



DANCE
IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

MIGRATIONS AND CULTURE

- In the last lesson the geological changes Africa underwent was discussed.
- However, migrations of people have also made a significant impact on dances produced and societies created.
- Research on the types of dances produced before, during, and after migratory events would provide rich insights on ancient and contemporary cultures, dances, and the people who created them.



THE SAN

- We will begin our discussion at this juncture with one of the most ancient cultures on earth – the SAN.
- The original inhabitants of Southern Africa are the San.
- In the first part of the first century, the Khoikhoi began to migrate into Southern Africa.
- Over time, scholars began to refer to the groups as a unit - Khoisan.

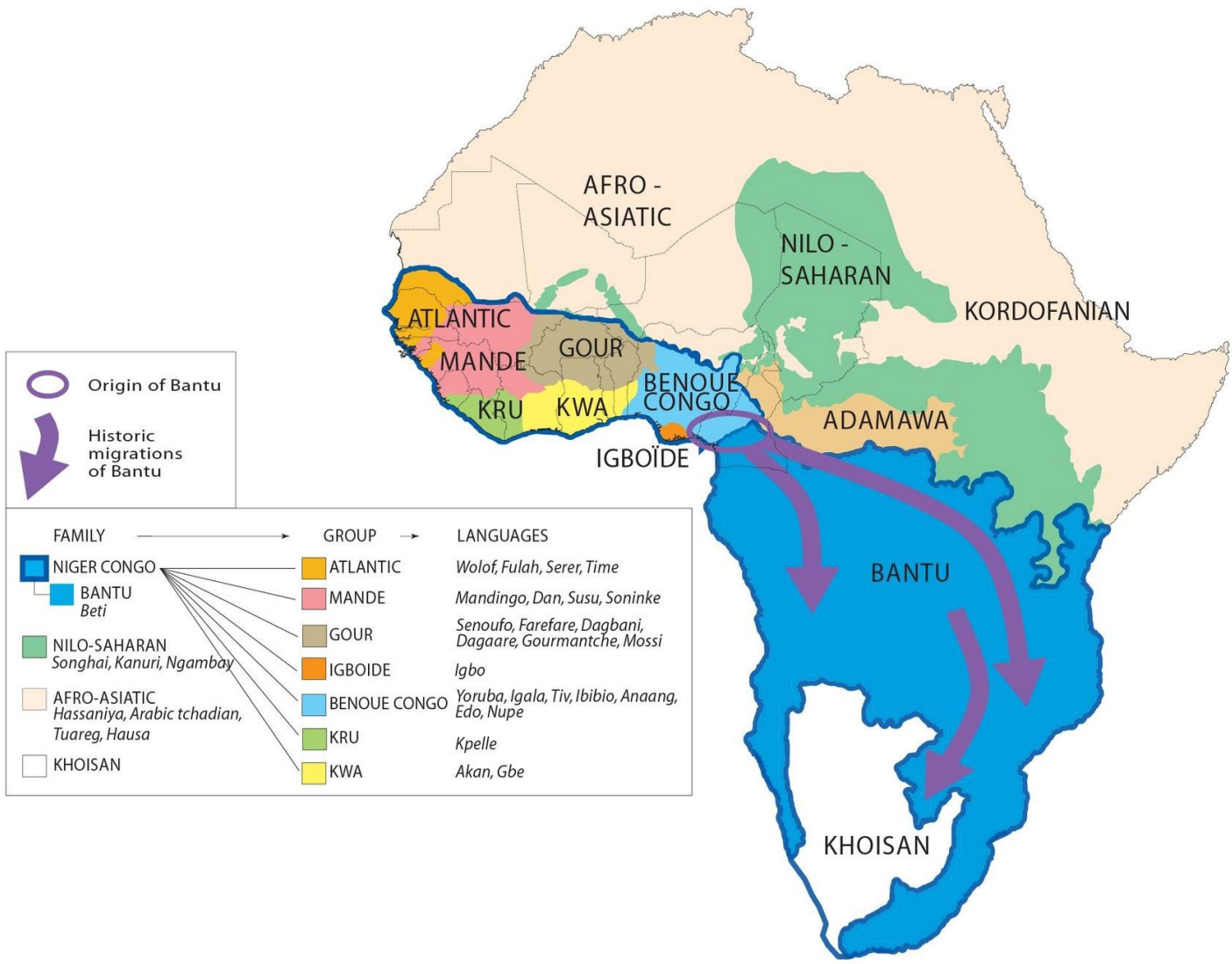
THE KHOIKHOI & THE SAN

- However, the Khoikhoi are pastoralists and the San are traditionally foragers (also referred to as hunters and gathers).
- Khoikhoi refers to a specific ethnic group.
- The name “San” describes a group of nations with distinct ethnicities but share historic and linguist tenets and approaches to food economy and lifestyles.
- The San employ a distinctive clicking sound in their language.

THE BANTU

- The BaNtu belong to a large subcategory of the Niger-Congo language group in Africa.
- Thus, it is not a single ethnic group or nation.
- Linguists have noticed that the languages – with the exception of Khoisan – spoken by the countless ethnicities and lineages in the West, East, Central, and Southern Africa, are closely related.
- Therefore they named the people based on the language grouping – ntu (means person) and ba (is plural)

THE BANTU MIGRATIONS



- The BaNtu migrated to South, East, and Central Africa beginning 3500 BCE and lasting for thousands of years.
- The migrations became intensified from roughly 2500 to 2000 BCE. The BaNtu were cultivators.
- What changes do you think they brought to Southern Africa when they engaged the Khoikhoi and the San?

THE !KUNG HEALING DANCE

- The !Kung is an ethnic group that belongs to the San grouping of peoples.
- They reside primarily in Southern Africa but are also located in some countries in East Africa.
- The !Kung possesses a healing dance that is performed to cure physical illness.
- The dance begins in the evening with women singing medicine songs.



THE HEALING DANCE CON.

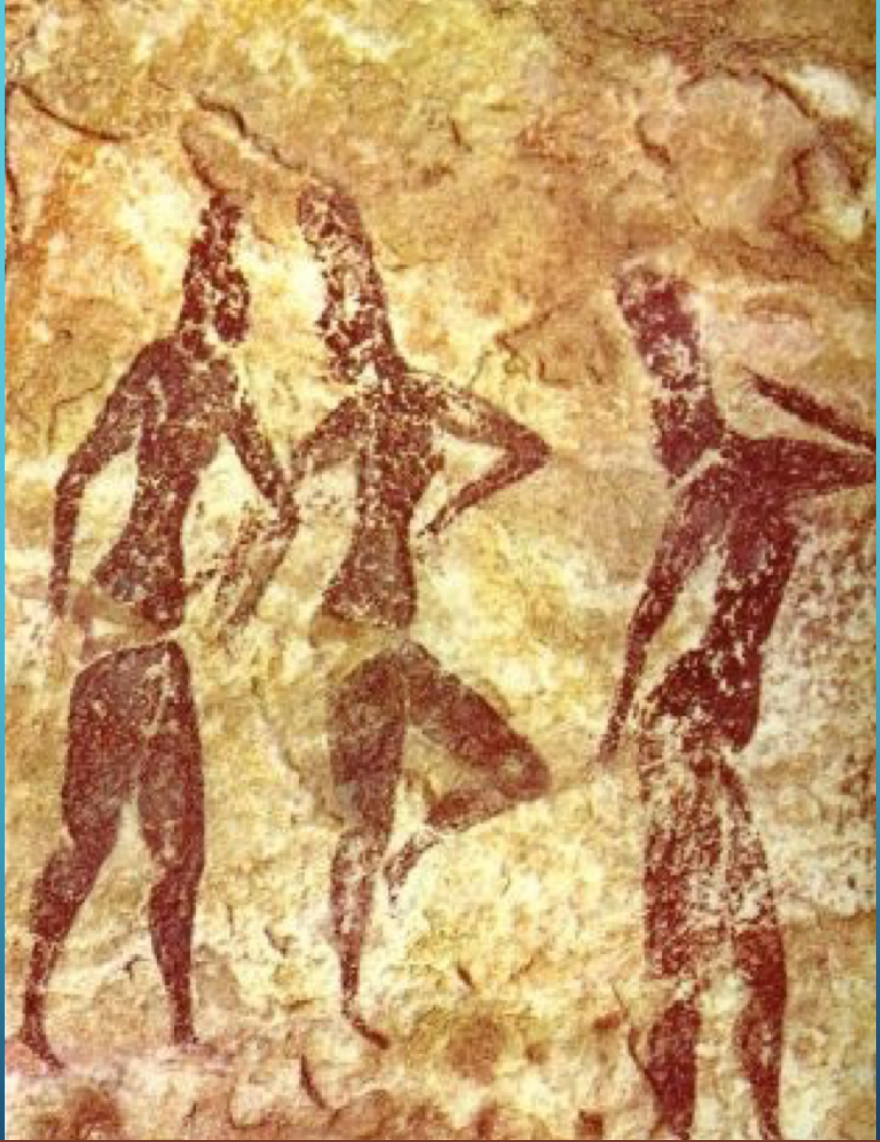
- Elements of the healing Dance include:
 - Women singing and forming a circle
 - A fire in the middle of the circle
 - Men dancing around the women with rattles on their legs.
 - Trance – half death mind state
 - Laying on hands healing
 - Abundant foot percussive movements

LIVING ON THROUGH ROCK ART

- The Healing dance and other San dances can be witnessed on rock art tens of thousands of years old.
- Rock art is the collective name for ancient paintings and engravings found on mountain cliffs, hillsides, and in caves.
- Rock art has been found in every region in Africa and the oldest specimen in the world was discovered in Southern Africa.
- It is over 75,000 years old.









The background features a vertical gradient from red at the top to blue at the bottom, overlaid with a field of small white dots. On the left side, there are several overlapping circular and semi-circular patterns. Some are solid white lines, while others are dashed. A prominent circular scale with numerical markings from 140 to 260 is visible, along with various arrows and partial circles scattered throughout the design.

THE NYNGWE

OF MOZAMBIQUE

FOOD AND DANCE

- The types of food economy employed by people in the past informs us about the nature of the dances fashioned, the types of materials available for dance attire and body paint and the materials available for props.
- For example, agricultural dances tend to include movement vocabulary with low torsos and bent knees.
- The Nyngwe were BaNtu peoples and cultivators.

NYANGA FLUTE DANCE

- The Nyanga flute dance is a complex foot percussive dance performed simultaneously while playing flutes – or nyanga – and singing.
- Nyangas are constructed from bamboo reeds.
- What does this tell us about the area they lived in?
- While playing the nyanga, the voice is used intermittently to enhance the sound.
- The dancers also dance at the same time.

