

material support for the furtherance of maritime archaeology is provided by the University of Cape Town, KWV, M-Net, Sanlam, Safmarine and Europcar Interrent.

REFERENCES

Miller, D. & Markell, A. 1993. Dutch brass buttons from the Cape to the Marico. *Southern African Field Archaeology* 2:107-108.

Thom, H.B. (ed.) 1958. *Journal of Jan van Riebeeck. Volume III 1659-1662*. Cape Town, Amsterdam: A.A.Balkema.

Werz, B.E.J.S. 1992. The excavation of the "Oosterland" in Table Bay: the first systematic exercise in maritime archaeology in southern Africa. *South African Journal of Science* 88 (2):85-90.

Werz, B.E.J.S. 1993. Maritime Archaeological Project Table Bay: aspects of the first field season. *South African Archaeological Society Goodwin Series* 7:33-39.

Southern African Field Archaeology 3:112-113. 1994.

NOTE ON A DIGGING STICK FROM AUGUSSIE SHELTER, EASTERN CAPE

JOHAN BINNEMAN

*Department of Archaeology, Albany Museum,
Somerset Street, Grahamstown, 6140*

The digging stick is the most important wooden artefact which is directly linked with plant food collecting and is generally associated with women. Women with digging sticks are depicted in many rock paintings (for example Vinnicombe 1976). According to Steyn (1984:119) "their digging sticks were like their pipes, the women rarely went without them".

Historic and contemporary observations indicate that digging sticks were not only used for digging up plant and other foods, but also for digging out burrowing animals from their holes and digging traps and pitfalls (Sparman 1785; Dunn 1931; Steyn 1971; Lee 1979). Among the Nharon San digging sticks are manufactured from hard wood between 1-1,5 m long with a sharpened point flatted on the one side and hardened in the fire (Steyn 1971; pers. observ.). The general conception among archaeologists is that digging sticks were weighted by bored stones. These stones were manufactured by women (Dunn 1931) and secured to the stick with a wooden wedge.

Although the digging stick is generally considered to be a woman's tool, Nharon San men also use them and manufacture them for women (Steyn 1971; pers. observ.). It is unknown whether a similar system was operative in prehistoric times. In a recent polemic between Wadley (1989) and Mazel (1992a), Wadley argued on the basis of similar evidence among contemporary !Kung San (Marshall 1976) that women were dependent on men for their digging sticks. Mazel on the other hand, from observations that Hadza women manufacture their own digging sticks within four minutes with a steel panga (Vincent 1985), is convinced that women in the Thukela Basin also manufactured their own

digging sticks in the past.

Relatively few complete or incomplete digging sticks have been reported from the archaeological context in southern Africa and all appear to date younger than 3000 years. Cooke (1980) reported two portions from Pomongwe in Zimbabwe. Wendt (1972) and Wadley (1979) reported portions from Big Elephant Shelter in Namibia, Parkington and Poggenpoel (1971) from De Hangen (1977) and Parkington (1977) from Diepkloof in the south-western Cape. Van Rijssen (pers. comm.) found a complete digging stick (0,45 m in length) at Great Brak River Cave in the southern Cape. Mazel (1992b) reported a complete digging stick (1,10 m in length) from Collingham Shelter in the Thukela Basin. The most remarkable finds come from Strathalan Cave A in the Maclear district in the north-eastern Cape. Opperman (pers. comm.) recovered two complete digging sticks and a broken one from a testpit associated with a bored stone, dating some 2500 years old.

Recently a new site was investigated in the foothills of the Kouga Mountains some 30 km north-west of Kareedouw (Fig. 1). Test excavations has revealed that plant material preserved to an estimated date of 5-6000 years BP. A broken digging stick was recovered from a layer dated to 4490 ± 60 (Pta-6417) BP.

The digging stick is in perfect condition and is 0,355 m long and 21,1 mm in diameter (Fig. 2). The broken end is slightly charred with the opposite end tapered to a point and somewhat flatted on the one side. The type of wood is not known, but the owner of the farm is of the opinion that it is most probably Olive wood (*Olea africana*). Plant remains associated with the digging stick include *Babiana/Freezia/Tritonia* spp. and *Moraea* spp.

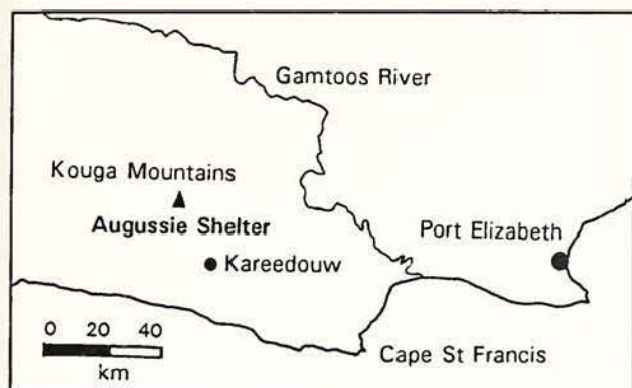


Fig. 1. Location of Augussie Shelter.

REFERENCES

- Cooke, C.K. 1980. Wooden and bone artefacts: Pomongwe Cave Matobo district, Zimbabwe. *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 35:25-29.
- Dunn, E.J. 1931. *The Bushmen*. London: Griffin.
- Lee, R.B. *The !Kung San: men, women and work in a foraging society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marshall, L. 1976. *The !Kung of Nyae Nyae*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Mazel, A. 1992a. Gender and the hunter-gatherer archaeological record: a view from the Thukela Basin. *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 35:25-29.
- Mazel, A. 1992b. Collingham Shelter: excavations of late Holocene deposits, Natal, South Africa. *Natal Museum Journal of Humanities* 4:1-52.
- Parkington, J. 1977. *Follow the San: an analysis of seasonality in the prehistory of the south western Cape, South Africa*. Unpublished doctoral thesis: Cambridge University.
- Parkington, J, Poggenpoel, C. 1971. Excavations at De Hangen 1968. *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 26:3-36.
- Sparrman, A. 1785. *A voyage to the Cape of Good Hope towards the Antarctic polar circle and around the world, but chiefly into the country of the Hottentots and caffres, from the year 1772 to 1776*. Vol. 1. London: Robinson.
- Steyn, H.P. 1971. Aspects of the economic life of some nomadic Nharon Bushman groups. *Annals of the South African Museum*. 56:275-322.
- Steyn, H.P. 1984. Southern Kalahari San subsistence ecology: a reconstruction. *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 39:117-124.
- Stow, G.W. 1905. *The native races of South Africa*. London: Swan Sonnenschein.
- Vincent, A.S. 1985. Plant foods in savanna environments: a preliminary report of tubers eaten by the Hadza of northern Tanzania. *World Archaeology* 17:131-148.

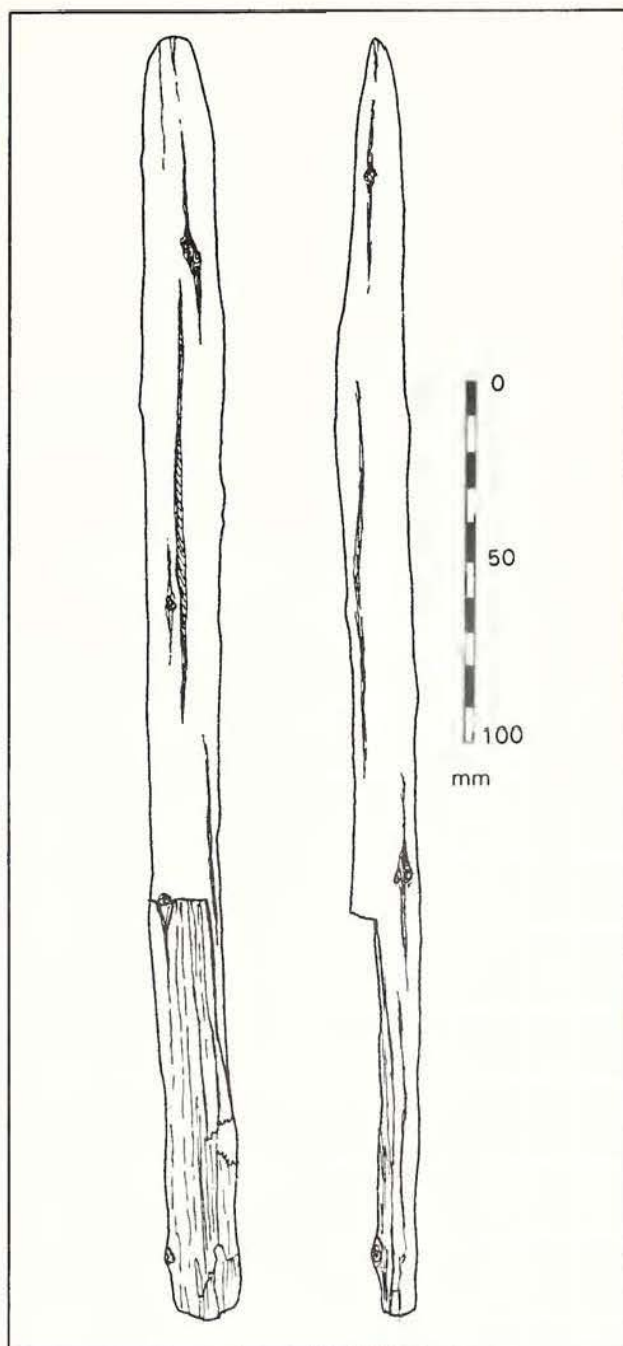


Fig. 2. Broken digging stick from Augussie Shelter.

- Vinnecombe, P. 1976. *People of the eland*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.
- Wadley, L. 1989. Gender relations in the Thukela Basin. *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 42:122-126.
- Wadley, L. 1979. Big Elephant Shelter and its role in the Holocene prehistory of central South West Africa. *Cimbebasia* 3:1-75.
- Wendt, W.E. Preliminary report on an archaeological research programme in South West Africa. *Cimbebasia* 2:1-6.