

TWYFELFONTEIN, NAMIBIA - FINALLY PROTECTED



In 2007, the UNESCO World Heritage List has been enriched by – among others – a true Stone-Age gem. Upon its inspection, archeologists rejoiced over the amazing value of local petroglyphs, or rock engravings which finally sheds more light on the inhabitants that resided in this area until approximately 1,000 years ago.

Twyfelfontein is a site which is located in the Kunene Region of Namibia. Some unbelievable 2,000 figures are engraved here into the rocks and serve as a key artifact helping the archeologists to uncover more information about the traditions, rituals and beliefs of local tribes.

Even though the number of engraved figures is very large, only seldom may we actually admire a human figure. Most of the engravings depict animals, which – as the experts claim – are meant to represent humans transformed into the animal form. What is even more fascinating is the mystical character most of the figures posses. Many rhinoceroses depicted have large, much exaggerated horns; some giraffes have unnaturally long necks. Such features most likely express the supernatural potency attributed to animals by humans.

The most captivating is the infamous “Lion Man” – he is depicted with five fingers on each paw; this engraving openly presents the transformation of humans into animals, which local hunters very much respected and believed in. Other sacred animals to be seen here include ostriches, elephants, yet also, visitors may observe painted footprints of both humans and animals on the walls.

Local authorities sincerely hope that being on the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites will not only help better preserve the whole precious area, but will also attract tourists from all over the world who may come to admire this prehistoric treasure. Attention is exactly what Namibia needs at this moment.

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