FROM THE CHAIRMAN

In view of the increasing amount of TARA activities and news stories we have decided to increase the frequency of our Newsletter from one per year to two per year!

At the beginning of November 2004 TARA hosted an international rock art conference here in Nairobi which was attended by some 80 delegates from 20 different countries, a dozen of them African. The conference appears to have been a tremendous success and TARA has now been asked to make this conference a regular 3-yearly event. TARA also staged a very successful African rock art exhibition at the Nairobi Museum which opened on Day One of the conference and ran until the end of February 2005. The exhibition will now travel to Tanzania where it opens in Dar es Salaam in April 2005.

In December 2004 TARA signed an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the National Museums of Kenya, under the terms of which the two institutions will work together to conserve rock art sites in Kenya.

In early February this year UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan recorded a special Statement in New York on the importance of Africa's rock art heritage and the need for African leaders to play a more active role in conserving the art.

In May 2005 Tom Hill and I have been invited to attend a special gathering of some 22 UN Ambassadors from African rock art nations to be hosted by Ambassador Abdallah Baali of Algeria, the inaugural meeting of the Africa rock art nations committee. The Secretary-General will also be invited to attend.

David Coulson, Chairman TARA.

ABOUT TARA

The goals of TARA are to create a permanent visual archive of Africa's rock art before it is too late, share this priceless archive with the world community, and, to the extent possible, preserve today's most threatened rock art sites, however remote, across the African continent. TARA believes an important way to realize the value of rock art in Africa for present and future generations is to promote awareness of its richness, antiquity and importance.

Based in Nairobi, Kenya, TARA is the world's only organization dedicated to this cultural imperative. TARA's work has been endorsed by Nelson Mandela, who encourages national governments and local communities throughout Africa to contribute their time and resources to the challenge of preserving and protecting Africa's rock art.

TARA has also received support and recognition from the Ford Foundation, the Andrew Mellon Foundation and the National Geographic Society, amongst others. TARA's singular contributions have also been widely acclaimed in the scientific and popular media.

TARA's chairman, international photographer David Coulson, has made it his life's work to photograph and document rock art in over 20 different African countries. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in a statement to TARA in 2005, called on African leaders to take a new and more active role, and on private businesses, foundations and individuals to contribute their expertise and resources.

All photos © David Coulson / TARA unless credited otherwise.

Create greater global awareness of the importance and endangered state of African rock art; survey sites; monitor status; be an information resource and archive; and promote and support rock art conservation measures.
KOFI ANNAN RECORDS STATEMENT FOR TARA

In 2004 UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan was forced to change his schedule, making it impossible for him to attend a benefit dinner at the UN planned by TARA for October ’04. Instead, however, he offered to record a statement on video and audio for the Trust concerning the urgent need to conserve Africa’s priceless rock art heritage.

In early February this year TARA’s Treasurer Tom Hill and Chairman David Coulson were in New York at the UN studios to watch the Secretary-General make his statement.

“The rock art of Africa makes up one of the oldest and most extensive records on earth of human thought. It shows the very emergence of the human imagination. It is a priceless treasure and it is irreplaceable.

But Africa’s rock art is not just about the distant past. It is about today and tomorrow as well. Scientists, historians, artists and students must be able to study and understand its significance for decades and centuries to come.

Africa’s rock art is the common heritage of all Africans and all people. It is a cultural gift from our ancestors that can bring diverse people together - with pride and a common commitment to share it and preserve it.

Yet, today, Africa’s rock art is severely threatened. Its future is uncertain. Perhaps the greatest threat is neglect. A lack of resources, combined with a lack of official interest, has left too many rock art sites unguarded against vandals and thieves.

It is time for Africa’s leaders to take a new and more active role. We must save this cultural heritage before it is too late. Two initiatives are especially critical: educating our children, and engaging local communities.

To Africa’s children I would like to say, “You are the future of Africa. Study your proud history, and protect Africa’s rock art.”

I would also like to ask private businesses, foundations and individuals to contribute their expertise and resources.

We at the United Nations will continue to do our part.

Finally, I am pleased to join my good friend Nelson Mandela in supporting TARA, the Trust for African Rock Art, in its work to preserve this vital cornerstone of our world’s cultural heritage”.

Special acknowledgement
TARA would like to acknowledge the generous help of Australian Ambassador to UN John Dauth and Algeria Ambassador to UN Abdallah Baali for helping to make the above recording possible.
TARA HOSTS ROCK ART CONFERENCE

At the start of November 2004, TARA hosted an international conference on African rock art here in Nairobi. The conference was officially opened on November 1st by Kenya’s Minister for National Heritage, Hon Najib Balala, and was attended by over 80 delegates from 20 different countries, including a dozen African nations. In his speech the Minister pledged his strong support for the preservation of Kenya’s rock art heritage and underlined the uniqueness and vulnerability of these early cultural records.

The conference touched on different areas affecting African rock art, including management, community relations, technology and tourism. An area of particular and urgent concern was theft and vandalism, which is on the increase in some areas, especially in the Sahara. TARA’s website is being updated to allow people to exchange information on theft and vandalism, and TARA will also act as the hub of a network to share case studies and experiences.

The conference concluded that the African rock art fraternity:

- acknowledges the significant progress that has been made by many communities in the past decade to safeguard Africa’s greatest and least known art;
- expresses concern about the future protection of the estimated 500,000 sites throughout Africa due to the increased vandalism and theft of Africa’s art;
- recognises the importance of engaging with local communities in drawing up any development plans for local and national benefits;
- calls on Governments of all African nations to assist in the long-term protection, management and sustainable development of Africa’s rock art heritage;
- recognises the need to use the latest digital technology for the benefit of rock art preservation;
- calls on the world community to outlaw all trade in rock art immediately.

The proceedings of the conference will be available by mid 2005. Proceedings can be ordered from the TARA website www.africanrockart.org.
**Facing page top:** Key conference participants pose for a photograph with Kenya’s National Heritage Minister, Hon Najib Balala. **Lower left:** Lorna Abungu of AFRICOM and Ephraim Kamuhangire (Uganda) follow proceedings of conference. **Lower centre:** Victoria Waldoock, a member of TARA’s Board, walks Hon Balala to the conference venue. **Lower right:** Tanzania’s Amini Mturi (left) shares a moment with Paul Lane of the British Institute in East Africa.

**This page top:** Norbert Kayombo (right), of the National Museums of Tanzania, in conversation with John Odhiambo of AFRICOM. **Centre:** Participants (from left) Mrs and Prof Jean Clottes (France), Sidi Mohamed Illies (Niger), Charlie Rapoport (Ireland) and David Kiyaga-Mulindwa (Uganda, and a member of TARA’s board) during a session. **Below:** Participants during an expedition to a rock art site near Nairobi.

All conference photos © official conference photographer.

**WHAT THE PARTICIPANTS SAID**

"Africa’s greatest asset is its cultural heritage and the foundation stone of this is rock art... this was a terrific conference..."  Prof Wilmot James, Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa.

"It was helpful, educational and interesting. I and my fellow students have learnt so much." Habiba Chirchir, Anthropology student, University of Nairobi.

"Very interesting and challenging...will in time to come be considered a watershed event" Dr Aron Mazel, world authority on rock art dating, University of Newcastle, U.K.

"I commend TARA for bringing us all together, and... was impressed by the commitment shown by the Minister for National Heritage towards rock art preservation in Kenya." Dr Benjamin Smith, Director of the Rock Art Research Institute in South Africa.

"I have enormously enjoyed the conference which was outstanding in all ways. Not only was it brilliantly organised, it was academically challenging, with diverse views, and was truly international with so many African nations attending." Nigel Winsor, Royal Geographical Society, London.

"It was extremely useful...well organised and provided me with a lot of new information." Dr Esmond Bradley Martin, World Rhino Authority and Geographer, Kenya.
TARA’s ROCK ART EXHIBITION

From November 2004 to February 2005, TARA hosted a temporary exhibition of African rock art at the Nairobi museum. The exhibition was aimed at introducing Kenyan rock art within the wider context of East African and African rock art.

It included a reconstruction of the Kakapel rock shelter, which proved the most popular individual exhibit with visitors, according to a small research project TARA undertook to gauge the impact of the various exhibits.

The opening cocktail for the exhibition was attended by a capacity crowd of about 300 people including Ambassadors, CEOs, museum administrators, academics and other interested people, with speeches by the Director of the National Museums of Kenya, Dr Idle Farah, the General Manager of Safaricom, Michael Joseph, and David Coulson, Chairman of TARA. The exhibition had received support from Safaricom, Kenya’s largest mobile telephone operator, and during the launch Mr Joseph also announced the support of the Safaricom Foundation for restoration of damage at the Kakapel rock shelter in western Kenya. Other sponsors of the exhibition included British American Tobacco and Bamburi Cement Ltd.

During its four-month run at the Nairobi museum, the exhibition was viewed by over 22,000 visitors, most of them school children. It has also attracted significant coverage in the Kenyan press, and we hope it will contribute substantially to raising awareness in Kenya and with international visitors of the importance and relevance of rock art as part of our cultural heritage.

The exhibition will move to the Dar es Salaam Museum (Tanzania) to open on April 27 and will run until the end of July 2005. Following its run in Dar es Salaam, the exhibition will travel to the Kampala museum starting in late 2005. The exhibition will visit other East African museums in 2006. Museums and institutions interested in holding the exhibition, please contact TARA.
Top: Photo gallery where walls were specially modelled to simulate rock surfaces in caves and rock shelters.

Centre left: Exhibition visitors watch a DVD on African rock art. In the background are special panels profiling different periods and styles of African rock art.

Centre right: Dr Idde Farah – Director-General, National Museums of Kenya, officially opening the exhibition.

Above and far right: Visitors in the simulated rock shelter which was the most popular exhibit.

Right: Detail showing one of the timeline panels.

Exhibition photos © Rowena White / TARA
SAFARICOM DONATES KSH 1.2 MILLION FOR KAKAPEL

In our last newsletter, we reported that the rock shelter at Kakapel in western Kenya had been gazetted as a national monument. The shelter features paintings from different styles and times; the oldest paintings may be as much as 4,000 years old whereas the most recent may be only a few hundred. Unfortunately, in the past few years, the site has been increasingly damaged by graffiti.

TARA and the National Museums of Kenya are working together to conserve the site and have started to work with the community to ensure its management and availability to visitors. Following visits there by the NMK and by TARA early in 2005, the site has been fenced, the community has appointed a caretaker, and temporary signage has been put in place. TARA has received Kshs 1.2 million (about $15,000) from the Safaricom Foundation to set up an interpretive center and to restore the damage caused by vandalism. The site should be open to the public late in 2005.

As Kakapel is such an interesting site, a reconstruction of the rock shelter featured prominently in the exhibition at the Nairobi museum. In February 2005, TARA sponsored a group of 25 children from the Kakapel Primary School, along with their headmaster and two teachers, to come to Nairobi to see their local heritage presented to Kenyans and the world. Slightly more girls than
boys, the group were in standards 4-8 (approx age 9-15). Also accompanying the group were the local sub-chief (government representative) and the present owner of the land on which the site is located, Ms Mary Idionyi. When she saw the reconstruction, Ms. Idionyi said, “it looks like you’ve taken my rock and brought it here!”

For most of the children it was their first trip to Nairobi, and they were able to visit the rest of the museum as well as the Nairobi National Park and the Bomas of Kenya (traditional dances and villages). The headmaster, Patrick Chesiya, mentioned that the project will benefit the school through increased educational exchanges and contacts, local pride and the expansion of the horizons of the children.

During their visit to the museum, the cheque from the Safaricom Foundation was presented to TARA’s treasurer, Tom Hill, who had arrived the previous day from New York. Les Davies, the Safaricom Foundation’s chairman, expressed his keen hope that the project will contribute to the local economy in the Kakapel area.

For anyone interested in visiting the Kakapel site before the visitor facilities are completed, please contact either TARA or the Kitale Museum.

A VISIT TO THE NATIONAL MUSEUM
An essay by Burudi Jemilah Zipporah, 14 yrs
Kakapel Primary School

I was overjoyed when I was chosen to go to Nairobi to the National Museum to represent my school as an ambassador. Surely I had never been there before. What I knew about Nairobi I had been reading in the newspaper and watching on the television, but that day I was going to step into the capital city of Kenya.

We were taken to the rock art exhibition. We learnt that rock art is very important because it tells us about what people used in the past and what kind of animals were found in the past and in a given area. We were told that rock art in Africa is found in countries like Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, South Africa, Chad, Tarmisia, Egypt and Algeria. Surely, this was just part of our Geography, History and Civics because we also learnt why the people of South Africa came in Africa.

At Bomas of Kenya we saw dances like Nyatili, Mungero, Kikuyu, Kuyamba, Omaru, Sengenya and Pokashen. The most interesting part of the journey was in Bomas of Kenya where my friend Bright danced with a dancer and another boy called Bernard. We visited villages in Kenya like - Taita, Maua, Milakenda, Karua, Iwo, Kisii, Kalfins, Kumber and Lusha.

Jemilah is looking forward for the next visit and I know I will learn more again. I am very thankful to TARA! Actually, whether it rains or the sun shines, the memory of that day still lingers in my mind.

Facing page top: Pupils and teachers from Kakapel Primary School join Tom Hill (Board Director and Treasurer TARA) and TARA CDO Amolo Nj’wemo in receiving the cheque from Safaricom. Inset: Graffiti at Kakapel. Picture strip: Pupils from Kakapel wait to enter the Nairobi Museum during their visit. The headmaster, Mr Chesiya explains the Kakapel interpretive plan during their tour of the rock art exhibition. TARA’s Amolo Nj’wemo and Alec Campbell when they met with community leaders at Kakapel in February, 2005. Community members at the site in Kakapel. Ms Idionyi, the present owner of the land on which the site is located, during her visit to the Nairobi Museum. Below: Kakapel rock above site, an aerial view.

Photos for museum exhibition visit © Rosvena White / TARA.
MODERN USE OF ROCK ART

By David Coulson and Alec Campbell

One very positive influence which has served to protect some of Africa's remoter rock art sites is the respect accorded to them by today's incumbents i.e. as "sacred sites". Even though present inhabitants may be ancestrally unconnected with the artists of long ago, they nevertheless revere the sites and the imagery within them. Historically there are many precedents of, for example, Christian churches being built on sites that were sacred to earlier and completely different religions.

We ourselves have come across a number of interesting examples of this phenomenon in the rock art world. In Zimbabwe's Matobo Hills for instance, we have often come across small shrines with food offerings outside painted shelters.

On a different occasion we recorded some rock paintings in a suburb of Harare. The site had become swamped by urban development and was, by this time, located in the centre of a small park surrounded by modern housing. We visited the site on a Sunday and noticed how several religious ceremonies were being conducted all around the painted rocks which seemed to have become a focal point. Significantly the paintings themselves (above) were untouched by any graffiti or vandalism.

In 2004 we visited a little known engraving site on the southern slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro, northern Tanzania. We believe these engravings to be several thousand years old but noted what appeared to be fairly modern scratchings on the biggest engraved rock. We learnt from a 1952 publication by Fosbrook and Morealle that these had been made when the site was used in the late 1800's for male initiation ceremonies, hence the scratchings.

Recently in Kenya we heard that an important painting site which TARA has recorded south of Mt. Elgon is being used by local church groups for religious ceremonies. The rock paintings at this site span a period of several thousand years and both the site and probably the rock below which it is located have clearly long been considered sacred.

In South Africa (northern Cape) we visited a site, Thaba Sion, in 1997 where a small hill was covered in rock engravings believed by experts to have been made thousands of years ago. The site is situated on tribally-owned land in the northern Cape. It's name literally means House of God/Zion and was given to it by the Zionist community who originally settled here. Perhaps they assumed the images had been engraved by God, or maybe they named it thus because they recognized it as a sacred site.

In Niger's Air Mountains (Sahara) we visited a site where life-size engravings, perhaps made 1000 years ago or more, had recently been coloured-in using black and white pigment. The site was on a caravan route and one theory explained to us was that the colouring may have been done in order to reactivate the power of the original images in order to protect the caravans. This was after all during the Tuareg rebellion of the 1990's when it was dangerous to travel (see photo below).


In southern Algeria local Tuareg showed us how they still use a large and ancient rock-gong for divination purposes. Stones are rhythmically rocked in specially made holes while other stones are rolled on its surface to produce resonant chimes. The Tuareg say that they did not make this gong themselves but inherited it from the previous inhabitants, perhaps 2000 years ago. It may have been the original inhabitants who taught them how to interpret its sounds which they believe speak of the past and predict future harvests, droughts and wars, as well as successes and disasters.
SAHARA HORSES
By David Coulson

Africa's largest concentration of rock art is found in north Africa’s Sahara Desert and one of the commonest images in the Sahara from Mauritania in the west to Egypt in the east is the horse, sometimes running, sometimes mounted by warriors and sometimes pulling chariots.

During the last 10 years my colleague Alec Campbell and I have travelled many thousands of miles through the Sahara and have built up an extensive collection of horse images, some of which are illustrated here. In the process of going through our collection TARA's Digital Archive Project Manager Rowena White noticed a remarkable similarity in the schematic styles used to depict horses in Mauritania (below left and 1 on the map) and the style used some 3,500 kilometres further east in Chad (below right and 2 on the map).

Engravings of horses are common in Niger’s Air Mountains where they are always shown attached by a cord to a warrior holding spears. The horse is always depicted on the right of the warrior. The fact that this is always the case suggests the scene must have some symbolic significance.

As far as we know, although horses came to Egypt nearly 4,000 years ago, they did not reach the rest of north Africa until 3,500 years ago or later. This therefore gives us a maximum date for rock paintings and engravings depicting horses.
For over fifty years Professor Farbrizio Mori has been known throughout the rock art world for his important research and many expeditions to southern Libya’s Akakus Mountains. Some might say that Mori, now over 80 years old, has become the grand old man of Saharan rock art!

Mori made his first discoveries in Libya at about the same time that French archaeologist Henri Lhote revealed some of the now famous paintings in Algeria’s Tassili n’ Ajjer to the world, only a short distance across the border from Libya’s Akakus Mountains. Both men played major roles in putting African rock art on the world map. They did this by showing that these were not “primitive doodlings” but “important art” of a parallel quality to the finest cave art in Europe (e.g. Lascaux and Altamira).

In the early days (1950’s and 1960’s) photographic techniques were still not sufficiently developed to enable researchers to accurately record most Saharan rock paintings, so what Lhote and Mori did in those days was to trace the paintings first and then fill in and touch up the tracings in such a way that they became supposedly faithful copies of the originals. Seeing these magnificent life-size reproductions, many of which are now displayed in Rome’s Pigorini Museum, one can well imagine the impact they must have had on the public at that time. Amazing to think that sophisticated paintings like this existed in the middle of the Sahara Desert!! But, contrary to what many people, including rock art researchers thought, the reproductions were not always entirely faithful to the original paintings.

Although Mori’s artists had in most cases accurately recorded the images themselves, they had sometimes taken an image from a different site or from another part of a site and dropped it into a panel to improve the overall composition. This brave and pioneering era of rock art research in Libya forms the core of a forthcoming book “The Memory of the Art”, by Savino di Lernia and Daniela Zampetti.

In mid-February this year I was in Rome and was taken to see these reproductions in the Pigorini Museum by Professor Savino di Lernia, head of the Italian Archaeological team in Libya. For a number of years Savino was a pupil of Mori’s and now carries on his important work in the Libyan Sahara. I was impressed by the quality and state of preservation of most of the reproductions.
TARA is planning exciting and ground-breaking scientific expeditions in the coming year and would like to invite partners to join us. We are asking each partner to contribute 6000 UK pounds to the cost of the expedition, which will include all your in-country costs (but not airfare from your home country). If you are interested, please contact us in good time as space is limited!

**ANGOLA SEPTEMBER 2005**

Join a team from TARA, including David Coulson and Alec Campbell, on their first survey trip to Angola. The trip will visit rock art sites in Angola’s southern and central provinces and record them for TARA’s archive and publication. In southern Angola, we expect to find engravings similar to those in northern Namibia, probably of Bushman origin. Further north, we may encounter Late White paintings or Twinstyle paintings. The trip is expected to take about 3 weeks.

**LIBYA LASER RECORDING FEBRUARY 2006**

TARA is pioneering the use of new technology to record engravings thousands of years old. TARA will visit southern Libya in February 2006 along with Dr Savino di Lernia, eminent Italian archaeologist, and UK archaeologist Dr Tertia Barnett. Dr Barnett will head up a special 3-D laser recording team. Sites to be recorded include the Fighting Cats (left) now in serious danger of crumbling having stood for perhaps 10,000 years. The expedition should spend about 10 days in the field.

Please note these trips are scientific and not tourist safaris. Accommodation is basic and you might be asked to assist with technical work and generally to contribute to the work of the expedition.

**TARA ON METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART WEBSITE**


We at TARA are continuously updating our site (www.africanrockart.org). If you would like to exchange links with us, please contact us.
Join us on a Helicopter Tour of East African Rock Art
November 5-15 2005

Join TARA’s rock art experts led by David Coulson and Alec Campbell on a 10-day tour of East African rock art.

We will visit Konda province in central Tanzania, where we will see Red Paintings first studied by the Leakeys in the 1950s, some of which might be as much as 8000 years old. In the Lake Victoria region, we will see Twa-style geometric paintings that pre-date the arrival of pastoralists or agriculture in the region. We shall stop off in the Serengeti National Park for two nights, where we shall have a chance to view a remarkable rock gong (with numerous cupules), as well as Serengeti’s amazing wildlife. In northern Tanzania, we shall see Late White paintings which are relatively recent since the white paint tends to fade and disappear with time. The journey to these sites will take us through some of Africa’s most spectacular scenery!

Moving north, we shall visit Kakapel shelter in western Kenya with its variety of styles including unusual paintings of cattle, which could be several thousand years old. From here we shall travel to the central highlands of Kenya, where we will see Meat-Feasting paintings that appear to be unique to eastern Africa. For bird lovers, we will have an opportunity to see a wide variety of birds at some of our evening camps including many rare birds.

Near the shores of Lake Turkana, the Jade Sea, we shall see Sahara-type engravings as well as lineage symbols from 3000 years ago. Lake Turkana lies in the north of Kenya near the Ethiopian border. Some 200 miles long, it is surrounded by desert.

Accommodation is at exclusive safari camps and small luxurious inns. Cost $25,000 per person. Only 8 people will join us on this fantastic once-in-a-lifetime experience, so contact TARA soon if you want to come!
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TARA would like to thank its major supporters, the Ford Foundation and the Robert and Ann Lurie Foundation, who have continued to provide funding for TARA’s major activities in 2004/2005 including the African rock art conference, the museum exhibition, ongoing survey and conservation work and TARA’s institutional development. TARA thanks the Andrew Mellon Foundation for its continuing support of the digital archive project. TARA also appreciates support from the Safaricom Foundation for the Kakapel project.

TARA would also like to thank Safaricom Ltd, Bamburi Cement Ltd and British American Tobacco Ltd for their support of the Nairobi museum exhibition. TARA also thanks the Heritage Insurance Company Ltd, Giraffe Manor, the Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Management in Mozambique project and the Australian Embassy in Nairobi for their support for the rock art conference. TARA would also like to thank individual donors including Bob and Maria-Jose Friedlander, Pamela Roberts, Julia Maynard and Robert Mark.

TARA SIGNS MOU WITH THE NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF KENYA

In December 2004, TARA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Museums of Kenya (NMK) for the conservation of rock art in Kenya. Under the terms of the MOU the two institutions will work together to conserve rock art sites, and to make certain sites accessible to the public in a responsible way. The MOU stresses the importance of community involvement in the long-term management and conservation of rock art. The first site on which TARA and the NMK will cooperate is Kakapel in western Kenya (see pages 8-9).

FRIENDS OF TARA

Robert Hefner III
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TARA is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation registered in the US and with offices in Nairobi, Kenya. Your donation will be used to support TARA’s valuable work all over Africa.

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**Printed T-shirts US$ 13.20**
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**Basket: US$20.70**
Authentic Kenyan ‘Kyondo’ basket by TARA. Sisal or Wheat; TARA Man or White Lady

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An autographed book by David Coulson and Alec Campbell.

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**Rock Art in East Africa**
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A booklet that introduces you to East African rock art.

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