

THE DIGGING STICK

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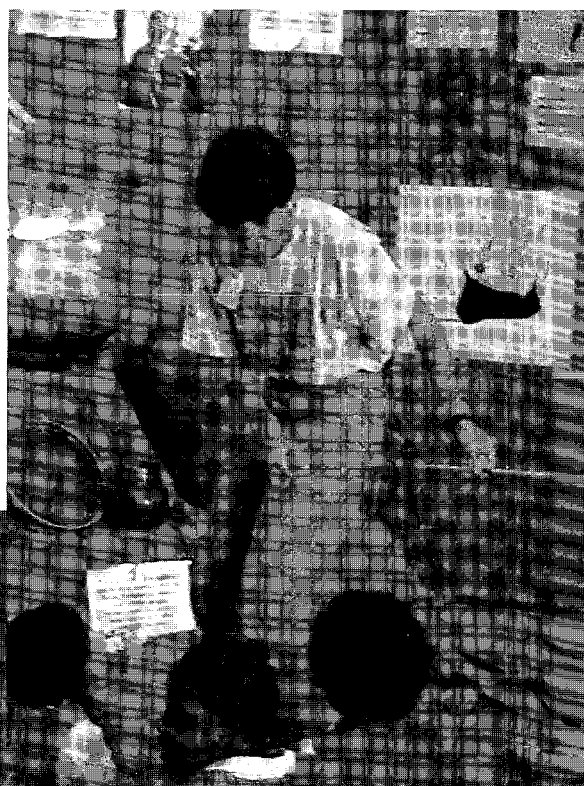
November 1998

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE YEAR OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mandy Esterhuysen

The Year of Science and Technology was launched in 1998 as a nation-wide initiative to encourage an interest in science amongst school-going children, and to generate an awareness of science and technology amongst the public in general. Archaeologists at universities and museums all over the country participated to promote their own discipline. These are a few of the initiatives in which I participated.

My involvement began late last year when we managed to get a slot on the television programme "50/50" promoting archaeology and the Year of Science and Technology. Both archaeology and palaeontology were considered priority subjects and for this reason were given air-time. At much the same time the Council for Geosciences was requested by the Department of Arts and Culture to promote the earth sciences. As archaeology fell into this category, archaeologists from Gauteng were consulted and I



Mandy Esterhuysen teaching a group about poisoned arrows.



Mandy Esterhuysen and Jeannette Smith with their display, SciFest, Grahamstown.

participated in outlining the content of a video, tape and poster to be distributed at each of the main venues during a series of Science Weeks to be held provincially around the country. We decided to focus on Iron Age technology and introduce the steps of logical enquiry used by archaeologists when investigating the past. The video and tape,

produced in May this year, shows the discovery of an Iron Age site by two characters S'bu and Dudu and their quest to find out more about the site and the people that lived there in the past. Led by an 'all-knowing' Everyman character, they solve their questions by obtaining information from their grandmother, the library, the museum and from archaeologists excavating a site. The poster, which deals with Iron Age technology, is one of four that fit together to make a composite earth sciences poster.

In March, Ben Smith, Jeannette Smith, Simon Hall and myself headed off to Grahamstown to attend the SciFest. Assisted by Johan Binneman and Alex Schoeman of the Albany Museum, we set up a large display that dealt with food; how archaeologists know what people ate in the past, and how through ethnography and rock art we can get an idea of what they believed about the food that they ate.

Children participated in the display by stamping mealies, grinding sorghum and millet, tasting mopane worms and sorghum beer, and looking at starch grains and edgeware under a microscope. Judy Sealy from the University of Cape Town, quite independently, had been invited to give a lecture on diets of people in the past, so our theme was well chosen. We encountered about 6000 pupils during the week (who managed to produce about two bags of mealie meal and spit out about 10 000 pieces of mopane worm!).

This display also went to Kimberley where Science Week was hosted by the William Humphreys Art Gallery.

In October, I put together a small display on the early hominids for the Northern Province Science Week. Having the full array of Sterkfontein casts at my disposal, I planned to give fifteen minute lectures on hominid evolution. Unfortunately, due to an incredible turn out (between 7-14000 pupils per day), my lecture was reduced to three hominids "...this is what you looked like 3 million years ago, this is what you looked like 2 million years ago, and look this is what you look like now! Move on..." So much for the sensitive teaching of hominid evolution!

The Gauteng Science Week was held in mid-November, and unfortunately was the least well attended, as most schools were in the process of writing exams. Nevertheless, pupils in the Vaal area were taken on an archaeological discovery tour by members of the Anglo-Vaal museum, and the Transvaal museum invited pupils to partake in fossil measuring exercises.

Generally, I think the Year of Science and Technology has been successful. Although some venues were more suitable than others, I feel it provided many children with what may have been their first experience of science and technology; and in our case their first exposure to archaeology. It is my hope that this kind of initiative (and funding) will continue, especially within areas that the Year of Science and Technology has shown require urgent educational assistance and support.

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P.O. Wits
2050



Four decades ago, in November 1958, Dr Gerhard J. Fock (1907-1990) became the first professional archaeologist appointed at a South African museum. Taking up the post at Kimberley's McGregor Museum, he was something of a pioneer in establishing the discipline's place in museums. Fock and his wife, Dora, subsequently won renown for their study of rock engravings in the Northern Cape.

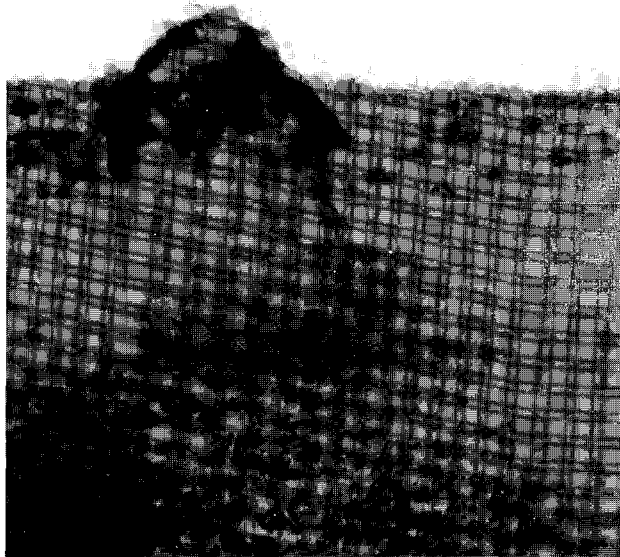
AARDVARK, ROAN ANTELOPE AND AGRICULTURE IN AFRICA: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY IN THE FIELD OF "LINGUISTIC PALAEOLOGY"

Francis Thackeray

Aardvark (*Orycteropus afer*) and roan antelope (*Hippotragus equinus*) have similar widespread distributions in African savanna habitats (Skinner and Smithers 1990; Smithers 1983), coinciding closely with the distribution of sorghum which is thought to have been domesticated in the north-east regions of the continent before being distributed to other areas, including southern and west Africa (Harlan and Stamler 1976). The transmission of sorghum to southern Africa has been associated with the migration(s) of Iron-Age populations within the last two thousand years. A domesticated variety of sorghum may have reached west Africa more than 2000 years ago.

In west Africa, roan and aardvark are known to have been important in agricultural rituals and beliefs held by the Bambara in Mali, where the cultivation of sorghum is linked to beliefs associated with concepts of fertility, productivity, endurance, and a "working animal" (Imperato 1975; Zahan 1980). In southern Africa, a Sotho word for aardvark is *thakadu*, incorporating a form which is also inherent in the Sotho term *thakaduba*, meaning "a hard worker" (Ziervogel and Mokgokong 1978). In terms of linguistic patterning explored previously (Thackeray 1994), the common form *thakadu* in these

words may reflect an association of ideas that developed from observations of animal behaviour. Aardvark spend a considerable amount of time and effort digging up termites and termite eggs which form an important component of their diet. This is one aspect of aardvark behaviour that is potentially relevant to an understanding of the context in which an association between aardvark and the



A human figure described as a "buckjumper", under the skin of an antelope with an erect mane and a curved horn, photographed by the late W.H.C. Taylor on the southern margin of the Kalahari, circa 1934. Reproduced with permission from the Director of the McGregor Museum, Kimberley, where Taylor's collection of photographs is housed (MMK 1421/292).

concept of "hard work" may have developed (perhaps independently among different agriculturalists) on the African continent.

Although primarily insectivorous, aardvark feed on cucurbits. They bury their faeces in shallow holes which they dig and cover with earth. Indigestible seeds of cucurbits such as *Cucumis humifructus* are thus placed in circumstances ideal for germination (Smithers 1983). These observations are potentially relevant to an understanding of the development of concepts associated with aardvark and agriculture. Moreover, the form *thaka* occurs in a Sotho

word for the pips of cucurbits (Ziervogel and Mokgokong 1978). If the common form *thaka* in Sotho words for aardvark and pips of cucurbits reflects an actual association of concepts, such an association may also be relevant to an assessment of factors influential in the development of concepts associated with aardvark and agriculture in prehistory. In East Africa the Swahili word *korongo* refers

to a roan antelope, and to a hole or furrow dug for purposes of planting seeds (Rechenbach 1967). The multiple meanings of the word could perhaps reflect associations of ideas. In support of this possibility, we can note the following: roan antelope occupy areas where soils are not subjected to water-logging in wet seasons or to excessive drying out in dry periods (Kingdon 1982). Roan are thus often found in regions potentially suitable for agriculture. In fact, to agriculturalists in East Africa, "roan country" was traditionally associated with environments suitable for "pioneer agriculture" (Kingdon 1982).

In southern Africa, the form *thaka* is recognisable in words for roan antelope (Roberts 1951) as well as in terms for aardvark. As mentioned above, beliefs associated with roan and aardvark are important among the Bambara in west Africa. Traditionally, the Bambara believed that an agency called *Chiwara* (*Tyiwara*) taught them agriculture, and wooden *Chiwara* carvings include representations based on roan and aardvark (Zahan 1980). The title *Chiwara* is considered to mean "working animal" in the sense of agricultural work. Imperato (1975) states that the name is understood to mean "an excellent farmer". He goes on to say that the Bambara consider an excellent farmer to be "a man who has the strength and endurance of an animal". These associations of ideas are perhaps coincidentally similar to associations of ideas potentially suggested from southern African words which incorporate a common form, *thaka*, referring to concepts associated with "hard work", "hard workers", aardvark and roan antelope.

A photograph of an individual described only as a "buckjumper", witnessed by the late W.H.C. Taylor on the southern margin of the Kalahari circa 1934 (Fig. 1), shows a person under the skin of an antelope and bending forward with two sticks, adopting a quadrupedal appearance (Thackeray 1993). This photograph has been previously compared with a rock painting from the Melikane rock shelter in Lesotho (Thackeray 1993 and in press). However, the "buckjumper's" posture, use of two

sticks, and association with the behaviour of an antelope are also similar (perhaps coincidentally) to rituals involving the use of wooden representations of the *Chiwara* among the Bambara in west Africa (Segy 1976: Fig. 38).

Unfortunately there is no detailed ethnographic information associated with the "buckjumper" photographed by Taylor in 1934, but it is possible to discern features from the photograph, suggesting that the individual may have been covered by the head and skin of a roan antelope which has curved horns and an erect mane. A word for roan in the area was recorded as "tackhaitse" by Daniell in 1800, comparable to southern African words for roan such as *ithaka* (Thackeray 1984, 1993).

It is emphasised that similarities between rituals associated with the *Chiwara* and the "buckjumper" may be coincidental. An alternative possibility, suggesting that the similarities may possibly be the product of common heritage, could be tested in the context of linguistic, ethnographic and ecological evidence such as that which has been presented here from various regions of Africa. However, similarities between the "buckjumper" and certain examples of African art certainly deserve to be explored further in the context of linguistics and "linguistic palaeontology" (Thackeray 1993), recognising that interaction has occurred between many different peoples within the last two millennia. Words, like fossils, can say things about the past, contributing to our understanding of the dynamic nature of African heritage, relating to periods of prehistory outside the range of ethnographic enquiry.

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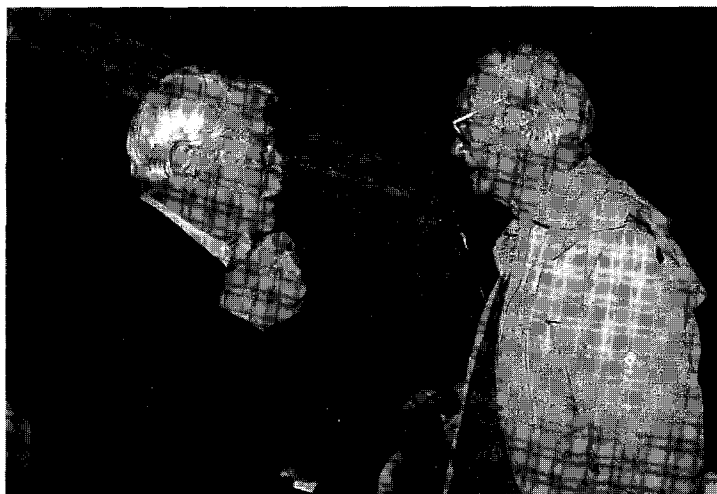
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PROFESSOR J.F. ELOFF AT 80

J. Dreyer

Professor J.F. (Hannes) Eloff of the University of Pretoria celebrated his 80th birthday on 18 May 1998. A considerable number of his former students, their spouses and offspring, representing consecutive archaeology classes of almost three decades, attended the occasion in Pretoria. The two Aukema youngsters, Albert and Willemien, were also present and seemed to have survived this pioneering exposure to their parents' archaeology friends quite well.



Hannes Eloff in conversation with Menno Klapwijk, during Eloff's 80th birthday celebrations in Pretoria.

A commemorative publication issued in honour of Prof Eloff and as a tribute to his contribution to archaeology was presented during the event. The volume, edited by John van Schalkwyk, Chris van Vuuren and Ina Plug, was published by the National Cultural History Museum in Pretoria. It was compiled from papers by a number of Eloff's former students, covering a variety of subjects ranging from the

Stone Age, Iron Age, rock art and archaeozoology, to colonial architecture.

Hannes Eloff hails from the Soutpansberg in the Northern Province, where he grew-up in close contact with the local inhabitants and was able to speak Setswana fluently at a very young age. During his matric year in 1934 he accompanied his father on a visit to Mapungubwe where gold objects had been excavated shortly before. After matriculation at

Pietersburg High School, he went to Pretoria for further studies. Eloff started his career as a teacher at an English-medium secondary school in Johannesburg. After some time he returned to Pretoria to further his studies in Anthropology, where he came under the influence of Prof W.W.M. Eiselen, then head of the Department of Anthropology and Prof J.A. Engelbrecht, who introduced him to the

subject of archaeology. Obtaining his BA in 1946, Eloff started lecturing in Anthropology on a part-time basis, while continuing his studies for an MA degree. He decided to include archaeological studies as part of his preparations for the examination. Consequently the nomination of Van Riet Lowe and Dr. Christof Heese as his mentors, largely contributed to his formal training in archaeology. After his appointment as senior lecturer in Anthropology at the University of Pretoria in 1949, Eloff incorporated Archaeology as part of his lectures. This development led to the instigation of Archaeology as a separate subject in 1961, a step which eventually led to the establishment of a Department of Archaeology at the University of Pretoria in 1970.

While attending a conference in London in 1957, Hannes Eloff used the opportunity to visit universities and archaeological sites in the UK and abroad and participated in excavations at Rome. To extend his practical experience he later joined excavations in Zimbabwe and Zambia. In actual fact Eloff never ceased to be a student and by close involvement with his students, he was able to gain and share experience on numerous excursions to sites in the Transvaal and Free State and during major excavations at Bushman Rock Shelter, Mapungubwe, K2 and in the Kruger National Park. By means of Eloff's endless enthusiasm and unselfish dedication the Archaeology Department of the University of Pretoria was able to produce a number of students who like-wise became involved in South African archaeology.

Hannes Eloff also contributed to other fields in conservation. He was actively involved with

the Transvaal Branch of the Southern African Archaeological Society for many years, creating opportunities for non-archaeologists to participate in excursions and excavations. Eloff served on the National Monuments Council and acted in an advisory capacity to the HSRC, the National Cultural History Museum, Transvaal Provincial Museum Service, Pilgrim's Rest Museum and conservation bodies in Venda, Lebowa and KwaNdebele.

During his career Prof Eloff was silently supported by his wife Mara (known to many students only through the delightful sauce which she prepared in canned fruit jars to be served at supper-time during camps) and their two daughters, Nellie and Marthie. After many years his students still experience a firm bond with Prof Eloff. They all agree that his charismatic personality emanated a favourable influence on their professional lives. The exposure he provided was never prescriptive, always allowing ample opportunity to the individual to develop his personal perceptions and skills, eventually resulting in a real fascination for the subject of cultural history.

We honour him, and cherish unforgettable memories of the many field excursions with him.

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LIMPOPO-SOUTPANSBERG STUDIES AT VENDA CONFERENCE

Extracts from a report by Janette Deacon

About 80 delegates from Southern African countries and overseas gathered at the University of Venda, Thohoyandou, in July, for the fifteenth biennial conference of the Southern African Association of Archaeologists - which was organised by Edwin Hanisch.

"Because of the rich archaeological heritage of the Soutpansberg and Limpopo Valley, special

focus was given to the results of archaeological research in the region. The scene was set in the

first paper of the conference, given by Edwin Hanisch, that emphasised the favourable environmental conditions, the geographical links with the east coast, and the similarities in cultural traditions of Later Stone Age and Iron Age peoples both north and south of the Limpopo. Trade in salt established a network during the Early Iron Age along the Soutpansberg mountain range. Excavated sites of this period include Happy Rest and Klein Afrika dating from about AD 500-600. After a hiatus, Zhizo pottery is found in sites after AD 800. There are no sites known south of the Soutpansberg that date between AD 1000 and 1100, but they are found to the north in the Limpopo Valley at places such as K2 and Mapungubwe. The Mapungubwe tradition was replaced by that of Zimbabwe. Trade goods between AD 1100 and 1400 indicate a well developed network moving iron, gold, ivory and other products from the interior to the coast and cloth, porcelain and glass beads from the coast to the interior. From AD 1350 - 1400, the Moloko tradition heralds the start of the early Sotho culture that merged with the remnants of Mapungubwe and a southward movement of Shona-speakers from Khami after 1450, and later became the Venda. Venda sites are marked by sophisticated stone walling on hilltops over a larger area than the current distribution of Venda-speakers. Venda political control peaked between 1700 and 1760 when Dzata and Thohoyandou were occupied.

Tom Huffman's paper summarised evidence for early trade networks in the Shashi-Limpopo Basin, emphasising the complex interchange between indigenous Iron Age groups that culminated in the birth of ethnic identity amongst the Venda. Important economic and social changes first occurred at Schroda and then K2 when links with Sofala and Bazaruto archipelago were established. These links extend westwards into Botswana where Zhizo people controlled an extensive iron working industry in the Tswapong Hills. After AD 1000, there is a marked ethnic boundary between Toutswe people to the west and Leopards Kopje to the east that is reflected in the low incidence of exotic glass beads at Toutswe sites. He pointed out that the foreign trade goods are concentrated in the Zimbabwe culture area where thousands of glass beads have been found, in contrast to KwaZulu-Natal where only three are known. Alinah Segobye focussed on the role of trade in Botswana in the same period, emphasising the peripheral nature of the Toutswe tradition. Andrew Reid's analysis of

"Special focus was given to the results of archaeological research in the Soutpansberg and Limpopo Valley"

Toutswe sites along a pipeline route in Botswana showed a range of different functions of settlements ranging from cattle posts to agricultural lands and habitation sites.

Excavations by Warren Fish at Tshiendeulu or Mutokolwe have shown an early settlement there between AD 1400 and 1450 that marks the beginnings of Venda ethnicity after Shona moved southwards from Khami. The stone walls are in the Great Zimbabwe Musanda tradition, but are not as well preserved nor as high as the walling at Mukumbane.

John Calabrese has been able to add new insights into the complex inter-relationships between Leopard's Kopje, Zhizo and K2 people through his excavations at Leokwe Hill on the farm Little Muck about 25 km west of Mapungubwe Hill and Greefswald. While the dates from AD 1020-1220 overlap with K2 and Mapungubwe Hill, Zhizo ceramics remained in use. Other students from Wits are investigating ways of testing whether the changes in settlement pattern in the region were affected by climatic change, such as the Little Ice Age in the fourteenth century. Leon Jacobson has been analysing the clays from which the pottery is made and can show that in general there is low variability in the source of the clays within each site. Exceptions are those from Eiland where salt was collected by people who came there from far and wide, and from Great Zimbabwe, presumably because there, too, visitors came from many places.

Simon Hall's summary of research by himself, Ben Smith, Kamal Bagwandas-Jogibhai and Ed Eastwood, examined another aspect of the Early Iron Age: that of the interaction between Later Stone Age hunter-gatherers and Early Iron Age immigrant farmers. By the second half of the first millennium AD the hunter-gatherers had lost control of the landscape. Farmers used their own rock art images to over-print the San rock art and expropriate rock shelters which had been ritual areas for the San. Evidence for this interaction has been gathered from excavations at a rock shelter and associated open sites at Salt Pan and Little Muck. They tentatively date the San rock art to the period AD 100-300, the late red geometric paintings (possibly done by the early herders) and late San paintings to AD 300-1150, the early white finger paintings to AD 1150-1400, and the most

recent of this style of painting to AD 1450-1700. They conclude that key painted sites were highly contested places occupied by the "invisible masters of the earth" who were soon out-competed by the farmers.

Johnny van Schalkwyk has been working for many years on the recent archaeology and oral history of the Blouberg to the south and west of the Soutpansberg. He has found that people from the local communities do not understand or relate to the results of archaeological research and he has been working with them to try to make the interpretations more compatible with their oral histories. The sources he has used have included conventional historical records that report on the activities of the Boers in the Lebowa War of 1894, the "late white" rock art of the region that depicts oxwaggon,

riders and guns (but no cannon), and oral histories in the form of praise poems of the agile chief who dodged the bullets of Paul Kruger and his followers.

Alan Kirkaldy from the Department of History at the University of Venda has studied the most recent end of the spectrum by examining records of the Berlin Mission Society. Their missionaries were active in Venda in the second half of the nineteenth century. They were the least successful of the missionary groups in terms of the number of converts, presumably because of their aristocratic Prussian attitudes. The missionaries were manipulated by the Venda chiefs with whom they came in contact. Kirkaldy emphasised that the information the missionaries had gathered about the Venda was therefore not necessarily correct historically and required deconstruction."

THE BALERNO STONE RESCUING ROCK ART IN THE LIMPOPO-SHASHI CONFLUENCE Ed Eastwood¹ and Dirk de Wit²

The Limpopo-Shashi confluence area consists of parallel series of Karoo Sandstone ridges running along the Limpopo River. Riverine forest gives way to a mosaic of mopane woodland and scrub. This intricate landscape supports a wide variety of diverse plant and animal communities and has, for millennia, attracted many different cultural groups, from San hunter-gatherers to Shona, Sotho and Venda Iron Age peoples.

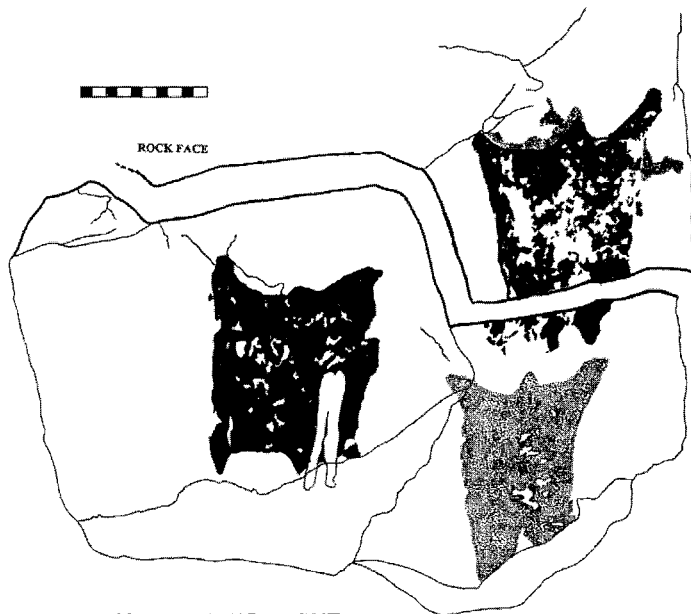
During the 1960s and 1970s the rock art of the area had been briefly studied and sketchily recorded by various researchers such as Murray Schoonraad, Alex Wilcox and Harald Pager. Since the early 1990s methodical surveys and recording programmes have shown that the area contains several rock art traditions, including engravings. About 120 rock art sites have been documented in the confluence. Although sites are generally well preserved from human impact by their inaccessi-

bility to the general public and protection by landowners and conservation agencies, the art is still subjected to natural weathering processes. Several painted panels were removed during the 1950s and deposited at the National Cultural History Museum in Pretoria (Schoonraad 1960). Where attempts failed to remove especially good examples of the art, chisel marks resulted in the damage and loss of some fine paintings. Fortunately, new South African legislation should minimise this unnecessary removal of panels. There are, however, instances where it is imperative to remove rock paintings to museums for safekeeping.



Marie Furstenberg and her brother, Gerhard, and Dirk de Wit of Northern Province Heritage Services with the Balerno stone.

During a recent preliminary survey, a stone bearing rock paintings was found to have broken loose from the roof of a shelter. It was felt that since cattle, zebras, warthogs and other animals regularly used this shelter for protection from the heat, it was likely that the stone would be damaged. One of the custodians of the art is Marie Furstenberg, co-owner of the farm Balermo, near Pont Drift. She feels very strongly about the need to protect cultural resources like an Iron Age site



THE BALERNO STONE

Redrawing of paintings on rock face and stone.

Blundell of the Wits Rock Art Research Centre for initially suggesting the removal of the stone, and Marie Furstenberg for her enthusiasm and support of this project.

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and at least seven rock art sites on her property. She and her family have been enthusiastically searching for archaeological sites on the property, and have already located a rare, pecked engraving of a gemsbok.

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2. Northern Province Heritage Services
P/Bag X2410, Louis Trichardt 0920

After consultation, the owners of Balerno gave their permission for the removal of this artefact and a permit was granted by the National Monuments Council to house the stone at the Schoemansdal Museum in Louis Trichardt. At the end of October we travelled to the site and removed the stone. The shelter is L-shaped, facing both north and east. The paintings consist of images of men, women, indeterminate antelope, kudu, a bushbuck, a rhino and several giraffe and elephants. Tracings were made of the paintings on the stone and the rock face from which it had dislodged. The images on the stone, depicted in red and yellow pigments, are shaped like animal skins, and it is thought that they represent women's aprons (Eastwood & Blundell *in prep.*). In the Kalahari, San hunter-gatherer women wear aprons made from the skins of duiker or steenbok (Dornan 1925:87) which are often decorated with ostrich eggshell beads, and are shaped just like these paintings. It is not certain why the San would have painted such images, but their potential associations with women's initiation rites may be a possibility.

We are grateful to the Northern Province Heritage Services for assisting with transport, Geoffrey



A !Kung woman's apron from Namibia. South African Museum collection.

THE STONE AGE ICEMAN OF THE ALPS

A lecture to be given by Prof Torstein Sjøvold of the University of Stockholm, at 19:00, 21 January 1999, at BMW Building (Cor. Dr Savage & Beatrix), Pretoria.

In 1991 a well preserved body was discovered in a melting glacier 3200 m up in the European Alps. The discovery of Otzi has given an opportunity to learn about many heretofore unknown aspects of life some 5300 years ago. His is the first complete clothing known from this period - even the organic parts of his equipment, including arrow feathers and the grasses used for insulation, were preserved by the ice. Prof Torstein Sjøvold, renowned physical anthropologist, has made a detailed study of the Iceman and his artefacts. He will present a number of surprising findings, showing, for example, how infrared photography

revealed a large number of simple tattoos on the body. These have been interpreted as the earliest known medical treatment, akin to acupuncture, but predating it by more than 1500 years. You will see a slice of life in Stone Age Europe in detail never before possible.

Sponsored by The Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Medicine, University of Pretoria

For further information contact: Dr S.R. Loth or Prof M. Steyn at 012-319-2438

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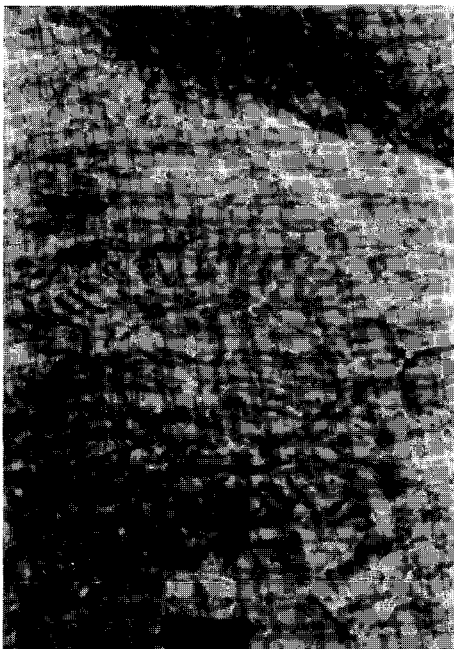
REDAN PETROGLYPHS

Ildiko Kovacs

The Redan petroglyphs are situated about seven kilometers from the Vaal Teknorama Museum in Vereeniging. The petroglyphs occur on an outcrop of Eccra sandstone that lies next to a small stream that flows into the Klipriver. Unfortunately vandals have removed the fence that surrounded the site, and so the site lies open to anybody and everybody to come and go as they wish.

This site fascinated me many years ago. As a pupil in the history class at one of our local schools, our teacher took us on a field trip to the petroglyph site. On our arrival we were informed that many years ago Bushmen lived in a cave that existed on the site - but that one fatal day the cave collapsed and all its occupants were crushed to death.

That I do not remember seeing one of the over two hundred petroglyphs that day is not surprising, so shocked was I by this gruesome tale. Nevertheless, for whatever reason, that visit to Redan did inspire me to study archaeology!



Sun motif petroglyph - Photo taken by T.N. Leslie (1858-1942), first mayor of Vereeniging. It is believed that he removed this petroglyph from the Redan site and it is now housed at the Rock Art Research Centre at the University of the Witwatersrand.

RESEARCH

During 1967, A.R. Willcox and H.L. Pager researched the Redan site. According to them the technique used to make these petroglyphs was by pecking. Due to the condition of the site owing to natural agencies, such as weathering, they decided to copy all the petroglyphs by drawing them to scale.

Six weeks later their hard labour resulted in the recording of a total of 244 petroglyphs:

10 representations of animals

1 possibly of a human figure

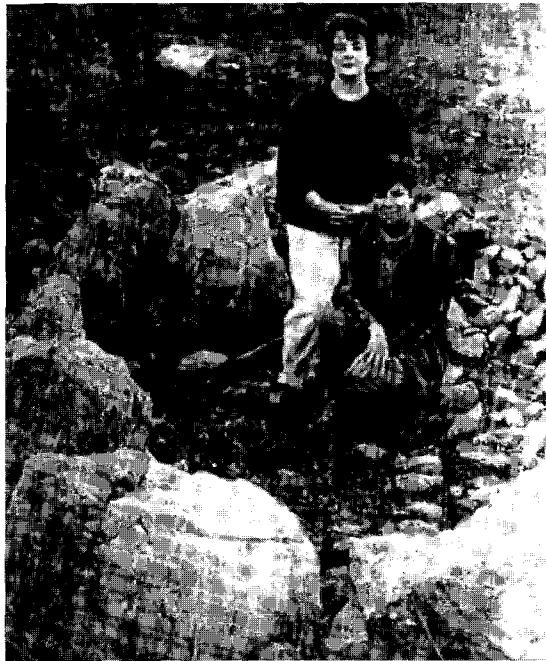
233 geometrical designs - 172 of which are circles.

Willcox and Pager published their findings in the *South African Journal of Science*, in November 1967.

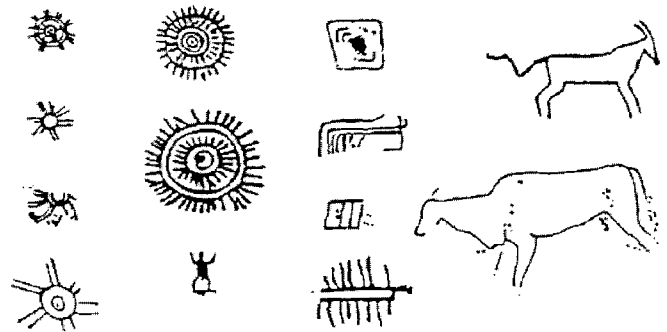
Besides the petroglyphs, Willcox and Pager also documented 21 flattened or smoothed surfaces produced by rubbing or grinding activities. According to them the weathering of the surfaces of the petroglyphs suggested an estimated age of between 500 and 100 years; they were therefore most probably made by Bushmen or Bantu-speaking people.

Willcox and Pager did not mention any human settlement. There is,

however, a stone circle located on the southwestern side of the site. Next to the circle I discovered a stone structure comprising a flat stone slab resting on piles of stones on either side. The structure is approximately 1 m in length and 0,5 m in width and height. Leading up to the previously mentioned stone structure is a passage of big stone boulders. There are a further five boulders on the site near the circle that seem to be strategically placed.



Circle at Redan site. Ildiko Kovacs, archaeologist researching site (standing) and Rene Pelser, Co-ordinator of the Vaal Teknorama Museum.



Geometrics, animal and single human representations - as drawn by Willcox and Pager (1967).

We can, at this stage, only speculate as to who the builders and artists were, and what they were trying to communicate.

As a staff member of the Vaal Teknorama Museum, I am in the process of doing research on, and documentation of, the Redan site.

If anyone is interested in visiting the site, or would like further information relating to this or any other site in the Vaal area, please contact me, Ildiko Kovacs, or Rene Pelser (Co-ordinator of the Vaal Teknorama Museum), at the following address:
Vaal Teknorama Cultural and Industrial Museum
P.O. Box 1622, Vereeniging 1930
Tel: (016) 450 3136
Fax: (016) 421 2543



CAN YOU HELP? ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN ALFRED COUNTY, KWAZULU-NATAL Val Ward

A Peter Mitchell paper for publication in the *Natal Museum Journal of Humanities* in December 1998, stimulated an excursion to southern KwaZulu-Natal to look for a site excavated and reported by Bazley in 1905 in *Man* 5:10-11.

The amazing site had '16 feet' of deposit and Peter Mitchell's reassessment of the few artefacts in the British Museum suggests a 100 000 year old use of the site.

We had no idea where this site is in Alfred County (between the Umzimkhulu and Umtamvuna Rivers). And on this Arch Soc July excursion we did not find it. Nor had Vinnicombe, Carter, Cable and others had any success in the past. A local government official will continue the search - via microlight.

However, we did find a site with numerous paintings that was published in the *South African Archaeological*

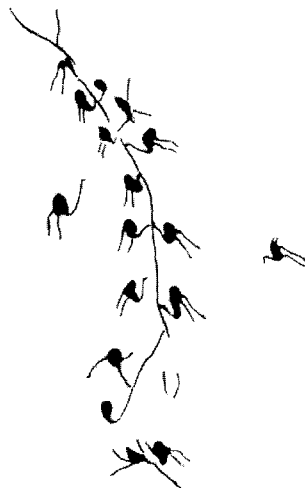
Bulletin in 1970 (Vol 25:78-79), with a cover illustration by Murray Schoonraad. And we found the original paintings of these published copies. This site had been excavated to bedrock. Whoever excavated it left a spoil heap, now grass-covered, and some deposit in a niche in the back wall. Artefacts of fine grained material (CCS) were noticed in the dripline between the rock floor and spoil heap. Who excavated this site (was it Bazley? Or Niddrie?) we do not know - at present. Documentation search in continuing.

This rediscovered site (Twagwa in Nyanisweni area) is very important. It is only 13 km from the sea as the crow

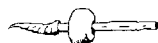
flies, has a 20+ metre band of paintings ranging from maroon to faded red, animals and humans (one with a battle-axe), in fair condition.

If anyone can throw any light on the locality of Bazley's 16 foot deep deposit site, or name the excavator of this painted site, I should be very pleased to have the information.

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3200



Amaxolo Location, District Port Shepstone



COMMENT ON "A PAINTED FRAGMENT OF BUSHMAN HISTORY FROM QWAQWA NATIONAL PARK, SOUTH AFRICA" (SVEN OUZMAN, *THE DIGGING STICK* VOL 15(3) AUGUST 1998).

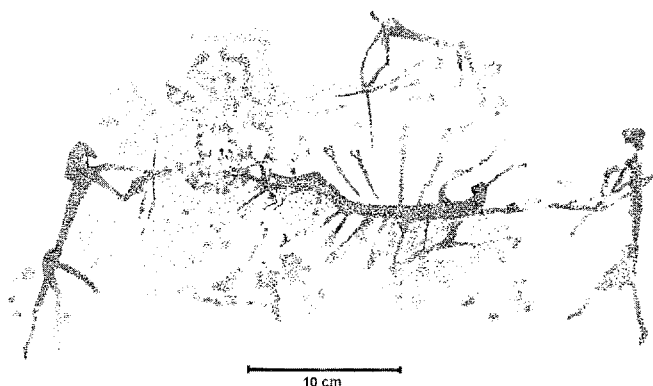
Elsbeth Parry

The conclusion to the above article would seem to pose a challenge in the interpretation of Figure 5. Is this an instance of taphonomy rearing its awkward head and the associated images have disappeared, or has this painting been reproduced selectively? In either case, is the author justified in his description of the painting as a "wounded game shaman"? Is this another instance of *seeing* a firmly entrenched belief? I acknowledge that the author recognises that the imagination has a big part to play.

informed analysis.

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Enclosed is an accurate copy of a similar figure in the Matopo, Zimbabwe. Realistically this could be a murder scene, or possibly the metaphoric arrows might be instilling a form of potency and the reclining figure transforming into an animal! Interpretive possibilities are numerous and I hope my contribution will help in the promotion of



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The views of the authors are their own and the society does not take responsibility for them.

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