

*Understanding heritage:*  
*The grading of Adam Kok III's*  
*laager settlement at Mount Currie*

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The identification and assessment of heritage in contemporary South Africa is complex territory. It is an emotive act, in addition to one that is deeply political. Importantly, current thinking prioritises the promotion of heritage sites that were previously marginalised in listings and proclamations. One of the communities least represented is that of the Griqua. This paper uses the case study of a Griqua heritage site to explain the process of identification, assessment and proclamation of sites in contemporary KwaZulu-Natal in order to showcase the rigour with which decisions are made as well as the complex territory in which such decisions lie.

Formally proclaimed Griqua heritage sites are poorly represented in KwaZulu-Natal. Importantly, all formally proclaimed sites in the province prior to 1994 were downgraded one level in 1999 when the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA, 25 of 1999) was promulgated. All downgraded heritage sites (now considered grade II) had to be reassessed based on their scientific, social, historic, technical or aesthetic values mapped against criteria listed in the Act.

The laager of Adam Kok III at Koksstad was chosen as a case study to reveal the grading process of heritage sites as followed by the KwaZulu-Natal Amafa and Research Institute (the Institute).

The methodology used included a literature study, the identification of interested and affected parties, interviews, and surveys of the laager site.

By assessing the site in terms of the stipulated criteria for cultural significance as presented in the Act, as well as those indicated in the national legislation, the Adam Kok III laager was graded as a provincial heritage site. This study can thus be used as a model to grade similar sites of historical or archaeological importance and can also assist in recommending best-practice management guidelines. As this paper employs terminology that may be considered contentious there is a glossary on pages 28–29.

## **Introduction**

Adam Kok III is considered the last of the great Griqua leaders of Transorangia (the area between the Modder and Orange rivers with Philippolis as its headquarters) and Griqualand East. He led the Griqua to a new land, the so-called Nomansland, later to become known as East Griqualand. Nomansland was located on the south-east side of the Drakensberg below the Sotho kingdom and between the sources of the Umzimvubu and Umzimkulu rivers.<sup>1</sup> The Griqua arrived here in 1863 and named their settlement De Laager. They started a new life, laying out streets, a stronghold, a church, a school and a fort. This eventually grew into what is today Kokstad.

The importance of the laager lies in the social value it has for the Griqua community, who revalidate the site on an annual basis. Furthermore, the historical significance of the site reflects its importance and rarity in comparison with other Griqua heritage sites. The laager also conforms to technical value

in its features. As such the Adam Kok III laager site is believed to be of high cultural significance for the Griqua people and therefore the Institute investigated the possibility of formally grading it.

Heritage grading follows a number of logical steps. These are presented in order to support the grading recommendation of the original laager site at Mount Currie as a grade II heritage site and clarify the process of grading and proclamation of heritage in KwaZulu-Natal.

The purpose of this article is to expand upon the methodology used during the grading process for the site. It reflects the process that determines whether the site has cultural significance or not. This involves evaluation of cultural, social, scientific and aesthetic values in accordance with international protocols for the protection of historical sites, as well as South African practice.<sup>2</sup> Identifying the main research question is an intrinsic part of the grading process, which leads to assessment of the degree of significance of the different criteria listed in section 3(3) of the NHRA. These are:

- the importance of the site for the community, or in national history;
- whether it is an unusual, rare or endangered aspect of the natural or cultural heritage of the country;
- the potential of the site to reveal information that contributes to an understanding of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage;
- the importance of the site in revealing the most important characteristics of certain classes of South Africa's natural or cultural places or objects;
- the importance of the site with regard to specific aesthetic characteristics on which a community or cultural

- group place value;
- the potential of the site to represent a high value of creative or technical achievements in a specific time period;
- a strong or special association with a specific community or cultural group for social, cultural or religious reasons;
- a strong or special association with the life and work of a person, a group or an organisation of importance in the history of South Africa;
- places of meaning with relation to the history of slavery in South Africa.<sup>3</sup>

### A brief background to the Griqua

The origins of the Griqua centre on Adam Kok I (1710–1800). Oral tradition suggests that he was either a cook on board a ship in Table Bay, from which he escaped, or that he was a slave and cook for either Governor Hendrik Swellengrebel or Ryk Tulbach at the Cape.<sup>4</sup> A third account states that he was the illegitimate son of a slave woman in the domestic unit of a Dutch governor at the Cape; he was born in 1710 and his father's name is not known.<sup>5</sup> Either way, by 1751 he had obtained grazing rights to a farm at Stinkfontein. Here he met remnants of the Grigriqua Khoekhoen group.<sup>6</sup> Oral tradition relates that Adam Kok I married the daughter of the leader of the Grigriqua clan. He gathered Bastards, escaped slaves and Khoekhoen of the Grigriqua group together with rogue white settlers. This group grew to such an extent that the Dutch East India Company recognised Adam Kok I as a *kaptyn*.<sup>7</sup>

From the mid- to late-1790s two groups of Griqua settled 50 kilometres outside Prieska Drift under the leadership of Adam Kok I's son, Cornelius

Kok I and Adam Kok I's son-in-law, Barend Barends.<sup>8</sup> Cornelius Kok had been born at Piquetberg and received the staff of office in 1795. They roamed the area of the Orange River up until 1804 when the London Missionary Society (LMS) persuaded them to settle at Klaarwater. In 1813 under the influence of missionary John Campbell they changed their name from Bastard to Griqua to honour their Khoekhoen origin and altered the name of Klaarwater to Griquatown.<sup>9</sup>

Adam Kok II preferred to live a life of hunting and trading. In 1828 he tried to relinquish his authority to his son Cornelius Kok III, but after his son died, he had to resume the chieftainship. He also tried to relinquish his authority to his son-in-law Hendrik Hendrickse, but was unsuccessful.<sup>10</sup>

Andries Waterboer, who led the Griqua of Griquatown between 1820 and 1853, was of pure San ancestry. He was the missionaries' preferred leader since he was educated at Griquatown under their influence. He was stricter with his followers than Adam Kok II and Barends and served as *kaptyn* over both Griqualand West and Transorangia until 1837.<sup>11</sup>

Another Griqua group moved from the Cape Colony to settle around Philippolis on the invitation of John Philip, superintendent of the LMS in South Africa. He established a mission station for the San at Philippolis, the oldest town in the Free State. Philip's invitation was to ensure the San's safety after he left the area and also allow for freed slaves to settle at Philippolis. In 1826 Adam Kok II (first mentioned as a *kaptyn* of the Griqua in 1813), took possession of Philippolis and control of the lands between the Modder and Orange rivers.<sup>12</sup>

Other sources explain that the LMS's invitation to this Griqua group was a means to control Adam Kok II, who was not interested in a settled life and being a chief. Instead he wanted to remain aloof as initiator of the Bergenaar group with Barend Barends (Adam Kok I's son in law) in the 1820s and 1830s.<sup>13</sup> It is also known that the Griqua under Adam Kok II's leadership did not encourage the protection of the San, but rather their annihilation.<sup>14</sup>

In 1827 trekboers moved into this Griqua territory and from 1833 a severe drought resulted in their illegal occupation of Griqua lands. Many Griqua started to leave Philippolis.<sup>15</sup> To solve this problem Adam Kok II met his *volksraad* and it was decided that they would allow trekboers to lease these farms. However, Adam Kok II's so-called short-term leases resulted in some 1 500 white farmers permanently settling in Griqua territory by 1834.

In the same year Philip decided that Adam Kok II (1760–1835) had to be accorded the same authority as leader that Andries Waterboer (1789–1853) enjoyed in West Griqualand (Waterboer led Griquatown from 1820 until his death in 1853).<sup>16</sup> Philip's rationale was that this would secure the northern frontier for the Cape Colony and that it would assist in curtailing Adam Kok II's raiding activities. Urged on by Philip's advice, Adam Kok II travelled to Cape Town to see Governor Sir Benjamin d'Urban to obtain independent rule over Transorangia. However, Adam Kok II died at Berg River without having met D'Urban.<sup>17</sup>

### **Adam Kok III and the move to the Eastern Cape**

In 1837 Adam Kok III took over as *kaptyn* of Transorangia and a treaty

between Adam Kok III, Waterboer and the British government led to a division of the Griqua state into two Griqua states (Griqualand West under Waterboer and Transorangia under Adam Kok III), with joint council meetings and co-operation in mutual matters such as military.<sup>18</sup> In 1838 an Act was passed by Adam Kok III that forbade the sale of Griqua land to Europeans.<sup>19</sup> In 1840 this Act was modified when it was decided that the Griqua could lease lands occupied by trekboers for a fee, that the Griqua had to pay for improvements erected by the trekboers on the leased farms, and that they could lease the farms for at least 40 years.<sup>20</sup>

After the Republic of Natalia was annexed in 1843 by the British, more voortrekkers arrived to settle in Transorangia. Adam Kok III met Governor Peregrine Maitland to try to limit the number of voortrekkers leasing farms in Griqua territory. In 1846 Maitland decided to mollify Griqua grievances by dividing their land into alienable and inalienable land. Alienable land, between the Modder and Riet rivers, allowed for farm leases of up to 40 years; while on inalienable land, south from the Riet River to the Orange River, boers who already leased here had to leave the farm once their lease had expired.<sup>21</sup>

In 1847 Maitland was replaced by Sir Harry Smith who altered Maitland's agreement in 1848 by claiming the Queen's sovereignty over all the people between the Orange and the Vaal rivers. Smith informed the Griqua that the boers did not have to quit when their leases expired in the inalienable territory until the Griqua had paid back money for improvements done by the boers.<sup>22</sup>

By the time of the Bloemfontein Convention of 1854 the British had abandoned the Orange River Sovereignty,

which became a boer republic named the Orange Free State. A secret deed drawn up between the Free State Republic and the British government provided that from the date of the treaty every farm leased to a European by a Griqua or subject of Adam Kok III in any part of the territory, would become part and parcel of the new boer republic.<sup>23</sup>

The Griqua wanted to prepare for war with the boer republic. However, the Cape governor Sir George Grey advised them to move to Nomansland, a buffer zone between Natal and the Cape Colony and under the protection of Faku of the Mpondo. In 1859 Kok III obtained permission from Grey to settle in Nomansland as a British subject.<sup>24</sup> Kok's trek involved 3 000 people, including Cornelius Kok II from Campbell and several black people.<sup>25</sup> However, according to Oberholster, the trek consisted of 2 000 people, 300 wagons and carts and 20 000 head of livestock.<sup>26</sup> At Hangklip in Lesotho, the Griqua camped for a year until the spring of 1862. As a result of severe drought, they lost more than 1 000 of their livestock. In addition, the son of Moshoeshoe, Nehemia, stole many of their horses and cows. From October 1862 to February 1863, the Griqua crossed the Drakensberg. When they reached Berg Vyftig, later to become Mount Currie, they were highly impoverished.<sup>27</sup> Mount Currie was named after Walter Currie, commander of the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police, who met Faku to negotiate with him to allow the settlement of the Griqua in his territory.<sup>28</sup>

Before the Griqua settled around Mount Currie, the area was under Faku's authority. Despite having relatively abundant resources, it was very thinly populated possibly as a result of the upheavals caused by the

Mfecane (1814–1835). Because of the territory's emptiness, it was known as Nomansland. The British wanted the Griqua to settle here to function as a buffer between the Bushman raiders of the Drakensberg and the Natal settlers and between Orange Free State and the Cape Colony.<sup>29</sup>

On 12 May 1863, the Griqua arrived at the foot of Mount Currie and called it De Laager. Each family built a house of sods just where they outspanned.<sup>30</sup> In total there were about 200 of these huts in the settlement.<sup>31</sup> Reverend William Dower, minister of the Griqua, described the settlement as having an irregular layout as streets were not parallel. A narrow building that functioned as a stronghold, church and school was built in the centre. A loop-holed, sod wall fort with corner bastions was erected around it. One corner included an underground powder magazine.<sup>32</sup>

On 14 August 1869, when Dower first visited Mount Currie, he explained that he would agree to be the Griqua's minister only if they left the laager and built a proper town. The Griqua formally moved to Kokstad in the middle of 1872.<sup>33</sup> However, the British annexed Griqualand East from 1874–1879 and it became part of the Cape Colony.

### **Modern history**

When the Union of South Africa was formed in 1910, the Cape Colony became the Cape Province. During the National Party era (1948–1994) the Griqua were classified as one of the groups identified as coloured; for instance Cape Coloured, Malay, Griqua and Other Coloured. For fear that their genetic origin would result in placement at a lower level than other non-European groups, they stressed the fact that they were of European descent rather than

of slave or Khoekhoen descent.<sup>34</sup> In the 1980s, Kokstad became part of Transkei, a bantustan or self-governing homeland set apart for specific race and ethnic groups in South Africa during the apartheid era.

In 1994 Kokstad was incorporated into KwaZulu-Natal.<sup>35</sup> Today it is part of the Greater Kokstad Local Municipality in the Harry Gwala District Municipality. The people who consider themselves Griqua can mostly be found in and around the areas of Griqualand East and Griqualand West and at Kranshoek in the Western Cape. Since the advent of democracy, the Griqua have referred to themselves as First Nation people, and they now stress the fact that they are descendants of the Khoekhoen, San and slaves rather than of European descent.<sup>36</sup>

### Methodology

In the case of the Adam Kok III laager site, the grading process generally prescribed by heritage authorities was followed. It first consisted of a literature review focusing on the history of the Griqua, Adam Kok III and his laager site. Second, it included an identification of stakeholders, interviews, site visits, and identification of the heritage components of the laager; and ended in a description of each component, its function, and management recommendations.

Developing a management strategy formed part of this project. This took into consideration theories put forward by authors such as David Lowenthal, as well as management strategies pertaining to heritage sites offered by various authors to show how theory can guide heritage site management.<sup>37</sup> This was enriched by the work of local heritage scholar Geoffrey Blundell in his MA dissertation that focused on the lack of

theory guiding the management strategies of rock art sites in South African and America.<sup>38</sup> By linking different theories to rock art sites, Blundell shows that a theoretical approach (for instance the minimalist or museum-as-metaphor theories) can lead to specific management strategies at publicly accessible rock art sites.<sup>39</sup>

The Institute's *Access Policy* stipulates that if archaeological excavations are necessary (which links with the scientific value of the laager) and if sites are opened as tourism destinations (which links with the social/tourism value of the site), management plans and strategies are legally required.<sup>40</sup> For these reasons this article includes proposed management strategies, even though it is also scholarly in nature.

As a result this article briefly refers to schools of thought pertaining to the fluidity of the identity of the Griqua using ideas of social constructivism as well as Khoisan revisionism. This is important as changes in this regard may influence the heritage significance of the site under discussion.

Last, it has to be indicated that several meetings were attended in which input was obtained from identified stakeholders and in which the Institute informed them of the grading process. The stakeholders informed the Institute of challenges they faced regarding the conservation and management of the site. In this way these matters could be attended to during the process. Stakeholders included the East Griqualand Traditional Council, as well as the National Khoisan Council. The East Griqualand Traditional Council was represented by Joseph Jansen, Jimmy Marais, C.B. Waltroom, Henry Venter, Bronwyn Maneveldt, and Vivienne and Gabriël Marais. The last also represented the

National Khoisan Council. Other important stakeholders were the Griqualand Independent Church Committee, Kokstad's chamber of commerce, the East Griqualand Museum (a member of the Griqualand Independent Church Committee), the East Griqualand Land Claim Department and Pioneer Griqua Council. Representation was as follows: the Griqualand Independent Church Committee was represented by the minister, Ebrahim Persent and A.G. Jood; Kokstad's chamber of commerce by Margi Fleming; the East Griqualand Museum by the curator, Audrey Steenkamp; the East Griqualand Land Claim Department by Cyril Gangerdine; and the Pioneer Griqua Council by Paul Pienaar.

### Rationale

After 1997, when Amafa<sup>41</sup> was established as the provincial heritage resources authority in KwaZulu-Natal, only three heritage sites were formally proclaimed as grade II sites in the Kokstad area. These were the bandstand, the old town hall and the Kokstad Museum; but none of these were Griqua sites. Subsequently, a number of heritage sites and monuments were declared to honour Griqua people in South Africa. These were the Ratelgat National Heritage Site, the Robberg Monument at Kranshoek, the farm Jakkalskraal (of the reformist le Fleur) and the bronze statue of Adam Kok III erected next to the Greater Kokstad municipal building on Heritage Day in 2018.<sup>42</sup>

The Ratelgat farm, on the Cape West Coast includes a Griqua museum, traditional *matjeshuise* (mat-houses), Late Stone Age rock engravings and modern accommodation for guests. It is linked to the cultural revival of the Griqua under the leadership of their forefather, Chief

A.A.S. le Fleur I.<sup>43</sup> Le Fleur focused on land claims and on the development of settlement schemes for the Griqua, to encourage self-reliance. He believed that the Griqua people could be brought together on this farm from Kokstad as one nation.<sup>44</sup> The site was officially opened on 11 May 2001 and has since become a national heritage site.<sup>45</sup>

The Robberg Monument at Kranshoek includes the grave of Le Fleur and commemorates the reformist's life.<sup>46</sup> Jakkalskraal, close to Kranshoek, is connected to Le Fleur's prophecies since he announced to the Griqua that this farm would become the breadbasket of the Griqua in times of hunger. In 2001 the title deeds were officially handed over to A.A.S. le Fleur II. None of the Griqua states have a laager site.<sup>47</sup> The only heritage resources that can be linked to them are modern built environments, graves and monuments.<sup>48</sup> This reinforces the idea that the Adam Kok III laager site can potentially be of cultural significance, but this needs to be measured in terms of the values stipulated in table 1.

At a superficial level, the scientific value will be high, especially within an archaeological context, if research reveals that a more holistic study of the settlement is needed. This category will be highest if it can be proved there is potential for archaeological excavation.

The social importance of Kok III's laager site can be investigated by establishing the degree of support from contemporary Griqua communities: this is measured by whether it is visited and memorialised on a regular basis through commemorative events and the community's initiative in requesting a formal proclamation of the site.

The historical significance goes hand-in-hand with the degree of importance of the laager site and its rarity in

| VALUE         | HIGH | MEDIUM | LOW | NONE           |
|---------------|------|--------|-----|----------------|
| Aesthetic     |      |        | X   |                |
| Social        | X    |        |     |                |
| Historical    | X    |        |     |                |
| Scientific    | X    |        |     |                |
| Architectural |      |        |     | Not applicable |
| Linguistic    |      |        |     | Not applicable |
| Technological |      | X      |     |                |

Table 1: Summary of the Statement of Significance of the Adam Kok Lager Site

comparison with other Griqua heritage sites. In addition, the significance of Adam Kok III’s (1811–1878) contribution to the Griqua people’s cultural successes and initiatives in comparison with other Griqua leaders is important.

The technical and aesthetical criteria of analysis pertain to any built environment feature. In this case the fort, its construction and material used, its layout, location and visual appearance need to be analysed.

### Three ways of conceptualising Griqua identity

This article considers three ways of conceptualising Griqua identity: the Victorian colonial view establishing racial difference; more recent Khoisan revisionist theories; and last, social constructivism.

From the earliest documentary resources of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries up until the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Griqua were subject to generalisations that were mainly negative. Missionary John Campbell, traveller and merchant George Thompson, and botanist and Quaker missionary James Backhouse said that they lacked determination and were improvident. In the social construct of the time, Campbell reasoned that they

were only semi-civilised.<sup>49</sup> Reverend William Anderson, one of the first missionaries of the LMS who visited the Griqua in 1800 and settled among them in 1804,<sup>50</sup> complained that ‘such is the natural laziness of the bastards that not one fifth of their good land at Griquatown is brought under cultivation.’<sup>51</sup> William Dower bemoaned the idleness of the Griqua and explained that they hated work.<sup>52</sup> These colonial viewpoints based on the political ‘standard of civilisation’ prevailed until more recent liberal exceptions such as writings by Robert Ross published in the middle of the 1970s.<sup>53</sup>

Khoisan revisionist writers such as Ross use Marxist models mainly based on economic and political factors to distinguish between master and subordinate classes.<sup>54</sup> Revisionists see the Khoisan as an economic underclass rather than a distinctive cultural entity. Carmel Schrire and John Wright also focus on the Khoisan beyond the Kalahari debate, suggesting that during the colonial/pioneer period, intermarriage led to increased hybridisation and the formation of new identities.<sup>55</sup> The origin of so-called coloured identity is one example, resulting from intermarriage between European colonists, slaves and indigenous San and Khoekhoen people.

Critique of this analytical framework is that the subordinate class, in this case coloured people, is reduced to marginal status and its contributions to the culture of the master class is not considered. The ability to influence and manipulate interaction is not sufficiently highlighted and requires more investigation than the simplistic mode of production narrative.<sup>56</sup>

For instance, Ross paints a bleak picture of the Griqua by the 1970s. He elaborates that all that was left of Philipopolis was the layout of the town, and all that was left of Griqua identity in Kokstad was the church. He believes that the Griqua's sense of community was gone and that they had forgotten their heritage.<sup>57</sup> Given this reliance on heritage being the material and not allowing for the intangible, this assumption was proven wrong given the cultural revitalisation in the Griqua community from the early 2000s, manifested in tourism programmes, days commemorating Adam Kok's birthday and a new interest in identifying and formally declaring Griqua heritage landscapes, sites and monuments as provincial resources, especially in KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape. Ross accentuates the Griqua as an economic underclass and ignores their cultural resilience.

Ross stresses that the trope of the Griqua as a bunch of lazy people who obtained the best land but were too indolent to farm it with success, reflects the prejudice of colonists as well as conservative academics. He explains that the positive contributions of the Griqua – such as their role in opening up the interior of southern Africa for trade through Botswana and beyond, their success in farming merino sheep, as well as the significant effort in clearing

a road from Hangklip to Berg Vyftig/Mount Currie – are often ignored.<sup>58</sup>

Ross further elaborates that historically there were means for the suppressed classes to emulate the success of the master class: at the end of the nineteenth century a Malay leader stood the chance to be elected a member of the Cape House of Assembly, but the election rules were changed. Further, at the Kat River Settlement, Khoisan had to pay cash on delivery during sheep auctions while white farmers had several months to settle their debt. However, while the 1913 Natives' Land Act hastened the end of the wealthier indigenous farmers' enterprises, access to markets for Griqua farmers was a problem as railways almost completely avoided their reserves.<sup>59</sup>

As opposed to the rigorous economic framework of the revisionists, social constructivism considers identities as fluid. During colonial times, both indigenous groups as well as European settlers influenced each other, implying that the borrowing of cultural traits, materials and institutions did not just follow the process of the indigenous group accepting these traits from the settlers; but vice versa. Second, traits, material and institutions that were adopted during the process of acculturation, were in many instances accepted with newly created values and uses, leading to an increase in hybridity in the colonial context.

Accordingly, both groups constructed new identities. Social constructivism also explains post-apartheid Griqua identity, which is fundamentally fluid, shown in cases such as land claims in which all Khoisan groups tend to form a united front in favour of whoever makes the claim.

The same fluidity applies whenever

aboriginal languages have the chance to be marketed or publicised by means of the Pan Southern African Language Board. During the San descendant ceremony held in July 2019 at the Kamberg Nature Reserve in the central Maloti-Drakensberg Park World Heritage Site, San descendants with different languages came together. They included the Dumisa clan (from the southern Drakensberg around Mpindle) as well as the !Xunthali and Kwedam San speakers from the Northern Cape. On the first day of the festival all groups attended the Eland San Descendant Ceremony in which an eland is offered at the Rock Art Heritage Site of Game Pass Shelter. All descendants take part in the prayer session, which is only open to San descendants, suggesting that this is perceived as common heritage. San descendant, ritual specialist and ceremonial leader Richard Duma, accredited by the Institute as a rock art custodian, ensured that the code of conduct was adhered to during the ritual.

### **Adam Kok's laager site can be understood as a site of contestation**

Fluid identity formation is not without its drawbacks. In contrast with such collective stances, Griqua society can also be described as fractured, particularly when it comes to making management decisions concerning Griqua heritage sites of importance. In this respect, Adam Kok III's laager site may even be viewed as a site of contestation. Funding was obtained from the National Lottery Fund to establish a museum at the laager site in the Mount Currie Nature Reserve, but the project never started. While Griqua representatives identified in the land restitution process and the Pioneer Griqua Council were in favour of the development, other

interested parties such as those representing the East Griqualand Traditional Council and the Griqualand Independent Church Committee, as well as one representative of the East Griqualand Museum, were against the proposal. Their rationale was that they believed that a new site museum on authentic archaeological terrain would lead to the Disneyfication of the only authentic Griqua military settlement left in South Africa. Based on this group's reasoning, the Griqua of Kokstad already had the East Griqualand Museum where the history of Adam Kok III and the Griqua of Griqualand East was exhibited.<sup>60</sup>

### **Case study: Adam Kok III's laager site**

The site, which was nominated for grading as a provincial site by Audrey Steenkamp, Gabriël Marais and Paul Pienaar (refer to the methodology section to see which Khoisan or Griqua council or organisation they represented) consists of the following historical components (see figure 1): a memorial, the Griqua Pilgrimage Square, a ruin on a hill above the Griqua Pilgrimage Square, an unknown archaeological feature, the narrow building in the middle of the laager that functioned as a council hall, church and school and other features. The monument, Pilgrimage Square of the Griqua National Independent Church and the ruin on the hill are all situated within Mount Currie Nature Reserve. The location of the walled square area and the narrow hall are on the property of the Kokstad Research Station. This is beneficial, since their position ensures that guests and tour groups visiting the monument, picnic area and Pilgrimage Square in Mount Currie do not collect artefacts or walk over sensitive archaeological

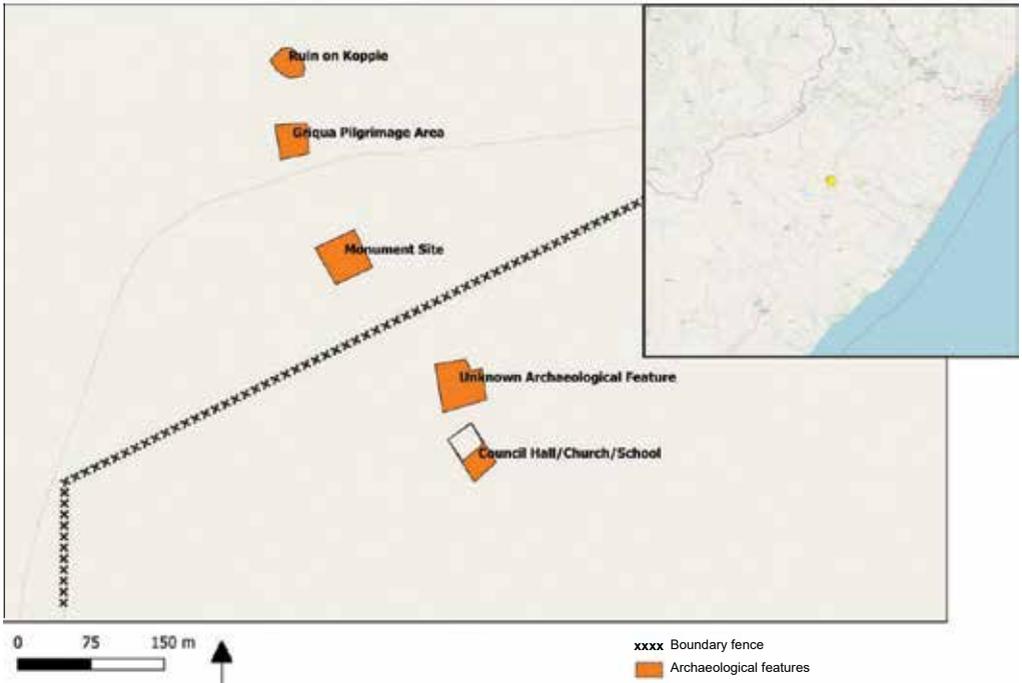


Figure 1: Map of Adam Kok III's laager settlement (design, Sumari Uys, 11 October 2019)

features such as hut floors. With the description of each of these, some management intervention is indicated.

### Memorial

The memorial to Kok III's laager (figure 2) consists of a sandstone monument surrounded by three pine trees and it gives a summarised history of the settlement. The picnic area consists of a square grassed area surrounded by pine trees (there were originally four). The site functions as a picnic area for schools and visitors and is visited every month by schools as part of East Griqualand Museum's outreach programme. Management recommendations for this would include replanting the one pine tree that died. The area must be monitored once a month since it is officially open to the public.



Figure 2: Pine trees around De Laager Monument (photograph, C. Rossouw, 29 April 2013)

### ***Griqua Pilgrimage Square***

The Griqua Pilgrimage Square consisted of a square lawn grass area where white stinkwood trees were planted in the form of a cross in 1972 when this site was developed by members of the Griqua National Independent Church.<sup>61</sup> This was the first church to be established in Griqualand. According to Milner Snell this area constituted the graveyard of the settlement. He maintained that the graves were without headstones and only piled up boulders of different sizes were used to construct the graves.<sup>62</sup> At present no gravestones have been detected. The function of the site is to act as a gathering space to commemorate the birthday of Adam Kok III also known as Founders Day on 16 October each year.<sup>63</sup>

When the site was surveyed, it was noted that the square was threatened by an infestation of *ou hout*, which must be removed. The shrub is also known as oldwood in English and *umtshitshi* in Zulu. It is often a straggly shrub or a dense small evergreen tree, which grows up to 7 metres tall and 5 metres wide.<sup>64</sup> Also, some of the white stinkwood trees that were destroyed by a fire must be replanted: Adam Kok III's laager is located within Mount Currie, a nature reserve, where annual fire breaks are burnt to encourage plant growth. On one occasion the fire spread into the pilgrimage landscape and some of the white stinkwood trees were destroyed.

When the survey was done only a single line of trees was visible. To address this problem a fire break must be burnt approximately 10 metres from Pilgrimage Square to protect the area against fire during annual burning. The white stinkwood trees that were destroyed must be replaced.

### ***Ruin on a hill above the Griqua Pilgrimage area***

The ruin is made up of a collection of square and circular walls constructed of piled-up boulders of different sizes measuring up to half a metre high, hidden from sight by a thick screen of thorn trees. Its function is not clear, but it could have been a livestock post or a defensive post during the time that the laager was occupied as a Griqua settlement from 1863 to 1872.

Even if Kok III constructed a fort and had cannons, it was never used in battle. However, after the Griqua left the laager to settle in the town of Kokstad, the laager site was used in April 1878 as a defensive post during the Griqua Rebellion. The exact position of this defensive post is not known and only an archaeological investigation would prove that perhaps the ruin on the north-western side of Adam Kok's laager functioned as the rebel's military post in April 1878. Or it could even be a very recently constructed kraal.

The research value of the ruin can only be investigated if the hill is burnt to uncover the archaeological footprint of this feature. This would allow the site to be mapped and excavated in order to determine the functions of the different sections/rooms of the site. Management recommendation would be to burn a firebreak around the hill, about 10 metres from the bottom, to ensure that the fire does not move into the Pilgrimage Square below.

### ***Unknown archaeological feature***

It is believed that this might have functioned either as a shop, accommodation for the missionaries or as the entrance to the fort (figure 3). Two large trees planted at the top of this feature might have served to mark the entrance to this

walled area. The stone blocks at the top of the square are semi-dressed while the rocks of the walls forming the two sides and bottom of the walled feature were built of random rubble.

The function of the square walled area just above the fenced-off earthwork hall is unknown. It might have functioned as accommodation for Reverend William Murray because when William Dower reached Mount Currie in August 1869 he was accommodated in the best house in the laager. The latter was a dis-used shop, the same building that was occupied by Murray to teach talented Griqua children at the settlement.<sup>65</sup>

The second possible function of this square-walled area could have been the position of the laager shop that the company Goodliffe and Ballance bought, around the middle of 1872. They purchased it for £75, the same amount paid by the Griqua Church four years before.<sup>66</sup> Goodliffe and Ballance still conducted their business from the laager after the Griqua moved to Kokstad in 1872.<sup>67</sup>

A question to pose that only an archaeological excavation could solve is to ask whether this square-walled area functioned as all the above. Another question is whether the walled site could have been part of the original fort that surrounded the narrow building that functioned as a school, church and council hall or whether it was located above the fort as a separate walled unit with its own function. Initially it was assumed on the basis of drawings of the old fort in J.J. Oberholster's book that these two units were both located inside the fort wall, but during the survey it became clear that they are not aligned at the right angle to function as one component. The accuracy of the drawing in his publication can be questioned.<sup>68</sup>

The area should also be burned annually to harden and conserve what is left of the narrow hall earthwork footprint and hut floors.

### ***The narrow building in the middle of the laager***

This building was made of sod walls and functioned as a council hall, church and school. Management recommendations regarding this site would include an annual burn to conserve the earthwork and hut floors. This site is not open to the public.

### ***Other features***

Other features identified included seven hut floors and ox-wagon roads. The hut floors were identified to the right of the square-walled area. Some track marks that could be ox-wagon roads that led from the laager site to town were identified to the left of the square-walled complex and the narrow sod-wall footprint.

Management recommendations would include an annual burn to conserve the hut floors and controlled visits. Only researchers or people with a permit should be allowed on this property. After excavation and rehabilitation of the site its opening as a tourism destination could be taken into consideration.

The process of developing the site for tourism purposes would be to impose a buffer of at least 5 metres around every archaeological feature identified and to create a trail route by gently removing the grass where the pathway is constructed. Care must be taken never to introduce cement walkways as such development is not reversible. The trail can be lined on both sides by small white painted rocks to act as psychological barriers: fencing would have too large an impact and compromise both the visual landscape as well as the

research potential of any archaeological deposit that may be present. It would be best not to introduce information panels but rather to train Griqua custodians to accompany guests to and from the site, to interpret the features, to relate the code of conduct to the guests, and to supervise their behaviour. People prefer being guided since they can ask questions rather than reading information from a brochure or pamphlet; and the guide can also learn from the visitor.

**Conclusion: statement of significance and grading recommendation**

As far as the social value of the site is concerned, people of the Griqua National Independent Church commemorate the birthday of Kok III by visiting the pilgrimage site. It also serves to commemorate Founders Day on 16 October each year. The aim is to honour the cultural history of the Griqua and the achievements of Adam Kok III who established Griqualand East. Social value is thus regarded as high.

The tourism value of the laager site is also very high. Custodians focus on tak-

ing schools and visitors to the laager site as part of a Griqua tourism node. This includes Margaret and Adam Kok III's grave; the Griqua National Independent Church and the oldest Griqua homes in Kokstad; graves of descendants of Kok III in the municipal cemetery; and Adam Kok III's laager.

The historical value of Kok III's laager site is high because of his contributions and initiatives relating to Griqua culture and the pioneer phase of their history, in both Transorangia and Griqualand East compared with the contributions of other Griqua leaders discussed above. They failed to establish lasting towns and Kok II's initiative in the establishment of Philipstown was rather induced by Philip. Although both Waterboer and Adam Kok II's settled towns based on the missionary ideals of a financially independent peasant farming community were successful, Adam Kok III was the only Griqua leader who issued title deeds to his followers.<sup>69</sup>

The scientific value of the laager site is exceptionally high. At present the archaeological footprint and the extent of

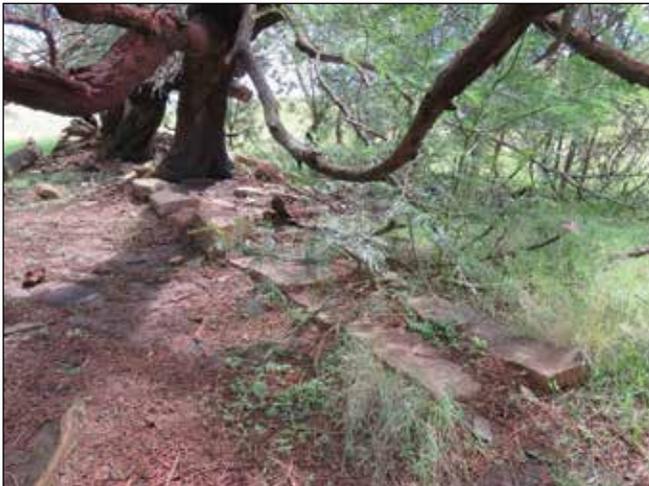


Figure 3: Part of the footprint of the unknown archaeological feature (photograph, C. Rossouw, 16 February 2018)

Adam Kok III's settlement are unknown and an elaborate survey is needed to investigate more features and map the entire site. The archaeological research value has large potential as the site has not undergone any excavation.

Last, regarding the technical value it was noted by Dower that the fort was a very creditable structure for purposes of defence and there was nothing equal to it from King William's Town to Pietermaritzburg.<sup>70</sup> Perhaps another research question would be to compare the layout and defensive qualities of the footprint with other forts in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. Taking Dower's argument into consideration, it seems that the technical value of the site is at least medium.

Although the site does not seem to have any specific aesthetic value, it remains clear from the above that its cultural significance is very high. The grading recommendation for Adam Kok III's laager site is thus valuable enough to be proclaimed as a site of provincial importance taking into consideration the values discussed above. Adam Kok III's laager site could not be graded at national level as it probably has value only to a section of the community, limited to the province. In comparison to other provincial heritage sites in KwaZulu-Natal, such as the Isandhlwana Anglo-Zulu Battlefield, the laager site of Kok III does seem less significant.

## Glossary

*Bastard*: Samuel Halford relates that many Griqua were people of European and San or Khoekhoen blood and that they referred to themselves as Bastards in the eighteenth century. Despite the term being derogatory for Europeans, the Bastards were proud of the name.<sup>71</sup>

The same applies to so-called coloured people.<sup>72</sup> Originally the term Bastard signified people with greater attachment to Christianity than the Khoekhoen, or slaves.

*Bergenaars*: many Bastards served in commandos in the Cape and some of those enlisted members left the country to pursue a life more in keeping with their own nomadic life. This resulted in the formation of opportunistic groups such as the Bergenaars. Some, such as Adam Kok II and Barend Barends, joined the San and Khoekhoe groups such as the Koranna between the 1820s and the early 1830s in order to raid settlements under missionary control.<sup>73</sup> This included the Batlaping and other Tswana groups as well as Griquatown under the control of Waterboer.<sup>74</sup>

*boers*: directly translated this word means farmer. However, within the context of southern Africa's settler history the word is charged with political significance since the Dutch settlers (boers) wanted to obtain political independence from the British by establishing republics.<sup>75</sup> The word boer is also emotive, especially when used in derogatory fashion to identify Afrikaners.

*kaptyn*: the Griqua people referred to their leader or chief using the Dutch word *kaptyn*.<sup>76</sup>

*Khoekhoen*: is the common-gender plural of *khoe* in Nama and Koranna and means people. Without the 'n' at the end it can be used as an adjective. The term 'men of men' or Khoikhoi is outdated.<sup>77</sup>

*trekboers*: this term refers to the first group of Dutch-speaking settlers who moved beyond the border of the Cape Colony mainly for economic purposes such as grazing lands for their livestock. In the earlier stages of their seasonal

migrations they returned to the Cape Colony to pay tax to the British government and were loyal to the British.<sup>78</sup>

*voortrekkers*: the voortrekkers were mainly defined by their political attempt to gain independence from the British government and to create their own republics.<sup>79</sup>

*Volksraad and veldkornette*: a Volksraad is similar to a parliament and the Griqua adopted it from the Dutch settlers; they also adopted the Dutch magisterial system known as veldkornette.<sup>80</sup>

## NOTES

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- 4 Alfred Wannenburg, *Forgotten Frontiersmen* (Cape Town, Howard Timmins, 1980), p. 39.
- 5 Shephard, *In the Shadow of the Drakensberg*, pp. 26–27.
- 6 Wannenburg, *Forgotten Frontiersmen*, p. 40.
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- 13 Marais, *The Cape Coloured People 1652–1937*, pp. 40–41.
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- 15 Balson, *Children of the Mist*, pp. 156–157.
- 16 DCAB, ‘Kok II, Adam’ <https://dacb.org/stories/southafrica/kok-adam-ii/> (accessed 19 July 2019); Griqua Royal House, ‘The Griqua history’ [www.griquaroyalhouse.com](http://www.griquaroyalhouse.com) (accessed 19 July 2019); Marais, *The Cape Coloured People 1652–1937*, p. 49.
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- 18 Griqua Royal House, ‘The Griqua history’ [www.griquaroyalhouse.com](http://www.griquaroyalhouse.com) (accessed 19 July 2019).
- 19 *ibid.*
- 20 Balson, *Children of the Mist*, p. 157.
- 21 Marais, *The Cape Coloured People 1652–1937*, p. 54.
- 22 *ibid.*, pp. 54–55.
- 23 William Dower, *The Early Annals of Kokstad and Griqualand East*; edited by Christopher Saunders (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1978; originally published Port Elizabeth, Jas. Kemsley, 1902), p. 10.
- 24 Marais, *The Cape Coloured People 1652–1937*, p. 59.
- 25 *ibid.*, p. 60.
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- 45 The Griqua Historical Cultural Tour and Jakalskraal Chalets Accommodation brochure, 'People of the mist: the Griqua community of Kranshoek' [plett-tourism.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/GRIQUA-BROCHURE-FINAL.pdf](http://plett-tourism.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/GRIQUA-BROCHURE-FINAL.pdf) (accessed 19 July 2019); The Griqua Nation, 'Griquas today: trivia and book references' [www.tokencoins.com/griqua5.html](http://www.tokencoins.com/griqua5.html) (accessed 19 July 2019); East Griqualand Museum, *Servant of God: The Early Years of the Reformer; Andrew Abraham Stockenström le Fleur* (Kokstad, East Griqualand Museum, 2003), pp. 9–10, 12.
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- 50 Griqua Royal House, 'The Griqua history' [www.griquaroyalhouse.com](http://www.griquaroyalhouse.com) (accessed 19 July 2019).
- 51 Marais, *The Cape Coloured People 1652–1937*, p. 44.
- 52 This is a primary resource although it was written long after Dower experienced the events.
- 53 Robert Ross, *Adam Kok's Griquas: A Study in the Development of Stratification in South Africa* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976).
- 54 Geoffrey Blundell, *Nqabayo's Nomansland: San Rock Art and the Somatic Past* (Uppsala, Uppsala University, 2004), p. 25.
- 55 *ibid.*, pp. 23–24. Two conflicting groups refer to the San in the Kalahari: the traditionalists and the Kalahari revisionists. The traditionalists stereotype the San as a pristine hunter-gatherer group with fixed and unchanging

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- 57 Ross, *Adam Kok's Griqua*, p. 1.
- 58 *ibid.*, pp. 1–2.
- 59 *ibid.*, pp. 7–9.
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- 61 Interview with Audrey Steenkamp, East Griqualand Museum, Kokstad, 29 April 2013.
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- 63 Interview with Audrey Steenkamp, East Griqualand Museum, Kokstad, 29 April 2013.
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- 66 *ibid.*, p. 37.
- 67 *ibid.*, p. 40.
- 68 Oberholster, *The Historical Monuments of South Africa*, pp. 172–173.
- 69 Marais, *The Cape Coloured People 1652–1937*, p. 43.
- 70 Dower, *The Early Annals of Kokstad and Griqualand East*, p. 15.
- 71 Samuel J. Halford, *The Griquas of Griqualand: A Historical Narrative of the Griqua People, their Rise, Progress and Decline* (Cape Town, Juta, 1950), pp. 15–16.
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- 80 Balson, *Children of the Mist*, p. 151.