

ETHNOGRAPHIC OBSERVATIONS ON THE BUTCHERING OF DOMESTIC STOCK AMONGST THE DESCENDANTS OF NAMA-SPEAKING PASTORALISTS IN NAMAQUALAND, NORTHERN CAPE

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ABSTRACT

This article describes the butchering of domestic stock by descendants of Nama-speaking pastoralists in Namaqualand. A great deal of variability is exhibited in the selection of livestock for slaughter. However, the dismemberment of the animal follows a fairly standard procedure. Every anatomical part of the animal is consumed or used in some way. The historical and the ethnographic records discussed in this paper do not support the butchery models proposed by archaeologists attempting to identify pastoralist sites.

INTRODUCTION

The descendants of the Little Namaqua Khoekhoen have been settled in the communally-owned areas of the arid Northern Cape between the Olifants and Orange Rivers for several hundred years (Fig. 1). The inhabitants of the Richtersveld, Leliefontein and Steinkopf Rural Areas have an intimate understanding of their environment and have retained many aspects of a traditional pastoralist lifestyle such as a strategy of seasonal mobility, the construction of the transportable *majjies* houses as well as detailed medicinal and edible plant lore. During fieldwork in the reserves between 1982 and 2003, interviews were conducted with more than 50 men and women on the butchering of domestic stock. In addition, field observations were made on the butchery of sheep and goat.

These observations do not support the butchery models which have been presented by faunal analysts working on pre-colonial pastoralist sites. In their interpretation of faunal remains from excavated sites, archaeologists have drawn on ethnographic observations from other cultural groups and on modern butchery practices (Von den Driesch & Deacon 1985). Faunal analysts have not considered the historical and contemporary ethnographic material which is available on the Khoekhoen. They have, nevertheless, claimed that high frequencies of juvenile male remains in a faunal sample imply the presence of a herding economy (Klein & Cruz-Uribe (1989).

HISTORICAL RECORDS ON BUTCHERING AMONG THE KHOEKHOEN

There are many brief references from 17th and 18th century travellers to the butchering of domestic stock by Khoekhoen

groups (Raven-hart 1967). Early travellers were particularly interested in the manner in which the Cape Khoekhoen consumed half raw cattle guts and wrapped the excess entrails around their arms and necks. Seafarers, who stopped off at the Cape of Good Hope before 1652, bartered both sheep and cattle from local herders. They butchered their purchases on shore, transporting only the edible portions on board. These travellers did not consume certain body parts, such as the intestines, which were discarded and provided the herding groups in the vicinity with sustenance that they had already paid for. The Khoekhoen were observed to draw the dung from the guts between their fingers and to throw the guts into the fire, before consuming them half-raw. They stored excess entrails by winding them around their neck and legs.

There is very little information on butchering methods and much of this early literature reflects European bias. Van der Stel (Waterhouse 1932:124) observed Khoekhoen groups butchering sheep on his travels through Namaqualand in 1685. The individual was observed to.

cut open its belly while it still lived, thrust in his hand and drew out the entrails, the sheep being still alive. Then the skin was clumsily torn from one side, the flesh severed from the shoulder blade, the ribs roughly broken off one side and stripped of flesh one by one, the same process being then repeated on the other side. The reason why they do not cut the throats of animals they butchering is to keep the blood, which they collect and boil by itself and then eat.

Wikar, a run-away soldier who travelled to the Northern Cape in 1799 (Mossop 1935:63, 65) and who observed ceremonial butchering, noted,

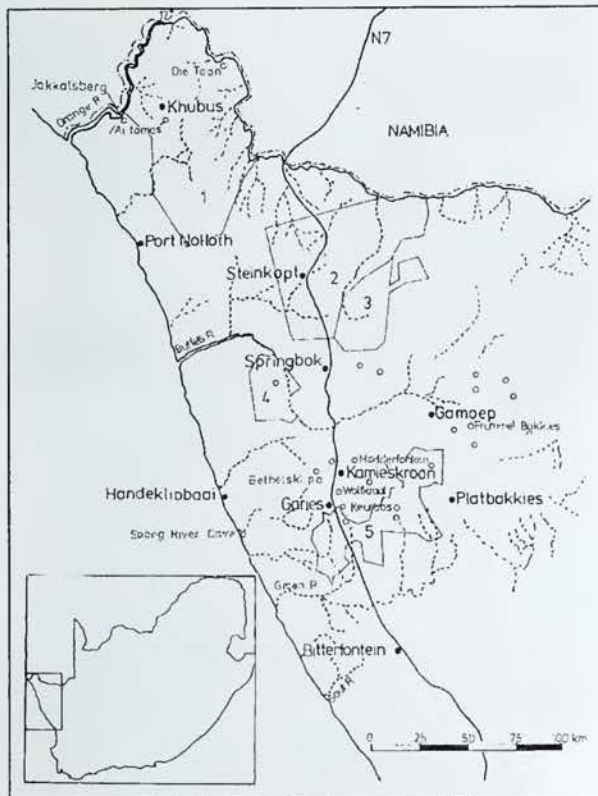


Fig. 1. Namaqualand with the locations of the archaeological sites as well as the communal reserves. (1) Richtersveld, (2) Steinkopf, (3) Concordia, (4) Kommagas, (5) Leliefontein.

the killing of the animal ... is done by cutting open the abdominal covering, thrusting the hand inside and severing the pulmonary vessels. The woman wore the omentum around her neck and the gall bladder on her head. The men too were observed to wear this in ceremonial killings. Women and children may not eat of a man's ceremonial killing and vice versa; but all partake of an animal which is butchered for healing purposes, which is killed when there is illness, provided it is not a special *handslagt*. From what I observed, their whole creed comprises nothing but ceremonial killing (Mossop 1935:67).

Preferences for certain livestock are also mentioned in the historical literature but only in passing. Gordon (Smith & Pfeiffer 1992), travelling through Namaqualand in 1779 and 1780, reported that a ewe was butchered when a girl experienced her first menstruation (1992:21) and three sheep (a ewe and two wethers) when she left the initiation hut (1992:20). During the nineteenth century Hahn (1971: 61, 72, 87) reported that fat cows and fat ewes were butchered for initiation and weddings, while Hoernlé (1922: 22, 21), in the early 20th century, noted that during the rain-making ceremony of the Nama, a pregnant cow had to be butchered in order for the uterine liquid to flow into the fire.

Hoernlé (Carstens *et al.* 1987:88) noted, "they kill, each man for himself too. The rich man perhaps sends a leg to the captain, but there is no need". After a child is born "a young ewe is killed for the use of the woman and her help-mates (Carstens *et*

al. 1987:93). At weddings, the groom's family (the word used is *werft* or homestead) provided four cows and sheep (*hammels*) which they killed at the bride's parent's home" (Carstens *et al.* 1987:97, 98). Bride and groom have "a cow and a sheep set aside for the two of them and only the old, people may eat of these beside them. The breast and the brisket are reserved for them" (the breast and the hip of the cow are still always kept for the bride and groom).

Gordon's journals (Smith & Pfeiffer 1992) also frequently refer to the use of the knuckle-bone which was placed in the hand of a sick person, or suspended around the neck of a butcher. They also mention the use of omental fat around the neck. A woman might also be required to wear powdered caul around her neck during the mongoose butchering, or a young bride could wear the caul around her neck after the marriage ceremony. In descriptions of various kinds of butchering there is mention of drilling a hole in the knuckle-bone and suspending it from the hand by a sinew taken from the heel of the butchered animal. The sinew from a butchered sheep could also be plaited with beads and hung around a child's neck, or tied below the left knee of a newly initiated girl.

Engelbrecht (1936) has provided the most detailed account of the division of livestock amongst the Korana, of the Northern Cape, during the 20th century. Certain portions of the animal were kept and cooked for men only, and consumed separately. In addition, the owner's maternal uncle also received the head, the neck and the breast. Engelbrecht observed that the fore and hind limbs were removed and that the entire back bone was removed, but then unlike the Nama, it was divided into a number of parts. The men retained the following: the *kambene* or the neural spines; the hind part of the backbone and sacrum; the ventral or inner part of the vertebral column; the two biltong muscles on the shoulder blade, and the paunch, colon, abomasums, the psalterium (third compartment of the stomach), the kidneys and the rectum. The rest of the cuts went to the hut for disposal by the women.

It is important to emphasize that many of these ethno-historical accounts refer to the slaughter of female livestock. There are no specific references to the slaughter of juvenile male individuals.

CONTEMPORARY ETHNOGRAPHIC OBSERVATIONS ON CEREMONIAL BUTCHERING

The ethnographic observations described here were made by Hoff in the Richtersveld, during the late 20th century. Additional information is provided by Waldman's (1989) research amongst the Griqua of Griquatown in the Northern Cape. The first animal to be butchered once the young girl was placed in the initiation hut had to be both female and fat (Hoff 1990:166). According to Waldman (1989:27) a young female sheep was slaughtered at the commencement of the young girl's initiation to symbolize the end of her childhood. Hoff (1990) noted that the most important part of this animal was the pelvis (*//hans*) and this had to be carefully removed, with a small piece of the backbone still attached. Care was taken not to cut into the pelvis, or to break it. The *//hans* was considered analogous to the young girl's pelvis, and she would not be

able to have children if the pelvis was damaged in any way. The *lhans* was boiled (not roasted) and was eaten by the initiate and her elderly caretaker (*kai taras*). The pelvis was cleaned of flesh, and then rubbed with fat and ochre; a hole drilled in the back, and hung up in the hut (Fig. 2). The rest of the meat of the butchered animal was consumed, and the bones collected, and burnt or buried. Waldman (1989) reported that the elderly caretaker removed the pelvis with the tail bone still attached. If the pelvis was damaged it would cause the girl to suffer during childbirth. Elderly women, past child-bearing age, were chosen to eat the meat from the pelvis. The pelvis was smeared with red ochre and hung up with beads and tortoise shells. The rest of the meat from the slaughtered animal was eaten by the women who took part in the ceremony. The bones from the sheep, the chyme (partially digested material from the small intestine which was used in ritual purification), the ochre scrapings and the offal were placed in a bag and taken to the spring, where they, together with the pelvis, were thrown in the water.

With regard weddings, the groom's family (Hoff 1990:199) provided animals for butchering at the wedding party. Traditionally, these animals are female as they are symbolically associated with fertility. Poles for the butchering of the livestock were erected in front of the door of the bride's home. The groom's family undertook the butchering and the meat was hung from poles and placed on reed mats in front of the house so that the bride's family could inspect the meat. All parts, including the skin, bladder, gall and blood had to be present. The dung was thrown onto the dance floor. Only one front foot was kept, so that the elderly women (*kai taras*) who had enjoyed a happily married life, could singe the hair and cook the foot in the ashes. This was done so that the husband and wife would not be parted. The front foot is symbolic of the person who takes the front foot. The aim of the butchery and the party was to bind the two families together. Hoff (1990:200) also reported that the short rib of the butchered animal was eaten by the bridal pair.

Pregnant women were not allowed to eat intestines, feet (because of the tendons), sinews or sinewy meat, so that the umbilical cord would not become entangled in the baby's neck and suffocate it (Hoff 1990:225). The son-in-law presented his mother-in-law with a pregnant cow (called the *abagomas*) on the birth of his first child. This was in appreciation for carrying his wife on her back as a child (in the leather baby bag or *abavel*) (Hoff 1990:204). Shortly after his wife had given birth, the husband had to butcher a sheep or goat. According to Hoff (1990:236) informants were not clear on whether this had to be male or female. The meat was only intended for certain categories of people and could not be eaten by strangers or young people. The *kai taras* (plural, *taradi*) cooked the meat to make a broth. The mother could not eat roasted meat as this would result in the young baby developing sore or red eyes. The mother had to regain her strength and the meat broth was considered very important. Some indicated that she should also eat of the brains (*haarslag*).

According to Hoff (1990:242), a married son respected his parents and therefore gave them of the best cuts of meat, such as the ribs. In further discussions below it will be argued that the ribs



Fig. 2. The pelvis which has been removed and covered in ochre, is suspended from a string in the hut.

are low status meat usually given to strangers. Similarly, a brother showed a great deal of respect for his eldest sister, and when he butchered, he sent her of the best cuts, such as the hindquarters.

An animal was butchered immediately after someone had died, usually when the stock was brought in from the veld (Hoff 1990:267). While any animal could be butchered, rams and bulls were avoided as their meat is considered to taste bitter. The best animal available for butchering had to be provided to relations of the deceased, such as a father, unmarried brother or son. The meat was intended for the family of the deceased. The meat had to be boiled and not roasted over the fire, as it was important that raw meat did not come into contact with the fire. Meat could only be roasted once the deceased had been buried. One way to avoid this taboo was to ask the *tai karas* to take pieces of the caul (*netvet*) and liver, the dung from the stomach, the small stomach (*kleinpensie*) and the front foot (of which the hair had been scraped off in the fire) and place this in the coals. Once this had been done, the injunction around the roasting of meat would fall away. The ash of the fire in which the above body parts were treated, was then buried (Hoff 1990:276). This was so that people could not walk on the ash and thereby affect the luck of the deceased's family. The family of the deceased as well as visitors was then "striped" with the blood of the butchered animal.

CONTEMPORARY ETHNOGRAPHIC OBSERVATIONS

During fieldwork in the Leliefontein, Steinkopf and Richtersveld Rural Areas numerous interviews were conducted on the butchering of domestic stock. These discussions are presented below.

1. Selection of a suitable animal to butcher

To the question, "how do you decide which animal to butcher?" informants generally responded with the answer "which ever you like". This answer was often qualified with the answer that they most frequently selected a young wether (a castrated ram) between 12 and 24 months of age, an old (48 months or older) or infertile ewe, or a young male sheep (12 and 24 months of age) to butcher from amongst their small stock.

However, the selection also depended on the occasion for which the meat was required. On ceremonial occasions like births, deaths and weddings, people generally select young animals (between 12 and 24 months of age), which provide tender meat. Contrary to the expectations of archaeologists they often selected young ewes to butcher. When a group of people reside together, *i.e.* during the school holidays, they may butcher a large animal (such as a 24 month old wether). Older wethers are generally sold. When a small group of people reside together, they may butcher a 6-month-old lamb.

People express the view that the desire for meat builds up until they feel compelled to butcher, even if they do not have a suitable animal in their herd. They butcher "what ever they have". On one occasion a herder butchered a pregnant ewe, because he claimed she was the most suitable animal in his flock. Often the decision to butcher an animal is taken, on what appears to the outsider, to be the whim of the moment. One informant recalled collecting a large amount of a certain kind of plant food (*veldkos*) that, she claimed, tasted delicious with mutton. She immediately butchered a 24 month old ewe to eat with it. Many similar cases have been observed and described.

Frequently people described eating an old animal, but they are always quick to add that the animal should be fat. As long as an animal is fat, its age does not seem to influence its palatability. Sometimes a specific animal is butchered for certain properties, *e.g.* an 8-year-old goat provides strong back sinews which are used for sewing leather. Certain sheep varieties may be selected for butchering because their skins are required for a sheepskin blanket. An old goat is sometimes butchered so that its intestines may be used for yeast.

Few informants still own cattle, but in the past (*i.e.* some 30-40 years ago), most families reported owning a few head of cattle. Young calves are generally not butchered because they observed, "their meat does not amount to much". In the majority of cases, informants said that they butchered young cattle (less than 36 months of age) or old oxen. Cows from 8-10 years of age were also butchered. However, in the majority of cases cited, the animal had been butchered because it was ill, had died of heat or of disease.

2. How frequently do people butcher?

Contemporary herders have relatively small herds of sheep and goats and the majority have reported that they are only able

to butcher once a month. All were agreed that in the past (one to two generations ago) people butchered more frequently, the consensus being once a week to once in two weeks. One informant said that they butchered every 8th day, another every 14 days.

Butchering frequency naturally depends on herd size; with a herd of 100 small stock one herder said that he was only able to butcher every second month in order that he could continue to build up his flock. Another herder with 70 sheep and 130 goats reported butchering twice a month. In the past three to five families used to 'trek' and reside together and each family would take a turn to butcher and share meat with his neighbour. For this reason, my informants recalled nostalgically how their diet consisted almost entirely of meat, milk and bread in the past.

When questioned, however, they all insisted that even today they would butcher when they felt like meat, or when they had no meat in the house. Some people reported a decline in their desire for meat in the hot summer months. They said they did not feel like eating because of the heat. From February through to about May, they said, *gaan dit skraps* (people struggled to survive). May, in particular, is known as the hungry month. Seasonal hunger is accepted as a fact of life.

In contrast, the months August to October were regarded as times of plenty; people reported butchering almost continuously during the flowering season (*blomtyd*). After the arrival of missionaries in the 19th century, many herders were persuaded to plant small fields of wheat. The annual harvest of these wheat fields take place in December and herders are obliged to butcher some livestock to feed their helpers. This 18th century innovation has clearly significantly influenced current butchering patterns.

On certain occasions, such as weddings and deaths, up to four head of livestock may be butchered to feed the guests/mourners. Butchery also experiences an upswing during puberty celebrations, at births and during school holidays.

However, cattle, which provide large amounts of meat, were butchered less often in the past. One informant reported that cattle were butchered once in 3 months and the meat shared with neighbours. Cattle were butchered when there were enough people present to consume the meat before it went bad. Apparently, if 6 adults ate from an adult sheep or goat, the meat would last approximately one week. It was also observed that when one had guests it was possible to eat meat 2-3 times a day. If, for example, an animal was butchered on Tuesday, then the meat was generally finished by Saturday. Others remarked that the meat from a butchered animal generally lasted a week, *i.e.* from Monday to Sunday.

3. Seasonal Variability

As discussed in a previous section, butchering frequently appears to be seasonally determined. May is known as the "hungry month" and one informant reported that they ploughed their wheat fields first, and then started butchering their first cattle by May. They might butcher again in June and August. Cattle were butchered primarily in the winter months, because in the absence of storage facilities, the meat kept better. Since a cow or ox may provide 600 kg of meat, it is important that the meat be consumed by a large group of people. The meat of fat animals does not keep in warm weather. However, many

people pointed out that they seldom butchered cattle, but that many sick animals died in summer and then had to be eaten.

Small stock on the other hand, may be butchered at any time of the year. People reported butchering every 3rd day during the harvest (December). Many, however, said that they preferred not to eat too much in the summer months, especially if the meat was fatty. In winter, they reported "you feel more like meat".

4. Ritual and ceremonial butchering

People reported butchering more when they were engaged in communal activities like cleaning a water hole or harvesting wheat. Animals were butchered at parties, at weddings, and burials. After a birth, a woman had to lie in for a period of 9-10 days. Then an animal was butchered for her, as she needed meat to regain her strength. Plant foods and wheat were not regarded as "strong" enough to sustain her. After a further 10 days, another animal was butchered.

One informant from the Richtersveld could still recall the young girl's initiation ceremony. After the girl emerged from the period of seclusion, her family held a party and butchered some livestock. The dung of the stomach was thrown in the middle of the dance floor. People also reported butchering in the past after especially welcome rains had been received.

5. Who butchers and where?

Men generally undertake butchering although today some women are forced to undertake the secondary butchery because the men are often away. Two people are needed to butcher a sheep or goat animal (Fig. 3). According to van Niekerk (1975), four men are really needed to butcher cattle, one man cuts the throat and two men hold the back legs and front legs respectively. A fourth man holds the container to catch the blood. Butchering can take place either at the stockpost or at the more permanent summer settlements (called *stasies* or stations). The observations discussed below were made at the settlements and it is possible that variations on the process may take place at the stockpost. Frequently, the neck of the animal is slit at the stockpost after which the animal is transported and butchery takes place at the settlement.

Butchery at the stockpost takes place near the cattle byre (*kraal*) or at some place at least five metres from the house. The throat is slit and the blood drained on a piece of corrugated iron or on a small rock. Further butchering takes place closer to the cooking shelter (*kookskerm*) and the *n/ta* pole. While butchering may be undertaken at any time of the day, informants said that the morning is preferred because the meat is said to taste better. This is contradicted by van Niekerk (1975) who claims that during summer, the evening is preferred as this allows the meat to cool overnight.

6. Disarticulation (dismemberment) sequence

Observations were made on the butchering of one sheep (at a stockpost) and two goats (at settlements). In addition, notes were made on the portions of carcasses present at various homes during my fieldwork in the study area. This is supplemented by interviews with elderly informants.

The animal is killed by slitting its throat (Figs 3 & 4). Informants emphasized that it was very important that the animal is slaughtered properly. If this is not done, the meat will



Fig. 3. The neck of the goat is slit and blood is collected in a bowl.

taste strange. It is reported that people can detect when an inexperienced person has undertaken the butchering. If the meat is tough it is because of the person who is responsible for catching the animal chased it around too much; if the meat is flavourless (*laf*) it is because of the person who slit the throat did not do a proper job.

A container may be placed under the neck to collect the blood by one of the butchers. He holds a stick or fork in one hand with which he stirs the blood to prevent it from forming lumps. Once the throat has been cut, the animal must be placed so that the head is lower than the rest of the body. This allows the blood to drain rapidly from the meat. There is a belief that meat which still contains a lot of blood, will spoil more rapidly. Butchering is considered a skill. It is important to know exactly where to cut and not to leave any meat or fat still attached to the skin. It is also important not to cut holes in the skin. The butcher also has to ensure that the hair from the animal does not stick to the meat.

Once the blood has drained, the skin is slit open from the neck to the groin and along the inside of each limb to the joints of the lower limbs (Figs 4, 3 & 6). The skin is then pulled away from the carcass by inserting a clenched fist between the skin and the meat, and pulling with the other hand (Figs 7 & 8). The experienced butcher only needs his knife at the groin, neck, tail and lower limbs (*lieste, nek, stert en pootafsnypkeke*). The lower limbs are cut through and they are removed with the skin. The process of removing the skin takes place quickly but a less experienced butcher can take more than an hour.

The stomach is slit open (Figs 9 & 10) and the internal organs divided into 3 groups:

- a) liver, lungs and heart
- b) stomach
- c) intestines

The first group is hung from a nearby pole to drain (Fig. 11). The stomach is taken a few metres away and emptied of its contents. The intestines are pulled between the fingers to remove the dung (Fig. 12). When women are present at the butchering, they may plait a section of the intestine to dry and



Fig. 4. The start of the skinning process on the goat, with the skin slit open from the neck to the groin.



Fig. 5. The start of the skinning process on a sheep, starting with the front limb. It is of interest that the entrails, head and the distal ends of the limbs ('pootjies') are not removed before skinning. Today hunters will remove these parts before skinning.

use as yeast. The rest of the intestines are usually cooked with group one. Sometimes they may be thrown straight on the fire and eaten immediately.

According to van Niekerk (1975), the lower part of the colon (*kannatjiederm*) is generally given to the butcher, but is otherwise thrown on the fire to be eaten immediately. He describes how the internal organs are removed, noting that the stomach membrane (*persvlies*) has to be carefully cut open to ensure that the dung from the stomach contents do not contaminate the meat. Then the pelvis (*ysbeen*) is cut open carefully, so that the bladder is not nicked. The pallium (*mantelvlies*) is cut away



Fig. 6. The skinning of the sheep continues, with the distal ends of the limbs removed.



Fig. 7. The entire skin of the goat is removed before the distal ends of the limb bones are removed. The skinner inserts his hand between the skin and the body to force the skin away from the body.

from the ribs. Now the stomach has to be removed. At the base of the rumen (*grootpens*) the thin intestine (*dinderm*) is used to tie both ends. At the top of the stomach is the oesophagus known as the *rooikeel* and this is also knotted. Then the stomach is removed and carried off to the ash heap. A small incision in the stomach allows the dung to be thrown out. The stomach is an important part of the tripe which is to be prepared. He reports that the intestines (*dinderm* and *dikderm*) are often thrown away unless the woman wants to make sausage. Intestines can be dried out and used as yeast when baking bread. Further, an informant from Pella reported that the thin intestine could be dried out and blown up like a balloon. This was traditionally



Fig. 8. The skin and the distal ends of the goat have been completely removed



Fig. 9. The entrails of the sheep are removed while the carcass lies on the skin. The head and distal ends of the limbs have been completely removed.

done at weddings. The rectum (*vetderm*) and the colon (*kartelderm*) are both turned inside out, cleaned and salted.

According to van Niekerk (1975), the liver is consumed first. It is thrown on the weakest coals so that it does not dry out. The rectum (*vetderm*) is placed on the hot coals as it must cook thoroughly. The kidneys, too, must be cooked for a long time. The omasum and psalterium (*blaarpens*) is cooked slowly as is the gullet or oesophagus (*rooikeel*). The *mantelvliese* are also cooked with the other internal organs, as is the heart and colon (*kartelderm*). According to van Niekerk (1975), the spleen ('milt') may also be roasted, but tastes better if it is combined with the lungs and oesophagus (*slukderm*), cut into small pieces and served as a soup. Informants report that the back (*i.e.* the vertebral column) which is often considered the best part of the animal, is eaten after the liver which has to be consumed fresh. The meat is cooked very rapidly in boiling water until it turns a pale grey, after which it is eaten with a little salt.

Tripe becomes the main meal on the second day after the butchering of the livestock (van Niekerk 1975:77). It takes experience to clean tripe properly. The trotters of the animal are boiled and then the hooves (*kloutjies*) are removed with the tip of a knife. The glands are removed in the same way. The various parts of the stomach (*grootpens*, *blompens*, *blaarpens* and *langpens*) are carefully scraped clean. The head must also be carefully treated.



Fig. 10. The process of removing the entrails continues.



Fig. 11. The liver and other unidentifiable organs have been left to hang after removal from the body cavity.

According to informants, the head is cut off and placed with the lower limbs inside the empty stomach and wrapped inside the skin for later transportation and processing. The gall is not eaten but is thrown to the dogs. The entire carcass may then be



Fig. 12. The cleaning of the intestines.

hung from a pole to drain (Fig. 13) after which it is portioned into three primary sections (Figs 14 & 15). One side, cut off along the backbone, consists of a scapula, a forelimb, half the ribs, the backbone and half the pelvis. The other side is removed in the same way. The vertebral column, consisting of the neck, back and tail is considered the third portion, and this is cracked along the middle for easier transportation.

According to van Niekerk (1975), the breast bone of young lambs is cut open, while those of older individuals are sawn open. It is very difficult to break the rib cage of cattle in this manner and van Niekerk reports that at least two men are needed on each side. It was reported that the ribs are too large to break open and that the chest has to be sawn open.

Secondary butchery takes place at the settlement. This results in seven portions (*i.e.* the two forequarters, the two hind-quarters, the two ribs and the back). All informants emphasized the final portioning into the same seven body parts. The head, together with the stomach and feet (lower legs), are cooked separately as tripe. The intestines, heart, lungs and liver are consumed first. Then the tripe is eaten. The ribs are eaten last as the meat is said to preserve the best. Cattle are butchered in the same way.

Van Niekerk (1975) describes how the carcass is hung from the meat pole (*slagpaal*) and then divided into eight body parts. They are the two hindquarters, the two forequarters, the two ribs, the vertebral column and the neck. In other words, the same seven body parts reported by informants with the addition of the neck, which has been removed from the vertebral column.

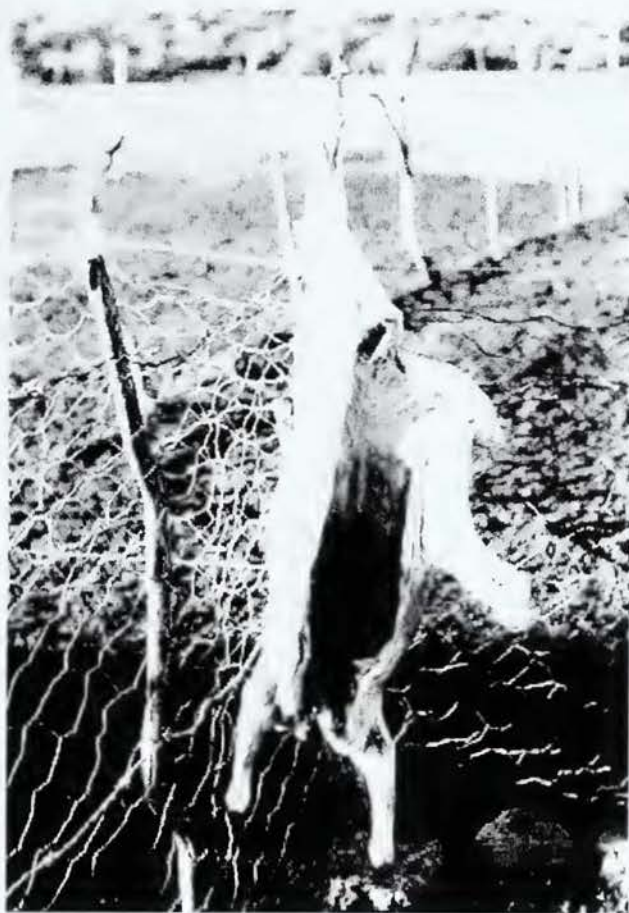


Fig. 13. The carcass without the head and neck is suspended from a fence at the kraal by the left hind limb. An incision is made behind the calcaneus without cutting through the Achilles tendon to allow the body to be suspended. The pelvis has now been cut through, which will leave typical chop and cut marks on the pubic bone. Also the sternum has been cut through.

The meat has to hang until it is completely cold. This is why butchering frequently takes place at sundown.

7. The sharing of meat and reciprocity

Certain portions of the slaughtered animal are preferentially exchanged. For example, on receiving half a rib section as a gift from an informant, I reciprocated with a neck of mutton bought at the local butchery. The meat was received with little enthusiasm. It soon became apparent that people have preferences for certain body parts

Whenever people were asked which part of the animal they generally gave as gifts, they invariably responded, "when someone asks for a piece of meat, you give him/her what they ask". They have a saying that the meat which is given away, will return (*die vleis kom weer terug wat soontoe is*). All informants emphasized that one always shared meat from domestic stock. This rule is generally not applied to hunted game that, today, consists of fairly small animals (such as steenbuck, dassie and hare). It is not known what happened when people hunted eland and gemsbok in the past.

Since family members lived near each other in the past, sharing usually took place between parents and their children, or between brothers and sisters. However, it became clear in

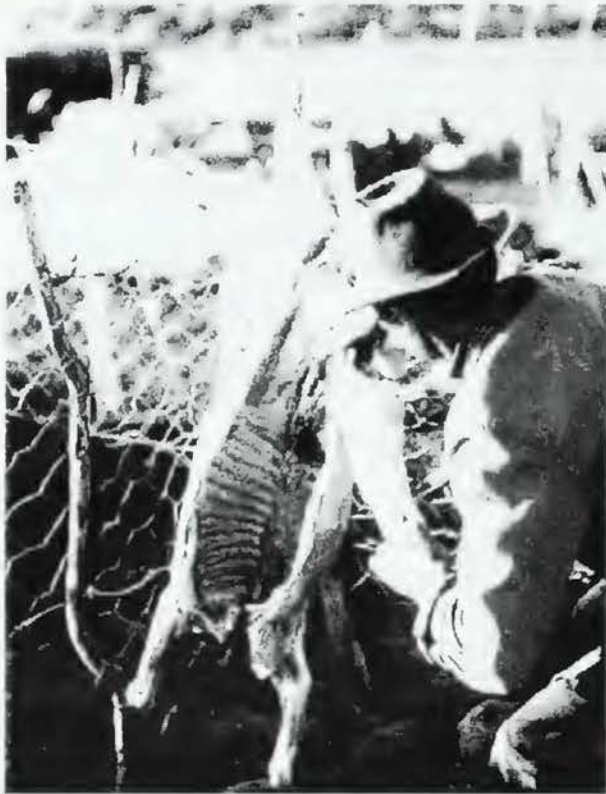


Fig. 14. The hind limb is cut from the body. This includes the section from the heel (talus and calcaneus) to the pelvis.

discussions, that even if a total stranger approached one with a request for meat, this would never be denied.

As mentioned previously, informants emphasized the division of the carcass into seven body parts. It appeared that there was a general preference for the back of an animal, especially the lower (lumbar area) back and hindquarters. These portions are usually consumed first as it is reported that the meat is the thickest and will therefore spoil first. The lower limbs, head and internal organs are generally retained by the owner of the animal and are not usually shared. The back and hindquarters may also be given to one's parents or parents-in-law or else made into biltong. The ribs and forequarters are more generally given away to other family members. The ribs in particular are regarded as low status food and are often given to strangers. Informants from Pella reported that people give the forequarters to visitors and that it would be rude to keep this part for yourself.

The stomach is reported to be big and everyone likes it, so it is cooked so that everyone can get a piece. The head too, is reported to feed an entire family. Apparently at least 5 families are able to eat from a single animal (if the two forequarters and two ribs are given away) and the back kept for one's own consumption.

Cattle provided even more meat. According to informants the best part of the ox is the hindquarters, forequarters and the back. They are reported to consist of *vaste vleis* (meat with substance). The two hindquarters are reported to feed four families, the two forequarters two families, the ribs two families and the head one family.

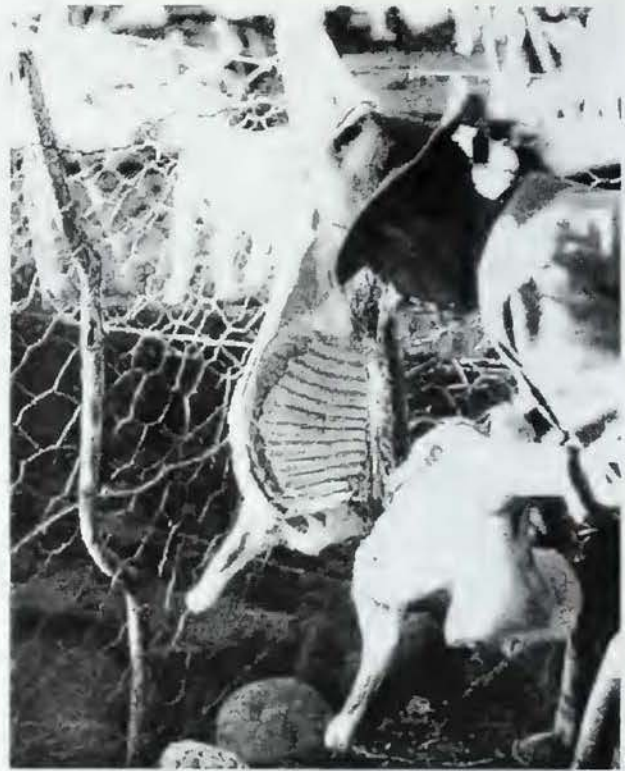


Fig. 15. After removing the hind limb, the carcass is split axially by dorsally cutting through the lumbar and thoracic vertebrae on the right side of the vertebral spines, on the side not used for suspension.

8. The preparation of the meat products

The back and hindquarters are the best parts for biltong. Making biltong allows the meat to keep longer. Today, biltong is seldom made from sheep or goat meat but game biltong is still common. Alternatively, the meat would be flayed (*oop gevlek*) and well salted. If properly done, the meat could last up to a month outside of the refrigerator. Generally, meat is cut up into bite-sized pieces and boiled in a tripod pot together with vegetables. The ribs are sometimes roasted in the mornings for breakfast.

In the past the head was first placed in the fire to singe off the hair. Then a hole was made in the ground and a fire made inside. After the fire had died down, the embers were scraped out, and the head placed in the hole, which was then covered with tin sheeting. The embers were placed on top of the tin. According to informants, the head takes about one hour to bake through, after which it is possible to pick off the meat, before the skull was chopped open. The brains and tongue were also eaten.

Today, people spend a good deal more time preparing tripe (*offal*) that includes the head, stomach and lower limbs (Fig. 16). The hair is carefully removed from the head and feet with a razor blade. Thereafter the head is chopped open and boiled together with the stomach and feet. It is a very time-consuming process but tripe is a favourite dish and the time is considered well spent. It is one of the first dishes to be prepared after the animal is butchered as the internal organs and the brain does not keep well.

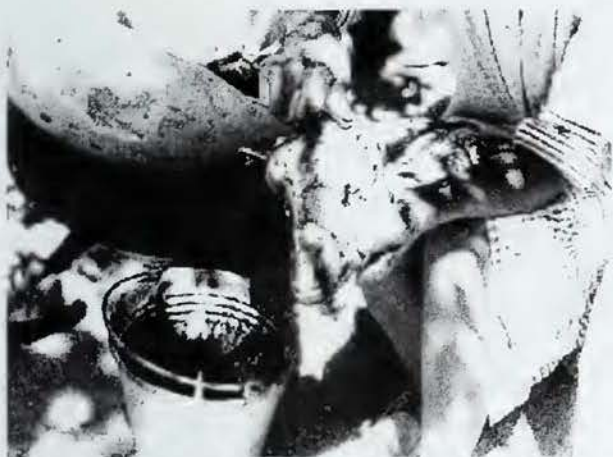


Fig. 16. The head, which is not skinned, is being prepared.



Fig. 17. The blood of the slaughtered goat is being whisked to prevent it coagulating.

The small intestine and stomach may be air dried and cooked when desired, sometimes by placing them on a grid or directly into the warm ashes. The kidney fat and intestine fat are especially favoured for adding flavour to vegetable dishes.

9. Marrow extraction

The limb bones are boiled and then chopped open for the marrow or as informants described it: "until the soft yellow fat runs out". The bottom part of the long bone is chopped off and the bone is placed in a pot in the sun, preferably in a sheltered part of the cooking shelter. The oily fat is reported to run out into the pot and is eaten by the children. Alternatively, the bone may be placed on a clean flat stone and broken open with another stone. The marrow that runs out is scooped up and eaten. A special method is used to prevent the bone from splintering into the marrow. The bone is chopped/broken on a place which still has meat attached. This results in only small

splinters of bone (*skilletjies*) rather than larger pieces of bone. The bone may be broken open by cracking it against a pot lid.

10. Meat Storage

From discussions with informants it appears that meat can last a long time if properly treated. If untreated, it may spoil very rapidly and therefore the proper procedures need to be followed immediately after butchering. The general consensus is that meat, if not treated properly, will spoil within three days. However, if the correct methods of preservation are followed, meat may last 8-15 days during the harvest (summer) and up to a month in winter. In practice, of course, meat is generally consumed long before it has had a chance to spoil.

According to informants, the meat must be placed on the roof of the hut at night or else hung from the *n//a* pole. The word *n//a* is said to mean meat, and people therefore say the pole is '*n//a*' or full of meat. If it dewes at night, a covering is placed over the meat. Early the next morning, before the sun rises, the meat has to be wrapped in a cloth or sack, and packed away in the coolest part of the hut. This is generally under the bed. If the meat is very fatty, it was to be stored between sheets of paper during the day.

According to van Niekerk (1975), the simplest meat pole is a long branch of a thorn tree. It needs several branches so that the portions of meat do not touch each other and spoil. These branches need to be above the height of dogs. The meat is removed in the mornings, wrapped in a cloth, and placed in the coolest place in the house, which is generally under the bed. The means is taken out again at sundown, and hung from the meat pole. If this routine is followed precisely, then it is possible for meat to last up to 15 days in summer. One informant reported that he sometimes ate from a goat for an entire month.

Meat may keep even longer if it is flayed which involves cutting and salting the meat. It may be left for 2 days in salt, and coriander and cloves may be added to improve the flavour. When flayed, the bone had to be removed from the meat. Despite every precaution, meat does start going rancid with time, it is reported to become soft and 'melts'.

11. Use of other products resulting from the slaughter

Fat

The hard fat is removed from the stomach and intestines and placed together. This will be used later in cooking and importantly in the manufacture of home-made candles. The sheep tail, together with other soft fat which has been removed from the meat, is cooked together for various household products such as a spread for bread and ash bread. The fat tail of the Namaqua Afrikaner sheep may weigh between four and eight kilograms. Boiling the tail in a pot renders the fat. This produces a thick white fat that may be stored for up to one month and is used in almost all dishes. The small bits of meat in the tail are cooked to a golden brown (*kaiangx*) and this is a special dish with children.

Rudner (1968) traced some 230 early references to the use of fat in connection with the Khoekhoen. Thirty-four of these references specify sheep fat and some insist on the use of tail fat. After the fat is rendered from the tail, it is stored in a tin and used in a variety of ways. Apart from its culinary applications, fat is also used to soften skins, it is combined with various herbs

and applied medicinally (for massage) and is used in rituals. People distinguish between stomach fat (*ong*) and kidney fat. The former is combined with herbs and used medicinally; the latter fat is referred to as hard. The stomach fat is prepared by chewing it finely, then softening it in the palm of the hand, before using it as a plaster on sore nipples for breast-feeding mothers or mixed with dagga (*Cannabis* sp.) and applied to baby's navels. Fat may be combined with ash and used as a plaster. One informant explained that the fat around the kidney was called *ong*. It is generally used after it has stood a few days in a tin and melted into a soft yellow fat, which can be used like Vaseline. However, if the fat is needed quickly, then one can chew the raw fat until it becomes soft. Animal bones may be kept and stored in tins that are hung from the *n/a* pole. They are boiled for their fat, which is used to soften hide.

Blood

The blood of small stock is often kept for blood porridge. Cattle blood is not consumed but may be used on the matjies hut floors (Archer 1994). Animals are generally butchered by slitting the throat. The blood, collected in a bowl, is whisked so that it does not congeal (Fig. 17). Alternatively, the blood may be allowed to set, and the fibres removed with a fork. The blood is brought to the boil in a pot, and a cup of flour and a cup of sugar as well as a pinch of cinnamon are added. It is served to children. Or it may be given to the dogs. Meat may sometimes be finely ground or stamped with grindstones. Meat may be briefly placed in hot ashes before being stored for later use. It is believed that this delays its deterioration.

Sinews

The sinews from mature goats are used as a thread for sewing hide articles (Webley 2005). Sheep sinews are not strong enough while cattle sinews are too thick to be used for sewing. After a goat is butchered, the ribs are removed but care is taken not to cut them off too close to the vertebral column. The sinews are cut loose at the neck and lower back and then carefully 'pulled out'. The excess meat is scrapped off and the sinew is wound around a pole and left to dry. The sinew is then pulled apart into thin strands. It may then be moistened in the mouth or a little fat may be applied, after which it is rolled between the fingers until a thin thread is produced. It is then used for the sewing of skins, etc.

Hooves and Horns

Cupping horns have traditionally been used in medical treatments and elderly residents talk about three horns, one of a bull and two of calves. They specify that the horns should be respectively 2 inches, 1½ inches and 1 inch in diameter. Laidler (1928) reported that both ends of the horn was open, the broader end was carefully bevelled while the smaller end was closed with resin which was then pierced with a long thorn. Small scratches or cuts were made on the patient's back or legs and he/she was required to lie in the sun so that his blood could warm up and flow easily. The horns were then applied to the cuts and used to "suck out" (*koppel*) the pain or disease. These horns were only used by medicine men. Goat horns may be burnt and the outer surface scraped off for medicine. The hooves of animals were also scraped and the shavings used for medicine. Goat dung may be used medicinally, *i.e.* for treating measles. One informant reported placing his infected legs in a bucket of warm goat dung

to treat them. In the recent past, cattle dung, blood and the gum of Acacia tree were mixed and applied as a surface to the floors of huts (Archer 1994).

DISCUSSION

Detailed discussions with informants and field observations have revealed that decisions regarding the animal to be butchered are a complex process in which many factors are taken into account. The selection of a suitable animal depends on a number of variables such as (1) size of the owner's herd, (2) composition (age/sex) structure of the herd, (3) season of the year, (4) number of people for whom meat is required (5) occasion for which meat is required *i.e.* daily versus ritual needs, (6) secondary by-products required *i.e.* sinew, skin, fat, horns, etc. In a similar vein, when Binford (1978:39) questioned the Nunamiut on their personal preferences in terms of caribou meat, he reported that his informants were puzzled.

Do you mean in the winter or summer?

Do you mean during the migration hunting or when we are eating dried meat?

Do you mean at a 'feast' or a regular meal?

Do you mean when receiving a gift of meat from a relative or when I am eating my own meat?

It is clear that the Nama Khoekhoen, like the Nunamiut, need to consider many variables when making decisions regarding butchery.

However, the dismemberment process itself, appears to be fairly standard (possibly not as rigid as Binford observed). Game, whether it be dassie or a small buck, are butchered in the same way as that of domestic stock. Exceptions are only made when, for example, a goat is butchered for its back sinews.

Butchery is a process which does not end with the evisceration of the animal and the dismemberment of the carcass into the seven units described above. There is also a secondary dismemberment of the carcass which usually takes place within the home and is dictated by rules regarding sharing and reciprocity. Some anatomical parts are presented to the family. The Nama appear to follow the system of the San, with the most important parts given to the parents. Meat is shared, first with parents and parent's-in-law, then with siblings and the extended family. Peterson (1993) describes a system of 'demand sharing' amongst Australian Aboriginal peoples which is also very prevalent among present-day inhabitants of the Namaqualand reserves. Informants reported that they would not reject the request for a piece of meat even if it came from a total stranger. Not all sharing is altruistic. In the majority of cases, people feel compelled to share their food (and other items from the household) with family, friends and strangers because it is expected of them. They may complain about the fact that a particular individual always turns up when they are serving supper, but the individual is never turned away empty handed.

This paper does not attempt an animal body-part utility index, such as that devised by Binford (1978). Archaeologists have been concerned to devise such measures to interpret faunal assemblages. Simply put, these indices reflect the fact that different anatomical parts of the animal contain different amounts of meat, bone marrow and bone grease and Binford

suggests that these indices influence decisions on the transportation and storage of different body parts. "In general" he observes, "the parts of greatest utility are femur, sternum, ribs, pelvis, and thoracic vertebrae" (Binford 1978:21). Clearly these observations are not supported by the oral accounts of Nama butchery presented above. Binford himself, acknowledges that he has not observed a single episode in which the selection of a specific anatomical part was made with respect to the meat yield only. There are many factors at play with regard to the distribution of body parts. For example, the Nunamiut (Binford 1978) exhibited a bias against the front legs and the neck, as these body parts are the leanest.

Generally, anthropological studies contain little discussion on the internal organs as these obviously have little archaeological correlates. But, this review shows that internal organs are consumed first and that they are of sufficient quantity to provide meals for the first few days after an animal is butchered. With regard marrow-extraction, it is interesting to note Binford's observations amongst the Nunamiut women, "second concern: namely, that the bones be broken so that the marrow remains "clean", that is free of impact chips commonly driven into the marrow when the dense bone of the shaft is impacted" (Binford 1981:158-159). Pastoralists in Namaqualand also employ a strategy to avoid these 'impact splinters'.

In summary, in more than 50% of all interviews, informants agreed that they preferred butchering an 18-month to 2-year-old male goat (*kapater*). Other preferences were for male sheep over 12 months of age, or old ewes (older than 8 years of age). Very few (only 2) informants specified lambs of 6 months of age. Very young animals (whether they were sheep, goat or cattle) were seldom butchered as people reported "their meat does not amount to much".

There is no evidence from the ethnographic material presented above that would support the interpretations offered for the age and sex profiles recorded at archaeological sites such as Boomplaas (von den Driesch & Deacon 1985), Kasteelberg (Klein & Cruz-Urbe 1989) or Die Kelders (Schweitzer 1974), although there are some correlations with Jakkalsberg (Brink & Webley 1996) and the recently abandoned pastoralist site at Sendelingsdrift (Robertshaw 1978).

In their analysis of the post-cranial sheep sample from Boomplaas Cave in the southern Cape, von den Driesch and Deacon (1985) reported that 40% died before 6 months of age, 25% died between the ages of 6 months and 1 year, and 15% died between one year and 18 months. Only 20% of the remains were older than 18 months. In other words, 80% of the sheep (based on the post-cranial sample) were juvenile. Von den Driesch and Deacon (1985) attempt to explain the high proportion of juvenile remains at the site by proposing that Boomplaas functioned as a sheep kraal, and mention a juvenile mortality rate, due to natural causes, of around 16%. This figure is probably an under-estimation as Cribb (1984:163) has observed that "a neonatal mortality rate of 20-30% is common" amongst herding groups. The very high (40%) proportion of sheep individuals of less than 6 months of age from Boomplaas should possibly be interpreted due to natural attrition.

Nevertheless, von den Driesch and Deacon (1985) have speculated on the high juvenile numbers from the site by quoting information from the Maitland abattoir in Cape Town, indicating that 70% of the sheep delivered to the abattoir are

lambs less than 12 months of age. Clearly, the Western palate prefers lean and tender lamb. However, the descendants of Nama-speaking pastoralists are equally adamant that their meat should be fat. A 6-month-old lamb contains very little meat or fat. Even European farmers, living around the Leliefontein Reserve, concur that the optimum age for butchering small stock is between 12-18 months when both weight and tenderness is maximized. If we interpret the high numbers of juvenile small stock remains from archaeological sites using Western standards "for judging what is plausible or possible, then we commit the worse kind of ethnocentric error" Binford (1981:188). In place of a post-hoc accommodative argument, it is important to ask: why does the archaeological record from Boomplaas contain such high numbers of juvenile sheep phalanges? Do they represent complete individuals introduced into the assemblage? How were these juvenile bones preserved? If these animals represent livestock consciously butchered, cooked and the bones discarded - what mechanism resulted in their preservation? Were there dogs present?

Further, the spread of three male and seven female sexually mature individuals from the archaeological deposit at Boomplaas would suggest that decisions regarding the butchery of domestic stock was more opportunistic than planned.

With regard Die Kelders on the Cape south coast, Schweitzer (1974) has recorded 23 sheep individuals from Layer 2 based on dental material. Eighteen were younger than 18 months, two between 18 months and 48 months and three older than 48 months. Six out of 23 individuals were definitely identified as being male, and they appear to all be young to very young from the state of their horn core development. "The predominance of the male juvenile remains supports the assumption that the Die Kelders sheep were slaughtered by their herder-owners" claims Schweitzer (1974:79). In other words, that they were cropping their surplus stock, the young male non-breeding animals. In an earlier paper, Schweitzer and Scott (1973) were more specific, noting that there are 15 animals aged between six months and thirty months. The latter age range, however, would support the ethnographic observations presented in this paper.

Kasteelberg, on the Vredenberg Peninsula in the Western Cape, is a small hill with a number of archaeological sites. Klein and Cruz-Urbe (1989:90) have found that the faunal assemblages from sites KBA and KBB are dominated by sheep and seal and they have suggested that these sites functioned as "specialized stockposts/sealing stations". In their interpretation of the faunal assemblage from Kasteelberg A and B Klein and Cruz-Urbe (1989) begin from the assumption that the sheep, "were kept primarily for their milk and partly for their meat. Their age profiles thus should be dominated mainly by young animals (lambs), in the first 10% of potential life span (roughly 12 years), and secondarily by relatively old ones, beyond 40-50% of life span when reproductive capacity begins to decline. The regular removal of many lambs and of post-prime adults would not only produce a steady supply of meat, it might even promote flock health by reducing pressure on the veld" (Klein & Cruz-Urbe 1989:90).

They go on to assume that male lambs would have been culled as they do not produce milk and only a few are needed for reproduction. At both sites, the age (mortality) profile of the sheep appears to be concentrated in the first 10% of potential

lifespan but Kasteelberg A also contains a number of adults in the 40-50% of potential lifespan. The authors interpret this anomaly through ethnographic analogy, as confirming the "kind of rational flock management strategy we would expect to find in a stockpost midden" (*ibid* 1989:91). KBB, however, poses an additional problem as it contains very few older, post-prime individuals and this anomaly is explained away by a "narrowing of seasonal occupation" to a period when seal were more common and the need to slaughter sheep diminished. It is clear from these discussions that the age profile of sheep remains from Kasteelberg is difficult to explain using the conventional interpretations offered by archaeologists.

The dominance of sheep in the faunal sample from Jakkalsberg in the Richtersveld, Northern Cape, suggests that it represents a pastoralist site, occupied around 1300 BP. Dental remains from the Jakkalsberg A site were too fragmentary to allow accurate age profiles but the post-cranial remains suggest that all classes, from newborn to fully adult, are represented (Brink & Webley 1996). The dental remains from the Jakkalsberg B site show that there is no clear focus on a specific age class since newborn to adult individuals represented. The sample is not dominated by juvenile individuals as is the case with Boomplaas (von den Driesch & Deacon 1985), Die Kelders (Schweitzer 1974) or Kasteelberg (Klein & Cruz-Urbe 1989). The sex ratio for Jakkalsberg B, based on intact pelvises, is 6 males and one female. The age profiles of sheep remains from Jakkalsberg therefore, do conform to the ethnographic observations presented above.

Finally, the analysis of a faunal sample collected by Robertshaw (1978) from a recently abandoned pastoralist camp-site at Sendelingsdrif, also in the Richtersveld, confirms that all 23 individuals represented at the site were between the ages of 24-30 months. This last observation confirms the accounts of contemporary pastoralists in Namaqualand, namely that young adult or adult sheep and goats are preferentially slaughtered for maximum meat gain. Ethnographic accounts clearly show that contemporary herders/foragers seldom slaughter livestock under the age of 12 months. The most likely explanation for the dominance of juvenile animals in archaeological sites would relate to high juvenile mortality rates and this is an issue which needs to be examined in greater detail.

How does one explain the differing percentages of domestic stock at post-pottery archaeological sites? Elsewhere (Webley 1986), it has been proposed that larger numbers of domestic stock were slaughtered at aggregation sites (summer settlements) and less at the winter dispersal sites (stockposts). This is because pastoralists are able to live from the milk of their stock and the plentiful supplies of plant foods (*veldkos*) which are available in winter and spring. It was also observed that rituals and ceremonies occur more frequently at the summer aggregation sites, resulting in an increased incidence of slaughtering.

Sadr (2004:5), suggests that sheep-poor sites "represent everyday living sites" while sheep-rich sites represent the "location of special activities" and more specifically, the locations for feasts. These feasts are defined as "events constituted by the communal consumption of food and drink for special purposes". These events may be celebrations of initiation, marriage, birth or death. Sadr (2004) is of the opinion that feasts sites may be recognized archaeologically through the presence of certain

unusual artefacts, such as shale palettes, Turbo shell pendants, warthog tusks, *etc.* While this paper supports the hypothesis that larger numbers of sheep remains will be found at aggregation sites (which tend to coincide with increased ritual activities), it does not necessarily follow that pastoralist groups specifically aggregate in order to undertake ritual activities.

Sadr discusses the evidence for feasting at Kasteelberg, and mentions with regard to KBA that there are many sheep cranial bones (Sadr 2004:9) present in the site. He postulates that this could "point to preferential consumption of sheep brains, which also have a high fat content or it may indicate the display of sheep heads as trophy". It is not clear why he believes sheep brains should be preferentially consumed at feasts since they are clearly only one component of the entire sheep carcass. His discussion on whether the feasts held at Kasteelberg in the late first millennium could be considered a "promotion/alliance" or "competitive feasts" and his further speculation on whether the local population "was throwing solidarity, reciprocal, solicitation, promotional, competitive, political, work-party or child-growth feasts" (Sadr 2004:12) is surely hypothetical and not grounded in the types of ceremonial activities which are discussed by the 17th century travellers to the region.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper does not attempt to emulate Binford's (1978) work on the Nunamiut Eskimo of North Central Alaska. It is an ethnographic rather than an ethno-archaeological study as I have been concerned with the butchery behaviour of the Nama, rather than with the analysis of the bone remains as a reflection of the butchery on the faunal assemblage. The study is not concerned with the relationship between human behaviour and a specific faunal assemblage. There are no observations on bone breakage, patterns of attrition or butchery marks. However, faunal collections have been made from a number of bone middens in Namaqualand and the differential frequency of anatomical parts as well as butchery marks awaits analysis.

In addition, the observations discussed above have not been compared with those made on hunter-gatherer groups. Yellen (1977), for example, observed a single butchery episode amongst the !Kung Bushman, which he described as "conforms to the standard pattern" (Yellen 1977:280). This contrasts with the very high variability which Binford (1978) recorded amongst the Nunamiut. The problem with drawing comparisons with hunters such as the San (Yellen 1977), Hadza (O'Connell & Hawkes 1988) or the Nunamiut (Binford 1978) is that many of the decisions regarding butchering are premised on the fact that the animal has been hunted and killed some distance from the settlement. Transportation of the meat therefore becomes one of the prime considerations in the sub-division of the carcass into various anatomical parts. Nevertheless, this study does suggest that the Khoekhoen descendants have a system of sharing which more closely resembles the !Kung (Yellen 1977).

This study has presented an overview of historical and ethnographic accounts related to slaughtering amongst the Namaqua Khoekhoen in Namaqualand and related Khoekhoen groups in the Northern Cape. It is concerned with documenting the strategy employed by current semi-sedentary pastoralist groups in Namaqualand when butchering domestic stock. It

does not presume to suggest that these same strategies were also employed in the prehistoric past. However, it does question the assumption often made by archaeologists that herders would have managed their flocks to "maximize meat and possibly also milk yields" Klein and Cruz-Urbe (1989:91). It suggests that there are problems with regard the interpretations which have been offered for the age and sex of sheep remains from archaeological sites. The contemporary ethnographic record from Namaqualand offers some interesting alternative perspectives which may allow us to consider faunal remains from archaeological sites from a different perspective.

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