WILEY

54. Malay Beliefs Concerning Prehistoric Stone Implements.

Author(s): J. B. Scrivenor

Source: *Man*, Vol. 8 (1908), pp. 104-106

Published by: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2839250>

Accessed: 27-06-2016 09:12 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://about.jstor.org/terms>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Wiley, Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Man*

neolithic scraper. The implement has also been used at the right upper edge, which is finer. The stone is blackish, lustrous, and scarcely abraded, and was raked out *in situ*.

Fig. 3 is a beautiful little tool, lustrous and of a yellowish-brown colour. It is evidently a borer and takes the tip of the forefinger and thumb very conveniently. The outer face and one edge view are represented.

Fig. 4 is minutely chipped almost all round the edges. It, also, is a borer. But, in addition, it has been chipped to a tiny cutting edge, in the most regular and beautiful manner at the right-hand lower edge of the inner face. The drawings of it are, from left to right, outer face, edge view, inner face with bulb of percussion at the bottom. There is a remarkable smoothness about parts of this little stone, as though constant attrition in use had affected some of its surfaces.

FIG. 4.

FIG. 5.

Fig. 5 is a first-class little scraper, with bulb of percussion on the inner face and edge chipping all round the horseshoe end. At the right-hand shoulder in the first drawing on the left is some minute detailed and regular chipping such as one frequently sees on the same part of palæolithic scrapers of normal size (of which I have a number) from this pit, and on some neoliths also. Both the side edges have also been used. The left-hand drawing is accidentally made with too straight and too slanting a top. The other views show inner face (with more correct drawing of the horseshoe end), horseshoe end showing chippings, and edge view. The stone is actually re-chipped from an older tool, as plainly as many a re-chipped neolithic scraper.

Fig. 6 is a tiny implement of ovate type, chipped all over both faces, and used at one end for scraping. It speaks wonders for the skill and ingenuity, and perhaps the humour, of palæolithic man that he could fashion so tiny a thing in stone.

FIG. 6.

Fig. 7 is a scraper, with bulb on the inner face. It is minutely and beautifully chipped, on one face or the other, round its edges.

The stones are drawn natural size. I have other beautiful little instruments in my collection. All the best, such as those figured here, are as plainly the products of human skill as any neolithic tool. There can be no doubt whatever that the latest palæolithic men at this site, and, to some extent, those of an earlier period also, did some extraordinarily fine work with these minute tools. What that work was we have yet to find out.

FIG. 7.

It should be added that some minute chips not worked at the edges are, no doubt, mere waste fragments from the manufacture of larger tools. These, however, are not trimmed at the edges. It is manifest that just as some of the flakes of normal size, knocked off in the manufacture of an implement, were re-touched and used, and others were not, so also has it been with the minute specimens.

H. G. O. KENDALL.

Malay Peninsula: Folklore.

Scrivenor.

Malay Beliefs concerning Prehistoric Stone Implements. By **54**
J. B. Scrivenor. (*Communicated by the Secretary.*)

Last June, when in the company of a number of Fellows of the Royal Anthropological Institute, I mentioned a curious belief held by the Malays of the Federated Malay States concerning the well-known stone implements, or *batu lintar*, which is

generally translated "thunderbolt stones." This belief is to the effect that the stones originate in the ground, and sooner or later burst into flames and disappear. My remarks were received with some doubt, and it was suggested that my authority, Mahomed Mansur, a Malay who works for me, had invented the story in order to account for *batu lintar* missing from my collection. Mansur, however, besides being a thoroughly honest fellow, had never had any opportunity of stealing *batu lintar* from me, since I had none in my possession, and I determined at the time that when I returned to the Federated Malay States I would ask Mansur to write me an account of *batu lintar* according to Malay ideas.

Mahomed Mansur is a Perak Malay, the son of a minister of the ex-Sultan, Abdullah. He is fairly well educated and has travelled with me, or for me, in all four of the Federated Malay States. I do not think he believes implicitly the things he has written here about *batu lintar*, but he does not recognise them as stone implements, and he tells me that he has never heard a Malay suggest that they fall from the sky, as is supposed in the case of our "thunderbolts." My impression is that the idea of "thunderbolts" has been connected with these stones by Europeans who have heard a little of the Malay notions concerning them, but have not followed the matter farther. It will be noticed that Wilkinson, under *lintar* in his dictionary, says that to the Malays their origin is "wrapped in mystery."

The part that lightning plays in Mansur's account is obvious and need not be enlarged upon. I should like, however, to point out the manner in which the rending of a tree by lightning is brought in. Note particularly that according to a Malay's ideas the stroke comes from below, "from the trunk to the branches."

I have questioned Mansur as to the cause of lightning. He tells me it is explained by Malays in many different ways. One cause is a Jin throwing a *batu lintar* at his enemy. Another is a big animal, such as an elephant or a bison, shaking himself in the jungle.

To anyone acquainted with these Malays, Mansur's story of the *batu lintar* is not a surprise. They love to weave extraordinary stories round things they do not understand. I have been told stories in Pahang about natural objects that are even stranger than this of the Jin and his weapons. I suspect that the idea of "thunderbolts" would seem too plain and straightforward to the average Malay.

I append a free translation of Mahomed Mansur's account of *batu lintar* :—

"There are certain things called *batu lintar*. Men say that a Jin makes them out of stiff clay and that they are always found in the ground. The Jin piles them one above the other, close together, while they are still soft. If they are left they become quite hard. When they are hard enough, if the Jin wishes to kill an enemy (another Jin), he takes out the stones, and the power of the Jin is such that they become red like fire and (are surrounded by fire so that) their shape is like a coconut. If any mortal comes within range of the emanations from these stones, though they may be thirty *depas* distant, he cannot help fainting away. If a tree is struck by one, it is as though that tree were struck by a bullet, but the mark runs zig-zag from the trunk to the branches. Men who are struck by the emanations from these stones become as though burnt and turn red; but no one is ever struck by the stone itself (*i.e.*, a tree may be struck, but a man never). Men say that the Jin who owns the stones does not purposely wound a man's body. When the Jin throws a stone at an enemy and the enemy in trying to escape runs close to a mortal, then the stone follows him and in passing causes him to faint away. When a man has fainted away one must not touch him. If he is touched he is sure to die. But if one searches near the man it will be found that the Jin has thrown down a tuft of grass tied in a knot. If this is dipped in water and the water sprinkled over the man who has fainted, he recovers. Again, men say that when one finds a *batu lintar* that has not yet burst into flames it will never burst

into flames if a little bit is chipped off the stone. But if this is not done when there is a high wind that *batu lintar* will explode with the noise of a cannon. Therefore, whenever a man finds a *batu lintar*, he chips it slightly." J. B. SCRIVENOR.

Africa : Rhodesia.

Firemaking Apparatus of the Makorikori. By F. Eyles.

Eyles.

55

The accompanying figure shows the apparatus for producing fire in use at the present time among the Makorikori in the neighbourhood of Mount Darwin, Mazoe, South Rhodesia. It consists of a small piece of greyish flint, a "steel" in the form of a long oval circlet, formed by bending a strip of native-worked iron round until

the edges overlap, and the funnel-shaped neck of a small gourd containing charred vegetable fibre. In use the gourd is held in the palm of the left hand, and the flint between the thumb and first finger of the same hand; the steel is then struck sharply across the edge of the flint with the

right, until a spark falls into the gourd and sets the fibre smouldering. A little bunch of another kind of fibre or bark is then brought in contact with the glowing fibre and blown into a flame. The fibre used to catch the spark is called *ulenje*, and is prepared from the silky inner fibre of the leaf of some plant not identified.

F. EYLES.

REVIEWS.

Africa, West.

Desplagnes.

Le Plateau Central Nigérien. By Lieutenant Louis Desplagnes. Paris : 56
Emile Larose, 1907. Pp. 504. 25 × 16 cm. Price 12 francs.

This work is a very suggestive study of the races who inhabit the uplands to the south of the bend of the Niger, and between 14 and 17 degrees north latitude. Lieutenant Desplagnes spent two years in the western Sudan between 1903 and 1906, sent, as Dr. Hamey informs us in an introduction, on a special mission to study this hitherto little known region. The book is divided into four parts, of which the first two treat respectively of the archæology of the "Plateau Central" and the origin of Sudanese or Negroid Clans; the third of the Habe, or primitive inhabitants of the Hombori and other rocky regions; while the fourth is devoted to general conclusions. The mission was fruitful in finds of neolithic instruments. Monuments of upright stones or dolmens were discovered near Bamako on the Upper Niger. These dolmens seem to be similar to those described by Mr. Partridge in his book, *Cross River Natives*, on the one hand, and on the other to the monuments of the Hoggar country in the Sahara.

The chapters on sepulchres are interesting. The subject is treated very fully and is well illustrated.

The large tumuli, which are not uncommon throughout the western Sudan, are shown to be probably formed by some such method of interment as that described by El Bekri as having been practised at Ghanata in A.D. 1050.

The principle of these tombs again is similar to that of the Numidian tombs.