

THE DIGGING STICK

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FOSSIL AT FIFTY ANNIVERSARY YEAR OF THE DISCOVERY OF MRS PLES*

"I have seen many interesting sights in my long life, but this was the most thrilling in my experience". So remarked Dr Robert Broom of the moments that day, 18 April 1947, when a remarkable specimen of *Plesianthropus* ("almost human") was revealed in the Sterkfontein breccia. News of the discovery, a fossil exposed by a dynamite charge in the Sterkfontein Caves near Krugersdorp south west of Pretoria, would echo around the world for years to come.

"Mrs Ples", the nickname given to the fossil skull, is believed to represent a distant rela-

tive of *Homo sapiens*. The creature is reckoned to have lived on the South African



highveld some 2,5 million years ago. Today scientists call Mrs Ples *Australopithecus africanus*, with Broom's great find remaining the most complete skull of the species.

Having joined the staff of the Transvaal Museum in 1934, Broom, a palaeontologist who had worked on 250 million year old fossils of Karoo mammal-like reptiles - including ancestors of all living mammals - was inspired by the earlier 1924 Taung child discovery. This first known skull of the species *Australopithecus africanus*, found in the lime mine at Buxton, Taung, now North West Province, was described by Professor Raymond Dart of the University of the Witwatersrand. Dart claimed that the "Taung baby" was a hominid, distantly connected to *Homo sapiens*. Broom hoped to find the remains of an adult *Australopithecus*, and his attention was soon drawn to the limestone workings in the Sterkfontein valley.

In August 1936 quarry manager G.W. Barlow handed to Broom an endocranial cast which, as he later recounted, "was clearly the anterior two thirds of the brain-cast of an anthropoid ape or ape-man, and in perfect condition. It had been blasted out that morning."

Further finds were made, but mining halted shortly before the outbreak of World War 2.

After the war General Jan Smuts, Prime Minister, promised financial support from the government if Dr Robert Broom would continue fieldwork to find more "missing links". The search recommenced on 1 April 1947, close to where the first skull had been found, with the team augmented by John T. Robinson. Important fossil finds were made in the first week, but the most thrilling was revealed following that strategic dynamite charge of 18 April.

"When the smoke of the blast blew away," Broom recalled, "we found that a beautiful skull had been broken in two. The outer part of the rock had the top of the skull and all the lower half was exposed in the wall. As the top

of the skull had been split off we could see into the brain cavity, which was lined with small lime crystals."

Fifty years on, the Transvaal Museum, where Mrs Ples and many other fossils are kept, together with other museums and institutions around South Africa, are promoting an awareness of the significance of Mrs Ples and other creatures that lived in South Africa millions of years ago. A brochure compiled to celebrate the fossil's discovery says "Mrs Ples...is one particular fossil that all South Africans can be proud of. It is part of our country's heritage, indeed an important part of world heritage."

Dr Francis Thackeray of the Transvaal Museum delivered his Presidential Address to the Palaeontological Society of Southern Africa in 1996, entitled "I have a dream" - expressing the hope that within 20 years all schools in South Africa will have a copy of Mrs Ples. Dr Thackeray, who heads the Department of Palaeontology and Palaeoenvironmental Studies at the Museum, is one of many scientists who continue the quest to understand and to increase an awareness of our country's rich fossil heritage.

AUSTRALOPITHECINES

Australopithecus africanus is the scientific name of ape-like human creatures that lived in Southern Africa about 2,5 to 3 million years ago. The first known skull of the species - that found at Taung in 1924 - represented a young child, about three years old. Dr Lee Berger and Dr Ron Clarke, of the University of the Witwatersrand, have said that a large eagle could have carried the skull to the cave where it was found more than two and a half million years later.

Since Broom's death in 1951, many further specimens of *Australopithecus africanus* have been recovered from Sterkfontein. Professor Phillip Tobias F.R.S. - who succeeded Professor Dart as Head of the Department of Anatomy, Medical School, University of the Witwatersrand - continued the excavations

that Broom began, together with his colleagues Alun Hughes and Dr Ron Clarke. These australopithecine fossils show that these creatures had small brains, similar in size to those of chimpanzees. They had the ability to walk upright, but may also have been quite agile in trees in localised forest environments.

That humans and chimpanzees had a common ancestor living in Africa more than 5 million years ago has been put forward by some scientists. Mrs Ples - who turns out from subsequent research to be a "Mr" and an adult of the same species as the Taung child - is one of the descendants of that common ancestor for humans and chimpanzees.

Another form of australopithecine, called *Paranthropus* or *Australopithecus robustus*, has been found at several sites in South Africa, including Swartkrans and Kromdraai in the Sterkfontein valley. *Australopithecus robustus* lived between 1,5 and 2 million years ago, and is believed to have become extinct between 1,5 and 1 million years ago.

Dr Lee Berger of the University of the Witwatersrand is directing excavations at many hominid sites in southern Africa, including Gladysvale, formerly investigated by Dr Broom, and now recognised as having enormous potential for palaeoanthropological research.

HOMO HABILIS

Creatures whom palaeoanthropologists call *Homo habilis* lived in the Sterkfontein Valley about 1,7 million years ago and are believed to have made tools from stones and animal bones. Burnt animal bones discovered by Dr Bob Brain, a former Director of the Transvaal Museum, suggest that *Homo habilis* was able to control the use of fire between 1 and 1,5 million years ago.

It has been pointed out that without the controlled use of fire it would not be possible to develop rocket technology, and without rockets it would not have been possible for a man to walk on the moon. "In a sense, the first small technological steps taken by our ancestors more than a million years ago in South Africa,

led to the giant leap that allowed humans to explore the moon."

Many scientists consider *Homo habilis* to be the ancestors of *Homo erectus*, a species widely distributed in Africa, Europe and Asia about 1 million years ago. According to scientific theory, *Homo sapiens*, the single species to which all humankind belongs, is a descendant of *Homo erectus*.

All three species of *Homo* are believed to have had *Australopithecus* as a distant ancestor that lived on the African continent more than 3 million years ago.

It is not only hominid fossils that have been studied at Sterkfontein Valley sites and elsewhere. For example, Dr Elisabeth Vrba, while Head of the Department of Palaeontology at the Transvaal Museum, spent many years working on fossil antelopes there. Now based at Yale University, she is researching the relationships between climatic change and human evolution.

STERKFONTein CAVES AND ROBERT BROOM MUSEUM

Visitors to the Sterkfontein Caves near Krugersdorp, open Tuesdays to Sundays, can take guided tours through the underground caves, and visit the Robert Broom Museum. There are displays on Mrs Ples and other fossils representing part of the human family.

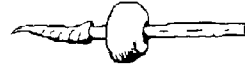
As an anniversary brochure points out, it is illegal to excavate or keep fossils without a permit from the National Monuments Council. Fossils can tell us about past environments as well as the creatures that inhabited South Africa many years ago, including those that may have been our distant ancestors. If you happen to find a fossil bone, it is always best to report it to your local museum or university.

There is a South African Society for Amateur Palaeontologists, P.O. Box 671, Silverton, 0127
Tel. 0823014085
email: doehne@global.co.za.

A range of casts of the Transvaal Museum palaeoanthropology collection is now commercially available through Waldeck Studios

Replicas, tel +27-11-7442192; fax +27-11-7405076; email: spectre@iafrica.com.

* Based on brochure *Mrs Ples - our distant ancestor?* (Thackeray, F., Mathers, C. & Reynolds, S., Transvaal Museum, 1997); *Pretoria News* insert, "Mrs Ples a link with the past", 18 April 1997.



MARY LEAKEY FUND FOR AFRICAN ARCHAEOLOGY*

Following the death of Dr Mary Leakey, palaeoanthropologist, in Nairobi on 9 December 1996, the Board of Trustees and Scientists of the L.S.B. Leakey Foundation announced the establishment of the "Mary Leakey Fund for African Archaeology".

In October 1995 Dr Mary Leakey was awarded the Mary Leakey Lifetime Achievement Award by the L.S.B. Leakey Foundation. This award recognised her tremendous scientific contributions to the field of palaeoanthropology, and established her role as consultant to the L.S.B. Leakey Foundation for East African affairs. Upon her death, any residual money was to be returned to the Foundation and these have now been used to set up the Mary Leakey Fund for African Archaeology. The Fund will benefit scientists who are pursuing interests similar to those of Mary Leakey through their work in archaeology, anthropology, palaeoanthropology, and other fields.

Mary Leakey made startling discoveries bearing on the origins and earliest developments of humans. In July 1959, at Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania, Mary Leakey found the skull of *Australopithecus boisei* (*Zinjanthropus*), a tool-using hominid who walked upright. The skull, which she reconstructed from several hundred fragments, turned out to be approximately 1,7 million years old. In 1978, six years after her husband's death, Mary Leakey made her most important discovery - the famous fossilised hominid footprint trails at Laetoli, which showed that human ancestors walked upright more than

3,5 million years ago.

Less well known is the meticulous work she undertook at many other early sites as well as Later Stone Age and Iron Age sites in the Rift Valley. In addition to major publications on East African hominid sites, and completing the detailed five-volume Olduvai series, Mary Leakey published a book on *Africa's vanishing art: the rock paintings of Tanzania*. Her autobiography, *Disclosing the past*, came out in 1984.

The Leakey family requested that donations in memory of Dr Mary Leakey be contributed to the L.S.B. Leakey Foundation's Mary Leakey Fund for African Archaeology. The Foundation was established in 1968 in honour of Mary's late husband, Louis S.B. Leakey.

"The team formed by Louis and Mary, combining his rare passion and instinct with her exceptionally meticulous research skills, was a unique partnership out of which genius was born. In this spirit the Foundation's aim is to continue the legacy of Louis and Mary by soliciting funds, and in turn, awarding grants for vital new research in all fields investigating human evolution."

* *The Leakey Foundation* press release, and obituary *The Weekly Telegraph*, 18 Dec 1996.

FURTHER COMMENTS ON MPATO SHELTER, SOUTH-WESTERN ZIMBABWE, AND THE USE OF GREEN/BLUE PIGMENTS

Ed Eastwood

I read with interest Paul Gray's article on the "Green Fish Site", Mpato shelter, Limpopo River Valley, in the November 1996 issue of *The Digging Stick*. I would like to make a few additional comments on the identification of the fish and bird depictions, and the minerals possibly used for the green/blue pigment.

The fish has been identified as having the body form and finnage of a cyprinid (large *Barbus* or

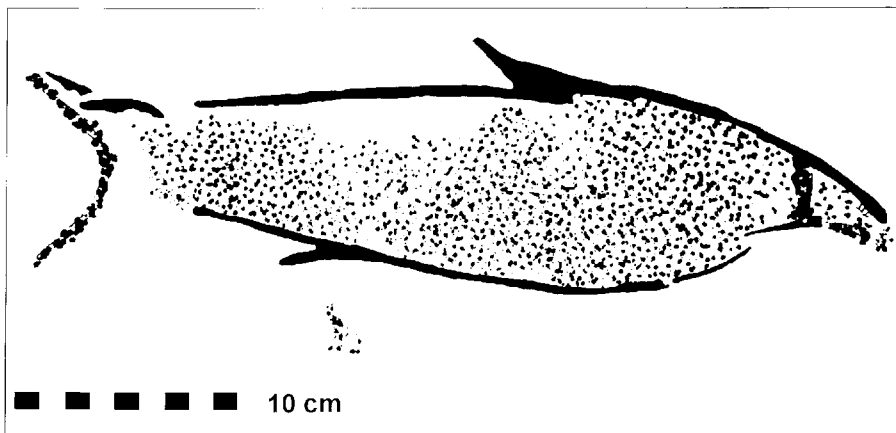


Figure 1. The Mpato fish. Black and heavy stipple represent shades of green/blue; light stipple represents light red. Scale in centimetres. (Redrawing by Vanessa Bristow).

Labeo) whereas the head and snout are in the form of a mormyrid such as *Mormyrus longirostris* (Skelton pers. comm.).

The bird is most probably a kingfisher judging by its upright posture and the body-to-bill length-ratio. The green/blue pigment of the body and red bill also suggest a kingfisher. It is not possible to be species-specific as there are no identifying characteristics.

During a visit late last year to the Maramani Communal Land, adjacent to the Shashi River, Colin Bristow of Sentinel and I visited the artist and sculptor Mrs Nyamukamadhi Khosa. She makes large sculptures of surrealistic animals from unbaked clay and colours them with various mineral materials found in the small watercourses which feed the Shashi River. Some of the wall designs in her village were painted in green/blue pigment which appeared to match the colours of the Mpato fish. We obtained a sample of the greenish material which she uses for the green/blue paints. The Centre for Geoscience analysed and identified it as heulandite with small amounts of celadonite. These minerals both occur in cavities in Karoo basalt.

Similar green/blue or green pigments are found in at least four San rock art sites in the Limpopo-Shashi confluence region. On the South African

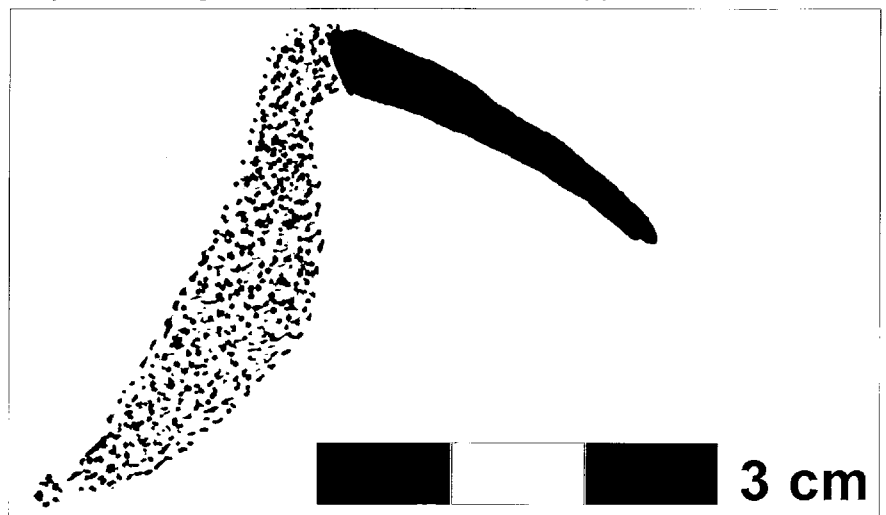


Figure 2. The bird painting. Black represents dark red, stipple represents green. Scale in centimetres.

side of the river a cyprinid fish is partially outlined in green/blue pigment. At another site in Zimbabwe, some twenty kilometres east of Mpato, a panel depicting a line of five human figures in bending-forward postures are connected by a discontinuous smear of green pigment which links the abdomen of the first figure to the spine of the second.

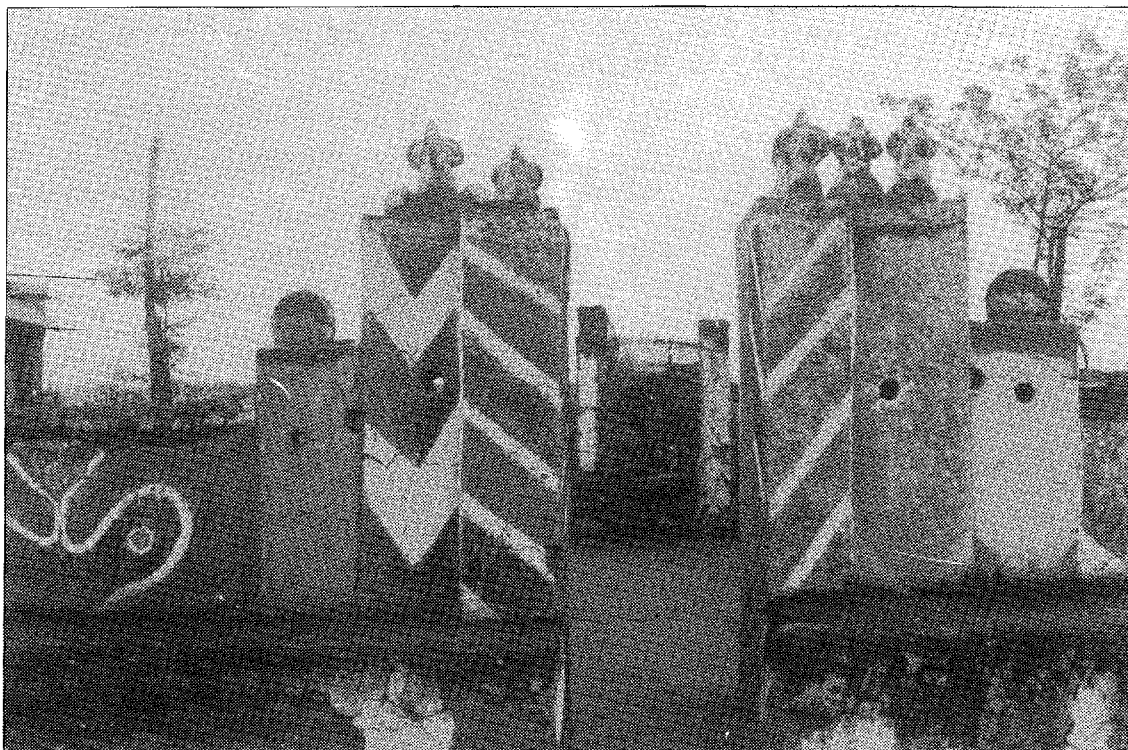


Figure 3. The entrance to Mrs Khosa's village. The outer posts of the gateway are painted blue/green and heulandite was used to prepare the paint.

In general, this pigment was very sparingly used in the San paintings, and was likely to have been a rare commodity. The significance of the subjects painted in green/blue may point to religious symbolism.

I thank Professor Paul Skelton of the J. L. B. Smith Institute of Ichthyology, Grahamstown for identifying the fish, Dr Gunther Brandi of the Centre for Geoscience, Pietersburg, for having the green mineral analysed and identified, and Colin Bristow for making the connection between Mrs Khosa's pigments and the fish paintings. I am grateful to Digby and Vanessa Bristow for introducing me to this site in 1992.

Palaeo-Art Field Services
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Louis Trichardt
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CONSERVING ROCK ART - WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Rock art is fragile and can never be repaired or replaced when damaged.

When you visit a rock art site behave as you would in an art gallery.

From National Monuments Council brochure, *Discover the world of rock art.*



CONFERENCE KHOISAN IDENTITIES AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

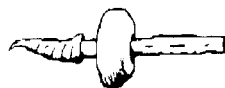
The international conference on Khoisan Identities and Cultural Heritage being held in Cape Town from 12-16 July this year, under the auspices of the University of the Western Cape, follows two earlier conferences held in Cape Town in 1991 and in Tutzing, Germany, in 1994. The organising committee is chaired by Professor Henry Bredekamp.

The programme includes:

* Open Days actively to involve communities of Khoisan origin who wish to present cultural events, debates, discussions and exhibitions.

* Academic Sessions, to be more formal, but also open to anyone interested in attending. Papers have been received from scholars throughout southern Africa as well as Europe, North America and Japan. The sessions are planned to address Khoisan ethnicity past and present; Language and identity; Khoisan cultural heritage; the Khoisan archaeological record; and Rock art as cultural heritage. For general audiences, each session to be introduced with a summary of research in that field.

* Post-Conference excursions to include a one-day trip along the Western Cape coast to visit Khoisan sites; a three day trip to the rock paintings of the Cedarberg; and longer trip to the Northern Cape to visit places where the /Xam informants interviewed by W.H.I. Bleek and L.C. Lloyd lived in the 1860s.



"Nothing old in South Africa..."

From Val Ward

While we were in Cape Town my Cretan friends visited a Paarl wine co-op on business. When asked where they were staying, Mike said, "with archaeologists in Constantia".

"Oh," said the wine man; "but there is nothing remotely old in South Africa. I've just returned from a visit to Europe where I stayed in a 600 year old building." Taken aback, Paula asked "What about the Stone Age and its wonderful rock paintings which are so abundant in South Africa?"

"Oooh yeesss, rock art!!" said the wine man, dismissively.

What are we to do about this state of affairs? Boycott the wine? Bombard the wine man with literature? Demonstrate on his doorstep?

LETTER
COPIES IN COLOUR BEFORE BREUIL
From Val Ward

Dear Editor,

With reference to the article "The Neil Lee Collection" (*The Digging Stick* 13(3):7-8, November 1996), I should like to point out that southern African rock paintings were reproduced in colour long before Abbé Breuil in the 1890s.

Mark Hutchinson and his teenage son Graham copied paintings at Main Caves, Giants Castle between 1875 and 1879 at the request of the Lieutenant Governor of Natal, Sir Henry Bulwer, who was concerned about deterioration. Most of their colour reproductions are housed in the Library of Parliament in Cape Town and a few are part of the archaeology collection at the Natal Museum. Recent colour slides and black and white negatives of the Hutchinson material are accessioned in the photographic archive of the Natal Museum's Archaeology Department.

Vinnicombe (1976) found reference to even earlier copies in the Christy Collection at the British Museum. The inventory, dated 1869, records copies of Bushman paintings from Natal presented by General Lefroy. However, the copies were not found.

In 1893 Louis E. Tylor, nephew of the anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor and curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, copied paintings in several sites in the Giants Castle Game Reserve. The reproductions are in Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. However, we have colour slides of

the Tylor copies in our department's archive.

The early Hutchinson and Tylor copies have been used by Maggs and Ward in two rock art deterioration projects.

Natal Museum
Private Bag 9070
Pietermaritzburg 3200

References & Further reading

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Looking for information on Rock Art, Archaeology, hunter-gatherers and pastoralists in southern Africa? Visit the South African Museum's Human Sciences Divisions homepage under Collections and Research.

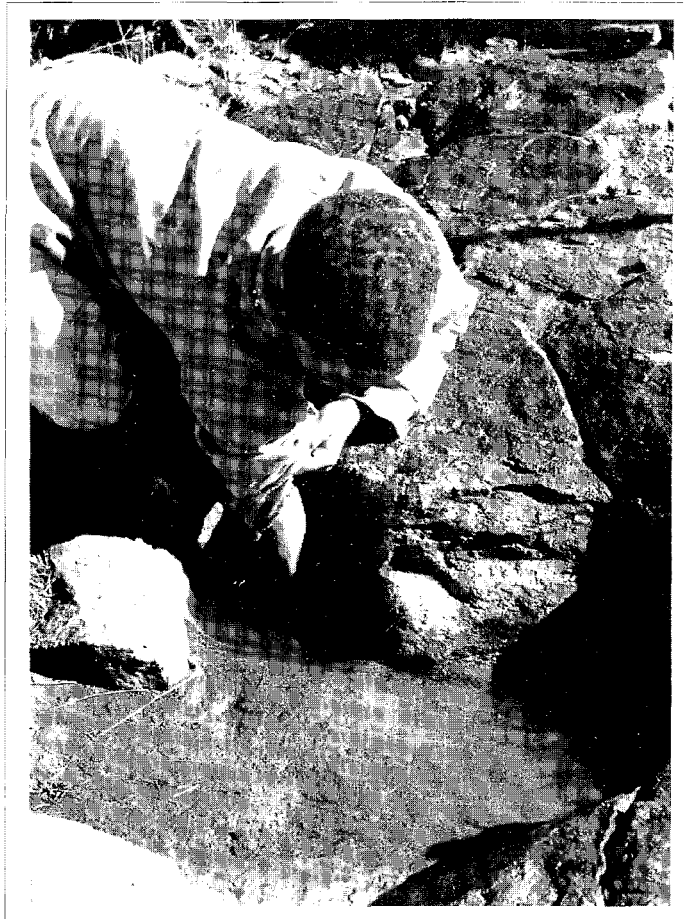
<http://ny1.samuseum.ac.za>

BUSHMAN WATER-HOLE?



“Bushman water-hole” on a farm near Loxton, Karoo. Oral tradition amongst farm workers has it that several hill-side holes, which collect water when it rains, were used as a water supply by “Bushmen”, who placed stones to cover them. The holes, which appear to be natural, but abraded from use, are of the order of 300 mm deep.

Does anyone have information on comparable features and/or usages?



LETTERS

CONSERVATION OF THE GRIQUA MISSION CHURCH: CAMPBELL

From David Yuill

Anthony Humphreys comments in *The Digging Stick* Vol,13(2) of August 1996 on the Griqua Mission Church at Campbell. The comments are useful in that they provide an opportunity to examine his views and provide answers as to why the National Monuments Council allowed this project to be approached in the way that it was.

Humphreys was clearly upset at the nature of change that had taken place in a building with which his family has had a long association. He describes his visit to Campbell as less uplifting than his other visits in the area and feels that "part of the heritage of the Northern Cape has been dealt a savage blow". He attributes this to his disappointment at the 'restoration' (his quotation marks) of the Griqua Mission Church.

My first reaction to Humphreys' expressions of unhappiness is that if he expected restoration in a conventional sense, his expectations were unrealistic. The Mission Church was beyond conventional restoration.

In his use of the Parthenon as an analogy he does himself a further disservice, as the analogy is inappropriate and only helpful by contrast, in achieving an understanding of the vastly different situation in respect of the Church.

Let it be clearly understood that the Griqua Mission Church has been *reconstructed* to make it safe and to recover its cultural significance. Reconstruction is a conservation strategy of last resort. Whoever described to Humphreys what had been done as restoration, did not understand the meaning of the word in a conservation context or was using it loosely.

Restoration, in a conservation context, generally implies the least possible intervention consistent with the preservation of the object concerned. Restoration is also very much concerned with the tangible. What was left to be conserved at Campbell was largely intangible. The tangible in the form of the original building fabric was lost long ago. The much altered Church was in a state of near collapse and drastic measures were called for if it was to have a sustainable future.

In explaining why the reconstruction route was

followed, it is useful to start by contrasting the Griqua Mission Church with the Parthenon, which has been conserved in a very different sort of way.

1. The Parthenon represents the climax of centuries of development of building and architectural skills. It was well built. The Campbell Church was built by unskilled people in a manner that had no chance of lasting. It was badly built and had not been helped by past conservation attempts and the numerous changes in use that had been imposed upon it.

2. The remains of the Parthenon are in the main authentic and ancient. The Campbell Church had, before its recent reconstruction, suffered the indignity of inappropriate attempts at repair, the replacement of every single original building component except the stonework, and the addition of architectural features that were never part of the original building.

3. The Parthenon, even in its ruined state, exhibits structurally stable and highly refined stone masonry, much of which is still exactly as crafted by the original stone masons. The Campbell Church was of loose packed stone randomly laid in such an inadequate manner that it is known to have been substantially re-constructed several times in its short history following collapses. The evidence for this is irrefutable. The Parthenon is a great work of art and building skill. The Church was, before reconstruction, an often re-arranged heap of stones to which had been added a variety of modern building components.

4. The Parthenon has long since ceased to be a working building. It has acquired a new significance as a ruin, albeit with a few reconstructed parts. The Church is still a working building. It needed firstly to be made structurally stable. Thereafter it needed a roof, doors and windows to keep out the weather and allow it to function as a church and museum. It could have been allowed to become a ruin, but would the often rearranged stones of the Campbell Church ever have acquired the significance of those of the Parthenon?

Although the Campbell Church is not like the Parthenon it is nevertheless a valuable part of our

heritage and would probably have been lost, had it not been for the interest displayed by the Humphreys family. This must be sincerely acknowledged in the interpretive display that will be set up in the reconstructed building.

The greatest surviving value of the Campbell Mission Church is intangible. The intangible quality of the place is important. What the missionaries stood for and did, is important but the actual building needs to be seen for what it is - something of little intrinsic historic value that had been in an ongoing state of change throughout its life.

The latest reconstruction has been more substantially done than in previous reconstructions and has been based on a careful study of how the original structure looked. It should not, however, be seen as doing much more than setting the scene. It is the place and the idea surrounding the building that are conservation worthy. The Campbell Church of today is therefore about the conservation of an idea and a place. It is not about the restoration of a building. *There was nothing left of any great significance in the fabric of the building to restore! Only the stones were original and even these were not as they had originally been laid.*

The museum display to be contained within the building will hopefully include some of the fascinating evidence that was uncovered in respect of how the original building was built, why it failed structurally, how and where the original building material was sourced and why a decision was made to reconstruct.

'The experts' (Humphreys' quotation marks) responsible for the present state of the Mission Church would not as he suggests have advised

the building of a replica of the Parthenon. Other reasons apart, this has in any event already been done on another site and strange as he may find it, was in its own way a valuable contribution to knowledge and an understanding of the original building.

Humphreys is correct when he states "there is indeed a church at Campbell but it is not the original..." The fact of the matter is that by the time his grandfather became involved in 1898 the church had already changed substantially from the original Mission Church and this process of change continued unabated. Following the most recent intervention by the National Monuments Council, there has been a change in the rules that had previously allowed the replacement of original components with new, the fanciful addition of architectural features and paid scant attention to the failing structure. The main rule guiding what has now been done, was "attempt to recover the original cultural significance of the building and strip away the overlays caused by inappropriate actions in the past."

Whether or not, as Humphreys questions, the church can be legitimately called a National Monument, depends on one's view of conservation and historical significance. The National Monuments Council is committed to conservation but not necessarily to restoration. The National Monuments Council is guided by international precedent and the strategy applied in the case of the Campbell Church is by no means unique, but as has already been stated, of last resort.

Chairman
National Monuments Council
Northern Cape Regional Committee

THE GRIQUA MISSION CHURCH : A REPLY TO DAVID YUILL

From A.J.B. Humphreys

David Yuill has identified himself as one of the 'experts' responsible for the present state of the Griqua Mission Church at Campbell and has commented at length on my reactions to their efforts. I feel obliged to respond.

At the outset let us get one thing out of the way: the Parthenon. Yuill appears to have missed my point, hence much of what he has to say is quite irrelevant. I did not in any way compare the Griqua

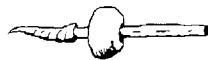
Mission Church with the Parthenon! What I did try to convey (clearly not very successfully to Yuill) was that Melina Mercouri, an outspoken Grecophile and conservationist, would have been more sensitive to the difference between restoration and reconstruction. Such sensitivity was, I suggested lacking with respect to the Griqua Mission Church and this again appears evident from the rest of Yuill's remarks.

For the record, the word 'restoration' was used in

the 1995 National Monuments Council Annual Report and not suggested to me by some assumed ill-informed guide. (Interestingly enough, it is also alleged in the report that "the structure has been stabilized.")

In order to get to the nitty-gritty it is necessary to make a few basic points. Any building (for this is what we are talking about here) has to be conserved - or, if you like, maintained. If such conservation or maintenance is stopped the building will deteriorate and, depending upon the initiation and nature of any subsequent intervention, will eventually become part of the archaeological record. One form that intervention could take is restoration - or 'patching up' - with a view to resuming the original use of the building or altering it for some other purpose. Such restoration may, with hindsight, be subject to differences of opinion as to its desirability or appropriateness (hence the basic museum principle that any restoration must be 'reversible'). In the case of the Griqua Mission Church the original windows and a door were filled in and a corrugated iron roof replaced the original thatch (amongst other patching) when the place was turned, for a period of time, into a store room. But, contrary to what Yuill asserts, the main fabric of the building was left intact. The 'undesirable' restoration could easily have been reversed. (There is, of course, a school of thought that sees modification as part of the history of a building that cannot, or should not, be undone - but lets not complicate the issue.) The outline of the original windows were clearly visible to all but the most unobservant. The thatched roof could be seen on contemporary drawings. Thus despite what had been done to the building over the years, any competent person should have been able to restore the existing structure to its original form.

This brings us to the point about restoration



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Editor: David Morris, P.O.Box 316, 8300 Kimberley, South Africa. Published by the South African Archaeological Society, P.O. Box 15700, 8018 Vlaeberg. Word-processed by David Morris and typeset by Annette Coetzee, courtesy of the McGregor Museum. Printed by SwiftPrint, Kimberley.

versus reconstruction. The building might well have been decrepit and in need of some buttressing but it had integrity and atmosphere in addition to everything else. Would it not have been better to intervene by restoring what was left (and that was pretty much the whole structure) as a tangible artefact from the past rather than intervening by demolishing it and replacing it with what is clearly a modern characterless reconstruction? This new structure does not by any stretch of the imagination contribute to the preservation of "...the intangible quality of the place...What the missionaries stood for and did..." Quite the contrary, in fact. Artificiality is the overwhelming impression. If this is what deserves National Monument status, so be it.

Yuill wants us to believe, moreover, that the Griqua Mission Church has been "reconstructed... to recover its cultural significance." I don't want to start another exchange but it may be suggested that Yuill is deluding himself if he thinks that his reconstruction has 'recovered' any cultural significance. Cultural significance is very much an issue of prevailing social exigencies and a statement about current values. The past is negotiated in the present and the very fact that something has been done about the Griqua Mission Church now, in the midst of contestations around Griqua identity, is an eloquent enough hint as to some of the thinking and motivation that might have underlain the reconstruction effort.

I stand by my original remarks but would add after Yuill's response : Q.E.D.

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