

*Published conclusions in a review in American Anthropologist, Vol. 72, No. 3, pp. 704-06 (1970). This statement presents some of my views of archaeological analysis in context of paleolithic study.*

## **Portion of a review of “Further Paleo-Anthropological Studies in Northern Lunda (J. Desmond Clark)”**

The quantitative and comparative problems encountered by Clark (1970), especially in the first two papers, reflect the dilemma of Paleolithic, particularly Lower Paleolithic, archeological classification. A blind faith has struck Western science, being that the more detailed and intensive a quantitative analysis, the greater the revelation and more the discovery of profound patterns. I think such an assumption can be seriously questioned. The analytical techniques of Bordes, Mason, Kleindeinst, *et al.*, accepted and used also by Clark, appear to be failing in their objectives. As Müller-Beck observes “we still do not have a single taxonomic system combining the descriptive data on the artifacts of the Lower, ‘Middle,’ and Upper Paleolithic” (1969:308).

The problem seems to be that the more Paleolithic assemblages are studied the more unique they are and, at the same time, the more alike they are. Everything differentiates but is the same. Classical terminology has been adapted to the latter view. The term *Acheulean*, originally applied to certain materials of the Somme River terraces, is now being used for all Lower Paleolithic industries in the western portion of the Old World that possess handaxes. Terms expressing the uniqueness of assemblages are nothing more than an inventory of names, or at Olduvai numbers, of localities or sites. There is nothing in between, an intolerable situation since no usable units for meaningful analysis exist.

Massive statistical technological analyses for their own sake are futile, though detailed descriptive recording is crucial. It is the opinion of this reviewer that Paleolithic archaeologists should take a page from the historical geologist’s book and look for diagnostic index key morphological and technological modes. These can act as tracers or markers for valid temporal-spatial units. Functional considerations at this level will only cloud the issues, the Binfords notwithstanding. The discovery of diagnostic modes may be difficult, but the effort, if successful, would pay big dividends.

### REFERENCES CITED

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1969 Comment on “Culture traditions and environment of early man,” by Desmond Collins. *Current Anthropology* 10:267-316.