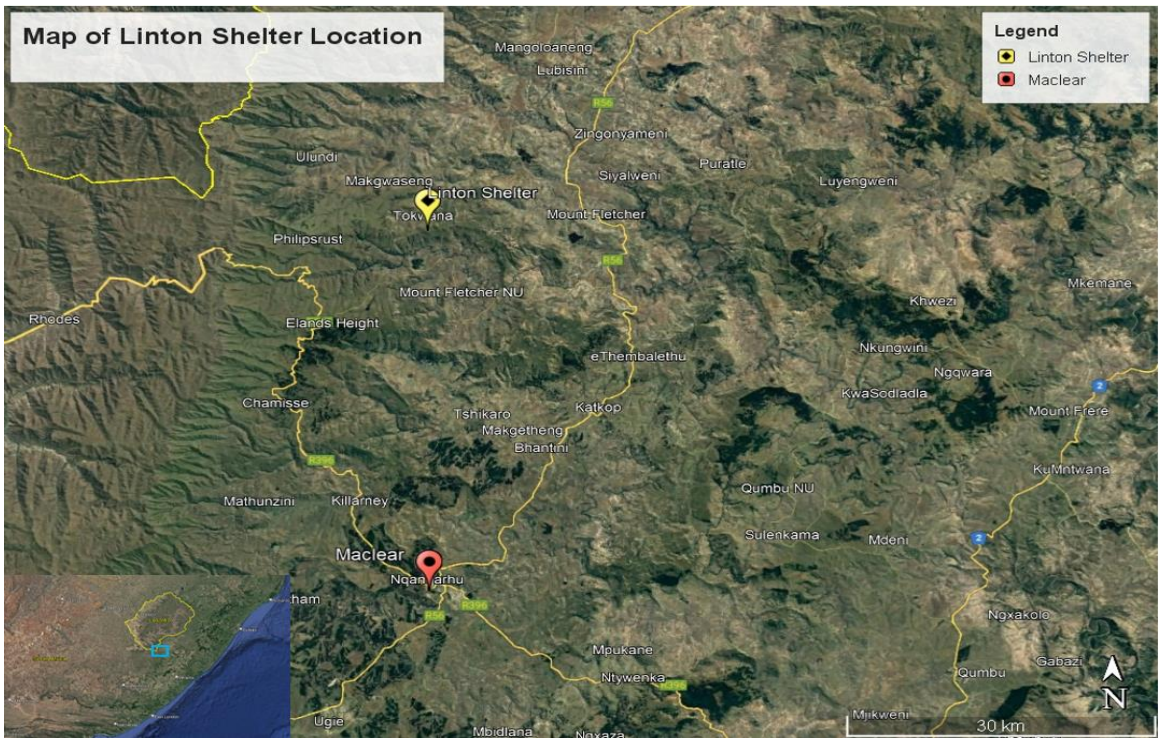

Figure 2.1 Map of Maclear District and location of Linton Shelter.

Most of the region's rock art lacks a firm chronology (Mazel 1993; Bonneau *et al.* 2017: 4) however, it also has some of the most accurate dates in the entire African continent. To understand the amount of time humans have been living and interacting with one another in this particular area a few examples of sites with dates are given. Strathalan Cave B was excavated in 1987, which resulted in some

artefacts, floral remains, and faunal food remains being recovered. The radiocarbon dates suggest the site was occupied *ca*. 22 000 years ago (Opperman 1996). Direct dating of rock paintings was subsequently undertaken a few years later by Bonneau *et al.* (2017), in which paintings from sites in Maclear were dated using Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS) radiocarbon dating. The resulting dates indicate that rock art was produced by hunter-gatherers in the region from *ca.* 2998–2381 cal BP. This information indicates that some of the art was likely San authored and probably produced pre-contact between San and Bantu-speakers, who were also known to have produced rock art, albeit not in the Drakensberg Mountains region (Bonneau *et al.* 2017).

However, the information on the last 29 000 years of occupation in the area remains hazy (Bonneau *et al.* 2017). In contrast, the last 500 years are rich in historical information on the lives of the San hunter-gatherers. These interactions resulted in what is known as contact period art, usually identifiable by motifs such as cattle and wagons.

Much research has been done to understand how these contact periods influenced and changed the rock art. This past research may aid in the interpretation of the Linton images. In southern Africa, the San have been in contact with other groups, such as the Khoekhoe pastoralists, for *ca*. 2000 years (Sadr 2015). Historical data and oral history suggest the San started interacting with Bantu-speakers in the area at least 500 years ago (Blundell 2004; George 2013). However, a more significant influx of Bantu-speakers, Khoekhoen, Griqua and Europeans into the area occurred during the colonial period (Blundell 2004; Mallen 2008). This long-term relationship between the Bantu-speakers and the San is evident in, for example, the presence of clicks, typical of San languages, in the Nguni languages (Dowson 1994). Furthermore, cattle had been introduced and integrated into the Khoe-San-speakers' cosmological beliefs as early as AD 250–770 (Pinto 2014). In the last 200 years, San shamans used their cultural experiences to negotiate political power by creating rain for the agropastoralists in exchange for crops and cattle (Dowson 1994: 334). In rock art, it has been argued that these interactions led to a shift in which shamans were painted with larger heads and increasing detail compared to the figures surrounding them due to foreign influences relying on

their shamanistic powers and paying them for their services (Dowson 1994). Dowson argues that a shaman's supernatural potency thus increasingly came to define their political power. Art was the medium in which shamans could translate their powers into the physical realm which made their rituals possible while conveying political status messages (Dowson 1994).

However, an alternative argument (Blundell 2004) proposed the intermixing of the San with other groups, such as escaped slaves from the Cape Colony and dislocated Khoekhoen groups, who moved into the area in the nineteenth century brought about a shift in San rock art. As the roles of ritual healers started to shift towards paid-rainmakers certain body parts were highlighted in favour of others in the art. Thus, the postcranial body, associated with healing, was slowly replaced with more focus on the head and face, representing essential identifying features (Blundell 2004).

Mullen (2018) argues that these figures may in fact be much older than Blundell believes, and their size could refer to the amount of spiritual potency they require to achieve certain tasks, while their décor is a reference to markers and items used by specialists as a means of identification within the spiritual or physical realm.

It is also possible that some rock art was not exclusively created by the San. Bantu-speakers and Khoekhoen groups also may have produced rock art in the region. Mallen (2008), Henry (2010) and Blundell (2004, 2021) discuss the various rock art traditions found within the area, including San fine-line art and possible non-San fine-line art, Type 2 and Type 3 art. Type 2 art is described as monochrome or bichrome non-fine line art, usually found adjacent to or in entirely separate shelters from San fine-line art. It lacks superpositioning, except in one instance, and features predominantly eland-figures with little diversity in their postures and perspectives. Type 3 art by contrast can be found superimposed over existing San fine-line art and includes depictions of felines, quadrupeds and human figures some of whom are dressed in colonial-attire. This art is characterised by its finger or rough-brush painted monochrome reddish-pink figures (Mallen 2008; Blundell 2021). Research into the art types conclude that they were likely painted by small multi-ethnic groups that lived amongst San

groups and may have included a range of ethnicities including Bantu-speakers, Cape Colony slave, Khoekhoen, San and people of mixed descent (Mallen 2008; Blundell 2021). This is backed-up by a testimony recorded in the 1930s of Mapote, a Puthi speaking man, who as a young man lived among a San group (How 1962; King *et al*. 2022). While he was allowed to engage in painting, he was prohibited from painting in the same shelter or the same side of a shelter as the San rock artists. This seems to coincide with Type 2 rock art which is usually separate from San rock art and may suggest that over time these boundaries and prohibitions became more blurred leading to what is often characterised as Type 3 art (Mallen 2008; Blundell 2021).While the existence of Type 2 and Type 3 rock art suggests that not all rock art was San authored, the majority of the region's rock art is typical of the Later Stone Age (LSA) tradition and includes fine-line and non-fine-line art (Dowson 1994; Hoerlé *et al.* 2016).

However, some early historians contested that the art was San authored. They believed that the art was unlikely to have been produced by the 'savage' San people. Such was the view of medical Dr S. P. Impey in the 1920s and Breuil in 1948 (Breuil 1948: 11; Mullen 2018: 5). In the 1950s and 1960s, a renewed interest in the evolution of humanity and its cultures occurred, and the San were seen as the ideal historical model. The idea was that the San embodied ancient hunter-gatherers due to their 'unchanging and static' lifestyle, effectively freezing them and their culture in time (Blundell 2004). However, the 1970s saw a radical change in the approach to rock art research in South Africa, to one in which interpretation was primarily based on ethnography (e.g., Lewis-William 1981a; Lewis-Williams 1990; Blundell 2004). Since then, it has become the predominant hypothesis that rock art was likely embedded in the rituals and belief systems of the San people who created them. LSA rock art was likely closely intertwined with the socio-economic lives of the people who produced it. For example, depictions of eland are common and likely refer to trance dances, boys' initiation rituals, girls' coming of age ceremonies, or marriage celebrations (Lewis-Williams & Biesele 1978; Lewis-Williams 1981a), which all form important parts of the socio-economic lives of the San.

2.2. History and Interpretation of the Linton Panel

Many museums and institutions in South Africa and Europe are home to removed rock art from South Africa. These include the collections by Emil Holub (the 1870s the 1880s), who was responsible for the most extensive collection of removed southern African rock art in Europe (Henry 2007). The Rock Art Research Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand, the Iziko Museums, the McGregor Museum in Kimberly (Dowson & Lewis-Williams 1993), the National Museum, Bloemfontein, KwaZulu-Natal Museum and the Ditsong Museum all hold large collections of rock art in South Africa. Reasons for their removal vary from simply collecting them out of curiosity and conservation efforts to salvaging them from a threatened site (Henry 2007). From the late 1800s to the early 1900s, collecting rock art out of curiosity and out of concern for their future preservation were the principal reasons for its removal. By this time, San populations across southern Africa had been significantly reduced, creating a sense of nostalgia for the 'lost' culture and people (Vinnicombe 1966; Henry 2007). Since the 1970s, however, researchers have begun understanding the importance of context. Removal of rock art should be done only as a last resort to salvage the art instead of simply removing it out of curiosity or for the convenience of studying it at a museum or institute (Henry 2007).

The Linton panel (Fig. 2.2) is one such removed panel that is now exhibited in the Iziko South African Museum, Cape Town (Lewis-Williams 1988; Loubser 1994: 454; Henry 2007: 44; Davison 2012: 19). The Linton panel was obtained for the museum by Mandy of the Cape Provincial Roads Department. In 1916, he sent a letter to the museum director at the time, Dr Louis Péringuey, advising him on the possibility of removing some exquisite rock art from a site on the Linton farm, Eastern Cape. Transportation took place on an ox wagon which relayed the panel to the railway station at Maclear (Henry 2007: 45; Davison 2012: 25). The panel arrived at the museum in August of 1918 (Henry 2007: 45; Davison 2012: 25). About 3 m of the painted site was destroyed during removal of the first and now famous Linton panel (Henry 2007: 45). The main Linton panel has been on permanent display in Cape Town since its removal, however it was temporarily

removed so that it could be exhibited in other parts of the world as part of an African art exhibition.



Figure 2.2 Tracing of the Linton panel by Dowson, Den Hoed & Kingdon (1985).

The last major event concerning the Linton panel occurred on 27 April 2000, Freedom Day in South Africa. On this day, the Linton panel had one of its painted figures adopted into South Africa's new Coat of Arms (Fig. 2.3). Staff members at the Rock Art Research Institute (RARI) of the University of the Witwatersrand chose the particular painted figure (Smith *et al*. 2000). One of the reasons for this choice was that the original painting resided in a museum where it could be protected. However, some changes were made to the redrawing of the original figure. These include the 'un-gendering' of the originally male figure and the removal of the nasal blood smeared across the figure's face. Finally, some of his other body decorations and bow and arrow were removed. This modified image was then mirrored, giving the impression of two separate figures facing each other and clasping hands (Barnard 2004: 9).

The image was chosen due to its link with the earliest people who inhabited South Africa, the San. Thus, its inclusion in the new Coat of Arms, along with the accompanying /Xam language motto, was symbolic of national unity and South



Figure 2.3 South African Coat of Arms Figure (Lewis-Williams 2013a)

Africa's rich history (Barnard 2004). The motto is *!Ke e: /xarra //ke*, which roughly translates to 'Diverse People Unite'. The /Xam words came from Dorothea Bleek's dictionary of /Xam words and the phrase was translated by Lewis-Williams (Barnard 2003).

CHAPTER THREE – METHOD AND TECHNIQUE

3.1. Method

The research reconstructs an object biography for the Linton panel and the remaining imagery at the site. An object biography encompasses a history of what happened at the site, the particular landscape in which it was created, and the people that used to occupy it. The central idea of an object biography is that both people and objects are constantly being transformed in the course of time and its movements (Gosden & Marshall 1999). An object's significance changes with each moment of 'life' in which it is used, or which happens around it. In these moments the object(s) become loaded with meaning for its users. For example, in the Trobriand Islands, the objects used in Kula exchange are often linked back to individuals who owned or handled them prior. In this way the objects gain value through their links with powerful or significant people and *vice versa* (Gosden & Marshall 1999). Another example would be a diary, important for its written content for its original author as well as the subsequent owners and readers who in turn may have used, altered or tried to interpret the written information (e.g., the diaries of Anne Frank, Marco Polo or Charles Darwin). The document the words are written on, the language and grammar used, the actual interpreted meaning, the time period they were made, and the damage they have subsequently sustained, all tell a story of their own, separate from the words noted within the diary. An object biography would look at information and details separate from just the person who wrote it, but also focus on the journey of the diary as a separate entity. With this approach, the research will seek to understand more about the site and panel.

Justine Wintjes (2021: 209) maintains that "Frequently in the case of historical collections, the link between the removed pieces and the provenance has also been lost…." Thereby the use of object biography fills in the gaps in the recorded data and reconstructs their histories and narratives to a greater extent (Brenner *et al*. 2015). Object biographies observe how objects and human histories interact with one another. As objects move through time and space, they change, imbuing different meanings through social interactions (Gosden & Marshall 1999). Object biography seeks to understand how objects are given specific meaning and unique

value through their use in ceremonies or constant exchanging between hands. Object biographies may also enquire into the breaks, or interruptions, seen in some biographies, such as those brought about through colonial intervention, which may – by placing it in a museum – remove an object from its cultural place of origin, thus isolating it (Gosden & Marshall 1999).

The object biography approach will inquire why the paintings at Linton farm were produced in the first place, who viewed them, how they were 'utilised', and who was responsible for their removal. Additionally, what significance did these paintings hold for their creators and audience, compared to the interpretation assigned by those who removed them, conducted research on them, and what occurred with the remaining paintings at the location, as well as how did their temporal and spatial passage alter them on a physical level (Appadurai 1986; Brenner *et al.* 2015)? The object biography will attempt to understand how the paintings eventually came to encompass different narratives post-removal, in what ways they may have been similar and in what ways they were different and if their different narratives can be reconciled with each other. As Wintjes (2021: 229) put it, "The figures that were removed relate to those that remained behind in different ways". It is in the interest of this dissertation to understand how the removed and remaining figures at Linton farm relate to each other in terms of the themes, scenes and compositions of each (cf. Wintjes 2021). By way of object biography, the gaps left in our understanding of the paintings may be filled, and the panel and site's history may be partially reconstructed (Brenner *et al.* 2015).

The research focuses on the removal process and its effects on both the removed panel and the site. The study then looks at two separate histories, the history of the removed panel and the history of the site after the removal process, precisely what happened to each after being separated, who was involved in their curation, interpretation, and exhibition, or if further removals, damage or other events may have affected the panel or site.

An example of an object biography of rock art can be found in Wintjes (2022). Wintjes (2022) examined an isolated and forgotten rock slab with a lion painting on it within the RARI collection and reconstructed its history. It had originated in

the uMhwabane rock shelter in the uKhahlamba-Drakensberg. In 1947 Clarence Van Riet Lowe, the Archaeological Survey director in Johannesburg, obtained permission to remove parts of the rock panel for conservation purposes. By the early 1960s, various rock art pieces were transported to the Natal Museum (now KwaZulu-Natal Museum). Conservation efforts took place twice on the removed pieces of rock paintings, first by Val Ward and later by Nkululeko Sibetha and Jeremy Hollmann. Through extensive research and contact with various institutes, Wintjes (2022) uncovered hand-painted copies of the site made in 1929 and published in 1931, which revealed the shelter before the paintings were removed. The research showed that the lion was crouched before a 'herd' of eland-and-cow, while the rest of the site had images of 6 or 7 feline creatures (Wintjes 2022). Wintjes (2022) partially reconstructed what the shelter may have looked like pre-1947 by placing to-scale images of the removed rock art paintings into an image of the current shelter, thus creating a sort of 'collage' of the former shelter.

In addition to the object biography, this study examines ethnographic interpretations of the Linton panel. The study interprets the remaining images at the site and, in doing so, tries to find links between the Linton panel art and the remaining art at the site. The method encompasses an analogy argument approach by which all research is conducted while referencing ethnographic accounts of beliefs of the San and referencing relevant literature on the subject (e.g., Lewis-Williams 1991). While the ethnographic approach clarifies meaning, it is less helpful in understanding motivation, which may vary among individuals, periods and places. The ethnographic reasons yielded insider information on the meaning and origins of rock art while the analogical reasoning fills in gaps left by missing or incomplete ethnographies. Analogical reasoning encompasses genealogical analogy, which tries to link two sites based on two peoples or groups (Whitley 2005).

3.2. Techniques

The Linton panel was traced and redrawn by RARI staff in the 1980s. The panel was also recorded as an ultra-high-resolution photo-mosaic by the photographer Andrew Lund in 2021 (Anon. 2021). Therefore, no additional recording work was

necessary on the stone itself, and recording work focused on what remained in the rock shelter.

Besides some photographs, no proper record has ever been made of the site. Therefore, it was necessary to record the shelter itself and the remaining art. Baseline documentation of the site included, *inter alia*:

- Mapping the location of the site with a GPS
- Completing a standard site record form
- Writing a detailed description of the site

Additionally, detailed photographic records were made of the art remaining in the site.

Standard digital photography was applied for the shelter itself, the art, the removal scars, and more. This sufficed to record the colour, context, and general 'look' of the art. Photographs of the site and the remaining rock art were taken with a scale for reference before any further work was undertaken. Photographing a site, especially one that has been visited before, enables researchers to visually identify any changes in the site since its last visit. In addition to traditional photography, ultra-high-resolution photo-mosaics were also made of the painted sections of the shelter. In this technique, overlapping grids of photographs are taken and then digitally combined to produce a single image with a resolution many factors higher than what can be achieved with a single photograph (Mark & Billo 2006).

Notes were taken on the condition of the remaining imagery and significant threats to the site. One of the original justifications for removing the panel was that the site was threatened, a point that will be further discussed in subsequent chapters. Whilst no detailed record of the earlier condition of the site exists, an assessment of current conditions and threats may nevertheless allow some insight into whether that original justification was legitimate.

Back at the University, the photographs were extensively studied to identify figures, shapes, or animals. The identified images' possible meaning and purpose are discussed using the relevant literature. These identified images are then linked,

if possible, to the rock art on the Linton panel housed in the Iziko South African Museum, Cape Town.

CHAPTER FOUR – DESCRIPTION OF THE LINTON IMAGES

4.1. Farm Linton Shelter and History

A team of four, the author included, made its way to the Linton shelter on Monday, 4 April 2022. Farmer Donie Naude explained that the shelter was surrounded by nearby koppies (a rocky outcrop) which contained scattered remnants of San rock art. The shelter is located about 10 meters above a tributary to the River Luzie. The front of the shelter is screened by heavy shrubbery with the mouth of the shelter facing south (Fig. 4.1). Natural light filters through the shrubbery lighting up the inside of the shelter, however, very little direct sunlight manages to reach the shelter walls. The shelter is rather long, and rock art is scattered throughout, however, the downstream portion of the shelter contains the most rock art. Rock fall litters much of the shelter floor, especially where the two rock art panels were removed.

The team was informed that the shelter itself receives very little interest from the outside world. Its only recently recalled visitors include friends, family, and an unnamed professor from an unknown university. This professor was likely either Sven Ouzman who took photos of the site in 2001 according to images uploaded onto the South African Digital Rock Art Archive (SARADA) or David Pearce from the University of the Witwatersrand who visited the site in 2012. Naude pointed out a small area of recent removal he thought to be about ten or fifteen years old, but it appears already in photographs taken by Ouzman in 2001. It is unknown who removed the painting or for what purpose. Four antelope legs protrude from the removed area. Graffiti exists within the shelter, including the apparently oldest by “G N 1915”, around the time Mandy had begun removing the Linton panel. More recent graffiti include “V. Henning 1975”, “S. Naude 1979”, “A Pretorius (and company) Dec 1979”, and “D. Jordaan 16/12/88”.



Figure 4.1 Image showing the front of the Linton shelter screened by heavy shrubbery

4.2. Rock Art Remaining in the Linton Shelter

Within the shelter, two large removal areas are evident, one near the downstream end of the shelter, the other more centrally located. The first set of images remaining in the site is grouped between the two removal areas. This painted section will be called ‘Panel 1’. To the west of ‘Panel 1’ and the second removal area is another set of painted images. It will be called ‘Panel 2’. This section will first discuss the finds and preservation of images in ‘‘Panel 1’’.

‘Panel 1’ spans about 2 meters and includes various motifs, including a therianthrope, highly detailed human figures, rhebok (*Pelea capreolus*), eland, threads of light and less detailed human figures. Large flakes across ‘Panel 1’ have destroyed much of the remaining paintings, and some graffiti can be seen scratched into the rock face just above the painted images. The preservation of the images varies. Some images are so well-preserved that individual brush strokes can still be identified, and the colours are vibrant and easily identifiable.

In contrast, others have their colours faded, primarily white, and some of the pigment has slowly started to smudge with time. ‘Panel 1’ is located under a large

rocky ledge behind thick shrubbery, preserving it from weathering. The shrubbery branches do not reach the rock art and thus serve more as a barrier between the rock face and natural elements. The nearby tributary poses no threat to the rock face as even in heavy rain it would not be able to flood enough to reach the shelter. The shelter is used by various animals, including dassies and sheep, and their presence is evident from the remains of sheep dung found in the shelter. While the paintings higher up on the rock face are not threatened by animal activity, paintings situated further down may be subject to scratching and lanolin caking.

Images remaining in 'Panel 1' include the following. A therianthrope figure (Fig. 4.2) with hooves for feet is depicted kneeling with his arms spread out behind him. His face is white, with evidence of a nose, chin and lips. The figure's face has a black line painted across it. His limbs, including his arms and legs, are painted in red. His right-hand leg has two parallel lines just below the knee, possibly indicating decorative objects or body paint. His body, neck and hooves are painted in black, except for his chest and stomach, with a continuous white outline. The back of his outstretched arms have dots of interchanging white and black running across them. The nape of his neck has two protruding triangular shapes. His head has long strands of black hair falling past his shoulders. The tips of each strand of hair have red dots, possibly representing beads. One hair starting at the scalp and ending just past the neck is entirely red. Around his neck, the figure carries three bags decorated with white dots and black tassel-like appendages. His neck also shows evidence of a white necklace or possibly the string attached to the bags. He kneels on a thread of light in red with white, black and yellow dots parallel to it on either side of the line. The thread of light extends from below an eland's head, under or through the therianthrope and beyond into the rock face where the red line fades out of existence, but the accompanying white dots continue until a flake destroyed them.

In terms of preservation, the figure is well preserved. His body remains primarily intact and unfaded. The white paint on his face is still visibly thick with pigment. However, part of the thread of light and the figure's legs and feet just below the eland's head and neck have flaked off. Smaller flakes have destroyed parts of the

figure's right-hand thigh.



Figure 4.2 Therianthrope in a kneeling position, closely followed by an eland.



Figure 4.3 Five human figures, two eland and a faded antelope.

Five human figures are located above and to the left of the therianthrope figure, just above the 'tethered' eland (Fig. 4.2). They are polychrome, but their bodies tend to be of one predominant colour. From left to right, the predominant

colouring for each human figure is red, red, white, red and white respectively. The first red figure is bending forward, possibly sweating from his armpits. Long stripes emanating from the armpits is often a representation of sweat which occurs during intense trance dances (Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2012: 701). He has a white face and long black hair. A bulge, possibly a bag, hangs from the figure's neck. Just behind and below his leg, superimposed on top of an eland, the remains of two antelope are visible. An eland faces the opposite direction of the first red figure, and a black line runs across its back, the eland has been superimposed behind the first red human figure. Parts of an antelope, possibly a rhebok, are superimposed upon the human's body, the legs are still well preserved, and hooves can still be easily identified. In front of the first red figure, two white legs are visible. They belong to the eland upon which the first red human figure was superimposed. Red dots are discernible near the shoulder and hair of the first red human figure.

The second red figure is also slightly bent forward, and he sweats from his armpits, has a white face with a black eye and is holding a black stick. His remaining foot is particularly interesting as it possesses three long black claws. He wears his hair in long black strands and has a black waistband, a red line, and possibly a spear or bow emanating from his shoulder. Parts of his body are outlined in black, including much of his torso, stomach, buttocks and at least one calf. A white figure walks before him. He has a black eye and carries a black stick on his shoulders. His groin has black lines near or emanating from it. He and the other two red figures behind him are all facing one direction. From the opposite direction, the third red figure approaches. He reaches out towards the oncoming white figure and places a hand on his forehead. In the other hand, he holds a red stick. His face is white with black and red outlines on the back of his skull. Most of his body is red except for his neck, which is black; lips and a nose are visible. Behind him, a second white figure is present. The second white figure seems to be reaching for the third red figure. In front of him, he holds a black stick-like object. He, too, has a black and red outline of the skull. All five figures and the surrounding antelope are badly damaged by flaking. Much of their remaining

bodies are riddled with minute flakes, while other parts have had large chunks eroded. The predominantly white figures are more faded than the mostly red ones.

Figure 4.4 shows a group of three human figures. Furthest to the left is “Figure A”. She is seated and clapping, an activity that is usually done by females (Katz 1982: 135; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2012: 697), and wears a kaross which is a type of skin cloak. She seems to be holding something faded in white or yellowish paint in her hands. Below her right knee, two parallel white lines are evident, possibly depicting body paint or bangles of some sort. Her buttocks and the ends of her kaross no longer remain due to a large flake that had fallen off the rock face. To her right, “Figure B”, the figure faces “Figure A” and is standing. He is slightly bent forward at the hip, and the remnants of a white neck tassel are evident beneath a rather large flake that destroyed much of the figure’s upper torso, neck, lower jaw and parts of his paraphernalia. His face shows evidence of a black eye and the upper ridge of a nose. He carries a bow and at least three arrows with red tips. On his ankles are rattles used in the trance dance to make a sound while stomping and dancing rhythmically. Around his waist is a faded white belt or waistband. The figure can be positively identified as male due to the penis evident below the ‘waistband’.

“Figure C” is also standing with his back towards “Figure B”. He carries a flywhisk and the skin of an animal, upon his knees are decorative bands. Similar to “Figure B”, much of “Form C’s” body and paraphernalia have been destroyed by a large flake. “Figure C” also has a black eye and facial features, including a nose, chin and lips. A white line runs across his shoulders and down the remaining length of his body. Two red finger-like appendages emerge from the flake to the figure’s right, possibly the remains of “Figure C’s” hand reaching or pointing at something or someone.



Figure 4.4 Three figures painted in red & white. From left to right Figure A, B & D

"Figure D" can be seen in the top left corner of Figure 4.5. He faces the same direction as "Figure C" and is carrying either arrows or spears. Most of his body has been destroyed by the same flake that destroyed much of the bodies of Figures B and C, however it is still evident that he is wearing a kaross. All four figures have a red and white line on their head, possibly reminiscent of hair.

A red figure (Fig. 4.5) positioned just right of "Figure D" is depicted bending forward slightly at the hips. His face looks masked. His hair is shoulder length and black with red tips, possibly representing beads. One hair strand is depicted entirely in red. This might be sweat drips from his armpits. He carries a bag upon his back, and a bow is held up in front of him. An animal's skin is seen hanging from his left-hand side. Upon his knees are bands, and around his waist is a tasselled belt. A large flake has destroyed part of the figure's upper thighs and lower buttocks. Just above the flake, a penis is evident. Smaller flakes have destroyed the figure's arms and part of the figure's paraphernalia which he carries on his back and shoulders.



Figure 4.5 In the top right-hand corner, a red figure is walking away from "Figure D".

Below the group of painted figures just described, various herds of rhebok and some eland can be seen. They are polychrome with exquisite detail. All are standing upright with their tails down and ears erect and alert. The rhebok are likely females as they show no evidence of horns. Rhebok still exist in the area today and likely roamed the mountain plateau when the San painted these images. The eland have very small dewlaps, possibly indicating they too are female. One eland has its neck hair depicted on end, and individual tufts of fur are evident on its dewlap. One of the eland is linked to the therianthrope (Fig. 4.2) via a thread of light, as discussed previously. The eland is seemingly following or tethered to the therianthrope.

In terms of preservation, the heads of the rhebok are faded, and many have lost most of their body to a large area which has flaked off. Various parts of human figures can be discerned standing among or around the animals, some of which are holding sticks (Fig. 4.6). These human figures are not painted in as much detail as the previously discussed human figures or animals. The human figures among the herds are predominantly monochrome red or orange and show no

discernible facial features or digits. At least one figure is depicted either falling or lying down at an angle, while another is seen crouching.



Figure 4.6 Three human figures, one holds a stick, another is painted lying or falling, and the third is crouched.



Figure 4.7 Human crouching forward over a zigzag figure.

Figure 4.7 shows someone crouching forward. They are wearing a kaross and have bands on their knees. Sweat pours from their armpits, and the angle of the arms suggests they are clapping. The crouching figure may be female due to an indication of breasts on the chest, or the bump may just be a visual representation of the kaross bending and distorting as the figure crouches. The crouching figure has lost parts of its lower legs, its hands, face, and parts of its buttocks. In front of the crouching figure is another figure or possibly an animal with a zigzag pattern going through the body. The zigzag is painted yellow, the body's upper half is black, and the lower seems to have been painted red. A tail-like extension is attached to the zigzag figure's remaining hindquarters. A knee and part of a leg are still identifiable. The image is extensively damaged, thus making it hard to identify with certainty. Large flakes have damaged most of the zigzag figure. Above and behind the crouching human figure are parallel lines. One is solid red while the other is yellow fringed with a thin red line. Three horizontal red lines are scattered below the zigzag figure. The colours are vivid and have not faded much.

'Panel 2' is located west of 'Panel 1' and is the second large painted area still remaining in the shelter. It is smaller and has fewer painted figures than 'Panel 1'. The ledge above it is not as broad, thus allowing for greater sun and weathering damage. Graffiti has been scratched onto the rock face, including on some faded white figures. 'Panel 2' is also where a recent removal scar is evident. Damage to the area includes large flakes that have fallen off, damaging various images, including the lower half of an eland and the tops of various human figures and an antelope. Some painted figures are badly faded, while others are still clearly visible. A large crack runs horizontally across the rock face passing through the front hoofs of the eland and causing flakes to fall off near the running figure's head.



Figure 4.8 Female polychrome fine-line eland.

Among the remaining paintings at ‘Panel 2’ is a polychrome eland (Fig. 4.8) depicted with a line just above the hump of its back, something that is common in the area, possibly representing tufts of hair. The eland’s head is superimposed over a faded white antelope. Faded white horns, a brown forelock and a black eye are still evident on the eland’s head. A large flake has destroyed the eland’s lower legs and most of its belly line. The eland’s front hoofs are still present below the flake but have a large horizontal crack running through them. The eland is likely female due to its small dewlap.

Below the large crack, a polychrome man is depicted running (Fig. 4.9). He is running towards a faded white feline or other quadruped. He holds a white stick-like object in his hand, and an indiscernible red object hangs from his neck or shoulder, possibly a bag. The back and top of his head have a red stripe that transitions into red dots towards the forehead. On his ankles, he wears faded white bands. Other details include evidence for fingers, toes, lips, nose and a chin. He is relatively well preserved, other than his left foot and part of his head, which have flaked off. A smattering of small flakes is evident around the figure’s hips and buttocks and his neck and upper shoulders are slightly faded.



Figure 4.9 A running figure with a shoulder bag and a white object in hand.

A group of primarily monochrome dark red figures are present in the upper left-hand corner of 'Panel 2' (Fig 4.10). A monochrome antelope with horns bent in the middle at about 90° angles (possibly a hartebeest [*Alcelaphus buselaphus*]) is among the red figures (Fig. 4.10). The antelope has a long tail and another long unidentified protrusion coming out of its hindquarters. The antelope is superimposed upon the feet of two figures seen above it. One of the figures is another antelope whose front hoof is either under or behind the hartebeest's head. The other figure is a sprinting human whose foot is hidden behind or under the hartebeest's hindquarters. The hartebeest body is well preserved. While its face and legs are slightly faded, flaking has not damaged it. Its body has either yellowish pigment smeared across it or natural mineral deposits from the rock face have leached onto the hartebeest's body. The human figure is of similar

preservation, with the only notable difference being that a large flake has removed the human figure's head. The same flake damaged the other antelope's head, back and part of its hindquarters. A faded white calcite run drips across the body of the mostly destroyed antelope.



Figure 4.10 A monochrome antelope and part of a human figure.



Figure 4.11 A monochrome antelope followed by two humans.

In Figure 4.11 a monochrome antelope is depicted. It has a short stubby tail, two large ears and at least three visible legs. However, it lacks horns or any characteristics that would enable species identification. The lack of horns may indicate it is a female antelope. It has a round belly line, possibly indicating it is very fat or pregnant. Two human figures holding sticks and slightly bent at the knee and hip follow closely. The antelope and human figures are not faded, and clear paint outlines are visible. However, the top of the head and shoulders of the human figures have been destroyed by a large flake. One of the human figures is more damaged than the other, for its torso and parts of its arms have also been lost. Below the two human figures is a straight red line. A red streak is visible to that right and just below the antelope. It eventually disappears into a missing flake.



Figure 4.12 Two male figures.

Two thin monochrome red male figures with penises stand facing each other (Fig. 4.12). One of the men, on the left, has his arms spread behind him while the other, to the right, stands with his hands in the air and two ear-like bulbs protruding from his temples. Both men's genitals have a vertical line going through them. The man to the left has had his shoulders and upper chest area destroyed by a flake.

The rest of the shelter, west of 'Panel 1', has scatterings of individual paintings, including a lone eland. The head and legs have faded, leaving behind only the red mid-section of the animal. Someone or something scratched the rock surface leaving behind white marks, one of which arches over the eland's body. Another image (Fig. 4.13), drawn possibly with the fingers, depicts a human-like figure with a large head and body proportions reminiscent of a baby or toddler. Another human with splayed arms, outward bent knees, and a rounded belly (Fig. 4.14) is painted hidden away in a shelter corner.



Figure 4.13 A toddler-like human figure.



Figure 4.14 A human-like figure with splayed arms, outward bent knees and a rounded belly.

Other images include an eland far removed from any other paintings on the shelter's roof, it is very faded, and parts of its body have flaked away.

A group of human figures walk along a ledge carrying digging sticks (Fig. 4.15). One of them is much larger than the others. The stone weights of the digging sticks are visible just behind the figures' heads. They appear to be monochrome and do not possess facial features. However, finger digits are evident, and their calf muscles are well defined. They have been subject to heavy damage from flaking. Their upper thighs, parts of their arms, and torsos are missing. A few more, smaller or highly faded paintings are scattered about the shelter, however, they are not discussed here because they could not be positively identified. The positive identification of these paintings should be addressed in future research.



Figure 4.15 Three human figures carrying digging sticks.

CHAPTER FIVE – INTERPRETATION OF THE PAINTINGS

This chapter discusses thematic similarities and differences between the Linton panel and the Linton shelter. While the shelter still contains many images, and many similar painted themes are present in both the Linton panel and the shelter, it should be noted that many possible links between the two have been lost due to the removal process, which cut away more than one meter of space between where the panel was once situated and the remaining imagery. This, in turn, makes it almost impossible to directly link images to one another and determine how they may have interacted. For example, the shelter and the panel have a thread of light. However, due to the damage caused by the panel removal, it is impossible to tell if these threads of light were once the same, intersected, ran parallel to each other, or never connected. We can only speculate on their relationships with the images still surrounding them. The same can be said about the various animals and human groups and individuals now separated by significant gaps where the panel and the shelter wall once met. Perhaps what seem to be two separate figures were once looking at each other or someone else. However, this something in between is lost, and thus their interaction with each other is lost too. Broadly, one must assume these paintings and motifs had some relationship. This is supported by the fact that the paintings belong in the same shelter and were once part of one painted area. The main problem is that those specific relationships are almost impossible to determine due to the significant destruction and loss of the painted area. This chapter will attempt to reconstruct the similarities and links in themes as far as possible, given the present data.

5.1. The Trance Dance and Trance Symbolism

Before examining further the artists' intended meanings and interpretations of the rock art that remains at the shelter, it should be made clear that much of San rock art can be explained in terms of shamanistic ritual, experience, hallucinations, and belief (Lewis-Williams & Biesele 1978; Lewis-Williams 1981a). However, it would be false to assume the entire corpus of San rock can be explained as depicting the experiences of a select few shamans who may have entered the trance state. Furthermore, a panel of images has no beginning or end in the same sense as a book, where the image and story might be "read" from left to right or

up to down. Rather panels represent a conglomerate of images all relating to one another and are added to as time and individuals pass by the paintings (Lewis-Williams 2010: 4). Knowing this may help interpret and understand the Linton shelter images.

The trance dance plays a large part in the lives, beliefs and rock art motifs of the San. In this section, the trance dance and its role will be discussed to identify and interpret trance symbolism in rock art. First, the trance dance is an event in which both men and women partake, often held at night and lasting a few hours or until dawn (Marshall 1969; Lewis-Williams 1988; Low 2004). Usually, women will sit around a central fire and clap to a rhythm while the shamans, usually male, dance around the circle, thus harnessing *n/om* ('supernatural power' or potency) (Marshall 1969; Lewis-Williams 1981a, 1987, 1988: 3, 2013), which travels through their spines and explodes from their heads thus enabling them to enter a trance. Shamans would yell during the dance, throw sticks, and point into the dark beyond the fire at the spirits-of-the-dead. The spirits-of-the-dead were believed to be malevolent beings who could pull a person's spirit through the top of their head, thus making the living into spirits-of-the-dead (Johnson 2016: 20). The dance induced trance without utilising hallucinogens but rather by rhythmic dancing that would result in the dancer hyperventilating and possibly collapsing (Lewis-Williams 1987: 166, Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2012: 697). The dance was not one into which a young dancer could be 'initiated' in any formal sense, but rather novice dancers would dance behind older, more expert dancers, thus learning how to perform the dance and enter trance, enabling them to enter the spirit world (Lewis-Williams 2010). While in a trance, shamans perform various tasks, including healing the sick, controlling rain or controlling the movements of wild animals (Lewis-Williams 1988: 3; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2012: 700; Davison 2012: 28).

Much of what researchers know about San rock art comes from ethnographies. Including, but not limited to, a San descendant named 'M' (Manqindi or Maquoqua Dyantyi) in the 1980s (Jolly 1986; Lewis-Williams 1986), San

speakers Lindiso and Poponi Mbekane in 1932, Mamxabele in 1913 (Jolly 1999), the accounts by Qing recorded by Orpen in 1873 (Orpen 1874), the Bleek-Lloyd collection in the late 1800s (Bleek 1864) and various Kalahari ethnographies (e.g., Marshall 1962, 1969; Biesele 1980; Katz 1982; Guenther 2017). As a result of detailed comparisons between these ethnographies and the rock art, San rock art came to be understood as frequently featuring the trance dance and spirit world.

However, the practice of the trance dance in southern San groups, as the Kalahari San know it, has been debated. The Bleek and Lloyd collection does not give definitive evidence that the /Xam participated in trance dances. However, references to a dance of sorts have been found and likely relate to the trance dance or a variant performed by the southern San (Lewis-Williams 1992; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2012, 2015). In 1875, Lloyd asked Diä!kwain (a San informant) about copies of rock paintings made in the 1860s and the 1870s by George William Stow. In response, Diä!kwain answered,

> They seem to be dancing, for they stand stamping (?) with their legs. This man who stands in front (1st figure to the right of the beholder) seems to be showing the people how to dance. That is why he holds a stick. . . The people know that he is one who dances first because he is a great sorcerer. That is why he dances first, because he wants people who are learning sorcery to dance after him… For when a sorcerer is teaching us, he first dances the '*ken* (synonym for *!gi*) dance, and those who are learning dance after him as he dances (Stow & Bleek 1930: caption to pl. 2a; in Lewis-William & Pearce 2012: 699).

The sorcerer or *!gi:xa* (*!gi* meaning potency and *xa* meaning full of, thus equating to a person full of potency) is the /Xam equivalent of the Ju/'hoan *n/omkxao*, medicine person, shaman or healer.

A further example of the trance dance in southern San groups can be found in an eyewitness account written by Stow in 1905. Stow describes how "the centre of every village or kraal, or near every rock-shelter, and in every great cave, there was a large circular ring where either the ground or grass was beaten flat and bare" from the reoccurrence of circular dances (likely trance dances) by the

inhabitants (Stow 1905: 111; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2012: 702). Another eyewitness account was recorded by two missionaries, François Daumas and Thomas Arbousset, in Lesotho in 1846. They record how dances would be carried out at night, in the middle of the village. The dancers would move irregularly, and eventually, they may sink to the ground in exhaustion, with blood pouring from their nostrils (Arbousset & Daumas 1846: 247; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2012: 703). Nasal bleeding is often described among shamans who fall into a trance and may smear it across their faces or the faces of those they are trying to heal (Lewis-Williams 1988; Dowson 1994; Lewis-Williams 2013a). Diä!kwain explains that a "sorcerer" teaching the dance may start to bleed from the nose and sneeze into his hands (Lewis-William & Pearce 2012: 701).

It is possible that since Bleek and Lloyd did not fully understand the /Xam cosmological belief system, they failed to recognise the importance of dance as a ritualistic and not recreational activity. In recent times, researchers have recognised that various aspects of southern rock art closely match features observed in the Kalahari trance dances (Lewis-William & Pearce 2012).

Various features of the trance dance can be observed in both the Linton panel and the shelter rock art. Trance dancers are often observed in a distinctive posture, their knees bent and leaning forward, or they may perform specific actions such as clapping. This posture resulted from the hot pain trance dancers experience in their *gebesi* (stomach) during the trance dance. Trance dancers may also support their weight on two dancing sticks, place their hand(s) on their heads or hold their arms up behind them (Lewis-Williams 1988: 4; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2012: 701). Various figures in the Linton panel are depicted in similar positions (Lewis-Williams 1988: 4).

It is also important to note that death, or a metaphor for death, is often a feature of the trance dance; trance dancers liken the experience of going into a trance to death (Katz 1982: 357). This metaphor of death can be seen in many ways, including similarities between the human figures and how animals die (Lewis-

Williams 1981a, 1988: 5; Dowson 1988: 118). When an antelope dies from a poisoned arrow, it will often lower its head, foam at the mouth, bleed from the nose, have its hair on end, stumble and eventually fall. A 'dying' shaman may be depicted similarly with head lowered, bleeding from the nose, hair on end, stumbling and eventually falling (Lewis-Williams 1981a: 8, 1987, 1988: 5; Dowson 1988: 118). This behaviour has been observed among the Kalahari San and southern San shamans. The metaphor of death may be relayed in rock art by juxtaposing a dying antelope with a 'dying' shaman or transforming into an incomplete or complete therianthrope. The otherwise realistic antelope may be identified due to the red nasal blood streaks across its face (Lewis-Williams 1987; Dowson 1988: 118). The Linton panel depicts three dying antelope (Lewis-Williams 1988: 7). One antelope, possibly a rhebok, has blood falling from its nose and red lines smeared across its face.

Similarly, the large supine human figure it is associated with also has red lines smeared across its face (Lewis-Williams 1988). The remaining two dying antelope respectively have their belly, and one hind leg's hair standing on end. One is portrayed with its front legs bent, as if it has recently stumbled and fallen. These antelope may be transformed shamans entering trance, or they may be a broader metaphor that links the other panel images to trance 'death'. Within the shelter, no dying antelope are present. Perhaps these images once existed but were destroyed, or only the area from which the Linton panel was extracted depicted dying eland. The relevance of this could have been that this part of the shelter may have been linked most closely with the experience of 'dying', the release of potency upon an antelope's, especially an eland's, death or some other yet unknown significance.

Moving on to other kinds of painted figures in the shelter and on the Linton panel, Figure 4.3 depicts five human figures surrounded by an eland and antelope divided into two groups. One group contains three members while the other, approaching from the opposite direction, includes two individuals. Each group has one predominantly white figure, while the remaining figures are primarily red. A connection is established between the two groups as the red figure from one group stretches out his hand and touches the forehead of the other group's white figure.

Trance dances are often filled with acts of touching others, and while this may be a depiction of a common occurrence in the trance dance, it may also depict a more symbolic and meaningful gesture between two people. As shamans dance, they eventually collapse due to an influx of healing energy called *tsso* by the Nharo and *n/om* by the Ju/'hoansi. After they collapse, they are helped back onto their feet. They now begin to apply their hands to the heads of those they wish to heal, or they may apply their sweat, usually from their armpits to those around them (Low 2004: 54). The painted image may depict such a process as the red figure reaches out to touch the head of and thus possibly heal the white figure opposite him. Behind him, the second white figure reaches out to the healer almost in a gesture of support, as if ready to assist him should he collapse. Another possibility is that the one human figure is 'syphoning' his potency into or towards the healer by trying to establish a physical connection with the latter, forming something like a chain of potency.

Figure 4.3 is also fascinating because novice shamans often dance behind experienced shamans, thus learning how to dance themselves into a trance (Lewis-Williams 2010: 2). In 1875, Lloyd asked Diä!kwain about some paintings that Stow had copied in the 1860s and 1870s. Diä!kwain explains how the figures seem to be dancing, and the man in the front of the dancing procession is showing the people how to dance (Stow & Bleek 1930: caption to pl. 2a). It is possible the white figure, who is possibly being healed, is also a shaman currently teaching novices how to dance, for he too carries a stick upon his shoulders and is the "leader" in the dancing procession. On the other hand, the two groups may also be opposing shamanistic groups, and the red figure is not healing but instead conferring sickness upon the other group's 'leader' in the hopes that he will become ill.

Figure 4.3 shows human "Figures A - D". They are painted in a similar rough style, size and shades of white or red. The figures seem to be participating in a trance dance, as indicated by the sitting and clapping figure facing the other three figures taking on trance dance postures by bending forward at the hips and

carrying trance dance paraphernalia. Such paraphernalia includes the dance rattles worn by “Figure B” and the fly whisk carried by “Figure C” (Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2012: 701). The idea of rattles rather than bands or tassels is supported by Low (2004: 54), who mentions that dancers may wear moth cocoon rattles on their ankles. Art may be a visual representation by which shamans show their spiritual encounters to those who do not have the same range of spiritual encounters. The objects may serve a purpose in both the physical realm and the spiritual realm, aiding in the identification of individuals or actions for those who lack comparable levels of experience or direct encounters with the shamans involved (Mullen 2018: 135). Karosses were often worn by /Xam shamans while healing (Lewis-Williams 2013b: 81). It is possible the karosses indicate shamans participating in a trance dance with the objective of healing.

All four human figures have a red line on the back of their heads. This line may represent hair or a cap of some sort. However, it may also be a visual representation of spirits leaving or just peeking out of the top of the head, which only shamans can see during trance. San shamans recount a sensation experienced on the crown of the head during trance—it is said that from this spot, the spirit leaves the body (Lewis-Williams 1987). This artistic inclusion is visible in the shelter paintings and some individuals on the Linton panel. However, none of the Linton panel figures carry animal skins, or wear karosses or decorative neck tassels. The figures carry hunting gear such as spears, arrows, bows and animal skins.

Paraphernalia typical to the shelter’s rock art and the panel are white sticks, dancing sticks, bows and arrows, and shoulder bags. One figure in the site and another on the panel can be seen holding one such white stick, likely a knobkerrie. They appear to be wooden sticks topped with a root or branch knob.

Certain other paraphernalia or decorations can be linked to the trance dance. Both the site and the panel depict knee bands, ankle bands and waistbands. Waistbands may have been a visual representation of the burst of pain felt by shamans in their stomach or *gebesi* while trance dancing (Lewis-Williams 1988: 4; Dowson 1989:

87). Another feature associated with trance dances is the flywhisk, usually fashioned from the tails of eland, giraffe, or wildebeest; three human figures in the panel hold one. In Figure 4.5, the human figure is bending forward at the hip and sweating profusely (Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2012: 701). The figure is highly decorated with a tasselled waistband and knee bands, holding an animal skin and a bow. During trance dances, shamans often describe experiencing a burst of pain and muscle contractions in the *gebesi*. This pain leads them to bend forward at the hips or waist (Lewis-Williams 1988: 4; Dowson 1989: 87). Figure 4.5 is depicted with a waistband. This waistband is unlikely to represent a loincloth, for it does not cover the genitals. Comparably, the knee and ankle decorations may have held twofold meaning, on the one hand representing the actual decorations and ceremonial items worn during the trance dance, such as moth cocoon ankle rattles.

Dancing sticks are also a commonality shared between the two painted areas. Used in the trance dance, the sticks would help support the weight of a dancer bending forward at an acute angle (Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2012). These sticks were not a typical depiction, as only one figure is seen holding such a dancing stick in the panel art, while two are seen holding these sticks in the art at the site. Furthermore, bows and arrows are strewn across the art in the panel and site. Arrows are a common feature in the Maloti-Drakensberg and are not just simple weapons of the hunt. Instead, they were also used for *hxaro* gift exchange or were swapped between San groups (Snow 2021: 36). During the hunt, a successful kill belongs to the arrow maker, not the hunter. Thus, once the kill is returned to the rest of the community, the arrow maker receives a large portion of the meat or is responsible for the meat's distribution (Wiessner 1983: 261; Snow 2021). Arrows were often painted or engraved uniquely to individualise them (Wiessner 1983: 261; Snow 2021: 34). Arrows also played a role in boys' initiation rituals. Upon having killed his first eland a boy will have scarifications made upon his body using the same arrow he had used to kill the eland (Snow 2021: 36).

The figures holding weapons may have been depictions of a plethora of things ranging from hunters in the spirit world stalking prey or perhaps hoping to butcher a rain-animal to malevolent shamans shooting arrows of sickness at others within the panel (Low 2007a, 2007b) to indicators of gift exchange. *//Gamab* is a deity

believed in by the Dama and Hai//om thought to be responsible for shooting arrows of sickness at people. *G//amama* also shoots arrows of disease in the cosmology of the /Gwi. Spirits of the dead and malevolent shamans may also shoot arrows of sickness at the living (Keeney 2003; Low 2007a). Depending on the context and ritual, arrows may be shot with good or bad intent. Some San believe that 'healing energy' can be fired at others in the figure of arrows. The /Xam believe that some arrows can cause sickness (Low 2007b). A Hai//om medicine man recalled how he would sneeze the harmful *//Gamab's* arrows out of the body of those he was healing (Low 2007b).

Paraphernalia such as bags have interesting connotations. In San mythology, it is believed that bags, three of which hang from the therianthrope's neck (Fig. 4.2), are related to trance, transformation, therianthropes and /Kaggen (Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2008). In San mythology, /Kaggen, who was the first shaman, would hide within a bag while transforming himself into a flying creature (Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2008: 429). The idea of trance is enhanced not just by the bags and threads of light, both of which may be associated with trance, but by the way the therianthrope is holding his arms. Common trance dance postures include bending forward at acute angles with arms spread out behind them (Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2012: 701). The therianthropic figure (Fig. 4.2) is also near an eland, the favourite animal of /Kaggen who was also its creator. Mayhap the therianthrope is not hunting the eland, but as /Kaggen would, trying to lead the eland away from harm (Parkington 2003: 138). Note that the therianthrope lacks any hunting gear, and the thread of light, unlike in the Linton panel, is not connected to any hunters or figures with hunting paraphernalia.

5.2 Therianthropes and Flying Buck

Therianthropes are shamans that transform partly or wholly into animals or obtain animal-like characteristics (Lewis-Williams 1981a: 12). Therianthropes are sometimes confused with shamans holding props such as eland horns or wearing antelope-eared caps (Challis 2005: 12; Guenther 2017: 6). These caps are made of scalps of small antelope, such as springbok or rhebok (Challis 2005: 12; Lewis-Williams 2006: 108). Therianthropes may depict transformed shamans, people

disguised as animals, or spirits-of-the-dead. However, it is most likely that therianthropes depict transformed shamans due to the tendency of rock art to depict various aspects of the trance dance (including dance postures and dance paraphernalia) and not mythology or hunting rituals. Therianthropes are also sometimes depicted alongside or with zigzag patterns linked to rain animals (Dowson 1988: 117). Within the shelter and the panel there are numerous examples of therianthropes, some of which I will discuss below.

First, the role of therianthropes is varied. One explanation for depicting therianthropes in the shelter and on the Linton panel is that therianthropes may allude to the hunter-prey relationship experienced in the physical world. The hunter becomes hyper-aware of the prey's "humanness and sociality" (Guenther 2017: 4). While tracking, hunting, and eventually butchering the animal, the hunter engages with it every step until their identities blur. The G/wi of the central Kalahari call this "invisible agency" *n!àre*, and the Ju/'hoan (also known as the !Kung) refer to it as *n!ow* (Guenther 2017: 4). It is believed to confer a spiritual connection between people and animals, but it also gives shamans and hunters a degree of control over the hunted animal. The bigger, potency-laden game animals possess *n!àre* or *n!ow*. The hunter and prey's *n!ow* may interact during the hunt, causing the hunt to succeed or fail. On the other hand, during a girl's initiation ritual, there are moments in which it is believed that she will experience a phase in the menstruation hut in which she transforms into an eland. This transformation is not physical but is felt on a spiritual level (Guenther 2017: 6). This connection may be depicted in rock art either in the form of therianthropic figures, which would show the blending of the two species' beings, or via threads of light. The latter will be discussed in the following section. However, it is more likely that the therianthropes allude to aspects of trance dance rather than hunting or a girl's initiation ritual. This is because most of the human figures in both the shelter and the panel do not seem to be female or depict obvious female characteristics such as breasts. Similarly, there is no clear ethnographic evidence that would suggest that rock art was created for or in relation to hunting. However, the large number of trance postures and paraphernalia lend credence to the idea that these therianthropic figures allude to the trance dance.

Both the site and panel have depictions of otherwise very human-looking figures, identified as a therianthropes by the presence of hooves. The Linton panel therianthrope is depicted lying down while a thread of light passes through or beneath him. The second large lying down figure seen in the upper right-hand corner of the panel may also be a therianthrope, as indicated by his hooves. This figure's right leg is bent at the knee, and a portion of his foot is painted like a hoof. This is similar to the shelter therianthrope (Fig. 5.1), who is also identified by his hooves and is seen kneeling or crawling along a thread of light.

Other therianthrope characteristics can be found in many figures in the panel. One example includes two figures with fetlocks and cloven hoofs, a canine figure standing by a human, both depicted with their hairs on end (Lewis-Williams 1988: 10), a figure with fetlocks, and a final figure with fetlocks and feline-like ears, head and tail (Lewis-Williams 1988: 10). Perhaps these therianthropes are shamans that have transformed into animals during the trance dance and are now traversing the spirit world in this other world form. Within the shelter, Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.3, are identifiable as therianthropes. Figure 4.3 is a predominantly red human figure, one of his feet has been destroyed by a flake but the other is still relatively well preserved. This remaining foot has three long black claws in place of nails or toes. Claws are a zoogenic feature and thus give rise to the possibility that this individual is a therianthrope. The other figures that surround him have all sadly had their feet damaged to such a degree that it is impossible to tell if they too once possessed claws upon their feet.

Explaining the therianthrope's purpose within the group of human figures depends on if this figure was the sole therianthrope or if he was one of many. If he was the sole therianthrope he may have been a transformed shaman walking among the other participants of the trance dance that have yet to transform or are onlookers of the dance. As previously explained the therianthrope and human figures exhibit various details that are indicative of trance dances. These include the waistbands that may signify pain in their *gebesi*, slightly forward bending positions, and sweat dripping from one of the figure's armpits. On the other hand, if all the figures were therianthropes perhaps this is a group of shamans traversing the spirit

world in their therianthropic forms, possibly meeting other shamanic groups coming from another direction, hence why two groups of people are seen walking or dancing towards one other.



Figure 5.1 A therianthrope crawling on a thread of light.

The therianthrope has red dots in his hair, which may indicate beads. They may be ostrich egg shell (OES) beads painted red or perhaps glass beads that the San traded for. However, including these details in rock art may be more significant than simply reflecting what people wore during daily life or trance dance. The Kalahari San consider beads and beadwork to be of great social importance. Beadwork is often used in girls' puberty rituals or as a *hxaro* gift (Dowson 1989: 85). In San mythology, it is believed that the gemsbok people were the first to create OES beads. A Ju/'hoan man who visited a shelter with Megan Biesele refused to believe humans made the paintings until they found an OES bead. The Ju/'hoan man explained that making OES beads was a human thing, thus implying "humanness" (Dowson 1989: 85). During trance dances, dancers adorn themselves with OES beads to appear attractive and robust to the spirits. By wearing the beads, they also reminded spirits and others of their humanness. Therefore, a therianthrope with OES beads may remind others that they are

simply humans transformed (Dowson 1989). Since beads hold more significance than simple adornment, the therianthrope figure may be depicted wearing them due to his higher social status, importance in the community or some other reason that justifies his hair being adorned with precious beads.

Upon his neck hang three bags. It was previously mentioned that such bags connect with therianthropes, transformation, /Kaggen and trance as the trickster god used such bags to transform himself into a flying creature (Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2008). Perhaps, these bags are a symbolic means of identifying a person who has been or is in the midst of transforming himself into some animal. It should also be noted that some dancing shamans would wear necklaces, usually reserved for women (Barnard 1979: 77). Perhaps this is one such necklace or a necklace-like thing with a bag or pouch attached. Another feature of the therianthrope are the odd protrusions on its shoulders. These may be potency escaping or entering through the *n/ao* spot (Lewis-Williams 1981b: 93). This spot is located on the nape of the neck and is believed to be the area where the spirit or soul of an individual can enter and exit the body. During trance, a shaman leaves behind his physical body and 'dies'. Perhaps these odd protrusions on the back of this therianthrope's neck symbolise the shaman's spirit leaving or entering his body as he enters or returns from a trance journey. This would make sense since therianthropes are associated with trance, which in turn is associated with 'death'. Thus, these protrusions enhance the metaphor of death and the subsequent transformation the shaman experiences as a result upon entering trance.

A very similar therianthrope and eland pair (Figure 5.2) are depicted in the Bosworth site, which is in relatively close proximity to the Linton shelter. Both images depict a red thread of light fringed with white dots that either leads to or wraps around the neck of an eland. The therianthropes are strikingly similar. They are depicted crouching down on the thread of light with their arms thrown back behind them. This posture is often exhibited by shamans performing the trance dance and links the therianthrope to the trance dance.

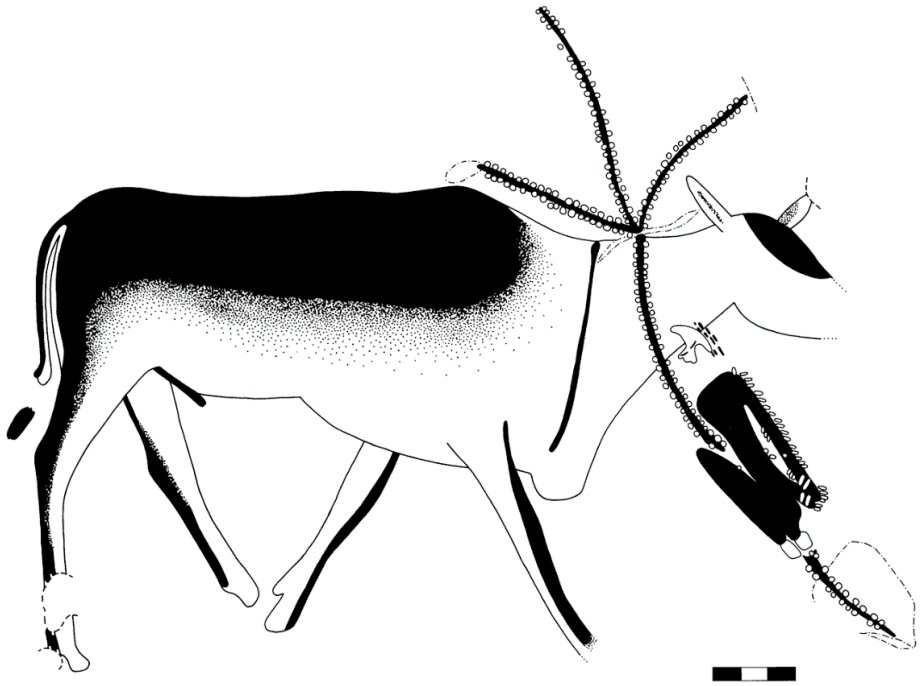

Figure 5.2 A therianthrope and an eland at Bosworth.

Along the arms of each therianthrope are white dots as well as white fingers. The finger ‘dots’ are slightly more elongated than the dots fringing the arms. The white dots may be depicting the arm hairs of the shamans standing on end or perhaps *n/om* which is coursing through their bodies as they throw their arms behind their back to receive the incoming *n/om* (Lewis-Williams 1981a, 1987, 1988; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2012). The therianthrope within the Linton shelter has hoofs for feet, while the Bosworth therianthrope has unidentifiable white block-like appendages instead of feet. Perhaps these are stylised hoofs. Even his posture on the thread of light is similar. Both crouch down with the thread of light passing through the front of their knees and re-emerging at their feet. Perhaps this area of the Drakensberg employed very similar styles when it came to depicting certain therianthropic figures, or both shelters (Linton and Bosworth) were painted by the same group of San. It is also possible that the tradition of painting therianthropes in such similar means was passed down through the generations or perhaps one group of San saw the depiction and based their own depiction in another shelter upon it. While the specific reasoning for their similarities may never be known, it is certain that the similarities imply a

certain degree of commonality among the San groups that lived in the area of the Linton and Bosworth shelters. Even if they were not the same San group, they seem to have interacted with one another or occupied shared spaces often enough that their art was influenced by each other and resulted in the eventual similar depictions.

The next section of this chapter deals with flying buck, also known as trance buck, alites, or winged antelopes. These creatures have been a long-debated feature in San rock art research (Pager 1975; Mazel 1982; Blundell 2004). Flying buck and therianthropes are not separate entities. Instead, flying buck are a specific type of therianthrope with certain features and associations. Common characteristics of flying buck include both human and animal features, usually those of an antelope with legs tucked underneath them, arms stretched behind their backs, bending forward, and lastly, wing-like limbs or appendages stretched out behind them (Lee & Woodhouse 1968; Mazel 1982: 75; Blundell 2004: 89). The long-debate about these figures was centred around whether they depicted flying buck or spirits-of-the-dead. Since spirits-of-the-dead were often associated with wind and thus flight, it was thought the wing-like appendages may have represented this association. However, in the 1970s and 1980s, ethnographic evidence suggested that these images were more likely representations of shamans in out-of-body travel rather than spirits-of-the-dead. However, distinguishing between the two is difficult, for they share many characteristics, including the ability to transform into animals (Blundell 2004: 89).

Within the shelter, Figure 5.1 has been identified as a therianthrope with many characteristics of a flying buck, including antelope features (hoofs), arms stretched out behind its back, legs tucked beneath its body, bending forward, and most strikingly, two odd wing-like appendages upon its shoulders and back of its neck. A similar image of a flying buck can be found in another shelter called Snake Shelter (Fig. 5.3). Here a person in a similar posture with a stick-like wing protruding from the back of his neck is seen crouching on a thread of light which leads to two subsequent figures, each progressively less human and more antelope-like with more evident wing-like appendages (Lee & Woodhouse 1968).

It is possible that the figure in Figure 5.1 is undergoing a similar metamorphosis, the eland indicating the buck-like figure the person is trying to take on. It should also be noted that much of the shelter has been heavily damaged, including the areas where the thread of light once led, and thus it is impossible to tell if subsequent images along the thread of light have similar stages of transformation to a flying buck. However, the remaining imagery does give enough indication to argue that Figure 5.1 may depict the first stage of such a transformation.

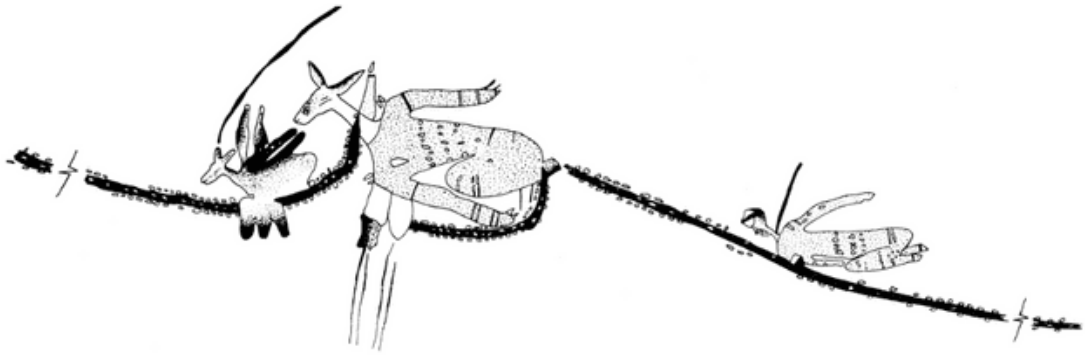

Figure 5.3 An image of a flying buck from Snake Shelter, Giants Castle, taken from Lee & Woodhouse (1968).

The possible flying buck in Figure 5.1 has many striking similarities to another rock panel, namely the Klipfontein panel. Figure 5.4 is a drawing of the Klipfontein panel. The exact shelter from which it came is unknown. On the Klipfontein panel, one can identify six flying buck, each unique in their own way and depicted in different degrees of transformation. The flying buck in the lower right-hand corner is depicted with its arms outstretched, an antelope head, hair on end along its arms, a waistband, flywhisks and three bags dangling from its neck. Like the therianthrope in Figure 5.1 (and Fig. 4.2), both are crouched on their knees, their arms are spread out behind them, and both have hair upon their arms. Most strikingly, both figures have three bags dangling from their necks and are on top of or depicted closely above a thread of light.

The two other Klipfontein figures above the same thread of light to the left lack bags or flywhisks but otherwise share many of the same characteristics. The similarity between these obvious and easily identified Klipfontein flying buck and

the therianthropic figure in Figure 5.1 supports the idea that Figure 5.1 may depict a flying buck. The pair of flying buck in the upper right-hand corner of Figure 5.4 and the lone flying buck in the left-hand corner have odd wing-like or triangular protrusions coming out of the backs of their necks, similar to the wing-like triangles protruding from the neck of the therianthrope in Figure 5.1. As mentioned before, these may be wings, as in the case of the Klipfontein figures, or they may be something else. Note that the left-hand Klipfontein figure already has wing-like protrusions spread out behind him, so the triangular spike-like structures coming out of its neck may not be wings but rather may be something coming out of or, alternatively, something entering the *n/ao* spot which is located at the base of the neck (Lewis-Williams 1981b: 93). Ju/'hoan informants have described this as an area where *n/om* enters the body (Lewis-Williams 1981b: 93). Another ethnographic account that may dispute these protrusions or streamer-like things being wings is that when a medicine man or shaman wishes to attain potency, he will position his arms in a backward position. This position allows for an influx of potency. However, this position is not maintained and ends abruptly when the shaman has achieved a climactic moment filled with potency, after which he may collapse onto his knees (Lewis-Williams 1981b; Lewis-Williams *et al.* 2000: 134). Figure 5.1 may thus not indicate flight but rather a shaman drawn in a stylised dancing position to indicate the climactic moment in which potency has entered his body.

The Linton panel does not seem to have any depictions of flying buck or people with these distinct features, thus making Figure 5.1 unique to the shelter. However, the thread of light upon which the flying buck in Figure 5.1 crouches may once have linked up with images in the Linton panel before it was removed and much of the other images within the shelter destroyed.

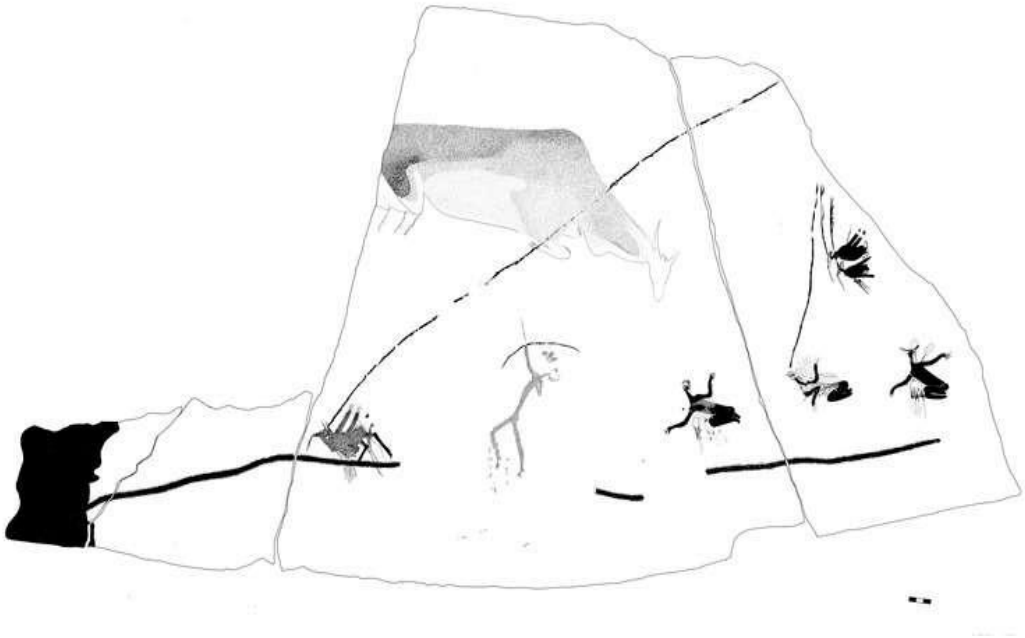

Figure 5.4 Tracing of the Klipfontein panel.

5.3. Threads of Light

At first glance, the panel may seem disconnected and chaotic. However, further study reveals a red line fringed with white dots running through the entire panel, entering and leaving cracks and figures, thus creating a sense of ‘‘unity’’ within the supposed chaos. The red line is not a ‘‘real’’ physical thing; rather, it is likened to a path or rope that trancers see and follow in a trance. It may pass through the bodies of surrounding figures, seemingly entering or leaving the rock face, or floating above or below figures (Lewis-Williams 1981a; Lewis-Williams *et al.* 2000; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2009). It is a physical representation of potency. While in trance, the San believe they permeate and pass through the rock face into the spirit world and return to the physical while in trance (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990).

The threads of light in the Linton panel permeate the rock face and figures. The threads of light may also have served as a link between shamans in other rock shelters, thus forming an intricate web of spiritual connections (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2009; Lewis-Williams 2013). Similar lines, such as the one found on the Linton panel and in the Linton shelter, are

depicted in many other sites, particularly in the Eastern Cape Drakensberg. The line does not have one uniform depiction. Instead, variations of the line can be found in San rock art. These variations include a red line fringed on one or both sides with white dots, parallel red lines, dots above, below or between red lines and a single line fringed by smaller white dashes (Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2009: 50).

Dots are a frequent characteristic found in threads of light, often fringing a thin red line. Both the shelter and the Linton panel have a thread of light fringed by dots. These dots may represent the neuropsychological sparks shamans see when they enter trance (Dowson 1989). The shelter and the panel's thread of light are predominantly fringed with white dots. Some areas within the Linton panel depict a thread of light without these dots. This could have been done on purpose, representing that dots and sparks in trance are not always present or may appear and disappear randomly. Alternatively, this may simply be a case in which the white paint has faded, leaving behind only the thin red line it once fringed. These dots that fringe the thin red lines form an ongoing chain of sparks, similar to what is described by people in altered states of consciousness (Dowson 1989). In some instances, both in the shelter and in the Linton panel, the dots are seen running in parallel chains to each other without a thin red line between them. Perhaps the thin red line was something seen or followed in trance that would occasionally disappear and reappear while the dots remained, perhaps to guide the way or signify that while the 'path' was still there, it was now in the rock face and thus in the spirit world. It may also have simply been how threads of light appeared in the artist's mind.

The role of the line is plentiful. Shamans may crawl along or climb it while in the spirit world to get to their Great god //Gauwa's home (Biesele 1980). An old Ju/'hoan man known as Old K"xau relayed his travelling experiences to the spirit world. To reach the Great god's home, he first had to enter a waterhole that opened into the spirit world and then climb ''the thread of the sky'' (Biesele 1980). This thread of the sky is likely akin to a thread of light. Another ethnographic account of the thread of light was given by a Ju/'hoan teacher and

translator, Kxao /O/oo, and a shaman, ≠Oma Djo, who relayed experiences of climbing threads up to god's home to rescue the souls of the sick and heal them. While climbing the threads, ≠Oma Djo relayed how he and another shaman named ≠Oma !' ' home!gausi, would support each other along the way, as well as tell other shamans still climbing if they had been successful in their attempts at saving the souls of the sick and that they could all climb back down now (Lewis-Williams *et al.* 2000). In this case we get the sense that threads of light are not just ropes or paths to the Great god's home but are also used by shamans for specific purposes, such as healing. While climbing these threads, the shamans may be able to see their fellow shamans climbing up to the Great god's home alongside them.

Other ethnographic accounts imply that the thread of light may be a falling star, as reported by an informant to Bleek and Lloyd named Diä!kwain. The falling stars appear as threads of light in the sky and are associated with a shaman's death or the entering into waterholes. The Ju/'hoansi view falling stars as a means for shamans' souls to return to the physical world (Lewis-Williams *et al.* 2000). This is an interesting description as falling stars often have a dust 'tail' behind them. This tail may resemble the threads of light seen by shamans while in trance, hence the association between falling stars and threads of light. This description also highlights the multitude of descriptions and interpretations of what precisely a thread of light is or looks like among individuals and San communities.

Unlike the Linton panel, the shelter only has one instance in which a light thread can be positively identified. In Figure 5.1., the therianthrope is seen kneeling on what can be described as a thread of light. The line is red and fringed on both sides with white dots that gradually become more yellow as the thread of light progresses further from the therianthrope kneeling upon it. Similarly, the thread of light eventually disappears as the artist stops the red line abruptly just after passing the therianthrope's face and partly due to a flake that has fallen off the rock face into which the last white fringed dots disappear. The disappearing of the red line 'into' the rock may be analogous to shamans' reports of feeling as if they enter underground while in trance.

Furthermore, the San believe that the rock face is a permeable surface by which one can enter the spirit world which lay behind it (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990; Low 2004: 54; Lewis-Williams 2013a). An example of this phenomenon can be seen in the Klipfontein panel, where a thread of light can be seen weaving in and out of the rock, disappearing into small notches on the rock face (Lewis-Williams *et al.* 2000: 126). Thus, the therianthrope may crawl along the line into or back from the spirit world.

The shelter therianthrope appears to have an eland following him, and the thread of light runs between them. The thread of light suggests a connection between the eland and therianthrope, for it starts just below the eland's head before leading over to the therianthrope and beyond into the rock face. Functioning akin to a tether, the therianthrope employs the remaining thread of light to guide the eland or absorb its potency, thus facilitating its transfer to himself. The eland may thus act as a source of power or potency that the therianthrope manipulates to complete its transformation (Lewis-Williams 1981b: 93). Threads of light have been hypothesised as a visual means of relating images to one another, including some which are meters apart (Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2009: 53). In this, both the image left in the shelter and the images on the Linton panel are similar. Both depict threads of light that connect people and animals and can be seen as a rope or path in some instances upon which individuals interact.

Within the Linton panel, threads of light are abundant, running the entire panel length. Figures are seen lying on or above the threads of light, touching it with one of their limbs, or having it pass through various body parts. However, not a single human figure in the Linton panel can be seen crouching right on top of the line in the same manner as Figure 5.1 in the shelter does. Nevertheless, there are instances where eland are seen walking or standing on the thread of light, such as at the far left-hand end of the thread of light on the panel. Another stands on a thread of light that emerges from the leg of a large supine figure on the left of the panel. The small antelope is bleeding from its nose. The thread of light shares many similar characteristics to the one in the shelter, namely having a thin red line in the centre fringed with white dots. There is also an instance in the panel, just as

the thread of light passes through or by the hind legs of an eland, in which the centre red line disappears, and only the white fringing dots remain. This is similar to the shelter's thin red line, which after passing the therianthrope, eventually loses its thin red line centre and is left with just the white fringing dots. The dots that fringe the threads of light on the panel are all uniformly white, while the dots that fringe the thread of light in the shelter becomes increasingly more yellow as it moves away from the therianthrope (right). The colour change seems intentional and does not appear to result from leaching or the paint reacting to the environment over time. Sadly, the ethnography sheds no light on why the dots may have been depicted in yellow or white.

The thread of light in the panel is rarely painted in a straight line. Instead, it bends or turns in acute, right and obtuse angles. Many of these turns and bends occur on the right-hand side of the panel, where the thread of light also splits into two. The threads of light seem to reconnect after passing through the large right-hand supine figure. The particular thread of light within the shelter does not possess any of these turns or bends at extreme angles. These turns may be a depiction of the twists and turns shamans see in the threads of light as they enter the spirit world, or perhaps, if one were to examine the panel more carefully, the threads of light are bouncing off or towards natural nooks and cracks within the rock face. It is apparent that in some instances within the panel, the thread of light changes direction after being touched or otherwise interacting with a figure. Such is the case with the lower right-hand thread of light. A white human figure with a stick reaches upwards to touch the thread of light, whereupon it changes direction. It then moves on to the head of another white human figure before twisting upwards and passing over a human figure into the arm of a smaller white figure, where it turns away in another direction again. This could well be a coincidence, but when considering the amount of detail and symbolic importance that San rock art held in the lives of the San people, it is unlikely these twists and turns are entirely arbitrary.

Interestingly, one of the larger human figures in the panel is standing next to a thin red line that appears to form a star-like shape. It should be noted that both the Ju/'hoansi and the /Xam informant Diä!kwain associate falling or shooting stars

and threads of light with either the death of a shaman or the return of a shaman's soul back to the physical world (Lewis-Williams *et al.* 2000: 129). This death could be physical, or the metaphorical death shamans experience while in trance. If so, perhaps this star-like thread of light is alluding to the human figure's role as a shaman who has just entered or returned from a trance experience. It should also be noted that the star-like shape is connected to the human figure's white third arm by a line fringed with dots.

The thin red line is also associated with neuropsychology (which will be discussed in further detail in the next section). During altered states of mind, people report seeing threads of light, usually described as paths and ropes one can follow only once one has entered trance. While in an altered state of mind, these lines may meander, zigzag or run parallel to each other (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1988). Similarly, threads of light are often drawn as thin lines that meander in and around the rock face and sometimes zigzag. One example of such a zigzagging line can be found in the Linton panel, where a thread of light splits into two sections running almost parallel before crossing each other again. The zigzagging line loses its white fringed dots and passes through the front legs of an antelope, while the thread of light it runs parallel to retains its fringed white dots and passes through a human figure's head. The shelter also has a zigzag pattern in one of its figures. This zigzag line seems to form part of an animal or human body and is not a thread of light. However, it is possible that while in an altered state of mind, one does not only see zigzag lines floating by one's inner eye but also merging and becoming part of other existing shapes or figures.

5.4. Neuropsychology and Trance

In this section, the role of neuropsychology in altered states of consciousness is to be examined. Neuropsychology may, in turn, help elaborate on some of the San rock art depictions (Lewis-Williams 1998). Thus, specific entoptic figures commonly found in rock art may be explained by altered states of consciousness. Entopic figures often experienced while hallucinating include thin meandering lines, zigzags, parallel lines, dots, sparks and basic grids. While such entoptic figures are more commonly depicted in San engravings, they are not wholly absent from San rock paintings (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1988). Since the human nervous system is universal, specific hallucinations and sensations may be similar, with the main difference in how individuals and cultures interpret these hallucinations and sensations.

For example, subjects will commonly move through a tunnel-like vortex with a bright light seen at its centre when entering a deep trance state. Westerners who experience this will often describe the experience as moving through a funnel or alleyway. On the other hand, an Inuit of the Hudson Bay described a road which went down into the earth. The Inuit believe that the road to the spirit world leads through the earth, or if they live upon ice, it leads through the sea (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990: 9). Australian shamans liken the experience to diving "into the ground" (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990: 10). The San sometimes liken the feeling to being underwater or going into a "water pit" (Lewis-Williams 1988: 8; Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990: 11; Lewis-Williams *et al*. 2000) where trancers find it difficult to breathe, experience weightlessness, and have rushing sounds in their ears. In mythology, the trickster /Kaggen, the first shaman, would dive into waterholes during trance (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990: 11). In rock art, the sensation of being underwater may have been depicted with the help of fish or fish-like creatures (Lewis-Williams 1998; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2004a, 2009).

In Figure 4.10, a monochrome antelope, possibly a hartebeest due to the bend in its horns, is depicted with an extra leg or tail. In neuropsychological studies, it has been observed that figures, people and animals are often distorted. They may

appear elongated, malformed, or have extra limbs, as in the case of the antelope (Lewis-Williams 1988: 10). Perhaps this hartebeest was observed by a shaman in a trance or was itself a transformed shaman, experiencing the sensation of possessing an extra limb. Within the Linton panel are a few examples of figures with extra limbs. This includes the large central human figure with two black arms and an extra white arm opposite a minuscule antelope with four black legs and two white legs, one in front and one in the back.

A small antelope with a third hind leg can also be seen to the left of the two former figures. The sensation of extra limbs might theoretically also lend way to the sensation of no limbs, which may explain the humanoid figure in the Linton panel. This figure is in the far right of the panel, just above the thread of light. This figure bleeds from the nose and has one arm-like protrusion but lacks a second arm and legs. Another interpretation suggests that this is a shaman crouched within his kaross (Anon. 2021).

The therianthrope, or flying buck, in Figure 5.1, has dots or beads in its hair. These dots may be a result of hallucinations experienced by shamans during trance. Neuropsychology reveals that dots or sparks are a frequently experienced phenomenon by those in an altered state of mind (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1988). Usually, dots form either a spiral, outline existing figures, appear in clouds, or appear as an ongoing chain. Thus, the dots in the hair may be visual representations of these dots and sparks shamans experienced during trance (Dowson 1989; Lewis-Williams *et al*. 2000). However, it is odd that they are limited to the hair, especially the hair's tips, instead of being arranged in a cloud or simply outlining the figure. Thus, it is more likely that the dots are beads, not neuropsychological sparks of light experienced during hallucinations.

5.5. The Eland and the San

The eland is the most potent animal according to the San (Lewis-Williams & Biesele 1978; Dowson & Lewis-Williams 1993); its potency is so strong that a hunter who has shot an eland refrains from going near the body for fear of being

overwhelmed with potency (Lewis-Williams & Biesele 1978). According to a first-generation descendant of the Transkei San, Mapote, this high level of potency may have influenced the San's use of the eland's blood and fat in the creation of some pigments for rock art (Jolly 1986: 6). Paintings made with this potency-laden pigment would often be touched by people wishing to transfer the potency from the paintings into themselves (Jolly 1986: 6). A San descendant, M, even described how dancers would turn to face paintings of eland to increase their potency (Lewis-Williams 1986). Without chemically analysing paint from the shelter and the panel, one cannot know if eland blood or fat was used in the pigments. However, it is possible that at least some of the figures, objects or threads of light were painted using such a paint. This would give the painting a high level of potency that the visiting San shamans could use whenever they touched or looked at the paintings. Such influxes of potency may have helped the shamans not only to enter trance but transform into various creatures, heal the sick and ward-off spirits-of-the-dead. Since potency is needed for all these actions, having a source from which shamans could siphon extra potency would be rather useful. Thus, to enrich the potency of the pigments they may have been made with these potency-laden substances such as fat and blood.

On the other hand, even if the pigments do not contain eland blood or fat, the panel and the shelter depict eland. Simply looking at a depiction of an eland can bestow potency upon the onlooking dancer. Thus, the pigments need not have been made with eland blood or fat. A number of these depicted eland touch or stand on threads of light. In the Linton panel, two eland have a thread of light pass through their legs and feet. This includes one depiction of a large supine figure from whose arm a thread of light emerges and enters the leg of an eland. These two figures are joined again by a thread of light leading from the large supine figure's hoof (foot) to the eland's hind legs and beyond. Perhaps this large supine figure is syphoning the potency of the eland into himself. The other eland in the panel has a thread of light emerging from his front hoof. This eland interacts with a human figure holding up a plant of some sort, possibly hoping to influence the behaviour of the eland. Perhaps by coaxing the potency-laden eland towards the

human figure, the human figure can manipulate and take the eland's potency. Within the shelter, only one thread of light exists. It links a therianthrope and eland figure. The eland seems to follow the therianthrope as it crawls along the thread of light. Perhaps it is not following but instead giving its potency to the therianthrope utilizing the thread of light.

Rhebok may have been associated with familial ties (Vinnicombe 1976: 147). The shelter depicts a small herd of rhebok and a few scattered remains of eland. Whether these were intended to represent a herd or individual antelope cannot be ascertained as the area has been too damaged. On the assumption that the eland once formed a herd, it may be a depiction of summer, perhaps indicating an important time of the year for the San, since that is when eland congregate, and large herds of eland also indicate the presence of /Kaggen. Perhaps by painting a large herd of eland, the artists hoped to invoke the presence of /Kaggen. On the other hand, if these eland never formed a herd, they may have had other significance, such as lending potency to the onlooker, interacting with the human figures of the shelter or indicating a trance death through raised hair, nasal bleeding and other indications of trance. The rhebok of the shelter may also once have formed a herd, possibly enhancing the message of familial ties by depicting a 'family' of rhebok, but this is just speculative, and the role of the rhebok may have been entirely different such as indicating trance or transformation once again through various trance characteristics as stated above.

Finally, the site and the panel show depictions of eland with small dewlaps, a feature reminiscent of female eland. At least three eland on the panel have ambiguous features, neither ruling out masculinity nor femininity. Overall, the shelter and panel seem to have been dominated by depictions of female eland. This is interesting for the San would often prefer male eland due to their excess fat and *n/om*, stored in part in their large dewlaps, tail, the lower part of the hind legs and shoulder humps (Lewis-Williams & Biesele 1978: 121, Lewis-Williams 2016: 58). Similarly, most of the rhebok depicted in both the shelter and on the panel are female, as indicated by their lack of horns. The significance of depicting

mostly female rhebok is unknown, but perhaps it links back to the idea of familial ties as mothers are often the primary caregivers in the natural world, thus forming strong familial ties. Perhaps this shelter was in some way linked to the family.

5.6. The Panel and Shelter as One

The shelter images and the Linton panel images show many motifs, some common at both the site and on the panel, while others are unique to one or the other. This section seeks to compare the two not as separate entities as they are now, but as part of one whole, as they were in the past before the removal. Commonalities show unity among the paintings, something that linked them to one another when they were in the shelter even if they were meters apart. The distinctions observed in these paintings emphasise varying intentions, potentially indicating the involvement of different artists or even reflecting the influence of distinct time periods during which they were created. By examining the commonalities and differences this dissertation seeks to better understand the paintings as a whole, as opposed to separately as panels and shelter images.

Both the site and panel have depictions of figures identified as therianthropes due to their hooves, but otherwise very human-looking. The Linton panel therianthrope is depicted lying down while a thread of light passes through or beneath him. The second large lying down figure seen in the upper right-hand corner of the panel may also be a therianthrope with hooves. This figure's right leg is bent at the knee, and a portion of his foot painted like a hoof can be seen. This is similar to the shelter therianthrope, who is also identified by his hooves and is seen kneeling or crawling along a thread of light. Two of the therianthropes also wear similar 'masks' covering the eyes. Therianthropes seem to have been a common feature that tied the paintings in the shelter together.

The panel and shelter paintings share a common feature in the form of shoulder bags, portrayed as oval or oblong protrusions located near or on the shoulder. Bags have mythological significance to the San, being a place where /Kaggen would hide to transform himself, but also be used to hold a hunter's bow and

quivers (Dowson 1994). When viewed together with the therianthropes a theme of transformation (likely while in trance) becomes evident within the shelter images. However, one of the Linton panel figure's bags has an arrow or stick-like article protruding from the bag's end, lending credence to the idea that the bags may simply represent a means by which the figures carry their hunting gear.

Unique to the Linton panel are the depictions of eels and fish. Trance was often likened to the feeling of being underwater or floating, and the description of these aquatic creatures may have been a visual means of representing this feeling (Lewis-Williams 1988: 8). This motif likely indicated to visitors of the shelter that the images on the walls pertained to trance, and specifically to the feeling of floating or swimming.

The Linton panel also has images of antelope walking out of the panel or looking into the rock face. One antelope is depicted looking over its back while lying down, similar to a sleeping position. Nearby another antelope is also lying down. Meanwhile, a group of antelope is seen sprinting or jumping. An antelope standing by one therianthrope's leg bleeds profusely from the nose. One antelope has its stomach hair standing on end and sticks out its tongue as a human figure reaches out to touch it. A single thread connects the two beings. None of these diverse depictions of antelope can be found in the shelter images. In the shelter the eland and antelope alike are simply painted standing from a side view. The antelope of the Linton panel are not the only figures displayed in various positions; the human figures are painted equally diversely. In the Linton panel, a single human figure kneels while two others point at a feline figure. Two men in the panel run with their legs splayed at ~180° angles. One figure climbs on one of the large therianthrope figures. One figure lacks arms and legs and simply lies with his nose bleeding. Another figure, the one adopted into the South African Coat of Arms, carries a bow that crosses an unidentified round form, something the shelter figures lack (Barnard 2003, 2004).

The differences in posture may simply be the result of different artists working on the shelter images, or convey a deeper meaning, such as that one part of the shelter had more 'active' trance experiences and potency, while another part of the shelter was more 'latent'. Of course many images within the shelter have been destroyed, and perhaps more varied antelope and human figures were common in the entirety of the shelter before many of the images were destroyed.

Further differences include the paraphernalia; other than the shield wielded by a human figure, the Linton panel depicts at most two lone, rather large bags containing arrows. Neither of these bags is carried or definitively linked to any one human figure. Another object pierced by or near a stick or spear is painted between the feline and a pointing figure. Within the shelter, unique paraphernalia or physical attributes include the human figures wearing karosses and the therianthrope and human figures with long beaded black hair. Another figure unique to the shelter is a large human figure with a pointed head. It is about 25 cm long and situated almost 2 m above the ground. It is very faded and therefore minimal interpretation to its meaning can be made.

In terms of animals, the Linton panel depicts an antelope-headed snake and a feline figure. While the shelter has a feline-like white figure, it is uncertain if this truly is a feline and will thus not constitute a similarity. A mountain reedbuck, identified by the curved horns and coat pattern, is only present within the Linton panel. The shelter images contain a single antelope with curved horns, but it is painted in monochrome, and is likely a hartebeest. Different antelope had different levels of potency and likely different roles in trance and San mythology (Lewis-Williams 1988; Challis 2005). By depicting the antelope in various parts of the shelter these roles may have relayed certain messages and meaning about the surrounding images to the viewer.

The shelter does have a baboon-like creature, absent from the images in the Linton panel. The baboon-like creature is noteworthy; even today, baboons can sometimes be found wandering the Linton farm. In San mythology, baboons are a

recurring figure. One such mythological retelling comes from Diä!kwain. He recalls that the baboon keeps a *so-/oa* (type of medicine plant) stick in its mouth. The baboon is protected from danger, forewarned of enemies, safeguarded from illness and taught to fear. Using the baboon's hair, or trance dancing, the protective powers the baboon personifies can be utilised and even enhanced (Bleek 1931: 167–70; Challis 2012: 276). Perhaps, the baboon image served to protect the images and the people in the shelter or was used to enhance trance experiences. It is situated near the floor in a hard to find nook, thus perhaps it was a hidden source of protection meant only for certain individuals who visited the shelter.

Other images exclusively found in the shelter includes a group of people carrying digging sticks, finger-painted images and a large human figure with a pointed head, kaross, and long beaded black hair. The group of people carrying the digging sticks are the only definitive depictions of women in either shelter or the panel. Similarly, while rare, finger-painted imagery is solely found in the shelter and utterly absent from the Linton panel, which only depicts fine-line art. This likely depicts a change in artist or artistic tradition that occurred in the shelter over time. The same can be said about the kaross and beaded black hair, which are features unique to the shelter, these too may have been individual artistic choices or relay a more important message to the San.

To conclude, this chapter has tried to illuminate the meaning and significance of the individual images and how their presence or absence may affect the images around them and one's understanding of the paintings and their purpose as a whole. This chapter tried to understand the relationship between the paintings before various parts were destroyed or removed. It does this by comparing the thematic differences and similarities and their significance to the San, their world view and culture, as well as modern understanding of rock art and neuropsychology.

CHAPTER SIX – THE SISTER PANEL

The Linton panel has a series of academic and non-academic works dedicated to its history and interpretation, however, all these entries fail to mention its sister panel. This second panel was removed in tandem with the famous Linton panel. This section will commence with an interpretation of the images on the second Linton panel, which I will henceforth refer to as the Sister panel.

The Sister panel was transported to the museum with the famous Linton panel, yet its history is still shrouded in mystery. Much of the early history of the Sister panel was obtained from letters between Mandy and Péringuey. Some known facts should be re-examined to fill in the gaps in the data. Firstly, the shelter has two removal scars, yet from which scar each panel was removed is never mentioned in previous studies or the known history of the panels. Assuming the panels and the removal scars are of similar size and shape, one should be able to figure out which panel belonged to which scar. This would help reconstruct the shelter images and may highlight relationships between the paintings that were unnoticed when looked at separately. However, the scars in the shelter wall are significantly larger than the removed panels, making it harder, but not impossible to determine which scar pertains to which panel.

Secondly, a series of letters between Mandy and Péringuey makes no mention of drilling. This is an odd omission since drilling is evident in the removal scars and Mandy seemed to outline meticulously every step he took in removing the panels. Perhaps he used a different word to indicate that the panels were drilled, or it was an oversight on his part. Regardless, the drill marks have left permanent scars on the shelter walls and would have done so on the backs of the panels, too, however these are no longer evident as Péringuey sawed them off upon their arrival at the museum. We have no way of knowing if the sawing of the back of the panels did not cause further damage, possibly scraping off some paint or causing flaking and cracks to appear on the panels.

This brings us to the final problem: what happened to the Sister panel after arriving at the museum, and why is it never mentioned in any writings detailing

the Linton panel despite coming from the same shelter at the same time? The Sister panel was mentioned only in a single sentence discussing eland facing away from the viewer in Dobrez and Dobrez (2013: 78, 79) and once more in de Waal (2012). The most likely answer to the Sister panel's apparent absence is that Péringuey deemed the Sister panel not interesting enough to be displayed and thus put it into storage. This assumption is corroborated by the fact that in the last few letters from Péringuey, he asks Mandy to continue taking note of paintings of eland, but that he would prefer paintings with different and more varied motifs. The Sister panel is dominated by eland, while the famous Linton panel has various motifs. It is likely Péringuey deemed the eland-dominated Sister panel less interesting and thus sent it to storage. This viewpoint is interesting as it shows how the meaning and value of the panel changed over time. To the San, who painted and visited the site, the eland paintings were rich in potency and meaning (Jolly 1986: 41), but to Péringuey, they were a repetitive and 'boring' motif. The Sister panel's deemed value changed depending on who was looking at it. The Linton panel likely went through a similar change in value and meaning. Péringuey saw the Linton panel as an interesting motif-rich painting with curious and outlandish images. Meanwhile, the San saw representations of trance and the spirit world, as 'normal' images pertaining to their lives and beliefs.

Similarly, every image in the shelter was connected and deemed important by the San. Mandy and Péringuey only deemed certain images interesting or worthy of removal. By doing so, they disjointed the images, creating artificial groups of images. By removing the panels, possible relationships and important links that the San artist sought to paint may have been destroyed, thus severing these links for good. Perhaps by examining the Sister panel and adding the known data about the Linton panel and shelter, a more complete history and narrative could be created for the Linton paintings.

The Sister panel may seem lost, but it turns out it is only absent in the literature, for physically, it is very much accounted for. It has been hanging in a display case next to the Linton panel at the Iziko SA Museum since 2003. However, this begs the question, if the Sister panel has been sitting in plain sight all this time, why

has it never been given any attention, let alone a passing mention of its existence? It seems that the museum knew of its existence. Thus, researchers of the Linton panel who were researching the Linton panel's history may have been told of the Sister panel's existence by the museum staff. If so, they may have chosen to omit this information as their research was focused on the Linton panel and not the Sister panel. Alternatively, depending on when this research was taking place, the Sister panel was still in storage somewhere and getting to it to have a look would have been a cumbersome process not deemed worthwhile by staff or researchers. This dissertation will remedy this oversight and give an overdue examination and interpretation of the Sister panel. Perhaps in so doing, some new meaning can be gleaned about the Linton images as a whole.



Figure 6.1 Photograph of the Sister panel in display. Courtesy of the Iziko SA Museum.

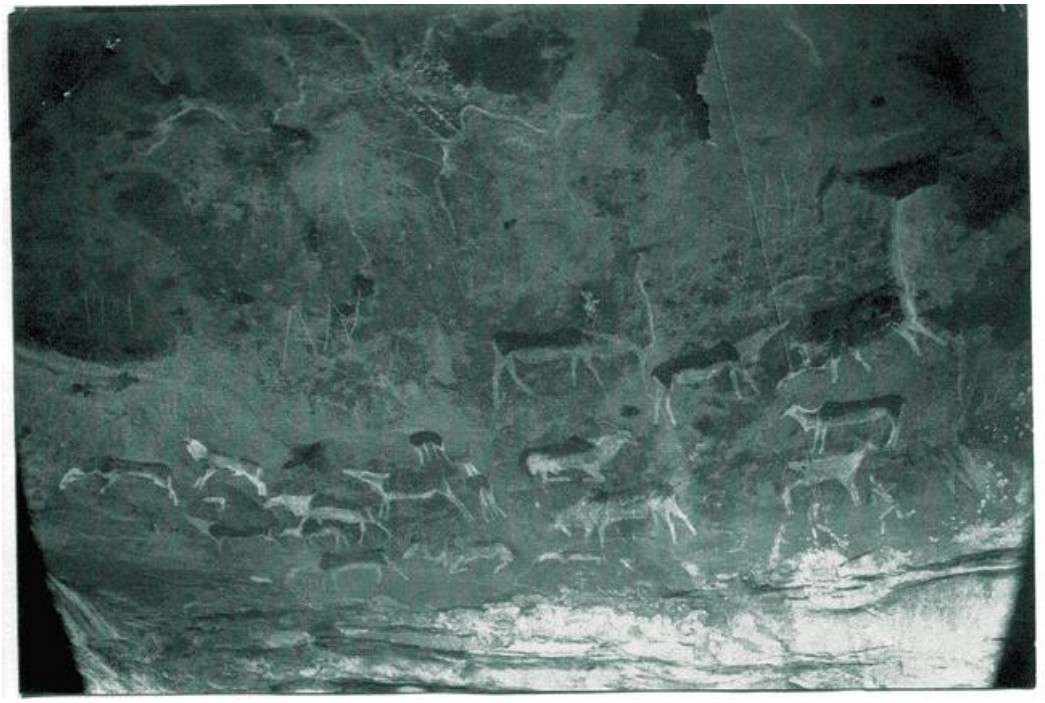

Figure 6.2 Photograph of the Sister panel *in situ*, taken by Mandy and sent to Péringuey in 1916.

The Sister panel is dominated by eland standing in various positions and angles (Fig. 6.1). Most are painted in a side view and are seen walking to the photograph's left or right. However, some are painted lying down or walking into or facing the rock face. At least five human figures are discernible at the bottom right of the scene. Above the scene, a few initials have been scratched into the rock face. This graffiti was already evident in the photo sent by Mandy (Fig. 6.2), but is no longer part of the panel in its current form (Fig. 6.1). In terms of motif, the Sister panel is very different from the Linton panel. Looking at them separately one may be inclined to believe they came from different places. However, one should keep in mind that these two panels came from the same shelter only a few meters apart and were likely painted by various people over swaths of time, leading to slightly different motifs and even art styles. They were also separated by a number of meters, thus them being somewhat different is not completely out of the ordinary.

In interpreting the Sister panel images, one's eyes are drawn to the mass of eland. Eland, as previously discussed, played a significant role in San mythology,

symbolism and ritual. Here, as in the previously discussed eland paintings in the shelter, most of the eland have small dewlaps and shoulder humps, perhaps indicating that most of the depicted herd was made up of female eland. Conceivably the painting was made in summer when herds of eland would roam the lands in droves (Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2009: 54). Eland herds would also migrate into the highlands during the spring and summer while winter herds were much smaller and usually scattered around the lowlands (Mazel 1983: 34). Perhaps these highland pastures with droves of eland that heralded the presence of /Kaggen were likely lands almost indistinguishable from the spirit world to the San (Challis 2019: 177). The land in which the Linton shelter is situated is optimally positioned to have supported large herds of eland and many other game animals in the past, which is supported by two factors. Firstly, today the area can support high stock densities (D. Naude pers. comm., 2022), thus it would not be inconceivable that similarly large herds of eland used to roam these highlands in the past. Secondly, the area in which the Linton shelter is situated is called "Eland's Heights" (D. Naude pers. comm., 2022), a name likely reminiscent of a past in which these herds of eland still graced these highland pastures. Perhaps the painting was made to inform visitors that this was a place in which eland roamed the lands in droves and their potency was infused within everything upon this land. But the painting may also have served as a warning, advising caution when dealing with potency, for the sheer abundance of potency in this place may be beyond control and could overwhelm an individual (Challis 2019: 180). The sheer number of eland probably emitted a great deal of potency that would be absorbed by the onlookers (Lewis-Williams & Biesele 1978; Lewis-Williams 1987; Dowson & Lewis-Williams 1993). Perhaps a herd was depicted instead of an individual eland because the artist and shamans needed a large amount of potency that could only be achieved by a large herd of eland.

As will be discussed below, the Sister panel was likely cut from the western section of the shelter, thus the majority of the eland would be depicted walking 'out' of the shelter. This may indicate the direction in which these large herds of eland were usually found.

When examining individual eland, the eland entering the rock face are especially interesting, as this action mirrors the reports of shamans following threads of light and feeling as if they were entering the spirit world through the ground, thus, making the rock face a 'portal' into another world (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990). One of the eland walking into the rock face is seen looking to its left towards a natural nook in the rock face. This nook was not the result of the removal, as evident in Mandy's photograph, taken just before removal. The San often painted figures entering or leaving nooks and cracks in the rock wall, as these are the entrances into the spirit world (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990). This specific eland seems to be looking into a 'window' leading to the spirit world or perhaps noticing the entrance. The eland has turned its neck to investigate the strange 'portal'. These eland may not have been representations of real living eland but spirit eland, seen during trance or shamans in the form of eland entering the spirit world together. It would make sense if the nook is an entrance, as the shamans who enter the spirit world during trance would be acutely aware of otherwise hidden portals into the other world. This eland may be a shaman that has not only noticed the entrance but will use it as a means to enter the spirit world alongside his companion eland. Further evidence of the eland being a metaphor or element of trance are the eland depicted lying down or dying. When an antelope is shot with a poisoned arrow, it will exhibit a number of behaviours, including stumbling, falling, frothing at the mouth, bleeding from the nose or having its hair stand on end. Shamans in trance often exhibit similar actions when 'dying' to enter trance (Lewis-Williams 1981a, 1987, 1988; Dowson 1988: 118). Perhaps, the lying (dying) down eland may be shamans who stumbled and fell to the ground as they transformed into eland.

The Sister panel now sports a large crack down the right-hand side of the scene. This crack is not evident in the photograph and is likely the result of the panel removal or perhaps occurred when Péringuey sawed off the back of the panel. The crack runs through the body of one eland and separates the hind legs from the body of another. At first glance, the hind legs seem normal until one notices that the eland has two red hind legs and a third white leg. Experiencing multiple limbs is common in trance (Lewis-Williams 1988), thus lending further credence that

these eland depict trance experiences. To the upper left of the panel, an eland is wandering. Upon its neck, it has four red lines. These lines do not extend beyond the neckline and are thus unlikely to depict blood or sweat. They likely depict folds of fat (Vinnicombe 1976: 167; Ouzman 1997: 244), and similar lines can be found on one eland on the Linton panel. This is interesting since the dewlaps of both the Linton and the Sister panel eland are rather small, and would indicate the lack of excess fat. Perhaps this was supposed to indicate very fatty female eland, hence the small dewlaps but evident fat rolls upon the neck. On the other hand, it may be blood or sweat where the lines beyond the neckline have faded since the stripes upon an eland calf are usually found on its back, not on its neck. If so, this is the only eland in the panel that shows sweating or bleeding characteristics likely due to entering a trance.

Two eland are depicted in white—one to the right of the panel and another much smaller eland to the left. The left-hand eland is minute compared to the others on the panel and is also incomplete. The back half of the eland is clearly visible, while the front half is not. It seems this was a conscious choice of the artist. White paint tends to fade more easily than other colours in rock art, but if this were a simple case of faded white paint, then the eland with white features around the white eland figure would also display signs of fading, which they do not. Thus, it seems the artist only painted half the eland. Perhaps he was trying to indicate that the eland was halfway into the spirit world, (cf. Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1990: Fig. 8) though there is no natural crack into which the eland disappears. This is not a required feature, the artists often painted figures as if moving into or out of natural features but figures can be portrayed entering the rock face at any point. The right-hand white eland is painted just above a group of human figures. It may be described as staring at a male human figure opposite itself. The sex of the figure is evident from its erect penis. The human figure is painted in various shades of red and white and seems to be wearing an antelope-eared cap. In nature when two eland meet and stare at each other it is often the result of a dominance challenge. Starting at a distance and slowly moving closer to each other before one's opponent backs down or a fight ensues (Underwood 1975: 89). It may be that the human figure and the eland are currently engaged in such a type of

dominance challenge. The eland may be a rival shaman, challenging the human figure while in the spirit world. This could explain why the eland is represented in pure white pigment, perhaps to further contrast and highlight the antagonism between it and the polychrome human figure.

Hollmann (2002: 564) recounts how in certain San languages the word for 'fight' may also describe a dangerously high concentration of potency. Perhaps the dominance challenge displayed here is representative of an extremely high level of potency being exuded by the painting or this particular area. On the other hand, shamans were said to be able to harness potency for the good of their community. As discussed above, the area in which the shelter was located was likely believed to be rife with potency. Perhaps this is a depiction cautioning visitors to the shelter that only shamans had the power to overcome the overwhelming waves of potency and harness it. Therefore, the eland and the shaman are not facing off for dominance in the usual sense, rather the shaman is concentrating on controlling and harnessing the potency that this eland is emitting. The shaman is also only facing a single eland, perhaps to indicate it is safer to harness the potency of one eland at a time, lest one be overwhelmed by trying to harness and control the potency of an entire herd of eland.

Another eland depicted in an unusual stance is the eland whose hind legs have been somewhat destroyed by the large crack in the panel. It is depicted in a threatening stance, with its horns lowered and ready to charge. Elands may lower their heads as they become increasingly uneasy (Underwood 1975: 25), or if the horns are lowered at a threatening angle, it may be indicative of a horn threat or the result of an eland getting ready to or in the midst of a charge. A dominant eland usually does this towards a subordinate (Underwood 1975: 89). This eland does not appear to be facing any obvious opponent; however, it has been painted next to a natural edge in the rock face. Possibly, its perceived opponent is on the other side of that edge, within the spirit world. This eland does display multiple limbs indicative of trance. Thus, perhaps it can see other figures also currently in trance behind the veil of the rock face. The eland all seem to be female; however, one eland, just above the white eland, has a slight bump on its belly line. This

could be indicative of a penis, if not an accident or perhaps a result of the uneven rock surface. If it is a penis, it would indicate that the eland is male, despite having a very small dewlap and shoulder humps indicative of female eland. With this in mind, the eland with small dewlaps and shoulder humps in the shelter, on the Linton panel and the Sister panel, may all be male. In contrast, the eland with completely absent dewlaps, such as two of the eland in the left-hand section of the Sister panel and the eland walking along the thread of light in the far left of the Linton panel, are female. This would make most of the eland in the shelter male, which were more prized by the San due to their greater amount of fat (Lewis-Williams & Biesele 1978; Lewis-Williams 2016: 58). Perhaps painting the male eland with small dewlaps and shoulder humps and the females without dewlaps was a style of painting particular to the San of the area.

On the other hand, perhaps the eland were supposed to come across as ambiguous, neither truly male nor truly female. A !Kung informant once pointed out to Lewis-Williams (1981b: 72) that most antelope females possess more fat than their male counterparts. This, however, was not true for the eland, where the male possessed more fat than the female. Dowson (1988: 122) elaborates on this and points to an engraving of an eland with ambiguous features, two dewlaps, one large and fatty and one small (belonging to a male and female eland respectively). This engraving also had two belly lines, indicative, respectively, of both a male and female eland. The engraving was thus sexually ambiguous, much like some of the eland in the Sister and Linton panels who may have been painted as sexually ambiguous males with small dewlaps or females with fat rolls upon their dewlaps. The ambiguous eland may be explained by neuropsychology, research into altered states has shown that often images are combined. Perhaps, shamans in trance would combine images of male and female eland (Dowson 1988: 122), and depict this combination in the rock art. A more ethnographically informed explanation points to the role of eland in specific ceremonies. For instance, during a girl's puberty ritual, she will be spoken to as if she were a hunter who has just killed an eland. While during a boy's first kill ritual he will be secluded and cared for in a solitary hut just as a woman would during menstruation. Both boys and girls are sexually ambiguous during this time (Dowson 1988: 123). Similarly, during

marriage rituals the bride will be anointed with eland fat, while the groom will go out to kill an eland. The eland thus becomes a unifying symbol (Dowson 1988: 123). The Linton and Sister panel's ambiguous eland may have been the result of neuropsychological image combination, indicating to the viewer that these are trance eland. These eland may have been symbols, used by the San artist to indicate that in the spirit world shamans became sexually ambiguous, or perhaps hinted at some ritual the shaman hoped to portray or influence.

The Sister panel scene contains five human figures in the lower right-hand corner. One has been discussed above (pg. 71). The remaining human figures can be seen walking or running. Three of the four remaining human figures are polychrome, predominantly white, with red bands around their hands, shoulders, waist, knees and feet and three of the human figures, including the one mentioned above, are wearing antelope-eared caps. Two of the human figures also wear a type of head covering. These two figures can be seen approaching each other. At least one of the figures is male, as evident from the slightly faded white penis. The remaining polychrome figure's feet are cut off where the panel ends. This human figure is the only one to carry a bow. He is running away from the remaining human figures or perhaps towards one of the eland on the right-hand side of the panel. The last human figure is pure white. His legs and feet are missing and not evident in the photo negative. Thus, it is impossible to tell if the figure once had polychrome feet or legs or perhaps wore similar red bands as some of the other human figures. His head is more crescent-shaped than the other human figures, and he does not seem to be wearing any form of head covering. His proximity to the white eland is noteworthy; perhaps he and the white eland share a connection or are the same individual. Conceivably his different-shaped head and lack of paraphernalia were intentionally done to distance him from the other human figures in the groups. Just like the white eland, perhaps this difference is supposed to highlight his antagonism towards the remaining human figures.

The Linton Sister panel is similar to another famous panel, the Zaamenkomst panel, which was also acquired by Mandy a few years prior to the removal of the Linton images. In the Zaamenkomst panel a herd of eland is surrounded by human

figures. The eland and humans alike are depicted running with their legs splayed. Some of the human figures carry with them bows and arrows, while a number of eland are depicted either foaming at the mouth or bleeding from the nose. At least four eland have the hair on their neck and one on their dewlap standing on end. These are characteristic of trance death. The eland with nasal haemorrhaging has fallen to its knees in death. A few eland in the Linton Sister panel can also be seen falling to their knees in death, though none seem to have signs of foaming mouths or nasal bleeding. Another contrast between the two panels is that the Zaamenkomst eland all move in the same direction, many seem to be jumping or running. In the Linton Sister panel, however, the eland seem to be leisurely walking or trotting, some follow the herd while others split off and wander in other directions. This is supported by the posture that a few of the eland have taken on, specifically lowering their head in a manner similar to when eland are settling down to ruminate or are investigating an external stimulus.

Furthermore, they all have at least three feet firmly placed on the 'ground' a posture indicative of a slow crawl mainly used while grazing (Underwood 1975: 21). After a successful first-kill, the boy hunter would have to keep his eyes downcast while the tail tuft, dewlap skin, ears and forelock of the eland were dipped in fat and then flicked and smeared upon the boy. This was done so that future eland may behave similarly and not look about them while being hunted (Lewis-Williams & Biesele 1978: 129). Perhaps, the painted eland with their eyes downcast have a similar effect as the first-kill ritual. Another contrast are the white eland which are only present in the Linton Sister panel.

When looking at the Sister panel negative that Mandy provided and an image of the same panel today, one notices that the Sister panel is curved. Looking at Figure 6.1, it would seem the eland are walking up; however, this is an optical illusion brought about by the curvature of the rock, while *in situ* (Fig. 6.2), the eland do not seem to be moving upwards. The Sister panel's curved surface corresponds with the curvature of the rock wall in the Linton shelter. Thus, it is possible that the removal scar, in that section, is where the Sister panel was removed from, while the eastern removal scar corresponds with the Linton panel,

which is a straighter rock wall surface. These scar marks also proportional to the measurements of the individual panels, keeping in mind that a few meters of rock were destroyed, thus making the panels somewhat smaller than they were initially. The smaller scar in the western section of the shelter measures around 447 cm by 143 cm, while the eastern scar measures around 500 cm by 130 cm. The Linton panel measured around 450 cm by 135 cm, while the Sister panel measured around 280 cm by 118 cm. The logical conclusion would be that the bigger panel came from, the bigger scar. Thus, the Linton panel was cut out from the bigger eastern scar, and the Sister panel was cut out from the smaller western scar. Comparing the scar and panel sizes, one also notices that more of the surface surrounding the Sister panel was lost than with the Linton panel. What was likely lost was the graffiti above the rock art scene, which is still visible in the photo negative but is not included in the panel, nor is it left within the shelter. In its original position, most of the eland in the Sister panel would be walking "out" of the shelter in the direction of the plateau while the Linton panel would have been located in the 'centre' of the shelter, protected from the harsh elements.

CHAPTER SEVEN – OBJECT BIOGRAPHY

This chapter will give a comprehensive object biography of the two panels and the shelter, from the moment of their removal to the present day. The story told here is the culmination of information gathered by reading letters between Mandy and Péringuey, communication with the South African Iziko Museum in Cape Town, and personal communication with the descendants of the Linton farm owners. The letters were obtained from the Iziko Museum and copies were sent to the University of Witwatersrand. The letters are not catalogued. Having said that, one must acknowledge that the site before the removal of the panels had a long history, probably in the order of thousands of years (Bonneau *et al*. 2017), of use with the shelter painted, repainted and used in a multitude of ways. I discuss what the art may have meant to its original painters and viewers in previous chapters. The biography I present here discusses the last century of the site's existence as it is fragmented.

Both the Linton and Sister panels were obtained at the same time by Mandy for the Iziko Museum. Mandy had discovered the paintings while he was working for the Department of Roads. The letters reveal that Mandy had found three sites with potential candidates for rock art removal, including paintings in the Linton farm, Barkley East District and the Herschel District. He had asked Péringuey if he would be interested in some of the rock art he had found there. In response Péringuey answered he would. Before Mandy could commence the removal of the rock art, he likely would have needed written permission from the Minister of the Interior, as stated by the 1911 Bushman-Relics Protection Act (No. 22 of 1911). Should he have failed to do so, or defaced or destroyed the panels, Mandy would have been liable to a fine not exceeding £50 or imprisonment with, or without, hard labour not exceeding three months. It is assumed Mandy managed to get the required permission as he started his work with the Linton panels by organising their removal in January 1916. Mandy estimated that the removal of the paintings could commence in April. He intended to be there for all removals' beginning and end to supervise and mitigate any possible failure (Mandy 1916a). With the help of a stonemason and a blacksmith, the panels were chiselled and drilled out of the

shelter wall (Henry 2007: 45; Davison 2012: 25). It is further revealed in the letters that he had previously visited some of the sites, including those in the Herschel District in 1902 and 1903 and was appalled by the damage they had suffered. Some paintings had had names scratched into them, what would be called graffiti today, while others had been used as targets for air gun practice (Mandy 1916b). The Linton paintings, he explained, were still 'good and well'. It seems that at least one motivator for removing the paintings was to prevent further damage by people.

This is interesting as, during the team's visit to the Linton shelter in 2022, a lot of graffiti and further removal of paintings had been noted. It is unclear what would have happened to the paintings had Mandy not removed them, but it is certain that Mandy's fears that further damage, at least to the shelter walls, by humans scratching their names and dates into the rock face was not wholly unjustified. Though no information is given as to why Péringuey wanted to acquire the rock art, considering he already had some back at the museum in Cape Town, it can be speculated that he wanted to expand his rock art collection which had been made by the 'lost' and slowly disappearing remnants of the San (Vinnicombe 1966; Henry 2007: 44). This would be in line with the emerging interest in the culture and artefacts of the San in the early 1900s which led to museums hiring stone masons to remove rock art. Such was the case in 1910, when the Natal Museum hired a policeman, A.D. Whyte, and a stone mason, R. Clingan, who subsequently removed twenty rock art slabs from the southern Drakensberg (Henry 2007). Others chiselled paintings out of rock shelters and took them back to Europe so that they could be displayed in European museums as the last remnants of a dying culture. One naturalist, Emil Holub, was responsible for the greatest number of rock art removals in South Africa which he then transported to Europe between the 1870s and the 1880s (Holub 1881; Henry 2007).

However, at least on Mandy's part, the act of removing the rock art was driven by good intentions. Consequently, the removal of these panels attracted individuals who were curious about the incident and the relocated panels, potentially drawing them to visit the site, which they might not have otherwise sought out. In coming to the site, they may have knowingly or unknowingly damaged it by touching the

remaining paintings or graffitiing their names and initials into the rock surface. Of course, the actual removal of the panels also caused significant damage. Had the panels been left untouched, the shelter may have remained essentially unchanged since Mandy's visits in the early 1900s.

Further revealed in the letters were the names of the blacksmith and the mason who were employed to remove the panels. They were J. Hugo and Van der Walt, respectively (Mandy 1916b, 1918a). The name of at least one of the black labourers was also revealed to be Jonas (Ouzman 2008). It was common in the past that black labourers were never mentioned by name despite doing much, if not most, of the labour. Those that were, were often only mentioned by their first name or nickname (Shepherd 2003), as in this case. Sometimes they even appear in old pictures, labouring away or posing with the benefactor or head researcher of the project. The pictures will almost always have the name of the benefactor or researcher written on the back; however, the black labourers' names were almost never written down. Thus, they get lost in history as nothing more than side notes (Shepherd 2003).

In subsequent letters it is revealed that the process of removal was slow. Mandy wanted to be there for crucial parts of the removal but still had to do his work for the Department of Roads and was thus unable to be present at all times. This meant work had to progress sporadically, only when Mandy was available and halted when he was not. When he was there the labourers were instructed to remove the paintings carefully, and this likely resulted in the removal being even slower as the panels were slowly chiselled out centimetre by centimetre.

In addition to the actual removal of the paintings, the wages for the labourers had to be settled. The initial estimate for the removal had been £60, £30 for each panel, but in 1918 Mandy had to admit that the costs were greater than expected. By January 13th of that year, one of the panels had been successfully chiselled out of the solid rock face, but the other was yet to be taken out. Where the removed panel was stored or if it was transported to a nearby farmhouse for safe keeping is not mentioned. Nor is there any mention on how long it took for the second panel to be successfully removed too. It likely took longer to remove the second panel

due to complications. Initially, it had been planned to wedge out the panel, but this plan was deemed too risky, and thus it was cut out instead. Interestingly, despite drill marks being evident within the shelter (Fig. 7.1), no mention of drilling is made in the letters. It is odd that Mandy omitted telling Péringuey that the panels were also drilled out, especially since he notes in meticulous detail every other step and precaution he made in their removal. Though it is possible he simply forgot while writing his letter on a particularly stressful day. In the end, Mandy's change of removal methods took longer but resulted in the panel being removed intact (Mandy 1918a).



Figure 7.1 Image showing the eastern removal scar within the Linton shelter, including chiselling and drill marks.

On May 25th 1918, both panels were successfully removed. Mandy describes some initial difficulty in transporting them from the site but that he was now arranging further transport of the panels with the railway station workers (Mandy 1918b). The panels had to be lifted out of the shelter and then brought to the railway station. How this was done is not mentioned. Though considering the terrain it was likely done by wagon. The ride would have been rather bumpy and have taken hours or perhaps even a few days considering they had to traverse

uneven fields and mud tracks. Mandy likely took precautions during this leg of the journey and would likely have found some way of padding and securing the large rock slabs so that the rough road did minimal damage to them, and they were unlikely to slip off the wagon. Upon arrival at the railway station, the two panels were soon to arrive at the Museum in August of that same year. Péringuey mentions how the backs of the panels were in the process of being sawed to lighten their load as they had to be transported upstairs. He mentions that for one of the panels, the right part of the scene, was to be 'fixed'. The letter did not include more information on what Péringuey may have meant or which panel he was specifically referring to. *In situ* and post-removal photo negatives of the Sister panel were sent to Péringuey as per his request (Fig. 6.2).

The current owners of the farm Linton are Jean and Pierre du Plessis, who lease the farm to Juan Marie and Donie Naude. Donie Naude's great grandfather, Stephanus David Naude, a sheep farmer, was the owner of the Linton farm when Mandy sought to have the panels at Linton farm removed. Mr Naude gave Mandy permission to remove the panels in 1916 (Mandy 1916b). The farm was later inherited by Stephanus David Naude's daughter, who eventually sold it (D. Naude pers. comm., 2022).

In the letter, Mandy mentioned how S. Naude wanted to be acknowledged for his part in the acquisition of the rock art, thus the now famous Linton panel was labelled 'from farm Linton, Barkley East, CP. Presented by S. Naude. Esq., removed by G.S.I. Mandy, Esq.'. In 1931, under the watchful eyes of the then museum Director Leonard Hill, the Linton panel was moved to a newly built exhibition wing, where it remained on permanent display (Davison 2012).

Between 1931 and 1985, no more information on the Linton panel or the Sister panel can be found. However, in 1985 it was traced by Paul den Hoed, Zachary Kingdon and Thomas Dowson. Tracing of the panel took four days and often lasted into the early morning hours. A one-to-one black and white drawing was then made by Dowson and used in his honours dissertation in archaeology for the University of the Witwatersrand (Fig. 2.2; Dowson 1985). Dowson visited Linton

farm in 1986 were he noted a hole measuring 4.5 m by 1.35 m. He also noted that traces of paintings could still be seen around the edge of the hole, indicating the panel had once been at least 6 m in length (Dowson 1985). The panel was again studied by David Lewis-Williams in 1988 after which he presented his research on Linton at one of the Margaret Shaw lectures at the South African Museum. Lewis-Williams used ethnographic accounts recorded by Dr Wilhelm Bleek and his sister-in-law Lucy Lloyd in the late nineteenth century and more recent collections from the Kalahari San. Lewis-Williams was able to conclude that the Linton panel images did not depict scenes of daily life but rather scenes of ritual and trance (Lewis-Williams 1988: 2). Both Dowson and Lewis-Williams's interest in the panel in the 1980s coincides with the re-emergence of interest in rock art in the 1970s, specifically the study of its meaning to the San and the importance of understanding the spatial context from which the rock art came (Henry 2007: 47). Sometime prior to 1994, the Linton panel had been strengthened with three vertical steel beams, which were glued on and bolted into place to provide the panel with greater structural support (Hosford 1996). This was likely done in preparation for the panel's travels in March of the same year.

In March 1994, the Royal Academy of Arts in London approached the South African Museum about the possibility of borrowing some material for its planned exhibition, 'Africa: The Art of a Continent' (Phillips 1996). The timing of this request came just after the end of Apartheid and was likely seen as a prime opportunity to show the rest of the world some of the indigenous art and objects to be found in South Africa, which until that point had been the subject of heavy sanctions and prohibitions. The curator of the planned exhibition, Tom Phillips, visited South Africa and its various museums and art galleries to view their collections. A request was then submitted to sanction the borrowing of various artefacts, including the Linton panel, Lydenburg heads, Coldstream stone, a Great Zimbabwe soapstone bowl fragment, a southern Sotho snuff box, a southern Nguni snuff box, a Shona headrest, San ostrich eggshell flasks and the Lobedu pole figures (Hosford 1996). Ms June Hosford undertook the preparation of the packaging and supervision of the artefacts, including the Linton panel. Mike van Wieringen, a geotechnical engineer evaluated the Linton panel's structural

integrity before packaging occurred. Finally, two specialists from the art packaging firm MOMART, Mr Keith Taylor, a stone conservator, and Guy Moray, a packing and transport specialist, all partook in the packaging and transportation process of the artefacts (Hosford 1996). Elliott International Movers were employed to deal with the crating and transportation of the artefacts. The crates for the Linton panel and Lydenburg heads had to be made to precise specifications to ensure safe passage to London. All artefacts, including the Linton panel, were subject to a condition report, and photographs with exact physical dimensions. All this was done to ensure the artefacts remained intact during the transportation process and would arrive at their destination in the same condition in which they had been sent. The packaging of the Linton panel took place between 11 and 15 September 1995. By Saturday morning, 16 September, the panel and the other artefacts were transported from the museum to the Cape Town International Airport, where they departed for London in the evening (Hosford 1996).

The artefacts arrived the following day, 17 September, in London and were transported to the Royal Academy, where the crates were opened to allow for acclimatisation to their new environment. On 3 October 1995, Nelson Mandela, via BBC live broadcast, announced the opening of London's Royal Academy of Arts' the 'Africa: Art of a Continent' exhibition (Hosford 1996; Phillips 1996). The exhibition featured over 800 objects from across the African continent chosen for exhibition by Phillips; among them was the Linton panel (Phillips 1996). The exhibit explored African artefacts. This included pre-dynastic Egyptian and north African artefacts, Nubian artefacts, central African, Guinean, Sudanese and eastern African artefacts; and of course, southern African rock art and objects, which were given deliberate prominence. The exhibit lasted until 21 January 1996. Just before the exhibit ended, the Royal Academy requested an extension on the artefacts loans so that they could also travel to Berlin and New York. The extension was sanctioned (Hosford 1996).

The exhibition travelled to Berlin's Martin-Gropius-Bau, where the Zeitgeist Gesellschaft, a commercial exhibition company and local museum staff undertook

the design and mounting of the exhibit (Hosford 1996). The Linton panel was not immediately unpacked as the creator of the mount on which the panel was to be displayed had failed to consider the weight requirements. A new mount had to be fashioned to safely accommodate the stone panel's weight. Anthropologist, Christine Stelzig, of the Völkerkundemuseum, Berlin was the exhibit's curator (Hosford 1996). The Berlin exhibition lasted from March to May of 1996. Berlin had also been the site of a recent historical event, namely the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 and the formation of the new German Republic. Berlin itself was a multicultural epicentre, and an ideal place to hold the exhibition. The Guggenheim Museum in New York was the exhibition's last destination. MOMART representatives travelled with the exhibit artefacts to New York, where they handed over responsibility to Masterpiece International to get the artefacts through customs and to the museum. Unpacking took place between 28 and 30 May. The exhibit remained at the Guggenheim Museum from 5 June to 28 September 1996 (Phillips 1996). Lindsay Hooper and Keith Taylor (the latter of whom accompanied the artefacts on their exhibitions) couriered the loaned artefacts back to South Africa. The Linton panel arrived back at the museum in Cape Town on 4 October 1996 (Hosford 1996).

A figure from the Linton panel was adopted into the South African Coat of Arms in the year 2000. This was done on the 27th April, also known as Freedom Day in South Africa, which signified the first ever non-racial democratic election held in the country in 1994. Then president Thabo Mbeki unveiled the Coat of Arms, in the centre of which stood a pair of human figures derived from the Linton panel. It was explained that figures from San rock art had been chosen to from part of the coat of arms because it linked back to Africa being the birthplace of humanity and therefore highlight the common humanity of a once divided country now united by diversity (Smith 2006: 322). It was also meant to highlight that South Africa had some of the finest rock art in the world and remind the nation of its rich history and cultural achievements (Smith 2006: 322). In a similar vein, the ǀXam-language motto of the new coat of arms *!ke e: ǀxarra ǁke*, was supposed to link the South African nation to its San heritage and roots in antiquity (Smith 2006: 323).

Meanwhile, the Sister panel had not been mentioned since its arrival at the museum ca. 85 years prior. This changed when it was put on display next to the Linton panel in 2003. This was likely done due to limited space within the storage room, as well as the desire to display as much rock art as possible (Wendy Black, Iziko South African Museum Cape Town, pers. Comm. 2022). Despite being placed right next to the Linton panel, as previously discussed, it was never accorded with nearly as much attention or research investigation as the Linton panel. Nor has it ever been subject to a conservation evaluation as the Linton panel had, for these evaluations only take place if the panel is being considered for potential travel, such as an exhibition elsewhere (Wendy Black, Iziko South African Museum Cape Town, pers. Comm. 2022).

A plaster mould of the Linton panel was created by Janine de Waal as an assignment for a gallery installation at the Centre of African StudiesGallery in the Oppenheimer Institute Building, at the University of Cape Town in November of 2012 (de Waal 2012). In the same year Davison (2012) studied the Linton panel in detail for lectures she was planning. Davison (2012) examined how the interpretation of South African rock art changed through time, how it was initially labelled a primitive relic of a dying culture, to images encompassing San ritual and myth. This resulted in the work 'Limitations of labels: interpreting rock art at the South African Museum' (Davison 2012).

Lewis-Williams decided to revise his study of the panel in 2013 which resulted in his work *San Rock Art* (Lewis-Williams 2013a). Not too long after in 2015, the panel was subject to a conservation evaluation report. The state of preservation was determined to be unchanged since its travel to and from the 'Africa: Art of a Continent' exhibition in 1995/96. Other preservation conditions were taken note of again, such as a specific hairline crack running from the right edge to the central section of the panel. The hairline crack is visible on the reverse side of the panel as well. A second near parallel crack was detailed running from the left side to the central section of the front face of the Linton panel. A structural flaw, indicated by the 'hollow' nature of the front lower section of the panel, was noted, which may be compromised by even the slightest vibration. The epoxy glue

adhesive used to fix the steel angle iron bars to the rear section of the panel were concluded to be still adhering well, and that no additional adhering should be attempted (Mottie *et al.* 2015). In the same year, the British Museum had requested the loan of the Linton panel from Iziko, but the request was denied. Though no reason for the denial can be found, it was likely deemed to be too great an undertaking, having learned from the previous exhibition just how challenging it was to transport the Linton panel. Furthermore, considering how great an effort had to be made to safely transport the Linton panel in 1995/6, the museum likely did not want to risk the panel getting damaged by improper handling or incorrect packaging. Instead, the Zaamenkomst panel, which also hailed from the Maclear District and is smaller than the Linton panel, was sent in lieu of the Linton panel (Giblin & Spring 2016; Wendy Black, Iziko South African Museum Cape Town, pers. comm. 2022). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY, USA, made a similar request in 2015, but it too was denied. In 2022, a descendant of S. Naude, who allowed the panels to be removed in the first place, came to view the removed rock panels at the museum (D. Naude pers. comm., 2022). This was the first recorded instance of the panels being viewed by anyone from the Linton farm since its removal in 1916. The panels remain on exhibit at the Iziko South African Museum Cape Town (as of time of writing).

CHAPTER EIGHT – CONCLUSION:

The Linton panel has been studied as a singular entity for the past one hundred years. In this dissertation a more complete understanding of its meaning, origin, journey through time and space, and relationship with other images that once surrounded it was presented. Chapter 2 discussed the information we know about the Linton panel and its origin, having been recovered from the Maclear area in the Eastern Cape by Mandy in 1916. In reviewing the letters and telegrams sent between Mandy and the museum director Péringuey, it was discovered that the panels were removed in the hopes of preserving them. The removal process was laborious, took several years, and was costly. Upon the panels' removal, they were transported to the museum, where the Linton panel was put on display while the Sister panel was put into storage.

In the subsequent decades, the Linton panel received much attention, being the subject of rock art research as well as travelling to Europe and the USA for exhibitions. Meanwhile, the Sister panel has been displayed only since 2003 and has not been mentioned save for once briefly in a sentence about its eland herds since its removal in the early twentieth century. Similarly, the paintings in the Linton shelter had been forgotten and remained unstudied, except for some local visitors every so often. While a few questions remain about the Panels' and paintings' origins and travels through time, Chapter 2 gives a far more detailed and complete image of their past. Chapter 3 sets out to explain the methodology used in the research, including the reasoning for individual steps and their importance in understanding and interpreting the images of the Linton shelter and Linton panels.

Chapter 4 explained the results of the research in the Linton shelter. It was revealed that many images were preserved in the shelter. Most of the images were found in one section of the shelter, while individual images were found scattered throughout the length of the shelter. The images were relatively well preserved. Some evidence of later human activity was recorded, including graffiti and the attempted removal of a small antelope painting prior to 2001. The images were largely sheltered from the weather, including harsh sunlight, strong winds and

water runs. However, some images still showed signs of damage from weathering, including large chips and fragments falling from the rock face. The images found were mostly composed of polychrome fine-line art, while a few mono- or bi-chrome finger-painted images were also recorded within the shelter.

Chapter 5 elaborated on the images found within the shelter and identified similarities and differences between the shelter images and the Linton panel images. It was found that the overall art style in both cases consisted of polychrome fine line art images with various similar motifs, including threads of light, eland and human figures. How these images interacted with the rock face and the surrounding images was discussed. The shelter and the Linton panel included various characteristics of the trance dance, including bending at the hips, extra or missing limbs and sweating. Similarly, the Linton panel and the shelter images depicted therianthropes, a common feature of trance and the spirit world. However, only the shelter provided an example of a flying buck. The threads of light were of particular interest, its meaning and purpose were explored and explained. It was hypothesised that perhaps the threads of light, predominantly seen in the Linton panel, once connected to or otherwise interacted with the remaining images in the shelter, specifically the flying buck and eland duo moving along one such thread in the shelter. The chapter then discussed how neuropsychology may have influenced trance experiences and how the San interpreted these experiences and depicted them in their art. One example of this was the sensation of floating or swimming, which was depicted in the Linton panel through fish and eels swimming around a large therianthrope figure. The role and significance of eland were elaborated on, including their use in rituals, seasonal migration and the differences between male and female eland and their fat reserves. Lastly, the chapter focussed on highlighting which motifs and images were shared among the shelter and the Linton panel and which were unique and the significance of both.

Chapter 6 focussed on the Sister panel. It tried to understand how the panel remained in relative obscurity both in the public eye and in the field of rock art for such a long time. It then attempted to interpret the images within the panel. Much of the panel is dominated by eland, and as such, the role of eland was the focal

point of the interpretation. An attempt was made to understand the individual postures the eland exhibited and link those to natural phenomena that the San artists may have observed. The chapter also discussed the importance of knowing and studying the surroundings of removed rock art, as the area in which the panels were removed was known for its herds of eland in the summer and, to this day, is known as Eland's Heights. The study of the location in tandem with the painted images may help future researchers understand rock art better, why only selected shelters are painted, and how the paintings may have facilitated or informed visitors of the region's potential potency and significance.

This research has attempted to reconstruct the images' meaning, purpose and history, in all three places, in the shelter, the Linton panel and the Sister panel. In doing so, future visitors to either the museum or shelter or researchers trying to interpret the rock art may better understand and appreciate that what they are looking at is simply one piece of a much larger and, sadly, incomplete picture. Upon removal, destruction or weathering, various images and their meaning and purpose were lost. Through the decades, our appreciation and understanding of them have changed. This research set out to and has successfully reconstructed a relatively comprehensive object biography, highlighting the painting's journey through space and time and how the images were received and coveted with meaning by different people in different periods.

The panels were once part of a larger shelter in the Maclear area. The images' original purpose was likely trance related, relaying the trance experience and indicating that the area was a site for eland herds to pass through, which would bring with them high levels of potency. After the San population largely disappeared from the area, the paintings were mostly left alone until Mandy, and his team of workers set out to remove two panels of art from the shelter. In trying to complete a comprehensive object biography, the motivation for the rock art removal was revealed; namely, Mandy had hoped that in removing the rock art, he might preserve and protect it from vandals that may shoot at the paintings or otherwise disfigure the art within the shelter. While no specific mention is made on Péringuey's motives, it can be assumed he wanted some fine rock art to add to the museum's collection. In 1918 these panels were successfully removed and

brought to the Iziko South African Museum in Cape Town, where the Linton panel was put on permanent display while the Sister panel was placed in storage and largely forgotten. Meanwhile, the Linton panel became the subject of various research papers and an international exhibition. It lent one of its painted human figures to the official South African coat of arms. In 2003 the Sister panel was placed next to the Linton panel exhibition, where it remains. Only a single dissertation mentions the Sister panel, but no interpretation of the art or its origins was ever made. The object biography of this dissertation attempted to understand why one panel received more attention and fame than the other and how the inherent value of the paintings changed through time. Likely both panel paintings were of equal or similar importance in meaning to the San who made them, but this level of importance and interest was then transferred mainly to the Linton panel by the Iziko South African Museum in Cape Town, which in turn led to the Sister panel likely being forgotten in storage for almost a century. Meanwhile, as interest and insight into San rock art increased, the Linton panel was viewed with renewed interest and understanding. This understanding that all rock art was important and full of meaning as well as the panels' sheer size and eye-catching beauty likely influenced the Sister panel being put on display.

This research also aimed to link the images from the Linton panel back to the images in the shelter and their relationship with each other and their original meaning. This aim was successfully completed. It was found that the style and thematic motifs are broadly consistent between the shelter and the Linton panel. The images are concerned mainly with the trance experience and the activities done within the spirit world. The Linton images and the shelter images were once linked. They told a complex story about shamans that had journeyed into the spirit world where they harnessed or experienced massive levels of potency, changing them into flying buck and therianthropes. In their trance state, they could fight off spirits-of-the-dead, and rival shamans, heal the sick and travel to god's home. The Sister panel shares the least number of similar features, as it is mainly comprised of eland imagery and lacks the threads of light that are prevalent in the Linton panel and therianthrope figures found elsewhere in the shelter and the Linton panel. The Sister panel's purpose was less about the trance experience than about

obtaining potency, which could lead to trance and the spirit world. This could be done either by direct means, through the potency-laden images of the eland themselves, or by indicating to San visitors that the plateau above the shelter was a site where large herds of eland travelled and brought with them high amounts of potency.

The Sister panel interpretation sheds light on the importance of studying eland imagery in the rock art. The San were very good at capturing minute details, including details on the individual characteristics and movements of the land, which they so prized. These movements may have held more importance and meaning than previously thought, indicating aggression, fright, flight, rest, and death. The death metaphor has already been researched extensively. However, the other possible metaphors the eland may indicate have yet to be adequately researched. In the Sister panel, a few interesting metaphors and characteristics of the eland were explored. One such metaphor was that of an eland with an aggressive, challenging posture. This may have been indicative of a 'fight' which in the San language also indicates high levels of potency. Future researchers can explore other more nuanced meanings into the individual meanings of the eland postures in other San imagery.

The research also sheds light on how museums and researchers tend to focus on famous examples of rock art, which may lead to overshadowing or outright forgetting less famous examples. Perhaps other rock art panels worldwide have 'Sister' panels that have been forgotten or unresearched. In re-examining the history of and locating or visiting the sites of rock art removals, lost or less understood imagery can be rediscovered and included in the interpretation of rock art. In doing so, more complete histories and meanings can be constructed. Thus, preserving and expanding on the literature of past peoples.

This research has successfully completed the aims and objectives set out at the beginning of the dissertation. Specifically, the primary objectives encompassed documenting and analysing the extant artwork at the Linton site, establishing a connection with the Linton panel, and constructing a comprehensive object biography for the paintings. However, more research should be done on all

aspects of the Linton images to get as close as possible to a completed and comprehensive history and understanding of the images, the people who made them, those who studied them (the images) and the individuals who interact with them today. Similar research should be done on other paintings, as this research gives researchers a more comprehensive view of the objects they are studying. The shelters from which other rock art paintings came may allow for new interpretations and understandings of already studied rock art. Old assumptions may be refuted or given more credence depending on what may be found at the shelter. By visiting the shelter, researchers can also assess the damage at the site and if it was wise and worthwhile for the rock art slabs to have been removed in the first place or if they might have been better off had they remained *in situ* under some protection (i.e., gates, signage, or animal fences). Examining the original site of rock art removal also allows researchers to paint a clearer picture of just how much art may have been lost due to initial removal and later weathering and human damage. With this information, efforts could be made to highlight the importance of preserving rock art sites so that future generations can still view them and learn about the culture and beliefs of the individuals who made them.

Researchers can study how rock art was valued and treated through time and space in creating a comprehensive object biography. In so doing, they may also understand why certain pieces of rock art were preferred over others, perhaps due to their motifs. The cost involved in removing the rock art panels may have influenced the individuals' decisions to remove or leave behind certain pieces of rock art. It also highlights how other 'bystanders' mindsets have changed over time. For example, Stephanus Naude was happy to let some of the rock art on his farm be extracted and displayed in a museum. Meanwhile, his great-great grandson, Donie, is of the mind that the rock art should have been left where it was.

Nonetheless, conducting this type of study may encounter certain limitations, specifically pertaining to comprehending the reasoning and motives of historical figures. Such understanding is only feasible if these individuals have left behind documented evidence that elucidates their motivations. Such was the case for Mandy. Thus, this dissertation knows he wished to remove the rock art in order to

preserve it. On the other hand, no mention is made by Péringuey why he chose to send the Sister panel into storage; thus, this dissertation can only speculate on his reasoning. Furthermore, depending on the state of preservation within rock art shelters, the remaining rock art may be impossible to study due to its level of degradation. While many paintings were well enough preserved to study, there were individual pieces that were so faded or destroyed that any attempt at studying and documenting them in detail was futile. Such was the case with a rather large painted head figure situated high up on the rock face in direct sunlight. It was so faded that it was even hard to discern its existence with the naked eye. No tracings of the images at the site were made due to time constraints but could be done for future research and to preserve the remaining images before they fade away.

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