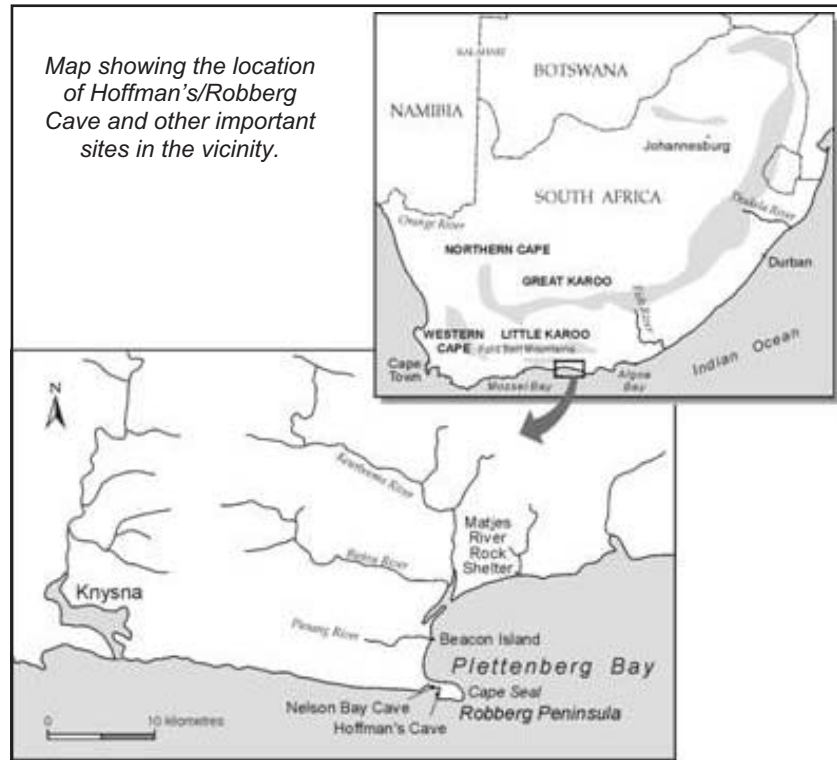




NEW EXCAVATIONS AT HOFFMAN'S/ROBBERG CAVE

Katharine Kyriacou

The Robberg Peninsula, located near the popular southern Cape coastal town of Plettenberg Bay, has been a focus for human settlement for thousands of years. Hoffman's/Robberg Cave forms one of a series of shelters situated along its rocky shores. These sites have been recognised for almost a hundred years as the repositories of a rich material record of pre-historic occupation, and have captured the attention of amateur antiquarians, collectors and professional archaeologists alike. Beginning in 1908, exploratory excavations were carried out at several caves and rock shelters along the Robberg Peninsula at the request of Dr Péringuey of the South African Museum. Investigations at Hoffman's/ Robberg Cave, also referred to as Cave F and East Guanogat, yielded human remains, painted stones and large quantities of bone artefacts (Péringuey 1911; Rudner and Rudner 1973).



More extensive excavations were conducted at the site during the late 1950s by Dr AC Hoffman of the National Museum in Bloemfontein. He dug a large trench through a substantial Later Stone Age (LSA) shell midden situated inside the cave, removing large amounts of human, faunal and cultural remains (Fairhall, Young and Erickson 1976). Forty years later human skeletons from this and other sites along the Robberg Peninsula were included in Judy Sealy's programme of stable isotopic analysis. Her main objective was to compare the diets of the prehistoric people living at these sites and at Matjes River Rock Shelter, a site located about 14 km further east along the coast. Her research showed that people living at these sites between 4 500 and 2 000 years ago practised very different economic strategies.

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IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 New excavations at Hoffman's/Robberg Cave – *Katharine Kyriacou*
- 5 Into the dark: Upper Palaeolithic caves in Western Europe – *David Lewis-Williams*
- 9 The destruction of the Griqua Mission Church at Campbell – the ultimate irony – *AJB Humphreys*
- 13 Mining in the Mapungubwe area ceases – for now
- 15 The low-down on research at Hadar in Ethiopia's desolate Afar region – *Anna Steyn*

While people at Matjes River had a mixed diet of game, plant food and shellfish, those at Robberg existed primarily on marine food, including fish and large quantities of seal, which would have been available to them from a rare mainland colony (Sealy 2006). These differences seemed to suggest that the inhabitants of sites along Robberg Peninsula and at Matjes River formed separate cultural and territorial groups. Indeed, a detailed examination of the artefacts manufactured by LSA people living at Robberg's Nelson Bay Cave and at Matjes River indicated a number of potentially significant differences in the production of items such as stone tools, decorated bone, bone beads and marine shell pendants (Ludwig 2005). However, since this material represents a selected sample, these observations remain tentative.

To explore further the existence of social and territorial separation among LSA hunter-gatherers living on opposite sides of the Keurbooms/Bitou estuary between 4 000 and 2 000 years ago, Dr Judith Sealy and I turned to the large collection of material derived from Hoffman's excavation of Hoffman's/Robberg Cave. Given the close proximity of this site to Nelson Bay Cave, we expected to find strong similarities in the objects manufactured by the people who had occupied these two caves, and, indeed, a number of broad similarities between the two collections of material were identified. However, a number of puzzling discrepancies also became apparent. Because of a lack of records pertaining to Hoffman's excavation, we were unable to ascertain whether these differences might be related to his excavation techniques or sampling strategies. The only way to resolve this issue was to conduct fresh excavations at the site and obtain an unselected sample of material.

The 2007 field season: excavation and dating

The excavations commenced during the winter of 2007. They were supported in part by a grant from the Kent Bequest of the SA Archaeological Society. Standard procedures were employed throughout: the deposit was removed with brushes and trowels; sieved through a 3 mm mesh stacked above a 1,5 mm mesh; and sorted into its main components for analysis. We began by working our way back from the remains of Hoffman's original section. Thirty-five strata, which can be divided into two broad groups, were recognised. The upper layers of the deposit consisted of compacted mats of estuarine grass or *Zostera capensis*, which was most likely brought into the cave as bedding material. These strata were separated from the underlying occupational units by a thin layer of hard, heavily burned material that formed a shelf supporting the overlying *Zostera*-rich units, and a more extensive layer comprising charcoal, ash and some residual *Zostera*. Beneath these were several shelly layers characterised by varying degrees of burning. The archaeological deposit bottomed out onto sterile dune sand.

Prior to our excavation, two radiocarbon dates were available for Hoffman's trench. These were obtained from samples of marine shell obtained from the top and bottom of the trench, and placed the occupation of the site within a short period between 3300 and 2800 BP (Fairhall, Young and Erickson 1976). Nine new radiocarbon dates on paired charcoal and marine shell samples, as well as one additional sample of charcoal, were obtained during the 2007 field season. The lower, shell-dominated strata derive from an occupation dating to approximately 4000 to 3700 BP, while the *Zostera*-rich units date to about 3300 BP. A 400-year break in the occupation of the site is indicated.

These new dates serve to push the occupation of Hoffman's/Robberg Cave further back into the LSA. Occupation at c. 4000 BP follows shortly after the lowering of southern Cape sea level to their present position following a period of higher sea levels (Reddering 1988). It would appear that higher sea levels discouraged human settlement at the site, which is situated on a very steep and exposed portion of the coast. This was not the case at the more sheltered Nelson Bay Cave. Furthermore, the occupation of Hoffman's/Robberg Cave followed fairly shortly after the appearance of economic separation among hunter-gatherers living on opposite sides of the Keurbooms/Bitou estuary. The habitation of the site is likely to have been spurred by increasing population densities in the area. There is no evidence of occupation after 3300 BP. This contrasts with the pattern observed at other southern Cape coastal sites, including Nelson Bay Cave, which was inhabited first by hunter-gatherers and, in the last 2 000 years, by herders who introduced domestic animals and ceramics to the region.

Shellfish remains and LSA collection strategies

Among the archaeological materials recovered from Hoffman's/Robberg Cave were the remains of thousands of shellfish harvested and consumed by the inhabitants. Owing to problems with the sampling of shellfish remains from Nelson Bay Cave and the lack of systematic analysis of remains from the earlier excavations at Hoffman's/Robberg Cave and at Matjes River, relatively little was previously known about shellfish collecting among hunter-gatherers living in the Plettenberg Bay region between 4000 and 3000 BP. To remedy this, I identified, counted and measured the shellfish found in the 2007 excavation. Two species were particularly abundant, the brown mussel, *Perna perna*, and the pear-shaped limpet, *Scutellastra cochlear*. These two types of shellfish made up 48,9 per cent and 24,7 per cent of shellfish recovered from the site. Other common marine species included the large abalone, *Haliotis spadicea*, and the large alikreukel, *Turbo sarmaticus*.

Large quantities of brown mussels are a common feature of LSA sites on the southern Cape coast as this

species is abundant and easy to harvest, has a high flesh yield and is not easily exhausted though repeated collection. The abundance of the limpet at the cave is more unusual. However, fairly large quantities of this species have been reported at similarly dated southern Cape coastal sites at Cape St Francis (Binneman 1995) and the Garcia State Forest (Henshilwood 1995). *P perna* and *S cochlear* are species which inhabit the lower reaches of exposed, rocky shorelines, of which the Robberg Peninsula is a fine example (Branch et al 2002).

The predominance of these two species at Hoffman's/Robberg Cave is most likely a result of the steep topography of the coast in the immediate vicinity of the site. This may have prompted the LSA inhabitants of the cave to focus their shellfish collecting activities on those species most accessible to them. Binneman (1995) has suggested that the harvesting of shellfish may have been deliberately scheduled to coincide with spring low tides. It is interesting to note that white mussels and other species from the sandy beaches of nearby Plettenberg Bay were almost completely ignored.

The average size of *S. cochlear* seems to suggest that this species was intensively harvested during the initial occupation of the site at around 4000 BP. This follows observations made by Buchanan et al (1978) that repeated collection from specific shellfish populations reduces the average sizes of exploited species. At Hoffman's/Robberg Cave, limpets recovered from the oldest layers were smaller than those from younger units. This is consistent with a scenario in which shellfish were more intensively collected during the early stages of occupation at the site.

A comparison of stone, bone and shell artefacts

Fairly large numbers of stone artefacts and some bone and shell implements were recovered from Hoffman's/Robberg Cave in 2007. These were examined and compared with those documented by Ray Inskeep (1987) from contemporary levels of Nelson Bay Cave. The stone artefacts from both sites were similar and consisted primarily of informal, expediently made tools manufactured from locally available quartzite. The sample from Hoffman's/Robberg Cave includes several distinctive quartzite cores of a type described by Inskeep and subsequently by Binneman (1995; 2006/2007) at another site in the south-eastern Cape, Kabeljous River Shelter. These cores are 'roughly cylindrical in shape' (Inskeep 1987: 74) with smooth upper and lower surfaces, indicating their origin as either naturally water-worn beach cobbles or small grindstones.

The large quantities of these and other cores in the collection from Hoffman's/Robberg Cave suggest that stone-tool manufacture was relatively intense at this site, particularly during the first LSA occupation. Grinding equipment, including grindstones and hammer stones, as well as stone artefacts preserving visible



The excavation at Hoffman's/Robberg Cave. Note the thin layer of dark, compacted material, or Ivan, indicated by the arrows. Photograph by Louisa Hutten.

traces of ochre, were also more numerous at Hoffman's/Robberg Cave than at Nelson Bay Cave. This pattern was first apparent during Sealy's and my investigation of the original collection derived from Hoffman's excavation, and was confirmed by my analysis of the new sample. Several shale and sandstone 'palettes', i.e. flat pieces of stone with ground and smoothed edges, were recovered from Hoffman's/Robberg Cave in 2007 and 2008. These were all similar to those described by Inskeep for the comparable levels of Nelson Bay Cave.

The recent excavations at Hoffman's/Robberg Cave yielded a range of bone artefacts similar to those manufactured by LSA people at Nelson Bay Cave and other well-known southern Cape coastal sites. Seventeen shell crescents, defined as fragments of mussel shell that have been ground on the arc end, as well as three marine shell pendants, were recovered during 2007. These pendants, which were not represented in the collection in the National Museum of Bloemfontein, are similar to specimens described by Inskeep from Nelson Bay Cave. They range in shape from round to oval, have two perforations and were manufactured on fragments of alikreukel shell. Ostrich eggshell beads, another item not present in Hoffman's original collection, were also found during renewed excavations at Hoffman's/Robberg Cave. These tended to be relatively small, between 4 mm and 5 mm in diameter. Small bead sizes are generally characteristic of sites occupied by hunter-gatherers, while larger bead sizes are associated with herders (Jacobson 1987a and b; Henshilwood 2008). Furthermore, like the LSA beads from Nelson Bay Cave, all those from Hoffman's/Robberg Cave are finished products. This, in conjunction with the lack of debris relating to ostrich eggshell bead manufacture, indicates that the beads at both sites were imported to the Robberg Peninsula from somewhere inland.

Conclusions

The 2007 field season at Hoffman's/Robberg Cave provided fresh insight into the prehistory of this rela-

tively little known site on Robberg Peninsula. Controlled excavations yielded archaeological material from two episodes of LSAge occupation dating to about 4000 to 3700 and 3300 BP, a time when hunter-gatherer lifestyles in the region became more sedentary and economic activities intensified.

Shellfish remains suggest collection strategies focused on species available on the steep, rocky shores in the immediate vicinity of the site. Changes in the average size of the most abundant limpet species reflect more intensive harvesting of shellfish during the initial stages of occupation.

Stone, bone and shell artefacts manufactured by the LSA inhabitants of Hoffman's/Robberg Cave are broadly similar to those associated with the contemporary occupants of Nelson Bay Cave, as well as other well-known southern Cape coastal sites. Further investigations at additional sites on both sides of the Keurbooms/Bitou estuary are needed before the existence of territorial and cultural boundaries among different groups of LSA hunter-gatherers can be recognised in excavated archaeological residues.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the SA Archaeological Society for their kind provision of Kent Bequest funds towards my excavation and research expenses. Additional funding was provided by the National Research Foundation and the University of Cape Town. I would also like to thank CapeNature for permitting me to excavate in the Robberg Peninsula Nature Reserve, and for their technical assistance throughout the field season. I am deeply grateful to the following people for their participation in the 2007 excavations: Judith Sealy, my thesis advisor; Tim Maggs, who provided invaluable practical advice and expertise; Louisa Hutten, for her organisational skills; as well as Susan Pfeiffer, Dolores Jacobs, Tara van Niekerk, Jane Noah, Celeste Boothe, Cuan Hahndiek, Deon Vaaltyn and Albon Pietersen. Dolores Jacobs deserves extra thanks for her assistance with the laboratory sorting of the material.

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Ancient skull suggests head reshaping

Eleven thousand years ago a tall and solidly built Aboriginal man lived a hard life in Australia. His bones reveal he had multiple breaks in both forearms, a fractured ankle so severe his shin bones fused together, and arthritis in his jaw. But since his skeleton, known as Nacurrie, was discovered near Swan Hill on the Murray River in 1948, it has been the changes to his skull that have been of most interest to palaeoanthropologist Peter Brown. The shape of his cranium suggests Aborigines practised body modification, specifically manipulating the contour of the skull. Nacurrie appears to be the earliest example of the practice in the world, according to Prof. Brown.

The skeleton of Nacurrie suggests his skull shape was modified by subtle means, probably by massage from his mother's hands. Several other skulls found in the Murray-Darling area also have modified skulls. 'It is clear from the archaeological record that a group of people living on the Murray River used to do this between 10 000 and 13 000 years ago.' Nacurrie man's skeleton also shows Aborigines living 10 000 years ago were much bigger than those first encountered during European settlement. 'The average height for men when Europeans arrived was about 1,6 m or less, whereas 9 000 years ago they were closer to 1,8 m tall.

Cranium manipulation was common throughout history in different cultures. By some reports, it was the most popular type of body modification after circumcision, said Prof. Brown. In Papua New Guinea some mothers would bind their babies' heads with a tight bandage, which created a cone shape, while in South America babies were sometimes bound to create a flat-shaped head. In the Netherlands and Denmark until fairly recently little caps were put on babies, which changed the shape of their heads.

The Age, 26 July 2010

INTO THE DARK

Upper Palaeolithic caves in Western Europe

David Lewis-Williams

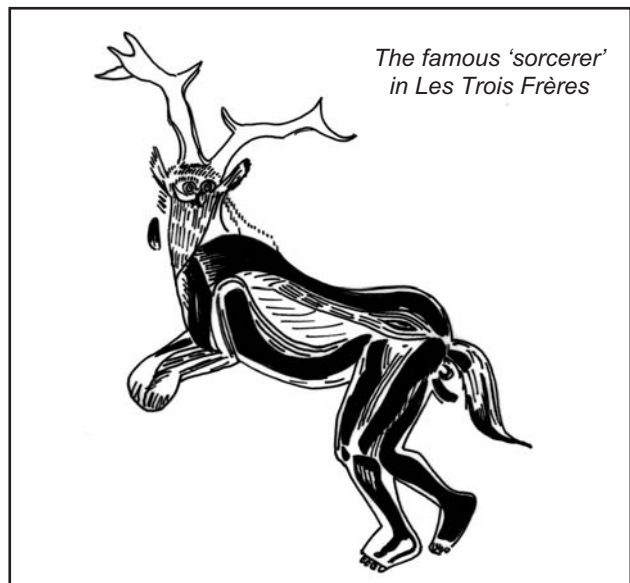
In April 2010, three members of the Wits Rock Art Research Institute (RARI) – Sam Challis, David Pearce and David Lewis-Williams – visited a number of Upper Palaeolithic caves in the Ariège (Pyrenées), Lot and Dordogne regions of France. For part of the time we were joined by Susan Ward, a keen supporter of RARI activities. Entering the darkness of these caves that date roughly from 32 000 to 10 000 years ago is always an adventure. On this occasion, we were trying to assess ideas that I had published eight years previously in *The Mind in the Cave*, a book that was written after extensive visits to all the major caves in France. This time, too, we were able to explore caves and parts of caves that are not open to the general public, and to spend extended time moving back and forth in the caves, checking my previous observations and finding regularities that we had not previously noticed. In this work, we were deeply indebted to a number of French researchers, especially Jean Clottes and Yanik Leguillou.

The first thing that strikes the visitor to a large number of caves is their variety. No two are identical in form. Some are huge, branching systems of tunnels. One such cave, Rouffignac (Dordogne), is equipped with an electric train to convey visitors through a kilometre of passages to the first images of animals. Then, in the deepest part of the cave, crowded images of Ice Age mammoths, woolly rhinoceroses, horses, bison and ibex have been painted on the ceiling. Other caves, like Enlène (Ariège), have no wall paintings, but in two of its small chambers hundreds of hand-size stone plaquettes have been found. Engraved on these are an abundance of images and what appear to be random scratchings. Here, too, small pieces of bone, about the size of a little finger nail, were thrust into cracks in the rock. Finally, in the deepest part of the cave, which is still being excavated, a few marks made with red ochre are hidden behind a protuberance of rock – no images, just red lines and dots. Was the mere presence of paint itself important?

Some caves, like Lascaux (Dordogne) and Chauvet (Ardèche), have large, impressive polychrome images that overwhelm the viewer; others, such as Les Combarelles (Dordogne) and Mas d'Azil (Ariège), have lightly scratched images that can be seen only when one's lamp is in an appropriate position. In some caves, like Les Combarelles, the ancient ground level

has been dug out to permit visitors access to the paintings and engravings, but in Upper Palaeolithic times people were obliged to crawl and lie prone as they made their images only a few centimetres from their faces. Many caves have been left in this condition and reaching the images is still today a difficult endeavour; not for the claustrophobic.

Notwithstanding all the variety, we can discern some consistencies. The most obvious is the stunning fact that people made images deep underground, often in places where their creations could be seen by only one person at a time; many may even have been seen by the maker only. It is hard to imagine any reason for making these remote images if those ancient artists did not believe there was a nether realm filled with supernatural animals and possibly spirit beings as well. Like communities all over the world, Upper Palaeolithic people probably believed in a tiered cosmos: an underworld, the level on which human beings lived, and a realm above the sky. Just what beings were believed in Upper Palaeolithic times to inhabit the spiritual levels and how they may have influenced human beings is a matter for conjecture.



Yet in the nether realm itself we can form some idea of what these supernatural beings were like because we find images of human bodies with animal heads, the most famous being the 'sorcerer' in Les Trois Frères (Ariège). Here there is a blending of a human body with antlers, a horse's tail, owl-like eyes (owls are depicted in this cave) and, possibly, feline genitalia. This painted and engraved image, high above a deep chamber over which it looms, points to a mixture of humanity and animality. But why? Perhaps, like many

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hunter-gatherer peoples around the world (the southern African San being one), animals were believed to have some sort of supernatural power that people could harness to achieve various ends.

If this power was believed to come from a spirit world deep underground, we would have some explanation as to why people penetrated so far into the earth: they were seeking spirit animals and beings. It would also explain why people placed 'offerings', like the small pieces of bone, into cracks in the rock. In some caves they went further and placed bears' teeth and stone artefacts smeared with red ochre in niches in the rock face. Perhaps the placing of ochre on these artefacts was in some way comparable to placing ochre on the cave wall in the depths of Enlène. Paint was, in a way that we do not fully understand, a bridge between levels of the cosmos: it linked the world of people with the spirit realm.



Animals painted on the Grand Ceiling in Rouffignac

While some caves, like Les Combarelles, are decorated virtually throughout their long, narrow passages, others are clearly divided into sections. There are passages with next to no images and chambers with many. It seems that people consciously divided up these caves into areas they considered appropriate for special activities, some of which involved a number of people and others that admitted only one or two. This sort of distinction suggests that Upper Palaeolithic people probably recognised social distinctions, rather in the way that the architecture of a medieval cathedral divides the lay congregation from the choir and, nearest to the altar, the higher ranks of clergy. Despite their apparent confusion, the caves were often highly organised 'sanctuaries' and moving through them had social implications.

But caves, like cathedrals, were not rigid and immutable. In some cathedrals the clergy have decided to move the high altar from the westernmost part of the cathedral to the crossing to bring it closer to the congregation. As social circumstances in Europe changed and egalitarian values came to the fore, the clergy

began to play down the separation between priests and laity, though they have never removed it altogether. Is it possible that Upper Palaeolithic people could challenge the social distinctions of their time by venturing into areas of the caves that were, for the most part, considered forbidden? Did this sort of movement entail crossing important thresholds?

One of the aspects of the caves that we particularly noticed on this visit may point to such thresholds. Images were often placed on both sides of a passage, sometimes, but not always, at a particularly narrow section. It is as if the paired images constituted a gateway or portal through which people passed on their way to deeper, perhaps more mystical, experiences. The idea of pairing is also found in the images themselves. Often two animals, say bison, were depicted tail to tail or, more frequently, head to head. It seems indisputable that these 'compositions' meant something, a message that is now beyond our understanding.

There may be another parallel with medieval churches. In some, images played an important role that is seldom recognised today: the contemplation of images induced visions. St Teresa of Avila (1512–1582), for instance, reported that when she was in church and chanting the *Salve Regina*, she saw the Virgin Mary surrounded by a host of angels descending from heaven and placing herself at the prioress's stall, just where there was a painting of the Virgin. The painting was superseded by the vision. St Teresa at once fell into ecstasy.

Did something like this happen in the Upper Palaeolithic caves? In many instances an image was painted or engraved so that a small nodule in the rock face became an eye, or some stalactite runs became the legs of an animal. Only a few painted or engraved lines were needed to transform the rock and to cause an animal to emerge from the gloom. In this way, animals were often integrated with the rock face, conjured from its convolutions and cracks. These features of the rock often seem to 'anchor' images. They may well have done more: with the intense concentration of a person looking at the rock, the suggestive natural shapes may have induced visions of spiritual creatures, some of which were 'fixed' with painted or engraved lines. We see these images even today. Through this sort of process, a painting or engraving may have become a powerful avatar for a spirit animal.

Indeed, we suspect that entry into these caves changed Upper Palaeolithic people. They emerged with new insights, perhaps new power. Nor have the caves lost this capacity for inducing awe. The whole experience of entering this dark yet illuminated underworld is so stunning that one's critical faculties are silenced. People emerging from these caves seldom chatter: they need time for contemplation. 🔑

FIRST RESULTS FROM SOUTH AFRICA-CHINA BILATERAL PROGRAMME IN PALAEOSCIENCES

Reinoud Boers

South Africa and China both have important fossil and archaeological sites relating to early human ancestry, but the relationship between these records has been poorly understood in the absence of scientific collaboration between the two countries. South Africa is renowned for sites with fossils of *Australopithecus*, *Paranthropus* and early *Homo*, as well as stone tools of the Oldowan and Early Acheulean industries, and the Middle Stone Age (MSA).

China is renowned for its fossils attributed to *Homo erectus* and for core and flake-tool industries that have been likened to the Oldowan. Other industries in China have been debated as Acheulean-like or indigenous. The presence of a true MSA (in the African sense) has been argued not to exist in China, while the movement of modern humans into China by 40 000 years ago has been suggested based on more refined artefacts appearing at this time.

To permit both Chinese and South African scientists to learn about each other's hominid fossils and stone tools, and to allow informed comparisons to be made to determine relationships between the hominid species and the stone tool industries, the two countries have entered into a bilateral programme in palaeosciences. This is expected to lead to a much improved understanding of hominid movements out of Africa during the Pliocene and Pleistocene to determine Africa's influence on Asian developments and to a better comprehension of any indigenous developments in eastern Asia. On the South African side the initiative is led by Dr Ron Clarke of Wits' Institute for Human Evolution, and Kathleen Kuman and Dr Amanda Esterhuysen, senior lecturers in archaeology at Wits University,


The questions to be answered by the programme are: where did China's *Homo erectus* originate and how does this species relate to earlier African hominids; are all fossil hominids from China really *H. erectus* or have some *H. habilis* and *Australopithecus* fossils been misidentified as *H. erectus* owing to the absence of informed comparisons; how do the limited number of hand-axe sites in China relate to the Acheulean of Africa; was the ancestral *H. sapiens* in China as early as *H. sapiens* in South Africa (e.g. the Florisbad hominid at 260 000 years ago); and how can the MSA of South Africa help us understand the cultural developments taking place in China during the last few hundred thousand years of prehistory.

South Africa's National Research Foundation (NRF) and the Ministry of Science and Technology of China have made funding available to this project running from 2009 to 2011.

As part of the programme, eight South African researchers attended the International Symposium on Paleoanthropology in Commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the Discovery of the First Skull of Peking Man and the First Asian Conference on Quaternary Research in Beijing in October 2009. Presentations were made by Ron Clarke (on hominids), Kathy Kuman (Acheulean archaeology), Amanda Esterhuysen (heritage and public outreach), Nkosinathe Tomose (heritage management), Ryan Gibbon (cosmogenic nuclide burial dating), Victoria Gibbon (human morphology) and Winnie Mokokwe (fauna).

Subsequently half the South Africans visited museums in Beijing, held discussions on heritage management and took the post-conference excursion to heritage and archaeological sites in southern China. The others participated in a post-conference excursion to Nihewan Valley archaeological sites, northern China, studied the human skeletal collection and hand-axes from central China and visited the key *H. erectus* site of Zhoukoudian to collaborate on dating of upper levels. Dr Clarke studied porcupine gnawed bones and *Gigantopithecus* fossils, and continued his study of the Lantian hominid for publication with the leader of the Chinese researchers, Prof. Liu Wu.

Following this, six Chinese researchers spent three weeks in SA studying collections at Wits, the Iziko Museum in Cape Town and the Transvaal Museum, specifically hominids, endocranial casts, stone tools, fauna and bone tools. A symposium was held at Wits to present current results of the collaboration, which will also lead to collaborative publications.

South Africa has much to contribute to understanding China's hominids and archaeology. The Chinese were very excited to studying South Africa's collections. They enjoy excellent support from government, even at the level of the presidency. An earlier visit by President Hu Jintao's to the Cradle of Humankind was in fact the catalyst for the programme. 

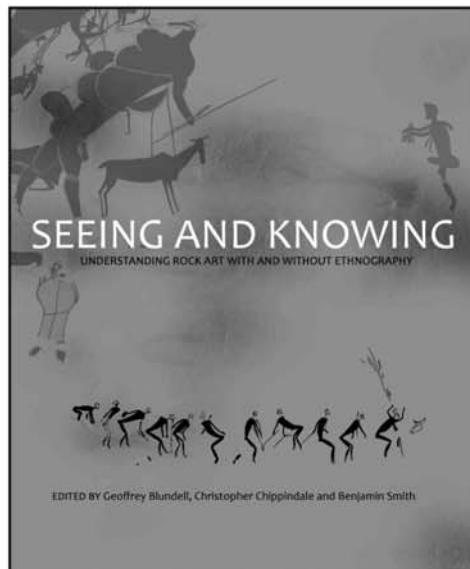
ARCHAEOLOGY IN BRIEF

500 000-year-old cranium. A complete cranium has been recovered from the Atapuerca side at Sima de los Huesos de Atapuerca in Burgos, Spain. It is the second complete cranium to be found at the site, which shows the presence of *Homo Antecessor* in the region. The first cranium found at the site, known as Craneo 5, is now on display at the recently opened Museum of Human Evolution in Burgos.

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SEEING AND KNOWING

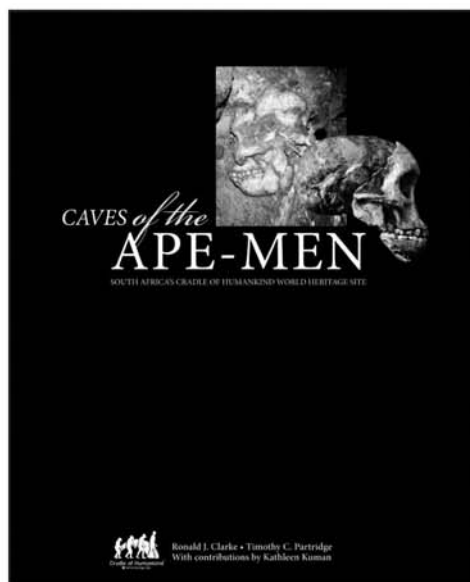
Rock Art with and without Ethnography

Edited by Geoffrey Blundell, Christopher Chippindale and Benjamin Smith

This collection focuses on David Lewis-Williams and the depth and wide geographical impact of his contribution to rock art research. In particular, the volume emphasises the use of theory and methodology drawn from ethnography that he has used with inspirational effect in understanding the meaning and context of rock art in various parts of the world. *Seeing and Knowing* explores how to understand and learn from rock art with and without ethnography. The volume is unique in that it focuses exclusively on rock art and ethnography, and covers such a wide geographic range of examples on this topic, from southern Africa to Scandinavia, to the United States.

Contributors: G Blundell, C Chippindale, J Clottes, M Conkey, E Eastwood, J Francis, K Helskog, I Lim, L Loendorf, J Loubser, D Morris, S Ouzman, N Price, T Saetersdal, B Smith, P Vinnicombe, E Walderhaug Sætersdal, N Walker, D Whitley.

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THE DESTRUCTION OF THE GRIQUA MISSION CHURCH AT CAMPBELL – THE ULTIMATE IRONY

AJB Humphreys

The history of the village of Campbell, in the Northern Cape, and its Griqua Mission Church, has been well served in two publications (Oberholster and Humphreys 1961; Morris and Fourshe 1993). What I propose to present here is a brief overview to place in context the recent history of the mission church.

The story of Campbell goes back to 1805, when a group of Griqua, including Captain Andries Waterboer of Klaarwater (now Griquatown), accompanied the missionary, Jan Matthys Kok, on a journey to the area settled by the Tswana people. Along the way they chanced upon a number of excellent springs, situated in a large valley, running north-south, which they gave the name of Knovel Valley. After their return to Klaarwater, the possibility of attempting crop cultivation at Knovel Valley was often discussed, but it was only in 1811 that the Revd Lambert Jansz, in the company of William Burchell, revisited the valley and took possession of the springs and the valley in the name of the London Missionary Society. By this time the place had become known as Groote Fontein, but this soon changed again, because in 1813, when the Revd John Campbell reached the village and asked its name, he was told it was Campbell.

Campbell flourished as a mission station, so much so that in 1816 Cornelis Kok II (1778-1858) was declared Captain of Campbell, although there had been other members of the family resident there from the beginning. Several years later the Revd John Bartlett, who had established himself as a missionary in Campbell in 1825, constructed a mission church during the period 1827 to 1831 (Oberholster & Humphreys 1961: 239-41).

The mission station was very much on the 'required route' of the early missionaries and explorers who

ventured into the interior of South Africa, and such luminaries as George Thompson, Andrew Smith, Robert Moffat, David Livingstone and GA Farini passed through. Indeed, for many years the building of the mission church was believed to be the work of David Livingstone – probably because of his high public profile – and in future years the general store and a hotel were to be named after him. It was the research undertaken by my father, Basil Humphreys, which was to demonstrate that Bartlett had in fact built the church, exploding the 'Livingstone Myth'.

In 1898 the mission church and various properties in Campbell came into the possession of Spencer



The Griqua Mission Church in 1961 (photo from the author's collection)

Benbow Humphreys, thus beginning the family connection. My father, who was of the third generation, took a special interest in the church and beautified it in collaboration with his friend Adam Kok IV, who was the Griqua Captain of Campbell. Regular church services were held in the church as Adam Kok was also a lay preacher in the Anglican Church.

This close collaboration continued until 1965, when ill-health forced my father to retire to Kimberley. Following his death in 1971, my own employment in Kimberley and ultimate relocation to Cape Town, the people running the church were left very much to their own devices. Adam Kok himself was to die in 1978.

After an absence of over 20 years, the opportunity for me to revisit the mission church arose during a trip to Kimberley in May 1996. I looked forward to the visit with great anticipation as the National Monuments Council Annual Report of 31 March 1995 had stated that 'The structure has been stabilised and the church is being rethatched'. To my utter dismay, the church had not been 'stabilised' at all – it had been demolished and a replica built in its place. I expressed my feelings rather strongly in a brief report on my trip published in *The Digging Stick* (Humphreys 1996). These critical remarks led to an exchange between myself and David Yuill, the person responsible for the decis-

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ion to demolish the church and construct the replica (Yuill 1997; Humphreys 1997). This seemed to be the end of the road; there was nothing more to be done. We were sitting with a *fait accompli*.

But, as things turned out, this was by no means the end of the story of the Griqua Mission Church. In November 1996 I received a letter from Attorney Peter Horn of the legal firm Haarhoffs in Kimberley. Horn stated, *inter alia*, that 'the Mission Church is still registered in the name of your grandfather, William Benbow Humphreys' and that in terms of his will it would have formed part of 'the rest and residue of his estate', which had been transferred to a trust set up to care for my grandmother for the rest of her life. (I have a copy of William Humphreys' will dated 24 April 1961, and there is no mention whatsoever of the mission church in it.)

My grandmother died in 1969, so that the assets of the trust (including the church), upon its dissolution, would have become the property of William Humphreys' descendants and were to be distributed on a 'share and share alike' basis, as stipulated in the original trust. This means that at the time of its demolition, the mission church was not the property of the National Monuments Council. The status of the church was, however, seemingly never resolved because the issue re-emerged in 1998 when, apparently, the National Monuments Council decided to 'dispose' of the church – a property that it had still never owned – because in a letter dated 5 October 1998 Horn wrote to me with regard to 'the transfer of the Church at Campbell to the Anglican Church'. The Anglican Diocese of Kimberley and Kuruman was, according to Horn, to pay the nominal sum of R1,00 for the mission church. At that point the church was still legally the joint property of myself, two elderly aunts and a string of cousins. In a subsequent letter, I pointed out to Horn that these relatives were scattered throughout South Africa, England and Ireland. As the transaction was clearly a mere formality, I gave my tacit approval on behalf of the family. This sale presumably went through, as I have heard nothing further on the matter.

I included the above ironical twist in the terminal part of a talk entitled 'The rise and fall of the Griqua Mission Church, Campbell', presented to the Western Cape Branch of the SA Archaeological Society on 8 May 2007. I drew attention to an excellent article that had recently appeared in the magazine *Getaway* by Don Pinnock (2006), an accomplished journalist and academic, on the historic Griqua migration wherein he mentions, in passing, that he travelled through Campbell 'where I nosed around a little church in which the missionary explorer David Livingstone once preach-

ed'. No mention of the true history of the church, or of the fact that it was a replica. And the 'Livingstone Myth' was arising once again. Was the true information even available to Pinnock as a 'tourist'?

In the audience at the lecture was Mariette Pitlo, who took it upon herself to write a letter to *Getaway* lamenting the fact that 'the ruins [sic] of the old building have been obliterated' and that 'the spirituality of the place has no doubt disappeared ... There is no longer anything there that connects it to all the various generations of Koks and Waterboers' (Pitlo 2007). The editors of *Getaway* chose to place a photograph alongside Pitlo's letter. Was it a picture of the replica mission church? Not at all – it was a picture of the so-called 'Rooidak' Dutch Reformed church of far more recent vintage and totally irrelevant. One won-



*The replica of the mission church in 2010
(photo courtesy of David Morris)*

ders if Pinnock had even bothered to take a photograph of the replica.

I write this piece with no malice, but only to bring the story of the tragedy of the Griqua Mission Church to a close and place it in the public domain. The church was demolished illegally and with no thought for the preservation of the integrity of that part of the Campbell Griqua heritage, as Pitlo points out. One can only hope that this fiasco will be an object lesson to those entrusted with the preservation of our fragile heritage.

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RIO LOCO: SOUTHERN AFRICAN ARCHAEOLOGY IN TOULOUSE, FRANCE

Karim Sadr

In this year of the World Cup, the 16th edition of Rio Loco, the Toulouse city festival, was dedicated to South African art, literature, poetry, music, history and archaeology. This annual showcase of cultural diversity organised by the Toulouse municipality is each year dedicated to a different nation, and has attracted over a million visitors and 2 500 artists from 24 countries over the past decade. This year, thanks to the efforts of Drs Nicolas Teyssandier and Francois Bon from the University of Toulouse-Le Mirail (and both honorary research fellows in the School of Geography, Archaeology and Environmental Studies at Wits University), the Rio Loco organisers agreed to include four evening lectures and a book fair on South African archaeology to link the arts and history of the rainbow nation for an audience eager to know more about the world cup host country.

Over the course of the festival (17-21 June), Dr Jean-Loic le Quellec kicked off the lecture series with a talk around his new book on the White Lady of the Brandberg, the Abbe Breuil and the politics of archaeological interpretations in South Africa during the first half of the 20th century. Next, Dr Francois-Xavier Fauvelle-Aymar presented an overview of his 2006 book on South Africa from first European contact to the present, providing a clear historical context for the iconic events and personalities from South Africa familiar to most Europeans. Both Drs Le Quellec and Fauvelle-Aymar have lived and worked for several years in Johannesburg in their capacity as CNRS researcher directors attached to the French Institute in South Africa (IFAS). They are also both honorary research fellows in GAES at Wits University.

Dr Francois Bon followed these lectures with a presentation on the origins of human modernity and symbolic behaviour as evidenced in the recent Middle Stone Age archaeological discoveries in the sub-continent. Dr Bon is a specialist in stone tool technology and the transition from the middle to upper Palaeolithic in Europe, and has helped train several Wits archaeology students in fieldwork techniques at his site Regismont. He also participated in a number of research projects in the Western Cape and helped present a lithic technology workshop at Wits in 2006. I presented the last lecture in the series, speaking about the origins of food production in southern Africa and the question of whether a Neolithic period exists in Southern Africa.

In the context of such a large, colourful, multi-facetted,

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rich and exciting open air festival, it was very gratifying to see that all the talks were attended by engaged and appreciative (even if relatively small) audiences. Attracting even a dozen or two listeners to the archaeology tent was no small honour, considering that other attractions nearby included Abdullah Ibrahim, Hugh Masakela, Johnny Clegg, the Mahotella Queens, Freshlyground and many other well-known South African performers. It was also gratifying to hear that the festival organisers considered the archaeological presentations a success and plan to make such juxtapositions between arts and culture, popular and academic discourse, a regular feature of Rio Loco festivals. The presentations on the archaeology and history of southern Africa at Rio Loco were made possible by the generous assistance of the Toulouse municipality, the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), and IFAS.



Professor Karim Sadr presenting the fourth archaeological lecture at the Rio Loco festival in Toulouse, France

ARCHAEOLOGY IN BRIEF

Statues older, more numerous than terracotta warriors found in Hunan. A cache of ancient stone statues outnumbering the Qin Terracotta Warriors has been found in the Nanling Mountains near Yongzhou City. There are over 5 000 vivid statues on the ground and a large number buried about 2 m below ground at the Guizai Mountain site, which covers an area of 15 000 m². The statues portray civil officials, military officers, pregnant women and a variety of common soldiers. Their height ranges from 30 cm to 100 cm. Over 90 percent of the statues were carved before the Qin Dynasty, some 30 per cent as long as 5 000 years ago. Archaeologists deduce that Guizai Mountain was a large altar, with the statues having a primitive sacrificial or commemorative meaning.

People's Daily Online, 18/08/10

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MINING IN THE MAPUNGBWE AREA CEASES – FOR NOW

The fight to protect the Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape (MCL) and its surrounding area from coal mining was taken to the next level in early August with a number of actions being taken by civil society and one government department.

On 3 August a coalition of civil society organisations concerned about the recent granting of a mining right to Limpopo Coal by the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR) launched interdict proceedings against the company and the Minister of Mineral Resources. Limpopo Coal is a subsidiary of the Australian mining company Coal of Africa (CoAL). The applicants include the Mapungubwe Action Group, the Endangered Wildlife Trust, the Association of Southern African Professional Archaeologists, the Peace Parks Foundation, World Wide Fund for Nature South Africa, BirdLife South Africa and the Wilderness Foundation South Africa. These applicants are all concerned with the protection and maintenance of the environmental integrity of the area in and around Mapungubwe.

The interdict application arises from the granting of a mining right to construct and operate an open-cast and underground coal mine, known as the Vele Colliery, and the associated approval of the Environmental Management Programme (EMP) by the DMR. Much of the applicants' concern relates to the location of the colliery and the impact that the mining operations will have on the unique and sensitive landscape within which the mining area falls. The Vele mining area is situated on 8 500 ha and lies less than 6 km from the border of Mapungubwe National Park and is adjacent to the MCL, which was recognised as a Unesco World Heritage Site in 2003. The area is a national treasure given its enormous historical and archaeological significance, as well as the abundant biodiversity that exists in this ecologically sensitive landscape. The MCL was the original location of far-reaching cultural and social changes in southern Africa between AD 900 and 1300, and its remains are a remarkably complete testimony of the largest kingdom in the African sub-continent.

The significance of the area has been recognised by South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana. The Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservation Area was established by means of a Memorandum of Understanding between the three governments in June 2006. In terms of this agreement, the governments commit to attempting to establish a Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA) that includes Mapungubwe National Park and the core area properties. It was renamed the Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservation Area in June 2009. Although the proposed mining area is not within the proposed Greater Mapungubwe TFCA, it is almost surrounded by it. The entire northern border of the mining area along the

Limpopo River is directly adjacent to the Zimbabwean portion of the TFCA.

The applicants have lodged internal appeals against both the decision to grant the mining right and the decision to approve the EMP. These appeals are pending and at the time of the interdict application no answering papers had been received. The applicants therefore launched the application in an attempt to prevent further destruction of the area while the legal disputes are pending.

In the interim, on 5 August, the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) confirmed that its Environmental Management Inspectorate, or' as they are more commonly known, 'the Green Scorpions', issued a Compliance Notice to CoAL to cease with activities that are in contravention of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA). CoAL is said to have commenced with activities listed in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations promulgated in terms of NEMA without the required prior environmental authorisation.

These activities include the construction of roads, the above-ground storage of dangerous goods, activities within the 1:10 flood line of the Limpopo River, the construction of a sludge dam and the installation of a water pipeline network. The compliance notice instructs CoAL to cease all construction related activities on the access roads and roads falling within, and outside the mining right area within 24 hours of issuance of the notice. The notice further stipulates that all the other activities listed above, including the construction of pipelines, storage facilities and the dam, and the removal of vegetation must cease in time frames ranging from 24 hours to three days on receipt of the notice. The mine is also not permitted to increase the current development footprint.

This coal mine is of grave concern to the civil society organisations because of their concerns for the sensitive landscapes in and around the mining area; the statutory prohibition against mining on those portions of the mining area that have been proclaimed nature reserves; the archaeological and other heritage resources affected by the mining; the impact on biodiversity and specifically on habitat, ecosystems and various species in the mining area; the impact on the quantity and quality of water resources; the noise and dust pollution that will be caused by mining; and the impact on socio-economic conditions in the area. Furthermore, concern has been raised for the failure of the EMP approval process to comply with the public consultation required in terms of NEMA in that relevant persons and communities, including affected parties in Zimbabwe and Botswana, which border this mine, were either ignored or their specific concerns ignored, or they were not consulted at all when they should have been.

Of significance are the concerns that this mine will result in irreparable damage to the archaeological and palaeontological heritage resources that make this region so unique. The open-cast activities will, according to the EMP itself, result in the 'total destruction' of any surface and sub-surface heritage resources and palaeontological remains that might exist on the land in question, and the head of the decline shaft for the underground section appears to be at or very near a concentration of at least four heritage sites identified as a 'an extended Middle Iron Age site'. Rock art experts feel that the area has been insufficiently surveyed and that the potential impact of dust, vibrations and a change in the water table on rock art in the surrounding area has not been dealt with adequately. The Mapungubwe area is one of only a handful of places in sub-Saharan Africa where rock paintings and rock engravings co-occur in the same landscape.

At the time of writing (11/08/10) CoAL had already ceased much of its activity on the Vele site, which offered welcome, but possibly only temporary relief from the ongoing destruction of this site. The Green Scorpions will be monitoring the colliery, as failure to comply with the instructions in the notice would result in further charges to the criminal investigation that is already underway. Commencement of an EIA-listed activity without an environmental authorisation constitutes an offence for which the penalty is a fine not exceeding R5 million or imprisonment for a period not exceeding 10 years, or both.

The damage done to this site on a daily basis over the past few months is largely irreversible. The applicants fully support the action taken by the DEA to enforce the regulations under NEMA and to demonstrate that their role as custodians of South Africa's precious natural and cultural heritage is not to be taken lightly.

The significance of Mapungubwe

A millennium ago, the amazing Kingdom of Mapungubwe existed in the northern corner of South Africa. It comprised a sophisticated state system, with highly developed agriculture, mining and metallurgy industries. The kingdom traded with countries as far afield as China. According to the Archaeology Department at the University of the Witwatersrand, Mapungubwe represented 'the most complex society in Southern Africa'. It is reputed to be the origin of the people, culture and foundation for the achievements of Great Zimbabwe.

Mapungubwe Hill is a sandstone hill located on a mudstone deposit in the northern part of the Limpopo province, known for its arid subtropical climate and erratic summer rains. Out of this seeming barrenness, there blossomed the complex and highly developed state and culture, centred around a thriving town built on and around Mapungubwe Hill, which served as the capital of the ancient Mapungubwe Kingdom.

South Africa has a powerful suite of environmental legislation that is too often flouted in the face of short-term commercial gain and at the cost of the right of future generations to also benefit from South Africa's remarkable natural wealth.

Visit www.savemapungubwe.org.za and www.ewt.org.za for a copy of the compliance notice, photographs and information on how you can help.

Edited version of a media release issued on 11 August 2010



ARCHAEOLOGY IN BRIEF

First beehives from Biblical Israel discovered. Beehives from ancient Israel 3 000 years ago appear to be the oldest evidence for beekeeping ever found. Archaeologists identified the remains of honeybees inside about 30 clay cylinders thought to have been used as beehives in the Jordan valley. 'Although texts and wall paintings suggest that bees were kept in the ancient Near East for the production of precious wax and honey, archaeological evidence for beekeeping has never been found,' Hebrew University of Jerusalem researchers reported in the June 8 issue of *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. The hives have a small hole on one side for the bees to come and go, and a lid on the other side for the beekeeper to use to access the honeycomb. Three rows of hives were found in a courtyard of a large complex. *LiveScience, 09/06/10*

Artefacts hint at earliest Neanderthals in Britain. Archaeologists have found what they say is the earliest evidence of Neanderthals living in Britain. A flint hand tool and a waste flake unearthed in Dartford, Kent, have been dated to 110 000 years ago. The finds push back the presence of Neanderthals in Britain by 40 000 years or more, said Dr Francis Wenban-Smith from Southampton University. A majority of researchers believe Britain was uninhabited by humans at the time the flint tools were made. An absence of archaeological evidence suggests people abandoned this land between 160 000 to 200 000 years ago and 65 000 years ago. The finds come from when sea levels were dropping after a period when they were high enough to make the English Channel impassable. Neanderthals inhabited northern France at this time. *BBC News, 01/06/10*

THE LOW-DOWN ON RESEARCH AT HADAR IN ETHIOPIA'S DESOLATE AFAR REGION

Anna Steyn

In September/October last year, Reinoud Boers of the Trans-Vaal Branch of the SA Archaeological Society (ArchSoc) organised a second tour to Ethiopia. After 12 days touring the Ethiopian plateau in the north-west of the country, the tour party split at Lalibela and eight participants continued by 4x4s into the Great Rift Valley, the Afar region and the ancient Muslim city of Harar in the east of Ethiopia.

The first objective in the barren Afar was the Hadar valley, the palaeo-anthropological site where in 1974 Don Johanson, then of the University of California, Berkley, discovered the 3,2 million-year-old (myo) *Australopithecus afarensis* fossil, commonly known as Lucy or, in Ethiopia, Dinknesh (Thou Art Wonderful). This was Africa's and the world's oldest and most complete hominid skeleton find at that time and caused great excitement.

Before the group's departure an unsuccessful attempt had been made to contact Professor Bill Kimble of Arizona State University. When we reached the village where we were picking up our armed guards for going off-road, we were delighted to hear that Prof. Kimble had arrived on site a couple of days before with a party of palaeontologists and 15 students for the university's annual field school. We set off through an inhospitable terrain with hardly a blade of grass, but some tree cover, to the site near the Awash River.

Prof. Bill Kimble was obviously somewhat taken aback by the sudden arrival of eight 'tourists' at his neat research base in an area where visitors were hardly expected. But when he heard of our connection with ArchSoc and our specific interest in the Hadar site, he welcomed us warmly and introduced us to his Arizona State University colleagues, Dr Kay Reed and Dr Chris Campisano, as well as Mohammed Amadin Hayera, government representative of Afar National Regional State and of its Culture, Tourism and Information Bureau. The researchers and students were working in a large tent in which the day's finds were laid out on long tables for analysis and cataloguing.

Prof. Kimble then invited us into the dining tent, offered refreshments and spent 90 minutes talking to us about Lucy, Hadar and the research being done. He emphasised that not only was the Hadar region a research area of international significance, it was also an important Ethiopian research resource and training ground. In addition, it held tourism potential, which had become a regional and federal priority. This

emphasised the need to open Hadar to visitors in a responsible way. To this end there was close co-operation between the research team and Ethiopian authorities, with scholars and government representatives participating in field research and the development of a conservation plan that would ensure the long-term integrity of the site.



*Lucy roamed this harsh Hadar countryside
(photo Bianca Berg-Mathiassen)*

Prof. Kimble told us that researchers had worked in Afar from 1972. Although there were years of interruption during the rule of the Derg regime under Mengistu from 1976 to 1991, when it was difficult for outside researchers to work in Ethiopia, initiatives were resumed in the 1990s and had continued since then. The discovery of Lucy by Don Johanson, the co-director of the International Afar Research Foundation, brought to light the oldest evidence of human evolution. She put Ethiopia on the palaeo-anthropology map and opened up the region to research. *Australopithecus afarensis* was recognised as belonging to a distinct new species, whose age ranged from 3,7 myo at the site of Laetoli near Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania, to 3,2 myo at Hadar.

Lucy became an icon for palaeo-anthropology in Africa. But she did not tell us all we wanted to know, Prof. Kimble said. We knew from Lucy, as was also already known from much earlier finds in South Africa at, for example, Sterkfontein and Swartkrans that these early hominids were walking much like we do, but that they were still very ape-like generically. So they were a sort of mix, with advanced bipedal locomotion, but with primitive teeth and jaws, and small brains. However, the Lucy fossil had little of the skull preserved. When she was discovered, her bones

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were eroding off a slope, in silts and sands that were characteristic of the area. But much of her skull had become fragile, had broken up and had been washed away. So while there were many parts of her skeleton, her skull was not well presented.

The researchers had two main goals from since the early 1990s. First, they wished to expand the knowledge about the *Australopithecus afarensis* skull to try and make scientific inferences about the hominids' brain evolution, diet and jaw architecture. Secondly, the aim was to expand the time horizon at the Hadar site over which this primitive species was represented. In the 1970s, the oldest examples at Hadar were from the beds that surrounded the current research camp, dating to about 3,4 million years. Higher up the sequence of rocks, the beds were of the Lucy age, about 3,2 myo. But during the 1990s researchers also wanted to get to know what happened to Lucy's species and what occurred in the Afar after Lucy. They expanded their search to two areas quite a few kilometres away.

Bill Kimble told us that currently they were looking at areas of known age and mostly of known content, and resurveying them by walking up the beds to get a final assessment of their content and potential for the conservation project. He then touched on specific questions by participants.



Budding palaeo-anthropologists from Arizona State University discussing and identifying the morning's finds (photo Leigh Voigt)

About the sediments: Sediments such as are found at Hadar are often not horizontal. They may have been deposited in horizontal layers, but tectonic activity, which is common in the Rift Valley, can often take these beds and tilt them this way or that, and as a result one has different age beds exposed in different places in a given area. The beds here tip to the north-east two to three degrees off the horizontal. This means that as one moves towards the Awash River and across, they get older, perhaps 3,5 million years.

Kimble's Ethiopian colleague, Dr Serasanyum Segid, works across the river at a site called Da Kika. A couple of years ago he published his fantastic find of two infant skeletons in *Nature*.

'Just this morning we had our excursion and discovered that there were older beds lying on the Lucy beds. The Lucy beds have a passage in time between 3,4 and 3,0 million, and at 2,95 million there occurs an observable break in the sedimentation. What had happened here is that, again, either due to a combination of global climate and/or tectonic activity, the type of deposition changed and very high activity streams were coming from the Ethiopian highlands as they were then developing, coming in here with these big boulder-strewn stream channels and literally eroding out previously deposited sediment, literally just slicing it with very high energy. You can see that in the sequence. All of a sudden from the horizontal layers you get these layers of big cobbles and you have lost about half a million years in time. You jump from 2,95 million to about 2,3 million in one step, so to speak,' Kimble said.

Where Lucy was found: Lucy's fossilised remains occurred in an ancient stream channel that formed part of a system of broader streams. Her bones came from a river-deposited sandstone layer and her remains formed part of a higher sandy deposit that forms part of a multi-storied sand layer as often occurs

along riverbeds. In the deposits we today recognise sand layers as representing the more rapid flow of rivers, while clays represent the silting that occurs as smaller particles settle out in lake deposits. The context in which Lucy was found was not heavily cemented and the bone material was brittle and had started to spread downhill.

Lucy's world and the circumstances of the Lucy find:

At 3,0 to 3,5 million years ago (mya) Lucy lived in a well-watered, densely forested landscape that formed part of a major river system where streams came down from the highlands and then slowed down as they meandered and moved across the flat featureless flood plain, eventually draining into a big lake basin 15 km to the east. The broad and diverse environment in which Lucy and her people lived experienced only limited

seasonal fluctuations. Lucy and her family could, therefore, search for food in the heavily forested riverbeds, as well as in the higher lying, more open surrounds, as could the wide range of creatures with which they shared this landscape. The day Lucy died she was walking upright next to a small stream in the floodplain. While we do not have clarity on the circumstances of Lucy's death, the carnivore tooth mark on her hip provides some evidence of scavenging.



(Fltr) Daniel Tesfaye, our national guide, Mohammed Amadin Hayera, representative of Afar State, Prof. Bill Kimble of Arizona State University, and Reinoud Boers, who put the tour together (photo Jo de Beer)

Stone tools at Hadar: At 2,3 mya we have very primitive stone tools, very similar to the ones Dr Seleshi Semaw has over in the Goner region. They are a little younger than his, but we also have a jaw of early homo associated with them, and those were found in 1994. Another Ethiopian scholar is currently working with her students in this area.

Recording the finds: In recent years scientific questions have become more refined and technologically advanced. The research is supported by advanced computer technology and finds are directly captured by Garmin GPS computers, scanned, bar-coded and the data directly transferred by satellite. This system provides immediate bar-coded printouts and spread sheets with co-ordinates of the locality of each find.

Concerning conservation: Erosion happens very slowly [in the Afar] since the annual rainfall is very low, closer to 200 mm than 300 mm. The surface has, therefore, not changed too much. We intend to return only when the surface had been opened up more by rain. Yet we have local Afar guides who will scout and who will alert us when new fossils have been exposed. Conservation has become an integral part and a specific area of focus. A shift has, furthermore, taken place in the sense that excursions have become part of a field school that includes course work in palaeontology, geology and early human evolution and provides a full semester's credits to students. We are, in addition, including in the field school a component that focuses on a conservation plan.

We are building up a group of Ethiopian scholars and knowledgeable government representatives who will be responsible for this work. Mohammed Hayera is himself becoming a specialist, and has been working here with us for ten years, while a representative of

the [Federal] Ministry of Culture and Tourism is also a student this year. The Hadar project is becoming narrow and we now have to think for the long-term future, because these beds here will, of course, long after we all have become fossilised, continue to yield the remains of early humans and there must be in Ethiopia an infrastructure and trained manpower to ensure the security of the site and to guarantee its integrity long into the future.


We will leave behind a basic data base of all the observations of the 30 or so years of work, and that is partly why we are this year running computers out here. We record information immediately and upload it by satellite to a remote site where everything can be integrated and recorded, coming right from the

spot of discovery. That system will be available here to the Ethiopian Government to draw from for the future.

The research base and farewell

Prof. Kimble subsequently took us around the base, showing us the kitchen (about 30 Ethiopians work with the research team, so food preparation is ongoing), the water tank system, the tented accommodation area and the 'medical station', a place under a shady tree where a few students were already being cared for. After this fascinating introduction to the activities at Hadar, Mr Mohammed Hayera bade us farewell with the following message:

'I want to say thank you to everybody that has been involved in the Hadar project over the last 37 years. Through your contribution, hard work and dedication Hadar has become a different world. Sometimes I think I am in another world, because now when I look I can see back to past landscapes. So I give a message to preserve our resources so that Africa should not lose our valuable heritage. I want to emphasise two things: Firstly, that it is very important to understand about preserving the context which archaeological and palaeontological finds are made and, secondly, that it is important to include local people in projects and to provide them with the tools and understanding of the significance of context. We need to connect and communicate and to support each other so we will get better results. The visit of your group from the South African Archaeological Society is greatly appreciated and I ask you to take home my greetings to your colleagues.'

[Mr Mohammed Amadin Hayera may be contacted at PO Box 46, Semera, Afar, Ethiopia.] 

ARCHAEOLOGY IN AFRICA

Sibudu cave faces threat from potential housing development

Sibudu Cave, which together with Blombos Cave and Pinnacle Point is one South Africa's most significant sites to be excavated currently, is facing threat from a potential housing development. The KwaDukuza municipality has proposed that 1 000 low-cost houses be built a mere 200 m from the cave. The announcement coincides with the discovery of stone artefacts heralded internationally as a possible game changer in the understanding of the hunting and cognitive abilities of early humans.

'Unless there is very serious protection of the site, the site will be destroyed,' said research team leader, Prof. Lyn Wadley from Wits University. Archaeological sites are extremely delicate, she said, emphasising that other South African research sites have been destroyed under similar development conditions. 'The minute you bring people into such a sensitive area, it only takes one person on a weekend to destroy 100 000 years of archaeological evidence,' said Dr Marlize Lombard, anthropology lecturer and researcher at the University of Johannesburg. Wadley is currently in consultation with the municipality to try and find a resolution to the proposal.

Sibudu Cave, near Ballito, was uncovered as a research site 10 years ago and between five and 10 scientific papers a year have been published based on findings there. The site's dry conditions and suitable soil chemistry have allowed artefacts to be excellently preserved. Evidence dating back as far as 80 000 years has already been recovered from Sibudu. The finding of the stone arrow points with micro residues of blood and bone on the points is particularly significant as the tools are a further indication of human cognitive ability at the time. 'Until 10 years ago, people thought complex technologies such as the bow and arrow were discovered in Europe only 20 000 to 30 000 years ago,' said Lombard.

Damage and impact to the shape of the points showed they were the tips of projectiles, not hand-held spears. Traces of a glue-like, plant-based resin were also found on the arrow heads, indicating that they were glued to a handle or shaft. 'Hunting with a bow and arrow requires intricate multi-staged planning, material collection and tool preparation, and implies a range of innovative social and communication skills,' wrote the researchers in their recently

published paper in *Antiquity*. The plan is to continue investigating even older technologies and assess how they can help in understanding when humans started thinking as we currently do. *Natal Witness, 31/08/10*

Sibudu Stone Age ochre, glue 'factory'

A once-thriving 58 000-year-old ochre powder production site has just been discovered at the large Sibudu rock shelter near Stanger in KwaZulu-Natal. The discovery offers a glimpse of what early humans valued and used in their everyday lives. The find, which will be described in the *Journal of Archaeological Science*, also marks the first time that any Stone Age site has yielded evidence for ochre powder processing on cemented hearths – an innovation for the period. A clever caveman must have figured out that white ash from hearths can cement and become rock hard, providing a sturdy work surface.

'Ochre occurs in a range of colours that includes orange, red, yellow, brown and shades of these colours,' said project leader Lyn Wadley of the University of the Witwatersrand. 'Yellow and brown ochre can be transformed to red by heating them at temperatures as low as 250 °C. Ochre has been found on bone awl tools and was probably used for working leather, so it is possible that the ancients sported colourful leather clothing and other leather goods. Ochre could also have been used as body paint and makeup, as a preservative and as a medicinal component.

Ochre is derived from naturally tinted clay that contains mineral oxides. In addition to colouring objects, it makes a compound adhesive when mixed with other ingredients, such as plant gum and animal fat. 'This glue would have attached stone spear or arrowheads to hafts, or blades to handles for cutting tools,' Wadley explained.

The Sibudu ochre site consists of four cemented hearths containing the ochre powder. These workstations could have held grindstones and/or served as storage receptacles for the powder, according to Wadley, who has excavated about 8 000 pieces of ochre at the site. She believes the natural material was collected less than a kilometre away from the site.

Francesco d'Errico, director of research at the National Centre of Scientific Research at the University of Bordeaux, said pigment material is found in bits and pieces at various early sites. However, not much had been known about how it was processed and used. Based on the nature of the cemented ash and the geology of the Sibudu site, d'Errico believes that people 58 000 years ago intended to produce large quantities of red pigment in a short time frame. He now thinks ochre pigment was a 'fundamental constituent of Middle Stone Age culture'. *Discovery News, 3/06/10*

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BOOK REVIEWS

Rusch, N and Parkington, J. *San Rock Engravings: Marking the Karoo Landscape*. June 2010. Cape Town: Random House Struik. 128 pp. Price R210.

The vast spaces of the Karoo abound with images pecked, incised or engraved into rock surfaces. These landscape markings were created by San hunter-gatherers who roamed this land in search of sustenance and water. Their engravings most commonly depict animals such as eland, quagga and elephant, and reflect, in fascinating and unusual ways, the relationship of the San to the harsh environment of the Karoo.


John Parkington, Professor of Archaeology at the University of Cape Town, is well known to ArchSoc members for his books *The Mantis, the Eland and the Hunter, Cederberg Rock Paintings, Shorelines, Strandlopers and Shell Middens*, and, most recently, *Karoo Rock Engravings*. He has had a lifelong research interest in southern African hunters and gatherers. Neil Rusch is an independent publisher, writer and photographer, whose interest in rock art has remained constant throughout his career.

Together they have published this delightful small coffee-table book, excellently designed and produced, that explores the visual legacy of the San, the signs they left and the meanings that could be attached to them. Rusch' superb photos, which dominate the book, are complimented by Parkington's thought-provoking text – together they bring to life these enigmatic markings and the way of life of their creators. The places featured are some of those referred to by the /Xam detainees at Cape Town's Breakwater Prison during their interviews with philologist Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd – Bitterpits, Springbok Oog, Varskans and the *Brinkkoppe*. The second part of the book covers the imagery of the rock art: the human figures, the animals, the therianthropes and the schematics, and the possible meaning of it all. This is a superb and very handy overview of some of the Karoo's rock art. *Reinoud Boers*

VOC shipwrecks in Table Bay

Werz, Bruno. 2010. *The Shipwrecks of the Oosterland and Waddinxveen: Table Bay, 1697*. E-book, 2010. Zulu Planet Publishers, www.zuluplanet.com.

The English translation of Bruno Werz' book on two wrecks of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), which was previously published in Dutch, is now available as an E-book. The book describes the historical background of the *Oosterland* and *Waddinxveen*, and their underwater excavation in Table Bay during the 1990s, and includes analyses of

the recovered material. This excavation project represents the first scientific maritime archaeological project in Southern Africa. The preface to the book is by ex-State President FW de Klerk. 

ARCHSOC LAUNCHES ITS OWN WEBSITE

The South African Archaeological Society has launched its new website. The website will go live in September 2010 at www.archaeologysa.co.za.

Anyone will be able to log on and learn about the Society, find out what activities are being offered by its branches, read back issues of *The Digging Stick* and *Artefacts*, see the contents pages of all the *South African Archaeological Bulletins* and the *Goodwin Series* from 1945 to the present, retrieve articles published up to three years ago by linking to JSTOR, using a password that members only can receive on request from the Secretary, and lots, lots more. New members will be able to join the Society online, frequently asked questions are answered, and you can even ask new questions and get new answers.

We look forward to your feedback and ideas for further information you think we could include. Thanks to all branch committee members, council members, the editors of our publications and FLOW Communications for their co-operation and enthusiasm in putting the website together.

Comments can be sent via the website, or directly to archsoc@iziko.org.za.

ARCHAEOLOGY IN BRIEF

French farmers civilised Britain. Researchers have discovered that 6 000 years ago, French farmers crossed the English Channel and civilised their neighbours, who at the time were still running around with spears. Academics from the University of British Columbia in Canada have studied ancient bones, wood and cereal grains from that period and discovered that the population of Britain at the time more than quadrupled in just 400 years. This explosion was so quick it could not have evolved from the indigenous hunter-gatherer communities and the only conclusion is that agriculture and people came from Brittany in north-west France. Mark Collard and Simon Fraser, who reported their findings in *New Scientist*, believe this first wave was joined a 100 years later by a second that settled in Scotland. They say that without the arrival of the French, the British may have continued as hunter-gatherers for hundreds of years instead of adopting the agricultural innovations of their Gallic neighbours. *The Telegraph, 03/12/2009*

WORLD ARCHAEOLOGY

Iranian ban on archaeological information

The Circle of Ancient Iranian Studies (CAIS) reports that since March 2009 Iranian archaeologists are banned from giving interviews or reveal any information about the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department (HCHTHD), or the status of Iranian archaeology. By implementing such a ban the theocratic-totalitarian regime has closed the only reliable avenue for obtaining accurate information about the status of archaeological discoveries and the cultural treasures recovered.

It also reports that by some reports, the number of priceless artefacts passed to the Iranian museums by ICHTHO, especially those made of precious metals, has fallen drastically. The illicit antiquities trade and the selling of Iranian historical relics to European markets and private collectors worldwide has become one of the most lucrative revenues for the ruling clerics and their families. Since the Islamic regime came to power in 1979, not only the smuggling and looting of Iranian art and antiquity, but the deliberate destruction of mainly Iran's pre-Islamic heritage has been systematic and widespread. The destruction has been increased since Mahmood Ahmadinajad's appointment as the president.

Cais-soas, 27/07/10

Etruscan house reveals ancient domestic life

Italian archaeologists have discovered the first-ever intact Etruscan house, complete with furniture, bricks and terracotta tiles identical to the ones still used in Tuscany today. The 2 400-year-old building was unearthed at Vetulonia, some 190 km north of Rome. Constructed in the Hellenistic period between the third and first century BC, the 'domus' consisted of a basement to store foodstuffs and a residential area where the wealthy owner lived with his family. Only a storage room has been brought to light to date.

Paintings and artefacts found in burial chambers have so far provided the best glimpses into the Etruscan world. Rising from prehistory around 900 BC, these fun-loving and sensuous people forged Italy's most sophisticated civilisation before the Romans. First defeated by the Romans in the 4th century BC, the Etruscans became Roman citizens in 90 BC, when their culture virtually vanished. They left no literature to document their society. Just a few traces of their language survive. Only the richly decorated tombs they left behind have provided clues to the civilisation.

The researchers believe that the room featured an 'Etruscan loft' made from wood and clay, with wooden supports. Among the building materials, the team unearthed several pipe-shaped clay bricks, placed on top of the dry stone walls to support the wooden beams of the roof, which was covered with modern-looking terracotta tiles.

Discovery News, 04/06/10

The South African Archaeological Society

This is the society for members of the public and professionals who have an interest in archaeology and related fields such as palaeontology, geology and history. Four branches serve the interests of members. They arrange regular lectures and field excursions guided by experts, annual and occasional symposia, and longer southern African and international archaeological tours.

The Society was founded in 1945 to promote archaeology through research, education and publication. It is a non-profit organization – Registration No. 024-893-NPO.

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The Society produces the following publications:

- South African Archaeological Bulletin**, a scientific publication of current research in southern Africa – twice a year
- The Digging Stick**, the Society's general interest magazine – three issues a year
- Goodwin Series**, an occasional publication on a specific field of archaeological interest

Subscription rates for 2010 are as follows: Individuals: Single – R230; Joint/Family – R245; Junior membership – R160; Africa ordinary – R250; Overseas ordinary – R450*. Institutions: Local and African – R450; Overseas – R850*. [* Plus R100 bank charges]

The Digging Stick

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