



Photo: A. David Marais



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Above, clockwise: Paintings of catenary-shaped combs: Ndedema, Natal Drakensberg; Cederberg x2; Oorlogskloof.

Right: Frontal view of combs of an open nest in a pine tree in Pretoria.

Honeybee nests depicted as a series of combs hanging in catenary curves emulate that of free standing combs in nature of which 56 such patterns have been recorded in 38 rock sites in southern Africa⁹¹. Honeybee nests were also viewed side-on and painted as such, in this case illustrated with ladders below the combs where the black represents the brood and the upper



Photo: Jan van der Poll & Renée Rust

Honeybees, shown as red dots with white wings, in direct flight behind the lower man, Klein Karoo.

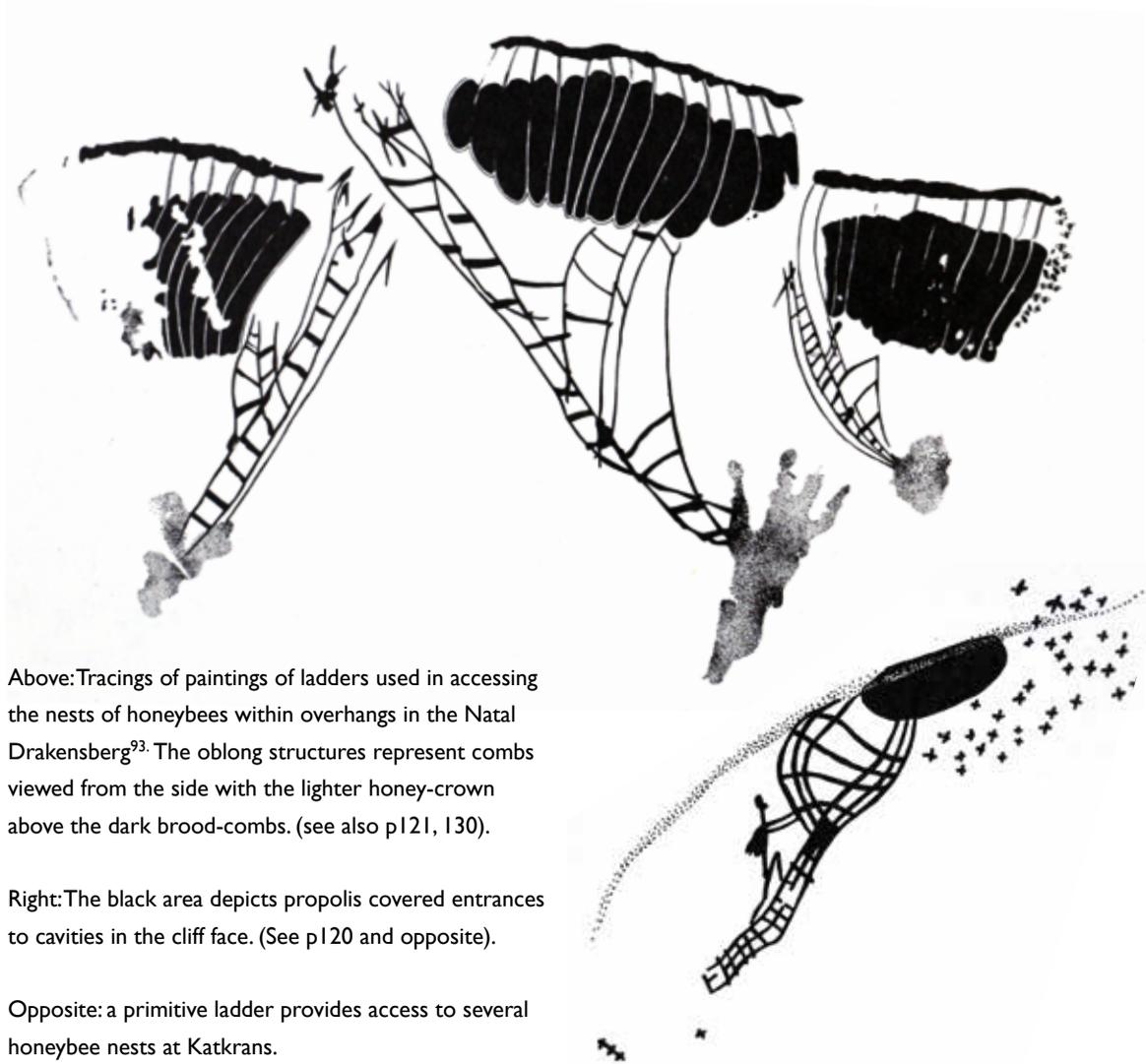
white the honey crown⁹².

'Formlings', once thought to depict honeybee nests but now recognized as those of termites occur in 311 examples at 222 sites of which 96% are in Zimbabwe⁹¹. Many paintings of bees, bees' nests, honeycombs and ladders (which were presumably employed to procure honey from the nests) have been recorded from the northern Natal Drakensberg^{93,94}. Makeshift ladders occur even today at the cliff nests at the Heuningberg (p111) and Buck Krantz (p120).

The Khoi used red ochre on their persons and as the main pigment in rock paintings. Colonel Gordon in November 1778 at the Orange River wrote of the 'Koraqua' that he met there⁹⁵:

They smear themselves with red paint and fat in which they put shining, broken fragments of stones such as mica. They get this from the Briquas or Caffers.

There were various sites where ochre was mined



Above: Tracings of paintings of ladders used in accessing the nests of honeybees within overhangs in the Natal Drakensberg⁹³. The oblong structures represent combs viewed from the side with the lighter honey-crown above the dark brood-combs. (see also p121, 130).

Right: The black area depicts propolis covered entrances to cavities in the cliff face. (See p120 and opposite).

Opposite: a primitive ladder provides access to several honeybee nests at Katkrans.

such as that in the Riversdale area and which was traded with other Khoi tribes in the same way as the Attaqua traded in dagga. The oldest ochre mine was discovered in the Bomvu Ridge in the Ngwenya massif of Swaziland which also yielded specularite used for body colouration, of which ancient man had removed at least 100 000 tons of ore⁹⁶. This mining operation has been definitely dated at 43 000 years ago but may go back even as far as 110 000 years ago with the removal of some 2 700 tons of hematite from the still-extant Lion Cave mine⁹⁷. Shiny blue-black specularite, a form of iron ore, was valued as a

cosmetic and with fat was rubbed into skin or hair⁵⁵.

A large mine called Blinkklipkop near Postmasberg was mined before 800 AD, and regarded as a sacred site, attracted peoples from afar who emerged 'nearly as black as a chimney sweep' but with sparkle that Van Riebeeck recorded in the Cape where they smeared themselves with 'soot' yet shone like mirrors⁵⁵. This suggests a trade in ochre and specularite over vast distances and partly explains why the Hottentots at the Cape would enter the galleys of ships and smear themselves with soot and grease.

