

EDITORS
Johan Binneman
Lita Webley
Alex Schoeman

The aim of *Southern African Field Archaeology* is to communicate basic data to professional archaeologists and the public.

Manuscripts of original research undertaken in southern Africa will be considered for publication. These may include reports of current research projects, site reports, rock art panels, rescue excavations, contract projects, reviews, notes and comments. Students are encouraged to submit short reports on projects. *Southern African Field Archaeology* also welcomes general information on archaeological matters such as reports on workshops and conferences.

Southern African Field Archaeology is published twice a year.

Subscription rates are as follows: R40,00 per annum for individuals and R60,00 for institutions. Outside of southern Africa U.S. \$25,00 for individuals and U.S. \$30,00 for institutions.

The views expressed by authors are their own and neither the Editors nor the Trustees of the Albany Museum take responsibility for them.

Copyright: Trustees of the Albany Museum, Somerset Street, Grahamstown, 6139. South Africa. The Albany Museum is an institution under the auspices of the Department of Sport, Art and Culture, Directorate Museums and Heritage Resources, Eastern Cape Provincial Government.

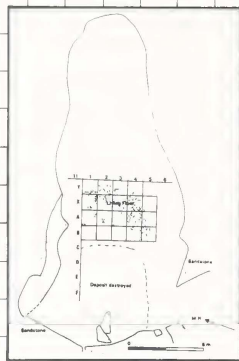
ISSN 1019-5785

southern african

Field
archaeology



September 1999
Vol 8 No. 2



Cover illustration:

Map of a living floor with well-preserved plant remains from Strathalan Cave A, Maclear district, Eastern Cape, p. 76.

ADVISORY EDITORIAL BOARD

G. Abrahams

South African Cultural History Museum, Cape Town

J. Brink

National Museum, Bloemfontein

S. Hall

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Z. Henderson

National Museum, Bloemfontein

A. Malan

University of Cape Town

A. Mazel

South African Cultural History Museum, Cape Town

D. Miller

University of Cape Town

A. Morris

University of Cape Town

D. Morris

McGregor Museum, Kimberley

A. Solomon

Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg

A. Thackeray

Pretoria

F. Thackeray

Transvaal Museum, Pretoria

J. van Schalkwyk

National Cultural History Museum, Pretoria

L. van Schalkwyk

KwaZulu Monuments Council, Pietermaritzburg

G. Whitelaw

Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg

R. Yates

South African Museum, Cape Town



southern african

Field archaeology

September 1999
Vol. 8 No. 2

CONTENTS

OPINIONS 57

ARTICLES

Animal behaviour and interpretation
in San rock art: a study in the Makgabeng
plateau and Shasi-Limpopo confluence
area, southern Africa.
Edward B. Eastwood,
Colin Bistow & J.A. van Schalkwyk 60

A 300 year-old living floor in
Strathalan Cave A, Maclear District,
Eastern Cape.
H. Opperman 76

Observations on the manufacture of
soapstone pipes in Namaqualand,
South Africa.
Lita Webley 81

Geographical information systems applied
to maritime archaeology, with specific
reference to the Table Bay Project.
Colin G.C. Martin &
Bruno E.J.S. Werz 86

Results from a test excavation at
Groot Kommandokloof Shelter in
the Baviaanskloof/Kouga region
Eastern Cape Province.
Johan Binneman 100

BOOK REVIEW

Images of power, understanding San
rock art. David Lewis-Williams &
Thomas Dowson
Gabriel Tlhapi 108

OPINIONS

INDIGENOUS INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

The terminal decade of the 20th century gave notice to southern African society of the genesis and growth of a persistent and increasingly powerful Indigenous voice. Southern Africa is more complex than almost any other region in the world when it comes to concepts of the Indigenous as we have at least three macro-Indigenous groups - San, Khoe and Black - each with further subdivisions and inter-connections. Also, unlike most post-colonial countries not all southern Africa's Indigenous people are in a minority, disenfranchised or oppressed and many have full access to political and economic power. These empowered groups are, by and large, dismissive of the limited leverage Archaeology is able to offer them. Not so the disempowered Indigenous minority who use Archaeology, 'the past', museums and the like to publicly voice their concerns. Regular high-profile public domain events have demonstrated the potent but sometimes chaotic political power this Indigenous voice is capable of unleashing. For example, in 1994 a Nama community forcibly removed by the Apartheid government to Namibia and South Africa's Eastern Cape in 1976, successfully re-claimed land at Riemvasmaak in the Northern Cape. In 1996 the gold objects and royal burials from the 800-year old Venda city of Thulamela captured the public imagination. 1998 saw official government sanction of Indigenous minority issues with the launch of the Khoisan Legacy Project. Since 1994 the skeletal remains of the 19th-century Griqua leader Cornelius Kok II have been the subject of a tug-of-war between Wits University and various Griqua interest groups aligned under Adam Kok V. On 21st March 1999 President Mbeki ratified the return of 40 000 hectares of land in and around the Kalahari Gemsbok Park to the =Khomani San. To cap it all, on 27th April 2000 South Africa's Indigeneity was incorporated into the country's most powerful state seal - the Coat of Arms - by means of a /Xam San motto and southern San rock-painting.

These public domain events have until very recently

been preoccupied with the highly necessary and emotive issues of land restitution and with human remains. Land is important not just for financial gain – the Riemvasmaakers returned to an area ecologically less favourable than their temporary Namibian and Eastern Cape homelands – but because Indigenous identity is strongly locational – you are *where* you are. Home and place act as *genius loci* that provide a groundedness and connexion with self, place and community. Forced removals were and remain most easily enacted among Indigenous minorities because they, perhaps more than anyone, have suffered from what John Marshall aptly called ‘Death-by-Myth’. Romanticised, vilified, patronised or just plain forgotten, Indigenous minorities of past and present often had to rely on non-Indigenes to carry their messages across to wider society – usually in non-Indigenous idioms. Similarly, notions of the body – especially human remains – have been used as powerful pricks of mainstream society’s collective consciousness. The Sarah Baartman issue, for example, operates at all levels from the local to the global. In the more circumscribed academic world, Martin Legassick & Ciraj Rasool’s *Skeletons in the cupboard: South African museums and the incipient trade in human remains 1907-1917* has ruffled many a feather and – understandably – rational thought has sometimes gone out the window.

But perhaps the issues of land restitution and the body have now established a platform for the next phase of the Indigenous voice’s development – Indigenous intellectual property rights. Here the trick will be to make Indigenous knowledge translatable and powerful in a world in which dominant and non-Indigenous interests push their agendas trans-nationally; usually with little regard for Indigenous intellectual property rights. A step in the direction of mutual knowledge partnerships was taken in 1997 with the 1st *Khoisan Identities and Cultural Heritage* conference in Cape Town where both Indigenous academics & interest groups and non-Indigenous academics participated. Communication, mis-communication and a healthy unease marked this partnership in knowledge about the past. But Indigenous intellectual property rights are by no means restricted to the past and play a far more important role in the present. For Indigenous interest groups to be successful they require knowledge of the wider world and the confidence to engage with it on an equivalent footing. Organisations such as the Kuru Development Trust in Botswana; the !Xu and Khwe Cultural Project in South Africa and the umbrella Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA) have all managed to promote Indigenous advocacy, often combined with measures of commercial success. Kuru, for example, have a very successful art project that makes judicious and empowered use of technology – www.africaserver.nl/kuru – to sell modern Naro San art. Similarly, in February 2000 the Snuneymuxw First Nation of Canada’s Gabriola Island used Canadian Intellectual Property law to protect an ancient heritage by trademarking 10 sacred rock-engravings. These images may not be used commercially and are now “considered the official marks of the Snuneymuxw First Nation, in the same way the Canadian

flag is considered an official symbol of Canada” (Tanner 2000). Trademark differs to copyright – which has a finite exclusivity clause linked to the life plus some years (usually 70) of the creator of an original work; after which time that work passes into the public domain. Trademark is potentially infinite and protects commercial and intellectual reputations against insensitive use.

In southern Africa there are many instances of non-Indigenous public domain uses and abuses of original Indigenous works and intellectual property. In literature there is, for example, Stephen Watson’s *Return of the Moon* based on /Xam oral literature and Zakes Mda’s *The Heart of Redness* based on Xhosa magical realism and the prophetess Nongqawuse. In film we have Jamie Uys’s *The Gods must be crazy* and the Foster brothers’ *The Great Dance*. T-shirts, wine bottles and Sun City make money from ancient images. Though much of this cultural appropriation is good as it proudly and widely makes the Indigenous past present, it is often partial and does not make provision for an Indigenous voice *per se* to be heard or for recognition and compensation to return to the Indigenous creators of those works and knowledge. For example, in mid-2000 controversy erupted in South America and South Africa over non-Indigenous botanists and pharmaceutical companies making one-sided profits from millennia of Indigenous knowledge of medicinal plants (George & van Staden 2000). Could the same be said of archaeologists who make a living – of sorts – by interpreting cultures other than their own? Perhaps, though here there is the twist that archaeologists often find themselves in the acutely uncomfortable position of knowing more about aspects of Indigenous culture than the relevant Indigenous people. In these cases we can and do help re-connect people with knowledge lost in the mess of forced removals, persecution and ‘death-by-myth’. Museums and universities function as ‘keeping places’ for knowledge and objects. But this knowledge and material culture cannot just be ‘kept’ and should be used to help seed projects such as the Indigenous development of the San Education and Cultural Centre near Darling in the Western Cape. UCT’s Clanwilliam Living Landscape Project is another good example of applying kept knowledge. Perhaps southern African Indigenous groups could themselves employ archaeologists, like the Indigenous Ngai Tahu of New Zealand’s South Island who employ a non-Ngai Tahu archaeologist to research, manage and publicise their pre-colonial history. Such partnerships are not equal but they are equivalent and they take as their initial premise the primacy of Indigenous intellectual property.

In the new millennium we may see an intensification of these knowledge partnerships in southern Africa with the WIMSA initiative to invite both commercial interests and academics working on issues that closely concern contemporary Indigenous groups to jointly sign a partnership-style contract designed to protect Indigenous intellectual property. “Does the research subject matter involve any intellectual property of a form that requires special protection? If so, what arrangements have been made to

protect [these] rights?" reads a draft of the contract. Of course, such a contract will need a great deal more negotiation – Indigenous groups are by no means homogenous and non-Indigenous researchers should not have their academic freedom interfered with unfairly. But closer co-operation in the form of consenting, genial and courteous partnerships – sometimes just sending copies of one's articles to Indigenous interest groups – may help responsibly introduce new flavours and a visceral humanity into the practice of Archaeology. Perhaps more partnerships between Indigenous systems of archaeological knowledge and non-Indigenous Archaeology will help further de-colonise our discipline.

I want to see the Bushmen write their own history so that we can interpret our own language, because when you are translating everything, you lose things, we need to write our own history. (Kxao Moses #Oma, in Weaver 2000).

Sven Ouzman
Rock Art Department
National Museum

References

- George, J. & van Staden, J. 2000. Intellectual property rights: plants, phytomedicinals – past history, present scenario and future prospects in South Africa. *South African Journal of Science* 96:433-443.
- Tanner, A. 2000. BC natives put stop to commercial use of ancient artwork. *The National Post*, February 14th.
- Weaver, A. 2000. Man Friday. *The Cape Times*, December 1st.

BOOK REVIEW**IMAGES OF POWER
UNDERSTANDING SAN ROCK ART**

By David Lewis-Williams & Thomas Dowson 1999, 2nd Edition.
Southern Book Publishers. R174-00.

GABRIEL TLHAPI

*Rock Art Department, National Museum P.O.Box 266,
Bloemfontein, 9300, Republic of South Africa*

email: gtlhapi@nasmus.co.za

A feature of South African society over the last decade has been an increasing awareness of the value and significance of hunter-gatherer or Bushman/San rock art. Part of this awareness involves asking questions about the San lifestyle, religious beliefs and history. The authors of the book under review have tried to answer these questions in a way that appeals to both academic and non-academic audiences.

The authors begin by providing essential background information, discuss who the artists were and outline San religious beliefs. The perennial questions of how the rock art was made and how old the art is are partially answered, although recent research has made some of this information outdated.

The second part of the book provides detailed examples of San beliefs as they are represented in the rock art. The Medicine Dance and other related shamanistic metaphors are thoroughly discussed. These metaphors are discussed with frequent tacking between text and image(s). On page 61, for example, the way in which diagrams are used to support interpretations is very effective. There have been many books written about rock art but, as a newcomer to the field, none of the books I have read have presented their argument in such a clear and easy to follow manner.

The third part of the book consists of full-colour photographs of San rock art. The illustrations used give a good impression of San rock arts aesthetic. Commendably, the authors have used big pictures and comment on each one, unlike those publications that assume the art to be self-explanatory. Many aspects of rock art such as rain-making, the symbolic labour of shaman have creatively and effectively been covered through the use of photographs and re-drawings. School children and non-academic readers will benefit greatly from the use of visual material in this book. Unlike most

writers on the topic, Lewis-Williams & Thomas Dowson have tried to present both rock paintings and engravings. However, according to my calculations, there is still an imbalance since there are only 16 engravings and as many as 106 paintings reproduced in the book.

Part Four of the book is about informing contemporary society on how to view San rock art and outlines appropriate behaviour and procedures to follow when dealing with rock art and site visits. Additional information about where to get more insight about rock art is also provided. Conservation issues are briefly touched on and sites open to the public are also mentioned, although some of these sites are now closed. Notwithstanding a tacked-on reference to Lewis-Williams & Blundell's *Fragile Heritage*: a rock art field guide, this is the weakest section of the book. A decade in a rapidly-changing country such as ours is a long time and this shows as most of the information in this section is woefully outdated.

In conclusion, the authors did adequate research for their book and this could be detected from the accuracy of the information presented. The general structure of the book is excellent because text and images have been used in tandem and the book has a visually appealing dust-jacket. The authors arguments are logical and effectively illustrated and this will allow students to develop observation skills and logical arguments supported by the available evidence. Terminology is not a problem, as the language is clear and jargon free, and there are no spelling mistakes throughout the book. In my opinion, the authors discourage misconceptions about San history and rock art. They are also trying to present an emic version of San history. This second edition will certainly continue to make as important a contribution to rock art research in the future as it has done over the last ten years in first edition form.