

AN INQUIRY INTO THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF SPACE IN INDIGENOUS
SETTLEMENT IN OVAMBOLAND.

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Abstract

The problem of informing appropriate architectural practice in southern Africa is addressed by proposing to divert analytical attention away from the level of appearances when researching the form of indigenous settlement patterns and architecture. By way of example, an empirical study of the homestead as a unit of settlement pattern in Ovamboland is undertaken by exploring the ways in which the designer/builders themselves perceive and value space with a view to identifying and describing the organizational structure of the homestead. The initial assumption is that this form of settlement, examined as a set of spatial relations, encodes within its organizational structure the formula (or diagram) for its reproduction.

The hypothesis is that a relevant understanding of indigenous settlement and architecture can only be grasped if inquiry extends beyond the formal aspects of style and technology to include an analysis of its spatial characteristics; this being the external projection of the socio-economic pattern (or ideology) of the people that produce it. And, such analysis being useful in identifying the formula which, when it interacts with its context, reproduces the observed settlement form. In view of this, a method of study is proposed which attempts to describe and examine settlement space from 'within' by exploring all the physical and non-physical determinants of form. This is done by isolating each determinant as a specification of settlement form and thereby arranging it into a scheme based on the scale of space with which it deals.

The conclusions are, firstly, that because the homesteads display similar features of layout and accommodation there must exist a common, agreed-upon diagram which ensures its constant reproduction. Secondly, the evidence for the diagram must lie within the way the designer/builders perceive

homestead space. Thirdly, this perception has its roots in historically inherited and functionally derived values and uses of space. Finally, a preliminary diagram is proposed which, it is argued, needs to be verified by undertaking further investigations of a similar nature in other areas of southern Africa where indigenous people occupy space.

Acknowledgements

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Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I must acknowledge the kind hospitality accorded to me by the farmers in Ovamboland who showed me their homesteads, in particular, Mr Shilongo Bunga.

CHAPTER 1INTRODUCTIONObjectives and Background

This study has as its aim the understanding of the way in which settlement space, which is produced unselfconsciously, relates to the wider nature of society and context in southern African indigenous communities. In doing this the study, cautious of being prematurely definitive, attempts to identify and propose a model that will aid the interpretation of indigenous settlement, and consequently the unselfconscious design process, by analysing the example of the homestead in Ovamboland and how it is perceived by its designer/occupants.

In recent years, architects and others working in southern Africa have become increasingly interested in the design of 'traditional' settlements and architecture (Denyer 1978; Frescura 1981; Rich 1982). Rather than being analytical and systematic in the pursuit of understanding the meaning of space as it is manifested in indigenous architecture, these investigations have been mostly at the level of formal description. As such, architecture is dealt with as an object, an approach which relegates it to mere artefact. Aspects of appearance such as decoration, technology, style, plan shape, and so on, have been thoroughly dealt with and catalogued to the extent of inventing elaborate categories and taxonomies (Denyer 1978 : 133:158) and definitive diagrams illustrating the evolution of 'house form' (Frescura 1981 : 12, 17-21). Although these publications have been useful in putting those settlements on record, they have inspired new designs which interpret and copy formal features. Thus, the responses and attitudes of architects to indigenous architecture and settlements have

been to use certain aspects, such as plan form, cross section, elevation and decoration in contemporary projects, thereby attempting to give such designs an 'African' character. The Assembly Hall at the Ongwediva Training College in Ovamboland is an example of numerous such-like attempts in southern Africa. (4) Much more can be gained by a deep analysis of spatial meaning and function in settlements and how this relates to the societies that produce them.



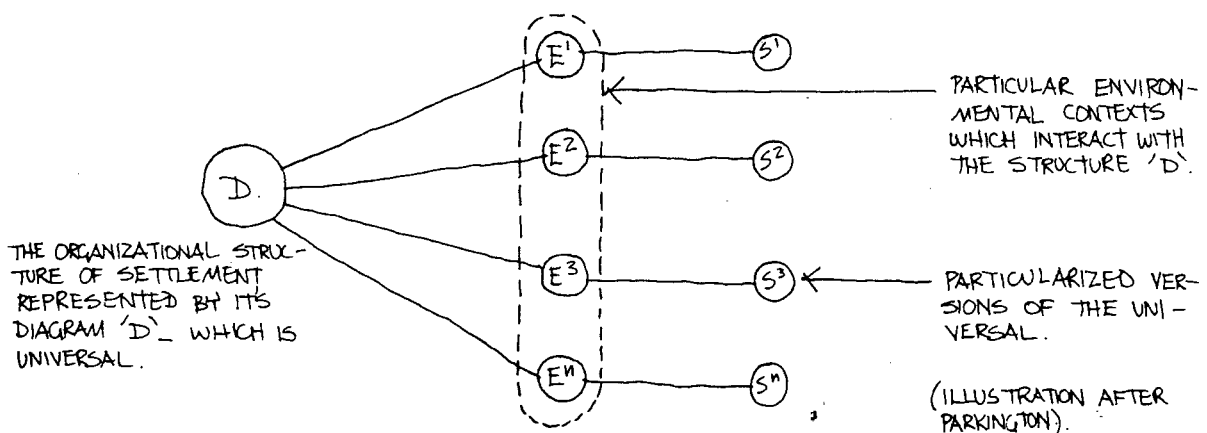
MAIN HALL AT THE ONGWEDIVA TRAINING COLLEGE

Anthropological and archaeological studies in southern Africa have recently focussed on the symbolic aspects of settlement patterns of the Bantu-speaking people in the region (Huffman 1981; A Kuper 1980; H Kuper 1972). These studies have suggested the existence of abstract symbolic models which the owner/builders subconsciously use when constructing their settlements. The identification of these models (or codes) has been applied in the interpretation of pre-historical settlement remains (Huffman 1982) and contemporary settlement patterns (A Kuper 1980). These models have relied heavily on the symbolic aspects of space which has provided a useful understanding of southern African settlements; but they have also diverted attention away from the functional aspects such as the day-to-day requirements for living, the need to accommodate social relations, climate and physical environment as important issues that help to shape settlement.

There is thus the need for a new approach that will inform a proper understanding of indigenous settlements which would be useful for architectural and planning practice in southern Africa. (5) This approach needs to appreciate that the form of settlement is informative on the fundamental nature of society and that the model (or diagram) for its pattern extends beyond the symbolic dimension.

If settlement at the 'surface' level embodies social and economic formations of society, then by identifying and analysing its organisational or 'deep' structure, it becomes possible to clarify the diagram that shapes its form (Levi-Strauss 1963 : 132-163). This implies viewing settlement as a physical organization; that is, as a set of spatial relations which needs to be understood by discovering the structural laws in relation to society. (6)

Parkington (1972 : 224-227) argues that individual expressions of settlement are produced when its diagram (or code) impinges and interacts with its environmental context to produce particularized versions of the universal. And, the work of Hillier and Hanson (1983 : 15-20) concurs with this view in their analysis of western European settlements. (7)



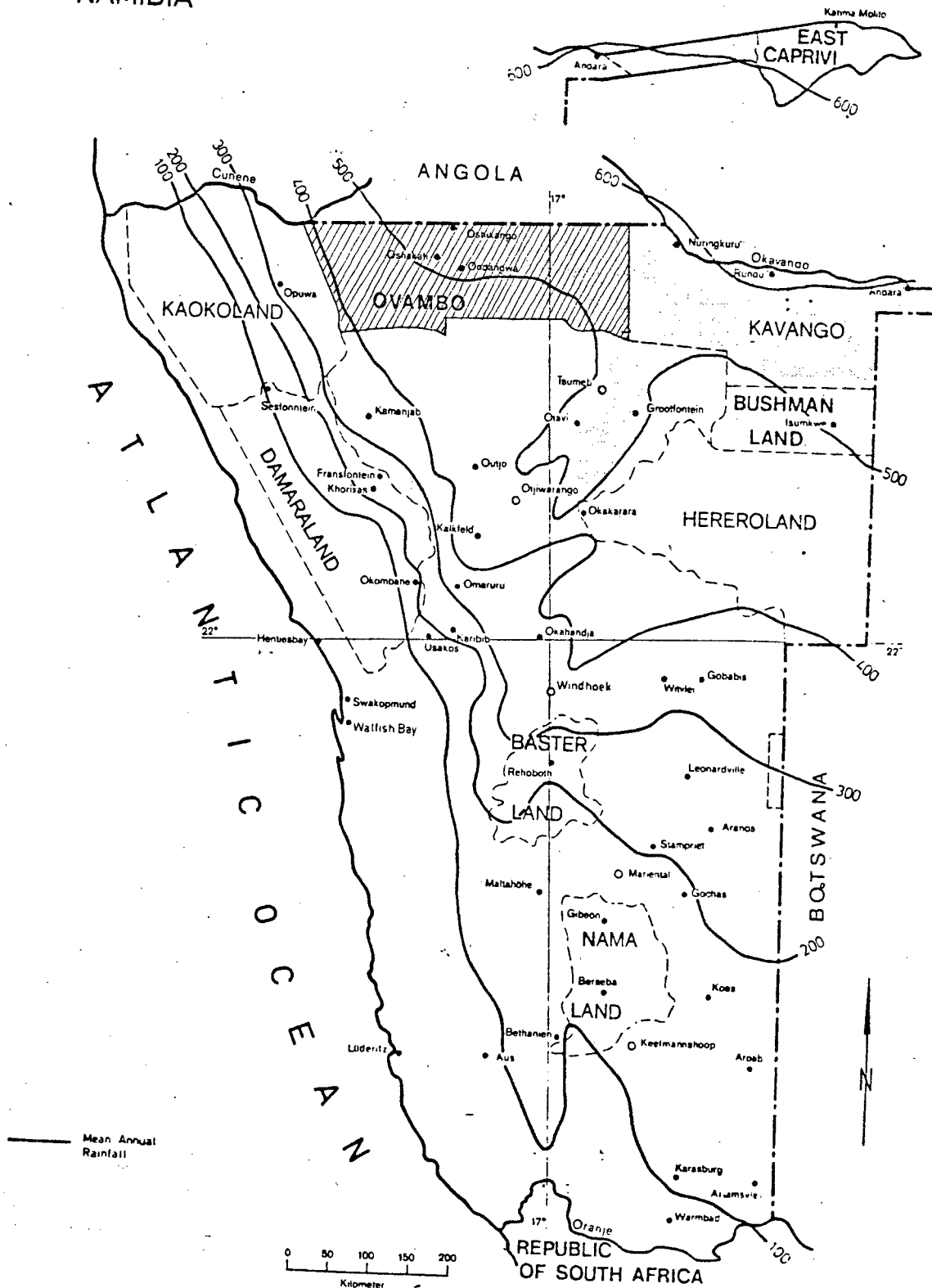
Settlement space and the physical and non-physical context of Ovamboland are thus probed in this study with the objective of discovering its structural organization and consequently the diagram in the belief that it is composed of both functional and symbolic dimensions.

Reasons for Study

The stimulus for researching this topic grew as a result of the writer's involvement in architectural practice and field work in Ovamboland between March 1979 and August 1983. Much of the work dealt with new building projects which were designed and built within the constraints of conventional practice procedures. (8) It was this that heightened the awareness of the need to search for appropriate architectural interventions in the developing regions of southern Africa: somehow there had to be a way of 'fine-tuning' the professional consultant's role to suit the spirit of the place. This study is inspired by the belief that one way of achieving meaningful practice in southern Africa is by understanding how indigenous communities (the client/community) themselves perceive and use space. (9) Many well-intended settlement and architectural projects designed (10) by architects and planners have interpreted the 'culture' and consequently the meaning of space for the users. These projects are mostly informed by models of development where environmental and professional practice is essentially product (or object) orientated and where much effort goes into formulating plans at the expense of appropriate planning. The importance of buildings and settlements as patterns of spatial relations is thus often ignored by consultants at the expense of the people for which they are intended.

Experience in Ovamboland has shown that the value of settlement space goes further than the physical boundaries of form and that its value is rooted in both functionally derived and historically inherited ideas. In order that architectural and planning practice might become more appropriate, it is essential to 'de-mystify' indigenous 'culture' by understanding the functional and historical values of space. (11) It is for this reason that this study has been undertaken.

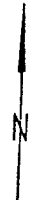
NAMIBIA



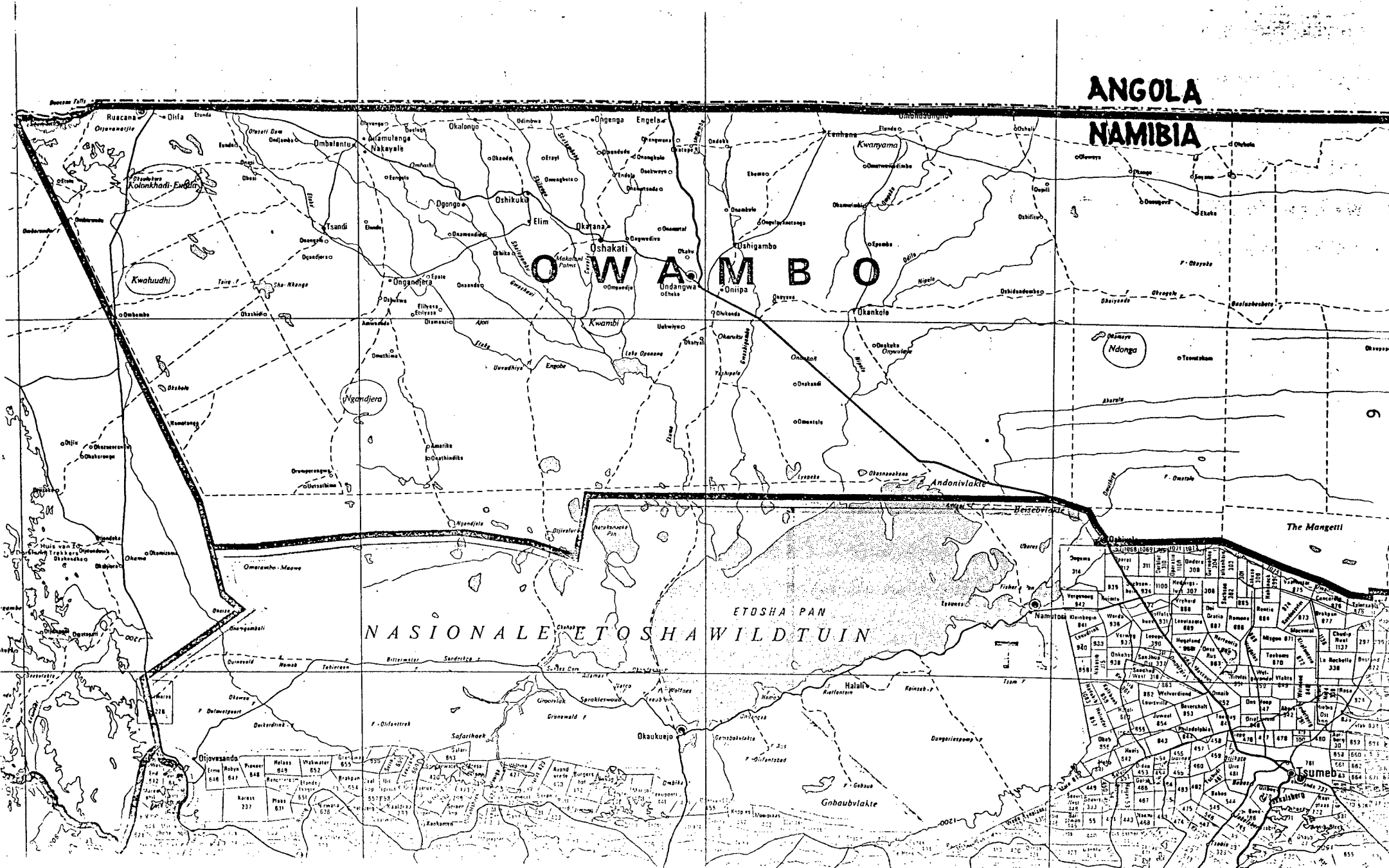
ATLANTIC OCEAN

Mean Annual Rainfall

0 50 100 150 200
Kilometer

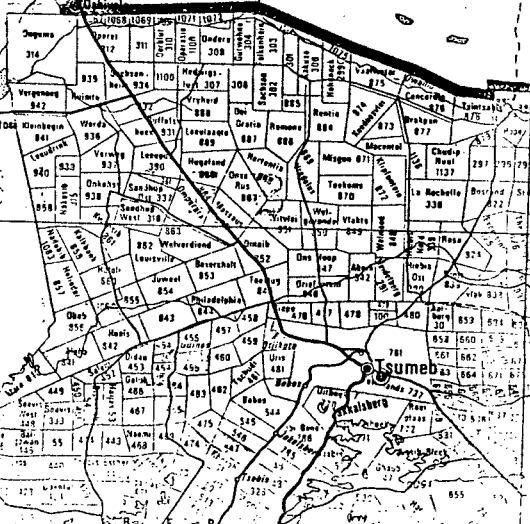


ANGOLA
NAMIBIA



O V A M B O

ETOSHA PAN
NASIONALE ETOSHA WILDTUIN



Ovamboland: The context of the investigation.

The purpose of this section is to sketch briefly the physical, social and material context in which this study is based. It is intended to serve as an introduction to the place and the people, in order to perceive more fully the spatial pattern under investigation in relation to its setting.

Physical context: Ovamboland is situated in the most northern part of Namibia, between 17 20' and 18 40' latitude south, and between 14 and 18 longitude east. It is bounded by Angola to the north, the Etosha Pan and Game Reserve in the south and the Kaokoveld and Kavango in the west and east respectively. The area covered by these boundaries amounts to some 56,072 sq.km (or approximately 6.3% of the total area of Namibia).

Climate: Long, hot summers with daily temperatures exceeding 30 C on average. Rain and a high humidity occur during the summer which is relieved by a mild and dry winter period.

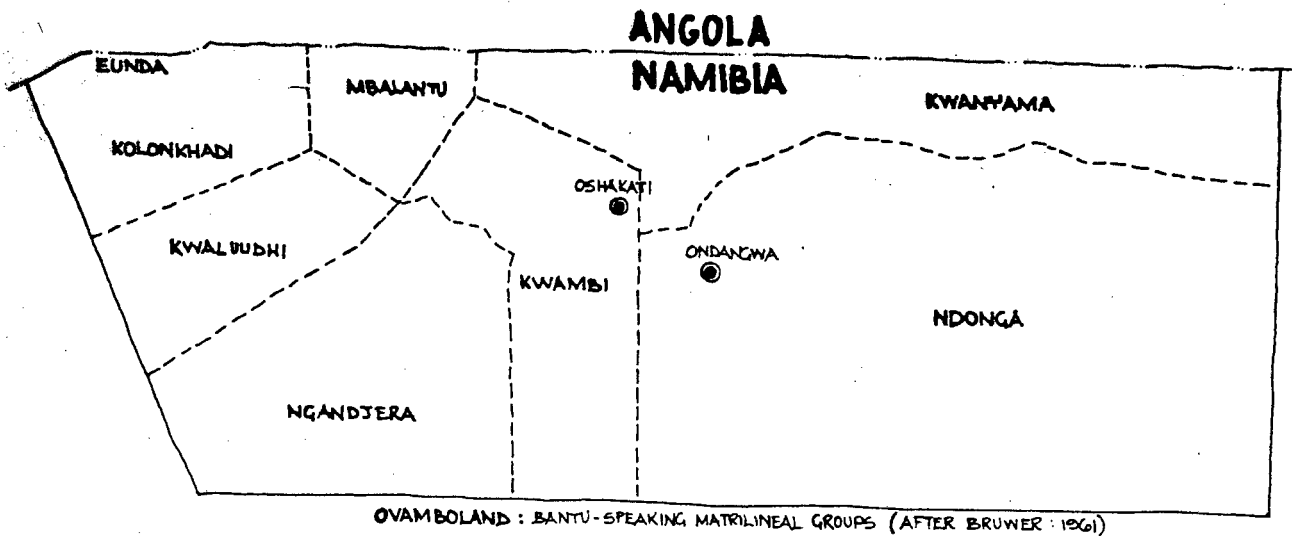
The average annual rainfall is between 400 mm and 500mm. The highest rainfall occurs between November and April, the summer period.

The highest temperatures occur during October and November (34 C) and the lowest in June and July (6 C.).

Humidity levels range from 82% in February to 22% in September.

There is no marked seasonal pattern of wind and gentle breezes are experienced throughout the year.

Geology: A deep layer of dolomite and sand of between 18 m and 40 m on rock of the Kalahari series characterises the lower layers of the region. In the oshonas there are often traces of clay. A top layer of fine, salty



The origin of these people in their present locality is imperfectly understood. There are diverse opinions on how long they have been settled in this area. Tyrrell (1978 : 9) suggests that they arrived in 1700, but most other anthropologists and ethnologists speculate differently and tend to concur with each other that these people have lived in Ovamboland since at least c.1550 (Totemeyer 1978 : 3; Loeb 1962 : 9). To date no archaeological investigations have been done in the region which may confirm or reject these findings (Phillipson 1977 : 102-139).

Official information concerning the size of population is difficult to obtain. However, a figure of 516,600 was reported in 1982 (The Argus : 26 May 1982) which is based on the 1981 census figures. This would imply roughly 47% of the total population of Namibia (Ongwediva/Oshakati Master Plan Report 1982 : 19).

The first contact with whites occurred in 1851 (Totemeyer 1978 : 19) when the travellers Galton and Anderson penetrated the area. They were followed by missionaries and in 1870 the Finnish Mission was established. There are no whites in the region except government officials, South African Defence Force and Police personnel, and missionaries. The whole of northern Namibia, including Ovamboland, is currently the arena of intense military conflict.

Material Context: The Ovambo peasantry live in dispersed homesteads, each of which is occupied by a single family on farms located on the high ground (or 'islands') between the seasonal oshonas. Their subsistence form of economic production is characterized by agriculture and animal husbandry; both activities being practised by most families. (Personal observations : 1979 to 1983). Crops cultivated include mahangu (a type of millet) and sorghum (the staple foods), pumpkins, ground-nuts, melons, beans and calabashes. Cattle are the most important livestock, followed by goats, pigs and donkeys.

Most of the utensils and articles for daily use, such as baskets, pots, mortars, hoes and arrows, and so on, are made by the people themselves (inf. Appendix 4).

Settlement is further characterised by two urban types : planned (inf. Appendix 2) and spontaneously settled (inf. Appendix 3). These do not form any part of this investigation and are included only as an introduction to the range of settlement types in Ovamboland.

Method of Investigation:

The physical organisation of architecture and settlements reflects the society in which they are produced. This suggests that the form of settlement patterns is unique to its specific context and is consequently the means whereby social relations and values are communicated and reproduced. The physical shape of settlement patterns and architecture is fundamentally generated by three characteristics of form : style, technology and space, all of which contribute, separately and together, to the ultimate shape. The hypothesis here is that in order to understand

settlements it is necessary to analyse their forms in relation to the social patterns that generate them, not only at the level of appearance or what they look like, but more importantly in what they are as the physical organisation of society. Hillier and Hanson (1983 : 15-16) suggest that of the three characteristics only space is systematically analysable, as it bears a necessary or direct relationship with society. In other words, although all artefacts as products of society, display the characteristics of style, technology and space, it is only architecture and settlement that are unique in that they alone organise space in terms of human occupancy, activities and social relations. Therefore, in order to study settlements, it is necessary to analyse their spatial configurations

(13)
(14)
(15)
(16)

in terms of the social patterns which underpin them. This method has evolved in response to the need for an approach which is appropriate for application in southern Africa. As such, it seeks to describe and analyse spatial relations in terms of the organizational structure which has its origins in the social formation of its designer/builders. This method has been influenced by the work carried out in the Unit for Architectural Studies, University College, London and the Martin Centre for Architecture and Urban Studies, University of Cambridge.

(17)
(18)

The aim is to develop a suitable means for studying and describing the form of southern African indigenous settlement patterns, which would be of benefit to architects and planners. Too often, studies made on indigenous settlement in Africa have concentrated on the "surface structures" of their form without a proper enquiry into the precise reasons or "deep structures" which generate their existence. In other words, the interaction between social relationships and the physical context, of which architecture and settlements are the concrete external projections, have not been clarified.

(19)
(20)
(21)

By viewing the settlement as an occupier of space at the interface of its physical context and the cultural experience of its users, it may be

examined as part of a broad continuum of events and artefacts including music, pottery, sculpture, myth, ritual and so on. These are ways in which society expresses itself and which are rooted in a range of issues such as kinship patterns, ecological forces, social ranking, economic factors, amongst other things.

The broader intention of this method is to examine the settlement within the context of this continuum and to discover the relations among spatial patterns in the context of the range of issues mentioned above; the objectives being to gain a clearer insight into the nature of the organizational structure of the settlement itself.

In order to understand settlements more precisely, it is necessary to record the way the occupants themselves use and value space. This implies studying settlement design 'from within'. One way of doing this is to understand the ideology - in particular the economic and social aspects - of the group that produces it. Therefore, in the investigation which follows, formal description will be used as a probing device in order to uncover the pattern of relations between settlement space, ideology and physical context. In this way, it would be possible to identify the organizational structure of settlement and gain a more accurate understanding of the value and use of space, or mental map, as it is currently experienced. A convenient method of representing the mental map as an organizational structure is by recording its diagram.

(23)

A broad selection of homesteads covering as wide an area of Ovambo-land as possible is documented as case studies representing the typical spatial pattern in the region. They are systematically described by scrutinizing all the physical and non-physical environmental requirements, or specifications, that call the typical form into being. These

specifications include:

- 1) Those explicitly felt by the occupants to be personal or family needs;
- 2) those generated by regional economy and social purpose, and
- 3) those that determine physical form, but which are not expressed by anyone. These would include inherited ideas such as religion, topographical features, climate and so on. (24)

Endnotes

- 1 It is assumed that indigenous settlements and architecture by virtue of the unselfconscious form-making process through which they are produced, are well integrated with the socio-economic values of the designer/builders and the physical environments in which are situated. Hence, a study of socio-economic relations (or social relations), settlement space and physical context may bring into sharper focus the relationship between these phenomena and thereby clarify the meaning of settlement space itself.
- 2 In other words, an attempt is made to distil from homestead space its most basic organizational structure, the diagram, which constantly generates its existence.
- 3 It appears that this is not a unique position to adopt when studying architecture. A superficial scan through much of what has been written and stated about architecture in general, makes it apparent that it is frequently dealt with at the level of artefact as finite object. As such, it is equated with sculpture, painting, pottery, and so on; a somewhat spurious relationship because although these objects are concerned with the same aspects of form (construction, technique, symbol, etc) it is only settlement that arranges space that is occupied and contains social activity.
- 4 Other examples include: Faculty Buildings, University of the North, Pietersburg; Uthun Centre, Bophuthatswana; 'Lesotho Hat' Building, Maseru, Lesotho.
- 5 Such as the method of 'information-rich' or 'thick' descriptions of the values of the designer and designed-for in an attempt to 'Africanize' design methods as outlined by Van Schaik, L. (1982) Rural Architecture in Southern Africa. Unpublished M.Arch Dissertation, University of Cape Town. This method is inherently 'poetic' which through its style of observation encourages word-painting which purposefully avoids attention to precise detail. *
- 6 By implication, this study assumes that settlements are not simply the assembly of spaces but also, and more importantly, patterns of relations which must exist among spaces if they are the organization of society.

- 7 In particular, the analysis of villages and hamlets in the Vaucluse region of Southern France, where there is an endeavour to discover the 'clues' to the 'syntax of urbanity'. Their studies show that the structure of urban forms approximate a global pattern which they call a 'heady ring' structure. The regularities that underlie this structure are the components of the diagram (or model) of the settlement type under observation.
- 8 Professional norms in South Africa are derived largely from 'western' ideas of moral value and consequently insitutional discipline tends to promote a conceptual equivalence in dealing with the resolution of architectural problems as they relate to the client/community - there is an implicit tendency among practitioners to assume that the values of 'other cultures' (the designed for) need to be elevated (to the level of the designers and standards of 'civilization').
- 9 If the human activities and the requirements of the environment that call the space-types and their relations into existence are clarified, then it becomes possible to form a more accurate understanding of settlement space.
- 10 The new housing scheme at Ongwediva is an example of this form of practice. Houses, complete with 'Bantu wall decoration' have been built as 'modern' versions of the 'Ovambo idea of house'.
- 11 This implies viewing settlement 'from within' the society responsible for it (vide inf: Method of Study).
- 12 Or, in the Vitruvian sense, delight, firmness and commodity. Human activity shapes space which is realized by technology and embellished with symbolism into a style : all of which are mediated by appropriate form.
- 13 Considering architecture and settlement purely as objects, necessarily calls for the inquiry to deal with issues of aesthetics; that is, the sensual qualities such as proportion, colour, shape, balance and so on, which are primarily surface structures that generate perceptual awareness, will tend to be dealt with at the expense of uncovering the generative and organizing principles of settlement form.
- 14 Hiller, B. and Hanson, J. (1983) Space after Modernism. 9H. No.3, p.15. This is because only settlements and architecture organize space ('social space') that is lived in. This view is further supported by Eisenman, P. (1971) From Object to Relationship II. Perspecta 13. p.38, when comparing architecture and painting : "Architecture, unlike painting, is constrained by the presence of actual 'objects' - with the real dimension of form and space. Whereas in painting the relationship of the form can be used to create the illusion of space, in architecture the relationship of the forms is the space."
- 15 Maggs, T. O'C., (1976) Iron Age Communities of the Southern Highveld. Pietermaritzburg : Natal Museum. "The form of settlement at a particular period is an accurate representation of its social structure" (p.277). And: "The settlements may be considered as elaborate artefacts and indeed they reflect the personality of their makers more sensitively than any other category of artefact .." (p.285).

- 16 The non-physical or socio-economic formation of society which is manifested by social structure (for example, kinship patterns, myth, values, religion, division of labour, and so on).
- 17 Much of the recent work has focussed on the study of pattern and form in architectural and urban space in relation to the societies that produce it. Research studies by Bill Hillier, Julienne Hanson, Adrian Leaman and others in the Unit have explored aspects of 'structure', 'system' and 'spatial relations' as the theoretical framework from which to describe settlements and architecture and the social dimensions from which they derive.
- 18 One major area of current research in the Centre has to do with constructing mathematical and theoretical models of 'spatial structure' and 'patterns of activity' in urban settlements. Work by William Fawcett, Nicholas Bullock and other researchers is published from time to time in: Transactions of the Martin Centre for Architectural and Urban Studies, Cambridge. See also, Martin, L. and March, L. (Eds.) (1972) Urban Space and Structures, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- 19 This is in the belief that the traditional methods of environmental practice (supra. Endnote 8) used by architects and planners are incapable of dealing with the issues and complexities of the problems to be solved. Also, the intuitive method of 'thick description' proposed by Van Schaik (op. cit. Endnote 5), although it provides a unique insight into settlement space as a whole, does not provide a sharp enough tool which is required for description, analysis and consequently appropriate practice. New problems are thus consistently 'solved' by falling back on previous built examples.
- 20 Such as style and technology.
- 21 vide supra: Endnote 16.
- 22 This is in an attempt to avoid ethocentric description.
- 23 Although hostilities in northern Namibia as a whole make movement difficult and dangerous, it was nevertheless possible to study a large number of homesteads briefly, and several in great depth. It was also possible to obtain aerial photographs of many of the homesteads under investigation mainly from helicopter flights. This clarified many of the outstanding details of a physical nature which were not adequately covered while making on-site investigations.
- 24 Alexander, C. (1964) Notes on the Synthesis of Form. p.136. Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press.

CHAPTER 2

THE REQUIREMENTS THAT SHAPE THE SPATIAL PATTERN: A description of settlement in relation to its context.

In order to understand the value and use of space in Ovamboland, it is essential to describe the homestead and, more broadly, the overall settlement pattern. Description of settlement can only be fully grasped in relation to the context in which it is rooted. This implies an understanding of settlement that goes beyond its formal aspects and viewing it as part of the broader experiences of the life of its occupants. (1) It therefore needs to be seen in the light of the relations that exist between it and the rest of its physical and non-physical context, and not as an isolated fragment in space. When viewed in this way, it becomes essential to probe its context and to extract the requirements that call the settlement into existence and specify its form. An analysis of both the physical (climate, topography, technology, etc) and non-physical (socio-economic structure, religion, myth, political organisation, etc) environments clarifies these requirements as they exist in contemporary Ovamboland.

The requirements are presented in the form of a set of specifications (Alexander 1968 : 15) which describe the problem, out of which each emerges. Some requirements specify more directly the physical dimensions of space than others. These may be classified as 'Physical' and are systematically arranged to specify clearly their spatial implications.

Non-physical requirements are less specific about the physical properties of space, but are nevertheless equally important in determining the homestead. They deal more with the intangible aspects of space which

qualify its meaning and which address its importance other than at the level of pure pragmatism. Often there are inherited ideas about homestead planning, which has meant probing the social, economic, and religious aspects of life to reveal the value and importance of space. The intention of describing the non-physical specifications is to bring into sharper focus these aspects, the relevance of which - in terms of space - is often obscured by the expediencies of day-to-day living. *

The fact that the requirements are viewed as being 'physical' and 'non-physical' does not mean that they are treated separately: they are dealt with in this way for analytical convenience only. The only reason for identifying the two categories is that some deal more directly with empirical space than others. It is also a feature of the total group that some tend to be close to the category from which they are excluded. This highlights the need to view them as part of the same package, even though they impinge on the functional and symbolic aspects of space at different levels. All the requirements, regardless of their analytical category, interact to describe the environment which contains the homestead and the overall settlement pattern. †

To make sense of the environmental requirements, it is necessary to establish how they constitute the whole; in other words, how they fit together. This implies some sort of order according to which they are structured together. The requirements are ordered and presented in a straight linear sequence which derives from the scale of space inherent in the settlement pattern in Ovamboland. (2) The largest scale requirements deal with issues at the level of world view, followed by those at the level of districts and wards; neighbourhoods; farm site; homestead and the smallest scale spaces within the homestead. There is also a category which incorporates those requirements that specify spaces at various scales. (3)

This sequence, by virtue of its reference to scale and the broad range of issues addressed by the requirements, summarizes the essence of settlement and architectural space in terms of the context in which it is produced; thereby making it comprehensible as part of a whole.

The list of requirements was identified by observation, discussions with peasant farmers and officials in Ovamboland, consulting the relevant literature and by on-site measurements and investigations at various homesteads. Each requirement was identified and described to conform as close as was reasonably possible to the following properties: (4)

- 1) To be of equal scope to other requirements in the total set;
- 2) To be as independent of the others as possible;
- 3) To be as small in scope, specific and detailed as possible.

The following is a complete list of all the requirements, graded according to a system of scales, after which there is a detailed description of each.

THE UNIVERSE: Besides being concerned with the practical business of establishing a living by working the lands, tending to the livestock and ordering communal co-operation into beneficial socio-economic relations, people also ask the 'big questions': what is the place of man in the universe; how and by whom was it created; what happens to the souls of the dead; what is the origin of all that is bad and good in this life? The answers to these questions lie in the thoughts and values of the individual and the community by the way in which both are perceived in relation to the universe (Hammond-Tooke 1974 : 318-319). Aspects of this perception or 'world view' are incorporated into a system of beliefs which are expressed by myth and are informative on a wider understanding of the meaning of space. This scale addresses aspects of those beliefs.

- 1 Conceptual space
- 2 Supreme Being
- 3 Shades of the dead
- 4 Ancestral spirits
- 5 Idea of centre

REGION:

Ovamboland. This is largely a colonial concept of territory which has been given formal geographic relevance (5) in terms of political ideology, that ignores patterns of settlement, subsistence and socio-economic structures that flow across boundaries. If any regional scale were to be clarified, then it would of necessity have to include those parts of southern Angola immediately to the north of the Namibia/Angola border where similar language and socio-economic formations interact with a similar physical environment (Urquhart 1963 : 3-128; Estermann 1976 : 51-214; Clarence-Smith 1979). Because of tensions and conflict, it is currently impossible to undertake a proper and detailed enquiry into settlement in southern Angola. Therefore, Ovamboland as a 'region' in terms of the set of scales adopted in this investigation, is irrelevant and it is used as a term of reference only because of the dictates of circumstance.

DISTRICTS AND WARDS: The character of the local environment is ordered by social and political devices which, by common consent, control and encourage co-operation for the good of all. These requirements are generated by 'global' purposes beyond the effective control of individuals.

- 6 Law and order
- 7 System of inheritance
- 8 Dispersed grave sites
- 9 Pattern of residence.

NEIGHBOURHOOD CLUSTERS: Within the community and between farms adjacent to one another, there exists a network of co-operation which deals with socio-economic situations that affect each family unit and which need to be resolved. This usually means setting up work groups within the neighbourhoods.

- 10 Land tenure
- 11 Good social relations
- 12 Taxation
- 13 Sufficient water.

THE FARM: Requirements at this level begin to impinge on the design of settlement space that is within the control of the family. The overall layout of the farm and the homestead as a unit of occupation in relation to it, is affected by these issues.

- 14 Sequential time
- 15 Ecological balance
- 16 Homestead energy
- 17 Transport routes
- 18 First furrow
- 19 Changing homestead site
- 20 Harvesting and threshing.

THE HOMESTEAD: As a complex of huts, shelters, courtyards, passages and palisades, the homestead is arranged to deal with requirements related to outside and inside space. The ultimate form is generated by the interactions between the respective (outside and inside space) specifications.

- 21 Natural vegetation
- 22 Meaningfully ordered environment
- 23 Christianity and marriage
- 24 Marriage costs
- 25 Social rites of transition
- 26 The past
- 27 Plan form
- 28 Circulation pattern
- 29 Kinship grouping
- 30 Meaningful style
- 31 Social rank (status symbols).

HOMESTEAD SEGMENTS: Within the homestead is a scheme of spaces and spatial relations which deal with specific requirements in order to meet the exigencies of day-to-day family interactions. These derive from the roles of individual members of the family, as well as from the dictates of social obligations, household chores and logical planning practice.

- 32 Economic production
- 33 Homestead zones
- 34 Animal husbandry
- 35 Authority of the homestead owner
- 36 Separate hut for the boys
- 37 The creamery
- 38 Socio-economic role of women
- 39 The granary

- 40 Stamping the millet
- 41 Household pantry
- 42 The hearth
- 43 A place for the girls
- 44 Hospitality
- 45 Inner space
- 46 East facing entrance
- 47 Main meeting chamber
- 48 Goods of value
- 49 'Cuca' shop
- 50 Hygiene spaces.

MULTI-SCALE REQUIREMENTS: It is inevitable that because of the nature of the manner in which the requirements were identified, some would ultimately be effective at more than one level of scale. These have been isolated to form an independent set in order to avoid restricting them to the context of one of the levels of scale and consequently misrepresenting them.

- 51 Territorial space
- 52 Migrant labour
- 53 Informal education
- 54 Formal education
- 55 Ritual
- 56 Social rank (historical indicators)
- 57 Respect for the individual.

Endnotes:

- 1 Physical form is closely associated with all aspects of its environment, particularly when the form-maker is its occupant. Therefore understanding the attitudes and values of the designer/occupant is equally important to understanding the environment in which the form is constructed.
- 2 This sequence deliberately attempts to avoid erecting prematurely conceived hierarchical structures or systems which stem from the overserver's own interpretation of culture and, subsequently, space. For example, a structure based upon socio-economic formations cannot be said to be 'natural' or 'true' until properly tested and verified; a task beyond the scope of this investigation. Scale is a property which is common to all form and is thus chosen in the light of this convenience.
- 3 vide inf. This is explained in the list of requirements.
- 4 This derives from the methods used by Alexander, C. (1964) Notes on the Synthesis of Form, p.115. Harvard University Press : Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- 5 In particular, as outlined and recommended in the 'Odendal Report'; Republiek van Suid Afrika (1964) Verslag van die Kommissie van Ondersoek na Aangeleent-hede van Suidwes-Afrika, 1962-63. Staatsdrukker : Pretoria.

CONCEPTUAL SPACE : IDEAS ABOUT THE WORLD

1

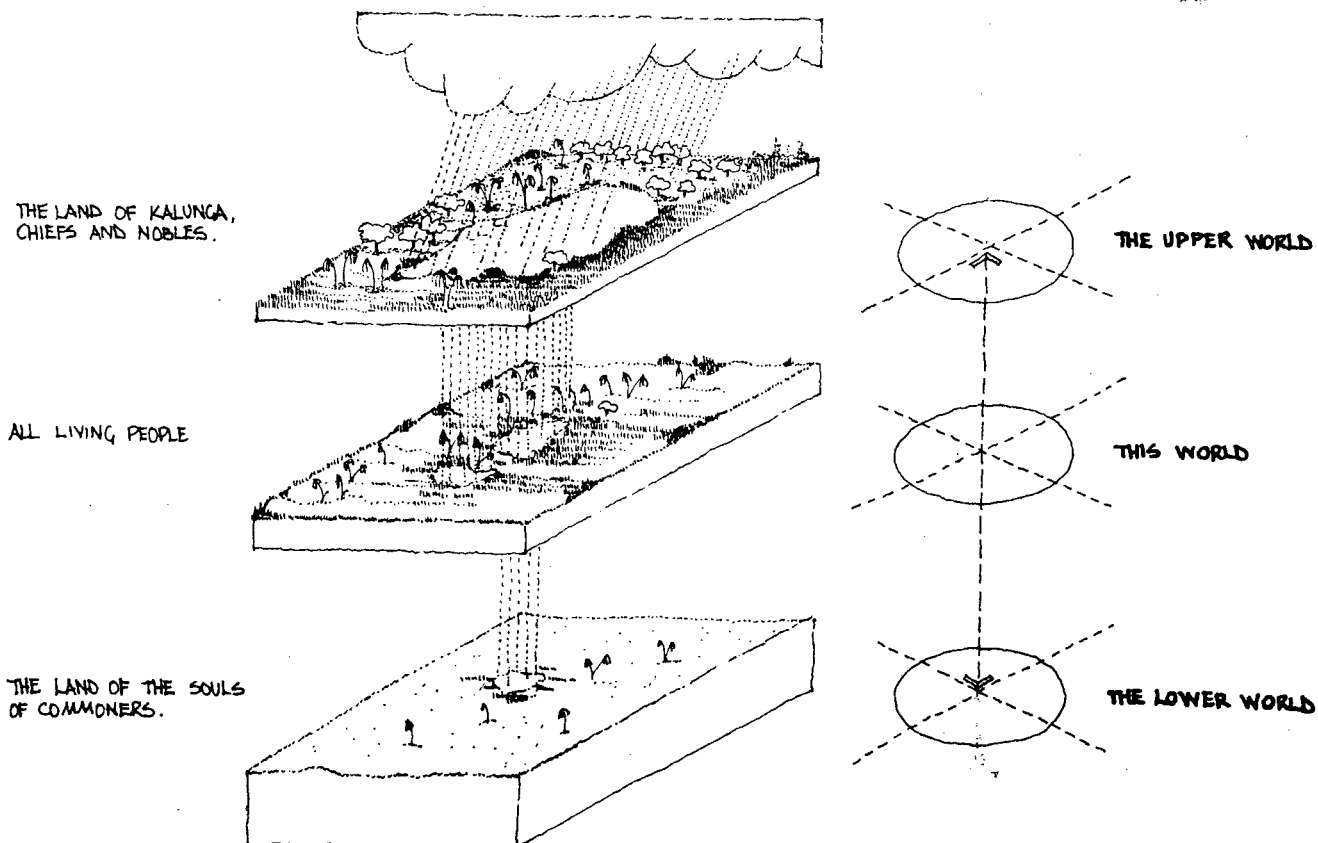
Although Christianity and the work of the mission stations have influenced and diluted, if not eradicated, the importance of traditional religious concepts, such ideas are still very much part of an individual's inheritance. This is probably due mainly to oral reference to the "old ways" of life and an implicit desire not to destroy traditional custom. Also, certain aspects of traditional religion have been "built into" the understanding of Christian concepts which have in some ways "legitimized" the teachings of missionaries. For example, the word Kalunga is used in contemporary Christian literature to denote God.

Central to the way in which the universe is perceived in relation to the individual and his community is the belief in a trinity of worlds; with each of which is associated a set of spatial characteristics. Although this philosophy is essentially place related it refers to conceptual and abstract space pertaining to a social order of which the social formation is a mirror. For instance, the pre-colonial peasant society invested a lot of power and esteem in their kings who were considered noble enough to be associated with another world : closer to Kalunga above who gathered around him "the nobles of the land" (Vedder 1966 : 74). This view also manifested itself spatially in the layout of the kings homesteads which was copied by the commoners. Later, with the dismantling of the independent kingdoms, the chiefs took on a similar significance when they were regarded as the incarnation of the deity (Tötemeyer 1978:9).

The following is a description which outlines the imagery attached to this spatial scheme:

"they believed that there is not only one world, but that there are three. The first is above us and it is pleasant to live there, for droughts and hunger are unknown. It rains quite frequently and sowing and harvesting is unceasing. It is there that Kalunga, the highest divine being, dwells. The nobles of the land gather round him. A man of the people has little prospect of reaching this upper world. The second world is that on which we live. It receives from above just a little of the surplus rain, only that which oozes through and falls on the ground. But still it is sufficient to give man the chance of producing the means of existence in good years and to afford him grazing for his stock. The worst world is the third, which is to be found under the earth. It is only the surplus rainfall of this earth which percolates through to the lower world. The departed souls of the common people are to be found there. They live in poverty and suffer hunger". (Vedder : 1966:74).

The supernatural or spiritual beings connected to this system of ideas have been identified as the Supreme Being, the shades and ancestral spirits (Bruwer 1961:132) to which ritual behaviour is directed in order to give material manifestation to these concepts and which ultimately enrich the meaning of space in the environment.



A SYMBOLIC SCHEME OF SPACE
INDICATES A VERTICAL SCALE.

THE SUPREME BEING : KALUNGA

2

Kalunga is a term denoting a philosophy the basic concept of which is a Supreme Being who, as a spiritual diversity, is the creator of heaven, the earth, the sacred fire and all that is good and therefore has an influence on personal and communal life. The term refers to a sacred idea which Estermann interprets as meaning the "personal intelligent being" (1976:181ff).

Proverbs and songs are used to express the idea of a deity to whom the people call during bad times. Much of the strength of this rests on the credibility and mysterious power with which Kalunga is endowed. There is often reference to chance or fate; a man who escapes injury through luck ascribes it to Kalunga as are incurable diseases such as cancer. Kalunga stays in heaven and all creation stems from his authority. He is remote, has no worship directed at him but sees everything and is all knowing. This is reflected in the proverbs: "the eyes are not hindered by a hedge : Kalunga has nothing hidden from him"; and "Kalunga does not ask for a witness, he sees for himself" (White 1948 : 31). Although he stays above, he sometimes visits this world and praises those who are good and bestows misfortune on evil (Bruwer 1961:132ff). In this sense Kalunga intervenes directly in the lives of people. According to Vedder (1966:74-77) he appears as an old man carrying two baskets. In one hand he carries happiness and good fortune, in the other misfortune. The contents is emptied according to peoples' behaviour and at his discretion. He wanders through the land and distributes blessings and food on the good and famine on the evil. This involvement is however restricted and infrequent as a result of which no active worship is directed at him.

In reality Kalunga is a distant notion which is only consulted during extreme experiences and distressful circumstances. At such times his

truth and power is unleashed and revealed. It is reinforced and expressed in the physical world by the rain (a scarce necessity) and the sacred fire (ediko) both of which ultimately drive from the power of Kalunga.

The traditional meaning of Kalunga has been changed by the Christian churches to denote God. People still refer to Kalunga but this is taken to mean the Christian idea of God. Thus the essence of the idea remains central to peoples lives even though it has been institutionalised and integrated with Christianity which has transformed it from an all embracing philosophy of life to a formally constituted faith.



AN IMAGE OF KALUNGA : AS DEPICTED
IN AN ETCHING BY PENNY MILLER .

SHADES OF THE DEAD : THE SOULS OF MEN

3

The shades represent the ancestral spirits. It is believed that the soul of a man lives in his heart and that when he dies his soul is transformed into wind which is an ancestral spirit. The ancestral spirits have doubles and shades that occasionally appear in the land of the living. Estermann (1976:189-200) and Bruwer (1961:134) note that these shades are of three basic types classified according to the characteristics they exhibit when they appear on earth.

The "oipumbu" are those that can transform themselves into human beings. They visit the living to communicate important messages and omens to the community. Although they are apparitions their forms are real, in particular when they "appear" to an individual.

The "oilubu" is also an apparition but with different functions. They stay in a sacred grove, access to which is forbidden to the ordinary people. The grove is situated close to the place where the traditional chiefs had their residence. Their mission was twofold : they had to inform the people of the future as it affected them and their land. It was also their job to make sure nobody entered the sacred groves (where the chiefs were buried) without authority.

The "ounikifa" are the most feared. These are the spirits that possess special magical powers. They do not enter the homesteads of the living but during the night will randomly attack anyone who leaves the homestead. For this purpose they transform themselves into half human, half dog, the upper part being that of a man and the lower half like a dog. These spirits are the sorcerers of the night world and are believed to make small fires during the night.



OIPUMBU SPIRITS: HUMAN APPEARANCES (PENNY MILLER).



OUNIKIFA SPIRIT: THE MOST FEARED (PENNY MILLER).

ANCESTRAL SPIRITS : THE MEANING OF EAST AND WEST

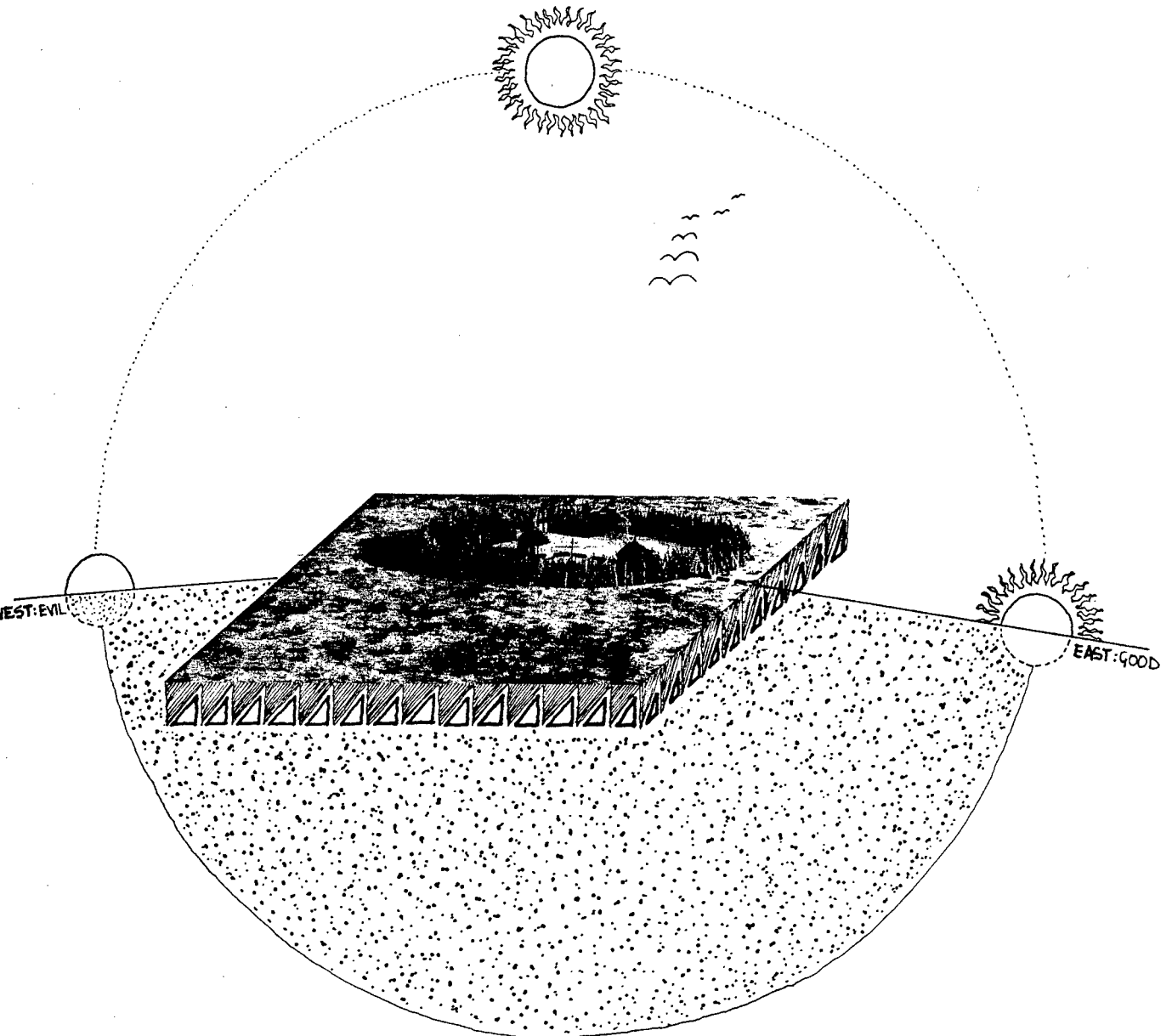
4

Respect for the deceased is an important aspect of life. Traditional religious activity centred around the worship of chiefly and commoner ancestral spirits called ovakwamungu. This established behaviour patterns that are expressed in ritual acts such as the offerings or sacrifices to the spirits. It is believed that by honouring them the spirits would bestow blessings on the people. If they did not then the living descendents were in danger of ill luck and misfortune. The ancestral spirits communicate their desires and wishes by means of omens and disease (Bruwer 1961:134). Animals, reptiles and birds are the carriers of good and bad omens; various species representing particular omens. For instance the hyena, the chameleon and the chicken are the omens of good fortune. Cancer and unhealable sores are believed to be the work of Kalunga and derive directly from him.

Even though the worship of ancestors is not actively practised today the spirits of the departed constitute a presence that although not tangible are nevertheless intimately connected with individuals or the community at large and are very much part of life. The wider historical role of ancestor worship was indirectly to reinforce social structures, such as the maintenance of the kinship system (Clarence-Smith 1979 : 73) and the social pattern that flows from it.

An important distinction is made between good and bad spirits and the places where they stay. Friendly spirits stay in the east and evil spirits in the west. This has a direct bearing on the layout of the homestead and certain sacrificial acts. The main entrance (onu) of the homestead faces the rising sun and consequently all that is good and has life. Also, the dead are buried facing eastwards. Inside the homestead

there is a clear distinction between what is front (east) and back (west) and while this responds to the public and private areas respectively there is no indication that there are "good" or "evil" parts of the homestead plan. Instead the homestead is a 'mediator' between the east and west, since sacrificed food offerings usually porridge, are tossed over the outer stockcades in both directions in order to keep the spirits satisfied.



THE IDEA OF CENTRE : THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SACRED FIRE

The fire is in the centre of the world. It is the most important symbolic and spatial feature which represents the community, the Supreme Being and historically, the chief or king. It is situated in the olupale and surrounded on three sides by log seats.

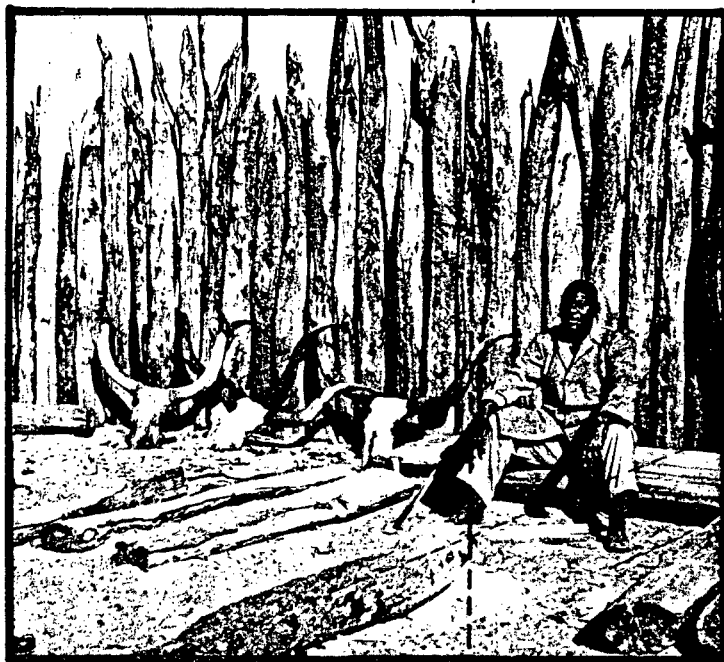
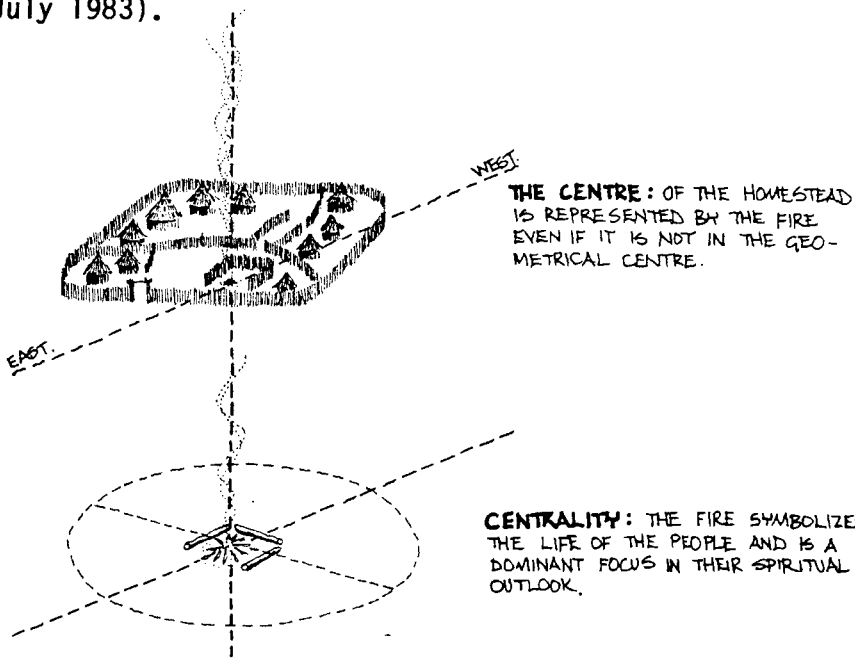
The fire in the main meeting chamber (olupale) is a symbolic reference to the "holy" or sacred fire (ediko) of traditional custom. The rituals with which the fire is connected are rooted in religious concepts related to the Supreme Being, Kalunga. He "lived" in the fire which was therefore never allowed to go out. The main fire was held in the Chief's homestead and maintained by young girls, usually virgins, or the first wife or old men who watched over it continually (Hahn : 1928; Bruwer : 1961 ; Loeb : 1962). Only Mopani logs were used for the fire over which no one was allowed to cook. The middle section of its three-sided seating arrangement always faced east - this was discovered to be the case in most contemporary homesteads (Personal observation : July 1983).

Tötemeyer (1978:8) suggests that the fire was emblematic of the life and death of the chief who in turn symbolized the life of his people. Its safe-keeping was thus important and vital to ensure the well being of all the people. Kalunga, and consequently the sacred fire, formed a dominant focus in the lives of people : it was at the centre of their lives. The importance of this is reflected in the physical position which the fire occupied in the layout of the homestead. It was situated in the innermost part of the layout that ensured its protection.

The fire forms the heart of the homestead, which if not geographically in

the middle nevertheless maintains its position as the "centre" for the homestead and its occupants. Today the fire is put to pragmatic uses. It is lit on most days, its function having being integrated into the daily domestic and general routine work of the homestead. People gather around it for meals or merely for socializing and drinking beer.

The idea of centrality is further reflected in the overall settlement pattern. In many cases, the homestead of the headman is situated in the centre of the district of which he is in control and similarly, the sub-headman is more or less at the centre of his ward. Several informants indicated that their sub-headman was "in the middle" of their ward (Personal observations : July 1983).



THE SACRED FIRE: A HOMESTEAD OWNER IN HIS OLUPALE (PHOTOGRAPH AFTER MALAN 1980:88).

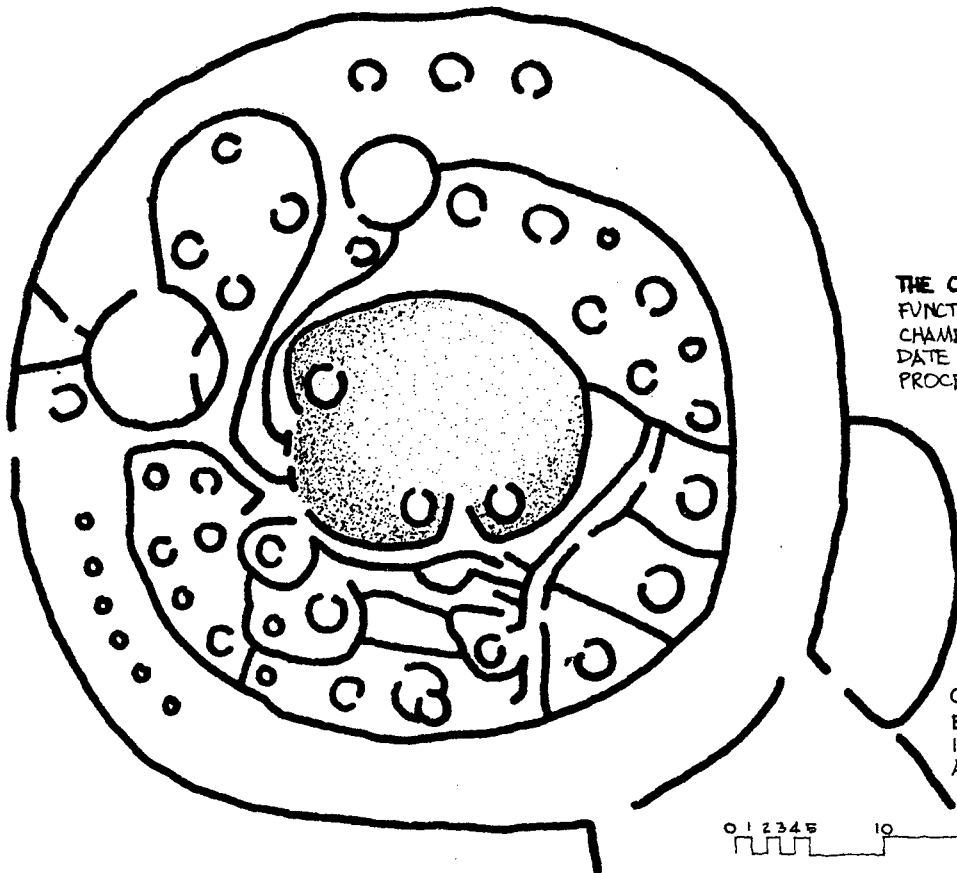
LAW AND ORDER : THE INDIGENOUS JUDICIAL SYSTEM

6

The function of the main meeting chamber is partly derived from the pre-colonial system of justice. There is an unconscious awakening to the requirements of law during socialization. People are thus law-abiding because of their 'legal' obligations towards one another which are shaped and reinforced by various social and political factors; the olupale and in some cases an additional central courtyard serves as a reminder to this system.

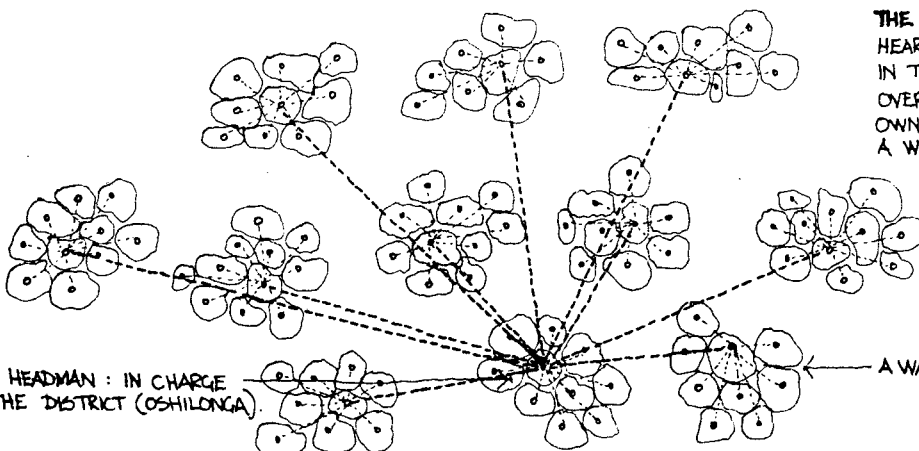
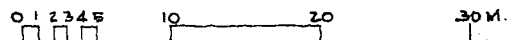
The indigenous judicial system is decentralized in relation to the political order which is physically articulated by the hierarchial structure consisting of districts (oshilongo) and wards (omikunda). Notwithstanding the fact that Roman-Dutch law applies to the whole of Namibia and that Ovamboland was declared a magisterial district in 1920 (Tötemeyer 1978 : 13) it nevertheless still retains the essential elements of its indigenous judicial structure. The lowest court is in the omikunda where a sub-headman presides. Only local matters pertaining to the omikunda and its inhabitants are heard. The senior headman of the oshilongo in which the omikunda falls has to approve of the decisions of the court. The oshilongo court differs slightly from the omikunda courts in that the senior headman presides and hears the cases from the various lower courts in the district. The highest remaining order within the indigenous system is the chiefs court or, where there is no chief, the so-called "tribal" court, which consists of senior headmen and their councillors. This serves as an appeal court as well as for cases which are referred from the lower courts.

The court procedure is direct and informal. The plaintiff and dependent squat on the ground in the middle of a circle formed by the sub-headmen. After arguments have been heard judgement is handed down and penalties prescribed. Usually these are in the form of corporal punishment, fines (cash or cattle) or by means of labour, and vary according to age. Fines are used in favour of the community. Women and children are precluded from attending these hearings.



THE COURTROOM: PART OF THE FUNCTION OF THE MAIN MEETING CHAMBER (OLUPALE) IS TO ACCOMMODATE WARD AND DISTRICT COURT PROCEDURES.

GROUND PLAN OF A HOMESTEAD BUILT FOR THE 1935 EXHIBITION IN WINDHOEK. AFTER LOEB.



THE LEGAL STRUCTURE: SUB-HEADMEN HEAR CASES PERTAINING TO HOMESTEADS IN THEIR WARDS. HEADMEN PRESIDE OVER CASES RELATING TO THEIR OWN WARDS AND THE DISTRICT AS A WHOLE.

THE HEADMAN: IN CHARGE OF THE DISTRICT (OSHILONGA).

A WARD: OMIKUNDA.

SYSTEM OF INHERITANCE : PROPERTY AND RIGHTS

7

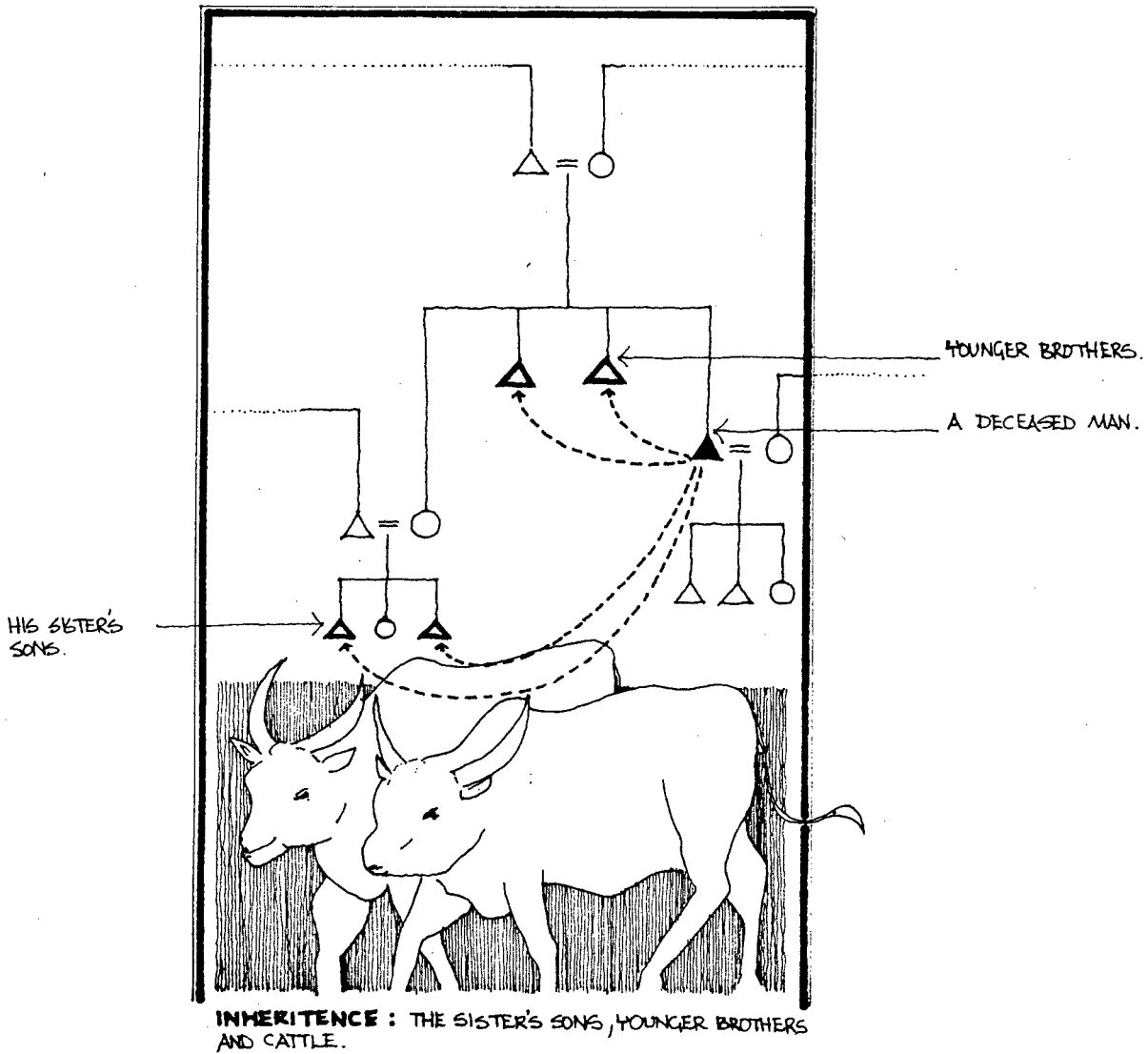
The homestead and farm could be considered to be a 'container' for things accumulated through personal (individual and family) effort and things inherited. The latter forms part of the reciprocity system which places rights and obligations on individuals in society. Briefly this entails the succession of property through the female lineage which stresses the relationship between a man and his sister's son as well as between a mother and her daughter.

Only movable property constitutes an estate that can be inherited. Land belongs to the community at large and is therefore not part of any private estate. When a homestead owner dies his land and homestead reverts back to communal control and can be 'sold' by the ward (omikunda) owner. This is without regard to the amount of effort spent on improvements to the land. Usually the family 're-purchase' the homestead and land by paying in cash or with cattle. In some cases the owner puts aside cattle for this purpose as a form of insurance for his family should he die. Several people indicated that they kept extra cattle at camps close to Oshivelo (Personal discussions : July 1983).

The principles of inheritance are primarily focussed on cattle. The kraal and pastures they use form the spatial referents which symbolize this system. Traditionally, at a man's death his cattle and important possessions were automatically handed down to both his younger brothers and his sister's sons. Thus there existed an effective social mechanism which prevented the establishment of a wealthy elite class.

Personal effects and household utensils belonging to a woman usually go to her daughters. The laws of matrilineal succession traditionally deny

children access to their father's estate. They belong to the clan (epata) of their mother and if a man wishes to make a special gift to his children he must obtain permission from the senior members of his lineage (Malan 1980 : 83). Matrilineal inheritance laws are being challenged by the importance and interests of the individual family unit. This is due partly to current economic pressures which are causing household heads to pass cattle on to their own children : a tendency towards patrilinearity.



DISPERSED GRAVE SITES : A NETWORK OF SMALL COMMUNAL CEMETRIES

Small communal grave sites are dispersed throughout the region in areas set aside exclusively for the purpose.

Families wish to have their relatives buried close to their homesteads and within the territory defined by their omikunda (ward).

The influence of Christianity has had an impact on the form of burial and the attitudes toward the dead in the following ways:-

- 1) The land set aside for grave sites is by mutual agreement between homestead owners in consultation with the churches.
- 2) Funeral rites follow procedures practiced by the churches. However, certain traditional customs still prevail, for instance, all graves face east. They are marked with crosses bearing names, dates and other details.

Functionally, the traditional custom of burying the dead within the homestead served to reinforce the belief that the homestead was a place for the living and the dead. Status, age and sex determined the burial site within the homestead. Still-born babies were buried in places allocated for urinating; young girls were buried in the pounding enclosure (oshini); young boys in the calves kraal (oshinjonga shoutana); men in the kraal for oxen (oshambo jehove); the head of the homestead in the kraal for cows (oshiunda shengobe shakula) and married women near the kitchen (Bruwer 1961 : 125). Ritual and customs surrounding death and burial varied throughout pre-colonial Ovamboland and, according to Hahn (1928 : 33), it was common practice to leave corpses in the

open veld to decompose and be eaten by wild animals. Only those in the higher order of the socio/political hierarchy such as chiefs and headmen were accorded formal burial rights.

Besides the profound influence of Christianity, the custom of burying the dead in the homestead has been abandoned because of the difficulty in moving the homestead to a new site on the farm.



A COMMUNAL GRAVE SITE : OF CLOSE RELATIVES AND NEIGHBOURS. ALL GRAVES ARE EAST FACING.



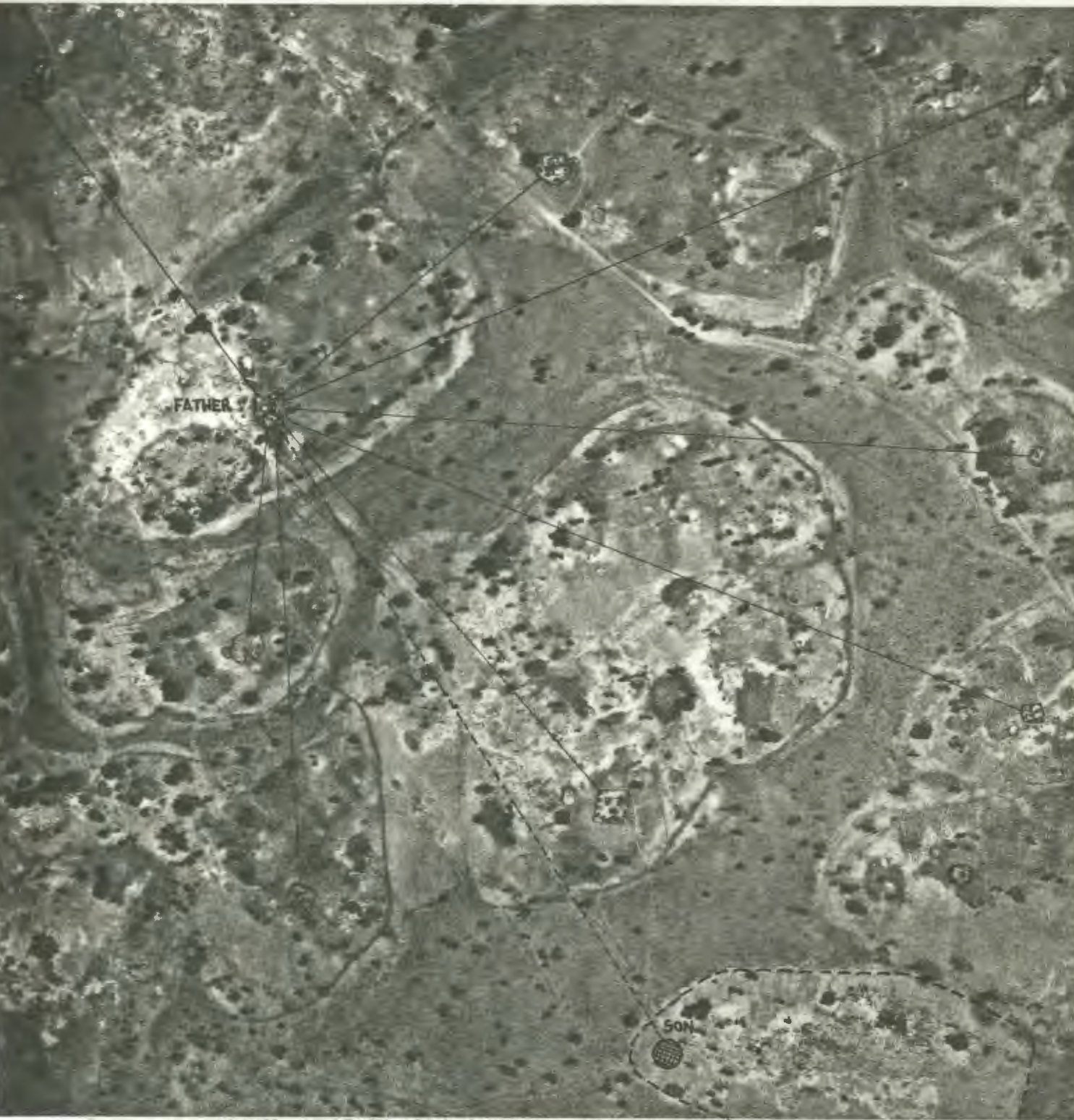
A SINGLE GRAVE SITE : NOT A COMMON FEATURE IN THE SETTLEMENT PATTERN.

PATTERN OF RESIDENCE : A NETWORK OF CONNECTIONS

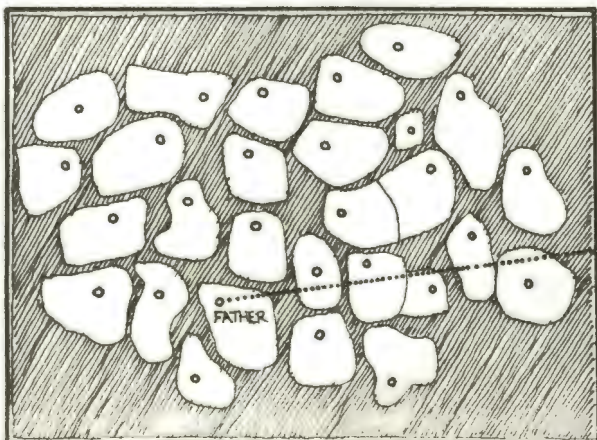
9

According to Bruwer (1961:42ff) there are no kinship, lineal, clan or administrative rules stipulating the places of residence. The guideline governing the distribution of family homesteads is that of neolocal residence. This means that a man does not stay with either his patrilineal or matrilineal relatives but erects his own homestead and establishes a household in a new locality. It also means that clans and lineages are dispersed and cannot lay claim to territory. The rule of neolocal residence does however control the woman as she stays with her husband in his homestead or in his parents homestead until their own home is established. A man may therefore choose to settle in any ward or district; his decision usually governed by the availability of land for agriculture and herding. If it is not available in the area where the relatives stay then it becomes necessary to acquire land from the headman in control of the district in which it is available. There is increasing pressure and demand for agricultural land which is resulting in limited option and choice possibilities (Oshakati/Ongwediva Master Plan Report 1982:111).

A common tendency is for a man to erect his homestead in close proximity to relatives. It also sometimes occurs that children stay in the homestead of their mother's brother; or widows and elderly parents stay with their sons. These tendencies constitute a network of connections between homesteads forming neighbourhood clusters which are interrelated. This pattern is however not governed by formal social rules (Bruwer 1961:42ff; Malan:1980) but is the desired and popular option within the community where this is possible.



PATTERN OF RESIDENCE : THE DESIRED OPTION. A MAN TRIES TO ESTABLISH HIS OWN HOMESTEAD CLOSE TO RELATIVES.



POPULATION DENSITY : IS FORCING YOUNG PEOPLE TO ESTABLISH HOMESTEADS AWAY FROM FAMILIAR SURROUNDINGS AND OFTEN IN WARDS AND DISTRICTS FAR FROM THEIR RELATIVES.

LAND TENURE : THE SOCIAL ROLE OF LAND AND A SPIRIT OF
COMMUNALISM

Individual farm units are grouped together to form a network of small clusters. This is because decentralized clusters are an efficient means of managing and organising publicly owned property.

Land is communally owned which ensures that there is controlled access to it by all who depend on it for the means of production. Besides, it is vital to maintain the interdependence and mutual benefit which co-operation brings with it. Without this attitude to land it is difficult to achieve a cohesive social system which is necessary for that co-operation.

A strong sense of communalism prevails which is ultimately rooted in the idea of common land and social relations both of which are mutually dependent. The rights to land are uniform to society and a privilege to family units and individuals who obtain benefit from improvement to their lands. This sets up mutual responsibilities which unifies and establishes neighbourhoods of farms particularly as the method of administrative and political management is the ward and district system. (Farms are the components of wards which together form a district). This implicitly organises the community into a cohesive whole and de-emphasises the importance of private land. As such private ownership of territory is not necessary as a means of ensuring security of tenure. One is automatically entitled to work the land for the span of one's life at the end of which it reverts back to

communal control to be allocated to someone else. The meaning of land is thus enriched by its continued use by the community ranging from the past into the future.

Its meaning includes all forms of communal benefit. Thus 'private' lands are used by all the cattle from neighbouring farms for grazing and facilities such as water holes for animal and human use are like-wise shared by all. However, the importance of farms of an individual unit of production is maintained : each homestead owner has a life-long use right to the land he works.

The attitude to land plays an effective role in knitting family units together and reinforces the social bonding necessary for healthy communal relations. The idea of common land makes it possible for people to feel comfortable outside their own farms or homesteads and connected to the broader social system. Visits between neighbours occur frequently as do gatherings for beer drinking at 'cuca shops' or in the homestead. Strangers who are passing are made to feel welcome by inviting them for food or a drink or even to stay over if necessary.



A CLUSTERING OF HOMESTEADS IN THE TSANDI DISTRICT ILLUSTRATES A TYPICAL WARD.

climatic seasons, the ecological pattern and the availability of labour has become seriously hampered. The women now have to manage the maintenance and running of the farm and homestead by themselves or by forming work groups. Although the homestead has withstood these pressures its appearance has altered slightly in so far as technology and the availability of building materials are concerned. Sheet metal is becoming a common feature in roof and wall construction and poles for the construction of palisades which are in short supply and are consequently becoming expensive. (See also 'MIGRANT LABOUR').



FARM BOUNDARY : BARBED WIRE AND OTHER INDUSTRIAL MATERIALS ARE BEGINNING TO REPLACE BRUSHWOOD AND STICKS.



HUT CONSTRUCTION : NEW CORRUGATED IRON STYLE OF HUT.

SUFFICIENT WATER : INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNAL POINTS OF SUPPLY

13

It is necessary to ensure an adequate water supply for the homestead and the livestock especially during the dry season.

The annual rainfall of between 400mm and 500mm is prevented from seeping into the saline groundwater by an impervious subsoil layer close to the surface. This means that all the surface water evaporates or filters through the oshona system down to the Etosha Pan leaving very little for the dry months. Therefore each homestead usually has its own source of water. A hole is dug down to the water table which varies from 2m to $\begin{matrix} + \\ - \end{matrix}$ 9m (Personal observations : August 1979 and December 1981). Watering can thus be either shallow ditches or deep wells. In all cases they are protected against animals by some form of fencing mostly bushes or palisades. The animals drink from wooden troughs which are filled by buckets. This is to avoid contamination. Recent drought in the region has caused a drop in the water level which has necessitated government intervention. Large water holes have been excavated within the wards for use by all the homesteads in the vicinity. These are used by animals, for laundry and by the people themselves who are thereby exposed to drinking contaminated water.

An alternative pattern has emerged whereby the neighbourhoods pool their labour and dig a water hole for their collective

use. The position chosen for the water hole is usually at the edge of one of the farms and at the lowest point in relation to the oshonas. Water is drawn up in buckets and stored in whatever containers are available close to the points of use.



COMMUNAL LABOUR

WOMEN AND CHILDREN FROM NEIGHBOURING HOMESTEADS DIGGING A 7m. DEEP WATER HOLE.



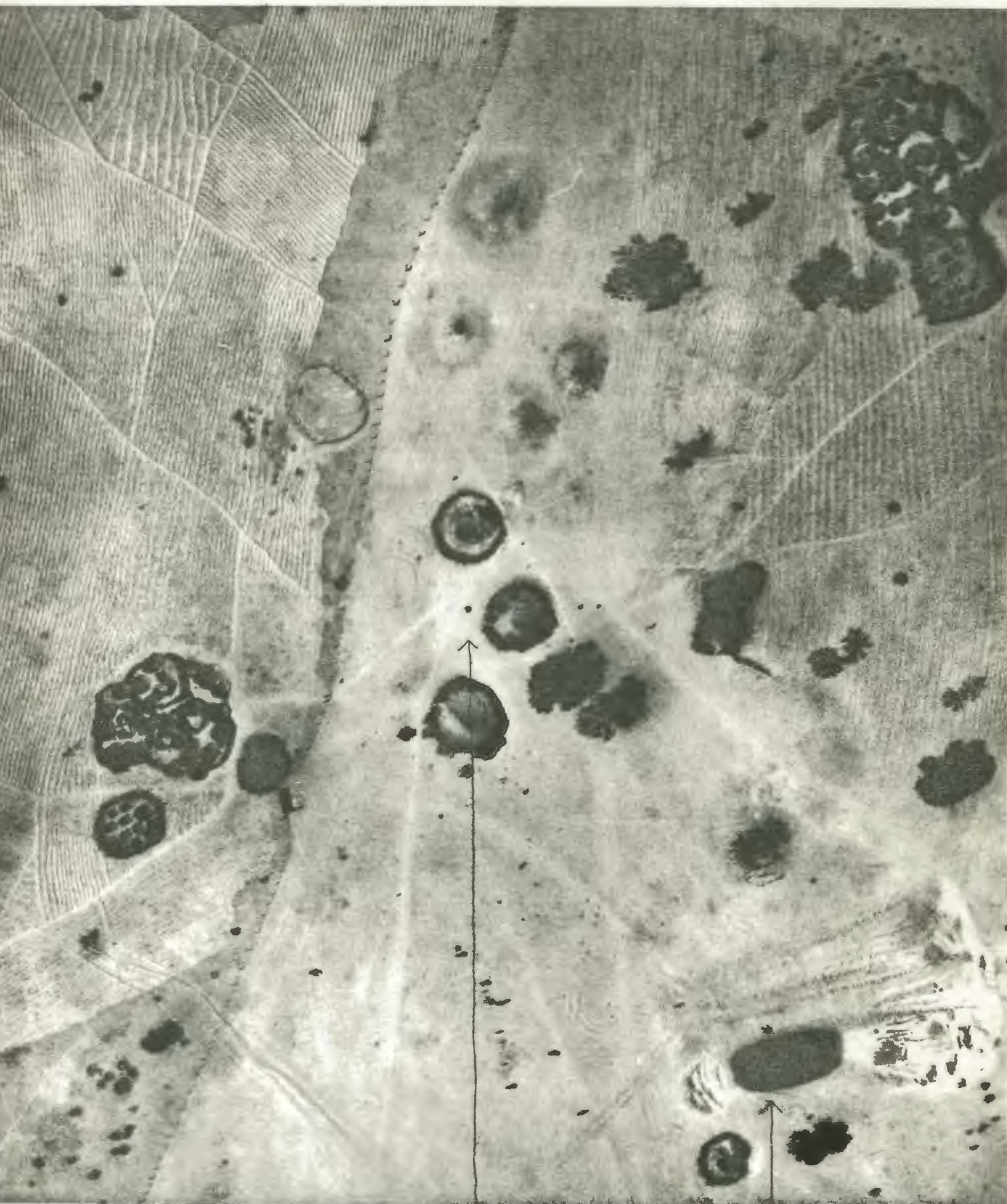
GOVERNMENT WATER HOLE

A PLACE FOR LAUNDRY, HUMAN AND ANIMAL USE.



WATER TROUGHS

HOLLOWED OUT TREE TRUNKS ARE PLACED IN OR NEAR TO ANIMAL ENCLOSURES.



WATER HOLES SHARED BY SEVERAL HOMESTEADS: ONGWEDVA DISTRICT, AUGUST 1981.

WATER HOLES ON AN INDIVIDUAL FARM BUT FOR THE USE BY THE HOMESTEADS IN THE NEARBY VICINITY.

MECHANICALLY DUG WATER HOLE PREPARED BY THE ADMINISTRATION.

SEQUENTIAL TIME : SEASONS, PRODUCTION AND THE HOMESTEAD

14

The pre-colonial concept of time is rooted in several aspects of the physical environment. The sequential nature of the seasons sets up a repetitive cycle which is used as a framework of time into which events are slotted to bring them into relationship with one another. A uniform time standard, for example a chronology did not exist until the introduction of this concept by the colonialists and even then the adoption of this standard has been slow and incomplete until recently (Loeb 1962 : 211) .

A. Short rains : Planting begins.

End November and beginning December

B. Summer, wet season : Planting of millet and sorghum.

Weeding. December, January, February and March

C. Winter : Cool and dry. Harvesting of the crops.

April, May, June, July and August

D. Hot and dry : Women make baskets and pots.

Men repair the huts and homestead. September, October and November

This sequential framework demonstrates an essential feature of peasant society which highlights an attitude towards space which is important when considering the homestead. In an economy of subsistence the central issue is the social and material welfare of the occupants of the homestead and the community at large. The appearance and style of settlement are secondary in relation to the maintenance of the social product. Any attention given to the homestead, its appearance, additional structures and so on can therefore only be accommodated when the mode of production allows it. In this way the prototypical layout and organisation of the homestead has evolved into a unit well suited to its economic and natural environment.

↑
availability
of materials
→ sustainability

Rather than having undergone fundamental physical transformations it has become a flexible vehicle which is able to accommodate new and changing patterns. Its effectiveness in responding to these forces is not so much due to the retention of outward appearances or to the stability of form but rather to its ability to adopt to its context (Marks and Atmore 1980 : 13).



SHORT RAINS

THE PLANTING SEASON BEGINS WITH THE FIRST RAINS AFTER DRY PERIOD.

THE SOIL IS PREPARED FOR CULTIVATION.



RAINY SEASON

PLANTING AND WEEDING

OSHANAS IN FLOOD ARE AN ANNUAL FEATURE OF THE LANDSCAPE IF THERE HAS BEEN SUFFICIENT RAINFALL.



COOL AND DRY

HARVESTING AND THRESHING



HOT AND DRY

A TIME FOR OTHER THINGS INCLUDING HUT AND PALISADE REPAIRS.

MILLET STALKS IN BUNDLES ARE USED TO REPAIR ROOFS AND WALLS.

A BAKKIE LOAD OF POLES FOR USE IN THE PALISADES AND HUTS.

ECOLOGICAL BALANCE : SUBSISTENCE FAMILIES AND AVAILABLE LAND

15

The ratio between homestead (family) size, farm area and land use needs to be well balanced. Subsistence families using traditional technologies rely on adequate land to ensure that sufficient food production takes place.

This balance is becoming increasingly difficult to meet. Population growth is creating more and more demand for land. Family sizes are increasing while farms are shrinking in size. In 1950 farms varied in size from 8,1 ha to 4,1 ha (Loeb 1950 : 53). An average cultivated area of 2,6 ha per family has been estimated for 1980 (Brandt 1980 : 87). This is based on the estimate of 60 000 subsistence families which are dispersed over an area of 5,2 million ha (the area of Ovamboland) of which only 3% (156 000 ha) is under cultivation (Brandt 1980 : 87). This is because of the oshona system and insufficient rainfall in the west. These figures correspond with a sample analysis of a portion of one ward in the Ongwediva district using aerial survey photographs which produces similar results (Personal analysis : November 1981). The production of cereal grains on 2,6 ha yields an average harvest of between 776 kg and 970 kg depending on rainfall. Using the highest estimated average family size of 9,7 persons (Ongwediva/Oshakati Master Plan 1982 : 21) it means that the annual harvest amounts to between 80 kg and 100 kg per capita. On a daily consumption basis this amounts to between 219 grams and 273 grams per day. Millet, the principle crop

provides 341 Cal. per 100 grams (FAO Report : 1968) which means that the 746 Cal. and 930 Cal. it is currently providing is insufficient when compared to the recommended daily intake of 1500 Cal. to 2000 Cal. for a healthy diet. The rest of the calorie intake has to be provided from other sources such as peas, beans, groundnuts, pumpkins, melons, meat and so on. This suggests that in terms of agriculture, the land's production capability using current techniques, is being stretched to its limit.

The other major form of land utilization is stock-keeping. Of the potential pasture area of 4,3 million ha only 3,4 million ha is used mainly because of a lack of suitable surface water (Brandt 1980 : 87). The supply of meat and dairy products appears to be satisfactory. Approximately 15 kg of meat per capita is produced annually (Brandt 1980 : 88) which is sufficient to supplement the shortfall in calorie intake resulting from agriculture. Provided that sufficient watering points can be opened up it is possible to extend the stock-keeping potential of the region by an extra 0,8 million ha of pastures thereby improving food production.



MEAT : 15 KG P.A. PER CAPITA.



GRAINS : 80 KG - 100 KG P.A. PER CAPITA.



HOMESTEAD : AVERAGE FAMILY = 2,7 PERSONS.

HOMESTEAD ENERGY : THE DOMESTIC SYSTEM OF CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

16

It is important that the consumption of energy in the homestead does not exceed the supply of fuel. At a subsistence level all energy requirements have to be satisfied by the local resources. This places a responsibility on each homestead to make efficient expenditure of labour power and appropriate use of available resources.

available resources
energy -
sustainable

The cycle of energy flow in the homestead constitutes a system of consumption and production. Resources are constantly being transformed in the interests of the material, social economic well-being of the inhabitants. The purposes for which energy is utilized are to prepare food, provide warmth and supply light. Wood and cattle dung are the principle natural resources that are used to provide energy. A secondary source, paraffin is sometimes used as a supplementary fuel but this is expensive and out of proportion to the cash income of most peasant farmers. This means that the fuel requirements have to be satisfied by the availability of dung and wood which must be collected from around the homestead. There are ecological problems associated with this. If demand for wood fuel exceeds the growth rate of the vegetation that produces it then deforestation and an eradication of woodland and brushwood cover will occur. If this happens the veld is in danger of being denuded, especially if there is extensive grazing in the area. The alternative to wood fuel is dung, the use of which increases as wood is consumed. When dung is removed from the veld it deprives it of an important source of

Nat. material
use in rural
areas -
disadvantages

fertilizer which consequently impedes natural vegetational growth. Safeguards against this deterioration are the rotation of the position of the kraal from time to time, the use of agricultural lands for grazing and the rapid growing grass cover which characterises the region.

The energy which is provided by dung and wood and consumed by the occupants of the homestead is transformed into labour. The work undertaken by the unit of production (man, wife and children) is directed at the land, livestock and cash economy.

Work on the land includes agricultural production, the collection of wood and dung, the digging of water holes and the erection and maintenance of the homestead. In so far as human comfort is concerned, the construction of the huts and shelters display the characteristics of an architecture that is well integrated with its environment. They are cool in summer and warm in the cool, dry months (Personal observations : December 1981 and July 1983).

The livestock need to be watched constantly in the pastures. They also need to be milked and their enclosures maintained from time to time.

Migrant labour extracts energy from the men. Their wages are used to buy clothing, food, new building materials and for other household outgoings such as taxes and school fees.

Thus, what is produced from the land, livestock and cash economy is in turn consumed by the homestead to be channelled back into the energy system in another form and so on. This

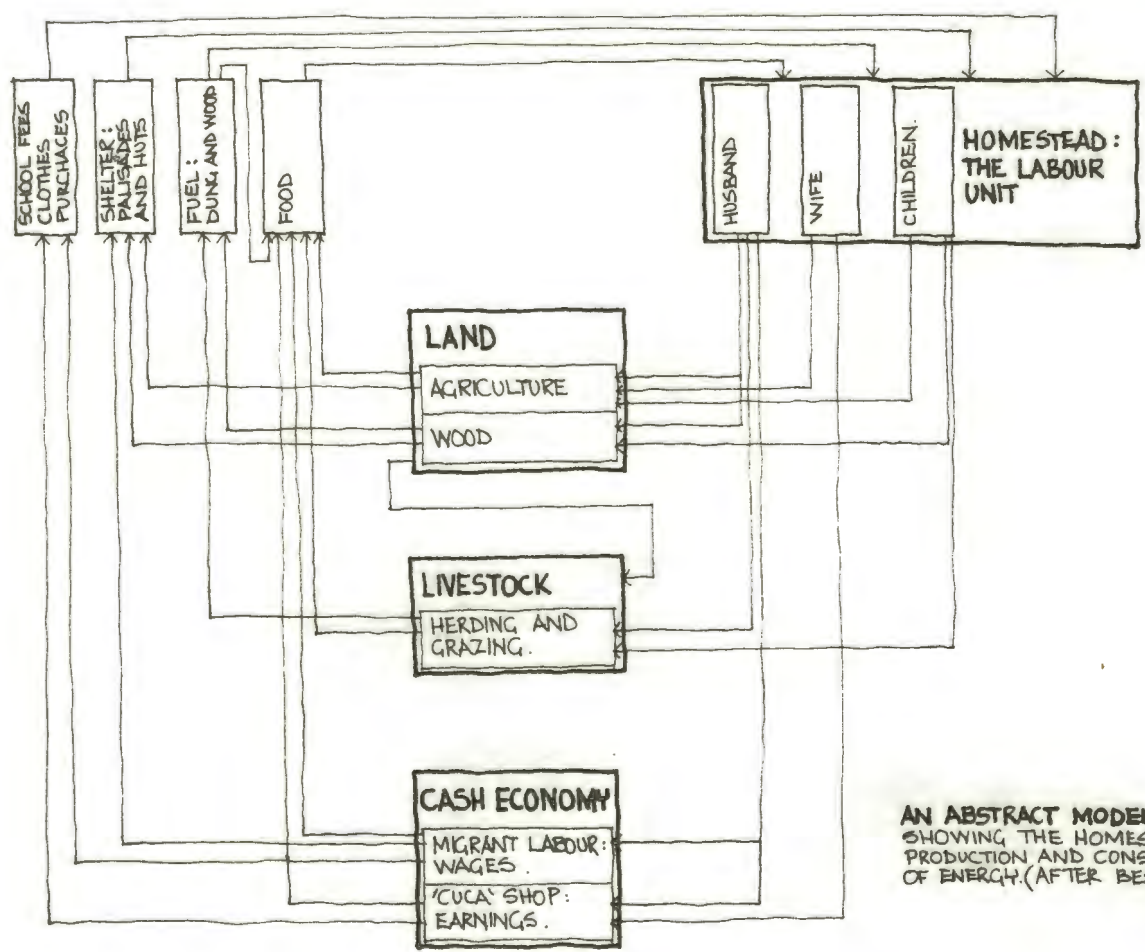
cycle is continuous and dependent on the availability of energy fuels. Population increase and the growing shortage of land pose a serious threat to adequate supplies of fuel and consequently the welfare of the population in Ovamboland as a whole.



COLLECTING DUNG FROM THE PASTURES.



CHOPPING WOOD



AN ABSTRACT MODEL : SHOWING THE HOMESTEAD'S PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION OF ENERGY.(AFTER BEST : 1979).

TRANSPORT ROUTES AND LAND USE : HOMESTEADS AT THE EDGE

The homestead is situated on the farm so that its position disrupts as little agricultural land as possible and is close to transport routes.

The oshona network dictates the available land for economic production and establishes its limits. It is therefore necessary to utilize the land as efficiently as possible while at the same time maintaining easy communication throughout the region and between neighbours.

One of the main characteristics of the overall pattern of settlement is that the individual farms are juxtaposed either directly in a back-to-back situation with a common boundary or indirectly by an oshona. A common feature of both conditions is that each homestead has access to the transport or movement network which is explicit and direct. A general rule for the homestead position is that it should be located towards the periphery or edge of the farm so as to be close to the transport route which is usually in an oshona. If, by locating the homestead too close to the edge, it is in danger of flooding then its locality tends towards the centre of the farm. This is more disruptive of cultivated lands as an access route needs to be taken away from the main route to the homestead. During the rainy season when the oshonas and consequently the main routes are temporarily flooded, the farmers allow their territories to be used for the establishment of pathways between their crops.

The main means of movement is on foot which has relatively little environmental impact. However there is a growing number of bakkies and sedans which are owned by the farmers. Movement patterns are thus being consolidated with frequent and constant use which is tending to establish a hierarchy of routes within the districts.



MAJOR ROUTE

PATHWAY THROUGH THE FIELDS WHICH COULD BE USED BY THE PUBLIC WHEN THE OSHANAS ARE IN FLOOD.

A HOMESTEAD CLOSE TO OSHKUKU.



MINIMAL DISTANCE BETWEEN BOUNDARY AND HOMESTEAD.

HOMESTEAD IN THE ELM DISTRICT.

MAJOR ROUTE THROUGH AN OSHANA.

THE FIRST FURROW : SITE PLANNING AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE
HOMESTEAD

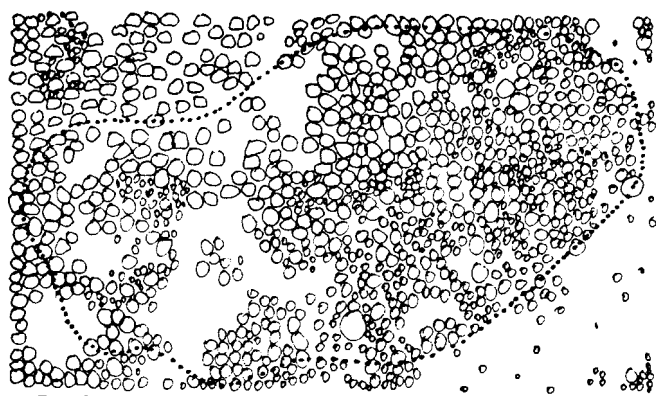
18

The homestead needs to be suitably sited and functionally planned to take into account the socio-economic requirements of the family unit, the neighbourhood and district. It is critical for the well being of all that, in an area with limited material and land resources, the homestead is well integrated with its context.

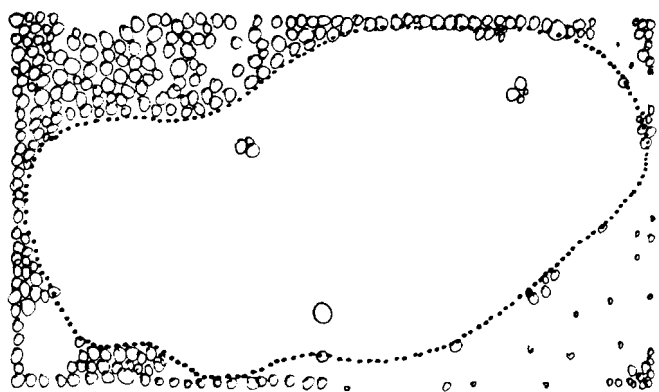
Once the land has been allocated by the sub-headman or headman and the use-rights paid for, the owner sets about planning and establishing his homestead. This procedure may be analyzed into a series of stages through which the owner/builder progresses.

Stage One: If the farm is in wooded territory it has to be cleared to make way for the agricultural fields. This is heavy work and is undertaken by the men who chop most of the trees down which are then used to construct the palisades. If the owner/builder has been allocated land outside his father's ward or district and is unfamiliar with his new surroundings then the labour assistance which he gets from other homesteads is generally the way in which he is socially introduced and integrated into his neighbourhood. The boundaries for the farm are marked by the bushes and small branches that are removed when clearing the land.

Large trees are not removed. The remaining wooded areas are those in the Mbalantu and Kwaluudi regions.

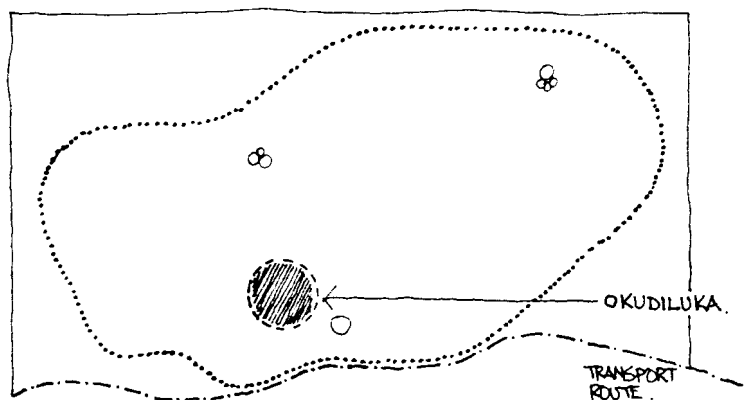
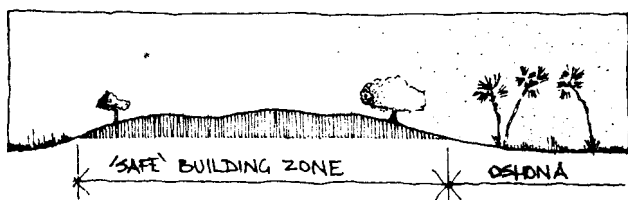


THE FARM SITE IS ALLOCATED.



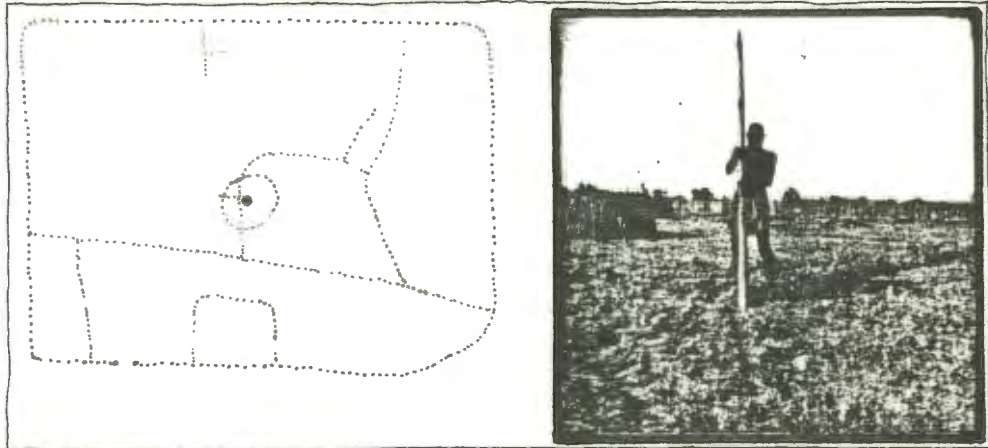
TREES ARE CLEARED AND THE FARM BOUNDARY IS MARKED.

Stage two: The position (okudiluka) for the homestead is chosen on the farm site. It is selected with a view to the closest transport route and is usually located as close to the edge of the farm boundary as possible. Sometimes, if a large tree is suitably placed then this is used as a site to start erecting the homestead. Another important factor is the contour level of the homestead site in relation to the oshonas.



Stage three: The form and layout of the homestead is determined. If a young man is unsure of how to proceed at this stage then he often consults his father or his mother's brother (Personal observation : July 1983). The intended plan is decided upon using personal judgement and knowledge and by considering the requirements of the family. A furrow is dug to mark the limits of the homestead compound. A heavy pole is used for this purpose. Homestead floor areas vary a lot between 550m^2 (a small unit) and 920m^2 (a large

unit). It is not possible to define an average size as there are many variables such as family size, income, number of boarders and so on, which need to be considered (Personal observations and analysis of aerial survey photographs : August, 1981).

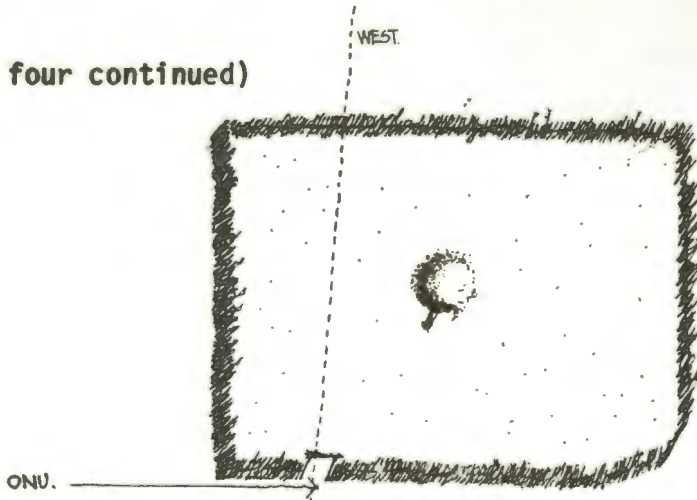


THE FUTURE HOMESTEAD IS CLEARLY ENVISAGED

THE FIRST FURROW: A MAN MARKING THE OUTLINE OF HIS HOMESTEAD.

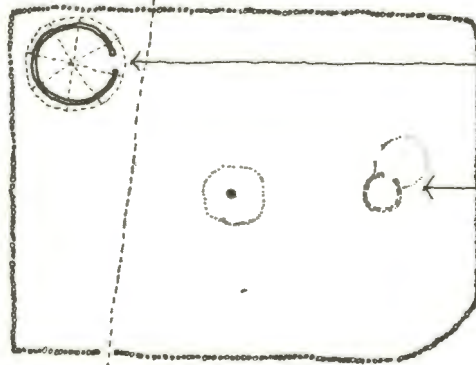
Stage four: The outer palisade for the compound is erected. Poles are normally not shorter than 1,5m and not longer than 2,7m. They are packed tightly together to form a continuous wall which is laterally supported by a beam of the same material which is lashed to the palisade at a constant height. The first element of importance for the rest of the layout is the position of the main entrance. It is constructed while the palisade is being erected and is a major determinant of the plan form which is to follow. The cattle kraal is usually positioned soon after the compound is fixed in space, and erected at the same time. Because of the scarcity of suitable wood, bundles of poles have to be "imported" from the wooded areas in the north west. Current costs are $\text{R}75$ per bundle, which usually means a bakkie load of 100 to 120 poles (Personal discussions and observations : July 1983).

(Stage four continued)



A PALISADE SHOWING THE BEAM FOR LATERAL SUPPORT.

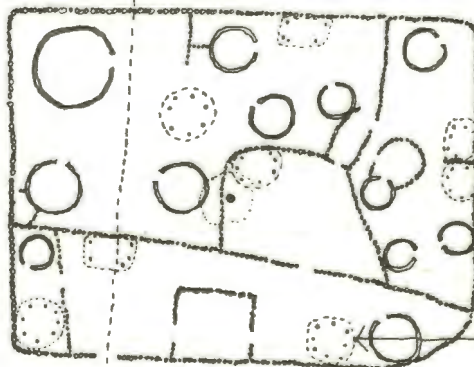
Stage five: The first hut to be constructed is for the wife. Hers occupies space in what will eventually be the most private zone of the homestead. It is thus an important device from which to begin setting out the rest of the homestead.



IF THE NEW HOMESTEAD IS THE RESULT OF A SITE CHANGE FOR AN EXISTING HOUSEHOLD THEN THE WIFE'S HUT IS OF THE SIMPLE RONDVEL TYPE.

FOR A NEWLY MARRIED COUPLE THE WIFE USUALLY OCCUPIES AN ONDUDA SOVAFUKO (HONEY-MOON HUT).

Stage six: The rest of the homestead components, consisting of the huts, shelters, courtyards and passages, are positioned in relation to one another and constructed. Space is always left vacant within the new homestead to take additional structures. Also, the granary is erected with one or two grain baskets with space for later additions.



A COMPLETED HOMESTEAD: CONSTRUCTION PERIODS VARY ACCORDING TO THE AVAILABILITY OF LABOUR. AN AVERAGE HOMESTEAD TAKES BETWEEN TWO AND THREE MONTHS TO COMPLETE.

SHELTER (ETALA).

EAST.

The process of site selection, site planning, homestead design and erection is a carefully controlled and systematically ordered one. In one case a potential builder began by doing a "drawing" of the homestead he was to erect in the dust. There appeared to be a definite plan of action as to who was to construct the homestead, with what assistance and how the components of the plan were going to work in relation to one another (Personal observation : July 1983).



A HOMESTEAD SCHEME : IS CLARIFIED BY A SAND SKETCH

THE CHANGING HOMESTEAD SITE : SOIL FERTILITY AND WHITE ANTS

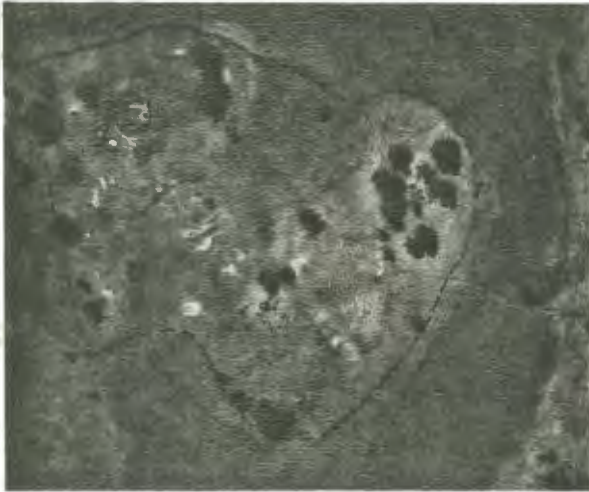
19

The position of the kraal and homestead on the farm is changed from time to time. This is essentially because constant fertilization of the fields is necessary to ensure an adequate production of crops.

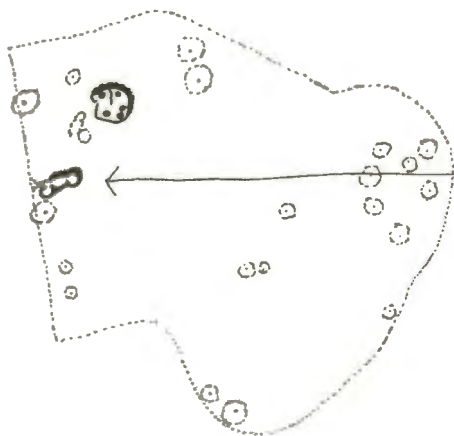
In pre-colonial Ovamboland it was considered taboo to remove dung from the cattle kraal in order to fertilize the fields (Estermann 1976 : 134). Also, termites caused the palisades to rot, necessitating their replacement. This meant that the position of the kraal and consequently the homestead to which it was attached had to be changed periodically so that all the fields could be equally fertilised. Relatively frequent site changes was thus a way of ensuring a long term build up of soil fertility as well as an opportunity for changing the layout and increasing the size of the homestead to suite new needs. Frequency of change varied from three years (Loeb 1948 : 17) to four years (Hahn 1966 : 12) which, in comparison to the contemporary cycle, is very rapid. Several owners indicated that they only considered moving their homesteads every ten years or so while the position of the kraal was changed more frequently (Personal observations and discussions : July 1983). The main reasons for this is that since the homestead has in most cases become detached, it is only the kraal that is moved from time to time. Secondly, palisades are becoming increasingly expensive to replace and thirdly, there is a decrease in the labour power required to do the work. The job of replacing the homestead is that of the men. It has to be done when the economic cycle allows it, which is

*Meat Loaf - Hot Sun
Nights.*

after the harvest and before the rainy season. This means a concentrated effort requiring many hands. An absence of males is thus seriously hampering this process.



**HOMESTEAD IN THE
ONGWEDIVA DISTRICT:
A POSSIBLE SCENARIO OF
CHANGING SITES.**



POSSIBLE SITE CHANGE:
THE KRAAL IS MOVED

KRAAL



HOMESTEAD AND KRAAL

THE FOLLOWING SITE
CHANGE COULD INVOLVE
BOTH THE HOMESTEAD
AND KRAAL.

HARVESTING AND THRESHING : THE WOMEN GET TOGETHER

A threshing floor needs to be provided which is located at the edge of the cultivated fields, not too close to the homestead and situated in an exposed place where there is nothing to impair the flow of wind

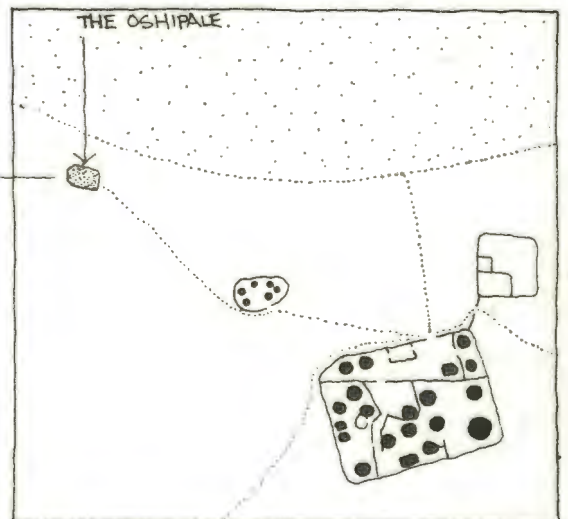
Harvesting and threshing is the job of women and begins every year once the ears of the millet are dry; usually during April or May after the rains have fallen.

Generally the crop is threshed at one time because of the birds and white ants who eat it if left for too long. If the harvest is large, the women from neighbouring homesteads form work parties and use the opportunity for singing, beer drinking and eating.

The men and boys sometimes help to carry the baskets of the ears of grain to the threshing floor (oshipale). It resembles a platform which is often raised slightly above ground level in order to keep sand and debris away. The slight hollow in the ground formed by a dried up water bed is also used for precisely the same reason. The woman form a circle and move constantly around the millet on the floor which they thresh by means of wooden pestles. In all cases the surface is made hard and smooth by smearing it with the clay soils obtained from anthills. It is a favourite place for the boys' bird traps when not in use. A wooden platform is constructed which is used for storing the millet ears so that they can be adequately

dried out before threshing starts. Sometimes the sheet iron roof of a 'cuca shop' is used but mostly specially erected frames are used. Usually, because of size of harvest, more than one frame is required; located at the threshing floor itself for work to be done immediately and at the homestead for longer term storage.

Once the millet ears have been properly threshed the seed is winnowed by throwing it on to a clean spot on the floor so that all the chaff may be blown away. Finally, it is taken to be stored in the granary which is located close to the homestead.



A HOMESTEAD IN THE ONELAGO DISTRICT.



HARVESTING: WOMEN BRINGING THE MILLET TO THE OSHIPALE.

TEMPORARY STORAGE RACK: MILLET IS KEPT ON RACKS PRIOR TO THRESHING. SCARE CROWS OF PLASTIC SHEETING OR CLOTH ARE NECESSARY FOR KEEPING BIRDS AWAY.



THRESHING: THE HEAVY END OF THE PESTLE IS USED FOR THIS PURPOSE.

NATURAL VEGETATION : MATERIALS FOR BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

21

The indigenous vegetation resources are exploited for building huts, shelters, palisades and enclosures.

The flat, sandy land is well covered with grass and trees and although deforestation has caused a scarcity of timber in some parts, there is sufficient which is suitable for construction.

The vegetation pattern is related to the region's soil types which occur throughout the region. It is sub-tropical and has been described by Giess (1971 : 10 - 14) as a combination of mopane savanna, tree savanna and woodland in an area which is devoid of stone. Scattered throughout the region are clusters of makalani palms (Hyphaene benguellensis and Hyphaene ventricosa) which occur on the open flats in the woodland or on the oshonas. The woodlands and tree savannas start immediately on the banks of the oshonas and consist of a wide variety of species. Of these the trees most commonly used for construction are the Pterocarpus angolensis, Burkea africana and Terminalia servicea. Ground cover is dense and consists of brushwood : Bauhinia urbaniana, Grewia spp. and Combretum and a micro-vegetative cover of grasses : Digitaria poleransii, Aristida meridionalis and others (Giess 1971 : 95). The characteristic species of the mopane savanna is the Colophospermum mopane (Giess 1971 : 10) and occurs either as a tree or a shrub. Both variations of this vegetation type are used extensively for building. Among the trees that are common but which are not used for building are the baobabs, marula and wild-fig trees. These are used for their food and alcoholic beverage potential.

available
building
materials

Many parts of Ovamboland have been denuded and brought under cultivation. The areas most untouched and which remain wooded are those in the north west and south east. This means that timber has to be transported, often over great distances, which is becoming expensive.

When tree felling and bush clearing takes place for building then all the material is used for construction. The stems and the tree trunks are stripped of their branches and cut into suitable lengths for erecting palisades and hut walls. Bark is used for tying the saplings together which make the roof frame. Leftover branches and brushwood is used for farm boundary and cattle kraal enclosures. And, grass is used for thatching.



VEGETATION : A BROAD ILLUSTRATION OF TYPES USED FOR BUILDING.

MOPANE SAVANNA,
DENSE WOODLAND
AND TREE SAVANNA
IN THE EENHANA
DISTRICT.



SPARSE TREE SAVANNA
CLOSE TO ONGWEDIVA.



GRASSES AROUND AN
OSHANA DURING THE
RAINY SEASON.



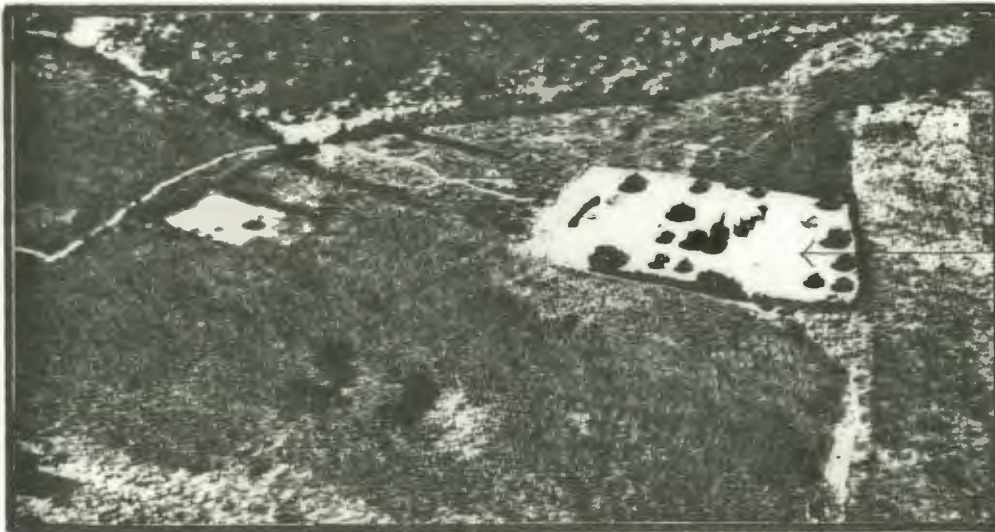
HYPHAENE VENTRICOSA.

The homestead is a conscious and profound act which displays the way in which spatial order is interpreted by society. In other words it is the way in which people take possession of their environment by ordering themselves in space and in a way which provides meaningful orientation and consequently a sense of stability and security. Allied to this sense of order is a feeling of identity in "knowing where you belong"; a universal feature common to most human formations (Prussin 1982:35). The spatial order of the homestead is essentially a function of this attitude of awareness towards the total environment : it is an "island" or rational piece of sophisticated space which is at once meaningful and logical in an "ocean" of nature which is rough and untame. To this end all aspects of habitat-making maintain and reinforce the implicit, that is, unselfconscious sense of spatial logic in the landscape. Part of this logic is extended to include the physical appearance of the homestead which enhances the occupants' rationally and emotionally articulate awareness of cultural status in relation to nature. The aspects of appearance which are explicitly addressed include:-

The overall physical condition of the huts and pallisades. The wooden stakes that have rotted or deteriorated as a result of termites and white ants are replaced. Thatching is trimmed or replaced. Huts which have plastered interiors are touched up where the mud plaster has cracked or peeled off. Generally these tasks are attended to when the seasonal cycle or productive activity allows them to; usually after the grain has been harvested during the hot/dry months of September, October and November or when the men return home from labour contracts.

Horizontal surfaces such as floors in the courtyards are kept clean and neat. Hut floors are stamped hard and made smooth. The surfaces between huts in the courtyards are kept clean of litter and swept regularly, especially around the oshini. Weeding is a constant occupation and only certain plants which are useful such as tobacco and wild fruit are allowed to grow in the homestead. Every homestead digs a garbage pit close by for debris and waste.

All domestic items and artefacts have a place. Nothing is left lying around : kitchen utensils, agricultural implements and the like all belong somewhere and are stored in huts or on the racks constructed for the purpose. Beer goblets and eating bowls for example are hung off hooks and racks close to the point of use or in the hut of the individual concerned.



NATURE : CULTURE

THE COMPOUND ESTABLISHES SPACE THAT IS SOCIALLY MEANINGFUL AND LOGICAL IN AN UNTAME ENVIRONMENT.



ORDERED SPACE

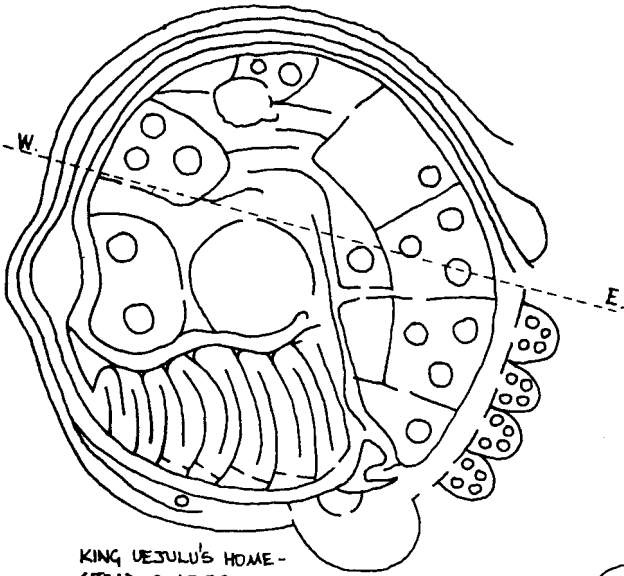
CERTAIN PLANTS ARE PERMITTED TO GROW.

COURTYARDS ARE KEPT CLEAN AND ARE SWEEPED FREQUENTLY.

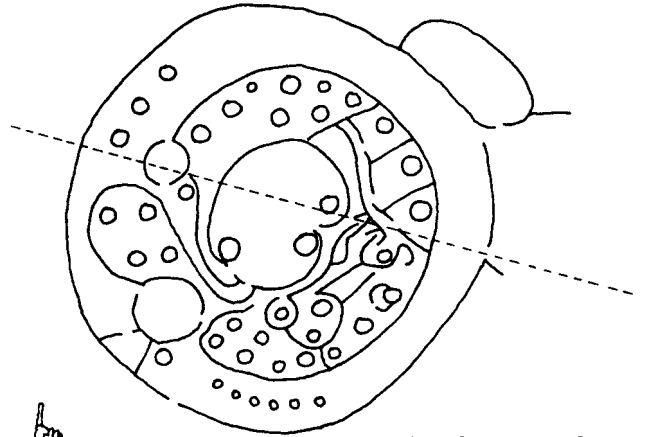
The stability of life was challenged by contact with the Europeans in the nineteenth century which was to initiate major social, economic and political transformations, one of the consequences of which was a change in the size and complexity of the homestead. The idea of Christianity first appeared with the arrival of the various missionaries beginning with the Rhenish Mission (C. 1870) who urged the population to reject their own view of the world. After the colonial conquest of Namibia in 1915-17 there followed a widespread increase in conversions to Christianity, particularly in the densely populated areas such as Ovamboland (Clarence-Smith and Moorsom 1977:108). One of the most important changes to have been brought on had to do with the laws governing marriage, in particular the eradication of the custom of polygynous union. Missionaries taught that the ideal form of marriage was that ratified by the Christian faith and which devalued the meaning of polygyny. Not all the Christian denominations presented the same attitude towards polygyny; the views ranging from total intolerance to the acceptance of polygynous unions in some cases (Tuupainen : 1970 103-108). Most marriages, if not all, are solemnized by the church today as the majority of the population has been converted to one or other Christian denomination (Personal communications with Father Mwaetako, Anglican Diocese of Namibia : July 1983).

A comparison between homestead plans of a polygynous and monogynous household illustrates the effect of the new religious order. The active promotion of the Christian marriage has reduced the number of wives in the household and consequently the complexity and size of the homestead has diminished. This characteristic is widespread even amongst the elders of the community who retain much of the old way of life and yet are staunch Christians who believe in monogamy. If their homesteads are

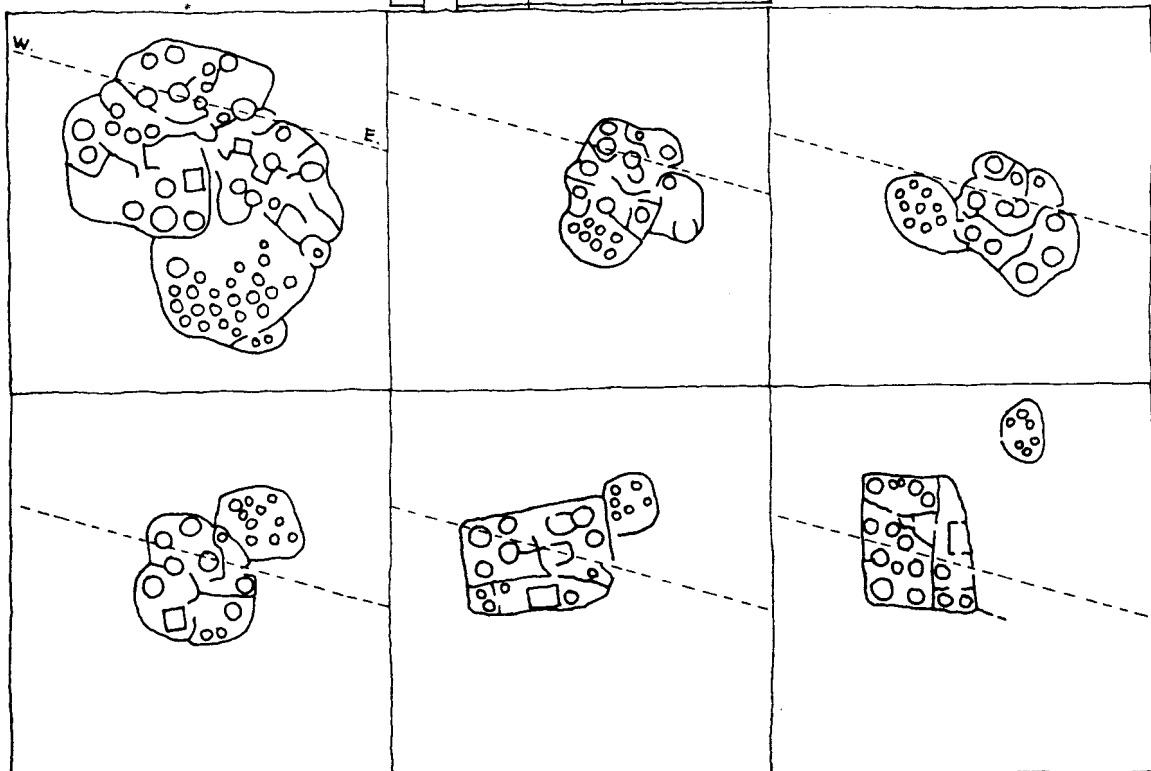
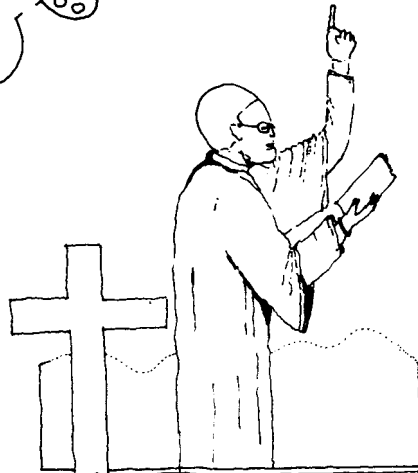
complex and large and reflect polygynous layouts it is because they are keepers of sisters and daughters and their children whose husbands or fathers are absent.



KING UEZULU'S HOME-STEAD C. 1900



TYPICAL HOMESTEAD C. 1935.



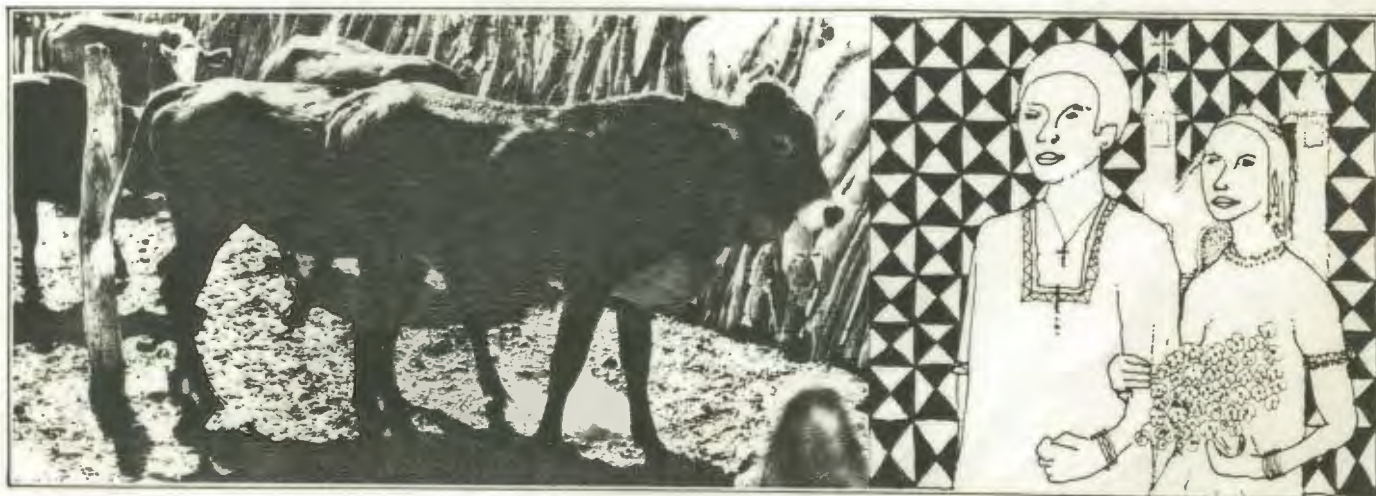
THE INFLUENCE OF FORMAL RELIGION: TYPICAL HOMESTEADS FROM SEVERAL DISTRICTS IN OVAMBO LAND, 1983.

MARRIAGE COSTS : CATTLE OR SUBSTITUTES IN CASH OR KIND

24

Although marriage ceremonies (ehombolo) take place in the churches it is nevertheless obligatory for the husband to give to his father-in-law some form of payment which validates the marriage. This form of payment is called ojonda and usually takes place prior to the ceremony so that the union may be consummated. According to Bruwer (1961 : 122) this does not imply that the husband, by handing over items of value, is entitled to any specific rights other than the privilege of matrimony and the consequential right to remove the daughter from the father's homestead. It is not considered to be a 'bride-price' or 'lobola' in the sense it is practised by patrilineal social formations elsewhere (Tuupainen 1970 : 153). In other words, one does not exchange goods for exclusive rights over another person : it is not a form of 'trading' or 'sale'.

The marriage costs vary. Before the introduction of the money economy, an ox and several cows would be sufficient. Today it is common practice to substitute these with cash. The beasts are converted into their cash equivalents : cattle vary between R75 to R150 per head depending on size, condition and age. Many husbands-to-be and future Fathers-in-law preferred the form of payment to be cash (Personal observations : July 1983). Goats and sometimes horses are also used as substitutes for cattle (Tuupainen 1970 : 153).



SOCIAL RITES OF TRANSITION : BOUNDARIES IN TIME AND SPATIAL REFERENTS

As far as can be ascertained transition rites are no longer a regular feature of life (Discussion with Father Mwaetako, Anglican Diocese of Namibia : July 1983). Socially, they performed an important function. They were used as landmarks in time which celebrated the passage of an individual from one age or status to another (Loeb 1948 : 23ff). They therefore emphasised different stages of life and clarified the appropriate social behaviour which was expected at each stage. Transition rites thus formed social boundaries between the different social realms with which each chronological phase of life was associated. Besides having a different social status each phase was also attached to a different aspect of economic activity within the homestead which placed certain obligations on the individual. It is not necessary to elaborate on the rites themselves but rather to list them as they occur in chronological order together with the appropriate socio-economic behaviour and the spatial referents to which each is connected. The following list and sequence is based on the observations of Estermann (1976 : 58 - 149) and Loeb (1948 : 16 - 28 and 71 -81).

- I. Pregnancy and birth: Eight days after the birth the mother is cleansed with cornmeal in her hut or at the threshold of the hut. She then returns to the fields to continue her work.



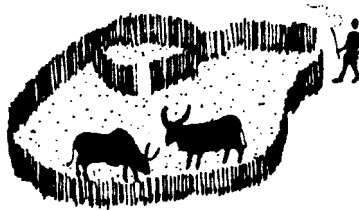
- II. Twelve years old: Boys and girls have their two lower incisors removed at the ekulo ceremony; from then onwards they are considered to be youths. The girls participate in the

homestead, the boys start taking responsibility with stock-keeping and the kraal.



III. Boys circumcision:

After this they have access to the etanda or assemblage of men. Added responsibilities for the herd and kraal.

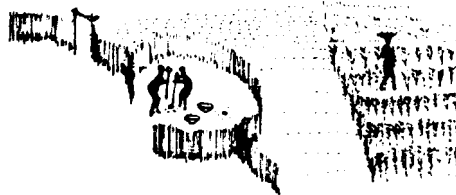


IV. Courtship:

Boys and girls begin to meet socially with a view to a future relationship. A period of preparation for marriage : the epata (girls) and kraal (boys).

V. Girls puberty ceremony:

A four-day efundala ceremony at the homestead and one month as "ash girls" running about the neighbourhood. Preparation for womanhood and future activities in the homestead, in particular the oshini, and agricultural fields.



VI. Marriage:

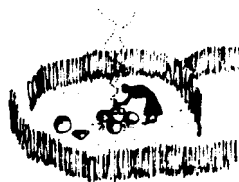
This usually takes place shortly after the period the woman have spent as "ash girls". The husband presents an ox and cattle to the bride's father. His new wife stays in the

"honeymoon" hut : onduda jovafuko.



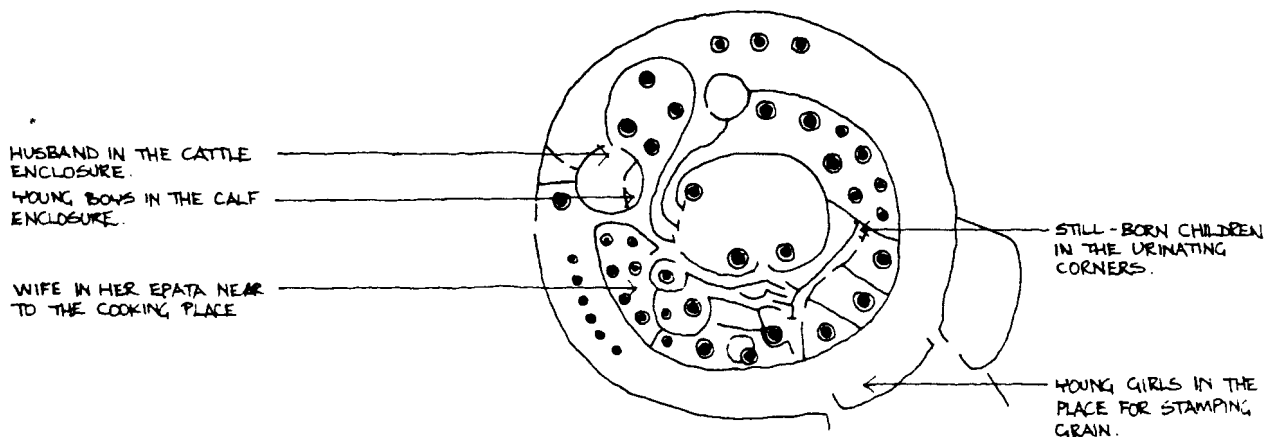
VII. Second Marriage ceremony:

At the ehombolo marriage, the husband presents his wife with three cooking "stones" which are usually made of clay. She uses these in the cooking place in her epata.



VIII. Death and burial:

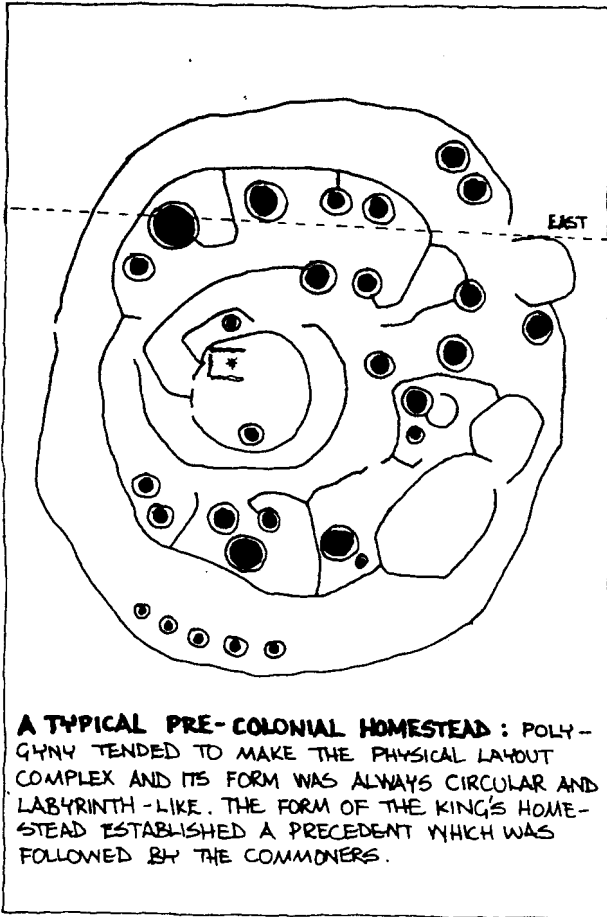
Age, sex and status determine the place of burial. Homestead owners, chiefs, women, boys and girls are buried in different parts of the homestead and kraal.



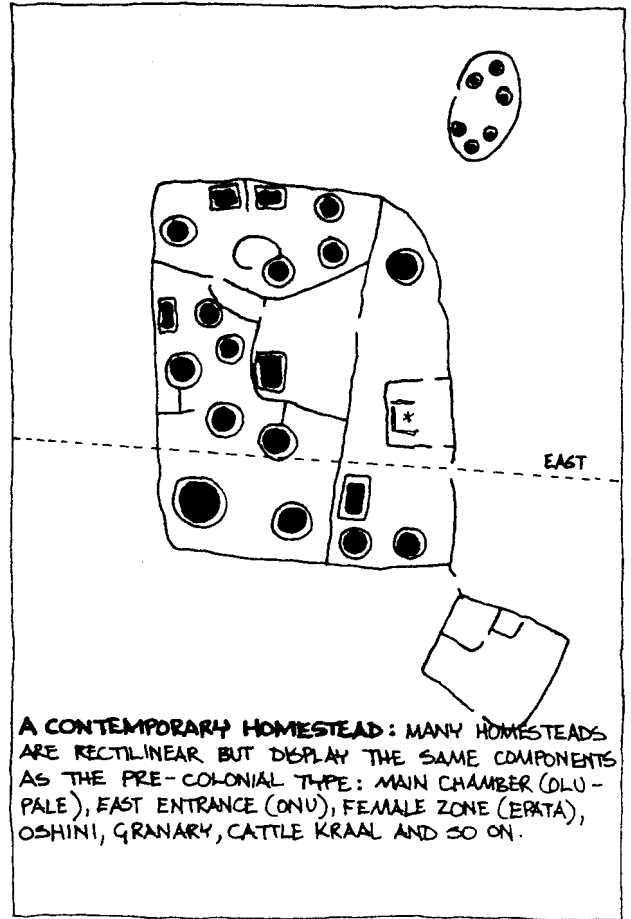
"The spatial patterns that are observed in culture and in social action are not arbitrary patterns : They are conditioned by historical antecedents and motivated by political and social contingencies" (Thornton 1980 : 25).

Although there has been much intervention in the society as a whole by 'western' concepts of modernization it is nevertheless clear that structural similarities between the spatial patterns of the past and the present do exist. Aspects of the old way of life bear a direct relationship with ideas about the structure and order of settlement. What has been inherited is a system of ideas about the pattern of space in the form of a plan. This spatial scheme, as a vehicle whereby social relations are articulated, has by comparison with earlier accounts, remained fairly constant. There is no evidence to suggest that contemporary pressures such as a shortage of mopani sticks or the desire to own a "cuca shop" at the homestead have had any great impact on the structure of spatial relations within the homestead. An illustration of this is that in some cases the geometry of the plan is more rectilinear : a more stylistic modification of the circular form.

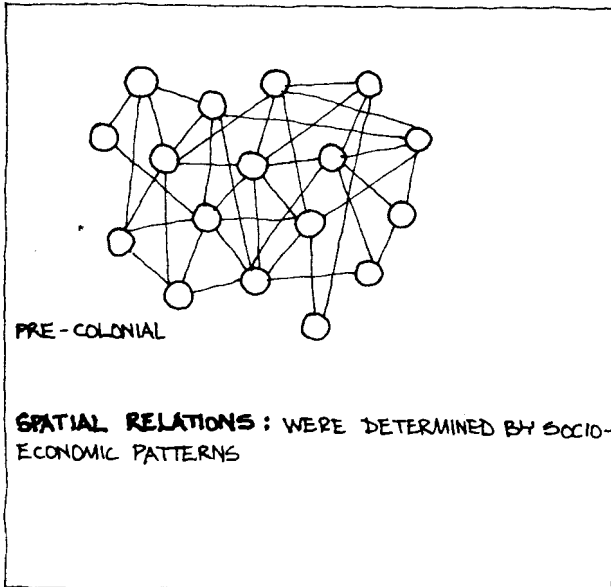
The changes that have taken place have been more at the level of appearances than with the actual meaning of spaces within the homestead; that is, their value has remained while the function has changed. For instance, the main meeting chamber with its fire is retained even though the actual worship of ancestors associated with a sacred fire no longer occurs. Nevertheless the space is charged with meaning and actively used as an important social feature of the homestead : a symbolic spatial reference to the past. The same symbolism would apply to aspects of style and technology such as the main entrance archway and the use of thresholds although these serve practical needs as well.



A TYPICAL PRE-COLONIAL HOMESTEAD: POLY-GYNY TENDED TO MAKE THE PHYSICAL LAYOUT COMPLEX AND ITS FORM WAS ALWAYS CIRCULAR AND LABYRINTH-LIKE. THE FORM OF THE KING'S HOMESTEAD ESTABLISHED A PRECEDENT WHICH WAS FOLLOWED BY THE COMMONERS.

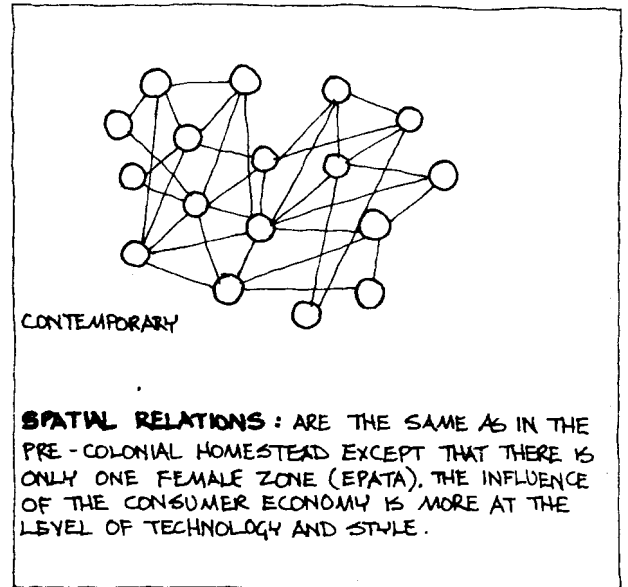


A CONTEMPORARY HOMESTEAD: MANY HOMESTEADS ARE RECTILINEAR BUT DISPLAY THE SAME COMPONENTS AS THE PRE-COLONIAL TYPE: MAIN CHAMBER (OLU-PALE), EAST ENTRANCE (ONU), FEMALE ZONE (EPATA), OSHINI, GRANARY, CATTLE KRAAL AND SO ON.



PRE-COLONIAL

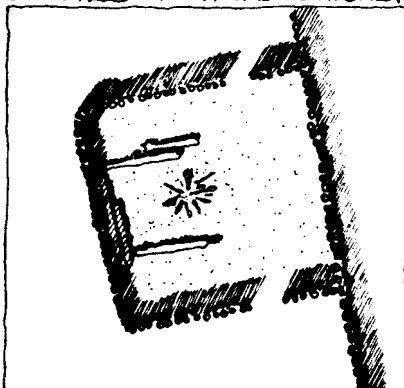
SPATIAL RELATIONS: WERE DETERMINED BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC PATTERNS



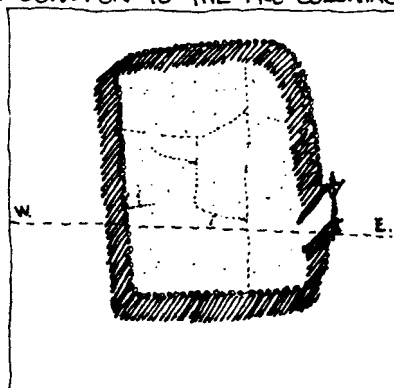
CONTEMPORARY

SPATIAL RELATIONS: ARE THE SAME AS IN THE PRE-COLONIAL HOMESTEAD EXCEPT THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE FEMALE ZONE (EPATA). THE INFLUENCE OF THE CONSUMER ECONOMY IS MORE AT THE LEVEL OF TECHNOLOGY AND STYLE.

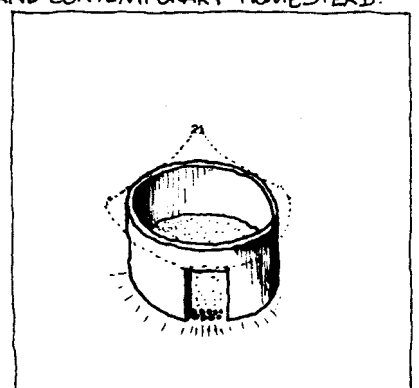
EXAMPLES OF SPATIAL COMPONENTS COMMON TO THE PRE-COLONIAL AND CONTEMPORARY HOMESTEAD.



THE OLU-PALE: CONTAINS THE 'SACRED' FIRE (EDIKO) AND THE HORNS OF CATTLE.



THE ONU: FACES EAST AND IS MADE OF A FRAME.



THRESHOLD: BOTTLES, TIMBER BEAMS, ETC. SERVE PRACTICAL FUNCTIONS.

PLAN FORM : THE KING, REGICIDE AND THE LABYRINTH

"...the king's kraal was a labyrinth with many blind passages and pitfalls. In imitation the lesser kraals were constructed in a similar manner". (Walton 1956 : 155).

"The plan of all the Ovambo houses is intricate, but (king) Nangoro's was a perfect labyrinth, and I could never find my way about it"... and, "I tried to sketch out the plans several times, but my head would never take it in." (Galton, 1851 in Pritchard 1915 : 8).

Until detailed archaeological site investigations have been done, the origin of the plan of the homestead can only be speculated on. One such hypothesis is that the layout has its origin as an internal defence mechanism against the practice of regicide during the time when the region consisted of independent kingdoms (Walton 1956 : 155ff; Loeb 1950 : 54). Most of the Ovambo social formations fell under the control of one of the kings who ruled the area before the European conquest (Clarence-Smith and Moorsom 1977 : 98).

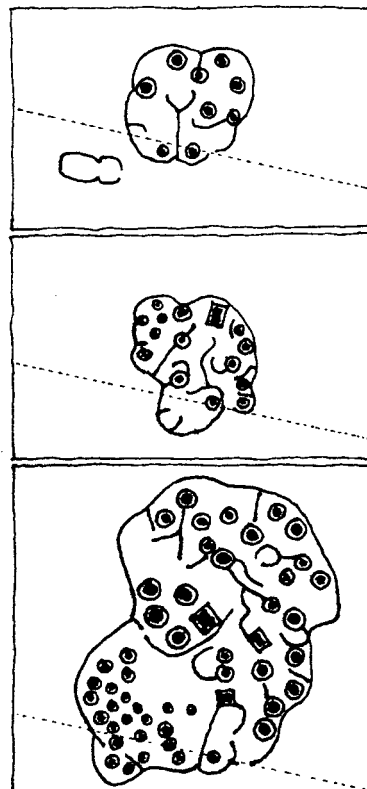
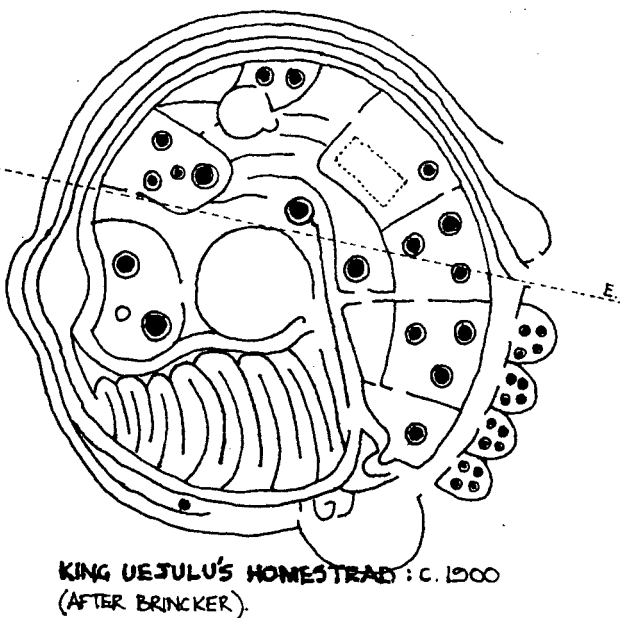
The well-being of the people rested on the health of the king who was considered to be a physical embodiment of Kalunga. Because the welfare of the land depended on the king it was considered unwise to allow him to grow old, frail or sick. If he became sick or it was thought that he might become sick he ran the risk of being killed by the heirs to his throne; usually his sister's sons or his younger brother. These people were not allowed access into the private zones of the homestead, for the person who killed the king would himself become ruler. One way of confusing any assassin would be to construct the homestead in such a way as to deliberately create a sense of disorientation: thus the establishment of a complex network of passages and compartments. Also, the practice of moving the homestead site on the farm meant that the design could be completely changed from time to time. The internal

Layout was adjusted more frequently for the same purpose; as it became necessary to add a hut or courtyard so the internal layout would also have to alter.

Respect for the king was ultimately reflected in the layout of the commoners' homesteads. Each homestead attempted to copy the king's "palace" and consisted of the same elements:

central courtyard, female zones, sacred fire, east facing entrance, winding passages and so on.

A current feature of the plan is that its geometry is generally of two types : circular and rectilinear and that variations of each type tend to occur in clusters or zones. That is, there are zones consisting generally only of one plan type. However, none of these zones appears to be "pure", for instance in an area generally characterized by one plan form say, the circular type, there is usually one or more rectilinear types in the vicinity (Personal observation : July 1983). This pattern suggests that the notion of "copying" a layout, probably that of the headman or sub-headman in the ward or district, could possibly still be practised.



A SELECTION OF
HOMESTEAD PLANS:
OSHAKATI AREA (1983).

0 5 10 20 30 m.

CIRCULATION PATTERN : A HIERARCHY OF PASSAGES

The various compartments and courtyards of the homestead need to be linked together by a network of passages which are structured according to the following broad principles:

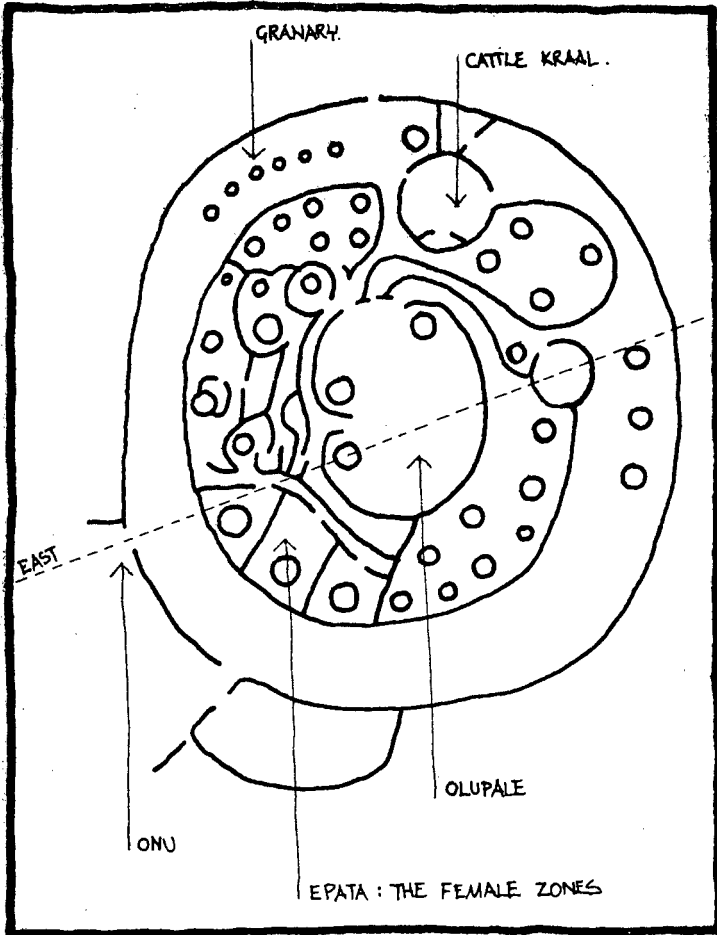
- 1) a dominant direction
- 2) different scales and a hierarchy of routes
- 3) and the properties of origin and end of route

Because of the relations between the zones, the overall layout of the homestead tends to be complex. Not only functional aspects but also symbolic issues are used, mostly implicitly, to specify the spatial pattern within the homestead.

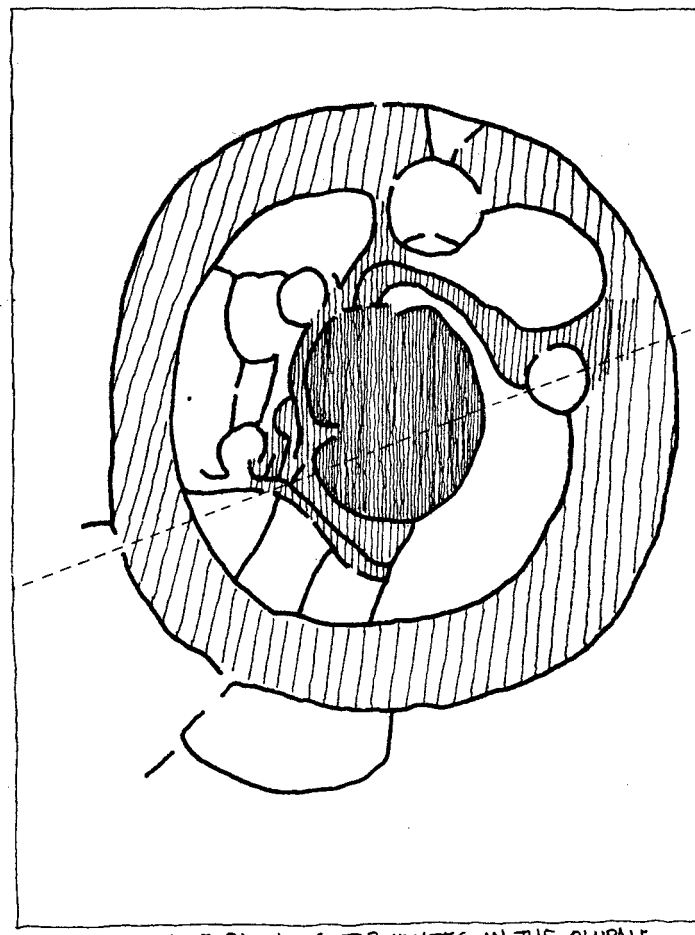
The nature of the homestead layout specifies a circulation system that is, for the occupants at least, legible and comprehensible. In all cases of homestead plans, both historical and contemporary, there is always one circulatory passage which moves in a dominant direction. Depending on where the entrance (onu) is in relation to the homestead scheme the route will extend in a direction which connects to the most amount of compartments and courtyards. In contemporary case studies (illustrated in this report) the dominant direction was always to the right hand side when approaching the entrance from the east. There is no evidence to support this as a "rule" in homestead planning except to postulate that if this is the case then it might be related to the aspect of the symbolic scale of the conceptual diagram which deals with women and agriculture : the role of women is directly related to the homestead and in the olupale the main wife is seated on the right hand side of the homestead owner (Loeb 1962 : 337).

Perception is confused by the often maze-like quality of the network of passages. In order to clarify the situation in relation to the rest of the homestead, the passages, which are constructed of wooden stockades, are built with varying widths. This establishes a scale whereby the longer passages are wider than the shorter ones. It is necessary to do this when the poles used for construction are of a standard height, between two and three metres, and are not cut for fear of wastage. The widest passage in a typical pre-colonial homestead was the main entrance passage (omukala oukonu) in which various activities took place : the boys' sleeping huts, stamping floor, granaries and so on (Loeb 1962 : 336). From this passage led the narrower passageways to the various wives' epata (female zones). Given the economic status and independence attached to the wives the wide outer passage allowed them a measure of relative privacy in an otherwise public setting. The contemporary monogamous household has no social need for this device which would also be expensive to erect and maintain.

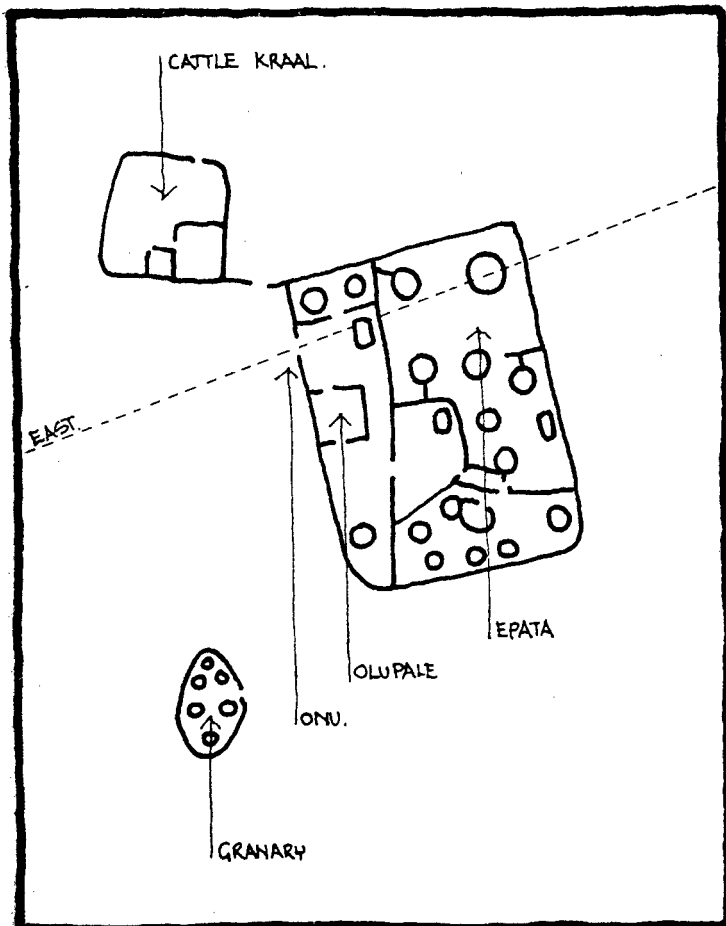
The main route through the homestead starts at the entrance (onu) and ends at the most private part, usually the female zone. Previous layouts indicate that the Olupale was the usual destination. On its way it connects to all the other smaller passages and compartments. The labyrinthine quality which these passages often exhibit is a historically inherited device which did two things. Firstly, in the pre-colonial kingdoms when regicide was practised, the passages were deliberately constructed to confuse the potential heir and murderer (Loeb 1950:54). Secondly, unwanted spirits would be led astray and prevented from entering the homestead by the winding passages.



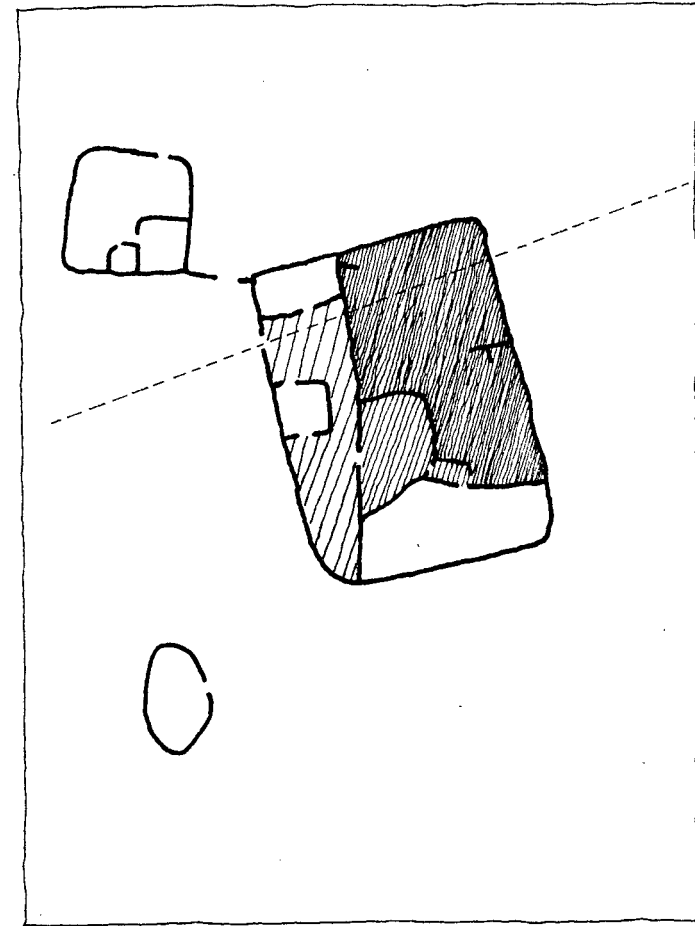
HOMESTEAD WITH A WIDE OUTER PASSAGE SURROUNDING AN 'INNER' HOMESTEAD (AFTER THE WINDHOEK EXHIBITION: 1935).



THE HIERARCHY OF PASSAGES TERMINATES IN THE OLUPALE.



HOMESTEAD IN THE ONELAGO DISTRICT.



A SIMPLE BUT DEFINITE HIERARCHY OF PASSAGES TERMINATES IN THE FEMALE ZONE.

KINSHIP GROUPING : THE STRUCTURE OF THE HOMESTEAD

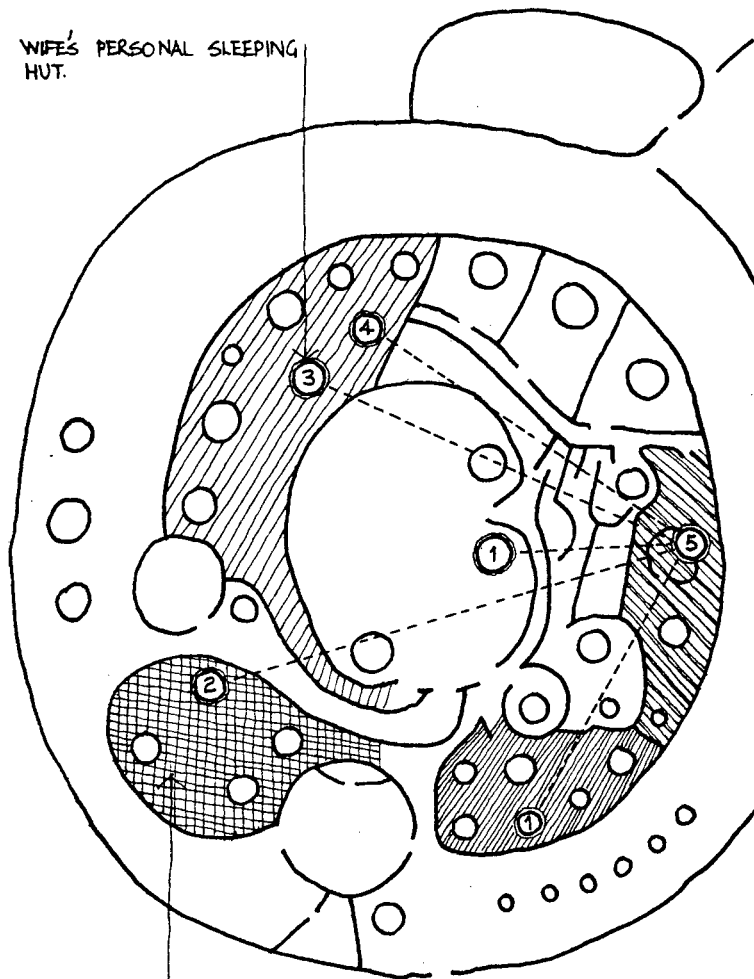
Kinship groups in Ovambo society are formed on the basis of matrilineal clans each of which has its own name which usually refers to a plant or animal (Malan 1980:81). These are called "omapata" (sing. "epata") which also denote the various segments of a homestead relating to the wife: in a polygynous household each of the wives occupies her own space or "epata". Every epata and consequently the homestead is associated with a woman and her children which together with the husband constitutes the dominant structural unit in Ovambo society - the family. This forms the fundamental unit of occupation which organises the size and the spatial organisation of the homestead. In this sense the single family is a prime generator of settlement pattern in that the homestead forms an expression of kinship space by the agglomeration of female zones within itself and the agricultural territory with which each is associated.

The number of people inhabiting a homestead varies throughout the region. The average size is given as between 6,5 persons (Tuupainen 1970:111) and 9,71 persons (Ongwediva/Oshakati Master Plan Report 1982:21). The number is influenced by the type of marriage (polygynous or monogamous), the presence of relatives, servants or boarders and the social rank of the household head (ie commoner, sub-headman or headman). Most marriages are nowadays solemnized by the churches which prohibit polygyny. A family consisting of more than one wife is thus uncommon and very rare today: a feature which is due mainly to the influence of the Christian missions and economic pressures. The number of household occupants is not constant and varies as children leave home or remain with spouses before erecting their own homesteads, and relatives and boarders come and go. Headmen and sub-headmen usually have larger homesteads and more people staying in their homes. There is considerable prestige attached to size if not to the complexity of layout of the

homestead as this does reflect the wealth and status of the owner. Generally it appears that the smaller the family the simpler the layout and the larger the family the more complex the homestead becomes.

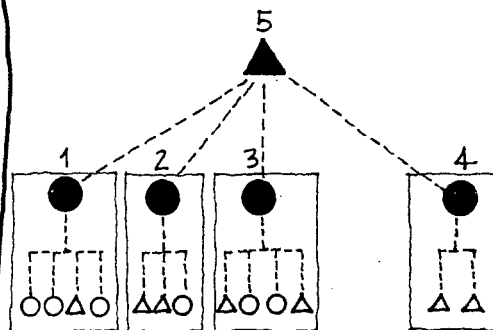
A POLYGYNOUS FAMILY: c. 1935.

WIFE'S PERSONAL SLEEPING HUT.



SPATIAL ZONE RELATING TO THE DOMINANT PERSON IN THAT SPACE.

KINSHIP PATTERN
HOUSEHOLD HEAD.



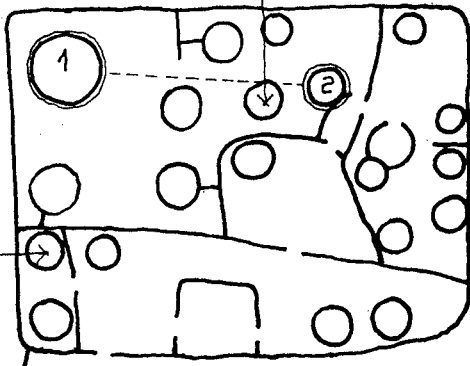
FOUR **OMAPATA** EACH CONSISTING OF A WIFE AND HER SMALL CHILDREN.

↑ FIRST WIFE ↑ SECOND WIFE ↑ THIRD WIFE ↑ FOURTH WIFE

THE HIGHER THE RANK OF THE WIVES THE CLOSER IN SPACE THEY ARE TO THE HUSBAND.

A MONOGYNOUS FAMILY: 1983.

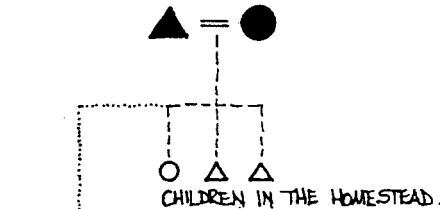
DAUGHTERS' HUT.



SON'S HUT

KINSHIP PATTERN

HOUSEHOLD HEAD: 2 1: WIFE



CHILDREN IN THE HOMESTEAD.

△ = ○

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER HAS MARRIED AND LEFT THE HOMESTEAD

A MEANINGFUL STYLE : APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY, TECHNIQUE AND THE
PROCESS OF BUILDING

30

Once the homestead has been laid out the next step is to construct the huts and shelters by using the available skills, technologies and materials. There are many ways of producing shelter but the most logical, economical and least energy consuming method is to make efficient use of the human and environmental resources which are at hand.

The prototypical form of the hut is the rondavel. Its main features are a conically shaped roof on a circular-plan wall or, using a more stylistic terminology, a "cone on cylinder" (Frescura 1981 : 53ff). There are three basic variations of the prototype which occur throughout the homestead:

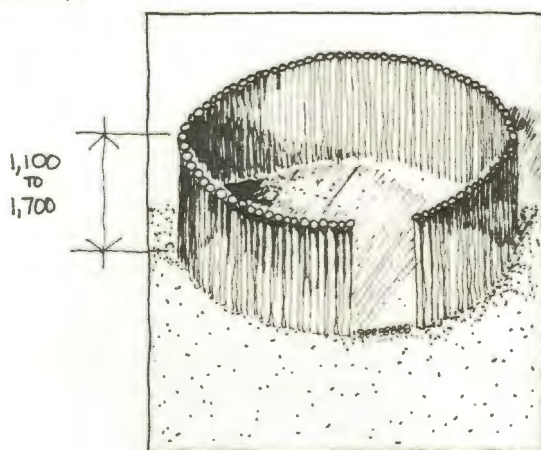
- 1) Non-loadbearing with the roof supported around the outer perimeter by timber columns.
- 2) Loadbearing with the roof resting on the walls.
- 3) Open shelter which has no wall and is supported by timber columns.

The construction of these variations consists of the "coming together" of components or elements in a way which follows a definite process.

The hut is made of five elements and consists of the following:
Walls : There are three types of wall construction which are used from time to time depending on the whim of the

owner/builder and the availability of materials and skills
(Personal discussions : July 1983).

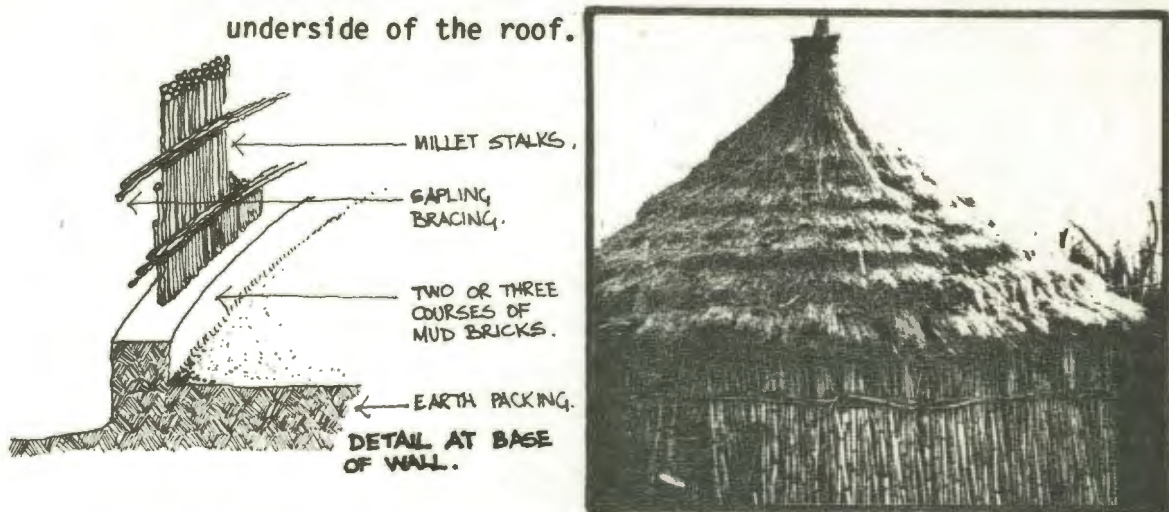
- 1) Palisaded walls consist of timber poles between 1,1m and 1,7m high which are driven into furrows and packed tightly together. Lateral support is sometimes provided by a perimeter beam made of timber poles towards the upper section of the palisade. In some cases the internal face is plastered with anthill clay. These walls are mostly loadbearing.



- 2) Mud walls are made of sun dried bricks which are made close to the homestead. Mud is mixed with small quantities of grass, laid on a flat surface and cut into "bricks" by a garden spade or trowel. Generally these walls are non-loadbearing.



- 3) Millet stalks on a mud wall plinth are used as a substitute for the palisaded wall. Bundles of millet stalks are lashed together between the plinth and the underside of the roof.



Roof: The roof finish is either grass thatching or millet stalk "thatching" or a combination of both. These materials are fastened to the conically shaped frame which is made of saplings that project radially from a central crown. They are held together by concentric rings of battens which span the radial segments and which carry the thatching. If both millet stalks and grass are used in combination then the grass is laid above the stalks. Elaborations at the apex of roof are not common but in some cases the owners devised some original and artistic cappings that were woven into elaborate forms. The grass is laid with the seed-end up thereby giving the roof the appearance of being layered. The eaves projection is mostly in the order of between 250mm (Loadbearing type) and 500mm (non-loadbearing type). Where the wall is carrying the roof directly then the eaves is made in such a way as to project minimally and is trimmed to give an even finish. If the wall is independent of the roof a continuous gap between the top of the wall and the underside of the roof provides the

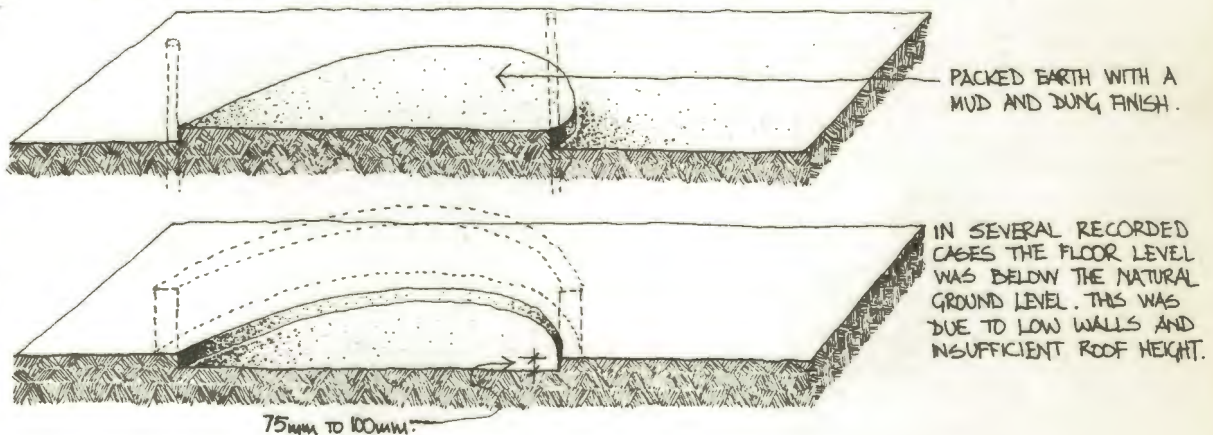
*Steyndberg
example*

ventilation. The roof is supported by timber posts which are up to 500mm away from the wall finish.

ROOF APEX: A SELECTION OF FINISHES FOUND IN ONE HOME-STEAD IN THE ONELAGO DISTRICT.



Floor: Earth is compacted to give a hard, smooth finish, usually with the addition of cow dung. The floor is plastered from time to time with mud and dung in order to maintain the finish. Floor levels are raised slightly above the natural ground level to between 50mm and 150mm.



Openings: There are no windows. Doorways are low and narrow. The actual door is mostly made of timber sections nailed to a frame which is hinged to a main frame in the wall. Padlocks are common to most doors. Sometimes a piece of synthetic or cotton fabric is merely hung from a cross beam over the doorway or a grass mat is suspended for the same purpose.



A MAN STOOPING TO GET THROUGH THE 1,3 m. HIGH DOOR TO HIS HUT.

Threshold: Bottles or timber beams are common devices between the finished floor level and the outside. This prevents rainwater from entering the hut.

A THRESHOLD OF BOTTLES.



A WOODEN THRESHOLD.



The construction process follows a definite pattern and depends on whether the walls are to be loadbearing or non-loadbearing or whether the structure is to be shelter.

Loadbearing :-

Step one: Construct the roof frame on the ground. Wire, bark or thin rope are used to lash the radial sections and battens together.



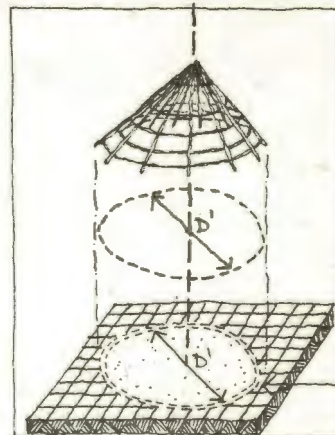
ROOF FRAME : MADE FROM MOPANI SAPLINGS.

BATTENS NAILED TO THE MAIN ROOF STRUCTURE.

Step two: Using the roof framework, mark out the extent of the plan in the position where the hut is to be built. The frame is used as a marker or template for the ground plan.



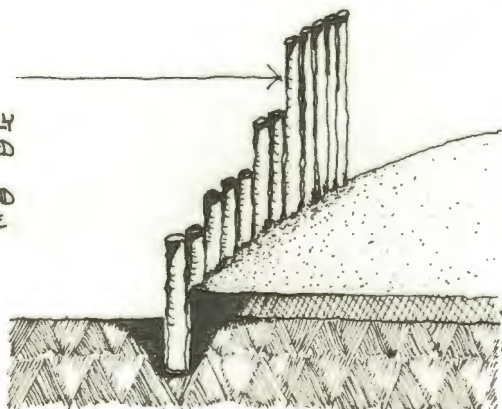
A ROOF FRAME:
BEING USED TO MARK
THE GROUND PLAN
OF A HUT



POSITION OF
FUTURE WALL.

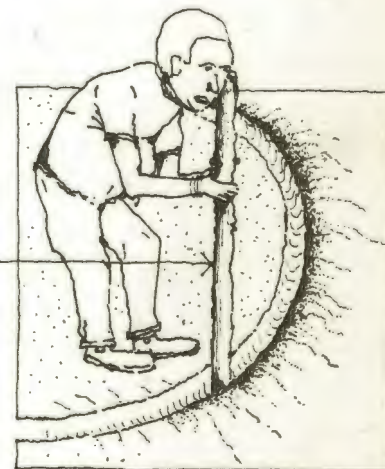
Step three: Dig a furrow or trench to a depth of 300mm to 400mm deep. Insert the poles which make up the palisade wall and compact the base with earth.

THE PALISADED WALL
CONSISTS OF WOODEN
POLES PACKED TIGHTLY
TOGETHER AND SECURED
BY BEING COMPACTED
INTO A TRENCH AROUND
THE PERIMETER OF THE
PLAN FORM.



A POLE BEING
DRIVEN INTO THE
TRENCH.

EARTH PACKING
ABOVE N.G.L.
COMPACTED
EARTH BASE



Step four: Thatch the roof completely while it is on the ground and (if desired) elaborate the apex. Then raise it over the palisaded "drum" and lower it on to its final resting position.

THE THATCHING AT THE
APEX BEFORE BEING TRIMMED
INTO THE DESIRED STYLE.



A COMPLETED ROOF: PRIOR TO
BEING LIFTED ON TO THE HUT
DRUM. DEPENDING ON THE SIZE
UP TO NINE PEOPLE MAY BE
NEEDED TO RAISE A ROOF.

Step five: Trim the eaves and stamp the earth to provide a hard floor surface.



EAVES DETAILS

GRASS THATCHING: UN-TRIMMED.



MILLET STALK THATCHING.



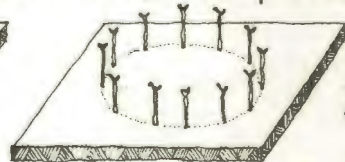
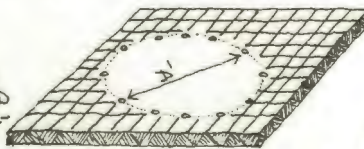
NEATLY TRIMMED GRASS THATCHING.

Non-loadbearing:-

Steps one and two : (As for loadbearing type).

Step three: Dig holes for the perimeter support columns and insert these, compacting the earth at their bases to provide rigidity.

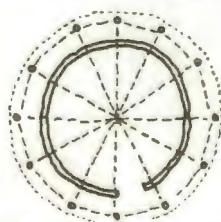
HOLES ARE PLACED AT CENTRES AROUND THE PLAN FORM DICTATED BY THE ROOF.



PERIMETER SUPPORT POSTS ARE THEN SET IN POSITION.

Step four: As for the loadbearing type except that the roof is lowered on to the timber columns.

Step five: Mud blocks are laid, within the circle described by the perimeter columns, to a height just below the roof. A shallower furrow is prepared to receive the first course of blockwork which serves as a foundation. If the wall is to be of millet stalks then the blockwork usually stops at a height of about three courses, depending on the height of the eaves and length of millet stalks.



GROUND PLAN

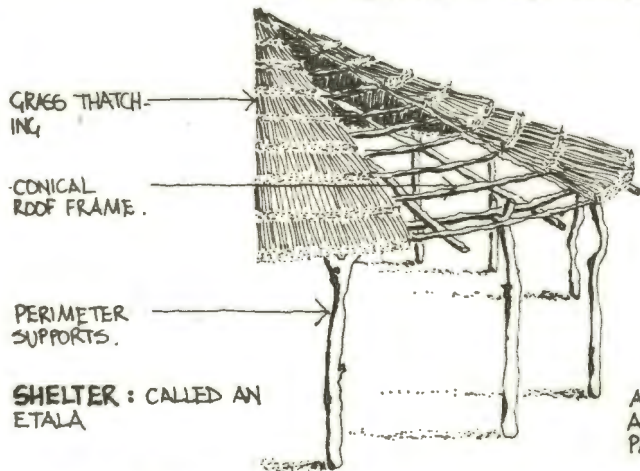


CROSS SECTION

Step six (As for "step five" in loadbearing type).

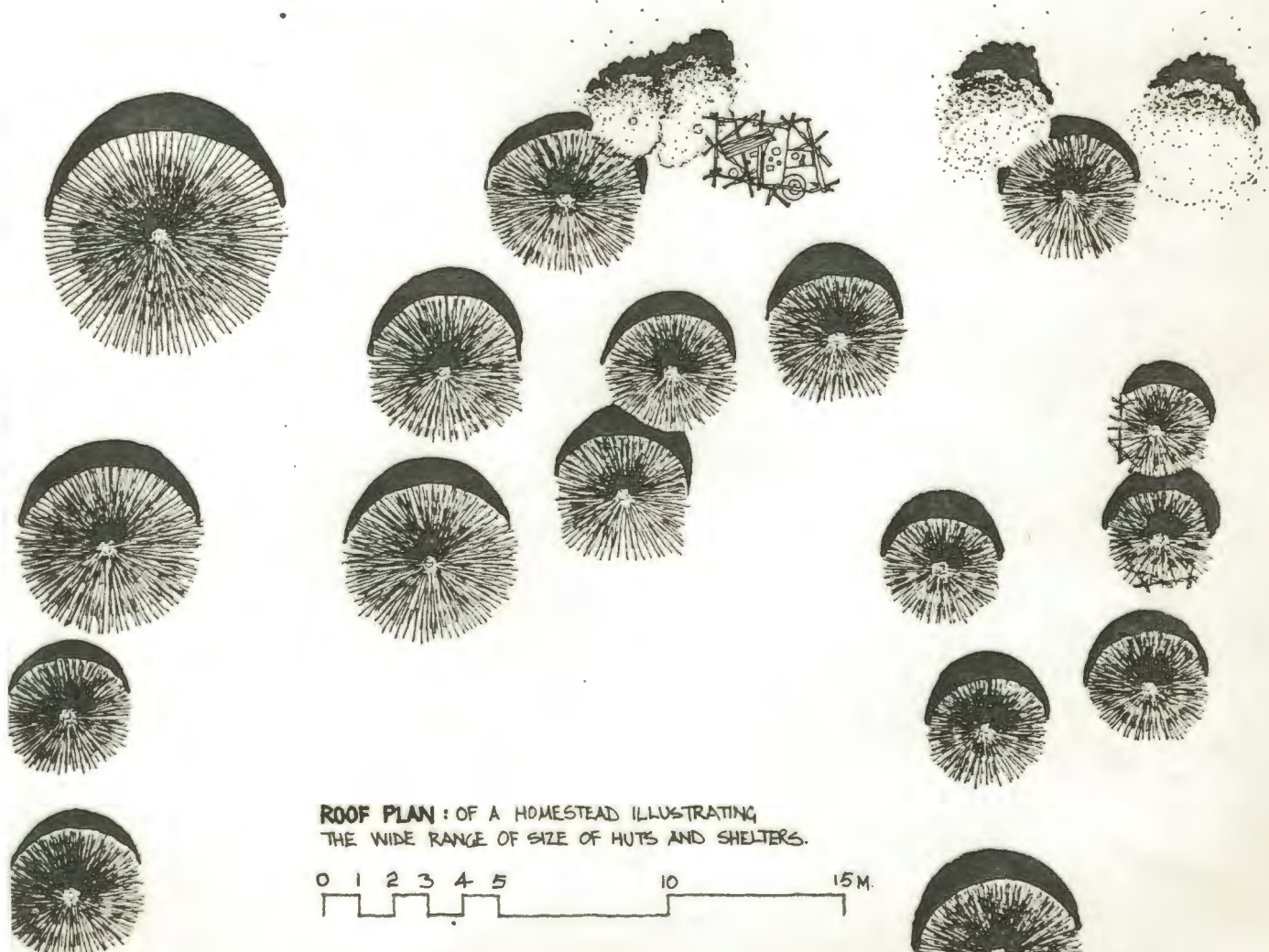
Shelter :-

Steps one to four: (As for non-loadbearing type). There are no walls except that sometimes a windscreen may be provided. Also, there is no special floor finish.



A TYPICAL EXAMPLE WITH A PALISADE SCREEN.

Sizes of the rondavels vary. The most common appear to be diameters of between 2,4m and 3m. The largest hut, usually that of the wife, is mostly in the order of 5,5m to 6m.



ROOF PLAN : OF A HOMESTEAD ILLUSTRATING THE WIDE RANGE OF SIZE OF HUTS AND SHELTERS.

0 1 2 3 4 5 10 15 M.

The utilization of labour during the production of huts is organized along the lines of sex. Men are responsible for :

- . erecting the palisaded walls and perimeter columns
- . constructing the roof frame
- . thatching
- . making the mud bricks and erecting the walls

Women generally assist the men, as well as:

- . collect the grass and millet stalks for thatching
- . plaster the interior of the palisaded walls and sometimes the exterior of the mud brick walls
- . prepare the floor and its mud and dung surface

Children are also involved. They are general assistants to both the men and the women and help to collect materials and water for plastering. When a homestead owner is erecting his eumbo it is usual for his neighbour to assist. Their labour is rewarded with beer and food during

and after the construction phases. Throughout the whole of northern

Namibia there is evidence of new technological trends appearing. These

are mainly due to the introduction of "modern" building materials. New

products are readily available from the traders around Oshakati and

Ondangwa and the informal settlements between them. The most common

components are sheet iron and timber and steel frames for doors and

windows. Homesteads displaying new styles and appearances in response to

the new technologies are becoming increasingly common. Several

homesteads were observed to contain at least one structure which was made

of sheet iron and had windows and doors which conformed to the new

rectilinear style (Personal observations : March 1979 to July 1983).

participation.

SOCIAL RANK : STATUS SYMBOLS AND THE APPEARANCE OF THE HOMESTEAD

31

The current socio-economic pattern in Namibia has elevated the meaning of monetary wealth and has generated needs and expectations which can only be met by the accumulation of surplus capital. This is in part due to the system of migrant labour and "tribal" or head tax which is imposed on people living in the bantustans of Namibia (Thomas 1978 : 251). This pattern has led to the formation of a clearly defined class structure based more or less along the lines of job categories. At the top of this structure are the so-called "Traditional leaders" in the Bantustan system of government, for example, the "Chief Minister" of the Ovamboland Government" (Töttemeyer 1978 : 54 ff) and the wealthy shop owners and general dealers. Those at the lower end of the structure include the peasant farmers while those in between are nurses, possibly the migrant workers*, teachers, government administration employees, army and police personell.

There are clear indicators or symbols of wealth within this structure to which people strive in order to gain status. These broadly include:-

A "western" style house in Oshakati, Ondangwa or Ongwediva. People indicated the desire for a house "all under one roof" which was large, in an urban or semi-urban setting and which in no way resembled their homestead which was generally considered to be inferior. The style and pattern of buildings in the growing spontaneous settlements reflect the value system which is emerging.

personal observation

Large sedan motor cars are becoming more popular than bakkies. Many homesteads have a vehicle parked next to them close to the main entrance (Onu). Cars and bakkies are bought in towns in the south and have generated a great deal of informal economic activities such as maintenance, pits, spare parts dealers and so on around Oshakati, Ondangwa and other spontaneous settlements in the region.

These two factors are impinging on the appearance of the homestead at the level of style and technology while the spatial structure is left more or less intact. Wire fencing, car parts, rectilinear plan forms, sheet iron walls and roofs, hip roof forms and so on suggest a new formal appearance which aspires to a new value system.

★
There have been theoretical debates about the precise class position of the migrant workers and their families in the context of labour exporting peasant communities (Clarence-Smith and Moorsom 1977 : 108-109). They are included here because of their involvement in the broader economic order of Namibia although they still retain certain rights in the land and in the labour of family members.



NEW TOWNSHIP DEVELOPMENT: AT ONGWEDINA ESTABLISHES ONE OF THE STYLISTIC REFERENCES WHICH ARE INFLUENCING BUILDING STYLES IN THE HOMESTEAD.



IMPORTANT STRUCTURES SUCH AS THOSE OCCUPIED BY THE WIFE OR A GRANDPARENT ASPIRE TO THE 'WESTERN' MODELS OF STATUS.



A SELECTION OF HOME-
STEADS WHICH DISPLAY
RADICALLY NEW BUILD-
ING TECHNOLOGIES
AND STYLE. THESE
EXAMPLES ARE IN
DIFFERENT DISTRICTS.



LINCUT BY JOHN MUAFANGESO

MOTOR VEHICLES AND STATUS

MOTOR CAR SHELTERS ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY COMMON AT THE HOMESTEADS.



ECONOMIC PRODUCTION : DIVISION OF LABOUR AND FLEXIBILITY WITHIN THE
HOMESTEAD

The foundation upon which social relations and material benefits depends is economic production, which in turn ensures continued survivability. This production at the level of peasant subsistence, needs to be systematically organised. Seen as a whole, the society is a productive community which consists of separate units of production : the individual families. Each unit of production is segmented into smaller sub-units formed on the basis of sex. Labour power within the homestead and on the farm is primarily expended in the production of crops and dairy produce. Traditionally this labour power was organised by a rigid division of labour and social role. The women were continuously involved with agricultural activities and homestead affairs while the men were actively concerned with stock keeping at the same time as being responsible for the overall co-ordination of the total economic product. Children generally played valuable supportive roles in maintaining the production activity and, depending on their sex, formed part of either the female or male sub-unit.

Estermann (1976 : 102-3) maintains that the division of labour is governed by a straightforward principle : cultivation and the preparation of food and drink is the work of women, who are generally associated with the hoe. The men are associated with the axe and do the work with which it is related, as well as with the affairs of stock-keeping. People therefore sometimes refer to the sex of new-born babies by saying they are born with either an okatemo (a little hoe) or an okakuva (a little axe) when distinguishing between boys and girls (Estermann 1976 : 102). Because these roles are rigidly maintained, any deviance is treated with suspicion : sexual perversion in particular is linked to a man if he

works with a hoe or abstains from working with an axe and the same applies to the role of women.

Today, the divisions between sub-units of production within the homestead is becoming increasingly blurred and not as clear as in the past. The push/pull factors of urbanisation, the war, consistent drought and the system of migrant labour have created social and economic imbalances in the fabric of society as a whole. The economic foundation is moving from a subsistence level to a consumer oriented society at a rapid rate. As a result, women and men alike are taking on roles which were traditionally encoded to behaviour and economic activity of the other sex. However, the broad division of activity is still very much adhered to where possible. Thus the men drive the cattle to the pastures; water them; milk the cows; maintain the huts and palisades; clear the forested areas when establishing a new homestead; construct the granary baskets and so on. The women work in the fields; clean the homestead; prepare the food; make baskets; plaster the huts with clay and look after the small children. The interchange of economic roles which is taking place is an appropriate response to pressures which would otherwise threaten and impede the continuation of the homestead as the unit of production. There is thus a degree of economic flexibility which is built into the homestead and ensures its stability.

FEMALE PRODUCTION:
AGRICULTURE,
FOOD PREPARING,
POTTERY, HOUSE
KEEPING AND SO
ON.



MALE PRODUCTION:
STOCK-KEEPING, BUILDING
HUTS AND PALISADES
MAKING GRANARY BASKETS
AND SO ON.

HOMESTEAD ZONES : AGE AND SEX STRATUM

33

The homestead needs to have two zones which relate to the male and female roles. They in turn each need to consist of sub-zones that accommodate the adults and youths respectively.

The historically inherited idea of socio-economic role playing based on age and sex is very much adhered to and reinforced. By building these ideas into the physical layout of the homestead the status quo can be maintained and made visible.

The objective in pre-colonial agrico-pastoralist society was to extract and maintain optimum social, material and ecological benefit for the family and community at large by ordering the relations of production between individuals to ensure an interaction which was positive and mutually beneficial (Clarence-Smith and Moorsom 1977 : 97). The homestead was a reflection of this and was spatially arranged as a reminder of role divisions and relations between them. In other words role playing was consolidated in space in the layout of the homestead

A feature of the layout of the contemporary homestead is that it is structured around an amalgamation of compartments each of which represents a distinct zone relating to the age and sex of its occupants. That structure is formulated according to the relations between the occupants which is rooted in their respective socio-economic roles and consists of the following :-

1. Female Zone

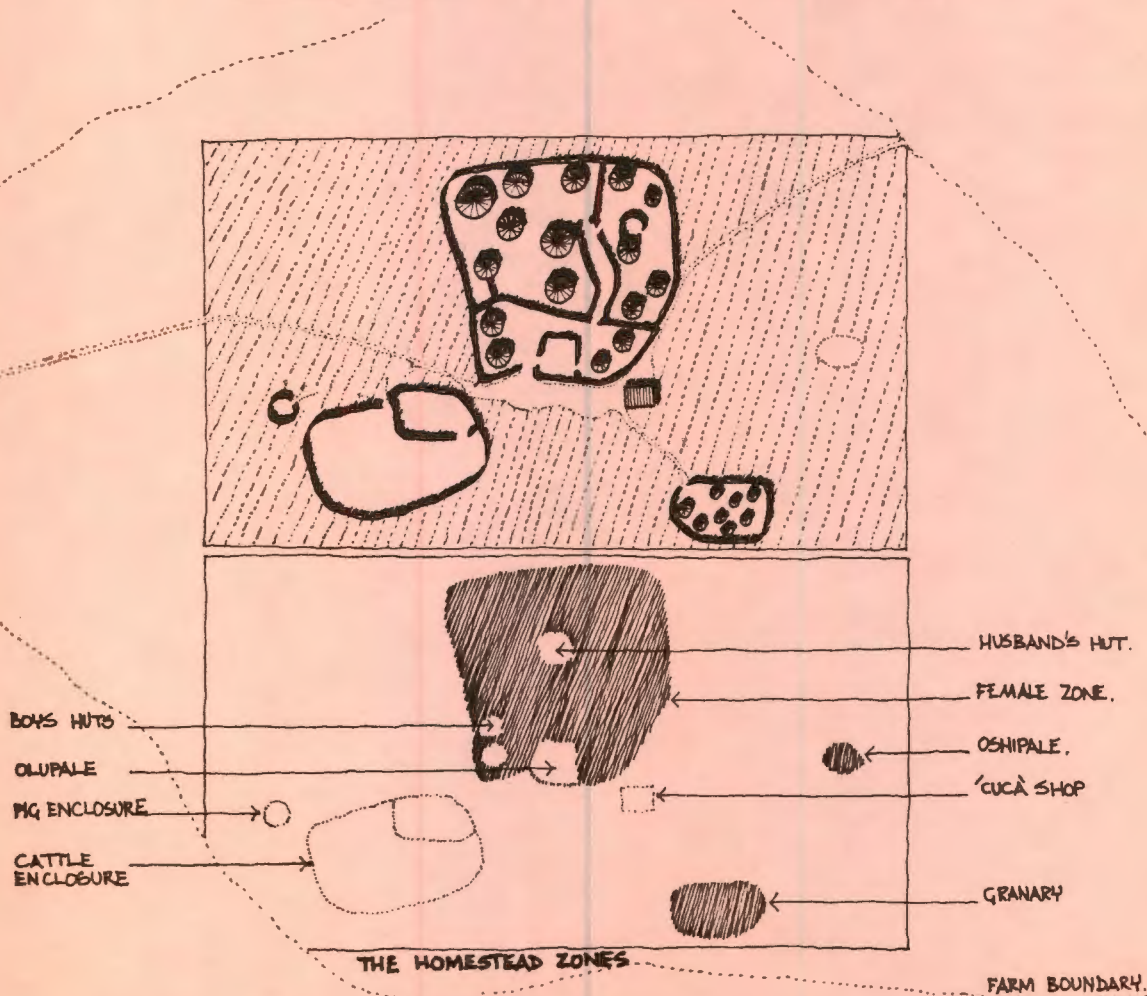
the wife's zone; including the food storage huts and food preparation areas, the threshing platform, the granary, her personal hut and shelter for socializing and the cultivated fields. All of these spaces relate to the wider role of women in society.

the girls' zone; their personal huts, the area for stamping millet and sorghum and all the food preparation areas.

2. Male Zone

the husband's zone; his hut and shelter, the olupale, his 'cuca' shop, kraal for cattle and goats, the pig enclosure and the grazing areas including the farm as a whole. These spaces relate to the status and role of men.

the boys' zone; their huts and the grazing lands.



ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND THE KRAAL : CONCEPTS OF VALUE AND
SUBSISTENCE

An enclosure is needed for the livestock which is close to the homestead and partitioned off to accommodate calves, cows, oxen, goats and pigs.

Animals, in particular the cattle, are an important value asset which require protection and attention. Historically this has always ensured that the enclosure for animals is attached or not far from the homestead.

"The domestic animals of the Ovambo are the ox, goat, dog, pig and cat (which I recently introduced), and the barnyard fowls. Horses, of which of late years a few have been brought into the country, don't thrive; for the most part, indeed, they die at the end of the rainy season of the so-called 'lung sickness'. Those that survive, however, are said to be exempt thereafter from the epidemic.

Neither have sheep succeeded, those which have been imported from Damaraland, or elsewhere, have for the most part succumbed to a disease designated 'blood sickness'.

The cattle, which are of fair size, differ in nothing from other native breeds ..."
(Andersson 1875 : 229).

The most important domesticated animals are the cattle. Herding and milking is the function of the males who see to it that the herd is adequately watered, fed and cared for. A good sense of animal husbandry is developed from the time when young boys are sent off, armed with bows and arrows and assegais, to tend to the herd while in the pastures. Cattle therefore form an important focus in the lives of males who learn to respect and attach great value to the animals under

their care. The possession of cattle gives a large measure of social prestige as they are the only important items of property that are inherited through the matrilineage. Cattle are moreover the traditional medium of exchange : marriage payment and fines levied in the district and ward courts can be paid in oxen and cows. It becomes the ambition of each male in society to possess his own herd and they are kept whenever and wherever it is possible. Disease, starvation and theft demanded that cattle be kept close to the homestead. This was so particularly in the pre-colonial kingdoms where cattle raids were a frequent feature of life (Clarence-Smith and Moorsom 1977 : 102ff). Animals occupied space in the layout of the homestead usually around the perimeter. In the contemporary layout the kraal usually forms a separate compartment situated close to the entrance of the homestead. This is because the kraal is moved from time to time which is a way of fertilising the fields and because cattle theft is uncommon. As a safeguard against cattle dying because of infectious diseases and the effects of drought, many farmers send portions of their herds to the cattle posts situated near Oshivelo in the south (Personal observation : July 1983). Also, the government has established a series of cattle pens scattered within the wards and districts for inoculating animals. Accurate figures of size of herds are difficult to obtain but informants indicated that herds varied a lot; between nine to fifty head per household (Personal observation : July 1983).

Within the homestead the value of cattle is reflected in the olupale. Horns of cattle slaughtered on special occasions

such as a marriage, are displayed on a rack or on the wooden palisade near to the sacred fire. These are mainly the cattle inherited through the matrilineage.

Goats are common and used for milk but mostly as a substitute for meat from cattle. Their enclosure forms part of the cattle kraal and has its own separate entrance.

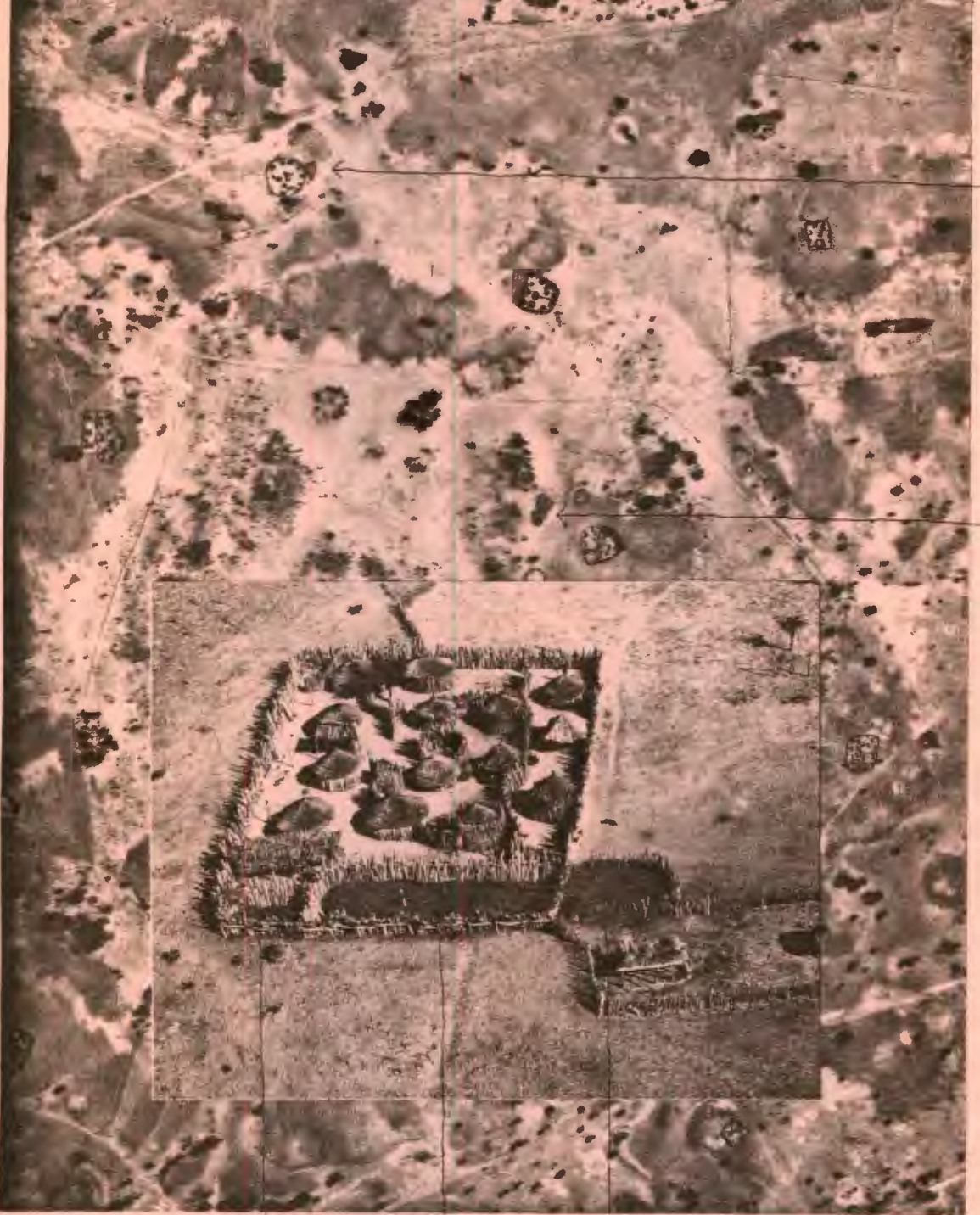
Pigs are similarly kept but their enclosure is apart from the kraal. They are allowed to run free and are fed on a mixture of millet and sorghum waste.

Chickens are a feature of every homestead and occupy deserted huts and shelters. They are generally the property of the women who ensure that there is an adequate supply for slaughtering.

Donkeys are a common means of transport in Ovamboland. They are not kept in pens and wander about freely.



A YOUNG HERDSBOY IN HIS FATHER'S CATTLE KRAAL. CATTLE IN OVAMBOLAND ARE SMALL AND DO NOT YIELD LARGE QUANTITIES OF MILK.



KRAAL ATTACH TO THE HOMESTEAD

KRAAL SEPERATE FROM HOMESTEAD

LIVESTOCK ENCLOSURES : A HOMESTEAD IN THE ONELAGO DISTRICT.

GOATS

CATTLE

CALVES



AUTHORITY OF THE HOMESTEAD OWNER : SPATIAL REPRESENTATION OF
THE ROLE OF MEN

Personal quarters in the homestead needs to be provided for the husband which are for sleeping, are in the private section and are close to his wife's hut.

He also needs place which can be used for important meetings, usually the olupale.

The authority of the head of the homestead needs to be maintained. Personal spaces that reflect this status within the family are a means of ensuring that his position is physically manifested and is seen.

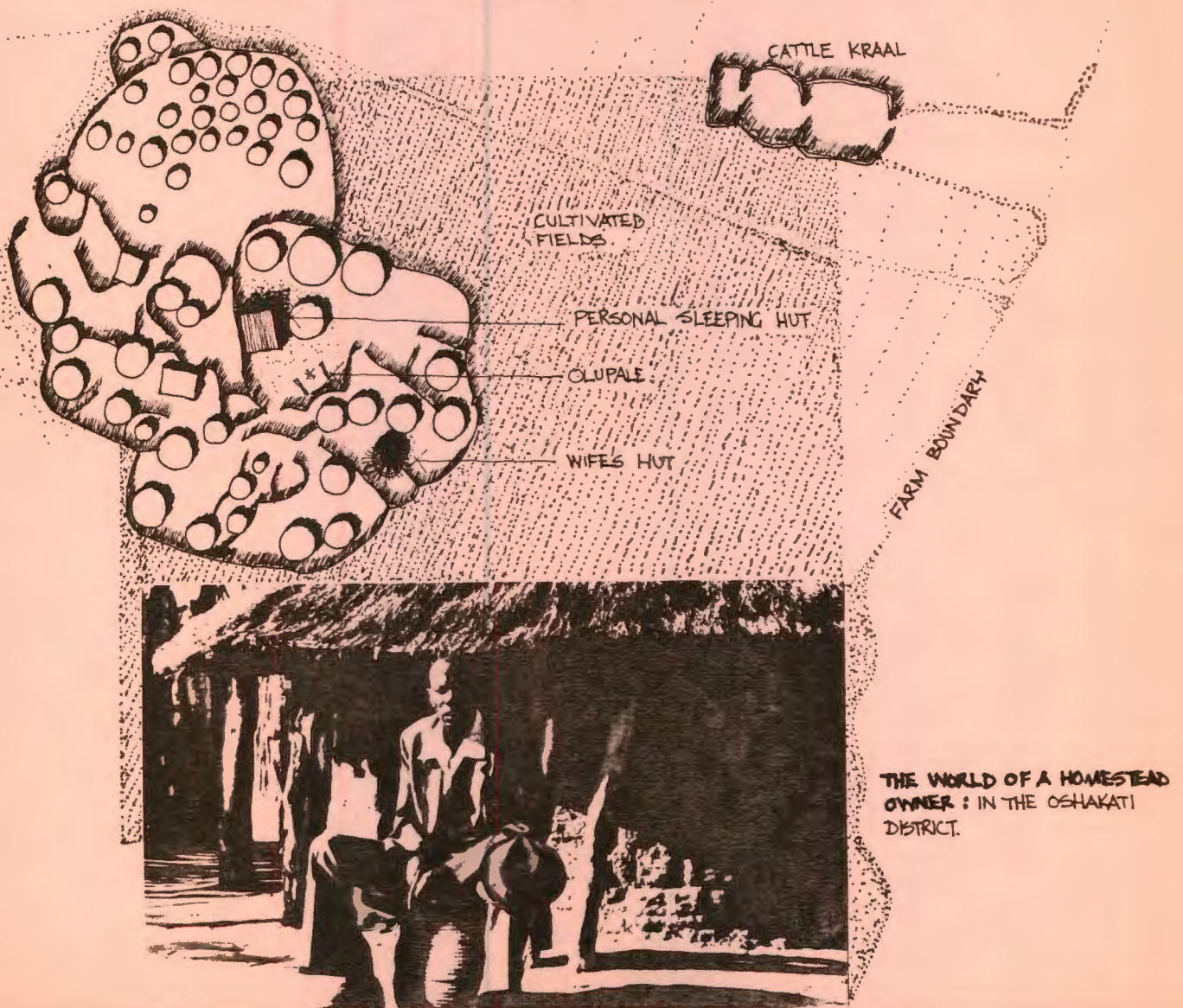
"A homestead is not built for many men" (Loeb 1951 : 327). This philosophical proverb expresses the social position of the husband who should be master of his own homestead. It is the aspiration of every male to one day have his own homestead, cattle and farm. These together represent and symbolise the role of men.

Within the homestead, the olupale is the focus of his authority. It is here that meetings are held if there are important matters to be discussed with neighbours or, if the man is a sub-headman or headman, community disputes are heard. The sleeping hut is situated within the female zone. However, there are spaces and sometimes a shelter within this zone, solely for the use of the husband for informal entertaining and beer drinking with close friends and relatives.

Cattle-raising is the most important activity of men which includes herding, milking and making butter. These tasks are undertaken mainly by the boys who are under the strict control of their father who authorizes their activities in the interests of the economical functioning of the homestead.

The kraal is usually close to the homestead which symbolizes the importance attached to cattle and the relationship with the men.

Although agriculture is the responsibility of women, the cultivated fields establish the limits to the domain of men. The women who work the fields are subject to the owner's authority who commands and controls the economic life of the homestead and farm as a whole.



THE WORLD OF A HOMESTEAD OWNER : IN THE OSHAKATI DISTRICT.

A SEPARATE HUT FOR THE BOYS : A HISTORICALLY DETERMINED PLACE

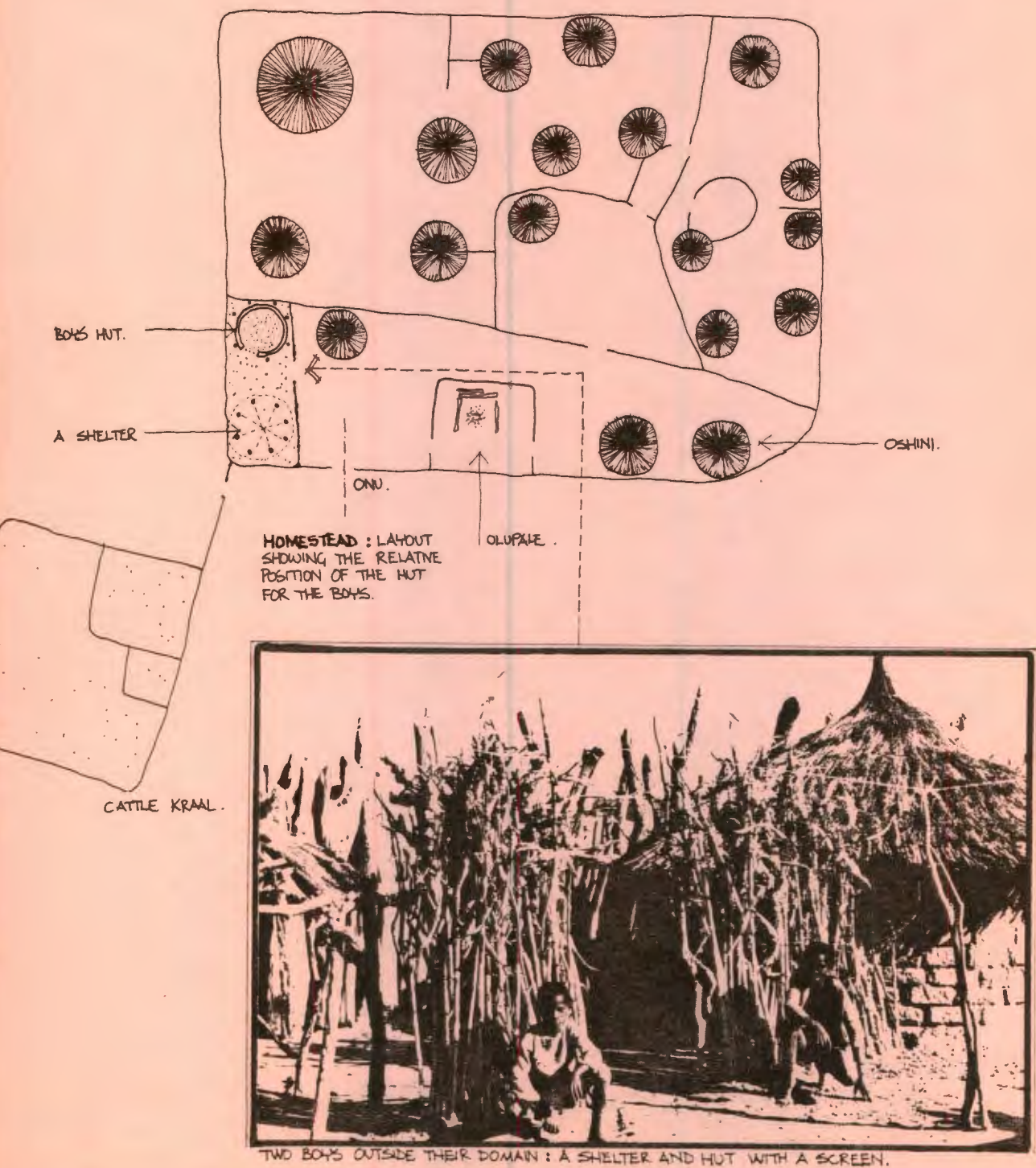
36

The place for the boys hut is at the entrance and close to the public areas of the homestead. By having their own compartment and sleeping hut the separate role of boys is maintained. Traditionally the boys were the guardians of the cattle kraal when it was part of the homestead layout. Most often the kraal was part of a broad passage around the perimeter of the homestead which provided an effective barrier of which the boys were in control. The huts for boys are an important symbolic indication to the outside world that there are or have been sons in the household. This also shows that the family has cattle (which need looking after).

The safety of cattle in the pre-colonial kingdoms demanded high priority. Consequently the kraal formed an integral part of the homestead layout and with the boys in attendance. Their huts were thus close to the vulnerable points of kraal and homestead entrance. With the threat of cattle raids a thing of the past the kraal moved away from the homestead while the boys' huts remained at the main entrance.

The number of huts depends on the number of boys in the household : usually two or three young boys to one hut. These are not necessarily all sons of the homestead owner who would, according to the laws of matrilineal kinship relations, accommodate one or more of his sister's sons. The boys show

great pride in 'their place' as a retreat into a world of their own. Their compartment, although close to the main entrance and meeting place is made private by a screen. Personal belongings and important items such as bows and arrows and eating utensils are stored in the roof space of their hut. The floor is used for lesser important items such as boxes and suitcases. Once the boys leave home, either to get married or to go on contract labour, the huts remain as storerooms, simple shelters or become places for guests.



THE CREAMERY : CHURNING MILK INTO BUTTER

37

Within the epata there needs to be a place for making butter. Butter is frequently used for frying meat and vegetables as a change from boiling as a method of preparation.

One of the duties of the boys is to churn the milk into butter. This is done all year round but the milk is generally of a better quality during the rainy season (Personal communication : July 1983). The milk is churned into butter in a calabash called an oxupa. The oxupa is supported by two vertical posts. It is filled with fresh milk and swung backwards and forwards until the butter is formed. The buttermilk is then poured into calabashes and the butter packed into whatever small containers are suitable, usually old mugs.

There is no particular place in the plan layout of the epata where the creamery is situated. It is however mostly located under or close to a shelter.



CHURNING THE MILK : A REGULAR TASK FOR THE BOYS.



AN OXUPA : STORAGE PLACE IN ONE OF THE OMALIMBA (PANTRY).

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ROLE OF WOMEN : PERSONAL SPACES AND THE
STATUS OF THE WIFE

The wife's zone, called the epata, needs to be in the most private part of the homestead and generally consists of the household kitchen, the pantry, guest quarters and a shelter or two for socializing. She also tends to have the largest and most impressive hut which is always built within the epata.

In a predominantly matrilineal society the wife is a socially and economically important figure. These positions need to be reflected and maintained.

The productive role of the woman is wide. Traditionally her role was primarily focussed on the agricultural aspects of economic production. This position has changed somewhat with the absence of men due to the migrant labour system, unemployed men who have moved to the towns and others who have left to join the liberation movement. Her role has widened to include many of the tasks and decision making normally performed by the men : controlling the herd, organising work in the fields, running "cuca" shops, membership of church organizations, educating the children and so on. Figures in the 1970 Census showed that in the adult population of Ovamboland between the ages of 15 and 59 women made up more than two-thirds of the total. The daily task of women is generally hard as described

by a woman in an interview:

"...Apart from something like a one hour break at about 10 am to go for breakfast and to feed the children, women in these areas work from 5 am to 1 pm from Monday to Saturday, every week. This is true whether you are talking about cultivation, weeding or harvesting seasons of the year After spending up to 7 hours of backbreaking labour in the fields, women in the rural areas do not retire to rest for the day. They must also fetch water, grind grain into flour and prepare meals, not to mention washing the babies..." (Moorsom 1982 : 60).

The wife occupies personal space within the homestead, the farm and sometimes, outside the boundaries of the farm. Within the homestead her social position is special and is reflected in the hut and epata she occupies. Both are large in comparison with other parts of the homestead and this size both represents and reinforces her value. This is not exclusively her own territory for it is shared by the whole family for its own purposes as well as for entertaining others. There are historical reasons for this. In a polygynous household each wife was allocated personal quarters in accordance with her rank in marriage. Each was however an independent economic production unit with her own portion of agricultural land and hut, pantry and shelter separate from the others (Loeb 1962 : 132-3). Further, the more wives the owner had the larger his agricultural territory, the more cattle he could keep and consequently the more enhanced was his status. The current situation differs only in that the agricultural land has been partially substituted by the "cuca" shop as the thrust into the economic pattern which maintains her independence and status. This in effect makes her a co-owner of the farm and homestead (particularly if the husband is absent).

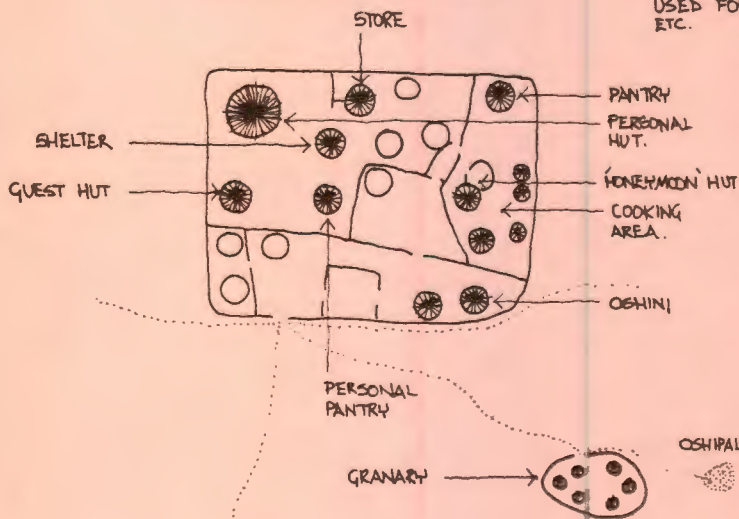
The granary is traditionally the "territory" of the female. The more grain baskets there were the greater her status. Consequently this became a measure for the success of agricultural production which was the economic domain of the female.



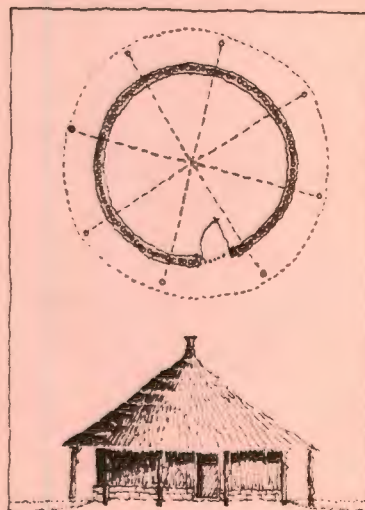
AN IMPORTANT FIGUREHEAD



AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION: RACKS ARE USED FOR STORING MILLET, GRASS FOR THATCHING, ETC.



HOMESTEAD: ILLUSTRATING THE WIDE SPATIAL DOMAIN ASSOCIATED WITH THE WIFE.



THE WIFE'S PERSONAL HUT: THE LARGEST IN THE HOMESTEAD.

THE GRANARY : GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICE AND FOOD FOR ALL

39

Effective and sufficient storage for the grain needs to be provided so that it is kept dry, protected from rodents and insects, not far from the homestead and protected from animals. The major crops are harvested once a year when it becomes necessary to ensure that the homestead has enough grain for the months that follow. Also, food has to be stored in the event of famine; and rain and pests are a threat to the grain.

The women are the chief cultivators in the homestead. Their inherited agricultural skills ensure that, given sufficient rainfall, an adequate grain crop is harvested annually. Preparing the lands, planting, digging, weeding and ploughing form an important part of good agricultural practice which requires year round attention. During October the weeds are burnt or removed and the soil is hoed to prepare for the seeds. Millet, sorghum, pumpkins and groundnuts are planted at the first signs of rain, usually in November. (Seeds for the crop are stored in baskets in one of the storage huts or sometimes in a pantry in the homestead). Once the seeds have taken and begin to sprout the lands require extensive weeding.

Ploughing techniques vary according to the amount of rainfall. Furrows run towards the oshonas when there is a good rainy season. This ensures that the lands will not dam up and cause the crop to rot. During the periods of little rainfall the furrows run with the contour pattern to hold as much water as possible.

Once harvested, threshed and winnowed, the grain is stored to be used when necessary. Large, raised grain baskets (etambo lomanda) are an important feature of the homestead. Their numbers and size indicate crop size and consequently form a measure of status. In some cases the homestead owners indicated that they had sufficient food stored in the granaries to last between three and five years (Personal observations : July 1983).

A typical granary consists of a number of baskets and is either attached or separate from the homestead. Mostly it is surrounded by its own palisade to protect it from the livestock. The individual grain basket are each supported by a number of forked stakes driven into the ground which are attached to the base of the basket by a circle of grass rope. The height above the ground varies between 300mm and 700mm. A cone-shaped thatched roof supported by wooden poles forms an umbrella over the basket. More than one basket beneath a thatched shelter is not uncommon.

Construction of the grain baskets is the job of men and women. The men weave the sticks and strips of bark to form the basket and then lift it into position on the circular shaped rim.

Using wet clay from the anthills, the women plaster the inside and make sure that the basket will remain insulated against insects and rodents. A grass lid covers the top of the basket which is sealed with anthill clay and dung once the basket is filled with grain. The thatched shelter is then lifted on to the supports to complete the job.



PROTECTION AGAINST ANIMALS.



A TYPICAL ETAMBO LOMANDA

DRAINAGE-TYPE PLOUGHING DURING A SEASON OF HEAVY RAINFALL.



CONTOUR-TYPE PLOUGHING DURING A DRY SEASON.



USING A CATTLE PLOUGH : MOSTLY A HOE IS USED.



SOWING SEEDS : SOMETIMES THE SEEDS ARE PLANTED IN MOUNDS OF SOIL AS A SAFEGUARD AGAINST FLOODING.

STAMPING THE MILLET : A SOCIAL EVENT

40

The oshini needs to be positioned so that it is close to the entrance and visible to the outside community. It also needs to be closely defined as a zone in its own right by being screened and by the provision of a shelter. The women tend to take advantage of their tasks of stamping the millet and sorghum and the making of flour by using them as opportunities and occasions for social interaction.

Porridge, part of the staple diet, is made from the flour which is produced from millet. This production process involves the stamping of millet which is exclusively the role of women and forms an important part of their household responsibilities. This activity is characterised by singing and chatting with friends and relatives who may be passing by. The young girls especially, take delight in using the rhythmic beat of their heavy stamping sticks (omisi) pounding into the stamping holes (oini) to set the pace for their songs.

In the oshini enclosure there are usually two to five stamping holes which consist of hollowed logs set in the ground to serve as mortars. The floor of the oshini is made of smooth clay which is constantly swept clean. A shelter is used to provide shade and protection from rain for most stamping holes and also houses the racks on which the stamping sticks are stored : it is considered bad luck for the homestead and the harvest if the

sticks are left lying horizontal on the ground. The flour making process follows a set pattern and involves pounding the millet to a smooth consistency and removing the bran. After an initial pounding the contents of the stamping hole is taken out and sieved to separate the bran. A small amount from the previous pounding is added together with water and the mixture is pounded again. The meal is again sieved and the part not adequately pounded is put back into the mixture and the process repeated. This goes on several times until the fine flour is achieved. A small amount of the rough remainder is used again for the next pounding process. The flour is spread out to dry in the sun on a woven mat or hesian bag. It is then ready to be used. During this process there is no wastage and even the rough bran is kept in baskets to be used in beer or, when millet stocks are low, it is mixed in with the flour.



AN OMISI: STORED IN AN UP-RIGHT POSITION



TWO WOMEN USE THEIR FEET TO KEEP THE MIXTURE IN THE MORTAR.

FLOUR READY FOR USE.



WOODEN MORTAR SET INTO THE GROUND: OINI.

SIEVE.

IN AN OGHINI: MAKING FLOUR UNDER A SHELTER

THE HOUSEHOLD PANTRY : FOOD FOR DAILY USE

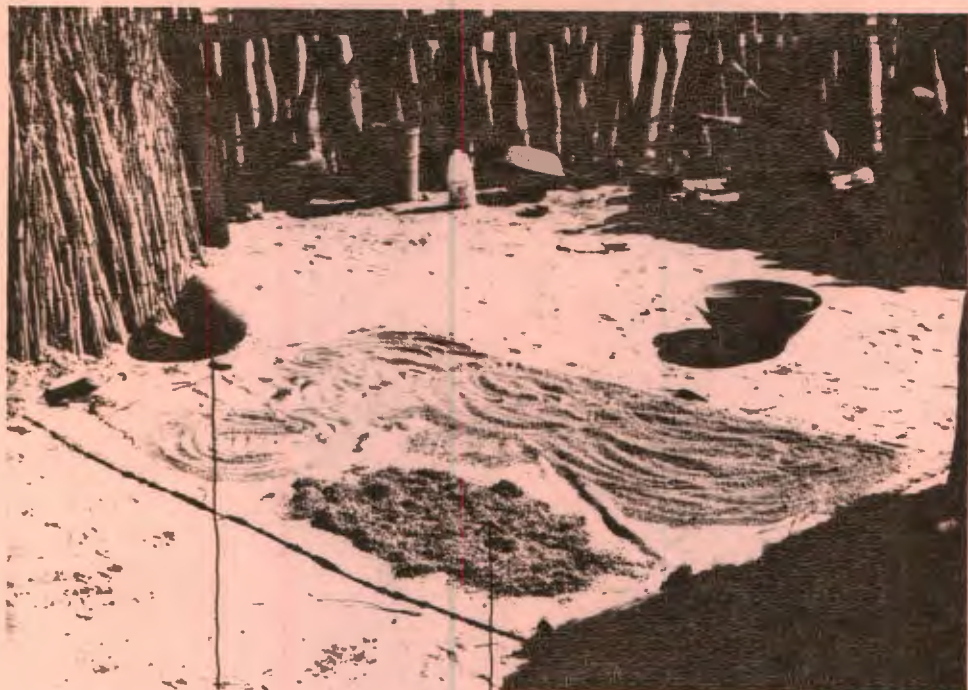
41

Pantries called "omalimba" are required for the storage of food which are close to the oshini, within the epata and close to the cooking place.

Adequate prepared and unprepared food needs to be stored so that there is sufficient for the daily meals of the household. This is short term storage which is constantly being consumed by the family and supplemented by supplies from the oshini (stamping area), the granary or the cooking areas.

The wife usually has a personal elimba close to her own quarters. It is not directly related to the food preparation areas and contains the utensils which she values most. These include pots, baskets and calabashes that are used only by her when she is preparing the food. Grain is stored in open buckets which she alone prepares.

Other pantries do not have specific relations with members of the family except that it is mostly the young girls and the mother who use the epata in which they are located. Clay pots and baskets contain the flour, grain and beer; meat is hung from the roof structure to dry; sorghum shoots are spread out on moist hessian bags in preparation for beer making and porridge is kept in pots which are sealed against insects. These items and containers occupy a lot of space and it is normal for a household to have at least two omalimba.



SITTING OUTSIDE AN ELIMBA .

THE EXTERIOR SPACE BETWEEN TWO OMALIMBA .

SORGHUM SHOOTS .

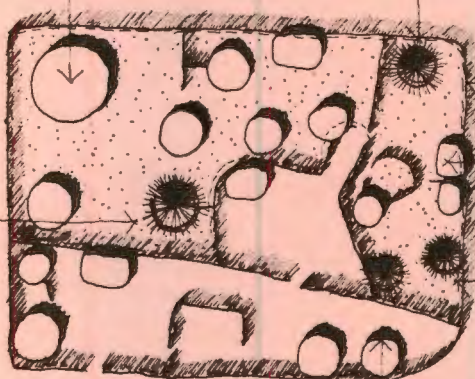
BEER BREWING IN A SEALED POT.



TYPICAL INTERIOR OF AN ELIMBA .

WIFE'S HUT

WIFE'S PERSONAL ELIMBA .



DASHED LINE INDICATES EXTENT OF THE EPATA .

FOOD PREPARATION AND COOKING AREA

TWO OMALIMBA

HOMESTEAD OF SHILONGO

0 1 2 3 4 5 10 15 M.

OSHINI

THE HEARTH : FOOD AND COOKING

42

A place needs to be provided in the epata which is suitable for cooking. It needs to be situated close to the pantry and oshini and have its own shelters under which cooking and eating can take place.

Food is cooked over open fires, and forms part of the female's domestic activity which is spatially centred within the epata. Large quantities of flour are not kept in the pantry which means that millet is stamped regularly to ensure an adequate and constant supply.

Traditionally each wife in a polygynous homestead had her own cooking place in which there was a hearth made of three cooking "stones" or potsherds. Most Bantu-speaking used three stones but because there are no rocky outcrops in Ovamboland the stones had to be constructed out of the clay from anthills into forms resembling pots (Loeb 1962 : 171). Today broken pots are used to form the hearth upon which the cooking pots are placed. Only occasionally do the men get involved with cooking and this is generally when meat is roasted. Fuel is provided by cattle dung and wood. The dung is collected by the children from the nearby pastures. Firewood is generally scarce and is mostly found only in those areas that have not been deforested which are in the Mbalantu and Kwaluudi speaking areas.

The staple food is porridge, meat and vegetables. Cattle are not often slaughtered except on special occasions; goats, chicken and pigs form the general meat diet. Beer brewed from sorghum is drunk with the main meal and, when it is hot, during the day.

Meals are prepared and cooked by the mother and assisted by her daughter whose kitchen chores include fetching water, washing vegetables, making flour and so on.

Usually only one main meal is cooked per day which is most frequently in the evening. This is the time when the whole family can get together after all the homestead, agricultural and stock keeping tasks are complete. Also, this is when the children return from school. In many households the father is away from home at great lengths of time on contract labour and it is mainly the wife, children and any relatives who may be staying in the homestead who will eat together. There are no fixed rules about where the meals are eaten. This could take place in the kitchen courtyard under the shelter or in the main meeting chamber.



FOOD PREPARATION : IN THE EPATA



BREWING BEER : IN A POT SEALED WITH
TERMITE HILL CLAY.

BROKEN POTS
USED AS COOKING
'STONES'.

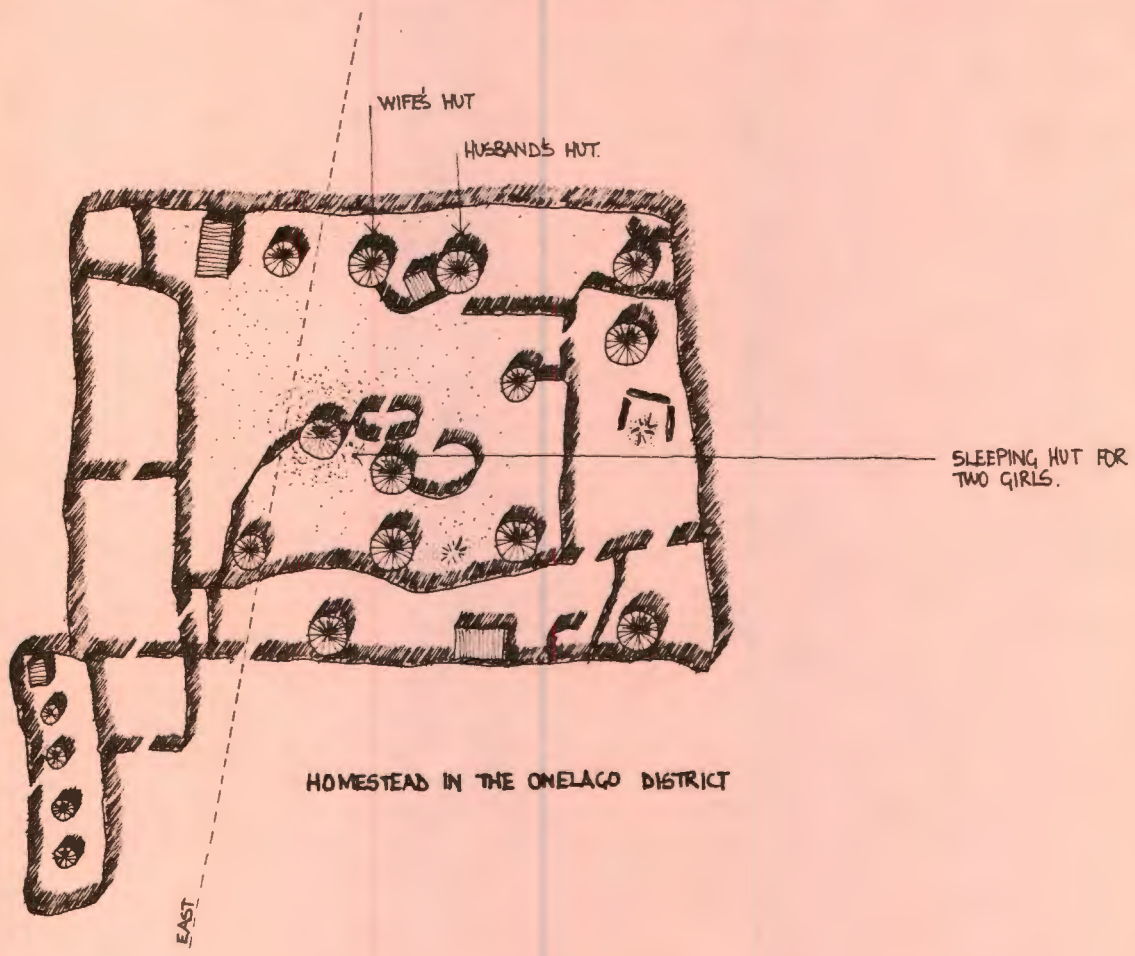
A PLACE FOR THE GIRLS : THE REPRESENTATION OF A FUTURE ECONOMIC
ROLE

43

A separate hut for the adolescent girls is required which is within the female zone. Unmarried girls above the age of puberty remain in the homestead of their father until they marry. The time spent in the female zone is a period of active participation and preparation for their own 'independent' production when they one day leave the homestead.

Production in the homestead takes place with the extraction of labour from within itself for the exploitation of resources under its control. In this context the female zone or 'epata' is a major sub-unit of production in that it constitutes a form of labour power which is expended in the production of crops and the maintenance of the homestead. Historically, in the polygynous household, each epata represented an autonomous unit which was reinforced by the number of children. Because the role of the boys is outside the realm of the girls and because young girls do not leave the homestead until they marry they constitute an important reinforcement of the labour power within the female zone. Under the rules of neolocal residence in Ovamboland a newly wed woman leaves her father's homestead and establishes her own epata in the homestead of her husband. If he does not already occupy his own homestead the couple stay with his father or with his maternal uncle (Loeb 1962 : 132). In all cases the new wife is expected to become economically productive and is expected to know how to maintain and manage the resources under her control. To this end she assists from

when she is a small girl and is gradually integrated into the wider nature of running the homestead and its agricultural activities. Typical tasks include stamping the millet, assisting with the harvesting, preparing food, collecting firewood, cleaning the homestead and so on.



VALUABLE ITEMS ARE HUNG FROM THE ROOF STRUCTURE.



A GROUP OF YOUNG GIRLS AT THE HOMESTEAD : THE WARDROBE USUALLY CONSISTS OF SUITCASES OR TRUNKS WHICH OCCUPY A LOT OF SPACE.

HOSPITALITY : A PLACE FOR GUESTS TO STAY

44

At least one hut is required as a "guest suite" for friends or relatives who come to stay or for passers-by who need to spend the night. It needs to be part of the private zone of the homestead and possibly in the female zone.

The place for guests automatically forms a part of the homestead's "schedule of accommodation".

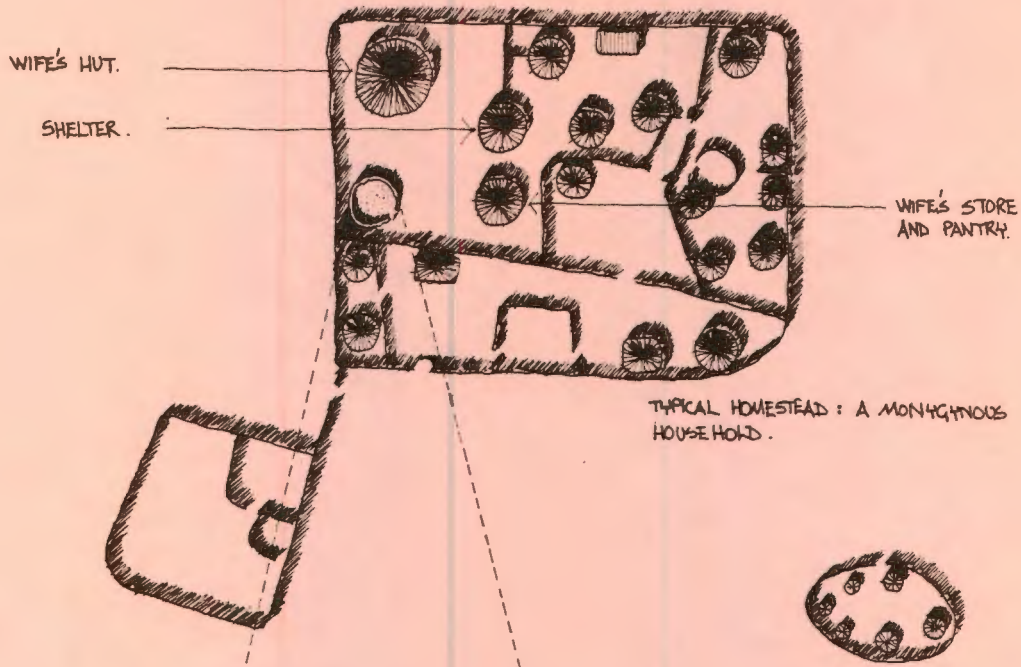
This is due to:

- 1) Social responsibilities
- 2) Respect for the individual
- 3) Sense of communalism

The visitors hut shares space with the wife's hut in the 'female' compartment of this domain. The hut is usually sparsely furnished and chickens are allowed to use the hut for nesting and laying eggs when it is not being used.

It is significant that the visitor shares space that is occupied by the wife's hut and store room. This 'female space' is important because of the social status attached to the wife who offers a portion of her space to the house guest. Besides, to be spatially included within the intimate part of the homestead integrates the visitor with the life of the occupants and represents a form of special welcoming and hospitality. Historically, the guest quarters formed a particular part of the layout of the homestead. Depending on rank and sex, the guest quarters were separated, the most important occupying zones close to the household head or first

wife. In a polygamous society each wife had a small guest hut and it was the duty of the first wife to attend to the guest of the household head (Loeb 1962 : 131). This inheritance is currently reflected in the physical position of the guest hut.



THE HUT FOR GUESTS : EVERY HOMESTEAD HAS AT LEAST ONE HUT FOR VISITORS WHICH IS SITUATED IN THE FEMALE ZONE.

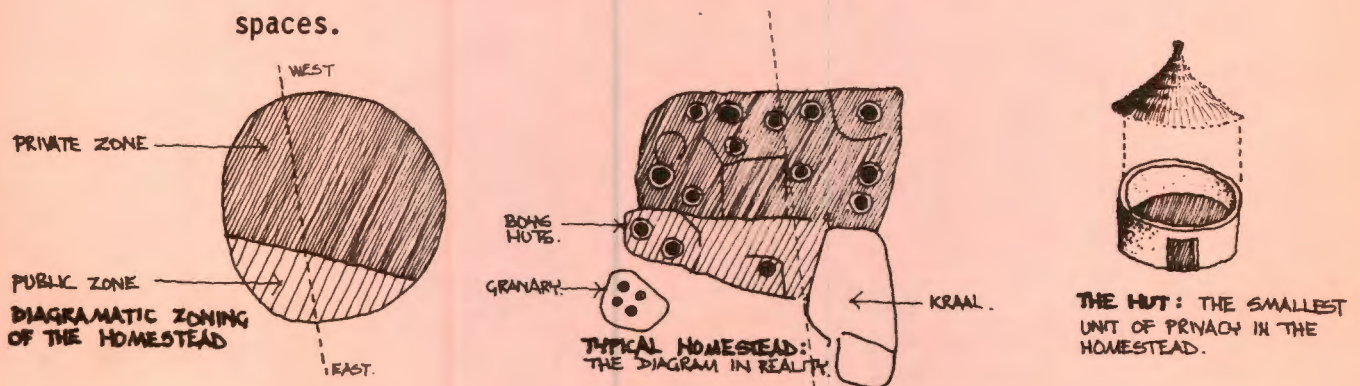
INNER SPACE : THE NEED FOR PRIVACY

45

An intimate, private zone needs to be set aside which is for the use of the family, close relatives and invited guests. It needs to be positioned in relation to the public areas of the homestead to ensure maximum isolation and possibly "difficult" to get to. The family needs spaces for its sleeping quarters, ablution areas, cooking and eating activities which do not form part of its public or social obligation.

The value of privacy is reflected in the position of the family's sleeping and eating quarters. Relative to the notion of front (public), the more personal spaces for the occupants are situated at the back (private). The position of these spaces suggests that the importance of privacy is physically manifested by the compartments in which the sleeping huts and food preparation spaces are placed and by the circulation routes which lead to them.

The hut, as a cell of occupancy or activity, is the most intimate unit within the scale of private and public affairs. It is the sub-unit within the overall compartment of private life which, by its relation to other huts and shelters, forms smaller compartments relating to particular activities and spaces.



EAST FACING ENTRANCE : THE GARDEN GATE AND FRONT DOOR AT ONCE

46

There is only one entrance (onu) to the homestead which is situated in the outer palisade surrounding the homestead and faces an easterly direction, which makes it easily recognisable

More than one onu is expensive and makes the homestead more vulnerable to criminals and other intruders. Traditional religious ideas, even if not currently practised have been inherited which affect aspects of settlement; including the entrance. Also, in a flat landscape it is necessary to provide some form of orientation and to use appropriate planning techniques that respond to an understanding of this environment

Besides its pragmatic function of being the only entrance through which people must pass from the landscape to the privately contained world of the individual family, there are other important functions which the onu has to perform. These functions have to do with how homestead space is related to its wider social and physical environment such as those which derive from, amongst other things pre-colonial religious concepts and appropriate planning techniques and which are reflected in entrance position and technology.

The formal approach to the homestead establishes and confirms the east : west axis around which the homestead is organised; for example the east/public/front : west/private/back relationship is a clear indication

of the two fundamental zones of the homestead relating to the social aspects of family life. Because the sun is life-giving (by its association with Kalunga) these directions became important spatial symbols which were associated with certain social rites. For instance, if a person was asleep or a sick person was allowed to remain lying down at sunset then they ran the risk of going down with the sun to the world below. Sick people therefore had to remain upright and standing at sunset in order to avoid 'going down'. Similarly, at sunrise the sick and weak were brought to the main entrance so that their condition could be enhanced by the life giving sun (Loeb 1962 : 129).

Although many of the pre-colonial religious ideas have disappeared they have nevertheless left their mark on contemporary society; such is the case with the east facing entrance.

This spiritual logic is supplemented by an environmental planning technique which is similarly logical and rational. In a horizontal landscape with very little scope for vertical articulation, the east facing entrance establishes a rule which helps to orientate people when approaching a homestead. The palisade, from a distance, appears formless and by making the entrance position invariable, a planning 'rule' is established thereby making orientation easier and the approach less confusing. The importance of this idea is clearly demonstrated by all homesteads. In one case where the entrance deflected slightly away from the east the owner constructed an independent wooden frame situated outside the palisade and which faced the "correct" direction. Further, he indicated that he had to have his "front door" facing the east. (Personal communication : July 1983). According to Loeb (1962 : 129) previous homesteads had two entrances. A main entrance facing east and a secondary entrance facing west which was used for the family, their

servants and as an exit for visitors. Also, when the cattle kraal formed an integral part of the homesteads' outer perimeter space, the main entrance was approached through the driveway (oluvanda) which led to the entrance of the kraal. It was fenced in with bushes and constructed to ensure that cattle did not enter the fields just before harvesting (Bruwer 1961 : 54ff). There is no evidence of these patterns today.

The position of the entrance is made visible by the way it is constructed in relation to the palisade of which it is a part. It consists of a frame which is made up by two vertical posts, a cross-beam and a threshold set into the ground. A wooden door is hinged to one side and padlocked. Generally the same wood used to make the palisade is used to construct the entrance frame. Larger, more prominent timber members are chosen for the job. Traditionally only certain types of wood could be used to construct the frame and which prevented the entry of unwanted spirits (Loeb 1962 : 129).

During the construction of the homestead the first important element to be erected after the palisade has been marked out is the entrance frame.

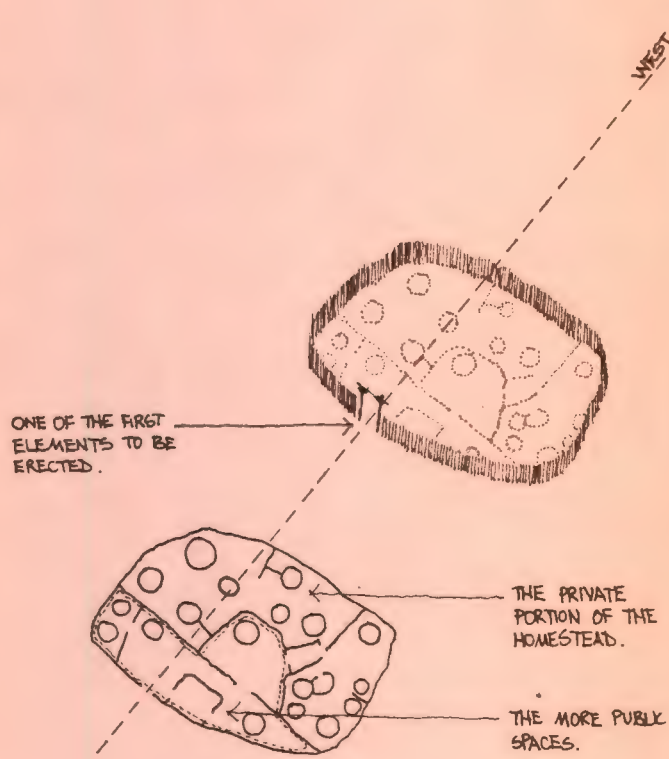
By "modern" dimensional standards it is narrow, usually between 550mm and 700mm. This is a historically inherited dimension which dealt with keeping the spirits from entering the homestead at night and was usually reinforced with a high threshold over which people had to step (Vedder 1966 : 75; Möller 1974 : 111). Except in cases where people have used standard doors from hardware dealers, the narrow width is maintained at the entrance.

In the sense that it is a threshold at the entrance to the homestead

which is neither a "house" in the 'western' sense of the word nor merely the collection of functional spaces such as huts and courtyards, it becomes an important "lock" which clearly establishes the access to private space that is neither the "front door" nor the "garden gate" but both at once.



AN ONU: THE NARROW ENTRANCE MADE OF A FRAME WITH A WOODEN THRESHOLD.



EAST FACING: THE ENTRANCE RELATES DIRECTLY TO THE MAIN APPROACH PATH.

EAST

THE MAIN MEETING CHAMBER : THE MOST IMPORTANT PLACE IN THE
HOMESTEAD

47

A formal "lounge" is required which can be used as a place for the family to get together, guests to be entertained, formal meetings and important ceremonies such as marriages

This space needs to be clearly defined within the homestead pattern and must relate to the entrance, the public areas and have access to the rest of the homestead.

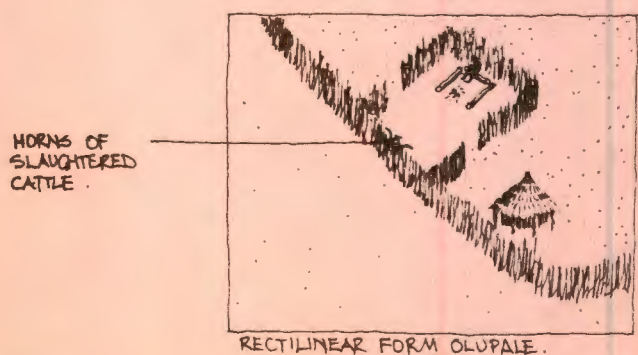
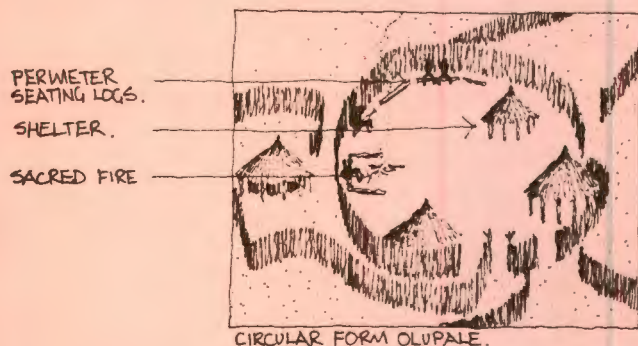
This is the centre of the homestead which carries with it symbolic and practical significance. It is the most important space in the homestead and an opportunity for the owner to display his traditional wealth and status.

The importance of this space called the olupale (which means "a big clear space") has been historically determined. Functionally it is significant at two levels. Firstly, its traditional role derives from religious ideas based on the belief of a Supreme Being. He was represented by the sacred fire (ediko). The meeting place contained the fire and occupied the central position of the homestead. The fire was the most important feature of the homestead which consequently elevated the importance of the meeting place above all other spaces. The symbolic meaning of this space was further enhanced by it being the venue where the horns of slaughtered cattle were placed, usually on a rack near to the fire. These included the horns of cattle which belonged to the matrilineal estate of the family (Bruwer 1961:53-63) and the horns of sacrificed oxen (Walton 1956:157). Whilst this aspect relates

08

to the religious substance of the space it nevertheless broadens its significance to include economy. This is because of the value attached to cattle; the number signalling the wealth of the owner. Secondly, this space was meaningful at a pragmatic level. As a place it was shaped as a multi-functional chamber to which all the passages led. It was used for counselling, important meetings, festivals, beer drinking and dances. Shelters (etala) provided shade and seating was on logs around the perimeter of the space.

Although the traditional significance of the olupale has become less important it nevertheless retains value as the focal point in the contemporary homestead. Although it is private and at the heart of the homestead it is also a public area. The family use it on a day-to-day basis as a setting for eating, drinking, some cooking, socialising and also for chopping wood. At evening time it is usually where the family gather round the fire and both adults and children participate in drinking beer. The fire, seating logs and cattle horns maintain the importance of the space as the nucleus of the homestead.



GOODS OF VALUE : A SAFE PLACE FOR INHERITED ITEMS AND OTHER THINGS

48

A storeroom for personal items and inherited goods of value is usually provided close to the husband's or wife's hut. Valuable articles are often bulky and large requiring a lot of space. There is consequently little space left over in the personal sleeping huts, so a separate storage hut needs to be built which is shared by husband and wife.

The only inheritable form of estate is movable property; notably cattle. All other possessions are handed down according to the laws of matrilineal inheritance and either used on a daily basis or specific occasions. A women's personal effects and cooking utensils are handed down to her daughter. The personal belongings of a man pass to his brother or nephew or sometimes to his own children. This pattern ensures that there is always a stock of items in the homestead which are valued and need to be taken care of. These are stored in suitcases or tied up in bundles, the contents of which include:

Belts made from ox skin called omuija.

Men's and women's aprons made from the stomach of an ox, called eteta.

The back apron worn by a woman made from the skin of cattle, called onguuo.

Baby slings made from the skin of calf or from brightly coloured patchwork cotton fabrics, called odikua.

Jewellery such as copper beads, earrings, ostrich eggshell beads, copper anklets and bangles and so on are safely stored away.

Other items such as drums made from hard wood, called ongoma, spare bicycles, extra blankets, beds or any artefact which is not frequently used are stored together. The hut has a padlocked door which is always locked and the key kept by either the wife or the husband.



A MAN PLAYING HIS ONGOMA.



A MOTHER OFF TO WORK WITH HER BABY IN AN ODIKUA.



AN OLD LADY WITH HER ARM BANDS AND NECKLACE.



A BICYCLE IS SUSPENDED FROM THE RAFTERS AND THE REMAINS OF A SILK PARACHUTE IS DRAPED ALONG THE WALL FOR LATER USE.

THE "CUCA" SHOP : A SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVICE

49

A "cuca" shop either outside the homestead or at its edge which is used for selling beer and other smaller items and meeting and socializing with people.

It is usually therefore easily accessible to the community at large.

Socially it is important to remain hospitable; and by establishing a venue where beer can be obtained ensures that people will congregate and meet at the homestead from time to time. This is one way of making money and also penetrating the cash economy. Usually the entrance to the homestead or along a pathway that passes the homestead close by is the best place for locating the shop for maximum public exposure.

There is a rising tendency for this space to be part of the 'schedule of accommodation' for the homestead. The demand for each homestead owner to have a "cuca" shop has increased during the recent past. (This observation is based on periodic visits to the area during the period from March 1979 to July 1983). The term "Cuca" is Portuguese and is used in Ovamboland to denote a place for trading mainly small scale and perishable goods. Soap, matches, sugar, second hand clothes, candles and so on are common items displayed on shelves and worktops. Beer however is the most common.

Traditional brew is made from the fermented sorghum by the women. It is brought to the "cuca" shop in buckets and sold by the jug. It is not a strong intoxicant and people can drink it for many hours while sitting around catching up on the latest social gossip and news. The beer made by the breweries is bought by the owner from traders in one of the towns or settlements. He then sells it by the bottle at a profit.

The opening time varies. There is no set period for trading. Sometimes the shop is left locked for periods of up to a week (Personal observation : 1983). It depends on whether the owner is at home or whether he in fact wishes to trade at a particular time. The women are also "cuca" shop owners : either individually or as co-partners if neighbours wish to pool their resources.

Construction is mostly of a timber frame cladded by sheet metal. One space divided by a counter top with essential seating at the edges is the usual layout. Sometimes a shelter is attached near the door and seating provided outside.



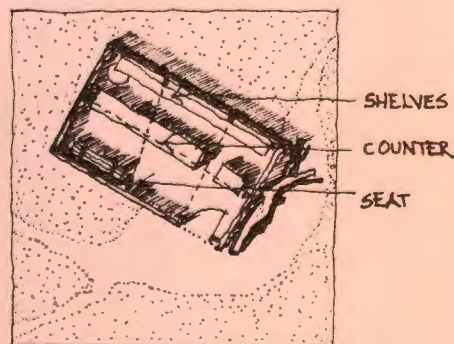
DRINKING TRADITIONAL BEER :
OUTSIDE A CUCA SHOP



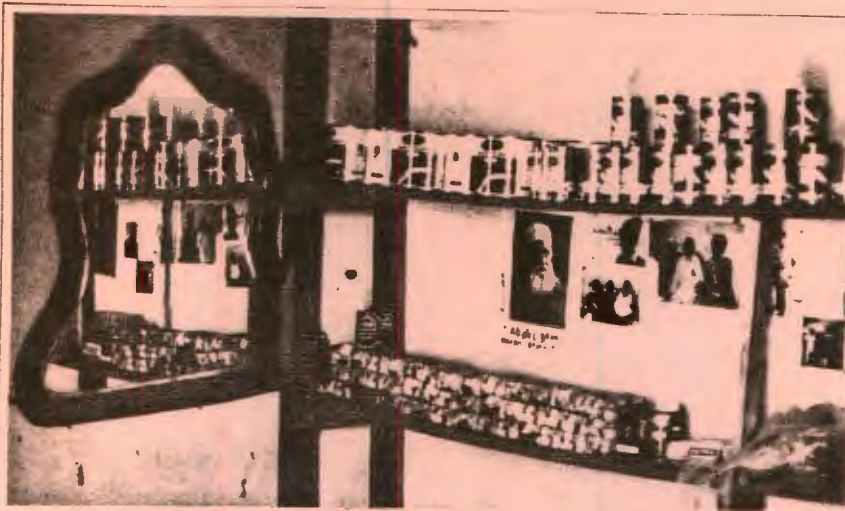
A CUCA SHOP : SITUATED AT A HOMESTEAD AND
ON A MOVEMENT ROUTE.



A SOCIAL PLACE : NEIGHBOURS AND DRINKING GATHER TOGETHER



SHELVES
COUNTER
SEAT



THE CUCA SHOP : A WAY OF MAKING A LIVING, IN THE CONSUMER ECONOMY AS WELL AS MAINTAINING SOCIAL RELATIONS.

TINNED FOOD, PORTRAITS, PATENT MEDICINES AND FRUIT JUICE.



JUST IN FOR A CHAT!



TYPICAL INTERIORS : THE ONE WELL STOCKED THE OTHER LESS SO - BOTH ARE APPROPRIATELY SUITED TO THE RESOURCES AND NEEDS OF THE RESPECTIVE OWNERS.



BUNDLES OF HOME MADE AND SECOND HAND GOODS.

HYGIENIC SPACES : BATHROOMS, URINALS AND GARBAGE PITS

There are three types of ablution/hygiene spaces which are planned and integrated into the homestead layout. These spaces are the bathroom, the "urinal" (oixuxuilo) and the garbage pit

The bathrooms and urinals are mostly concealed by palisades or behind huts, and are close to the private and public zones of the homestead. Garbage pits must be located close to the homestead.

Personal hygiene and good health is ranked high and there is an implicit and unspoken planning rule that the landscape be kept free of litter.

People take great care in washing regularly and the children are taught from a young age to keep themselves clean. The "bathrooms" generally occupy left over spaces which are concealed and private. Depending on the size of the household there is normally a female and a male "bathroom". In smaller family units one wash area does the job and would normally consist of a galvanised sheet metal laundry drum in which one sits or stands. Millet meal mixed with water is sometimes used in place of soap. The floor surface is stamped hard and smooth to a falls away from any hut which may form part of the screen.

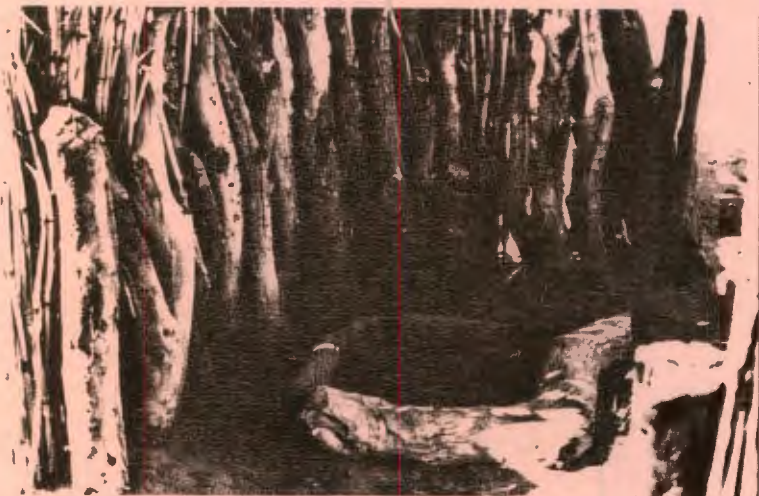
Urinals called "oixuxuilo", occur more frequently in the plan. For instance, there is always at least one oixuxuilo which is located close to the main meeting chamber. This would

approximate the 'western' meaning of the "guest toilet". Other oixuxuilo are similarly planned for convenience; close to the female zone, next to the homestead owners' hut and so on. A large log is simply laid against the palisade to form a barrier for the loose soil within. People do not defecate in the homestead but use the agricultural fields.

Every homestead owner digs a shallow pit for depositing garbage. Paper, beer cans, broken bottles and so on are dumped in the garbage pits which are rotated from time to time. The only criteria for the position of the pit is that it should not encroach upon the cultivated fields. The areas between the farms and homesteads is exceptionally clean and pollution free.

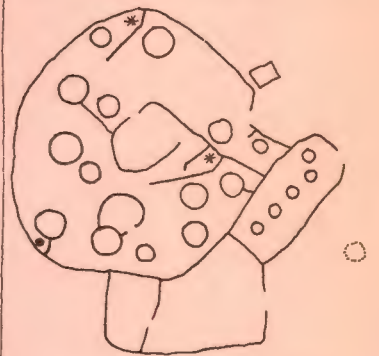


A BATHROOM : SHOWING A SOAP RACK AND WASH TUB.



AN OIXUXUILO : WELL SCREENED.

- * URINAL
- WASH PLACE
- GARBAGE PIT



HOMESTEAD IN THE OXGNEDVA DISTRICT.

TERRITORIAL SPACE : THE MEANING OF BOUNDARIES

Boundaries around territory over which there is a personal use-right are made explicitly clear.

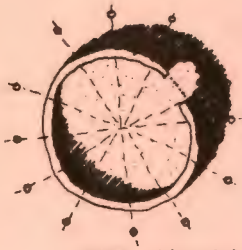
There are historical and pragmatic reasons to do with the system of land tenure why this is so. During the pre-colonial period land ownership was vested in the king or chief. He appointed headmen who were granted with land rights in specific districts. The headmen assigned segments or wards of each district to sub-headmen after the payment of cattle. They in turn provided individuals with farm sites which were also paid for with cattle. This pattern is identical today, the only difference being the form of payment which is sometimes in cash.

Just as there are rites of transition (Loeb 1948 : 16ff) marking the passage from one social state of life to the next so there are clearly delineated markers that indicate personal or individual space. There is an implicit and very clear sense of what is "here" or "inside" and "there" or "outside" in relation to the individual, the family and society as a whole. This establishes a scale of territory, the delineation of which becomes sharper the closer to the individual it gets.

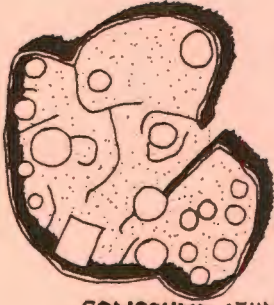
The smallest "piece" of space is that which is occupied and defined by the individual. This spatial territory is represented by the hut. It is the private world of the personality who occupies its space and is furnished and used according to personal whim.

Beyond the threshold of the hut is the "outside" world of the family. It is bounded by a continuous palisade which establishes the compound of the homestead. Into this the personal and functional spaces of the family are inserted in such a way as to create a complex of interrelated sub-zones for personal and group action. The compound establishes the intimate world of the family unit thereby setting up a "here : there" relationship with the farm from which access into the homestead is only possible through the onu (main entrance). Limited and controlled access prevents farm animals from entering, in particular the goats, who do a lot of damage. The farm is marked by a continuous boundary of thornbushes which forms a dense hedge to keep unwanted animals from the crops prior to harvesting. A scarcity of suitable materials prevents this form of boundary in many regions where the owners merely stake out their land in a gesture of territorial delineation. Often, in the absence of a formal farm boundary, landmarks are used as property "pegs". Tall trees, ant hills or, in some cases, electricity pylons, perform this function of establishing what is "inside" and "outside". These are features which are prominent in a horizontal landscape which has very little vertical relief.

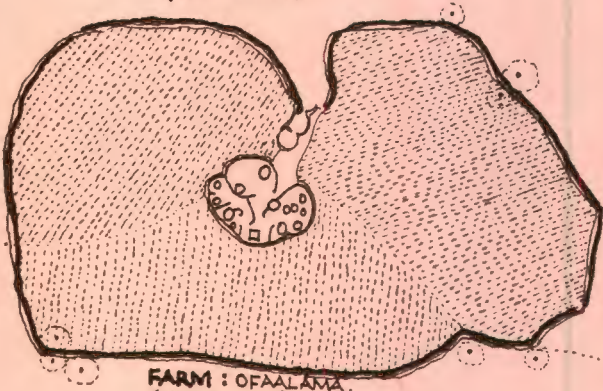
The wards and also the districts have edges to them. They are not formally marked off but, as is the case on some farms, landscape features determine the extent of the oshilongo or omikunda. The main feature of delineation does however appear to be the oshona system which sets up clear clusters and neighbourhoods of farms.



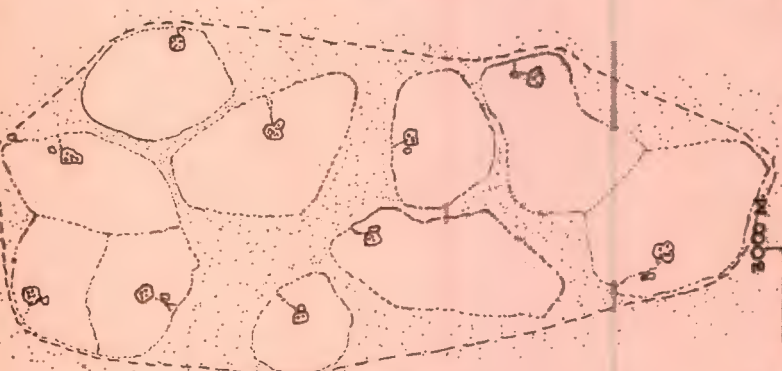
HUT : ONDUBA.
(THE INDIVIDUAL).



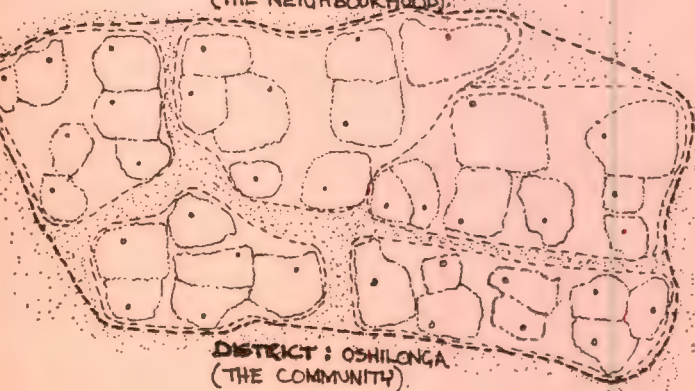
COMPOUND : EUMBO
(THE FAMILY).



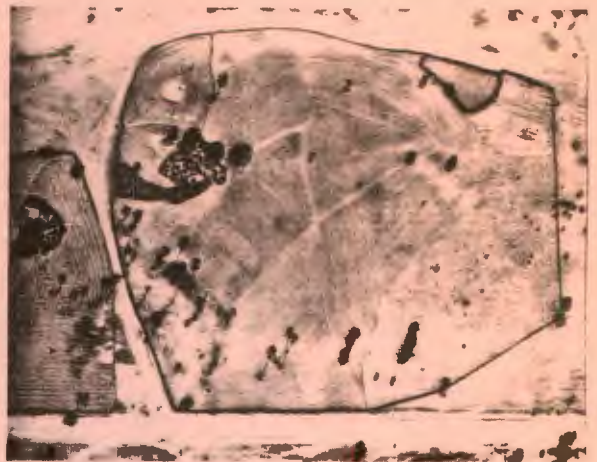
FARM : OFAALANA.
(THE FAMILY).



WARD : OMIKUNDA.
(THE NEIGHBOURHOOD).



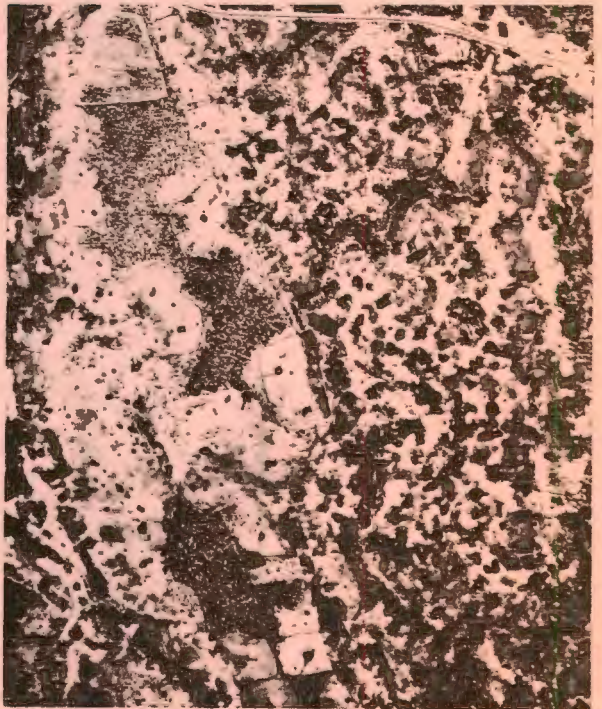
DISTRICT : OSHILONGA.
(THE COMMUNITY).



FARM BOUNDARY : IN THE TSANDI AREA, THIS TYPE OF BOUNDARY DEPENDS ON THE AVAILABILITY OF BRUSHWOOD.



AN OMIKUNDA : PART OF A WARD IN THE ONGWEDIVA DISTRICT. AN OSHANA SEPERATES THE FARMS INTO 'ISLANDS'.



AN OSHILONGA : A PORTION OF A DISTRICT



MIGRANT LABOUR : THE EFFECTS ON TECHNOLOGY, STYLE AND MAINTENANCE

52

The effect that migrant labour has on the pattern and form of the homestead is twofold. Firstly, it derives the homestead and its economy of an important source of labour power. This means that the work of repairing of huts, building additional structures, adding to the palisade and so on has to be done by others or the work has to be postponed until such time as the men return. Contract periods vary between eight months (Personal findings : July 1983) and eighteen months (Töttemeyer 1978 : 156). Building repairs and general homestead maintenance are normally undertaken from September to November, that is when the agricultural economic cycle allows them to happen. Consequently if the men are not back during this period, less time than is necessary is spent working on the fabric of the homestead than would normally be the case. Secondly, the technology that is used for constructing the homestead is beginning to be challenged. Workers exposed to ideas and techniques in the towns and on the mines and farms are 'importing' not only ideas about forms (such as roof style and plan shape) but are also returning with actual building components. It is not uncommon to find a lorry or bakkie loaded with door frames, timber sections, steel windows, door leafs and so on winding its way through the oshonas. The new structures that are built using this form of technology are not common and within the homestead they are usually occupied by the wife or an elderly man. A lot of status and importance is thus being attached to the new style. In none of the case studies currently being investigated was there any structural transformation within the relations between spaces in the homestead. These technical changes are thus purely at 'surface' levels only.

The absence of men from the homesteads at great lengths of time has consolidated the co-operation between neighbours and reinforced social

links. People form labour groups in order to assist one another with agricultural and homestead activities.

Men who are away are not necessarily at work in the south although this forms by far the largest group. Figures for 1975 show that out of a population of just under 400 000 there were 40 000 away on labour contracts - 10% the of total population of Ovamboland (Tötemeyer 1978 : 156). Others are employed by the military and police forces in the areas and are away from the homesteads for most of the time. The third group of absent males are those in exile. They are mostly the men who have joined the liberation movement and its military wing which, according to observers, commands widespread popular support (Moorsom 1982 : 68-9).

Migrant labour in Ovamboland and in Namibia as a whole is not a recent phenomenon but has its roots in the pauperization of the country beginning at the turn of the century (Clarence-Smith and Moorsom 1977 : 106). It is not necessary to trace its history here but rather to point out that the homestead as a set of spatial relations, appears to have withstood the forces that migrant labour has brought to bear on it; a response which suggests some form of in-built flexibility.



A MIGRANT WORKERS FAMILY:
THE WIFE AND OLDER CHILDREN
MAINTAIN PRODUCTION. THIS IS A
HOMESTEAD IN THE ONELAGO DIS-
TRICT.



OSHAKATI: LABOURERS GATHER
AT BUSING POINTS FOR THE JOURNEY
SOUTHWARDS.



THE NEW TECHNOLOGY:
SHEET METAL AND SUN-DRIED
BRICK CONSTRUCTION (EKO
DISTRICT, 1983).



ASPECTS OF MIGRANT LABOUR : IN OVAMBOLAND AND NAMIBIA AS A WHOLE ARE REFLECTED IN A LINO CUT BY JOHN MUAFANGEJO.

INFORMAL EDUCATION : CHILDRENS' RESPONSIBILITIES AND GAMES

53

The homestead, its grazing areas and cultivated fields forms the background for the preparation for adulthood. Traditionally this education was broad with the aim of preparing boys and girls for their future economic role. Today most young people are forced by circumstances to leave home and find work in the towns and on farms in the south. For this reason the education at home has little to offer but is nevertheless still emphasised as being customary and necessary for personal development.

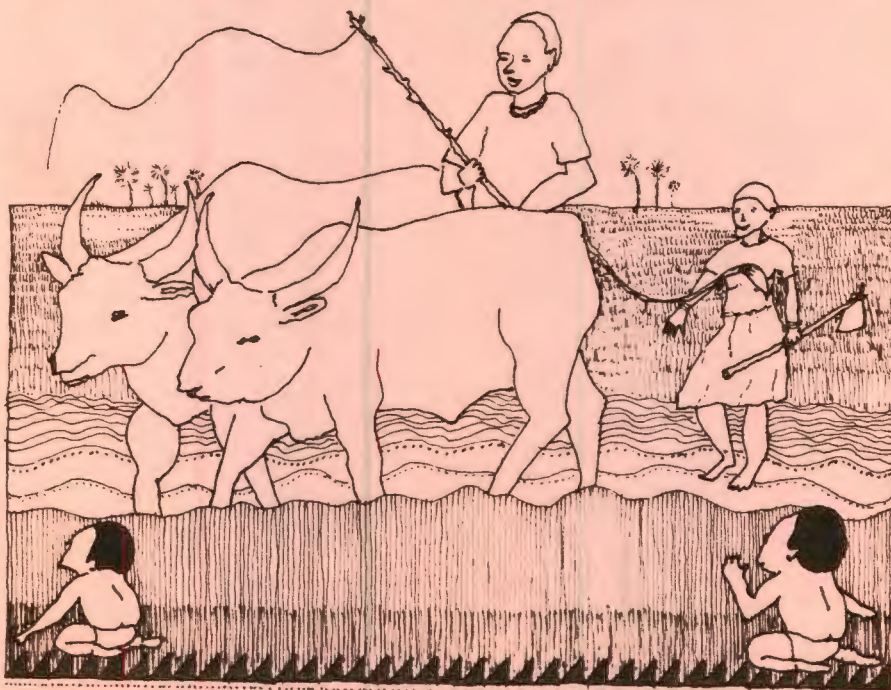
The education at home is informal and learned by participation and experience rather than by the conscious passing on of knowledge in a system divorced from reality. As such, most of the education is by imitating the adult way of doing things. Children learn tasks and techniques simply by doing them. Most of what the child learns is practical and has a direct bearing on the economic life of the homestead. This makes the child's activity meaningful as it contributes to the general feeling of mutual responsibility in the family. Moreover, much of what is by imitating in the homestead carries through to the children's games as well. Models of cattle and homesteads are made by the boys; babies are imitated by the dolls which the girls make and play with. A knowledge of natural materials, plant and animal life and manual skill is developed by the boys because of their participation in activities related to animal husbandry and hunting. The tasks of the girls are related to the domestic chores in the homestead and from an early age become assistant housewives : stamping the omahangu, collecting firewood, laundry and so on. The overall effect of these respective activities is that they introduce at an early age the sexual division of labour in and around the homestead.



IN THE OSHINI: LITTLE GIRLS SINGING AND DANCING WHILE STAMPING MILLET.



AT THE THRESHING FLOOR: A YOUNG BOY LEARNING TO CATCH BIRDS.



CHILDREN: LEARN BY COPYING THEIR PARENTS AND ELIERS.

FORMAL EDUCATION : THE ALIENATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE FROM THE HOMESTEAD

54

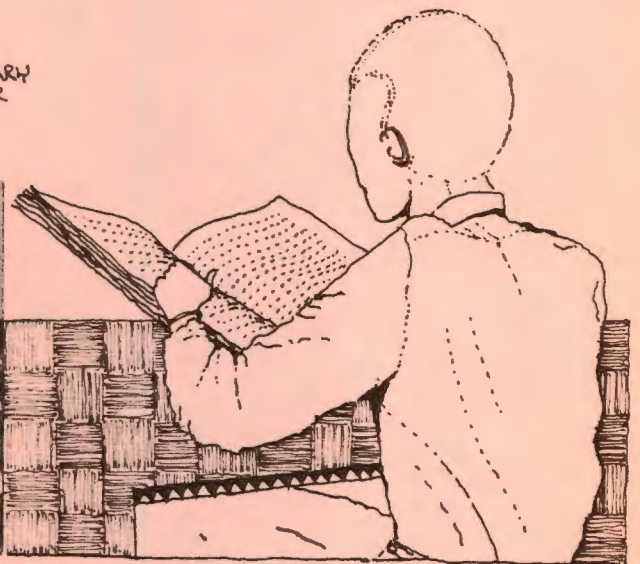
A recent increase in the number of educational facilities has added to the number of people being educated in schools. Beginning in the mid 1970's the Ovamboland administrative authorities embarked upon an accelerated programme whereby classrooms, schools and hostel facilities were built in the region (Personal discussion with Mr Oosthuizen, Works Department : May 1979). This provision has brought with it social changes which have indirectly affected the homestead and the overall settlement pattern.

Economic pressures have forced the need for formal education in the "western" style. Job opportunities and consequently economic status is enhanced by a school education which has meant that most young people now attend one of the schools in their respective districts. Because of distances and the locality of these facilities not everyone who attends is a day scholar: many children have to be accommodated in hostels. This means that they are away from the homestead for most of the year thereby depriving it of a valuable source of labour and economic power. The imbalance in the economic equilibrium which results has to be made good by the rest of the family, usually the women, the elderly and the very young who take on the extra tasks. Daily chores by the young boys in the stock-keeping sphere and the young girls in the domestic and agricultural spheres have either to be neglected or done by others when time permits. This includes helping to maintain the fabric of the homestead: palisade repairs, sweeping the courtyards, assisting with thatching and so on. Household income derived from migrant labour, casual labour in the nearby towns and "cuca" shops is spent mostly on maintaining the children at school. Whereas this was previously expended on the farm and homestead in the form of new building materials and agricultural implements, it is

now used for school fees, books, shoes, uniforms and other sundry expenses. f

The schools focus primarily on educating for vocational skills with an apparent de-emphasis on training for social relationships, which is what the informal education in the domestic situation offered. Education was traditionally acquired by copying the skills and actions of elders which the child witnessed around him. Thus, besides learning technical and domestic skills the young people were automatically socialized into performing what constituted socially accepted behaviour. School education has in effect separated these two "educations" which has consequently created differences and controversies between age groups in the family. The authority of parents has been challenged and, in some cases, weakened (Tuupainen 1970 : 132). The spirit of communalism in the community has been de-emphasised in favour of individual interests. Teenagers frequently do not have any interest in the affairs of the homestead and the farm and the network of co-operation that reinforces and maintains the continual economic production of the society as a whole (Personal observation : July 1983). Peasant families and the community are becoming more stratified into distinct classes as the alienation of the young people from the rest of society increases.

A TYPICAL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL AND HOSTEL COMPLEX NEAR TO TSANDI.



RITUAL : THE SYMBOLIC NATURE OF SETTLEMENT

55

Ritual procedures are the ceremonial manifestations or 'acting out' of myths. This means that belief systems are the foundations upon which rituals are formulated and to which they refer. As Hammond-Tooke points out;

"Ritual forms the articulation point between the belief system and the network of day-to-day interactions between men which is society. It is here that the social and ideational interpenetrate" (1980:344).

Included in this are ritual acts that are focused on aspects of settlement and land usage; they are the means whereby settlement is enriched with meaning. They are seldom carried out today but nevertheless retain importance, even if indirect, on the symbolic nature of space. The meaning of space is enriched by certain rituals that pertain to particular pieces of space, that is, the symbolism of the act enriches the identity of the environment at which it is directed or within which it is performed. The close relationship which exists between the idea, ritual and space is physically addressed by the rites often performed at socially defined spatial intersections such as thresholds, boundaries and edges. In particular these are the rituals of insurance that are performed as measures of (i) protecting the homestead and assuring (economic) success in the realms of (ii) agriculture and (iii) herding. An emotional involvement with space is thus generated by the integration of social rites with aspects of the physical environment.

- (i) The homestead: Traditionally these measures applied mostly to new homesteads that were about to be occupied. Certain constructional details and materials were used to counteract the

effects of witches and natural acts. A crossbeam of special timber spans the gateway of the main entrance to keep out witches. Similarly, thresholds of sticks or bottles keep evil spirits and sorcerers away (that is, besides the practical functions). Bruwer (1961:136ff) notes that species of gardenia were put on roofs to protect huts from lightning.

- (ii) Agriculture: A medicine-man walks around and across the fields of the farm and buries medicine in the soil to protect the crops from thieves. The same is done to the granary. The medicine is removed before harvesting time.
- (iii) Herding: The "dancing of the cattle" is both a feast and a ritual (Bruwer 1961 : 136ff). It occurs when the cattle return from distant grazing lands to the farm. Singing women dance around the herd selecting the best kept cattle. The ceremony ends with a feast for the herdboys. This ritual purifies the cattle and ensures much milk and many calves.

THE FIELDS SOON
AFTER PLANTING IN
MOUNDS.

A WOMAN DOING A
SIMULATED 'DANCE
OF THE CATTLE'.



THE HOMESTEAD, AGRICULTURE AND CATTLE FORM THE SPATIAL OBJECTS TO WHICH RITUALS OF INSURANCE ARE DIRECTED.

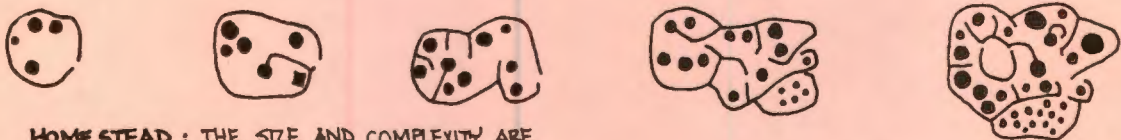
SOCIAL RANK : THE HISTORICALLY INHERITED INDICATORS

Status and social rank are rooted in concepts of wealth which derive from two different sources. The first concerns values attributable to the past and the pre-capitalist mode of production while the second may be ascribed to contemporary socio-economic forces in Ovamboland and Namibia as a whole. Both these concepts are focussed on the adult male although there are indications to suggest that the role and status of women is changing to take on a new significance (Moorsom 1982 : 57 ff).

In the pre-capitalist mode of production in Ovamboland social rank was a physically reflected phenomenon which was measured by the size and complexity of the homestead, the number of cattle, the area of fields under cultivation and the age of the household head. In polygynous households cattle were the prime generators of wealth and status : they were used in exchange for wives from other lineages, as the more wives the greater the labour power to work more land. Wives meant the possibility of more children which increased the chances of more daughters and the subsequent prospect of more cattle as brideprice when they left to get married and so on. Furthermore the complexity of the homestead layout was a function of the epata (female zones) which accumulated with more wives.

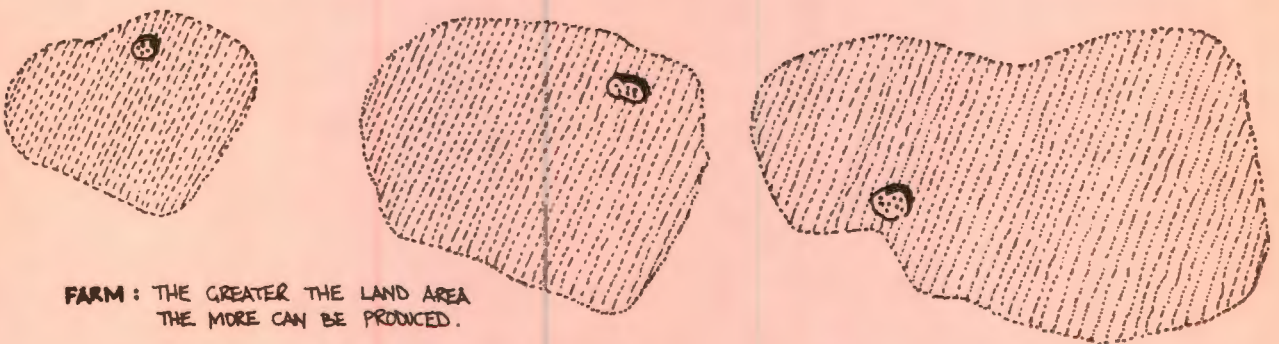
There is little to suggest that, in the peasant social formations prior to the arrival of European traders in the 1840's and the subsequent transformations that took place up to the introduction of the migrant labour system in 1917, there existed any form of class structure or "feudal aristocracy" based on the unequal spread of wealth (Clarence-Smith and Moorsom 1977 : 98 - 101). That is, in spite of the control of land and the accumulation of surplus extracted by trade and exchange by the kings who ruled the independent kingdoms of this region.

Furthermore, these measures and others have, until recently, tended to 'level' out the distribution of wealth in the community which prevented the rise of a permanently wealthy group or family. Other measures included the laws of kinship with dispersed matrilineage clans which determined the lines of transmission for the inheritance of property, the succession of rights, the patrilocal pattern of residence and the absence of any form of the private property of land. These social mechanisms have been severely challenged by the intervention of the capital economy which has generated its own indicators of wealth.



HOMESTEAD : THE SIZE AND COMPLEXITY ARE IMPORTANT INDICATORS OF STATUS. POLYGYNOUS HOUSEHOLDS CONSISTED OF A NUMBER OF EPATA (FEMALE ZONES) WHICH GENERATED THE HOMESTEAD'S COMPLEXITY.

THESE HOMESTEAD PLANS DERIVE FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE ONGWEDIVA DISTRICT 1981.



FARM : THE GREATER THE LAND AREA THE MORE CAN BE PRODUCED.



CATTLE : A PRIMARY INDICATOR OF WEALTH.



GRANARY : THE NUMBER OF GRAIN BASKETS REFLECT AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND ENHANCE THE STATUS OF THE HOMESTEAD.



SOCIAL STATUS : THE SPATIAL INDICATORS IN THE SUBSISTENCE MODE OF PRODUCTION.

RESPECT FOR THE INDIVIDUAL : THE ELDERLY AND CLOSE RELATIVES

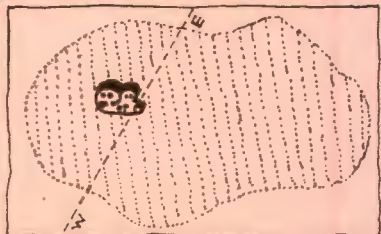
"Still, Aron was my mentor and many years my elder - according to our customs, I could not possibly walk out on him. So, in anguish, I listened."
(John Ya - Otto 1982 : 38).

The dignity of the individual is highly respected in Ovambo society. Obedience to those in authority and a sense of generosity and encouragement to share material goods are values which are stressed. There are historically determined reasons why these codes of conduct are maintained. The pre-colonial era was characterised by independent kingdoms dispersed across the region each with its own ruler. The most powerful of these were the Kwanyama kings of north-eastern Ovamboland (Clarence-Smith and Moorsom 1977 : 97). Irregular tensions caused mainly by cattle raids generally generated a desire amongst all people for peace and tranquility. The aim of this form of moral law is thus individual respect and goodwill towards all. These patterns of behaviour are especially noticeable in relation to the elders of the community and close relatives. Old people particularly are regarded with respect and dignity as in the pre-colonial era they not only tended to accumulate larger herds but also had many wives and could therefore work more land (Clarence-Smith 1979 : 73).

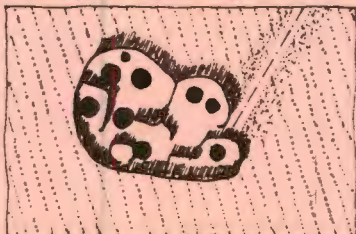
These attitudes have physical or spatial manifestation in certain aspects of the homestead:

- 1) The homestead and farm as a whole represents the essential unit of production, the family. The complexity and size of the homestead reflect the status of the household head as do the amount of cattle and extent of agricultural land. These issues automatically clarify his social responsibilities which demands respect because control of these resources and the continuity of homestead life rests ultimately with him.

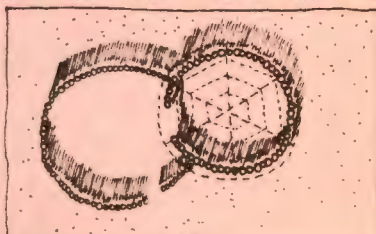
- 2) A special hut called the onduda jovafuko is built for the sole use by: the wife's mother and father, the husband's mother and father and the wife's brothers. It is also used as a ceremonial hut for when a man brings home his new wife for the first time for use as a "honeymoon suite". The new wife stays here and is looked after for a month or two before becoming economically active.
- 3) When people (including those familiar with the family) approach the main entrance they announce themselves by shouting their greetings and ask for the person they wish to see. A reply is usually returned from inside the stockade. It is considered a breach of social etiquette if one's arrival is not announced.



HOMESTEAD AND FARM.



APPROACH.



ONDUDA JOVAFUKO.

CHAPTER 3CONCLUSIONS

Homesteads in Ovamboland, as observed and studied in this investigation, display similar characteristics of layout, organization and accommodation. This suggests that, while no two homesteads are identical, there are definite structural regularities which are common to all. The pattern of the homestead is an enclosed compound which is characterized by a central feature (the sacred fire) and an east facing entrance. In other words, there is a clear indication that underlying each individual homestead design is a prototypical diagram which is particularized by the owner/builder. It is in this light that the following preliminary conclusions are proposed:

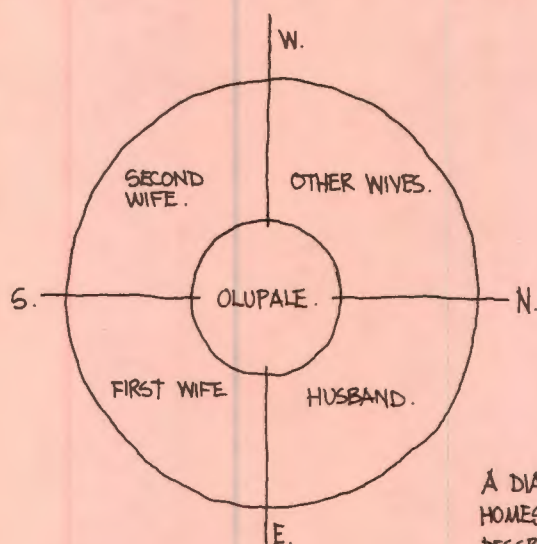
- 1) Each homestead owner is his own planner/designer and builder. He accepts and uses the standard spatial components which are typical of the homestead and, by inheriting specific ideas about space, which are handed down from generation to generation, composes these components into a form which suits his socio-economic needs and is appropriate to the ecological environment. This is achieved within the framework of an accepted set of rules which help him order his homestead in relation to the physical and non-physical context. In this way, by using available technology and materials, spatial relations are automatically regulated into a form which conforms with the physical and non-physical requirements of the environment and which is embellished with symbols into a style which is meaningful. An implicit understanding of the environment helps the decision-making and design process insofar as it eliminates many of the variables :

there is not so much a question of what form to adopt, only how to order a series of 'givens' to suit personal needs.

- 2) Physical space is thus defined with the help of a conceptualised topography. A difficult task is therefore automatically made easier by the 'mechanical' inheritance of this topography which is subsequently deployed individually. This diagram (or mental map) of space indicates the preferred plan of the homestead and is taken for granted as a planning tool : in other words, it is the theory which informs appropriate practice.
- 3) Underlying the preferred plan (or prototype for settlement) is a set of spatial components consisting of cells (huts and shelters), compartments (meeting places and courtyards), paths (passages), granaries and cattle kraal which are structured according to a specific code of relations. This structural code is rooted in the cultural complex of the society and by relating the spatial components in a particular way, it calls the prototypical homestead into being. The prototype is then particularised into versions which are at once unique, meaningful and respond directly to individual needs.
- 4) In order to define the homestead prototype, it is necessary to clarify the properties which underlie its composition. By distilling the homestead into "key structures" (Kuper 1980 : 11) it is possible to delineate its conceptual model. Using current examples of homestead case studies obtained by on-site investigation and earlier descriptions (Bruwer 1961 : 53; Loeb 1962 : 128) it becomes feasible to postulate a model.

The conclusions drawn by Loeb in this regard are based on the predominant precolonial polygynous household. In his description of the Kwanyama homestead plan, he describes its layout which:

"has as a rule four main divisions in its living quarters : one each for the kraal head, the first wife and second wife; and one for the other wives. These four divisions are grouped around a central courtyard, the main meeting place called the olupale. Four is the Kwanyamas' sacred number, standing not only for the four cardinal directions, but also for a synthesis of sacred form and number." (op. cit : 129).

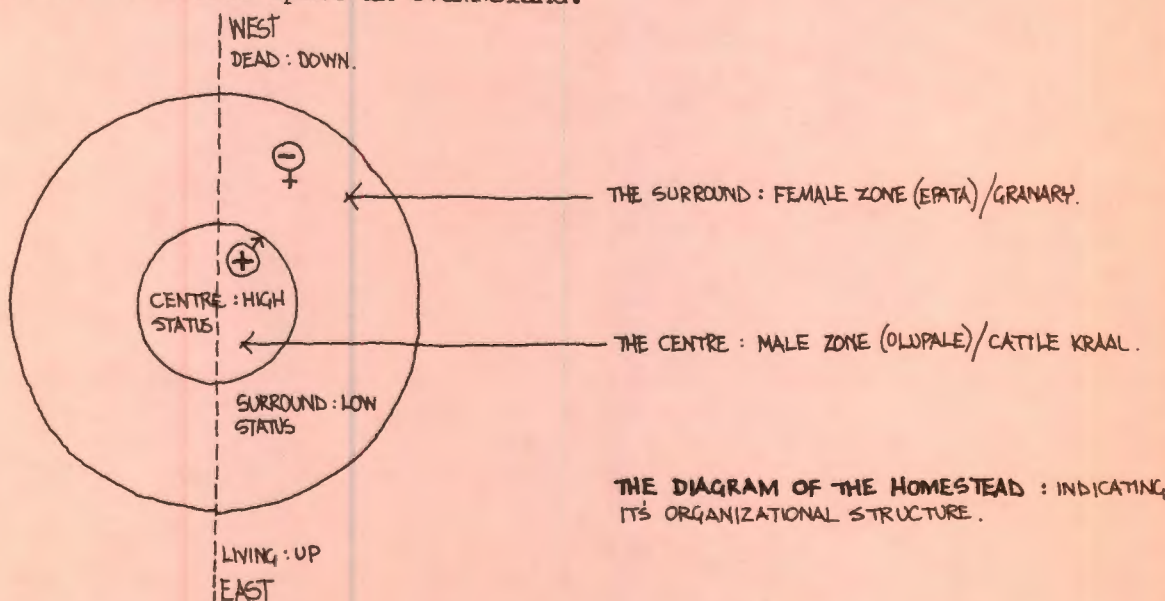


A DIAGRAM OF THE POLYGYNOUS HOMESTEAD BASED ON LOEB'S DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS.

Notwithstanding the lack of clarity regarding the source for Loeb's "sacred form and number" theory, this description, although it is probably a true reflection of the polygamous homestead, does not go far enough. It fails to recognise the importance of the subsistence mode of production which forms the foundation from which the social formation is derived. Agriculture and stock-keeping are the basis of subsistence. This establishes the basis of the division of labour, whereby agriculture relates to the role of women and pastoralism to the role of men. If settlement pattern is the mirror of social formation (Hanson 1976 : 32) then it could be assumed that there exists a direct relation between spatial patterns and the mode of production and aspects related to it. In other words, a relationship between agriculture, pastoralism, economic roles and settlement. The following key structures clarify this relationship in space:

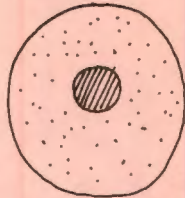
the ' <u>olupale</u> '	(male zone and main meeting chamber)
the ' <u>epata</u> '	(female zone)
the ' <u>osiunda</u> '	(cattle kraal)
the ' <u>etambo lomanda</u> '	(granary)

- 5) There is no prescribed geometrical formula which connects these elements, but rather a scale of "symbolic dimension" (Kuper 1980 : 8) (4) which affects their placement in space depending on the whim of the homestead owner. The regular manner in which the key structures are organized in Ovamboland suggests the articulation of two dimensions which are associated with attitudes to do with:
- status (male and female), and
 - life forces (articulated by the East/West axis).
- 6) By using the symbolic scale, the key structures and their spatial components such as huts and courtyards are unselfconsciously composed by the owner/builder into a homestead scheme that is at once fitting. In this way the symbolic scale forms the structure which binds together the four functional key structures. It therefore becomes possible to postulate that these two schemata constitute the diagram (or code) for homestead space in Ovamboland.



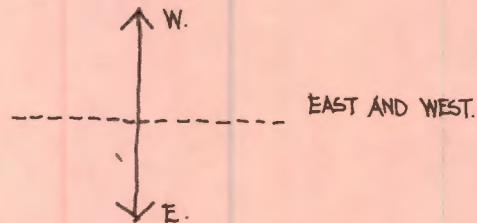
7) The form of the diagram may be analysed graphically as having the following properties:

a) Structure:



CENTRALITY AND PERIPHERY.

b) Orientation:

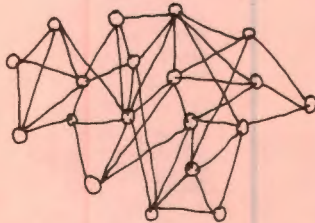


c) Texture:



LABYRINTHIAN QUALITY OF THE GROUND PLAN.

d) Organization:



A NETWORK OF SOCIAL RELATIONS

8) There are certain consistencies which emerge if the conceptual model (the symbolic scale and the four key structures) is applied when examining previous homestead plans (Bruwer 1961; Loeb 1950 : 53; Loeb 1962 : 336). Although polygyny has disappeared, the basic structure or diagram of the homestead has remained intact. These homesteads demonstrate adequately the key structures and their relations by virtue of the symbolic scale. Given the impact on the social formations in northern Namibia due to the work of missionaries starting in the 1870's (Clarence-Smith and Moorsom 1977 : 101) and the

development of migrant labour from 1917 onwards, the homestead has managed to maintain its fundamental structure. The greatest effect of these forces has been the virtual elimination of polygyny. Notwithstanding the retention of form and overall appearance, the
(5)
homestead has remained resilient and has been able to cope with changing socio-economic forces. This is probably due to its flexibility which derives from a conceptual model that is not prematurely specific in a geometrical or formal sense. There is evidence to suggest that similar formulae prevail in other parts of southern Africa (Marks and Atmore 198 : 13). This lends support to the argument that the stability of the homestead is due to its flexibility by virtue of the strength of its diagram.

- 9) The settlement pattern in Ovamboland is governed by a code that establishes the rules by which spatial relations are organized. This is similar to a language in that each homestead is the result of a personal manipulation of the elements (spatial components) in a way that automatically conforms to the code (or rules of grammar) for settlement. It may therefore be argued that each larger spatial scale (or phrase) contains smaller, more detailed scales and that the overall settlement pattern (comprising districts, wards, neighbourhoods, farms and so on) constitutes a form of extended speech or discourse. This in turn calls for rhetoric which is ultimately rooted in the ideology of the society that generates it.

Postscript

This study presents an approach towards the understanding of settlement which is based on a structural-functionalist method of analysis used by social anthropologists. Its aim has been to identify the evidence for the encoded formula of settlement space and thereby gain a fuller understanding of indigenous spatial patterns. These findings indicate the presence of evidence to support this hypothesis, but before confident support can be given, more work will have to be done. In order to determine precisely the encoded regularities that transcend specific environments, more settlement types would have to be studied in southern Africa. By studying and comparing other indigenous settlements using a similar method, it would be possible to explore more fully the settlement code. This could result in a greater and broader understanding of the meaning and function of space in indigenous settlements, which would be of practical benefit to architects and planners who are involved with habitat-making in southern Africa. Also, by testing the indigenous diagram for settlement against the context of informal and planned urban settlements, it would be possible to see what happens to it under those conditions. Such results could be used as a measure against which new designs and physical development strategies could be appropriately evaluated.

Endnotes

- 1 vide inf. Conclusion, point 3.
- 2 Such as huts, shelters, courtyards, palisades and the inherited diagram for the homestead.
- 3 Gould, P. and White, R. (1974) Mental Maps. p.52. Middlesex : Pelican Books. A conceptualized topography is a map or diagram which is the result of a complex interaction of values rooted in the social, political, economic and religious formations of society and the

relative importance attached to each. It derives from the world view and is therefore the way in which a society sees itself: how it is organized socially; the political boundaries within the group; the role of the women; division of labour, and so on, all interact to form a self-image which is 'ideal'.

Hanson, J. (1976) Time and Space in two Nineteenth Century Novels. Architectural Association Quarterly, vol. 8, no.4, pp.32-38. When this interaction forms a synthesis of organization or system which, if it is subjected to minimal external interference and remains constant, it becomes possible to describe the society as being 'mechanically solid'. In other words, when the mental diagram interacts with the physical environment, it constantly reproduces settlements in a regular manner.

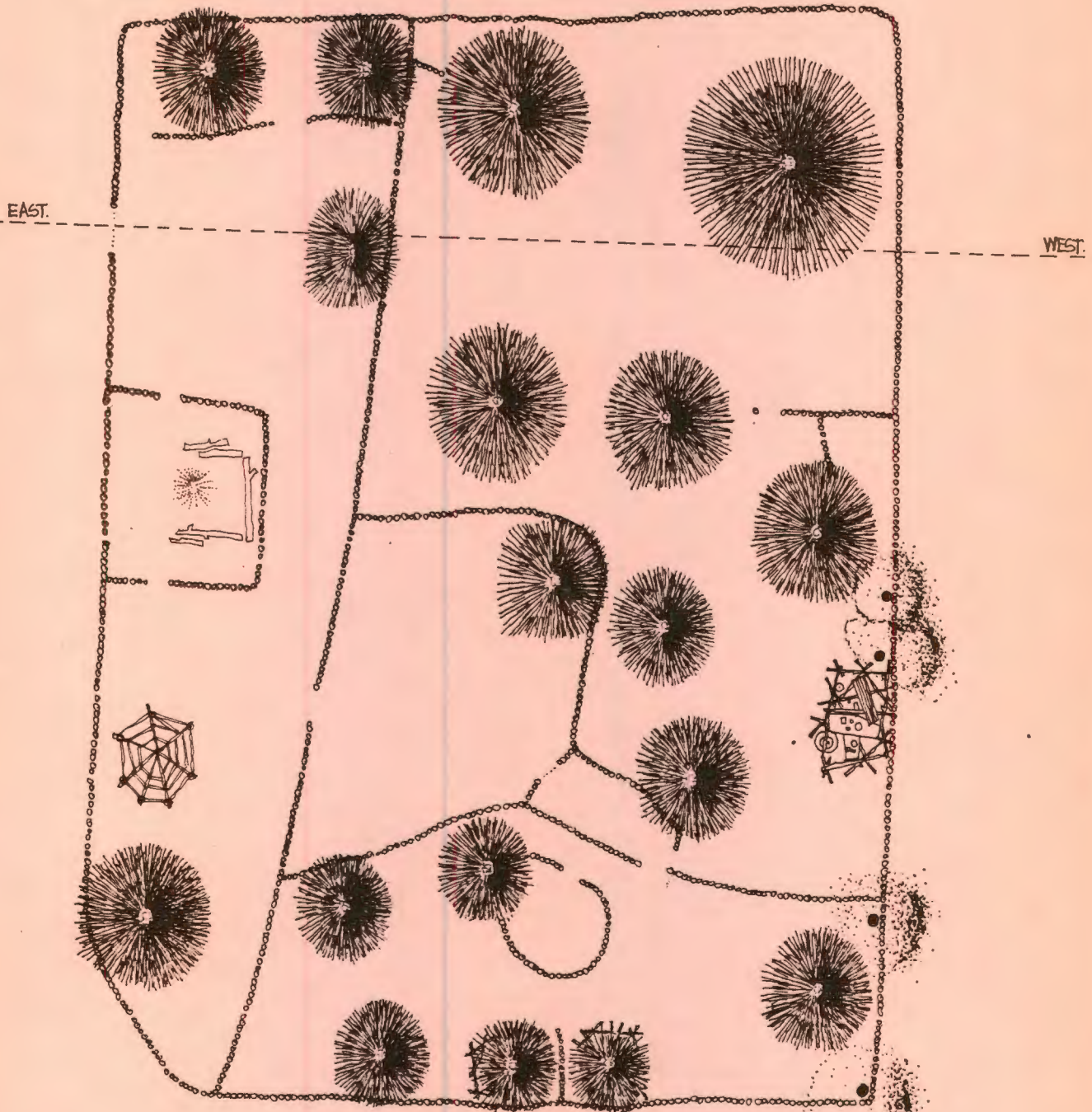
- 4 The result is what Huffman terms 'expressive space'. Huffman, T.N. (1981). Snakes and Birds: Expressive Space at Great Zimbabwe. African Studies, vol. 40, no.2, pp.131.
- 5 That is, the homestead considered as a set of spatial relations which physically articulates the social relations of its occupants.
- 6 Such studies could be of benefit in testing the hypothesis that Bantu settlement types are variations of a common conceptual diagram which takes on particular forms when it interacts with different environmental contexts.
- 7 For example, the inevitable conflict between historically inherited ideas and the requirements of day-to-day living is highlighted in the transition from a subsistence economy to a consumer economy in the urban context. These two components of the diagram could form the focus of further investigation.

Glossary

- Epata** The female portion of the homestead, consisting of the cooking areas, storage huts, and private quarters. Also a clan in the matrilinear system of social organization.
- Eumbo** This is taken to mean a 'Native dwelling or complete homestead. Also used for European house; home, abode, residence, quarters.' (Turvey 1977). These definitions are somewhat obscure, if not simplistic, in equating the word meaning with that of the 'European' house. People referred more to the eumbo as being a family home or a home of people related through kinship, rather than as a reference to a collection of material components. (Personal communications with peasants : July 1983).
- Farm** Often referred to as a 'tuin' (Afrik. for 'garden'). The term is used to refer to the agricultural land worked by a single homestead.
- Homestead** The settlement unit which forms the module from which the settlement pattern as a whole is made up. See 'eumbo' above. The term is also used here to refer to the peasant household as the unit of production.
- Kalunga** The Supreme Being. Also God, deity. (Turvey, 1977).
- Kraal** Animal enclosure or byre, especially that used for cattle.
- Labyrinth** The term is used here to refer to the maze-like quality of the ground plan of the homestead.
- Olupale** The central space in the homestead which contains the sacred fire. It is the main meeting/reception venue.
- Omikunda** Wards under the supervision of sub-headmen. A ward consists of several homesteads.
- Onu** The main entrance to the homestead which faces east/north-east. According to Turvey (1977) the term refers to a doorway constructed of a 'frame forming an arch'.
- Oshilongo** Districts under the supervision of headmen or senior headmen. Each district is sub-divided into a number of wards.
- Oshini** The enclosure for stamping the grain into flour.
- Oshipale** The place for threshing and winnowing the harvested grain. It consists of a hardened floor surface and a rack for storing the grain.

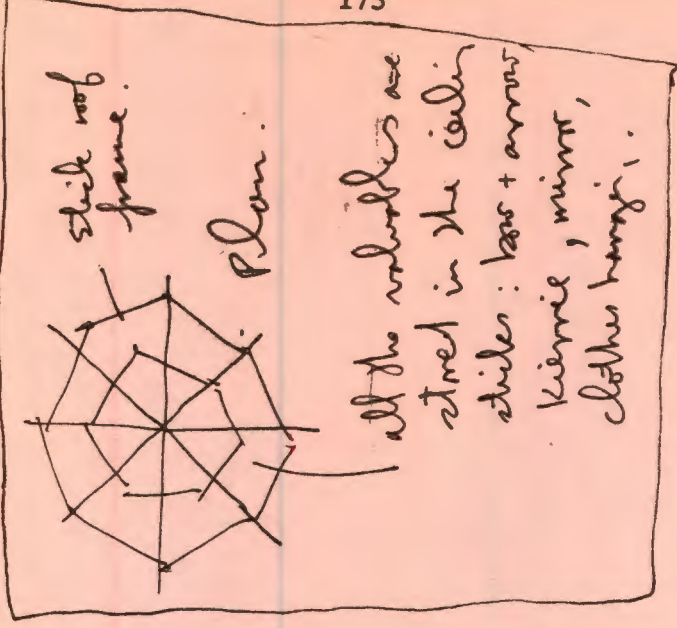
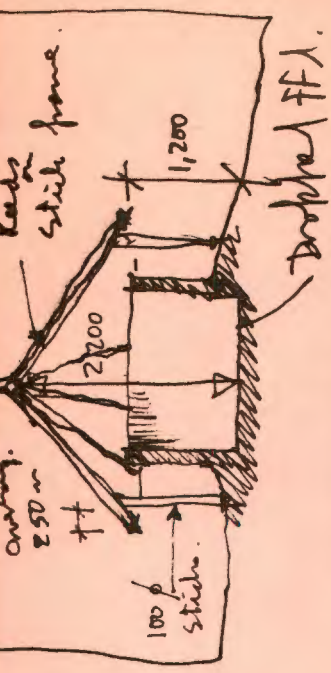
- Ovambo** The collective term for several matrilineal groups who occupy space in southern Angola and northern Namibia and who are considered to be part of the Western Group of Bantu speakers (Phillipson 1977 : 229). So far only the Kwanyama and Ndonga languages in northern Namibia have been transformed into the written form.
- Ovamboland** The region in the extreme north of Namibia which has been set aside by the Odendal Report as a Bantustan or 'homeland' with its own form of quasi-'independent' authority; as part of a political scheme for Namibia as a whole. The term is used for convenience only in this investigation.
- Pre-colonial** The era prior to foreign influence and conquest by the European colonial empires beginning at the turn of this century with the German and later the British and South African forces of occupation.
- Subsistence Economy** Production whereby only the immediate and short term needs of the producers are provided for. Surplus is usually not used for exchange which generates unequal gain or investment. All the goods produced have a functional or social value, rather than exchange value.
- Tribe** An obscure term covering several definitions: speakers of a common language; inhabitants of a particular area; a group of people who share a common value system, and so on. It is often used by outside observers and officials to denote what they view as a group, when the people under observation may themselves not share any sense of groupness.

Field Notes. Some working notes and diagrams made in Ovambo-land.



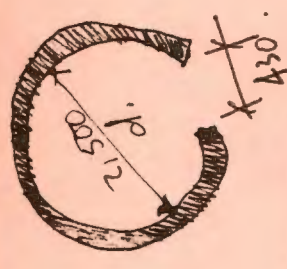
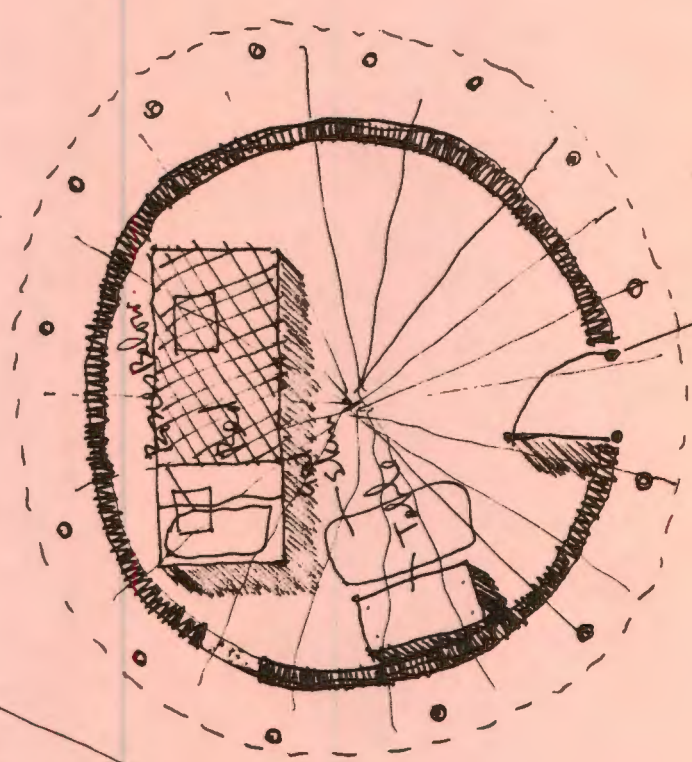
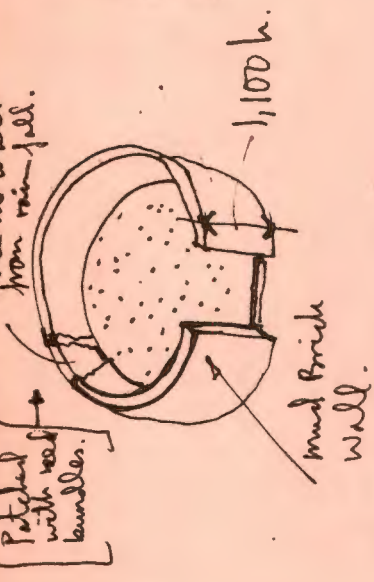
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MEASURED DRAWING OF A TYPICAL HOMESTEAD : A SELECTION
OF ON-SITE MEASUREMENT SKETCHES FOLLOW



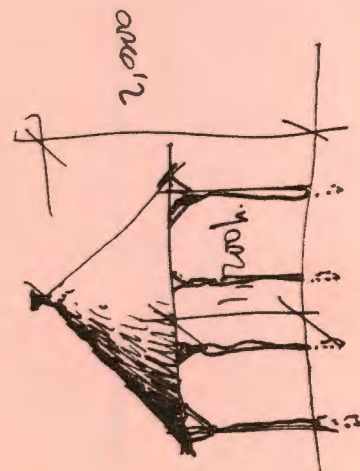
all the rollers are stored in the ceiling
sticks: base + arrow, Kierrie, mirror, clothes hanging.

1975



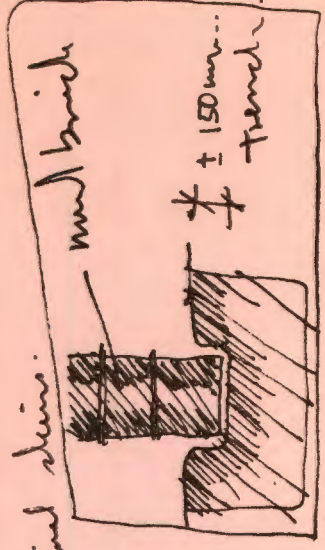
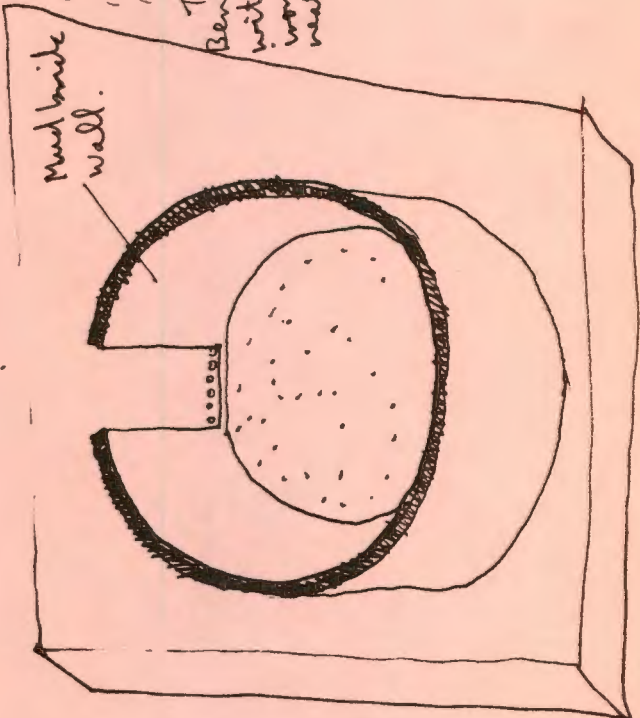
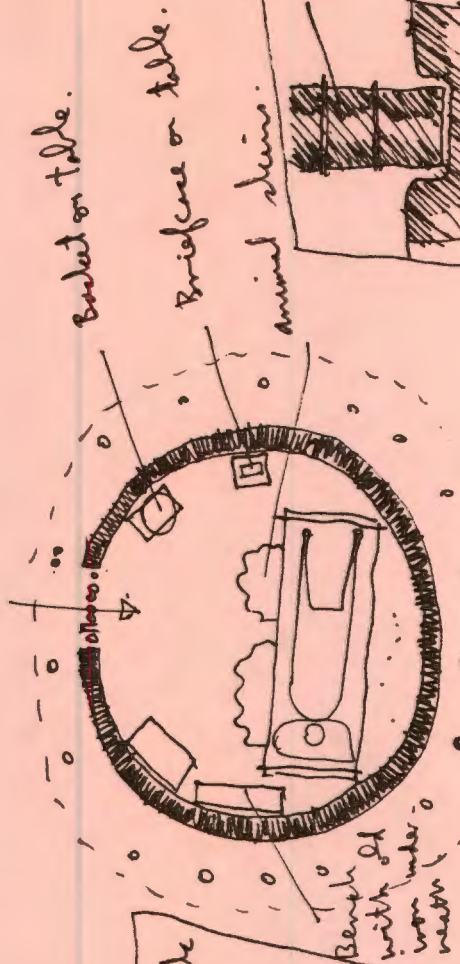
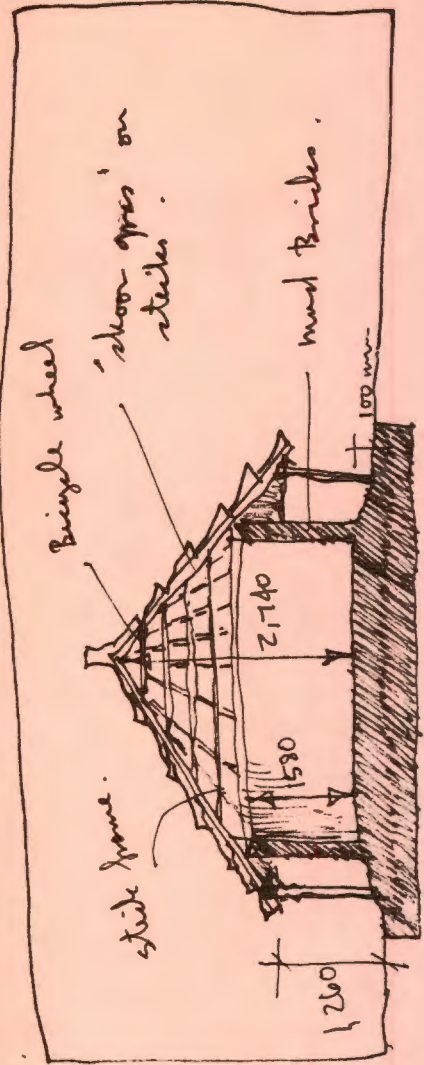
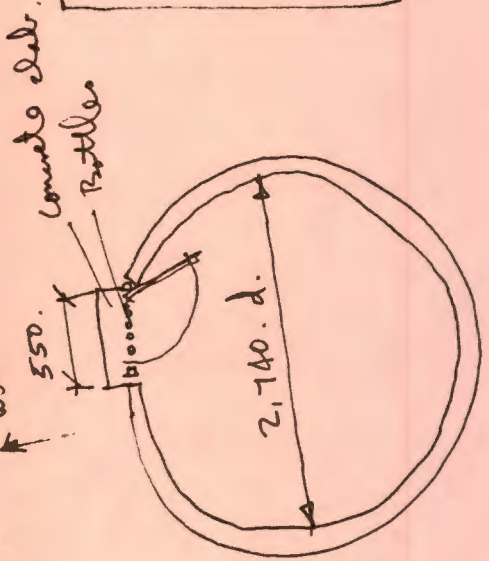
ETAA

B



Plane for strong structure.
count in rain or structure.

in 1970



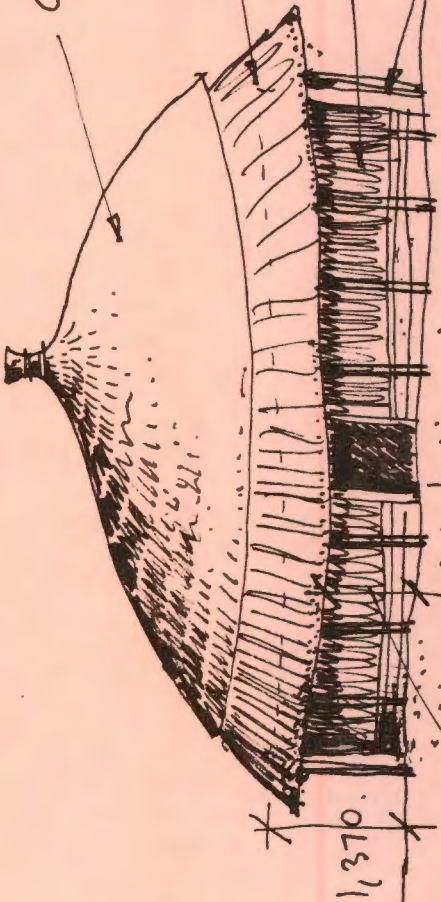
- Pictures on the wall.
- Clothes hanging from line in the ceiling.
- Paraffin lamp from ceiling

Grass thatching

Rieta
'reed' : inlet of poles.

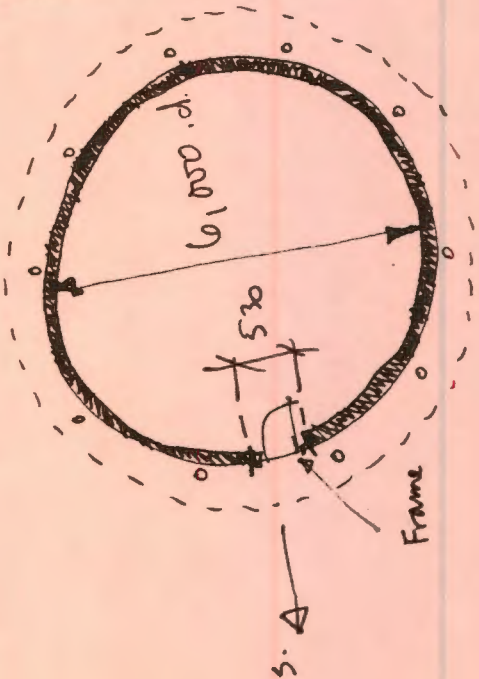
'reed' bundles
±

wood poles.



• Children made the bricks.

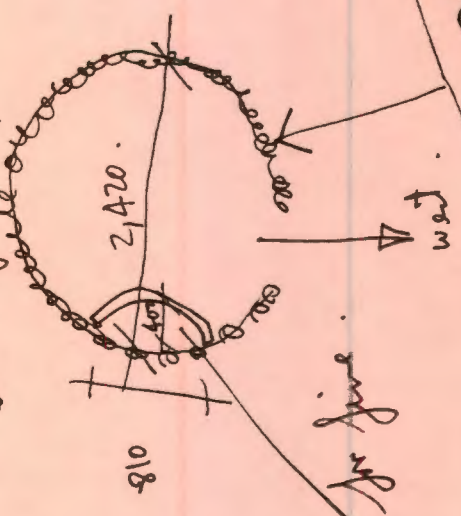
• The reed bundles are temporary; say they [1,000h] will be replaced someday with reed over or a brick wall.



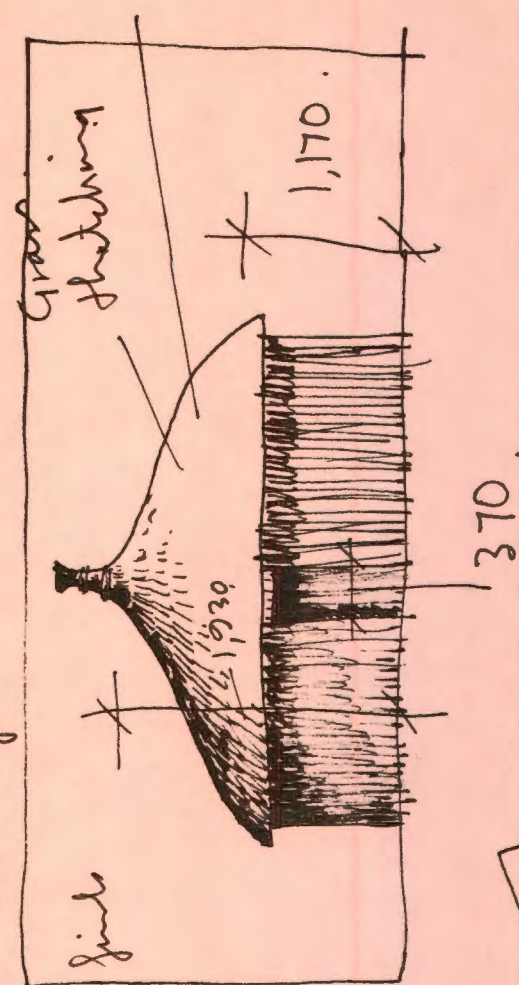
(M)

no see inside

- For wife's mother
- " wife's father
- Also for when Shilongyi has his first wife.



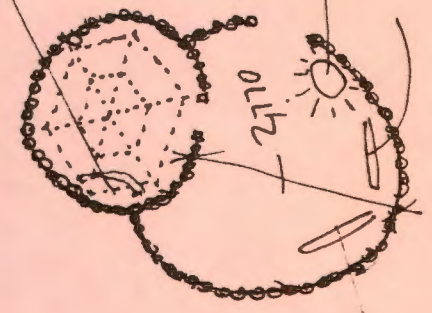
- For mother
- For father



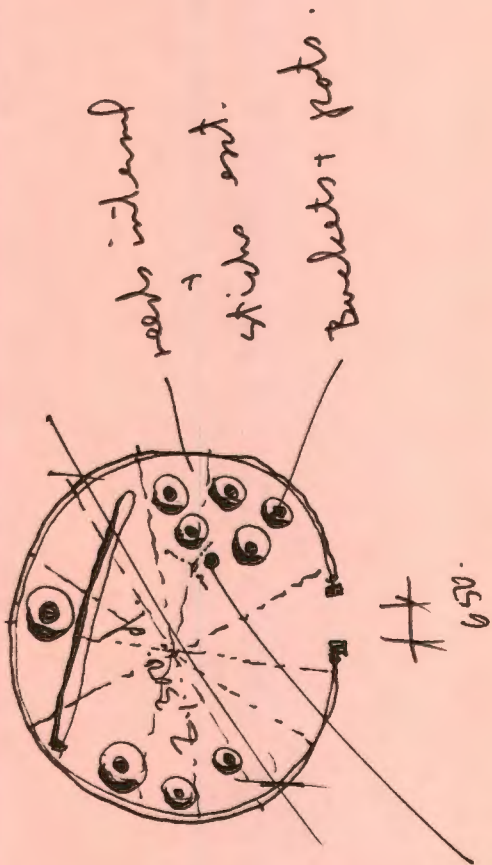
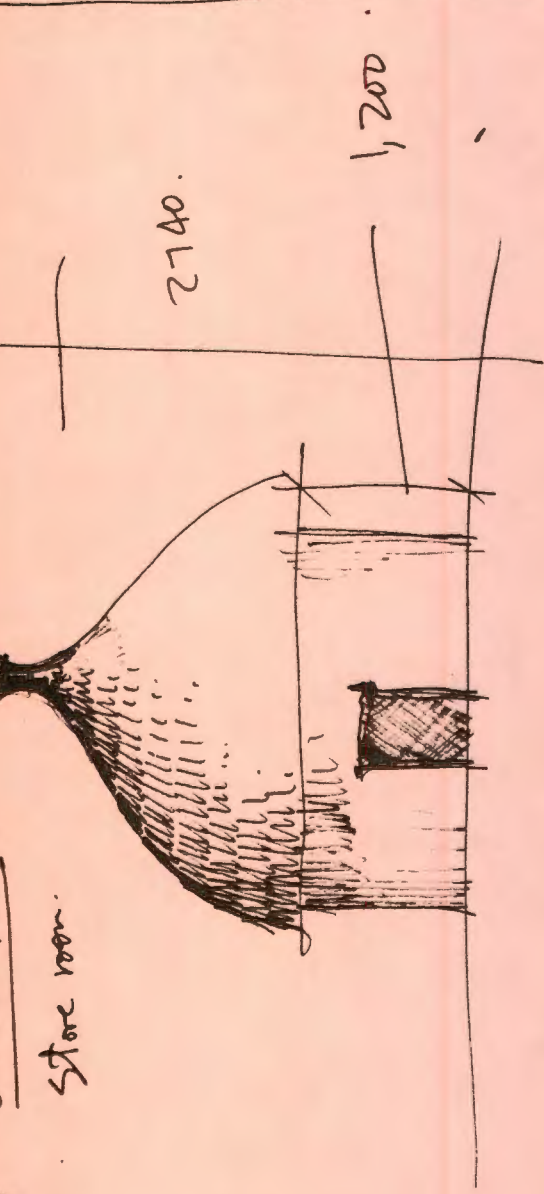
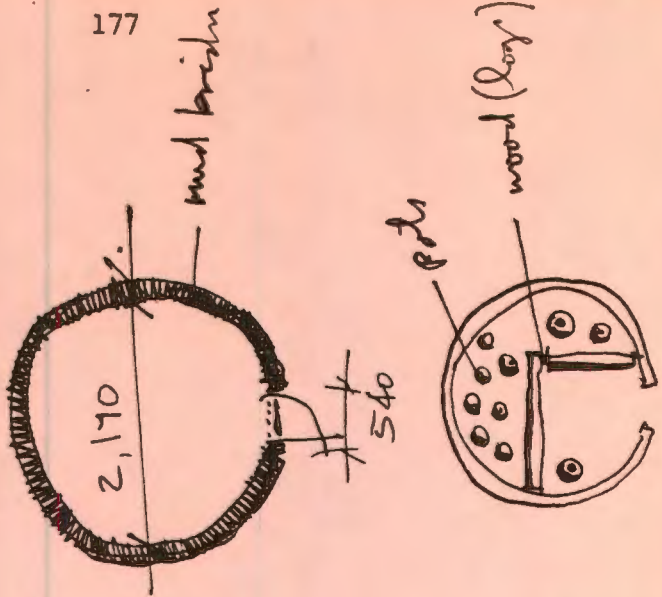
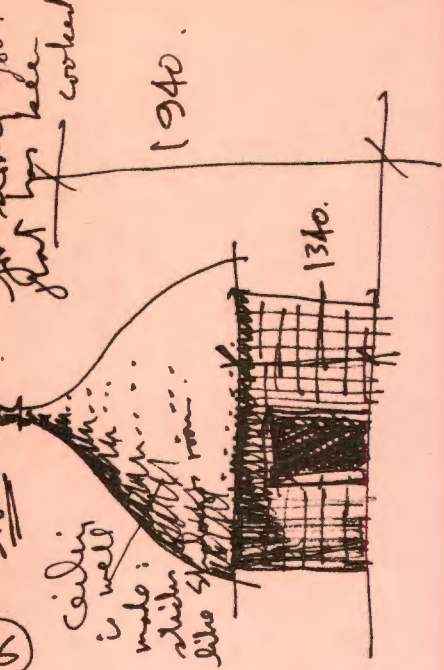
stake frame
+ stake infill
thatch
(Just like
Shilongyi
room ceiling)

stake wall
mud plaster

no door on hinge



off



for food storage :-
 some prepared,
 some not
 pillow bags for
 ceiling.

stiches for pump
 hanger

7/7/83
Shilongo: ph
da Eumbo.

178

Etale

Wife's Room
Etale.

ENDUDA BOKO -
POGOLA.

duda -
rela -
ne for
etc.

duda -
dore
nyite
vorn.

dudapko -
nyel - onkoro -
vorn
vorn's room
Etale.

de - yokehale
lter for
vorn.

real.

Omtawamat
Boys' room.

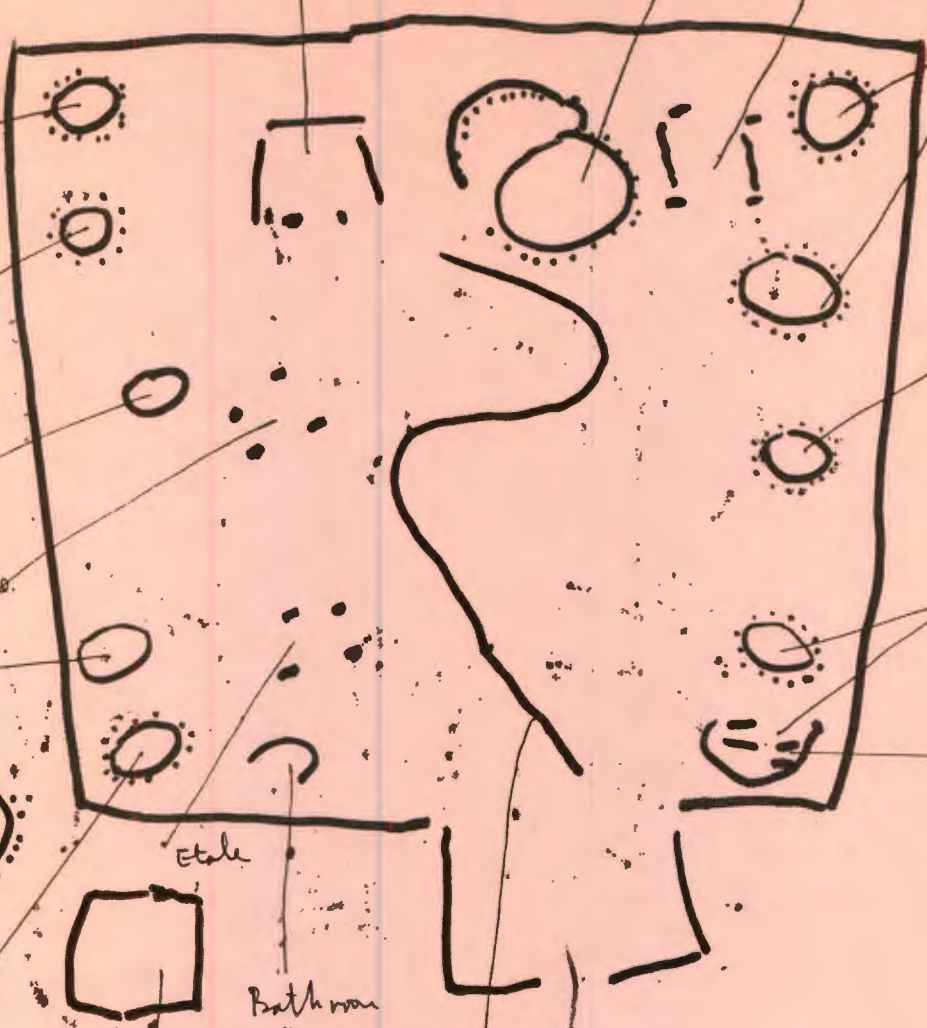
area ship.
Ondudayo maroko.

Bathroom
Okikoshen -
kamot.

omu.
▲

outdoor
passage.

sun rise
Etango
(Exit).



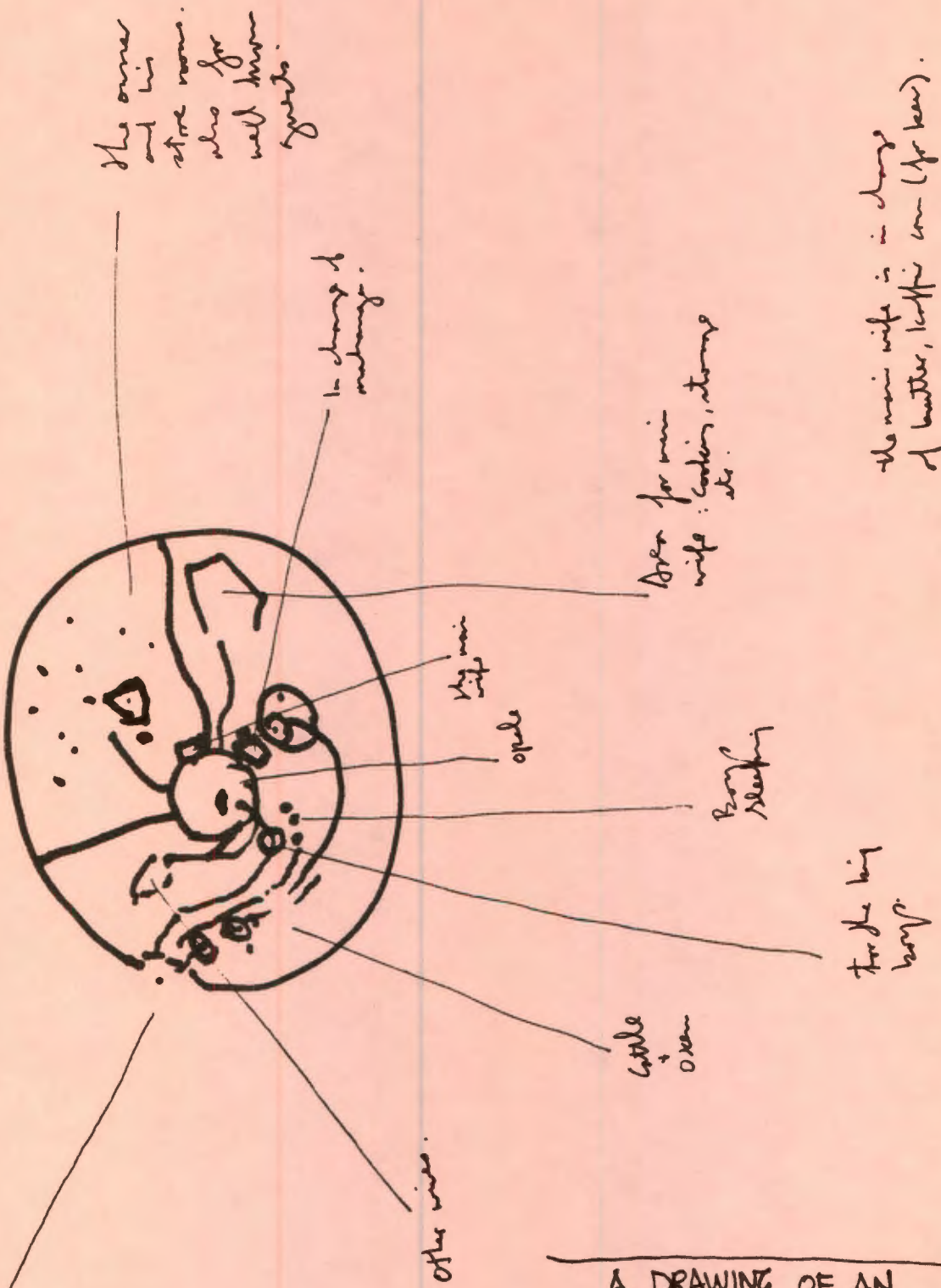
Oshini

olepale.
opale.

Ipundi
(logs for
sitting.)

PREFERRED PLANS.

A DRAWING OF AN EUMBO WHICH
MR SHILONGO BUNGA WOULD LIKE
TO BUILD ONE DAY.



The main wife is in charge of butter, coffee etc (for beer).

A DRAWING OF AN EUMBO BY MR ERADIUS MWAETAKO.



TYPICAL HOMESTEAD : A PANORAMIC VIEW

EAST

LOGS AROUND THREE SIDES OF THE SACRED FIRE.

ROOF FRAME ON THE GROUND PRIOR TO BEING RAISED ON TO A NEW HUT.

CALABASH VINE GROWING OVER A ROOF AND PALISADE.

Planned settlements: Aerial view of Oshakati location : August 1981
(Scale 1:1000)

This is separated from the 'white' areas by an oshona. Ongwediva township, situated several kilometres on the road to Ondangwa, is the latest such development - the only difference being that of style and appearance of house form.



Spontaneous settlements: An aerial view of Oshiele : August 1983
(Scale 1:1000)

The largest and most concentrated growth occurs in three areas around Oshakati in the settlements known as Oshiele, Upindi and Okatana. Other, smaller growth points are scattered along the main road between Oshakati and Ondangwa.



ARTEFACTS AND CRAFTSMANSHIP : The use of local resources

Local craftsmanship and materials are utilized to make household utensils and other artefacts. Skills have been handed down from previous generations which are refined and appropriately developed for making containers, furnishings and other items which are economically and socially valuable.

Indigenous resources are transformed into everything that is required for domestic activities, social events and economic production. It is not necessary to list every item but rather to isolate the important objects so as to illustrate the range which is produced. The resources which are used include clay, plant and vegetable material, iron and animals.

Clay is used mainly for making pots (embija) which is the craft of women. The oshonas and anthills form the source of the clay. It is collected in buckets and left out to dry if wet. Once it is suitably dry it is crushed into a fine consistency after which it is ready for use. Pots are moulded by hand and are rounded with little, if any, decoration. Large pots are used for beer-making while smaller ones for drinking and for holding water. Any broken pot gets used as a potsherd for the cooking fires. Once the pot is formed it is left to dry. This is done in a hole dug into the side of a mound or in a pit. The mouth of the hole is completely sealed during the drying out process which could last up to six weeks, the pots are then fired in open "kilns" which are

shallow pits into which charcoal is put to cover the pots. Because not all women engage in pottery those who do usually make more than they require. The community then buys the surplus (Personal observations and discussions 1983).

Plant and vegetable material used for the manufacture of artefacts consists of wood, millet stalks and calabashes. Cups, beer goblets and meat platters are carved from softwoods into forms which are elaborated with simple graphics. Bold lines are burnt into the articles by hot iron rods after which they are smeared with animal fat or butter to seal the wood. Harder woods are used for knobkierries and arrow shafts. Bows are fashioned by trimming down the stalks from palm leaves. Small flutes are made from millet stalks. Calabashes are grown on vines in the homestead and are used for drinking cups, spoons and serving ladles. Men and women make baskets. The material they use comes from the branches of palm trees which are cut into strips and twisted into coils. Drums (engoma) are made from the hollow trunks of hardwood trees.

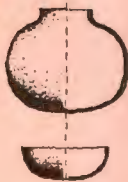
Iron smelting is no longer common and widespread. It used to be mined in southern Angola (Clarence-Smith 1979 : 61) by all the people in region. A limited number of blacksmiths produce hoe blades, knives (omikonda), arrow heads (oikuti) and assegai heads (omaonga). The latter are used for hunting and for slaughtering domestic animals.

Animal skins are used for floor rugs and for making rope. The horns of cattle are carried by herdboys and blown when calling the herd.

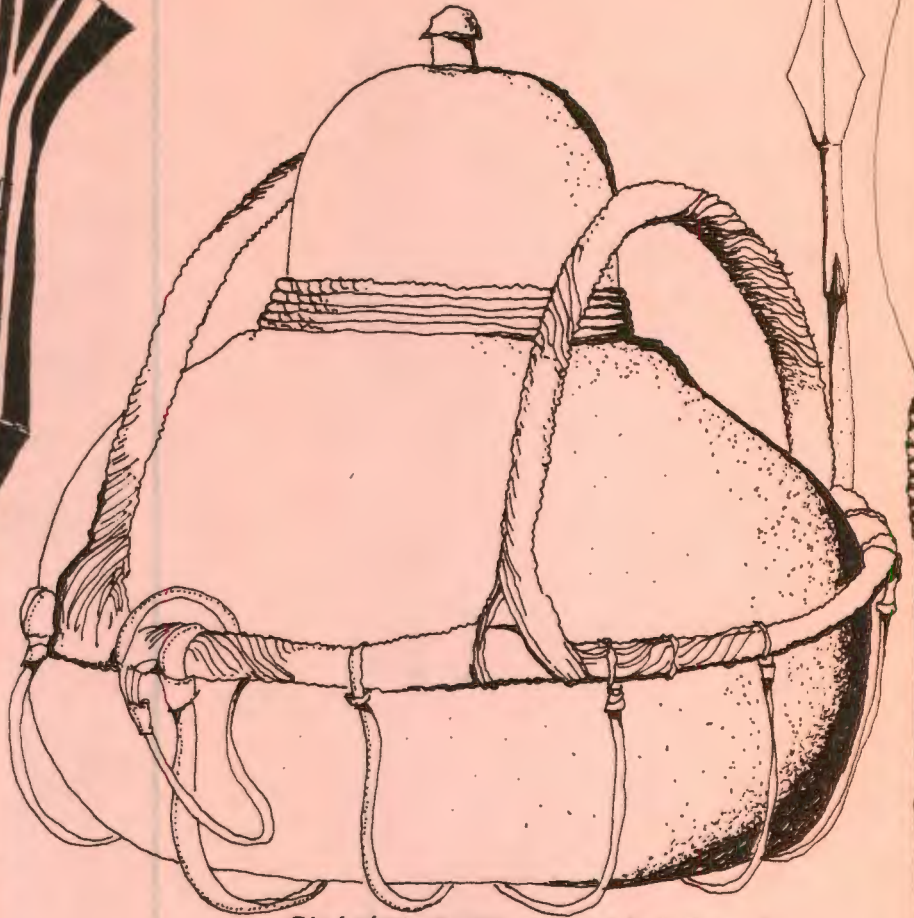
Graphic decoration occurs on all artefacts which are produced, except buildings.

AN OIKUTI.

WOODEN DAGGER SHEATH WITH BURNT ENGRAVING.



POTTERY



CALABASH GOURD FOR MAKING BUTTER.



CALABASH LADLE WITH LINE GRAPHIC.

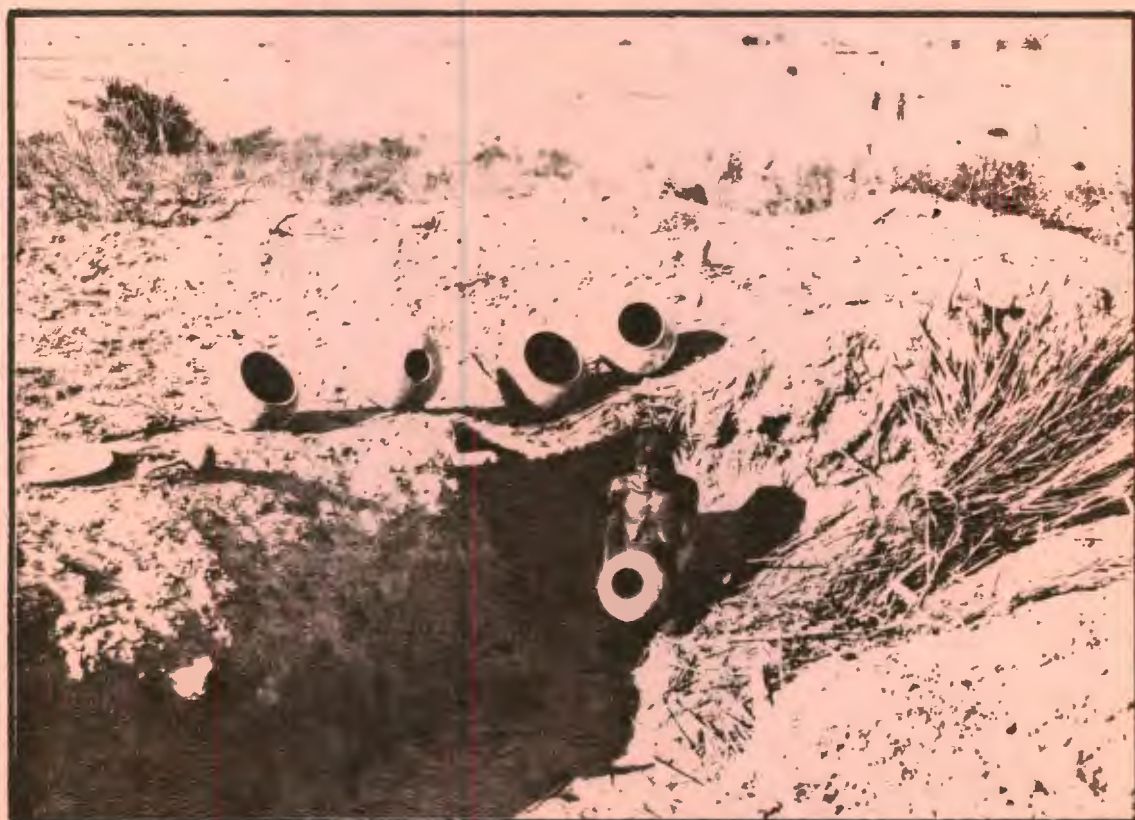


MEAT DISH AND GOBLET CARVED FROM SOFTWOOD.





WOMEN MAKING POTS (DUGGAN-CRONIN : 1936): MCGREGOR MUSEUM



A VARIETY OF POTS (DUGGAN-CRONIN : 1936).



A GRAIN BASKET (DUGGAN-CRONIN : 1936).



STRAINING BEER (DUGGAN-CRONIN : 1936).



BLACKSMITHS SMELTING IRON ORE (DUGGAN-CRONIN : 1936).



STAMPING GRAIN IN THE OSHINI (DUGGAN-CRONIN : 1936).

FISHING AND HUNTING

Fishing during the rainy season is a favourite seasonal pastime. After a period of heavy rain and when the floodwaters begin receding, fish are caught in the oshonas between the farms. These are mostly small, lung fish (Clarias gariepinus) which come into the Ovamboland flood plains from the Cuvelai and Cunene rivers in the north. They are caught by using dip-baskets, called ejongo, which are shaped like beer sieves. Very thin saplings are used to construct the ejongo which vary in size from about 380mm to 450mm diameter at the wide end. There are two ways in which fish are caught. The larger fish are trapped by plunging the basket over them and into the muddy surface. They are then simply removed from the narrow top of the basket through a small opening. Alternatively the fishing is done in groups and the baskets are skimmed across the surface collecting the smaller fish which are emptied into baskets on the land. People indicated that fish were a delicacy which were either eaten in dried form or boiled.

Hunting is hardly practiced due to the scarcity of game. In pre-colonial times hunting formed an important part of the diet and was controlled by the kings (Loeb 1962 : 158). Today, the only areas with any game are in the extreme eastern parts of Ovamboland where small buck and hare are occasionally hunted. Bows and arrows and small assegais are used by the boys for this purpose. Birds are also sometimes hunted using bows and arrows.



A YOUNG BOY USING HIS BOW AND ARROW.



FISHING IN AN OSHANA.



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