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ON ROCK-ENGRAVINGS OF ANIMALS AND THE HUMAN  
FIGURE, FOUND IN SOUTH AFRICA.

(Second Note.)

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With Plates VII.-XV.

(Read September 29, 1908.)

I.

THE ROCK-ENGRAVINGS.

In a preliminary note on this subject, published in Vol. XVI., 1906, of the Transactions of the South African Philosophical Society, I alluded to rock-engravings (sculptures rupestres, graffiti, petroglyphs) of a type far superior in finish and artistic merit to those that were at the time the object of my communication.

These rock-engravings are indeed so very superior in technique and correctness of outline, that they cannot fail to compel admiration, especially when it is remembered how primitive were the tools used by the sculptors, and how exceedingly hard the surface of the rock, which must have caused many a rechipping of the edges or points of the stone tools, themselves of a material not harder than the stones on which the delineations are so deeply engraved.

These rocks are porphyritic, or consist of amygdaloid diabase; but some carvings have been found on granite, on sandstone, and also on slate.

In many of the figures here reproduced\* we have no longer lines or outlines obtained by more or less rough pointing or punching as shown in several of the illustrations of my first note. The technique

\* The reproduction of these figures was obtained not by chalking the chipped parts, but by carefully oiling the surface of the rock adjoining the outlines of the figures; owing to the darkening of the adjoining surface, the figures appear boldly and very distinctly in the photographs.

is of a much more complicated nature, and it includes occasionally lines in relief.

This is well shown in Fig. 2 of Plate VIII. which represents an elephant fleeing before a hunter armed with bow and arrow. The lines intended to represent the corrugation of the skin are in relief, and in relief also is the somewhat slender tail, which is, however, not well brought out in the photograph. Apart from the real artistic merit of the intaglio process, the attitude of the animal in flight before its pursuer is amazingly correct. The manner in which the ears are carried, the hanging down of the lower lip, the curvature of the back, the bending backwards of the left fore foot, the manner in which the left hind leg is thrown back are absolutely exact, and denote a keen power of observation on the part of the sculptor. The figure of the man is, as usual, very poor in design, but in this instance one notices in it an expression of activity; the hunter is plainly running after its quarry, and the sex is *not* apparent.

This rock-engraving is probably the best of its kind as yet discovered. I have, however, been told of another hunting scene (several men attacking a rhinoceros) which, my informant pronounces, after an inspection of this engraved stone, to be equally good in finish.

Fig. 1 of Plate VIII. is that of another elephant going peacefully along. The ears alone are in relief, and the whole body is carefully chipped; the intaglio bringing out the outlines of the thighs is executed in a masterly manner.

Fig. 3 of Plate IX. is in point of excellence second only to Fig. 2 of Plate VIII. It is that of a buffalo (*Bubalus cafer*), and is wholly hollowed out, but the two lines indicating the horns are in bold relief. The attitude of the animal, the switching of its tail, is full of life. As a study of nature at rest, it can be matched only by Fig. 7 of Plate X. representing a female Koodoo (*Strepsiceros Kudu*). The next sculptures in order of merit are the two giraffes in Plate XI. In both, the large spots of the skin are executed in bold relief, the chipped-off interstices being in places as much as 8 mm. deep. Fig. 12 is in motion, and the four legs are clearly delineated; Fig. 13 seems to be at rest, only two legs are there shown. The execution of these figures is so good, that it seems probable that what might appear at first sight to be a defect in technique, is in reality the result of consummate skill, the absence or the presence of two or four legs being intended to convey the impression that the animal is either resting or on the move (see also Figs. 4 of Plate IX., 1 and 2 of Plate XIV., &c.). I may add that in all likelihood, the rock-engravings here mentioned

are, judging from the position in which they stood, the work of the same artist. On the other hand, many of the quadrupeds of inferior workmanship are elsewhere represented with two legs, or occasionally three.

None of the rock-engravings mentioned in my first note exhibit any attempt at perspective, if we except perhaps that of a giraffe (*loc. cit.* Plate XII., Fig. 3). Under the head of the animal, the body of which is represented in full, is that of a much smaller one. It is doubtful, however, if that reduction in size is meant to convey an idea of the dwarfing due to the distance. The animals depicted are as a rule not grouped together, but Miss M. Wilman, a former assistant of the South African Museum, and now in charge of the Kimberley Museum, has obtained by rubbings, tracings of animals that show a technique of very high order indeed and plenty of imagination. These figures (1 and 2, Plate XIV.) are those of two giraffes engraved on a small boulder the contour of which made it impossible to trace the animals in their right position. They form part of a group of three; one animal reaches on one side the top of a tree, the second does the same from the other side, the third is no longer well defined and a rubbing could not be obtained. In the same spot is a giraffe of the same size as the other two suckling her young, and the execution is as good as that of the two figured in Plate XIV. These sculptures from the Vryburg District are probably the best of their kind, and it is impossible not to credit the sculptors of these scenes with plenty of imagination and a great mastery of their craft. In other places discovered lately are specimens of nearly equal artistic merit. Fig. 9 of Plate X. represents a galloping rhinoceros, which is not only realistic in the extreme, but which might be termed "study of a head." The sculptor plainly intended to depict the fore-part of the animal only, because it abuts on the edge of the boulder which is there at right angles with the face of the rock. A similar instance is to be found in the admirably treated fore-part of an eland (Fig. 19 of Plate XII.) obtained from a different locality, and in all probability not executed by the same sculptor. There has been no attempt to continue the outline on the receding face of the rock. The running ostrich, Fig. 11 of Plate X., is full of life. But more singular perhaps than any of the illustrations here given is that of Fig. 20 of Plate XII. The surface of the boulder is there closely amygdoidal; the lower part is a little more even. It is that part that the engraver has chosen for depicting two blue cranes (*Tetraptyx paradisea*). Extraordinary as may seem the attitude of these birds, it is an exact reproduction of them when they lay

their curious antics or strut grotesquely along. To the right of the engraving are three superposed, broadly triangular chevron-like lines.

Fig. 1 of Plate XIII. is that of an eland, which I have selected among others because of the very effective appearance obtained by retaining for the central part of the body the original smooth surface of the rock, and thus helping to bring out the chipped part more clearly.

But next to, and often intermingled with, these well-finished engravings are some which contrast singularly with the others in their lack of artistic merit, or even crudeness. Thus Figs. 6, 8, and 10 of Plate X., although found with the series in Plates VIII. and XIV., are not of equal merit; Fig. 18 of Plate XII. which was figured on the same boulder as Fig. 7 of Plate X. is made quite ludicrous by contrast. The tracings (Fig. 1 of Plate XV.) are certainly far from being artistic. I may say that in this case the latter scene stood by itself.

Figs. 14, 15, 16, 17 of Plate XI. do not betray much skill, and are of the same type of workmanship as the singular design that surmounts Fig. 10 of Plate X. Starred designs are not uncommon. I have seen them from the banks of the Orange and of the Vaal Rivers; and they are met with on the plains of Kimberley and of Bechuanaland.\* Rough check-boards made by lines intersecting each other are also known. Hübner, speaking of a group of these sculptures in the Potchefstroom District (*Zeitsch. f. Ethnol.*, 1871), says, "Besides these easily recognisable figures there are, however, many others, which are difficult to explain. I may merely mention one in which 6 vertical stripes, or succession of holes, were cut at right angles by 4 or 5 similar lines; another, where 12 rows of 3 holes are situated under each other, and which cannot possibly be considered as alphabetic signs; very common are circles of 100 mm. long from which 18 radial strokes, about 100 mm. long emanate, so that the whole might be a representation of the sun." Fig. 17 of Plate XI. represents a foot the small size of which suggests the possibility of the etching having been made from a wet imprint.

The disparity of skill and technique evinced by the illustrations given in this paper can be explained by the assumption borne by

\* In certain Bushmen paintings stars and check-boards do also figure. In the tracing of one such picture in the South African Museum is the reproduction in red ochre of a very small, almost delicate human hand, with the digits spread out. This picture was plainly produced by the impression on the surface of the rock of the painter's hand covered with red pigment. A similar impression, but the hand is white on a red ochre background, occurs in the very ancient cave of Castello, *vide* "Portugalia," vol. ii., fasc. 2. ? 1904.

facts that other and less talented sculptors endeavoured to imitate, and this more or less clumsily, the portraiture the evidence of which they had before them. A good instance of this is shown in Fig. 2, Plate XIII., which would seem at first sight to represent a fight between a rhinoceros and another quadruped of identity unknown. Now, the rhinoceros is plainly *Rhinoceros simus*; it is etched all over, and although not having the finish of the Vryburg engravings and others, is still a fine piece of work. The imitator has entirely failed to give to his reproduction a semblance to any of the quadrupeds met with in South Africa. In his book, "Aus Namaland und Kalahari," Jena, 1907, Schultze figures two engravings found in the close neighbourhood of Beaufort West in the Cape Colony. The lower figure, that of the eland, is genuine; the upper is a miserable attempt at imitation of a nondescript quadruped.\*

Dr. A. W. Rogers, Director of the Cape Geological Survey, saw in places between Kuruman and Tsenin, along the Kuruman River, numerous series of engravings of that type made by the Bechuana herd-boys or others. Rev. G. E. Westphal, of the Berlin Mission Society, and stationed at Pniel on the Vaal River, was very careful in selecting for the South African Museum old original engravings from the numerous carvings perpetrated by the school-going children of the Station, which are of Koranna, Bechuana, and Griqua mixed origin.

Some of these imitations are so crude that they cannot deceive any one; but in some cases it is difficult to decide as to the authenticity of the etchings, that is to say if we assume that the most perfect are very ancient.

Fig. 1 of Plate XV., traced and photographed by Dr. A. W. Rogers, is on a quartzite rock and is covered with a distinct patina, but the lines of the engraving are not patinated. It is thus likely of comparatively recent origin, like most of the obscene representations met with; but in Plate XII., the very uncouth Fig. 18 is as well patinated as the elephants on Plate VIII.

## II.

### AGE OF THE ROCK-ENGRAVINGS.

I have in my first note pointed to the great similarity between the rock-engravings of the southern part of Africa and those occurring in Southern Algeria and the Sudan. The great antiquity of the

\* I am informed that in the same district most of the Bushman paintings are disfigured by additions such as waggon and drivers, to the original figures of antelopes, &c.

Algerian ones is demonstrated by the fact that man did there execute among others the figure in intaglio of an extinct buffalo, *Bubalus antiquus*. We had in South Africa, and living at the same time, another buffalo, *B. bairni*, probably larger than the northern one. Its remains have been found in a situation that clearly showed that it had been laid low by man, and its bones fractured for the extraction of marrow, in common with bones of the rhinoceros, large antelopes, &c. ~~*Bubalus bairni*~~ *Bubalus bairni* does not seem to have been etched in South Africa, but its contemporary, *Rhinoceros simus*, which is said to occur still in parts of Central Africa, is often figured. The South African engravings are, however, on a much more reduced scale than the Northern, and although we have found in both parts of the African continent the stone implements used for the reproduction of these figures, it is impossible as yet to assign to them an age, and it is doubtful if the conclusions arrived at by the late Sir John Evans or M. M. Boule can be accepted in full.\* But what can be said with regard to some of the South African implements found is that they are unmistakably of the same type as the palæoliths found in Lake Karar.

If we take in South Africa the evidence of the rocks themselves, and they are probably the hardest and most durable of those occurring in the country, we find that the etched parts are in many cases nearly as completely covered by the characteristic thin shining black or brown film found on exposed rock surfaces in the interior of South Africa as the surface of the rock itself. Many, if not most, of the well-executed etchings are strongly patinated, and while a few of less artistic merit are partly coated with that film, the ruder kinds are not coated at all, or are only so in a moderate degree.†

In the case of the former, and although there is no means of ascertaining at what rate this film is deposited, there is some justification in assigning to these sculptures a very ancient origin, owing to the presence on the etched part of a patina that can hardly be differentiated from the crust forming on the surface of the boulder, &c. Stow, himself an eminent geologist, in order to show the great antiquity of some etchings occurring on an island in the Vaal, opposite Riverton ("The Native Races of South Africa," London, 1905, p. 30), says: "The extreme antiquity of some of these designs is, however, clearly evinced by the fissures which have been formed in the apparently

\* "Étude s.l. station paléolithique du lac Karar," Boule (*L'Anthropologie*, vol. xi., 1900, p. 1); "Palæolithic Man in Africa," Evans (*Proc. Roy. Soc.* 66, No. 433, 1900).

† Mr. A. du Toit, of the Cape Geological Survey, informs me that the black shining film is not the result of a simple oxidation as I thought, but of the formation of a very thin film of iron and manganese.

impenetrable rocks since the earliest designs were chased upon them. . . . One of the oldest was that of an eland done on a larger scale than any other representation of an animal found; but since its completion, a large fissure has been worn through the rock, upwards of nine inches in breadth in its broadest part, and about eighteen inches in depth." When one considers the extreme hardness of these rocks, the great antiquity of these engravings would seem proved by that statement, but I must add that on the testimony of Rev. G. E. Westphal these same rocks, including the engraved ones, are often split by the concussion of the terrific peals of thunder prevailing there.

On the other hand, ice-scratches occurring in the bed and on the banks of the Vaal River, exposed partly to the polishing effect of the huge periodical floods, or partly to the eolian agencies when the river is low, are still perfectly distinct. Perfectly distinct also are the aboriginals' sculptures engraved on the same rocks, and which, for aught we know, may have been nearly contemporaneous with the uncovering of these traces of glacial action, some of which, I am informed, are not very much deeper than the intaglios themselves.

These rock-engravings, however, are not found only on the banks of rivers. As a matter of fact those occurring on the banks of the Orange or Vaal are, so far as I know, often inferior in merit if compared with those occurring in the Vryburg, Upington, or Prieska Districts in the Cape Colony. The water-flow cannot in the case of most of these have played the part of a destructive agent. Some are found in solitary boulders on the veld; others on small eminences without any spring or water-flow in their neighbourhood, &c. At no great distance from a place in the Vryburg District where many of these images are found, is a depression which after the summer rains becomes a very shallow "pan," or lake. Not only there, but also at a long distance off, are strewn either on the surface, or at no great depth, stone implements of a palæolithic type, showing a great resemblance to those found further south. Made of a volcanic rock of perhaps as hard a structure as the amygdaloid rocks on which the sculptures are found, these implements are as much polished by eolian agencies as if they had been exposed for untold ages to the turbulent, although in South Africa spasmodic, flow of river waters.

I give in Plate VII. 3 figures of these implements. Figs. 1 and 2 are hand-picks; Fig. 3 was probably used as a sling-stone, or for hand-throwing. The edges are too sharp to admit of its having been used for trimming or detaching flakes.

In other places where stone implements similar to those occur in South Africa, there is nothing to suggest the presence of old river

gravels,\* and it is perhaps a moot point if the geological circumstances now obtaining differ much from those found in the post-pleistocene, or perhaps the pleistocene period.

Stow, however, does not think so, and in dealing with what he terms the evidence of great antiquity of these stone implements, he mentions a bed of sandy marl in which he discovered a number of finely chipped stones, and comes to the conclusion † that the "Vaal River itself did not flow in the same channel in which we now see it. . . . The hunters who made or used these weapons must have lived at a period so remote that the physical features of the country were really different from what we see at the present time."

In order to prove the antiquity of the Bushman race—which he considers to have been the first aboriginal—he quotes also finds including "finely shaped stone armlet," "Bushman beads made of ostrich egg-shell," "a stone hammer and a well-formed chipped stone," "Bushman pottery," "maal stones, stone implements, and an awl made of ivory," &c., found at various and sometimes considerable depths.

Unfortunately I cannot find from a careful perusal of his book that Stow knew how to distinguish between implements of the neolithic and palæolithic types. No evidence has as yet been obtained of pottery, bone awls, or perforated stones being found associated with palæolithic forms, whereas they are always associated with the neolithic or recent period in South Africa.

The presence of these stone implements found close to the sculpture themselves, or in the immediate neighbourhood justifies, however, the assumption that the two must be associated. The flakes which I figured ‡ bear plain evidence of having been used as engraving tools; but these flakes cannot, unfortunately, be said to belong either to the palæolithic or to the neolithic type.

What we know of the Stone Age in South Africa does not allow of discrimination between very remote, ancient, or recent periods. If the celts of palæolithic type are very ancient, so are many of the rock-engravings; if they are not, the evidence drawn from their association with these implements settles the question of their antiquity.

But to me a point of great importance is the *total* absence in the scenes of the better and more ancient manufactures of figures representing the ox, the Cape sheep, or any other domesticated animal.

\* Cape, Stellenbosch, Paarl, Worcester, Tulbagh, Piquetberg, Knysna, Cradock, &c., Districts in the Cape Colony.

† "The Native Races of South Africa," p. 25.

‡ Trans. S. Afric. Phil. Soc., xvi., 1906. p. 412.

Why should only the *feræ naturæ* be represented in these graffiti, and not the cattle which the Hottentots—great shepherds, and on that account great nomads—had always with them? \*

On that ground alone there is some justification in coming to the conclusion as I do, that these rock-engravings are anterior to the immigration of the Hottentots.

### III.

#### WHO WERE THE ROCK-ENGRAVERS?

There is no doubt that among the aborigines of mixed Hottentot race, especially among those called "Bushman" in the up-country districts and also near the coast of Cape Colony, there are still individuals very proficient in the art of carving, and some of their productions are really surprising. I have the handle of a home-made awl carved into the typical shape of a Hottentot head with prominent cheek-bones, slanting eyes, &c.; on a slab is carved the typical Cape cart with two impatient horses, and the driver, a farmer in his best Sunday clothes, and with long, flowing beard, holding the reins, &c. But the term "Bushman" has been, and is still, applied to so many mixed aborigines of the Khoi Khoi races that at the present moment it is absolutely misleading.

Stow, in his *posthumous* work, assumes, however, that the oldest South African inhabitant was the Bushman, and he divides the race into two sections: the painters and sculptors, explaining their migrations southwards "from the relics they have left of their former ownership." This theory may at once be dismissed, because these relics have now been found where Stow did not know them to exist. In page 43 he states that the makers of these sculptures lived in large communities, and were one of the two main branches of the Bushmen, one being cave-dwellers whereas the other lived in towns of from one to two hundred huts, the position of these huts in the hills being marked with a *semicircle of stones*. He connects these last-named people with the makers of sculptures because of the number of chippings, chiefly representations of animals, occurring in these spots. He gives two such examples found on "kopjes" or commanding positions in these terms:—

"We have already noticed the difference in the habitations of the two main branches of the Bushmen. Those who were the cave-

\* In a cave quite lately discovered at Hauston, near the seashore of the Caledon District, in the Cape Colony, bones of all these animals, as well as those of the ruminants of the antelope tribes, elephants, hippopotami, &c., were found mixed together.

dwellers and painters arrived at a higher degree of artistic talent than any other portion of their race, while their cave dwellings afforded more comfortable shelters from the weather than the fragile structures used by those tribes living on the more open kopjes. The towns, for so the stations of the larger tribes might be termed in comparison with the movable dwelling-places of the small nomadic clans of the hunters of the plains, contained from one to two hundred huts. Two excellent examples of stations of this kind are to be found between Kimberley and Barkly. The one is on the outlying kopje near what is termed the Half-way House, the other on the kopje immediately behind the Mission Station at Pniel itself. At both places there are a number of chippings, chiefly representations of animals; the head and neck of a giraffe at the Pniel kopje is remarkably fine both on account of its large size and the correctness of its outline. It was evidently the grand figure of the tribe, and the spot might fitly be named from it the 'Camp of the Giraffe.' The position of most of the huts which covered the crests of both these hills is marked by a semicircle of stones with the opening towards the east; while that which formed the residence of the chief can also be distinguished from the rest, not only because it is larger, but the rocks also around it are very much more ornamented than any in the immediate neighbourhood of the others, while two or three smaller ones are placed close against it. . . . An open space was left around this, and here it is that the carvings on the rock are the thickest. Beyond this the huts of his people evidently formed an irregular ring about him, while detached from the main body; the sites of several smaller groups of huts are still marked on the flanks of the kopje, apparently so placed for the purpose of acting as outposts."

I am afraid, however, that Stow allowed his imagination to run riot. I communicated this statement of his to the Rev. G. E. Westphal, who is in charge of the Pniel Station of the Berlin Missionary Society, asking him to try and find any traces of such a town, which in his previous communications with me he had never mentioned. His answer is as follows:—

"I know distinctly the exact spot mentioned by Stow. I know also the engraving of the 'Giraffe,' which is still there. However, the supposition of a camp or village constructed at a remote date seems to me a purely imaginary one. It is true that when I arrived in Pniel, in 1882, there were at the Station more than one hundred of these stone engravings, most of which showed the appearance of a very great age. But others were distinctly newly chipped, and were, besides, badly drawn. At the foot of the hill lived then, and

also at the time of Mr. Stow's visit, the small tribe of the Kats-Koranna. The men living there used to sit on the top of the hills to have a good view of the flats below where their goats were grazing. A great number of stone implements and of iron arrow-heads, peculiar to Bushmen, have been found round this kopje. Moreover, this place was *not* inhabited by the Koranna before the year 1849. The Station was founded in 1845, and was on the south bank of the Vaal, opposite Barkly, and known now as 'Old Pniel.' The fountain in the neighbourhood was called 'Bushmanfontein,' and the hill 'Bushmankopje.' Another point militating against the probability of a large settlement on the hill, is the extreme danger incurred there by the lightning discharges, through the hill serving as a conductor. Most of the rock-engravings have been split through their agency. I saw there the remains of small semicircles of stones, about one foot high, and not more than two. A little further, and behind that place, the Rev. Meyer, who arrived at Pniel in 1874, showed me another spot where huts had been erected, but there were no traces of enclosures. *This is the spot mentioned by Stow.* I conclude, therefore, that Bushmen have been there, but not in great numbers. In the neighbourhood of the dwelling-places were the most numerous and the best chippings. . . . The place mentioned by Stow near the 'Half-way House,' may be that of 'Scheelkoo's' and his family, which is mentioned several times in the diary of the Pniel Mission of 1848. He was shot with his followers in the early days of the discovery of the diamond fields. . . . I still may mention a settlement of Bushmen, a whole *tribe* of about 200 or 300 heads the 'Dansters,' at Platberg. Among these people our Mission had a station from 1847 to 1852, under the Rev. Salzman. Their constant warfare against the Link Korannas\* under Goliath, and the dislike evinced by them towards mission work, brought the Mission to a sudden end. This same tribe was routed later on by a strong Boer commando for having attacked and plundered on the Modder River two waggon-loads of goods. I suppose that this tribe consisted of Bushmen and Korannas. Remains of them are *still found amongst our congregation at Warrenton.*"

From the Rev. Westphal's statement it is obvious that Stow's account is highly coloured, and that we must dismiss the assumption of a large community having carved the rocks to embellish the "town," or having congregated round their totem, the Giraffe. The position is plainly a place commanding a view of the surrounding

\* These Korannas were probably called after their chief, Paul Lynx, or Lynk, whom Sir Jos. Alexander, who met him in 1836 at Aris, some twenty miles from the mouth of the river, calls "the Chief of the Orange River."

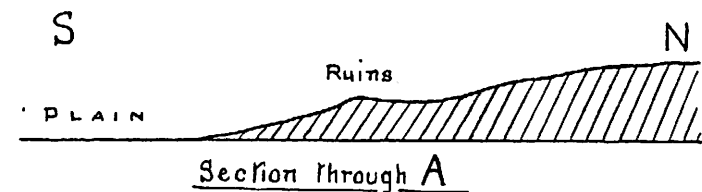
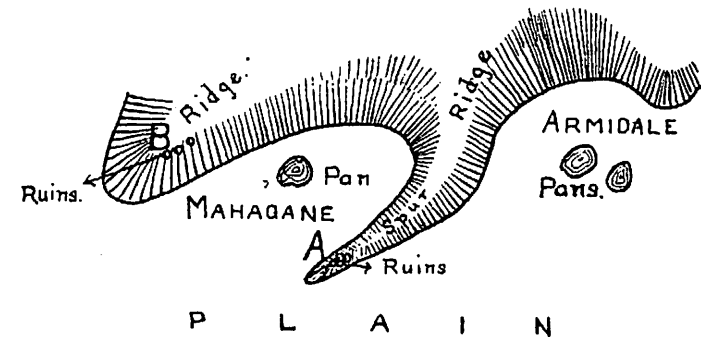
country for fear of surprise either from wild beasts or from man, and I am inclined to imagine that where these enclosures and the sculptures coexist, the spots were selected both by the sculptors and by the recent races on account of their strategic or commanding situation. From the figures illustrating this note one character however is undeniable, especially in the more artistic ones. *They are not the work of a "herd" trying to while away a moment's ennui. They imply a long, assiduous sum of labour and a great dexterity of hand.*

The existence of these semicircular enclosures is not, however, restricted to places where rock-engravings occur. The old colonists that lived on the borders or the neighbourhood of what was at the time called Bushmanland, and is now the fiscal divisions of Kenhardt, Upington, Prieska, &c., in the Cape Colony, distinguished between the "berg" Bushman, who, as his name implies, lived in mountain fastnesses, and the "kraal" Bushman, so called because he built small enclosures or pens in which he slept. These kraal Bushmen may possibly have been stragglers from the Southern Kalahari.\* I had one of these "kraal" Bushmen modelled from life in the Prieska District. He is a very old man. When I showed his bust to the Rev. Westphal he told me that he could produce from his congregation half a dozen old men absolutely similar in every feature to that model. This is very important in view of the Reverend gentleman's statement that the remains of the "Dansters" tribe, *i.e.*, Bushmen and Korannas, are still found in his congregation at Warrenton, which is close to Pniel, and where rock-engravings abound. The old man who sat as a model professed to be totally ignorant of "paintings" or "rock-engravings." He was very closely questioned on that point, and there is no reason to doubt the veracity of his answers.

Mr. A. du Toit, of the Cape Geological Survey, came across some "ruins" to the north-west of Morokwen (Vryburg), close to the Setaben crown-reserve, which recall to mind these small enclosures.

\* We do not as yet know of any rock-engraving having been recorded from German West Africa, but Eriksson, speaking of the Namias of Great Namaqualand (Lake N'Gami, 1856, 2nd edition, page 327), says: "The natives in these parts have a strange tale of a rock, on which the tracks of all the different animals indigenous to the country are distinctly visible; moreover, that man and beast lived here in great amity, but one day, from some unknown cause, their Deity appeared unexpectedly and dispersed them. I never had the good fortune to obtain a sight of this marvellous rock." It is not unlikely that the legend arose from an agglomeration of these rock-engravings. The late Rev. Moffat, according to Anderson, mentions a similar story prevailing among the Bechuanas, in whose country these engravings are occasionally encountered as far as Mafeking.

He writes: "These ruins are on a narrow spur of jasper, and command the whole place to the south. The walls are about 2½ to 3 feet high, built evenly of angular blocks of jasper, and are even vertical, not sloping. They form a series of segments of circles united to one another. (The existence of ruins at B. I learned on good authority.) The pans they command are formed of dolomite, on which are numerous engravings"—of asymmetrical patterns, not of animals. "The drawings (engravings) are either contemporaneous



with or later than the ruins; some engravings are much older than others. These 'pans' are the only source of water in the vicinity." Answering further questions from me, Mr. du Toit adds: "The walls of the ruins were made of hard jasper—a material quite unsuitable for carving." The pans have dolomitic limestone on the slopes and bottom, and the surface of limestone both on the surface and bottom were covered with carvings." †

\* The hardness of the rock, as I have shown in a former chapter, did not prove a deterrent to the sculptors of the best-finished scenes.

† Figures somewhat of the same type have been found near Kuruman on rocks forming the bottom of a pan.

Inquiries from the natives (Bechuanas) could not elicit any information. They had no idea by whom these semicircles were built. Their history was unknown; they were in existence longer than their forefathers remembered.

To those who know the impossibility of obtaining an idea of chronology from a Bantu beyond a few generations, the ignorance of the occupiers of that part of the country is in no way remarkable. But the Rev. Moffat, than whom no one knows the Bechuanas better, is said by Stow (*loc. cit.*, p. 27) to "have ascribed these productions to the Bechuanas, and employs their existence as an evidence of the extended occupation of his favoured tribe in early days! He



informs us that they are called Lokualo, a word from which the one used to express writing and printing is derived. He further states in describing those which he examined, that these Lokualo are various figures chipped upon stones with flat surfaces. These marks, the Rev. Moffat says, are made by striking one stone on another till *curved lines, circles, ovals, and zigzag figures* are impressed upon its surface, exhibiting the appearance of a white stripe of about an inch broad, like a confused coil of rope. These, the Rev. Moffat imagined, were done by Bechuana herd-boys, &c."

Of course Stow, following his favourite theme, pronounces Mr. Moffat to be "clearly mistaken, for there can be no question but that these relics are all of undoubted Bushman origin."

We have, however, Dr. Rogers' evidence about the modern attempts at rock-engraving occurring along the Kuruman River. The Rev. Westphal's testimony to the same effect cannot be ignored or passed by.

But there is more evidence that goes to show that these semi-circled ruins "with very low walls," brought to our notice by Mr. A. du Toit, have, if they are of ancient origin, been singularly successfully imitated quite lately. Dr. Rogers, indeed, informs me that at Takoon (? Litaku) he came across "schaanzes"—read parapets—half-moon shaped, set against each other and covering a distance of from two to three hundred yards. From residents in the neighbourhood he heard that part of those fortifications were built at the time of Sir Charles Warren's expedition about the 'eighties, but that these were additions to work of an earlier period—about a century—built for the defence of the place against natives coming from the north. Compare the ruins mentioned by Mr. du Toit, and exactly of the same shape as those recent ones of which Dr. Rogers tells us; add the testimony of the Rev. Moffat, and the details given by him as to the shape of the engraved designs made by the Bechuana herds, and which correspond so well with the sketches given by Mr. du Toit, and I think that the evidence goes against Stow's assumption that Bushmen must be credited with the raising of these "schermes" and the engravings of the designs on the dolomitic surface of the pans, and also that in this instance the Rev. Moffat has proved his contention that the engravings are most likely to have been the work of the Bechuanas.

Carefully sifted information tends to the belief that some of the Bush people were more gregarious than it is generally assumed. But without dilating here on this subject, which will be treated in another article, it may be contended that were they living or residing in the "towns" or "stads" mentioned by Stow, some evidence of their having done so would be forthcoming in the shape of a necropolis, of a sort. Surely if they lived at one spot they also died there. Now, no traces of sepulture are found in the neighbourhood of these agglomerations of rock-paintings, nor where they occur singly or, it may be said, spasmodically. Mr. J. E. Connan, one of my correspondents, who is taking as great an interest as myself in trying to elucidate the antiquity of these rock-engravings, of which a great number of a high type of finish occur on his property between Prieska and Upington in the Cape Colony, is very emphatic on this point. In answer to my questions he states: "I am at one with you that Bushmen were not people that lived in large communities, and that these engravings were not made for the purpose



of ornamenting their "kraals" (pens) or "stads" (towns). The very fact of the existence of these engravings in a barren country destitute of any permanent waters would not permit of the belief that they congregated in communities."

On the question of graves he writes: "Bushman graves are plentiful in the hills, a range passing within three miles of the Kop (where his engravings occur). Nearer the "Kop" I have never found any grave."\* In the Vryburg and Britstown Districts no traces of sepultures have been found where the paintings occur. At Pniel, on the Vaal River, the Rev. Westphal states: "It may be also mentioned that at the foot of this kopje (Bushmanskop) is at present our cemetery. Some years ago in digging a grave the workmen came across a human skeleton at the depth of two feet. Judging from the manner of burial in a sitting position we supposed it to be a Bushman grave."

It may perhaps be argued that the very fact that these sepultures were very shallow would make it quite possible for animals of prey to disinter the corpses and do away with them. But I have information and evidence of many of the mortal remains of aborigines, presumably Bushmen, being found together in a "donga," in such a state of decomposition, however, that the "bones are crumbling to pieces if handled," or in grottoes or rock shelters where they never were disturbed. The absence of these graves is important, inasmuch that they would not bear out the hypothesis that these graffiti were connected with some funeral rite. It is true, however, that if very ancient, as I believe them to be, the chances of destruction of the bone remains would prove greater than that of their preservation.

So far, it cannot be said that Stow's assumption of the "rock sculptor Bushmen living as large communities in "towns" is supported by any ascertained fact.

Let us now examine the possibility of both the engraving and painting arts having been practised at the same time by the same people.

In the lately discovered caves of Southern France, Spain, Portugal, the two arts have been found associated. Prehistoric pictures and engravings are found there together, both depicting unmis-

\* Mr. Connan mentions incidentally that he was told by an old Bushman that it was not the custom to bury the body deep. It was generally put in a sitting position, the legs being doubled up, pressed against the body, and the head bent forward before *rigor mortis* set in. I have clear evidence that the corpses of the Strand Loopers living in the caverns or rock shelters of the south-western part of the Cape Colony were tucked up in the same way, but laid on their sides in the manner of the pre-dynastic Egyptians.

takably the animals of the period, *i.e.*, the reindeer, bison, mammoth, horse, &c.; seriated dots, patterns not unlike some found in Bushman paintings, &c.

In my first note (Trans. S. Afric., xvi., p. 111) I have quoted the discovery by Mr. J. M. Bain in the Humansdorp District of the Cape Colony of a "rock-engraving" painted over with red ochre. In the same narrow gorge where this daubed sculpture occurs are still to be found the game pits with stakes at the bottom, and in a very good state of preservation.

Miss Wilman, of the Kimberley Museum, in a letter just received, informs me that at Warrenton, on the Vaal River, where rock- engravings are found, these sculptures, according to the people that took her there, "used to be coloured. This might account for the habit people have in these parts of speaking of the engravings as paintings."

A cursory examination of some of the figures illustrating this article is sufficient to prove that sculpture, and sculpture alone, was the aim of the makers of the better-finished class of engravings. Look at the corrugated hide of the elephant figured in Plate VIII., the relief work of the giraffes in Plate XIV., of the buffalo in Plate IX.; notice the slits on the sides of the rhinoceros in Plate XV., meant evidently to indicate the ribs and to give an idea of the rotund form of the animals. Is it likely that all this patient labour, skill, and dexterity would have been lavished on the production of a figure that was to be painted over in order to obtain a monochrome effect like that of Humansdorp, and one which could have been effected by the much simpler process of painting direct on the surface of the rock?

Warrenton was not inhabited by whites half a century ago, except by the Berlin missionaries. They knew the rock- engravings, and they do not confirm the statement that they "used to be coloured." On the other hand, the Kats-Korannas, comprising as they did Bushmen among their numbers, might very well have tried their hand at daubing these pictures, in the same manner as they are still trying their hand at producing engravings on stone. The want of stability of the pigment used would bear out that they were novices, however, at that kind of work,\* since the colouring has disappeared within a very short period indeed.

\* In 1837 Sir Jas. Alexander published in his book, "Narrative of a Voyage of Observation among the Colonies of Western Africa," &c., coloured figures of Bush paintings found near George, in the Cape Colony. In 1907 Miss Wilman, at my request, retraced and carefully copied the colour of some of these pictures. On comparison with the original publication neither the outlines nor the colour of the pigments had altered in the least.

In the Humansdorp case the rock-engraving was situated very high on the face of the rock, as if the ground at the foot had been removed for a considerable depth by natural agencies. It is not too much to assume that there also a Bushman could not resist the temptation of "improving" on the sculptor's art. That it is not very long ago is shown by the good state of preservation of the game pits, &c. The distance from the ground to the sculpture would be nothing for men accustomed to climb up vertical surfaces by means of wooden pegs driven in the crevices of the rock. (Some of these pegs are still to be found *in situ*). But these paintings need not be necessarily the work of Bushmen. South African aborigines other than Bushmen have executed "paintings" which are, it is true, bad imitations of genuine productions, but not always so.\* I know of some near the Cango Cave, Fraserburg, Danielskuil, New England, &c., in the Cape Colony.

Paintings of a similar nature are now known to exist in Senegalese Mauritania. I have heard of some in Nigeria.

It is not possible to arrive at another conclusion that in South Africa, as in Mauritania, both the rock-engravings, and perhaps also the rock-paintings show a conspicuous retrogression. The better finished are probably the most ancient; the decadent art set in with the arrival of the new-comers or new races.

From the profuse quotations here given one thing stands out, viz., that there is no evidence that the Bushmen of the present time were the original authors of these rock-engravings.

But if the Bushman of to-day is not the creative genius that composed these artistic productions, shall we ever know the race that was so talented? From hearsay evidence the Bush people themselves admitted that before them there was another race occupying the land. That that artistic race was the Strand Looper † is very doubtful,

\* In the *Folk-Lore Journal* (Cape Town, II., 1880), is published a letter from the late C. S. Orpen, from Smithfield (Orange River Colony), to this effect: "I was lately in Elands Berg, over Caledon (Orange River Colony) looking for caves, and a Boer lady, at whose house I was, opened a door of an inner room and showed me her wall adorned by several hundred paintings made by a Mosuto, who had been brought up with Bushmen in the Maluti. They were very well done—all sorts of game, Boers on horseback, &c. The Mosuto drew twelve figures per diem, and considered that a day's work.

† Strand Looper, a race of Hottentots living along the seashore of South Africa, Dr. F. Shrubbsall, as a result of his recent investigations on Bushmen and Hottentot crania, pronounces them to constitute a purer group than that of the Bushmen, and apparently quite distinct from that of the Hottentots; the up-country Bushmen appears intermediate between the Strand Loopers and the Hottentots; the Bushmen, and still more the Strand Loopers, are further removed from the Negroid type than are the Hottentots. (*Annals S. Afric. Mus.*, v., 1907, p. 249.)

as so far no relic of art in any form has been found in their shelters or sepultures. Could it be that they were the work of a negro race of which the Berg Damara may perhaps be a decadent scion?\*

One thing, however, seems to be certain, and that is if whether that art originated in South Africa, or in Northern Africa, there must have been intercourse or migrations from south to north, or more likely from north to south. We cannot get away from these conclusions when we remember: (a) the presence of rock-engravings in Mauritania similar to those found here; (b) the abundance of stone implements of similar shape and technique of manufacture as those occurring in the Congo as well as in Algeria; (c) the stone awls and borers, some of them of the pigmy type, for piercing and making disks of the ostrich shell found in Southern Algeria, Soudan, Egypt, and even Abyssinia, † and absolutely similar to those met with in South Africa; (d) the discovery on the high plateaux of Nyanza, and also to the north of Kilimandjaro and in Somaliland of the typical "tikoes," or perforated stones, found so commonly in South Africa.

\* The origin of the Berg Damara is quite unknown. People of a Bantu race, they speak Hottentot only.

† Cf. Verneau in Foureaux's *Mission Saharienne*. Documents historiques, p. 110, fig. 396; Flamand, *Préhistorique dans le Sahara*, *Revue Afric.*, 1906, p. 226, &c.



Fig. 3 44 x 24.

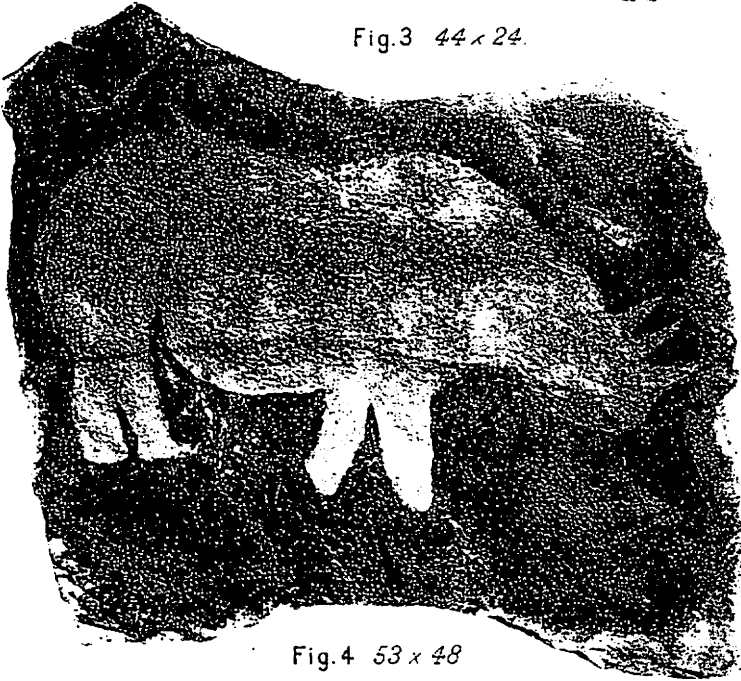


Fig. 4 53 x 48

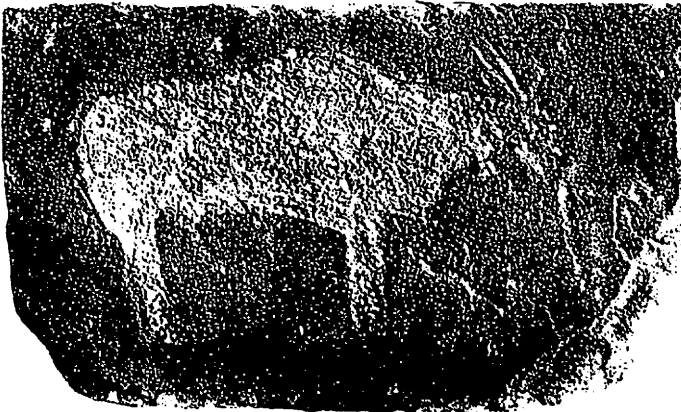


Fig. 5 60 x 40.

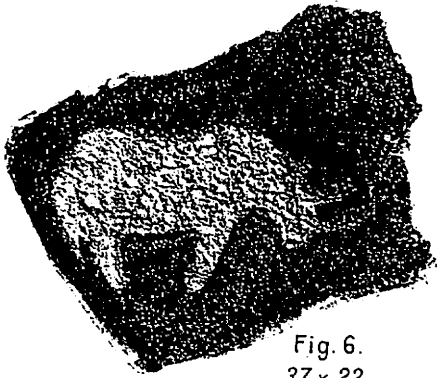


Fig. 6.  
37 x 23.

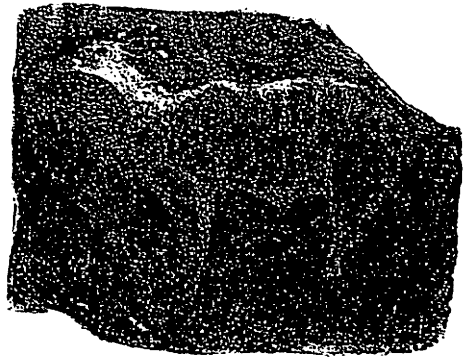


Fig. 7. 36 x 28.

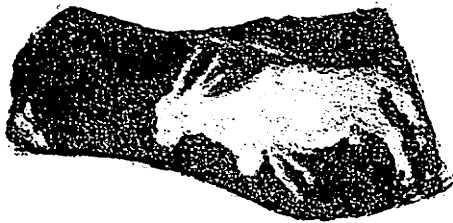


Fig. 8. 43 x 18.

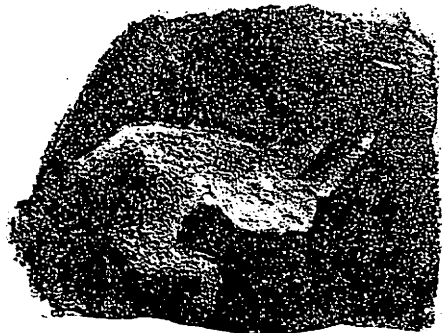


Fig. 9. 38 x 30.



Fig. 10. 47 x 29

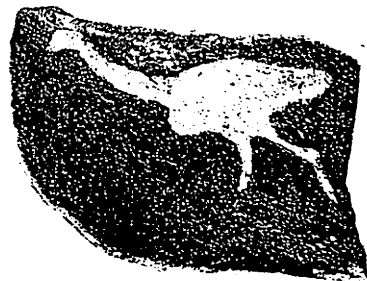


Fig. 11. 31 x 22.

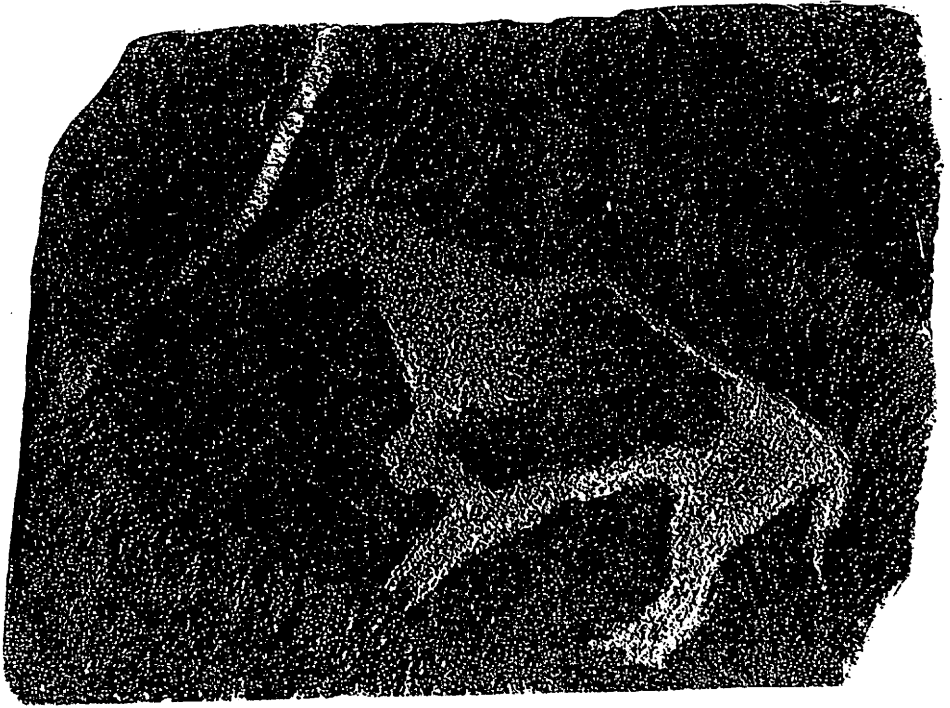


Fig. 1. *500 x 390 m.m.*

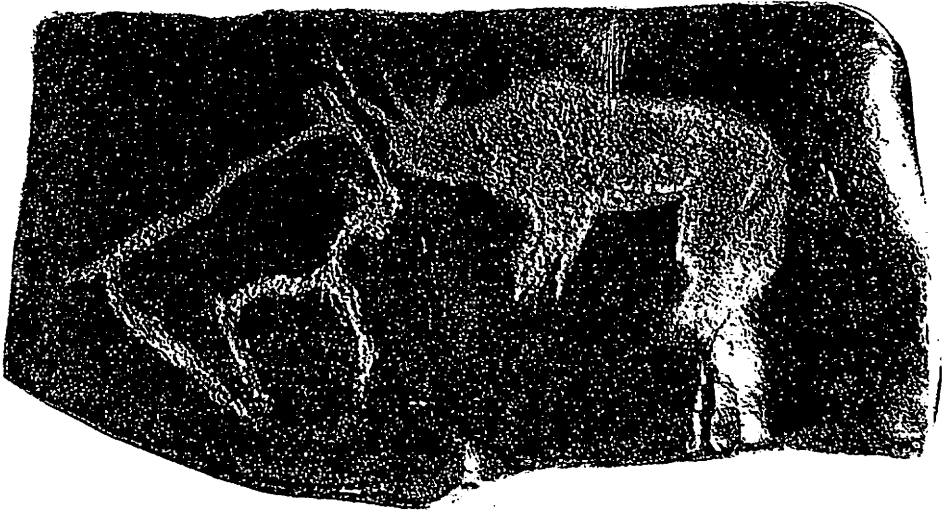


Fig. 2. *550 x 31 m.m.*

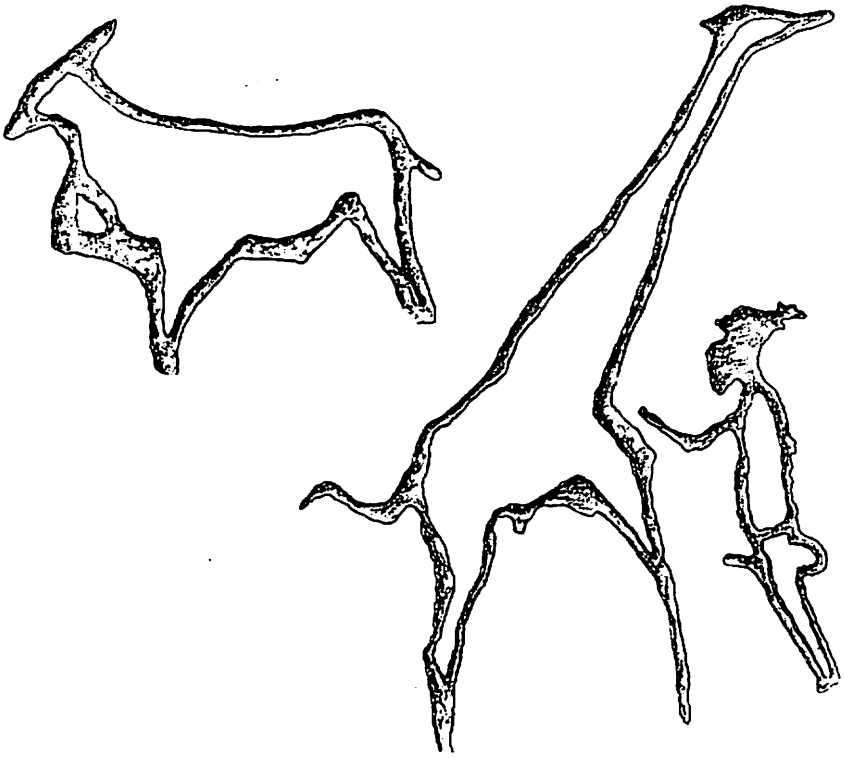
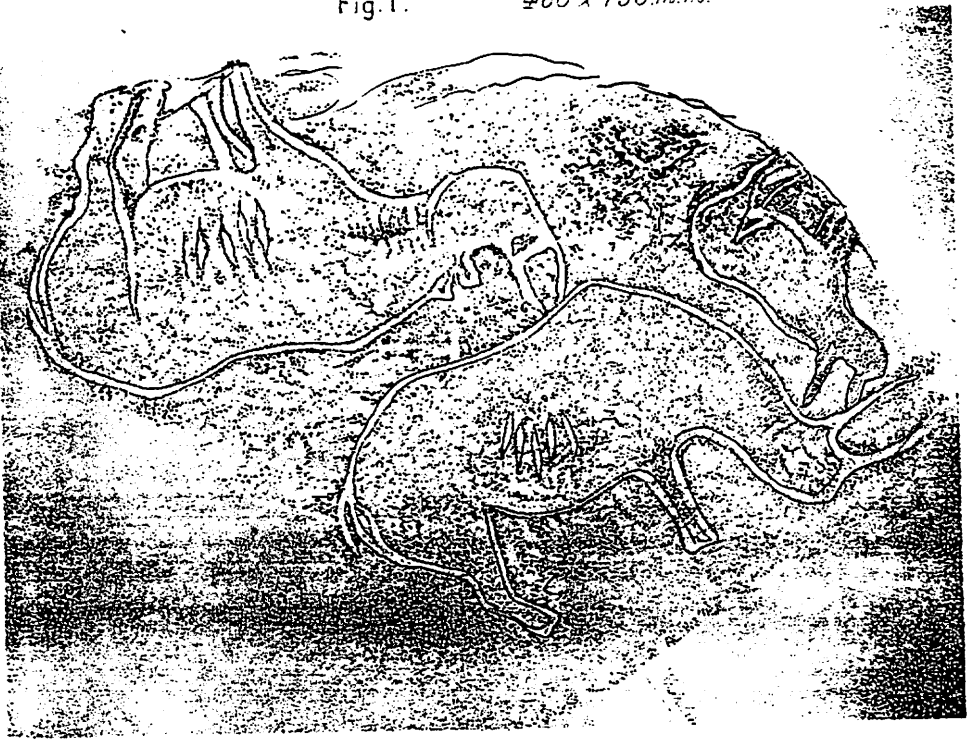


Fig. 1. 460 x 750 m.m.



910 x 580 m.m.

Fig. 2.

West, Newman colls.