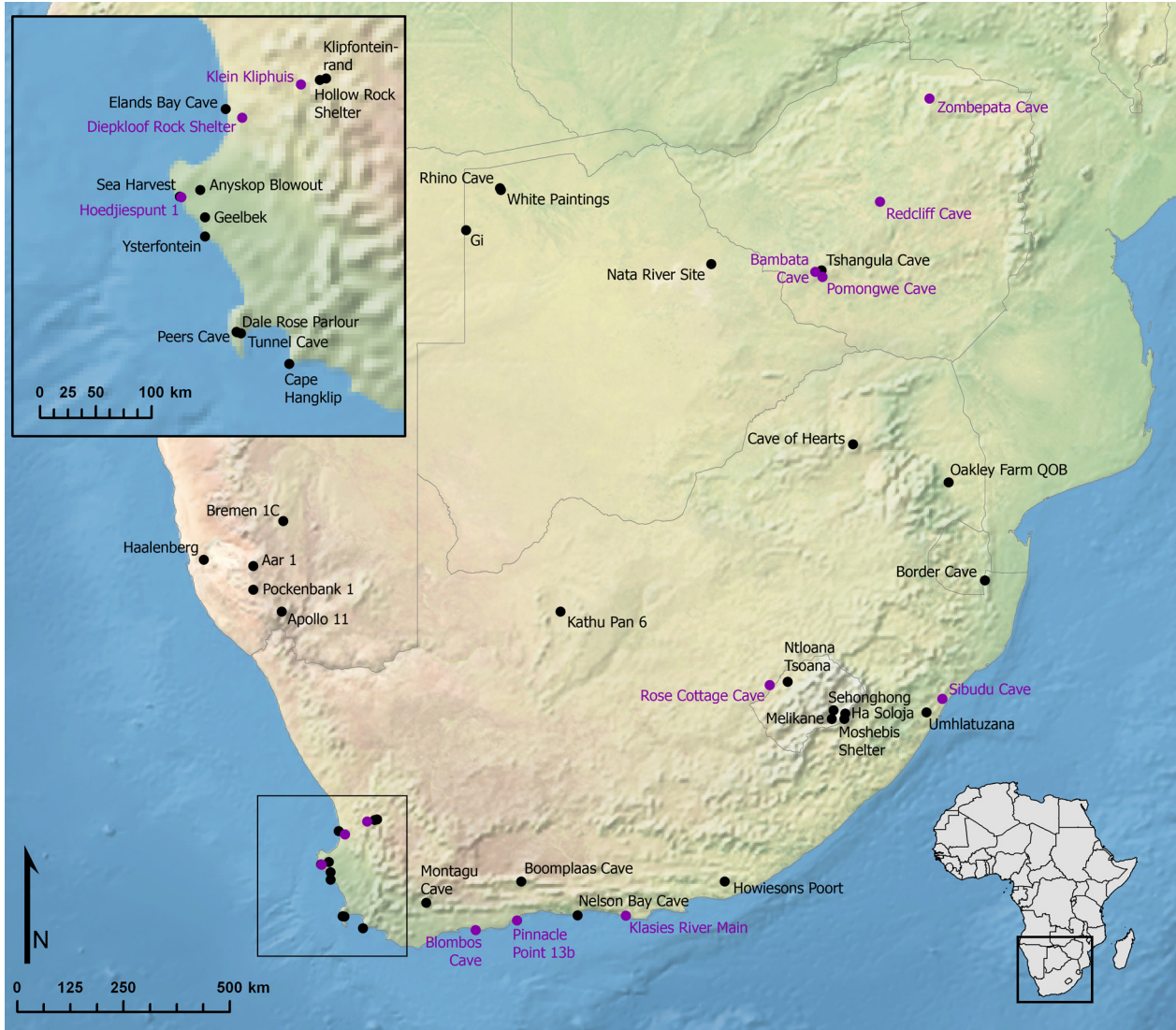




THE ROLE
OF CULTURE
IN EARLY
EXPANSIONS
OF HUMANS

Transport Distance of Raw Materials in the MSA



The distance that MSA people transported lithic raw material from its source to their living sites represents a way of measuring the breadth of their movement across the landscape. From the 47 MSA localities in southern Africa entered into the ROAD database, we selected 142 well-documented assemblages from 12 localities and grouped them into four main cultural phases: Pre-Still Bay (Pre-SB) dating before 80 ka; Still Bay (SB) from 77-70 ka; Howieson's Poort (HP) from 65-59 ka; and post-Howieson's Poort (Post-HP) from 59-30 ka. We classified raw materials into three groups that reflect local (0-5 km), regional (6-20 km) and supra-regional (21-100 km) circulation patterns. Local raw materials dominate in all time periods, with the HP showing the highest frequency. This result contrasts with previous studies suggesting that the HP was a time of increased range. Instead, we observe that the earlier periods, pre-SB and SB, show a greater range of movement, as reflected in the raw material transport distances.

Map illustrating 47 MSA localities (in black); 12 southern African MSA localities (in purple) included in this study for which raw material transport distances are available.

Graph plotting the frequencies of the three distance classes used to analyze the transport of lithic raw materials.

