

[Ebook pdf] The meaning of South African rock paintings

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Lenka Tucek

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Lenka Tucek : The meaning of South African rock paintings before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The meaning of South African rock paintings:

Seminar paper from the year 2001 in the subject Art - Painting, grade: 1 (A), Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (Faculty of Arts), course: Course: South African Archaeology and Ethnondash;history (SA 301), 9 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: One aspect of the wealth of material evidence left behind by the early people are the pictures in south african rock art. They occur in paintings and engravings. In 1996 the total number of sites in South Africa was estimated to be a little over 10 000 but the actual number of sites is significantly

undercounted. It is still not known exactly when the artists started to make rock art, although new techniques of radiocarbon dating, using very small samples of paint, open the possibility of an absolute chronology. The oldest example of rock art in Africa was found in 1969 by Eric Wendt in the southern region of Namibia at a site called Apollo 11. After various datings, mainly with the radiocarbon method, archaeologists concluded that the rock art tradition in southern africa is at least 27 500 years old. In South Africa the oldest dated rock art is an engraving in the Northern Cape which was found on a small slab of dolomite at the Wonderwerk Cave south of Kuruman. It has a radiocarbon date of c.10 200 BP. Rock paintings are found in the mountainous parts of the subcontinent in abundant rock shelters and shallow overhangs, while engravings were generally made on the interior plateau of South Africa. There are about 1600 paintings in South Africa. In this assignment I will focus on the meaning of rock paintings, on the specific symbols and their importance for the early people. In Chapter Two, I provide a short introduction about the artists and their methods. Then I will explain the three important approaches to reveal the meaning of rock art described by Lewis - Williams and give some examples of misinterpretations of rock paintings. Chapter Three deals with the spiritual world and shamanism in the society of the Bushmen. In the fourth chapter the state of trance and the trance dance are described, which are important key parts for understanding rock art. Chapter Five shall point out the symbolism of the eland - antelope in addition to animal power in general. This symbol is of great importance and represented relatively frequent in the art. These symbols and the discussion of their meanings seem to be a representative selection, to help better understand the spiritual background of south african rock art and its meaning.