


Editorial

CHRISTOPHER CHIPPINDALE

 **Elandsbaai** Western Cape, South Africa
warm and sunny

North and trending west a little out from Cape Town, through the Cape Flats sprawl and into arid ploughland. Everywhere blossoming on the wire fences is South Africa's welcoming national flower — the feral plastic bag (a bloom shared even equally by Italy), commonly white, often with polychrome details. Into Piketberg for a snack, little town full of farmers' *bakkies* come into town to buy stuff for the property; the bottle shop opposite, as ANTHONY MANHIRE shows me, is a thoroughly modern building where a concrete fedazzle set over the door is the enduring ghost of the graceful central gable in high Cape Dutch houses. Above us the mountain of the Piketberg, a high craggy lump which looks promising (at least, *fairly* promising) for rock-art. Though I am used now to unexplored country in Australia, my English background still makes me expect every obvious archaeological acre will have been explored to exhaustion; so I am startled when I ask, and Tony says, 'Is there rock-art up there? Probably — we haven't had time to look yet.'

Then turning more west, narrowing tarmac then good gravel, we cross the *sandveld* and come towards Elandsbaai. Sheep, wheat, cattle, ostriches (*ostriches!* — this is my first time in southern Africa), vines. A spreading flock of sheep on the stubble with dark-skinned herders: the sheep not fat-tailed, but otherwise a wandering flock as shepherding people have grazed this land 2000 years. To the east, the ridges of the Cederberg, blue knife-edges retreating into far grey. Then a long straight valley, cultivated fields of pure sand on the slope, not even a streak

The Editorship of ANTIQUITY

Christopher Chippindale completes 10 years as Editor of ANTIQUITY in December, and leaves office. From January 1998, the new Editor will be Caroline Malone with the support of Simon Stoddart.

of humus in the beige. To our left, the Verlorenvlei, a long narrow pool of water, sometimes with reeds, pelicans, glossy ibis, though we are still 15 kilometres from the sea. In time, opposite, where Diepkloof shelter makes an enticing lump on the sky-line, a clump of trees. Before it, with its *stoop* overlooking the *vlei*, a *langhuis*, neat and low, tiny windows, green door, whitewashed (to save the unfired mudbrick from running away in the wet) under a thatch from the *fynbos*.

A night in the University of Cape Town's station, field-base for JOHN PARKINGTON's long-term study of the changing landscape and the Quaternary sequence around Eland's Bay. It is astonishing to me — and no less astonishing though I know it is commonplace — how much of a Holocene landscape's changing story is plainly visible on the ground, if only you have the eyes and experience: the main shelter of Elandsbaai cave; the little gray taluses spilling down below smaller overhangs that tell each of a little deposit of shell and lithics above; the rock-bar at the mouth of the *vlei* which separates the brackish-cum-freshwater from the saltwater systems; the 'dinner-time' camps of one-time visits that make tiny deposits of shell and charcoal scattered within the sand of the



Elandsbaai: the University of Cape Town field station above the vlei is a langhuis. Thatch and whitewash keep its mudbrick sound, by the usual rule that mud buildings need a good hat, a good set of shoes, and a good coat to keep safely dry.

dunes; further north, the *kopjes* with open sites at their bases; the shell beaches, *cheniers*, of 'last Interglacial' age (whatever *that* means) in the quarry exposures; and a deep river valley where, they say, handaxes are downstream eroding out of the channel banks.

The earth scientists who work on plate tectonics teach us how thin and shallow is the zone of active geology as we see it, on and within the plates that float lightly above the deep movements. We archaeologists, who work amongst the shallow surficial deposits that lie on those plates, see the same in miniature. So we are given the beach terraces, the moving sand-dunes, the buried soils — the whole material body of Holocene landscapes often perfectly on view.

U **Diepkloof** Elandsbaai, Western Cape,
South Africa *warm and sunny*

Above and across from the *langhuis*, a high crag of rocks on the ridge-top, rounded, with a clear overhang on the left side: Diepkloof shelter. A hint of a path up to it from the farm buildings,



Diepkloof West. Red ochre hand — painted or printed or offset — as a set of nested U-shapes.

through the low scrub and across the scree boulders, a scramble over the rounded blocks for the last yards, and into a lovely enclosed rock-shelter, Diepkloof West. A fortunate fall of little rocks has pulled in and held back the deposit in a good area, 10 by 5 m, northeast facing: not fortunate, JOHN PARKINGTON thinks, as the rock-fall is too regular, and they see this in other shelters as some kind of a nearly built wall. Board and plastic sheeting covers the top of his telephone-box excavation, left accessible since they stopped before bottom. A great vista out, across the *vlei*, on towards the far Cederberg. Distinct round patches below, greyer in the patchwork foliage, half a dozen yards across: the mark in the modern vegetation of long-gone termite mounds, John tells us.

Rock-art — paintings, not so many, but as my first in southern Africa they will do. Painted hands mostly, but how are they done? Not simple prints, because the palm comes out as U-shapes nested within each other. Not painted either. Are they 'offset' (as a printer would call them) — with the design painted on the hand, and then the hand rolled on to the rock face and the image transferred there?

Animal droppings run down, goo over and ruin some paint. Hyrax droppings, we hear, and we see hyraxes — *dassies* — later in the day: too much like oversized grey guinea-pigs to be credible as the elephant's closest living relative. Over the years, working in shallow shelters with rock-art, I have accumulated experience of the varied creatures whose droppings build up there. I am not surprised to hear that dates



Diepkloof East. SIYAKHA MGUNI left and JOHN PARKINGTON right, making sense of overlays of one painting over another that will, if clear enough, state the rock-art stratigraphy.

for the dassie droppings, built into fantastical dirty black stacks, go back thousands of years: the lengthy radiocarbon chronology of habitual and orderly shitters. Dassie poo has its own faint stink, which I come not to enjoy; though it is less nasty than the rodent mustiness in the ancient nests of Great Basin pack-rats. I prefer the cleaner smell of Arnhem Land rock-wallabies, though their urine makes even slippier and shiny skins on the rock surfaces to have you slither off. Mediterranean sheep and goats just make scattered pea-droppings, no build-up, no sense of *history* there. My favourite creature of the caves, when it comes to lying on whatever stuff covers the shelter floor to look at paint on the ceilings, remains the feral donkeys of north Australia, whose generously loose digestion makes — if the plopped turds are old enough and well enough baked clean in the sun — for a soft, dry, grassy, pleasant mass to ease your shoulders on. (It could be worse, as BRUNO DAVID reminds me, telling of the shimmering patch on the floor of Hearth Cave, which close up was the biggest mob of hungry ticks, on the march towards his excavation trench.)

Round to Diepkloof East nearly at the same level, more open, less deposit, less grand view. More pictures, though not much to see at first glance. Ochre mostly, some with white: there are my first eland, the famed great antelope of Bushman painting and sacred knowledge. Red bodies make strong red rectangles; their white heads are most parts gone. Not as lovely as in the books!

We look with special care at paintings that distinctly cover one another: is this a site at which sequence can be seen with some reliability, and therefore a place that can contribute to a stratigraphic chronology for the Western Cape paintings? SIYAKHA MCGUNI, honours student who arrived only last week at Cape Town to develop his skills from an undergraduate degree in his home Zimbabwe, looks at the figures with John and myself. Does he have an honours field project here? It looks like it.

I have some notions, especially the value of a huge line of the nested-U hands, about 110 clear that are spread along 10 metres, out of perhaps 130–160 originally; if one can treat those as a set of motifs to be equated together, as reasonably supposed to have been done altogether and all at the same time, then they will tie the whole panel together. I remember the long line

of water-lily buds, and the great horizontal snake, that similarly unite the sequence across the Kungurrul panel in north Australia, on which PAUL TAÇON and I built essentials of our regional chronology there. I realize with a start that I am for once some kind of an expert in what we are looking at. Parkington, a cannier man than I, expects me to be able to guide him as to what best they do. That Australian work was, we believe, the first time a complex rock-art sequence was resolved using the Harris matrix method developed for complex stratigraphy in the dirt; JANNIE LOUBSER's subsequent study of the El Ratón panel in Baja California was the second; Siyakha's and John's would make the third. I try to work with Siyakha through essentials of what Paul and I found useful, and where we were cautious; how can I be helpful and courteous, not pushy or commanding, with a young man who has just come from home to a foreign university, then straight into the bush with a visiting bearded Brit — a Brit who is both in an African painted shelter for the first time and pretends to know what to do with it?

🐾 Sevilla Cederberg, Western Cape, South Africa *hot and still*

Inland from Elandsbaai to Clanwilliam; its name — remembering some failed Irish settling of the place — stands out from the Afrikaans place-names all around. The centre of a little town busy with Saturday morning business, *bakkies* down the main street, the Spa store heaving with shoppers. Over the high Pakhuis Pass, and down 300 metres into the valley — part dry-farming, part great circles of irrigated land. Up a side-track by the empty river-channel to a pair of cottages under a pepper-tree. A *langhuis* again, with the caution here to beware of baboons; who will squeeze in a window and trash the place at the smallest opportunity. We see the patriarch of the troupe one afternoon, looking just like a baboon should look by the model of the rock-paintings: first in sitting profile on the rock edge, tail overhanging; then on all fours in strolling profile; then heading back over the crest to join his women and children.

The Cederberg landscape strikes me as classic arid rock-art country: broken scrub, with exposures along the river-valleys, and where gullies make little canyons. Metamorphosed sandstone, it's more like the basalt country of the Mojave Desert in central California. Worn

and wonderfully detailed red paintings in the little shelters and overhangs; my eyes often struggle as Tony Manhire points to the faint lines, millimetre thin and sometimes in a transparent yellow, which make the bows and bow-strings painted as they were held — either out ready for action in the hand or stowed away in the hunter's bag. I will struggle even more with the famous line of elephant-headed men in the Olifantsrivier valley (*Olifants! Elephants!*), so much fainter than what was seen distinct when the old tracings were made, not many years ago. Something grave is happening on the rock, not just in my eyes.

There is a lot to spy on the ground too, and I begin to learn what to look for amongst the lithics. Grey-black shale, an odd worked-stone material for me, is a pointer. Close by to the

east begins the great plateau of the Karoo, the dry plateau with flat-topped shale *kopjes* that amounts to nearly a third of the area of South Africa; so shale in the industries points to links that way. As at Elandsbaai, it does and it does not surprise me that the surface landscape is so littered with these traces of a Stone Age presence. It does thrill me, as it should.

In one of the Traveller's Rest shelters, darn it, an aardvark has quarried through the deposits, turning over the grey dry dirt. It's as bad a beast as a wild pig. In the side of the hole it has rooted up are streaks of white and of beige grass-stems. The beige will be the sleeping-mats, for the Cederberg shelters are dry enough to conserve organics.

**Department of Archaeology,
Stellenbosch University Western Cape,
South Africa *hot and clear***


Across the Cape Flats from Kaapstad, between the 'informal settlements' (a.k.a. townships) that line the motorway by the mile, past the thickets of infamous Port Jackson weed; it's an Australian mimosa, imported to stabilize sandy places, and now gone wildly feral. (Why do the Australian plants, once released, take over the world — whilst the Australian animals cannot even survive at home once rabbits and cats arrive?) Across to the notch in the hills, up a little among the vines and into Stellenbosch, picture-pretty bright-white town, second-oldest in the Cape. Long houses, thatched, with a curlicued centrepiece over the central doorway, symmetrical whitewashed ranges to each side.

The archaeology department inhabits the little pavilion appended to the side of the original university building which once was the university's library: late Cape Dutch, decorated, gleaming whitewash, as lovely a little building as a small archaeology department could hope to occupy. Below, office space, stores, the one teaching-room; upstairs a single big square plain work-room, good windows, good even light. Trestle tables, and on them Klasies River Mouth in all its cryptic lithic order, on which HILARY DEACON and colleagues continue their patient work. Klasies, a full 20 m of stratified sequence on the Tsitsikama coast at the far south tip of the Cape (south even of the Cape of Good Hope), holds the great puzzle of the Middle Stone Age in southern Africa: if its Howiesons Poort industry is pukka Middle Stone Age,



Sevilla Rock Art Trail. Mrs Strauss's enterprising opening-up of some of the art sites with a trail through the sandstone marked by white-stencilled footprints along the path. It raises the usual thanks and fears: it is good that visitors are encouraged to find, to see, to enjoy the sites — but are these precious places thereby put at risk from deliberate damage or innocent wear?

which stratigraphically it is, then why and how does it have a recurring and standardized component of small blades, backed pieces and points — alongside what a more textbook MSA should have? Is it in that sense Upper Palaeolithic? And if not, then what? And how does blade technology equate and fail to equate with the stony culture of our own modern *Hom. sap. sap.* (on which see the Neanderthal question and JEAN-PHILIPPE RIGAUD & JAN F. SIMEK's review-article in this number)? What date *is* it? Clearly beyond 40,000 since beyond useful radiocarbon, and at 60–80,000 b.p.? Like so much mixed up with early modern hominids, it falls into that dating gap, beyond ^{14}C and before the older radiometric measures, where varied approaches to dating sometimes contrive to give nearly the same answers. So there the strange stuff is in the old Stellenbosch library, ordered on the work-tables — the decent blades, of a sufficient thin elegance, in between the lumpier stuff, the chunky flakes made of a gritty grey stone. As usual — since whatever it is, Howiesons Poort is most certainly Palaeolithic — they have at Stellenbosch mostly just the lithics to work with; but CHRISTOPHER HENSHILWOOD, of the Cape Town department, just now has got down into an MSA sequence with a proper bone industry — the first ever in the Cape — where elegant bone points well match what 'ought' to be in the Later Stone Age. Turning towards art, my own way into these questions, I think also of ochre and what ochre means: full of symbolic meaning in modern cultures, does it signify some symbolic meaning, and therefore symbolically-meaningful creatures, from the start? In an ideal world, perhaps I might join Professor DEACON, a soft-speaking man I feel so very much senior to myself, in a considered dig into those issues. Like other fundamentals in the archaeology of hunter-gatherers then and now, they could be neatly explored in parallel tandem between southern Africa and Australia.

 **Game Pass Shelter** KwaZulu-Natal
Drakensberg, South Africa *cool with clouds*

Beethoven wrote just nine symphonies, and I have heard each one too many times; there is not one left for me to come fresh to. I have never been into Lascaux, and perhaps I never would like to (besides not having sufficient research cause to enter a sacred chamber that should be

left in peace); better that I should *anticipate* what a place it might be, and never know.

Up from (Pieter)Maritzburg, on the longest hill that takes you into the high country, and then up again away from the main Durban–Egoli highway into the lower slopes of the Drakensberg, the 'Dragon Mountain'. Not at all what prejudice made me expect of Africa in the summer, not hot and not dry, but cool, damp and intensely green like a perfected and larger-scale re-making of the Welsh mountains. Expansive farms, now disappearing under a dismal dark blanket of solid conifers growing for pulp-wood; then on the higher ground — though still in the lower foothills of the great range — through busy settlements where most households mix the old round thatched huts with rectangular houses in modern materials. DAVID LEWIS-WILLIAMS, my guide with colleagues from the Rock Art Research Unit at Wits university in Johannesburg, explains: when there were still San Bushmen in the hills, they used to come down to raid for cattle, so the colonial government planted in a buffer zone of black farmers to stop them causing trouble for big white stations on better land below.

Into the Natal Park, calling at the ranger station to collect the key for Game Pass shelter. A big wide and U-shaped valley (was it glaciated? Goodness, it seems high enough to have been), with a strip of rocky cliff proud below the skyline. Can I see a distinct shelter up there? Maybe. A steady walk up the slope, which in a U-shaped valley steepens as you go, on a half-hearted path. Spoor of a big ungulate in the mud where a waterfall dribbles down: I ask. It's eland. Across the creek and more directly up. Out of courtesy for one of us, who has not been at his best, we take it gently; which saves me from being the unfit laggard. Zig-zag up the far slope, nearly needing hand-holds and at last to the razor-wire fence that protects the shelter. I didn't check the time that's passed since we left the truck: 1000 feet up at 1000 feet an hour? Not less?

Again, rightly nervous in the presence of a senior wizard of the art, I worry if I will be up to scratch. Will I see the darn things? What if they are fainter even than in the Cape? There is the shelter, a good sandstone wall, perhaps 80 m long, with chunky slabs breaking away on the talus, perhaps 10 m deep, its vertical wall perhaps 6 metres high, and then overhangs stepping out: very like an Arnhem Land shel-

ter, in essentials. Brown-reddish rock face, no paintings: am I too daft to see them? Up and into the shelter proper: *there* they are—even I cannot miss them, but I had been standing where only the upper, unpainted surface was in view.

I don't have the words to describe the elegance and the beauty of these loveliest of paintings that make up the main frieze. Red-bodied eland, fine hump at the shoulder, with cream-white heads, worthy of worship. Elegant lines of sturdy standing human figures, each body made a strong upright block by the enfolding cloak, the *kaross*. Where these standing figures stand standingly, the moving figures move movingly: ox-blood dark (eland-blood dark), small, they leap on outstretched legs with as enduring a dynamism as ever tracked down a wounded eland and spread sacred blood on the greenest *veld*. This is the hunter's vision.

In the presence of masterpieces of painting, I am in the presence of the master of their study. DAVID LEWIS-WILLIAMS talks me through a central panel, a Rosetta Stone for the Drakensberg in his reading of the San art as ruled by the metaphors of trance and shamanism: an eland, head low, front knees breaking, in the posture of death; by its tail, a human figure with animal head and eland hooves.

Round the corner from Game Pass, trying not to lose height as we traverse the upper slope, and up some more into a narrow V-squeeze of a valley; twisting and dividing, it takes us to the three Willem shelters, and from the last up the slope again (it *hurts* again) over the flat top, and across down and round and into Christmas Shelter. I have no words, as now begins to be usual.

Down now, down the narrow valley, soon broadening, across the streams, over the lip by Game Pass, down towards the waterfall. A far matchbox of white deep below is the truck we are heading to. Mostly I just look at my feet. The others, more observant and less zonked, see distant movement on the far slope, beyond and below Game Pass, a good kilometre away. Big creatures. Eland! Now I have seen them!



Game Pass Shelter. Human figure with kaross.

Nuttall's Shelter KwaZulu-Natal
Drakensberg, South Africa *cool with
showers threatening*

We have permission from the Natal Park's officers to visit remote sites. Just the three of us today, GEOFFREY BLUNDELL & BEN SMITH with myself. We leave the truck as for Game Pass and head up the main valley's floor. The first hour is on the ruin of the old farm track, the second across the open tussocks of the *veld*. A great bluff ahead splits the valley and its river. A serious stream, tumbling over rocks and little falls, perhaps 6 metres wide, waist and more deep, the water strong and *cold*! It's either cross or go back, so cross we do. Up the right-hand valley, hint of a game-trail path, all on a steep diagonal slope; under the high tussocks of grass is a scree-slope; my right ankle feels as if it will turn and sometimes it does. Kranzes Shelter, destination, 3 hours 45 minutes from the truck. A big and deep overhang; screaming swifts nest



'Khoikhoi in a storm'. Drawing in pen and sepia ink. Artist and date unknown, likely before 1713. From the set of Khoi drawings in the South African Library (INIL 6256), by whose permission it is reproduced. Plate 3 in Andrew B. Smith (ed.), *The Khoikhoi at the Cape of Good Hope: seventeenth-century drawings in the South African Library*. Cape Town: South African Library, 1993.

on the cliff above; more good paintings; hint of an occupation deposit. Lunch on the rocks; we have to watch the passing time, for it will be a good walk back. Yesterday's animal droppings in the shelter were porcupine's; today's are baboon's.

Then up and on to Nuttall's; just past Kranzes, David had said, where there's a little valley to the left, doesn't look promising, go up there where a Mr Nuttall once went and there's Nuttall's. So that's what we try — just past Kranzes, a little valley to the left, doesn't look promising, up we go and there's Nuttall's, a thick sliver of a shelter near the top of the slope. Great and delicate pictures again: marvellous buck, alongside the eland; a good bush-pig in a band of human figures; more human and not-wholly-human figures. The delicacy of line, which I saw in the Cape mostly as ghosts and blurs within Tony's ken and beyond mine, is plain here in the Drakensberg, and the finesse of the brush when it comes to detail, to the hairs on an eland's neck. In this shelter there is no good lip to catch material, but in a scrap

of occupation deposit are some well-worked lithics. It is a physical mark of the committed rock-art researcher, I hear, to sport a fitting tattoo on his hip: would a bush-pig show a right message? Or an extravagantly male running figure? Since a teenager, I have wanted a tattoo, never have had the nerve.

Time to head back: tussocky slopes are as wretched on the ankles as going up, stream crossing as cold as ditto, Ben & Geoffrey as patient as ditto. We meet buck on the *veld*, much smaller, no hump, more uniform beige, stiff legs: certainly not eland! I try to show good attitude by a tidy and rapid closing pace as the truck comes into sight. 2 hours 50 minutes down from Nuttall's.

Drakensberg art is San Bushman art, but there are no San there today, and the surviving Bushmen are in a far country where they do not paint. Whose heritage is it now become? Who is to own whose heritage in South Africa, a land where the distinctions of race and identity as they direct power and possession have had such explicit force?

U District 6 Museum Cape Town, South Africa *hot and windy*

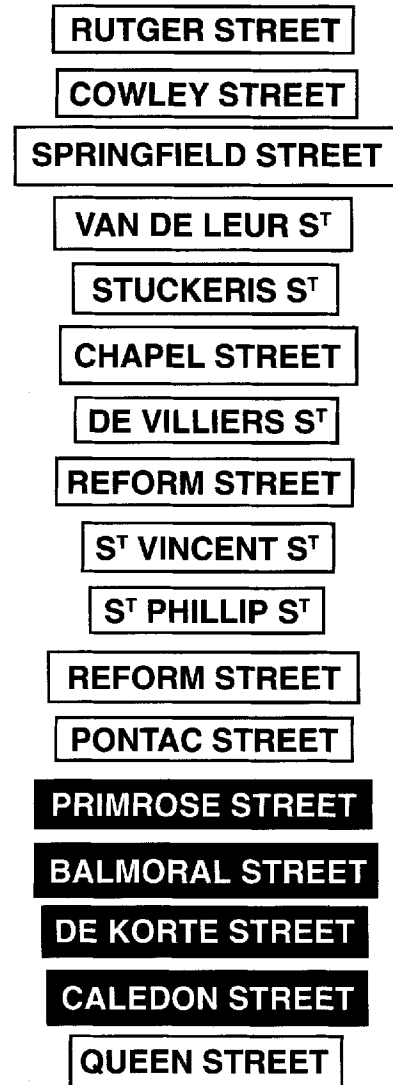
I had felt some spirit of the new South Africa from the first moment I landed in Cape Town and found the immigration officers strikingly young and so visibly multi-ethnic under the vivid new flag. But how, through knowledge of truth and through impulse of reconciliation, to bring together such long-divided communities, where the taxi-buses are for one ethnicity, the BMWs for another? (BMW does not stand in South Africa, as it does in south London, for **Black Man's Wheels**.)

District 6 is an inner-city area of Cape Town, close to the docks, historically mixed and mostly non-white in its ethnicity, which was declared White under the 1966 Group Areas Act, and bulldozed. Much of the land is still empty, its former people scattered in the Cape Flats. A remarkable museum in a fine high church with a good ironwork balcony offers this human district's history and existence in material objects and — repeatedly — in names: names of people, names of streets, names of places. Central on the floor is a map of District 6; on it, and on a long white sheet, memories are written: by the gazebo, by the rose garden, 'Big brass bands played on Sundays & Bank Holidays in Trafalgar Park'; 'M. Mazel & Sons, 175 Caledon Street'; on Marriott Square, '4 families, 1 Portuguese, 2 Moslem, 1 Christian'; 'Zahier & Awaatief Jacobs'; 'Johaar Mosaval'; 'Eddie Daniels'; 'Alex La Guma'; 'Cissie Gool'.

On the balcony is a show about District sport — cricket of course, and soccer and swimming, the pigeons of the Cape District Homing Union, scoreboard of the Evergreen Domino Club.

Notice how one grasps people, places, things by their given names. Nuttall's Shelter and Game Pass Shelter and Christmas Shelter — if not each shelter, then their valleys — surely had its San name; when San Drakensberg people were made extinct so were the names of the places. Newly nameless, they were named again by the people who took possession of the land. And naturally the new name of the dominating peak, 'Dragon's Mountain', is itself of our language and culture.

This is why the 79 enamelled street-signs of District 6 move me so. Retrieved by a foreman who was himself in charge of forced demolition and donated to the museum, they are the public names of a human topography.



Street signs from District 6. Enamelled navy-blue on white (except for Primrose, Balmoral, De Korte and Caledon, enamelled white on navy-blue).

U Opryland Hotel alongside the freeway, somewhere beyond the city-edge, Nashville, Tennessee, USA *enclosed air-conditioned and dry space, exterior weather unknown*

Oh dear. The Society for American Archaeology, of which I am a long-loyal member and soon (as I leave ANTIQUITY) the chair of its Publications Committee, has done it again. They held their enormous and excellent annual meeting at the Disneyland Hotel in California a few

years ago: as an applied exercise in anthropology, it was a remarkable study in monopoly capitalism, social control and voluntary infantilization — the three tied together of course, by the skills of Disney management. (I remember fondly also an unspeakable joke about Michael Jackson and Disneyland, too horrid even to hint at.) Now the 1997 annual meeting is at the Opryland Hotel, an immense artificial confection of sub-Southern style invented somewhere north of Nashville airport. Its point and inspiration is the 'Grand Ole Opry', home of country music as homogenized and mass-reproduced. (For proper bluegrass from JAMES KING's band, and the loveliest double-bass, JOHN TERRELL & I went instead to the plain concrete bar on — was it? — 14th Street in the real city.) Opryland was Disneyland again in Middle America, but with a larger element of monopoly capitalism, to judge by the prices.

It at last dawned on me that this is not an accident. Many European archaeologists believe — with slight justification — that their American colleagues are oddly in thrall to simple models of ecological and functional determinism: human behaviour follows in a rather mechanical way those controlling directions. Not so, and Opryland is proof: a wholly artificial make-believe world, complete with Gulf of Mexico delta and snake-free tropical forest, constructed with no regard to the ecological and functional constraints of a landscape on the valley-bottom edge of a tributary of the middle Mississippi, and made logically true only by

an idiosyncratic and historically arbitrary version of a free-market economics. A session chair of integrity at the SAA, faced with papers on the baffling eccentricities of advanced state societies — say THOMAS H. CHARLTON & DEBORAH L. NICHOLS offering 'Results from continuing investigations of Late Aztec Otumba in the north-eastern Basin of Mexico' or RAFAEL COBOS with 'Ancient Maya causeways: new views on their intrasite role' — would have abandoned that academic programme and instead led their colleagues to roam the hotel in a hands-on experience of such fuller expression of social complexity and its specialized aberrations: they could have started with the ingenious items of material culture displayed at the Domino's Pizza franchisees' show down the hall from the archaeologists in the tangle of meeting rooms. Those into the perennial SAA topic of Maya collapse — like RHAN-JU SONG's 'Childhood dental health of Altun Ha Maya from Preclassic to Postclassic: implications for the Maya collapse' — could have got to good experimental work: strategies of whatever kind that caused Opryland to collapse would make a practical study in applied archaeology and, surely, provide also some broad public benefit.

W *Writing-on-Stone* Milk River, Alberta, Canada *cold (-10°C), lying snow, windy*

In the field again, though briefly, thank goodness, and where other than in the field would anyone want to be, south Canadian spring weather and all? Rock-art again, because that's



Writing-on-Stone. Shield-bearing warriors.

what I mostly work on (and isn't Writing-on-Stone one of the best archaeological site names? It's nearly as good as Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, also in southern Alberta and not many miles west along the US border.) Dating the figures there — some fine paintings, mostly fine engravings — is the key research issue, as it is in the Cape and in the Drakensberg. It is hard to do good archaeology on stuff until you have some kind of a date. Fine work by MICHAEL KLASSEN & JAMES KEYSER ties petroglyph styles there into ethnohistorical records of the ledger-books, painted hide robes, and coup counts: plain pictures of horses and guns were the first defining clue, as they often are in those regions where the rock-art traditions fortunately extend into an era of European contact. JACK BRINK, archaeologist for the province, recognizes the potential here to broaden the study of the figures out and into a fuller exploration of their biogeochemicogeomorphologicogeological context; for the history and potential antiquity of the figures depends on the history and potential antiquity of the surfaces which bear them. And good conservation measures depend on and demand a good knowledge of what happens in and on the rock-surface.

Across the Milk River — proving colder even than the Drakensberg stream when I clumsily half-fall into its meltwater (either I went in or the camera did) — proudly ochre in its own shelter is the Thunderbird; this emblem, as thrilling as the transforming eland, perhaps even has an equal potential to show the real meaning of these icons. The Thunderbird Shelter, facing downslope to the river, is — one imagines — just the spot for the vision quest. The question haunts, as it does in the Cape and in the Drakensberg: what and how much is held in common between the vision of the researcher and the vision of the artist?

Noticeboard

Index to ANTIQUITY

Besides the indexes to each volume, there are three printed indexes to the journal, each a separate book: for volumes 1–25 (1927–51), 26–50 (1952–76), and 51–65 (1977–91). Now all three are combined into a single index together with the individual indexes since volume 65. This complete comprehensive index is available at Antiquity's page on the Internet: <http://intarch.ac.uk/antiquity>.

Since it is an edited collation, we warn users: 'The index has been collated from individual indexes for the separate numbers, which were done at various times by various hands. Names of contributors and of authors of books reviewed should be right. Coverage of subjects is very variable; since early indexes were more thorough in covering subjects, the entries may be mostly or only for older volumes — and much more recent coverage will not be indexed.'

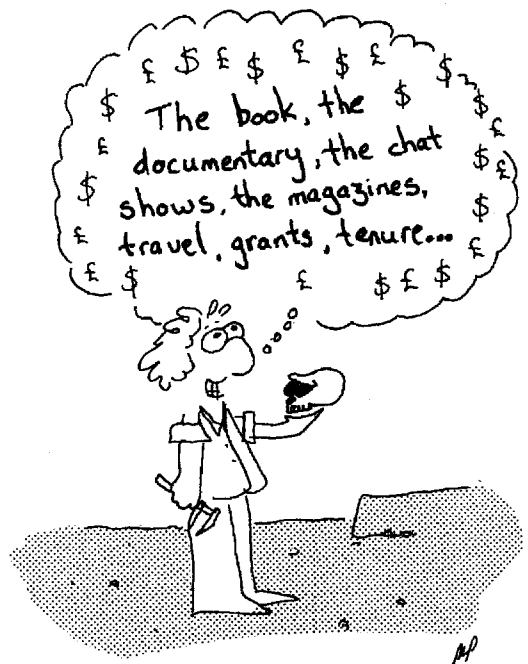
Conference

3–6 September 1998

Following the excellent Alta Conference on Rock Art (proceedings warmly reviewed in *ANTIQUITY* recently), a second conference — ACRA II — with emphases on the theory of interpretation of rock art and on curation; also to be held at Alta in north Norway.

Knut Helskog (Trømsø Museum); FAX (47)-77-64-55-20; e-mail knut@imv.uit.no

MP



FISCAL ANTHROPOLOGY.