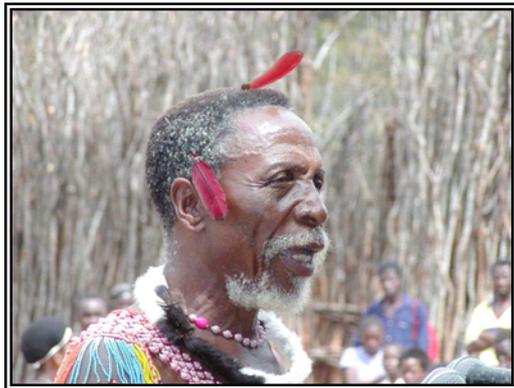


Mekemeke: A study of the archaeological sequence and interaction between two Swazi villages of the late 19th and early 20th century.



A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria, Pretoria,
in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
Lydenburg, 2009

Abstract

A combination of archaeology, written historical evidence, oral history and ethnography was used to investigate contact between Swazi communities in the eastern Mpumalanga lowveld and the colonial frontier during 19th century colonial expansion into the area. Archaeological data was collected from two Swazi residential sites, Mekemeke and eKusoleni. Oral traditions indicate that these sites were occupied from the mid 1860's to the mid 1930's. Data from these sites were compared in an effort to explore the changes in contact between the Swazi and Westerners intensified over time. The incorporation of new types of material culture was selective and guided by internal dynamics.

Keywords

Agency

Archaeology

Culture

Contact

Group identity

Historic

Identity

Material culture

Swazi

Declaration:

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the University of Pretoria, Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

14th August, 2008.

Jean-Pierre Celliers

To my loving parents who never fails to believe in me.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

During the course of 2003, the Barberton traditional authority, known as the Lomshiyo Traditional Authority, brought a historic settlement situated in the mountainous Barberton district to my attention. The site, Mekemeke, was said to be the remains of a Swazi royal village occupied from about 1866 and until at least the early 1920s. In support of documentary evidence, the local chief, Tikhontele Dlamini, informed me that this settlement was the home of one of the principal wives of king Mswati II (c1845-68:). This dissertation grew out of this conversation.

The nearby town of Barberton was founded in 1884, some 18 years after Mekemeke was established. Since the discovery of gold and the consequent establishment of the town, Westerners flooded the area in pursuit of riches. With this came traders, shopkeepers, bankers, hoteliers and many more people and material associated with Western colonial expansion (Bornman in Barnard, 1975:34-35). I realized that there must have been some kind of contact between the Swazi residing in the Mekemeke village and the newcomers to the area. The paramount question that I faced was how this contact was reflected in the archaeological record. This question raises related issues where phases of contact and the extent of such contact are concerned. Therefore, a secondary challenge of this study was to establish whether contact intensified as time progressed and how this is represented in the archaeological record. Consequently, I also studied eKusoleni, Mekemeke's successor.

For the sake of clarity, I refer to the initial village as Mekemeke and its successor as eKusoleni. Mekemeke was established 18 years before the town of Barberton was founded in 1884 and occupied until the 1920s. This period of occupation proved to be challenging in archaeological terms as the stratigraphic layers of occupation and distinction between phases were unclear.

The events around the establishment of the sites provide a unique opportunity for detailed archaeological study, assessing the possible influence of the colonial frontier on the material culture of the occupants. The main challenge I faced was to establish the extent of Western influence on these villages and how contact and interaction would be reflected in the archaeological record. I focus on how differentiation was made between phases of occupation in terms of stratigraphy, as the occupation of the initial village occurred over a relatively short time period. Material remains within stratigraphic context excavated at the site, were compared to material excavated from

a similar area of activity in the village, Ekusoleni, which was occupied after Mekemeke was abandoned. By comparing the finds at these two sites the aim was to establish how Western influence increased or decreased with time.

This type of research can loosely be referred to as “archaeology of contact” and this approach has been successful in the past where researchers mostly investigated contact between hunter-gatherer societies and Europeans, or hunter-gatherers and indigenous farmer communities. Archaeological research concerning culture contact during historical Southern Africa is mostly limited to colonial settlement archaeology in the Cape (Hall, 1993). This scenario is supported by well-known researchers such as Simon Hall who believes that research on contact between Europeans and indigenous herders during the time of colonial expansion adds enormous value to this topic. (Hall, 2004, personal communication).

This question is also fundamental to historical archaeology. Strangely, historical archaeology seems to have attracted little interest from South African researchers until recently. This dissertation was compiled during the formation of The 500 Year Initiative which is a cross-disciplinary project with its main objective the mutual interrogation of source materials including archaeological, oral, documentary and pictures in an effort to newly understand the history of the last 500 years in southern Africa. Colonial influence in historic times and specifically in the regions of Mekemeke and eKusoleni provide an opportunity to approach my research with the objectives of the 500 year initiative in mind.

Social dynamics and interaction within historic communities and how archaeology relates to this has especially not received the attention it deserves. In this study I attempt to show the value that archaeology has as an interpretive tool to facilitate the reconstruction of social dynamics within a specific community and also among different communities. In addition, with the incorporation of subjects such as anthropology and history, archaeology may offer more detailed interpretation of material remains. I also propagate the value of pursuing archaeological challenges concerned with contact between different communities and highlight issues which should be considered when interpreting historic archaeological data in contact zones.

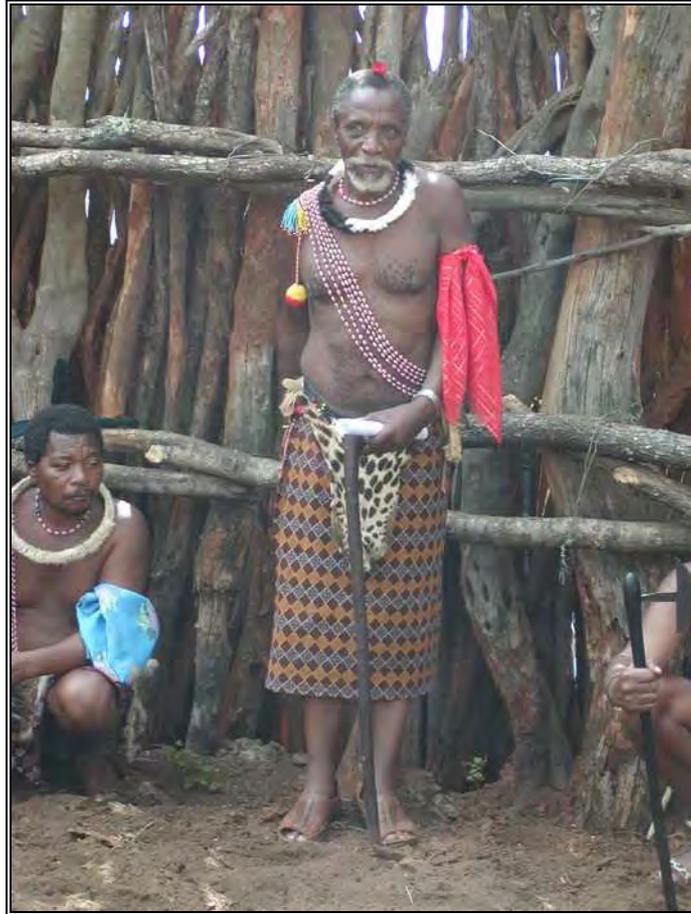


Fig. 1.1. Chief Tikhontele Dlamini, during a cultural day at his homestead near Low's Creek, addressing male delegates inside his *Sibaya* (Cattle enclosure).

The fundamental questions this study deals with in terms of contact is what types of material remains will be found when archaeological excavation is carried out and how are they represented in the archaeological record? In the following chapters I aim to illustrate the value of considering *human agency* as a model of studying contact. I propose to show that individual preference and group identity play a defining role in the type and nature of materials obtained and used by an individual, group or whole community. I also argue that a paucity of Western items may not necessarily be interpreted as lack of contact or interaction, but may imply persistence of cultural identity.

1. Identifying the research focus and area

1.1. Problem statement

Historic events leading to the establishment of the settlement Mekemeke, are characterized by the influence of the famous king of the Swazi nation, Mswati II. Some traditionalists have said that he was the counterpart of the famous Shaka, influential king of the Zulu, Mswati was likewise known to be a conqueror and militant ruler (Matsebula, 1972: 44).

Mswati the son of king Sobhuza's chief wife, Thandile, was the favoured successor to the throne at a tender age of thirteen. At this stage he had a couple of regents namely Malambule and Malunge both his elder brothers. He was officially installed as king in 1839 or 1840, but as he was still young a greater part of official affairs were still handled by his regents. Mswati's circumcision, around 1845, marked the start towards his full powers of kingship (Bonner, 1983: 51).

Mswati implemented a coherent military strategy, one of which was to build strategic outposts.

Mekemeke was one of these military outposts. The outposts stretched from west to east along the upper Komati River and the Kaap River to ensure that the borders of his domain remain free of invading groups, among them the Pedi. (Bornman, 2002: 22; Myburgh, 1949: 47). This history is reflected in Matsebula's account:

"Mswati continued his attacks on the Pedi tribes to the north of the Olifants River, until eventually he attacked and defeated Sikwati, the paramount chief of the Pedi, and Sikwati was forced to acknowledge Mswati's authority. Mswati's victories over the Pedi were not permanent, for again and again, as soon as the Swazi army retreated, the Pedi returned to their old haunts and reoccupied them. For this reason Mswati now built a line of military outposts from east to west along the Little Crocodile River. At each outpost he stationed some of his regiments to watch and stop the Pedi returning to the country from which they had been driven out. In each outpost he also placed a chieftainess or *inkhosikati* and a *ndvuna*" (Matsebula, 1972: 45).

Matsebula continues to describe each of the three outposts Mekemeke, Mjindi and Mbhuleni in terms of their location and the individuals who were put in charge by king Mswati. Mswati II, married the daughter of Nyandza Nkosi, a woman by the name of Lanyandza (also referred to as Mekemeke) in 1842 and conferred on her the status of right hand wife or *umfati wakunene* at his village in the Piggs Peak district (Myburgh, 1949:47).

In the year 1866 Lanyandza was sent as chieftainess to this village (Mekemeke) and the village became known as Mekemeke. "Here Mswati installed his famous

inkhosikati (wife) Lanyandza as chieftainess of the post and principality, which to this day is still known as Mekemeke” (Matsebula, 1972:45).

Placing a woman at the head of a strategic outpost was uncommon, but forms part of a broader leadership pattern. Whilst chieftainship was normally reserved for males, the role which mothers, wives and female regents played in political affairs is well known. The key role of the Swazi king’s mother is well documented (cf. Kuper 1947, 1986). Other examples are the Bakgatla of Mmakau (Mother of Kau). She ruled her Kgatla group as regent for her minor son, Kau (Makhura, in Delius, 2007: 122). Before the reign of chief Mhola Nkosi, the chiefdom had been under successive female rulers: first there was Yangase, Mswati’s wife, then Yoyo, Yangase’s half sister. LaMqciza, Mswati’s junior wife, succeeded Yoyo after which the daughter of Yangase, LaHanyamba, succeeded LaMqciza. Lanyandza and her daughter Monile preceded chief Lombaluko as rulers of the Nkosi chiefdom in the Barberton area.

This village was situated in the elevated reaches of the Three Sisters mountains near the modern day Low’s Creek (Matsebula, 1972:45).

According to chief Tikhontele Dlamini, it was customary to build villages high in the mountains as these areas are free of diseases harmful to cattle, provide good security and there is abundant building material in the form of stones, wood, grass and more.

Myburgh (1949) describes how Lanyandza was succeeded by her son Fana (1854-1929) who was brought to the Mekemeke village in 1866 when he was 12 years old. When his mother died, (this date is presumed by Myburgh at around 1920) he moved the village (according to Swazi custom) to a location just below that of the original village, known today as eKusoleni. This probably occurred around 1925 (Myburgh, 1949). Fana passed away in 1929 and Monile, the sister of Lanyandza, acted as regent for the successor of Fana, namely Lombaluko. It is well documented that the Swazi move their homesteads when the headman passes on. Sometimes the entire cattle byre and all the huts are literally carried a short distance away and re-established according to the original layout pattern and given the original name. It also happens that the eldest son of the deceased then moves away to form a new independent homestead (Kuper, 1947:47). The homestead is also moved in times of crisis such as during an epidemic or when pasture and farm land becomes depleted.

In the case of the movement to eKusoleni, the closer proximity of the village to mines such as Aurora and French Bob mines may have been an additional reason for the move as it brought promise of work and prosperity.

When Myburgh visited the village of eKusoleni in 1946/7, he noted that although the residents seemed to be contented, most young men worked at the mines or in the plantations to earn money for household articles and to enable them to pay taxes (Myburgh, 1949:56). In the light of this observation, I wondered if this situation was also true during the time of occupation at the village of Mekemeke. Answers to these questions may come from archaeological investigation. Therefore, a stone-walled feature situated at the village of Mekemeke, which informants call a *lidladla* or an outside cooking and reception area, was identified as a suitable feature for sampling. This feature was divided into male and female areas and the chieftainess received all her guests here (Herbst, 1985: 49). Informants related that it was in this area that the village chief, Lanyandza, spent most of her daytime. (Chief Dlamini, personal communication, 2003).

Activities in the *lidladla* would involve cooking and preparation of food. It also served as an area where foodstuffs such as grains and maize would be stored. Visitors would be welcomed and entertained and cooking utensils and related kitchen wares would also have been used and stored here.

This information was important for the archaeological research as it provided me with a strategy regarding excavation. The understanding of the nature of the site and activity areas therein helped me to make decisions about where to excavate and what type of material to expect from these excavations.

1.2. Description of research area

Both Mekemeke and eKusoleni are located in the Mpumalanga Lowveld and within the municipal boundary of Barberton, known as Umjindi, in the picturesque Komati Valley. This area is characterized by dry woodland, thornbush and grassland and falls within the Southern African marginal zone with an annual rainfall of between 501-750 mm. Barberton has a rich history as a gold mining town and there are still several mines operational in the area today. (Bornman, 2002: 8). The Swazi village of Mekemeke is situated in Three Sisters mountains near Low's Creek (topographical map 2531 CB Kaapmuiden 1:50 000). Coördinates: 25° 37, 020' S and

31° 23, 299' E. The eKusoleni village is located south-east of here at 25°39.228' S and 31°24, 870' E. Low's Creek is a tributary of the Kaap River, which it joins near Kaapmuiden railway station. With the completion of the Kaapmuiden - Barberton railway line in 1895, Low's Creek station was named after the creek (Bornman 2002:226).

The village known as Mekemeke largely has been destroyed by modern blue-gum plantations and only some features remain undisturbed and suitable for research purposes. These include the stone walled structure known as the *lidladla*; the grave of the chief of the village, situated to the east; and an area pointed out by informants where public meetings and gatherings were held beneath a supposedly ancient common wild fig tree which is still there today.

In the next chapter I illustrate events that preceded the establishment of Mekemeke and eKusoleni. I also examine the work of previous researchers and topical issues that relate to my interpretation of the sites. These resources were also used specifically for their specific content which supported my premise.

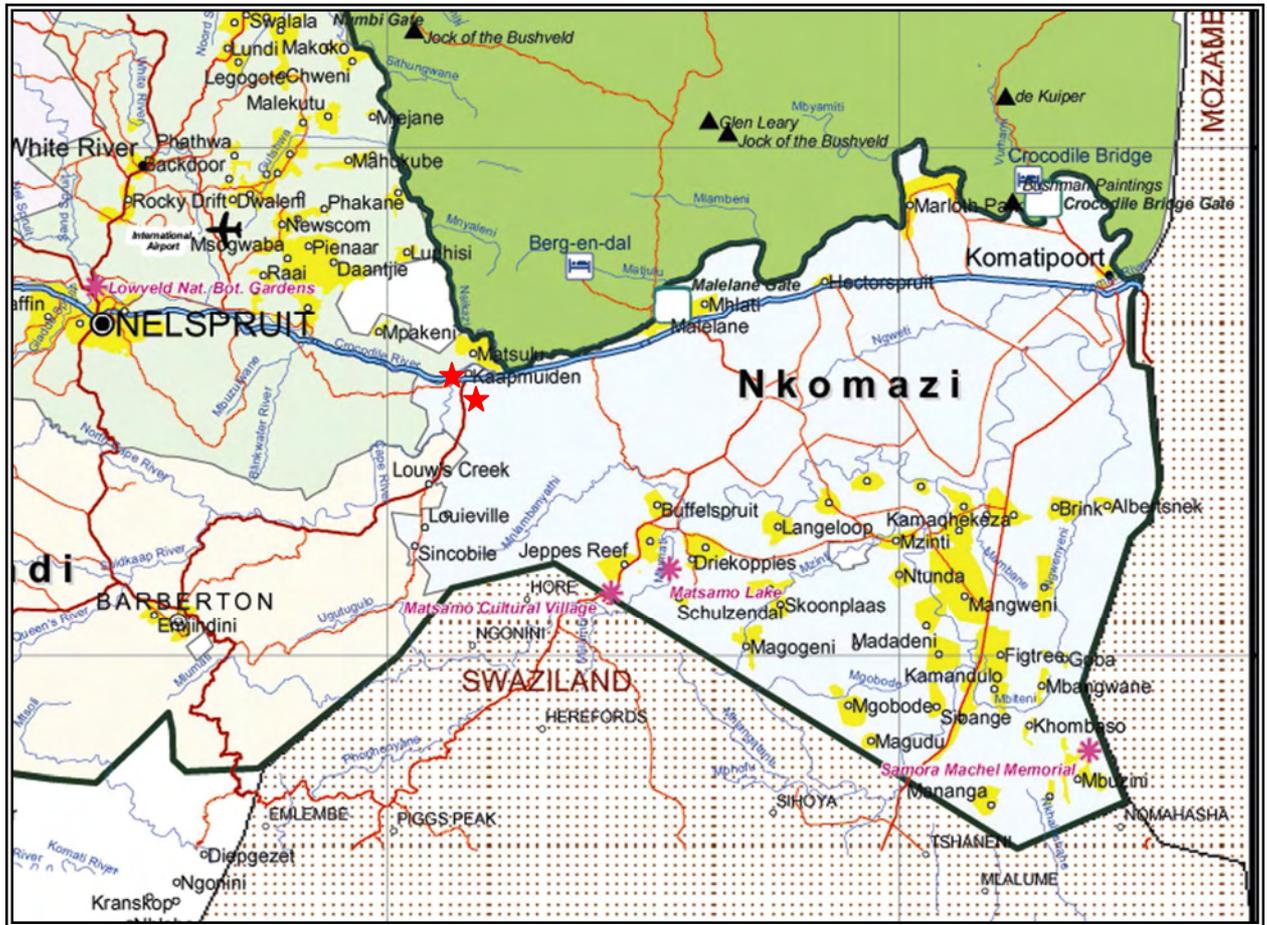


Fig. 1.2. The location of the sites mentioned in the text. Mekemeke is represented by the topmost red star and eKusoleni the bottom one. Map courtesy of Ehlanzeni District Municipality GIS.



Fig. 1.3. Aerial photograph indicating the position of Mekemeke and eKusoleni.



Fig. 1.4. A 1:50 000 topographic map indicating the location of the two sites.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Frameworks

2.1. Introduction

Investigating contact between groups of people through archaeology requires intimate knowledge of the social organization of the affected society, as well as the traditional settlement layout and usage of specific implements. Only thereafter is it possible to identify exceptions to the norm and investigate the reasons for continuity and change. I consulted the research of individuals which concerns traditional settlement patterns among the Swazi, also those who documented traditional Swazi implements such as pottery, kitchen utensils and other household equipment.

The traditional layout of the Swazi homestead was scrutinized in an effort to establish whether the layout at Mekemeke and eKusoleni conform to the traditional layout but also to identify specific activity areas at each site. In addition the use of more informal informants was invaluable to aid in the interpretation of each site. I show how oral tradition supplements formal archaeological research. Research concerned with the influence which gender relations within a community has on archaeological interpretation is touched on in this chapter and more thoroughly examined in later chapters. The use of interpretive models such as acculturation is scrutinized and its applicability to this paper is assessed.

Accounts of researchers regarding specific contact situations in the history of the Swazi and Europeans of the Barberton area in the early and mid-19th century provided insight into the nature of such contact and the context within which it took place. This was read in conjunction with archaeological research in other African states which demonstrates how contact between different groups affect people and identities and how this is represented in the archaeological record is represented and the results discussed.

2.2. Literature review

Sources consulted include those of pure historic value, those of ethnographic value, and a number that deals with the intricate dynamics detectible in the archaeological record as a result of contact between different societies.

Literature concerning the history of the Swazi up to the establishment of Mekemeke was scrutinized before and during the survey of the site. Initially, I concentrated on a historical study, consulting more specific sources concerning the establishment and history of the Swazi nation. In this regard, the material of Barnard (1975), Matsebula (1988), Bornman (1995), Punt (1975) and Pienaar (1990) were extremely relevant. With regard to the more specific history of the establishment of the village of Mekemeke and the history surrounding that, the works of Myburgh (1949), Bornman (2002, 1995) and Matsebula (1988) were most helpful. Myburgh (1949) contained significant information regarding the activities of the occupants at eKusoleni. When Myburgh visited this village in 1946 and 1947, he documented some of the traditional utensils used by the inhabitants. These included items which he noted in the storeroom or *lidladla* (the traditional reference to the kitchen is also *lidladla*) including a mortar and pestle for grinding maize and sorghum, a drum for propitiating spirits carved from the trunk of a tree, wooden headrests, plaited beer basket with lid, wooden meat dish, plaited conical dish for carrying cereals on the head, sleeping and sitting mats, a ladle, porridge stirrer, beer calabash, clay food bowl and large beer pots. These items are all traditional Swazi cooking and kitchen utensils. Their presence at the *lidladla* suggested that similar items may be found during archaeological excavation at both eKusoleni and Mekemeke.

Although most items listed above are made of wood, it was felt that some of the ceramic vessels were likely to have survived the damage inflicted by natural weathering processes. Thus an important working hypothesis was the extent to which people incorporated Western material culture.

Ethnographic works concerned with the layout and activity areas of the traditional Swazi village include the work of Herbst (1985), Hilda Kuper (1947, 1986), A. Kuper (1980), Marwick (1940) and Matsebula (1972).

The Swazi kraal or *umuti* was traditionally built in the Nguni fashion. Normally the Swazi village is never located close to a water source and water is therefore carried by hand to the various homesteads. The main reason for this is the fear that the water

source may become contaminated. Settlements were always located on elevated areas where the soil was dry and undesired insects were minimal. The settlement should also be built in such a fashion or position as to provide maximum protection from the elements (Marwick 1940, Matsebula 1972, Kuper 1986).

Family and friends are preferred neighbours. Typically the following individuals would occupy a homestead: The head of the household, his wives, brothers and sisters, his married sons with their wives and children and also his unmarried sons and daughters (Kuper, 1986: 20).

The traditional homestead is built according to a definite plan that reflects the interests of the occupants and their status [relationships]. In the center is a heavily palisaded, unroofed cattle byre or *sibaya*. The main gateway usually faces the rising sun; a symbol in family and national ritual. Men and boys have free access to the *sibaya* and women may only enter during special occasions (Kuper, 1986: 21). Grouped around the western side of the *sibaya* are the living quarters. The great hut or *indlunkhulu* forms a central point of the living quarters and the mother of the headman usually stays here as this hut is the family shrine. The headman offers libations of beer and meat at the rear of the hut (Kuper, 1986: 21). The quarters of the wives are distinct from the great hut and each wife is given her own sleeping, cooking and store huts located to the right of the *indlunkhulu*.

The huts (*lilawu*) of the young unmarried men are located near the entrance of the *sibaya* on the right and those of the young women to the left (Herbst, 1985: 27, 31).

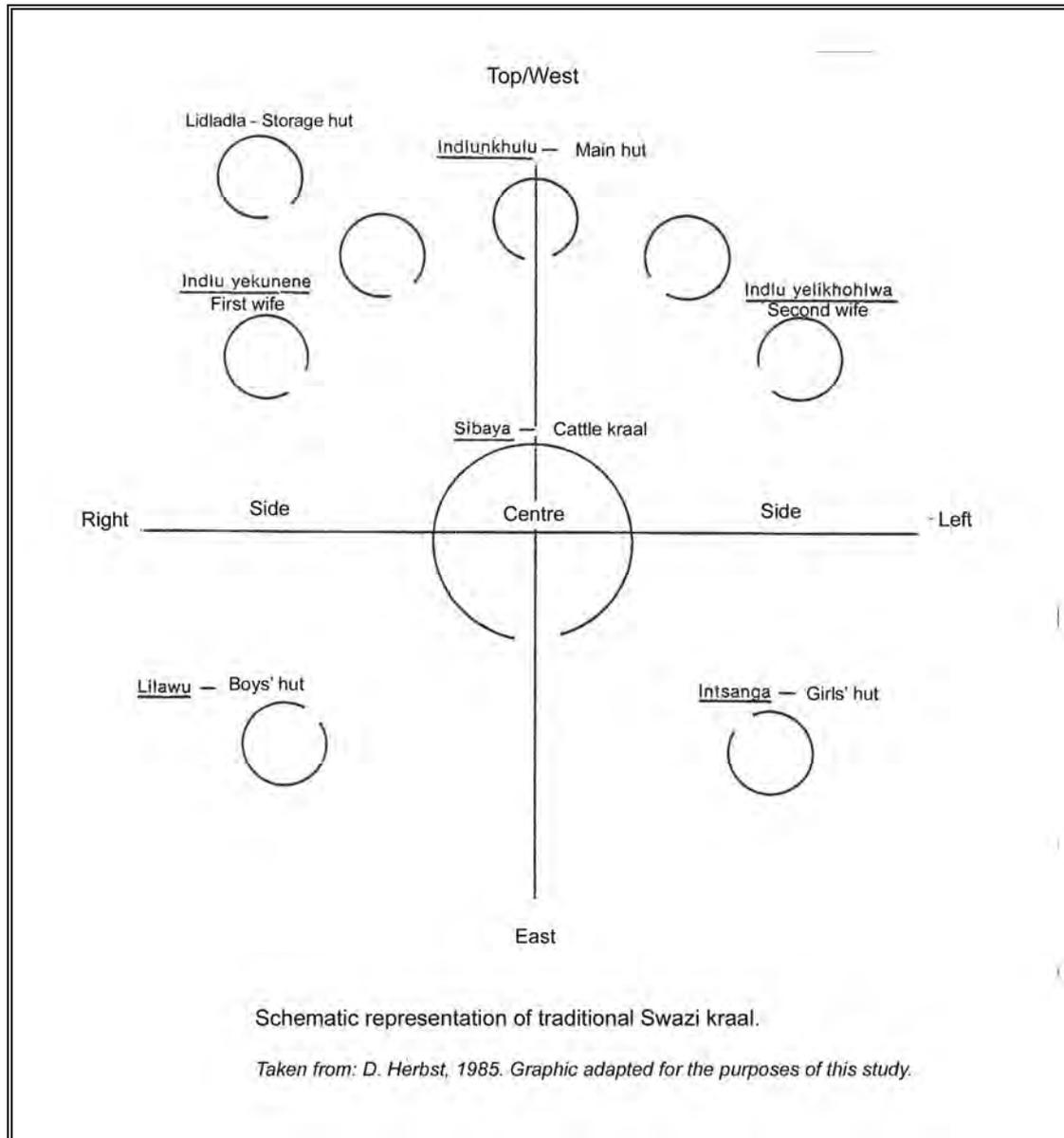


Fig. 2.1. The traditional layout plan of a Swazi settlement. Provision was made to indicate the probable location of the *lidladla*.

The *lidladla* or store hut also serves as a second (larger) kitchen. In terms of construction, this hut or area shows similarities to the *indlu* or sleeping hut. This hut was also occupied by guests and a number of hangers were present upon which blankets, clothing, calabashes and a variety of other items were hung. Beer pots and various items used to making beer were stored here. Tools of the kraal chief including agricultural equipment, was also stored here (Herbst, 1985: 49).

2.3. Contact and interaction

In addition to the literature, I consulted the local chief, Mr Tikhontele Dlamini. He was asked to point out the various traditional features of a Swazi village as he recalled their position at the village of Mekemeke. The location of the main hut or *indlunkhulu* as well as the central cattle byre or *sibaya* and the location of the huts of teenage males and females were pointed out. It was clear that the layout of this village generally conformed to that of the traditional Swazi homestead. Unfortunately the largest part of this village was destroyed by eucalyptus plantations which made extensive analyses impossible.

When we look closer at the positioning of huts and social space of the typical Swazi village it becomes clear that there are certain symbolic values attached to the positioning of huts and the arrangement of huts and activity areas within a village. Settlement pattern is functional on two levels, one expresses the external identity while the other serves to demonstrate internal social, political and economic relations (Schoeman, 1997: 20).

The symbolic aspects of a homestead are much more complex than what may be deducted from a surface layout as described earlier. Defined male and female space may differ between homesteads of affiliated Nguni societies, for instance the entrance to the central cattle byre may be placed facing or opposite the wives huts, the placement of second and third senior wives varies not only in the position of seniority but also in terms of the perceived left- and right hand side of the homestead; left and right differs from one ethnic group to another as a result of Western influence (Kuper, 1980: 8).

Homestead plans in the Nguni fashion are all circular in layout and also have diametric properties. In the circular layout, the centre is opposed to the side or periphery, and inner space contrasted to outer space. Diametric opposition in terms of space is represented by left and right vertically, and up or down, horizontally. Therefore, inside the hut there are areas designated for males and females (husband and wife) or specific areas which visitors or children occupy. Kuper (1980: 18) made the observation that transformations in symbolic space may be observed in modern times where a shift occurs from the traditional Nguni pattern of round huts organized in a semi-circle around a circular cattle byre to straight rows of rectangular huts that

face a rectangular byre. Symbolism captured in the layout of a homestead either changes or remains intact.

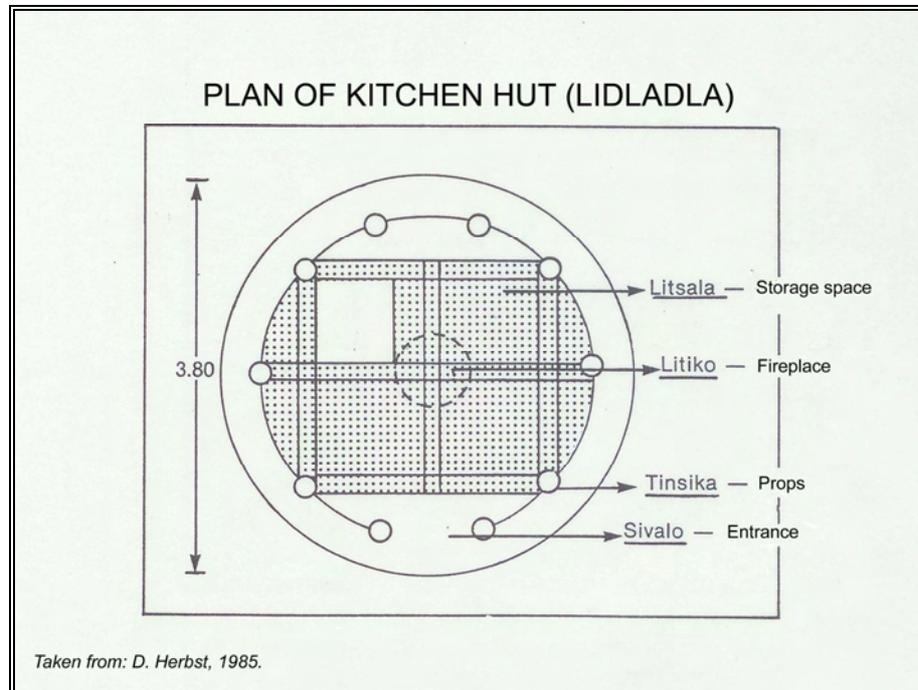


Fig. 2.2. Traditional composition of the Swazi *lidladla* as described by Herbst, 1985.

More specific literature was consulted in an effort to establish whether previous research has been done; similar questions asked and methods followed with regard to culture contact in historical archaeological research.

The work of Taylor (1979) concerning Late Iron Age settlements was one of these. His aim was to establish a sequence of archaeological entities that existed at the Vredefort Dome during the last 500 years. This was done during a period when it was believed that basic Late Iron Age sequences were necessary to order archaeological entities in a time and space framework. His research on this specific area was meant to clarify relationships between stone-walled settlements situated to the north and south of the area. Taylor made use of oral traditions and informants as well as accounts of missionaries and travellers and previous archaeological investigations in his studies.

Julius Pistorius (1992) concerning an early Tswana settlement in the western Transvaal was also consulted. His research focused on the Late Iron Age; specifically a period between 1660 and the early nineteenth century. An investigation of

Selonskraal was undertaken with the aim of proving that the site's settlement style is representative of the settlement system of historical and contemporary Sotho-Tswana villages in its ground plan, composition and settlement layout. His investigation also showed that the smaller composite sites, or settlement units comprising the mega site, were wards or socio-geographic units.

The accompanying socio-economic and political systems of this macro and micro level of settlement were explained with the aid of ethnographic and supplementary databases such as C14 dating, chemical analyses of soil and examinations of material remains and faunal evidence (Pistorius, 1992). He then used the archaeological database collected in this manner to do comparisons with a range of analogies or models derived from Sotho-Tswana ethnography.

It seems that most of the researchers mentioned here were concerned with research that shed light on the social dynamics and settlement structures within a traditional settlement and its society, whereas this study is concerned with the extent of contact between different cultural groups. They are, however, extremely useful in determining whether there were continuities or discontinuities. It is also clear that these researchers were working in more distant periods of history than the current study but the use of oral tradition seems just as invaluable in both instances.

Little archaeological research about the period 1860-1920 within the South African context, has been done. Archaeologists who are known for their work in the later stages of the Iron Age and Historic era were consulted and asked about how they approach their research. Most of these researchers have been working on historical archaeological research which has related topics to this study.

The work of Dr. Anton van Vollenhoven in the Kruger National Park concerns historic military outposts associated with the Steinaecker's Horse unit which date from the South African War (1899-1902). These sites proved problematic in terms of usable stratigraphic dating as the occupation was short and datable material in the form of porcelain ware were used (Van Vollenhoven, personal communication, 2007).

Mr Francois Coetzee, provided valuable information about research that he and some students conducted among the Bathlabine tribe in the Tzaneen area. Students made valuable use of informants, who were forcefully removed in the 1960s, to reconstruct the layout of the village they occupied before. This information led to the discovery of underlying foundations of a more ancient village and valuable research material. In this case, Coetzee confirmed that excavated cultural material clearly

showed that some Western influence was present. Kitchen utensils and other materials of Western origin were found in the same context as traditional utensils (Coetzee, personal communication, 2005).

Other researchers concerned with Historical research are involved with gender related issues within communities and how these perceptions influenced contact with the colonial frontier (Hall, 1997). Hall based his research at Maboitse, in the southern Waterberg, around the manner in which European material culture was imported into indigenous society and that this process was based on control by male elites. He explained that what he found interesting was the selective way in which certain European artefacts or forms were present at the site. The way in which a straight-line architecture selectively replaced a circular concept, seemed to relate to male and elite space, in contrast to continuity in the circular forms in commoner and domestic space. (Hall, personal communication, 2003; Hall, 1997: 214).

In an effort to understand how archaeologists approach research that has contact as its main focus, I consulted literature published and research conducted by academics in both southern Africa and elsewhere. The research questions asked by these scholars were similar to those of this project. Although they are concerned with different societies and different environments, it is felt that there are similarities between the nature of intercultural contact revealed through oral tradition, historic documentation as well as the archaeological record that provides insight for the focus of this project.

My research questions include the determination of the extent and nature of cultural contact between the Swazis and European settlers in the Barberton district, and how this contact is reflected in the archaeological record.

The fact that these (other) studies were completed fairly recently and concerned nineteenth century history enhanced their relevance.

In addition a few more relevant research papers were also consulted. Issues described in these articles contain the essence of what I focused on during this project. The majority of the reviewed case studies made use of oral tradition as an information source. Similarly, I consulted both Swazi and Western informants.

Research projects done by the University of Cape Town in the late 1980s and early 1990s focused on the architecture and material culture of British Settlers in the nineteenth century and their contact with indigenous communities (Hall, 1993, review of Deetz, Winer and Jeppson.).

A Historical Archaeology Research Group was established to concentrate on eighteenth century Cape Town and hinterland. One of these projects involved research at a VOC outpost called Oudepost. This outpost, established on the Cape West Coast in 1699 was excavated in an effort to understand the daily life of the Garrison stationed there as well as their interaction with the native Khoikhoi herdsman (Schrire, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991 in Hall, 1993).

The value of archaeological research concerned with contact and resultant cultural transformation seems to be high for sister disciplines. Lightfoot (1995) states that Historical Anthropological Studies rely on the archaeology of pre-contact contexts to understand the long-term implications of culture contact. The archaeological interpretation of contact is needed for comparative analysis of cultural transformations that took place before, during and after European contact and colonialism.

His views were based on cultural transformation of Native American societies before and during contact with Europeans. In this context, Lightfoot also recognises the importance of making a distinction between prehistoric and historical archaeology. The need for this, according to him, is because of the fact that colonial settlements in nineteenth century America not only comprised Europeans, but consisted of multi-cultural elements within the “European” communities of the time, creating the need for the understanding of historical processes and cultural histories.

Although this is concerned with studies in America, it is felt that this point is also applicable to the South African context. In southern Africa, this distinction may be defined as the difference between Iron Age archaeology and Historical archaeology. Iron Age archaeology in southern Africa is broadly associated with Bantu-speaking farmer communities whereas Historical archaeology is normally concerned with colonial settlers and their interaction with the local communities. The project at Mekemeke and Ekusoleni necessitates an understanding of both focus areas as the concerned sites and their layout may be associated with the late Iron Age when at the same time, the nature of descriptive historic documentation, oral tradition and contact lends it a historic face.

Another scholar addressing this issue is Silliman (2005), who interrogates the use of the terminology, culture contact and colonialism in archaeological research (Silliman, 2005). While discussions to define contact and colonialism is underway, it is my opinion that we need to focus on collecting archaeological data in this zone of contact in an effort to understand how to interpret this phenomenon in the South

African context. I take note of the problems presented in interpretation theories concerning contact and colonialism but feel that before we can arrive here, some groundwork needs to be done. Have we progressed far enough in South Africa regarding research of contact and colonialism to arrive at questioning the meaning of these terms in South African context? Reid et. al. (1997) may provide an answer:

“...if archaeologists are to understand better the nature of colonialism, there is a need to look more carefully at the many different elements involved in each situation, and to pay as much attention to continuities in style and the contributions of indigenous communities, as hitherto has been granted to the impact of new forms introduced by outsiders” and “...changes in material culture are induced only rarely by simple external imposition of new styles and materials. Instead, such changes are more generally the product of a dialectical relationship between donor and recipient communities, involving complex processes of selection and recontextualisation of meanings and forms” (Reid et. al. 1997: 371).

Illustrating this, students and staff of the Archaeology Unit of the University of Botswana examined in detail the spatial structuring of Ntsweng and Phalatswe, respective capitals of the Bakwena and Bangwato chiefdoms of Botswana. Both sites were historical towns of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, a critical period during which the identity and form of the Bechuanaland protectorate was formed. The settlements were contemporary in a broad sense and occupied by closely related people (Tswana) and were subject to similar historical processes including religious change, trade and territorial negotiations with Europeans.

The spatial layout of the settlements were indicative of the political relations characteristic to the two cases and the complex nature of negotiations of power and control of the settlement.

In order to understand the processes of change in each settlement, comparisons were made with preceding and succeeding settlements. Emphasis was given to how the use and organization of settlement space affected the relative powers of the paramount leaders and their response towards activities of European traders, missionaries and administrators. These dynamics in the contact situation had an effect on the architecture of both settlements; each in a unique way.

It is not the purpose of this dissertation to show theoretical distinction between Iron Age and Historical archaeology, but rather has a more simplistic objective namely to establish whether contact between Swazi and colonists did take place and what effect that may have had.

A possible future consideration may be to more clearly define African and European communities in the nineteenth and early twentieth century South Africa, and the role these communities played during contact including the contribution of archaeological understanding of contact and expansion.

According to Silliman (2005) contact or culture contact is a general term used by archaeologists in reference to groups of people coming into, or staying in contact for days, years, decades, centuries or even millennia.

“In its broadest usage, this contact can range from amicable to hostile, extensive to minor, long term to short duration, or ancient to recent, and it may include a variety of elements such as exchange, integration, slavery, colonialism, imperialism and diaspora. Its potential value lies in offering a comparative framework for the study of intercultural interactions, encounters, and exchanges...” (Silliman, 2005: 478).

This view is considered elemental in providing a theoretical foundation for the study at Mekemeke and Ekusoleni. Defining the contact between Swazi and Europeans in this manner leaves room for a broad interpretation of the data that was collected.

In the context of this dissertation, I believe that we are dealing with colonialism or rather colonial expansion, when describing the increase in European population of the Barberton area during the discovery of gold in 1884. As Silliman (2005) and Lightfoot (1995) define colonialism as a form of European state control or power invasion, thereby clouding the nature of contact, it is felt that in this case, the reason for colonial expansion had something to do with elements not considered valuable by the Swazi of the time:

“As far as the gold is concerned, one must presume that if the workers were local Bantu, they had as little use for the metal as the other natives of South Africa at their level of culture, and bartered it directly or indirectly for goods brought to Delagoa Bay by sea” (Van Warmelo in Myburgh, 1949: 12).

Only later (during and after 1884) as described by Myburgh (1949) did the Swazi get involved in the mining industry; predominantly as labourers. And this is where interaction took place in earnest. The Three Sisters Mountains, Malelane and Hectorspruit, were sites where red ochre was mined and used as trade item. This activity was exclusively undertaken by Swazi females. Myburgh describes:

“Women journey thither in parties from places as far as the Portuguese border and on payment of a shilling each are allowed to carry away a load each of the heavy ore. At home they pound the stones to fine powder and use it, mixed with fat, to anoint themselves and for barter” (Myburgh, 1949:13).

“When the first Europeans settled on the high plateau of the interior, they had reason to avoid the much less elevated Barberton area. It was difficult of access, a large portion was malarious and lay within the tsetse fly belt and was useless to pastoralists and dangerous if not fatal to transport riders. The native population was small and poor. In 1884 gold was found on Moodie’s concession near the present town of Barberton... The news of the discovery brought a great influx of diggers. New arrivals and prospectors swarmed over the hills in search of gold. Other reefs were found, including the famous Sheba by an Australian named Bray, the Kimberley Imperial, and others. Canteens, restaurants, shops, and a post-office sprang up like mushrooms on the quiet veld, and this collection went by the name of Barber’s Camp” (Van Warmelo in Myburgh, 1949: 7),

and further:

“That this had a profound effect on the native population was already observed by Wilson who left the area only a few years after the arrival of the diggers (Europeans)”.

He continued to describe how the once innocent Swazi later became accomplished at thievery and other uncharacteristic activities. He also explained that some Swazi worked on the mines for many years and that the large majority of them did not stay there but went to their homes at intervals or found employment on the Rand mines. This is significant because, during periods when the indigenous population working on the mines (in Barberton area) were among Europeans, they may definitely have taken some aspects of colonial material with them to their homes during times of absence from the mining industry.

Contact between Europeans and Swazi evidently did not take place only as a consequence of the discovery of gold in 1884. The intensification of mining activities only served to enhance the extent and nature of contact, for when Barber’s Camp was christened Barberton:

“...it occurred with some festivities and a good deal of Portuguese gin and the consumption of Swazi tobacco...”(Myburgh, 1949: 8).

This is evidence suggesting that there already occurred some form of contact before the start of the gold rush, and this contact intensified.

Of more social nature is the description by early ethnographers of the effect that the discovery of gold had on the local population:

“The occupation of the area by Europeans has had two other major results for the natives which must be referred to. The one is that all land may now only be owned by Europeans except in the two released areas east of the district, which leaves several tribes of note without any land where they can live undisturbed.” (Van Warmelo in Myburgh, 1949: 9).

Van Warmelo then continues to describe how local people worked on the farms of cattle and vegetable farmers as farm hands, and that they (Swazi) then stayed on these farms. It is not clear if the writer refers to the time of writing, the 1940s or a few years after the discovery of gold in 1884. In whichever case it sketches a picture of how the

nature of contact between Europeans and the Swazi progressed after the gold rush. Looking at the situation from a purely social point of view, it certainly seems as if the local population (Swazi) drew the short end of the stick when the consequences of the contact are scrutinized. It would seem that they were far better off continuing their traditional ways instead of venturing into the different, economy-driven world of Europeans. It remains an open question whether the incorporation of Western ways was a spontaneous transition, driven by the Swazi curiosity, infatuation with Western culture, or if the transition occurred because of a need to survive in a fast changing world and environment.

Oral tradition plays an important role in the study of the nature and extent of contact between different cultural groups. A study conducted in northern Bushmanland, Namibia, made use of oral history as well as archaeological excavation in determining the degree of intercultural contact. The value of oral tradition in determining the nature of forces behind contact is clearly illustrated in a study done by Smith and Lee (1997).

Excavation of a known exchange point, namely Cho/ana, a meeting point of the Ju/'hoansi Bushmen where external trade and internal *hxaro* exchange took place, offered archaeological data on the time-depth perspective of such contacts. In this particular case this served as a starting point to initiate a larger project where archaeological differentiation may be made between external trade and internal *hxaro* exchange. Some valuable information about the archaeological sites of Mekemeke and Ekusoleni was obtained by questioning Swazi informants who grew up in the area of study. Information supplied by these informants served to clarify historic accounts regarding the nature of the sites as well as the activities that took place there. Some undocumented information was also gathered in this manner. Tikhontele Dlamini, for instance, told an interesting tale about how Lanyandza (Mekemeke) went by establishing the motives of visitors when they visit the royal settlement of Mekemeke.

The most valuable informants, chief Tikhontele Dlamini and his mother, Tsambosi, contributed in pointing out the activity areas within the remains (ruins) of Mekemeke and Ekusoleni. The "*lidladla*" the only remaining features of Mekemeke, was identified by Dlamini. He visited Mekemeke as a child and remembers the layout of the homestead. As this was an area of social activity and interaction, it was used for initial archaeological sampling. The "*lidladla*" was also used as a meeting place where Lanyandza entertained guests. Dlamini told a story about Lanyandza when he

explained the function of the ruin at Mekemeke. He said that legend has it that Lanyandza had a peculiar habit when unknown visitors came to Mekemeke. She would have her subordinates invite the delegation (some of whom were Europeans) into her royal *Lidladla* where visitors were normally welcomed. There they would introduce themselves and converse with a trusted individual who feigned to be her while she hid in a nearby hut within audible distance from the proceedings. The conversation would be led in such a way as to reveal the motive for the visit and when she felt that it held no threat to her security, she would reveal her real self to the visitors and attend to the business at hand (chief Dlamini and Mr. Danie van Graan, personal communication, 2004).

In the Cho/ana study, informants' comments proved valuable in the interpretation of the archaeological evidence. Identification of plant remains, bone materials and the provision of a social context in which the material could be interpreted were contributed by the informants.

Similar to the *hxaro* exchange described above, this form of reciprocal exchange formed the basis of cultural contact between hunter-gatherer communities and agro-pastoralists since the 16th century in the eastern Free State (Thorp, 1996). Thorp examined archaeological data recovered from a hypothesised frontier to determine if social transformation occurred as a consequence of the contact between the two parties. The results were compared to contemporary hunter-gatherer sites south of the frontier zone. The replacement of hunter-gatherer ceramics by agro-pastoralist ceramics in the frontier zone was attributed to the development of new social relationships between these two groups. Archaeological evidence recovered at Mekemeke and eKusoleni also suggest a change in the social make-up of the Swazi as will be demonstrated in following chapters.

Answering questions about the nature of material evidence and the extent of contact between Swazi and Europeans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, has some practical implications. An example of this is illustrated by the work of Paterson (2003) which concerns culture contact between Europeans and native Australians or Aborigines. This historical archaeological study was based on the interaction between two different cultures at Strangways Springs Station in northern South Australia during the period 1850-1900. The study indicated that cross-cultural interaction is characterized by different types and degrees of interpersonal engagement. It also focused on how both historical and archaeological evidence

provide different insights into the nature and outcomes of the contact. The practical problem which confronts this study is the distinction between historic evidence describing the lives of individuals and the archaeological evidence which presented evidence of the group rather than the individual. Ascribing archaeological evidence to an individual's historic actions is very difficult if not impossible in most instances. Archaeological evidence in conjunction with historical evidence may however provide links in the reconstruction of the lives of individuals or groups (Paterson, 2003).

2.4. Human agency in contact

The use of the concept referred to by researchers as *human agency* may be applied to interpret archaeological data sets when the researcher is confronted with anomalies in the data. Insofar as it proves very useful in archaeological interpretation, the term *agency* certainly may be interpreted in a broad sense. On the one hand it has been used to interpret actions of the individual; individually unique cognitive structures; resistance to social norms; resistance to power inequalities; the capacity for skilful social practice; freedom from structural constraints; and free will (Paterson, 2003). On the other it poses a challenge to processual determinism and refers to deliberate action by individuals or groups of people (e.g. Silliman 2001). This is quite a broad range of interpretations for this term. Therefore the need arises to explain what is meant by *agency* for this particular study.

Paterson became interested in how the actions of individuals and different groups were reflected in archaeological and documentary records. This is a very specific approach and requires the documented evidence of the interaction between specific individuals as well as their relationship within the larger groups. In the case of Mekemeke, I could not find any documentary evidence regarding interaction between specific individuals representing the Swazi and European groups respectively. A challenge I encountered was how to link historical evidence and archaeological data to create a realistic reflection of the contact between European miners and native Swazi.

Relevant research by scholars attempting to interpret archaeological data in different contact situations provided a starting point for addressing this problem. The Swazi change in lifestyle, observed by ethnographers who describe them more

actively taking part in the Western style of living, still shows continuity of traditional activities and beliefs. At both Mekemeke and eKusoleni, what may be termed as traditional items were found even though eKusoleni showed some increase in the use of modern or Western cultural items by the Swazi.

The presence of lower grinding stones, ceramic pottery, traditional grave goods, traditional village and settlement layout, as well as the presence of traditional and modern materials suggests that although the influence of western society increased over time, core elements of the traditional worldview of the Swazi remained. This implies that despite the introduction of foreign and often attractive materials, the Swazi identity still remained.

2.5. Culture contact and ethnicity

The work of Cusick (1998), engages different types of culture contact and how archaeologists should interpret them. In his work Cusick (1998) highlights the problems that archaeologists face regarding suitable models for addressing the challenges that contact archaeology presents in the interpretation of data. The acculturation model in most instances is perceived as inadequate due to the fact that it emphasizes the cultural impact of Western on non-Western groups, it ignores power relations in contact situations and provides little predictive capability about the effects of culture contact (Cusick, 1998:126).

Another scholar who formed an acculturative model was Edward Spicer, who noted that group identity often persists even while many aspects of culture changed. He believed that contact mostly resulted in the transfer of “things” rather than ideas or beliefs. This evidence of sustained elements of culture despite introduction of new ideas, beliefs or material, he labeled as “persistent culture systems” (Spicer, 1971 in Cusick, 1998: 134).

Silliman (2005) argues that culture contact especially in light of colonial expansion, presents challenges for describing all types of indigenous-colonial interactions. There should be a distinction between contact and colonialism (Silliman, 2005:57). Culture contact is defined as a situation where groups of people come into contact with one another and do not share the same identity, whereas colonialism implies that a nation or state exerts control over a nation or group of people (indigenous) outside of its own geographical boundaries. This is normally done by the

colonization of such a place in an effort to induce state control and enforce labour, extract raw materials and manage interactions (Silliman, 2005:58).

It is important to make this distinction when studying cultural interaction archaeologically. This means that the historic context within which the contact took place becomes important when the data is interpreted.

It has been documented that societies in West Africa exhibited a striking degree of continuity between initial European contact and the late 19th century but there was a resultant large change within these societies regarding polity, power of individuals, changes in subsistence and changes in settlement patterns, pottery forms and decorative styles (DeCorse, C. 1992:164-166). At Elmina, Ghana, alongside the so-called Gold Coast, archaeological investigation illustrated that contact between Portuguese and other European traders and the local African community had social and economic impacts. European trade started here in the late 15th century and eventually led to the establishment of more than 60 trade posts along the 500 km coastline. One of the first archaeological observations done by Paul Ozanne at Elmina indicated that there was a dramatic difference between pottery from the early prehistoric period and the late 16th to mid 17th centuries. He ascribed the difference in the later pottery to a change in attitude towards form which was inspired by brass trade vessels. (DeCorse, 1992:166).

Against this background, DeCorse argues that examination of the degree in which socio-economic change affects culture change, has not been done carefully enough. The factors which cause cultural change are very complex and interdependent. The complex relationships between these factors make it very difficult to determine which are key in causing culture change. DeCorse makes a valid statement by saying that the ways in which culture and culture change is discernible from the archaeological record is equally varied and complex. He explains that the material record may be regarded as a meaningfully constituted result of cultural phenomena but that the interpretation thereof may not be applicable to all contexts. Culture is non-material and the archaeological expressions of world view is represented by different things and to varying degrees, culture may best be reflected materially in the ideological realm by shrines, ritual offerings and burial practices. Belief systems are expressed in inter- and intra-site patterning along with individual artifact classes such as pottery (DeCorse, 1992:169). He concludes that culture change cannot be directly compared to changes in these portions of the material record but it may be best identified here.

Intermarriage, the importance of trade and economic competition with surrounding groups resulted in the Elmina population being a political unit. By the nineteenth century Europeans could see a clear contrast between inhabitants of Elmina with people from the interior. By the seventeenth century Elmina people regarded themselves as being politically and culturally distinct from the surrounding African population. Archaeological research was aimed at investigating how people's modified world view and belief systems is discernible from the archaeological record.

The artefactual assemblage was dominated by European trade items including glass, metal objects, tobacco pipes, firearm parts and beads. Imported items from Spain, Portugal, Holland, France, China, Germany and the United States attested to Elmina's extensive trade connections. This array of European trade items also provided chronological control which is not the case with the majority of African archaeological sites of the last 500 years.

A great deal of innovation is represented in the material record at Elmina this included technological innovations and changing behavioural patterns, buttons, buckles, slate pencils and writing slates are additions to the material inventory which reflected new activities and dress patterns (DeCorse, 1992:183). Also, imported goods now had functions in traditional contexts such as the use of European whiteware ointment jars with burials. New artifact types were also created such as ritual vessels made of European sheet brass. This is however, not necessarily an indicator of cultural change; in fact continuity in ritual practice seems to have prevailed.

Some models are thus applicable to this study and each contributes in its own way to the interpretation of material evidence, oral resources and written history. I return to this issue in Chapter 4. In the following chapter I demonstrate how I went about to extract archaeological data and the methods I used in an effort to fit the two sites in a time-space framework.

Chapter 3: Research methodology and sources

Mekemeke and eKusoleni were both excavated during the entire month of April 2005. The excavation was preceded by field visits during the years of 2003 and 2004 where the sites were surveyed and documented. During this time the sites were normally visited with either the *nduna* of chief Dlamini or the chief himself or delegated elders all of whom aided in the identification of specific activity areas at either of the two sites. These visits aided me in deciding where to excavate and also helped to focus my research in addressing questions where both sites had the potential to provide satisfactory answers. The excavation team consisted of four local men, Makhelebane Magagula, Sandile Dlamini, Filemon Mkabela and Simanga Sibiya. I directed the activities.

3.1. Research Methodology

Information sources were classified into three main categories: historic information, oral history and archaeological data. Historic information about the establishment and history of Mekemeke and eKusoleni was sourced from various written records including ethnographic accounts of the tribes of the research area. As described in the first chapter, a number of individuals were interviewed in an effort to expand on and also verify the information gathered through the literature study.

Archaeological investigation started as an initial field survey to determine the location of both sites and their state of preservation.

After this was done, a decision was made which part or parts of the site features were suitable for archaeological sampling. This decision was made with input from oral sources who aided in the location of specific activity areas.

The next step was to map the areas to be used for archaeological sampling with the aid of surveying equipment including a GPS (Global Positioning System) unit, a dumpy level, compass, tape measure and photographic equipment. Thereafter the chosen areas were cleared of vegetation, excavation trenches were measured and marked out and excavation started. The excavations were carried out following the natural stratigraphy, which fluctuated in depth from 4cm to 8cm, depending on the nature of the deposit. Excavation continued until sterile soil was reached.

Archaeological material recovered during excavation was classified and documented according to its description, type, quantity and location within the excavation as well as the broader surveyed area. After excavation was completed, the different types of artefacts were individually analysed to reveal more about the site. The data extracted in this manner was comparatively analysed. Thereafter, conclusions were drawn in respect of the problem statement of the study. Models used to interpret the archaeological data include the acculturation and the role of human agency. The effectiveness of these models was also scrutinized in the light of recent research.

This period of occupation proved to be challenging in archaeological terms as the stratigraphic layers of occupation and distinction between phases were unclear. I focus on how differentiation was made between phases of occupation in terms of stratigraphy, as the occupation of the initial village occurred over a relatively short time period. Material remains within stratigraphic context excavated at the site, were compared to material excavated from a similar area of activity in the village, Ekusoleni, which was occupied after Mekemeke was abandoned. By comparing the finds at these two sites the aim was to establish how Western influence increased or decreased with time.

3.2. Written sources

All documentary evidence used for this study is presented in chapter two. There are, however, some literary sources that were particularly relevant during the interpretation of the archaeological data. The ethnographic works of Herbst (1985), Kuper (1986), Matsebula (1972) and Myburgh (1949) were extensively used to verify information collected from informants. The detailed description of day-to-day Swazi life within their homesteads at Mbuzini as described by Herbst (1985) served as valuable background against which traditional and non-traditional household items were defined.

Myburgh's (1949) work, which specifically focuses on the Swazi in the Barberton District served as an excellent source of information concerning the descendants of Lanyandza Dlamini and the Nkosi of Monile. Furthermore his work described certain incidents where the Swazi made contact with the Europeans in the area by trade, bartering or normal work relations. His observations regarding daily tasks performed

by the Swazi within their traditional surroundings and the implements they used also contributed to the interpretation of data from the sites.

Recent work on contact archaeology by researchers such as Lightfoot (1995) and Silliman (2005) proved invaluable for current archaeological research concerned with contact between separate cultures.

Through the nature of their work, these researchers sensitised the author to the importance of being aware that the historic setting in which archaeological evidence was deposited must be considered in both a Late Iron Age context as well as a purely historical setting. Contact between individuals with a Western, or “modern”, worldview and those with a traditional worldview sets the stage for a distortion in defining the exact period in which I am working.

The importance for archaeologists to understand the dynamic nature of the term colonialism was brought home by the work of Reid (1997). The effect of colonialism on all parties concerned needs to be understood in an effort to interpret data as objectively as possible. Accurate interpretation of data, especially when working with comparative sets, proves challenging when expected results are not gained. The persistence of dynamic social interrelations and the unique nature of the individual identity within any cultural group are not always discernable from the archaeological record. The model of human agency as described by Paterson (2003) served invaluable in contextualising the effect that the individual or group has on the continuity of archaeological data.

3.3. Oral sources

I used information gathered by communicating with knowledgeable individuals to locate certain archaeological sites and to verify information gathered in written sources. According to some sources a few of the informants are direct descendants of the chieftainess, Lanyandza Dlamini. According to Matsebula (1972:45):

“Lanyandza had no issue. Thus she got her niece, named Nkumbuta Magongo as her “inhlati” or co-wife to raise issue for her. Under this arrangement Monile (female) and Fana (male) were born. When Lanyandza died her son Fana succeeded her as the head of the principality. Fana died in 1929 and his sister Monile acted for his son Lombaluko. Fana’s senior wife was Ntfwati Mabuza whose issue were all girls. Therefore her younger sister named Labohenga, was put to bear her issue. By this

arrangement Lombaluko was born. When he became of age, Lombaluko took over from his aunt Monile and married 18 wives. When Lombaluko died his aunt Monile once more acted until Tikhontele (living) succeeded in 1973”.

The oral sources that were consulted included Chief Tikhontele Dlamini, a direct descendant of the royal Swazi family and traditional leader in the Mbombela Municipal District (Local Government). Dlamini provided valuable information regarding the location of both Mekemeke as well as eKusoleni. He also escorted me to Mekemeke to point out the various features and areas of activity at the site. Information regarding the identity of the chieftainess, Lanyandza Dlamini, was verified by this informant. He also pointed out the grave of the chieftainess.

Sandile Dlamini, son of chief Tikhontele, served as a handy translator and helped a great deal with communication problems between myself and the other informants. Mr Makhelembane Magagula is one of the chief’s advisors and a senior citizen of the Louw’s Creek community. As a youngster he visited both sites and assisted in the location of specific activity areas.

Gogo (Grandmother) Tsambosi Dlamini, the mother of chief Tikhontele Dlamini is one of the oldest Dlamini’s still alive. She was invaluable in locating key activity areas at eKusoleni. It must be said that oral traditions by themselves are bound to be partial and influenced by the elite i.e. kings and chiefs’ accounts of historic events, nevertheless I found oral information very useful especially when used in conjunction with literary sources and the archaeological record.

It is also true that official historic accounts were written by white officials and missionaries who may have been biased in their interpretation of information received from high ranking indigenous individuals see for example Makhura in Delius (2005: 64). When consulting written sources, I took this into consideration.

Chapter 4: Oral sources

4.1. Introduction

As mentioned in chapter three, I relied on oral sources to verify aspects of the written history of Mekemeke and eKusoleni which was extensively discussed in chapter two. I also relied heavily on oral accounts to locate the two sites. The landscape underwent dramatic changes since the visit to Mekemeke and eKusoleni by A.C. Myburgh in the late 1930's. Since that time the area surrounding both sites have been utilised for commercial plantations. The fact that the informants and their predecessors have been visiting Mekemeke and eKusoleni at least annually ensured that their location was well-known. The elderly informants, Chief Dlamini, Makhelembane Magagula and the chief's mother, Tsambosi Dlamini, provided detailed information about the layout and specific features of the sites since they had intimate knowledge thereof which was gained through a lifetime of visits and exposure to oral traditions regarding the sites.

In an effort to understand the pitfalls that exist when making use of oral traditions during archaeological interpretation, a few case studies were consulted. An example by Damm (2005) concerns approaches to ethno-history and oral traditions to be used by archaeologists when working closely with communities whose history they are researching. Damm distinguishes between ethno-history, oral tradition and oral information. Ethno-history may be used to describe gathering of information within a Western scientific tradition whereas oral tradition concerns narratives which originated from within indigenous societies. Oral information refers to knowledge which is related to practical issues and not presented in the narrative form (Damm, 2005: 74).

Damm observes that researchers should note that oral traditions are also influenced by current issues. The story teller or informant often incorporates new information and experiences into existing stories. Thereby elements considered to be of little importance for the key issues, may be altered or modified for example an important location linked to an event may be "moved" to where it is currently more convenient. In some societies consistency in the repetition of a story is important while in others storytelling is an art where variation and improvisation is desirable (Damm, 2005:77).

When archaeologists make use of oral sources in their interpretation of sites and features care must be taken not to project desired outcomes by selectively using oral

sources and traditions. A case in point is the critical review by David Beach (1998) of the interpretive work of Thomas Huffman in his interpretation of Great Zimbabwe.

Beach critiques Huffman's interpretation of Great Zimbabwe by indicating that certain aspects of this site lacked the support of accurate oral and historic sources. Huffman mainly used publicised Portuguese documents, Shona oral traditions and Venda anthropology to explain mysterious phenomena at Great Zimbabwe. Beach argues that the oral traditions used in Huffman's interpretation, does very little to support his arguments relating to male and female space. He points out that information derived from Portuguese sources are mis-interpreted to suit his arguments. This serves to caution researchers to remain as objective as possible when interpreting oral sources and historic documents.

Combining oral tradition and scientific fact is a challenge that faces archaeologists like me who has the privilege of working within a time period where such an approach is possible. To accomplish this one has to make use of oral information concerned with the details of site locations, function of tools and structures and local knowledge regarding resources in the area. Such use of oral information does not attempt to interpret narratives but is rather used to reconstruct functional and empirical elements. This summarises the approach I took when consulting oral sources in my research at Mekemeke and eKusoleni.

4.2. Oral references to specific places and layouts

Consulting informants provides insight without which I certainly would have misinterpreted some features of the sites. Accounts of the mentioned informants in many instances served to support more formal records regarding the location and nature of the sites. Some information provided by the informants even supported the formally recorded age of eKusoleni for instance the memory of Tsambosi Dlamini which leads her to say that the last time she visited the site was in 1948. The most valuable contribution by the informants is information that is not general knowledge for instance the location of characteristic features and activity areas within each site. This includes the refuse midden, the location of the *lidladla*, the *indlukhulu* and other huts at the sites. Tsambosi Dlamini for instance, recognised one of the lower grinding stones which she as a child used at the site. She also remembered that one of the huts (fig. 5.13. east of excavation 1) were the dwelling of Libando, the senior wife of Fana.

She remembered that the larger number of the community stayed downslope close to the Mlambanyantzi River and that the refuse midden was located between the royal enclosure and an ancient Sotho hut.

This information is valuable when archaeologists interpret a site, especially in conditions where much of the site features are no longer visible or overgrown by vegetation or have merely been disseminated as a result of wind and weather. Historic archaeological research is often in the favourable position that oral sources are available and may be consulted. This, I believe, adds a dimension to this time-period which other time-periods do not have.

Informants also clarified most uncertainties I experienced when interpreting features of both sites. I distinguish between informants who aided me by introducing me to knowledgeable individuals, escorted me during site visits and acted as Swazi translator and those informants who shared the history, family genealogy and site layout features. During my initial visits to the home of Chief Tikhontele Dlamini when I consulted him regarding the history of the two sites, I was fortunate to have an excellent translator in the form of Mr Mfana Sibiya the chief's *induna*. In fact it was Sibiya who first brought these sites to my attention and introduced me to the Dlamini family. He accompanied me to these sites and pointed out some of the activity areas after careful consultation with senior informants such as Chief Dlamini, "Gogo" (Grandmother) Tsambosi (Shongwe) Dlamini and Makhelembane Magagula. Sibiya also introduced me to the Lomshiyu traditional authority in an effort to explain the nature of my work and formalize the relationship between myself and the community.

More senior informants consisted of individuals who are familiar with the sites since childhood and some of them for instance the mother of Chief Dlamini, Ms Tsambosi Dlamini, actually visited these sites when they were children approximately 60 years ago. These informants include Chief Tikhontele Dlamini, his mother Tsambosi and Makhelembane Magagula.

Mekemeke is by far the more frequently visited of the two sites. This is mainly due to annual visits by the Dlamini family and senior members of the community to pay homage to their ancestors. Magagula and Chief Dlamini identified the stone walled ruins as the *lidladla* and showed me the likely activity areas within the enclosure. These included an open-air cooking area within the confines of the stonewall enclosure, an area where maize was ground and beer was brewed and the likely location of the cooking hut.

It was Magagula who brought my attention to the refuse midden on the eastern side of the stone-walling at Mekemeke. He indicated that this area outside the stone wall was used as the refuse midden due to its proximity to the cooking area and also because it was located outside the stone wall. Artefact scatters on the surface as well as the ashy character of the soil confirmed this. This meant that the refuse pit was separated from the *lidladla* by a stone wall which ensured hygiene (Fig. 5.1. position of trench Mek/05/02 to wall).

Both individuals showed me parts of the village where the *sibaya* and *indlunkhulu* were once located. These features are not visible any more as a result of commercial forestry activities. Dlamini indicated that the *sibaya* was located a couple of hundred metres north-east of the *lidladla*. His mental map of the area related to an ancient fig tree which still grows there today. He related that this tree was where formal discussions took place between men of high rank. The *sibaya* was located very near and to the south of this tree. Both informants distinguished between the residential quarters of the commoners as opposed to the royalty. The *lidladla* (see fig. 4.1.) was part of the royal enclosure of Lanyandza Dlamini. Tikhontele Dlamini explained that the chieftainess would entertain guests here. He also said that she had the habit of letting senior individuals receive guests first while she waited close-by, concealed in a hut and listening in on the conversation before revealing herself to the visitors. Dlamini explained that this was a strategy of hers to determine the motive of the visitors and reveal their intentions before exposing herself to possible harm.

Dlamini indicated that the royal enclosure was removed from the commoner quarters which were all arranged in a semi-circular fashion to the north-east, east and south-east. The western side of the village was more difficult to access because of the steep inclines which made it treacherous terrain to navigate. It also ensured a bird's eye view of the lower lying Barberton valley. It is clear that security was a major consideration when this village was planned and built. This makes sense as it served as one of Mswati's military outposts.

eKusoleni is not visited as regularly as Mekemeke. This is mainly due to its remote location. Forestry activity has limited access to both sites. The observation skills and vivid memory of Tsambosi Dlamini helped to identify the royal enclosure at eKusoleni. She related that she remembers the village since childhood when it was still occupied. The last time she visited here was approximately 1948. Between her and Magagula the *lidladla*, *indlunkhulu* and refuse midden was identified and located.

She also showed where the original *sibaya* was located and where surrounding huts once stood. The identification of some of the deceased buried here was also done by her. For instance the grave of the Chief, Fana Dlamini's wife Mnyokazi (Mabuza) Dlamini, the northernmost grave on the site plan (fig. 4.13). She also identified one of the huts indicated on the site plan as that of one of Fana's principal wives Sitepi (Mahela) Dlamini. This is the southernmost hut on the locality plan (See fig. 4.13).

Chapter 5: Archaeological Excavations

Mekemeke was first visited in April 2001 with representatives of Chief Tikhontele Dlamini acting as guides. These included elders of the Low's Creek Community who are familiar with the history of the area. Two years later, in 2003, the site was visited again and informants indicated Mekemeke as being the oldest site in the area. Later that year the site was visited to formally document it and compile a site plan (fig. 5.1). It soon became apparent that unfortunately the *lidladla* was all that remained of the once elaborate settlement. The rest of the site features were destroyed by forestry activity. This was a setback as I realised that I now only had a limited sample with which to work.

The royal *lidladla* consists of an outer perimeter wall, constructed of stone and has an average height of 70 cm. The enclosure has two entrances one on the south-eastern side and another on the northern side. The entrance on the northern side is hidden by a semi-circular wall.

Traditionally, the *lidladla* is divided into male and female activity areas. The male area is known in the Swazi tongue as *inkhudla* and the female area as *liguma*. The food preparation took place in the female area and this area was selected for excavation. In this part of the enclosure a broken lower grinding stone was found together with a number of iron objects and shards of broken glass.

Informants Makelembane Magagula and Chief Dlamini pointed out the likely locations of specific activity areas within and outside the enclosure. These were the area where food preparation was done as well as the location of the refuse midden.

The reason for excavating these specific areas was to locate material culture objects used by the settlement inhabitants in their daily routine.

Information gathered by the informants is discussed in more detail in the previous chapter.

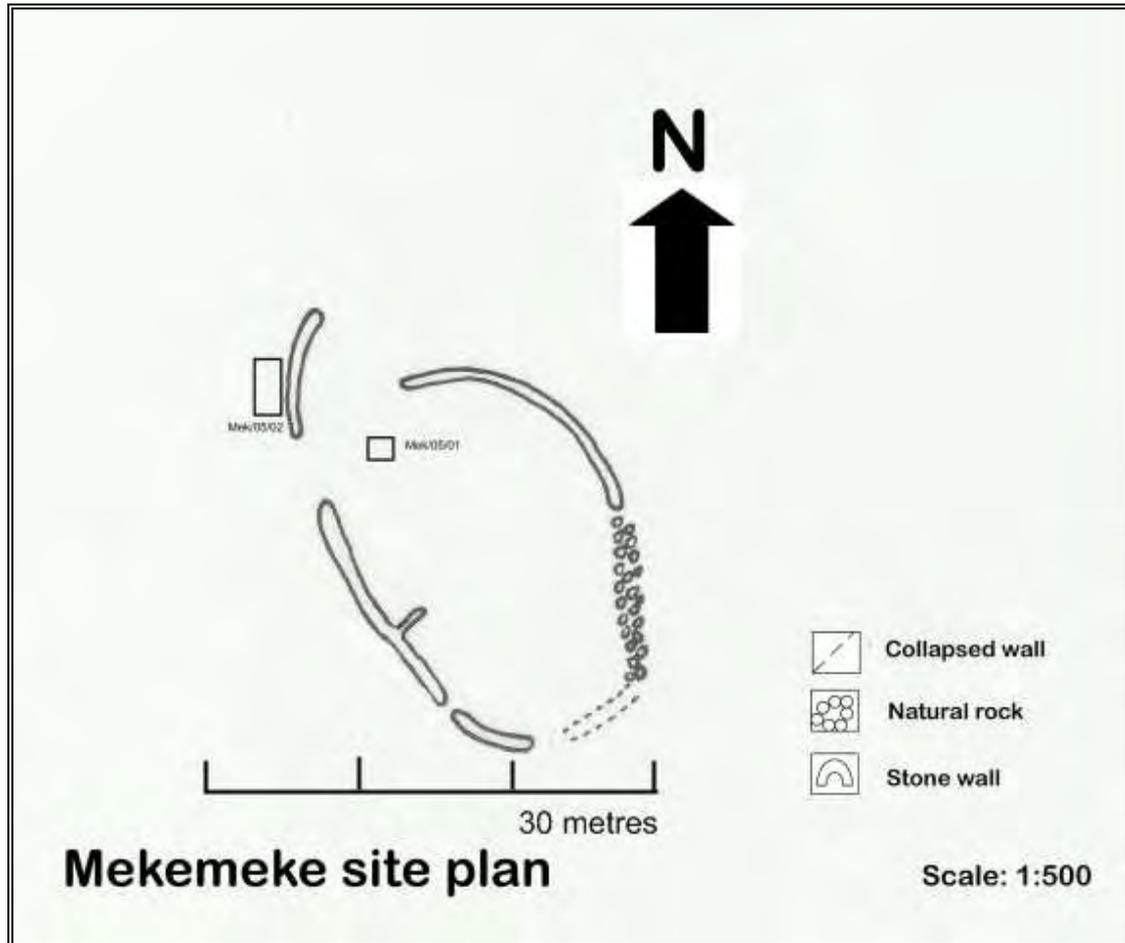


Fig. 5.1. The plan of *lidladla* at Mekemeke.

5.1. Survey and excavations at Mekemeke

The Mekemeke ruins were documented by photographing key areas within the main enclosure supported by the making of a scale drawing (Fig 5.1). This site plan indicates the layout of the enclosure as well as the excavated trenches within. Information gathered from oral sources was tested by collecting artefacts and observing features on the surface as well as making small shovel test pits. Information provided by Makhelebane Magagula and Tikhontele Dlamini regarding the activity areas within the *lidladla* was used to decide where to excavate. Two trenches were made at Mekemeke. The first, Mek/05/01, measuring 3m x 3m (fig. 5.3 - fig. 5.6) was made inside the enclosure, south-east of the northern entrance. This was an area where informants believed food preparation took place, also a lower grinding stone was observed nearby. It may have moved from its original position as a result of

frequent visitors, but it was a good indication that the area may have been used to prepare food.

Two layers were excavated before sterile soil was encountered. A number of artefacts including glass beads, charcoal, bone fragments, shards of broken glass counted among the finds.

A second trench, Mek/05/02, which measured 2m x 4m (fig. 5.7 - 5.11) was laid out approximately 1,5 metres away from the outside of the enclosure to the west. The ashy nature of the soil as well as information by Makhelembane Magagula identified this area as the refuse pit associated with the enclosure. Magagula was of the opinion that this is where one would expect to find a refuse midden as the retaining wall provided an extended barrier between the refuse midden and the enclosure. Initial test pits and subsequent excavation of this area proved that he was correct.

Some of the deposit in this pit covered stones that formed part of a collapsed section of the western semi-circular wall which in some way limited the depth of the sampling area of the trench. Despite this, the trench, compared to others, proved very rich in both artefact quantity as well as quality.

Trench Mek/05/01

This is a 3m x 3m trench measured out in the area where cooking activities were most likely to have taken place inside the *lidladla* it was pointed out by informant Mr Makhelembane Magagula. The excavation was made on the eastern side (inside) of the western wall of the *lidladla* some 4 metres east of the northern entrance. The excavation consisted of two layers the first layer (L1, fig. 5.5.) was excavated to a depth of 7cm. This layer was not the surface layer, but the soil beneath the surface after surface materials were collected and the swept surface soil removed and sieved. Sieving was done with a 1,5mm by 1,5mm mesh beneath a 5mm by 5mm mesh. From the first layer we recovered white glass beads, charcoal, red glass beads, amber glass beads, iron objects, pink glass beads, bone and teeth fragments of sheep and goat, some undecorated pottery and blue glass beads. The density of artefacts became noticeably less as the layer progressed except for one area where a concentration of charcoal suggested the presence of a hearth. The excavation subsequently continued to a second layer (L2, fig. 5.5.) albeit a smaller section of the trench (fig. 5.3, 5.4). Although there was a concentration of charcoal and burnt rock

visible, further investigation revealed that a hearth was not present at that specific location. What was interesting though was that more artefacts turned up from this smaller section up to a point where we reached sterile soil again at a total depth of 15cm (profiles, fig. 5.5 and 5.6).

Among the artefacts recovered from this layer were a large number of white glass beads and two stone tools.



Fig. 5.2. Excavations at Mekemeke.



Fig. 5.3. Excavation Mek/05/01 indicating layer 1 and the second layer in a smaller section.

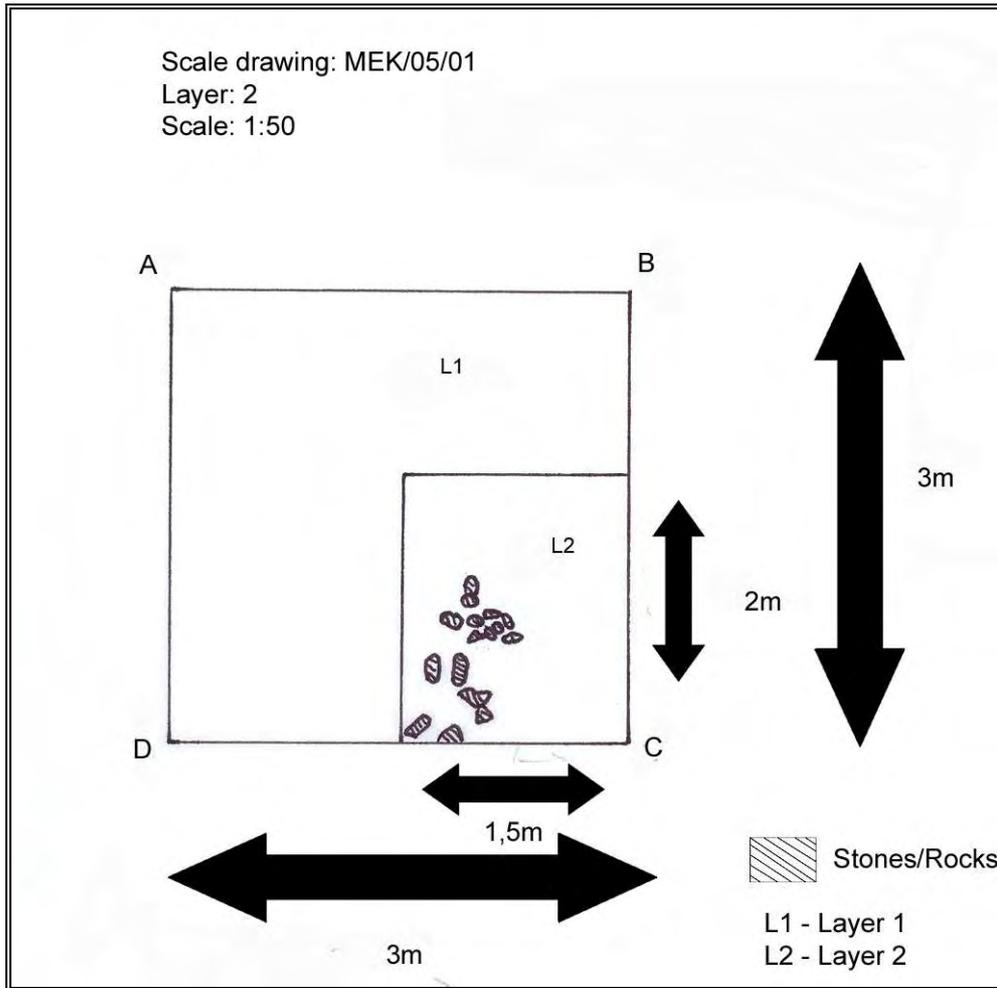


Fig. 5.4. Layout plan of excavation Mek/05/01.

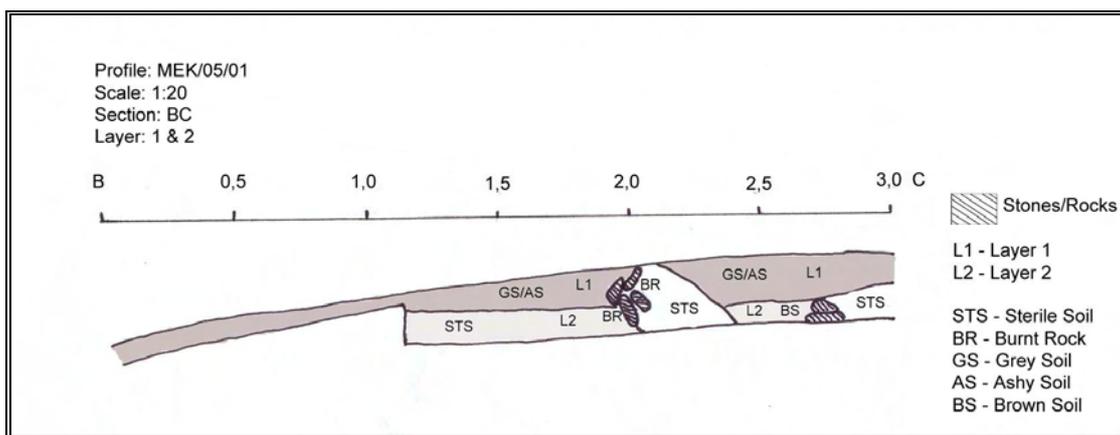


Fig. 5.5. Profile of trench Mek/05/01 section BC.

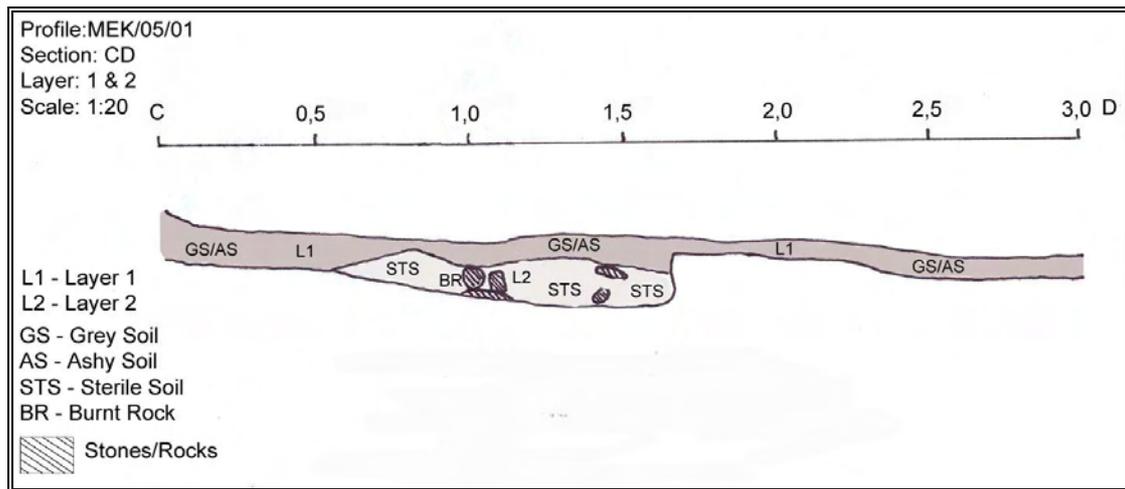


Fig. 5.6. Profile of trench Mek/05/01 section CD.

Trench Mek/05/02

This trench was made on the western side of the perimeter wall of the *lidladla* (fig. 5.1, 5.8 and photo fig. 5.7). The trench measures 2m x 4m and is located about three metres west of the northern entrance of the *lidladla*. The trench is oriented in a north-south alignment. This area was pointed out by informant Mr Makhelembane Magagula as the location of the refuse pit therefore it was considered a valuable area for sampling. Artefacts recovered from this trench include bone fragments, glass beads, pottery shards, broken glass fragments and iron objects. The largest portion of the iron assemblage recovered, by far, were nails which were most probably used for construction purposes. The trench was also excavated in two layers L1 and L2 (fig. 5.10 also 5.9, 5.11). Again, layer 1 was not the surface layer, but the soil beneath the surface after surface materials were collected and the swept surface soil removed and sieved. Sieving was done with a 1,5mm by 1,5mm mesh beneath a 5mm by 5mm mesh.

The second layer ended in a yellow clay bed which was devoid of any more artefacts. Layer one was excavated to an average depth of 8 cm where the soil started to show a distinct ashy quality (profiles, fig. 5.9, 5.10 and 5.11). At this point the research team realized that we were at the topmost part of the refuse pit and therefore commenced further with a second layer. The second layer produced a larger quantity

of artefacts and also a larger variety including a .303 cartridge, pottery sherds, charcoal and more iron objects.



Fig. 5.7. Trench Mek/05/02 the second excavation at Mekemeke on the Refuse midden. Note sections of stone wall on the right exposed.

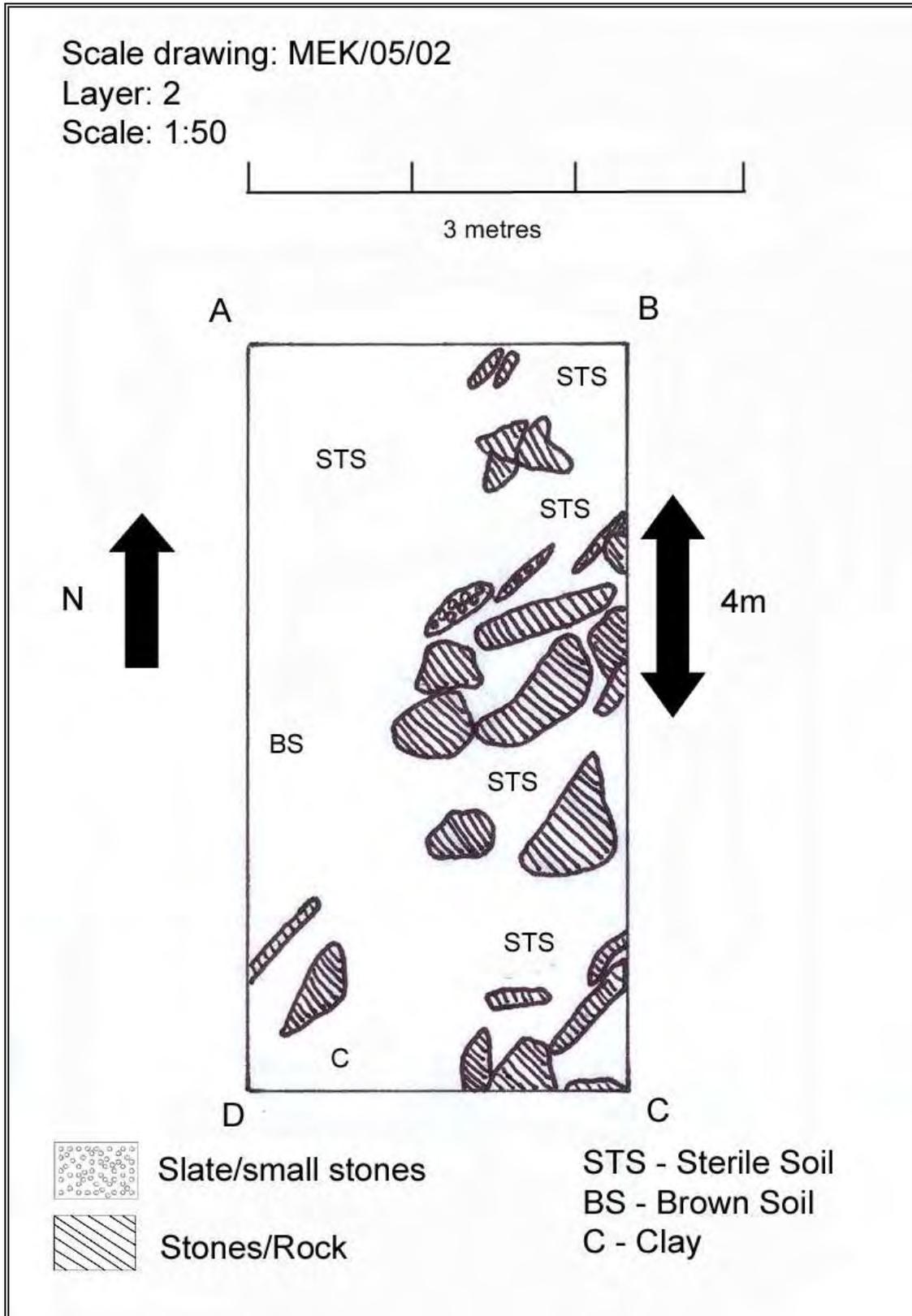


Fig. 5.8. Layout plan, excavation Mek/05/02

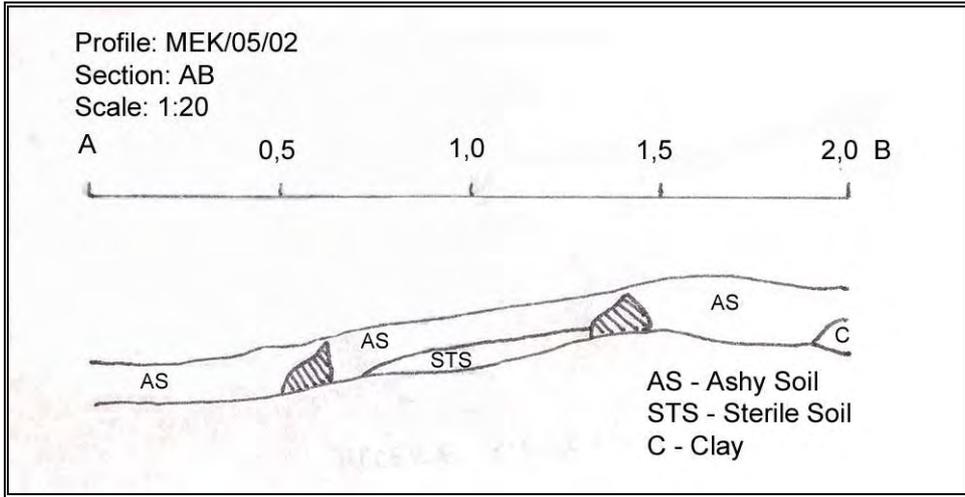


Fig. 5.9. Profile of trench Mek/05/02 section AB.

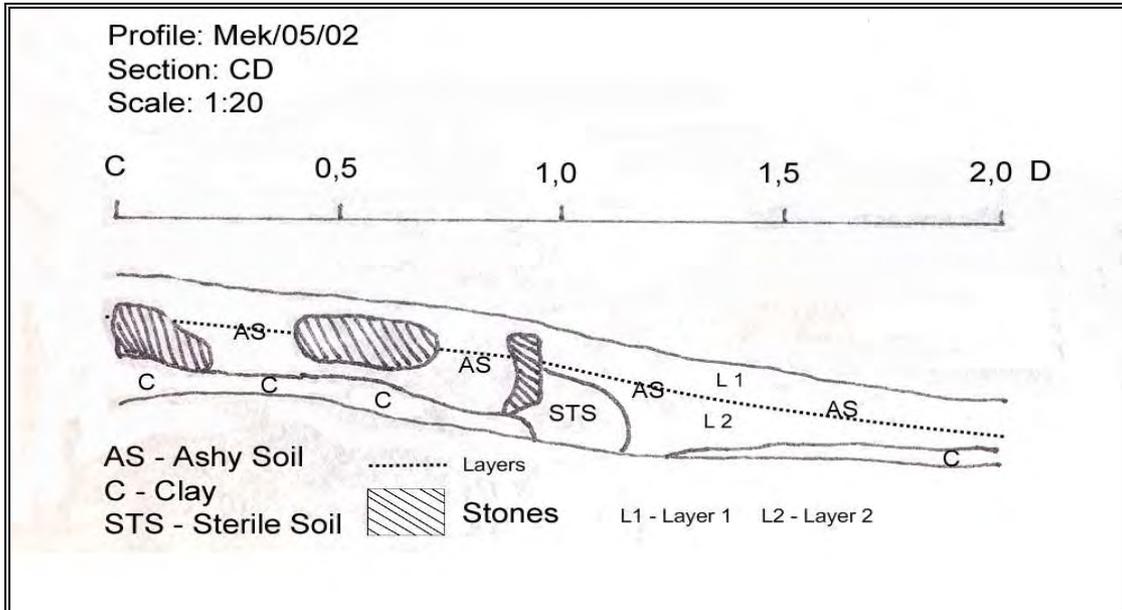


Fig. 5.10. Profile Mek/05/02 section CD.

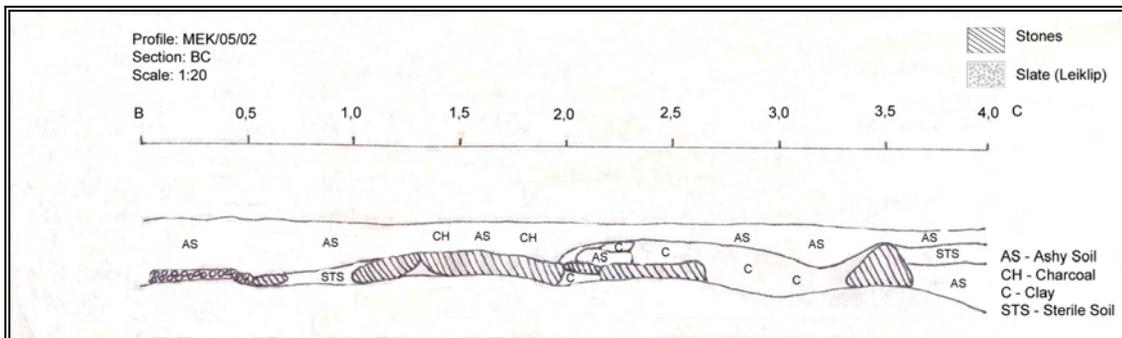


Fig. 5.11. Profile Mek/05/02 section BC.

5.2. Survey and excavations at eKusoleni

The eKusoleni site was visited on January 2005 for the first time. According to Myburgh (1942) this was the homestead of the Nkosi of Monile, lead by Fana Dlamini, the eldest son of Lanyandza Dlamini. This village was established shortly after the death of Lanyandza when Fana removed all villagers to a new location around 1920 and remained the home of Fana and his descendants until the early 1940's (Myburgh, 1942; Dlamini personal communication, 2005).

Located in a valley overlooking the Kaapmuiden farming area to the north-east, the site is approximately 200m x 200m big. This is the royal residence and according to informants the larger part of the settlement is located further to the east. The site consists of a central area surrounded by circular huts. The activity areas explored by archaeological investigation include a pantry and adjoining kitchen, as well as a refuse midden located to the west.

Other features on the site include five graves, aligned in a north-south direction, and three circular structures suggesting the foundations of huts. This was verified by an informant, Mrs Tsambosi Dlamini, who identified the location of the hut of the headman's wife (Fig. 5.13, hut 02). This hut was called *libando*. According to Dlamini she visited this site in the late 1940's (1948-1949). She also confirmed that this location was the royal residence and that the rest of the community lived further to the east near the Mlambanyantzi River.

In contrast to Mekemeke, a larger part of this site remained intact as fewer forestry activities took place here. It is also a very secluded area and few people come here. Though most of the site and site features were overgrown with vegetation, a number of artefacts were left untouched on the soil surface which made interpretation of the site easier in terms of the layout and activity areas. But it would have been difficult without the help of oral informants.

Clay pots in pristine condition were found where informants indicated the kitchen and pantry areas were located. Original hut poles are still visible and the rusted remains of metal boxes, implements and other material can still be found inside the hut perimeter.

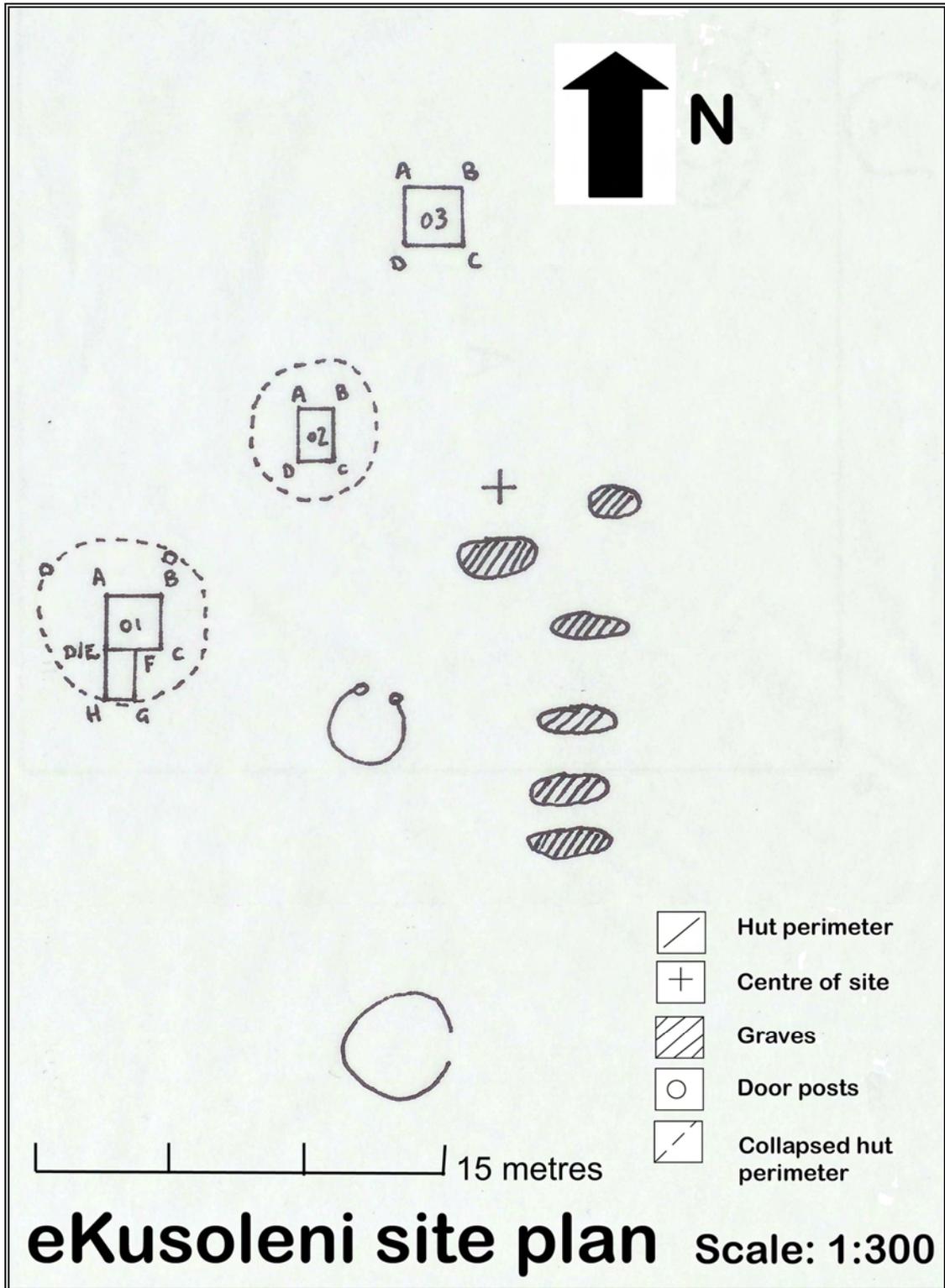


Fig. 5.12. Layout of site at eKusoleni.

I realised that a similar area of activity would need to be utilised at eKusoleni for comparative analysis. After consultation with the mother of chief Dlamini, a similar activity area was located at eKusoleni. Gogo (Tsambosi) Dlamini explained that as a child she visited the site and could therefore point out this *lidladla*. According to her, the last time she was at this site before the visit during 2005 was in 1947/8. This site served as the royal residence and the rest of the community resided close to the Mlambanyanthi River downslope.

Trenches were marked out in similar areas of activity as those at Mekemeke. Three trenches Kus/05/01, Kus/05/02, Kus/05/03 were excavated. One of these, Kus/05/02, produced very little, but the remaining two were very productive: one of them so much so that it had to be extended later on.

An extension of this trench was made towards the pantry which was located adjacent to the cooking area. The trench was then subdivided into Kus/05/01/A (cooking area) and Kus/05/01/B (pantry).

The third trench Kus/05/03 was sunk on the refuse midden of the royal enclosure, on the western side. This trench was also identified with the help of Mrs Tsambosi Dlamini and its location indicated by the presence of ashy soil. Both trenches Kus/05/01 and Kus/05/03 revealed similar artefacts as found at Mekemeke: excluding glass beads and including significantly more iron, iron implements, iron cooking utensils and glass.

Trench Kus/05/01:

This trench tested the deposit in the *lidladla* and initially measured 2m x 2m. The trench had an interesting feature located at corner A (fig. 5.16.) It comprised of two clay pots and a third cast-iron pot lying on the surface. One of the clay pots was located inside the perimeter of the trench. As the excavation progressed it was decided to extend the excavation to include a couple of features discovered at a later stage. An additional trench measuring 2m x 1m was measured out on the southern side of the original trench. This was done to include two in-situ cast-iron pots as well as a corner post of the pantry section of the *lidladla*. (fig. 5.14 – 5.16). The context of the two cast-iron pots as well as the discovery of a concentrated amount of nails, pottery shards and other iron objects in that vicinity served to support the identity of the pantry. The excavation was done in two layers (profiles, fig. 5.17 and 5.18). First the

surface was swept and all visible artefacts collected before sieving the deposit. The first layer was dug about 5 cm deep until a reddish clay soil was revealed. Thereafter a second layer was excavated to a depth total depth of 13 cm. Finds included pottery sherds, some of which were diagnostic, iron items both identified and unidentified, broken pieces of glass both diagnostic and undiagnostic, and nails. Most of the artefacts were recovered from the reddish clay soil in the second layer of the excavation (profiles, fig. 5.17 and 5.18).



Fig. 5.13. Surface of trench Kus/05/01. Note the Ceramic and cast-iron pots on the top right. The extension to include the pantry was later made from the top left-hand corner to the south.



Fig. 5.14. Trench Kus/05/01 with extension into the pantry visible to the south.



Fig. 5.15. Detail of trench Kus/05/01A. This is the pantry area that revealed more cooking utensils like this cast-iron pot.

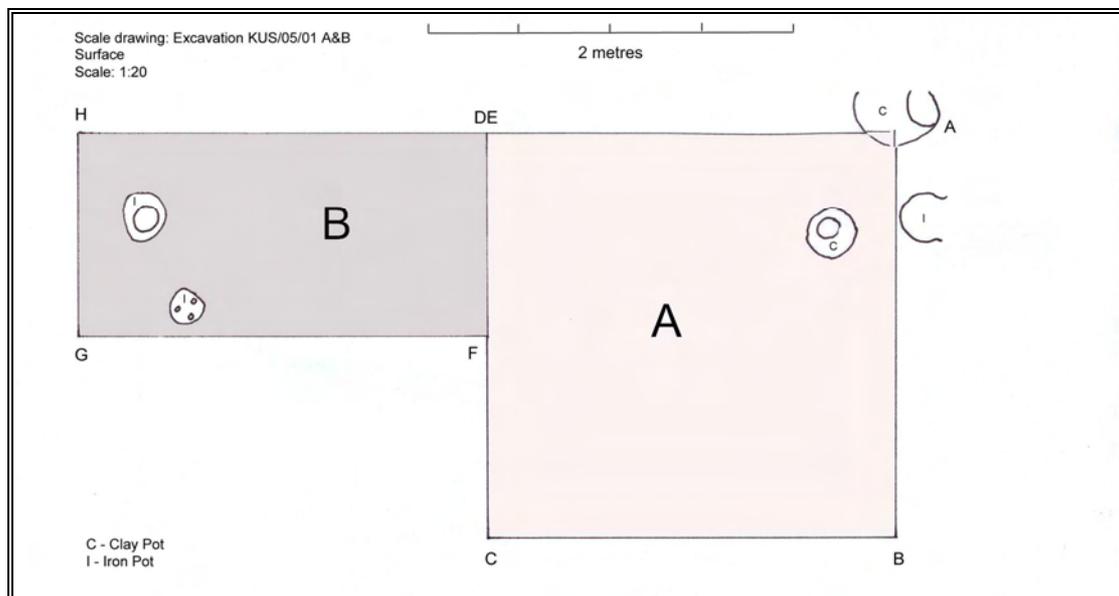


Fig. 5.16. Division of trench Kus/05/01 into sections A and B.

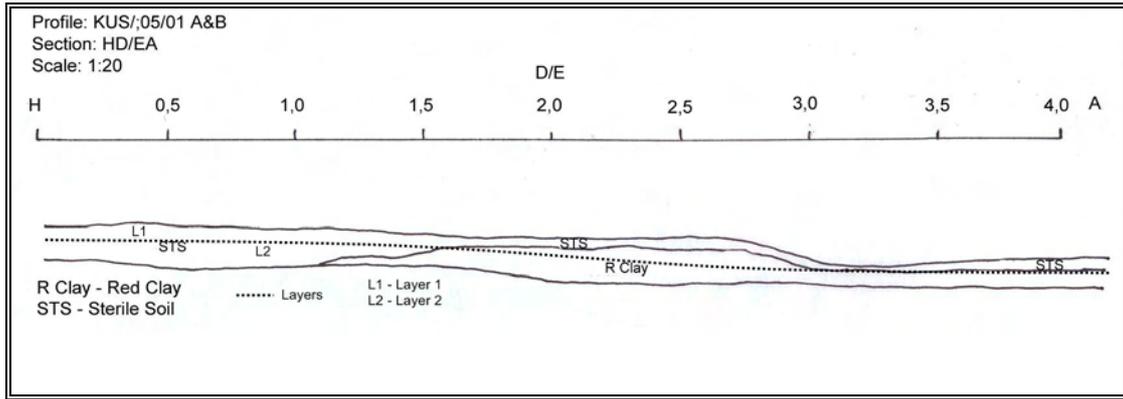


Fig. 5.17. Profile Kus/05/01 section HD/EA.

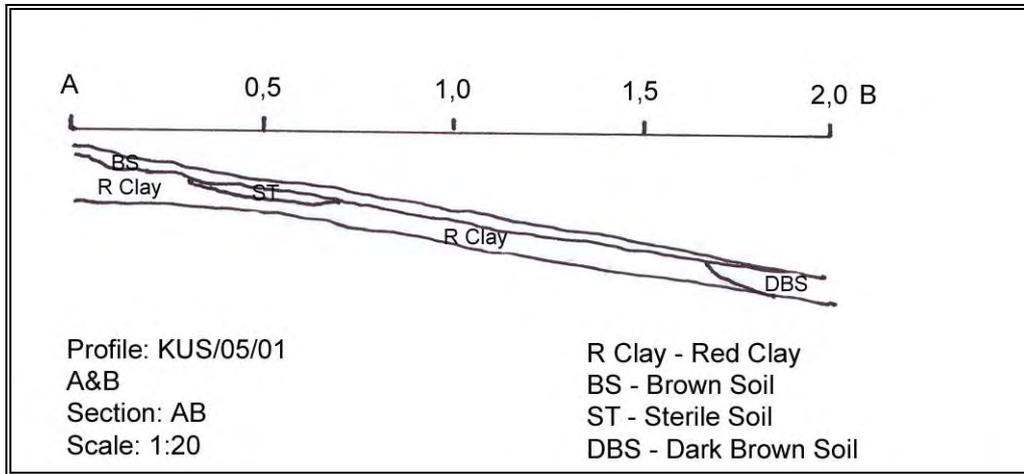


Fig. 5.18. Profile Kus/05/01 section AB.



Fig. 5.19. Excavations in progress at eKusoleni.

Trench Kus/05/02:

A trench measuring 2m x 2m was measured out at an area approximately 10 metres north-northeast from excavation Kus/05/01. This excavation was made in an effort to establish the extent of the *lidladla* and to see whether other features like a hut floor or related features of significance were present. The excavation unfortunately revealed nothing. No artefacts were retrieved from this location except some pieces of iron and glass that was gathered from the surface.

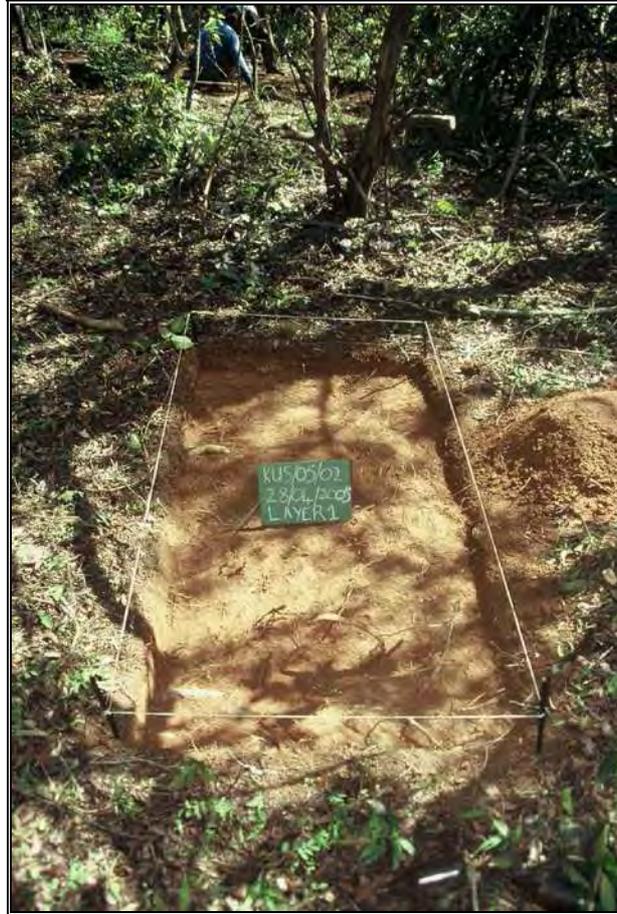


Fig. 5.20. Photo of unproductive trench Kus/05/02.

Trench Kus/05/03:

Trench Kus/05/03 was excavated at the refuse-midden of the settlement. This was necessary for a spatial comparison with Mekemeke and also purposeful as it was expected to contain a concentration of artefacts. Initially it was very difficult to establish the whereabouts of the midden and with the help of informant Mrs Tsambosi Dlamini the midden was eventually located. She remembered that the refuse midden was located somewhere between an old Sotho hut and the royal residence.

The midden consisted of a prominent sandy outcrop that was thought to have been an anthill. Indeed some ant and other insect activity were discernible here. The mound also had a dense concentration of vegetation located on and adjacent to it which made access and a suitable area for excavation difficult. Sampling with a trowel revealed a hard reddish top layer followed by a softer dark brown ashy deposit (fig. 5.22 – 5.24) at a depth of around 5 cm. The consistency of the soil was dramatically different at this depth and the soil contained a lot of charcoal. This discovery marked the proper

location of the refuse midden and an excavation trench measuring 2m x 2m was measured out. The first layer (profile, L 1, fig. 5.23.) was excavated to an average depth of 5cm which revealed that the ashy deposit was only located in half of the planned excavation. A subsequent second layer was excavated in the western half of the trench until sterile soil was reached at a depth of 95 cm. This second layer contained ashy deposit that became more concentrated to the eastern side (fig. 5.22 and profiles 5.23 and 5.24). The artefacts recovered from the second layer included bone, iron objects, pieces of glass and charcoal.



Fig. 5.21. Trench Kus/05/03. The refuse midden. This photo was taken after the excavation was completed.

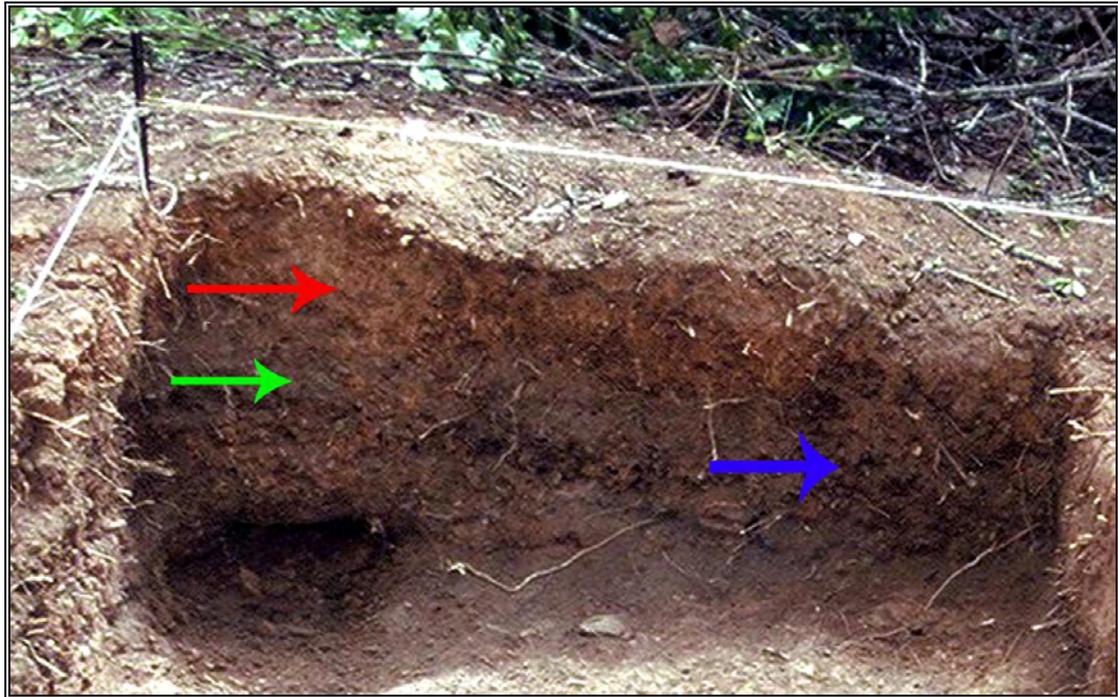


Fig. 5.22. Trench profile of the refuse midden at Kus/05/03. Section AB.

Red arrow: Reddish surface layer

Green arrow: Distinctive ashy layer

Blue arrow: Ashy layer thickens to form a concentrated area on the eastern side.

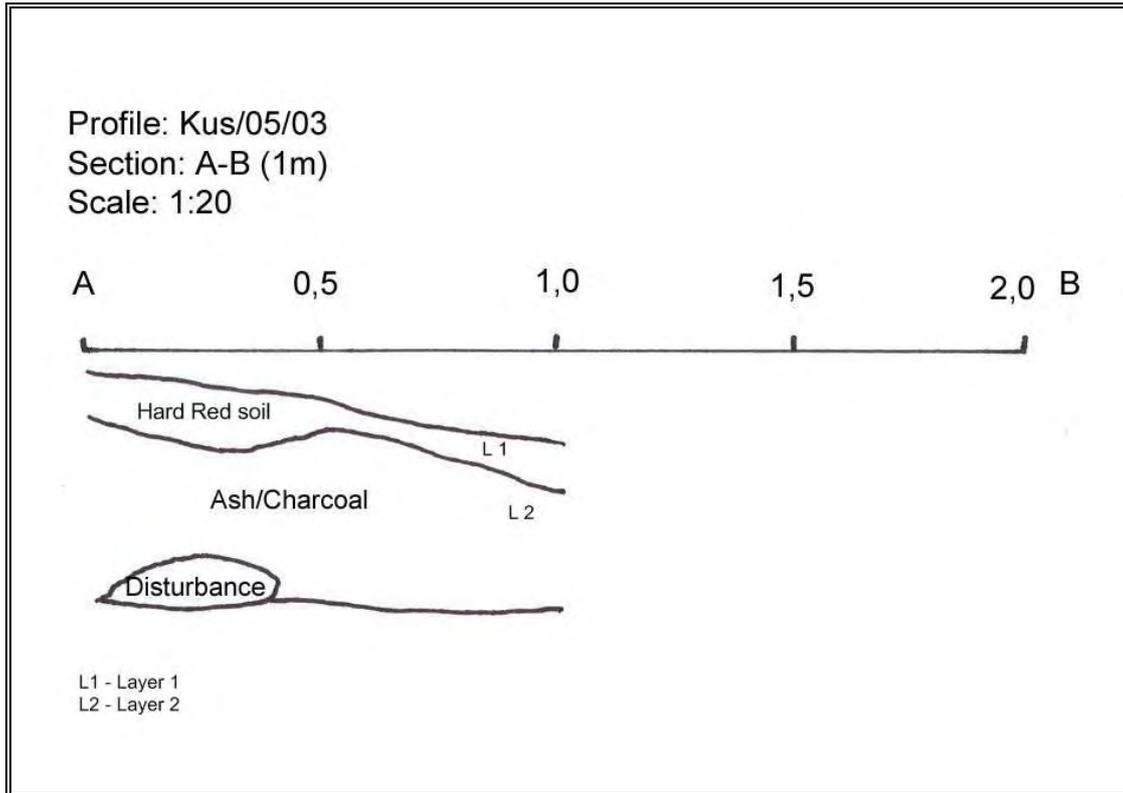


Fig. 5.23. Profile trench Kus/05/03 section AB.

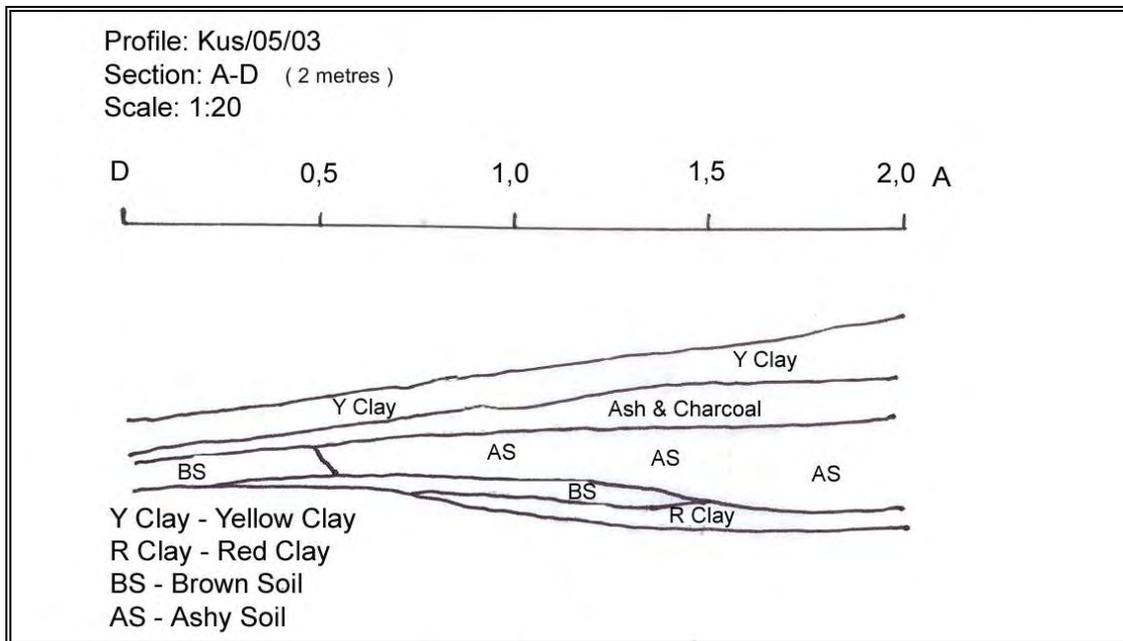


Fig. 5.24. Profile trench Kus/05/03 section DA.

Chapter 6: Description and Analysis

Introduction

I now consider the archaeological data in the light of the historical sources described in previous chapters. Artefacts recovered from both sites included traditional items and imported artefacts. Typical items excavated include: ceramics, iron, glass, bone, glass and bottles, charcoal, glass beads and rifle cartridges. Artefacts that were recorded at the sites as features and indicators of cultural identity include: upper and lower grinding stones, graves, dwellings, structures and their layout. Although most of these did not form part of the excavated sample, they are still regarded as data critical in assessing the relationship between traditional identity and European influence.

The relationship between traditional and foreign material is interpreted as an indicator of the intensity of contact and relations between the Swazi and the colonial frontier. This contact was not new. Trade has been channelled through this area to and from Delagoa Bay by communities such as the San, Tswana and Nguni communities at least since the 17th century (Makhura in Delius, 2006: 67-68).

6.1. Ceramics

6.1.1 Description

A very small sample of pottery was recovered at Mekemeke. This was unexpected as I thought the site would yield a larger amount of pottery as I regard pottery as common traditional items. Only eight undecorated pieces were excavated or collected from the surface. Informants say that this site is normally visited, once a year, by Chief Dlamini and delegates, and that some people have removed pottery shards from the site. This scenario may have contributed in some way to the absence of this material at the site. In contrast to the ceramic sample recovered at Mekemeke, the number of pottery shards excavated and collected at eKusoleni is significantly larger. A total of 97 pieces together with three wholly preserved ceramic pots, identified as *imbiba* were recovered. None of the pots or sherds were decorated. This is not surprising as Nguni pottery on the whole does not carry extensive decoration

(Huffman, 2005, Herbst, 1985: 216). Traditionally a large variety of clay pots are found in the Swazi household, and they can be divided into four types. The largest of the pots is called the *imbita*. This pot usually measures 45 cm high and has a cross-section of 47 cm with a wall thickness of some 10-15 mm. This pot is used for the brewing of beer and occasionally to store water or prepare large amounts of porridge (Herbst, 1985:78-79).

A smaller pot in the assemblage is called the *siguca* which is used for drinking traditional beer. It is also used for chilling beer after it was brewed and preparation of porridge. The next pot in the household collection, smaller than the *siguca*, is called the *ludziwo*. This vessel is small enough for the individual to lift it to his/her lips and drink traditional beer from. The smallest pot is called the *ludziwo loluncane* and is used to serve vegetables and meat (Herbst, 1985:78-79). The making of pottery is exclusively carried out by skilled women. This skill is transferred from mother to daughter and is guarded within the family. The Swazi endeavour to make strong, functional pots. They prefer the functionality of their ceramics rather than the extensive decoration thereof (Herbst, 1985: 216). This means that a large number of pottery found on Swazi settlements are not decorated. The pieces of pottery recovered from both sites did not show any form of decoration. According to Marwick (in Herbst, 1985: 216) their implements and utensils are unornamented and are evidently created to be functional rather than symbolic.

6.1.2. Interpretation

Analysis of the ceramic assemblage led me to believe that they represent three types of vessels namely the *imbita* and probably the *siguca* and *ludziwo*. Large sherds with thick walls are probably the remains of *imbita* (fig. 6.3, 6.5 and 6.6) whereas smaller pieces with thinner wall thickness represent *siguca* or even smaller vessels such as *ludziwo*. All the pottery collected and excavated from eKusoleni are from the first trench, Kus/05/01 A&B or the location of the *lidladla*. Only one sherd was recovered from the refuse midden, Kus/05/03 (Table 6.2.).

At eKusoleni, two intact *imbita*, were found inside the *lidladla*, or pantry, together with two contemporary three-legged cast iron pots.

I believe that the two pots found alongside the cast-iron pot are *imbita*. The large size of the pots and the thickness of the walls conform to the observations made by Herbst (1985). They measured between 40-44 cm high, 29 cm cross-section and have a wall

thickness of between 10-15 mm. In addition, the informant Makhelembane Magagula informed me that these pots are known as *imbita*. The typical thickness of *imbita* at eKusoleni seems to fall within the range 10-15mm. *Imbita* comprises 33, 95% of the total sample of pottery excavated or collected from eKusoleni. Pottery with a wall thickness of 7-10mm may be ascribed to *siguca* and those equal and less than 5mm is probably *ludziwo* or even *ludziwo loluncane* (Herbst, 1985).

The pottery sherds listed in table 6.2. represent all the types of vessels one may expect to find in a typical Swazi household. The *siguca* or beer pot represents the largest type of pot in the assemblage followed by the *imbita* and the *ludziwo*. The *siguca* may be associated with male activity as men traditionally drank beer, the presence of *imbita*, on the other hand may indicate female activity as this vessel was used for food preparation and storage of water and beer. Trench Kus/05/01 A&B then represents both male and female activity and may suggest an “invasion” of traditional female space by men, it also concurs that this area was used as the *lidladla*. The mixed presence of clay and iron pots suggests that the iron pots may have gradually replaced traditional clay pots but it is felt that they probably supplemented them as they were more readily available at the time.

These finds suggest that traditional Swazi household items were replenished by Western equivalents. Not only is this evidence of Western influence and contact but also, on the part of the Swazi, confirmation of traditional identity. The iron pots did not replace the traditional pots but supplemented them. The fact that ceramic vessels were found alongside iron artefacts at the eKusoleni site is significant in addressing the scientific problem of this study. The presence of ceramic pottery as accepted traditional kitchenware in Swazi society alongside the Western equivalent made of iron in areas traditionally associated with women, suggests that even if the latter was “imported” it’s incorporation was guided by internal logic. Thus the material culture of contact also is guided by *human agency*. The drive behind acquiring iron pots may have been from the women.

In their interpretation of ceramics, archaeologists have started to change ideas about identity, construction and approach towards ideas that include interaction studies (Pikirayi, 2007). This started in the early 1990’s. Rather than directly linking pottery with ethnic groups, ethnicity is now viewed in terms of group interaction. Ceramic style still defines group identity though. In the light of this some studies are using ceramics to address gender.

Similar to the pottery excavated from Mekemeke and eKusoleni, the recovered shards of Mabotse pottery were all without decoration. I mentioned this earlier and explained that according to other researchers and ethnographers this is a common “trend” in Swazi ceramics. I believe that the reason for the absence of decoration may not only be attributed to the fact that pots are regarded by the Swazi as merely functional items but that there are more significant reasons for this in the nineteenth century context. The making of pots in Swazi as well as the Mabotse society is a female activity. Decorative motifs on the pots relate to among others, female fertility and symbolize daily social life. Hall (1997: 218) argues that the absence of decoration on the Mabotse ceramics may suggest a change in women’s status brought about by large-scale urbanisation and larger populations of people forced to stay close together. The absence of stylistic decoration may be interpreted as a mechanism for getting along in these densely populated environments. Women at Mekemeke and eKusoleni may have reacted similarly to these imposed social forces and as a result started making “generic” ceramic wares where function became more important than aesthetics, symbolism or tradition.

Pikirayi (2007) makes a very valid statement when he says that African Iron Age archaeology is limited in its treatment of pottery as if it is the only material evidence found on sites when ceramics are only meaningful within a given cultural context. Pottery relates and communicates with other material culture. Ceramic style is also communicative and considerations beyond that given by typology may reveal other social issues.

Archaeology provides a means to understand social structures through the study of material objects such as pottery when the researcher realizes that behaviour within domestic space is also socialized. The making of pots formed an important part of past human social organization and therefore contributed towards social narratives. The process of decorating a vessel is in itself an exercise in personal communication. Decoration of pottery includes proportion, direction, rhythm, interval and motif (Pikirayi, 2007).

Table 6.1. The excavated ceramic sample of Mekemeke and eKusoleni.

Site	Shards	Whole	Decorated	Undecorated
Mekemeke	8	0	0	8
eKusoleni	97	3	0	97
Total	105	3	0	105

Table 6.2. Comparison of pottery sherd thickness at eKusoleni

Trench	≥5mm	7-10mm	10-15mm	Total	Percentage of sample
Kus/05/01 A&B; Surface	5	20	31	56	54,32%
Kus/05/01 A; Layer 1	6	10	3	19	18,43%
Kus/05/01 B; Layer 1		21		21	20,37%
Kus/ 05/03; Layer 2			1	1	0,97%
Total	11	51	35	97	100%
Percentage size of total sample	10,67%	49,47%	33,95%	100%	



Fig. 6.3. Two traditional ceramic pots, *imbita*, and a third cast-iron pot (top right) found in the *lidladla* at eKusoleni.



Fig. 6.4. An *in situ* three-legged cast iron pot found inside the pantry or *lidladla* at eKusoleni.



**Fig. 6.5. An assortment of pottery shards recovered from the surface at Kus/05/01.
These are all fragments of *imbita*.**

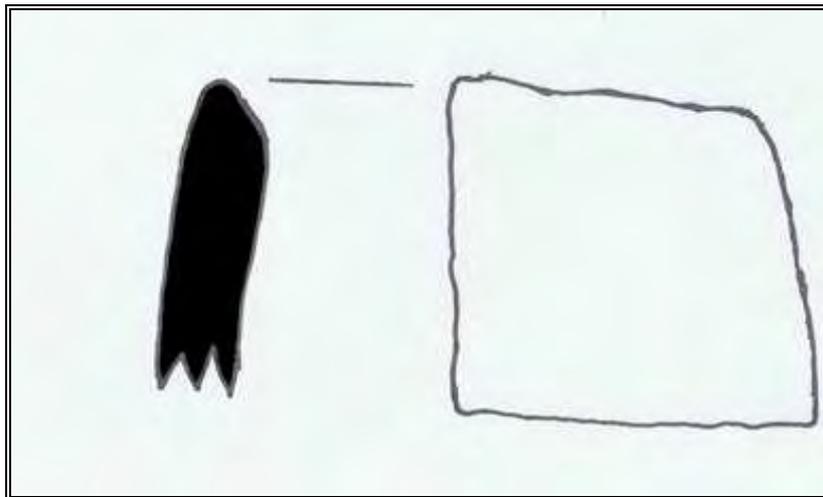


Fig. 6.6. The only shard which could be identified as having a discernible rim of a clay pot. Recovered from the surface at eKusoleni. Incorporated into one graphic, showing both the frontal and side profile. This piece is probably from an *imbita*.

6.2. Iron

6.2.1. Description

At Mekemeke a number of iron objects were found on the surface as well as in excavations (Mek/05/01 and Mek/05/02). The total mass of iron objects weighed only 500g compared to that of eKusoleni which weighed 2,7 kg. Iron objects recovered from Mekemeke include a number of iron nails, two bolts, one nut, a harmonica, a piece of cast-iron pot, two pieces of wire, one iron bracket and other unidentified pieces.

Iron objects recovered from eKusoleni as surface assemblage and in trenches Kus/05/01 A&B and Kus/05/03, include nails, whole cast-iron pots, hoes, cutlery, bottle caps, belt buckles, a chest (probably for tools) farming implements a razor and more.

6.2.2. Interpretation and discussion

These items must have been acquired through contact with Europeans who made extensive use of them. The use of nails in construction is attributed to adoption of Western building techniques as they are not considered to have been used by Swazi during traditional construction activities. Information gathered by Herbst (1984: 209, 213) suggests that traditional Swazi materials used for fastening and securing timber and thatch consisted of tree bark.



Fig. 6.7. Some of the nails recovered from Mekemeke.

The variety of metal items from eKusoleni is much larger than that found at Mekemeke. A table containing the numbers of iron artefacts recovered at eKusoleni illustrates this (Fig. 6.7). This lead me to conclude that those staying at the modern settlement made more use of these items suggesting that the changes in building techniques had intensified.

Table. 6.8. The types and frequency of iron objects recovered from eKusoleni.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Number</i>
Iron Pot shards	4
Whole pots	2
Razor	1
Can opener	1
Nails	58
Bottle Cap	1
Blades	2
Griddle	1
Hinge	1
Plough handle	1
Not identified	4
Total	76



Fig. 6.9. Iron objects recovered from Mekemeke and eKusoleni. Left: the handle of a cut-throat razor, recovered from eKusoleni, Kus/05/01/A, layer 1. Right: A Jewish Harp and nut, recovered from Mekemeke, Mek/05/ 02/layer 1.

6.3. Glass and bottles

6.3.1. Mekemeke: description and interpretation

Most of the glass found at Mekemeke are broken and unidentified pieces. One whole bottle was collected from the surface bearing the name of famous Lowveld bottling company, Vinto Minerals (Pty) Ltd (fig. 6.10). Vinto Minerals was established in Nelspruit some 60 years after Dr John S. Pemberton discovered the formula of Coca-Cola in his hometown of Atlanta, Georgia, in 1886.

A certain Mr Edmund Davie joined forces with a Mr Wally Woolcock who was allocated the first Coca-Cola franchise in South Africa in 1938 and obtained the “Coke” franchise for the Nelspruit Magisterial area.

The Vinto Minerals Company was officially formed in July 1948 and started bottling on the site of an old butcher’s shop at 11 Currie Street (Bornman, 1979). This suggests that this bottle was brought to Mekemeke long after the village was abandoned by its original inhabitants. It also indicates continued use of the site by relatives and dignitaries long after it has been abandoned as a settlement.



Fig. 6.10. A bottle recovered from the Mekemeke Lidladla on the surface. Clearly visible is the name of the bottling company in Nelspruit, Vinto Minerals.

6.3.2. eKusoleni: description

A larger number of intact pieces of glass artefacts were recovered from eKusoleni compared to the sample retrieved from Mekemeke. These include medicine bottles, ointment jars and coldrink bottles (fig. 6.11). Two medicine bottles which has “Sloan’s Liniment” written on it is a typical chemist’s prescription bottle issued to patients to relieve skin problems (Lastovica, 1982: 43). A chart and tables were drawn to illustrate the relationship between identified and unidentified pieces of glass found at eKusoleni (fig. 6.12 – 6.14).



Fig 6.11. Some of the whole glass bottles recovered from the surface at eKusoleni.

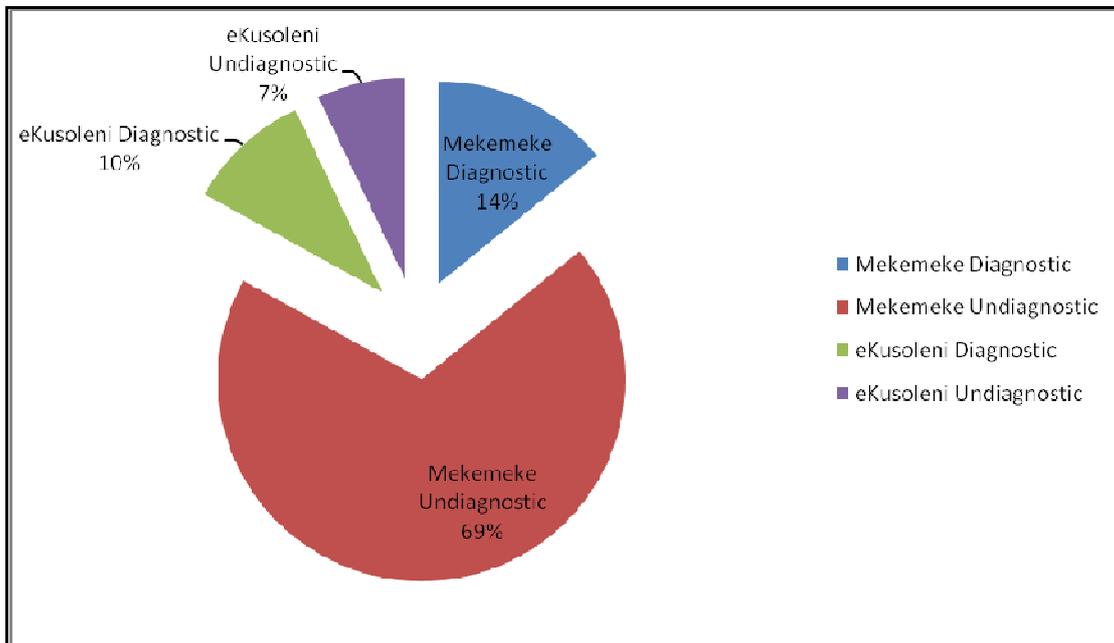


Fig.6.12. Glass comparison, Mekemeke and eKusoleni

Table 6.13. Comparison of diagnostic and undiagnostic glass at eKusoleni.

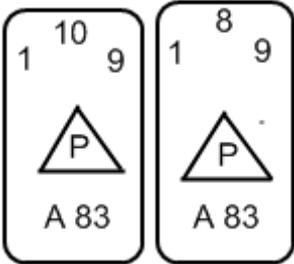
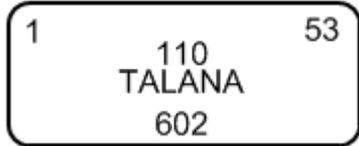
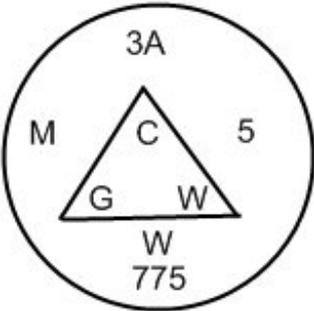
Number Diagnostic	Number undiagnostic	Type	Colour	ID marks on bottom of vessel	Remarks
2		Medicine bottle	See through		“Sloans Liniment” on front. Company existed 1929-1954. Made by Pretoria Glass Works 1937-1944
1		Ointment jar	See through		Bottle made by Pretoria Glass Works 1937-1944.
1		Medicine bottle	See through		Glass factory at Talana near Dundee, since 1918.
1		Cold drink	See through		GCW. Consolidated Glass Works 1946-1954. The W at bottom represents Wadeville in Germiston.
	2		See through		
2		Coldrink	See through		Shard with lime or orange peel quality and branch and leaf decoration. Probably Rose's Lime cordial
	3		See through		

Table 6.14. Comparison of diagnostic and undiagnostic glass at Mekemeke.

Number Diagnostic	Number undiagnostic	Type	Colour	ID marks on bottom of vessel	Remarks
1		Bottle flavoured water	See through		“Flavoured Aerated Waters” Vinto Minerals (PTY.)LTD; Nelspruit. Consolidated Glass Works 1946-1954. The W at bottom represents Wadeville in Germiston.
1		Beer bottle. Crown top. Fragment	Dark brown		
1		Bottle closure. Fragment			Fine round top piece of bottle closure. Probably for medicine or ointment bottle.
1		Jar bottom. Fragment	Milk glass		Probably cosmetic jar. Similar to “Tokalan” vanishing cream. Fragment of bottom of jar. Picture of cow.
1		Codd bottle. Fragment	Light green/ Aqua		Mid-section fragment with part of word visible “...POORT” C. Apostolos, Komatipoort.
1		Codd bottle base. Fragment	Light green/Aqua		
1		Bottle neck piece. Fragment	Green		
1		Fragment	See through		Some wording visible. “CHES...”
1		Bottle neck piece. Fragment.	Green tinge		
	7	Codd bottle	Light Green/ Aqua		Soda water or cold drink
	8	Beer bottle. Fragments.	Dark brown		
	31	Not known. Fragments.	See through		
	3	Broken jar. Fragment of lid section.	See through		Possibly a food bottle for sauce or pickles.

6.3.3 Discussion and interpretation

More diagnostic glassware were excavated or collected from Mekemeke than from Ekusoleni (fig. 6.12). Tables (6.13. and 6.14.) illustrate the diagnostic glassware from both sites and provide some description. The identity marks on the bottom of the vessels contain information regarding the date of manufacture, the company who manufactured the glass and the place where it was made.

Depending on the context of the glass vessel, this information is significant in providing possible dates for the sites and site occupation. The flavoured water bottle from Mekemeke was made by the Germiston factory of the Consolidated Glass Works, dating between 1946-1954. The bottle was collected from the surface which means that it was probably left there by visitors to Mekemeke after the village was abandoned. The cosmetics jar bottom, made of milk glass (so called because of its white colour) is similar to a piece in the Lydenburg Museum collection which is a facial vanishing cream, except for the markings on the bottom. No date could be traced but as the piece was collected from the second layer of trench Mek/05/02, the midden, it is probably contemporary with the occupation of Mekemeke i.e. 1866-1925.

A “codd bottle” piece retrieved from the second layer of trench Mek/05/03, the midden, had “Komatipoort” enscribed on the mid-section. This bottle came from a bottling factory of a Mr C. Apostolos in Komatipoort. The date of manufacture is uncertain but we know that codd bottles were first patented in 1870 by Mr Hiram Codd and they were made and used up to the 1930’s in South Africa (Lastovica, 1982:26-27).

Two medicine bottles with “Sloan’s Liniment” written on them were collected from the first layer of trench Kus/05/01/A. The date of manufacture of these bottles is between 1929 and 1954 which corroborates the date of occupation at eKusoleni.

A few bottles were collected from the surface. This includes an ointment jar made by Pretoria Glass Works between 1937-1944, a medicine bottle marked “Talana” from a factory near Dundee which was in operation since 1918 and a cold drink bottle made by Consolidated Glass Works, Germiston between 1946-1954. These dates are all contemporary with occupation at eKusoleni.

The total glass sample from Mekemeke is larger than the sample from eKusoleni. There are more diagnostic pieces from eKusoleni which were mostly identifiable. The fact that there are more identifiable pieces (fig. 6.13) suggests that

the site has had good preservation conditions i.e. not a lot of visitors since it was abandoned. It also suggests that there were a larger number of glass items present at this location. I propose that the residents used more bottles and other glassware both as a consequence of intensified contact with the Western world and because of the preference of Western medicines or other bottled products such as ointments, liquor and cold drinks.

6.4. Bone

6.4.1. Description

The faunal material excavated at both sites were submitted to archaeo-zoologist, Ms Louisa Hutten, for analysis. They were analysed according to internationally accepted procedures (Meester, 1986). Each layer of each site was analysed separately but the layers were combined for each site for the purpose of this analysis. The sample was very small (Table 6.15). Of the total bone sample, 56 (34.8%) were identified to species or animal size class. Table (6.16.) presents the species present classified according to Meester *et al.* (1986). For both the sites, 48.2% of the total number of identifiable skeletal parts (NISP) belonged to domestic animals with cattle at 7.1% and sheep/goat at 41.1%.

6.4.2. Interpretation

There were not any complete bones to measure that could be used in comparisons between different sites and animals from these sites. Table (6.17.) presents the ages, based on tooth eruption and wear of domestic animals at time of death as well as the ages of domestic animals based on post-cranial remains. One *Ovis/Capra* (sheep or goat) specimen (QSP: 13, MNI: 1) could be placed in the age group 30-60 months and the *Raphicerus campestris* or Steenbok could be classified as mature. No specimens could be identified according to sex. Three fragments of bones from Mekemeke showed signs that they were smoothed at the edges (fig. 6.18). No butchering damage (cut and chop marks) was present on the bones. A total of 32 bone fragments (identifiable and non-identifiable) showed signs of weathering (photo, fig. 6.19). The weathering was probably the result of the type of soil (clay like soil) and roots in the area (Behrensmeyer 1978; Davis 1985). Only three bone fragments were burnt, one black (Mekemeke) and two white (eKusoleni). Extra bone growth (exostosis)

appeared on a domestic cattle (*Bos Taurus*) first phalanx and a fragment of a tibia. They may have belonged to the same individual since they were both recovered from eKusoleni. Although one bone was identified as Bov III, it is possible that this bone may be *Bos taurus*. The bovid skeletal parts representation (Table 6.17) showed no unusual trends in terms of preference during slaughtering. The bone sample was too small to determine any trends. It is thus difficult to draw any definite conclusions from such a small sample. Nevertheless, domestic animals appeared to have played the most significant role in the meat diet of these people.

This may be interpreted as a continuation of dietary trends throughout occupation at Mekemeke and eKusoleni. The Swazi probably supplemented their meat diet by hunting. The steenbok represented in Table 2 still occur in this region today (Smithers 1983).

Table 6.15. The faunal sample

Skeletal part	Mekemeke	eKusoleni
Total identifiable fragments	50	6
Non-identifiable fragments		
Enamel fragments	1	1
Skull fragments	0	1
Vertebra fragments	13	5
Rib fragments	18	14
Miscellaneous fragments	8	0
Bone flakes	34	9
Polished bone	1	0
Total bone sample	125	36
% identifiable bone	40%	16.7%
Mass identifiable fragments (g)	46	46
Mass non-identifiable fragments (g)	65.5	84.5
Total bone sample mass (g)	111.5	130.5

Table 6.16. Mekemeke and eKusoleni: Indentification of Species

Species	NISP	QSP	MNI	MASS (g)
Mekemeke				
<i>Bos Taurus</i>	2	3	1	22
<i>Ovis aries</i> (sheep)	5	5	1	16
<i>Ovis/Capra</i> (sheep/goat)	18	18	1	71
Bov II	17	12	0	54.5
Bov III	3	1	0	10
<i>cf Raphicerus campestris</i> (steenbok)	5	5	1	5
Total	50	44	4	178.5
eKusoleni				
<i>Bos taurus</i> (cattle)	2	2	1	29
Bov III	1	0	0	12
<i>cf Raphicerus campestris</i> (steenbok)	2	0	1	2
Small mammal	1	0	1	3
Total	6	2	3	46

Table 6.17. eKusoleni and Mekemeke: Number of quantifiable skeletal parts (QSP) (*Bos taurus* includes Bov III and *Ovis/Capra* includes *Ovis aries* and Bov II and *Raphicerus campestris*)

Skeletal part	<i>Bos taurus</i>	<i>Ovis/Capra</i>	cf <i>Raphicerus campestris</i>
Mandible: toothrow		2	1
P2/dP2		2	
P3/dP3		2	1
P4/dP4		1	1
M1		2	1
M2		1	1
M3		1	
Humerus: distal		1	
Radius: proximal	1		
Radius: distal		3	
Ulna proximal		1	
Metacarpal: proximal		1	
: distal		1	
Femur: proximal			
: distal			
Tibia: proximal	1	1	
: distal	1	1	
Calcaneum		2	
Astragalus		1	
Metapodial: proximal		1	
: distal		5	
Phalanx 1: proximal		3	
: distal	1	3	
Phalanx 2: proximal	1		
Phalanx 2: distal	1		
Total	6	35	5



Figure 6.18. Bone smoothed around edge from Mekemeke, also visible signs of weathering.



Figure 6.19. Weathered bone from Mekemeke.

6.5. Glass beads

6.5.1. Description

Glass beads were only recovered at Mekemeke. Because glass beads are often associated with royalty, it seems odd that none were found at eKusoleni. This may be ascribed to the principles of *agency* in archaeological collections (Silliman, 2005). A total of 238 beads were recovered. The majority of these (61%) were white in colour. The smallest group, group six, is represented by amber beads (of which there is only one) which comprise 1% of the total number of beads recovered.

Fig. 6.20. Chart indicating the proportion of beads excavated from Mekemeke.

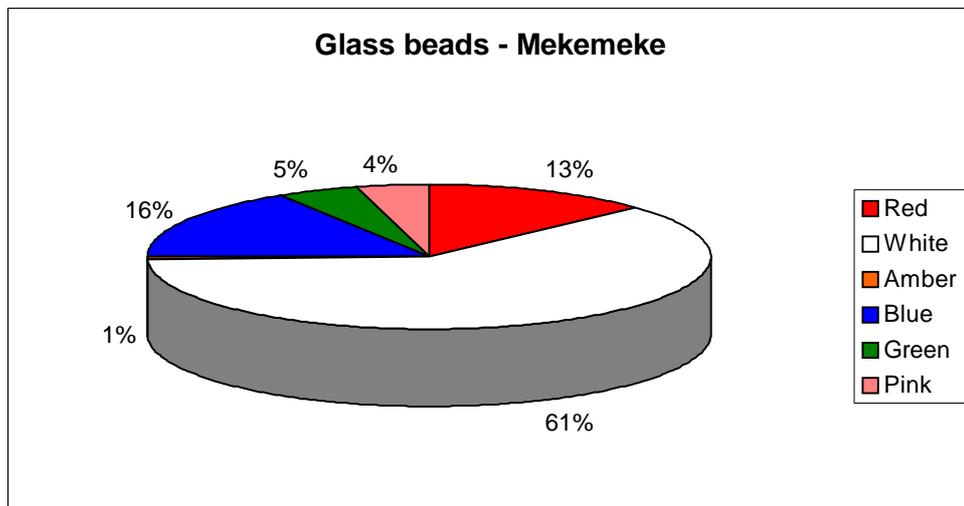


Table 6.21. Quantification of beads by colour, shape and size.

Bead colour	Shape	Numbers in size group 1 (1,2-4mm)	Numbers in size group 2 (4-6mm)	Numbers in size group 3 (6-9mm)
White	round	104	8	1
Blue	round	57		
Red	round	39		
Green	round	13		
Green	angular		2	
Pink	round	10	2	
Amber	round	1		
Amber	angular		1	
Total		224	13	1

The glass beads are divided into colour groups including amber, blue, green, pink red and white. They are further subdivided into groups indicating small medium and large beads as well as beads with a rounded shape and those with an angled shape.

Small beads have a diameter of 1, 2 - 4mm; medium beads have a diameter of 4 – 6mm; large beads have a diameter of 6 – 9mm (table 6.21).

Group 1: White beads

The white beads are the largest group in number and they are divided into three size groups. Group one has a diameter of 1,5mm and 4mm. The second group measure between 4mm and 6mm and the third group of which there is only one example, measures 9mm diameter.

Group 2: Blue beads

This is the second largest group of beads. They comprise 16% of the total bead sample and range in colour from light blue to turquoise and dark blue. Only one size group was identified and these beads have a diameter of 1,5mm to 3mm.

Group 3: Red beads

This group comprise 13% of the total bead sample. The diameter varies from 2mm to 3mm and colour varies from light to dark red.

Group 4: Green beads

The fourth largest group are the green beads. They are divided into two subcategories that are defined by shape. These include round (regular) shaped beads with sizes between 2mm and 3mm in diameter and angular beads that measure 5mm across (measured from point to point).



Fig. 6.22. Cornerless pentagonals are an interesting contrast to the round beads.

Group 5: Pink beads

Pink beads vary in size from 1,2mm to 6mm in diameter.

Group 6: Amber beads

Only two beads fall into this category. The largest measures 5mm across and has an angular shape similar to those in the green group. The second bead in this group has a diameter of 1,5mm and has a round shape.

6.5.2. Interpretation and discussion

Marilee Wood kindly examined some of the excavated beads. Two groups are very rare beads and confirm Mekemeke's status as a royal residence. The first of these is part of group 4 (green beads) and is known as a collared bead. This bead was manufactured by blowing a glass bubble usually inside a mould to give it shape and size. According to Wood, (personal communication, 2005) these beads are very rare finds in southern African excavations. If it is a blown bead the walls are thin, so they are fragile, and seldom stay intact. Wood is of the opinion that few of these were imported. According to her, she is only aware of another three which were excavated from the royal kraal of the Zulu king, Dingaan, at Mgungundlovu (Wood, personal communication, 2005).

The single specimen from Mekemeke is the only other of its kind excavated in South Africa that she is aware of (Photo, fig. 6.23). It is uncertain who could have been responsible for the making of these beads. It is possible that their manufacturing technique dates from the Roman period around 100BC to 400 AD. During this time one of the most significant inventions in aid of bead production was the blowpipe (Lucciola, 2006). This was a faster way to produce large quantities of beads and more time efficient than the individual drawn method that was used in Europe and the Mediterranean. By making use of a blowpipe the artisan also used less glass and this method gives the bead its distinctive hollow ball shape.

The late Peter Francis jr, an established authority on glass beads regards collared beads as a style of bead making which was adapted by the Egyptians from India. Collared beads were recovered from the royal tombs at the city of Ur in Mesopotamia. Some of these beads were made in the early 20th century in Venice but as a style they were principally made at Arikamedu, India during the late centuries BC and early AD (Francis, 2002).



Fig. 6.23. Photo of the collared bead retrieved from Mekemeke.

The second type of rare beads is represented in both Group 6 (amber) and Group 4 (green) and has an angular shape, defined by Dr Wood as cornerless cubes. In this case they would be cornerless pentagonals because of the five-pointed edge (Photo fig. 6.22). They are made by grinding (or moulding) the equatorial facets and then grinding off the ‘corners’ at both extremities of the beads.

According to Wood, these types of beads were usually made in Bohemia (Czechoslovakia) and are quite rare in southern Africa. Larger blue, cornerless hexagonals with flat ends, however, are common. Around the 1550s a major glass and bead industry started in cities like Jabonlee, Stanovsko and Bohemia. The earliest examples of these beads originate from Tascila. They were also made by the Romans and this style remained popular into the European Middle Ages (Francis, 2002).

The rest of the assemblage are all drawn beads and may have been manufactured in Venice which has been a centre for bead manufacture since 1200 AD (Lucciola, 2006). Among them are oblates made in a similar fashion as drawn beads and originated in Venice. In the 19th century Venice continued to produce handmade glass beads while the artisans in the Czech Republic became masters of pressed glass

(Fernandes, 2006). After World War I, Bohemia became part of the new state of Czechoslovakia and in 1928 the Czechs were the largest bead exporters in the world.

Unfortunately no beads were recovered from eKusoleni for comparison. However, glass beads as used by societies in southern Africa have been imported since at least 900 AD (Wood, 2000). Historic evidence indicates that glass beads were very popular. Dutch merchants trading at Delagoa Bay in the early 1700s purchased 56 bars of tin in exchange for 46 kg of beads (Esterhuysen in Delius, 2007: 16). The incorporation of beads, which were colonial imports in the context of Mekemeke and eKusoleni, into traditional Swazi material culture speaks to the complex agency processes at work when items travel from one group to another. One of the ways in which beads were used was to signify status. The rarity of the beads found at Mekemeke shows that it was indeed a royal Swazi settlement.



Fig 6.24. An assortment of beads recovered from Mekemeke.



Fig. 6.25. Some of the white beads excavated from trench Mek/05/01.

6.6. Cartridges

6.6.1. Description

Two cartridges were found at Mekemeke. One of these, a Martini-Henry .577/455 cartridge, was found on the surface in block D4. The other cartridge, a .303 calibre came from the second layer in trench 02, block B3, the refuse midden (Mek/05/02).

6.6.2. Interpretation

The Martini-Henry ammunition was made by Eley Brothers of London as indicated on the headstamp (Fig. 6.27.). The Martini-Henry rifle was developed in 1871. During the latter part of the 19th century this company supplied percussion caps, black powder and ammunition to both the firearms trade industry and the military. They manufactured .303 and .455 Webley revolver cartridges for the British Army during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1903). Eley amalgamated with three other companies in 1920 to form Nobel Industries, Nobel later became the well-known Imperial Chemical Industries. The trade mark ELEY was retained in the headstamps of centre-fire cartridges for a number of years after 1920.

Martini-Henry rifles and carbines were used by both British and Boer troops during the Anglo-Boer War, both sides used ammunition supplied by the same British manufacturers (Loock, 2001). This calibre was chosen as the official British military weapon in 1871 and also adopted by both Boer-republics, the Free state and Transvaal, as a military weapon after the First War of Independence in 1881 (Lategan, 1974: 57).

The original casing of the Martini cartridge was made of a thin sheet of brass rolled around a mandrel which was then soldered to an iron base, these cases were soft and prone to damage, they were therefore replaced by a solid brass casing in 1882 to alleviate the problem (Lategan, 1974: 58). The specimen found on location at Mekemeke is evidently one of the latter types (Fig. 6.27). The Martini-Henry was also used in South Africa as a preferred hunting rifle especially for big game. This may explain the presence of the cartridge at Mekemeke as this calibre may have been used by the Swazi for hunting or military purposes. It is well-known that the Snider rifle, a rear loading rifle and predecessor to the Martini-Henry as well as some front-loaders were used by the Swazi during the Sekhukune wars during 1876-1879 (Bulpin, 1989).

The acquisition of guns was one of the motivating factors for the Swazi and other African communities to work on the mines – Kimberley and later on the rand – distribution of guns might have been managed by royals. Extent of gun ownership by African communities can be seen in changes in regional architecture e.g. sites such as Erloweni, the Ndzundza capital from the mid 1800s had barrel holes.

The Martini-Henry cartridge was probably deposited on the site at a date later than 1882, perhaps by visitors to the site who may have been Swazi or European. This cartridge was widely used by South Africans until well into the 20th century (Loock, personal communication; Lategan, 1874).

Between 1868 and 1898 Britain had ammunition factories in various British colonies, including Canada, New-Zealand and India. The .303 cartridge found at Mekemeke was made by an ammunition factory in Kirkee, India (Fig. 6.26). This factory was located near Poona (India) and was erected in 1868 for the purpose of manufacturing small-arms ammunition for the British Army. During the Anglo Boer War (1899-1902) as well as the First World War (1914-1918) ammunition from this factory was sent to South Africa (Loock, 2001; 2006).

The headstamp markings are clearly visible on a photo of a .303 cartridge excavated at Mekemeke (Fig. 6.26 and 6.27).

The markings are interpreted as follows:

KF – Kirkee, Poona

VI – The mark VI (six) cartridge. This is a military cartridge with a round-nosed projectile. These cartridges were manufactured from 1904 until 1926.

^ – The so-called bird track or foot which indicates military property.

I – Signifies that the ammunition was made in India.

1-16 – Date: January 1916.

The .303 cartridges were manufactured for military Lee-Enfield rifles which were also used by hunters. Documented .303 British cartridges found during Archaeological excavation in the Kruger National Park include the Mark II, Mark V and Mark VI cartridges (Loock, 2001, Van Vollenhoven, 2001).

The specimen from Mekemeke is clearly a Mark VI variety as indicated on the headstamp and also most probably made in 1916 as indicated on the bottom of the headstamp (Fig. 6.23). The Mark VI ammunition was adopted early in 1904 to coincide with the introduction of the Mark III Short Magazine Lee-Enfield Rifle.

Large quantities of this ammunition were manufactured up to 1910 when the Mark VII cartridge with the spitzer bullet was introduced. It is known for collectors to come across Mark VI ammunition bearing the 1926 date code (Loock, 2001). According to Loock, the .303 cartridge is definitely a military round dating from the middle of the First World War (1914-1918) as indicated by its date of manufacture.

This ammunition was used by government forces to control the Rebellion of 1914 a year later, some of these cartridges were fired during the South-West Africa campaign (Loock, 2006). During or after this time some of this ammunition was brought back by soldiers or came into possession of civilians. The .303 cartridge found at Mekemeke was most probably fired by a hunter.

The fact that this specimen comes from the bottom layer of trench 02 suggest that this refuse pit may only have been created during this later phase of occupation at Mekemeke, suggesting that there may be older pits. Traditional Swazi material in the form of glass beads and broken pottery coming from the bottom layer (layer 2) in trench Mek/05/02 suggest that this cartridge must have come into the hands of the Swazi through contact with Europeans (hunters) or soldiers.

Fig. 6.26. A photo of the .303 cartridge found in the bottom layer of the trench at Mekemeke refuse pit.



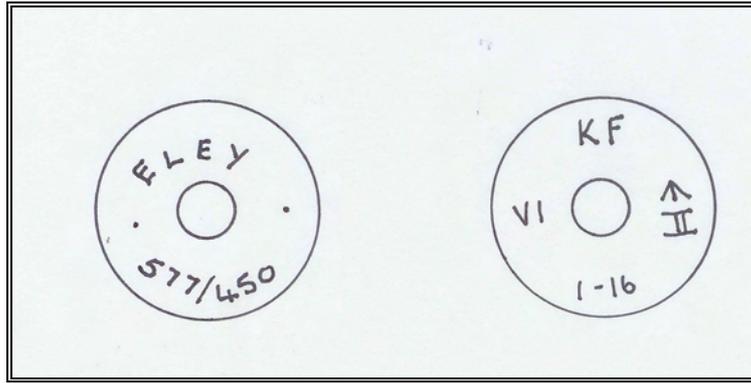


Fig. 6.27.
Drawing of the
headstamps of
the Martini-
Henry
cartridge on
the left and the
.303 cartridge
to the right.

At both Mekemeke and eKusoleni, graves were documented. A single grave at Mekemeke and six at eKusoleni. The grave at Mekemeke was shown to me on one of my initial visits to the village and Chief Tikhontele Dlamini informed me that this was the grave of the chieftainess, Lanyandza Dlamini. As we approached the location of the grave the Swazi escort who came with me started chanting, showing respect for their ancestors in announcing our presence. The grave is now, sadly, located between blue gum plantations, some 150 metres south-east from the remains of the village. It had a large spear in the form of grave goods hidden between the small mound of rocks which marked the grave. This spear, Dlamini explained, indentified the grave as the burial place of a person with high social status.

At eKusoleni the six graves were positioned to conform to Western burial practises. They are oriented in a straight line running north-south and the headstones are located on the western side (fig. 5.12). The *sibaya* (not shown on the site map, fig. 5.12.) is located some 50 metres to the south-east. Though these graves do not look like traditional Swazi graves, it is still believed that they are contemporary with the village of eKusoleni. In fact, the informant, Tsambosi Dlamini informed that one of the graves, the northernmost one (fig. 5.12) belongs to the wife of Fana Dlamini, Mnyokazi (Mabuza) Dlamini.

Comparing the “traditional” grave of Lanyandza Dlamini at Mekemeke to those of eKusoleni, seems to indicate that a shift took place regarding beliefs and religion. The residents of eKusoleni seem to have adopted Western religion and burial practises although they were still living in a traditional Swazi homestead. Traditional cultural practises like the placing of traditional pottery as grave goods, remained which suggests that there was a resilience pertaining to certain cultural practises and group identity.

So we see that some actions and preferences are communal while others may be ascribed to the needs of gender. It is clear that community values and social structure have been affected by certain changes in spatial organisation which is discernable from the locality of for instance graves in relation to the settlement at Mekemeke through eKusoleni. These seem to be the most obvious indicators to the role that *agency* started to play in the historic sequence of the two villages and it is then further supported by the archaeological record.

The materials described and analyzed in this chapter indicate that the Swazi at Mekemeke and eKusoleni used a variety of items of traditional origin in addition to those that were probably imported from colonial sources. Ceramic items present at both sites indicate that traditionally produced domestic items were supplemented by iron counterparts and glass bottles. Iron objects and glassware represent materials not associated with traditional Swazi household items. This may indicate that contact with the Western world increased during the late 19th and early 20th century or simply that people eventually preferred iron pots to traditional ceramic varieties for specific purposes. Their presence at both Mekemeke and eKusoleni, bearing in mind their excavated context, imply that they were increasingly utilised by following generations.

The linear positioning of graves at eKusoleni may be seen as a contrasting symbolic representation of the villagers' relationship with their ancestors as opposed to the placement of graves under hut floors or the central cattle byre. It seems as if they were influenced by Western practice and maybe religion when these relatives were buried. Traditional pottery located near the headstone of one of the graves suggest that some traditional practices remained.

The discovery of the collared bead may point to contact with the Zulu and also point to relations between Zulu royalty and Lanyandza Dlamini at Mekemeke. This has promise for future research.

The data presented here may also be interpreted to support the idea that there are certain dynamics within a community that cannot be revealed or reconstructed by archaeological investigation. In this study this phenomenon is visible where consistencies within the data range are absent.

In the following chapter I discuss what I learned about the material evidence by making use of an interpretative model known as *human agency* in an effort to address

anomalies within the archaeological record. I further illustrate that ethnicity or group identity should also be considered when examining the effects that interaction had on the daily life of the Swazi.

6.6.3. Discussion

Now that we know that contact did exist between the residents at eKusoleni and the colonial frontier, more questions arise. Who were these Europeans, where were they located and why the contact? Archaeological evidence alone cannot accurately answer these questions. Written records and oral tradition must be consulted in conjunction with the archaeological evidence to produce answers. Myburgh (1942) mentioned that during the start of mining activities in the Barberton area in 1884, people from all parts of the world settled on the Barberton goldfields in search of fortune. He describes that in following years an increasing number of local Swazi were present at the mines and worked as labourers for mining companies or prospectors. He documented that individuals would work on the mines in Barberton for a couple of weeks before returning home to eKusoleni for a weekend or fortnight. In this way Western items may have found their way to the homes of Fana and his subordinates at eKusoleni. The single section of Western iron pot found at Mekemeke compared to the larger number of similar pots at eKusoleni suggests a progressive increase in contact with Europeans as time increased.

Chapter 7: Interpretation of the material evidence

7.1. The role of agency, ethnicity, identity and acculturation

On completion of data analysis, certain trends regarding the relationship between data sets were revealed. Expected results regarding certain material remains were not met. The archaeological record revealed unexpected relationships between specific types of material evidence retrieved from Mekemeke and eKusoleni. This result may best be ascribed to the occurrence of what I believe to be the effect of *human agency*. In general, material evidence suggested that there is a trend towards more Western material being present at eKusoleni than at Mekemeke; traditional material is also less in number at eKusoleni than at Mekemeke (Fig 7.1). On the surface, these trends confirm the expected increase in intensity of colonial influence. There are, however, exceptions to this, illustrated in the following graphs.

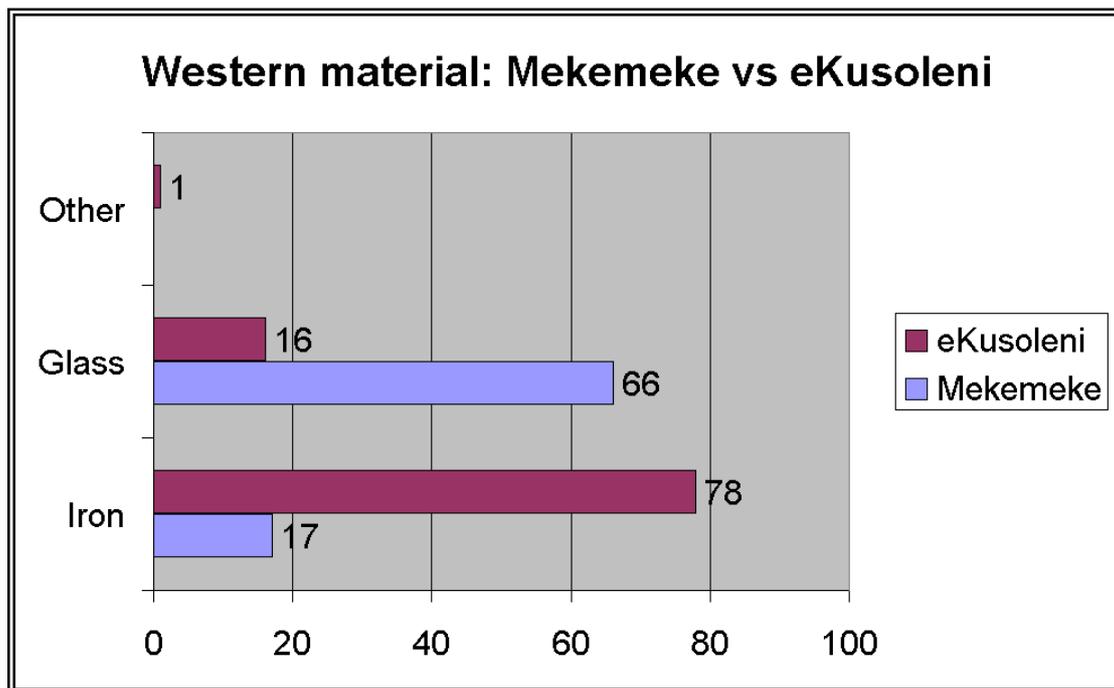


Fig. 7.1. A gradual increase in Western material, Mekemeke vs eKusoleni.

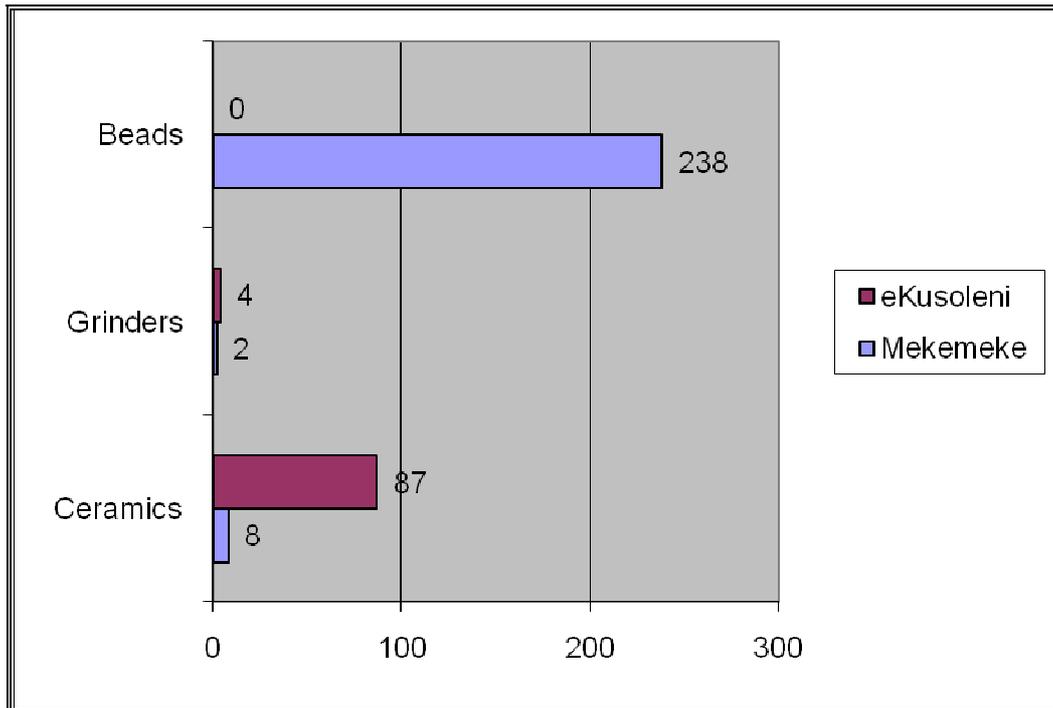


Fig. 7.2. A representation of the relationship between the total number of traditional items found at Mekemeke and eKusoleni.

In fig. 7.1. the data indicates that in terms of the amount of iron and various items of Western origin (referred to as “other” in the graph), there is an increase in the usage of Western material. When we look at the amount of glass representing each site, however, this contradicts the trend.

In a similar manner, the artefacts representing traditional Swazi material (Fig. 7.2.) at both sites indicate that there was in fact more traditional material present at eKusoleni than at Mekemeke. One would expect the reverse to be true.

7.2. Examining agency at Mekemeke and eKusoleni

I propose that archaeological evidence in conjunction with written sources suggest that the nature of the contact between the Swazi and Europeans had an interdependent effect rather than one of conflict or oppression and that there was continuity in the world view and cultural practices of the Swazi. Historic evidence shows that the Swazi were for instance not forced to work on the mines in the Barberton area as a result of subordination or conflict with the Europeans. This scenario was rather a result of the indirect influence of the Western economy on day-to-day subsistence, one may also refer to it as a “voluntary acceptance of foreign cultural material”. This

acceptance of non-traditional material by the Swazi may have purely been motivated by practicality, cost, availability and want, and the presence of traditional and foreign cultural material in similar context suggests a willing incorporation of European wares. The fact that a progressively increasing volume of foreign material is discernible in both contexts of Mekemeke and eKusoleni indicates that this trend developed and increased, over time, supposedly as interaction increased between the involved cultures.

Cultural dominance or passiveness between 1864 and 1930s at Mekemeke and eKusoleni is not discernible from either the archaeological or written record or oral tradition. It is important to note that this study does not attempt to either underline or dissuade the validity of acculturation or colonialism as a model to interpret the contact between the Europeans and Swazi, it rather illustrates that principles in both models may apply to what has been observed.

That European activity increased in Barberton after the discovery of profitable gold reefs had a profound effect on Swazi lifestyle cannot be denied. The archaeological evidence recovered from both Mekemeke and eKusoleni seems to indicate that European commodities were very attractive to the Swazi.

Material evidence further indicates that some changes in world view and possibly social composition did take place although essential traditions remained. At eKusoleni for example, the positioning of the graves were done in a Western manner i.e. the graves are organized in a straight line and has headstones; all positioned in an upright manner on the western side of the graves. The use of traditional grave goods in the form of ceramic pottery displayed on top of some of the graves still conforms to traditional practice.

These “contradictions” may be explained by *human agency*. The fact that more ceramics were found at eKusoleni may be ascribed to better preservation conditions prevailing there, or simply because most ceramic material was removed from Mekemeke by frequent visitors. The latter explanation is most probably also true for the lack of lower grinding stones at Mekemeke.

The fact that certain data sets are not representative of the expected actions of the Swazi at both sites is ascribed to the fact that we are dealing with human dynamics that cannot be predicted in any way. Therefore *human agency*, in this study, refers to the influence that individual or group choice may have on the result and effect of a collective action such as contact with a different society. Practically it may be

interpreted that people residing at the royal enclosure at Mekemeke, for some reason, did not acquire as much glass objects as was available to them, which may explain the lesser amount when compared to eKusoleni. In a similar way the non-occurrence of glass beads at eKusoleni may be ascribed to a trend towards not wearing ornamentation, wearing organic ornamentation or the usage of other imported objects of adornment. The archaeological record, however, revealed no imported jewelry or beads. This suggest that the Swazi either treated new forms of body ornamentation as valuable items and took it with them when eKusoleni was abandoned or that they simply did not acquire these items by choice.

When I refer to glass beads as being traditional, I imply that these items have been used and acquired by Swazi since at least the 1700s when Dutch merchants trading at Delagoa Bay exchanged beads for tin (Esterhuysen in Delius, 2006: 16) and that the prolonged use of them qualifies for this item to be seen as traditional material of adornment as opposed to Western material of the 19th and 20th century.

The adoption of items from outside the traditional cultural sphere might signify social change. Furthermore it is argued that the incorporation of foreign material should be seen as the result of changing values and opportunities as opposed to a simple desire to imitate (Moore in Schoeman, 1997).

The complexity of identity choices by individuals within a society should also be considered. When discussing gender and ethnicity issues of the Thonga in Kosi Bay, Webster (1991), illustrates how male and female individuals choose an identity to suit them in their social environment. Thonga men for instance, refer to themselves of being of Zulu origin in an effort to gain status in the urban environment thereby attaining job security. This is also an attempt to dissociate themselves of what they perceive to be an inferior ethnic group as opposed to Zulu and Swazi. The Thonga women on the other hand are proud of their Thonga identity. In contrast to the role of Thonga males, which is herding cattle or goats and primarily getting an education, girls have to fit into female roles where they are responsible for collection of water and firewood or caring for younger children. Few girls are sent to school and families will make huge commitments to have sons get a formal education. The female role is much more concerned with domestic life as opposed to the male who has to provide for the family in a foreign environment. This division of roles and responsibilities lays the foundation of the identity difference between male and female Thonga.

This complexity in inter-social relationships of the Thonga indicates that the individual choice within a society plays a significant role in day-to-day actions. Relationships between material culture and identity are complex. Interpersonal relations and perceptions play a role in the way in which materials are acquired and also the nature of such materials or items in a practical sense. These dynamics sketches a picture of intricate social behaviour within a community which should be considered to be of significance regarding all interpretations and reconstructions of the past.

7.3. The impact of contact on Swazi ethnic identities

A second aspect that surely played a role regarding preferences or rejection of Western material at both sites is ethnicity. I believe that the group identity of the Swazi before the establishment of Mekemeke until the establishment of eKusoleni and thereafter would have undergone change as a consequence of interaction with the colonial frontier.

Reference was made to Hall's work at Mabotse (Hall, 1997: 209-219) but I feel when discussing *agency* there are observations made in his work which should be mentioned here. The gender relationships at Mabotse certainly played a role concerning the type of Western material and the manner in which this material was incorporated in the lives of the people of Mabotse. Hall's observations that *human agency* is not just defined as individual whim is important when considering Western material at Mekemeke and eKusoleni. Rather, the effect of gender relations and their possible influence in this regard paints a much more accurate and probable picture. The occupation of Mabotse stretched from 1872 – 1880 under the chief Makapan. The homesteads are a mixture of rectangular and more traditional circular structures. The rectangular structures are a European influence but also conform to traditional symbolism associated with males. The remaining traditional rounded structures (huts) are associated with traditional female symbolism. This observation sheds light on the influence of male and female relations when incorporating Western elements into the traditional lifestyle. This is summarized by Hall:

“...while straight-line walls signify European influence, their acceptance was facilitated and premised just as much on indigenous values.” (Hall, 1997: 214).

In the context of this study this observation implies an even more dynamic interpretation of *human agency*. I elaborate more on the use of space and architecture and how it relates to agency in the concluding chapter.

7.4. Critically examining Acculturation and some concluding remarks

In Southern African archaeology researchers historically made exclusive use of the acculturation model when confronted with issues of culture contact, we have made considerable progress lately and more penetrating questions about human behavior within a society have resulted in the use of more analytical models to interpret the archaeological record. *Human agency*, for instance, is a tool which helps archaeologists to interpret their data in a more dynamic way.

Acculturation as an interpretive model does not adequately explain social changes that took place within the community as a result of cultural interaction, I agree with Moore (Moore in Schoeman, 1997) that acculturation suggests a situation of detribalisation, which implies that the communities at both Mekemeke and eKusoleni were passive and change imposed on them. Acculturation also seems “generic” and does not take into consideration the historic conditions within which change took place. Dynamic and strategic responses of the community to new ideas and materials are ignored.

It is clear from the examination of evidence at both sites that the Swazi were indeed not a passive people who had values, materials or beliefs enforced upon them. They rather chose some values, beliefs or materials to suit their needs and continued to make use of familiar items and habits as they saw fit. This illustrates how *agency* affected Swazi identity throughout the occupation of both Mekemeke and eKusoleni.

In conclusion, I contextualize the research I have undertaken and summarize the outcomes. I also speculate on the value of certain deductions made as a result of my research and the possibility of future investigation.

Chapter 8 : Conclusions – Archaeology and the construction of Swazi identities

8.1. Introduction

Recent research by Prof. Peter Delius (Delius, 2007) and colleagues, concerning the dynamic and often volatile history of Mpumalanga, underlined the urgent need for more detailed archaeological research. This province has a rich cultural heritage and diversity which may be the key to unlock its potential as a new focal point of archaeological research in South Africa. The cultural diversity within Mpumalanga and the social interaction between different societies during colonial and pre-colonial times has been the pivot around which wars, trade, social interaction, economic tendencies, racial conflict and politics were built for the last three centuries. The settlements of Mekemeke and eKusoleni provided an opportunity to apply the methodology of archaeology and get a glimpse into the social dynamics taking place between different communities over a period of some 80 years.

8.2. Archaeology in modern history

This study highlights the challenges facing the archaeologist when working with shallow deposits and resultant small collections. The preservation conditions of the sites and the effect which modern development or agricultural expansion has on some of them has an influence on the correct identification of features and how they relate to one another.

The Mekemeke and eKusoleni study has shown how oral tradition can help the researcher overcome such difficulties by helping to correctly identify features on site and the location of activity areas.

Shallow deposits which are frequently overgrown or affected by water run-off and other forms of deterioration made it difficult to discern the integrity of the site in some instances both at Mekemeke and eKusoleni. This may be the case at other similar settlements or archaeological sites in the area and present challenges when interpreting the archaeology.

Interpretation of such data requires the researcher to be inventive in theoretic approach and the use of interpretive models. I am convinced that historic contact and

the effect it had on societies in Mpumalanga and in the rest of South Africa, are much more complex than reflected in historic accounts alone.

Archaeological investigation, in addition to the use of oral tradition and ethnographic information, may lead to the uncovering of facts in opposition, or in support of the mainstream historic account.

Herein lies value and potential for continued research.

8.3. Human agency

The research conducted at Mekemeke and eKusoleni should be seen as work which has the potential to be used as a model in addressing similar future research projects. I believe that this study has contributed to a deeper understanding of the nature of *human agency* through the inclusion of gender roles in its definition. Hall (1997: 217) made the observation that at Mabotse men were traditionally controlling bartering, buying and exchange activities which implies that they manipulated the type of Western material which reaches the wider community. Because of the absence of iron smelting at the site of Mabotse this traditionally male dominated activity transformed into the acquisition of Western metal tools and objects. This observation has implications in interpreting the presence of specific iron artefacts excavated from eKusoleni. Males were employed at Barberton and therefore had easy access to all Western materials while on duty at the mines. The type of Iron artefacts recovered from eKusoleni suggests male choice and control. The majority of the items are used by males i.e. razor, nails, bolts, nuts used for construction suggesting male preference and a type of monopoly in the acquisition of Western metal objects. This may be taken further to state that males directed change within this society.

Gender, however, may not be the only factor which influences the choices people make regarding their cultural behaviour. The way in which a group for example incorporates “new” burial practises as opposed to traditional methods, speak about how they incorporate new religious beliefs into their traditional lifestyle.

8.4. Archaeology and Swazi identities

At both Mekemeke and eKusoleni, the data has shown that both change and persistence played a role in the the Swazi identity. The data suggests that there was continuity in the midst of social and technological change. Ritual practises (graves) and the use of space indicate that there was a resilience in practises which defines the identity of the Swazi.

In which way can archaeology contribute towards Southern African indigenous knowledge? Does this study in any way contribute towards the broadening of knowledge and identity of the Swazi?

I believe the answer to both these questions is positive. This research, made available to the community, should invigorate the need to conserve and cherish their cultural identity and heritage. It might make them feel that some effort is being done to understand their heritage and that it is important and respected.

In conjunction with the archaeological practise, questions regarding cultural identity may be answered or cultural identity itself may be confirmed, if that is the need. When working together, new types of research questions may be formulated which may differ substantially from the typical approaches used by Western researchers. This, as stated earlier, is the aim of The 500 Year Initiative in the southern African context. Historians, ethnographers and archaeologists working together, will ensure that the view of African societies as being isolated, passive and unenterprising is not true. A new approach may be formulated incorporating relevant questions to and from the community during scientific investigation. This is very similar to the approach of Zimmermann (1997) and his ethnocritical archaeology and community archaeology.

8.6. Future research and questions unanswered

I believe that there are topics revealed within this study which needs future attention. For instance, the sampling area, at both sites, was confined to the enclosures of the royalty; the reason being that this is the only surviving part of Mekemeke. Sampling at the more informal settlement units of eKusoleni will certainly diversify the existing archaeological record and provide a new angle for continued research. Similarly, the

remaining two outposts of Mswati II, Mjindi and Mbhuleni may be researched to establish whether similar trends of intercultural contact were present. Another possibility for future research lies in the investigation of the nature of trade and social relations between the Swazi and Zulu before and during times of colonial expansion. The discovery of a collared bead at the royal enclosure at Mekemeke against the background that similar beads was exclusively recovered from the Dingane's royal kraal, presents an opportunity for investigation.

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