

The Painted Caves: An Introduction to the Prehistoric Rock Art of Zimbabwe By Peter Garlake. Harare, Modus, 1987, iv, 100 pp., ISBN 0-908309-06-6, Z\$29,95.

The Painted Caves is perhaps the most important work yet published on the interpretation of Zimbabwean rock art. It is an attempt to view the art from the artist's perspective without recasting the images into the cognitive framework of modern cultures. As such it represents a refreshing change from previous work and a breakthrough in a hitherto stagnant field of research.

Garlake successfully demonstrates that the rock art is highly conventionalized in terms of both style and subject matter. He then argues that these depictions have a symbolic rather than decorative function. They represent, in a metaphorical way, the major concerns and emotions of a hunter-gatherer society. Thus a depiction may appear to be realistic but it has a hidden, and more important, meaning which was known to the hunter-gatherer society which used it; and therein lies the challenge to those interested in cognitive archaeology.

Garlake takes the known importance of trance in historically documented hunter-gatherer societies in Southern Africa as a fundamental basis for his argument that trance also took place among these societies in the past and that many of the depictions indicate trance-inducing activities and of the state of trance itself. This seems to be a believable interpretation of the numerous 'fallen figures', 'pregnant figures' and various lines and formlings found in the art. In his interpretation of the art in these terms, Garlake is following the tradition of several South African specialists. However, he goes a little further than they do in his suggestion that one cannot understand the rock art simply in terms of trance-related activities. He suggests that several depictions are symbols of other concerns; for example, the mother-child bond, the male-female dicotomy, social discord or co-operation, and so on. Unfortunately, in my opinion, he does not go far enough along these lines. The symbols represent more than merely trance-related activities. Garlake's treatment of animals and plants in the rock art is particularly disappointing in this regard. Animals and plants are discussed as mere pictures rather than as symbols and there is a tendency to reduce them to simply sources of potency or trance-modified images. More work is needed on the symbolic function of non-human elements in rock art.

The Painted Caves is divided into five sections. Part One answers most of the usual questions asked by the layman, including information on the age and the techniques of the paintings and provides an introduction to the conventions of the art form. Part Two reviews previous work, a little harshly in some cases, introduces the reader to the complexities of symbolism and provides a general anthropological background to San hunter-gatherer groups. Part Three suggests symbolic interpretations to various topics such as the standardized postures of the human figure and the combinations of human and animal figures in individual depictions. Parts Four and Five provide the reader with descriptions of paintings at selected sites and directions of how to get there. The directions are good

but his listing of the content of the paintings at the sites is rather disappointing. It is as if he has reverted to a pre-symbolic interpretation of the depictions.

I have a few other quibbles with the book. The basic layout is pleasing but the tracings, while generally good, are sometimes a little inconsistent and confusing. For instance, in some cases the unshaded areas represent white on the actual painting and, in others, light red. The outlines of several depictions could also have been smoothed off. As I know from personal experience, kinked outlines are often the result of differential weathering of the rock itself as well as the steadiness (or otherwise) of the tracer's hand. It is the principles behind the art that we aim to copy, so a smoothing off of the depictions would improve their visual impact. My greatest criticism of the book, however, is that the circles used to indicate size are not according to standard practice. Bar scales should have been used instead.

Nevertheless, this is an excellent book and it is very reasonably priced, especially when one considers the number of coloured plates included in it. *The Painted Caves* deserves a place on the bookshelf of anyone interested in the prehistoric art of Zimbabwe.

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Cultural Struggle and Development in Southern Africa Edited by Preben Kaarsholm. Harare, Baobab; London, James Currey; Portsmouth, Heinemann, 1991, x, 258 pp., ISBN 0-85255-211-4 (pbk), Z\$30.00.

Cultural Struggle and Development in Southern Africa is a fascinating and topical study which brings together research in various disciplines such as history, literature, art, development studies, political science, religion, constitutional law and sociology. It is based on the proceedings of a workshop on 'Culture and Development in Southern Africa' which was held at the University of Copenhagen in April 1988.

In this book researchers and development workers call for the return of culture to its rightful place in people's everyday lives, arguing that culture plays an important role in the development process of society and is very significant in economic development programmes. The contributors to this book offer some practical ways in which culture (including, for instance, customs, beliefs and taboos) can be used to facilitate the implementation of development programmes in a country. The majority of the contributors disprove the general European and North American beliefs about what is believed to determine economic development in the so-called 'under-developed' or 'developing' countries. The central argument of the book is that a consideration of culture, especially the role of local language and related communication processes, is missing in the western model of economic development. These scholars argue that the assistance of local customs, beliefs and language should be sought in the implementation of development programmes. Culture may be regarded as