Table S1. Summary of relative dating methods used to examine rock art.

|  |
| --- |
| Bednarik (2012) |
| Weathering rind or zone | Areas where “oxidation, hydration or solution . . . form parallel to rock surfaces” increase in thickness over time |
| Schmidt hammer | “Nondestructive technique for measuring the degree of rock surface weathering” |
| Spalling | Flaking off of materials from boulders or rocks  |
| Patination | “A visually obvious surface feature that differs from the unaltered rock in colour or chemical composition” |
| Surface retreat or micro-erosion | “Measurement of the rate of retreat of rapidly eroding surfaces . . . on certain sedimentary rocks” |
| Accretions | Gradual increase or addition to the area |
| Geometry of rock weathering  | The use of geometry of stone tool fossils as indicative of geometry of rock weathering |
| Thackeray (1983) |
| Stylistic change | Though one of the first methods used, this is a much-debated approach (Thackeray, 1983) |
| Superposition | Follows principle of superposition, which states that “in an undeformed sequence of sedimentary rocks, each bed is older than the one above and younger than the one below” (Tarbuck & Lutgens, 2017, p. 351) |
| Visual differences | The “more weathered and deteriorated the rock, the older it must be”  |
| Content | Rock art content as indicative of historical period |
| Archaeological associations | How closely related objects, situation, or contexts are/might be  |
| Assumptions | “Educated guesses” |
| Amino acids | Methods of “direct dating,” such as counting amino acids, using paper chromatography  |
| Radiocarbon dates | Though an example of absolute dating, it is not considered the most reliable by all archaeologists despite improvements in technology  |
| Source of African rock art images and background information: 1. The British Museum: http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\_online/search.aspx?searchText=dancing+san+rock+art

http://www.britishmuseum.org1. Trust for African Rock Art: https://africanrockart.org/rock-art-gallery/south-africa/

https://africanrockart.org |