

Potter's fingerprints: some prehistoric southern African utilityware in an intimate light

John Steele

Ceramics and Art Theory, Border Technikon School of Applied Art, Cambridge Street, East London, 5120, South Africa. Email: jsteele@inyathi.bortech.ac.za

Extensive archaeological excavations in southern Africa during the past century have revealed a richly described heritage of widely distributed First-Millennium (C.E.) Agriculturist ceramics. In viewing both artefacts and assessments thereof it can be observed that ways of thinking shape ways of seeing, and explanations of what is seen. Thus, because conceptual frameworks are inseparable from what is observed and explanations that result, consideration is given to some particular mindsets that have led to recent theories concerning local prehistoric material culture. In conclusion, a brief look at dialogues initiated by some contemporary potters who interrogate cherished lifeways and belief systems serve to elucidate current trends towards finding meaning in prehistoric southern African ceramics.

In order to contextualize current studies of some southern African First-Millennium (C.E.) Agriculturist ceramics it is appropriate to sketch the geographical landscape within which those artefacts occur (cf. figure 1).

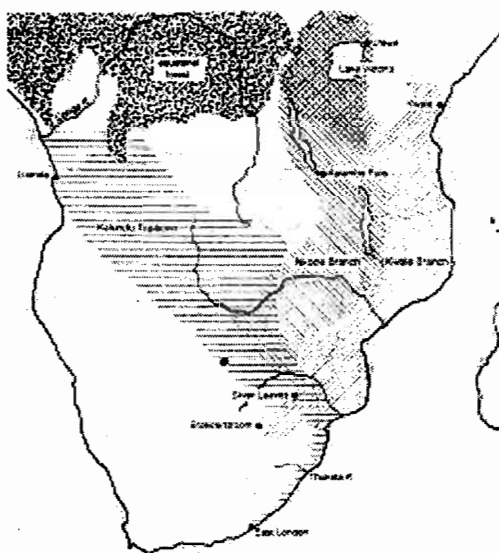


Figure 1
First-Millennium Agriculturist ceramic traditions of eastern and southern Africa (Whitelaw 1997:446).

Thereafter, the main ceramic styles and associated timeframes will be introduced, and then consideration will be given to ways in which conceptual frameworks have influenced what has been observed.

Archaeologists such as Tom Huffman (1989: 76) and Gavin Whitelaw (1997: 446) are largely agreed that there are two main First-Millennium Agriculturist ceramic styles present in this region. Urewe Tradition ceramics, such as these from Ziwa in Zimbabwe (cf. figure 2) are to be found inland and along the eastern African coast.

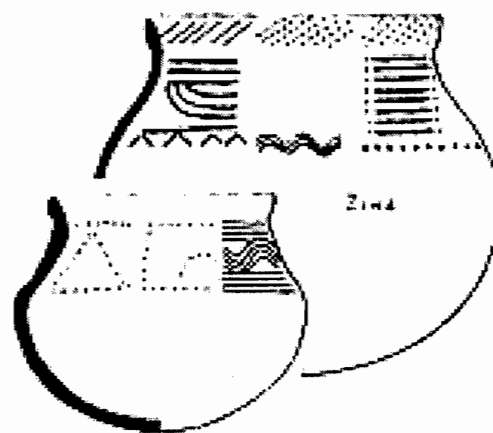


Figure 2
Ziwa ceramics (Huffman 1989: 7).

On the other hand, Kalundu Tradition ceramics span a region of central and southern Africa from around Luanda in the west to around East London in the south-east. Thus the potter responsible for creating this Kalundu Tradition vessel (cf. figure 3), excavated at Nanda (Whitelaw 1993: 60) in

KwaZulu-Natal, was part of a wider network of farmers that extended up Africa towards the equator.



Figure 3
Nanda vessel and close up. Height 200mm; diameter at lip 83mm (Photos: John Steele, 2000, courtesy of Natal Museum).

For the sake of clarity my focus in this paper will be mainly on KwaZulu-Natal/Eastern Cape Kalundu Tradition style of works and resulting discourse, despite that Urewe Tradition ceramics

were also created by early agropastoral farmers who practiced a mixed economy that included metalworking and clayworking technologies.

Kalundu Tradition ceramic style has been found to be quite consistent, despite regional variations, because by and large ceramic vessels are considered to reflect “a structured and repetitive combination of vessel shape and motifs that functions as a symbolic, non-verbal form of communication” (Whitelaw 1996: 75). Thus, considering factors such as “combinations of vessel profile, layout of [engraved] design field, and motif” (Huffman 2000: 4), the Nanda pot can be stylistically described as being rounded with an everted neck, featuring boldly incised linear engravings that also drop down over parts of the vessel belly.

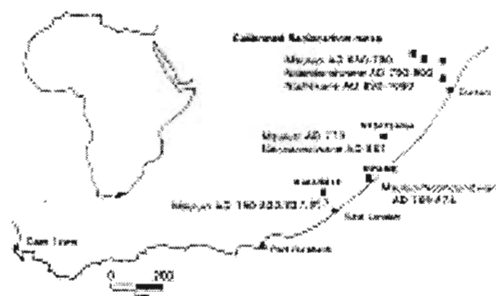


Figure 4
Sites and radiocarbon dates (Binneman 1996(b): 30).

In its southernmost manifestation this Msuluzi style is associated with potters living approximately 1500 years ago. (Cf. figure 4). The Msuluzi style Kalundu Tradition ceramic design changed gradually over the next few hundred years towards the Ndondondwane (figure 5) and Ntshekane styles (figure 6) of rounded vessels. Such utilityware featured progressively “elongated, [and then] inward sloping necks with fine

geometric clay body incisions, usually only on the neck” (Steele 2002(a): 8).



Figure 5
 Ndongdwane ceramic style vessel from KwaGandaganda, and close up. Height 120mm; diameter at lip 185mm; diameter at belly 240mm (Photos: John Steele, 2000, courtesy of Natal Museum).

Against this brief background it is useful to go back in time to some early southern African writings and archaeological excavations so as to consider particular mindsets that led to more recent ways of finding meanings associated with local prehistoric ceramic artefacts. Early historic era travellers, and other researchers, created a disturbing picture built upon preconceived ideas¹ of “the primitive” that were then imposed upon

indigenous African populations. It was widely believed most African societies were “uncreative, violent, incapable of change, and that any stimulus for development must come from outside” (Hall, M. 1984(a): 456, citing Harris 1969, and Trigger 1980).

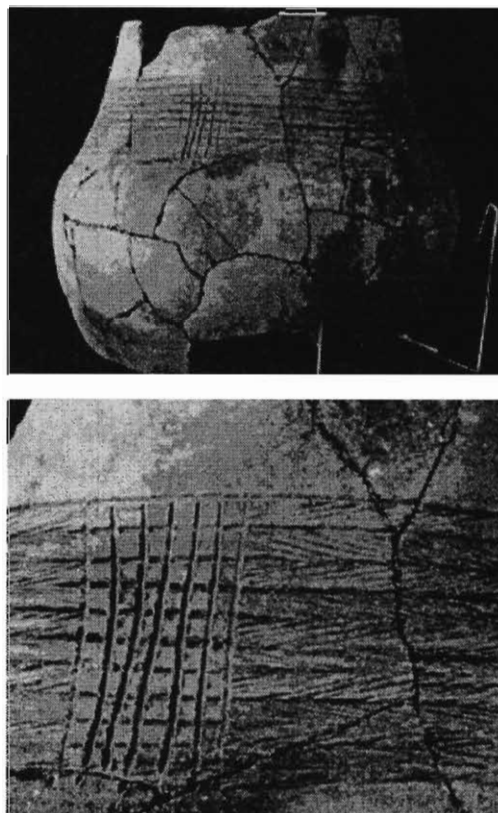


Figure 6
 Ntshokane vessel, and close up. Height 300mm; diameter at belly 350mm. (Photos: John Steele, 2000, courtesy of Natal Museum).

Such opinions were most frequently predicated on Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian concepts such as good / bad, civilization / savagery, and were also strongly influenced by a Linnaean trend, from about 1735 onwards, towards classification of all things as a way of knowing. Classification of peoples² encouraged a dehumanization process wherein “types” became so important that humans became

homogenized into standardized groups, and their individuality was ignored.

This self-serving scenario was also played out in gender issues, wherein patriarchy asserted itself in Western Europe by (amongst other strategies) aligning concepts of male with reason, and female with nature. By then claiming a superiority of reason over nature, masculinist tendencies towards dominance were thus seemingly legitimated. Likewise, capitalism, when dovetailed with ideas of social evolution, superiority, and a bringing of “benefits” of civilization to vanquished indigenous peoples, formed a potent conceptual cocktail out of which early archaeological efforts in southern Africa emerged in the 20th century.

The first archaeologically oriented systematic research into material culture of a farming-based society in southern Africa was undertaken in 1929, at Great Zimbabwe, by Gertrude Caton-Thompson³ (Hall, M. 1990: 7). She, and two assistants identified respectively as Miss Norie, responsible for the line drawings, (figure 7) and Miss Kenyon, responsible for the photography (figure 8) and vehicle maintenance, conducted excavations from April to September of that year (Caton-Thompson [1931] 1971: v-viii)⁴. Martin Hall (1984(a): 458; 1990: 7) has commented that Caton-Thompson created the first ceramic sequence for southern Africa, and was the first to use aerial photographs of a southern African site.

Despite such achievements it can, in retrospect, be seen that Caton-Thompson brought an early 20th Century colonial consciousness to bear on her findings because although she attributed Great Zimbabwe to African origins, she stated that the architecture

struck her as “essentially the product of an infantile mind”. She also, characteristically for the era, saw a “retrogressive continuity of custom down the ages” (Caton-Thompson [1931] 1971: 103).

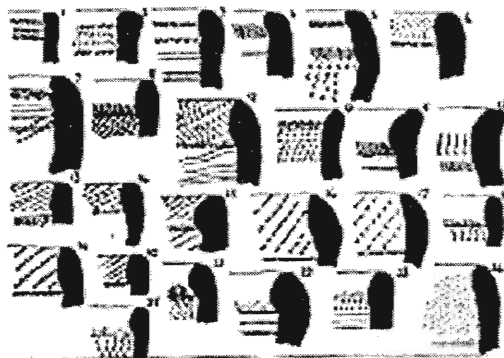


Figure 7
Great Zimbabwe vessel rim sections, Class A (Graphic by Miss Norie, in Caton-Thompson [1931] 1971: Plate LXIX, 1).

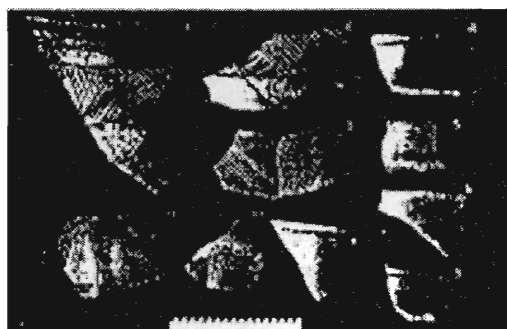


Figure 8
Great Zimbabwe, Maund Ruins, rimsherds (Photo by Miss Kenyon, in Caton-Thompson [1931] 1971: Plate XVIII, 2).

Thus the mindset that she, and others, brought to their researches determined interpretation of the Great Zimbabwe site. Garlake (1982) has called this particular way of seeing the “settler paradigm” (cited by Hall, M. 1984(b): 263), wherein southern African ceramics and culture was cast within a framework of preconceptions. These preconceptions also included an idea of Africa as having had “a shallow

history of invasions by bloodthirsty marauders ... and accordingly emphasised ... the sequence and directionality of the migrations and wars that had led to the contemporary distribution and disposition of black society” (Hall, M. 1984(b): 263). Aspects of this settler thought paradigm were to continue to find their way into studies of early farmer material culture for some time to come.

Writing from 1929 to 1936, amateur archaeologist PW Laidler attempted in several publications to classify mainly surface coastal ceramic remains from East London on the east coast, to Port Nolloth on the west coast. His settler paradigm way of thinking can be seen in his attribution of ceramic remains to men⁵, and also in his focus on race⁶, and on which peoples migrated where and miscegenated with whom. Laidler’s underlying objective in classifying the ceramics (figure 9) was thus a classification of peoples.

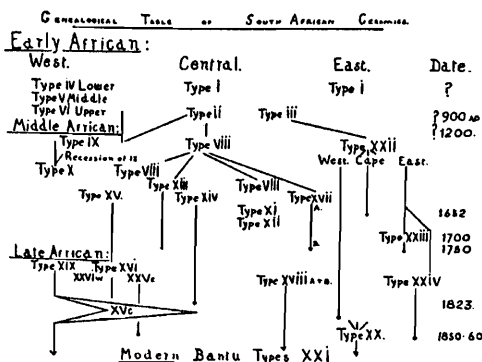


Figure 9
One of the earliest attempts at a genealogical table of South African “ceramics” (Laidler 1936: 165).

His conceptual framework is also demonstrated by a seamless use of the term “degenerate” (Laidler 1929: 759; 1935: 568) for pottery as well as people, thus derogatorily equating

humans with things, (figure 10) thereby also ascribing a “degenerate” character to the peoples responsible for the making of “degenerate” vessels⁷. Furthermore, like Caton-Thompson, Laidler denied both time-depth to ceramic assemblages and associated peoples – as can be seen in figure 9 -, and rejected that regional origins of clayworking could have been a local enterprise⁸.

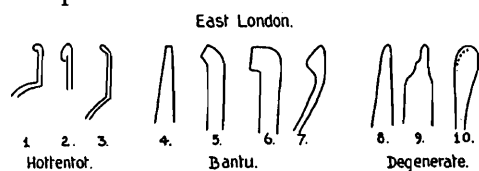


Figure 10
Laidler’s (1936: 140) classification of East London area people and ceramic types.

Of Laidler’s approximate contemporaries, architect and amateur archaeologist John Schofield created a relatively systematic classification of First and Pre-colonial Second-Millennium Agriculturist ceramic styles, leading to an attempt at a general synthesis of this type in 1948. (Cf. figure 11). Tim Maggs (1993: 70) has expressed an opinion that Schofield’s assessment “was to remain the basic reference work until the 1970’s ... [but] was, however, of limited [archaeological] value because it was based on small, often surface, collections and it was written before the discovery of radiocarbon dating”.

Nonetheless, Schofield (1948: 15) was also prey to settler thought paradigms, asserting, for instance, that “primitive pottery making ... is carried on by women, and is always shaped by the hand; while that of more advanced peoples is made by men with the aid of the potter’s wheel”. He (1948: 25) did, however, also admonish that “we must always regard primitive people as

being just as much human beings as ourselves, and, even at their furthest removes from us, far more like us than unlike us". Despite his use of the value-laden word "primitive", and the paternalistic tone of this statement, it does, however, indicate a significant shift in mindset towards recognition of human commonality.



Figure 11
Part of Schofield's (1948: 153) classification of KwaZulu Natal prehistoric coastal ceramics.

For a little less than the next three decades there was not much methodical research undertaken which focussed on KwaZulu-Natal / Eastern Cape First and Precolonial Second-Millennium Agriculturist material culture. Len van Schalkwyk (1991: 11) has commented that this

has partly been ascribed to the prevailing political milieu, in which the ruling minority strove to maintain colonial myths of a limited

and static indigenous cultural past and stressed recent internecine strife to bolster ideologies of ethnic separateness and tribal affiliation.

This picture started to change with the establishment of the CSIR radiocarbon dating laboratory under John Vogel in 1968. "Only then could numbers of reliable dates be brought to bear on the accumulated chronological confusion" (Maggs 1993: 71) characteristic of southern African deep-past studies. Radiocarbon dating showed that indigenous farmers had occupied vast tracts of southern Africa for more than a millennium. This discovery enabled the likes of Johan Binneman (1996(b): 71), for instance, to address a widely held misapprehension that the Eastern Cape was largely an "empty space" prior to the early historical era.

Binneman (1996(b): 71) found that ash from a pit at Kulubele settlement on the west bank of the Great Kei River, (figure 12) and the presence of Msuluzi style Kalundu Tradition ceramics, (figure 13) enabled him to place occupation of this site by early farmers at "between AD 790 and AD 799". It is salutary to note that the Kulubele valley had thus been occupied by potters and metalworkers, (figure 14) who also farmed millet and sorghum (Binneman 1996(b): 72) approximately a thousand years before the landmark 1820 arrival in the Eastern Cape region of settlers from Europe.

Other significant developments that brought about different mindsets included a 1976 assessment of First-Millennium Agriculturist ceramics, excavated along the eastern plateau slopes and coastal plain of KwaZulu-Natal, by Tim Maggs and Mary Michael. They (1976: 715), for instance, excavated at Ntshekane under

controlled conditions, and developed a “matrix of pottery characteristics” upon which an extensive stylistic analysis could be based. It is also interesting that their (1976: 716) observations went beyond being purely descriptive, noting that “the potters regarded the neck as being rather distinct from the body” (figure 15) thereby acknowledging human agency without any disparaging commentary.



Figure 12
Kulubele valley, showing the spot [below] where Victor Biggs first discovered engraved rimsherds (Photos: John Steele, 1999, courtesy of Wesley and Colleen Sternberg).

Maggs and Michael (1976: 716) also suggested that “it seems likely that the neck was sometimes added after the body had been made”, thereby giving an insight into possible production procedure, and conjuring an image of potters actively making choices about construction technique. Furthermore, they (1976: 718) noted that “necks are fairly tall and they are an important

aesthetic element of the vessel”, thus again attributing choice, not only in regard to the relation of shape to function, but also in terms of how the vessel looks. The visual impact of an elongated neck stretching upwards from the vessel belly, such extension enhancing a display of clay body incisions, is one of elegant assurance.



Figure 13
The original two rimsherds found by Victor Biggs (Binneman 1996(b): 71).

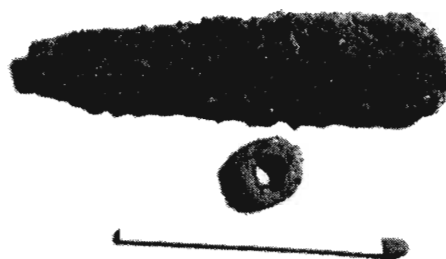


Figure 14
Kulubele flat iron point, and iron bead (Photo: John Steele, 2001, courtesy of Albany Museum).

By hinting at the personal and pointing out stylistic variety Maggs and Michael sketched a picture of many individual potters skilfully manipulating the medium to create domestic utilityware for rhythmic daily storage and cooking purposes, as well as for intermittent ritualistic usage.

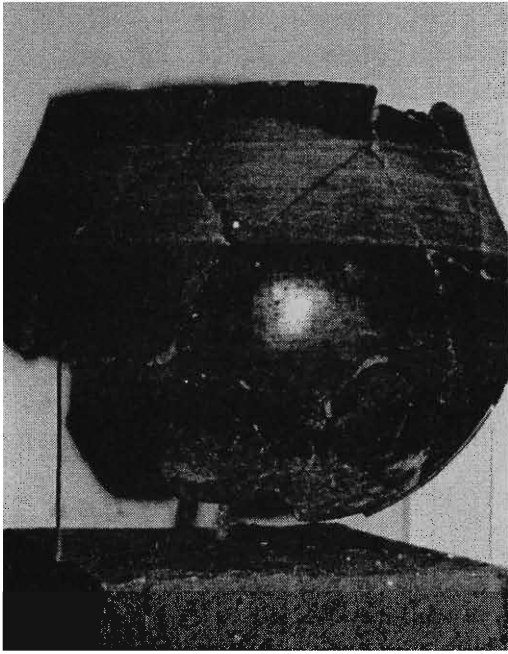


Figure 15
Ntshekane vessel on display at Natal Museum (Photo: John Steele, 2000).

It has been found, for example, that First-Millennium Agriculturist mortuary rituals, which articulated transitions from life to death, almost invariably involved deliberate internment of domestic utilityware. Vessels were used, for instance, as “receptacles” for human remains, (figure 16) as in this foetal burial from KwaGandaganda (Whitelaw 1994: 73), or as accompanying grave goods, such as those (figure 17) associated with a burial at Nanda (Whitelaw 1993: 52). These Nanda grave goods are particularly interesting in that they relate a story of use value reconfiguration wherein the vessel depicted top right [also shown bottom] had its base deliberately removed prior to being interred upside-down in the human burial pit. The new hole in this pot was found to have been deliberately closed over at the time of internment by the shard depicted top left.

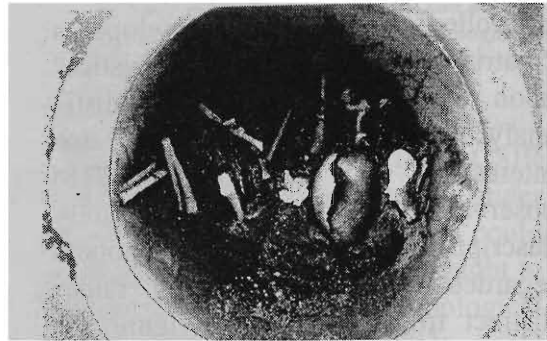


Figure 16
KwaGandaganda foetal burial in vessel (Photo: Gavin Whitelaw, 1988).

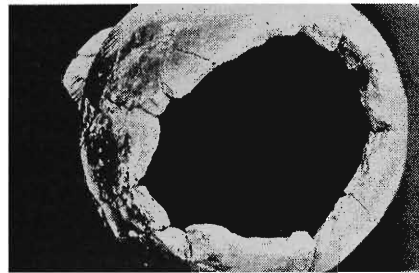
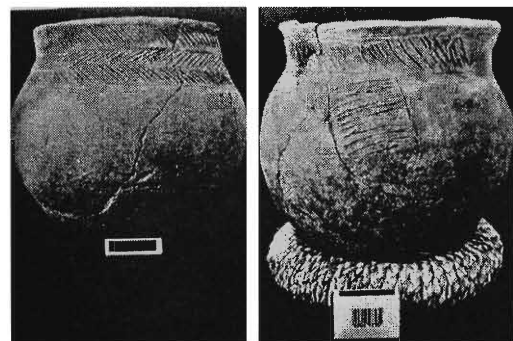


Figure 17
Nanda sherd [left] placed over a deliberately made hole [bottom] in another vessel [right] prior to upside-down internment (Photos: John Steele, 2000, courtesy of Natal Museum).

It may be that the top left shard was placed over the hole in the vessel buried upside-down so as to re-articulate closure of some sort, perhaps even to seal earthwards whatever metaphysical contents the pierced vessel was thought to embody. Such a symbolic meaning –in -the -making series of events may have been a tangible expression of a cosmology

that was “focussed on harnessing beneficial and appeasing detrimental energies conceptually linked with particular tangible objects in the environment” (Steele 2002(b): 175).

In conclusion, then, it can be seen that recent theories concerning First-Millennium Agriculturist ceramics are tending towards a search for possible meanings that such ceramic artefacts may have had for people at moments of creation, use, and discard. Combined with this is a recognition that each ceramic artefact also indicates a momentary culmination of technical and social knowledge, revealing the presence and intentionality of “skilled and knowing hands” (Dobres in press: 1).

A brief look at dialogues initiated by some contemporary potters who have interrogated cherished lifeways and belief systems should serve to further elucidate the significance of this trend towards finding meaning in prehistoric southern African ceramics. Siziwe Sotewu, in *The Abduction* (figure 18) offered comment on an ancient Xhosa practice known as *ukuthwalwa*, whereby custom allowed for a maiden to be forcibly removed from her home to become party to an arranged marriage. Here Sotewu depicted a moment when such a maiden attempted to fight off her attackers. In subsequent artworks of the series Sotewu explored reasoning behind *ukuthwalwa* practices, and commented on contemporary appropriateness of this custom.

On the other hand, in *Reunion*, (figure 19) Gcinikhaya Dase reflected on a moment of resolution after a childhood of extreme hardship caused in part by the disappearance of his father that left the family destitute. Here his parents are symbolised as

fish, agreeing to start afresh, the flowing upward curves indicating hope for a brighter future.

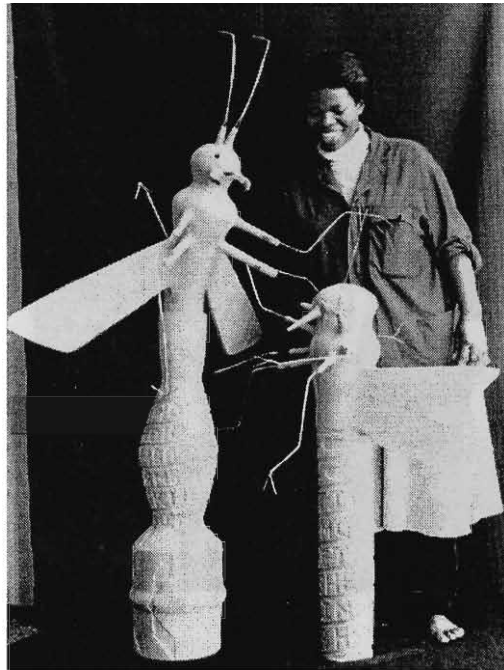


Figure 18
Siziwe Sotewu, *The Abduction*. 2001. Clay and wire.

Both Sotewu and Dase have used symbols and metaphors to initiate dialogues between themselves and their life experiences, expressing ideas about the past and hopes for the future. An advantage that I as viewer have in coming to grips with meanings in their works is that the artists have explained some of their conceptual points of departure, enabling me to follow thought processes leading to creation of these works. Thus, just as these clay stories can be said to result from “unfolding actions and experiences of the hands, minds, hearts, practices, values, and social labour” (Dobres in press: 2) of present day potters, so too can the clayworks of prehistoric times.



Figure 19
Gcinikhaya Dase, *Reunion*. 2001. Clay.

This means that, apart from aesthetic interest, ceramic artefacts evidence an interface between medium, thoughts, feelings, and lifeways as experienced by persons in the deep past. A focus on these aspects of ways in which artefacts acquire meaning brings me, as an individual researcher, closer to recognition of commonalities in the landscape⁹ shared by flesh and blood present day and prehistoric potters.

Furthermore, it is truly astonishing to notice that those skilled and knowing hands, of First-Millennium Agriculturist potters, have often left intimate evidence (figure 20) on vessel interiors of long, confident, sweeping motions across soft clay surfaces during the shaping process.



Figure 20
Detail of Nanda vessel interior showing a potter's long and confident shaping strokes (Photo: John Steele, 2001, courtesy of Natal Museum).

Such striations, and fingerprints (figure 21) like this on a lump of clay excavated by Johan Binneman (2000: 83) at Baviaanskloof in the Eastern Cape, bring me, as viewer, closer than ever before to recognition of individuality, and towards empathetic participation in creative moments so long ago. Therein, for me, lies value.

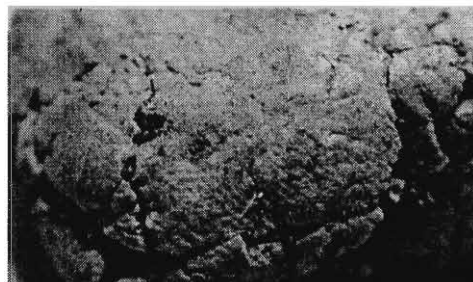


Figure 21
Fingerprint on a piece of clay recently excavated by Johan Binneman at Baviaanskloof (Photo: John Steele, 2002, courtesy of Albany Museum).

Notes

¹This mindset can be seen, for example, in writings by Stow in 1905, Theal in 1907, and Impey in 1926. Stow (1905: 233) wrote of central African people as "a seething mass of equatorial life", thereby presenting an image of people undifferentiated from animal and plant life. Theal (1907: 2-3), writing about prehistoric middens along the South African

coast, maintained that “arrowheads, spearheads [and] scrapers ... were the products of the skill of man in the lowest stage of existence”.

² Classification according to race, from a Western European point of view and of relevance to studies of southern African material culture, can be traced back to 1735 when Linnaeus drew distinctions between *Homo europaeus*, *Homo asiaticus* and *Homo africanus* (Hall, M. 1996: 127). This empiricist classificatory trend was quite likely to have influenced the mindsets of Stow, Theal, Impey, and others.

³ Before Caton-Thompson, archaeologists in southern Africa had concentrated on Stone Age studies, “consigning evidence for more recent settlement to the “Bantu Period”, and leaving its interpretation ... to ethnographers” (Hall, M. 1984(b): 263). Martin Hall (1984(b): 263) cited two such examples of ethnographic enquiry, both of which contributed substantially to the misinformed worldview previously under discussion. He observed that “Soga (1930) argued the value of racially superior “blood” for the advancement of a barbaric race, and CT Binns (1974) suggested an association between the Zulu and the lost tribe of Israel because both practised circumcision”.

⁴ Prior to their arrival the area had been searched for signs of an immensely wealthy mythical Christian king, called Prester John, as well as for the lost wealth of the biblical characters King Solomon and Queen of Sheba. In 1892 Teodore Bent dismissed the above characters, proposing instead a Sabaeen Arab and Phoenician origin for the ruins. Ten years later RN Hall and WG Neal largely concurred with Bent’s assessment, adding a final “decadent period” when descendants of the first builders mixed with the local population (Hall, M. 1996: 23-27, citing Bent [1892] 1969, and Hall, RN & Neal 1902).

Such preconceptions advanced colonial expansionist imperatives by assuming a history of colonization, and thereby denying the local population their own history. Furthermore, the abilities of earlier local people were trivialized by assertions that persons from elsewhere had built Great Zimbabwe. Furthermore, Martin Hall (1984(a): 457) has recounted that RN Hall and WG Neal’s disregard for careful excavation procedure resulted in “depredations that destroyed much of the archaeological evidence of Great Zimbabwe”.

⁵ This attribution of ceramic remains to “men” was without any archaeological evidence whatsoever.

⁶ For example: “The race of men responsible for their deposit [the ceramics] is usually termed “Strandlooper” ... bastardization appears to have

taken place steadily, and the Hottentot was probably more and more Bush in blood the further south and east that he migrated” (Laidler 1929: 758).

⁷ For example: “Shape was dictated to a considerable extent by the development or degeneration of technique. As the Hottentot trekked along the African coast his technique ... degenerated as he became bastardized, and there was a consequent loss of standard” (Laidler 1929: 759). His conflation of “degenerate” people and pots was repeated in 1935 (p. 568) where he referred to various coastal peoples who “may be classified as follows: Modern Bantu; Bantu of mid 19th century; Degenerate Pottery; Hottentot ...”.

⁸ For example: “Pottery did not develop in South African cultures, but was an industry of comparatively recent introduction” (Laidler 1929: 761).

⁹ Landscape is used here in the sense suggested by Ingold (1993: 171) of being “not a totality that you or anyone can look at, it is rather the world in which we stand in taking up a point of view”.

Sources cited

Bent, JT. [1892] 1969. *The ruined cities of Mashonaland*. Bulawayo: Books of Rhodesia.

Binneman, J. 1996a. Preliminary report on the investigations at Kulubele, an Early Iron Age farming settlement in the Great Kei river valley, Eastern Cape. *Southern African Field Archaeology* 5: 28-35.

Binneman, J. 1996b. A new history from the dust. *Vuka S A* 1 (7): 70–73.

Binns, CT. 1974. *The warrior people: Zulu origins, customs and witchcraft*. Cape Town: Howard Timmins.

Caton-Thompson, G. [1931] 1971. *The Zimbabwe culture. Ruins and reactions*. London: Frank Cass.

- Dobres, M-A. In press. Meaning in the making: agency and the social embodiment of technology and art, in *Explorations in the anthropology of technology*, edited by MB Schiffer. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Garlake, PS. 1982. Prehistory and ideology in Zimbabwe. *Africa* 52(3): 1-19.
- Hall, M. 1984a. The burden of tribalism: the social context of Southern African Iron Age studies. *American Antiquity* 49(3): 455-467.
- Hall, M. 1984b. Pots and politics: ceramic interpretations in southern Africa. *World Archaeology* 15(3): 262-273.
- Hall, M. 1990. *Farmers, kings and traders. The people of Southern Africa, 200-1860*. London: University of Chicago Press.
- Hall, M. 1996. *Archaeology Africa*. Cape Town: David Philip.
- Hall, RN & Neal, WG. 1902. *The Ancient ruins of Rhodesia*. London: Methuen.
- Harris, M. 1969. *The rise of anthropological theory*. London: Routledge and Kegan.
- Huffman, TN. 1989. *Iron Age Migrations*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Huffman, TN. 2000. Regionality in the Iron Age: the case of the Sotho-Tswana. Paper presented at the Biennial Conference of the Southern African Association of Archaeologists, 25-28 April, University of Witwatersrand.
- Impey, SP. 1926. *The origin of the Bushmen and the rock paintings of South Africa*. Johannesburg: Juta.
- Ingold, T. 1993. The temporality of the landscape. *World Archaeology* 25(2): 152-174.
- Laidler, PW. 1929. Hottentot and Bushman Pottery of South Africa. *South African Journal of Science* 26: 758-786.
- Laidler, PW. 1932. The Bantu potting industry and its impacts on other native potting industries in South Africa. *South African Journal of Science* 29: 778-791.
- Laidler, PW. 1936. South African native ceramics: their characteristics and classification. *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Africa* 26: 93-172.
- Maggs, T. 1993. Three decades of Iron Age research in South Africa: some personal reflections. *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 48(158): 70-76.
- Maggs, T & Michael, MA. 1976. Ntshekane: an Early Iron Age site in the Tugela Basin, Natal. *Annals of the Natal Museum* 22(3): 705-740.
- Schofield, JF. 1948. *Primitive pottery: an introduction to South African ceramics, prehistoric and protohistoric*. Cape Town: South African Archaeological Society.

-
- Soga, JH. 1930. *The South Eastern Bantu*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Steele, J. 2002a. Potters of Pondoland. *National Ceramics Quarterly* 60 (Winter): 8-13.
- Steele, J. 2002b. First-Millennium Agriculturist ceramics of the Eastern Cape, South Africa: an investigation into some ways in which artefacts acquire meaning. Unpublished MA dissertation. Pretoria: UNISA.
- Stow, GW. 1905. *The native races of South Africa*. London: Swan and Sonnenschein.
- Theal, GM. 1907. *History and Ethnography of South Africa, South of the Zambezi*, Vol II. London: Swan Sonnenschein.
- Trigger, BG. 1980. *Gordon Childe: revolutions in archaeology*. Thames and Hudson: London.
- Van Schalkwyk, L. 1991. Society in transformation. Early Iron Age mixed farming communities in the lower Thukela basin, Zululand. University of Cape Town.
- Whitelaw, G. 1993. Customs and settlement patterns in the first millennium AD: evidence from Nanda, an Early Iron Age site in the Mngeni Valley, Natal. *Natal Museum Journal of Humanities* 5: 47-81.
- Whitelaw, G. 1994. KwaGandaganda: settlement patterns in the Early Iron Age. *Natal Museum Journal of Humanities* 6: 1-64.
- Whitelaw, G. 1996. Lydenberg revisited: Another look at the Mpumalanga Early Iron Age sequence. *The South African Archaeological Bulletin* 51: 75-83.
- Whitelaw, G. 1997. Southern African Iron Age, in *Encyclopedia of precolonial Africa: archaeology, history, languages, cultures and environments*, edited by JO Vogel. London: Altamira: 444-455.