

THE L.S.A. INDUSTRY OF BUUR AD (MIDDLE JUBA VALLEY, SOUTHERN SOMALIA)

Margherita Mussi
Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità
Università di Roma "La Sapienza"
Via Palestro 63
I-00185 Roma (Italy)

Introduction

In 1985, a L.S.A. site was located on the top of Buur Ad ($3^{\circ} 47' 5''\text{N}$, $42^{\circ} 35' 42''\text{E}$), a flat residual hill close to the town of Luuq, in the Juba Valley (Fig. 1). It is approximately 1 km east of Buur Meadow 1, a similar L.S.A. site (Mussi 1987). Buur Ad ("the white hill") is capped by evaporitic rocks, without any soil horizon. As the archaeological materials lay directly on bedrock, digging was not required. A grid was established, and lithic implements were collected in 5 x 5 m units, over an area of 1000 m². Approximately one tenth of the top of the hill, which is 103 x 98 m wide, was covered by the grid. Nothing was collected outside it. The distribution of archaeological remains was patchy, inside as well as outside the grid. Bones were not preserved, except for one tooth of a small to medium-sized ruminant *Artiodactyl*.

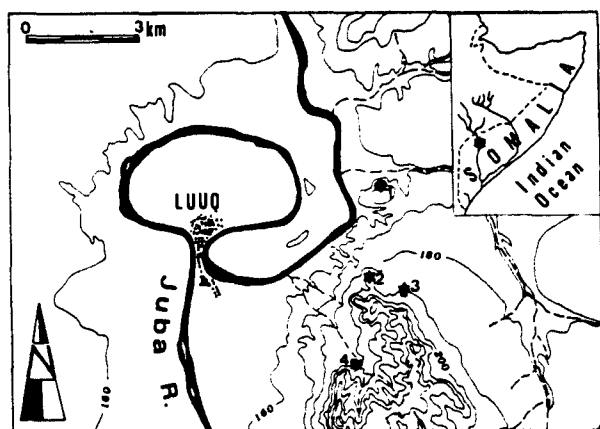


Fig. 1: The surroundings of Luuq, with the L.S.A. sites located during the 1985 survey. 1: Buur Heela Shiid. 2: Buur Meadow. 3: Buur Ad. 4: Buur Matabno North.

Lithic industry

In all, 1375 lithic implements were collected. Small flint and chert pebbles, which are found eroding on the flanks of nearby Buur Meadow, were by far the most popular raw material, but quartz pebbles were some-

times knapped.

Laminar débitage is infrequent (Table 1). In the typological analysis, bladelets larger than 1.2 cm were classified as "blades", following Tixier's (1963) scheme. However, they are very rarely longer than 5 cm, and are lumped with true bladelets in Table 1.

Table 1

Débitage

Flake cores	21
Bladelet cores with one striking platform	22
Bladelet cores with two striking platforms	8
Residual cores	17
Re-shapening flakes/blades/bladelets	52
Flakes	679
Bladelets	218
Fragments and chips (less than 1 cm long)	200
Unmodified pebbles	7

Many tools retain cortex. A stylistic attribute of this industry, as at Buur Meadow 1, is the use of inverse retouch on flakes with a smooth and compact cortex, so that the latter is eventually found in a "ventral" position (Fig. 2 : 3,5,7).

The typological study followed Tixier's (1963) list for the Maghreb Epipaleolithic (Table 2). Notches and denticulates are the largest typological group, followed by endscrapers. Many tools of both groups are made on re-shapening flakes or bladelets. Truncations are the next most common, and include some partially truncated pieces. Most of the backed tools are broken. Good quality flint was selected for backed bladelets. One segment only is clearly identifiable: two others, while probable, are fragmented, and a fourth, made out of quartz, is partially retouched. Most perforators are on flakes. They include a very distinctive type, the so-called "large Capsian perforator" (Fig. 2: 11). Two small chopping-tools are labelled as "miscellaneous bifacial tools".

Comments and conclusions

Trampling cannot be completely ruled out in a surface collection rich in notches and denticulates. However, I do not think that it had such an impact. Edges are fresh. The alternate and alternating retouch, which is the rule on pseudo-tools, is never found. Notched and denticulated edges are rarely associated with other working edges, and appear therefore to have been intended as distinct tools.

This assemblage compares closely with the one found at Buur Meadow 1 in typology, type percentages,

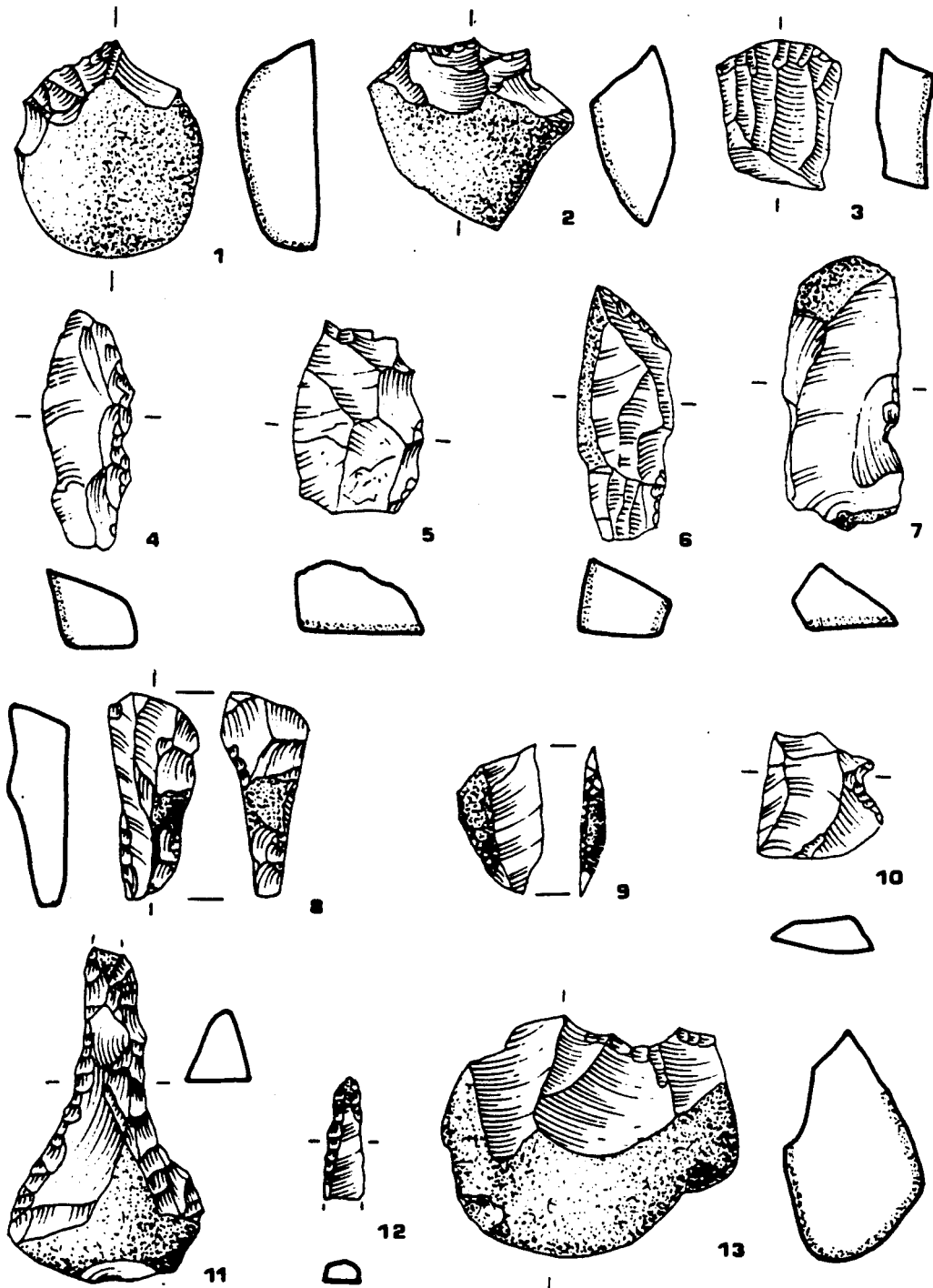


Fig. 2: Buur Ad industry: 1,2,3 endscrapers; 4,5 denticulates; 6 truncation; 7,10 notches; 8 backed tool; 9 geometric microlith (segment); 11,12 perforators; 13 varia(chopping-tool) (nat. size).

Table 2
Typology

	n	%
ENDSCRAPERS		17.8
1 single on a flake	5	3.3
2 on a retouched flake	2	1.3
4 nucleiform	8	5.3
5 denticulated	4	2.6
6 nosed	1	0.7
7 on a notched piece	4	2.6
9 on a retouched blade or bladelet	2	1.3
11 double	1	0.7
PERFORATORS		0.8
12 single	10	6.6
15 large "Capsian"	1	0.7
16 drill	1	0.7
BURINS		0.7
19 on a break	1	0.7
BACKED FLAKES AND BLADES		13.9
34 flake	5	3.3
37 curved backed blade	5	3.3
40 obtuse ended blade	2	1.3
42 fragment	9	6.0
BACKED BLADELETS		9.5
45 straight and pointed	1	0.7
46 straight and pointed with rounded base	1	0.7
47 straight and pointed with truncated base	1	0.7
55 with curved tip	1	0.7
56 with curved back	1	0.7
61 with narrowed base	1	0.7
66 fragment	5	3.3
71 with Ouchtata retouch	1	0.7
72 fragment with Ouchtata retouch	2	1.3
NOTCHES AND DENTICULATES		25.9
74 notched flake	8	5.3
75 denticulated flake	24	16.0
76 notched blade or bladelet	2	1.3
77 denticulated blade or bladelet	4	2.6
79 notched or denticulated piece with cont. retouch	1	0.7
TRUNCATIONS		11.3
80 truncated piece	17	11.3
GEOMETRIC MICROLITHS		2.6
82 segment	4	2.6
VARIA		10.0
104 splintered piece	1	0.7
105 piece with continuous retouch	9	6.0
106 sidescraper	3	2.0
112 miscellaneous bifacial tools	2	1.3
Total	150	

Comments and conclusions

Trampling cannot be completely ruled out in a surface collection rich in notches and denticulates. However, I do not think that it had such an impact. Edges are fresh. The alternate and alternating retouch, which is the rule on pseudo-tools, is never found. Notched and denticulated edges are rarely associated with other working edges, and appear therefore to have been intended as distinct tools.

This assemblage compares closely with the one found at Buur Medow 1 in typology, type percentages, stylistic attributes, as well as technology (Mussi 1987). However, similar industries are not known elsewhere in Somalia or in East Africa (Mussi in press; Coltorti and Mussi in press). The dating is still an open question. On typological grounds, it can be assumed that those "Mode 5 industries" are of Holocene age. Apparently, they pre-date the introduction of ceramics. The suggested age is anything between 10000 and 5000 years old. It is hoped to better define their chronology in the future.

I propose to informally call the assemblages from Buur Medow 1 and Buur Ad as well as others from the area that appear to be similar but are still under study, "Luuqian" after the name of the nearby town of Luuq.

Acknowledgements

This research is supported by grants from the Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione (Rome, Italy). In Somalia, it had the support of the Somali Academy of Sciences and Arts.

References

- Coltorti, M. and M. Mussi
In press Hunter-gatherers of the Middle Juba Valley (Southern Somalia) during the Early Holocene. *Proc. Int. Symposium "Environmental change and human culture in the Nile Basin and Northern Africa through 2nd millennium BC"*. Dymaczewo (Poland) 6- 10 September 1988.
- Mussi, M.
1987 Preliminary report on Buur Medow 1, a LSA site in the Middle Juba Valley (Southern Somalia). *Nyame Akuma* 28:33-37.
- In press Uomo e ambiente nella media valle del Giuba durante l'Olocene antico. *Atti XXVII Congr.Soc.It. Biogeografia "Biogeografia della Somalia"*. Firenze 27-30 settembre 1988.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA TO KERMA (SUDAN) - SEASON 1988-1989

Charles Bonnet

Mission Archéologique de l'Université de Genève
17, chemin Bornalet
1242 Satigny, Switzerland

The work of the Swiss Archaeological Mission took place from 8 December 1988 to 28 January 1989. As in the past, the two raïs from Tabo, Gad Abdallah and Saleh Melieh, directed a team of 70 to 80 workmen. Fieldwork was concentrated on six locations within the concession, as well as on the nearby site of Koya, on the left bank of the Nile (facing the town of Argo), where a rescue excavation was made necessary after the discovery of a grave in the courtyard of a house.

The Pre-Kerma settlement

An area of 18 by 12 m was entirely exposed revealing 50 storage pits and post holes belonging to circular huts. The clearance of these surfaces, which are very time-consuming, will make it possible for us to complete the overall plan of the settlement dating around 3000 BC. Several hearths have been preserved, but for the most part the occupation levels have been lost through erosion. Some clusters of pits were frequently surrounded by huts, a layout reminiscent of African villages in which granaries are located in the centre of the settlement. The artefacts found in the pits were identical to those collected during the two previous excavations.

The ancient town

The north-eastern quarter of the town seems to have developed along one of the roads leading towards the centre. As on the eastern side, the general outlines of the northern ditches constitutes a U-shaped depression that sinks deep into the urbanized area. Soundings cut across the ditches have shown that during the Classic Kerma phase (1750-1500 BC), the occupation levels were situated 4 to 5 metres above the depression. All the fortification walls have disappeared.

The north-eastern end of the town was occupied by a few peculiar buildings, the small rooms of which were surrounded by large courtyards. Flimsy structures were built against the enclosure walls. In front of these buildings, rounded walls delimited a broad passageway that let to the central building, the foundations of which were laid on sand. Many features suggest that these buildings were used for religious or official functions.