

ABSTRACT

In this thesis I identify and clarify the archaeological signature of rain-control sites in the Shashe-Limpopo Confluence Area (SLCA). I use a landscape-based approach to investigate rain-control in the ideology of SLCA farming communities. I investigate the archaeology of ritual by viewing rain-control as materialised ideology. Using this insight, I examine the material culture and spatial manifestation of rain-control, the transition from ritual to residential sites, and how these transitions articulated with the ritualised landscape.

Specifically, I explore the local manifestation of rain-control and its relationship with the ideologies of farming communities in the period leading up to SLCA state formation, between AD 1000 and AD 1250. I also scrutinize the relationship of the Leopard's Kopje elite with hunter-gatherers and other farming people on the same landscape, as this relationship was partly grounded in ritual and rain-control.

Furthermore, this thesis explores the ideological roots of the Mapungubwe state. The ideology manifest in the location of the Mapungubwe royal residential area germinated during the K2 occupation. In this period rain-control was slowly removed from nature and located in farmer society. The final step in this course was nationalising rain-control and locating it on Mapungubwe hill. Initially, however, rain-controllers resisted this centralisation.