

KhoiSan Rock Art: The art of identity



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Benjamin Smith
Winthrop Professor of World Rock Art
Centre for Rock Art Research and Management



ARCHAEOLOGIES of ART

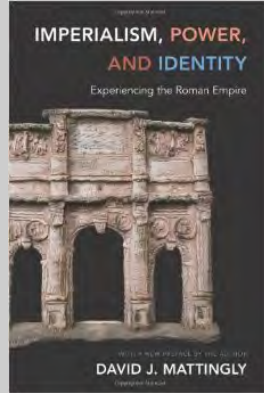
Time, Place, Identity

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NEW & FORGOTTEN

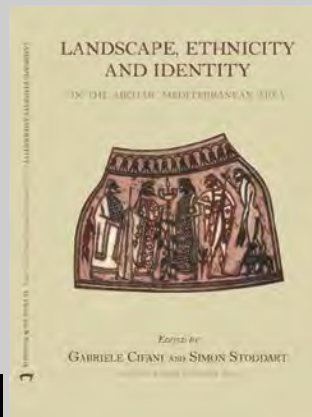
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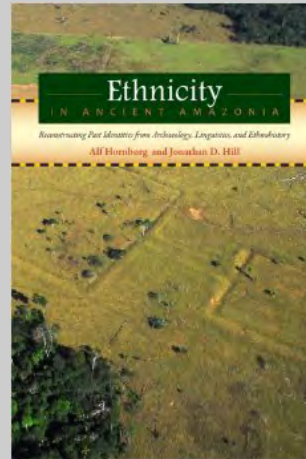


The Archaeology of Ethnicity

Constructing identities in the past and present

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Ethnicity

IN ANCIENT AMAZONIA

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All Hornborg and Jonathan D. Hill

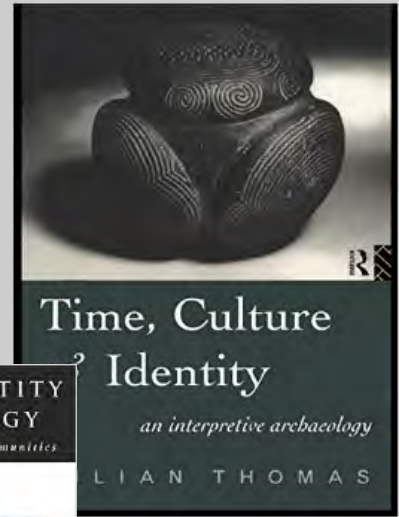
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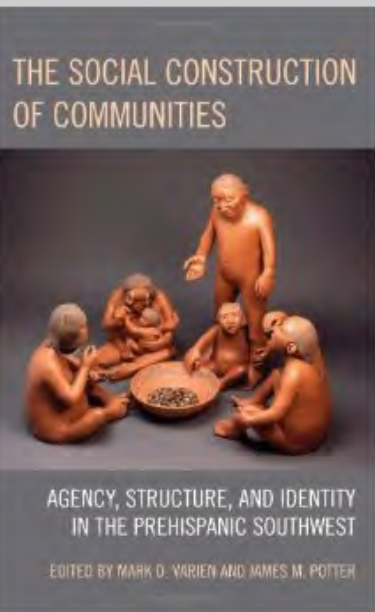
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Time, Culture, Identity?

an interpretive archaeology

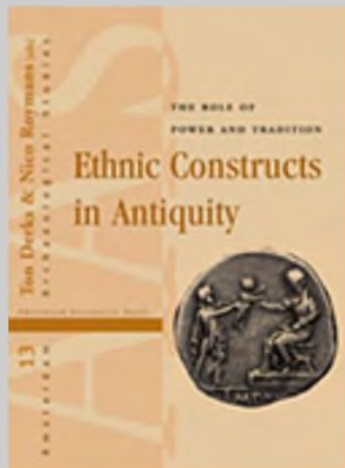
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THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF COMMUNITIES

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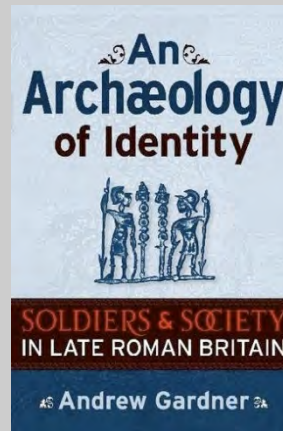
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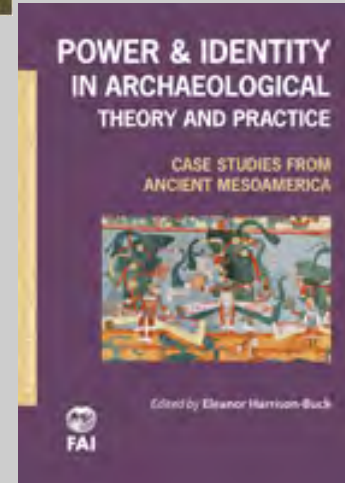


An Archaeology of Identity



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by Andrew Gardner



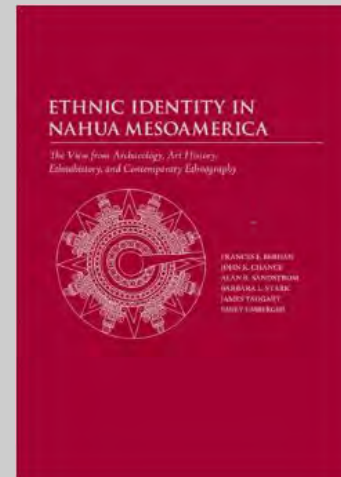
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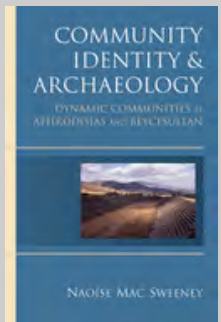


ETHNIC IDENTITY IN NAHUA MESOAMERICA

The View from Archaeology, Art History, Ethnohistory, and Contemporary Ethnography



FRANCIS BARNES
JENNIFER CLARKE
HELEN SANDERSON
HARRIET STEEN
JAMES TROSBY
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COMMUNITY IDENTITY & ARCHAEOLOGY

DYNAMIC COMMUNITIES IN ATHENS AND BEYSULAN



NAOISE MAC SWEENEY

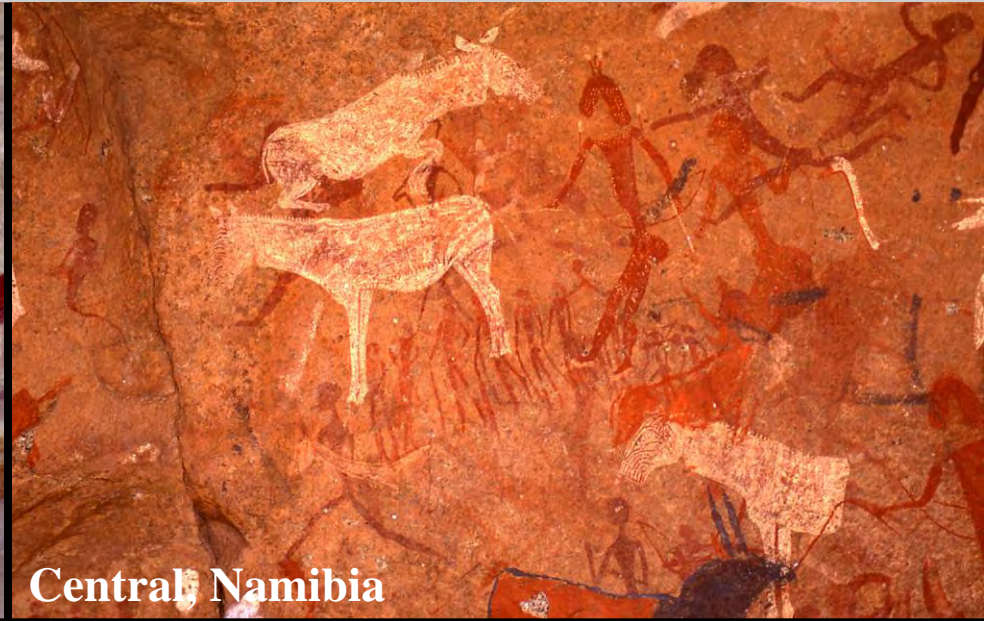
The rock arts of Bantu language-speakers



Southern African Bushman rock art



Eastern, South Africa



Central, Namibia

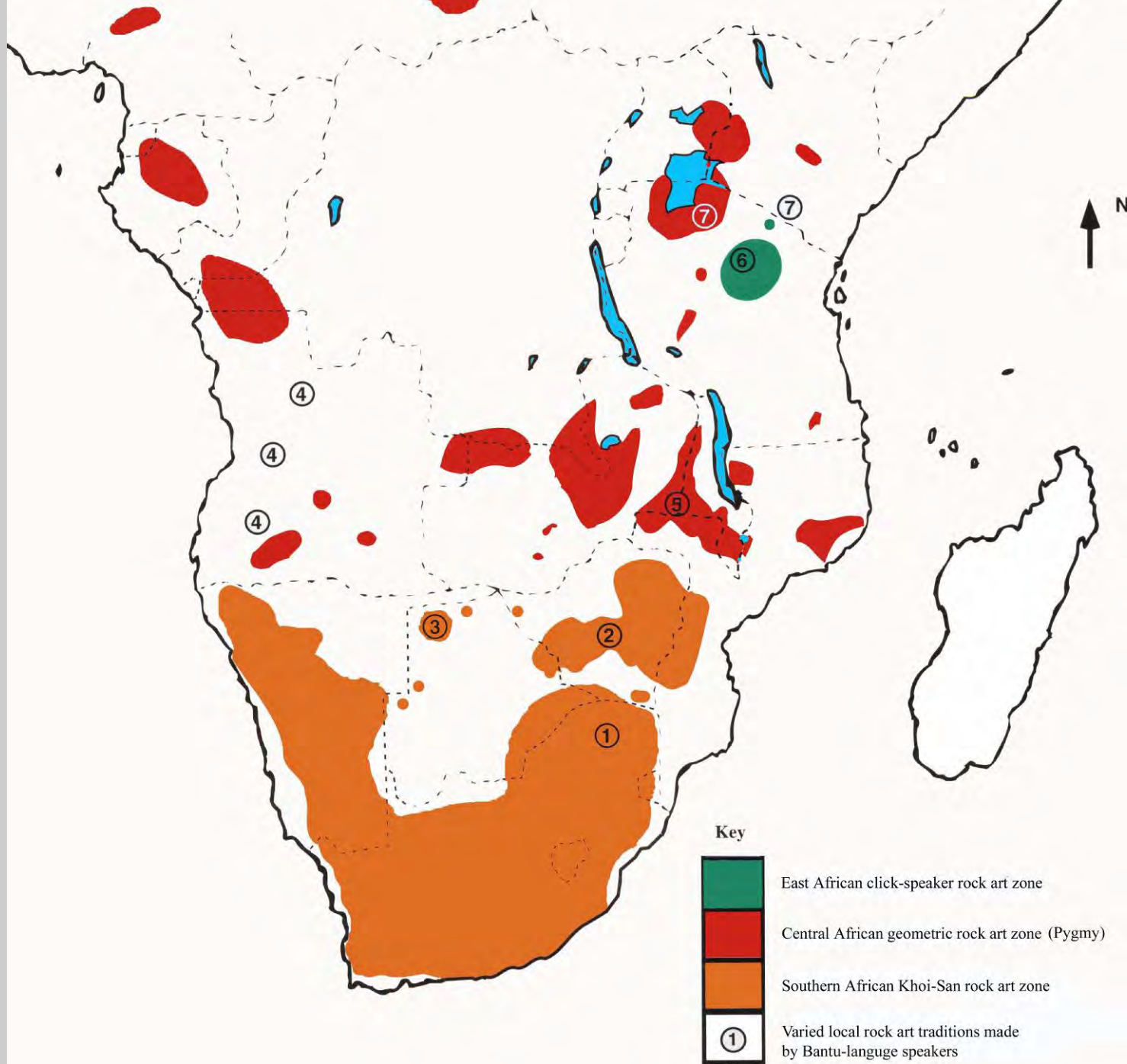


Western, South Africa



Central, Zimbabwe







Taking Stock

Identifying Khoekhoen Herder Rock Art in Southern Africa¹

by Benjamin W. Smith and
Sven Ouzman

Recent archaeological research has identified a widespread southern African rock art tradition that materially affects the debate over what archaeology can tell us about prehistory in southern Africa. This tradition differs from the one attributed to the ancestors of today's San in being dominated by rough-pecked and finger-painted geometric imagery. Using appearance, technique, age, geographic distribution, site preference, and relationship to known San-produced rock art, this article considers various candidates for its authorship—San foragers, Bantu-speaking farmers, Khoekhoen herders, European colonists, and multiethnic groupings—and concludes that it was predominantly Khoekhoen. The identity of the Khoekhoen, their origins, the route(s) by which they traveled, their relationship with foragers, and their material culture signature are contentious issues. The identification of a Khoekhoen rock art tradition provides another element for the study of the San-Khoekhoen relationship.

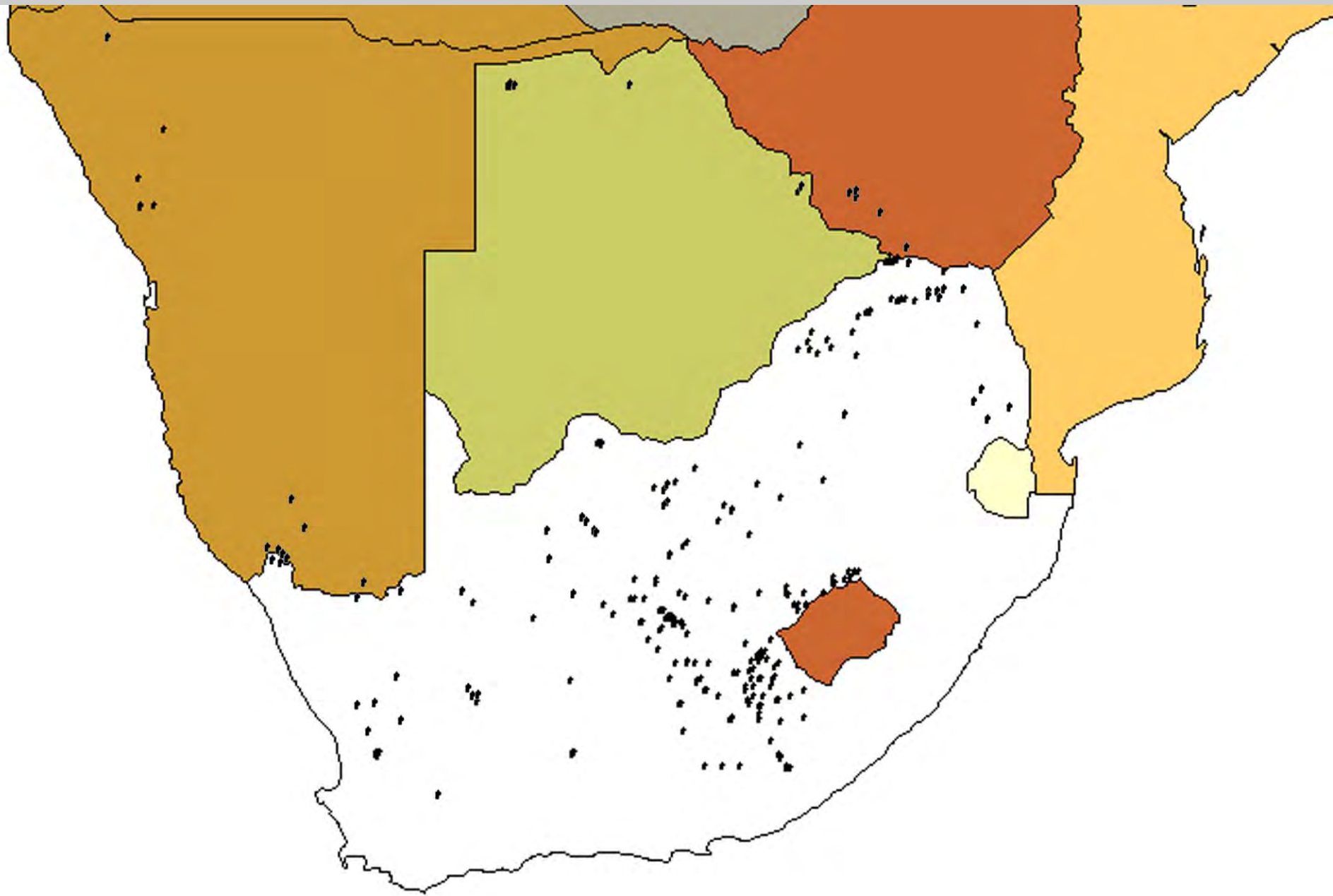
BENJAMIN W. SMITH is director of the Rock Art Research Institute, School of Geography, Archaeology, and Environmental Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand (Private Bag 3, PO WITS, 2058, South Africa; bws@rockart.wits.ac.za). He can be con-

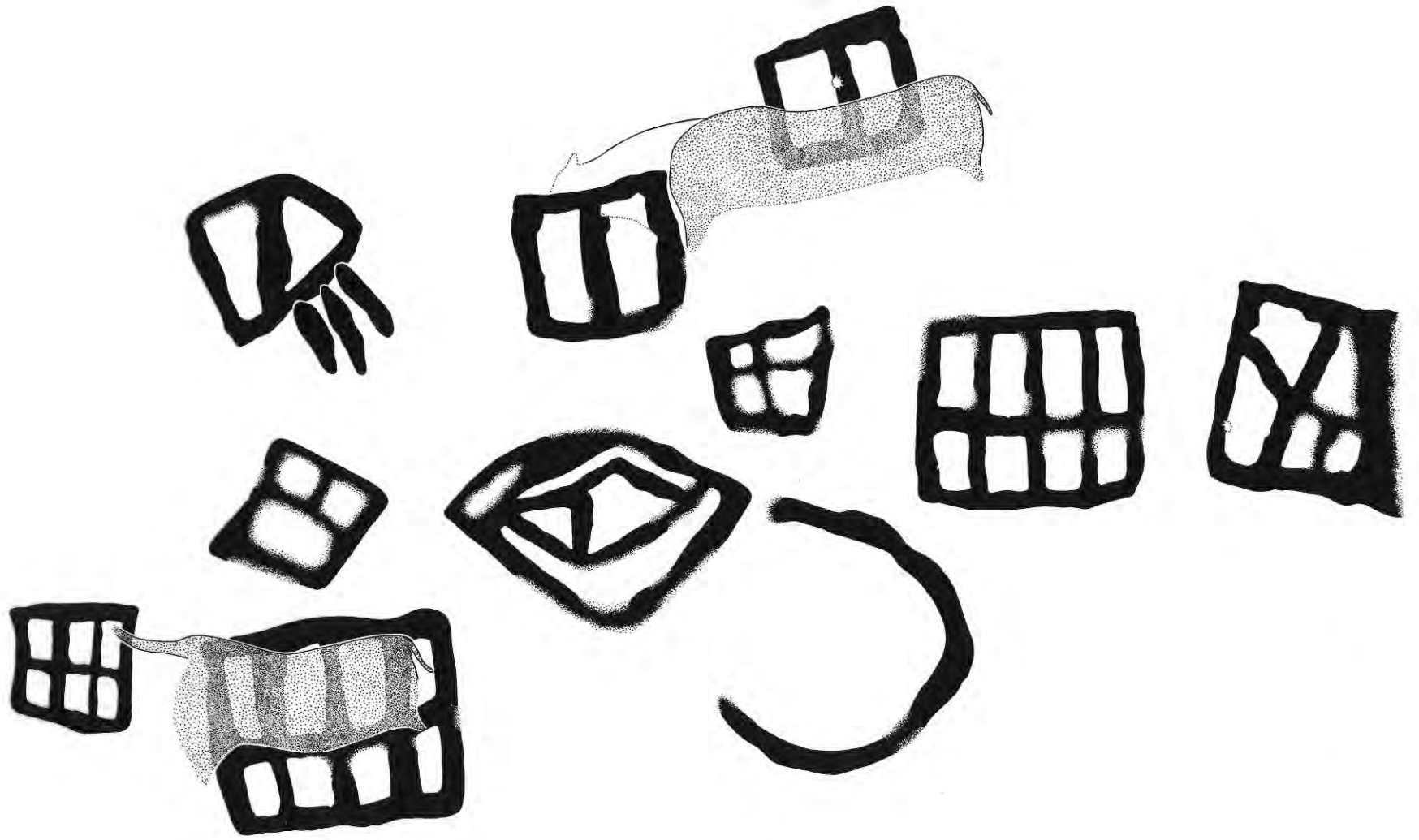
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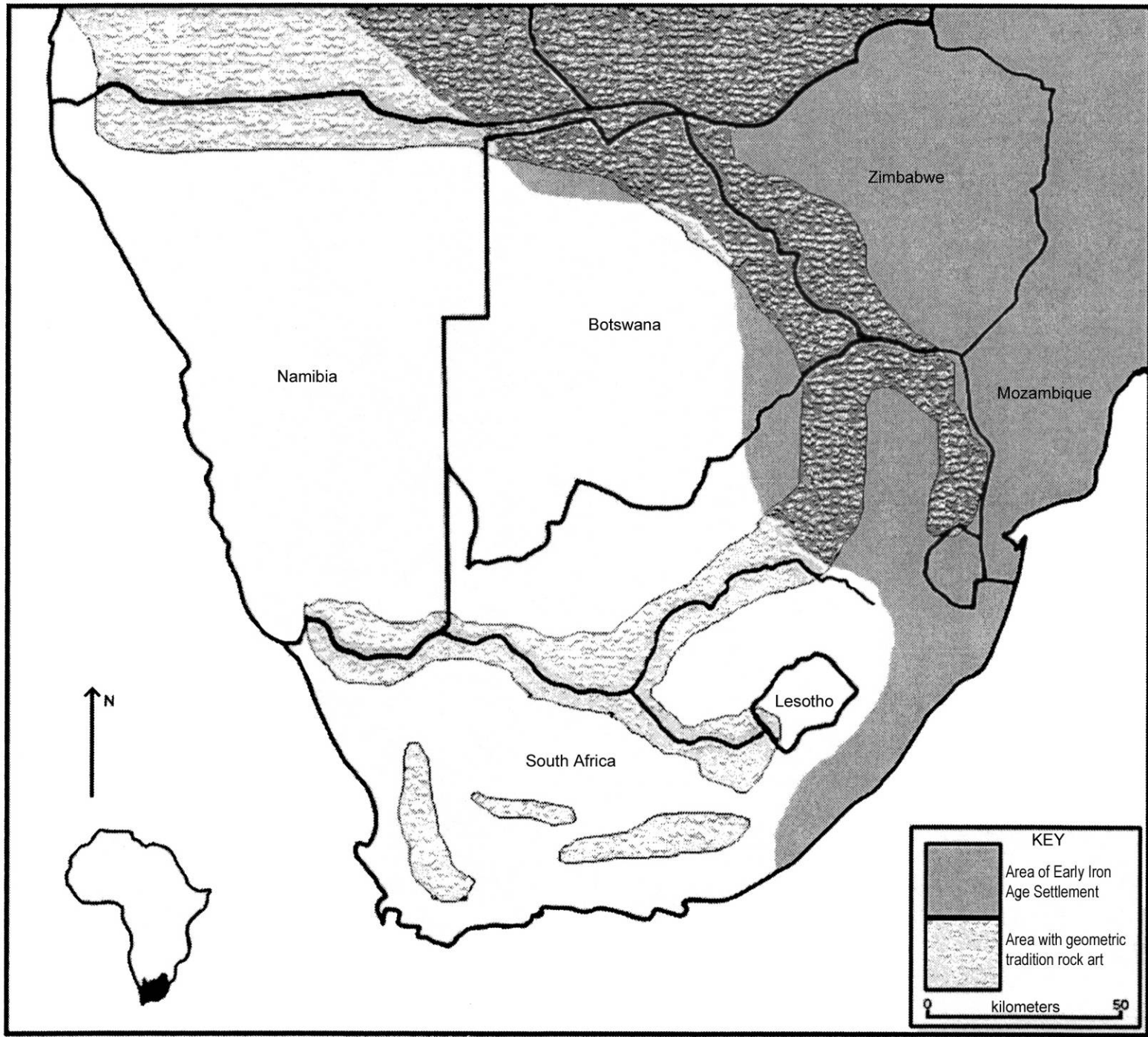
[Supplementary material appears in the electronic edition of this issue on the journal's web page (<http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/CA/home.html>).]

The past three decades have seen fierce debate about the presence, identity, and material culture signatures of "San" forager and "Khoekhoen" herder communities in southern Africa (fig. 1).² Some writers have lumped the two macro-ethnic categories as "Khoisan" (Schultze 1928:211), though many forager and herder descendants consider separate identities of prime importance. Archaeological research seeks to clarify the nature of this ethnic division—if in fact it exists—by juxtaposing the observations of early European settlers with archaeological remains. In this endeavor, 0 CE is a watershed for the peopling of southern Africa, the point at which non-foragers such as Bantu-speaking farmers and perhaps Khoekhoen herders appear in the archaeological record (cf. Mitchell 2002: chap. 9). Mid- and late-seventeenth-century-CE European reports from what is now South Africa's Western Cape Province call most non-Bantu-speakers possessing pottery and domesticated animals "Khoikhoi" (now "Khoekhoen" [A. Smith 1998]). Most people who gathered and hunted and did not possess pottery or domesticated animals were called "Bosjemans" and variations of "Sonqua" and "Soaqua," from which "San" is derived (Wright 1996). Researchers today wonder whether this ethno-economic division was not much more fluid, definitional rigidity being the product of a confusing, biased, and economic-determinist nomenclature. Furthermore, revisionist scholars ask whether historically observed differences have any time depth beyond the reach of ethnographic capture. Some suggest that they may be the product of recent cross-cultural









Namibia

Botswana

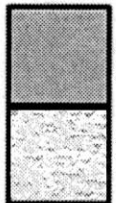
Zimbabwe

Mozambique

Lesotho

South Africa

KEY



Area of Early Iron Age Settlement

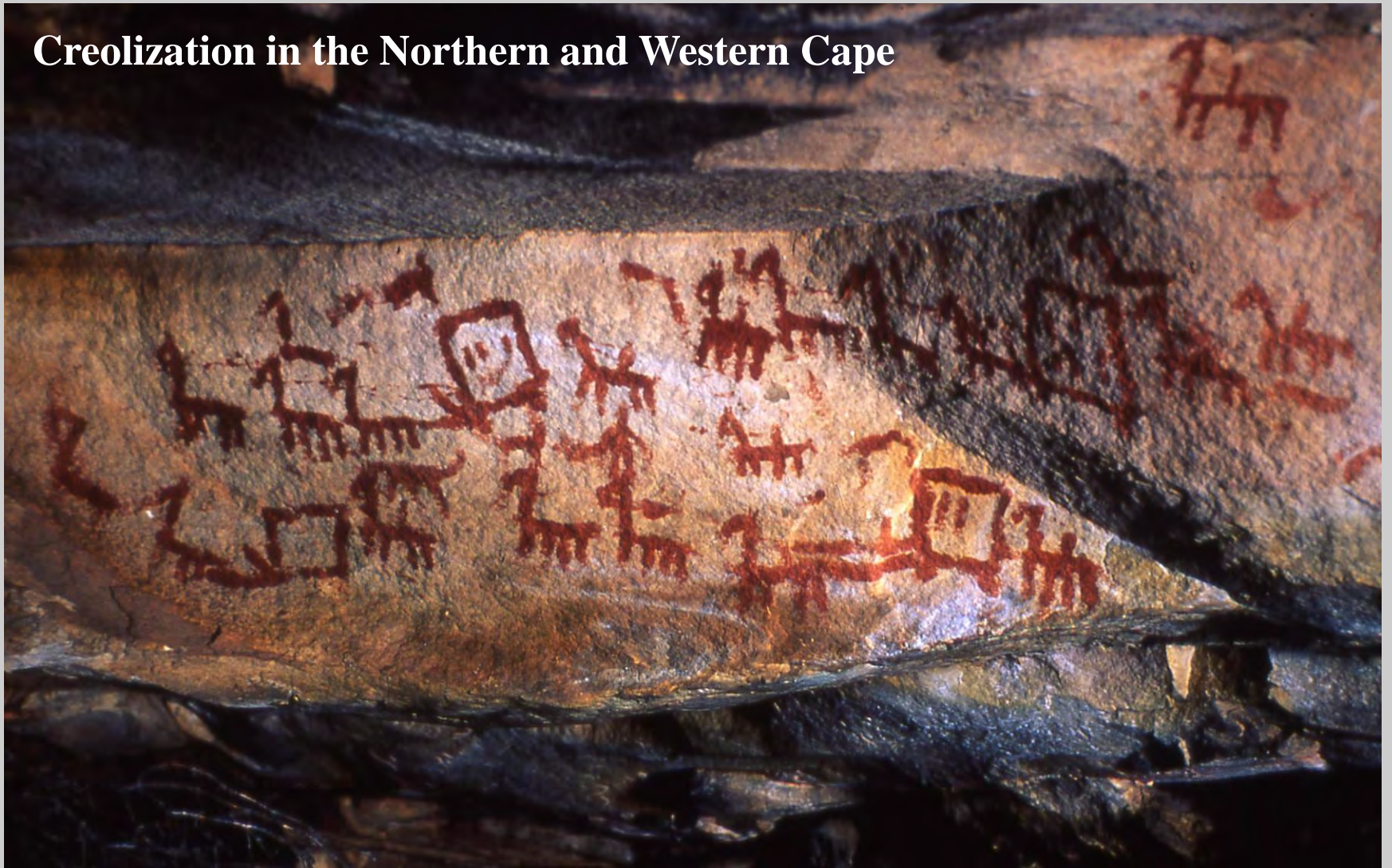
Area with geometric tradition rock art

0 kilometers 50

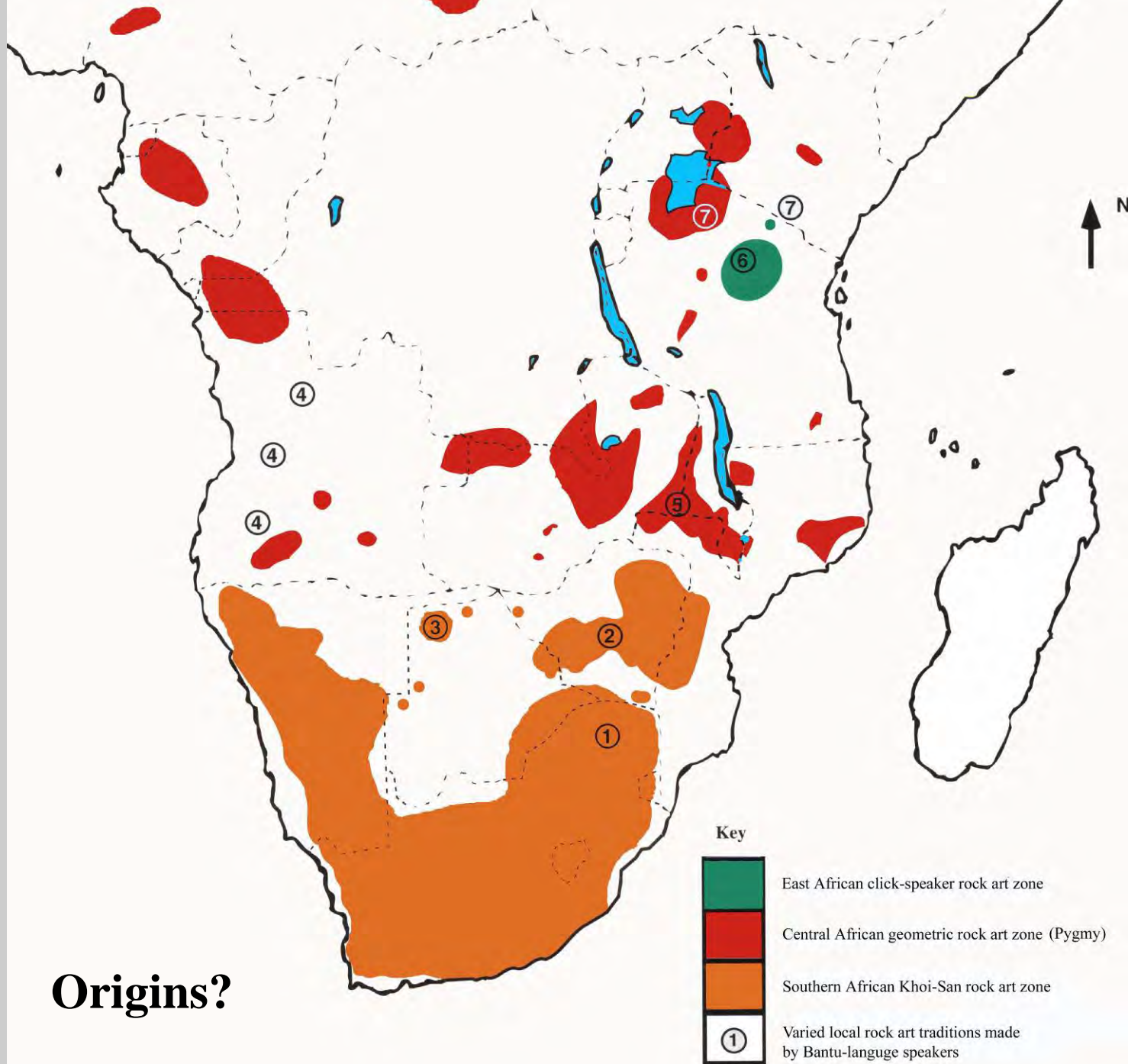




Creolization in the Northern and Western Cape

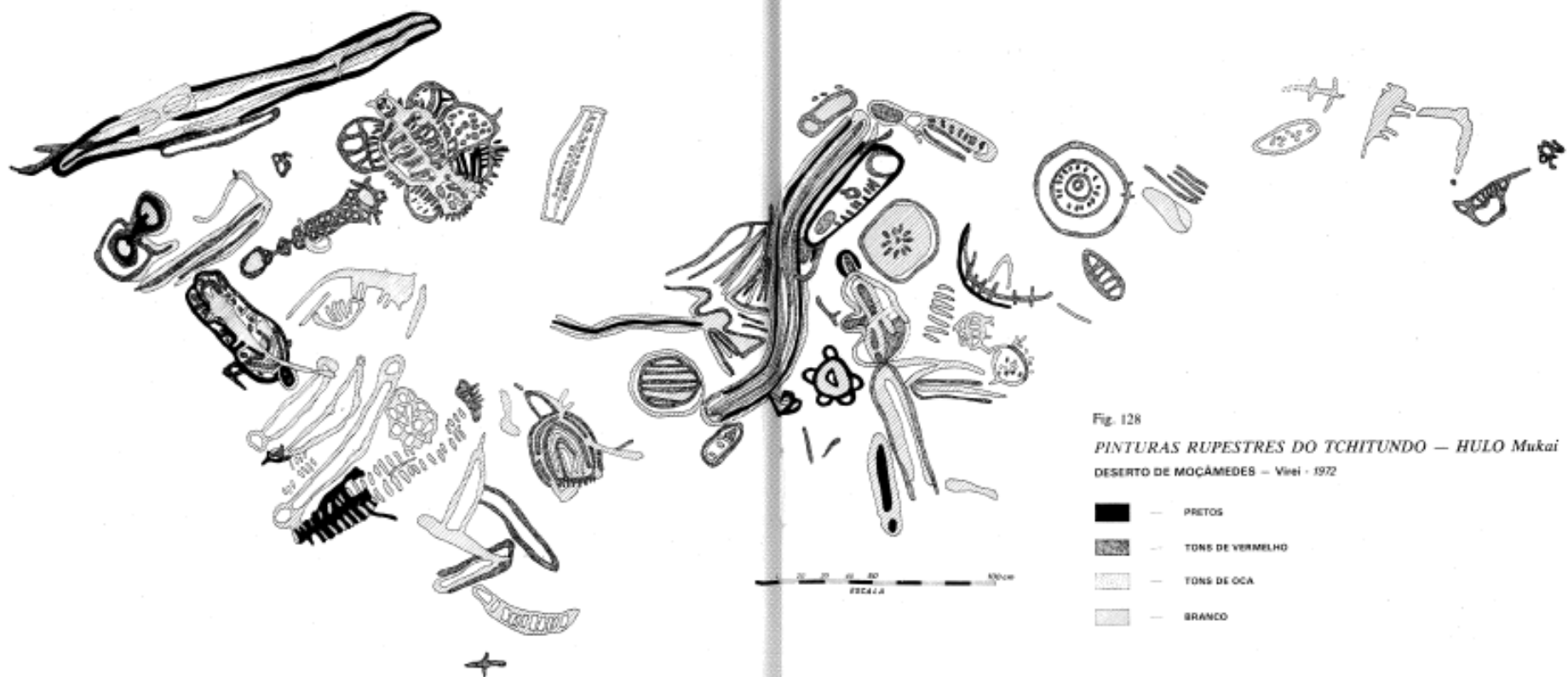


Origins?







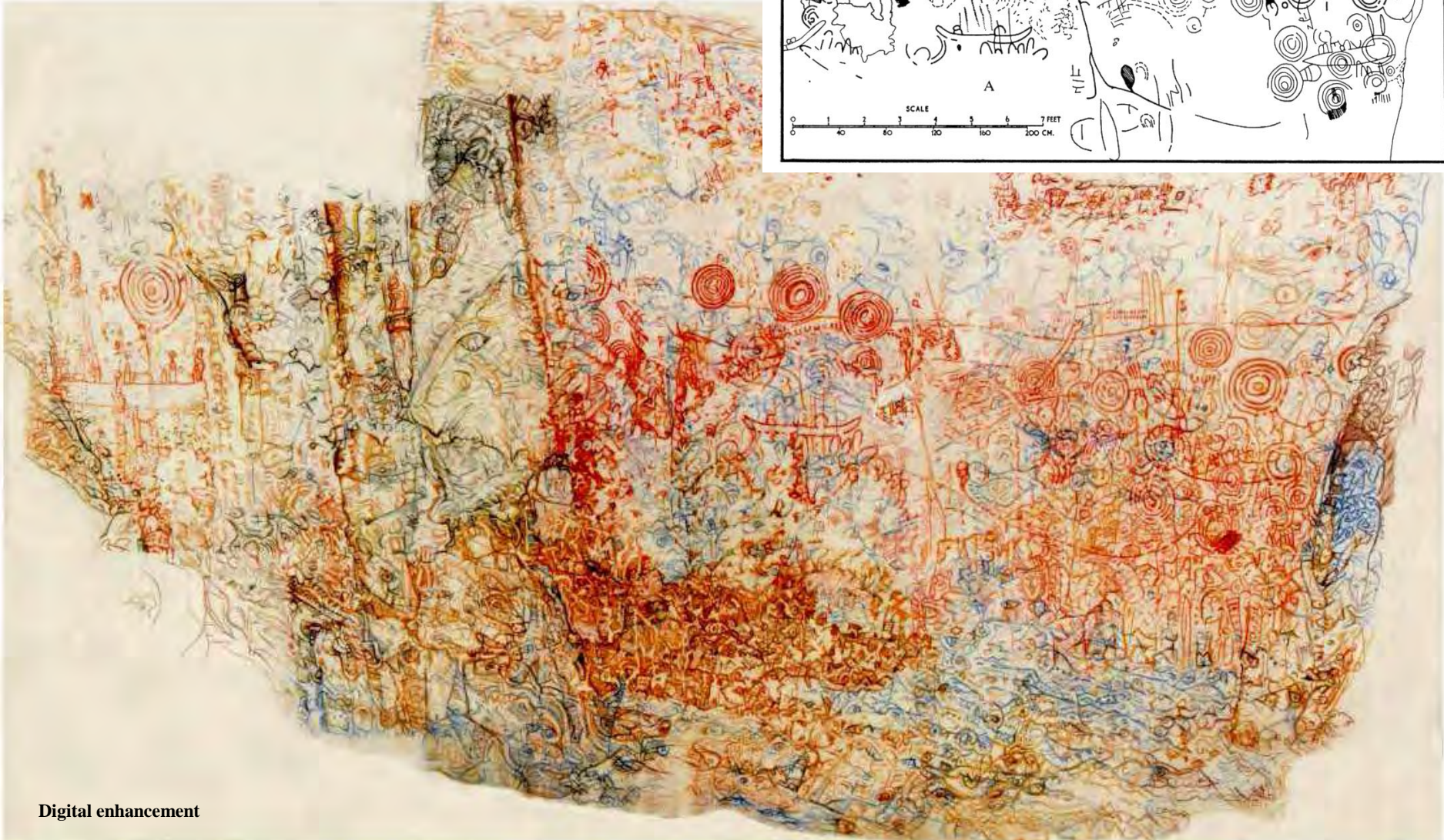
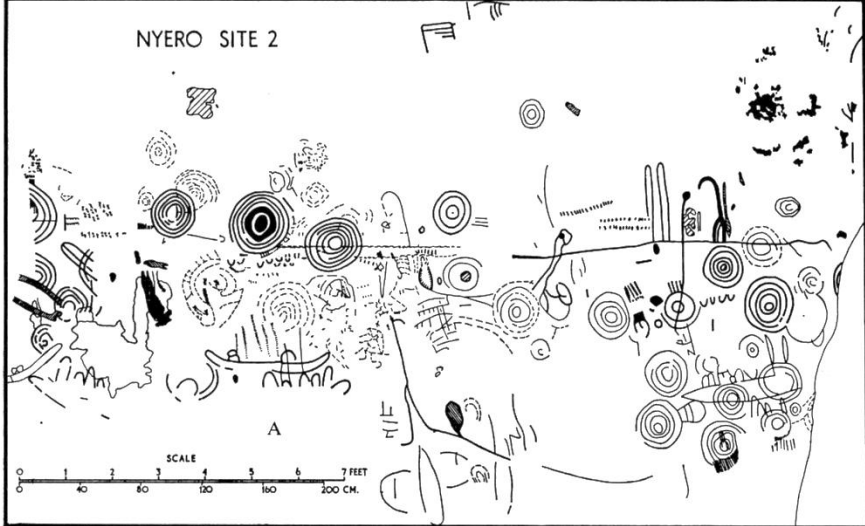




East Africa?

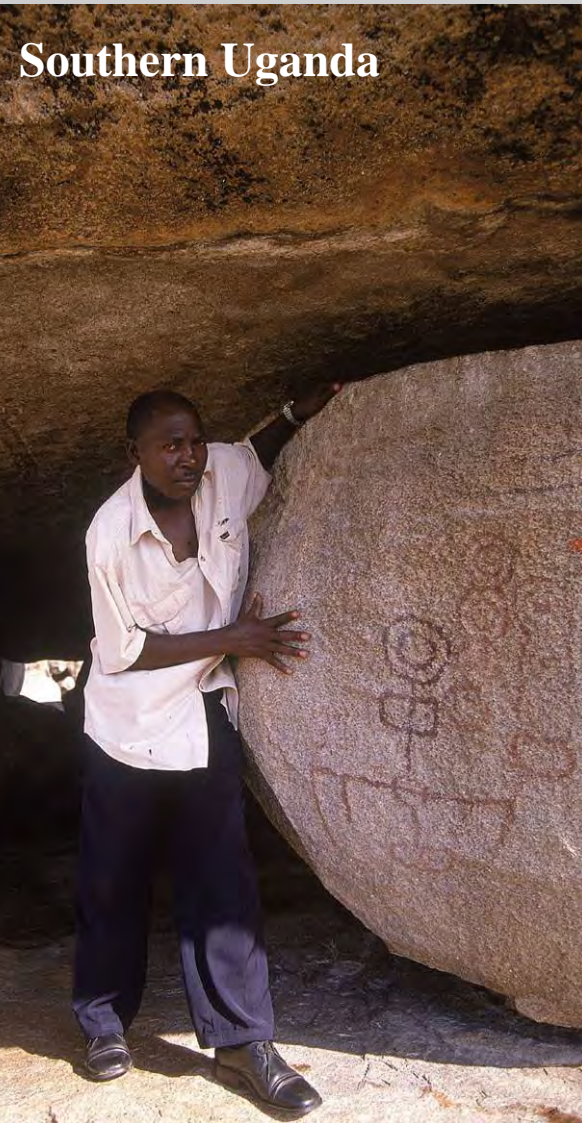


Nyero, Eastern Uganda



Digital enhancement

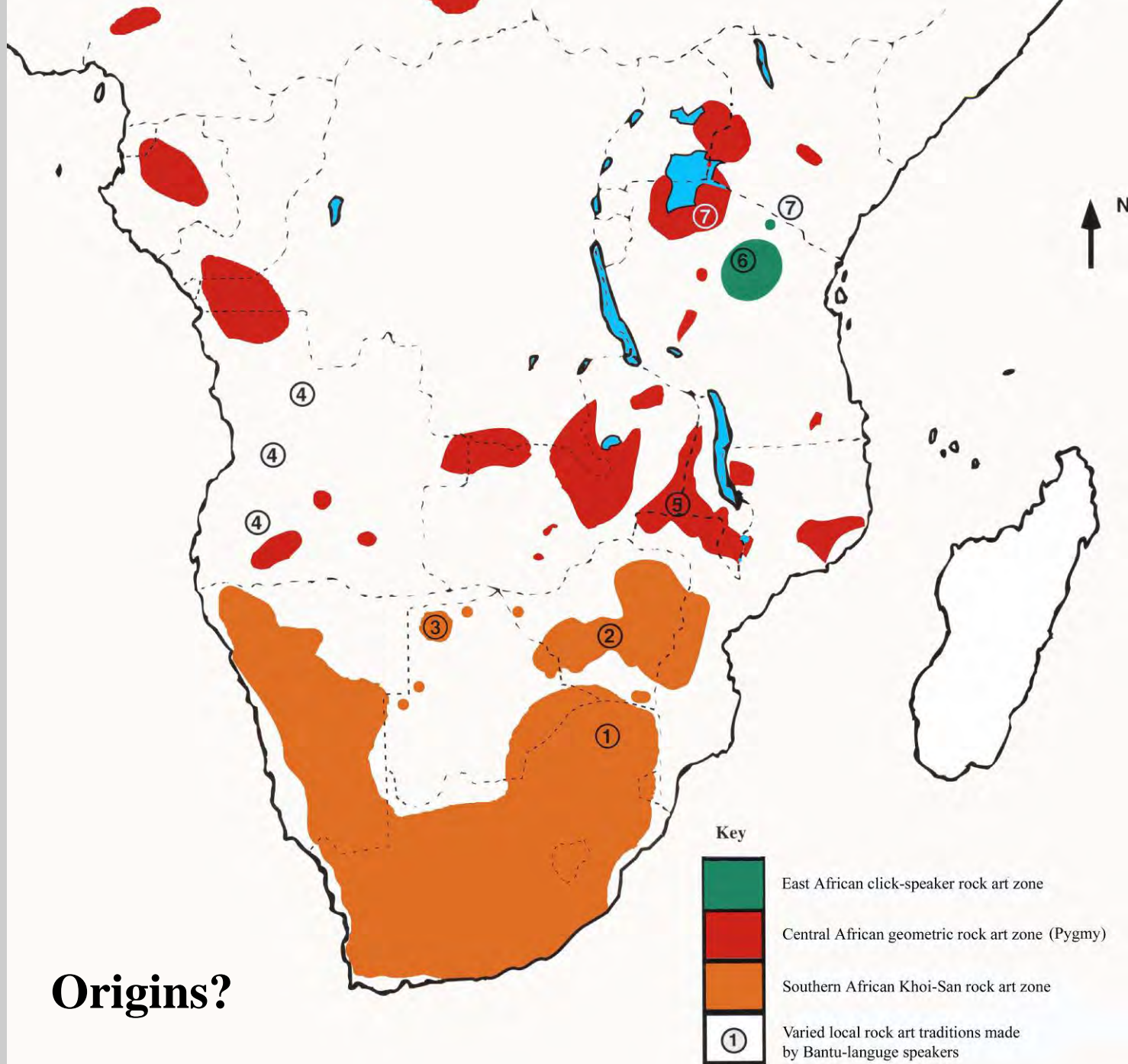
Southern Uganda

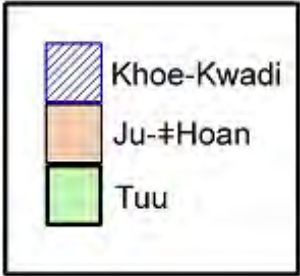
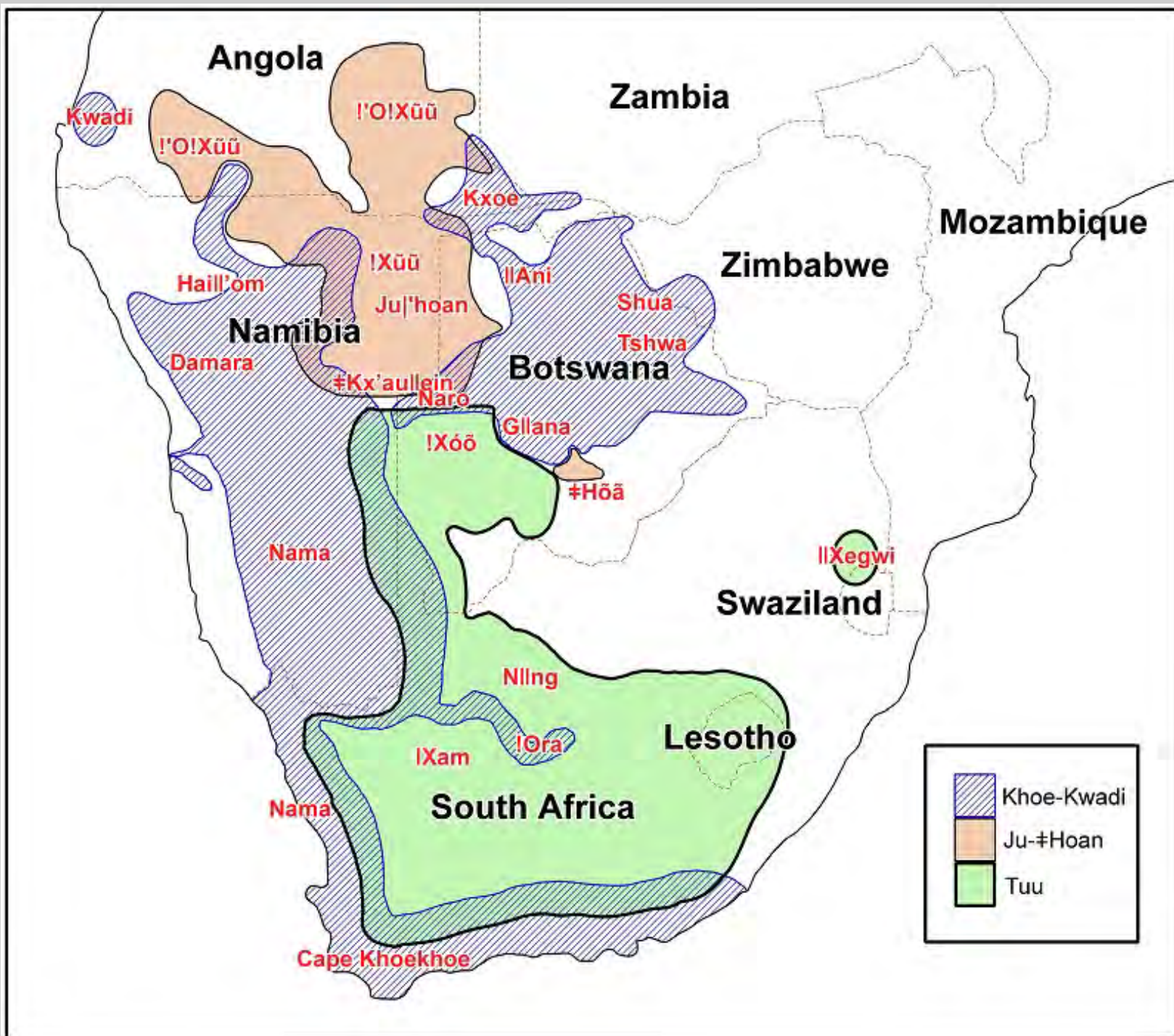


Western Tanzania



Origins?





**Tsodilo Hills,
Botswana**



**Limpopo Valley,
South Africa**



Art and authorship in southern African rock art:

Examining the Limpopo-Shashe Confluence Area

EDWARD B. EASTWOOD,¹ GEOFFREY BLUNDELL AND BENJAMIN SMITH
 (Rock Art Research Institute, University of the Witwatersrand,
 Johannesburg, South Africa)

ROCK ART AND REGIONALITY

In 1925, Samuel Shaw Dornan, an Irish Presbyterian missionary, remarked on Bushman forager rock art: “The paintings are of the same general type all over South Africa. I have seen examples in the Cape Province, Orange Free State, Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Rhodesia, and they all looked the same; one cannot tell from reproductions of these paintings unless one is told where they come from” (1925: 182). It was not until the late 1920s that differences in various parts of the subcontinent were formally recognised; regional bodies of rock art were classified according to differences in stylistic characteristics and other features (e.g. Burkitt 1928; Van Riet Lowe 1952; Wilcox 1963a; Malan 1965; Rudner & Rudner 1970; Lewis-Williams 1983; cf. Laue 1999). Today, researchers would not offer general statements such as Dornan’s.

With the recognition of regional diversity comes the dual challenge of its explication and explanation. One obvious suggestion is that diversity is an indication of cognitive and cultural differences among the artists (e.g. Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1994: 207; Skotnes 1996: 238). Diversity is, of course, well noted in other aspects of forager culture; ethnographic studies point to the diversity of Khoisan languages and the fluidity of forager religious thought (e.g. Barnard 1992; Guenther 1994, 1999), despite broad similarities. Yet, one needs to guard against any simplistic correlation between material culture and cultural identity (Hodder 1985; Johnson 1999: 98–101; Hammond-Tooke 2000). Differences in material culture do not necessarily translate into a different cognitive system, and any particular example is likely to be more complex than some archaeological models portray. In southern Africa, a poor chronological

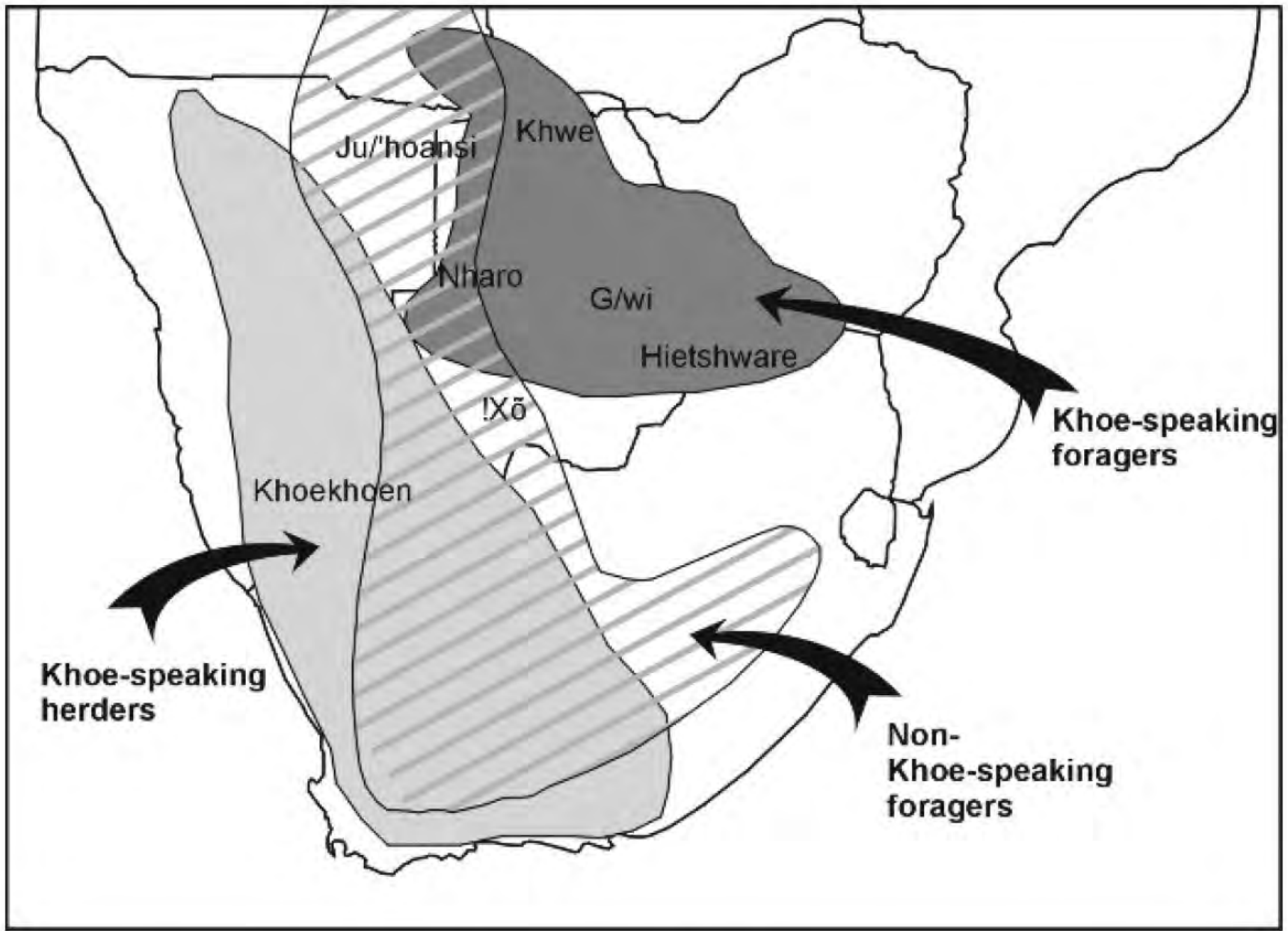
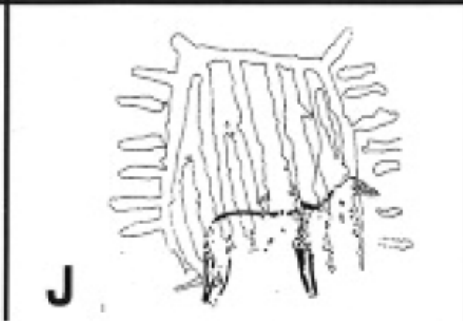
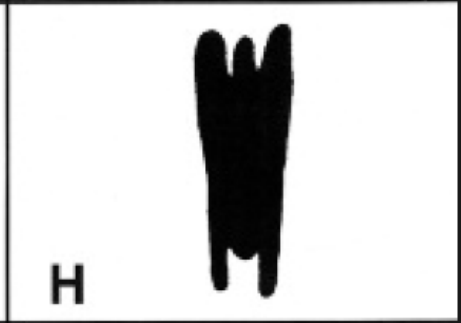
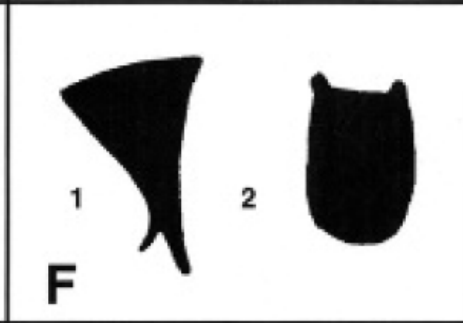
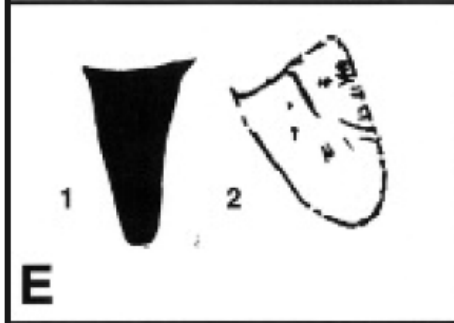
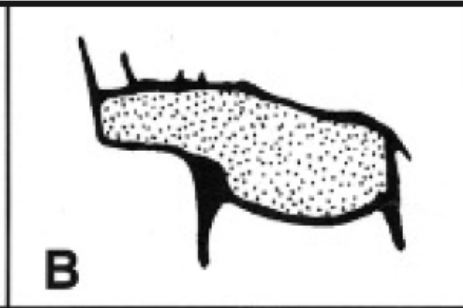
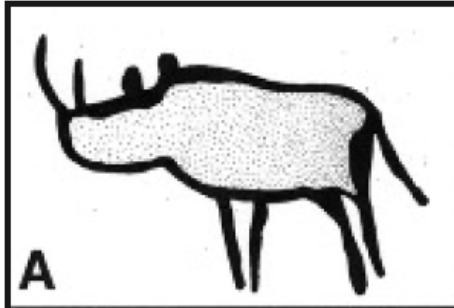


FIGURE 5.7 Map of southern Africa showing approximate distribution of main Khoisan language families, and of specific forager and herder groups mentioned in the text.



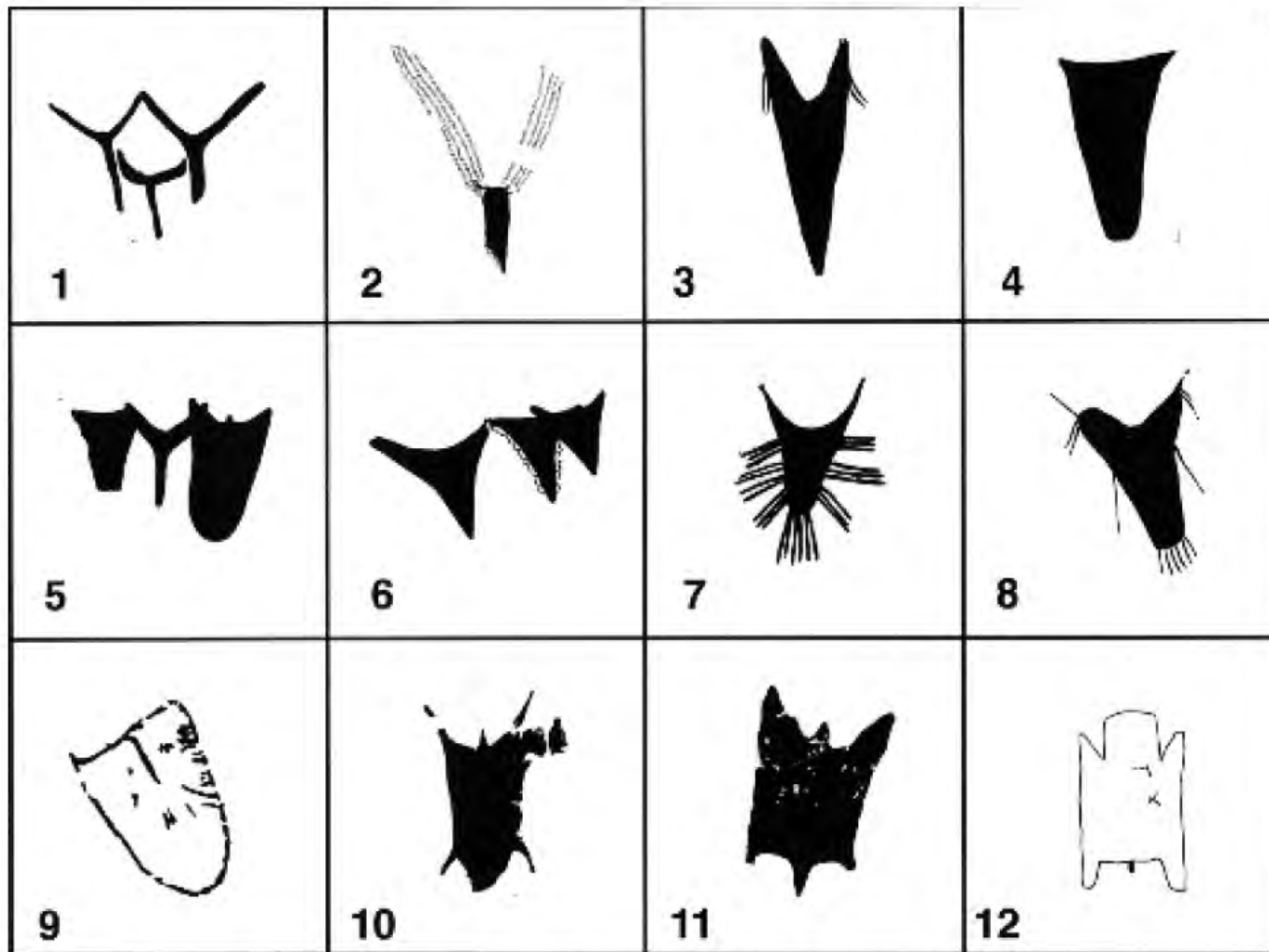


FIGURE 5.6 Examples of formal variation in the loincloth and apron motif in the central Limpopo Basin.

1-3. Limpopo-Shashe Confluence Area.

4. Soutpansberg.

5. Limpopo-Shashe Confluence Area.

6-7. Soutpansberg.

8-12. Limpopo-Shashe Confluence Area.

All paintings are red monochrome, with the exception of number 2, which is white and black, and number 7, which is yellow.





Chapman, 1846



FAMILIE DER KLEINE NANAQUIAS.



Holland.



*Karmack,
Grote Nanaquas Hottentots Captain.*



Women

28.2% in Limpopo

0.3% Barkley East

(Lewis-Williams 1981)

2% Southern Drakensberg

(Vinnicombe 1976)

6 – 10% Western Cape

& Zimbabwe



