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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF HOLOCENE DEPOSITS AT ROOIELS CAVE, SOUTH-WESTERN CAPE*

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ABSTRACT

Analysis of cultural and faunal material from a small excavation in Rooiels Cave, first investigated in 1921/22 and re-excavated in 1979, shows that the later Holocene inhabitants exploited marine, terrestrial and estuarine resources. There are reasonable indications that the cave was occupied during the summer months, but we are less certain that the occupation was restricted to this time of year. The reports tabled in 1922 on the earlier excavations are appended to highlight changes in emphasis in archaeological research in South Africa.

Introduction

The Rooiels Cave is situated on the north bank of the Rooiels River approximately 1 km from the sea ($34^{\circ}18.8'S$; $18^{\circ}49.7'E$) and about 70 km by road south-east of Cape Town (Fig. 1). It has been known as an archaeological site for some time and was included in the compendium of Stone Age sites published

by Goodwin and Van Riet Lowe in 1929. It is surrounded by Coastal Mountain Fynbos vegetation that develops on white sandy soils derived from rocks of the Table Mountain Sandstone Series and is influenced by salt-laden on-shore breezes which blow against the coastal mountains rising from 150 m to 600 m a.s.l. (Boucher 1978:486). The vegetation includes mixed ericoid and restioid elements, as well as Gramineae and Cyperaceae which would have attracted grazing as well as browsing animals. Paterson (1789:8-10) described a visit to the area in the late 18th century and remarked on the presence of 'wild buffaloes', eland and 'Bonte Bock'.

The site was first excavated in 1921 by A.O. Divine and P. van der Byl who reached bedrock at 1,7 m towards the rear of the cave, but after reaching 2,0 m towards the front they abandoned their cutting. A further excavation was undertaken early in 1922 by K.H. Barnard (Fig. 2) who left a baulk, estimated to be about 1 m wide, down the centre of the cave floor and an area at the front of the cave. It was these untouched areas which were investigated in 1979. The 1921/22 investiga-

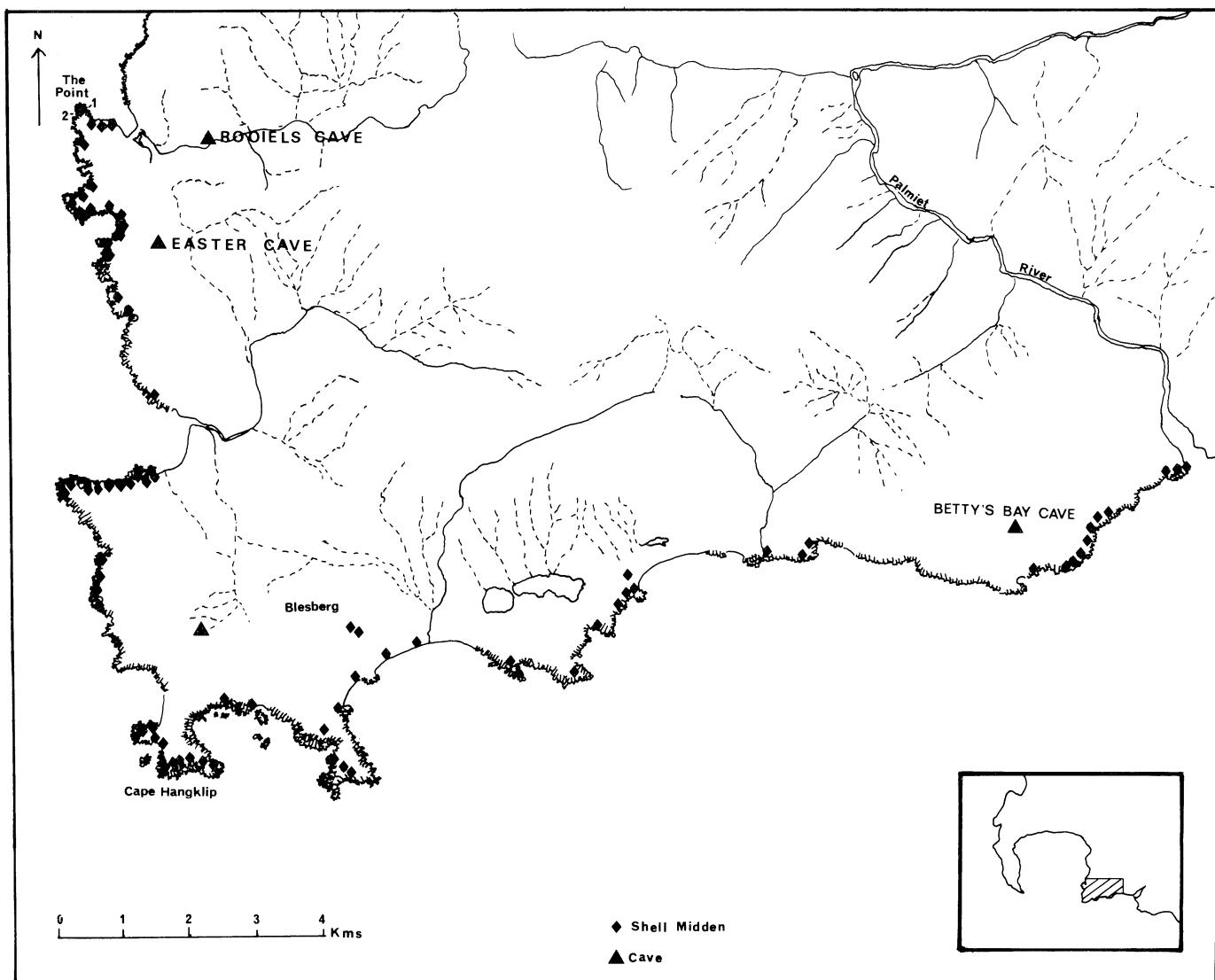


Fig. 1: Sites located during survey.

*Received January 1981, revised June 1981

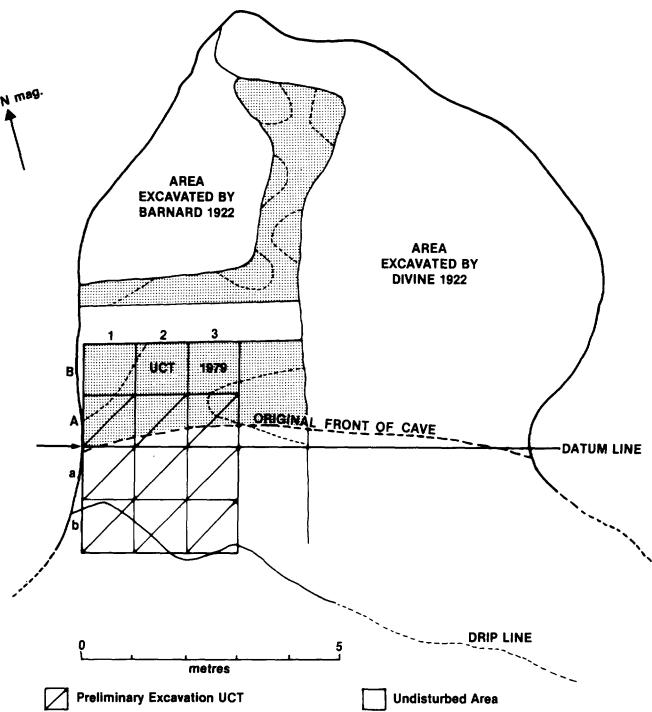


Fig. 2: History of excavations at Rooiels Cave.

tions yielded at least eleven burials, bone tools, pottery, 'sea bamboo', stone artefacts, leather and a wooden 'fish hook' (Appendix A, Table 1). Finely comminuted shells were found through to the base of the deposit. The reports of Divine and Barnard are appended here (Appendix A and B) because of the historic interest they provide in demonstrating the changes in approach towards prehistoric research that have taken place over the last 60 years. Their primary interest was in obtaining human skeletal material and they paid scant attention to food remains and stratigraphy. Their eagerness has left little for later researchers to study and it is only by analogy with other sites in the vicinity that a coherent picture of later Holocene exploitation patterns can be constructed. Nevertheless their reports provide keys to the minds and interests of early excavators and indicate some of the difficulties of excavating in what, in those days, was a remote area of the south-western Cape coast.

In order to salvage more detailed information on the stratigraphy and economy of the cave inhabitants, Rooiels Cave was re-excavated in 1979. This report describes the results of this work and of a survey of sites in the vicinity.

Survey of the Cape Hangklip Area

To expand the detailed work done by Mabbott (1954) and Rudner & Rudner (1954), a survey of sites was conducted along the coast between Rooiels and the Palmiet River (Fig. 1). Some 75 open midden sites were found. These were all located immediately above the high water mark, with the exception of two middens on top of the dune on the eastern edge of Blesberg (Rudner 1968:517) and two caves, namely Easter Cave in the Klein Hangklipberge and another in the kloof south of Cape Hangklip. The dense vegetation cover inland between the high water mark and the base of the mountains may well conceal other open sites that would only be exposed by erosion or excavation. All four inland sites had quantities of shell as well as broken beach cobbles indicating that they had been used by people exploiting the coastal resources. With the help of the Zoology Department at the University of Cape Town our survey included the study and collection of shellfish from the intertidal zone on the southern side of the Rooiels estuary in order to compare the range of available shellfish with that preserved in the Rooiels Cave deposit, and to test their calorific value.

Excavation of Rooiels Cave, 1979

Stratigraphy. The rough nature of the reports filed in 1922 precluded the efficient location of the earlier trenches. The first cuttings made in 1979 (Fig. 2) found only disturbed deposit. Undisturbed deposit was found, however, in squares B1, B2

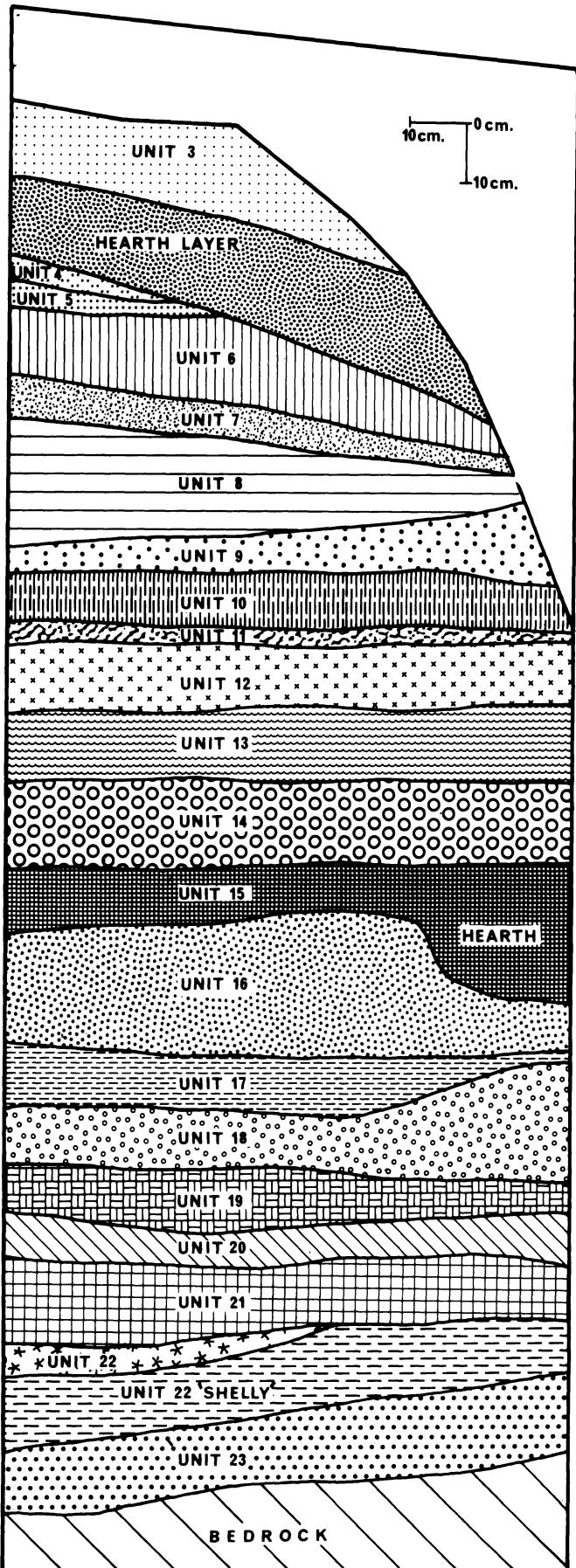


Fig. 3: B2, Cross-section of wall facing B1 + key to stratigraphy.

Rooiels Cave Square B2 Section: Key

| Unit | |
|-------------|--|
| 1 & 2 | Disturbed |
| 3 | Loose light-grey soil |
| 4 | Ashy grey soil, shell fragmented |
| 5 | Light brown soil |
| 6 | Compacted dark brown soil with white flecks |
| 7 | Brown soil, shell fragmented |
| 8 | Loosely structured light brown soil |
| 9 | Compacted light brown soil, with thin lens of ash & charcoal |
| 10 | Loose light brown clayey soil |
| 11 | Brownish humic layer with pronounced white flecks at bottom |
| 12 | Brown earthy soil |
| 13 | Fairly loose light brown clayey soil |
| 14 | Fairly loose brown soil with light brown clayey lenses. |
| 15 | Sandy soil |
| 16 | Burnt layer, shell friable and broken, dark brown matrix. |
| 17 | Burnt layer, light brown matrix |
| 18 | Fine ash lens overlying layer of darker ash and burnt shell |
| 19 | Fairly loose medium brown soil |
| 20 | Light brown/grey earthy layer with white flecks |
| 21 | Medium brown mottled clayey soil |
| 22 | Dark brown soil very lightly flecked |
| 22 "Shelly" | Soft loose matrix with high density of shells |
| 23 | Dark brown compact soil with large amounts of charcoal |

and B3. B2 was disturbed above 0,22 m and the material from the top two layers is not included in the data summarized here. B2 was taken to bedrock at 2,6 m below the surface. Generally speaking the stratigraphic levels were fairly horizontal with few disturbances other than those made by the previous excavators. These latter included easily recognizable partial disturbance of the top ten units (Fig. 3) and only units 3-23 can be considered truly *in situ*.

From the earlier excavation report of Barnard (Appendix B) two distinct occupation periods separated by a sterile humic deposit were recognized. The sterile deposit (Appendix B, Fig. 1) was located at the back of the cave and was not found in the 1979 excavations.

Cultural material. Cultural material from B2 only is described here. The assemblage consists of 290 pieces of stone, only 13 of which can be considered as formally retouched tools (Table 1). They include 10 scrapers, one backed scraper and two backed bladelets. Most of the formal tools were found in unit 22 near the base of the deposit. Raw materials are summarized in Table 2 and show a fairly even distribution of quartz, quartzite and silcrete with a small quantity of haematite and one piece of chert.

Amongst the non-lithic artefacts were fragments of polished bone points, and low frequencies of ostrich eggshell beads and decorated ostrich eggshell fragments. Artefacts made of bird bone are described by Avery (1981). A single piece of white mussel (*Donax*) shell from unit 10 could be recognized as a scraper and Cowrie (*Cypraea*) shells were found in units 20 and 22. No wood or leather was found although they were present in the 1921/22 collections.

Rudner (1968:515) described pottery from the 1921/22 excavations at Rooiels and from middens at the mouth of the Rooiels River, Kogel Bay, Pringle Bay and Cape Hangklip. It is typical of Cape Coastal ware and all the vessels complete from shoulder to rim have lugs. The bases are either nipped and conical or slightly pointed.

Faunal remains. The mammals identified from Rooiels Cave (Table 3) show that the inhabitants exploited both marine and terrestrial resources and the remains of a hippo in units 2 and 10 and of a Cape clawless otter (*Aonyx capensis*) in several units indicate that the upper estuarine environment was also used. The Cape fur seal (*Arctocephalus pusillus*) occurs throughout the deposit. The emphasis in the terrestrial fauna is on small antelope, such as steenbok/grysbok (*Raphicerus* sp.), duiker (*Silvicapra grimmia*) and klipspringer (*Oreotragus oreotragus*), with some larger bovids, such as eland/buffalo (*Taurotragus/Syncerus*) and hartebeest (*Alcelaphus* sp.). The possible occurrence of sheep in the upper disturbed deposit is of interest.

All the birds identified from the site are found along the South African coast today. They are described in detail by Avery (1981) and are of interest in that the presence of medullary bone suggests that some of the birds were collected during the summer months.

A wide range of fish species was caught by the cave inhabitants. The most common were hottentot (*Pachymetopon blochii*) and poenskop (*Cymatoceps nasutus*) (Table 4). From information currently available it is probable that white stumpnose (*Rhabdosargus globiceps*), white steenbras (*Lithognathus lithognathus*) and flathead mullet (haarders) (*Mugil cephalus*) enter estuarine waters very early in their life-cycle and later, when they are sexually mature, re-enter the marine environment. From the sample retrieved in the excavation there is no indication that immature individuals were present so it is probable these species were not taken from the estuary. The low incidence of haarders and other shallow water species suggests that the fish were not caught in fish traps, while the high incidence of hottentot, a deep water fish, suggests that they were caught by line (Thom 1952:80; Kolb 1731:256).

Cape rock lobster were also regularly caught throughout the time the cave was occupied (Table 4).

Frequencies of shellfish found in Square B2 are summarized

Table 1. Rooiels Cave: Cultural Material Square B2

| Unit | 22 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Total | | |
|---------------------------------------|----|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----------|-------|----|-----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | "Shelly" | 22 | 23 | |
| scrapers | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 9 | — | 10 | |
| backed scrapers | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | |
| backed blades | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | 1 | — | |
| misc. retouched pieces | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | |
| flakes | — | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | — | 4 | 3 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 3 | — | 7 | 14 | 8 | — | 4 | 10 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 93 |
| pebbles (flaked) | — | 2 | 1 | 2 | — | — | — | — | 2 | — | 2 | 1 | 1 | — | 4 | 1 | 1 | — | 1 | — | — | 10 | 1 | 29 | |
| pebbles (unflaked) | — | 1 | 3 | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | 3 | 1 | — | — | — | — | 1 | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | 13 | |
| cores | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | 2 | — | 2 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 2 | — | 7 | |
| chips/chunks | 2 | 2 | 3 | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | 6 | 2 | — | — | 1 | 1 | 9 | 6 | — | — | 11 | 19 | 28 | 7 | 98 | |
| hammerstones | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 3 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 3 | |
| grindstones (lower) | — | 2 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 2 | |
| grindstones (upper) | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | |
| ochre | — | 7 | 1 | — | — | 1 | — | — | 1 | 4 | — | 4 | — | 1 | — | 3 | — | 2 | — | — | 7 | 1 | — | 32 | |
| bone points | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | 1 | — | 1 | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | 2 | — | 6 | | |
| ostrich egg-shell beads | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 2 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | 1 | — | 4 | |
| ostrich egg-shell frags (undecorated) | — | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | 1 | 6 | — | 10 | |
| ostrich egg-shell frags (decorated) | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 2 | |
| <i>Cypraea</i> shells | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | 1 | — | 2 | | |
| <i>Donax</i> scrapers | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | |
| TOTAL | 2 | 16 | 10 | 3 | — | 1 | — | 6 | 6 | 25 | 6 | 10 | 11 | 10 | 2 | 22 | 23 | 15 | 3 | 8 | 24 | 27 | 77 | 12 | 319 |

Table 2. Rooiels Cave: Stone Raw Material Square B2

| UNIT | Quartz | Quartzite | Silcrete | Haematite | Chert | Total |
|-------------|--------|-----------|----------|-----------|-------|-------|
| 1 | 2 | — | — | — | — | 2 |
| 2 + 3a | 2 | 7 | — | 7 | — | 16 |
| 3 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 1 | — | 10 |
| 4 | — | 2 | — | — | — | 2 |
| 5 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 6 | — | — | — | 1 | — | 1 |
| 7 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 8 | 1 | 2 | 2 | — | 1 | 6 |
| 9 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | — | 6 |
| 10 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 4 | — | 21 |
| 11 | 2 | 2 | 1 | — | — | 5 |
| 12 | — | 6 | 3 | — | — | 9 |
| 13 | — | 2 | 5 | 4 | — | 11 |
| 14 | — | 1 | 6 | — | — | 7 |
| 15 | 1 | — | — | 1 | — | 2 |
| 16 | 4 | 10 | 8 | — | — | 22 |
| 17 | 6 | 6 | 11 | — | — | 23 |
| 18 | — | 5 | 6 | 3 | — | 14 |
| 19 | — | 3 | — | — | — | 3 |
| 20 | — | 4 | 2 | — | — | 6 |
| 21 | 11 | — | 11 | 2 | — | 24 |
| 22 (Shelly) | 18 | 3 | 4 | — | — | 25 |
| 22 | 28 | 10 | 22 | 7 | — | 67 |
| 23 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 1 | — | 12 |
| TOTAL | 93 | 77 | 91 | 32 | 1 | 294 |
| % | 31,6 | 26,2 | 30,9 | 10,9 | 0,3 | 99,9 |

in Table 5. The shells in units 16 and 17 were burnt and extremely friable. The shell counts from these levels are therefore not comparable with those from other units since some species and shellfish parts are more resistant to burning than others. The survey of shellfish at present available confirms that all the species represented in the cave deposit are found in the vicinity today and the low frequency of black and brown mussels reflects their low incidence at the mouth of the river. Species, such as *Patella compressa*, *Crepidula porcellana* and *Aulacomya ater*, were probably not collected for food, but brought into the cave either on the backs of larger shells or on seaweed. The shellfish sample is dominated by high frequencies of operculate gastropods, such as *Burnupena* sp., *Oxystele* sp. and *Turbo* sp., rather than by mussels or limpets.

Dating. There are no radiocarbon dates from Rooiels Cave, but shellfish were found throughout the deposit implying that the sea level was somewhat similar to the present during the time the cave was occupied. We are thus dealing with a strictly Holocene deposit. The low frequency of formal stone tools, particularly backed elements, is consistent with that from other sites along the southern Cape coast where assemblages post-dating 3000 B.P. are usually dominated by large unretouched flakes and few microlithic tools (Louw 1960; Maggs & Speed 1967; Van Noten 1974; Avery 1976; Robertshaw 1978; Inskeep 1979; Schweitzer 1979).

Discussion and Conclusions

The location of Rooiels Cave close to the estuary made it possible for the prehistoric inhabitants to exploit a variety of

Table 3: Rooiels Cave: Mammalian fauna, Squares B2 & B3

Table 4. Rooiels Cave
Fish & Crustacea: Minimum numbers of individuals: Square B2

| | | | Brown layer | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-------------|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12a | 12b | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18a | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | Total | | |
| <i>Pachymetopon blochii</i> , hottentot | 3 | 12 | 23 | | 11 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 22 | 6 | 15 | 6 | 19 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 12 | 2 | 8 | 2 | — | 9 | 15 | 204 |
| <i>Cymatoceps nasutus</i> , poenskop | 1 | 1 | 5 | | 4 | — | — | — | 1 | 1 | 11 | — | 2 | 1 | 2 | — | — | — | 1 | 3 | 1 | — | 2 | 1 | — | 40 | | |
| <i>Coracinus capensis</i> , galjoen | 1 | — | 1 | | — | 3 | — | — | — | 1 | 5 | — | 3 | — | 4 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 2 | — | 2 | — | 22 | | |
| <i>Diplodus sargus</i> , dassie | — | — | 1 | | — | — | — | — | 3 | — | 1 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 6 | | |
| <i>Rhabdosargus globiceps</i> , white stumpnose | — | — | — | | — | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | — | 17 | |
| <i>Argyrozona argyrozona</i> , carpenter | — | 1 | 1 | | 2 | — | — | 1 | — | 1 | 2 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 9 | | |
| <i>Mugil cephalus</i> , flathead mullet | — | — | — | | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 2 | | |
| Clinnidae, klipfish | — | — | — | | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | 1 | 1 | 2 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 5 | | |
| <i>Petrus rupestris</i> , red steenbras | — | — | — | | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | | |
| <i>Lithognathus lithognathus</i> , white steenbras | — | — | — | | — | — | — | 1 | — | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | 5 | | |
| Total identifiable to species | 5 | 14 | 31 | | 18 | 10 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 15 | 44 | 9 | 28 | 9 | 25 | 13 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 13 | 3 | 11 | 3 | 3 | 11 | 19 | 311 |
| No. of bones/layer | 167 | 515 | 1953 | | 456 | 731 | 212 | 361 | 287 | 542 | 893 | 1917 | 663 | 1967 | 430 | 1983 | 1340 | 253 | 295 | 384 | 146 | 208 | 267 | 152 | 256 | 1566 | 1121 | 19 065 |
| Total based on other body parts* | 9 | 16 | 42 | | 15 | 14 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 12 | 42 | 13 | 31 | 16 | 44 | 36 | 5 | 11 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 12 | 7 | 9 | 45 | 40 | 518 |
| (excl. vertebrae) | — | 1 | 2 | | 1 | — | — | — | 2 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 1 | — | 8 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | — | — | — | — | 39 | | |

*The analysis by body part available from author.

resources in the vicinity. In terms of energy expended in the food quest the most important component in the diet appears to have been shellfish, probably collected by women, while seals and marine birds were also more likely to have been collected from the beaches than hunted. The hunting pattern is essentially the same as that observed at other late Holocene sites, with an emphasis on small antelope and ground game. The presence of medullary bone amongst the bird remains points to at least some summer occupation. The questionable presence of sheep in the upper disturbed deposits may actually be from the occupation horizon above the sterile deposit shown in Barnard's section drawing (Appendix B, Fig. 1), but is little more than a hint that the site may have been occupied by pastoralists who were known in the region in historic times. It is possible that the cave was used up to historic times because wooden pegs, a wooden fish hook and leather fragments were found on the surface in 1921/22. R. Ross (pers. comm.) has suggested that the cave may have been occupied by runaway slaves in the 18th and 19th centuries and Divine (Appendix A) gives details of a story from local inhabitants who said the cave had been used as a base by raiding Khoikhoi.

Analysis of the excavated material from Rooiels has confirmed results from other late Holocene sites in the southwestern Cape which show that there was some size selection of limpets with *Patella granatina* shell lengths from Rooiels in the 40-65 mm range and *P. granularis* ranging from 20-60 mm (see Buchanan *et al* 1978). Observations by Avery (1974, 1976) and others (Parkington 1976; Buchanan *et al* 1978) have also shown a very close correlation between the coastal morphology and the range of shellfish at adjacent sites.

Despite a limited data base, the result of over-enthusiastic early excavators and some subsequent disturbance, the information from Rooiels shows it to have been a site visited regularly over the last 3000 years or more by Later Stone Age people who may have visited the coast seasonally to take advantage of shellfish, fish and marine birds, and mammals, and was probably used later by herders as well.

Acknowledgements

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Thanks also go to R.G. Klein for identifying the mammalian remains and C. Poggenpoel the fish remains. T.H. Barry, Director of the South African Museum, Cape Town very kindly gave permission to include the original reports of Divine and Barnard as appendices to this work. The South African Museum retains copyright to these reports. G. Avery analyzed the bird remains and, along with J. Deacon, spent considerable time commenting on the original manuscript. This was greatly appreciated.

For permission to excavate in the cave I thank the Department of Forestry. Funds for the excavation came from the Research Committee and from the Oppenheimer Institute for African Studies, U.C.T.

Table 5: Rooiels Cave: Shellfish, Squire B2

| | <i>Patella argenvillei</i> | <i>Patella granatina</i> | <i>Patella granularis</i> | <i>Patella oculus</i> | <i>Patella cochlear</i> | <i>Patella longicosta</i> | <i>Patella barbara</i> | <i>Patella tabularis</i> | <i>Burnupena</i> | <i>Oystrele</i> | <i>Turbo</i> sp. (operculae) | <i>Dinoplax</i> sp | <i>Perna</i> sp | <i>Haliotis</i> sp | <i>Donax</i> sp | Total | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|----|------|-----|------|----|------|-------|------|-------|
| n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | 206 | 16.6 | 37 | 3.0 | 5 | 0.4 | 104 | 8.4 | 18 | 1.45 | 46 | 3.7 | 6 | 0.5 | 1 | 0.08 | 143 | 11.5 | 469 | 38.0 | 165 | 13.3 | 9 | 0.7 | 24 | 1.9 | 2 | 0.1 | 1 235 | | |
| 2 "clav lens" | 12 | 17.3 | 4 | 5.8 | — | — | 3 | 4.3 | 3 | 4.3 | 5 | 7.2 | — | — | — | — | 9 | 13.0 | 22 | 31.8 | 11 | 16.0 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 69 | | |
| 3 | 46 | 3.8 | 22 | 1.8 | 5 | 0.4 | 65 | 5.2 | 28 | 2.3 | 34 | 2.8 | 1 | 0.08 | — | — | 245 | 20.2 | 500 | 41.3 | 194 | 16.0 | 8 | 0.7 | 61 | 5.0 | 1 | 0.08 | — | — | 1 210 |
| 4 | 39 | 6.0 | 8 | 1.2 | 7 | 1.0 | 34 | 5.2 | 26 | 3.9 | 31 | 4.7 | — | — | — | — | 157 | 24.0 | 150 | 22.9 | 158 | 24.1 | 2 | 0.3 | 42 | 6.4 | — | — | — | — | 654 |
| 5 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 8 | 4.3 | 5 | 2.7 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 79 | 43.1 | 12 | 6.5 | 30 | 16.1 | — | — | 49 | 26.7 | — | — | — | — | 183 |
| 6 + 7 | 13 | 4.7 | 5 | 1.8 | — | — | 1 | 0.3 | 14 | 5.0 | 3 | 1.1 | — | — | — | — | 73 | 26.5 | 93 | 33.8 | 72 | 26.2 | 1 | 0.3 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 275 |
| 8 | 4 | 0.8 | 10 | 2.0 | 6 | 1.2 | 20 | 4.0 | — | — | 13 | 2.6 | — | — | — | — | 83 | 16.8 | 127 | 25.7 | 180 | 36.4 | — | — | 51 | 10.3 | — | — | — | — | 494 |
| 9 | 5 | 1.1 | 10 | 2.2 | 5 | 1.1 | 23 | 5.0 | — | — | 18 | 3.9 | 1 | 0.2 | — | — | 80 | 17.4 | 90 | 19.6 | 158 | 34.4 | 3 | 0.6 | 66 | 14.4 | — | — | — | — | 459 |
| 10 | 39 | 4.6 | 22 | 2.6 | 6 | 0.7 | 77 | 9.1 | 65 | 7.7 | 45 | 5.3 | 5 | 0.6 | — | — | 172 | 20.4 | 59 | 7.0 | 228 | 27.0 | 8 | 0.9 | 110 | 13.0 | 7 | 0.8 | — | — | 843 |
| 11 | 4 | 2.1 | 30 | 15.6 | — | — | 10 | 5.2 | 16 | 8.3 | 4 | 2.1 | 2 | 0.1 | — | — | — | — | 16 | 8.3 | 78 | 40.6 | 1 | 0.5 | 30 | 15.6 | 1 | 0.5 | — | — | 192 |
| 12 | 20 | 2.2 | 7 | 0.8 | 4 | 0.4 | 59 | 6.4 | 48 | 5.2 | 42 | 4.6 | — | — | 1 | 0.1 | 138 | 15.1 | 167 | 18.3 | 303 | 33.1 | 15 | 1.6 | 109 | 11.9 | — | — | 2 | 0.2 | 915 |
| 13 | 35 | 4.0 | 14 | 1.5 | 4 | 0.4 | 80 | 9.0 | 62 | 6.9 | 44 | 4.9 | 1 | 0.1 | — | — | 110 | 12.3 | 135 | 15.1 | 336 | 37.6 | 17 | 1.9 | 52 | 5.8 | 3 | 0.3 | — | — | 893 |
| 14 | 56 | 6.5 | 43 | 5.0 | 5 | 0.6 | 118 | 13.7 | 93 | 10.9 | 72 | 8.4 | 2 | 0.2 | — | — | 97 | 11.3 | 98 | 11.4 | 198 | 23.1 | 13 | 1.5 | 59 | 6.9 | 1 | 0.1 | 1 | 0.1 | 856 |
| 15 | 34 | 7.3 | 40 | 8.6 | 2 | 0.4 | 74 | 16.0 | 35 | 7.5 | 23 | 5.0 | 2 | 0.4 | — | — | 17 | 3.7 | 90 | 19.4 | 131 | 28.2 | 6 | 1.3 | 5 | 1.1 | 4 | 0.9 | — | — | 463 |
| 16 | 37 | 4.8 | 11 | 1.4 | 1 | 0.1 | 14 | 1.8 | 86 | 11.0 | 6 | 0.8 | — | — | — | — | 19 | 2.4 | 4 | 0.5 | 598 | 76.6 | — | — | 2 | 0.2 | 1 | 0.1 | — | — | 776 |
| 17 | 12 | 2.0 | 1 | 0.2 | — | — | 3 | 0.5 | 52 | 8.8 | 8 | 1.4 | — | — | — | — | 9 | 1.5 | 11 | 1.9 | 478 | 80.8 | 1 | 0.1 | 4 | 0.7 | 12 | 2.0 | — | — | 589 |
| 18 | 22 | 5.3 | 23 | 5.5 | 2 | 0.5 | 33 | 7.9 | 26 | 6.2 | 10 | 2.4 | — | — | — | — | 4 | 1.0 | 29 | 6.9 | 243 | 58.1 | 4 | 0.1 | 21 | 5.0 | 1 | 0.2 | — | — | 418 |
| 18a | 4 | 2.1 | 3 | 1.5 | 1 | 0.5 | 4 | 2.1 | 3 | 1.5 | 3 | 1.5 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 6 | 3.1 | 162 | 86.1 | — | — | 2 | 1.1 | — | — | — | — | 188 |
| 19 | 40 | 5.4 | 36 | 4.9 | 5 | 0.7 | 96 | 13.0 | 74 | 10.0 | 47 | 6.3 | — | — | 1 | 0.1 | 32 | 4.3 | 100 | 13.5 | 290 | 39.2 | 9 | 1.2 | 9 | 1.2 | — | — | — | — | 739 |
| 20 | 13 | 2.8 | — | — | 8 | 1.7 | 105 | 22.8 | 24 | 5.2 | 60 | 13.0 | — | — | — | — | 81 | 17.6 | 58 | 12.6 | 98 | 21.3 | 4 | 0.9 | 8 | 1.7 | — | — | — | — | 459 |
| 21 | 25 | 3.3 | 51 | 6.8 | — | — | 43 | 5.7 | 17 | 2.3 | 11 | 1.4 | — | — | 1 | 0.1 | 327 | 43.3 | 95 | 12.6 | 170 | 22.5 | 3 | 0.4 | 12 | 1.6 | — | — | — | — | 755 |
| 22 | 8 | 1.6 | 18 | 3.5 | 5 | 1.0 | 29 | 5.7 | 30 | 5.9 | 25 | 4.9 | 2 | 0.4 | — | — | 142 | 27.6 | 104 | 20.4 | 137 | 26.8 | 1 | 0.2 | 9 | 1.8 | — | — | 1 | 0.2 | 511 |
| 22 "Shelly" | 44 | 2.9 | 53 | 3.5 | 4 | 0.3 | 66 | 4.3 | 63 | 4.1 | 74 | 4.9 | — | — | — | — | 496 | 32.6 | 397 | 26.1 | 306 | 20.1 | 1 | 0.07 | 14 | 0.9 | 2 | 0.1 | 1 | 0.07 | 1 521 |
| 23 | 11 | 2.5 | 30 | 6.8 | 1 | 0.2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Initial help in locating sites previously recorded came from the Archaeological Data Recording Centre, South African Museum.

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ADDENDUM

A single date from Unit 22 at the bottom of the Rooiels sequence has been given by Dr. J.C. Vogel of the National Physical Research Laboratory, C.S.I.R.

Pta-3069 Rooiels Cave Square B2 Unit 22 6100 ± 120 B.P.

The date confirms the previous suggestion of an entirely Holocene occupation of the cave, although it is somewhat older than expected from the analysis of the cultural material. However, we can now see that the occurrence of scrapers and, particularly, the backed blades at the bottom of the sequence from Units 21 and 22 was significant. It was assumed that the low numbers of formal tools reflected a later date. Close scrutiny of the numbers of backed pieces in certain levels of contemporary sites also show low levels, e.g. Nelson Bay Cave, level RA (Deacon 1978). Thus the bottom part of the sequence from Rooiels can be said to conform both culturally and chronologically to that from other southern coast sites.

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APPENDIX A

To the Director
South African Museum

(December 1921)

Sir

I have the honour to submit the following report with reference to the excavation of the Rooi Els River cave.

On December 26th, acting upon instructions received based on information supplied by Mr van der Merwe of Paarl, I proceeded in company with Mr P van der Byl to Rooi Els river. The stream enters the sea about 14 miles, as the crow flies, from Gordons Bay. On proceeding to the cave it was found that the lower shelter described by Mr van der Merwe, was occupied by The Rev. Mr C.E.S. Bull of the Diocesan College. This shelter is however valueless. Almost directly above this shelter is the large cave at a height of about 150 feet above the river.

The cave is about 25 feet deep and about the same width a fairly steep talus composed almost entirely of shells and ash reaches to the stream. The soil of the cave is composed of the same ash and shell. Some 30 feet below the cave is another small hollow which appears to have been almost entirely filled with rubbish.

On the western face of the kopje in which the cave is situated are a number of small rock shelters, mostly showing signs of having been occupied for a short period.

On Wednesday we were able to obtain shovels from the party below and a depth of about 7 feet in the front and about 6 in the back was obtained, with however small results. On Thursday I made a trip to Pringle Bay then across to Cape Hangklip and then back to Rooi Els via Stony Bay and the neck about it, a distance of some twenty miles. At Pringle Bay and about Stony Bay are large middens which are however rather barren.

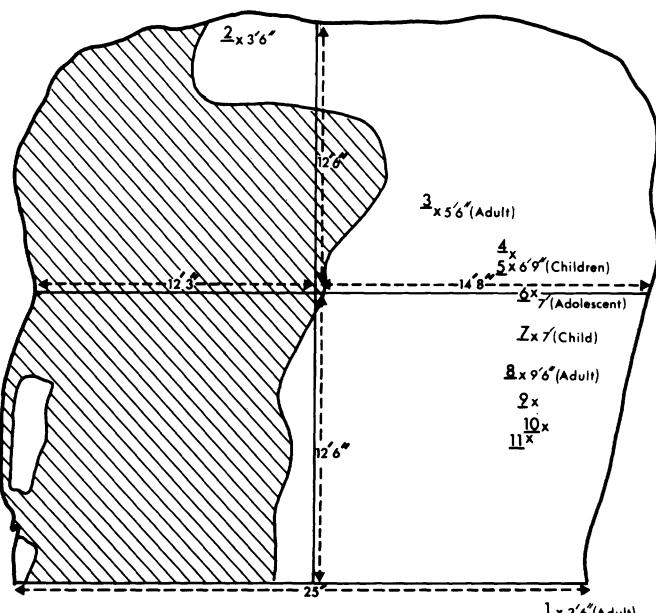


Fig. 1: A.D. Divine's Map of Rooiels showing location of burials.

On Friday, 30th December, we proceeded home via Gordons Bay. On Thursday, 5th January, 1922, I proceeded to Somerset Strand to obtain labour and conveyance to Rooi Els, with a view to excavating the whole or some portion of the Rooi Els cave.

On Friday no start could be made owing to adverse weather conditions, but I obtained 4 labourers to be paid 4/6 per diem. On Saturday morning at about 6.30 we set out by motorboat from the Strand. On coming abreast of the Bay however our boat developed engine trouble and we were compelled to return to Strand after about 10 hours at sea.

On Sunday by promising the boys an extra half days pay, I was able to set out walking. The cave was reached about 4.30 in the afternoon.

On Monday morning operations were commenced. Two boys working at the back of the cave and two at the lip. Bottom was reached at the back at about 5 ft 6 inches. At the lip no rock was reached then or subsequently.

A large quantity of bones of various sorts and particularly a large number of jaw bones of the larger cats were discovered. The days finds were a few bone bodkins or awls. Two rib scrapers and one large grooved stone at a depth of about 3 ft. On Tuesday operations were conducted in the same manner. At 9.30 am Tom Arnolds discovered a skull at about 3 ft 6 ins. A sketch of the position is appended. The skull was very badly damaged and most of the bones were also in a very bad condition owing to the damp. A large grave stone was found approximately over the skull. More bodkins were obtained at various depths, at about 4 ft a piece of sea bamboo with a knot tied in it was found, various skulls were found including one of a large cat possibly lion or leopard.

Grinders and pounders were found at all depths. At about three feet from the skeleton a quantity of black hair which appears to be human though it cannot possibly be bush.

There is a large amount of the so called sea bamboo in the cave and as it is not edible a possible explanation of its presence is that it was used for the purpose of carrying water on hunting expeditions and so forth.

On Wednesday a beautiful slate knife ground and bevelled at the edges after the manner of the Knysna Paint Pallette was found. A number of rib scrapers and bones, awls and also a number of wooden spikes were found. Large portions of an ornamental pot were also obtained.

On Thursday the two workings were connected and a large number of the big grooved stones were found at a depth of approximately 5 feet. More small implements were obtained and also some more wooden spikes but nothing outstanding.

On Friday morning realising the probability of these stones having been used as gravestones I made the boys clear the earth carefully away to the wall and then to start working back slowly at a different level.

At about eleven o'clock Pietersen turned up two pieces of bone which proved to be the skull of a tiny baby. I extracted the complete skeleton, most of the bones being fairly well preserved.

Half an hour after this another skeleton with a comparatively well preserved skull was obtained. The lower jaw of this skull was very much deformed, owing possibly, it has been suggested, to venereal disease. This skeleton, as did most of the others, showed distinct signs of having been disturbed after burial. The legs and feet being entirely missing. This was found at the 5 ft 6 in. level.

Shortly afterwards the bones of two, or possibly one and a portion of another, were found inextricably mixed. Two more skeletons were found during the afternoon at 7 ft possessing however no striking characteristics. The following morning the boys refused to work, having previously refused to work on Saturday afternoon, unless paid as for two whole days. After much argument I was forced to pay them off during the morning and about midday they departed for the Strand.

Fortunately in the afternoon, by the kindness of certain members of The Rev. Mr Bull's party, I was able to carry on and during the afternoon four more skeletons were brought to light. One of these had fortunately a fairly well preserved skull.

Another baby's skeleton was found at 10 just above the head of the mother, who unfortunately has also been much disturbed. The skulls in two cases were found to have been buried in what the natives call rooi klip, which also figured largely on the burial stones.

There is a legend current concerning the cave which states that in the very early days of the Caledon settlement this cave was the headquarters of a tribe of Hottentots (?) who used to make raids up the valley of the Rooi Els river and into the Caledon plateau.

On one occasion says the story a small child belonging to one of the farmers was kidnapped and carried to the cave. The father without apparently waiting to obtain the cave proceeded to the rescue and coming down the krantz just opposite the cave was shot. A commando of Caledon farmers was then raised and the whole tribe was annihilated. It would be interesting to see if the Caledon records hold any corroboration of this story.

I am much indebted to Mr P van der Byl for his valuable assistance rendered me in the first trip and to the Rev Mr Bull and party for the loan of shovels and for their kind assistance after the defection of my boys.

On Sunday, 17th January, I proceeded home by motor boat, Mr Bull's party having helped to convey my specimens to the beach. I have the honour to be Sir

Your obedient Servant
ARTHUR D DIVINE

APPENDIX A TABLE 1
Rooiels Cultural Material in South African Museum
(from Divine Excavation)

| S.A.M. No. | Specimen Description | | |
|------------|---|----------------------|---|
| 4029 | 13 bone awls | 4052 | 1 upper grindstone (ochre stained) |
| 4030 | 3 bone awls, 2 bone points (length of complete point: 135 mm.) | 4054 | 1 upper grindstone (ochre stained) |
| 4031 | 15 bone spatulae (2 with unbroken tips: 1 symmetrical, 1 assymetrical in cross-section; lengths: 100-165 mm.) | 4055 | 1 upper grindstone |
| 4032 | 1 bone tube (link shaft?) length: 35mm. | 4062 | 1 small hammerstone |
| 4033 | 1 polished vertebra (possibly ornament) | 4063 | 1 hammerstone |
| 4034 | 4 pieces undecorated ostrich egg-shell | 4070 | 1 seal skull |
| 4035 | 1 polished slate palette (dimensions: 113 x 42 mm) | 4071 | 1 potsherd |
| 4036 | 1 grooved stone, grey sandstone (with 3 grooves) | 4072 | 1 ochre chunk |
| 4037 | 14 pieces of wood 13 pointed (some with fire hardening) 2 spatulae | 4073 | 1 quartzite chunks (roof spall?) |
| 4038 | 4 pieces of wood 3 possible shaft fragments | 4074 | 1 ochre chunk |
| 4039 | 1 piece stitched leather | 4075-4077 | pottery fragments |
| 4040 | 1 piece stitched leather (velskoen toe?) | 4078 | 1 quartzite flake |
| 4041 | 1 piece of stitched leather (other part of velskoen?) | 4079 | 1 red pot with 2 lugs (see Rudner 1968) |
| 4042 | 1 leather thong | 4925 | 2 upper grindstones |
| 4043 | 1 piece perforated leather strip | | 2 hammerstones (1 ochre stained) |
| | | | 2 cores (pebbles, quartzite) |
| | | | 1 flake (quartzite) |
| | | | 1 crystal quartz chunk |
| | | | 2 utilized red ochre slabs |
| | | unnumbered specimens | 1 bone spatula made from a bovid metapodial |
| | | | 1 lower grindstone fragment (ochre stained) |
| | | | 2 beach pebbles |
| | | | 2 fragments of salt or gypsum? |

APPENDIX B

To the Director
S A Museum

Sir

I beg to present the following report on the results of my excavations in the Rooi Els Cave.

On Monday 30th January I proceeded to the Strand and thence by Mr Haylett's boat to Rooi Els in order to complete the excavation of the cave begun by Mr Divine. I was able to engage only one boy, the reports spread by Mr Divine's boys having apparently created an unfavourable impression. This one boy however turned out excellent as far as the work of excavation was concerned.

I was informed that since Mr Divine's visit some boy scouts had done some digging in the cave and taken out one or two skulls. This story however I consider incorrect and I believe that I found the excavations essentially as left by Mr Divine.

Work Done

As shown in the plan annexed to Mr Divine's report, he excavated the eastern half and a small portion at the far back of the cave. He touched rock bottom only at the back, though he took out a skeleton from near the mouth of the cave at a depth of 10 ft. As far as I could judge the bottom was one half to one foot below this. A depth of 14' 8" is given in one spot on Mr Divine's plan; evidently the top of the mound, i.e. the general floor level before excavation from which Mr Divine measured his depths, was here considerably higher, because I found the original rock floor of the cave to slope fairly evenly from back to front and from side to side.

A preliminary examination of the central section left by Mr Divine revealed the important fact that there had been two distinct occupations of the cave separated by a period during which a layer of cave earth rich in humus was deposited. I then continued the excavations at the back round to the western half, cutting a broad trench from the wall nearly to the centre forwards until about opposite a large rock projecting up alongside the W. wall. A trench was then dug from this projecting rock straight to the centre of the cave. I worked down to rock bottom throughout. A narrow tongue down the centre was thus left intact for purposes of control. But although left intact on the surface several tunnels on the bottom level were dug out, (see dotted lines on plan below), in order to test the character of the deposits and on the chance of striking implements or skeletons.

With the deepening to rock bottom of the floor as left by Mr Divine the excavation of the whole cave may be said to have been completed.

Results

Relics were almost totally absent from the portions excavated by me. Two bone scrapers, a wooden fish hook and a broken piece of pottery were found close together at the spot marked X on the plan. They were in the upper occupational layer about 2 ft from the surface. In the lower occupational layer 3 grooved stones were found at the spots marked 0 to 00 at depths of 3' and 5' 6" respectively from the top of the mound. All these stones were feebly grooved and 2 were cracked. One was covered with red ochre. They were found in the immediate vicinity of lenticular white patches consisting of calcined shells and earth. Smooth spherical pounders and pieces of bone (not human) were found fairly frequently at all depths. No traces of human skeletons were found by me.

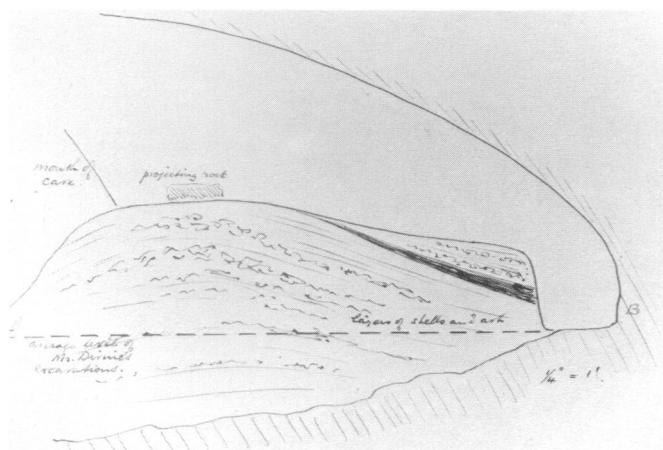


Fig. 1: Section through centre of Cave.

(February 1922)

In spite of the absence of relics several interesting facts were revealed.

As mentioned above there have been two distinct periods of occupation, the later one apparently of considerably less duration than the earlier one.

The original rock bottom slopes downwards from the back, where it is about 5' from the roof of the cave. It also slopes downwards from the west to the east side.

The cave earth which was on the bottom of the cave when the occupation began varies in thickness, but is difficult to distinguish from the over-lying ash etc. owing to discolouration. On this is piled up the midden of the first occupation, consisting of alternating layers of ash, shelly earth and shells.

The lowest layers and several layers at higher levels are composed of finely-communited shells, none of the fragments exceeding a square inch in size. As shown by the slope of the strata in the sections the growth of the mound took place chiefly in the western half and towards the mouth of the cave. In the portions excavated by me I found no traces of subsequent disturbance. The mound formed during the original occupation extends in front up to the present floor of the cave, reaching a height of about 8' 9". Then followed a period during which the cave appears to have been uninhabited allowing of the deposition of a layer of cave earth rich humus. A few ferns are growing at the back at the present day. This layer is thin near the top of the first mound in the centre but thickens towards the back and western side. Above this layer of humus there are several layers of ash and shell. They do not rise higher than the top of the first mound, though it seems probable that at one time they did, but have been planed down to the present general level of the floor of the cave by later parties of campers.

Red ochre. As bearing possibly on the source whence the red ochre was obtained, I have brought back three samples.

- (A) is a small quantity of red ochre dug up from near the grooved stone.
- (B) is a sample of some decomposed red earth from a narrow band in the rock near the mouth of the cave.
- (C) is two pieces of the undecomposed rock from the same band.

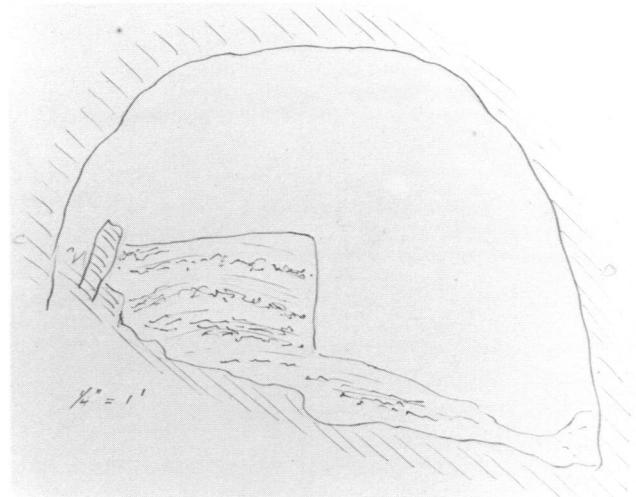


Fig. 2: Section across cave.

The Table Mountain sandstone composing the kopje in which the cave is situated, is largely stained and infiltrated with a red oxide of iron. I would suggest that these samples be analysed with a view to seeing whether it is the decomposed red rock which forms the main ingredient of the red ochre.

Situation of the Cave. Mr Divine's remarks on the situation of the cave may be slightly amplified. As he says, the lower shelter is nothing more than a shelter, the floor of which is scarcely above the level of the river (a branch of which flows immediately by it) and in times of flood is probably mostly under water. The cave which has been examined lies about 150 ft above the river on the S side of the kopje overlooking the river. This side of the kopje is overgrown with trees and bushes and a fairly large spreading tree blocks the outlook from the cave at the present day. The eastern side of the cave where the relics and skeletons were found is sheltered from the SE winds.

In addition to the rock shelters on the western side of the kopje mentioned by Mr Divine, there is a large cave to the east of the one we

dug out. It is some 300 ft above the river and is extremely difficult of access. I managed however to climb down from the top into it and found it about 20 ft wide but only 10-12 ft deep. The floor is rocky and is covered with yellowish sand nowhere more than a foot deep, evidently formed by decomposition of the surrounding rock. No signs

of occupation were found and from its inaccessibility it is probable that the cave was never used, except perhaps as a last resort.

Similar remarks apply to two or three rock shelters on the seaward side of Klein Hangklip, i.e. the mountain immediately south of the Rooi Els river mouth.

I did not have time to prospect further inland or towards Hangklip, as did Mr Divine, owing to shortage of food. But evidently the whole stretch of country is worthy of detailed examination. I was told that there is a "Bushman Cave" at Kogel Bay, which is right on the beach (rocky) and can only be entered at low water. But when pressed for details my informant became vague. There are certainly several cave or fjord-like places on the coast between Rooi Els and Gordons Bay which might be worth examining. Personally I think that better results and more reliable data are likely to be obtained further away from the favourite haunts of campers to the south of Rooi Els. For this purpose I would recommend a two-man reconnaissance, with a base camp at Rooi Els or the farm in the Buffels Vlei valley (Pringle Bay).

It may also be mentioned that botanically and entomologically the whole district ought to prove interesting. There are two patches of original bush, Louw's Bosch and Oudebosch, and doubtless other smaller areas up the kloofs. The mountains however are being ruthlessly burnt out.

KEPPEL H BARNARD

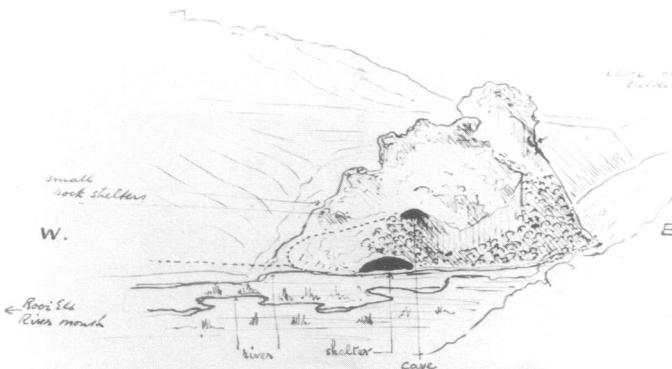


Fig. 3: Drawing showing location of cave at Rooiels by K.H. Barnard.