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REPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS.

REPORT

PRESENTED TO THE

Cambridge Antiquarian Society,

AT ITS FORTY-SECOND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING,

MAY 22, 1882,

WITH AN ABSTRACT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE SOCIETY,
1881—1882.

ALSO

Communications

MADE TO THE SOCIETY.

No. XXIV.

BEING No. 2 OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.

CAMBRIDGE:

PRINTED FOR THE CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.
SOLD BY DEIGHTON, BELL AND CO.
AND MACMILLAN AND CO.
GEORGE BELL AND SONS, LONDON.

1884

Price 8s. 6d.

REPORT

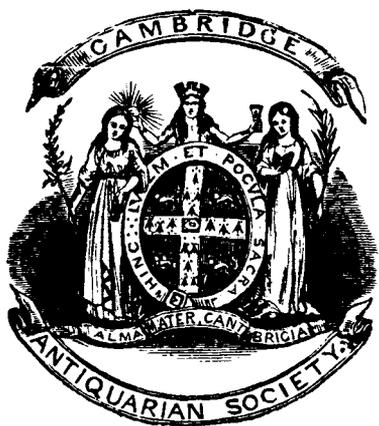
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WITH APPENDIX.



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DEIGHTON, BELL & CO.; MACMILLAN & CO.
G. BELL AND SONS, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON.

1884

Cambridge:

**PRINTED BY C. J. CLAY, M.A. & SON,
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.**

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VII. NOTES ON SOME NEOLITHIC IMPLEMENTS FROM
SOUTH AFRICA, by Mr J. C. RICKARD, Cambridge.
Communicated by A. F. GRIFFITH, Esq., B.A.,
Christ's College.

[March 14, 1881.]

[The following notes on some Neolithic implements collected in South Africa by Mr Rickard form a natural sequel to his notes on the Palaeolithic implements from the same district, which I had the pleasure of communicating to the Society in November last. Mr Rickard's classification of this whole series of remains will be found at the commencement of his notes in the preceding paper. A. F. G.]

IN many localities of South Africa, in fact, almost everywhere, implements of stone of various forms are to be met with lying exposed on the surface of the soil; it is difficult in many cases even to determine whether they belong to the Palaeolithic or to the Neolithic age; this difficulty is much increased when we attempt to assign any of those which are undoubtedly Neolithic to their particular subdivision of the period. For instance, one cannot with any certainty decide whether a given specimen is the work of the present race of Bushmen, made possibly within the last fifty years, or whether it belongs to any older period included in the vague term prehistoric. Under these circumstances it is better merely to

arrange such specimens according to the forms which they present, rather than by a process of mere guesswork to attempt any chronological distinctions.

There are, however, good reasons for separating those implements which are found under more definite circumstances, such as those occurring in kitchen-middens, or in caves, or which exhibit a peculiar style of workmanship, and for applying to them distinctive names.

Surface finds. First, as to Neolithic implements found on the surface; these may be divided into knife-like or spear-shaped flakes, scrapers, rubbers, mullers, grindstones or hones, perforated balls, &c. The examples of knife-like and spear-like flakes exhibited, are from East London, Kei river, Queenstown, Stormberg, Burghersdorp, Orange river, Fauresmith, the junction of the Riet and Modder rivers, the Diamond Fields, Boshoff, Richmond, and various localities of the Uitenhage district. One rude implement from Burghersdorp, probably a spear-head, is entirely different from any of the others, and is the only one of that type I have seen.

The scrapers with one end chipped to a semicircular form are from the same localities as the flakes; another kind of scraper formed from a circular disc, brought to a sharp edge all round by secondary chipping, which is all done on one side of the instrument, seems to graduate into a thicker and more core-like form, in which also the base is flat, and the chipping confined to one side. I exhibit English specimens of these three types to shew the great resemblance they bear to the African; this is the more remarkable, as scrapers with their secondary chipping may be considered to be more highly specialized forms than mere flakes.

A triangular scraper from the Orange river—the only South African example I have seen—is of an uncommon type. A small scraper from East London, with a broadly curved

working edge, is also a scarce form ; Mr Jukes Brown figures similar specimens from Egypt¹.

The rubbers were found at East London, Riet river, Modder river, and Port Elizabeth ; the hammerstone is from East London, and the grindstone or hone is from the Diamond Fields.

The perforated balls are from the district of Uitenhage, Bethulie on the Orange river, Riet river, and one from about four miles below the junction of the latter river with the Modder. The specimen from Bethulie is made from a natural concretionary nodule, which contains some kind of fossil, probably a coprolite. Two of the balls from the Uitenhage district have flattened sides, and seem as if intended to be mounted on handles and used as clubs or hammers ; some flatter or thinner specimens, in which, a hole having been commenced on both sides, the perforation has however not been completed, were probably used as knapping-stones and employed in fabricating various stone instruments. It is pretty certain that some of the perforated balls have been employed as make-weights for digging-sticks, but I cannot believe that they were ever specially made for such a purpose.

The earlier kitchen-midden implements. Under this title are included specimens found in middens near Port Elizabeth. One of these is situated about a mile to the north, and a series of similar middens is met with about three miles to the south of the town ; they are on or near the beach, and are about 15 or 20 feet above high-water mark. Shells of *Patella*, *Haliotis*, *Turbo*, *Mytilus*, *Mactra*, *Donax*, &c. form the chief part of the contents ; but the large land-shells (*Bulimus*) occur in considerable numbers ; probably however merely as intruders, as they are sometimes to be found present in a living condition ; as some of the bones have holes eaten in them, it is

¹ *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.* 1877, plate 9, figs. 5 and 12.

possible that the *Bulimi* get a supply of lime from them to assist in the formation of their shells. The bones are chiefly those of the larger antelopes, but those of seals, birds, and tortoises are also present, as well as considerable quantities of fish-bones, while remains of domestic animals are, I believe, absent.

The implements found in these middens comprise in addition to the usual flake-forms and rubbers, knife-like instruments with a cutting edge and thick back, precisely similar to a modern one from Australia, figured by Mr Evans¹. Another type that I have not seen elsewhere, is a scraper formed of a quarter of a flat water-worn pebble; the straight edge is the one used in working; other implements again are very similar to those found in the Danish middens and figured by Sir John Lubbock². A specimen from the north end midden closely resembles in form a Palaeolithic implement, but, as may be seen from a comparison with several examples from a salt-water creek two or three miles distant, is only a natural pebble which has been utilized as an implement.

From this midden I also procured several fragments of a perforated ball; as these balls are very rarely found associated with other implements, an occurrence of this kind is worth recording, as helping to some extent to fix the age of these curious objects. Portions of two pebbles have well-defined grooves cut in them. There is an entire absence of metal in these middens, and even pottery is very scarce.

The later kitchen-midden implements. Middens of an entirely different character are found near the beach at various parts of the coast. One such at East London did not afford any cutting instruments whatever, the only implements of stone being hammers and rubbers; this midden was also largely

¹ *Stone Implements*, p. 264, fig. 198.

² *Nat. Hist. Rev.* 1861, p. 499, plate 7, figs. 8 and 9.

composed of shells, but there were no remains of the larger mammalia, the bones found being mostly those of rodents and fishes, the latter being the more numerous; the absence of larger bones and cutting instruments probably indicates that the tribe by which the materials of the midden were accumulated were in possession of domestic animals and tools of metal; the pottery is ornamented with indented lines and dots, arranged in several patterns.

At a little distance from the midden just described are the remains of several smaller mounds, probably of about the same age. From one of these I got a neatly-worked scraper $2\frac{5}{8}$ inches long, one edge chipped on both sides, the other left unworked and probably at one time imbedded in a handle which has preserved its original sharpness. I also found another flake, and part of a ball of coarse limestone shewing the commencement of a perforation on both sides; except as regards size and material this ball is of a similar character to the larger examples, and it seems ridiculous to suppose that it could have been intended to have added to the efficiency of a digging-stick. In another of these small mounds I found five rough flakes and a core, associated with fragments of bone of a large animal, probably hippopotamus.

Relics of a similar kind are to be found also at Port Elizabeth, where on the site of what seems to have been an old encampment I found numerous rubbers, a hammer-stone, a mealing-stone, and two rough flakes, associated with ornamented pottery. There is no midden actually on the spot, but within half a mile is a group of eleven small shell-mounds, which may have been formed by the inhabitants of this camp; ten of these mounds are arranged in a semicircle; the eleventh and largest is placed in a position facing its concavity. In addition to shells these mounds only yielded pieces of pottery, a few bones, irregular nodules of white quartz, and a pebble battered at one end; I was not however able to search them thoroughly.

With this series I have placed two fragments of iron ore, one found at Port Elizabeth, the other at East London, both shewing surfaces worn by friction. The rubbers may have been used in grinding this material as well as corn, as it is evident from the bruised appearance of many of them that they were employed on some hard substance; it is possible that one end was used in breaking it into small fragments, which were afterwards ground to powder by the smooth end of the instrument.

Bushman caves and rock-shelters. I have very little material that can confidently be said to be of Bushman origin, and although perhaps it will eventually be necessary to associate Bushman relics with one or more of the other groups, it is best at present to keep them apart. The deposits already alluded to have not yet supplied us with any of those drawings for which bushmen are celebrated, neither have any objects been found in them which could fairly be described as corresponding to the well-formed arrow-heads of Europe; this is also true of surface finds, and I am surprised that though the present bushmen are well acquainted with the use of the bow, neither my collection obtained from 40 or 50 different localities, nor that of Mr G. McKay, of East London, contains a single example of such an arrow-head. Dr Dale¹ has certainly described certain implements from the Cape Flats, East London, and other places, as arrow-heads; but with the exception probably of the Cape Flats specimens, I believe he has made an error in so doing; his East London and Panmure specimens were collected by Mr McKay, and as that gentleman is an intimate friend of mine, I may safely say that he does not believe that arrow-heads have been found in those localities; perhaps their rarity may be accounted for on the supposition that the bow is a comparatively recent acquisition of the bushmen, which may have superseded the

¹ *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.* 1871—2, p. 347.

perforated balls for hunting or warlike purposes, and led to these latter being utilized in connexion with the digging-stick.

Lance-heads of the Cape Flats. Another very distinct kind of implement (unrepresented in my collection) is found on the Cape Flats, and so far as I can learn, in no other part of Africa; these are carefully-worked lance-heads, of the same type as an English specimen from Icklingham, which I shew to illustrate their form; the South African Museum possesses specimens much more regularly worked even than this; Mr E. L. Layard¹ exhibited twenty-one examples to the Ethnological Society; Mr Evans also has several, and I am indebted to him for a reference to two figured by Sir John Lubbock². These lance-heads are found associated, according to Dr Dale³, with arrow-heads, flakes, scrapers, sling-stones, corn-crushers, and pottery. But their chief interest arises from their apparent isolation on a comparatively small tract of country at the southern extremity of Africa: this fact, added to the superior workmanship of the specimens, induces me to keep them apart from the other series which have been already noticed.

I have never met with a true celt in South Africa, but an instrument sent to England by Dr Dale, was described as a polished celt by Mr G. Busk⁴. Mr Winwood Reade discovered small celts near Accra in West Africa, which were described and figured by Sir John Lubbock⁵.

We see then that the various subdivisions of the South African Neolithic period (leaving out of account the surface-finds) may be provisionally arranged as follows:—

Early Kitchen-midden period,
Cape Flats period,

¹ *Jour. Anthropol. Inst.* Vol. I. p. xcvi. (Appendix).

² *Ibid.* Vol. I. plate 1, figs. 1 and 2 (Appendix).

³ *Ibid.* Vol. I. p. 347.

⁴ *Ibid.* Vol. I. p. 346.

⁵ *Ibid.* Vol. I. plate 2, figs. 1—5 (Appendix).

Bushman period,
Late Kitchen-midden period.

But it is probable that the so-called Bushman period will have to be amalgamated with one of the others.

In conclusion I would like to record the existence of considerable accumulations of mussel shells in the neighbourhood of East London, which might be mistaken for old middens, but I have been informed that they owe their existence to the Kaffirs having been compelled to use mussels in large quantities as food during the "starvation time" of 1856-7.

NOTE.

While putting together these notes I happened to see in the volume of the Anthropological Institute's *Journal* to which reference has already been made, figures of the hut-dwellings on Dartmoor. They at once called to mind some remains at Bethulie on the Orange river, which, although I believe they are modern, are nevertheless of some interest. My attention was attracted to them chiefly because the foundations of the huts (which were of small size) were oval in plan, and formed of two concentric rows of stones set on edge, the intervening space and interstices of the stones being filled and plastered up with sandy clay. The walls thus formed were about 18 in. in height, and 12 to 18 in. in thickness; the superstructure of all the huts had entirely disappeared; on one side of the entrance to some of them was a space about 18 in. in diameter paved with small pieces of stone set on edge; while near the huts were several heaps of ashes, in which were agates and other stones which had been used in obtaining fire; strewn about the settlement was a quantity of broken pottery, stones hollowed for corn-mills and some of the mullers used in connexion with them, and several grindstones or hones. Close by and adjoining each other were numerous small enclosures with stone walls about four feet high, in which they had kept their live-stock; they differed from ordinary kraals in being of very small size, as well as in being rectangular in plan.