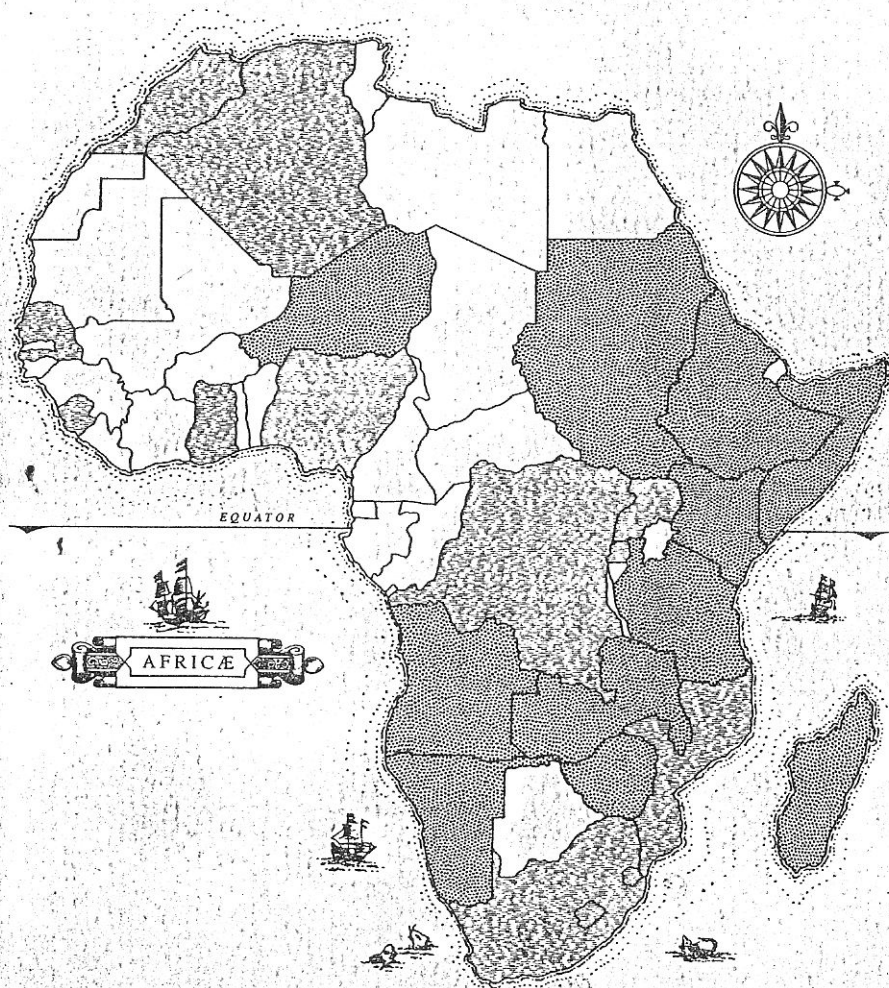


THE LONGEST RECORD: THE HUMAN CAREER IN AFRICA

A Conference in Honour of J. Desmond Clark



*Berkeley, California
Alumni House
12—16 April, 1986*

GARBA IV AT MELKA KUNTURÉ: A SYNTHESIS OF THE ACTUAL STAGE OF EXCAVATIONS AND STUDIES, Marcello Piperno, Soprintendenza Speciale alla Preistoria e all'Etnografia, Istituto Italiano di Paleontologia Umana, Rome, Italy

The Evolved Oldowan site of Garba IV was excavated from 1972 to 1982 as part of the activity of the French Archaeological Mission at Melka Kunturé (Ethopia). More than 13,000 stone tools and bone remains have been found, plotted and removed, most of them (more than 12,500) from living floor D (100 m²) of the upper part of the stratigraphical sequence (levels C and D).

Two test pits opened 15 m far from the main excavation area have shown that this occupation level reaches at least 700 m².

In spite of the fact that this large area shows a constant and very high density of lithic material (more than 150 pieces per square meter), a certain degree of organization of the soil is evident: several

heavy basalt blocs surrounded by large fragments of bones, two wide areas, concentrations of obsidian flakes and scars in two or three sectors and a roughly circular accumulation of bones and tools can be observed on the plans of the main excavation.

A fragment of *Homo erectus* mandible was found in 1982, lying about 60 cm below the soil D, together with bones and tools belonging to level E of the lower part of the sequence (levels E, F and G).

Detailed typological analysis of the lithical assemblage has been up to now mostly focused on obsidian flakes and tools, while only a few hundred of basalt flakes and HDT have been examined; this subdivision reflects a clear functional differentiation on raw material utilization at Garba IV D. 30% of obsidian flakes show various degrees of utilization or have been retouched. A rather well established diversification at a typological level results by the analysis of this set of obsidian material: practically all types of side scrapers are present in this early palaeolithic complex, together with denticulated and notched flakes, end scrapers and burins. A greater conservatism may be observed on basalt tools: primary and cortical flakes on this material are more frequent and flakes generally show less intensive retouching. Only a few handaxes and two cleavers are present amongst the HDT: lateral and distal choppers are largely predominant by respect to the other types, bifacial choppers being more represented than unifacial ones; rabots seem to be one of the most specialized tools of the basalt component of Garba IV lithic industry.