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Sibel Barut Kusimba. *African Foragers: Environment, Technology, Interactions.* New York: Altamira Press, 2002. xxi + 284 pp. $82.50, cloth, ISBN 978-0-7591-0153-1.

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As the subtitle shows, this book is explicitly about technology, environment, and relations between foragers and their neighbors. The author constrains her discussion to these sub-sets, and in consequence, there are lacunae, such as discussion of faunal collections in the Middle Stone Age and Klein's interpretation, and only a single passing reference to rock art.[1]

These limitations, however, should not be seen as criticism, but rather to heighten the awareness of readers that the book has specific foci. The work is very well written, with a wealth of theoretical argument that will be extremely useful for graduate seminars in African prehistory. It would appear that the book is an expanded version of a Ph.D. thesis, using a restricted data base of analyses of material from South and East African archaeological sites to support ideas. Primary fieldwork seems to have been in East Africa, but the author had access to stone tool collections housed in the Field Museum, Chicago, excavated by Richard Klein in the 1970s.

The book is divided into eight chapters, and generally follows a chronological framework. Chapter 1 gives a useful history of hunter-gatherer studies, and leads the reader through the early days of the "Man the Hunter Symposium" in Chicago in 1966, with its explicitly human ecological/evolutionary paradigm, to the human behavioral (optimal foraging) paradigm and the Great Kalahari revisionist debate, finishing with ideas on sharing, so central to Glynn Isaac's model of early human society.

A point to ponder here is about sharing (pp. 14-18): sharing is not altruistic behavior. People come for their share (among the Ju/'hoansi, probably more disputes are generated among people who feel they have not been given their fair share). It would also be bad form to refuse, anyway, as this would work against the principle of risk management.

Chapter 2 deals with landscape and humans in it. Here the author is primarily concerned about food extraction, and gives a short pr=cis of different ecological zones in Africa. Changing environmental conditions are then considered (as a result of global conditions) and the effect this would have had on humans in the past.

Here, the author has a restricted view of the landscape, seeing it as a place for food, although she recognizes (p. 34) that each generation is a reservoir of environmental knowledge. There is no discussion of the socio-psychological role of landscape, e.g., for religious/ritual purposes, stories, myths, etc. that are contained in the cultural landscape, or the importance of rock art in the landscape which might have acted as a mnemonic for ritual and other needs.[2]

Agriculture in Africa possibly lagged behind pastoralism because there were few possibilities for sedentary plant collectors (fishers) like the

Natufian in the Levant (p. 55), and because Africa generally had low population densities.

In chapter 3, the author discusses stone tool technology and cha=nes operatoires. I am sorry Desmond Clark did not survive to read this chapter, as the ideas expressed were very close to his heart, and he would have been delighted with it.

It is chapter 4 where social systems are discussed. The author presents a good summary of the evolution of human social development, leading to land-use rights (pp. 89-100). The author says that the archaeology of hunter-gatherers tends to neglect social interaction, as most scholarly effort is expended on discussion of economic and ecological themes (p. 104). This is not true of South Africa. John Parkington and his students have looked at intra-site use at Dunefield Midden.[3] Garth Sampson in the Karoo has looked at wider regional issues and space use, and my own work on the Vredenburg Peninsula offered information on hunter/pastoralist interaction, and changes through time (contra the author, p. 237).[4]

Chapter 5 deals with modernity and development of hunting among Homo sapiens. The author draws together data on different ideas about modern human evolution, but lacks discussion on hunting techniques, such as Klein's ideas on catastrophic kill techniques versus attritional die-off (p. 125),[5] which could have been added to the section on "Effective Hunting" (p. 129) when comparing Middle Stone Age (MSA) to Late Stone Age (LSA) hunting methods. The section on "Small Resource Procurement" (p. 129) could also have discussed Parkington's model of a possible spurt in modern human brain development from Omega 3/6 long-chain fatty acids available in shellfish to pregnant and lactating mothers in the MSA coastal sites (Broadhurst, et al.). Regarding the author's comments on "Evidence of Symbol" (p. 132), the book may have gone to print before the Blombos decorated ochre was published.[6] I am pleased to see that the author does show some reservation about the MSA date of the Katanga bone harpoons (p. 182).

In chapter 6, the longest chapter, the author deals with the archaeological data from MSA and LSA sites to support her ideas. It is primarily focused on the MSA of Nelson Bay Cave, at Robberg on the south coast of South Africa, and LSA from Lukenya Hill in Kenya. As the author is concerned with technology, it is the Howiesonspoort (HP) industry which is of interest, seen as a presager of blade technologies in the LSA. As the HP is seen as "modern" it is used as an indicator of the beginnings of hunter flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances to widen the resource base when necessary.

The author mentions Klein's idea that human populations were probably small and vulnerable to extinction (p. 165).[7] Stan Ambrose and Marcus Feldman have both commented on bottlenecks, Feldman suggesting that human numbers may have dropped as low as 2,000. This would be counter to the author's argument that human numbers increased, causing them to migrate out of Africa (p. 128).

Chapter 7 raises the question of what happened to foragers when food producers arrived in the landscape. The author rightly looks at the widening of the food base, with smaller animals being tapped, following Binford/Flannery's "Broad Spectrum" ideas. Already in North Africa smaller animals were being exploited at the end of the Pleistocene/beginning of the Holocene, including hares and gazelles,[8] similar to what was happening in the Levant.[9] Control of animals, such as Barbary sheep at Uan Afuda, c. 10,000-8000 BP, may also have taken place with wild cattle (p. 200).[10] Intensification and widening of the food base immediately prior to the appearance of domesticates may be a common phenomenon, as there are similar indications in the west coast of South Africa 3000-2000 BP.[11]

There seems to be an assumption by the author that hunters did not alter the landscape (p.

198), although her figure 7.5 shows burning of the vegetation as part of "wild plant procurement." Fire regimes inevitably change the vegetation, and Sampson has also noted that certain plants species grow on abandoned hunters sites in the Karoo.[12]

The author follows a trend to blur the differences between hunters and food producers, which underlay the beginnings of the Kalahari debate. Elphick and Schrire would argue that hunters and herders at the Cape were just part of a cycle of fortune, and ends of a continuum.[13] Following Harris, the author accepts the process leading to "wild plant cultivation" in Africa (p. 199). Given the paucity of botanical data in Africa, and the difficulty of separating "wild" from "domestic" African cereals, I am not convinced of this. Tuareg[14] and Zaghawa,[15] both pastoral people, harvest wild grains today, without any attempts at "cultivation," i.e., movement of wild seed out of the natural habitat, a practice which must be centuries old.

While I accept that there has always been a great deal of flexibility in foraging societies, particularly regarding the food base, I believe that the blurring of the distinction between hunters and food producers is a modern vision of the world. Economic distinctions were probably much more clear-cut within what were basically conservative societies in the prehistoric past, where population densities were much lower. In my article, I tried to show how this still maintains itself, although with colonialism (even as far back as the eighteenth century in South Africa) and with modern pressures (wars, famines, etc.) survival needs have created refugee situations where identities have become much more flexible and people are forced to maintain them artificially (an extreme example of this would have been during the Rwanda genocide).[16]

A misunderstanding by the author (p. 211) is that "full scale agriculture" was established at the Cape 1,400 years ago. The Cape is a winter rainfall area, where African summer rainfall crops (e.g. sorghum and millet) could not grow. Thus, this was a pastoral zone (occupied by the Khoekhoen) until winter rainfall crops (wheat, barley, etc.) were introduced by Europeans in the seventeenth century.

The use of the term "Neolithic" in Africa is fraught with problems. Most students of archaeology know that the Neolithic (New Stone Age) was originally devised for collections of polished stone tools and pottery. It was later widened to encompass food production. But, even in the Near East, it was not always easy to fit cultural patterns into the named category (e.g., Pre-pottery Neolithic). In Africa, I would suggest the same problems also pertain. Wendorf and Schild have assumed that cattle bones associated with pottery at Nabta Playa are domesticated.[17] This is by no means certain, and assuming pottery means food production can lead to false premises.[18]

Chapter 8 looks at the demise of hunting societies in Africa. Contra the author (p. 214), if we accept the premise above that modern conditions require the gathering of wild plant foods and hunting of wild game, then hunters have not gone. Equally, contra Wilmsen[19] some Ju/'hoansi were independent of their fisher/farmer neighbors, and would only contact them when they needed material goods for hxaro,[20] and this appears to be supported by the archaeological record.[21]

San choices of involvement with outsiders (p. 236) were often contingent on the degree of "encapsulation" or maintenance of escape routes, i.e., not being surrounded by food producers. The history of independence where war leaders arose is well-documented by Guenther.[22] Trade with the outside, without any sense of domination, goes back at least to the nineteenth century, as described by Passarge (1898).[23] Formalized hxaro-type exchange may only exist among the Ju/'hoansi and Nharo (p. 224), but risk and reci-

procity is probably universal among foragers where periodic stress occurs.

The author suggests that the differences between the two contrasting "food-getting" regimes described in the Vredenburg Peninsula[24] is not sufficient from a material perspective to allow them to be separated into "hunters" and "herders" (p. 237). The bead sizes in the first millennium are completely different (hunter sites <5mm, herder sites >5mm). Only in the last five hundred years do large beads show up on hunter sites, suggesting a change in the social environment. This change may be due to the appearance of cattle in large numbers in the landscape.[25] The percentage of small buck (Raphicerus sp) to small medium bovids (mostly Ovis) may be the deciding factor separating the economies. The hunter sites have large numbers of small buck pre-1900 BP, along with reasonable percentages of formal tools (1.5-4 percent). This continues post-1900 BP, but with the addition of a few sheep. On herder sites, the formal tool component is low (0.2 percent), and may well just be background "noise." Sheep percentages against small buck are high. These differences seem to be so great that I would like to know what more archaeological evidence would be needed to accept that they are both different economies, if not cultures?

Postscript

If the differences between hunters and food producers becomes blurred, so does the concept of foragers (pp. 198-199). Virtually every rural person in Africa forages, i.e., uses wild plant and animal resources, often by choice, e.g., bush meat in West Africa, certainly by necessity in war zones, e.g., Angola and DRC.

Today the Ju/'hoansi of Nyae Nyae are having to eke out a living by supplementing meager rations from donor aid to keep body and soul together. Polly Wiessner has been measuring food available against body weight in one village. One old woman only weighed 30kg at one point, and there has been competition from elephants this year (Polly Wiessner, personal communication). Anyone interested in the present plight of Kalahari Bushmen should log onto www.kalaharipeoples.org.

Notes

[1]. R. G. Klein, "Stone Age Predation on Large African Bovids," ***Journal of Archaeological Science*** 5 (1978): pp. 195-217; and ***The Human Career: Human and Biological Origins***, 2nd ed. (University of Chicago Press, 1999), figure 6.39.

[2]. C. Tilley, ***A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments*** (Berg: Oxford, 1994).

[3]. J. E. Parkington, P. Nilssen, C. Reeler, and C. Henshilwood, "Making Sense of Space at Dunefield Midden Campsite, Western Cape, South Africa," ***Southern African Field Archaeology*** 1 (1992): pp. 63-70.

[4]. Garth Sampson, ***Stylistic Boundaries among Mobile Hunter-Foragers*** (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988); A. B. Smith, "Keeping People on the Periphery: The Ideology of Social Hierarchies between Hunters and Herders," ***Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*** 17:2 (1998): pp. 201-215; and A. B. Smith, K. Sadr, J. Gribble, and R. Yates, "Excavations in the Southwestern Cape, South Africa, and the Archaeological Identity of Prehistoric Hunter-Gatherers within the Last 2000 Years," ***South African Archaeological Bulletin*** 46 (1991): pp. 71-91.

[5]. Klein, ***The Human Career***.

[6]. C. S. Henshilwood, F. d'Erroco, R. Yates, Z. Jacobs, C. Tribolo, G. A. T. Duller, N. Mercier, J. C. Sealy, H. Valladas, I. Watts, and A. G. Wintle, "Emergence of Modern Human Behavior: Middle Stone Age Engravings from South Africa," ***Science*** 295 (2002): pp. 1278-1280.

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Humans, ed. P. Mellars and C. Stringer (Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 529-546.

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[10]. S. di Lernia, "The Uan Afuda Cave: Hunter-Gatherer Societies of Central Sahara," ***Arid Zone Archaeology Monograph*** 1: (1999).

[11]. A. Jerardino, "Changing Social Landscapes of the Western Cape Coast of Southern Africa over the Last 4500 years," (Ph.D. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1996).

[12]. C. G. Sampson, "Veld damage in the Karoo Caused by Its Pre-Trekboer Inhabitants: Preliminary Observations in the Seacow Valley" ***The Naturalist*** 30 (1986): pp. 37-42.

[13]. R. Elphick, ***Kraal and Castle*** (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); and C. Schrire, "An Inquiry into the Evolutionary Status and Apparent Identity of San Hunter-Gatherers," ***Human Ecology*** 8 (1980): pp. 9-29.

[14]. S. E. Smith, "The Environmental Adaptation of Nomads in the West African Sahel: A Key to Understanding Prehistoric Pastoralists," in ***The Sahara and the Nile***, ed. M. A. J. Williams and H. Faure (Rotterdam: Balkema, 1980), pp. 467-487.

[15]. M. J. Tubiana and J. Tubiana, ***The Zaghawa from an Ecological Perspective*** (Rotterdam: Balkema, 1977).

[16]. Smith, "Keeping people on the periphery."

[17]. F. Wendorf and R. Schild, ***The Prehistory of the Eastern Sahara*** (New York: Academic Press, 1980).

[18]. For past discussion on the subject of "Neolithic" in Africa, see B. Barich, "Pour une definition du Nolithique en Afrique du Nord at au Sahara," ***Proceedings of the 8th Panafrican Congress of Prehistory***, Nairobi (1980): pp. 271-272; A. B. Smith, "Origins of the Neolithic in the Sahara," in ***From Hunters to Farmers: The Causes and Consequences of Food Production in Africa***, ed. J. D. Clark and S. A. Brandt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 87; and P. J. J. Sinclair, "Introduction," in ***The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals and Towns***, ed. T. Shaw, P. J. J. Sinclair, B. Andah, and A. Okpoko (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 3-8.

[19]. E. N. Wilmsen, ***The Kalahari Ethnographies (1896-1898) of Siegfried Passarge*** (Koln: Rudiger Koppe Verlag, 1997).

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[21]. A. B. Smith and R. B. Lee, "Cho/ana: Archaeological and Et1nohistorical Evidence for Recent Hunter-Gatherer/Agropastoralist Contact in Northern Bushmanland, Namibia," ***South African Archaeological Bulletin*** 52 (1997): pp. 52-58; and A. B. Smith, "Ethnohistory and Archaeology of the Ju/'hoansi Bushmen," ***African Study Monographs***, Supplemental Issue 26 (2001): pp. 15-25.

[22]. M. Guenther, "'Independent, Fearless and Rather Bold': A Historical Narrative on the Ghanzi Bushmen of Botswana," ***Namibia Scientific Society*** 44 (1993): pp. 25-40. M. Guenther, "'Lords of the Desert Land': Politics and Resistance of the Ghanzi Basarwa of the Nineteenth Century," ***Botswana Notes and Records*** 29 (1997): pp. 121-141.

[23]. Wilmsen, ***Kalahari Ethnographies***.

[24]. A. B. Smith, K. Sadr, J. Gribble, and R. Yates, "Excavations in the Southwestern Cape, South Africa, and the Archaeological Identity of Prehistoric Hunter-Gatherers within the Last 2000 Years," ***South African Archaeological Bulletin*** 46 (2001): pp. 71-91.

[25]. Smith, "Keeping people on the periphery."