

**AFRICAN ROCK ART MANAGEMENT AND THE CASE OF BIRNIN
KUDU ROCK ART CENTER JIGAWA, STATE NIGERIA**

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Africa is rich and diverse with unique rock paintings and engravings across the continent spreading from north-Africa, central Africa, south Africa, eastern Africa and western Africa regions. Rock art in Africa can be looked at in the context of some interpretive themes: these include symbolism, shamanism, sacred sites and communication with Devine goddess, sun etc. The growing number of rock painting images are not carbon-dated and documented across the continent. Thanks to the efforts of TARA (TRUST FOR AFRICAN ROCK ART), numerous works have been documented and protected in Kenya. Likewise in Nigeria, one of the most populous nations among the west-African states with great socio-cultural, tribal, and religious diversity, different rock art images and sites were discovered.

Birnin Kudu Local Government, being one out of the 27 local governments in Jigawa Northwestern Nigeria, was blessed with different sites housing rock painting images of cattle, a rock shelter/cave and a bow and arrow etc. The distribution of rock painting sites occurred in four different locations:

- Mesa rock (Dutsen Mesa) = contained different style of domestic cattle – long legged, long bodied which is extinct
- Murufu Rock (Dutsen Murufu) = contained short horned bull and a painter on the rock
- Atiye Rock (Dutsen Atiye) = contains rock painting images and a shelter

The Dutsen Murufu site was discovered on 15th Dec, 1964 while the Dutsen Habude site discovered on 5th August, 1964 by the NCMM. Another interesting site was discovered by the management and staff of the newly created Birnin Kudu rock art interpretation center (NCMM) Nigeria in 2011.

Achievements

A newly established rock art interpretation center under the leadership of Mallam Yusuf Abdallah Usman recorded numerous achievements, including:

- a) Establishing new rock art center charged with the protection and conservation of the rock paintings.
- b) Employing a trained curator, staff to manage the center etc., a conservator, protection officers, education staff, and an ethnographer.
- c) Declaration of the site as a national monument.
- d) Commencement of the center building and site.

Challenges

The challenges are little public knowledge or understanding and lack of a community understanding of the importance of rock painting as the history of prehistoric people. There is little interest in investment and research by people in academia, the private sector or NGOs. There is also a disregard in the media of the opportunities to create awareness about the importance of rock painting as the tools

of education, art and culture, commerce, fashion and eco-tourism to benefit the Community.

The aforementioned problems prompted us to embark on a serious community sensitization public enlighten campaign, focus group discussion, and student outreach program to educate the public about the importance of protecting preserving and conserving rock painting images. Our strategy mainly emphasizes student outreach programs.

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