

ii. Abstract

A faunal analysis was conducted in order to clarify the social-political status of Leokwe people during the Middle Iron Age in the Shashe-Limpopo Valley. Both Calabrese and Huffman have contributed to this topic; however, they have opposing views concerning the status of Leokwe people. My main purpose is to establish whether Leokwe people held a subordinate position to K2 people before K2 rose to power, as argued by Huffman or whether their interactions were more complicated at the beginning of the K2 period, as argued by Calabrese. The study will contribute to the understanding of status relationships within the Leokwe culture and will further provide information on their social dynamics and interactions. Faunal remains form the main research component and the faunal analysis results have been achieved by studying these remains. Faunal remains were used as both Calabrese and Huffman have a faunal component to their arguments. Both patterns, if present, should be visible within the faunal remains at a settlement. Three types of faunal analysis were used in order to identify these patterns: (1) status elements of cattle, (2) small versus large stock through NISP and MNI, and (3) fragmentation, through measurement and comparison of fragment lengths at multiple archaeological sites. Statistical analysis was also conducted. The first method (status elements) refers to the presence of both high and low status parts of a carcass. In terms of the bones associated with the high/low status parts, status may be indicated by the presence or absence of specific bones. High status elements refer specifically to the limb bones (the humerus, ulna, radius, femur, fibula and tibia). Low status elements, those meant to be associated with the herdsman are the lower leg/foot bones such as the carpals, metacarpals, tarsals, metatarsals and the phalanges. In total the faunal remains from ten sites were analysed. A large sample of K2 faunal remains formed the baseline to which the rest of the sites were compared. Two of the sites were especially important, Leokwe Hill and Castle Rock, as Huffman's interpretation differs from Calabrese's for both of these sites. Ultimately, four Bov III faunal distribution patterns were identified during analysis, an Above-Average/ High Status Pattern, a Below-Average/ Herdsman Pattern, an Average Pattern and a Borderline Pattern. The High Status Pattern is identified by an over abundance of certain status elements, specifically the fore and hind-quarters, while the Herdsman Pattern is characterised by an over abundance of lower leg/ foot bones. Statistical analysis proved all four faunal distribution patterns to

be significant. However, as a result of the statistical analysis, the Borderline Pattern became the pattern most often identified within the samples. The Herdsmen Pattern was only identified at four sites. Due to the nature and location of the settlements that had the Herdsmen Pattern, it may be stated that this pattern is linked with low status people and not necessarily Leokwe people specifically.