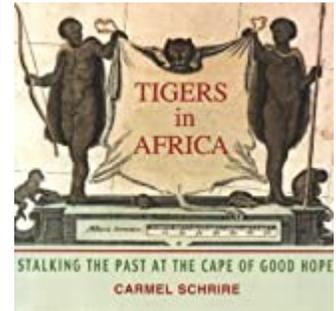




Carmel Schrire. *Tigers in Africa: Stalking the Past at the Cape of Good Hope.* Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2002. vi + 58 pp. \$12.50 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8139-2129-7.



Reviewed by Saul Dubow (Professor and Chair of History, Sussex University)

Published on H-SAfrica (December, 2002)

This quixotic caper through the history of South African archaeology begins with a long-running debate amongst Robben Island prisoners about the putative existence of tigers in Africa and concludes with the author's presentation of a packet of Romany Creams (and her book) to Nelson Mandela on the occasion of his eighty-second birthday—all by way of celebrating the life and work of her distinguished archaeologist colleague, Glynn Isaac.

Schrire moves freely, in this splendidly produced pictorial essay, between discussion of visual and literary references to tigers in Africa (whose non-existence is not in doubt) and metaphorical evocations of the tigrish spirit of resistance to slavery and apartheid. That the tiger

metaphor is strained to breaking point in doing so barely matters: enter into the spirit of Carmel-in-Wonderland and the reader will delight in a tour that celebrates the splendors of Cape natural history as well as the careers of several of the country's leading exponents of hominid cultural evolution, Dart, Ardrey and Isaac among them.

To quibble over Schrire's interpretations is to spoil the romance of her quest, not least because the romance of scientific discovery is part of the message that this spirited academic wishes to remind us of. Riding her scholarly tigers with verve and skill, Schrire succeeds admirably in introducing tasty morsels from the carnivorous field of palaeoanthropology to a general audience.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

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Citation: Saul Dubow. Review of Schrire, Carmel, *Tigers in Africa: Stalking the Past at the Cape of Good Hope.* H-SAfrica, H-Net Reviews. December, 2002.

URL: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=6989>

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