

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES ALONG THE SOUTHERN COAST OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA *

J. Rudner† and P. Grattan-Bellew††

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

The coastal area referred to in this report stretches from the Orange River mouth in the south to Lüderitz Bay in the north, a distance of approximately 155 miles. It lies within the Namib Desert which here varies in depth between 40 and 50 miles from the coast. It is an extremely inhospitable coast, constantly battered by heavy breakers and, when not swept by a strong south-west wind, covered by a wet fog caused by the cold, offshore Benguela current.

The rainfall is irregular and varies between .8 inch in the north and 2.0 inches a year in the south. Permanent springs with brackish but drinkable water occur at Affenrücken, Chameis, Buntveldschuh and Elizabeth Bay.

A sandy beach runs more or less continuously from the mouth of the Orange River northwards to Chameis Bay, backed by a broad marine terrace with elevations up to 40 ft. above sea level and mostly covered by wind-blown sand. Under the sand is a diamond-bearing beach gravel which is being mined to bedrock. There is some vegetation, mostly of succulent nature, on this terrace. Just north of Affenrücken are several schist tafelbergs capped by silcrete. The inland plains are covered by red sand with sparse vegetation.

From Chameis to Bogenfels the coast consists of a series of long sandy bays separated by schist headlands. There are numerous saltpans as well as sand dune areas along this part of the coast. The landscape is very rugged and there is almost no vegetation. A 200 ft. high escarpment composed of Eocene marine deposits occurs at Buntveldschuh.

From Bogenfels to Lüderitz Bay the coast is dominantly steep and rocky with a few sandy bays. The largest of these is Elizabeth Bay, which forms the mouth of

an ancient river valley now swamped by sand. Here the barchan dunes, which travel northwards under the influence of the strong south-west winds, cover a wide area and stretch inland for more than 16 miles. The vegetation is very sparse.

This coastal area is as a human environment perhaps the most inhospitable in Southern Africa, but the prehistoric remains are still numerous.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Oranjemund Plain. O. Davies and R. L. Walsh reported in 1955 on the raised beaches and associated Stone Age material from this area¹. They found rolled pebble tools, possibly of Pre-Chelles-Acheul origin, in the diamondiferous raised beaches from 100 ft. down to 25 ft. above sea level. Unrolled handaxes, probably of Late Acheulian type, were also found on these terraces, suggesting a transgression of the sea during Early or Middle Chelles-Acheul times.

H. Jenner-Clarke has communicated to the authors finds of unrolled silcrete handaxes and large flakes on the diamondiferous gravels between Oranjemund and Affenrücken. These tools are of the late Chelles-Acheul type, while one small, finely-trimmed handaxe from Gemsbok (Orange River mouth) is probably of later Faure-Smith origin. These sites have now been ploughed up by diamond mining operations and have not been seen by the authors.

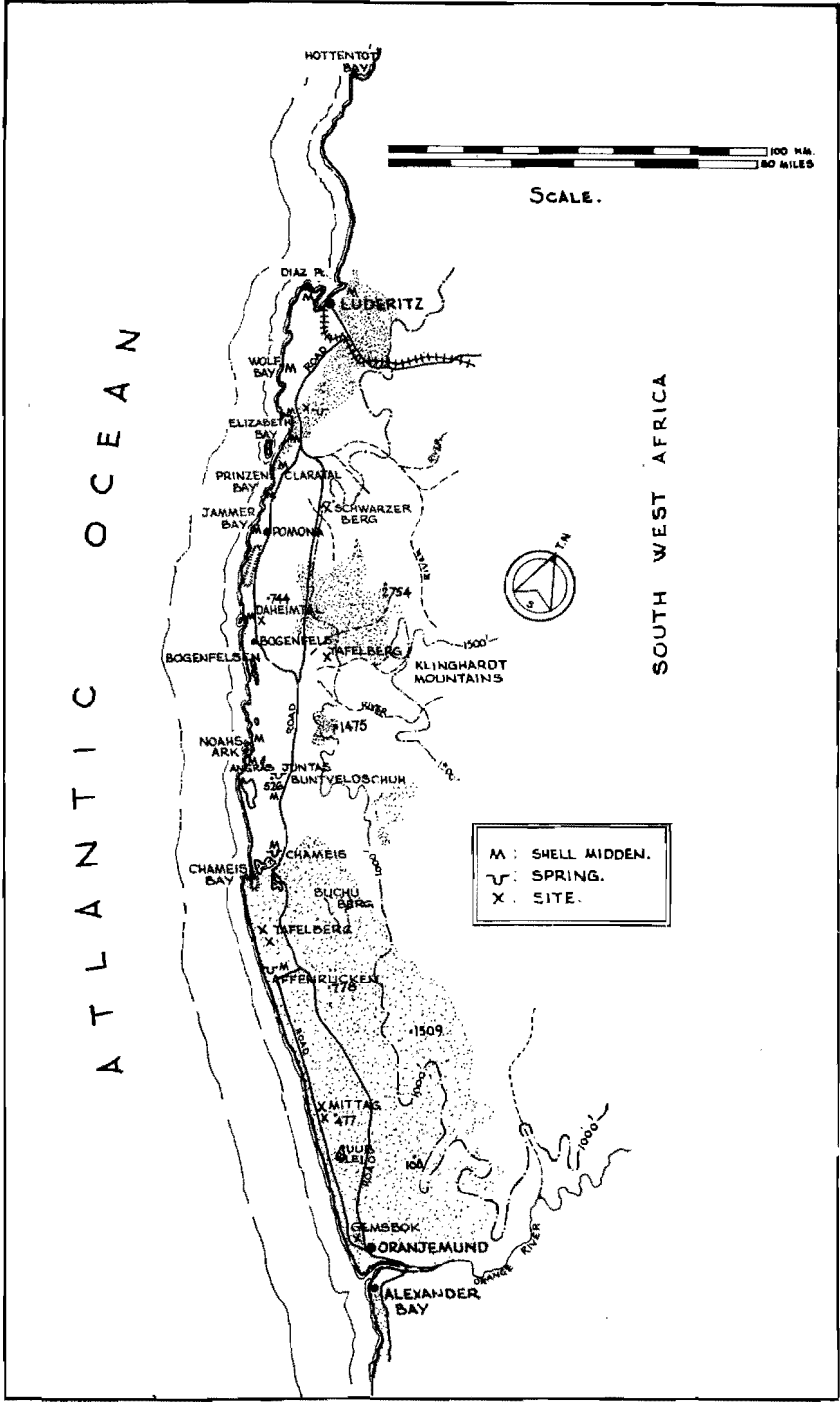
Affenrücken Tafelberg (Fig. 1). Just north of Affenrücken are four tafelbergs capped by silcrete, reaching a height of about 270 ft. and occurring at a distance of about two miles from the sea. Artefacts are found on the tops of all of these, the reported collection coming from the tafelberg on the Chameis-Affenrücken border. This is a workshop site and the material used is the local silcrete. All the tools show heavy mechanical weathering on all sides. Some of the tools have some later retouch,

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†Hon. Curator of Archaeology, S. Afr. Museum, Cape Town.

††Montreal.

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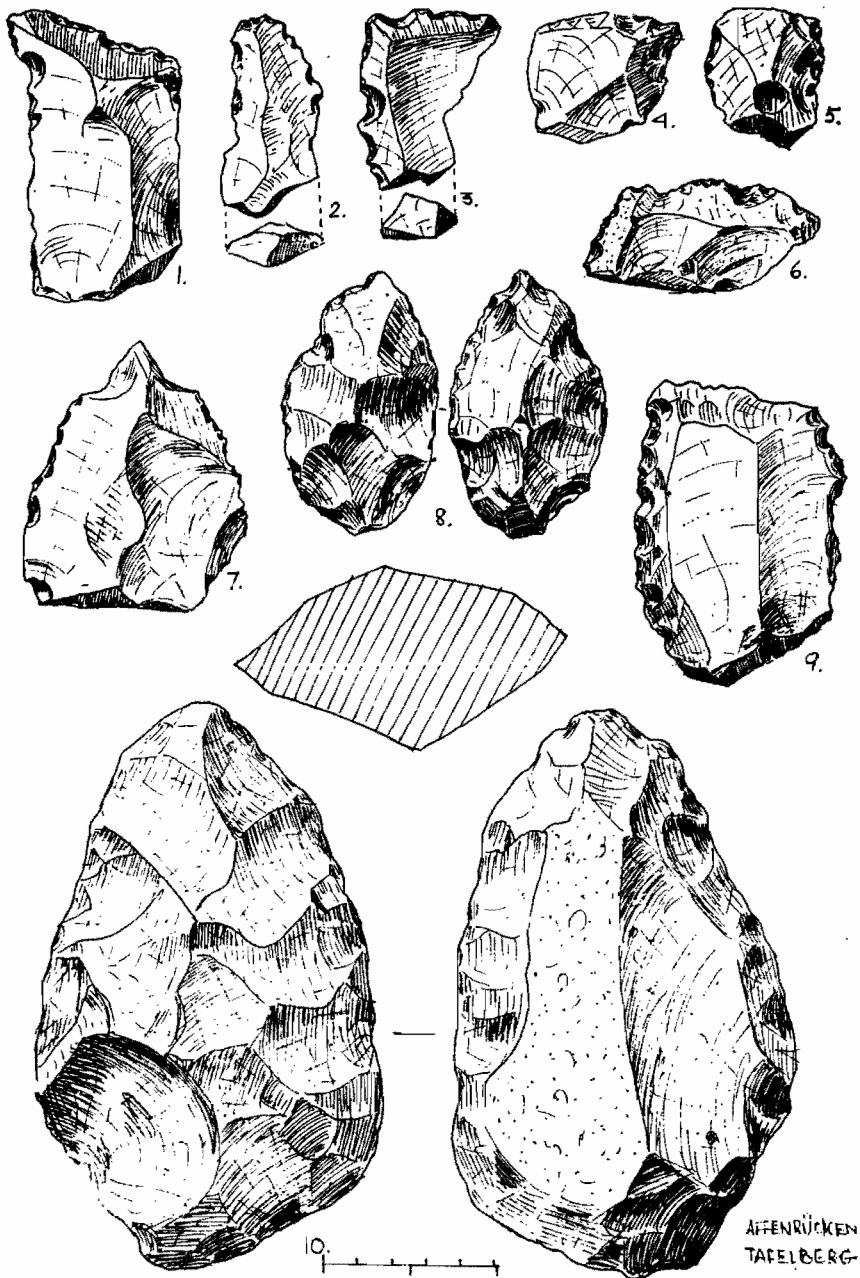


Fig. 1—Specimens obtained from the Affenrücken Tafelberg site.

possibly natural. The tools are mostly large (5—15 cm.), but there are also some medium-sized ones (3—5 cm.). The platforms are plain or crudely prepared and the angle between platform and cleavage face is usually about 110°, showing that “block-on-block” technique was used. There are also some large and heavy flake-blades and a struck, prepared core in the collection. Among the tools the majority are large and medium-sized side-scrapers (72%), followed by end-scrapers on side-flakes (15%), some crudely concavo-convex (Fig. 1, 6). There are also some large points (5.7%), a burin, a large handaxe (Fig. 1, 10), and a small limande handaxe (Fig. 1, 8).

This industry shows features which could be Sangoan or Fauresmith. Davies has mentioned Sangoan from the Namaqualand coast¹ and Desmond Clark an Upper Rhodesian Sangoan (Bembezi Culture) from Bechuanaland². Rudner has described a similar industry in indurated shale from the Brandberg³ further north in the Namib as Fauresmith. The flake-blades and the concavo-convex scrapers are typical Fauresmith elements both at the Brandberg and Affenrücken and the industry at Affenrücken should probably be called a Fauresmith.

Klinghardt Tafelberg (Fig. 2). This hill is situated between the Klinghardt Mountains and the Zwartberg, about 10 miles east of Bogenfelsen, and consists of a chalcedony tafelberg rising about 100 ft. above the surrounding valleys. The site is on the northern side of the plateau. The implements are made of local chalcedony or milky quartz, and the site must have been a living site as almost all the material has secondary working or shows signs of use, the waste comprising only 8%. Only one irregular prepared core was found. This assemblage might represent more than one industry, but there is no apparent difference in weathering of the tools from an open plateau site where there is no sand to cover and uncover the tools and where the weathering is mainly due to wind action.

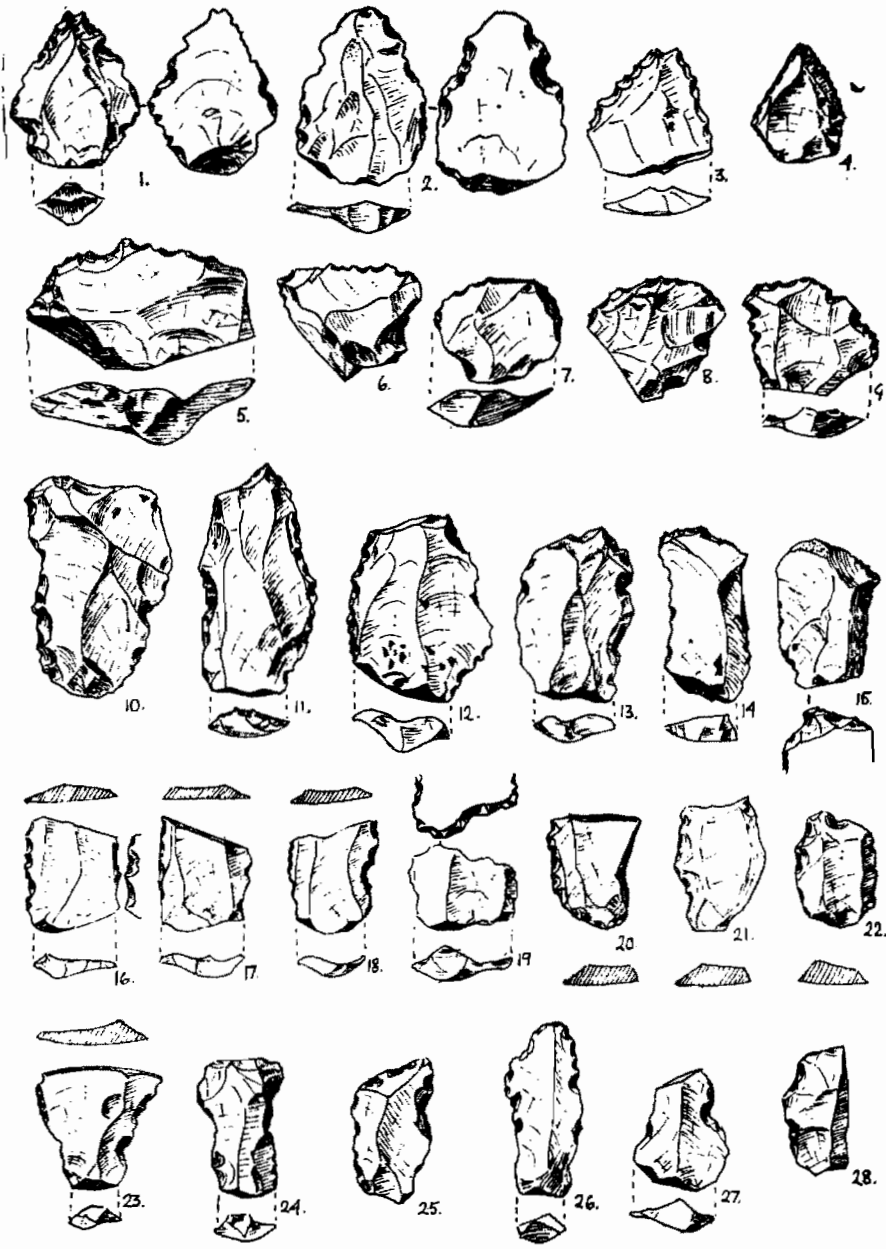
The tools are generally smaller (2—7 cm) than at Affenrücken, the majority having well-prepared platforms, and some

having reverse trimming. Typologically the implements can be divided into side-scrapers (54%), unifacial points (25%), end-scrapers (18%) and burins (2.5%). Some end-scrapers are made on side-flakes and one is a crude concavo-convex scraper (Fig. 2, 5). The best-made tool is a crudely-tanged point (Fig. 2, 1). While flakes are the rule, flake-blades also occur and generally have a prepared platform.

Although this is a Middle Stone Age industry with typically faceted platform technique, the occurrence of a few small, but rather thick, true blades indicates that it belongs to the end of this period. The situation of the site, 14 miles from the nearest known permanent spring, points to its belonging to a wetter period probably the end of the Gamblian Pluvial, during which period the Middle Stone Age industries were widespread in the Namib⁴. The desert polish of the tools indicates that this period was followed by a drier period, which according to Desmond Clark⁴ was the time of the Second Intermediate Period and the formation of the Kalahari sands.

Elizabeth Bay Valley (Fig. 3). This site is situated about 1.2 miles inland on a floor of old river sand covered by moving dunes and less than 7 mile from an artesian spring. The industry found here is remarkable for its choice of fine stone materials, mainly chalcedony (clear, milky, smoky, etc.) but also silcrete and milky quartz. All the material has a beautiful desert polish which varies little between the different tools. This is a workshop site and the assemblage includes hammerstones, prepared cores, blade cores, redirecting flakes and a large number of waste flakes and blades. The majority of the material is macrolithic (>3 cm.) and has prepared platforms, but the microlithic blade technique is now firmly established and is responsible for 33% of the assemblage.

Points comprise 25% of the tools, as at Klinghardt, but they are smaller and a larger percentage are made on flake-blades. One is possibly a broken tanged point (Fig. 3, 28). Side-scrapers are still common (19%), but are also smaller than at Klinghardt, and end-scrapers have decreased in number (8.2%). Typical for this industry



KLINGHARDT
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Fig. 2—Specimens obtained from the Klinghardt Tafelberg site.

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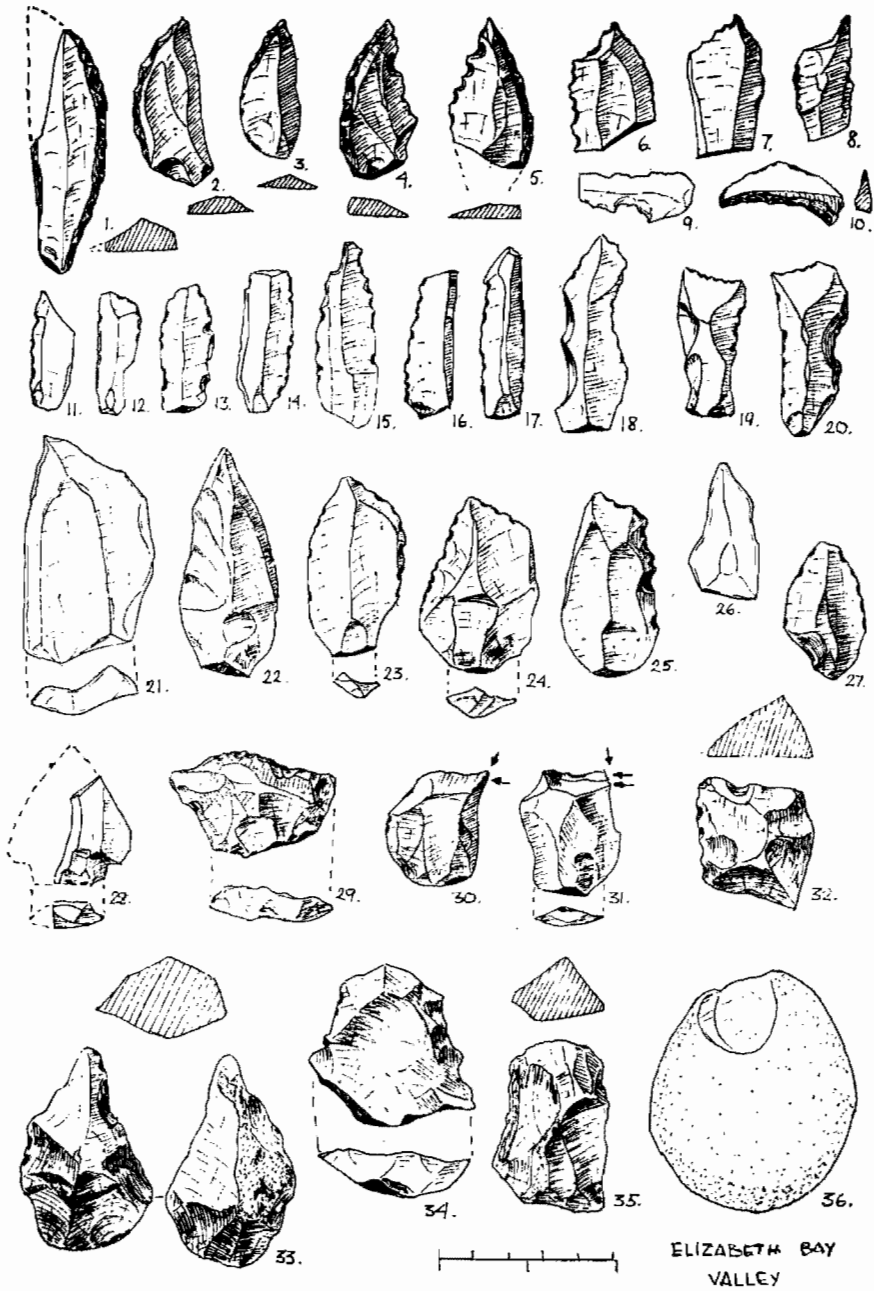


Fig. 3—Specimens obtained from the Elizabeth Bay Valley site.

are large, backed flake-blades (14%) up to 8.5 cm. long, which generally have the platform left. Burins comprise 6.9%. Among the microlithic tools are double-backed points, generally larger than in a Wilton assemblage, and some notched (11%) and core scrapers (1.4%).

In spite of the predominance of blade tools this industry does not seem to be Magosian as there are no bifacial points, large crescents, or pressure flaking. It has a superficial resemblance to the Capsian of North Africa (El Mekta). It is probable, however, that this industry is a development of the Middle Stone Age industry at Klinghardt and belongs to the very end of the Gamblian Pluvial when people were taking refuge at the last remaining springs.

Daheim Valley Midden. This is a shell midden situated in a donga on the western side of the southern end of the Daheim Valley, about two miles from the sea. The donga leads into a pan where a Wilton site occurs. The buried midden has been partly exposed by the donga and consists of old-looking *Patella* shells and a few implements cemented together by calcrete. No bone, ostrich eggshell or pottery was found in the midden. There are one prepared core and nine large flake-blades, of the same type as at Elizabeth Bay Valley, and made of chalcedony, silcrete or quartz. The assemblage is obviously too small to enable us to study this industry, but the absence of all the elements typical for the other midden sites along the coast might be significant and it seems possible this midden is earlier than the others and belongs to the same industry as represented at Elizabeth Bay Valley.

Schwarzer Berg (Fig. 4). Swarzer Berg is situated 10 miles from the sea north-east of Pomona. It is a conical, basaltic hill which rises steeply to an elevation of about 330 ft. above the surrounding country. Artefacts and workshop debris were found scattered among the scree on the sides of the hill as well as on the top, where a certain amount of ostrich eggshell was also found but no eggshell beads. The material is mostly chalcedony but there is some quartz. There is very little weathering of the tools.



Fig. 4—Specimens obtained from the Schwarzer Berg site.

Among the tools the side-scrapers are predominant (50%), followed by end-scrapers (22%), utilized flake-blades (20%), microlithic notched scrapers (4%) and core scrapers (4%). Statistically it resembles both the Klinghardt and Elizabeth Bay Valley industries. A possible broken tanged point (Fig. 4, 3) adds to the resemblance with the Klinghardt industry, but there are no points or burins. The choice of material is inferior to the Elizabeth Bay Valley industry. The general size of the tools is also smaller than at the latter site, but the percentage of microlithic debris is only slightly higher, 33% against 28%. The Schwarzer Berg industry gives the general impression of being a later development of the Klinghardt and Elizabeth Bay Valley industries.

Elizabeth Bay South Midden (Fig. 5). This shell midden is situated at the southern end of the bay, near an old compound, and stretches along a small road for about 150 yards. The very flat midden is com-

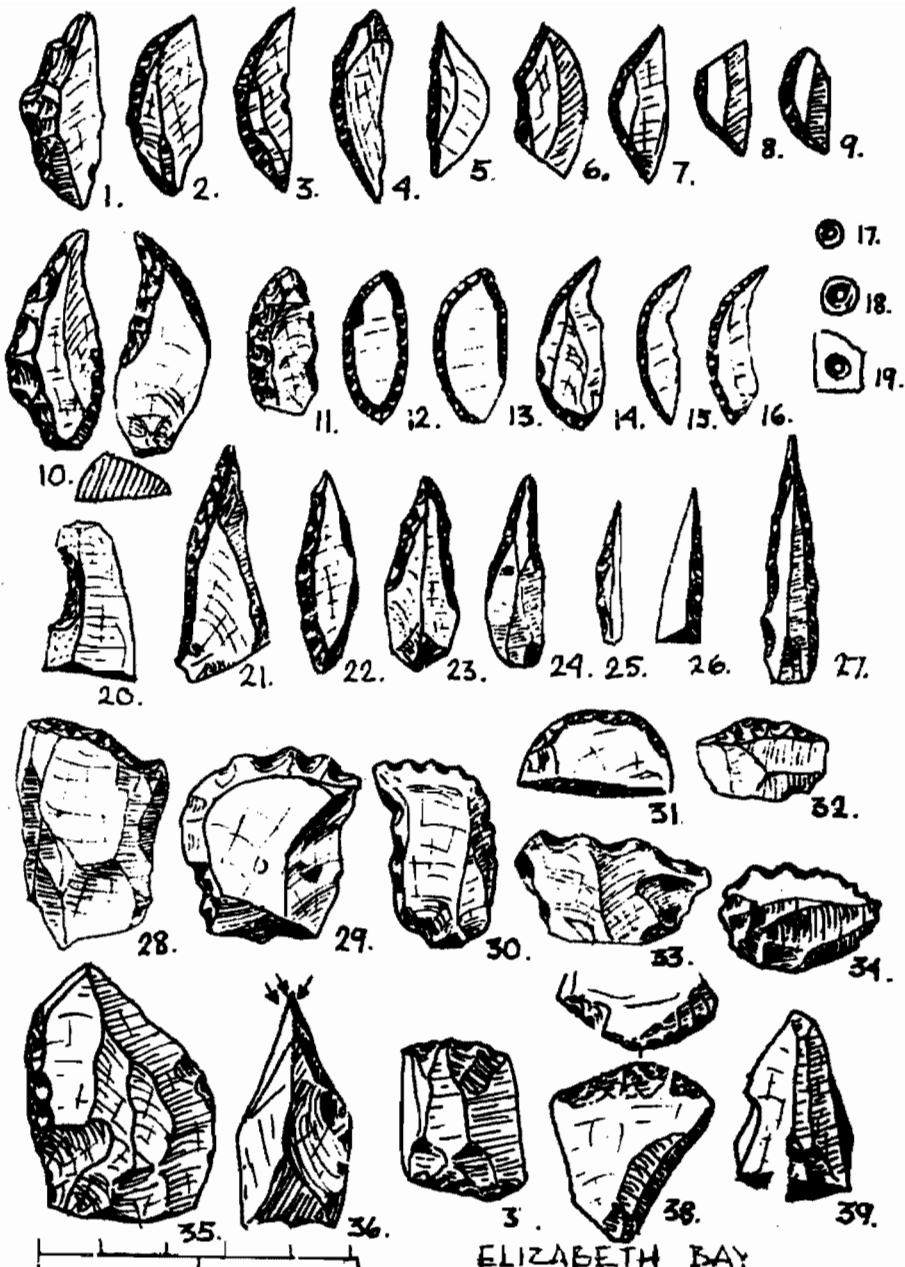


Fig. 5—Specimens obtained from the Elizabeth Bay South midden.

posed of *Lutreria*, *Patella* and *Mytilus* shells and lies just above the storm beach. The tools are made of chalcedony and are somewhat wind-polished. There are also finished and unfinished ostrich eggshell beads, bones and a few pieces of pottery on the midden. These pottery sherds seem to be from one pot only and may be of a later date.

The workshop debris contains mostly microlithic blades and flakes (81%) and some blade cores. Most of the tools are microlithic blade tools, among them crescents (27%), some beaked, backed blades (22%) and double-backed points or borers (19%). There are also some larger side-scrapers on flakes (13%) and some unusual serrated end-scrapers (9.3%). A weathered grinder of quartzitic sandstone has also been used as a hammerstone.

This midden industry is certainly a Wilton industry with typical crescents, double crescents and double-backed blade points, but the presence of some Magosian elements, i.e. large crescents, an outil écaillée (Fig. 5, 37), burins and a pressure-flaked adze head (Fig. 5, 38), combined with the almost complete absence of microlithic end-scrapers, indicates that this industry is probably older than any other Wilton we found in the area, and also older than the Wilton midden industries of South Africa.

Claratal Midden (Fig. 6, 22-30, 33-34). This midden occurs on the southern side of a valley just west of the road from Pomona to Elizabeth Bay and about a mile from the sea and at a level of about 60 ft. The site stretches for about 200 yards along the main valley and shorter distances up the small side valleys. The midden consists of *Patella* and *Mytilus* shells. A large amount of artefacts, ostrich eggshell and pottery was found here, the pottery only on part of the site, and some splinters of cooked bone.

The tools are mostly made of chalcedony, only a few of quartz, and are slightly weathered. Almost half the assemblage is macrolithic (>3 cm.) with many side-scrapers (32%) and a few end-scrapers (6.5%). Among the microliths the thumb-nail scrapers predominate (42%), but there are also core scrapers (8.1%), notched scrapers (4.8%) and a few crescents (6.5%).

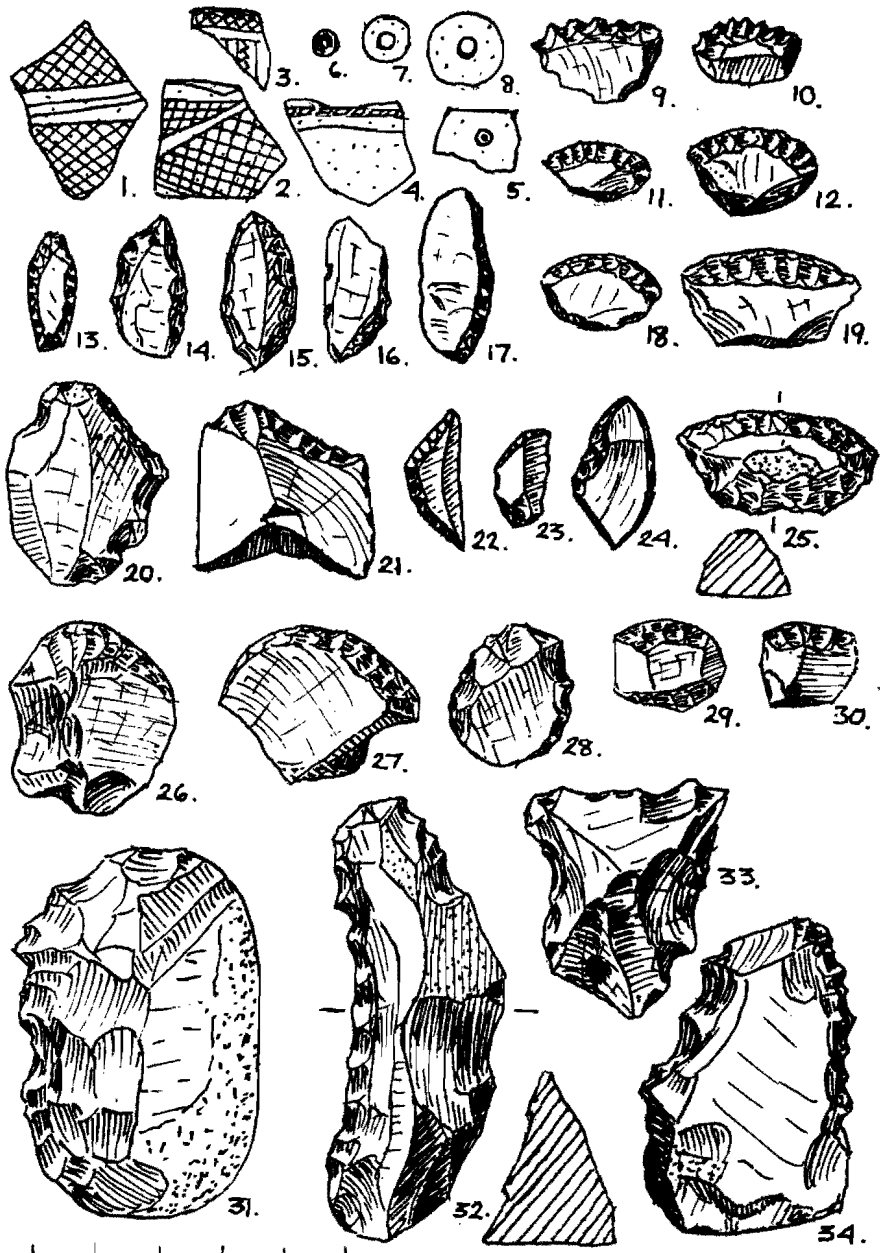
A hammerstone made on a pebble was also found.

In the Claratal industry the scrapers predominate (93%), in contrast to the Elizabeth Bay South industry, where they constitute less than a third (31%) of the tools. In the former industry the microlithic element constitutes 58% in contrast to 92% in the latter. The Elizabeth Bay South industry being a Wilton industry, it is tempting to call the Claratal industry a local Smithfield in spite of the few crescents present.

Buntveldschuh Midden (Fig. 6, 1-21, 31-32). This site is located on either side of a track leading from the main road to the spring at Buntveldschuh. It is about 200 yards from the western side of the local escarpment and 4.4 miles from the sea. The midden consists mainly of *Patella* shells but there are also some *Mytilus* and a few Gastropod shells. Ostrich eggshell pieces are numerous and some of them are engraved with geometric patterns. There is also a fair amount of unweathered artefacts, bones and pottery sherds. Much pottery has been collected here earlier. The material is chalcedony, quartz crystal and silcrete.

Apart from some macrolithic (>3 cm.) scrapers (17.7%), most of the tools are microlithic, i.e. thumbnail scrapers (20%), serrated ditto (4.0%), side-scrapers (18%), backed blades (15%), double-backed points (12%), core scrapers (9.5%) and double crescents (4.0%). Ostrich eggshell beads are also common. Typologically this industry seems to show a merging of the Elizabeth Bay South industry with the Claratal industry. The result is very reminiscent of the typical midden Wilton with pottery as we know it from the Cape, where we have also found engraved ostrich eggshell². No typical single crescents were, however, present.

Chameis Spring Midden. This midden is situated at the permanent spring on the northern side of the Chameis salt pan and about five miles from the sea. It is next to the old Chameis Police Station. The midden consists of *Patella*, *Mytilus* and snail shells and contains artefacts, ostrich eggshell pieces, some of them engraved, egg-



BONTVELDSLUH & CLARATAL

Fig. 6—Specimens obtained from the Bontveldschuh midden.

shell beads and pottery sherds. A few pieces of specular haematite were also found and some bone. For its large size the midden contains very little material and the finished tools are rare. The material is chalcedony, quartz crystal and silcrete. Macrolithic scrapers comprise 40% of the assemblage, while the rest are microlithic core scrapers (50%) and thumbnail scrapers (10%). All the tools are actually scrapers, which compares well with the 93% from

the Claratal midden, and this is probably a later development of the Claratal industry.

Jammer Bay Midden. This site is located on the southern side of the bay in shelter of the hills and at a height of about 33 ft. above sea level. There are several large heaps of very fresh-looking and unbroken *Patella* and *Mytilus* shells, on which artefacts, pottery, bones and ostrich eggshell pieces are found. The number of finished

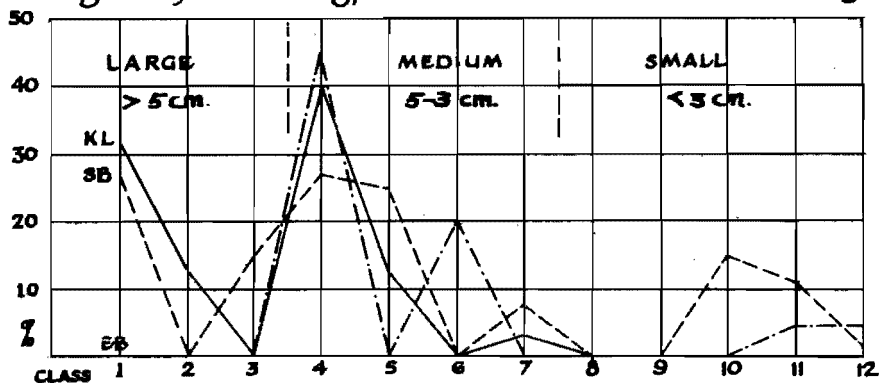
TABLE I.—Number and percentages of artefact classes

<i>Assemblage</i>	<i>Affen- rucken Tafelberg</i>	<i>Klinghardt Tafelberg</i>	<i>Elizabeth Bay Valley</i>	<i>Schwarzer Berg</i>	<i>Elizabeth Bay South</i>	<i>Claratal Midden</i>	<i>Buntveld- schuh Midden</i>	<i>Chameis Midden</i>
Size over 5 cm.								
Handaxes . . .	3·8(2)							
Side-scrapers . .	23(12)	22(26)		22(17)	1·9(2)			
End-scrapers . .	15(8)	10(12)		5·3(4)	·9(1)			
Unifacial points	5·7(3)	13(16)						
Backed blades . .			14(10)					
Size 3-5 cm.								
Side-scrapers . .	49(26)	32(39)	19(14)	28(21)	13(14)	32(20)	11(8)	30(6)
End-scrapers . .		8·3(10)	8·2(6)	17(13)	11(12)	6·5(4)	4·0(3)	5·0(1)
Points		12(14)	25(18)					
Utilized blades .				20(15)				
Burins	1·9(1)	2·5(3)	6·9(5)		1·9(2)			
Waste								
Prep. flake cores	1·3(1)	·8(1)	4·9(25)				·2(1)	
Flake & flake- blades	30(23)		52(269)	45(183)	4·5(41)	36(178)	17(83)	33(93)
Size under 3 cm.								
Backed blades . .					22(23)		15(11)	
Crescents					27(29)	6·5(4)	4·0(3)	
Double backed points			15(11)		19(20)		12(9)	
End-scrapers . . .						42(26)	24(18)	10(2)
Notched scrapers			11(8)	4·0(3)	·9(1)	4·8(3)	2·7(2)	5·0(1)
Core scrapers . .			1·4(1)	4·0(3)	2·8(3)	8·1(5)	9·5(7)	50(10)
Side-scrapers . .							18(13)	
Waste								
Blade cores . . .			·6(3)	2·5(10)	2·8(25)	3·3(16)	6·3(30)	6·8(19)
Blades & small flakes		6·9(9)	28(143)	33(135)	86(719)	47(232)	51(242)	45(125)
Total tools . . .	69(52)	92(120)	14(73)	19(76)	12(107)	13(62)	16(74)	7·2(20)
Other artefacts								
Hammerstones & fabricators			(3)	(1)		(1)	(5)	(9)
Grinders					(1)			(1)
Pottery					×	×	×	×
Ostrich eggshell beads					(3)		(24)	(8)
Engraved ostrich eggshell							(14)	(4)
Grand total . . .	(76)	(130)	(516)	(405)	(896)	(489)	(473)	(279)

Percentages of tools given are of the total number of tools, while percentages of waste material are of the total assemblage. Actual numbers are given within brackets.

TABLE II

Percentages of Tool Types at Middle & Later Stone Age Sites.

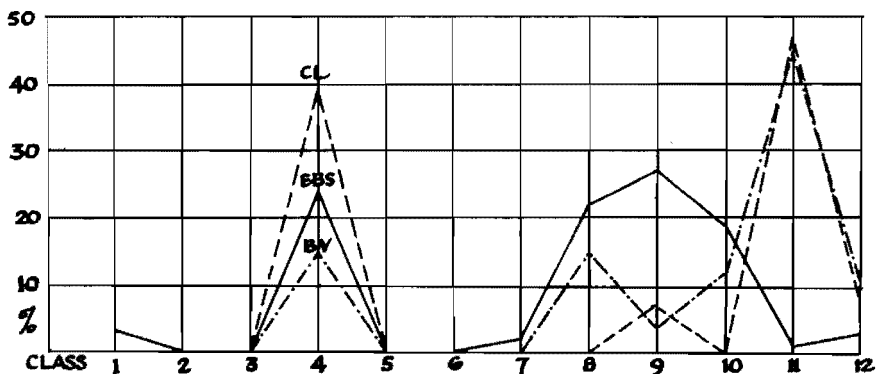


Middle Stone Age Sites

KL Klinghardt Tafelberg

EB Elizabeth Bay Valley

SB Schwarzer Berg



EBS Elizabeth Bay South Midden

CL Claratal Midden

BV Buntveldschut Midden

Later Stone Age Sites.

CLASS

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Large side- or/and end-scrapers | 7. Medium burins. |
| 2. Large unifacial points | 8. Small backed blades |
| 3. Large backed blades. | 9. Crescents |
| 4. Medium side- or/and end-scrapers | 10. Double-backed points |
| 5. Medium points | 11. Small side - or/and end-scrapers |
| 6. Medium utilized blades | 12. Core scrapers |

tools is very small. In the assemblage are hammerstones on pebbles, a trimming stone, two-blade cores, three core-, four end- and side-scrapers and two ostrich eggshell beads. The main interest of this material is that it is the most recent and probably can be attributed to the last strandloppers of historical times.

POTTERY

The pottery found on the middens along the coast is thin-walled, well-baked and with a coarse sand admixture. The pots are shouldered with conical or rounded bases. The lugs are external and generally horizontally pierced. A whole pot of this type is kept at the Geological Office in Oran-jemund. It was found in a midden at the mouth of the Orange River. A pot of the same type at the Bethanie Mission Station near Aus was made by local Hottentots in the last century. A Topnaar Hottentot pot from Walfish Bay in the State Museum, Windhoek, is also of similar type. J. F. Schofield has described this pottery as Hottentot⁶.

CONCLUSIONS

In this report some archaeological open sites along the southern coast of South-West Africa have been described and a tentative sequence has been suggested, based not, as it should be, on stratigraphy, but on typology and weathering. This was the only way possible during a short visit, but the task was made more difficult by the lack of comparative, published material from South-West Africa.

Oldest are the doubtful pebble tools from the diamond gravels, followed by a Late Chelles-Acheul on the beach terraces. Then comes the Fauresmith from Affenrücken. The industries from Klinghardt, Elizabeth Bay Valley and Schwarzer Berg are probably Late Middle Stone Age, but the mutual sequence is difficult to determine. We may have here an example of the development of an isolated local culture tradition. Right from the Fauresmith at Affenrücken the importance of flake-blade tools increases to reach a peak both in number and perfection in the Elizabeth Bay Valley industry. Even when the microlithic blade technique finally takes over in the Wilton of the Elizabeth Bay South midden, there are still a few earlier elements present.

While the Daheimtal midden may belong to the end of the Middle Stone Age, the other midden industries are definitely in the Later Stone Age. The Elizabeth Bay South midden is possibly the oldest midden Wilton known from South-West Africa, before contact had been made with the Smithfield-like industry represented at Claratal midden, and may be connected with local Bushmen. At Buntveldschuh, Chameis and Jammer Bay we see these two midden industries merge to different degrees, while pottery becomes more important and the technical skill deteriorates, possibly as iron becomes available.

From historical evidence we know that the last strandloppers in this area were Hottentot-speaking⁷, and to them we can probably ascribe the last midden industries, especially as the pottery is the same as is known from other Hottentot tribes in South-West Africa. We know that some of these strandloppers had cattle and it is possible that the pottery arrived at the same time as the cattle.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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J. RUDNER,
115, DREYERSDAL ROAD,
SWEET VALLEY,
BERGVLIET, CAPE.