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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.

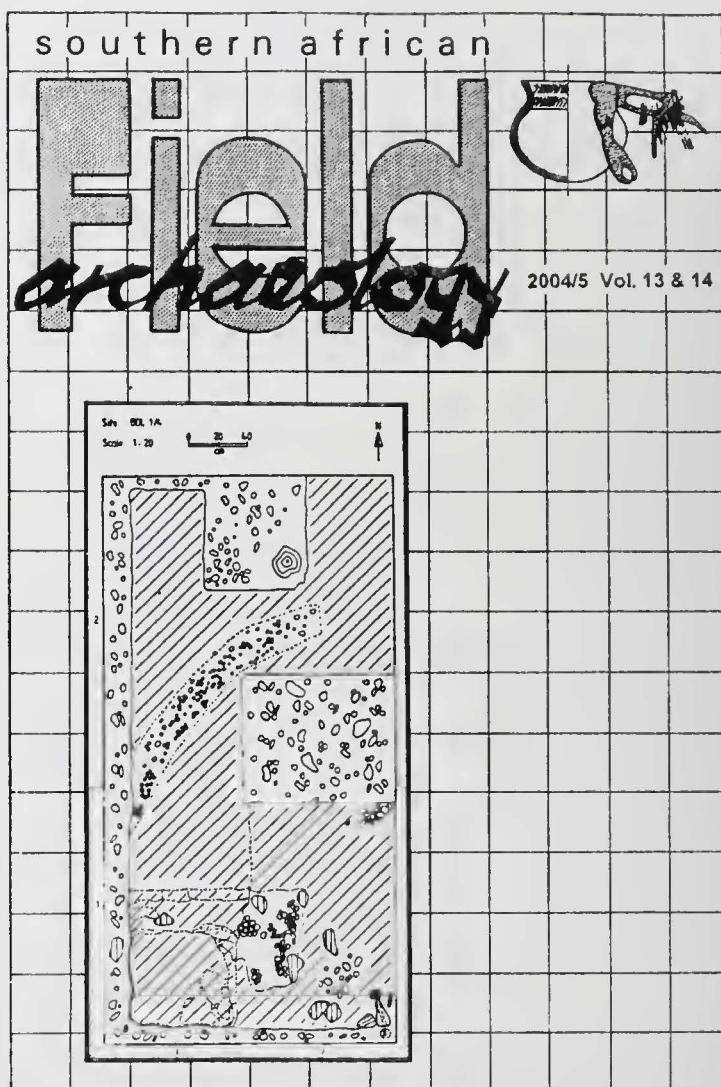
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Cover illustration:

Excavation plan of a living area at the Late Iron Age site of Thabantsho. See p. 3.

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OPINIONS

ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY ROCK ART PRACTICES.

Rock art studies in South Africa these days probably has the most sophisticated theoretical underpinning in the archaeological corpus. The art can for the most part be explained in a sophisticated manner in terms of the cosmology of the painters. In contrast, our understanding of other aspects such as stone artefacts, whether of style or function, is still somewhat limited. Yet, there are issues that can be improved upon.

In 1998, Johan Binneman recommended in this journal that tracing of rock art should require a permit similar to the requirement for excavating. Since then, however, there appears to have been little discussion on this issue. And it is an issue. Paint as well as the surfaces they are painted on can be fragile and pose problems for the inexperienced tracer. In fact, there are stories about

particular paintings that have been marked or damaged by members of the public wanting their own copies and for whom photography is not enough. Repeated tracing could also induce problems. It is therefore difficult to limit tracing when there are no guidelines in place. By making tracing dependent upon a permit, we can establish a set of standards for its control. This should also apply to rock engravings although at first it may seem that they are more durable being carved in stone and lying in the open. Other forms of contact activities are relevant here such as making latex moulds, rubbing, marking with chalk, etc. Furthermore, if local communities, whether farmers or farm workers, are to be trained to act as custodians of rock art sites and tour guides, a base line of good practice needs to be established. It is not only tracing that needs a set of standards. Museum storage, particularly of art mobilier, needs guidelines as well as the handling of such objects. Perhaps members of ASAPA should make a start in discussing these issues. If we want a professional association, we need to be held accountable to professional standards.

One point that needs emphasising, this recommendation is not anti-amateur. There are skilled amateur archaeologists who would make expert tracers just as there are professional archaeologists who have no talent for this activity. Each application should be judged on the merits of the individual and not simply his general archaeological qualification.

Apart from these practical issues, there are other issues facing the rock art community that need careful thought. The establishment of rock art as a tourist drawcard will put selected sites under additional stress. Rock paintings weather and exposing them to large numbers of visitors can result in them fading faster

than under natural conditions. The example of Lascaux is particularly pertinent. What does one do? Move to another site or do we consider the conservation of such sites by re-painting them? This is a controversial question and obviously needs much discussion but the sooner a decision is reached the better.

The development of rock art and archaeological tourist centres lead to other issues relating to the tourism experience that are too detailed to deal with here. These include community involvement, the economic sustainability of such centres, the type of educational programs available and their assessment relative to the type of visitor one can expect, the quality and monitoring of tour guides, the authenticity of the programs, etc.

Promoting large scale access to rock art will be a challenging task. It can only be made easier if we have proper ethical guidelines for its curation, conservation and popularization.

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BOOK REVIEWS**THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA**

By Peter Mitchell. 2002. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (African Edition).
Cambridge Africa Collection limited for sale in countries in sub-Saharan Africa. pp. 515.

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I, and probably many other young academics, agree to review books, because in return we are allowed to keep the review copies of these books. Our 'mercenary' attitude to book reviews is the result of the cost of books in southern Africa. Imported academic books are expensive, due to unfavourable exchange rates, and local taxation of imported books. The cost of books not only affects individuals, many southern African University libraries can simply not afford to purchase new books and pay their journal subscription fees. This removes southern African scholars, from the academic information network, and has dire implications for the quality of knowledge our graduates acquire. In the light of this, the publication of this volume as part of the (cheaper) paperback Cambridge Africa Collection, which is limited for sale in southern Africa, is heartening.

The Archaeology of Southern Africa is substantial, and Mitchell was courageous to undertake a synthesis of southern African archaeology, as this is a perilous endeavour. Irrespective of the balance of the text as a whole, there is bound to be focus on, and criticisms of the inclusion or exclusion of data, and interpretation of nuances. I feel myself only qualified to critique the farmer archaeology section, which forms a small portion of the volume.

Consequently, I decided to (mostly) refrain from discussing inclusions of particular data sets, and to rather examine how data is presented.

I start with the obvious. This is a clearly written, and laid out, synthesis of southern African archaeology. It engages with the main data sets and debates. It, obviously, is impossible for Mitchell to have knowledge of, never mind write about, every topic, debate and discovery in southern Africa. Consequently, there are omissions. An example from my research area, the Shashe Limpopo Confluence Area, is Calabrese's discovery of the continuity of Zhizo settlements in the Limpopo valley, after the Leopard's Kopje people occupied the area. These K2 period Zhizo settlements are marked by a new ceramic tradition,

Leokwe Zhizo, which combines K2 design elements with Zhizo decoration techniques (Calabrese 2000a & b). I am sure that there are other oversights in other research fields. This is to be expected, and does not detract from the value of the contribution.

The book follows the traditional divisions of Stone Age (Chapters 3 to 7), San Rock Art (Chapter 8), Pastoralist (Chapter 9), Farmer (Chapters 10 to 12) and Historical Archaeology (Chapters 13 and 14). These topics are organized in chronology-based succession. On one level this organization succeeds, and results in an elegant flow of narrative. On another, these categories perpetuate an illusion of isolated and bounded communities who lived in different 'Ages'. This arrangement complicated the placement of the sections on interaction between farmers and hunter-gatherers. By sub-summing these into the farmer chapters, the arrangement directly contradicts the text, which argues "it is by no means clear that contact per se should, as the revisionists suggest, produce relations of dominance and subordination" (Mitchell 2002:224). The current layout creates the impression that contact took place in the 'farmer' period, thereby implying that farmers set the interaction agenda.

Due to historical processes, underdevelopment, as well as long-term conflict in some countries, there are variations in the intensity with which archaeology in different parts of southern Africa has been studied. This is reflected in the data synthesized here. I did, however, find the volume to be rather South Africa centric. I was disappointed not to see more discussion on research from other parts of southern Africa, as the title implies. The bias in inclusion might, partly stem from Mitchell's predisposition towards Anglophone publications. I counted less than ten non-Anglophone titles in the bibliography.

In spite of dealing with the 'archaeological data' comprehensively, this volume seems to be theoretically uncritical and un-rooted. This approach allows Mitchell to

separate and compartmentalize the political and the archaeological, which ignores that southern African archaeology and politics have been intertwined. Most southern African archaeologists no longer attempt to pretend that their work is not influenced by the socio-political situation. Mitchell's non-engagement might be the result of his location in Britain. He is on the outside looking in. This neutrality is in sharp contrast with the most recent South African undergraduate archaeology textbook: Martin Hall's *Archaeology Africa*, which is located on the inside and deeply influenced by the theoretical and political. The pairing of these two texts, Mitchell's concrete data synthesis and Hall's more political and theoretical content, forms the perfect undergraduate teaching duo.

It is in this field of facilitating the teaching and learning of archaeology, that this book is most valuable. The simple language and arrangement will help newcomers to the discipline. The comprehensive inclusion of data and references, means that more advanced students can employ this

volume as an entry into debates, or research questions they are exploring. At R190.00, for a paperback edition, some of these students might even be able to buy their own copies.

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THE FIGURED LANDSCAPE OF ROCK-ART: LOOKING AT PICTURES IN PLACE

By Christopher Chippindale and George Nash (eds). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2004. ISBN 0 521 52424 5.

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This book serves as a companion to *The Archaeology of Rock Art* (Cambridge University Press, 1998). The earlier publication focussed on the archaeological aspect of rock art, approaching rock art as a material record of the past. Drawing together research from numerous scholars, this volume emphasizes the importance of the landscape where rock art occurs - both the geographical location and the placement of images in a site, as well as its spiritual dimensions.

In the introductory essay, Christopher Chippindale and George Nash suggest that the immovability of rock art pictures as permanent markers in the landscape is a central strength and also a central concern, both on large scale and also in and around a rock art panel. They note the difficulties presented by uncertain chronology, but argue - with examples from across the world - that these are compensated for by the certainty of rock art being fixed in place, giving a firm starting point for research. Recent trends in landscape archaeology that are pertinent to rock art studies are examined, followed by a discussion of informed and informal methods for studying rock art, as well as definitions and research practicalities. Finally, the

authors present the rationale and structure of the book, noting that although the majority of the contributions favour informed research methods, collective patterns emerging from the informed methods can be used to build formal methods that can be applied over a broad range of study. The book is divided into four parts, the first dealing with the principles of landscape and rock art in practice:

Paul Taçon and Sven Ouzman investigate areas of commonality between rock art in topographically comparable areas of southern Africa and northern Australia. Rock art imagery demonstrates how hunter-gatherers experienced and understood the world and rock art sites - and the rock itself, function as places where worlds of extra-ordinary and 'ordinary' existence come together.

When attempting to interpret ancient cultural landscapes, the need for including a spiritual dimension found in oral traditions is addressed by Daniel Arsenault. Demonstrating that some 'objective' models of analysis and interpretation fail in capturing the world view of Native Peoples of Canada. He includes theoretical, methodological and practical aims to be included when studying sacred landscapes.

William Hyder discusses the use of locational analysis in rock art studies. This formal methodology for analysing the location of rock art in the landscape relies strongly on awareness by researchers of the scale of the system that will be studied, and a correlation between the questions asked and the data collected.

Reporting and studying the immensely varied physical scales encountered in rock art research can be a substantial challenge. Christopher Chippindale proposes a flexible framework aimed at greater unity. The author demonstrates that employing four physical scales of rock art, each linked to a particular aspect of rock art study, can be useful when dealing with the varied physical scales encountered in rock art research.

Relating examples from western North America and European Upper Palaeolithic rock art, James Keyser and George Poetschat investigate the rock surface not just as a neutral canvas, but from the viewpoint that it was selected for natural features that were incorporated in the art. They demonstrate the interplay between the rock surface of an individual rock art panel and the images thereon, just as rock art exists at distinctive points on the varied surface of the earth.

Using *Gestaltung* - described here as the physical acts whereby a landscape is changed as it is endowed with meaning, Tilman Lenssen-Erz develops a systematics of landscape focusing on the Brandberg, the foremost rock-art area in Namibia. Elements of the landscape setting for rock art are used in this way to demonstrate the human choices and decisions leading to motifs occurring at particular places, panels and locations.

Part Two explores opportunities and applications associated with informed methods of studying rock art: Bruno David discusses the emergence of late Holocene symbolism in north-east Australia, making use of excavation data, ethnography and direct dating of the rock art. Images of particular animals used to mark the landscape emerges in the late Holocene and are linked to how the landscape was experienced by hunter-gatherers, and how this experience is reflected in both the rock art and its location in the landscape. Landscape components were employed in the rock art, expressed by patterns of continuity and change in the representation of animals in the rock art over time.

With extensive use of ethnography, Josephine Flood explores the way in which rock art - in the extra dimension of meaning created by the placing of images, helps to explain and map the land of Aboriginal Australia. The ideas of 'Dreaming' and 'Dreaming Tracks' in Aboriginal religion, the landscape, and rock art are demonstrated to influence interwoven relationships between sites and between figures in a site. In this living tradition, the significance of rock art and the landscape continues from the Dreamtime to the present and future.

Lawrence Loendorf investigates the Dinwoody rock engravings in the high mountains of Wyoming. He argues that the petroglyphs follow a pattern of distribution in the landscape according to their elevation and that the choice

of images is influenced by the Shoshone world-view according to what power is traditionally seen to inhabit a particular landscape.

Why does one site differ from the landscape pattern of others in an area? David Whitley, Johannes Loubser and Don Hann explore the central significance of symbolic meaning against the backdrop of the Modoc Plateau in western North America. Landscape, along with being a physical place, has conceptual and symbolic elements ascribed to it. Ethnography linking rock art to shamanism reveals variable conceptualisations that influence the complexity and forms of sacred landscapes.

Benjamin Smith and Geoffrey Blundell demonstrate the considerable variation between cultures in their experience and perception of landscape, and that researchers may unwittingly fall prey to historically situated western perceptions concerning landscape. Applying landscape methodology to three rock art traditions from northern South Africa, the authors demonstrate that, without ethnography, a landscape rock art study of this area would not be very useful. They caution against treating landscape as a straightforward given, and bestowing it a position above other approaches.

Part Three explores opportunities and applications associated with formal methods of studying rock art:

Knut Helskog examines rock carvings at Alta in far northern Norway - interpreting panels as large-scale compositions serving as physical models of the landscape that also incorporate time. Knowledge of the Sami is incorporated as the author investigates the different elements of the stories these rock carvings represent. Along with physical features of the landscape represented in the panels there are elements of actors, place and time reflecting cyclical transformations of the landscape.

The relationship between spiritual places and their setting in the Canadian Shield area is the setting for Daniel Arsenault's second contribution. Drawing from Algonkian ethnography and ethnohistorical knowledge - combined with rock art and archaeological evidence, a distinct pattern in the placement, execution and depiction (or absence thereof) of the rock art, emerges. This approach proves to be significantly more useful than simplistic assumptions of relationships between primitive people and ecosystem.

Andrea Arcà investigates topographic elements in Alpine rock art from the French Maritime Alps. These compelling engravings, with features of fields, settlements and agricultural landscapes as they are seen from above, are placed in a regional chronology of agricultural patterns that diffused from the southern to the central Alps. They are suggested to represent a conceptualised topography of a landscape of human territory, expressing social values of ownership and marking of the landscape.

Part Four is entitled 'Pictures of pictures' and contains the final contribution. George Nash, Lindsey Nash and Christopher Chippindale present a photographic essay. The reader is taken to rock art sites in the Campo Lameiro valley in north-western Spain - a journey through different spatial perspectives, from expansive wide-angle views right

up to individual images, experienced at different times of day. A striking visual phenomenology is produced, made all the more commendable considering it was created in a small basement in Cambridge.

The Figured Landscape of Rock-Art: Looking at Pictures in Place, provides an extensive investigation into

looking at rock images on an unmoveable surface at a fixed place. This may seem obvious and simplistic at first glance, but the contributions in this publication have effectively demonstrated the advantages and value of incorporating landscape in rock art research. The book is recommended reading to all who are interested in rock art studies.

RESEARCHING AFRICA'S PAST. NEW CONTRIBUTIONS FROM BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGISTS

By Mitchell, P., Haouar, A. & Hobart, J. 2003.. Oxford University School of Archaeology Monograph 57. 152 pp, illustrated.

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This book, with its rather nationalistic title, comprises 17 papers given at a conference organised by Peter Mitchell at St Hughes College in Oxford in 2002. It also includes an obituary for Desmond and Betty Clark, written by Ray Inskip, who himself has passed away in the interim. The work documents the resurgence of interests of a new generation of Africanist scholars, after a lacunae of about two decades when Africa seemed to be of less importance to British researchers.

The papers are an eclectic mix, and the archaeology is from all over the continent. The only unifying theme is the fact that the authors are British researchers working in Africa. With the single exception of a paper on the hominid landscapes of Makapansgat, all the papers deal with the either the Later Stone Age (of South Africa and Ghana), or more recent periods. Ten of the papers focus on the proto-historic or later (*e.g.* Aksum, Timbuktu, Engaruku, Buganda), showing perhaps a predilection of the younger generation for the historic periods. One paper is on fishing in rock art, another on the ethnography of ostrich eggshell bead manufacture, and another on cultural resource management in Ethiopia. The concluding chapter by Paul

Lane reviews the papers offered, then goes on to deal with Thabo Mbeki's *African Renaissance*, and the pros and cons of making use of the Africa's past, with the potential for 'invented traditions'. Lane is keen for there to be 'several pasts' that allow for national discourses, while permitting change to exist alongside stability, continuity and indigenous achievements.

The papers have varying strengths and weaknesses, but all show a commendable commitment to intensive research in Africa, and the researchers have obviously found funding sources to feed their interests. Lane's reasoned summary and comments notwithstanding, this book is nonetheless written by outsiders about Africa. While the authors might be aware that they are giving 'voice to genuine African lives and accomplishments' only one African scholar (Muringazina from Zimbabwe) contributed to the volume, although it is possible that other African students were among the more than 100 attendees at the conference.

The book is hard cover, and beautifully finished. One could only wish that the BAR volumes emanating from Oxford were of such fine quality.