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Hans-Joachim Ulbrich

A giant new geoglyph in Botswana

Patterns in and on the surface of the earth – often of stunning dimensions which are not a product of natural processes – were found all over the globe. No reports mentioned until now Botswana in this context. With the find presented in this short paper Botswana is now in the focus [besides the Verneuk Pan (Nama Karoo) in South Africa which seems to be, at least in parts, recent].

We look at these structures and are in most cases clueless; although a ritual purpose can be assumed for many of the sites – religion being the motor for such tremendous efforts, not agriculture or other elements of everyday-life. The involved groups must have had a strong sense for their community, highest reliability and the will for a year- or decades- or generations-long commitment.

The pictures here (figs. 1/2) show a hexagonal structure of 5930 m (5,93 km) diameter in the savanna of the eastern part of Botswana. At first sight it seems to be oriented exactly north-south/east-west, but there is a slight rotation to the east. The center (fig. 3) comprises a circle (140 m Ø) which encloses another hexagon (30 m Ø). A modern farmer with cattle has obviously occupied the place. A few cottages exist some meters southeast of the center. Coordinates: 22°09'43.2"S 26°24'15.7"E (GE 35KMR3858549120).

A closer look allows some observations which let doubt that it is a modern engineering project or a contemporary drollery of the proprietor:

- the corner points of the hexagon lie exactly on one circle, but the sides of the hexagon have not the same length;
- not all lines are precisely straight, two in the north are slightly concave;
- the 26 segments have not the same expanse;
- nothing is exactly symmetric;
- the lines/paths have different widths;
- not all lines meet the corners exactly;
- the lines are no walls but areas without vegetation (like in many geoglyphs the uppermost layer of the soil has been removed including the roots of plants);
- many lines touch the outer flanks in small curves (Google Earth zoom-in);
- the circle and the hexagon in the center are both not exact;
- some lines cross the center, others not;
- a technical purpose and appropriate equipment is not identifiable;
- the present farmer seems not to be the constructor because of his limited financial resources (herd only around 50 animals). Is he the owner at all?

Hopefully some authorities or the University of Botswana in Gaborone will investigate this place in the near future to clear the chronology.



Fig.1 - A giant geoglyph (Ø 5,93 km) in the savanna of eastern Botswana, southern Africa. This is the largest geoglyph in the world. It is assembled of several photo slices with different tones. The hexagon can be overlooked easily from the air.



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more or less natural colour of the landscape after retouching the original Google Earth picture which
from this height (11 km), even by pilots of aircrafts. No similar structure is located in the proximity.

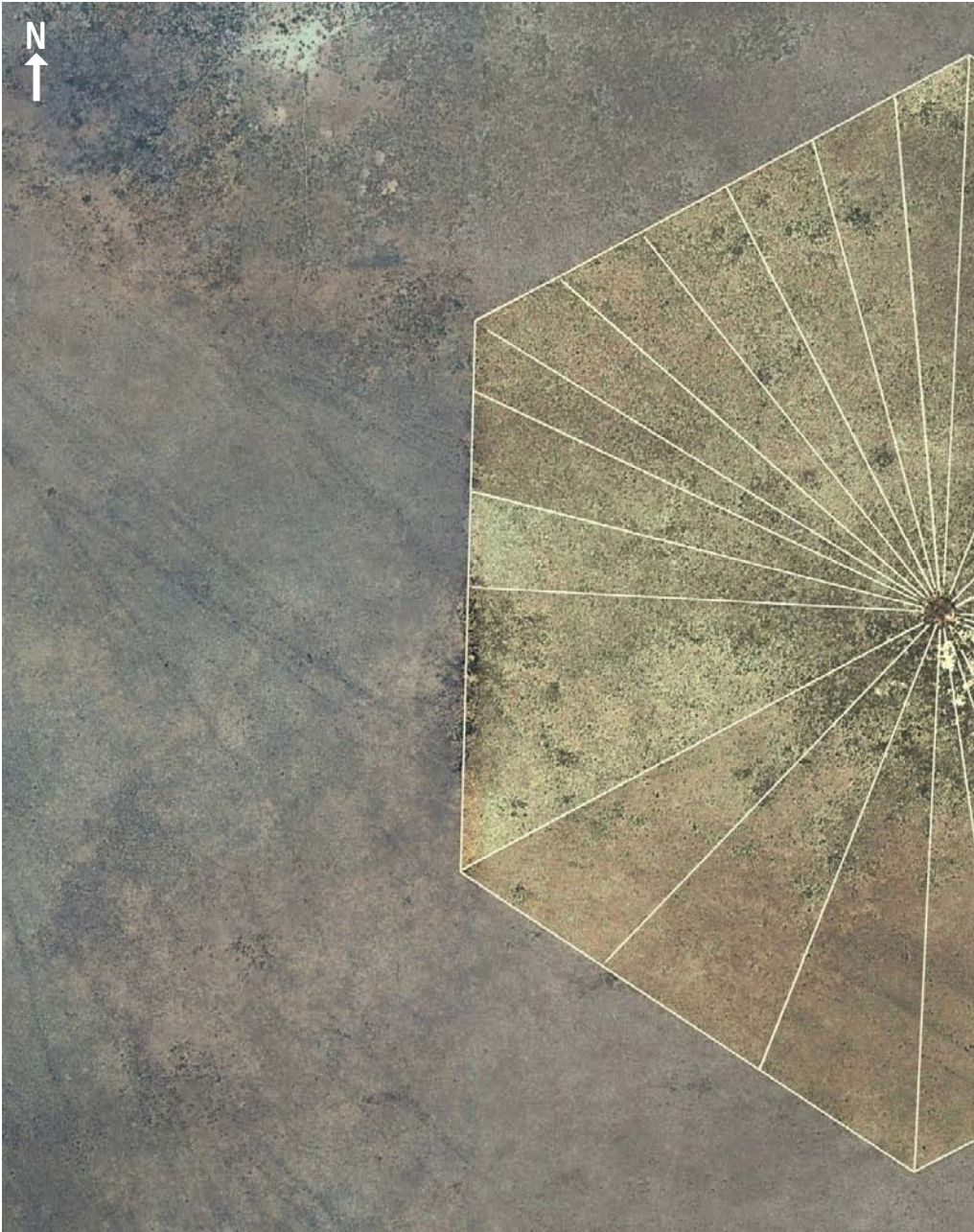
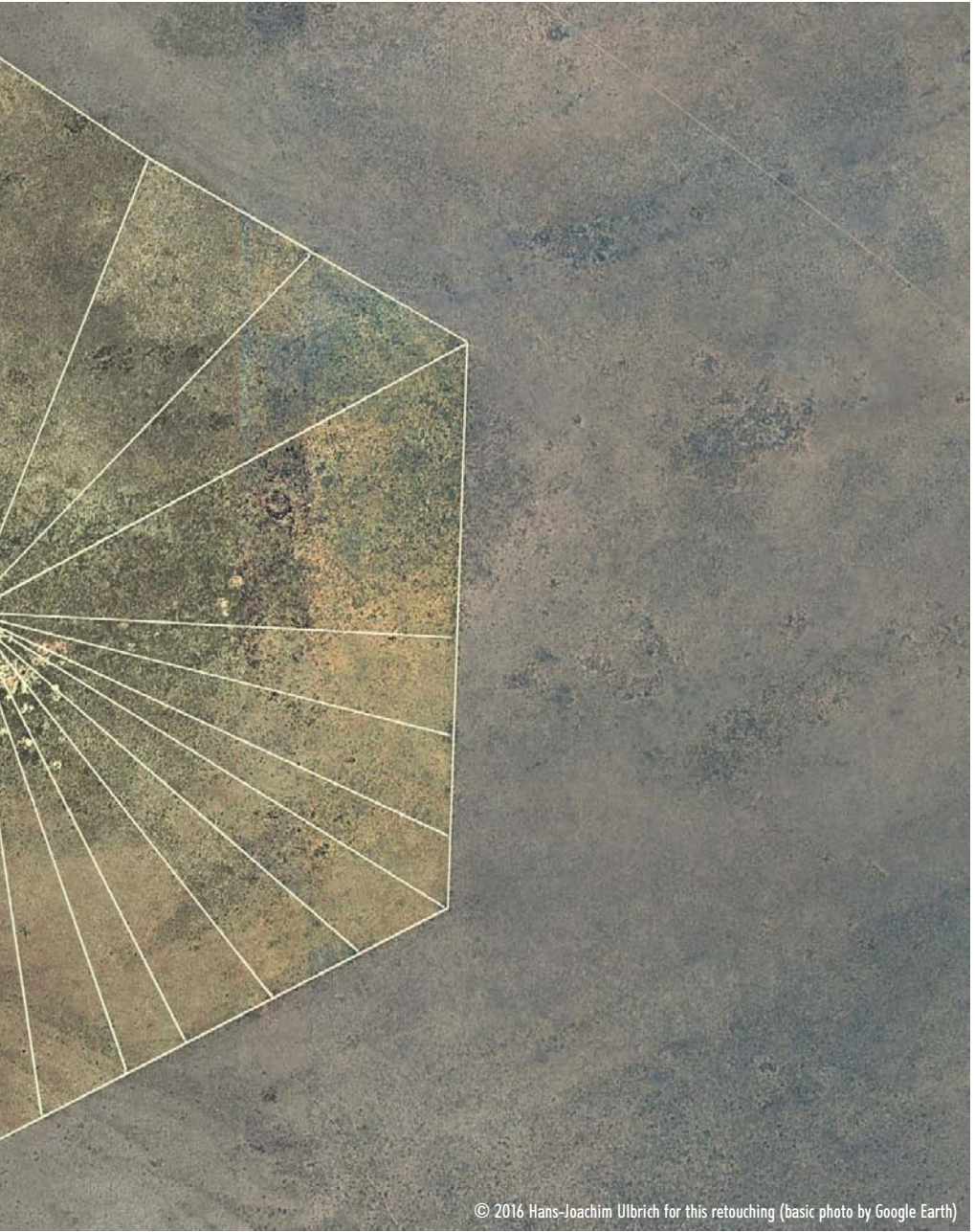


Fig.2 - This is fig.1 after artificially boosting the contrast of the area and the visibility of the lines of the hexagon, so that the structure is not symmetric. Or in other words: Not all lines continue in t



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in the hexagon. We see 26 segments and paths; the latter have not all a counterpart in the other half
the same direction on the other side of the center. The nearest city is Serowe 40 km to the southeast.



Fig.3 - The center of the Botswana hexagon. We can see the cattle of a farmer. There seems to be a small building in the center of the green field. The landscape is a mix of the Kalahari Desert. Noticeable is also a triangle whose right hand corner is cut by the in



also a well which allows the existence of humans and herds at this place near the eastern branch
ner hexagon. © 2016 Hans-Joachim Ulbrich for this retouching (basic photo: Google Earth).

Star-like structures or "rays" are not uncommon in the world of geoglyphs. We find them – for example – among the Nazca lines in Peru. There are junctions (Figs. 4/5) which clearly show a star-like structure, but we do not know if the lines are running – in the sense of the makers – to a center or if they are leaving one ("rays"). In the first case the meeting of lines is important, in the second case the lines are to reach an aim outside of the center. Regarding the hexagon of Botswana both approaches are imaginable; but in any case the hexagonal outline there limits the action or purpose of the pathways.

Is the hexagon of Botswana a religious building or was it the fascination for geometrical forms which led the constructors? Perhaps both! The Nazca lines for their part seem to prove exactly that.



Fig. 4 - An example of a star-like structure among the Nazca lines and "roads" (GE 18LVJ8123174558). Contrast and brightness of the lines were intensified by the author. The dark lines are probably low walls (or trenches ?) while the bright lines are "paths" without vegetation.

Fig. 5 shows the center of the Nazca "star" which is clearly designed and not a whim of nature. We can see three artificial accumulations in a row above a small center hill which has a diameter of around 20m.