

Preserving Shona and Venda culture and heritage to develop tourism post-1994: A case of the Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape, Limpopo, South Africa

D.R. Makgatho

 **orcid.org/0009-0007-2408-0868**

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Supervisor: Dr Claudia Gouws

Co-supervisor: Dr Elicha Jonker CUT

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DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted for the award of any degree. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature:

Date: 2023/11/20

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ABSTRACT

The Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape is set against the northern border of South Africa, joining Zimbabwe and Botswana, at the confluence of the Limpopo and Shashe rivers. UNESCO listed the Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape as a World Heritage Site in 2004, because the remains found at the site created an impressive cultural landscape as a heritage site of universal significance. The World Heritage Site contains a wealth of information from archaeological investigations at the K2 and Mapungubwe sites both situated in the Middle Limpopo valley that have been excavated since the 1930s. An analysis of the historical context of the Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape, specifically examining the Shona and Venda cultures, presents a unique opportunity to develop cultural heritage tourism experiences. These initiatives can contribute significantly to the preservation of cultural traditions and practices.

The Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape represent a sequence of human settlement, subsistence farming, and state development between 900 and 1300 AD. An Early Iron Age settlement (during the middle of the first millennium AD) left evidence of their pottery at Mapungubwe Hill. A royal African farming community ruled over their capital K2 during the 11th and 12th centuries AD. During the 12th and 13th centuries Mapungubwe Hill became a royal African state trading with Arabia and India via East African ports along the Indian Ocean and may be seen as a watershed moment in the history of the African subcontinent. Within the so-called Zhizo archaeological sites are the remains of three capitals – Schroda; Leopard's Kopje; and one located around Mapungubwe Hill. The remnants from these sites are a remarkable testimony to the emergence and subsequent demise of the Mapungubwe state, which was the greatest known kingdom in the African subcontinent at its peak. Mapungubwe also portrays the influence of climate change recording the kingdom's expansion and subsequent collapse as it became vulnerable to irreversible change.

Pre-colonial societies in the southern part of Africa are related to one another with specific reference to the Mapungubwe Kingdom, the Shona- and Venda-speaking people, and particularly their traditions, tangible and intangible heritage (e.g. rainmaking and burial rituals). Artefacts such as shells, pottery, ivory, glass beads, gold bangles, and the famous golden rhinoceros, recovered from Mapungubwe Hill, are proof that this

kingdom's artisans were smelting gold. In the Shashe-Limpopo confluence area, 150 rock art locations have been identified, with most of the engravings being discovered at the same locations as paintings. There is strong circumstantial evidence that these rock paintings and engravings were created before around 1050 AD probably by hunter-gatherers, when the area became inhabited by the Iron Age farmers of Mapungubwe. The golden rhinoceros found in an excavated royal grave on Mapungubwe Hill is a testament to the prosperity of the polity of Mapungubwe. Both the archaeological setting and the black rhinoceroses' ethnographically derived symbolic value among Shona and Venda speakers.

This study contributes to the research on ways to create cultural heritage tourism experiences focussed on the Shona and Venda cultures. This type of tourism development could also contribute to sustainable economic growth, to secure foreign exchange derived from tourism in the Limpopo region, and specifically in the Mapungubwe National Park which is within the World Heritage Site. Cultural heritage tourism is based on the cultural resources of Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape and the preservation and presentation of Shona and Venda arts, music, and culinary traditions. This can lead advancements in heritage, creative and gastronomical tourism in this region.

Key terms

Culture, cultural landscape, development, heritage, indigenous, tourism, Mapungubwe, Shona, Venda.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Cultural Landscapes, recognised for their appeal as tourist attractions, embody cultural significance, stemming from the historic interplay between human societies and the natural world (Ivanović, 2011:133). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (hereafter referred to as UNESCO) defines cultural landscapes as combined works of nature and humankind that express a long and intimate relationship between peoples and their natural environment; sites that are associated in the minds of the communities with powerful beliefs and artistic and traditional customs, embodying an exceptional spiritual relationship of people with nature, sites that are part of our collective identity, and the need to preserve the traces of those which have disappeared (UNESCO, 2021).

This study focuses on ways to preserve Shona and Venda culture and heritage to develop tourism after 1994 in the Limpopo province, South Africa. In particular, the research focuses on the Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape, a World Heritage Site. The reason why the title refers to Shona and Venda is because Mapungubwe has a history of interchanging human value over the years, and the last ethnic groups to occupy the place were the Shona-speaking people. The movement and interactions of Venda (VhaVenda) and the people of Zimbabwe across the Vhembe (now Limpopo) River to the north are people from one culture on both sides of the river (Nemaheni, 2021:132).

The name Mapungubwe is Venda, which means "hill of jackals", as has been confirmed by oral history (Sebola, 2017:600). The history of the Venda relates to the Mapungubwe settlement (9th century) where King Shiriyadenga was the first king of the Venda and Mapungubwe (Mathaba, 2016:36). Venda people share ancestry with Lobedu people and Kalanga people, and they are also related to Sotho-Tswana peoples and Shona groups. All these ethnic groups were under the Venda Kingdom. According to Sinthumule (2017:53) the Mapungubwe Kingdom (also known as the Mapungubwe state/period), now the Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape (hereafter referred to as MCL) was the heart of the Middle Limpopo valley on the transport route to the north until the end of the 13th century AD when the area was abandoned, leaving untouched remains of palaces and

settlements. Until its demise, Mapungubwe was the most important inland settlement on the African subcontinent (Sinthumule, 2017:53).

Although this research takes note of effect of the Coal of Africa Limited (CoAL) Vele Colliery's project 7 km from the Mapungubwe National Park (Van Aardt, 2010; Sievers, 2011; Smith, 2012; Davies, 2015; SANParks, 2016; Leonard & Lebogang, 2018), it is not the focus of this research. It is also noted that limited research has been conducted to measure the effect of mining on the protected environments and the MCL. This chapter begins by providing an orientation and background to the study, which sets the stage for the subsequent sections. It then delineates the problem statement and outlines the research objectives. Following this, the theoretical framework underpinning the study is discussed, leading into a presentation of the research methodology and literature. The chapter concludes with the structural organisation of the study.

1.1 Orientation and Background

Mapungubwe was added to the UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2004 because of its rich cultural heritage and biodiversity. The wildlife and vast landscape contribute to the potential of this region (UNESCO, 2004a) and has established itself since then as a tourism destination.

The image below (see Image 1) shows that the MCL is set against the northern border of South Africa, joining Zimbabwe and Botswana, as well as the position of the nearby mining operations. The MCL is situated approximately 50 km to the west of the urban centre of Musina in the Limpopo province. Bradfield and Forssman (2019:427) stated that more than 1000 years ago, this 'place of the stone of wisdom' was the largest kingdom on the subcontinent. The local regional communities responsible for their own kingdom's, development, and ultimate demise are said to have been representative of the most complex society in southern Africa at the time (Caton-Thompson, 1939:330). They also were representative of the first class-based social systems in southern Africa. This northern part of South Africa is home to many indigenous African cultures, for example, the VhaVenda (hereafter referred to as Venda), MaPedi and MaTsonga peoples. This research focusses specifically on the Shona and Venda cultures and heritage as they relate to the development of the Mapungubwe World Heritage Site as a tourist attraction.

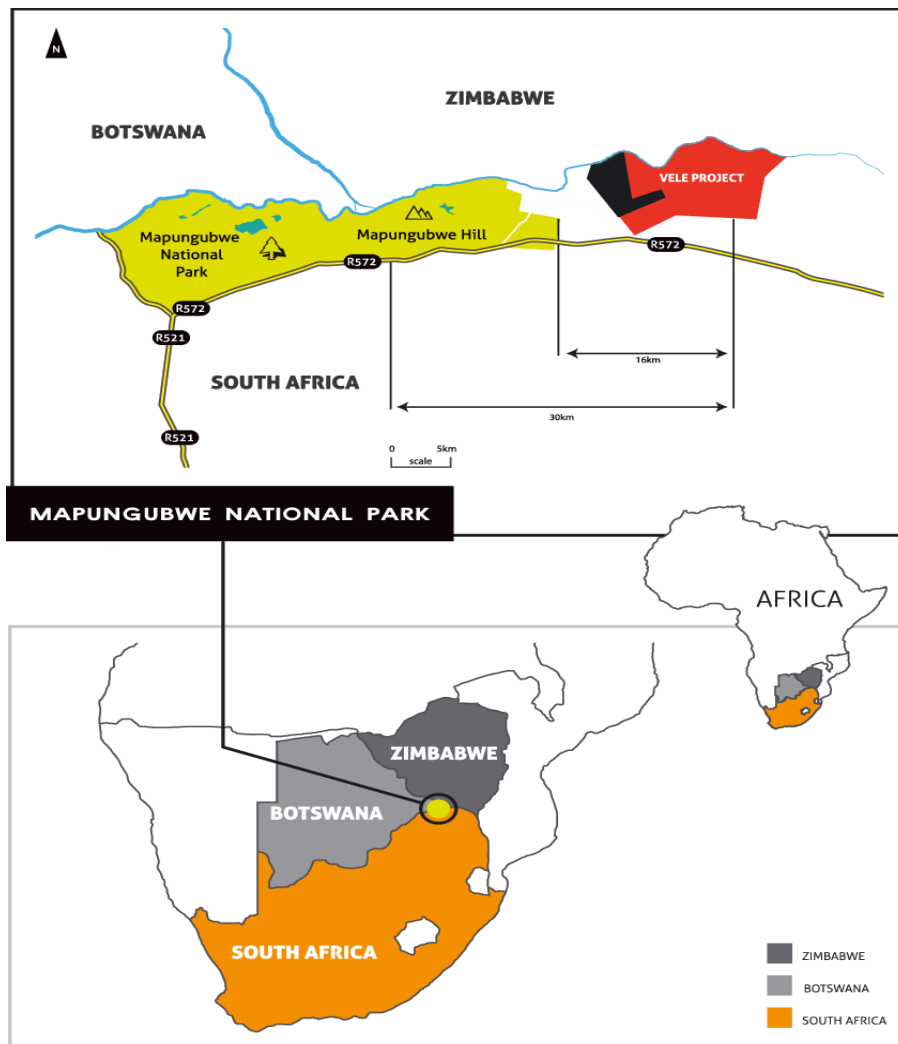


Image 1: Mapungubwe World Heritage Site and mining area (Leonard & Lebogang, 2018:208)

In post-apartheid South Africa, certain discourses have crystallised as the chief modes of reading the “nation”, its people, and its history (Rasool, 2000:1). Witz *et al.* (2001:277) notes that in the early 2000s, South African policymakers re-cast the country as one of the leading African states to promote an African Renaissance. To Africa’s monumental structures, including the Egyptian sphinx and pyramids; artistic creations like Benin’s Bronzes in Nigeria; places of learning such as Mali’s Timbuktu; the ancient universities of Alexandria of Egypt; Morocco’s Fez; Sudan’s heroic armies of Omdurman; and Great Zimbabwe, we may include the late Stone Age southern African rock art, Iron Age metal tools, the Taung and all the palaeontological finding such as the Cradle of Humankind, and the MCL in South Africa.

In 1924, Raymond Dart, an Australian professor of anatomy based in South Africa, discovered the first important African hominin fossil. These hominins appeared on the African continent about five million years ago (Christian, 2018:163-164). Subsequently, more hominin fossils have surfaced in Africa. Christian further states that the first fossils currently classified within our genus (*Homo*) lived in Africa from about 1.5 to 2.5 million years ago, an indication of Africa's rich two million years of *Homo* history. The graves found at Mapungubwe include the remains of early farming communities dating 100 000 years ago (Murray *et al.*, 2023:2) to a people more recent (13th century AD) that can be considered a 'complex society' formation in southern Africa (Caton-Thompson, 1939:330).

Writings on Africa in the 19th and early 20th centuries (e.g., those of the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel) were in general biased and critical of African cultural accomplishments (Mbembe, 2021:1-7; Graness, 2016:132–146). It was representative of an acutely biased Eurocentric view. Nowadays, the history of Africa provides a variety of interesting challenges, such as queries about how text-based European historians deal with Africa's oral heritage and history. However, to participate in the contested past discourses, we should take note of the limits of our epistemological image of culture and heritage. In other words, the limits of how we know, what we know, and in what that knowledge is grounded.

If one analyses the main existing international documents produced by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) (2008) and UNESCO (2008) for the protection and preservation of heritage sites, heritage has various meanings and definitions attached to it. Shalaginova (2012:4) identifies the following five different aspects of heritage also applicable to this study: "any relict physical survival of the past; individual and collective memories of the past, viewed from the present; cultural and artistic productivity; the natural environment; and a major commercial activity", e.g., the tourism industry.

Tourism can lead to the preservation of both culture and heritage, and it can circulate wealth in a local economy (Santos, 2016:229). This dissertation aims to show that it can be done at Mapungubwe. The field of heritage and cultural tourism provides a coherent conceptual and historical scholarly understanding (also a contemporary understanding)

of the research topic under study. The study conducted by Ivanovic and Saayman (2013:40) likewise argues that many countries make use of cultural tourism to uplift the economy. Similarly, Zadel and Bogdan (2013:360) state that cultural tourism is one of the big economic contributors in the tourism industry, also contributing to the social wellbeing of both the host community and the tourists. Further to this, tourism has been established to be an approachable zone for economic growth, allowing for the diversification of the local economy, attracting foreign exchange that leads to regional development, employment and income creation, and stimulating domestic household consumption (Meyer & Meyer, 2015:212). Heritage tourism is a fast-growing niche of cultural tourism worldwide (Van der Merwe, 2016:117). Viljoen and Henama (2017:1) further refers to an emphasis on the growth of heritage tourism in South Africa because of the potential for local economic development.

In recent times, the Limpopo provincial government and planners have identified the North-South corridor along the Limpopo River as a strategic economic development zone (Global Africa Network, 2022). This implies that there will be, on the South African side of the Limpopo, substantial economic, industrial, and regional development. The Limpopo provincial government has partnered with the national government through the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC), an international operator from China, Vhembe District, and local municipalities (Musina and Makhado), and the business fraternity to establish the Musina-Makhado Special Economic Zone (MMSEZ). The MMSEZ is in the vicinity of the Beit Bridge border post which is one of the busiest ports of entry to South Africa and a gateway to the South African Development Community (SADC) countries. The MMSEZ has the potential to become an inland intermodal terminal, facilitated by its strategic position along the North-South Corridor (include the Musina and Makhado municipalities, located in the Vhembe District). Also directly connecting to the country's major ports through both the N1 road and the Johannesburg-Musina railway line, for the trans-shipment of sea cargo and manufactured goods. This proposed development is noted, but this study will not explore the proposed MMSEZ development from a tourism perspective to add to the understanding of regional social-ecological, economic, and political dynamics at play in the North-South corridor.

The growth and contribution of tourism to the economy can be attributed to the increase in sales and profits in tourism-related businesses, both direct and indirect businesses

(Amin & Priansah, 2019:160). The positive economic impact of tourism has also been widely acknowledged with reference to the provision of employment, foreign exchange, and infrastructure development (Ribeiro & Wang, 2020:181). Du Cros and McKercher (2020:14) further point out that cultural tourism helps to conserve, preserve, and sustain the history and heritage of a region, unites nations across the world and builds the pride of a region through unique culture-related attractions.

In South Africa, the National Department of Tourism launched a national heritage and cultural tourism strategy in 2011, informed by the White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa (1996) and the National Department of Tourism (RSA, 2012). This strategy includes support and coordination, strategic partnerships, raising awareness, the sustainability of cultural tourism, and growing tourism in the country. To add to this, UNESCO stated at the UNESCO World Heritage Convention (1972) that World Heritage Sites are places of importance to cultural or natural heritage. On 10 July 1997, South Africa accepted the convention, making its historical sites eligible for inclusion on the list. As of 2024, there are ten World Heritage Sites in South Africa, including five cultural sites, four natural sites, and one mixed site (UNESCO, 2004b). The MCL was declared “an impressive Cultural Landscape of universal significance” in 2001 and included on the world heritage list in 2003 (UNESCO, 2004b).

To protect the area the Vhembe-Dongola National Park (that was proclaimed in 1995) officially opened on Heritage Day, 24 September 2004 to tourists under the name Mapungubwe National Park (hereafter referred to as MNP) (Hermann, 2013:24) under the management of the South African National Parks (SANParks). The MNP and MCL, is located on the farm Greefswald, that lies at the confluence of the Limpopo and Shashe rivers, along the border between South Africa, Botswana, and Zimbabwe. In June 2006 the Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservation Area came into existence with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding by the three countries (Sinthumule, 2020:282) South Africa, Botswana, and Zimbabwe, to benefit the local Shona and Venda communities and to attract tourists to the MNP and MCL.

Tourism is a complicated socio-economic phenomenon and no doubt one of the vital forces shaping the society in which we live (Mansperger, 1995:90). It is also an instrument for financial rejuvenation and for improving and preserving an area’s heritage. Tangible

and intangible, movable and immovable, or religious heritage assets emerge as the impetus for the regeneration and growth of a destination (Manetsi, 2011:57). The 21st century tourists learn more about local heritage and culture, which include traditions, languages, and customs, this happens when the tourist visits the heritage site of their choice. Mansperger (1995:90) also states that the more people visit heritage sites, the more it encourages local people to appreciate and value what they have and to thrive economically in the region. This dissertation not only focuses on the development of cultural heritage tourism in the Limpopo region after 1994, but also on the importance of developing the Mapungubwe World Heritage Site as a tourist attraction to create an indigenous African experience for the tourist (both international and domestic) and to share the history of the rise and fall of the first indigenous kingdom in southern Africa.

1.2 Problem statement

The study attempts to demonstrate that African culture and heritage have strong roots in pre-colonial southern Africa (Idang, 2015:97–111; Chirikure, 2013:1–3) and Mapungubwe is one example. The archaeological treasures and fossils found at the Mapungubwe heritage site can be used to develop tourism in the area. It may attract tourists (international and domestic) to its rich heritage. Further to this, tourism provides an important means of promoting culture and creating income that can support and enhance cultural heritage, cultural production, creativity (Caton-Thompson, 1939:330) and employment. The MCL also contains invaluable archaeological treasures and fossils, and those discovered so far are likely only the beginning of the historical and cultural knowledge found in this sensitive landscape (Carruthers, 2006:7), and tourism can preserve it.

The study further examines how the indigenous African culture and heritage fit perfectly with the contested public national history of South Africa, with specific reference to the heritage of the local Shona and Venda people. Cultural heritage tourism does not only benefit a nation economically, but also plays a big role in reconciling the nation and building a collective national identity (Easterly *et al.*, 2006:103). Heritage can be defined by the full range of our inherited traditions, monuments, objects, and culture, and the preservation of heritage and culture has played a big role in assisting people to identify who they are. Heritage is more than preserving, conserving, and reinstating old objects,

it includes intangible aspects and tangible resources. As indicated in the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA, Act No. 25 of 1999) (RSA, 1999), living heritage, includes the intangible aspects, traditional rituals, songs, dances, languages, customs, oral history, indigenous knowledge systems, and the holistic approach to nature, society, and social relationships. The tangible resources include places, buildings, structures and landscapes and natural features of cultural significance, historical settlements, archaeological sites, and graves and burial grounds (RSA, 1999:sec 3(2)). Tourism can divide or unite cultures, and tourism to the Mapungubwe World Heritage Site may be an opportunity for unity.

The gap in the existing scholarship in support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNESCO, 2015) centres on the most pressing development goals to alleviate poverty and create jobs in disadvantaged rural communities, and cultural tourism has been singled out as an effective socio-economic tool to achieve these goals (Ivanovic, 2015: xviii). The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (WTO) for example has become engaged with it and has stated that tourism can be harnessed as a great force for poverty alleviation and environmental protection, giving economic value to cultural heritage, creating jobs, and generating foreign exchange earnings (Shackleford, 1985:257). I shall indicate how tourism, in particular cultural heritage tourism, is not only a major economic force in the world, but also benefits the economy in the region around the Mapungubwe World Heritage Site in South Africa.

1.3 Research Questions and Aims

1.3.1 General research question

How can the Shona and Venda culture and heritage develop tourism in the Limpopo province of South Africa, with specific reference to the Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape?

1.3.2 Specific research questions

- How did the settlement on the Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape develop?
- What are the limits of our epistemological image of the Mapungubwe World Heritage Site, and the Shona and Venda culture and heritage?

- How can preserving Shona and Venda heritage and culture to promote tourism to the Mapungubwe World Heritage Site?

1.3.3 General Research Aim/Objective

The study aims to investigate how to preserve Shona and Venda culture and heritage to develop tourism in the Limpopo province, South Africa, with specific reference to the Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape.

1.3.4 Specific research objectives

The study further aims:

- To investigate the settlement history, discoveries, and trade in the Shashe-Limpopo valley.
- To critically assess UNESCO's reasons for listing Mapungubwe as a Cultural Landscape of universal significance and World Heritage Site; and
- To argue how preserving Shona and Venda cultural heritage for tourism, in particular how creative tourism and cuisine and food culture, at the Mapungubwe National Park may give economic value to cultural heritage, create jobs, and to generate foreign exchange earnings.

1.4 Theoretical context

The dissertation is based on a constructivist epistemology, which proposes that truth and meaning are constructed by my interaction with the world; meaning is therefore constructed and not discovered (Grey, 2004:17). Another theoretical perspective selected for the dissertation, which is also linked to constructivism, is interpretivism. According to Grey (2004:20) interpretivism looks for “culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social lifeworld” and deals with the social world and the actions of individuals (culture), thus focusing more on qualitative rather than quantitative enquiries. The selection of the epistemological and theoretical perspectives followed in this dissertation is determined by the fact that heritage is a part of social reality and cannot be considered separate from it. For tourism development, I find that cultural heritage tourism is particularly pertinent for this study. It posits that cultural heritage, both tangible,

like historical sites, and intangible, such as traditions and customs, plays a crucial role in driving tourism. This theory advocates for both preserving cultural heritage and utilising it to spur tourism development, thereby benefiting local communities economically and enhancing global cultural appreciation. It calls for cultural heritage in tourism to be used responsibly and sustainably, ensuring the conservation and transmission of cultural values. This resonates with my goal of providing tourists with enriching experiences that foster a deep connection with local cultures and histories.

1.5 Research methodology and literature

1.5.1 Methodology

This is a heritage tourism study, but the approach is historical in structure and source collection and analysis. The research design follows the historical research process (historic); the collecting and consolidating of information (heuristics); critiquing the past (criticism); and the techniques of interpretation (hermeneutics) and analysis. The study entails a multidisciplinary relatedness with archaeology, regional history, public national history in South Africa, and the fields of economic history, social history as well as cultural heritage tourism. I used purposive selection, a type of sampling that has a specific purpose in mind, and I relied on my own judgement when collecting and consolidating the information. To address the objectives of the study, qualitative methods of research were used. Both primary and secondary sources were consulted, including archival sources, archaeological reports as well as scholarly articles and texts, and personal interviews.

1.5.2 Literature

There are many interpretations of the past, therefore it is important to determine what narratives have been used, what the ideological position or purpose of the narratives are, and who's story/stories the history tells. In the past there was little historical scholarship based on indigenous southern African culture and heritage, and history has largely been studied from a Eurocentric perspective. It is my view that there are gaps to close by historical scholarship based on Mapungubwe's past archaeological excavations and findings, and the Shona and Venda cultures and heritage.

The archaeological reports on the Mapungubwe site drafted over several decades and kept in the University of Pretoria's archive was visited online for information on the research topic. The complexity of using this archive is noted. In all archives, documents are included selectively, for example, documents where government is presented in a good light may be included, while documents critical of government may be classified or removed. Africa is widely known as the birthplace of modern humans and for its distinctive cultural patterns (Harrison, 2015:24–42). However, indigenous southern African history is not simply a description of the past, it also includes details that have been excluded in writings about the past (silences) and questions which sources have or have not been consulted.

The disciplines of archaeology and physical anthropology are regarded as the major contributors to research already done on Mapungubwe. Eadington and Smith (1992), for example, argue that archaeological study provides unique and valuable clues to the evolution of African culture and society, while Huffman (2005 & 2007) and Hall (1987) provides insights relevant to the interpretation of the archaeological record in Mapungubwe and the changing past between 200 –1860 AD in southern Africa.

South Africa has considerable potential for cultural tourism as the country has a strong and attractive history and South Africa's apartheid history played a big role in the cultural diversity of the country (Butler & Ivanovic, 2016:58–75). Scheyvens (2009:194) further argues that local economic development became one of the most important priorities for the government after the fall of apartheid. Ndidzulafhi (2020:280) offers an important insight into the redesigning of border landscapes to establish transfrontier conservation areas, borders as a legacy of colonialism, and borders as fragmenting habitats that affect border people. Cultural tourism in the 21st century is no longer an entirely commercial phenomenon, it now also entails social, cultural, political, and environmental aspects (Tasie, 2014:96; Meyer & Meyer, 2015:180). It is, therefore, important to recognise that any evaluation of tourism should not only be concerned with tangible economic results such as revenue and foreign exchange earnings, but also non-economic and intangible effects, such as social and cultural ones. I analysed publications on cultural tourism in the broader South African context, with specific reference to the impact of tourism on poverty (Saayman *et al.*, 2012), the tourism industry as a viable response to South Africa's growth and development challenges (Van der Schyff *et al.*, 2019), and unlocking the rural tourism

potential of the Limpopo province of South Africa (Mafunzwaini & Hugo, 2005). I also analysed the sources and findings of Mohale *et al.* (2020) a study that outlines the nature of the cultural and heritage tourism industry in greater Polokwane, Limpopo province.

The South African government is continuously introducing more policies that only focus on job creation, rather than looking at how these policies affect the conservation of culture within an area (Sully, 2013). Meskell (2013a & 2013b) also writes about World Heritage Sites with specific reference to the economic and political order of international heritage conservation. Meskell further argued that the advisory bodies' scientific conclusions were becoming less and less consistent with the committee's choices, which led to a more "political" approach to the Convention than a "heritage" approach. Rogerson (2006:40) asserts that developing pro-poor tourism increases the benefits for the local community, not only by creating jobs, but also with the provision of other developmental opportunities. Ramaano (2021a:201) adds that in the Limpopo province, most of the cultural and heritage sites are privately owned and that they contribute positively to the cultural heritage preservation in the province. Additionally, Boonzaaier and Phillip (2007:117) assert that most heritage sites in the Limpopo province are managed by people who are educated and know how to manage the heritage sites according to legislation. However, local entrepreneurs are needed to boost the tourism-related activities in the province to foster the sustainability of culture and to continue to improve the living conditions of the local community.

1.5.3 Interviews

I planned to conduct 10 interviews with local schoolteachers, owners of guesthouses, the employees in Musina Tourism Office, and the Mapungubwe National Park. Unfortunately, it was only possible to conduct two interviews, one with a tourist who visited the site in June 2023, and one with a previous manager of the MNP. SANParks was emailed, and they instructed me to add my research proposal to their website, as they will only give permission to interview employees after a minuted meeting decision. They did not respond. The individuals approached by me, except the above mentioned two, did not want to sign the NWU Basic Sciences Research Committee's (BaSSREC) participant information and consent leaflet (see Addendum A). This prevented me from obtaining valuable information for this study.

1.6 Research Ethics

All research conducted respected the North-West University's ethical requirements' policy. The BaSSREC committee approved the study as a minimal to low-risk category, as it mainly comprises of scholarly online and printed documents. I was the only investigator and has the appropriate academic credentials to conduct this study (with a BaSSREC Ethics training certificate). The data collected will be stored for five years by me and the study leaders in electronic format with password protection. The outcomes of the study may be used in conference papers and journal articles to highlight the importance of persevering the Shona and Venda heritage and culture to develop tourism in the Limpopo Province.

1.7 Significance of the study

My main objective is to uncover new knowledge on the Shona and Venda cultures and heritage and to link it to the Mapungubwe Heritage Site and tourism. The information on how to preserve Shona and Venda heritage and culture to promote tourism will add new insights on the MCL and the MNP as a tourist attraction. The research results may assist future researchers, thus building on the knowledge that exists in the field.

1.8 Limitation of the study

Challenges related to the use of secondary data include that data may not be relevant to the study as it may have been collected by parties with other research foci, or from different disciplines. In addition, the secondary data may not be relevant as the location may not necessarily be the same. The people who did not consent to the interviews limited the number of interviews conducted and the collection of information. I had to complete the study within two years, and this limited time factor influenced the data saturation process.

1.9 Provisional chapter layout

This dissertation will consist of five chapters. A brief outline of each chapter follows below.

Chapter 1 offers a brief introduction and include an orientation and background to the study. This is followed by a discussion on the problem statement, research questions and

objectives, theoretical context. research methodology, a brief literature review, research ethics, significance, and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2 analyses what the available literature offers on the settlement history on the Mapungubwe Landscape.

Chapter 3 critically assesses UNESCO's reasons for listing Mapungubwe as a World Heritage Site and why the remains created an impressive cultural landscape of universal significance.

Chapter 4 deals with the preservation of the Shona and Venda heritage and culture to develop tourism in the Limpopo province.

Chapter 5 offers a discussion of the main findings of the research and suggestions for further development and study of the research topic.

CHAPTER 2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE SETTLEMENT, DISCOVERIES AND TRADE IN THE SHASHE-LIMPOPO VALLEY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents intellectual perspectives on the early farming settlement, the Venda and Shona distribution (see Image 2), as well as farming and trading since the Early Iron Age (200 – 900 AD) in the Middle Limpopo valley. The discussion starts with a short overview on the history of southern African societies and their socioeconomic division, thereafter, the Venda and Shona's intangible and tangible heritage including traditions and burial rituals, and the development of external trade in southern Africa. This chapter also contributes to the understanding, and interpretation of the MCL which can be used to development authentic tourism experiences focussed on the Shona and Venda culture and heritage.

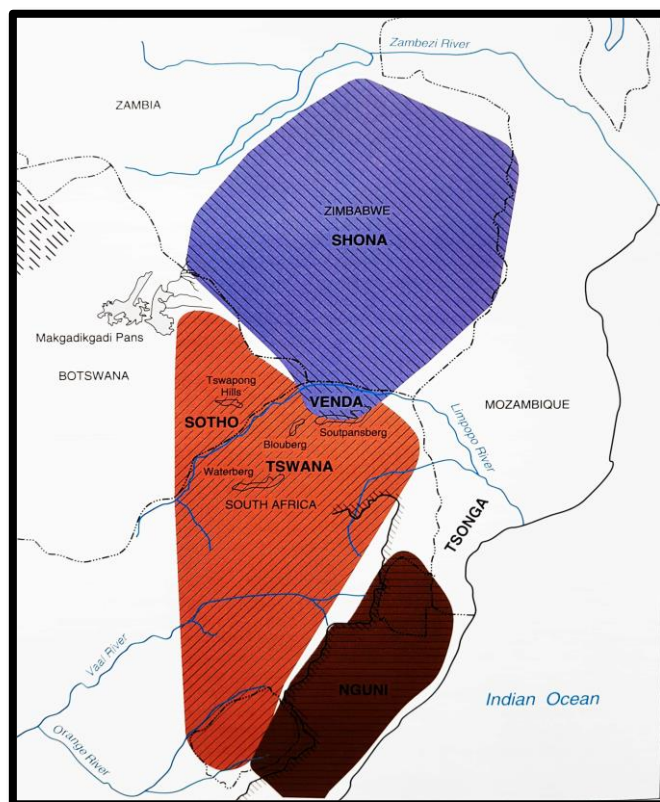


Image 2: Distribution of Eastern Bantu languages considered in this study
(Huffman, 2007:xii)

2.2 Settlement on the Mapungubwe landscape

To understand the impact of external trade on southern African societies, it is imperative to review the region's precolonial history – from the emergence of iron-using farming cultures to the initial decades of the second millennium – in four distinct stages (Leighton, 1999:45). Firstly, in the sixth century the farming communities are defined by communities that live in dispersed villages and lack any indication of outside connections or a social structure with hierarchies. The second stage, which begins around the seventh century, coincides with the development of external trade, and is characterised by a shift in production toward items with a market value. The third stage, which begins about the 10th century, is marked by a growth in trade and communities that start to exhibit signs of socio-economic diversion. The creation of state structures like Mapungubwe and social stratification are created in residential structures that occur in the fourth and final stage. The culmination of these events was the founding of the Zimbabwe state (11th to the 15th centuries, which was centred on the principal city of the area north of the Limpopo River also known as 'Great Zimbabwe' (the name of the capital of the Kingdom of Zimbabwe, which was a Shona trading empire near modern day Masvingo, Zimbabwe), which is thought to have replaced Mapungubwe (Leighton, 1999:45).

Southern African Eastern Bantu speakers are descended from pre-colonial farmers (Schapera, 1971:36). Therefore, their ethnography is crucial to comprehend the Iron Age archaeological record. Van Warmelo and Lestrade (1932:23) contend that an archaeological term for societies in southern Africa that were built on class distinctions and sacrosanct leadership is the Zimbabwe culture, excluding the Khoisan people. However, Mapungubwe in southern Africa is where a sacrosanct leadership form of society first emerged (Smith, 1931:506). This source refers to a mystical connection between the leader and the land as well as a connection between the leader's ancestors (*mudzimu*) and God are both examples of sacrosanct leadership. The next leader is also claimed to be chosen by God through the ancestors, and he might be any of a few royal sons of the outgoing leader. Huffman (1982:140) argues that the shift from ranking societies at the capital K2 (Leopard's Kopje) to class-based societies at the Mapungubwe Hill area, resulted in modifications to the geographical organisation of communities within the area (see Image 3).

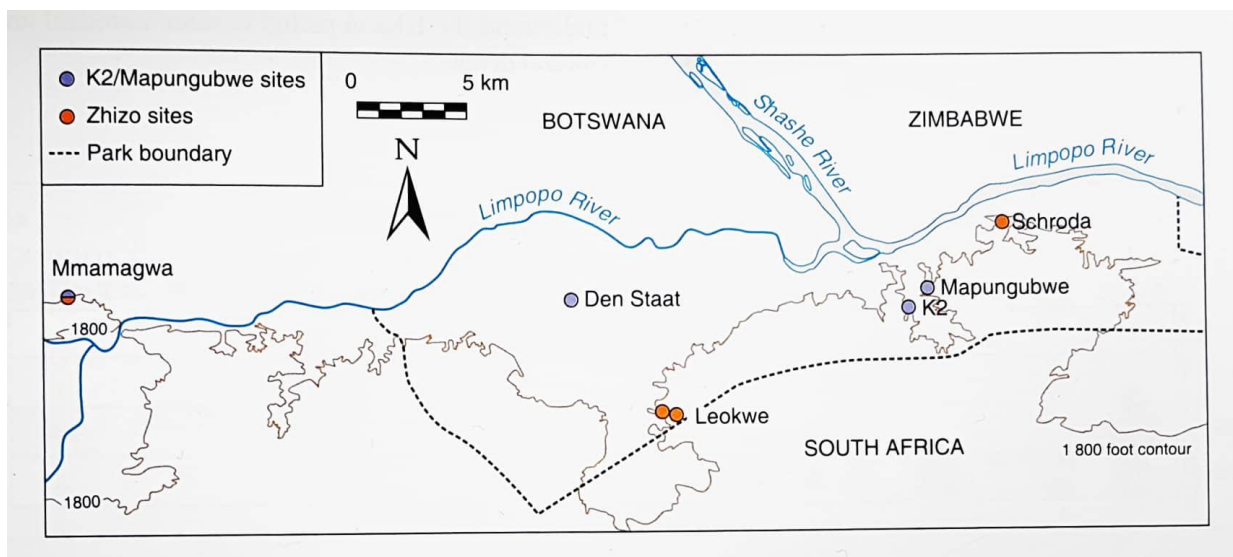


Image 3: Map of the Mapungubwe and K2 sites in the Shashe-Limpopo basin (Huffman, 2007:361)

The central cattle pattern, often known as the CCP, was widely employed by rank-based societies to organise their towns. In this style of governance, the outside residential zone served as the realm of women, while the settlement's centre belonged to men. Throughout the Iron Age, the Mapungubwe landscape's low-lying commoner sites were characterised by this type of organisation. This type of leadership made it easy for the people who stayed there to be organised in their everyday life (Kuper, 1980:15). The Zimbabwe pattern widely known as the ZP was created because of social and philosophical changes (Huffman, 1982:142). Sacred leaders had to maintain their distance in this pattern, so they lived by themselves in a private palace with a stone wall, above, to the east, and behind the followers' designated public and secular region. In contrast to the property for the king's women, the court was primarily a male domain and was situated on a different status axis to the side of the palace. It was customary for concentric rings of guards and medicine to surround the palace, shielding it from both natural and supernatural threats. Everyone else organised their homesteads outside of the capitals in accordance with CCP principles (Huffman, 1996a:12).

The Mapungubwe landscape's dual settlement structure provides more proof of formal social classes. As stated by Taruvinga (2019:14) the MCL is connected to the growth of socio-political complexity in southern Africa between the 11th and 14th centuries. The social system at Mapungubwe involved the unique living arrangement among people in

the area. To differentiate this living arrangement, the leaders stayed at the top of the hill while the commoners would be found in the low-lying sites at the bottom of the hill. During these centuries, people in said region viewed the hill found at Mapungubwe as a place they can connect to God. The people of the Middle Limpopo valley (near the confluence of the Shashe and Limpopo rivers) would be practicing the African religion at the hill to lift their spirits by connecting with the God of Mapungubwe (Meskell, 2016:273).

There were people who lived on the Mapungubwe Hill and in the nearby low-lying sites from about 1100 to 1290 AD (Manyanga & Chirikure, 2019:80). The spatial organisation continued to change during this brief period, becoming the new elite pattern. The new design incorporated a stone-walled enclosure that gave the king ritual privacy while isolating him from family and subjects. Manyanga and Chirikure (2019:80) confirm that additional stonewalling marked the entrances to affluent neighbourhoods, delineated the boundaries of noble residences, and demarcated the town centre. This source further argues that the aristocratic ZP emerged at K2 and Mapungubwe Hill rather than at Great Zimbabwe itself, as shown by these and other similarities with Great Zimbabwe (Manyanga *et al.*, 2010:580). This new elite pattern, which reflects the full materialisation of religious leadership, had most likely formed by 1250 AD (Manyanga *et al.*, 2010:580). The first spatial change in terms of social complexity happened at K2 (Huffman, 2000:15). Consequently, an intensification of social ranking there is likely what led to the earliest cultural modifications. K2's original spatial design would have represented social relations at the time of its establishment. Subsequently, due to fundamental socio-political developments, the layout of synchrony, necessitating adjustments to the spatial pattern (Huffman, 1986a:290).

2.2.1 Socio-economic division

The economies of the early farming communities in southern Africa that used iron were mostly geared toward subsistence, and it is likely that production was done locally to meet local demands (Hall, 1983:8). In addition, it has been found that these societies' villages do not exhibit much difference. It reveals a vast and intricate political framework, but there is no indication of social stratification, except for sex and age (Arnold *et al.*, 2013:130). Cattle herds played a significant role in various southern African Iron Age communities, based on archaeological data (Thorp, 1984:16). Cattle were the dominating animal, as

evidenced by the faunal remains found at important sites like Mapungubwe, Great Zimbabwe, and other locations. It is evident that herds of cattle were a source of status and power, and that one's ability to command a following in society depended in part on this (Plug, 2000:120). Bundy (1979:60) explains that the expansion of some people's riches in the form of cattle is what gave rise to southern Africa's growing social complexity and state development. Huffman (1972:24) has suggested that the establishment of state institutions and the subsequent growth of social complexity in the area could not have been the simple outcome of an increase in income from cattle. It has been stated that unlike trade items like beads and ceramics, cattle are a "democratic" resource that is renewable. Any person with adequate breeding stock might amass herds of cattle in favourable conditions (Jean & Comaroff, 1990:197). In addition to their traditional cultural value, cattle were an important economic resource in places like K2, and Leopard's Kopje (Mapungubwe), and Mapela (Zimbabwe).

There is a startling similarity between the rise in social complexity and the expansion of the region's external trade, to the point where a causal relationship between the two can be acknowledged. However, it is one thing to show the link between the social transformation of some southern African communities brought on by their involvement in international trade and ownership of imported products, and quite another to explain how this new branch of production caused this social revolution (Brooks, 2006:30). Skinner (2017:34) argues that the possession of trade commodities in Mapungubwe translated into authority and result in a hierarchical society and statehood. This is because the uniqueness of imported goods and the fact that they offered a route to power since they represented a type of wealth that could be preserved and distributed in a different way than cattle.

A significant synchronicity exists between the establishment of new economic, social, and political entities in some areas of the sub-region starting about the time when evidence for external trade became accessible. In this context, Leokwe, Schroda, K2 (Leopard's Kopje, Mapungubwe), and Mapela (Zimbabwe) are key places (Killick, 2009:14). Huffman (1980:43) writes that Mapungubwe and Mapela are excellent examples because it has been observed that there are differences in residential structures, with some likely those belonging to persons higher on the social scale enclosed behind stone walls and situated on hilltops (Mapungubwe Hill), and others being in open and lower positions. Recent

arguments have been made that the relationship between monarchy and mountains or high areas, which has been a feature of the Kingdom of Mapungubwe and various southern Bantu civilisations, is established by this differential habitation pattern (Klehm, 2017:620).

Social, economic, and political differences did exist in these societies (Turner, 1987:17). Evidence can be cited from Mapungubwe where some burials have been discovered in association with gold objects. Mapungubwe was a centre of some economic and, by inference, political importance, to such an extent that archaeologists now agree that it was the centre of the region's first state system, developing from the 11th century and collapsing sometime during the early part of the 13th century. Furthermore, although it has not been proven, it is probable that the smaller site of Mapela, which is 85 km away and was constructed at the same time as Mapungubwe, fits within the state structure's hierarchical settlement patterning (Chirikure, 2020:38). Thus, the rise of Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe, its alleged successor, can be utilised as case studies to demonstrate the evolution of early state systems in the region and how this connects to foreign trade. There is no indication of any additional population movements into the area to commence this growth, indicating that Mapungubwe as the capital of a state undoubtedly developed from the local farming settlements. Given this, it is important to consider how these little towns expanded to become such substantial cities and political entities. The answer appears to be partially rooted in both the local economies and the new opportunities that came with owning foreign products (Maggs, 1984:34).

The control over the goods used in international trade by elites was essential for the emergence of power and states (Feuchtwang & Rowlands, 2019:56). Following that, Huffman and Vogel (1991:19) explain that the elite's hierarchical relationships with one another and their standing in relation to their dependents were strengthened by the unequal distribution of the goods of external commerce. These imported items may then be redistributed to increase authority and command a following.

2.2.2 Venda and Shona origins

When Great Zimbabwe replaced Mapungubwe around 1300 AD, the Mapungubwe landscape was largely abandoned. About 50 years later, Sotho-Tswana people arrived at Mapungubwe. They could be recognised by their distinctive Icon-style pottery (Hanisch,

1979:75). Later, speakers of western Shona from the Khami phase crossed the Limpopo from the north (Khami is located about 22 km west of Bulawayo in Zimbabwe). The history of the Venda, as well as the oral traditions of the Tshivhula and Machete, is directly influenced by the movement of the western Shona speakers and the Sotho-Tswana in the Mapungubwe area.

Nemaheni (2002:256) contradicts Leighton (1999:45) mentioned above and argues that the first people to have stayed at Mapungubwe were the people of Thulamela, the ancestors of the Shona people from the southern part of Africa. He (Nemaheni, 2002:256) adds that the Thulamela people left Zimbabwe and headed south by crossing the Limpopo River (modern South Africa) to relocate at Mapungubwe and Pafuri (nowadays Kruger National Park) after the collapse of the Great Zimbabwe. Fagan (1964:340) further states that the Thulamela people are directly linked to the Venda people of today. Firstly, the people of Thulamela were “skilled goldsmiths, and their main currency was gold”. Secondly, the male and female skeletal remains that were found at the K2 site were buried in gold jewellery resembling the Venda custom.

The Vhambedzi clan, one of the earlier Venda, migrated from the Masnyanga stone-walled settlement in Zimbabwe and settled south of the Limpopo (Vhembe) River before the arrival of the Masingo group who conquered and subjugated them (Nemaheni, 2021:119). This is an indication of the Venda connections with Zimbabwe and the Shona people. The Venda language exhibits indications of evolution from Shona and Sotho-Tswana over the course of the 20th century (Bailey, 1995:40). Linguists claim that Venda is a combination of Kalanga, Karanga, and Sotho-Tswana (Lestrade, 1927:15). To confirm this, the Tavhatshena transitional stage, which dates to between 1500 and 1600 AD, demonstrates that Venda ceramics (Letaba, nowadays Kruger National Park) are a result of the blending of Shona (Khami) and Sotho-Tswana (Icon) forms.

It is evident that most Venda speakers, particularly of royal lineage, identify as "Venda" (Loubser, 1991:150), despite regional language variations. Neighbouring communities also recognise this identification, albeit with their respective variations of the term. They go by the names Vesha or Bvesha among the Tonga in the southeast, Veya among the Kalanga in the northwest, Dzweda among the highveld Sotho in the south, and Tswetla among the lowveld Sotho in the southeast. According to Ralushai (1977:46) other than

these indicators, nearby populations may tell Venda speakers apart by their habits, particularly by the significant respect that the Venda people exhibit towards their chiefs. This outward identity survives even though the Venda do not consider themselves to be a politically or culturally homogeneous nation. In the ninth century, the Venda speakers started to be treated as a cultural group by ethnographers because they all participate in the same characteristic institutions (Ralushai & Gray, 1977:7).

During the 15th century when the Twamamba, who made Khami pottery, migrated to the Middle Limpopo valley, Sotho-Tswana peoples were already residing here (Wentzel, 1983:25). As to what the exact methods and timing, the change into Venda was finished prior to the Singo's arrival. The Singo's came from the Great lakes in Central Africa (present day Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, and the western side of Tanzania), conquered the Venda clans and went about imposing its rule over every clan it found in Venda (Machiridza, 2008:25). Traditional and Portuguese records claim that the Singo crossed the Limpopo in the 1690s, proceeded south, conquered the separate chiefdoms, and for the first-time united Venda as a nation. There is little reason to question a close historical resemblance given that the Changamire Rozwi and the Singo share the same mythological forebears (Machiridza, 2008:25). As stated by Stayt (1931a:234) the Nzhelele valley's stonewalled capital, Dzata served as the seat of the Singo. Dzata, which is significant since it is the only paramount Chief capital in Venda, likely ruled over a region of about 30 000 km² shortly after AD 1700. Additionally, 50-60 years later, under the mythical ruler Thohoyandou, Dzata was abandoned, and the nation was divided into the three rival dynasties that exist today, Mphephu, Tshivhase and Mphaphuli.

The Singo clan, with a totemism connection, is where the Mphaphuli Kingdom first appeared in the 1770 AD (Mmbara, 2009:1). The Mphaphuli Kingdom's founding father was Nelunguda. He first resided in Lunguda before moving to Mandala, Tshitomboni, Hamphego, Mbilwana, and finally Miluwani, which is today a part of Thohoyandou, a town in Limpopo, South Africa. Nemudzivhadi (1977:11) a few of his subjects travelled to Mbilwi and subsequently made their home in Maanea. The older headmen of this kingdom are: Mmbara, Tshikalange, Tshabuse, Mafenya, Madzuta, and Bohwana, and they can be easily distinguished by their unique title names Gole.

The Singo cultural group has long been renowned for the respect it shows for its royals, headmen, and other royal family members. It appears that the aforementioned allowed the Venda people's diverse cultural communities to live in peace and stability. Rarely did one see or hear of subjects who were hostile, disdainful, or unruly toward either their chiefs or their king (Loubser, 1990:30). People who spoke the Venda language used to perform initiation rituals such *musevhe* (junior female initiation), *domba* (the final stage of girls' initiation), *vhusha* (girls' second initiation stage), and *murundu* (boys' home coming from mountain initiation). Without the chief's consent, these initiation rituals could not begin. Back then, the chief would punish anyone who did not report this incident, and the activities would be stopped right away.

The Twamamba are a western Venda group that were found in the Limpopo province around the 15th century (Dzivhani *et al.*, 1940:20). The Tshivhula are now recognised as the senior dynasty of this group. In contrast, the Tshivhula community is mainly divided along the Machete line. According to the written legends, the Tshivhula headquarters were situated close to the Saltpan at the western end of the Soutpansberg during the 18th and 19th centuries. Additionally, Trevor and Mellor (1908:15) assert that early in the 19th century, Raletaupé, a son of chief Tshivhula, was appointed as a district chief in the Middle Limpopo valley. He discovered Sotho-Tswana in the neighbourhood and Bolana, a headman of the Birwa group, residing at Leokwe Hill, today part of the MCL (under Thaha, the chief of Kalanga). Raletaupé was given the name Machete (or Mmatshete), which means "Mr. Be Quiet," because his job was to defend the northern border while keeping peace. For a while, he ruled as district chief from Leokwe Hill, but after his passing, his son Rantshana took over. Moreover, Van Warmelo (1935:20) stated that the Leokwe Hill was forgotten shortly after Rantshana was killed, his brother and uncle were judged guilty for his passing. It is unclear what happened to the chieftaincy after Rantshana's death. However, the Machete chieftaincy had broken up by the 1930s, when the first Mapungubwe expeditions were launched, after the region had been controlled by people of European descent for almost 60 years.

2.3 Intangible (living) heritage

Intangible cultural heritage, also referred to as living heritage, may be a positive contribution to the attractiveness of a destination. The Convention for the Safeguarding

of the Intangible Heritage (UNESCO, Paris 2003: Article 2.1) define intangible cultural heritage as:

“the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts, and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups, and individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities, and groups (and in some cases individuals) in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity”.

The Convention further list (UNESCO, Paris 2003: Article 2.2) the domains in which intangible cultural heritage, as defined above, is manifested. It includes oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, social practices (rituals and festive events), knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, and traditional craftsmanship.

2.3.1 Rainmaking practices

Southern African Eastern Bantu speakers are descended from pre-colonial farmers, who settles in the Middle Limpopo valley. Rainmaking (practices concerning nature and the universe) was connected to their agricultural cycle (Schapera, 1971:67). Usually men, rainmakers carried out their tasks in a designated space at the rear of their homesteads. They generally seemed to be prosperous. But as droughts persisted despite these rituals and remedies, rainmakers relocated to specific, steep-sided hills (Murimbika, 2006:17). The hills are known for rainmaking such as Leokwe Hill, incorporated within MNP (see Image 4). The rainmaking hills possess unique characteristics namely: they have steep sides making access difficult, features artificial cupules alongside natural cisterns, are too constrained in size to accommodate regular settlement and are scattered with pottery spanning varied time periods (Schoeman, 2006:100). Between 350 and 450 AD, when rainfall was presumably sufficient, the first Bantu-speaking farmers arrived in the Mapungubwe region (Huffman, 2007:24). The cattle farmers were using rain-making techniques around 500 AD at numerous locations, but unfavourable weather and less rainfall put a stop to future farming operations for several hundred years (Machiridza, 2013:65). As a result, the central cattle pattern (hereafter CCP) village was abandoned

by the Shona-speaking people's ancestors who settled in the Middle Limpopo valley (now MCL) (Sinamai, 2018:70).



**Image 4: The rainmaking hill, Leokwe Hill, in Mapungubwe National Park
(Photo: Liebetrau, 2022)**

The rainmaking hills have a specific archaeological character. The deposit includes elements including transient tiny stock kraals, transient grain bins, charred sorghum, and transient thin *lapa* surfaces (Murimbika, 2006:18). According to Huffman (2007:17) the Transitional K2 (TK2) period (1200 – 1250 AD), is known for its thin *lapa* surfaces. TK2 is a transitional phase between the K2- and the Mapungubwe period when a change in ceramics occurred in the hilltop deposits at Leokwe Hill (K2). Ceramics made during the TK2 phase are distinct from traditional K2 ware. Notably, this type of deposit is unique to this hill and is not produced by any other activity in the archaeological record. This archaeological signature can be utilised as a cultural proxy for drought because it coincides with independent climate data for dryness (Tyson & Lindesay, 1992:276). Multiple droughts occurred during the transitional period (1200 – 1250 AD), when both temperature and rainfall fell significantly below average, as indicated by isotopic evidence

(Eastwood & Smith, 2005). Like on the farm Machete, many hills in the region have a sizable amount of rainmaking deposit that dates to this same period.

The professional rainmakers stopped using hills in the Mapungubwe region by the middle of the 13th century because sacred leaders had altered the system (Schoeman, 2006:45). Furthermore, Townsend (1974:30) believes that all aspects of rainmaking were nationalised, but it is still unclear how the 13th century drought affected the final manifestation of religious leadership in Mapungubwe, and that further research is required. Van der Walt (2012:20) argues that, if historical cultural systems are accurate guides, the restoration of heavier rainfall would have been seen as a divine endorsement of the new order. In any case, from this point forward, most religious leaders routinely built their palaces atop hills that brought rain. The religious leaders believed that building palaces on top of the hill would put an end to drought in the area and bring heavier rainfalls which assist them when it comes to farming (Huffman, 2007:45).

Sacred leadership during the Mapungubwe period (1220 – 1300 AD) was established because of customs and traditions (Huffman, 2000:27). According to Basinyi and Sagiya (2018:180), the local population has preserved Mapungubwe's significance as a sacred site for rainmaking in their intangible heritage. Folklore claims that in the distant past, several *mashonzha* worm catchers camped close to Mapungubwe Hill and built a large fire to roast the worms (Steyn, 2018:69). Late at night, they heard singing and drumming on the Hill, along with human voices. After an hour, the rain started to fall, and soon rainwater was pouring into their fireplace. They were frightened to death because there was violent thunder and lightning (Steyn, 2018:69). Steyn (2018:70) further confirms that people became even more alarmed when they heard wild animal noises. When one of the group's oldest members pleaded with the ancestors to save them, the thunder and roar were suddenly silenced. The people were unaware that this was a burial cemetery, so they put some snuff (A type of smokeless tobacco that is made of finely ground or shredded tobacco leaves) on the ground, and started to pray, "We are your little ones" (Steyn & Antonites, 2019:360). To add to this, Leokwe Hill may have occasionally served as a significant location for female initiation, according to a vast cache of baked clay figurines (Huffman & Du Pisani, 2011:190) excavated in this area.

2.3.2 Burial rituals

In the Venda culture, and practiced up to date, the royal family are laid to rest in the evening (Musehane, 2012:55). They are interred in a particular cemetery set aside for the royal family, similar to the custom during the Mapungube period (Kingdom) to bury the royals on the Mapungubwe Hill. The royal grave site is a holy location. Mourners are not permitted to speak once they are in the graveyard to protect the deceased from noise disruption when this process is being done. Women enter the designated area or graveyard with their breasts uncovered. According to Vho Nyamutshasgole (2011:34) as cited by Musehane (2012:55) a person in charge of overseeing and declaring each action that should be conducted at the cemetery yard will be there when they enter. When they are in the cemetery, only moderate singing is permitted since they do not want to disturb those who have already been laid to rest. There will be ululations from certain family members as the casket is lowered into the grave.

On the other hand, a commoner is laid to rest in the morning. Funeral directors bring the corpse early on the morning of the burial. The body will be recognised by those who knew the deceased. This is to prevent them from burying the incorrect individual. As tradition, Christian pastors nowadays lead vigil prayer gatherings, as traditions have changed over time. A Christian leader will be asked by the family to officiate at the funeral. Pastors will preside over the burial regardless of whether the deceased was a Christian or not (Loubser, 2008:190).

According to Musehane (2012:55), the burial process of then and now includes the following: Water: the pouring of water on the grave is believed as a way of cooling down the deceased. Seeds: the traditional pouring of seeds on the grave after the burial recently resembles the verse in the Bible where they plant the corpse as seeds which would later 'germinate' to resemble the resurrection. Tombstone: traditional burial rites resemble the way when, after death, a stone is removed, and placed on the grave, and life goes on as normal and there is no more weeping. Nowadays they use a tombstone. Food: the purpose of the invitation to eat food after the burial is to cleanse the mourners' hands. Before entering the gate, they bathe their hands, not to say that they want to eat, but that they are cleansing death, as mourners are believed to carry death with them. Roots: the collection of roots found when digging the grave are taken to the traditionalist who will

boil them, and it would be drunk by the relatives to prevent death from returning to the family. Utensils: the deceased's utensils are put on the grave after the burial. The family of the deceased will break all the utensils that the deceased used and place them on the grave, and this symbolises the end of the deceased. The community also believes that the deceased should not come back in spirit for the utensils.

The above-mentioned practices can be preserved by educating and engagement within the community of both elderly and youth. For people who are far and cannot join the community engagement, documenting and recording of the above practices can help in reaching a larger community. This is also part of dark tourism (tourists who travel to places historically associated with death and tragedy), activities that tourists may see and experience when visiting MNP.

2.4 Mapungubwe rediscovered

The city on the southern part of the Limpopo River, known today as Mapungubwe Hill, was deserted in the 13th century and disappeared from the main historical records of southern Africa for centuries (Caton-Thompson, 1939:340). Occasionally, the area was settled by small groups, but little was known to the world about these communities, whose political and economic reach stretched as far as the East Coast of Africa (Meyer, 1994:150). However, Meyer (1998:15) adds that Mapungubwe has regained the world's attention in much the same way as many other sites and early civilisations in other parts of the world. There was a time of legends and stories about the former capital, followed by secret visits by wealth hunters.

The Mapungubwe site was rediscovered on 31 December 1932, when Mowena, a local informant, took farmer and prospector E.S.J. Van Graan, his son and three other people to Mapungubwe Hill on the Greefswald property (Fouché, 1937:140). A deeper look revealed ceramic, glass beads, iron, and gold items, as well as stone fortifications on the hill. The site's academic worth was recognised by Van Graan's son, who then got in touch with Professor Leo Fouché, head of the history department at the University of Pretoria (Steyn, 2007:140). In June 1933, the Union government purchased Mapungubwe's resting farm Greefswald, for the state, and the University of Pretoria acquired the excavation rights from the previous owner, Mr. E.E. Collins, who transferred the rights to the government (Fouché (1937:89). In return, the government signed an agreement with

the university that allowed the university to conduct archaeological research at Mapungubwe for five years and guaranteed significant financial support for the research (Gardner, 1955:76). Under the auspices of the University of Pretoria, researchers began excavations to shed light on the remains of a “lost” culture. Additionally, Gardner (1963:45) adds that Mr. J.H. Hoffmeyer, Minister of the Interior at the time, had responsibilities including archaeological surveys and the Commissioner for Archaeology of the University of Pretoria, a special commission responsible for all work related to the planned excavations, and set up a meeting. This required raising funds, directing field activities, arranging for the publication of reports on the work done, and submitting annual reports and balance sheets to the Minister (Fagan, 1964:314). After the South African government purchased Greefswald in 1933, and the University of Pretoria was given permission to conduct excavations, an Archaeological Committee was founded by the University from 1933 to 1947 (Gardner, 1963:3). The discovery attracted considerable media attention at first, but soon the University's archaeological investigations and discoveries were kept quiet and only made public after 1994 (Tiley-Nel, 2011:56). Perhaps because the discovery showed that a civilisation existed and thrived long before the arrival of the Europeans or because of the valuable items found. The Mapungubwe collection on display at the University of Pretoria, is based mostly on archaeological excavations conducted by the University of Pretoria at the sites of Mapungubwe and nearby areas, beginning with preparatory work in March and June 1933 and culminating with the first official field expedition in May 1934 (Steyn, 2007:145).

In the MNP, at the bottom of Mapungubwe Hill is an informative stratigraphic excavation pit showing the archaeological evidence (excavated by the University of Pretoria archaeologists) with a steel canopy to protect the pit from the elements. For school groups and tourists this is very informative and a way to experience the cultural authenticity of this heritage site.

2.5 Excavations at Mapungubwe Hill (royal graves)

The content of the excavated graves gives us information on both the tangible culture and the customs of people who resided in the Mapungubwe Kingdom. Two royal graves were uncovered on Mapungubwe Hill in the 1930s when the local archaeologist (E.S.J. Van Graan) was looking at the design of houses. The first one was located along the

enclosure's north wall, fragments of three clay jars and two oval stones were discovered. A depression in a section of the clay floor suggested the presence of a collapsed chamber (Heron *et al.*, 2013:17). An oval irregularity in the floor showed the location of the second grave. Numerous bits of gold and copper foil that had been punctured with tiny nails, along with a double iron gong and several broken clay pots, had been discovered. A hyena mandible, lion teeth and many seashells were found in the levels just above the structure where the second grave was interred (Caton-Thompson, 1939:330). To add to this, there are several little stone constructions in the grave that point to the possibility of a circular home.

During a later excavation, a 400 mm deep layer of human remains was discovered during the test dig (Van Warmelo, 1940:55). Van Warmelo (1940:56) further observed that on the right wrist of the skeleton, a triple-stranded gold wire bracelet was found, and 291 gold beads were found near the left wrist. The total absence of glass beads in the burial, although they abound on the site, is remarkable. The excavation of the pit revealed no stratification, except for a thin ash layer in the bottom of the southern profile. This ash layer was not observed during the excavation of the grave filling, as it would have been removed by the original gravediggers.

In another grave, a female skeleton was discovered on her left side, facing east, in a horizontally flexed foetal position. It is unknown if the body's position was thought to be significant (Mabena, 1999:33). Like the current Venda tradition of *losha*, her hands were joined with her palms together, and her hands under her left temple (Sibadela, 2002:56). Today, in Venda tradition, women greet men in a reflective of the position in which the female skeleton was found. This is a way to show respect and is called *losha*, therefore the female skeleton discovered was named "Queen Losha". The broad sciatic notch and flat sacrum on the pelvis of this skeleton suggest that the person was female (Krogman & Isçan, 1986:205). This was supported by the skull's vertical forehead, acute supra-orbital borders, diminutive supra-orbital ridges, and diminutive mastoids. The chin is round, despite the everted mandibular angles (typically a male feature). Thus, it may be said that this person was probably a woman. Given that the cemetery was discovered in a location that was historically considered to be a female territory, ethnographic evidence supports this (Steyn, 1997:15).

Using the Lundy (1987:54) equations, almost all the post-cranial measurements were taken, and thanks to the skeleton's excellent preservation, pre-mortem stature was estimated to be around 173 cm (calculated from either the femur or the tibia alone, it was 176,27 cm and 169,35 cm, respectively). The person was generally of strong build. Moreover, Lundy (1987:56) writes that there are a variety of explanations for why this person is relatively tall. As a "royal," she might have had access to superior food, alternatively, her height might have led to her becoming a "royal" bride. Both the location of the cemetery and her personal decorations point to her high status (Buikstra & Cook, 1980:444).

Another two graves were discovered during an examination of the settlement's architectural framework (Pistorius, 1997:196). It appears that the site of the first grave was never set on fire (a Venda funeral custom), which may have counted against the preservation of clay buildings. A circular clay building with low clay outer walls that was encircled by a clay "veranda" was discovered through methodical excavation. The central structure occupied the majority of the enclosure's usable floor space (Matisoo-Smith & Horsburgh, 2016:45). There was no room between the outer clay wall and the stone wall to the south. The central clay structure was probably not higher than 1 m above the "floor" where the disturbance caused by the grave hole was discovered, judging by the amount of clay present. A set of steps (the veranda) that were placed in place after the construction of the damaged skull from the first grave. It appears the entire amount of material above the "floor" was placed in place all at once. The centre structure's filling was a uniform combination of ungraded clay that cannot be linked to the remains of the collapsed walling. The stone walls revealed that the grave had two entrances, one of which, provides direct access to the "veranda" and to a "step" that would have made it simple for visitors to reach the main platform (Huffman, 2015:20).

The second grave had an approximately oval shape and a slight northward taper. The profile, which was at least 400 mm deep, showed no signs of stratification or features (Ramji, 2020:67). The absence of ceramics, weaponry, and glass beads, as in the case of the first burial is also noted. The around 1000 little ostrich eggshell beads, gold wire bands, gold beads, iron bracelets with gold staples, and other gold-coloured items were likely buried in the grave as personal possessions. In the southern section of the burial, there was a single flat, long granite stone. The bones found in the grave were not in their

natural anatomical positions, and since total or nearly complete decomposition had occurred, it is obvious that they had been buried sometime after passing away. The larger long bones were separated into two groups and stacked parallel to one another at the grave's edges (Van Riet Lowe, 1936:290). The proximal ends of both femoral heads were on the northern side, and the distal ends were on the southern side. The southern end had received most of the other bones. The mandible, ribs, vertebrae, hands, feet, and pelvic bones were among them. Perhaps to keep the other bones in place, the two scapulae (one inverted) were positioned next to them vertically. Moreover, Fouché, (1937:115) believes that the skull may have been set on top of this assortment of bones, but if so, it had rolled forward and was discovered face down between the two rows of long bones, where most of the gold artefacts were also discovered. The clearly intentional arrangement of the bone components' ritual and symbolic significance is unknown.

The age of a bone sample from another excavated skeleton was taken to observe how the bones appear to be arranged at random. The bones are calibrated 1434 AD the period after the existence of the Mapungubwe Kingdom (state/period) (Prinsloo *et al.*, 2011:3270). Most of the larger long bones, or pieces of them, were discovered, but the hand and, more so, the foot bones, were incomplete. To add to this, although extensively damaged, the skull was substantially whole, with the face bones twisted in reference to the neurocranium. Apart from the right condyle, the mandible was also intact. None of the teeth were lost before the death, however some were severely broken. All the long bones were broken, except for the left radius. Only a few fragments of some of the long bones, such the right fibula, were present. Both were completely fragmented, notwithstanding the sacrum's partial constructability. This skeleton was male, as evidenced by the comparatively robust aspect of the cranium and the long, narrow shape of the sacrum. Additionally, the mandible displays typical male characteristics such a square chin and everted gonial angles. Unfortunately, the pelvic bones, or *os coxae*, are not well enough preserved for research. The deceased person must have been a senior male because of the burial's position in the site's most isolated part, the degree of tooth wear, the appearance of the sternal ends of the ribs, and the presence of osteophytes on the vertebrae (Koleini *et al.*, 2016:436). A wide range of burial customs depend on status, sex, and circumstances. Some of these customs suggest that the axial orientation is meant to point in the direction of the deceased's origin (Stayt, 1931a:235). The condition

of the skeletons was influenced by different factors. If the acidity of the soil were higher than that of the tomb filling, the skeleton would have been preserved differently (Davis, 1987:247). Additionally, if the grave's floor was deliberately set on fire (a Venda funeral custom), it would have helped preserve the bones closest to the heat. When bones were stored in a dry environment or sheltered location it was ideal for preservation due to the area's low rainfall.

The 150 excavated human remains, stored by the University of Pretoria's anatomy department since the 1930s, was repatriated to Mapungubwe in November 2007. A cleansing ceremony, and a "return of the spirits" ceremony was followed by a reburial ceremony on 20 November 2007 (Kashe-Katiya, 2013: 72-73).

2.6 Tangible heritage

Tangible heritage refers to things that we can store or physically touch. Examples of tangible cultural heritage applicable to the MCL include physical artifacts (cultural property of the Venda and Shona culture including pottery, ivory articles, glass beads, and gold objects founded in the archaeological sites, excavated graves, and scattered in the landscape.

2.6.1 Zhizo pottery

The earliest Iron Age farmers left behind pottery and middens that date to around 350 AD as evidence of their existence south of the Limpopo River (Mothulatshipi, 2006:190).

Within the collectively known Zhizo sites in the MNP are the remains of three capitals – Schroda, Leopard's Kopje, and Mapungubwe Hill (Fouché, 1937:54). The Zhizo pottery style mostly vanished from southwest Zimbabwe and northern South Africa around 1000 AD. At the same time, K2 (Leopard's Kopje, Mapungubwe) became the site of a new capital, and K2 pottery expanded throughout a sizable portion of the Shashe-Limpopo region (Fouché, 1937:54). These pottery from the Leopard's Kopje cluster (Mapungubwe) dates between 1000 and 1200 AD and is associated with western Shona speakers. At K2, in accordance with CCP principles the primary cattle kraal was encircled by the chief's residence area. The sequence in the central men's area has been clarified by

rehabilitation work. The court midden, which is situated a few metres north of the central kraal, is where the ivory workers in this area dumped their waste (Huffman, 1974:63).

The Zhizo people also stayed at Leokwe Hill (Calabrese (2000:190). These people, now known as Leokwe (or Leo-kwe) because of the modifications to their pottery, were unmistakably under the political control of K2 which was only a few kilometres away. However, they continued to exhibit their distinctive material culture. Therefore, the Leokwe people might have had a role based on their status as “First people”. Another Leokwe complex closer to K2 extends our understanding of their status. All in all, the Leokwe people were herdsmen because there are at least four more Leokwe communities nearby with “extra” kraals (Gardner,1955:74). Additionally, according to Stayt (1931b:136) the midden excavations produced an exceptionally high percentage of cattle feed. Low-status parts that are given to herdsmen rather than the owner include lower legs and feet, according to Shona and Venda ethnography. Three different Leokwe horizons have this “herdsmen pattern” that has been identified so far.

2.6.2 Ivory objects

At several sites, it has been possible to show a shift from a primarily subsistence-based economy to the additional production of goods with value for external trade. The evidence of ivory-working at locations like Schroda (Mapungubwe), where pieces of ivory trimming have been discovered, makes this more obvious (Saitowitz, 1996:57). Although some of the ivory was utilised locally to create articles of jewellery, most of it was probably intended for trade. The Zhizo sites at Schroda contain imported artefacts made of ivory, and glass beads, suggesting that these people may have migrated there on purpose to hunt elephants for the coastal trade (Hanisch, 1980:130). The distribution of Zhizo sites is explained by the fact that the majority are positioned far from the fertile agricultural soils in the floodplain, where elephants would otherwise damage the crops. Thus, the widespread dispersion of glass beads from the Zhizo era at Schroda. It appears from the archaeological data that exportation of animal skins, such as leopard skins, occurred (Forssman *et al.*, 2014:82). Additionally, Van Waarden (2010:76) mentions that it should be emphasized that evidence of craft specialisation, which is occasionally listed as one of the requirements for state systems was founded at Mapungubwe in the form of cotton-spinning spindle whorls.

2.6.3 Glass beads

The earliest traces of trade between southern Africa and the outside world, have largely been found in the form of glass beads, having come from places outside of southern Africa (Sinclair, 1982:156). The sites of Leopard's Kopje (Mapungubwe), and Mapela in Zimbabwe, and possibly more significantly for this study, the site K2 at Mapungubwe, are significant sites with a variety of imported beads, that date to the second millennium AD (Nyamushosho, 2021:45).

The first varieties of imported glass beads thought to have been produced in India and Persia (now Iran) in the first centuries of the Christian period (27 – 325 AD). Glass beads have been discovered in the Limpopo valley in locations like Schroda (Mapungubwe) which has a date for the lower occupation horizons of 815 BC – 50 AD, and Makuru in southern Zimbabwe, which dates from the seventh century (Hanisch, 1981:5; Hall, 1986:56). Wood (2005:56) suggests that around 900 BC – 100 AD, the Zhizo people exchanged beads for grain with more prosperous farmers. Exotic items may have entered the interior of southern Africa through the coastal site of Chibuene, a coastal trading station of the late first and early second millennium AD. This site is situated very close to the seashore 5 km south of Vilanculos, about 700 km north of Maputo in modern day southern Mozambique (Badenhorst *et al.*, 2011:10).

From a variety of local excavation sites, the emergence of glass beads as a new class of material culture is evident, and dates around the seventh and eighth centuries AD (Wood, 2005:65). The archaeological dates for the appearance of this evidence correspond with some of the earliest written records of contacts between the east African coast and the Arab world. Consequently, it is possible that certain products from southern Africa made their way, ultimately and inadvertently, to the European continent. It is possible that some goods with European origin also made it into southern Africa, through the Mediterranean and North Africa (Sinclair, 1982:156). The avenues of trade and contacts between the region and the outside world were in the shape of Arab traders.

During the ninth century, more bead varieties were added. These pieces included light-blue glazed "Sassanian Islamic" porcelain and tin-glazed ware with splashed painted ornamentation (Bvocho (2005:410). Both styles resemble imported goods made during the early stages of the great coastal town of Kilwa's occupancy, which dates to the ninth

century (Wood *et al.*, 2012:60). Kusimba (2019:35) suggested that spindle whorls, glass beads, and pieces of Chinese porcelain are proof of a thriving trading network that reached India, Indonesia, and China from the East Coast of Africa. The historical records that show there was direct trade between the western Indian Ocean and China during the latter part of the first millennium AD is supported by convincing archaeological evidence (Flecker, 2001:340).

2.6.4 Gold

Shortly after the start of the second millennium, we also witness the beginnings of gold mining, particularly on the plateau of Zimbabwe, primarily to meet the demand for this commodity on the international market (Chirikure *et al.*, 2017:120). As with ivory, it is obvious that most of the gold was intended for export to the Arab world and beyond, even though some of it was used locally (Chirikure *et al.*, 2017:120). The golden rhinoceros of Mapungubwe is believed to be a medieval artwork from the medieval Kingdom of Mapungubwe, made of wood plated with tiny sheets of gold. Chapter three discusses the golden rhinoceros found in Mapungubwe in detail.

Societies in southern Africa started obtaining commodities from outside sources, both in the interior and along the coast (Alpers, 2014:45). The communities started taking advantage of new resources like ivory and later gold that were in demand in markets outside of Africa. According to Bohannan (1959:492) the archaeological data unmistakably shows that the level of external commerce engagement gradually increased over time. By the 13th century, the area had integrated into a significant commerce network spanning the Indian Ocean and beyond, especially with the rise of cities like Mapungubwe and later Great Zimbabwe. Chanaiwa (1972:430) states that the evidence from these sites demonstrates that although the fundamental agrarian economy is qualitatively unaltered, there is a growth in long-distance trade and the exploitation of gold and ivory on the other side.

2.6.5 Mapungubwe artifacts

The University of Pretoria's Mapungubwe archaeological collection in the Javett Art Gallery at the University of Pretoria housed the artefacts found in Mapungubwe since 1933 (Murray *et al.*, 2023:5). The collection has grown as more excavations have taken

place over the years, covers the years 1000 to 1300 AD and displays the distinctive golden rhinoceros figurine (Wintjes, 2017:54). There was a transfer of some of the artefacts to the Mapungubwe National Park Museum.



Image 5: The Museum, information centre, restaurant, and curio shop at the Mapungubwe National Park (Photo: Liebetrau, 2022)

The 1,500 sqm Museum and Interpretation Centre (see Image 5), was designed by Peter Rich, and is situated near the entrance of the MNP and WHS. The artefacts transferred from the University of Pretoria's Mapungubwe archaeological collection are displayed in the MNP museum to educate and inform visitors of the area's rich heritage. The most prominent artefacts in the museum are replicas in the main exhibition room, including a replica of the golden rhinoceros, feline, and bovine, which are lighted in glass cases in the centre of the room. Several display cases surround them, featuring authentic gold, iron, stone, clay, ceramic, shell, ivory and glass artefacts. The original golden rhinoceros, on the other hand, can only be seen at the University of Pretoria (Nienaber *et al.*, 2008:165).

2.7 Development of external trade

Migration and coastal trade played a great role in the settlement history of the Middle Limpopo valley. This section will be focusing on how this migration took place by discussing the coastal trade, Great Zimbabwe, the Kingdom of Mutapa, the Dutch East Indian company as well as the town of Sofala.

Two things are notable about the trading relationships between the Mapungubwe Kingdom and Arab traders. First, we observe that the southern African coast and interior were merged into the Indian Ocean commercial network by the end of the first millennium. Second, it also becomes evident that the size and geographic scope of the trade in the interior had significantly increased over time. What export-related contributions the interior of southern Africa made to this commercial network are yet unknown (Robertshaw *et al.*, 2010:1900). Furthermore, Voigt (1981:57) states that the evidence is not as convincing as it is for imported items. The durable imports are simpler to prove because they are obviously not indigenous and, in certain cases, may be traced back to their country of origin.

One of the main drivers of the development of societies on the African continent prior to European colonialism has repeatedly been identified as the influence of external trade (Rodney, 2018:45). Nkrumah and Nkrumah (1965:15) write that this perspective has been applied particularly to urbanism and state formation. However, some writers have emphasized the significance of external trade without adequately describing its potential effects or considering the potential local and indigenous factors that may have contributed to, and in some cases may have even been more significant in, the growth and development of these societies (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012:50).

2.7.1 Coastal trade

The coincidence between the fall of the Mapungubwe Kingdom and the creation of Great Zimbabwe serves as another example of the connection between international trade and the evolution of state systems (Hannaford *et al.*, 2014:420). The transfer in power from Mapungubwe to Great Zimbabwe has been viewed as two related events linked to the rising importance of gold in the Indian Ocean trade, which can be explained by the more plentiful gold fields on the Zimbabwe plateau than the gold belt territories in the Middle

Limpopo valley (Shenjere-Nyabezi *et al.*, 2020:7). Archaeological evidence suggests that Great Zimbabwe became a centre for trading, linked to Kilwa Kisiwani (off the southern coast of present-day Tanzania), and China (Beatley, 2011:34). It is now widely acknowledged that the two profited from one another, with Zimbabwe serving as the interior supply hub and Kilwa serving as the entry point for products going for Zimbabwe. Thus, the coastal trade must have had a role in Great Zimbabwe's emergence as both a significant urban centre and a state centre. A similar development at Kilwa appears to be connected to the fall of Great Zimbabwe in the second half of the 15th century (Steadman, 2016:23).

2.7.2 Great Zimbabwe

Huffman (1986a:15) asserts that one of the most well-known archaeological sites in sub-Saharan Africa is that of the ruined city, known as Great Zimbabwe, which is located close to modern-day Masvingo. This 78-hectare, stone-walled structure likely housed more than 18 000 people during its florescence and is renowned for its exceptional artistic and architectural accomplishments. It is an example of a Shona civilisation that existed and flourished between the 11th and the 17th centuries. The Hill Complex, the Great Enclosure, and the Valley Enclosures make up the site. It was referred to as a significant economic and political hub by the Portuguese on Africa's East Coast in the 16th century. The majority of modern-day Zimbabwe, as well as portions of Botswana, the northern Transvaal (currently Limpopo province), and Mozambique, were all a part of this civilisation, making it the largest settlement to date. The Portuguese introduced the Zimbabwe culture to the West for the first time in the 16th century, but Great Zimbabwe was not fully documented until Carl Mauch studied the ruins in the late 19th century (Huffman, 2011:30).

The local chiefs believed that maintaining possession of the site was worth arguing over because it was so important to them. Jan Adam Renders, a German American hunter and trader who started a trading station there in 1868, was likely the first European to arrive at the ruins of Great Zimbabwe (Huffman, 2011:30). German geologist Carl Gottlieb Mauch's account of the site of Great Zimbabwe is the most well-known. Mauch asserted that the Queen of Sheba had ordered the construction of the Great Zimbabwe using the myth and fable that were popular at the time. The queen of Sheba (10th century BC)

according to Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions, was the ruler of the kingdom of Sheba in southwestern Arabia. These investigations aimed to demonstrate that Great Zimbabwe had connections to the Semitic people (people of the Middle East, including Arabs, Jews, Akkadians, and Phoenicians). As a result, some authors were happy to comply and agreed with Cecil John Rhodes, a British mining magnate and politician in southern Africa who served as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony from 1890 to 1896, that Africans did not construct Great Zimbabwe (Huffman, 1986b:20).

2.7.3 Kingdom of Mutapa

Great stone cities were constructed in southern Africa over a thousand years ago by the Shona ancestors (Chifunyise, 1990:277). It is believed that the bulk of Shona people reside in present-day Zimbabwe, but there are sizable Shona populations in what is now modern-day South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, and Mozambique as well.

Modern Zimbabwe is the product of Shona-speaking people, with many dialects as well as sub-dialects throughout the southern African counties mentioned above. To add to this, the Shona people are divided into two groups: western Shona (Kalanga/Bakalanga) and eastern Shona (Berliner, 1993:14). Venda is closer to Kalanga than any other language under the umbrella of Shona languages. The Kalanga are situated in Botswana and southwestern Zimbabwe. The eastern Shona included Zezuru Karanga, Korekore, Manyika and Ndau. Alpers (1970:215) states that the Mutapa dynasty appears to have increased its dominance by capitalising on the decentralised structure of the northern Tavara/Tonga clans. The Karanga were able to establish authority over these clans and expand their dominance through intermarrying, economic ties, and deliberate political interference in succession issues. It is believed that the Shona people of the Kingdom of Mutapa built Great Zimbabwe (Chifunyise, 1990:277).

The Mutapa or Monomotapa Empire (Shona: *Mwene we Mutapa*, Portuguese: Monomotapa) was an African kingdom in Zimbabwe, which extended to what is now modern-day Mozambique (Sonnenberg, 2017:45). According to Stiebel (2001:127) the Monomotapa people were members of the Shona ethnic group and related to the people of a nearby Mutapa Empire. That empire was centred on a city that is now known as Great Zimbabwe. The people of the Monomotapa Empire were mainly farmers. They also traded gold and ivory along the coast of the Indian Ocean. Beginning in 1659, missions were

routinely dispatched to the north with the intention of establishing economic ties. Most frequently, these were difficult treks that had little success (Romney, 2015:316).

The Mutapa dynasty extended his rule by land distribution and the establishment of a divine monarchy that was made holy through ritual incest (Chanaiwa, 1972:430). When the decision had to be made to turn his kin into his subjects, the interdependence of a political constitution and ideology was essential. The social systems that were modelled after feudal clientelism grew as the Mutapa's dominance grew. In agreement Beach (1976:13) writes that three distinct regions also emerge as a result of the expansion of the Mutapa dynasty's rule to the western Guruuswa/Butwa region, which was ruled by the Togwa dynasty; the northern region, where the expansion was taking place by enslaving the Tavara/Tonga in the Zambezi valley; and the Barwe and Manyika further to the east. The Mutapa conquered Uteve in the areas to the south, where he was able to impose his own rulers.

By 1515, Mutapa had more formidable rebels than he could have possibly controlled, and he was soon compelled to battle them on multiple fronts (Beach, 1976:16). Some of them, like Sachiteve Nyamunda and the Torwa Changamire, succeeded in putting together a potent alliance against him. Only until Nyamunda fell, in or around 1530, the Portuguese were able to enter the Mutapa realm, and even then, only after they had driven out the Muslim traders (Alpers, 1970:215). When the Portuguese eventually made it to the Kingdom of Mutapa, they were forced to deal with this strong arrangement, since religion played a significant role in their interactions with the Mutapa state, including trade and politics. The Portuguese's subsequent punitive expeditions to exact retribution and overthrow the Mutapa state. The noble class of the Mutapa empire was the sole route for the Portuguese to infiltrate its complex political and social structure, notably through converting the royal family to Christianity. It is obvious that a state that has experienced civil war and a justice system plagued by conspiracies and coup attempts is vulnerable (Nicolaidis, 2011:135).

The Mutapa dynasty started to accept Portuguese assistance to maintain their grasp on power (Mtetwa, 1984:35). A series of defeats were experienced by Mutapa Gatsi Rusere, who succeeded to the throne in 1586, including the Maravi invasions led by Kapambo, and Chikanda. These had stoked tensions inside the Mutapa army, which eventually

sparked a revolt by the general, or *mukomohasha*, and other high-ranking officers. Some members of the nobility also supported the insurrection. In return, Gatsi not only loosened the restrictions on Portuguese immigration into his nation, but also 'donated' Madeira copper, silver, and gold mines and gave the Portuguese permission to construct churches and spread Christianity. Further complicating the succession dilemma that followed Gatsi's passing were the conflicts between Mavhura Mhande and Nyambo Kapararidze, which, when Mavhura won with their help, brought him closer to the Portuguese (Ranger, 1963:156). The Portuguese presented new opportunities for trade and prosperity.

2.7.4 Dutch East India Company

The Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, hereafter VOC) maintained a presence at the Cape of Good Hope from 1652 until 1795. The Cape of Good Hope acquired a unique status within the VOC's network of settlements. This settlement was established with the intention of serving as a fresh produce supply stop for ships traveling between Europe and Asia, to reduce the ship crew deaths (Beukers, 1992:126). Moreover, during the 17th century the Cape of Good Hope had a tactical significance as the entrance to the East when the VOC's marine dominance diminished in comparison to its rivals. The supply station at the Cape, however, cost the VOC money. Boseken (1966:1) notes that exploiting mineral resources and engaging in trade with locals in the Cape of Good Hope could have lessened this load, and efforts in these directions were made. Unfortunately, there were no significant mineral discoveries located close to the Cape, and the Khoikhoi, a nomadic native people, did not have an economy that provided the VOC with any items of interest. The Khoikhoi could only provide livestock to be slaughtered. As a result, Worden *et al.* (1998:23) explains that there has always been interest in expanding commercial opportunities in the interior, particularly in areas where it is believed that trade with the Portuguese was profitable.

The main objective for the VOC in terms of early trading was to make direct or indirect contact with the gold rich Monomotapa (Boseken, 1966:7). Between 1659 and 1664, there were seven expeditions, and between 1682 and 1686, there were four. The existence and viability of copper reserves in Namaqualand were also investigated. Two local commanders, Van Riebeeck and Van der Stel, spearheaded the effort and two visiting VOC approved commissioners, Adriaan van Reede and Rijkloff van Goens gave the

command to discover Africa's secrets in 1657 (Boxer, 1969:55). The excursions were to be carried out by regular VOC-soldiers (Boseken, 1966:8).

Even though the expeditions' main objectives were economic in nature, gathering knowledge about southern Africa's interior was not entirely overshadowed by their search for trade routes and minerals. Indeed, the expeditions' launch was driven by preconceived notions about the interior. Before the Cape settlement had got off the ground, these assumptions were widely held. According to Godée Molsbergen (1916:12) the Khoikhoi were supposed to be exiles of the monarch of Monomotapa who was assumed to rule in the interior. The travel journal of Jan Huygen to Monomotapa, which included further maps, was the most significant source of geographic information on the interior beyond the Cape, furthered this favourable opinion of the interior (Huigen, 1996:215).

Monomotapa, the territory or city, and Monomotapa the emperor (also known as Monomotapa), were described in Cape records as the epicentres of a civilisation with permanent inhabitants and a significant amount of gold that was being traded to the Portuguese at Sofala (in modern-day Mozambique) (Bhila, 1974:79). However, Huigen (1996:215) writes that from well before the start of the 14th century, the Portuguese were interested in Monomotapa. Vasco da Gama travelled to southeast Africa, and while there, the Portuguese learned from Islamic traders about the gold trade with the interior. Tomé Lopez, one of Da Gama's companions, connected Monomotapa with Ophir, the location from where it is believed that King Solomon (c. 965 – 931 BC king of Israel.) obtained his gold (Huigen, 1996:215).

2.7.5 The town of Sofala

In Sofala the Portuguese constructed a town with an eye toward the gold trade. Contrary to predictions, not much was ever gained from this because gold trading was merely a sporadic Shona activity while the Portuguese were in Mozambique. The hazards were considerable, the rewards were low, and the mining season (the dry time) was brief (Huigen, 1996:215). The town of Sofala was deserted in the 17th century. The rumour of wealth in the interior lingered, nevertheless. The mythology led Cecil John Rhodes, to believe that information regarding the gold of Monomotapa might be hidden in Portuguese archives at the end of the 19th century (Bosman, 1932:48).

2.8 Reflection

The purpose of this chapter was to understand how prehistorical societies in the southern part of African are related to one another with specific reference to the Mapungubwe Kingdom, and the Venda and Shona origins and traditions. Farming as well as the reports related to archaeological findings, have value for understanding the value of the Mapungubwe site. Artefacts – shell, pottery, ivory, glass beads, gold bangles and the famous golden rhinoceros – recovered from the Mapungubwe Hill, is proof that the kingdom's artisans were smelting gold. Mapungubwe had not only become a greater state in southern Africa, but it also contributed to international trade. The growth of Mapungubwe as a great state trading with Arabia and India via the Indian Ocean East African ports may be seen as a watershed moment in the history of the African subcontinent. The main aim of the discussion was to introduce intellectual perspectives on intangible heritage like rainmaking and burial rituals, and tangible heritage, in particular, artefacts related to external trading in southern Africa. This information can be used for the creation of authentic cultural heritage tourism experiences.

Chapter 3 gives a brief assessment on UNESCO's reasons for listing Mapungubwe as a World Heritage Site and why the remains created an impressive cultural landscape of universal significance.

CHAPTER 3 MAPUNGUBWE AN UNESCO LISTED WORLD HERITAGE SITE

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents scholarly perspectives on the MCL as a legendary WHS and Cultural Landscape, the archaeological remains, as well as occupation and the change of the landscape since the Iron Age in this region. The discussion starts with a short discussion on the MCL as a listed World Heritage Site. Thereafter, the effect of climate change on settlement, the human connection with the environment, rock art, and the rhinoceros figurines is also considered.

3.2 MCL as a legendary heritage site

Based on evidence for “a substantial exchange of human values that resulted in significant cultural and social developments in the southern African region between 900 and 1300 AD”, the MCL was declared deserving of a World Heritage listing (Meskell, 2014:220). According to Meskell (2014:220), the MCL was added to UNESCO's list by the World Heritage Committee (WHC) based on the four criteria mentioned below.

The MCL contains evidence for an important interchange of human values that led to far-reaching cultural and social changes in southern Africa between 900 and 1300 AD. The remains in the MCL are a remarkably complete testimony to the growth and subsequent decline of the Mapungubwe State, which was the largest kingdom in the African subcontinent. The establishment of Mapungubwe as a powerful state trading through the East African ports with Arabia and India was a significant stage in the history of the African subcontinent. The remains in the MCL graphically illustrate the impact of climate change and record the growth and then decline of the Kingdom of Mapungubwe as a clear record of a culture that became vulnerable to irreversible change.

The MCL is a significant addition to the World Heritage List. This is because, in the context of southern Africa, it is here that global trade, in conjunction with optimum climatic conditions for agriculture, has most significantly altered human habitation and cultural

practices (Chirikure *et al.*, 2014:114), a remarkable illustration of an important stage in human development history.

3.2.1 Archaeological remains

The abundance of archaeological sites, which date from the early Stone Age, at least 500 000 years ago, to the 19th century AD, demonstrates the importance of the MCLs' geographic location (Carruthers, 2006:8).

The cultural environment extends back to the late Pleistocene (c. 11 700 years ago), but it only became significant to southern Africa with the rise of a monarchy centred on Mapungubwe Hill and the adjacent hills around the beginning of the second millennium AD (Kim *et al.*, 2015:19). It is noted that Mapungubwe oversaw a hierarchy of cities whose wealth came from the exploitation of elephants and other wild animals as well as from processed gold (Nyamushosho, 2021:45). Thebe (2021:16) also declares that the cultural context dates to the late Pleistocene, but it was not until the development of a monarchy based at Mapungubwe and nearby hills at the start of the second millennium AD that it had any real impact on the Middle Limpopo valley. Mapungubwe commanded a hierarchy of towns whose riches were derived both from processed gold and the hunting of elephants and other wild animals (Thebe, 2021:16). On the East African coast, Swahili traders exchanged gold, ivory, and animal skins. The preservation of such a cultural environment, that depicts the exchange of values between people in the past, extends beyond the Mapungubwe site.

Mapungubwe was the first town (population: 5 000), the capital of the first state covered 30 000 km², and the first political organisation to be headed by a sacred leader (Huffman, 1986b:57). Cocks *et al.* (2018:40) concur that Mapungubwe was the most significant inland settlement in the subcontinent, because the distribution of Mapungubwe pottery reveals that the kingdom covered a region of around 30 000 km² on both sides of the Limpopo and Shashe rivers during its height between 1220 and 1300 AD (80 years). Beyond the Mapungubwe site, a similar cultural setting that shows the exchange of values between people in the past is being preserved (Hill & Site, 2022:240). Khami completes a historical triangle that started with Mapungubwe and has since been joined by Great Zimbabwe (Huffman & Vogel, 1991:65). However, Mapungubwe is the only cultural landscape in this triangle that contains such a comprehensive list of earlier stages in the

history of southern Africa (Sadr & Sampson, 2006:240). The archaeological sites that show the rise of the kingdom from relatively modest towns centred on a central cattle kraal to a capital with separate zones for the elite and commoners are found throughout this cultural environment (Forssman, 2022a:450).

3.2.2 Powerful state trading

When Iron Age farmers began to settle in the Shashe-Limpopo valley in the first century AD, some of the ideological and economic shifts as well as new metaphors of power had occurred, as reflected in nearby hunter-gatherer and herder rock paintings (Van Doornum, 2007:55). Kim and Kusimba (2008:140) confirm that the most prominent chief in the area lived at K2, about 7 kilometres from Schroda, between 1020 and 1220 AD. His community's greatly improved riches resulted from not just taking part in but also having control over foreign trade. Furthermore, Pwiti (2005:340) states that the village of Schroda, which acquired its ivory from traders operating along the East Coast between 900 and 1000 AD, controlled the regional trade in ivory for glass beads during the initial phase of international trade.

A significant exchange of human values that resulted in cultural and social transformations in southern Africa between 900 and 1300 AD can be found in Mapungubwe (Huffman, 2000:26), the nowadays MCL. Furthermore, the archaeological evidence reveals a transition from a CCP town layout to one inspired by an elite class with holy leadership, with the monarch sequestered on the summit of Mapungubwe Hill and away from the common people (Huffman, 2001:20). The study conducted by Kim and Kusimba (2008:140) also states that the aristocracy lived on the hilltop of Mapungubwe Hill between 1220 and 1300 AD, and the common people lived below the flat areas surrounding the hill, which are referred to as the southern terrace, and the northern plateau (Chiripanhura, 2018:27). The minor royals most likely resided on the hill's slopes. Dry stone walling and a distinction between the locations of elite and commoner living areas were architectural characteristics that emphasized the new social order. Gold was processed and exchanged, and ceramics from spindle whorls found in China show that trade had increased, and they also show that cotton was being spun and grown there (Shenjere-Nyabezi, & Pwiti, 2022:133).

Evidence of international trade in the Indian Ocean trade network, which produced riches in the society and led to ideological shifts and changes in architecture and town design, reflects these principles (Meskell, 2011:150). African gold and elephant ivory, as well as animal hides and hippo ivory, were worked and exchanged for glass beads and ceramics. This came from as far away as the Indo-Pacific region, including India, Indonesia, and China, when developing international contacts with Islamic traders on the East Coast who were a part of a larger Indian Ocean network (Huffman & Woodborne, 2021:3). The kinship system was reorganised because of the stratification of society into an upper and lower class, which also granted the upper-class authority in both the political and economic spheres (Chirikure, 2020:150). Additionally, Chirikure *et al.* (2015:85) write that over some years, the society started to distinguish between upper-class social activities and those related to livestock. By melting glass from smaller imported beads from the Indo-Pacific region, the upper-class created their method of producing glass beads that archaeologists refer to as garden rollers due to their shape. Klehm (2017:620) suggested that a new indigenous social order based on class differentiation emerged because of the increased trading network, and the CCP long-standing dominance was finally abandoned.

After 1300 AD, farming settlements still existed in the Mapungubwe region, but they did not attain the same level of population density or political influence (Huffman, 2008:2040). The archaeological evidence indicates that the social organisation of the settlements around Mapungubwe Hill is like that of Great Zimbabwe (1270–1550 AD) and other Zimbabwean culture sites (Steyn & Antonites, 2019:360).

3.3 Impact of climate change

The Limpopo-Shashe valley (Middle Limpopo valley) is an exceptional Cultural Landscape of universal significance because of traditional human habitation and land use patterns that are emblematic of human connection with the environment. When climatic conditions have been favourable, the combination of the riverine environment and the sandstone hills has created a centre for human settlement (Hill, 2022:5). The area has had warmer, wetter periods between 100 and 1800 AD, which were conducive to agriculture, alternating with cooler, drier pulses (see Table 1) (Pikirayi *et al.*, 2016:200; Holmgren & Öberg, 2006:187). The accumulated trade riches, yearly renewal of

agricultural soil on the floodplain, and population increase, occurred during time of favourable climate (Forssman, 2022b:440).

Table 1: MCL climate change between 100 and 1800 AD (Pikirayi *et al.*, 2016:200) with my notes on settlements in italic

Years AD	Climate
100-250	Cool and dry
250-600	Mostly warm and wet, but variable <i>Cattle farmers settle in the Mapungubwe area/Middle Limpopo valley, evidence of farming and trading 350 – 450 AD. Rainmaking was part of the agricultural cycle, and they left behind pottery and middens</i>
600-900	Variable but cooling and drier <i>No evidence of farmer villages between 700 – 900 AD</i>
900-1300	Variable but warmer and wetter, coinciding with the Medieval warm Epoch in the northern hemisphere. <i>Resettlement: Iron Age settlement 900 – 1300 AD. The 80-year Kingdom of Mapungubwe, a city and trading centre 1220 – 1300 AD divided into a three-tiered hierarchy (the king/chief's settlement on Mapungubwe Hill, leaders occupying small hilltops, and commoners inhabiting low lying sites). There were a population increase during this time because of the favourable climate.</i>
1300-1500	Cooler and drier, corresponding with the little ice age. <i>Only farming settlements</i>
1500-1800	Cool initially, but warming

This valley is believed to have been inhabited by Early Iron Age people between the years 500 and 700 AD, when the area got enough rainfall to support the growth of sorghum as well as grass for small animals and cattle (Robinson, 1985:27). Happy Rest pottery from this period has been discovered on Mapungubwe's southern terrace, in eroded sections to the north of the hill, and on top of other steep-sided hills (e.g., Leokwe Hill) that were reportedly utilised at the time for rainmaking (Calabrese, 2000:190). Hanisch (1981:12) concurs that pottery makers, like those who lived at the Happy Rest site (west of the K2 and Mapungubwe Hill sites), are associated with settlements that date to the first half of the first century AD. These people were subsistence farmers who, when the weather permitted, raised some crops, kept cattle, and hunted wild animals. Due to the basin's growing aridity, later farmers who resided at Schroda and other nearby sites starting in the seventh or eighth century AD, may have relied less on crop production (Hall & Smith,

2000:33). Moreover, Voigt (1983:12) writes that these people appear to have taken advantage of wild animals like elephants, antelope and leopards, whose products, mainly ivory and animal skins, were exchanged for glass beads and other important imports with eastern Africa. The initial chiefdom in the region was likely made up of about 30 Zhizo type towns, according to records (Sadr, 2008:110).

The Limpopo floodplain was used by the K2 people to farm millet, sorghum, various grains, and beans because of the improved climatic circumstances (Huffman, 2008:2040). However, they continued to hunt, and herd cattle in the nearby Mopane woodlands on the plateau above the river. They interacted with other communities, as evidenced by a few other sites and settlements including Leokwe Hill (Mashimbye, 2013:300). Furthermore, research conducted by Mashimbye, (2013:300) states that, over 6 500 glass beads found at the site indicate to their trade with eastern Africa and Asia. Figurines suggest ritualistic behaviour, while iron and copper production suggest a booming metallurgy. A shift in habitation patterns toward Mapungubwe Hill begins around 1220 AD.

Three phases can be identified within the main occupation period of the Mapungubwe settlement (Calabrese, 2000:190). The first phase, known as the Zhizo period, dates to about 900 AD, when climatic circumstances improved and Iron Age farming communities, whose villages were designed around a CCP, started to emerge. Between 900 and 1020 AD, their numbers increased as they built trade connections with the East Coast. However, it is noted that there is no evidence of farmer villages existing at times, such as between 600 and 900 AD when temperatures were lower, and rainfall was low (Chirikure *et al.*, 2018:420). The population remained small and was confined by variations in the rainfall regime (Chirikure *et al.*, 2018:420).

The second phase, between 1020 and 1220 AD, when the numbers of the Zhizo people decreased and ancestors of the Shona-speaking people occupied Leopard's kopje (K2), whose villages were also arranged around the CCP. The integrity of the CCP started to deteriorate toward the conclusion of this period as the governing and commoner classes started to vary from one another. During warmer and wetter periods, occupancy accumulated, and fresh opportunities for further expansion of settlements arose (Mathoho, 2021:68). The study conducted by Forssman (2022a:64) highlights that it was

required of the people to relocate from K2 to the southern terrace below Mapungubwe Hill, as the arrangement was no longer appropriate given the socio-political transformation that had taken place. Since the new ideology called for the physical isolation of the sacred leader from the common people, the CCP was no longer appropriate, and topographically K2 could not be modified to fit the new ideology (Huffman, 2000:26). This spatial division might have been expressed at Mapungubwe Hill from the start to reflect the new socio-political order (Huffman, 2000:26).

The third phase stretched from 1220 to 1300 AD, called the Mapungubwe period, when a socially stratified Late Iron Age Kingdom at Mapungubwe established close trading ties with the East Coast and ruled the region for at least 70 to 80 years. Hall and Smith (2000:40) indicate that the hilltop at Mapungubwe was gradually altered throughout the time of intense habitation. It required of the local inhabitants to take a lot of soil to the top of the hill to build an artificial platform for the homes and the royal tombs, and the hill's entrance was marked off with low walls, which were also used to fortify and distinguish terraces and roads (Mohale, 2014:80). Adjustments were also required to reflect the shift in rain-making techniques, as the holy leader now relied on his ancestors to pray to God on his behalf rather than generating rain himself (Ombati, 2021:403). Additionally, to claim the power of the location and therefore solidify and authenticate his new position, he erected his palace on top of Mapungubwe Hill, a former rainmaking site. In the process of moving from a ranking to a class-based society, the landscape underwent physical alteration in addition to changes in practice and religion (Lippert, 2019:90).

The Kingdom of Mapungubwe documents the spatial changes that occurred in the communities from Schroda through K2, and to Mapungubwe to illustrate the development of class differentiation and spiritual authority (Ramji, 2018:79). These are the only locations where such enormous numbers of non-utilitarian and exotic trade objects have been discovered. Moreover, Huffman (1986:112) adds that along with gold mining and elephant ivory hunting, farming was a significant activity. These goods were exchanged for glass beads, pottery from the Near and Far East, and other goods in the Indian Ocean trade. As already mentioned, archaeologists believe that the Kingdom of Mapungubwe, which ruled over a hierarchy of communities in an area of roughly 30 000 km² and had an estimated population of 3 000–5 000, was one of the first state societies in southern Africa (Huffman,1996:120).

The expression of class differentiation facilitated the development of a complex society. The settlement was also permanently altered by the hundreds of people who lived in the Kingdom of Mapungubwe for about 80 years, occupying places like Schroda, Leopard's kopje (K2), and the southern terrace of Mapungubwe Hill (Sinamai, 2020:60). The population required to preserve the power of the sacred leader could not be sustained through 1300 AD due to the movement of the trading centre, as drier climate conditions caused the population to decline (Pikirayi *et al.*, 2022:11). After 1300 AD, the Mapungubwe settlement and trading centre was unable to maintain a large population using conventional agricultural practices because of climate change and was forced to disperse its occupants (Pikirayi *et al.*, 2016:200).

Between 1270 and 1300 AD, Mapungubwe's existence as a state came to an end because of the unfavourable climate in the Middle Limpopo valley (Huffman, 2000:140). People were compelled to disperse to other regions of the basin and beyond as a result. The Make Hills, lower down the Limpopo basin in what is now southern Zimbabwe, is one potential location (Huffman, 2014:261). Eastern Botswana's Lose Hill is the other. Both regions exhibit continuity between K2 and Mapungubwe civilisation. Great Zimbabwe eventually became well-known, and this development is connected to the decline of Mapungubwe as a centre of political authority, but it is possible that different individuals were involved (Huffman, 2005:65). As already mentioned, the Mapungubwe monarchy scattered because the start of unfavourable climatic circumstances made it impossible to support a large population, however, minor villages remained (Switzer, 1993:56). Murimbika (2006:170) stated that:

“Small groups of people entered and left the Mapungubwe region during later power battles, particularly to the region that is now Zimbabwe. These movements are visible in the different pottery types and settlement patterns found at more than 100 sites within the Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape that date to the Icon/Zimbabwe, Khami, and Venda eras of habitation between 1300 and 1800 AD”.

However, the idea for social stratification that emerged at Mapungubwe persisted as a key component in succeeding Zimbabwean, Khami, Shona, and Venda culture, even though population sizes and alliances did not stay constant (Huffman, 1986c:90).

Huffman (2014:260) also stated that the Sotho-Tswana and Kalanga are responsible for archaeological settlements in the MCL that date to the 14th century and later (Icon type and Khami phase sites). Some of these people, like the Venda, remained in the area up until recently before being relocated by farmers of European descent who cleared the land to make way for habitation, commercial farming, and wildlife management (Huffman & Main 2022:370).

3.4 Rock Art transition from the Late Stone Age to Iron Age

The Pleistocene is when the oldest communities appeared in the Middle Limpopo valley. According to Wadley (1993:245), over 20 hunter-gatherer sites have been found in this valley, and they suggest that there may have been settlement activity if the environment was favourable.

The rock art sites, some of which are also connected to early herder communities, indicate a human connection with the environment, intergroup relationships, and ritual activities (Mitchell, 2002:160). The archaeologist Dr Forssman stated (Murray *et al.*, 2023:1–2) that archaeological sites in the Limpopo-Shashe confluence area, namely Balermo Main, Kaxa, Little Muck shelters, Leokwa Hill, and Mapungubwe Hill are all historically interconnected with some occupied by the Stone-Age hunter-gatherer groupings (11 120 to 10 890 BC), and others settled later by Iron Age herders and farmers (6 230 to 6 060 BC). According to Ambrose (1998:370) the Later Stone Age population began utilising both open areas, and rock shelters around 20 000 years ago. Tools like bows and arrows, and ornaments like ostrich eggshell beads that were still in use by their San ancestors up until a few centuries ago started to appear in their artefact assemblages (Ambrose, 1998:370). It is argued that the rock carvings and paintings in this area were created by these hunter-gatherers (Lombard, 2007:15).

Some hunter-gatherers became herders with sheep and cattle when Bantu-speaking Iron Age farmers with cultivated crops and livestock migrated southward into the area from West Africa around two millennia ago (Smith, 1990:60). The Khoikhoi (Khoekhoen), a term used to describe the early herders, may have been of San ancestry. The San and the Khoikhoi, the first native inhabitants of the subcontinent, are also referred to as Khoisan (Barnard, 1992:312). Mitchell and Whitelaw (2005:210) assert that there is no archaeological evidence of Khoikhoi herder settlement in the Middle Limpopo valley,

except for distinctive Bambata pottery, the oldest pottery in the regional sequence, and the rock art, which includes paintings of sheep and 'finger' paintings attributed to herders. The common consensus is that the herders settled primarily in the southwestern region of southern Africa after making a quick march southward prior to the Iron Age migration (Huffman, 2017:33). This argument is disputed, as the Kaoxa hunter-gatherer shelter (south of the MNP), with rock paintings, is named after the belief of the Kalahari San hunter-gatherers who believed that the God, Kaoxa, is the Lord of the animals and has its home in the spirit world, surrounded by all animal species (Murray, 2023:4).

In the Shashe-Limpopo confluence area, 150 rock art locations have been identified, of which only 40 are in Zimbabwe and 110 in the MNP and nearby farmland (Eastwood & Cnoops, 1999:107). There are 139 painted and 56 engraving sites discovered included in the sample of 150, with most of the engravings being discovered at the same locations as paintings (Brunton *et al.*, 2013:120). Prins and Lewis (1992:140) stated that there are several legends that are tied to the cosmologies of both the San hunters and gatherers and Khoikhoi herders. Deacon (1993:75) writes that excavated deposits from three rock art sites offer comprehensive information on the chronology of events throughout the change from the Stone Age to the Iron Age. Little Muck and Balerno shelters in the MNP, and Salt Pan shelter in the Soutpansberg (some 100 km to the south and outside of the MNP), are excavation sites. Hall and Smith (2000:40) write that, with occupation layers that are roughly 1-metre thick, Little Muck Shelter provide the most thorough sequence from which to assess the nature and speed of the process of transformation from foraging to agriculture in the Shashe-Limpopo valley.

Similar to Salt Pan shelter, Balerno, and locations on the Botswana side of the Limpopo, the initial occupation took place around 2000 years ago, just before the invention of pottery (Van Doornum, 2008:250). According to Seiler (2016:56), this implies that the foragers were getting ready to prepare hides for trade with farmers. The deposits associated with the earliest Happy Rest/Bambata pottery contain more stone scrapers than the pre-ceramic deposits at the foot of the Little Muck sequence, which are inferred to date to before 250 AD. These stone implements were utilised to prepare skins (Mañhoho *et al.*, 2022:110). This activity was further enhanced in the underlying deposit of Leokwe Zhizo pottery, which dates to about 1000 and 1100 AD (Mañhoho *et al.*, 2022:110). The same source indicates that formal stone tools, worked bone, shell and

ochre are either absent or present in very limited amounts in the topmost layers connected to K2 and Mapungubwe pottery, dating between 1100 and 1300 AD. According to the interpretation conducted by Robertshaw *et al.* (2010:189), the highest strata, which are post-1050 AD and contain glass beads, iron artefacts and pottery from the K2 and Mapungubwe periods, were created when agriculturists from the nearby Leokwe Hill village, not the Later Stone Age foragers, occupied the shelter. After that, farmers took over the foragers' locations and started to exclude them from barter and craft transactions (Wood, 2011:70).

In the Shashe-Limpopo confluence area, and the neighbouring Soutpansberg region, three rock painting traditions have been identified: early San paintings, geometric paintings, and so-called late white paintings Eastwood & Smith, 2005:30).

3.4.1 Early tradition

The greater part of the rock paintings in the Shashe-Limpopo confluence area follows the early tradition of intricately detailed pictures that reflect beliefs and cosmology that were shared by the San diaspora throughout the course of the previous 5 000 years or more (Dewey, 1991:140).

A few rock paintings are in black and white, with the most being done in red ochre. According to Eastwood's (2005:25) survey, human figures are the most prevalent type (45.7%), followed by animals (42.3%), clothing items including aprons and loincloths (8.8%), and lines, dots, nets (entoptic phenomena) and therianthropes – half-human, half-animal figures (3.2%). To add to this, an investigation conducted by Thackeray (1983:27) amongst the human figures found in the rock paintings, people without clear identity were the most prevalent (48%) and were followed by women (28%) and males (24%). In the context of southern Africa, this is unique because images of men typically prevail. The frequent depiction of women's leather aprons, compared to the less frequent depictions of men's loincloths, is another peculiar aspect of the rock art that is likewise tied to gender (Smith & Ouzman, 2004:510).

The study conducted by Clutton-Brock (1994:165) entails that, in the animal category, ambiguous creatures predominated, followed by less significant animals such the kudu, giraffe, elephant, impala, tsessebe, fish, eland (rain animal), ostrich, locust, rhinoceros

and fat-tailed sheep. Because domesticated fat-tailed sheep were initially imported by herders and immigrant farmers in the first millennium AD, the paintings of them can be dated. The sheep were probably painted by hunter-gatherers rather than herders because they are in the same manner as the more traditional San paintings (Denbow, 2017:500).



Image 6 Mr Kgomotso Phalandwa Johannes Masalesa with a tour group on Mapungubwe Hill (Photo: Liebetrau, 2022)

Little Muck Shelter's rock paintings cannot be accurately dated, but the absence of ochre in the highest strata provides strong circumstantial evidence that they were created before around 1050 AD, when the area was inhabited by Iron Age farmers (Chirikure *et al.*, 2015:300). The study conducted by Hall *et al.* (2013:78) states that the presence of fourteen gaming "boards" etched into the sandstone in front of Little Muck shelter further emphasizes this appropriation. These "boards" are also discovered at the sites of Zhizo, Leopard's Kopje, and Mapungubwe Hill. A guide Mr Kgomotso Phalandwa Johannes Masalesa, guides tourist groups to Mapungubwe Hill in the MNP (Interview 1, 2023/11/8),

where he shares the settlement history, and discusses the royal graves, as well as the board games on Mapungubwe Hill (see Image 6).

In recent times, only men in Shona, Venda, Shangaan, and Tsonga-speaking groups have produced and utilised them. With reference to rock art and the Khoikhoi settlement, it is noted that certain Khoikhoi peoples thought that their God, Heiseb, had placed this "cloud game" or "African chess" on the rock and that it was mystically connected to rain (Schmidt, 1995).

3.4.2 Geometric paintings

There are geometric (squares, circles, triangles, and lines) engravings and paintings in the Shashe-Limpopo confluence area, similar to those in many other parts of southern Africa (Butzer *et al.*, 1979:1204). They also state that it could be the work of San-related Khoikhoi-speaking herders who bought sheep and then cattle from Iron Age farmers. Around 2 000 years ago, they travelled southward into the western portion of what is now South Africa. There are no archaeological remnants of Khoikhoi presence in the Shashe-Limpopo valley other than the rock art (Orton, 2013:33). The identity of the artists is unclear, although it is generally accepted that they were shepherders who travelled through the area for a short period of time between the time that the first Iron Age agricultural towns were established and roughly 900 AD (Kruger & de Lange, 2018:34).

At some sites, a finger was used to apply red, orange, and white paint (Eastwood & Eastwood, 2006:120). Though less prevalent than San paintings, works from this tradition may nevertheless be found all over the region.

3.4.3 Late white paintings

The so-called late white paintings, fit in well with the early San rock painting traditions (Prins & Hall, 1994:173). However, they also resemble those carried out by Bantu-speaking people as part of rain-ceremonies in eastern, central, and southern Africa, and more precisely by the ancestors of the contemporary Sotho-Tswana ethnic group (Ouzman, 1995:64). They are thought to have been painted sometime after 1300 AD, and they provide more proof of the appropriation of locations that had previously been occupied by other people (Hall & Smith, 2000:39). Hall and Smith (2000:43) further

contend that in this context, paintings of sheep made by the San “may indicate a San attempt to neutralise or defeat the influence of the herders; undoubtedly they signify the extent to which the new herder population threatened San life”. The ancient depictions of the spirit world and the religious ideas that gave rise to them were symbolically cut off when San art was replaced by herders' and farmers' art (Lewis-Williams & Pearce, 2004:200).

The Iron Age were living in the same general area as hunter-gatherers in the first millennium AD (Denbow, 1986:17). Another indication that the power and presence of the hunter-gatherers had been drastically altered by the beginning of the second century is the absence of San paintings or pictures that could be connected to the Mapungubwe period (1220 – 1300 AD).

3.5 The golden rhinoceroses

The earliest tangible proof of significant gold working in the subcontinent is found in high-status burials that contain thousands of gold beads and several special pieces of gold leaf that once covered wooden sculptures (Arab written records mention trading with gold on the East Coast in 927 AD) (Fagan, 1969:8). Locals established the gold trading network and did associated activities before Europeans exploited this valuable commodity in the southern African region (Miller *et al.*, 2000:24).

A golden rhinoceros, found in a royal cemetery in 1934 on Mapungubwe Hill is a testament to the prosperity of the polity of the Kingdom of Mapungubwe in the 13th century (Duffey, 2012:176). Between 1220 and 1290 AD, Mapungubwe is believed to have become the kingdom's capital, in large part due to its control of the gold trade with the coastal Swahili settlement at Kilwa Kisiwani, located about 3 200 kilometres (2 000 miles) away to the northeast in what is now Tanzania (Chirikure *et al.*, 2015:65).

Gold increasingly overtook silver as the most significant commerce export during the 13th century (Pikirayi, 2011:213). As a representation of elite wealth and power, it eventually took the place of glass beads. The golden rhinoceros' symbolic significance was increased by the fact that it was interred alongside a member of the ruling royal class of Mapungubwe (Wintjes, 2017:40). Kashe-Katya (2013:140) argues that it was not until the 1930s, when a group of academic and amateur archaeologists from the University of

Pretoria dug up a graveyard on Mapungubwe Hill, that the golden rhinoceros (see Image 7) was exhumed from its royal grave. Three of the 27 burial locations have significant gold deposits. The gold artefacts included sculptures of animals including rhinoceroses and a crocodile, as well as pieces of other unidentifiable animals, including two that were subsequently rebuilt in 2009, which included an ox and a wild cat (Mlambo & Parsons, 2018:320).



Image 7: The golden Rhinoceros exhumed from a royal grave (Wintjes, 2017:40)

Kelly (2014:120) clarified that, along with these figurines, gold sceptres, a bowl that some people believe to be a crown, bracelets, bangles, beads, nails, and discs were also discovered. The manner of excavation resulted in the loss of significant information, as some of it was undertaken by inexperienced amateurs. Nevertheless, based on these and more recent excavations at the site as well as examinations of the excavated material, a rich picture of life at Mapungubwe, has since been formed.

3.5.1 The rhinoceros as a symbol and metaphor

The interactions between people and animals have always been diverse and influenced by cultural conventions, in particular an animal's physical characteristics and actual or perceived behaviour (Mullin, 1999:220). Animals have frequently been used by humans as symbols or metaphors in attempts to conceptualise the social world and the variety of relationships between individuals or different segments of society, famous dictum,

paraphrased as “animals are good to think with” (Mullin, 1999:220). This connection includes the adoption of animal characteristics from one species to another, the use of animals as totems or identity symbols, and the use of animals as intermediary devices to interact with the spirit world in general (Marvin & McHugh, 2014:34). Understanding the symbolic or metaphorical allusions in each of these cases, necessitates some familiarity with animal behaviour and anatomy, in this case that of the two kinds of rhinoceroses found in southern Africa (Mullin, 1999:221).

The *Rhinocerotidea* originally appeared in Africa during the lower Miocene, and by the upper Miocene, southern Africa had at least one genus in it. One of the oldest and most stable megafauna species in Africa is the sub-Saharan black rhinoceros, *Diceros bicornis*, whose direct ancestor has been traced back to the early Pliocene of Europe, around four million years ago. The Plio-Pleistocene is when the genus *Ceratotherium*, which only includes white rhinoceros from Africa, first appeared (Owen-Smith, 1987:257). According to Harley *et al.* (2016:1286) the northern and southern white rhinoceros are two surviving subspecies or species that represent *Ceratotherium simum*, which initially occurred during the Middle Pleistocene. Even though only minor morphological variations exist between the two forms, taxonomic analyses indicate that they have been isolated from one another for up to a million years in terms of geography and genetics (Sánchez-Barreiro *et al.*, 2021:6356). Consequently, de Jesus Jopela (2010:300) suggests that the southern variation should be classed as *Ceratotherium simum* rather than *Ceratotherium simum simum*, which is how it was classified according to another theory. According to a recent reconstruction of the white and black rhinoceroses' historical distribution from 1500 AD on, the latter species lived continuously from Burkina Faso in west-central Africa to Somalia in the east and down south to South Africa. However, the white rhinoceros's historical distribution reveals a disconnect between its presence in central Africa and the region south of the Zambezi River (Rookmaaker, 2011:74). Both the black and white rhinoceros did, in historical times, exist in the regions established by south-eastern Bantu speakers (Rookmaaker & Antoine, 2012:93). However, it is possible that second-millennium migrants from East Africa, such as Sotho-Tswana and Nguni speakers, may have encountered the white rhinoceros for the first time on the voyage south from their ancestral homeland (Rookmaaker & Antoine, 2012:93).

In the 20th century the significance of the golden rhinoceros and other Mapungubwe artefacts was once more understood (Masuku Van Damme *et al.*, 2009:70). By excluding them from official South African narratives in the past, the ruling class of the time, the white South African government, recognised their influence. The golden rhinoceros and other sculptures from Mapungubwe, as well as sculptures from older sites like Schroda and further south (Lydenburg) that were connected to it, presented a challenge to the colonial and apartheid beliefs that were supposed to justify European settlement and white authority (Cocks *et al.*, 2018:40). Switzer (1993:340) reported that pre-colonial sculptures, on the other hand, showed that the San and Khoikhoi people had lived in southern Africa for at least a thousand years before the arrival of Europeans. The histories of the Mapungubwe gold artefacts and the obvious implications of their existence were not included in official histories, even though archaeologists had discovered them, they were covered in the press, and some were only on display in museums (albeit with restricted access) (Gribble, 2005:3).

South Africa's first post-apartheid government acknowledged the power of the discovery of the Mapungubwe golden rhinoceros, as it is proof of a southern African Renaissance that took place before the arrival and settlement of Europeans in 1652 (Cock & Fig, 2000:25). The golden rhinoceros was recognised as a National Treasure in 1999, when the Order of Mapungubwe, the highest honour in South Africa, was established by the South African government. With this award the President of South Africa recognises a South African citizen whose outstanding achievements serve not only the interests of South Africa but also have international impact. It has four classes: platinum, gold, silver, and bronze. A picture of a golden rhinoceros occupies the award's centre (Crigler, 2018:160). The top honour of these medals, platinum, was given to Nelson in 2002. Berger (2009:23) asserts that the golden rhinoceros' communication abilities are changed and strengthened once more as it prepares to depart South Africa for the first time to be on display in the British Museum's South Africa. It took centre stage in The Art of a Nation exhibition in London (October 2016 – February 2017), speaking to new audiences about the significance of Mapungubwe, the pre-colonial past, the atrocities of colonialism and apartheid, as well as the goals of a modern South Africa (Boeyens & Van der Ryst, 2014:36).

3.5.2 Rhinoceros figurines

Four rhinoceros figurines' remnants have been discovered in South African archaeological sites, all which date to the Middle Iron Age (about 900-1300 AD) and are situated in the Shashe-Limpopo basin (Hanisch & Maumela, 2002:59). They consist of the renowned golden rhinoceros from Mapungubwe Hill, the leg of a putative rhinoceros (or elephant) clay figurine discovered at Castle Rock (isolated hill on the edge of the vlel on the farm Den Staat, west of Mapungubwe Hill), and a clay headpiece of a rhinoceros figurine from Schroda (Calabrese, 2000:182). Berger (2009:35) states that the burial remains from the royal cemetery on Mapungubwe Hill contained a gold sceptre, a gold bowl, countless gold, and glass beads, as well as other decorative ornaments and artefacts, in addition to the pieces of the reconstructed golden rhinoceros. Two other objects, that may have been a component of further "sceptres", are also included on show at the Mapungubwe Museum at the University of Pretoria. Gold figures, that were recently reassembled, resemble a cow, a feline (leopard), and possibly an elephant (Meyer, 2011:35).

Inferring the black or white rhinoceros' species from the gold figurine's form, stance, or features alone is impossible, because the figure is missing its nose and has only one horn (Nyathi, 2005:210). White rhinos are like the Mapungubwe figurine's "characteristically bowed head, muscular shoulders and big belly," according to rhinoceros conservationist Clive Walker (Clarke, 2017:67). Estes (1997: 230) writes that one interpretation of the elevated tail might be that it represents the black rhinoceros's distinctive dominance or threat show. In contrast to the head, which is held more horizontally and only lowers to the ground just before impact, the black rhinoceros's tail is held erect when it charges at humans (Clarke, 2017:70). White rhinos typically demonstrate a threat by holding their heads down and curling their tails over their rumps (Clarke, 2017:70). Rademeyer (2012:76) contends that the white rhinoceros has been seen charging with their tails up, but it is important to note that "the position of the tail and the movement of the ears and location of the ears" vary depending on the situation. The animal figurines discovered in southern African Iron Age settlements are not intended to be precise replicas. They are typically stylised representations of the animals, just like the rock paintings of animals connected with southern Africa's indigenous farming communities, especially those made by Northern Sotho speakers of the Makgabeng Plateau (Bending, 2018:150).

The gold figures, however, may have come from a Venda occupation in the 18th or 19th century and were mounted to the edge of a round wooden divining bowl, according to speculation (Duffey, 2012:175). The gold burials' association with a more recent occupation is in stark contrast to contextual archaeological data, the burials' generally recognized age, and the settlement history of Mapungubwe Hill (Tiley-Nel, 2014:76). It is implausible to also claim that the figurines are "sib images" which are supposed to coincide with the *mutupo* (name of clan or totem group) of the Venda or Shona (Boeyens & Van der Ryst, 2014:30). The rhinoceros is not revered by the Venda or the Shona as a totem animal or clan sign. A more likely explanation for the figurines' specific shape is that they were mounted on ceremonial staffs made of wood or other perishable materials that were a component of the monarchs of Mapungubwe's royal insignia (Ramji, 2020:35).

3.5.3 The black rhinoceros link with the Shona and Venda

Research conducted by Huffman (2005:48) found that since the archaeological setting and the black rhinoceros's ethnographically derived symbolic value among Shona and Venda speakers, it is assumed that the golden rhinoceros from the royal burial on Mapungubwe Hill was most likely a symbol of authority. The Shona ethnography has been searched to explain the cultural significance of the golden rhinoceros because Mapungubwe was the centre of an early Shona state. Klehm (2017:610) proved that because of the early descriptions of Shona political leadership and the setting of the royal graves on the hilltop, the Mapungubwe black rhinoceros figurine has come to represent sacred leadership in a class-based society. According to some, the rulers of Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe shared the black rhinoceros's behavioural traits such as "dangerous behaviour, unpredictability, power and lonely life" (Scholfield, 2019:113). This means that the people of the Kingdom of Mapungubwe were powerful, and not easily predictable.

The black rhinoceros is also linked with a ritual fight known as *pemberar* and the *rukoto* ceremony a rain-control ceremony (Huffman, 1996:189). The ruler of the Mutapa state (see chapter 2 section 2.7.3), and significant subjects would act out a ritual fight known as *pemberar*, to see who was the bravest and most accomplished during the *rukoto* ceremony, which lasted several days each September (Huffman, 1996:189). The intensity of the battle has in turn been connected to the black rhinoceros's aggressive behaviour, which is known to demolish a bush or termite mound in a fit of rage or hostility or when it

is injured (Skinner & Chimimba, 2005:535). According to Gelfand (1959:49), the centralised Mutapa state no longer exists, and the *pembera* dance is not mentioned in more modern ethnographic reports of the *rukoto* dance. However, it is crucial to note that the *rukoto* ceremony is fundamentally a rain-control ceremony. Prayers are offered to so-called "tribe spirits" to request rain, thank the ancestors (*mudzimu*) for the previous year's beneficial rains, and find out what crops should be sown (Hannaford & Nash, 2016:375). The cultural importance of the "rhinoceros dance" is further illuminated by Venda cultural traditions (Kirby, 1933:340). Venda ethnography is a significant and useful source of cultural information because of their close historical and linguistic ties to the Shona cluster. The Singo, the prominent clan among the Venda, may trace their ancestry to the Torwa state in southwest Zimbabwe, and the Venda language is essentially a hybrid of Kalanga and Northern Sotho (Dube, 2015:300). According to Van Warmelo (1940:57), the equivalent dance among the Venda is called *pembela*, and its cultural significance is to

"dance excitedly, in joy; be out of danger, past all hazards, secure, as old chief who has weathered all storms and is thought to have the full support of his ancestors, who has begotten his heirs and can now safely be rendered impotent by secret administration of a drug to remove the hazards of sexual activity".

Information acquired by Van Warmelo (1940:14) on the "burial of chiefs and *u pembela*" suggests that the *pembela* ceremony, which included a dance and the consumption of a drug to stifle sexual urges, was carried out following the appointment of a new chief. The only children considered to be his legal descendants were those born prior to the *pembela* ritual, although this information was "kept hidden, and his wives still continue to sleep in a hut" (Pauw, 1980:317). According to Stayt (1931b:210) the sacred ritual known as *pembela*, in which the new chief enters the royal court while carrying his ancestors' spears and is given a secret medicine to make him impotent, allegedly took place two to three years after the death of the previous chief and the ascension of the new chief. The *pembela* or rhinoceros dance is inextricably linked to chieftainship, whether in terms of succession or rain control, despite differences in the specifics of the rituals and their timing (Stayt, 1931b:210).

Schroda (Mapungubwe), the 10th century capital of the Zhizo chiefdom and its Leokwe successors, yielded a sizable collection of clay figurines (Huffman, 2002:9). An impressionistic dark-grey head fragment among them has been interpreted as a rhinoceros figurine based on two short horns. Many of the figurines were gathered close to a cattle kraal that appeared to be split into two portions by a fence (Hanisch & Maumela, 2002:59). According to Berger (1994:300) the north-eastern side of the fence offered the greatest component, with relatively large figurines of wild creatures (including the rhinoceros' figurine), stylised birds, a few sheep and oxen, semi-human and stylised human forms and phallic devices made of coarse gritty clay. Small figurines made of fine-textured clay that included domestic animals (such as cattle, lambs and probably dogs), and other oddly shaped and ornamented artefacts were discovered in the vicinity southwest of the fence (Berger, 1994:300).

It is stated that after examining some excavated figurines, the underlying meaning "would have been articulated in a symbolic fashion in the praxis of ritual pedagogy" (Dederen, 2010:36). There is little doubt that the rhinoceros figurine's symbolic meaning was also communicated, even though the specifics are not clear from the archaeological setting. A small figurine assemblage made up of the leg of a potential rhinoceros or elephant was discovered at Castle Rock, a Leokwe facies site on the farm Den Staat (west of Mapungubwe Hill) in the Middle Limpopo basin. This figurine assemblage has been tentatively linked to fertility or initiation rituals that took place at a "supra-household level". The archaeological or cultural background of the rhinoceros figurine found at Melora Saddle (an early African farmer settlement on the Waterberg Plateau, Limpopo), which was a surface find, is unknown (Boeyens *et al.*, 2009).

The Leokwe and Mapungubwe complexes, which are the source of the other rhinoceros figures, were occupied during the same period (Dinerstein, 2011:150). From the same general area, at least two further partial clay figurines of bovids were found on the surface. It is impossible to tell if these figurines were standalone items belonging to specific houses or if they were a part of a broader group of figurines that would have been used in homestead ceremonies. Estes (1997:112) states that the rhinoceros most likely served as a metaphor for leadership and appeared in didactic lessons during initiation rituals where young boys and/or girls were prepared for adulthood and full integration into the social life of their community, according to the archaeological contexts of the figurines.

This is especially true of the farming communities of the Middle Iron Age that lived in the Shashe-Limpopo confluence region at the beginning of the second millennium AD.

3.6 A relict archaeological landscape

According to Kadouri *et al.* (2005:60) the cultural values given by the MCL have precolonial roots, as was already said, and they must be preserved for both current and future generations. These values are respected all around the world because the landscape is listed as a World Heritage Site.



Image 8: The confluence of the Shashe and Limpopo rivers, along the border between South Africa, Botswana, and Zimbabwe in the MNP (Photo: Liebetrau, 2022)

The MCL has been recognised as the region's first geologically defined cultural landscape, encompassing a complete set of consecutive periods in early history (Kelly, 2014:36). This contains the already mentioned historical triangle stretching from Mapungubwe to Great Zimbabwe (ruins), and Khami, (ruins) which continues to have an impact on African society today. Additionally, Carruthers (2006:12) writes that the MCL is

a place with extraordinary cultural and ecological assets. It has kept two values over the years, namely, exhibition of crucial interchange of human values in southern Africa between 900 and 1300 AD – on technological innovations and town planning, providing exceptional testimony to a lost cultural practice or civilisation in the Shashe-Limpopo region. According to Frost and Hall, we have here a good example of a landscape that depicts not only an important stage in human history, but also an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement and (their) land-use that represents a culture that became vulnerable because of irreversible change (2012:120).

Mapungubwe presents itself as a remnant cultural landscape that need to be protected, however, the archaeological legacy is under danger because of a multitude of problems that are unique to the Shashe-Limpopo confluence zone (see Image 8) (Startin, 1995). Given how interconnected they are, it is challenging to group the threats under any overarching themes. Kashe-Katyan (2013:300) asserts that the preservation or demolition of the archaeological evidence, particularly that of the flora and fauna, should be considered when analysing research data on previous flooding occurrences to determine what effects this might have on sites situated in the floodplain. Soil creep, gully erosion and vegetation overgrowth are common in areas like K2, and Mapungubwe Hill, primarily because of flooding and excavations. In addition to ongoing conservation work, stabilisation procedures at K2, and Mapungubwe address prior excavation activities that jeopardised the legitimacy of these sites (Ross, 2017:170).

Since the early 19th century, commercial farming has already significantly reduced the number of surface artifact concentrations and scatters (Mason, 1968:170). With the transfer of managerial power, this circumstance will be the opposite. The effect of cattle on the terrain seems to be minor, while there are signs that it once had a significant impact. Other influences on the landscape's physical environment influence the archaeological legacy as well. Elephants for example, whose populations are expected to rise, may present a threat to places like K2, but their management of them is necessary because they are a component of the environment and the communities that once benefited from the ivory trade (Selier *et al.*, 2016:120).

The archaeological legacy is also severely damaged by more significant excavations, such as mining and quarrying operations as the buffer zone of the terrain has several

mining enterprises (Prinsloo *et al.*, 2011:3265). Although the impact of diamond mining appears to be quite small, and its operations have mainly complied with South African environmental legislation, there are identified coal resources in the area, and if mining operations are permitted to proceed, coal dust pollution will have a significant effect on the landscape (Leonard & Lebogang, 2018:210).

3.7 Reflection

The main aim of the discussion was to assess UNESCO's reasons for listing MCL as a World Heritage Site, and why the remains created an impressive cultural landscape as a legendary heritage site of universal significance. The remnants in the Mapungubwe cultural environment are a remarkably thorough testimony to the emergence and subsequent demise of the Mapungubwe state, which was the greatest kingdom in the African subcontinent at its peak. The MCL also documents a significant exchange of human values that resulted in far-reaching cultural and social transformations in southern Africa. The remnants in the Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape graphically portray the influence of climate change and record the Kingdom of Mapungubwe's expansion and subsequent collapse as an indication of a culture that became vulnerable to irreversible change.

In the Shashe-Limpopo confluence area, 150 rock art locations have been identified, with most of the engravings being discovered at the same locations as paintings. Three rock painting traditions have also been identified, namely early San paintings, geometric paintings, and so-called late white paintings. These rock paintings and engravings cannot be accurately dated, but there is strong circumstantial evidence that they were created before around 1050 AD, when the area was inhabited by Iron Age farmers. The golden rhinoceros found in an excavated royal cemetery on Mapungubwe Hill, is a testament to the prosperity of the polity of Mapungubwe, the earliest recognised kingdom in southern Africa. Both the archaeological setting and the black rhinoceros's ethnographically derived symbolic value among Shona and Venda speakers, and it is assumed that the golden rhinoceros from the royal burial on Mapungubwe Hill was most likely a symbol of authority.

Chapter 4 gives a brief assessment on how the Greater Mapungubwe cultural path aims to create a one-of-a-kind, world-class route to connect heritage centres with tourism loops

and meanders to boost legacy tourism in Limpopo. The following chapter also offers an analysis of the socio-economic effects of both tourism and development in the Limpopo province.

CHAPTER 4 PRESERVING SHONA AND VENDA CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR TOURISM

4.1 Introduction

Heritage sites are valuable areas that must be fully protected to be preserved for current and future generations. Heritage sites contribute significantly to the country's economic growth and development; consequently, action to conserve them is vital to ensuring sustainability (Ngoepe & Saurombe, 2016:33).

This study focuses on preserving the Shona and Venda heritage and culture using tourism as a tool in Limpopo. This chapter presents perspectives on the positive economic impact of tourism, in particular cultural heritage tourism, on a region. The discussion starts with a review on tourism, the importance of cultural heritage tourism and the challenges that comes with tourism. Thereafter, the economic benefits to include the local communities in tourism activities is also considered with specific reference to the Shona and Venda history, language, traditional beliefs, arts, and cuisine.

4.2 Tourism, heritage and culture

Cultural heritage tourism is a tool for economic improvement that aims at attracting tourists from different areas apart from the host area (Blake, 2000:70). These tourists are attracted by the historical, artistic, scientific and lifestyle of the host community. Moreover, Tribe (1997:640) writes that cultural heritage tourism can best be understood in depth if the three terms are explained separately. Therefore, in this section I will separately define tourism, heritage, and culture. I will explain the concept of cultural heritage, which will then culminate in a clear definition of cultural heritage tourism.

Tourism as the sum of operators, mainly of “an economic nature, which directly relate to the entry, stay and movement of foreigners inside and outside a certain country, city, or a region” (Saayman, 2007:2). The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (1993) defines tourism as “the activities of persons traveling and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes”. Tribe (1997:640) defines tourism as “the activities of person traveling to

and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other related to their exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited". Tourism is described by many scholars as an activity engaged in by human beings including the act of travel from one place to another. Tourism has also a particular set of motives for engaging in that travel, and the engagement in activity at the destination (Netto, 2009:56). Leiper (1979:398) defines tourism as:

"a human intentional activity that serves as a means of communication and as a link of interaction between the people, inside a country or even beyond its geographical demarcation. It involves the temporary displacement of people from one region to another, country or even continent, with the objective of satisfying necessities and not the realisation of remunerated activity".

Taking the above into consideration I define tourism as the movement of people from the comfort of their home to another place, where they contribute to the economy of the local area by making use of what the community has to offer.

The positive economic impact of tourism has been widely acknowledged; this has been acknowledged through the increase of visitor arrivals at various destinations (Fayissa *et al.*, 2007:4). Tourism generates a significant amount of foreign exchange earnings that contribute to the economic growth of a country. Between 2016 and 2018, South Africa's tourism industry was a significant employer, providing jobs for 722 013 individuals within the industry (Stats SA, 2018:44). Employment within this industry is diversified across various sub-sectors, including transportation, accommodation, food and beverage services, retail of tourism-specific products, travel agencies and air passenger transport, among others. Reflecting on a global scale, the World Travel and Tourism Council (2017:2) highlights that the tourism industry has experienced substantial growth, contributing to the creation of 292 million jobs worldwide. These employment opportunities encompass both direct and indirect roles associated with the industry. Amidst the expansive growth of the tourism industry at large, a particular subset merits focused attention: cultural heritage tourism.

Tourism plays a pivotal role in the economic landscape of Limpopo. The province of Limpopo's tourist industry is expanding, which improves the province's economic growth

and prospects. In 2016, over 700 jobs were generated during the construction of the high-end hotel in Polokwane called Park Inn, which cost roughly R180 million in total. When the hotel opened for business, another 150 jobs were created for employees (South African Government News Agency) (RSA, 2016). Additionally, more than 70% of the nation's private game breeding activities in the tourism industry are contributed by Limpopo province. This is because the province, which borders Botswana and Zimbabwe, boasts some of the best private game reserves, the Kruger National Park, historical sites like Mapungubwe, and several hunting opportunities (South African Government News Agency) (RSA, 2016).

Heritage refers to “inheritance or a legacy, things of value which have been passed from one generation to the next” (Lowenthal, 1998:200). Hewison (1987:16) characterises heritage as elements from previous generations that have been conserved and transmitted to the current era, which a significant segment of society aims to preserve and pass on to future generations. The definition of heritage can at times be confused with history. The difference between heritage and history is that; history is the source of heritage, yet heritage is not the equivalent of history. History becomes heritage after a period (Hewison, 1987:16). According to Hoedemaekers (2018:1350), history is the remembered record of the past while heritage is a contemporary commodity purposefully created to satisfy contemporary consumption. One becomes the other through a process of commodification. Such a process is not unique to history but can and has been applied to other aspects of human activity and creativity such as arts, music, and crafts (Ashworth, 2011:16).

Heritage has transformed from merely preserving random relics from the past into a more dynamic process, resulting in significant shifts in its focus (Ashworth & Larkham, 2013:17). This transformation can be broken down into specific stages, each marked by a fundamental change in planning strategies, focal points, selection criteria, operational methods, and even the makeup and goals of the decision-makers involved. Moreover, Peterken (1996:187) writes that preservation approaches dominated the first hundred years of European concern for surviving artefacts and buildings from the past. Furthermore, the traditional methods primarily concentrated on preserving structures like monuments, chosen based on supposedly clear and objective criteria such as their age and aesthetic value. These were safeguarded through legal protections, applied by

experts who saw themselves as protectors of the public's cultural treasures, acting as arbiters of public taste. While heritage is anchored in the past, culture breathes and grows as a vibrant and dynamic expression of a community's way of life.

UNESCO (1982:41) defines culture, based on the 1982 Mexico Declaration of Cultural Policies, as:

“the entire array of unique spiritual, intellectual, material, and emotional traits that define a society or a group. This encompasses not only literature and the arts but also lifestyles, fundamental human rights, systems of values, traditions, and beliefs. Culture equips individuals with self-awareness, shaping our identity as rational and moral beings capable of critical thought and ethical decisions. It is the medium through which we understand values, make decisions, express our identities, acknowledge our own imperfections, critically evaluate our accomplishments, continuously seek deeper meanings, and produce creations that help us overcome our constraints”.

In the same report the cultural heritage of a people is defined as “the works of its artists, architects, musicians, writers and scientists and also the work of anonymous artists, expressions of the people’s spirituality, and the body of values which give meaning to life” (UNESCO, 1982:43). Cultural heritage includes tangible and intangible works that represent the community's creative spirit, including languages, ceremonies, beliefs, historical sites and structures, literary works, art pieces, and the contents of archives and libraries. Consequently, every community holds both the responsibility and the privilege to safeguard and maintain its cultural patrimony, as this is a practice acknowledged and upheld by societies (UNESCO, 1982:43).

4.3 Cultural heritage tourism

Taking into consideration the definitions of tourism, heritage, culture, and cultural heritage, cultural heritage tourism in this study can be defined as follows: Cultural heritage tourism refers to the practice of visiting destinations where the unique traditions, arts, history, and lifestyle of a community are showcased and experienced. It involves engaging with the tangible and intangible aspects of a community's cultural legacy, such as its historic sites, monuments, languages, rituals, and artistic expressions. This form of

tourism not only allows for the appreciation and understanding of diverse cultural expressions, but also plays a critical role in the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage, as it fosters respect and support for the protection of these cultural assets by both locals and visitors. Cultural heritage tourism emphasises the importance of authenticity and sustainability, ensuring that the cultural heritage of a community is honoured and sustained for future generations to explore and appreciate. The above mentioned are what attract tourist to the host community or cultural heritage attraction.

Cultural heritage tourism is a growing tourism niche that combines economic growth with the protection and appreciation of local historical and cultural assets, making a varied and sustainable contribution to development. In this regard, Moulin and Boniface (2001:240) state that the development of cultural heritage tourism is frequently linked to a variety of social advantages. It can contribute significantly to the formation of local, regional, and national identities and foster a sense of community among host communities, particularly those who live close to heritage sites. One common benefit of cultural heritage tourism development has been noted to be heightened feelings of community pride, which may in turn raise awareness of the need to also preserve heritage (Lak *et al.*, 2020:390).

4.4 Tourism impacts on cultural heritage

The tourism industry and the tourists it serves can have a significant impact on host communities on a variety of levels. On the one hand, tourism has the potential to preserve cultures, resurrect lost traditions and prevent cultural stagnation. Tourism, on the other hand, has the potential to challenge existing values, social norms, traditions, and behaviour (Yamin *et al.*, 2021:47). Cultural heritage preservation is not free, and given the limited resources in many developing nations, decisions must be made about how to best allocate funds (both public and private) (Tosun, 2001:290). The costs of maintaining and improving a heritage site can be calculated quite simply, but the benefits are frequently harder to predict. Economic impact studies are tools that can be used to measure the financial benefits, which are typically related to tourism spending in the area, but they only show the private benefits of heritage conservation and may represent a smaller portion of the overall economic value. Current models of tourism development which utilise culture are limited, because they fall short of maximising the financial (and

non-financial) gains associated with expanding the cultural supply chain (Dayoub *et al.*, 2020:870).

The craft industry is booming globally, and culture, crafts and tourism are rapidly becoming inseparable partners in the growth of the tourism industry (Holder, 1989:311). It is emphasised that local crafts are important cultural components and people travel to see and experience other cultures, traditions, and ways of living (Littrell & Dickson, 2010:97). Crafts are frequently a significant component of tourist shopping activities (Timothy & Ron, 2013:100). Additionally, Koumara-Tsitsou and Karachalis (2021:260) add that the fact that visitors travel to see local customs and crafts can help to foster a sense of local pride. Marginalised rural women can redefine their roles as contributing members of society by developing new craft skills and increasing their sense of dignity and well-being. To add to this, local crafts are important cultural components and people travel to see and experience other cultures, traditions, and ways of living (Littrell & Dickson, 2010:97).

4.5 Importance of cultural heritage tourism

Cultural tourism is growing faster than most other tourism segments and at a higher rate than tourism worldwide” (Günlü *et al.*, 2009:220). In fact, highlighting the arts, culture, history, and heritage to draw tourists is nothing new globally and cultural tourism has been steadily increasing because of travellers’ increasing interest in possibilities to learn about places through their art and history. The importance of cultural heritage tourism will be discussed in terms of economic development, preservation of culture and heritage, education, and cultural exchange.

4.5.1 Economic development

Macroeconomic and microeconomic levels can be used to analyse the financial effects of cultural heritage tourism (Brida *et al.*, 2013:111). They further state that the economic value of cultural heritage tourism can be described on a microeconomic level as a collection of advantages for a particular society and that the macroeconomic value is reflected in the growth of other economic sectors because of its direct, indirect, and induced effects. Since the growth of cultural heritage tourism encourages the growth of specific economic sectors, which in turn contributes to the overall development of a

particular destination, it is reasonable to say that cultural tourism is a method of development (Dwyer *et al.*, 2000:350).

Consumption by cultural tourists is influenced by four fundamental factors: average consumption, duration of stay, cultural attractions, and cultural activities at the destination (March & Woodside, 2006:237). Research on the economic effects of cultural heritage tourism products depends on the product's unique features. The variables of visitor volume and admission cost make it relatively simple to calculate the impact of a museum or heritage site as a cultural heritage tourism product. While some festivals and events do not charge admission, other tourist-related businesses like hotels, restaurants and shops do benefit financially when such events occur (Jucan & Jucan, 2013:86). This makes estimating the impact of festivals and events much more difficult than it is for museums (Jucan & Jucan, 2013:86). According to Richards (2013:483) economic growth is achieved by attracting tourists from outside the host community who are interested in the historical, artistic, scientific, and /or heritage offerings of a community, region, group, or institution. Furthermore, Silberberg (1995:364) states that the primary focus of culture as an economic tool is to attract visitors for cultural and heritage tourism.

Both intangible (quality of life) and tangible (job creation and tax revenues) effects are widely credited to tourism. A wide range of attractions, such as agritourism, the arts, cultural and heritage tourism, destination tourism, fairs, events, conferences, sports teams, recreation and more, may be used to create it. Therefore, economic growth in cultural heritage tourism is driven by attracting tourists interested in a community's historical, artistic, and heritage offerings. This sector not only enhances the quality of life, but also contributes tangibly through job creation and tax revenues.

In the context of the local community of the MCL, leveraging cultural heritage tourism presents a significant opportunity for economic development. By showcasing the unique cultural, historical, and natural heritage of the area, the MCL can attract tourists whose spending will support local businesses, from accommodations and restaurants to local artisans and cultural sites.

4.5.2 Preservation of culture and heritage

Tourism contributes to the preservation of the cultural heritage of a community by providing economic support, raising awareness, encouraging sustainable practices, enhancing community pride, spurring research, influencing policy development, and fostering international support. According to Goussous (2022:253) the preservation of culture and heritage is a critical component of every civilised state's humanitarian policy and serves as the foundation for the nation's self-identification, this is especially true for nations dealing with crises and tensions, as well as those in transition and post-conflict circumstances. In this instance, cultural revitalisation, conservation, and preservation of cultural assets are critical for fostering regeneration by preserving national identity, long-term peace, and sustainable development (Goussous, 2022:253).

Cultural heritage conservation is an inherent part of the humanitarian component of democratic society development concepts (Cave & Negussie (2017:90). The regulatory framework established by UNESCO provides a unique worldwide forum for international collaboration and discourse about the funding and management of the preservation of cultural and natural heritage sites. They build comprehensive cultural governance based on shared values, reciprocal commitments, tolerance for cultural diversity, open exchange of ideas and collective accountability. UNESCO engages governments in international cooperation by adhering to the provisions of treaties, different recommendations, declarations, and intergovernmental programs, therefore encouraging inclusive governance, information exchange and best practices at the policy level (Goussous, 2022:254).

Tourism has always been a driving force behind the creation and maintenance of protected areas across the world, and South Africa is no exception. In terms of preservation, maintenance, and conservation, many of South Africa's cultural sites have received assistance from the government, private sector, non-governmental organisations (NGOS) and UNESCO (Snyman & Spenceley, 2019:110). All heritage sites are vulnerable to the impact and effect of climate change, and as such, all interventions to sustain them are critical and "must be implemented so that they continue to be protected, conserved, and preserved for present and future" tourism and other activities (Saayman, 2007). The MCL as well as the Khomani Cultural Landscape, the Cradle of

Humankind, and the Richtersveld Cultural and Botanical Landscape are perfect examples of protected and preserved heritage sites in South Africa. The South African Constitution Section 24 categorises issues of preservation, protection, and conservation within the context of the environment as fundamental rights, which indicates that “the environment should not be harmed, must be protected for the benefit of all, pollution of the environment should be abhorred and prevented, and the ecology should not be degraded, conservation should be intensified and promoted” (Ngoepe & Saurombe, 2016:33).

Other forms of regulations were also put in place to supplement section 24 for it to accomplish its sustainable objective, to widen the provision of section 24 to particularly describe locations and sites that must have constitutional protection, preservation, and conservation (Paterson, 2017:154). One regulation in question is the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act 57 of 2003 (NEMPAA) (RSA, 2004). It was enacted in 2004 with the goal of “providing protection and conservation of ecologically viable areas representative of South Africa's biological diversity, natural landscapes, and seascapes”. The NEMPAA further works to safeguard the long-term preservation of South African landscapes, particularly historic sites, against degradation and destruction (Paterson & Mkhulisi, 2014:383). The NEMPAA's objectives are to continue to provide strong leadership in managing declared protected areas as:

"part of a strategy to manage and conserve its biodiversity; to provide for a representative network of protected areas on state land, private land, and communal land; to promote sustainable utilisation of protected areas for the benefit of people, while preserving the ecological character of such areas; and to promote participation of local communities" (Paterson, 2017:154).

In the context of MCL, cultural heritage tourism serves as a pivotal mechanism for safeguarding the region's rich heritage. Tourism to this area brings attention to its archaeological and cultural value. By attracting visitors interested in the historical and cultural narratives of MCL, tourism fosters a deeper appreciation and understanding of this heritage, which in turn motivates both local and international support for its conservation. Furthermore, the involvement of the local community in tourism activities empowers them to become active stewards of their heritage, ensuring that conservation

strategies are culturally sensitive and beneficial to the community's socio-economic development.

4.5.3 Education

Tourism can also have a positive impact through formal and informal education. According to Cave and Negussie (2017:114) cultural heritage preservation through education and training has always been a matter of great interest and concern as it directly linked to achieving the efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage. Cultural heritage education contributes to the proposed development aims of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. According to Cave and Negussie (2017:114) there are three elements fundamental to initiating formal cultural heritage education in local processes:

- Communication with cultural subjects and citizens;
- Research and training; and
- Partnership and relations with different stakeholders.

The current education system on cultural heritage tourism entails examining the standard training programmes and suggesting an alternative that is appropriate for building a professional profile with digital, practical, and theoretical abilities that can handle the complexity of culture and heritage (Mayaka and Akama, 2007:300). It is necessary to acknowledge cultural heritage as a unique asset. The medium- and long-term goals of heritage education are to help individuals further their education throughout their lives. Thus, the creation of adaptable and multidisciplinary pathways, enhancement of learning procedures and research abilities, extension of capabilities, and acquisition of relational, communication, and project skills are definitions of education and cultural heritage (Cave & Negussie, 2017:114). The incorporation of living heritage into educational courses enhances their relevance and fosters an understanding of the cultural variety and the significance of culture in sustainable development (Achille & Fiorillo, 2022:2570).

Through formal and informal education, UNESCO has been trying to create measures that help conserve intangible cultural assets. The survival of living heritage depends on initiatives to raise awareness among the next generation and assist them in discovering, appreciating, and taking part in the preservation of their own living legacy (Van Doorselaere, 2021:37). Living legacy fosters tolerance and appreciation for cultural

variety, encourages intercultural communication, and builds more resilient, peaceful, and inclusive communities when it is acknowledged and shared, especially from a young age. There are various advantages of incorporating living heritage into school-based teaching. To begin with, integrating intangible cultural heritage into education contributes to its preservation, which means it helps ensure that a practice, knowledge, or ability is passed on to future generations. This significance also includes promoting an understanding for cultural variety to promote sustainable living, global citizenship, and peace (Patel & Sooknanan, 2011:178). Additionally, Van Doorselaere (2021:37) writes that living heritage shapes who we are, what we value and how we view and act in the world. As a result, incorporating living heritage into education connects youth to their history, to one another, and to the larger world.

For educational tourism, interpretation is essential. According to Staiff (2016:230) heritage interpretation is the process of transferring appreciation or passion for an area that is regarded to be important to people, and it is used to educate the significance of a region to its visitors. The goal of interpretation is to make people aware of the significance of the places they visit, to provide knowledge that “increases their understanding, and to promote interest which leads to greater enjoyment and perhaps responsibility”. It functions as a medium for conveying the significance of heritage, employing objects, direct experiences, and educational media to enhance visitor understanding and enable experiences at attractions that would be unattainable without such interpretive tools (Kennedy, 2012:140). Furthermore, Kennedy (2012:140) asserts that effective interpretation involves audiences hearing and conveying previous tales, emphasising human experience, and add it at the heart of those stories. It includes incorporating individuals who utilise the spaces, such as locals, communities, visitors, and stakeholders, in especially for destinations. The interpretative strategy allows citizens to get an innovative and more comprehensive knowledge of their cultural and heritage assets. Staiff (2016:230) suggests that by adopting an open-minded approach, stakeholders can evaluate their cultural assets and innovative combinations, recognising qualities that garner acclaim in tourism and culture. This contributes to regeneration and conservation efforts that benefit both residents and tourists.

By implementing interpretive strategies, MCL can transfer the appreciation of its ancient civilisation, landscapes, and artifacts to visitors, making the significance of this UNESCO

World Heritage Site more accessible and engaging. Interpretation is already achieved through various means such as the guided tours that narrate the history and significance of the Mapungubwe Kingdom, the informational panels that detail the archaeological findings and their cultural implications, and the interactive experiences (in the museum) that allow visitors to immerse themselves in the daily life and traditions of the ancient inhabitants. To update the training of local Shona and Venda tour guides will also enhance the interpretation and add to a more authentic experience to tourists (Interview 2, 2023/11/10).

4.5.4 Cultural exchange

The modern phenomenon of tourism is driven by the growing demand for health restoration, the changing environment, and "the birth and development of a sense of openness for the beauties of nature" (Richards, 2001:79). People have always been interested in expanding their understanding of the past and present.

Tourists may learn about other people's histories, traditions and customs when visiting a destination of their choice. In this way it helps the local community with self-development while it allows tourists to be able to engage with the local's way of life and results in both host employers and tourist working together. One of the consequences of cultural exchange is the creation of stereotypes. Miller *et al.* (2012) define a stereotype as a cognitive generalisation about a certain social group that links group members together based on a single characteristic. There is no requirement for these cognitive linkages "to be based on a specific culture" they can develop at any moment. In the tourism industry, stereotypes are applied to both visitors and locals. The opinions that visitors and hosts have of one another might be influenced by stereotypes. Tourists may be drawn in by positive preconceptions and turned off by unfavourable ones (Reisinger, 2009).

Stereotypes play a significant role in the tourism industry since unfounded information might persuade a visitor to visit or not to visit a particular location (Pearce, 1995:147). According to Reisinger (2009), to avoid experiencing a culture shock, it is important for travellers to enquire in advance about the region they intend to visit. This will allow them to become familiar with certain cultural elements of that area. He further indicates that this informing often dispels many stereotypes in the tourist's mind and can permanently alter its perception of specific aspects of a tourist destination, of the local population, and

of how to behave in public in countries that are completely different from the tourist's own. For instance, this difference may be reflected under the aspect of religion, customs, or behaviour towards tourists leading to their acceptance or rejection by the host population (Reisinger, 2009). The psychological and social processes that accompany intercultural interactions are frequently the same. The most basic intercultural interaction takes place when a stranger enters a new cultural setting, which happens frequently in the tourism industry. Typically, "the foreigner goes through a form of cultural shock" (Hofstede, 2012).

Within the MCL are the remnants of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) Greefswald bunker built with corrugated iron sheeting and sand-cement mix filled hessian bags, covered with soil, and planted with endemic foliage as camouflage. It was a place where non-conforming military conscripts were sent during the South African Border War (1966–1990), to protect the northern border between South Africa and Zimbabwe. This structure is part of the MNP tourist viewpoints. In the context of MCL, the cultural exchange facilitated by tourism offers in this case a unique opportunity to deepen the understanding of not only ancient African kingdom's rich heritage, but also presenting the challenge of navigating stereotypes. To mitigate the risk of stereotyping at MCL, informed interactions between visitors and the local community must be encouraged, which will promote a more nuanced and respectful understanding of cultural differences, thereby enhancing the cultural exchange and ensuring that tourism remains a positive force for both the local community and visitors.

4.6 Challenges in cultural heritage tourism

Cultural heritage tourism plays a vital role in preserving the local culture and heritage, yet it can influence negatively on the same community. The challenges in cultural heritage tourism will be discussed in terms of over-tourism, acculturation, depletion of natural resources as well as commodification.

4.6.1 Over-tourism

Mass tourism is an increasingly common occurrence, frequently including the entrance of a large number of visitors to small regions, which has a significant influence on the area of arrival and leads to increased pollution, waste, and water consumption, placing infrastructure and ecosystems under significant strain (Chong, 2020:162). The amount of

pressure that visitors feel when they arrive in large numbers may be determined by looking at the locations. The number of tourists or visitors present at a location and time relative to the total number of residents there is known as tourist pressure. Numerous studies have linked visitor density and concentration to perceptions of tourism, indicating that the pressure from tourism is psychological rather than physical (Adie, 2019). According to Chong (2020:163) urban areas and cultural institutions are becoming more and more attractive as tourist destinations. Overcrowding at these locations is a rising problem and since cultural heritage places frequently draw sizable crowds of visitors, over-tourism has detrimental effects on locals' quality of life, including traffic and parking issues in historic districts, resident annoyance due to unruly visitors, visitor unhappiness, and significant historical damage (Fyall & Garrod, 1998:215). Over-tourism can also lead to the increased prices and a shortage of basic items and services available to local communities (Bornhorst, *et al.*, 2010:581).

A range of factors contributing to over-tourism, including promotional strategies, shifts in visitor behaviour, changes in accessibility, and the development of new and existing attractions against the backdrop of an increasing global tourism trend are identified (Fyall & Garrod, 1998:227). They argue that the direction taken in the political and destination-level management of tourism is critical. The resilience of a location is affected by issues like social inequality, economic stability, and environmental sensitivity. Over-tourism can also arise from insufficient infrastructure, seasonal fluctuations, and the nature of the tourism activities available. Austin (2002:447) emphasises that the core issue often lies in the management of tourism, which profoundly affects both the carrying capacity of a destination and its ability to withstand the pressures of over-tourism.

To prevent over-tourism at MCL, it is essential to implement strategic visitor management practices, such as regulating visitor numbers, promoting off-peak tourism (e.g., school groups), and encouraging the exploration of lesser-known areas within the cultural landscape. While over-tourism has not yet emerged as a challenge in South Africa, proactive measures should be considered to safeguard the future sustainability of tourism destinations.

4.6.2 Acculturation

Acculturation is a process of adjustment and adaptation (Rothe *et al.*, 2010:686). They state that when locals provide entertainment for visitors, they eventually begin to adopt their wants, attitudes, and beliefs, and that this frequently occurs in less developed societies, where the stronger culture rules over the weaker. Yet, in a social context, the dissemination of innovative cultural elements depends on compatibility, advantage, and the cultural items' intricacy. Lee and Cox (2007:1887) argue that:

“a new culture known as the hybrid culture is produced when there is a combination of two cultures coming into contact with each other and sharing ideas and customs, and examples include taking traditional dancing, music, events, and activities and incorporating artificial components into them; providing hybrid food in place of traditional salads and three-course meals in place of appetisers for the evening performance; and setting up a bar and disco”.

Despite the loss of their culture, the locals are usually content with their lives and their affluence, and they believe that visitors help them, thus they must please tourists (Lee & Cox, 2007:1887).

Acculturation has also the effect of causing migrants who migrate to a nation to have different travel choices and habits from those of most people in that country. As a result, their demands and desires may differ from those of the general local population, creating a niche market potential for tourist operators in the region (Lee & Cox, 2007:188). According to Herrero *et al.* (2011) culture influences customer behaviour by influencing consumers' values and lifestyle. Cultural values are fundamental to any ethnic group, and culture is the arrangement of taught behaviour, behaviour consequences, and a society's specific lifestyle. As a result, a group of people from the same culture share numerous characteristics, including not just their physical appearance, but also their ideas and actions. Cultural variations in tourism have been demonstrated in several studies by comparing visitor habits by nationality or ethnicity (Lee & Cox, 2007:188).

MCL can safeguard its cultural integrity and prevent acculturation by actively promoting and supporting local traditions, ensuring community participation in tourism development,

and educating visitors on the importance of respecting and preserving the unique cultural heritage of the area.

4.6.3 Depletion of natural resources

The pressures applied on natural resources by tourism expansion, particularly in areas where these resources are already limited are highlighted by Gazta (2018:13). Fresh water, a vital and scarce resource, is consumed in copious amounts by the tourism industry through its extensive use in hotels, swimming pools, and golf courses, leading to potential shortages and degradation of water quality. Additionally, the industry impacts local resources, heavily drawing upon energy, food, and raw materials. This escalated consumption is not only intensified by the demand from a transient tourist population, but it also amplifies the environmental toll through increased resource extraction and transportation. As such, the seasonal nature of tourism significantly exacerbates these pressures, with peak seasons seeing an increase in local population, thereby straining the available resources disproportionately (Sun *et al.*, 2021:1000).

Attention is drawn to the industry's role in land degradation, where the exploitation of minerals, fossil fuels and other natural land resources is spurred by the construction of tourist infrastructure (Gazta, 2018:13). This development adversely affects both renewable and non-renewable resources and can lead to significant ecological damage. The issue is compounded by solid waste and littering, especially in mountainous tourist regions where waste disposal facilities are often inadequate, resulting in pollutants infiltrating otherwise pristine environments. According to Holden (2008:157), implementing controls on tourism density and movement within protected areas is vital for mitigating environmental impacts and ensuring the long-term sustainability of these precious resources.

The aquatic environment (including the Kalopi/Maloutswa wetlands and pans) within the MNP, an important biodiversity feature, is already highly degraded (SANPARKS, 2006). It has been and still is threatened not only by mining, but also by upstream and local water use by agricultural, fish-farming, dam building activities in the Sashe River (Botswana) and the fragmentation of the bio-physical features themselves (SANPARKS, 2006). Unfortunately, MNP can only mitigate the depletion of natural resources caused by tourism through implementing sustainable tourism practices, such as eco-friendly

infrastructure, responsible waste management, and conservation initiatives that involve both tourists and the local community in preserving the area's natural heritage.

4.6.4 Commodification

The exploration of the sociocultural effects of tourism has been centred on the concepts of authenticity and commodification. The urgency of discussions about how tourism affects the authenticity of cultures has increased because of the tourism industry's growing influence, improved travel convenience, and expanding number of visited locations (Garay-Tamajón & Morales-Pérez, 2023:69). Tourism as an economic activity contributes to the commodification of cultures. It is claimed that when items and performances that were once produced for local consumption are geared toward the tourism market, they are exploited (Zhang, Yin & Peng, 2021:6847). Therefore, Gugushvili *et al.* (2019:20) argued that such commodification destroys the authenticity of regional cultural goods and relationships and results in "staged" or faked experiences made especially for tourists. A decline in authenticity harms both the experience of the visitor and the host community.

The central element of tourism may be viewed from the visitor's perspective, their consumption of genuine goods and experiences. A traveller will take part in genuine events and rituals, purchase genuine handicrafts, get to know the locals, and enjoy a friendly and welcoming experience (Jyotsna & Maurya, 2019:755). Moreover, Bramwell (1994:3) writes that the host community and the cultures of the tourists now are moving towards the industrialised nations of the West, which have been a significant force for change. The process of globalisation, which has transformed our identification with local cultures and replaced it with global awareness, unquestionably includes tourism.

The globalisation of tourism, cultures, and economies has been facilitated by "the ever-expanding communications network, intensified international travel flows, and growing dominance of global brands supplying global markets" (Hazbun, 2004:334). As travel becomes more accessible and affordable and the tourism industry matures, more and more regions of the world are entering it, and the tourists' points of cultural reference become more and more universal. The travel industry now offers a greater variety of special interest vacations to some far locales and distinctive, vibrant cultures because the

mature tourist market is eager to seek out more specialised, niche tourist experiences (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007:68).

MCL can counteract the commodification of its culture by ensuring that tourism development is community-led, focuses on authentic experiences, and actively involves local stakeholders in decision-making to preserve the cultural significance and integrity of their heritage.

4.7 Preservation of Shona and Venda culture and heritage

This section highlights the Shona and Venda cultural heritage and how it can be utilised for cultural heritage tourism offerings and MNP. Currently, MNP offers various cultural heritage tourism opportunities. The Mapungubwe Interpretation Centre provides interpretation about the Mapungubwe World Heritage Site (SANParks, 2024). The website also provides historical information, but the specific cultural tourism activities are not clearly specified. In the next sections I will provide some recommendations of how Shona and Venda people can be included in the historical narrative at MNP in their cultural tourism offerings.

4.7.1 Historical background of Shona and Venda People

The early Shona population growth in the Mapungubwe area, located immediately south of the Shashe-Limpopo confluence, is likely the most well-known settlement location in the Limpopo province (Hall & Vogel, 1980). Venda-speaking people have historically resided in north-eastern Botswana and south-western Mozambique. Madiba (1994:200) writes that Venda's grammar and phonology are comparable to Shona, especially western Shona, or Kalanga, whereas Sotho has a vocabulary very close to that of Venda. Despite these parallels, academics concur that Venda has enough distinctive features to be regarded as a separate language. Many ethnographers claim that in addition to the Venda language, the Shona, Sotho-Tswana, and Tsonga communities are distinguished from one another by several rituals, such as the *domba* pre-marital school.

4.7.2 Language and communication

Language holds a central place in the tourism industry, serving as a key instrument for demarcating community boundaries, affirming local identities, and monetising cultural

heritage (Cohen & Cooper, 1986:537). Consequently, language emerges as a pivotal medium for the dissemination of cultural values. Hopkyns (2020:130) indicates that when English is employed in countries where it is not the first language, it conjures notions of modernity, exclusivity and a marketplace that is welcoming and unrestricted. Furthermore, language is instrumental in conveying the essence of cultural and historical sites. The narratives, legends, and historical accounts, often transmitted through oral traditions, provide context and depth to the physical sites, enhancing the experiential quality of the visit.

Shona is a Central Bantu language which is spoken by approximately 9 million people. There are five dialects in Shona: Ndau, Korekore, Manyika, Karanga, and Zezuru. The two main dialects are Karanga and Zezuru; the orthography is primarily based on their phonologies; both have a higher speaker count than the other dialects; they both cover a greater geographic area than the other dialects; and they are both regarded as more prestigious than the other dialects (Mudzingwa, 2010:197). The same source indicates that the Venda (TshiVenda) language, emerged as a distinct dialect in the 16th century, and in the 20th century, the vocabulary became similar to SeSotho, but the grammar also shares similarities with Shona dialects, which are spoken in modern Zimbabwe.

The allure of non-verbal communication within host communities, which often serves as a significant draw for tourists (Giles & Powesland, 1975:18). Non-verbal communication transcends the need for a common language, speaking through the silent but powerful conveyance of internal attitudes and emotions. This form of communication encompasses a range of expressions beyond the spoken word and is integral to ritualistic practices. Moyo (2013:12) provides insight into specific non-verbal communication practices within the Shona and Venda cultures. In these communities, eye contact carries nuanced meanings: while direct eye contact is common and expected in casual conversations, it is considered respectful for individuals to avert their gaze when interacting with elders or members of the opposite sex.

The act of kneeling is a profound gesture of deference and respect, particularly towards those of higher social standing or advanced age (Baines, 2022:79). This custom is observed with a lowered head and minimal eye contact and is commonly maintained for the duration of the elder's presence. In Shona culture, women may kneel when engaging

with male family members or while serving food, and men might similarly display respect towards female relatives. These culturally embedded practices of non-verbal communication are not only intricate but also play a critical role in the maintenance of social order and respect within the community (Mhaka, 2022:345). Chapman (1973:56) asserts that Shona and Venda people make use of drums, hand clapping, ululation, kneeling, scattering blood on the grave and more. In addition to being action types, they are factual statements that call for interpretation and comprehension.

Depending on the circumstance, ululation can be used to express excitement, encouragement, or gratitude (Phibion, 2013:95). People ululate, for instance, to motivate dancers to move even more or singers to sing even louder. The small beer calabash known as *kahari kemusumo* is very significant because it tells both the living elders and the ancestral spirits that the preparations for the "taking home" of the deceased's spirit are complete by saying the following: *Madzitateguru edu mose Tapfugama zvakare mberi kwenyu Tichikurangaridzai kuti basa remwana rapera Chitungamirirai kuuya kwake mumusha*. Which translates 'To all our forebears we kneel down once more in front of you to let you know that our preparations for the "child's" coming are over, so please direct his return home' (Waliaula & Mangena, 2019:294).

Both Shona and Venda people live in a communal, sharing society (Gelfand, 1959:56). This sharing is thought to extend into the spiritual realm. For instance, the Mashona would typically provide food first before speaking to guests, friends, or family. They hold the opinion that you should not converse or discuss with someone who is hungry. The idea of *kudyidzana* has inspired the following proverbs: *Ukama igasva hunotozadziswa nokudya* and *Nhumbu yomweni haipedzi dura*. Both phrases imply that feeding or providing food for guests does not deplete one's food reserves (Halliday, 1978:56).

To enhance cultural tourism at MNP with a focus on the Shona and Venda peoples, leveraging the rich linguistic heritage and non-verbal communication practices can offer immersive experiences for visitors. For instance, guided tours could incorporate storytelling sessions in Shona and Venda, showcasing the oral traditions and legends of the region, allowing tourists to appreciate the depth of local history and spirituality. Non-verbal cues, such as the respectful practices of kneeling and avoiding direct eye contact with elders, can be demonstrated, and explained to provide insight into local customs and

social etiquette. Additionally, cultural performances featuring traditional Shona and Venda rituals, including drumming, hand clapping, and ululation, can vividly bring to life the community's rich cultural expressions. By integrating these elements into the tourism offerings, MNP can create authentic and engaging experiences that celebrate the unique cultural heritage of the Shona and Venda peoples.

4.7.3 Traditional beliefs and religion

Since the earliest days of civilisation, there has been religious tourism (Coleman & Elsner, 1995:170). To add to this, travellers made pilgrimages to honour the guardians of important sites across the world. Over the last 2 000 years, pilgrimage and tourism to holy places have coexisted. More recently, in the previous 200 years, affluent Europeans, Africans and Asians have travelled to unique places of religious ritual. People have spent centuries going to places with great religious significance (Coleman & Elsner, 1995:170). These places now require preservation, conservation, and interpretation, which is crucial. There are not many guardians of these unique places of prayer and visitation, and there are even fewer funding sources to keep these sanctuaries in good condition for current visitors and worshippers. However, there is a distinction between worshippers and tourists since religious buildings can accommodate both as guests (Woodward, 2004:180). Many tourists view the worshippers as part of their travel experience, although some of the worshippers do not appreciate the sense of being monitored by the visitors (Coleman & Elsner, 1995:170). They further argue that some worshippers are delighted to share their holy place with others and are proud of the culture and history that draw others to the location. However, they do not want to feel like they are a part of a "show". A tourist may find something sacred to one set of worshippers yet find it fascinating from a cultural perspective. Church officials may need to decide when a request to join in a service may be regarded as a declaration of sincere interest and/or intention given that some visitors may seek to engage in worship (Barth,1989:127).

In the MCL, Leokwe Hill and Mapungubwe Hill are sacred places of worship as discussed in the previous chapters. This is because of rainmaking rituals and traditional initiation ceremonies controlled by the chosen sacred leaders in the area (Huffman,1982:123). Class differentiation was made acceptable by the sacred leadership concept. This is a reference to the connection that was made between the leader and both the land and

God. God made it rain in Shona culture, and people prayed to him through their leaders and ancestors (Kahari,1990). Masaka and Makahamadze (2013:140) add that it is philosophically interesting to consider the hierarchical rank ordering of spiritual and non-spiritual forces that is at the core of the Shona religion and ultimately leads to the Supreme Being.

One of the significant forces in this intricate hierarchy of forces is the ancestors. It is significant to note that the ancestor's significance in the Shona religious worldview was largely misrepresented and distorted in most missionary and anthropological literature in colonial Zimbabwe (Bourdillon, 1976:200). Moreover, such literature made the false claim that ancestral spirits are revered by the Shona people. Ancestors are not actually seen by the Shona as their God, but rather as one of a few prerequisites to communicating with God. The Shona brilliantly captures this reality through clever proverbs that demonstrate that ancestors are not ends in and of themselves but rather means to a greater end, God (Mungwini, 2011:13). Gelfand *et al.* (1985:57) mistakenly asserts, however, that the habit of calling on ancestral spirits is exclusive to "the less sophisticated Shona regardless of where the person resides". On the other hand, a Shona person feels more vulnerable and worried that their enemies might try to bring them down as they accumulate more and more wealth. It is therefore even more important for the called individual to honour their ancestors or group spirits. Additionally, sacred leaders were chosen by their ancestors; hence, they were not strictly hereditary. Mapungubwe and later phases of the Zimbabwean civilisation were distinguished by class differentiation and religious authority, and they constituted the most sophisticated society in pre-colonial southern Africa (Huffman, 2000:14).

The Shona and Venda religion "is closely associated with medicine and disease, because a sickness is likely to be attributed to an upset ancestral spirit that demands sacrifice as propitiation" (Gelfand, 1968:8). Traditional healers are given instructions to carry out specific actions and rituals to address the current issue after being infected by the spirit of healing. After consulting the patient's *mudzimu* (ancestors) to determine the cause of the illness, they then determine how to treat the illness. Because of this, the traditional healer performs the roles of both a Shona and Venda religious leader and a bridge builder between the spiritual and physical realms. The person who has access to esoteric knowledge about what the *mudzimu* (ancestors) want their living relatives to do to please

them because of their position (Gelfand, 1973:80). Moral sanctions are in place in Shona and Venda society to enforce the right behaviour. Justice, duty, and social responsibility are important to the Shona and Venda. Living a good life earns the ancestors' blessings while engaging in antisocial behaviour results in punishment (Mungwini, 2011:23).

One of the main elements of Shona folklore are proverbs and other wise sayings (Dundes, 1985:3). Proverbs are very significant in terms of religion and ethics for the Shona people. From an early age until adulthood, children are "continually instructed directly and indirectly through listening to wise sayings such as proverbs". Such an activity helps one learn about their religious convictions and shapes how they behave around family and strangers (Gelfand, 1959:85). Despite not having a clear definition, proverbs have a big impact on people's lives. As stated by Hamutyinei and Plangger (1987:14), it is important to note that proverbs "represent a people's philosophy ... that serve to impose some sort of regularity on the unfolding variety of life and to stress the proper form of behaviour or the type of character or action to be expected". Shona proverbs are therefore helpful in guiding people's daily lives insofar as they serve to direct people's lives. Consequently, the Shona moral code is incorporated into the Shona religion. Shona proverbs are a verbal art form that are used to teach young people about the nature of the universe, the nature of knowledge, and the proper standards of human behaviour. They are frequently used in casual conversation by both young and old (Gwaravanda & Masaka, 2008). Messenger (1959:299) claims that the Shona "are exceedingly rich in proverbs" that they use for a variety of purposes in their daily lives. Proverbs are also frequently and widely used by the Shona to teach lessons, correct people who violate the Shona code of conduct, improve one's ability to reason, and make people aware of the spiritual presence in daily life. Proverbs also give every day human conversation authority and colour. Many Shona proverbs "vividly illustrate the way people do or should not hold a particular view of the world and how the individual can best fit into it" and has educational value (Hamutyinei & Plangger, 1987:20). The traditional religion and morality of the Shona people are thus transmitted and preserved through Shona proverbs.

Despite a period of aggressive Christianisation, the Shona have continued to practice their traditional religion (Gelfand, 1981:45), and it is still practiced in 2023. Gelfand (1981:49), who conducted a survey of Shona people living in western Zimbabwe (northeastern side of the Middle Limpopo valley, states in 1981 that the Shona are still

firmly attached to their traditional beliefs and prefer their own moral and spiritual culture to that of the West. As a result, there is a sense in which the Shona traditional religion is kept central to their lives because proverbial lore is consistently passed down to the young, ensuring that the need to respect Shona's traditional belief systems will always be present (Gelfand, 1981:7)

The Venda language, similar to Shona, is also rich with metaphors. This highlights the truth that idiomatic phrases include proverbs. Venda proverbs can also be applied to daily life to comfort, laud, counsel, or encourage. There is a proverb that is used to comfort people and help them understand that a grieving person's strange behaviour, excessive anger, or unforgivable comments may be the consequence of their sadness (Netshisaulu, 2012:112): *Murahu ha mulidzi a hu monwi* – One should not approach a mourner from behind. Meaning that no one must talk to a mourner from behind, they should face the mourner directly. Proverbs can also serve as motivation. The encouragement might be favourable or unfavourable. There is a saying that is used to motivate children to keep trying even when they are failing or are not very good at what they are doing. This is considered as encouraging people positively (Awaritefe *et al.*, 2020:69): *Mulala a sa fi tsimu ya dongo u do vhuya a lima* – a person who perseveres through terrible circumstances prevails in life. It is possible to negatively encourage someone. The person could be persuaded by friends or family to perform evil acts that are found out after he has passed away or after his death: *Phundulu ndi a dzama, zwivhi ndi sia ndo ita.* – a person who brings about starvation that will last for a very long time. Even though proverbs are an important aspect of Venda culture, little is known about them.

To foster religious tourism at MNP centred around the Shona and Venda cultures, it's vital to leverage the rich tapestry of traditional beliefs, rituals, and the sacred significance of places within the park. The guided tours that elucidate the spiritual importance of Mapungubwe Hill, known for rainmaking rituals and initiation ceremonies, thereby offering visitors a profound understanding of the area's religious heritage should continue. Highlighting the communal and sharing ethos of the Shona and Venda, as well as their traditional healing practices, can provide deeper insights into their spiritual worldviews. Incorporating storytelling sessions that feature proverbs and wise sayings (especially to school groups), can enrich the visitor experience, offering moral and ethical insights into the Shona and Venda cultures. By sensitively integrating these elements, Mapungubwe

can offer an immersive religious tourism experience that respects and honours the sacred traditions of the Shona and Venda peoples, promoting cultural understanding and preservation.

4.7.4 Art, music, and dance

Cultural heritage tourism in general acquires a rich, real dimension from the lively manifestations of cultures found in art, music, and dance. These expressive forms act as means for cultural preservation, economic growth, and community empowerment while providing tourists with a richer, more immersive interaction with the cultural narratives. Wijesundara and Sugimoto (2018:61) state that both tangible and intangible resources are categorised as cultural heritage entities. They further indicate that physical artefacts made, preserved, and passed down through generations in a society are referred to as tangible cultural legacy. Examples include customary dress, means of transportation, tools, structures, monuments and works of art. The intellectual richness, which is nonphysical, is the intangible legacy (Wijesundara & Sugimoto, 2018:61). Oral traditions, traditional skills, performing arts, local knowledge and language are examples of intangible heritage (Boylan, 2006:60). It is more difficult to preserve language, art, music, and dance. This heritage is alive today through culture and continues to be passed down through the generations. The keepers of this background information are the proponents, such as dancers, singers, lyricists, authors, historians, and the communities. The underlying information and digital recordings of performances should be preserved to protect intangible cultural assets.

Modern post-industrial knowledge-based economies place a great emphasis on the creative industries. They not only are believed to be responsible for better than average growth and job creation, but they also serve as essential symbols of cultural identity and promote cultural variety (Littrell & Dickson, 2010:98). One approach to manage and protect cultural heritage, and to preserve cultural assets through arts, music, and dance is creative tourism. Creative tourism can be defined as the co-creation of participatory, 'genuine' experiences that allow individuals to develop their creative potential and abilities by means of contact with local people and culture (Jonker, 2019:81). It also highlights the most crucial elements that creative tourism entails as unique experience, such as: "tourist as co-creators, active participation, creative skills development and learning,

authentic local people and culture, tourist self-realisation and place branding, atmosphere, and distinctiveness” (Jonker, 2019:87).

Creative tourism in the MNP which offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in Shona and Venda festivals, exhibitions, and music, can contribute to the local economy. This may include the following Shona festivals (Chipangura et al., 2019:20) which are celebrated in the wider Limpopo area: the *Nyaninyani* festival which celebrates the spirit of *Nyaninyani*, a river god revered by the Shona people; and the *Mwari* festival: the Shona people come together to connect with their spiritual roots and strengthen their faith. The Venda festivals according to Makhado Local Municipality (2013:62) are: The Makhado arts and culture festival, to create a better understanding of the history and culture of the Venda people; the Mapungubwe art festival to show case the artistic expertise of Limpopo province and the country at large; and the Print exhibition, to offer a unique opportunity to explore the fusion of creativity and culture as expressed through print and wood in Limpopo province. The Shona enjoy dancing and singing, and songs are typically accompanied by musical instruments to enhance the enjoyment (Chiwome, 1992:9). Some of the popular traditional instruments used for this include the *marimba* (xylophone), *mbira* (thumb piano), *ngoma* (drum), *chipendani* (a bow instrument), *chigufe* (a flute-like instrument), and *hosho* (rattles).

The traditional Shona community is also a poetic community that supports its members through its poetry. The presentation of traditional or ritual Shona poetry is a multifaceted activity that includes serious and humorous activities. Dramatic or ritual poetry are examples of performed arts that are notable for involving the body, the mind, and the emotions all at once. It is interesting to note that psychotherapy theories concur that a person's wellbeing depends on the unity of their body, emotions, and intellect (Meisami, 2014:46). Poetry is ritual-friendly and frequently combined with other arts, like music and dance. Traditional Shona poetry controls interpersonal interactions, social interactions, and the definition of roles, all of which contribute to an individual's socialisation (Degl'Innocenti & Rospocher, 2019:33), and could be therapeutic (Meisami, 2014:45). Themes of this emotional form of expression include human conflict, crises, unmet expectations, dashed hopes, and joys. The *nhango*, a form of traditional Shona poetry, is extremely common. The established procedure for adhering to customs is part of the many subgenres of *nhango* poetry. It is renowned for its ability to socialise children and

prepare them to assume adult roles at the appropriate time (Dathorne,1975:45). *Vanhu vane nyambo/ndyaringo*, or talented speakers, are appreciated by village elders. The storyteller draws the audience in by captivating, highly dramatic (even satirical), and vividly descriptive narratives and descriptions. The focus of these can be on social institutions, events, anecdotes, protracted riddles, or even dreams. The use of picturesque language creates a connection to reality through its evocative language. Kinesthetic ideophones, idioms, and proverbs are frequently used in this kind of art (Anderson,1998:56).

When a woman marries, according to Shona custom, she leaves her own home and moves in with her husband. She is expected by tradition to respect and serve her mother-in-law, who frequently vies with her daughter-in-law for her son's affection. She may frequently reprimand the daughter-in-law and is annoying and difficult to live with (Mawere & Mawere, 2010:224). The mother-in-law is a highly respected individual (*munyarikam*), and her daughter-in-law is unable to openly criticise or challenge her (Chiwome, 1992:11). However, even when her mother-in-law is nearby, the daughter-in-law is permitted to express her complaints in a critical poetic song known as *nheketerwa* or *jikinyira*. One such *nheketerwa* song is:

*Vamwene vangu godo vanaro Vamwene vangu godo vanaro Ndiende kuhuni
zvonzi tutsotso. Ndiende kumvura zvonzi mabvongwe. Ndigeze zvangu zvonzi
ipfambi. Ndirege kugeza zvonzi ipfende. My mother-In-law is jealous, my
mother-In-law is jealous, if I fetch firewood, she says it's too thin. If I fetch
water, she says its muddy. If I bathe, she says I'm a prostitute. If I do not bathe,
she says I'm filthy.*

While grinding corn, the song is sung. By singing and vigorously grinding corn, it enables the irritated woman to let out her pent-up emotions. She can handle her mother-in-law's criticism thanks to this combative work song, which also promotes the amicable coexistence necessary for communal village life (Gunner, 1979:251).

Hunting songs (*nziyo dzokuvhima/dzechidzimba*) serve a similar function. Because it both protects and breeds man-eating animals, the bush represents ambiguity and providence incongruously for hunters. Even though hunting is a dangerous activity, men must do it to provide meat for their families (Kahari,1981:83). Okpewho (1992:34) writes that hunters

used to recite poetry to enlist the aid of the spirits that, in their opinion, control game before uncontrolled hunting was deemed poaching and thus made illegal under current law. Men who were rumoured to be *shavi* spirit-possessed (the spirits of people who died away from home and were not properly buried) would make controlled up a small percentage of the hunters, making them stand out as renowned hunters (*hombarume*). Songs and recitations inspire both experienced hunters and novice hunters to venture outside and even provoke dangerous animals (Hitchcock, 2001:145). Without the ritual dance, hunters would be concerned about peril and potential bad luck. Poetry therapy is not only practiced in isolated areas. Additionally, migrant workers use it to adjust to the strange city environment because it differs socially and psychologically from the way of life they are used to in the village (Urbanek *et al.*, 2021:127).

At the MNP, creative tourism experiences can be crafted around the vibrant art, music, and dance of the Shona and Venda peoples. For example, visitors could participate in workshops led by local artists, learning traditional crafts or the intricate techniques of Shona sculpture and Venda pottery, embodying tangible cultural heritage. Music and dance workshops can immerse tourists in the rhythmic beats of the ngoma drum or the melodic tunes of the mbira, offering hands-on experiences that highlight tangible and intangible cultural assets.

4.7.5 Venda and Shona gastronomic culture

Gastronomic culture encompasses the culinary practices, traditions, and customs associated with a specific region, community, or country. Mintz and Du Bois (2002:106) suggest that traditional food is more than sustenance; it is a social and cultural practice that reflects society's values and way of life. The authenticity of traditional food has long been celebrated. Du Rand (2007:115) emphasises that traditional cuisine relies on local ingredients, making it a core part of a community's cultural identity. In addition to being a major identity builder that fosters local pride and promotes tourist development, traditional food holds cultural and symbolic significance for the community.

Adding on the South African cuisine, the Venda tribes' traditional meal was and is based on everything that successfully grew. Although it is a blend of grains and vegetables, corn is unquestionably the primary element in Venda cuisine. One popular food on the Venda

cuisine is maize porridge. It can be eaten raw, cooked like pancakes (see Image 9 number 1), or combined with meat and spinach to make a stew-like dish. Luckily, the Limpopo Province is fertile and producing a wide range of crops (Mhlanga, *et al.*, 2015:760).



Image 9: No. 1 Pancake maize porridge; no. 2 Mopane worms; no. 3 Marula fruits; no. 4 Baobab fruits; no. 5 Sadza and stew; no. 6 Mutakura; and no. 7 Insects (locust)

According to Sekonya (2016:156) the Venda people enjoy mopane worms (see Image 9 number 2). They are very healthy and may be eaten cooked or dried. These caterpillars have a lot of iodine and protein. After being plucked, their stomach contents are released by pinching them at the tail end to burst them and then squeezing them all the way around their body. They are either smoked or sun-dried to preserve them. The native Venda people of the Limpopo area also rely on the Baobab and Marula trees (see Image 9 numbers 3 and 4) for their culinary traditions (Ramaano, 2021b:57). The acidic flesh of the baobab fruit is added to milk dishes to give them a distinct Venda flavour. The acidity thickens and ferments the milk. Pregnant Venda women grind and consume Marula tree bark in the belief that the gender of the unborn child will be determined by the 'gender' of

the tree (female trees bear fruit). The Marula fruit is tasty, nutritious, and may be fermented to make alcohol. Food also has a significant role in the Venda culture's ancestor worship. Food is offered as a sacrifice to water spirits since it is thought that being limited to a watery realm, for example, these spirits are incapable of cultivating fruits or vegetables. Thus, knowing their food is essential to comprehending their civilisation (Ramaano, 2021b:70).

Shona cuisine can also play a big part in attracting tourists to Mapungubwe. For the majority of Shona people, *sadza* is their main food source. *Sadza* is a generic term used to describe thickened porridge made from pulverised grains. There are two parts to the recipe: the *sadza* and the stew or vegetable relish that goes with it (see Image 9 number 5). Any amount of ground grains can be used to make *sadza*. White maize (corn) mealie meal is used to make *sadza* in its most popular form (Muzhingi *et al.*, 2008:115). A nutritious combination of maize (*chigage*), peanuts (*nzungu*), bambara nuts (*nyimo*), cow peas (*nyemba*) and occasionally sugar beans is called *mutakura* (see Image 9 number 6). It is known as *mangai* when it is only a combination of maize and peanuts. It is comparable to *umngqusho* (South African samp and beans). Because it contains both proteins and carbohydrates, *mutakura* is an extremely nutrient-dense meal. One can have *mutakura* for supper or lunch, with or without meat. Some Shona people even have it with a cup of tea for breakfast. An excellent source of protein are insects, and Zimbabwe's (Middle Limpopo's) rainy season is characterised by the abundance of *harurwa* (stinkbug) and *ishwa* (termite) (Remigios, 2014:345).

Shona people eat insects (Gardiner & Gardiner, 2003:125). To capture them, the insects are drawn to different lights, most of them are captured at night. Insects are often collected by many Zimbabweans (Shona people) from their doorstep. *Hwiza* (locusts) (see Image 9 number 7) are captured throughout the day and can be caught with the use of small traps. These insects are cleaned (typically by youngsters), then fried till crispy in a skillet with a mild oil. They may be dried and eaten later. They are eaten with *sadza*. One may also enjoy this well-known Zimbabwean dish as a delightful afternoon snack. The Zimbabwean people's (Shona people) nutrition and wellbeing are greatly influenced by indigenous cuisine (Nxusani *et al.*, 2023:8799). Zimbabwe has a diverse range of native cuisine, but due to modernisation and erasure of indigenous knowledge, the knowledge of indigenous cuisine is vanishing. In the context of Zimbabwe, traditional

foods referred to as "Zimbabwe Soul Food" include *sadza* or *isitshwala* or southern African porridge (pap) made from maize, *rapoko* (finger millet), and sorghum.

The development of identity and cuisine are closely related. The management of cultural heritage, the preservation of social and cultural identity, and sustainable development all depend on preserving knowledge of the indigenous cuisine in a particular setting (Butler, 1991:207). Life and cultural inheritance are also reflected in food (Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011:269), and indigenous cuisine contributes to a nation's uniqueness and to its ability to unite its citizens. Indigenous cuisine, which has influenced tourism growth through gastronomic tourism, is a hot topic all over the world (Chaney & Ryan (2012:312). Indigenous cuisine is thought to contribute to tourism and knowledge preservation by differentiating a nation. However, there is a great concern that if indigenous cuisine is not preserved and codified, the next generation won't have anything to hold onto in terms of culture (Nistor & Dezsi, 2022:16954). The knowledge of the regional cuisine is vanishing in sub-Saharan Africa, more specifically in Zimbabwe (Ngcamu, 2022: 46). In fact, the cultural inventory of Zimbabwe has lost track of many indigenous cuisines and expressions. Native knowledge is in danger of disappearing because of the accelerated effects of rapid urbanisation and ongoing attrition in the older population (Du Rand, 2007:114).

The experiences listed in this section make it evident that there is a connection between culinary tourism and destination marketing. Gastronomic tourism is recognised as one of the attractions provided at a location and, as such, may be included into a destination's marketing plan. No travel location can afford to undervalue the significance of food as a primary attraction or, more frequently, as a supporting one. In 2007 Durand indicates that culinary tourism was seen as an underutilised and neglected aspect of destination marketing (2007:117), and this is also the case at the MNP in 2023. SANParks can for example may reopen the restaurant at the MNP and add traditional dishes in the menu. Developing gastronomic tourism at MNP can celebrate and showcase the rich culinary traditions of the Venda and Shona peoples. Interactive experiences like mopane worm harvesting workshops can offer visitors hands-on engagement with this traditional Venda delicacy, teaching them about its nutritional value and traditional preparation methods. Baobab and Marula tree experiences can delve into the significance of these trees in Venda cuisine, perhaps through cooking classes that incorporate Baobab fruit into local

dishes or Marula fruit tasting sessions that explore its use in both food and traditional beverages. For the Shona culinary heritage, activities could include *sadza*-making workshops, where visitors learn to prepare this staple dish alongside traditional relishes, or *mutakura* cooking classes to explore the rich nutritional profile of this mixed legume meal. Insect tasting experiences, may also highlighting the role of insects like *hwiza* in Shona diet, and could be an adventurous addition.

4.8 Reflection

Cultural heritage tourism may attract visitors to the MNP and can be used as one of the effective tools in preserving and conserving the culture and heritage of the Shona and Venda people who reside near the MNP. Creative tourism may offer tourists the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in Shona and Venda festivals, exhibitions, dance, music, and cuisine. Through the process of preserving the Shona and Venda groups' culture and heritage, jobs can be created within the host community and can contribute to the local economy.

Cultural heritage tourism can yield both positive and negative impacts on host communities. It is noted that an increase in tourist numbers in a community can have detrimental effects on the environment, including the depletion of local and natural resources. Therefore, it is crucial to strike a balance between resource utilisation and tourist influx. This balance can be achieved through the implementation of government policies aimed at protecting and sustaining the natural and cultural resources.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The study aimed to investigate how to preserve the Shona and Venda culture and heritage to develop tourism in the Limpopo province, South Africa, with specific reference to the MCL. UNESCO added the MCL to their list of World Heritage Sites because it shows evidence of social and cultural changes, as well as trading through the East African ports between 900 and 1300 AD, and the growth and decline of a state because of the impact of climate change.

Chapter 1 of this dissertation introduced the reader to the background to this study, and include the problem statement, research objectives, theoretical context, and research methodology. Chapter 2 explored the first objective, the settlement history of Mapungubwe with specific reference to the Venda and Shona heritage, as well as farming and trading between 900 and 1300 AD. Chapter 3 involved an in-depth exploration of the MCL as a legendary heritage site and cultural landscape, with the Shona and Venda culture specifically to meet the second objective. To meet the third objective, Chapter 4 began with a definition of cultural heritage tourism, followed by the importance of, and challenges experience in cultural heritage tourism, as well as the importance of preservation of the Shona and Venda heritage for tourism in the said region. This includes art, music, economic value, and culinary traditions in creative tourism with specific reference to MCL.

The synthesis of the preceding chapters of this dissertation has illuminated the profound historical and cultural tapestry of the MCL, particularly focusing on the Shona and Venda cultures. These insights are instrumental in strategizing the implementation of cultural heritage tourism at MCL. This chapter endeavours to amalgamate the findings from Chapters 2, 3, and 4, offering a cohesive narrative on leveraging the unique cultural heritage of MCL to foster a sustainable and enriching tourism experience.

5.2 Analysis and Discussion

5.2.1 Leveraging Cultural Heritage for Tourism Development

The rich history of the MCL, as detailed in Chapter 2, underscores the area's significance as a cradle of significant socio-political development, trade, and cultural expressions among the Shona and Venda peoples. This historical narrative, combined with the tangible and intangible cultural heritage elements discussed, presents a unique opportunity to develop cultural heritage tourism that not only respects, but also celebrates the legacy of these cultures. Key to this endeavour is the sustainable integration of the tangible heritage, such as pottery, ivory, gold artifacts, and the iconic golden rhinoceros, with the intangible elements like traditional rituals, music, dance, and language. These elements serve not just as tourist attractions, but as living testimonies to the ingenuity and resilience of the Shona and Venda peoples.

5.2.2 Sustainable Tourism Practices

Drawing from the discussions in Chapter 3, the designation of MCL as a UNESCO World Heritage Site adds an imperative layer of responsibility towards sustainable tourism practices. It is crucial that the development of cultural heritage tourism in MCL aligns with global best practices in heritage conservation and sustainability. This includes managing visitor numbers to prevent over-tourism, implementing creative tourism and educational programs to enhance tourists' understanding and appreciation of the site, and ensuring that tourism development does not compromise the landscape's ecological balance or the authenticity of the cultural heritage.

5.2.3 Community Involvement and Economic Empowerment

Chapter 4's exploration of the potential impacts and challenges of cultural heritage tourism highlights the necessity of involving local communities in the tourism development process. Ensuring that the Shona and Venda communities are active participants in shaping the tourism narrative, not only fosters a sense of ownership and pride, but also opens avenues for economic empowerment through job creation, entrepreneurship, and the preservation of traditional crafts and practices.

5.3 Discussion of research findings

The two interviews added value to this study. The first interviewee presented a tourist view about his experience of the MNP visited in June 2022. The second interviewee is a Venda-speaker, and previous manager of the MNP, who focused on conflicting justifications in past research and present scholarly literature about the settlement history of the MCL.

For a tourist who visits the park for the first time (Interview 1, 2023/11/08) it is essential to visit the museum and interpretation centre with its impressive architecture and displays and look and listen to the DVD on the history of Mapungubwe. In this Shashe-Limpopo confluence area, 150 rock art locations have been identified, with both engravings and paintings, however tourists need to make a booking with a tour guide (not always available) to have access to these sites. There are many archaeological sites that are not accessible to the tourists. The MNP can open more sites to the public to attract tourists. A guided tour and short hike to Mapungubwe Hill is very informative, especially the history of the discovery of the royal burial sites found on top of the hill along with some of the history about the wealthy kingdom and king who reside on the hill. The golden rhinoceros (on display at the MNP museum) found in an excavated royal cemetery on Mapungubwe Hill, is a testament to the prosperity of the polity of Mapungubwe. It is important to note that both the archaeological setting and the black rhinoceros's ethnographically derived symbolic value among Shona and Venda speakers, and as already mentioned, it is assumed that the golden rhinoceros from the royal burial on Mapungubwe Hilltop was most likely a symbol of authority.

The Venda-speaker, and previous manager of the MNP (Interview 2, 2024/11/10) indicated that the Vhambedzi are no longer a composite group as they used to be in the past, and they no longer effectively practice their rainmaking powers. I found through this research that although precolonial societies in the southern Africa are related to one another with specific reference to the Shona and Venda-speaking people in the Limpopo valley, the myth that they are homogenous entities, was exposed as incorrect.

It was found that macroeconomic and microeconomic levels can be used to analyse the financial effects of cultural heritage tourism. The economic value of cultural heritage tourism can be described on a microeconomic level as a collection of advantages for a

particular society. The macroeconomic value of cultural tourism is reflected in the growth of other economic sectors because of its direct, indirect, and induced effects. The economic gain from selling their own goods causes induced effects, which are reflected in increased tourism holders' consumption because of both direct and indirect effects.

The tourism industry and the tourists it serves can have a significant impact on host communities on a variety of levels. Firstly, tourism has the potential to preserve cultures, resurrect lost traditions, and prevent cultural stagnation. Secondly, tourism, has the potential to challenge existing values, social norms, traditions, and behaviour. This clearly indicates that tourism can be used as a tool to preserve the Shona and Venda culture and heritage to develop tourism in the Limpopo province, South Africa, with specific reference to the local language being communicated with tourists during site visits which enhance the experience of the tourists as they engage with the host community. The introduction of local greetings in the native language to tourists adds an educational dimension to their visit, making the experience both informative and fun. During such engagement, the host community educate the tourist about their culture through story telling. The storytelling can involve cultural activities that tourists and local school groups can engage in, such as traditional dance and music. Cultural education may furthermore promote respect for sacred heritage sites, and the preservation of traditional cuisine under the local communities.

5.4 Practical Implementation Strategies for tourism

It is noted that host communities and school groups frequently visit the park for events (e.g., stokvel groups and educational school tours). To enhance cultural heritage tourism in the MCL, leveraging both existing offerings and introducing new strategies can provide a comprehensive and immersive experience for visitors. Currently, the MNP offers various activities such as guided heritage walks up Mapungubwe Hill, which delve into the historical significance of the area and its ancient civilisations. The Interpretation Centre and Museum near the park's main gate is an award-winning facility that showcases artifacts from the region, including a replica of the famous golden rhinoceros, providing insights into the rich cultural heritage of the Shona and Venda peoples.

To build on these existing offerings, new strategies could include developing more interactive and community-led cultural experiences that highlight the tangible and

intangible heritage of the Shona and Venda cultures. For instance, organising cultural festivals that celebrate Shona and Venda traditions, music, dance, and cuisine could provide a platform for cultural exchange and community involvement. Establishing workshops or demonstrations on traditional crafts, storytelling sessions, and culinary experiences featuring indigenous dishes could further enrich the tourism experience, providing deeper connections to the local culture and history.

The development of gastronomic tourism can introduce visitors to the traditional foods of the Shona and Venda cultures, perhaps through culinary workshops or food festivals that celebrate local cuisine, incorporating ingredients like mopane worms and baobab fruit, which are indigenous to the area. Religious tourism can be expanded by creating experiences around the spiritual practices and sacred sites significant to the Shona and Venda peoples. This could involve guided tours that explain the cultural and religious significance of sacred places like lake Fundudzi (near Thohoyandou), Thulamela (Kruger National Park), and the Thulamela Archaeological Site (a stone walled site in the northern part of the MNP), which are linked to the broader cultural heritage route encompassing significant heritage sites in Limpopo, as well as Zimbabwe and Botswana. These strategies not only aim to enhance the tourist experience by offering a deeper engagement with the local culture and history, but also seek to preserve the unique heritage of the MCL. By incorporating elements of religious and gastronomic tourism, along with strengthening and diversifying the existing tourism infrastructure, the MCL can offer a more holistic and enriching cultural heritage tourism experience.

5.5 Implications and recommendations for future research

The footprints of the earliest inhabitants (San people), who occupied the rock shelters left their rock tools and art behind. This provides vital clues to the beliefs, culture and inventiveness of a people who once occupied the Shashe-Limpopo valley and should move to the foreground in the history of the MCL. The already excavated archaeological sites should be used to attract more tourists because it contains rich information on the settlement history of the site. However, it is very important that the tour guides update their information with training and updates on research studies on the Mapungubwe World Heritage Site. In scholarly literature, there are different and even contradictory views and interpretations on the Venda, Shona people in general and their concept of a deity (God)

in particular, it needs to be researched and the updated information must publicly be distributed on the SANParks website.

It is important to engage, educate, and raise awareness of cultural tourism in the surrounding area between the host communities, business owners and tourists to help in building good and lasting relationships. This could be done by hosting conferences and workshops about cultural tourism and how it affects everyone in the area. Conservation at Mapungubwe can be achieved through the development of an interpretation centre whereby more native speakers should be trained as guides and hired to conduct the tours. The interpretation centre can assist the community leaders to educate the upcoming generation about their language and how to communicate, traditional beliefs and traditions, arts, music, and dance as well as how to prepare cultural food. In 2023 the restaurant in the MNP was closed. If there are more tourists, the restaurant may introduce local cuisine and food on their menu to complete the whole experience. This can be done by introducing mopane dishes like a mopane burger for lunch, and a meal with pap and mopane worms for dinner.

To conclude, SANParks website and social media pages focusses on the tourist experience highlighting the park's distinct natural beauty and attractions, for example: the numerous prehistoric baobab trees native to the African savannah; the delightful experience at the Vhembe wilderness camp, when a herd of elephants passes one's cabin patio in the late afternoon on their way to the Limpopo River; self-drive game viewing and bird-watching experiences at various hides, including those at Schroda Dam, Maloutswa, and a treetop hide along the Limpopo River. However, they also need to actively market the cultural heritage tourism experience, and the MCL as a 'cross boarder' attraction, that will enhance understanding, unity, and collaboration between the three countries to create more jobs.

The current study can be interpreted as one of the steps in using tourism to preserve the culture and heritage in MCL. However, the results of the study should be treated with caution due to limited participants in the study. Future research could further investigate why the surrounding business owners are not sharing adequate information about MCL, yet they are expecting many clients on their game farms.

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ANNEXURE A: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT LEAFLET

Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC)

DATE: 6 November 2023

BaSSREC Authorization

Title of the research project	Preserving Shona and Venda culture and heritage to develop tourism post-1994: A case of the Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape, Limpopo, South Africa.
Ethics number	NWU-01040-22-A7
Principal investigator	Dikobe Reshelder Makgatho
Student number	27864669
Address	2340 Unit 1 Mmabatho
Email address	Makgathodikobe863@gmail.com
Contact number	0710825535

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. This study is voluntary, and you are entitled to stop participating at any time. Please do familiarise yourself with the information given below regarding the importance of conducting this study.

The main goal of this research is to analyse how preserving Shona and Venda culture and heritage can be used to develop tourism post-1994: A case of the Mapungubwe

cultural landscape, Limpopo, South Africa. The study will include 10 participants and will be for qualitative research.

This study has been approved by the Basic Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC) of the Faculty of Humanities of the North-West University (NWU-01040-22-A7) and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (2010) and the ethical guidelines of the National Health Research Ethics Council. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or relevant authorities to inspect the research records to make sure that the researcher is conducting research in an ethical manner.

What is this research study all about?

This study, as stated above, is an investigation of how preserving the Shona and Venda culture and heritage can develop tourism in the Limpopo province of South Africa, with specific reference to the Mapungubwe National Park. The researcher has been trained to use research ethics in conducting research. The objectives of this research are:

- ✓ to investigate the settlement history, discoveries, and trade in the Shashe-Limpopo valley.
- ✓ To critically assess UNESCO's reasons for listing Mapungubwe as a Cultural Landscape and World Heritage Site; and why the remains created an impressive Cultural Landscape of universal significance; and
- ✓ To argue how preserving Shona and Venda cultural heritage for tourism, in particular how creative tourism and cuisine and food culture, at the Mapungubwe National Park may give economic value to cultural heritage, create jobs, and to generate foreign exchange earnings.

Why have you been invited to participate?

- You have been invited to participate because you are/have been a staff member, tourist or resident with information on the Mapungubwe National Park in the Limpopo province
- You have also complied with the following inclusion criteria:
 - Age: 18 and above

- You may assist with information regarding the Shona and Venda culture and heritage
- You will be excluded if
 - You are below the age of 18
 - You do not have information on the Mapungubwe National Park in the Limpopo province
 - You refuse to sign the BaSSREC information and consent leaflet

What will your responsibilities be?

- You will be invited online or face-to-face to participate in the noted study.
- You will have 3-5 days to indicate whether you would be willing to participate.
- You will be requested to sign this *participant information and consent leaflet* before the commencement of the study.

Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

The most beneficial thing about taking part in this study is to help the researcher to understand how Preserving Shona and Venda culture and heritage can develop tourism post-1994 in the Mapungubwe cultural landscape, in the Limpopo province.

Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research and how will these be managed?

The possible risks in this study, and how these will be managed, are summarised in the table below:

Possible risk	Mitigation strategy
COVID 19 risk during face-to-face interviews.	Strict adherence to COVID-19 guidelines
Emotional distress of the participants.	Mrs E Cloete, a counsellor and social worker would be provided for you if needed.
Tiredness and discomfort.	Comfort breaks after 30 minutes

Lack of privacy and comfort during interviews due to the colleagues at the workplace.	The interviews will be conducted either in the participants' workplace or private residence, depending on their preference. Your confidentiality will be protected, and your identity will not be known by anyone except the researcher.
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- However, we do believe that the benefits to you and to science (as noted in the previous section) outweigh the risks we have listed. If you disagree, then please feel free not to participate in this study. We will respect your decision.
- Should we learn, during the research, that someone is harming you, or that you are intending to harm someone, then we must tell someone who can help you/warn the person you are intending to harm.

Who will have access to the data?

- The *handling, storage, security, and analysis of data* is critical in ethical considerations. The researcher will ensure data in both hard-(printed) and soft copy (electronic) are safely locked away and password-protected, respectively. Only the study leaders will/may have access to my raw data where the need arises. At the analysis stage, as will be the case throughout, the use of coding will reinforce participants' non-identification, hence upholding the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity.
- *Anonymity* will be ensured by choosing your own fictitious names/the researcher will assign a fictitious name to you before the interview starts. Only this name will be used in the research process.
- *Privacy* will be ensured by not probing unnecessarily if you do not wish to discuss particular matters.
- The researcher will be responsible for transcribing the data – no other person will have access to the data.
- The researcher will not use a *translator/interpreter* for the purpose of the interviews/explaining the informed consent, etc.

- The data will be *stored safely in electronic form* for a period of five years after which it will be destroyed.

What will happen to the data?

The data from this study will not identify participants personally if not consent to it. This means that the reporting will not include your name or details that will help others to know that you participated (e.g., your address or the name).

Will you be paid/compensated to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

No, you will not be paid to take part in the study. The researcher will avoid out-of-pocket expenses and costs incurred by participants (e.g., travel expenses, parking costs, data-costs for virtual interviews and lost wages), as the researcher will visit the participants in their workplace or private residence, or schedule an online meeting.

How will you know about the findings?

- The general findings of the research will be shared with you by email
- If you would like feedback on your personal results, then keep in contact with the researcher and leave your contact details.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- You can contact me, the researcher Ms D.R. Makgatho at 071 082 5535 or email me, makgathodikobe863@gmail.com if you have any further queries or encounter any problems.
- You can also contact the chair of the Basic Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Prof Erhabor Idemudia) at 018-389-2899/Cell: 072-795-3933/ or Erhabor.Idemudia@nwu.ac.za if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I _____ agree to take part in a research study entitled: "Preserving Shona and Venda culture and heritage to develop tourism post-1994: A case of the Mapungubwe cultural landscape, Limpopo, South Africa".

I declare that:

- I have read and understood this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person obtaining consent, as well as the researcher (if this is a different person), and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I understand that what I contribute (what I report/say/write/) could be reproduced publicly and/or quoted, but without reference to my personal identity.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.

Signed at (place) _____ on (date) _____ 20 ____

Signature of participant

Signature of witness

- | | |
|--|--|
| • You may contact me again | ☐ Yes ☐ No |
| • I would like a summary of the findings of this research | ☐ Yes ☐ No |
| • I would like feedback on my functioning/wellbeing as reflected in the questionnaires I completed | ☐ Yes ☐ No |

The best way to reach me is:

Name & Surname: _____

Postal Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____

Cell Phone Number: _____

In case the above details change, please contact the following person who knows me well and who does not live with me and who will help you to contact me:

Name & Surname: _____

Phone/ Cell Phone Number /Email: _____