

Nyame Akuma, 12:1-6
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NEWS ITEMS.

BOTSWANA

RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ETHNOARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN BOTSWANA

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While a decade ago it could have been said that Botswana was relatively unknown archaeologically, research in the past several years has done much to change that. Sites ranging from Acheulean to historic have been found, and a number of them have been excavated. The purpose of this note is to briefly summarize some of the research that has been conducted in the interior of Southern Africa, primarily in the Kalahari and adjacent areas.

One of the first people to do archaeological research in Botswana was E.J. Wayland, who was director of the Geological Survey of the then Bechuanaland Protectorate. Nearly all of the sites he located were Stone Age sites, and the artefacts which he recovered have recently been the subject of an exhaustive analysis by C.K. Cooke of the National Museums of Rhodesia, who is in the process of publishing "A Survey of Stone Age Archaeology in Botswana." The work of Wayland and, more recently, John Yellen of the Smithsonian Institution has done much to dispel the notion that the Kalahari was a marginal environment into which groups were pushed by other, more highly organized populations. Yellen and Alison Brooks of George Washington University have been carrying out archaeological excavations at /Gi, a pan in the northwestern part of Botswana near the Namibian border. At /Gi there are well-preserved archaeological remains going back to the Middle Stone Age; these remains include extinct species of hartebeest, buffalo, and zebra. In addition, some outlines of what appear to be pits have been located in the Late Stone Age deposits. It is possible that these pits may have been hunting blinds similar in function to those used near the pan by contemporary San (Bushman) populations.

While /Gi is the only well-excavated Stone Age site in Botswana, a substantial number of other sites of Early, Middle and Late Stone Age have been located in surveys of a number of different parts of the country. Yellen and Brooks and their students have worked in the !Angwa Valley in northwestern Botswana, while the University of New Mexico Kalahari Project (James Ebert, Robert Hitchcock) have concentrated on the eastern margins of the Kalahari, particularly around the Makgadikgadi Pans and the east-central Kalahari near Serowe. James Ebert has used Landsat space imagery to define the margins of what was a gigantic ancient lake, Lake Makgadikgadi, and he has surveyed

I very much regret to announce - the death on 18th April 1978
of Professor Henry T. Irwin
of the Department of Anthropology
Washington State University
Pullman, Washington. U.S.A.

West African Archaeological Association

The second conference of this association will be held in
Bamako 11th - 18th December 1978. The original notice was sent
to members on 25th November 1977 but Nyame Akuma was informed by
a letter from Dr. Obayemi of 13th April 1978 received in Calgary
on 24th May.

The closing date for receipt of abstracts of proposed papers
is given as 31st May 1978 - it is hoped (by editor of Nyame Akuma)
that the conference organisers will extend the date to help those
of us who were informed rather late.

Those wishing to go to the Conference and/or to join the
association should write to Dr. A. Obayemi at Department of History,
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.

Unfortunately at the same time will be held the
International Congress of African Studies
Kinshasa 12th - 16th December 1978

those interested should write to:

Secrétariat Général du CIAF
B.P. 1944
Lubumbashi Zaire.

a series of transects on the margins of the lake. John Cooke of the University of Botswana and Swaziland and David Grey, formerly of the Anglo-American Corporation, have done geomorphological work in the same area. The UNM Kalahari Project located over 150 sites from which surface collections were made and detailed studies done of the site settings; these sites ranged from Early Stone Age to recently abandoned Basarwa (Bushman) camps. Morgan Tamplin of Trent University has also done surface survey in eastern Botswana, mostly of Iron Age sites. An ongoing survey is being done by James Denbow of the University of Indiana. Using aerial photographs and ground survey techniques, he has located well over 100 Iron Age sites in the Serowe-Palapye area of east-central Botswana; two of these sites have been tested by Denbow and well-preserved ceramics, faunal remains, and a burial have been recovered. These test excavations indicated that the Iron Age sites overlie both Middle and Late Stone Age materials. Denbow has been assisted by an able amateur archaeologist, David Schermers, who has found several Iron Age sites in the northern part of Botswana, mostly in the Mosetse and Sebina areas.

The Iron Age is the period that has perhaps received the most attention of late in Botswana. Besides Denbow's work there is that of Tamplin, who sampled a site on Talana Farms in the Tuli Block in 1977. Edwin Hanisch of Pretoria, south Africa, has excavated a Leopard's Kopje site at Commando's Kop, also in the Tuli Block. Work in southeastern Botswana has been carried out by Ron Pahl, who has reported on ceramics and stone-walled villages; Alec Campbell, Director of the National Museum of Botswana, has also located Iron Age sites in southeastern Botswana. Perhaps the most detailed data on a Botswana Iron Age site are those on Tautswemogala, excavated in 1970 by Larry Lepionka. Tautswe is the only site in Botswana which has been dated using Carbon-14; the dates range from A.D. 1090 \pm 105 to A.D. 1500 \pm 95 (GX-3772 - GX-3775). The skeletal remains from this site were analyzed by Hertha de Villiers of the University of Witwatersrand, and the faunal remains were studied by the late Robbie Welbourne, also from Wits University. A short survey of Iron Age remains in the Bobonong area of eastern Botswana was made by Ernst Westphal of the University of Cape Town and John Fletemeyer of the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee.

Rock art is another subject that is receiving increasing attention in Botswana. G.K. Cooke published an overview of Botswana rock art in 1969 which indicated that there were far fewer rock art sites in the country than in neighboring Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. One area where there is an abundance of rock paintings is the Tsodilo Hills region of northwest Botswana. This area, visited by Jalmar and Ione Rudner and reported on by them in several papers, has been the scene of a recent quantitative survey of paintings by Alec Campbell and Mike Bryan of the National Museum along with Robert Hitchcock. 1,650 paintings were recorded at a total of 194 locations, and a number of archaeological and recently occupied

Bushman sites were found in the vicinity of the paintings.

Ethnoarchaeology has been the subject that has generated the most interest in Botswana in the past decade. The study of the behavior of contemporary hunting and gathering groups and the material byproducts of their behavior was initiated in the 1960's by the Harvard Kalahari Research Group which included John Yellen. Yellen accompanied a group of Bushman over a six month period, observing what they brought into camp and what they did there, then he went back and excavated a series of the abandoned camps. His recent work in conjunction with Alison Brooks and a number of students has extended his sample to camps going back to 1948. Edwin Wilmsen of the University of Virginia has also done some ethnoarchaeological research in the /ai/ai region, south of Dobe, in addition to observing hunting and other contemporary behavior patterns. The University of New Mexico Kalahari Project has worked in two regions in eastern Botswana, the Nata River area and the east-central Kalahari. These two regions contrast both ecologically and ethnographically; the Nata area is a riverine gallery forest with settled Bushman groups living in villages and herding livestock and growing crops; while Bushman groups in the Kalahari sandveld region are still mobile and are hunting and gathering. though some of them are beginning to settle on the peripheries of cattle in order to have access to water. Hitchcock has done a comparative study of populations in these two areas and has mapped both occupied and recently-abandoned sites, accompanied groups on hunting expeditions, and observed manufacturing and other types of behavior in both settled and mobile groups in an attempt to understand changes in archaeological patterning in sites that may be correlated with sedentism.

Recent activities in Botswana include the setting up of a system of national monuments, the cataloging of all collections in the national museum and the establishing of a national site file, and the organization of archaeological research in the country. The pace of archaeological research in Botswana is clearly picking up. Already a number of sites have been dug and surveys undertaken. It is hoped that future work can be coordinated through a National Monuments Officer based at the National Museum and that local archaeologists can be trained to continue the work of the past few years.