

COMMISSION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF NATURAL AND HISTORICAL
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A R C H A E O L O G I A

Z A M B I A N A

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A MIDDLE STONE AGE FACTORY SITE NEAR MBALA:

Recently Mr. J.L. Carlin and Mr. R. Beare have reported to the Monuments Commission an extensive Stone Age surface occurrence on the rubble strewn slope of Liamba hill near Mbala. A report on the site was sent to us by Mr. Carlin and the following quotations are extracted from his report.

"Following Mr. Beare's initial visits to the site in November, he and I went to the area on December 2, 1967, and spent some 2½ hours on Liamba Hill.

"The hill is an outlying height of the Nachilanga Ridge which rises half a mile east of Kawimbe Mission - about 14 miles east of Mbala - and curves south to the Kanji and Maniola Hills, westward to the Chipando Hills and then south again to Itimbwe and Sunzu Mountain where it is then crossed by the main Tunduma Road.... The summit of the isolated Liamba Hill is just higher than the range, at 6,225 ft. The valley between is on the 5,7000 ft. contour, being about 500 ft. deep.

"The whole surface of the western slope of the Liamba Hill formation ... is almost completely covered with stone fragments so thickly laid that there is hardly any grass cover and only thin, open bush... These stone fragments are largely - in fact mainly - artefacts. In some places there is hardly a natural stone to be seen. They appear to be debris and implements representing more than one culture. There are multitudes of small flakes, blades and cores of late M.S.A. type; rather crude small hand axes; many notched implements; large burin type implements; numerous large crescent or disc type tools with well worked convex edges; some large cores and, on the lower slopes, very large cores, such as boulders with obvious flake scars. One perfect small "rostracarinate" was recovered.

"...the surface for over half a mile and nearly 1,000 ft. vertically and the rounded summit plain itself were found to be consistently covered with this material with the variation that the gentler slopes and level patches or terraces in general bore much smaller fragments than the steeper slopes, and larger and very large cores etc. seemed concentrated lower down ending with the flake-scarred boulders mentioned. This appears to be the sorting effect of hill-wash....

As no one from the Monuments Commission has yet been able to visit the site Mr. Beare brought us a collection of almost 2000 artefacts when he came through Livingstone in June. It contained the following types.

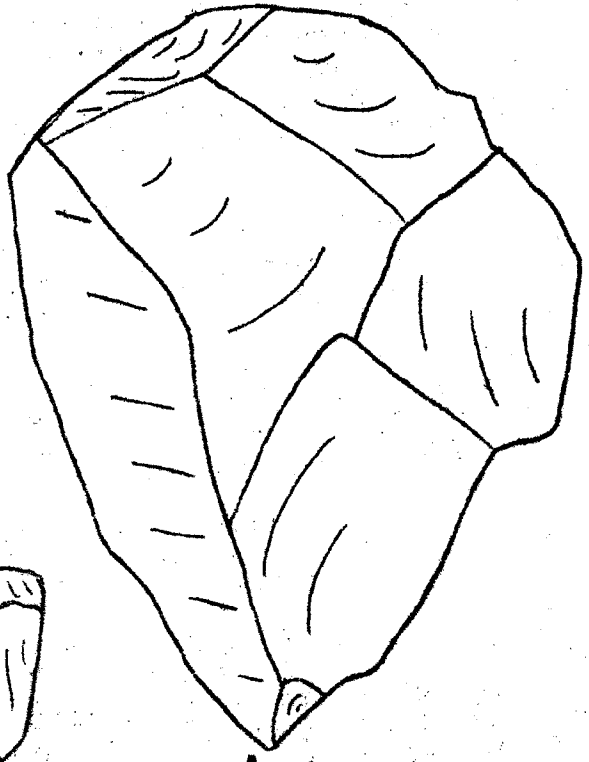
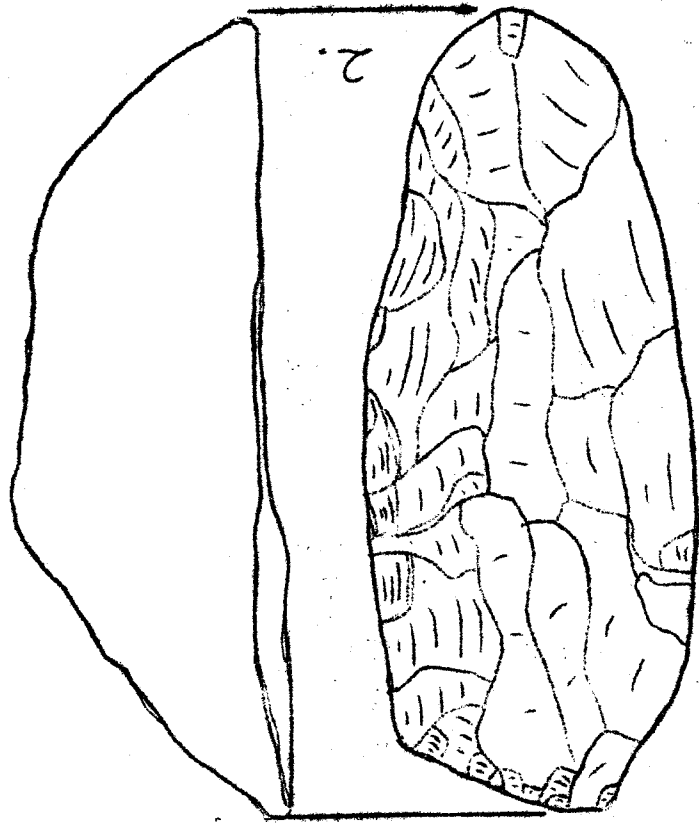
Points - The few examples of trimmed or retouched triangular flakes are either too blunt or too irregular to have served as projectile heads and were probably discarded for this reason.

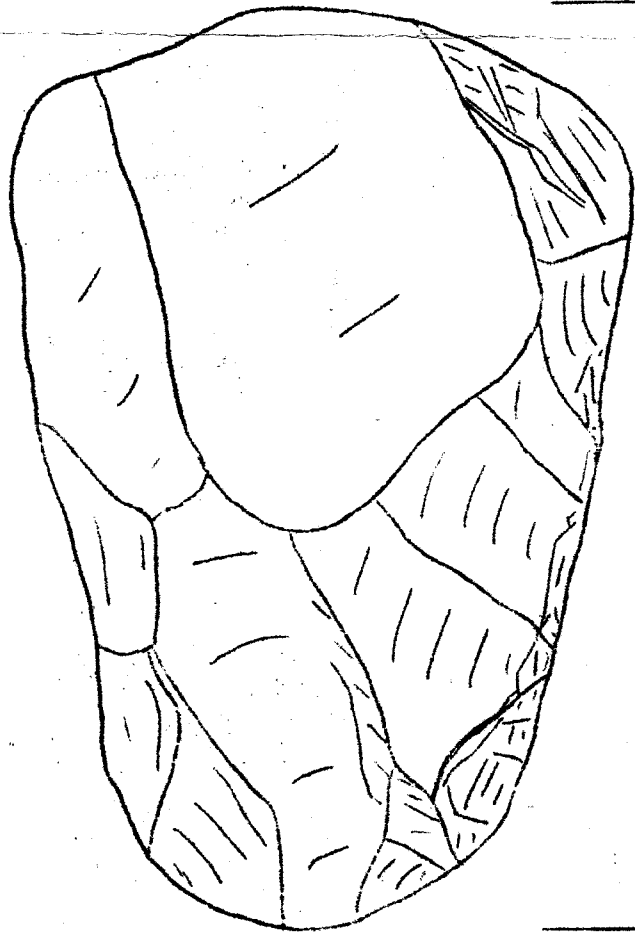
Burins - One is on a very large triangular flake, the other on a small irregular flake.

Pseudo-Burins - These are flakes or chunks with a pyramidal point that is polyfaceted in cross section and is made by the intersection of at least three flake scars. They have some edge damage at the very tip, but no true burin scars.

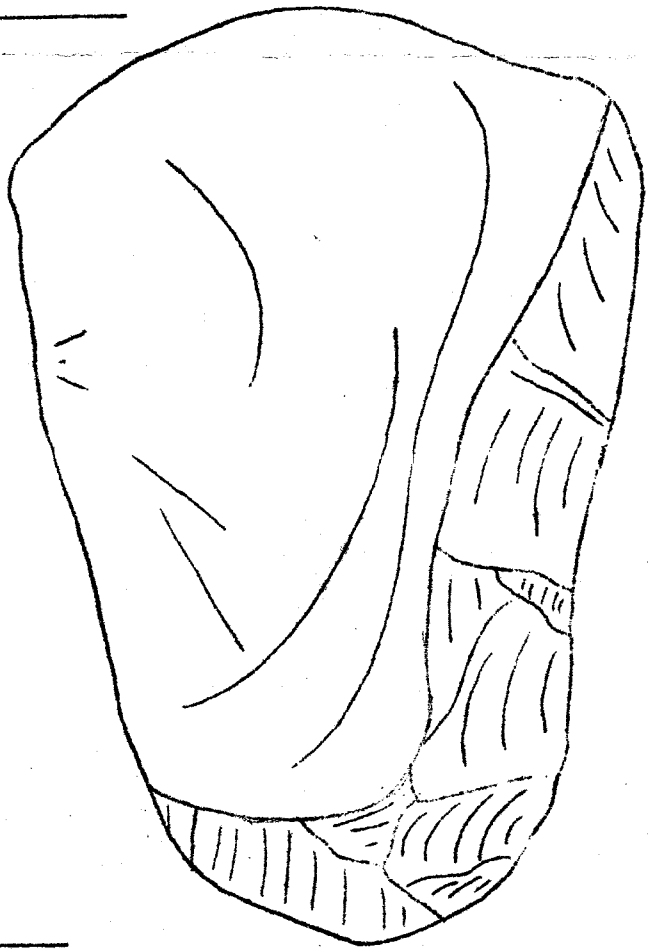
Circular Steep or Core Scrapers - There are two of these.

Limace or Rostro-carinate - The French name for this "slug", is very descriptive. I've not heard any convincing





3.



Artefacts from Liamba (Actual size)

guess as to the purpose for which these implements, which are almost always very finely worked, were intended. The example from Liamba is somewhat unusual in having a straight scraping edge at one end.

Flake Cleaver - This is a thick, heavy "U" shaped flake which had been pre-formed as a cleaver before it was detached from the core.

Handaxes - Two are flake handaxes similar to the cleaver in size and manner of production, but ovate in plan and **lacking** the cleaver edge. There is also one slightly smaller bifacially worked handaxe.

Flake Scrapers - There is a variety of large and small flake scrapers including concave, convex and straight edged forms. Most have edge angles of less than 35°. There is only one steep flake scraper.

Backed Blade - One small blade has been roughly backed.

Cores - Biconvex disc cores are most frequent. Variations on the disc core, particularly plano-convex or high backed disc cores, chopper-like cores, and triangular prepared cores are also common. There are also several polyfaceted blade cores and a number of irregular cores.

Whole Flakes - These include ovate and circular disc core flakes with radially oriented dorsal scar patterns, triangular flakes, and blades and flake blades with somewhat irregular outlines. Irregularly shaped flakes are most common.

Broken Flakes and Chips - Few of these were collected.

The artefacts appear to belong to workshop facies of at least two MSA industries, the majority of those collected belonging to a very early MSA or possibly even to a late Sangoan industry, and some of the small flakes and scrapers to a late MSA industry. As Liamba Hill is the only source of chalcedonic rocks occurring in a wide area prehistoric men must have come here to obtain the raw material they needed to manufacture their stone tools. It is possible that the hill was used as a quarry and factory site during much of the Middle Stone Age period and that the artefacts left behind are in fact a jumble of industrial waste from the early, middle, and late MSA.

The illustrations (p. 4) are: (1.) a large and a small triangular flake showing the range of flake sizes, (2.) the limace, and (3.) the flake cleaver.