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The nineteenth century Matabele settlements on the South African Highveld

Renier Hendrik van der Merwe

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Johannesburg, 2023

Declaration

I, Renier Hendrik van der Merwe, declare this Thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.



DATE: 2023-11-22

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Abstract

The rise of the Zulu kingdom in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, has been a topic of historical research since the 1870s and coincided with increased conflict within the area. The development of the Matabele as a distinct cultural grouping was a gradual process that occurred for decades. Although, initially, only a small group of Khumalo (a northern Nguni clan that formed the elite of the Matabele), they soon started to incorporate the surrounding Sotho/Tswana communities. A clear understanding of their archaeological signatures is needed for Matabele sites to be identified on the landscape. No clear archaeological signature has yet been developed for the Matabele. Therefore, this project aims to describe the organisation of the Matabele military settlements and determine how they evolved during the migration from KwaZulu-Natal to southern Zimbabwe. A settlement organisational model was created that determined that the Matabele and Zulu had a similar settlement organisation, with important differences that allow for individual identification of each group's settlement. Furthermore, the Matabele utilised perishable material in the construction of the settlement, with no mention of the use of stone found within the historical accounts. Consequently, a difference existed between settlements constructed by Matabele viewed as Nguni and those not regarded as Nguni. This Nguni-non-Nguni divide was also reflected in the presence or absence of the Nguni culture among the inhabitants. This model was then used to develop a Matabele settlement signature that could be used to locate these settlements on the landscape via the use of satellite and multispectral satellite images. A satellite images-based survey was then undertaken to find potential Matabele settlements between Zeerust and Millvale, with 667 potential sites being identified. With the identification of these sites, archaeological excavations can be conducted to develop a clearer understanding of the Matabele. As our knowledge of the Matabele improves, it will allow for a more detailed examination of the northern Nguni as a wider cultural grouping.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The rise of the Zulu kingdom in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, has been a topic of historical research since the 1870s and coincided with increased conflict within the area. In the 1970s and 1980s, interest in this period of history again increased with the debates surrounding the cause, effect and consequence of the period that had become known as the Mfecane. This debate, called the Mfecane debate, challenged the long-held view that this period of conflict resulted from the rise and expansion of the Zulu kingdom under Shaka kaSenzangakhona in the 1810s. This debate cumulated in the 1990s with the view that the Zulu kingdom was itself a result of this period of conflict and not the cause (Wright 1995). Although the Mfecane debate did much to improve our understanding of not only the history of the Zulu kingdom and some selective other groups, a critical limitation of this debate was also the over-focus on the Zulu and largely overlooking the other northern Nguni kingdoms. Although a limited degree of research was undertaken on other northern Nguni groups, primarily the Matabele and Swazi, these were of a more limited nature. The Zulu Kingdom's impact on South Africa's historical development and capturing popular imagination after the battles of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift resulted in its preference within South African historiography. Despite these kingdoms' noticeable achievements, this popularity has somewhat sidelined the rest of the northern Nguni as research topics.

Next to the Zulu, the Matabele have received the most attention as a topic of historical research (Rasmussen 1976). A common theme of Matabele-related research was the tendency to view them as the primary antagonists of the interior, whose actions resulted in the large-scale social-political and demographic upheavals that affected the interior of southern Africa during the 19th century (Shillington 2005). Yet, despite their critical role in developing modern southern Africa, very little is known of them as a cultural group. Many aspects of Matabele history are in dispute, ranging from their origins, the route they took north, and the size and composition of the migrating group (Cobbing 1976; Rasmussen 1978). Furthermore, much remains unknown regarding their daily activities and cultural practices during their occupation of the South African Highveld. Most of our current understanding of the Matabele culture is derived exclusively from first-hand accounts of Europeans who visited them during this period. The prejudices of many Europeans during this time mean that their observations and descriptions of cultural practices should be viewed with caution. Alternative sources, such as archaeological excavations, often counter these prejudices. However, a critical limitation of

Matabele research is the lack of alternative sources against which the historical narrative can be compared. The lack of comparative archaeological information is due to the absence of excavations on known Matabele settlements, with only limited excavations of one Matabele capital in southwestern Zimbabwe (Hughes 1995, 2000; Gaffney *et al.* 2005). Due to an incomplete settlement model for the Matabele that incorporated several assumptions (Pistorius 1997b), it is challenging to locate and identify these settlements on the landscape. Therefore, a detailed settlement model is required to identify these settlements on the landscape before a more detailed reconstruction of the Matabele as a cultural group can be undertaken. Given the significant role that the northern Nguni kingdoms had in the development of Southern Africa and the large-scale changes that occurred, a better understanding of these kingdoms will also aid in better understanding the historical and cultural development of the 19th century in southern Africa.

At first glance, the settlement reconstruction process can be viewed as relatively straightforward. Archaeological excavations of a site provide the structural framework for the model, with historical and ethnographic accounts providing bricks and mortar. Once all three elements are added, the completed settlement model is created. Unfortunately, settlement patterns and organisation are rarely this straightforward. Historical accounts are often inaccurate; significant gaps can exist between the cultural practices of a society studied by ethnographers and their ancestors. Furthermore, sites are often damaged or lack enough evidence to provide the basic framework for such a reconstruction. Therefore, it is usually a complex and challenging process to reconstruct a specific society's settlement organisation, even when there, at first, appear to be overwhelming volumes of data.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The development of the Matabele as a distinct cultural grouping was a gradual process that occurred for decades. Although, initially, only a small group of Khumalo (a northern Nguni clan that formed the elite of the Matabele), they soon started to incorporate the surrounding Sotho/Tswana communities (Kirby 1940a,b; Omer-Cooper 1966; Lye 1975). A similar process was also underway in KwaZulu-Natal at this stage among the Zulu, with the Zulu amalgamating all the northern Nguni clans that still occupied KwaZulu-Natal (Omer-Cooper 1966). How cultural incorporation and/or assimilation occurred among the Matabele is still unknown. The analysis of this aspect of the Matabele will be framed within the conceptual framework that Igor Kopytoff called "the African frontier hypothesis" (Kopytoff 1987). The next chapter will provide a more in-depth discussion of this hypothesis. The primary idea behind

Kopytoff's hypothesis is how one smaller community, in this case, the Matabele, develops into large political units as they migrate away from the core area, in this case, the northern part of KwaZulu-Natal, towards the frontier (outer edges of the core area). As these migrating communities encounter the communities already living on the "frontier", they either incorporate/assimilate these communities or are themselves incorporated (Kopytoff 1987). Although there are some limitations regarding applying this hypothesis to the Matabele, which will be discussed in a later chapter, this hypothesis does, nonetheless, provide a stable conceptual framework for analysing any possible cultural or political assimilation among the Matabele. Possible cultural assimilation among the Matabele has resulted in one of the most critical assumptions related to Matabele settlement construction, namely the utilisation of stone as a construction material, as seen in Pistorius's research (1997b). The importance of this material as an identification marker requires a detailed examination to determine the accuracy and validity of this assumption. Another part of this assumption is the adoption of cultural practices from incorporated communities, such as the Sotho/Tswana, which resulted in the modification or abandonment of Nguni cultural practices.

Incorporating non-Nguni communities into their society continued after they settled in southern Zimbabwe with the incorporation of the local Shona, which would eventually cumulate in the development of the Matabele culture as it is known today. However, this cultural amalgamation and/or assimilation causes several problems in developing a Matabele archaeological signature. Firstly, Matabele archaeological signatures can differ depending on the region and period in which the site is located. Secondly, depending on the degree of cultural assimilation, a Matabele site could be very similar to surrounding sites not associated with the Matabele, such as the Sotho, Tswana or Shona. Descriptions provided in historical accounts also indicate that some communities incorporated into the Matabele kingdom adopted the Matabele dress and customs but not the Matabele settlement organisation (Kirby 1940a,b; Burrow 1971; Lye 1975). Therefore, the main research question of this study is: Can Matabele settlements be distinguished from surrounding cultural groups' settlements?

A clear understanding of their archaeological signatures is needed to identify Matabele sites on the landscape. However, developing such an archaeological signature is problematic. Although a certain degree of ethnographic information is available for the later period of Matabele history, not much is known of them during their period in South Africa. Consequently, a clearer understanding of both the historical as well as archaeological development of the Matabele is needed. The problem, however, remains how to identify Matabele settlements?

Fortunately, due to the northern Nguni origin of the Matabele, as well as historical and ethnographic accounts, it is known that they utilised a form of a military settlement called an *ikhanda* (pl. *amakhanda*). This form of settlement was not utilised by any other cultural groups in southern Africa (except other northern Nguni). As a result, the presence of these settlements on the landscape can indicate Matabele settlements.

Therefore, this project aims to describe the organisation of the Matabele military settlements and determine how they evolved during the migration from KwaZulu-Natal to southern Zimbabwe. This study will utilise a two-pronged approach to facilitate this goal. Firstly, a theoretical settlement model of Matabele military settlements will be developed. The model will be created by combining first-hand accounts, ethnographic studies, and excavations of known Matabele sites. As the impact of cultural assimilation and/or incorporation within Matabele society is still unknown, any settlement model will have to determine what settlement architectural elements are distinctively Matabele and would not be found at Sotho, Tswana or Shona settlements. This study will use a multistage approach to develop the settlement model. Firstly, it is a generally accepted view within Matabele archaeology and historiography that many similarities existed between the Matabele and Zulu regarding their regimental system and the utilisation of military settlements. Secondly, studies utilising archaeological, ethnographic and historical sources have already developed a settlement model for Matabele military settlements during the British conquest in 1895. Consequently, any changes in settlement organisation between these two periods would have resulted from the incorporation of other groups.

Subsequently, this study has three main objectives:

- Based on first-hand accounts, develop a model of Matabele settlements on the south African highveld.
- Use this model to develop criteria that can be used to locate potential sites on satellite imagery.
- Undertake a visual inspection survey of satellite imagery of the study area to determine if any sites match these criteria.

Remote sensing will be utilised to identify settlements on satellite images in the study area. During their stay on the South African highveld, the Matabele moved west on three separate occasions, from Pretoria to Rustenburg and then to the Zeerust area. As the area covered by

these three areas is too large for detailed visual-based image analysis, only the two westernmost regions (Rustenburg and Zeerust) will be examined.

1.3 Discussion of terms

The Zimbabwean Ndebele are today most commonly referred to as the Ndebele and historically as the Matabele. However, there are several limitations regarding the use of the term Ndebele. First, Matabele is a term derived from the Sotho word meaning Nguni, which was applied to the followers of Mzilikazi once they entered the interior of South Africa (Hughes and van Velsen 1955; Tabler 1955; Bulpin 1965). The Nguni form of this term, *amaNdebele*, was then used by the followers of Mzilikazi when referring to themselves (Hughes and van Velsen 1955) and was later shortened to Ndebele. However, the term Matabele or Ndebele is commonly used in reference to any Nguni group that migrated into the interior of South Africa, with the Nguni version being the most common. Therefore, Matabele and Ndebele can be used when referring to either the Zimbabwean Ndebele or the South African Ndebele, which have no direct cultural links other than a shared Nguni origin. Within archaeology and historiography, the term Matabele is primarily used in reference to the Zimbabwean Ndebele, which is also in keeping with the term's historical use. Conversely, Ndebele is primarily used in referencing the South African Ndebele. As a result, the term Matabele is used in this study to refer to the cultural grouping today known as the Zimbabwean Ndebele and originated from the followers of Mzilikazi.

The *amabutho* system, also known as the regimental system or age groupings, was a system whereby the clan's youth were grouped according to age. *Amabutho* is derived from the word *butho*, or *ibutho*, meaning regiment (Bryant 1905; Doke and Vilakazi 1948). When the prefix "*i*" is added, it indicates the singular form, with the prefix "*ama*" indicating the plural. In this regard, *ibutho* can be used to refer to the regiment as a whole or to the individual members who make up the regiment.

Regiments were housed in a settlement constructed explicitly to serve as housing, referred to as an *ikhanda*, and exclusively used by the northern Nguni. Derived from the word *khanda,* which can be translated as head, with the prefix "*i*" indicating singular and "*ama*" plural (Doke and Vilakazi 1948), *ikhanda* can be translated as head kraal or royal kraal. The word "kraal" is an Afrikaans word generally used when referring to a Sotho-Tswana or Nguni homestead/settlement within South Africa.

1.4 Historical background

This study focuses on the chronological period of the 19th century, generally known as the Mfecane period. Although it would seem that understanding such a chronologically short period should be straight forward, the following sections will highlight the complex nature of this period. These complexities, combined with critical limitations in our understanding of this period and the cultural groups existing during that time, would all contribute to the great Mfecane debate of the 1980s to 90s in South African historiography. Although a deep analysis of this period lies beyond the scope of this study, key events, as they relate to the study topic and the study area, will be briefly examined to provide the historical and archaeological context for this study. This historical analysis will start with the arrival of the two primary cultural/linguist groups (Sotho-Tswana and Nguni) into the region and end with the Mfecane debated.

1.4.1 The Nguni and Sotho-Tswana language groups

The northern Nguni kingdoms originated in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa. Although the area has been continuously inhabited since the 4th century, it would not be until the 16th century that the term "Nguni" would first be associated with the communities that occupied Kwa-Zulu Natal (Bryant 1965). The term Nguni was derived from the word abaNguni, which these communities used when referring to themselves (Bryant 1965). Although earlier pottery traditions such as Blackburn, Moor Park and Nqabeni are generally associated with the Nguni (Huffman 2007), it is not known what these communities called themselves. As such, the name of the pottery tradition is used when referring to these communities instead of Nguni, as they were ancestral to the Nguni. However, as Bryant (1965) mentioned, the term "Nguni" was already used by the 15th Century, although it is unknown when it was first used. By the 16th century, the Nguni started to migrate south down the coast and north over the Great Escarpment. The Nguni that moved south would become known as the southern Nguni, while the Nguni that migrated north would become the various Matabele communities.

During the 15th and 16th centuries, the Nguni occupied the entire area of northern KwaZulu-Natal, expanding inland from the coast (Maggs 1989; Mitchell 2002). By the 16th century, some Nguni clans had migrated southwards down the coast. Although the exact reasons for these migrations are unknown, it appears that this was likely due to an increase in regional population and ecological pressures (Guy 1980). As a result of these southerly migrations, the Nguni are divided between those that had stayed in the north (northern Nguni) and those that had moved further south (southern or Cape Nguni) (Bryant 1965; Hammond-Tooke 1993). Today, the southern Nguni constitute many groups, such as the Xhosa, Thembu, Mpondo,

Bhaca and Mfengu, while the northern Nguni include the Zulu, Swazi, Matabele, Ngoni and Shangana (Bryant 1965; Hammond-Tooke 1993). Historically, the northern Nguni included far more communities than mentioned above, with all but the Swazi, Matebele, Ngoni, and Shangana incorporated into the Zulu kingdom.

The history of the Sotho-Tswana is still unclear. Mason (1981) argued that they developed out of the communities associated with the Broederstroom pottery tradition. However, Evers (1983) argues that there was a discontinuity between the communities associated with Broederstroom and the Olifantspoort pottery traditions, an argument supported by Huffman (2007). Evers further argued that the Soth-Tswana migrated into South Africa sometime during the second millennium AD (Boeyens 2003). However, all agree that the Sotho-Tswana developed out of the communities associated with Olifantspoort pottery and were already present on the South African Highveld by the 15th century (Huffman 2007). Legassick (1969) identified four main clusters among the Sotho-Tswana: the Hurutshe, Kgatla, Rolong and Fokeng. Therefore, all the modern Sotho-Tswana communities form part of one or more of these four larger groupings (Hammond-Tooke 1993).

1.4.2 The Marico-Bankenveld region and the arrival of the Matabele

The previous section provides a general context for a more focused examination of the study region. Although the history of this region covers many millennia, this study will only focus on two selective periods that directly impact the study topic. The first period, starting in 1600 and ending in the 1820s, covers the later farming period (or Late Iron Age) and can be chiefly associated with the later Moloko tradition of the Marico and Bankenveld (Boeyens 2003). The second part is the arrival of the Matabele, led by Mzilikazi kaMashobane, in the region during the 1830s. These two periods are critical in understanding the physical and cultural landscape that this study is focused on.

1.4.2.1 The Moloko tradition and the period of migrations: 1600-1820's

As is the case with the history of many parts of Southern Africa, the archaeology and history of this region is debated. This debate is formulated around the various radiocarbon dates obtained for the area and the implications of these dates for the late and early farming periods (early and late Iron Age). Much of this debate has no direct impact on the topic of this study, as it is primarily focused on when the first communities entered the area and how the early and later periods can be linked (Boeyens 2003). The chronological period of this study, the

19th century and parts of the 18th century, is widely accepted and will be the sections examined in this section.

Moloko is a pottery tradition primarily associated with the Sotho-Tswana language group (Boeyens 2003). Within the study area, the Moloko pottery tradition is associated mainly with the Tswana, of which the Hurutshe and Bamadimosana are important regional groups (Pistorius 1994; Boeyens 2003). As will be examined in greater detail in the later chapters, the study area is well known (archaeologically and historically) for the extensive stone-walled settlements in the region. Archaeological evidence indicates that these settlements can be linked to the later Moloko tradition, which suggests that these settlements are associated with the Tswana (Pistorius 1994; Boeyens 2003). This conclusion can be further supported by first-hand accounts of Robert Moffat (Wallis 1945) and Andrew Smith (Kirby 1940a,b; Lye 1975), who attributed the construction of many of these settlements to the Hurutshe. The Hurutshe (Boeyens 2003) and the Bamadimosana (Pistorius 1994) are considered to have been the two culturally dominant groups within the region. Regarded as being the two dominant groups, the Hurutshe and the Bamadimosana were held in high regard by surrounding communities, resulting in both communities exerting extensive influence over them (Pistorius 1994; Boeyens 2003). The later Moloko period is associated with the development of stone-walled settlements, with the settlements of Kaditshwene (Boeyens 2000; Boeyens 2016) and Molokwane (Pistorius 1994; Pistorius 1996; Pistorius 1997c) being the best known within the study area. A detailed description of these settlements will be provided in Chapter 3, but these settlements followed the same settlement organisation as the large Sotho-Tswana language group.

Part of the reason why the historical and archaeological reconstruction of this region is complex is due to a large number of social-political disruptions that occurred within the region from the 17th century onwards, ending with the annexation of the whole region into the Zuid-Afrikansche/Afrikaanse Republiek (ZAR) during the latter half of the 19th century (Bergh 1999). Although the arrival of the Matabele into the region is the best-known Nguni migration, they were not the first Nguni to arrive within the region. From oral traditions and archaeological excavations, it is known that multiple Nguni groups migrated into the region and further north during the 17th and 18th centuries (Parsons 1995). These Nguni groups, known as the Ndebele, Transvaal Ndebele or Southern African Ndebele, share the same ancestral origins as the Matabele but are not directly related (Parsons 1995). Like the Matabele, these communities originated in the Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN) province of South Africa, but their migration north

started more than a century before that of the Matabele. Although the arrival of these Nguni groups within the region significantly impacted the Sotho-Tswana communities that inhabited the region, it is unknown what caused these Nguni groups to migrate out of KZN (Parsons 1995). Many parallels can be drawn between the migration of these early Nguni groups and the later Matabele migration. Some notable similarities were the preference for hilltops as locations for settlement constructions and a preference for raiding neighbouring communities (Huffman 1990; Parsons 1995). The differences between the two events might be more significant than the similarities in understanding how both groups adapted and interacted with surrounding communities.

From archaeological and ethnographic research, it is known that the arrival of the Nguni during the 17th and 18th centuries caused much disruption in the region (Parsons 1995). However, the continuation of the pre-Nguni polis, such as those of the Hurutshe and Bamadimosana, indicates that communities in the area successfully resisted and adapted to the arrival of the Nguni during this period. Furthermore, both the Hurutshe and Bamadimosana were also able to maintain a high degree of influence in their respective areas even after the arrival of the Nguni (Pistorius 1994; Boeyens 2003). Some Nguni groups, such as the Po and Tlhako, even adopted the Sotho-Tswana language and culture (Parsons 1995). The arrival of the Matabele during the 1820s would have a dramatic and destructive impact on the region, with all the established political units being either destroyed or driven away.

1.4.2.2 The Matabele and the other northern Nguni kingdoms

The 19th century saw the development of more centralised chiefdoms within modern KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa (Maggs 1989). Central to the consolidation of political power within these chiefdoms were the age sets called *amabutho* (sing. *ibutho*), meaning regiment or a person that is part of a regiment. The *amabutho* provided the rulers of these emerging chiefdoms with a large military and labour force (Krige 1965).

Much of this period of conflict among the northern Nguni is still unknown. Critically missing in our knowledge of this period is when this period started, why and to what extent this conflict changed or affected the region. Historically, it was thought that the conflict began in the later part of the 18th century and cumulated in the first two decades of the 19th century (Omer-Cooper 1966). Much of this historical narrative has come under debate, which is the focus of a later section and will not be covered here. Despite this, several historical facts are not in

dispute. Firstly, by the arrival of the first European settlers to KZN in 1824, much of the conflict had been finished, and the Zulu Kingdom, led by Shaka kaSenzakagona, was the dominant power in the region. Secondly, all other northern Nguni communities had either been incorporated into the Zulu Kingdom or fled from the region by this period. Thirdly, the remaining northern Nguni communities, which would ultimately create the Matabele, Swazi, Gaza and Ngoni kingdoms, had already started their migration (except the Swazi, who already occupied the area of Eswatini). Fourthly, the conflict between the Matabele and the Zulu had already begun by this time, as this conflict is mentioned in the accounts of Fynn (Stuart and Malcolm 1986) and Isaacs (Isaacs 1836), who formed part of the first European settlers in the region.

Similarly, much of the early history of the Matabele is unknown. Therefore, this section will only focus on what is known of the Matabele. Firstly, it is known that the Matabele originated out of the Khumalo clan in the region of the Black Mfolozi River in KwaZulu-Natal and that its leader, Mzilikazi, was the son of Mashobane. Mashobane, in turn, had some relationship (either by blood, marriage or alliance) with the leader of the Ndwandwe, Zwide. For some reason, Zwide had Mashobane killed, and the leadership of his section of the Khumalo passed on to Mzilikazi. Secondly, Mzilikazi had some relationship with Shaka and his Zulu. The nature of this relationship is highly debated and has wide-ranging implications for our understanding of northern Nguni in general (van der Merwe *et al.* 2023). Historically, they were regarded as part of the Zulu Kingdom and one of Shaka's regiments (Omer-Cooper 1966). Two alternative interpretations have also been advanced, suggesting they were either allied or only neighbours according to Matabele oral traditions (Rasmussen 1978). Whichever was the case, at some point, conflict erupted between Mzilikazi and Shaka, with the latter ultimately merging victorious. This defeat resulted in Mzilikazi and his remaining followers (the number of which is also debated) fleeing north. Cobbing (1976) and Omer-Cooper (1966) propose two different routes but ultimately agree that Mzilikazi would settle in the region of modern Pretoria-North.

Thirdly, although the time of this settlement is unknown, it is known that by the time Robert Moffat visited Mzilikazi for the first time in 1829 (Moffat 1846; Wallis 1945), they were already settled in the region and were already known by the name Matabele. From the accounts, it would also appear that by this time, they also referred to themselves as the Matabele; why this is or where the name originated from is unknown. Similarly, by this time, the area between Pretoria and Zeerust had already been invaded by a group historically referred to as the "Mantatee Horde" (Hartley 1995:397), whose cultural affiliation is still debatable. During

Moffat's first visit, Moffat also mentions that the Hurutshe lived at Mosega and had been driven from Kaditshwene by the Mantatee (Moffat 1846).

Fourthly, by the time of Moffat's second visit to Mzilikazi (Wallis 1945), accompanied by Andrew Smith (Kirby 1940b; Lye 1975), in 1835, the Matabele had already advanced further west and had occupied the area surrounding Zeerust and Mosega. At this stage, the dominance of the Hurutshe and Bamadimosana had been destroyed, with many of them being incorporated into the Matabele Kingdom. From this period onwards, much more is known regarding the Matabele due to the increased number of historical accounts. The Matabele would remain in control of the region until the battle of Mosega in 1837 between the Matabele and the Voortrekkers. The Voortrekkers would win the battle, with the Matabele again moving north. However, this was not an in-mass movement as the retreat from Shaka had been, with the Matabele systematically moving north over two years and finally settling in the area of modern Bulawayo (Zimbabwe) in 1840. The battle of Mosega is generally viewed as the end of the Matabele's time in South Africa. With their dominance in the region weakened, the Matabele started their migration north, and the battle of Mosega is generally regarded as marking the end of the Matabele period in South Africa.

1.4.2.2.1 The *amabutho*

As mentioned at the start of the previous section, central to the success of the northern Nguni kingdoms was the regimental system, generally referred to as the *amabutho*. Although the origin of the regimental system is unknown, it is believed to have developed out of the old circumcision (van der Merwe *et al.* 2023). These schools dictated that initiates be kept separate from the rest of the population while undergoing initiation (Junod 1912). When circumcision was abandoned by the northern Nguni sometime in the 18th century (Krige 1965), these schools might have developed into the *amabutho* used by the northern Nguni. The abandonment of circumcision by all the northern Nguni occurred before the development of the Zulu Kingdom (Krige 1965), and the reason for this abandonment is still a subject of research.

These alterations resulted in two critical differences in the initiation practices used by the northern Nguni. Firstly, the length of service was increased to include multiple years, with the Zulu having the most extended service period. Similarly, members of the *ibutho* could still be told to re-join their *ibutho* if needed, even after completing their service period (Krige 1965;

Omer-Cooper 1966; Summers and Pagden 1970; Cobbing 1974; Laband 1995; Knight 1995). As the practice of keeping the initiates separate from the general population was maintained (Krige 1965), initiation practices had to be adapted to accommodate the large number of individuals undergoing initiation. Furthermore, as the primary function of these youths was now military service, settlement locations became a matter of state importance. Therefore, the areas where military settlements were stationed reflected internal administrative and political requirements. The combination of these aspects resulted in the *ikhanda* settlement obtaining its specific organisation and its central role in the social-political organisation and stability of the northern Nguni kingdoms. The transition from the 18th to the 19th century coincided with a period of increased conflict among the Nguni in KwaZulu-Natal. It is unclear what caused this period of heightened aggression, with social, political and economic factors being advocated (Eldredge 1995). This period of conflict resulted in the large-scale migrations of northern Nguni clans out of KwaZulu-Natal. These migrations would lead to social and political unrest throughout southern Africa, commonly known as the Mfecane.

1.4.3 The Great Mfecane debate

In the 1980s, the historiography of the Mfecane became disputed after Julian Cobbing published his article *The Mfecane as Alibi* in 1988. Cobbing's argument was not directly directed towards the history of the Matabele but rather to the historiography of the Mfecane, of which the Matabele were a central part. This debate finally cumulated in a workshop held in 1991 on the Mfecane and the subsequent publication of the book *The Mfecane Aftermath* (Hamilton 1995). A detailed examination of this debate is outside the scope of this study, with only an overview provided here. The main focus of this debate surrounds the historiography of the Zulu Kingdom and, consequently, affects the Matabele only concerning their association with the Zulu and their kingdom. However, some of Cobbing's arguments concerned the history of the Matabele, which this study had to incorporate. Cobbing made three arguments in his criticism of the Mfecane. Firstly, this period of disruption was not caused by the rise of the Zulu Kingdom, which was itself a result of this period. Secondly, the hypothesis of a depopulated interior was supported and emphasised by writers seeking to justify the white settlement of the interior. The Matabele would be blamed for depopulating and devastating the interior of South Africa. Lastly, this period of disruption resulted from labour and slave raiding by Europeans for the slave market in the Cape Colony and Portuguese Mozambique (Eldredge 1995; Etherington 1995; Wright 1995).

The first of Cobbing's arguments (Cobbing 1988) is widely accepted, as increasing evidence supports this (Etherington 1995). However, the last two of Cobbing's arguments have been widely criticised and generally believed to be incorrect. Some critiques against Cobbing's arguments are the lack of supportive evidence and the distorting of facts to support his argument by removing them from their complete historical context (Eldredge 1995; Wright 1995). An important argument by Cobbing that affected this study was the arguments made concerning the northward route taken by the followers of Mzilikazi, as this would affect the area selected for the satellite survey.

1.5 Study area

The study area is located in the eastern half of the North-West province of South Africa, covering an area of 4 495.43 km² (Fig. 1). The survey area stretches from Malopo Oog and Ottoshoop in the west to Millvale in the east, Vrede in the north and Koster in the south-west. This region is part of rural South Africa, and its selection is based on three criteria. Firstly, it is known from historical accounts that the Matabele had already occupied this region by 1835 (Kirby 1940b; Wallis 1945; Burrow 1971; Lye 1975). Similarly, historical accounts indicate that the Matabele did not occupy the area in 1829 when the missionary Robert Moffat (Moffat 1846) and traders Schoon and McLuckie (Chase 1830) visited the Matabele. Finally, although the Matabele had had a long period of sporadic conflicts with the Griqua, the arrival of the Voortrekker would force them to abandon the area. After the battle of Vegkop in 1836 and the subsequent burning of the capital in 1837, Mzilikazi decided to move his people north (Shillington 2005; Retief 2016). Sporadic attacks by Zulu regiments are also believed to have influenced Mzilikazi's decision to abandon the area. However, Matabele withdrawal from the region occurred gradually, with complete withdrawal occurring by 1840. Therefore, all Matabele settlements in this area had to be constructed sometime between 1829 and 1840. The routes used by the European travellers to reach the Matabele similarly passed through this region, increasing the number of usable historical accounts.

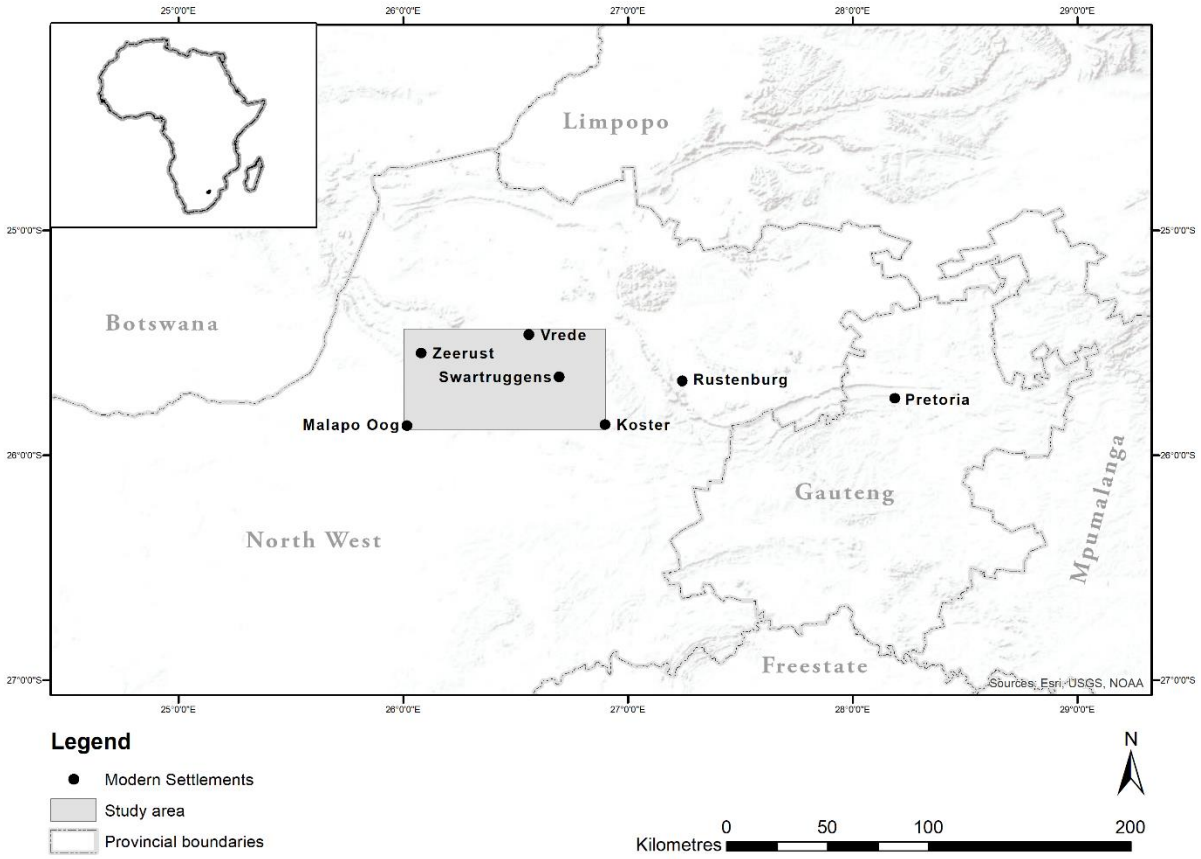


Figure 1: Map of the study area

Secondly, this region is dominated by a mountain chain stretching from Zeerust in the east and Millvale in the west. Historically, these mountains were called the Kashan, Cashan or Cashane mountains, and today are made up of several mountains with independent names. According to Pistorius (1994:40), the name is derived from Kgaswane, the leader of the Bammatua, who resided at the sites on the Selonskraal farm in the Rustenburg area. Historically, the name Kashan was applied to all the mountains between Zeerust and Pretoria; however, today, this area consists of several mountain chains, including the Magaliesberg. The exact range of the Kashan Mountains varies considerably between historical maps. However, the generally agreed area covered by these mountains stretched from the Zeerust area in the east to Bronkhorstspruit in the west. Therefore, the study area was specifically selected to include primarily the mountain ranges stretching from Zeerust to Millvale and the flat area south of these mountains, including the Malopo Oog. Moffat (Wallis 1945) and Smith (Lye 1975) state that the Malopo river was the western boundary of the Matabele. However, Moffat (Wallis 1945) also states that the Matabele claimed the area between the Malopo and the Setlagole rivers. Therefore, these boundaries should not be viewed in absolute terms. However, no Matabele settlements were encountered west of the Malopo.

Similarly, Cornwallis Harris (Harris 1852) mentioned that most of the Matabele settlements were limited to the mountain areas, with few or any being located in the grassland to the south, stretching from the mountains to the Vaal River, which Harris gives as the southern boundary of the kingdom. This region is dominated by an agricultural economy, with large-scale farming occurring to the south and pastoral, primarily cattle farming, occurring to the north. Limited industrial and mining activities occur within this region. Several nature reserves are also present within the mountains of the area. Due to the lack of large-scale development within the regions, especially within the mountains, this area will likely contain unaffected Matabele settlements that will be visible on satellite imagery. Although the Rustenburg to Pretoria area is known to have had large numbers of Matabele settlements, it was not included in the study area due to two primary limitations. Firstly, it would increase the study area to 12 000 km², which would not have been viable within the project's time constraints. Secondly, the region stretching from Rustenburg to Pretoria has been heavily developed within the last two decades. Many of these developments occurred on the routes taken by European travellers, which would have destroyed many of the settlements mentioned in the first-hand accounts. Therefore, the likelihood of locating a Matabele settlement within this region is low. Thirdly, it is known from the historical accounts (Kirby 1940b; Wallis 1945; Burrow 1971; Lye 1975) that the Matabele preferred to build their settlement on the slopes of hills or mountains and rarely built on the plains, which match similar preference found among other Nguni groups in KwaZulu-Natal (Hall 1981; Maggs 1988; Whitelaw and Moon 1996). Therefore, the prevalence of mountains within the study area is ideal for locating potential Matabele settlements.

1.6 Organisation of study

This study consists of nine chapters, with the current chapter being the introductory chapter. Chapter two consists of the literature review discussing the analytical models used in this study and the principal settlement features examined. The main focus of this chapter will be to explore the different types of literature sources used in studies focusing on the Matabele as well as settlement archaeology in general. These sources include historical first-hand accounts, academic journals and book publications on settlement archaeology, ethnography and remote sensing.

For cultural assimilation to be effectively assessed, the framework used to analyse possible indicators of assimilation needs to be provided. This conceptual framework will be the focus of chapter three. Chapter Four will be a detailed examination of the different settlement patterns found within southern Africa. Much related to Matabele society and settlement

organisation is currently unknown, with no clear indication of which aspects, if any, regarding their settlement organisation reflect the incorporation of other cultural groups. Therefore, an analysis of the settlement patterns of all the cultural groups that the Matabele are known to have encountered will be required to determine if cultural assimilation can be observed within the Matabele settlement organisation.

Chapter five is focused on the military settlements of the northern Nguni. This chapter aims to provide a background of the different types of known military settlements, how they are similar and/or different from each other, and how they are linked with the regimental system. Both the military settlements and the regimental system organisation among the northern Nguni are unique, with both being critical aspects in the success of the northern Nguni kingdoms. Chapter six provides a detailed discussion regarding the analytical and theoretical approaches utilised within the study. This section examines the types of sources available, along with their strengths and weaknesses. Due to the minimal archaeological information available for the Matabele, a combination of historical, ethnographic, and remote sensing techniques had to be utilised. Therefore, this chapter explains how these different analytical approaches and source materials were combined within the study.

Chapter seven provides the settlement model that this study has created for the Matabele. The known facts are analysed and interpreted regarding what information they provide on the organisation and structure of Matabele settlements. The developed model is then compared to the other known settlement models that the Matabele encountered to determine if any similarities can be observed. These are then examined as to whether they can be regarded as examples of cultural adaptation by the Matabele. This chapter includes re-examining known historical routes and the development of new routes based on first-hand accounts. This section will be followed by implementing the settlement model in a remote sensing analysis of the study area in chapter eight. Due to the size of the study area, the nature of the landscape, and the COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions, it was impossible to survey the area physically. However, by determining how known northern Nguni military settlements can be found on satellite imagery, combined with how the new model is expected to be reflected within these images, it was possible to undertake a systematic visual survey via satellite imagery of the area. The results of this survey are the focus of this chapter.

In chapter nine, a discussion is undertaken regarding what the implications of the obtained results, explained in chapters seven and eight, are regarding our understanding of the Matabele and their settlement organisation. The newly created model is compared to known settlement models of other Nguni military settlements and others proposed for the Matabele. Part of this examination indicates how and why the new model differs from the other proposed models. Chapter ten serves as the conclusion chapter for the study and provides a summary of the results found, what interpretations have been drawn and what their utility is for future research.

1.7 Conclusion

Migrations are a common theme within southern African archaeology. However, the migrations of the 18th and 19th centuries were associated with a violent upheaval of the already established order, the collapse of established political entities and the development of new cultural identities. The Matabele, however, provide archaeologists with a chance to examine how a cultural grouping managed the incorporation of many separated cultural groups and, in the process, developed a new cultural identity. Identifying the archaeological signature associated with this type of cultural change might assist in identifying similar events in the past. Unfortunately, the nature of migrations makes them difficult to detect within the archaeological landscape. However, before a detailed examination of the Matabele can be undertaken, a settlement model needs to be developed to assist in identifying and locating their settlements. Therefore, the focus of the following chapter will be an assessment of the source types used in reconstructing past settlement organisations and patterns.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Despite the importance of the Matabele in the historical development of southern Africa, little is known of their society and settlement organisation. Reconstructing a past society is a complicated process requiring many different sources. As is always the situation in historical reconstructions, some source material is more abundant than others. The overabundance of specific source material and the absence of another can be seen within Matabele research. This chapter will examine the source material utilised in reconstructing a past society, with the primary focus being the relationship of these source types with the Matabele.

2.2 The study of settlements

Settlement studies have two main aspects that they seek to examine. First is the physical organisation of the settlement, which includes the construction methods used, placement criteria, and the relationship of each subsection of the settlement to the other. Secondly is the conceptual or symbolic organisation of the settlement that is often directly linked or reflected in the physical organisation of the settlement. Bruce Trigger (1968) referred to these aspects as determinants and stated that they can used to explain all aspects of a settlement's organisation. The underlying principle of these determinants is that all settlements, regardless of size, geographic location or cultural affinity, share several characteristics that can be used in their study. Examples of studies that make use of such deterministic concepts are Chang (1968), Maggs (1974a,b; 1976), Hall (1980), Maggs (1988), Dewar (1991), Dewar and Mcbride (1992) and Flannery (2002). Despite their utility, local factors such as environmental conditions, resource availability and climate can also affect these determinants. Therefore, these determinants should be regarded as broader guidelines that must be revised for each study.

2.2.1 Settlement organisation within southern Africa

2.2.2.1 Southern African settlements

Research into settlement organisation and construction in southern Africa started in the late 19th century. These early studies were the best-known excavations undertaken at Great Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe) in the 1890s (Huffman 1982; Huffman and Vogel 1991; Pikirayi 2001). Studies then focused on Bambandyanalo, formerly K2, and Mapungubwe in South Africa during the 1930s (Gardner 1955; Huffman 2000). Settlement studies in southern Africa have

generally focused on the eastern coast and northern Highveld of South Africa and the southern regions of Zimbabwe. The ecology of these regions and the construction techniques utilised make them ideal for settlement studies. First, vegetation in this region ranges from savannah to arid (Johnson and Bytebier 2015), which eases archaeological investigations. Secondly, the presence of monumental architecture, such as Great Zimbabwe, and the preference for stone as a construction medium in these regions further directed focus to these areas. However, the rest of the sub-continent has not been neglected, with various settlement studies undertaken to a lesser degree throughout the region. Several studies, such as Pikirayi (1995) and Pwiti *et al.* (2007), have studied central and northern Zimbabwe with Summers (1958), Mupira (2003) and Soper (2002) focusing on the Nyanga culture of eastern Zimbabwe. Research undertaken by Maggs (1976), Delius *et al.* (2012), Sadr and Rodier (2012) and Sadr (2016) have focused on the central and southern regions of the South African Highveld. Webley (1992), Sadr (1998), Kinahan (2000) and Feely and Bell-Cross (2011) have focused on the western and eastern coast of South Africa as well as Namibia. Ohinata (2002) did research in Eswatini with researchers such as Macamo (2006), Ekblom (2008) and Pollard *et al.* (2018) in Mozambique. Segobye (1994), Mookodi (2001) and Klehm *et al.* (2019) have focused on Botswana.

The preference for specific regions and settlement types has narrowed our understanding of regional settlement patterns and organisational development, as substantially less research has been done on the other regions. Settlements constructed out of non-perishable material such as wood, thicket and grass are harder to locate and, as such, have remained heavily under-researched. For example, stone is expected in the interior highveld of South Africa but very rare on the coastal belt (Maggs 1989; Whitelaw and Moon 1996, Mitchell 2002). The possibility that the use of stone versus wood, especially regarding the coastal zone, could have had a temporal connection has been examined; however, no clear link was found. It appears that the preference for construction material was based on the availability of local resources (Hall and Maggs 1979; Parkington and Cronin 1979; Hall 1981; Maggs 1982; Rawlinson 1985, 1987; Roodt 1992, 1993). Although this is a logical interpretation, it has been found to not always be the case in practice. Smith (Kirby 1940a,b) and Harris (Harris 1852) hint at the change in settlement preferences among the Matabele when they state that their settlements were not found in areas that had only grass but were confined to areas that had thickets, such as mountains and rivers/stream. These statements indicate that settlement placement preference was determined by the availability of specific resources instead of utilising what material was locally present.

2.2.2.2 Northern Nguni settlements

Settlement studies on the 19th century northern Nguni are primarily limited to ethnographic and historical studies such as those undertaken by Krige (1965), H. Kuper (1954, 1961) and A. Kuper (1980, 1982). This trend is not due to the lack of interest among archaeologists on the northern Nguni but rather due to the difficulty of locating settlements that can be linked to them. Maggs (1982) and Hall and Maggs (1979) have excavated two stonewalled settlements within the Tugela basin linked to the northern Nguni. However, as Maggs (1982) also indicated in his publication, these settlements do not match the known settlement models of the northern Nguni as provided by ethnographers such as Krige (1965), Hammond-Tooke (1993) and Van Warmelo (1962). Maggs speculates, and is likely correct, that these settlements pre-date the development of the known ethnographic models and are dated to the early 18th century. Excavations of late 18th century and later settlements could help to confirm this; however, only limited and very specific excavations have thus far been undertaken. These excavations are almost exclusively limited to the Zulu, with the excavations of Parkington and Cronin (1979), Rawlinson (1985, 1987), Watson and Watson (1990), Roodt (1992, 1993), Whitelaw (1994) and Van Schalkwyk (1999) all focusing on one of the Zulu Kingdom capitals. These were military settlements and, therefore, had a different settlement organisation and layout than the typical family homestead (van der Merwe 2015). This aspect will be examined in more detail in later chapters; however, the archaeological model developed by Huffman (1986) and based on the work of Kuper (1982) has yet to be archaeologically verified. Ample evidence (such as historical photos) and oral tradition confirm the model's accuracy; therefore, the lack of archaeological confirmation only highlights the rarity of these types of sites.

This problem is further compounded for the Matabele, with a clear distinction evident between their South African and Zimbabwean periods. Only a limited amount of archaeological and ethnographic work has been undertaken on the Matabele, with Cobbing (1974) also highlighting this limitation. From an archaeological perspective, little is known of Matabele settlements, which can be attributed to several reasons. Firstly, it is known from historical accounts that the Matabele used perishable materials, such as grass and brushwood, as construction materials. In addition, the Matabele did not spend more than a decade in the same location until after 1840, when they migrated to southern Zimbabwe. These two factors contribute to a very low archaeological signature for Matabele settlements, which makes them very difficult to locate. Additionally, reference has been made in some first-hand accounts that the Matabele ceremonially burned their settlements when abandoning them (Kirby 1940b:111). Considering the large number of abandoned Matabele settlements encountered throughout the various accounts, this might have only been a selective practice or restricted

to a specific region. Another contributing factor that further reduces the archaeological signature of Matabele settlements is the lack of a detailed settlement model.

One of the earliest ethnographic studies focused on Matabele residential life, primarily the aspects directly associated with the hut (Nielsen 1900). Another ethnographic account dated to the early 20th century was by Prestage (1901) and focused on Matabele kinship relations. Twenty years later, Jones (1921) published an article focusing on Matabele initiation rites. Most of the ethnographic work was undertaken between 1950 and 1980. These ethnographic studies were broader in their research focus and examined multiple aspects of Matabele society. A study by Hughes and van Velsen (1955) examined the Matabele as a whole and was followed the next year by a detailed analysis of the Matabele by Hughes (1956). Another study followed these studies in the late 60s that examined the external relations of the Matabele and incorporated a historical narrative (Brown 1969). Two subsequent historical analyses also included ethnographic sections. The first was by Summer and Pagden (1970) on the Matabele as a warrior society, followed by Cobbing's (1974) analysis of the age regimental system. A few years later, Chanaiwa (1976) published a study examining the Matabele army and national politics. These represent the core of studies that focus exclusively on the Matabele. However, some broader ethnographic studies on several communities within southern Africa have also included sections on the Matabele. The earliest was by Van Warmelo (1962), Hoernlé (1962) and then later Hammond-Tooke (1993). A limited amount of ethnographic information can also be obtained from the first-hand accounts already mentioned.

Despite these limitations, some South African and Zimbabwean excavations have focused on the Matabele. In South Africa, two excavations have been published by Pistorius (1997a,b, 1998) focusing on several settlements believed to have been constructed by the Matabele. These two settlements near Pretoria and Emalahleni, respectively, would have been built in the early Matabele kingdom. However, as a later chapter shows, these settlements cannot be linked to the Matabele. In both these cases, the primary construction material used was stone, known not to have been used by the Matabele. Therefore, the presence of stone as the construction material excludes these settlements from being built by the Matabele.

Gaffney, Hughes and Gater also excavated at one of the Matabele capitals in southwestern Zimbabwe called koBulawayo in 2005. This publication confirmed the results of a magnetic

survey suggesting the royal area was located in the centre of the settlement. Details regarding the layout of the rest of the settlement were also provided. Two unpublished reports were created, one by Gaffney and Hughes (1997) and another by Gaffney in 1994. Hughes presented two additional reports on the excavations of koBulawayo in 1995 and 2000 related to the 1997 publication. Hughes and Muringaniza (2003) wrote a chapter that focused on the interpretation of the history of the site. Makuvaza and Burrett (2011) published an article related to the heritage management of the site and the subsequent destruction of the reconstructed version in 2010. Despite the research undertaken at koBulawayo, our understanding of the rest of the Matabele settlements, including other royal settlements, is still very limited. However, all of our ethnographic and archaeological information regarding the Matabele is limited to the period they migrated to Zimbabwe. Consequently, it is unknown to what extent these models can be used to understand the Matabele during their South African period, as it is unknown to what degree Matabele society has changed during the 19th century.

These uncertainties reflect the most significant limitation in current northern Nguni studies: over-reliance on historical sources. Although these sources are of great value, they are ultimately products of the observations and interpretations of the individuals who created them. Consequently, their observations and interpretations need to be verified by archaeological excavations to determine their accuracy. At present, it is unknown how accurate the representations of the Matabele are within these accounts.

2.3 Northern Nguni research: a historical narrative

Research on the northern Nguni can be divided into two broad streams. The first stream is research focused on the northern Nguni's history and/or archaeology, with the second stream being ethnographic studies. In both these streams, each Nguni group was primarily examined as an independent community, with little comparative research undertaken between the different communities. Studies utilising some forms of comparison were Omer-Cooper (1966) and Cobbing (1974), with the Zulu being the point of comparison. The first comparative study on the northern Nguni as independent communities was undertaken by van der Merwe *et al.* (2023) and focused on the military settlements of these communities.

The earliest research on the northern Nguni, focusing primarily on the Zulu, was undertaken by Bryant (1965) and Holden (1963a,b). Holden’s work focused on the Zulu and was mainly a historical analysis, while Bryant combined a historical narrative with ethnographic inquiry.

Although aspects of Bryant's work have come into question since the 80s, his research is still extensively used as a source of information for pre-Zulu era ethnography. The studies of Theal (1905, 1907, 1919) provide critical reference material for much historical and ethnographic research. Theal's work also formed the basis of much of the earlier historiography writing, such as those of Cory (1926) and Walker (1938), that would eventually provide the context for Omer-Cooper's Mfecane analysis. Theal was the first historian to propose the depopulated interior hypothesis, with Theal arguing that the rise of the Zulu kingdom caused this depopulation. Although this would form the core of the future Mfecane debate, Theal did not use this term in his work.

Nguni research entered a new phase in the 1960s with the publication of Omer-Cooper's (1966) book on the Zulu Kingdom. Omer-Cooper's book examined many key Figures in southern Africa's history during the 19th century. This examination also included the examination of the political institutions they would develop. However, Omer-Cooper's most notable contribution was expanding and consolidating the Mfecane/Difaqane theory that would form the core of all northern Nguni-related research for the next forty decades. Although Omer-Cooper was not the first to use the term, having already been used by Walker in the 1930s (Saunders 1995:24), he provided a new perspective and interpretation of events outside of European influences. As the chief antagonists in the Mfecane theory, the Zulu and Matabele became a key focus of historical research within South Africa, primarily emphasising the Zulu. The other kingdoms examined were viewed as reactionary and developing in response to Zulu expansion. The core argument of Omer-Cooper's Mfecane hypothesis was that the expanding Zulu incorporated and expelled all the other northern Nguni communities. These expelled communities, such as the Matabele, migrated north and, in this process, destroyed and displaced all the communities in the interior of the sub-continent. Ultimately, these migrations would result in the depopulation of the interior and the associated large-scale destruction. However, the idea of a "depopulated" interior was already proposed by earlier historians such as Theal and Walker and was not unique to Omer-Cooper's narrative. Omer-Cooper's narratives (1966, 1969, 1974) also turned the focus of Nguni research primarily on the Zulu, resulting in what John Wright termed the "Zulucentric" approach to Nguni historiography (Wright 2008). Although Omer-Cooper's narrative would dominate Nguni historiography, it was not the only historical narrative developed. Several other historical narratives related to the Matabele were developed within the broader Mfecane narrative during the 1960s and 70s (Brown 1969; Summers and Pagden 1970; Morrow 1973; Rasmussen 1976, 1977, 1978). Other studies such as Marks and Atmore (1970), Liesegang (1975), Bonner (1978), and Kuper (1978) also focused on the other northern Nguni kingdoms.

From the late 1970s through the 1980s, a new phase of Nguni historiography would develop after Cobbing's 1974 critique of Omer-Cooper's work was published. Although Cobbing was not the first historian to challenge the core premise of the Mfecane narrative, historians such as Macmillan (1929) and De Kiewiet (1941), and to some extent, even Walker, had already started to challenge the historical narrative developed by Theal and expanded on by Omer-Cooper. Cobbing put forth three principal arguments against the developed historical narrative. Firstly, the conflict of the 19th century was not caused by the rise of the Zulu Kingdom. Secondly, the Zulu were used as a scapegoat for historians seeking to justify white settlement in the interior. Lastly, the root cause of these wars was brought about by labour and slave raiding from the Cape Colony and Portuguese Mozambique (Etherington 1995:13). However, due to incomplete historical research and the misrepresentation of crucial historical facts, most of Cobbing's arguments have been disproven (Eldredge 1995; Wright 1995). The resulting debate surrounding the Mfecane during the 1980s would eventually cumulate in the publishing of *The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern Africa*, edited by Carolyn Hamilton (1995).

Despite the numerous limitations and shortcomings of the historical narrative proposed by Cobbing, the debate resulting from his critique resulted in two fundamental changes to the traditional Nguni historical narrative, directly impacting the study and understanding of all the northern Nguni kingdoms. The first change was the acceptance that the rise of the Zulu Kingdom resulted from the upheavals of the 19th century and was not its cause. Secondly was the acceptance that the root cause of this period of upheavals was complex and wide-ranging. However, the debate surrounding the cause of these conflicts remains unsolved, with multiple proposed reasons. These range from an economic perspective caused by either slaving (Cobbing 1974), trade control (Hedges 1978) or environmental considerations (Guy 1980). Ultimately, most historical narratives follow the view that a combination of these factors resulted in the conflicts of the 19th century. The Mfecane debate is critical for Nguni historical archaeology as it provides the historical context into which the archaeological finds need to be incorporated. Recent historical narratives that either directly or indirectly focus on the Matabele are Dodds (1998), Pikirayi (2001), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009), Mlambo (2014) and Shillington (2005), with some aspects of the Mfecane debate featuring in these narratives.

Despite these changes, the historical narrative of the northern Nguni is still primarily dominated by the Zulu, with some attention given to the Swazi (such as the research done by Bonner 1978; 2002). The debate and research focus is still largely on the KwaZulu-Natal Province of

South Africa and Eswatini. The remaining northern Nguni are largely ignored, with Cobbing's use of the Matabele framed within the Zulu narrative. To develop a more balanced understanding of the northern Nguni, the other northern Nguni groups must be examined independently from the Zulu narrative. Determining how these communities are similar and different will allow for a more detailed and comprehensive understanding of the northern Nguni and the causes and effects of the events of the 19th century.

2.4 First-hand experience: historical accounts and the Matabele.

A source used extensively by archaeologists and historians, and to some extent by ethnographers, are first-hand accounts. In southern Africa, first-hand accounts generally fall into two categories. The most common are the accounts of missionaries who moved into the interior during the 18th and 19th centuries. The other are accounts written by explorers and hunters who travelled into the interior. In addition, many official reports and documentation are kept in government archives, both in Africa and Europe.

Due to the Matabele kingdom's historical development, first-hand accounts are divided into two periods. The first is the period from the 1820s to the late 1830s, during the Matabele's occupation of the South African Highveld. For the early period of the Matabele kingdom, the most well-known and used first-hand accounts are those of the missionary Robert Moffat, one account written by him for publication and the second a later publication of his journals (Moffat 1846; Wallis 1945). Moffat had kept four journals, the first two documenting his journeys to the Matabele while they were in South Africa and the last two when they had migrated to southern Zimbabwe. The first-hand accounts associated with Andrew Smith's expedition into the interior of South Africa is another well know first-hand account. Several first-hand accounts have survived from this expedition. Two are associated with Andrew Smith and are his journals (Kirby 1940a,b), with the other being the official account he wrote of the expedition (Lye 1975). Another account is the diary of one of Smith's assistants, John Burrow (Burrow 1971). A short extract from the travels of two well-known traders, Schoon and Mcluckie, was also published by Chase (1830). Although multiple references have been made to accounts written by these traders and another well-known trader, Hume, it does not appear that these accounts have been published. Steedman (1966), another traveller to the interior, also kept an account of his journey, published in two volumes. An account of a famous hunting expedition into the interior, led by Cornwallis-Harris, has also survived (Harris 1852). Jointly, these accounts described the Matabele and the landscape they inhabited for over twenty years. When the various routes are considered together, they cover a considerable part of the interior of South Africa,

especially the central and northern regions. However, despite the significant temporal and geographical period covered, these accounts aren't as descriptive regarding the settlement organisation or customs of the Matabele as the first-hand accounts of the Zulu are.

The accounts available for the Zimbabwe period of the Matabele Kingdom are similar to those of the earlier South African period, with the addition of several war accounts (Anderson 1898; Sykes 1969; Donovan 1979). The Matabele War occurred in 1893, with several war-related accounts published, similar to the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. As mentioned previously, the last two journals of Robert Moffat (Wallis 1945) document his journeys to the Matabele after they had settled in southern Zimbabwe. Two accounts related to Livingstone and his travels (Adams 1868; Schapera 1960) are also available, which can be supplemented with the accounts of many traders and explores that entered the area in the latter half of the 19th century (Chapman 1868; Holub 1881; Selous 1893; Carnegie 1894; Perham 1895; Davidson 1915). Some accounts of the Matabele capital of koBulawayo have survived, such as Gelfand (1968) and Lloyd (1979).

Despite the first-hand accounts' usefulness, they also have several limitations. First and foremost, they are written by individuals who were essentially products of their time. Consequently, they viewed the world through a specific lens dominated by Eurocentric concepts such as social Darwinism and the superiority of the European culture and Christian religion. Some authors, such as Cornwallis-Harris, did not attempt to hide their views of superiority (Harris 1852). Other authors, such as Smith, did not share Harris's views and approached their work with what was considered objectivity. However, this objectivity was still framed within the built-in belief of the superiority of the European, and mainly British, culture and the Christian religion. These perspectives do not, however, indicate that the information given is wrong or inaccurate. On the contrary, the excavations of the Zulu capitals and the one Matabele capital have confirmed most observations made in all the first-hand accounts. However, these accounts' interpretations and explanations given for cultural practices and religious beliefs should be viewed with extreme caution.

2.6 Remote sensing in archaeology

Remote Sensing is a wide field of study that includes aerial and satellite along with Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) imagery. The first use of remote sensing in archaeology via aerial photography was already undertaken in the 1920s (Kucukkaya 2004) in Europe and the

Americas. Its utility in archaeology formed the topic of book chapters by the 1970s (Lyons and Hitchcock 1977). Since then, it has become a widely used tool in archaeology, with the most well-known example in South Africa being that of Maggs (1974a,b). However, Maggs's work builds upon previous aerial studies, mainly Mason's, first undertaken in South Africa in 1968. Despite their utility for archaeological research, aerial photography had some limitations. Firstly, it was expensive to acquire, limiting the regions where it could be used. Secondly, and linked to the previous, most aerial imagery reflected only one season and one photographic sequence. Although some projects, such as the British Royal Air Force aerial survey missions in Sudan and India, provide imagery for multiple years and seasons, these are the exception. However, aerial photography did allow for the surveying of large areas, and the projects of Mason and Maggs still form the basis for much of South African settlement archaeological theory.

The development of free and open-source satellite imagery platforms, such as Google Earth and Bing, in the 1990s and early 2000s, allowed many of the limitations associated with aerial imagery to be overcome. Although the initial imagery was off to low resolution to allow for detailed analysis, imagery released since 2000 has been of sufficient resolution to allow for detailed analysis to be undertaken. It has now become a regular tool in archaeological investigations worldwide, with the research papers by Lasaponara *et al.* (2021), O'Reilly and Scott (2015) and Kempe and Malabeh (2010) being only a few examples. Open-source satellite imagery has also been used in conjunction with GIS software (a recent example being Goncharov *et al.* 2016) and e-Heritage management database (Apollonio *et al.* 2011) to expand its application within archaeological research and heritage management. It has similarly become well-used in South African settlement archaeology, with the studies of Kruger (2010), Sadr and Rodier (2012) and Sadr (2016) being a few recent examples. One of the primary limitations of both aerial and satellite imagery is that archaeological features can be obscured by vegetation.

Recent advances in remote sensing have allowed this limitation to be countered. The most widely used approach is the use of LiDAR. LiDAR allows for the detection of features below vegetation. It allows for studying regions less accessible on foot or where vegetation obscures most of the features when using aerial photography. Examples of such studies are Harmon *et al.* (2006), Chase *et al.* (2011), Masini *et al.* (2013) and Chase *et al.* (2017). In recent years, the use of LiDAR has also become more common in South Africa, with Lombard *et al.* (2020), Lombard *et al.* (2021) and Sadr (2021) being some of the more recent research projects

utilising LiDAR. However, the use of LiDAR is still restricted in its application by the high costs associated with its implementation.

2.7 Conclusion

Despite the central role that the northern Nguni expansion and migration played in the historical development of sub-equatorial Africa, very little is known about these societies. Some societies, such as the Zulu, have been the focus of many research projects. Other societies, such as the Matabele, are well studied from a historical perspective but little related to their society or how they changed during their migrations. This study aims to improve our understanding of Matabele settlements, which will aid in developing a better understanding of Matabele society as a whole. However, as a migratory nation, the Matabele incorporated many other communities into themselves, with these communities adding different cultural practices to the broader Matabele society. Therefore, to develop a clear understanding of the organisation and construction of Matabele settlements, a framework needs to be created to examine these interactions. This framework is presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 3: Culture and the African Frontier Thesis

3.1 Introduction

It is a well-accepted view within southern African settlement archaeology that symbolism played a critical part in the organisation of settlements within southern Africa. Although umbrella models such as the CCP simplify this process, each community had variations in the symbolism attributed to various parts of their living space. As such, this symbolism also forms part of their social identity, as highlighted in the work of Kuper (1982) related to symbolism among the northern Nguni. As such, the question is raised about what will happen when one cultural identity is integrated into another. Cultural integration is especially complex when political power and wealth are directly associated with one particular cultural identity, such as being Nguni among the Matabele. In such cases, cultural identity is directly linked to political authority and, thus, political culture.

3.2 Kopytoff's frontier thesis

A useful model that can be used to analyse this process is the concept of a "frontier" society. The frontier hypothesis was initially developed by Fredrick Tuner in 1893 in his paper on the American frontier and expanded on in later works (Turner 1928). The concept of the American frontier was then expanded on by Igor Kopytoff in his work "Speculations about the Internal African Frontier" in 1977 and expanded later on in "The Internal African Frontier: The Making of African Political Culture" in 1987. Essentially, this hypothesis presents a contrasting view to the historical Social-Darwinism view on the development of societies. Social Darwinism, similar to Evolutionary Darwinism, holds that societies developed from a "primitive" or simple form into a more "advanced" or complex form over time (Rogers 1972). Therefore, The frontier hypothesis can be viewed as the opposite view, where smaller or new political cultures or societies are developed from larger and more established ones. Therefore, a smaller section of a larger or more complex society will break away from the core area of the society and re-establish itself on the fringe of the core area or the frontier (Kopytoff 1987). This hypothesis can help analyse the northern Nguni as most of the northern Nguni kingdoms, except for the Zulu, can be somewhat viewed as "frontier" societies. Nonetheless, there are also essential limitations in this regard that need to be kept in mind, especially in the case of the Matabele.

Kopytoff's hypothesis is structured around eleven themes, namely: the production of frontiersmen, movement of groups, institutional vacuum, pre-existing social model, adherents

and kinsman, adherents as subjects, first-comers and latecomers, patrimonialism, inter-dependence, regional context and the frontier as a historical process. Production of frontiersmen is related to the tendency of some societies to generate frontiersmen more frequently than others. Kopytoff's argument here applies to the Nguni in general, as it was standard practice for a son to remove himself from his father's homestead when he married and then create his homestead, essentially creating a new, yet still related, political unit (Hammond-Tooke 1993). An essential part of this process is maintaining bonds, either physically by blood ties or ritualistic ties (Kopytoff 1987). Strengthening this bond allows for future reunification between the frontier and the core. Kopytoff states that historically, European scholars tried to group African cultures into a unified cultural group, such as the Nguni, that would match the European concept of nation-states, as best described by Michael Oakeshott (2006).

Although Kopytoff argues that this approach does not work within African societies, much of his argument itself does require a significant degree of unity among the "tribe" or a core social unit (Kopytoff 1987:5). For a frontier to exist, a core societal area also needs to exist that can be viewed as a collective unit, either politically or culturally. This idea of a core political unit can be applied to some extent to the Sotho-Tswana or even to southern Nguni groups such as the Xhosa. However, it becomes more problematic for the northern Nguni. Although all these communities shared the same broader cultural traditions and language, they had no core area that could be considered a collective unit. In this regard, each Nguni kingdom was a core area that would have had its frontiers. If this view is followed, then the Nguni kingdoms of the 19th century were not the establishment of new poleis on the frontier of a core area. Instead, it was the re-location of the core area and the development of new related frontiers in a newly occupied region. This view of the northern Nguni, especially the Matabele, can be supported by the first-hand account descriptions of Matabele societal organisation during the late 1820s and throughout the 1830s (Moffat 1846; Kirby 1940a,b; Harris 1852; Wallis 1945; Burrow 1971), with four core areas of the Matabele being identified throughout this period. An alternative explanation can also be forwarded by examining the descriptions of Nguni political structures given by Moffat (Wallis 1945) and Liesegang (N/A), in which for an individual to acquire political power and wealth, they only had to be northern Nguni. No separation was made between those born Nguni and those who had adopted the Nguni culture. In this regard, each community can be regarded as having a shared cultural link, and thus, each forms part of a collective unit that would have a core and frontier area.

The second theme is that frontier poleis are developed by the movement of groups and not individuals (Kopytoff 1987). All the northern Nguni migrations occurred as the simultaneous movement of the whole community to a new area and not as a wave of smaller migrations. Smaller secondary migrations did occur among the northern Nguni (Lye 1975). Nonetheless, these were limited mainly to individuals moving between them, with only limited examples having been documented of breakaway groups joining another kingdom, as was the case with a Ngoni group that joined the Matabele in southern Zimbabwe (Liesegang no date). The third theme was that of the frontier as an institutional vacuum. A frontier was regarded as a political entity in which the authority of the core area was absent. Areas where the core's authority was absent were considered open for occupation, settlement, or frontier (Kopytoff 1987). Conceptually, this meant that the frontier was viewed as "empty" although they were often already occupied by other established communities. As was examined in a previous chapter, all the areas to which the Matabele migrated already had long and well-established poleis, but as they were not Nguni the land was regarded as empty and open for occupation. A justification for land occupation often found within the firsthand accounts of southern Africa is linked to the idea that if a group is able to take the land, they also have the right to do so.

The fourth and most relevant theme to this study was the pre-existing social models present within the frontier (Kopytoff 1987). As the frontier polis is developed by a group with a pre-determined social model, such as with the Matabele, this model is transported to the frontier along with the group. As the frontier is rarely empty or devoid of communities, at least two types of social models would be present. Both Liesegang (N/A) and Summers and Pagden (1970) have emphasised the importance placed on the Nguni culture and social-political structure among the Matabele and northern Nguni. The emphasis is furthermore supported by the first-hand accounts of Robert Moffat (Wallis 1945) and Andrew Smith (Kirby 1940a,b). It is similarly known that the regions that the Matabele occupied already had well-established political and cultural systems (Pistorius 1994; Boeyens 2003; Huffman 2007). As the dominant political cast, the Nguni imposed their social-political system onto the communities that they incorporated, but these communities were not forced to adopt the Nguni culture.

Consequently, a dichotomy is created between an individual's culture and the social-political system in which they live, which is derived from a cultural tradition. Furthermore, it is a well-documented practice within southern Africa that communities viewed as being "the first" significantly influence the communities they are incorporated into (Pistorius 1994), which also links to a later theme of the frontier thesis. As this is a well-established practice, assuming that

a similar process would have been present among the Matabele is reasonable. Unfortunately, insufficient information is available regarding these aspects of the Matabele culture, predating and contemporary to the Matabele kingdom, to make any definitive interpretations.

This aspect of the social-political integration of different social models can be indirectly observed and analysed through settlement patterns. At the core of all the large settlement paradigms in southern African settlement archaeology is the idea that cultural identity and views are, to some extent, reflected within the organisational patterns of the settlement and livening space, such as the hut. Some predictive conclusions regarding the social-political organisational elements adopted by the Nguni from the incorporated communities may be derived from comparing and examining their respective settlement organisation with each other.

A fifth and related theme is adherents as kinsmen, directly linked to the sixth theme, which is adherents as subjects (Kopytoff 1987). Analysing this aspect of Kopytoff's thesis is complicated among the Matabele due to our lack of understanding regarding the size and composition of Mzilikazi's original following (Rasmussen 1976). Undoubtedly, kinship relations were as important among the Matabele as the rest of the communities in southern Africa. The question here is related to how kinship relations are associated with political authority and how they differ from those of the subjects. These themes of Kopytoff focus on how power is obtained and projected by communities on the frontier. As power and community size are directly linked, Kopytoff argues that this power structure is initially done via kinship bonds, with this changing to subject inclusions as the polis grows (Kopytoff 1987). It is well documented among the Matabele that individuals not directly related to the king could obtain high positions of authority (Wallis 1945; Lye 1975).

Furthermore, it is also documented in the first-hand accounts that incorporated individuals could also achieve positions of power, such as the case of William the Griqua (Wallis 1945). Liesegang (N/A) also argued that cultural similarities, such as being Nguni, were significant among the Matabele, the Gaza Nguni, and possibly the Ngoni. In these cases, kinship bonds could have allowed Nguni members to obtain authority within the Nguni caste. When both of Kopytoff's themes are viewed together, it can be argued that the Matabele power structure developed jointly from including kin-related groups and subjugated populations. How this

power structure dynamic would have been structured and how it functioned are, at present, primarily speculative due to the limited available information.

Kopytoff's (1987) seventh theme, the legitimacy of the firstcomers, is a well-documented practice in southern Africa, as mentioned by Pistorius (1994) and Boeyens (2003) concerning the Hurutshe and Bamadimosana. Currently, insufficient information is available to form conclusions or interpretations regarding these aspects of Matabele society. Smith, in his diary (Kirby 1940b), mentions that many of the subjugated populations among the Matabele regarded the spread of the diseases that affected the area during the 1830s as being caused by the Matabele not respecting the ancestors of those who lived on the land before their arrival. The implication of this view, as recorded by Smith, is that the Matabele actively ignored or undermined any possible "legitimacy" the first-comers could claim. Since Matabele society was caste-based, with the ruling cast being derived from a different culture, combined with the area having been conquered, it would make sense that the Matabele would actively undermine any cultural practice of the incorporated groups that could pose a risk to their authority and legitimacy. This process would not mean that the firstcomers' specific cultural or religious practices were not incorporated or included by the ruling Nguni cast to strengthen their claims to rule/own the land legitimately.

Kopytoff's eighth theme, patrimonialism on the frontier, is problematic regarding the Matabele. Patrimonialism is a form of political power in which authority stems from the ruler and his house in which no independent power base is present (Oxford Reference 2023). Although this might match the power structure in southern Africa, these systems were far more complex. Moffat (Wallis 1945) and Smith (Kirby 1940a,b) both stated that chiefs had, in theory, complete authority but did not act without the consent of the elders. Obtaining elder consent/support was especially relevant among the Sotho-Tswana and the Xhosa (Hammond-Tooke 1993). Even among the Zulu, generally regarded as having the most authoritarian power system in southern Africa, the king still felt the need to present his decisions as being the will of his senior *amaduna* and that he was following their guidance (Gardiner 1836). Although Gardiner attributes this to the king not wanting to take responsibility for his actions, it highlights the importance placed on at least appearing not to rule as an absolute ruler. Power structures are more unclear among the Matabele. Moffat (Wallis 1945) states that all decisions had first to be agreed upon by Mzilikazi and, as a result, he had a highly centralised government. However, both Moffat (Wallis 1945) and Smith (Kirby 1940a,b; Lye 1975) refer to senior *amaduna* who were allowed to make decisions regarding local matters without the king's

approval and that Mzilikazi seldom made decisions without first consulting his council of senior *amaduna*. Obtaining council support did not mean that the king shared power, as he could and did ignore their council and make decisions alone. It does, however, indicate that a more complex relationship existed between the Matabele and northern Nguni regarding the perceived/theoretical power of the kings and their power in practice. Kopytoff's sacred leadership concept does not match the northern Nguni systems. Sacred leadership is most closely associated with the Zimbabwe tradition in southern Africa (Huffman 2007). Though the northern Nguni kings were viewed as having a special link with the ancestors (Laband 1995), they were not regarded as being sacred rulers. Similarly, Kopytoff's claim that communities in these frontier poleis could leave if they choose does not apply to the Matabele. Smith observes the Matabele hunting down and killing any individual or group that tried to leave the kingdom (Kirby 1940a,b; Lye 1975). These observations made by Smith further support the view that the Matabele polis in the interior should not be viewed as a frontier but rather a core with its frontiers.

Kopytoff's ninth theme, inter-dependence, is related to integrating the ruler-subject divide into a system of symbolic royal ritual (Kopytoff 1987). Little is known regarding the royal rituals of the Matabele, with few such events recorded and none in detail. Moffat (Moffat 1846; Wallis 1945) and Smith (Kirby 1940a,b; Lye 1975) recorded Mzilikazi undertaking royal rituals in the calve enclosure near his house in the settlement. This practice was also documented among the Zulu, directly associated with the king and his authority (van der Merwe 2015). It is, therefore, clear that the Matabele did have royal rituals that were routinely undertaken. Unfortunately, due to the lack of detailed documentation, we can only speculate on what rituals were undertaken based on similar rituals documented among other northern Nguni communities.

The tenth theme of Kopytoff's thesis does not apply to the Matabele. Kopytoff argues that the expanding frontier polis sought to legitimize their rule in the eyes of neighbouring poleis (Kopytoff 1987). When reading the accounts of Moffat (Moffat 1846; Wallis 1945), Smith (Kirby 1940a,b; Lye 1975), Burrow (Burrow 1971) and Harris (Harris 1852), the conclusion given by these authors supports the view that the Matabele did not feel the need to legitimize their rule. From these accounts, the perspective is that the Matabele regarded their right to rule as undisputed because they had the strength to take the land from those who had it before them. Thus, as they had the power to take the land, they also had the right to do so and were, therefore, the rightful owners of the land. There is currently no evidence to support the view

that the Matabele felt that they had to justify the legitimacy of their rule to neighbouring poleis. On the contrary, both Moffat (Wallis 1945) and Smith (Kirby 1940a,b; Lye 1975) regularly document that communities surrounding the Matabele lived in fear of being attacked, conquered or raided by the Matabele. Such fears do not support the view that the Matabele cared about how neighbouring poleis would have regarded their legitimacy.

Kopytoff's (1987) last theme, the historical process on the frontier, is another problematic theme concerning the Matabele. In this theme, Kopytoff argues that as the frontier polis matures and incorporates itself into the frontier, it either starts expanding at the expense of its neighbours or is incorporated by them. In the case of the Matabele, from the start of their history, they expanded at the expense of their neighbours, both during their time on the South African highveld as well as in southern Zimbabwe (Omer-Cooper 1966; Summers and Pagden 1970; Rasmussen 1976). Consequently, it is unclear how poleis founded by expansionist and displaced groups such as the Matabele are incorporated into the frontier thesis, as they generally do not match the nature of groups that move towards the frontier.

3.3 The African frontier and the Matabele

Despite having some limitations, Kopytoff's African frontier thesis does provide a valuable framework for the analysis of cultural exchange and incorporation among the Matabele. In this regard, a few features of Matabele society should be considered. Firstly, although there is disagreement within historiography regarding the size of the original group led by Mzilikazi (Omer-Cooper 1966; Rasmussen 1976; Cobbing 1988), it is accepted that by the time the first Europeans visited the Matabele, most of its population consisted of incorporated communities. The amount of incorporated communities is an important feature, as the ratio of "original" and "incorporated" will have a distinct impact on how cultural flow would have occurred. Humans tend to stick with what they know, especially when it is related to culture and religion. Therefore, as the number of newly incorporated members outnumber those present from the start, specific cultural practices would become more common than others. Often, in such cases, the "common" practice ultimately gets transferred into the ruling caste over time as a natural process. As a result, the longer this process is active, the more cultural mixing will occur unless it is actively countered by the ruling group, which was not the case among the Matabele.

A second important feature is that the Matabele kingdom had a prominent caste system based on cultural practices instead of wealth. In this regard, wealth and power became linked to a specific culture, with no distinction made between “old” and “new” Nguni members. From the first-hand observations of Smith (Kirby 1940a,b; Lye 1975) and Moffat (Wallis 1945), it is clear that the Matabele did not force incorporated communities to adopt the Nguni culture. However, the Matabele political system, and thus wealth, was directly linked to the individual following the Nguni culture. Consequently, although anybody could become a “Nguni”, only a “Nguni person” could acquire wealth and political power.

Lastly, it should also be remembered that very little is known of the Matabele culture during the early part of the 19th century. Most of what is known of the Matabele culture is based on late 19th-century, and primarily 20th-century, ethnographic studies. Although these studies are beneficial in understanding Matabele society, they were undertaken long after the Matabele had settled in southern Zimbabwe and incorporated many new communities. This process can, however, help identify cultural aspects that can be regarded as “Matabele” by examining what was present in later decades with those practices mentioned in early accounts. Despite this, it does not help us better understand early Matabele culture. Unfortunately, all the known first-hand accounts rarely documented cultural or religious practices. Those recorded are often recorded from a clear, and often condescending, European-biased perspective, which significantly limits their utility in understanding Matabele culture. Historically, this limitation has been countered by using the closest known culture to the Matabele, the Zulu, as a reference. A critical limit in this regard is that although both communities had many similarities, they were still two different cultural groups with different origins and historical developments. Therefore, the question remains about what can be considered Matabele and what should be excluded.

3.4 Cultural assimilation and incorporation

Cultural assimilation or incorporation has been studied since the 19th century (Lamsal 2012). Although many different theories have been developed over the last century, the one proposed by Anthony Giddens is helpful for this study. There is no right or wrong theory within Anthropology and Sociology, as they are subject and perspective-based. As a result, any theory used should be compatible with the critical elements of the study matter. In this regard, Giddens's theory on structuralism acts as a useful guideline in examining what is currently known about cultural assimilation or incorporation among the early 19th-century Matabele.

Structuralism seeks to determine the relationship between the individual and the surrounding social elements that impact them (Lamsal 2012). Giddens argued that the actor, or individual, cannot be separated from the overall structure or society, as these two aspects are linked, what Giddens called “the duality of structure” (Giddens 2005:126). In simplistic terms, Giddens states that although an individual is influenced and, to a certain extent, controlled by an overall structure, such as societal norms and rules, the individual is not a blind or powerless actor in this process. In practice, this theory states that an individual’s perspectives and opinions are shaped by the structures of which they form part. Still, these structures are also created and influenced by the individuals that collectively form part of them. Therefore, just as a system influences an individual and exerts some control over their actions, the individual similarly influences the structure and has some level of control over it as well (Giddens 2005; Lamsal 2012).

The link between societies (structures) and power has been developed by prominent theorists such as Karl Marx (Lamsal 2012). To place this relationship in context, political power among the Matabele, which in practical terms was reflected in access to resources such as cattle and agricultural land, was controlled by the king and the ruling Nguni cast (Moffat 1846; Kirby 1940a,b; Wallis 1945). As such, based on the acceptance of the Nguni culture, only members of this cast could acquire power and wealth. As access to this cast was directly linked to adopting the Nguni culture, individuals within the conquered communities could adopt the Nguni culture and, thus, become part of the ruling cast. However, adopting the Nguni culture was not enforced by the Matabele, with conquered peoples being allowed to retain their own cultures and traditions within the kingdom (Moffat 1846; Kirby 1940a,b; Wallis 1945). Within the framework of Giddens's theory, the social and political structure of the Matabele Kingdom forced the individual to comply with these rules if they wished to acquire well and political power. Therefore, the individual's action is caused by the regulations of this structure. On the other hand, an individual could not conform to these rules and retain their culture and traditions. Therefore, although the structure of the society influenced and largely dictated the reality in which the individual existed, it did not overrule the freedom of choice that the individual had regarding the actions they undertook within that structure. Essentially, a structure can be viewed as a collection of agreed-upon rules and norms practised by the most significant number of individuals within the structure.

The other part of Giddens's duality can be seen in first-hand observers' systematic changes documented among the Matabele. As this topic will be examined in detail in Chapter Nine, it

will be sufficient to note that several non-Nguni practices were recorded among the Nguni cast of the Matabele Kingdom. Most notably, non-Nguni structural design elements were documented in the king's hut by Harris (1852). Although the rules and norms of Matabele society were developed by the Nguni, of which the king was the leader, as individuals, they were also affected by the structures of the broader society in which they functioned, which included large numbers of non-Nguni. As cast membership was open to any culturally assimilated individual, over time, the number of assimilated Nguni would exceed the number of original Nguni. The assimilated individuals would not suddenly forget the traditions and culture they grew up in. Therefore, as more and more non-Nguni individuals adopt the Nguni culture, non-Nguni practices would start to become part of the Nguni culture, mainly if many individuals of the same culture were assimilated. In turn, these newly adopted practices will become part of the social structure in which all individuals exist. Therefore, a two-way link exists between the individual and the social structures they formed part of, or as Giddens called it, a dual link.

Giddens's theory pairs well with Kopytoff's frontier hypothesis. Kopytoff argued that the frontier society functioned within a pre-existing social structure that included other, more established societies. In this regard, the frontier society can be regarded as the individual within Giddens theory, with the frontier serving as the structure in which the individual functions. Consequently, just as a duality existed between the individual and the structures around them, so did a duality between the community and the frontier.

3.5 Conclusion

Examining cultural interactions and incorporation within historical societies is a complicated process. This complexity is especially true for societies such as the Matabele, where very little information is available for analysis. In this regard, combining Kopytoff's frontier hypothesis with Giddens' theory on structuralism provides a good framework for examining this interaction. Kopytoff's hypothesis allows for reviewing the development and exchange of Matabele society as they migrated north and settled on multiple frontiers. In addition, as a conquest polis that attacked and incorporated many other communities, the frontier hypothesis does have some limitations regarding the interaction of different cultures on a smaller scale. These more minor interactions can be examined within the framework of Giddens' structuralism theory, which provides a framework in which the interaction between the individual, both conqueror and conquered, can be studied. Additionally, it can also augment Kopytoff's hypothesis on the interactions between different frontier communities, as each

community on the frontier can also be viewed as an individual operating within a larger structure, as theorised by Giddens. Before this examination can be conducted, the different elements of both theories need to be examined to allow for a broader context to be developed. This process will start in the following chapter by reviewing the different settlement patterns that the Matabele and the other frontier communities formed part of.

Chapter 4: Southern African Settlement Patterns

4.1 Introduction

Settlement pattern and architectural organisation studies within southern Africa have focused on developing large regional umbrella models. The drive behind this process was the desire to create a single, all-encompassing model that can be used to interpret and analyse any settlement (Pikirayi and Chirikure 2011; Hall 1998). However, due to the different nature and origin of many of the communities living within southern Africa, it was found that creating one single model was impossible. Therefore, from the 1980s, three umbrella models were developed for the region, drawing extensively from the work of Thomas Huffman. These models, the Zimbabwean Pattern, the Central Cattle Pattern and the Western Street Pattern, are today viewed as forming the basis of all settlement organisational studies focusing on southern Africa. However, despite their large-scale adoption, many problems and limitations with these models have existed since their creation, with new research questioning their usefulness for regional settlement studies (Pikirayi and Chirikure 2011). Therefore, this chapter will not follow the traditional approach of discussing the various community's settlement patterns within the framework of these umbrella models.

Although these models are essential for understanding previous studies and will form the starting point of this chapter, this study follows the view of Adam Kuper (1982) that the differences between them might be more significant than the similarities. Similarly, Martin Hall (1986) argued that facts do not remain absolute and are perceptible to change over time, indicating that the validity and accuracy of facts should not just be accepted offhand and require re-examination with every use. Therefore, this study will examine the settlement patterns used by different communities within southern Africa separately. Despite the ongoing debate about which route the Matabele used during their migration north (Omer-Cooper 1966; Cobbing 1976; Saunders 1995), the cultural groupings they encountered remain the same. Consequently, all the cultural groups discussed in this section may have had some influence on the development of the Matabele settlement over time. As a result, a clear understanding of each cultural group's settlement organisation is required to identify any of these possible architectural and organisational elements within Matabele settlements.

4.2 Main settlement paradigms in southern Africa

Three settlement paradigms are widely used to interpret and analyse southern African settlements. These paradigms, called the Western Street Pattern (WSP), Zimbabwean Pattern (ZP), and Central Cattle Pattern (CCP), have dominated settlement studies within the region since the 1980s. Despite their dominance, these paradigms are far from universally accepted within the field of southern African settlement archaeology and have been heavily criticised in recent years. Although an in-depth review of these settlement paradigms lies beyond the scope of the current study, this section will summarise each paradigm with its associated limitations. Therefore, each cultural group examined is believed to fall within the framework of one or more of these paradigms.

4.2.1 Western Street Pattern

Developed by Huffman (1989) and based on the settlement patterns of northern Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). It is called the Western Street Patterns (WSP) due to the two most distinguishing factors of the pattern. Firstly, it is only found among the Western Iron Age Farming Communities (WIAC, formally Western Bantu), and secondly, these communities arranged their settlements on a linear pattern next to a central road (Huffman 1989; Huffman 2007). Huffman argues that because these communities were matrilineal, as opposed to patrilineal associated with the Eastern Iron Age Farming Communities (EIAC, formally Eastern Bantu), they did not practice lobola and had little to no cattle. In addition, these communities utilised rectangular house construction instead of the circular layout found in southern Africa. However, Huffman (2007) does not explain why a linear and circular layout can be linked to a matrilineal or patrilineal worldview. WIAC that lived near EIAC combined the linear pattern with a circular one, with the rectangular huts constructed around a central enclosure, often utilising a circular hut design. The same internal hut organisation would be used (Huffman 2007), with the Ila and Tsonga exemplifying this combination of linear and circular patterns.

This settlement paradigm proposed by Huffman has several limitations, although Huffman states that it is only a preliminary model and that further research is needed. Firstly, the communities that Huffman uses as examples are not exclusively matrilineal, with the primary groups, the Ba-Yaka and Tsonga, being patrilineal. It is interesting to note, however, that northern Tsonga women have a more central role in the social organisation of their communities than southern Tsonga women (Torday and Joyce 1905, Junod 1912). Furthermore, Turner (1955) states that although some of the communities were matrilineal,

their settlements had no structural differences from those that were patrilineal. Therefore, the link between patrilineal and matrilineal word views and settlement organisation is unclear. Turner (1955) brings this worldview link further into question when he states that it appears that a matrilineal or patrilineal form of social organisation has little or no impact on settlement organisation. This is illustrated by Turner (1955) when he states:

"*…. although there are a number of villages which are said to consist of matrilineal descendants of autochthonous populations. Such villages, however, exhibit no significant structural differences from those of reputed Lunda* [patrilineal] *origin."*

A second limitation of the WSP is that not all settlements had a visible settlement organisation. For example, Torday and Joyce (1905) found no specific organisational settlement patterns with randomly placed huts. However, they may have been arranged with a north-south axis, although this only applied to some settlements, as can be seen in the following statement by Torday and Joyce (1905):

"*The huts of a village are scattered and not arranged in any order, though they are usually, but not always, built with the major axis running north-south; the door may face in either direction".*

An interesting feature of these settlements was that they had no cattle enclosures and that cattle lived in a semi-wild state. In both cases, however, the settlements lacked a central road, with only footpaths linking the houses. The baKoni of Cameroon, another patrilineal community, also used a primarily linear settlement layout that partially supports Huffman's paradigm (Levin 1971). However, these settlements only developed after the German occupation (1886-1914) had started, with significant changes occurring to the settlement organisation of these communities. Furthermore, these linear agglomerated settlements only develop in heavily wooded areas. Before the colonial period, the baKoni constructed scattered settlements containing members of the same lineage (Levin 1971). Therefore, the origin and nature of linear settlements in West Africa need further examination to determine whether they were utilised before European contact.

A third limitation to the WSP is the underlining argument made by Huffman that these communities did not practice lobola and, therefore, had little to no cattle or livestock. It is unclear whether or not Huffman was referring to the specific cultural practices associated with lobola or whether he meant the practices of bridal wealth in general. This becomes an essential question as these communities did practice a form of lobola, although they did not call it lobola. Torday and Joyce state: "*The marriage price is paid to the father of the women…*" (Torday and Joyce 1905). However, it appears currency was the primary means of payment, with goats also being used instead of cattle (Torday and Joyce 1905). It is not uncommon for goats to be valued higher than cattle in West Africa, as this tendency was also found among the northern and southern Tsonga (Junod 1912). Therefore, the undisputed assumption that cattle was always the most sought-after livestock used by Iron Age Farming Communities should be used cautiously. There are enough exceptions to this practice that the cattle dominance hypothesis should first be proven instead of assumed to be present. Even among the Zulu, who were well known for their extensive cattle herds, some military settlements were constructed to protect the sheep/goat herds of the Zulu kings (Webb and Wright 1976). Therefore, just because a culture places a high value on one specific type of livestock does not mean that that livestock was necessarily present at a particular settlement.

The Fourth limitation of Huffman's model is that these communities have had a long history of contact with European powers. Therefore, it is unclear how much of these communities' practices pre-date European contact and how many were later adaptations. The Zulu Kingdom capital of oNdini is a good example of such adaptations. It was constructed in the 1870s by the Zulu king Cetshwayo kaMpanda (1872-1879), who had a European-style rectangular brick structure in his *isigodlo* (Van Schalkwyk 1999). Also, the development of linear settlements among the baKoni due to German colonial policies and the linear street modifications made by the Shona due to British colonial policies further support this limitation (Holleman 1968; Levin 1971). Fifthly, no symbolic or religious significances surrounding rectangular huts or partial linear settlement alignment are mentioned, except for the baKoni. It is also possible that these two elements were adaptations to local geographic and environmental conditions, a view supported by Levin (1971).

Furthermore, although some baKoni settlements had a semi-permanent rectangular hut functioning as a joined living area for male youths, most huts were circular (Levin 1971). This supports Badenhorst's (2009) view that the circular/rectangular distinction between WIAC and EIAC is a modern development. However, the baKoni again shows that this

circular/rectangular distinction may not have existed, as all three communities mentioned used circular and rectangular huts, with the baKoni and Tsonga using primarily circular huts. Huffman's omission of environmental factors as possible causes for these developments is a critical weakness in the paradigm, especially considering that the original name for the paradigm was the Forest Pattern (Huffman 1989).

Considering the many similarities between the Ba-Yaka settlement organisation and the Tsonga, consideration of geographic and environmental factors becomes essential. The Ba-Yaka form part of the WIAC, and the Tsonga the EIAC. Both are primarily patrilineal, with women playing a more central societal role. Both groups' settlements tend to consist of two to three huts following a linear pattern, with cattle enclosures often missing (Torday and Joyce 1905; Junod 1912). Among both groups, goats appear to be valued more highly, often above cattle, than is generally found among southern African communities. Considering that both the Ba-Yaka and the Tsonga lived in heavily wooded areas, this could be an adaptation to environmental factors. For both these communities, keeping cattle in such heavily wooded regions would have resulted in many practical problems, problems not present when keeping goats. The baKoni also provides a problem for Huffman's model, as they are patrilineal and WIAC with a primarily linear settlement organisation, although dating to a more recent period. Therefore, the only common link in these cases is that linear settlements are more prominent in heavily wooded or mountain areas, with circular being more common in open savanna or grassland environments.

Consequently, environmental factors should not be excluded when interpreting settlement organisation, a central argument also made by Hammond-Tooke (1993) regarding southern African settlement organisation. Although the WSP forms part of the overall study of settlements within southern African archaeology, it is not commonly found in southern Africa. Therefore, the Zimbabwean and Central Cattle Patterns are the dominant paradigms in southern African settlement archaeology.

4.2.2 Zimbabwean Pattern

Southern African settlement archaeology can be divided into two main regions: the Zimbabwean plateau and highlands and the rest of southern Africa. This divide is best represented by Great Zimbabwe's iconic and monumental structures, which form the centre of the Zimbabwean Pattern paradigm (ZP) and the iconic Zulu's beehive huts, which form part

of the Central Cattle Pattern (CCP). Often viewed as opposite and opposing settlement paradigms (Huffman 2007), all settlement studies within southern Africa can be grouped into one of these paradigms. The primary divide between these two settlement paradigms is not the importance of cattle but rather the presence or absence of sacred leadership and how this form of leadership was reflected within broader settlement patterns. This is evident by the utilisation of the CCP within the ZP (Pikirayi and Chirikure 2011; Huffman 2007). Therefore, the practice of sacred leadership and how this was reflected in the settlement organisation is central to the ZP (Pikirayi and Chirikure 2011). The ZP would finally be abandoned after the Nguni invasions of the 19th century (Mukwende 2016).

Although sacred leadership is most vividly associated with Great Zimbabwe, the practice is pre- and post-date Great Zimbabwe. It is thought to have originated with Mapungubwe and then later moved north into Zimbabwe (Pikirayi and Chirikure 2011; Huffman 2007; Mitchell 2002). The practice of sacred leadership is reflected in the ZP with the physical separation of the ruling elite from the rest of the population and the introduction of class distinction (Pikirayi and Chirikure 2011; Huffman 2007). The ruler lived in a section located at the back, conceptually called the palace by Huffman, and remains separated from the rest of the population. He was assisted in governing by specifically selected brothers and sisters, with only a few officials living with him in the secluded section of the settlement (Mitchell 2002; Huffman 2007). Only a limited number of buildings (constructed of *daga*) was located in this secluded section, functioning as locations for messengers, herbalist, an audience chamber, a private room for the ruler, as well as a small living area for the wives in the back potion which also used for national rituals (Huffman 2007). Guards surrounded the palace with a court of law for the nobility located within the palace. The commoner's court was situated outside and conceptually on the opposite end of the wives' compound (Huffman 2007). Members of the upper royal class lived around the palace with associated guards. The commoners lived west of this royal section (Huffman 2007).

Various limitations are associated with this paradigm. Pikirayi and Chirikure (2011) have launched a multi-layered critique of both the ZP model and the analytical approach used in its development. Their argument has three main points that directly affect the ZP and its usefulness and implications for the utility of the other settlement paradigms. Firstly, they argue that settlements cannot be examined only by using large-scale general models such as the ZP (Pikirayi and Chirikure 2011). They acknowledge that similar practices and patterns may be present in multiple settlements, but each settlement has specific evolutionary factors that

need to be examined, both on the local and regional levels. Secondly, they argue that the material culture present at Great Zimbabwe does not match the settlement's structural model, as Huffman proposed. In this regard, their main focus is on the function of the Hill Complex and the Great Enclosure and their impact on the interpretation of the settlement's structural model (Pikirayi and Chirikure 2011). Pikirayi and Chirikure (2011) argue that the “palace” of Great Zimbabwe was not restricted to only the Hill Complex as claimed by Huffman, but that it moved to different areas during the occupation of the settlement and that there is sufficient evidence that the Great Enclosure was also used as a “palace”. Therefore, the location of sacred leadership within the settlement was not limited to only one area as required by the ZP model but moved around due to the effects of leadership succession battle outcomes. Thirdly, they argue that other Zimbabwean sites, such as those associated with Khami, might not be adequate in understanding the nature and development of Great Zimbabwe. This argument has two elements related to it. Firstly, they argue that the origins of Great Zimbabwe might not be linked to the development and decline of Mapungubwe, as put forward by Huffman. Secondly, they also question the chronology of Great Zimbabwe used by Huffman, arguing that the site was occupied sooner and for longer than Huffman’s hypothesis indicates (Pikirayi and Chirikure 2011). Therefore, they question the assumption that the settlement model used at Mapungubwe was transferred to Great Zimbabwe after the decline of Mapungubwe. They argue that the system used at Great Zimbabwe was intentionally different from that of Mapungubwe (Pikirayi and Chirikure 2011). Secondly, Khami and its associated sites might not represent a continuation of the style used in Great Zimbabwe. Instead, they argue that Khami represented contemporary and competing political-ideological systems (Pikirayi and Chirikure 2011). Therefore, sites associated with Mapungubwe and Khami cannot be used uncritically to understand Great Zimbabwe, as there is no clear evidence that one gave rise to the other. In turn, this raises the question of the validity/usefulness of the whole Zimbabwean settlement paradigm.

There are several other limitations to the model as proposed by Huffman. Firstly, Huffman does not explain why he distinguishes between areas that were physically located at the rear of the settlement instead of conceptually located at the rear. Why, if it was important for a section to be located conceptually at the rear, was the physical placement of the corresponding elements not placed in the actual rear of the settlement? Why was this dichotomy between physical and conceptually practised within the Zimbabwean paradigm but not within the CCP? Therefore, if the ZP developed from the CCP, why was the physical and conceptual (symbolic) relationship separated within the ZP model but maintained in the CCP model? Secondly, Pikirayi and Chirikure (2011) mentioned that due to the limited

understanding of the rest of the settlement, it is challenging to develop such an all-inclusive settlement model when the relationship between the various parts of the settlement is poorly understood or not known. Thirdly, the link between sacred leadership and the development of the ZP pattern is unclear. Sacred leadership and class distinction also developed among the northern Nguni; however, their settlement patterns followed a very different development than that of the Zimbabwean Plateau. Why did the rise of sacred leadership at Great Zimbabwe, and Mapungubwe by extension, develop into the ZP model but not among the northern Nguni? If the development of the ZP settlement organisation is linked to the development of sacred leadership, why is this pattern not repeated throughout the rest of southern Africa? This also brings to question how sacred leadership can be defined. What constitutes sacred or divine leadership, and what is the nature of the association between this political ideology and overall settlement organization?

4.2.3 Central Cattle Pattern

The Central Cattle Pattern (CCP) is the dominant settlement paradigm in southern African archaeology. It was found throughout southern Africa, even within the ZP settlement model (Huffman 2007:26). The CCP model is primarily associated with the work of Thomas Huffman (1986). However, the model itself pre-dates its utilisation by Huffman. It was first proposed by Adam Kuper in 1982 as a secondary support base to illustrate the importance of cattle in Nguni society. Kuper's work focused on the northern Nguni bridal wealth system and cattle's use as a means of payment. Therefore, the settlement model illustrates the importance of cattle to the northern Nguni, although Kuper does extend this to the Sotho/Tswana. However, he did not specifically develop a model for the Sotho/Tswana but only expanded the model in a general fashion to include them. As a result, Kuper's model was not intended to be used as a definitive final model for the last 2000 years of southern African settlement organisation. Kuper's model was based on the collective works of other ethnographers such as Hilda Kuper, Isaac Schapera and Johan Holleman. Although Kuper's (1982) main focus was on the bridal wealth system of the southern African communities, he nonetheless brought together the collective works of many ethnographers into a single coherent settlement pattern. However, Kuper's model was developed using modern (19th and 20th century) ethnographic studies, primarily Zulu and Swazi, and was meant to be used for contemporary ethnographic studies. Huffman (1986) adapted Kuper's model for archaeological purposes, primarily by suggesting that this model can be traced back to the Early Iron Age and was not limited to "modern" societies (Huffman 1986). Therefore, the CCP is an ethnographic model developed by studying modern northern Nguni societies. It was then reverse-engineered and applied to an archaeological context, then projected into the past to be used on societies with no

corroborative ethnographic information. This process forms the basis of much of the critique levelled at the paradigm.

Before examining the critiques and limitations of this paradigm, it is necessary first to examine the settlement model proposed by Huffman. The model developed by Kuper forms the basis of our understanding of northern Nguni (specifically Zulu and Swazi) settlements and will be discussed in detail in the following section. The model proposed by Huffman primarily states that the CCP was characterised by a male-dominated central area (Huffman 2007), giving the settlement paradigm its name. The cattle enclosure and meeting area of the settlement's adult male population were within this area. Other activities associated with this area were trials, political discussions, long-term grain storage, a public smithy and headman/chiefs (or other important individuals) burial places (Huffman 2007). In this regard, it was associated with men and was the men's domain. It was surrounded by a female-dominated area containing residential and storage huts and kitchens (Huffman 2007). These huts were arranged according to seniority, determined from right to left (Huffman 2007), with "insignificant" variation regarding how seniority was reflected via hut placement. Settlements can also be regarded as having had a sacred rear and secular front section (Huffman 2007). Huffman further states that this pattern was limited to EIAC that were patrilineal, utilised a bridal wealth system, with cattle being the preferred means of payments, male hereditary leadership and a positive view regarding the role of ancestors in the daily lives of the people (Huffman 2007).

The process in which the CCP paradigm was developed is a critical, if indirect, part of the criticism raised against it. The name of the paradigm in itself is problematic as to how you define a central cattle enclosure. The model's name implies that there was only one central enclosure, a view supported by the diagrams and photos provided by Huffman and other ethnographers such as Kuper and Holleman. In the case of Kuper and Holleman, this was understandable as they are discussing contemporary northern Nguni settlements that only had one central cattle enclosure, which was not the case in Huffman's work. Although Huffman states that there can be multiple cattle enclosures in the central area (Huffman 2007), his diagrams and the general images used when referencing this system imply a different view. Therefore, the name of the paradigm is misleading, as the significance in the model was not the central cattle enclosure/s but rather the importance and function of the central open area that may also have contained cattle. In this regard, the importance of the central area was signified by the location of the cattle enclosures within this area, for it is due to the importance of this area that cattle were also kept there, not the other way around. The presence of the

central area in settlements without cattle, such as among the Tsonga (Junod 1912), supports this view. Even in settlements where cattle were kept, this open central area was also found, with cattle kept in surrounding enclosures (Maggs 1982; Hall and Maggs 1979). This is further highlighted by the fact that sheep or goats were also held in the enclosures in the centre of the settlement (Junod 1912; Badenhorst 2009). A second limitation of this paradigm is the assertion by Huffman that the differences regarding how seniority was illustrated within a settlement "…*are merely variations on the same theme*" (Huffman 2007). Kuper mentions these variations are *"….perhaps not without significance in the marking of ethnic identity*" (Kuper 1986). When Kuper distinguishes between the Mpondo, Bomvana, Zulu and Swazi by how hut placement reflects seniority (Kuper 1986), it indicates that these variations have greater significance than mere variations on a theme. Therefore, examining and focusing on the number of variations, instead of dismissing them as insignificant, might help develop a more precise model. Such a model might determine cultural affinity and, potentially, trace migration routes and historical associations between the various southern African communities.

A third limitation to this paradigm is the contradiction in the separation Huffman created between the CCP and the WSP. Huffman states that the WSP reflects a matrilineal ideology or worldview, whereas the CCP reflects a patrilineal one (Huffman 2007). However, many of the communities that Huffman used in the WSP's development are patrilineal. Turner (1955) similarly indicated that there appeared to be no significant difference in settlement organisation between matrilineal Lunda and patrilineal Lunda communities. This view is further supported by Junod (1912) and Colson (1962, 1968) when they state that the Tsonga organised their settlement in either a linear or circular fashion. Huffman argues that some matrilineal WIAC communities (such as the Ila and Tsonga) incorporated the CCP into their settlement organisation. However, the spatial organisation of the interior of the huts remained unaffected (Huffman 2007). Therefore, why would a matrilineal worldview (therefore linear) community incorporate a patrilineal worldview (circular) into their settlement pattern yet not transplant this into their internal hut arrangement? This is especially strange considering the close link between settlement organisation and hut organisation that Huffman emphasises when he states: "*At a lower scale the same dimensions apply to the great hut itself*" (Huffman 2007). The link between a hut's internal organisation and the settlement's associated organisation is central to Huffman's argument, and his lack of clarity regarding this contradiction is a critical limitation to both paradigms. Hall (1986) criticised the model similarly regarding the nature of the CCP model and the associated worldview. Hall (1986) provides two main criticisms of the CCP model. Firstly, he points out that the model was based on studies done on a historical

population and did not consider the impact of change. Huffman (1982) argued that the Zimbabwean Pattern developed out of the CCP model and can be seen as a further evolution of the model. Hall (1986) pointed out that if both the CCP and ZP are linked, then the worldview that created one should have continued into the other. Hall argued that a society's worldview should survive the political and economic changes associated with settlement enlargement and an increase in wealth (Hall 1986). Hall argued that the model did not explain why the 19th century Zulu kings, faced with similar changes, modified the CCP model to accommodate these changes, a path not taken by the Zimbabwean Culture (Hall 1986). Secondly, Hall (1986) argues that an essential component of the CCP model is the cognitive approach used by Huffman, which was not clearly defined. In this argument, Hall asked how two different cognitive processes could exist within the same economic system yet not be mutually connected (Hall 1986). He also questions how one cognitive approach could be changed and interlinked, such as decoration on pottery reflecting ethnicity, yet had no impact on other cognitive approaches, such as architecture (Hall 1986). Another point of uncertainty is what specifically constitutes a linear or circular settlement. Some settlements in KwaZulu-Natal have multiple enclosures (Maggs 1982), surrounded by huts built in linear alignment with each other, thus giving the settlement a linear appearance. Therefore, does this constitute a linear settlement pattern or a circular one?

A fourth limitation in this paradigm is the total exclusion of geographic and environmental influence on settlement patterns by Huffman and Kuper. Huffman and Kuper's model argues that social norms dictate the origination of these settlements and, therefore, do not allow for the possibility of external factors in determining settlement organisation. However, neither states that environmental factors did not have an impact; these factors are not examined. Badenhorst (2009) has argued that a circular settlement layout with an enclosure in the centre was the best pattern for an open savannah area with predators like lions, leopards and hyenas a constant threat to livestock and the occupants of the settlement. Badenhorst made a valid point when stating that the CCP form was the most suitable for a savannah area since this form has also been found in Khoisan settlements (Boonzaier *et al.* 2017; Jerardino and Maggs 2007; Maggs 1974b). Furthermore, several stories are related in the first-hand accounts of individuals and livestock being attacked within the settlement by predators, even with the outer fencing present (Moffat 1846; Kirby 1940b; Burrow 1971). Similarly, many references are made to architectural designs being followed to protect people from attacks by predators, primarily lions (Steedman 1835; Moffat 1846; Gordon-Cummings 1856; Kirby 1940b; Wallis 1945; Burrow 1971; Lye 1975). In Moffat's account, he recounts the following event that illustrates the frequency of these types of encounters:

"One night we heard a woman screaming in the town, and, on inquiry in the morning, found that a hyena had carried away her child, which had happened to wander a few yards from the door. On our expressing astonishment, we were informed that such occurrences were very common, and that after night fall the hyenas were in the habit of strolling through all the lanes of the town, and carrying away whatever they could seize. As these animals were thus accustomed to gorge themselves with human flesh, it became extremely dangerous to pass the night in the open field, especially on the confines of a town." (Moffat 1846:400-401).

Although social norms and symbolism are often important determinants in understanding and reconstructing settlements, the importance and influence of environmental and geographic factors, especially in a region as diverse as sub-Saharan Africa, should not be overlooked.

However, there does appear to be a difference regarding settlement organisation between West and East Africa. In western Africa, settlements tend to be linear, whereas eastern settlements tend to be circular. However, these areas were also linked to environmental conditions, as linear settlements tended to occur in heavily wooded areas, whereas circular settlements were found in open grasslands or savannas. This link should not be taken too far, as the Tsonga also built circular settlements in heavily wooded areas, although rare (Junod 1912). Another possibility is that a circular pattern might have had religious significance (Biermann 1971, Levin 1971; Maggs 1976). Biermann (1971) states that a circular organisation encompasses all aspects of Zulu culture, from settlement organisation to beadwork and baskets. Maggs (1976:42) quotes Rapoport (1969:77), stating that some African communities did not have a word for straight.

Furthermore, Levin (1971) states that although the baKosi did build their settlements in straight lines, they always incorporated a bend or curve at the ends of the settlement. This curve or bend was to ensure that there was no clear line of sight between the opposite ends of the settlement. The baKosi believed this was essential as it provided the inhabitants with a means of escape and defending them from witchcraft, as witches needed a direct line of sight (Levin 1971). Consequently, the use of either circular or linear settlement organisation can, and most probably does, have many different factors determining the use of one instead of the other. Furthermore, the Khoisan also constructed circular settlements with central enclosures (Maggs 1974b), and they are a community that is linguistically and culturally distinct from the

Iron Age Farmers on which the CCP was based. However, these communities share the common practice of pastoralism, again highlighting the importance of function in this debate. Maggs (1974a) also states that the circular shape of settlements is characteristic of sub-Sahara Africa. He further says that a circular organisation is the most efficient style to use as it allows for the maximum amount of space to be enclosed for the least amount of effort and material.

Therefore, arguments regarding the validity of the CCP should be directed towards its usefulness as an analytical model for understanding and interpreting settlement organisations. Additionally, the symbolic element of the CCP, regarding polygamy and a patrilineal worldview, is not constant. For example, some societies that utilised a settlement pattern with a centrally located enclosure were not exclusively patrilineal, such as the Tsonga. Additionally, it is unclear if or how a circular pattern represents a polygamist worldview, as there is no clear link between the use of a circular organisation and polygamy beyond that some communities with circular settlements, such as the Nguni, are polygamist. Therefore, as an analytical tool, the CCP indicates that the settlement in question is located in sub-Sahara Africa, as neither the symbolic element, cultural affinity, worldview, the presence of or type of livestock penned remains constant.

Moreover, there are many examples of a circular settlement that does not have a central enclosure but rather a centrally located open space that may or may not have house livestock. Consequently, the utility of the CCP as an analytical tool to interpret settlement patterns is limited, and in some cases, such as the military settlements of the northern Nguni, only obscures the interpretation of these settlements. This debate surrounding the symbolic versus functional significance of both the CCP and the WSP, and to a lesser extent, the ZP, is a recurring feature. In this regard, the argument is not centred around whether one or the other element is possible but rather which is the driving motivation.

These three models (WSP, ZP and CCP) reflect the archaeological settlement organisation currently believed to have existed in southern Africa. These models have been developed by utilising archaeological and ethnographic information to establish a general, all-inclusive settlement model for each of the three ideological models, as put forward by Huffman. However, such a general model is of limited use in this study, as the differences and variations

that were present within each society are of critical importance when analysing Matabele settlement evolution.

4.3 Nguni settlement patterns

The Nguni can be divided between the northern (Zulu, Swazi, Ndebele [Matabele], Ngoni and Shangaan) and the southern Nguni, which includes many sub-groups, of which the Xhosa, Mpondo and Bhaca are the best known (Hammond-Tooke 1993). Although this division appears straightforward, the historical development of the Nguni is very complex and lies beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, only crucial elements will be highlighted in this section that directly impact each group's location and settlement organisation. The Nguni form part of the Kwale branch of the Urewe pottery tradition (Huffman 2007). Although the use of pottery traditions as a means of tracking and dating, population traditions is a highly contested subject; it does indicate that the Nguni have their origins in East Africa (Hammond-Tooke 1993). A believed East African origin for the Nguni has been further supported by Ancient DNA studies**,** which have also proven an East African link for populations living within KwaZulu-Natal during the Early Iron Age. It should be noted, however, that these communities were not Nguni but rather the ancestors of the modern Nguni. The ancestors of the Nguni are believed to have moved south down the east African coast, through Mozambique and entered South Africa sometime around the third century AD (Maggs 1989). Boeyens (2003) also states that linguistic studies undertaken among the Xhosa and Tswana similarly support the hypothesis that the Nguni and Sotho-Tswana languages moved into Southern Africa in two separate streams originating south of the modern Kenyan border.

It is currently unclear whether the Tsonga formed part of the Kwale branch or the more northern Nkope branch. Depending on which branch they formed part of the Tsonga and the Nguni, they can either share a common ancestral link in Mozambique or the Tsonga are unrelated to the Nguni and moved into the Mozambican area later. When considering the similarities between the Tsonga and the Nguni settlements, the origin of the Tsonga becomes critically important in understanding the origins of the Nguni settlement patterns and the CCP in general. The ancestors of the Nguni systematically moved further south down the South African coast, with communities staying behind as others moved south. Eventually, a cultural and linguistic divide developed between those who had moved south and those who remained in the north, resulting in the modern separation between the northern and southern Nguni (Hammond-Tooke 1993). However, during the late 18th century and early 19th century, various large-scale migrations occurred, with northern Nguni communities moving out of KwaZulu-

Natal. Some communities moved south towards the southern Nguni (such as the Bhaca), and others moved north onto the interior escarpment of southern Africa, such as the Matabele, Ngoni and Shangaan.

During the 18th century, a change occurred among the northern Nguni, resulting in large-scale social-political changes among these communities. The causes of these changes are still a topic of intense historical debate (Hamilton 1995); however, these changes resulted in a new form of social-political organisation within southern Africa with a corresponding shift in settlement organisation. Within the archaeological record, these changes can be observed in a marked difference in settlement organisation between settlements built pre-dating these changes (Hall and Maggs 1979; Maggs 1982) and those constructed during the late 18th and 19th centuries. The iconic Zulu homestead, well known in popular imagination and historiography, has so far not been found to have been constructed before the 18th century, with no mention in the ethnography or first-hand accounts of the pre-18th century settlements. However, there are references in the ethnographic accounts that in the period pre-dating the Zulu Kingdom, often called the “old” or “olden days”, settlements were constructed with multiple cattle enclosures (Webb and Wright 1986). Such a view is supported by the excavations of Nqabeni (Hall and Maggs 1979) and Mgoduyanuka (Maggs 1982) as well as the survey done of Siklibeni by Becker (van der Merwe 2015).

As a result, this study will separate the settlement patterns of the Nguni between the northern and southern Nguni, with the northern Nguni again divided between the pre- and post-Zulu Kingdom patterns. Although this modern northern Nguni pattern was found among all the northern Nguni, the rise of the Zulu Kingdom is used as a chronological marker. It is unclear when the one system transformed into the other. However, it is known that the Zulu Kingdom only used the settlement model now regarded as the northern Nguni settlement model. Therefore, the start of the Zulu Kingdom can be used as the last possible date for the end of this transition.

4.3.1 Northern Nguni

As mentioned above, the northern Nguni originated in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa, with some communities migrating north during the 19th century. However, only five communities remained after the conflicts of the late 18th and early 19th centuries ended. These

are the Zulu (South Africa), Swazi (Eswatini), Matabele (Zimbabwe), Ngoni (Malawi and southern Tanzania) and Shangaan/Gaza Nguni (Mozambique). Although the South African Ndebele originated in KwaZulu-Natal and are of Nguni origin, their migration north pre-dates the 18th century, and they have also adopted Sotho/Tswana culture. Similarly, the South African Ndebele does not represent a particular group or community. Instead, it is a general term for all the pre-19th century Nguni that migrated into the interior. Therefore, the South African Ndebele are not considered part of the Nguni and are classified as forming part of the Sotho/Tswana despite their Nguni origin.

When examining the settlement archaeology of the northern Nguni, a clear distinction can be seen between the period pre- and post-dating the rise of the Zulu Kingdom. Whether these changes resulted from the Zulu rise to dominance is still under debate (Etherington 1995). That the modern Nguni settlement model is found among communities that the Zulu never subjugated supports the hypothesis that the model predates the Zulu Kingdom. Oral traditions further support the hypothesis that the Zulu did not create the model. Many documented oral traditions indicate that many of the changes historically associated with the Zulu developed years before the rise of the Zulu Kingdom. However, this debate is complicated by the limited number of excavated settlements dated to the later Iron Age period within KwaZulu-Natal. However, the 18th century appears to mark a turning point regarding the settlement organisation within KwaZulu-Natal. A clear difference can be seen between those dating to the early 18th century and those dating to the later 18th and 19th centuries. Therefore, this section will differentiate between northern Nguni settlement patterns predating the 18th century and those dating to the 19th century. The time, nature and reason for these changes are unknown and require further research.

4.3.1.1 Pre-19th century settlement patterns (type Z and B)

Reconstructing pre-19th century settlements within KwaZulu-Natal is a complex process as different settlement types have been documented, contrary to the seeming uniformity of 19th century and later northern Nguni settlements. By comparing settlements excavated in KwaZulu-Natal with other settlements excavated on the interior of the highveld, a pattern emerges that allows for a partial reconstruction of the settlement patterns present in KwaZulu-

Natal. However, this pattern applies only to the later part of the Iron Age Farming period (approximately 16th century to early 18th century) and does not necessarily apply to the Early Iron Age Farming period. South African settlement archaeology often utilises type settlement patterns in analysing and contextualising settlements. These type settlements were first introduced by Mason (1962, 1968) and then modified by Tim Maggs (1974a,b) and have been expanded on in subsequent years. However, Maggs' work was initially limited to the Free State and the southern parts of Gauteng and North-West provinces. Another type pattern that Martin Hall and Tim Maggs later introduced (1979), called type B (Fig. 2) and very similar to the type V described by Maggs, is based on settlements in the northern interior of KwaZulu-Natal. Type B directly impacts this project as this area corresponds with the region believed to have been occupied by the Kumalo and many other communities that formed part of the 18th and 19th-century disruptions.

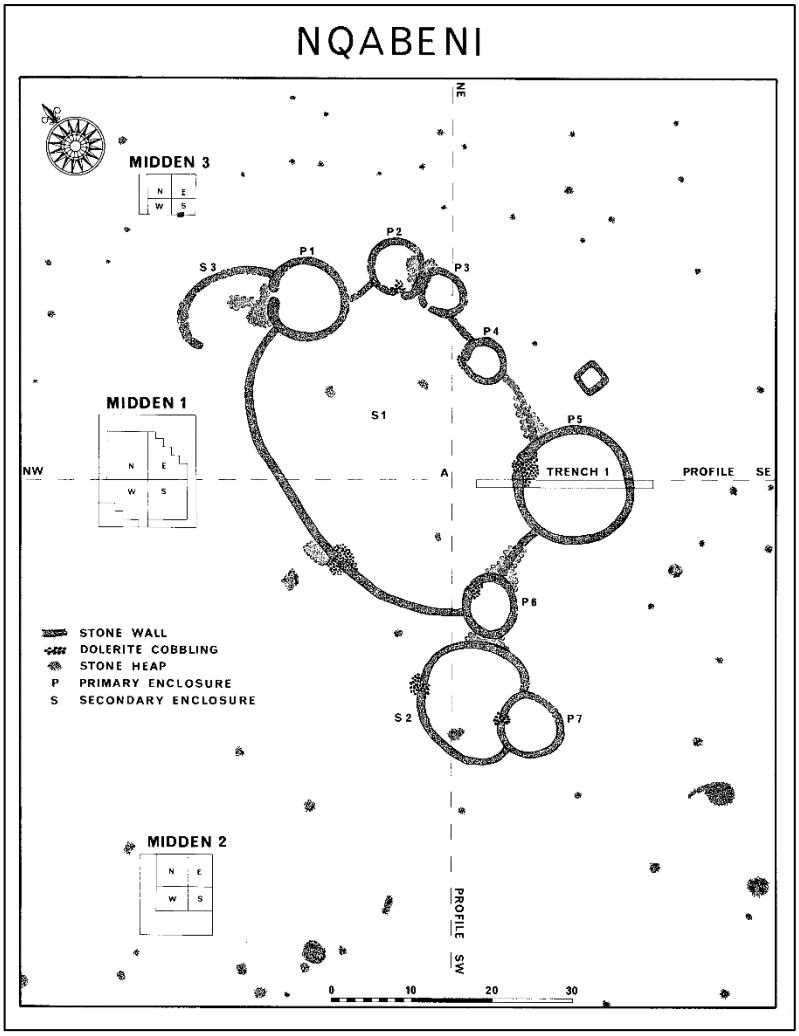


Figure 2: Example of a Type B settlement (Hall 1979: 162)

Two settlement patterns that have many organisational similarities to each other are type V and type B settlements. Although the organisational patterns are similar, the architectural styles and material remains associated with type B settlements are markedly different from type V and can be used to distinguish the two settlement types from each other (Hall and Maggs 1979). As with type V settlements, multiple primary enclosures (between two and nine but may also be more) were linked with secondary stonewalling to each other. This linking of the primary enclosures created a secondary enclosure in the open space between them, leaving only one entrance (Hall and Maggs 1979). As with type V settlements, livestock was

kept in the primary enclosures, not the large central secondary enclosure (Hall and Maggs 1979). In this regard, the secondary enclosure formed an open space in the centre of the settlement, a feature that was found throughout sub-equatorial Africa. Huts were located around the primary enclosures, and no evidence was found of outer walling surrounding the settlement, again similar to type V settlements. The primary structural difference between type V and type B settlements is that type V settlements do not have the uphill-facing cobbled stone entrances characteristic of type B settlements (Hall and Maggs 1979). Type B settlements were found between the Mzinyathi and white Mfolozi rivers, which also formed part of the core area of the later Zulu Kingdom. Settlements with similar architectural styles but different material cultures have also been found within the Tugela basin (Hall and Maggs 1979). These structural similarities might indicate different variations of the type B settlement, indicating that type B settlements were widely spread throughout the interior of KwaZulu-Natal.

Another site excavated in KwaZulu-Natal with a settlement organisation that does not match any of the other type settlements is Mogoduyanuka (Maggs 1982). Three features were found at the site that distinguished it from the other type settlements and set it apart from the general CCP paradigm. Firstly, the nature and dispersal of the underlining modular units found on-site do not match other patterns. Each modular unit consisted of a primary enclosure, with one or two secondary enclosures constructed against the primary enclosure in a semi-circle shape. These secondary enclosures were similar or smaller than the primary enclosure, with secondary walling absent in some modular units (Maggs 1982). Huts were constructed around the primary enclosures at varying intervals from each other. An interesting feature was the considerable distance from each hut to the next and from the hut to the primary enclosure. Although clear patterns regarding these intervals weren't present, some huts had a distance of up to 30m from each other or the primary enclosure. Most of the huts were constructed of perishable material. However, some huts had paved floors, the primary enclosures faced uphill, and many had cobbled entrances (Maggs 1982). The uphill-facing cobbled entrances of the primary enclosures link Mogoduyanuka with the type B identified by Hall and Maggs. The paved hut floor also connects with the type V settlements identified by Maggs. However, the presence of both these features and the associated material remains differentiates these settlements from both type settlements.

Multiple modular units are located on-site, each at various distances from the other, with no clear placement pattern (Maggs 1982). However, one exception was found, settlement unit 2, which consisted of nine modular units. Five units were more common in the region than nine.

These nine modular units were constructed in a linear pattern at regular intervals from each other (Maggs 1982). Settlement unit 2 marks the second feature distinguishing these settlements from others in southern Africa. Although this linear alignment was found at many sites throughout the region, it is uncommon for the rest of South Africa. However, it is interesting to note that the Tsonga also use linear settlement alignments, as do many other sites around the Zambezi and within central Africa. This link is further enhanced by the third unique feature found at Mogoduyanuka, which was the earthworks found at settlement unit 1 (Maggs 1982). Maggs noted (1982) that these earthworks may have been the only Iron Age earthworks south of the Zambezi. However, it is interesting that the Langa Ndebele also used earthwork walls in their settlements (Jackson 1981), perhaps indicating an ancestral link. Another interesting similarity between Mogoduyanuka and the type B settlement was that in both settlement variations, the number of settlement modules was between five and nine, and both sites were representative of regional patterns. This, in turn, indicates that there may have been more variation in settlement construction before the 19th century than after.

4.3.1.2 Nineteenth-century and later settlement patterns.

As the main protagonist of the CCP settlement pattern form, Huffman argued that its layout reflected the male-dominated aspect of Nguni culture (Huffman 2007). Consequently, the CCP was seen as a gendered pattern due to the divide between male and female spaces (Krige 1965; Kuper 1980; Huffman 2004; Huffman 2007). This circular layout illustrated the dominance of the polygamous family, although non-family members may also have lived within the settlement in a client relationship with the family (Krige 1965; Kuper 1982; Hall 1984). In a Nguni homestead (*umuzi*), the great hut where the chief or family head resides was situated above the cattle enclosure in a direct line with the entrance of the settlement (Holleman 1940; Hoernlè 1962; Krige 1965; Kuper 1980; Kuper 1982; Mack *et al.* 1991; Knight 1995; Huffman 2001; Huffman 2007; Badenhorst 2009). The principal hut was to the left of the great hut and belonged to either the chief's mother or his principal wife (Hoernlè 1962; Krige 1965; Kuper 1980; Knight 1995; Huffman 2001; Huffman 2007; Badenhorst 2009). The great hut also had a left (female) and right (male) divide, which partially followed the same principle as the settlement (Huffman 2001; Huffman 2007). Variation was also found among the Nguni regarding which side was considered male or female (Kuper 1980). The great hut was also the living place for the chief and his principal wife. However, it was not uncommon for the principal wife to have had her hut immediately to the left. The chief sometimes also had a hut reserved for his private use, situated to the right of the principal wife's hut. If the chief decided not to have a private hut, the second wife's hut would be in this area (Hoernlè 1962; Krige 1965; Bryant 1967; Knight 1995; Huffman 2001; Huffman 2007; Badenhorst 2009).

Each wife had a private hut, seniority indicated from left to right, stretching from the great hut towards the settlement's entrance. Status was also marked by the proximity of a hut concerning the great hut (Hoernlè 1962; Bryant 1967; Krige 1965; Kuper 1980; Kuper 1982; Hall 1984; Stuart and Malcolm 1986; Knight 1995; Huffman 2001; Mitchell 2002; Huffman 2007; Badenhorst 2009). Each hut had individual cooking and storage areas along with grain bins. Children considered old enough not to live with their mothers were given separate huts, although more than one child may have lived within it. Children's huts followed the same pattern as the wives, with huts to the left of the great hut being more senior than those to the right. As boys matured to adulthood, they received individual huts in the same area as the children. Married men left the family *umuzi* and erected their *umuzi* nearby (Hoernlè 1962; Kuper 1982; Hall 1984; Stuart and Malcolm 1986; Huffman 2001).

Family clients and retainers would have constructed their huts at the bottom of the settlement closest to the entrance. Sons living at the family *umuzi,* referred to as *indlunkulu*, had a hut at the settlement's gate. Retainers were not viewed as part of the family; instead, they worked for the chief or family head in return for support (Krige 1965; Kuper 1982; Hall 1984). Aristocratic settlements would also have had one or two huts located at the entrance of the settlement (*izimVali*) that acted as gatekeepers with an additional hut for the night watchmen (*umVakashi*) (Krige 1965; Kuper 1982). The cattle byre was also divided into two sections. Calves were kept in a separate area of the enclosure closest to the great hut, and this enclosure was also where the chief would perform his religious rites. Bulls and cows were kept together in the rest of the enclosure while pens for the sheep and goats were constructed outside of the settlement, although, rarely, they were also kept within the settlement but not within the byre (Krige 1965; Kuper 1982; Hall 1984). Depending on the size of the settlement and the cattle herd, the settlement may also have had separate enclosures for different groups of cattle within the main cattle byre (Parkington and Cronin 1979). At the top of *umuzi* in the area of the great hut, there may also have been two smaller entrances, one to the left and one to the right, with strangers and visitors forbidden to use this entrance; they were only allowed to use the *umuzi*'s main entrance (Krige 1965; Kuper 1982). When it was still common practice to store weapons in the *umuzi*, a special hut (*indlu yezikhali*) was built on ten-foot poles in the top left-hand side of the *umuzi* (Krige 1965; Kuper 1982).

A Nguni *umuzi* was also seen as having a left/right, up/down and an inner/outer divide (Kuper 1982). The left/right divide, primarily associated with the male/female divide, was also seen as a divide between members of the same gender regarding their status. It was often assumed

that the right side represented a higher status than the left. Yet, the decision of which side was superior to the other differed from one group to another, with no accepted general practice for either (Kuper 1982). An up/down divide also represented a temporal divide. A “permanent” section was situated at the top of the homestead, with a “temporary” section located at the bottom (Kuper 1982). “Permanent” referred to those members who stayed at the *umuzi*, such as the chief/family head and his wives, with “temporary” referring to those who would eventually leave, such as the sons and daughters (Kuper 1982). This permanent/temporary divide was used in hut placement for those living in the *umuzi* and did not refer to people’s daily movements.

Lastly, the inner/outer divide represented safety, with the inner part of the *umuzi* being the safest. Unprepared crops were stored outside the *umuzi* and, after refinement as food or beer, were moved inside the *umuzi*. Similarly, cattle were slaughtered outside the *umuzi* and cooked and eaten inside (Krige 1965; Kuper 1982). Grain was threshed on a site (*isibuya*) prepared explicitly for this purpose outside the settlement and was usually fenced and connected to the outer fence. Aristocratic homesteads may have had one *isibuya* for each section, with an entrance leading into the settlement (Krige 1965). Grain was sometimes temporarily stored in these areas, in huts made of grass and placed on wooden platforms. However, the primary granaries for long-term storage were located within the cattle byre with no noticeable surface features indicating the location of these granaries (Krige 1965; Kuper 1982; Huffman 2001; Huffman 2007; Badenhorst 2009). Each section of the *umuzi* also had its storage area for grain, vegetables and beer (Krige 1965).

The above model represents the conceptual layout of a standard CCP. However, this pattern had regional variations since landscapes and local cultures differed. For example, each clan within the larger northern Nguni culture had a specific settlement structure and layout variation, but the basic circular layout remained constant (Kuper 1980; Kuper 1982). One variant was that the principal and second wife’s huts were located on the left side of the great hut, with the third wife’s hut being the first on the right-hand side (Kuper 1982; Huffman 2001). A more significant variant was the orientation of the settlement and hut entrances (Kuper 1980; Kuper 1982). Theoretically, the entry of both the hut and the settlement should face downhill, with some sources (e.g. Samuelson 1929) stating that east was the preferred direction. However, an ethnographic study done by the Archaeology Department of the Natal Museum (Mack *et al.* 1991) found that the only determining factor to entrance orientation was that a settlement’s

entrance should be facing downhill, and not any particular direction, a conclusion supported by Krige (1965) and Hall (1984).

Even though this study by the Natal Museum was done on modern settlements, the settlements followed traditional approaches to settlement layout. As a result, it can be safely assumed that they would follow similar practices to that of their archetypes. In the study, they found both western and eastern-facing entrances, with no mention being made by ethnographic sources of a preference for either direction. Although more entrances faced east than west, this could be attributed to the predominance of eastern-facing slopes in their study area (Mack *et al.* 1991). Maggs (1988) similarly found that a settlement entrance was determined by the direction of the hill's slope. Bryant (1967) mentioned that some hut entrances faced west to receive more sunlight. Other variants can be seen at Nqabeni, which Martin Hall and Tim Maggs excavated in the 1970s (Hall and Maggs 1979). Nqabeni is situated in the northern part of the White Mfolozi River valley, with the entrance to the settlement facing uphill (Hall and Maggs 1979). Mack *et al.* (1991) noted in their study area that some great huts were situated at right angles to the cattle byre. The explanation was that the prevailing wind should not blow directly into the hut owing to the danger that fire embers posed to thatched huts and the inconvenience the smoke would have caused the inhabitants (Mack *et al.* 1991). Thus, it can be seen that local environmental conditions could have resulted in regional variations regarding settlement layout and patterning.

Kuper (1982) also argued that variations in settlement organisation were another means of representing cultural differences and status. An important person such as a diviner may alter his *umuzi* layout to any degree to emphasise his position, as in the case of the diviner Laduma Madela, whose *umuzi* was the reverse of the "traditional" *umuzi* and had no central cattle byre (Kuper 1980; Kuper 1982). Kuper's hypothesis is supported by observations made of the amaPondo by Alan Gardiner during the 1830s. Gardiner observed that many amaPondo settlements had a small enclosure that wasn't centrally located and that many settlements had no outer fence (Gardiner 1836). Similarly, Catherine Barter also observed a settlement in the northeastern part of KwaZulu-Natal that consisted of two settlements. Both were under the control of the same family head, and the fences were built almost against each other. Interestingly, only one had an enclosure where the cattle were kept (Barter 1866). George Champion also visited a Zulu settlement with guard houses at each entrance and constructed outside the settlement (Booth 1967). Although there was a high degree of uniformity regarding

settlement organisation among the northern Nguni, it is clear that a range of individual variations also occurred.

Each part of the settlement had both a ceremonial and symbolic meaning associated with it. As expected, the most important part of the settlement was the centrally located cattle byre (Kuper 1982; Huffman 2001; Huffman 2004; Huffman 2007; Badenhorst 2009). This area formed the centre of the clan's religious and political lives in general, and it was where the chief would have held court sessions and meetings with his advisors. The council of elders called the *ibandla*, would have gathered in an area, also called the *ibandla,* which was either located at the area immediately in front of the cattle byre or just outside the settlement's main entrance (Kuper 1982). Furthermore, raised and lowered grain bins used for long-term storage were within the byre (Huffman 2001). Manufacturing brass and shields possibly also occurred within the byre in addition to serving as a burial place for prominent individuals (Huffman 2001). Ash middens were located at the settlement's entrance, with variations concerning the location on the left, right, or both sides of the settlement entrance (Van der Merwe *et al.* 1989; Mack *et al.* 1991). The outer area, between the cattle byre and the outer fence, was associated with women. This area contained residential huts with their associated kitchens and grain bins as well as functioning as a burial site for the women (Huffman 2001)

An interesting feature indicated by the archaeological record is that before the *Mfecane/Difaqane*, wider variation existed in settlement design among the grassland Nguni than the uniformity of the coastal Nguni (Maggs 1989). These variations might have indicated a greater level of social flexibility among the pre-Shakan Nguni than the ethnographical accounts appear to suggest. Correspondingly, our understanding of LIA Nguni *umuzi* is more limited than that of the Sotho-Tswana. The main reason is the perishable construction materials used for LIA Nguni *umuzi*, significantly limiting its preservation and archaeological visibility. *Umuzi* that have been burned or had clay floors are the ones that have the highest survival rate in the archaeological record (Maggs 1988). Furthermore, most settlement archaeological work in South Africa has been focused on the four northern, which further limits our understanding of northern Nguni archaeology.

4.3.2 Southern Nguni

Due to a shared ancestral origin, the settlement patterns of the southern Nguni were very similar to those of the northern Nguni. As with the northern Nguni, the cattle enclosure formed

the core of the settlement and was surrounded by a fence made of reeds or bushes (Hoernlè 1962). The principal hut was positioned on the settlement's upper end, opposite the cattle enclosure's entrance (Walton 1949; Hoernlè 1962). The rest of the settlement huts were then arranged next to the cattle enclosure, descending from the principal hut down the sides of the cattle enclosure towards the enclosure's entrance (Hoernlè 1962). The settlement was either semi-circular (Walton 1949; Hoernlè 1962) or circular, depending on the individual size. Before the 20th century, southern Nguni settlements tended to be larger, with a settlement's population consisting of between twenty to forty adult men and their related families. Twentieth-century settlements only number between 3 and 4 adult men and their families (Hoernlè 1962). The huts of the wives were arranged from left (dominant) to right (secondary) as viewed from the entrance of the cattle enclosure (Hoernlè 1962). Each of the huts was seen as belonging to an independent single-family unit. A feature among the Xhosa, which was not found among the northern Nguni, was the placement of a hut belonging to the *isizinda* wife. This hut, along with all the associated dependents, was placed in the chief's father's settlement and was seen as "keeping alive" the household of the chief's father (Hoernlè 1962). As each wife's hut was viewed as independent (Hoernlè 1962), a southern Nguni settlement could be viewed as having a similar organisation to that of the Sotho-Tswana, as each settlement has several "wards" in contrast to the northern Nguni, where one settlement represented only one family.

4.4 Sotho/Tswana settlement patterns

Despite having separate origins and occupying different regions within southern Africa, the Sotho and Tswana share many similarities in how their settlements were organised. Although each community within this wider cultural grouping had an individual settlement organisation, these tended to be minor additions and modifications to the wider used pattern. Therefore, this wider pattern will be discussed first with an example of community-specific variations to illustrate the large degree of variation found. The South African Ndebele are included within this section due to their adoption of the broader Sotho/Tswana settlement organisation despite being Nguni in origin.

The smallest residential unit within a Sotho/Tswana settlement is the household, which consists of one or more compounds (Schapera 1979; Jackson 1981). The husband and his wives occupied each family unit with their unmarried children but could also include other family members (such as brothers) and their families. Each household had an individual compound, consisting of several huts and granaries enclosed by a low wall which was built

from either reed (Tswana), wood (Ngwato, Kwena and Ngwaketse), earth wall (Langa) or stone (Schapera 1979; Jackson 1981). Hut occupancy varied between the different groups. Some huts hosed a married couple and sometimes their adolescent children as well. Alternatively, all the adolescent children could share a separate hut or sometimes share with an older female relative, with unmarried adults having private huts (Schapera 1979; Jackson 1981). Due to the polygamist nature of the Sotho/Tswana, each wife would have had an individual compound that her children would share. Therefore, the more wives a man had, the more compounds were under his control. As the household head (also called headman), he was responsible (legally and spiritually) for each family member and any other person living within one of his compounds. He also owned cattle, land, huts and other property, and he would divide them between his different compounds for use (Schapera 1979; Jackson 1981). A headman could be the leader of a household, family group or a ward/sub-ward.

Each compound was built around a central courtyard where most of the daily activities occurred. Jointly, all the compounds connected to a shared courtyard would constitute an individual household. Depending on the community, a homestead could consist of either a single household or many households recognising a shared household head (Schapera 1979; Jackson 1981). These courtyards contained cattle (although not always), granaries, hearths (Langa) and a meeting area for the men. Among the Langa, this area was located within the courtyard and had a structure (thatched roof supported on poles) called a *kgwadi,* which also housed boys during part of the initiation ceremony and acted as a guardhouse in times of conflict (Jackson 1981). Among the Tswana, this area adjoined the courtyard, was called kgotla, and served as the gathering point (Schapera 1979). Among the Langa, the courtyard of the headman's ward would also have contained several stones placed together, called a *ditlou,* which formed part of the female initiation ceremony. These stones were only found in the ward of the headman and were never removed or disturbed (Jackson 1981: 113). When a headman moved his homestead, the stones were left behind in the old homestead. These settlements tended to be circular (Schapera 1979), with Jackson (1981) stating that the shape of the homestead was due to the front of the compound being narrower than the back, thus creating the circular to semi-circular shape. Every homestead began with a single compound and then had multiple compounds added to it over time (Jackson 1981).

A homestead can grow in several ways. Either it expanded due to the addition of more wives (along with the associated increase in children), married sons may live on in their father's homestead, adding individual courtyards to their father's, or non-family members could join

the homestead, again building separate courtyards. Therefore, a homestead could have had one or multiple courtyards (Schapera 1979; Jackson 1981). When several households came together, usually descended agnatically from a common ancestor, they formed a family group. However, a family group could include various relatives (such as cousins) or unrelated dependants (Schapera 1979; Jackson 1981). Therefore, a ward was constituted by one or more family groupings. When there was more than one family grouping within the same ward, each family grouping would then constitute a sub-ward. Each sub-ward would have had an individual headman under the ward headman's authority (Schapera 1979; Jackson 1981). The term ward can be problematic, as it could refer to a section of a large, agglomerated settlement or sub-administration district within the kingdom. Therefore, if a ward represented an administrative division of the kingdom, there would typically only be one settlement consisting of one or more family groupings. In these cases, the family grouping's homestead equalled the ward homestead. In large, agglomerated settlements, the homestead/settlement could consist of multiple wards, each having one or more family groupings. Schapera (1979) calls each ward's area within the large settlement a hamlet. Therefore, the large, agglomerated settlements consisted of multiple hamlets. Consequently, a ward could either represent a single or multiple family group, all recognising a shared leader (generally based on hereditary descent from the original homestead head).

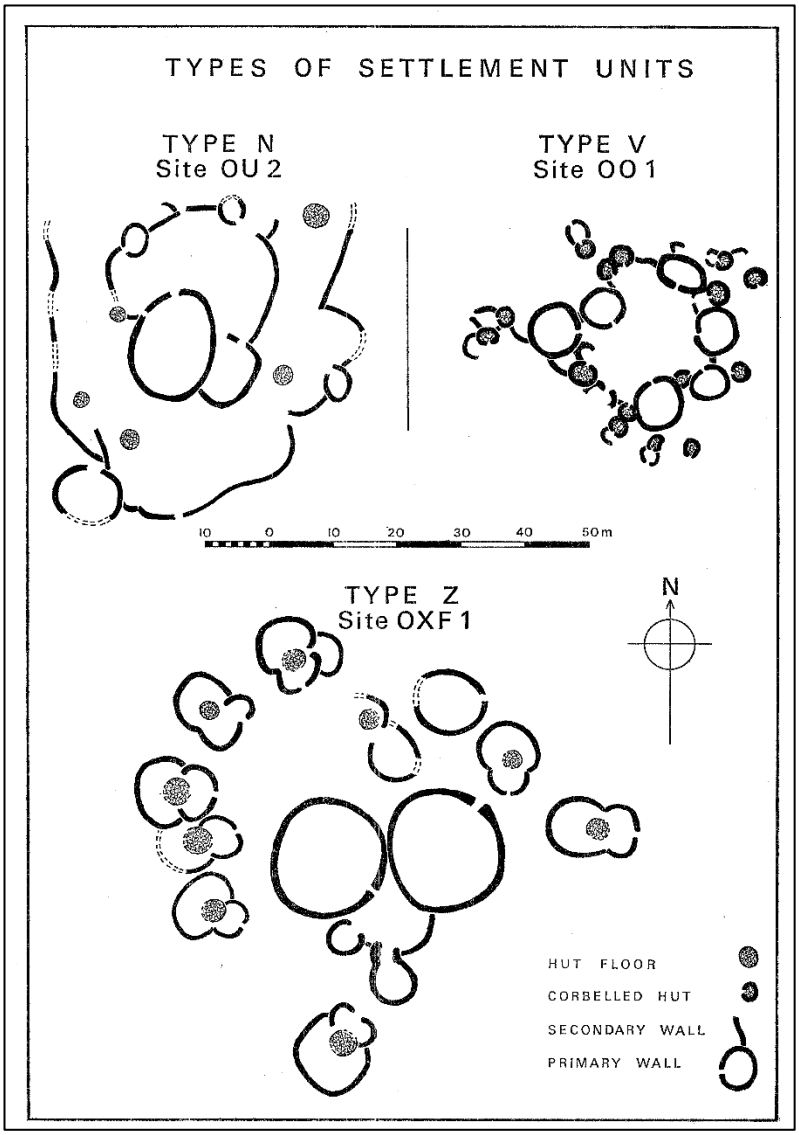


Figure 3: Examples of Type N, V and Z (Maggs 1976:321)

All historical Sotho/Tswana settlements were organised following these principles, with some regional variation. However, it is unclear how far back these organisational principles can be traced.

Maggs (1974a,b) has found several variations in settlement construction, which he has dubbed “type settlements”, that he believes to be the archaeological variations of this historical organisational pattern. These “type settlements” have been dated between the 16th and 19th centuries and are found in the Free State, Gauteng and North West Province. Maggs (1974a,b) called these settlement variations Type N, V and Z (Fig. 3). Jointly, these settlement variations represent four centuries of settlement development, with three distinct regional variations, with partial geographic and temporal overlaps occurring between them. These type settlements represent the latter part of the Iron Age farming communities’ expansion into the interior, although these variations may also have occurred during the early phases. It is believed that until the 16th century, environmental conditions within the interior of South Africa prevented the spread of these communities further into the interior (Maggs 1976).

4.4.1 Type N, V and Z

Type N settlements represent the oldest of these settlements and are believed to be the precursors of the later type V settlements. Type N settlements consisted of several primary enclosures arranged in a circular pattern around a central area. These enclosures were connected by secondary walling, forming a large secondary enclosure in the centre (Maggs 1974a, 1976). Entrances to these primary enclosures were located within the secondary enclosure, with the secondary enclosure having only one entrance (Maggs 1974a, 1976). Cattle were kept in the primary enclosures, with the secondary enclosure acting as an open area within the centre of the settlement. The settlement was surrounded by an outer wall, with the huts constructed between the outer wall and the primary enclosures (Maggs 1974a, 1976). Some type N settlements may also have had primary enclosures that form part of the outer wall, with the entrances facing toward the inner primary enclosures (Maggs 1976). The huts were constructed with paved floors, while some of the huts also had cobbled floors. However, there is currently no evidence that cobble floors were used within all type N settlements and are therefore not considered to be a diagnostic feature of this type of settlement (Maggs 1976).

The type V settlement pattern is believed to have developed from the older type N settlement (Maggs 1976). From this period onwards, the size and number of settlements increased, indicating an increase in the region's overall population. A characteristic of this period was the development of type V between existing type N settlements, with type N often being robbed of building materials for the new settlements (Maggs 1976). Type V settlements were characterised by multiple primary enclosures grouped in a ring pattern (Maggs 1974a, 1976). These primary enclosures were connected by secondary walling, forming a secondary

enclosure in the open space between them. Huts were found within this line of primary enclosures and surrounding the primary enclosures (Maggs 1974a, 1976). The entrances of these primary enclosures were within the secondary enclosure, which had only one entrance. Funnel-shaped entrances are rare within type V settlements, and there was no longer an outer wall surrounding the whole settlement, marking a distinct departure from the type N pattern (Maggs 1976). Livestock was kept within the primary enclosures, with the secondary enclosure acting as an open space within the settlement (Maggs 1974a). Type V settlements were the most frequently used settlement pattern within the southern and central Highveld of South Africa; however, their frequency starts decreasing further north and is absent in the northern parts of the Highveld (Maggs 1974a).

It is clear from the settlement pattern that type N and V settlements have many similarities with each other, and type B found within KwaZulu-Natal. However, Maggs (1974a,b) describes another settlement pattern, type Z, distinctive from all three other settlement types. Type Z settlements are the most recent type of settlement described, with date ranges extending from the 16th or 17th century until the 19th century (Maggs 1974a, 1976). These settlements were characterised by several independent primary enclosures (usually between three and eight) with thickened walls at the entrances and little to no secondary walling (Maggs 1974a, 1976). These settlements also lacked an outer fence, with the huts being constructed around the primary enclosure in a semi-circular pattern, with the huts having a front and rear circular enclosure. In addition, they varied in size from a single primary enclosure unit to multiple units located in a dense, compacted area, partially obscuring the overall settlement pattern (Maggs 1974a, 1976). Maggs (1976) identifies the type Z settlement with the ethnographic models of the Tswana, as already described, which matches the known date ranges for the type Z settlement. Therefore, it is most likely that the settlement patterns that the Matabele would have encountered would have been more similar to the type Z than N or V. However, the existence of these other two types of settlements during the 19th century cannot be excluded.

The type settlement patterns developed by Maggs provide a general framework in which the settlement patterns of the Sotho-Tswana can be examined. In this regard, these type settlements function only as a general guideline and not as absolute settlement models, with significant variations regarding the different type settlements (Sadr 2019). Two such variations of specific interest to this study are the Doornspruit and Molokwane patterns. Doornspruit is a circular settlement pattern linked to the Nguni and the Matabele specifically, with Molokwane

being the most widely found settlement pattern within the study area. As such, both patterns will be discussed separately.

4.4.2 Doornspruit Type

First described by T.R. Jones in 1935 and later incorporated by Mason (1968) into his research on settlements in the northern interior of South Africa, the origin and historical development of the pattern remain unclear. The Doornspruit pattern (Fig. 4) was circular, with an outer wall surrounding multiple residential units. Associated walling indicated two types of walling were present: one used for the residential area and the other for the livestock enclosure (Jones 1935). Huffman (2004) argued that the inner area consisted of a wooden enclosure where the livestock was kept. However, Huffman provides no evidence for this statement, and it appears to be based on the assumption that these settlements were related to the Matabele of the 19th century. These settlements were first linked to the 19th-century Matabele by Pistorius (1997a,b), who argued a Matabele origin for a settlement within the Rustenburg area that followed the same settlement pattern. This argument was followed by Huffman (2004) and later Kruger (2010). However, Jones (1935) and Mason (1968) argued for a Sotho/Tswana origin for these settlements. As will be shown later, the Matabele link developed by Pistorius is unproven and based on many assumptions, most disputed by multiple historical first-hand accounts of Matabele settlements. As a result, the underlining assumption used by Huffman and Kruger, based on an uncritical acceptance of Pistorius's work and a lack of any detailed settlement model for the Matabele, has resulted in a mis-association of the Doornspruit pattern with the Matabele. It is, nonetheless, still possible that these settlements might have had a Nguni origin; however, these settlements predated the arrival of the Matabele.

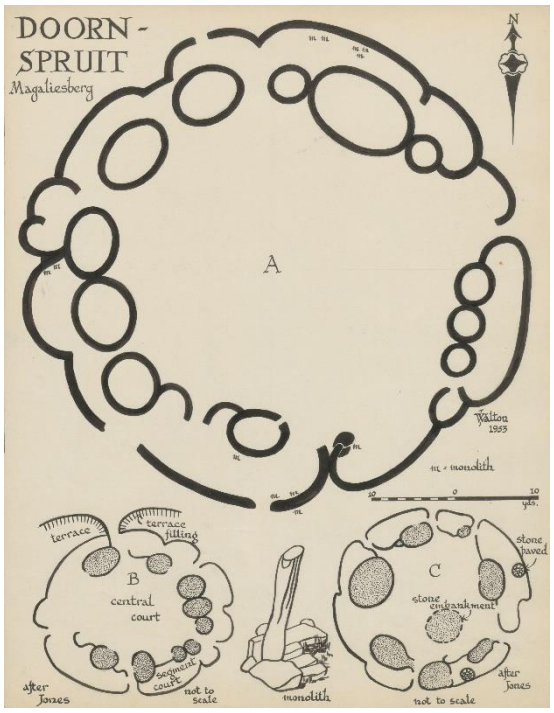


Figure 4: Diagram indicating the settlement pattern of a Doornspruit type settlement (James Walton Collection: http://digital.lib.sun.ac.za/handle/10019.2/498)

4.4.3 Molokwane

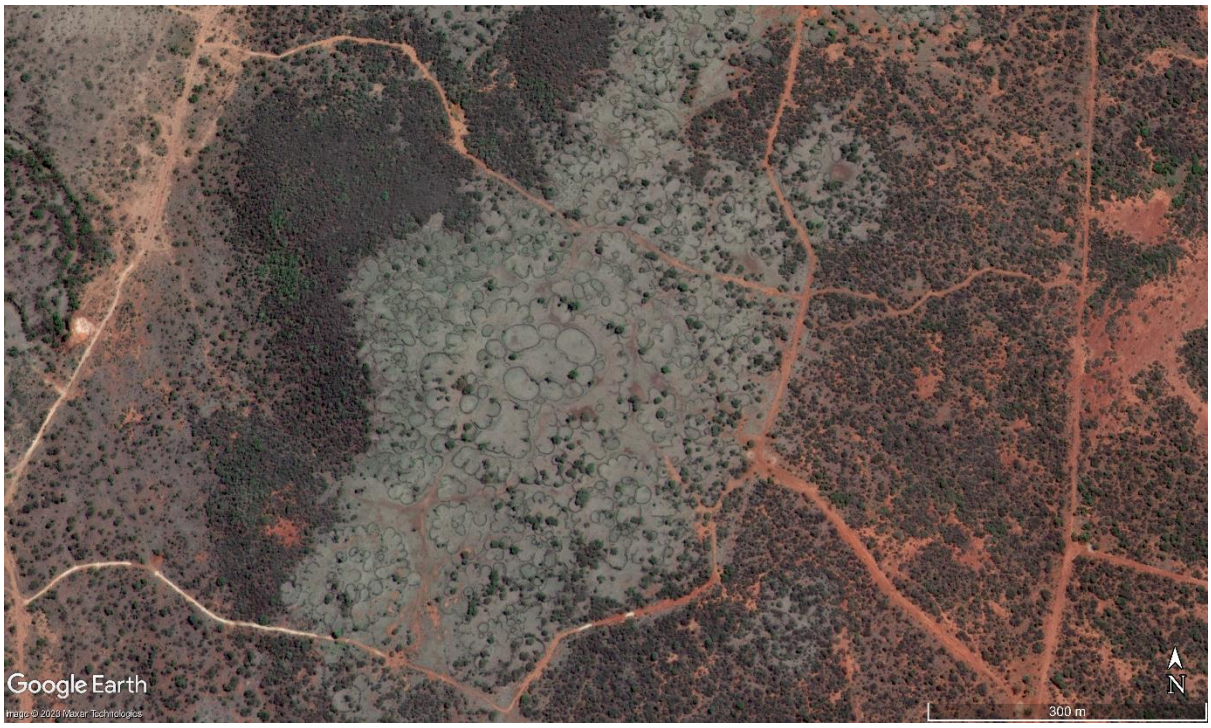


Figure 5: *Kgosing* (senior ward) at Molokwane (Selonskraal).

Molokwane is a settlement type (Fig. 5) widely found within the study area as well as surrounding regions and is believed to have developed out of the Type N settlement (Huffman 2007). These settlements are associated with the Hurutshe and are believed to have developed during the late 18th and early 19th centuries (Huffman 2007). Molokwane settlements have several small enclosures arranged circularly around an open central area, with the large open area acting as the primary central enclosure. In this regard, the walling of the small enclosure jointly constitutes the walling for the large central enclosure (Pistorius 1994; Huffman 2007).

As is common among southern African settlement organisations, several variations to the basic organisational pattern have been documented. One such variation is that a primary central enclosure was first constructed, with the walling of secondary enclosures later being linked to the walling of the primary enclosure (Pistorius 1994). Surrounding this large enclosure area are several smaller enclosures used for sheep/goat penning. These enclosures were not physically linked to the centrally located enclosures and did not form part of the primary or secondary enclosures. Surrounding the central enclosures was the residential section, with each hut having its walled-off section (Pistorius 1994; Huffman 2007). For each hut to have a walled-off section for its use is a common feature found within Sotho-Tswana settlements. In this regard, it has been found that Molokwane settlements shared the

ward system of other Sotho-Tswana communities, with seniority being indicated in a linear pattern arranged either north-south or east-west (depending on the direction of nearby rivers), with the central area being the most senior (Pistorius 1994; Pistorius 1996)

An interesting feature of huts associated with this settlement type throughout the interior is the use of sliding doors (Maggs 1993; Huffman 2007), first reported by Mason in 1974. It is unclear why these sliding doors were built, and there is a high probability that their use was linked with social status and defence. Preliminary research indicates that capitals had more sliding doors than non-capital settlements (Maggs 1993), further supporting the link between social status and wealth. As with other Sotho-Tswana settlements located in the interior of southern Africa, stones were extensively utilised as a construction material (Pistorius 1994; Pistorius 1996; Huffman 2007). The capitals of both the Hurutshe (Kaditshwene) as well as the capital of the Bamadimosana, which utilised this settlement organisational pattern, were attacked and incorporated by the Matabele (Maggs 1993; Pistorius 1994; Pistorius 1996; Huffman 2007).

4.6 Zimbabwean settlement patterns

Although the Zimbabwean pattern has already been discussed, this pattern pre-dates the temporal period of this study. As a result, this section will examine the more recent settlement patterns of the Shona as they would have been with the arrival of the Matabele. The Matabele incorporated various Shona communities, with many Shona living in or surrounding the Matabele Kingdom. Therefore, these communities would have had some degree of influence on the Matabele. The Nyanga complex is also added for completeness. There is an ongoing debate surrounding the nature and antiquity of the Nyanga complex and the possibility that they might have had a limited influence on the Matabele.

4.6.1 Shona

The Shona is a cultural grouping that lives in Zimbabwe. As with the Tswana and Sotho, the Shona consist of groups sharing similar cultural practices (Holleman 1968). Similar to the Tsonga, the Shona have no universally accepted communal name. The term Shona is a foreign word, possibly Matabele, that has been applied to them and by which they are today known (Holleman 1968). Large Shona societal organisation is similar to that of the Sotho and Tswana, with the village constituting the lowest level of organisation, followed by the ward and the tribe.

Shona settlements do not have the same degree of fixed organisation as found among the Nguni, with settlement organisations varying between the different Shona communities. However, they all share the same general settlement pattern. Huts, constructed from poles and mud with a thatched roof, were organised around or facing a central open area (Holleman 1968). This central area may have had several trees that were left for shade. Similar to the Tsonga, Shona villages were not fenced but may occasionally have shrubs surrounding a cooking area or separating two adjoining villages. Granaries were constructed on nearby solid rock protrusions, which had a secondary function of a threshing floor. Goat and chicken pens were usually located within the central open area. However, there are many exceptions, with the cattle enclosure located a short distance from the living huts and outside the settlement (Holleman 1968).

A settlement could be occupied by one close family consisting of a single man, his wives and unmarried sons. However, it is not uncommon for married sons to live within their father's settlement with their families nor for there to also be other relatives of the family head (Holleman 1968). It sometimes happens that village members will split from each other, forming different settlements. Although these settlements are physically no longer connected, they were still seen as forming part of the same village. Different villages are constructed away, but still nearby, from each other, with each village having a family connection to nearby settlements. However, there was no standard distance between two different settlements, with proximity not indicating close or distant family kinship (Holleman 1968). Historically, members of the same family would build their settlements close to each other; however, after the numerous attacks from northern Nguni and European forces, many of the Shona tribes' political unity was broken (Holleman 1968). Therefore, since the 19th century, it was not uncommon to find settlements close to each other that had no shared kindship or political connections. Consequently, the proximity of settlements does not automatically indicate any form of kinship between the occupants of each settlement.

Field cultivation occurred close to the village, with each family member's field being located next to the other with no clear boundary between each. Fields were cultivated annually until the soil was exhausted, after which the settlement would be moved to a new location with suitable arable land. Historically, this occurred every six to eight years; however, with the arrival of the European colonial government and associated central authority, the relocation of settlements has become more difficult (Holleman 1968). Although a distinction was made between grazing and farming land, cattle are grazed on any suitable land as long as it is far

enough away to pose no threat to cultivated land. There was no official boundary of a village's land rights; however, when the land rights of two separated settlements connect, a boundary indicates the extent of each settlement's land (Holleman 1968).

Shona settlements located in the southern part of Zimbabwe commonly followed this settlement pattern. Shona settlements located further north had some variation due to the colonial government-enforced land policies being active longer. Settlements in these areas were larger than those further south, with multiple families living within the same settlement. Within these settlements, the central open area had been replaced by a street, with huts on either side and running parallel (Holleman 1968), with hut numbers determined by road length. Population density varies between 40-60 people per settlement, although settlements of 100-150 were not uncommon. Goat and chicken pens were still constructed in the open area next to the road, with cattle enclosures constructed behind the owner's house (Holleman 1968). This modification of the Shona settlement pattern again brings the separation of the WSP and the CCP into question.

4.6.2 Nyanga Complex

The Nyanga Complex is the name given to a series of different settlement formations located in the Manicaland province in eastern Zimbabwe surrounding the modern town of Nyanga. The name of the cultural grouping that constructed these settlements is not known (Soper 1996) and is not believed to be linked with the modern Shona groups or with the Zimbabwean pattern communities. Despite this, modern communities living in the area do have Shona influences, and the possibility exists that the Nyanga Complex could have had some link to the Shona in the past (Soper 1996). Although there is insufficient data for a definitive timeline to be developed, it is currently believed that the

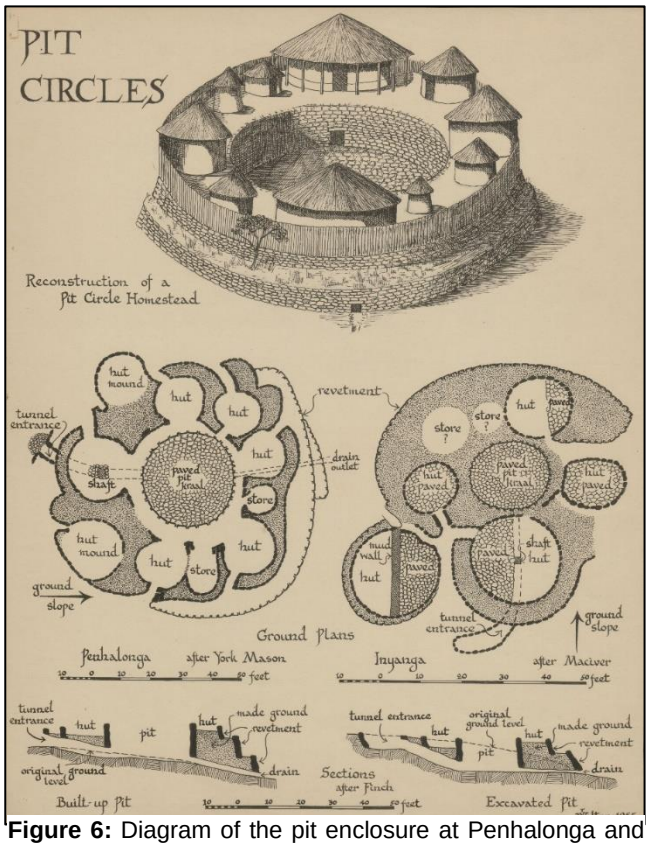


Figure 6: Diagram of the pit enclosure at Penhalonga and Inyanga (Walton 1956).

Nyanga Complex dates between the 14th and 19th centuries, with new carbon dates falling within the early part of the 19th century (Pikirayi 2006; Mitchell 2002; Soper 1996).

The Nyanga complex is considered to have a unique settlement pattern within the region (Mitchell 2002) and has three features that together give it its unique organisation. Firstly, the area has extensive terracing, which was located close to, or surrounding, stone-built settlements, although not all settlements were necessarily constructed out of stone (Soper 1996). The nature and function of this terracing are still unclear; however, it is believed that their primary function would have been related in some way to agriculture. (Pikirayi 2006; Mitchell 2002; Soper 1996). It is, however, clear that the terracing and settlements were in some way linked, and it is this relationship between the terracing and the settlements that gives it its second unique feature. The last unique feature of the Nyanga complex is the construction, organisation and variation of the settlements themselves. Four settlement variations are generally associated with the Nyanga Complex: highland pits, pit enclosures, settlements with a central enclosure that was not dug in (pit) and forts (Pikirayi 2006; Mitchell 2002; Soper 1996). Soper (1996) has expanded on these by renaming the highland enclosures to pit structures to include other features beyond pits. Central enclosure settlements were called double-concentric enclosures, again highlighting other settlement features as well, and added split-level enclosures and hilltop ruin complexes.

This difference in the number of variations does not indicate a disagreement regarding the existence of the other two patterns discussed by Soper (1996); instead, pit structures (Fig. 6) and pit enclosures are generally grouped, the same with split-level enclosures and settlements with an enclosure in the centre instead of a pit. However, Soper (1996) provides a more detailed examination than the other studies and differentiates the settlements to a higher degree. This breakdown, as used by Soper (1996), separates settlements that have some variations regarding their settlement construction and, to some extent, the organisation, which in turn may be indicative of either cultural or functional variations and will, therefore, be followed in this section.

The most notable feature of the Nyanga settlements was the construction of a central pit area within the settlements, with the huts surrounding the central pit (Soper 1996; Mitchell 2002). The function of the central pit is still being investigated and is currently thought to have been linked to livestock penning (Soper 1996; Mitchell 2002). Although several variations related to

Nyanga pit settlements have been documented, all but the forts share the same key feature of the central pit.

4.7 Elevated settlements of South Africa

First-hand accounts dating to the early 19th century mention two types of elevated settlements. The best known is the tree village, first documented by Robert Moffat and later verified by other first-hand accounts (Steedman 1835; Moffat 1846), with Steedman mentioning that the traders Schoon and McLuckie confirmed the existence of the tree village as well. The Smith Expedition in 1835 documented a second type of elevated settlement in which the huts were constructed on poles (Moffat 1846; Kirby 1940b; Wallis 1945; Lye 1975). Although no references to tree settlements have been found, pole settlements (Fig. 8) have been documented in two separate areas of northern South Africa and Mozambique.

Moffat described the tree settlement (Fig. 7) as consisting of 17 huts, with three still being constructed and with the lower huts being about 9 feet (2.7 m) from the ground, the uppermost hut was approximately 30 feet (9 m) above the ground (Steedman 1835; Moffat 1846), constructed on tree branches. Steedman (1835) states that the settlement consisted of three levels, the first being 9 feet and containing ten huts, the second 8 feet above and having three huts and the third level containing four huts. The huts are built on a platform secured to the tree branches, with a conical hut (made of grass) constructed on top of the platform (Steedman 1835). Huts on the lower branches had poles beneath the platform, anchored to the ground, as additional supports. It is unclear whether this “tree” settlement was a unique feature or a more widely occurring settlement form since they would hardly survive into the archaeological record. However, Smith (Lye 1975) does mention in his official account of the expedition that he was told that it was a customary practice for communities living in the interior to construct their huts in trees in areas in which lions and hyenas are found in abundance (Steedman 1835).

Although little current evidence is available for the frequency of tree settlements, more evidence is available for settlements where most huts are constructed on poles (Figs. 8 and 9). Moffat (1846) encountered a settlement that consisted of 40 huts built on poles (Wallis

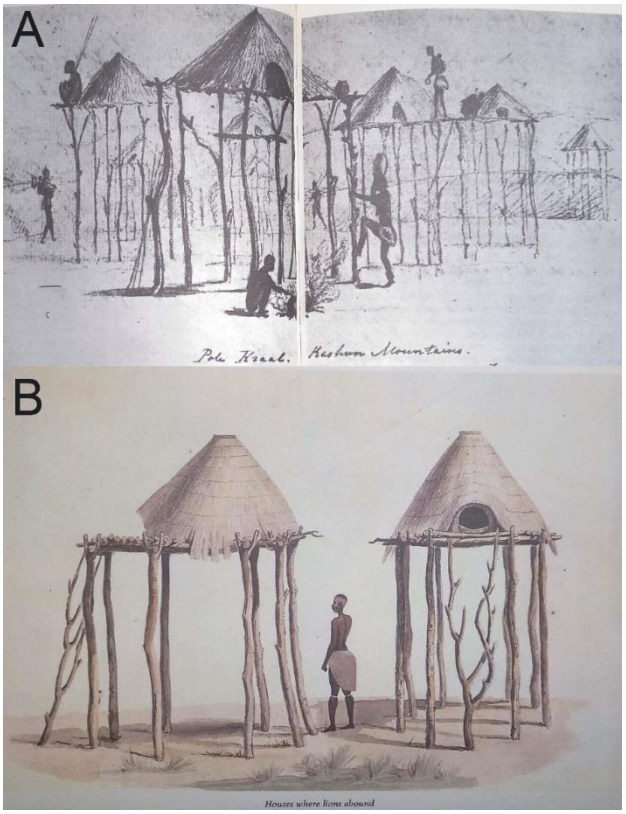


Figure 7*:* Two illustrations representing settlements in which the huts were constructed on poles. A (Burrows 1974: 56) and B (Lye 1975: 197)



Figure 8 Sketch of tree settlement encountered by Robert Moffat on his first journey to Mzilikazi (Moffat 1846: 521)

1945) to a height of 7 feet (2.1 m). Smith and Burrows described encountering settlements built on poles in two different areas of the South African highveld, around the Magaliesberg and further north (Kirby 1940b; Burrow 1971; Lye 1975). Steedman also mentions that the traders Schoon and McLuckie encountered many settlements constructed on poles between the region of Mahikeng and the Groot Marico River, which is also mentioned in the accounts of Moffat (Steedman 1835; Moffat 1846).

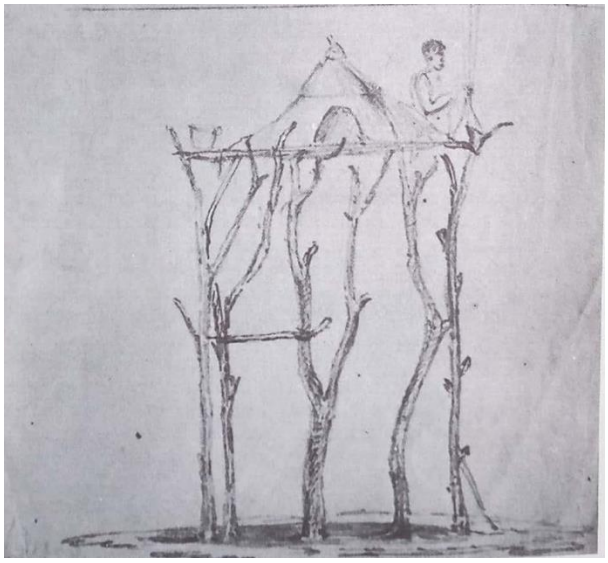


Figure 9: An example of a hut constructed on poles (Burrow 1974: 54, 56)

Steedman further states that the traders had also seen them in many other areas without specifying which areas. The only difference between these settlements and the more common non-elevated settlements was that the huts were constructed on poles. These huts had raised platforms (supported on the poles) on which the huts were constructed. In some settlements, the area beneath the hut was used for storage, but in other cases, it was left open, indicating no standard practice in this regard. Burrow (1971) also states that the Matabele had raised living huts constructed in their farmlands in areas where large amounts of herbivores were common. The function of these huts was to act as housing for individuals protecting the growing crops.

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, it has been shown that settlements constructed in southern Africa had both many similarities and many differences. Primarily, two types of construction material were used, perishable (such as grass, shrub or thicket) and not perishable (such as earth, stone or granite), with the type of material used largely dependent on local environmental conditions as these relate to cultural preferences. Variations in hut organisation and placement within the settlements have also been documented, with these variations also being linked to associated cultural practices of the broader cultural groups to which these settlements can be connected.

The Matabele migrated from the northeast coast of South Africa through the central interior and finally settled in southern Zimbabwe, encountering many different communities. As a conquering polis, many of the communities that the Matabele encountered were also incorporated into the kingdom. Due to this process, it is unclear what, if any, impact this incorporation process had on the Matabele. Furthermore, the possibility remains that the Matabele adopted some aspects of the Sotho-Tswana settlement organisation or architectural styles. As part of the northern Nguni, it is known that the Matabele used both civilian and military settlements. This combination of the civilian and military aspects is a common practice found among the northern Nguni; however, some variations have been documented. Therefore, part of developing a settlement model for the Matabele requires a detailed examination of the other military settlements that have been constructed. As part of the northern Nguni, the Matabele military settlement's development would have similarities and differences to the military settlements constructed by the other northern Nguni. Therefore, it is essential also to understand the wider social and architectural context in which these settlements were constructed. This will be the focus of the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Military Settlements of the Northern Nguni

5.1 Introduction

The northern Nguni are generally considered to be a militaristic society. Popular literature and imagery of the northern Nguni depict warriors in various poses, often primarily the Zulu. The first-hand accounts similarly depict the overall dread that the northern Nguni warriors had on many of the southern African communities of the 19th century, including the Cape and Natal European colonies. Whether or not this image of southern Africa's "warrior society" is exaggerated is a matter of debate. What is not in question is that the northern Nguni were the most militaristic societies in southern Africa, with the Zulu emphasizing this martial aspect of their society more than the other northern Nguni. Central to the image of the northern Nguni warrior society was their use of the age regimental system, also called *amabutho*, along with their associated military settlements, *amakhanda*. The origins and historical development of the regimental and military settlements are still unclear; however, historians, ethnographers and archaeologists have well-documented their use by the northern Nguni during the 19th century (Cobbing 1974; Hall 1996; Knight 1995). In their physical organization, the military settlements resembled a settlement following the Nguni variation of the Central Cattle Pattern (CCP) model. However, unlike the family homesteads (*imizi*), the function of these settlements was directly related to the king and the kingdom's administration. Furthermore, they also served as the residential quarters for the various regiments of each kingdom, with each regiment having had an *ikhanda*. This chapter will examine the various regimental systems and the associated military settlements throughout southern Africa. By reviewing the different variations within their historical context and developments, it may also be possible to start reconstructing the origins of this system.

5.2 Age regimental system

The organization of sexes into age-determined groupings is a practice found among all the southern African communities except the Shona (Kuper 1954). Similarly, it is a practice documented among several eastern African communities (LeVine and Sangree 1962). Similarly, ethnographic evidence shows that the Iron Age Bantu-speaking farmers adopted the practice from Nilo-Hamatic communities (LeVine and Sangree 1962). The practice is known within the literature as age groupings, age sets, regimental groupings or age regimental groupings. It has many different names among the southern African communities, including *ibutho* among the Zulu

and Matabele, *libandla* among the Ngoni, *mophato* among the Sotho-Tswana and *libutfo* among the Swazi (Hughes 1956; Hoernlè 1962; Omer-Cooper 1966; Kuper 1986; Laband 1995; Knight 1995). Although only a limited amount of research has been done on the age grouping system within southern Africa, the system can be divided into two broad variations representing the Sotho-Tswana and Nguni. The system's origins within southern Africa are unclear; however, it is believed to have been first introduced by the Sotho-Tswana and later adopted by the Nguni (Omer-Cooper 1966). It is unclear when the Nguni variation started diverging from the Sotho-Tswana's. However, by the start of the 19th century, the northern Nguni had developed a system fundamentally different to that of the Sotho-Tswana. Whether this system was related to the start of the numerous conflicts of this period or itself, a product of these conflicts is still a research topic (Omer-Cooper 1966; Hoernlè 1962; Guy 1980; Knight 1995). Furthermore, several sub-variants of the Nguni regimental system were found among the Matabele, Zulu, Swazi, Ngoni and Gaza Nguni (Gaza), although all shared the same larger structure.

The system utilized by the Sotho-Tswana and the Nguni was inherently the same. Both groups shared three similar traits. Firstly, only kings and paramount chiefs had the authority to create a new regiment, thus also increasing their authority. Secondly, new regiments were created during the first fruits ceremony, and lastly, both sexes were grouped according to age, with boys “apprenticing” before joining a regiment by acting as herders or carriers (Read 1956; Krige 1965; Omer-Cooper 1966; Liesegang no date). Despite these similarities, several critical differences existed regarding implementing and utilising these traits, which resulted in two fundamentally different regimental systems.

5.2.1 Northern Nguni

The northern Nguni system is the best-researched system within southern Africa due to the Zulu kingdom's prominent position within South African historical and ethnographic literature. Despite the general over-emphasis on the Zulu system, significant research was also done on the Swazi, with more limited research on the Matabele. Little research has been done on the Ngoni and the Gaza Nguni. A critical gap in the understanding of the northern Nguni regimental system is the structure and organisation of the system before the rise of the Zulu Kingdom, as it is known that other groups, such as the Hlubi, Mthethwa and Ndwandwe, also had regimental systems. This gap is directly related to the questions of when, how and why the system of the northern Nguni

kingdoms developed. Historically, this system has been attributed to Dingiswayo of the Mthethwa (Stuart and Malcolm 1986); however, this attribution has become increasingly questioned, with most modern scholars agreeing that the system likely predated Dingiswayo. Despite these limitations and uncertainties, the existence of a shared northern Nguni system is generally accepted and will be examined below.

It is believed that the regimental system developed out of the old circumcision schools, which formed part of the initiation ceremonies among the northern Nguni, similar to the practices still found among the southern Nguni. The chief determined the time spent in the schools, and the boys were directly under the control of the chief during this period (Hughes 1956; Hoernlè 1962; Krige 1965; Omer-Cooper 1966; Hedges 1978; Stuart and Malcolm 1986; Knight 1994; Laband 1995; Knight 1995). During this period, each group was given a name and insignia, and the chief could use the boys as labourers or soldiers in activities such as hunting, building, enforcing tribute or attacking other groups. At the end of the initiation period, the youths would be seen as adults and have the right to marry (Krige 1965; Omer-Cooper 1966; Hedges 1978; Stuart and Malcolm 1986; Knight 1994; Laband 1995; Knight 1995).

However, by the start of the 19th century, several changes had been made to the traditional system. Firstly was the widescale abandonment of circumcision among the northern Nguni, with the southern Nguni still maintaining the practices. It is currently thought that the abandonment of circumcision occurred at the same time as the development of the military settlements, with these settlements possibly developing out of the original circumcision lodges/schools (Krige 1965; Hughes 1956; Hoernlè 1962; Omer-Cooper 1966; Knight 1994; Laband 1995; Knight 1995). Secondly, the organization of the age groups changed among some groups, such as the Matabele, Zulu and Swazi, from a system based on region to an age-based system covering all the kingdom's areas. However, some groups, such as the Ngoni and Gaza, maintained the regional organization (Liesegang no date). In combination with this, the period served within the regiment was changed from a few weeks or months to years (usually 4 or 5) and among the Zulu, up to 15-20 years (Krige 1965; Omer-Cooper 1966; Hedges 1978; Laband 1995; Knight 1995). Lastly, boys who had already undergone the right to become men remained eligible for service within their regiment. This continuation of service indicated a fundamental shift in how the regiments were viewed concerning the original circumcision schools.

Although the overall organization of each northern Nguni group's armies differed, they did share some basic features. Firstly, male youths started their lives in the regiments as carriers/ apprentices and as a source of general labour required by the regiment. Secondly, the older boys (generally older than 15) formed the fighting force's core and generally constituted the bulk of the army. Thirdly, warriors who had ended their active time within a regiment remained part of the regiment for life and could be called up again if a need arose later. All the northern Nguni similarly had female regiments as well, and among the Matabele, Zulu and Gaza, they were called the *isigodlo* (Cobbing 1974; Liesegang 1974; Webb and Wright 1976; Parkington and Cronin 1979; Roodt 1992; Knight 1995; Liesegang no date). However, very little is known regarding the organization of the Gaza and Matabele *isigodlo*; no comparison can be made between the various communities' female regiments.

5.2.2 Southern Nguni

The southern Nguni system is believed to be more representative of the potential system used by the northern Nguni before implementing the system used during the 19th-century system. This assumption is based primarily on aspects of the southern Nguni system. Firstly, the continuation of circumcision among the southern Nguni. Secondly, the presence of circumcision lodges among some of the southern Nguni. However, reconstructing the southern Nguni system is more complicated when compared to the northern Nguni. This is because the area experienced several migrations from communities driven south by the conflicts in KwaZulu-Natal during the early 19th century (Hammond-Tooke 1962; 1993). Some of these communities, such as the Bhaca, adopted aspects of the southern Nguni cultural practices, resulting in many variations among the southern Nguni.

Despite the variations, some similarities were nonetheless present. Age hierarchy was as crucial to the southern Nguni as it was to the northern. However, the southern Nguni utilised no tribe-wide regimental system. The Xhosa, who did not have a regimental system, best represented this system. Among the Xhosa, the chief or Paramount Chief could only directly command those warriors who were economically dependent on him, with economically independent chiefs and warriors having the right to decline any summons. Therefore, this system was based on individual choice, not a formal organisation (Knight 1994; Hoernlè 1962). Similarly, the Xhosa also had age groupings; however, they functioned as an informal grouping system (Hammond-Tooke 1962).

Another system found among the southern Nguni can be linked to the Bhaca, which also had links to the northern Nguni (Hammond-Tooke 1962). The Bhaca also had an informal age grouping system. However, they had no regimental system, with all able-bodied men being available for military service. Similarly, there was no set age at which age limit or any means to determine when a youth became an adult. An interesting feature of the Bhaca is that they adopted the practices of circumcision from the Xhosa, further highlighting the wide-scale abandonment of the practice among the northern Nguni (Hammond-Tooke 1962).

5.2.3 Sotho-Tswana

The Sotho-Tswana are believed to be the first group within southern Africa to use the regimental system (Kuper 1954). Furthermore, it is thought that the Nguni adopted this system from the Sotho-Tswana (Omer-Cooper 1966), making the Sotho-Tswana system the basis of all the regimental systems in southern Africa. The Sotho-Tswana also practised circumcision (Hoernlè 1962; Omer-Cooper 1966; Mönning 1988), with some of the communities also constructing circumcision lodges as found among some of the Xhosa and southern Tsonga. These schools were connected to the regimental system, with the initiates being separated from the rest of the population during the initiation process (Hoernlè 1962; Schapera 1962; Omer-Cooper 1966; Schapera 1970; Mönning 1988; Knight 1994). How the initiates were separated from the rest of the population differed from one community to the next, with some specific huts or enclosures constructed for this purpose, while others had the initiates live in the veld for the duration of the initiation (Hoernlè 1962; Schapera 1962; Mönning 1988). The Sotho-Tswana also grouped the youths according to age; however, this was done on a regional basis during a specific ceremony. At this ceremony, youths would be given a name that was generally associated with a note-worthy event that had occurred that year, or among some of the communities, a numerical system was used (Hoernlè 1962; Schapera 1962; Mönning 1988). Similar to other communities in southern Africa, the initiates were also available as general labour to the chief and could also be used for military service; however, this was a secondary function of the system and military service was generally only used in times of war (Hoernlè 1962; Schapera 1962; Mönning 1988; Knight 1994). In this regard, a significant difference was found between the Sotho-Tswana and the northern Nguni related to the time an initiate was expected to undergo initiation. Among the Sotho-Tswana, this was generally a few weeks and, in the most protracted cases, could go up to six months (Hoernlè 1962; Schapera 1962; Mönning 1988), whereas the average among the northern Nguni

was a few years. At the end of initiation, the youths would be seen as adults, and the initiation lodges/enclosures would often be ritualistically burned before the initiates rejoined the population.

5.2.4 Eastern Africa

A striking similarity can be observed between the regimental system utilised in southern Africa and that used in eastern Africa. Eisenstadt (1954) identified seven features of the regimental system common to southern and eastern Africa. Firstly, they are all organised across the range of society. Secondly, these groupings are not bound by kinship or regional associations. Thirdly, the creation of new age groups is associated with a collective ceremony in which the whole society participates. Fourthly, the age system is related to a form of social stratification in which different members have different social standings based on age relations. Fifthly, a close social relationship between the members of the same age groups continues for the rest of their lives. Sixthly, the organisational structure differs from those of the rest of the society, such as family or kinship. Lastly, these age groupings have many responsibilities and tasks allocated to them (Eisenstadt 1954). One of the critical tasks given to these groupings was military service, although the nature and temporal extent of this service can vary significantly between the different societies. However, not all age groups had this martial component in East Africa (Baxter and Almagor 1978). LeVine and Sangree (1962) argued that the Bantu-speaking communities' adoption of the age group from their Nilotes neighbour might have been due to these communities' success in warfare due to this system. De Wolf (1980), however, argues that the adoption of the regimental system by some of the Bantu-speaking communities was due to weaker communities obtaining protection from stronger ones, and the adoption of the system was a symbolic acceptance of the superiority of one above the other.

It is interesting to note that the prevalence of the regimental system in southern Africa is far higher than in east Africa, with only the Shona not practising the system. Therefore, considering the high degree of similarity between southern and eastern African communities, a deeper analysis of the regimental system practices between the various communities might further illuminate the various migration routes used by the southern African communities.

5.3 Military settlements and initiation lodges

5.3.1 Matabele variant

During the 19th century, the Matabele migrated from the KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa to the southern part of Zimbabwe, settling around modern Bulawayo (Becker 1962; Omer-Cooper 1966; Summers and Pagden 1970; Cobbing 1976; Rasmussen 1978). During this migration, the Matabele incorporated large numbers of Sotho, Tswana and Shona communities into themselves. As a result of these incorporations, some changes might have occurred in the organisation of their military settlements. Currently, only a rudimentary model exists for the Matabele, primarily based on ethnographic models of Matabele settlements in the later half of the 19th century and unproven assumptions regarding the degree of similarities between the Matabele and Zulu systems. As a result, the Matabele military settlement will be examined in two sections. The first section will examine these settlements during their time in South Africa (1820-1840), and the second will examine their settlements in southern Zimbabwe (1840-1893). This analysis will assess the current model related to the Matabele.

5.3.1.1 South African highveld

It is believed that during this time, the Matabele regimental system, and the organisation of their military settlements were the same as those used by the Zulu. This view is most clearly reflected in Pistorius's (1997a,b) work concerning settlements within the Rustenburg area. The belief that the Matabele and Zulu utilised the same system is rooted in the historical narrative that states that the Matabele had formed part of the Zulu military system and that the Matabele were taught this system by the Zulu (Omer-Cooper 1966). However, this narrative is not universally accepted, with other historical narratives and Matabele oral traditions challenging this view (Summers and Pagden 1970; Cobbing 1974; Rasmussen 1976). In this alternative narrative, the Matabele were only allied to the Zulu and never formed part of the Zulu military system. This view implies that the system utilized by the Matabele was unique to them and not copied from the Zulu.

Despite these historiographical debates, it is currently believed that the Matabele military settlements (Fig. 10) were a copy of those of the Zulu, with possible variations related to specific features. Therefore, the Matabele military settlements were circular with a centrally located cattle enclosure. Surrounding this central enclosure was a residential area that contained the huts of the warriors, with the royal area situated at the opposite side of the entrance to the central enclosure (Pistorius 1997a,b). Furthermore, it is believed that the phases of the settlement's evolution, as proposed by Cobbing (1974) and Summers and Pagden (1970), were reflected in different settlements constructed in proximity to each other and were constructed using stones (Pistorius 1997a,b). As the settlement matured, the military organization of the settlements was then changed to that reflecting a normal family homestead. As argued by Pistorius, this model is currently the only model used within South African archaeology, with the limitations of this model being examined in detail in the discussion chapter.

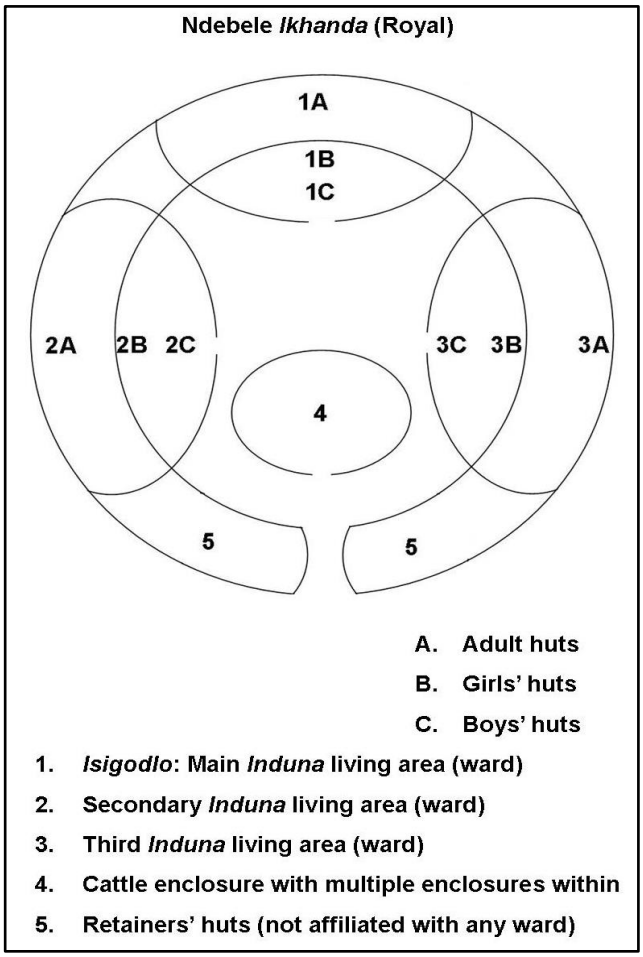


Figure 10: Current believed layout of a Matabele military settlement on the South African Highveld (van der Merwe 2015)

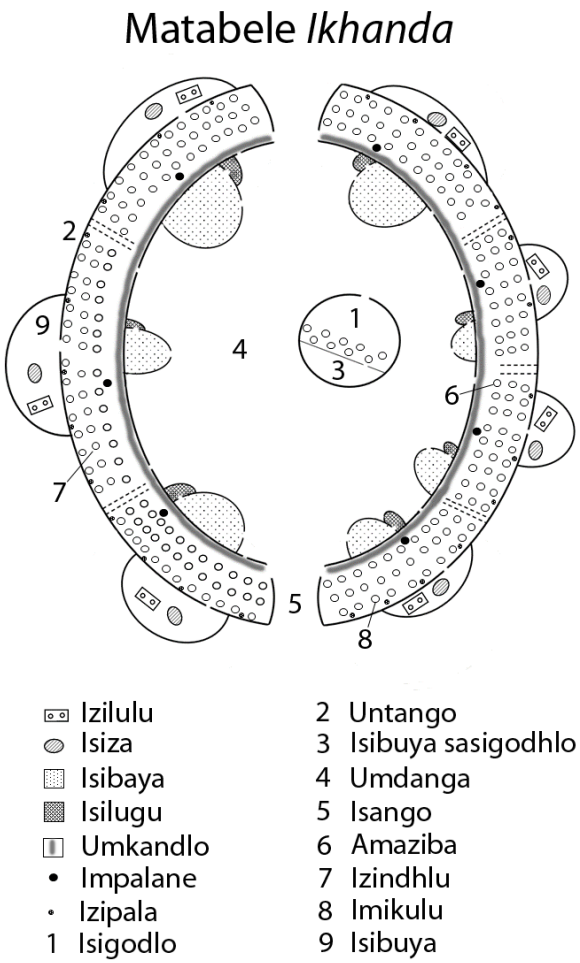


Figure 11: Matabele military settlement in southern Zimbabwe developed from Summers and Pagden (1970).

5.3.1.2 Southern Zimbabwe

Significantly more information is available for the Matabele settlements constructed in southern Zimbabwe (Fig. 11). These settlements had a roughly circular form with a cattle byre in the centre to form the "classical" CCP settlement form. However, it should be noted that these settlements may also be either irregular or oval (Prestage 1901; Hughes and van Velsen 1955; Summers and Pagden 1970). Two variations of these settlements were created: one to house the married regiments (*amadoda*), which was usually the largest and most populous, and a smaller one constructed to house the unmarried regiments (*amajaha*) (Summers and Pagden 1970). Settlements built to house the *amadoda* included women and children, accounting for their larger size and population.

Huts are located between the two stockade fences, with the dormitories (*amaxiba*) nearest to the byre of unmarried boys and girls. Next to these huts, the main living huts (*izindlu*) were located. In contrast, the huts closest to the outer stockade were used as kitchens (*imikulu*) and contained thrashing floors and granaries (*izipala*). A small settlement was constructed within the centre of the large military settlements to house the *isigodlo*. This area, referred to as an *isigodlo*, housed some of the king's wives and dependents (similar to the Zulu variant) and was found only at capitals or settlements of individuals of high social standing (Prestage 1901; Hughes and van Velsen 1955; Hughes 1956; Summers and Pagden 1970; Cobbing 1974; Chanaiwa 1976). As with the divisional military settlements of the Zulu (van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019a), the *isigodlo* could house the wives of the king or the induna (often married to one of the king's daughters) that commanded the regiment (Summers and Pagden 1970). The stockade surrounding the settlement had small secondary gates in the outer fence that allowed access to the central

enclosure and the outside bush. These gates were closed every night. However, the main gates (a settlement can have up to 4) were guarded but not closed (Summers and Pagden 1970). The residential units in a Matabele settlement, separated by the paths connecting the secondary outer gates with the central enclosure and surrounded by a stockade fence, followed the same layout as that of a Nguni CCP. Each followed the other in a circular shape around the cattle byre similar to the traditional Nguni CCP form (Prestage 1901; Hughes and van Velsen 1955; Hughes 1956; Summers and Pagden 1970; Cobbing 1974; Chanaiwa 1976). A path (*umkandlo*) was located between the inner fence and was used by the town messenger (*imemezi*) to pass on any information and extended around the whole central enclosure. Shield huts (*impalane*) were often also constructed along this path (Summers and Pagden 1970). Each residential section would have had a cattle kraal (*izibaya*) and calf kraal (*isilugu*) located against the inner stockade, forming part of the central enclosure (Summers and Pagden 1970). Each military settlement formed the centre of an administrative unit for the kingdom and was ruled by two *amaduna*, one for civil matters (*induna umuzi)* and one for military matters (*induna yobuto*). Also, the Matabele employed a ward (*isigaba*) system similar to that of the Sotho-Tswana. Within each administrative area, men who had distinguished themselves in military matters could construct their family homestead, mirroring the Nguni family homestead layout (Hughes and van Velsen 1955; Hughes 1956; Cobbing 1974; Chanaiwa 1976). It is unclear when this settlement organisation developed, as none of the first-hand accounts of the 1820s through the 1830s make mention of such a settlement. However, some aspects, such as the family homestead reward, were mentioned.

5.3.2 Zulu variant

The Zulu variant (Fig. 12) is the most well-studied of all the Nguni military settlements. It consisted of three different variations, each having a specific function within the kingdom's administration and defence. All three of these variations shared the same core organisation, with slight additions being added. The core organisation of the Zulu variant was similar to that of a family homestead (Fig. 2), with the Zulu capital always being constructed as a military settlement (Krige 1965; Van der Merwe *et al.* 1989; Knight 1995; Mitchell 2002). This was mainly because the king would periodically move to different military settlements throughout the kingdom, with at least one

regiment present at the capital (Stuart and Malcolm 1986; Rawlinson 1987; Knight 1995). Although the military settlement followed a similar structural layout as that of a family homestead (Parkington and Cronin 1979; Rawlinson 1985; Roodt 1992; Laband 1995; Knight 1995; Mitchell 2002), the social organisation of the military settlement contrasted with the regular Central Cattle Pattern (CCP) homestead. As with the standard CCP, the settlement was divided into different sections, with the top (opposite the primary entrance) section being the most important (Krige 1965; Laband 1995). In this top section lived both the regimental commander and the female regiment, with the female regiment being under the command of a female relative of the king (Krige 1965; Hedges 1978; Van der Merwe *et al.* 1989; Roodt 1992; Laband 1995; Knight 1995; Mitchell 2002). She presided over the military settlement and kept the female regiment's women in line, supervising the production and distribution of food produced for the settlement. In military settlements with no female regiments attached, the regiment was expected to be provided for by their family homestead or by hunting (Krige 1965; Rawlinson 1985; Knight 1995). Hut placement within the military settlement followed the same hierarchical organisation as a standard CCP. The great hut was now the residence of the regimental commander, with the regimental officers occupying the areas usually occupied by the wives. In the area where the children lived, the huts of the warriors were now located (Krige 1965; Rawlinson 1985; Laband 1995; Knight 1995; Mitchell 2002).

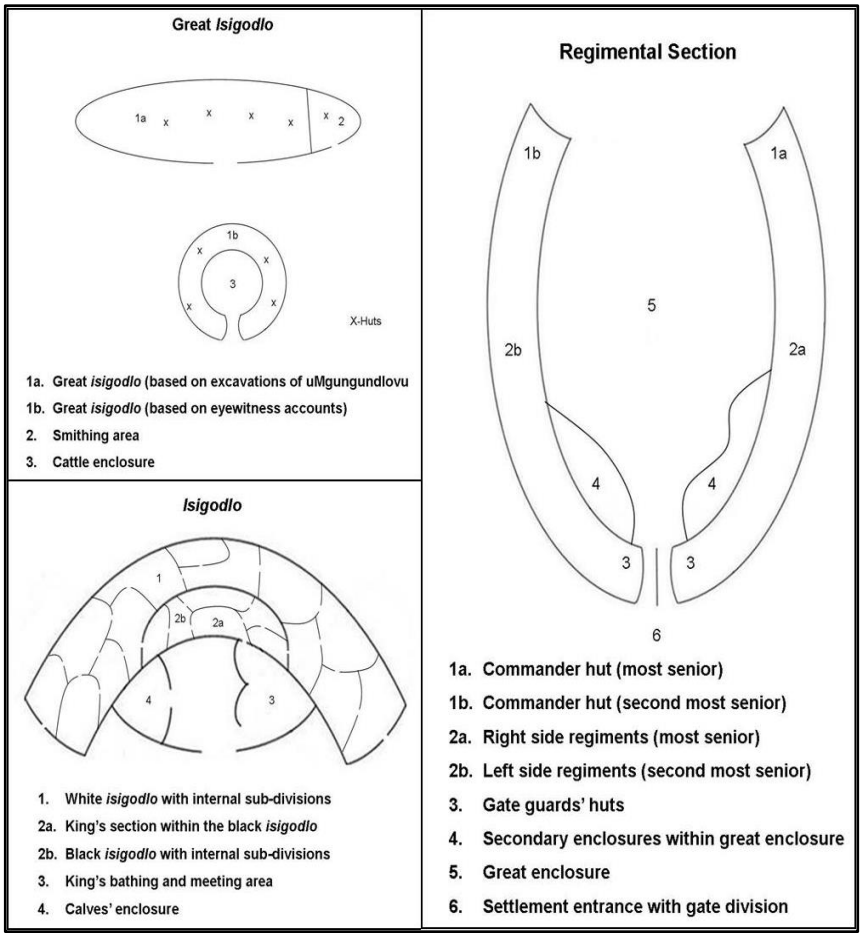


Figure 12: Zulu royal military settlement (van der Merwe 2015)

A regimental commander (*induna*) commanded each military settlement and had the same authority as a chief. Each *induna* had the authority to launch small-scale raids on enemy tribes. However, mobilising for war was only done by order of the king and from Dingane kaSenzangakhona onwards, they could no longer grant the death penalty; that right rested with the king's court only (Kuper 1982). The only other women allowed at the military settlements besides the women of the female regiments were the wives of the *induna*. Military settlements tended to be larger than family homesteads due to military settlements having a higher population density. During times of peace, the regiments stationed at the military settlements would repair byres and fences, tend to the royal herds and fields, and act as transporters and messengers. On rare occasions when a great hunt was called, it was also handled by the male regiments (Hedges 1978). Strict dietary rules were also observed, with large quantities of meat, beer, and cooked corn being the only foods consumed. This was due to these food types being seen as strengthening, which would have been essential for the king's soldiers (Krige 1965).

Of all three types of military settlements utilized by the Zulu Kingdom, the regimental settlements were the closest to the family homesteads in size and organisation (van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019a; van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019b). These regimental military settlements housed only one regiment and were placed in areas of the kingdom that required a stronger military presence. This was primarily in regions from which attacks were anticipated; however, it could also strengthen royal authority in areas where it might have weakened. These settlements did not have a female regiment stationed there and generally had a short period of occupation, often only lasting a few months. Although associated with a specific regiment, only a selection of the regiment would be present at these settlements (van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019a; van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019b), and they were under the command of a regimental commander. The next variation that was used was the divisional military settlement. These were similar in structure to the royal military settlements but significantly smaller and lacking the *great isigodlo* section (van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019a; van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019b). These settlements were the headquarters of a specific regiment, and, therefore, were under the command of the regimental commander. Also present were female relatives of the king, between 3-20 but often only around 3-5, who oversaw the female regiment stationed as the settlement (van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019a; van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019b). These settlements were the administrative centres of the kingdom, each responsible for overseeing a division of the kingdom and surrounded by many family homesteads.

The largest of the three types was the royal military settlement, the king's residence. The Zulu Kingdom had two capitals, winter and summer, but one was also considered the “primary” capital. These capitals could be identified by their size, as the secondary capitals were similar in size to divisional military settlements (van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019a; van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019b). Some of the Zulu kings, such as Dingaan kaSenzangakhona, had three capitals, the third being the same size as the second. These settlements were the seat of government for the kingdom; however, as the government moved with the king, a royal military settlement would only be a capital if the king was present. When the king departed, the settlement reverted to a divisional military settlement, with one settlement always seen as the primary settlement. These primary settlements were the largest in the kingdom, often twice the size of a divisional military settlement. Besides their size, they had an additional organisational feature, called a great *isigodlo*, which was only found at capitals (van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019a; van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019b). However, a difference again existed between the primary and secondary capitals, with the great *isigodlo* of the primary capital being the largest. From first-hand accounts and ethnographic studies, it is known that the Matabele used a similar system to that of the Zulu. However, further research is needed into the similarities and differences between the two systems.

5.3.3 Swazi variant

The Swazi’s use of the regimental system and the associated military settlements (Fig. 13) slightly differ from the Zulu and Matabele. The primary difference in this regard was that the Swazi did not have a military settlement as a separate settlement. Instead, the Swazi used the term *ikhanda* when describing the call-up of a whole regiment; therefore, an *ikhanda* was a part of the regimental organisational structure and not a separate settlement (Marwick 1940). However, a section within the capital and other royal villages was called a *lilawu*, which functioned

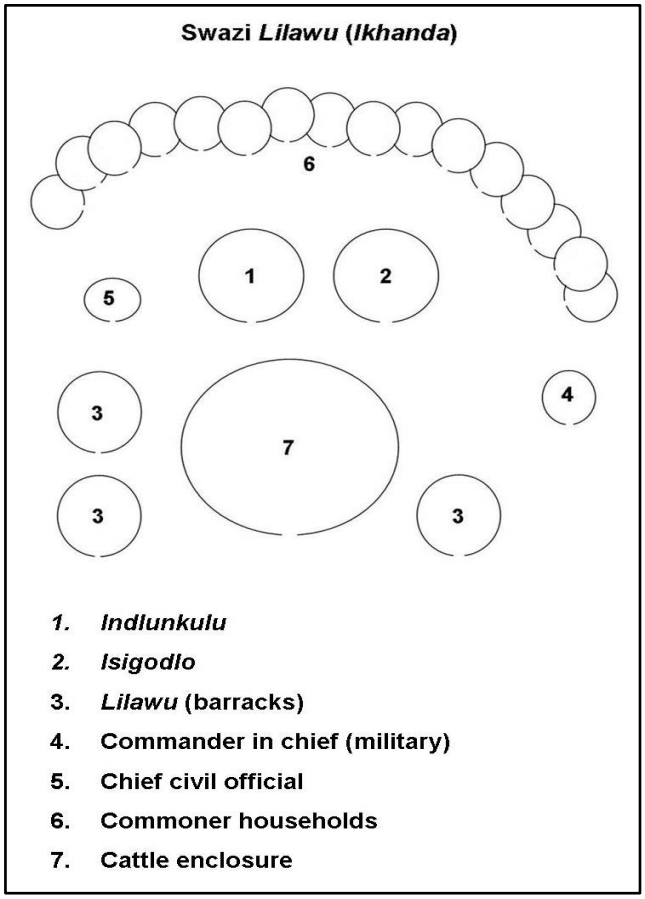


Figure 13: A Swazi riyal village based (van der Merwe 2015).

like a military settlement among the Zulu and Matabele. Additionally, when the Swazi king constructed his first independent settlement from his mother's, that settlement was called a *lilawu* and had a regiment stationed there (Kuper 1961; Kuper 1980; Kuper 1986). Therefore, *lilawu* referred to a section of a capital/royal village (queen mother's settlement) and the king's residence. The king's residence did not always contain a ritual hut, ritual storage hut, *isigodlo* or an inner circle of huts for the ritual functionaries (Kuper 1961; Kuper 1986). Furthermore, due to the ward system utilized within Swazi settlements, the *lilawu* constituted a separate ward instead of a separate settlement.

When viewed from the cattle enclosure's entrance, a *lilawu* (nr.3 in Figure 13) was placed at both sides of the cattle byre. With the addition of further *lilawu* to the settlement, they would be placed above the previous one next to the central enclosure, systematically moving up towards the royal area of the settlement, located at the opposite side of the enclosure entrance. Seniority was indicated by proximity to the royal area, with the most senior regiments located nearest to this area (Marwick 1940; Kuper 1961). Within the king's settlement, the hut reserved for the civil authority (nr.5) was built to the left, and the military authority hut (nr.4) was built to the right of the central enclosure (Marwick 1940; Kuper 1961). The isigodlo (nr.2) was constructed in mature settlements next to the king's area (nr.1) and the military authority's hut. The commoners' huts (nr.6) were located behind the royal area and the furthest away from the entrance to the cattle enclosure (Marwick 1940; Kuper 1961). When the king summoned a new regiment, they would either construct their barracks at a designated area within the royal settlement or, if no space was allocated, were placed behind an existing barracks further away from the royal area (Marwick 1940; Kuper 1961). As the number of huts constructed increased, the king could allow them to construct a fence around the huts, thereby converting them into a separate barrack. Alternatively, they could be ordered to move to a new area and construct the barracks there (Marwick 1940; Kuper 1961). Each hut could house six warriors, with ownership of the hut belonging to the individual who built it. Anybody wishing to live within the huts needed the permission of the owner. The barracks would have a central meeting hut or clubhouse, distinguished from the rest of the huts by cattle horns above the entrance (Marwick 1940; Kuper 1961). Therefore, unlike the other

northern Nguni, the Swazi utilized military wards instead of separate military settlements. Cattle horns above the entrance of a hut were also documented among the Matabele in South Africa; however, it is unknown if they served a similar function or were decorative.

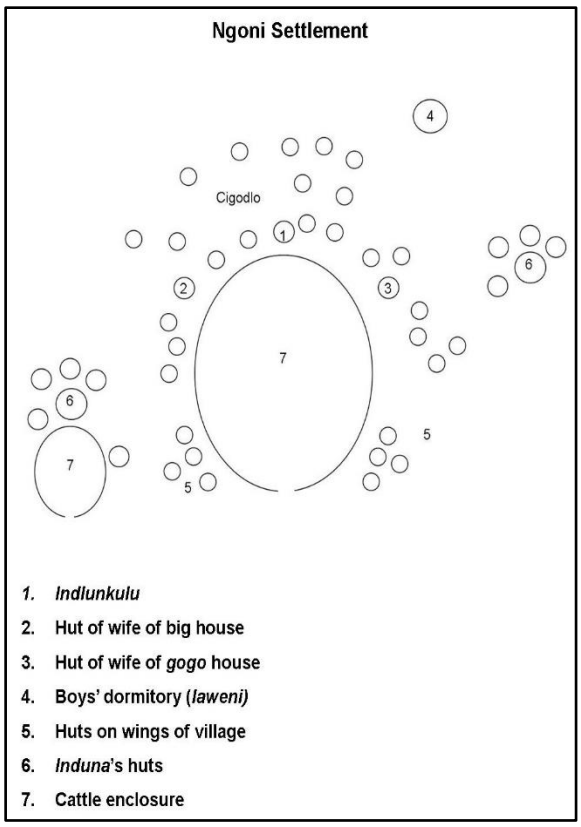


Figure 14: Ngoni settlement (van der Merwe 2015)

5.3.4 Ngoni variant

The Ngoni (Fig. 14) differed noticeably from the other northern Nguni in not constructing a military settlement (Barnes 1954; Read 1956). It is unclear why the Ngoni did not construct military settlements; however, two possible explanations were due to the largely nomadic lifestyle they followed and the absence of regimental marriage restrictions found among the other northern Nguni. Despite the absence of separate military settlements, the Ngoni extensively used the regimental system, with all men remaining part of the system for life. As a result, the Ngoni combined their society's military and civilian aspects into one settlement, similar to the Matabele and Swazi, with the Swazi system having the most similarities. Similar to the Swazi system, the Ngoni had a section within the settlement occupied by unmarried boys aged between seven and seventeen, called the *laweni* (nr.7 in Figure 14). These huts housed all members of all the age groups associated with the different age ranges. The *laweni* was a separate house (a ward within a Ngoni settlement was called a house). Historically, all Ngoni settlements followed the same basic principle, with the function of the different houses being dependent/present depending on the size of the settlement (Read 1956).

As with all northern Nguni, the livestock enclosure (nr.7) was placed in the centre of the settlements, with the huts and later houses constructed around the central enclosure. Each house was constructed to resemble a small family homestead, as found in KwaZulu-Natal, and may also have had an independent livestock enclosure (Read 1956). As with the Swazi system, status was determined by the location of the hut/house concerning its distance from the livestock enclosure's

entrance. The highest-status huts/houses were located at the opposite end of the entrance, with the lowest-level huts/houses at the entrance. The chief (nr.1) hut was located opposite the central enclosure's entrance, with his wives' huts being placed around his. Behind these huts were constructed the huts of married sons and those belonging to the chief's brothers living with him, with this whole area collectively called the *cigodlo* (Read 1956). A house within a large settlement would follow this same settlement pattern, with its status indicated by its proximity to the livestock enclosure. The *laweni* (nr.4) housed the unmarried boys of the settlement (aged between 7 and 17) and was placed behind the *cigodlo* area. Once a youth was married, he would move out of this section of the village. Therefore, a degree of fluidity existed regarding the age of the individuals living within this section. Within large settlements, more than one *laweni* was constructed, each *laweni* housing the youths of a different house (Read 1956). Therefore, each Ngoni regiment was associated with a specific house/ward within a particular settlement. However, not all large settlements would have had more than one *laweni*. In these cases, the regiments would be associated with only the settlement (Read 1956). As a man remained associated with his regiment for life, the *laweni* housed only the unmarried regiment members as they were still viewed as boys. Therefore, once a man married, he was no longer viewed as a boy and thus was no longer allowed to live within the *laweni*. Functionally, the *laweni* had many similarities with the military settlements of the Matabele and the Zulu but functioned as an independent section within a Ngoni settlement.

5.3.5 Gaza Nguni (Shangana) variant

Very little is currently known about the Gaza system because most historical sources are written in Portuguese. Despite these current language restrictions, several English sources are available that do provide a basic description of the Gaza system. However, this is primarily related to the regimental system, and how this would have been reflected in the military settlements is unclear. However, some descriptions of Gaza military settlements are available, allowing for a partial reconstruction.

It is known that the Gaza Nguni also had a regimental system that was similar in organisation to the Swazi and the Ngoni (Liesegang no date). However, regarding the regimental organisation, these communities differed from the Zulu and Matabele as they did not organise their regiments on a national level but rather on a local one. Among the Gaza, the king's mother had significant

political authority, similar to the system used by the Swazi (Liesegang no date). In this regard, it is clear that the Gaza also used the *isigodlo* system as found among the other northern Nguni (Liesegang 1974). A critical difference in the regimental system among the Gaza was that the regiments were not linked to a specific military settlement as was found among the Zulu or Matabele and had closer similarities with the Swazi military settlement system. It appears that the process of summoning warriors to form their regiments was similar to that of the Swazi, with the different age groups heading to the capital to form their respective regiments (Liesegang no date). In addition, at the end of the Gaza Empire during the late 19th century, it appears that the regiments were called up and housed as military settlements only for a short period due to limitations on the availability of grain and other foods (Liesegang no date), which seems to indicate that the Gaza military settlements were not supplied by the local population or their families as was the case among the Zulu and Matabele. However, it does appear that the military settlements acted as regional administrative units for the kingdom, similar to the Zulu system. However, the individuals in charge of these settlements formed part of the aristocracy, similar to the Swazi, with minimal numbers of them being commoners and non-Nguni. Therefore, once a regiment was summoned and gathered at the Capital, they would be sent to military settlements within a selected area. It is unclear, however, whether or not they constructed these settlements on arrival or whether they went to already existing settlements.

Limited information is available on how the military settlement was organised, their demographic composition, and how they related and integrated with the regimental system. However, a basic reconstruction of the Gaza military settlement can be made. According to Liesegang (1974), the *isigodlo* of two Gaza capitals were located in the centre of the settlement, with the king having a separate area. It is unclear what " central " means; however, this might reflect a similar practice documented in late 19th-century Matabele military settlements with the *isigodlo* being constructed in the central kraal. However, it should be noted that a contemporary first-hand account does not mention such a feature. However, the account is very limited in settlement descriptions and does not exclude the possibility of its existence. From the account of Vincent Erskine (1875), a more extensive reconstruction of the Gaza military settlements can be created. Erskine states that the settlements were stockaded and circular. A large cattle enclosure was located in the centre of the settlement, with huts constructed around the central enclosure. Erskine visited a settlement he called a “royal military kraal” (Erskine 1875: 69, 99), but he did not mention a secondary enclosure located within the central cattle enclosure. It is, however, interesting that Erskine calls the

settlement a royal military enclosure. This indicates that it is possible that multiple types of military settlements were present, as found among the Matabele and Swazi, and that there might also have been a separation between military and civilian, as was found among the Zulu. As later studies do not mention such a split, it should be viewed cautiously. Erskine may also be indicating a separation between Nguni and non-Nguni (most likely Tsonga) settlements in the region, as it is known that the area had Tsonga settlements as well.

Erskine indicates that although the central enclosure could have contained at least 1000-2000 cattle, it usually only contained 100 (Erskine 1875). The settlement was still under construction when he visited, and as such, many of the huts were still to be constructed, which also raises the possibility that the central *isigodlo* mentioned by Liesegang among the Gaza was still to be constructed. A later description by Erskine supports the interpretation of Liesegang that the huts constructed differed from those constructed by the Zulu, Swazi and Matabele. Erskine described the huts as having walls between 4 and 6 feet (1.2-1.8 m) tall with an internal platform used for storage. The huts also had hinged doors with two planks positioned at the bottom to keep out livestock (Erskine 1875). An interesting feature Erskine mentioned is that domesticated beehives are kept within the living huts (Erskine 1875). The size range and population densities of the Gaza military settlements are unclear. From Eskine's account, the large settlements appeared to have had between 1000 and 1500 inhabitants, with the smallest settlements having 150 huts (Erskine 1875). If these estimates accurately reflect Gaza military settlements, then these settlements were larger and more populous than those constructed by the Zulu and Matabele. Although the Zulu capitals could hold up to 5000 people, their daily estimated population was between 800-1000 (van der Merwe 2015), which is smaller than the Gaza capitals and other large Gaza settlements. The available evidence shows that the Gaza would have used a system similar to that of the Swazi and Ngoni, which would have indicated that the military settlements housed military wards instead of separate military settlements as found among the Zulu. However, it is also possible that they combined the military and civilian aspects into a similar system to that of the Matabele. When considering the other similarities that the Gaza had to the Swazi, it is more likely that they followed a system closer to that of the Swazi than the Zulu/Matabele.

5.3.6 Initiation lodges

How the pre-19th-century northern Nguni initiation practices worked is currently unknown. Very little ethnographic information is available dating to this period, and no known pre-*ikhanda* phase settlement associated with initiation has yet been found. However, it is known that the pre-nineteenth-century northern Nguni practised circumcision (Bryant 1965; Omer-Cooper 1966). Similarly, it is known that some of the communities in southern Africa that practice circumcision constructed a specific structure or settlement to house the initiates' during this period, called an initiation lodge. Little is known about these lodges and the practices that occurred within them, as outsiders have always been kept away from them. This has been a practice even from the early days of European exploration into South Africa's interior, as Kirby documented (1940a). However, combining information from several sources can create a partial picture of how these lodges and rituals worked.

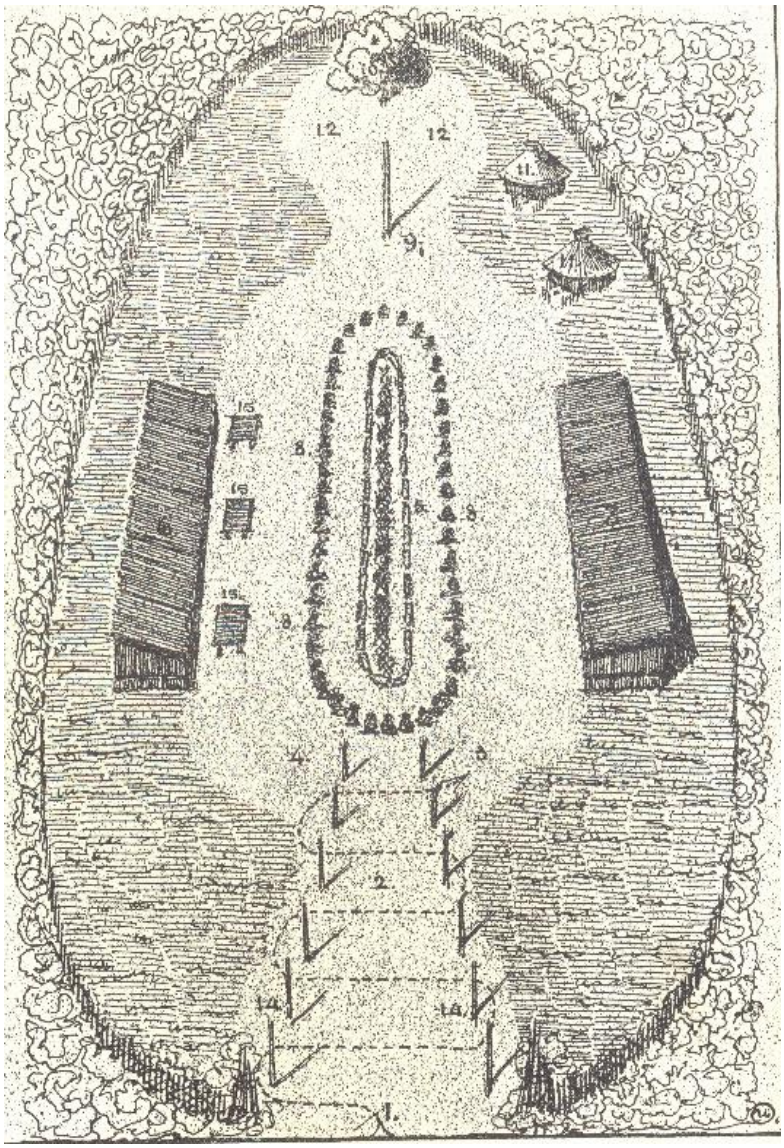


Figure 15: Tsonga initiation lodge (Junod 1912: 78)

Fortunately, a detailed account of a southern Tsonga (in the Maputo region) initiation lodge (Fig. 15), called a *sungi*, was provided by Henry Junod (1912), although the information was obtained via an informant. Considering this community's proximity to the northern Nguni and the general similarities in overall settlement organisation between the southern Tsonga and the northern Nguni, the pre-nineteenth-century northern Nguni lodges might have been similar. It should be

noted, however, that there is a significant difference between these two communities, and no direct comparisons can be made without further research. The lodge was surrounded by a fence created from thorny branches, with an elongated entrance and 12 poles (6 on each side of the entrance) leading to the interior (nr.2 in Figure 15). Circumcised men (uncircumcised men and women were not allowed into the settlement) walked a parallel route between the poles and entered the lodge on the right (nr.3) of the last pole (Junod 1912). Only initiates could walk between the poles (no parallel or zigzag route) and enter the settlement on the last pole's left-hand (nr.4) side. In the centre of the lodge was a long fireplace constructed from stone called the elephant. The leading boy in the rituals, usually the uterine nephew of the chief, had a special stone on which he sat around the fireplace (nr.8), with all the other boys sitting behind him. Near the fireplace were tables constructed of reeds (nr.15) on which the initiates porridge was placed. On either side of the central fireplace were two roughly constructed huts, the right (nr.6) for the shepherds, boys assisting with the initiation ceremonies, and the left (nr.7) for the initiates themselves. Some adult men had huts (nr.11) constructed (Junod 1912). On the opposite side of the entrance was placed a pole (nr.9), called the Mulagaru pole, around which instruction took place (nr.12). In some lodge, a tree would grow (nr.10) in this area which was used as a “podium” for the teacher (Junod 1912).

Andrew Steedman (1966) recollected that during a visit to the Xhosa in 1835, he came across a group of circumcised boys confined within a circular enclosure separated from the village. In his diary (Kirby 1940a), Andrew Smith also documented the initiation practices of the Tswana. The huts used by the boys during the ceremony were constructed a mile from the chief’s settlement, with the huts having to be constructed within 24 hours. Similarly, Smith noted that the Korana also constructed a settlement as part of their initiation ceremony (Kirby 1940a). It is unclear from Smith’s description where this settlement was constructed, but it appears to have been separated from the rest of the village. In both cases, Smith noted that the initiates were supplied with meat, preferably cattle, during the initiation process and that it was the responsibility of either the chief or the initiates' families to provide them with food during this period. The similarities between the initiation lodges and the military settlements of the northern Nguni are apparent. Therefore, it is possible that the military settlements were modified initiation lodges to accommodate the changes that were similarly made to the associated initiation practices (regimental system) among the northern Nguni. These changes might also have coincided with the abandonment of circumcision by the northern Nguni.

5.4 Conclusion

It has been shown that several different forms of the regimental system were present in southern Africa. Some of these regimental systems, such as those of the northern Nguni, resulted in the creation of settlements, or sections within settlements, that were directly and exclusively associated with the martial aspects of the system. In this regard, the northern Nguni differed significantly from the Sotho-Tswana and the southern Nguni in how they used and modified the martial aspects of the regimental system. From the analysis, it has been shown that the settlement organisation of the Ngoni and Swazi variants, and potentially also the Gaza, shared many similarities. Similarly, the Zulu and Matabele variants also shared many similarities. An interesting feature, however, is that the Ngoni/Swazi variant differed remarkably from the Zulu/Matabele variant. The existence of two separate yet regionally defined systems has direct implications for the development and origins of the northern Nguni military system. However, before this link can be explored further, a more detailed understanding of the Matabele military settlements is needed, as the Matabele had historical ties to both identified systems. Unfortunately, very little of the Matabele system is currently known. A detailed examination of the historical and ethnographic accounts is needed to start developing a settlement model that can be used to locate these settlements within the landscape. This is the main focus of this study, and the process that will be used in reconstructing the Matabele military settlements to a more detailed level will be outlined in the following chapter.

Chapter 6: Material and Methods

6.1 Introduction

A multifaceted approach is required to understand any settlement's complexity and social dynamics fully. The 19th century was a dynamic period in southern Africa where the whole region underwent rapid and large-scale changes. As a result, a variation of sources can be utilised to develop a detailed and comprehensive understanding of the settlement patterns of this period. These sources can be grouped into three broad categories: written sources, archaeological excavations and satellite imagery. All current literature related to the Matabele has primarily utilised written sources, with only a limited amount of archaeological work being undertaken. This chapter will examine the known literature pertaining to the Matabele and how additional information can be obtained from other sources, such as remote sensing.

6.2 Materials

Two primary types of material will be used within this study, namely, written sources and remote sensing sources. Both source types can be further divided into several sub-sections, each of which will be examined separately.

6.2.1 Written sources

Written sources on the Matabele can be divided into two primary categories: first-hand historical accounts and historiographical works. Much of the historiographical literature extensively uses first-hand accounts; however, some also incorporate ethnographic or oral history sources. As the first-hand historical accounts form the core of our current understanding of the Matabele, they will be examined first.

6.2.1.1 Historical first-hand accounts

To properly understand the historical accounts related to the Matabele, it should be noted that the history of the Matabele Kingdom can be divided into two distinct phases, each of which can be linked to a specific geographic and temporal context. Therefore, the first phase can be considered the South African period and is related to South Africa, primarily the KwaZulu-Natal province and

later the four northern provinces. This first phase covers Matabele (or Khumalo) history until 1839/40, when the Matabele migrated into southern Zimbabwe. With this northern migration, the second phase of the Matabele Kingdom started, which can be called the Zimbabwean phase, and continued until the British conquest during the 1890s. Therefore, first-hand historical accounts cannot be linked to the Matabele residing in KwaZulu-Natal, as they had already departed the region by the time Europeans arrived at Port Natal (modern Durban). Therefore, first-hand accounts are limited to the geographical area of northern South Africa (Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and North-West provinces) and southern Zimbabwe (North and South Matabeleland provinces) covering the period from 1819-1895. The names of several explorers that pre-date these periods are known; however, at the moment, it does not appear that they kept diaries/accounts or that these accounts have never been published.

The two most cited accounts related to the Matabele are the works of the missionary Robert Moffat and the explorer and expedition leader Doctor Andrew Smith. Robert Moffat was a close associate of the Matabele king Mzilikazi, who considered him a close friend. However, from the entries in Moffat's diaries, it appears this feeling was not mutual. Moffat undertook five journeys to meet Mzilikazi, stretching from the 1810s to the 1860s. As such, it is the only source of first-hand information currently available that covers both phases of the Matabele Kingdom. However, the primary and most detailed are still related to the first phases. Moffat's oldest available source is his book, *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa*, published in 1846. This book covers Moffat's life as a missionary in South Africa and starts with his arrival in Cape Town in the 1790s and ends with his first visit to Mzilikazi in 1819. Most of the period covered by the book is focused on his missionary work in what is today the Northern Cape Province of South Africa, as well as a small section of southern Namibia. This period includes his time spent with Afrikaner and the creation of the Kuruman mission station. Although this book provides an interesting view of the northern interior of South Africa during this period, it is of only limited use concerning the Matabele. Only a small section at the end of the book is related to his first visit to Mzilikazi, and this section was not written to provide a detailed recollection of the trip. Similarly, this section of the book was based on his diary, which is also published in the next work to be discussed, further reducing the published work's utility. However, despite these limitations, the book does provide information that is not available in later accounts, which does aid in filling in some of the cabs evident in later accounts.

The best-known historical account associated with Moffat is the book published by Wallis (1945) titled *The Matabele Journals of Robert Moffat. It* is a publication of Moffat's diaries and some of his known letters. These diaries (published in two volumes) are related to the five journeys that Moffat undertook to Mzilikazi and are the only known first-hand accounts that can be associated with both the South African and Zimbabwean phases of the Matabele Kingdom. This is the most detailed source of information related to the Matabele that Moffat developed. However, this source is important for Matabele studies because of the detailed information provided, and Moffat visited the Matabele of Mzilikazi over 30 years in South Africa and Zimbabwe. Therefore, examining the accounts and how the information changes over time allows a limited degree of historical continuation to be explored. The diaries are organised according to each trip, with the first two related to South Africa and the rest to Zimbabwe. As mentioned earlier, the first trip is a partial copy of the information provided in Moffat's publication. However, Moffat's publication was based on his diaries and memories, whereas the publication of Wallis is only on Moffat's diaries. Therefore, combining these two sources provides the most detailed reconstruction of his possible first trip. Moffat's second trip was undertaken alongside the scientific expedition of Dr. Andrew Smith, in which Moffat acted as a guide to the expedition and facilitated interactions between Smith and Mzilikazi. The last three visits were after the Matabele had migrated north into southern Zimbabwe. Unfortunately, this study could not obtain a copy of the second volume that deals with the last two trips to the Matabele. Therefore, only the third trip was used concerning the Matabele in Zimbabwe. Moffat's third trip to the Matabele occurred after the Matabele had been living in southern Zimbabwe for several years and, therefore, allows for a certain degree of historical comparison. In this regard, a significant degree of cultural continuality appears between the Matabele during their period in South Africa and the earlier period in southern Zimbabwe.

Arguably, the most cited source, especially concerning the Matabele in South Africa, was the accounts and publication of Andrew Smith. Andrew Smith led a scientific expedition into South Africa's interior over two years. Three different accounts are associated with this expedition. The first is the accounts of Andrew Smith, which consist of two published volumes related to his expedition diaries (Kirby 1940a,b) titled *The Diary of Dr Andrew Smith: Director of the Expedition for Exploring Central Africa, 1834-1836.* Smith's diary has been published in two volumes, with Smith starting an official account, but he never finished it. The unfinished version was later published by Lye in 1975 and titled *Andrew Smith's journal of his expedition into the interior of South Africa: An authentic narrative of travels, discoveries, the manners and customs of the native*

tribes, and the physical nature of the country. These accounts provide a large amount of detail about the interior of South Africa; however, the cultural elements of the societies encountered were documented in considerably less detail than the zoological and geological aspects. Another account of this expedition is also available, written by John Burrow (1971).

Although this is a short and undetailed account, it provides additional information not mentioned in the other accounts and is a collaborating account for Moffat and Smith's accounts. As mentioned earlier, Moffat undertook his second journey to Mzilikazi in the expedition's company, along with two other traders who also journeyed alongside them. These three accounts together allow for the reconstruction of the environment and the people/communities living on it to some extent. Furthermore, by combining the geographic and landscape information provided in all three accounts, it is possible to reconstruct a large section of the route taken within a few kilometres, which allows for the determination of settlement locations to some extent. Unlike Moffat's publications, these publications have large sections directly related to the Matabele and allow a basic reconstruction of the society and its settlements. However, these three accounts are very limited in the cultural and settlement information provided, especially compared to first-hand accounts associated with the Zulu. In the account of Cornwallis Harris, Moffat has also been accused of being very bad at navigation and that his directions cannot be relied upon, which does cast some doubt on the reconstructions of the routes Moffat took. A possible reason for the minimal amount of geographical information provided by Smith could be attributed to the existence of a geographical journal. Unfortunately, this journal has not been published, and its current whereabouts are uncertain, which did not allow for its incorporation into this study.

The last well-known first-hand account is related to the account published by Cornwallis Harris shortly after the Smith Expedition. This book, titled *The Wild Sports of Southern Africa: Being the Narrative of a Hunting Expedition from the Cape of Good Hope, Through the Territories of the Chief Moselekatse, to the Tropic of Capricorn,* documents the hunting expedition undertaken by Harris and covers a large geographic area that was also covered in the previous accounts. Harris's account provides the most detailed description of the interior of a Matabele settlement; however, this is primarily limited to the area of the settlement in which Mzilikazi lived. Despite his criticism of Moffat, Harris' account also does not provide detailed geographical information, making his route hard to track. Andrew Steedman wrote another less well-known first-hand

account in 1835 titled *Wanderings and Adventures in the Interior of Southern Africa: Illustrated with Lithographic and Wood Engravings (Vol.1 and 2).* Similar to Moffat's account, only a small section of this account is concerned with the Matabele.

Furthermore, the section related to the Matabele appears to be a duplication of the information given by Moffat in his account, which significantly reduces the utility of this account for understanding the Matabele. A short extract of the accounts of the traders Schoon and McClukie was also published in the *South African Quarterly Journal*, vol1, by John Chase in 1830. This extract is related to the journey these two travellers undertook to Mzilikazi at the same time that Moffat undertook his first journey. These are the same two traders joining Moffat and Smith on their journey to Mzilikazi. Unfortunately, the amount of detail provided in this extract was very limited and only corroborated some of the observations made in the other accounts.

5.2.1.2 Historiographical sources

Several published research papers and books focus on the Matabele as a cultural grouping or their first king, Mzilikazi and his life. Published research articles focusing on the Matabele military system and the associated *ikhanda* settlement are the works of Cobbing (1974), Pistorius (1997a,b) and van der Merwe (2015). Historiography on the Matabele includes the works of Prestage (1901), Hughes and Van Velsen (1955), Hughes (1956), Cobbing (1974, 1976), Rasmussen (1977, 1978), Chanaiwa (1976), Pikirayi (2001), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009). Most of these sources primarily focus on the Matabele society that eventually settled in southern Zimbabwe. Therefore, they represent a view of the result of the Matabele migration when they had developed into the cultural grouping today known as the Zimbabwean Ndebele. These sources also provide us with ethnographic information regarding the Matabele of this period. These can then be further substituted by the works of Breutz (1953), Kuper (1954) and Elliott (1989). These sources, therefore, provide us with a picture of Matabele society and organisation during different phases of their north-wards migration. These sources will be combined to develop a model of the Matabele *ikhanda*. This model will be based on sources from the start, middle and end of their migration north, enabling us to track and reconstruct how these settlements changed over time and space.

6.2.2 Archaeological

The amount of archaeological information available for the Matabele is minimal. Only one known Matabele site has been excavated, the Matabele capital of KoBulawayo, undertaken by Gaffney *et al.*. and partially published in 2005. The work of Pistorius (1997a,b) is also often cited concerning the Matabele; however, this work has critical limitations that bring Pistorius' Matabele connection into question. A research publication by Pistorius titled *The Matabele village which eluded history,* was published in two parts in 1997. These papers focus on surveys and limited exploratory excavations of several stone-built enclosures located on a hill near the town of Rustenburg in South Africa. The first part of the publication provides the historical context of the Matabele, with the second part focusing on the survey and partial excavations. These two publications are the most often cited archaeological sources for the Matabele during their South African phase. This is primarily due to them being the only archaeological papers linked to the Matabele in South Africa. However, the Matabele link developed by Pistorius is unclear, nor do known features of the Matabele support it. Pistorius argues that the settlements do not match the surrounding Fokeng settlements of the region without providing any clear reason as to why; therefore, they had to be Matabele in origin. The rest of the paper builds on this original, largely unproven, point. It follows a primary reductionist approach by arguing how the documented features fit within the Matabele model, as these settlements now had to be Matabele.

Although this is not a faulty analytical approach, how Pistorius utilised it stood in contrast to his supporting information, and he used assumptions as facts. Three core assumptions undermine the argument made by Pistorius. The first was that if those settlements weren't Fokeng, they could only be Matabele. As a result, no clear Matabele link is created. The second assumption is that as the Matabele had occupied the surrounding region and incorporated Sotho/Tswana into their kingdom, the Matabele would also have adopted the use of stone as construction material. What impact the incorporated communities had on the Matabele is unclear, but it has been documented that the Matabele adopted some non-Nguni cultural practices. All the first-hand accounts do, however, corroborate the lack of stone usage among the Matabele as a construction material during this period. Pistorius's overall avoidance of the contradiction of stone use and the first-hand accounts further undermines the Matabele link. The last core limitation is that Pistorius views the located settlements as being linked to each other from a temporal and cultural perspective. This link functions as the core of Pistorius's argument that the different settlements represent the different phases of a Matabele settlement. Pistorius argues that a different settlement represents

each phase of the settlement, and therefore, all the enclosures found can be viewed as one conceptual settlement. Pistorius assumes that a different settlement would represent each phase of a Matabele settlement; however, there is currently no evidence to support this, although it is also possible that this might have been the case. However, as Pistorius does not provide any evidence for the temporal or cultural linkage of these sites, their connectivity cannot be validated nor used as a supporting argument for the Matabele link, as was done by Pistorius. As a result, the paper published by Pistorius cannot currently be viewed as representative of the Matabele. The result of the exclusion of Pistorius's work means that there is no published archaeological work that can be linked to the Matabele within South Africa. Therefore, the archaeological signature and nature of Matabele settlements during this period need to be inferred from the first-hand accounts and excavations of later Matabele Capitals.

The excavations of *Gaffney et al. (2005)* and another related publication in 1997 provide a clear archaeological signature for a Matabele settlement during the Zimbabwean phase. However, it is well known that several settlement alterations occurred during the South African and Zimbabwean phases concerning Matabele settlement organisation, with the date and cause of these alterations being unknown. The differences between the South African and Zimbabwean phase organisations resulted in the excavations of Gaffney *et al.* having only limited use for the South African period. Its utility is further hampered by many excavation aspects that have not yet been published. Despite these limitations, *Gaffney et al.* provide archaeological support for several key features mentioned in the first-hand accounts. Firstly, the excavations support the absence of stone as a construction medium within Matabele settlements. Furthermore, the magnetic survey of the capital collaborates the first-hand account descriptions of this settlement, which indicates that these accounts can be used to a certain degree of certainty. Lastly, Gaffney *et al.* found evidence that the nature and size of the internal fence walling of the capital differed from that of the outer stockade walling, further supporting the first-hand observations of differences concerning internal and external fencing within a Matabele settlement.

Due to the near absence of archaeological evidence for the Matabele, it is not currently possible to make any definitive statements regarding the accuracy of the first-hand accounts concerning settlement organisation. However, the many similarities between the different accounts written during different periods indicate a certain degree of credibility, especially when the Zimbabwean

case is also considered. However, a feature frequently noted within the literature is the high degree of similarities that appear to have existed between the Matabele and the Zulu. As a result of these similarities, several excavations of Zulu capitals can also be examined for identifying possible Matabele archaeological signatures. The excavations of uMgungundlovu (Parkington and Cronin 1979; Roodt 1992, 1993) are of particular utility. uMgungundlovu was occupied during the 1830s, which made it contemporaneous with the Matabele settlements constructed on the South African highveld. In addition, uMgungundlovu was also constructed within a decade of the Matabele-Zulu split, although their relationship is debated. As Smith visited both uMgungundlovu and the Matabele settlements, often commenting on the similarities but making no mention of any settlement differences in this regard, indicates the viability of uMgungundlovu as a partial proxy settlement. However, this link should be used within the known limitations between two separate but related groups.

Furthermore, although many similarities have been documented between the Matabele and Zulu, it is also known that several differences were also present. Therefore, although the Zulu capital can be used as a potential archaeological settlement signature indicator for Matabele settlements, it should be remembered that differences would also have been present. The excavations of Rawlinson (1985, 1987) and van Schalkwyk (1999) of a later Zulu capital (oNdini) indicated the large degree of similarity between uMgungundlovu and oNdini, further extending the number of excavations that can be drawn upon as partial proxy sources. The excavations of the Zulu capitals cannot be used to interpret or predict the organisation of Matabele settlements beyond a basic layout. However, as the Zulu and Matabele shared the same overall physical settlement organisation as well as utilising the same construction material, these settlements can be used, in conjunction with the first-hand accounts, to develop a basic archaeological signature for Matabele settlements that will allow for their identification on the landscape via the use of satellite and multispectral imagery.

6.2.3 Satellite imagery and survey

This study uses two types of remote sensing data: the Google Earth Pro desktop application and Planet Scope multispectral satellite imagery. Google Earth Pro is an application that provides free, high-resolution satellite imagery that covers the whole planet. Google Earth Pro can be utilised either via the web application or as an installed desktop application. The web application

was not suitable for this study as it lacked key features that were needed for the study, such as historical imagery. In addition, the range and quality of available imagery can vary significantly between regions within southern Africa. Within the study area, the date range of images included 1985, 2002-2003, 2011-2013 and 2017-2022. Of these ranges, imagery dated to 1985 was unusable due to the large pixel resolution preventing any detailed view of the landscape. Similarly, the 2002-2003 imagery also had poor image resolution when features were viewed at a higher magnification; however, the resolution was considerably improved from the 1985 series and did allow for close inspection. Therefore, most of the imagery used for the survey utilised satellite imagery dating between 2011-2022.

The second type of satellite imagery used was multispectral band imagery provided by Planet Scope. These images are also freely available; however, registration and an educational institution affiliation are required to access the imagery. Planet Scope imagery comes in 4 bands and 8 band images, with 8 bands only available since October 2021, resulting in a smaller temporal range than the 4 band images. These images' wavelength spectrum (band) includes the visible light spectrum (Red, Green and Blue), Red Edge, and Near-infrared. Planet Scope provides a daily range of satellite imagery, and the user can limit the available imagery to specific dates with imagery obtained via the Planet Explorer web application. The study area was uploaded as a keyhole markup language (KML) file to create an Area-of-Interest (AOI). After creating the AOI, imagery was selected for August of 2021 due to this period being part of the dry period, reducing the amount of cloud cover. Once the required images were downloaded, they were imported into two geographic information software (GIS) packages: ArcGIS and QGIS. ArcGIS is a licensed GIS software package, with QGIS being an open-source GIS package, and this study utilised functionalities in both software packages. The available ArcGIS licence did not allow for using kml files (the file format used by Google Earth Pro) and, therefore, needed to be converted into a shapefile format that could be used within ArcGIS. ArcGIS and QGIS are compatible with Planet Scope’s satellite imagery; however, the usability of these images is easier within QGIS than within ArcGIS. A vital strength of multispectral images above a visual range image (such as Google Earth) is that different features can be located within the imagery due to these features reflecting light differently. Therefore, the presence of a feature obscured by vegetation can be determined by examining the different wavelengths (bands) of these images.

6.3 Methods

A two-pronged approach had to be utilised to examine the Matabele's micro and macro settlement patterns. The first phase of the reconstruction was to develop a theoretical model of the organisation and architecture of a Matabele settlement. This model then had to be translated into a visual representation of how this model would be reflected on satellite imagery that could be used to identify these settlements on the landscape. Each phase required a different methodological approach and will be discussed separately.

6.3.1 Settlement reconstruction

As mentioned, several published results of excavations undertaken at Zulu capitals are available. Furthermore, it is known that the Matabele and Zulu shared many similarities. Since the organisation and extent of these settlements have been well documented, they can provide a crucial interpretive base for developing the archaeological signature of a Matabele settlement for use within satellite imagery. However, it is known that the Matabele and Zulu also differed despite the high degree of similarities. Due to these differences, this study had to determine to what extent the Matabele and Zulu settlements could be considered similar and how this would be reflected within the satellite and multispectral images. As no known Matabele settlement has yet been excavated, this determination had to be undertaken using first-hand accounts. These accounts were examined for any description related to the organisation and construction of Matabele settlements to develop a settlement model for the Matabele. Features mentioned in more than one account were viewed as having a high degree of accuracy, with the number of repeated descriptions improving the certainty of these features. In this regard, it was clear from examining all the accounts that a Matabele settlement at this stage was circular to oval and had a large central enclosure with the huts being constructed between an inner and outer fence, with the inner fence surrounding the central enclosure. However, several differences were found between the Matabele and Zulu during the model reconstruction, which would allow for identifying these settlements within the landscape. However, the overall organisational pattern of the Matabele matched those of the Zulu, indicating that the Zulu capitals' visible and spectral signature could be used as a proxy. Therefore, the spectral image of Zulu settlements was used as the basis for the satellite survey undertaken in this study.

Once it was determined that the Zulu capitals' visible representation could be used for the Matabele, the study still needed to determine the boundaries of the study area. To determine the boundaries of the study area, it was required to determine where Matabele settlements were more likely to be present on the landscape to improve the possibility of successful detection. This was done by reconstructing the routes that the 19th-century explorers took.

6.3.2 Historical route reconstructions

Although a general location of the Matabele within South Africa was already known, this area covered the whole northern regions of South Africa north of the Vaal River. It would not have been viable to undertake a satellite imagery survey for such a large region; therefore, its boundaries needed to be reduced. To reduce these boundaries, the routes taken by each explorer that visited the Matabele. As these explorers, traders and missionaries visited Matabele settlements, the region where these settlements were located could be determined by tracking their route. Although partial route reconstructions for some of these explorers already existed (see Lye 1975 and Wallis 1945), it was hoped that the incorporation of additional sources of information would allow for a more detailed and precise reconstruction of these routes. As the entries within each account follow a chronological order, each entry's location was plotted on a modern map using GIS software.

A multi-source approach was utilised to determine each entry's location. The primary determination was via a visual inspection of satellite imagery in the region to locate landmarks, such as rivers or mountains, mentioned in the first-hand accounts. The starting location of each of these expeditions is known and, therefore, allows for a significant reduction in the region being examined. Some of the entries also provided estimates of the distances travelled, which allowed for a further reduction in the region being examined for landmarks mentioned. However, not all entries had these estimates, with many only indicating the time spent travelling during the day. Therefore, to facilitate a reduction in the required examination region for landmarks, this study determined the estimated distance each explorer would have travelled in the time mentioned. To determine this, a two-phase approach was utilised. Firstly, as some entries provided the number of hours travelled, and the distance travelled, this information was used to develop an estimated distance travelled per hour. Secondly, some historical sources, such as Burrow (1971), also gave the average distances travelled by ox wagon during this period, which was an estimated 1.5 miles

per hour. Although these estimates had many variables, such as geography, weather and breakage, that could have dramatically impacted the distance travelled per hour, this reconstruction allowed for a general estimate. Therefore, combining these two sources of information could significantly reduce the region that needed to be searched for landmarks on satellite imagery. A further reduction was also possible as a general travel direction was often also given, which allowed the search area to be restricted to locations within the mentioned travel directions.

Additional sources of information were also used in the reconstructions. Several digitised maps were obtained from online sources dating to between the 1810s and the 1860s. Most of these maps covered either the whole of southern Africa or were limited to the interior of southern Africa outside of the British colonies at the Cape and Natal. These maps were downloaded and digitally enhanced in Adobe Photoshop via the smart image functionality. A smart image within Photoshop keeps the relationship between pixels during image manipulation. As a result, pixelation of an image due to a size increase is significantly reduced, which allowed for a significant increase in the size (dpi) of the downloaded maps. Once re-sized, the images were exported in Tiff format, allowing for better digital application utilisation as no pixel compression is applied to the images, as happens with PNG and JPG formats. These maps were then imported into ArcMap, part of the ArcGIS software package, QGIS, and geo-referenced. Due to technical problems related to both software packages, which prevented georeferencing one map within one software, both were required to georeference all the historical maps. Georeferencing was done via direct point matching as it was found that the placement error was too large when the coordinates were used due to the limitations of the conversion process. The known points, such as rivers, mountains, lakes and settlements, matched the features indicated on the historical map to the same feature on software-provided satellite base maps. Due to the inherent inaccuracies of historical maps, the features indicated on the maps and their true location were not precisely matched, with the average error being within a few kilometres. Despite these inaccuracies, utilisation of the historical maps allowed for the location of specific features mentioned in the accounts, such as springs with a specific name or the location of a specific farm, to be narrowed, which allowed for a more precise tracking of the routes.

Tracking the routes these explorers took allowed for the general regions where the Matabele constructed their settlements to be determined. In addition, as these journeys occurred at multiple periods during the late 1820s and 1830s, they also allowed for a general regional settlement pattern to be determined. However, it should be noted that the explorers all travelled along a similar route and only visited a small portion of the Matabele Kingdom. Therefore, it is unknown if this regional settlement pattern was unique to this part of the Kingdom or if it could be viewed as representative of the wider kingdom. However, Summers and Pagden (1970) commented that Matabele settlements in Zimbabwe were mainly limited to a small geographical area surrounding the capital, an estimated 15 km radius, despite the large territory of the kingdom. Smith (Kirby 1940a) created a similar impression of large Matabele practices in South Africa when discussing Matabele regional settlement distribution. Therefore, although Matabele settlements have been recorded within the historical accounts as far north as the Limpopo and as far east as the Barberton area, it appears it was a general Matabele practice to concentrate the largest portion of the population within a core area of the kingdom, with current evidence suggesting it was organised around the capital. Based on the descriptions provided in the accounts, the regions identified as having the highest concentration of settlements were then selected for inclusion into the study area. From the multiple descriptions, it was found that the highest known concertation of Matabele settlements within South Africa was located in the region stretching from Zeerust in the west to Millvale in the east.

6.3.3 Remote Sensing

6.3.3.1 Survey methodology

A systematic, grid-based survey methodology was utilised within this study. An Area of Interest (AOI) was created within Google Earth Pro via the “create polygon” feature based on the selective criteria discussed above. The build grid functionality of Google Earth Pro was used to provide a consistent grid (based on latitude and longitude) throughout the study area. Multiple size grids are available, based on zoom level, with the smallest zoom level used for this study. These grids cover a square of 300 x 300 meters. A north-south transect pattern was used, starting on the western border of the AOI and ending on the eastern border. Each north-south transect consisted of three grid squares. All layers, excluding terrain, were deactivated within Google Earth Pro, which included names and borders. The terrain layer was kept enabled as this allows for a 360-degree three-dimensional view of the landscape, which allows for improved examination of features on the slopes of the mountains. As the development of the settlement model and the

accompanying reconstruction of the routes used were undertaken first, the names and border layer were de-abled to prevent any bias in the survey. As the survey's primary goal was to see if any potential Matabele settlements could be located on the landscape based on the model created, a blinded study approach was required for the survey. Therefore, with the names and borders disabled, along with a high zoom-in setting (1 km), prevented any form of orientation within the study area other than allowing for a north-south survey transect. This approach limited any potential bias that resulted from the reconstruction of the historical routes that would have influenced the search of sites in regions they are known to have been. Regional analysis for identified sites was only undertaken once the survey was finished, and a comparison between identified sites and the historical accounts was then undertaken to determine the similarity/accuracy of the model concerning the historical accounts.

The survey transects (Fig. 16) started in the southwestern corner of the study area, surrounding the Malopo Oog. Each transect was followed from south to north, incorporating three 300-meter-long east-west grid squares. After each transect, a line (called path in Google Earth Pro) was created on the grid to indicate that the area was finished. Once a feature was identified within the transect path, a close-up 360 inspection was undertaken to identify and confirm its nature. Each inspection included using historical imagery to rule out any possible modern features and obtain optimal visibility of the feature. From the historical accounts, it is known that many of the Matabele settlements were located close to Tswana stone-walled settlements. Therefore, the presence of stone-walled settlements was used as an additional verification criterion for identified sites. Two known military settlements were used

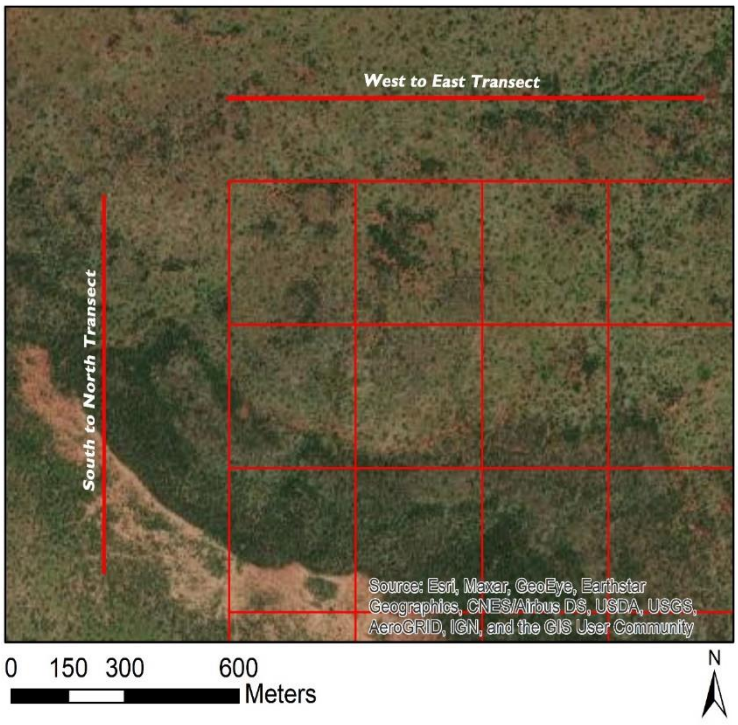


Figure 16: Survey transects used in this study for the satellite image visual inspection.

to create a baseline identification for Matabele settlements. From first-hand accounts, it was determined that Matabele settlements during this time were similar to the military settlements used by the Zulu Kingdom. Therefore, the visual representation of one of the known Zulu military settlements, oNdini, was used. However, it is also known that Matabele settlements at the end of the 19th century had a different layout than those dating to the earlier part of the century. Furthermore, when and why this change occurred is unknown. Although none of the first-hand accounts mentioned any of these features, the possibility that they could be present could not be ruled out. This was primarily due to the limited area of the kingdom visited by the missionaries, traders and explorers. Therefore, another baseline image was created from the only known Matabele settlement with this later settlement layout, old Bulawayo, to allow their identification within the study area.

Table 2: Table describing the type of features associated with each level of probability.

Probability level	Features number	Feature type	Example figure
Low	1	Circular patch of vegetation	Figure 15
Medium	2	Circular patch of vegetation combined with evidence of surrounding huts.	Figure 16
High	3	Has either a circular vegetation path or an open area surrounded by a circular line of vegetation. The circular patch is then surrounded by an open area where evidence of occupation (primarily soil discolouration) can be seen. Two variations have been found regarding the region surrounding this open area. Another ring of vegetation or circular soil discolouration indicative of an occupation area can surround this area.	Figure 17

Once all the transects were completed (83 in total), the data was exported from Google Earth Pro as a kml file. The kml file was then imported into QGIS, and each identified feature was exported as a shapefile for import into ArcGIS. The two main settlement types identified within the transect were stone-walled sites and possible Matabele settlements. Potential Matabele settlements were further divided into three sub-categories: low, medium, and high probability (Tabel 1) of being a Matabele settlement. Settlements with a low probability

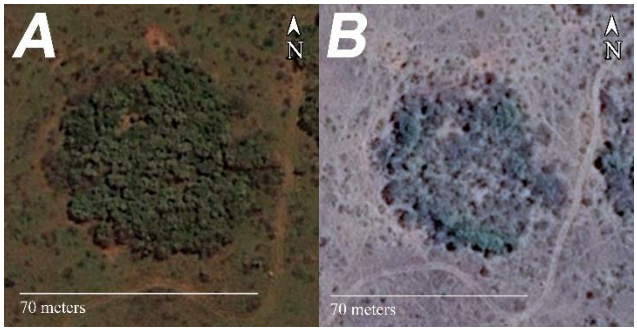


Figure 17: An example of a site categorised as having a low probability of being a Matabele settlement.

(Fig. 17) consisted of only one identified feature, such as a circular patch of vegetation, which would indicate a central cattle enclosure. A circular patch of vegetation can also show modern cattle enclosures that have been abandoned for several years. As this possibility could not be excluded due to the temporal range of the available satellite imagery, these sites were classified as having a low probability.

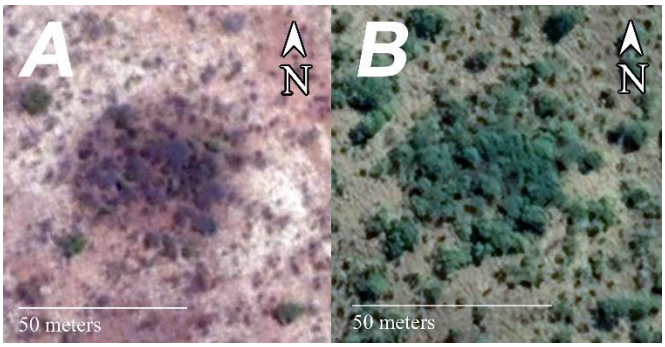


Figure 18: An example of a site categorised as having a medium probability of being a Matabele settlement.

Sites classified as having medium probability (Fig. 18) had two identifiable features. These two features were a circular vegetation patch surrounded by a region that matches an occupation area. Either soil discolouration can identify this region (generally light-coloured, such as white or grey) or by different vegetation types, such as grass. This secondary region is generally poorly defined with an irregular shape.

The sites listed as having a high probability (Fig. 19) had three features that could be identified from the satellite imagery. These features are a circular central patch of vegetation (or an unvegetated area) surrounded by narrow circular vegetation area. This area is surrounded by a clearly defined circular area of soil discolouration consistent with an occupation area. This secondary area can additionally be covered by another narrow strip of vegetation, or the boundaries can be separated from the surrounding soil or vegetation. From the historical accounts, a particular locational settlement placement pattern between each Matabele settlement, as well as the stone-walled settlements, was also discovered. Due to the high concentration of stone-walled sites within the region, it is unclear whether this link is intentional or coincidental. An observation made by Moffat on his third trip to Mzilikazi when he was residing in south

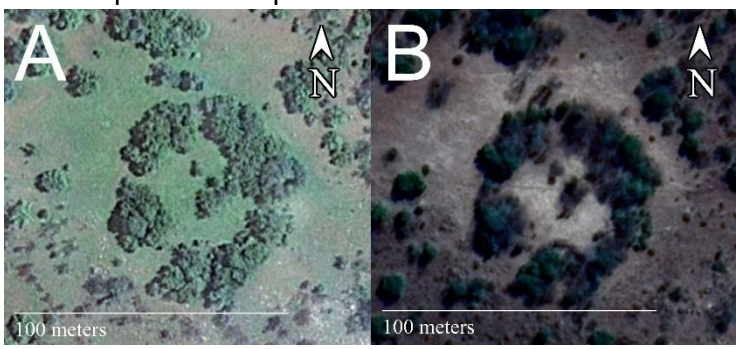


Figure 19: An example of a site categorised as having a high probability of being a Matabele settlement.

Zimbabwe (Wallis 1945) of a similar occurrence at one Matabele settlement indicates that this link might not be entirely coincidental.

The location of these potential Matabele settlements was then compared concerning each other and with the identified stone-walled settlements to determine which patterns were present and how these patterns matched the expected patterns based on the historical accounts. The survey data was then overlayed onto the Planet Scope imagery (Planet 2017) using a 4 5 3 (RGB) band combination. The 4 5 3-band combinations are used to visualise healthy vegetation from less healthy vegetation. In this regard, healthy vegetation is based on the degree of moisture available to each plant, with more moisture equalling a healthier plant. The GIS software allows any combination of the eight bands to be used. However, the vegetation band was chosen based on vegetation prevalence at the identified and known sites. A prominent feature of all Matabele settlements was a large central cattle enclosure, a feature shared with the Zulu. It is known that the high concentration of manure within the soil allows for increased moisture concentration within the soil deposit and an increase in available minerals (Thabeng *et al.* 2019). As a result, the vegetation within these old cattle enclosures would be healthier than the surrounding vegetation due to the soil's increased moisture and mineral content. This will result in a clearer representation of these features on the satellite images using the 4 5 3-band combinations. The image signature used for the Google Earth Survey was then compared to the signature visible on Planet Scope to determine if any additional features could be ascertained that would allow for further identification of sites or to improve the accuracy of identified sites. The survey data was then combined with the developed routes developed from the historical accounts to locate the mentioned settlements and to enhance further the overall accuracy of the developed routes based only on the historical accounts.

6.4 Conclusion

It has been shown that a multi-source approach is necessitated in any study focusing on the Matabele. Such an approach is necessitated by the lack of non-historical source information for the Matabele during much of the 19th century. The dominance of historical source information highlights the need for a better archaeological understanding of these communities, as historical sources are critically lacking in many aspects of Matabele society. However, before our understanding of the archaeology of the Matabele can be improved, a model needs to be created

to identify these sites within the landscape. Once Matabele settlements can be identified, it will allow for the systematic survey and excavation of these settlements. The development of such a model will be the focus of the following chapter.

Chapter 7: Matabele Settlement Model

7.1. Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections focusing on developing the settlement model for Matabele settlements and then using this model to find these settlements on the landscape. First, the settlement model is developed using several historical accounts of traders, missionaries and explorers/hunters who travelled to the Matabele and documented these travels. This allowed for a settlement model to be developed based on the first-hand accounts of the construction and location of buildings within Matabele settlements. These first-hand accounts similarly allowed for tracking the routes taken to reach the Matabele, which allowed for determining the core areas of Matabele's occupation in the interior of South Africa. Once the settlement model was developed, a visual representation was determined to identify possible sites on the landscape. This signature was then used to systematically survey the study area, identifying features that match this signature and secondary features that are known to be associated with Matabele settlements using two types of satellite imagery. The first was high-resolution imagery provided by Google Earth Pro, including historical imagery, and the second was multispectral imagery supplied by Planet Scope, which constitutes the second part of this chapter.

7.2 Matabele settlements on the South African highveld: mid-1820s to 1838

The South African phase of the Matabele kingdom can be organised into two distinct periods. During the first period (mid-1820s to mid-1830s), the core area of the Matabele kingdom was located between Pretoria and Rustenburg, with the principal capital situated somewhere in the region of Pretoria North. Core area refers to the region where the Matabele king, Mzilikazi, had his residence. In his diary, Andrew Smith describes the nature of Matabele settlement geographical organisation:

"His posts are placed with considerable regularity. His own kraal is nearly in the centre of his country, and then his principal soldiers are placed round him in posts not very distant from each other and no one of them more than an hour's walk from his kraal. At these posts his best cattle and those for breeding are kept, outside of those again are placed posts about nine in

number in each direction where he fears the approach of any enemies. Thus in the direction of Kuruman he has eight or nine posts, in the direction in which the Griquas can approach him eight or ten, in the direction of Sabiqua a like number, and in the direction in which Dingan's commando approaches also a number. Each of these divisions have the different kraals so placed that they are within sight of each other. Between each of those posts in the openings he has small Buchuana kraals, but these are within the outer circle so" (Kirby 1940a: 293-294).

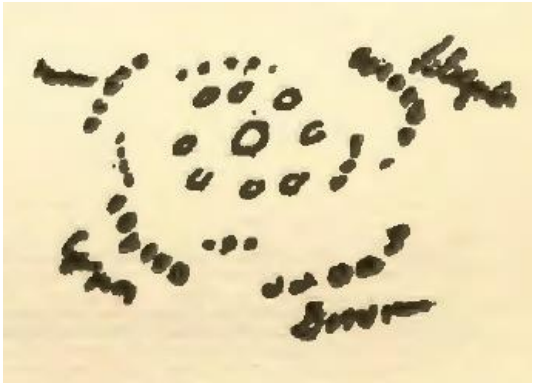


Figure 20: Diagram indicating the overall regional settlement pattern of the Matabele kingdom in 1835 (Kirby 1940a: 294).

This description is followed by an associated diagram (Fig. 20) illustrating the abovementioned description. Therefore, although further research is needed to determine the accuracy of Smith's representation, his description will be used as the basis for the core areas of Matabele occupation. These core areas, therefore, do not reflect the extent or boundaries of the Matabele Kingdom, only the areas in which Mzilikazi was resident and which housed the largest number of people.

7.2.1 Known core areas of the Matabele kingdom

Based on the settlement pattern of the Matabele as proposed by Smith (Kirby 1940a: 293), three core areas of Matabele occupation on the South African highveld can be determined. These three areas are based on the known locations of the Matabele king during this period (Omer-Cooper 1966; Cobbing 1976; Rasmussen 1976). From the historical record, it is known that there were more than the three discussed here. However, this section does not include these earlier areas due to insufficient historical and archaeological information. Therefore, the three core areas discussed in this section are the core areas of known Matabele of occupation during the 1820s and 30s. These core areas were further pinpointed by the incorporation of the various first-hand accounts of the travellers, explorers and missionaries that moved through the area in the 1820s-1830s (Chase 1830; Moffat 1846; Harris 1852; Kirby 1940a,b; Wallis 1945; Burrow 1971; Lye 1975). The routes were developed based on the information provided in the daily diary accounts of each of these accounts, which were then cross-referenced with historical maps (Hall 1828; Arrowsmith 1836; 1844; Radefeld 1846; Hall and Hughes 1854; Fullarton 1872), satellite imagery,

and modern topographic maps. This method allowed for a reconstruction of the routes to a more precise detail than previously, improving the location precision of potential settlement zones. However, the amount of useable geographic or environmental information varied considerably in the different explores accounts and within each account. Therefore, the routes could be determined with an acceptable degree of accuracy within a kilometre of the potential area based on descriptions. Beyond this point, insufficient or contradictory information is provided, resulting in the fact that the routes cannot be precisely determined with the available information beyond the wider area. An example is where the Smith expedition, and by extension Moffat as they followed his route, crossed the Magaliesberg. Lye (1975) has the crossing at Hartbeespoort; however, depending on the route taken by the expedition from the Swartruggens area, it could also have been via Olifants Nek south of Rustenburg.

Another example is the route taken by Harris in relation to the Magaliesberg. It is known that Harris crossed the Magaliesberg in the vicinity of Pretoria. However, four possible passes could have been used depending on which side of the two parallel ranges he moved. Therefore, depending on the pass used, the route and length of the subsequent journey are drastically affected. Another limitation in the development of the routes, especially that of Harris, is the location of the mission station at Mosega. A wide error margin is present between the different accounts as to the location of this station, which can differ by up to kilometres on a north-south line from the known location of the station based on modern topographic maps. Mosega was a critical starting point for all the expeditions, and the discrepancies between the accounts and the historical narrative need to be reconciled to improve the accuracy. Although alternative sources of information were available for the Smith expedition that allowed for a more detailed route to be developed, this was not possible for the account of Harris. Consequently, until the precise location of Mosega can be determined, this will remain a limitation for the Harris account. Therefore, the precise route beyond the Millvale area has many potential errors. The combination of the routes, their accuracy, and the historical evidence affected the determination of the boundaries of the study area.

7.2.1.1 First known core area (the late 1820s)

Three European expeditions are known to have reached Mzilikazi during the 1820s. These were the first journeys of Robert Moffat and the traders Schoon and McLuckie. In addition, it is known

that the missionary James Archbell also visited Mzilikazi at the same time as Moffat (Moffat 1846; Lye 1975). However, no account is known to document Archbell's journey to Mzilikazi, with a partial account of Schoon and McLuckie's journey published (Chase 1830). More detail is known of Moffat's first journey, documented in his journal (Wallis 1945) and a book written by Moffat and published in 1845.

Therefore, the first core area of the Matabele kingdom can be determined by reconstructing the route Robert Moffat took in 1829 (Fig. 21). A reconstruction of Moffat's first visit has a large degree of potential errors and subjectivity due to the very little information that Moffat provides about landmarks or other features on his route. A reconstruction is further complicated by historical criticism from Harris that highlighted Moffat's poor skills at navigation. These problems, however, only affect the precise reconstruction of Moffat's route, with a reconstruction of the wider general route still being possible. Therefore, it is known that Moffat travelled from Mosega over the Groot Marico River through the region surrounding Swartruggens to the Magaliesberg east of Rustenburg. From there, he crossed the Magaliesberg at Olifantsnek or further south at Hartbeespoort. The exact crossing depends on the region from which Moffat started, with too little information given to narrow this down any further with clear certainty. From this point, Moffat's route is again unclear. Based on his account, Moffat appears to have moved further east, passed modern Brits and ended his journey in the region of modern Pretoria North. However, in his diary, Smith later creates the impression that Moffat never passed the Brits area and remained within a few kilometres of the Hartbeespoort area. The Smith expedition followed the same routes as Moffat followed on his first visit, and Smith observed that he could see the settlements that Moffat visited to the west instead of the east, as stated by Moffat. This implies that Smith was beyond the point Moffat had ended his first journey, which occurred when Smith was in the region surrounding Hartbeespoort. Lye (1975) argues that this was a mistake on Smith's part regarding the direction he was viewing, which would be strange for the director of a scientific expedition that was very careful regarding geology and the expedition's route. It is possible that this was an error in Smith's account, which is further compounded by the uncertainty of where Smith was when he made this statement, as the point at which the Expedition crossed the Magaliesberg is similarly unclear.

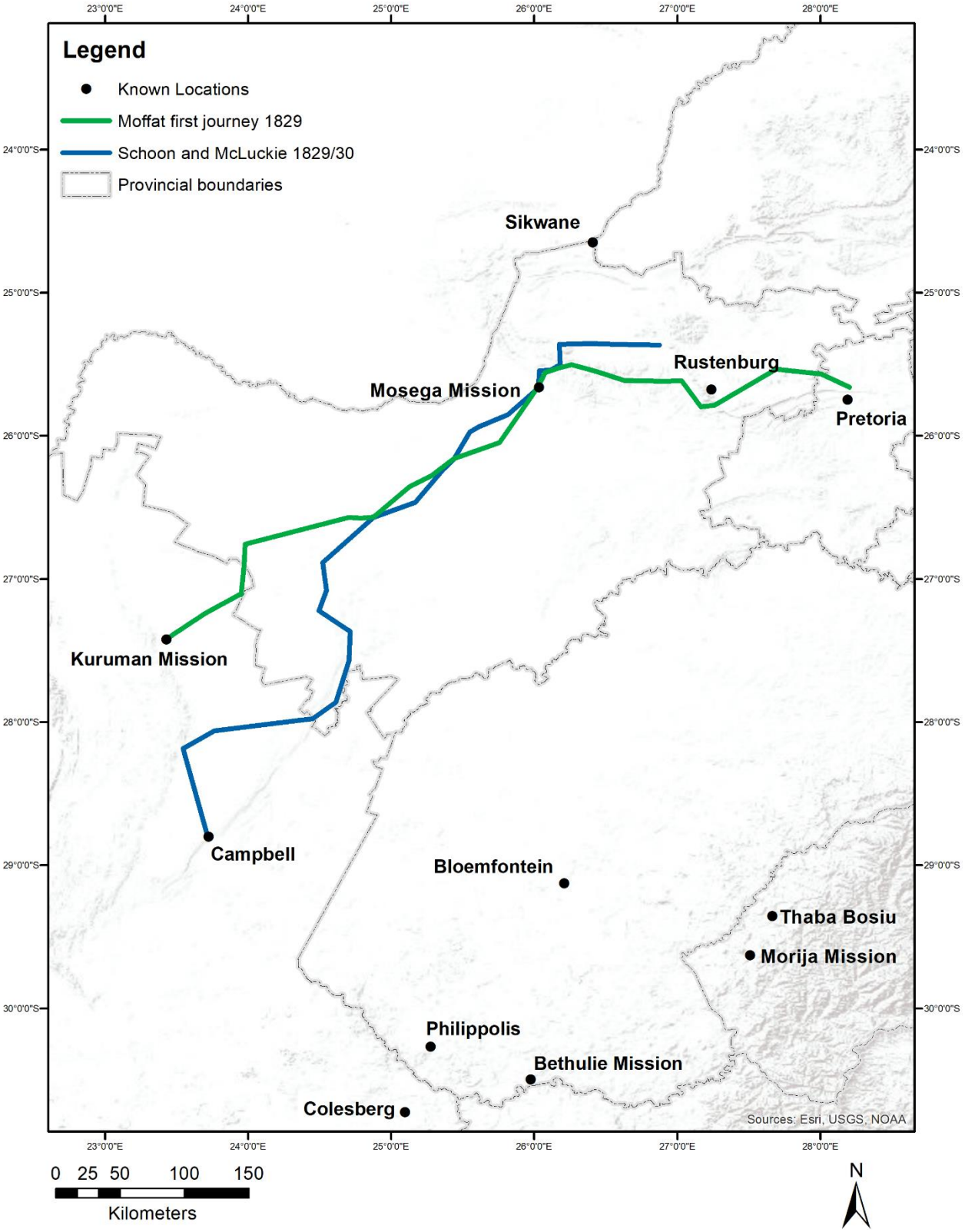


Figure 21: Map illustrating the approximate routes of explorers during the 1820s.

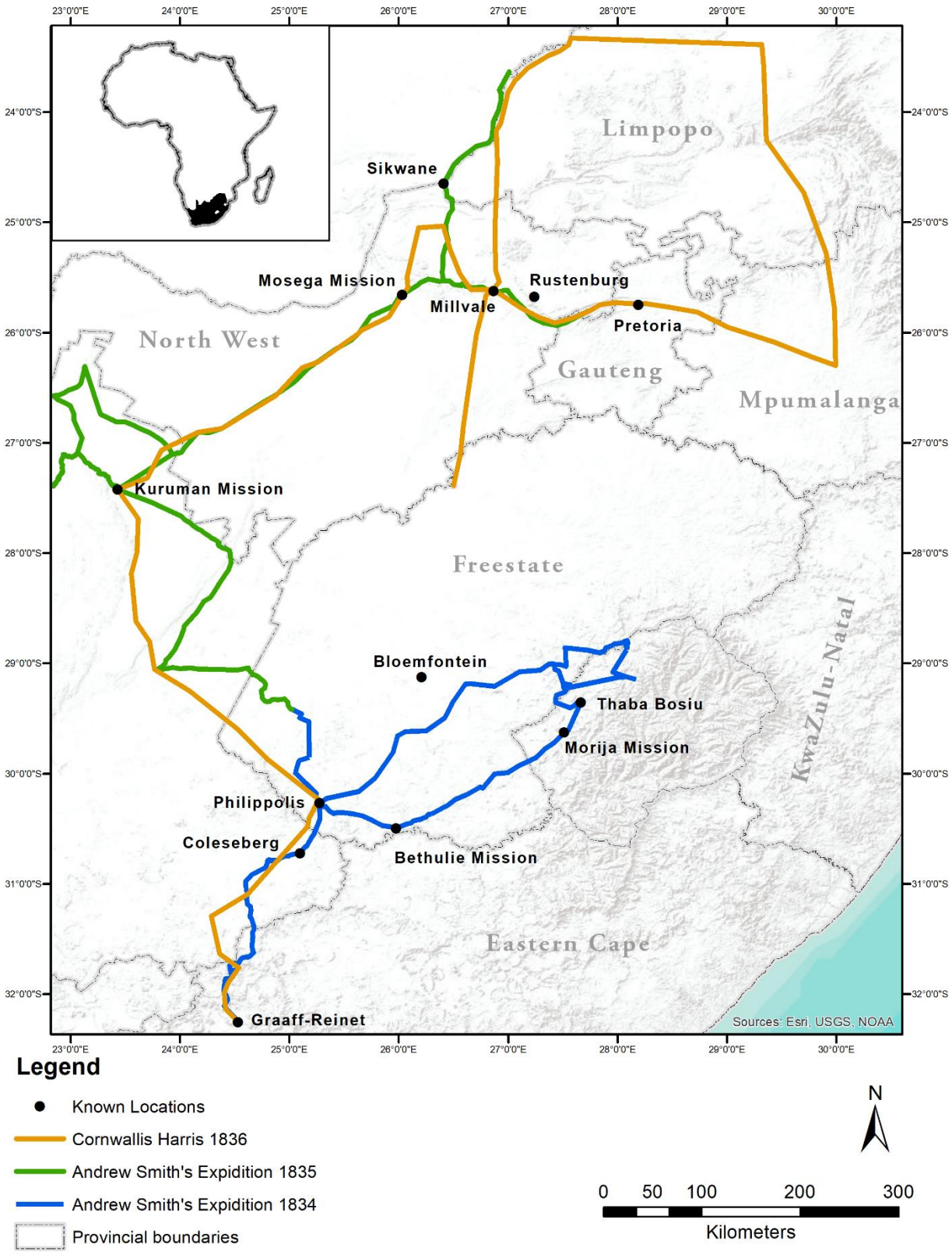


Figure 22: Map illustrating the approximate routes of explorers during the 1820s.

7.2.1.2 Second known core area (the mid-1830s)

The second known core area of the Matabele Kingdom was located around the Silverkrans area and stretched roughly from Swartruggens to Zeerust. This core area can be determined by reconstructing the route of the Smith expedition (Fig. 22) in 1835 (Kirby 1940a,b; Burrow 1971; Lye 1975) and combining it with Moffat's account of this same journey (Wallis 1945). Although geographic information is again lacking as the geographical journal of the expedition was not published, it was possible to reconstruct the expedition's route to Mzilikazi in 1835.

A reconstruction of the route undertaken by the Smith Expedition during 1834-1836 was provided by Lye (1975). However, I have found several discrepancies, with one of the main differences being the route taken by the expedition right after leaving Mosega. This study found insufficient information to accurately reconstruct the Expedition’s route past the Mosega area. Some of the other information provided is contradicting, with the location of a key landmark, such as the Mosega mission station, being given differently in the Smith and Harris accounts. Smith states the Mission station was north of the Matabele Mosega military settlement, while Harris states it was south. As this was the Expedition's starting point, this discrepancy directly impacted the rest of the route.

However, based on the information provided in the accounts, as well as information collected during the satellite survey of the location of stone-walled settlements and possible Matabele settlement, this study determined that the Smith expedition moved north-east from Mosega, crossed the Groot Marico approximately 4.5 km north of the modern N4 highway. This is the only area in which a large stone-walled site is located that matches the description provided by Smith. From there, they moved southeast along the base of the mountain, between the northern and southern ledges of the mountains, to the area of Doringkloof. From this point, they moved east along the base of the mountain; however, beyond this, not enough information is provided to track the route with any certainty. Based on the sketch created by Charles Bell of the kloof in which they crossed the Magaliesberg, an argument can be made for both the Hartebeesport area (proposed by Lye 1975) or the Olifants Nek area, depending on the route taken and the distance travelled. The lack of detailed geographic and geologic information in Smith’s account overall can be attributed to Smith having also kept a geographic journal that documented these aspects, including coordinates of the route, that was separate from his other journals. Unfortunately, this

study could not find a copy of this journal, which will hopefully aid in determining which one of the two passes was used by the expedition.

From the accounts, it is clear that the expedition moved in an eastern direction from Mosega, crossed the Groot Marico River and then reached the Tholwane River, where Mzilikazi's residence was located. Moffat mentions that the distance was 40 miles (Moffat 1846), which would also place the location of Mzilikazi's residence in the Silwerkrans area. However, a reconstruction of the route taken by Cornwallis-Harris in 1836 (Fig. 22) shows that Mzilikazi had relocated his settlement from where the Smith expedition had encountered him. From the reconstruction, Harris did not cross the Groot Marico River en route to Mzilikazi from the Mosega area. Instead, he had moved north from Mosega, over the mountains and encountered Mzilikazi in the Nietverdiend area before heading east to Sesobe and south to the Silverkrans area. Mzilikazi lived at two different settlements during the Smith and Harris visits. The location of one of these settlements, called Kapain by Harris, is supported by a map created by Carl Flemming in 1855, called Süd Africa (David Rumsey collection), which places Kapain in the same wider Nietverdiend region. The location of Mzilikazi's usual residence further north is also supported by Smith when he states:

"Because he [Mzilikazi]*, expecting a commando in consequence of the attack upon Peter David, has retreated from his usual residence more to the north."* (Kirby 1940a: 240)

7.2.1.3 Third known core area (the late 1830s)

A third core area was located around the Mosega basin near Zeerust. This was where Mzilikazi was resident when attacked by the Voortrekkers in 1838, after which the Matabele migrated north into Zimbabwe. Therefore, despite the limitations of the geographic information provided in the accounts in tracking the precise routes taken, the general regions that the individuals mentioned in the first-hand accounts travelled through could be determined and were used in deciding the geographic extent of the study area, as this area could be accurately determined for all the available accounts.

7.2.2 Settlement architectural organisation and wider settlement patterns

Reconstructing a Matabele military settlement is complicated by the life cycle of the settlement, which changes as the associated regiments age. Like other northern Nguni military settlements, a Matabele settlement had a military function at its creation, which would then change to include a residential function (Summers and Pagden 1970; Cobbing 1974). Therefore, at the end of the Matabele settlement life cycle, the settlement would have evolved from a military settlement with a specific demographic organisation to a hybrid system incorporating a more demographically diverse population. However, this change over time can only be associated with the Matabele-constructed settlements, with incorporated settlements not undergoing this same metamorphosis. The nature, organisation and wider function of incorporated settlements are not clear. From the first-hand accounts, it is clear that several non-Matabele settlements were incorporated into the Matabele Kingdom (Moffat 1846; Kirby 1940a; Lye 1975). These settlements appeared to have had several functions, including agriculture and livestock herding. However, Matabele settlements similarly had these functions, and it might be that the difference between these settlements was more the extent to which each activity was undertaken rather than the activity itself.

Due to the nature of Matabele society at this time, a distinction is made between settlements constructed by the Matabele, called Nguni Matabele settlements and those constructed by communities incorporated into the Matabele kingdom, called non-Nguni Matabele settlements. This distinction is critical in understanding and reconstructing the settlement landscape of the Matabele, as they were contemporary and very often close to each other, yet had different demographic compositions as well as differing in organisation and construction material used. Similarly, Nguni-Matabele settlements can be further divided into a three-tiered hierarchical system similar to that of the Zulu. However, unlike the system utilised by the Zulu, the Matabele system was less well defined, and it appears the difference between the different tiers was based more on social standing than an administrative function. During the reign of Mzilikazi, the kingdom's administration was centralised to Mzilikazi, with very little authority being delegated to regional commanders/induna (Wallis 1945). However, very little archaeological work has yet been undertaken on Matabele settlements (Pistorius 1997a); therefore, it is unclear to what extent these differences are reflected within the archaeological record.

6.2.2.1 Settlement organisation

Due to the Matabele being primarily a migratory nation during the period they occupied parts of South Africa, their settlements had a short period of occupation, generally between 5 and 10 years. Depending on the region in which they were located, some settlements were only occupied for a specific season. Similarly, Cobbing (1974) and Summers and Pagden (1970) also stated that the average period of occupation for a settlement was seven years when the Matabele were already settled within Zimbabwe, which indicates that the average occupation for a Matabele settlement during the 19th century was between 5-7 years. Occupation length would vary greatly from region to region based on the local environmental conditions, and it is unclear if the Matabele reoccupied settlements. However, based on the following two extracts taken from Smith's diary, it appears that if the Matabele re-occupied settlements, this would only have been to a limited extent. Smith states:

"….passed the remains of two Zoola [Matabele] *kraals which consisted of nothing but ashes, it being their custom to burn the walls of their kraals and their houses before leaving the spot."* (Kirby 1940b: 111).

and

"During the day passed several deserted kraals and saw some at a distance close to the base of the range equally without inhabitants. Though I was told that it was the Matabeli [Matabele] *custom to burn their kraals on leaving them, those were entire with the exception of the houses…."* (Kirby 1940b: 120).

Similarly, Moffat (Wallis 1945) recounts on his third journey to Mzilikazi how the Matabele built a small temporary settlement a short distance from one they had built a few days prior and was still in an excellent state instead of re-occupying that settlement. Again, this could indicate a disinclination among the Matabele to re-occupying settlements. However, Smith also states that he has seen many Matabele settlements that were abandoned and un-burnt (Kirby 1940b: 120), which means a certain degree of re-occupation could have occurred. In general, however, it does

appear that the Matabele preferred constructing new settlements rather than re-occupying existing ones.

Due to this migratory nature of the Matabele, the largest portion of their population was of non-Nguni origins. Similarly, many settlements under the control of the Matabele king were also of no Nguni origins or occupation. It is known that only a small number of Mzilikazi's original followers migrated north with him (Rasmussen 1978); however, the number of followers remains in dispute. Despite this, it is certain that the largest number of people living within the borders of the Matabele kingdom were not Nguni and did not originally live in KwaZulu-Natal. Therefore, two types of settlements were encountered by explorers and missionaries within the borders of the Matabele Kingdom. The first type, here called Nguni-Matabele settlements, was settlements constructed along the "Nguni plan", as generally known from the work of Adam Kuper (Kuper 1986) and modified by Thomas Huffman (1986) and similar to the military settlements of the Zulu (van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019b). Therefore, these Nguni-Matabele settlements represent the settlements constructed and occupied by the regiments of the Matabele kingdom and are, hence, the military settlements of the Matabele. However, due to the circumstances surrounding the start of the Matabele migration, too few of the original Nguni followers of Mzilikazi were present to explain the large number of Nguni-Matabele settlements encountered by these explorers.

The discrepancy in numbers encountered by the European explorers can be accounted for in the nature of the regimental system used by the Matabele. Youths captured by the Matabele on their raids, both boys and girls, are incorporated into the Matabele regimental system and, through this system, adopted the Matabele Nguni culture (Wallis 1945; Summers and Pagden 1970; Cobbing 1974; Lye 1975). Therefore, once these youths are part of the regimental system, they become "Nguni" and are treated the same way as the original followers of Mzilikazi, as no distinction is made. This system is clearly illustrated by Moffat (1846) in his third journey when he arrived at the military settlement of William the Griqua. William was the nephew of Peter David and was captured in a raid on Peter David in 1833/34 and incorporated into the Matabele regimental system. When encountered by Moffat in 1854, he was an *induna* in charge of two regiments. Therefore, the Nguni Matabele settlements were occupied by individuals who had adopted the Nguni culture and language and, through that process, became Nguni with no distinction being made based on an individual's origins. However, little is known about how cultural change or

assimilation occurred among the Matabele. It is clear from the various accounts that culture change was occurring among the incorporated communities. It also appears the speed and extent of this process varied, as several communities encountered by the explorers had not yet adopted the Nguni culture. Three factors appear to have influenced this process: the number of years incorporated within the kingdom, the distance from the core area and the specific region the settlement was located. Some of the statements made by the explorers (Wallis 1945; Lye 1975) indicate that the adoption of the Nguni culture was enforced more in regions considered important by the Matabele and less in areas not considered valuable or important. Despite this possible pattern, extensive research is still required to understand the cultural adaptation process within the kingdom. Non-Nguni settlements were occupied by individuals who had not adopted the Nguni culture, many already occupied at the time of the Matabele conquest. Consequently, very little is known of their organisation as well as the cultural practices of their inhabitants. Therefore, Nguni Matabele settlements can be directly associated with the Matabele culture, whereas non-Nguni Matabele settlements were associated with the incorporated peoples.

Nguni-Matabele settlements can be regarded as having consisted of two primary variations. The first was those with a predominantly military function and those with a combination of military and family homestead functions. It is unclear as to whether or not there were Nguni-Matabele settlements that had only non-military functions. However, Cobbing (1976) argues that the Matabele had family homesteads (*imizi*, sing. *umuzi*) which surrounded the larger military settlements during their period in Zimbabwe. This was similar to the system utilised by the Zulu during the same period. A statement made by Smith in his diary about Moffat's first visit to Mzilikazi seems to support this view. Smith states:

"When Mr. Moffat visited Masalakatzie in 1829 he passed several of Masalakatzie's outposts and saw none with more than 150 people, men, women and children, [and] seldom more than 100. He neither saw nor heard of any kraals of warriors [and] seldom saw more than five or six of the machacha (amajaba)*, or trusty soldiers, at a post."* (Kirby 1940a: 264)

However, Moffat's first visit to Mzilikazi was brief. Moffat did not explore the region surrounding the capital or the rest of the Matabele territory (Moffat 1846), and his travel experience was limited

to his travel route. Similarly, it is known from later accounts that the Matabele had settlements occupied only by warriors (Kirby 1940b; Wallis 1945; Cobbing 1976; Lye 1975). A possible explanation for this statement can be found in the life cycle of a Nguni-Matabele settlement, which was closely linked to the life cycle of the regimental system. Cobbing (1974, 1976) argued that a Nguni-Matabele settlement would have started as a settlement occupied only by warriors, and then, as the warriors were allowed to marry, their wives would come and live with them. As the warriors aged and their families grew, the settlement would resemble a family homestead more than a military settlement. Therefore, Smith's statement might reflect this later stage of a settlement's life cycle. Furthermore, these settlements were closer to the capital and, thus, would have formed part of the inner core of the Matabele Kingdom, with the regimental settlements being located on the outer edge and in strategically situated areas.

However, the men were still available for military service even later in the settlement's life cycle (Cobbing 1976). Therefore, the settlement would still have had a partial military function. However, this function would only have become active in extreme situations and was no longer the primary function of the settlement. In these cases, it can be argued that these settlements had become "non-military" settlements as their function was no longer primarily military but rather residential.

6.2.2.1.1 Nguni Matabele (Military settlements)

Matabele military settlements, also known as *amakhanda* (sing. *ikhanda*), consist of three different sections. These sections are the Royal area (also called the *isigodlo*, harem or palace), the residential area and the central enclosure, which can be seen in Figure 23 and was developed from sketches provided by Smith (Lye 1975) and Burrow (1971) along with the inclusion of other information provided in the accounts. Each section will be discussed separately regarding its organisation, structure and variations. Two primary variations can be determined from the first-hand accounts labelled A and B on the diagram. It is still unclear as to why these variations occurred and what the significance of these variations could be. It is known from the Zulu military settlements that the organisation of the different sections of the settlement had a particular function indicating status as well as function (Van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019b). Therefore, when the similarities between the Zulu and Matabele are considered, it is possible that these similarities could have had similar meanings within Matabele society. However, during this period, the

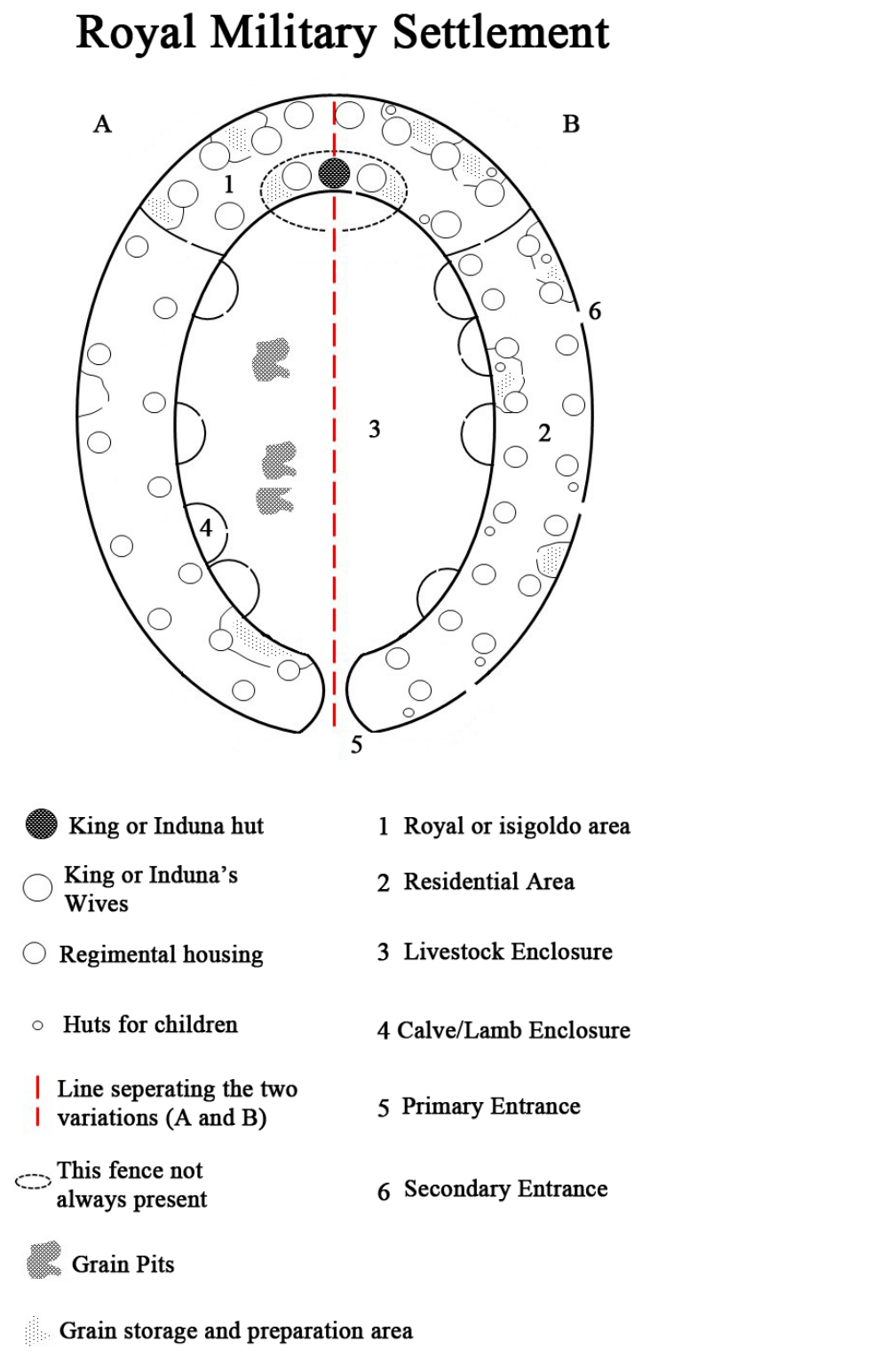


Figure 23: Diagram illustrating the layout of a Matabele military settlement until the 1850s.

Matabele kingdom and society were still largely migratory and were still in the process of development, which could also indicate that these were only normal variations with no significant social or administrative meanings. Similar to that of the Zulu, Matabele settlements were constructed from organic materials such as grass, thorn bush (wickets) or reeds. Smith, who visited the Zulu under the Dingaan as well as the Matabele under Mzilikazi, supports this view when he states:

"The towns were situated upon or near the to the summits of the rising grounds and all laid out on the same plan ….. to the east of the colony, but exactly in keeping with that adopted by the Amazoolas eastward of Port Natal "(Lye 1975: 217).

Moffat and Harris further state that the Matabele settlements on the highveld were constructed entirely from these materials, with no mention of stone being used in any first-hand accounts. In Moffat's first journey, he states:

"…..*no vestige will remain to point out to the traveller the nature or extent of the towns he* [Mzilikazi] *inhabited, as they are composed entirely of bushes and grass"* (Wallis 1945: 100)

Similarly, Harris states:

"The plan of the enclosure was circular, a thick and high thorn fence surrounding an area…" (Harris 1852: 118)

In his diary, Smith makes two statements related to the construction of two different Matabele settlements. The first, dated 14 July 1835, is:

"Walls of bushes, the cattle kraal in the centre and the houses in a circle around it." (Kirby 1940b: 113)

And the second, dated 20 July 1835, was:

"In the kraal were a tolerable number of houses thatched with grass to the very ground and much crossed by grass cords, the doors made of wicker work. In the kraals numbers of elevated platforms upon which they stored pumpkins etc; also over many of the doors of the houses cattle horns" (Kirby 1940b: 122).

From these statements, it is clear that the Matabele constructed their settlements similar to the Zulu and followed the Nguni style of settlement construction practised by other Nguni communities such as the Swazi and Xhosa (Kuper 1986; Huffman 1986). Although the use of stone in settlement construction cannot be ruled out, as all the first-hand accounts similarly state that the typical Matabele settlement consisted of grass, thorn thicket fences and reeds, the use of stone within a Nguni Matabele settlement would have been the exception. In addition, an interesting feature in the last statement by Smith is the presence of cattle horns above the entrance to the huts in this specific settlement, a feature not noted in any of the other accounts. As no other mention of similar practice is found within the first-hand accounts, this might have been a practice that was specific to this particular settlement. Alternatively, this might have indicated the hut having a particular function, as was done among the Swazi.

6.2.2.1.1.1 Royal area (*Isigodlo*)

Very little is known about the female regiments of the Matabele and the section of the settlement where they lived (Cobbing no date). However, this settlement section can be reconstructed to some extent from first-hand accounts. Several names were used to describe this area, such as the palace, royal area or royal harem (which is also extensively used when describing the same area within a Zulu military settlement). However, in the following statement made by Cornwallis-Harris, he similarly uses another term that is regularly used when describing Zulu settlements:

"….sending simultaneously to his seraglio for a vast variety, that we might distinctly comprehend his wishes on the subject." (Harris 1852: 108).

The term “seraglio” by Harris matches the use of the same term among the Zulu and describes the same area with the same function as the Zulu (Cory 1926; Gardiner 1836). Therefore, the royal area of the Matabele can also be called an *isigodlo,* as this term (in various dialects) is also found among the Swazi and Ngoni. As Harris never travelled to Natal nor did he meet with any Zulus, his use of the term “seraglio” must have been due to the Matabele themselves using it. Therefore, the Royal area of the Matabele is also an *isigodlo* as found among the Zulu, and this term will be used within this study. However, further research is required to determine if “seraglio” was used when referring to the king's female regiments or the area in the settlement in which they, or the king, lived. In an article written by Cobbing at an unknown date, he also uses the term *isigodlo* when referring to this section, as do Summers and Pagden (1970). Therefore, the term *isigodlo* will be used when referring to the royal section of a Matabele settlement within this study.

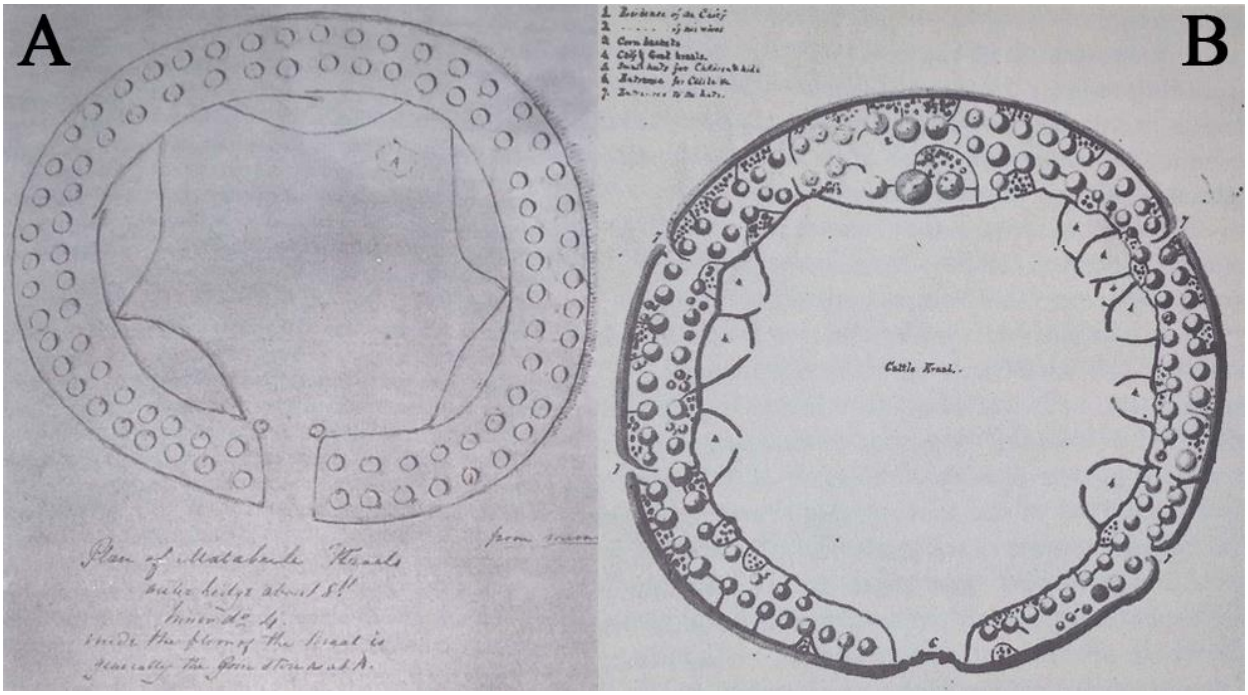


Figure 24: A: Burrow’s diagram of a Matabele kraal (Burrow 1971: 71). B: Smith’s diagram of a royal Matabele kraal (Lye 1975: 217).

The *isigodlo* was located at the opposite side of the settlement when viewed from the entrance of the central cattle enclosure. Although only Harris provides a name for this area, its location within the settlement can be determined via the status of the individuals occupying this section. In his diary and official account, Smith provides several descriptions from which the location of the *isigodlo* can be determined. The first is in the form of a sketch (Fig. 24) of the capital in which the

location of the chief/royal hut and those of the wives are indicated. In this sketch, the location of the king's and wives' huts is indicated as being on the opposite side of the settlement from the entrance. This view is further supported when Smith states:

"We entered the gate and proceeded through the centre of the cattle kraal to the opposite side of the fence and there sat down, he not being there. After waiting about ten minutes we were apprised by the exclamations" Byat! Byat! " that he was approaching from an inner enclosure" (Kirby 1940b: 61).

Furthermore, from the account of Moffat during his second journey, it is clear that the section of the settlement where Mzilikazi lived was separated from the rest of the settlement. Moffat states:

"I went into the enclosure where his house is, and found him busy stuffing. "(Wallis 1945: 98)

That this section was separated from the rest of the settlement can be determined by Moffat referring to it as an enclosure instead of the area in which Mzilikazi lived. Harris's observation of the capital settlement of Kapain when he visited Mzilikazi in 1836 further supports this interpretation. Harris states that:

"The royal lodge [*Isigodlo*], *and the apartments of the ladies, were shut off by a rough irregular palisade; and a portion of this enclosure was surrounded by a very closely woven wattle fence, having only one aperture of barely sufficient dimensions to admit the king's portly person upon all fours"* (Harris 1852: 118).

From these descriptions, several interpretations can be made. Firstly, the *isigodlo* area was fenced off from the rest of the settlement, which is reflected in the use of terms such as enclosure to describe the area. Secondly, the huts of the king or chief and his wives were also located within this area. Finally, from the description provided by Harris (1852: 118) regarding the nature of the

fence surrounding this area, it can be determined that access to this area was restricted. This would be in line with similar practices among the Zulu during this period (Cory 1926; Gardiner 1836; van der Merwe 2015; Van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019b) as well as Swazi practices documented in the 20th century (Kuper 1986).

Similarly, Summers and Pagden (1970) state that access to this area was restricted to all men besides the king. In settlements where only an induna and his wives were present, this area was restricted to the induna and his family. However, whether or not this section was further subdivided into two sections, similar to that of the Zulu, is unknown. However, based on the sketch (Fig. 24) provided by Smith in his official account of the expedition, it does not appear that the royal area was further divided. Considering the prominent nature of this division within a Zulu *isigodlo*, it would seem strange that none of the accounts would describe this separation after describing that the whole area was separated from the rest of the settlement. Similarly, Moffat described the Matabele king's encampment practices while on the march and stated that all the wives shared the same make-shift enclosure, with no apparent differentiation (Wallis 1945). Therefore, the sub-division of the *isigodlo* might be a Zulu practice; however, further research is needed to determine this. However, in one of Moffat's earlier accounts, he indicates a difference in social standing did occur among the women of the *isigodlo*, which by description would have been similar to that found among the Zulu. Moffat states that:

"About thirty ladies from his harem with long white wands, marched to the song backward and forward on the outside of the ranks, their well lubricated shining bodies being too weighty for the agile movements which characterized the matrons and damsels of lower rank" (Moffat 1846:534)

The term "matron" or "damsels" is generally not used when referring to the non-royal women of a settlement by explorers during this period. Instead, the term "women" or "females" is generally used in such cases. Therefore, a social division based on three levels within the *isigodlo* would be in line with similar practices found among the Zulu. Considering the large number of similarities between the Matabele and Zulu, such a division would be expected. Similarly, when considering

the highly stratified nature of Matabele society, it would be unusual for no social or hierarchical division within the *isigodlo*.

One way of identifying this part of the settlement is via the size and nature of the huts within this section. Huts constructed in this area were larger than those of the rest of the settlement. Harris estimated the size of Mzilikazi's hut to be 12 feet (3.6 m) wide and 4 feet (1.2 m) tall, which are similar to those found within Zulu military settlements (Parkington and Cronin 1979; Roodt 1992). Mzilikazi's hut was surrounded by a step, with the small entrance to the hut having a sliding door. The hut floor was sunk to 3 feet (0.9 m) and was accessed via two steps (Harris 1852). Surrounding the outer portion of the hut was a low step (Harris 1852) or hedging (Kirby 1940b), which was not present at all the houses. Harris is the only explorer to describe the interior of Mzilikazi's hut; therefore, it is unknown whether this was a regular feature in the *isigodlo* area or if it was unique to this specific hut. However, it should be noted that the rest of Harris's descriptions are corroborated by either Smith, Burrow or Moffat, indicating that it might not be a unique feature.

The sketch provided by Smith shows that the average size of the huts within this area was larger than the rest of the settlement. This was in keeping with the practice of an individual displaying his social standing via the size of his hut, a practice also found among the Zulu. How the huts were organised within this section is unclear. Both Burrow (Burrow 1971) and Smith (Kirby 1940b; Lye 1975) agree that the huts had both regular and irregular spacing within Matabele settlements. However, neither Burrow nor Smith distinguishes between the different areas of the settlement. Therefore, it is unclear whether Burrow and Smith indicated two different hut placement patterns within a settlement or among the Matabele in general. Several interpretations can, however, be made from the diagram of a Matabele settlement provided by Smith and Burrow. Burrow's (1971) diagram indicates a regular linear hut placement throughout the settlement. In contrast to this layout, Smith's diagram (Lye 1975) shows a linear hut placement in most of the settlement, with an irregular placement pattern within the *isigodlo* area (indicated by the presence of the chief/king and wives' huts, represented by numbers 1 and 2 on the diagram). Therefore, these two diagrams indicate that a combination of regular and irregular hut placements was used within settlements with both regimental/residential huts and an *isigodlo*. A linear hut placement pattern was utilised when only regimental huts were present. The Zulu also practise this combination of regular and

irregular hut placement patterns within the different sections of the settlement (van der Merwe 2015).

It is unclear what type of Matabele settlement Burrow's diagram illustrates. However, due to its location within the account when they were visiting many non-royal Matabele kraals, there is a high probability that this diagram reflects the regimental military settlements. When considering that the regimental military settlement constituted the largest number of Matabele settlements (Cobbing 1974), Burrow's using it as an indication of the general Matabele settlement would be understandable. In his diagram, Burrow also indicates a feature marked "A" located within the central enclosure, the function of which is unknown.

A marked change in the organisation of a Nguni-Matabele settlement can be determined between the South African and Zimbabwean periods concerning the placement of the *isigodlo*. Historical and ethnographic accounts of Matabele settlements during the Zimbabwean period place the location of the *isigodlo* within the central main enclosure (Summers and Pagden 1970; Du Toit 1977). Mandy provides the following description of koBulawayo, which can also be found in Du Toit's account:

"An immense circular space, about three-quarters of a mile in circumference, is enclosed by a high and strong fence, formed of poles planted in the ground. About twenty yards inside of this there is a similar fence, and between the two walls of poles the city is built. At four points, north, south, east, and west, are four public entrances or gates. Within the double wall of poles is an immense space, quite a quarter of a mile in diameter, which is used as a parade or drill ground for the regiment living in the kraal; and in the middle, surrounded by another wall of poles, are the quarters of the king, including the kraal for the cattle belonging to the tribe, as also the revered goat kraal. Passing into this through the entrance, you come into a large enclosure, along the walls of which, if the king is at home, large numbers of councillors and soldiers are seated. Great heaps of ox-horns give evidence of the great meat feasts which are from time to time held here. In front there is a neat wall of poles intersecting this space; passing through the entrance of this you come to the sanctuary, the private quarters of the king. This description applies to all military kraals, excepting that at Bulawayo in the inner circle are two squarely built houses, the one a

waggon house, the other the king's residence. This inner space in every military kraal is the king's sanctuary, and no one may enter it excepting the members of the king's court when he is absent" (Mandy 1889: 13-14).

Donovan, describing a Matabele settlement in southern Zimbabwe, similarly states:

"It was a large and very clean kraal, surrounded with a stockade; in the centre was a small enclosure with the queen's huts…. " (Donovan 1979: 223).

From the description provided by Maude, it is clear that the function of the *isigodlo* remained the same, with only the location being moved. Mandy's description is supported by other historical accounts, such as Donovan's, and published works, such as Summers and Pagden (1970). Also, excavations and magnetic surveys undertaken by Gaffney, Hughes and Gather (2005) further confirm this description. However, it is unclear when these changes in the *isigodlo*'s location were made. In his visit to Mzilikazi in 1854, Moffat states that they halted in the large enclosure just in front of Mzilikazi's harem (Wallis 1945). Although this does not clearly state that the *isigodlo* was not in the centre of the main enclosure, the way the statement is made matches the previous descriptions provided by Moffat on his first two journeys. Similarly, considering the organisational pattern which Moffat would have been familiar with while the Matabele were in South Africa, it would be strange that he would not take special note of this change in the organisation, especially since he makes several comparisons between the Matabele of his previous trip and the ones he was meeting with on that journey. Therefore, it would appear that these changes occurred at some point after the death of Mzilikazi.

6.2.2.1.1.2 Residential and Regimental Area

This section constitutes the rest of the settlement and is located between the primary entrance of the settlement, the royal area, and around the central enclosure. Huts within this section appear to have had two placement patterns (sections A and B in the diagram). In his account, Smith provides the following description of Mzilikazi's settlement:

"Over the space enclosed by the two fences the houses of the inhabitants are either disposed in regular rows, or scattered about without regard to order and in tolerably populous towns they are rarely at a great distance from each other than is just necessary to admit a free passage between them." (Lye 1975: 218).

Similarly, Burrow provides two separate descriptions of the hut placement patterns of these settlements. The first states:

"The huts are built around the kraal, sometimes in a double line, but so arranged that there shall be abundance of spare room around each, and that everyone shall have his own fireplace" (Burrow 1971: 48)

And the second states:

"The houses are built round the edge, generally two deep" (Burrow 1971: 70).

The accompanying sketch of the second description has the huts placed in a regular pattern with two lines of huts between the inner and outer fence. Smith (Lye 1975) provides a sketch of the capital, which differs from that of Burrow (Burrow 1971). Another sketch (Fig. 25) provided by Smith in his official account (Lye 1975) indicates a Matabele settlement with only one row of huts which appear to be regularly spaced. Therefore, none of the sketches provided is the same, yet all the first-hand accounts agree that all Matabele settlements were constructed along the same plan. Summers and Pagden (1970) similarly state that the huts of Matabele settlements in Zimbabwe were placed in a circular line around the central enclosure, with the accompanying diagram indicating a regular placement. Archaeological excavations of koBulawayo (King Lobengula's Capital) also revealed a regular hut placement pattern (*Gaffney et al. 2005*). However, the excavations and magnetic survey of koBulawayo also found several different structures between the outer and inner fences, which matches the diagram Smith provided of Mzilikazi's settlement. Similarly, these excavations also found that the huts were surrounded by several fences, again supporting the chart provided by Smith.

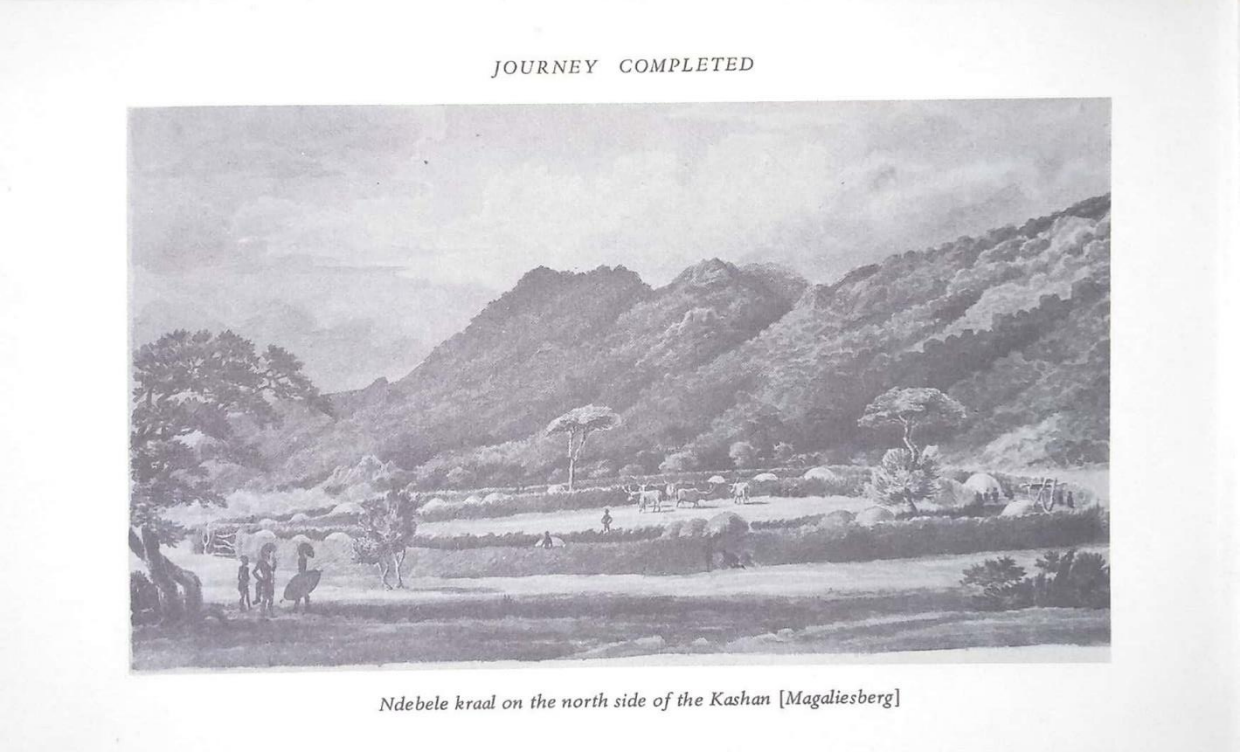


Figure 25: A Matabele kraal depicted in Andrew Smith's official account of his expedition (Lye 1975: 260).

Currently, there is no evidence to indicate what the determining factors were in the organisational placement of the huts. However, it was likely linked to the evolutionary level of the settlement and, by extension, the age of the male occupants of the settlement. Matabele settlements underwent an organisational and demographic change as the age of the male occupants increased, and therefore, their social standing changed (Cobbing 1976). Among the northern Nguni, hut placement, size and organisation are linked with the social status of the occupant/s (Kuper 1980). Similarly, each member of the same level of the regimental system was viewed to be of the same social standing. Therefore, when these factors are combined, the apparent discrepancy between the two variations of hut placement can be reconciled. When a new regiment is created, its occupants are young men (called *amajaha*), and they would construct their military settlement, called an *amajaha* by Summers and Pagden (1970), once their regiment is created (Cobbing 1976). As all these men will be of the same social standing due to their status as newly recruited warriors who have not yet earned the right to marry, their hut placement and organisation would be similar.

However, some degree of social stratification would also have occurred due to the presence of a more senior member of the regimental system that has been allowed to marry, which were called *entoto* by Moffat (1846:552) or *ring-kop* by Smith (Kirby 1940b:188) due to ring (made of bulbs) that were worn by all married men (Burrow 1971:48). However, it is unclear as to how this social stratification would have been reflected within the hut organisational pattern. If the Matabele followed the same system as that of the Zulu, which is very likely due to the large degree of similarities between the two communities' overall systems, these more senior members of the regiment would have had their huts located at a specific section of the settlement (opposite the main entrance), but the construction of the hut would have been the same as the rest of the regiment (Parkington and Cronin 1979; van der Merwe 2015). Therefore, these regimental settlements would have had a regular hut placement pattern. Furthermore, it was a standard practice of the Matabele to re-locate these younger warriors regularly as strategic requirements needed (Kirby 1940b; Cobbing 1976), and thus many of these settlements would have been visible to the explorers. Also, as all the explorers entered the Matabele kingdom from the direction of Kuruman, they would have seen a disproportionate number of these settlements. This was because all the Griqua raids also originated from that direction (although further south than the Kuruman road, which was the only safe route to enter the kingdom). Smith states that:

"…outside of those again are placed posts about nine in number in each direction where he fears the approach of any enemies. Thus, in the direction of Kuruman he has eight or nine posts, in the direction in which the Griquas can approach him eight or ten….. " (Kirby 1940a: 293)

Therefore, the western part of the kingdom would have had between 16 or 19 military settlements, with many fewer in the western part as no threat was viewed from that direction. However, these new military settlements would also be constructed between older ones, resulting in a mixture of settlements that would have had a similar organisation but different hut placement patterns.

When the *amajaha* (regiments) were allowed to marry, their wives would have come to live with them at their primary military settlement. At this stage, variation in hut placement would have started to be observed. Unlike the Zulu in which the married men left their military settlement and constructed their family homestead (*umuzi*), the Matabele incorporated these family units into the

military settlement (Summers and Pagden 1970; Cobbing 1976), and the settlement was then called an *amadoda* (Summers and Pagden 1970) or an *isigaba* (Cobbing 1976). In this process, the organisational and demographic nature of the settlement changed, and the military settlements adopted an organisational system that has many similarities to the ward system used by the Sotho and Tswana. Some individuals would also have had a personal homestead as a reward for service, which improved the individual's social standing (Summers and Pagden 1970). A statement made by Smith appears to indicate that this practice was also present during their time on the South African highveld. Smith stated:

"I remarked at the kraal we left yesterday that there was a small one a little way from the other and that the tuna came from it to say farewell; he probably lives there" (Kirby 1940b: 240).

With the addition of wives and later children, the function of the settlement would gradually change from a purely military role to a combined military/residential role (Cobbing 1976). This process would continue until the settlement is primarily a residential one. However, the military function will never completely disappear as there will always be a certain number of warriors present at every settlement (Summers and Pagden 1970).

The hut organisation would change when the military settlement also included women (either as wives or members of the *isigodlo*). This can be seen in the diagram provided by Smith of Mzilikazi's capital. Within the *isigodlo,* an irregular hut placement would have been followed, with a semi-regular to regular placement in the rest of the settlement. This was due to the members of the *isigodlo* having a higher social standing than the rest of the settlement due to them being seen as part of the king's family. Therefore, their hut placement and construction would have reflected this higher social standing. Similarly, as the number of wives of each warrior increased, they would also have indicated their social status related to each other in the placement of their huts, as is found among all of the northern Nguni. Also, in smaller settlements, there would only have been one row of huts due to the small population that would have been present. However, a second row would have been added as the settlement increased in population and size. Therefore, the hut placement pattern and the number of rows would have changed as the settlement grew and matured.

Three types of residential huts were located within the sides of the settlement. The huts for the warriors and their wives were located closest to the outer fence of the settlement, with the children's huts being constructed close to the inner fence. Huts occupied by children could also be built next to the huts of their mothers (Summers and Pagden 1970; Lye 1975). Summers and Pagden (1970) note the presence of a path between the inner fence and the first line of huts that served as a route for messengers within the settlement within Matabele settlements in Zimbabwe. However, none of the accounts associated with their time on the South African highveld directly mentions such a path. Based on the diagram provided by Smith, it does not appear to have been present during this period. However, in his account, Burrow mentions that "*…between them and the kraal (inner) hedge the floor is laid with cow dung nicely spread and hardened like the walls in a boer's house in the Colony*" (Burrow 1971: 71), which may indicate that this practice was already present during this period. It was also not uncommon to have shield huts placed at regular intervals along this path (Summers and Pagden 1970), with a similar pattern documented among the Zulu (Parkington and Cronin 1979). Surrounding the huts was a small fence constructed from reeds. This fence enclosure created a courtyard used by either one or up to three huts, possibly representing the same family group (Kirby 1940b). It was also common practice to dig holes next to some huts to collect household refuse. Within the fenced-off area, grain storage bins were also placed on raised platforms along with a threshing floor (Summers and Pagden 1970; Lye 1975).

6.2.2.1.1.3 Central Enclosure and Stockade Fencing

The central enclosure was the most prominent feature of the settlement and was used to pen the settlement's livestock and for parades (Moffat 1846; Harris 1852; Kirby 1940a,b; Burrow 1971, Lye 1975; Summers and Pagden 1970). Although the whole central area was viewed as an enclosure, it had secondary enclosures on the sides of the inner stockade fence, similar to those found among the Zulu (Summers and Pagden 1970; Lye 1975). Depending on the settlement's size, cattle penning occurred either in the central enclosure or in secondary enclosures on the inside of the central enclosures against the stockade fence. These smaller secondary enclosures were also used to pen the calves and smaller livestock such as sheep or goats. On the opposite side of the entrance to the main enclosure, another secondary enclosure was built and connected to the royal area of the settlement (Harris 1852; Wallis 1945; Lye 1975). The king used this enclosure for meetings as well as for ritual purposes. This can be seen in the following statement made by Smith:

"We [Smith's expedition at the Matabele capital] *were prevented going near a small kraal in which the calves stood in the night where Mas. was engaged with the doctor"* (Kirby 1940b:137).

Smith's account shows that the *indunas* were sometimes restricted from accessing this area, similar to the same section of a Zulu military settlement. Within this enclosure, claves and goats may also have been kept. Although most Matabele military settlements had cattle, many only had oxen or cows (Kirby 1940b; Wallis 1945; Burrow 1971; Lye 1975). This is an interesting separation as it was a general custom to keep cows and oxen together within southern Africa. The grain storage pits were also within the central enclosure (Lye 1975).

No clear indication is given in any of the accounts regarding the size of the settlements nor the number of inhabitants each settlement had. However, few details are provided that indicate these settlements' size. For example, Smith states that the settlement occupied by Mzilikazi when he was residing near Pretoria "*was composed of about fifty or sixty houses; the house he lived in was larger than the others"* (Kirby 1940a:267). Burrow mentions that one of the largest settlements encountered by the Smith expedition had around 300 huts (Burrow 1971: 71). Smith states that the settlement that Mzilikazi occupied during their visit had around 120 huts (Kirby 1940b: 240) and that this settlement was of a regular size to other Matabele settlements. Similarly, Smith states that Moffat told him that he estimates the number of people who occupied the settlements in which he first encountered Mzilikazi to have been no more than 150, and seldom more than 100 and that he never saw more than 5 or 6 warriors at a settlement (Kirby 1940a: 264). Furthermore, he estimated that Mzilikazi had around 700 to 800 warriors with him at his capital. Smith also states that many of the Matabele settlements had housing for many more warriors than the number of warriors occupying them (Kirby 1940b: 223). However, these numbers should be viewed with caution as it is unclear whether or not the European visitors were counting all the huts or just the residential huts. Similarly, Moffat is known to be unreliable regarding the estimation of distances and numbers, and these numbers were also recounted to Smith several years after the visit, which further increases the possibility of error.

6.2.2.1.2 Non-Nguni Matabele

No description of non-Nguni settlements is provided in any of the first-hand accounts. However, when the information provided in the accounts is combined, several interpretations can be made regarding these settlements. Smith states that Bahurutshe settlements were placed between those of the Matabele as part of the defensive organisation of the kingdom (Kirby 1940a). Moffat noted that when he entered the Mosega valley on his first journey, he saw 13 villages, of which six were Bahurutshe (Moffat 1846). Furthermore, Smith states that some Tswanas and Bahurutshe adopted the Matabele dress and shield and constructed their huts according to the Matabele form (Kirby 1940b). From these descriptions, it is clear that not all conquered people adopted the Matabele culture and that enough differences remained between their settlement organisation and the Matabele that they could easily be distinguished from each other at a distance. Therefore, it appears that the conquered people either continued to live in their original settlements or constructed new settlements along the same organisational pattern as before the conquest.

7.2.3 Demographics and Settlement Hierarchy

From first-hand accounts, it is possible to identify three types of Matabele settlements based on their primary functions. However, the exact relationship between the three settlement types is unclear. From the first-hand accounts, it is apparent that they differed on the administration level. However, it is unclear if this also resulted in a status difference between them. Some settlements, such as the capitals, would have been separated from the rest due to the king's presence. However, it is unclear to what extent the administrative and social standing changed when the king left the settlement. An example of this process is the settlement that Mzilikazi occupied during the Smith expedition. During the period of the Smith expedition, this settlement formed the seat of government as well as the kingdom's capital, despite it not being Mzilikazi's regular settlement. However, the expedition was surprised to see how small and "unimpressive" it was. Their reaction can be seen in Smith's account when he states:

"There was nothing in the appearance of the kraal calculated to impress us with importance of it inmates and, had it not been pointed out to us as the royal residence, we should doubtless have regarded it with indifference and passed it under an impression that it was an abode of some of the meanest of the Zoolas [Matabele]*, or, it being inferior in size to most of*

those we had seen in the country, we might have regarded it as simply a well constructed cattlepan" (Lye 1975: 227)

The first order of settlement function was where the settlements were responsible for the primary administration, which included the capitals and the division headquarters. These settlements were occupied by either the king, which would be the capital or by one of the indunas responsible for administrating a specific region of the kingdom. Matabele administration was highly centralised at this stage, with *indun*as having little authority beyond basic administration functions regarding the warriors and food production. This function can be determined from the following statement by Smith:

"*…we found that every person cultivating ground is required to furnish a certain proportion of his grain for the use of the king, which is deposited with the chiefs of the different towns*" (Lye 1975: 221)

In this case, Matabele *induna* had fewer political and administrative powers than their counterparts among the Zulu. However, it is known from first-hand accounts that Mzilikazi had several *indun*as who acted as advisors and who thus carried large amounts of influence with the king. An example of this is provided by Smith when he states:

"*Masalacatzie was born in Kabalonta's kraal, but in his old country; he has therefore a great regard for this chief. He is said to be the greatest man next to the king in the country. Masalacatzie often lives at his kraal*" (Kirby 1940b: 242)

It is, nonetheless, unclear if and to what extent this influence would have affected the administration function. The primary means of identifying these settlements are with the presence of the royal area (*isigodlo*) within this settlement. The presence of this feature in these settlements can be seen in the following statements:

"*Travelled about four hours, nearly due west, and about dusk reached one of Masalacatzie's own kraals where he frequently resides. Here are a number of his wives*" (Kirby 1940b: 240)

And a statement from Burrow from another settlement further to the east of the capital:

"We first paid a visit to the queen, who was living at the largest kraal in the country" (Burrow 1971: 70)

It is known that the wives of Mzilikazi always lived within the *isigodlo* of the settlement. Similarly, the other historical accounts mentioned are made of induna living at settlements that also housed some of Mzilikazi's wives. From these accounts, it is also clear that Mzilikazi moved between many different settlements, which would also necessitate an *isigodlo* within these settlements. However, the responsibility of overseeing the running of the settlement as well as the food production was ascribed by Burrow to the wives of Mzilikazi, of which Burrow states every settlement had one present (Burrow 1971:48). Moffat states only the principal settlements had his wives present and generally had between 2-5 (Wallis 1945: 26). Therefore, it is likely that the *induna* had authority over the warriors and the wives of Mzilikazi had authority over all activities regarded as domestic, such as food and beer preparation. These settlements also had a population combining men and women. However, it is unclear whether children were present at all these settlements or only at selected ones.

The second type of settlement functionality was that of a residential settlement. Matabele society was organised along military lines; therefore, all settlements within the kingdom had a military function, unlike other northern Nguni groups, such as the Zulu, who also had purely civilian settlements. However, among the Matabele, two types of settlements were found: those that housed only warriors and those with a combination of family (women and children) and warriors. Summers and Pagden (1970) and Cobbing (1976) agree that a Matabele settlement in Zimbabwe evolved from purely military to a combination of the two to eventually being predominantly family-

based. From the first-hand accounts, there is evidence supporting the evolutionary nature of Matabele settlements.

"*….reached one of Masalacatzies' outpost where were a great number of cattle, principally cows, in charge of a few young men, the ring-kop who had the chief charge of the post being absent on a visit to his wives. They say that a portion of the ring-kops are detached in this way in charge of posts whilst their wives are at their regular kraals, and that whilst on this duty they can from time to time either go and see their wives or their wives may visit them, but they never reside at their kraal. From this sort of arrangement generally half of the married men living apart from their wives; [they] say it is the custom*" (Kirby 1940b: 118)

and

"*As far as I have been able to ascertain there are about 10 kraals in the Mosiga basin, and I am convinced none of these contain more than fifty men able to use arms. There are a great number of women and a few children*" (Kirby 1940b: 56)

From these statements, it can be seen that settlements that housed men, women and children were common throughout the kingdom. However, Moffat also mentioned that the presence of children was more restricted (Wallis 1945: 99). However, it is also clear from these statements that some of the settlements only had warriors present. Furthermore, Smith mentions that the Matabele regularly moved their military settlement around within the kingdom (Kirby 1940b: 246). Also, it is known that the regiments routinely patrolled the kingdom's borders and that they often built temporary settlements but had other more permanent settlements that were considered their "regular" settlement (Kirby 1940b: 118). Therefore, it is possible that settlements that housed only the warriors were temporary and that most long-lived settlements combined family and military.

The last settlement function used by the Matabele was that of a cattle post. It is currently unclear if these settlements were viewed as separate from those settlements that housed only warriors

or if the function was different. However, it is known that some of the Matabele settlements had only a few warriors present, along with large portions of cattle. An example of one of these settlements is mentioned by Burrow and Smith as follows:

"Rested at a kraal where there were about six men and a very large herd of cattle, principally cows". (Kirby 1940b: 239)

and

"This kraal was found to be a cattle station, one of an immense number belonging to Masulikatzi. The cattle, all oxen, were under the charge of the Mututu or boys, and consequently there was not a man or women anywhere to be seen, forming a strange contrast to the other kraals we had seen, both at Mosigha and elsewhere; for it always appeared to me that, as indeed you find it in civilized towns, the proportion of women preponderates." (Burrow 1971: 59).

Moffat and Harris also encountered settlements such as these in different parts of the kingdom, illustrating the widespread use of these settlements. These tended to be in areas considered safe by the Matabele, with the cattle herds generally being split between cows and oxen, with some settlements having both. These settlements always had a very small population, with the accounts differing between which members of the regiments were present. However, they generally agree that it was a combination of married and unmarried members of a regiment.

7.3 Conclusion

By combining the known elements of Matabele settlement organisation with the observations made by first-hand observers, it was possible to develop a theoretical model of Matabele settlement organisation. Although there are many limitations and missing details in our understanding of the Matabele, the model developed in this chapter can serve as a starting point to locate and further examine Matabele settlements. The first step in this process is to determine if the theoretical model can be used to develop a visual signature of the type of features/elements

visible on the landscape concerning the Matabele. This visual signature will determine how many sites within the study area match these identified features. This will be the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 8: Remote Sensing Analysis

8.1 Introduction

The previous chapter developed a theoretical settlement model for the Matabele based on historical and ethnographic information. Although several aspects regarding the organisation of the Matabele settlements remain unknown, the model developed in this study is complete enough to determine what type of visual signature these settlements will have when seen on satellite imagery. A two-stage process was used to develop the criteria to visually inspect free-to-use satellite imagery located within the study area. This chapter will detail the development of the criteria and present the results of implementing these criteria in the satellite survey.

8.2. Model-based criteria for survey

For the survey to be undertaken, the developed model was translated into a set of criteria that could be used to identify them on satellite imagery. From the first-hand accounts, it was clear that the Matabele did not use stone in the construction of their settlements, instead using perishable materials such as grass, wood and thicket in conjunction with clay and dung. Therefore, the presence of stone features within a site was used as an exclusionary factor, indicating a non-Matabele origin. As a result, the two primary criteria used in developing the search criteria for the survey were the presence of a large central cattle enclosure within every Matabele settlement and the use of clay and dung in the construction of Matabele huts (Lye 1975: 218-219).

It is known that the long-term presence of livestock directly impacts the soil chemistry of the enclosure. A vital component of these changes is the increase in the availability of nutrients and an improvement in the moisture retention capabilities of the soil (Miller *et al.* 2002). Based on the observation recorded in the first-hand accounts related to the Matabele and Zulu (Harris 1852; Cory 1926; Kirby 1940a,b; Wallis 1945, Gardiner 1836; Booth 1967; Burrow 1971), the larger the military settlement was, the higher the probability that it would have secondary enclosures located within the large central enclosure. The distribution of these secondary enclosures within the large enclosure is unclear, with two variations documented among the Matabele and Zulu. The first variant consists of the secondary enclosures being constructed on the side of the large enclosure (Gardiner 1836; Summers and Pagden 1970; van der Merwe 2015), and the second consists of

the cattle being kept in groups within the large enclosure but with no enclosure being specifically built (Gardiner 1836). These two variations can result in either one dense circular patch, several dense patches forming a circular pattern or one dense circular patch with multiple smaller dense patches distributed throughout the larger circular one. In his official account, Smith (Lye 1975: 218-219) describes a Matabele hut and states that clay and cow dung were used to construct the interior part of the hut wall and the floor. Adding clay (which affects moisture retention) and dung (which affects moisture retention and nutrients) will increase the vegetation density in the areas where they were built. Unfortunately, combining these two elements will result in a similar visual representation to the central enclosure, further affected by sheep/goats around the huts.

Therefore, depending on the population density of the settlements, the circular vegetation can either represent the central enclosure or the full extent of the settlements. As the Matabele were the only group in the study area to construct circular settlements (Sotho-Tswana settlements had more irregular shapes), dense circular patches in the study area can indicate possible Matabele settlements. Some variation should also be expected, as Smith (Lye 1975) mentions that the Matabele often also burn their settlements when abandoned. The burning of the huts would result in the backing of especially the clay floor, which increases the density and hardness of the floor. Due to the increase in hardness of the area covered by the floor, the soil’s ability to absorb and retain water will be affected. Consequently, these floor regions will have differential vegetation growth in settlements that were not burnt due to other plant species' different soil and water requirements.

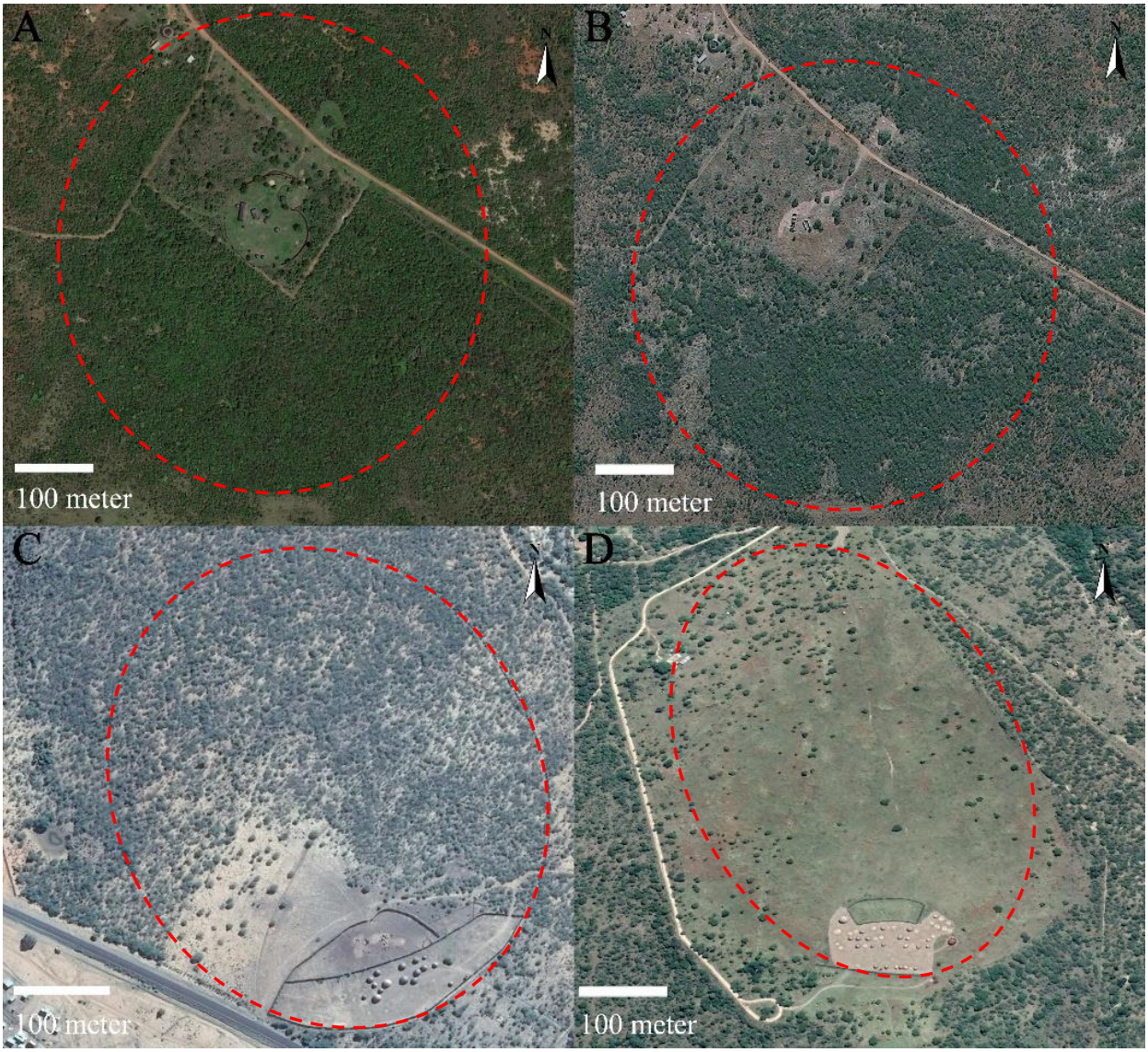


Figure 26: Known settlements used as a baseline for testing the survey criteria developed for the survey. The dotted lines indicate the estimated extent of the settlement. A and B illustrate old Bulawayo before (A) and after (B) a fire destroyed the reconstructed *isigodlo*. C represents oNdini with D representing uMgungundlovu.

The developed criteria were then compared with the satellite imagery of three known Nguni military settlements (Fig. 26). From the first-hand accounts, it is clear that Matabele military settlements were very similar to those constructed by the Zulu; therefore, they will have a similar signature to the Zulu settlements. Therefore, the known Zulu capital of oNdini, located in Ulundi, KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, was used as a baseline criterion for the Zulu model's visible representation. A third known Zulu capital, called uMgungundlovu, was also used. This was the capital of the Zulu king Dingane kaSenzangakhona, a contemporary of Mzilikazi, the Matabele king, during the study area's occupation in the 1830s. However, a limitation is present with using

uMgungundlovu as a signature criterion for this study. Firstly, farming heavily impacted the site before it became a known historical site (Parkington and Cronin 1979). Secondly, the site is currently an active tourist attraction, with vegetation removal and maintenance being undertaken. Although this does make the site a more accurate representation of the contemporary settlement, it likewise reduces its utility as an indicator for this study's criterion. However, oNdini does, to a large extent, compensate for this limitation. Although oNdini is also a modern-day tourist attraction, the vegetation of the sites has not been removed to the same extent as with uMgungundlovu. Also, it is known from historical accounts that oNdini was constructed to duplicate uMgungundlovu (van Schalkwyk 1999). Therefore, the visible representation of oNdini is representative of the earlier Zulu military settlements due to the duplication of the settlement organisation of uMgungundlovu, which was contemporary with the Matabele kingdom during the 1830s. All three known capitals have reconstructions of the original settlements on the sites. These reconstructions are based on the results of archaeological surveys and several excavations (Parkington and Cronin 1979; Rawlinson 1985, 1987; Roodt 1992, 1993; Gaffney *et al.* 2005).

However, it is also known from later historical accounts and archaeological excavations that later Matabele settlements had a slightly different settlement organisational pattern to those of the Zulu. When and why this change occurred is currently unknown; however, the change constitutes a significant change in settlement organisation that also had to be incorporated into the visible representation, as the possibility of this feature being present in the study area could not be excluded. Therefore, the Matabele capital of old Bulawayo, located south of modern Bulawayo in Zimbabwe, was used as the baseline criteria for the later known variation of the Matabele settlement organisational pattern. Bulawayo and oNdini were also nearly contemporaneous, dating to the 1870s, allowing for a better comparison between the visible representation of the two settlement variations. Although all three of these settlements were capitals, it is known from historical accounts for the Zulu as well as Matabele that the difference between the capitals and the non-capital settlements was of such a nature that they would have had a limited impact on the visible representation of these settlements, with settlement size being the only relevant difference in this regard. Therefore, the criteria developed for this model were compared with Google Earth satellite imagery of uMgungundlovu, oNdini and old Bulawayo. From the visual inspection, it was determined that all three settlements had several similar physical features when viewed on satellite imagery. First was the presence of a circular or oval-shaped vegetation section

denser than the surrounding vegetation. Such a dense circular patch of vegetation was most visible at koBulawayo, with the two Zulu capitals having fewer distinct signatures. This difference could be attributed to the maintenance work undertaken at both Zulu capitals, which was historically also affected by farming practices, resulting in different vegetation growth (Parkington and Cronin 1979, van Schalkwyk 1999). Despite this, the general outline of the settlements can still be determined (indicated by the red line in Fig. 24). The comparison of the visual apparency of the three capitals on satellite imagery has shown that dense patches of circular vegetation can be associated with Zulu and Matabele settlements, with Matabele settlements being more circular and Zulu settlements more oval in shape. Summers and Pagden (1970) stated that Matabele settlements could be either circular or oval, although most firsthand descriptions describe them as more circular than oval. Based on the results of this comparison with known sites, the criteria used for the remote sensing survey of the study area was a region of dense vegetation, generally represented by either shrubs or trees following a circular pattern. This dense vegetation reflects either the central enclosure, the residential area or both. However, depending on the size of the settlement, the residential area might not have had a dense enough population to affect the vegetation. In this case, the dense vegetation is reflective of only the central livestock, primary cattle, enclosure of the settlement.

A key limitation of this visual signature is that several unrelated features, both naturally occurring (Figs. 27 and 28) and anthropogenic (Fig. 29), can also result in similar visual signatures. Using multiple historical periods, satellite imagery, and the feature's location within the study area allowed for several naturally occurring features that can result in a false positive to be accounted for. Features A-C in Figure 27 represent the same geological feature at different periods, indicating the significant

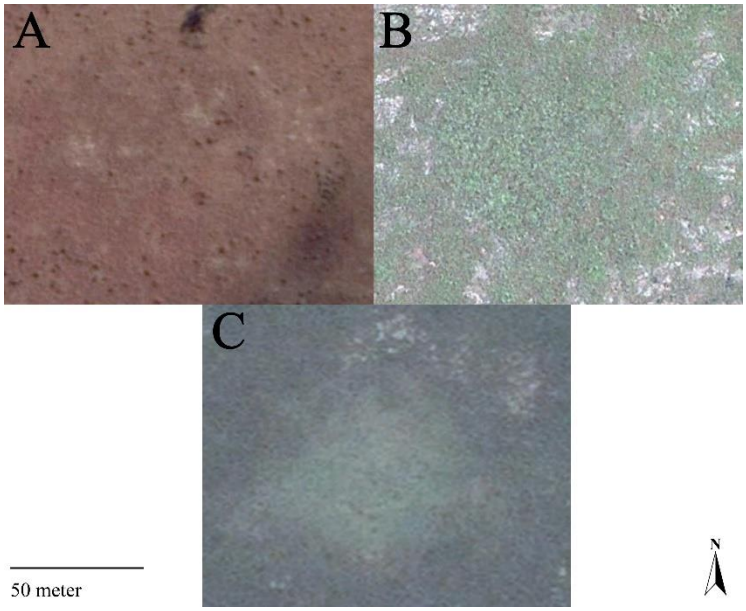


Figure 27: Examples of the same geological feature at different periods illustrating the visual similarity between these and archaeological features.

variation in visibility between satellite imagery dated to different periods. However, due to the unequal distribution of available satellite imagery, in conjunction with the resolution of the imagery, some of the sites found might be representative of non-archaeological features. However, none of the naturally occurring features has the same dense vegetation, limiting any potential misidentification of sites with a visual signature similar to that of uMgungundlovu. Two types of naturally occurring features were identified as potentially causing misidentification of sites. The first feature is a circular region between an existing bedrock formation (Fig. 26) that was especially prevalent in the southern section of the study area.

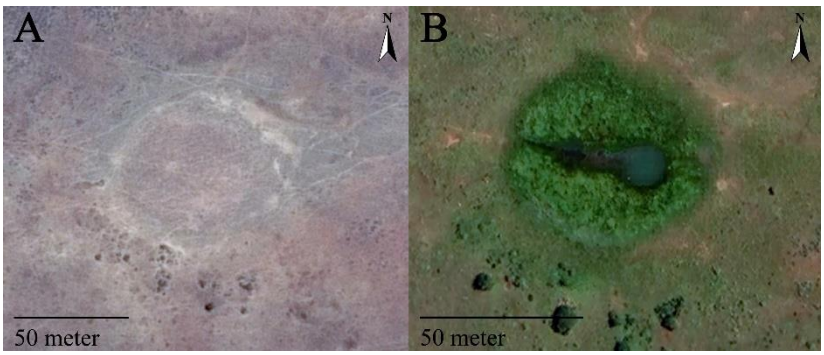


Figure 28: Examples of modern hydrological process that result in similar signatures within the study area with A and B representing the same feature during dry and wet periods respectively.

These features are characterised by a grass area that has a circular to oval shape. As can be seen from Figure 28A, the surrounding bedrock is not always visible on satellite imagery. However, some of these sites were identified via historical imagery, as seen in B in the above Figure. In contrast, some other imagery had only partially visible bedrock, as seen in A. The presence of the surrounding bedrock will make the construction of Nguni-style settlement difficult, with no known first-hand account in either the interior of South Africa or in KwaZulu-Natal making mention of any Nguni-style settlement constructed in these circumstances, which makes it unlikely that the central vegetation area is representative of an enclosure. It is more likely that the central vegetation area results from a depression in the underlining bedrock that allows for the accumulation of topsoil over the bedrock, which in turn allows for vegetation growth. This is a common feature found in the interior landscape of South Africa.

Another naturally occurring feature that could potentially cause misidentification of sites within the study area is the presence of dry marshes and small ponds, as seen in Figure 28. Section A within the figure is an example of a marsh area during the dry period. Deceptively, the feature appears to indicate the presence of a central enclosure surrounded by a region that could represent the

occupation area of the settlement. These naturally occurring features can be identified by comparing the area's visual appearance in the wet and dry seasons. As seen in Figure 28, during the wet season (B), the pond and surrounding marshland can be identified, allowing for identifying and excluding these features in regions where the temporal distribution of the available satellite imagery allows.

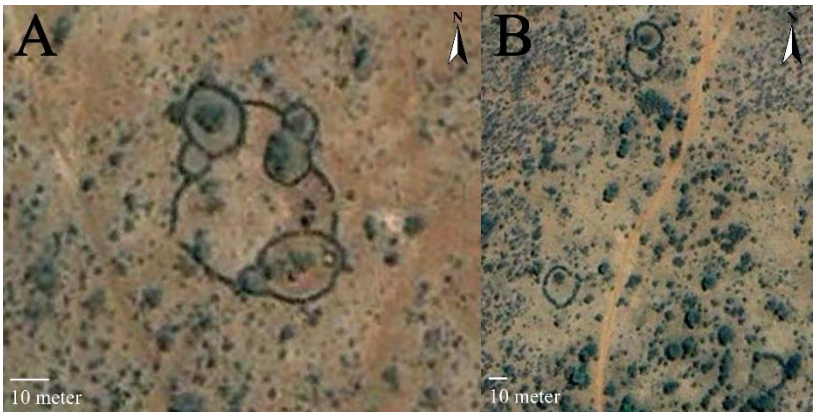


Figure 29: Examples of modern-day livestock enclosures with either multiple (A) or singular (B) enclosures.

Anthropogenic features (Fig. 29) were more complicated to account for due to their similar signatures to Matabele settlements; however, historical imagery allowed for excluding any features constructed shortly before and after 2002. The range of historical satellite imagery available for the study area covers 2002 to 2022, although not every year is represented within this period. This long period of available imagery allows for the exclusion of modern enclosures based on two criteria. First, the enclosures' creation, use and abandonment could be tracked on satellite imagery. Secondly, the utility lifespan of the enclosure could be determined by the removal of vegetation around the enclosure in imagery dated to earlier imagery, with the same feature being overgrown in the later imagery. This was also combined with the presence of either modern settlements near these sites or the presence of other modern enclosures. However, anthropogenic features constructed and abandoned before this date were harder to exclude. To limit the number of misidentifications, regions within the study area were identified with signs of modern pastoral and agricultural activity and those in regions surrounding rural settlement areas. These high-risk areas were primarily restricted to livestock farming areas to the north and a small section to the south of the study area. However, most sites identified were located in mountainous areas with little to no indication of modern industrial or agricultural developments. Therefore, the impact of modern anthropogenic features will be minimal; however, those dating back to the 20th century might not have any modern indications. Consequently, it is impossible to determine the impact post-Matabele period anthropogenic features, dating to the 19th and 20th centuries, will have on the number of sites identified.

8.3 Matabele sites

A total of 678 sites have been identified (Figs. 31 and 32) as matching the criteria developed for Matabele settlements. Of these 678, 12 were identified as having a high probability of being Matabele settlements. As can be seen in Table 2, most sites were located within regions classified as shrub (based on the land-use-land-cover map developed by the European Space Agency (Fig. 30) for 2021(ESA 2017)), with the second highest land cover type being grassland followed by thicket. Only two sites were located in a land cover type outside these three and in modern farmland.

Table 2: Number of potential Matabele sites organised according to probability and land cover type.

Number of features	Total number of sites	Site number by land cover type: Shrub	Site number by land cover type: Thicket	Site number by land cover type: Grassland	Site number by land cover type: Other
1 (*low probability*)	595	373	87	133	2
2 (*Medium probability*)	71	47	12	12	0
3 (*High probability*)	12	6	1	5	0
Total	**678**	**426**	**100**	**150**	**2**

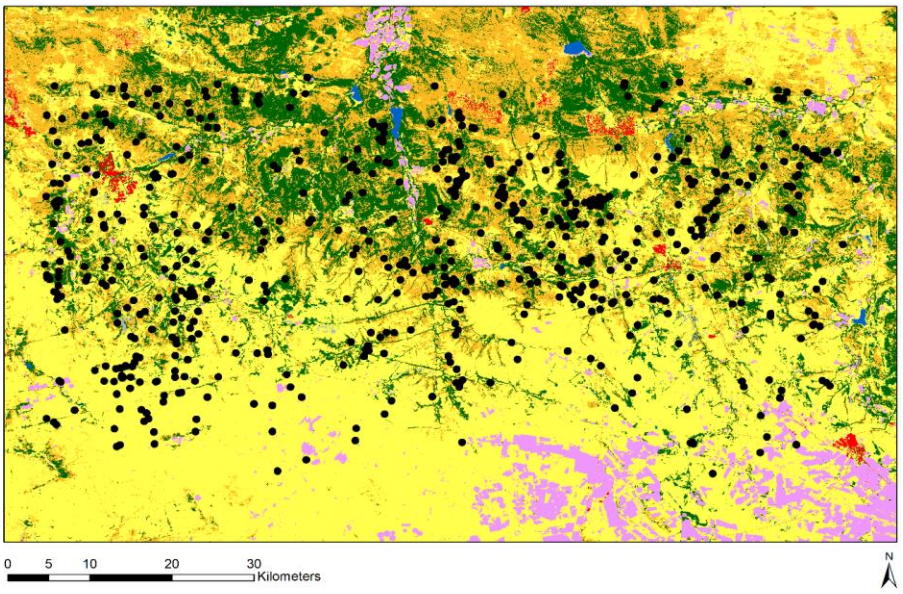


Figure 30: Map illustrating the relationship between potential sites and land cover and use. Green indicates tree/shrub, orange thickets and yellow grass.

These features were ascribed a high probability based either on the location of the features (slope of a hill or mountain) or the visible features, such as the outline of the settlements or a combination of these features. The remaining features

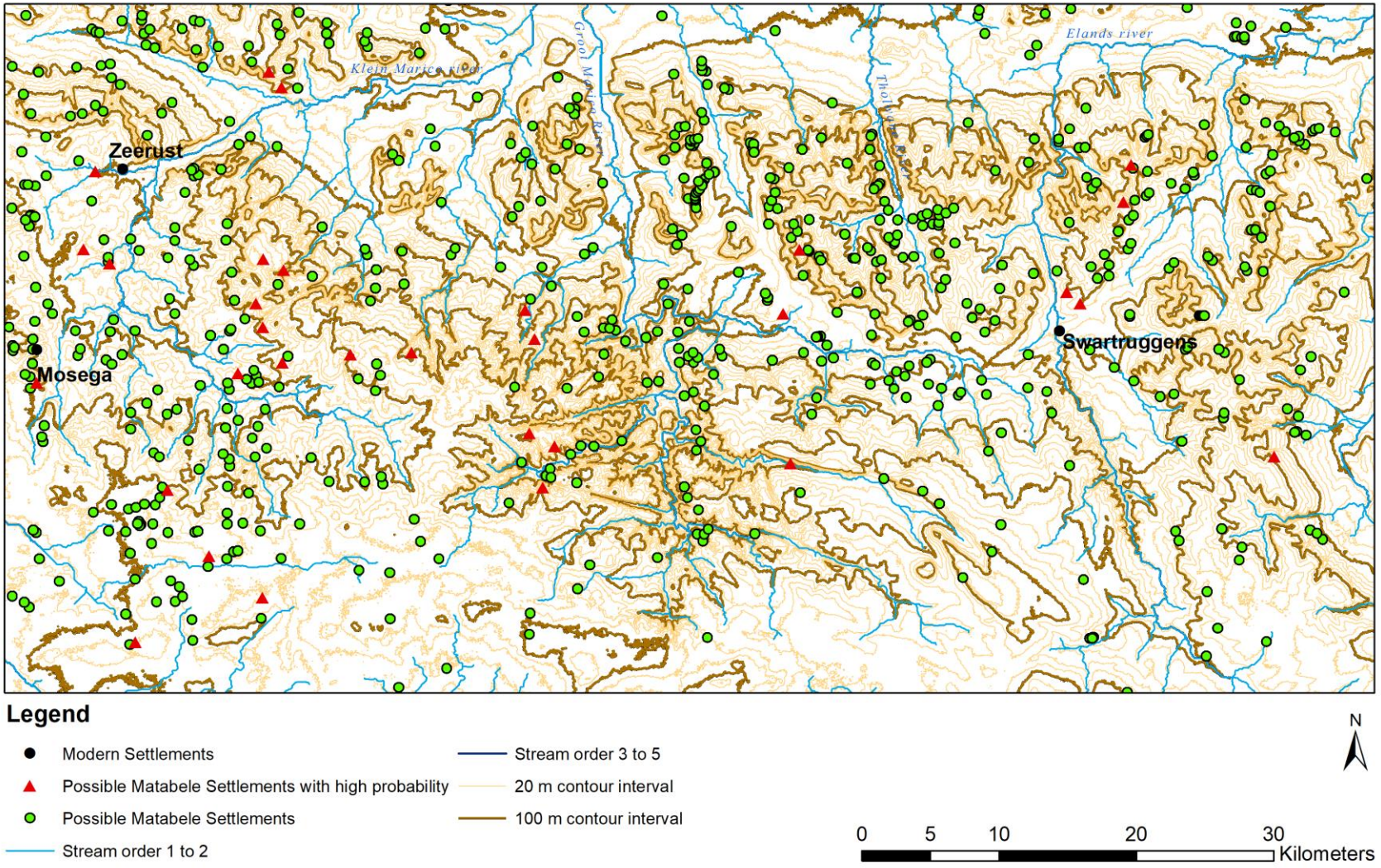


Figure 31: Map of the study area illustrating the relationship between identified potential Matabele sites, elevation and stream order.

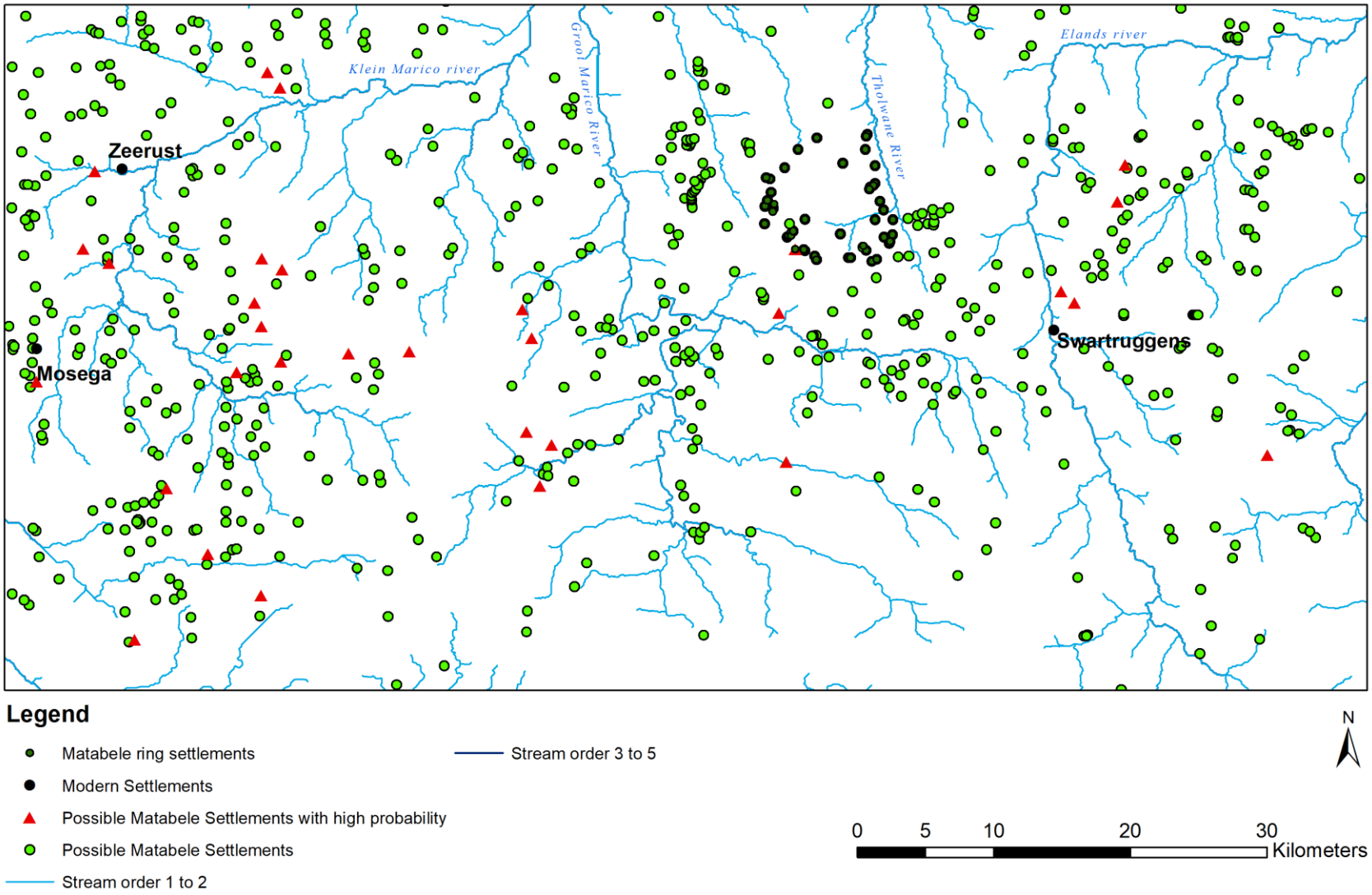


Figure 32: Map of entire study area illustrating the clusters zones around Mosega/Zeerust, Groot Marico and Swartruggens

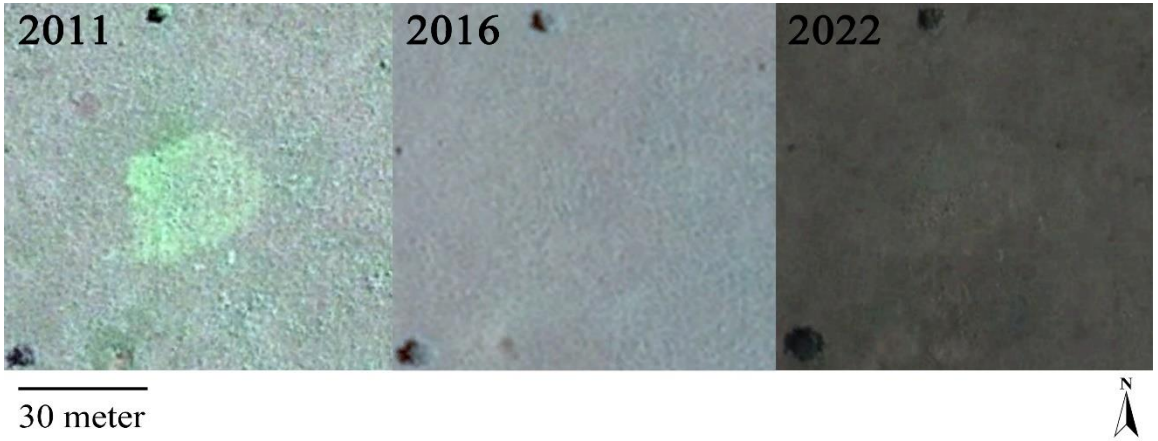


Figure 34: Example of a possible Matabele settlement located on the grassland in the southern section of the study area. Each image indicates the same area during three different years, with the central enclosure being most visible in 2011, with 2022 potentially indicating the residential area surrounding the central enclosure.

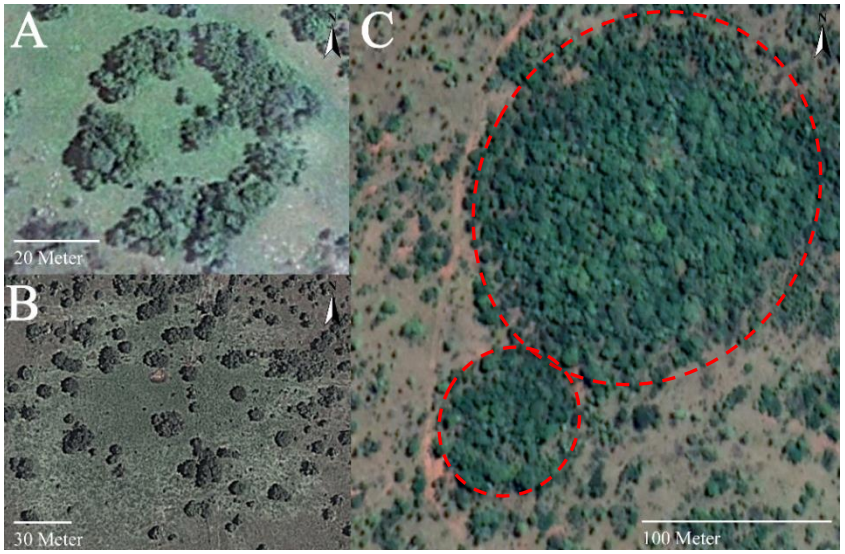


Figure 33: Figure illustrating the three types of potential Matabele sites identified via satellite imagery.

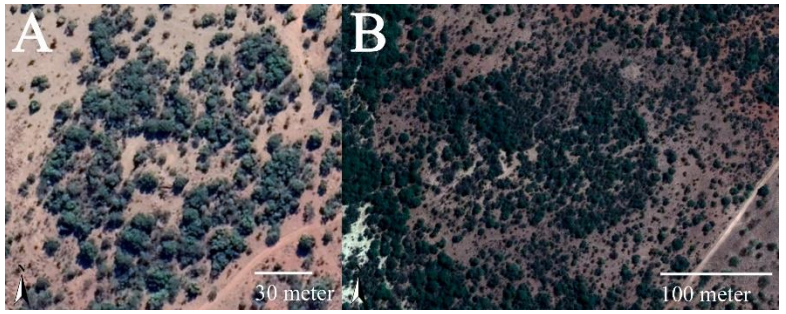


Figure 35: An illustration of two alternative visual signatures for potential Matabele settlements, with B resembling both oNdini as well as old Bulawayo in appearance.

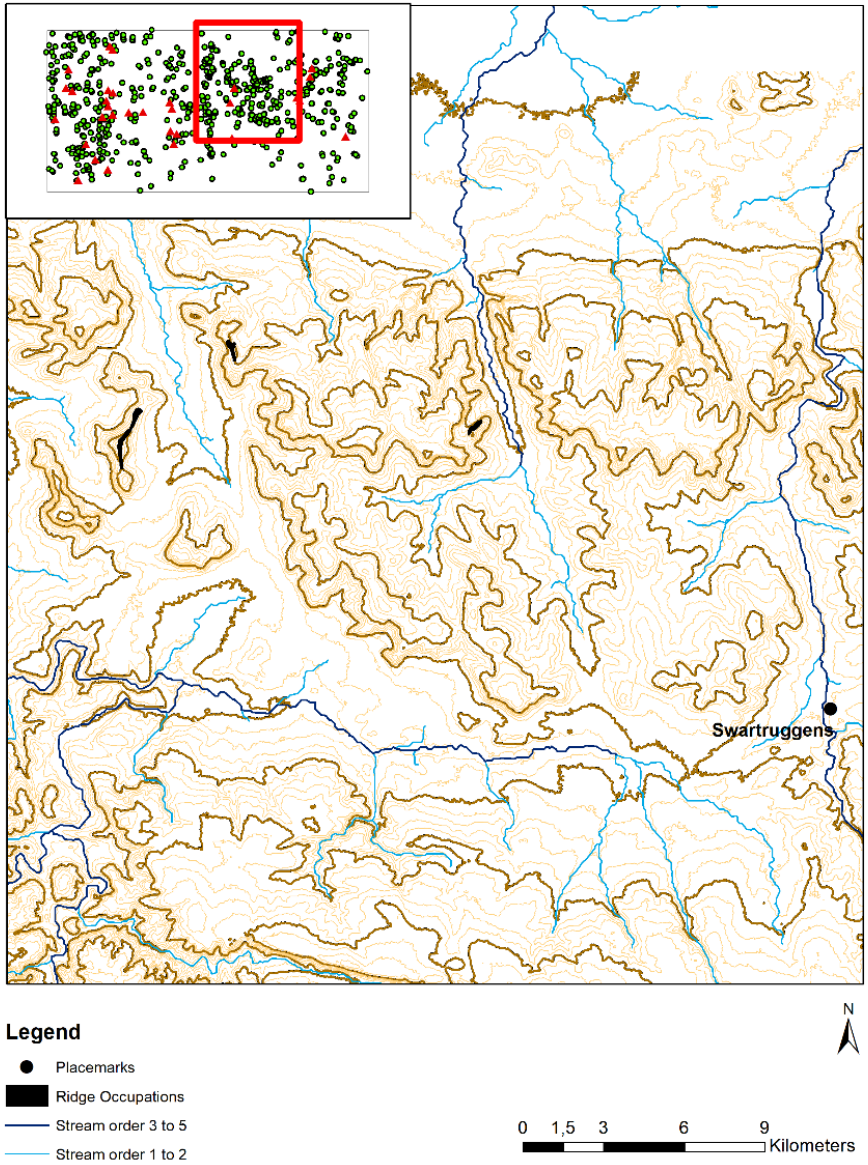


Figure 37: Map illustrating the ridge occupations near Swartruggens.

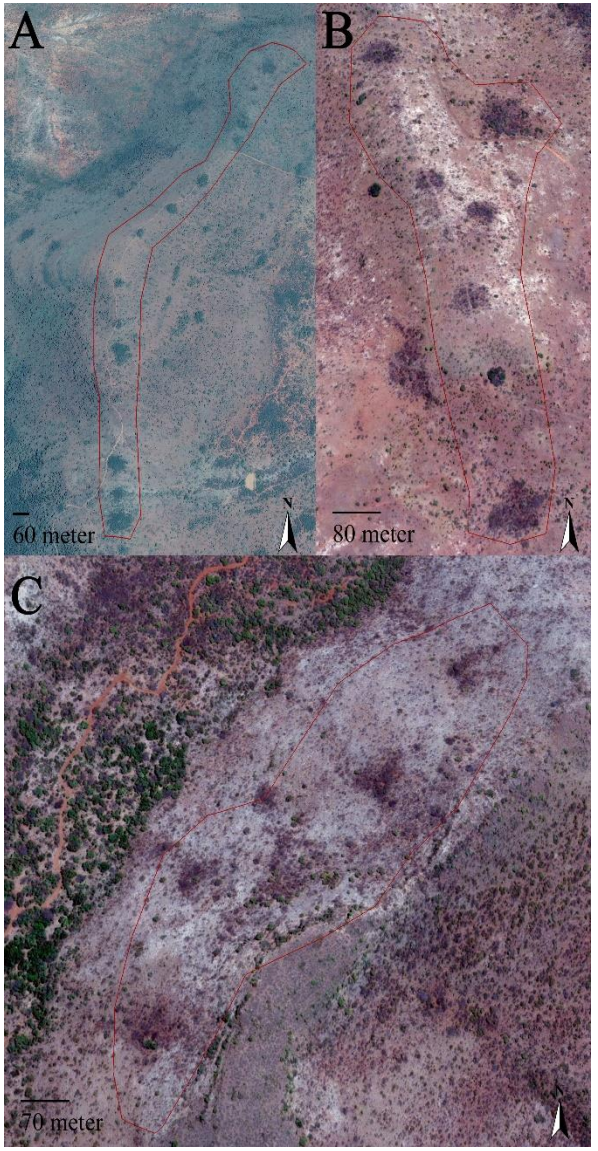


Figure 36: Three ridge occupations identified in the study area north-west of the town of Swartruggens.

identified were thick vegetation surrounded by either grassland or significantly less dense vegetation. In addition, several different visible representation variations of potential Matabele settlements were found within the study area. The most common was a thick circular patch (Fig. 33) of vegetation that differs from the surrounding vegetation, as seen in C in the Figure. Another feature that can be seen in the visible representation of C is the presence of a smaller secondary settlement right next to the larger one. It is known that important military settlements among the Zulu had smaller secondary settlements near the main settlement (van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019b). Similarly, Smith mentions the one Matabele induna coming to greet them from a small enclosure nearby (Kirby 1940b: 242). Unfortunately, Smith does not indicate how close “nearby” was. However, the distance between the two potential settlements in C is within range of those found among the Zulu (less than 100 m); therefore, C may represent the feature described by Smith, which was a sign of the wealth and prestige of the owner.

The southern section of the study area is grasslands with little to no trees or thickets. This lack of vegetation made it difficult to identify sites within this region; however, several potential sites were identified based on the comparative use of features visible at uMgungundlovu. Figure 3 illustrates a time-lapse of three different years of one of the possible sites located in the south of the study area. A large green patch can be seen in the 2011 images, indicating a central enclosure. The surrounding area has no indications of modern livestock farming, with no visible water source in the surrounding area. Therefore, it is likely that the green patch is a result of a livestock enclosure, with the 2022 images appearing to indicate the presence of a residential area surrounding the enclosure. A variation of the circular vegetation growth (Fig. 35) signature has also been found, represented by A in the Figure, within the study area. This variation is the inverse of the main signature, with a dense circular vegetation growth surrounding an open patch of grass that differs from the surrounding grass. This type of grass, known as *Cenchrus ciliaris* or blue Buffalo grass (Denbow 1983), is a known vegetation marker for cattle enclosures within southern Africa and is found at many archaeological sites.

Most sites (200) were located at an elevation between 1300 and 1400 m, as shown in Table 3. The second-highest concentration was found between 1200-1300 m, and the third highest

Table 3: Site probabilities arranged according to elevation in 100 m intervals.

Settlement probability	Elevation: 1000-1100 m	Elevation: 1100-1200 m	Elevation: 1200-1300 m	Elevation: 1300-1400 m	Elevation: 1400-1500 m	Elevation: 1500-1600 m	Elevation: 1600-1700 m
Low	1	55	180	176	110	71	2
Medium		5	17	20	20	8	1
High			1	4	6	1	
Total	**1**	**60**	**198**	**200**	**136**	**80**	**3**

between 1400 and 1500 m. Consequently, it was found that the overwhelming majority of sites (534) were located between 1200 and 1500 m and corresponded with the elevation of the mountain's slopes situated in the study area.

Three clear cluster zones can be identified based on the distribution pattern of these sites. The first is located west of the study area, between Zeerust and Mosega. A second cluster is situated in the centre of the study area surrounding the Groot Marico River. The third cluster is located north and in the hills near the modern town of Swartruggens. This second cluster also has a circular distribution pattern that appears to be centred around three sites. Also, within this second cluster area are three groups of settlements located on ridges (Figs. 36 and 37), with a possible fourth ridge zone on the study area's eastern edge. These ridge zones have several circular vegetation growth areas following the ridge line. In his account, Smith mentioned that the Matabele had settlements on the ridges, which would match these circular vegetation areas. The size of some of the identified settlements might indicate the presence of cattle posts. However, it would be unusual for the Matabele to construct them on such exposed areas where the cattle would be affected by the cold winds that occur in the area during winter, which is when Smith (Lye 1975) and Harris (1852) state the cattle were moved into the mountains due to the availability of grazing.

Table 4: Distance of possible Matabele settlements to the nearest stream

Settlement probability	Distance to nearest stream: <500 m	Distance to nearest stream:500 – 1000 m	Distance to nearest stream: >1000 m
Low	458	136	1
Medium	58	13	
High	11	1	
Total	**527**	**150**	**1**

No discernible pattern was observed regarding the location of the features of rivers and streams. The majority of sites are located close to order 1 and 2 streams, which are restricted to the higher elevation areas. As each stream flows into another, the stream order increases. Thus, a stream order of 1 has no tributaries, and a stream order of 5 has four other rivers flowing into it. Therefore, in the study area, streams with an order of 1 and 2 are perennial rivers fed primarily by rainfall within the higher elevated areas. Streams with an order of 3 are more permanent, with streams with an order of 4 and 5 being permanent rivers. When settlement probability and distance to the nearest stream are compared (Table 4), it is clear that most sites were located within 500 m of a stream, regardless of the probability level.

Table 5: Distance of possible Matabele settlements to the nearest permanent river

Settlement probability	Distance to nearest stream: <500 m	Distance to nearest stream:500 – 1000 m	Distance to nearest stream: >1000 m
Low	141	175	299
Medium	12	21	39
High	4	3	5
Total	**157**	**199**	**343**

A different pattern, however, can be seen when the distance between the settlements and the nearest permanent water source is compared (Table 5). In this case, more than half of the sites are located more than 1km from the most immediate permanent water source. More than half of the remaining sites are located between 500 m and 1 km from the nearest source, indicating that only around a quarter of sites were within 500 m of water. These findings align with the statement made by Smith (Lye 1975) and Burrow (1971) that the Matabele travelled a considerable distance to obtain water. Therefore, when stream order and elevation are combined, elevation had a higher priority in site selection than the proximity of water, as the majority of sites are located close to perennial streams and thus would only have provided access to water during the rainy summer season. Therefore, the proximity of these settlements to non-permanent streams indicates that access to water was not a determining factor in site selection. These results, therefore, support the observations made by Smith (Lye 1975) and Burrow (1971) that the Matabele travelled long distances daily to collect water.

Table 6: Number of possible settlements found in each size category.

Settlement Size	Number of Settlements
Small (<100 m)	345
Medium (100-200 m)	274
Large (>200 m)	59
Total	**678**

The sites' diameter ranges from 30 m to over 200 m (Table 6), with the average size between 80 and 100 m. It is currently unknown whether this represents the diameter of the settlement or just the central cattle enclosure. A central cattle enclosure diameter of between 30 and 150 m is within the known range of cattle enclosures within Nguni military settlements among the Zulu in KwaZulu-Natal (van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019a).

Therefore, it is possible that the features identified within the study area represent the diameter of the central cattle folds of the settlement. However, it is also possible that these measurements represent the diameter of the settlement. Although reliable measurements for Matabele settlements are missing from the first-hand accounts, an estimation can be made from the sketch of a Matabele military settlement made by Charles Bell (Fig. 25). If Smith was accurate with his 2 m estimate of the diameter of a hut and the scale on which the settlement was drawn is representative of the true settlement. The settlement depicted by Charles Bell would be around 30 m in diameter, making 30 m a possible lower limit for the size of a Matabele settlement. None of the potential sites identified within the study area matches the size of known Nguni capitals in South Africa or Zimbabwe. The three known capitals of uMgungundlovu, oNdini and old Bulawayo have a diameter of between 500 m and 600 m. However, the population size and density of the Matabele Kingdom are unknown, with too little information currently available to generate any reliable estimate regarding the population size and density.

Therefore, there is a possibility that the Matabele did not have the population density at this stage that would have resulted in the creation of such large settlements. It is also possible that the capitals were located outside the study area since Smith states that the settlement occupied by Mzilikazi during their visit was not his regular settlement. Smith stated that Mzilikazi left his regular settlement due to an anticipated attack from the Griqua, whereas Moffat (Wallis 1945: 74) mentions the outbreak of disease (*delagonian fever).* Smith (Kirby 1940b: 199) also mentioned

the outbreak of smallpox in the region, which could be the disease mentioned by Moffat. Burrows states that Mzilikazi moved around out of general security (Burrow 1971: 51). These are some of the reasons for the move, and as a result, the settlement was only temporarily occupied by Mzilikazi; however, the length of time is not mentioned or indicated.

These visual representations were tested on other Matabele military sites in southern Zimbabwe. A map developed by Summers and Pagden (1970) indicating the location of Matabele military settlements during the latter half of the 19th century was scanned and georeferenced using ArcGIS. This provided a general area of these settlements, which were located within the area of modern Bulawayo. Unfortunately, this area underwent extensive development in the 20th century, destroying or heavily impacting most sites. However, four sites matching the general location as indicated on the map were identified. These sites (Fig. 38) have the same circular dense vegetation signature as the sites located within the study area, with the size. The average diameter of the features identified in Zimbabwe (Fig. 38) is larger than those of the study area, averaging between 230 m and 300 m, which is still smaller than the known capitals. However, one site (A in Figure 38) identified near old Bulawayo has a diameter of 139 m, similar to the study area's largest features. The residential areas can be seen surrounding the central vegetation at the sites labelled C and D in Figure 38.

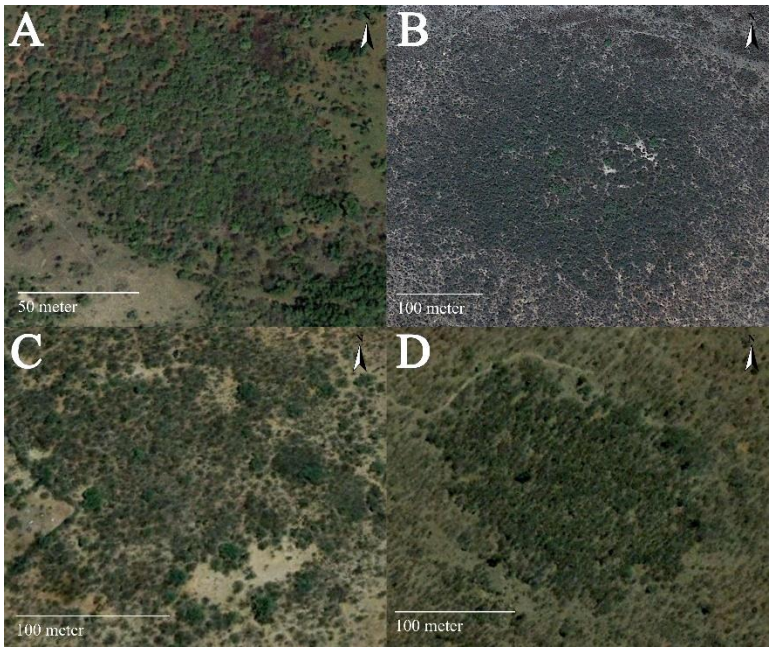


Figure 38: Matabele military settlements found in Zimbabwe around modern Bulawayo

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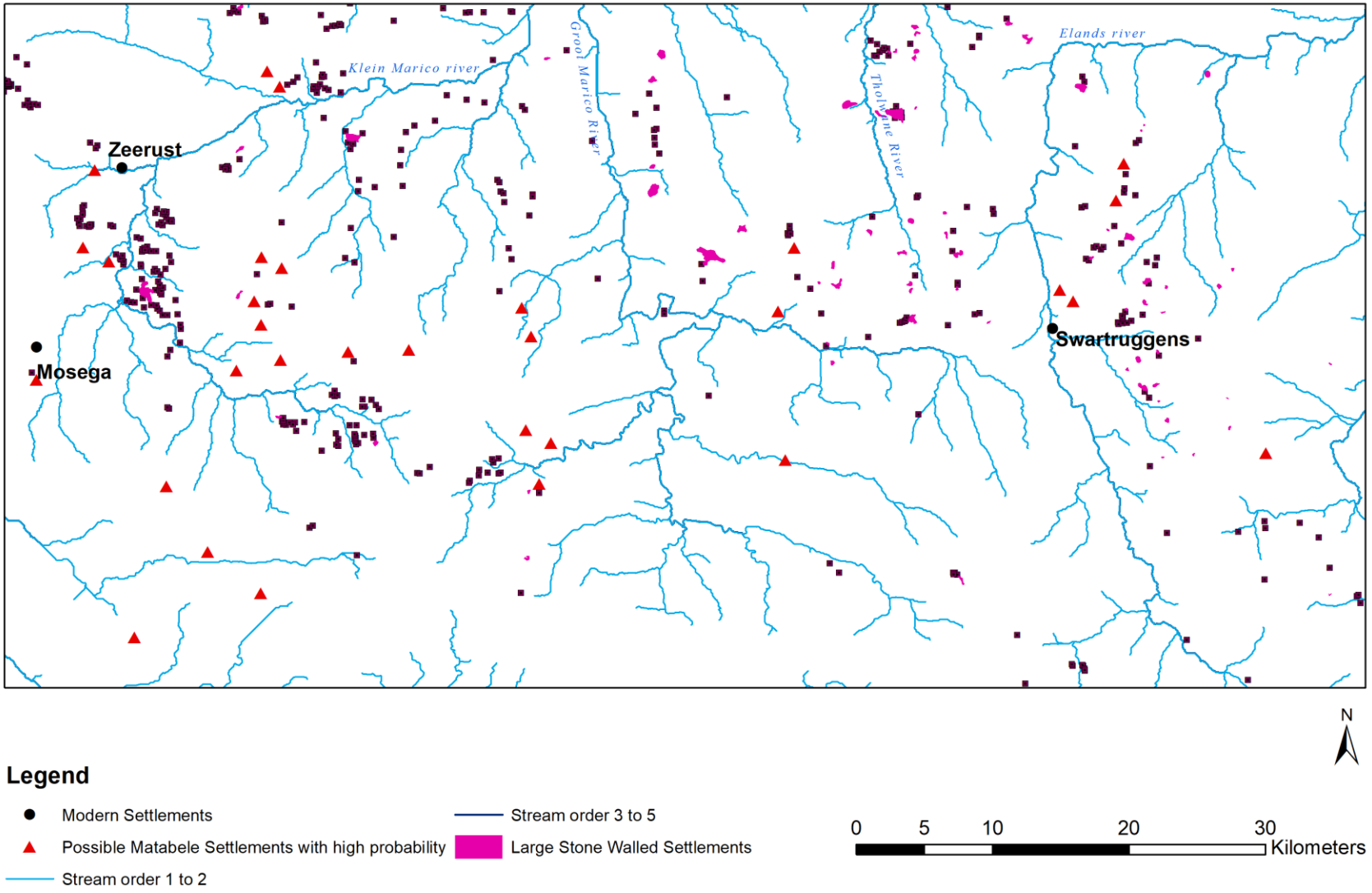


Figure 39: Map illustrating the special relationship between potential Matabele sites and stonewalled settlements (indicated in purple squares) within the study area.

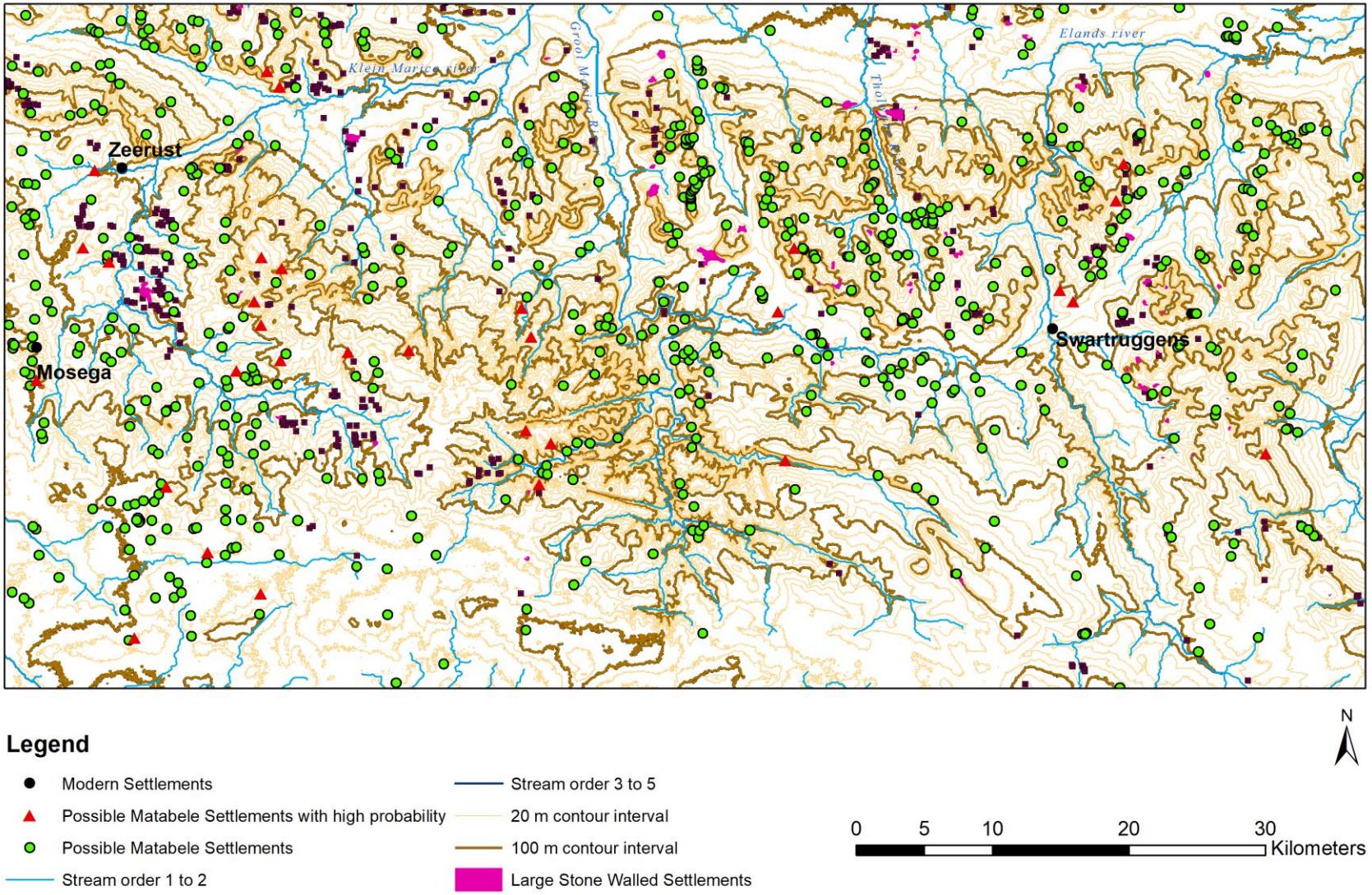


Figure 40: Map illustrating the special relationship between stonewalled settlements (purple squares) and elevation, hydrology systems and Matabele settlements.

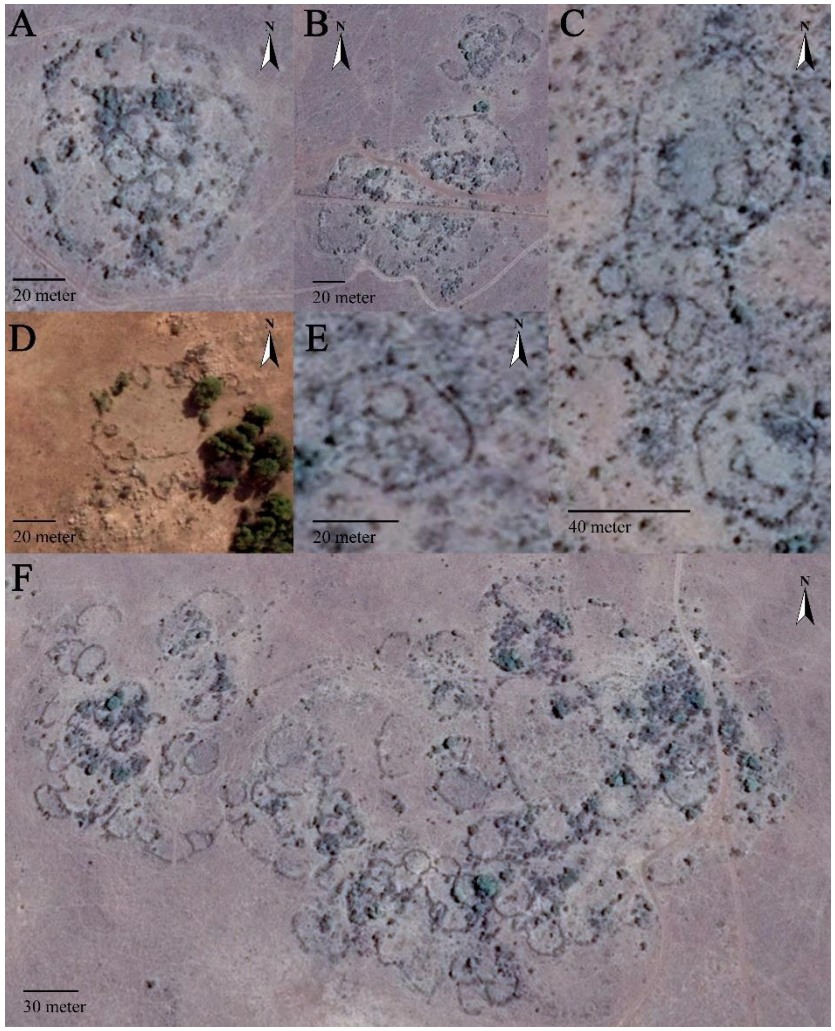


Figure 41: Examples of the different stonewalled settlements found within the study area.

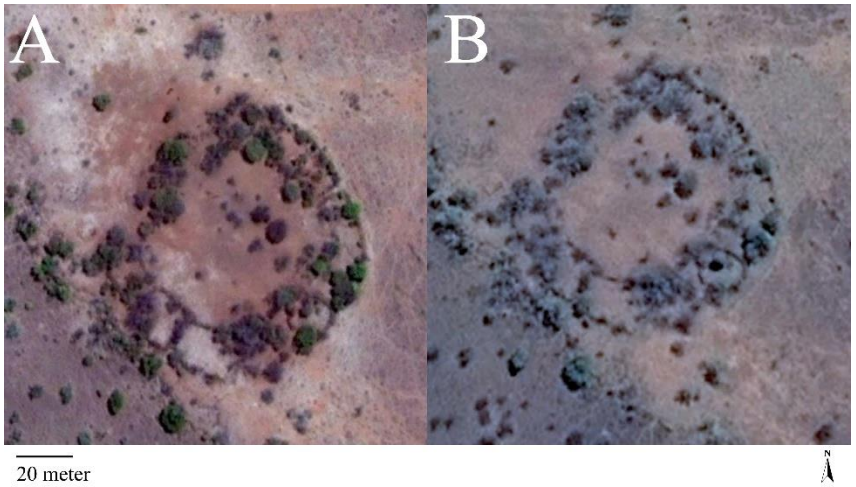


Figure 42: Stonewalled pattern not matching known stone walled settlement patterns.

8.4 Stonewalled sites

A total of 472 stonewalled sites were identified within the study area (Figs. 39 and 340). The region is well known for the large number of stone-walled settlements, see Boeyens (2003). Six different types of stonewalled sites were found within the study area (Fig. 41), including one type that does not match the current known stonewalled settlement types within the region. Two of the type settlements identified by Maggs (1976) are present within the study area. Type N is represented by number E in Figure 41, while type Z or Molokwane are represented by number A. Type Z and Molokwane have very similar visual signatures on aerial and satellite images and are challenging.

Large and agglomerated settlements (although not a type) are also located within the study area and are represented by C and F, respectively. Number D might represent the Doornspruit pattern. However, these are different from the other possible Doornspruit sites found (Fig. 41), as they have one central enclosure surrounded by an outer wall. The largest agglomerated settlement is located 8.5 km northeast of Mosega and is 2 km long and 1 km wide. These large and agglomerated settlements have the same settlement patterns found to the east at sites such as Selonskraal (Molokwane) near Rustenburg, the stonewalled sites in the Kuruman area, and those located further north in Botswana. Similar to the Matabele, the stoned walled sites are generally located in the higher elevated regions; however, the settlements correspond to the flow of the rivers, with only a few located more than 1 km away from streams or rivers. However, a large number of these rivers and streams are today perennial rivers, which indicates that they might have had a more regular flow rate in the past. Three main cluster areas (Fig. 39) were identified concerning the stonewalled settlements' spatial organisation. These three areas are the regions surrounding Mosega in the south, Zeerust in the north and the Swartruggens valley to the east. Several potential Matabele sites are located near the stonewalled sites (Tables 7 and 8), which is supported by first-hand accounts. However, this proximity appears more pronounced in the Swartruggens Valley than in the regions surrounding Zeerust and Mosega.

Table 7: Possible Matabele settlements and their distance to the nearest known stone-walled settlement.

Settlement probability	Distance to SWS < 300 m	Distance to SWS: 300 m-2 km	Distance to SWS: 2-4 km	Distance to SWS: 4-6 km	Distance to SWS: 6-8 km	Distance to SWS: 8-10 km	Distance to SWS < 10 km
Low	24	201	214	68	33	33	22
Medium	4	22	28	9	4	1	3
High		5	2	2	2	1	
Total	**28**	**228**	**244**	**79**	**39**	**35**	**25**

Table 8: Possible Matabele settlements and their distance to the nearest known large/agglomerated stone-walled settlement.

Settlement probability	Distance to SWS < 300 m	Distance to SWS: 300 m-2 km	Distance to SWS: 2-4 km	Distance to SWS: 4-6 km	Distance to SWS: 6-8 km	Distance to SWS: 8-10 km	Distance to SWS < 10 km
Low	28	118	197	91	67	64	30
Medium	1	9	21	16	13	8	3
High		2	2	3	2	2	1
Total	**29**	**129**	**220**	**110**	**82**	**74**	**34**

As already mentioned, one type of stonewalled settlement organisation found within the study area does not match the known patterns. As seen in Figure 42, this pattern is circular with a large open area and has walling surrounding this area, similar to the traditional Nguni-type homestead. The image also shows that the settlement has several sections within the circular area. There is no evidence of modern livestock farming in the vicinity. Three groups of modern buildings are located 3 km east, with a small square structure next to one of the groups. However, the function of these buildings could not be determined, and no sign of livestock keeping was visible on any satellite imagery dated between 2011 and 2022. Next to the one group of buildings appears to be a dirt runway already present by 2011, which would make livestock keeping in the area unlikely. Furthermore, imagery dated 2011 indicated that the sites had not been used for a significant time, with no roads in the area connecting to the sites as would be expected from modern farming practices. Similarly, there are three sites with the same pattern located within 1 km of each other, all constructed on the slope of the mountain near the edge of a ridge. Their locations match known Matabele settlement location preferences; however, the use of stone in their construction excludes them from having been built by the Matabele.

There is currently no evidence to indicate that the Sotho-Tswana incorporated into the kingdom adopted the Nguni settlement style but maintained the use of stone as a construction material. Although this possibility can't be excluded, the lack of any supporting evidence makes a Matabele-Nguni-isd Sotho-Tswana origin unlikely. Therefore, although a modern origin can't be conclusively ruled out based on satellite imagery, the lack of modern activity around all three sites and their locations is generally unfavourable for modern farmers due to livestock exposure to the elements and criminal activity. Combined, these factors make a historical origin for these stone features more likely than a modern one. Another two similar features are also found 3 km to the east, also on a slope next to a ridge. From satellite imagery dated 2011, it is evident that the sites have not been used for a long time.

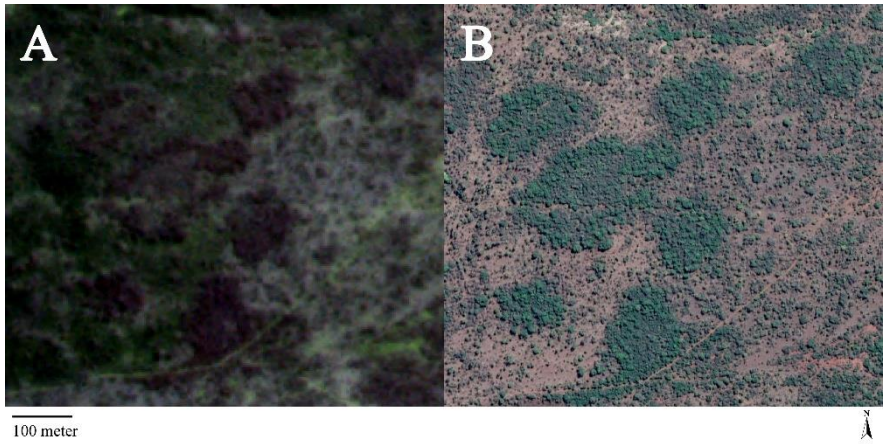


Figure 43: Potential Matabele settlements represented in Planet Scope (A) imagery as dark patches and Google Earth Pro (B) imagery as patches of vegetation.

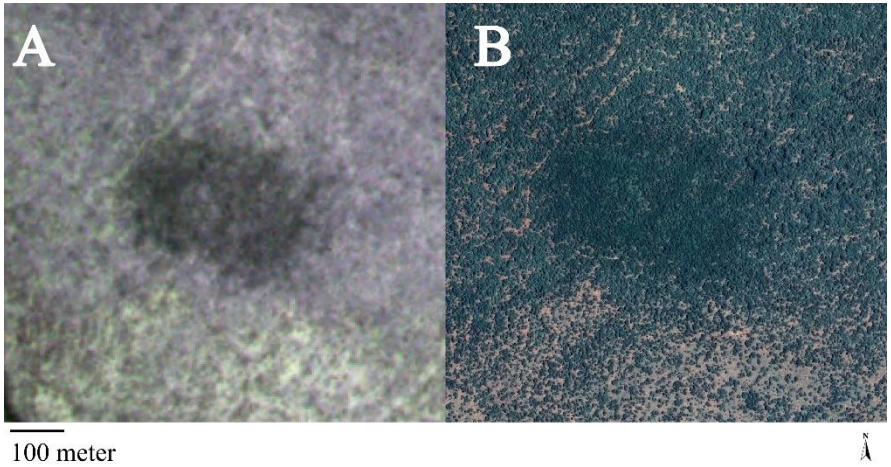


Figure 45: A patch of soil with a higher moisture content than the surrounding area indicated as a darker patch on Planet Scope (A) and a dark green patch on Google Earth Pro (B) imagery.

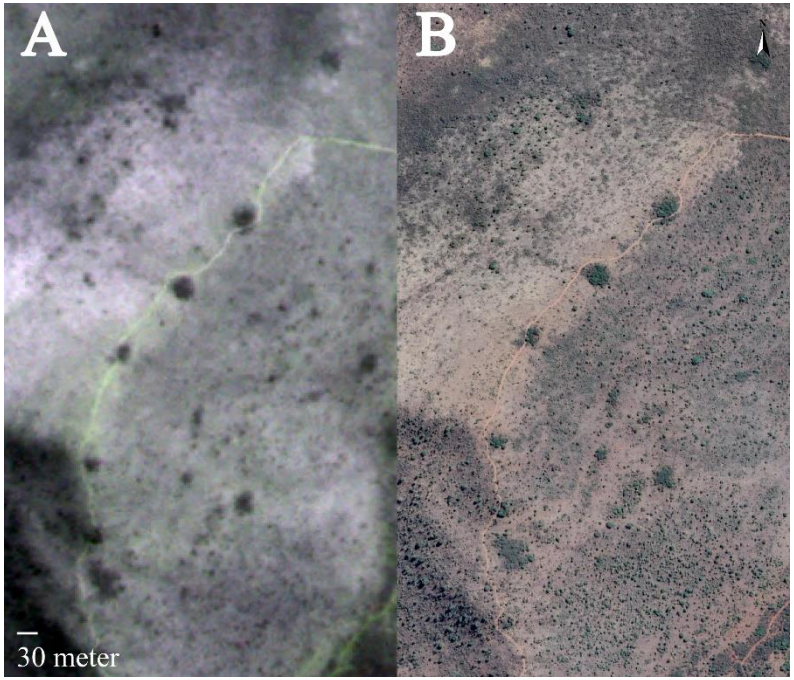


Figure 44: Patches of vegetation following a ridge line visible as dark circular patches on Planet Scope (A) imagery and as circular green patches on Google Earth Pro (B).

8.5 Planet Scope Multispectral Satellite Imagery

Eight band Planet Scope multispectral satellite images were used in the test survey of the study area. These images have a 3x3 m pixel resolution. These images allow for multiple types of band combinations, which represent different wavelengths of light, to be used to run several different predictive models and manual searches. For this study, a band combination, measured in red, green and blue wavelengths, of 4 5 3 was used. This variation of the band combination used to investigate healthy vegetation (4 5 1) highlights moisture differences concerning vegetation growth. Therefore, the higher the moisture content of the soil, the darker that region of the images will be, with dryer areas appearing lighter. This is an ideal combination for this study due to the importance of vegetation as a site marker and the increase in soil moisture content due to anthropogenic activities within the settlement. Within the images, open spaces appear in variations of green, with vegetation appearing in variations of purple.

As shown in Figure 43, the vegetation of the potential Matabele sites has a darker colouration, indicating a higher moisture content. Both patterns visible in the image can indicate Matabele settlements, either indicating the residential area, central site, or the likely central enclosures Illustrated by the rest of the sites. Similarly, in areas with dense vegetation, such as a large area covered with trees or thickets, this band combination can make potential sites more visible due to the increased contrast between wetter and drier zones. The small, dense circular pattern (Fig. 43) can also indicate walling, which might similarly impact vegetation. The circular area can be explained via anthropogenic activities, most likely livestock keeping. Likewise, the location on a slope near a ridge matches Matabele settlement location practice. Therefore, when the features' moisture content, shape and location are combined, it is highly likely that this site represents the central enclosure of a large Matabele settlement.

However, the addition of Planet Scope imagery was less effective in regions with little vegetation growth, such as areas dominated by grassland. As can be seen in Figures 44 and 45, the increased visibility of the area due to the moisture content of the soil does not make any significant contributions to the identification of the site other than confirming the presence of high moisture content at the feature. In the case of these features, the prominent vegetation growth already indicates a higher moisture content, which limits the amount of additional information acquired from the planet scope imagery.

8.6 Conclusion

From the visual inspection of the satellite imagery, this study was able to locate 678 sites that match the criteria developed. In addition, 472 stonewalled sites were also located within the study area. This study has also found that many potential Matabele sites, as identified by the criteria developed from the settlement model, close to these sites match the observations made in the first-hand accounts. However, it is still unclear what this relationship would have been as all the settlements mentioned in the accounts had already been abandoned by the recording time. The following chapter will examine how these sites found in the visual survey of the Google Earth satellite images can be linked to the Matabele and the stonewalled settlements.

Chapter 9: Identifying Possible Matabele Military Settlements Within the Landscape

9.1 Introduction

With the development of a settlement model for the Matabele, it is possible to re-evaluate the currently available archaeological evidence related to the Matabele and their settlement patterns. A re-examination of the current literature on the Matabele reveals that several assumptions have created an archaeological settlement pattern for the Matabele that does not match any of the descriptions provided by the first-hand accounts. Therefore, these assumptions have resulted in falsely identifying sites as being Matabele. This chapter will examine the newly created settlement model within the context of the existing literature, focusing on the implication this model has for the broader understanding of the military settlements of the northern Nguni.

9.2 Identifying possible Matabele settlement on the landscape

Nguni settlements are very hard to locate due to the perishable nature of the material used in their construction. This problem has been compounded for the Matabele as little is known of the full extent of their kingdom's borders, which areas they concentrated their settlements in, and how their settlements were organised and placed within the landscape. These limitations are further heightened by the misidentification of Matabele sites within the archaeological literature, further obscuring their settlements on the landscape. Nevertheless, from first-hand accounts, it is clear that Matabele society and their settlements can be divided between those who had adopted the Nguni culture and those who had maintained their original culture. Therefore, this section will start by examining these two aspects of the Matabele kingdom.

9.2.1 Nguni and non-Nguni Matabele

Despite the limited detail presented in the first-hand accounts of each of the individual features of a Matabele settlement, combining these sources allows for a basic reconstruction of the settlement organisation and the regional settlement pattern. From the first-hand accounts, it is clear that the Matabele share all the same settlement sections and social/religious practices documented among other northern Nguni groups such as the Swazi, Zulu, Ngoni and Shangaan (Gaza Nguni). The presence of the same settlement sections within each of the northern Nguni military settlements indicates that these sections are a standard part of the northern Nguni settlement organisation. However, despite all northern Nguni having the same

settlement sections within their military settlements, the placement does differ among the various groups, with the Swazi and Ngoni and the Matabele and Zulu having the most similarities, respectively. Unfortunately, insufficient English information is available for a detailed reconstruction of the Shangaan/Gaza Nguni military settlements. However, from the available information, it is theorised that the Shangaan military settlements will have more similarities with the Swazi and Ngoni than with the Matabele and Zulu. This hypothesis is based primarily on the shared geographic location, origins and shared historical development between the Shangaan and the Ngoni. Despite the range of similarities, it is important to note that several differences are also present among the northern Nguni groups. Although shared overall settlement patterns are helpful in reconstructing historical development patterns, the differences found among each group are of a higher significance as these differences allow for identifying these settlements within the archaeological landscape. Therefore, a core question related to the Matabele is how these differences will allow for the identification of their settlements within the landscape, as well as what the implications of these differences are for the origins and historical development of the Matabele kingdom.

Due to the migratory nature of Matabele society for a very large part of their historical development period, reconstructing Matabele settlements and society is a complex process. From the first-hand accounts, it is clear that Matabele society was divided between Nguni (based on culture and not genetics) and non-Nguni Matabele. It is currently unknown what the size of the Matabele community that left KwaZulu-Natal in the mid-1820s. However, considering the high degree of continuation of the Nguni cultural practices throughout the history of the Matabele Kingdom, a population of 200, as have historically been argued (Rasmussen 1976), appears to be unlikely. When the size of the Matabele army during the 1830s and 1850s is considered, estimated to be around 5000 warriors (Wallis 1945; Lye 1975), the number of incorporated people far exceeded the number of original Nguni (from the Khumalo). Many war casualties would have further reduced the number of original Khumalo members among the Matabele (Wallis 1945).

Similarly, Smith states, "*More than 2/ 3 of Mas.' people are the remains of the tribes he has conquered in this direction*" (Kirby 1940b:246). Therefore, if the Matabele Kingdom started with an original population of 200 Khumalo and then subjugated thousands of non-Nguni peoples into their society along with the loss of original Khumalo members due to the wars, then the degree of cultural continuation among the Matabele would be a very unusual feature of their society. Human nature results in individuals largely remaining with what is considered

familiar. Therefore, even if other individuals adopted the Nguni culture, they would have incorporated elements of their own culture that are familiar to them into their newly adopted culture (Makuvaza and Burrett 2011). As the number of original Khumalo diminished and the recently assimilated people far outnumbered them, the Nguni cultural element of the kingdom would have started to undergo large-scale change due to the non-Nguni elements outnumbering the Nguni elements. Therefore, it seems more likely that the original number of Khumalo was far more than the 200 historically mentioned, which is also supported by Khumalo oral traditions and some historiographical interpretations (Cobbing 1976; Rasmussen 1978)**.** Similarly, from first-hand accounts, it is clear that not all conquered people adopted the Nguni culture. Smith and Moffat make numerous mentions in their diaries of non-Nguni peoples and settlements in between or near Nguni Matabele settlements. In Moffat's account of Mosega, he states:

"*When we reached the Mosega Basin, in which one portion of his warriors dwelt, among thirteen villages, six of which were Bahurutsi, who appeared to be tolerably well treated"* (Moffat 1846: 583).

Smith also states that:

"*The women appear mostly Baquana and Baharutsi. All those who travelled with us were regular Matabeli …"* (Kirby 1940b: 56-57).

Smith also indicates the nature of the cultural adoption among some of the incorporated communities in the easternmost part of the Matabele Kingdom when he states:

"*The people, all Bechuanas, build their houses according to the Matabeli form, carry their milk in calabashes and small earthen pots,* [and] *have also the Matabeli dress and shields. Seem quite satisfied with their present situation. Very anxious for animal food"* (Kirby 1940b: 239).

and

"*More than 2/ 3 of Mas.' people are the remains of the tribes he has conquered in this direction. They appear to be of two classes. The one has approximated much to the Litabeli in dress, cleanliness and spirits; the other consists of poor who have the appearance of Bechuanas with a dress and deportment not suited to them. The former are principally or indeed entirely those who reside amongst the conquerors in the same kraals who are more esteemed, better treated and have more food. The other generally live apart in small kraals, have little food except what they obtain by hunting or from a few cows which may be handed over to them, and they are chiefly employed in working the ground and reaping the corn. The former are pretty stationary, the latter are much moved about. There were two of the machaha in their uniforms passed us today when halting; they, we were informed, were changing their residence"* (Kirby 1940b: 246).

As well as:

"*Most of the inhabitants of the three kraals which are situated in this kloof* [Kurricane mountains] *are of the conquered tribes"* (Kirby 1940b: 247).

From these statements, it is clear that the nature and degree of cultural assimilation varied between the different regions of the kingdom and the different conquered communities. Furthermore, the abandonment of the Nguni culture in the region after the withdrawal of the Matabele in the late 1830s further indicates the limited extent to which Nguni cultural assimilation occurred. Therefore, it is clear that Matabele society was divided into two distinct classes: the Nguni elite (including those who had adopted the Nguni culture) and the non-Nguni commoners. As these communities constructed and lived in different types of settlements, each needs to be examined separately to obtain a clearer understanding of Matabele settlements and society.

9.2.1.1 Matabele Nguni

9.2.1.1.1 Settlement and Demographic Organisation

From the first-hand accounts, it is clear that the Matabele shared the same settlement organisational pattern and architecture used by the Zulu. When viewed from the entrance to

the central enclosure, the *isigodlo* area was located on the opposite side of the central enclosure. The residential area was situated to the left and right of the central enclosure, encircling the full extent of this central enclosure. In conjunction with this overall shared settlement layout and construction, the Matabele also appear to have had a similar three-tiered settlement hierarchy found among the Zulu. The *isigodlo* could be identified by huts of varying sizes, with the overall hut size greater than the rest of the settlement (Lye 1975). This variation in hut size is similar to what has been documented in the *isigodlo* of the Zulu (Parkington and Cronin 1979; Roodt 1992; van der Merwe 2015). Within the Matabele *isigodlo* area was a large number of faunal remains, especially wild ones such as those of lions, which were scattered in large quantities around the *isigodlo*, but especially around the area of Mzilikazi's hut (Harris 1852). From the account of Harris, it is also clear that the construction of Mzilikazi's hut was markedly different to that of the rest of the settlement; however, it is unclear as to whether or not this was a feature unique to Mzilikazi's hut or if it was a wider feature of the *isigodlo* area.

However, such a hut within the settlement would identify the *isigodlo* area and indicate the possible presence of Mzilikazi, who is well known to have routinely moved between different settlements for safety. An interesting variation in the location of the *isigodlo* is found among the Matabele. It is known from later historical accounts of the Matabele in southern Zimbabwe and supported by excavations of the capital KoBulawayo that the *isigodlo* (or *isigodlo*) section was moved from the outer residential ring to the central enclosure (Gaffney *et al.* 2005; Makuvaza and Burrett 2011). This enclosure consisted of several huts, with a magnetic survey conducted in the 1990s estimating the enclosure had 17 huts believed to be those of the royal wives, with a cattle enclosure located at the entrance to the enclosure. Grain bins were also thought to be located in the western section of the *isigodlo* (Gaffney *et al.* 2005). The authors further believed that some anomalies found within the enclosure could be attributed to smaller internal separations between the huts, an observation also supported by first-hand accounts of Matabele *isigodlo* in South Africa. However, the incorporation of European architectural styles was also evident in the presence of two brick structures that were similarly constructed within the central enclosure in the central livestock enclosure (Makuvaza and Burrett 2011). A similar adaptation was also present in the last Zulu Capital of oNdini, which was contemporary with KoBulawayo. An interesting conclusion drawn from the survey by *Gaffney et al. (2005)* was that the fence structure constructed around the *isigodlo* and the central enclosure was possibly an insubstantial timber structure that thick layers of thatch might have covered. This markedly differed from other known Matabele construction techniques and similar techniques among the Zulu. No evidence suggests similar enclosures within the central livestock

enclosure of Matabele settlements in South Africa. It is unknown when or why this enclosure was created. Therefore, it could have been a more recent development related to the new Matabele king or an established tradition with unknown origins and determining factors, although this later hypothesis appears unlikely.

Evidence supports the hypothesis that the Matabele did have smaller secondary enclosures near the military settlements, similar to the *great isigodlo* found at royal military settlements among the Zulu (van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019b). In his diary, Smith states:

"*I remarked at the kraal we left yesterday that there was a small one a little way from the other and that the tuna came from it to say farewell; he probably lives there"* (Kirby 1940b:242).

Many offhand references are also made in the other accounts of the existence of possibly smaller enclosures near important military settlements. For example, it is known that some warriors were allowed to construct a smaller private enclosure for themselves as a reward for bravery or service (Cobbing 1974). Therefore, these smaller enclosures mentioned in the first-hand accounts may be reflections of this practice of the Matabele noted by Cobbing in southern Zimbabwe. These enclosures could have functioned as great *isigodlo*, similar to those of the Zulu; however, the absence of any first-hand descriptions and any such smaller enclosures at any of Mzilikazi's capitals indicates that the possibility of this hypothesis is low. Therefore, based on the currently available evidence, it does not appear that the Matabele utilised *great isigodlo*, suggesting that this feature of a military settlement was restricted to the Zulu.

Unfortunately, no clear descriptions are provided of the demographical organisation of the Matabele *isigodlo*. However, from historical and ethnographic accounts of the Zulu, it is known that the Zulu *isigodlo* consisted of three different social ranks (van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019b). In his book, Moffat provides the following description that indicates a similar social hierarchy within the Matabele *isigodlo*. Moffat states:

"….*where Moselekatse took his stand in the centre of an immense circle of his soldiers, numbers of women being present, who, with their shrill voices and clapping of hands, took part in the concert. About thirty ladies from his harem, with long white wands, marched to the song backwards and forward on the outside of the ranks, their well-lubricated shining bodies being too weighty for the agile movements which characterized the matrons and damsels of lower rank"* (Moffat 1846: 534)

Moffat might be referring to other female members of the settlements and not to the *isigodlo* itself. However, the stratified nature of Matabele society and the known practice for only the women of the *isigodlo* to join the king in a dance (Wallis 1945), a practice also found among the Zulu, would make this interpretation unusual. However, the ambiguity of Moffat's statement means that this possible interpretation cannot be excluded and would indicate a marked difference in the social interactions between members of the Matabele *isigodlo* and the rest of the population than is found among the Zulu. Other statements made by Smith, Moffat and Burrow also indicate the presence of "queens", "matrons", or "mothers" at all the large military settlements of the Matabele, reflecting terms also used to describe the *amakhosikazi* found among the Zulu, which was also differentiated in the first-hand accounts between the wives/mothers and concubine/women of the king. Furthermore, the presence of senior female individuals at Matabele military kraals is supported by Burrow when he states:

"*Every kraal is under the direction of a matron, one of Masulikatsi's wives, who keeps the girls in order and sees that the cattle (all Masulikatsi's; no subject can have wealth) go out at the proper time in the morning after milking, which is done by the Matutu (boys) who have the entire management of the cattle"* (Burrow 1971: 48)

In his official account, Smith also recollects the following event when they arrived at Mosega:

"*Soon after Calipi left us a respectable old dame approached followed by two women carrying large vessels of beer upon their heads. To the advance of these women our guards offered no opposition……took up the vessels of beer and delivered one to Mr. Moffat and the other to myself as presents from the "mother" of the adjoining town"* (Lye 1975: 215).

During this part of the expedition, the expedition members repeatedly complained about the Matabele guards keeping all the people away from them, including men, women and children, often chasing them away with beatings or other threats. Therefore, the guards' behaviour concerning the women mentioned above mirrors the social interaction of the women of the *isigodlo* and warriors within Zulu society. Although further research is needed, several observations indicate a strong possibility that the Matabele *isigodlo* was organised along similar lines as those of the Zulu. Firstly was Moffat's ability to distinguish three different members of the female section of the *isigodlo*. Secondly, Smith and Burrow mention a difference between the matrons and the girls under their authority at Matabele military settlement. Lastly, the reaction of Matabele warriors assigned to keep crows away from the Smith's expedition did not attempt to halt the approach of the women of the *isigodlo*, contrary to their actions related to the rest of the population. These events mirror similar descriptions of the Zulu *isigodlo* in first-hand accounts (Cory 1926; Booth 1967; Dlamini 1986; Gardiner 1836; Merrett 1995). However, the exact nature and organisation of the Matabele *isigodlo* and its wider function within Matabele society are still unknown. The physical organisation of the *isigodlo* section is similarly unclear. However, it is known that the Zulu *isigodlo* was divided into two sections (van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019b), with some evidence being presented in the first-hand accounts of a similar separation within the Matabele *isigodlo*.

The diagram provided by Smith (Fig. 24) does show a limited amount of internal separation within the area of the *isigodlo*. Similarly, the excavations and magnetic survey undertaken by Gaffney *et al.* (2005) at KoBulawayo found many internal fencings within the *isigodlo*. However, Smith (Lye 1975) and Burrow (Burrow 1971) mention many internal fences within the rest of the settlement. Therefore, it is currently unclear whether the fencing within the *isigodlo* area had the same function as within Zulu military settlements or was just a continuation of the internal separation of the rest of the settlement. However, considering the differences in social standing, wealth and political authority associated with the *isigodlo*, it would be unusual if the internal fencing did not have a degree of functionality related to social separation between the *isigodlo* and the rest of the settlement. Furthermore, it is also unclear if the same entrance restrictions applied to the Matabele *isigodlo* were present among the Zulu. From the account of Harris, it is known that a fence separated the Matabele *isigodlo* from the rest via a small arched entrance similar to the huts (Harris 1852: 118). However, none of the first-hand accounts mention the presence of guards at the entrance nor that unauthorised entry was punished with death, as was the practice among the Zulu. Nevertheless, there is a high probability that some restrictions would have been practised as it is known that some restrictions related to the women of the *isigodlo* among the Zulu were also present among the

Matabele. For example, Moffat (Wallis 1945) mentions a few incidents where women of the *isigodlo* were killed due to having inappropriate relations with other members of Matabele society.

When examining the rest of the residential area of a Matabele military settlement, several differences are apparent between the Matabele and the Zulu related to the structure, organisation and demography of this area. Nevertheless, the Matabele followed the same general organisational principle of the Zulu in the placement of huts concerning each other. Both Smith (Lye 1975: 218-219) and Burrow (Burrow 1971: 70-71) mention that Matabele huts were arranged in a linear pattern, with either two or three rows depending on the size of the settlement. It is unclear whether this was a linear or horizontal alignment or whether there was any specific preference for either form of alignment. When viewing the two diagrams, it appears to have been a vertical alignment (following a line from the entrance to the *isigodlo*) rather than a horizontal one (from the central enclosure to the outer fence). Some mention is made of sections of the settlement having an irregular or non-linear alignment. However, which area of the settlement this was is not mentioned, and the diagram provided by Burrow (1971: 71) does not reflect this, with Smith's diagram (Lye 1975: 217) reflecting this within the *isigodlo* area. Therefore, two possible interpretations can be made related to hut alignment within a Matabele settlement. First, two variations of hut placement existed: a linear arrangement (horizontally or vertically) and a random hut placement pattern. A second interpretation is that the residential area associated with the warriors and their families had a linear hut placement, with the area of the *isigodlo* having a random hut placement. Further research is required to determine which of these two interpretations is accurate. However, when the social standing of the occupants of the *isigodlo* is considered, along with hut placement and size having a direct link with the occupant's social standing, the second interpretation is more in line with known cultural practices found among the other northern Nguni as well, especially the Zulu (Parkington and Cronin 1979; Roodt 1992).

However, significant differences existed between the Zulu and Matabele military settlements concerning the organisation of the non-*isigodlo* areas of the settlement. It is known that this section of a Zulu settlement housed the huts of the warriors, two to three rows deep, placed close to each other with no internal fencing (Parkington and Cronin 1979; van der Merwe 2015). However, the Matabele had several internal fences in this area, primarily separating different families' cooking areas from each other (Summers and Pagden 1970; Lye 1975). Similarly, it is also known that the Matabele constructed small livestock enclosures near their

huts for keeping smaller livestock such as sheep or goats (Burrow 1971; Lye 1975). However, all the first-hand accounts of the Zulu agree that the Zulu did not have livestock enclosures within the living area of the settlement.

Similarly, the Zulus did not seem to keep cattle and sheep/goats together in the same settlement, with references to military settlements that housed only sheep/goats instead of cattle (van der Merwe 2015). The presence of small livestock enclosures, the separate kitchen areas within the Matabele settlement, and their absence within Zulu military settlements are expected when the differences in settlement functionality and demography are considered. It is a well-documented practice among the Zulu that the warriors residing in the military settlements were supplied by their families from their homestead supplies (van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019a; Fowler *et al.* 2020). Therefore, Zulu warriors did not undertake any or only minimal cooking activities while stationed at a military settlement. Similarly, there was a clear distinction between the functions of a military settlement and a family homestead (van der Merwe 2015; Fowler and van Schalkwyk 2022). Among the Matabele, however, no such clear distinction was made between the military settlements and family homestead, with many Matabele military settlements eventually developing into a settlement that combined both these settlement functionalities. As the warriors aged and married, their wives and children would live with them in their settlements, thus changing the demography of the military settlement from only warriors at its creation to one that combined both military and civilian life (Wallis 1945; Summers and Pagden 1970; Cobbing 1974). However, Smith also noted the same practice of regimental supplying among the Matabele in South Africa when he states:

"*Wherever kraals, or we may rather say barracks, exist the inhabitants of the neighbouring towns are often required to supply the inhabitants with food, particularly if the barracks should be intended for temporary use or the country in their vicinity is not well adapted for cultivation of grain or fitted for the sustenance and security of cattle"* (Lye 1975: 223)

Therefore, it is clear that Matabele and Zulu military settlements were similar at their creation. However, their evolutionary process following their creation differed markedly. A Zulu military settlement never adopted any civilian aspects, with warriors leaving the military settlement and constructing their family homestead once allowed to marry (van der Merwe 2015). This stands in contrast to the Matabele in which a warrior's family came to live with him in the

military town. Through this process, the settlement eventually changed from a purely military settlement occupied by only men to a settlement with both women and children inhabiting it that served both a military and a domestic function. This highlights a key difference between the Matabele and Zulu military settlements, as women and children (except for the *isigodlo*) never lived within a Zulu military settlement. As a result, later phase Matabele settlements would also have a different depositional matrix to that of the early phase, as the presence of domestic wares would be few or absent within the first phase of the settlements compared to later phase settlements. Summers and Pagden (1970) also mentioned the presence of a path along the inner fence of the central enclosure (on the residential side), which functioned as a road within Matabele settlements in southern Zimbabwe that allowed for the quick movement of people, especially messengers. Burrows also mentions a similar feature among the Matabele in South Africa. Burrow states:

"*The houses are built round the edge, generally two deep (see sketch), and between them and the kraal (inner) hedge, the floor is laid with cow dung nicely spread and hardened like the walls in a boer's house in the Colony"* (Burrow 1971: 70-71).

None of the first-hand accounts of contemporary Zulu military settlements makes mention of such a feature, nor did any of the excavations of known Zulu military settlements (Parkington and Cronin 1979; Rawlinson 1985, 1987; Roodt 1992, 1993) reveal the presence of such a feature; therefore, it seems to be a feature unique to the Matabele.

Current evidence indicates no significant difference concerning the central enclosure of the Zulu and South African Matabele military settlements. Both had a large central enclosure used to keep cattle, with smaller secondary enclosures on the side of the central enclosure. Similarly, a smaller enclosure was located in the area of the king's living area that was used to keep calves and for ritual practices (Lye 1975), a practice also found among the Zulu. However, later, Matabele settlements in southern Zimbabwe also had a secondary living

enclosure, with a separate livestock enclosure within this large central livestock enclosure. Moffat does not mention such a feature among the Matabele in Zimbabwean during his first visit to them in the 1850s, nor do any of the other first-hand accounts of the Matabele during the South African period make mention of this feature. However, the presence of this feature among the Matabele in southern Zimbabwe is supported by later first-hand accounts, sketches, and excavations. A possible explanation for this feature is that it resulted from the cultural assimilation of communities in Zimbabwe or even possibly southern Zambia. A similar feature was found among the Ba-Ila (Fig. 46) in southern Zambia.

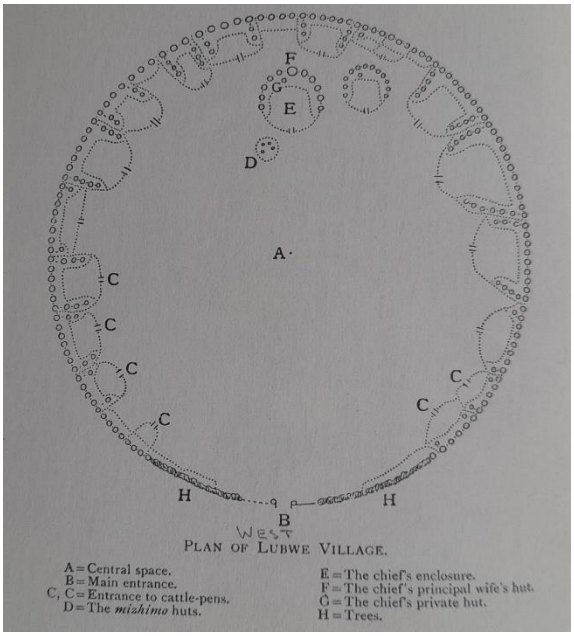


Figure 46: Sketch of a Ba-Ila settlement illustrating the presence of a second enclosure within the main livestock enclosure (Smith and Dale 1968:112).

9.2.1.1.2 Beads

Beads are a prominent feature within the first-hand accounts of southern Africa (Harris 1852; Wallis 1945; Cory 1926; Kirby 1940a,b; Gardiner 1836; Burrow 1971; Lye 1975; Merrett 1995), with beads being one of the primary articles used in trade between the African communities and the European colonies. From these accounts, it is known that some communities, like the Zulu, had restrictions on which colour and type of beads could be bought by most of the Zulu population and those reserved for royal use only (van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019b). However, it does not appear that a similar restriction was present among the Matabele, with all the accounts agreeing that bead usage was very high among them, especially among the *isigodlo*. Harris describes the nature of Matabele bead usage when he states:

"*Some wore only blue from top to toe, others were enveloped in one mass of red, the endless variety of patterns in which they were disposed having doubtless emanated from the inventive brain and prolific fancy of his Majesty, a large portion of whose valuable time is passed in devising and superintending the construction of ornaments for the Harem"* (Harris 1852: 119).

Similarly, Smith noted in his diary that:

"*He* [Mzilikazi] *danced in front of his people and at such times was heavily laden with beads, perhaps 20 lbs. When Schoon and MacLuckie arrived, he had nothing but Portuguese beads of a large coarse description; he kept all theirs and laid aside those got from Delagoa Bay"* (Kirby 1940a: 267).

Many of the first-hand accounts related to the Zulu throughout the 19th-century state that certain colours of beads were restricted to royalty, which would make it very unusual that none of the Matabele accounts would mention a similar practice among the Matabele, especially considering the importance of bead trading present in the accounts of Smith and Harris. It is, therefore, more likely that bead colour restrictions were not present among the Matabele and that the only restrictions on their accumulation would have been the wealth of the specific individual. Harris furthermore states that Mzilikazi had no clear preference for any type or colour of beads (Harris 1852: 108). However, from the descriptions provided, blue and red were used more frequently than the other colours, with white beads being the only other colour specifically mentioned. When examining the accounts of Smith, Harris and Moffat, an idea of the extent of Matabele bead usage can be determined. Smith indicated that the women of the *isigodlo* wore around 20 pounds (9 kilograms) of beads (Kirby 1940a: 267), and Harris stated that he gave Mzilikazi 50 pounds (22 kilograms) of beads (Harris 1852: 102). Similarly, Moffat said that beads appeared to be the primary form of ornamentation among the women of the *isigodlo* (Wallis 1945: 21). The use of brass ornament was also mentioned in all the accounts but appeared less prominent than beads. Although further research and excavations are needed to determine the full extent and nature of Matabele bead usage, the frequent mention of high bead usage among the *isigodlo*, as well as the creation of bead ornaments within the *isigodlo*, indicate that this section of a Matabele settlement would most likely have the largest quantity of beads within the settlement.

9.2.1.1.3 Faunal

The use of faunal analysis has proven useful in understanding and interpreting military settlements among the Zulu (Plug and Roodt 1990; Watson and Watson 1990). The primary reason for the utility of faunal analysis for understanding and identifying northern Nguni military settlements is the presence of specific dietary practices among these communities that separated the military settlements from the general public. However, as no faunal assemblage

for a Matabele military settlement is available, only an estimate of a Matabele military settlement's faunal signature can be created from first-hand accounts. From these accounts, it is clear that the consumption of cattle meat within Matabele military settlements was high, which is in line with similar practices among the Zulu. Burrows stated that around 60 cattle a day were consumed at the capital (Burrow 1971: 53). Although it would appear that the consumption was not to the same extent as among the Zulu, it appears to have still been significantly higher than the surrounding non-military settlements, primarily those settlements belonging to the conquered communities. It is currently unclear what the consumption ratio between the capital and the other military settlements would have been; however, it is known that limited cattle consumption was implemented in all the military settlements, with the highest rate of consumption being in the settlements where the king was residing. Furthermore, it is unclear if the Matabele shared the same dietary restrictions concerning wild fauna found among the Zulu. Nevertheless, Harris mentions the presence of large quantities of lion bones (*Panthera leo*). In this regard, Harris states:

"*I had an opportunity of leisurely examining the imperial kraal. The plan of the enclosure was circular, a thick and high thorn fence surrounding an area which was strewed with the skulls, paws, and tails of lions, some of them quite fresh, others bleached by long exposure to the sun*." (Harris 1852: 118)

Among the Matabele, Mzilikazi was often associated with either an elephant or a lion (Harris 1852; Lye 1975), therefore, it is most likely that the presence of large quantities, especially of lower limbs and crania, of lions within a settlement would indicate the presence of Mzilikazi at that settlement. However, no direct mention is made regarding elephants; therefore, it is unknown if a similar practice can be associated with them. Furthermore, the concentration of lion skeletal material within a settlement would also indicate the location of Mzilikazi's hut and the location of the *isigodlo*. It is also possible that the presence of other large carnivores, such as leopards (*Panthera panthera*), might similarly indicate the presence of an *induna*'s hut or other senior members of Matabele society, as the use of leopard skin and claws were a mark of status among the Matabele.

9.2.1.2 Non-Nguni Matabele

Little is known concerning the settlement constructed and occupied by non-Nguni Matabele. It is a well-known feature of Matabele history and society that a large number of people were

incorporated into the Matabele from the societies that they conquered and that Nguni members of Matabele society were regarded to be of higher status than the non-Nguni Matabele (Wallis 1945, Summers and Pagden 1970; Burrow 1971; Lye 1975; Cobbing 1976). It is also known that the non-Nguni members of Matabele society could be distinguished from the Nguni members by the visiting Europeans. However, based on the different first-hand accounts, it is unclear to what extent social assimilation was enforced among the Matabele. Moffat and Smith mention communities that either completely adopted the Matabele language and culture while others adopted only some aspects, such as dress and ornamentations. In contrast, others did not adopt any aspect of Matabele culture (Wallis 1945; Lye 1975). In his diary, Smith stated that the Matabele could be differentiated from the conquered people in the following way:

"*The real Matabeli have large holes in the lobe of the ear; most of those who have been conquered have not."* (Kirby 1940b: 79).

The level of cultural assimilation might be directly linked to the community's geographic location concerning the core area of the Matabele kingdom, such as the distance from the capital and the time that the community had formed part of the kingdom. Both Moffat and Smith were able to identify non-Matabele settlements from Matabele settlements from a distance when they entered the Mosega basin (Kirby 1940b; Wallis 1945; Lye 1975), which means that the different levels of cultural assimilation also had to be evident in the physical organisation of the settlements. A possible explanation of how this distinction was made can be seen in a statement by Smith earlier in his account when he states:

"*The mere differences in that respect without regarding the differences in the forms of the houses, at once enable a traveller who is acquainted with the facts to conclude as the description of people who occupy a country he may be visiting in South Africa and should he only come in contact with abandoned kraals."* (Lye 1975: 245)

From this statement, it would appear that some of the communities incorporated into the Matabele continued to construct their settlement along the same lines as before the Matabele conquest, making them easily distinguishable from the Nguni-style settlements. As the Mosega area was only conquered a few years before the arrival of the Smith expedition (Moffat

1846; Wallis 1945), this level of difference between the Nguni and non-Nguni elements of the kingdom is not unexpected. Therefore, these two different settlement patterns would represent the settlements of the assimilated and un-assimilated members of Matabele society. However, it is still unclear how the settlements of communities that were only partially assimilated would have been organised or even if a difference existed in the settlement organisation between the different assimilation stages. However, the remains of several stone-built features within the study area might indicate the nature of partially assimilated communities within Matabele society.

Although the age of the stonewalling is unknown, they have the traditional horseshoe shape of Nguni settlements with several compartments reminiscent of Sotho-Tswana wards. The features are constructed within the mountains of the study area, on the slopes and ridges of the different levels of the mountain. Each stone feature is within 1km of large flat sections within the mountains and is not an area generally used for modern livestock keeping due to livestock's exposure to the elements and crime. However, their location does match the areas mentioned in the first-hand accounts of locations generally preferred by the Matabele. Therefore, these settlements might be reflective of the assimilation process. Another settlement form associated with the Matabele, the Doornspruit pattern, currently has no clear association with the Matabele. Although this pattern has been linked to the Nguni and the Matabele specifically (Pistorius 1997b; Huffman 2004; Kruger 2010), no evidence exists to connect this pattern with the Matabele. Kruger and Huffman based their Matabele link with the Doornspruit pattern due to the article on the Matabele published by Pistorius in 1997(b). A detailed examination of Pistorius's article will be done in the following section; however, the settlements identified by Pistorius are not Matabele and therefore, the Matabele link with Doornspruit as used by Huffman and Kruger is based on the misidentification of Matabele settlements by Pistorius. However, it might be possible that the Doornspruit pattern can be linked to other Nguni groups, but that analysis is outside the scope of the present study.

9.2.2 Current settlement models associated with the Matabele

The most cited article related to the Matabele is the work done by Pistorius in 1997 (a,b) on a site that he has attributed to the Matabele. This site is located on the slopes of a hill to the west of Rustenburg and consists of nine stone-walled sites distributed in a linear pattern along the hill (Pistorius 1997b). Based on the following assumptions and criteria, Pistorius attributes these sites to the Matabele. Firstly, as the Matabele occupied areas between the Sotho-Tswana, they adopted their construction mode and built their settlements out of stone.

Secondly, the Matabele occupied several Sotho-Tswana settlements after they controlled the regions. Thirdly, the settlements are located in an area where the Matabele are known to have resided. Fourthly, the settlements in the survey area had a different type of settlement pattern to the Tswana settlements in the region and lacked a large archaeological deposit or evidence of clay-built huts. Fifthly, these settlements were constructed along the Central Cattle Pattern (CCP) lines. This is combined with the assumption that the settlement evolution proposed by Cobbing (1976) was represented by different contemporary settlements that jointly constituted a settlement complex. Sixthly, Cobbing stated that the Matabele settlements in Zimbabwe were constructed along a river course. The settlement identified was built along the foothills of the Magaliesberg and near fountains and a small perennial stream. Seventhly, the Matabele and the Zulu shared the same geological and ecological selection criteria concerning settlement location, primarily in wooden areas on the slopes of mountains or hills. Eighthly, the first-hand explorers used Matabele guides during their journeys, and on at least two accounts, they used the same individual. Therefore, the assumption is that this individual would have taken the Europeans to the same settlements. Lastly, as the area that was surveyed had two different types of unrelated settlement patterns, they had to represent the different phases of the Matabele settlement's life cycle (Pistorius 1997b).

Therefore, at first glance, Pistorius appears to make a strong argument for these settlements to be representative of Matabele settlements based on known historiography and ethnography of the Matabele and excavations of known Zulu military settlements. However, a detailed examination of Matabele and Zulu's historiography, ethnography and archaeology reveals several critical errors in Pistorius's hypothesis, proving that Matabele did not construct or occupy these settlements. The primary limitation of Pistorius's hypothesis is the wide-scale use of stone in the settlement's construction in both the settlement walling and within the huts. Pistorius provides a quote by Smith (Pistorius 1997b: 46) in which Smith states the use of perishable material in Matabele settlement and hut construction. Similarly, in his conclusion, Pistorius again highlights the use of perishable material in this regard (Pistorius 1997b: 54). However, Pistorius does not explain or mention the discrepancy between the first-hand accounts' descriptions related to the use of perishable material and the widespread use of stone in his identified settlements.

On the contrary, Pistorius ignores this discrepancy throughout his hypothesis and views the use of thicket/wood and stone as the same. As shown in the previous chapter, the Matabele did not use stone in any part of their settlement, and Pistorius supports this interpretation in

his quotes and arguments. Therefore, the extensive use of stone in constructing the primary walling of the settlements and the base of the huts already proves that these settlements were not constructed or occupied by the Matabele. Pistorius develops the implied use of stone when he states that Matabele occupied Tswana settlements and constructed settlements in between those of the Tswana. Pistorius provides no evidence to support these arguments. The situation surrounding Mosega, which Pistorius uses as an example of Matabele occupying a Tswana settlement, is ambiguous. It is known that a Tswana settlement was located on the Mosega hill before the Matabele occupied the area (Moffat 1846; Lye 1975). Similarly, it is known that a Matabele settlement was also located on the Mosega hill (Wallis 1945; Harris 1852; Kirby 1940b; Burrow 1971; Lye 1975). However, whether or not this is the same settlement is unclear. From the description provided by the explorers, it appears that these were two different settlements located on the same hill. Moffat stated that:

"*When we reached the Mosega Basin, in which one portion of his warriors dwelt, among thirteen villages, six of which were Bahurutsi, who appeared to be tolerably well treated….*" (Moffat 1846: 583)

Similarly, Moffat stated:

"*Leaving the Mission-house on the 22nd October and repassing- the town of Mosega within the fence of which we saw Erasmus's captured waggons our road wound for some distance, in a north-westerly direction, amongst numerous Matabili villages, having all the same form and appearance, though varying considerably in size and extent…*" (Wallis 1945: 92)

Smith and Burrow also provide descriptions of the Matabele settlements within the Mosega area, which follow the same settlement organisation as the rest of the Matabele. Therefore, if the Matabele had occupied Mosega (at which one of Mzilikazi's most senior indunas lived, according to Smith), it would be unusual that none of them made mention of this discrepancy, especially since there were several active, non-Matabele settlements also located within the region. Similarly, the description provided by Moffat further creates the impression that Mosega had the same organisation as the rest of the Matabele settlements in the region. Furthermore, none of the first-hand accounts mentions any of the Sotho-Tswana settlements

occupied by the Matabele. The first-hand accounts make mention of settlements under Matabele control inhabited by non-Matabele peoples, such as the Bahurutshe and Bakwena. It is also clear from the accounts that the explorers and missionaries could distinguish these settlements from those of the Matabele, often from a distance, which would not have been possible if the Matabele had adopted Sotho-Tswana construction techniques. Therefore, there is currently no evidence to support Pistorius's assumption of Tswana site occupation by the Matabele nor the adoption of Tswana construction techniques or materials by the Matabele. All currently available evidence does, however, support the argument that the Matabele retained their Nguni organisation and construction techniques while they were occupying the South African highveld.

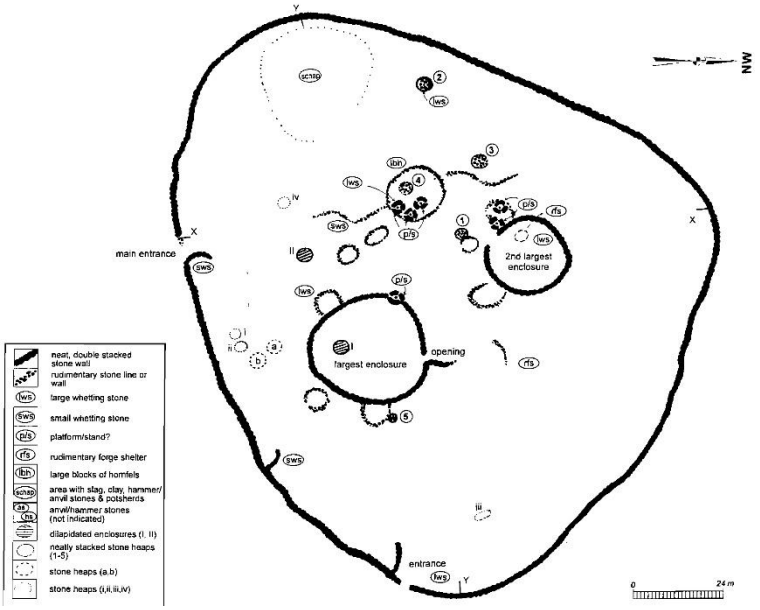


Figure 47: Diagram of the site proposed to be a military settlement by Pistorius (Pistorius 1997b: 42).

It is well known that the traders, missionaries and explorers did not visit all the Matabele settlements located within the Matabele kingdom. Therefore, the possibility that some Matabele settlements might have been constructed from stone cannot be excluded. Nevertheless, several critical limitations remain to the Matabele origins proposed by Pistorius. Firstly, a crucial part of Pistorius's hypothesis is that the settlements reflect the life cycle of a Matabele settlement as presented by Cobbing. However, it is unclear whether this life cycle was reflected in constructing a new settlement for each phase or if a gradual change resulted in changes to the original settlement. Based on current evidence, the latter seems more likely.

Similarly, Pistorius does not provide evidence linking these settlements chronologically or culturally. In the argument made by Pistorius, the chronological age of the settlements is not discussed, and it is clear that it is an assumption made by Pistorius that these settlements were contemporary, with no evidence given that can support such an assumption. A second critical limitation is the settlement origination of the settlements discussed by Pistorius. The

settlement Pistorius identifies as a Matabele settlement, NS008 (Fig. 47), does not have the same settlement organisation as mentioned in any of the first-hand accounts related to the Matabele or the Zulu. From the diagram provided by Pistorius, it is clear that the settlement had three internal enclosures, with one external wall surrounding the three enclosures. All first-hand accounts, as well as limited known excavation, support the origination of one large central enclosure with no sub-enclosures located in the central area. Although military settlements are known to have secondary enclosures located within, these were always constructed to the sides of the enclosure to keep the central area open for various activities, such as war dancing. Although later Matabele settlements have been recorded as having a small homestead constructed within the centre of the large enclosure, such as koBulawayo, this feature has not yet been documented among the Matabele during their stay on the South African Highveld.

In this regard, the features identified by Pistorius similarly do not match the known organisation of these central enclosures, which were constructed along the same lines as normal *umuzi* (Gaffney *et al.* 2005). Pistorius also states that a large open space was adjacent to the enclosures (Pistorius 1997b: 52), not a feature associated with any known Matabele or Zulu military settlement. The location of the identified entrance, as indicated in the diagram, is also not located in the areas in which the Matabele constructed entrances, with no large primary entrance indicated on the diagram. The Matabele did have several secondary entrances located around the settlement, although based on the diagrams of the first-hand accounts, these entrances did not extend into the central enclosures. In addition, all the accounts agree that one large entrance, linking the central enclosure to the exterior of the settlement, was located at all Matabele settlements, similar to the entrances also found at Zulu military settlements. As the outer wall of the settlement is constructed of a double row of quartzite stone (Pistorius 1997b: 52), the primary entrance would have been a prominent feature within the walling. Therefore, the absence of this characteristic Nguni settlement feature would be highly unusual. Pistorius does mention that there might have been a primary entrance on the south side of the settlement, based only on his interpretation of the secondary entrance on the north side being high-status areas due to their location further up on the slope. However, his diagram does not indicate its possible location, nor is any evidence provided to support its existence or location. Pistorius also claims that the settlement's location, situated high up the slope, makes it ideal for a military settlement as it provides a comprehensive view of the landscape, allowing the post to detect the approach of any possible enemies. Although this is true, and the location of Matabele settlements on a slope is attributed to defence purposes by first-hand accounts, its utility seems less important in this case. This settlement is located on

the hill's eastern side, facing away from the known direction from which the Matabele's main rivals, the Griqua and Korana, came. Therefore, this settlement would only detect the presence of approaching enemies after they had passed the settlement. In this regard, constructing the military settlement on the western or southern side of the hill would make more strategic sense, facing the direction of approaching enemies or travellers.

Based on the currently known settlement organisation and associated features of Matabele military settlements, there is no evidence to support Pistorius's claim that these settlements can be associated with the Matabele. However, the one settlement mentioned by Pistorius, NS007, does have similarities with Nguni-style settlements and other stone-walled settlement patterns such as Doornspruit. Therefore, some of these settlements might be associated with other Nguni-speaking communities, as Huffman (2004) and Kruger (2010) argued.

9.2.3 Regional settlement distribution

Not much is known regarding the regional distribution pattern of the Matabele military settlements. This is further hampered by the unknown dimensions of the Matabele Kingdom and how the military settlement was distributed throughout the kingdom. However, from information provided by the first-hand accounts, a partial reconstruction can be made of the border and settlement distribution of the Matabele.

9.2.3.1 Borders of the Matabele Kingdom in South Africa

Developing a clearly defined border for the Matabele Kingdom is not currently possible. However, from several descriptions provided within the first-hand accounts, it is possible to create a general idea of the regions in which Matabele settlements were found, as well as the regions that the Matabele claimed but not necessarily occupied.

Smith and Moffat mention that the area around modern Mahikeng or the Molopo River was the western extent of the Matabele kingdom, with the Malamanie River being the border (Wallis 1945; Lye 1975). To the north, Smith mentioned that the Limpopo River acted as the kingdom's northern border (Kirby 1940b). It is unknown to what extent the Limpopo River functioned as a border; however, Smith mentions that the last Matabele military settlement to the north was at Sikwane. In his account, Harris states that the kingdom's southern border was the Vaal River (Harris 1852). Similar to the Limpopo, it is unknown to what extent the Vaal

functioned as a border. One possibility is that the two rivers marked the extent of the Matabele's territorial claims but that the area directly under their control was considerably smaller. In his account, Harris alludes to this possibility when he states that the Vaal is the kingdom's border but that the area settled by the Matabele stopped a long distance from the river, approximately in the mountain range around the modern town of Koster. The eastern boundary of the Kingdom is more challenging to determine as little detail is provided in the accounts in this regard. Smith states that the kingdom's eastern border was around the source of the Vaal, with both the Smith and Harris expeditions moving a considerable distance to the east of the known Matabele occupation area of Pretoria and still encountering Matabele settlement. However, the size and frequency of these encounters decreased the further east the expeditions went. As a result, it can be theorised that the eastern extent of the kingdom was probably the eastern South African Escarpment, as no known Matabele settlements have yet been documented in the South African Lowveld.

Despite the apparent large territory claimed by the Matabele, approximately most of the four northern provinces of South Africa, the area which the Matabele directly controlled was far smaller. From the accounts, it is clear that most of the Matabele population was clustered in the interior core areas of the kingdom.

9.2.3.2 Population and settlement distribution

It has already been shown that three core areas can be associated with the Matabele Kingdom during their occupation of the South African Highveld. Furthermore, from first-hand accounts, it can be determined that these three core areas also housed the largest portion of the Matabele population. Smith supports this interpretation in his description of the settlement distribution of the kingdom, which followed a circular pattern around the capital.

However, from the satellite survey of the study area, it was found that within this proposed circular settlement arrangement, several sub-clusters were also present. One cluster was located within and around the Mosega Valley, with the accounts of Smith, Burrow and Moffat (Wallis 1945; Burrow 1971; Lye 1975) supporting a large Matabele population within the valley. Further to the east, another cluster zone was found in the mountains northwest of Swartruggens. Smith mentions the presence of many Matabele settlements in the region, especially on many ridges, confirmed by the satellite survey (Fig. 44). However, less detail is given in the accounts regarding this region; therefore, it is unknown if it was smaller or similar

to the Mosega area. An interesting feature observed within the settlement distribution of the Matabele settlements was a linear pattern found along the Groot Marico River. It is known that the Matabele Kingdom expanded west in at least three phases; therefore, the linear pattern observed around the Groot Marico River possibly indicates that the Groot Marico River acted as a western border during one of these western expansion phases.

Smith makes several observations about the Matabele's settlement construction location preferences throughout his diary and official publication. Smith highlighted three critical selection criteria throughout these accounts, which were the following: the slopes of hills or mountains (but avoiding the high sections of the mountains), close to areas with brush, thickets or trees and not close to rivers. This study found that many of these selection criteria appear accurate, as the possible Matabele settlement distribution pattern matches these distribution patterns. Most were on the slope of hills or mountains, except for a region in the south with a flat geography. These settlements were generally not constructed close to rivers, with some located a considerable distance from the nearest river. However, the observation that the Matabele avoided the higher elevated regions of the mountains could not be corroborated. Many sites were found within the higher elevated regions of the study area; however, only a few were constructed on the summit of the mountains. Therefore, this study did find a reduction in the concentration of potential settlement in the higher elevated areas, but there is no indication of these areas being avoided by the Matabele, as suggested by Smith.

An interesting feature observed from the first-hand accounts was the absence of Matabele settlements in the flat open area between the Magaliesberg (around Rustenburg) and the mountains surrounding Millvale. Therefore, Smith's view that the Matabele had a strong declination for flat open areas can be supported; however, this study has found several possible settlements in a region with similar geography. This indicates that although the Matabele preferred hilly or mountain areas, they also constructed settlements in the flat regions, but these were significantly fewer than the rest. Furthermore, the observation noted by all the first-hand accounts that Matabele settlements were constructed close to or next to stone-walled settlements can be confirmed by this study. However, it should be noted that more sites were found that had no association with stonewalled sites than those with associated stonewalls. Considering this region's rich stonewalled site archaeological landscape, it is likely that the Matabele-stonewalled site's association is a coincidental distribution pattern. The lack of any motivational factor for this preference within the first-hand accounts suggests that the close association between these settlements was coincidental.

Due to the changes in the landscape in the last two centuries, it is impossible to collaborate the vegetational preferences of the Matabele, as noted by Smith. However, a similar pattern can be found when the sites are overlayed on a modern land use land cover map (Fig. 30) developed by the European Space Agency (ESA). As seen in the images, most sites are located in areas defined as thickets, with grassland and trees being close to these sites. Using Landsat 8 and 9 images, a thermal analysis was also undertaken in the study area. Due to the nature of the construction techniques used by the Matabele, as well as the subsequent burning of some or all of the settlements, the floor of the huts would have a different thermal signature from the surrounding soil due to the moisture content as well as the backing of the clay. Landsat imagery was used on all settlements identified as being over 100 m in diameter to test this hypothesis. Unfortunately, no clear result could be obtained from the thermal analysis. This can be attributed to two primary factors. The first is the pixel resolution size of Landsat imagery (30 m), resulting in very few visible differences between the different sections of even the extensive identified sites. Secondly, although the clear thermal difference could be seen at all sites, it could not be determined whether this was due to the presence of a site or the presence of vegetation within the same area. Vegetation would directly affect the thermal radiance of the covered area, which, due to the concentration of vegetation and the increase in moisture, would have a different thermal signature to the surrounding area. Therefore, thermal imagery with a significantly smaller pixel resolution, ideally 30 cm, would be needed to test this theory.

Although the largest portion of sites identified is based on circular vegetation, the diameters of the settlements are primarily within the same range. It would be very unusual for modern cattle enclosures to have such a consistent size throughout the 90 km area, as modern enclosures are built according to the needs of the individual owners. However, such a degree of uniformity would be consistent with first-hand account descriptions of the uniformity of all Matabele settlements. Of the 678 sites identified, 380 have a diameter of between 50 and 150 m, with all of the settlements within every 10 m ranges being either the same diameter or having 1 to 2 m differences between them, which is within the range expected from Matabele settlements. No measurement is given concerning the size of Matabele settlements; however, it is known that some of the large ones had around 300 huts (Burrow 1971: 70-71), with another being estimated to have had between 20 and 30 huts (Kirby 1940a: 267). Although this does not directly indicate settlement size, when the size of known settlements such as uMgungundlovu and oNdini are included, it allows for a certain amount of prediction. It is known that the size and shape of the average Matabele hut were the same as that of the Zulu, as based on all the first-hand accounts. Furthermore, it is known that the Zulu capitals had

over 1,000 huts within the outer fence (van der Merwe 2015). Therefore, as both uMgungundlovu and oNdini had diameters of over 400 m, with a large central enclosure, this size can be used as an outer estimate for the size of Matabele settlements.

Therefore, a settlement with 300 huts would be around 130 m in diameter, while a settlement consisting of 20 to 60 huts would be between 8 and 25 m in diameter based on the same size-to-hut ratio of the capitals. The smallest settlement found in the survey had a diameter of 14 m, with the largest being 435 m. Although these are just rough estimates based on the known size of similar, yet unrelated, settlements, it is worth noting that all the settlements found are within this range, with more than half falling within the mid-range of these estimates, as would be expected from the size estimates derived from the first-hand accounts as well as provided diagrams. Similarly, the number of sites identified between 20 and 30 m was 8; however, that number more than doubled for the range between 30 and 40 m, increasing to 20, which is within the same estimated range as the settlement depicted by Bell in Smith's account. Therefore, if the 10 to 130 m size range is counted, 504 of the 678 sites identified are within this estimated size range. However, as has already been mentioned, there is no clear link between the size of a Matabele settlement and the number of people/huts within the settlement, therefore, these estimates should be viewed in a general estimation sense.

The density of Matabele settlements and population beyond the Millvale area is unclear. However, a statement from Smith does indicate that the population density of settlements in this direction was very low and that settlement size and population density did not correlate. For example, Smith described a settlement somewhere east of Bronkhorstspruit:

"*…kraals and herds of cattle began to appear. The former were generally situated upon the slopes or near the basin of the hills and, as far as we could judge, were but thinly inhabited arising, no doubt, from the circumstance of them being so situated that enemies could not approach them without previously passing towns of greater strength. Thus Mzilikazi practised the same system as Dingan by disposing the fighting population principally in kraals most open to attacks while those of who from situation are comparatively secure, through from disposition of large herds of cattle are in a measure defenceless, many of them having only a few old men and boys as herders"* (Lye 1975: 223).

The number of settlements found within the study area appears to be more than the Matabele would have occupied at a given time. Moffat estimated the size of the Matabele army to be around 5000 (Wallis 1945), meaning that if each settlement was occupied simultaneously and to equal strength, each settlement would have had only seven warriors stationed there. Although this small number does match some of the military settlements mentioned in the accounts, it does not match the estimated 800 warriors that were believed to have been at the capital with Mzilikazi (Moffat 1846). This number also does not match the descriptions provided by Smith and Wallis concerning the large number of warriors stationed in the Mosega basin. Another number that also needs to be considered is the number of patrols that were moving between each military settlement located in the outer ring, as mentioned by Smith, which would have had to be around 3 - 4 warriors to allow 3 - 4 warriors to remain at the military settlement as they were always occupied unless intentionally being permanently abandoned. Although the size of the patrols is unknown, they would most certainly have been larger than 3 - 4 warriors as their function was both as a first strike force and an advanced guard. Therefore, these functions require a force larger than 3 - 4 warriors.

Therefore, it is clear that not all of these identified settlements could have been occupied simultaneously. However, two factors would account for the large number of sites found. The first is that the study area experienced at least two expansions of the Matabele kingdom, which would have resulted in multiple overlapping rings (based on Smith's interpretation) which would not be distinguishable from each other via satellite imagery. Secondly, Smith mentions that the patrols also had temporary military settlements that they constructed, which would again increase the number of sites found. Therefore, due to these two factors, more sites are expected to be found within the study area than would have been occupied simultaneously. Unfortunately, due to these two factors, verifying Smith's double-ring interpretation of the overall Matabele settlement layout or the concentration of settlements in areas from which an attack is expected is impossible. However, there does appear to be a concentration in the southwest section of the study area, and according to Smith's account, this is generally the area from which the Griqua attacked the Matabele. Additionally, one circular feature could be identified in the Swartruggens area, which is centred around a settlement that matches the descriptions of Mzilikazi's settlement when visited by Smith (Fig. 24).

9.2.3.3 Potential capital of the Matabele Kingdom

Unfortunately, the first-hand accounts provide very little environmental or geographic information that would allow for an exact determination of Mzilikazi's settlement. However, Burrow stated:

"*We passed close to the kraal, on the outside of which he and his people were standing, and at first, we were ordered to outspan close to his kraal, but second thoughts often being the best he ordered us farther off on to a sort of dry bog thinly covered with thorn bushes. This was a more convenient situation for us, as we were nearer the water and had a good view around us….* "(Burrow 1971: 51)

Smith describes the area they selected as follows:

"*The banks of a river a little to the southeast of us was the spot we chose"* (Lye 1975: 228).

Moffat also stated that a river was close (called Tholane) with a plain situated just below the settlement (Wallis 1945: 74). The settlement (Fig. 48) in the centre of the ring is located close to a river called Tolane today, with tributaries of the river running past the settlement to the north and southeast. There is also an open plain around the river and many trees/thickets around the river today. The settlement is located on the slopes of a hill and around 600 m from the river, and the plain would also provide a clear line of sight around the camp. Furthermore, based on the reconstruction of the route followed by the expedition, along with the area and distance



Figure 48: Satellite image indicating the possible location of Mzilikazi's settlement (red dot) mentioned in the accounts of Smith, Burrow and Moffat.

at which they crossed the Groot Marico, the location of this settlement is within the range mentioned in the first-hand accounts. As mentioned by Moffat, the overall distance of how far they travelled to the Tholane River also matches the distance to the modern Tolane River, making it highly probable that it is the same river mentioned in the account. Although further research is required, based on the current evidence, there is a good possibility that the settlement identified could be that of Mzilikazi's settlement.

9.2.4.4 Military settlement hierarchy

New research on the military settlements of the Zulu (van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019b) has found that Zulu military settlements consisted of three different hierarchical levels, each with a unique function and some differences in settlement construction and organisation. Although less information is available for the Matabele than for the Zulu, based on first-hand accounts, it appears that the Matabele military settlements also had at least two hierarchical levels, with a possible third level. Smith and Moffat made two of the most explicit statements within the first-hand accounts that reflect at least two levels of military settlements. Smith states:

"*…we found that every person cultivating ground is required to furnish a certain proportion of his grain for the use of the king, which is deposited with the chiefs of the different towns"* (Lye 1975: 221)

Moffat also mentions:

"*There are about fifteen hundred head of cattle here. The inhabitants are few, it being merely an outpost"* (Wallis 1945: 105)

As well as:

"*Moselekatse left early this morning on foot to a large town about a mile distant, one of his principal residencies"* (Wallis 1945: 110).

Burrow similarly also indicates the presence of different types of settlements when he states:

"*This kraal was found to be a cattle station, one of an immense number belonging to Masulikatzi"* (Burrow 1971: 59)

The above statement reflects the two primary levels of military settlements found among the Matabele. The lowest level of military settlements was the regimental military settlement, called an "outpost" or "cattle station" in the various military settlements. Similar to the Zulu, a Matabele regimental settlement was only occupied by a specific regiment, with the primary functions being either border defence and patrol or cattle defence, depending on the part of the kingdom where the regimental settlement was located. Smith mentioned in his discussion on the wider settlement organisation of the Matabele, that several regiments were stationed between the large settlements to act as a means of defence, with the patrol moving between these settlements (Kirby 1940a: 293-294). Similarly, Smith also stated that cattle were moved away from the areas of most danger. He further noted that these regiments' function was the intercepting of approaching enemies and not the defence of the cattle directly. The protection of the cattle was the responsibility of the regiments stationed at the specific settlements keeping the cattle (Kirby 1940a: 270). However, all regiments had these two responsibilities, emphasising one or the other at particular times or locations. During their journey from Mosega to Mzilikazi's settlement, Smith also stated that some of these regimental settlements were also temporary and that the regiments moved from one to another regularly, and observation supported Smith and Burrow's accounts. Smith and Burrow also indicate, when they were in the east of the Matabele kingdom, that many of the regimental settlements had vast herds of cattle but only a few warriors guarding them, as the area was considered safe.

The next hierarchical level was that of the divisional or administrational settlements. From the first-hand account descriptions, it is clear that some of the Matabele settlements acted as regional headquarters in which an induna and members of the *isigodlo* were residing. Smith states that among the Matabele, there were two levels of superiority, the Induna, and then beneath him were headmen (Kirby 1940b: 79). Therefore, when all these statements in the first-hand accounts are examined together, they indicate that some settlements had a higher status as well as having a regional administrative function. However, it is unclear how this would have impacted the physical organisation of the settlement or whether the only difference was on an administrative level. However, as Smith, Burrow and Moffat felt it required to mention settlements that had *isigodlo* present via members of Mzilikazi's family, it would suggest that their presence within a settlement was unusual and worth specific mentioning.

Therefore, it can be theorised that some of the Matabele settlements, excluding the regimental or other temporary settlements, consisted of two types: the regular settlement (in charge of a headman) and then the administrative settlement (in charge of an induna), which also housed members of the *isigodlo*. Considering the difference in social status, and therefore wealth, of settlements that would have had an *isigodlo* as well as an induna, it is most likely that these would also have had differences related to hut placement and size as well as a specific depositional matrix, which would allow these settlements to be identified within the archaeological landscape. However, the difference between divisional military and regular settlements is not as straightforward as among the Zulu. This is most likely due to the combination of normal homesteads and military settlements among the Matabele, which would result in many similarities between the settlements.

The highest level of administration within the kingdom occurred at the kingdom's capital, with Moffat stating that all Matabele administration was largely centralised via orders from Mzilikazi (Wallis 1945). However, it is well known that Mzilikazi moved around within the kingdom and, therefore, the administrative capital would also have moved along with him. However, it is also known from the various accounts that despite his regular re-location, Mzilikazi did have fixed residences within the kingdom. Therefore, it is unclear to what extent the settlements Mzilikazi temporarily relocated were modified or if they underwent any modification. Consequently, it does appear that the Matabele did have a three-tiered hierarchical administrative system; however, it is currently unclear whether the upper two levels of the administrative hierarchy had a physical difference concerning settlement organisation and construction, as was the case with the Zulu.

9.3 KwaZulu-Natal military settlements

From examining the various military settlements of the northern Nguni kingdoms, two different settlement variations can be observed. The first variation, utilised by the Zulu and Matabele, is based around a large central enclosure, with the regimental housing being located around this central enclosure. Both the Matabele and the Zulu have the *isigodlo* area located in the same settlement region, although it appears the Matabele moved this section to the central enclosure in the later part of the 19th century (Summers and Pagden 1970; Cobbing 1974). An interesting feature of Zulu royal military settlements is the construction of secondary enclosures outside the primary settlement, near the female regimental section, directly associated with the king and the female regimental section (van der Merwe and Pikirayi 2019a). Furthermore, from ethnographic studies and first-hand accounts, it appears that the

placement of the female regimental section in the centre of the enclosure only developed after the migration of the Matabele into southern Zimbabwe (Moffat 1846; Harris 1852; Kirby 1940a,b; Summers and Pagden 1970; Burrow 1971; Lye 1975; Cobbing 1974), possible as a result of contact with the Ba-Ila of southern Zambia. All first-hand descriptions of Matabele settlements and associated sketches on the South African highveld during the 1820s and 30s lack this distinguishing feature (Moffat 1846; Harris 1852; Kirby 1940a,b; Burrow 1971; Lye 1975). Although no mention is made of any enclosure at Matabele settlements that can be linked to the great *isigodlo* of the Zulu, the Matabele did have a practice of awarding individuals the right to construct small settlements next to their military settlements, which might indicate it is a variation of an existing practice.

It is interesting to note, however, that some of the historical sketches of the Matabele capital in southern Zimbabwe, koBulawayo, during the 1870s indicate the presence of a smaller secondary settlement close to the main settlement, which might indicate the presence of a great *isigodlo*. However, it could also be an example of the above-mentioned reward settlements. However, despite all the similarities, two clear distinctions can be identified between the Zulu and Matabele military settlements. The first is that the *isigodlo* gate within a Zulu military settlement was an open gate, whereas it was an arched gate, similar to those of the huts among the Matabele. From the first-hand accounts, it also does not appear that the Matabele *isigodlo* had guards stationed at the gate, as was the case among the Zulu. The second feature was the presence of a compacted path on the residential side of the fence of the central enclosure among the Matabele, which has not been found among the Zulu. It is currently unclear if combining the military and civilian aspects of the Nguni culture within one settlement among the Matabele occurred before or after their migration out of KwaZulu-Natal. However, from the current evidence, separating these two aspects into different settlements might have been a feature unique to the Zulu.

Therefore, the variations found between the Matabele and Zulu military settlements concerning how the settlement was constructed are in line with the same range of variations found between the hut constructions of the northern Nguni. This indicates a possible shared historical development of these military settlements, rather than the Matabele copying it from the Zulu. If the Matabele copied the regimental system and military settlements from the Zulu during their time as a Zulu Kingdom regiment, it would be strange that they would change these two aspects, and not the rest, within such a short period after separating from the Zulu. As Moffat makes no indication of any changes between his first and second visits to Mzilikazi

concerning settlement construction, it would appear that these features were already in place by the late 1820s, only a few years after the Matabele-Zulu separation, further indicating a continuation of cultural practice for the Matabele instead of a continuation of a learned one. Additionally, there is still an ongoing debate as to whether or not the Matabele were even part of the Zulu Kingdom or only allied to them for a short period.

The secondary variation, utilised by the Ngoni and Swazi, had the female regimental huts also placed at the upper end of the settlement, near and around the chief's hut (Read 1956; Kuper 1961). However, the placement of the male regimental huts differs from the other variations regarding their placement within the larger settlements. Among both the Ngoni and Swazi, the regimental huts are placed at the top of the settlement above the female regimental huts. Among the Swazi, the king's settlement (if he had a separate settlement) may have consisted of only male regimental huts (Kuper 1961), which would be similar to that of the Zulu and Matabele; however, this settlement would not have had the same social or administrative function as those of the Zulu and Matabele. The Ngoni did not separate the male regimental huts from their settlements during any period of the settlement's evolution (Barnes 1954; Read 1956), which marks a distinct divergence in practice from any other northern Nguni examined. In this regard, among the Swazi and Ngoni, the male regimental huts are a subsection of the settlement, whereas they are the main feature among the Matabele and Zulu. In this regard, however, the Matabele differed from the Zulu as their military settlements would eventually develop into a hybrid settlement that consisted of both unmarried regimental members as well as married regimental members and their families (Summers and Pagden 1970; Cobbing 1974), a process that did not occur among the Zulu.

These two variations' origins (Fig. 49) can be traced back to two separate but adjoining areas of the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province, South Africa. The Ngoni originated within the Ndwandwe (Omer-Cooper 1966; Liesegang 1975), which controlled the area of northern KZN between the Pongola and Black Mfolozi rivers. Similarly, the Swazi originated from the Ngwane who, after being attacked by the Ndwandwe, broke into two sections, one heading north (proto-Swazi) and the other west (Omer-Cooper 1966; Laband 1995; Wright 1995; Shillington 2005; Laband 2018). The Ngwane's original territory was between the Mkuze and Black Mfolozi rivers. Determining the original territory of the Matabele to a detailed

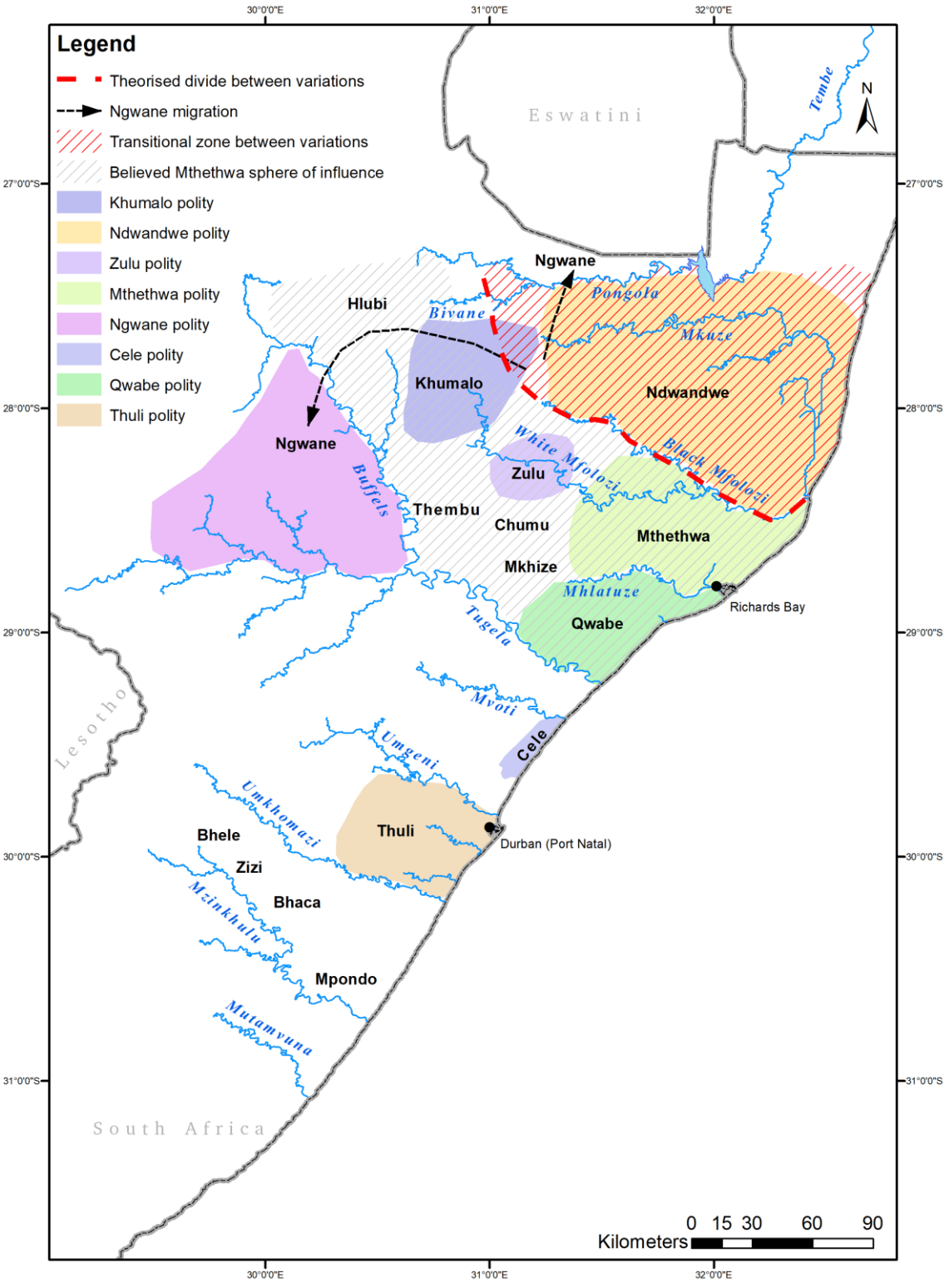


Figure 49: Estimated location of northern Nguni communities prior to the final Mthethwa attack on the Ndwandwe.

level is problematic due to differing accounts. However, the general area of the Khumalo, from which the Matabele originated, seems to have been around the upper section of the White Mfolozi River (Rasmussen 1978; Laband 1995; Shillington 2005; Laband 2018) between the Bivane and White Mfolozi rivers and west from that of the Ngwane. Zulu territory at this stage was centred around the mid-waters of the White Mfolozi rivers, with the Khumalo located north by the west and the Mthethwa to the southeast. Ethnographic accounts mention that the Hlubi also utilised the regimental system (Wright 1990), which raises the possibility that they would also have constructed military settlements.

One hypothesis is that they developed due to the incorporation of other ethnic communities into their society, along with the adaptation to local environmental and geographic conditions. However, not all known facts regarding these kingdoms can be incorporated within this hypothesis. Although all but the Zulu incorporated many communities of different ethnic origins, many were incorporated into both variations. For example, the Matabele incorporated Sotho, Tswana and Shona, whereas the Swazi also incorporated Sotho and, potentially, Tswana communities, with a large portion of their community consisting of northern Nguni. The Ngoni similarly incorporated Sotho, Tswana, Shona and many other communities living in Central Africa, none of which were incorporated into the Swazi. In both the Matabele and the Ngoni kingdoms, the original Nguni members were the minority, although dominant, group. In addition, the Zulu primarily incorporated other northern Nguni groups. Environmental conditions in the regions occupied by the Ngoni, Matabele and Swazi are also fundamentally different. They range from Highland Mountain grasslands (Swazi) to arid Savana grasslands (Matabele) and sub-tropic and tropic regions (Ngoni). It, therefore, seems unlikely that environmental conditions would have been a determining factor regarding settlement organisation. Thus, the logical result of this hypothesis would lead to the expectation that the Zulu and Swazi variations would be closely related (as is the case with their family homesteads) and that the Matabele and Ngoni would be closely related due to the similarities in their societal organisation and close geographic position. Another limitation of this hypothesis is that it does not explain why the regimental systems of each of the kingdoms remained remarkably similar, but the military settlements were changed and adapted. This is especially strange considering the close link between the regimental system and the military settlements. Therefore, the migration-environmental hypothesis fails to adequately explain the similarities and differences between the two settlement variations.

The origins hypothesis provides a stronger analytical base for developing the two variations of the military settlements. As can be seen, the ancestors of the Swazi and Ngoni originated from the same region of KZN and were neighbours. Although the Ndwandwe attacked the Ngwane, they were never incorporated into the Ndwandwe, and therefore, similarities with the later Ngoni were most likely linked to regional practices. However, at first glance, the Khumalo appear to present a problem for this hypothesis as they have close links to both the Ndwandwe and the Zulu, with the Khumalo history of this period being in dispute (Rasmussen 1978). In this regard, three possible scenarios have been proposed. Firstly, the Khumalo were incorporated into the Zulu Kingdom as an autonomous regiment (which went against standard Zulu practices in this regard) and adopted the Zulus regimental system (Omer-Cooper 1966). Another possibility is that the Khumalo formed part of the Ndwandwe royal house via marriage and joined with the Zulu after the murder of Mzilikazi kaMashobane's father by the Ndwandwe chief Zwide kaLanga (Omer-Cooper 1966; Rasmussen 1978). The third option, based on Khumalo oral traditions, states that the Khumalo were never part of the Ndwandwe or Zulu but rather an independent community allied with the Ndwandwe and then the Zulu (Rasmussen 1978), which would explain the known difference between the Matabele and the Zulu. One consistent element in all three versions is that the Khumalo had close associations with the Zulu and the Ndwandwe. However, the relationship was longer with the Ndwandwe than with the Zulu (Rasmussen 1978). Therefore, why is the Matabele military settlement so similar to that of the Zulu, especially considering the level of hostility that would dominate relations between the two kingdoms during the 19th century, and not the Ndwandwe? When examining their geographical origins, this would be expected as the Zulu and Khumalo were closer related geographically to each other for longer than the Khumalo and the Ndwandwe were.

The seemingly contradictory occurrence of the regimental system remains broadly similar, but the military settlements can also be accounted for with this hypothesis. If the regimental system were a cultural practice unique to the northern Nguni, supported by historiography and ethnography, then it would make sense that all four kingdoms would have had a similar system. Similarly, there is no indication within the ethnography or historiography that the military settlements organisation was dictated by the structure of the regimental system, only that the two were closely linked. Therefore, it is possible that several variations of the military settlements developed within northern KwaZulu-Natal. From the ethnographic, historical and first-hand accounts, it is known that the Zulu, Mthethwa and Khumalo used similar, if not identical, military settlement organisations.

Similarly, it is known that the Swazi and the Ndwandwe were competing against each other for regional supremacy, with many battles being fought between the two. This would also be the nature of the Zulu and Swazi relationship later in the century. Therefore, the origins hypothesis explains why the Swazi and Ngoni and the Zulu and Matabele are similar despite their level of hostility and competition. In his examination of the history of the Matabele, Rasmussen (1978) also hypothesised that based on the historical reconstruction of the early 19th century northern Nguni in South Africa, it was unlikely that the Matabele copied the Zulu and that all the similarities within the region were likely due to a "broader pool of common Northern Nguni practices to which Shaka himself was an heir" (Rasmussen 1978: 8). Similarly, Liesegang (N/A) observed that the Ngoni, Swazi and Gaza were more similar to each other than to the Zulu or Matabele, and attribute this to potentially being the result of a shared Ndwandwe tradition however, as the Swazi had the same traditions and were never part of the Ndwandwe, these similarities with the Gaza and Ngoni cannot be as a result of shared Ndwandwe traditions.

The Ngwane, although driven north, had remained intact and would, therefore, have kept following their traditions. As the Ndwandwe never incorporated them, it is unlikely that they would have adopted the Ndwandwe system. Subsequent historical developments have clearly shown a strong disinclination from communities neighbouring the northern Nguni kingdoms from adopting the same systems, which would make the Ngwane adoption of the Ndwandwe system unusual. However, their shared geographical position would make the adoption of a regional system more plausible. Considering the nature of the relationship between the Khumalo and the Zulu, the dedication to the system shown by the Matabele throughout the 19th century would only make sense if it was a regional model that had already been part of their traditions. If the Khumalo had formed part of Shaka kaSenzangakhona's regiments, the fact that they were an autonomous regiment that did not change after incorporation further supports the existence of a regional model. However, the close geographic position of the Zulu, Khumalo and Mthethwa would support the presence of a regional model for these three communities.

Another feature that also separates both variations is the combination of the military and civilian aspects of the settlement as opposed to keeping them separate. Among the Ngoni and Swazi, the military section of a settlement is restricted to a specific part of the settlement. On the other hand, the Zulu and Matabele constructed settlements with a primarily military function, although this was more relevant among the Zulu than the Matabele. Therefore, this

could also indicate the existence of multiple practices among the different northern Nguni, with the Zulu and Matabele sharing one cultural practice and the Swazi and the Ngoni another. Although there is currently not enough evidence to make any definitive conclusions relating to the significance of the difference between the northern Nguni, some features have become apparent. Firstly, there existed at least two variations of the military settlements. Secondly, within these variations, one section of the settlement had a military function; in the other, this was the function of the entire settlement. Lastly, the origins of the communities that utilised each variation can be linked to specific geographic regions close to each other. These variations within the northern Nguni military system make it clear that the system was more complex and diverse than the current model indicates.

9.4 Evidence for cultural assimilation in Matabele settlement organisation

Several architectural features have been documented among the Matabele that do not match the architectural features generally associated with the Nguni, as described by Kuper (1982). Consequently, these features may indicate the adoption of other cultural practices by the Matabele from the communities they incorporated. However, a more detailed comparison is required to determine if these architectural features can be regarded as adaptations by the Nguni Matabele from the other non-Nguni Matabele living within the Kingdom.

9.4.1 Central enclosure *isigodlo*

The best-known and most prominent distinction between the Matabele and other northern Nguni military settlements is the placement of the *isigodlo* within the central enclosure of the settlement. The presence of this feature among the Matabele in Zimbabwe has been confirmed by ethnographic and historical accounts (Summers and Pagden 1970; Cobbing 1976) and limited excavations (Hughes 1995, 2000; Gaffney *et al.* 2005). There is currently no evidence that the placement of the *isigodlo* in the central enclosure was practised by the Matabele in South Africa, contrary to the assumptions made by Pistorius (1997a,b) in this regard. As a result, the evidence currently suggests that this was a modification to the original Matabele settlement pattern that occurred after they had migrated north out of South Africa and, therefore, had to originate from a community encountered when they settled in southern Zimbabwe. However, none of the known settlement patterns in Zimbabwe, such as those associated with the Shona, Zimbabwean tradition or Nyanga, had similar practices. This practice has been documented in communities living further north in southern Zambia, such as the Ba-Ila. It is also known from historical accounts as well as oral traditions that the Ba-Ila were often raided by the Matabele (Smith and Dale 1968).

As shown in Figure 46, the Ba-Ila had a smaller enclosure within their central cattle enclosure that was directly associated with the chief or head man (Smith and Dale 1968). Besides the similarities related to the placement of living enclosures within the central cattle enclosure, the Ba-Ila association of this enclosure with the chief or headman is of critical importance. It has been shown that the *isigodlo* among the Matabele and the northern Nguni are directly associated with the royal family and the king. The importance of the central enclosure among the northern Nguni has been widely documented (Kuper 1982; Huffman 1986, 2007). Considering the absence of this feature among the Matabele in South Africa and the connection between the placement of this feature and chiefly/king authority by both the Matabele and Ba-Ila provides a strong indication that this feature was an adaptation made by the Matabele after encounters with the Ba-Ila. Why and when this occurred is still unknown.

9.4.2 Compacted path surrounding the central enclosure

Another feature documented among the Matabele and no other northern Nguni was a compacted path around the outside of the central enclosure (Burrow 1971). In their description of a Matabele settlement in Zimbabwe, Summers and Pagden (1970) state that the Matabele kept the area on the outside of the central enclosure open and unobstructed for it to be used as a path and a route for messengers to use within the settlement. A similar practice has not yet been documented among the other northern Nguni, and the extensive and frequent use of the same area could potentially result in the compaction of the soil and, thus, the creation of a path. However, the nature of Burrow's descriptions indicated that he believed this path was not accidental but rather an intentional act by the Matabele. As with the placement of the *isigodlo*, this feature is not found, or known of, among other communities in Zimbabwe or South Africa.

It is, nonetheless, similar to a practice found among the Ba-Ila, who created a path inside the central enclosure (Smith and Dale 1968). Although this is an interesting similarity between the Ba-Ila and the Matabele, it cannot currently be regarded as an indication of cultural adaptation by the Matabele. The documentation of the feature among the Matabele by Burrow was done before any known contact had occurred between the Ba-Ila and the Matabele, who are believed to have only started raiding and attacking the Ba-Ila after they entered Zimbabwe (Smith and Dale 1968). As a result, this appears to be a similar practice utilised by both communities independently, raising interesting questions about why this occurred.

9.4.3 Mzilikazi's sliding door

A feature that perhaps is the most unambiguous indication of cultural adaption among the Matabele can be found in the account of Harris (1852: 118-119). Harris provides the only detailed description of the Matabele *isigodlo* and Mzilikazi's hut in this part of his account. Harris's description provides two important elements not found among the northern Nguni. The first is the presence of a "sliding wicket" door, and the second is an interior "sunken floor", both of which formed part of Mzilikazi's hut (Harris 1852: 118-119). The presence of the sliding wicket door is essential, as sliding doors are known and a standard feature of Tswana settlement within the region of South Africa occupied by the Matabele.

Maggs (1993) provides a summary of these sliding doors among the Tswana as well as two first-hand-account descriptions of these doors by Delegorgue (1847) and the other by Sanderson (1860). Of critical importance in this regard is the description provided by Sanderson as:

"…. and the semicircular doorway, 18 or 20 inches in height, closed by a board sliding behind a couple of pilasters forming a frame. Opposite the door inside, and extending a third of the way round, is a platform or dais raised about 6 inches, in which are sometimes planted the stems of one or two small trees, the branches of which serve to hang articles upon" as quoted by Maggs (1993:34).

Delegorgue also provides an important description in this regard when he stated that:

"When I went out, the door was pushed shut and for more than a minute the inside of the hut resonated like a bell that had just been rung" as quoted by Maggs (1993:33).

Both these descriptions provide insight into the presence and function of several elements described by Harris. Firstly, the description by Sanderson of the step surrounding a Tswana hut is similar to the step described by Harris. Additionally, Sanderson and Delegorgue confirm the utilisation of sliding doors among the Tswana, which strongly suggests that the Matabele copied this practice as it is not found among the other northern Nguni groups. The descriptions of the Tswana sliding doors are not the same as those of Harris, however, with Harris making

no mention of poles located at the door nor of the door as having been made of wickets instead of wood, as was custom among the Tswana. Maggs (1993) confirms the use of stone among some Tswana instead of wood, indicating variations in this regard were present.

The African Frontier Hypothesis holds that one of the things that a new polis does after entering and settling in a new region, or what Kopytoff (1987) called a frontier, is to incorporate aspects of the communities that occupied the area before them to legitimacy their claims to the land. It is unlikely that the Matabele, specifically Mzilikazi, as it was only documented at his hut, would have felt the need to legitimise their claims as they believed they had the right to own the land. The presence of sliding doors has been documented as the capital of powerful poleis that occupied the region before the arrival of the Matabele, such as the Hurutshe capital of Kaditshwene, which makes it utilisation by Mzilikazi at his hut and act which could have had an important symbolic significance. Using these doors in the capital of a powerful polis (which the Matabele only recently defeated) would have carried with it an image such as status, wealth or political authority. Therefore, Mzilikazi could have adopted it to show that he now ruled the land. However, it should also be noted that Mzilikazi's hut was located within the *isigodlo*, restricted to only members of the royal family and senior *amaduna*. As such, the incorporated people would not have seen him using this at his hut.

The question remains as to why Mzilikazi would have used this sliding door. In this regard, Delegorgue descriptions could indicate Mzilikazi's motivation. Delegorgue states that the function of the door was to prevent attackers from opening and entering the hut (Maggs 1993:33). From the first-hand accounts of Moffat (Wallis 1945) and Smith (Kirby 1940a,b; Lye 1975), it is known that Mzilikazi was very conscious about his safety. Moffat most often references this point. As a result, Mzilikazi could have used this sliding door as an extra security measure, as the traditional Nguni hut had an open door. Nonetheless, the presence of two Tswana architectural features at Mzilikazi's house would have had a significant symbolic impact on the Nguni Matabele regardless of the motivation behind their utility by Mzilikazi.

9.4.4 The lowered pit in Mzilikazi's house

The last feature recorded by Harris (1852: 118-119), the sunken floor on the interior of Mzilikazi's hut, remains an anomaly. Sunken floors of this description are not found among the Nguni, Tswana or Sotho in South Africa. Additionally, they have not been documented

among the Shona or Zimbabwean tradition. The Nyanga culture is known to have used pits, with some of their huts built over a tunnel (Soper 2013). This similarity is superficial, as the pits found among the Nyanga were located in the centre of the settlements, with some having had a roof covering (Soper 2013). Similarly, a tunnel was constructed from the central pit to the outside of the settlement, with huts sometimes built over these tunnels for the tunnel to be opened and closed from inside the hut (Soper 2013). Therefore, these features are different from the sunken floor described by Harris. Currently, no explanation can be given for this feature documented by Harris; however, such a sunken hut floor would allow for the identification of this capital of Mzilikazi, allowing for further archaeological investigation.

9.5 Conclusion

It has been shown that the Matabele military settlements had an organisation and construction similar to that of the Zulu, with several key differences. From the first-hand accounts, it has become clear that the Matabele constructed their settlements only from perishable materials such as grass, reeds and thickets and that this remained consistent throughout the kingdom. Similarly, the degree of cultural assimilation varied throughout the different regions of the kingdom, with Nguni-style settlements being constructed next to those constructed following non-Nguni settlement styles. Similarly, it appears that some aspects of the Matabele settlement construction, such as the enclosure constructed within the central livestock enclosure, were later additions after the Matabele had already migrated into southern Zimbabwe. Finally, the use of perishable material for settlement construction shows that the settlements currently believed to have been associated with the Matabele near Rustenburg could not have been constructed by them, and thus, no known Matabele settlements have yet been found and excavated within South Africa.

However, satellite and multispectral image survey in the region between Zeerust and Millvale has found many potential Matabele settlements that match the expected archaeological signature for these settlements based on first-hand accounts. These potential sites might also include the settlement at which Mzilikazi resided when visited by the Smith expedition in 1835. As mentioned in the first-hand accounts, these potential settlements are located within the geographic areas preferred by the Matabele for settlement construction and having areas with increased moisture in relation to surrounding areas, as would be expected from settlements with large livestock enclosures. It has also been argued that the variations that have been observed among the different northern Nguni military settlements could be an indication of two regional variations that existed in KwaZulu-Natal and possibly indicate that the Matabele and

Zulu had a shared military settlement construction practice instead of the Matabele adopting it from the Zulu. The next chapter will summarise the results found within this study and the potential further research topics that can be utilised to improve our understanding of the Matabele and the northern Nguni as a cultural grouping.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

10.1 Introduction

Many aspects of Matabele society remain unknown, partially due to our reliance on incomplete historical accounts. Although utilising these accounts is important in understanding the Matabele, they are often limited in the detail they provide in relation to Matabele society. As a result, an improved archaeological understanding is required to provide information missing from the first-hand accounts and other historiographic accounts. However, the archaeological investigation of the Matabele is hampered by the difficulty in locating and identifying their settlements. Nguni settlements of the 18th and 19th centuries are generally challenging to find on the landscape due mainly to the perishable nature of the material used in their construction, resulting in a generally low archaeological signature. Several additional problems related to the archaeological investigation of Matabele settlements can also be identified. One of these problems was the migratory nature of the Matabele during the first half of the 19th century, which resulted in short occupation periods for many of their settlements, further reducing the archaeological visibility of these settlements. A second problem within current Matabele archaeology is the uncertainties related to the organisation and construction of their settlements. Several assumptions in this regard are currently present in the field, the nature of which further hampers the identification of these settlements on the landscape.

Therefore, this study aimed to address these limitations by clearly understanding the construction and organisation of their settlements to facilitate their identification and excavation. The focus of this study was the development of a detailed settlement model and the implementation of this model within the archaeological landscape to locate these settlements.

10.2 Evaluation of aims and objectives

A detailed examination of the first-hand historical accounts and other historiographic sources indicates that the Matabele settlement was circular and consisted of an inner enclosure surrounded by two to three rows of various huts. Surrounding these rows was an outer fence, with the construction material being perishable organic material, primarily thicket and grass, but reeds and wood were also used. Furthermore, the settlement was divided into a royal, high-status area and a commoner's area. The demography of these settlements varied depending on the age and developmental status of the settlements. In this regard, the Matabele had a similar administrative hierarchy to that of the Zulu; however, it consisted of

royal administrative settlements and regional administrative centres. The developmental level of the settlement was determined by the status of the regiment that occupied it and was not linked to the age of the settlement itself. The first level of this system was structured around a newly created regiment, followed by a regiment that had married and ended with regimentals that had been long established and already had families. However, it should be noted that the number of warriors in well-established regiments could be increased by new younger recruits, which would not affect the developmental level of the settlement. Therefore, this study found a high correlation between the structural organisation of a Matabele settlement and that of the Zulu, with important demographic differences that would result in a different archaeological matrix from that of the Zulu. However, the first-hand accounts are critically lacking in detail concerning cultural practices and daily activities among the Matabele. The information that has been recorded has shown that a Matabele settlement had a unique archaeological matrix. The construction material used would separate it from surrounding Sotho-Tswana settlements, and the different demographic organisations separated it from a Zulu settlement.

There is currently not enough information available to determine what impact cultural assimilation and incorporation had on the development of the Matabele. However, it does appear that the Matabele maintained a remarkable degree of cultural continuation during their migration to southern Zimbabwe as well as during their occupation of the region. This could partially be attributed to the importance placed on the Nguni culture, both as an indicator of high social standing as well as being an important determining factor in the appointment to higher governmental positions. However, changes in the organisational structure of the Matabele settlement did occur over time, such as the re-location of the royal area to the centre of the inner livestock enclosure. This noticeable change in settlement organisation could be a result of cultural modification. The relocation of the royal area and documented changes in weapon usage indicate that systematic cultural changes were occurring among the Matabele, suggesting that a difference might be present in the archaeological matrix of a South African Matabele settlement in relation to those found in southern Zimbabwe.

The development of a more detailed settlement model in this study allowed for identifying several important similarities between the Matabele and the Zulu settlement variations. These similarities allowed for the determination of how Matabele settlements would be visually represented on satellite imagery. By combining the impact that the known Matabele settlement features would have had on the landscape with those of known Zulu military settlements, it was found that Matabele settlements would be primarily identifiable by the presence of dense

vegetation within the area of the central enclosure as well as the preference for the slopes of mountains or hills and ridges. This model was tested on true colour satellite imagery obtained from the Google Earth Pro desktop and multispectral satellite imagery obtained from Plant Explores. The multispectral satellite imagery was downloaded and imported into QGIS, which facilitated the use of a specific band that indicated the moisture content of the soil. This study found a noticeable pattern in the size (diameter of the concentrated vegetation) and their location within the landscape. It was found that these dense patches of vegetation were primarily found on either the slopes or ridge of the mountain chain, with the number of identified sites being significantly less in the lowland areas.

In addition, these vegetation patches were also located away from areas used for agriculture, indicating an unlikely association between the identified features and modern agricultural activities. Similarly, a concentration of dense circular vegetation was also found in regions where first-hand accounts documented dense concentrations of settlements, further supporting the potential Matabele origin for many of the identified features. Multispectral imagery indicated that the identified areas had higher moisture content, determined by the wavelength of the reflected light from surrounding areas. This pattern was present in woodland areas where the identified feature was surrounded by similar vegetation, making a geological origin unlikely for most of the features. It is known that cattle manure increases the moisture and nutrient content of the soil, which would account for both the dense vegetation and the increased moisture of the identified features.

10.3 Future research

Although this model developed a detailed settlement organisational model for the Matabele, we still do not know much. Field verification and excavation of identified sites are required to determine the accuracy of the settlement model developed from historical accounts. Although excavations of Matabele settlements in southern Zimbabwe confirmed many features of the Zimbabwean historical accounts, it is currently unknown what the accuracy of the South African accounts is. However, verification and excavation of these sites are crucial beyond only determining historical accuracies. As has been stated, the first-hand accounts for the South African period are critically lacking in the cultural information they provide.

Similarly, the information provided regarding settlement organisation and construction is also limited. As a result, many aspects of a Matabele settlement can only be determined from

excavations. For example, although the location of the royal areas could be determined within the settlement, almost no information is given concerning the organisation of this section or the type of daily activities undertaken. However, it is known that the Zulu royal area had a specific organisation that contained a three-tiered hierarchy, which was physically separated from each other within the royal area and the rest of the settlement. From the first-hand accounts, it appears that a similar system might also have been present among the Matabele, and excavations should be able to confirm or disprove this indication.

The nature of the daily life and activities of the non-royal area of the settlement is similarly unclear. Excavations of these areas should be able to indicate what type of daily activities were undertaken in these areas, what the demographic organisation of these areas were, and what type of huts were constructed. Some first-hand accounts indicate that smaller livestock enclosures were also constructed within this area, a marked difference between the Matabele and the Zulu and should also be confirmed by excavations. Determining the demographic composition of these settlements and how this composition relates to the size of the settlement is important in understanding the developmental process of a Matabele settlement. For example, it is known that a Matabele settlement changed over time from a settlement that exclusively housed warriors to one that was primarily domestic. However, how this process occurred and how it would be reflected in settlement construction is not known and is an essential aspect of the understanding and interpretation of Matabele settlements. Considering the minimal amount of information currently available for the military settlements of the northern Nguni, excavations of Matabele settlements will significantly enhance our understanding of these types of settlements. In this regard, our knowledge is overwhelmingly dominated by the Zulu model, which has resulted in a series of assumptions related to the military settlements. Considering the large number of variations that have been documented concerning the homesteads of these communities, it would be very unusual for the military settlements not to have similar variations. Therefore, finding more military settlements related to all the northern Nguni is important, but a lack of settlement models that can help identify them has been a critical limitation. Although many gaps remain in our understanding of Matabele settlements, the model created now allows for the possibility of locating these settlements, which will allow for detailed archaeological research to be undertaken.

The Matabele, similar to the Shangaan and Ngoni, were a largely migratory group for a large period of their history. It is well known that all these communities incorporated large numbers of non-Nguni communities into themselves. However, it is currently unknown what impact this

had on the Nguni cultural aspects of these societies and how this cultural assimilation and interchange occurred. Excavations of Matabele settlements will further aid our understanding of how these societies incorporated other communities and how cultural traditions or practices would have transferred. This is an important aspect of the Matabele as it directly impacts the organisation and construction of their settlements. From first-hand accounts, two types of settlements were located within the Matabele Kingdom: those constructed by the Matabele and those of the incorporated peoples. Visitors to the Matabele could distinguish these settlements from each other from a great distance, indicating that significant structural differences were needed for this identification.

However, there is currently no known description of a non-Nguni Matabele settlement other than general references to large cultural groupings such as the baHurutshi. Such identification implies that these settlements followed the same organisational pattern as before the Matabele conquest. However, several references also indicate the presence of communities that had partially adopted the Nguni culture but did not live in what these accounts called Matabele settlements. However, they were often found in proximity to each other. This further links to the interesting occurrence of Matabele settlements being constructed near stonewalled settlements. The first-hand accounts of the Zulu do not make any similar mentions (however, it should be kept in mind that stonewalled settlements are rare in this region), which is an interesting difference concerning the Matabele. Moffat similarly made one such observation on his trip to the Matabele when they were living in southern Zimbabwe. This observation raises the question of the interaction between the Nguni, those who adopted the Nguni culture, and those who didn't.

Research by Boeyens and Pistorius on Molokwane sites and other capitals in the region has highlighted the impact of the Matabele arrival on the region. However, the region was also already heavily affected by the incursion of the baTlokwa (called the Mantatee in the historical accounts) short before the arrival of the Matabele. The impact of the Mantatee on the region is not considered by the first-hand accounts when they reflect on the "devastation" brought by Mzilikazi and the Matabele. Thus, how much of this "devastation" was done by the Matabele vs. the Mantatee? What impact did this have, along with the assumption by the first-hand witness that most abandoned stonewalled settlements were as a result of the Matabele, have on the historical narrative of the devastation of the interior? These events significantly impacted the communities that lived in the region, abandoning well-established settlements such as Kaditshwene and Molokwane. However, what is unknown is what happened to these

communities once they were incorporated into the conquering groups such as the Matabele. Did they adopt a new culture? Did these incorporations follow the same social practices associated with the marriage of wives from other communities? What impact did the Matabele cast system, in which wealth and power were directly linked with adopting the Nguni culture, have on the incorporated communities? Did the Matabele incorporate any of the religious and ritual practices from those communities who had occupied the land before them? The importance of the "firstcomers", those communities who have lived on the land before others, is a well-documented feature of southern African communities. Yet Smith documents conquered people, attributing the outbreak of the diseases at that time to the Matabele not respecting the incorporated peoples' ancestors. Therefore, what was the interaction between the conquering Matabele and those they conquered and incorporated into their kingdom?

The region occupied by the Matabele in South Africa is well known for large numbers of stonewalled ruined settlements, with even historical observers commenting on the large numbers they can see. Furthermore, we also understand that the Matabele settlements were often built near these settlements. The question can then be raised as to whether or not this relationship was intentional or coincidental due to the large number of stonewalled settlements in the region. Was Moffat's observation of one similar event in southern Zimbabwe also just a coincidence? These questions can only be answered once a detailed understanding of the Matabele and non-Matabele settlements is developed. This interaction remains one of the most prominent unanswered questions concerning the Matabele Kingdom: How did the incorporated communities live? How were their settlements organised and constructed? Did they continue following their settlement traditions or create new ones? To what extent did they affect the Matabele? How did these communities differ from neighbouring communities outside the kingdom? It has been shown that a few identified features among the Matabele can be linked to other communities, such as the sliding door of Mzilikazi's hut. Therefore, understanding the relationship that the Matabele had with the communities they incorporated will improve our understanding of how this process worked practically and help us better understand the events of the 19th century in southern Africa and the northern Nguni migrations.

The most significant limitation in investigating the 19th-century Matabele has been the difficulty in locating and identifying Matabele settlements on the landscape. This has been compounded by the absence of a detailed settlement model that can be used as a basis for identification, resulting in several misidentifications. These misidentifications have increased the difficulty of identifying Matabele settlements. Therefore, this study has contributed to 19th-century

Matabele research by providing a settlement model that can be used to identify these settlements upon the landscape. Furthermore, this model has also been used to locate potential Matabele settlements within the study area, hopefully facilitating a more in-depth archaeological investigation of the Matabele.

The northern Nguni kingdoms' migration and subsequent development significantly impacted Africa's social-political and demographic organisation south of the equator. Despite this, our understanding of these communities is still very limited, with many aspects of their history and culture being unclear. Although extensive investigations of the Zulu have allowed for a better understanding of many aspects of the northern Nguni, these investigations are of limited assistance in understanding the rest of the northern Nguni. This limitation is primarily due to the unknown relationship between the Zulu and the other northern Nguni, which makes it unclear to what extent the Zulu model can be used to understand the historical and cultural development of the other northern Nguni. Therefore, a detailed examination of these communities, their history, archaeology, and cultural development are critical in understanding the historical development of 19th century southern Africa and how cultural incorporation and interchange occurred within these communities. This, in turn, can help identify similar periods within the archaeological record. Understanding the cultural links between the different northern Nguni and how these links developed and changed over time will also aid our understanding of the period of increased conflict that marked the transition of the northern Nguni from the 18th to the 19th century, a period that became widely known as the Mfecane.

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