

STONE AGE AFRICA

AN OUTLINE OF PREHISTORY
IN AFRICA

BY

L. S. B. LEAKEY

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*Each of the Chapters formed the
subject-matter of one of the ten
MUNRO LECTURES delivered in
Edinburgh, February 1936*

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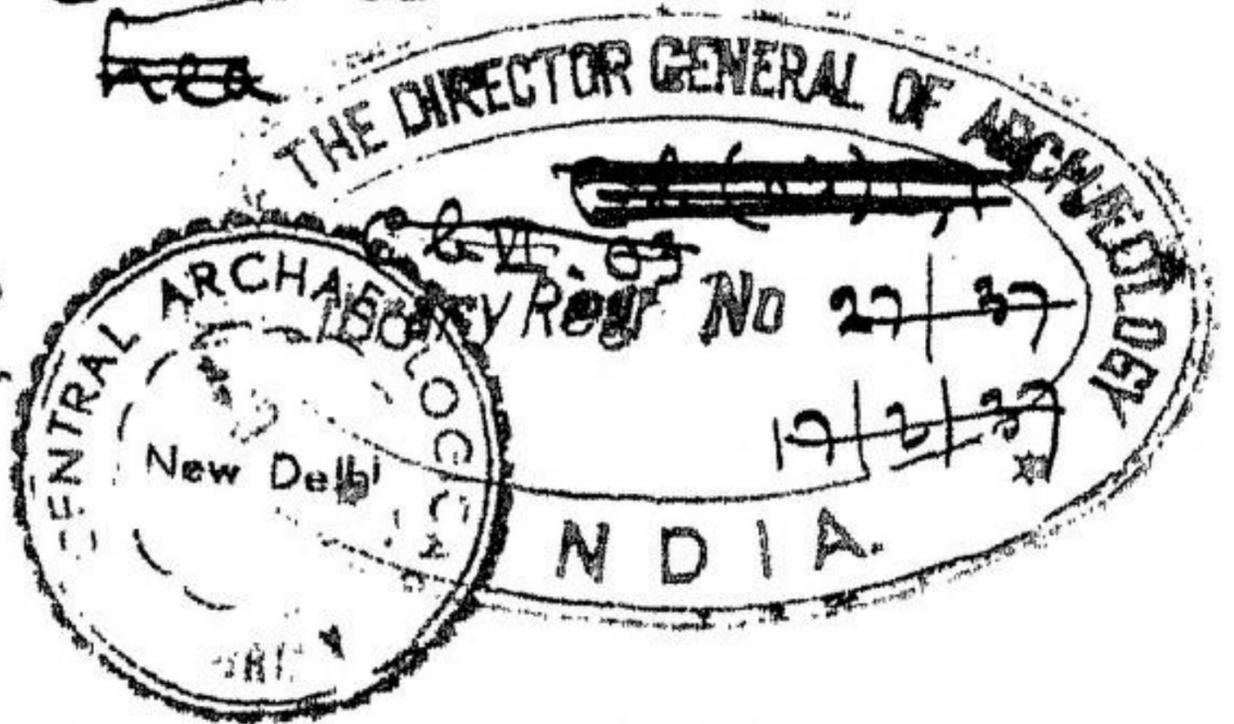
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CHAPTER VIII

STONE AGE ART IN AFRICA

FOR many years cave paintings and rock engravings, which are found in many parts of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, had attracted the attention of both travellers and scientists, but there was very little evidence which could be used to date any of this art. It was well known that when the European first arrived in South Africa the Bushmen were still living a Stone Age life, using stone implements (probably of Wilton and Smithfield type), and it was also known that these Bushmen had been in the habit of painting upon the walls of the caves and rock shelters which they inhabited. In consequence it had become customary in South Africa to describe all these rock paintings as 'Bushman paintings' and to ascribe them all to a very late date.

In 1928 Mr. Burkitt published an account of his brief survey of the Stone Age in South Africa under the title of *South Africa's Past in Stone and Paint*, and in this book he showed for the first time that the cave paintings and engravings of South Africa were quite obviously not all of the same age, and he suggested that probably some of the art was of considerable antiquity. Burkitt pointed out that there were a number of quite distinct styles of painting to be found in Southern Rhodesia, and that in addition to the stylistic differences it was very noticeable that the different styles were, for the most part, carried out in different colouring matter. After critically examining a number of sites and studying the cases of superposition which were found, Burkitt arrived at the following conclusion concerning the art in Southern Rhodesia. 'This makes altogether five age periods that can with safety be

determined, but it is perhaps simpler to think in terms of three groups; an early pre-dark-claret one, a middle one composed only of the dark-claret series, and a later one including the earthy yellow and white series and apparently leading up to and consummated in the polychrome series.'

In 1928, after the South African meeting of the British Association, Professor Breuil visited Southern Rhodesia and examined the paintings at a number of sites. He considers that the sequence given by Burkitt is incomplete. The oldest paintings of all are, according to him, a black series; next comes a series usually in white, after which are the yellows and reds of Burkitt's pre-dark-claret series. The suggestion that there is a black series older than all the other paintings in Southern Rhodesia was confirmed by a recent examination by Miss M. Nicol, who noted a similar sequence to that given by Professor Breuil.

At a site called Makumbi and elsewhere, Burkitt found that a yellow series of paintings and a bright red one were both earlier than the dark claret series, from the point of view of superpositions, but the relationship of the bright red and the yellow series to each other was not clear. At Bambata the yellow series is always under the bright red series, showing that it was apparently the older.

In 1929, a year after Burkitt had worked out this sequence of styles and colours in Southern Rhodesia, Armstrong carried out his detailed excavation at Bambata cave, and the result of his work, so far as it bears upon the question of the art, may be summarized in his own words, as follows:¹

'In the middle and upper zones numerous specimens of raw colouring material was found, consisting of balls and fragments of yellow ochre, and pencils, fragments and balls

¹ See *J.R.A.I.*, vol. lxi, 1933, pp. 251 et seq.

of red and brown haematites and ochres. The pencils were pear-shaped or triangular in shape and invariably showed definite striae of the pointed ends and frequently upon their surfaces and edges also, obviously produced by rubbing on a gritty surface. Several of the broken fragments of ochre bear similar marks, but the balls of yellow ochre and most of the specimens of red ochre, being softer, have not always retained these striae although their shape is evidently artificial and upon some specimens there are flat surfaces which appear to have resulted from use. . . . A study of the technique of the wall painting shows that it was customary to draw the animals and figures first in outline, generally with a fairly bold line and that subsequently the body was filled in with colour. It is clear that the process of filling in was generally done by scouring the rock with the appropriate colour in the manner that a child uses crayons . . . therefore, strictly speaking, these are pastel drawings rather than paintings. The indications of use displayed are exactly such as would result from these processes and I have no doubt that in them we have some of the actual tools used in producing the paintings. This being so they provide an important link between the paintings and the artefacts which has hitherto been entirely lacking.

'Colouring material was distributed consistently in each layer of the Upper Bambata zone and down to the centre of the middle zone: the lower pieces . . . were at five feet and consisted of yellow balls of ochre. . . . Red ochre was not found lower than 3 ft. 6 inches, and the brown and red haematites were absent after the 2 ft. 6 inch level, though frequent between 6 inches and 2 ft. 6 inches.

'It will be observed that the colouring materials are in a stratified succession of yellow (lowest) red and brown and red, and it is significant that this succession is precisely that of the order of superposition of the wall paintings. The oldest paintings which are now almost entirely faded away were executed in yellow ochre and for a long period this colour appears to have been that in sole use. . . .

'In view of this close agreement between stratification of

colouring material and the order of the superposition of the paintings, a correlation between the two seems to be reasonably justified and the paintings, except for the latest series, can safely be assigned to Middle and Upper Bambata times.'

I have quoted this report of Armstrong's at length because of its very great importance. Here we have positive evidence that the men who were responsible for the earliest paintings at Bambata cave (and presumably also at the other caves where the earliest series occurs) were the makers of the Middle and later stages of culture described by Armstrong as the Bambata culture. We have already seen that while the Lower Bambata compares more with the Proto-Stillbay of East Africa, the Middle and Upper stages are the Rhodesian equivalent of the East and South African branches of the Stillbay culture.

At present we have, unfortunately, very little other evidence upon which we can rely for associating the Stillbay culture with the earliest South African art, but at the same time it is an important fact that the areas where *early* paintings occur are chiefly areas where the so-called Middle Stone Age group of cultures are also found.

Another important fact in connexion with the evidence from Bambata is that the only human skull which as yet can be almost certainly associated with the Stillbay culture is the Fishhoek skull, from Peers cave in South Africa. This skull, which has been reported upon by Sir Arthur Keith, represents an ancestor of the later day Bushmen of South Africa. We know that these later Bushmen had many of them considerable artistic ability, and it thus is possible that most of the art of South Africa and Rhodesia is attributable to the Bushman race, although at different periods of time. There is no doubt at all that, although some of the art is early, other examples are of recent origin, for some of the scenes depict domestic animals, such as

oxen, and others show what appear to be Europeans wearing hats.

A number of important works illustrating the cave paintings of South Africa and Rhodesia have been published and those who wish to get a clear idea of the nature of this art cannot do better than consult such works as Miss Tongue's *Bushman Paintings*, Mr. Burkitt's book which has already been mentioned,¹ and the notes by Professor Breuil published after his visit in 1929.

Recently, too, Professor Leo Frobenius and a party of artists have made an extensive study of South African art and some of this has been illustrated in *Cahiers d'Art*.²

✓ In the Union of South Africa a very great deal of the art is undoubtedly late in time, and the very beautiful polychrome paintings which are so common are almost certainly to be attributed to the people who made the later stages of the Wilton culture; in other words, they are probably the work of the immediate ancestors of the Bushmen who were in the country at the time of the coming of the white men.

✓ In his examination of the South African paintings Professor Breuil came to the conclusion that there are 'at least 16 pictorial series'. The first eight of these are the early and true Stone Age ones, for, but from the ninth onwards, the paintings show cattle and also Bantu natives and Europeans. This does not mean, however, that they were not the work of Bushmen who were still living a more or less Stone Age life. Only a few of the styles found in Southern Rhodesia reoccur, and the earliest black ones are missing. The eighth series, which is the last truly

¹ *Bushmen Paintings*, by Helen Tongue, Oxford University Press, 1909; *South Africa's Past in Stone and Paint*, by M. C. Burkitt, Cambridge University Press, 1928.

² *Cahiers d'Art*, Paris, 1931.

Stone Age one from Breuil's point of view, is that characterized by the best polychrome paintings.

In a good many cases these polychrome paintings of the Union are seen to overlies semi-obliterated claret coloured paintings, suggesting that an older claret series comparable to the claret series of Southern Rhodesia is present. Even in the polychrome series it is possible to trace several distinct stages, and the later stages show a marked falling off in artistic merit in most cases, thus suggesting that degeneration had set in.

According to Mr. Burkitt a painted scene near Molteno, in which white men with wide-brimmed hats are figured, belongs to this late degenerate period, suggesting that by the time the white men came to South Africa the art of the Bushmen was already much degenerated. Even if this be true, the fact remains that when Europeans first came to South Africa the Bushmen, who were still really a Stone Age people surviving into modern times, were still practising cave art, and it is a great pity that in those early days of colonization no one took the trouble to find out and record either the methods employed in making these paintings or the reasons why the painting was done at all.

The latter question is one on which there is much controversy. Some people hold that all cave art was of a magical and semi-religious nature, and there is a good deal of evidence to show that some of the art certainly had a magical and religious significance.

It is probable that scenes which show male and female animals in pairs had something to do with fertility rites. On the other hand, many scenes seem to be much more purely pictorial, and probably the truth is that art was practised both for art's sake and also sometimes for magical purposes.

Human beings are very commonly figured in the South

African and Rhodesian paintings, and usually they are far less naturalistically drawn than are the animals in the same style. At the same time the artists were often at pains to emphasize—almost to the point of caricature—such characteristics as *steotopyga*. ✓

In certain regions of South Africa paintings are replaced by engravings and, in the words of Burkitt, the 'distribution coincides more or less with an area rich in dolerite, the rock upon which most of the engravings are usually made'. ✓ Other rocks are sometimes found to have been engraved as well, and in Southern Rhodesia a few examples of engravings on granite have been found.

Miss M. Nicol, who recently spent some time examining some of the rock-shelters with paintings in Southern Rhodesia, tells me that at one shelter in the Umvukwes district, where there were many paintings of the yellow and red series, there are also some engravings which include a zebra and several other animals. Unfortunately the engravings and paintings were upon different parts of the rock surface, so that there was no way of determining their relative ages.

In the engravings of South Africa a number of distinct styles have been noted, and Burkitt divides the engravings into four groups of different ages. In the oldest group he places engravings which show 'a fine incised outline' while the bodies of the animals are 'filled in with fine lines more or less parallel to this outline'.

In the second group the figures of the animals are 'made by a pocking technique without any definite outline; sometimes there is merely an outline formed by a more or less wide band of coarse pockings; sometimes the whole of the body of the animal, sometimes the head and neck only, are covered with pock-marks'.

In both of these series the surface of the rock upon

which the engravings have been made often shows that it has weathered very considerably since the artists were at work, thus suggesting that they are far from being very recent. Because of this weathering, too, the figures of these two series are often comparatively hard to see.

At the very well-known site called Afvallingskop near Koffiefontein in the Orange Free State, Miss Nicol discovered last year a particularly interesting figure (belonging to the second series) which had apparently been overlooked by previous workers as it does not seem to have been recorded. This remarkable figure is reproduced in this chapter for the first time. It represents a man wearing a pair of antelope horns on his head and with a long tail like a lion's. Such human figures in 'fancy dress', although by no means unknown, are rare in Stone Age art. One of the classic examples is the 'masked man' or 'sorcerer' from Trois Frères in the South of France, and there are also two or three paintings of masked men among the published material from South Africa.

In her beautifully illustrated work on *The Rock engraving of Griqualand West and Bechuanaland, South Africa*, Miss M. Wilman shows one masked man with the comment, 'Man, masked, with a tail, a very unusual representation'.

Both engraved, the masked man found by Miss Nicol and that published by Miss Wilman, are noticeable for having a line cutting across the penis, the significance of which is not at all clear.

Similar lines cutting across the penis are to be found in some of the painted representations of men both in Southern Rhodesia and the Union, suggesting that some definite significance must have been attached to this sign, and also suggesting that some of the paintings and en-

gravings were the work of the same race, or at least people with a similar custom.

Describing the third series of engravings, Burkitt says that it is

'the most important and most frequently seen of all, and judging from the fact that the patina (or weathering of the engraved surfaces) is sometimes fairly deep and sometimes very slight, it must have lasted through a long period of time. . . . Engravings of this series show a clear outline, the body of the animal being, as it were, deeply rubbed all over. That this "rubbing" was done with a fine punch making a minute pocking all over the surface seems to me to be proved by the fact that definite pock-marks can occasionally be made out.'

The final series of engravings noted by Burkitt is not of importance to us as they are made with a metal knife and do not belong to the Stone Age at all.

In addition to the four series noted by Burkitt and summarized above, we may add a fifth, which in style of drawing as well as in technique is quite distinct. The figures of this series are very faint indeed, and apparently very old; they underlie figures belonging to series one and two and are certainly older. The animals are represented by a simple incised outline only. It might be argued that these were unfinished examples of Burkitt's first series, but this idea is negatived by the fact that the artistic style is quite distinct and much more naturalistic. Professor Breuil places these in a group by themselves and regards them as the oldest, this view being confirmed by further discoveries made by Miss Nicol.

One of the most striking differences between the Stone Age art of South Africa and of Europe is the fact that in the latter there are very many examples of beautiful engravings upon small stones, and upon rough pieces of bone and antler, as well as upon artefacts made of bone and



FIG. 21. Incised outline of an eland at Afvallingskop, Koffiefontein, Orange Free State, representing style 1 of the South African engravings. Reduced to $\frac{1}{2}$ (approx.)

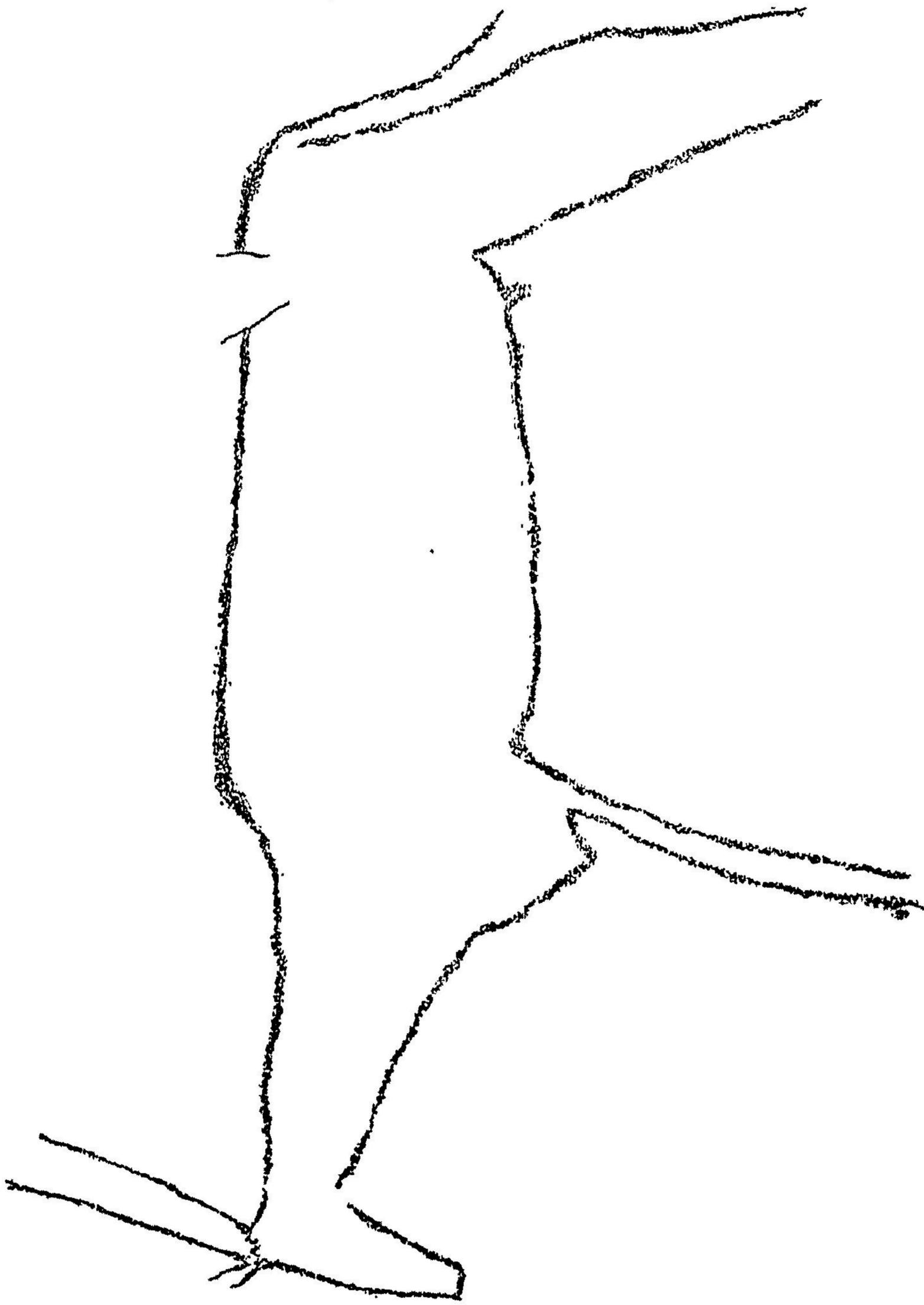


FIG. 22. An eland in which the outline is 'pocked' instead of incised, representing either an early phase of style 3 or an unfinished example. (Equals Burkitt's style 2). From Afvallingskop. Reduced to $\frac{1}{3}$ (approx.)

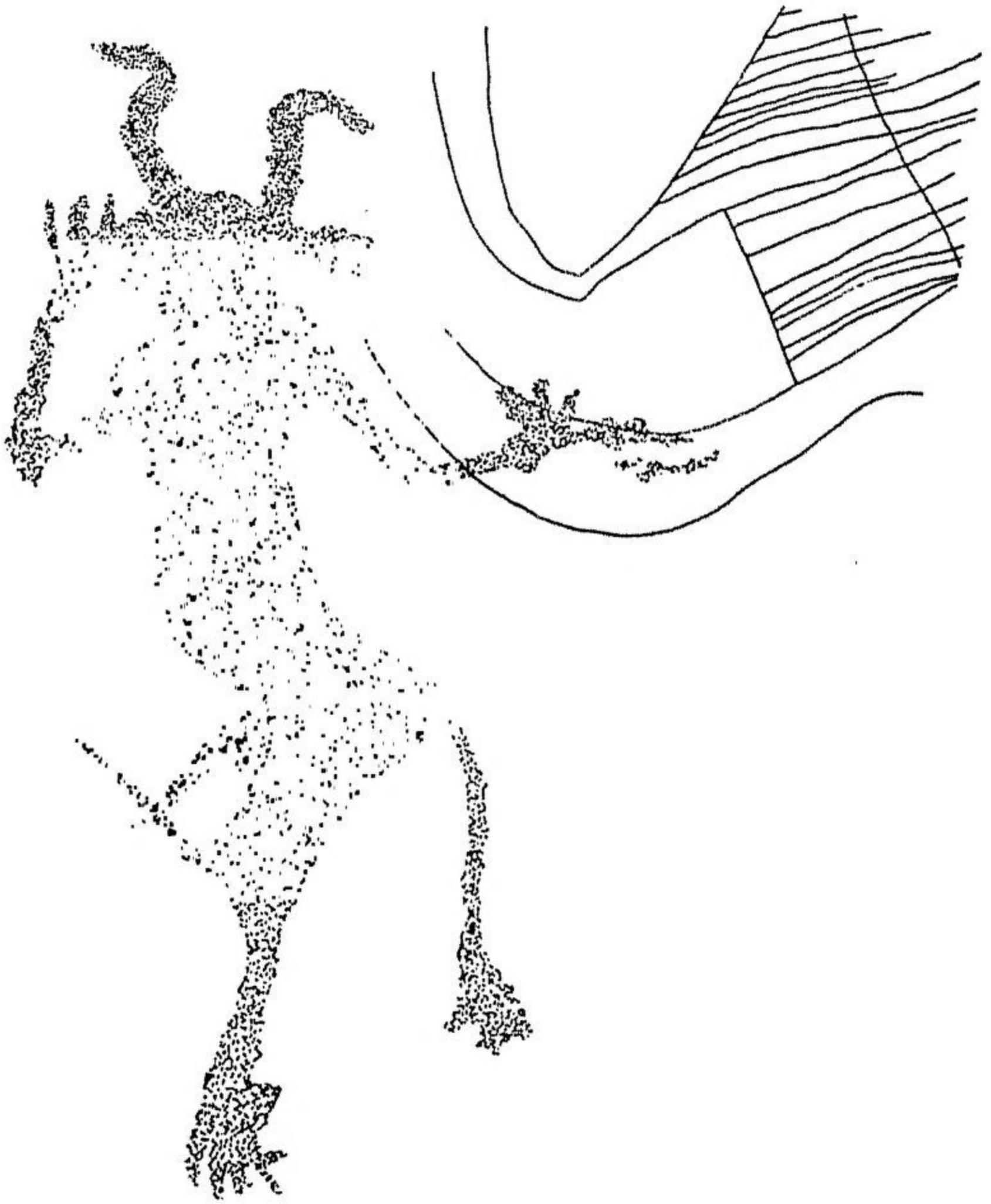


FIG. 23. A masked human figure in style 3 (from Afvallingskop)
Reduced to $\frac{1}{2}$ (approx.)



FIG. 24. A frieze of animals and ostriches belonging to a late stage of style 3 (from Afvallingskop). Reduced to $\frac{1}{3}$ (approx.)

antler and ivory, while in South Africa the finding of engraved or painted objects actually in the archaeological deposits is very rare indeed. The most notable exception to this in South Africa is to be found in connexion with burials of the 'Strand-loopers' or shell-mound peoples. In several instances burials belonging to these people have revealed upon excavation the interesting fact that the bodies had large flat pebbles and broken stone mortars placed upon them at burial, and that upon these stones were painted conventionalized human and animal forms.

The summary of Stone Age art in South Africa and Rhodesia which I have given above is very incomplete, chiefly because I have not seen more than a very few examples of this art myself, and I do not feel qualified to give more than a brief summary based upon what I have read.

From South Africa we must now go northwards to East Africa and thence to North Africa.

The first discovery of any form of cave art in East Africa seems to have been made in 1908 by some missionaries working at Buanja, near Bukoba on the western shores of Victoria Nyanza. Some rock-shelters were found in which there were numerous conventionalized human figures in red. These were shown to the members of the Duke of Mecklenburg's scientific expedition in June of that year, and were subsequently described by the ethnologist of the Expedition, Dr. Czekanowski.

So far as I know, no further discovery was made until after the War, when in 1923 Mr. F. B. Bagshawe published a note in *Man* under the heading of 'Rock Paintings of the Kangeju Bushmen, Tanganyika Territory', in which he described some paintings from the area lying to the west of Lake Eyassi.

Following this in 1929 Mr. T. A. M. Nash published

a short paper in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* in which he gave an illustrated account of some paintings found on the walls of rock-shelters in the Kondoa Irangi province of Tanganyika Territory. Describing them, Nash says: 'Most of them are in a rather bad state of preservation and in many of the places where they have been kept in the best condition they are spoilt by the jumble and chaos of drawing superimposed upon drawing. The pigment used in every case is red, sometimes of rather an orange colour and sometimes purplish.' In other words, Nash had found a site where there were a number of superpositions and where several different coloured pigments had been used.

On our way by lorry to South Africa in 1929 my companions and I called on Mr. Nash, and he very kindly took us to see some of his sites and also told us how to get to others. Although we had no time to do any detailed work it was perfectly obvious that there were a number of different styles represented and that a great deal of careful study would be necessary to elucidate the sequence of the styles, and I made a resolution that I would revisit the area at some future occasion and spend some time on this fascinating work. In 1935 the opportunity came, and I spent two weeks making a preliminary examination, the results of which will be given in brief presently. Besides re-examining Nash's sites we located several others, and were thus able to get some idea of the sequence of the styles by checking off one site with another.

In 1931 Mr. A. R. Culwick published a paper in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* on some more paintings from Central Tanganyika. In this paper he pointed out that the superpositions in the examples which he had found gave the following results. 'We have the line drawings as the earliest series, the paintings in plain

colour as the most recent, while those with a dark culture occupy an intermediate position.' Unfortunately, at the sites found by Culwick no complete line-drawing of an animal remains; in other words, the oldest series seen by him was already very nearly obliterated.

In none of the cases from East Africa cited above is there any proof that the paintings described belong to the Stone Age, but I have little doubt that some of the earlier ones figured by Nash and Culwick were painted by a Stone Age people. The more recent ones, however, are almost certainly very much later and are possibly the work of comparatively recent Bantu tribes.

A detailed account of the results of the work which I did in 1935 will be published elsewhere, but a summary must be given here as it gives a more complete idea of the sequence of styles than anything previously published from East Africa, and makes a very interesting comparison with some of the Rhodesian and South African art.

Seven different sites were carefully examined, and between them they yielded the following sequence of styles:

(1) The earliest to be found are figures of animals in red and in every case the whole figure is coloured, except for the face, which is drawn in thick outline only and the middle left blank. Where the animal had a mane it is shown by a series of short dashes.

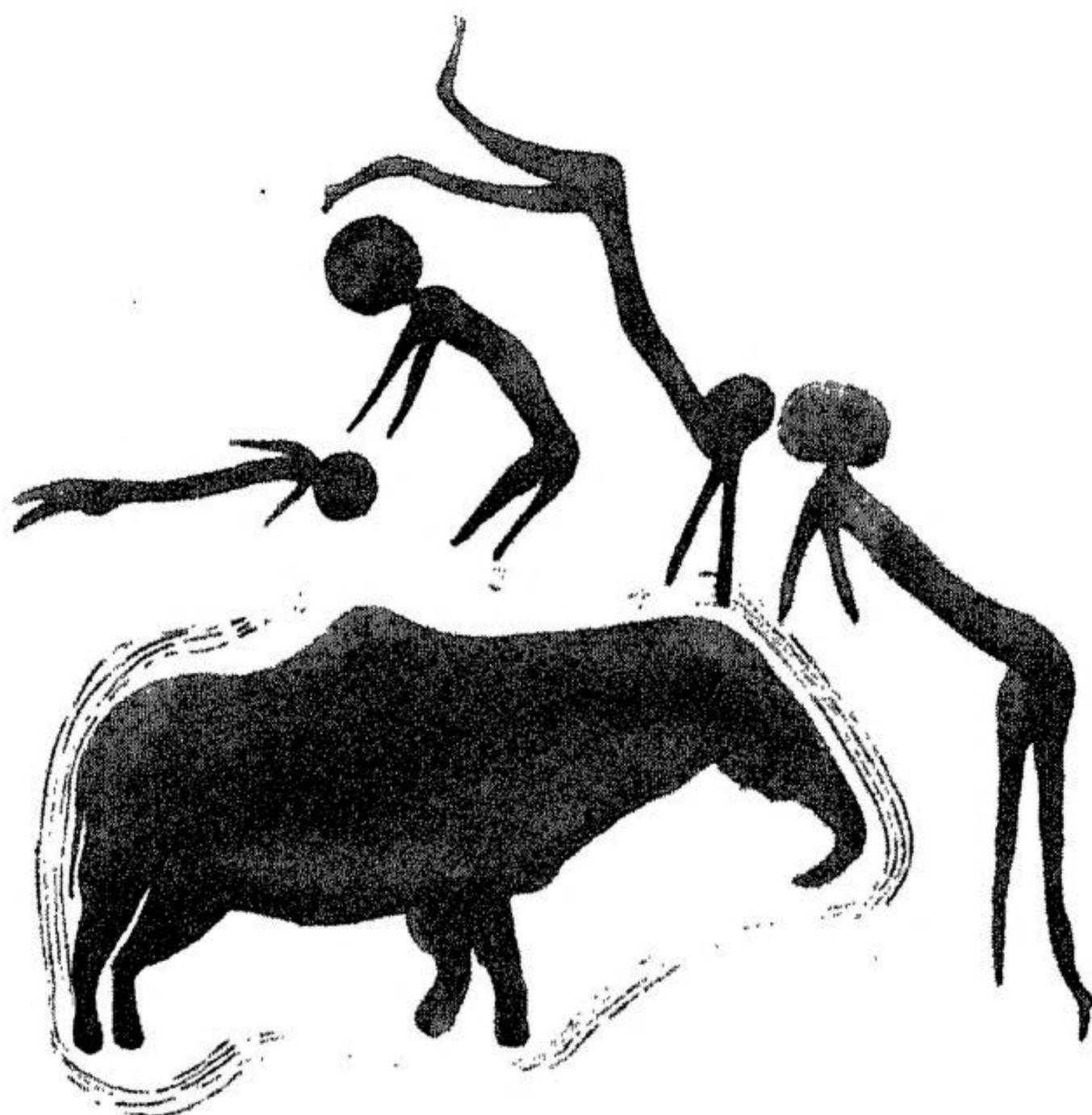
(2) Very curious human figures in an unusual purple colour, rather badly drawn animals in the same purple, and large areas of concentric rings of dots apparently drawn with the finger tip dipped in the colouring material.

(Note: the relationship of (1) and (2) is not absolutely clear, but both groups are older than any of the others, which, in all cases of superposition, are over them).

(3) A number of figures in which ostriches and giraffes predominate, drawn in outline in a purplish red; the



Paintings of antelopes (?) in style 1 at Kisepe Rock Shelter, Tanganyika Territory
(from a tracing). Reduced to $\frac{1}{4}$ (approx.)



Group of human figures and an elephant (?) surrounded by interrupted lines, at Cheke Rock Shelter, Tanganyika Territory. These paintings are in style 7 (from a tracing)
Reduced to $\frac{1}{8}$ (approx.)

technique of applying the colouring material was different from that in style (5) (in which also the drawings are even more naturalistic) but at the same time style (3) seems to be related to (5) and is probably only a little earlier than it.

(4) A few very indistinct black outline-figures are always under style (5) and seem to come in here. They may possibly belong to style (3), but the difference in colour as well as an improvement in style suggests that they should be classed alone.

(5) In this style the art is at its best. Figures of animals are drawn in outline with very thin lines of paint. The animals are very naturalistic and details such as sex organs, manes, &c., are very carefully shown. The colour used is a claret-red.

(6) Some curious yellow and orange human figures and animals rather badly drawn are found overlying animals in style (5) and underlying style (7) so that they are placed here. They are comparatively rare, and not to be confused with the much later orange and yellow figures.

(7) This style consists of animals in a dark claret-red colour in which the whole body is coloured. The animals are sufficiently naturalistic to be easily recognizable, but the detail is not good. Sex organs are not shown, nor are the manes of giraffes, &c. Animals in this style are common. There are a few human figures which may belong to this group but which were not found under conditions which gave any direct proof of this.

(8) Overlying style (7) at several sites are animals drawn in a thick red outline. These animals are not nearly as naturalistic as those of stage (5), and the commonest animals figured are elephants. In one case an elephant in this style is nearly 10 feet long and 5 feet high. The wrinkles on the trunks of the elephants are always carefully shown, although little attention is paid to other details.

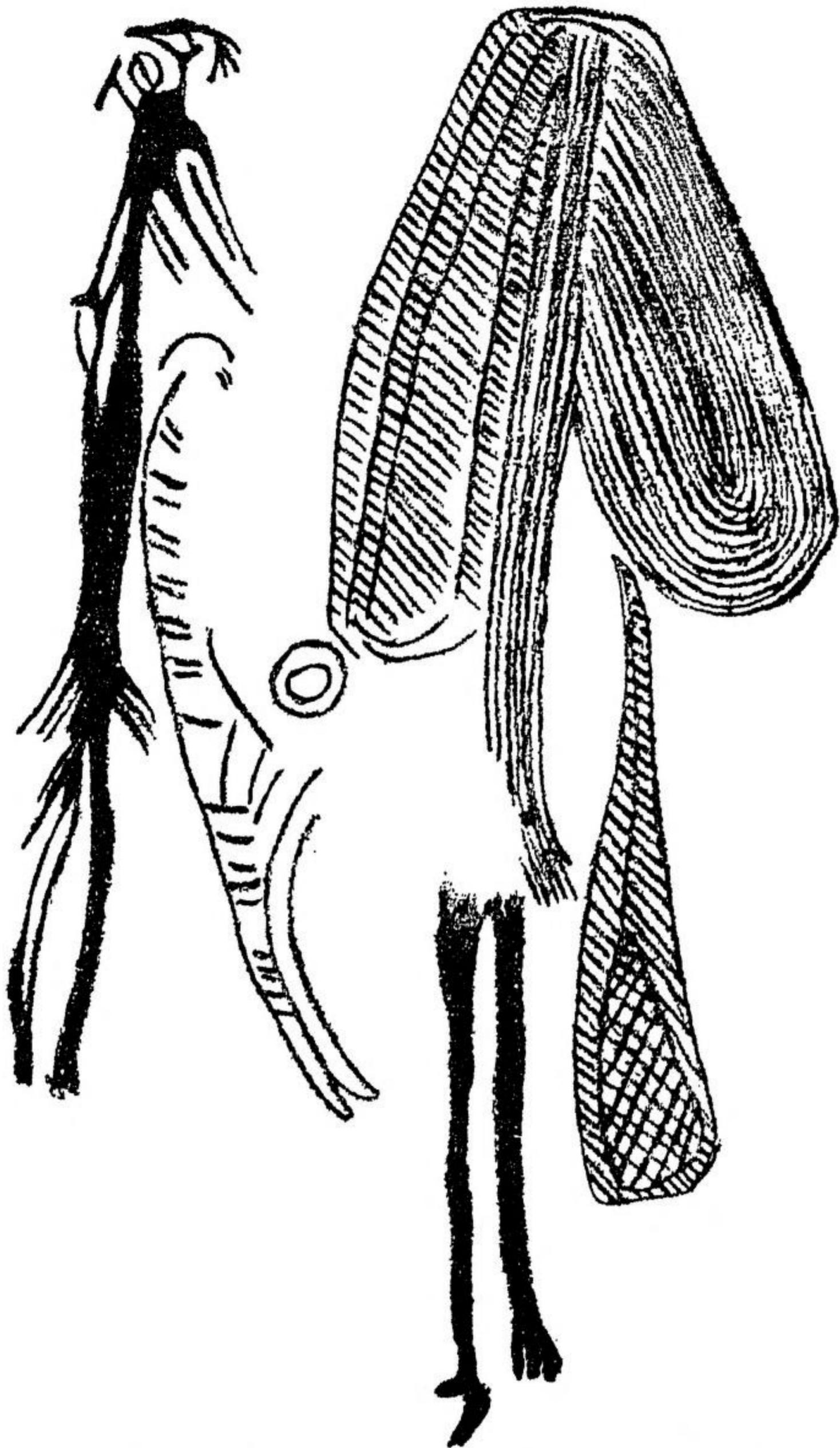


FIG. 25. Conventionalized human figures in purple (style 2)
(from Kisesse Rock-Shelter No. 2, Tanganyika Territory).
Reduced to $\frac{1}{4}$ (approx.)

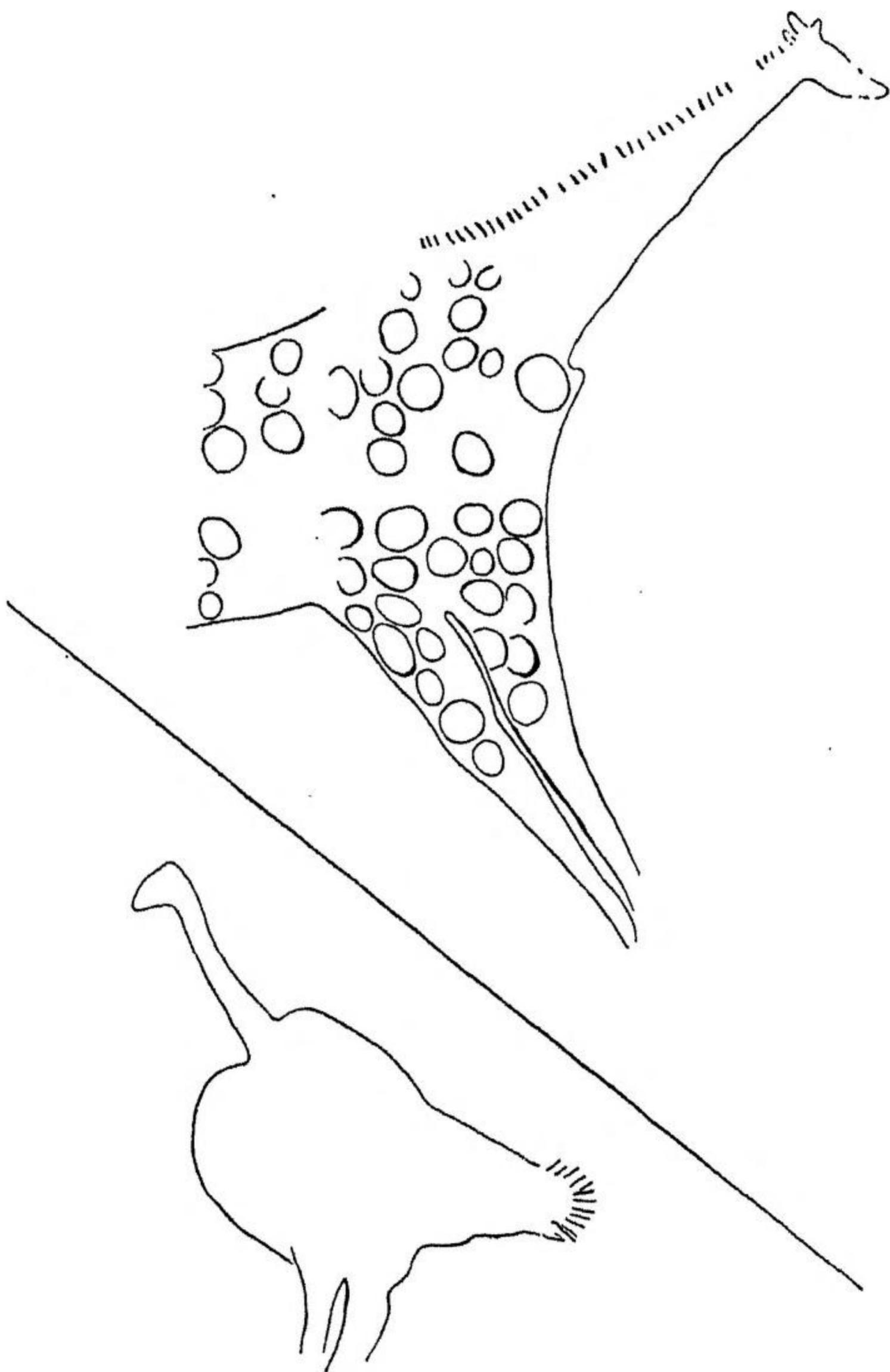


FIG. 26. Painting in style 3 (purplish-red outline) [from Kisesse Rock-Shelter No. 1 (ostrich) and Rock-Shelter No. 2 (giraffe)].
Reduced to $\frac{1}{8}$ (approx.)

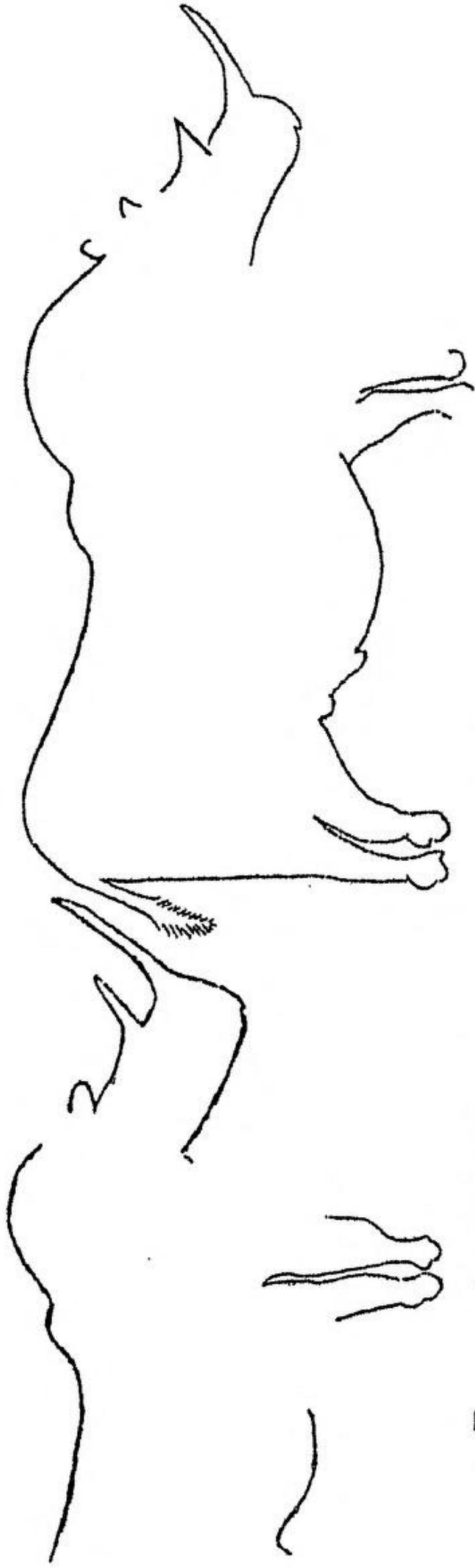


FIG. 27. A pair of rhinoceroses painted in style 5 (from Kisee Rock-Shelter No. 1).
Reduced to $\frac{1}{16}$ (approx.)



FIG. 28. An animal in a very curious style which cannot at present be placed in the sequence
(from Kisee Rock-Shelter No. 2). Reduced to $\frac{1}{6}$ (approx.)

(9) A series of animals drawn in outline in a brick-red colour. Very stiff and conventionalized drawing quite unlike any of the earlier outline styles. Often the tails of animals are omitted.

(10) A series of very curious orange human figures and badly drawn animals in solid colour.

(11) Figures in a dirty yellow and dirty white, apparently very recent indeed, including white hands.

(12) Orange coloured lines and hands.

(13) Black human figures very conventionalized indeed. The last three groups are very recent and are probably not of Stone Age date at all. In addition to this series of thirteen distinct superimposed styles, several other styles were noted, but no evidence was found to show where in the sequence they belonged. A great deal more work remains to be done, and this it is intended to do if possible during the next season's work.

At present we have no positive evidence at all that any of the paintings are the work of Stone Age man, although on analogy with Rhodesia and South Africa it seems certain that the earlier ones are. Excavations will have to be carried out before positive proof can be obtained. It may be mentioned, however, that a Wilton culture certainly occurs in the top deposits of these shelters, and that there is evidence also of the presence in the district of a Stillbay culture. Until further work has been carried out no more than this can be said about prehistoric art in East Africa.

From East Africa we turn to North Africa, where there are a number of recorded sites with engravings or paintings. Of these, however, the vast majority are apparently of very recent origin from the prehistorian's point of view, and belong at the earliest to the Neolithic period, for they frequently include domestic animals, such as cattle. There are, however, a few sites where the available evidence sug-

Paintings in styles 3, 5, and 8 at Kisee Rock Shelter No. 2, Tanganyika Territory (from a tracing)

NOTE. Style 3 is represented by an animal of which only the trunk and hind-quarters remain; style 5 is represented by an impalla (?) in thin outline and superimposed upon style 3. At a much later date, after the head and forequarters of the style 3 animal had been defaced by rock scaling, a rhinoceros's head was added in style 8



gests that we are dealing with an art which belongs to a more remote period. One of the most important of these sites is Djebel Owenat in the Lybian desert, an account of which was given by Prince Kemal el Dine and Professor Breuil in 1928. According to Breuil the engravings at Djebel Owenat can be divided into a number of distinct styles of different periods. Concerning the earliest of these Breuil says:¹

‘The oldest layer (of engravings) is of exactly the same style as the best rock-engravings of South Africa. It is impossible to distinguish any difference between the giraffes and ostriches of the two groups, which are in a remarkably good naturalistic style. The latter belong, according to the latest investigations, to a comparatively old geological period . . . and are associated with implements much older than the microliths of the Strandloopers and Bushmen. It is thus probable that the oldest group (at Djebel Owenat) can be assigned to a hunting people of the Upper Palaeolithic period.’

Subsequent to the work done by Prince Kemal el Dine, Djebel Owenat was visited by Count Almassy, who found a number of other sites, including several shelters, with magnificent paintings as distinct from engravings. These have not yet been published in detail, but they were partially illustrated in the *Illustrated London News*.

From the number of shelters with engravings and paintings at Djebel Owenat it is almost certain that if a careful and detailed scientific investigation was carried out there, we should learn a great deal about the culture stages of the people who were responsible for this art, but at present we have only indirect evidence—such as the fact that many of the animals represented are now no longer present in the area or are altogether extinct—to help us in dating this art.

¹ A free translation from the original in the article in *Revue Scientifique*, 1928.

Among other engravings which can be assigned without question to the Stone Age period in North Africa are many which were found at sites in South Oran. These have been described by Flamand, Frobenius, and Obermaier. There are two main groups of engravings in this region, an early one in which extinct animals and animals that no longer are found in North Africa occur, and a much later group where the engravings are associated with inscriptions. The latter do not concern us here. Among the best-known sites where engravings of the earlier group occur is Ksar-el-Amar, where there are magnificent engravings of gigantic buffaloes of the *Bubalus* group, and also of a rhinoceros, while other sites clearly show lions, elephants, and giraffes.

At one or two sites in North Africa a few small fragments of decorated ostrich egg-shell and other material have been found *in situ* in deposits containing human cultures. The most important of these is probably the painted and engraved fragment of an ostrich egg-shell cup found by Dr. Clergeau at El Mengoub. This was associated with a Capsian culture and it comes from a region where the walls of many rock-shelters show engravings. The animal represented on the egg-shell is a bovid and it was engraved in outline first and then covered with a red colouring material. On the walls of some of the rock-shelters of the region are similar engravings associated with colouring material so that this gives strong suggestive evidence that these engravings are also of Capsian origin.

Apart from this there is very little evidence in North Africa which tells us who the artists were, or what their stage of cultures was, and therefore, as in the case of East Africa, we can only say that a great deal more very careful scientific work needs to be carried out. Looking at the Stone Age art of Africa as a whole, we find that the vast

majority of it can only be assigned to the Stone Age on very general grounds, and it is only a few sites such as Bambata which have yielded positive evidence which links certain artistic styles with definite cultural horizons.

One very big problem emerges from the study, and that is whether any real connexion can be said to exist between the Stone Age art of Europe and Africa. Many people believe that there is a direct connexion, and all kinds of supporting arguments have been put forward. The early Stone Age art of Europe was the work of the races that made the Aurignacian and Magdalenian cultures, and art appears in South Africa for the first time just when Aurignacian (or so-called Neanthropic) influences are first noted. In this connexion Armstrong wrote:

'It is noteworthy that the horizon upon which colouring material first occurred and which presumably marks the beginning of art in Southern Rhodesia, is the point at which a distinct improvement in the technique of burins was noticed and from which horizon upwards they were increasingly abundant. It is probable that the incoming of art and the improvement in burins were alike due to a new wave of Neanthropic people or influence from the north. If this correlation between the cave paintings and the Upper Palaeolithic culture of South Africa is reliable, as I believe it to be, it provides a further and highly important link between it and the Upper Aurignacian of Europe, and supports the evidence for a common origin for both in the region of the Sahara of North Africa.'

While I do not deny that the earlier Stone Age art of Africa and Europe may have a common source, I must say that I am more inclined to regard it as due to a quite independent growth of artistic ideas in the different regions. This will be further discussed in the concluding chapter of this book.