A World Heritage Site is a cultural or natural site that is judged as having outstanding universal value. UNESCO has designated 119 World Heritage Sites in 39 countries in Africa. In Africa, there are 76 cultural, 39 natural and 4 mixed sites. Currently, there are eight African rock art sites listed as World Heritage sites; these sites are featured on pages 11-13. Additionally, the Lopé-Okanda National Park in Gabon features a remarkable collection of some 1,800 rock carvings. In 2008, TARA entered into a memorandum of understanding with UNESCO for the protection and promotion of African rock art.

**Kondoa, Tanzania 2006**

Most of the Kondoa rock art sites are located on or near the Maasai escarpment (that marks the western edge of the Great Rift Valley in Tanzania). The sites are a series of rock shelters and boulders containing paintings mainly depicting elongated people, animals, hunting scenes, and abstract markings.

**Matobo Hills, Zimbabwe 2003**

The rock art sites of Matobo Hills occur in profusion in shelters located in massive granite inselbergs and “whale-backs”, (common rock formations in southern Africa). The paintings provide vivid pictures of later Stone Age peoples’ conceptions of reality: San/Bushman ancestors who were absorbed in Zimbabwe by Bantu speaking agriculturalists.

Tanzania also has World Heritage Sites that are not rock art sites including: the Cultural Ruins of Kilwa Kisiwani and Ruins of Songo Mnara (1981); Stone Town of Zanzibar (2000); Kilimanjaro National Park (1987); Selous Game Reserve (1982); Serengeti National Park (1981); and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (1978).
The amazing quality and quantity of rock art, contained in a relatively small area, has earned the site the title of the “Louvre of the Desert.” The site is characterized by a wide variety of paintings on exposed rocks made mainly by Khoe pastoralists. “White-painting Shelter” has been periodically inhabited over 100,000 years, early Iron-Age villages and prehistoric mines set Tsodilo apart from other Southern African sites.

**uKhahlamba/Drakensberg, South Africa 2000**

The Drakensberg is South Africa’s highest and most dramatic mountain range; it contains some of the most fascinating natural and archaeological areas in the subcontinent. The mountain’s numerous rock painting sites present a significant component of cultural heritage left behind by San/Bushman people who lived there until the late 19th Century. The paintings are outstanding in quality and diversity of subject, and in their depiction of animals and humans.

**Chongoni, Malawi 2006**

The Chongini rock art site is located within a cluster of forested granite hills on the high altitude plateau of central Malawi. The rock art consists almost entirely of schematic, white paintings (making it visually different from the more naturalistic, red hunter-gatherer images) in male and female initiation ceremonies (as well as rain-making and funeral rites of Chewa agriculturalists).

**Twyelfontein, Namibia 2007**

The Twyelfontein rock art site has one of the largest concentrations of rock engravings in southern Africa. Most of these represent rhinoceros, giraffe, elephant, antelope, birds, and animal footprints. The site features an extensive record of ritual practices of hunter-gatherer communities in this part of southern Africa over at least two millennia.

**Tassili n’ Ajjer, Algeria 1982**

The Tassili n’ Ajjer consists of paintings and rock engravings (preserved on a high, eroded plateau in the central Sahara Desert). The plateau is a spectacular lunar landscape of great geological interest. The art depicts herds of cattle and large wild animals (such as giraffes or elephants indicative of a time when the Sahara was humid and vibrant with human activities like hunting and dancing).

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