

THE DIGGING STICK

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PICTURES FROM AN EXHIBITION "AUSSTELLUNG TRANSVAAL", BERLIN, 1897



"Hottentots", Basotho dancers and other idealised images of ethnic Africa feature in an unusual assemblage of postcards associated with a Transvaal Exhibition ("Berliner Transvaal Ausstellung") presented in Berlin a century ago. In addition to depictions of "Strasse in Johannesburg", the "Marktplatz" and "Clubhaus", as also scenes relating to the Transvaal

goldmines (black mine-workers in one; white top-hatted on-lookers in another), several show views of 'tribal life', vernacular architecture and material culture. A 'curio' genre that persists a century later, they clearly helped convey elements of indigenous Africa into the purview of imperial Germany.

Those postcards shown here illustrate "Hottentotten Kraals", a "Flötentanz der [flute dance of] Basutos", and a "Kaffern-Piano" - with various items of material culture and dress included. But where twentieth century 'curio' images often conflate the colonial, precolonial and archaeological pasts into a timeless ethnic stereotype, it is interesting to note some of the "Hottentotten" people in these postcards quite clearly wearing western clothing including hats - and one fellow seated upon what could well be a wooden packing case.

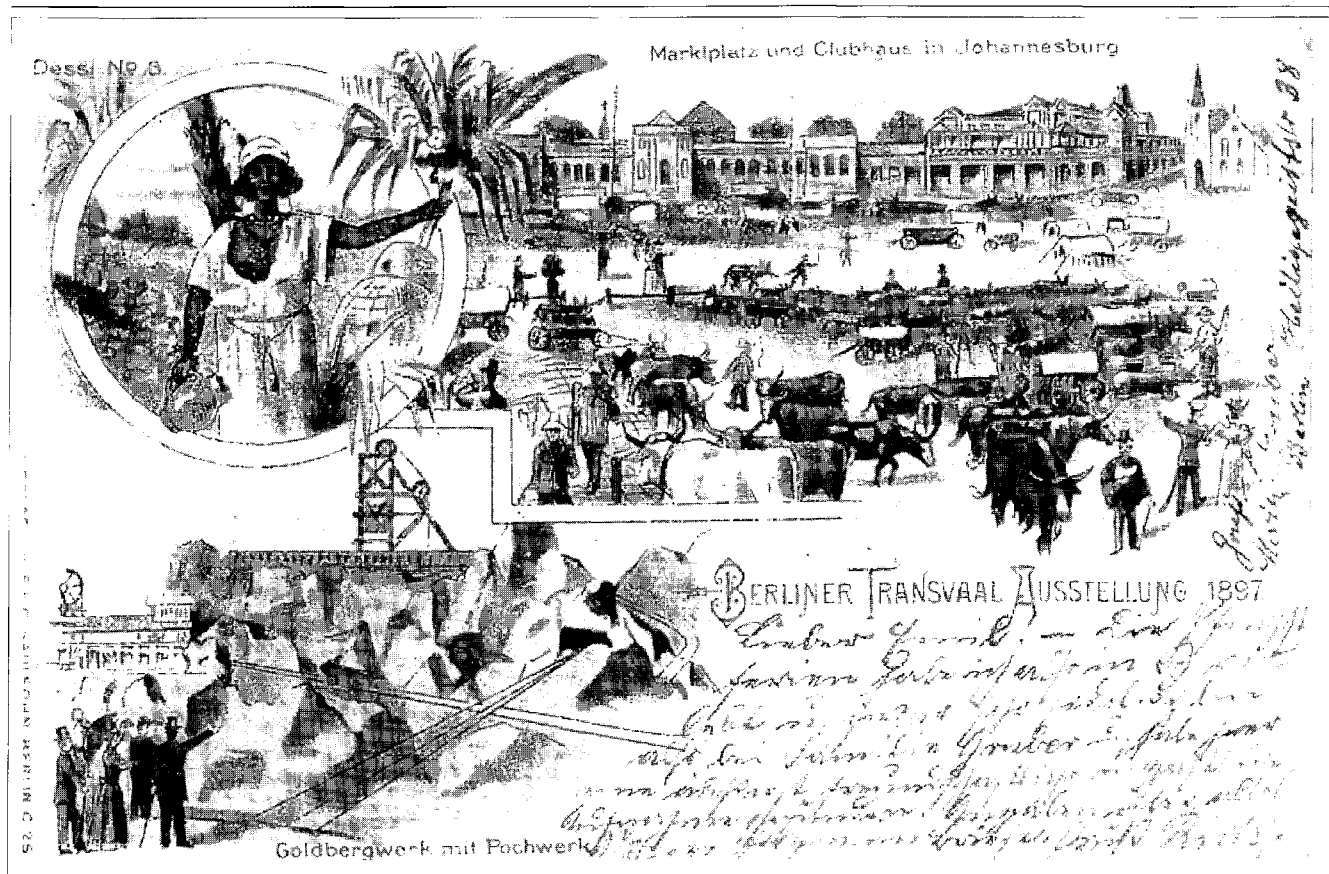
Other cards in the series show a "Kriegstanz der [war dance of] Maquamba" and "Kaffern-Dorf (Kraal)".

The postcards are in the collection of Wolfgang Zahn of Köln, who would appreciate any information our readers may have on the exhibition. Did the Berlin exhibits feature any of the depicted objects or constructions; were there indeed demonstrations of music and dances? Rock engravings had been removed to various museums in central Europe by Dr Emil Holub in the previous decade - including 200 slabs from Gestoptefontein in Transvaal: could some of these have been featured in the exhibition?



Musical Africa: Basotho flute dance and xylophone. Published by Verlag von Emil Boas.

Postcards on front show: "Hottentotten-Kraal", Khoekhoe, including man with necklace and earrings, and matjes house dwellings - in one instance set amongst tropical palms! Note late nineteenth century attire of some Khoekhoe. A gold mine and gold diggers' canteen appear alongside one of these rural scenes. Publishers: Verlag von S. & G. Saulsohn (top); Kunstverlag J. Goldiner (bottom).



Idealised maiden with rather un-African ceramic jug and ?matjes houses or beehive dwellings in background, together with scenes from Johannesburg Market Square and a goldmine with stamping-mill. Published by Verlag von S. & G. Saulsohn.

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OLDEST FINDINGS OF HUMAN FOSSIL WITH TOOLS DISCOVERED BY INTERNATIONAL TEAM IN ETHIOPIA*

Discovery of the oldest yet known human ancestor fossil to be found in association with stone implements and animal bones has been announced by a scientific team from the U.S., Ethiopia and Israel. The findings, estimated at 2.3 million years old, were discovered in the Hadar region of northern Ethiopia.

The human fossil consists of an upper jaw of early *Homo*, the genus to which modern humans belong.

Previously discovered sites (all in Africa) in which hominid fossils have been found in stone tool-bearing layers were estimated to be no more than 1.85 million years old. The current discovery relates to an earlier period about which little has been known and

therefore provides important information regarding the evolutionary and cultural development of human ancestors.

The scientific team which made the discovery is headed by Prof William H. Kimbel of the Institute of Human Origins at Berkeley, California, and includes Prof. Yoel Rak of Tel Aviv University and Erella Hovers of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. A

report on their findings appears in the December 1996 issue of the *Journal of Human Evolution*. The team has been exploring the Ethiopian site since 1990.

The fossil, tools and animal bones which they found were discovered on the surface of a barren hill near a dry stream bed in Hadar. Hadar is the home of the famous 'Lucy' human ancestor discovered a number of years ago. Lucy, dating back some 3 million years or more, is of the species *Australopithecus afarensis* that had an apelike appearance and was not known to have made stone tools. The new fossil discovery is estimated as some 700,000 years younger than Lucy and bears a much greater resemblance to humans than Lucy, yet is still somewhat different from fossil

discoveries of the *Homo* species belonging to later periods.

It is believed that the new fossil will help fill in an evidence gap between earlier and later fossils, covering a period about which little has been known regarding the ancestry of the earliest *Homo* species.

The Hadar artefacts, consisting of a number of primitive stone flakes and chopping tools, are under study by archaeologists Zelalem Assefa and Curtis Marean of the State University of New York-Stony Brook and Erella Hovers of the Hebrew University.

* *Research and Science News*, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.



A DESCRIPTION OF STONE ARTEFACTS AND OSTRICH EGGSHELL BEADS IN THE KALAHARI IN THE YEAR 1859?

David Morris

In the year 1855, or was it 1858, T.H. Bowker, or his brother J.H. Bowker - the sources conflict - recognised stone artefacts in the Eastern Cape, and thus was archaeology in South Africa born. Goodwin remarked on it as South Africa's archaeological centenary in 1955, and it has been a generally accepted version, although Johan Binneman of the Albany Museum reported evidence a few years ago that a certain G.R. McKay, also in the Eastern Cape, had likewise identified ancient stone tools in the late 1850s. Of interest is that an equally early description comes from the interior, the details of which are contained in one of the closing chapters of a rather obscure book which appeared in 1890, entitled *Terra: on a hitherto unsuspected second axial rotation of our earth*. The author was Andrew A. Anderson, better known for his travel book, *Twenty-five years in a wagon* (1888).

In *Terra*, Anderson was considering "Man's presence on earth prior to many physical changes of its crust" - and in that chapter

provided a first-hand account of the use of stone flakes, by Bushmen, in the Kalahari in 1860. It is necessary to caution that Anderson, when writing up his travels in the late 1880s, seems to have confused some of his dates, and it is possible that some accounts may be a few years out.

"Of late years," he wrote, "since the Dutch first occupied the South, and the English afterwards came in with all kinds of iron tools, few natives now know the use of the stone knives and arrow-heads. Therefore the antiquity of any of these specimens, when found, must be determined by the position in which they may have been unearthed."

He went on to recount:

"The first time attention was called to this subject was on a Sunday morning in the Kalahari Desert, 1859. As we never trek on that day if it could be avoided, we had plenty of leisure to look round, as we made it a practice to select a pretty spot

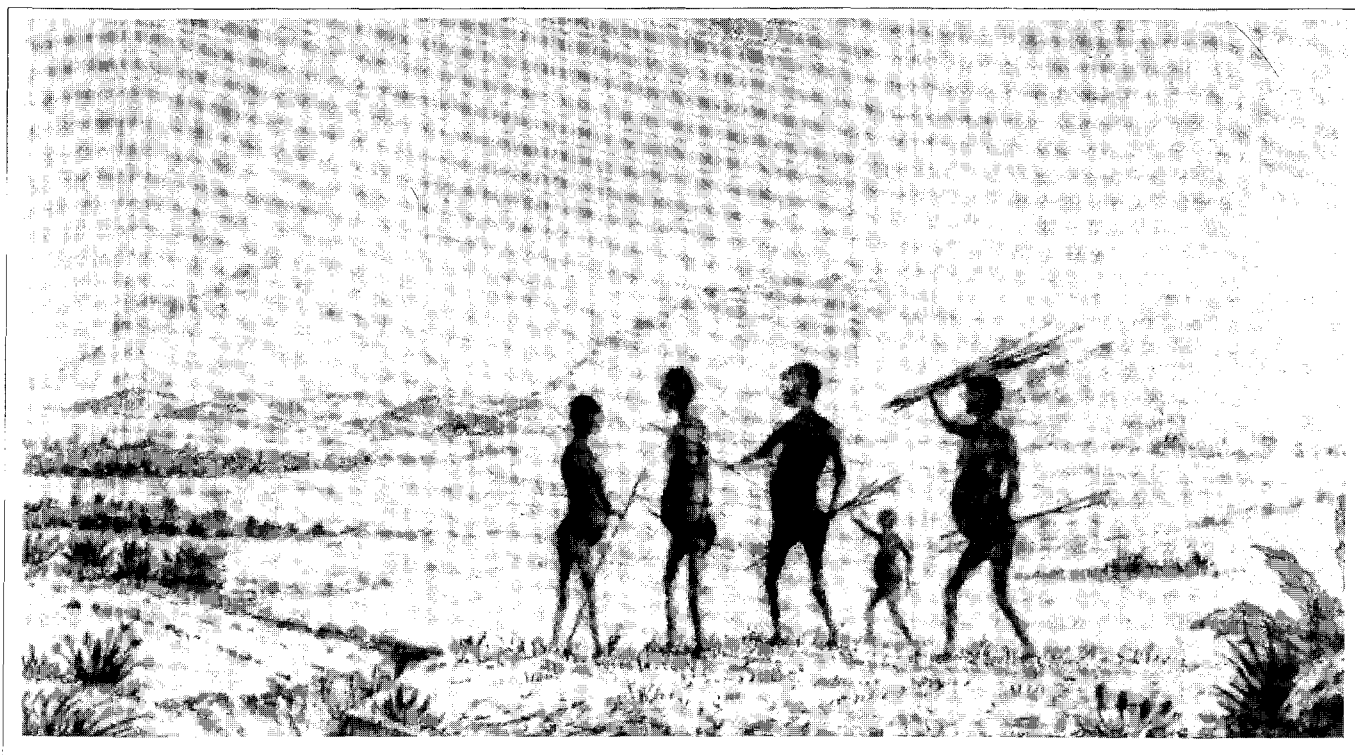
on that day; and being outspanned close to some thorn trees, on the banks of the Nosop River, in an open part of the country, looking as usual for geological specimens, we saw many perfect and beautifully worked spear-heads of yellow flint, about 6 inches in length. This induced us to look for more, and in the course of the day collected five, some perfect, others broken, composed on yellow, black and white flints and quartz, one being jasper."

so true."

Further on he commented:

"...so far as surface flints are concerned, it is difficult to distinguish between the ancient and modern from their position; but there is a very distinctive mark of age on some, and with their worn appearance there can be no mistake about their great antiquity..."

Later he was on the diamond fields and described how artefacts were recovered



"A small Bushman family" - by Andrew A. Anderson

Exploring the sand dunes:

"Stirring up the sand with a small stick, we saw several pieces of ostrich eggs with holes in them, that had evidently been bored through by some sharp instrument. Looking for more, found five well-rounded beads made of the same material, but saw no instruments with them; but on searching along the bank some twenty yards up the hill, discovered several small flint borers, about an inch in length, similar in shape to the blade of a pen-knife pointed very sharply at one end...our surprise is how such small flints could be held by the hand to fashion them

from considerable depths - evidence of their antiquity - in the river-side sediments of the Vaal; this at places such as Windsorton, Barkly West and Pniel, well known today in the annals of South African Stone Age archaeology.

That there were other early collectors of Stone Age artefacts in the interior becomes apparent from Anderson's remark that "when in Potchefstroom in the Transvaal, in 1865, we were shown some very good stone implements, in the possession of a medical gentleman..."

It would seem that while T.H. (or J.H.) Bowker's recognition of Stone Age artefacts

was certainly early, there were others such as McKay and Anderson, and still others unnamed like the Potchefstroom 'medical gentleman', who had identified archaeological remains of 'great antiquity' within the same decade or two. Actually, as archaeological 'firsts' go - Sparrman, as early as 1776, had excavated a stone mound near Cookhouse, while a clergyman in Mozambique had noted rock art in 1721.



Part of the map "The Interior of South Africa, explored and surveyed by Andrew Arthur Anderson" showing the Kalahari Desert where he noted stone artefacts in the year 1859.

Whereas Goodwin had claimed T.H. Bowker to be "our first true antiquary", that statement would now need some qualification.

SUGGESTED READING

Anderson, A.A. 1890. *Terra: on a hitherto unsuspected second axial rotation of our earth*. London: Reeves & Turner.

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Humphreys, A.J.B. 1975. The earliest reported shelter excavation in the interior of South Africa? *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 30:40.

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KHOE, KHOI, OR KHOEKHOE?

The question of correct Khoisan (or Khoesan) terminology is a leitmotif running through southern African ethnography and historiography, and the recent Khoisan Conference reached no consensus on it. "Depending on which academic or aboriginal descendant one speaks to, there will be a different name or spelling," writes Melanie Gosling (*Cape Times* 15 Jul 1997) who approached various delegates at the conference.

It was pointed out that "'Khoisan' is a name coined by a German physical anthropologist Leonard Schultze in the 1920s as a term to encompass both the people popularly known as 'Bushmen' and 'Hottentots'. People have stuck with it because it is a convenient way to describe descendants and different groups of these people".

However, when referring to people of, say Nama ('Hottentot') descent, it should be 'Khoe', the Nama word for 'person', or 'Khoekhoe', meaning 'People of People' or 'Real People'.

Some academics including the South African Language Board and the South African San Institute indicated a preference for 'Khoesan'.

DUAL CONGRESS, 1998

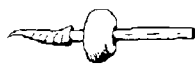
South Africa is to host the Dual Congress of the IV International Congress of the International Association for the Study of Human Palaeontology, jointly with a meeting of the International Association of Human Biologists, 28 June to 4 July 1998. Congress Patron-in-Chief is President Nelson Mandela.

Professor Phillip Tobias, President of the Dual Congress, explains how this joint meeting came about. "At the III International Congress of the IASHP which was held in Jerusalem in 1992, Dr. Francis Thackeray of the Transvaal Museum, Pretoria, speaking on behalf of human palaeontologists of South Africa, extended an invitation for the IV International Congress to be held in South Africa. This was graciously accepted by the Permanent Council and General Assembly of the IASHP. Originally, this meeting was intended to be held in 1997, but for various reasons it was necessary to defer it until 1998. Meantime, independently, the Executive Committee and Council of the International Association of Human Biologists (IAHB) had invited me to organise a meeting in South Africa during my term of office as its President. The governing bodies of the two organisations agreed to a South African proposal

that the meetings of the two organisations should be combined as a Dual Congress at the same time."

The programme of colloquia, open sessions and entertainments will include visits to some of the world's most famous Plio-Pleistocene sites, viewing renowned fossil remains from Taung, Sterkfontein, Swartkrans and Makapansgat, and "a taste of the varied cultures of South Africa's 'Rainbow Nation'."

"As the century nears its end," Professor Tobias writes, "we expect that the Dual Congress will provide a wonderful opportunity for participants to take stock of their disciplines, to review the past and present, and to foresee and plan the roles of human biology and palaeo-anthropology in the 21st Century."



BOOKS FOR SALE

We have been given a number of books, chiefly early publications of the Society, which belonged to Margaret Shaw and which are duplicates of those in the Library of the South African Museum. Miss Shaw has allowed us to make these available to the Members.

- ◆ Clark J.D. 1950. *The Stone Age Cultures of Northern Rhodesia*. Claremont : Rustica Press.
- ◆ Clark J.D. 1959. *The Prehistory of Southern Africa*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- ◆ Goodwin. 1945. *Method in Prehistory. South African Archaeological Society Handbook Series No 1*. Cape Town : Rustica Press.
- ◆ Goodwin. 1953. *Method in Prehistory. South African Archaeological Society Handbook Series No 1*. Cape Town : Rustica Press.
- ◆ Goodwin. 1946. *The Loom of Prehistory. South African Archaeological Society Handbook Series No 2*. Cape Town: Rustica Press.
- ◆ Schofield. 1948. *Primitive Pottery South African Archaeological Society Handbook Series No 3*. Cape Town : Rustica Press.

If you would like one of the above they are available at market related prices:

Please contact Mary Leslie at 27 North Road, Somerset West, 7130. Tel 021- 8515991

e-mail: mleslie@beattie.uct.ac.za

WAC4 : WORLD ARCHAEOLOGY CONGRESS 4 CAPE TOWN 1999

It has been announced that the fourth meeting of the World Archaeology Congress is to be held in Cape Town in January 1999.

WAC was inaugurated at its first congress in Southampton in 1986, and last met in New Delhi in 1994. Its conferences and inter-congresses have continued to develop the global dimension of archaeology and the social role that archaeologists play as interpreters of the past. The World Archaeology Congress was formed in opposition to apartheid, highlighting the relationship between the study of the past and the politics of the present - an issue again underscored in the controversies that erupted at the WAC meeting in New Delhi. South Africa having emerged from the dark days of apartheid, it is singularly appropriate that WAC4 should be in this country and with President Nelson Mandela having agreed to be Patron - testimony in itself to the importance of archaeology in the reconstruction of our history and heritage.

WAC4 has a website <http://www.uct.ac.za/depts/age/wac>



KHOISAN IDENTITIES AND CULTURAL HERITAGE CONFERENCE

The international Khoisan conference held in Cape Town between 12 and 16 July 1997 brought together Khoisan people, academics, and members of the public, on a scale never before attempted, and in the hope of participants gaining a closer understanding of one another's viewpoints.

The conference attracted wide media attention, with greatest coverage focussed on issues of modern Khoisan land and language rights, identities and leadership claims, and the marshalling of the past by organisations and individuals to support or contest sometimes competing viewpoints.

The South African Museum published, in its monthly newsletter *Muse News-Indaba-Nuus*, an introductory scene-setter by Gerald Klinghardt of the museum's Human Sciences Division, in which he points out that "over the past century, studies of the identities and histories of Khoisan people in southern Africa have been conducted mostly by academics from Europe, South Africa, North America and Japan."

"The results of their work have seldom

become known to the people they studied, and even the broader public tends to be poorly informed about Khoisan heritage and its significance in the wider context of southern African history. Only within the last decade have programmes been undertaken in Botswana and Namibia to reverse this situation, with the result that some contemporary Khoisan people have begun to take greater pride in their ancestry and have been empowered to make strategic decisions about conserving their heritage."

"In much of southern Africa, but particularly in South Africa, the nature and content of Khoisan histories and identities remain controversial and contested. After the 15th century, the indigenous Khoisan population underwent major changes as a result of the European colonization of the subcontinent.

This led to the loss of their control over the natural resources essential for an independent existence. Large numbers died resisting conquest or from introduced epidemic diseases, and the survivors were incorporated as permanent minorities into the developing complex societies that now control what was once their land. For the descendants of the indigenous Khoisan people, this produced revolutionary transformations in forms of cultural expression, perceptions of reality and concepts of identity."

"The extensive changes in South Africa since 1994 have created new opportunities for redressing past injustices. Some Khoisan descendants have begun asserting forms of cultural identity based on idealized images of the past that seem to owe more to trends in Western scholarship than to documentary evidence. These ideas about Khoisan cultural heritage have become powerful political symbols arising from struggles over land claims, but they also challenge scholars to confront the relevance of their work for the people they have described and claim to know well."

This then was some of the background to the conference - a bringing together of people from different spheres around issues of Khoisan identity and cultural heritage not attempted on the same scale before in South Africa. It attracted some 300 delegates from various Khoisan groups in the subcontinent. It was hoped that "providing opportunities for Khoisan people to express their concerns, needs and achievements, for academics to share their knowledge about the Khoisan past, and for members of the public to participate in open discussions" would "stimulate a sense of shared responsibility for the promotion of Khoisan heritage, so that Khoisan studies can continue to grow and flourish."

To the outside world, the conference highlighted hard contemporary issues surrounding exploitation, deprivation and dispossession - in the words of one San leader, Mr

Mathambo Ngakaeaja from Botswana, "we must be the best-studied people in the world, but our socio-economic position is declining in spite of all the research" (*Cape Times* 16 July 1997). "As leaders from a variety of Khoisan groups - from Namibia, Botswana and South Africa - took the microphone," wrote journalist Melanie Gosling, "some speaking in their own languages with translators, a picture emerged of an aboriginal people which governments can still mess around - and get away with it".

Some research - for example that describing San as nomadic - had been used, it was claimed, to exclude San from owning land. "In my country," said Ngakaeaja, "the government won't give land to San people because they say we move; farmers in Namibia won't employ San people because they say we move, and the government won't provide schools and clinics for us because they say we move." In Botswana and Namibia San are fighting to retain rights to land being set aside as game reserves.

Another area focused on in the media was the fate of Khoisan languages, including the demand of the Nama Representative Council to have Nama recognised as an official language and to include it in the school syllabus as a recognised subject. Other languages are on the brink of extinction or are now already silent forevermore.

Assertions and contestations of identities, titles and claims of various kinds spilled over into the media, with detractors pointing, in at least one instance (*Mail and Guardian* 25 Jul 1997), to opportunism - the spotting of gaps in post-apartheid political flux, and the marketing of "a potentially dangerous mix of historical fact and fantasy". University of Cape Town social anthropologist Emile Boonzaier cautioned that "one must acknowledge many populations draw on history to create a sense of identity and they have every right to do

so." In trying to correct negative images and connotations of, for example, being called "hotnot" or "bushman", some of the leaders of such groups "are much more conscious and calculating about the way they manipulate symbols than the rank and file who see images that resonate with them - and that's one of the dangers," he said. Boonzaier expressed scepticism about one of the leader's lineage claims, "but then there are people who say he's no worse than other leaders they have had before".

Boonzaier referred to negative connotations attached to Khoisan languages which were sometimes literally beaten out of people: "I have heard school principals speak with pride about beating children to stop them speaking Nama." Ouma Kaatjie Elam from Douglas, one of the few remaining speakers of Gri (Griqua) indicated one of the negative connotations now attached to her click-rich language, which children are not interested in speaking "because they say it sounds like stones being knocked against each other".

Dr Janette Deacon, of the National Monuments Council and a member of the conference organising committee, said (*Cape Times*, 11 July 1997) that doing a properly co-ordinated inventory of the dying languages, cultures, folklores and histories of endangered Southern African communities was "a very urgent matter that must be addressed as soon as possible." She hoped the conference would help to instill a sense of heritage and pride in South African communities whose role in history and value to the country had often been excluded from

school curricula.

Director of the Institute for Historical Research, and chairperson of the conference organising committee, Professor Jatti Bredekamp, said (*Cape Times*, 11 July 1997) the conference was particularly significant because "for the first time the people being researched will form an integral part of the conference - not as objects but as active participants in charting ways to preserve their culture and history."

Some media References

Davis, G. 1997. Chief Little takes on a big job: the self-proclaimed chief of the Hancumqua is proud of his heritage, but some doubt his authenticity. *Mail and Guardian* 25 Jul 1997.

Gosling, M. 1997. Persecution continues for Southern Africa's San people. *Cape Times* 16 Jul 1997.

Gosling, M. 1997. Southern Africa's unwanted people. *Cape Times* 21 Jul 1997.

Holiday, A. 1997. Languages endangered worldwide. *Cape Times* 28 Jul 1997.

Johnson, A. 1997. Bid to save heritage of S.A.'s first people. *Cape Times* 11 Jul 1997.

Johnson, A. 1997. S.A.'s oldest cultures under threat. *Cape Times* 14 Jul 1997.

Klinghardt, G. 1997. Khoisan '97. *Muse News-Indaba-Nuus* 11(6).



J.A. Engelbrecht in his study, *The Korana*, provides information in a footnote on the making of bored stones for digging sticks. In an interview, Vaaltyn told Engelbrecht that "it was the Bushmen who taught (Korana) how to make the bored stone...for this they required as tools a stone used as a hammer and a borer which was made of an even harder stone. By striking the borer with the hammer and at the same time moving the borer round, the hole was made. If one borer became blunt another was used. If necessary they took water or sand or both to facilitate the process of boring which was done from two sides. It was only after this that the stone was rolled and ground into its spherical shape. In fixing the stone on to the stick, necessity dictated whether wedges should be used or not." J.A. Engelbrecht 1936. *The Korana* p 73.

MANAGING CULTURAL RESOURCES

IN THE NATAL DRAKENSBERG...

Archaeologists Aron Mazel and Beth Wahl of the Natal Museum have been working with Stephen Roberts of the Natal Parks Board (NPB) to develop a management plan for cultural resources in the NPB controlled Natal Drakensberg Park. Up to now they have concentrated on rock art but, in time, other cultural remains will be drawn into the plan. The draft plan was discussed at a successful

two day workshop in early August which was attended by representatives of a wide range of interested and affected parties. The plan is presently being modified taking cognizance of inputs made at the workshop. After passing through various NPB structures and committees it is expected to be accepted as policy, probably in early 1998.

...AND THE RICHTERSVELD NATIONAL PARK

Lita Webley of the Albany Museum recently assisted with facilitating a series of workshops on recording and managing cultural and heritage sites in the Richtersveld. She has carried out research in the area over the

years, particularly at herder sites. The workshops were aimed at training game guards of the Richtersveld National Park as well as the local communities in the four villages around the Park. The project (funded by Transform) is

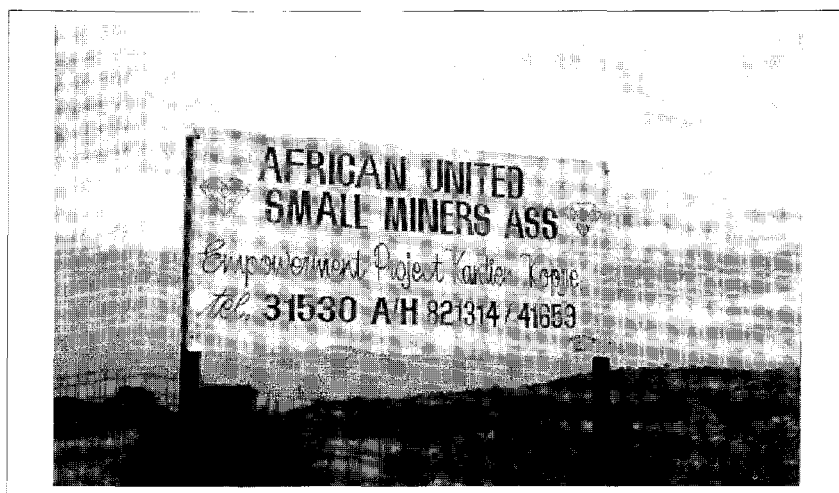
intended to initiate an awareness of the importance of cultural and heritage sites both for local villagers and for tourism. Rock engravings and herder sites along the river are endangered by encroaching diamond mining operations.



“EMPOWERMENT PROJECT KANTIEN KOPJIE”

The empowerment that “developers” of Canteen Kopje had in mind when this sign was erected in February 1997 was not development of the archaeological site there, which is a

national monument, but its destruction. The colluvial deposits contain abundant early Acheulean artefacts including flakes, massive primitive cores and handaxes - some comparing closely in form and technology with early Acheulean tools found in Olduvai Gorge. But the deposits, near the Vaal River at Barkly West, also contain diamonds and it was these the African United Small Miners Association came to recover. The National Monu-



ments Council was able to prevent the declared site from being mined away, while community consultation and participation of McGregor Museum archaeologists in the Northern Cape KWAGGA mining and minerals policy forum is turning the situation around. A community-based Barkly West Heritage Committee has plans to develop a site museum at Canteen Kopje and community museum in the nearby Barkly Bridge Tollhouse.

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS FIFTY YEARS AFTER THEIR DISCOVERY*

Fifty years ago this year a Bedouin shepherd stumbled upon one of this century's great finds, in a dark cave at Qumran in the Judean desert - the so-called Dead Sea Scrolls. He sold three of the seven scrolls to an antiquities dealer in Bethlehem who, in turn, sold them to the eminent archaeologist Prof Eliezer Sukenik of the Hebrew University. The four remaining scrolls found their way to the USA and were purchased in 1954 by Prof Sukenik's son, Prof Higael Yadin, on behalf of the government of Israel. Over the years thousands more fragments of parchment, some papyrus and some leather, were found and pieced together into 80 documents. Today the majority of the Dead Sea Scrolls have been interpreted and published. Since 1965 they have been on display at the Israel Museum in a distinctive white pavillion, called the Shrine of the Book, which has become a popular tourist site in Israel.

Containing ancient Jewish writings including portions of the Old Testament, the texts are associated with an ascetic Jewish sectarian community of Essenes at Qum-ran, which existed from the beginning of the second century BCE until it was destroyed by the Romans in 68 CE (Common Era). The Essenes are believed to have been influential in the growth of early Christianity - it is thought that John the Baptist was in some way connected with

the sect. Nearly a third of the documents found in the caves, which overlook the Dead Sea, set forth and interpret the books of the Old Testament, excepting the



Book of Esther.

To mark the fiftieth anniversary of their discovery, an exhibition has been mounted by the Israel Museum on *A day at Qumran - the Dead Sea Sect and its Scrolls*, and an international congress was held in Jerusalem in July, entitled *The Dead Sea Scrolls - fifty years after their discovery*. The Israel Philatelic Service issued a stamp depicting one of the ceramic jars in which the scrolls were found, against a back-

drop of the Judean Desert.

* Based on an article by Simon Griver, *Israel* 1997.

The South African Archaeological Society was founded fifty two years ago to promote archaeology through education and publication. Bi-annually, the Society publishes the *South African Archaeological Bulletin* for publication of current archaeological research in southern Africa. Periodically, thematic collections of papers appear in the Society's Goodwin Series. *The Digging Stick* is the Society's general interest newsletter. Please contact the secretary (address below; tel 021-243330) for details of subscriptions and publications, including back numbers.

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