

Cave Painting from Griqualand East.¹

By Dr. SIDNEY H. HAUGHTON.

THE large slab covered with paintings, a portion of which is reproduced herewith (Fig. 1), has a height of 3 feet and a length of 7 feet 10 inches. It is obviously incomplete, and forms but part of what must have been a larger mural painting.

The slab, which is in the collection of the South African Museum, was obtained for the Museum in the year 1912 by Mr. G. S. T. Mandy. He dis-

The painting is probably one of the finest of its kind hitherto found in the Cape Province, and is remarkable not only for the coloration but also for the attention paid to details. The nature of the polychrome colouring can be compared with that of the wall-paintings of Altamira.

The scene depicted is that of a herd of elands surrounded by hunters armed with bows and arrows

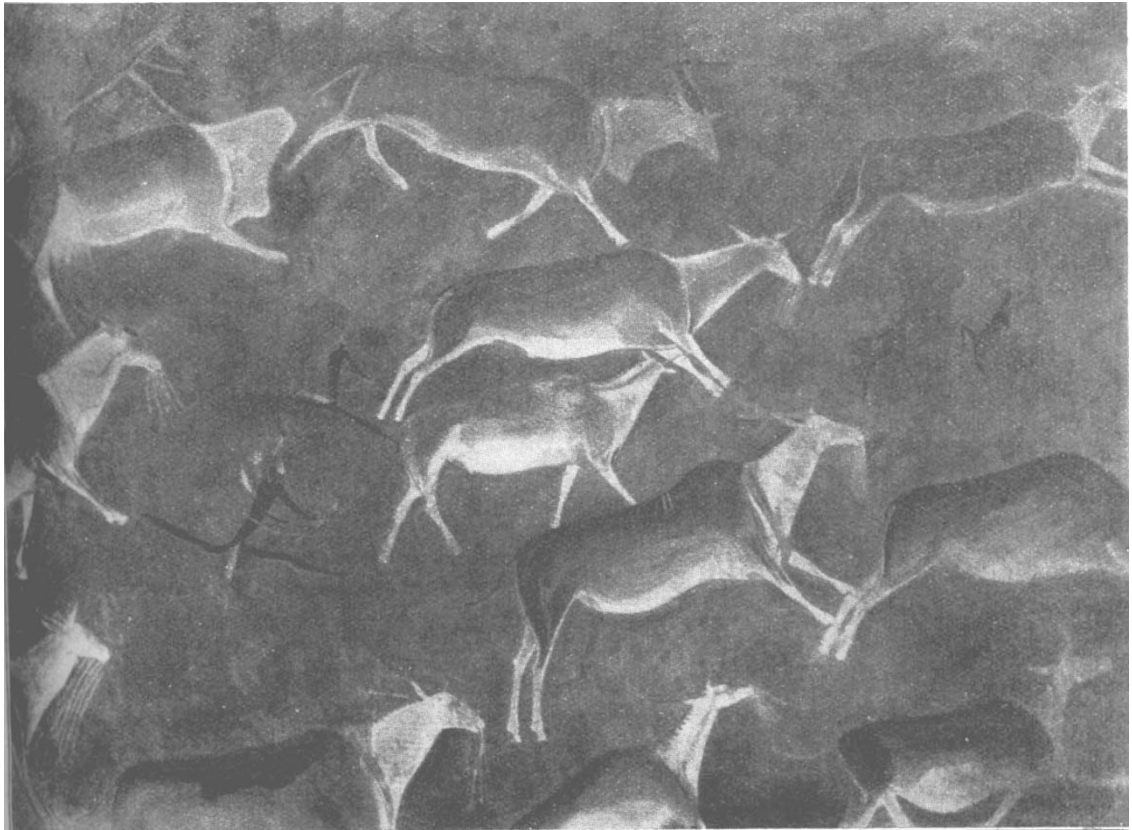


FIG. 1.—Part of polychrome painting on the Zaamenkomst slab. Scale about one-sixth natural size.

covered it in a cave on the farm Zaamenkomst, which lies about 12 miles from the town of Maclear in Griqualand East. The slab was lying, in two parts, face downwards, in ash which covered the floor of the cave, and must have fallen either forwards from the wall of the cave or downwards from the roof. There is no evidence available to settle this point. From the ash and debris on the floor of the cave no artefacts or other evidence of occupation have been recovered. No traces of paintings were found on other large slabs which lay in the ash; but on the walls were remains of other scenes showing an entirely different technique.

¹ Reprinted from a paper entitled "Note on the Zaamenkomst Slab" in *Trans. Roy. Soc. South Africa*, vol. 14, part 3, 1927.

and also with battle-axes. The hunters are running rapidly, this impression being conveyed by a conventional drawing of the outstretched legs. The animals are depicted as foaming at the mouth, and, in one instance, approaching death is indicated by the presence of bloody foam. The details of the animal figures are far more realistic than those of the men; but the presence of head-plumes and battle-axes as part of the equipment of the hunters lends peculiar interest to the scene, for these would seem to indicate that the men were not Bushmen but Bantu. The late Dr. Péringuey considered that the bows and arrows depicted are of the type used by the Barotse and other Zambezi tribes.