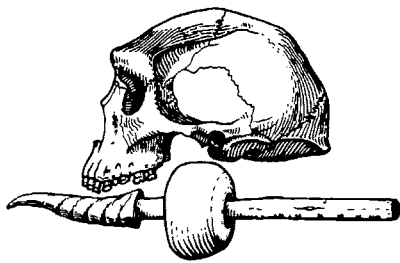


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Editor: Shirley-Ann Pager

The Digging Stick

This issue of The Digging Stick has an interesting variety of articles and again, as in our last issue, some contributions describing archaeological researches taking place in other countries. Our magazine is beginning to acquire an international aspect.

Contributions for the September 1987 issue should please reach me by mid-August.

Shirley-Ann Pager, Editor, P O Box 21083, Windhoek, 9000 SWA/Namibia.

EXPERIMENTAL ARCHAEO-METALLURGY AND ARCHAEOLOGY AT MELLVILLE KOPPIES. A JOHANNESBURG NATURE RESERVE

R H Steel

It was a fortunate event when Professor R. J. Mason discovered the first remains of prehistoric people in the early days of the Melville Koppies Nature Reserve (Emmenteria, Johannesburg). This was followed by the discovery of the well-known Melville Koppies smelting furnace on the upper slope of the hill (1963). Shortly afterwards (1964) a second furnace was excavated by a group of members of the Archaeological Society, digging under the guidance of Professor Mason. These early discoveries have been described by Professor Mason in a publication entitled 'Archaeology and Human Ecology of the Melville Koppies Nature Reserve' (1971), a booklet which contains interesting papers on Stone Age artefacts, pottery, remains of settlements, bones and shells from a cave on the western part of the reserve as well as on the geology and ecology of the area. This booklet (Occasional Paper No. 6, Department of Archaeology, University of the Witwatersrand) is now out of print. It should, however, be replaced by a publication describing the more recent researches - archaeological, archaeo-metallurgical, palaeobotanical and ecological - which have been undertaken at Melville Koppies and other Nature Reserves of the greater Johannesburg region. Lack of funds unfortunately prevents this newest information from being published.



A unique series of prehistoric-type furnace reconstructions at the Melville Koppies testing ground, 1986.

Investigations at Melville Koppies continue and I have excavated some Late Iron Age sites in the bush-covered central part of the eastern Koppie, a well-preserved hut floor and a walled settlement where many potsherds were found. A number of decorated sherds show that not less than a dozen pottery types and patterns are represented here.

During the last winter (July-August 1986) a team of members of the Archaeological Research Unit, Department of Metallurgy (Dr H. Friede, Dr A. A. Heijja and Mr R. Steel) constructed and worked a testing ground for Iron Age metal smelting furnaces on a plateau next to the upper Iron Age furnace site 7/63. These models of seven different types of furnaces, based on excavated Iron Age furnaces in the Western and Central Transvaal, were constructed using local material and traditional methods employed by the ancient smelters.

One model was built to the pattern of the excavated Late Iron Age Melville Koppies furnace, another to that of a Western Transvaal (Kaditshwene) furnace. Three models were replicas of furnaces excavated recently by Professor Mason. A small pit furnace from Bultfontein, a copper smelting furnace from Ifafi (both in the Hartbeespoort Dam area) and a trench furnace from Lone Hill. Smelting experiments were carried out in each of these reconstructed furnaces. A forge furnace was used for resmelting and shaping the metals produced. The hard work of pumping air into the furnace fire with goatskin bellows was done by Africans.

The experiments gave valuable information on many aspects of the lost art of traditional African smelting technology: on the blowing and firing of the furnace, control of air supply, the various stages and time of the process, discharge, resmelting and forging of iron, the efficiency of the various furnaces and the types of ore and charcoal. Temperatures and air flow rates in the furnaces were measured by special instruments. Studies of economics of furnaces, labour and material were conducted and the slags and metal produced were analysed. The results of all this research will be published at a later stage.

Melville Koppies Nature Reserve has seen many thousands of visitors and demonstrations of the smelting process for the public were started in 1979. The most recent demonstration, in September 1986, was given for the benefit of a large group of members of the S A Archaeological Society.

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HANDEDNESS PRESENT AND PAST

A R Willcox

In THE DIGGING STICK 1:3, 1984, Townley Johnson called attention to the question of handedness in rock artists. In his experiment 7% of the children were revealed as left-handed and all of them drew their elephant facing to the right, whereas the 93% right-handers portrayed it facing left. It is remarkable that out of 100 students there were no exceptions to the rule.

Johnson cites a study in Germany and South Africa by Arnold Schecker which indicates that 6% of the population

tested was left-handed. Other surveys in Germany by Dirk R. Spennemann agree closely, showing about 5,67% of high school pupils to be left-handed. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, the percentage is generally 6%.

Can archaeology reveal handedness in the past? There is much interest currently in the question overseas. A particularly interesting study by Spennemann of the striations on neolithic bone and antler implements in Europe indicates much higher percentages of left-handers, from 13-19,6% in Germany, but only 2,19-6,48% in Switzerland.

Going by the representations of manual actions in ancient Egyptian mural paintings, W. Dennis found that 7,5% indicated left-handers at Beni Hasan, and 4,76% at Thebes. A similar study of the relief sculptures at Borobudur in Java shows about 9%.

Can South African archaeology help? We have very few bone implements from the past, but plenty of evidence from rock art if the way animals are depicted indicates handedness with any consistency as Johnson proposes. Another study by Spennemann in Germany indicates a correlation, but by no means a rule. His experiment gives the following results:

Right-handed drawings of animals facing:		Left-handed drawings of animals facing:	
left	right	left	right
84,72%	15,28%	61,90%	38,09%

Thus the tendency for lefties to draw animals facing left was not very much less than for the right-handers.

However, for what it is worth, I have made a rough count of the animals in profile as illustrated in some books taken as a sample:

	Animals facing left	Animals facing right	Percentage left facing
Rock Paintings of the Drakensberg (Willcox)	25	37	40,32
Rock Art of South Africa (Willcox)	22	37	37,29
Ndedema (Pager)	92	147	38,49
Bushman Paintings (Tongue)	41	76	35,04
The results are fairly consistent, and very surprising as contrary to expectations. So was another count from a big book on the palaeolithic rock art of Europe.			
Prehistoire de l'Art Occidental (Leroi-Gourhan)	30	43	41,10

This first look at the evidence indicates that it would be worthwhile to make a thorough regional study of, say, the south-western Cape. I will gather more data from the Drakensberg. In my counts where a herd of eland, cattle, etc., were shown all facing one way this was taken as one case. As they stand, the statistics show either that the premise is wrong, or that left-handedness was prevalent among the Bushmen, or that more left-handers became artists. I do not know of any study of handedness among recent Bushmen.

There is another possible body of evidence in the hand imprints the artists left to us (see Willcox *Rock Art of Africa*, pp. 245-247). In southern Africa the prints are positive - I know of no negatives south of the Zambezi River. It would be interesting to have a study of a large sample to see how many are right hands and how many are left hands: in counting, obvious cases of several repetitions of the same hand should be taken as one. But this might not indicate handedness as we do not know how the prints were made. If it was done by the hand holding the brush applying paint to the front of the other hand, the left prints will mean right-handedness; but if the person splashed some paint on a horizontal rock or palette, placed his hand on it and then on the rock face, it would be more likely directly to indicate handedness. In a too small sample from sites I have visited in the southern Cape and northern Transvaal, 23 prints were of right hands and 10 of left.

In the case of negative prints it is much more likely that the print is of the unskilled hand as the stencil brush or tube of powdered pigment should be held in the skilled one. In a thorough study of this element in Franco-Cantabrian rock art, Kirchner found the positive prints to be too few to be significant, but of the numerous (205) negative prints, 86% were of lefts. Thus,

on the above stated hypothesis, about 14% left-handedness is indicated. Spennemann (in litt.) has pointed out that this may not show the percentage for the artists, but the ratio for the whole population as the hand placed to make the negative might be anyone's. However, I would think the artist would be more concerned, being human, to leave the print of his own hand.

Some think it is possible to tell a left-handed and a right-handed handaxe. someone might investigate.

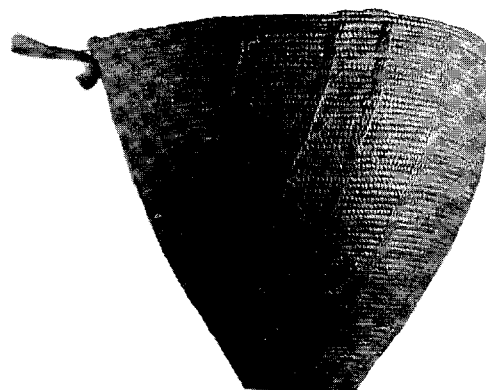
I hope my initial look at the problem may be followed up.

P O Box 26 Winterton

MILKING BASKETS OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN PASTORALISTS

Andrew B Smith

In my previous note on Khoikhoi containerization (THE DIGGING STICK 2(3):3-4, 1985) I discussed various types of containers referred to in the published historical record. Milking baskets were observed being used by the Khoi by Gravenbroek in 1695, Masson in 1773 and Sparman in 1775. A recent trip to Kaokoland in northern Namibia allowed me to visit a number of Ovahimba settlements near Purros. The basket shown here is used for milking by these pastoral people. It is of a very light weave, 240 mm high, with an oval rim diameter of 220 x 300 mm. The outside has been covered in a mixture of red ochre and fat, while the inside is untreated. These baskets are obviously never washed as the milk residues are allowed to accumulate inside. This was also mentioned by Sparman on the Sundays River in the Eastern Cape.



Comparison with the Sparman milking basket which is 220 mm high and 370 mm in diameter (housed in collections of the State Ethnographic Museum, Stockholm, Sweden) and depicted in the previous DIGGING STICK article, shows a strong similarity in shape and size.

While trying to find more data on Khoi basketry, I ran up against a dearth of information. No Khoi baskets exist in the South African Museum collections, and Schapera in his *Khoisan Peoples of South Africa* refers to wooden milking pails. Where milking baskets are noted in the historical literature it is by Khoi groups who were in contact with Black agro-pastoral people. For example, the Gravenbroek, Masson and Sparman instances were either referring to the Gonaqua (a mixed Khoi/Xhosa group) or one of the other Eastern Cape Khoi groups in contact with the Xhosa. Masson describes the people on the day after his description of the milking basket as being "remarkably well-shaped and stouter made than any other Hottentots I have yet seen", and Le Vaillant in 1796 says that the Gonaqua traded for baskets from the Xhosa.

In the Van Riebeeck Journal entry for 16 December 1660, it is the Namaquas who are described as making "baskets and vessels, large and small, and churns as is done in Holland. In the vessels they keep their milk". Similarly, the only other examples of plaited fibres used in a container is to be found in the necks of skin bags called //ubub by the Korana described in Engelbrecht's book *The Korana* in 1936 (examples can be seen in the McGregor Museum, Kimberley, and the South African Museum in Cape Town).

There are a number of historical and ethnographic examples of basketry from Nguni speaking people. Among the Zulu, Schapera and Goodwin wrote in 1937: "The small milkpail of the Zulu is . . . so tightly sewn together

with rushes or grass into a solid receptacle that liquid poured into it quickly expands the strands and makes the basket water-tight" and Aberti writing in 1807 says of the Xhosa: "The milk is not drunk fresh, but is left to curdle and get sour, which is accomplished in a very short space of time in small Baskets which have repeatedly served to bring about this transformation, and which are, therefore, already acid. The circular perimeter of such a small basket usually has a diameter of between ten to fourteen inches [250 to 350 mm], the depth is proportionally a little greater, the side has a thickness of one or two strands, seldom more . . . These are very skilfully plaited by the women from a fine kind of reed grass in such a way that this small basket is completely water-tight after it has previously been rubbed with grease". The size compares favourably with the Sparman specimen in Stockholm. It would thus appear that access to basketry had to come from Black agro-pastoralists, but may have been an important trade item of the Namaqua met at the Cape by the early Dutch settlers, and who were probably not in direct contact with Blacks, favoured their use.

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BOLAS IN THE ROCK ART OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

Bert Woodhouse

A recent letter from the editor of the Australian Rock Art Research Association enclosed a brief paper from Professor George Carter of Texas on the bolas in rock art. It was sent to me for comment in view of the fact that it quoted an article that I wrote for *Scientific South Africa* in 1964.

In my reply I drew attention to a comprehensive paper on the subject presented by J. Desmond Clark to the Second Pan-African Congress on Prehistory in Algeria in 1952 and a subsequent note of mine which included a photograph of a rock painting at Mrewa, Mashonaland, which I regarded as depicting a double-headed bolas twined around the neck of a buck with a man behind in an attitude consistent with having thrown the missile (Fig. 1). The note was published in March 1966 in the *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 21 (81).

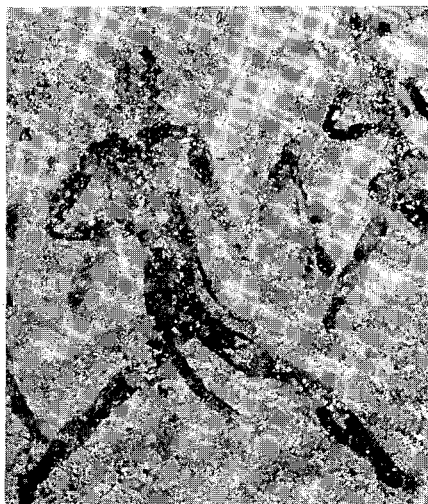


Figure 1

Shortly thereafter, my wife and I were driving through the Matopos (now Matobos) when our attention was attracted by an overhanging boulder. Painted underneath it was a row of figures, of which at least one appeared to be carrying a similar artefact (Fig. 2). I subsequently recorded paintings in the Harrismith and Maclear districts that appear to depict a double and single-headed bolas respectively (Figs 3 & 4).

The latest issue of the newsletter of the Zimbabwe Prehistory Society (No. 65) includes drawings by Peter Genge of figures copied near the Mwzilume Dam in the Matopos National Park, two of which have similar appendages (three double-headed and one single-headed) hanging from their shoulders.



Figure 2

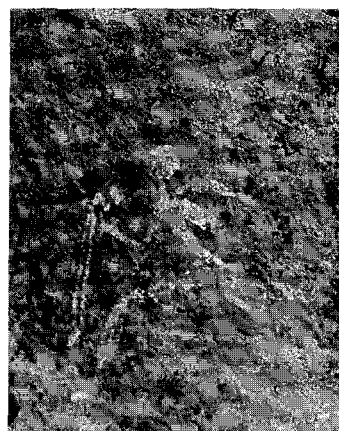


Figure 3



Figure 4

For a little ethnographic evidence; in his book *Travels in the interior of South Africa* published in 1868, Chapman writes on p. 266 that he was "presented by the Makalakas with the leg of a wildebeest. They had killed several animals with the bolele lately."

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THE WORK OF THE WITS ROCK ART RESEARCH UNIT

Z E Kingdon

A previous article concerning the work of the Wits Rock Art Research Unit, which appeared in the September 1986 issue of *THE DIGGING STICK*, dealt with techniques for recording rock paintings. In addition to this work, the Unit is presently involved in a project to prepare the southern San ethnography, collected by Dr Wilhelm Bleek and his sister-in-law Lucy Lloyd, for further publication.

Wilhelm Heinrich Immanuel Bleek was a German linguist who originally came to South Africa to compile a grammar of the Zulu language for J. W. Colenso, the first Anglican bishop of Natal. In this office he developed an interest in the San language and people, an interest he was able to further when he was appointed interpreter to the High Commissioner in Cape Town in 1856. In 1862 he married Jemima Lloyd, whose sister Lucy was to continue the research Wilhelm began in that year when he was appointed curator of the Grey Collection at the South African Library.

The notebooks of Bleek and Lloyd represent the largest collection of oral literature that exists from the now extinct southern San. Twelve thousand or so pages of single-sided quarto were taken down in the San language by dictation in half-page columns. They record numerous myths, accounts of events in the lives of the informants, songs, accounts of rituals, accounts of hunting practices, kinship terminologies and other diverse topics concerning San life. Bleek developed a complex phonetic notation to record the San language, which was usually translated later (mostly by Lloyd) with the help of the informants.

The English translation was written down in columns alongside the San. Unfortunately, some pages were left untranslated and remain so today.

The principal informants were San who came from the Strandberg and Katkop mountains south of the Orange River in the Cape Province. They were among 28 San convicts sent to work on the new breakwater in Cape Town harbour. Bleek obtained the permission of the Governor of the Cape Colony to keep some of the more useful informants at his home in Mowbray, in which environment co-operation was more readily elicited.

In August 1875 Wilhelm Bleek died at the age of 48. Lucy Lloyd continued to collect San oral literature until 1884. She retired to Europe in 1887 but continued to publish parts of the work until she died in 1914, whereupon Bleek's daughter, Dorothea Bleek, carried on with publication and some new research. In 1911 Lucy Lloyd published Specimens of Bushman Folklore, and in 1923 Dorothea Bleek published translations of a number of stories concerning the creator and trickster figure, Mantis, in Mantis and his Friends. Between 1931 and 1936, Dorothea edited a series of texts under the title 'Customs and Beliefs of the /Xam Bushmen' for the journal Bantu Studies. Dorothea also published a /Xam grammar, an account of /Xam kinship terms and a volume of copies of rock paintings made by G. W. Stow which included interpretations by Bleek's informants. Dorothea's Bushman Dictionary was published in 1956, eight years after her death.

The original notebooks of Bleek and Lloyd are housed in the Jagger Library at the University of Cape Town. The aim of the Unit's Bleek project is to publish several annotated volumes of the material. All the unpublished texts are being transcribed and typed into the relevant files on a word processor. Even the sections of the notebooks that have already been published contain phrases that were not properly understood by Bleek and Lloyd because they refer to customs and practices in San society about which they had no knowledge. It is possible, with the greater knowledge of San societies that we possess today, to solve a few of the unsolved riddles in the original translation. Where the original San word must be referred to, to establish a more meaningful translation, the Bushman Dictionary is not always helpful because it lists many words with similar meanings and variable pronunciations.

The first volume will deal with the conditions and events contingent on the compilation of the ethnography. It will also deal briefly with the history of the San people and give an introduction to San daily life suitably selected from the ethnography itself. The volume will take as its central theme the important Mantis cycle myths.

The Bleek project is still in its early stages, and it will be over a year before the work for the first volume is completed. It hardly needs to be stated that the publication of the Bleek collection will stand as a major event in San studies.

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DESCRIPTION OF A UNIQUE SET OF ROCK PAINTINGS IN THE KARASBERG, NAMIBIA

M du Toit

On a recent visit to the Karasberg I was shown a strange set of rock paintings by a farmer in the Warmfontein area. The site is not well known and has been seen by only a few select visitors to the farm.

Executed on the wall of a high cliff, on the bank of a dry river bed, are the most extraordinary set of paintings I have ever seen; strange ghostly figures, with large staring eyes, quite unlike what are popularly called Bushman paintings.

An important feature of the site is the presence of ancient graves below the stream in the wide river bed, an investigation of which might reveal who the people were who were responsible for these paintings.

As one approaches the site from the opposite bank of the river bed the enormous figures of the main panel are already strikingly visible.

The paintings are mainly white ghostly shapes, most of which have been eroded and washed away, while wide, staring eyes in red or white and black have remained. The

main fresco, which is still reasonably well preserved, is dominated by a large, well executed elephant, facing a mysterious round-headed figure with a white shrouded body holding a child-like figure by the hand. They face a white mound-like object, possibly a symbolic mountain or cave, representing an entrance to the earth. Keeping in mind the nearby burial site in the river bed, it is interesting that in Congo mythology the Mundangs believe that "every time a thing dies, its soul goes down a deep hole."

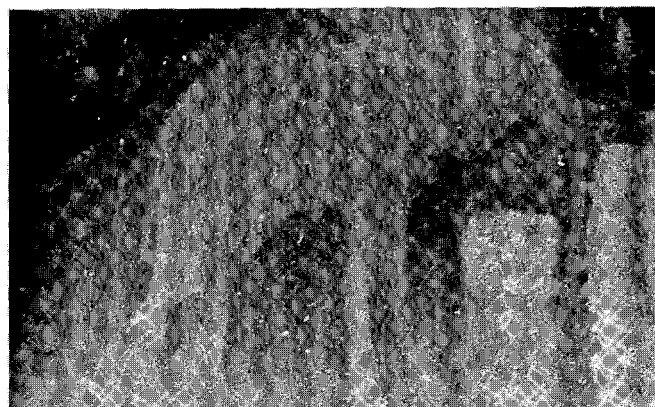


Figure 1
The large, yellow elephant on the main panel at a site in the Warmfontein district. It measures 920mm from trunk to hind foot and is 900mm tall.



Figure 2
Also on the main panel is this 900mm tall ghostly, white figure. To the left of its head is a pointed-eared dog. The small figure in front of it is touching both the ghost-like figure and the odd, white shape in front of it.

To the left of these figures is another frightening figure in the presence of a dog with pointed ears.

The frescoes to the right consist of some strange, faded, white objects, two pairs at least of ghostly-eyed human shapes, the figure of a white, large-beaked bird on its back with two large red eyes situated on its body. Above this is depicted, quite distinctly, a boat of the dug-out canoe type, equipped with two oar rests, with stern and prominent prow.

Immediately below this boat a sequence of rounded, undulating shapes are depicted, which may represent waves.

The presence and origin of this isolated frieze in the Karasberg pose as many questions as answers to researchers into the prehistory of southern Africa. The excavation of the burials at this site may hold some of the answers.

9 Sorrento Avenue, Risidale, Johannesburg

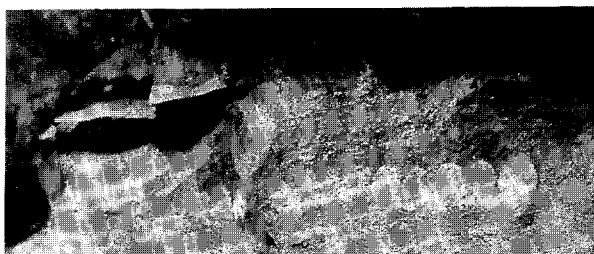


Figure 3
A boat-like shape skimming an undulating sequence 680mm long.

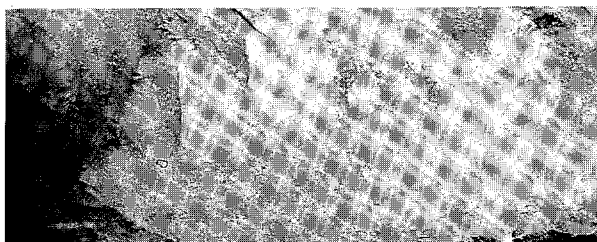


Figure 4
Another strange shape with large red eyes in the centre. This painting measures 930 mm wide.

In October 1986, with road directions and an introduction to the farmer from Mrs du Toit, I drove the 700 km from Windhoek to this unusual site at the foot of the Karasberg, between Keetmanshoop and Aus. The site is every bit as strange as she describes it. I photographed all the paintings, made notes on the site and traced the main panel with the large elephant.

Of the 52 paintings on the cliff face there are 14 of the strange white humanoid figures with the mask-like heads. There are five elephants and four dogs. There are also several obscure shapes, one of which has a stream of short lines emanating from it that could be a cloud.

While the human figures are all crudely painted and the dogs are child-like in their execution, the elephants are quite realistic and well drawn.

This is a site that needs to be fully investigated

Shirley-Ann Pager, Windhoek

THE MANUFACTURE AND USE OF QUARTZ FLAKES BY RECENT BANTU-SPEAKERS IN ZAMBIA AND MALAWI

K R Robinson

Today it is generally recognized that in rock shelters and caves there is not always a clear break in the Later Stone Age occupational sequence marking the arrival of agricultural/pastoral people into the area. Stone artefacts continue alongside iron and pottery until well into the second millennium AD. This evidence is particularly clear in Malawi where J. Desmond Clark (in his Introduction to Diana Crader's *Hunters in Iron Age Malawi*, Department of Antiquities Publication 21, 1984) has written that the occupation of Chencherere rock shelter by hunters began in the "mid-first millennium BC; contact with the first farmers began from the 8th to 10th century AD, and became more regular from the 13th century AD and continued into the mid-18th century, and probably later." Yusuf Juwayeye has produced similar evidence from the Shiri Highlands.

Clark (*ibid.*) believes that the aboriginal Akafula or Twa were almost completely absorbed by the Maravi (ancestral Cewa/Mang'anja) some 200 years ago. If this happened, it should be possible to find some oral traditions referring to the recent use of stone artefacts, and such evidence does appear to exist.

A man who has worked for me for many years, a Cewa originally from Katete in Zambia, recently showed interest in some flakes of white quartz and chalcedony lying on a ledge near my house, all being surface finds from the vicinity of the Umguza Valley. When asked the reason for his interest he explained that when he was a young boy (in about 1940), living at Katete before moving to Zomba in Malawi, his grandfather (*gogo*) regularly made and used flakes of white quartz during hunting when he had killed game. The flakes were struck from a core and were used to make the necessary incisions in the skin before flaying. Apparently, secondary trimming was also practised in some instances.

In order to test the validity of this information my informant was shown the series of photographs illustrating the manufacture of gun-flints in J. Desmond Clark's paper 'Old stone tools and recent knappers: late Pleistocene stone technology and current flaking techniques in the Zaire Basin' that was published in 1984 in *Zimbabwe* 1, and he immediately recognized the squatting position of the gun-flint maker, and his use of heels as a vice/anvil. However, after studying the photographs for a few moments, he remarked that his grandfather did not use a metal hammer or a punch to detach a flake from the core; he used a stone. This statement is important as I had never discussed the manufacture of stone artefacts with him and therefore his evidence appears to be reliable. He mentioned further that larger stones were used for the removal of the skin, particularly of larger animals. In the skinning of a sheep or small antelope the fist is sufficient, but with large antelope a skinning stone is necessary if the skin is to be removed without damaging cuts. (Such stones, with definite polish on both faces and some edge trimming, occur commonly at Woolandale sites dated from the 11th to the 13th century, and have been identified as skinning stones by old men who have used similar ones.) I first received information on the use of stone flakes about 50 years ago, but was then too inexperienced to follow it up.

These days my access to reference material is limited, and there may well be other fuller and better accounts of the recent use of stone flakes. I submit this note as a record that oral tradition referring to the manufacture and use of stone tools is still obtainable.

P O Box 170, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

SOME RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPERIENCES IN ENGLAND

A J B Humphreys

During the June holidays of 1986 my family and I were fortunate enough to spend three weeks in England, primarily near London but with some time exploring, mainly in the Cotswold area. While the main object of the trip was to visit relatives and friends, we also took the opportunity of seeing as much archaeology as possible and, of course, in a country like England one is never far from some or other archaeological site.

Archaeologically speaking, the highlight of the trip was undoubtedly the 'Archaeology in Britain' exhibition which had just opened at the British Museum. This exhibition traced 'New Views of the Past' from the Stone Age right through to the growth of medieval towns around AD 900-1600. As an ex-museum man I can testify to the magnificence of the displays. I have no idea what their budget was, but it must have been considerable. Apart from the spectacular objects on display (many of which one only sees illustrated in books) the quality and number of the mini-dioramas was quite breathtaking.

Interspersed among the displays were little cubicles where people could watch continuous videos showing archaeologists in action at particular excavations or a detailed explanation of the development of some of the more complex sites. The climax of the exhibition was the first public display of the now famous Lindow Man - the 'body in the bog' that was discovered in 1984. The body, after intensive study (the results of which are presented in a book which was on sale at the exhibition), has now been freeze-dried and preserved for posterity. It was quite a moving experience for me, as a person whose archaeological experience has been dominated by stones and bones, to gaze upon the actual face of someone who lived over 2 200 years ago.

Another highlight was a visit to the redesigned museum attached to the Roman baths at Bath which now incorporates the results of excavations undertaken as recently as 1979-83. Let none of our readers think he has 'seen' Bath - the new displays present a completely new and highly informative perspective.

While on the topic of new and exciting displays, I must mention the new exhibition at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. I took the opportunity to pay a flying visit to Ray and Adi Inskeep (who will be well known to many of our readers) and Ray showed me the recently opened exhibition, which he designed, showing man the hunter-gatherer throughout the world, both in the past and present. The exhibition is impressive not only in its meticulous presentation but also in the amazing range of objects from even the most obscure times and places. The famous Pitt Rivers collection has certainly been put to good use here.

Among some of the sites visited were Avebury and the Roman Villa at Chedworth, both of which are run by the National Trust. Both sites were well tended with information readily available (Chedworth has a video show) and one came away with a deep admiration for the work being done by the National Trust. This organization looks after 250 historical buildings as well as gardens and parks, mountains and parts of the coastline, archaeological sites, over a thousand farms and even forty traditional villages. Its budget is over fifty million pounds a year, all of which comes from the private sector. What could we achieve with that sort of public support in this country?!

Another memorable site was Painswick Beacon, an old Celtic fortification with a magnificent view from the summit. The only problem here is that it is now part of the local golf course so even after thousands of years one still has to be on the look out for flying missiles!

Our trip back to London took us past the enigmatic Silbury Hill, the largest man-made mound in Europe consisting of a quarter of a million cubic metres of quarried chalk. To this day no one knows why it was constructed. A little further on we passed a signpost indicating the turn-off to Greenham Common which brought us back to the present (one hesitates to say "with a bang"). We thought it prudent to drive on straight past.

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HISTORY IN CHINA

Andrew B Smith

As information about the past is incomplete and has to be pieced together from a number of sources, this inevitably leads to selective interpretation. Thus we can say that history is not neutral, and historians are not "impassive or neutral conduits passing on the past to a wider audience" as John Parkington and I noted in our Guest Editorial in the SOUTH AFRICAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL BULLETIN for December 1986. It also means that the historian has to be regarded within his social context to understand the ideological orientation.

A recent visit to the People's Republic of China gave some insights into the use of history and how people perceive the past. Official history in China, as exemplified in S. Bai's book *An outline history of China* published by the Foreign Languages Press in Beijing in 1982, follows a Marxist construct, and the development of social schemes adheres very much to the writings of Engels in 1884.

Early society is seen to be matriarchal. As Engels puts it: "Woman occupies not only a free but also a highly respected position among all savages and all barbarians of the lower and middle stages and sometimes even up to the upper stage." This was in reference to Morgan's classification in 1877 of the stages of development of Society. Archaeology is seen as providing proof and is given great prominence in China. The early Neolithic Yangshao site of Ban-po, outside Xian, occupied between 7 000 and 6 000 years ago supposedly demonstrates the central position of women from a number of female graves that have been excavated. Following Engels once more "the communistic household implies the supremacy of women in the house" and we see the adulation of this social condition in the statue to Chinese primitive motherhood erected outside the excavations (Fig. 1).

The excavations at Ban-po revealed a large village settlement of 50 000 sq m surrounded by a ditch. The buildings, represented by hut floors, showed that two types of structure existed: (a) semi-subterranean square houses, and (b) round houses with associated domestic equipment. A cemetery was located within the confines of the settlement where a variety of burials took place. One tomb contained four women which is suggested as demonstrating that this "was a custom prevailing in some matriarchal communities where the individuals were tied together by blood relationships" in figure 125 by Y. Du, author of the site guide *Neolithic site at Ban-po near Xian*. The site at Ban-po has been preserved by the state by covering a large part of the former settlement and creating walkways around the edge. The site is visited by large groups of people who arrive by the busload. It is probable that these are people from communes on a bus outing for the day. The entire museum is taken very seriously and the labels of each exhibit case are read carefully by the long lines of visitors.



Figure 1: Statue to primitive Chinese motherhood at Ban-po. Behind the figure is the building covering the Neolithic excavations.

In Marxist historical constructs, matriarchal society is replaced by patriarchies. The Longshan cultural remains are seen as representing the earliest patriarchal clan communes which, according to the orthodoxy in Bai's book mentioned above, "represented a transitional social stage between primitive communal and slave society". Bai elaborates this further: "Private ownership, polarization between rich and poor, class division, and the possession of slaves all made their appearance in the patriarchal clan commune period" based on a substantial increase in grave goods of certain individuals.

The interpretation given by Bai is that the period c. 5000 BP is when "relations of bondage were taking root" and emergence of diviners at this time resulted in a separate group divorced from production, which may "gradually have assumed the character of class oppression."

Archaeology therefore plays a central role in supporting the Marxist orthodoxy as "the public evidence of the truth of dialectical materialism" according to R. Wu in his article 'Paleoanthropology in China 1949-79' published in *Current Anthropology* 28:473-77 in 1982. The reputed conscription of 700 000 peasants, many of whom died in building the tomb of the first emperor of consolidated China, Qin Shi Huan, adds fuel to the revolutionary antagonism against feudal China. The peasants "never knew when they might be punished at any moment on any pretext under the harsh laws of the Qin Dynasty" says Bai on p. 127 of his book. Today, the mausoleum, built to be a microcosm of the Chinese universe of the time, can be seen outside Xian. The famous 'ceramic army' excavations of around 8 000 life-size figures (Figs 2-4) have, like the Ban-po site, been covered by a hangar-like building that would easily house a jumbo jet.



Figure 2: Senior Officer.

The site of the ceramic army is four kilometres from the tomb of the emperor. The way the entire complex has been laid out, and historical records, suggest that two other wings of the army have yet to be excavated. The existence of one of these wings has recently been confirmed. Thus there is a probability that ultimately the ceramic army could consist of over 20 000 lifesize figures of men and horses.



Figure 3: Soldier in armour.



Figure 4: Soldier in light armour. The clothing and hair or head covering distinguish rank. While the bodies of the soldiers are more or less stereotyped and repeated according to rank, the heads, made separately, are all different, suggesting the possibility that they were modelled on real people.

While many of the extravagant royal monuments were either destroyed or badly damaged during the excesses of the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s, today there is a respect for the marvels of the past, and the peasantry are acknowledged as the real artisans of Chinese cultural greatness. Certainly the anti-Qin rebellion of 209 BC is heralded as the first peasant uprising against the ruling class. One of the leaders of this revolt put forward the idea that the royal household, officers and ministers were not so by birth, undermining the idea of a hereditary aristocracy that had existed for the previous 1 400 years. This peasant rebellion is seen as setting an important historical precedent against authority, legitimating the present revolutionary government.

The new pragmatism of the current regime has resulted in an awareness of tourism as an important attraction for badly needed foreign exchange. The country is becoming more and more open to visitors, and should this philosophy continue beyond the tenure of the old men, like Deng Xiaoping, we can anticipate more and more revenue being spent by the State to preserve important historical sites. By considering the extreme reversals in government policy over the past 30 years, this is not guaranteed. As Feuerwerker notes in a paper entitled 'Academe in contemporary China', published in the *Michigan Quarterly Review* (22:579-593) in 1983: "there remain conflicting forces based on ideology, faction, personal advantage, and disparate experiences which surge strongly beneath the surface."

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CITY OF DOR EXCAVATIONS IN ISRAEL

A productive season of excavations at the ancient port city of Dor, on Israel's Mediterranean coastline, has given scholars new and important information about the town which was an administrative centre in the time of King Solomon.

In all, structural remains and artefacts at Dor cover periods dating back some 2 500 years and incorporate the civilizations of the ancient Canaanites, the Sea People, Israelites, Phoenicians, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans and Byzantine Christians. The town was eventually abandoned in approximately the third century AD. Its decline began with the rise of a new neighbour to the south, Caesarea.

A significant find this season at Dor was the pavement of what had probably been the main Roman market area. Other important excavations were those of the walls and gates of the eastern end of the city. Explorations on the slope adjacent to the port revealed an installation that produced purple dye during the Persian period from the crushed murex shell. This valuable dye, used to colour the clothing of kings and priests, was the basis for the wealth of the residents and a primary export item. Archaeologists say that these installations help them to understand for the first time all the steps in the manufacture of this dye, which caused the colour purple to be associated with royalty.

Excavations were carried out by Jerusalem's Hebrew University Institute of Archaeology, working with the Israel Exploration Society, California State University, McMaster University and the University of California. Some 400 students and volunteers from Israel and abroad took part in the dig.

This season also saw the exploration of one of the temples, the discovery of the oldest remnants yet found at the site and further evidence that Dor was a very cosmopolitan city, deduced from the large amount of imported objects found, dating from the middle Bronze period up through the Roman period.

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EXPERIMENTAL ARCHAEOLOGY IN ACTION

Mellisa Deacon

During the University of Stellenbosch excavations at Klasies River in January this year, we had a chance to see if experimental archaeology really works. My Dad left his big bunch of keys under the bumper of our Kombi and when my Mom went to town to buy supplies for the camp, she used her own keys to drive. That evening, when we were all sitting around the camp fire, she realized that she had driven off with Dad's keys under the bumper. The next morning Mom and I searched the area where the Kombi had been parked by sieving the loose sand, but we could not find the keys. I suggested that we put Mom's keys under the bumper and drive along the same road to see where her keys fell off, but Mom did not listen to me. We searched for about 500 m along the road without success. After a while, Boy Adams and Vera Geleijnse drove past us on their way to fetch something at the farmhouse. Boy said he was sure the keys must have fallen off closer to where the Kombi had been parked. We agreed to go back there, but asked him to look out along the road ahead as well.

At last Mom decided to try my experiment. We put her bunch of keys under the bumper and fixed a piece of red paper onto them so we could see them more easily when they fell off in the loose sand. She drove off and I ran behind the Kombi, but after about 200 m I got into the Kombi and we checked the bumper from time to time. The keys stayed under the bumper for more than 700 m until we crossed a stream and went up the steep hill on the other side. The road was too narrow for the Kombi to turn, so while Mom drove on, I searched the road and found her keys. I marked the place with the piece of red paper and then we began sieving the sand in the vicinity.

Before long, Boy and Vera returned and Boy was holding Dad's keys out of the window. He had found them on his way to the farmhouse within 3 m of where the experimental set had fallen off the bumper! Experiments really work, but we would not have wasted so much time if Mom had taken my advice earlier.

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THE MOON IN ROCK ART

A R Willcox

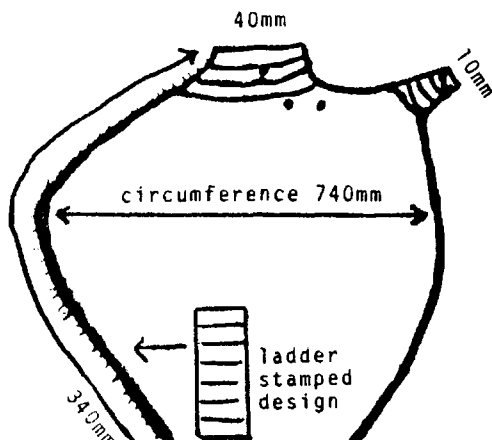
The illustration to the article by S. E. Kingdon and T. A. Dowson in THE DIGGING STICK 3(2) of September 1986 reminds me of the Bushman belief given by Bleek & Lloyd in their Specimens of Bushman Folklore (1911:367) that when the moon "lies hollow" it is "carrying people who are dead."

This fancy is typical of so much in World folklore, like the old belief in the U. K. that when the moon "holds water" it will not rain; but no doubt those who see everything in Bushman art as executed by medicine men in a state of trance will see the picture as the depiction of an hallucination.

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A /XAM POT FOUND IN THE HANTAM MOUNTAINS

D A Moeller



This example of a complete /Xam Hantam clay pot (Fig. 1), found by Mr W. C. Louw, was shown to me in the course of a survey of the area. It has deep lines etched around the neck and spout and the design continues in a shallow 'ladder stamp' design from the neck of the pot to its base.

My guess is that this pot was designed to hold honey beer. It has small holes punched just below the neck, where probably a leather thong was inserted as a handle in order to steady the pot while drinking from the spout.

The pot is of baked anthill clay and is burnished both inside and outside with red pigment.

The name Hantam is from the /Xam San, i.e. !Han !ami (Mountain of the red uintje), the plant Moraea edulis longifolia.

I am grateful to Mr A. M. Louw for his kind assistance with my survey.

Nassa, Good Hope St, 8180 Nieuwoudtville

HELP

The Southern Cape Branch of the South African Archaeological Society feels they are left out in the cold. They desperately would like to have someone to give them a talk and/or slide lecture at their branch meetings and offer a big welcome and hospitality to anyone travelling in the southern Cape who could make a small detour to George for this purpose. Some prior notice would of course be appreciated.

Prospective visitors willing to give a talk or slide lecture should please contact Mr Marais Wepener, Chairman of the Southern Cape Branch, P O Box 1641, 6530 George.

Let us not forget all the local branches who do not have the benefits of big town facilities and a ready supply of lecturers. The non-professional members of the South African Archaeological Society wholeheartedly support the magnificent work being done by our professional archaeologists, and it would be great if this support could be reciprocated when professionals find themselves with an excavation or investigation in the regions where the country branches are located. The offer to give a talk or an invitation to visit and perhaps to participate in some work at your site would be an exciting event for them.

ERRATA

A J B Humphreys

I would like to point out an error which appeared in my brief note in the April 1986 issue of THE DIGGING STICK on the use of stone artefacts. The date published in the article was 1919, whereas it should have been 1912.

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INTERNATIONAL ROCK ART CONGRESS IN DARWIN, AUSTRALIA

The Australian Rock Art Research Association (AURA), under the auspices of the Northern Territory Museum of Arts and Sciences, will be hosting the first international rock art congress in August/September 1988.

There is an impressive list of symposia, covering all aspects of rock art research and management and some exciting pre- and post-congress field trips.

The cost is reasonable and, unlike other countries at the moment, you can really get your money's worth because the Rand/A\$ exchange rate is virtually equal.

Congress attendance and participation (as well as AURA membership) are open to anyone with a genuine interest in prehistoric art.

Write to the Editor of THE DIGGING STICK for further information and a brochure. This promises to be an exciting event so don't delay. There are special rates for early registration.

BOOK REVIEW

GREAT RIVER: THE STORY OF THE ORANGE RIVER by A. R. Willcox. Drakensberg Publishers, Winterton, Natal. 112 pages, 18 black and white plates, 27 colour plates, 11 figures, 4 maps. Price R28,00.

The story of the Orange River is a drama in many acts, played for a hundred million years before Man came on the stage. From the time of his arrival the story is an epitome of human history from the Earlier Stone Age to the Atomic Age. Thus the author begins the prologue to his story of the Great River.

The book begins with an informative description of the birth of the Orange River, the slow, hesitant steps of its infancy, its boisterous, bubbling youth and its growth to maturity until it became the great 2 000 km long river it is today, discharging 12 000 million cubic metres of water into the Atlantic Ocean annually.

By the time Man's earliest relative, the Australopithecines, made their slow, shambling entrance along the river's rich fertile valley, between three and one million years ago, Great River was already old, but its role with Man was about to begin.

Mr Willcox, well known writer on archaeological and historical subjects, traces Man's progress along the Orange River from the Stone Ages to the time when the early mariners sailed around the coasts of southern Africa and the first heroic and romantic figures of the early European explorers, hunters and missionaries came upon the scene: men like Wikar, Burchell, Campbell, Patterson, Gordon, Cornwallis-Harris and the colourful and dandified figure of Le Vaillant. These first adventurers who wrote in their journals and diaries of their discoveries and experiences in wildest Africa and sketched and painted the new and wondrous scenes around them, all play their part in the drama. Their tales are also interwoven with those of the indigenous populations they encountered in those times.

The book concludes its journey through time with the exciting discovery of diamonds at the mouth of the Orange River and the important development of the Orange River Irrigation Scheme.

Mr Willcox has drawn on many sources of information, both historical and contemporary, published and unpublished, and has produced a very readable history book. It is interesting and informative without being too academic, it is a book that can be enjoyed by anyone interested in the discovery of our land and its people.

The book is well illustrated and includes plates of original drawings and paintings from private collections as well as from museums and galleries.

Shirley-Ann Pager