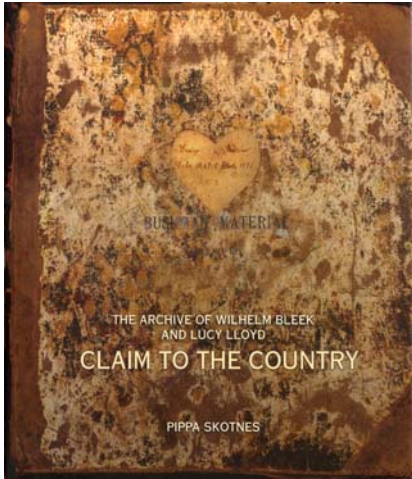


**Claim to the Country: The Archive of Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd** / Edited by Pippa Skotnes.-- Athens, OH: Ohio University Press and Jacana Media, October 2007.--392 p. + DVD.--ISBN-13: 978-0-8214-1778-2: \$65.00.



*Claim to the Country* is a unique publication, an affecting and effective work, one that confronts and documents the words and images of a now-lost people, within art historical and archival contexts that render it accessible to a wide audience, not only through the power of its printed text and images, but also through the presence of its accompanying DVD. For the first time, the entire archival contents of three separate institutional collections—the University of Cape Town, Iziko; the South African Museum; and the National Library of South Africa—are brought together.

The Archive was assembled predominantly during the 1870s by three Europeans living in the area: the German linguist Wilhelm Bleek (1827-1875); his sister-in-law, the English Bushman Researcher Lucy Catherine Lloyd (1834-1914); and the photographer Dorothea Bleek (1873-1948), fifth daughter of the philologist. In pioneering work, they recorded and translated the language and folklore of the Ixam (or Cape San or Bushmen) and

Ikun tribes, who formerly inhabited the tip of present day South Africa, and preserved a record of their watercolors and drawings. The story of their incarceration by the British and eventual total annihilation by the Victorians is heartbreakingly documented with consummate dignity by Skotnes, who has been working with this material for two decades.

This book concentrates on the Archive, in its entirety, and the result is a marvel to behold, for it is all that survives of the culture that formed it and those that recorded it. Skotnes succeeds admirably with all her intentions: 1) to publish and index the major part of the Archive; 2) to present the reader with some of the experience of being in the Archive; 3) to reveal how knowledge and understanding are birthed through curatorship; 4) to include essays by various scholars as contextualization, but also as an expanded part of the Archive itself; 5) to try to understand that the former inhabitants of Southern Africa are no longer alive through their language or their culture or their ideas; and, 6) to be a beautiful book. This publication brings to mind a much abused word today, that is pertinent here: awesome. The testimony of these silent witnesses arouse myriad conflicting emotions and feelings.

This important book will appeal to archivists, anthropologists, art historians, and scholars of colonialism, material culture, visual studies, memory studies, and Holocaust studies.

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