



# I LOVE ROCK ART



## NIGERIA



TRUST FOR AFRICAN ROCK ART



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## FRONT & BACK COVER CAPTIONS

**Top left:** Community member watch archaeologists, Rumfar Shaho, Bauchi State

**Top Right:** Symbolic Rock painting, Old Karya, Bauchi State

**Middle Left:** Paintings of cattle, Birnin Kudu, Jigawa State

**Middle Right:** Carved monolith, Nikrigom, Cross River State

**Bottom Left:** Monolith at Alok Open Air Museum, Cross River State

**Bottom Right:** Monolith at Nkarasi, Cross River State



This publication was created through funding from the United States Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation in the framework of the project, *Rock Art of Nigeria from Cross River to Jigawa: Preservation and Promotion*.



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Carved monolith at Alok, near Ikom, Cross River State

## ABOUT TARA

TARA is the Trust for African Rock Art. It is a group of people who want to find rock art, teach others about it, and help to protect it. TARA wants everyone in Africa, and around the world, to know what rock art is, why it is important, and why we should not damage it. TARA wants to take as many pictures of rock art as possible so that if the real rock art is damaged, people can still see the pictures.

TARA was founded in 1996 by David Coulson, who is a photographer, with the help of Mary Leakey, one of the first women archaeologists in the world.



Carved Monolith representing a human figure, Cross River



Two of the local clan chiefs with Paramount Ruler in the background, at Emanghabe community hall



Red paintings of horses and riders Birnin Kudu

## INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN ROCK ART

A long time ago, all over the world, people used to paint and carve pictures onto the natural rock in the areas where they lived. In Africa, the pictures mainly represented animals and people, and also designs. Very rarely the artists painted plants; they never drew hills and rivers.

The earliest pictures that we can still see today may be more than 5,000 years old. When you look at pictures in this booklet, remember that those ancient artists did not read or write as we do today. It makes us wonder how they could draw so accurately and engrave with such care. We must also remember that rock paintings and engravings were an early form of communication, because the artists were telling their communities about how they saw their world. This art is our heritage, a part of our roots in this land. We must care for it so that our children and our children's children can also see, study and enjoy it.

- by David Coulson, TARA Executive Chairman.

Kofi Annan (right) and Nelson Mandela (Left) were two of the most important African leaders in the world. Here is what they had to say about rock art:

**Kofi Annan:** "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."

**Nelson Mandela:** "Africa's rock art is the common heritage of all Africans, but it is more than that. It is the common heritage of humanity."



David Coulson,  
Chairman of TARA

Do you  
know who Kofi  
Annan and Nelson  
Mandela are? Read  
what they said  
about children  
and rock art.



## WHAT IS ROCK ART

Rock art is the artistic work made by earlier inhabitants on rock hundreds and sometimes thousands of years ago. This means that a long time ago, when people wanted to draw or paint, they did it on rocks – because they did not have any paper, pencils or pens.

Rock art can be made by painting on rocks and these are called Rock Paintings. People made their own paint by using different materials like charcoal, soft white stones, ochre (clay that is red, yellow or brown) and other dry things, and then grinding them with stones to make PIGMENTS. A pigment is a dry powder, and when mixed with liquids like blood, milk, fat and plant juices, turns into paint. The liquids are known as BINDERS because they help pigments to stick to the rock. After mixing their homemade paint, early humans would use their fingers, sticks, animal hairs or feathers to apply the paint on the rock. Other images can be made by carving or engraving the rock surface directly.



A carved monolith at Ekelebogor site,  
Cross River



Ancient Cattle paintings,  
Birnin Kudu

In ancient times, people used hard and sharp objects of stone or metals to make engravings by pecking the rock. Sometimes they used other rocks or stone knives, and in this way they also carved and decorated MONOLITHS from existing rocks. These rocks were usually naturally shaped to look like a human face/body and were made by the ancestors of the Bakkor people.

Local musicians playing ancient rock  
gongs in Birnin Kudu. Rock gongs are  
rocks that have natural resonance  
and make a ringing sound when you  
strike them



Conservation tip: When you  
visit a rock art site, do not touch  
the art because your fingers  
leave sweat and oil on the art,  
which cannot be removed later.

## WHAT DOES ROCK ART TELL US?

Rock art is important because it gives us a clue into what happened a long time ago. For example, the image on the right shows a rock engraving found in Niger. When you look at rock paintings and engravings, you see animals, people and designs. We ask ourselves several questions: What does the image mean, why did the artists make them?

Which animal is this? It is a giraffe, the tallest animal in the world. These giraffe carvings were made 7000 years ago and are the same size as a real giraffe. The rock carvings are in northern Niger. 80% of this country is covered by the largest desert in Africa, the Sahara Desert.

Why are giraffe pictures so common? We don't know the answer, but we suspect that giraffe pictures may have been a symbolic representation of what giraffe meant to them. In southern Africa, Bushmen (also known as San) believe that giraffe are associated with rain and abundance.



### Conservation tip:

**When you visit a rock art site, never pour liquids on the engravings and paintings! This spoils them and the damage cannot be undone.**



Look at this other image. What do you see? This painting, which was found in Tanzania, shows a man with bow and arrow and a kudu. A kudu is a large African antelope. This painting shows us that the man may have wanted to shoot the kudu, and it tells us that people hunted kudu a long time ago.

## ROCK ART SITES

A place where the rock paintings and engravings are found is known as a **rock art site**. Rock art sites are found all over the world. Scientists (archaeologists and anthropologists) and photographers are still searching and learning new things about them. Photographers take pictures of the rock art so that other people can see and learn about them.

The year in which a painting or engraving was made is known as its date. Finding the date for the rock art involves a lot of experiments. They can test the rocks or the pigment used to make the rock art. Scientists can also estimate the dates for the rock art by looking at similar rock art images that have already been dated.

For example, if the scientist sees that one image looks like another, they may believe that they were made by similar people at a similar time. This kind of dating works better when the rock art sites are near each other. Finding the exact date that the art was made is really hard and therefore archaeologists and anthropologists usually give approximate dates. An approximate date is like saying 1,000 to 2,000 years ago. Finding the dates of the art is important because it can help us tell who made it.

An **archaeologist** (say "ar key olo gist") is a person who looks at old things and sites to find out how people lived in the past.

An **anthropologist** (say "an thro po lo gist") is a person who studies the origins and customs of people and their cultures.

A **photographer** is a person who takes pictures with a camera.

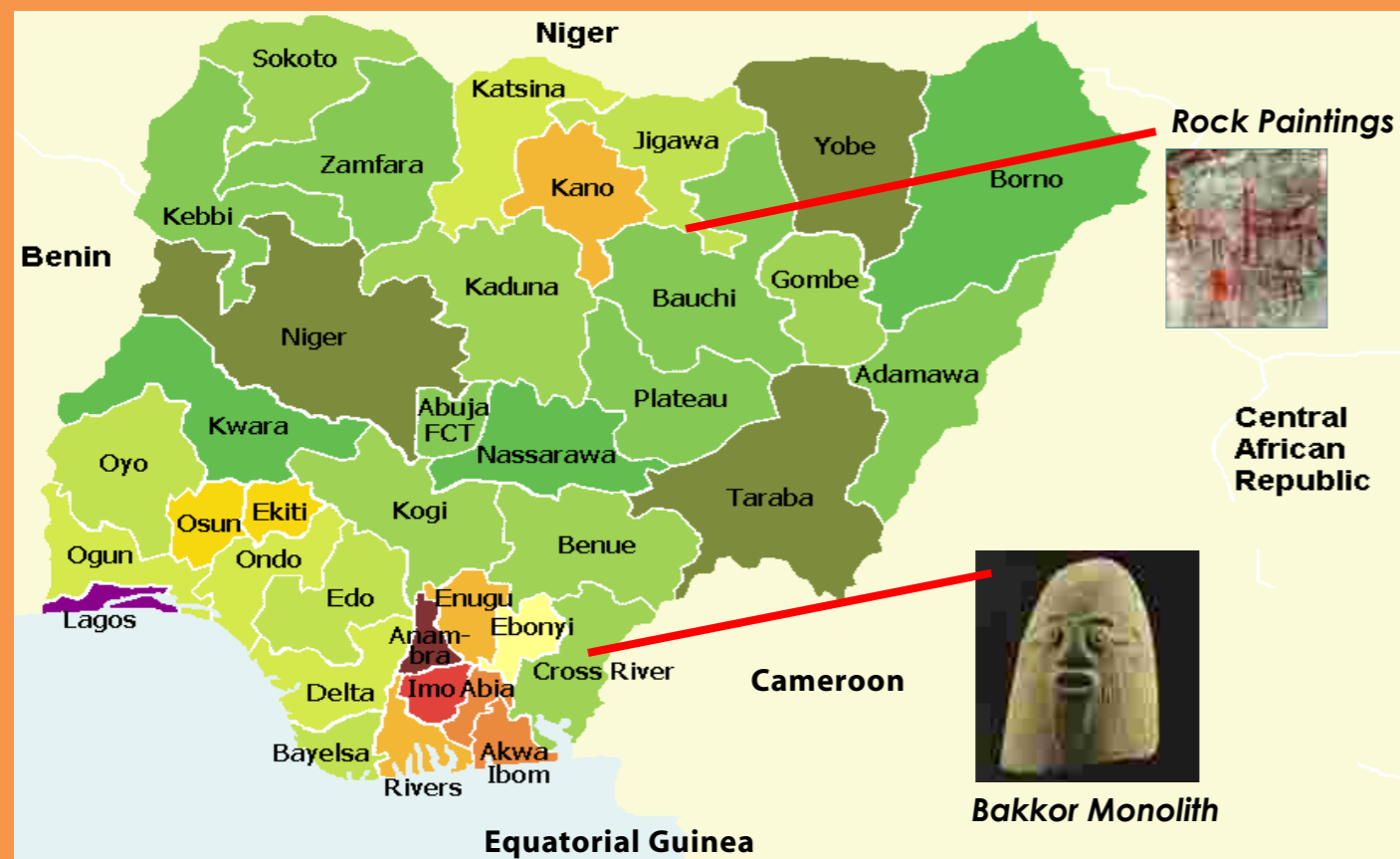
**Note:** Archaeologists and Anthropologists also try to find out when the rock art was made and who made the rock art (a person who makes art is called an artist).



*Nigerian archaeologists from Ahmadu Bello University and the University of Calabar work with TARA to document monoliths in Cross River State*



*Community members work with Nigerian archaeologists and Factum Foundation to document a monolith site near Ikom*



Rock Paintings

Central African Republic



Bakkor Monolith

## ROCK ART UNDER THREAT

Sometimes a rock art site is damaged and this makes it hard for others to enjoy it. Rock art can be spoiled by people, animals, water and the sun. When people write, scratch or paint on top of rock art, it is called graffiti, which damages the art, is disrespectful of our ancestors and prevents other people from enjoying or learning from it.

In Nigeria, the National Commission for Museums and Monuments works with communities to protect rock art from such damage. Sometimes walls or barriers are built for this purpose, especially in towns. Rock art can also be damaged by unrestricted construction, agricultural work, mining and quarrying, and deforestation.

Protecting rock art from such damage is known as conservation. Below are examples of graffiti damage as well as rock art which was broken by people who were trying to steal it so they can sell it illegally. Such people are known as vandals.



Grffiti on rock paintings,  
Nyero, Uganda.



4,000 year old engraving in Morocco  
broken by thieves

## SAVING NIGERIA'S ROCK ART



Many monoliths have been damaged and broken by fires  
in the dry season



Cassava farming threatens this  
ancient monolith



This monolith was destroyed by fire when  
crops were burned



These animal paintings at the Geji Rock  
Painting National Monument, Bauchi State,  
which are very old, have recently been  
destroyed by vandals



This monolith has fallen over and is now lying  
on the ground where it will soon get destroyed

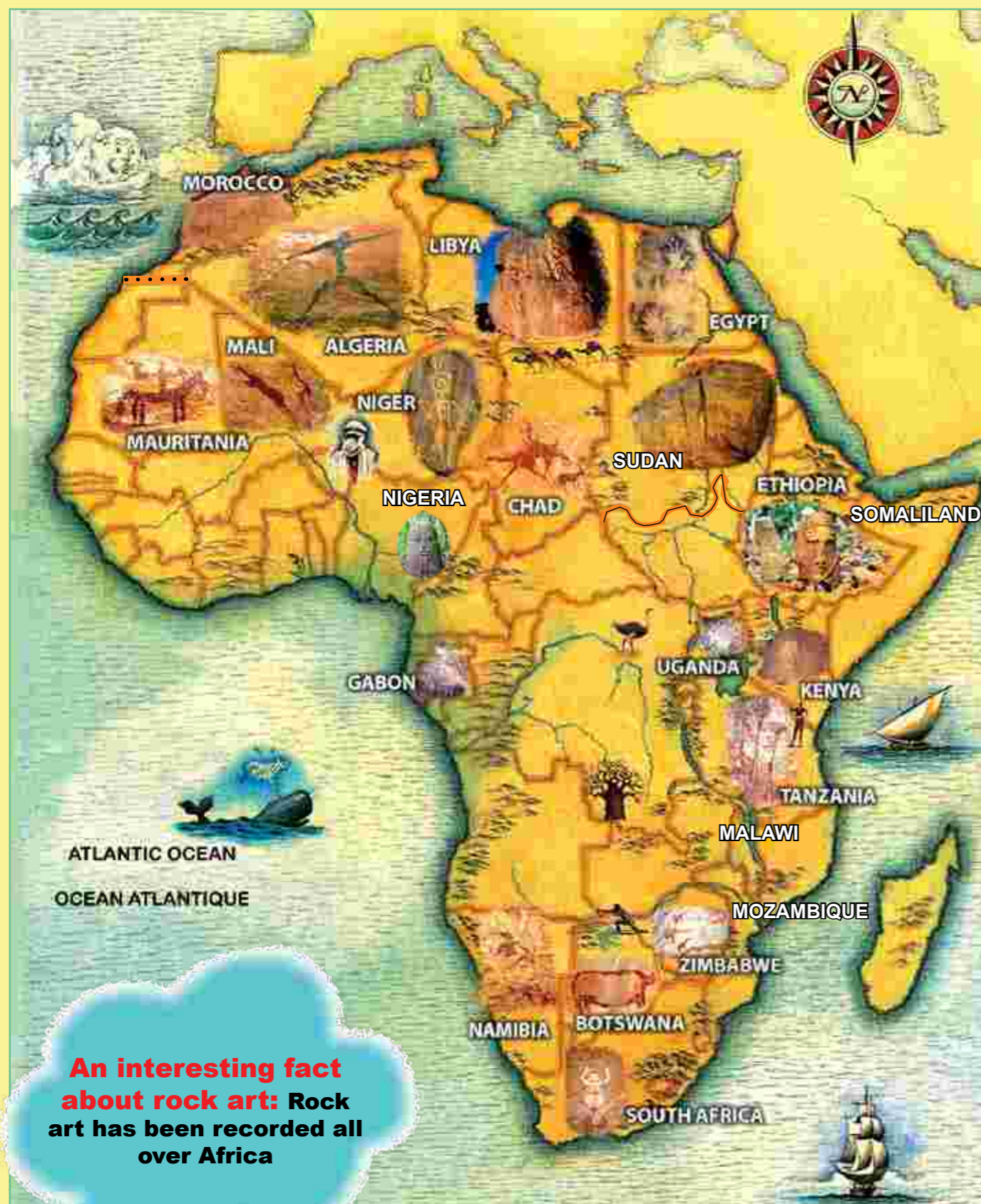
### Conservation tip:

Do not outline or fill in rock art engravings because it spoils the varnish and makes dating the art difficult. Varnish is the outer layer of an engraving or painting. Dating rock art helps us to learn who made the art.

## ROCK ART IN AFRICA

Rock art is found in many countries of Africa. Look at the map of Africa: do you know some of these countries?

Here are some examples of paintings and engraving found in Africa.



## EXAMPLES OF ROCK ART IN AFRICA



4,000 year-old paintings of humans, Tanzania



Painting of a man running with a bow, Algeria



Painting of a camel & rider and a cow, Chad



Paintings of concentric circles on Mfangano Island, Kenya



Engraving of a cow with a small elephant inside, Morocco



30,000 year-old painting of a predator, Apollo 11 Cave, Namibia



Engraving of mythical animals, now called Fighting Cats, Libya



Painting of two therianthropes (part animal and part human) in South Africa

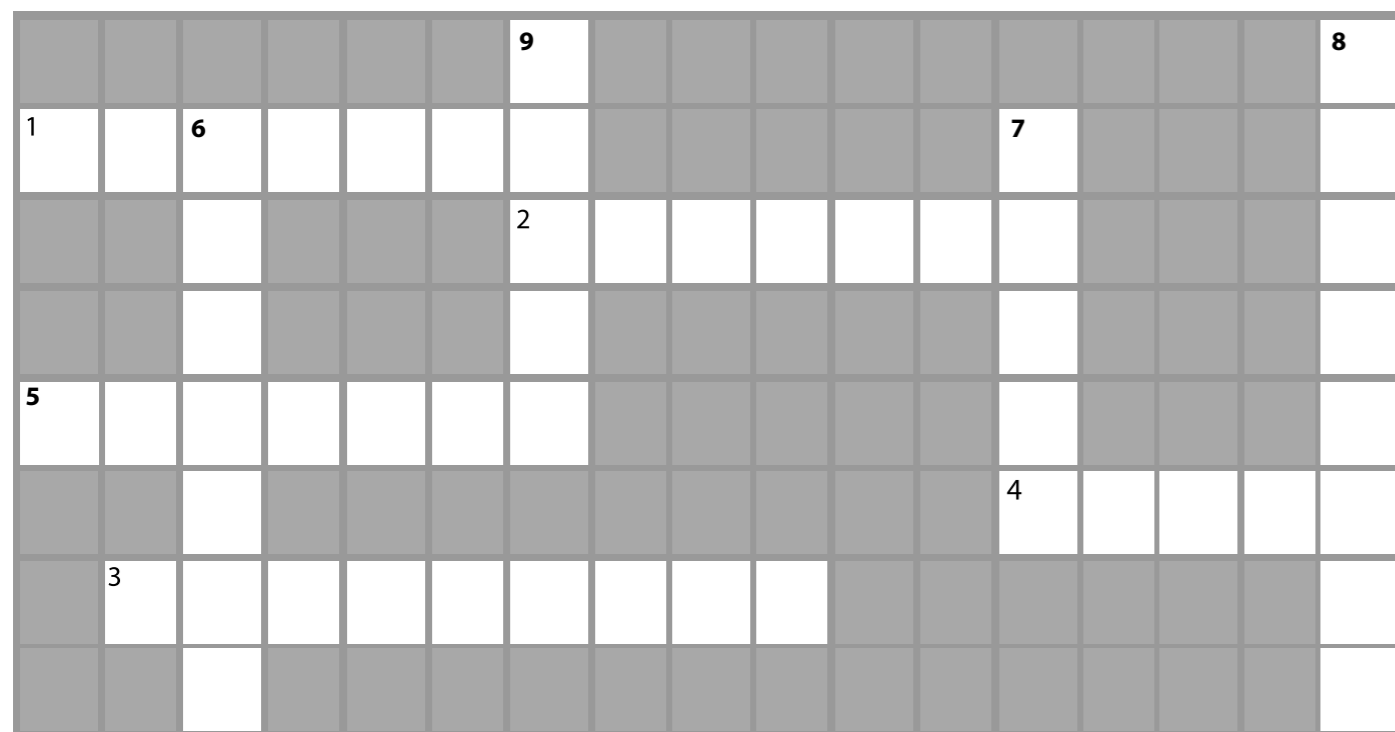
## Junior crossword

### ACROSS

1. Which is the tallest animal in the world?
2. In which country is the Apollo Cave found?
3. Which animal lives in water and has a long, big mouth with many sharp teeth?
4. In which country is the engraving of the Fighting Cats found?
5. Where are the Ikom Monoliths found?

### DOWN

6. What do you call the art of people made a long time ago? (two words)
7. Which animal lives in the desert and has a hump?
8. Which animal has a long trunk and two tusks?
9. In which country is the engraving of the camel found?



Rock engraving of a crocodile, Libya



Rock engraving of camel, at Kapesse Kenya



Painting of a giraffe and three figures, Namibia

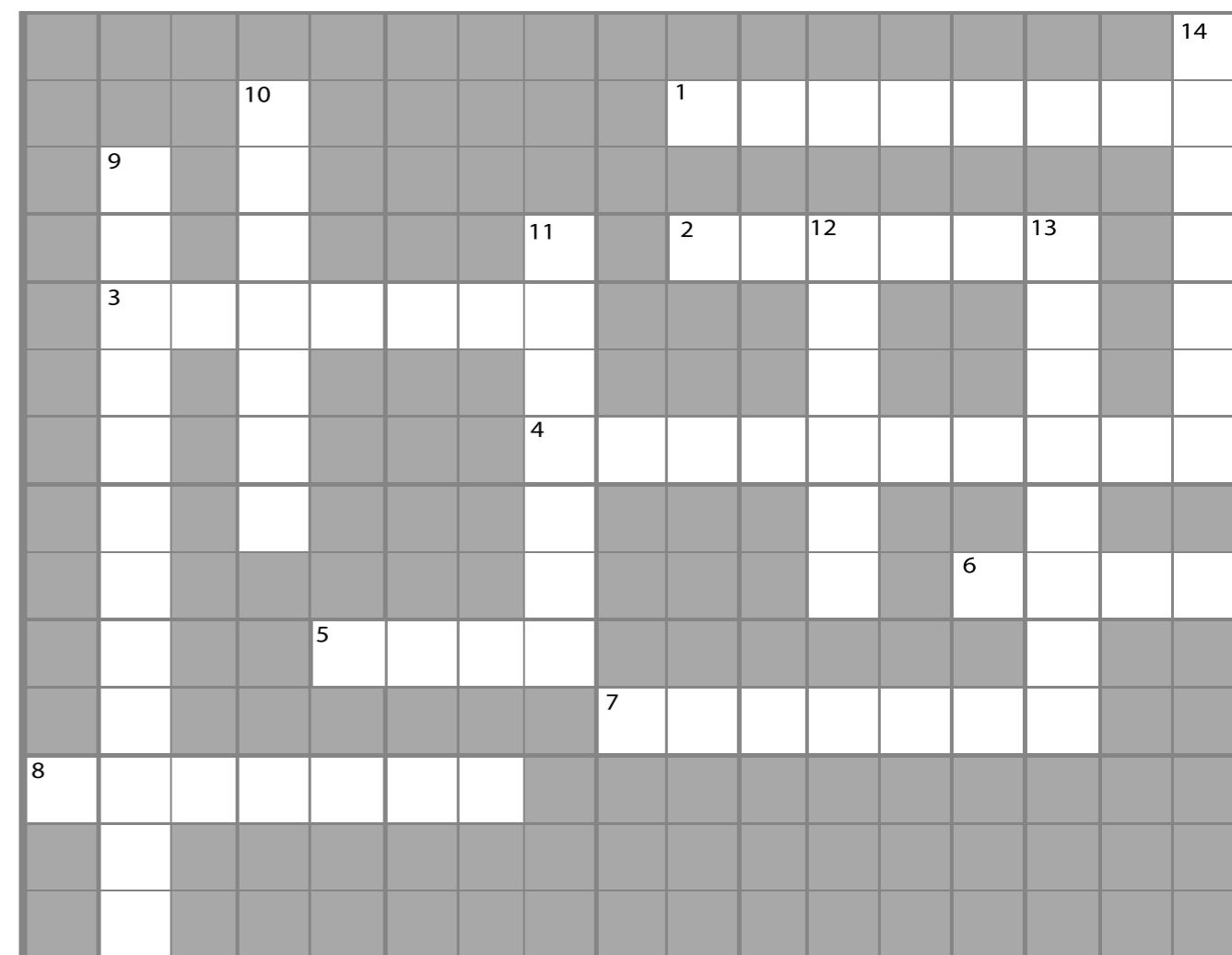
## Senior crossword

### ACROSS

1. In which country is the image of the kudu and a man with bow and arrow found?
2. In which place can people see displays of rock art and other historical and cultural features?
3. In which country is the Apollo 11 cave?
4. What are the carvings on stone called?
5. What do you call a place where rock art is found?
6. Which animals are fighting in an engraving in Libya?
7. The elephant inside a cow engraving is found in which country?
8. What do you call the liquids that help the paint stick to the rocks?

### DOWN

9. What do you call the protection of rock art and other environmental features?
10. What do you call the dry powdery substance used to make rock paintings?
11. In which region in Kenya is the image of the camel found?
12. Which is the biggest desert in Africa?
13. In which island in Kenya is the image of concentric circles found?
14. What do you call people who destroy rock art by writing on it or breaking it?



Find the following words in the word puzzle. The first one has been done for you. The words run in all directions.

1. KENYA

2. AFRICA

3. ROCK ART

4. ENGRAVING

5. NAMIBIA
6. ELEPHANT

7. CROCODILE

8. SAHARA

9. CAMEL

10. NIGERIA
11. MUSEUM

12. CONSERVATION

13. GRAFFITI

14. LIBYA

15. PAINTING
16. TARA

17. SAN

18. MASK

19. HERITAGE

20. CAVE
21. MONOLITH



JUNIOR CROSSWORD

- ACROSS

1. Giraffe

2. Namibia

3. Crocodile

4. Libya

5. Nigeria

6. Rockart
- DOWN

7. Camel

8. Elephant

9. Kenya

SOLUTIONS

SENIOR CROSSWORD

- ACROSS

1. Tanzania

2. Museum

3. Namibia

4. Engravings

5. Site

6. Cats
- DOWN

7. Morocco

8. Binders

9. Conservation

10. Pigment

11. Kapesse

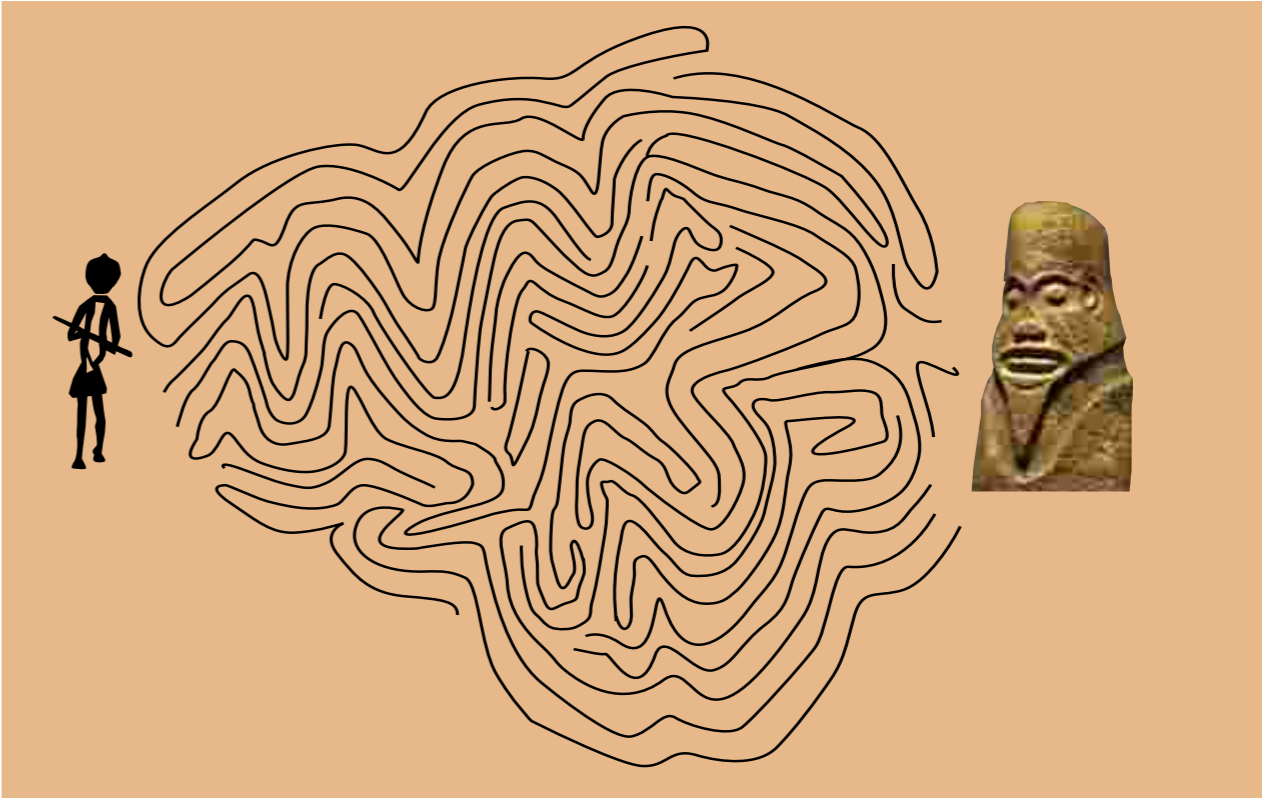
12. Sahara,

13. Mfangano

14. Vandals



PLEASE HELP PETER FIND THE MONOLITH



# I LOVE ROCK ART



## PARTNERS



UNICAL



ABU



FACTVM  
FOUNDTION  
for DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY  
IN CONSERVATION

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