



THE
DAWN
OF

IMAGINATION



ROCK ART IN AFRICA



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TRUST FOR AFRICAN ROCK ART

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Cover Pictures top left, clockwise: Alien Figure, Niger; Close-up view of rock painting, Gaseeb shelter, Namibia;
Kwitone rock art site, Mfangani Island, Lake Victoria; Sacred site in the Drakensberg, South Africa

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AFRICAN ROCK ART

“Africa’s rock art is the common heritage of all Africans, but it is more than that. It is the common heritage of humanity” **President Nelson Mandela**

“The rock art of Africa makes up one of the oldest and most extensive records on earth of human thought. It shows the very emergence of the human imagination. It is a priceless treasure. And it is irreplaceable. But Africa’s rock art is not just about the distant past. It is about today and tomorrow as well. Scientists, historians, artists and students must be able to study and understand its significance for decades and centuries to come.

Africa’s rock art is the common heritage of all Africans and all people. It is a cultural gift from our ancestors that can bring diverse people together - with pride and a common commitment to share it and preserve it. Yet, today, Africa’s rock art is severely threatened. Its future is uncertain. Perhaps the greatest threat is neglect. A lack of resources, combined with a lack of official interest, has left too many rock art sites unguarded against vandals and thieves.

It is time for Africa’s leaders to take a new and more active role. We must save this cultural heritage before it is too late. Two initiatives are especially critical: educating our children, and engaging local communities. To Africa’s children I would like to say, You are the future of Africa. Study your proud history, and protect Africa’s rock art. I would also like to ask private businesses, foundations and individuals to contribute their expertise and resources. We at the United Nations will continue to do our part. Finally, I am pleased to join my dear friend Nelson Mandela in supporting TARA, the Trust for African Rock Art, in its work to preserve this vital cornerstone of our world’s cultural heritage.” **Kofi Annan, Secretary-General United Nations (2005)**



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Communication with Divine	

Head and neck of the big giraffe at Dabous, Niger. This life sized giraffe was carved at the top of a large outcrop in the Dabous river bed between 6,000 and 7,000 years ago.



ABOUT TARA

The goals of TARA are to create a permanent visual archive of Africa's rock art before it is too late, to share this priceless archive with the world community, and, to the extent possible, preserve today's most threatened rock art sites, however remote, across the African continent. TARA believes that an important way to realise the value of rock art in Africa for present and future generations is to promote awareness of its importance and richness.

Based in Nairobi, Kenya, TARA is the world's only organisation dedicated to this cultural imperative. TARA's work has been endorsed by Nelson Mandela, who encourages national governments and local communities throughout Africa to contribute their time and resources to the challenge of preserving and protecting Africa's rock art.

TARA's founder and Chairman, photographer David Coulson, has made it his life's work to photograph and document rock art across the African Continent. In 2005 UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, in a filmed statement in New York, called on African leaders, to take an active role in preserving this heritage, and on private businesses, foundations and individuals to contribute their expertise and resources to this imperative.

TARA's Mission is to create greater global awareness of the importance and endangered state of African rock art; survey sites; monitor status; be an information resource and archive; and promote and support rock art conservation measures.

Professor Heinz Ruther, an expert on 3D imaging is assisted by two Tuareg men in photographing a panel of huge 8,000 year old giraffe engravings, on a river pavement in southern Algeria.

MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

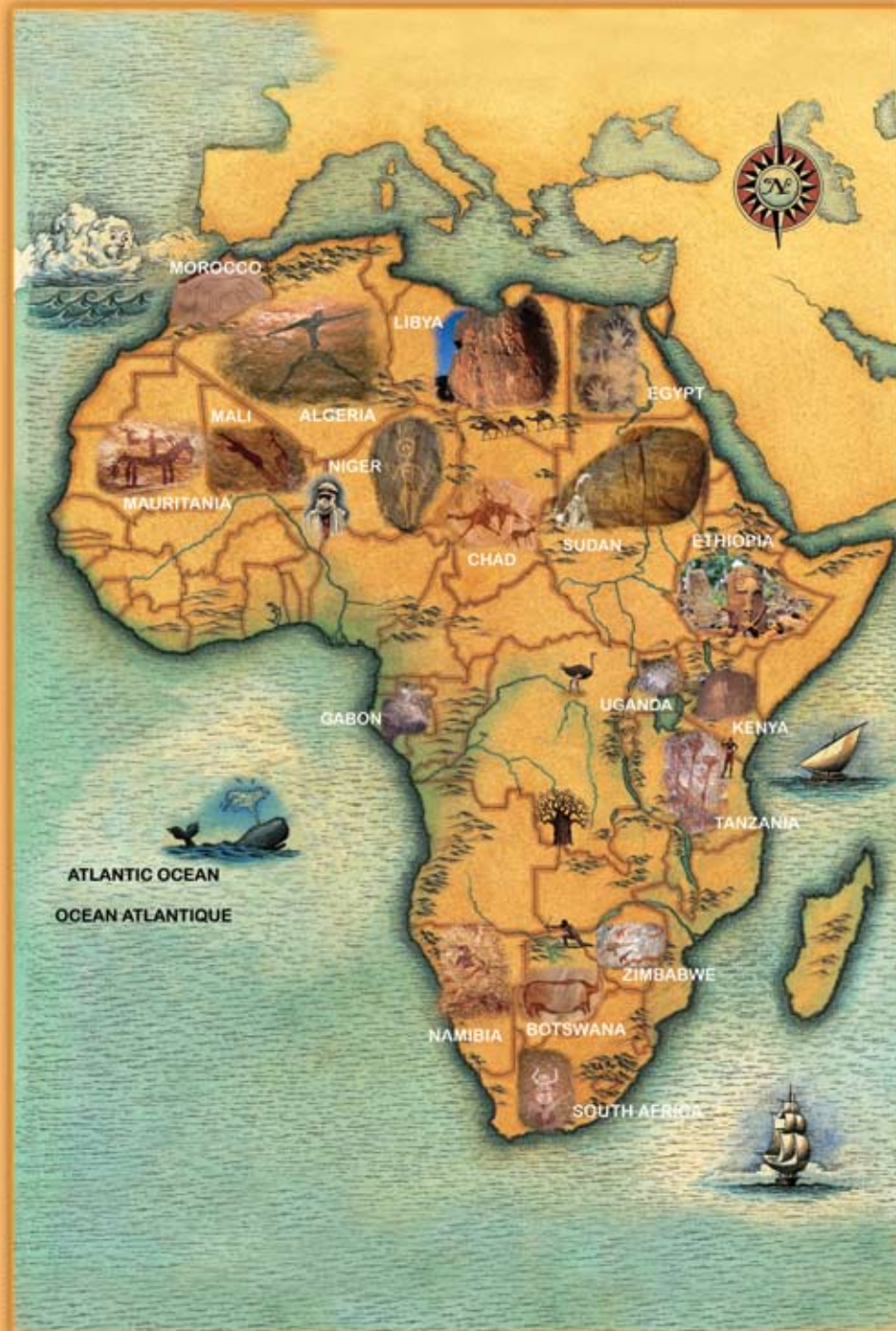


Alain Godonou, EPA Director, congratulates TARA COO, Terry Little on the EPA Grant to animate the Nairobi Exhibit.

Museums in the Service of Development (MSD) is a programme that supports the development of museums and related institutions so that they may become important actors in sustainable development. Focusing on three main themes: Educational impact of the museum, scientific and cultural impact of the museum, and improved marketing of the museum this program endeavours to work on projects that aim at enhancing the role of museums and related institutions in the contributing to educational, cultural and socio-economic development in sub Saharan Africa

In the educational impact of the museum MSD programs are based on the 'My Museum My School' concept in which museum - school partnerships are fostered through interactive exhibitions, public programs, educational programs promoting heritage and publication of education materials. To enhance the scientific and cultural impact of the museum the program focuses on projects that border around development and or renovation of permanent and traveling exhibitions. Improved marketing of museums focuses on product development, such as merchandise, publications, website, creation of museum shops, setting up of cultural banks amongst others. The MSD programme mainly takes the form of call for projects which must be included in the action plans that the prospective institutions present and promise to honor. www.epa.prema.net

ROCK ART IN AFRICA



INTRODUCTION TO THE EXHIBITION



Rock art distribution map - Africa

Imaginary rock shelter in the Dawn of imagination Exhibition, at the National Museum of Kenya 2008-2009 featuring actual paintings from three major geographical areas - Northern, Eastern and Southern Africa.

The earliest rock art in North Africa consists of large animal engravings, but the earliest paintings (from 10,000 years ago) were mainly of mythical humans. From 7,000 years ago paintings of cattle dominated the art until the Sahara dried up to become the desert it is today. Later images depict armed warriors, chariots, horses and, more recently, camels.

All East African countries contain rock art sites, but the greatest concentrations of the art occur in central Tanzania (Kondoa Province) where some paintings are thought to be at least 7,000 years old. Geometric paintings originally made by hunter-gatherers occur around the Lake Victoria Basin with some sites used until recent times for rain-making. Meanwhile, sites with rock engravings are found in Northern Kenya in the Kerio Valley, in areas near Lake Turkana and near the Chalbi Desert.

Most of Southern Africa's rock art is the work of ancestral San or Bushman hunter-gatherers. Along with much of Africa's prehistoric art, these rock paintings are believed to be spiritual in nature and to reflect shamanism - a variety of traditional beliefs and practices related to communication between the natural and spirit worlds.

NORTH AFRICA

SAHARAN ROCK ART

North Africa's Sahara desert is one of the richest rock art areas on earth with many thousands of painting and engraving sites. Most of the art of this area dates back to a time when the Sahara was not a desert as it is today. When the art was created there was vegetation and trees and the land supported many animals as well as human populations. The single richest rock art area of all is a huge area on either side of the Algeria/Libya border that includes the Tassili n' Ajjer and the Tadrart Akakus Mountain Range.

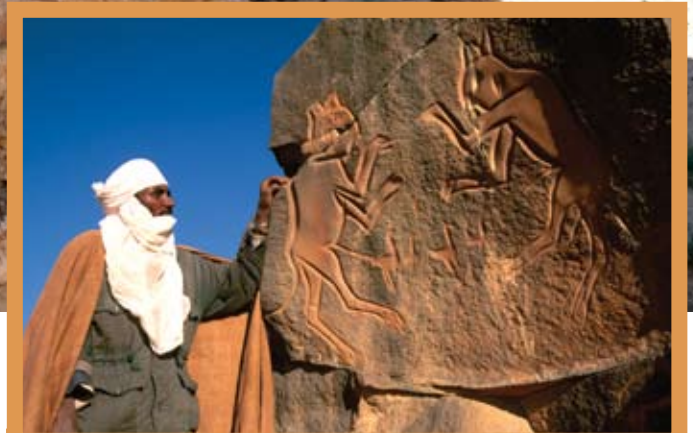
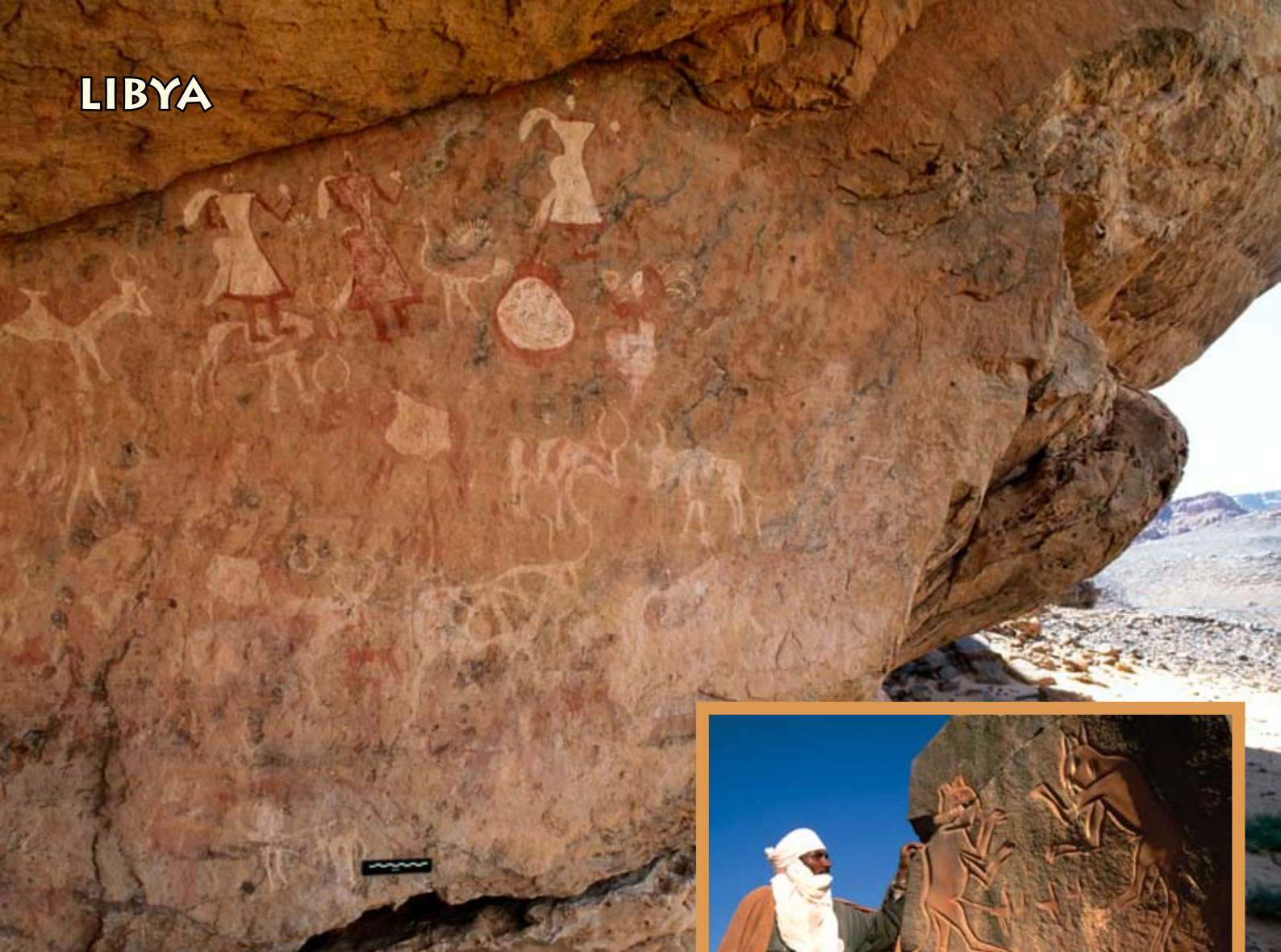
Periods and Styles

Found mainly in Algeria, Libya and Chad the oldest period of Saharan art is the so called "Early Hunter" Period. This is often characterized by large, often life-size engravings of wild animals (e.g. elephants, giraffe, rhino, aurochs). The earliest art from this period probably dates from before 12,000 years B.P (Before Present) and may have lasted until around 6,000/7,000 years ago. The artists were apparently hunter-gatherers.

The earliest Saharan paintings are the so-called "Round Head" paintings of Algeria – Libya from roughly 9,500 – 7,500 years ago. This art, also apparently drawn by hunter-gatherers is characterized by larger-than-life size, paintings of human figures and other worldly depictions of wild animals and people. These art periods are followed by the Pastoral Period of Saharan rock art which dates roughly from around 8,000 – 3,000 years ago comprising both paintings and engravings. This art is found throughout the Sahara and is followed and overlapped by the Tazina art period. Although this art is also found in Niger and Algeria, the main and best examples of Tazina art are found in southern Morocco on the Sahara side of the Atlas Mountains. This art is characterized by flowing, often schematic images engraved in outline. The oldest Tazina art is thought to date back to around 5,000 B.P. Meanwhile three different periods/styles – the Horse Period (starting around 3,000 B.P) and "Libyan Warrior" Period and finally the Camel Period starting around 2,000 B.P.

A Tuareg man and his son are seen travelling through the Sahara (Niger), dwarfed by immense dunes.

LIBYA



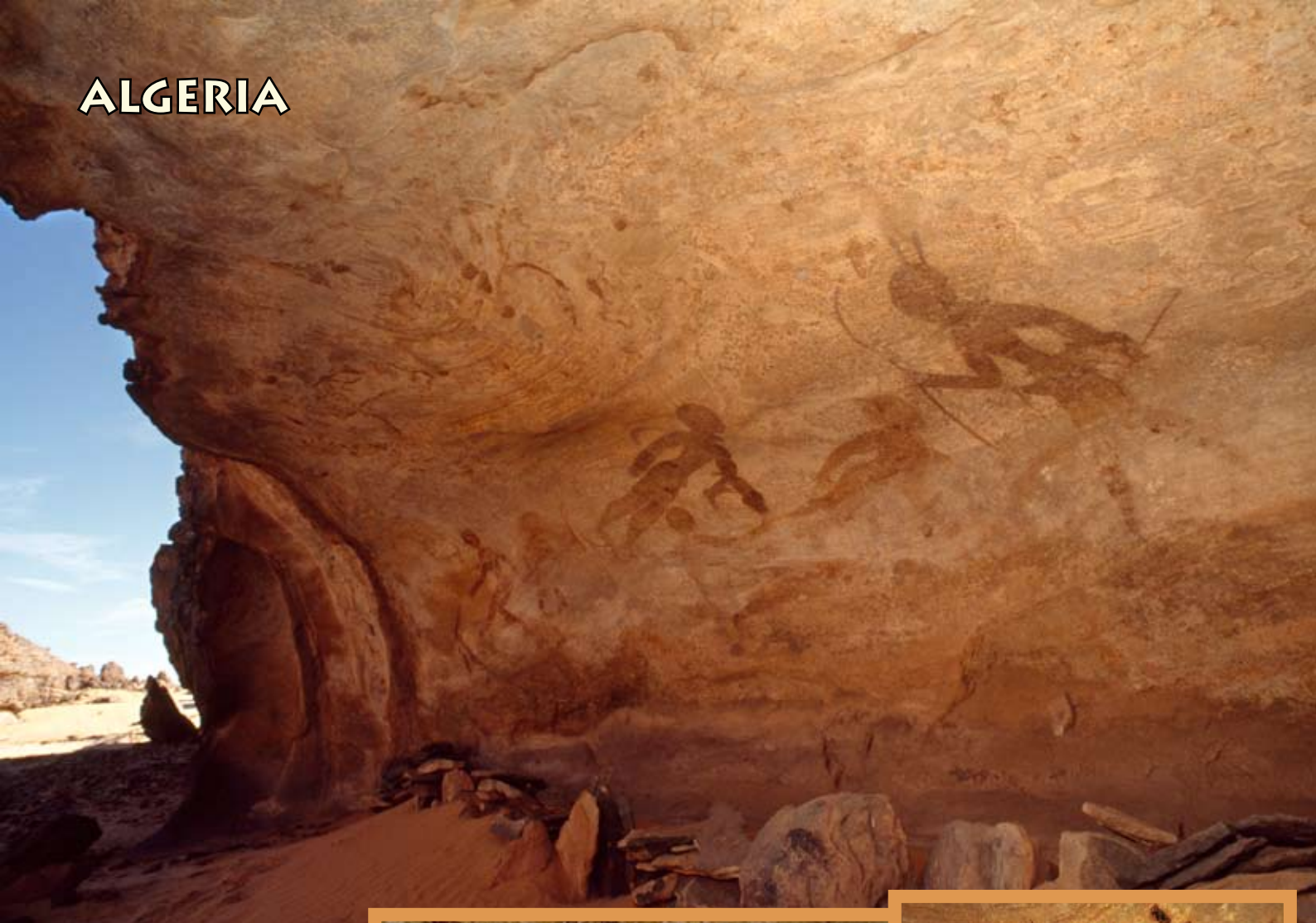
Main Picture: Paintings of women and cattle in Libya's Akakus mountains, a UNESCO World Heritage Site; **Inset top:** A Tuareg guide standing by the 'Fighting Cats' engraving, Messak plateau, in south western Libya; **Below:** Engraving of a huge, mythical man/beast confronting an elephant on the Messak plateau, south-western Libya.

MOROCCO



Main Picture: Tazina-style engraving of a White 'Rhinoceros' on a loose rock in southern Morocco; the engraving may date to around 5,000 years old, engravings like this have been severely looted;
Inset top: Tazina-style engraving of an Elephant; **Inset:** A spiral engraving at the same site as the Elephant.

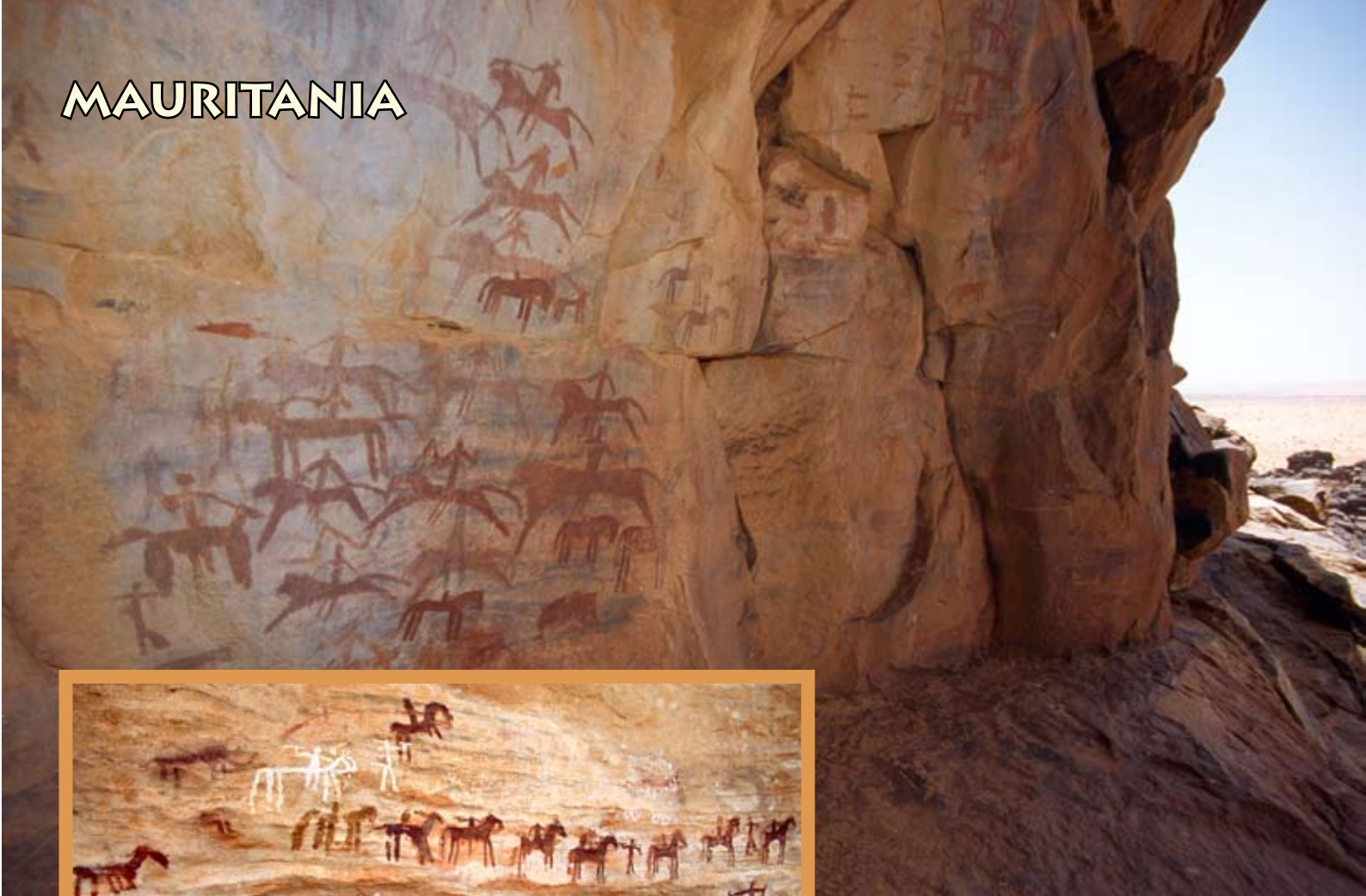
ALGERIA



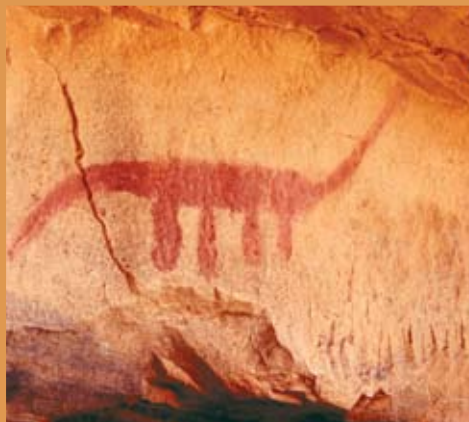
Main Picture: Major Round Head painting site on the Tassili n' Ajjer, Algeria;
Inset left: Detail from another Round Head site on Algeria's Tassili n'Ajjer;
Inset right: Three metre-high Round Head god-figure in Algeria's Tassili n'Ajjer.



MAURITANIA



Main Picture: Large painted panel depicting horses and riders southern Mauritania; **Inset left:** Bi-chrome paintings of horses and riders in southern Mauritania; **Below left:** Painting of mythical animal resembling dinosaur, southern Mauritania; **Below right:** Bi-chrome painting of a circle with rays south-east Mauritania.



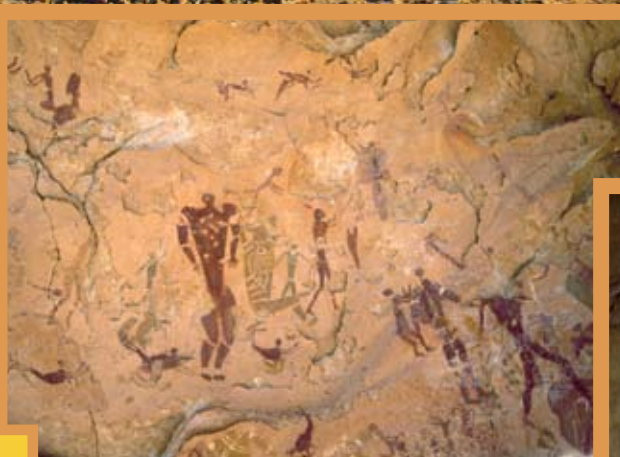
EGYPT



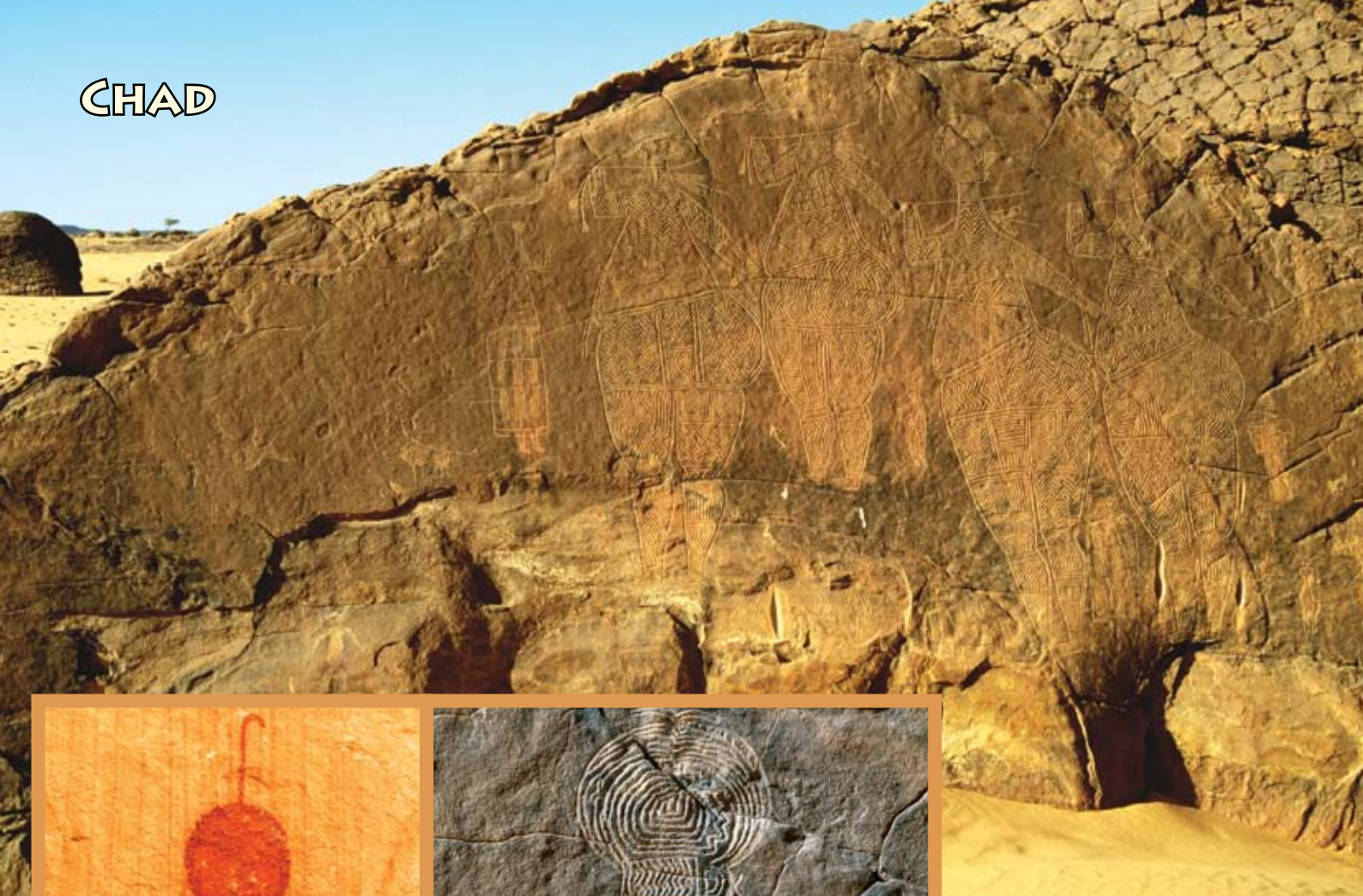
Main Picture: The so-called Cave of Swimmers made famous in the film, the *English Patient*. Gilf Kebir, south-western Egypt; **Inset**

top: Detail of rock paintings in the Cave of Swimmers; **Inset right:** Painting of negative hand prints, White Desert, south-western Egypt;

Below: Looking out of the Cave of Swimmers, Gilf Kebir, south-western Egypt.



CHAD



Main Picture: Pastoral period engravings of large ladies with intricate body decoration, possibly a fertility site, Ennedi plateau, Chad; **Inset left:** Painting of a human figure (from the Horse Period) on roof of a small shelter, Ennedi Massif, Chad; **Inset right:** A close up of body decoration (above).



NIGER



Main Picture: Engravings of two warriors with double triangle bodies and tri-lobular heads perhaps between 2,000 – 3,000 years old, Niger; **Inset left:** Engraving of a Warrior with circular head dress and plumes, Niger; **Inset right:** Life-size of engraving of two giraffes, curved around 7,000 years ago in northern Niger (see detail of head and neck of big giraffe on page 3).



EASTERN AFRICA



Around 50 images of stylized cattle, engraved in bas-relief into the sandstone wall of a gorge in Sidamo region, southern Ethiopia.

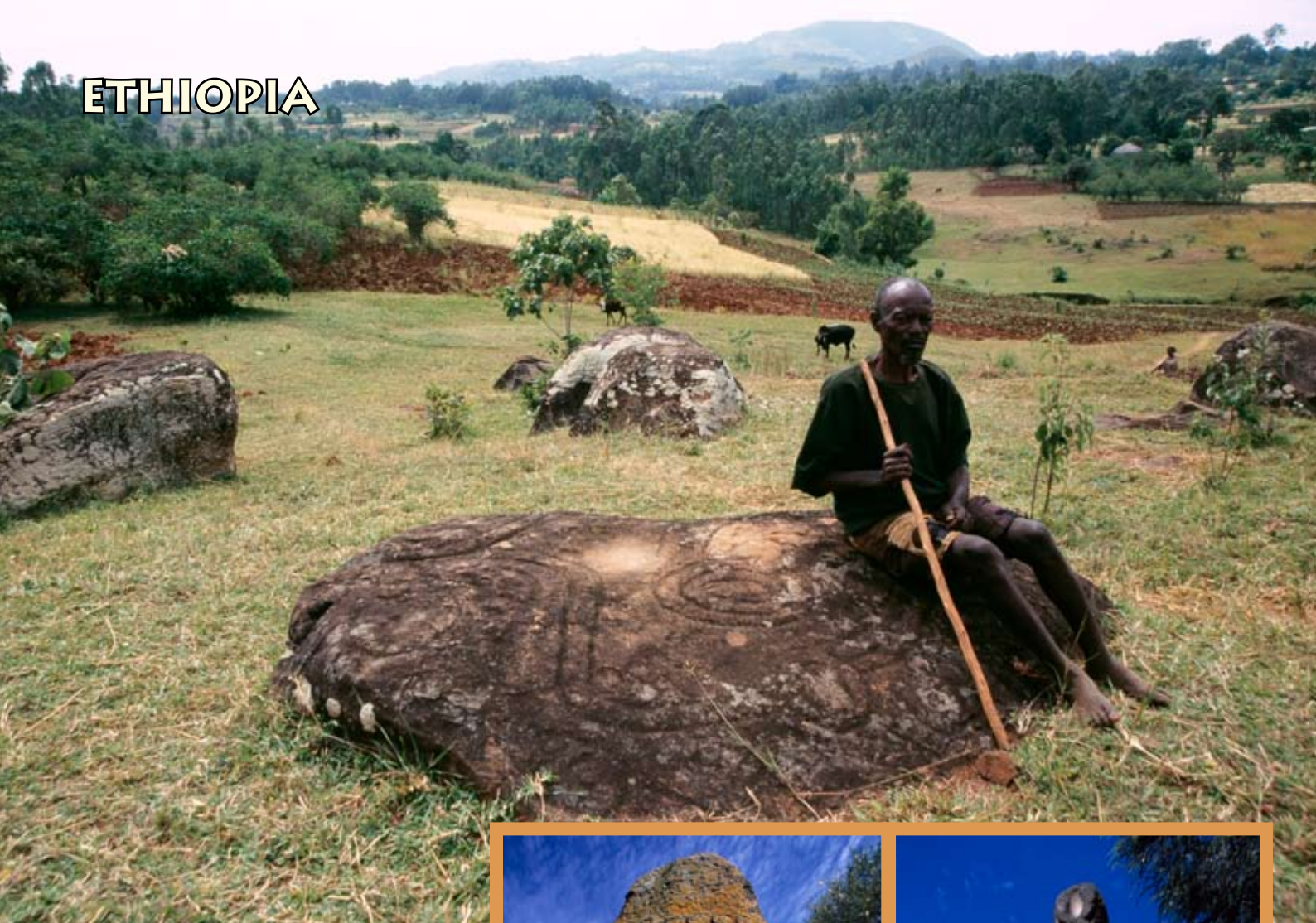
The rock art of East Africa (includes Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia and the horn of Africa) is very diverse and scattered with the richest concentrations of art occurring in central Tanzania. The earliest art was done by hunter-gatherers who were the only inhabitants up to around 5,000 years ago. From this time onwards Saharan pastoralists began to move southwards into East Africa and around 2,000 years ago Bantu speaking people spread eastwards in southern Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

The art itself consists of paintings, engravings and carvings (e.g. monoliths and cupules) and is not homogenous. Eastern Ethiopia and the Horn have some paintings of giraffe, antelope and pastoral scenes, believed to date after 3,500 years ago. Southern Ethiopia contains a very few paintings but mainly engravings and also carvings including numerous phalic monoliths, some weighing several tons and standing over 3 metres high may date to over 2,000 years while other grave-markers (stelae) decorated with swords, faces, ramshorns and geometric designs may date to around 1,000 years.

Around Lake Turkana are many small, generally fairly crude engravings of giraffe, antelope, cattle, camels, people and symbols denoting clan affiliations, all less than 2,300 years old. On Mt Elgon and to its north are small faded paintings, often in creamy-white, of cattle, a few people and geometric designs, probably painted by descendants of early Saharan emigrants.

North-central Tanzania has numerous painted sites with mono- and some polychrome paintings, mainly of wild fauna and people reminiscent of southern Africa's Bushman paintings.

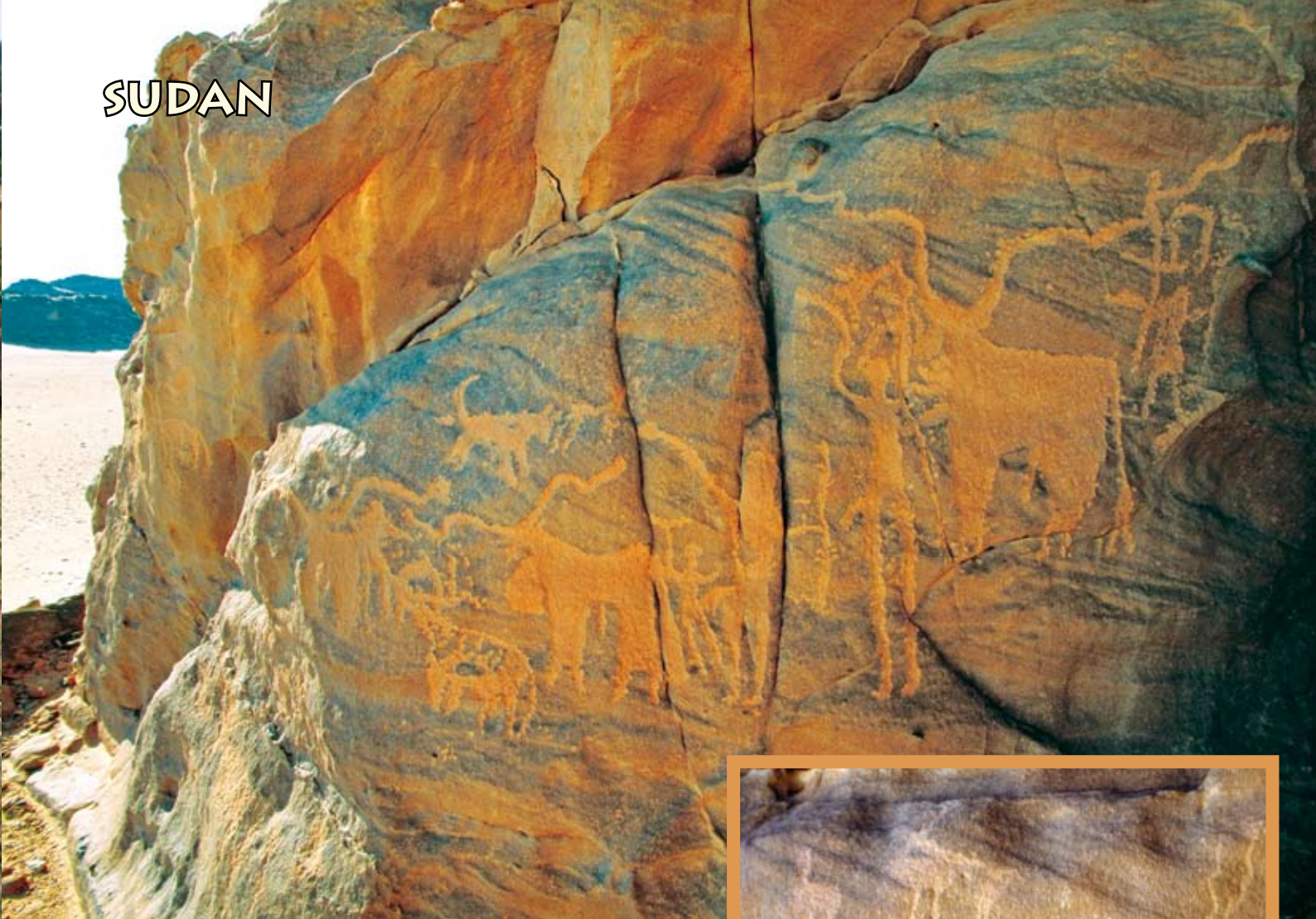
ETHIOPIA



Main Picture: Geometric engravings, probably several thousand years old on a rock in southern Ethiopia;
Inset left: A funerary megalith from about 1,000 years ago, carved in bas-relief from Tiya, southern Ethiopia;
Inset right:



SUDAN



Main Picture: Engraved scene with people and long-horned cattle in northern Sudan, near border with Egypt;
Inset: Antelope and ostriches, northern Sudan.



Oldest paintings may date back 10,000 years. These are more recent paintings are attributed to ancestors of modern Sandawe and Hadza peoples.



From the shores of Lake Victoria and terminating between Nairobi and Mombasa are numerous sites with bichrome red and white concentric circles, spirals and 'dumbbell' shapes attributed to gatherer-hunters, sometimes known as the Twa, who were possibly once affiliated to ancestral Pygmies. This art probably dates to between 4,000-1,000 years ago.

More recent art, mostly dating from the last 500 years, includes crude, mainly white, animal and geometric designs painted by members of Bantu-speakers' secret societies and used as teaching-aids in rites of passage ceremonies; and symbolic paintings, sometimes of shields, made at Maa peoples' meat-feasting sites where young warriors doctored themselves for tribal cattle raiding.

UGANDA

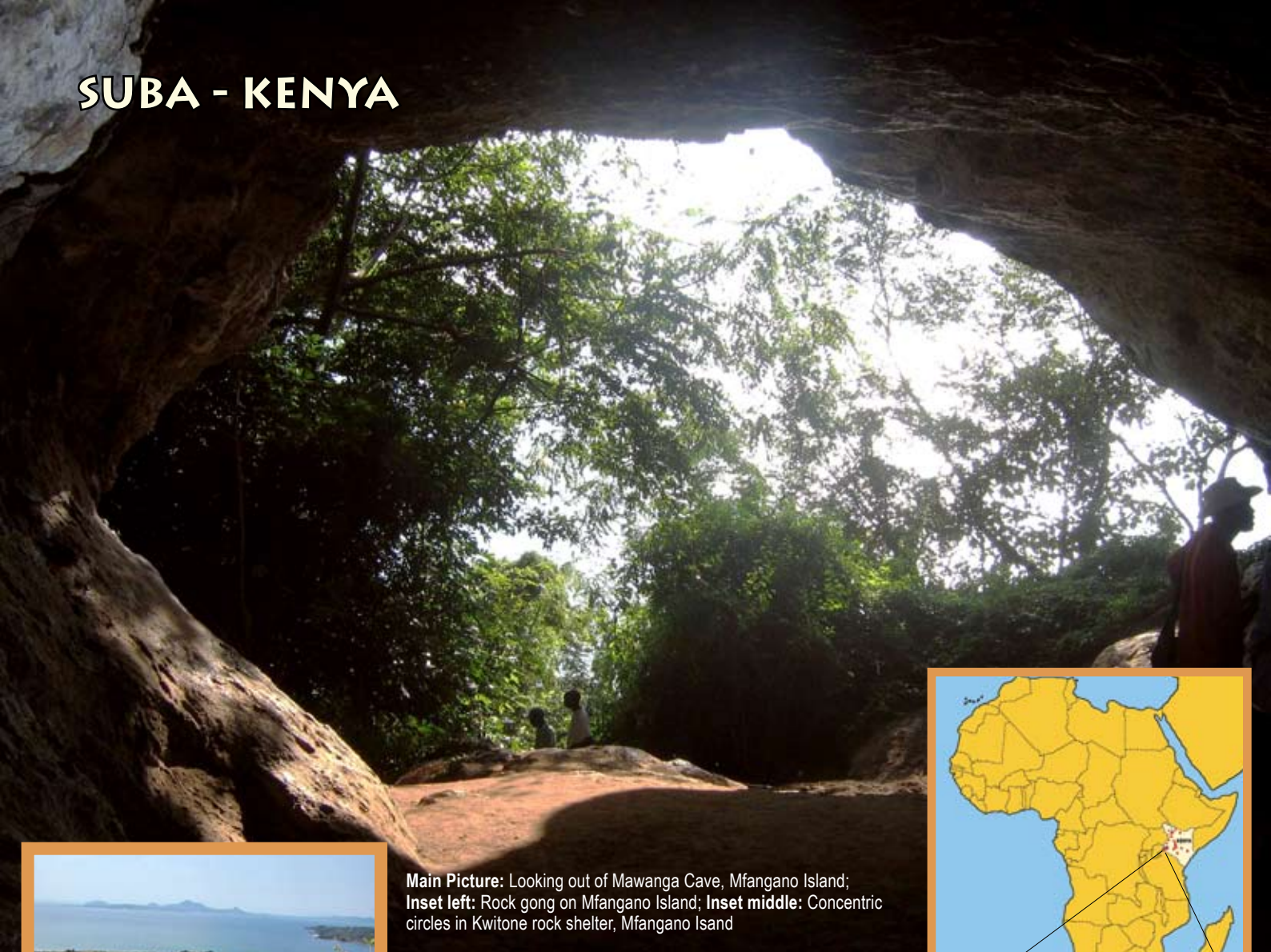


Main Picture: Large granite outcrop at Nyero site, eastern Uganda; **Inset:** Decorated nest of concentric circles, Uganda;

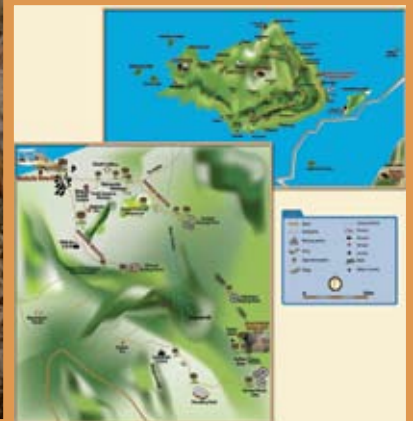
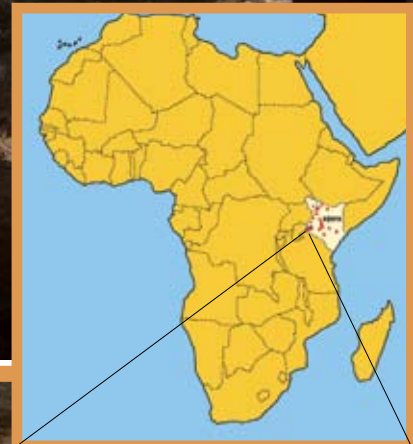
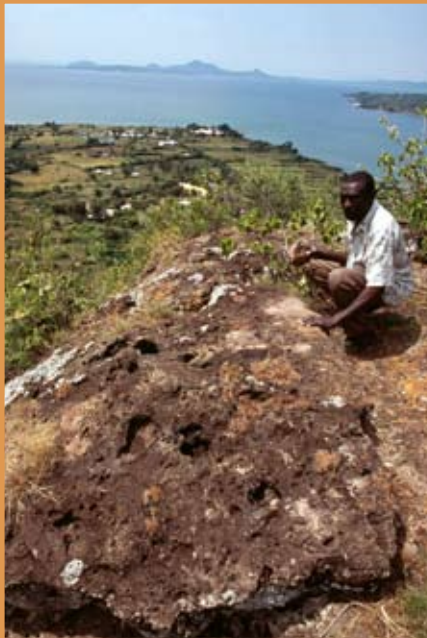
Below: Large shelter decorated with painted circles and so-called 'canoes', Nyero, Uganda.



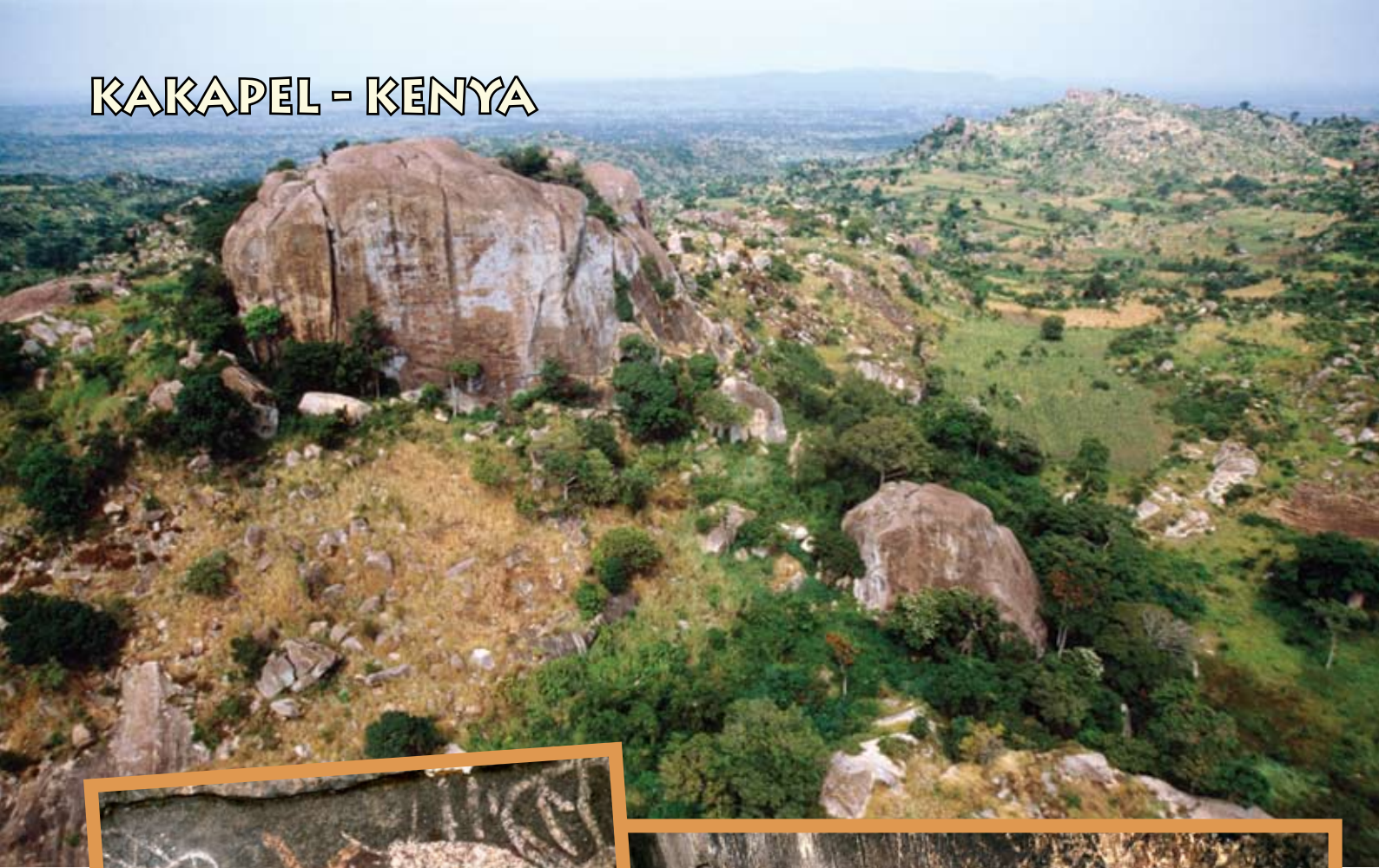
SUBA - KENYA



Main Picture: Looking out of Mawanga Cave, Mfangano Island;
Inset left: Rock gong on Mfangano Island; **Inset middle:** Concentric circles in Kwitone rock shelter, Mfangano Island

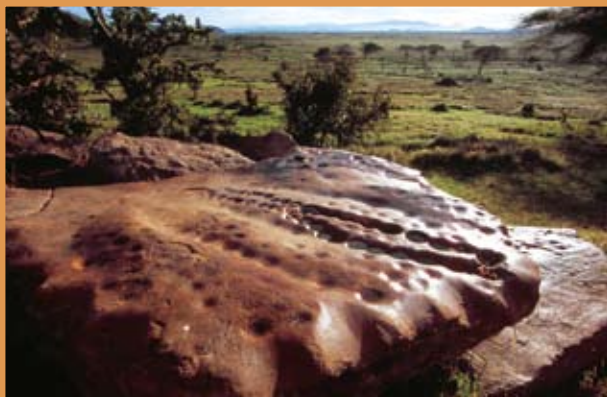
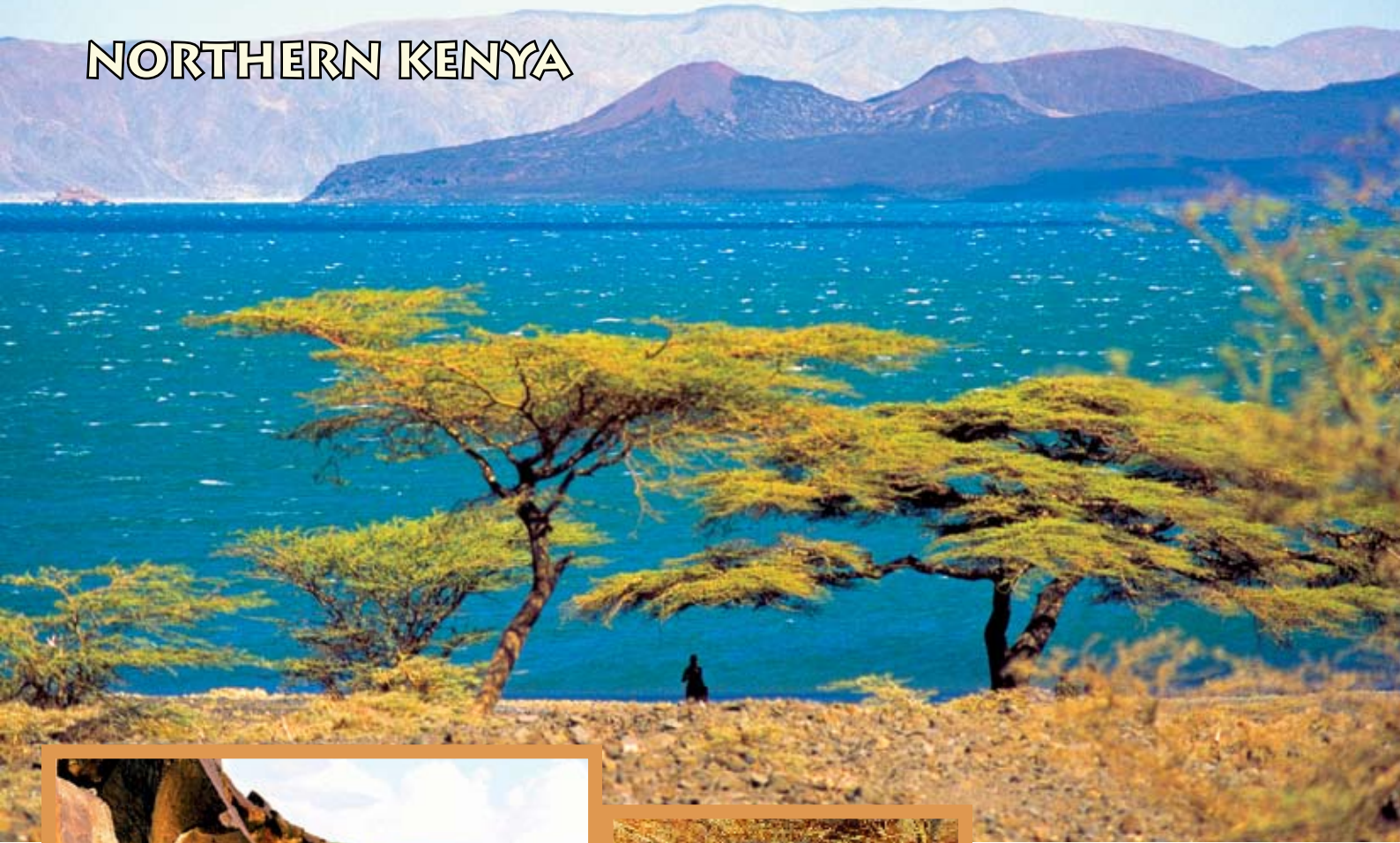


KAKAPEL - KENYA

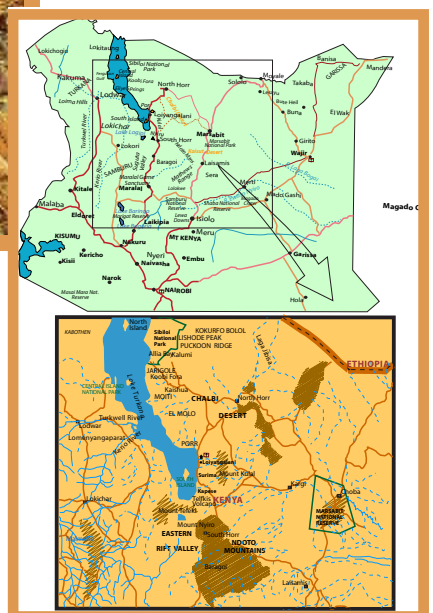


Main Picture: Aerial view of Kakapel rock, western Kenya; **Inset:** Detail of rock paintings at Kakapel site.

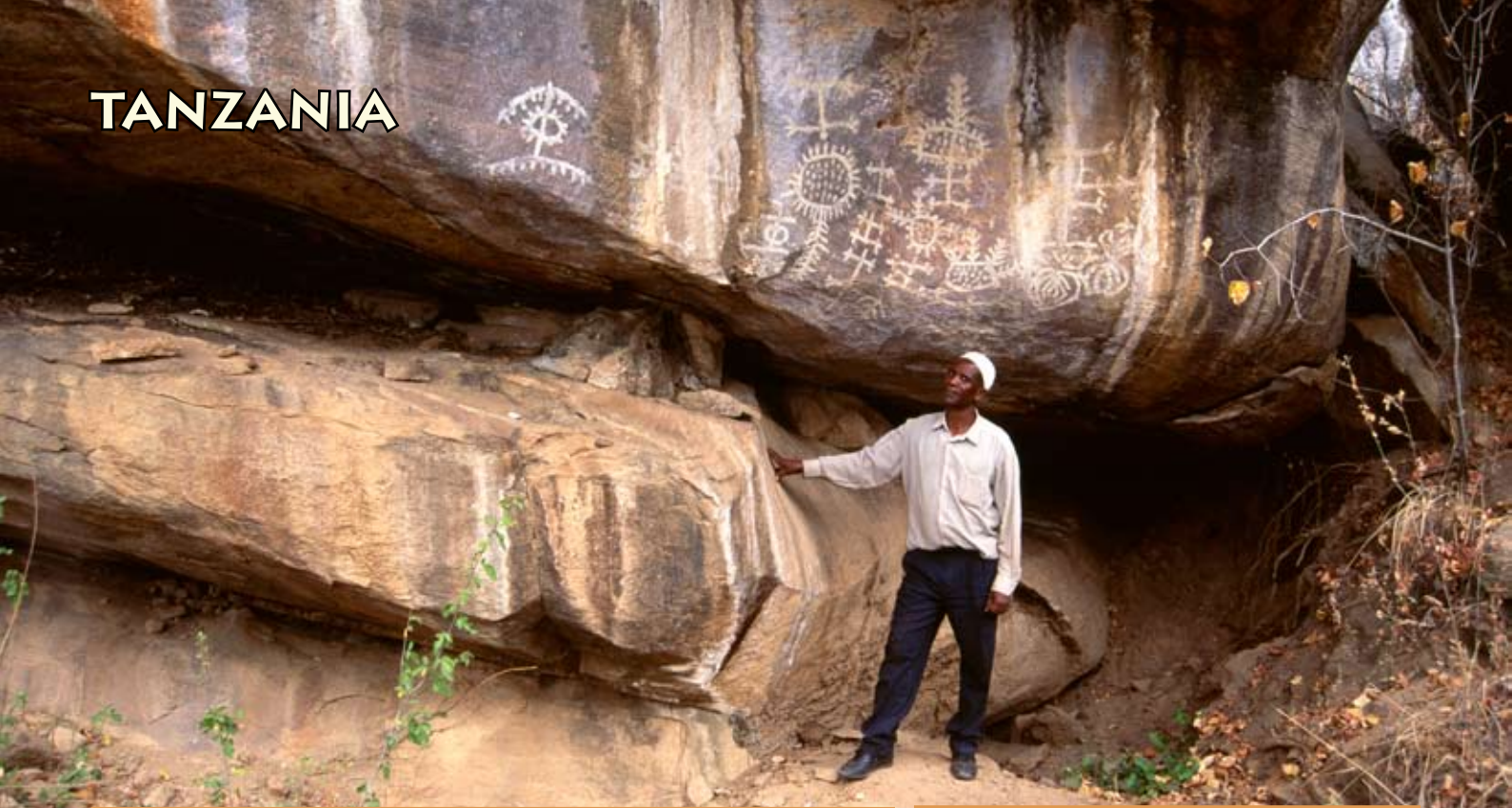
NORTHERN KENYA



Main Picture: Lake Turkana, in northern Kenya's Great Rift Valley, is an important rock art region;
Inset middle left: Engraved stone near lake shore;
Middle right: Panel of Giraffe engravings by a river bed near Lake Turkana;
Below: Large rock gong (granite) with curved cupules, Lewa Downs, North Kenya.



TANZANIA



Main Picture: A Senior Guide from Tanzania's Department of Antiquities stands beneath a panel of late White geometric engravings in Kondo, central Tanzania;

Inset left: Detail from a painted shelter in Kondo, Tanzania apparently showing four humans holding/abducting a fifth person;

Inset left: Painted figure from a large rock shelter in Kondo, central Tanzania.

SOUTHERN AFRICA



Southern Africa (like north Africa Sahara desert) is one of the richest rock art regions on the continent. The majority of Southern African rock art (paintings and engravings) are attributed to Bushmen or San hunter-gatherers with the largest concentrations of this art being found in South Africa, Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Namibia. In South Africa the Drakensberg Mountains are particularly rich (the Ukhambula Drakensberg National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site) with the oldest paintings dating to around 3000 years old. In Namibia, “Twyfelfontein” in Damaraland (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) is perhaps the most important rock engraving site and further south the Brandberg Massif one of the richest rock painting sites in the subcontinent.

Bushman rock art is not the only rock art in Southern Africa however. Ancestors of the Chewa and Nyanja peoples of Malawi and Zambia were prolific Bantu-speaking artists during the last 1000 years who painted but did not engrave. Other Bantu-speaking rock art traditions included the art of the northern Sotho major concentrations of which are found in the hilly areas of Limpopo province, South Africa. Meanwhile the rock art of the Nguni-speakers (Zulu) in South Africa consists mainly of rock engravings and date from the last few hundred years.

Khoekhoen or Herder art is found in the southern Cape and in Namibia. Dating from the last 2000 years, this art is the work of Khoe herders who originally came from the Zambezi River. This art is characterized by both engravings and finger paintings including geometric, animals, some bushman figures and positive hand prints.

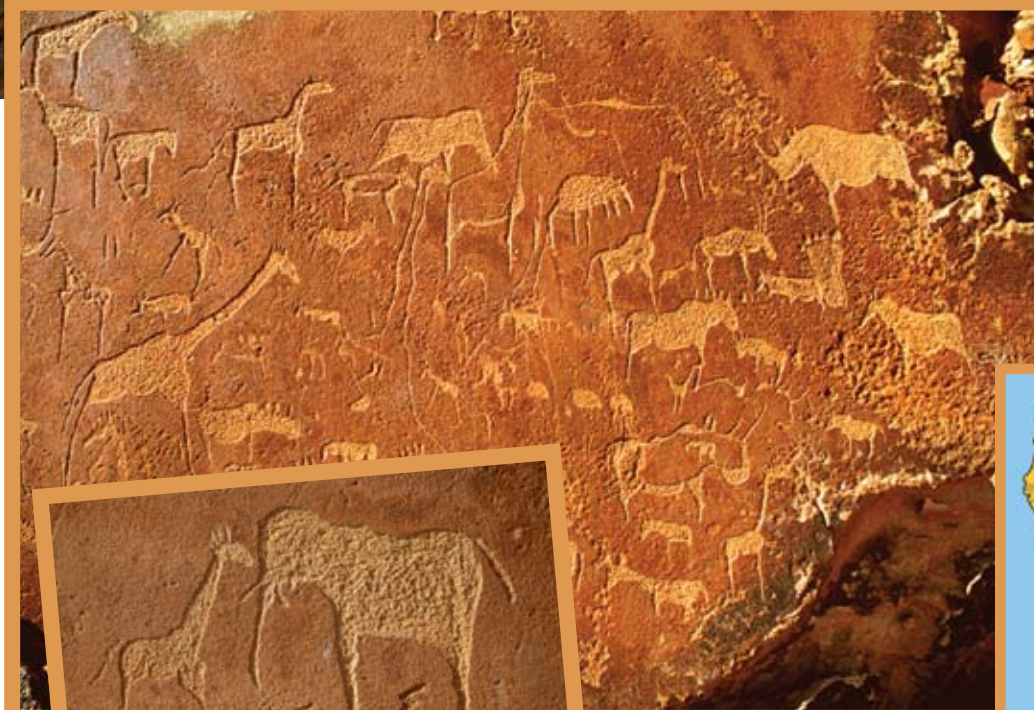
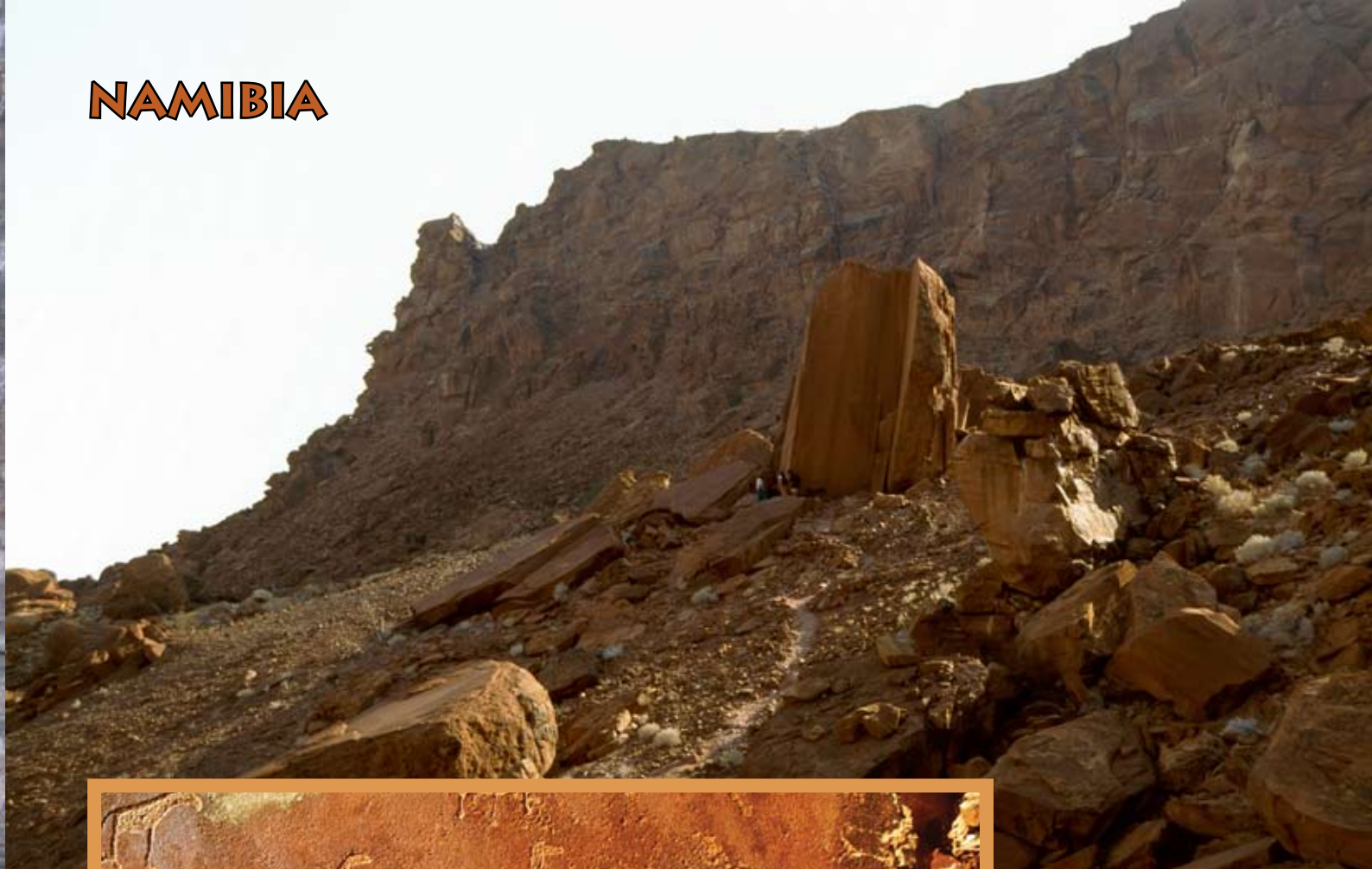
MALAWI



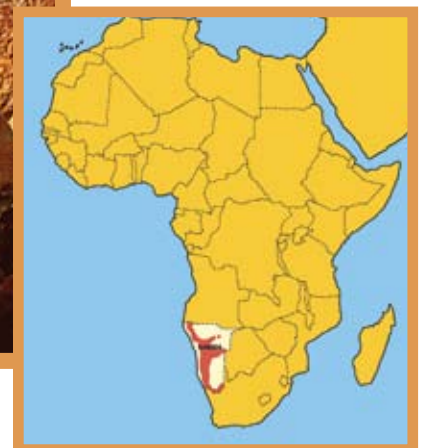
Main Picture: Main panel of rock paintings at Chongoni, Malawi, World Heritage Site;
Inset middle: Detailed set of concentric circles;
Below: View of the Chongoni Hills, Malawi near rock art site.



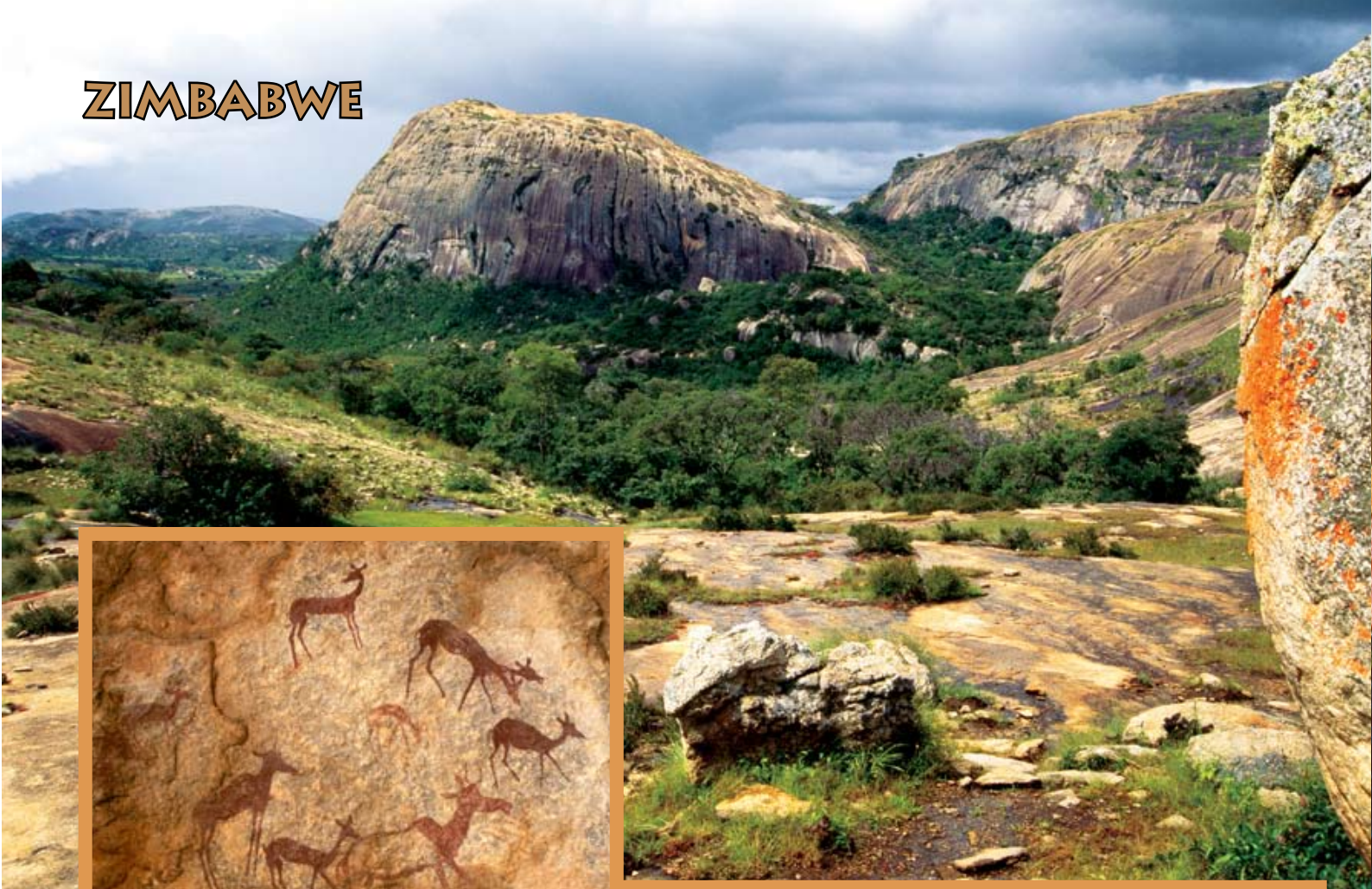
NAMIBIA



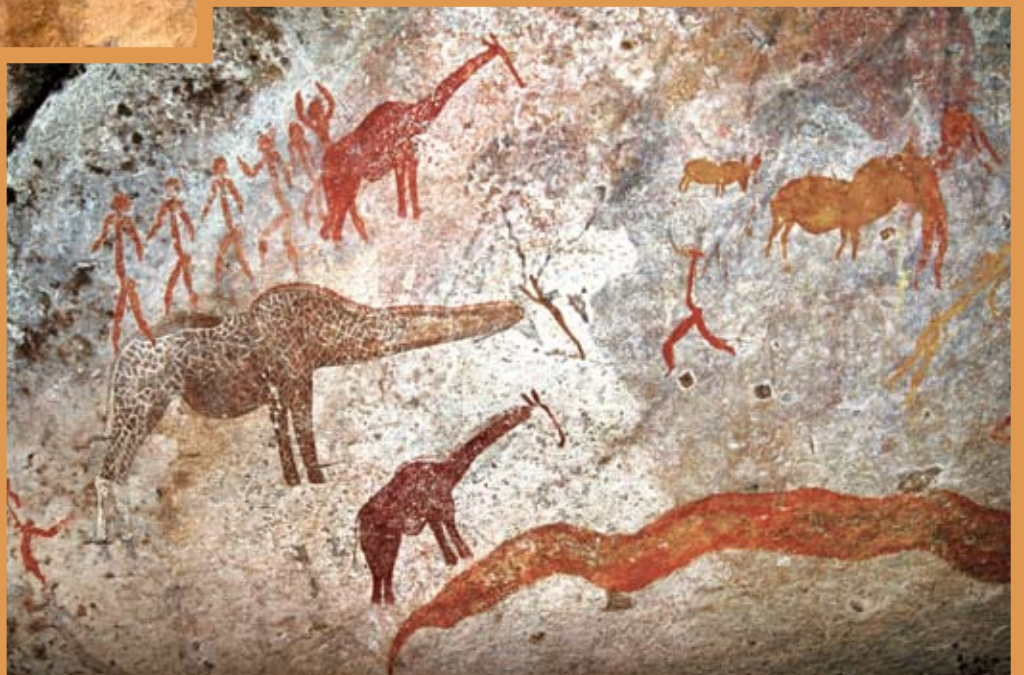
Main Picture: Landscape at Twyfelfontein rock engraving site;
Inset middle: Part of a major Twyfelfontein panel depicting a variety of animals engraved in different styles;
Inset below: Detail of giraffe and elephant from same panel.



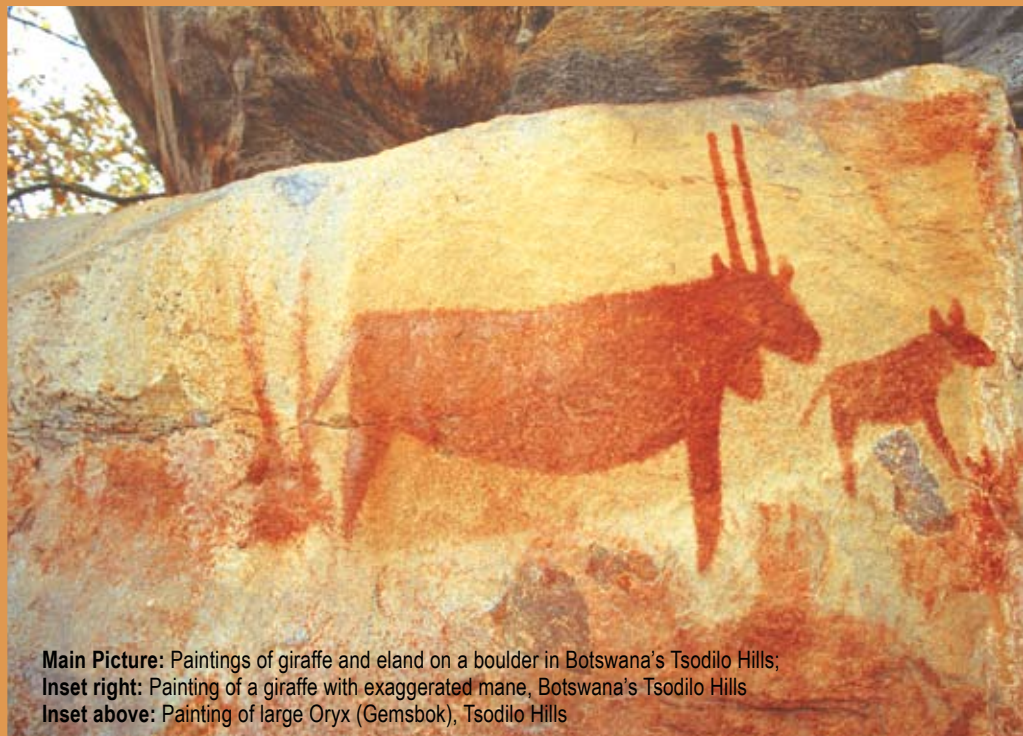
ZIMBABWE



Mashonaland, Zimbabwe, home of many rock art sites; **Inset above:** Circle of painted antelope in the Umvukwe Hills, Zimbabwe
Below: Human figures next to three giraffe and other animals. Note tail of large snake bottom right. Mashonaland, Zimbabwe



BOTSWANA



Main Picture: Paintings of giraffe and eland on a boulder in Botswana's Tsodilo Hills;

Inset right: Painting of a giraffe with exaggerated mane, Botswana's Tsodilo Hills

Inset above: Painting of large Oryx (Gemsbok), Tsodilo Hills

SOUTH AFRICA



Main Picture: Bushman paintings of eland and humans in South Africa's Drakensberg;
Inset left: Engravings of four animals, the bottom one a bull eland, northern Cape, South Africa; **Inset right:** Painting of a bisexual figure with bow and arrows, Drakensberg.





Main Picture: Rock art expert Jean Clottes (left), as well as TARA Trustees Alec Campbell (Centre) and TARA chairman David Coulson (right) gaze with wonder at the now famous Dabous Giraffe, Niger for the first time in 1997; **Below:** Engraving of a kudu with geometrics, Twyfelfontein, Namibia.

AFRICAN ROCK ART TIMELINE

Africa has some of the oldest rock art in the world but it has so far proven difficult to establish accurate dates for a lot of the art. Scientists use radiometric techniques to date organic components such as charcoal and binders such as blood, egg white and urine. In some parts of Africa, experts have been able to develop chronologies based upon the existence of ancient species such as the crocodile, now extinct in the Sahara, or the introduction of exotic new species like the horse, camel or dog.

Because Africa's rock art was created in exposed places, much has now disappeared, but major concentrations of rock art occur in the Sahara and Southern Africa. What we see today was probably created during the last 12,000 years, while much of it is less than 6,000 years old. Researchers believe however that Africa's now-vanished art may have been contemporary with Europe's great Palaeolithic cave art – between 15,000 and 33,000 years ago.



APOLLO 11 CAVE

C. 28,000 TO 26,000 YRS AGO



Main Picture: Plaquette with rock painting found at Apollo 11 Cave in 1969, Namibia; **Inset:** Detail from France's Chauvet Cave of woolly rhinos, reproduced courtesy, Jean Clottes

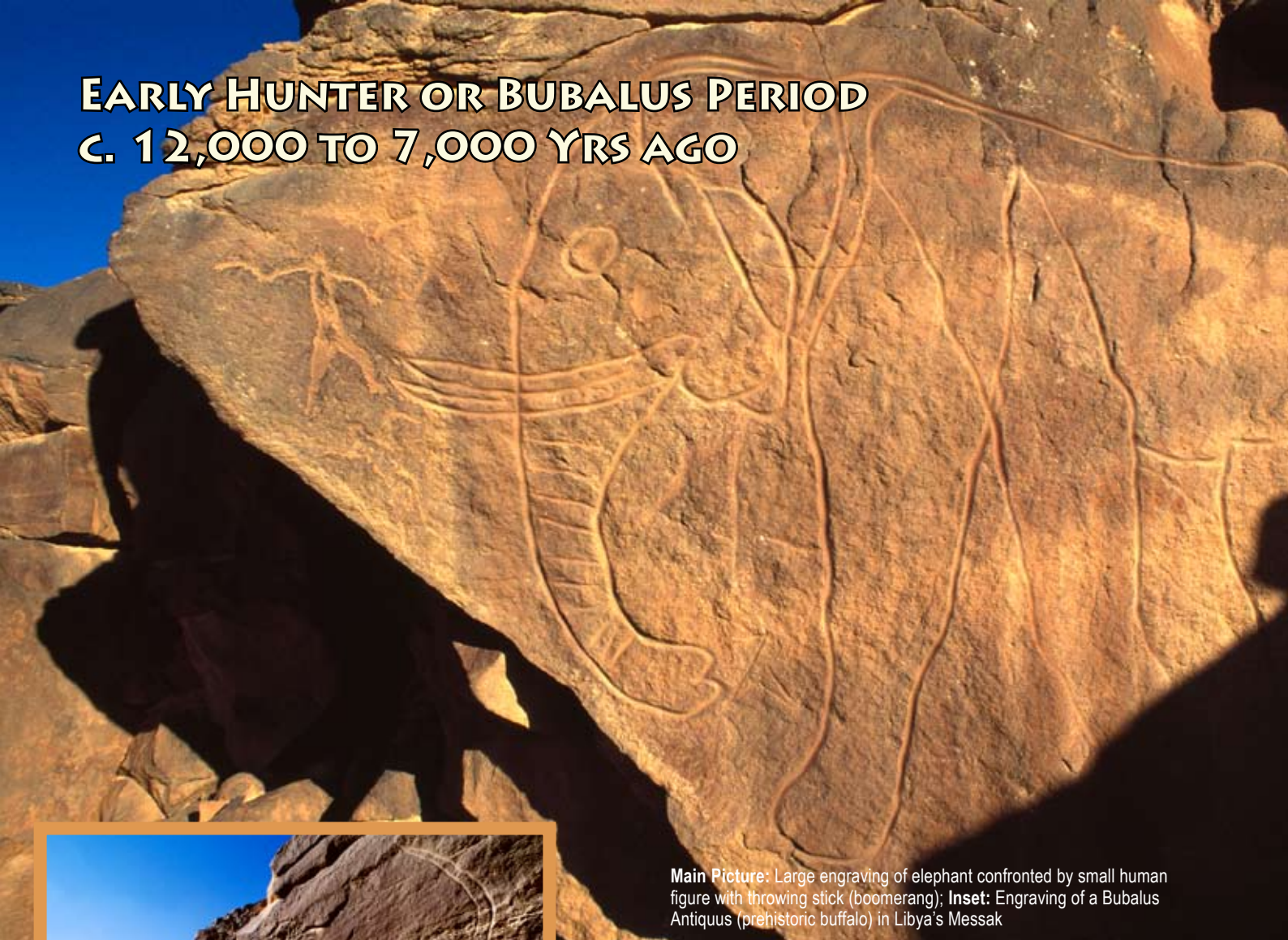
Africa's oldest known paintings are seven small stone plaquettes with images of animals (above). They were excavated from a rock shelter in southern Namibia in 1969, when the first manned spacecraft, Apollo 11, landed on the moon, hence the site's name. Radiocarbon dates were derived from charcoal fragments from



fires, found in the sediment layers containing the painted stones. The images were most likely painted on stones brought from outside the shelter. Such art is generally known by the French name as 'art mobilier' (literally 'movable art'). The detail from Chauvet Cave in southern France (below), depicting rhinos, shows how paintings of similar age have been well preserved because they were created in areas of total darkness, completely sheltered from weathering. Pigment from this site has been radiocarbon dated to about 32,000 years ago, making these the world's oldest known rock paintings. The artists who painted at Chauvet are believed to have been Cro-Magnon people, whose ancestors had migrated from Africa,



EARLY HUNTER OR BUBALUS PERIOD C. 12,000 TO 7,000 YRS AGO



Main Picture: Large engraving of elephant confronted by small human figure with throwing stick (boomerang); **Inset:** Engraving of a Bubalus Antiquus (prehistoric buffalo) in Libya's Messak

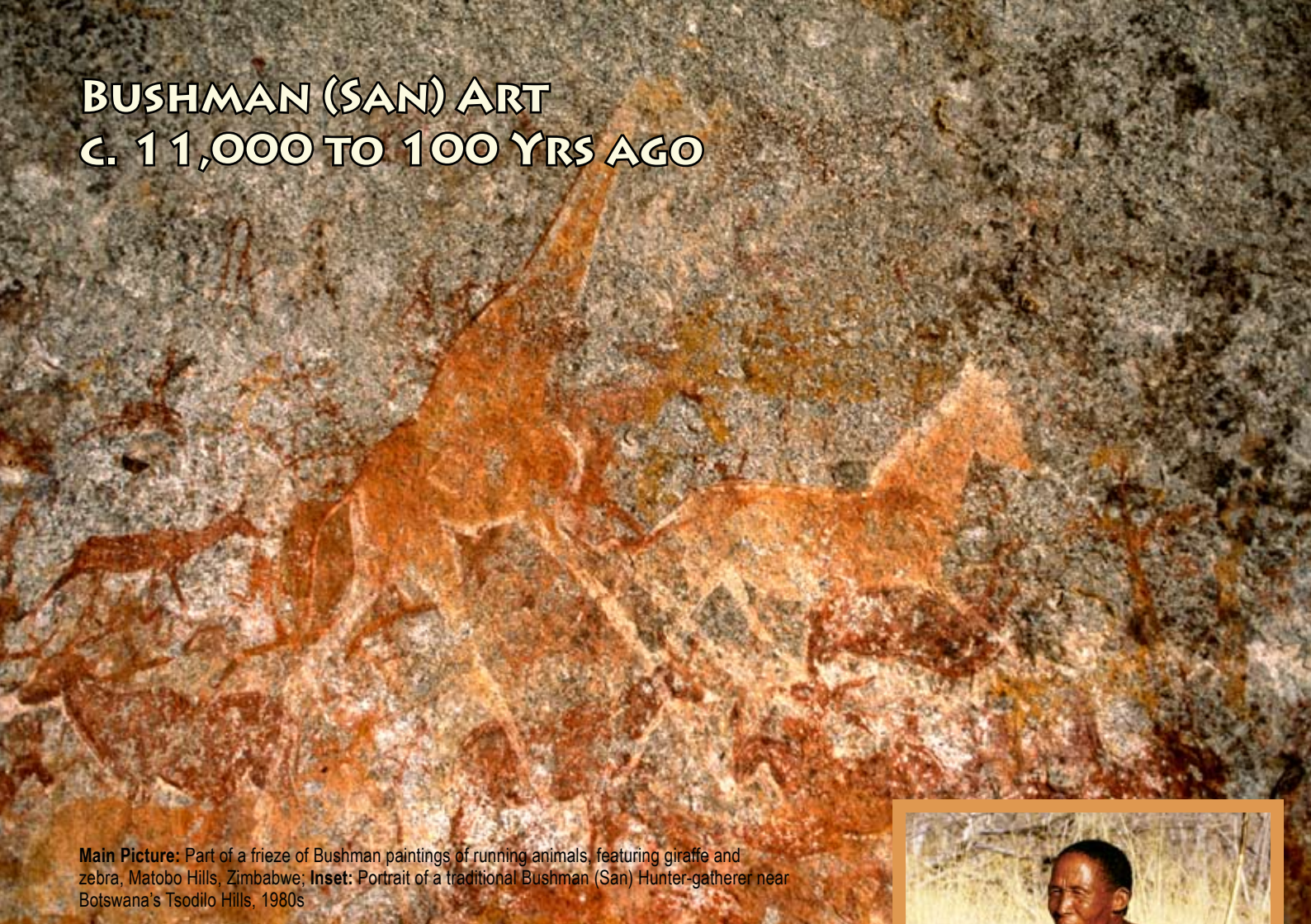


The earliest known period of art in the Central Sahara is also sometimes called the 'Large Wild Fauna Period'. The art is attributed to hunter-gatherer peoples and is found over wide expanses of the Sahara. The images can be very large, sometimes reaching life-size proportions. The engravings of this period (there are no paintings) most often depict animals that lived in the Sahara when it was green and fertile with rivers, lakes and savannah-covered plains. Among the imagery are depicted elephant (above), rhino, hippo,

crocodile, giraffe, aurochs, a now extinct buffalo, Bubalus (below), and some geometric designs. Humans are normally depicted as tiny figures, dwarfed by the large animals that dominated their world. The human figures sometimes hold very small boomerangs, axes or sticks (never bows). It is apparent from the imagery that the animals are not being attacked, however, the depictions do suggest some other form of liaison with animals. Some scenes possibly portray mythology that includes humans with animal heads, masked men



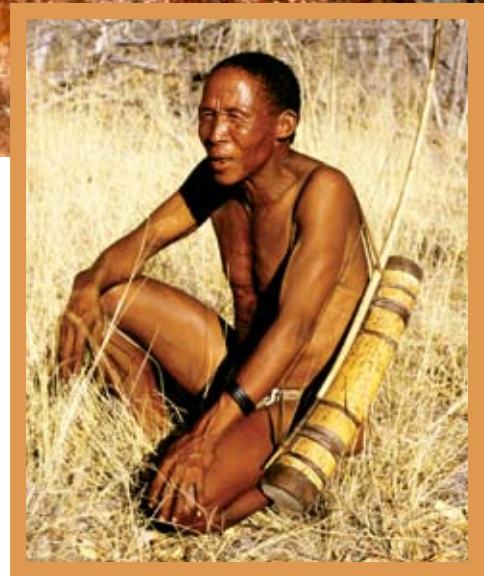
BUSHMAN (SAN) ART C. 11,000 TO 100 YRS AGO



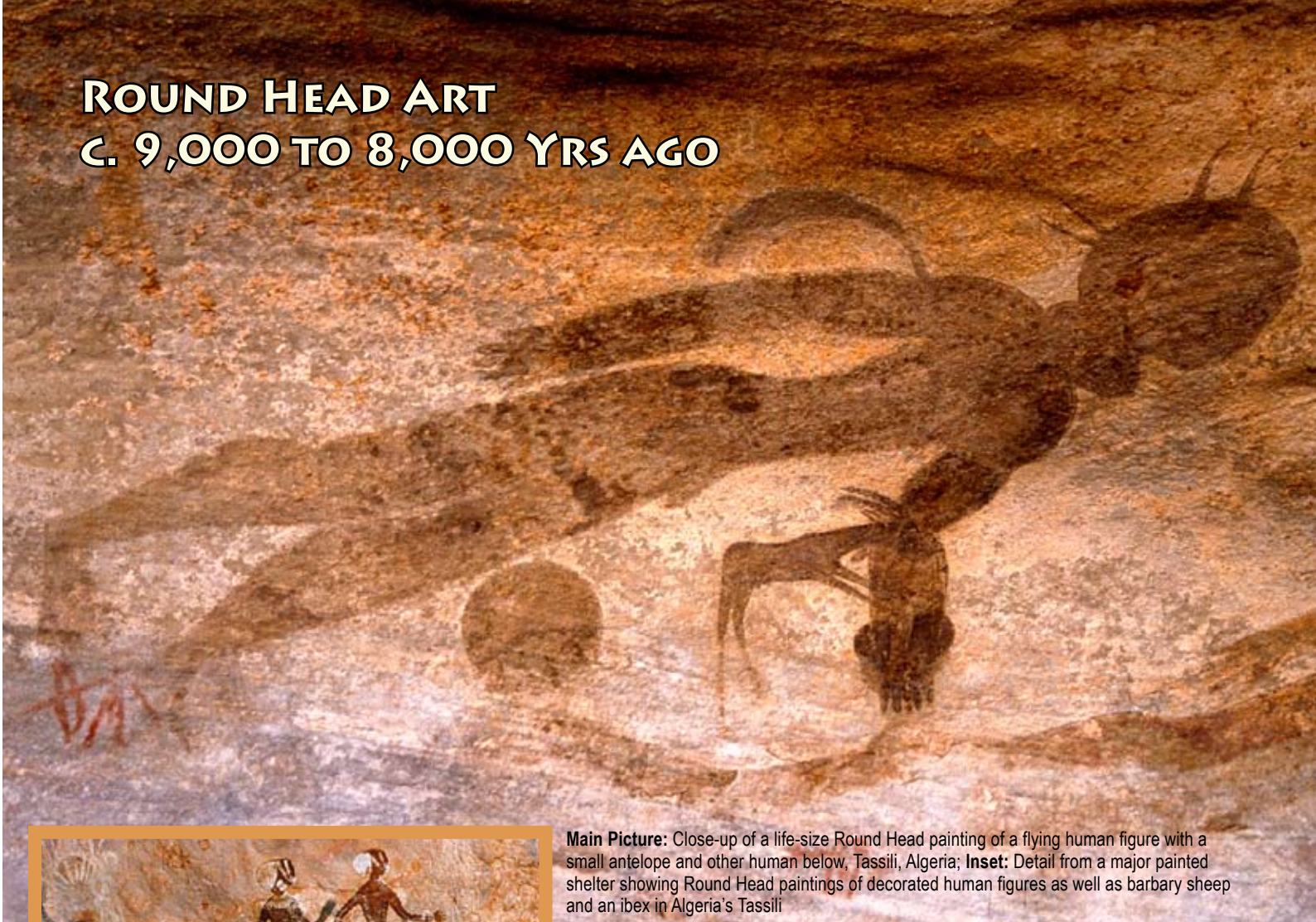
Main Picture: Part of a frieze of Bushman paintings of running animals, featuring giraffe and zebra, Matobo Hills, Zimbabwe; **Inset:** Portrait of a traditional Bushman (San) Hunter-gatherer near Botswana's Tsodilo Hills, 1980s

Bushman art has been found in Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. It is characterised by fine-line red and polychrome paintings

(above) in mountainous areas and engravings in the central region of Southern Africa. The earliest existing paintings are thought to be about 10,000 years old—yet the tradition of Bushman art is probably older. Excavations in Zimbabwe, for example, have unearthed numerous painted rock fragments, that have been detached from the walls of the shelters, dated to between 18,000 and 22,000 years ago. While the art varies in form it portrays a single world-view throughout southern Africa. It is metaphorical and of a religious nature, which reflects the artists' belief systems and visions of reality. Although known as 'Bushman Art,' the artists themselves were ancestral to modern peoples who speak click languages, now commonly known as San. Today, San survive mainly in the Kalahari Desert with a few remnant groups in South Africa. Some Bushman artists (below) continued to paint up to the end of the 19th century and possibly well into the 20th century.



ROUND HEAD ART C. 9,000 TO 8,000 YRS AGO



Main Picture: Close-up of a life-size Round Head painting of a flying human figure with a small antelope and other human below, Tassili, Algeria; **Inset:** Detail from a major painted shelter showing Round Head paintings of decorated human figures as well as barbary sheep and an ibex in Algeria's Tassili



Some of the world's largest rock paintings are from the Round Head period, which is confined to the Sahara. For example, there is one figure in Algeria that stands more than five and a half metres in height! There are no engravings in this tradition, which is confined to south east Algeria and south west Libya. The majority of Round Head paintings portray strange people with round, featureless heads and formless bodies. Generally, figures are seen in profile (above), but in some cases huge figures faces forward. At times they appear to be floating or swimming through space (below), as

though experiencing out-of-body travel, suggesting a connection with shamanism. Women, when depicted, are normally shown with raised hands, as though seeking blessings from the huge male figures that tower above them. The artists seem to portray a gentle and ethereal world where man bows to the lords of nature. Shards of Neolithic pottery have also survived from this period.



ANCESTRAL SANDAWE OR HADZA ART C. 9,000 YRS AGO TO RECENT PAST

Main Picture: Part of a large panel of paintings, probably painted by Ancestral Sandawe, in Kondoa, central Tanzania; **Inset:** Portrait of Sandawe woman in Kondoa photographed in the early 1990s.

These paintings are found throughout the Kondoa Province in central Tanzania, and were often drawn with brushes. The artists were almost certainly from the ancestral Sandawe (below: Sandawe woman, today) and Hadza peoples, who spoke click languages. The earlier images include fairly large and naturalistic depictions of animals, while geometric designs appear less frequently.

More recent images show people and animals, in what seem to be domestic and hunting scenes. Human figures often wear skirts and have strange hairstyles or headdresses (above), and in some cases their bodies are decorated or they hold bows. The paintings from this period appear, at first glance, to be similar to Bushman paintings in southern Africa, and indeed the Sandawe and Bushman populations are genetically linked, although only in the distant past. Meanwhile, Hadza still painted in rock



PASTORAL OR CATTLE PERIOD C. 7,500 TO 4,000 YRS AGO



Main Picture: Large panel of Pastoral Period paintings in Algeria's Tassili
Inset: Close-up from the same site depicting a running hunter (TARA's logo)



Pastoral art, both paintings and engravings, commenced in small isolated areas about 7,500 years ago, and spread rapidly throughout the Sahara. This long-lasting style sees human figures gain in importance and appear to dominate compositions (above), reflecting the stratification of societies on the basis of wealth and the change from hunting and gathering to animal husbandry. Unlike in earlier art styles, human figures no longer seem to be allied with nature and wild animals, but they appear as if deriving sustenance from domestic animals. Furthermore, the art style reflects changing human attitudes towards property and nature, which occurred from rapid and varied climatic changes. Pastoral art lasted until the desert dried out, around 4,500 years ago, when most

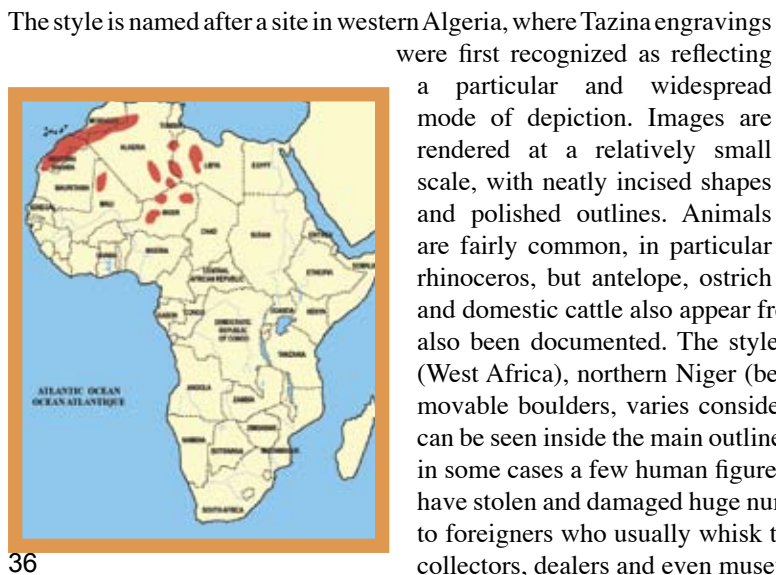
pastoralists moved east and south to regions with better rainfall. In areas where herding remained as the main means of survival, the art continued for many centuries; these later images are dominated by cattle, sheep, goats and occasional dogs. The last centuries of the Pastoral Period coincide with the rise



TAZINA STYLE ENGRAVINGS C. 6,000 TO 4,000 YRS AGO

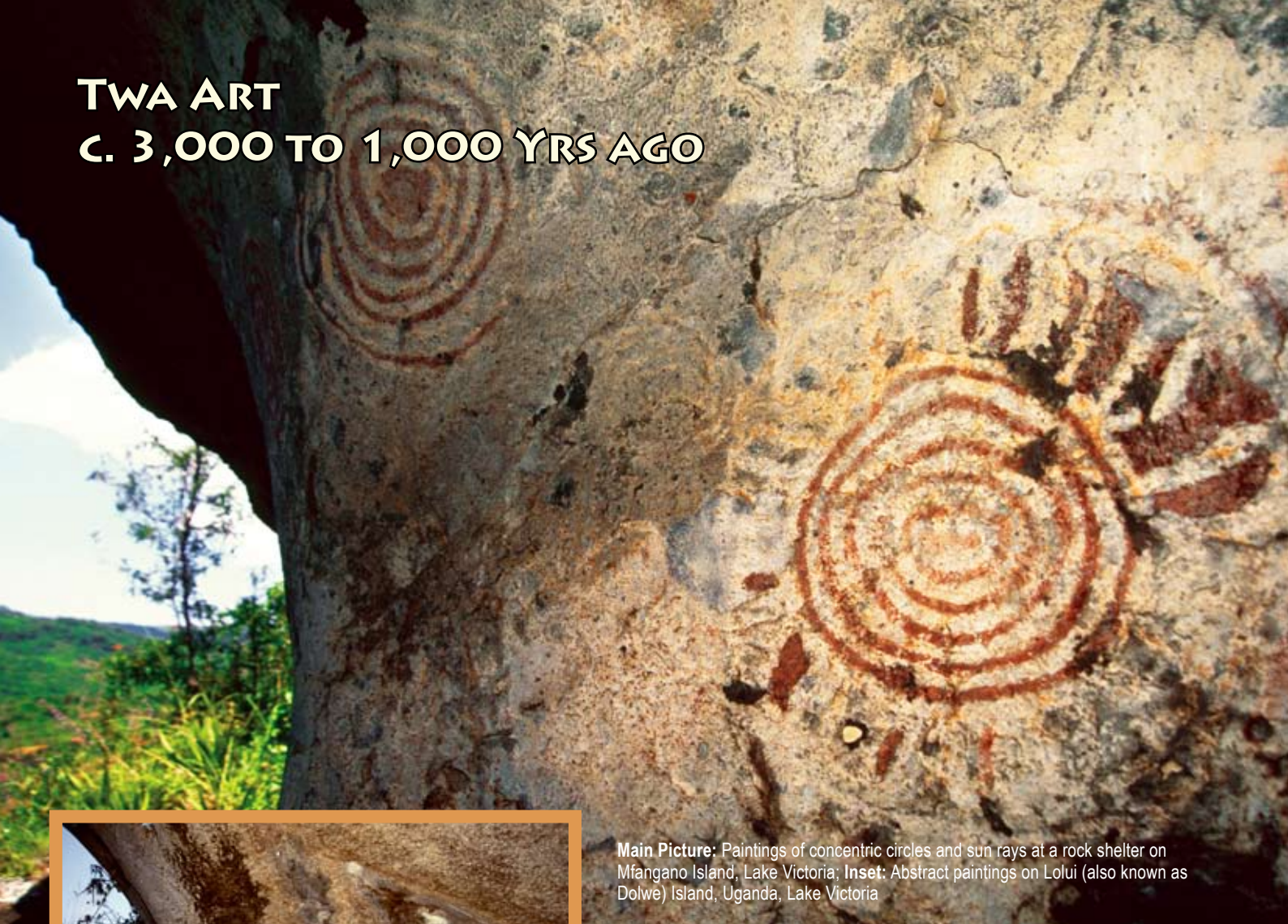


Main Picture: Tazina engraving of a rhino with small elephant inside it, southern Morocco; **Inset:** Detail of small Tazina elephant from a site in north-eastern Niger (Djado)



The style is named after a site in western Algeria, where Tazina engravings were first recognized as reflecting a particular and widespread mode of depiction. Images are rendered at a relatively small scale, with neatly incised shapes and polished outlines. Animals are fairly common, in particular rhinoceros, but antelope, ostrich and domestic cattle also appear frequently. Geometric designs and a few human figures have also been documented. The style spread over southern Algeria and Morocco, Rio de Oro (West Africa), northern Niger (below) and south western Libya. The art, often engraved on movable boulders, varies considerably in imagery, and sometimes a second smaller image can be seen inside the main outline (above). Antelope images often have elongated legs, while in some cases a few human figures are paired with geometric designs. Unfortunately, thieves have stolen and damaged huge numbers of these engravings, particularly in Morocco, for sale to foreigners who usually whisk them away to Europe via the Straits of Gibraltar for sale to collectors, dealers and even museums!

TWA ART C. 3,000 TO 1,000 YRS AGO



Main Picture: Paintings of concentric circles and sun rays at a rock shelter on Mfangano Island, Lake Victoria; **Inset:** Abstract paintings on Lolui (also known as Dolwe) Island, Uganda, Lake Victoria



Twa art is scattered over a large part of eastern and central Africa, spreading south from the Lake Victoria Basin to the Zambezi River, and spanning the continent from the coast of Angola to northern Mozambique. The art is dominated by paintings, but also includes a few engravings. Animal and human figures are rare in Twa art, which is attributed to small, strong, hunter-gatherer peoples who were probably related to ancestors of

modern pygmies. In Zambia and Malawi the art consists of geometric designs in red or in red and faded white, as well as a few animal silhouettes that show the ears and the horns in twisted perspective. The art found in the Lake Victoria Basin comprises mainly of geometric designs in red (below) or red and faded white, often showing concentric circles (above), circular shapes, joined circles and spirals. It is believed that the geometric designs could have been made by women, and that they relate to weather and fertility. Twa geometric designs were used until recently to create rain at one site in Kenya and at another in Uganda.

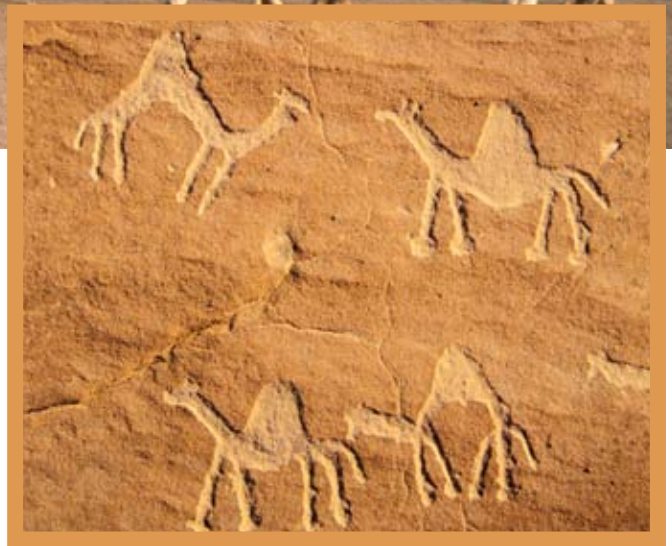


CAMEL PERIOD / STYLE

C. 2,300 YRS AGO TO TODAY



Main Picture: Group of Tuareg men mounted on camels at a ceremony in northern Niger; **Inset:** Camel engravings Chad



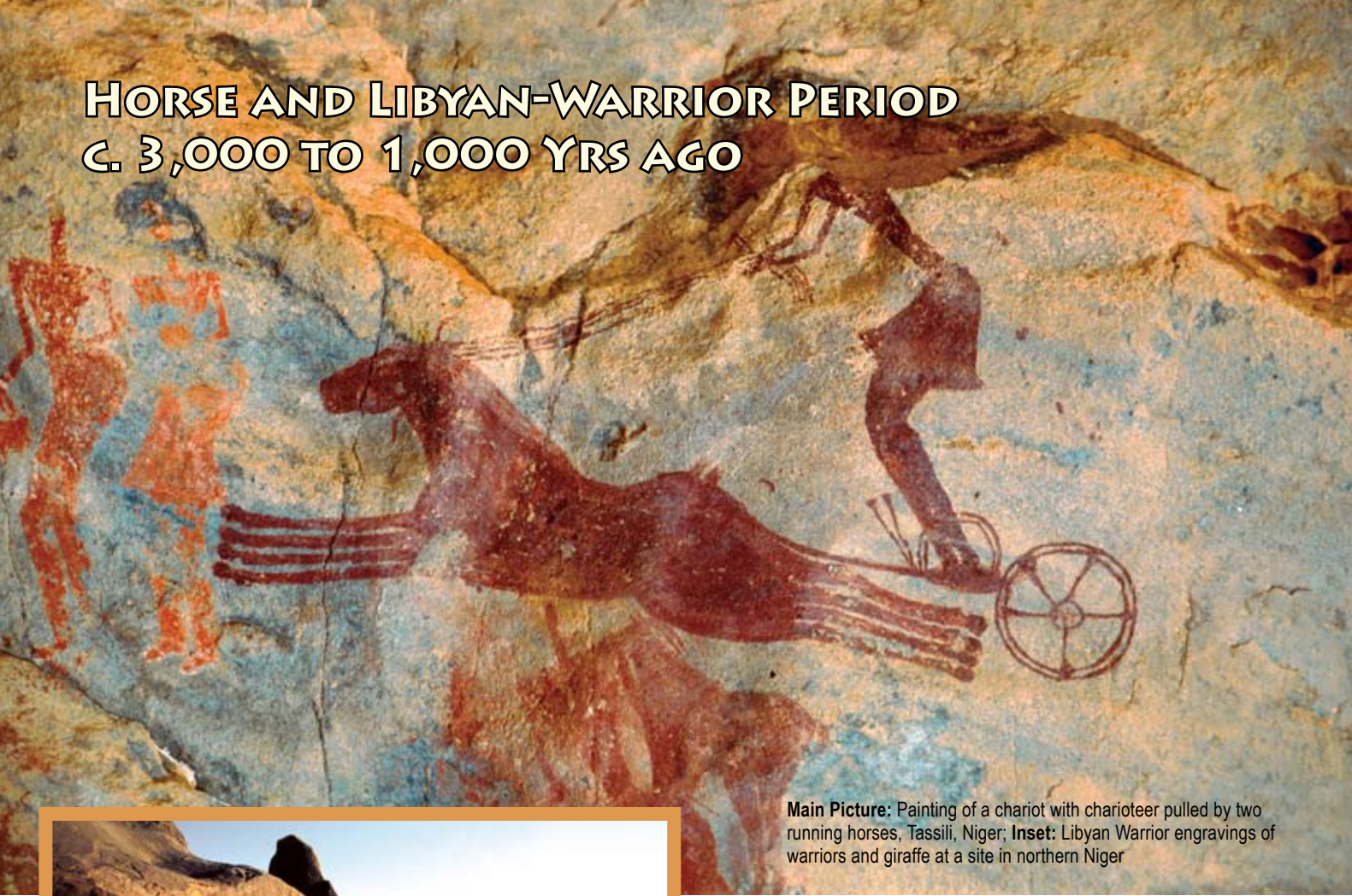
This form of art commenced in eastern Sahara about 2,000 years ago, some centuries after camels were introduced from the Middle East into Egypt. The style rapidly spread to western and southern Sahara, and has lasted until the present day. The dominant motif is the camel (above), but in southern Sahara, particularly in Chad,



the imagery is diverse in content and often includes horses, cattle and even wild animals. Earlier paintings were often beautifully executed, depicting horses and white camels appearing to fly across the sand, bedecked with red

trappings and ridden by spear-brandishing warriors. Over time the style deteriorated in terms of refinement, as later engravings are often crude and portray little more than stark depictions of camels. Interestingly, swords and metal-tipped lances were depicted in earlier paintings, but as technology developed over the centuries they were replaced in later paintings by firearms. The earlier images may be forms of communication, while later images may denote places where caravans halted on trans-Saharan journeys, which still take place today (below).

HORSE AND LIBYAN-WARRIOR PERIOD C. 3,000 TO 1,000 YRS AGO



Main Picture: Painting of a chariot with charioteer pulled by two running horses, Tassili, Niger; **Inset:** Libyan Warrior engravings of warriors and giraffe at a site in northern Niger

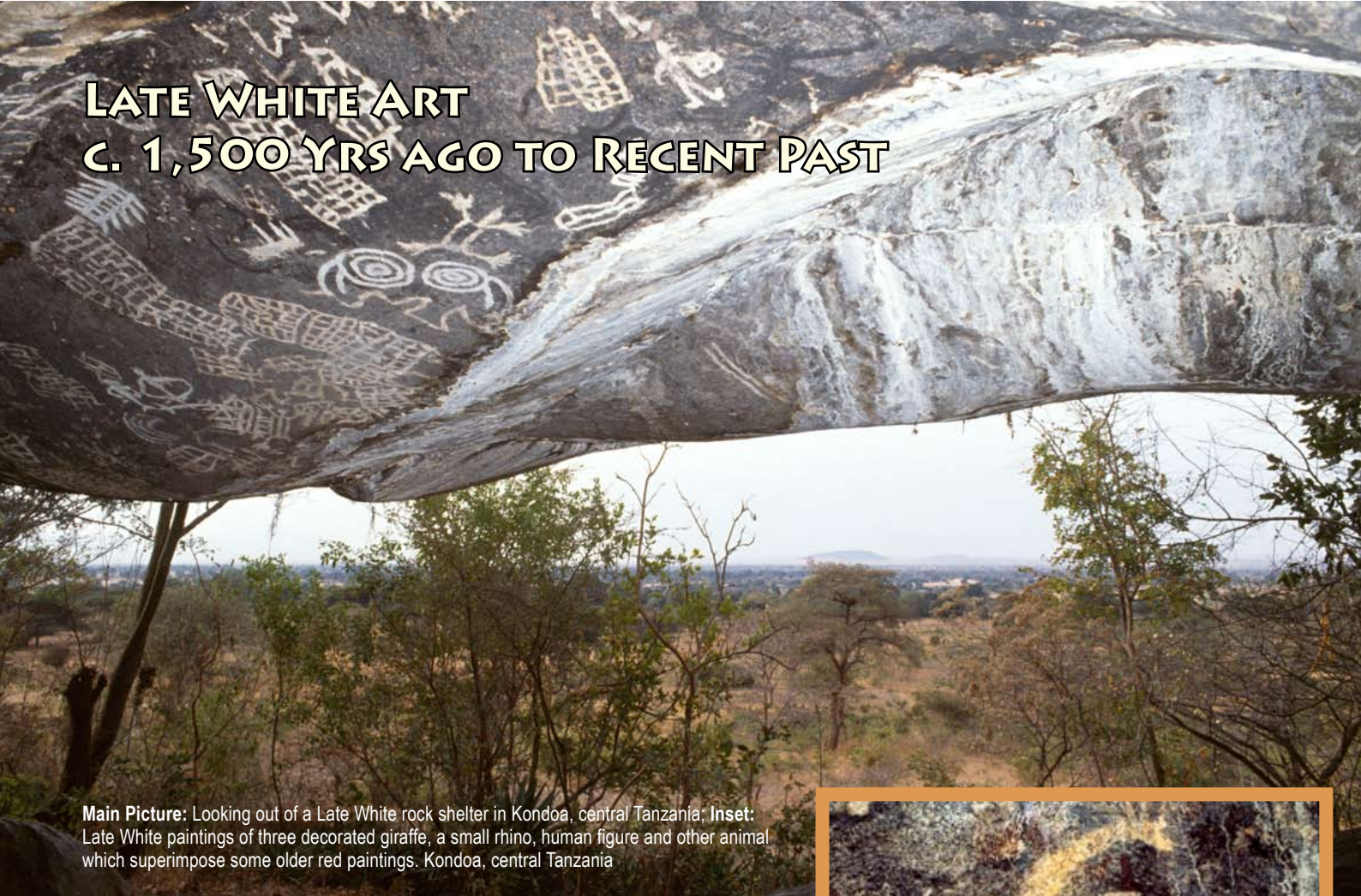


The paintings and engravings of this style commonly depict horses, horse-drawn chariots (above), chariots without horses and warrior-like male figures, whose bodies are stylized as two triangles joined at the apex (below). The style also includes many engravings of so-called Libyan Warriors; armed men dressed in leather with particular headdresses, often holding the reins of small, engraved horses. Engraved chariot images stretch from south west Libya to the Atlantic Coast, while painted images are confined to the

mountains between Libya and Algeria. Tifinagh script, still used today by Tuareg people, often appears alongside images of people; and for the first time metal-tipped spears appear in art. The tradition also includes depictions of giraffe, ostrich, antelope and lions. Although horses and chariots entered Egypt about 3,700 years ago, they were probably introduced to Central Sahara through the Libyan coast. It is unlikely chariots were driven across the Sahara, more likely the images held a symbolic power.



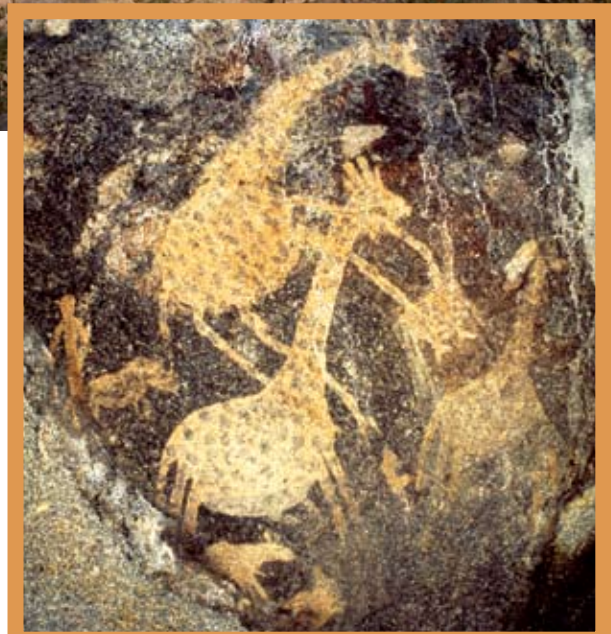
LATE WHITE ART C. 1,500 YRS AGO TO RECENT PAST



Main Picture: Looking out of a Late White rock shelter in Kondoa, central Tanzania; **Inset:** Late White paintings of three decorated giraffe, a small rhino, human figure and other animal which superimpose some older red paintings. Kondoa, central Tanzania

Two thousand years ago, Bantu-speaking farmers spread from the general area of present day Cameroon and Nigeria into eastern Africa, and south through Tanzania, Zambia and Malawi to the San-occupied territories of modern Zimbabwe and eastern South Africa. Early en route they appear to

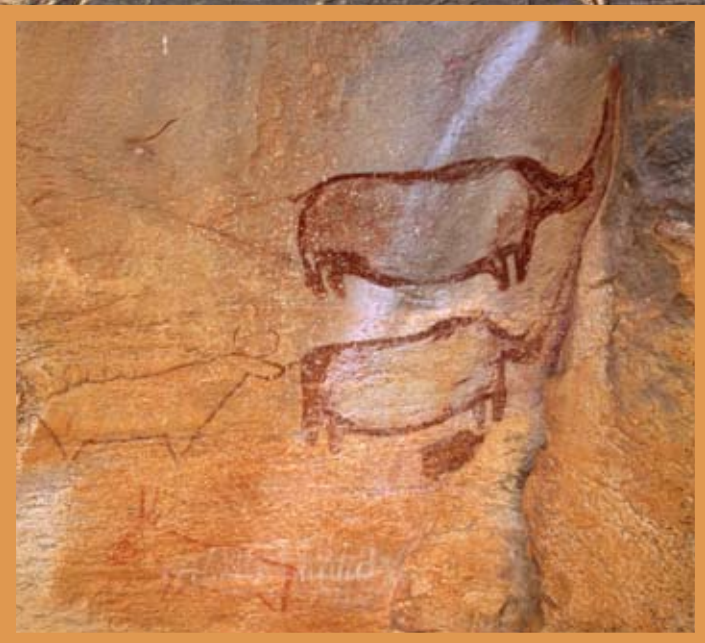
have adopted rock art, perhaps from ancestral Pygmy peoples. In the recent past, some fragile white paintings in rock shelters were incorporated in secret rites to facilitate births, initiations into adulthood, marriages and death. The images present metaphors emphasizing morality, recognizing proper behavior and consequences of wrongdoing. Unlike the brush-painted, fine-line San art, Late White images were painted with fingers (above) and incorporate crudely chipped images into exposed rock surfaces. The imagery includes animals, mythical animals, water-related animals, geometric designs (below), basket-work figures, loincloths and more recently motor vehicles and trains. Late White paintings ceased to be made in the 1990s.



KHOEKHOEN ART C. 2,000 YRS AGO TO RECENT PAST



Main Picture: Smooth river pavement decorated with hundreds of geometric engravings, northern Cape South Africa; **Inset:** Panel featuring two stylized rhino paintings in Botswana's Tsodilo Hills



Khoe herders were well-built people who originated from north of the Zambezi River and entered southern Africa about 2,000 years ago. Today, their descendants speak click languages, although in the remote past they may have spoken other languages. They brought sheep and then cattle into southern Africa, and lived mobile lives that revolved around permanent water sources. Their art, both engravings and finger paintings, depicts many geometric designs (above), animals and some human figures. Positive handprints, usually made by pressing a painted hand against the rock, are possibly a later expression of their art. Although Khoe art

expresses a similar world-view to that of Bushman paintings and engravings, unlike Bushman art, it does not appear to be shamanic. Khoe art was most likely created out of religious beliefs (below) during initiation rituals.

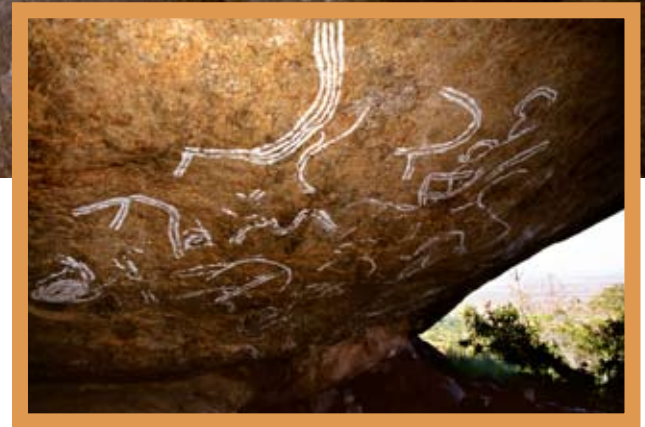


MEAT-FEASTING ART UNKNOWN TO RECENT PAST

Main Picture: Rock shelter with Maasai Meat-Feasting paintings featuring bi-chrome shields and a black elephant, Serengeti National Park Tanzania; **Inset:** Samburu meat-feasting paintings near mouth of a huge cave, in the Loldaiga Hills, Laikipia, northern Kenya.

Meat-feasting paintings occur in rock shelters in northern Tanzania and western Kenya. The paintings in southern regions depict shields (above) and occasionally animals, while in northern regions clan symbols are featured as animal brands (below). Maa men, who were forbidden to eat meat in front of women, painted the symbols after so-called 'meat

feasts.' On such occasions, young men gathered at specific, isolated sites (il puli) to feast on meat, preferably beef, but also mutton and goat. The beast was either stolen by the group, or donated to the group by the father of a participant. The animal was driven to an il puli, often rock shelters, and ritually slaughtered. Medicinal broth used for increasing strength and courage was brewed in clay pots; which were acquired from other groups. The warriors washed their bodies in one broth, drank another, and cooked meat with others. Afterwards, symbols were painted on the rocks in the location of the ritual. Shields may be symbols of bravery, while cattle brands may represent the animals that were eaten during feasts. It is unknown when meat feasting commenced, but more recent paintings date from the last two centuries.



THEMES IN ROCK ART

In this exhibit African rock art is presented in terms of several different themes such as; Shamanism, Symbolism, Humans relation with animals, Communication with the Divine and Sacred Sites



Bushman painting depicting two Therianthropes in the Cedarberg, south-western Cape, South Africa

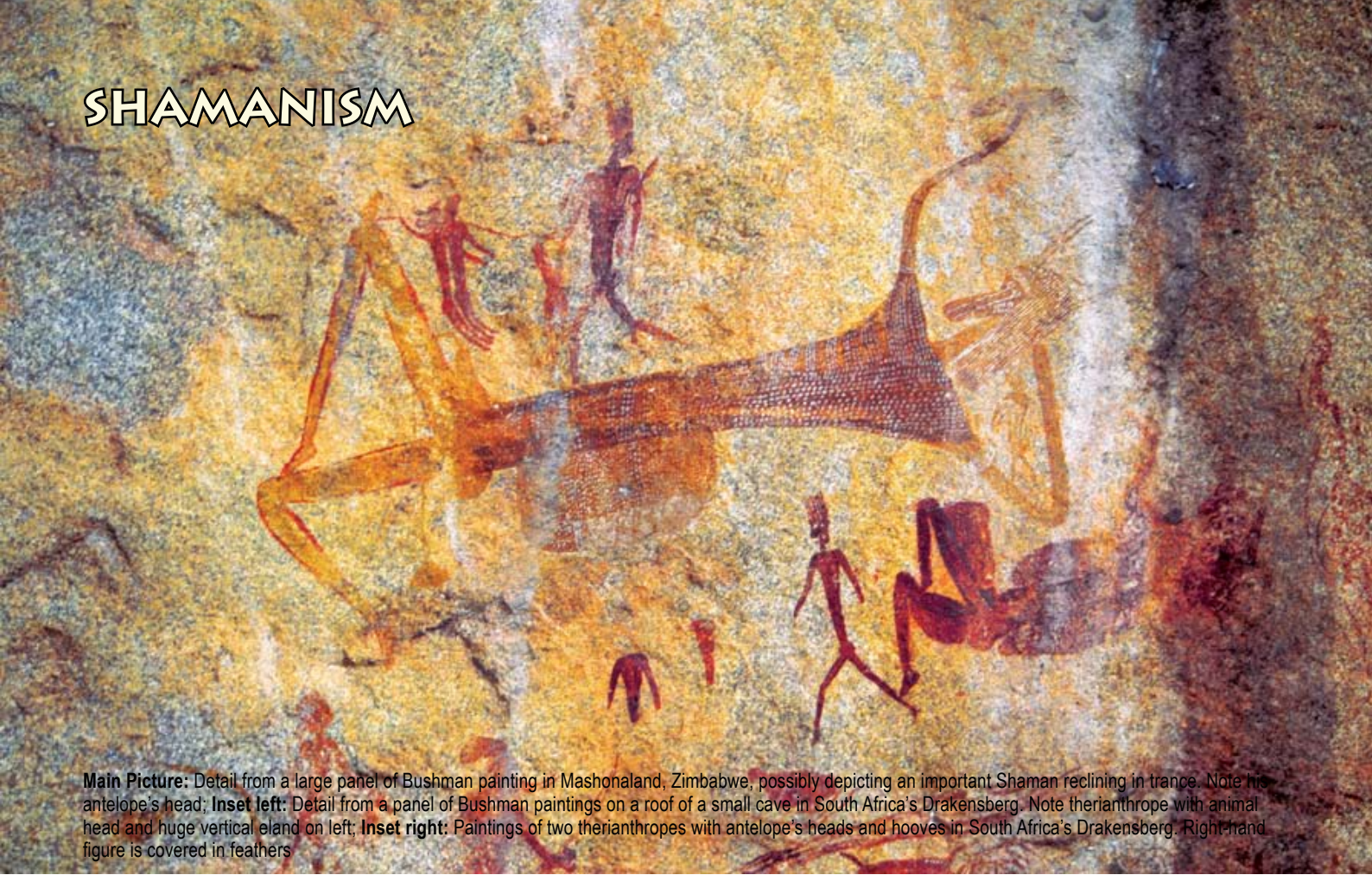
SYMBOLISM

Main Picture: Concentric Circles, once used for rain-making rituals in a rock shelter in Lukoba Island, Lake Victoria, Tanzania; **Inset left:** Detail from a major panel of concentric circles and “canoes” at Nyero, in eastern Uganda; **Inset right:** Engraved geometrics in Kisii, western Kenya, photograph courtesy, Elkana Ongesa

Most of the rock paintings in Western Kenya and in the Lake Victoria Basin consist of symbolic, geometric art, usually featuring concentric circles. Research about living peoples in Africa (Pygmies, Bushmen (San) and some Bantu-speaking farmers) suggests that some of these geometric symbols represent fertility, weather, morality and the invisible world. In the Lake Victoria Basin local people recognise concentric circles and other symbols as channels to rain and peace. Abasuba peoples and others say that red paint represents the moon and white paint the sun. In Bushman rock art, some symbols are believed to be entoptics, images experienced by Shamans while in trance.



SHAMANISM



Main Picture: Detail from a large panel of Bushman painting in Mashonaland, Zimbabwe, possibly depicting an important Shaman reclining in trance. Note his antelope's head; **Inset left:** Detail from a panel of Bushman paintings on a roof of a small cave in South Africa's Drakensberg. Note therianthrope with animal head and huge vertical eland on left; **Inset right:** Paintings of two therianthropes with antelope's heads and hooves in South Africa's Drakensberg. Right-hand figure is covered in feathers

The word Therianthrope means 'part human forms, often with animal head, hoofs and even wings are fairly common in North Africa art and even more common in Bushman/ San art.

Therianthropes are nevertheless humans. We know from anthropological studies and from an ethnography recorded in the 19th century that these images of people with animal features are probably shamans who have become partly transformed into animals through trance. To this day healing or trance-dancers are an important part of San social and spiritual life. Most experts now believe that many San paintings were made by shamans who were expressing the hallucinatory imagery they had experienced in trance on the walls of their rock shelters.



SACRED SITES

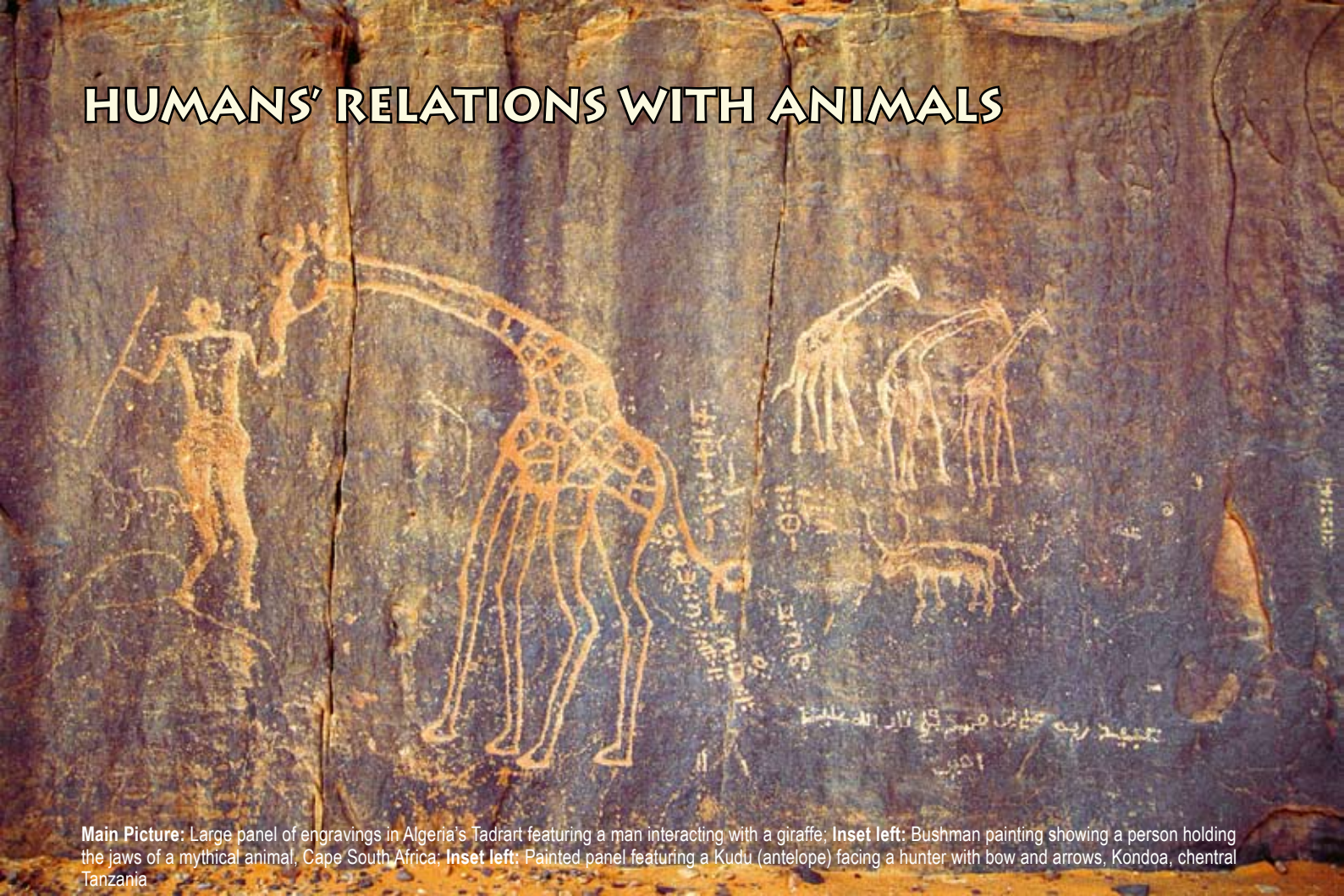


Main Picture: Looking out of a decorated cave in the Sahara - northern Chad; **Inset left:** Samburu meat feasting site, Laikipia, northern Kenya; **Inset right:** Anthropomorphic and phallic monoliths at an important burial site in southern Ethiopia

It is believed that most rock art was made for spiritual and/ or religious reasons, and many rock art sites are sacred. Even today many people recognise some of their sites as having mystical and spiritual importance even though inhabitants today may have no connection with art which may have been made thousands of years ago. In some areas, religious groups and animists conduct ceremonies at rock art site recognizing opportunities to tap into sacred power emanating from the past.



HUMANS' RELATIONS WITH ANIMALS

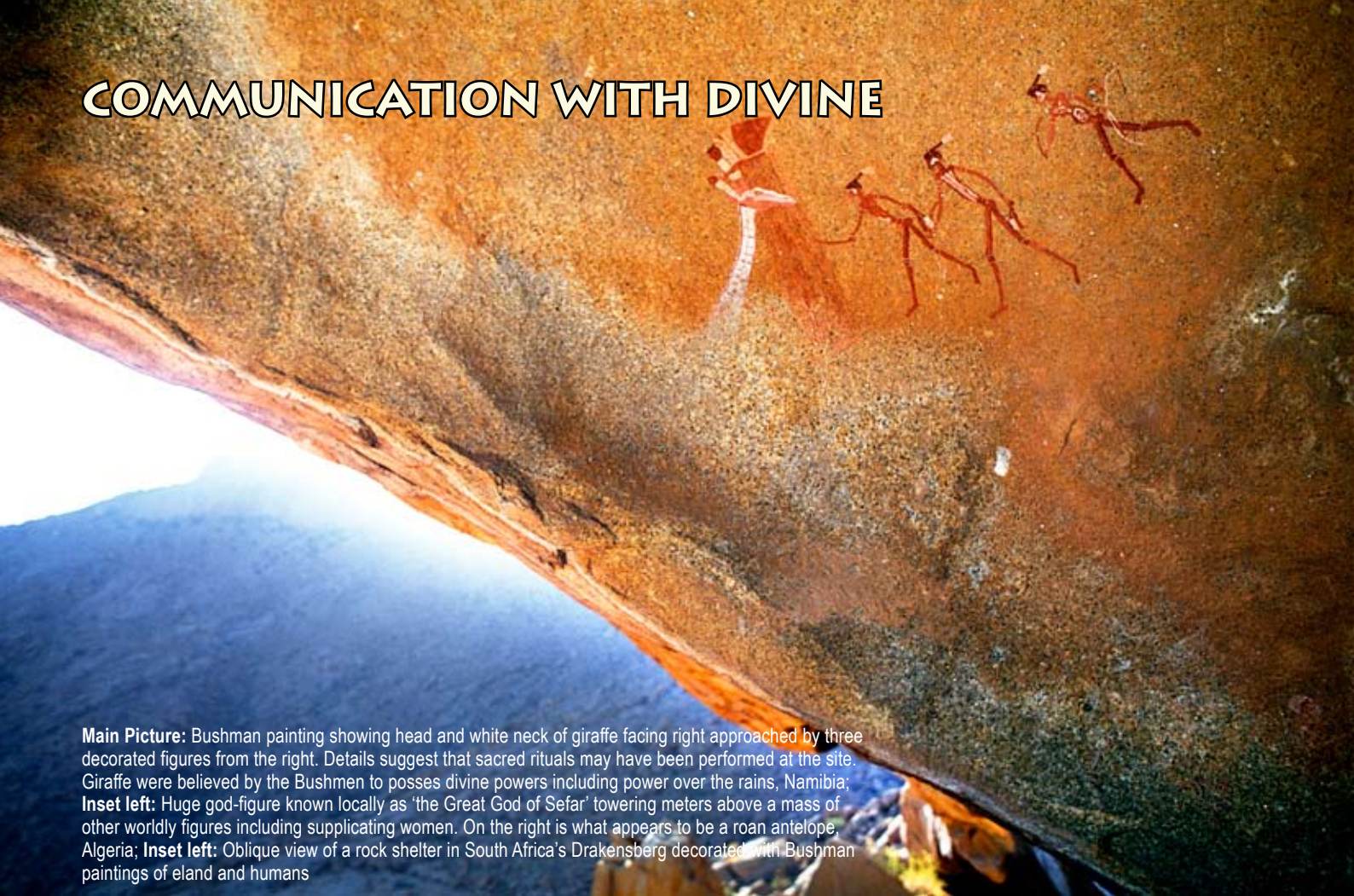


Main Picture: Large panel of engravings in Algeria's Tadrart featuring a man interacting with a giraffe; **Inset left:** Bushman painting showing a person holding the jaws of a mythical animal, Cape South Africa; **Inset right:** Painted panel featuring a Kudu (antelope) facing a hunter with bow and arrows, Kondo, central Tanzania

For thousands of years early peoples like the Bushmen/ San lived in harmony with the animals that shared their world. They talked of a time when people and animals could communicate with each other. Across Africa certain animals were recognised as possessing special powers for example over rain. In Bushman mythology, the eland was special and was painted more frequently and beautifully than any other animal. In Morocco, the rhino appears to have been similarly regarded. In Zimbabwe, the kudu is revered. But the animal which appears to have been universally revered across Africa is the giraffe. It is depicted more frequently and faithfully than any other animal. The largest single rock art image in Africa is in southern Algeria and depicts a giraffe that stands 8.5 metres from head to hoof.



COMMUNICATION WITH DIVINE



Main Picture: Bushman painting showing head and white neck of giraffe facing right approached by three decorated figures from the right. Details suggest that sacred rituals may have been performed at the site. Giraffe were believed by the Bushmen to possess divine powers including power over the rains, Namibia; **Inset left:** Huge god-figure known locally as 'the Great God of Sefar' towering meters above a mass of other worldly figures including supplicating women. On the right is what appears to be a roan antelope, Algeria; **Inset right:** Oblique view of a rock shelter in South Africa's Drakensberg decorated with Bushman paintings of eland and humans

Many people still recognise rock art and rock gongs as ways to contact the spirits of the land: the autochthones or first settlers who understood and still understand the natural world and had, and still have, abilities to harness it for 'good': ancient spirits still able to bring rain, overcome evil-ones and foretell the future. Round head paintings in the Sahara dating back to 8,000 years and more, portray an etherial world where humans bowed to nature and scenes hunting are absent. As in Bushman painting, research suggests that shamanism may have played an important role in North Africa rock art. Bushmen saw their painting as a doorway through the rock face into the world of spirits through which they could step to harness mythical rain-animals, snakes and large mammals to create good and overcome evil.





Herd of wild cattle, known locally as the 'Crying Cows' carved in bas-relief on a large sandstone outcrop in southern Algeria