

"I Have Already Seen in the Clouds": The Nature of the Water-creature among the |xam Bushmen and their Modern Descendants

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The 19th |xam Bushmen of the Upper Karoo, South Africa, told stories about a protean being called *!khwa*: ("water"), one of whose many shapes was that of a bovine they called "the water bull", which ritual specialists captured in order to cause rain over the land. This water-creature has been variously interpreted by scholars as a metaphor, a symbol of the dangers of water or a death-wielding divinity. This article seeks to demonstrate that for the |xam and their contemporary descendants the water-creature was, and still is, water itself, considered to be a living being when present in large concentrations, such as dams, rivers or permanent waterholes, or certain accumulations of clouds. Because of this the water-creature is a tangible entity connected with a vital substance, but whose dealings with human beings are always fraught with danger.

Keywords: |xam Bushmen, Bleek-Lloyd Collection, Karoo, water-creature, water-bull, rock art

1. Introduction

!khwa., which simply means "water, rain" (Bleek 1956: 431), is the term that the 19th century |xam Bushmen¹, a hunter-gatherer people of the Upper Karoo region in South Africa, used to call the being that here I will refer to as the water-creature. When it manifested itself in the form of a quadruped similar to a bovid, it was also called the *!khwa:-ka xoro*, the "water's *xoro*",

¹ The decision to use in this article the term "Bushman" rather than "San" is a matter of individual preference, there being at present no unanimity as to what is the more appropriate general term to refer to this linguistically-diverse group of communities, neither among researchers nor among the communities themselves.

normally rendered by Bleek and Lloyd as "the Rain's Bull" (see, for example, |haŋ#kass'o in B-LC, L.VIII.16 [LL91]: 7441', Bleek & Lloyd 1911: 194–195)² and, more rarely, |ka:ξxa, a term glossed in Dorothea Bleek's *Bushman Dictionary* as "bull" (1956) and which perhaps, unlike *xoro* (which also referred to ordinary cattle), was used only for a male water-creature (for the only example of usage known to me see below).³

Before proceeding, I have to say that we have the information given above thanks to the ethnographic archive known as the Bleek-Lloyd Collection (from now on, BL-C), kept at the Jagger Library of the University of Cape Town. The narratives that form the bulk of this archive fill 128 notebooks totalling about 12,000 manuscript pages. They were dictated in the 1870s by a group of |xam individuals, all but one, men, to philologist Wilhelm Bleek and his sister-in-law, Lucy C. Lloyd, who considered these collaborators their "Bushman Teachers". All of them came from the Upper Karoo, an extensive semi-desert south of the Gariiep (Orange) River that is part of a larger region known then as Bushmanland.

The complex of beliefs around the water-creature as documented in the B-LC has been explored by Roger Hewitt (1981: 75–88) in his pioneering study of |xam oral literature. These materials were revisited by Ansie Hoff (1997; 1998; 2011) and Sigrid Schmidt (1989; 1998). In their analyses, both researchers added a wealth of data from other historical sources and from their own fieldwork, extending their inquiries to the contemporary descendants of the |xam in the Northern Cape and, in the case of Schmidt, the Nama and Damara communities of modern Namibia.

In this article I will not deal in detail with the ground already covered by these researchers. For example, I will not refer in detail to the connection of *!khwa:* with the female puberty rituals of the |xam (for which see: Hewitt 1981: 75–88, 131–133, 198–201), or to the rain-specialists (see: Hoff

² For an explanation of Bleek-Lloyd Collection notebook references see next note.

³ The archival research and fieldwork in the Karoo area on which this article is in part based was to a large extent made possible by Prof. Pippa Skotnes of the Centre for Curating the Archive at the University of Cape Town, and Prof. Michael Wessels, then at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Also by Professor Simon Hall, of the Department of Archaeology at the University of Cape Town, who funded several fieldtrips in the period 2013–2016 as part of his National Research Foundation "Eighteenth and nineteenth century Khoe, San, Xhosa and colonial entanglement in the Karoo" grant. The Olifants River Area fieldwork, all of it conducted in September–November 2015, was done as part of the Clanwilliam Dam Heritage Mitigation Project, funded by the Department of Water and Sanitation of the Republic of South Africa and managed by PGS Heritage. I express here my gratitude to Professor John Parkington, who oversaw the project, and to Wouter Fourie of PGS Heritage and his staff for the trust they placed in me and their assistance during the period of fieldwork. My gratitude too to the Jagger Library of the University of Cape Town for permission to reproduce here Dialkwain's drawing of a *!khwa:-ka xoro*.

2011). Rather, I will focus on the water-creature as an ontologically fluid, yet tangible, entity. How does it relate to water as a physical "element"? How is it perceived by people who believe in it? How do these perceptions change according to the variations in water resources found in different areas? This aspect of the question has been generally overlooked by researchers, in spite of its crucial relevance to a proper understanding of the water-related beliefs and rituals of the |xam and other Khoisan peoples. In this article I will try to address the questions outlined above. Like Hoff and Schmidt, I will start with the beliefs of the 19th century |xam as documented in the B-LC and, more briefly, J. M. Orpen's short ethnography of the Maloti mountains (Orpen 1874; De Prada-Samper 2016a), but I will also discuss contemporary beliefs and narratives about the water-creature that are current among the present inhabitants of the Karoo area that was the home to the "|xam teachers" of Bleek and Lloyd (see below), as well as similar ones from other parts of the Karoo region. I will also bring in examples of narratives and beliefs from the communities of the Olifants River Valley, a better-watered area south of Karoo, rich in hunter-gatherer rock art, which is also inhabited by people of Khoisan descent.

2. What is a water-creature?

When discussing the available narratives and testimonies about rain and rainmaking given by Qing, Orpen's Maloti consultant, and by the "|xam teachers" of Bleek and Lloyd, archaeologist David Lewis-Williams considered that the depiction, in verbal and painted images, of rain as an animal was for the |xam, and in general for other Bushman peoples, a metaphor, based in the "basic analogy (...) between 'rain' and 'animal'" (Lewis-Williams 1981: 103). Lewis-Williams goes on to say that for the |xam, as for the contemporary Kalahari Bushmen, this metaphor and similar ones were "simply ways of speaking about a natural phenomenon" because the Bushmen "are not so credulous as to suppose that a rain cloud 'is' an animal", since "at this level, they perceive an analogical relationship" (Lewis-Williams 1981: 104). In later publications, Lewis-Williams has ratified this conclusion, although with some variations. Thus, in his book with David Pearce, we are told that, for the |xam, the rain/water embodied as an animal was "a being that appears in some tales", different from the *!khwa:-ka xoro* or rain-animal that the |xam rainmakers strove to control. Although Lewis-Williams goes on to say that, unlike the "metaphor" referred to above, the *!khwa:-ka xoro* was more than a mere "figure of speech" (Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2004: 141), in his recent book *Myth and Meaning* he states that the "rain-animals" that the rainmakers capture were "imaginary" (Lewis-Williams 2016: 152).

For Anne Solomon, another author that has paid special attention to "rain animals", *!khwa*: is the "embodiment of the storm" and "a dangerous force and a mighty and fearsome figure of death" that has its home in the waterhole, it being "in fact (...) the water in the waterhole" (Solomon 2007: 152). Even while recognising this fact, that the creature is the water itself, rather than a being that lives in it, Solomon conceives the "rain-animal" as something essentially apart from water, an equivalent to the "lesser god" of the Jul'hoansi of the Kalahari which, like *!khwa*:, is "linked to death and its domain" (Solomon 2007: 152).

For sociologist Roger Hewitt the creature was "a personification of all water but particularly rain-water" (Hewitt 1986: 77), while ethnographer Ansie Hoff, in her monograph about !xam beliefs and practices around rain, states that both Bushman and Khoikhoi peoples and their descendants, "viewed rain/water as beneficial but potentially dangerous and (...) symbolized it in the attitudes and behaviour of an extremely potent female or male mammal (...) or snake" (Hoff 2011: 7). However, Hoff quotes also the statement of a !xam descendant who told her: "The Snake and the water are but one" (2011: 16). Folklorist Sigrid Schmidt, on the other hand, sees the water-creature in its male form as representing "the fierceness of a heavy rainfall, the destructive side especially of the thunderstorm", and the female form as the "symbol of life-giving rain, of fertility" (Schmidt 1989: 204).

What is, then, this being about which we read in the 19th century archive? A real animal? A figure of speech? A figment of the imagination? An embodiment of death in the form of water and bad weather? A personification of water? A symbol? Or perhaps the water itself, as some of the authors suggest, without elaborating on this possibility?

3. "She lay, smelling the Rain's scent": the tangibility of the water-creature

The *!khwa*: of !xam stories and beliefs can be touched and smelled. It can be seen grazing outside its abode, flying in the sky from place to place or walking with long legs over the plain. Or it can literally take hold of an unsuspecting person in order to kill them, or drag its victim to another realm. In short, although *!khwa*: can certainly function as a metaphor and symbol and inhabit the imagination in many other ways, it is an inescapable physical reality. For Khoisan descendants over an extensive part of South Africa (especially those living along substantial bodies of water) it is something to reckon with because in the lives of these communities dealing with water in its multiple forms is part of daily life, as certainly was the case of their hunter-gatherer or herder ancestors.

Before dealing with the beliefs and stories of these communities, however, I will summarize here several of the narratives recorded in the 1870s by Bleek and Lloyd from their |xam teachers. The territory of these individuals falls roughly within the triangle formed by the towns of Brandvlei, in the west, Kenhardt to the north and Vanwyksvlei to the east (see: Deacon 1986). It is an extremely dry area, with very low levels of rainfall, in which permanent sources of water are very rare and far between, and take the form of waterholes and underground wells (known in Afrikaans as *puts*). As we will see, how the water-creature is conceived in a given area is to a large extent determined by the kind of hydrological resources available in it.

In the 19th century |xam narratives the water-creature appears in a variety of guises. In a story told by |haŋ#kass'o in September 1878, the water-creature, here initially called just *!khwa:*, "water", snatches from her hut a woman who has just given birth, and carries her on his back towards his abode, "the pit [*tsaxaukən*] from which he came out" (Bleek and Lloyd 1911: 195). In this tale *!khwa:* appears initially in the form of mist, but the narrator explained to Lloyd that the creature "resembled a bull [*xoro*], while he felt that (he) was the Rain's body" (Bleek and Lloyd 1911: 193). He also explained that "the Rain's Bull [*!khwa:-ka xoro*] goes out from his pit, and the pit becomes dry [because] the Rain has gone out, the Rain's Bull" (|haŋ#kass'o in: Bleek and Lloyd 1911: 195n).

A few days later, |haŋ#kass'o told a story in which a group of hunters of mythical times chase and kill an eland without knowing that it is actually *!khwa:*. When they cut the meat of the animal and try to roast it over the fire, its true nature becomes evident as it melts and eventually extinguishes the fire. *!khwa:* then becomes a *#hauru* (here translated as "pond") inside which the "Rain's body" goes, and which surrounds the hunters before transforming them into frogs (B-LC, L.VIII. 16 [LL91]: 7461–7462, L.VIII.17 [LL92]: 7463–7472; Lewis-Williams 2000: 222–223).

Some years before, in 1871, |haŋ#kass'o's father-in-law, ||kabbo, who combined his work as teacher with some gardening in the Bleeks home near Cape Town, told Lloyd that he had dreamed that he had spoken with *!khwa:* to ask that it "would wet the garden" for him, so he could "sit in peace while [*!khwa:*] was wetting the earth of the garden". ||kabbo told Lloyd that at home he frequently talked to *!khwa:*, and *!khwa:* "assented" (Lewis-Williams 2000: 263–265).

||kabbo's daughter, Swobba-||keŋ, who remained in the Karoo while her husband, |haŋ#kass'o, was taken prisoner to Cape Town, told the latter, and he in turn told Lloyd, that she had seen the body of *!khwa:* hovering over the town of Victoria West, with "pots" attached to it. It didn't look as if it were going to rain, but when these pots "fell down in the midst of Victoria West" (B-LC, L.VIII.23 [LL98]: 8011), a torrential rain was unleashed that destroyed

the stone houses and killed people and animals. The rain had been caused by the sound of a "sorcery's bell" (*!gí ta !gwárra*) that "people" were striking (B-LC, L.VIII.23 [LL98]: 8014–8015). We know from historical accounts that this happened on the night of the 27–28 February of 1871, and that the flood killed 62 people and almost wiped-out the entire town (Theal 1908: 171).

In December 1874 *!kweitən ta ||kən*, a woman who came from the "Grass country", an area to the west of *!haŋʔkass'o's* territory, told Lloyd a story about three girls, one of whom had recently entered puberty, who went gathering in the veld and saw a round cloud in the sky. They began to walk back towards their camp, as their parents had instructed them to do in such a case, but rain started to fall and puddles of water formed around them. When they had to jump over one of the puddles, which had the shape of a horned creature, two of the girls put an aromatic herb, *buchu*, "between the water('s) horns" and crossed safely. The one that was a "new maiden", tried to jump to other side, "and this water put her into the [*ʔhauru*], when she had intended that she should spring through the water". The girl is then transformed into a frog (B-LC, L.VI.1 [LL50]: 3930–3941). Here we have again the term *ʔhauru*, which Lucy Lloyd translated in this case as "great waterhole".

In all these narratives, the water-creature is a manifestation of water conceived as a living being that can adopt the different forms water takes: clouds (or mist), rain and liquid-, standing-water. Yet it can also show itself as an eland, or, more often, as I mentioned at the beginning of this article, as a quadruped similar to a bovid called *!khwa:-ka xoro*, "the water's *xoro*". *Xoro* is a term usually rendered as "bull" (Bleek & Lloyd 1911: 195) and "cattle" (Bleek 1956: 260); originally it was perhaps used to designate any large quadruped. In the story told by *!kweitən ta ||kən*, the water-creature actually shows itself in all these forms, the puddle on the ground having the shape of a horned-creature.

The stories show that the water-creature can move of its own volition, and that when it does so the concentration of water standing on the ground dries. The stories also tell us that the water-creature eats while "sitting" in a given place, presumably grazing around that place, which is then "shut in" (Bleek & Lloyd 1911: 193), a magic action that the creature also performs just before transforming into frogs the hunters that killed it in the form of an eland (B-LC, L.VIII.17 [LL92]: 7471). In these stories, the water-creature is bent on transforming those that crossed its path into frogs. He does this to the "new maiden" in *!kweitən ta ||kən's* story, and intends to do the same to the woman it abducts in *!haŋʔkass'o's* narrative summarized above, although in this case we don't know exactly the reasons for its actions (Bleek & Lloyd 1911: 195). In some narratives the creature not only transforms the disobedient maiden into a frog, but also her relatives, who are carried by a whirlwind (*||go||go*) towards the waterhole and thrown inside (Bleek &

Lloyd 1911: 203–205, told also by !kweitən ta ||kən). Once they are there, their mats and arrows return to their original nature and grow as reeds by the waterhole.

More destructive are its actions when, at the sound a “sorcery’s bell” caused by people identified as *!gitən*, it unleashes a murderous thunderstorm over the Karoo town of Victoria West. The “sorcery bell” can be confidently identified with the numerous “rock gongs” that can be found in several parts of the former |xam territory (Parkington et al. 2008: 102–111).

These *!gitən* (singular *!gixa*, a word variously rendered as “medicine-man”, “sorcerer” and “shaman”) were the ritual specialists of the |xam, and dealing with the water-creature was one of their main functions. The story mentioned above about ||kabbo causing to rain in Mowbray strongly suggests that he himself was a *!gixa* (Lewis-Williams 1981: 27, 108; 2016: 99) and that his “dreams” about talking to *!khwa*: can be compared with the altered states of conscience during which the ritual specialists of modern Kalahari peoples like the Ju’hoansi (!kung) fight evil and disease within their communities.

It is relevant to summarize here one more narrative: that in which ≠kagara (identified with a species of shrike similar to *Lanius collaris*) goes to the camp of his brother-in-law, !haunu, to take back his sister from her husband. |haṅ≠kass’o, the storyteller, told Lloyd about !haunu that “[a] man (it) is; the Rain [*!khwa*:] it is”, adding “I think that a Rain’s Sorcerer [*!khwa*: *ka !gixa*] (he) seems to have been” (Bleek and Lloyd 1911: 112–113). That !haunu is indeed an embodiment of water is shown by the fact that he chases his wife and brother-in-law in the form of clouds “unequaled in beauty” that are seen and then vanish away (Bleek and Lloyd 1911: 112–113, 114–115). The woman is carrying mysterious “things” belonging to her husband that, |haṅ≠kass’o explained, “resembled water”. When her brother touches them, blood pours out of !haunu’s nose and he begins to throw lightning towards the fugitives. These watery “things” could be something similar to the “pots” that the “body of the rain” carried while it hovered over Victoria West and thus possess the potential to unleash destructive rain. This is the only 19th century story in which the water-creature takes human form, but, as will be seen below, narratives about anthropomorph water-people abound in the contemporary folklore.

It is important to stress that the |xam narratives summarized above are consistent with a very arid landscape in which the main sources of water are, rather than rivers and streams, essentially wells and waterholes, most of them seasonal and unpredictable. This fact informs the notion the |xam of the dry Karoo had of the water-creature and its doings, and also how they conceived the relationships between the water-creature and people.

4. "The Rain's body": the water-creature as a quadruped and the control of clouds

In the narratives summarized above |haŋ≠kass'o refers often to "the Rain's body". The eland that transforms the hunters into frogs, the *xoro* that tries to take the woman away and the thunderclouds that cause the destruction of Victoria West, are visible manifestations of the body of the water-creature.

In November-December 1872, ||kabbo (who, as we have seen, was a true expert on the subject) dictated two long, and interconnected, narratives about the processes of rainmaking that describe in detail the way in which the "the Rain's body" is formed, even if he does not use this phrase himself. In the second of the narratives, ||kabbo describes how, at the rainmaker's entreaties, the clouds, aided by the wind, begin to accumulate: first the "Rain's hair", then the "Rain's ribs" (B-LC, L.II.25 [LL31]: 2264–2269). At a later stage, when rain begins to fall, the body is completed with legs, this being the columns of water falling from the clouds (B-LC, L.II.25 [LL31]: 2283–2284). With these, ||kabbo said in the first story, the rain-cloud "go[es] forward" (B-LC, L.II.25 [LL31]: 2248). The two narratives focus on how the *!gixa* controls the clouds, causing their gradual formation as described above, and then riding and cutting them over certain mountain (B-LC, L.II.25 [LL31]: 2239–2240). Here, the rain-clouds are seen clearly as being part and parcel of a living creature with legs that moves over the veld. In the Upper Karoo, this phenomenon can be observed often during the rainy season, and is particularly striking when observed from a distance (see fig. 1). This probably explains why a quadruped such as an eland or a bovid can be the water-creature. In any case, the clouds are the "body" mentioned by |haŋ≠kass'o and described by !kweitən ta ||kən. According to the intensity of the rain, ||kabbo tells us, the water-creature can be male or female, and it seems it is up to the rainmaker to decide this. Male rain is usually torrential and destructive, like the one that almost wiped out Victoria West in 1871. This is why in ||kabbo's story the people go the *!gixa* to beg him for rain, and say: "You must not work / make a bull [!ka:ξxa], / for you shall work a female rain, / that is not angry, / that it may gently rain, / because a nice rain it is. / It which, gently rains soft(ening) the earth (...) / For, the people do fear a male rain [!khwa: gwai:]" (B-LC, L.II.24 [LL30]: 2227–2228).

The rain-clouds are a living being, but ||kabbo constantly refers to "the rain liquid [!khwa //kitən] [that] makes wet (the ground)" (B-LC, L.II.25 [LL31]: 2253). This water comes from the living creature, and is actually seen as its blood (B-LC, L.II.25 [LL31]: 2236–2237). This "blood" is what fills the vleis and pans, replenishes the wells and forms other life-giving concentrations of water on the ground and under it.



Figure 1: Rain-clouds discharging water. Varskans farm, Northern Cape, 6 March 2011.

In ||kabbo's account nothing is said about the place from which these clouds come, that is, about the place where the water-creature lives. Probably there were several ways in which a rainmaker could control the clouds and make them do his or her bidding. The description of one such way, which greatly attracted the attention of Bleek and Lloyd, was given by Dia!kwain in June 1874, when Wilhelm Bleek showed him a copy of a rock painting that Magistrate Joseph M. Orpen had copied the previous year in Sehonghong, a shelter in the Maloti mountains of what today is Lesotho (De Prada-Samper 2016a). The painting shows two quadrupeds and a group of human figures, some of which are holding one of the creatures by a rope. The explanation by Orpen's own informant, a young man called Qing, reads in part: "That animal which the men are catching is a snake (!) They are holding out charms to it and catching it with a long reim (sic). (...) They are all under water and those strokes are things growing under water" (Orpen 1874: 10; De Prada-Samper 2016a: 78). The fact that Qing described one of the quadrupeds as a "snake" has puzzled researchers to this day, beginning with Orpen himself, but as I will explain in section 5 below, the water-creature is commonly referred to as the "Water Snake" (cf. De Prada-Samper 2016a: 97–98).

When first shown the images, Dia!kwain said (in Bleek's paraphrase) that they

represent[ed] rainmaking. We see here a water thing, or water cow, which (...) is discovered by a Bushman [who] then beckons to others to come and help him. They then charm the animal, and attach a

rope to its nose, – and (...) lead it over as large a tract of country as they can, in order that the rain should extend as far as possible, – their superstition being that wherever this animal goes, rain will fall (Bleek 1874: 12; De Prada-Samper 2016a: 89–90).

Although the narratives recorded from ||kabbo in 1872 had already described a very similar rainmaking situation, Bleek and Lloyd only realized the importance of this aspect of |xam belief when Dia!kwain, asked to comment on Orpen's copies, told them how the water-creature was captured by the !gitān and dragged over a stretch of territory to cause rain. As I have explained elsewhere (De Prada Samper 2016a: 98–99), although both Qing and Dia!kwain considered the quadrupeds to be representations of water-creatures, they saw different things in the images. Yet it is relevant to note here that Qing's beliefs about water reflect the existence of permanent rivers in his Maloti territory, which in this regard is very different from the dry Karoo that Dia!kwain called home.

From June 1874, until 10 February 1876 (about two weeks before his departure from the Bleek's home), Dia!kwain commented on Orpen's images another three times, in two of which he told in full the story of the capture of the water-creature, one in June 1874, shortly after seeing the copies for the first time (Bleek 2004: 166–171 [B-LC, B.XXVII [WB27]: 2540–2608]), another in January 1875 (Bleek 2004: 153–160 [B-LC, L.V.3 [LL52]: 4075–4089]). In the telling of January 1875, Dia!kwain said that the place where the !gitān waylay the creature is "a water-spring, which has a great and deep hole (a pit) at it" (B-LC, L.V.3 [LL52]: 4090; cf. Bleek 2004: 173). Here, as in the other account, the !gitān do not go inside the pit to capture the water; they wait outside until it comes out to graze, something which happens at night. Dia!kwain is not explicit about this, but very likely we are to understand that the water-creature manifests itself in the form of mist, the usual form it takes when it comes out to graze in contemporary narratives (see below). Dia!kwain states that what the !gitān capture is the !khwa:-ka xoro (B-LC, L.V.3 [LL52]: 4096; cf. Bleek 2004: 174). Yet in the light of what I have said before, and from what is implicit in the account itself, what is captured, tied with a thong and dragged along the veld and then cut up and dispersed to cause rain, are clouds, considered to be, as we have seen above, "the Rain's body". Part of this action could be, as Lewis-Williams has suggested, something that happened within the mind of rainmakers (Lewis-Williams 1981: 112), but since the water-creature, as I have argued above, was a reality perceived by the senses rather than a metaphor or a figment of the imagination as suggested by Lewis-Williams (Lewis-Williams 2016: 152), another part of the capture of the clouds certainly could be performed while observing them on top of a hill and perhaps, as Janette Deacon has suggested, "cutting" them

by making "vertical and horizontal scratches across" an image of the water-creature engraved on rock (Deacon 1988: 132–133), the eventual discharge of rain from the clouds being seen as the result of the cutting, since, as I mentioned above, the rain itself is seen as "the rain's blood" (B-LC, L.II.25 [LL31]: 2236–2237). Dia!kwain's account makes it clear that the clouds were thought to emanate from the well, which was thus considered to be the dwelling of the living water. The creature, which was first liquid water inside a well, then mist, then clouds, then rain, actually embodies the whole water cycle.⁴

In May 1875, Dia!kwain drew, using blue pencil or crayons, the image of a "!*khwa: ka xoro* or 'Water-Bull'" (fig. 2). The creature resembles very much a bovine and is drawn in a style very similar to that of rock engravings which may show also the water-creature (Deacon 1988: 132–133). The caption in Lloyd's hand, written, in all likelihood, following the artist's explanation, states that this is the creature that the "sorcerers" captured "and led about the country (...) when they want to make rain".

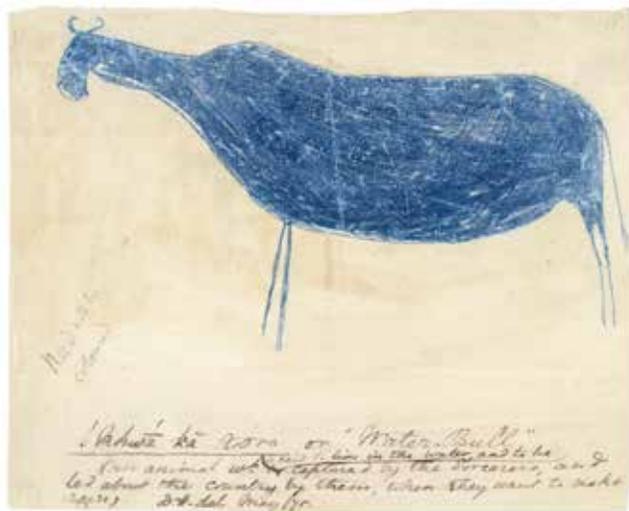


Figure 2: Dia!kwain's drawing of *!*khwa: ka xoro** or 'Water-Bull'. May 1875.

⁴ On March 16, 2018, Alma Reichert, of the farm Arbeidsvreug but now living in Kenhardt, told me that the previous month several hundred mm of rain, much more than the usual average for the region, had fallen in an area close to the R361, the untarred road that leads from that town to Vanwyksvlei. There being no dams in that area, Mrs. Reichert lamented, all this water soon evaporated. This kind of highly localized rainfall is very common in the dry Karoo, and explains why its first dwellers felt the need to try to control the clouds in order to distribute rain evenly and avoid being on perfectly dry ground watching how, as ||kabbo explained it to Lucy Lloyd, "the rain does yonder fall nicely (upon) the [other] people's place" (B-L-C, L.II. 24 [LL30]: 2221), or perhaps suffer a potentially lethal excess of rain while most of the ground around remains dry.

5. The water-creature in contemporary belief and narrative

Most of the people that live today in the area from which the !xam teachers of Bleek and Lloyd came, now part of the Northern Cape province of South Africa, are Afrikaans-speakers. The majority are impoverished rural workers that live in farms, or, more frequently, in townships. Today, as in the recent, and so recent, past, they are officially considered to be "Coloured", a label that carries the stigma of non-identity, among other negative associations. Yet as Ansie Hoff already established a few decades ago, in spite of "the comprehensive culture change" they have undergone, and the complex history of interactions in the area during the past three centuries, they are to a large extent descendants of the !xam (Hoff 2011: 8). A similar situation exists in among many rural communities in the parts of the Karoo that fall within the Western and Eastern Cape provinces, and in areas like the Olifants River Valley, that includes the Cederberg. This mountainous area is rich in the rock art of hunter-gatherers that still lived a more or less independent life when, around 1739, Europeans brought the region under colonial control (Penn 2005: 56–78). The difference with the Upper Karoo communities is that, for these other areas, we almost have no older ethnographic data with which compare the contemporary materials.

a. The water-creature in the Upper Karoo

The Upper Karoo is today even drier than it was 150 years ago and, from what the locals tell me, the situation is not improving. Water is indeed a topic of conversation difficult to avoid, be it with farmers or with labourers. Among the latter, belief in the water as a living thing is still strong, even if the collapse of the hunter-gatherer economy and the forced incorporation of the local population into the farm economy has radically altered their relationship with water. Dependency on rainfall for drinking water and food has become less vital, because for several generations farmers have been managing water by means of dams and water-pumps. The fragile huts of the hunter-gatherers that torrential rain easily washed away have been replaced by the more sturdy little cottages of the farm-labourers. As Ansie Hoff has shown (Hoff 2011), rain-making specialists, or in any case, people who "work with water" continue to exist, but the control of clouds is now less important.

People of the area now refer to the water-creature with the Afrikaans compound *Waterslang*, meaning "water snake", but this does not mean that they really see it primarily as a snake. *Waterslang* is just a way to refer to water as a living being, and that of a snake is just one of the many shapes the living water can adopt. The !xam records actually never describe the water-

creature as a snake or refer to it by that name. The fact that contemporary !xam descendants do so appears to be a recent occurrence, due perhaps to the greater access to the Gariiep (Orange) River that resulted from the imposition of colonial authority in the area in the 1880s. Before this, the presence along the banks of the river of the Korana and other hostile communities had seriously limited the access of the !xam to its waters. Riverine communities today routinely refer to the water-creature as a snake (Hoff 1997; Lange 2015), and it is likely that they have been doing so for a long time. This greater freedom of movement between the river and the drier areas to the south of it appears to have contributed to the standardization, to a certain extent, of beliefs in the water-creature, even if local variations can be clearly detected. However, another important factor to take into account is that, in the Karoo as in other areas, idiosyncratic opinions about the nature and activities of the water-creature abound, a fact that reflects a lack of dogmatism that has been noted also among the contemporary Bushman communities of the Kalahari (Guenther 1999: 196).

Aletta Tieties, of Kenhardt, said that the Water Snake, even if thus called, is actually "a woman and a man, very beautiful people". They are able to move between the Augrabies falls to the man-made Rooiberg Dam outside Kenhardt, and have a predilection for people with moles. This dam is considered to be a very dangerous place even with low water, because the water-creature is there, in the slime and the reeds (ATNA, KP15S010). Another resident of Kenhardt, Sophia Meerkat, also associated the creature with rivers, but said it also lived in the wells and fountains, especially where there are lots of reeds. She said there is a male snake and a female snake. They live together, and at night go out to graze together in the mountains. They move from place to place, and, as happens in some of the 19th century stories, the spot they leave dries (ATNA, KP14aS013).

When I asked directly about the Water-bull, some of the people of the drier parts of the Karoo with whom I have talked recognized it as one of the forms that the water can take. Thus, Maria Kaptein (born in 1951), then living in the farm Varkans, near Brandvlei, told Pippa Skotnes and myself in July 2011 how she saw the creature herself. She described it, in Skotnes paraphrase, as "as beautiful – blood-red with white feet and white horns and pitch-black tail". She also said that "if one is very still, and at the right time of day, you can still see a rainbull (sic.) grazing in the grasses" (Skotnes 2014: 22, the conversation corresponds to ATNA, KP11bS001). Anna Swarts (perhaps in her late 80s), who has lived all her life in the Vanwyksvlei area, said in April 2013 that the *Waterbees* ("Water Cattle") is "black with [little] red horns". Echoing the language employed by many of the !xam teachers of Bleek and Lloyd, Ouma Anna said that "he is just there, one cannot see

him, one who knows will see him, but not one who doesn't know" (ATNA, KP13S011b).

Except for the story summarized above about the flood in Victoria West, there are no water-related first person or "friend of a friend" narratives in the |xam records. This type of narrative, however, abound in contemporary tradition. The same Anna Swarts mentioned above described a strong thunderstorm that fell there in terms not very different from those employed by |haŋɁkass'oo to describe the flood in Victoria West. She doesn't mention the "pots" attached to the "rain's body", but the narrative leaves no doubt that the experience of the sudden downpour was indeed frightening and potentially deadly:

It rains, the water runs like this, flooding. Here one [cloud] just comes. It comes there to the other one and I just hear [*claps once*] the two of them stand like that [*opens her arms wide*].

Then I say [to my husband]: "Look there, you must see the things that are around here in this place."

Well, now he says to me: "Now you and I can run-run."

Now I say: "You cannot run away now. Then it falls on top of you. There is such a cloud, it will fall on top of you. And then all of us here will be dead, as well as the whole of Vanwyksvlei, upside down with water and anything." (...)

But then the water rolls, then the water rolls. [My husband] says to me: "Hey, this here, is this your business here?"

Then I say: "Do you know what? My old people told us about a Water Snake. We weren't children anymore, but we still saw it. And he's like this, he's thick and big" (De Prada-Samper 2016b: 298–299).

It is of special interest here that the storyteller's husband thinks she may be responsible for the thunderstorm. This indicates that she is considered to be a person that "works with the Water Snake".

On June 21, 2014 Oom Klaas Priega (fig. 3), also of Vanwyksvlei, told David Morris and me: "I've already seen in the clouds, when [the Water Snake of the Jagersberg] now treks out of the mountain to go to another place. The weather just gathers, and quite a cloud will come down on top of those mountains, and then he is there in that cloud, and there he goes" (KP14bV008).

Other first-person narratives convey a different kind of experience with water. Dawid Abrahams, of Williston, told me how the Water Snake had drowned a white boy that was swimming into a well with the storyteller's father. When the body was finally recovered, not a drop of blood was left in the boy's body, the creature having sucked it all through his nose. Oom Dawid also told us of a more personal experience he had with the Water Snake while he was herding sheep for a farmer and fell asleep. The creature appeared to

him in a dream as a whirlwind and then as a bearded snake. After a second encounter the following day, Oom Dawid developed what from his description appears to be narcolepsy (De Prada-Samper 2016b: 292–297).



Figure 3: Oom Klaas Priega, of Vanwyksvlei, at Springbookoog's main site showing us the movements of water-creature of the Jagersberg

b. The water-creature in the Olifants River Valley

In the Olifants River Valley (ORV), south of the Karoo, belief in the water-creature is also strong, but the narratives about it reflect the fact that water is much more abundant in the area, which is dominated by a powerful and permanent river and its tributaries, and abounds in perennial springs, not to speak of the Clanwilliam Dam itself, which regulates the Olifants and features often in the stories.

In most of the ORV area the water-creature is called in Afrikaans *Waterbaas*, which can be rendered as "the owner of the water" or "the master of the water". One can also hear the term *Otterbaas*, "the master otter" or "the chief of the otters", although this could be a separate entity. More than in any other area in which I have conducted fieldwork, here the water has seldom a stable shape and can manifest itself as a living being in virtually any guise: a bird, a fish, a goat, a mirror, a powerful wind that blows towards the water, among many other forms. Some of the transformations are part of the *Waterbaas'* efforts to drown people (both adults and children) who have not approached the water-place in question with due caution, or are acting in a way the wa-

ter-creature does not like, such as catching too many fish or swimming at the wrong place. Thus, in many stories the water-creature shows itself as an attractive object that appears floating in the surface: a scarf, a ring, a mirror, among many others. When trying to lure children, the creature often takes the form of dolls or other toys.

People in the ORV area also refer often to the water-creature as a being that is half-fish, half-human. In its masculine form it is usually called *Waterman*. In its feminine one, *Watermeid* ("Water Maiden") or *Waternooi* ("Water Lady"), not very often also *Watervrou* ("Water Woman"). This particular conception of the water-creature as an anthropomorphic or semi-anthropomorphic being resonates with the |xam narrative summarized above about ≠kagara and his brother-in-law !haunu, who "fight each other with lightning" (Bleek & Lloyd 1911: 113–119), which shows that for the |xam water-creature was also capable of adopting human or semi-human form.

More interesting for the argument I am developing is the fact that all over the area people refer very explicitly to the fact that the water is alive. Lena van Rooy, who lives near Alpha Farm, beyond the Pakhuis Pass, told me that Meidegat (known also as Maiden's Pool, in nearby Bushman's Kloof resort), "is not dead, it's alive" (*hy's ook nie dood nie, hy lewe*). The pool is a base of a waterfall and, as Ouma Lena made clear, it is alive not only because it never dries up, but also because it has a mind of its own, something which she illustrated telling us several stories about strange encounters near the pool (ATNA, CD15V048). Similarly, Willem Okhuis, of Algeria, said that he had been told that in the Clanwilliam district *daar's baie poele wat baie lewendig is*, "there are many pools that are very alive" (ATNA, CD15V008).

Paul Nieuwoudt (56), of Skilpad Stasie, a farm very close to the Olifants, told us about having heard that construction of a road near the river was stopped when people warned that the use of dynamite would destroy part of the "long snake" there, and this in turn would cause the whole of the Olifants to dry (ATNA, CD15V009).

The water-creature as a cow or bull is also known in the Olifants River Valley. In the little settlement of Witwater, in the Wupperthal Commonage area, the writer Margaret Murray (1974: 24–25) heard stories about the *Waterbull*, a strange beast people saw in the grass near the fountain and that once abducted a young girl. Unfortunately, although I was in Witwater in October 2015 I couldn't gather any information about this manifestation of the water-creature, but a few weeks before Adrian Le Nee (46), from the vicinity of Citrusdal, told me about a strange *Fries* (Friesian) cow was seen emerging from a dry but grassy spot on the ground near Kruisrivier, a tributary of the Olifants. After a while the cow disappeared in the same way, taken along the Afrikaner cow of a local farmer (ATNA, CD15V010). More intensive fieldwork in the area will probably yield other stories of this kind.

The notion that there is a world under the water is to be found in the ORV, especially in the areas closer to the Olifants river itself. Petrus Ockhuis, of Witwater, the same settlement mentioned above, told me that there are rooms (*kamers*) under the water, and that the people that are dragged inside by the *Waterbaas* or the *Waternooitjie* (the diminutive form of *Waternooi*) do not drown, because they find themselves in these perfectly dry rooms (ATNA, CD15V065). The notion is known also in other areas to the east of the ORV. Archaeologist René Rust (2011) documented it in the Little Karoo, and I have found it in Beaufort West from informants that came mostly from the nearby Nieuweveld mountains (De Prada-Samper 2016b: 310–317).

In a story told by Frikkie Snyers, of the farm Klawer, close to the Olifants River Mountains south of Clanwilliam, a farmer is dragged inside a dam by a powerful wind after shooting one of two ducks that stood on it. Once in the world under the water, which is dry, he is taken by guards to a room where a wounded woman awaits him. She is, of course, the duck he has shot. The man is forced to stay in the underwater world until the woman heals (ATNA, CD15V040). In this narrative, the wind that carries the farmer into the water closely resembles the "whirlwind" (*//go//go*) that in !kweitən ta ||kən's story, summarized above, threw into the water the family of a disobedient maiden. In the ORV this manifestation of the water-creature is called a *boogwind* (also *barrelwind*), a local term for "whirlwind" which probably conveys the supernatural connotations of the |xam term *//go//go*, rendered by the Bleeks just as "whirlwind" (Bleek 1956: 534).⁵

In another story, told by Magrieta Jenzel, of the farm Dwarsrivier, in the Cederberg, a man captures a *Waternooi* (Water Lady) and forces her to marry him. She eventually returns to the water, but while trying to stop her, the man is dragged inside to a place where the *Waterbaas* lives surrounded by many snakes. After six months he is spat out and can return to his people (ATNA, CD15S067). Both these stories show a fascinating combination of European and local motifs, but it is clear that the notion of an underwater world is not recent.

Inhabiting, as explained above, an area with no permanent rivers, the 19th century |xam do not seem to have had an elaborate conception of an underwater world, but there can be no doubt that for them at least certain waterholes were portals to a different realm, one into which disobedient

⁵ In Kenhardt, on 16 March 2018, Dirk Steenkam (born 1942 in the farm Middleputs) told me several stories in which the latter manifested itself as a strong *boogwind* that blew for days when the creature was displeased, when grazing outside its home in the Rooiberg Dam, or when moving from there to a nearby place. It is so far the only instance I have recorded in which the primary form of the creature was the wind, and it could be connected with the fact that the stories were all connected with an uncle of Oom Dirk, who "worked with the Water Snake".

maidens and other transgressors were dragged and/or transformed into frogs (Lewis-Williams 2000: 223, 278; Guenther 1989: 109), or which was the dwelling place of deceased *!gitān* (Bleek 2004: 244). In all the texts cited the term used for the body of water is *≠hauru*, and the context indicates that none of these *≠hauru* was an actual waterhole, but rather a manifestation of the water-creature, such as in the case of the hunters that kill the creature in the form of an eland mentioned above. What is beyond the *≠hauru* is something that none of the |xam teachers of Bleek and Lloyd ever explained.

6. Conclusions: the nature of the water-creature

The narratives and testimonies in the BLC show that for the |xam people of the 19th century certain concentrations of water were considered to be alive. Although some of these narratives are set in the mythical past, it is clear that for the |xam the creature was a reality of everyday life. These beliefs are to a large extent current in the former |xam territory and adjoining areas. For contemporary communities, most permanent sources of water, or large concentrations of it, such as rivers and dams, are seen as living, autonomous entities, endowed with supernatural powers, especially that of transformation. These entities possess intelligence, but common people cannot communicate with them, even if the crucial life importance of water for the continuity forces many individuals to interact with it all the time. The connections between puberty rites and the water-creature, so important in the 19th century records, cannot be detected today in these areas, although further research could perhaps document their presence in an altered form. Although I have heard no stories about the water-creature transforming people into frogs or other things, there can be no doubt that the water-creature is as short-tempered and aggressive today as it was 150 years ago. Many of the people I have so far interviewed have experienced this behaviour of the water-creature personally, or know about it through the first-hand stories of close relatives and neighbours.

Lewis-Williams (1996: 125) has described the waterhole of the |xam as an ambivalent, intermediary space between the hunting ground and the campsite, "positive because it provided life for both people and animals and because it was regenerative, but also negative because of the dangerous encounters that could take place there (...) with both people and animals". For him, this intermediate space constituted the axis of the |xam cosmos. Lewis-Williams does not mention the water-creature itself as a dangerous being to encounter; but there can be no doubt that in many cases the |xam must have feared the water-source itself when it was considered to be alive. Today, both the traditional campsite and the hunt as they were understood by

the teachers of Bleek and Lloyd have disappeared, but the water continues to be a force to reckon with. As Serena Renier of Beaufort West, who grew in the Nieuwveldt mountains, told me, after illustrating it with several stories, *fontein is 'n gevaarlike ding* ("the fountain is a dangerous thing") (ATNA, KP13V006). One does not go there to play or to do improper things. One must be cautious at all times when in close proximity of water, because what is sitting there could be a living being. In the Olifants River Area certain uses of the water are even subject to payment. For example, Johanna Hanekom (1941), of the farm Steenrug, near Clanwilliam, told about having to pay in order to fish at a certain pool. The payment took the form of 1 or 2 rand coins (ATNA, CD15V016). Christian van Schalkwyk (in his 70s), of the farm Elizabethfontein, in the Agter Pakhuis area, mentioned a similar payment to be made at a certain fountain in order to draw water from it. The money, Oom Christian said, was paid to the *Waterbaas* (ATNA, CD15V075).

According to Mathias Guenther (2015: 278) "[t]he central, unifying theme in San ontology, and the defining feature of their schema of relational ontology, is that of ontological flux, of human and non-human person-beings". While fitting this ontological schema, since as a "sentient, intentional subject" fulfils a crucial requirement of personhood, the water-creature stands in a category of its own in at least two domains.

The first one pertains to its metamorphoses. While, as Guenther states, transformation of persons in Bushman ontology "may be temporary and reversible or permanent and irreversible, complete or incomplete, voluntary or involuntary, giving the theme of instability the widest ontological and experiential scope, as well as narrative scope" (Guenther 2015: 285), the "ontological flux" of the water-creature is permanent. It can be witnessed by all in those aspects that pertain to the natural water cycle of evaporation, condensation and precipitation, which involves the states of liquid, solid (ice/snow) and vapour, aspects all that in most traditional thought-systems are enough to justify the inclusion of water among living beings.

Very different, and occurring at a more intimate level, are the changes the water-creature can undergo when dealing with its intended victims. The stories, some of them told in the first person, of personal encounters with the living water indicate that the latter can adopt any shape it wishes. It can be a fish, a frog, a bird, an antelope, a bovine, a goat. It can be a mirror, a necklace, a handkerchief, a toy. It can also show itself as a gust of wind or a cloud with a peculiar shape and movement. It can also be seen as having a human torso and the tail of a fish. More dangerously, it can take the shape of a person known by the unsuspecting individual it intends to capture.

The other domain that sets the water-creature apart from other non-human beings is that language is not one of its attributes, unlike other non-human persons, such as lions, that do speak even in narratives set in non-

primeval times. Neither in the 19th century records nor in contemporary tradition does the water-creature talk save on extremely rare cases. In this exceptional cases, its utterances are minimal, as when, in another story told by Serena Renier, it asks the girl that it has dragged underwater what kind of food does she eat (De Prada-Samper 2016b: 312). In another story told by the same narrator, the water-girl addresses the white hunter who is pointing a gun at her with the words "don't shoot me, I've a little one" (*moet my nie skiet nie want ek het 'n kleintjie*) (ATNA, KP13V006). Not even this much do we find in the |xam records, in which neither the !khwa of narratives set in the times of the "Early Race" nor the one of those that are set in more recent times, ever utters a word. Even in the case of ||kabbo's experience the creature does not respond verbally to the rainmaker's entreaties, but just "assents" to them. To the extent that it communicates, the water-creature does so by mean of its transformations and its actions, which normally convey displeasure, sexual desire or intent to kill.

All this places the water-creature in shaky ground, being neither a moral entity, nor a fully amoral one, a fact that is perhaps grounded on the unpredictability of water in all its manifestations. Drought can reduce its availability to almost nothing, and torrential rain can cause a destructive overabundance. In both cases, there can be loss of life. In communities where adults have to work, most children go about on their own and fatal accidents happen. People fishing or working by the water also have accidents. These are seldom, or never, seen as such. It is always the water-creature who claims another victim.

This latest point, the frequent use of narratives of the supernatural to deal with tragic events such a drownings and other water-related incidents, leads to me another crucial aspect of the beliefs around the water-creature: their value, to use the reflections of folklorist Angela Bourke about the fairy legends of Ireland (Bourke 1996: 13), as "cognitive tools" that "deal with so much of the betwixt-and between – the liminal, the marginal, and the ambiguous, whether in time, in the landscape, or in social relations". In the Karoo and the ORV there is "a web of story" similar to the one that in Ireland, according to Bourke, floats "above the physical landscape, pegged down at point after point, as incidents are recounted" (Bourke 1996: 7). The stories in this web, Bourke argues, help listeners to negotiate "a shared system of symbols and metaphors in a context of orality" working as "a grammar of ideas" that constitutes a "a vernacular virtual reality", one with which tellers and audience "can interact realistically" (Bourke 1996: 14). The rich fabric of narrative around the water-creature is a way of conceptualizing water and thinking about it. Also of dealing with losses and other circumstances that people attribute to the actions of the water-creature. Many of the stories told in the Karoo and the ORV about children that drowned may be understood as

narrative ways to cope with personal losses that any family and community would find very difficult to accept, while other stories, such as the one told by Dawid Abrahams about his narcolepsy, bring into the sphere of the water-creature other types of circumstances that in this way can be dealt with within the framework of the "grammar of ideas" enabled by the rich "web of story" these communities have been weaving for a very long time.



Figure 4: Rock engraving at Springbokoog showing a water-creature and two antelopes drinking from it

How long a time this could be is suggested by a rock engraving at Springbokoog's main site, in what was part of the historical |xam territory. There, not far from where Oom Klaas Priega told us how he saw the Water Snake trekking from place to place, stands a roughly rectangular black dolerite rock, so low on the ground that it is easy to miss it. Once you squat to examine it, you can see that engraved on it are two bucks of an indeterminate species with the neck bent over a much larger figure that occupies most of the upper part of the surface of the rock (see fig. 4). The way the lips of one of the antelopes are depicted (fig. 5) leaves no doubt that both it and its companion are drinking from the larger figure, which appears to be a body of water. Yet the figure has something of a fish-like shape, and a diminutive eye

can be seen on its "head". Springbokoog is a singular complex of sites which abounds in unique images, but this one truly stands on its own. It is always risky to interpret any rock art image, specially to put it in connection with narratives, but this fish-like figure which possesses what seem to be a tail and a head, and whose body appears to be liquid, resonates with narratives such as those discussed here, of concentrations of water that turn out to be literally living bodies of liquid, and of living beings that turn out to be liquid. According to David Beaumont and David Morris, the archaeological deposits associated with the Springbokoog engravings suggest that they date from about 2700 to 1600 years before the present (Morris and Beaumont 1994: 21). Whatever the age of the engravings, the wide distribution in the subcontinent and, as a matter of fact, all over the Africa, of stories and ideas about the water-creature indicates that the preoccupations and anxieties they reflect are not new. On 19 November 2016, at his home in Vanwyksvlei, Oom Klaas Priega told us that the Jagersberg waterhole produces sounds that can be heard from a distance. Later that same day another storyteller, Katriena Magang, took me to the yard of Anna Swarts, the old lady who "works with the water", so I could talk with her. At the end of the interview, Katriena and Anna commented briefly on the unusually long silence of the Jagersberg, usually a perennial spring. I perceived a hint of anxiety in their voices.



Figure 5: Detail of figure 3, showing the open lips of one of the antelopes

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Illustrations

Figure 1 – Photo by the author.

Figure 2 – Bleek and Lloyd Collection, Jagger Library, University of Cape Town.

Figure 3 – Still from a video recording by Jarita Holbrook.

Figure 4 – Photo by the author.

Figure 5 – Photo by the author.

„Већ сам видео у облацима“: Природа воденог бића
међу Цхам-Бушманима и њиховим савременим потомцима

Хосе Мануел де Прада-Сампер

Резиме

У 19. веку Цхам-Бушмани Горњег Каруа у Јужној Африци причали су приче о бићу променљивог облика званом *!khwa*: ('вода'), чија је једна од многих форми била бик – звали су га *водени бик*, а врачевани су га хватали да би изазвали кишу. У науци је ово водено биће тумачено на различите начине: као метафора, симбол водене стихије, или божанства смрти. Циљ овог рада је да докаже да је за народ Цхам и његове савремене потомке ово водено биће некада било, и још увек је, вода као таква, која се сматра живим бићем онда када чини веће водене формације, као што су браном направљени базени, реке, рупе које су стални извори акумулиране воде, или неке скупине облака. То је разлог што се ово водено створење доживљава као опипљиво биће, које је повезано са кључним животним елементом, али које је истовремено извор потенцијалне опасности за људе.

Кључне речи: Цхам-Бушмани, Збирка Блика и Лојдове, Кару, водено биће, водени бик, петроглифи

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