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SURROGATE SURFACES:
A CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETIVE APPROACH TO THE ROCK ART OF UGANDA

by

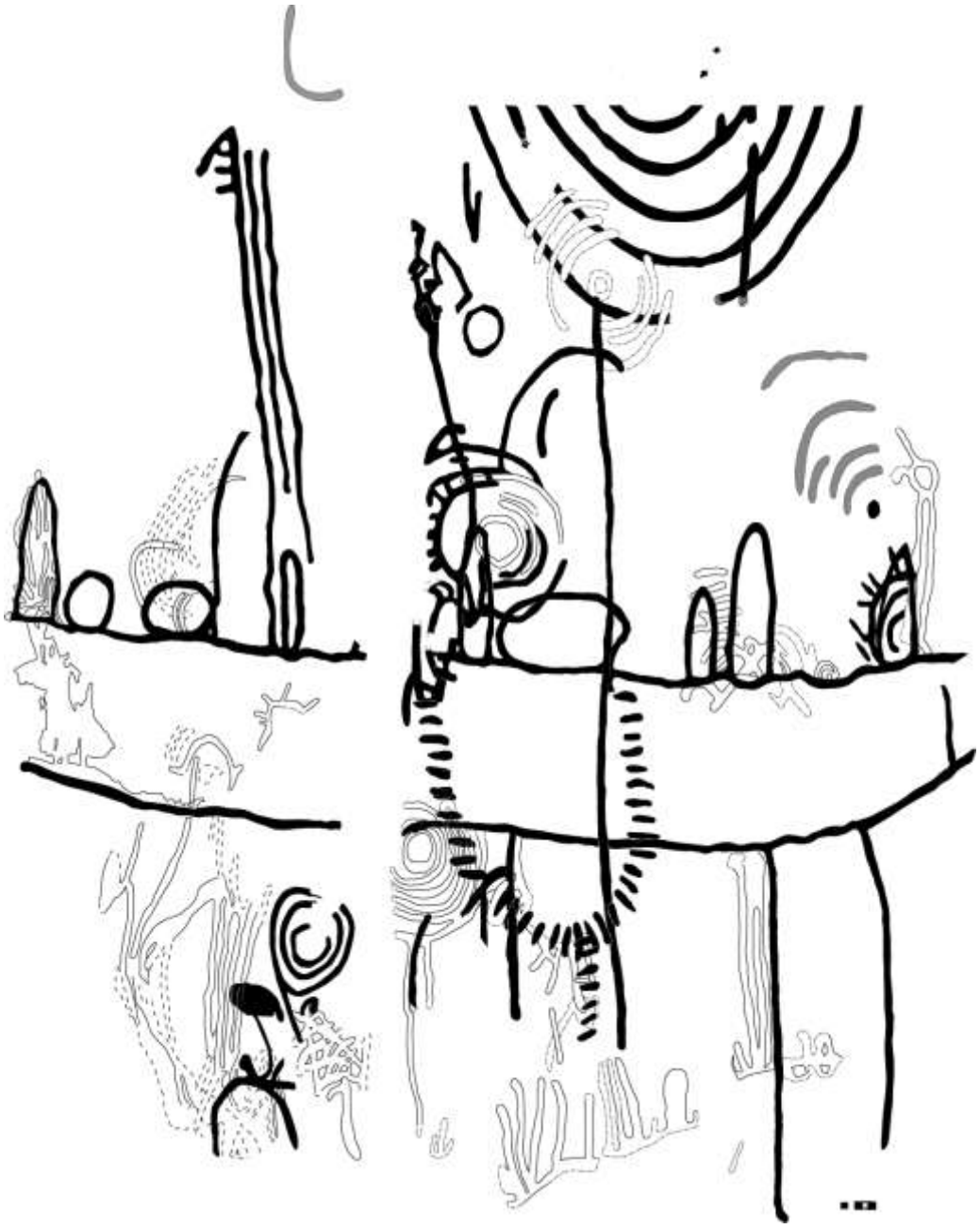
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A thesis submitted to the
Graduate School of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

March 2010



Declaration

I declare that this is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

Signed:……..

Catherine Namono

5th March 2010

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Dedication

To the memory of my beloved mother, Joyce Lucy Epaku Wambwa

To my beloved father and friend, Engineer Martin Wangutusi Wambwa

To my twin, Phillip Mukhwana Wambwa

and

Dear sisters and brothers, nieces and nephews

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Acknowledgements

There are so many things to be thankful for and so many people to give gratitude to that I will not forget them, but only mention a few. First and foremost, I am grateful to my mentor and supervisor, Associate Professor Benjamin Smith who has had an immense impact on my academic evolution, for guidance on previous drafts and for the insightful discussions that helped direct this study. Smith's previous intellectual contribution has been one of the corner stones around which this thesis was built. I extend deep gratitude to Professor David Lewis-Williams for his constant encouragement, the many discussions and comments on parts of this study. His invaluable contribution helped ideas to ferment. I am greatly indebted to Collin M. Turnbull for his insightful anthropological studies that inspired the many ideas in this thesis.

In a special way, I thank my brother, Jimmy Kutosi for his invaluable support that enabled fieldwork in Uganda. Special thanks go to Susan Ward, the British Institute for East Africa, The University of Witwatersrand and the Rock Art Research Institute for the generous financial support to this study.

Special thanks also go to Professor Merrick Posnansky for encouraging me along the way, and to Dr. Andrew Reid for all the support- *mwebale nnyo ba ssebbo*! To Dr. Geoff Blundell for inspiring me! In Kisumu, Kenya, a huge *asante saana* to Jack Obonyo of the Abasuba Community Museum, Dr. Mzalendo Kibunjia of National Museums of Kenya and Amolo Ng'weno of the Trust for African Rock Art, for assistance to Mfangano Islands.

I recognise the contribution of the Uganda National Research Council for the permits and Dr. Ephraim Kamuhangire of the Uganda Museum for introductory letters that facilitated fieldwork in Uganda. To my research assistants: Micheal Robert Okwi, Dismas Ongwen and Alex Tamale, thank you very much for working tirelessly to ensure my fieldwork was successful. To Mbaziira

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Hannington, *webale byonna*, *byonna*! In all the districts visited in Uganda, I am grateful for the support received from the Local Council Chairpersons at various levels, security operatives and the police for ensuring security during fieldwork. I particularly thank the staff of El-Nino Guest House, Kumi district, for the excellent service. To *Mzee* Francis Okerenyang and *Mzee* Ikara of Nyero, *yalama noi*! To Fred Kisubi of Fisheries Department on Lolui Islands, *weebale ino*! Thanks for your help!

I thank all my dear colleagues and friends: Paulo Kagoda, Zakaria Katambara, Monica Kiwanuka, Victoria Redman, Albino Jopela, Cynthia Mooketsi, Lisa Baker, Thembi Russell, Alex Schoeman, Sam Challis, Natalie Swanepoel, David Pearce, Natalie Edwards, David Dunns, Stéphane Hoerlé, George Susino and all those not mentioned here, for support in whatever way.

In a special way, I thank my wonderful friend Edward B. Eastwood (RIP) and his wife Cathelijine, for their good nature, warmth and advice.

This thesis would not have been possible without the love of family. I am grateful to my parents who imparted a love of knowledge and an appreciation of learning. I am grateful to all my family who always love and take pride in my achievements, for their support and encouragement. This is for you. Thank you for your prayers – He definitely listened!

Finally, I thank the entire 'Blind PiG' (Wits Postgraduate Club) fraternity – Leslie Zubieta, Decio Muinga, Yvette Mwavu, Kiangi Kiangi, Job Kibii, Georgina Peters, Mwakabaga, Mabebe, 'Africans', South Africans, Europeans, Americans and all for the camaraderie that kept the fire burning! To Chunga, Chazya, Maina wa Mutonya, Thomas Kimaru, Jacinta, Monica, Kaminju and Paulo – keep it real, I'm watching you! To Andy, Brian, Dunford, Dennis, Judy, Ikela, Mapule, Phil, Roger – thanks people for your good cheer, advice and support.

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Glossary of terms

akami	noise or conflict
apa	camp
bopi	playground
ekimi	quietness or peace
endu	family leaf hut
keti	disembodied spirits, are both human and animal and not necessarily spirits of the dead
kuma	vagina
kumamolimo	the hearth of the *molimo*
ndu	womb
ndura	forest
pepo	life-force

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Terminology

In this thesis, I use the term ‘Pygmy’ to describe hunter-gatherers of the Central African rain forest to distinguish them from the savannah hunter-gatherer groups of southern Africa. I reject all pejorative connotations of the word ‘Pygmy’. I use the terms hunter-gatherer, farmer or pastoralist to define groups of people according to their life-ways. In southern Africa, hunter-gatherer groups are generally termed either Bushmen or San people. Some researchers today consider the term ‘Bushman’ pejorative although some of the Bushman people prefer using it to alternative names such as ‘San’. San is a Nama word for ‘vagabond’ or ‘cattle-less wanderer’. ‘San’ is therefore also potentially pejorative. There is no single emic word for all the Bushman groups, each have their own name (Lewis-Williams 2003: 123). Therefore, the terms ‘Pygmy’, ‘San’ and ‘Bushman’ I choose **do not** carry any pejorative and derogatory connotations in this thesis.

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Abstract

Rock art in Uganda is under-researched, and where research has been done the rock art was erroneously attributed to 'Bushman-like' people. This misattribution resulted in flawed interpretations. Uganda forms part of the geometric art zone that spreads across central Africa, including Angola, northern Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Using a contextual interpretive approach, this thesis considers the meaning of the geometric rock art of Uganda.

Arising from recording and analysis of geometric rock art sites in Uganda, a literature review and archival searches on oral traditions and interviews with heritage holders, the study attempts to sequence the art and tie identified patterns in the rock art to data from ethnography, oral tradition and archaeological sources. In this thesis, I consider the geometric rock art in Uganda to be made within a context of ritual.

This study makes an empirical contribution by generating a comprehensive database of rock art in Uganda. Methodologically, this is the first time that a contextual approach is used to identify patterns and to interpret the rock art in Uganda. Interpretatively, this study generates new knowledge about the geometric rock art as well as information on related living heritage.

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Introduction

This thesis ends a 41-year hiatus of rock art research in Uganda and, in doing so, is a contribution to the growing body of social and contextual analytical studies relating to the rock art of Africa. Significantly, this study offers something theoretical and social to the lacuna of rock art research in Uganda and East Africa.

In 2003, I began my academic conversion from art history to archaeology. At the heart of this conversion was the desire to study the rock art of Uganda. The challenges of this conversion did not permit a survey of rock art in Uganda. However, I was fortunate to conduct a research project on the rock art of Bantu language-speaking farmers in Limpopo Province, South Africa. The rock art of these farmers, the Northern Sotho, comprise animal and geometric forms. Emerging from this background, I was equipped to discern motifs of Bantu-speakers from the geometric motifs I would encounter in Uganda. My conversion complete, in 2006, I was able to conduct fieldwork on the rock art of Uganda around which this thesis revolves.

In this study, Chapter 1 situates the rock art of Uganda within a broad environmental and cultural framework. This chapter situates the thesis in relation to current archaeological understandings and to contemporary Pygmy debates. It explores two notions of Pygmy existence, and considers how these notions have influenced anthropology and archaeology. The chapter concludes with a demonstration that the Pygmies may have made the rock art of Uganda.

The second and third chapters focus on the fieldwork in 2006 that provided the data for this thesis. Chapter 2 traces past rock art studies in Uganda and shows the trends in research over the past 41years. Figure 1 shows the area of study. Included are those areas surveyed for rock art and areas not surveyed due to

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logistical reasons. These chapters provide a comparative analysis with other parts of the region and follow-up the in-depth survey of Chaplin (1974), (conducted in 1966, but published 8 years later), as well as studies of rock art in Central Africa by Clark (1958) and more recently Smith (1995).

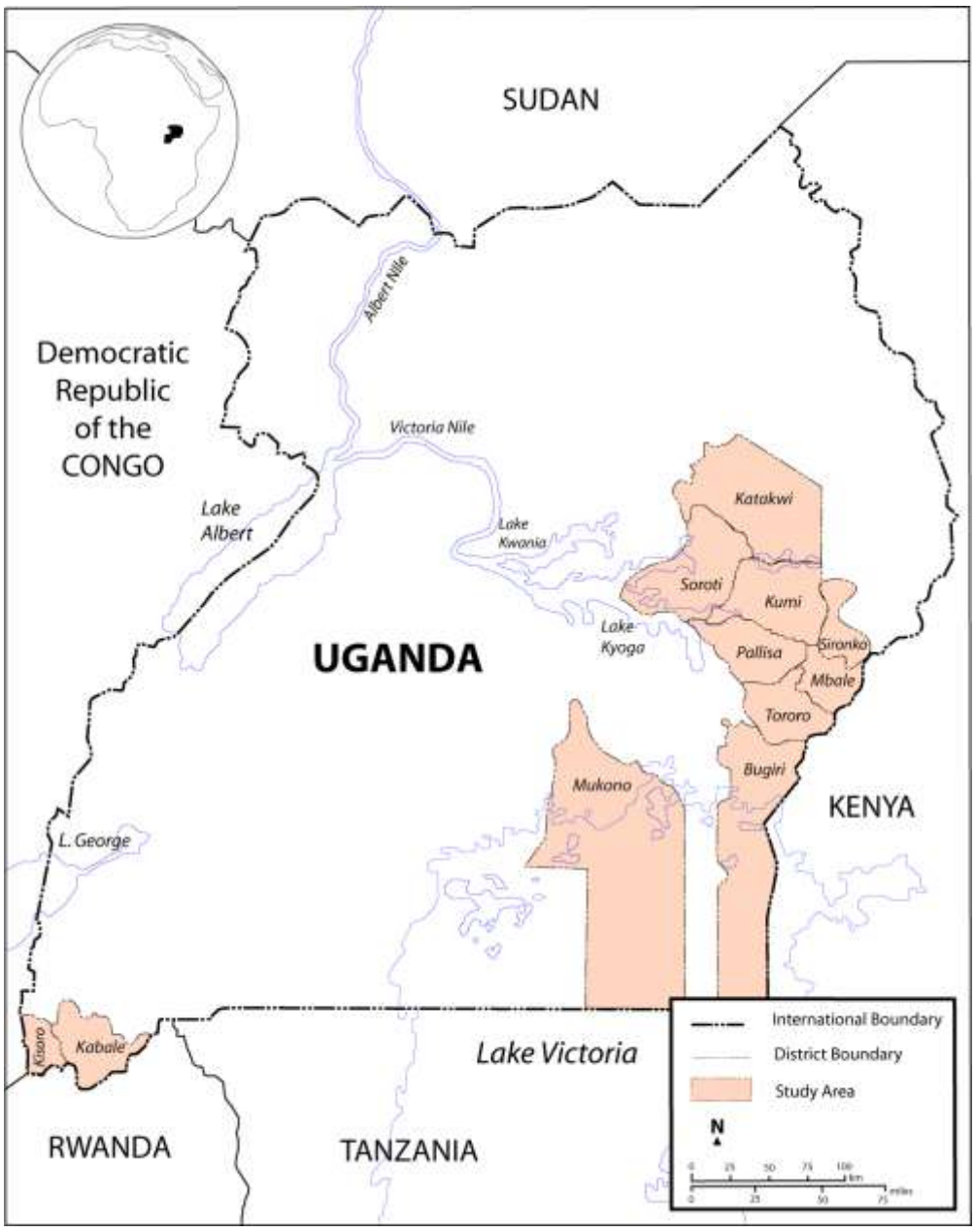


Figure 1: Map of study area

The theoretical framework, on which the interpretive model of this thesis is built, is presented in chapter 4. In this chapter, I address key perspectives that will be influential to the form my research will take. Post processsulists such as Ian Hodder have strongly influenced me. They contend that archaeological interpretation must be contextual. Contextual interpretive approaches examine the way particular sets of components are related to a whole (Hodder 1986: 30). Specifically, Hodder engages the structured content of ideas and symbols, by examining how these ideas denoted by material culture themselves are involved in structuring society (*ibid.*: 121). Although contextual interpretive approaches have been used to understand various archaeological contexts, this is the first time such an approach is used to interpret the rock art of Uganda. This is my point of departure from previous studies.

The next chapter, chapter 5, is introduced with a quotation from Moke, an autochthonous elder of the Mbuti people of Ituri forest, who describes his understanding of his cosmology in his own words. Distinctive understandings of a gendered cosmos are presented throughout the chapter. This ethnographic understanding leads to a cosmological model for the interpretation of the geometric rock art of Uganda in Chapter 6. Drawing from these ethnographies, I put the categories of shapes and the sites, into contexts that render them meaningful. These contexts create an intellectual space for obtaining meaning and understanding in the interpretation of the rock art of Uganda.

Finally, I make use of the understanding of previous chapters to produce an overall interpretation of rock art sites. In this chapter, ideas already presented, meet and mingle. I consider a few lingering points outside my cosmological model. I argue that the study makes a valid attempt to write a new interpretation of the rock art of Uganda with far reaching implications in understanding this rock art tradition and identity of its makers.

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Chapter One

AN ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL FRAMEWORK

This study situates the rock art in Uganda within a broad environmental and cultural framework, because the locations of sites, migrations and interactions of people are all important issues for the interpretation of the rock art of Uganda. This framework derives from published literature on East Africa as a whole, since firm archaeological evidence for sequences in Uganda is limited in part because political events for the past 41 years rendered field research in several parts of Uganda difficult, if not impossible. I begin first with a general outline of the environmental and cultural history of East Africa and then focus on that of Uganda. I conclude with the issue of the identity of the possible authors of the rock art in Uganda.

Geography of the study area

Located in East Africa, Uganda is a landlocked country lying on the equator and comprising an area of 236,040km². It shares borders with Sudan in the North, the Democratic Republic of Congo in the west, Rwanda and Tanzania in the South, and Kenya in the East. As part of the African interior high plateau, much of Uganda is topographically classified as a plateau, with numerous small hills, valleys and extensive savannah plains.

The country lies in a cradle of mountains; on its east border with Kenya is Mt Elgon and Mt Moroto in the northeast. The Mufumbiro and Ruwenzori mountain ranges in the south-west rise to altitudes of over 5,000m. At 615m, Mwitanzige is the lowest point and at 5,119m, Margherita peak on Mt Stanley the highest, the third highest point in Africa. Uganda lies in the interlacustrine region of Africa, at the heart of the Great Lakes region with close to 15% or 36,330km² of its area

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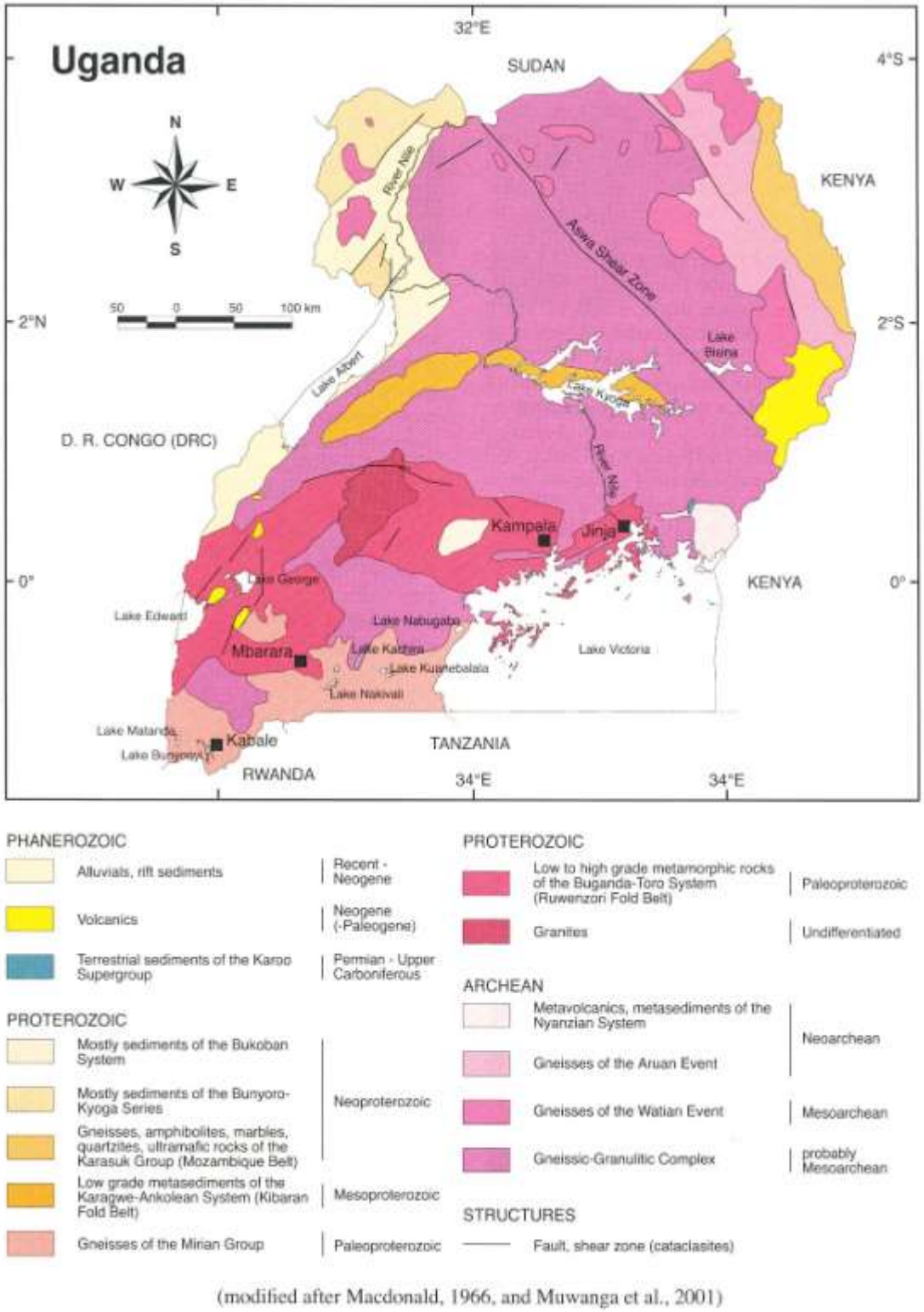
is made up of swamp or open water, and including Lakes Edward, Mwitanzige (Albert) and Victoria. This well watered, rich tillable land has abundant rainfall and a tropical climate. Most parts of Uganda receive good precipitation; annual amounts range from less than 20 inches (500mm) in the northeast to a high of 80 inches (2,000mm) in the Ssese islands of Lake Victoria.

Geology and Vegetation

Vegetation in Uganda is extremely diverse, varying from tropical rain forests in the south to savannah woodlands and semi-desert vegetation in the north. Indigenous trees and shrubs, particularly in northern and eastern Uganda, are interspersed with open savannah grassland which includes *Acacia brevispica* ('wait-a-bit'), *Vitex maiensis*, *Vitex fischeri guerka* (Schlüter 1997). Rocky outcrops and dry flat land are mainly populated by *Haplocoelum Foliolosum*, *Erythrina Abyssinica lam*, *Acacia Senegal* and *Euphorbia Candelabrum*. Dominant grasses in open savannah country include *Triandra forsk*/red oat grass, *Setania Sphacelata*/dog tail grass, *Imperata cylindrical* cotton grass (mainly used for grazing and thatching), *Hyparrhenia Rufa*/zebra grass used in reed work and grazing, and *lasiurus boiss*. Elephant or Napier grass is found in areas with well-distributed rainfall. This vegetation is underlain by a Precambrian basement that comprises by far the largest share of rocks in East Africa (Fig. 2). Uganda, like the rest of East Africa, consists mainly of isolated volcanic mountains, rocky outcrops and a plateau divided with long, narrow lakes and the Great Rift Valley.

Generally, the geology of Uganda is extensively of gneissic-granulitic rocks particularly in the northern, eastern and north-western regions (Schlüter 1997:7-10). In eastern Uganda, the Nyero rock shelter is one of six geosites in Uganda (Schlüter 2006: 241). Almost 60% of rock outcroppings, especially in northern and central Uganda are a high grade of gneissic-granulitic complex (Schlüter 2006: 238; 1997: 7-33). Minerals in the rocks of gneiss facies include, among others, iron oxides, pyroxene, biotite, calcium plagioclase and quartz.

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(Image: Schlüter 2006: 239)

Figure 2: Geological overview of Uganda

Acid gneisses are grey while granite ranges from a grey to pink, with a foliation caused by the orientation of mica (Schlüter 1997: 35). Rocks in southern and south-western Uganda fall within the Ruwenzori Fold belt while those in western Uganda are of the Kibaran belt, a stratigraphic structural unit in East and Central Africa (Schlüter 1997: 11). Acidity and exfoliation strongly affect the survival of rock art in Uganda.

Accumulative data indicates that, like the rest of East Africa, Uganda experienced dynamic prehistoric climatic changes that had profound effects on its tropical environments and landscapes during the terminal Pleistocene and early Holocene (Kendall 1969: 121). Palaeoenvironmental evidence indicates that Lake Victoria was surrounded by a wide variety of vegetation ranging from savannah to evergreen forest. It included amongst its catchments areas, the Mau escarpment and Mount Elgon. From 14,500 BP until 12,000 BP Lake Victoria had no outlet. From 12,000 BP there was a probable outlet where the River Nile flowed into Lake Kyoga, but this outlet closed up around 10,000 BP (Kendall 1969: 170). The forest vegetation that first appeared after 12,000 BP declined during this closed interval of Lake Victoria (*ibid.*). Since this hiatus the lake has drained northwards via the river Nile. By 12,500 BP warmer and moister conditions began to pertain in the region, fluctuating to drier conditions (Butzer, Isaac, Richardson & Washbourne-Kamau 1972).

Palaeovegetational studies of the African continent have shown that between 30,000 BP and 20,000 BP, vast areas of the continent were extremely arid (Adams & Faure 1997). With the southward advancement of the Sahara resulting in a reduction of the equatorial rain forests, savannah woodlands were created in the Congo basin. This environment change may have been conducive for modern human dispersal.

Core samples from the bottom of Lake Victoria reveal that the period before 7,000 BP was a very wet phase in East Africa and that dense rainforest once covered the Lake Victoria shores (Livingstone 1975). However, rainfall

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fluctuations between 7,000 BP and 6,000 BP created a shift from evergreen to semi-deciduous forest until 3,000 BP. Since then, centuries of anthropogenic factors have removed almost all the original tree cover (Kendall 1969: 170; Livingstone 1975: 261). For instance, the vegetation of one of 3,000 islands on Lake Victoria, Lolui island, is changed into a coastal fringe rain forest that extends into the hinterland as relic forest (Jackson, Gartlan & Posnansky 1965: 38). Lake Victoria, the second largest tropical freshwater lake in the world, is shallow, approximately 69km^2 and 40m deep on average with a maximum depth of 84m. It is relatively young; its current basin formed only 400,000 years ago, when westward-flowing rivers were dammed by geological up thrusts. The lake's shallowness, limited river inflow and large surface area relative to its volume make it vulnerable to climate changes. Cores taken from its bottom show that Lake Victoria has dried up completely three times since it formed (Reader 2001) (Table 1).

In Uganda, specifically in the eastern region, there is apujan clay soil in areas along the shores of Lake Kyoga. Loam clay is in and around the River Mpologoma Basin and the shores of Lake Kyoga. The areas of Kachumbala, Bukedea, Nyero, Kobwin, Ngora, and Kumi in Kumi District, which I have surveyed for rock art sites, have a mixture of loam clay, loam and sandy loam soils. On Lolui islands, the soils are ferralitic and range from yellow-red, coarse sandy-clay loams to coarse sandy loams, becoming grey brown towards the shores (Jackson, *et al.* 1965: 576). Archaeological evidence indicates that this rich and varied Ugandan landscape has been populated by ancestors of modern humans for more than 2.5 million years, and there is evidence of Later Stone Age activity from about 35,000 years ago (Salas, Richards, De la Fe, Lareu, Sobrino, Sanchez-Diz, Macaulay & Carracedo 2002: 1082).

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Table 1: Simplified environmental changes

Period	Climatic Change
Present	Lake Victoria drains northward via the River Nile Cultivation removed almost all original forest cover
3,000 BP	Deciduous Forest
6,000 BP	Rainfall Fluctuations cause a shift from evergreen to deciduous forest
7,000 BP	Wet phase Dense Forest covers the lake shore
10,000 BP	Dry Lake Victoria outlet closes Forest vegetation declines Outlet river flows to lake Kyoga Forest vegetation appears
12,000 BP 14,000 BP	Global temperatures and humidity increase significantly (Lamb 1982:26), but not significantly enough for forest expansion until 8,000BP (Van Noten & Cahen 1982) No outlet for Lake Victoria Vegetation decreases
Palaeo-environment	Lake Victoria is surrounded by a wide variety of vegetation

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Uganda is positioned along the central African rift valley. The beginning and end of many parts of the dated archaeological sequence in Uganda appear to correlate with past climatic periods and their transition, suggesting that movement of people may have been climatically controlled or induced (Dyson-Hudson & Smith 1978; Ambrose 1982: 137). Movements of people into and around the East African landscape was and still is a subject of research interest for archaeologists, linguists, historians and geneticists. Since the 1950s, archaeological and historical research in the region mainly focused on establishing cultural sequences and correlating archaeological sequences with language families, contributing to our current understanding of East African prehistory (Ambrose 1982; Robertshaw 1990).

Early Inhabitants

In this chapter, I trace the peopling of Uganda within the broader context of East Africa since modern national borders were non-existent during prehistoric times. I portray a possible prehistoric sequence for Uganda drawing on associations and connections between archaeological, linguistic, anthropological, historical and genetic evidence.

Archaeological sources provide evidence that East Africa was inhabited from about 2.6 million years ago (Plummer 2005: 55, 65). Traces of the Early Stone Age (ESA) have been found at Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania and Turkana region in Kenya where the earliest archaeological evidence traces to 2.5 - 2.6 million years ago (Schick & Toth 2006: 9,16-17). Other hominins include *Homo habilis* dated 2.4 - 1.6 million years ago and the famous 'Turkana boy' *Homo ergaster* dated 1.8 to 1.0 million years ago. In Uganda the ESA is traced to Nyabushozi in the Lake Mwitanzige Basin and dates to around 1.5 million years ago by Oldowan hominins, probably opportunistic omnivores who made and used stone tools (Schick & Toth 2006: 13).

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From around 1.4 million years ago, new technological elements emerged described as the Acheulean Industrial Complex. This Complex, dated from about 1.6 million to 300,000 years ago, is defined by the appearance of bifaces. Current evidence indicates that the Acheulean-Middle Stone Age transition occurred between 300 to 250,000 years ago (Marean & Assefa 2005: 103). Despite problems with dating, the Middle Stone Age (MSA) in East Africa is believed to date from as early as about 280/240,000 to 40,000 cal BP (Prendergast, Luque, Domínguez-Rodrigo, Diez-Martin, Mabulla & Barba 2007: 218). Malewa Gorge in the Kenyan Central Rift yielded a date of 240,000 years, while Baringo, also in Kenya, dated to 280, 000 years (Marean & Assefa 2005: 109).

In Uganda, MSA remains are found in the Sango hills at the mouth of the Kagera River. Further MSA evidence occurs on the west coast of Lake Victoria and Nsongezi (O'Brien 1939: 11; Van Riet Lowe 1952: 62-80; Cole 1964; Phillipson 1985: 84-5), in the lake terraces on Buvuma island in Lake Victoria and at Magosi in Karamoja (O'Brien 1939: 11; Nelson & Posnansky 1970; Posnansky, Reid & Ashley 2005: 97). The MSA is characterised predominately by prepared cores, rare bifacial points, un-retouched flakes and flake-based lithic industries that replaced cleavers and hand axes of the Oldowan sequence. The diversity of retouched points is indicative of regional variation (Prendergast, *et al.* 2007: 218).

East African MSA populations are believed to have exploited the fauna of their rich and varied ecosystems. MSA economies focused primarily on plant foods throughout most of the year, supplemented by hunting (Marean & Assefa 2005: 110). Ostrich egg-shell beads from Enkapune Ya Muto rock shelter in Kenya as well as similar beads from Mumba Cave in Tanzania indicate that the MSA/LSA transition occurred prior to 40,000 years (Ambrose 1998: 377; Conard 2005: 312) with others placing it to earlier than 59,000 to 62,000 years ago (Skinner, Hay, Masao & Blackwell 2003: 1365). Evidence from Matupi Cave in the Democratic Republic of Congo dates the transition to more than 40,000 BP (Van Noten 1977). However, Marean and Assefa posit that "there is little direct evidence for symbolic behaviour anywhere in the world prior to 40,000 BP"(Marean & Assefa

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2005: 116). According to Ambrose (1998: 379) the MSA/LSA transition occurred earlier in equatorial Africa than in southern Africa.

Excavations from Enkapune Ya Muto dating to a minimum age of 39, 900 BP mark the earliest occurrence of LSA in East Africa (Ambrose 1998: 388). At Buvuma island in Lake Victoria and Magosi in Karamoja, north-eastern Uganda LSA assemblages date to about 12,000 BP. Similar assemblages at Turkana, in north-western Kenya date to between 8,250 and 4,700 BP. All these sites indicate a hunter-gatherer-fisher economy (Van Noten 1971; Ambrose 1982: 119, 133; Brooks & Robertshaw 1990: 151). LSA assemblages are characterised by bipolar cores, choppers, long blades and microlithic technology, small backed microliths, awls, hammers, thumbnail scrapers and burins, bored and grooved heavy-duty stone tools, polished bone tools, fishing harpoons, bows, arrows, and tortoise shell bowls.

Further excavations in Uganda revealed ostrich eggshell, fresh water mussel shell and land snail shell in Karamoja (Nelson 1973: 62). Typical LSA artefacts were also found with pottery in excavations at Nyero in Kumi (Lawrance 1953; Harwich 1961; Posnansky & Nelson 1968). The presence of pottery at Kumi is probably evidence of interaction with Neolithic communities. Kansyore island in the Kagera River revealed quartz based lithics, Kansyore pottery ware, large cores, a 'heavily used lump of red ochre' and numerous freshwater oyster shells (Chapman 1967: 169; Gifford-Gonzalez 1998). On Lake Victoria, excavations at Tonge and Munyama cave on Buvuma Island and Nakisito on Bugaia Island suggest an LSA occupation for the period between 15,000 BP to 10,000 BP (Nenquin 1971: 132; Van Noten 1971; Sassoon 1973: 9; Ambrose 1982). LSA technology continued in use well into the Early Iron Age (EIA) (Brooks & Robertshaw 1990; Phillipson 1985; Prendergast, *et al.* 2007: 220). Therefore, in East Africa, we see a continuous sequence of LSA assemblages from about 39,900 BP to around 1,000 BP.

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Although the northern lake islands of Buvuma and Bugaia islands on Lake Victoria indicate evidence of LSA occupation, the archaeology of Lolui Island shows that, during the MSA, Lolui was occupied and that it was probably part of the mainland at that time. According to Posnansky, Reid and Ashley (2005), Lolui Island was not occupied again until the arrival of Bantu-speaking Urewe-using groups at about 2,500 BP and 1,200 BP (Posnansky, *et al.* 2005: 82, 97). Although there is no evidence of **occupation** of Lolui Islands by LSA populations, it is probable that they **did use** the island for other activities, such as rituals.

In overview, during the LSA, population numbers were low and occupation sporadic across East Africa. These microlithic and bone tool-producing people lived in rock shelters, open-air sites and along lakeshores. They probably used these areas for residential, hunting, fishing and ritual activities. They combined hunting and fishing with gathering, surviving on a diet of aquatic and plant resources, ostrich eggs, meat and fish. LSA settlement is believed to have been nomadic and semi-nomadic, which in time led to specialisation in tools such as bone harpoons used in fishing. The importance of symbolic behaviour among LSA people is marked by the use of body ornaments (ostrich egg-shell or shell beads), the occurrence of ochre (e.g. at Magosi and Nyero) and evidence of rock art at LSA sites (Prendergast, *et al.* 2007: 219). Who these LSA people were genetically and linguistically is difficult to determine archaeologically.

The emerging pattern of LSA specialisation is seen in the occurrence of Kansyore ware pottery, believed to span the period 8,200-8000 to 3,000-2,400 cal BP, predominantly found around the Lake Victoria Basin, as well as in western Kenya, northern Tanzania, the Mwanza region, Mumba Höhle and Nasera rock shelter in Tanzania (Lane, Ashley, Seitsonen, Harvey, Mire & Odede 2007: 63; Prendergast, *et al.* 2007: 219). Kansyore is associated with delayed return hunter-gatherers. The presence of domesticated ovicaprids at Kansyore sites in western Kenya may indicate a very late transition to animal husbandry and domestication for Kansyore-using communities (Lane, *et al.* 2007: 78), although there is strong

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evidence to suggest that Kansyore has its ultimate origins in the middle Nile region. It is highly probable that these specialised hunter-gatherers were an intruding group different from the earlier LSA populations. It is also possible that LSA people acquired pottery through exchange and gradually acquired pottery-making skills from early pastoral communities. Specialisation in pottery ultimately led to the domestication of plants and animals. This domestication, hence food production, is believed to have occurred in the south-east Saharan regions before 7,500 BP (Phillipson 1985: 118; Ehret 2003: 164). According to Ehret (2003: 163) food producers "have material advantages that tend to facilitate the expansion of their cultures, economies and therefore languages into regions previously occupied by hunting and gathering peoples", without necessarily prevailing over them. Whereas East Africa has a multiplicity of cultures and lifestyles, ancient ethnic differences across cultural boundaries were not diluted so that an initial appearance of a discrete archaeological culture, such as pottery traditions, may represent a single linguistic group (Ambrose 1982: 108) (see Table 2).

Present East African communities are the outcome of complex historical interactions (Soper 1982: 223). A significant indicator of interaction is pottery amongst LSA groups. Some researchers suggest that pottery provides the only common culturally diagnostic factor of migration, but represents a migration of pottery **styles** rather than of **people**. However, these styles could not have moved so fast, with such typological consistency, unless carried by significant numbers of people (*ibid.*: 238). It is possible initially for pottery to enter the archaeological record through exchange, however, a persistent presence of a particular style of pottery over a wide area, suggests the presence of a distinctive group identity. Huffman (1989; 2002: 1) argues that pottery styles imply that makers of similar ceramics shared a common language, since ceramic decoration can express group identity because the decorations form a repeated code of cultural symbols.

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Table 2: Tentative archaeological sequence for Uganda

PERIOD	CULTURAL SEQUENCE						DOCUMENTED LOCATIONS - UGANDA
0							
200							
400						IRON AGE	
600							
800							
1,000 BP							
1,500 BP					PASTORAL IRON AGE ▯ Elementeitan ware		
2,000 BP				PASTORAL "NEOLITHIC" ▯ Nderit, Maringishu, Narosura & Akira ware		EARLY IRON AGE ▯ Urewe ware	▯ northern Chobi area along the Victoria Nile ▯ Buvuma island, Lake Victoria
2,400 - 2,500 BP							
							▯ Karamoja
3,000 BP							
4,500	LATE STONE AGE ▯ microlithic technology ▯ stone & bone tools ▯ body ornamentation ▯ rock art						▯ Lake Victoria shores
		LATER STONE AGE ▯ Kansyore ware					▯ Rock shelters around Lake Victoria Basin
8,000 BP							▯ Lolui, Bugaia & Buvuma islands, Lake Victoria ▯ Eastern & north-eastern Uganda
40,000 BP	Middle Stone Age – Late Stone Age Transition						▯ Magosi, Karamoja ▯ Sango hills at the mouth of the Kagera river
59,000 BP 62,000 BP	MIDDLE STONE AGE ▯ prepared cores ▯ flake-based lithic industries ▯ blades						▯ Buvuma islands, Lake Victoria ▯ Lolui islands, Lake Victoria
280/240,000 ya							
300/280,000 ya	EARLY STONE AGE ▯ cleavers ▯ hand axes	Acheullean - MSA transition					▯ Nsongezi, Ankole ▯ Kafu & Musizi Rivers ▯ Lake Mwitanzige Basin ▯ Lake Victoria
1.4 m - 300,000 ya		Acheullen complex					
2.5 - 2.6 m ya							

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Immigrants

Before 5,000 BP, hunter-gatherers who also fished were the only inhabitants of Uganda. A combination of archaeological, linguistic, genetic and cultural evidence suggests that change occurred when the hunter-gatherer world was intruded upon by a series of outsiders. In East Africa, a major archaeological change is the arrival of domesticated animals. Current evidence suggests that pottery and domesticated animals seem to have arrived as a cultural package. Pottery has been found in association with the faunal remains of domestic animals and where there is evidence for hunting. Evidence for domestication occurs in the form of generalized, mixed cattle, sheep and goat pastoralism, in the northern Kenyan lowlands bordering Lake Turkana, in highland central and southern Kenya (Marean 1992; Marshall 2000; Marshall & Hildebrand 2002) and western Kenya (Karega-Munene 2002). This evidence also indicates that the cultural package was a result of a long-term continuous southward migration of small groups of pastoralists from Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia (Bower 1991; Marshall 2000). Generally, pastoralists depend on their hoofed domestic animals for food production and organize settlement and mobility strategies to suit the dietary needs of their animals (Dyson-Hudson & Dyson-Hudson 1980; Gifford-Gonzalez 2005: 188). There is no evidence that early pastoralists in East Africa used grain, although they may have practised cultivation (Smith 1992: 133).

In East Africa, the first pastoralists are known as the Pastoral Neolithic (PN). The characteristics of these early pastoral groups are that they relied substantially on domestic animals for livelihood, had no crop-production, used pottery and employed typical LSA technologies for the manufacture of edged tools. The PN had a lengthy and complex development, having begun before 4,000 BP and lasting until about 1,300 BP (Soper & Golden 1969; Bower & Nelson 1978: 562; Mehlman 1979; Ambrose 1982: 133). Then, there is the ‘Pastoral Iron Age’ (PIA) in which cultures with pastoral economies take-on iron technology.

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The Pastoral Neolithic

There is no agreement as to the original homeland of the Proto-Afrasan speakers although they are generally believed to have originated in northeast Africa (Ehret 2003: 165). Southern and Eastern-Cushitic languages belong to the Afrasan (Afro-Asiatic) family. Most scholars' agree that the split in the Cushitic language (into Southern and Eastern) occurred in the southern Red Sea hills region (*ibid.*). Cushitic-speakers are believed have practised pastoralism over a long period because Proto-Cushitic vocabulary contains words diagnostic of a well-developed pastoral economy (Ehret 2003: 164).

Southern Cushites

Archaeological, linguistic and historical sources in East Africa provide evidence that an immigrant stock-keeping people from the fringe of the south Ethiopian highlands arrived in northern Kenya around the Lake Turkana area and intruded upon the hunter-gatherer communities as early as 4,500 BP. The Lake Turkana ceramic, bone harpoon-using, hunter-gatherer tradition was replaced with a pastoral tradition after 4,500 BP (Ehret 1974; 1998: 10; Barthelme 1977: 7; Ambrose 1982: 113). Ambrose refers to these stock-keepers as the 'Lowland Savannah Pastoral Neolithic' (Ambrose 1982: 119).

Cattle and caprines (goats and sheep), large quantities of fish and some wild animal bones appear in the archaeological record of the central Rift Valley of Kenya (e.g. Enkapune Ya Muto), and parts of the northern lowlands bordering Lake Turkana around 4,000 BP. Archaeological evidence for domestication becomes more common after 3,800 BP, occurring in highland, central, southern and western Kenya around 3,400–3,000 BP (Ambrose 1998: 380; Lane 2004: 247; Lane, *et al.* 2007: 62-3; Prendergast, *et al.* 2007: 220).

These immigrant pastoralists, the Southern Cushities, are believed to have interred their dead beneath stone cairns, between rocks, sometimes accompanied with stone bowls and stone platters (Leakey 1966; Sassoon 1968). They built flat-roofed houses with rectangular floors, kept cattle in circular pole fences and used

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mountain bamboo for arrow quivers (Ehret 1998: 172-175). Around 3,500 BP, the Southern Cushites moved further southwards through the Kenyan highlands to the plateau of northern Tanzania (Ambrose 1982; Ehret 2003: 168).

Archaeological evidence, oral tradition and historical sources in the highlands of southern Kenya, in the Central Rift valley areas and highland zones of the Mau Escarpment of northern Tanzania provide evidence for a pottery-stone tool using economy based on herding dating to between 3,300-1,300 BP (Ambrose 1982: 113; Smith 1992: 81; Ehret 1998: 10). Ambrose refers to this cluster as the 'Highland Savannah Pastoral Neolithic' (Ambrose 1982: 119). Southern Cushities are believed to be ancestors of the modern Alagwa, Aranamik, Iraqw and Burunge of northern Tanzania. Modern Dahalo speak a Southern Cushitic language adopted from their neighbours, but they originally are not descendants of Southern Cushites (see Blench 2006: 139-162).

Eastern Cushites

Another PN group, the Eastern Cushites, originated from the fringe of the south Ethiopian highlands about 4,000 BP and moved into northeast Uganda, northern and eastern Kenya, south to Mount Kenya arriving at the coast of the Indian Ocean by about 2,300 BP. Modern representatives of the Eastern Cushities are the Yaaku hunters of Mts. Elgon and Kenya (Ambrose 1982: 113), the Arbore herders and cultivators in the Lake Turkana region as well as the Elmolo fishermen of east Turkana. They are believed to have settled in the area about 2,000-3,000 years ago displacing or absorbing the Southern Cushites (Heine, Rottland & Vossen 1979; Ambrose 1982: 113-4). Later Eastern Cushities include the Oromo (historically called Galla) people of eastern and north-eastern Africa. They represent one of largest of the Cushitic-speaking groups inhabiting the Horn of Africa. The Oromo, predominantly of the northern region of Oromia Ethiopia, spread to northern Kenya as far south as the Lamu Islands.

In sum, faunal remains from most known PN sites reveal evidence of domestic stock and some evidence of hunting, suggesting that these stock-keeping people

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practised a mixed pastoral, hunting and fishing economy. According to Ambrose's staple carbon and nitrogen isotope analysis, PN people subsisted on a diet high in animal protein - milk and blood (Ambrose 1986: 722). They produced a few mainly undecorated, distinctive and diagnostic potteries. PN pottery traditions include Nderit and the later phase Maringishu traditions, dating to about 4,860–3,000 BP (Ambrose 1998: 386; Lane, *et al.* 2007: 63), and Narosura and Akira traditions dating to about 3,000 –1,300 BP. These ceramic traditions, apart from Nderit, span the area south of Turkana, some going as far south as the Lake Nakuru Basin (Smith 2005a: 153), reflecting a southward migration. Bower (1991) suggests that a further shift occurred from 1,900–1,300 BP marked by a return to more highly mobile settlement strategies and an increased importance of foraged wild resources, even among groups of previously specialized pastoralists. This later period of the PN, is generally represented by Akira pottery. The presence of Southern Cushitic loan words in almost every language between Lake Victoria and the Indian Ocean suggests a period of prolonged contact with other immigrant groups.

The Pastoral Iron Age: the Nilotes

The production and use of iron among early pastoralist communities in eastern Africa appears to have begun relatively late. A shift to a PIA is indicated in the archaeological excavations at Deloraine Farm. These yielded the remains of cattle and cereals as well as evidence for the manufacture and use of iron implements dating to around 1,100 BP (Bower & Nelson 1978; cf. Collett & Robertshaw 1983: 71). Other archaeological evidence occurs at Enkapune Ya Muto dating to c. 1,295 BP (Ambrose, 1998: 385).

After the Cushites, Central Sudanic-speaking pastoral groups arrived in East Africa between about 2,500 and 2,000 BP (Ambrose 1982: 114). Linguistic evidence indicates that iron-smelting and iron-working trace back to these Central Sudanic-speaking (Nilo-Saharan family) pastoralists in the Horn of Africa before 3,000 BP (Ehret 1998: 15). According to Ehret (2003: 170) Proto-Nilotic-speaking societies appeared between the White and Blue Nile rivers around 5,500

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BP. They expanded and intruded into the land of the Cushites, assimilating and absorbing them into Nilotic societies. Ehret further posits that between 5,500 and 3,500 BP three groups emerged from the ancient Proto-Nilotic community in the southern central area of the Sudan: the Proto-Southern Nilotes, Proto-Eastern Nilotes and Proto-Western Nilotes.

Proto-Southern Nilotes

The history of the Southern Nilotes (Proto-Central Sudanic people) indicates that they originated in the Proto-Nilotic homeland, the southern central area of the Sudan. From here, they moved southwards, enduring a long period of contact with the Eastern Cushites. To the southwest, they had contact with Southern Cushites and westwards they met with the expanding Bantu-speakers. Southern Nilotes moved in different directions, south through eastern Uganda from the Uganda-Sudan border arriving in the western Kenya highlands between about 2,500 BP and 2,000 BP and then they moved further south to south-western Uganda, and as far as the Lake Eyasi area in northern Tanzania (Ambrose 1982: 114). Southern Nilotes are believed to have practised fishing, raised goats and sheep, cultivated sorghum and pearl millet (Ehret 1998). They are believed to be the makers of the Elementeitan tradition dated to about 3,300 and 1,300 BP (Lane *et al.* 2007: 63). Relatively large microlithic blade blanks, finished tools, and a standardized size in geometric microliths characterize the Elmenteitan lithic industry.

Eastern Cushitic loanwords found amongst Southern Nilotes indicate enduring interaction in north-eastern Uganda (Ambrose 1982: 114). Southern Nilotes initiated their youths into age sets; circumcised both males and females; built round houses with conical roofs and used leather for clothing and containers. According to Greenberg's (1963) classification, Southern Nilotic speaking modern representatives are the Datoga pastoralists of Tanzania (Ambrose 1982: 114), probably the makers of Lelesu pottery (Ehret 1998: 189). The other group commonly referred to as Kalenjin comprises the Kipsigis, the Nandi, the Tugen,

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the Marakwet, the Keiyo, the Pokot and the Sabaot, who live on the slopes of Mount Elgon near the Ugandan border.

Eastern Nilotes

It is suggested that the Proto-Eastern Nilotes emerged from the more ancient Proto-Nilotic group and arrived in the area east of the Nile around 3,000 BP or slightly earlier, in the fourth millennium BP (Ehret 1980: 5, 7; Vossen 1982: 470). Loan word evidence indicates that Proto-Eastern Nilotic-speakers remained in the area for more than 1,000 years (Vossen 1982: 470). From about 3,000 to 2,000 BP, having established themselves in the Nile valley, Proto-Eastern Nilotes split into two linguistically discernable divisions: the Proto-Bari and the Proto-Teso-Lutuko-Maa (Vossen 1982: 49, 470-2). The latter group split-up again, forming the Proto-Teso-Turkana and the Proto-Lutuko-Maa societies (*ibid.*). The Bari-speaking people moved west of the River Nile, and today they are found on the modern border of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. The Lotuko-speakers in the central area migrated southeast, settling south of the Imatong, Dongotono and Lutuko Mountains in present-day north-eastern Uganda. East of the Lotuko is a small cluster of Teso-Turkana speakers. The majority of Teso-Turkana speakers are the Jie, Karamojong and Teso in north and central-eastern Uganda, and the Turkana of north-western and western Kenya. Ongamo-Maa speakers are confined to Kenya and Tanzania (Vossen 1982: 21).

Linguistic evidence indicates that speakers of an early form of the Karamojong-Teso language lived in northern Uganda as early as 950 BP (Vossen 1982: 49; after Ehret 1971: 67). Descendents of this population established themselves in the region between Mount Moroto and Mount Elgon on both sides of the modern border between Uganda and Kenya. These groups are probably the Proto-Eastern Nilotes who inhabited north-western Kenya and north-eastern Uganda between about 3,000 to 1,000 BP (Vossen 1982: 474). Proto-Eastern Nilotes were potters who practised a mixed pastoral, hunting and fishing economy (Ambrose 1982: 120).

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Western Nilotes

According to Ehret, linguistic evidence suggests that the Western Nilotes, like their Eastern counterparts, engaged in a series of language divisions and cultural expansions. As early as around 5,500 BP, Proto-Western Nilotes diverged into two: the Proto-Burn and the Proto-Jii groups (Ehret 2003: 172). The Proto-Jii had two major expansions: between 4,500 -3,000 BP and between 1,500 -1,000 BP. In the second expansion, some descendants of the Proto-Jii expanded into the area of the southern Middle Nile Basin displacing and absorbing the Northern Sudanic communities they encountered (Ehret 2003: 173). Their descendants, the Luo, moved further south occupying large areas of northern Uganda where they settled among Eastern Nilotes, and western Kenya were they settled among Bantu-speakers between the late 1400s and 1800s (Ogot 1967: 67; Ehret 2003: 173). The Luo gradually assimilated all the groups they encountered (Ehret 2003: 173). According to Vossen (1982), the Acholi, Shilluk, Dinka, Luo, Nuer, and Langi are Western Nilotes.

Along the Great Rift Valley and adjacent areas, many of the present ethnic groups are a result of PIA economies that emerged and consolidated themselves over time. Pastoral societies therefore existed in East Africa for almost 2,000 years before Bantu-speaking agro-pastoral farmers arrived.

<u>Agro-pastoral farmers: Bantu-speakers</u>

The early 1960s saw researchers pre-occupied with the origins and spread of agriculturalists. Early views, largely derived from linguistic studies, held that early agro-pastoralists spread in a north-south movement. Since the 1970s two views, one supporting a continuous wave of migration (Soper 1971: 29-30), and the other, the 'shot-gun-theory' where a homogenous culture moved rapidly (Huffman 1970), are still debated.

Proto-Bantu

Vansina (1990: 35) suggests that around 5,000 BP, hunter-gatherers near the equatorial forests and southern Cameroon became more sedentary, acquired

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ceramics and began to supplement their hunting and gathering with agriculture and trapping. These Proto-Bantu-speakers encountered other hunter-gatherers as they moved from the Benue valley around the Benue-Cross Rivers, in what is now south-eastern Nigeria and Cameroon. Perhaps triggered by a harsh Sahara environment and pressure from the migration of people out of this arid area, the Proto-Bantu-speakers expanded into the equatorial rain forest region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (Ehret 1982: 58; Vansina 1995: 52). Proto-Bantu-speakers lived mainly along rivers and lakeshores, neither smelted nor used metals, used Neolithic tools, gathered and cultivated, hunted and practised fishing and boating (Ehret 1982; Vansina 1990: 49; Schoenbrun 1994/95: 270). These converted hunter-gatherer-fishers then split into Eastern and Western Bantu-speakers (Vansina 1990: 49). According to Reid (2005: 590), these first Bantu-speaking farmers had no access to either cattle or grain agriculture.

By about 4,000 BP, Western Bantu-speakers occupied the area east of the Cross River in western Cameroon, the Bamileke plateau and the lowlands near the ocean (Vansina 1990: 49). A convergence of linguistic, archaeological and biological information shows major migrations into Central Africa by farmers from south-western Cameroon (Cavalli-Sforza 1986: 361). They made pottery, farmed yams and practised oil palm oil cultivation (Vansina 1990: 49).

Around 3,500 BP Eastern Bantu-speakers advanced eastwards taking on a strong reliance on iron. They also made pottery, planted cereals and yams. Later, around 3,000 BP, in a series of migrations, a more rapid second phase of expansion of Eastern Bantu-speakers began beyond the forests into the southern and eastern savannah lands of Africa. Ehret (1982: 59) disagrees with the view of a Bantu expansion around the fringes of the forest, and with those who suggest a dash through the forest. He argues that if the Proto-Bantu period dates to 5,000 BP, then the Proto-Bantu were forest people and emerged from the forest (Ehret 1982: 62). If the period is in the later fifth millennium BP then the Proto-Bantu could be forest or savannah people due to changes in the climate.

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The largest group of people to migrate to East Africa, Bantu-speakers, combined both iron and stone tool technology to exploit domesticated and wild animals and plants (Bower, Nelson, Waibel & Wandibba 1977; Bower & Nelson 1978; Ambrose 1984; Kirama 1993: 484; Phillipson 1993). Around 2,500 BP, Eastern Bantu-speakers reached the Great Lakes region from where they expanded south to Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia and the Indian Ocean coast (Schoenbrun 1998: 42-43).

During their expansion, the proto-Eastern Bantu-speaking farmers (Ehret's Mashariki Bantu) encountered forest hunter-gatherer groups (Vansina 1990: 56; Schoenbrun 1998: 68) and pastoralists, with whom they exchanged diverse products, food production techniques and iron-producing methods (Schoenbrun 1998: 69-71; Lane 2005: 682). Prior to interaction with farmers, linguistic evidence from the central Rift Valley of Kenya indicates that hunter-gatherers had interacted with herders for close to a millennium. This interaction enabled the development of a wide range of social relations as well as a shift in subsistence from a hunter-gatherer-fisher economy to theft or adoption of stock-keeping, as evidenced at Enkapune Ya Muto rock shelter (Lane 2004: 254). Lane (2004: 255) suggests that evidence for interaction in the archaeological record may also be because of "ethnic shifting". Archaeological evidence shows that LSA sites overlapped with Iron Age sites and that there were long periods of interaction between hunter-gatherers and farmers (Vansina 1990: 56). There is no doubt also that Bantu-speaking farmers drew aspects of culture and belief from earlier peoples (Ehret 1998: 2-3).

Urewe

Before the major movement out of the Lake Victoria Basin, some Eastern Bantu-speaking, iron-using agro-pastoral communities settled at Urewe, along the coastal fringes of Lake Victoria and the highland Western Rift between 2,500 and 1,200 BP (Robertshaw & Collet 1993; Ehret 1998: 185; Posnansky, *et al.* 2005: 82; Reid 2005: 590). These agro-pastoral communities are associated with Urewe ware pottery. Urewe pottery is characterised by bevelled rims, decorated motifs

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and a thumb imprint or 'dimple' base. The earliest EIA dated sites are those associated with the adoption of iron metallurgy, crop production and Urewe ware (Lane 2005: 682; Reid 2005: 590). Traces of Urewe pottery are concentrated on prime agricultural land and pollen sequences demonstrate land clearance (Reid 1994/95) either for cultivation or charcoal for iron smelting. In Uganda the Urewe tradition has been found in the interlacustrine region and the northern Chobi area in the north along the Victoria Nile, to the Lake Victoria Buvuma island (Posnansky 1961: 9; Sassoon 1973; Schoenbrun 1994/95: 270) dating to between 2,400 and 1,750 BP (Schoenbrun 1994/95: 270; Gifford-Gonzalez 1998: 170). The earliest Urewe sites all lie to the west of Lake Victoria, concentrated around Buhaya, in western Tanzania (Soper 1982; Kirama 1993: 485; Lane 2005: 682), the southern shores of Lake Victoria and the Rwanda-Burundi Kivu-Rusizi River region (Lane 2005: 682). In Kenya, Urewe pottery is linked to iron-using groups on the north-eastern side of Lake Victoria (the Yala and Alego). It occurs in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (Nenquin 1959).

Later, another group of eastern Bantu-speaking farmers, the probable makers of Kwale ware (Ehret 1998: 187), moved across central northern Tanzania into the Tanzanian highlands and the eastern edge of the Rift Valley in Central Kenya, all the way to Kwale on the Shimba hills, south west of Mombasa (Lane 2005: 683). By 1,600 BP, the Kwale ware farmers had settled along the slopes of Mount Kenya and moved as far north as Somalia (Ambrose 1982: 115; Ehret 1998: 184). Others moved south, along the Indian Ocean coast, eventually reaching South Africa.

When the Bantu-speaking farmers arrived in Uganda, they found both pastoralists and hunter-gatherers that genetically and linguistically were the scattered remnants of the aboriginal inhabitants (Nzita & Niwampa 1998). In nearly all the areas in which the Bantu-speakers moved they absorbed the vast majority of the preceding populations. Of these preceding populations, the only aboriginal survivors today are the scattered groups of Pygmies found in the central African rain forests, along the Uganda-Congo border, and a few Cushitic and Nilotic-

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speaking peoples between Lake Victoria and the Zanzibar coast. Modern Bantu-speakers are predominantly mixed farmers like the Ganda, Gisu, Kamba, Chagga, Luhya, Kikuyu and Pokomo (Ambrose 1982: 115).

In East Africa, varied environments enabled discrete groups practising different economies to live side by side without overt intensive competition (herders in the open savannah; farmers in the woodlands and bushes; hunter-gatherers in the montane forests and arid bush) (Ambrose 1982: 109). Through the study of vocabularies, previous contact is apparent since loan word strata relate to actual movements of people encountered, often revealing contacts far beyond human memory (Ambrose 1982: 109-111; Nurse 1982: 204). For example, although the languages of farmers have replaced original hunter-gatherer languages, traces of this original language are found in names for forest animals and plants (Cavalli-Sforza 2001: 170). Various groups in modern Uganda continue to practise a hunting and gathering life-style, yet they may not necessarily be among the original inhabitants of Uganda.

The hunter-gatherers of Uganda

During their expansion, the early Bantu-speaking farmers encountered Pygmy groups, whom they apparently called *túá*, (Vansina 1990: 56; Schoenbrun 1998: 68). *Túá* is a term designating "bushpeople" (hunters and gatherers), small hunter-gatherer, autochthon and dwarf, now used to designate 'Pygmy' (Vansina 1990: 56, 279). The origin of the word "Pygmy" by which these hunter-gatherers are described is not derived from a name of any African group of people (Hewlett 1996: 215). The actual etymological origin of 'Pygmy' is the Greek word, *Pugmaioi* or *pugna*, meaning an ancient length measured from the elbow to the wrist, or to the knuckle of the second digit, about 13 inches.

Homer first used the term *Pygmaioi* around 2,800 BP to emphasise short stature, a diminutive human being (Hewlett 1996: 215). In Greek mythology, this was the size of a race of tiny, black-skinned people. In Latin the word assumed the more modern recognizable form, *Pygmae*, and came to be applied as a generic

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reference to various western-African peoples—the BaMbuti, the BaTwa, the BaYaka and the BaGyeli. Blench (1999: 41) suggests that Pygmies are related to the Adamawa-Ubangian/Bantu-speaking people who evolved as a group of hunters and lived by seasonal exploitation of the rain forest. According to Schaldeberg (1999), 'Pygmy' refers to people of low status who were hunter-gatherers and regarded as the aboriginal inhabitants of the land. Today in Africa, 'Pygmy' is commonly used as a term designating the small stature of Pygmy peoples of the equatorial forests and adjoining areas across eastern and central Africa. No word has since emerged to replace the word 'Pygmy' (Hewlett 1996: 215).

A major factor contributing to the notion of early Bushmen peopling of eastern Africa is the persistent image of the Bushmen as **the** African hunter-gatherer and the suggestion that living hunter-gatherer communities are remnants of these archaeological hunter-gatherer populations (Wilson 1970; Schepartz 1988: 58). East African archaeological and palaeoanthropological evidence is often compared with the better-known southern Africa evidence, which held Bushmen as the prototype for prehistoric populations (Schepartz 1988: 58). This is probably because research in East Africa in the past was concerned with attempting to correlate archaeological assemblages with language families (Ambrose 1982; Robertshaw 1990:89).

Debate on the identity of the East African hunter-gatherers has been ongoing for decades: one group arguing for the existence of Bushmen in East Africa and, the other, for Pygmies. Both groups accept variation in hunter-gatherer societies across Africa. Homer, Herodotus, Aristotle, Pliny and Pomponius Mela, according to Aristotle, had mentioned the existence of Pygmies in Greek mythology as 'a race of little men'. Apart from Homer and Pliny, the rest of the authors referred to the Pygmies as living in Africa, north of the equator (Daly 1892: 19). In 1870, anthropologist, Dr. George August Schweinfurth (1874) 'discovered' the Aka Pygmies in equatorial Africa and popularised the myth about them (cf. Frankland 2001: 239). Confirmation of the existence of Pygmy

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people was strengthened by Colin Turnbull's evocative work among the Mbuti Pygmies of the Ituri rain forest.

According to Cavalli-Sforza (1986), African Pygmies were seen to comprise of a diverse category of people historically understood to be the largest autochthonous group of hunter-gatherers in the tropical rain forest (Cavalli-Sforza 1986: 422). People similar to modern day Pygmies seem to have been hunting, fishing and gathering in the expanded rain forest areas of central Africa between 9,000 BP and 5,000 BP, prior to the advent of any form of agriculture (Bailey, Head, Jenike, Owen, Rechtman & Zechenter 1989: 67).

Welsh journalist and explorer, Henry Morton Stanley, on his way to Lake Mwitanzige through the Ituri forest, encountered 'undersized nomads, dwarfs, Pygmies who live in unclear virgin forest and support themselves on game' (Stanley 1890: 218, 225, 362-65). For Stanley, there were 'two species of Pygmies,': one, the Batwa with longish heads, long narrow faces, reddish skin; and the other, the utterly dissimilar Bambuti with round faces, gazelle-like eyes, open foreheads, of undisguised frankness, and skin of a rich, yellow, ivory complexion (Stanley 1890: 362-5). When Stanley encountered an Mbuti man and his wife, he remarked that:

> [T]he pair was undoubtedly man and woman. In him was a mimicked dignity, as of Adam; in her the womanliness of a miniature Eve (Stanley 1890: 44).

The earliest reference to Pygmies in Uganda was by British botanist, explorer and colonial administrator, Sir Harry Johnston (Johnston 1902: 473, 479-80). Yet, Raper and Ladkin (1951) argued that Pygmy people do not exist in Uganda, and that the 1950s tradition among the Baganda of a Pygmy tribe called the Banakalanga is circumstantial and highly exaggerated. According to Raper and Ladkin, the Banakalanga were sufferers of cachectic infantilism (Raper & Ladkin 1951: 157). However, geneticist Cavalli-Sforza points out that Pygmy people do

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exist and that their conservative body parts and small stature are probably genetically determined (Cavalli-Sforza 1986: 395-402).

Ruth Fisher's account from the early 1900s, describes the people in Uganda as "barbarous races, abject savages, including Pygmies and cannibals, naked folk with painted faces and limbs" (Fisher 1970: 2-6). According to Fisher, specific traits of Pygmy types were markedly found among populations near Lake Stephanie in Ethiopia, and in Uganda, on the north and western slopes of Mount Elgon, Mbale and Kyagwe forest, Mukono.

These primary accounts echo early anthropologists' fascination with Pygmies as being primitive, backward and isolated beings (see Johnston 1920), often described using non-human images (Grinker 1994: 105) such as 'gazelle-like eyes' (Stanley 1890: 362-365). By the beginning of the 1960s, notions of Pygmies as being uncivilised, sequestered beings who lived beyond the reaches of foreign powers were extremely popular around the world (Headland & Reid 1989: 43). Modern Pygmy communities were portrayed as windows to the Stone Age, living fossils of a primitive past (Dentan 1988). In his communication to the Royal Anthropological Institute, Turnbull argued that the Mbuti should be considered as living in an idyllic environment, in political, social, economic **isolation** from the rest of Africa:

> surrounded by strong cultural influences … the Bambuti preserve a way of life and thought that is essentially their own (Turnbull 1955: 23; 1959: 45).

This isolation model became heavily criticised and, by the late 1980s and early 1990s. Debate questioned whether humans are capable of living exclusively by foraging wild plants of the rain forest, as the Pygmies are portrayed, or whether some form of symbiosis with farmers was necessary for Pygmy adaptation (Bailey, *et al.* 1989; Bahuchet, McKey & de Garine 1991). Thomas Headland and Lawrence Reid (1989) argued that hunter-gatherers were **never** independent or isolated, but rather, had **always** interacted with farmers through trade and exchange. The simple food production observed among Pygmies today is neither

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recent nor anomalous but represents an economy practised by most Pygmy groups in a relatively symbiotic, interdependent relationship for at least several hundred years (Headland & Reid 1989: 59-60) or more (Bahuchet & Guillaume 1982; Hart & Hart 1986; Terashima 1998: 123). For Headland and Reid, Pygmies lived in interdependence with, rather than independent of, surrounding societies and they continue to exist not **in spite of** but **because of** their contacts with the outside world (Headland & Reid 1989:59-60).This later position has strong nuances in common with that argued earlier by Schebesta (1933: 214-5) and Turnbull (1961; 1965c; 1997).

Ethnographic, archaeological, linguistic, genetic evidence, oral history and historic accounts indicate that mutually beneficial rather than exploitative, hunter-farmer symbiotic relations have been in existence for a long time (see Turnbull 1997: 224-6; 1986: 104). Current understandings now show that the wild foods necessary for survival can be found in the tropical rain forests, but that the Pygmies choose also to eat farm produce (Sato 2001: 132; Lewis 2002: 33; Mercader 2002: 123). The universality of relationships over all Pygmy groups and the influences this has had on some farmer groups indicates long-term Pygmy-farmer relations (Cavalli-Sforza 1986: 362).

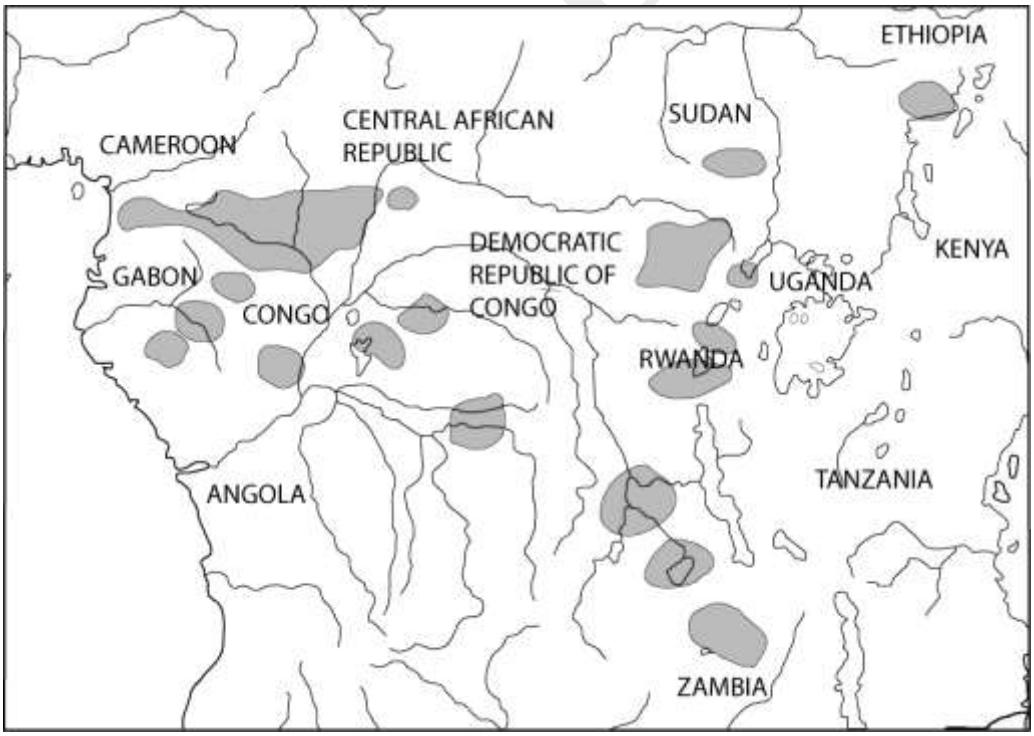
In summary, after several years of debate on Pygmies, old racist derogatory perceptions of them persist amongst a small percentage of all groups – farmers, researchers and government representatives. These perceptions probably emerge from a hesitation to admit any association or identification with people who were, and still are, despised. Lewis (2002) has argued that the continued notion of Pygmy culture and nomadic existence, as being in the process of degenerating under pressure from external influences, encourages the use of the term 'Pygmy' as a form of ethnic identity of Pygmies (Lewis 2002: 47).

The term 'Pygmy' is widely used by non-Pygmy people to refer to them (often in a derogatory way), but only rarely by Pygmies themselves. For example, most ordinary Batwa of the Great Lakes region do not like the term because they only

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hear it in the context of verbal abuse from neighbours, although Batwa political activists tend to approve of and use the term since it allows for collective debate and identity. There are many Pygmy groups in Africa, but those closest to Uganda are the Twa of Lake Kivu and Lake Tanganyika (Fig. 3), the Mbuti Aka, Sua and Efe of the Ituri Forest of eastern Congo (Turnbull 1965b: 159), some of whom remain in Uganda today (Fig. 4).

The question of the identity of the hunter-gatherers of East Africa has persisted amongst researchers due to reluctance in accepting that an authentic group of people, other than Bushmen, hunted, fished, gathered and traversed various parts of Africa north of the Zambezi. The anthropological evidence makes it likely that, regardless of various notions of them, the hunter-gatherers of Uganda were most likely Pygmy people.



(Image: After Cavalli Sforza 1986:24)

Figure 3: Distribution of Pygmy groups of Africa

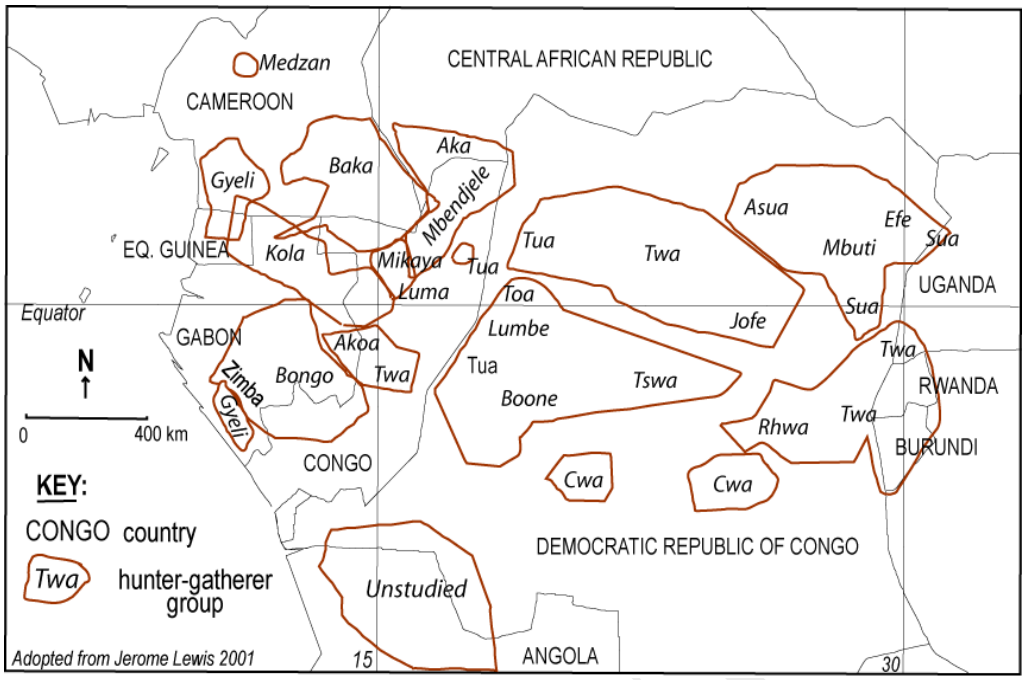


Figure 4: Distribution of Pygmy groups of Central Africa

Other Supporting Evidence

Archaeology

More archaeological evidence, genetic studies and oral tradition support the argument that the hunter-gatherers of Uganda were Pygmies. Researchers once suggested that LSA assemblages known as Wilton, spread from southern Africa to as far as East Africa, and by implication, Bushman populations lived as far north as East Africa. However, Deacon (1984) and later Wadley (2000; 2001b) cite a discontinuity in lithic industries between southern and central Africa, arguing that the Wilton Industry does not extend north of the Zambezi. Clark (1970) suggested an alternative forest-based technological complex throughout central Africa as far as the Congo Basin, which he called the Nachikufan Industries, arguing that people living in moist forests must have differed markedly in their way of life from those in the savannah (Clark 1970: 175). A scarcity of preserved bone makes it difficult to obtain an accurate record of the

basic economy of forest people, though knowledge of the present may provide a basis. Clark contended that heavy scrapers (such as those in the LSA assemblages of East Africa) suggest an extensive use of wood such as for making bark cloth (*ibid.*: 178).

In East Africa, indigenous populations from the later MSA through to the LSA are assumed to have been mainly Bushmanoid because of an assumed rough correlation between Bushmanoid people and makers of LSA lithics. Despite the tradition of burial rituals, completely well preserved skeletons of the LSA period are rare and, when found, are often fragmentary (Gramly & Rightmire 1973: 85; Phillipson 1993). Skeletal remains described as Proto-Bushmanoid with Negroid affinities and associated with LSA have been found in Eastern Rift Valley lakes and at Ishango, on the north-western shore of Lake Edward (Cole 1964: 247; Phillipson 1993: 115).

Whereas some sources suggest these features represent populations ancestral to present day Nilotes, others emphasise features seen in Bushmen, leading them to interpret the harpoon fishers of Lake Mwitanzige as akin to a common ancestor of several more recent populations (Rightmire 1975: 115; Phillipson 1993). Excavations on Kansyore island, in the Kagera river, revealed typical LSA artefacts, large cores and a 'heavily used lump of red ochre', numerous freshwater oyster shells and an exceptionally small skeleton without a skull (Chapman 1967: 169). However, one cannot say that this skeleton is 'San' due to its small stature; it could just as easily be described as 'Pygmy'.

Genetics

Genetic studies now indicate that the African population is highly diverse, despite a perceived physical uniformity (in skin colour). Sub-Saharan physical types vary from one extreme (the Masai and Samburu known for their tall stature) to another (Pygmy people who are among the world's shortest adults). Given the levels of interaction and admixture between pastoralists, farmers and hunter-gatherers, it is difficult to determine a hunter-gatherer status based on physical uniformity. In

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parts of East Africa, Lane, Ashley & Oteyo (2006: 135) suggest that the recent ceramic making hunter-gatherer communities of the northern Nyanza district of Kenya slowly and intermittently appropriated and adapted the trappings of a farming lifestyle. Although genetic data is largely restricted to living populations, it can tell us something about human history (Cavalli-Sforza 2001:33). The previously widely held assumption that in prehistoric times eastern and sub-Saharan Africa original population comprised a physical type allied to the San (Clark 1950a: 42; Murdock 1959: 44) has been disproved. Now, genetic evidence clearly shows that the San and the Pygmies are different (Knight, Underhill, Mortensen, Shivotovsky, Lin, Henn, Louis, Ruhlen & Mountain 2003: 2). Another group of people believed to share linguistic similarities with the San of southern Africa are the Hadza and Sandawe of Tanzania.

The Hadza (also known by the derogatory terms, of Hadzabe, Hadzapi, Hatsa, Tindiga, Watindiga, Kindiga, Kangeju, Western Hadza: Wahi) are a minority group of hunter-gatherers of the eastern rift valley of northern Tanzania. The Sandawe of the Tanzania central highlands, speak languages employing click consonants and are widely regarded as a relict population of former hunter-gatherers. Modern Sandawe spend time in the forest collecting honey, wild food and hunting small animals. Regardless of the contact the Hadza and Sandawe have had with non-foraging communities for over a century, they retain the trappings of a hunter-gatherer way of life.

Although the Hadza and Sandawe are believed to share linguistic similarities with the San of southern Africa, there is no evidence at present for a linguistic, cultural or physical tie supporting theories of early San or Caucasoid populations in East Africa (Woodburn 1970: 11; Schepartz 1988: 63). Woodburn suggests that the link between the Hadza and Sandawe is no closer and no more certain than that between the Bushmen and the Hadza (Woodburn 1970: 271). Although Bleek (1931: 281), Murdock (1959: 60), Schepartz (1988: 63), Ten Raa (1969), Woodburn (1962: 271) and Masao (1976: 59) show that the Hadza and Sandawe are linguistically close, speaking with consonants pronounced using a velaric

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ingressive air stream, there is no evidence clearly linking Hadza and Sandawe languages to Khoisan (Blench 2006: 93). Blench's position is strengthened by modern genetic research (Knight, *et al.* 2003; Salas, *et al.* 2002) that now shows 100,000 years of separate development between the click-speaking San and the Hadza (which also holds true for the Sandawe).

According to Knight *et al.* (2003), the Hadza Y-chromosome haplogroup B2b and mtDNA haplogroup L2a1 indicate that the Hadza are genetically different from the San but closer to typical Pygmy groups like the Mbuti, although the Hadza and Mbuti are reduced in diversity in comparison to neighbouring groups. The original Hadza population was influenced by genetic admixture from Bantu populations. However, Hadza are genetically more distant from Bantu populations than they are from the Sandawe. The Sandawe, on the other hand, have an exceptionally small genetic distance from Central-Western Bantu speakers. The genetic distance between the Hadza and Sandawe is of the same magnitude as that between these groups and all other sub-Saharan populations (Cavalli-Sforza, Menozzi & Piazza 1994: 177). Therefore, the Hadza are quite distinct from the Sandawe, and both are equally distinct from their neighbouring Bantu-speakers.

Studies of the African Y chromosome and mtDNA divergence show that the Hadza and the San are separated by genetic distance as great as or greater than any other pair of African populations (Knight, *et al.* 2003; Salas, *et al.* 2002). The genetic divergence suggests that alternatively, before Homo sapiens sapiens developed the capacity to produce sound, communication may have been by clicks produced by the teeth and the movement of the tongue. This suggests that clicks trace back to an early common ancestral language rather than a recent cultural trait (Knight, *et al.* 2003: 1, 8). Sandawe language is tentatively thought to be related to the Kwadi-Khoe family although there are insufficient known correlations for regular sound correspondences to be established (Blench 2006: 165, 171).

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Genetically, Pygmy groups are extremely divergent from all other African populations (Jayakar & Cavalli-Sforza 1986: 330). Although African mtDNA studies indicate a 70,000 year deep common ancestry between ancestors of farming populations and Pygmies, a 30,000 year period of isolation accounts for phenotypic differences between them (Quintana-Murci, Quach, Harmant, Luca, Massonnet, Patin, Sica, Mouguiama-Daouda, Comas, Tzur, Balanovsky, Kidd, Kidd, van der Veen, Hombert, Gessain, Verdu, Froment, Bahuchet, Heyer, Dausset, Salas & Beharf 2008: 1596). From about 40,000 to a few thousand years ago, an asymmetrical maternal gene flow from Pygmies to ancestors of the farming populations began and continued with the Bantu expansion. Bahuchet (1992; 1993) argues that the reduction in the rain-forest at the end of the Pleistocene isolated Pygmy groups in relict forest. These groups diffused outwards when the forest began to expand again, eventually encountering the incoming Bantu farming populations.

Conclusively, there are four main genetic groups of hunter-gatherers in sub-Saharan Africa –Pygmies, San, Hadza and Sandawe. The San have no genetic links to any of these groups, while the Mbuti Pygmies, believed to be the most pure, are genetically closer to the Hadza. The Hadza and Sandawe on the other hand are not genetically distinct from other African populations. In modern Uganda, there are no descendants of the Hadza or Sandawe, whereas there are pockets of Pygmy descendent populations. It is therefore highly probable that Pygmy-like hunter-gatherers were present in Uganda.

<u>Oral Tradition</u>

Hunter-gatherer groups, described as exhibiting the trait, 'pale-yellow skin', are believed to have inhabited Uganda and other parts of East Africa. Among the Alur of Uganda for example, Aidan William Southall (1953) recorded oral traditions remembering the Pygmies as being of a "dwarf stature, yet of great ferocity and cunning, and as skilful hunters, especially of elephants. Alur called them *Jupunenakane* 'The People of Where-did-you-see-me' because when you met a pygmy, he always asked where he had been seen coming" (Southall 1953:

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23). According to Southall, if you said, you had only just seen him he would attack you at once for mocking his stature, so you pointed to a distant hill and affirmed you had seen him over there (*ibid.*).

A similar oral tradition is told among the Makua of southern Tanzania (Conan-Davies 1944) and the Nyakusa of south-western Tanzania, who refer to Pygmy people as *Bansimpiningili* "where did you see me?"(Colson 1965: 567), in Zambia among the Lunda-Luba speakers and the Gwembe Tonga people who refer to Pygmies as the *Banasimpiningili or Mwandibonene* (Clark 1950a: 48; Colson 1965: 567), as well as among the Chêwa of central-southern Malawi where Pygmies are referred to as *amwandionerapati* 'where did you see me?'(Morris 2000: 209). The Gwembe Tonga make a distinction between Pygmies and Bushmen, referring to Bushmen as the *Makwengo* (Colson 1965: 568). This mixed, coherent oral tradition over a large area in East and Central Africa confirms that Clark's Nachikufan people were present in Uganda and the broader landscape.

In sum, this evidence has thrown up three key points. First, the discontinuity in the Wilton industries between southern and central Africa, suggests that different groups of hunter-gatherers existed north and south of the Zambezi. Second, the Bushmen of southern Africa are genetically different from the Pygmies, and there is a strong genetic divergence between Bushmen, the Hadza and Sandawe. Third, a consistent thread of oral traditions relating to Pygmies within the east and central Africa forest zone weaves the archaeological and genetic evidence neatly together. In light of this evidence, I conclude that the diverse Pygmy groups of the Congo were once spread across East and Central Africa and were most probably the aboriginal inhabitants of this landscape. In Uganda, modern Batwa are descendants of these ancient aboriginal groups.

Modern Uganda has a population of about 31 million people (Uganda Bureau of Statistics July 2008 estimates), comprising several ethnic groupings with a perceived strong sense of culture and heritage. Ethnic conflicts and wars were,

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and still are fought to defend land and in the process emphasise differences between ethnic groups. The perceived sense of cultural uniformity is threatened by current ethnic conflicts that persist in various parts of Uganda. Some of these conflicts are rooted in traditions with prehistoric roots.

By 1,000 BP the population of Uganda had undergone tremendous admixtures both socially and culturally because of interactions, for example intermarriages and migrations of Southern and Eastern Cushites, Bantu, Southern, Western and Eastern Nilotic-speakers that profoundly changed people's values and traditions in East Africa (Ambrose 1982; Schepartz 1988). In retrospect, from 100,000 BP until about 8,000 BP, there was a steady shift away from broad cultural uniformity as seen in the archaeological record, to regional traditions. There is a southern savannah zone, a central African forest zone and an east African savannah zone. Uganda is closely linked to the central African forest zone. Pygmy people were most probably the descendants of the makers of the microlithic traditions from 10,000 to 1,000 BP, and must have been the makers of the geometric rock art within this zone. The cultural sequence for Uganda is now well understood and relatively well dated. The only question now is how the rock art links to this sequence, and I will answer this question in chapters 2, 3 and 6.

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Chapter Two
THE ROCK ART OF UGANDA
Fieldwork, Traditions, Distribution

In the contextual approach I have chosen, I consider the rock art of Uganda in the context of the archaeological record itself and try to place the rock art in its social and cognitive setting. Towards this end, in this chapter I provide an overview of rock art traditions in Africa, more specifically in east and central Africa. I then describe the rock art in Uganda and show the site distribution, taking cognisance of the various contexts in which the rock art is found.

Great strides have been made over the last 20 years towards understanding the rock art in southern and central Africa. A 'grey area' exists in East Africa particularly in Uganda where the few studies that exist, published between 1938 and 1974 (Wayland 1938; Lawrance 1953; Posnansky 1961; Morton 1967; Chaplin 1974)[1], are highly descriptive and largely speculative. Since the 1960s, no major research has been conducted in Uganda to extend these studies. To date, Uganda has no research institutions outside the Uganda Museum concerned with rock art research, and aside from the Uganda Journal, there is no academic forum for debate on rock art research or conservation.

Although descriptive and speculative interpretations of rock art were common to almost all rock art research prior to the 1970s, research in East Africa was dogged by the assumption that the rock art of the region should be attributed to

[1] In his 1953 publication, J.C.D. Lawrance is spelt 'Lawrence'. In 1955 and 1958 publications, Lawrance is spelt as 'Lawrance'. Although there is no apology from the editor regarding the error in spelling of the name 'Lawrance' and given the fact that all of his subsequent publications use the spelling Lawrance means that this must be the correct spelling. In this thesis, I have adopted the spelling 'Lawrance' even for the 1953 publication.

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"Bushmen". This assumption led to the use in East Africa of explanations derived from southern Africa (Lawrance 1955a: 10; 1957: 6; Posnansky 1961: 107; Leakey 1983: 15) and I believe this was an erroneous analogy.

Researchers used the assumption that the primary inhabitants of East Africa were 'Bushman-like' to conclude that the hunter-gatherers of sub-Saharan Africa were of a single cultural group and similar everywhere. A few researchers argued that human remains from the Lake Turkana Galana Boi Beds in Kenya represented tall, Late Pleistocene eastern Africans present in the landscape as long ago as 10,000 BP (Rightmire 1984; Schepartz 1988: 67). Despite this, the majority of rock art researchers assumed there would be commonalities between the rock art of East Africa and that of the better-known southern regions of Africa, particularly South Africa. As I have discussed in the previous section, recent genetic studies reveal just how flawed this assumption was: modern East African hunter-gatherers are separated from the southern African Bushmen by a genetic distance far greater than any other pair of African populations (Cavalli Sforza 1986; Knight *et al*. 2003: 1).

Situating Uganda within the rock art traditions of Africa

This study is not the first foray into rock art research in Uganda. The human facility for symbolic communication, realised in such forms as rock art, has intrigued the minds of archaeologists before me. These archaeologists focused first on questions of chronology and typologies, only very rarely tackling the more slippery issues of attribution, interpretation and understanding of rock art. Rock art, like other archaeological remains, occurs in many regions of the world. One way to approach understanding of rock art then, is to consider the regional contexts.

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A Regional Context of the rock art of Uganda

Willcox (1984) divided the hunter-gatherer rock art of Africa into three regions with sub regions namely: the Maghreb and the Sahara with a sub region relating to the horn of Africa, the Central African Art Zone with the central Tanzanian sub-region and the Southern African Art Zone with six sub-regions of southern Africa. The earliest known rock art in the Sahara, tentatively attributed to hunter-gatherers, is dominated by figurative depictions of animal and human forms. Extensive research in this region has generated a compilation of styles and a development of chronologies rather than an attempt to interpret the rock art.

Focusing on central and southern Africa, Smith (1997) expands some of Willcox's categories and identifies four broad regional rock art distinctions that include hunter-gatherer and other traditions, namely:

1. the hunter-gatherer tradition of the Bushmen of southern Africa, termed the 'Southern African "Bushmen" Art Zone';
2. the 'hunter-gatherer' tradition of central Tanzania, termed the 'East African "Sandawe" Art Zone';
3. the hunter-gatherer tradition of Zambia, Malawi, northern Mozambique, eastern Angola, southeast Democratic Republic of Congo, and south and western Tanzania termed the 'Central African "Twa" Art Zone';
4. the rock art traditions of the Bantu-speakers, and areas with geometrics of unknown associations (Smith 1997: 22-26) which include Uganda and the Central African Republic.

Within the category of geometrics in central and southern Africa there are three known rock art traditions: that of the Bantu-speakers, colloquially referred to as 'late-whites' because it often occurs over other rock art traditions; the rock art of herders; and the red geometric tradition linked to Pygmies. The rock art of Bantu-speakers or Iron Age farmer rock art consists mainly of anthropomorphic, zoomorphic imagery, animal forms, and images of people, spread-eagled designs and geometric images. No attempt is made to capture the true likeness of the figurative object and attention to detail is impossible. The pigment is usually a

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rough chalky white paste although red, orange and black monochrome pigment has been recorded (Namono 2004: 24). Herder rock art comprises geometrics depicted in finger-painted red and white monochrome pigment and is attributed to Khoekhoen herders of southern Africa (Smith & Ouzman 2004). In this thesis, I will not focus on herder or farmer rock art in detail.

The majority of geometrics linked to Pygmies are similar to those described for sites in Uganda, in central and north-central Tanzania (Mabulla 2005: 36-7), in the lake Victoria Basin (Chaplin 1974) and Zambia and Malawi (Smith 1995, 1997). I am aware that within the Pygmy geometric rock art tradition, regional variations can and probably do exist. However, congruency in subject matter, pigment and a stylised manner of depiction suggest an association in tradition. Such association has been the subject of past understandings of geometric rock art in east and central Africa.

Past understandings of geometric rock art in East and Central Africa

Drawing on Clark (1950a; 1958) and Chaplin (1959), Willcox (1984) described the 'Central African Art zone' as running "…from Uganda southwards to the Zambezi and from there to Angola, and eastwards into northern Mozambique…" (Willcox 1984: 80). Willcox noted that Chaplin attributed the geometric motifs in this zone to "…the Butwa, a dancing cult whose practices seem to have taken over from a Negroid people preceding the present Bantu-speakers in the region" (*ibid*). Willcox suggested that the Oropom, or an offshoot of theirs, were the most likely makers of some of the rock art in north-eastern Uganda (Willcox 1984: 94).

Among the minority, Clarence van Riet Lowe (1937) argued that, in Zambia, only the animal paintings were made by Bushmen and that all the geometric rock art of the region was not typical of southern African Bushmen paintings. This argument is sustained by Desmond Clark's later archaeological finds at Nachikufu in Zambia (Clark 1950b). The Nachikufan human skeletal material confirms that the inhabitants of rock art areas "are not typically Bush, but belong to more robust types (Clark 1950a: 42). Clark used stone tool evidence to argue for a forest-

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based technological complex throughout central Africa (Clark 1950b; 1970). Using stone tool typological parallels, Clark suggested a possible link between the later hunter-gatherers of Zambia and those of Angola, northern and central Malawi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the equatorial region of the Congo Basin (Clark 1950a: 43-5). He then went on to link this to a rock art tradition.

In the late 1950s, Clark (1958) made initial recognition of a rock art tradition when he described a concentration of rock art sites in south central and east Africa as far as eastern Uganda, the Nyasa and Tete provinces of Mozambique, southern Tanzania, Zambia and Malawi, eastern Katanga province of the Democratic Republic of Congo and eastern Angola as the 'Central African Schematic Art Group', which he later termed the 'Schematic Rock Art Zone' (Clark 1959). The schematic zone was characterised by a predominance of red monochrome geometric grids and circular shaped motifs. Clark postulated that schematic art originated from the equatorial regions of Africa and derived from a working knowledge of a softer medium such as bark cloth. He added that alternatively, it could be that the tradition arose from hunter-gatherer contact with western elements (Clark 1958: 74). Regardless of this problematic statement, Clark had acknowledged the important link between rock art and cultural practice.

Based on archaeological excavations from areas in Malawi and Zambia, Clark argued that the presence of LSA and Iron Age material was evidence of two groups of people living alongside each other. He suggested that hunter-gatherers might have acquired the art of working metal from immigrant, food producing metalworking farmers with whom they came into contact (Clark 1959: 211). Clark further argued that descendents of the hunter-gatherers, 'Batwa' were represented along the northern Zambian border and were living in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Clark 1959: 211; Smith & Blundell in prep.). Therefore, Clark implied a possible identification of the makers of the Schematic Art Group as being Batwa hunter-gatherers.

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Anati (1986), Chaplin (1974), Garlake (1995), Leakey (1983), Posnansky and Nelson (1968), Smith (1997) and Mabulla (2005: 37) subsequently acknowledge that a red geometric tradition is evident from Angola, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of Congo, northern Tanzania, Uganda to western Kenya. Smith (1997) followed Clark and linked the red geometric tradition of this region, to Batwa hunter-gatherers.

Rock art researchers in Malawi and Zambia (e.g. Lindgren & Schoffeleers 1985; Juwayeyi & Phiri 1992) identified new patterns in the paintings, (i.e. white & red schematic, red animal) but this identification has not aided in explaining the meaning of the paintings. Current understanding draws from Smith's doctoral research in Zambia and Malawi, and subsequent analysis of the rock art of Central Africa (Smith 1995, 1997). Smith (1995; 1997; 2001) divides the rock art of south-central Africa into four traditions: white zoomorphic, white spread-eagled, red animal and red geometric. In his analysis, Smith contends that farmer groups made the white spread-eagled and white zoomorphic paintings (Smith 1997: 13). He also argues that the tradition comprising red animals and the other, of red geometric paintings, belong to Batwa hunter-gatherers (Smith 1997: 12-13).

Within the landscape, Smith argues, the Batwa hunter-gatherer tradition is widespread and found in greatest concentration in areas unsuitable for agriculture, and, where oral traditions record a presence of Pygmy groups (Smith 1997:17, 28). On the other hand, Smith notes, farmer rock art is localised. Smith's understandings enhance this study. The formal similarities in the rock art suggest a possible cultural link between the makers of the rock paintings in Zambia and Malawi and those in Uganda. In East Africa, six rock art traditions have now been identified:

1. *Farmer rock art*

In Tanzania, this rock art tradition is associated with the Warangi of Tanzania based on its pattern of distribution and oral traditions. In Kenya, Kajaido district,

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at a place Osaga Odak recorded as Namangatives rock shelter (Odak 1988: 76), there are rock paintings that bear strong similarities with farmer rock art (Fig. 5). I suggest that this rock art may be aligned to the Bantu-speaking farmers of south-central Kenya. In Uganda, evidence of farmer rock art has not yet been documented.



Central Tanzania (Image: RARI 2003) **S**outh-central Kenya (Image: Adopted from Odak 1988)

Figure 5: Examples of Farmer rock art in East Africa

2. *<u>Pastoralist rock art</u>*

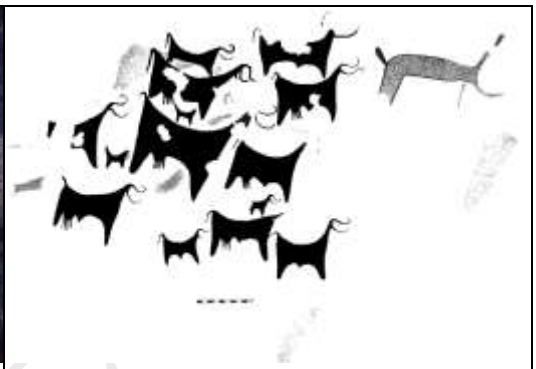
In East Africa, a few pastoralist groups developed rock art traditions that occur at a few sites and are much localized. There are three categories of rock art (Fig. 6) attributed to pastoralists, namely:

- the figurative painted and engraved images of highly stylized depictions of long and short-horned cattle in Ethiopia and Kenya;
- the finger-painted images of stylized cattle around the shores of Lake Victoria in northern Tanzania. These cattle depictions and engraved board games, are tentatively attributed to Nilotic-speaking pastoralists; and

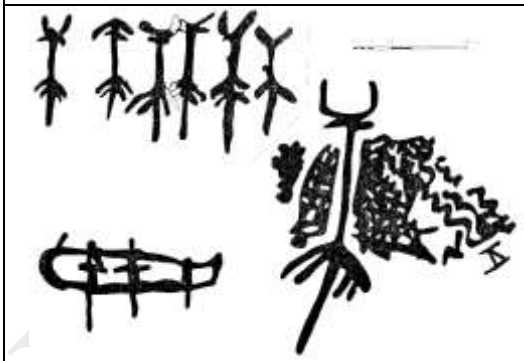
- depictions of cattle brands and shields associated with meat feasting and attributed to Ma'a speaking Samburu, Pokot, Turkana, and Masai of central Kenya and northern Tanzania. This association is made through a demonstrated link between the art and the ceremonial meat-feasting practices of the warriors from these groups. Chamberlain (2006: 156) suggests the rock art may have been painted in the context of initiation.



Figurative depictions of cattle, Kenya (Image: RARI)



Figurative depictions of cattle, Ethiopia (Image: RARI)



Stylised depictions of cattle, L. Victoria (Chaplin 1974:31)



Painted cattle brands & shields, Kenya (Image: RARI)

Figure 6: Examples of Pastoralist rock art in East Africa

Engravings that may be associated with pastoralists have been found in northern, central and western Uganda (e.g. Morton 1967; White & Nkurunziza 1971: 175-80), and northeastern Kenya (Soper 1968), however, none of the present local inhabitants know anything about them. In Kenya, Lynch and

Donahue (1980)suggested an erroneous attribution of 'fresh' paintings of north western Kenya, (Namoratunga) to Eastern Cushitic-speaking pastoralists who entered East Africa around 2,300 BP. Lynch and Donahue's view was based on fragile and faulty data. It was subsequently reappraised by Soper (1982) and dismissed.

3. Hadza and Sandawe hunter-gatherers

The fine-line rock art of central Tanzania in Kondoa and Singida and north-central Tanzania in the Eyasi Basin tentatively attributed to hunter-gatherers believed to be ancestral to the Sandawe of the Irangi hills (Fig. 7). The localised distribution of this rock art closely corresponds to the known distribution of the Sandawe people who appear to have a hunter-gatherer ancestry that extends beyond the arrival of Bantu-speaking farmers to the area. This tradition is composed entirely of animal and human forms. A unique feature is the distinctive human head forms that distinguish it from the rock art of hunter-gatherers of other regions. This tradition is not found in Uganda.

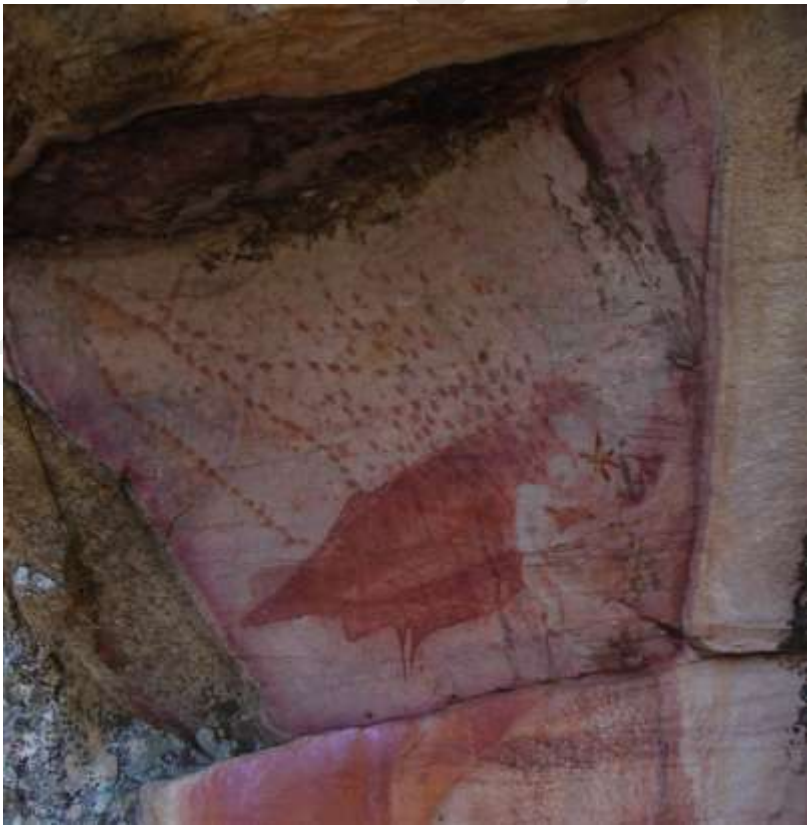


North-central Tanzania (Image: RARI 1999)

Figure 7: An example of Sandawe rock art

4. Pygmy hunter-gatherer rock art

A hunter-gatherer rock art tradition of Uganda, western Kenya, areas in the south, northern and western Tanzania, eastern Angola and southeast Democratic Republic of Congo, is the geometric or schematic rock art attributed to the BaTwa. As I mentioned earlier, Smith (1995, 1997) divided this tradition into two: the red animal tradition that comprises animal depictions in red pigment applied to the rock-face in fine-line brush strokes. Some of the animals are executed in remarkable naturalism but most are depicted with gross distortions in body form making it difficult to discern the species of the animal. Most of these animal depictions are associated with rows of dots that overlie the animal forms (Fig. 8) (Smith 1997:32). This tradition is predominately found painted in Kasama, Zambia although there is also evidence of engravings in the Democratic Republic of Congo.



(Image: Zubieta 2007)

Figure 8: An example of the red animal tradition, Kasama, Zambia

Second, the red geometric tradition comprises images depicted in red pigment usually applied by fingertip, sometimes applied by brush. The most common images are sets of parallel vertical lines, dots and circle variants (Smith 1997:41) (Fig. 9). This geomrtic rock art tradition is at the heart of this thesis.



(Image: Zubieta 2007)

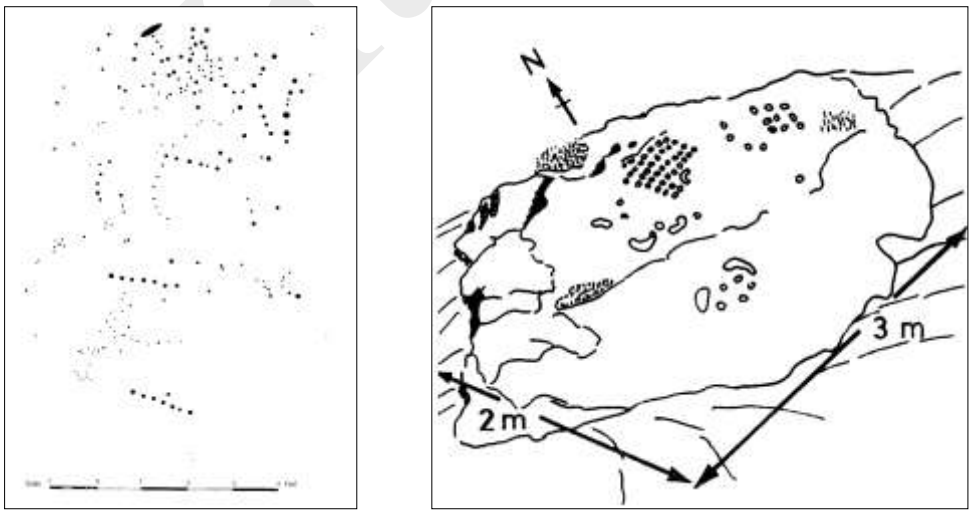
Figure 9: An example of the red geometric tradition, Kasama, Zambia

In light of major population migrations into and out of East Africa, researchers commonly debate the relationships between the archaeological record and the various population groups. The majority of researchers have focused on understanding pottery, stone and iron tools. Very few examined rock art within the same context, or read the rock art together with the archaeological data. In

attempting to understand any rock art, we often begin with description, which is, in effect, a form of interpretation. People describe images differently and often interpret images in multiple ways. Although early descriptive reports on rock art in Uganda may not satisfy modern scholars, they are useful in forming a basis for further rock art research. I describe the rock art of Uganda within the categories: engravings and paintings.

Engravings

In Uganda, rock engravings, sometimes called petroglyphs, are commonly found in the form of small-aligned cupules locally referred to as *omweso* because of the similarities in alignment between cupules and the holes on a traditional board game. These types of engravings are predominately found on top of hills or on large rocky slabs near water sources. Engravings have not been found on vertical rock faces or in rock shelters. At Nsongezi engravings were described as prehistoric inscriptions, small aligned cupules or as a series of engraved hollows in curved and straight lines (Wayland 1938; Pearce & Posnansky 1963; Chaplin 1974: 24). White and Nkurunziza describe six sites with *omweso* boards (White & Nkurunziza 1971: 175) (Fig. 10).



Nsongezi (Image: after Wayland 1938) Namunyonyi hill (Image: after White & Nkurunziza 1971:178)

Figure 10: Examples of cup markings and omweso boards



Kibengo (Image: after Lanning 1960)

Figure 11: Criss-crossed engraved marks

On a granite slab at Kibengo, Lanning (1960: 191) describes criss-crossed rock marks forming surface depressions. Lanning suggests that these depressions appear not to have occurred by chance and it is probable that their significance may be diagnostic of spear heads or blades wrapped in stripes of hide, bark cloth, dried leaves or banana fibre that may have been a sign of peace or a warning (Lanning 1960:191). Archaeological evidence from the occupation sites at Kibengo shows that a pastoral people occupied the area (*ibid.*: 195). It is probable that these pastoral people made the surface depressions (Fig. 11). Chaplin and McFarlane (1967: 207) described aligned grooves that were probably not used for grinding, hollows and small, aligned cupules on Moniko hill (Fig. 12). Andrew Reid recorded similar engravings at Kimera and Namagolola (Reid, pers. comm. 2007) (Fig. 13).

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(Images: Namono 2006)

Figure 12: Engravings on Moniko hill

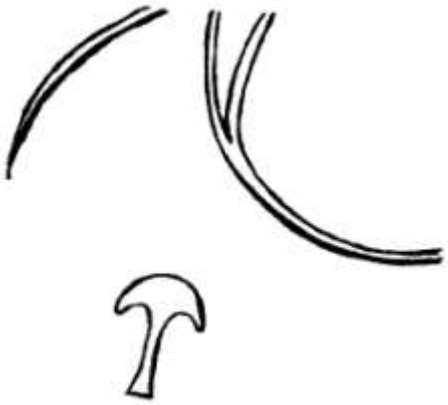




(Images: Reid 2002 & 2001 respectively)

Figure 13: Engravings at Kimera and Namagolola

At Hanfuka (Fig. 14), groove marks were described as weathered outlines of a ‘dozen hoes of pre-European type and two unidentified impressions’ (Lanning 1956; Chaplin & McFarlane 1967: 207; Chaplin 1974: 8). Lolui islands has images on a singular, ovate-shaped boulder, that were described as pecked designs of barred circles comprising an omweso board on top of the high boulder (Jackson, *et al.* 1965: 40) (Fig. 15). Chaplin described the engraving as a ‘rayed’ wheel with round and rectangular gridiron patterns (Chaplin 1974: 17).



(Image: Lanning 1956: 108)

Figure 14: Engravings at Hanfuka



(Image: Posnansky 1961)



(Image after Chaplin 1974)

Figure 15: Engravings in-filled with maize flour for clarity



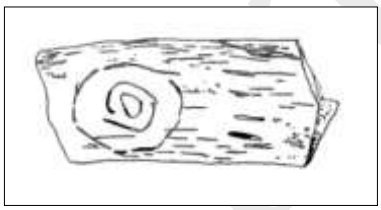
Lolui Islands & Sanzi Peninsula (Images: Namono 2006 & Reid 2002)

Figure 16: Examples of grinding hollows

In Figure 16, the top row shows images of grinding hollows around a rock art site; middle row, images of hollows on top of large boulder and bottom row, grinding hollows at the edge of the shore and surrounding areas of Lolui.
On Lolui, oval to square grinding hollows have been found in very large numbers, sometimes up to 100 or more per outcrop, and sometimes very high up on boulders (Posnansky, *et al.* 2005: 94-95). Similar engravings are found around

some rock art sites, high on top of boulders and at several boat landing sites around the shores of Lake Victoria.

A bone with incisions of three concentric circles and four parallel vertical incisions, as well as two large orange-red pieces of prepared ochre recovered from excavations at Nyero 2 in 1945, are the first and only evidence to date of art mobilier in Uganda (Posnansky1961: 110; Posnansky & Nelson 1968: 156) (Fig. 17). Whether the bone and ochre were used and therefore found in a rain-control context or as accumulated deposit is not very clear. The absence of context in this case makes it difficult to draw associations between the bone in Nyero, the parietal rock painting at the same site, and the loose block with a concentric circle at Loteteleit (Fig. 18).



(Image: after Posnansky 1961:108)

Figure 17: Engraved bone from Nyero

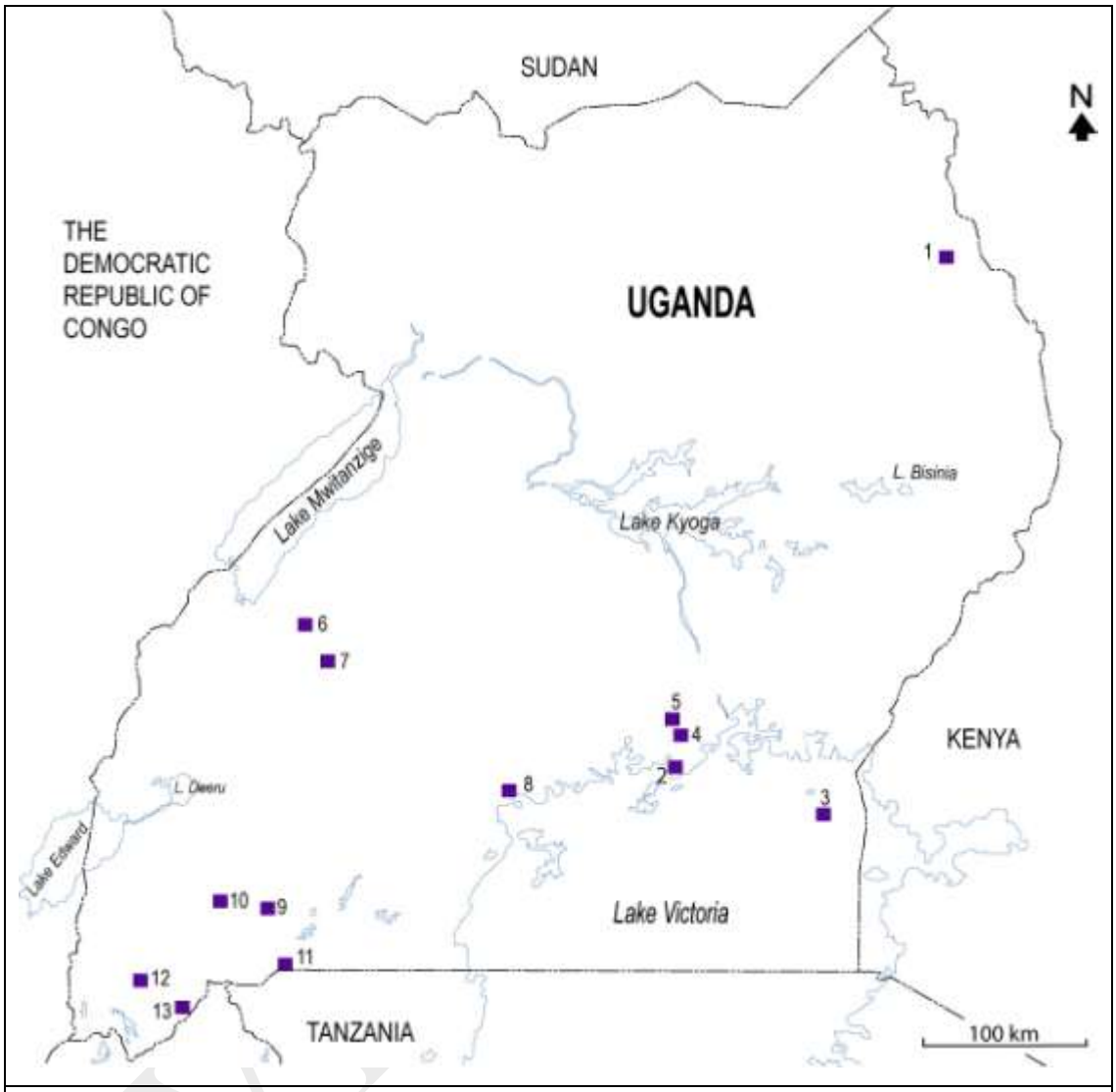


It is evident that parts of the engraved outer circle were lost in the process of removing the rock from the site

(Image: Morton 1967: 209)

Figure 18: Engraving from Loteteleit now housed in the Uganda Museum

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KEY:

1	Loteteleit	**6**	Kibengo	**11**	Nsongezi
2	Sanzi	**7**	Hanfuka, Kisonde	**12**	Nyarushanje
3	Lolui Islands	**8**	Kaina	**13**	Kyobwe, Kyanzeire
4	Namaligga-Nsenga	**9**	Nyamunyonyi		
5	Moniko	**10**	Ngoma		

Figure 19: Distribution of documented engraved sites

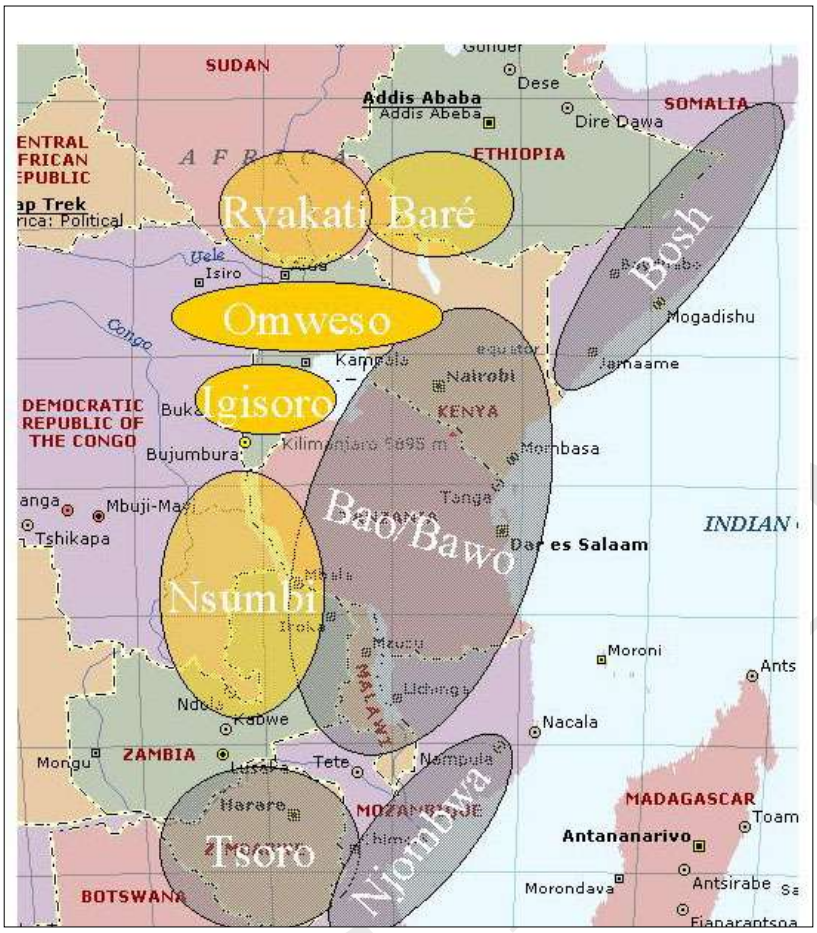
It is now clear that these are three image classes of engravings (Fig. 19), namely, *omweso* boards, engravings associated with grinding technology and geometric imagery.

1. *Omweso boards:*

The first published reference to rock art in Uganda was in 1938 by Wayland, who described hieroglyphic 'inscriptions' as an interpretable assemblage of small aligned cup-holes suggestive of a miniature *omweso* board (Wayland 1938: 252). *Mweso* or *bao,* or some variation of these two names is the version of *mankala* played in East Africa. *Omweso,* sometimes shortened to *mweso,* is a board *mancala* introduced to Africa with the Indian Ocean trade. *Mancala* is of great antiquity in the Middle East and Egypt. The board game has evolved, with variants. According to Zaslavsky, (1973: 118) the two-row board (two by seven rows, two by six rows, two by eight rows with two cavities at the end) is used almost universally north of the equator, while south of the equator, the four-row version is generally preferred (Fig. 20).

In Uganda, the four by eight boards are the most commonly used. Originally, small-aligned grooves or cupules or a series of engraved hollows in curved and straight lines, pecked designs of barred circles, incised lines, and oval to square grinding hollows were etched into a rock slab. At Namaligga-Nsenga village in Mukono district, the locals believe that ancient people made the numerous *omweso* boards on top of the hills. The name of the village, 'Namaligga' means 'place of many sheep' and the oral traditions speak of pastoralists, keepers of large flock of sheep in the area. Engraved *omweso* boards are predominant in central and southern Uganda.

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(Image: Wernham 2002: 6)

Figure 20: Geographical relationship of omweso to mancala variants in eastern and south-central Africa

2. *Grinding technology*

Engravings associated with grinding technology are commonly found on Lolui Island and near Sanzi on the Bukunja peninsula (Reid 2004, cited in Posnansky *et al.* 2005: 95) and areas in and around Lake Victoria. Posnansky, Reid and Ashley (2005: 95) suggest that grinding hollows are a less common feature in East Africa than in western Africa dating from the 'Neolithic' period to the present (*ibid.*). Posnansky, Reid and Ashley also suggest that these shapes were made in the act of grinding millet or cereals, and before grinding commenced, the surface was demarcated and pecked to guide the grinder. Oral traditions indicate that the grinding hollows are associated with recent migrant groups (*ibid.*).

3. Geometric tradition

Compared to the above categories, engravings within the geometric tradition occur in and around Lake Victoria and northeastern Uganda. Such engravings comprise concentric circles, grids, concentric circles with internal radiating spokes, lines and dots.

It is possible that there are other engraving sites in Uganda with another, as yet unidentified category of imagery. In Uganda, fewer engravings than paintings have been documented. This disparity may reflect a research bias towards paintings rather than engravings.

Paintings

Fifteen years after Wayland's publication on engravings, a series of publications by Lawrance (1953, 1958) described rock paintings in eastern Uganda as generally geometric. Archaeological evidence from north-eastern Uganda indicates a long period of occupation by hunter-gatherers and the probability that the cave dwellers were the makers of the rock paintings (Lawrance 1953: 12). Present day north-eastern inhabitants have no knowledge of the origins of the paintings. Tales abound of 'Europeans' with 'tails', small, light, pale-skinned frightened men, who skulked and were seldom seen. Oral traditions attest that these light-skinned men of short stature, a strange, dwarf race lived amongst the rocky inselbergs in Achuloi, Asuret and Nyero 200 or 300 years ago before the arrival of the present inhabitants (Cole 1964; Lawrance 1953: 12-13; 1955b: 90; 1957; 1958; Posnansky 1961; Posnansky & Nelson 1968). Drawing on Clark (1950b), Lawrance linked the makers of the 'carelessly finger-painted white geometric designs of concentric circles' to people belonging to the Nachikufan Culture who inhabited eastern Uganda 150 to 300 years before the present inhabitants (Lawrance 1953, 1958). The hunter-gatherers of the Nachikufan Culture were, Clark confidently argued, the makers of the red animal and red geometrics, particularly since the LSA tool distribution matched the regional distribution of geometric rock art.

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In Uganda, the Nyero rock paintings, Patiko Fort, the archaeological sites of Munsa, Mubende Hill, Bigo, and Ntusi, as well as Bweyorere traditional palace are the only sites out of almost 200 known archaeological and historic sites in Uganda gazetted for protection. Perhaps due to their visual appeal, the rock paintings at Nyero are the best known of these sites and the most described rock painting sites in Uganda. Previously, three sites at Nyero hill were recorded and named Nyero 1, 2 and 3. Nyero 2, popularly referred to as the 'main site' is regarded by locals as a 'shrine' (Lawrance 1953; Posnansky & Nelson 1968: 148; Chaplin 1974: 34). It was first documented in the Teso Report of 1913 (Chaplin 1974: 27), mentioned in a 1945 report by C.A.E. Harwich and Pearson (Pearson 1945; Chaplin 1974: 27) and also described in detail by Lawrance (1953: 10-11).

The panel at Nyero 2 consists of images such as vertical divided sausage shapes, so called 'canoes', unidentified faint markings, many concentric circle shapes, 'U' shapes, lines and dots, with evidence of superimposition (Harwich 1961: 132; Lawrance 1953: 10-11; Posnansky & Nelson 1968: 151; Sassoon 1973: 8; Chaplin 1974: 28). Lawrance suggests rather unconvincingly that some linear images represent humans (Lawrance 1953: 10-11). Harwich added to this unconvincing suggestion by identifying hands and fingers (Harwich 1961: 132). Harwich (1961) obviously interpreted some images as 'a very stylistic impression of a man dragging an animal or possibly another man by the neck' (Harwich 1961: 132; Chaplin 1974: 28). However, Posnansky and Nelson could find no justification for this idea (Posnansky & Nelson 1968: 154), and, neither was this idea apparent to Lawrance (Lawrance 1953: 10). Lawrance noted that all the images are finger-painted in various shades of thick red pigment, they are in outline, except for one of the concentric circles which has one of the rings filled in (Lawrance 1953: 11). He does not mention the colour of the in-fill, but it is white (Fig. 21).

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(Image: RARI 2003)

Figure 21: Nyero 2 rock paintings



(Redrawn by Namono 2006)

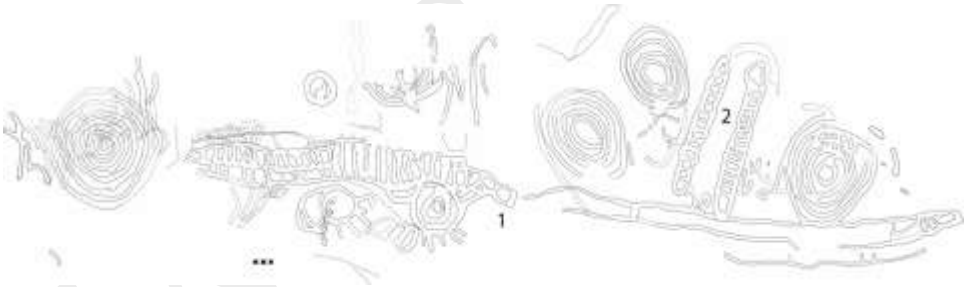


(Image: RARI 2003)

Figure 22: Examples of canoe shapes at Nyero 2

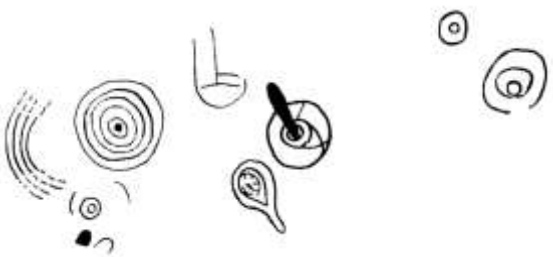
For Posnansky, Nelson and Chaplin, a unique feature of the paintings was the depiction of the so called ‘canoes’ or parts of ‘canoes’, some angular, others more rounded, with stylised representations of people and goods (Posnansky & Nelson 1968: 151, 154; Chaplin 1974: 28)(Fig. 22). Sassoon (1973: 8) erroneously described some extremely faded red lines as a frieze of zebra, painted in naturalistic and detailed style. Posnansky also made a similar error by suggesting that there were some very faint naturalistic paintings of zebra (Chaplin 1974: 27).

The panel at Nyero 2 was traced by Posnansky in 1962. In 1968, Posnansky and Nelson reported that all of the images were depicted in various shades of red. According to Chaplin there were traces of “uncopyable” white pigment that were clearly superimposed on the red images, and that bore “close similarity to the white drawings of Nyero 1”, in the lower left hand corner of the panel of Nyero 2 (Posnansky & Nelson 1968: 151; Chaplin1974: 28). At Nyero 1, the images are all white and comprise concentric circles with a central image of a so-called ‘floral motif’ and an ‘acacia pod’ shape (Lawrance 1953: 151; Chaplin 1974: 27) (Fig. 23).



(Redrawn by Namono 2006) Shape 1 = ‘floral’ motif’; 2 = ‘acacia pod’

Figure 23: Nyero 1



(Image: after Lawrance 1953: 11, Fig. 9)

Figure 24: Ngora 1

The paintings, described as badly executed in slapdash workmanship, show several episodes of painting and superimposition (Posnansky & Nelson 1968: 148; Chaplin 1974: 27). At Ngora 1 the paintings are geometric and executed in faded red pigment similar to paintings at Nyero 2, but with some shapes not found at Nyero 1 and 2 (Lawrance 1953: 10; Chaplin 1974: 24) (Fig. 24).

In Asuret county at Obwin hill, is a claret finger-painted image comprising six concentric circles with an exterior adorned with small, evenly spaced outline rectangles and a base similar to two hockey sticks (Fig. 25). The method and manner of depiction of this image is similar to those at the Nyero and Ngora sites (Lawrance 1955: 90; Chaplin 1974: 28). At present, the paintings at Obwin are threatened by quarrying, but the painted image does not appear to have changed since Lawrance (1955) and Chaplin (1974) recorded it.



(Photo and redrawing: Namono 2006)

Figure 25: Obwin 1

Another site in Asuret was recorded by Lawrance as Tira (Lawrance 1958: 39), as Onyeri by Compton (1958: 89), Onyere by Chaplin (Chaplin 1974: 28), but which I was told is known as Olupemoru, and consists of red finger-painted, very faded geometric images, linear and dotted concentric circles. (The local community know the rock art site by these various names). Lawrance suggested

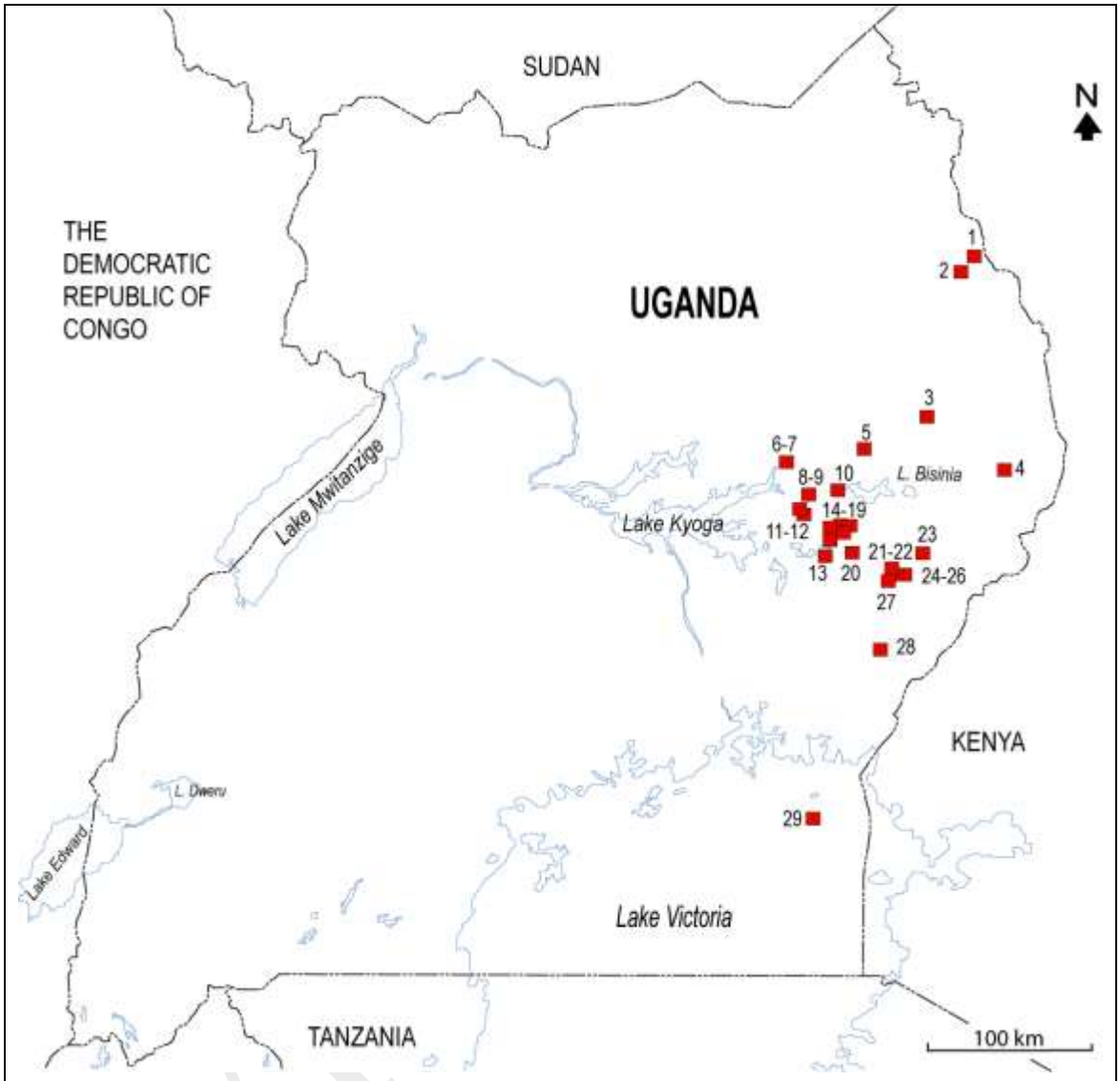
that these images appear jumbled, probably due to superpositioning (Lawrance 1958: 39). For consistency, I retain the name Onyere.

On a monolith on a hill in Kakoro sub-county, there are rock paintings of an unusual geometric shape and concentric circles similar to those at Nyero, Ngora and Obwin. Chaplin described these faded claret ochre images as interlinked lines, concentric circles and a 'hide' shape (Chaplin 1974: 10). On the same hill at another site, Kakoro 2, there are 'incomplete designs' in red ochre pigment (Lawrance 1958: 40). Kakoro 3 is in the same area; it is a low shelter penetrating far under a massive rock with 'crude white paintings' on the lip of the rock, best viewed by crouching inside the shelter. The images are daubed, probably finger-painted, 'in a noticeably more careless manner' than in the paintings at Kakoro 1 and 2 (Lawrance 1958: 40).

In 1963, Professor Desmond Clark and Dr. Walter William Bishop discovered abstract and geometric rock paintings at Magosi, similar to those found at Nyero (Posnansky & Cole 1963: 104). According to Posnansky and Cole, this is the most northerly instance of geometric paintings in Uganda (Posnansky & Cole 1963: 104; Chaplin 1974:17). Chaplin (1974) described these images as consisting of a circle surrounded by three squares with rounded edges, the outer edge of one intersected by a phallic shape on one side. On the other, there is an angular image suggestive of a semi-naturalistic head of an ox (Chaplin 1974:19).

In Karamoja, Kadam Mountain shows evidence of hunter-gatherer occupation from LSA through to the Iron Age. Present inhabitants around the mountain in Karamoja know nothing about the rock paintings for as long as living memories can stretch (Robbins 1970: 79-80). On the southern slopes of Kadam Mountain, figurative paintings of two white giraffes are recorded at Napeduh hill, in Pokot. According to Robbins (1970: 79), the Pokot do not have any information concerning the origin of these paintings. Other paintings of giraffes are at Lokapeliethe hill, northeast of Moruariwan hill in Karamoja.

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KEY:

1	Magosi	**11**	Adacar	**21**	Kachumbala
2	Lokapeliethe	**12**	Onyere	**22**	Komuge (3)
3	Napak (Moroto)	**13**	Keria	**23**	Bunambutye
4	Napeduh (Kadam)	**14**	Kobwin	**24**	Komolo (2)
5	Morungatung-B1(2)*	**15**	Kalengo	**25**	Kongoide
6	Onongo	**16**	Okoboi	**26**	Kongunga
7	Adamai	**17**	Ngora	**27**	Kakoro
8	Obwin	**18**	Nyamongo (4)	**28**	Sere
9	Otatai	**19**	Nyero (6)	**29**	Lolui Island
10	Kapiri (2)	**20**	Mukongoro-Ekoki (4)		

*(3) = no. of sites in the area

Figure 26: Distribution of documented painted rock art sites in Uganda

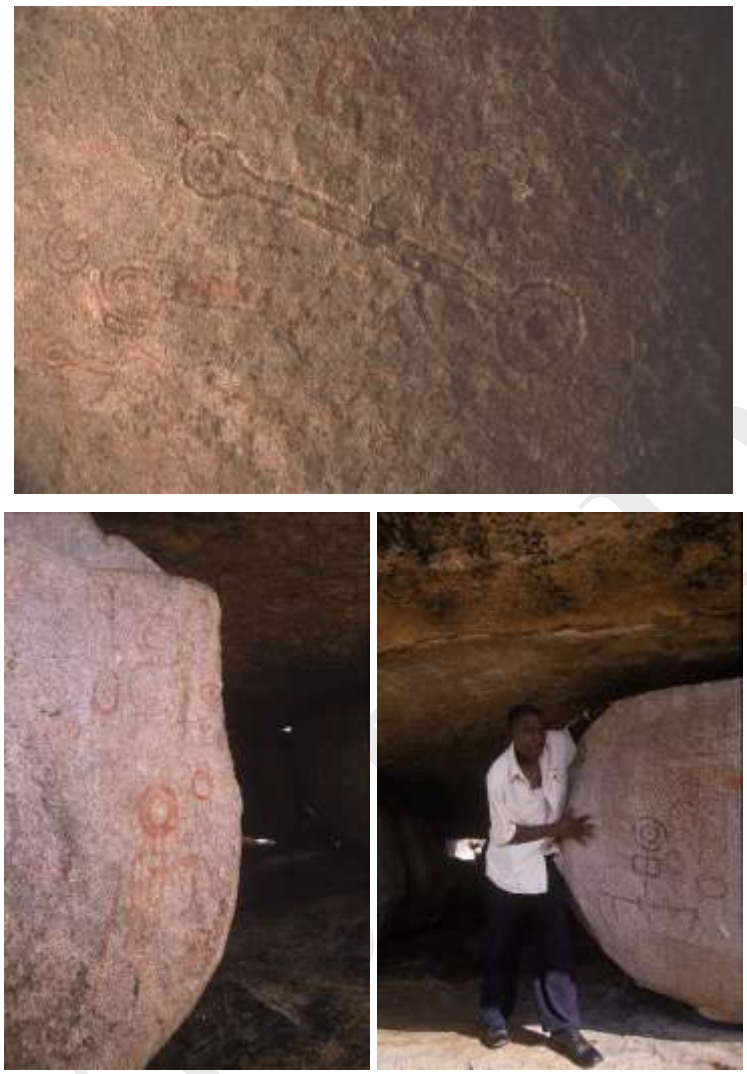
According to Robbins, the good state of preservation enabled a clear identification of the horns and ears of the animals depicted, as a giraffe looking over its shoulder (Robbins 1970:79). Robbins suggested that the paintings were made as hunters waited for game (*ibid.*). The Lokapeliethe paintings of concentric circles are similar to the engraved concentric circle designs on Loteteleit hill. The distribution of sites is shown in Figure 26.

At Lokapeliethe, there is a "vivid depiction of a giraffe and a number of hieroglyphs" (Wilson 1970: 141). Similar reports of engravings depicting men and animals resembling giraffe, oryx, buffalo, flamingo, small gazelles, elephant rhino and long horned antelope were recorded at the southern end of Lake Turkana in Kenya (Adamson 1946; Soper 1968: 191) are said to have stylistic traits linking them to the Sahara rock art tradition (Robbins 1970: 79). It is probable that these figurative depictions are an indication that the northern areas of Uganda and northern Kenya may straddle two hunter-gatherer rock art zones.

On Lolui islands, there are several rock art sites (Posnansky 1961; Chaplin 1974: 13). The largest and most spectacular is referred to as 'the sanctuary', or the main site (Fig. 27). It is the most impressive of all rock art sites and comprises several huge supporting boulders, four of which are extensively painted near the entrance to the rock chamber (Posnansky 1961: 106; Chaplin 1974: 15, 40; Posnansky *et al.* 2005: 76). The sites at Lolui probably constitute the largest concentration of rock art in Uganda similar to, yet distinct from, Nyero 2 (Posnansky 1961: 107; Posnansky *et al.* 2005: 77).

The extremely elaborate and schematic paintings on Lolui islands are believed to be associated with rock gongs. Most of the painted sites are located near them (Jackson *et al.*1965: 38-40; Posnansky *et al*. 2005: 77). There are seven groups comprising more than 40 sets of designs, the only paintings on the exterior are at the entrance. Images are predominantly concentric circles, but there are also sausage shapes (Harwich 1961: 132), one of which has been described as a "dug-out canoe with a sail" (Posnansky 1961: 107).

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(Images: RARI 2003)

Figure 27: Rock art at the entrance and ceiling of Lolui main site, 'the sanctuary'

Unique motifs are dumbbell shapes in red pigment with two sets of concentric circles terminated by an enlargement of the connecting parallel lines. Posnansky suggests a phallic interpretation for this type of shape (Posnansky 1961: 107). Executed in faded claret pigment or in a "crude more rubiginous ochre" (Chaplin 1974: 15), the images include dumbbell shapes, a series of concentric circles, lines and other abstract shapes. These unidentifiable shapes are a unique feature to Lolui. The images are in two finger-painted shades of red ochre, claret and

orange-red; the colour difference of these images does not seem to be intentional and does not represent a time difference.

In summary, the overriding pattern of image classes of paintings so far identified is predominately geometric shapes: concentric circles, concentric circles with radiating lines, dots, U-shapes, dotted, straight, horizontal and vertical lines and interlinked lines. Other descriptions such as 'acacia pod' designs, 'canoes', 'stretched-hide', 'phallic' and 'dumbbell' shapes are an attempt to describe complex geometric shapes. There are very few giraffes and zebra, painted in figurative style and these are all in the far north-eastern corner of Uganda. Patterns that will emerge from an analysis of these engravings and paintings, in Chapter 3, may suggest a framework for understanding the geometric rock art in Uganda. This framework is contextualised against a backdrop of previous rock art research in Uganda.

Previous rock art research in Uganda

The 1960s in Uganda saw interest in rock art research expand with major publications on rock art (e.g. Chaplin & McFarlane 1967; Jackson, *et al.* 1965; Morton 1967; Posnansky 1961; Posnansky & Cole 1963; Posnansky & Nelson 1968). These researchers all suggest that the function of the rock art paintings must have been a journalistic one. Posnansky (1961) suggests a possible link between the makers of rock art in areas around Lake Victoria and those in north and north-eastern Uganda.

While political instability during the 1970s and 1980s in Uganda hindered archaeological research, this decade is marked by the publication of Chaplin's ((1966) 1974) monumental study on the prehistoric rock art of the Lake Victoria region. Unfortunately, after completing his thesis, Chaplin tragically died in 1966. His work was subsequently published in 1974. Chaplin followed Posnansky and suggested that the distinct geometric and non-representational rock art served a documentary function of identifying migrant remnant hunter-gatherers, incoming

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cultivators and pastoralists or a combination of these (Chaplin 1974:35). He further suggested that superimpositions in the art resulted from copying underlying work (*ibid*: 39). Superimpositions resulted because, according to Chaplin, the rock art from Lake Victoria probably dates to between 15,000 BP to 200 BP and were the product of more than one cultural group (Chaplin 1974: 46). Chaplin was not so clear about whether the paintings should be attributed to pastoralists, farmers or hunter-gatherers.

Robbins (1970) described naturalistic paintings and attributed them to hunter-gatherers. However, Robbins and others went on to argue that in the absence of living memories about the rock art it is impossible to draw conclusions about the relationship between rock art sites and the authors of the art (Wright 1961; Robbins 1970: 79; Odak 1977; Lynch & Donahue 1980).

Sequences and chronology

During the 1960s, researchers tried to understand rock art in Uganda by establishing chronological frameworks that could be tied to broader archaeological sequences. Following Desmond Clark's work in Zambia (Clark 1959), Lawrance suggested a possible sequence for the rock paintings in Uganda. Lawrance's framework was based on colour with yellow as the oldest, then orange, red, purple, red and white, white and dirty white as the latest (Lawrance 1953: 12) (Fig. 28). Basing his work on this sequence, Lawrance argued that Nyero 2, with all images considered to be in red pigment, was older than Nyero 1 where all images are in white. Red pigment was used at a majority of known sites, Nyero 2, Ngora, Asuret, Obwin, Kakoro I, 2 and Onyeri; superposition occurred with certainty only at Nyero 2 and Kakoro 1. Using this framework, Lawrance noted that paintings in white and red pigment do not occur in the same group and nowhere yet in Uganda are other colours found.

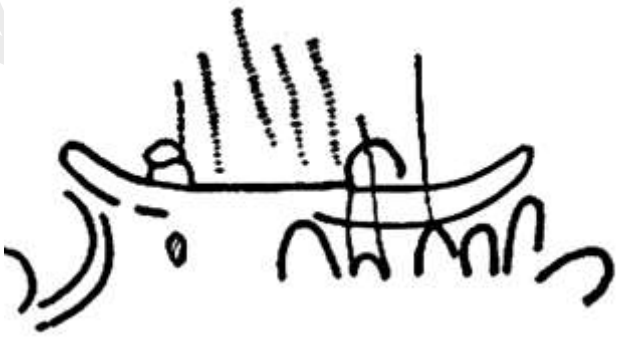
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Pigment Colour	Period	Motifs
White & dirty white	Most recent	Geometric designs
Red and white	↑	↑
Purple		
Red		
Orange		
Yellow	Earliest - Oldest	Naturalistic images

(After Lawarance 1953)

Figure 28: Summary of the relationship between colour and depicted motifs

Lawrance extended this sequential framework to propose a sequence for images in the categories geometric and naturalistic. For him, the superposition of geometric shapes over naturalistic ones, suggested that naturalistic drawings are older than geometric ones (Lawrance 1953: 12). He noted that concentric circles were usually depicted with five circles (or between three to six circles) and were common to all sites except Kakoro 2 and 3, while at Onyeri they were depicted in dots. According to Lawrance, the 'acacia pod' designs were only found at Nyero 1, 2, and Kakoro 1 and Onyeri, while Lawrance's 'naturalistic' images of "canoes with figures and line drawings of humans" were only at Nyero 2 (Lawrance 1953: 12) (Fig. 29). These images certainly are not naturalistic and almost certainly not canoes or human figures. What Lawrance's observations do indicate is that the majority of sites in Uganda contain red painted images.



(Image: Redrawn after Posnansky & Nelson 1968)

Figure 29: Lawrance's canoe with human figures

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It is, however, difficult to distinguish sequences based on red, white or yellow pigment owing to the variable surfaces on which the pigment is applied. For instance, white pigment is known to be fugitive, and is known to change from a white to a black hue depending on what it was mixed with or again, what elements it is exposed to. Some painted surfaces are in the wash area of the rock face, and exposed to run-off water, while other surfaces are well protected from the elements and are less likely to change colour. So according to Lawrance's sequences, what appears as yellow pigment may have originally been white.

Providing a chronological context to rock art all over the world remains one of the many challenges in rock art research and the rock art of Uganda is no different. Secure age dates are unavailable for nearly all the rock art of the world, and Uganda is no exception. This makes direct association with archaeology difficult. The body of dating information from other archaeological and linguistic contexts, gives a clear indication of which people were in which landscape at which time. Dating techniques have changed with time and with it, old dating techniques are replaced with what is considered 'a more accurate dating technique' applied to old data.

In addition, obtaining secure dates is very costly. The fact that most of the rock art in the world has not been dated means that archaeologists demonstrate chronology using alternative approaches that do not require specialized equipment or use of a destructive procedure of sample removal. Rock art researchers often resolve chronology with relative dating that relies on formal analysis, studying the effects of weathering of the rock art panels or through associated archaeology (Whitley 2005). Relative dates can also be resolved by observing similarities/differences in manner of depiction and technique that may suggest a common authorship. Association, whereby images can be discerned as natural objects that can be placed within a particular period, may also provide relative dating of rock art. In a rock art panel, images of a horse, a cow (animals), or a train (technology), or a figure in unique clothing (European) may suggest a

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historical period when these animals, technology or people were first introduced into an area and deductively a tentative date may be set for the rock art.

Instances where associated archaeological finds can be used to resolve chronology are in the case when engraved or painted panels are covered with datable archaeological deposits. Dating can be done when fallen rock art slabs or surfaces from a rock face become incorporated in dateable stratified archaeological deposits can be linked to motifs on the walls of the rock shelters. If a rock art slab falls thousands of years after the rock face was painted or engraved, the stratified position records the destruction rather than the execution of the image. In addition, traces of pigment or patina on the slab may be difficult to link to the subject matter on the rock face.

Different degrees of chemical and physical weathering of rock engravings and paintings are also indicative of relative age. In the case of painting other elements such as the degree of exposure, the nature of the pigment and the binders used in the pigment can affect the overall appearance of a panel and pigment stability. Red pigment is more durable than most other pigments used. In Uganda, the physical condition of most of the paintings and the manner in which they have been painted and weathered, flaked or bonded with the rock indicates that they have endured a long period of exposure to similar natural elements. Sites in Uganda, such as Nyero 2, Kapiri, Nyamongo and Lolui exhibit exfoliation, are partially covered with mineral salts, or are destroyed or obscured by rain wash-off as in the case of Nyero 5, Kongoide, Adacar and MorungatungB1- 1. This indicates that the paintings are many centuries if not millennia old.

Pigment variation produced by a particular group of people was probably relevant to the purposes for which the authors intended. Many painted sites in Uganda comprise faded and blurred images in extreme states of preservation, despite the fact that gneiss is comparatively resistant to weathering. Gneiss is a common metamorphic rock, often showing a distinct banding between light feldspar and darker micas. Annual rainfall in most areas where rock art has been found in

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Uganda is relatively low. However, other factors such as agricultural activities that include cultivating, grazing animals or burning and clearing, and economic activities, such as burning wood for charcoal and quarrying rocks, are a major destructive factor at rock art sites.

With superimposition, it may sometimes be difficult to establish the order in which the layers of painting where applied, some colours may be more intense and bleed through overlaying pigment. Others may not adhere well to underlying pigment, while some pigment mixtures may fade rapidly. The time depth between one painting episode and another is difficult to determine, it may be the same day, same year or thousands of years. Superimposition sequences may not primarily be a function of age (Whitley 2005: 55), but what is clear is that one episode was painted after another. Superimposition may not only reflect time depth, but may also reflect cultural associations where over-painting 'describes' relationships between motifs or colours.

At almost all of the sites recorded in Uganda so far, where superimposition occurs, there is over-painting of similar imagery not necessarily in similar pigmentation. There are a few variations for instance at Komuge II, where the depiction, hue and consistency of pigment used differs from what occurs at other sites. It is often considered that a change in motifs depicted or in pigment may be indicative of the same group, different gender; or the same group affected by alternative ideas; or a different group. A relative consistency of geometric motifs across a broad area (East and Central Africa) suggests that the red and white geometric paintings have been in existence for a long time. If it is accepted that the geometric imagery was made by hunter-gatherers then the rock art of Uganda probably dates from between 12,000 to 1,000 BP.

Fieldwork

The aims of my fieldwork were kept basic: to re-survey areas where rock art was previously reported, to re-document previously recorded sites and to survey in

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areas never surveyed. During the survey, I attempted to identify patterns within and between sites. Judging by oral reports in local communities in the areas where known sites are found, there are sites that have never been recorded. These reports suggested that absence of documented rock art sites might not be evidence of absence of other sites in Uganda. Because of logistical inadequacies to conduct systematic surveying and complete coverage, there can be little doubt that further surveys will reveal more sites.

The survey team initially included Micheal Okwi (only for a few weeks), Dismas Ongwen and Alex Tamale as research assistants. A three-month site survey from May to July 2006 yielded 40 unrecorded rock art sites, 39 of which are from the eastern region of Uganda. The northern and north-eastern parts of Uganda that could have yielded more sites were considered high-risk areas and could not be surveyed. The high risk arises from the fact that northern and eastern Uganda have been severely impacted by, for instance, the Teso-Lango rebel insurgency of 1986 to1992 and the continuous Karamojong cattle raids.

Although government soldiers near the Namalu-Nakapiripirit area, Namendera and the Iriri-Napak area on the Teso-Karamoja border were prepared to provide security to the survey team, I was unable to meet the costs of hiring the soldiers. In addition, during this time, there were several skirmishes between the Karamojong warriors and government soldiers. My survey team would probably have been mistaken for soldiers attempting to dis-arm the warriors. We would be exposed as easy targets for the warriors who are renowned sharpshooters. I therefore did not survey Karamoja and Kapchorwa districts due to insecurity pertaining there.

Northern Uganda has endured an 18-year vicious war that worsened in 2002/3 following a massive military suppression of insurgency. Many people in northern and eastern Uganda were (and some still are) displaced by violent LRA (Lord's Resistance Army) rebel incursions between 2001 and 2004, although most people have now returned home. Often, when people return to their homes and resettle

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there is an element of mistrust or suspicion regarding strangers, particularly when it was rumoured that the government was selling off land left unoccupied after the insurgency. In one instance, after surveying a few hills around a village in Kobwin sub-county, about fifteen men on bicycles from the local community armed with sticks surrounded my survey team. We were mistaken for land surveyors or prospective buyers. Fortunately, an elder recognised us from the sub-county headquarters on the day we registered our intentions with the local chief, and we were spared.

Conducting fieldwork in these areas required intensive sensitisation of the local leaders about the objectives of the survey and a strict adherence to protocol and procedure before accessing survey areas. My fieldwork was however, made easier by letters of introduction to various district officials and security organs from the National Research Council and the Uganda Museum explaining the nature of research. The leaders required that we worked with a local guide. Although this was an opportunity to sensitise the communities to the need to conserve heritage and rock art in particular, often the local 'guide' assigned to us would 'disappear' along the way. Unfortunately, the 'guide' very rarely understood our methods of site identification or saw the rock art sites that we found during the survey. As such, these new sites remain threatened by the local communities' lack of knowledge of their existence or their significance.

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Methods

The eastern region was identified as an area likely to yield a considerable number of rock art sites. In the eastern region, I focused on the districts of Amuria, Bugiri, Bukedea, Katakwi, Kaberamaido, Mbale, Sironko and Tororo, and concentrated my survey in Kumi, Pallisa and Soroti. Previous research was carried out in these regions; however, I sought to confirm the image categories to situate them within the shape typology developed by Smith for south-central Africa. Like Chaplin's study, my survey was dedicated to documenting rock art, and was unlike other researchers who documented rock art whilst conducting archaeological excavations, geological surveys, policing or adventure hiking

where rock art was of secondary interest. These considerations gave confidence to the areas I selected as likely to yield more rock art sites.

For my survey, I attempted to search as many hills and outcrops within a particular area as possible. This procedure proved to be a feasible and productive strategy. As I have mentioned, in selecting these areas, I was guided by prior knowledge of the existence of sites in some areas, as well as the presence of rock outcrops and surfaces for potential rock art panels in others. Although local understanding of the topography is often essential in identifying rock art sites, in this case, local knowledge of sites other than some of those previously documented was almost absent. Only four of the new sites I documented were ones shown to me by the local community. Often areas where the community did not acknowledge the presence of rock art, several new sites were found, such as Kapiri and in Kaberamaido district. The majority of the new sites were documented by traversing the landscape and inspecting almost every rock boulder, outcrop, shelter or overhang for traces of pigment.

On Lake Victoria, aside from Lolui Islands in Uganda, I considered Mfangano Island in Kenya for three reasons. First, as mentioned earlier, national boundaries as they exist today were non-existent during pre-colonial times. Second, the sites of the island had been reported to be associated with supernatural powers and miraculous events (Chaplin 1974: 19) and formed part of the indigenous knowledge system of the Islanders. Mfangano Island, home to the Suba people, lies in the eastern part of Lake Victoria, at the mouth of the Winam Gulf, west of Rusinga island. The Suba have a history of migration from Uganda to the islands of Rusinga and Mfangano during the reign of King Kigali of Buganda in the sixteenth century. Although the rock paintings on Mfangano pre-date the arrival of these migrating groups, the Suba have embraced the art as part of their heritage. Third, the description of motifs on Mfangano was consistent with motifs from some rock art sites in Uganda.

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For my survey, a rock art site was considered any rock outcrop or rock surface with traces of ochre pigment. Dimensions of sites are given in metres by length, width and by height. Site documentation was based on the ARC 1960 grid and with a Garmin GPS to plot the sites. Site coordinates were recorded in degrees, minutes and seconds. Descriptions of the physical attributes and shapes identified were recorded; condition reporting relating to conservation was done; potential and existing risks to sites were noted; 35mm professional slide film backed up by digital photography was used; selected images were traced and sketches were made; distances between the sites were considered; where possible, associated archaeological deposit and cultural beliefs were recorded. In the case of previously documented sites, the initial site names given to the sites by earlier researchers were retained. The site descriptions used in Appendix 1 follow from left to right when facing the panel. The rock art sites are recorded in alphabetical order.

Outcomes

The outcomes of the fieldwork suggest that further survey will yield more rock art sites particularly in the northern and north-eastern regions of Uganda. In this survey, new rock art sites were found in areas never surveyed in the 1960s and 1970s. Other sites were identified in areas that were surveyed between 1960s and 1970s but reported to be devoid of any traces of rock art. For instance, Lawrance (1955b) surveyed Achuloi rocks and found only one rock shelter and no paintings (Lawrance 1955b: 90). My survey of this area, correctly known as Ochulloi, yielded two sites here documented as Adamai and Onongo. Chaplin (1974) noted that:

> …there are excellent surfaces on sheltered but conspicuous rocks that seem very suitable, but no traces of ochre can be seen on them. One could instance Kapiri and Kachumbala on the Mbale-Soroti road as examples of this (Chaplin 1974: 34).

My survey identified rock art sites at Kapiri and Kachumbala. There is great potential that further surveys will yield more sites. In several instances a communities' lack of acknowledgement of the existence of rock art sites in an area was simply because they were either not aware of the presence of rock art

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images or they had seen them but considered them 'child's play' or part of the rock. I re-documented rock art sites in an attempt to provide a more accurate record, to ascertain for instance, whether what were described as naturalistic images, such as zebra or a canoe for instance, were an accurate description of the represented figure since such identification will have implications later in this study. I also tried to confirm where possible the existing traditional beliefs and practices relating to rock art sites.

Re-documented sites include four at Kakoro. Not all rock art sites at Lolui were re-recorded. The few sites that were identified were threatened by damage caused by a *laissez-faire* attitude of the community on the Island. According to Posnansky, Reid and Ashley (2005: 82-98) Lolui Island was occupied by three different groups during three different periods: during the MSA when the Island was probably part of the mainland; then by the Urewe-using early farmers during the late Holocene from around the first to mid-second millennium AD and by fishermen, around the later part of the second millennium AD up to 1908. Presently, a mixed group of fishermen and women, gamblers, thieves and businesspersons occupies Lolui Island (also known as Dolwe or Lolwe). Lolui has been dubbed "the Dubai of Lake Victoria" for being a great source of wealth derived from fishing, illicit movement of goods across the lake to Kenya and Tanzania, prostitution, unruly behaviour, gambling and 24-hour drinking (Namugoji 2004; Posnansky, *et al.* 2005). This behaviour accounts for their attitude.

Lolui is the most isolated of a group of islands in Lake Victoria making it an ideal place of refuge for criminals. The population on Lolui has grown from a few hundred in the 1960s to an estimated 10,000. The majority of islanders have permanent homes on the mainland, they often desert the Island, and return to the mainland such as in December for the festive season. Although the islanders are aware of the existence of rock art sites, they do not see the need to protect them. Unfortunately, paintings at the entrance to the site described as the main site or the 'sanctuary' by Chaplin have been defaced with graffiti. The community use

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the site as a meeting area and have painted the name of the association that meets there, on the rock face upon which are paintings (Fig. 30).



(Image: Namono 2006)

Figure 30: Entrance to the main site on Lolui Island showing graffiti

The paintings at Ngora, now largely covered in graffiti, were not as well managed as those at Nyero, under the care of a voluntary caretaker. Nyero rock art sites are on the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage sites. The sites Nyero 1, 2 and 3 are found in a village known as Kodike or Assirim. In the past, the area was renowned for sorghum, *assirim* that was boiled and eaten rather than milled. The rocky outcrop on which sites 1 and 2 are located is referred to as *Moru* Ikara. '*Moru*' means hill and Ikara is a name of a person, in this instance Ikara was a great chief who owned most of the land including the one on which the rock paintings are found. In the past, people travelled long distances to Nyero in the belief that as a special place where ancestors had left their presence in the paintings, blessings would be obtained for good harvest, fertile soils and for 'barren' women to bear children through offerings of food, beer and money. This belief and practice still holds true today.

The new sites with paintings and the districts from which they are found are tabulated (Appendix I), but a brief discussion of some sites follows in alphabetical order. Adacar 1 is a very small boulder with a rough surface on which are painted geometric shapes that comprise two rayed circles, a rectangular motif and an outline of a circle. All motifs are in red monochrome pigment. Unfortunately, the local community of this area was hostile so I was unable to document the site properly.

Adamai 1 is a small southerly facing granite boulder that sits on top of a large outcrop at the edge of an old quarrying site. The small shelter, with a commanding view of the village plains, is easily accessible, though partially concealed by bushes. The extremely rough panel surface has traces of claret, red and white finger-painted monochrome motifs. All the red motifs appear to be finger-painted. There are about six rows of orange dots measuring about 1m long in the centre of the panel. The dots appear to have been applied with a brush or a stick. It is difficult to discern whether the variation of pigment is because of several episodes of painting on different occasions or whether the pigment was applied at the same time, but has reacted differently to the elements.

Bunambutye 1 is a small granite boulder resting on the edge of a large prominent, isolated outcrop that sticks out from a flat landscape. The eastward facing shelter is easily accessible and the rock art panel consists of scanty red finger-painted marks and two concentric circles with radiating 'U' shapes on the panel. Bunambutye borders the districts of Sironko and Kachumbala.

Kachumbala 1 is a small open shelter at the base of a very large granite boulder, one of the many large rocky outcrops in the area. The south-westerly facing shelter measures approximately 10m x 4m x 2.5m. The panel surface is rough and flaking. It has geometric and indeterminate images painted in a claret shade, with a few traces of white pigment below the red or between the red pigments.

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Kalengo1, known to the local community as Moruakileng, 'hill of knives', is a medium sized granite boulder with two relatively smooth panel surfaces in the rock face. The rock art panel of the north facing shelter has a red finger-painted 'sausage-shape', dots and circular floral motifs. The concentric circles with external radiating 'U' shape images appear to have a white pigment infill.

Kapiri 1 is an impressive southeast facing shelter with commanding views of Lake Bisinia, the surrounding village and the plains. Part of the large boulder rests on several small boulders forming a small enclosure. There are two painted panels. One panel has two rayed circles, six concentric circles, and concentric circles with lines running through as well as several other noncircular motifs that are difficult to discern. All these motifs are in red monochrome pigment and are executed in a manner similar to those found at other sites such as Nyero and Lolui. Below this panel is another long smooth panel with finger-painted images in red or white, very faded monochrome paintings.

Kapiri 2 is a small boulder with an angle of approximately 30^{o} on a large granite boulder. Access to the site is a relatively steep climb. The shelter, with heavily flaking panels, has traces of a few geometric shapes in red monochrome pigment, fragments of a 'rayed' concentric circle in a reddish orange monochrome pigment and a claret image at the lower end of the panel.

Keria 1, a south-east facing shelter, is at the base of a large granite boulder. The extremely rough, unclear panel has traces of red pigment of an image that is difficult to discern. Kobwin 1 is a small boulder overlooking the lake, north of Keria 1. It has a very small panel surface, in the wash area and it is exposed to the direct rays of the midday sun. Below the panel is a small, narrow, deep cave. On the panel is a single finger-painted, geometric comb-like image in red and white bichrome pigment.

Komolo 1 is an easily accessible, small, open, north-east facing shelter at the base of a very large granite boulder. The site is approximately 6m x 4m x 2.5m. The

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surface of the shelter is rough, with the panel surface covered in soot and dust. The finger-painted motifs are in the blackened wash area of the shelter. The subject-matter is a partial geometric pattern in dirty white pigment. At the extreme end of the same boulder as Komolo 1, is an open north-west facing site, Komolo 2. The very rough panel surface is exposed to direct sunshine and rain. These very faded paintings comprise one curved line and two incomplete loop shape motifs that appear to have been finger-painted in red pigment.

In Komuge village, I found three sites. Komuge 1, at the bottom of a small boulder that sits on a rock base, is a rock shelter with a relatively smooth panel. The panel has white finger-painted incomplete geometric shapes. Sections of the panel are obscured by soot and either touching or rubbing. Komuge 2 is a large, spectacular, northward facing shelter. It consists of two large boulders, one resting on the other, to form a large enclave. The base of the panel rests on the edge of a heavily patinated rock. The panel has several finger-painted geometric images in shades of red, white and orange monochrome and bichrome paintings, congruent with images found at other sites in the region. There is a large dominant triangular shaped motif in thick pasty off-white pigment, slightly obscured at one end of the base by other superimposed motifs in similar pigment. Komuge 3 is a small shelter with a partial finger-painted white geometric image consisting of one vertical line with three horizontal lines cutting across at different points.

One of several massive boulders at the base of a small hill, Kongoide 1 is a northwest facing shelter that has traces of red finger-painted geometric shapes but which are difficult to discern. On the opposite side of the road is Kongunga hill, which comprises several granite boulders. Kongunga 1 is a south-south-west facing shelter with an extremely rough, heavily exfoliating panel surface on which are very faded red and white finger-painted circular images.

Morungatung, ‘village in the rock’, is a large granite boulder. Morungatung-BI 1 is a wide shelter overlooking the village plains. The shelter is very easily

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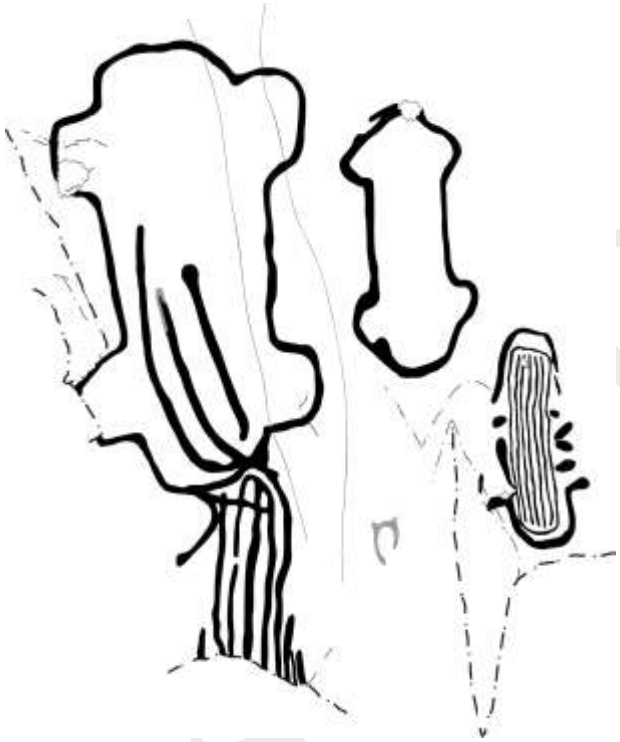
accessible and, used as a cattle kraal, its floor is covered in animal dung. Traces of pigment in the lower areas of the panel suggest that the bulk of the motifs may have been lost to rubbing by animals and humans. The images are difficult to decipher but there are traces of red and white bichrome images at several points on the panel surface. Morungatung-BI 2 is a rock shelter formed by a large granite boulder resting on another large rocky slab that forms the floor. The shelter overlooks an open area surrounded on one side by a massive granite hill and on the other by the village. On one side of the panel there are finger-painted claret images that comprise a concentric circle with a diagonal line running, dotted and straight lines and 'ladder-shapes'. There are other gridiron red and white images.

Mukongoro-Ekoki 1 is a south facing site comprising a red finger-painted image similar to what has been described as 'canoes' at Nyero 2. The interior of the image appears to have been in-filled with white pigment. There are about five finger-painted concentric circles in red monochrome pigment. Lines at alternating points along the circle join the inner circles together. Mukongoro-Ekoki 2 is a small granite boulder with a large, rough, lichen covered panel surface with one red finger-painted concentric circle. The site is very near the village.

Mukongoro-Ekoki 3 is a very large granite boulder. The rock art panels are at two positions. The first group of paintings is on the boulder wall along the path down to the cave area of the shelter (Fig. 31). The red motifs comprise one very large and one small 'stretched-hide' motif, an oval shape motif with thin red lines running from top to bottom. Around this oval shape are thick dots that are joined by a thick line running around the oval shape. Theses motifs were probably stick-painted and finger-painted. Further down the path, almost at the base of the shelter, is a cave. It measures about 8m wide. At the furthest end, between the opening of the cave and a granite slab boulder on the ground, the shelter forms a roof upon which are white finger-painted monochrome motifs. The images,

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slightly covered in soot and dust, comprise dots, zoomorphic designs, anthropomorphic images and indeterminate forms.



(Image: Namono 2006)

Figure 31: Re-drawing of red images at Mukongoro Ekoki 3

Mukongoro-Ekoki 4 comprises two large granite boulders, one resting at an angle on top of the other. They are situated between a primary school and the village fields. The panel is in the wash area of the shelter. The motifs, which cover about 1m x 80cm of the panel surface, include two lozenge shapes and a central concentric circle with externally radiating 'U's shape. Both shapes are finger painted in red monochrome pigment. The central shape has fine line outer petal extensions in faded white monochrome. There are other traces of pigment in red and faded white monochrome around this central motif.

Namaligga-Nsenga 1 and 2 are two engraving sites with several omweso boards comprising 4 by 8 rows, 4 by 14 rows, 4 by 7 rows, and 6 by 4rows, and several others that were not so clear. They cover a surface area of approximately 15m x 10 m and 7.50 m x 9 m respectively. Some of the surfaces are covered in lichen. The surface is extremely rough.

Nyamongo 1 is a large granite boulder resting on top of another large boulder that forms the shelter floor. Images at this site are four very faded, clustered circular shapes, a 'rayed' circle and an unclear geometric situated on the lip of the shelter, best seen by lying on one's back. All the images are finger-painted in red monochrome. At Nyamongo 2, locally known as Kolupe 'place of clay', the images are all on a very rough surface and consist of a big floral motif with thin red lines running down which join another circular shape, four white diagonal lines, close to images with eight white vertical lines with a single horizontal line dissecting the row. There are traces of red pigment at one end of the panel.

Nyamongo 3 is a large boulder with a small shelter and a relatively rough panel that consists of two finger-painted, geometric motifs and a small concentric circle about 20 cm in diameter. All the images are in very faded red pigment. Nyamongo 4 comprises one large boulder next to a small boulder that forms a small cave area. The roof of the shelter is relatively low, about 1.6 m high and the floor is about 4 m wide. The distance from the drip line to the panel is about 2 m. On this panel, motifs depicted in white pigment are all finger-painted and comprise a dotted conical image, with three dotted lines dissecting it. There are other unclear lines and dots.

Nyero 4 is a small shelter with a few traces of red finger-painted concentric circles, two conical shapes and lines. Nyero 5 is a small boulder with a slight ledge, overlooking the village and the nearby primary school. The panel surface is relatively smooth. The red geometric images consist of a combination of circular and linear shapes and appear to have been finger and brush painted. The images are difficult to discern because sections of them have been washed off

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(Fig. 32). Nyero 6 is an open site where the panel is directly exposed to rain and morning sun. It is relatively high with a commanding view of the cultivated plains. The panel surface is rough, has lichen and it is exfoliating. On the rock face, there are traces of pigment, two oval outline small circles and a central linear image. All the images are finger painted in red monochrome pigment. The floor of the site is a granite slab currently used as a base for crushing rocks.

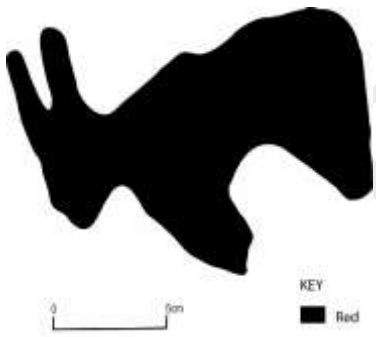


(Images: Namono 2006)

Figure 32: Nyero 5

Okoboi 1 is an easily accessible south-westerly facing rock boulder about 8m x 7m x 2m with a small overhang. It overlooks the mission compound. Mineral accretions and wasps threaten the panel. Most of the motifs are difficult to discern, but those that can be, comprise a faded red semi-circle with two half sausage shapes in it, a 'rayed' circle and an orange rayed circle. All motifs are monochromatic and appear to have been finger-painted.

Located close to the village fields, Onongo 1 is at the base of a large granite outcrop that forms a relatively shallow shelter with a south-westerly outlook. This 16m long shelter has a relatively smooth panel surface on which is a single finger-painted image of an animal in red monochrome pigment. The animal has a belly curved inwards, two straight protrusions from the head, and a slight bulge on the back. The merged front and hind legs of the animal round off slightly below the belly curve (Fig. 33).



(Image: Namono 2006)

Figure 33: Redrawing of the animal image at Onongo

Otatai 1 is an eastward facing boulder with a small and a smooth panel surface on which is a red finger-painted, partial rayed circle and a few gridiron shapes. There are traces of white pigment as well, but most of the images have faded or flaked off since the panel shows considerable evidence of flaking. Otatai 2 is a small open shelter on a small granite outcrop, overlooking Otatai I and situated in the cultivated fields of the village. This south-west facing shelter has a heavily flaking panel surface onto which are traces of red pigment and two, small, red, concentric circles.

The last site found was Sere. Sere, locally known as Nyakiriga Shrine (Namono 2008), has a large granite boulder, with a west-facing shelter under a shallow overhang. On the rock face are faded red, finger-painted shapes or lines, obscured by lichen and difficult to discern. The shapes appear finger-painted in a manner

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similar to the geometric images found in other parts of eastern Uganda, such as at Nyero1. Near these painted images are feathers, stuck into cracks or crevices in the rock face.

From this survey, I observed that, at a number of sites in Uganda, it is evident that the painting tradition persisted over a long period. I noted extensive overlays at some sites that made the background of some panels a blurry whitish red, with very faint images repeatedly over-painted. Within these overlays, it was possible to discern an element of consistency in motifs depicted, implying prolonged use of a site by the same painting community, or probably a consistency in the practice that produced the rock art.

Building on the previously known sites and the recently recorded rock art sites it is safe to say that the sites discussed constitute a valid and representative sample from which to make preliminary general observations about the geometric rock art of Uganda. First, the absence of any recollection of a painting tradition by the communities where the rock art is now found suggests that the images are relatively old. Second, it is apparent that the images in the rock art sites of Uganda fall within two broad categories: naturalistic - motifs that adhere to or conform to shapes in nature, such as animals, people or trees and can be recognised as such; and geometric – motifs that adhere to or conform to unrecognisable geometric shapes such as circles.

In rock art research, although formal analyses trace depiction and conventions, the form of the rock art and the categories chosen – geometric or naturalistic, are imposed by the archaeologists or rock art researchers. Whereas the form of a living creature is intrinsic to it, that of an artefact (such as rock art) is imposed on it by people according to their own cultural knowledge (Thomas 2004: 202). I follow Odak and use the terms figurative and geometric-schematic only for my own analytical purposes. I feel confident that those images I call figurative were probably intended to represent natural forms. At this stage, I do not make any

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judgement as to whether those forms I call geometric or schematic were intended to be representational.

Figurative shapes

There are very few rock paintings and engravings in Uganda that have been described as figurative. Images of animals, mainly giraffes are common in rock art further north in Africa. The so-called zebra seen at Nyero 2 by Sassoon (1973: 8) are not zebra. They are a series of fragments of concentric circles that appear as animal shapes because of erosion due to run-off water passing over the images. The only convincing animals in Uganda rock art are several painted giraffes next to geometric images at Lokapeliethe, and a single painted animal at Onongo.

Geometric/schematic shapes

In Africa there is a broad spectrum of image shapes that are widely categorised as geometric, and in most instances these shapes are less frequent than figurative shapes (Smith 1995; Coulson & Campbell 2001: 220). Geometrics have been produced in many different configurations, over thousands of years and by peoples with different cultures in very diverse environments (Coulson & Campbell 2001: 220). I use the term geometric to describe motifs that conform to a basic geometric shape not identifiable as obviously figurative. Describing motifs as geometric enables these shapes to be classified within a standard geometric form typology. Hence, I use words such as lines, circles, dots, grids or squares to identify different motifs. Motifs described as ‘stretched cow hide’, ‘acacia pod’ designs or ‘dumbbell’ shapes, and ‘canoes’ co-occur with more simple geometric forms and so I consider them geometric - the descriptive names are simply labels of convenience. Painted and engraved geometric shapes (sometimes called schematic designs) dominate in the documented engraving and painting sites in Uganda.

The distribution of rocks and rock art sites in Uganda is influenced primarily by the impact of climate on the landscape. Rainfall and humidity decreases from central to north and north-eastern Uganda (see Chapter 1). In the eastern and

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northern parts of the country, there are a succession of long low undulating hills comprising coarse, gneissic, biotite granite outcrops and boulders. Outcrops of gneiss are widespread in Karamoja, they are a source of flat slabs, often used as grindstones (Wilson 1970: 82). These flat slabs are also suitable for engravings.

Rock paintings are not a common feature in the western and southern parts of Uganda. Future research in Uganda will undoubtedly reveal more sites in these areas, although these may not be numerous. Less studied areas remain comparative *terrae incognita* making it difficult to assess the overall picture I have presented, but the overall dominance of geometric rock art is unlikely to change.

Painted rock art sites are predominantly distributed in the rocky drier areas of Uganda. This distribution of sites may be due to the type of rock surfaces suitable for painting on or it may be connected with the distribution of research bias. The distribution may also be the result of post depositional factors such as that painted surfaces in other areas have not survived. The majority of paintings are found on any suitable surface. Most are not hidden away but in shelters with a significant overhang to provide protection. Most of the rock art sites are easily accessible and occur around the lower slopes of ridges and rocky inselbergs.

From the sites identified during my fieldwork, many aspects of the rock art traditions in Uganda remain obscure. The range of geometric images is an assortment of shapes and colours. The method of application varies from brushwork to finger application and daubing. Most geometrics in Uganda are painted in red claret pigment, often applied with the finger, in some instances with a brush. Traces of white pigment are found at sites that are now predominately red, but white pigment being fugitive and flaking rapidly, may originally have been prominent but does not survive.

Images in white pigment at sites such as Mukongoro-Ekoki and Nyamongo lean towards farmer rock art and this aspect will be considered in later site and image

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analyses. Areas in north-eastern Uganda record a figurative rock art tradition probably aligned to hunter-gatherer North African rock art tradition (Smith 1997; Coulson & Campbell 2001). Furthermore, it is possible that pastoralist and (or) farmer traditions are present in Uganda, for instance at sites such as those in the central eastern region. Along one of the many escarpments of Mount Meraniang, overlooking the plains of northern Kenya, Turnbull came across a rocky overhang that contained traces of chalk drawings of animals and people. He had heard that such drawings were done in the past but the present inhabitants, the Ik, do not practise the drawing tradition (Turnbull 1984b: 227).

The imagery found in the rock art sites I have recorded in Uganda is predominantly geometric in depiction and may have been produced by hunter-gatherers. The red geometric paintings in Uganda form part of the geometric rock art zone due to the parallels it shows with rock art in Angola, northern Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi and the Central African Republic. In light of our knowledge of the African rock art traditions, the overall picture of Ugandan rock art is that the geometric imagery is controlled and contained within the boundaries of the Central African Schematic Art Zone. In the earlier sections of this chapter, I mentioned the need to read rock art together with the archaeological data. I now consider evidence from excavated contexts associated with Nyero 2 and Lolui islands.

Excavated Contexts

In 1926, Mr. Edward James Wayland and Mr. Miles Burkitt excavated Magosi 1 site. The finds from this excavation included thumbnail scrapers, flakes, chipped and flat trimmed discs, burins mainly covered in yellow ochre, varieties of blunted backs and points (Wayland & Burkitt 1932). In 1963, Posnansky and Cole excavated another site, Magosi 2 next to Magosi 1. Magosi 2 has a large overhanging rock with geometric rock paintings. The Magosi 2 excavation yielded pieces of haematite, some red ochre ‘pencils’, large quantities of microliths, large crescents, pottery, ostrich eggshell with a few beads, hammer-stones, several pestles, a shallow mortar, perforated stones, a partial bored stone,

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scrapers, awls and a bifaced lancolate point (Posnansky & Cole 1963: 105-6). Posnansky and Cole suggested that the finds from Magosi represent the LSA and early Holocene period (*ibid*.). The stone tools bear strong resemblance to the Nachikufan culture, characterised by microlithic technology especially bladelets, bored or drilled stones, scrapers, pointed, curved-backed flakes.

Excavated archaeological evidence from Nyero 2 suggests a period of long occupation from Stone Age times, together with the likely supposition that the cave dwellers of Nyero were the authors of the rock paintings (Lawrance 1953: 12). In 1945, Harwich's excavation at Nyero 2 yielded quartz (Harwich 1961; and see Lawrance 1953) that Posnansky assigned to LSA occupation that used pottery in small quantities towards the end (Posnansky & Nelson 1968: 151; Nelson 1973: 62). Harwich's excavation also yielded a bone incised with three concentric circles and four incisions (Fig. 17) similar to designs found on the rock walls at Nyero. This bone led Posnansky to believe that the rock paintings belong to the LSA (Posnansky 1961: 109-110).

In 1962, Posnansky re-excavated Nyero 2, with the assistance of the Brathay Exploration Group. Posnansky's excavation yielded two ostrich-egg shell beads, freshwater oyster, a pierced cowrie shell and very little pottery, as well as two large pieces of prepared orange-red ochre 'pencils', one grindstone and large quantities of scrapers and bipolar blades, typical LSA artefacts (Posnansky & Nelson 1968: 154-5). Posnansky and Nelson (1968: 156) noted that although the paintings at Nyero 2 and the excavated occupation layer were not necessarily contemporaneous, the red ochre 'pencils' and the decorated piece of bone indicate that the occupants of Nyero 2 incised concentric circles on bone and used ochre. What cannot be determined from the excavated material is the symbolism of these finds.

Posnansky and Nelson argue that there has been no occupation of the shelter since the Iteso occupied Kumi in the eighteenth century (Posnansky & Nelson 1968: 157). In addition, the painting superimpositions and the depth of

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occupation debris suggest that the occupation and probably the practice of painting spread over a long period (*ibid.*). It is significant that where rock art has been found in association with an archaeological industry, this industry has always been in an LSA form. Based on stone tool typological parallels (Clark 1950b), Lawrance suggested that the makers of the rock paintings in Nyero might be linked to the makers of the Nachikufan culture where sites with distinctive similar LSA industries and rock paintings have been found (Lawrance 1953: 12). If a connection indeed exists between the art and the Nachikufan culture, then this proves that the makers of the geometric tradition in Uganda were forest hunter-gatherers.

Excavations on Lolui islands in 1940 by Louis and Mary Leakey remain unpublished. In 1953, Mary Leakey re-visited the island and made a large collection of Urewe ware (Posnansky *et al*. 2005: 73). In 1964, the island was surveyed by an interdisciplinary team, and excavated by Paul Temple, Chaplin and Posnansky. The island excavation yielded stone tools, Entebbe and Urewe pottery, found also on the surface (Posnansky *et. al* 2005). Urewe pottery persists in evolving forms at least until the middle of the second millennium AD (*ibid.*). The pottery types found on Lolui islands are currently not used by inhabitants on the mainland and may belong to previous inhabitants evacuated from the islands in 1908 during the sleeping sickness epidemic. Although Lolui island has evidence of a long history of occupation (Posnansky 1961: 109; Jackson, *et al.* 1965: 38), Chaplin (1974: 35), Posnansky, Reid and Ashley (2005) noted that despite extensive searches in which large numbers of artefacts were examined *in situ*, there is nothing diagnostic of LSA on the Lolui islands similar to LSA assemblages on the mainland (Posnansky, *et al.* 2005: 78). However, prior to this, Jackson, Gartlan and Posnansky argued that on Lolui islands, "though no stone-age assemblages have been found, a single piece of imported obsidian with a scraper edge is evidence of a possible Late Stone Age occupation" (Jackson, *et al.* 1965: 40).

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The presence of a single diagnostic LSA stone tool is fleeting evidence of the presence of LSA people. More obvious traces of LSA people in the landscape is the abundant rock art on Lolui islands. Rock art is an archaeological record. Similarities have been noted between the rock art images at Lolui and Nyero. Chaplin suggested that the Lolui artists were not LSA people but pottery using groups alien to the locality, probably remnants of LSA people, incoming cultivators or pastoralists or a combination of these (Chaplin 1970: 35-39). I disagree. The overwhelming weight of evidence points to them being forest hunter-gatherers.

Nelson (1973: 29) argued that the geographic patterning of material culture (the MSA and LSA industries in East Africa) is tantalising because, although the LSA variation is great, it is confined to a single basic technological tradition with little or no symptomatic variation. The MSA, on the other hand, is divided into two geographical regions: the Congo basin and Lake Victoria Sangoan or Lupemban tradition with generally higher rainfall and the surrounding areas of lower rainfall. Nelson noted from his excavations that in East Africa, archaeological finds from rock shelters were more variable than those from open sites, suggesting that rock shelters tended to attract activity-specific occupation (Nelson 1979: 28).

Archaeological evidence from the excavated sites indicates a close pattern of site occupation and a possible relationship between excavated finds and the rock art. Similarities have been noted in the rock art at Magosi, Nyero and Lolui. From this evidence, the emerging questions revolve around:

1. whether site occupation was activity-specific, and if so, what activity was this? Does this hold true for most of the geometric rock art sites;
2. what is the symbolism of the excavated finds, particularly the ochre pencils in relation to the paintings, and how can this symbolism be determined; and
3. does the homogenous pattern in method and manner of depiction of the geometric rock art and the consistent pattern of evidenced from excavated finds, confirm a forest hunter-gatherer authorship of the rock art?

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I contend that previous researchers were mistaken in attributing the rock art of Uganda to Bushmen of southern Africa - an interpretation based on what was known of San cosmology and was correct in a South African context. I argue that the makers of the geometric rock art of Uganda are most likely to be found north of the Zambezi.

In contrast to previous researchers, I position myself within a contextual interpretive approach that takes cognisance of the diversity of oral traditions and acknowledges the complexity and variability of ethnographic, archaeological, linguistic and historical evidence individually and collectively. I am aligning myself within this approach because it entails the use of multilayered interpretive and hence contextual, investigations. This approach remains the nexus of providing a secure means of unpacking rock art images. In the next chapters, I seek to obtain answers to the emerging questions following a clearer understanding of patterns that will emerge from data analysis.

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Chapter Three

CONFRONTING SIMILAR YET DIFFERENT SHAPES

In Chapter 2, I presented my fieldwork and provided a discussion on the general distribution of new rock art sites in relation to those previously recorded in Uganda. From this discussion, it is clear that most of the rock art of Uganda is depicted within two broad traditions: the figurative in the north east and the geometric/schematic in the central, east and northeast. Formal similarities are shown between the geometric images in Uganda and those in other parts of east, central and south-central Africa. These similarities re-confirm that this rock art represents a single tradition as originally identified by Clark (1958).

In this Chapter, I analyse the geometric rock art of Uganda, placing it into categories or shape typologies for ease of discussion. Processes of analysis such as developing typologies have a large element of subjectivity but, in this study, such analyses serve towards an eventual contextual comparison with other known sites in east, central and south-central Africa. An appreciation of any identified patterns is crucial for subsequent analyses. However, the categories or typologies used here are not the categories in which the makers of the rock art would have viewed the images.

The images discussed in this Chapter derive from fifty-one rock art sites [these include eleven previously recorded sites]. These sites are a significant increase upon previously recorded rock painting sites and they are predominantly located in the eastern part of Uganda. The reason for this easterly localisation of sites is not yet clear. It may reflect the availability of relatively stable and suitable rock surfaces for painting. Engraved sites were not included in the analysis.

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Following my fieldwork, information obtained from site record forms and field notebooks was tabulated and entered into Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. Slides were transferred into digital format by scanning the colour films. GPS information was processed using GARMIN software. Processing of site forms and slides was done for analytical purposes as well as to create an archive of rock art sites in Uganda on the SARADA (South Africa Rock Art Digital Archive) database.

Of the thirty-six previously recorded engraved and painted sites in Uganda, only five are recorded with figurative images and of the five there is a high possibility that some of the images described as figurative may actually be fragments of geometric shapes that erroneously appear as naturalistic depictions of animals. For example, in Sassoon's report in *Nyame Akuma*, he was informed that a group of red lines "added up to a frieze of zebras" at Nyero 2 (Sassoon 1973: 8). These red lines are actually fragments of red and white concentric circles.

From the data, we see that 94% of all rock art sites in Uganda contain geometric motifs. Forty of the forty-two new sites (95%) contain geometric motifs. Given these percentages, I can only conclude that the probability that additional new sites will not contain figurative motifs is 0.94. Although new sites will increase my data set, such an increase is unlikely to alter existing emerging patterns. I therefore consider the quality and quantity of the data collected during fieldwork, and from previous publications, sufficient and significant to generate overall trends in geometric rock art patterning (focusing on general patterns rather than individual sites or images).

Whilst I made every effort to obtain as much data as possible, not all data from previously documented sites were considered because, I was either unable to revisit some sites or, the information about the sites from available literature did not contain the necessary details to use it within my data analysis. The data techniques I chose were ones designed to throw up a variety of patterns in site and image choices. These techniques were chosen to confirm, contradict or eliminate

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any assumed patterns and to consider specific associations between image-type and site-type.

To engage with statistical analyses, I classified the data into variables derived from a summary of detailed field notes, literature, observation and memory. I looked at similarities between the images in Uganda with those of east, central and south-central Africa. I considered whether these images differed from rock art traditions in neighbouring areas such as those tentatively aligned to the eastern Africa pastoralists; the eastern, central and southern Bantu-speaking farmers; or the better-known southern African San hunter-gatherers. I analysed the data visually, categorising images according to visual likeness.

Qualitative data were converted into quantitative data (percentages and represented in charts and graphs) for ease of analysis and to determine evidence of variation or consistency. Matters of image juxtapositions and associations were considered separately. In my classification scheme, I first considered images individually, and then grouped the images according to formal similarities. I acknowledge that lumping images into groups may obscure some differences between them, but that equally, splitting them could expose or highlight irrelevant differences (Cowgill 1989: 132). Data were analyzed in two sections: image and site analysis.

Image Analyses

Image analyses hinged on whether images were depicted singly or clustered, and by the geometry of their shapes. Such considerations aimed to identify patterns and associations between the images. The kinds of associations considered included image placement, site location, superimposition, method and manner of depiction. I divided images based on four key variables: placement, manner of execution, colour and shape. Shapes were subdivided according to outline, internal and external appendages and subdivisions. Only those shapes established with certainty to belong within these categories or subdivisions were classified. Traces or smudges were considered indeterminate and were omitted.

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Variables were tabulated into options in which one of each was applicable to any image. Physical associations were considered for the images. Where sites exhibited panel surfaces separated by more than five metres, but less than fifteen metres, these panels were categorised as site A or B respectively. Although this division slightly increased the number of painted sites analysed, more importantly, it provided a clearer picture of the choices made in choosing specific images in a panel of art. Of the fifty-one sites considered, forty-nine comprise geometric images only, one site has an animal-like image alongside geometric shapes and one site had a single animal image (Table 3).

Table 3: List of sites used in data analysis

1	ADACAR	16	KOBWIN	30	MUKONGORO-EKOKI 1	45	OBWIN
2	ADAMAI	17	KOMOLO 1	31	MUKONGORO-EKOKI 2	46	OKOBOI
3	BUNAMBUTYE	18	KOMOLO 2	32	MUKONGORO-EKOKI 3	47	ONYERE
4	KACHUMBALA	19	KOMUGE 1	33	MUKONGORO-EKOKI 4	48	ONONGO
5	KAKORO 1	20	KOMUGE 2	34	NGORA	49	OTATAI 1
6	KAKORO 2	21	KOMUGE 3	35	NYAMONGO 1	50	OTATAI 2
7	KAKORO 3	22	KONGOIDE	36	NYAMONGO 2	51	SERE
8	KAKORO 4	23	KONGUNGA	37	NYAMONGO 3		
9	KAKORO 5	24	LOLWE ISLAND (Main)	38	NYAMONGO 4		
10	KAKORO 6	25	LOLWE ISLAND 1	39	NYERO 1		
11	KAKORO 7	26	LOLWE ISLAND 2	40	NYERO 2		
12	KALENGO	27	LOLWE ISLAND 3	41	NYERO 3		
13	KAPIRI 1	28	MORUNGATUNG BI-1	42	NYERO 4		
14	KAPIRI 2	29	MORUNGATUNG BI-2	43	NYERO 5		
15	KERIA			44	NYERO 6		

Statistical analyses of the rock art sites reveal that there was a very weak relationship between colour and image categories. A chi-square test indicates that this relationship is essentially a random one because any image type could have been done in any colour ($\chi 2 = 0.37$) (Fig. 34). However, this weak and random relationship does not mean that the relationship is irrelevant to an overall understanding of the rock art. Rather, it may indicate that form took precedence over colour. Image-colour relationships were generated by evidence of presence by site rather than by counting each individual image in the panel at each site. If image types were counted individually, the number of images in red pigment will

increase significantly, since most of the images are painted in various shades of red pigment.

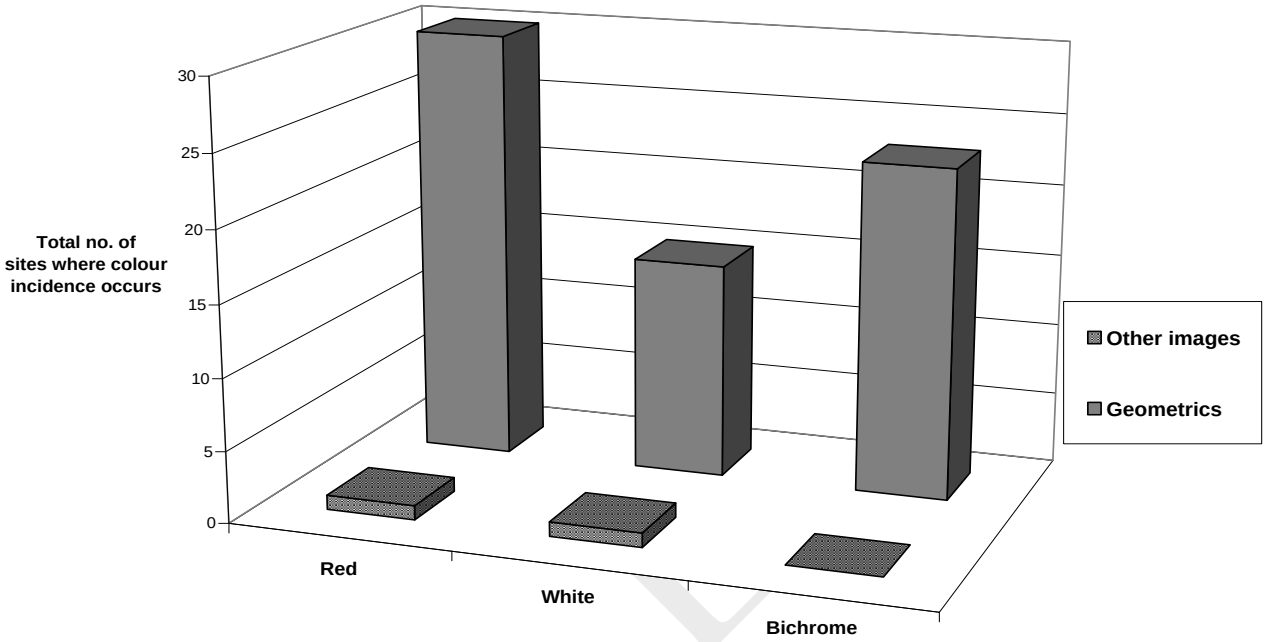


Figure 34: Image – colour relationship

Typology

In rock art research, formal analyses have been particularly useful in developing typologies. Typologies are useful in assessing similarities or differences in rock art traditions. Using formal analysis I observed that although the manner of depiction of the geometric rock art of Uganda is relatively consistent, the range of shapes depicted is similar to that used in the broader geometric rock art zone of Africa (Clark 1958; 1970; Smith 1995). In my use of formal analysis, I do not suggest uniformity in depiction, but rather, I attempt to illuminate conventions that may help to explain the rock art imagery.

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The shape typologies (Fig. 35) I employed were an essential method in recognising variations in Uganda and within the geometric rock art zone. I have used the shape typologies developed by Smith (1995) so as to be able to draw comparisons between my observed Ugandan patterns and those Smith identified for the rock art of south-central Africa.

In Uganda, twenty-seven of Smith's ninety shape types were identified. Variants in the group type were identified and numerically listed. The sequence imposed here begins with simple forms and progresses to more complex shapes. Deriving from Smith's typology it is clear that there is a very strong similarity in circular motifs in south-central Africa and Uganda. The area of greatest variation however, lies with the 'sausage shape' types. Briefly, I discuss the identified shapes in Uganda, using their numerical identification for clarity.

Circular shapes (1000s) are by far the most frequently depicted of the geometric images and comprise about fifty-two percent of the image types occurring in the art. The majority of circular shapes are red monochrome. The circle, the simplest circular shape, is depicted in various sizes from about 5cm to 10cm in diameter. Circles and circular shapes may occur individually or as part of other shapes, or may be joined together to create other forms such as linear shapes. Such linear shapes of circular forms have been referred to as 'acacia pods or lozenges' by previous researchers (e.g. Lawrance 1953: 10).

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Shape Typology
(after Smith 1995:84)

CIRCLES AND OFF CIRCLES
1000 Outline circle and off circle motifs.
1001 " + all round external radiating lines
1002 " + external radiating lines from base
1003 " + external radiating Us
1004 " + internal spokes
1010 " + concentric fill
1011 " + " + external radiating lines
1012 " + " + external radiating Us
1020 " + single horizontal line fill
1021 " + multiple horizontal line fill
1030 " + single vertical line fill
1031 " + multiple vertical line fill
1032 " + internal grid
1040 Filled circle and off circle motifs

SAUSAGE SHAPES
1100 Outline vertical "sausage" shape.
1101 " + single vertical line fill
1104 " + multiple horizontal fill
1110 Outline horizontal "sausage" shape
1112 " + multiple vertical fill
1120 Filled vertical "sausage" shape
1130 Filled horizontal "sausage" shape

U SHAPES
1200 U shape open at top
1201 " + concentric fill
1202 " + single internal attached line fill
1203 " + multiple internal attached line fill
1210 U shape open to right
1211 " + concentric fill
1220 U shape open to left
1221 " + concentric fill
1230 U shape open at base
1231 " + concentric fill
1232 " + single internal attached line fill
1233 " + multiple internal attached line fill

LINES
1300 Vertical line
1301 Set of parallel vertical lines
1305 Vertical line upturned V base.
1310 Horizontal line
1311 Set of parallel horizontal lines
1320 Grid/lattice
1340 Vertical line with horizontal lines running off to right

DOTS & SHORT STROKES
1400 Dot
1410 Line of dots
1420 Grid of dots

ARROWS & SIMILAR
1500 Up arrow
1501 Up arrow + multiple heads
1511 Down arrow + multiple heads
1520 Sideways arrow

COMPLEX GEOMETRIC
1600 Complex geometric motif

SPREAD EAGLES
2000 Two legged motif
2010 Four legged motif
2011 " + feet
2012 " + head protrusions
2013 " + feet + head protrusions
2030 Six legged motif

SNAKE-LIKE DESIGNS AND MEANDERS
3000 Single snake like meander
3010 Multiple snake like meanders
3020 Complex meander

SILHOUETTE ZOOMORPHS
4000 Indistinguishable animal with elements of naturalism in depiction.
4050 Schematised animal with stick legs
4070 " " with no legs
4100 Indistinguishable bird with elements of naturalism in depiction.
4150 Schematised Bird with stick legs
4170 " " with no legs
4200 Indistinguishable reptile with elements of naturalism in depiction.
4250 Schematised reptile with stick legs
4270 " " with no legs

ANTHROPOMORPHS
5000 Single figure
5001 Single figure with penis
5002 Single figure holding item
5003 Single figure with penis holding item
5100 Row of figures
5101 Row of figures with penises
5102 Row of figures some with, some without, penises
5103 Row of figures arms linked

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Shape Typology – Uganda variants

CIRCLES AND OFF CIRCLES
1013 Outline circle + concentric circle fill + internal spokes fill
1014 " + concentric circle fill + vertical line from centre
1015 " + concentric fill + filled central circle
1016 " + filled circle
1033 Outline circle + internal grid + external radiating lines

SAUSAGE SHAPES
1102 Outline vertical "sausage" shape + outline sausage infill
1103 " + dotted infill + outline sausage centre infill
1104 " + internal off circle at one end
1105 " + U shape at both ends
1106 " + concentric circle + filled circle at both ends
1107 " + filled circle at both ends
1108 " + small off circle at one end
1111 Outline horizontal "sausage" shape + upturned ends
1112 " + upturned ends + open U shapes on top
1113 " + upturned ends + inverted U shapes below
1114 " + multiple vertical line fill
1115 " + external off circular 'sausage' shape at one end
1116 " + internal off circular 'sausage' shape at one end
1117 " + concentric circle + filled circle at both ends
1118 " + filled circle at both ends
1140 Outline half 'sausage' shape
1141 " + outline half-sausage shape in-fill
1142 " + external off circular 'sausage' shape at one end
1143 " + internal off circular 'sausage' shape at one end

LINES AND GRIDIRONS
1302 Set of parallel vertical lines + internal dots
1303 " + internal horizontal lines
1304 Vertical line + upturned V base
1312 " + horizontal strokes
1341 Vertical line + intersecting horizontal lines

DOTS & SHORT STROKES
1412 Line of dots + horizontal line

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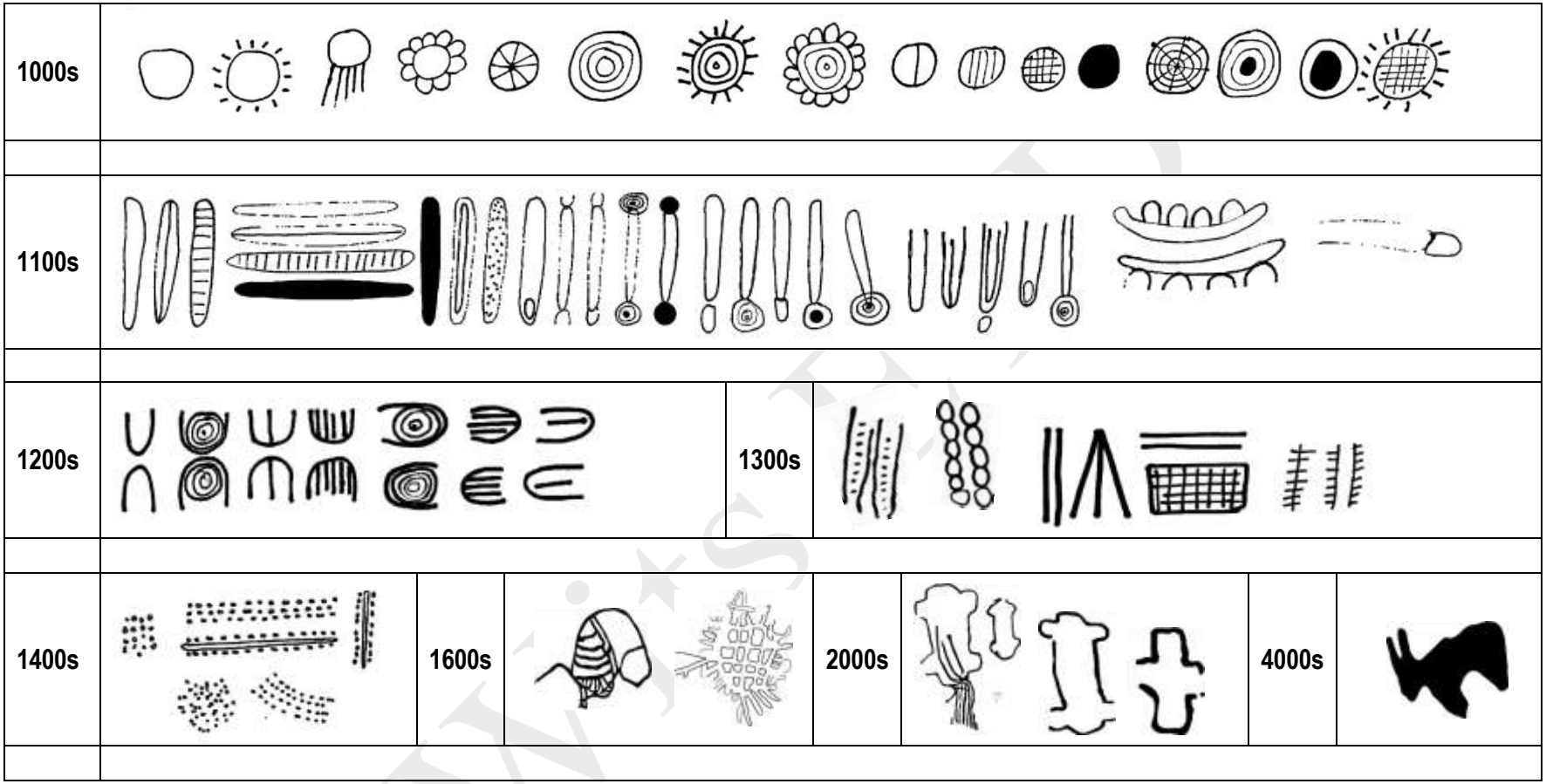


Figure 35: Key to shape typologies. Numbers correspond to the shapes

Of the circular shapes, concentric circles are predominant. With concentric circles, the outer circle encloses between one and up to ten or more inner circles. Concentric circles are predominately depicted in red, although there are several in red and white bichrome. Concentric circles vary in size from 10cm to 50cm in diameter. Circles are also depicted with a vertical line and horizontal line cross. Circles are often small, not more than 10cm in diameter. The outline circle and internal filled circle are frequently depicted in red pigment.

Another frequently occurring shape is the circle with external radiating lines, the rayed circle, commonly referred to as the 'sun-burst' image (1001). A variation of the rayed circle is a concentric circle with external radiating lines. Frequently these radiating lines are also depicted in bichrome where the concentric circle has alternating red and white pigment. Often a concentric circle has a vertical linear extension that forms no shape or sometimes the extension is sausage shaped with an off-circle attachment (1014). Alternatively, concentric circles may also have internal spokes that radiate from the centre to the edge of the outer circle (1013). Circles or concentric circles may have multiple linear extensions from one point of the outer circle (1002).

Continuing with the imposed sequence and shape typology, the next group of images examined are 'sausage shapes' (1110s) and these comprise about fourteen percent of the image types depicted. They are the second most frequently depicted image type, after circular imagery. On stylistic grounds, these images were identified and described by Smith (1995) as 'sausage shapes', and for consistency, I use the same term. Similarly, U-shapes (1200s) comprise six percent of the image types depicted. U-shapes are unlike 'half-sausage' shapes, are described as open oval shapes that often occur with various lines or circles attached to the internal base of the "U'. There are several variations of this image type.

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About twelve percent of the image types depicted are lines and grid shapes (1300s), and these are the third most frequently depicted image type. Predominately depicted in red monochrome, often with red and white vertical line infill, they appear 'comb-like'. Some lines include a combination of half circles or strokes forming 'ladder-like' shapes. Lines are also depicted as if the pigment was applied to the finger and then the pigment was dragged across the panel surface, over other images or other images are painted over it. Such lines often occur in red monochrome and are frequently located almost at the top of the panel surface (see Nyero 2). Dots and strokes (1400s) comprise seven percent of images depicted. Dots vary in colour, some are red, but are often in white and may occur in a cluster, cloud, or grid, or they may form another shape. Dots or strokes also often occur with a horizontal line over them.

Complex shapes (1600s) constitute four percent of the image types depicted in the variations. Within this category, various shapes are possible. I use this category to consider forms that may not fit under any of the set types. 'Stretched-hide' shapes (2010s) equally comprise about four percent of the image types depicted. This shape evokes the outline appearance of a stretched animal hide. It is depicted only in red pigment. Finally, only two animal type motifs were identified (4000s); one depicted in red and another in white monochrome. Animal shapes comprise one percent of the image types in Uganda so far. This typological analysis allows a firm basis for statistical comparison with geometric art in other areas, regardless of the imposed shape types used.

Having grouped the images, I sought to determine first, whether any relationship exists between image shape, manner of depiction and placement on the panel as well as in the landscape; second, between colour and orientation; and third, which association probably occurred intentionally and which could be a product of chance. The granular texture of most boulders in eastern Uganda is the preferred surface for painting on probably because they are the predominant surface available.

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Statistical analyses indicate that at about seventy-three percent (n=41) of the sites images are depicted on vertical surfaces under an overhang, sixteen percent (n=9) are on exposed vertical surfaces, while close to eleven percent (n=6) are on ceiling surfaces. This strong preference for use of vertical surfaces reflects the fact that in the landscape there are more vertical surfaces than there are other surfaces (Fig. 36). Specifically, circular image types (1000s) occur on all surfaces while sausage shapes (1100s) are depicted mostly on ceiling or exposed surfaces. Animal image types (4000s) occurred on surfaces with a slight overhang. The stretched hide image types (2010s) are frequently painted on exposed vertical surfaces and boulders, while complex geometrics (1600s) occurred on ceiling surfaces or surfaces with a slight overhang (Fig. 37).

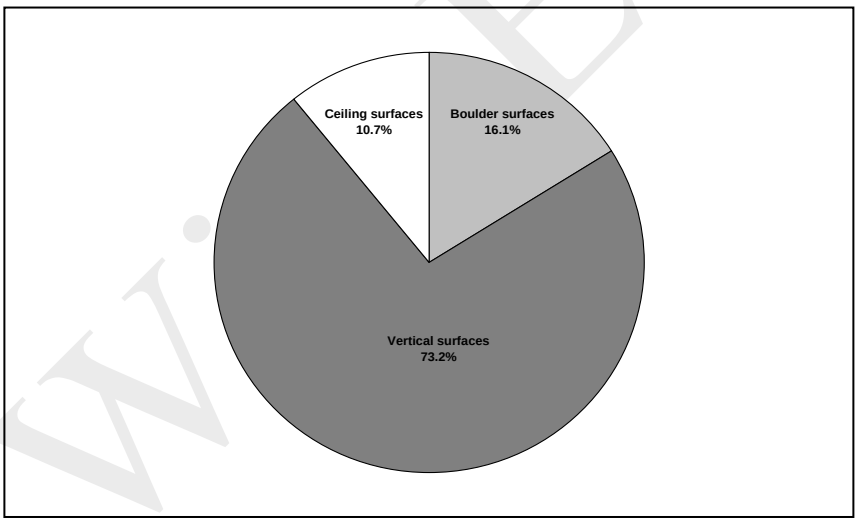


Figure 36: Percentage of sites with images on boulders, vertical or ceiling surfaces

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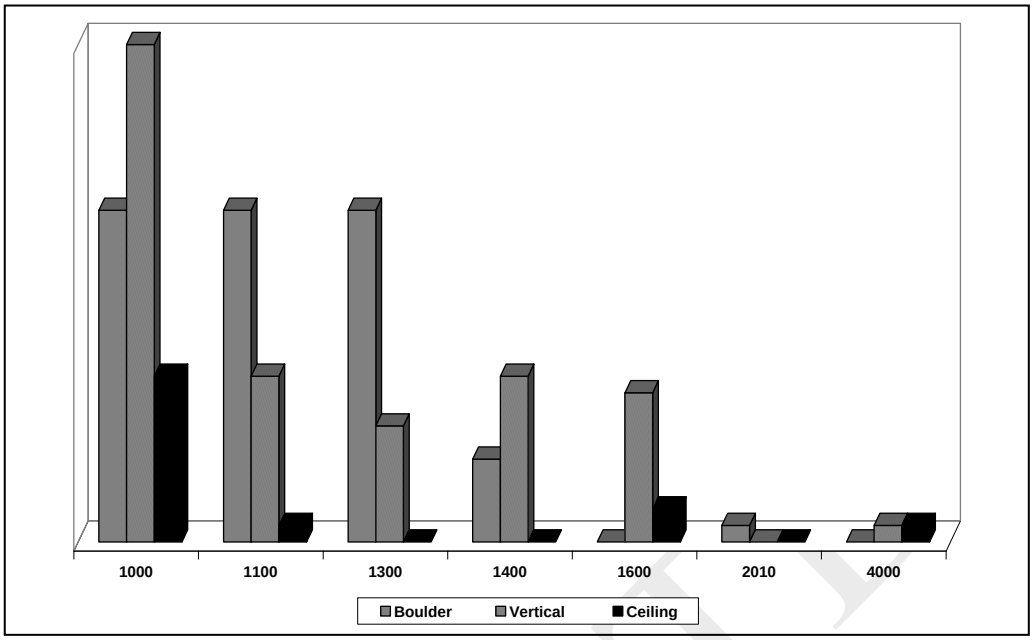


Figure 37: Relationship between the shapes and surfaces

The method and manner of depiction was not considered in detail because at forty-nine sites, the pigment was always thick and most probably finger-painted, or made by a combination of finger and stick. At nine sites, images comprise distinctive fine lines that suggest brush or stick application. At sites Nyero 2 and Onyere 1, for instance, circular and sausage shapes (1000s and 1100s) were painted with a stick or a brush while at the majority of sites, these shapes were finger-painted. In all instances, the stretched hide shape (2010s) is almost always finger-painted, although one at Mukongoro 3 had an internal grid that was probably stick or brush-painted. Some image outlines or shape boundaries were smudged, making it difficult to determine convincingly whether the image was painted with a brush, a stick, or a finger. Given this scenario, I therefore considered the method of application as contributing only a minor role in understanding the rock art. The pattern in which finger-painted images are common, and stick-painted ones occasional, is identical to the pattern reported by Smith for the geometric tradition rock art in Kasama, Zambia (see Smith 1995: 133-5).

With regard to colour classification, in south-central Africa, Smith (1995) recorded a large percentage of geometric images painted in red monochrome and a small number of geometric bichrome (red and white) images. Smith noted that many concentric circle red images probably had white infill, now lost through preservation factors (Smith 1995: 96). The colour classification I used was based on the different pigments identified in East Africa (Posnansky 1961; Posnansky & Cole 1963; Posnansky & Nelson 1968; Chaplin 1974). Rock paintings in Uganda are depicted in a range of reds – claret, orange, crimson, pale pink and similarly a range of whites – chalky white, off-white. These colour ranges derive from two core pigments: red ochre and white clay. Red and yellow ochre are naturally tinted iron-rich clays that form at temperatures of about 950^0C usually where there is standing water, hot springs or because of volcanic activity and are a product of oxidation. The eastern part of Uganda where most sites are found is on the edge of the East African Rift Valley systems where there are historically active volcanoes, implying that the clays in this area have been subjected to great heat. This region is dominated by lakes Kyoga, Bisinia and Opeta each of which have large swampy areas during the dry season. During fieldwork, the local people of Kumi district, particularly those in Nyamongo and Kalengo villages, explained that clay deposits are ubiquitous in their areas, especially parts near these swamps. The abundance of clay at Nyamongo for example, earned it the local name 'Kolupe', meaning 'place of clay'. Within the Great Lakes region, kaolin was widespread and used (with ochre and charcoal) by people to decorate walls of houses and their bodies (Schoenbrun 1998: 25). Colour variations arise due to fading and bleeding of pigment through time and mixing core pigments with other soils or contaminants. I will therefore treat all pigment as either red or white or bichrome for analysis purposes because most of the variations result from post-depositional processes.

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Statistical analysis shows that fifty-five percent of the sites (n=28) had images depicted in red and white bichrome. Twenty-nine percent (n=15) of sites had images depicted only in red pigment and sixteen percent (n=8) of sites had imagery depicted only in white pigment. Colour (and therefore image) overlays were based on seven pigment variables: bichrome only; bichrome and monochrome red; bichrome and monochrome white; monochrome red; monochrome white; monochrome red and monochrome white; and all three (bichrome, red and white monochrome) (Fig. 38). An interpretation of the emerging pattern in colour overlays is that images depicted in red are commonly painted over other red images (e.g. Fig. 39). Frequently, red images occur over white images and sometimes over bichrome images. Comparatively, less frequent are white images over white images and rarely are images depicted in white painted over bichrome or red images. At Nyero 3, red and white monochromes are painted side by side while at Mukongoro 3, red and white images are painted at separate locations of the boulder.

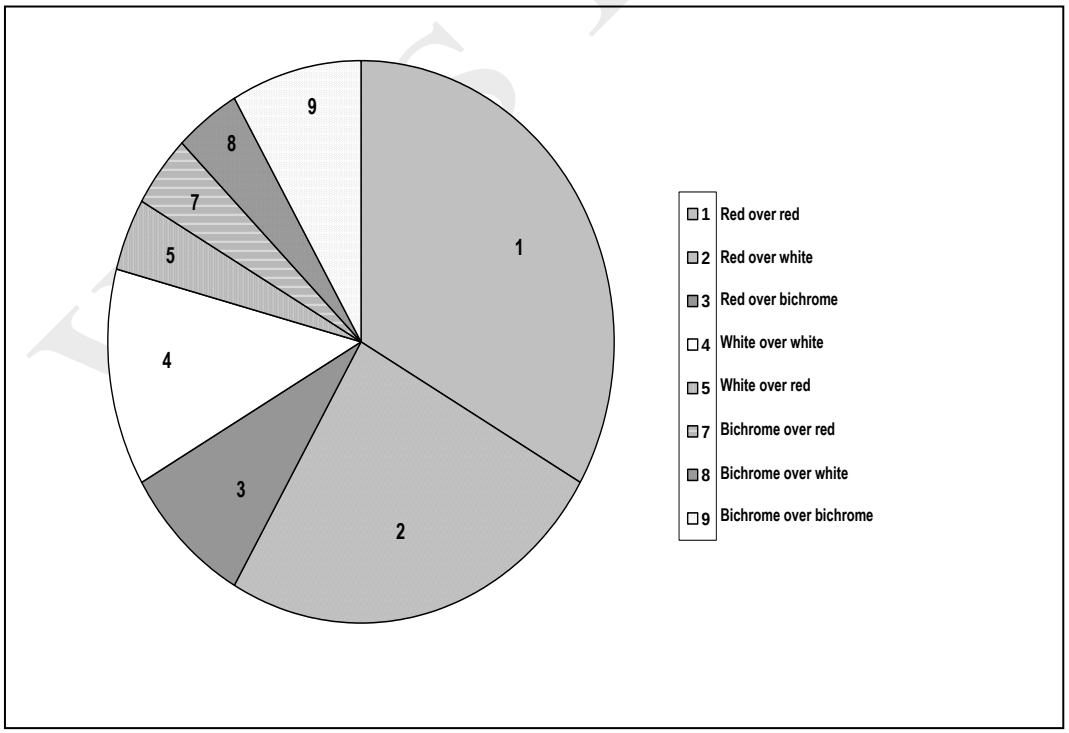


Figure 38: Colour overlays



(Image: Namono 2006)

Figure 39: Detail showing red pigment overlays, Lolui Islands



(Images: Namono 2006)

Figure 40: Examples of bichrome images from Lolui Islands

Super-positioning of imagery was clear where there were variations in pigmentation or hue. Variations in pigmentation may suggest that different palettes were mixed and one episode of painting preceded another. At Nyero 1, Chaplin noted, "the flaky white paint has the physical appearance of being more recent" (Chaplin1974: 41). The time scale between episodes is difficult to determine, but a generalisation can be made. Earlier rock art images are predominantly in claret. In small sized shelters such as Otatai 2, there was no overlapping of imagery, while at large shelters such as Nyero 2, Komuge 2,

Kapiri 1 and Lolui main shelter, the intensity of distinctive episodes of painting formed a large smudge of colour. The intensity of overlays confirms what Posnansky suggests, that the geometric rock art tradition has been made over a long period.

At Lolui there are two shades of red, a deep red and an orange red, and according to Posnansky, "the colour difference would not seem intentional and does not represent one set of paintings superimposed on a former set" (Posnansky 1961: 107). The accumulation of pigment from episodes of painting may suggest that initially red pigment was the preferred pigment but this preference was overtaken by a preference for white, or that early white pigment has not survived. Some images are typically bichrome, such as with the dumbbell shape in Figure 40. At Lolui main site, almost all dumbbell shapes have white dots or lines in-between and around the red image lines. Other images like these have red outline with red internal line or shape in-fill. In my opinion, where there are overlays, the consistent depiction of the same motifs in red or white suggests that the same group of people made all of the episodes. In some instances, there was a distinct separation of colour and motifs within the same site such as at Mukongoro 3.

Site Analyses

The physical characteristics for every recorded site were classified into types. With each type, I defined a range of options, and the most applicable type was selected for every site recorded. The variables related to site type, elevation, orientation and outlook. I classified site type based on whether the painted panel occurs in an overhang, on the exposed surface of a boulder or on the ceiling or lip of a rock. This was to determine whether sites had deep shelters suitable for habitation as suggested by Lawrance (1953) and Posnansky (1961). Some rock art sites may be big enough for only one or two people (e.g. Ngora 1); while others may hold quite a large crowd (e.g. Lolui main, Nyero 2 or Obwin 1). I was

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also interested in throwing up patterns that may suggest why certain surfaces were chosen for painting or engraving on and not others.

During fieldwork, I came across several potential rock boulder sites with no evidence of pigment. Lawrance noted that at Nyero, "there are many shelters and holes in the rocks but in only two of them did I find paintings; both are on the southern spur of the hill" (Lawrance 1953: 8). Chaplin observed that in the Teso area "there are excellent surfaces on sheltered but conspicuous rocks that seem very suitable, but no traces of ochre can be found on them" (Chaplin 1974: 34). On Lolui islands Chaplin noted that there are "other ideal surfaces entirely devoid of decoration in such positions as to preclude destruction by weathering of once-existing ochre" (*ibid.*). These observations imply that some sites were specifically chosen while very similar locations were ignored.

Elevation was considered a determining factor with regard to accessibility and seclusion or exposure of sites. I also considered whether the rock art site is on or near an unusual geological feature such as a prominent exposed vertical surface, or overlooks a river or a lake. Almost all sites are easy to reach, though they are often at a higher elevation within the local terrain (Fig. 41). For instance, Lolui island is low lying with an elevation of about 1,136 m and with the central part rising to between 1,150 m and 1,200 m as. Kumi district, the area from which the majority of sites are located, is dotted with isolated denudational hills and inselbergs making it possible to view a large expanse of relatively flat areas of grass and wetland. Since there are few hills, most of them were surveyed. About seventy percent of the areas surveyed yielded rock art sites, so in this area, most suitable surfaces were utilised.

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(Images: Namono 2006)

Figure 41: Examples of elevation and outlook of sites within the typical Kumi area landscape

The elevation of 61% of the sites ranges between 1,050m and 1,149m, while 39% are between 1,150m and 1,249mts. Comparison with a random distribution indicates a fifty-five percent chance that this pattern occurred by chance, in other words, an insignificant finding in this case. I considered site orientation to determine which surfaces are frequently painted on, the visibility of the panels and whether the orientation of the panel influenced choice of site for painting on. I found that 53.1% of the sites are oriented southerly, 8.0% are easterly, 24.8% are northerly and 14.1% are westerly (Fig. 42).

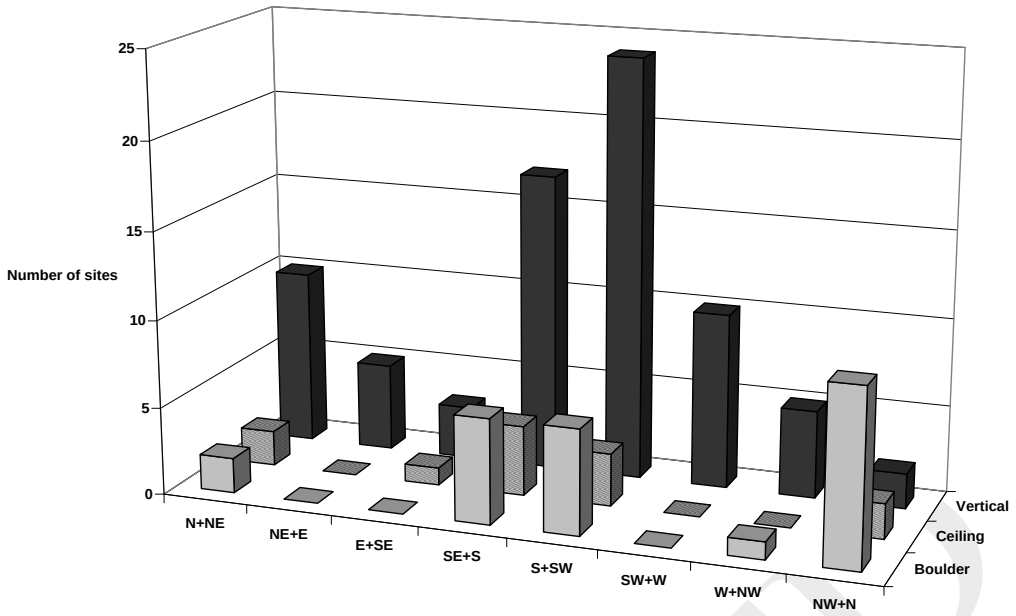


Figure 42: Association between site orientation and placement

Compared with Smith's work in Kasama Zambia, there seems to be a distinct pattern in orientation of sites between the red animal tradition sites and the red geometric rock art sites. In Kasama, the red animal tradition sites (Group BR) tend to face north and northwest, while the red geometric tradition (Group FG), sites tend to face south or southeast quite strongly (Smith 1995: 150). This strong pattern for the geometric sites in Kasama ties in with the pattern in site orientation for Uganda. A VCramer measure of the relative strength of association between orientation and placement of images indicates a moderate association (0.31). This association can be interpreted as evidence that choice of surfaces did not occur by chance, the strong pattern indicates that southerly oriented sites are deliberately being chosen in Uganda and Zambia. Although the association in Kasama was between orientation and image groupings (traditions), and the associations in Uganda are between orientation and image placement/panel surface, the strong southerly bias of sites confirms that the geometric images in Uganda and the red geometric images in Kasama belong together. Reasons for this deliberate selection of southerly oriented sites may be linked to rain control and fertility. Rainfall on the greater part of Uganda is a product of evaporation, spread by

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southeast winds enforced by Lake Victoria breezes. In the eastern town of Mbale, close to Kumi district, relief rainfall sometimes comes from Mt Elgon in the north-east (Engineer Martin Wambwa, pers. comm. March 2009).

Comparing with a random or even distribution of site orientation and placement, there is a twenty percent chance of the correlation between image placement and site orientation occurring by chance. Comparing with Smith's data for site orientation in Kasama, Zambia for the red geometric images, there is a site orientation bias towards southeast and south (Smith 1995: 151). Closer to Uganda, in Tanzania, Mabulla noted that the majority of geometric painted shelters and overhangs in the Mara region are south and east facing shelters (Mabulla 2005: 36). It can be said therefore, that the southerly bias for the Ugandan sites conforms to the broader pattern within the geometric rock art zone.

Further, I considered the possible relationship between choice of site and whether proximity to or visibility of surrounding features such as water were significant in determining choice of site. Eighty six percent of the sites have an outlook to the plains and what would have been woodlands, while fourteen percent have an outlook to the plains and a water body. A random distribution shows a fifty-five percent chance that this pattern occurred by chance. All that can be said is that most rocky areas with potential surfaces for rock art are oriented towards the plains and they are painted in proportion to their prevalence.

It is possible that any rock was suitable to be used so long as the surface was suitable. Suitability of orientation seems the only demonstrable feature important for choice of site. Sites with a good command of the surrounding areas were preferred, but painting was not restricted to these surfaces. It is probable that there is a relationship between site location and use of site. Observations during fieldwork revealed that some of the sites were visible from each other. It was possible to identify a hill with a rock art site from another site in the opposite

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direction, such as Agule hill, which is visible from Kobwin (Fig. 43), or Obwin that can be seen from Otatai 2 (Fig. 44).



(Image: Namono 2006)

Figure 43: View of Agule in the distance, from Kobwin



(Image: Namono 2006)

Figure 44: A distant view of Obwin from Otatai 2

In order to interrogate the accuracy of relationships derived from image and site analysis using statistical analysis and observation, I sought to establish first, that the dominant imagery is depicted in red pigment, is circular and is distributed widely among the rock art sites in Uganda. Secondly, that the distribution of these images is random in the landscape. Thirdly, that the society that produced the majority of the images was probably a homogenous one.

To establish this I sought to analyse my identified patterns and look for variability or homogeneity between sites. Using XLSTAT version 2008.1.03 software, I employed a simple correspondence analysis using 72 variables listed in columns and 51 sites listed in rows. Colour was indicated as red = a, white = b, red + white = c, against the numerical image type. Correspondence analysis is a statistical, descriptive, exploratory technique that graphically represents associations between values in a cross-tabulation table within a two dimensional graph. Correspondence analysis serves to reproduce the distances between the row and column points in a two-way table. The relative positions of the row points and column points that are plotted on the resultant graph are consistent with the relative associations of the row and column data in the table.

For this study, although the cross-tabulation table was small, I used this technique because correspondence analysis provides a clear, quick identification of unexpected associations between images, colour and sites that may not be immediately evident whilst examining data in the field or the qualitative data derived from site record forms and notebooks. What are important in this analysis are the distances of the points on the graph. These are informative because row points (sites) that are close to each other are similar with regard to the pattern of relative frequencies across the columns (images). These relative positions of points on the graph contain the results of the analysis.

Intuitively the results from the correspondence analysis (Fig. 45) suggest what the general observation and statistical analysis showed: that the majority of images in

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Uganda are circular and are depicted in red pigment. Variations in imagery can be identified especially since things differentiate themselves through what they have in common (Bourdieu 1986: 258). In this case, images are differentiated through their colour and shape. Similarities between sites and images plotted on the graph indicate that those with the strongest semblances in colour and shape (all other images) group together at the point where the x-y axes meet indicating that they are very strongly associated.

On the left of the graph in Figure 46 are those sites that are associated with the rest of the images in terms of shape, but differ from them in colour. They differ from each other in shape type (1402 are dots and strokes while 1003 are circular shapes), but are similar in colour, both are white. On the right side of the graph are those sites that are linked to the rest of the group categories in terms of colour, directly as in the case of Onongo 1 (red animal), or indirectly in the case of Komolo 2 (U-shape) that is linked first with Komolo 1 (dots and strokes) then with the others in colour (red). Sites with circular imagery and red pigment are closer to the centre.

In geographical terms, the location of the sites has no obvious bearing on the shapes and colours depicted, although it may have relevance to the interpretation of the imagery. Rock art sites Nyero 3 and Obwin 1 are several kilometres apart, but in Figure 45, they form a cluster that is close to the centre, because they have red pigment and many concentric circles but differ from the majority due to the appendages around the circles. Nyero 3 and Obwin 1 are associated with each other because both contain a similar image that varies only in pigment. On the other hand, Komolo 1 and 2 are a few metres apart, but they are outliers because the shape and colour of the image types 1341b and 1003b or 1200a at these sites are different from other sites drawn to the centre of the graph.

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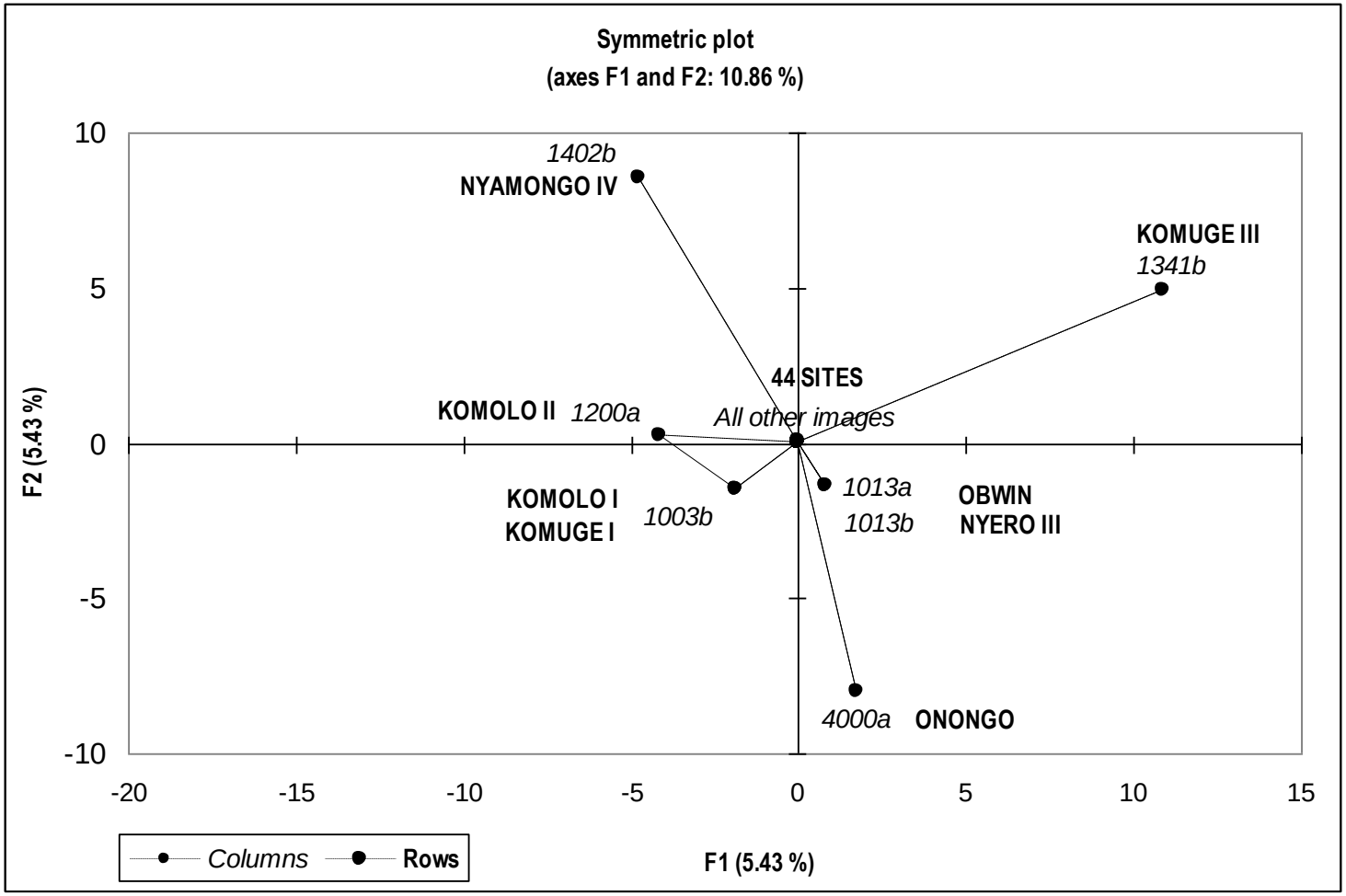


Figure 45: A Correspondence Analysis Graph showing the relationship between sites and image types

Variations in image typology may be due to influences from an alternative rock art tradition, alternative cultures or gender distinction within the same culture since change or variation is not always exogenous. Independently, colour may not be important in distinguishing one tradition from another as was the case in Malawi and Zambia (see Smith 1995), but rather it may be shape that distinguishes images. Correspondence analysis has shown that there is a very clear variation or divergence from the general pattern between, for example, shapes 4000a and the rest of the shapes. It differs in type from the majority of sites, but is depicted in a colour predominant at most sites, hence, it can be said to be loosely associated with the majority of sites in terms of colour rather than shape.

Statistics have been used in archaeology, anthropology and the social sciences over a considerable period. Sociologists have gathered and interpreted statistics as one of the ways of understanding the social world. A key sociologist, Bourdieu, used correspondence analysis to recognize that in societies such as Algeria, determinants of taste, cultural discrimination and choice lie in the possession of two forms of capital: economic and cultural (Bourdieu 1979; Robbins 1991). Bourdieu's use of correspondence analysis provides part of the impetus for the integration of an alternative method to the scientific approach in archaeology, so advocated for in the 1960s and 70s. Bourdieu argued that although statistics are theoretically and socially constructed phenomena, they are the primary datum for determining what reality or social practice is - a social pattern of reality.

The questions asked of these data are guided in their connections by my observations and classification of the images; hence, there is an element of subjectivity. For example, I mentioned earlier that the typologies I used may not have been the image categories the makers of the rock art or earlier researchers, such as Chaplin, chose. These typologies may be supported by evidence that is compelling for me, but may not be compelling for others, in which case I am relying on intuition to make sense of my data. In addition, the 'outliers' in Figure 45 could be the outcome of the variables that I used for this study. What correspondence analysis demonstrates is that points closest to where the x-y axes meet are more closely associated than points further away, the 'outliers'. I grouped the main cluster as a single point and labelled them 'all others' because most of the sites and variables cluster at the centre x-y crossing in Figure 45.

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The underlying logic of the distribution of image types established by correspondence analysis shows that the majority of sites in Uganda are similar in shape and colour. Consistency of colour and shape is indicative of cohesiveness between the rock art sites and continuities through time within the culture. What can be inferred from the central clustering in Figure 45, is that the closer the sites are to the centre, the more homogenous the culture or society or practice that produced the images.

Chaplin associated the white images at Nyero 1 with the 'late-white' paintings of Tanzania (Chaplin 1974: 41) that have since been attributed to farmers. The implication of this association is that the images in white are of a later date than the paintings in red. At Nyero 2 for example, there is evidence of red pigment over white pigment depicting a similar motif. Secondly, the images at Nyero 3 are similar in form but differ in pigment. Obwin 1 is very similar to Nyero 3. Farmer rock art was colloquially referred to as 'late-whites' hence the tendency to categorise images in white as painted by farmers. However, I have shown that it is the form that is depicted and not the colour that is used that is a better association for attribution of authorship in Uganda. Colour may have had symbolic function. Black could have been used but was not used. I therefore consider colour as a poor indicator of age or of a different group of people.

My data analysis challenges the assumption that there are very few rock art sites in Uganda. The fieldwork for this study generated twice as many painted rock art sites from what was previously known, suggesting that further surveys will generate more sites. The high degree of congruency in the imagery within the sites that I have considered seems to conform to regular repeated patterns of depiction, execution and location. The consistent variance in manner of depiction and placement between the rock art of the southern African San with those depicted in Uganda is a clear indication of a cognitive divergence between the makers of the two rock art traditions north and south of the Zambezi.

A strong pattern emerges when we consider the variables of colour, shape, method and manner of depiction. First, images made using the brush are usually in red. Second, those applied with the finger, are simply geometric and monochrome red and white or bichrome. Third, daubed images are highly stylised depictions of animals and dots and

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lines. The repertoire of geometric rock art of Uganda includes variations of image types commonly found in other areas north of the Zambezi. These variations may be considered regional variations within or between the groups that made them.

In my statistical study on variation (Table 4 & Fig. 46), I include data derived from Eastwood and Smith's numerical comparison of image classes between the Central Limpopo Basin in South Africa and Dedza, in Malawi (Eastwood & Smith 2005). In addition, Smith's original data from Kasama district in Zambia is included. I resolved to use statistics from Smith's field notes to eliminate figures for motifs that fall within the red animal tradition. This is because Smith randomly chose 100 sites for his analysis. In doing so, some shapes were likely to be underrepresented. Of the 100 sites, 50% were red animal tradition sites and 50% were red geometric sites. Red animal motifs are regularly accompanied by dots (Smith 1995: 143), which if included, would skew my analysis. Eliminating the Kasama red animal tradition makes Smith's 1995 Kasama data useful for comparison with the data from Uganda and the other regions I am considering with geometric motifs.

What is demonstrated in the study on variation is a progressive change in space. Regions are arranged in order further away from Uganda. It is clear from the data that as one moves from Uganda further south, circular shapes, sausage and 'U'shapes decrease progressively. Moving in the same direction, this predominance of circular, sausage and 'U'shapes is balanced by a progressive increase in depiction of rectangular, grids, dots, strokes and stretched hide shapes. Complex geometrics and animal shapes are relatively stable (albeit in the absence of the Kasama red animal tradition). Handprints are found in the south, further away from Uganda. Whereas current evidence of the presence of geometric rock art in these areas may reflect a research bias, consistency in manner of depiction and shapes used at sites across the geometric rock art zone suggests broad cultural links across the geometric rock art region. I now demonstrate this homogeneity with a brief regional comparison of a few geometric rock art sites.

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Table 4: Comparative Image Frequency table

		UGANDA		KASAMA		DEDZA		CLB	
IMAGE CLASS	**Goodwin Series terminology**	**Frequency**	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**
Circular shapes		103	**51.5**	179	**43.2**	245	**22.3**	153	**14.4**
Sausage shapes	Ovals/curved ovals	27	**13.5**	12	**2.9**	38	**3.5**	42	**4**
U shapes	U and V shapes	12	**6**	12	**2.9**	36	**3.3**	2	**0.2**
Lines, Dots and Strokes, Grids, Rectangles		37	**18.5**	145	**35**	651	**59.3**	377	**35.6**
Complex Geometric shapes	Other geometric	12	**6**	27	**6.52**	44	**4**	41	**3.9**
Stretched hide shape	Apron: semi-ovoid & animal skin forms	7	**3.5**	39	**9.42**	78	**7.1**	132	**12.4**
Animal	Other representations: human & animal	2	**1**	0	**0**	5	**0.5**	7	**0.7**
Handprints		0	**0**	0	**0**	0	**0**	265	**24.9**
Total sampled images		**200**		**414**		**1097**		**1019**	

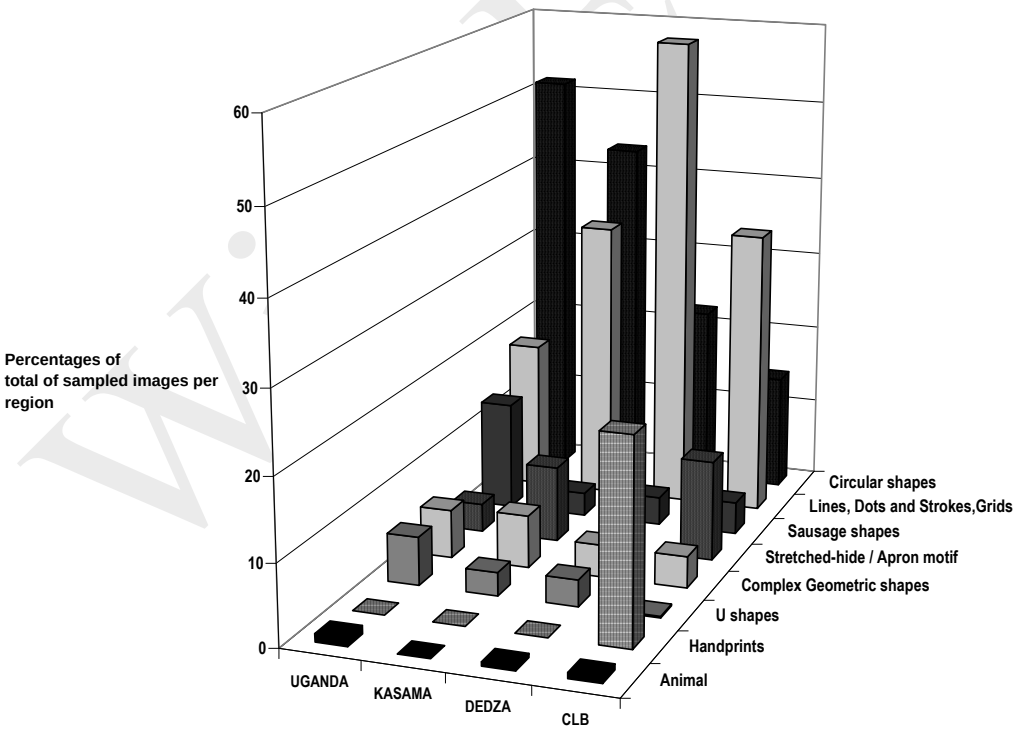


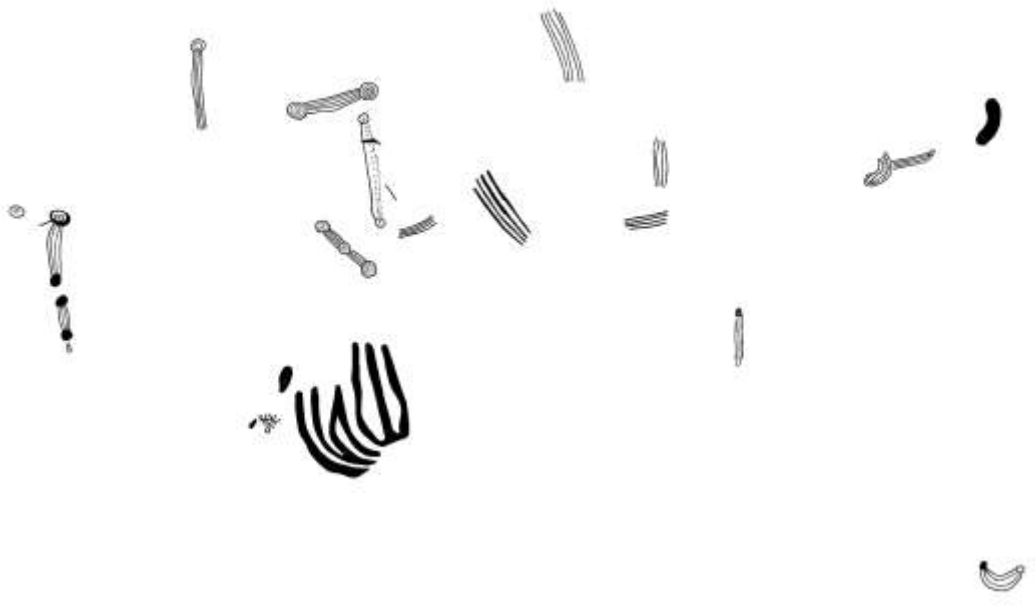
Figure 46: Percentages of Image Frequency per region

Regional comparisons

Zambia

Statistical data have shown that there are strong similarities between site orientation and image typology in Kasama, Zambia and Uganda. Shapes in Figure 47 (an unpublished site in Kasama), the geometric shapes closely parallel those in Uganda (such as at Lolui main or Morungatung-BI 2). Specific similarities between Figure 47 and Uganda sites include attention to detail in the dotted line infill of some sausage shapes and parallel lines. However, in Figure 47, the concentric circles are fewer than those in Uganda. These sausage shapes are also very similar to those in Angola.

In Kasama, the images Smith categorised as Group BS have a strong northerly and moderate southerly orientation (Smith 1995: 150). In Uganda, the Group BS falls within the red stretched-hide shape type. At Nyero 6 and Mukongoro 3, this shape is on an exposed boulder surface oriented south, while at Kakoro 1 it is on a similar surface oriented north. At Kakoro 2, it is on a vertical surface oriented northwest. This fifty-fifty north-south orientation is again similar for Uganda and Zambia. I posit that this relationship is further confirmation that Smith's Group BS and FG belong to the same geometric tradition as the geometric rock art of Uganda.



(Image: Traced and re-drawn by Smith 1995)

Figure 47: An unpublished site from Kasama, Zambia

Mozambique

Anthropologist Joaquim Roberto Dos Santos Júnior (1950) visited eight rock art sites (Cazula, Chiuta, Luia, Chicolone, Chifumbaze, Pembere, Cachombe and Deseranhana) in Tete Province, northwestern Mozambique. Santos Júnior described these sites as dominated with geometric motifs and occasionally including animal forms (Santos Júnior 1950). Recent images from Chicolone and Chifumbaze confirm that not only are these images geometric, but also they are in red pigment and are depicted in a manner similar to those in Uganda (Fig. 48).



(Image: Muinga 2007)

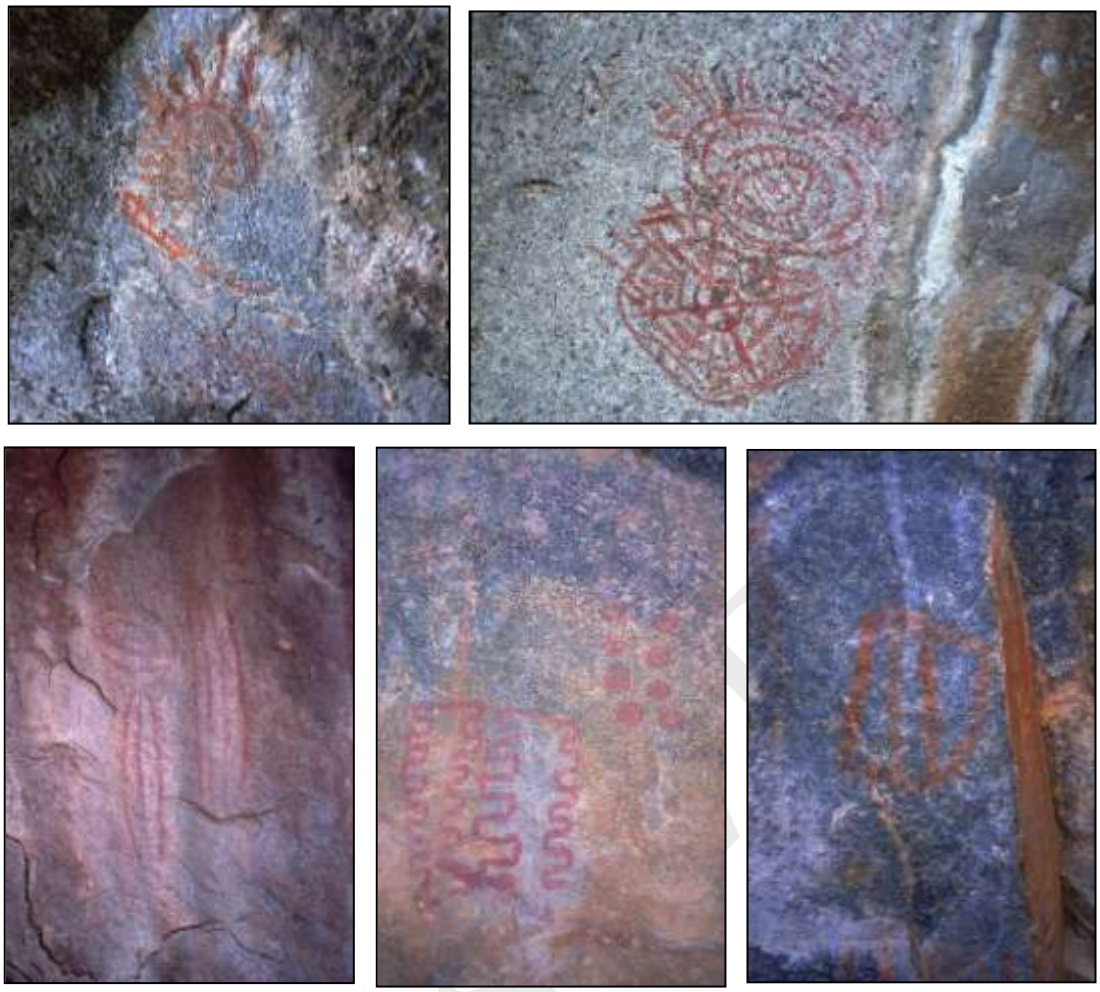
Figure 48: Photo of Chifumbaze showing fragments of surviving images in red pigment

Rectangular grids dominate the panel surface at Chicolone (Fig. 49), clearly demonstrating the earlier pattern observed as one moves further away from Uganda. Chicolone is one of the few sites so far north of the Zambezi with handprints, though there are a few handprints at a site in Malawi and at one in Zambia (Smith pers comm. 2009). In Nampula Province, Adamowicz (1987) describes the paintings at several sites, as being geometric. Field surveys conducted in Tete Province by the University of Witwatersrand and Tore Walderhaug Sætersdal, yielded several sites that confirm the presence of a geometric rock art tradition (Fig. 50). Although the sites have concentric circles with radiating lines, circles forming lines, grids and parallel lines, variation in shape is evident in the detailed rendering of some motifs, such as the joined concentric circles. These shapes are similar to those in Uganda and Zambia, but differ often where the red line has white dots painted over them (Fig. 51).



(Image : RARI 2005)

Figure 49: Chicolone, Mozambique



(Images: RARI 2005)

Figure 50: Images from sites in Mozambique



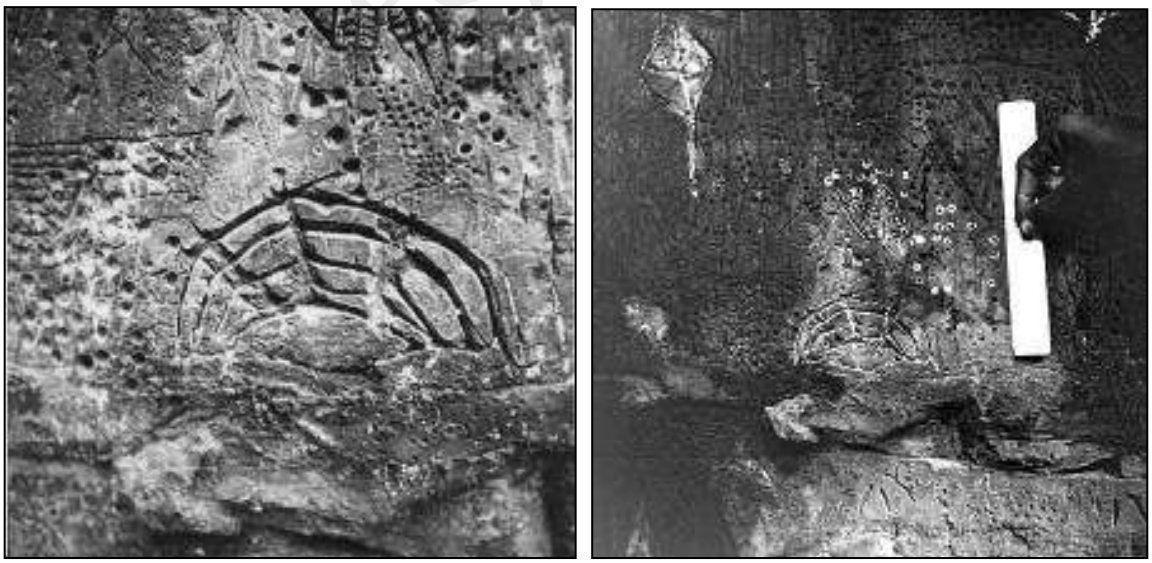
(Image: RARI 2005)

Figure 51: Detail showing white dots over red lines

The Democratic Republic of Congo

Archival records are housed at the Rock Art Research Institute, Johannesburg that relate to Clarence van Riet Lowe's contact with Francis Cabu, then working in the southern districts of Katanga and Lusambo of the Belgian Congo. Between them, they exchanged documents and photographs of archaeological finds. Amongst these are a series of photographs taken from the outer wall of the Kiantapo and Kiamakonde cave, two caves situated towards the south-west of the industrial city of Lubumbashi and at the end of one of the tributaries of the Lualaba River. They are of engravings made in limestone (Fig. 52). Abbé Breuil published images from these engraved sites (Breuil & Mortelmans 1952).

It is probable that rock paintings are unlikely to survive for long periods in the humid environment of the tropical rain forest, but engravings can. However, regardless of the medium of expression, what can be observed from these engravings is a relative consistency in depiction of circular shapes, concentric circles with strokes, dots and lines congruent with image types that are painted in Uganda.



(Images adopted from Breuil & Mortelmans 1952)

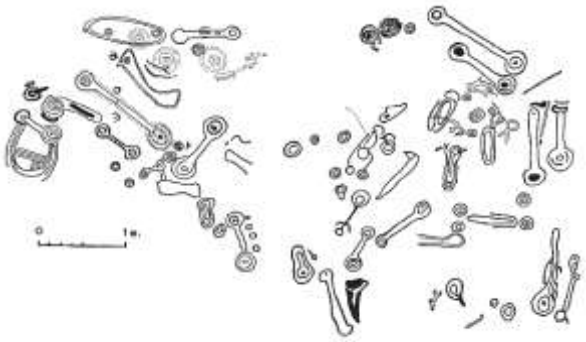
Figure 52: L-R : Kiantapo and Kiamakonde cave

Angola

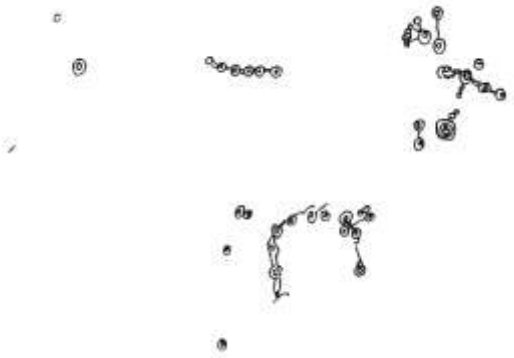
Clark (1963) showed a continuity of cultural material between north-eastern Angola and the rest of the Congo Basin and adjacent areas in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. In terms of the rock art, Clark (1958) placed the earlier rock art of Angola within the broad schematic zone. In Angola, studies by Ervedosa (1980) and Gutierrez (1996) confirm this association, though they also show extensive evidence of later Bantu-speaker rock art as well. Frequent motifs at Lolui, the dumbbell shapes and concentric circles are very similar to images recently found at another site in Uganda, Morungatung-B1 2 and these are commonly found in Angola (Fig. 53). Angola also has a dominance of concentric circles, rayed circles, dots, lines and sausage shapes at typical probable Pygmy sites such as Tchitundo-Hulo (Fig. 54). This strong similarity attests to a widely distributed homogenous culture in the region as far as Tanzania to the east.



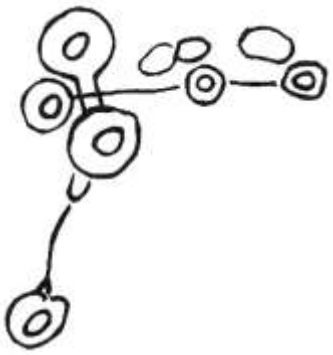
Morungatung-B1 II- Uganda (Namono 2006)



Lolui island - Uganda (After Posnansky 1961)

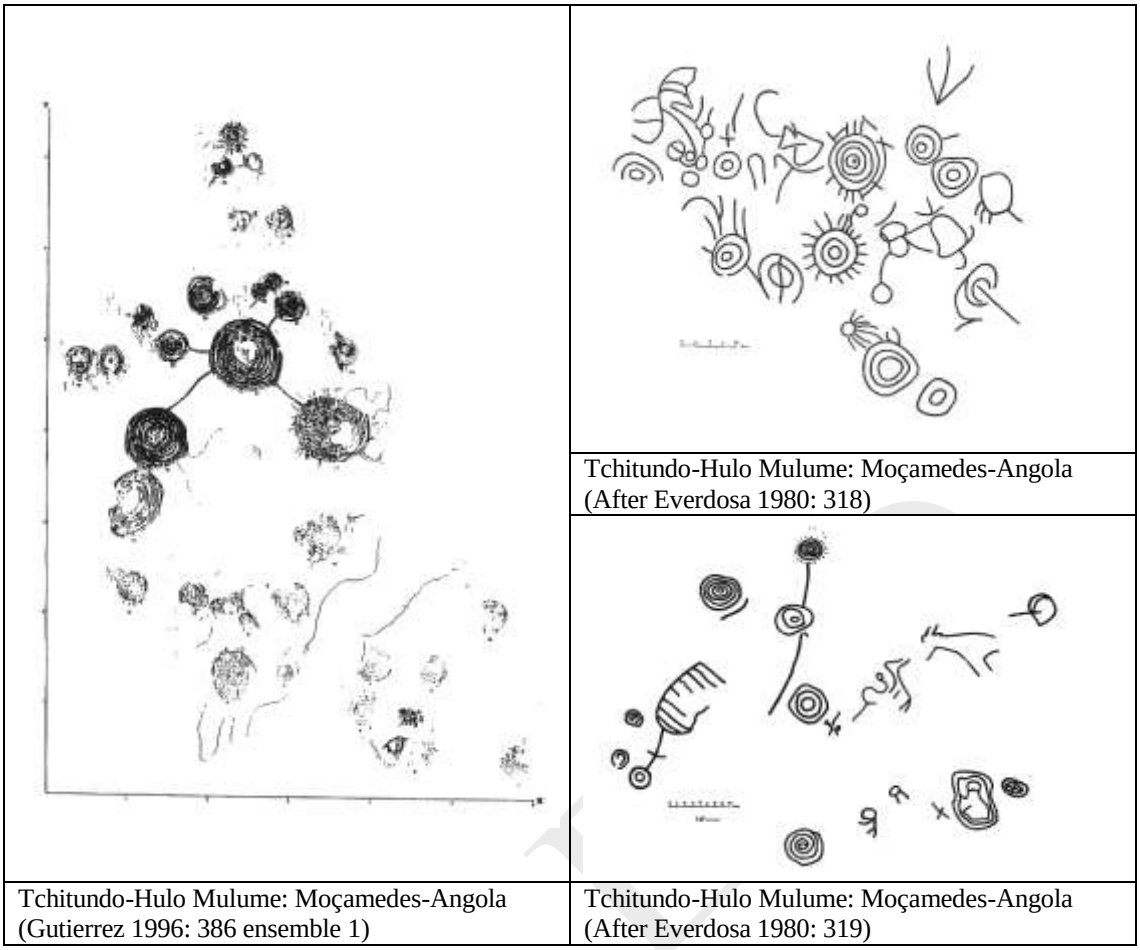


Tchitundo-Hulo Mulume: Moçamedes-Angola (Gutierrez 1996: 381 taken from Redinha)



Tchitundo-Hulo Mulume: Moçamedes-Angola (Ervedosa 1980: 11)

Figure 53: Similarities between the rock art in Uganda and Angola



Tchitundo-Hulo Mulume: Moçamedes-Angola (Gutierrez 1996: 386 ensemble 1)

Tchitundo-Hulo Mulume: Moçamedes-Angola (After Everdosa 1980: 318)

Tchitundo-Hulo Mulume: Moçamedes-Angola (After Everdosa 1980: 319)

Figure 54: Examples of rock art in Angola

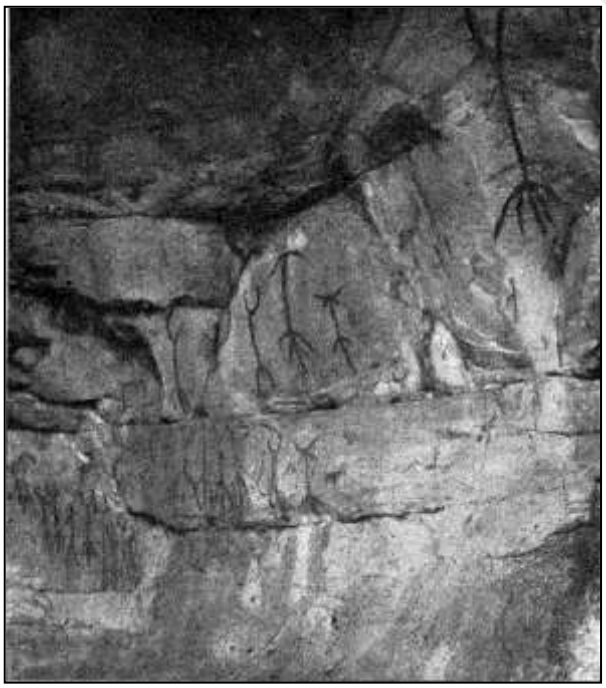
Tanzania

Apart from a small island of fine-line naturalistic paintings of the Hadza/Sandawe around Kondoa in central Tanzania, and a few cattle-like depictions around Lake Victoria, all the rock art of western and parts of southern Tanzania falls within the geometric tradition (Whiteley 1951; Tanner 1953; Collinson 1970; Willcox 1984; Mabulla 2005). Some of the naturalistic depictions are found amongst, or superimposed on geometric motifs such as the concentric circles in Figure 55 (Collinson 1970; Anati 1986: 56). The schematic spread-eagled cattle depictions along the shores of Lake Victoria (Mecklenburg 1914; Arundell 1936; Fosbrooke 1950; Chaplin 1974) (Fig. 56) and tentatively attributed to Nilotic-speakers (Namono 2006: 147) constitute a localised rock art tradition with a focused distribution.

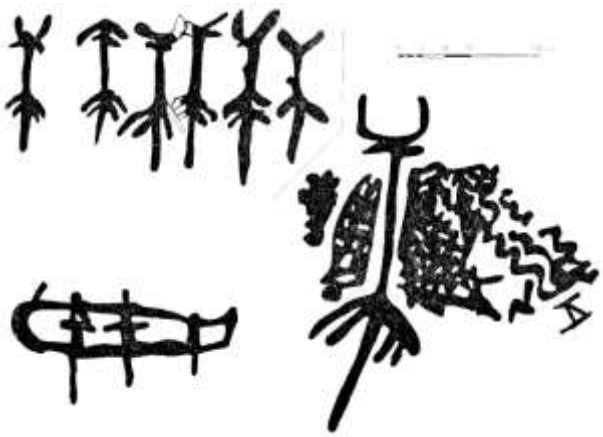


Mungomi wa Kolo, Tanzania (Image: RARI 1999)

Figure 55: Fine line images superimposed on concentric circles



Bwanja, Tanzania (Mecklenburg 1914)



Rukuongo, Tanzania (Chaplin 1974)

Figure 56: Depictions of schematic spread-eagled cattle

The geometric motifs at Makalo (Collinson 1970) and Nyabirungu (Mabulla 2005) in Tanzania, are strikingly similar to the geometric images found in Uganda (Figs.57 & 58). At Makalo, the paintings are predominantly in varying shades of red claret pigment. Collinson states that "The circle is repeated in various forms: small single circles, large circles with concentric inner repetitions, other concentric circles with lines radiating from the innermost circle, or (usually) double concentric circles with radii only apparent in extension after the periphery. The last is a typical schema…of the sun showing its rays" (Collinson 1970: 57). The description of images at Makalo could very well be a description of the rock art at Nyero 2 or Kapiri 2 in Uganda.



(Image: after Collinson 1970)

Figure 57: Paintings from Makalo, Tanzania



(Image: Mabulla 2005)

Figure 58: Geomtric rock art in Tanzania

Kenya

Although Odak correctly described the rock art of Kenya as ninety percent geometric or schematic (Odak 1989: 161), East Africa also has some similar rock art traditions associated with cattle. There are stylised depictions of domesticated long-horned humpless cattle and short-horned cattle with humps at Kakapeli on the foothills of Mount Elgon (Wright 1961; Odak 1976; Odak 1977). At Kimothon (Odak 1980: 11) there are naturalistic paintings of cattle similar to those at another site, on Luucho Hills, Chemasari rock. This site was recorded by Wright (1961) and Chaplin (1974:8) as Endebess (Fig. 59). At Chelemuk around Mount Elgon there is a white human stick figure (Odak 1980: 10). The daubed cattle brand designs and shields linked to meat feasting (Gramly 1975; Lynch & Donahue 1980) tentatively attributed to Ma'a Nilotic-speaking pastoralists are found in the Laikipia plateau, Lukenya hills and the Etonyoosoito hills near Leshuta, in the Rift Valley in Kenya (Gramly 1975: 109).

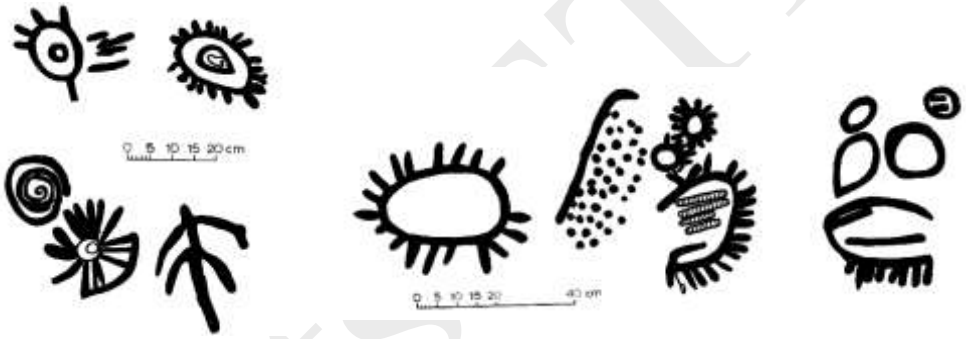


(Image: RARI 1999)

Figure 59: Cattle images from Kakapeli

Although Odak's (1988) preliminary report of the rock art of Kenya reflects a research bias in western Kenya, it also provides an extension of the rock art landscape of eastern Uganda, enabling a broader perspective on rock art in East Africa. In the report, Odak indicated sites that are similar to the Ugandan geometric art. Of these, circular motifs, dots and lines are predominant in Kisii, south-western Kenya and in Maragoli, central-

western Kenya. At Eldoret in Kenya, Odak (1977: 190) recorded paintings on several hills. On Tapsagoi hill, he found two sites, one of which, Turbo I, contained 34 paintings of geometric motifs in red and white (Fig. 60). They include variations of concentric circles with radiating lines, both internal and external, and concentric circles. The images he found at Kabaragutwa on Kaptebei hills are also geometric. Depicted in red white and brown, the paintings include circular shapes, circular shapes with external radiating lines parallel sausage shapes with vertical line infill and dots. Similar images to these can be found at various sites in Uganda. Geometric motifs in white and red, comprising mainly concentric circles and grids on Mfangano islands in Lake Victoria are notably similar to the geometric rock art found in Tanzania (such as at Makalo) and Uganda (such as Lolui islands and Nyero 2) (Fig. 61). Kenyan engravings comprise geometric designs, concentric circles e.g. in the Goti-Chaki area (Odak 1980: 13)



Turbo I, Tapsagoi hill (After Odak 1977: 190) Kabaragutwa, Kaptebei hills (After Odak 1977: 191)

Figure 60: Geometric rock art from sites in Kenya



(Images: Namono 2006)

Figure 61: Mfangano Islands

At Chemasari, the white animal images are superimposed on red geometric images. Other underlying images in red pigment are concentric circles, one crossed circle and one white circle (Odak 1980: 12). A similar pattern of superimposition is at Mima hills in Kakamega district where images in white are painted over red schematic paintings (*ibid.*: 13). Odak's Kenya evidence is therefore strongly supportive of geometric rock art being an older tradition. As in northern Uganda, as I have noted already, one enters a rock art zone of animal depictions in northern Kenya (Adamson 1946: 70, Odak 1988: 74).

Discussion

This quick review of the rock art in the region and from other traditions has shown a strong, consistent pattern in space linking the geometric rock art tradition across east and central Africa. Some patterns of superimposition indicate that other groups painted over the red geometric imagery (e.g. Mungumi wa Kolo), and therefore these came after the makers of the red geometric tradition. Sites such as Makalo in Tanzania, Nsalu and Sakwe in Zambia (Figs. 62, 63), Chicolone in Mozambique (Fig. 49) and Nyero 2 (Fig.64) in Uganda, are large and offer a wide variety and consistency of imagery. There are strong similarities in the placement of imagery on the panel at Nyero 2 and Chicolone. At Chicolone, Nyero 2 and Nsalu there is a horizontal line painted across the upper level of the rock face. Although the one at Nsalu is depicted in yellow ochre, the shapes of the images depicted are consistent with those found at Sakwe, and Chicolone. Undoubtedly, the shapes depicted generally conform in method and manner of depiction within the broad geometric tradition.

I attempted to classify images through description and categorisation with the intention of identifying similarities (and therefore differences) in the rock art and thereby moving towards a resolution of authorship. Description is regarded here as more than a method: it is a useful and strategic approach towards understanding the geometric rock art. Although description does not engage with meaning, social context or account for why certain shapes appear the way they do, it remains the primary step in classification to determine similarities or differences in imagery.

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(Image: RARI 1999)

Figure 62: Geometric rock art, Nsalu, Zambia



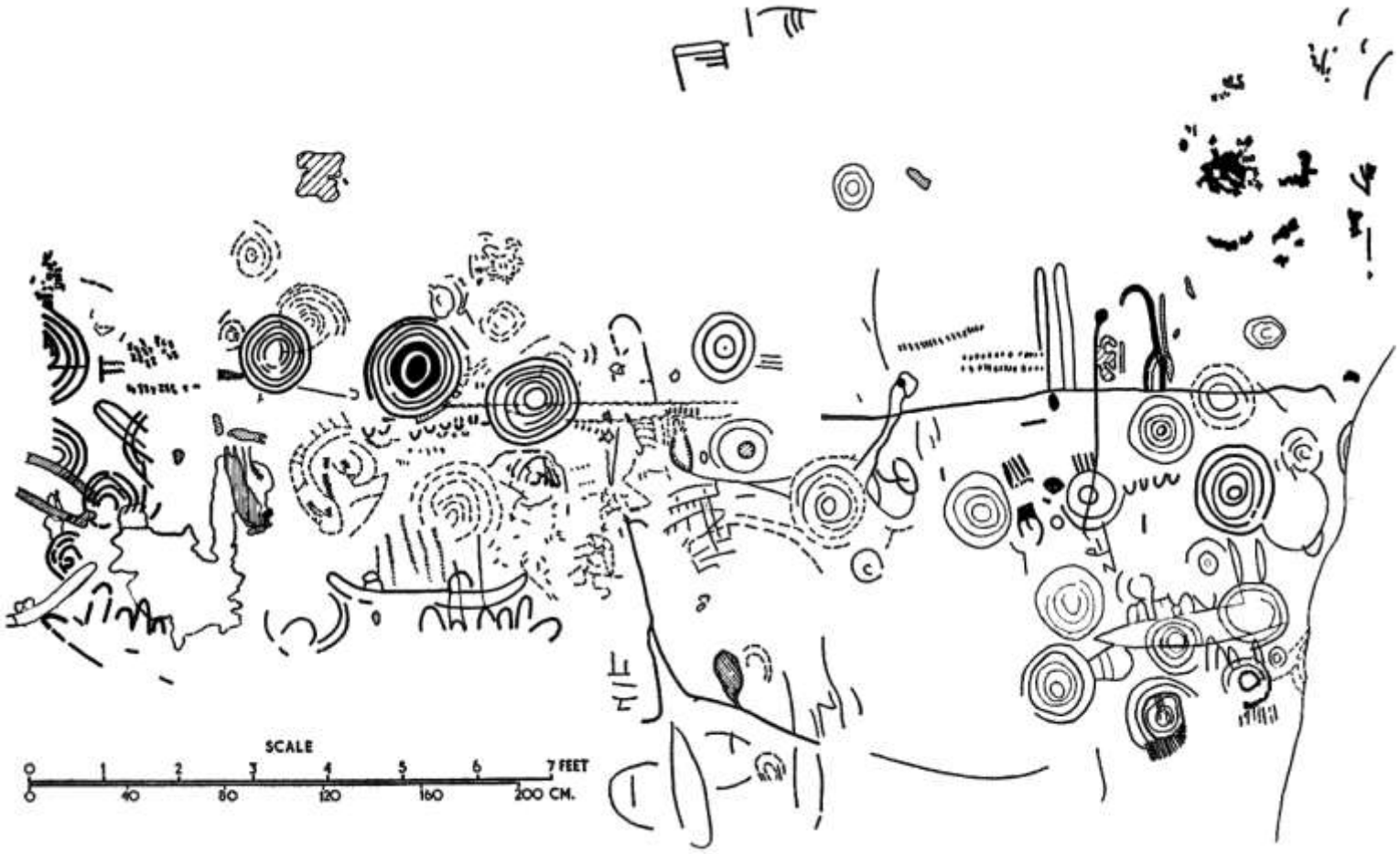
(Image: after Phillipson 1993: 207)

Figure 63: Geometric rock art, Sakwe, Zambia

In Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique the red geometric tradition is paired with the red animal tradition. This raised the question, where is the red animal tradition in Uganda? Is it possible that the stretched hide shape is the equivalent of the animal in the red animal tradition? Data analysis in this study indicated that placement of the stretched hide shape on exposed surfaces was intentional. There is no evidence of the stretched hide shape depicted in white outline or in any other form in Uganda. This implies that the colour and shape of depiction in Uganda is also intentional. In Zambia, Smith recorded images similar to the stretched hide shape, but different in depiction which he termed white-spread-eagle designs. However, there are red stretched hide shapes within the red animal tradition at Kasama (see Smith 1995).Given that there is no evidence yet, of a red animal tradition in Uganda, it may be possible that the stretched hide shape is an earlier form of the red animal tradition.

Causes of change are difficult to pin down, even if we acknowledge that within societies there is **always** cultural reproduction (Cowgill 2000: 57). Change can be intentional or unintentional. It is possible that changes in motif depiction and choice of colour will be a result of borrowed practices during interactions, as a result of "imperfect replication of received traditions" (*ibid.*), or may reflect a shift in rituals or beliefs associated with an image within the same society. In modern Uganda, although the rock painting tradition has ceased, the function of the paintings has shifted and become part of the heritage of existing modern communities.

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(Image: Posnansky & Nelson 1968)

Figure 64: Nyero 2, Uganda,

Living heritage

Given the tendency to brand what is incomprehensible as 'ritual related', it is not surprising that Chaplin (1974) argued that the geometric rock art, particularly concentric circles and dumbbell shapes should be seen as shrines or sites for ritual, after he drew parallels between these and the practice of Christianizing pagan wells in Europe (Chaplin 1974: 39). Clark (1959) suggested that purely schematic art is symbolic, contains some esoteric meaning and that the use of signs is a 'well-known feature accompanying initiation ceremonies in Africa' (Clark 1959: 217-8). Collinson (1970) suggested that the circular images were connected to sun worship while Lawrance (1953, 1958) and Sassoon (1973: 8) argued that the rock art had ritual significance and was associated with rain-control. Odak (1988: 77) associated the rock art of Mfangano islands with ancestral worship and rain-control. Chaplin and McFarlane (1967) associated the geometric imagery with games. Ritual in Africa has long been an area of interest for academics and Western scholars, hence, these researchers were informed by their own cultures in their arguments associated with the production of geometric rock art in Uganda. Two themes emerging from previous rock art research are rain-control and fertility rites as well as initiation and puberty rites.

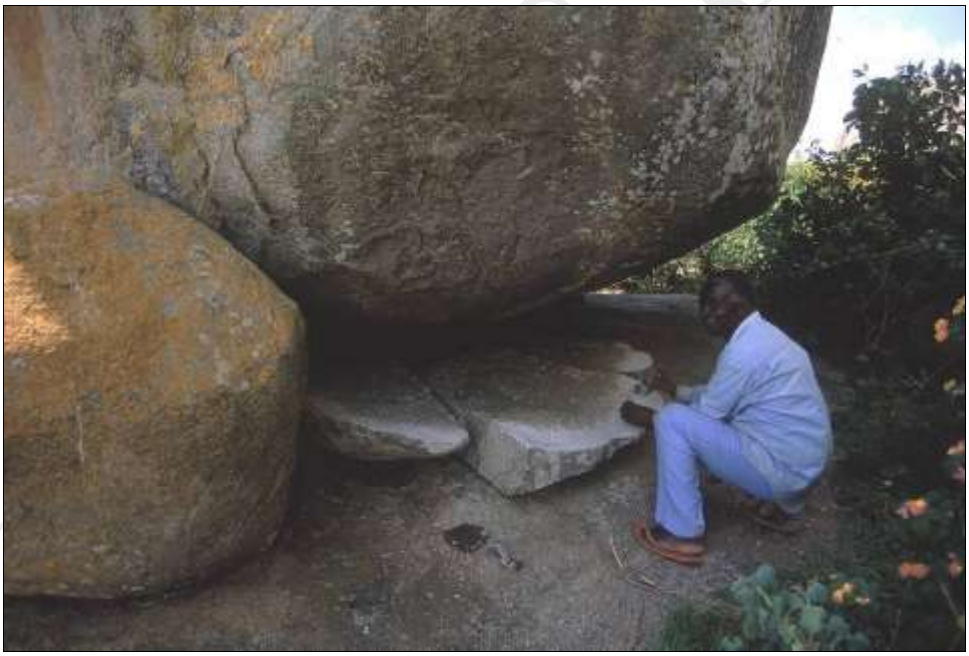
Rain-control and Fertility

In Uganda, where rock art sites are known to the local community, the significance of the geometric images is not remembered apart from oral traditions linking the art to ancestors. In citing ancestors, it is difficult to determine which ancestors are referred to although it seems most probably those of the **recent** past. The Iteso, for example, have no knowledge of the origins of the paintings. They have no distinct tradition of who made the paintings at Nyero and surrounding sites, aside from tales of small light, pale-skinned frightened men, who lived amongst the rocky inselbergs and occupied the area 200 or 300 years ago before the arrival of the Iteso (Lawrance 1953: 12-13; 1957: 6; 1958: 42; Posnansky1961: 109; Posnansky & Nelson 1968: 154).

The Iteso regard the Nyero rock (*Moru Ikara*), as a magical place around which they perform rain-control ceremonies (Cole 1964: 246; cf Chaplin 1974: 40). However, during the rain control ceremonies described by Wright (1946) and Ludger (1954), emphasis was placed on the rock **boulder** rather than on the paintings. In my opinion, it

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is probable that because rock paintings are believed to have been made by the ancestors, their antiquity and association are powerful, making sites with rock art such as Nyero, enhance the power of the rainmaker. This does not imply that rock art **was made** in the context of rain-control but that it is now **used** in such a context. Wright and Ludger state that rain-controllers were often buried near these huge rocks and it is at their graves that offerings and the final rituals of the rain-control ceremonies were performed (Wright 1946: 25-28; Ludger 1954: 185). Rain-control ceremonies ended at the graves of renowned rainmakers suggesting that therein rests the power to make rain. For these modern communities, it is the ability of the rain-controller to commune with the ancestors for rain that is important. At Kakoro 1, the large boulder with rock art was used as a rain-control site. The rain-controller would use the base of the large boulder as a rock gong during the ritual (Fig. 65).



(Image: RARI 2002)

Figure 65: A rain-controller demonstrating the rock gongs at Kakoro 1

In the Lake Victoria region, present inhabitants consider the rock art on Lolui islands, the domain of knowledge of older people and traditional ritual specialists (Jackson, *et al.* 1965: 40). Chaplin worked on the assumption that the rock paintings on Lolui islands were made for documentary purposes, and suggested that it was possible to

identify migrant populations in the paintings (Chaplin 1974:35). He argued that the distinct absence of animal representations in the Lake Victoria region suggested that the makers of geometric or non-representational rock art may be remnants of Late Stone Age hunter-gatherer populations, incoming cultivators, incoming pastoralists or a combination of all these. For Chaplin, superimpositions in the paintings were the result of copying underlying work (Chaplin 1974: 39).

The Lolui main site, locally referred to as a shrine and 'house of spirits' (*nyumba ya misambwa*) has some rock gongs believed to be used during rain-control. In Figure 66 the rock art is defaced with signage. The association of the geometric paintings with ancestors renders this site powerful. Although the present inhabitants are not the authors of the paintings, they have incorporated the art into their rituals in a manner similar to people at Kakoro and Nyero. Posnansky (1961) suggests that the geometric paintings at Lolui island may be linked to those at Nyero and all of them must have been drawn by hunter-gatherers (Posnansky 1961: 107). It is possible that hunter-gatherers painted the images in the context of fertility and rain-control, but such understanding can only be obtained from an understanding of the painters' worldview.



'*TOPAMA MU NYUMBA YA MISAMBWA*' (Do not defecate in the house of spirits) iswritten over rock paintings (Image: RARI 2002)

Figure 66: Entrance to Lolui main site

In Africa there is a strong link between rain and fertility, since in most cases, rain equals fertility (Sanders 2003: 84-5). It is for this reason that rain rites are rites of fertility, and therefore full of fertility symbolism (*ibid.*). These rain-fertility rituals are predominantly directed towards the ancestors whose help is sought in rain-control and fertility. In Uganda, Nyero hill is locally known as Moru Ikara after the former administrator of the area called Ikara. In earlier times it was known as Asirim (of Sorghum), due to an abundance of sorghum in the area. During fieldwork in Nyero in 2006, I met with a 77-year-old former caretaker of the Nyero rock art sites, Mzee Erimano Ikara[2]. According to Mzee Ikara, barren women or couples who failed to have children, visit Nyero 2 in the belief that if they made offerings to the ancestors who made the paintings (Fig. 67), and slept at a specific location under the boulders at the site (Fig. 68), they would become fertile and conceive. This practice is alive and operating. At Mukongoro I was informed that women had travelled to Nyero to obtain fertility blessings from the power of the ancestors within the paintings. This suggests that the paintings are not powerful, but it is the belief that ritually powerful ancestors painted them, that makes the site a special place for the communities who use it. The significance of the paintings has evolved from its original intention, since the communities have reinvented their beliefs around the rock art and interpreted the rock paintings in ways relevant and meaningful to them.

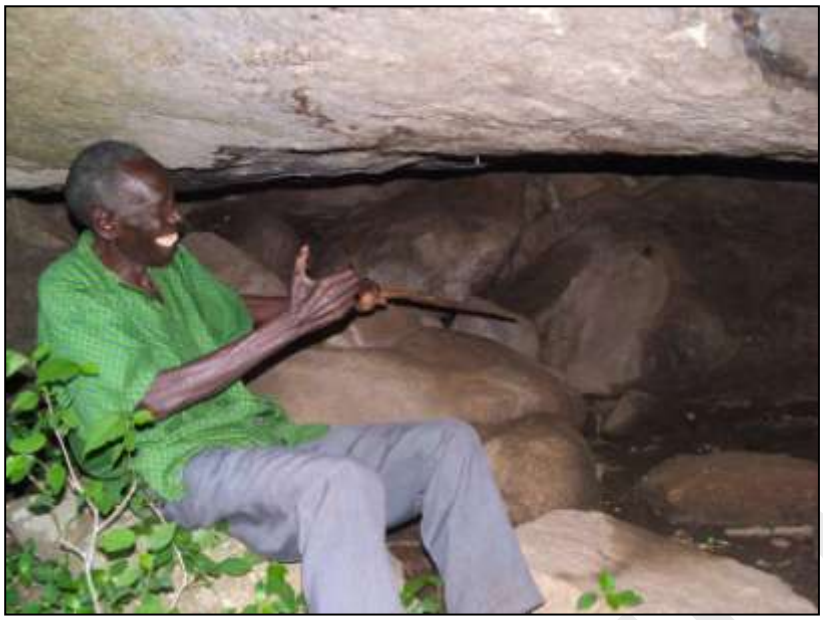


(Image: Namono 2006) The rock art panel is visible in the background

Figure 67: Mzee Ikara showing the hole in which money or cowrie shells are left for ancestors

[2] Interview with Mzee Ikara on 26th May 2006 at Nyero 1 rock art site

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(Image: Namono 2006) The rock art panel is above this enclosed space

Figure 68: Mzee Ikara showing the spot women are made to sleep 'with the ancestors' to become fertile

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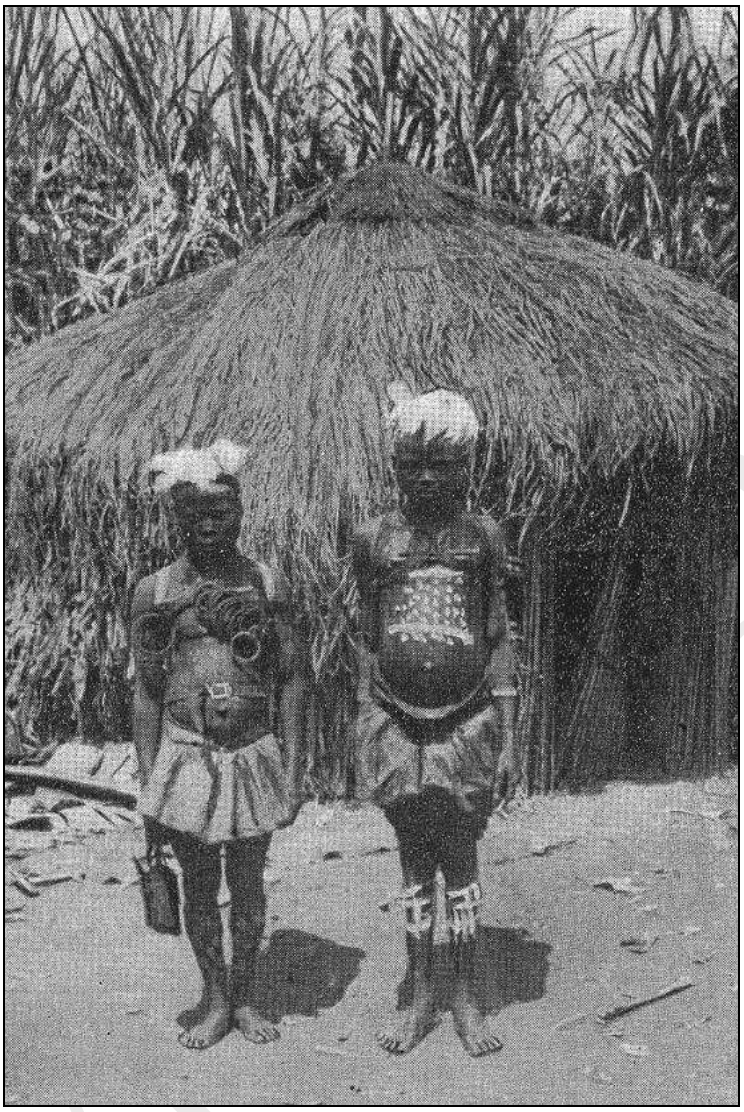
Puberty and Initiation Rites

Puberty and initiation rites appear to have been practised in many parts of Africa by different groups of people from central, east and southern Africa, southern Sudan and the Great Lakes Region. I mention puberty as separate from initiation rites because puberty rites seek to promote and control the fertility of the individuals who have reached physical maturity. Initiation rites are concerned with transition from social childhood to social adult hood. Initiation may be performed before or after attaining puberty (La Fontaine 1959). Some societies perform these rites and others do not. In Africa, Afro-Asiatic language families circumcise males. Some Nilotic-speaking groups circumcise (such as the Masaai and the Eastern Nilotes in general), while others do not (for example, the Luo or Western Nilotes in general). Among Bantu-speakers, the antiquity of initiation can be traced through ethnography and oral traditions. Ethnographic evidence indicates that prior to colonialism, male circumcision among Bantu-speakers, was normally associated with adolescent initiation schools in which age-sets were defined. With the advent of colonialism some groups initially abandoned the practise, only to return to it, and now continue to practise it simply because it is their 'tradition' (Heald 1989; La Fontaine 1959).

In Uganda, three groups of people practise circumcision as part of the adolescent initiation ritual: the Gisu (males), the Masaaba, Luyia language-speakers and the Sebei (male and females), Kalenjin speakers. The Gisu are part of an initiating belt stretching from Mount Elgon, south through Kenya to north-central Tanzania. Although not every group in this 'belt' circumcises, where circumcision occurs, it is inextricably linked to male gender and ethnic identity (Heald 2001: 45). According to La Fontaine, the Bukusu on the Kenyan side of Mount Elgon (the eastern slopes) have similar cultural features to those of the Gisu from southern Bugisu. Oral traditions attest that Mubukusu, the founder of the Bukusu, was forced to prove his 'manhood' to his neighbouring tribe who had been practising circumcision for a very long time. Mubukusu was forced to kill a very dangerous, poisonous snake to prove his courage. When he did so, he was permitted to be circumcised. Therefore, the Bukusu learnt the tradition of circumcision from the Kalenjin, Southern Nilotes. The ancestors of the Bukusu and the Gisu are believed to be represented as brothers while those of the Sebei are represented as agnate cousins (La Fontaine 1959: 181). Pressure from colonial rulers in 1904-5, "to put a decline to initiation practises were unsuccessful and the ceremony is performed with renewed vigour, with the addition of new ceremonies and details which had fallen into disuse" (La Fontaine 1959: 188).

Konjo and Amba males undergo an initiation ritual – circumcision in small huts away from the village (Thomas 1936: 90; Wayland 1929). Amba are Bira-Huku, Amba-speakers who call themselves 'Kwamba', and are closely related to the Bila, Komo and the Bera. Amba paint their bodies as part of their initiation ritual for boys (Fig. 69). According to Wayland (1929) Amba people have a religious cult that consists very largely of the propitiation of the spirits of the dead (*mulimo*) (Wayland 1929: 521). *Mulimo* is similar to a ritual called *molimo* practised by their neighbours, the Batwa. It is highly probable that the Amba adopted *mulimo* and body painting from Pygmy groups, Mbuti and Twa, with whom they have lived in close contact for a long time. Aside from the Konjo and Amba, among Bantu-speakers in Uganda, the Gisu have no painting tradition associated with initiation rites, but they smear the bodies of initiates with millet powder and mud. Although Gisu adopted initiation from the pastoralist Kalenjin, no painting tradition was inherited with the practice of initiation. Similarly, among Southern Nilotic-speaking Sebei who circumcise males and females, there are no painting traditions associated with the ritual.

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(Image: Thomas 1936:90)

Figure 69: Amba boys fully accoutred and painted

In Africa, coming-of-age rituals and rites of passage usually involve body painting, manipulation of sacred objects and sometimes, the use of rock paintings. It is for this reason that rock art is sometimes associated with these rites. In Uganda, none of the groups practising initiation rites engage in rock painting or have any knowledge of the significance of the existing rock paintings in their rites. It is therefore unlikely that the rock art was made in this context.

In sum, the data I have presented here and in the previous chapters, confirms a consistency and homogeneity within and between the geometric rock art of Uganda and

the broader geometric rock art zone. Modern practices associated with the rock art do not account for the authorship of the art. Rather, my data analyses provide information and knowledge that point to a probable Pygmy authorship. Having obtained secure authorship how do we move to interpret the rock art? An understanding of the Pygmy worldview, so crucial to obtaining meaning of the rock art, will be addressed in chapter five. In the following chapter, I provide a postprocessual framework that will guide my interpretation.

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Chapter Four

A POST-PROCESSUAL FRAMEWORK

For the past two decades in Uganda, no new rock art sites have been documented. Past interpretations have not been challenged, nor have alternative understandings been offered for known sites. Regularities or patterns in the choice of motifs at sites in Uganda, as Chapters Two and Three have shown, suggest elements of continuity and a sharing of beliefs and practices throughout East and Central Africa. I acknowledge however, that regional variations do exist, and some of these variations are explored in this study. Smith (1997) has shown that certain aspects of Pygmy cosmology articulate with Zambian and Malawian geometric rock art. A core feature of this thesis is to demonstrate that, if Uganda is part of the broad geometric rock art zone, then Smith's conclusions may be productive in Uganda. However, there is a possibility that, despite the fact that Uganda lies within the geometric rock art zone, Smith's articulation may be applicable to Zambian and Malawian geometric rock art only and not to Uganda. Using a post-processual framework, this study provides new dimensions to existing discourse on the rock art of Uganda and the region in Africa previously labelled 'rock art of unknown associations' (Smith 1997: 23).

This theoretical chapter nestles between data analysis and the socio-cultural insights of the authorship of the geometric rock art of Uganda. In the previous chapters, I discussed the rock art analyses of previous researchers in Uganda and subsequently dealt with the results of my own fieldwork, demonstrating that the shapes, method and manner of depiction of images align themselves with the broad geometric rock art zone of central Africa. I then analyzed the data to identify patterns within and between sites, and, within the broader context of the geometric rock art zone. In this chapter, I diverge from past narrative perspectives of rock art in Uganda and delve into a contextual interpretative framework, so that previously unanswerable questions can now be addressed. My main concern here is to articulate a framework that will link analysis and insights towards understanding. Specifically, I shift away from the radically descriptive analyses characteristic of the period between 1938 and 1974 (e.g., Wayland 1938;

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Lawrance 1953; 1955b; 1958; Jackson, *et al.* 1965; Chaplin & McFarlane 1967; Morton 1967; Posnansky & Nelson 1968; Chaplin 1974) that probably reflected the spirit of research in archaeology in East Africa at the time, that were mainly concerned with establishing cultural sequences (Robertshaw 1990: 89).

One of the early recorders of rock art in Uganda was Wayland, a geologist whose enthusiasm and concern with evolutionary sequences of stone tools naturally transferred to constructing sequences for rock art. In East Africa, the advent of independence diverted interest away from evolutionary sequences in archaeology studies to the construction of culture-stratigraphic sequences (Robertshaw 1990: 81-93). At this time, rock art research in East Africa was on the periphery of archaeological research that was dominated by studies in lithics and the Iron Age.

Contra early archaeological research, this study moves beyond culture-stratigraphic sequencing to focus specifically on the attribution of authorship and the interpretation of the geometric rock art. Key terms I employ here, such as context, hermeneutics, gender, analogy and material culture, are not new in archaeology and have already been clearly explicated in archaeological studies elsewhere (Hodder 1982c: 58-74; 119-24; Ambrose 1984; Robertshaw 1990; Trigger 2006: 453). Current theories employed in understanding archaeology generally, and rock art in particular are predominately social and anthropological theories that seek to benefit from social insights on material culture and provide a more nuanced understanding of society. The conceptual framework for this study likewise draws on archaeo-socio-anthropological theories and discourse on the interpretation of the archaeological record. Such a framework provides a cognitive and social perspective to understanding the geometric rock art of Uganda.

This study rests on the basic assumption that the past is firmly linked with, and part of the present, and can be regained from an analysis of significant relationships between associated material culture remains. Specifically, and mindful of the presuppositions that guided my research, I focus on significant contextual patterns in the distribution of rock art sites, images, associated archaeology, and how these may resonate with Pygmy ethnographies. Significance here relates to relationships that do, or may, provide an indication of the authorship, motivation and meaning of the geometric rock art.

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Conceptual frameworks are the backbone to addressing archaeological challenges. There are almost as many theories and approaches to studying archaeology (and rock art) as there are archaeologists, and each approach can shed light on archaeology. Few, if any, archaeologists would claim that one person's interpretation of archaeology reveals 'the' truth about the past. Conceptual paradigms in any discipline serve to help generate clear and unambiguous ideas of what needs explanation and what information can be sought from data. Yet, the primacy of theory in archaeology has been and remains a bone of contention for many archaeologists (see Binford 1987; Renfrew & Bahn 1991). How to make 'valid' statements about the past in the present continues to be a challenge. David Whitley (2005: 17) succinctly argues that each approach is relevant to understanding the past and that, whether a research problem is cultural-historical, interpretative or overtly scientific, analytical rigour is essential.

Whereas it is argued that, when used, theories exert their own influences on any archaeological interpretation, one cannot eliminate theory from data regardless of any chosen approach. Even in an empirical or scientific process, choices of data, of variables to be tested and of observations made about the data, are theory-laden. For instance, in this study, I selected the survey areas and designed the site record sheets to capture specific data. These choices are subjective even though I employed quantitative analyses. The decisions I took in dealing with the data are themselves an interpretation. It is for this reason that I do not argue that my statements about the geometric rock art will be 'value free' especially since different conclusions may be arrived at by different people using the same data (Hodder & Hutson 2003: 209). Rather, I consider that the validity of my statements will derive from a consistent application of ethnographic data.

In southern Africa, Tom Huffman (1981) largely relied on ethnography to draw upon religious beliefs to interpret the archaeological record of Great Zimbabwe. In doing so, he moved beyond the traditional empiricist approach, to symbolic interpretation - what may be called structural cognitive-processual archaeology. Before Huffman, in the 1970s, Patricia Vinnicombe (1972a; 1972b) argued that to find a more meaningful understanding San rock art, one cannot simply look at the rock art and guess what it is without considering San ethnography that provides the context in which the rock art was made. This need to look more closely at ethnography was echoed by David Lewis-Williams who developed a more cognitive interpretative approach than Huffman's, by

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turning to beliefs found in the nineteenth century Orpen and the Bleek and Lloyd ethnographic material of the /Xam (one of the southern San groups). Lewis-Williams (1972) came to the conclusion that the only possibility of clarifying the themes in San rock art lay in the, "albeit fragmentary, mythology" (Lewis-Williams 1972: 64). At the time, 'mythology' meant ethnography, a wider concept than one would understand mythology today. These pioneer rock art researchers set the stage quite early in Africa for a cognitive contextual approach to understanding the archaeological record. This contextual approach is a useful model for understanding the rock art of Uganda. So, as rock art research advanced, drawing upon the knowledge that context is very significant in the interpretative process, researchers in mainstream archaeology were developing a similar line of thought.

A contextual approach

Humphrey Case (1973) proposed that, data collection in mainstream archaeology should be aimed at contexts rather than sequences, should be intensive rather than extensive, and should lead towards greater and more complete detail (Case 1973: 43). To this, he argued, must be added a constant back-and-forth networking of mental processes that will enrich and refine, confirm or deny the processes of data collection (*ibid.*). The ultimate aim of such rigour is to obtain as comprehensive a meaning as possible of the archaeological record, linking adequate explanations of data to full descriptions or accounts of the past (*ibid.*). Case referred to the embodiment of these aims as **contextual** archaeology (Case 1973: 44).

In the early 1980s, a leading material culture theorist, Ian Hodder, interpreted material culture in terms of contemporary social anthropological theories, refining this approach by the mid-1980s. Drawing from Case (1973), Hodder encouraged a contextual approach to archaeological interpretation that links general theories more closely to data, to get the past 'right' (Hodder & Hutson 2003: 171). A contextual approach places emphasis on methods of identifying and studying various contexts to understand meanings. This approach is two-pronged: first, it encourages the idea of placing an object in relation to the larger environmental, technological and social contexts from which it is drawn in order to understand it, because meaning may be a factor of use rather than of function (Hodder 1986: 154; Hodder & Hutson 2003: 204). Second, it favours the argument that, by careful analysis, the networks of relationships that an

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object was involved with in the past can be read 'as text' in order to reach an interpretation of meaning content.

Hodder and Hutson (2003) use the analogy of text because text is a concrete product of discourse, it loses some of the force of original communication:

> The meanings may become distanced from the intentions of the 'writer' of the text and may depend very much on the context in which the text is read (Hodder & Hutson 2003: 204).

Words on their own mean relatively little; it is only when they come together in structured ways that the overall meaning becomes clear. Presently, a contextual approach to material culture that considers objects as functioning within different cultural, social and temporal contexts is still encouraged (e.g., Lewis-Williams 1972; 1981; 1995; Vinnicombe 1972a; 1972b; Hodder 1982a; 1982b; 1982c; 1982d; 1992: 130; Shanks & Tilley 1987a; Preucel 1995; Shanks & Hodder 1998; Hodder & Hutson 2003).

While I do not think a textual analogy is exactly appropriate for material culture, what I take for granted in this study is that, like text, Ugandan rock art will have been open to multiple, varied, sometimes conflicting readings, by different individuals and groups in different contexts and times. Whilst I will not be able to know the unique meanings read by specific individuals in the past, I hope to move towards knowledge of the generally understood meanings of the context/time in which the art was created. I will also consider how these meanings changed through time and where possible, the role of individuality in the construction of these meanings.

In this study, I am not concerned with whether my statements about the past are 'true' but rather with whether the statements articulate in a manner that seems plausible, fitting well with the data at hand. After all, the goal of interpretation is **not** direct translation, but understanding (Hodder & Hutson 2003). Therefore, I do not propose a new interpretative approach but use a contextual one that has been used elsewhere, applying it to a new data set, the geometric rock art of Uganda. The advantages of using this approach here are that social meaning(s) can be ascribed through interpretation that is directed by the ideology of both the authors of the rock art and the associations that I discern (Hodder 1992). Because meanings are abstract and

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subjective, obtaining meaning involves abstraction where specific meanings of the rock art will vary depending upon the context in which they are used (Shanks 1992: 43; Hodder 1992: 109).

Contextual interpretative approaches in archaeology are a methodological orientation used to organise data, they encourage a richer, more networked, data analysis that seeks similarities and differences along relevant dimensions of variation while enriching information from the data (Hodder & Hutson 2003: 191). Using a contextual model, I attempt to establish:

- authorship of the rock art of Uganda developed around themes of identity, diffusion, assimilation, migration, interaction or dispersion, taking cognisance of the various hunter-gatherer debates (Kalahari and Pygmy, in chapter one). Authorship ranks first in importance to meaning of the rock art of Uganda. Unless we know who made it we cannot proceed to understand what the images mean, neither can we proceed to use ethnography to draw analogies with past communities; and
- the possible meaning of the motifs, focusing on cosmological values and rituals, and ultimately the probable context for the production of the geometric rock art of Uganda. It is vital to understand cosmological values to infer the specific content of beliefs from which the geometric rock art of Uganda derive. A focus on material culture will help to understand the worldview(s) of the makers of this rock art tradition in Uganda and how they are shaped (or constrained) by it.

<u>Context</u>

Although the past may exist in a preserved record such as the geometric rock art of Uganda (and related archaeological artefacts), it also exists in the cultural memory of the present and therefore, has always been and will be a part of the present (Hodder 1992: 176-9). Past research has shown that archaeological interpretations rely on contexts and analogical inferences whether directly or indirectly, since they are structured on present understandings of social processes in relation to the material past. 'Context' derives from the Latin word *contextus,* from past participle of *contexere*, meaning to join. The Philosopher Ben-Ami Scharfstein (1989), defines context as:

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> [T]hat which environs the object of our interest and helps by its **relevance** to explain it. The environing may be temporal, geographical, cultural cognitive emotional – of any sort at all (Scharfstein 1989: 1; emphasis mine).

Similarly, in archaeology, context refers to an event in time preserved in the archaeological record, to archaeological relationships as well as other more general social, economic and cultural environments in relation to or connected to, associated archaeological material. Because of this all-encompassing concept, context is often taken as a given; archaeologists constantly consider archaeological sequences and relationships regardless of the material culture data being studied. Contexts are constructs, they are often considered as the association between the archaeological sequence(s) where an archaeological record is located (such as rock art in the landscape), and the record itself (such as the rock art imagery on the panel). For example, rock art appears on one context, the rock face, but there are other contexts such as site location in relation to other sites in Uganda and the broader geometric rock art zone, and (or), other archaeological data or features often ignored in analyses of rock art, that may inform or extend my interpretation.

Context also refers to linking, interweaving or associating natural and artificial, tangible and intangible 'things' that surround archaeological data that may suggest clues to the meaning of the data. However, because our interpretations are shaped by the questions with which we approach our data (Palmer 1969: 66), what is defined as context will be determined by what is considered relevant to the question for which an explanation is sought, excluding that which lacks the required explanatory power (Scharfstein 1989: 1). The complexity of determining the boundaries, of determining relevance, which in turn defines context or the nature of context(s), is often problematic (Hodder & Hutson 2003: 5). What may be considered relevant, or what one's sense of what is relevant changes because, our frameworks of understanding and modes of knowledge are constantly changing as well (Foucault 1989; 2001). Relevance of context is linked to the diverse purposes, interests, reasons and concerns of archaeologists who interpret and use context, to justify conclusions arrived at (Dilley 1999: 17). To help determine boundaries, I focus only on specific archaeological relationships from which space and time associations can be made. From these associations, I consider those that have significant relationships identified during data analysis and shown to be necessary for attempting to discern the meaning of the geometric rock art.

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Context therefore, is a function of our knowledge systems and of how one conceives of knowledge. Relevance of context is formulated by one's theoretical orientation that shapes how one conceives of what contexts might or might not be appropriate for analysis towards understanding the archaeological record. Context is vital and, in this study, from the ethnographies it is important to consider how social context(s) impinge on interpretation of the rock art. It is difficult to decide how far or in what ways more specific meanings might be attached to patterns in the archaeological record that might distinguish when material culture is being used symbolically to distort or invert, rather than reflect, social relations (Trigger 2006: 456).

Material Culture

Material culture is embedded in layers of meaning. From material remains an understanding of others and selves is obtained, since it is with things that human beings constitute their world. Hodder has argued that objects and activities actively represent and act back upon society and that individual actions form society which in turn reacts back and shapes individual actions, making it difficult to understand an object out of this context (Hodder 1982a: 10). For Hodder, the meaning content of an archaeological record is contextual and so, any interpretation of material culture should be done using a contextual approach that does not favour any biases (Conkey & Spector 1984).

According to Bourdieu (1977), people internalise external structures and externalise things they have internalised through practices. Habitus, the mental structure through which people deal with the social world, produces and is produced by the social world (Bourdieu 1977: 164). This dialectic negates the argument that contextual approaches are an imposition on the archaeological record and that the past must be known in order to understand the archaeological record rather than understanding the data to know the past (Binford 1989: 31-40). Marie-Louise Sørensen (2006: 105) considers material culture as a flexible medium used to create notions of traditions, maintain conventions and normative behaviour – ideology. Material culture, as a social practice, is a product of and a medium for past behaviour. It deals with the meaning(s) that mute materials had or have with people in a particular culture, as well as with the variety of material remains that constitute the cultural identity of the people who made it (Hodder 1982c; 1982d).

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Archaeology is unavoidably bound to the analysis of mute material remains (Buchli 2007: 179; Thomas 2004). Archaeologists try to understand the general articulation of past human societies by inferring what the less permanent aspects of cultures may have been like from the material record left behind. There are those, for example, who consider the archaeological record composed on the one hand of static effects of past causes and on the other, of material signs and symbols of past concepts (Jones 2002: 17). Material culture can be used as a tool to challenge present understanding of the past (Hodder 1986: 170; 1992: 12; 2007: 29).

Hermeneutics

Current hermeneutic thought encourages an understanding of material culture as a product of meaning, as well as of socially negotiated relationships and associations (Buchli 2007: 181). The root for the term 'hermeneutics' lies in the Greek verb *hermēneuein*, generally translated 'to interpret' and the noun *hermēneia,* 'interpretation'. The Greek word *hermeios* referred to the messenger-god Hermes, "credited with the discovery of language and writing – the tools which human understanding use to grasp meaning and convey it to others" (Palmer 1969: 12-13). Micheal Shanks and Christopher Tilley (1987a; 1987b) argue that the materiality of archaeology is fundamentally dialectic in nature and the underlying dichotomies ought to be dismantled by hermeneutic techniques. Hermeneutics was used in the 1970s, '80s and '90s in southern and central Africa to establish the symbolic associations of particular images (e.g., Lewis-Williams 1981; 1983c; Smith 1995). Contextual archaeology draws on hermeneutics to answer questions posed after identification of images by isolating symbolic associations for interpretation. Interpretation is a natural way of thinking. Interpretation is an activity that we constantly engage in when attempting to understand words or images in relation to known things or those that sound familiar by making comparisons. However, the challenge I face using this approach, is to be able to communicate understanding, without being misunderstood. Central to hermeneutics is the hermeneutic circle. Hans-Georg Gadamer developed a style of interpretation known as dialectical interpretation. This interpretation is a process of moving back and forth, asking definite questions and understanding the detail for instance, of the part in terms of the whole and the whole in terms of the part; an interrogation of context(s) of what is or was being interpreted (Hodder & Hutson

2003: 195; Smith 1995; Gadamer 1975: 258). For example, in the rock art of Uganda, the meaning of the concentric circles is understood in reference to the whole panel on which they are depicted (sometimes within a broad tradition); and reciprocally, the meaning of the panel is understood or dependent upon the meaning of the individual concentric circles in the panel. A motif may have meaning, but it may only be meaningful when considered as part of a site, a panel, or of the broader geometric tradition in Uganda and central Africa. As Lewis-Williams (1995: 75) argues, "a rock panel is not like meaningful words on an otherwise meaningless page in a book" (Lewis-Williams 1995: 75). Real understanding of a panel begins only when the details of the individual shapes are considered and then the whole panel is reflected upon repeatedly. However, caution is needed in considering rock art as text because placing "emphasis on words rather than on the page on which the words are written obscures a key feature of the rock art" (Lewis-Williams 1995: 75). Such understanding has been an integral part of rock art research and, as well as the painted context, there is the social context within which the art is made and then read.

For Hodder, the hermeneutic circle involves asking questions and getting answers, working in a back-and-forth dialectic between the present and the past, object and subject. It concerns the 'us' in our current socio-political context, reading meanings in an entirely different socio-political context to that when the object was made. We therefore face the archaeological other. There are therefore two sets of meanings: meanings then and meanings now (see also Lewis-Williams 2006). These meanings are linked in the hermeneutic circle in that both relate to the same item of material culture. This link bonds them in some way. Although these meanings will **not** be the same, I consider a link through a process of approximation to understanding. Unless we understand a motif within its cultural, social, historical or environmental contexts, a concentric circle may mean nothing to some people, and a water hole to others. Drawing on this understanding, I consider the rock art imagery and my understandings of natural and societal or cultural formation processes (such as ethnographies, archaeological data and theoretical underpinnings) until these two are aligned, such that I obtain the meaning at the heart of this rock art tradition (O'Brien, Lyman & Schiffer 2005: 233).

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Gender

I categorise the geometric rock art of Uganda according to gender and argue that gender concerns lie at the heart of this tradition. I will therefore consider gender as one of the key concepts in this study, but I will also be assessing whether I was right in assigning such an importance to gender. The concept of gender in rock art can have a significant impact on any attempt to understand image depictions. Gender often includes any expectations held about the feminine and masculine characteristics and behaviours of women and men. Sex, on the other hand, is the universal biological difference between men and women determined at birth. In this study, I consider how biological differences are socially challenged through ritual, everyday activities and/or behaviour. Often, gender and sex are conflated into a single category, wherein a figure depicted with a penis is designated male and one depicted with breasts is designated female. Assigning male and female categories without the benefit of biological sexing is limiting in rock art particularly given the polysemy of the mute archaeological record. Gender roles are fluid and learned. It is important therefore to understand gender roles and relations within the context of a Pygmy environment, since systems of social differentiation may modify these roles. Formal analyses of the basic shapes of the rock art images depicted can help to identify gender categories.

Formal analyses

Formal analyses are undoubtedly an analytical tool that allow useful comparison of rock art shapes between rock art in Uganda and other areas. Formal analyses are a form of ethnography since what is perceived as important derives from one's society or prior experience with rock art shapes. They are also a form of analogy in helping us identify material forms (such as separating a circular shape from a human figure) by relating them to similar forms elsewhere. This is one of the causes for concern and debate regarding the interpretations we make using such analyses. Postprocessualists argue that all archaeological arguments are inherently subjective, but that materiality limits subjectivity so that one does not end up with an 'anything goes' scenario. In rock art research and in this study, use of formal analyses is not to suggest uniformity in depiction of imagery, but rather to emphasise and reveal the character of the rock art.

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Analogy and ethnographic analogy

Analogical thinking is an important component of human cognitive processing. Use of analogies in archaeology has been debated extensively. I will not review the debate but simply acknowledge that currently analogical inference is perceived to be the basis for most archaeological analysis and interpretation. Hodder (1982a: 16), Wylie (1985) and Lewis-Williams (1991) distinguish two forms of analogy: formal and relational. Formal analogies are "simple look-alike analogies" (Lewis-Williams 1991: 150) based on simple similarities or differences in form (formal attributes) in the properties of source and subject (Wylie 1985: 94). Regardless of the multiple correspondences between source and subject, formal analogies are weak and problematic, liable to error since the association between the properties in the source is singular and lacking a necessary link between the features in the subject. Conclusions derived from formal analogies are premised on the assumption that if the two objects share some properties visible or known for both, they probably share other properties only known for one, regardless of what properties may comprise the additional analogy, or whether the analogies come from the same culture (Hodder 1982a: 16; Wylie 1985: 94; Lewis-Williams 1991: 150).

Relational analogies are better than formal ones. Relational analogies rest on a cultural or natural relation or association between the source of an analogy and the archaeological context; that is, emphasis is placed on the properties they share rather than simple presence or absence of properties considered independently, and where the relations based on cultural continuity can be suggested (Wylie 1985: 95; Hodder 1982b: 178; Lewis-Williams 1991: 151). Relational analogies include considerations of relevance:

> Relevance is typically understood to be a function of knowledge about underlying "principles of connection" that structure source and subject and that assure, on this basis, the existence of specific further similarities between them (Wylie 1985: 94).

Relations of relevance justify analogical conclusions, improve credibility of analogy and give confidence to interpretation (Lewis-Williams 1991: 152; Wylie 1985: 95; 1988). Confidence derives from strong relations of relevance that must:

> involve a demonstration that there are similarities between source and subject with respect to the causal mechanisms, processes, or factors that determine the presence

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> and interrelationships of (at least some of) their manifest properties (Wylie 1985: 95)

Strong relations of relevance establish that the same relations of relevance operated in the past and that the correlation between the archaeological feature is similar to the feature in the source of the analogy, holding consistency across a wide range of source contexts, despite variability in the materials (Hodder 1982a: 11-27; Wylie 1985: 98; Lewis-Williams 1991: 152). So relevance is best established if it is "specifically designed to determine what causal connections hold between the material and cultural or behavioural variables of interest, and under what conditions these connections may be expected to hold" (Wylie 1985: 101). In this study the strength of the relations of relevance will be in the demonstrable historical continuity and confidence that the specific elements of ethnography used came from the same cognitive system as the rock art, or drew on common symbols, or had common gender values and roles.

Ideally, awareness of the problems associated with analogy allows for the assurance that the arguments made in this study are well grounded. I follow Wylie (1985: 11; 1989) and work horizontally between the subject and source sides of the analogy, and vertically within each side of the analogy cognisant of the multiple attributes that should ultimately produce strong relational analogically based inferences. In reading ethnography and deriving interpretation, Wylie's (1989) cables and tacking metaphor secures my arguments since I embrace multiple strands of supporting evidence (cables), and link these to social theory (tack). By analogy, if I cast an interpretative net over data, the net is hooked at various points, onto the data. In the event that one hook unfastens or weakens, my interpretation remains secure and feasible, attached to the data at other points. I follow those who posit that archaeological interpretations require evidential insights or strands, whereby various contexts can be associated with others in order to make sense of the past since "there is no final and definitive account of the past as it was" (Shanks & Hodder 1998: 70-77; Wylie 1989: 5).

In this study, the relevant ethnographies I use are those of the largest and nearest Pygmy groups, whose rituals and belief systems have been studied extensively - the Mbuti of the Ituri forest in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Mbuti recent territory extended almost up to the Ugandan border and certainly in south-western Uganda there

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were, and still are, people who descended from them, these are the Mbuti Twa and Sua across the eastern border of the Ituri, in the south-western region of Uganda. The Mbuti are the nearest largest group to my study area and they are approximately 350 kms away from the documented rock art sites in eastern and north-eastern Uganda.

Therefore, I focus first on Mbuti ethnographies and draw primarily from them, but also look more broadly to other Pygmy groups near the Mbuti with very similar ethnographies. I exploit commonalities evident in other studies of Pygmy groups, acknowledging variation and fluidity within and between them. Wherever possible, I use beliefs and traditions found almost universally within the broader Pygmy ethnographies of central Africa as one can have even more confidence that things that are Pan-Pygmy will most likely have existed in Uganda and they have the potential to have the deeper historical roots needed in an archaeological study of this kind. Strength of relevance also derives from the consideration that the geometric rock art in Uganda demonstrates a strong consistency in depiction and across the whole of central Africa; and the Pygmy ethnographies show similar consistency - most groups have/had a large range of similar beliefs and rituals. For example, there are direct equivalents of rituals such as *molimo* in almost all Pygmy groups and we can be sure that similar equivalents existed across Uganda by whatever name they might have been called.

In Uganda, the granite rock surfaces are crumbly and flaking so most of the sites are probably hundreds rather than thousands of years old. However, the more stable sites such as Nyero and Lolui may be thousands of years old but they show little variation from the broader more recent patterns in the rest of Uganda. This gives confidence that the rock art has not changed much through time and, therefore, that the widely held beliefs and traditions amongst the Pygmy ethnographies most likely have relevance to most, if not all, of the rock art of Uganda. I consider these beliefs and traditions in Chapter 5.

This broad post-processual framework draws inspiration from emphasizing a specific cultural and social context to understanding the past (Hodder 1982c; 1987; Hodder & Hutson 2003). Context and interpretation are interrelated. In a contextual approach, it is incorrect to read any meaning outside of a social and political context, because these

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define meaning. By employing an approach that embraces concepts of recursive hermeneutics and polysemy (Hodder 1997), a more nuanced and reflexive understanding of the rock art of Uganda will be possible. I seek the most grounded explanation from the detailed analyses of data, following through numerous influences that impinge on the interpretation of the geometric rock art images. I argue that the rock art of Uganda will mean nothing or very little on its own. It is only when it is put together structurally within the broader geometric rock art zone, and an embracing of ethnographies, that meanings can be approached. This study will undoubtedly generate discourse that contributes to the growing body of archaeology and rock art scholarship in interpretive studies on hunter-gatherers in Africa in general (e.g. Lewis-Williams 1996), and geometric rock art in particular (e.g. Clark 1953; Smith 1995; 1997).

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Chapter Five

REJOICING THE FOREST

> It was as though the nightly chorus were an intimate communion between a people and their god, the forest. Moke even talked about this, only when he did so he stopped working on his bow and turned his wrinkled old face to stare at me with deep, brown smiling eyes. He told me how all Pygmies have different names for their god, but how they all know that, it is really the same one. Just what it is, of course, they do not know, and that is why the name really does not matter very much. 'How can we know?' he asked. 'We can't see him, perhaps only when we die will we know and then we can't tell anyone. So how can we say what he is like or what his name is? But he must be good to give us so many things. He must be of the forest. So when we sing, we sing to the forest' (Turnbull 1961: 87-88).

> [E]very human society is the embodiment of a particular system of knowledge. The cultural knowledge possessed by contemporary indigenous societies is part of a compendium (epitome) of wisdom that extends back through time, a significant portion of which is (reflected) represented in archaeological materials and information (Nicholas & Bannister 2004: 332).

In the previous chapters, I traced evidence for the presence of LSA peoples in East Africa and considered the flawed assumptions and debate regarding the identity of the LSA people. The cultural values of these ancient societies, embedded in material remains, are part of the heritage of some of the groups of Pygmies of Africa. This chapter deals with what is at the heart of these cultural values, what underpins the material culture of Pygmy groups, and how these groups dealt with (or deal with) the unknown, a concept aptly expressed in the above quotation, "We can't see him". Moke's words will echo throughout this chapter, they contextualize the all-embracing concept of forest as perceived by the Pygmies. The diverse and linguistically distinct Pygmy groups in Africa all make similar reference to spirits and to the supernatural.

I introduce a principle here that will become apparent as we go through the lengthy beliefs and rituals of the Pygmies in this chapter. In my opinion, if the rock art at the heart of this thesis is a part and a product of these beliefs and rituals, then, it is

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imperative to take cognizance of the gender synergies they contain and metaphors they express. What may initially appear to be a separate ritual for either men or women actually involves both genders.

In this chapter, I make frequent yet cautious use of metaphor as an interpretative tool to contextualise Pygmy thought. Metaphor derives from the Greek *metaphora*, 'carrying over' or Greek *meta-pherein*, which means carry to another place. Its etymological meaning is similar to that of the English word transfer. Metaphor has the same root as *amphora*, a container used to store precious oils and wine in which they are carried from place to place. Similarly, metaphors store precious information and have an innate capacity to carry and transfer it, for example, from the mundane to the sacred or extraordinary. David Phillip Collett (1995) uses metaphor to understand the conceptual link between pots, women and furnaces. Among the Karanga of Zimbabwe, one cultural context (pots and furnaces) carries the meanings of other cultural contexts (fertile women) (Collett 1995: 506). Peter Schmidt (2006) also shows how the Haya of Tanzania use a "concatenation of metaphors that transform the cultural furnace into a human womb"(Schmidt 2006: 152). In these instances, what is transferred may be the meaning of the word furnace: instead of understanding a word literally, it is applied to a meaning other than that which it usually has, so that the word now is to be understood metaphorically. Thus, a metaphorical meaning consists of two meanings present simultaneously, interacting in one metaphor. We find then that essentially, metaphorical expressions are woven throughout the fabric of people's languages.

Metaphorical structures are fundamental to all belief systems (Tilley 1999: 10). In archaeology, Tilley describes metaphor as a form of compressed analogy and a verbal, textual or material reflection of an underlying cognitive structure and worldview (*ibid.*: 5). In rock art research, David Lewis-Williams argues that textual metaphors must be used with caution since they can easily draw attention away from the data and impute to them a particular kind of syntax that may lead to a misinterpretation (Lewis-Williams 2002: 136-7). Lewis-Williams drew on ethnographies to show that a cluster of metaphors present in San rock art was concerned with supernatural potency. This cluster is at the foundation of an accurate explanation of San rock art. Attempting to explain the geometric rock art of Uganda, I draw on Mbuti ethnography. From this ethnography, I develop a model on gender synergies. The synergy of these partnerships,

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embellished through metaphors, is very powerful and is manifest in the ultimate goal of rejoicing the forest. Using this model, I show that a Pygmy world is full of metaphorical expressions that are sung and danced; they are enacted verbally and dramatically.

Max Black (1962) considers three ways in which metaphorical expressions may be understood. First is what he refers to as the substitution view of metaphor. In this approach, one word or expression with a distinctly metaphorical use within a literal frame is used to communicate meaning that might have been expressed literally, making a straightforward substitution (Black 1962: 32). His second approach is the comparison view of metaphor. This is an extension of the straightforward substitution approach because a metaphorical statement may replace an equivalent literal comparison (Black 1962: 35). Rather than perceive metaphor as drawing attention to the similar in apparently dissimilar terms, Black's third approach considers metaphor as an interaction of two thoughts (Black 1962: 39). For example, if I use Black's interaction approach, the metaphor 'forest is mother' comprises a principal and subsidiary subject - the forest is the principal and mother the subsidiary. In reading the metaphor, 'forest is mother' I connect two ideas of forest and mother; two thoughts of different things are active, interacting. This is what Black refers to as the system of associated commonplaces. This system ensures that the associations with the word 'forest' made by different hunter-gatherer groups in the Ituri forest for example, would agree closely, but such associations may be entirely different from mine (Black 1962: 40).

> [T]he important thing for the metaphor's effectiveness is not that the commonplaces shall be true, but that they should be readily and freely evoked (*ibid.*).

Although metaphors are powerful and evocative and may help understand a Pygmy worldview, I explicate them with caution because what I may interpret as a metaphorical association may actually be a real and powerful connection for the Pygmies. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) argue that human thought processes are largely metaphorical. Metaphors structure basic human understanding and are embedded in the way we perceive, think about and describe the world (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 3). Often metaphors shape our perceptions and actions without us being aware of them because metaphorical concepts form our ordinary manner of expression.

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Metaphors do not only point out objectively true similarities; they create the similarities. Following Lakoff and Johnson, the notion of digesting an idea is coherent only within the context of other metaphors. The Mbuti expressions, 'dancing with the moon' and 'sleeping with the moon', create their own similarities and allow for the creation of further similarities, acknowledging that the structure of metaphors depends on culture.

Human cultures employ metaphors to express thought, to communicate, and to show how societies associate specific material objects with other objects, with people and with social (or political) roles. Such connections are specific to certain cultural situations (e.g. Richards 1956; Turner 1967; Smith 1995; Namono 2004; Calvert 2006). The specificity of metaphor and the fact that metaphors are culturally relative, as well as the frequent use of a specific set of metaphors amongst a specific group of people at a particular time, largely, reflects a shared worldview and cosmology. It implies that this specific group of people shared many distinct metaphorical understandings (Tilley 1999: 9; Hodder 1982d: 7; Miller 1982).

In southern and central Africa, before hunter-gatherer or Iron Age farmer ethnography was used in rock art research, it was difficult to understand the meaning of rock art without some insight into the beliefs from whom the imagery derived. As David Lewis-Williams has argued, the painting of the *Last Supper* by Leonardo Da Vinci or the stained glass windows of the European cathedrals can only be understood with some knowledge of Christianity and European beliefs (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990: 9). Similarly, the rock art of Uganda can only be understood with some insight into beliefs and practices of African Pygmies to whom the geometric images are attributed.

There is no ethnographic record of the Pygmies making rock art. This lacuna in Pygmy ethnography is similar to that in southern Africa where there is no direct record of the San people painting, although we now know of one of the last San painters in the southern Drakensberg (Jolly 1986; Lewis-Williams 1986; Blundell 2004: 40). In the case of the Mbuti, early researchers in equatorial Africa had difficulty obtaining access to hunting camps. It is recorded that the Mbuti were sceptical about foreigners visiting their camps so, for example, Paul Schebesta constantly worked through villagers to gain access to them (Turnbull 1960b: 37). On their part, the villagers were not willing to

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allow any European visit a hunting camp (*ibid.*: 37-8). However, Turnbull overcame the 'villager barrier' by accessing and gaining the confidence of the Mbuti through Patrick Putnam. In 1954 to 1955 and later in 1957, Turnbull gained direct access to the Mbuti in the forest. He did not record any instance of rock art. It is probable that by the 1930s the tradition of creating rock art may have ceased. Alternatively, if the making and using of the rock art was important then it is highly unlikely that they would have allowed strangers to be part of it, so information about rock art was probably not volunteered.

Turnbull's ethnographic accounts of the Mbuti form my primary data on Pygmy cosmology and ethnography. Although Turnbull's accounts have been criticised as exaggerated and romanticised, they remain an extremely valuable resource in highlighting the intricacies of Pygmy cosmology. While most of Turnbull's information was obtained from Anne Putnam's accounts, he made several visits to the Epulu, in 1954, 1955 and 1957, thus making his own interaction with the Pygmies repetitive, prolonged and deep. This depth of interaction enabled Turnbull to question some of his sources and "follow up his statements with such a wealth of secondary material" (Douglas 2003: 16). Despite economic changes and interaction with neighbouring groups, the Mbuti retained much of their traditional culture and social organisation. Turnbull's interactions enriched and extended his understanding of the Mbuti before and in the context of change. Thus although Turnbull's passages may be romantically phrased, I am more concerned with his empirical observations.

Aside from Turnbull's rich material on the Mbuti, several studies have been done on other Pygmy groups. I draw on some of these studies and a multiplicity of anthropological voices to develop an understanding of the Pygmy cosmos. Specifically though, I am inspired by Turnbull's (1985) analysis of Mbuti cosmology and Mosko's (1987) structural analysis of Mbuti culture and social organisation. Turnbull's perceptive understanding and Mosko's analytical study together form a basis from which to challenge not only what, but also how the material culture of Pygmies was produced. I start with the belief in the concept of the 'forest,' *ndura*.

Almost all researchers who study the geometric rock art of east and central Africa suggest that it is associated with fertility. Sassoon (1973: 8) associated the geometric

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images of Uganda with rainmaking and fertility. Smith argues that the geometric images deal with weather/fertility. I seek to consider the rock art of Uganda within a broader framework that takes cognisance of male-female synergies that Smith did not use. Although my reading of Pygmy ethnographies largely follows that of Turnbull, I do not claim that it is the only possible reading of the data, neither do I propose a pan-Pygmy cosmology. In the discussion that follows, I expand earlier restricted views to consider Pygmy concepts of the supernatural, myth, ritual and regeneration.

A gendered cosmos

In broad terms, Pygmy cosmology is a system of beliefs and practices concentrated around the notion of 'forest', *ndura*. Cosmos, from the Greek word *kosmos*, 'orderly arrangement' refers to a group's overall orderly perspective from which society perceives and interprets the world; it embraces a collection of beliefs about life and the universe that helps to maintain order and harmony. The forest is central to Mbuti thought, and similarly held beliefs exist among the Twa, Aka, Yaka, Baka and the Efe for example. Life and thought revolve around the normal benevolence of the forest (Turnbull 1960b: 36). It is essential for people to maintain harmony with the totality of the forest. Within this system, one component must not deteriorate at the expense of another. There must be constant harmony and balance. Harmony is maintained through social values, beliefs and attitudes that emphasise a need for balance.

Mosko's (1987) work on the Epulu Mbuti offers an in-depth discussion of forest symbolism evident in their culture and social organization. Douglas argues that people's behaviour to their god(s) corresponds to their behaviour to each other (Douglas 2003: 16). In considering patterns for behaviour, Mosko (1987: 896) shows what Turnbull has persistently argued, that the Mbuti notion of *ndura,* is not simple. Virtually everything in Mbuti culture is related to this single idea: *ndura* refers to the entire world (Turnbull 1961: xv). The Mbuti believe in an overriding power, a life force *pepo* - that animates all moving and living things (Turnbull 1965c: 249; 1965b: 248). Every man and animal is endowed to a greater or lesser extent with this power. *Pepo* is the breath of the disembodied spirits as well as the breath of the forest. It derives from a single source whose physical manifestation is the concept *ndura* (Turnbull 1965c: 247-8).

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According to Bird-David (1988), Mbuti perceptions of the environment are summed up by the primary metaphor 'forest is as parent' or, more generally, by the notion that the environment gives the where-withal of life to people, unconditionally (Bird-David 1990; Ingold 2000: 43). *Ndura* is sacred. Its centre is the most sacred space of all: its sanctity derives from the rituals performed to it. The Mbuti reverence for the forest moves beyond its being only as a source of food and clothing, to its being personified as father and mother, the giver of life from whom help is sought and thanks given through ritual. The forest **is** 'mother', 'father', 'sibling or friend' and 'lover' (Turnbull 1960c: 319-20, 330; 1965c: 252-3; Mosko 1987: 898). Women, as bearers of children are 'life-givers'. No wonder then that women are believed to be closer to the forest than men (Turnbull 1981: 210).

Farmers neighbouring the Mbuti, by contrast, liken the environment to an ancestor rather than a parent, which yields its bounty only reciprocally, in return for favours rendered (Ingold 2000: 43). It is this difference in orientation to the environment, Ingold argues, that fundamentally distinguishes hunter-gatherers from farmers and is upheld even when goods are exchanged (*ibid.*). Bird-David (1992) extends this argument by positing that hunter-gatherers liken the way the forest shares with people to the way people share amongst themselves. By so doing, both farmers and Pygmies integrate human and non-human components of the world into an all-embracing 'cosmic economy of sharing' differently (Ingold 2000: 44).

In the Ituri forest the canopy shuts out all direct sunlight except where rivers cut through the trees, where there are salt licks or where farmers have grown plantations. As a result, under the canopy temperatures barely fluctuate and range from 21^{o} C at night to 26^{o} C during the day (Turnbull 1985: 8). The centre of this forest is dark, wet and moist (Turnbull 1990: 69), a metaphor for the primordial vagina, the female sacred vessel, her energy emanating from her bloody womb and core (Chicago 1996: 25). The centre of the forest is its very essence; it is unoccupied, no hunting occurs there and all hunting camps, circular in layout, radiate between the centre of the forest and the periphery, never at the centre (Turnbull 1985: 8; Mosko 1987: 900). Spirits move between the real world on the periphery and the supernatural world at the centre of the forest.

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The Mbuti see themselves in a time-space capsule where they are constantly at the centre (Turnbull 1978b: 97-8). Individuals move within their own capsule or sphere. If one moves too quickly within one's own sphere and reaches the periphery before the rest of the world has caught up, one becomes disoriented. Such disorientation causes sickness, antisocial behaviour (another form of sickness) and other aberrational behaviour. Violent movement is, as the Mbuti say, 'too fast' or 'with too much noise' or 'like an elephant' (Turnbull 1990: 77). When you are 'on the edge', you are vulnerable to the disembodied spirits that may pierce the shell of the capsule (Turnbull 1978b: 97-8; 1984a: 32; 1985: 9). If your shell is pierced, you can move into the in-between space and pass to the other world (Turnbull 1985: 11). When you move into this in-between space, your mirror image replaces you, as what may happen in case of death. This mirror image will look **like** you but not **be** you (Turnbull 1983: 123). Movement between spheres is considered a movement of spheres rather than of individuals, although individuals and groups can cause such movement to occur, for example, during the *molimo* ritual (Turnbull 1990: 77). When there is chaos, the *molimo* 'centralises' you and the camp, restoring 'balance'.

Larger spheres, such as hunting camps, are never contiguous. Preferably, there should be space between individual spheres, between the spherical houses, in-between spherical hunting camps and within the spherical forest clearing. According to Turnbull, individuality and sociality create ambivalence in terms of what occupies the in-between space of everyone's sphere. Ambivalence causes the walls of the spheres to become weak, punctured or dissolved thus permitting interpenetration between contiguous spheres or between one sphere and the surrounding, unknown space (Turnbull 1985: 9). From my reading of the ethnographies, I suggest that if there is *ekimi* between individuals and in the camp, then the spheres are impenetrable because everyone will be at the centre of their sphere and no sphere is permeable. However, during *akami*, the spirits that occupy the spaces between the spheres challenge the sacredness of a punctured sphere and gain control of it. These spirits are expelled through the songs sung to the forest.

Similarly, the Mbuti believe that moving out of one's shell and encountering the supernatural is similar to total immersion in water (Turnbull 1978b: 98; 1983: 123). The essence of a person's reflection can meet and replace that person as he or she

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approaches and enters the water. When a person is completely immersed, all contact with the human world is lost. However, as the person emerges from the water, another body passes through theirs and, systematically replaces the person leaving the water (Turnbull 1978b: 98; Turnbull 1983: 122). Reflections in the water are the spirit world that mirrors the world of the Mbuti. Immersion in water equates to crossing from one plane of existence to another, from the human world to the spirit world. Large water bodies are therefore an *axis mundi* that leads to the supernatural world. "The mirror reality is a constant phenomenon in the Mbuti forest world, taken by them to represent the co-existence of the sacred and the profane" (Turnbull 1990: 61).

Maintaining harmony and balance within the band and the camp forms the deepest longing of the Mbuti, and is the basis for their behaviour. As I have pointed out, all movements must be quiet and gentle like the leopard; it must not be noisy, chaotic, fast and violent like the elephant (Turnbull 1985: 12). A lack of noise does not mean a lack of sound since the forest is constantly 'talking' *ndura a lufu* (Turnbull 1965c: 259). 'Silence' is joy, awareness, order and peacefulness; it is the absence of conflict, tension and anger. 'Noise' on the other hand is chaos, quarrelling and disharmony. When there is 'silence', *molimo* is brought out to rejoice the forest. When there is 'noise', and things are 'out of balance', *molimo* is called to negotiate and restore the balance (Turnbull 1985:11). For the Mbuti the forest **is** a 'womb' *ndu*, with *ekimi* at its centre and *akami* at the periphery (Turnbull 1983: 30, 32, 44; Mosko 1987: 899):

> The word for sphere is the same word used for hut, *endu*, is a spherical structure built from sticks and leaves from the forest, in which they live for shelter, protection, warmth and comfort (Turnbull 1984a: 33).

The family hut is like the forest and takes on 'spherical' iconic proportions (Mosko 1987: 899). If the roof of a hut leaks when it rains, it is a woman's task, specifically a married woman, to repair the leak, hence bachelors bemoan being single (Turnbull 1961: 65). Similarly, although Mbuti men collect saplings and *mongongo* leaves for the hut, only women construct the hut (Turnbull 1965c: 102). Thus, a leaking roof may be a metaphor for menarche, vaginal or womb fluids of the womb, and are hence women's concerns.

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At the centre of each family hut is the family's hearth, its 'vagina' (*kuma*). The Mbuti liken a womb to a hearth because it is warm, but also because it has the power to transform (Mosko 1987: 900; Turnbull 1965c: 264; 1978a: 202; 1984a: 50). For them, a natural womb transforms blood and semen into life, just as fire transforms spiritual life, fluids, from physical life. This symbol is present in their everyday lives in the central hearth, the huts, the camp and the *molimo* fire. The *molimo* fire is composed of embers taken from each family hearth. The most important hearth is the *kumamolimo,* the 'vagina' of the *molimo* or the 'place of the *molimo*'; it is the fire of life, or 'the gift of life' from the forest (Turnbull 1961: 69, 148).

Ideally, for the Mbuti, coitus and conception are sacred and creative if obtained in marriage and conducted in the forest near a stream or in the shade of trees. The smell and sounds of the forest are considered to be an integral part of marital coitus and by extension, infuse mother and child with the spirit of the forest (Turnbull 1978b: 167-70; 1984a: 33; Mosko 1987: 899). The Mbuti believe that during coitus, semen is *pepo,* and this *pepo* is conveyed to the womb (Turnbull 1965c: 122, 254; Mosko 1987: 899).

The Mbuti believe a woman's womb to be most fertile during her menses and that there is a "connection between coition and conception" (Turnbull 1965b: 177; 1965c: 122). Coitus during menses equates to 'sleeping with the moon' (Turnbull 1960a: 191; 1981: 169; Mosko 1987: 899). According to Turnbull (1965c: 253), Schebesta recorded Aka net-hunters referring to *songé* (moon), as creator of all things especially of man who is created by menstrual blood. Turnbull also noted reference to the moon in a song of the *molimo*:

> *Ema songé, ema, ema; okisu ema; pika'i.*
> Mother moon, mother, mother, hear us mother; come.

Turnbull also observed an intimate, solitary, erotic relationship between an Mbuti hunter, Kenge and the moon. In response to why he was dancing alone, Kenge said, "But I'm *not* dancing alone…I am dancing with the forest, dancing with the moon" (Turnbull 1961: 245). For the Mbuti, dancing equates to sexual intercourse. The Mbuti word for dancing is the same word for sexual intercourse (Grinker 2000: 2).

The foetus is believed to be the result of the joyful intermingling of mother (vaginal fluids or menstrual blood), father (semen) and the benevolent forest (the life-giver),

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hence ‘child of the forest’ (Mosko 1987: 899). Coitus during pregnancy makes the child grow faster (Mosko 1987: 899; Turnbull 1965b: 178; 1978b: 168), it is believed to “hurry things along” (Turnbull 1965c: 123). The Mbuti do not explicitly refer to bodily fluids (menstrual blood and semen) as *pepo*, life, (that may escape through the body orifices that they are expelled from), but recognise copulation as a means of transferring and containing life (Mosko 1987: 899). This implies that the Mbuti access the supernatural world at both an individual level (as man and woman) during coitus, and at a collective level (as a camp) through the *molimo* fire.

An Mbuti newborn child is born in the forest (Duffy 1984: 134), bathed in waters of the forest and wrapped in soft bark cloth, ‘womb of the forest’ (Turnbull 1965b: 213; Turnbull 1965c: 129; Mosko 1987: 900). Mosko suggests that the bark cloth and plant fluids symbolically represent maternal and paternal dimensions of the forest, respectively. From here, the child emerges into the nuclear family hut, *endu*. Like the womb, *endu* are spherical or dome-shaped and the family’s hearth is at the centre of the hut (Mosko 1987:900). As the child grows, it interacts in the children’s playground, imitating adult life. In this space, a child is attached to an age group whose functions and sphere of authority differ from that of the nuclear family.

The camp, *apa*, is where adults live and move around the forest with time. Upon death, with the aid of the *molimo*, the dead are ‘transported’ from camp and the hut, to the forest that gave birth to them. The dead are interred in holes in tree trunks in the forest, up in the branches of trees, beside the hut, or in the hut, and the hut structure is pulled down over the body or the grave (Turnbull 1965c: 145). According to Schebesta, the Efe carried the dead to the forest, placed them against a tree in a sitting position and left them there (Schebesta 1933: 237). The camp is then abandoned. From a cosmological perspective, by returning to the forest the living go full circle, from one steadily widening, protective and inclusive sphere to the next and return to their origins, to the all-inclusive primordial womb, *ndura*. Essentially, the dead return to the womb to be re-born. Death is a natural phenomenon like birth. Turnbull (1965b: 238) noted that net hunters believe death is caused by the water animal, that is the rainbow, that is sometimes the python. Turnbull suggests that the water animal may not be the cause of ‘normal’ deaths.

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According to Mrs. Putnam's notes, the water animal is the rainbow, and **is** the *molimo*. Lightning is also associated with death. It may be probably that given similar beliefs amongst farmers, of a relationship between the python and the rainbow, the idea of the *molimo* being the rainbow, the python, and the water animal is a farmer belief. On the other hand, it may be probable that this is a Pygmy belief adopted by farmers. Notions of the rainbow, the python and lightning are associated with rain control in which Pygmies are experts (see Smith 1997).

Daily singing and dancing are nourishment for life, good for both humans and the forest; they provide the cohesion necessary to hunt, fish, gather and do other daily chores. All songs should be 'pleasing to the forest'(Turnbull 1965c: 257). For the Mbuti, a prime mode of contact with spirits is through song (Turnbull 1990: 71). Their songs have very few words and in most cases, the song is an imitation of the sounds of the forest. Through song and dance, the Mbuti are able to manipulate their individual emotions while affecting the emotions of others and the forest. Within this context, each participant in a song or dance is a leader and a follower of collective participation, while enabling individuality and sociality, for public and private behaviour and thought (Turnbull 1985: 1). However, although individual wisdom and ability are recognised and influential, any tendency towards charismatic leadership is countered by ridicule (Turnbull 1965c: 179).

Song, dance, mime and ridicule are essential modes of expression but are also modes of control. Like each participant in a song, each age group within a camp has a role within the social organisation of a camp. For example, if an adult in a camp isolates himself or herself due to impotence or sexual inadequacy, children's mime brings them back to the all-embracing sphere of the camp. Children's ridicule is believed to be spiritually powerful (Turnbull 1984a: 49).

Extended Spirituality

Belief in spirits is common to almost all religions. Some people believe in the spirit of the god(s), in ancestor and evil spirits. Because these spirits are believed to be invisible, people often invoke them verbally, through song and recitation in the knowledge that

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communing with oneself and amongst themselves is communing with the spirits. The Pygmies and their farmer neighbours are no different.

According to Lewis (2002:53), all Pygmy groups aggregate during certain weeks of the year, hunt collectively and celebrate large festivals dominated by group polyphonic singing. These aggregations are known respectively as *jengi* (Baka), *mokondi* (Aka) and *molimo* (Mbuti) (Bahuchet 1992: 247; Lewis 2002: 53). Schebesta believed that the Mbuti worldview derived from a belief in a deity, creator-God (Lewis 2002: 53; Schebesta & Griffin 1936: 171). But Schebesta's position has been challenged by Turnbull (1965c) and more recently by Bahuchet (1992), Tsuru (1998), Sawada (2001) and Lewis (2002).

The Mbuti recognise a power greater than themselves, a spirit being whose physical manifestation is the totality of 'forest'(Turnbull 1965c: 247-8). Unlike the farmer belief in the supernatural, the Mbuti do not require protection against it. Their belief exists to explain the present nature of the world of which they are a part. The Mbuti consider themselves to be part spiritual, a quality derived from *pepo* present in all living and non-living things. *Pepo* activates individual personality located in the heart. *Keti* are human and animal, not necessarily the spirits of the dead but may be independent manifestations of the forest; they are disembodied in that they are invisible to the Mbuti (Turnbull 1965c: 249). *Keti* mirror the lives of the Mbuti. A *keti* hunter and an Mbuti hunter never meet in space as they hunt. The Mbuti believe that if they shoot an arrow into an animal and the animal runs away never to be found again, then the *keti* hunter has taken the animal (Turnbull 1965b: 58-59) or that the animal itself was *keti* (Turnbull 1965c: 249). Spirits of the forest are therefore animal and human, invisible and dis-embodied. Since the dead return to the forest, spirits of the forests are spirits of the dead as well as independent manifestations of the forest. The dead and the forest become one.

Among Pygmy groups, the dead play a crucial role in beliefs associated with successful hunts. According to Tsuru (1998), the Baka collectively believe that upon death they transform into spirits that have a general name '*mɛ'* (Joiris 1996:256-8; Tsuru 1998:52). These *mɛ* are androgynous and anthropomorphic, they reside in camps in the forest from where they occasionally visit Baka camps to sing and dance and impart mores to

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living society (Tsuru 1998: 51; 2001: 105). Sawada (2001) states that Baka spirit specialists are the people who inherit the guardianship of the 'spirits' of the dead and call upon spirits to help the living hunt (Sawada 2001: 35; Joiris 1996: 252-3, 263). I use the term spirit specialist because, in my opinion, the term 'initiate' often implies some ritual associated with initiation. Spirit specialists inherit guardianship of the 'spirit' or acquired guardianship in exchange for a close relative's life. They have contact with spirits and conduct hunting rituals in which they go into light trance when their gaze encounters a 'spirit' (Joiris 1996: 263; Sawada 2001: 35). It is not clear whether the 'spirits' of animal origin are regarded as 'spirits' of the dead since 'spirits' of human origin may sometimes be reincarnated as animals (Sawada 2001: 36-38).

The Aka consider success in hunting and honey gathering to be directed by 'spirits' of the dead, while animal 'spirits' help Aka avoid detection during a hunt (Sawada 2001: 36). Aka game 'spirits' are similar to 'spirits' of animal origin since both are always with the animals. Then the spirits of animal origin are similar to 'spirits' of the dead because both help the living people hunt game successfully (Sawada 2001: 37). Game 'spirits' are different from animal 'spirits' among the Mbuti, Baka and Efe (*ibid.*). For the Mbuti, game spirits, *keti* move with the animals: when the spirits stop, the animal stops, when they jump or move, the animal does the same. *Keti* prevent the Mbuti from catching the animal (Harako 1984: 152, in Sawada 2001: 37).

The Efe believe that when they die they will go to the forest (Sawada 2001: 30). The dead are 'alive' and are encountered in the depth of the forest, the same forest that the living Efe use (Sawada 1998: 71-90). Life after death is the same as life before death and this thinking is at the core of the Efe worldview (Sawada 2001: 31). In dreams, the dead communicate with the living. For the Efe all mammals in the forest are controlled by a game spirit, *toré*, who determines which mammal will be killed. The dead are, or metamorphose into, *toré* (Sawada 2001: 37). In this sense, game spirits and ancestor spirits are the same. Accordingly, for the Efe, *toré* sends death, *toré* is everywhere (Turnbull 1965b: 189).

The Baka and Aka have been in long contact with about thirty non-hunter-gatherer groups. The fluidity of ritual or belief systems has meant that behavioural osmosis has occurred and produced intra-cultural diversity amongst all groups (Joiris 1996: 246;

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Tsuru 2001: 107-9). In my review of some of the revisionist literature, I argued that fluidity is not always the case. I consider there to be a minor difference between belief systems and modes of production when interaction takes place. Those practises that remain consistent through time and space can be considered central amongst all groups. In my view although supernatural beings of separate categories can be called the same name, it is the concept 'spirit' that is important rather than the name of the spirit. The **form** of the spirit is what is significant.

In summary, Baka and Efe believe that upon death humans are reincarnated into spirits while this idea does not exist between Aka and Mbuti. Aka believe that human 'spirits' can be reincarnated as animals such as elephants, but not vice versa (Sawada 2001: 36). Mbuti *keti* and Efe *toré* are probably the same. The game 'spirits' of the Mbuti and Baka move with the animals; for Mbuti they protect the animal while for the Baka they help in the hunt. Baka *mɛ* and Mbuti *keti* are very similar in mirroring real life experiences. Game 'spirits' and 'spirits' of the dead are similar and common to Baka and Aka for whom they are notably anthropomorphic and help the hunters to hunt (Sawada 2001: 38). Baka game 'spirits' and Efe *toré* of animals are anthropomorphic and have an important role in hunting (*ibid.:* 37). In my opinion, Mbuti *keti* are 'spirits' of the dead, of the game 'spirit' and animal 'spirits'. Given that the situation in a hunt is always one of flux, the interpretation of the category of *keti* will depend on the outcome of the hunt and events before the hunt. These disembodied spirits also derive from *pepo* and are 'spirits' considered to be independent manifestations of the forest synonymous with *molimo* (Turnbull 1965c: 249). This connection between the living, the dead and the forest, and the belief in the nature of the supernatural is reflected in the stories recounted as myths and legends.

Myths and Legends

Legends and myths tell a lot about a people's worldview. Although contemporary Pygmy groups may live miles apart, speak different languages and have different livelihoods, they still share cultural characteristics as forest-based groups. Specific cultural characteristics are still evident amongst sedentarized Pygmy groups who have since lost their forest way of life. Like most societies, Pygmy traditions are transmitted through stories, myths and legends. Turnbull (Turnbull 1965a: 162) notes that it is

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difficult to determine whether a particular legend is of farmer or Pygmy origin due to the scanty nature of traditions of origin and interest in them amongst Pygmies.

Anne Putnam recorded and translated from KiNgwana into English two hundred legends from the Mbuti. Turnbull reviewed these legends but only published those that were re-told to him in recognisable form (see Turnbull 1959; Turnbull 1965b: 260-72). One such myth is the creation myth, which affirms the centrality of the forest (Balenger, Coppenger, Fried & Kanchev 2005). This Mbuti creation myth deals with water, the sun and the moon. The water rained on the earth, earth vegetables flourished and the earth gardens grew (Turnbull 1965b: 261).

Victor Turner (1968: Introduction), argued that myth and ritual are the predominant means through which people express and transmit their inner concepts of the supernatural, from one generation to the next. Turnbull categorised the recorded mythologies of the Mbuti as creation myths, legends dealing with social relations and legends dealing with relations with the supernatural. Turnbull presents three accounts of creation that differ in some aspects, but are similar in structure and reflect a ritual relationship between Pygmies and the universe (excluding the stars) (see Turnbull 1959: 47).

Among the legends dealing with relations with the supernatural are those that link the animal and the supernatural worlds in which water animals are spirits that are not particularly dangerous. There is one myth about an Mbuti man, Ngoyi, who was tired of all his relatives and decided to live on his own in a river called Tato where his family will not be able to see him anymore. He took his children and they all disappeared. Ngoyi was a clever worker of wood and once a piece of wood had been thrown into a river, Ngoyi could make it into whatever you wanted. Ngoyi's children came out to play during the daytime and disappeared when a person approached the river; the children can still be heard talking in the river. In this myth, Ngoyi and his children point to another level of being and hint to a life beyond the real world.

This myth is retold as a story by Turnbull (1984a: 226-7), as an example of what happens to a person in old age. Nzoki was a hunter who grew tired of hunting and increasingly stayed behind in the camp whilst the others went to hunt. In the camp,

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Nzoki simply whittled away at a piece of wood. He wanted the wood to be something else. Then as a sign of old age, he took to wandering alone into the forest. In the forest, he sat at a river and stared at his reflection. As he stared, he whittled away at a piece of wood and let it be whatever it wanted to be. One day he slowly touched his feet in the water, and whittling away, he waded into the river and allowed his reflection to replace him. He whittled, whittled, and was still whittling when he finally disappeared beneath the surface of the water forever. Now, if you throw a piece of wood into the Lela River, Nzoki is there and he will whittle it for you and give it back to you in whatever it wanted to be. I consider that when Nzoki disappears forever, he metaphorically transforms into a supernatural being.

Another legend that deals with the supernatural tells how two brothers were crossing a stream, and one fell in. The other, thinking he had been drowned, returned to camp with the news; but really the drowned brother had become a water animal. Some weeks later the land brother saw his water brother and tried to tempt him home, glad to see him still alive. The water brother caught hold of the land brother and pulled him into the water, so that the land brother also became a water animal. The two water brothers then stayed in the stream and never came out again.

A third legend connects the rainbow with these water animals. Some girls were cutting wood. They crossed a stream by a fallen tree. However, really the tree was the bad water animal called *klima*, the rainbow. When returning, all crossed except the slowest of the girls, whom a man waited for. As these two were halfway across, the dead tree, which was really the rainbow in the form of a water animal, suddenly dived into the water, carrying the man and girl with it. Later on, the couple were seen sitting on a rock in the middle of the stream, but were never seen again after that.

These legends expose 'trickery' and elusiveness (Turnbull 1959: 58). I suggest that this trickery and elusiveness is that of the disembodied spirits of the supernatural world. In these myths, water is the medium through which humans and animals transform, and through which they move from one world to another. Water as a metaphor for menstrual blood and transformation, is a visible manifestation of the supernatural. Amongst the Mbuti the water animal and the rainbow (and sometimes the python) cause death. The rainbow and the *molimo* suspended in the tree, carry this symbolism

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probably due to their position, connecting the earth (the ground) and the sky (the canopy). The water animal is *molimo* (Turnbull 1965b: 238). If *molimo* is used to communicate with the forest, then *molimo* is in the real world (physically) and the spirit world (metaphorically). The Aka have a great fear of the rainbow '*Papae',* 'Father', who is the great snake that ascends from the water to the sky (Schebesta 1933: 167). These myths and legends speak of the supernatural world. Rituals represent a major link and a deep relationship between the supernatural world and the real, social world.

Ritual

Now, in more detail we will see the principle I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter - gender synergy. Given the evidence for variation and diversity amongst Pygmy communities in Africa, Mbuti culture has been found to exhibit a considerable uniformity throughout the Ituri Forest. There are several Mbuti ritual activities, such as important activities associated with elephant hunting (Hewlett 1996: 215). Reference to the game of elephant hunting was found in the diaries of Father Maurice Morceau, a French missionary who disappeared without trace in 1821 while on a mission to the Ituri forest. Elephant hunting may be a recent activity encouraged more out of the economic rewards than for ritual purposes. I have not focused on other activities in detail, but rather, have chosen two major rituals, *molimo* and *elima* recorded amongst the Mbuti that elaborate the gender synergy and the vibrant relationship with *ndura*.

<u>Molimo: male</u>

For the Mbuti, the most central ritual is the *molimo*. The dark, dense groove of trees and shrubs, in canopies in the depths of the forest are where the *molimo* trumpet is kept. A story is told that in the old days, *molimo* was an animal that belonged to the women, and all the men had to run away every time they saw it. But the men caught the animal and since then no woman has been allowed to see it (Turnbull 1965b: 227-8). There are also legends that women stole the *molimo* from chimpanzees (or sometimes from spirits, *baketi*) (Turnbull 1960c: 314). The physical form of *molimo* is a single end-blown seven-foot length of bamboo (Moore 1998: 141-2). The trumpet itself is not sacred because at one time a metal drainpipe was used (see Turnbull 1965c: 201). Following Moore (1998: 141-143), I consider that the function of the trumpet is sacred. The special dance and *molimo* songs that mimic the sounds of the forest awaken it to

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the plight it is called to address. *Molimo's* voice, which is the breeze, transfers '*pepo*' between the Mbuti and the forest. The 'song of the forest' is a symbol associated with the Mbuti.

Molimo, sometimes called the 'animal of the forest', is an important part of Mbuti spiritual and social life. The sanctity of *molimo* derives from Mbuti belief in the goodness of the forest that inspires the rituals, performed primarily to awaken the forest, as Moke explained to Turnbull:

> Normally everything goes well in our world. But at night when we are sleeping sometimes things go wrong, because we are not awake to stop them from going wrong. Army ants invade the camp, leopards may come in and steal a hunting dog or even a child. If we were awake these things would not happen. So when something goes wrong, like illness or bad hunting or death, it must be because the forest is sleeping and not looking after its children. So what do we do? We wake it up. We wake it up by singing to it, and we do this because we want it to awaken happy. Then everything will be well and good again. And when our world is going well also we sing to the forest because we want it to share our happiness (Turnbull 1961:87).

When the forest awakens, the plight in the camp may change (if it is not in the case of death) (Turnbull 1965c: 259). It is compulsory for male adults to participate in *molimo;* failure to do so could result in death of the individual. The forest that gives life and strength may bring death to one who fails to rejoice it (Turnbull 1965c: 280).

Young hunters decorate their bodies (Fig. 70), and then they carry the *molimo* trumpet to the camp. As the men move towards the camp, they immerse the 'animal' in streams, scoop earth, leaves and branches from the forest floor and cover it to enable it to become 'like the forest', making a connection with the supernatural world. Immersion of the trumpet into the streams may signify *molimo* as the sacred python, the rainbow serpent or the water animal. This association of spirits may account for Mbuti's fear of water (Turnbull 1965b: 169). They associate a storm with water, thunder, lightning, snakes and possibly fire connecting water animals to the rainbow and death (Turnbull 1965c: 237). Mbuti control rain by covering the fire with fire resistant leaves to produce smoke. They say that when lightning comes at night, campfires are covered so that the flames will not be seen. Then the lightning will pass (Turnbull 1965c: 238-9). There are traces of similar beliefs to this among the Chêwa in Malawi, with regard to Nyau.

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(Image: Wheeler 2000)

Figure 70: An Efe hunter, his body covered in dots

Schebesta and Turnbull have written extensively about the *molimo* as a ritual for men because, although women and children occasionally sing some *molimo* songs, they promptly shut themselves in their huts when the *molimo* trumpet enters the camp (Turnbull 1965b: 226). *Molimo* is a ritual hunt. The young hunters make hunting cries and act as if chasing an animal (Turnbull 1960c: 314, 317). *Molimo* songs are heard by the forest only if they are sung by an unmarried hunter who sings into the trumpet like a leopard (life) or the elephant (death) (Turnbull 1983: 51-2).

According to Turnbull, there are two *molimo* rituals: *molimo mangbo* and *molimo madé. Molimo madé* is held if there is bad hunting or illness shows no sign of alleviation. This *molimo* is characterized by songs sung in the evening around the *molimo* fire and "there will be no use made of the *molimo* trumpet" (Turnbull 1965c: 260). However, in a later publication, Turnbull stated, "both the *molimo made* and *molimo mangbo* involve use of a trumpet" (Turnbull 1985:12). Turnbull's contradiction probably arises from the fact that, usually in the evening, the hunters gather around the camp fire and sing *molimo* songs to attract the attention of the forest (Turnbull 1965c:

260). Understandably, situations of poor hunting or sickness may change for the better in a few days, as will the *molimo* songs. It is only if the poor hunting results in tension and quarrelling in camp causing 'noise' that the *molimo madé* is called to 'cure *akami*'; or if the sick person dies then *molimo mangbo* is called to 'cure death'. For this reason, I shall not refer to the *molimo* ceremonies as greater or lesser but rather use the Mbuti names. Among the Mbuti, when *molimo madé* occurs, elders control it in case of sickness; hunters in the case of poor hunting and hunters are most prominent amongst the singers. Young hunters perform most of the dancing and control the *molimo* fire. Elders reinforce Mbuti norms and values through controlling rituals (Turnbull 1983: 55).

Molimo madé, which is the manifestation of the elephant, destroyer of the forest (Turnbull 1984a: 57), may last between one to four nights since its purpose is simply to awaken the forest to the plight in the camp. *Molimo madé* is usually called to 'cure' *akami,* 'noise' that usually results from unruly adult behaviour (Woodburn 1982: 198; Turnbull 1984a: 57). According to Turnbull, 'noise' is synonymous with trouble, disputes and discontent. Songs are referred to as 'rejoicing' (Turnbull 1961: 239). The *molimo madé* dances while encircling the camp several times trumpeting a shrill sound reminiscent of a herd of elephants. Then it rushes into the camp, criss-crossing the central area, moving back and forth across the sacred centre, the *kumamolimo* 'the place of *molimo*', normally the place of *ekimi*. During *molimo madé*, only young hunters will do casual and mildly erotic dancing; elders do not sing (Turnbull 1965b: 260; 1983: 53).

Molimo mangbo is called when there is a combination of sickness, illicit flirtations and marital squabbles, a poor hunt and, usually, death. Its main function is to awaken the forest to 'cure' death by 'making it good' and restore 'balance' by celebrating the forest in a joyful manner (Turnbull 1965c: 263). This *molimo* celebrates a symbolic triumph of life over death, and a process demanding total *ekimi* that it brings. Mbuti desire for balance and strong belief in the goodness of the forest is echoed in their *molimo* song for the dead:

> There is darkness all around us; but if darkness *is*, and the darkness is of the forest, then the darkness must be good (Turnbull 1961: 88).

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Molimo songs stress that, if death occurs, it must occur at the will of the forest, and since the forest is good then death must be good. Many of the *molimo* songs are an expression of joy in life (Turnbull 1965c: 144).

The *molimo mangbo* trumpet encircles the camp before entering it, trumpeting with a growling and coughing sound reminiscent of a leopard (Turnbull 1985:12-14). *Molimo mangbo* trumpets with each person in turn and each person then washes *molimo mangbo* with smoke from the fire, rubs it with earth and leaves or ash, or feeds it with hot coals so that sparks fly up into the night or scatter around the huts. These sparks are *pepo*. The *molimo* renews life in the camp. The *molimo* trumpet is passed across the fire several times and over the heads of all the men (Turnbull 1960c: 313). Sometimes ritual intercourse is mimed with the coals in the mouth of the *molimo* in which case the *molimo* becomes a metaphor for the primordial penis. Zuesse equates the coals to uterine fire that binds women to the domestic hearths. When this fire is stoked by intercourse, it produces live flesh, human children; the campfire produces cooked flesh, food; while the inner heat of the forest produces universal life, plants and animals, it assures fertility of women and increase of game animals (Zuesse 1979: 51).

Molimo: female

> Women take part in the *molimo* and, although it is a small part, it is a highly significant one (Turnbull 1965c: 151).

While a masculine character is associated with the *molimo*, *molimo* is also female (Moore 1998: 142). Turnbull (1961) provides an account of a *molimo* ceremony in which he felt that 'something different was going on' because usually women and children do not participate in *molimo* songs or witness the *molimo*'s appearance in the camp (Turnbull 1961: 133; 1983: 58). Prior to this *molimo*, Turnbull noticed that an Mbuti young maiden, Kondabate, who had been married for two years without a child, was building an extension to her hut that was usually the space for children, yet she had none.

On the first night of this 'special' *molimo*, the men sat around separate *molimo* fires in age groups of elders, hunters and youths – the hunters and youths sang and danced.

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Women and girls watched and clapped their hands, they danced intently, and then they went into the maiden's hut leaving an old woman hunched over the central fire. The next evening, the girls who had entered the maiden's hut emerged; their bodies painted with black *kangay* juice and vine circlets twined in their hair. The women and girls had their own *molimo* fire at the edge of the men's group, who now sat around a central *molimo* fire. The old woman from the hut now sat in the middle of the group of women and girls staring into the women's *molimo* fire. Then the barren maiden joined the rest of the women and the men began to sing their *molimo* song.

Then the women took over the singing of the sacred *molimo* songs (songs women were not supposed to know) to which the men 'religiously' sing the chorus. After several groups of females have danced around the men's *molimo* fire circle, the climax comes when the old woman rises and dances with the barren maiden. They dance and jump in to the *molimo* fire scattering the embers in all direction to the circle of men around her. Then the hunters throw the embers back and dance erotically as the flames come to life. This contest for 'fire' is repeated until the old woman and the women retreat. Then the old woman returns as the men go back to their places around the *kumamolimo.* The old woman ties the men together with a long twine around their necks (Turnbull 1961: 137-141). The men do not attempt to untie themselves, but when they are all tied up, they stop singing. The *molimo* is 'silenced' and bound. "The men are impotent. Their 'fire of life' is now in the hands of women" (Turnbull 1983: 58). The men agree on a token for the old woman. Upon receipt of the token, the old woman unties each man, who then begins to sing. The *molimo* is free. As she leaves, the old woman touches each man's hand as if it were a form of a blessing (Turnbull 1961: 141).

In 1951, Turnbull noted that towards the end of *molimo mangbo* ritual, normally an old woman, usually a stranger from another camp, becomes an integral part of every *molimo mangbo* ritual. She is sometimes accompanied by a girl or girls who are beyond childbearing age (Turnbull 1983: 58). The old woman dances through the fire and scatters the burning logs, as the men kick the logs back they dance with the *molimo* trumpet around the fire as if in a communal act of regeneration, clearly imitating the act of copulation as the fire springs back to life (Turnbull 1965c: 263; 1983: 58; 1985: 15). If the dancing old woman referred to as 'mother', succeeds in scattering the logs, an old man stamps out the embers of the *molimo* fire. In this sense, the old woman is the

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forest, a spirit. According to Turnbull, the women are reminding the men about the origin of *molimo*, that the men stole the *molimo* from the women (Turnbull 1961: 140; 1965c: 263).

It is not clear whether these are the same incidents reported differently, or whether they are two separate events. What is important is that they both show that women have control over the *molimo* fire and the *molimo* (songs) associated with life, continuance, regeneration and death, a sign of the **presence** of the supernatural, the forest. Women share this power with the men as symbolised in the woman touching each man's hand after she unbound them. It is an acknowledgement of mutual interdependence of men and women (Turnbull 1965a: 310). Old women are postmenopausal but remain reservoirs of female fluids, *pepo*, sealed in a 'male' vessel. For the Mbuti, ritual status does not arise as fathers or mothers, but as sexual beings (Collier & Rosaldo 1981: 276). Female and male are partners in a heterosexual relationship.

Women's involvement (being of the camp) in stamping out the *molimo* fire (being of the forest) strikes a balance between day (women gather) and night (*molimo* festival) or between female (fire) and male (*molimo* trumpet). Turnbull noted that:

> Fire is primarily connected with women; the hearth is often referred to as the vagina; the association of blood and fire is considered particularly dangerous. Thus, the association of the male *Molimo* trumpet with the fire and the ashes gives the trumpet phallic significance in this context (Turnbull 1965b:264).

According to Turnbull, symbolic triumph of life over death is dramatized through this dramatic stamping out of the *molimo mangbo* fire, the fire of life, by an old woman – she who gives birth to life also seeks to destroy it (Turnbull 1965b:263). The same is true for triumph of fertility over barrenness.

Men attempt to regenerate the fire dance in a manner that imitates the act of copulation, with the fire as their partner, fanned by the blower of the *molimo mangbo* trumpet who blows and fans sparks of life around the camp (Turnbull 1965b: 263). The *molimo* may also perform even during *elima* since this 'first regenerative blood' symbolises both life and death and hence concerns of *molimo.* The mimed sexual act in the dance has an explicit concern with the regeneration of life, removal of barrenness hence it is also a fertility ritual. *Molimo* affirms a belief in, and continuity of, life (Woodburn 1982: 145,

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280). At the end of the *molimo mangbo* dance, the trumpet returns to the forest, singing as it goes, with the men responding from the camp (Turnbull 1985: 16).

Molimo madé, the elephant, destroys the forest like the villagers. *Molimo mangbo*, the leopard, kills animals like the Pygmies. Since death is a gateway to life, Pygmies consider the leopard a 'good animal' (Turnbull 1985:11). The supernatural world of the Mbuti is part of their daily experience and exists parallel to theirs. Metonymically, *molimo* represents a state of death (a passage of life) which in turn is metaphorically associated with reproduction and regeneration of the Mbuti. When the *molimo madé* rushes into and enters the camp, criss-crossing the *kumamolimo*, it is engaging in symbolic intercourse. Although the women are in the huts, they are symbolically present in the central fire. However, during *molimo*, fire may also be associated with the *molimo* itself - with masculinity. Turnbull (1960c: 313) recorded a youth holding embers in each hand leading the *molimo* out of the forest as it circled the camp. As the trumpet fans the fire, it 'breathes' flames. Then the young hunters who perform erotic dances around the fire ritually restore the feminine aspect of the fire. So, *molimo* is equated to masculinity and femininity, and its polarity is echoed in sexual contest and gender reversal (Zuesse 1979: 50-53). Amongst Pygmies, sex and sexuality emerge as a subject of play and of violence, for example, during *elima* that celebrates the sexuality of both gender, young adolescents engage in playful sexual contest.

Throughout the *molimo* festivals, the male/female contradictory oppositions come to the fore. Zeusse summarises these contradictory oppositions: the *molimo* trumpet is fiery, wet and phallic yet its 'mouth' is filled with glowing coals with which dancers mime intercourse. The *molimo* trumpet is hidden when it is not in use, in dense groves of trees, suspended between heaven and earth, a monstrous and ambiguous animal (Zuesse 1979: 50-1). It is justifiable to ascribe a male-female gender to the trumpet. Rosaldo and Collier (1981: 299) suggest that *molimo* provides an opportunity to expose the cultural divisions in the "conflict-ridden" world of heterosexual relations. Heterosexual relations are an area of latent conflict. The Mbuti avert this conflict through ritual, song, exaggeration, mime and this aversion runs throughout the *molimo* festivals (Turnbull 1983: 57). They recognise that this area of latent conflict is, like age, biologically determined. Hence, the public and frequent manifestation of latent conflict averts and expels it and reinforces the norm of sexual differentiation (Turnbull 1983: 57).

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According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 4-5) some societies perceive arguments or conflicts not in terms of war but rather in terms of a dance. Those engaged in conflict or arguments are 'performers'. In such cultures, people view and experience arguments differently, carry them out and talk about them differently (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 5). Whereas they perceive an action as argument, we would perceive it as something else. While some communities structure arguments in terms of battle pitting their wits against each other, other societies like the Mbuti structure argument or conflict in terms of dance (*ibid.*), enacted in *ekokomea,* tug of war and the honey dance.

Ekokomea and tug-of-war

Among the Mbuti, coitus exaggeration and mime usually end in hysterical laughter (Turnbull 1965c: 171; 1982: 134; 1983: 57). *Ekokomea* is a sex reversal dance of mutual ridicule, of sexual perversion involving men and women, adults and youth. It is performed either in the morning or in the late afternoon. This is a transvestite ritual dance exemplifying the concept of sexual contest, performed sometimes during the honey season or in the course of a *molimo* festival considered of great importance to a band (Turnbull 1965c: 171). During this dance, a young hunter (usually a bachelor) leads the *ekokomea* dancers (elders and the youth) in single file around the camp, gradually forming a circle in which male and female pairs dance at the centre, singing '*ekokomea'*. A couple dance at the centre of the circle and imitate the act of copulation in their reversed roles.

Women pretend to be men. They adjust their bark cloths to resemble those worn by men, stuffing them with objects to represent male genitalia. The women mercilessly ridicule male gender, the male organ, exaggerating its size to grotesque proportions. The men pretend to be women. They lower their loin cloths to resemble those worn by women and equally mercilessly pretend to wash their female genitals like women, ridiculing menstruation (Turnbull 1960c: 315; 1981: 215-6; 1983: 57). Menstrual blood is a symbol of death and of life (Turnbull 1961: 169). The amplification of genitalia may be an indication of *pepo*.

For the Mbuti, *ekokomea* is the dance of the disembodied spirits - *keti*. Since *ekokomea* is associated with *molimo*, then it is associated with the spirits and with the supernatural

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world. *Ekokomea* is performed when there is death, "as though death were itself a reversal, which could only be put right by reversing everything else"(Turnbull 1960c: 314; 1983: 57). In the supernatural world hunters (male) can become the hunted (female) (Turnbull 1965c: 249). Turnbull suggests that through such performances, a transformation rather than a mere transition, takes place (Turnbull 1990: 73).

The Mbuti perceive themselves as equal in all respects except sexually (Hanna 1998:85) women have the power to give birth (Turnbull 1981: 206). *Ekokomea* neutralises this power, by ritually transferring it to the men. In a sense, *ekokomea* concretises symbolic gender opposition (Turnbull 1965b):

> On two occasions, I heard *ekokomea* described laughingly as a dance of the *keti*. The dance, involving a reversal of the sexes, is primarily associated with the *molimo*, hence with the spirit and supernatural world. There is a hunting dance in which there is rapid succession of changes in direction, the hunters becoming the hunted and vice versa (Turnbull 1965c: 249).

Through ritual, the Mbuti dramatise opposition between the sexes in *ekokomea* and tug-of war games between men and women (although children may also act it out). Rituals like these take cognisance of the fact that each gender has its own sphere. The men 'stole' the spirit of the forest, the *molimo* from the women, making the *molimo*, the forest, their sphere of influence. The women 'stole' fire from the chimpanzees or from the spirit of the forest, made hearths, and fire their sphere.

In the tug-of war, the men take a vine rope on one side and the women pull the other. If the men seem to be winning, one of them will abandon his side and join the women, pulling up his bark cloth and adjusting it in-between his legs in the fashion of women. As he does so, he shouts encouragement to them mimicking their voices and exaggerating his mime, ridiculing them. If the women begin to win, one of them adjusts her bark cloth, letting it down in the manner of men, and strides to the men's side to join them, and shouting in a deep base, mimicking and ridiculing them. Each person who crosses over tries to outdo the ridicule of the last, causing more and more laughter. In the end, they cannot pull any more due to laughter and simply collapse on the ground. In this way the stupidity of competitiveness is demonstrated (Turnbull 1982: 142-3). According to Turnbull, the Mbuti perceive each individual act of ridicule as adding to general hilarity and their diversity frames the underlying latent aggression

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until the hilarity reaches such an extent that aggression is unthinkable (Turnbull 1982: 150). The ridicule in these rituals is similar to that exposed during the honey dance.

The Honey Dance

The honey season is the season to rejoice. According to Turnbull (1965c: 169), during the honey season a mimetic ritual dance is performed in which men, armed with bows and arrows, and fire which they have 'stolen' from the *endu* hearths (Turnbull 1982: 143). Ordinarily, men 'steal' fire from the hearths that they use to smoke out the bees to steal their honey (*ibid.*). In the ritual dance, the men act their role as honey-gatherers and sing a special honey song. Parallel to the men are the women, sometimes dancing in front or in and out of the men's line as if invisible, buzz like bees, and carrying firebrands (Turnbull 1965c: 172; 1982: 143).

The men pretend they have found the honey and when they are about to take it, the women descend on them crushing the burning embers above their heads, so that sparks fall on them, 'stinging' them like the bees (Turnbull 1965c: 172; 1982: 144). This honey dance usually ends in a tug-of war or *ekokomea*. Alternatively a woman (not a girl) may end the dance by dancing into her hut and coming out with a leaf cup of honey or a honeycomb for the men who eventually share some with the women (Turnbull 1982: 144).

Another honey ritual involves placing a piece of bark cloth belonging to a female in a cleft stick onto which a honeycomb is pressed. The bark cloth is then set on fire and waved around the forest and the camp by young men, while the women clap loudly. The stick is then placed at the *kuma'ngebe* (hearth or vagina of honey) (Turnbull 1965c: 232). Ritually, women symbolically become one with the forest. They are the 'honey' and the 'game' that is hunted. Then the honey dance echoes the hunter becoming the hunted. The men hunting for women's 'sweetness' are 'stung' by the women. Normally during honey gathering fire is used to produce smoke that repels the bees so that the Mbuti get to the honeycombs. Women, who ensure that the hearths never die out, control fire. In the honey dance, fire **prevents** access to honey. Turnbull (1982: 143) suggested that the men ritualize hunting (stealing) of game (the honey). In my opinion, this hunting metaphor extends to the puberty ritual, *elima*.

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Elima: female and male

Elima is a female puberty ritual, a celebration of a woman's role as bearer of life (Turnbull 1960a: 177). It is a festival of *ekimi* (peace, quiet, joy), a result of the first appearance of menstrual blood (Turnbull 1984: 57). Puberty and pregnancy are critical life-stages in many societies, and this holds true for the Pygmies. Although *elima* and *molimo* are festivals initiated by the hunters, but the elders have control over them and give the festivals their spiritual quality (Turnbull 1965c: 128). *Elima* is a pre-marital ceremony that serves to celebrate a female's puberty and is a form of initiation into womanhood, a public recognition of a girl's maturity and a public pronouncement of her eligibility for marriage and motherhood (Turnbull 1960a). For the Mbuti the first menses is a blessing by the moon and marks the beginning of a woman's cycle **with** the moon, interrupted only to have children. If the moon blesses two girls at the same time, this forges strong bonds of solidarity between them since they have seen the blood together (Turnbull 1965c: 133). Womanhood comes with menarche and upon a girl's first menses, she is secluded in an *elima* house, with her all her young "friends" or "sisters" (Mosko 1987: 907), who have not yet reached that state as well as a few older ones. In the hut, they sing *elima* songs in praise of the forest. *Elima* celebrations occur during the day in the centre of the forest (unless *molimo* is performed at the same time). *Elima* girls dance in a circle around an older woman (Turnbull 1985: 13).

During *elima*, eligible *elima* bachelors are attracted to the *elima* house. At the house, the young bachelors demonstrate their manhood, strength and courage by fighting their way into the *elima* house that is guarded by women with sticks and whips. If the girls in the *elima* house did not invite the boys, they withstand a possible beating from the girls. If they were invited, they are allowed to, or expected to, flirt or even have intercourse (supervised by the older girls or an *elima* mother and under restriction to prevent conception) with the girls who invited them if the females consent and if the bachelor's intention is to marry the girl thereafter (Turnbull 1960a: 178-9). A bachelor who participates in *elima* emerges from the hut as an adult ready to take a wife and strong enough to feed the camp. Married men can and do take part in the *elima* fight, and a young man who does not take part in *elima* "is a subject of ridicule" (Turnbull 1965b: 247).

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Elima is a celebration of female maturity and initiates a females childbearing potential. A similar celebration does not occur for males. Turnbull (1965c: 256) argued that male youth are an integral part of *elima* festival which celebrates their masculinity. Consequently, *elima* is as much a celebration of female maturity as it is one for male hunting skills. In my opinion, the *elima* house is a female counterpart to the deep forest where the *molimo* is kept. The *elima* house is a 'womb'. A girl enters the *elima* hut and emerges from it eligible to take a husband for marriage. As a festival of courtship (Turnbull 1984: 57) *elima* is connected with adult male status as provider, hence, hunter since there is no separate ceremony for them.

A main feature of the *elima* is the young males battling to gain access to the *elima* hut guarded by the women (Turnbull 1965b: 247). The hunters' penetration of the symbolic womb the *elima* hut that is 'with blood', is a ritual intercourse, deflowering the girl(s) for whom the *elima* is held. Since male status is determined primarily by one's skill in a hunt, *elima* is a symbolic hunt. Collier and Rosalind (1981) argue that in societies like the Mbuti, men celebrate their skills as providers, through their ability to nurture and order the social and natural worlds. They suggest that women's ability is more focused on health and sexual pleasure than on the creation of life (Collier & Rosaldo 1981: 276). I submit that Mbuti females and males are **partners** in a heterosexual relationship and contra Collier and Rosalind, both genders focus on the creation and propagation of life. In the *elima* house, just as in the family hut, sexuality is made fruitful. In ritual, the male counterpart of the *elima*, the *molimo* is made of bamboo, phallic and hollow. The hot coals usually placed at the wide hollow end the trumpet give it both male and female attributes.

In the manner that males may have authority over the females during *molimo made*, the females may have authority over the males during *elima* (Turnbull 1981: 208). While *elima* songs are rather more important to women than to men, so *molimo* songs are considered more the concern of men: there is, however, no absolute exclusion (Turnbull 1965c: 256). *Elima* involves both men and women in song and dance (Turnbull 1965b: 224). The males sit outside the hut and wait for the females to emerge, then they all sing in antiphony (Turnbull 1983: 47). The children of *elima*, 'siblings' of the forest interact as 'lovers' during *elima*, and supervised by *elima*, 'father' and 'mother'. As the girls leave the hut in the forest they sing songs to 'awaken' the forest and show that they are

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the *bamelima*, the people of the *elima*, blessed with 'the blood of the forest' (Turnbull 1960a: 175). Bonds created during the *elima* temporarily obliterate those of the nuclear family and form a firm basis for co-operation that will never be broken (Turnbull 1965c: 136). *Elima* male youth provide the chorus to some *elima* songs, just as during the *molimo*, women take over the men's songs and the men sit and listen (Turnbull 1965c: 256). *Elima* is the women's major occasion to 'rejoice the forest', just as *molimo* is for men (Turnbull 1960a: 190), although Schebesta (1957: 78) suggests that *elima* and *molimo* are of farmer origin. I follow Turnbull and suggest that these are Pygmy rituals. Ritual is a form of social control and sanction. The *elima* is a form of ritual reinforcement of social solidarity and interaction within the community as a cohesive social structure. The same holds true for the *molimo*.

Female youth celebrate their puberty through *elima* dance ritual; male youth hold exclusive rights over *molimo* in which the main symbol of forest as a spiritual entity is used (Hanna 1988: 85). Role reversal may not only be cathartic, but it may also impose restrictions on the holders of each gender (*ibid.*). *Ekokomea* embraces Mbuti beliefs in *ndura*. Other forces such as *pepo* and *keti* (disembodied spirits that are both human and animal and not necessarily spirits of the dead), derive from this greater force (Turnbull 1965c: 248-9).

Mbuti believe that animals and humans inhabited by *pepo* (Turnbull 1965c: 249). In this context, the body must be respected and any form of mutilation, which may allow *pepo* to escape (causing death), is abhorred. It is believed that *pepo* returns to the world of *keti* in the forest (Turnbull 1965c: 250). Because the means of escape of *pepo* are unknown, bodily apertures are regarded as possible avenues for this escape hence they require attention. Although Mbuti do not explicitly refer to bodily fluids such as semen as *pepo, pepo* is associated with life (and may escape) hence Mbuti recognition of copulation as a means of conveying life.

The Pygmies value harmony, pleasure and laughter (Lewis 2002: 54). Among the Mbuti, *ekokomea* emphasises the importance of play, cooperation, laughter and mimicry in growing up within society. The *elima* and *molimo* rituals are spirit rituals based on a concept of spirit guardianship (Tsuru 2001: 103). The characteristics of these rituals are very fluid and diverse amongst Pygmy groups; however, they all

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maintain the centrality of forest around which their cosmos revolves. For example, according to Lewis (2002: 89) the Mbendjele Yaka divide the world into the forest (*ndima*) and open space without forest canopy cover (*vuli*). *Ndima* is a quiet, peaceful, cool and safe place while *vuli* is hot, noisy and dangerous. These are similar concepts found in the *elima* and *molimo* ceremonies of the Mbuti or in beliefs of the forest as a good place verses the village that is a bad place.

In 1951 and again in 1954, Turnbull (1957) witnessed what may constitute an initiation ritual among the Mbuti (Turnbull 1957: 211-6). He noted that the Mbuti had an attitude of indifference towards initiation, pointing out that in the Mbuti camps "there was no dancing at all" during a combined farmer-Mbuti initiation (Turnbull 1957: 194). Turnbull observed that unlike, their farmer counterparts, there was no change of status in Mbuti life upon completion of the farmer initiation ritual even though the Mbuti may be seen as 'men' among the farmers. Schebesta recognized that farmers incorporated elements of the Pygmy beliefs in *molimo* (*toré*), into their nkumbi initiation rituals (Turnbull 1965b: 180, 184). The Mbuti "village-initiated men became Mbuti children again" when they returned to the forest (Turnbull 1990: 60). According to Schebesta, Mbuti participation in farmer rituals is one way of extending farmer control over the Pygmies (Turnbull 1965b: 180). Kohler and Lewis (2002: 276) argue that because both groups interpret the terms of their relationship differently, each group thinks it is controlling the other. For the Mbuti, advancement to adult status is not associated with the farmer initiation ritual (Turnbull 1957: 206). Although Mbuti interacted with farmers, they did not necessarily attach the same meanings to things that the farmers did.

In his discussion of the variations between the Mbuti *elima* and *molimo* ritual ceremonies in comparison with the initiation ceremonies of the farmers, Turnbull noted a total lack of ceremonial initiation among the Mbuti in sharp contrast to farmer rituals (Turnbull 1957: 208). He argued that the significance of this contrast indicated:

> [A] major hiatus, not only between the two ways of living, but between two ways of thinking: it shows we are dealing with two totally different sets of values (Turnbull 1957: 208).
>
> The absence of any specific Mbuti form for village events, including *nkumbi* initiation or village arranged marriages, is an indication of the lack of importance of these events in the forest life of the Mbuti (Turnbull 1965c: 255).

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We can now see that Pygmy philosophy is very clear on the sacred and the profane, but the shifts between these planes are very subtle and fluid. Whatever is perceived as sacred or profane, or as striking or discrete is valuable only for those who can recognise these aspects. Myths are told as gossip or stories, and rituals may be practised as everyday life or considered natural phenomena, as for example, with sexual relations. Salient parts of ritual like laughter, jokes and ridicule are vital elements in Pygmy everyday life and constitute a key factor in their rituals. In addition, a salient aspect of Pygmy life is where the exclusion of either gender appears to demarcate that a ritual is for men or for women. I argue that this 'removal' of either gender **is part** of the ritual. For each of these rituals, either *molimo* or *elima* to be 'effective' there must gender opposition. This opposition is engaged with in ritual action through the integration of male-female symbolism.

Another salient aspect of Pygmy ritual is age. From the age of four years, children participate in mime in the *bopi* and use their power to ridicule to bring about cohesion in the *apa*. Youths play a very central role in all Pygmy rituals particularly since these rituals revolve around the social economic status within a camp or band. Youths are very active participants in all these contexts. These socio-economic activities are conducted to bring about and ensure harmony and balance between the real and the supernatural worlds, and between the all-embracing prime sphere and the omnipotent force, that is the forest. In addition, from the ethnographies, it is now also clear that Pygmies acknowledge two planes of existence: the real and the supernatural worlds (Turnbull 1965b: 260). The supernatural world mirrors the real world. Spirits from the supernatural world are invisible but interact with the real world constantly. Through water, fire, song, mime and dance, and through the *elima* and *molimo*, the Pygmies ritually move between the real and the supernatural world.

I have made extensive use of Turnbull's material, focusing heavily on consistencies of Mbuti belief, and practice. The limitations in the main ethnographic accounts I used here may have biased my focus. Turnbull, Schebesta and Putnam were male anthropologists, and hence, they were probably exposed more to men's rituals than to the idiosyncrasies in women's rituals. For instance, Turnbull observed the all-important *molimo* festival and listened to a post-burial meeting between villager men and Mbuti hunters. Turnbull's assistant, 'informant, guide, mentor and censor' was usually a male

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youth, Taleabo Kenge who had also worked for Patrick Putnam (Turnbull 1965c: 10-11; Grinker 2000: 112). Turnbull noted that there were challenges for a male anthropologist in understanding the *elima* (Turnbull 1960a: 178). Ann Putnam, although female, was not an anthropologist and did not interact with the Pygmies to the level where she could gain an insider experience of women's 'things'. For example, she 'stumbled upon' an *elima* ceremony that she recorded. Turnbull acknowledged the confidence and trust of his female informants, "if there was something they did not wish to discuss Mbuti women simply told me so. In return for not having their inner world violated, I believe they respected *my* inner world by telling me the truth, if they told me anything" (Turnbull 1978a: 170). It is possible that more information on *elima* or the honey dance for example, would have provided me with a deeper understanding of depicted motifs in the geometric rock art.

To sum up and show the relationships between all the various concepts in this Chapter, I propose a cosmological model (Fig. 71). I acknowledge that there are other possible ways to formulate a structure of the Pygmy cosmological system, however, my model is just one way that captures well those features I consider most significant. This model underpins Pygmy rituals and philosophy. On this basis, I propose to use this model for my own analytical purposes in Chapter 6, and then assess its usefulness (or not) in my concluding chapter.

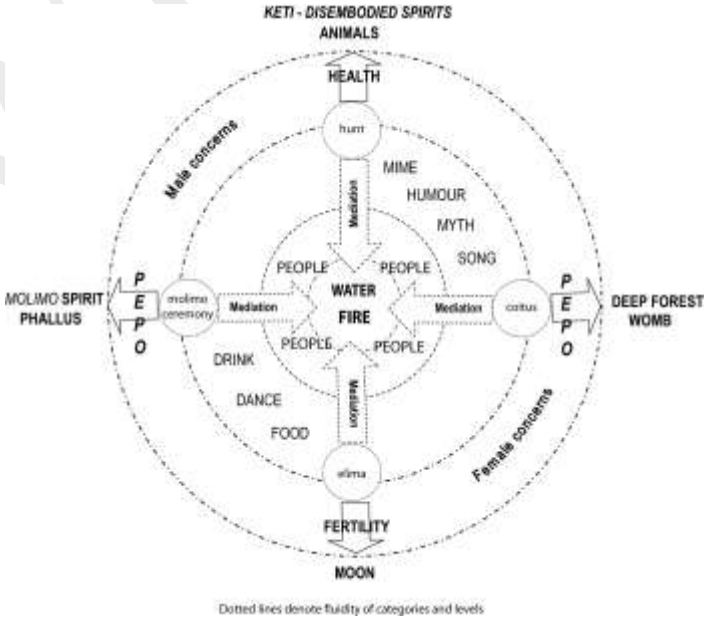


Figure 71: Model of the Pygmy symbolic realm

Chapter Six

A GENDERED COSMOS

FEMALE - MALE SYNERGY

In my reading of Pygmy ethnographies in chapter 5, I have shown that the Pygmy life-ways and rituals enact their cosmos. The cosmological order of the Mbuti is represented in the form of *keti* and *pepo*. In this chapter, I show how this cosmos can be tied in specific ways to the geometric rock art.

According to Mary Douglas (2003: 14-18), early ethnographers assumed that the Pygmies had no religion or culture because they appeared to have few rituals. These ethnographers also assumed that whatever rituals the Pygmies did perform, were those they borrowed from their farmer neighbours. It was argued that since the Pygmies "move freely in an uncharted, unsystematised, unbounded social world….it would be impossible for them to develop a sacramental religion" (Douglas 2003: 16). However, Douglas contends that actually the Pygmies **do** have a religion, one of "internal feeling not of external sign" (Douglas 2003: 16). Much paraphernalia usually accompanies farmer rituals, however, Pygmies ritual is often so informal and apparently casual that it may pass as unnoticed initially (Turnbull 1983: 41). If ritual involves symbolic acts that represent unspoken concepts or invoke alternative states or frames of being and reference, then Pygmy life is full of ritual (*ibid.*). I argue then, that rock art is an alternative frame of reference for the Pygmies. Moving from an understanding of Pygmy ethnographies, I consider the geometric rock art of Uganda as a product and function of ritual.

The geometric rock art of Uganda must be a reflection of a widespread cognitive system; it is so widely distributed, with a consistent recognisable manner of depiction. Smith and Blundell (in press) argue that, within the rock art tradition attributed to the Twa (defined here as Pygmies), stylised animal depictions mark the concerns of men while the geometric shapes represent the concerns of women. They posit that these are

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two separate gender ideological contexts, hence animal depictions and geometric shape categories are found locally separated, but are paired within the landscape. Smith and Blundell further suggest that within the same Twa society, although each gender made different rock art imagery, together, the two categories form a conceptual whole.

I have already demonstrated in Chapter 3 that the rock art of Uganda sits within the geometric rock art zone of which Twa rock art is a part. I noted that in Uganda sites with animal imagery comparable to those of Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique for example, are yet to be found. In Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique it has been noted that rock surfaces with animal motifs are usually at very obscure places, such as on the periphery, at the entrance to rock shelters. One expects images to be depicted inside the shelter. It is probable that a re-survey of some parts of Uganda may yield animal imagery. For now, I note that an overriding feature of the rock art of Uganda is the variety and consistency of method and manner of depiction of geometric shapes. This depiction is marked by slight shifts and modifications that do not change the overall impression. Recognizing consistency does not mean that the iconography or 'grammar' was static. Rather, it emphasises the fact that any shifts in iconography could reflect regional variation or change in depiction or pattern, through time.

In thinking in terms of symbols (Strecker 1988: 58) and what the geometric shapes may 'mean', I follow Douglas who stated that symbols are meaningful only in terms of their relation to other symbols in a pattern:"the pattern gives the meaning" (Douglas 2003: xxxii). In terms of Ugandan geometric rock art, a shape such as a 'dumbbell' has a relational significance where part of its meaning is actively constituted in relation to other geometric shapes such as concentric circles. Hence, no shape in the pattern can carry meaning by itself isolated from the rest of the shapes (Douglas 2003: xxxii). For example, within the geometric rock art of Uganda, circular shapes occur independently at some sites, and are juxtaposed and superimposed with spread-eagled and sausage shapes at other sites. It is therefore important to understand the symbolic relationship between these shapes to interpret and arrive at possible meanings for them.

Identifying shapes does not lead automatically to an understanding of meaning. Rock art on its own is described as 'mute' or silent; hence eliciting meaning becomes dependant on a number of approaches. While it is now clear that the majority of rock art

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images in Uganda are geometric in shape, it is difficult to know what they **actually** represent. Yet, I consider that all sites must have been important to those who painted them. My study builds on previous research in east and central Africa where similar shapes have been described and some interpretation provided. In my comments, I focus on the most commonly painted and juxtaposed shapes as recognized in my statistical analyses because these shapes seem to form the core of the tradition and so, I presume, they lie at the heart of its symbolism. I will then look at other shapes in relation to these.

The motivation for the geometric rock art is difficult to establish clearly. Obtaining motivation is an elusive, slippery path, since there are various levels that motivate the production of rock art. There are two main levels of motivation. First, is a personal motivation of the individual. For example, a person may depict a certain shape, such as a cross because she wants to make a controversial statement within an atheist society, or because she has just converted to Christianity. Such personal motivation may change even during the act of depiction. Second, is group motivation, it is the accepted motivation acknowledged to be acting on an individual. For example, it is accepted that the motivation for people to go to church is to worship their creator. However, it is common knowledge that people go to church for all sorts of other reasons that have nothing to do with religion, such as to meet a social or business partner. Just as motivation operates at personal and societal levels, so does meaning. In this chapter, I am concerned with these kinds of general societal meanings and motivations. Whilst I know that individual specific meanings and motivations were involved in the construction of each painting in geometric rock art, knowledge of these died with the individual and I do not expect to be able to recover them here. With this in mind, I use the cosmological model (Fig. 71) that will obtain the broad societal meanings of the geometric rock art of Uganda.

A new interpretation

The model I propose rests on the ethnographies set out in Chapter 5 and the interpretative framework in Chapter 4. From the ethnographies, the forest is central to Pygmy thought and **all** Pygmy rituals call out the spirit of the forest, what the Mbuti call

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molimo. I argue that the relationship between the Pygmy and the forest is carefully structured and I illustrate my understanding of this structure in Figure 72 that places rock art in the Pygmy cosmic realm and shows how the human sphere mediates with the spirits through the central ritual, the *molimo* ceremony. *Molimo* restores and ensures a harmonious relationship between people and the *molimo* spirit of the forest. *Molimo* encompasses aspects of *elima* festival and engages central elements: water and fire. These elements are metaphors for coitus and hunting and are key elements for *elima* and *molimo* ceremonies. Hunting and coitus are mediating contexts both of which are real as well as supernatural and are ritually associated with water and fire.

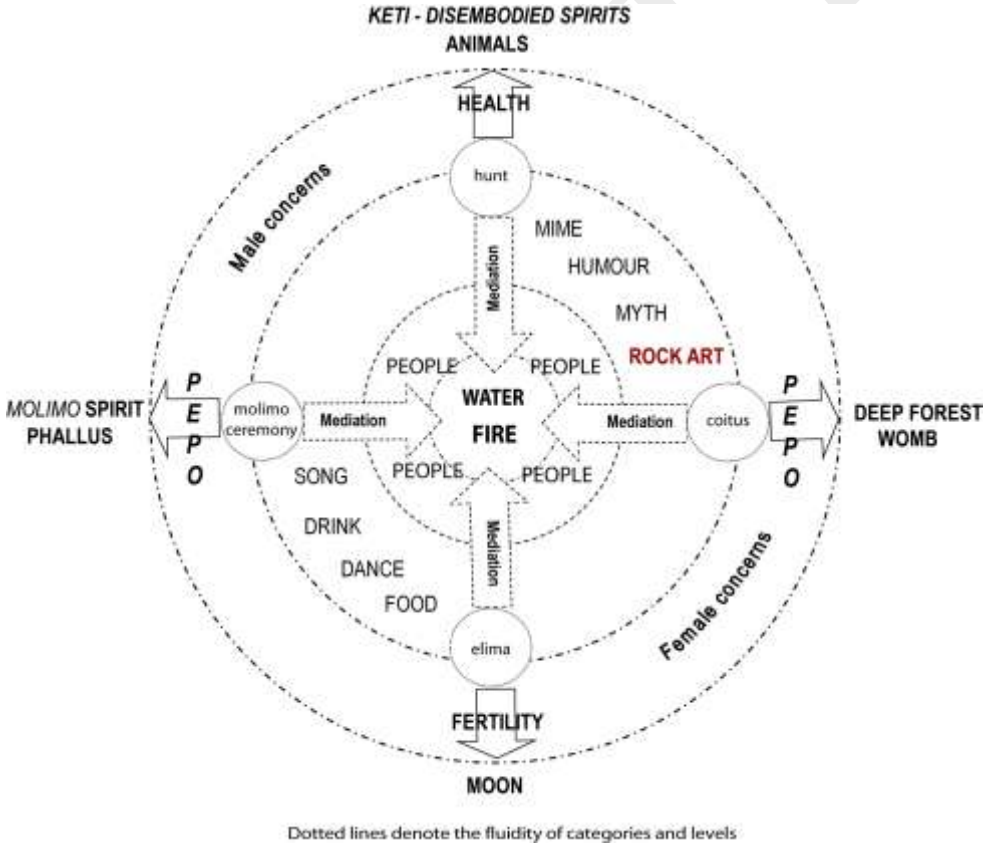


Figure 72: Cosmological model of Pygmy worldview

Pygmy ethnographies state that hunting is central to their social organisation. For example, among southern Mbuti, youths light the fire at the base of a young tree near the hunt trail (Turnbull 1965c: 155). They cover the fire with heavy leaves to make smoke that alerts the forest of the hunt. Northern Mbuti light the morning fire within the camp (*ibid.*). The hunters carefully stake vines in a circle around the fire. Within this vine circle long twigs stripped of bark, sometimes with patterns burnt into them, are placed around the fire, pointing in the direction of the hunt. Upon return from the hunt, any animal caught is returned and placed within the vine circle before it is divided amongst the hunters (Turnbull 1965c: 156; Zuesse 1979: 24-25). According to Zuesse, this is a symbolic realm:

> The physical reality is returned to its spiritual source. At the same time, this gives the entire hunt a ritual and archetypal nature. The real hunt occurs within the circle, between the central fire and the forest depths of the vines … (Zuesse 1979: 25).

A hunt song or dance ritual, distinct from any other form of song or dance and only used in this context, is performed before the first departure from camp for the hunt. This hunt song demands the same level of cooperation as that required in a real hunt; the hunt dance is imitative of a successful hunt but it is not mere mime (Turnbull 1965c: 155). This distinct song, dance and fire emphasise the sanctity of the forest:

> One cannot step out of the forest world taken as a whole; but the camp is on a human scale; one can walk outside of that. Within it is domesticity and human beings, outside is hunting and animals (Zuesse 1979: 24).

A ritual hunt mimics a real hunt and hunting songs are similar to *molimo* songs (Turnbull 1965b:256). A hunt is a sacred ritual that joins yet preserves the realms of primeval sacred power and everyday human life (Zuesse 1979: 35). When singing *molimo* songs, the Mbuti "stare into the fire or up at the treetops", they become transformed and commune with a benevolent and bountiful forest (Turnbull 1960c: 319). As the *molimo* trumpet enters the camp, a hunter accompanying it dances around:

> with two spears, pretending to scan the ground, occasionally making jabbing motions at some imaginary person or object.…It is possible that the spears represent elephant tusks: the way in which they are held certainly suggests this… the *molimo* may be associated with the leopard… it is smeared with ashes these are sometimes smeared on as if to represent spots; and further there may be some connection between the name and what used by the BaMbuti for leopard, i.e. *moli* (Turnbull 1960c: 320-22).

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The *molimo* hunt is real yet metaphorical, the *molimo* ceremony being the interface between the human and spirit realms of existence. Referring to the significance of the *molimo* ceremony, Turnbull noted:

> The association with the festival of all the basic elements - fire, water, air and earth - and the central importance of food and sex, all combine to create a highly direct, personal and intimate relationship between the Mbuti and the forest, while at the same time binding them together as a band, the one individual dependent upon the next (Turnbull 1965c: 267).

Although the *molimo* ceremony is the point of access to both planes of existence, movement between these different planes is achieved through song, dance, mime, myth, food, drink, water, fire, sex, humour and, to these mediators I add rock art. As transformative agents, water is emphasised in myth and fire is emphasised in daily life and ritual. These transformative or transitional processes occur in the all-embracing primal sphere, the cosmic womb (the deep forest) embracing the human womb. On another level, these wombs engage with the spiritual and social realm, becoming a binding agent of the Pygmy cosmos. The supernatural and real worlds continuously interact with each other and are conceptually similar. Using my model (Fig. 72), I propose that the geometric rock art of Uganda is an interface between these planes in the context of the shared rituals at the heart of a Pygmy cosmos.

In seeking to explain the common occurrence of particular geometric shapes in world rock art Lewis-Williams and Dowson (1988) argue that these are universal products of altered states of consciousness, produced within the human nervous system. They show that most people in altered states experience a range of basic geometric shapes (circles, grids, dots, lines, etc) which they call 'entoptic' forms. These geometric forms become culturally informed, giving meaning to the shapes. The Pygmies' *molimo* ceremony may last for several days or weeks. These are weeks of intense singing and dancing, wearing down the body and causing trance-like experiences. While it may initially seem possible that the geometric rock art of the Pygmies may be a product of such experiences, this is unlikely because the core rock art forms are not entoptic shapes.

William Noble and Iain Davidson (1991) argue that in order for symbols to be conventional they must be repeated. The iconography of Pygmy geometric rock art

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contains several repeated motifs. Following my broad discussion of the iconography of the geometric rock art of Uganda (Chapter 3), a detailed analysis of the subject matter and interpretation of their symbolism now follows drawing upon the explanatory model I have proposed (Fig. 72). In this chapter, I provide details of the more common shapes within the broad geometric shape repertoire, and I begin with a set of intriguing images described here as dumbbells, sausage and phallic shapes.

Shape type 1100s

Dumbbells are shapes with a narrow middle and large, circular ends, almost similar to a comic depiction of a dog-bone. In Uganda, the best examples of dumbbells, sausage and phallic shapes are at Lolui Islands; at the site referred to as 'the sanctuary' by Chaplin (1974: 40). Almost all visible dumbbell shapes at this site are depicted on the ceiling surface of the rock shelter (Fig. 73). These outline dumbbells are finger-painted in red pigment and in outline. Some dumbbells are large and circular only at one end, tapering to a curved end at the other (Fig. 74). I refer to these as half dumbbells.

What is consistent about these half dumbbells is a dot, a circle or a concentric circle at either end for 'typical' dumbbell shapes. With the half dumbbells, the smaller end of the dumbbell may contain nothing, a small dot, or a circle without an enlargement. Describing these shapes, Posnansky (1961) observed that:

> [A] frequent design is a dumbbell like object in which two sets of concentric circles are joined, or in which one end lacks the concentric circle and is terminated by simple enlargement of the connecting parallel lines (Posnansky 1961: 107).

I use Posnansky's re-drawing of the ceiling panel of Lolui Islands (Fig 75). To ease discussion, I assign numbers 1 to 17, to the shapes. From Figure 75, it is clear that although the shapes follow a similar manner of depiction, each shape varies in depiction. Consistency in basic depiction lies in the fact that, one end of the dumbbells comprises more circular and/or solid shapes, than the other end. Since most of these shapes are on the ceiling and oriented differently, it is difficult to tell from which angle they are intended to be viewed, if any.

In Figure 75, numbers 8 to10 are what I refer to as 'typical' dumbbell shapes. Close observation of them shows that some have a white outline and white in-fill around the

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concentric circles (e.g. number 9). Chaplin suggested that since white is used "to outline a red drawing one can suppose it to be later by an unknown period of time. It is too faint elsewhere for one to be certain where it fits into the sequence" (Chaplin 1974: 16). I differ from Chaplin and argue that the red and white pigment was applied at the same time as a conceptual whole. It is highly likely that the white pigment has faded from other dumbbell shapes but that this evidence is now lost in time.



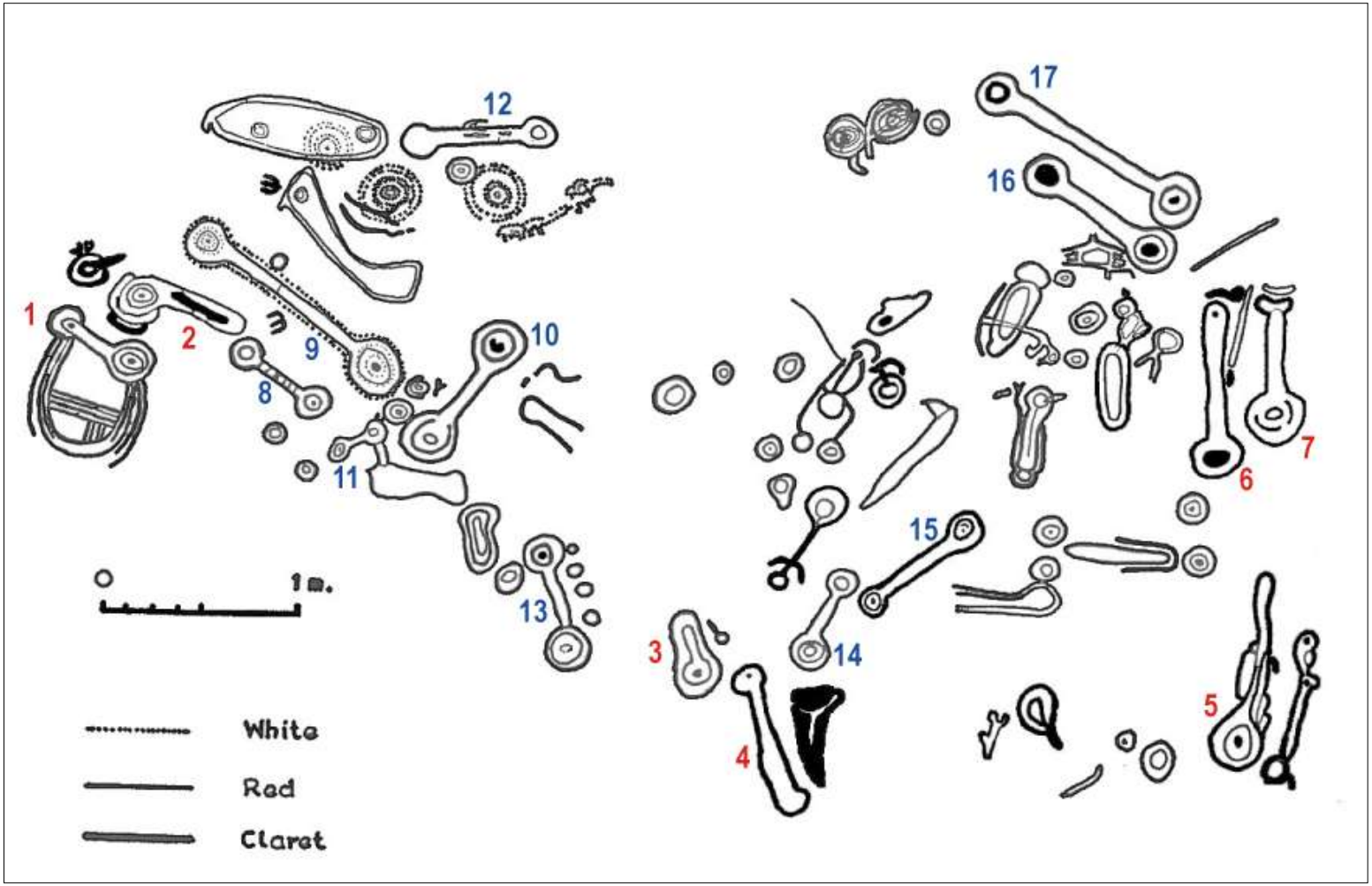
(Image: Namono 2006)

Figure 73: The ceiling surface at Lolui Islands main site



(Image: Namono 2006)

Figure 74: Images on the ceiling surface at Lolui Islands main site



(Image: after Posnansky 1961)

Figure 75: Redrawing of the ceiling of Lolui Main site

A shape that is different from Figure 75, number 9, but similar to numbers 1 and 2 is amongst a cluster of other shapes at the entrance to the Lolui main site (Fig. 76). At the extreme right of this cluster of shapes is a half-dumbbell. Next to this half dumbbell is another motif with a long line and a small circular shape at the base. These images are very similar to those on the ceiling. However, one difference between these images at the entrance and those on the ceiling is their vertical depiction.

In Figure 76, the circular end of the dumbbell is at the top and the narrow end is at the bottom. The narrow end has a small seemingly triangular tip. This shape and the one next to it suggest that this is probably the intended orientation for other similar shapes. If these vertical shapes are similar to those on the ceiling then we can conclude that all half dumbbells should be viewed in similar orientation. In Figure 75, images similar to Figure 77 are piercing a circle (e.g. numbers 1 and 7). Other similar images appear to be attached to a closed circle (number 13) or they are in a similar erect posture with the tip of the erect shape fusing with the circular one, becoming a circular outline (numbers 8 to17).



(Image: Namono 2006)

Figure 76: Cluster of shapes at the entrance to the 'sanctuary' on Lolui Islands



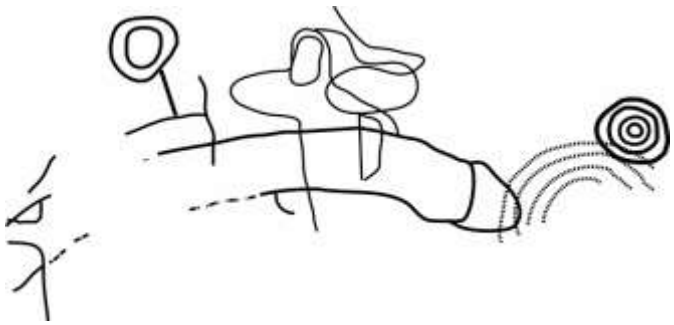
(Image: Namono 2006)

Figure 77: Detail of a shape in Figure75

Posnansky (1961), commenting on the phallic natures of many of the dumbbell forms states:

> [T]he designs defy interpretation unless a phallic significance can be attached to the dumbbell like designs (Posnansky 1961: 107).

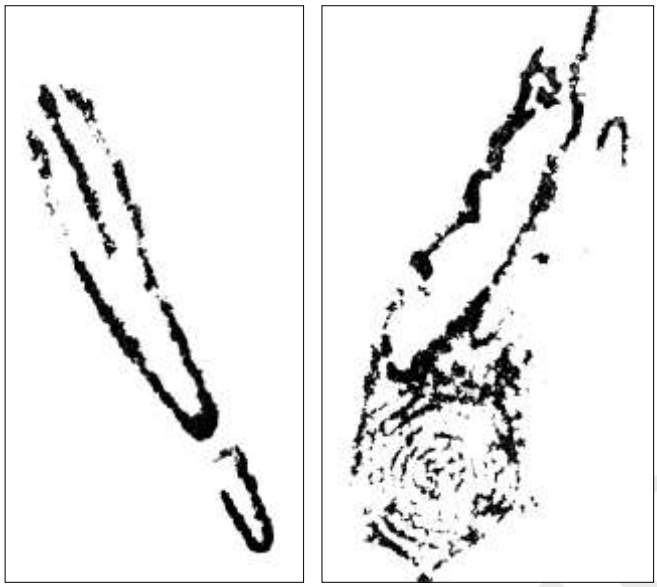
This explanation is stronger as it draws upon specific formal similarities between the painted shapes and the proposed subject. If Posnansky is correct that some or all of the dumbbells represent the penis then the circular or oval shape at the end of them (at the top in the case of the one in Figure 77) is well explained as the scrotum. I note that a phallic identification is plausible, and that, while not diagnostic, it well explains the pattern seen in Figure 75 where dumbbells are depicted piercing circles.



(Image: Namono 2006)

Figure 78: Kakoro I, Pallisa, Uganda

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ImageJ and Photoshop CS4 enhanced and redrawn images by Namono, 2006

Figure 79: Some of the sausage shapes at Onyere

Although there are only a few sites in Uganda with dumbbells, there are other sites such as Kakoro I (Fig. 78) and Olupemoru I (Fig. 79) with more diagnostic depictions of distinct phallic-like shapes. Figure 78 is a sausage shape with a triangular extension and distinct morphological similarities to a penis. Again, the penis shape touches or pierces a concentric circle. This association is highly reminiscent of the dumbbells at Lolui main site. The difference between the dumbbell in Figure 77 and Figure 78 lies simply in the orientation of the shapes. Figure 78 shows sausage shapes where one is touching a concentric circle while the shape from Onyere, Figure 80, has the strong appearance of a flaccid penis with scrotum.



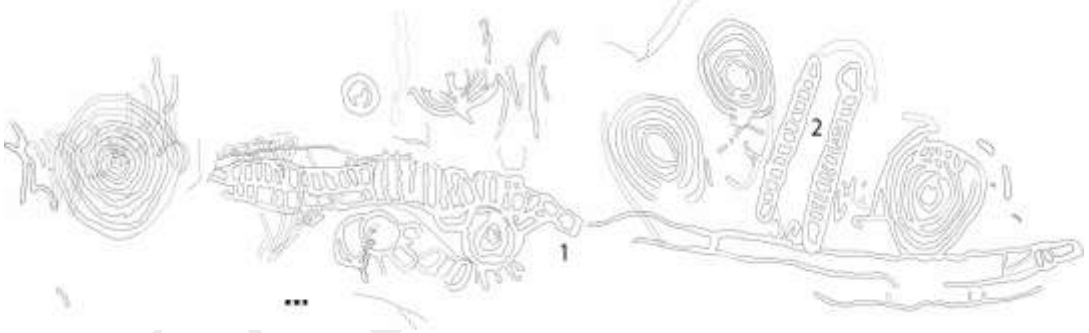
(Image: Namono 2006)

Figure 80: Representational shape from Onyere rock art site

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If the shapes are indeed representations of male genitals we may expect to find further physiological details depicted. There is regularity in the stylization by which the shapes are depicted as a single concentric circle with two straight vertical parallel lines that end in an irregular triangle attached at the base (Fig. 79). If these are penises then the parallel lines are suggestive of erectness.

Characteristic features held in common by the dumbbells in Figure 75 and Figure 77, and the more representational shape in Figure 80, are the divisions in the shape that seems to demarcate the scrotum. Although the phallic shape in Figure 80 is not erect, the patterning of the scrotum is an oval receptacle with arcs. In Figure 80, the scrotum is depicted in a spiral shape, but again the spaces in-between the spiral lines are divided. If we imagine a bird's eye view of Figure 80, it would appear as a dumbbell shape with a phallic attachment. I therefore argue that dumbbells, and the shapes in Figures 78, 79 and 80 represent the same thing and that all are compellingly phallic.



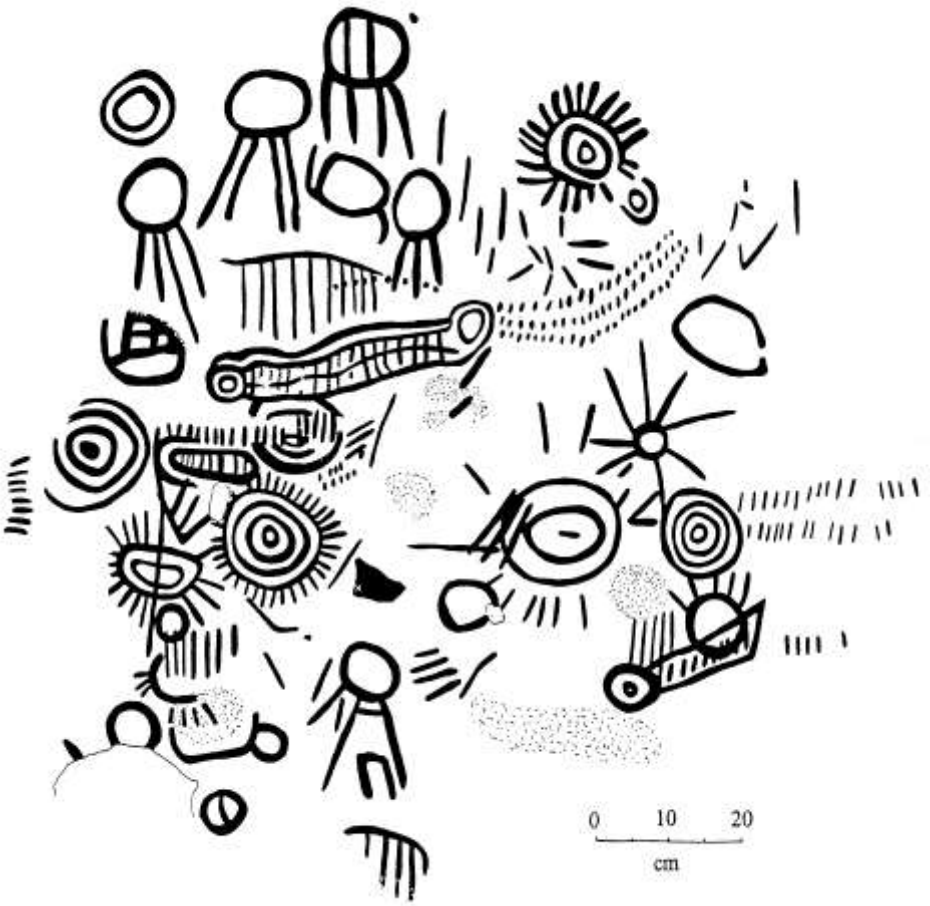
(Image: Namono 2006)

Figure 81: Nyero 1

Alex Willcox referred to a dumbbell-like shape at Nyero1 (Fig. 81, number 1) as a 'rope-bridge' design and shape number 2, as ladders probably used to execute some high paintings at Nyero 2 (Willcox 1984: 91). Willcox read the Ugandan rock art in the same way that he read the southern African San rock art, as pictures of everyday life. In southern Africa he has been shown to be wrong (Lewis-Williams 1983a; 1983b: 541) and I suspect he was wrong in Uganda as well. A close observation of Figure 81, number 1 indicates that the shape is very similar to one at a site, Nsana wa Ng'ombe, in Malawi (Fig. 82). Smith (1995: 281) states that several authors describe the shapes at

Nsana wa Ng'ombe in Malawi, as resembling meteorological phenomena in appearance. Smith goes on to argue that these circular shapes are associated with weather divination. I shall return to his discussion on circles later.

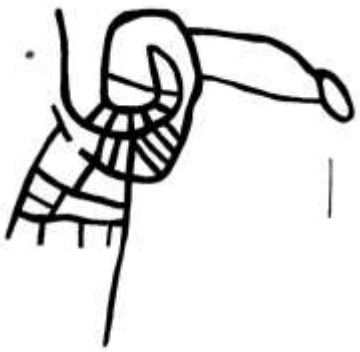
In Figure 82, the central shape is one that Smith (1995: 285) refers to as a phallus. This shape, similar to shapes number 1 and 2 at Nyero 1, has three horizontal dotted lines (Fig. 81) and is probably a permutation of a regular dumbbell formed by two concentric circles at both ends. One concentric circle is larger than the other end. At the smaller end, the circles are both closed. At the larger end, the outer circle attaches to the outer parallel lines that connect to the smaller circle at the other end. Between the parallel lines of the dumbbell, is one central line crossed at intervals by vertical strokes.



(Image: Smith 1995: 282)

Figure 82: Dumbbell and other shapes at Nsana wa Ng'ombe, Malawi

A unique feature of the dumbbell in Figure 82 is the line connecting the exterior circles at both ends of the dumbbell. The three dotted lines at one end appear to be emissions from the dumbbell. If the dumbbell is a phallus as Smith suggests, then these dotted lines are body fluid emissions, and since it is an erect posture, the emissions are more likely to be semen than urine. Urine is a waste product of the body while semen is an essential component in conception. As in Uganda, this 'Malawian' penis and scrotum, collectively called a phallus, is associated with circular forms. There is therefore a widespread juxtaposition of dumbbells/phallic shapes with circles and phallic shapes repeatedly pointing at or penetrating circular shapes.

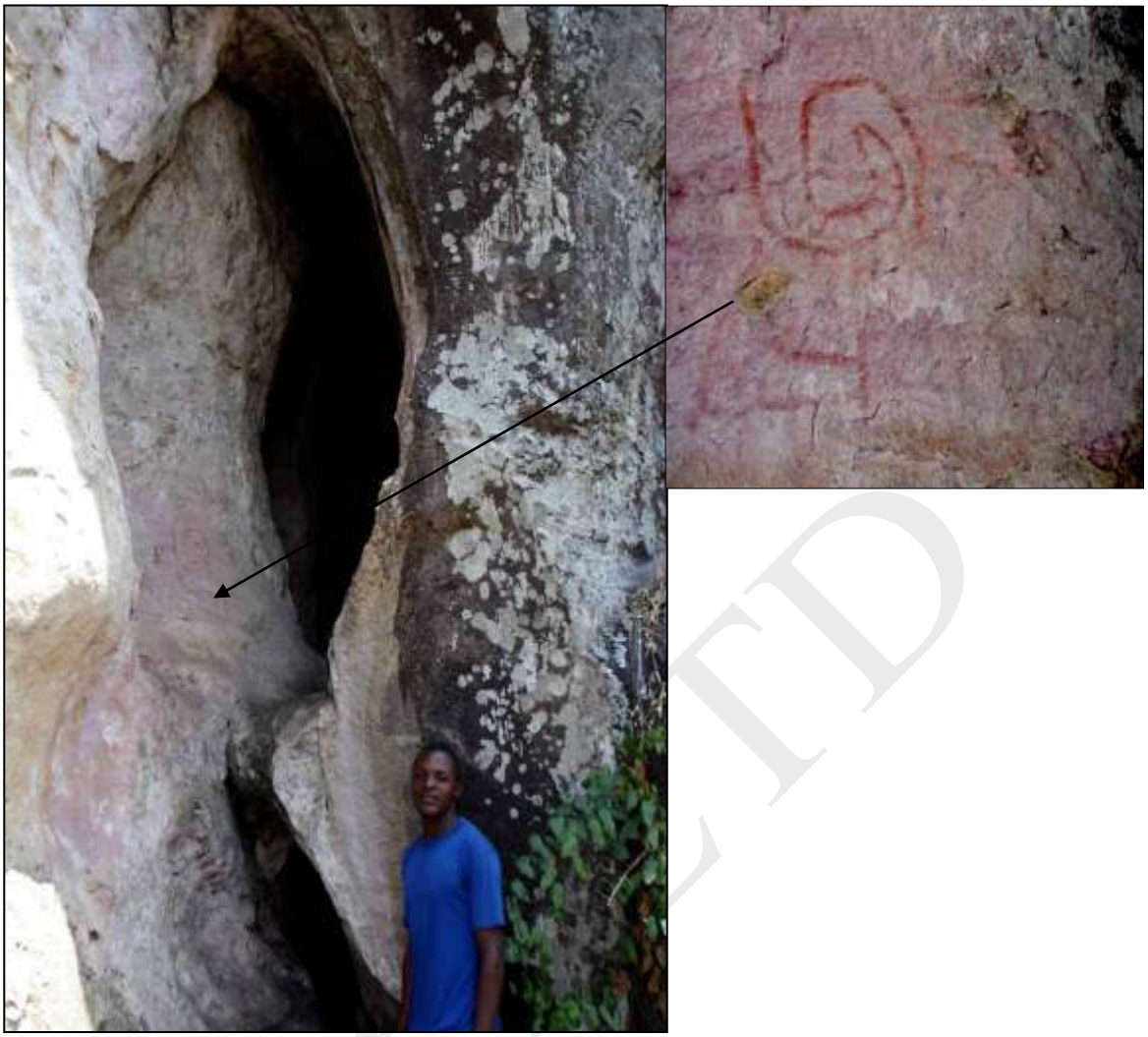


(Image: Smith 1997: 28)

Figure 83: An example of a phallic shape from Zambia

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Smith (1997: 46) also noted that phallic shapes are depicted at several sites in Zambia. However, these motifs were not depicted as frequently as other shapes, such as the concentric circles in comparison to the majority of shapes within the geometric rock art repertoire. An example of a phallic shape published by Smith is Figure 83. What Smith does not note is that the painted shape is positioned close to the entrance to a cave. This cave entrance is an elongated ovoid shape as shown in Figure 84. Placing of the phallic shape in this setting is highly suggestive of a penis penetrating a vagina. Depiction of this phallus with an emission suggesting ejaculation, lends credence to the recognition, not just of sexual organs in the rock art, but to coitus. I now consider the symbolism of these shapes within the framework of my model.



(Image: Zubietta 2007)

Figure 84: Phallic shape, Zambia

Phallic symbolism

Mbuti ethnographies indicate that apart from coitus being a natural and normal occurrence, it is also a powerful relationship of ritual potency. For the Mbuti, a man's fertility is potent and, I argue, this underpins the symbolism of dumbbells, sausage and phallic shapes. I showed in Chapter 5 that the *molimo* ceremony was the most important for the Mbuti and that masculinity (the *molimo* trumpet) and femininity (the *molimo* hearth/fire) lie at the centre of *molimo* symbolism. The premise for this ceremony is the concept of a male-female forest that engenders the Mbuti.

Life force, *pepo* is incarnate in both the concept ‘penis’ and ‘vagina’ or ‘womb’. My reading of the Mbuti ethnographies leads me to suggest that male *pepo* is potent and transmittable only through active sexual intercourse. Female *pepo* is absent as a potent force, but present as a crucial agent of nourishment and growth in the womb. Female *pepo* is the receptacle into which the phallus deposits *pepo* that moulds and strengthens a child. Often the Mbuti refer to an active element as masculine and a passive one as feminine. For example, the logs that are stacked to make the *molimo* fire are, in my view, male since they are constantly being shifted around to keep the fire burning. The fire is female (Turnbull 1965c: 264).



Ota Benga plays the molimo—the sacred pygmy trumpet—at the St. Louis Fair, 1904. Anthropologists entitled this photo *A Savage's Idea of Music* and hoped the molimo would someday evolve into a flute. (*American Museum of Natural History, New York*)

(Image: Bradford & Blume 1992)

Figure 85: A *molimo* trumpet

The *molimo* trumpet, the *molimo* hearth, the choreography of *ekokomea* and the honey dance are all infused with sexual metaphors. The *molimo* trumpet is a metaphor for Pygmy masculinity, its phallic shape (Fig. 85) a symbol of its creative energy (Chapter 5). Naturally, phallic shapes conjure ideas of human procreation. The phallic *molimo* trumpet has 'ritual intercourse' with the *molimo's* 'vagina', the *kumamolimo*. Turnbull (1965c: 263) describes the *molimo* trumpet being played around the fire as if being sung to. The trumpet, blown over the fire, scatters embers of coal sometimes placed at its 'mouth'. This is a metaphor for procreation, for life and death, a symbol of fertility, creation and vitality (Turnbull 1965c: 263-4). The *molimo* spirit restores fertility to barren maidens and virility to impotent hunters.

Having dwelt on the significance of phalli and masculinity, there is a second half to the symbolism, the feminine and so I now turn to shapes in the rock art that dumbbells penetrate - the circles.

Shape type 1000s

Concentric circles, shape type 1000s, are the most frequently painted shapes in the rock art of Uganda (Chapter 3). Concentric circles are defined here as circular shape within circular shapes with a shared centre or axis. These circular shapes may not be equidistant in radius from the centre. A concentric circle may be an entity on its own or be part of the dumbbell depending on the variant shape. To clarify this I return to the shapes in Figure 75. In Figure 75, the exterior of the dumbbells in shapes number 8 to 17 is also the exterior of the concentric circle or circle interrupted by two parallel lines as explained earlier. The concentric circles in the dumbbells comprise three to four circles; often the final circle is a filled-in circle. The other end of the dumbbell either has a single filled-in or outline circle, or, it comprises one to two concentric circles. This schema of concentric circles can be seen in Figures 86 and 87.

Chaplin (1974: 40) noted that the concentric circles are forms that exist everywhere and that "within contemporary ritual contexts, the concentric circle, often in the three significant colours - red, white, black - is widespread" and that the concept of a centre was being visualised. Chaplin postulated that in many ritual contexts circular shapes are

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prominent and the "concept of circularity must be derived from observations of the apparent circum-envelopment of the horizon" (Chaplin 1974: 41).



(Image: Namono 2006)

Figure 86: Concentric circles, Nyero 2

Notice the shape at the top right hand corner of this picture is a faded dumbbell



(Image: Namono 2006)

Figure 87: Concentric circles, Kapiri 1

Collinson (1970) argued that circular shapes are depictions of the sun, moon and stars. While both these ideas are possible, we cannot assert the subject of these shapes. Their forms are open to a number of other possible interpretations. Smith (1995) argues weather divination within the Twa rock art tradition and that these circular shapes are an indication of a possible connection to rainmaking rituals and fertility symbolism (Smith 1995: 280-285). He notes that the Bemba of northern Zambia use the concentric circle to represent female genitalia in their initiation ceremonies (*ibid.*: 284). If the identification of phalli that I have made in the geometric rock art is correct, then the objects that they penetrate should be vagina. It is therefore possible that, as for the Bemba of Zambia, the concentric circle represented female genitalia for Pygmy groups.

The iconography of many societies entails body imagery. Some authors have suggested alternative links between rock art and body imagery. For example, Kenny (1978) writing about the symbolism of the rock art of East Africa suggested, that the 'beetle-like' shapes (Fig. 88) might be "an assimilation of the shape of the human head to the sun, and that in some contexts the image of the human body is implicated in more generally significant cosmological ideas" (Kenny 1978: 150). He went on to suggest, absurdly, that cross-hatched patterns attached to circles represent a human body with a schematic spine and ribs, the circular patterns together representing the articulation of the spine and head (*ibid*: 151). Kenny's interpretation was not based on an understanding of the people who made the rock art, but rather on his own perceptions. His position lacks material evidence to support his argument.



(Image: Collinson 1970: 6)

Figure 88; 'Beetle-like' figures

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Another researcher, Redinha (1948), writing about the geometric tradition engravings of Calola, Bambala and Capello in the Zambezia Province of Angola, suggests that rock art engravings were made for entertainment (Redinha 1948: 79). Drawing on the testimonies and practices of the Bena-Mai living in the area, Redinha further argues that the engraved geometric shapes imitated body tattoos, or were a reference to celestial bodies (*ibid.*: 79, 87). Redinha also notes that a Bena-Mai woman's chest was tattooed with a fish, depicted in a manner similar to the engravings and characterised by its ability to reproduce (*ibid*: 79). Redinha implies the existence of a form of symbolic or sympathetic magic by which the wearing of such a body tattoo can help the fertility of its wearer. Redinha's position, like Kenny, cannot be used to understand the rock art of the Pygmies of Uganda. There is also the danger of imposing a modern mind onto a prehistoric one. The notion of sympathetic magic was popularly used in relation to Palaeolithic rock art of France and Spain at this time and the influence of this thinking on Redinha is clear.

In Pygmy geometric rock art, while varied subjects have been proposed for circles, such as suns, moons, female genitalia and so on, their repeated contextual association with probable phalli helps to narrow down the subject options. A circle penetrated by a phallus (Fig. 89), for example, is far more likely to represent a womb than represent the sun. In Figure 89, there is a deliberate placing of phallic images piercing circular shapes. Even if the concentric circles are wombs, they may still carry broader symbolic connotations.

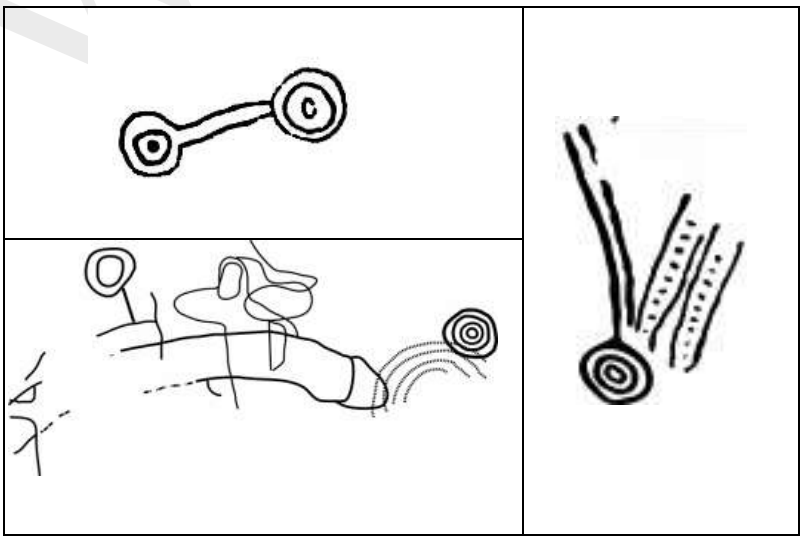


Figure 89: Examples of phallic images penetrating circles

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I have shown that the deep forest and fire are symbolic wombs in Pygmy symbolic traditions, but one can only move to these deeper levels of symbolism once one has recognised the core subject of womb. In some societies that refer to circular shapes, the sun is considered a male symbol and the moon a female symbol, so I do not discount this possibility, but this understanding requires the prior recognition that the core subjects depicted are the penis and the womb. With the strong possibility that the circles depict wombs, I draw on my cosmological model (Fig. 72) and move to consider the symbolism of the womb within Pygmy societies, showing a conceptual link between concentric circles and women.

Womb and vulvae symbolism

For the Pygmies, the womb is important as the receptacle for and originator of life. Within the womb, 'male' and 'female' combine to produce new life. Males and females transfer to their offspring distinct asymmetrical substances: semen and menstrual blood. Among the Pygmies, a woman's potential to conceive and reproduce originates in the source of her *pepo*, her menstrual blood and vaginal fluids, considered fluids of the forest. The womb is a fitting receptacle for a 'gift of the forest'. In the womb, biological substances become gendered substances: blood and semen: fire and meat (Zuesse 1979).

If the forest is involved in conception and birth, then pregnant or menstruating women are interacting with the supernatural, their *pepo* is therefore likely to interfere with the *pepo* of hunters. Upon being classified an adult, a young hunter receives his first hunting net from his mother (Turnbull 1982: 148). This symbolises the conceptual link between women and animals, both are hunted by men, wherein relations with one prevent relations with another (Zuesse 1979: 31). It is a separation of the human from the spirit realm. There is a symbolic relationship between the world of the life-producing, food-producing forest and that of the life-producing, food-cooking women, between the child transforming in the womb and fire transforming raw food into cooked food (Turnbull 1965b: 177-8) . Men as hunters penetrate women and produce children, living flesh; men penetrate game with their arrows and produce dead non-human flesh, food. Both the 'live flesh' of humans and the 'dead flesh' of the hunted game are very essential for human continuance so it is important for a successful hunt, there must be no confusion between the two 'hunted flesh' (Zuesse 1979: 32-35).

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According to Lewis (2008), a common belief held amongst linguistically diverse Pygmy groups in Africa, is that most animals flee from humans involved in the procreative process. Sexual intercourse, childbirth, pregnancy and menstruation have human *ekila* offensive to animals. Hence, expecting women or parents of newborn babies must not engage in a hunt:

> A man with a pregnant wife, or whose wife has just delivered a child, must not hunt until her blood has absolutely ceased flowing and she has put on her loincloth. In the same way, the husband of a menstruating woman must stay in the camp and cannot hunt (Turnbull 1965c: 156; Zuesse 1979: 32).
>
> In both cases, the sexual relationship, even if permitted, cannot be fruitful in children, and so the hunt cannot be fruitful either (in providing animal flesh). A good relationship with one's wife is essential to good hunting, and when domestic quarrels grow too "heated", the Epulu say the "noise" alienates the forest deity and the animals withdraw from the hunters (Turnbull 1965c: 317; Zuesse 1979: 32).

According to Lewis (2008:298), in speech, *ekila* can refer to menstruation, blood, taboo, a hunter's meat, animals' power to harm humans and particular dangers to human reproduction, health, and sanity. Turnbull was convinced that such prohibitions are of villager influence on the Mbuti (Turnbull 1965b:156). The link between sex, menstruation, pregnancy and hunting is a common thread throughout hunter-gatherer ethnography in many societies (Knight, Power & Watts 1995). Among the southern African San for example, there are related beliefs about not hunting while a wife is menstruating and abstaining from sex before a hunt (Biesele 1993: 93, 196). Lewis-Williams (1981: 51-2) notes that among the southern San, a girl in menarche paints her face with ochre and adorns young men with ochre to protect them from hunting accidents. In rock art research, the link between ritual powers and female reproduction, is a prominent theme (e.g. Solomon 1992; Hays-Gilpin 2004). It is therefore no wonder that one encounters this symbolism among Pygmy groups.

Shirley Ardener (1987: 123) argues that a medical body is different from a ritual or a symbolic one, since body symbolism draws on more than simple bodily functions and issues of sexuality. She argues that:

> "the boundaries of 'the vagina' in the symbolic body seem to extend further than in the medical body to include, for instance, the vulva…. The vagina of the medical body seems only to be the hidden recesses of the wider category label 'vagina' in the sexual body, and it is interesting that it is this hidden recess that

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> seems the most potent symbol. The womb, incidentally, is distinguished in the sexual body, and its symbolic force seems to be quite different" (Ardener 1987: 123-4).

Amongst central and southern African Bantu-speakers, such as the Northern Sotho, a woman's head ritually belongs to her father; her legs, particularly the knees and her body belong to her husband. Bodily joints are believed to represent the union of hard objects (bones) with soft things (movement), symbolic of coitus with the hard object being male and the soft movement female (Namono 2004:84). In Pygmy thought, the symbolic womb is inclusive of female genitals, it is the most sacred symbol - this is the passage of life.

Among the Pygmies, the umbilical cord of a child is cut-off with an arrowhead or bamboo knife. The father keeps the cord, the arrow or knife until the child is old enough to bury them in the forest near a river or a pool or in or near the family hut (Schebesta 1933: 207; Turnbull 1965b: 178, 213). Interring the umbilical cord in the forest or stream in the forest concretises the ritual space, 'deep forest', as the womb (Turnbull 1965b: 178, 238). *Molimo* expresses the ambivalence of this ritual space that is not here and now, it is a permanent unknown, "its existence is beyond question because there has to be a place for which there is not here and now" (Turnbull 1985: 11). Socially, *molimo* enhances the cooperation necessary for the hunting and gathering during the day. It creates 'balance' and discipline in the camp.

Penis-womb symbolism deals with *molimo* and *elima* ceremonies, with coitus (vaginal fluids and semen), the deep forest, the womb, birth and death. We see this in the symbolic hunt ritual linking the real world in male and female to the spirit realm with *pepo* (semen and vaginal fluids). Pygmy ethnographies indicate that people engaging with these substances must not meet *keti*. In terms of my model, there is a ritual or cosmic relationship between hunting (and the hunter), animals, the deep forest and women. Phalli and womb symbolise *pepo*, fertility and regeneration in the real and supernatural realms. It is clear that the symbolism of dumbbells, sausage and phallic shapes has a natural relationship in Pygmy traditions with that of concentric circles. It would be fallacious to regard the symbolism of the womb in isolation from that of the phalli with which they are juxtaposed, since these shape types form a conceptual pair. In addition to this relationship between phallic shapes and concentric circles, there is a

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strong association between phallic and concentric circles, with U-shapes. Smith (1995: 285) has argued that in Zambia and Malawi, some U-shapes (1201s & 1202s) could represent vulvae, and in the context of my other suggested subjects of wombs and penises, this seems a real possibility for the geometric rock art of Uganda. Concentric circles may be a metonym or a metaphor (*cf.* Tilley 1999: 5) for the female, the mother, and the womb. These circles may also be a scrotum filled with *pepo*, so that a dumbbell may symbolise male and female linking concretely during intercourse and metaphorically to the categorised synergy between man and woman. I suggest that in the concentric circles, the filled-in areas that one sometimes sees in the centre probably represent conception (Fig. 90).



Figure 90: A circle with a filled centre

In terms of my model in Figure 72, there are three other key symbolic subjects related to the male-female sexual symbolism within Pygmy beliefs. These subjects: fire, water and the moon are not included in detail, in the above discussion. I now discuss the symbolism of each in turn and consider which, if any, might fit the shapes in the geometric rock art repertoire.

Fire symbolism

Drawing on Pygmy ethnographies, fire is a ritual agent "primarily connected with women" (Turnbull 1965c:264), with the womb/vagina. Upon marriage a woman changes her hearth and joins her husband's hearth, she must contribute to the *molimo* of her new camp (Turnbull 1965c: 201). Among the Pygmies, sex and food encode social dimensions. For example, when a hunter quarrelled with his wife, first he accused her of being a bad cook and then during the preparation for the *molimo* ceremony he "took

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down the baskets full of offerings to the *molimo* from the *molimo* hearth, uprooted the sticks and the vine marking the site, and threw the lot onto the ground. While doing this he was busily saying the *molimo* was empty" (Turnbull 1965c: 201). The sticks around the *molimo* hearth hold the baskets with the *molimo* offering. A husband ensures his wife keeps the *molimo* baskets full and tends the *molimo* fire. In this way, both man and woman are responsible for the *molimo* ceremony, just as they are for procreation. This critical association of *molimo* baskets, hearth and trumpet define the *molimo* ceremony as a communal ritual of shared values and collective conscience (Kets de Vries 1999: 72-3).

Fire plays a central role in Pygmy cosmology. The poignant relationship between *molimo* and fire is synonymous with a hunter and his wife. A good relationship with one's wife is essential for good hunting. When quarrels lead to *akami* or noise, the noise is displeasing to the forest, making the animals withdraw from the hunters (Turnbull 1965c: 278; Zuesse 1979: 23). Fire, like sex, is a node of transition, and according to Zuesse (1979) the association between fire (and its theft) and sexuality (equated to theft of fire) bridges the boundaries between the real and the supernatural:

> They are all liminal and generative, and their symbolisms would be likely to recur at times or places of transition (Zuesse 1979: 22).

My cosmological model clearly shows the centrality of fire before a hunt. The adult male is the killer of game, and so perpetuates human (and animal) mortality. This "necessary act of violence and aggressivity" is minimised through the hunting fire (Turnbull 1982: 148). The context of the hunt fire is best understood in light of a deep relationship between the Pygmies and the forest. Bachelors sleep around the central campfire. When the central fire is dismantled, each family takes an ember to add to their own hearths (Turnbull 1965c: 123). A woman moves her hearth from one camp to another when she gets married and she is expected to contribute food to the *molimo* of her new camp (Turnbull 1965c: 201). Pygmy women protect the fire from rain and transport it in fire-resistant leaves when shifting camp (Turnbull 1961: 58) (Fig. 91). For the Mbuti, fire connects them to the forest deity, hence the campfire must never die out; it is life.

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(Image: Turnbull 1965b: Plate 33)

Figure 91: An Mbuti woman carrying smouldering ember in fire-resistant phrynium leaves

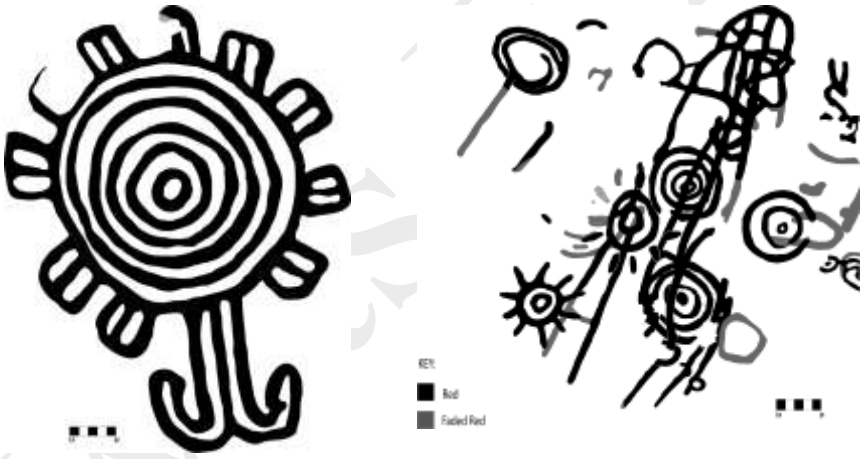
With this in mind, I now consider the painted context that best fits this fire symbolism. Within the shape typology (Chapter 3), there are variations of concentric circles and circles with radiating lines or complex circular geometric shapes that I refer to here as 'rayed shapes' (Figs. 92 & 93). These are the shapes in my typology listed as 1001, 1002, 1003, 1011, 1012 and 1033. These rayed shapes have been described as sun bursts, as a "stylised sun figure…consisting of a flame like pattern" (Chaplin 1974: 19), as concentric rings with appendages (Chaplin 1974: 28) and sigmoid forms interpreted as the 'legs of the moon' by some present – day inhabitants (Sassoon 1973:8). Mbuti ethnography does not refer to the sun as being central to their cosmos so the sun is therefore a very unlikely subject. The understandings of the present-day inhabitants cannot be used in this context since their identity is known to be different from that of the makers of the rock art. Close observation of these rayed shapes shows particular attention to their distal parts. Details like these suggest that these concentric circles are different from the basic concentric circles discussed earlier and that the distal parts are important. However, their close association with dumbbells and general concentric circles indicates that they are an integral part of the penis-womb symbolism discussed above.

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(Images: Namono 2006)

Figure 92: 'Rayed' shapes from Nyero 3



(Image: Namono 2006)

Figure 93: Examples of rayed circles

What is consistent with the rayed shapes is the concentric circle or circular shape. Repetition of this shape and its prominence at most sites indicate that it is significant in the Pygmy cosmos. I have argued that the concentric circle is a womb and fire and I contend that this is what is at the centre of the rayed concentric circles. Nevertheless, as we have seen, the fire is also a symbolic womb. This could therefore provide an explanation for the distal parts. Around the *molimo* fire are placed an array of vines

and baskets. These fit well with the shape and the arrangement of the various objects appended to the concentric circles. These figures could therefore represent the womb symbolism of the *molimo* fire.

Water symbolism

Pygmy ethnographies indicate avoidance of places where spirits live such as **sources** of streams, waterfalls, caves, deep groves or springs (Zuesse 1979: 24, 35) because "the primordial forest is the region of the cold, wet darkness and death: the dew must evaporate and the night-beings retreat from the sun before the Pygmy hunters venture forth from camp" (Zuesse 1979: 35). These sacred spaces are entered for ritual such as to retrieve or return the *molimo* trumpet. In Pygmy thought, there is a close relationship between water and *molimo* spirit. Pygmy ethnographies show that the *molimo* trumpet, sometimes called the water animal, symbolically drinks water and it is also stored under water:

> When the *molimo* trumpet is taken from its sacred groove and blown during the long nights of the festival, it is hidden away during the days upstream from the camp within the flowing cool waters. The cold, the wet, the dark, … and the remote, participate in each other and in divinity. They are the primordial modality of the sacred (Zuesse 1979: 24)

The water may evoke semen, and the placing of the *molimo* trumpet underwater keeps it strong. Through water, the *molimo* trumpet connects humans to the supernatural. At birth a child's first contact with the forest is with the special sweet-smelling water of the forest vine leaves used to cleanse it (Turnbull 1982: 141). At the end of *elima* celebrations, both the boys and the girls who participated in the ceremony are ritually cleansed with water (Turnbull 1982: 146). It is clear then that the Mbuti work the essence of the forest into their souls through the waters of the vines and streams (Zuesse 1979: 36). Bathing in the forest waters introduces the child and adolescents to the forest womb. Sexual intercourse is preferred in close proximity to water "so that they can look at it or listen to it" (Turnbull 1982: 147). It is crucial to understand the metaphorical sense of reverence of water and fire that is at the very heart of Pygmy beliefs to reflect upon the significance of water symbolism. I contend that significance is given to water in order that the ritual potency of sexual fluids is clearly defined. Sets of parallel lines and sets of parallel dots might represent water/semen. I have already

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noted the dots emerging from the penis at Nsana Wa Ng'ombe. Smith (1995) suggests that the parallel line sets are probably rain, but they might better be explained as 'water' more generally.

Moon symbolism

The moon, fire, rain and water have a strong presence in Mbuti cosmology and link to the *molimo* spirit. *Molimo* ceremonies are held at night when the moon is up or just before dawn. During the *molimo* ceremony, the Mbuti call on mother moon with whom they associate menses, and menstruation with fertility (Turnbull 1965c: 253). Among the Efe, the chameleon is the sacred animal that is in rapport with the sky and the moon, with rainstorm and lightning (Turnbull 1965b: 189; Zuesse 1979: 20).

If anything is to serve as a symbol, it is important that the Pygmy conceptions of that object or activity are identical with their conception of the referent object. So, the patterned monthly phases of the moon resemble the monthly menstrual cycle. The rotund full moon stimulates the roundness of a pregnant woman. Roundness or wholeness is conceived as female, just as the 'inside' space of a hut is female, and the 'outside' space, where the bachelors sleep, is male. The womb is a symbol for the cycle of the moon, of life, and of nature. Rhythmic changes and fruitfulness are concepts associated with the feminine compressed into a single visible object, the moon. At night, the moon forms part of a communion with the forest. First menses are a gift of the forest and a link to it:

> [*E*]*lima* is an establishment of personal contact with the forest, a reification of the direct bond between the individual and the forest world (Turnbull 1965c: 133).

Mbuti females attempt to synchronise their menses with each other and with the moon (hence with the forest). If a girl receives her first period, she will look for others who are like her, so that the *elima* is held together(Turnbull 1965c: 133). Coitus during menses or a solitary erotic dance in the forest are equated to sexual intercourse with the forest (Turnbull 1961: 245). Thus, Pygmies conceive of coitus in moonlight as a rhythmic encounter between male (penis) and female (moon).

The waxing and waning of the moon, is a metaphor for life, death and immortality. Pygmy fertility depends on the decomposition of previously living matter. Hence, the

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waning of the moon is synonymous with regeneration. Death is considered a natural phenomenon as is birth (Turnbull 1965b: 222). Unification of male-female confirms their disparate roles in society. The ritual values expressed here are social values in action that paradigmatically shape Mbuti lives. Men and women recognise another's gender and accept the challenges that go with it without being controlled by it. Men and women recognise and avoid conflict, they avert it, divert it or when it erupts despite precautions, resolve it with minimum mental or physical aggression (Turnbull 1982: 152). Linking this to the paintings, one can recognize a male-female polarity in the penis-womb symbolism.

The moon as a manifestation of *pepo,* probably accounts for circular or crescent like shapes in the geometric rock art. From the ethnographies, we see that Pygmies have intimate relationships with the forest; it is probable that rock art is a part of such a relationship. *Molimo* is the communal expression of this intimacy (Turnbull 1960b:319). The forest manifests in different forms. As the moon, it is a manifestation of puberty and the menstrual cycle and as the agent of transformation (like fire). Females, as mothers are life-givers and bring *ekimi;* males, as hunters cause death and bring *akami* (Turnbull 1982: 153). The forest realm conceived of as being like a woman, is wooed by the masculine hunter (Zuesse 1979: 32). Sex emphasises the equal potency of male and female. Sexual potency manifests in blood and semen. Sex during menstruation is considered the most fertile moment because it enables the direct mixture of blood and semen. The ritualization of male/female opposition ensures 'balance' at the core of Pygmy cosmos. This understanding of the manifestations of the forest as moon leads me to conclude that various circular shapes may symbolise the moon. These circular shapes, some in outline but most filled (shapes 1000s and 1040s) , are found regularly juxtaposed with concentric circles, sets of parallel lines, dumbbells and phallic shapes. They seem to go together in the art as a conceptual whole. They are thus well explained as the moon because moon symbolism fits perfectly with the symbolism of the other subjects I have already identified. The solid circle also evokes a full moon in its basic form. The full moon is the most important phase of the moon and rituals, such as *molimo* and *elima* are usually timed to culminate at the full moon. Moon symbolism fits in very well with my earlier interpretation of dumbbells and concentric circles shapes.

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Shape type 2000s

The final major image type in Ugandan rock art, as described in Chapter 3, is what I term spread-eagled shapes (the 2000s in my shape typology). Chaplin (1974:10) described the shapes in Figure 94 as stretched-hide motifs. All these shapes are depicted in outline, and occur on very prominent, exposed boulder surfaces. These shapes occur often with concentric circles, circular and phallic shapes as in Figure 95. The method of depiction is also consistent with that of other shapes such as concentric circles. Consistency in the form of the spread-eagled shapes provides some useful insights into what they represent. Conformity to this peculiar shape suggests that the depiction derives from a single source.

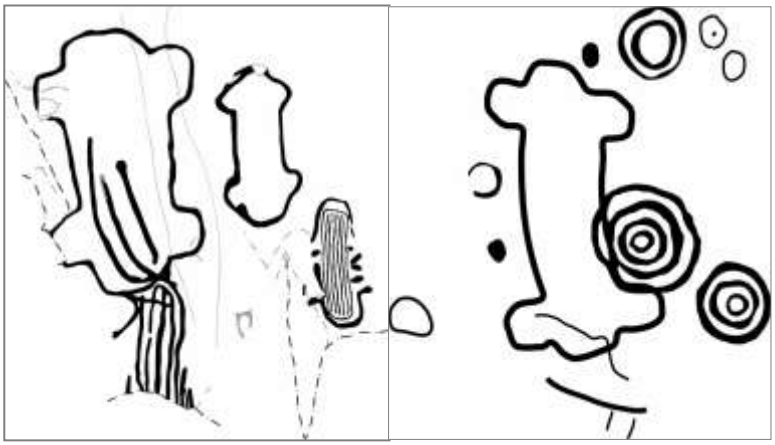
Permutations of the spread-eagled shapes are found throughout many parts of eastern and central Africa with a basic shape consistent with those in Uganda. In his analysis of shapes from the Kasama hills in Zambia, Smith (1995) identified two similar shapes: one he referred to as a 'bat-like' shape (Smith's shape 2050) (Fig. 96) and the other, a 'stretched animal hide' (Smith's shape 2010) (those similar to Fig. 94). Smith observed that these two forms were rarely identical shapes, intentionally varied, always filled in and occur in groups:

> Cross associations between these two shapes exist but are not common. The forms are nearly always filled and tend to occur in groups, occasionally accompanied by dots. It is particularly noticeable, when in groups, that any two forms are rarely identical in shape. The artists appear intentionally to have varied each of the motifs (Smith 1995:139).

Smith argued that the stretched-hide shapes are associated with the finger painted geometrics and the bat-like shapes with the red brush-painted red-animal tradition with which they share the same principal manner of execution:

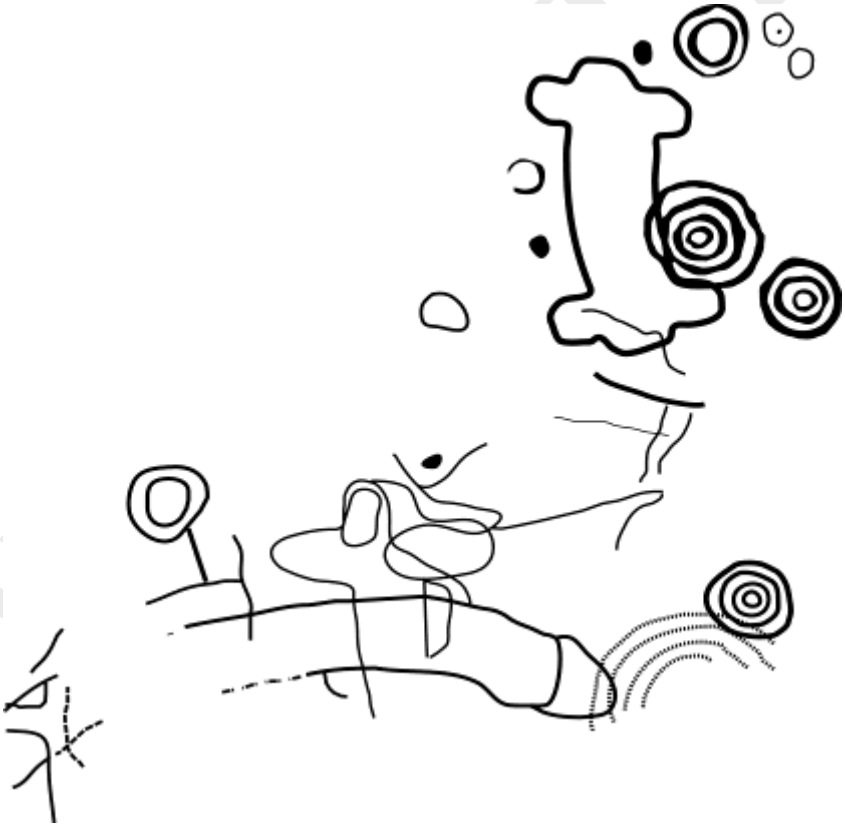
> It is possible that this group should be split. Most of the FG associations are with shape 2010 pictographs, which, generally share the common feature of finger application. Shape 2050 pictographs rarely suggest any association and in this respect resemble group BR motifs with whom they share the same principal manner of execution, brushwork. … It is conceivable that shape 2010 should be included with Group FG and shape 2050 should either form a group of its own or be incorporated into Group BR (Smith 1995: 139-143).

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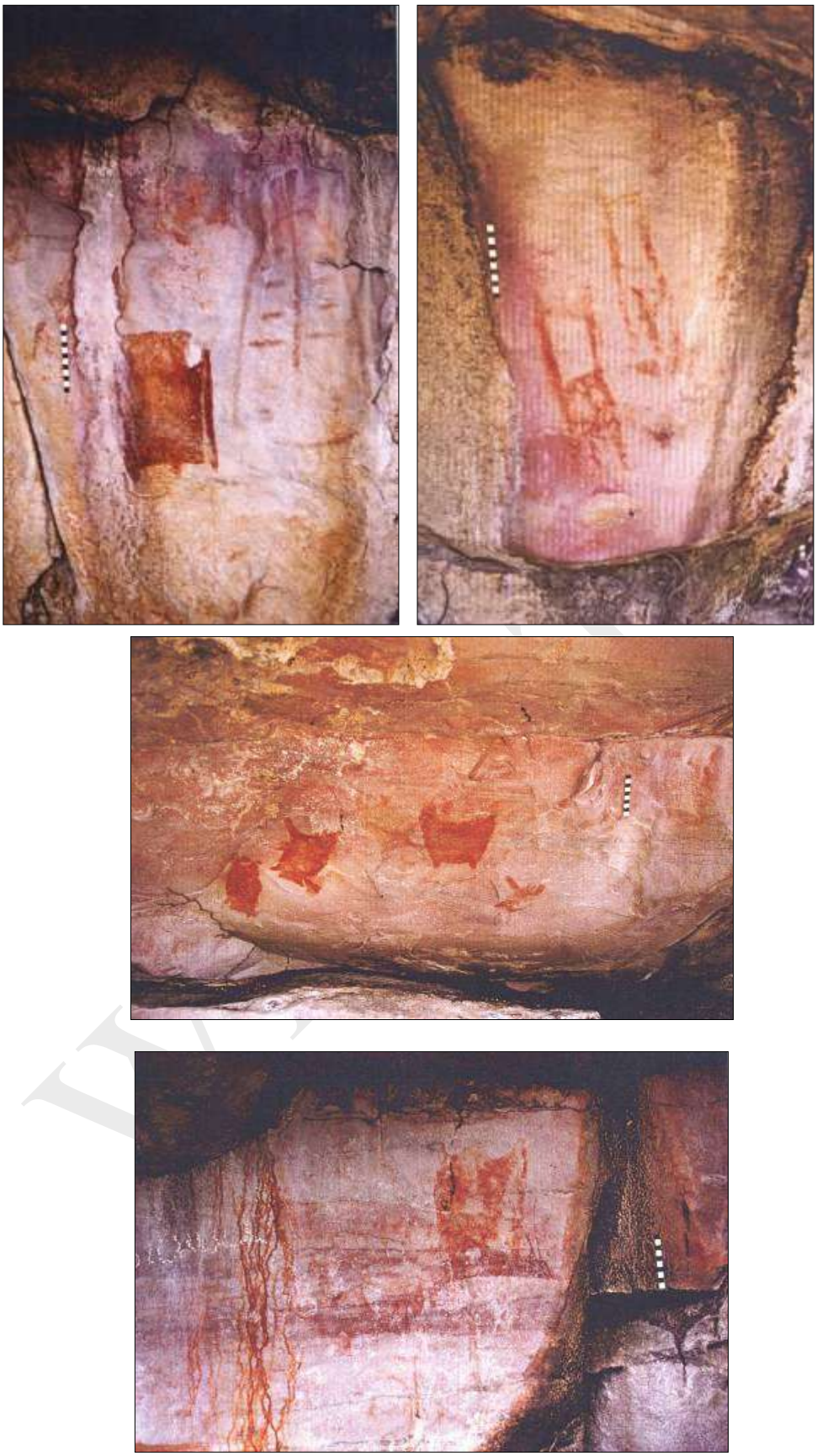
(Images: Namono 2006)

Figure 94: Examples of spread-eagle shapes



(Image: Namono 2006)

Figure 95: Examples of spread-eagle shapeswith other shapes



(Images: Smith 1995)

Figure 96: Bat-like shapes of Kasama Hill

I contend that although Smith overemphasized the variety inherent in these shapes, the differences were important. This probably explains why I did not find any red animal shapes or bat-like shapes in Uganda. I only identified the stretched hide shapes, associated with the finger-painted geometric shapes; it fits perfectly with the dominance of the geometric shapes in my data set. In this study, I shall refer to the bat-like and stretched hide shapes as spread-eagled shapes.

Since the time of Smith's work, similar spread-eagled shapes in southern Africa have been recognised as depictions of clothing motifs (Eastwood 2003; 2007). In a recent paper Smith, together with Eastwood, extended this understanding and they suggest that spread-eagled shapes in the geometric rock art tradition of Zambia and Malawi may also represent aprons (Eastwood & Smith 2005). This interpretation raises the question whether the similar spread-eagled shapes in the related rock art tradition of Uganda may also be aprons or loincloths.

Close observation of Figure 96 reveals diagnostic features of this material culture item. A basic vertical (sometimes horizontal) rectangular shape is interrupted with protrusions towards the top and bottom to the left and the right. These lateral appendages proximate to the central rectangle, creating flaps at the top and lower ends of the rectangular shape. These central flaps are very similar to the flaps on the wide, low, loincloths worn by hunters (Fig. 97), explaining the pattern and fitting well with the possibility that the depictions in Figure 94 are loincloths.

Similar observation of Figure 94 reveals that the spread-eagled shapes are almost all depicted as vertical or horizontal basic rectangles (1300s). The edges of these shapes have thin lines that extend beyond the base of the overall shape. In some cases, these thin lines are parallel to the general shape, attaching to it at the top and running loosely towards the base of the rectangular shapes. Some of these shapes have a short protrusion at the centre of the base. The rectangular and square shapes are very similar to the square (front) and rectangular (back) aprons worn by women. These are held at the waist with a string or bark cloth belt; aprons are normally smaller than loincloths (Meurant & Thompson 1995: 186) (Fig. 98).

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(Image: Turnbull 1965b: Plate35)

Figure 97: Mbuti hunters wearing bark cloth loincloths



A



B

A Young girl wearing bark cloth aprons in the traditional manner for women, with one piece in the front and a longer one at the back (Wheeler 1996: 70)

B According to Thompson, male dress is worn "flaring at the waist, with a suspending belt, and passed under the legs and tucked up on the other side, as illustrated by an Mbuti male photographed before World War II …. The two 'squares' that women wear, one front, one back, normally are smaller (Meurant & Thompson 1995: 186)

Figure 98: Illustration of Pygmy loincloths and aprons

The basic rectangular shape and the short flaps in the case of loincloths are a factor of the bark cloth material. The bark cloth is termed *murumba* in Ki-Ngwana, *pongo* or *lengbe* (Ki-Bira) according to the different dialects (Tanno 1981: 33-4; Thompson & Bahuchet 1991: 36). The Mbuti use the term *pongo* and that is what I shall use to refer to worn bark cloth. Women choose the tree from which to remove the bark. According to Tanno (1981), there are over twenty kinds of plants whose bark can be stripped for bark cloth, but men usually use figs (*Ficus* spp.) of which the bark of four species is taken from young trees (Tanno 1981: 34). Sixteen other fig species, when young and woody are referred to as *kumo*. These vines twine around big tree trunks, secured to the ground by their long roots. As the *kumo* grows, its roots coalesce around the host tree, encasing it (Fig. 99). Gradually the host dies from strangulation, insufficient light and root competition. It rots away leaving a hollow (Tanno 1981: 34; Akinsoji 1990: 88). The 'strangler' vine grows into a tall canopy tree with light coloured bark and is called *pongopongo*.



Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strangler_fig

Figure 99: An example of a 'strangler fig' *Ficus* spp

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The Mbuti use the bark of the young branches of *pongopongo* by stripping it and hammering sodden strips of its fibrous inner bark into a wide, soft, thin and pliable, slightly textured sheet of fabric (Tanno 1981: 34-5) (Fig. 100). "The bark is soaked in water or mud, mud giving it a bluish colour, or softened by smoking over the fire " (Turnbull 1961: 120). The beaten bark is known as *tapa* (Thompson & Bahuchet 1991: 31). The width of the branch, usually about 7- 8cm in diameter restricts width of the bark cloth (Tanno 1981: 35). Similarly, the texture of the bark fibre controls the level of flexibility of the material. Strips of bark cloth cut off from the edges of the main piece to create a comfortable fit between the legs of the wearer, are plaited with forest creepers and used as belts (see Turnbull 1965c: 200).

Pongo may be worn in its resultant natural colour, dyed, or painted with designs. Usually women, sometimes men, dye and paint *pongo* using a mixture of vegetable dyes to produce yellow, red, black and tan, and lemon juice (*Citrus medica*) to dye the *pongo* greyish blue; the red *nkula* Camwood (*Baphia nitida*) tree also known as African sandalwood, to get red pigment and *kangay* from a Gardenia fruit to obtain black (Turnbull 1961: 120; 1965c: 123)(Fig. 101). "Generally they use one colour for one piece of "pongo"" (Tanno 1981: 35). Their designs are either finger-painted or applied with a twig and are often symbolic (Turnbull 1965b: 197, 208; 1965c: 151, 166-7; Meurant & Thompson 1995: 16).

Whether the designs used for men, women or children varied is difficult to determine (Meurant & Thompson 1995: 19). Christiane Falgayrettes of the Dapper museum notes that the designs on the *pongo* echo the "hand-painted rock paintings" (Thompson & Bahuchet 1991: 13). Moreover, there is a close resemblance between the motifs on the *pongo* in Figure 102 and some of the concentric circles and dumbbells depicted in the rock art. It is also difficult to confirm whether these shapes stand for the same set of ideas wherever they appear, or if meaning varied from one cultural setting (such as in a ritual) to another (daily life). Regularity in depiction of the *pongo* designs and the fact that decorated *pongo* are worn at ceremonial festivities suggests that these shapes may represent a similar set of ideas.

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An Mbuti man hammering out the bast. 1989
(Image: Meurant & Thonpson 1995:17)



An Efe woman decorating bark cloth. 1994
(Image: Wheeler 1996: 65)



Mbuti Sua women decorating bark cloth, near Epulu 1973 (Image: Meurant & Thompson 1995: 2)

Figure 100: Hammering bark and decorating bark cloth

According to Tanno (1981: 36-7) after a bath, the Mbuti occasionally rub their bodies with vegetable oil squeezed from *Fagaar dinklagei* seeds, *Caloncoba glance*, "huo", "jele" or oil palm *Elaeis gaincensis*. Pygmies draw some pattern on their faces and

occasionally on their bodies with black dye derived from *Rothmannia whitfielii* or *Simirestis welwitschii* (Fig. 101). According to Thompson & Bahuchet (1991: 33) the body designs "evoke the luxury and swarming excitement of the forest" or the beautiful painted designs are used to attract men by the women (Thompson & Bahuchet 1991: 36). People are usually painted before the advent of a ritual gathering (Meurant & Thompson 1995: 19).

These ethnographic observations lead me to conclude that the depicted spread-eagled shapes are loincloths (2000s), and the rectangular and grid shapes are aprons (1300s). Aprons and loincloths, like the other subjects I have identified, probably carry deeper symbolic meanings and I will consider these now. Having identified spread-eagled shapes as *pongo*, it is now possible to draw on elements of my cosmological model to derive deeper symbolism.

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An Mbuti woman paints the face of a child with a twig, with 'kangay' (black colouring from the juice of the Gardenia fruit)
(Image: Thompson & Bahuchet 1991:32)



Young hunters painted faces
(Adopted from Schebesta 1941 *Die Bambuti - Pygmaen vom Ituri*, Vol II, Bruxelles)
(Image: Thompson & Bahuchet 1991:135)

Figure 101: Mbuti face and body painting.



(Image: Thompson & Bahuchet 1991:113)



(Image: Thompson & Bahuchet 1991:111)



(Image: Thompson & Bahuchet 1991:10)



(Image: Meurant & Thompson 1995:29)



(Image: Meurant & Thompson 1995:107)



(Image: Thompson & Bahuchet 1991:61)

Figure 102: Examples of Mbuti painted *pongo*

Pongo symbolism

Use of the bark cloth in everyday life and in ritual is symbolic. The symbolism derives from the natural growth of the vine from whose branches the bark is obtained. Tanno (1981) notes that:

> Usually trees are called "mme" in singular and "hamme" in plural generically in Kibila. The above mentioned *Ficus* big trees themselves are called generically "pongopongo", which are distinguished from other usual big trees. Furthermore, while 'vines' both woody and herbaceous are called "ngoli" and the kind of strings and ropes are also "ngoli", the *Ficus* vines which grow up to be "pongopongo" in the future and make the material for bark cloth are called not "ngoli" but "kumo" generically" (Tanno 1981: 34).

There is no doubt that the Pygmies considered this tree a special one. The *kumo* serves as a metaphor of the Pygmies' interdependence on each other and on the forest. The growth pattern of this tree is an implicit metaphor indicating growth from childhood to adult and old age - continuity of life and regeneration. The characteristics of *kumo* echo the strength, shrewdness of hunters and fecundity of gatherers that the Mbuti seek within the forest. The conglutination of the *Ficus* has implicit sexual connotations, of coitus that results in new life. This unique 'behaviour' of the *Ficus* is probably why the Pygmies developed a special relationship with it, naming it and choosing it for bark cloth. Another characteristic of this vine is feminine, hence the apt reference to bark cloth as 'womb of the forest' (Mosko 1987: 900). Human fertility is thought to be controlled by the deep forest. There is explicit symbolism of bark cloth with fecundity. Therefore, associated human reproductive body parts – the penis and vagina/womb are encased with the fecundity of the forest through the apron or loincloth.

Large pieces of *pongo* are used to cover new born babies to protect them from cold and exposure to light (Meurant & Thompson 1995: 16) (Fig.103). Turnbull (1978a: 170) states that the bark cloth, *le-engbe* or *esele*, must be sweet-smelling and light in colour. *Pongo* symbolically contains part of the forest, hence it has *pepo* that may heighten or protect the *pepo* of both men and women. When the *pongo* are removed, men and women join in coitus, or a woman's apron is removed when she is in her menses or giving birth. The *pongo* is thus a shield/protector and a guarantor of fertility and rebirth.

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(Image: Turnbull 1965b: Plate 27b)

Figure 103: An Mbuti mother with her child wrapped in painted bark cloth

In everyday activities, Pygmies wear bark cloth loincloths aprons that are sometimes decorated and sometimes plain (Tanno 1981: 35). *Pongo* are usually painted before the advent of a ritual ceremony (Meurant & Thompson 1995: 19). It is expected that during *molimo* ceremonies, young hunters decorate their bodies (as in Fig.70) and wear a special decorated loincloth (Thompson & Bahuchet 1991). Similarly, at the end of the *elima* ceremony, the young girls wear oily, new aprons (Turnbull 1961: 180). As the girls bathe, a pot with a piece of bark cloth inside it is thrown into the stream to "wash their blood"(Turnbull 1960a: 189). *Pongo* bridges the gap between the human and the supernatural. It is this thinking, I argue, that embodies the *pongo* shapes depicted in the geometric rock art site.

The symbolism discussed for *pongo*, links to the symbolism of all the geometric shapes I have discussed in this chapter and resonates with my cosmological model. Core aspects of this model balance between masculine and feminine concerns. This

male-female opposition, and the need for balance and harmony, is at the heart of Pygmy social organisation and ritualisation, hence this is where the symbolism of the geometric shapes derives. The union of male-female, coitus within the human world and with the supernatural world, must be fruitful to be useful and restore balance and harmony in all realms. *Molimo* is a cogent manifestation of the masculine and feminine forest. These masculine and feminine qualities are exhibited through the songs and dances performed to the forest. Contra Smith and Blundell (in prep.), *molimo* is concerned not only with men's issues, but also with women. I contend that the geometric rock art in Uganda concerns *molimo* and relates to both genders.

Finally, I am convinced that the recognition of *pongo*, penises, wombs, fire, water and the moon is correct because all fit so neatly together within an ethnographically informed understanding of the rock art. Whilst some of the identification was on a formal basis, others were informed by the ethnography, but the overall impact is a compellingly coherent reading of the juxtaposed shapes. It all fits together too neatly to be an unwarranted imposition of meaning onto the art.

Colour

It is difficult to know if colour forms part of the rock art symbolism I have just explained for the shapes, or whether it was a factor of availability of material. In Pygmy ethnographies colour symbolism is not mentioned much among the Mbuti. Tanno notes that with regard to staining the *pongo*, red cosmetics "are used only for rituals" (Tanno 1981: 37). Red is obtained by grinding a piece of *Pterocarpus soyauxii* African Padauk or African Coral wood) into powder, by rubbing it against a stone and mixing it with palm oil (Tanno 1981: 37). This is probably the same tree Turnbull referred to as *nkula* (Turnbull 1961: 120). The Mbuti obtain the wood from the south-western region where it is found, through trade (*ibid.*). Red is probably used for special occasions because of the difficulty in obtaining the wood to make the dyes, compared to the readily available black dyes. I suggest that red is also used in this manner to indicate special rituals. According to Grinker (1994), among the Lese, red is equated to menstrual blood, to meat and women generally. The food the Lese provide is described as white (Grinker 1994: 102). For the Efe, red and white are related to male/female symbolism. Women are symbolised as red, men as white. Drawing on Pygmy male/female, menstrual

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blood/semen dialectic, it is probable that Efe symbolism derives from similar thoughts. Efe women are thought to be fecund during menses because their blood mixes with semen. Conception is conceptualised within the mixing of red and white categories. Grinker (1994:100) suggests that red and white have a variety of different meanings, but these meanings together constitute specific patterns of metaphorical relationships. Blood is the 'semen' of women. The whiteness of bones and aspects of whiteness are attributed to the father's semen while red aspects are attributed to the mother's 'semen'. According to Turner red and white are not always linked to gender. However, when they are incorporated in ritual contexts, they often stand for the opposition of the sexes (Turner 1967: 61; Grinker 1994: 101). For the Lese, the combination of red and white symbolises fertility (Grinker 1994: 101). What can be deduced from Lese and Pygmy associations is that red and white pigments are linked to regeneration.

I cannot confirm whether this symbolism holds only when both red and white are depicted together in the same shape, juxtaposed in separate shapes or wherever they occur at different sites. In the rock art, some shapes in red pigment are very similar to shapes in white pigment, such as Nyero 3 and Obwin. If whiteness and redness clearly indicate separate gender then, the fact that each gender is represented in the same shape suggests that male and female are more than a pair of opposites, through that opposition, they work together and give meaning to each other (Turner 1967: 61). In terms of my cosmological model (Fig. 72), colour symbolism that links to male/female synergy and regeneration, fits well with the overall symbolism of the shapes depicted.

Sites

I now turn to the conceptual link between the shapes depicted and the sites. Drawing on my model, I have argued that rock art is one of the nodes of transition between the real and the supernatural world. Often natural features in a rock, the shape of the rock or the enclosed space of the rock, suggest interplay or an opening between the real and the supernatural worlds. Such features mark these spaces as special or sacred ritual places. Such transition between the non-human and the human, the real and the supernatural worlds existed in the everyday experiences of Pygmy rituals. The womb is a confluence of male and female *pepo*. Rock art sites are therefore gendered spaces used by men and women for the sustenance of life.

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There are strong similarities between the concept of womb in the geometric rock art and the physical sites. At a few sites, the rock surfaces are egg-shaped. Others are slightly enclosed spaces and like the womb, they are secure ritually nurturing places. Such cold, wet, fairly dark and remote places participate in each other and in the forest and "are the primordial modality of the sacred" (Zuesse 1979: 24). If contaminated, the womb will not produce. If penetrated with male *pepo*, it is sure to produce healthy offspring. Therefore, I argue, the ritual participants at rock art sites are like the foetus in a womb, both can be vulnerable to improper influences and both are renewed through interacting with *pepo*. A mother listens to the movements of her child in the womb just as the forest spirit listens to the communion of the Pygmies at a rock art site.

From the image and site analysis in Chapter 3, a clearer picture emerges to consider site symbolism. Of the forty-eight painted rock art sites in Uganda, two have been widely published and described as 'the most physically impressive of all the sites visited' (Chaplin 1974: 40). This acclaim rests on the fact that both sites are very large, relatively enclosed and over painted as evidenced by the numerous superimposed shapes. Both sites have shapes unique to them.

In Figure 104, the top left picture is a view at the main site on Lolui Island and in the background is a portion of Lake Victoria that surrounds the Island. At the top right is a picture of a dawn breaking on Lake Victoria with a view of the Island. Bottom left is a view from the entrance into the shelter, with the afternoon sunshine rays lighting up the 'sanctuary'. Bottom right is a view from inside looking out towards the entrance of the site. What makes Lolui Islands main site and Nyero 2 'special' is their enclosed womb-like space. Describing Lolui main shelter, Posnansky stated:

> The paintings are executed on the underside of a large boulder supported by smaller boulders formed by erosion of the 'granite tor' variety resting in turn on a large slab of rock….[T]his pile of rocks is visible from the lake on the north-west corner of the Island. The seven supporting rocks form an open-ended chamber some six feet high and seven or eight feet wide at the entrance (Posnansky 1961: 105-6).

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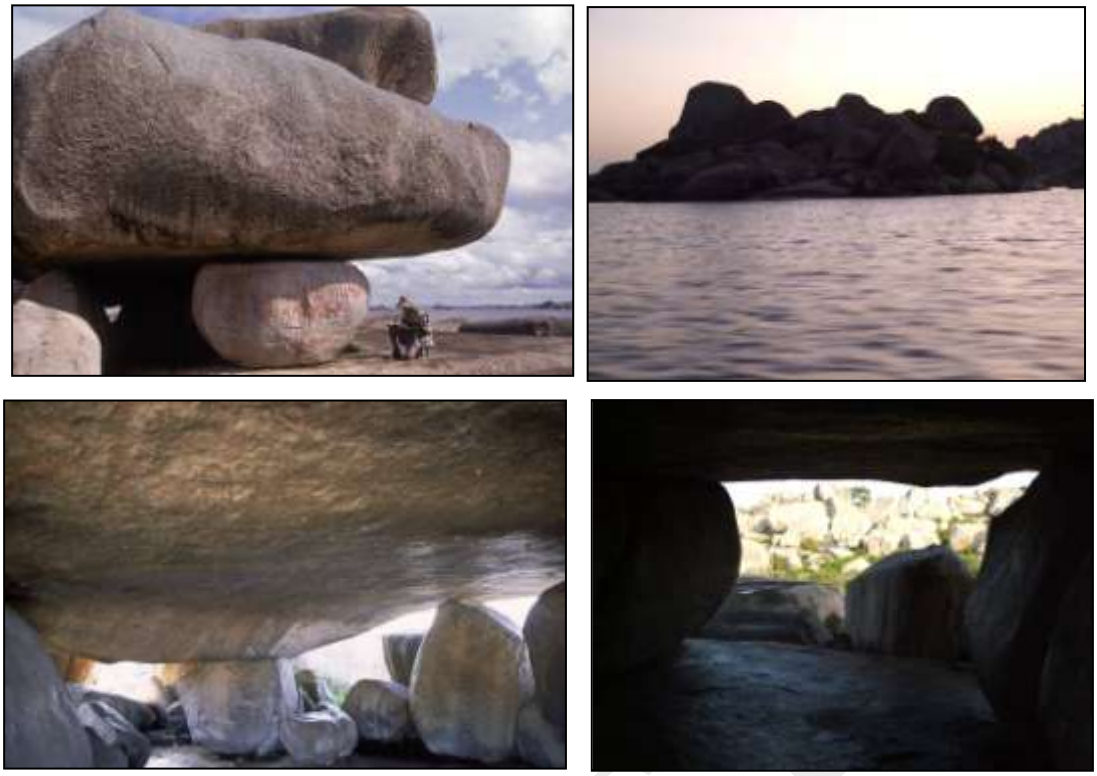
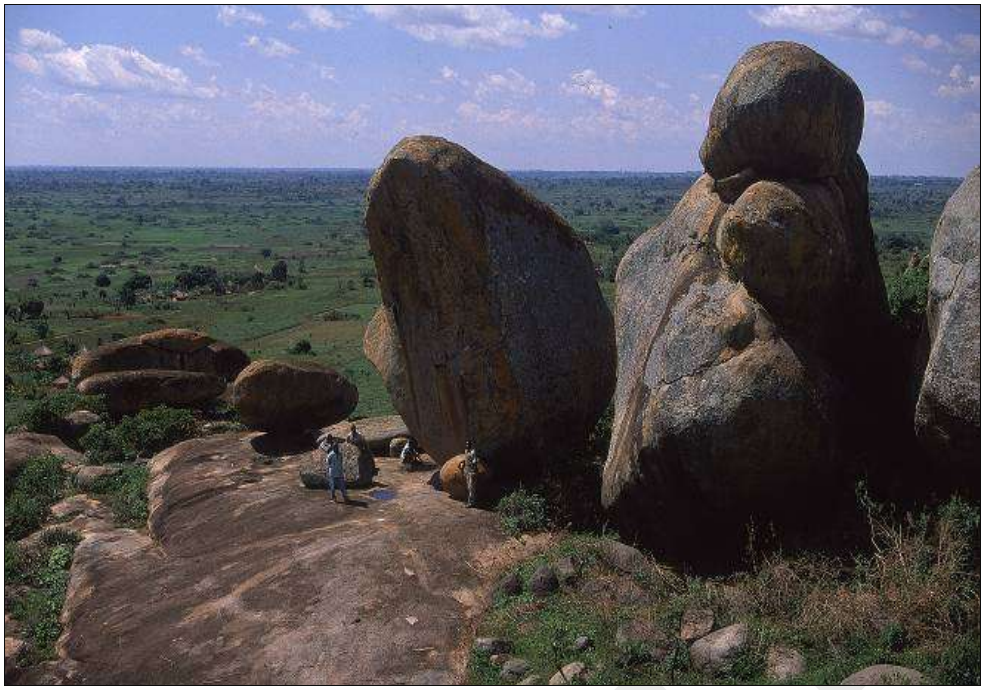


Figure 104: Images of Lolui Island

This open-ended chamber has resonance with a womb. Such a shelter is, in the Pygmy thought, a place with strong *pepo*. I have argued that the womb is a powerful place of *pepo*. This understanding probably explains the re-use and density of shapes depicted at Lolui and Nyero 2 as sites for ritual. Again, if, as I have argued, dumbbells and phallic shapes are metaphors for procreation, for life and death, and that *molimo* connects the real with the supernatural world, then this understanding probably also explains why there are so many dumbbell shapes at Lolui main site. I also argued that water is an *axis mundi* for the Pygmies. The sound of waves, of water trickling through the rocks is synonymous with the sound of the wind brushing through the forest canopy, believed to be *pepo*, or the sound of the streams in the forest, evoking the moulding fluids in the womb. When the site was painted or the last image painted is difficult to tell; what is clear is that it was a powerful place for the Pygmies.



(Image: RARI 2003)

Figure 105: View of Kakoro 1

Kakoro 1 is an egg-shaped rock that dominates a very flat landscape (Fig. 105). The surface of this rock is dominated by depictions of phallic motifs, spread-eagled shapes and some concentric circles. The fecundity of the womb is associated with continuity and potency. The combination of these male-female elements at Kakoro 1 may suggest a unity of opposition, wholeness and a fluidity of gender and potency. The shape of the rock enhances this symbolism.

Gender symbolism at some sites may portray a dominance of shapes inclined to the female gender (such as a cluster of concentric circles and circular shapes). Others may show an inclination for the male gender, (such as a clustering of dumbbell and phallic shapes). One may be inclined to identify these as female or male sites respectively. However, since the supernatural is the inverse of the real, it is probable that the reverse also holds true for the gendering of sites. Alternatively, where the site itself is conceived of as female or male, if it is womb-like or phallic-like, then the shapes depicted are only an adjunct to the symbolism, taking their cue from the broader symbolism of the site itself.

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In Pygmy societies, the need for balance is supreme. In the real world, gender is always binary - a person is **born either** male **or** female, and grows up to be **either** a man **or** a woman. However, as in the supernatural, again in the context of ritual gender inversion is possible. Female may become 'token male' or male become 'token female' although a woman is not the social inferior of a man, but a partner, and vice versa (Turnbull 1965c: 270). Pygmy ethnographies show that in ritual, gender balance is crucial and every effort is made to maintain it, and yet control of all rituals is strictly gendered, as are almost all other activities within Pygmy life. Painting may have been no different.

Rock art sites, *molimo*, *ekokomea* and tug-of-war serve as fluid boundaries that signal the transition from the real to the supernatural (Seligman, Weller, Puett & Simon 2008: 84). This signification enables mediation. Fluidity of gender derives from a very fluid Pygmy social organisation (Turnbull 1972: 300-303). For example, during the honey season, large hunting bands disintegrate into small honey collecting units. Since the groups are smaller, relationships can easily be adjusted and new members be amalgamated into new groups. Membership of a band is fluid and each band has a shifting population. If people disagree or quarrel in a camp, they move freely to another band and do not have to remain living together in the fixed settlements of the farmers. In a band, people may be related, but that blood relationship does not structure the band. Therefore, there was no need for the Pygmies to invest an individual(s) with arbitration rights or any form of authority in a band. Fluidity of band movement averted any tensions 'naturally'.

Since rock art is part of Pygmy rituals, we cannot see rock art outside of these fluid group and gender-based boundaries that are ritualised to maintain balance. Of all the important activities in Pygmy life that are gendered, only sex brings both genders together and I agree, one cannot equate rock art with sex. On the other hand, one may equate the **making** of rock art to sex, since the relationships within and between the depicted shapes evoke the centrality of coitus in Pygmy cosmos. I propose that we should regard the depicted shapes of the geometric rock art of Uganda as part of a metaphoric structure within which sites are conceived as wombs.

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Meaning then, meaning now: surrogate surfaces

I have presented the geometric rock art of Uganda as a product of Pygmy ritual. Whereas geometric art was made in prehistoric times, the rituals that inspired them live on in various forms amongst modern pastoralist and farmer communities other than Pygmies. For the Pygmies, the surfaces may have been used simply to make a distinction between primeval sacred potency and mundane everyday human life (Zuesse 1979: 35). For the Pygmies, the significance of the rock art, its power and potency derive from the meaning encoded in the shapes depicted and the sites selected. These were sites of contact with the spirit world.

Presently, rock art sites are used as ritual sites by present-day inhabitants (see Namono 2008). The rock art sites extend beyond their original purpose, becoming layered contextually and culturally with new levels of meaning. The making of geometric rock art sites has now ceased in Uganda. It is broadly accepted that a function of ritual is to maintain, reproduce and transmit values and structures of society over time. Rituals may also be used to instil new values. For present communities, power of the sites derives not from the past symbolism encoded in the shapes but from the association of the sites with the past, with a spirit world of the ancestors, each group identifying its own ancestors. Alternatively, the shapes depicted may denote alternative meanings and symbolism for the current users. It is probable that the inability to understand the past meaning(s) of the geometric shapes or the reason why they were painted enhances the aura of 'ancestral power' or potency associated with rock art sites.

Although the present inhabitants in and around rock art sites attach new meaning to the sites (Chapter 3), this attachment derives from the new values read into the images. Pastoralist and farmer values attached to the sites fulfil a similar function of engaging with the supernatural. The rock art surfaces remain 'pregnant' with potency' for these different groups. Effectively then, I consider the painted rock surfaces, **surrogate surfaces**. As surrogate surfaces, the rock art sites in Uganda are defined by the values and meanings Pygmy groups, pastoralists and farmers give to them and their surroundings.

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'Surrogate' derives from Latin *surrogatus*, the past participle of *surrogare*, to choose in place of another, substitute. In common usage, surrogacy is a method of assisted reproduction whereby a woman agrees to become pregnant for the purpose of gestating and giving birth to a child for others to raise. 'Surrogate mothers', specifically 'avail their wombs' for gestation. The rationale of surrogacy is the continuity of life. By analogy, rock art surfaces 'adopt' the values modern societies attach to them. Past and present values continue through time. In essence, the rock art surfaces 'give birth' to meanings identifiable with each group of people. I use the term 'surrogate' metaphorically to demonstrate the continuity of **presence.** Presence refers to the idea that although the authors of the rock art and the rituals from which the shapes derive are non-existent in the landscapes where rock art sites are today, the rock surfaces are evidence of a former Pygmy presence in the landscape (see Chippindale & Nash 2004).

Rock art surfaces may retain the values of those who painted onto them. In depicting phallic and womb shapes, the Pygmies were harnessing the potency of the forest. In so doing, the forest ritually assured regeneration, life of a newborn child formed from the fluids of the forest, the supernatural world. Harnessing potency can be equated to harnessing the fertility that present day users of rock art sites seek to obtain from the ancestors, the supernatural world. At Nyero 2, barren women seek to become fertile by touching the surfaces on which the images are painted and leaving monetary tokens for the spirits in anticipated appreciation of success. Although present communities do not paint similar shapes onto the rock surfaces as those painted by the Pygmies, the **function** of the rock surfaces is similar. It is a point of contact with the spirit world. If the barren couple today conceives, it is considered that the power of the ancestors, through the paintings, have granted new life. In present-day Uganda, societies that use the rock art have different needs from those of their ancestors. Yet a central meaning that binds all groups who use these sites, then and now, is fertility and regeneration.

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Chapter Seven

IN RETROSPECT

The Lessons Learnt

It is now time to let the issues considered in previous chapters of this study come together, and allow for some final points. At the heart of this thesis is the proposition that a specifically Pygmy worldview underpins the creation, transmission and transformation of Ugandan geometric rock art. Specifically, I argue that:

1) the pervasive attribution of all rock art in East Africa to 'Bushman-like' hunter-gatherers resulted in flawed interpretations of rock art in Uganda;
2) the former hunter-gatherers of Uganda were probably closest to certain Pygmy groups in their cosmology and traditions than to the 'Bushman-like' hunter-gatherers;
3) the rock art of Uganda derives from a gendered forest worldview; and
4) the rock art of Uganda is an interpretative window to understanding aspects of the geometric rock art of African Pygmy groups.

In constructing these arguments, I integrated recordings of rock art in the field with oral tradition, archival, ethnographic, linguistic, archaeological and paleo-environmental sources to identify past and present patterns in Pygmy thought. In Chapter 1, I concluded that archaeological and genetic evidence point to African Pygmies as being the descendants of the forest hunter-gatherers who must have made the geometric rock art of Uganda. The meaning of this art, presented and analysed in Chapters 2 and 3, was constituted by the intricate relationship that the Pygmies had with the spirit realm that is essentially the forest.

Meaning of the rock art was obtained by drawing on what I have argued are the relevant Pygmy ethnographies bearing on this thesis (Chapter 5). The multi-stranded contextual approach I employed played into wider discourses on interpretation of rock art. Interpreting rock art with the aid of ethnographies is, however, notoriously complicated and some researchers will question the validity of the conclusions I derived

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from the ethnographies I used. However, confidence lies in the similarities in beliefs among the diverse Pygmy groups as a testament to a widespread underlying belief system and the strong articulation of these beliefs with the shapes and juxtapositions I identified in the rock art. As David Lewis-Williams says in a different context, the two fit like hand-in-glove.

In presenting key collective rituals and beliefs and using the frames of reference proposed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, I have shown some of the significant ways in which the forest is central to Pygmy cultural reproduction over time. Central to this understanding is the *molimo* that is not only a source of sustenance and well-being but also a source of identity. This conclusion is supported by the fact that, even though modern Pygmy groups speak the language of their farmer neighbours and practise some of their rituals, the ancient sanctity of *molimo* and *elima* in the forest remain intact.

Any understanding of rock art takes cognisance of its direct and indirect associations as well as the contexts within which it occurs. In the case of the Pygmies, such understanding must be resolved through interpretation of the symbolism of *molimo* in relation to the overarching belief in the forest as gendered. I showed (Chapter 6) that the metaphorical structures and analogical reasoning the Mbuti use to talk about, understand and analyse their experiences are based on the concept of 'joy' and their experience of a forest-gendered relationship. A forest-gendered relationship is one in which the forest is both male and female – mother/father, brother/sister (Turnbull 1965b: 257; 1965c: 252-3; Turnbull 1978a: 164-5).

To explain forest-gendered associations or relationships I return to the model in Chapter 6 (Fig. 72). Some researchers may also question the extent to which this model led me to find what the model predicted I would find. While I acknowledge the structuralist leanings of the model, I believe it usefully summarises the fundamental aspects of Pygmy cosmology that many researchers have recognised amongst many Pygmy groups.

The model can be criticised for masking individual meanings in favour of highlighting societal meanings, but I explained in Chapter 6 why I do not believe that we will be able to read individual meanings. I acknowledge that all things will have individual

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meanings and we may in future understand the role of individuality within Pygmy symbolism. For example, the model portrays Pygmy society as broadly cohesive and unified, masking the fact that some individuals, such as the mother and father of the *elima,* probably have a **deeper** understanding of the symbolism of *elima* than the other members of society do. In addition, in terms of hunting, a killed animal is put into the basket of the wife of the net-owner to be shared out to the camp (Turnbull 1965c: 157). Moreover, whereas meat sharing is good for group cohesion and part of the broader system of exchange and cooperation, the responsibility of sharing rests with the net-owner. The symbolism of sharing for the net owner may be different from those who receive the meat. It is possible then, that there are far more individual relationships than those I have identified in the rock art. However, my model remains appropriate because the social organisation of the Pygmies is concerned with "the society as a whole, rather than with individuals" (Turnbull 1972: 310).

Cautiously, I do not propose this as the only model for understanding Pygmy rock art. Rather, I maintain that in this study, the model arose from the ethnographies, and the rock art articulated remarkably precisely with it. There was the potential for much to conflict with my model, but I did not find this. If the model had fitted with a few shapes, it would not have been a convincing explanation, but because it fitted with all the major shapes I classified, it becomes extremely compelling. I therefore believe this model was appropriate and relevant for interpreting the rock art in this study. I now highlight those key aspects that articulated with the model: a forest-gendered worldview, the transition between the human and the spirit realms and the contextual associations in which they operated.

Nodes of transition and the relativity of gender

The Pygmies recognise the existence of a life-force *pepo* and disembodied spirits, *keti,* both of which derive from the forest. To engage with these mediums, there are two nodes of transition: fire and water. These nodes are operational only when a person can engage constantly with the real and the supernatural. These nodes are activated in the forest and in the camp (according to my model), through coitus, the hunt, *elima* and *molimo* (Fig.106). Semen, menstrual and vaginal fluids are symbolised by fire and water.

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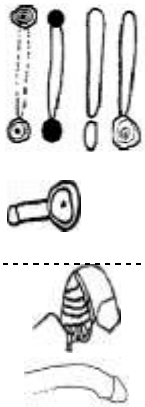
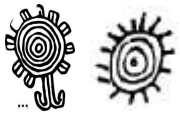
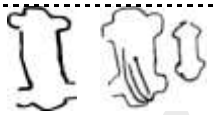
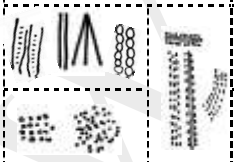
Shape type	Shape Examples	Shape	Subject-matter	Symbolism	Gender	Node	Mediator
1100s		dumbbells (sausage + concentric circle / circle)	penis phalli	virility potency of the forest *pepo*	male	Fire (when inactive, kept in water)	*Molimo*
		sausage					
		phallic					
1004; 1010; 1013-16		concentric circles	vagina womb	crucible of life potency of the forest *pepo*	female	Water Fire	*Elima*
1200s		'U's	vulva				
1000 1040		outline & solid circles	moon				
1001-03; 1011-12; 1033		rayed circles	fire				
2000s		spread-eagled	loin cloths	womb of the forest that encapsulates the agents of potency *pepo*	male	(when active (during sex = fire) they are removed) Water	Coitus Hunt
1320s		grids, rectangles	aprons		female		
1300s		lines	water		female or male		
1400s		dots	semen / fluids				

Figure 106: The relationship between nodes of transition, mediators and the rock art

The relationship between the nodes of transition and the rock art suggest that all symbols are probably polysemic. Referring to San rock art, Lewis-Williams (1981:90) argues that rock art has more than one association for the people who made and used it – the shapes are polysemous. Often symbols may have focused polysemy where the symbolism of the shape derives from its contextual associations. In terms of the geometric rock art of Uganda, some shapes are polysemous.

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The coherency of gendered imagery in the art and the ethnography fits together well (Chapter 6). However, without one gender, the other is impotent or barren. A child is a product of the procreation power or potency of male plus female. A man's fertility is contingent on a woman's fertility and vice versa. The frequent association of male and female imagery is a clear indication of sexual potency in the rock art, and by association, supernatural potency, or what the Mbuti term *pepo*. In ritual, at no time must one gender out-balance the other. At a male ritual for example, a female may not be bound by the same social values as 'normal' females and the same applies for males at a female ritual if this is essential for balance (e.g. *ekokomea* and the tug-of war). Gender relativity is exhibited elsewhere in Pygmy society, such as with parenthood.

The Pygmies do not consider parenthood as being gender specific, because the male-female opposition is held in perpetual tension to such an extent that gender becomes variable, except in the physical anatomical realities of reproduction (Turnbull 1986: 21), "sociological parenthood is much more important than biological parenthood" (Turnbull 1972: 306). In Mbuti kinship it is only at parental level that a distinction is made for male and female in terms of address, "the terms for grandparent, sibling or child do not vary according to sex" (Turnbull 1978a: 164). Only if necessary, will sex differentiation be made when there is need to differentiate a genealogical connection (Turnbull 1965c: 110, 270). An Mbuti child is introduced at a very early stage to variable gender roles when a father formally gives the child its first solid meal:

> There used to be a beautiful ritual in which the mother presented the child to the father in the middle of the camp, where all important statements are made….The father took the child and held it to his breast, and the child would try to suckle, crying "ema, ema," or "mother". The father would shake his head, and say "no father …eba," but like a mother (the Mbuti said), then give the child its first solid food (Turnbull 1983: 41).

A child is nourished not only by its mother but also by the father. The child accepts the father as "a kind of mother" (Turnbull 1978a: 164). Alternatively, this ritual may teach the child that, as the hunter, the father is the meat provider even though men may gather and women participate in the hunt. While the child is suckling from the mother, the meat for the family actually comes from the father. This hunted meat binds and defines a camp or a band.

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The Mbuti appear to live a socially and psychologically genderless life and a non-hierarchical system:

> Much of Mbuti life is lived in a kind of gender limbo, for even the division of labour according to gender is by no means rigid and exclusive at any age level. Obviously, motherhood is the one supreme and absolute exception to gender-specific behaviour, but I rather suspect the Mbuti would say that fatherhood is an exception as well (Turnbull 1986: 21).

One realises that no one holds **all** authority among the Mbuti, even children at age four have a social responsibility and authority over a hunt (Turnbull 1983: 41). Men and women are decision makers. Pygmy tradition is symbolically rich, well structured and dynamic; it is as much a product of a logically ordered symbolic expression as it is of material, ecological, demographic, economic, historical and social forces (Mosko 1987:909).

In terms of my model (Fig. 72), in the rock art, the unification of phallic and womb shapes echoes the unification of male and female in coitus. This is in turn mirrors the unification of male and female aspects of the forest. Coitus merges opposites whose procreative powers are conceived of in fluids – seminal fluid symbolises male aspects and vaginal and menstrual fluids symbolise female aspects. Old people and children do not or cannot procreate and are therefore considered 'sexless' or genderless (Turnbull 1984a: 254).

Pygmy ethnographies indicate that considerable thought is given to holding *molimo* and *elima* ceremonies. In Uganda, surprisingly almost no rock art sites exhibit evidence for habitation or ritual activity. If the rock art was made in the context of ritual, similar thought must have been given to selecting special places for rock art sites. These rituals are part of the organising means by which gender is the social organising principle. Gender symbolism is recognised in *pongo* loincloths and aprons, in the *molimo* fire and baskets, and the *molimo* trumpet, in honey gathering and hunting. In other words, gender synergy is complimentary and gender roles are juxtaposed in a similar context. The 'penis' and 'womb' are inherent to a worldview of regeneration. Therefore, in the rock art, phallic, womb and moon imagery symbolise fecundity, regeneration and potency of the forest, the life-death cycle, and the male and female juxtaposition of procreative powers. The *molimo* ritual "is a dramatic symbolization of Mbuti notions

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about life and death, and the role of men and women in procreation, and their power to create, preserve and destroy life" (Turnbull 1972: 308). Procreation or regeneration is a result of male penetration of the spirit realm in the woman's body. In giving birth, women perpetuate the Mbuti, like the forest.

Just as exaggeration, dance and mime are nodes of mediation with the spirit world, so rock art sites are nodes of *pepo*, of engaging with the forest spirit. Sites are mediating points between the human and the spirit world. Although my discussion of the symbolism of the rock art draws heavily on female potency particularly regarding procreation, this does not necessarily indicate female authorship. Procreation can only occur if there is male *pepo*. Depicting these symbols may be recognition of the *pepo* and therefore an attempt to harness it. In a similar way, the same holds true for women. I have shown that *molimo* does not deal directly with fertility yet *elima* does. Ritual control of fertility is therefore, gendered and since the rock art is linked to the rituals, rock art sites probably functioned in different ways for individuals and for groups, having a more active role within society rather than simply as a passive reflection of male/female synergies. Pygmy ethnographies have shown gender synergies at work in their rituals and everyday lives and the rock art sites underpin this Pygmy philosophy.

Contextual associations

Following from an understanding of the geometric rock art, I consider three contexts that may associate rock art sites with archaeological excavated material. First, archaeological excavations in areas close to the rock art sites, such as Magosi and Lolui islands, revealed material artefacts contextually associated with the rock art sites in other areas (Posnansky & Cole 1963: 105; Posnansky & Nelson 1968: 156-7). For example, excavated material from Nyero 2 revealed the first evidence for rock art – a small bone with engraved concentric circles. Excavations from areas where no rock art has been recorded, such as at Nsongezi and Kansyore islands revealed evidence for painting – red ochre pencils. This evidence indicates a widespread use in Uganda of red ochre and suggests that rock paintings may have been made in Kansyore and Nsongezi, but have not survived.

Although I identify ochre pencils as possible evidence for rock art, I do so cautiously. It is known that aside from ochre pencils being waste products of grinding rather than

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deliberately manufactured implements, (Wadley, Williamson & Lombard 2004; Wadley 2005a: 9), under certain circumstances, ochre has utilitarian value and it is "unwise to assume ritual use from its mere presence at archaeological sites"(Wadley 2006: 74). In some parts of East Africa, such as Engaruka (Ambrose 1998), as well as in central and southern Africa, ochre traces have been found on backed blades, ochre is used for body decoration and burial as well as for tanning and curing animal hides (Wadley 2001a; 2006: 65-66). There is also a "cross-continental use for ochre in adhesive" as hafting mastic (Wadley 2005b: 600; Wadley, Hodgskiss & Grant 2009).

However, use of ochre for such utilitarian purposes may have been **because** of its ritual significance. Although I have no evidence that Pygmies used ochre in any of these ways or for bark cloth decoration, I cannot rule them out. I note that my study area is a 'bark cloth hammering' not a 'hide scraping' one and so hide curing is less important here. In addition, this is a net hunting area and so again, hafting mastic was not as important as it was in southern Africa. Therefore, in terms of common uses of ochre, this leaves body and bark cloth **decoration** and rock art all of which link to my interpretation in Chapter 6. Therefore, I consider the ochre finds significant and supportive of my interpretation, while acknowledging that there are other possible explanations for the appearance of ochre in the ground deposits in Uganda.

Another point for consideration is whether the excavated material suggests gender exclusivity in ritual use of sites. Archaeological excavations at Nyero 2 yielded quartz, while at Lolui, single obsidian with a scraper edge was found as evidence for LSA activity. Microlithic tools are associated with hunters and scrapers are most often used by women for scraping hides. Again, my study area is a 'bark cloth hammering' not a 'hide scraping' one. If geometric rock art sites were used exclusively for women's concerns and rituals, an *elima* site would leave evidence of a central fire and probably very little else. There would be very few or no beads in the excavated material. At Nyero and Lolui main site, for example, where layers of super-positioning of images clearly indicate re-use of the site but where the excavated deposit does not exhibit gender specific activities, there is simply not enough evidence to tell if these sites were used exclusively by men or women. There could be gender exclusivity regarding use of sites, there could not be. What is clear is that the context of painting probably did not require any daily kit other than the ritual kit such as ochre to paint. Similarly, there is

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insufficient evidence to attribute authorship of the rock art either to men or women. The ground deposit evidence does not point either way.

Furthermore, in terms of the relationship between Figure 72 and the context of rock art **sites**, I consider an area around Magosi rock art sites. Opposite the painted overhang there is a rock surface "is potted with natural cisterns one of which is some 10 feet deep, over 40 feet long by 12 feet wide with clear in what is otherwise a relatively dry area" (Posnansky & Cole 1963: 104-5). It is highly probable that the site was chosen due to its proximity to the unique cistern. The juxtaposition of this cistern in the rock with rock art is similar to what is at Lolui islands. On Lolui islands there are grinding hollows, often in very high numbers in flat or gently sloping rocks, in thickets, high-up on large boulders and around rock art sites (Posnansky, *et al.* 2005: 94-5)(Fig. 106).



Grinding hollows on top of large boulder. Dismas Ongwen used for scale (Image: Namono 2006)



A B

A = rock art site surrounded by grinding hollows; B = outlook from the site to the lake (Images: Namono 2006)

Figure 107: Sites on Lolui showing examples of grinding hollows

Variation in depth and smoothness of the grinding hollows suggests evidence of manufacture and use. The grinding hollows were probably used for grinding small

quantities of ochre and plant materials. Some grinding hollows are covered by the lake when the waves are high, and are exposed when the waves are low. This specific human choice of surfaces covered by water during lake fluctuations may suggest ritual intent (but these may also be the nicest cleanest rock surfaces nearest to the water). The cisterns and the grinding hollows may well be evidence for some ritual activity area given water symbolism in Pygmy cosmology. These grinding hollows have a regular pattern of association, and they must play a part in the fertility divination processes I have discussed in Chapter 6. However, only further research, including microanalysis and residue analysis of the hollows can propose how these hollows fitted into the functioning of the rock art sites.

It is difficult to determine when rock art sites were last used; however, the cosmological model I proposed is likely to have ceased functioning following increased external influence on Pygmy groups. This is because, ritual significance may shift as beliefs alter over time and symbols may acquire new or different meanings, although core symbolism is retained. The same is true for Pygmy beliefs. Change is a function of every society. Sometimes change is rapid, but often it is gradual. In 1928, Patrick Putnam set up Camp Putnam or Epulu for guests to the Ituri forest; he operated a clinic and built a school for children. By 1954, Turnbull found the Pygmies experiencing rapid changes resulting from influence of the other agro-pastoral and farmer groups long before the Europeans arrived. Prior to this influence, the Pygmies had interacted with farmers. Undoubtedly, interaction had an impact. For example, although *pongo* were produced as exchange objects for trade with villagers, Meurant and Thompson (1995) note that the two thousand painted *pongo* that reached Europe or America in the 1980s:

> [H]ave certainly not all been created in the forest in honour of one of the festivals cherished by the Pygmies, but executed as part payment to the dispensaries and missions where they leave their sick and exchanged in Bantu villages for oil, manioc, corn, cigarettes and alcohol (Meurant & Thompson 1995: 15).

Colonial influence brought a shift in reverence for the forest and its associated symbolism. It is highly probable that this model ceased to function when the rock art and the related rituals ceased to be used.

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In summation, the principal aim of this work was to use a contextual interpretative approach to understanding the geometric rock art of Uganda. I argue that rather than look at the images in isolated groups of shapes, we must look at their associations framed by Pygmy ethnographies that provide an overall conceptual unity. I point out key groups of shapes: dumbbells, sausage and phallic shapes; circular shapes; and spread-eagled shapes**.** There was a reflexive relationship between my classification and interpretation. The interpretation served to confirm the useful parts of the classification and the need to refine others. Circles, for example, broke down into various separated parts. In addition, I was able to sort out the miscellaneous category (1600s) into other categories as should be the case, as its contents are progressively understood. Some contexts seem to suggest that the 1300s are water and the 1400s are semen, but this would need to be looked at further. I used formal analysis to identify common properties that the depicted shapes have. I strengthened this identification using relational analogies. Relevant ethnographic analogy enabled the association of natural and cultural links within and between the different aspects of the shapes depicted. Understanding the underlying processes from which the rock art is a part helped to place the production of rock art within its wider social context.

Implications and contributions

This study fills a 41-year hiatus in rock art research in Uganda since Chaplin's 1966 (1974) seminal study. It provides the first comprehensive rock art survey and contextual interpretation of rock art in Uganda, making a critical contribution to the understanding of rock art in East Africa. It establishes a foundation upon which future studies on rock art in Uganda can be based. It is a first step and I believe it is a good one, because already data from this study is being sought by the Uganda Museum sites and monuments division for their heritage management database. The data from this work has been integrated within the SARADA database and is accessible to a wide range of researchers. In doing so, it contributes to the body of research on the rock art of Africa. Significantly, it offers theoretical and social dimensions to understand further the geometric rock art of the Pygmies. The study has not been able to chart the original meanings to individual painters but rather the broader society symbolism.

Wits ETD

The previously vibrant scholarly debate on African Pygmies has been in abeyance for a while (Blench 1999:41). In Uganda, a majority of the minority marginalized modern Pygmy population are the Twa and Sua people who live mainly in three districts in southwestern Uganda. Although Kabananukye and Wily (1996) and Frankland (2001) refer to the Twa of Uganda as the Abayanda Twa, in this study I refer to them only as Twa because I reject the derogatory connotations of the term 'abayanda' meaning 'people who steal'(Lewis & Knight 1995). This study revitalises scholarship on these people and on Pygmies in general by demonstrating that the former hunter-gatherers of Uganda were probably closer to certain historically described Pygmy groups in their cosmology and traditions than to southern African San hunter-gatherers. I argue that the geometric rock art is culturally affiliated to African Pygmy groups, thus challenging the pervasive, historical assumption of a ubiquitous San presence across East Africa and the (mis-) attribution of rock art in the region to 'Bushman-like' hunter-gatherers.

This point will be instrumental in the development of archaeology and anthropology in Uganda, significantly contributing knowledge of the prehistory of an under-researched part of East Africa. Furthermore, my study has confirmed Clark's (1958) identification that the geometric rock art of Uganda is part of a broader central African geometric rock art tradition. I have drawn on and moved beyond Smith's 1995 seminal thesis in south-central Africa by providing a new understanding of the rock art. Smith argues that each gender "had its own artistic traditions, but with each, probably, creating pictographs for differing purposes" (Smith 1995:279). He contends that Twa men and women practised a form of rock art for some personal ritual; the red animal tradition (the concerns of *molimo*) is attributed to men and the geometric forms (concerned with fertility and divination) to women, with the two traditions forming a conceptual whole, occuring paired in the landscape (Smith 2005b: 1393).

In this thesis, I have shown that the geometric rock art relates to the concerns of gender - men and women, and is part of a shared central ritual – *molimo*. *Molimo* is premised on the concept of a masculine-feminine forest that engenders the Pygmies; the rock art deals with the relationships between the human and the cosmic realms; and as part of ritual, like dance and mime, rock art provides a visible expression of political, social relations and gender synergies in Pygmy society.

WitsETD

In present-day Uganda, Twa and Sua communities have been forcibly displaced from forest environments by various Ugandan governments. The National Parks of Mgahinga, the Bwindi 'Impenetrable Forest' and Echuya, set up in the 1930s. In 1964, Twa were expelled from the Bwindi Forest Reserve when it was converted into an animal sanctuary and evicted in 1991 when Mgahinga and Echuya were gazetted. The Sua, "the marginalised within the marginalised, the disinherited of the disinherited" (Frankland 1999:67), were forcibly evicted from the Semliki forest when it became a National Park in 1993. Land originally allocated for the relocation of Twa was given to non-Twa farmers who had destroyed the forest through land clearance for cultivation. The Twa and Sua received no compensation (Lewis 2000: 20; Frankland 2001: 242). Twa and Sua are considered to have no rights to land. Their agro-pastoral neighbours accord them an inferior social status and hold radical notions of alterity resulting in conflicts. Twa and Sua are under pressure to subordinate themselves to state policies, to integrate into farming. They lack freedom of mobility in areas of conflict with wildlife management (Baker 2001). Despite legal provision for Twa to use and live within the national parks (Ugandan Wildlife Statute, No. 14, 1996, sections 23-6) they remain excluded from them. Although Twa set up their own organisation UOBDU (United Organisation for Batwa Development in Uganda) in 2000 and the Sua set up a similar one in 2001, no real measures have been taken to enable legal access to the forests (Fig. 108).

In the 1960s to '80s, the Sua gained prominence as a tourist attraction and tourism became their major source of livelihood (Frankland 2001). However, with the political unrest of the 1990s, tourism declined and the Sua were caught up in the resultant violence and were subject to reprisals (Frankland 2001: 242). Today, there is little government concern for the plight of the Pygmies. Efforts by several NGOs and church groups to remedy the situation do not involve real participation by the affected modern Pygmy groups and are therefore not effective. In May 2009 at the first Global Indigenous Conference on Climate Change in Alsaka, Twa representatives presented their plight to the international community in an attempt to put pressure on government and concerned organisations to redress past wrongs and enforce their full human rights as citizens of Uganda (Mwanga, Mukhwana, Zaninka & Kidd 2009:486).

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Offices of the United Organisation for Batwa Development in Uganda (UOBDU)



L-R : Chairman UOBDU John Rwubaka, Council members: Abdul Turyatemba Richard & Ellen Musabyi; member

(All Images: Namono, C. 2006)

Figure 108: Batwa organisation, Kisoro, Uganda

Culturally and spiritually, the Pygmies still affirm the centrality of the forest (Balenger, *et al.* 2005: 27). The socio-political value-systems of these marginalised people are perceived as backward and contemporary Pygmies are struggling with a crisis of identity (Lewis 2000: 8-11). This study provides the opportunity to celebrate Pygmy cultural integrity and identity. A policy of multiculturalism will free Pygmies to express truly, who they are within society and give them a means towards restoring

dignity and human rights. It is ironic that some of the rock art sites presented in this study, like Nyero, are celebrated as Uganda's heritage and are **protected by law** against vandalism while the Pygmies remain a voiceless minority even though their traditions and beliefs, their spiritual encounter with the supernatural world, shout out to us in the geometric rock art of Uganda. This heritage is part of all humanity. I hope that this study will encourage these marginalised people to take pride in their identity and preserve their and our heritage (Lee & Hitchcock 2001: 274).

Further research

My field survey did not locate rock art sites with animal-type imagery similar to those Smith (1995) identified. I have not dealt exhaustively with the animal and human images within the geometric zone described by Smith (1995). A more extended and intensive survey is therefore needed to confirm or question the validity of the pattern I have identified and to evaluate the interpretative model I have used for Uganda in relation to animal-type images. In my study, the animal shape type 4000 appears to belong outside the geometric rock art tradition. More research on the animal art in northern Uganda would be worthwhile. This appears to belong to a Saharan rock art tradition, rather than the red animal tradition, but this remains to be confirmed.

In addition, potential research can consider the challenges and influences exercised by intruding groups of pastoralists, farmers and colonialists on the imagery and symbolism of Pygmy rock art. All groups consciously manipulated the environment and each other, introduced various political, economic and social networks to maintain or extend control over resources. For example, it would be interesting to see whether aspects of Pygmy rock art changed or whether the geometric rock art tradition ended due to challenges from these intrusions. Such acknowledgement could provide a significant dimension to the understanding generated by this study.

Finally, moving from existing fieldwork to early and late twentieth-century ethnographies and then to an understanding of gender relations and the ways in which they are symbolically expressed and they themselves acquire agency, I have argued that the Pygmy worldview integrates natural and human components into a dynamic whole. Rock art is a window into that human-cosmic world.

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WITS ETD

APPENDIX

Sites recorded in 2006 (excludes engravings)

RECORD NUMBER	1
DATE	20-05-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono
SITE NAME	ADACAR I
AREA	Adacar Village
LOCATION	Adacar Parish, Asuret sub-county, Soroti District
ELEVATION	1095 m
ASSOCIATED ARCHAEOLOGY	The site contains no associated archaeological remains
SITE DESCRIPTION	This is a very small boulder with an uneven smooth panel surface. The site is easily accessible. The images and the rock surface at this site are slightly obscured and discoloured by water wash and dust build up. There are a few old mud wasp nests.
ROCK ART DESCRIPTION	There are two rayed circles, a rectangular motif and an outline of a circle. All motifs are in red monochrome pigment.



UNETP

RECORD NUMBER	2
DATE	07-07-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono
SITE NAME	ADAMAI 1
AREA	Adamai Village
LOCATION	Ochulloi Parish, Katine sub-county, Soroti District
MAP SHEET NO.	
ELEVATION	1072 m
ASPECT	South
ASSOCIATED ARCHAEOLOGY	The site contains no associated archaeological remains
SITE DESCRIPTION	According to Lawrance "a search in Achuloi rocks revealed only one rock shelter and no paintings "(Lawrance 1955:90). A re-survey of this area, correctly known as Ochulloi revealed two rock art sites. One, described here, is a small southerly facing granite boulder that sits on top of a large outcrop at the edge of an old quarrying site. The small shelter, with a commanding view of the village plains, is easily accessible, though partially concealed by bushes.
ROCK ART DESCRIPTION	The extremely rough panel surface has traces of claret, red and white finger-painted monochrome motifs. All the red motifs appear to be finger-painted. There are about six rows of orange dots measuring about 1m long in the centre of the panel. The dots appear to have been applied with a brush or a stick. It is difficult to discern whether the variation of pigment is because of several episodes of painting on different occasions or whether the pigment was applied at the same time but has reacted differently to the elements.





WISER

RECORD NUMBER	3
DATE	22-06-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono
SITE NAME	BUNAMBUTYE 1
LOCAL NAME	Wamanga Hill or *Ihabale*
AREA	Bunambutye Village
LOCATION	Bukhalu Parish, Bukhalu sub-county, Sironko District, Eastern region
MAP SHEET NO.	
ELEVATION	1101 m
ASPECT	East
ASSOCIATED ARCHAEOLOGY	The site contains no associated archaeological remains
SITE DESCRIPTION	This site is a small granite eastward facing boulder resting on the edge of large prominent, isolated outcrop that sticks out from a flat landscape. The shelter is easily accessible.
ROCK ART DESCRIPTION	The rock art panel consists of faded scanty red finger-painted marks and two clear petal motifs on the panel.



RECORD NUMBER	4
DATE	16-06-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono
SITE NAME	KACHUMBALA 1
AREA	Kachumbala Village
LOCATION	Kachumbala Parish, Kachumbala sub-county, Bukedea District, Eastern region
MAP SHEET NO.	
ELEVATION	1183 m
ASPECT	South-west
ASSOCIATED ARCHAEOLOGY	The site contains no associated archaeological remains
SITE DESCRIPTION	This site is a small open shelter at the base of a very large granite boulder, one of the many outcrops in the area. The south-westerly facing shelter measures approximately 9.80m x 4m x 2.34m.
ROCK ART DESCRIPTION	The panel surface is rough and flaking. These geometric and indeterminate images are in claret shade, with a few traces of white pigment below the red or between the red pigments.





RECORD NUMBER	5
DATE	26-05-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono
SITE NAME	KALENGO 1
LOCAL NAME	Moru Akileng
AREA	Kalengo Village
LOCATION	Kalengo Parish, Ngora sub-county, Kumi District, Eastern region
MAP SHEET NO.	
ELEVATION	1118 m
ASPECT	North
ASSOCIATED ARCHAEOLOGY	The site contained scattered potsherds with roulette decoration
SITE DESCRIPTION	This is a medium sized granite boulder with two relatively smooth panel surfaces in the rock face. There is evidence of very recent use of the site from potshards on the floor surface. There are several wasps' nests, some of which interfere with the images. The images and the rock surface at this site are slightly obscured and discoloured by water wash and mineral salt build up.
ROCK ART DESCRIPTION	The rock art panel of this north facing shelter has red finger-painted 'sausage-shape', dots and circular floral motifs. The floral images appear to be filled in with white pigment.





Wits ETD

RECORD NUMBER	6
DATE	18-06-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono
SITE NAME	KAPIRI 1
AREA	Kapiri Ateta 1Village
LOCATION	Kapir Parish, Ngora sub-county, Kumi District, Eastern region
MAP SHEET NO.	43/4
ELEVATION	1123 m
ASPECT	South-east
ASSOCIATED ARCHAEOLOGY	The site contained no associated archaeological surface remains. It is possible that there is a burial at the far right end of this site.
SITE DESCRIPTION	This an impressive southeast facing shelter with commanding views of Lake Bisinia, the surrounding village and the plains. Part of the large boulder rests on several small boulders forming a small enclosure. There are two painted panels. At this site, there is evidence of fires below panels. The ash from the fire and the dust from path settle on the imagery. Evidence of surface mineral salt deposits, rain-wash water and flaking threaten the survival of the paintings site.
ROCK ART DESCRIPTION	One panel has two rayed circles, six concentric circles, and concentric circles with lines running through as well as several other noncircular motifs that are difficult to discern. All these motifs are in red monochrome pigment and are executed in a manner similar to those found at other sites such as Nyero and Lolui. Below this panel is another long smooth panel with finger-painted images in red and white very faded monochrome pigment.



VIS BD

RECORD NUMBER	7
DATE	18-06-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono
SITE NAME	KAPIRI 2
AREA	Kapiri Ateta 1 Village
LOCATION	Kapir Parish, Ngora sub-county, Kumi District, Eastern region
MAP SHEET NO.	43/4
ELEVATION	1101 m
ASPECT	North
ASSOCIATED ARCHAEOLOGY	The site contained no associated archaeological surface remains.
SITE DESCRIPTION	This site comprises a small boulder with an angle of approximately 30^0 on a large granite boulder. Access to the site is relatively steep climb. The shelter has heavily flaking panels
ROCK ART DESCRIPTION	At this site there are traces of a few geometric shapes in red monochrome pigment, fragments of a concentric circle with external radiating lines in a reddish orange monochrome pigment and a claret image at the lower end of the panel.



UNDER ETD

RECORD NUMBER	8
DATE	26-06-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono
SITE NAME	KERIA 1
AREA	Keria Village
LOCATION	Agule Parish, Agule sub-county, Pallisa District, Eastern region
MAP SHEET NO.	53/1
ELEVATION	1090 m
ASPECT	South-east
ASSOCIATED ARCHAEOLOGY	The site contained no associated archaeological surface remains.
SITE DESCRIPTION	This south-east facing shelter is at the base of a large granite boulder. The panel is extremely rough, pouched surface, covered in a lot of soot resulting from fires at this shelter.
ROCK ART DESCRIPTION	The panel has traces of red pigment of an image that is difficult to discern.



RECORD NUMBER	9
DATE	15-06-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	KAKORO 5
AREA	Kakoro Village
LOCATION	Kakoro Parish, Oteu sub-county, Kumi District, Eastern region
MAP SHEET NO.	
ELEVATION	1171m
ASPECT	South-west
ASSOCIATED ARCHAEOLOGY	The site contained surface scatter of decorated and undecorated pottery.
ROCK ART DESCRIPTION	This is a 4m wide, 2,5m deep and 167m large boulder that rests on a granite outcrop. The surface is rough and partly covered in salt wash. The images are faint in red pigment. They comprise a U shape with internal vertical lines.



RECORD NUMBER	10
DATE	15-06-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	KAKORO 6
AREA	Kakoro Village
LOCATION	Kakoro Parish, Oteu sub-county, Kumi District, Eastern region
MAP SHEET NO.	
ELEVATION	1165m
ASPECT	North
ASSOCIATED ARCHAEOLOGY	No associated archaeology.
SITE DESCRIPTION	A small shelter with faded finger painted images in red pigment
ROCK ART DESCRIPTION	Faded large concentric circle



RECORD NUMBER	11
DATE	15-06-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	KAKORO 7
AREA	Kakoro Village
LOCATION	Kakoro Parish, Oteu sub-county, Kumi District, Eastern region
MAP SHEET NO.	
ELEVATION	1142m
ASPECT	South West
ASSOCIATED ARCHAEOLOGY	No associated archaeology.
SITE DESCRIPTION	A small shelter with faded finger painted images in red pigment
ROCK ART DESCRIPTION	Small filled in circles, concentric circles and concentric circles with external radiating lines





RECORD NUMBER	12
DATE	11-05-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	KOBWIN 1
AREA	Kobwin Village
LOCATION	Kobwin Parish, Kobwin sub-county, Kumi District, Eastern region
ELEVATION	
ASPECT	
ASSOCIATED ARCHAEOLOGY	The site contained no associated archaeological surface remains.
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	This small boulder overlooking the lake is north of Keria 1. It has a very small panel surface, in the wash area and meets the direct rays of the midday sun. Below the panel is a small, narrow, deep opening.
ROCK ART DESCRIPTION	On the panel is a single finger-painted, geometric comb-like image in red and white monochrome pigment.



RECORD NUMBER	13
DATE	18-06-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	KOMOLO
SITE NUMBER	1
LOCATION	Komolo Village, Konunga Parish, Kachumbala Sub-county, Bukedea District
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	This is an easily accessible, small, open, north-east facing shelter at the base of a very large granite boulder. The site is approximately 6m x 4m x 2.38m. The surface of the shelter is rough, with the panel surface covered in soot and dust. The finger-painted motifs are in the blackened wash area of the shelter. The subject matter is a partial geometric pattern in dirty white pigment.



RECORD NUMBER	14
DATE	18-06-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	KOMOLO
SITE NUMBER	2
LOCATION	Komolo Village, Konunga Parish, Kachumbala Sub-county, Bukedea District
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	This is an open north-west facing site at the extreme end of the same boulder as Komolo I. The panel surface is very rough and exposed to direct sunshine and rain. These very faded paintings comprise one curved line and two incomplete loop shape motifs that appear to have been finger-painted in red pigment.

Unable to photograph due to bad weather

RECORD NUMBER	15
DATE	26-05-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	KOMUGE
SITE NUMBER	1
LOCATION	Komuge Village, Komuge Parish, Kachumbala sub-county, Bukedea District
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	At the bottom of a small boulder that sits on a rock base is a shelter with a relatively smooth panel. The panel has images in white finger-painted incomplete geometric shapes. Sections of the panel are obscured by soot, and either touching or rubbing.



Wits ETD

RECORD NUMBER	16
DATE	26-05-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	KOMUGE
SITE NUMBER	2
LOCATION	Komuge Village, Komuge Parish, Kachumbala sub-county, Bukedea District
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	This is a large, spectacular, northward facing shelter. It consists of two large boulders, one resting on to the other, to form a large enclave. The base of the panel rests on the edge a heavily patinated rock. The panel has several finger-painted geometric shapes in shades of red, white and orange monochrome pigment, congruent with images found at other sites in the region. There is a large dominant triangular shaped motif in thick pasty off-white pigment, slightly obscured at one end of the base by super-positioning of other motifs in similar pigment.



RECORD NUMBER	17
DATE	26-05-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	KOMUGE
SITE NUMBER	3
LOCATION	Komuge Village, Komuge Parish, Kachumbala sub-county, Bukedea District
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	This site is a small shelter with a partial finger-painted-white geometric image consisting one vertical line with three horizontal lines cutting across at different points.

Unable to photograph due to bad weather

RECORD NUMBER	18
DATE	17-06-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	KONGOIDE
SITE NUMBER	1
LOCATION	Kongoide Village, Konunga Parish, Konunga sub-county, Bukedea District
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	One of several massive boulders at the base of a small hill, this northwest facing shelter has traces of red finger-painted geometric shapes difficult to discern.

Unable to photograph due to bad weather

wits ETD

RECORD NUMBER	19
DATE	24-06-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	KONGUNGA
SITE NUMBER	1
LOCATION	Kongunga village, Konunga Parish, Konunga sub-county, Bukedea District
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	Kongunga hill has several granite boulders. The rock art at this site is in a south-south-west facing shelter with an extremely rough, heavily exfoliating panel surface on which are very faded, red and white, finger-painted, circular images.



RECORD NUMBER	20
DATE	24-06-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	LOLWE
SITE NUMBER	4
LOCATION	Lolwe island, Lolwe Parish, Sigulu Sub-county, Bugiri District
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	Small shelter surrounded by grinding hollows. The images are red finger-painted grids.



RECORD NUMBER	21
DATE	24-06-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	LOLWE
SITE NUMBER	5
LOCATION	Lolwe island, Lolwe Parish, Sigulu Sub-county, Bugiri District
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	Finger-painted circular shape in red pigment



RECORD NUMBER	22
DATE	24-06-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	LOLWE
SITE NUMBER	7
LOCATION	Lolwe island, Lolwe Parish, Sigulu Sub-county, Bugiri District
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	Finger-painted small circle with external radiating lines in red pigment



RECORD NUMBER	23
DATE	02-07-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	MORUNGATUNG-BI
SITE NUMBER	1
VILLAGE	Morungatung-BI
PARISH	Abela
SUB-COUNTY	Katakwi
DISTRICT	Katakwi
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	Morungatung, *'village in the rock'*, is a large granite boulder with a wide shelter overlooking the village plains. Very easily accessible and used as a cattle kraal the floor of the shelter is covered in animal dung. Traces of pigment in the lower areas of the panel suggest that the bulk of the motifs may have been lost to rubbing animals and humans. The images are difficult to decipher but there are traces of red and white monochrome image fragments at several points on the panel surface.



RECORD NUMBER	24
DATE	03-07-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	MORUNGATUNG-BI
SITE NUMBER	2
VILLAGE	Morungatung-BI
PARISH	Abela
SUB-COUNTY	Katakwi
DISTRICT	Katakwi
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	A large granite boulder resting on another large rocky slab that forms the floor forms this shelter. The shelter overlooks an open area surrounded on one side by a massive granite hill and on the other by the village. On one side of the panel there are finger-painted claret images that comprise a concentric circle with a diagonal line running, dotted and straight lines and 'ladder-shapes'. There are other gridiron red and white images.

EP





RECORD NUMBER	25
DATE	11-05-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	MUKONGORO-EKOKI
SITE NUMBER	1
VILLAGE	Mukongoro-Ekoki
PARISH	Mukongoro
SUB-COUNTY	Mukongoro
DISTRICT	Kumi
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	Mukongoro-Ekoki 1 is a south facing site comprising a red finger-painted image similar to what has been described as 'canoes' at Nyero 2. The interior of the image appears to have been filled with white pigment. There are about five finger-painted concentric circles in red monochrome pigment. Lines at alternating points along the circle join the inner circles together.





WFD

RECORD NUMBER	26
DATE	12-05-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	MUKONGORO-EKOKI
SITE NUMBER	2
VILLAGE	Mukongoro-Ekoki
PARISH	Mukongoro
SUB-COUNTY	Mukongoro
DISTRICT	Kumi
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	This site is a small granite boulder with a large, rough, lichen covered panel surface with one, red, finger-painted concentric circle. The site is very near the village.



RECORD NUMBER	27
DATE	11-05-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	MUKONGORO-EKOKI
SITE NUMBER	3
VILLAGE	Mukongoro-Ekoki
PARISH	Mukongoro
SUB-COUNTY	Mukongoro
DISTRICT	Kumi

IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION

This is a very large granite boulder. The rock art panels are at two positions. The first group of paintings is on the boulder wall along the path down to the cave area of the shelter. The red motifs comprise one very large and one small 'stretched-hide' motif, an oval shape motif with thin red lines running from top to bottom. Around this oval shape are thick dots that are joined by a thick line running around the oval shape. Theses motifs could probably have been painted with a stick and with the finger. Further down the path, almost at the base of the shelter, is a cave. It measures about 8.10m wide. At the farthest, end of the shelter, between the opening of the cave and a granite slab boulder on the ground, the shelter forms a roof upon which are white finger-painted monochrome motifs. These motifs are dots, zoomorphic designs, anthropomorphic images and other indeterminate forms. These motifs are slightly covered in soot and dust.





RECORD NUMBER	28
DATE	13-05-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	MUKONGORO-EKOKI
SITE NUMBER	4
VILLAGE	Mukongoro-Ekoki
PARISH	Mukongoro
SUB-COUNTY	Mukongoro
DISTRICT	Kumi
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	This site comprises two large granite boulders, one resting at an angle on top of the other. They are situated between a primary school and the village fields. The panel is in the wash area of the shelter. The motifs, which cover about 1m x 80cm of the panel surface, include two lozenge shapes and a central floral shape. Both shapes are finger painted in red monochrome Pigment. The central shape has fine line outer petal extensions in faded white monochrome. There are other traces of pigment in red and faded white monochrome around this central motif.



RECORD NUMBER	29
DATE	24-05-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	NYAMONGO
SITE NUMBER	1
VILLAGE	Nyamongo
PARISH	Ngora
SUB-COUNTY	Ngora
DISTRICT	Kumi
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	This is a large granite boulder on top of another forming the shelter floor. Images at this site are four very faded, clustered circular shapes, a circle with external radiating lines and an unclear geometric situated on the lip of the shelter, best seen by lying on one's back. All the images are finger-painted in red monochrome.



UNDER

RECORD NUMBER	30
DATE	24-05-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	NYAMONGO
SITE NUMBER	2
VILLAGE	Nyamongo
PARISH	Ngora
SUB-COUNTY	Ngora
DISTRICT	Kumi
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	This site is locally known as *Kolupe* 'place of clay', the images in this panel are all on a very rough surface and consist of a big floral motif with thin red lines running down which join another circular shape, four white diagonal lines, about images with eight white vertical lines with a single horizontal dissecting the row. There are traces of red pigment at one end of the panel.





RECORD NUMBER	31
DATE	24-05-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	NYAMONGO
SITE NUMBER	3
VILLAGE	Nyamongo
PARISH	Ngora
SUB-COUNTY	Ngora
DISTRICT	Kumi
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	This is a large boulder with a small shelter and a relatively rough panel that consists of two finger-painted, geometric motifs and a small concentric circle about 20 cm in diameter. All the images are very faded and in red pigment.



RECORD NUMBER	32
DATE	26-05-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	NYAMONGO
SITE NUMBER	4
VILLAGE	Nyamongo
PARISH	Ngora
SUB-COUNTY	Ngora
DISTRICT	Kumi
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	This site comprises one large boulder next to a small boulder that forms a small cave area. The roof of the shelter relatively low, about 1.6m high and the floor is about 4m wide. The distance from the drip line to the panel is about 2m. On this panel all the motifs finger-painted in white pigment and comprise a dotted conical image, with three dotted lines dissecting it. There are other unclear lines and dots.



RECORD NUMBER	33
DATE	27-05-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	NYERO
SITE NUMBER	4
VILLAGE	Kodike / Asirim
PARISH	Nyero
SUB-COUNTY	Nyero
DISTRICT	Kumi
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	This area is also locally known as *Moru Ikara*. This is a small shelter with a few traces of red finger-painted concentric circles, two conical shapes and lines.



RECORD NUMBER	34
DATE	27-05-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	NYERO
SITE NUMBER	5
VILLAGE	Kodike / Asirim
PARISH	Nyero
SUB-COUNTY	Nyero
DISTRICT	Kumi
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	This is a small boulder with a slight ledge, overlooking the village and the nearby primary school. The panel surface is relatively smooth. The red, geometric motif, a combination of circular and linear shapes appears to have been finger and brush painted. This image is unique and difficult to discern since sections of it have been lost in the wash.



UNEDITED

RECORD NUMBER	35
DATE	27-05-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	NYERO
SITE NUMBER	6
VILLAGE	Kodike / Asirim
PARISH	Nyero
SUB-COUNTY	Nyero
DISTRICT	Kumi
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	This is an open site where the panel is directly exposed to rain and morning sun. It is relatively high with a commanding view of the cultivated plains. The panel surface is rough, has lichen and it is exfoliating. To the left of this panel are traces of pigment, two oval outlined small circles and a slanting I-shape. The central motif is an outlined cross motif with a small outlined circle below it. All motifs are finger painted in red monochrome pigment.



VETTED

RECORD NUMBER	36
DATE	14-05-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	OKOBOI
SITE NUMBER	1
VILLAGE	Ngora
PARISH	Ngora
SUB-COUNTY	Ngora
DISTRICT	Kumi
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	This is an easily accessible south-westerly facing rock boulder about 8m x 7m x 2m with a small overhang. It overlooks the mission compound. Mineral accretions and wasps threaten the panel. Most of the motifs are difficult to discern, but those that can be, comprise a faded red semi circle with two half sausage shapes in it, a rayed circle and an orange rayed circle. All motifs are monochromatic and appear to have been finger-painted.



RECORD NUMBER	37
DATE	26-05-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	ONONGO
SITE NUMBER	1
VILLAGE	Onongo
PARISH	Ojom
SUB-COUNTY	Katine
DISTRICT	Soroti

IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION

This site is at the base of a large granite outcrop that forms a relatively shallow shelter with a south-westerly outlook. It is located close to the village fields. The panel surface is relatively smooth. This 16m long shelter has only one animal motif in red monochrome pigment. The animal has a belly curved inwards, two straight protrusions from the head, and a slight bulge on the back with front and hind legs rounding off slightly below the belly curve.



RECORD NUMBER	38
DATE	17-05-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	OTATAI
SITE NUMBER	1
VILLAGE	Otatai
PARISH	Otatai
SUB-COUNTY	Asuret
DISTRICT	Soroti
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	This site is an eastward facing boulder with a small and a smooth panel surface on which is a red finger-painted, partial rayed circle and a few gridiron shapes. There are traces of white pigment as well, but most of the images are have faded or flaked off since the panel show evidence of flaking.



RECORD NUMBER	39
DATE	17-05-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	OTATAI
SITE NUMBER	2
VILLAGE	Otatai
PARISH	Otatai
SUB-COUNTY	Asuret
DISTRICT	Soroti
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	This site is a small open shelter on a small granite outcrop, overlooking Otatai I and situated in the cultivated fields of the village. It is a southwest facing shelter, with a heavily flaking panel surface on which are traces of red pigment and a two small, red, concentric circles.



RECORD NUMBER	40
DATE	26-05-06
RECORDER	Catherine Namono, Dismas Ongwen, AlexTamale
SITE NAME	SERE
SITE NUMBER	1
VILLAGE	Sere
PARISH	Nagongera
SUB-COUNTY	Nagongera
DISTRICT	Tororo
IMAGE & SITE DESCRIPTION	This site is locally known as *Nyakiriga* Shrine. The site is a large granite boulder with a west facing shelter with a shallow overhang. The surface of the panel is relatively smooth and slightly patinated at the ends. The very faded outlined images are in a distinct red finger painted line. Some of the images are obscured by lichen. Nyakiriga shrine is protected by a traditional custodian who narrated how this location came to be a shrine.

