

Contact and conflict

A legacy of the Kalahari animated revisionist debate of the 1990s appears in this issue in two guises, one archaeological and the other personal. Eastwood examines the likely genesis and transmission of a particular motif in the rock art in the Central Limpopo basin, a region in which three distinct communities co-existed for more than a millennium. Hunter-gathers, herders and farmers shared this landscape and through a spatial, contextual and ethnographic analysis of the imagery of clothing, an argument unfolds for considerable interaction between these groups, resulting in the borrowing and incorporation of new ideas into their symbolic worlds.

The large and impressive Baltic cemetery of Zvejnieki was featured in *Before Farming* in 2004 (Eriksson *et al* 2003) and we return to the site in this issue for a further analysis of the grave goods (Mannermaa *et al*). The burials, which span the Mesolithic and contact with farmers, contain offerings of ochre, tools, pendants and bird bones associated with men, women and children. Further refinements in the dating of the site are reported here, with a close examination of the association of bird and human remains. The dates demonstrate a complex depositional history for the site, with the potential of even earlier use of the site, the occasional unintentional incorporation of bird remains into burials and a clear case of contemporaneity between human and avian interment. A broad regional comparison of burial practices from the Baltic to southern Scandinavia would be of interest in revealing cultural and temporal variations in practices, and the impact of the arrival of farming on the cosmology of these hunting, gathering and fishing communities. We will be commissioning just such a piece for a future issue.

Academic conflict raises its disputatious head in Helvenston and Bahn's extended reply to David Whitley's contribution to our discussion on shamanism in rock art research. David Whitley was offered the opportunity to respond, but declined. We had hoped to avoid re-opening old wounds, but it is clear from the *ad hominem* tone taken on both sides that a rapprochement lies in the future, perhaps with another generation of researchers who can see beyond the individuals involved. The Kalahari Revisionist debate has seen similarly bitter exchanges which have, with time, been soothed though perhaps not resolved to the satisfaction of all. The general discussion of shamanism in rock art is now closed in the pages of *Before Farming*.

On a happier note, despite current internal conflicts in Zimbabwe, academic research and publication continues. Archaeologists at the University of Zimbabwe and the National Museums & Monuments of Zimbabwe have recently published the corpus of rock art recordings made early in the 20th century by Lionel Cripps, an early colonist, politician and talented artist. Hubbard's review makes for re-assuring reading that a body of data is now available for analysis that will survive the shifting fashions and passions in rock art research.

The Editor

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