

PART III

CHAPTER 8

Synopsis and Inferences

1) The People

a) Who were they?

i) According to identification of skeletal remains

Five skeletons were recovered from Schroda, and one from Pont Drift. Between them they represent the Zhizo and Leopard's Kopje A populations on the sites excavated. Other skeletal material was recovered from Commando Kop and K2, and is representative of the people who are connected to the Leopard's Kopje Culture.

From the Schroda sample, only one skeleton could be identified without doubt as negroid, one could not be identified at all, while the remainder were closer to negroid than any other racial group.

It can therefore be said that the Schroda inhabitants were negroid people. No indication was found of hybridization.

The Pont Drift burial could not be identified, as the skull was too crushed and distorted to permit measurement.

ii) According to cultural traits

The basic cultures from both sites are similar to those found under present day blacks in the rural areas. There is no difference in the settlement pattern or economy to suggest the presence of other racial groups.

At Schroda, however, two elements did suggest contact with Khoisan peoples. The first was the presence on site of composite arrows, which are generally associated with Bushmen hunters. Present day blacks do not use composite arrows, preferring a solid shaft with a fixed head.

Metal arrowheads were recovered from area 5 at Schroda, thereby indicating that solid shaft arrows were known. The second element

is connected to the clay figurines, in particular to the large elongated, stylized, female figurines that are particularly common at K2. These have very pronounced steatopygia, which is a known characteristic of Khoisan women. It seems unlikely that these features would have been modelled in clay, unless numerous women present were in fact built in this manner. It is possible that these were wives taken by force or bartered from the Khoisan people in the vicinity. This physical deformity was clearly admired by the Zhizo men.

This does not mean that the Khoisan element at any stage formed a major part of the culture. It remained a predominantly negroid culture from start to finish, but other elements might have been taken up as a matter of convenience.

b) Where did the people come from?

Based on the available dates, it would appear that the Zhizo peoples were migrating southwards. Rhodesian dates place the Zhizo Tradition between about A.D. 600 and A.D. 850 (Huffman 1974 pp. 128-129), while south of the Limpopo it is dated to approximately A.D. 800 to A.D. 850. There is no indication so far that earlier sites exist, although four other Zhizo sites south of the Limpopo are known. In all cases incised Leopard's Kopje A pottery has been recovered in surface collections.

The spread of the Zhizo people stops a few kilometers south of the Limpopo and does not appear to continue towards the Soutpansberg. The easterly limits are in the vicinity of Schroda, although in Rhodesia, sites that are further to the east have been found.

The Leopard's Kopje A people occupied approximately the same area as the Zhizo people. The boundaries south of the Limpopo are the same, while in Rhodesia, the distribution covered a slightly smaller area which is situated more to the west, i.e. the Fort Victoria area was not occupied.

Huffman(1978) has argued that the Leopard's Kopje A tradition originated in the Eastern Transvaal and that pottery associated with Leopard's Kopje A has been dated to around A.D. 800 near Lydenburg.

The Leopard's Kopje people migrated north westwards, crossing both the Drakensberg and Soutpansberg ranges in the process, to settle in the present area during the 11 th Century. In the area between the Limpopo and the Soutpansberg, the author has traced numerous sites and not a single one of these contains pottery similar to that of the Eastern Transvaal or of the Leopard's Kopje Tradition, nor is there pottery that can be interpreted as containing elements of both types. Prinsloo (pers. comm.) reports the same findings for the Soutpansberg as well as the area to the east of the Louis Trichardt/Messina main road.

In view of these facts, it seems unlikely that such a vast group of people could move without leaving a trace, nor would they have left the Lydenburg area with one type of pottery and arrived in another area with a different type. At the point of departure one would expect to find the characteristic Leopard's Kopje A culture or conversely that at the destination the original culture should be found, which then developed into Leopard's Kopje A.

I am not implying that the Zhizo culture in its entirety developed into Leopard's Kopje. It is clear, particularly from Pont Drift, that new people, bringing with them an incised ware, must have moved into the area, and mixed peacefully with the Zhizo inhabitants. This new group and its pottery type became dominant, but retained several of the Zhizo cultural traits and pottery classes in a modified form. This combination of the dominant incised ware with the stamp decorated Zhizo ware led to the formation of what we know as Leopard's Kopje A.

No evidence exists yet as to who these later people were, but it is clear that they must have moved into the area shortly after A.D, 800. This brings them into line with the period in which Leopard's Kopje A pottery was supposedly starting to develop out of the Klingbeil pottery, and very much earlier than the period in which the northwards movement is thought to have taken place.

c) For what length of time were the sites occupied?

The Zhizo settlement at Schroda probably began shortly before A.D. 800. It is difficult to assess the length of occupation but it would appear that the greater part of the site must have been

occupied for more than one generation, judging by the depth of deposit. A large section of the site, not all of its midden area, has a depth of deposit varying between 75 and 120 cm, with a probable average of very close to 100 cm. Working on the assumption that the deposit increased by 1 cm a year, then the occupation period was for about 100 years. This 1 cm per year ratio does not seem incorrect for the area, as a similar depth of deposit/length of occupation ratio worked out for the Southern Terrace and Mapungubwe Hill gives a result of between 0,75 and 1,4 cm per year.

On the basis of comparing the stage of development of the incised ware at Schroda, it is clear that the development recorded at the beginning of the Southern Terrace and at K2 at A.D. 970 has not been reached, at Schroda, and still must undergo a long period of change to reach the same point as that at K2.

It would appear then that Schroda must have been abandoned at approximately A.D. 900, although it could quite conceivably have been earlier.

Pont Drift is easier to determine, having started prior to A.D. 800 (The sample for dating was taken several centimetres above sterile soil). The final date is after A.D. 1100, the sample coming from level 4.

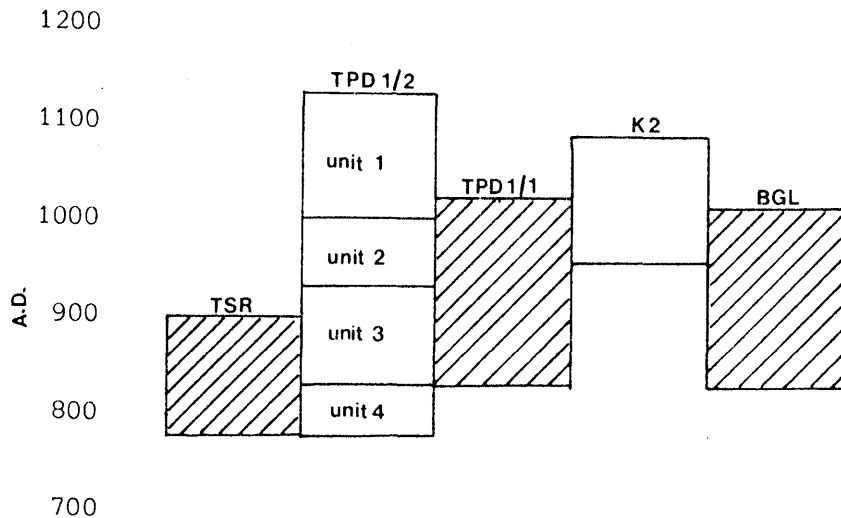
This gives a time span of 300 years, which is rather long for a continuous occupation of the site, although it is not impossible. If there is a break in the occupation, then the logical place for it to be, would be between units 1 and 2, although stratigraphically no indication was found of such a break (c.f. chapter 7).

The period in which the stamp decorated Zhizo pottery disappeared from the scene must be just after the beginning of the K2 sequence, i.e. at around A.D. 970 (c.f. chapter 9).

The Zhizo/Leopard's Kopje A occupation sequence for the Limpopo/Shashi valley is given in table 123. Additional sites like K2, Commando Kop and Pont Drift TPD 1/1 have been added, to give more substance to the table, as well as placing these sites in perspective to one another.

TABLE 123

Sequence of Zhizo and Leopard's Kopje A occupation



TSR = Schroda
 TPD = Pont Drift
 BGL = Commando Kop

A certain amount of overlap in dates between the sites is clear. K2, which has some stamp-decorated ware in the sample, begins in the period where the mixture of Zhizo and Leopard's Kopje A comes to an end.

Zhizo ends at around A.D. 840, with pure Leopard's Kopje A beginning at around A.D. 1000 and ending at approximately 1130 A.D. The intervening period is characterised by a gradual change from the stamp-decorated Zhizo Tradition to the incised Leopard's Kopje. There was no sudden influx of new people wiping out the original inhabitants.

2) Settlement patterns

The on site settlement patterns have already been discussed in the preceding chapters, but it is necessary to make comparisons.

No direct comparison can be made between Schroda and Pont Drift, as in the case of the latter the excavated area was too small to provide the relevant information. A comparison can, however, be made with K2.

Obvious similarities strike one from the beginning. They are both very large sites with a good depth of deposit. At both sites there is a tendency to a central livestock area, as well as a centralized midden, although smaller refuse dumps are spread throughout the site. Huts were spread around the perimeter of the central midden and kraal.

With regard to the spatial distribution of sites, clear clustering of Leopard's Kopje A sites was noted during the reconnaissance prior to excavation. In all cases there appears to be a larger site with a series of smaller sites close by. Presumably these larger sites were villages of petty chiefs, with their underlings in the surrounding smaller villages. Figure 62 shows the clustering of these sites. No further investigations of these sites have yet been made.

No similar pattern has been noticed with the Zhizo settlements, except for the farm Little Muck, where several adjacent sites were found. These do not have the spatial distribution like the Leopard's Kopje clusters, and should perhaps rather be considered as a unit. The sites are marked on figure 62

3) Changes in the economy

Huffman (1974, 1978) has stated that the Leopard's Kopje culture is distinct from earlier cultures on the basis of economic differences, and not just because of ceramic differences. This is based on the evidence found in Rhodesia that the Leopard's Kopje people had larger herds of cattle than their predecessors, and were clearly cattle-orientated.

This characteristic can also be said to be true of the earlier Zhizo culture in the Limpopo/Shashi Valley, where according to the faunal analyses, domesticated livestock played a very important role in the dietary economy.

This is perhaps less obvious at Pont Drift than at Schroda, where Voigt is expecting meat weight ratios for cattle very similar to those found at K2.

This ratio can vary from site to site within the same culture, as is shown by the differences between K2, Pont Drift unit 1 and Commando Kop

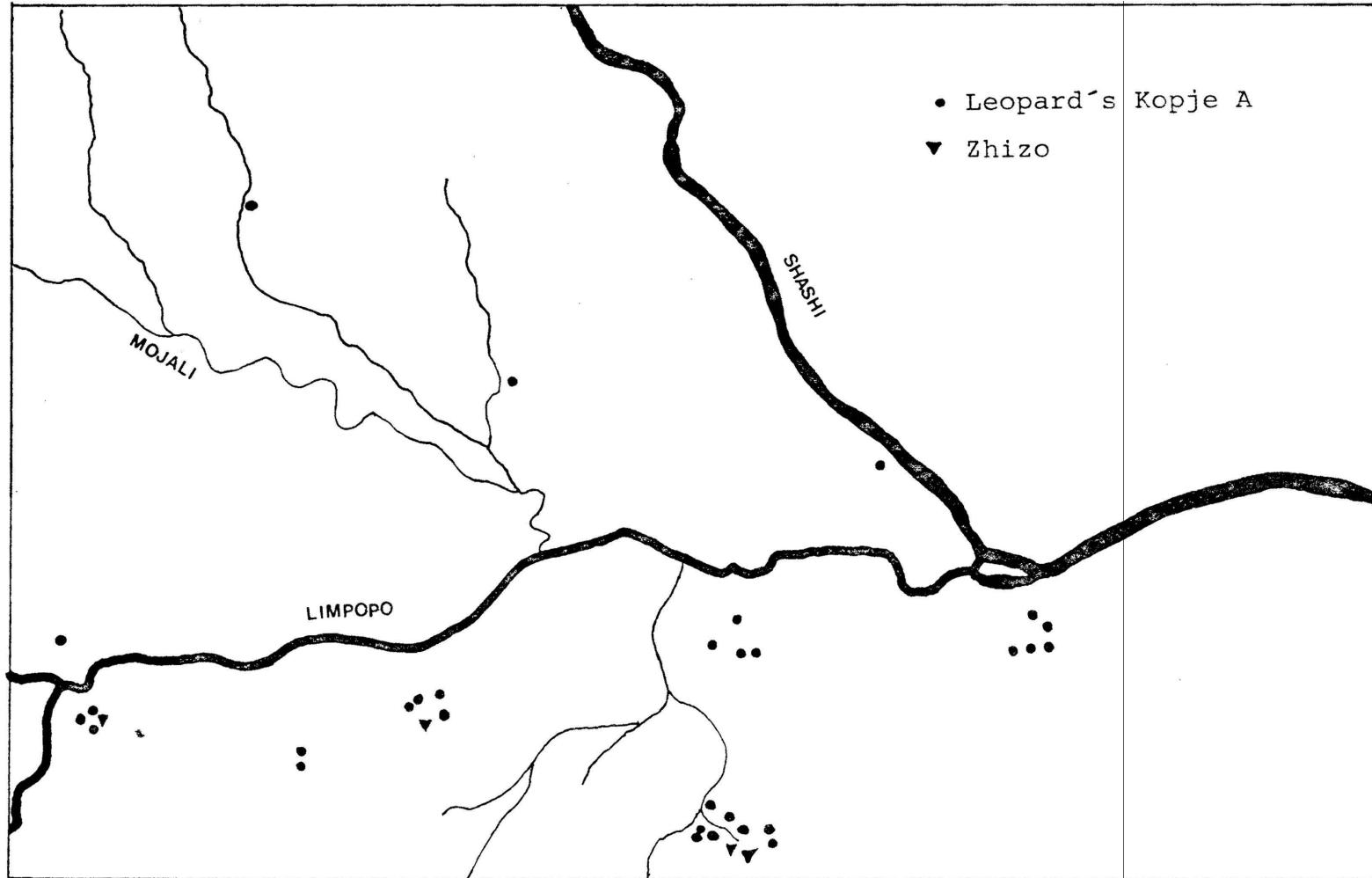


Figure 62
Clustering of Leopard's Kopje A sites.

(88%, 72% and 60% respectively. Voigt 1980).

The cattle orientation is emphasized by the central livestock kraals with their distinct dung levels as is found at Schroda. Cattle figurines are also found.

It seems therefore that on average, depending on which site is being looked at, that there is little difference in the ratio of domesticates, particularly cattle, between the Zhizo and Leopard's Kopje A cultures.

Other facets of the economy, particularly trading showed no great differences, although certain items like glass beads are of a different type.

The change in the type of grain recovered is shown between Pont Drift and Schroda, particularly in that only one type (sorghum?) was identified at Schroda, while in the Leopard's Kopje unit at Pont Drift, three different types of cereal were found.

The changes in the economy are thus not as great as would be expected, were one dealing with two totally different cultures that had no relationship to one another.

4) Change in Pottery

The change over from stampdecorated ware to incised ware at Pont Drift and to a lesser extent at Schroda, has already been pointed out in the relevant chapters.

A comparison between sites and Traditions has been done, and these results are shown in tables 124 and 125.

From the comparison of vessel shapes (table 124) it is clear that the great majority of shapes are common to the Zhizo and Leopard's Kopje A Traditions. Shapes 4, 5, 17, 19 and 37 were found only amongst the Zhizo pottery, while shapes 12, 14 and 40 are purely Leopard's Kopje. This indicates very strongly that little originality exists under the Leopard's Kopje A Tradition, and that most vessel shapes including some of the beakers and beaker bowls can trace origins back to the Zhizo. This is further proof that the Leopard's Kopje origins were not entirely elsewhere, but that vessel shapes were taken over from the Zhizo

TABLE 124

Comparison of Vessel shape from Schroda and Pont Drift

Site	Tradition	Vessel Shape																								
		Decorated																								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	21	24	25	26	28	29	30	38	42	43	
Pont Drift	LKA	x	x	x			x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	
	Zhizo	x	x	x			x																			
Schroda	Zhizo	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x			x	x	x			x				x		

Site	Tradition	Vessel Shape																												
		3	6	7	11	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	35	37	38	39	40	41	42
Pont Drift	LKA	x	x				x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	
	Zhizo						x	x			x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x			x	x						
Schroda	Zhizo		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

TABLE 125

Comparison of layout position from Schroda and Pont Drift

SITE	Tradition	Layout Position															
		<u>Stamped</u>							<u>Incised</u>								
		Under rim	Neck	Shoulder	Rim/neck	Rim/shoulder	Rim/neck/ shoulder	Neck/shoulder	Base	Under rim	Neck	Shoulder	Rim/neck	Rim/shoulder	Rim/neck/ shoulder	Neck/shoulder	Base
Pont Drift	LKA									x	x	x	x				x
	Zhizo	x	x	x				x		x	x	x					
Schroda	Zhizo	x	x	x			x	x		x	x	x			x	x	

The comparison of layout position (table 125) indicates that typically the Zhizo has stamped decoration in the following positions: under rim; neck; shoulder; rim/neck/shoulder; and neck/shoulder. No stamped decoration was found in the Leopard's Kopje A sample.

Incision only, occurs in both the Zhizo and Leopard's Kopje Traditions, although it forms a small percentage of the former. The incised Zhizo sample has the same layout positions as the stamped ware. The Leopard's Kopje ware has only three layouts common to the Zhizo, namely under rim, neck and shoulder. The other two positions, rim/neck and base do not occur in the Zhizo sample, and can be considered to be characteristic of the southern branch of the Leopard's Kopje A Tradition.

The neck layout is generally accepted as being the 'standard' position for decoration on Leopard's Kopje vessels. Decoration under the rim is known, but scarce. The shoulder decoration is peculiar, in that it is not normally associated with incised ware, and is considered to be more characteristic of Zhizo. It would, therefore, appear to be an archaism that originated in the Zhizo and was taken over by the Leopard's Kopje people.

Another combination that appears to have been taken from Zhizo is the rim/neck combination. Typically the Zhizo has had the idea of two separate bands of decoration on two different parts of the vessel. This has carried through to Leopard's Kopje. Other examples of this type of combination have been found at Pont Drift TPD 1/1 and at Commando Kop .

In summary, it is without doubt that many of the vessel shapes and layouts are not original to the Leopard's Kopje A Tradition, and have been taken over from the Zhizo.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

1. The Zhizo and Leopard's Kopje A cultures in the Limpopo/Shashi Valley

In the preceding chapters a picture has been given of the research work with many references to similarities between the two cultures under review. It must also be mentioned that in turn each culture is clearly representative of a Southern Branch of two separate Traditions. The Southern Branch of Leopard's Kopje has been described elsewhere, but no description has yet been published on a Southern Branch of the Zhizo Tradition.

Before describing the Zhizo Tradition, it is better perhaps, to compare the Zhizo and Leopard's Kopje cultures as known not only from this work, but also that done at Greefswald. Many points must be compared, and this is best done in tabular form.

Many attributes can be listed, but those that seemed to be the most important have been done. It can be seen from table 126 that the characteristics listed are found at both K2 and Schroda, while many of them are lacking from the different components of the Pont Drift site.

Numerous cultural characteristics generally accepted to be part and parcel of the Leopard's Kopje A culture, are clearly shown to be just as much part of the Zhizo Tradition. These elements include beakers and beaker bowls; elongated stylized human figurines; ivory working; garden roller beads and bead moulds; composite arrows; and beast burials.

Looking closely at the evident similarity between Schroda and K2 it would appear that Schroda was the precursor of K2.

With regard to Huffman's suggested reverse flow of the Leopard's Kopje people northwards, I would like in view of the obvious relationship between Zhizo and Leopard's Kopje A, to present an alternate hypothesis to explain the possible similarities between the Eastern Transvaal material and Leopard's Kopje.

SITE	TRADITION	Vessels				Figurines																
K2	LKA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	LKA	X	X	X	X																	
	LKA/Z	X	X	X	X		X															
Pont Drift	Zhizo	X	X	X	X																	
	Zhizo	X	X	X	X																	
Schroda	Zhizo	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Comparison of cultural attributes

TABLE 126

Similarities suggest a common ancestor, and Huffman with his "core concept" analysis has proposed the Eastern Transvaal Pottery as the ancestor to Leopard's Kopje. Might it not be possible that a common ancestor to both Traditions exists elsewhere, but has not yet been fully described, and therefore not recognized for what it is.

The Zhizo in the Limpopo/Shashi valley has several characteristics that distinguish it from the Zhizo described by Robinson (1965, 1966) and Huffman (1973, 1974). The ceramics of the former differ from those of the latter as follows:

- a) Less emphasis on a rim/shoulder of a neck/shoulder layout;
- b) A larger percentage of the pots are decorated on the neck only;
- c) Little decoration on the rim only;
- d) Few carinated vessels;
- e) Very few black and red bowls;
- f) The clear presence of beakers and beaker bowls; and
- g) No "seated" female figurines.

These are, in my opinion, sufficient grounds to separate the tradition into a Northern and a Southern Branch. I would also like to propose that Schroda be referred to as the type site for the Southern Branch, unless a more suitable site be found.

Enough has been said about the Southern Branch of the Leopard's Kopje A culture to give it a suitable definition. The site of K2 has generally been accepted as the type site, and has recently been proposed as such by Meyer (1980).

A word of caution should be exercised at this stage. From the results of the Unit one analysis at Pont Drift it is clear that what can be called pure Leopard's Kopje A contains no stamped vessels. A fair number of these stamped (ie. Zhizo) vessels have been recovered from K2, thereby placing the site in the latter part of the mixed Zhizo/Leopard's Kopje A phases. K2 is therefore not a pure Leopard's Kopje A site, and care should be taken as to what is then being described as Leopard's Kopje A.

2. Recommendations for future research work

Many questions have either not been satisfactorily answered or answered not at all in the course of this dissertation. Future work should concentrate on supplying these answers.

What we now know about the Zhizo culture is based on the results of excavations on only two sites. Other sites should be excavated to check and extend upon results found so far. The unusual and unique clay figures of Schroda must be placed in their proper context. Work is at present underway at Schroda to determine their context on site but this should be carried further to other sites to establish whether the art of clay figurine making was widespread amongst the Zhizo people of the Limpopo/Shashi Valley, or whether it was limited to Schroda because of certain activities that took place there and nowhere else.

The Leopard's Kopje A Tradition, although it has been described from several sites in the area, presents more possibilities for further projects. Most of these are connected to the settlement pattern.

Each cluster of villages should be investigated to determine on site settlement patterns, and each village compared to the others within the clusters to determine activity areas. These clusters can then be compared to one another

The dietary economy of the various sites should be investigated to determine differences between sites and the reasons for them. Although the sites are of the same time period and culture, differences can be picked up, as has been noted between K2, Pont Drift and Commando Kop, where the latter had a different economy from that of K2.

For example, sites where chiefs lived should have more livestock remains, as the chief always has the largest herds. Lower ratios of livestock to wild animals might suggest a cattle outpost.

Further work should also be done on the pottery typology, whereby the results of the analyses of the pottery from all the Leopard's Kopje sites excavated in the Limpopo/Shashi Valley is combined, to enlarge upon the excellent work done by Meyer on the Greefswald Pottery.

As a final thought, it must be said that in depth studies like those

mentioned above, are long term projects that will take careful planning to achieve their goals. The archaeologist wishes to elucidate the mysteries of the past, and form a clearer picture of the people and their style of life. The emphasis should then fall on all aspects of the culture that can be excavated.

Small trenches are at this stage not likely to be of much use to the archaeologist, as the type of information forthcoming from such trenches is basically what has already been discussed by myself and others. Lateral excavations over large areas will give the results desired.

Such excavations take a long period of time to complete, and logically a single person cannot cover all that has been suggested. It is clear, therefore, that much care must be taken in the choice of sites prior to excavation.

Excavation techniques must also be improved and many aids be employed to ensure the maximum retrieval of information within the limited time that the archaeologist spends in the field.