Thaba-Bosiu,
the Birthplace of the Basotho Nation:
A Historical Archaeological Study

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University of Cape Town

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Declaration

I Nthabiseng Mokoena hereby declare that:

(i) This thesis is my own unaided work, both in conception and execution, that apart from the normal guidance from my supervisors, I have received no assistance except as stated below;

(ii) Neither the substance nor any part of the above thesis has been submitted for a degree at this university or at any other university.

I am now presenting the thesis for examination for the degree of PhD.

Candidate's Signature: Signed by candidate

Date: November 2023

DEDICATION

To my late grandparents, ‘Malisemelo and Moleko Mokoena. Stories of your lives continue to motivate and shape my life choices.

ABSTRACT

This research explores the daily life of past communities that settled atop the mountain known as Thaba-Bosiu through historical and archaeological evidence, in order to understand how they maintained their day-to-day lives during a nation-building period. This study combines archival and desktop studies with oral traditions and excavations to understand the lifeways of people who lived in this revered place. A variety of material culture, primarily beads, local and foreign ceramics, faunal remains and other foreign material were uncovered and analysed. The conclusions made from material analysis reveal the daily practices, economic activities, and interactions of local, regional, and international scale. Crop and livestock production were major socio-political and economic pursuits. Foreign materials uncovered from the site reflect interactions with African, European, and other cultures. The study mobilises these conclusions to provide an alternative narrative to the idea of Thaba-Bosiu as a mere place of conflict. Rather, insights from various sources converge around the view that Thaba-Bosiu was fundamentally a home where different groups mingled, interacted, co-existed, and adjusted to a new world and a new identity.

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A final appreciation to God and my ancestors. *Leseli Bahlakoana ba batle*.

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Southern Sotho and Nguni communities who presently occupy modern Lesotho and parts of the Free-State Province of South Africa interacted to form what we know today as the Basotho Nation. In this study, the region referred to as Lesotho, formerly known as the Basotholand, is defined by areas that were once occupied by communities that fell under the rule of Moshoeshoe (founder of the Basotho nation), in the Free-State and Eastern Cape Provinces of South Africa, and present-day Lesotho areas. The major question that this study attempts to answer is, what were the daily activities among these communities?

Societies that settled in the Basotholand could be broadly categorised as what are commonly referred to as the Iron Age or the Farming Community societies. Archaeological studies that have previously been conducted in Lesotho were conducted in predominantly Later Stone Age (LSA), hunter-gatherer studies (Mitchell 1994; 1996). The earliest Later Stone Age of the Phuthiatsana and Mohokare valleys is dated between 12000 and 9500 years B.P (Mitchell 1994: 89). The LSA is mostly associated with the Maloti hunter-gatherer communities. The Bantu-speaking farming communities then moved into the region, where they interacted with these hunter gatherer societies. The communities mentioned in this study represent the Farming Community societies that settled in the Mohokare Valley and the Highlands of Lesotho from the late 1600s AD (Gill 1993). Both these groups fall under the precolonial communities. The arrival of the European missionaries in 1833 (Casalis 1861) marked the introduction of colonial culture and identity. This study focuses primarily on the precolonial cultures' identities and their transitions respectively before and after European contact.

The historical background of communities that settled in the Mohokare valley and the area of Lesotho shows network and contact among groups from the Tugela River/Valley region such as AmaHlubi and Mazizi, who interacted with other Bantu-speaking communities that settled in the Drakensberg mountains (Eldgredge 1993). The trade networks were, for instance between the

AmaHlubi, Mazizi, Bafokeng, Batlokoa, Bakoena and other Sesotho-speaking communities where cattle, animal skins, tobacco, knives and hoes were the preferred goods (Eldredge 1993: 21).

Migrations of the Southern African Farming Communities from as early as the late 18th century into new lands meant contact with other groups (Esterhuysen 2008). Interactions among different groups in the Mohokare Valley were not always peaceful in nature. The Lifaqane wars (also known as Difaqane in northern Sotho and Mfecane in Nguni languages) broke out among the Zulu lineages in the eastern region of South Africa (Coplan 2009). Competition in ivory trade in Delagoa Bay (Present Maputo) caused frictions between affected communities (Becker 1969: 38; Gill 1993:65; Mothibe 2002: 15).

The formation of new states in the Mohokare Valley has not only redefined different landscapes, it has also given birth to formation of complex identities. The Basotho nation for instance, comprises of multiple clan groups. Lesotho comprises of groups of various lineages, clans, and ethnic identity with different languages (Mitchell 2018). Both Nguni- and Sotho-speaking farming communities, and hunter-gatherers have interacted to form a creole identity as they negotiated their different identities and livelihoods within shifting frontiers (Gill 1993, Gill and Nthoana 2010; Mitchell 2018).

The newly formed identity in the Lesotho context was apparent among groups that settled in the Mohokare Valley. The first farming community that settled in the Caledon Valley moved into the region in the years between 1500s and 1600s, and this was a Phokeng (Bafokeng) group (Gill 1993; Maggs 1976). Bafokeng were thereafter joined by more groups including Bakoena-ba-Mokoteli, who are known as a group in which King Moshoeshoe I emerged from. It should be noted that Bakoena in the context of Basotho lineage are a clan, and among them there are sub-groups who collectively refer to themselves as Bakoena, but who had different leaders. Bakoena-ba-Mokoteli, for instance, loosely translates to Bakoena of Mokoteli, who was one of the great leaders of a group of Bakoena clan. A clan in this context is generally known as a descent group formed by members who believe that they share a common ancestor (Schultz & Lavenda 1995; Kottak 2008). Clan members are known to descend from the apical ancestor, and members are normally known not to trace the actual genealogical links between themselves and their progenitors (Schultz and Lavenda 1995; Kottak 2008; Eller 2009). In some instances, an apical ancestor is not human; it could either be a plant or an animal, regarded as a totem. The particular apical ancestor

symbolises the social unity and identity of members of the clan, and this distinguishes them from other groups.

Among the Bakoena there are also groups who do not call themselves Bakoena though they are historically identified with the Bakoena clan and regard a crocodile as their common apical ancestor. Bahlakoana, also known as Batebang, for instance, are a part of the Bakoena clan. Within the Bahlakoana clan, the surname is Mokoena. Bahlakoana today are recognised as an autonomous group of Bakoena, who similarly associate themselves with the crocodile as their apical ancestor (Sekese 1999). Many of the groups within the Bakoena clan, therefore, inherently share the same clan totem, though they go by different names. Interaction of Koena groups and other clan or ethnic groups in the Caledon Valley has resulted in reconstruction of new identities that take different forms.

While historians have provided ground-breaking work in documenting the history of Lesotho (Thompson 1975; Gill 1993; Mothibe and Ntabeni 2002), studies focusing on the lives of past communities, particularly at Thaba-Bosiu, are yet to be undertaken. Exploring the cultural and daily practices of Basotho communities in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries would be efficacious. This is particularly useful in understanding how past communities navigated and survived in new landscapes. From an anthropological standpoint, culture can be defined at different levels, whether national, international, or individual, and these distinctions are observed in the discussion of the rise of the Basotho nation (Kottak 2008; Eller 2009). The study of culture also, more importantly, provides an alternative knowledge about past communities.

Decolonial approaches advocate for African agency in research about an African past (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2020; Chirikure 2020). This entails a radical transformation of what questions we ask about the past, as well as how we investigate the way past communities lived. Southern African studies have covered the types of settlements, technologies, diet, landscapes as well as living cultures of past farming communities (Esterhuysen 2008; Maggs 2008; Behrens and Swanepoel 2008; Boeyens and Hall 2009; Sadr 2019; Chirikure 2020). While highlighting different contexts under which the Basotho nation was built, the goal of this study is to learn about the everyday life of people who settled on Thaba-Bosiu.

The history of the Basotho nation and its formation has been extensively interpreted and narrated mainly from a European perspective. Backhouse (1839), Arboussett & Daumas (1846), Casalis (1861), and Ellenberger (1912) compiled the earliest written records of Basotho history. The inputs made by these explorers, historians and missionaries made a significant contribution towards narrating their personal experiences and events within the general political, economic, and social organisation of the Basotho. However, the histories recorded have reflected very little of the day-to-day livelihoods of communities that settled in Lesotho. Even today, very little is shared about the cultures and traditions that have influenced the formation of the Basotho nation, in particular, the earliest architecture and materials used in the day-to-day activities. Oral traditions and archaeology are thus crucial in redressing a distorted and singular perspective adopted by history.

Lesotho is landlocked by South Africa with the eastern and southern boundaries separated by the Maluti/Drakensburg Mountains while the Caledon River separates western and northern parts of Lesotho (Fig 1). Modern Lesotho occupies an area of about 33000 square kilometers and is largely mountainous. The country is located within the Southern African grassland Biome. Lesotho is divided into four geographical regions, namely the Foothills, Senqu Valley, the Lowlands, and the Highlands (Chaka 2002; Grab and Nash 2009). Lesotho is especially unique for its mountainous landscape, which is concentrated in the Highlands (Chaka *et al.* 2002). These regions experience different climatic conditions from the rest of the country, and are geologically distinctive. The multiple landscapes of Lesotho have influenced societal structures across the country. The summers of Lesotho are hot, with frequent rains. The winters are frigid, where temperatures drop below zero throughout the country (Grab and Nash 2009). The highlands and foothills experience annual snowfall, which causes extreme cold weather in the Lowlands.

The lower regions, which are mainly conducive for agriculture, cover an area averaging 1500 square kilometres (Gay 1995 *et al*: 37). The Highlands, known as the Maloti Mountains, are characterised by rugged mountains that reach the height of around 3000 metres above sea level. Modern-day Lesotho is largely occupied in the Lowlands and the Foothills regions. The nature of occupation has implications for the history of population growth in Lesotho.

Lesotho's environment is crucially largely conducive for livestock agriculture (Mitchell 2018). The area along the Mohokare River where the current capital city, Maseru, is located is characterised by a hilly landscape, which consists of flat bits of pastures and fields. The Mafeteng

and Mohale's Hoek districts are particularly flat along the Mohokare Valley and although these are regarded as the dry landscapes in Lesotho, there is currently a lot of agricultural activity (Mothibe 2002). Towards the north of Maseru are the Berea, Leribe and Botha-Bothe districts, whose landscape is also flat in some areas towards the Mohokare Valley, and very hilly towards the Highlands.

Thaba-Bosiu is located along the border between the Foothills and the Lowlands of Lesotho (See figure 1.1). Thaba-Bosiu lies within the present-day Maseru District, approximately 80 kilometres from the capital city. The top of Thaba-Bosiu allows access to views of the Maloti Mountains and the low-lying areas of present-day Lesotho. During the winter season, it is often possible to view rugged, snowcapped mountains of the Highlands.

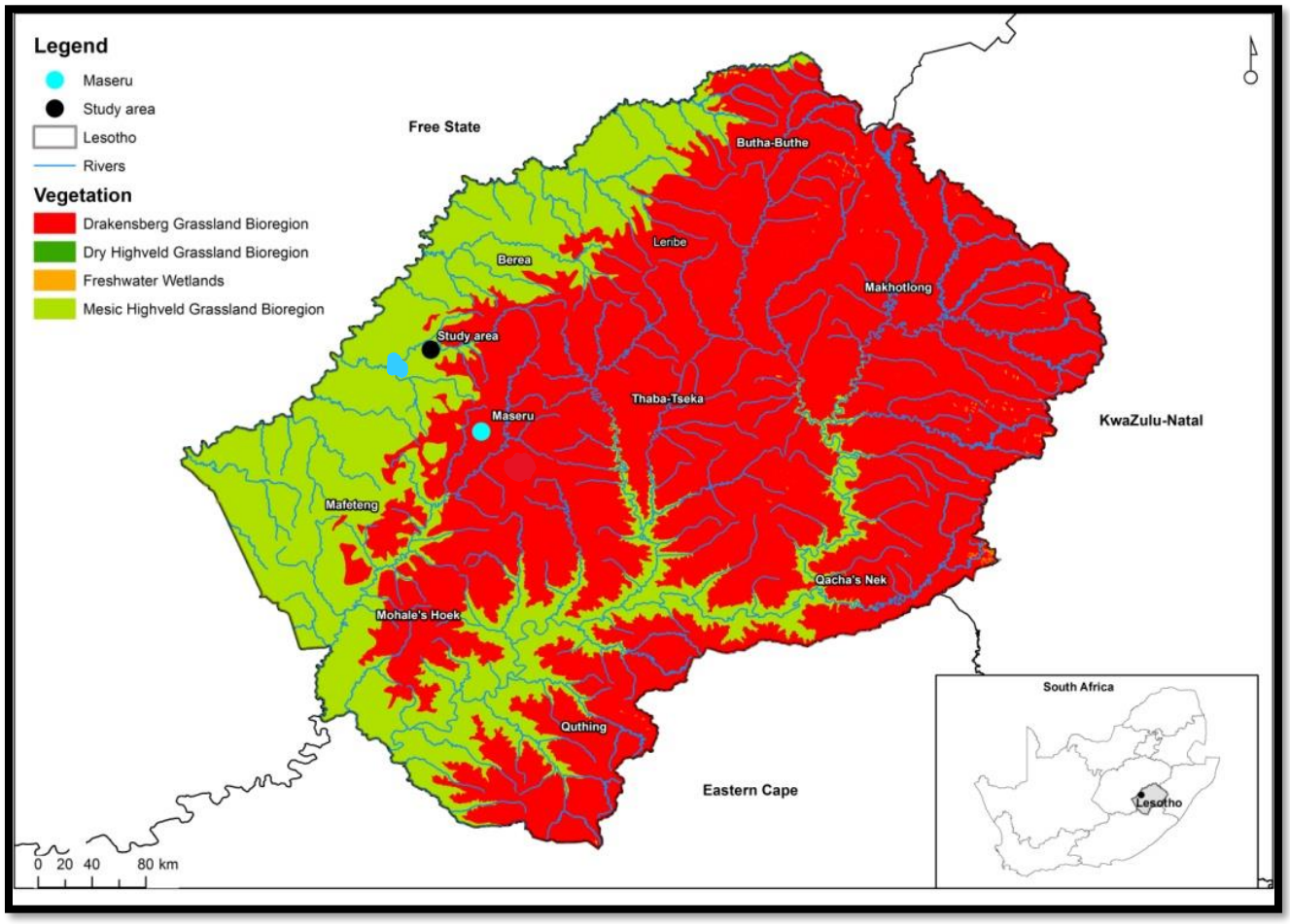

Figure 1.1: Map of Lesotho showing the location of Thaba-Bosiu and vegetation of the country (Map courtesy of author and Mncedisi Siteleki)

Historically, Thaba-Bosiu assumed numerous significances, and these are uncovered by this study. The mountain is viewed by some as a sanctuary, a sacred place, and a place of Basotho political identity. The mountain is generally recognised by the Basotho as the birthplace of the Basotho nation. The last occupation of the mountain is said to have been in 1898 (Letsie 2023).

In the 1990s, a plan to conserve and develop Thaba-Bosiu was discussed during a seminar by the government of Lesotho, UNESCO and the Federal Republic of Germany on a quest to develop National Heritage Sites of Lesotho (MTEC 1991). Thaba-Bosiu's development plans included the need to define the site, to analyse historical sources, document archaeological remains, mapping, accounting for educational endeavours, and to analyse the topometrical and photographic documentation (MTEC 1991). The listed development plans were conducted to a limited extent, but the history of Thaba-Bosiu is presently still under-researched, where this study reconstructs the history of Basotho through the lens of Thaba-Bosiu. The modern development plans for Thaba-Bosiu have not incorporated an extensive archaeological study to reconstruct the settlement on the mountain and understand the significance of the mountain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as periods when the Basotho nation is known to have been formed.

In 1990, Thaba-Bosiu was declared a National Heritage Site under the 1967 Heritage Act of Lesotho. Presently the fortress welcomes local and international tourists, of which most are local schools. Depending on the season, particularly during the school term, the site receives a variety of visitors each day. During excavations for this study, I observed the daily visits of different schools. The history of the Basotho nation and the significance of Thaba-Bosiu are included in the Lesotho school curriculum. However, the details of the taught history is restricted to the arrival of missionaries and the conflicts that happened on the mountain. Not much known about how people survived when there were no conflicts. Schools across the country annually bring learners to the fortress for educational purposes. Thaba-Bosiu receives local and international tourism as well. Thaba-Bosiu is not only visited for educational purposes, but also for religious purposes. At the entrance of the fortress, there is evidence of candles which are said to have been used by Basotho from both South Africa and Lesotho who visit the mountain to pray. Rain control rituals hosted by the royal family and local Christian churches are additionally performed on the mountain. The mountain is in these ways regarded by the Basotho as a sacred site.

Thaba-Bosiu is currently under the management of the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture (MTEC) of the government of Lesotho. The Basotho Royal family also has authority over any development or research activities on the mountain. The royal cemetery, pictured in figures 3.5 and 3.6, is located approximately 500m from the royal family ruins on Thaba-Bosiu. Past and present royal family members, as well as close allies and advisers of the King, are buried at the cemetery. The royal family thus presently maintain influence over the management of Thaba-Bosiu, even though they currently reside in Matsieng and Maseru.

1.2. Aim

This research aims to reconstruct everyday life at Thaba-Bosiu.

1.3. Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

- To document the spatial organisation of Thaba-Bosiu.
- To trace the different styles of architecture at Thaba-Bosiu and how these might have changed over time.
- To determine the prevailing economic activities (including subsistence, craft and trade) practiced by the residents of Thaba-Bosiu during the nineteenth century.
- To trace the impact that contact with missionaries and broader colonial society may have had on consumption and other aspects of daily life.

1.4. A brief history of the Basotho nation

> "The formation of the Basotho nation under Moshoeshoe and the expansion of production and trade did not constitute a dramatic departure from the past. There were always tendencies to amalgamate and divide, and to trade and raid, causing transfer of ideas and goods between separate socio-political groups and these tendencies were merely amplified during the upheavals of the 1820s" (Eldredge 1993: 18).

The history of the Basotho nation has received a significant amount of research attention from historians (Ellenberger 1912; Eldredge 1993; Gill 1993). According to historical sources, the roots of the Basotho nation emerged in a climate of violence and insecurity during the early 19th century (Rosenberg 1999; Mothibe 2002). During this time, the AmaZulu state had been formed under

Shaka and was associated with raiding and conquest that unleashed violence, with populations fleeing in different directions. This historical time is known in Sesotho as the Lifaqane, or 'time of troubles'. Some of the populations running away from Shaka passed through Botha-Bothe, the ancestral home of King Moshoeshe I. Moshoeshoe belonged to a small Koena group of Bakoena-ba-Mokoteli (Ellenberger 1912). Following several attacks while at the Botha-Bothe Plateau, Moshoeshoe and his group were driven out, of north of Lesotho (Mokhehle 1990; Mofuoane 2015) in 1820, as more Nguni and Sotho-speaking groups, including Batlokoa, Basia, Bataung, Matebele (Ndebele), Ba-Phuthi, moved into the region (Becker 1969; Struik 1964). The decision to settle at Thaba-Bosiu was motivated by the heightening attacks they experienced as the Lifaqane wars gained momentum (Mothibe 2002).

Around 2000 followers of Moshoeshoe's group arrived at Thaba-Bosiu under the cover of darkness in 1824, hence, the name Thaba-Bosiu, meaning 'hill of the night' or 'mountain at night' (Backhouse 1839; Tylden 1950:6). The Basotho also believe that the mountain grows at night, hence the name. Thaba-Bosiu looks small from a distance, but at close range it is steep, standing 91metres high (Backhouse 1839; Tylden 1950). The mountain is located 20km east of the current capital city of Maseru along the Phuthiatsana/ Little Caledon Valley (Tylden 1950).

The narratives of the history of the Basotho Nation are primarily steeped in conflict as presented by European historians, travelers or explorers, and missionaries who interacted with the Basotho (Casalis 1861; 1971; Backhouse 1839; Tylden 1950; Orpen 1979). For a long time, the history of the Basotho was centered around the violence of the Lifaqane upheavals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, very little is written and researched about the Basotho cultures and their daily lives in the 19th century.

King Moshoeshoe I is described in the literature as one of the most diplomatic leaders of his time and out of his desire to become a great leader and his choices, he successfully united different groups that were affected by Lifaqane and formed the Basotho nation, who reside presently in the Free-State, South Africa, and Lesotho (Casallis 1861; Mothibe 2002).

Thaba-Bosiu became a centre for diplomatic engagement throughout the nineteenth century. The arrival of the first missionaries at Thaba-Bosiu marked an influx of many more foreign travellers and diplomats, some of whom kept records of their travels and experiences with Basotho

(Backhouse 1839; Casalis 1861; Tylden 1950; Stuik 1969). Such accounts are useful in the recollection of histories related to events and people who experienced Thaba-Bosiu throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Maps, sketches and paintings of the landscape of Thaba-Bosiu and its locale have been useful in exploring the different landscapes on Thaba-Bosiu.

One of the missionaries who have compiled historical records of his stay and interactions with Basotho is Ellenberger. David-Frèdèric Ellenberger was a member of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) who resided in Lesotho for more than 40 years before he retired to the Cape (King 2015: 32). Ellenberger's information was sourced from Basotho, who had directly or indirectly been part of these events (King 2015).

To cover the leading events and transformations that led to the establishment of the Basotho nation, historical and ethnographical records are critically utilised in this study. Written historical records are significant in providing background of leading and vital historical events. Be that as it may, total reliance on written records, particularly those that also account for events that occurred prior to colonial contact, pose a risk of obtaining one-sided information. Alternative approaches as advocated for by postcolonial scholars such Peter Schmidt (2006; 2010; 2014) include unwritten sources of data, which may include folkore. This research, therefore, incorporates both written and oral records by means of which to account for the above-mentioned objectives. A study conducted by Dreyer (1988), Lawton (1965), and Du Pisani (1983) is incorporated.

Thaba-Bosiu has received little archaeological attention. The short-lived excavations carried out in the early 1990s did not yield any sufficient information about the communities that settled on the mountain (Dreyer 1993; 1996). It has become known as a centre for diplomatic negotiations. For example, clan lineages of the Sotho and Nguni-speaking peoples made contact there where multiple identities were formed (Mitchell 2018). The Lifaqane wars played a pivotal role in the formation and fall of multiple identities.

1.5. Theoretical Approach to the Study

This study has adopted a decolonial approach to constructing the history of Thaba-Bosiu. Decoloniality is born from the call by African scholars and others (Fanon 1952; Mignolo 2009; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; Chirikure 2020), to challenge the western epistemologies in the

investigation of an African past. This study acknowledges work undertaken by postcolonial scholars (Bhabha 1994; Eathope 1998; Gosden 2001; Patterson 2008), in the attempt to challenge coloniality and its impact on African past and identity. As presented in the next chapter, postcolonial scholars in the field focused on interaction and identities between the colonial governments and the previously colonised communities (Gosden 2001). Postcolonialism, however, has been criticised for failing to go so far as to liberate indigenous communities from western epistemologies that continue to redefine and isolate Africans by silencing the voices of African communities when under the scrutiny of academic research (Chirikure 2020).

The focus of this study, thus, considers the interpretation of the archaeology and history of Thaba-Bosiu by exploring local knowledges of past cultures and practices. As advocated by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013; 2018) and Chirikure (2020). African archaeology needs to be undertaken in a way that gives agency to the past communities under research.

1.6. Source Material and Methodology

Relevant evidence of a past can be drawn from geographical, biological, archaeological, anthropological, linguistic, folkloric, oral-traditions, and historical and other relevant sources or expert opinions (Echo-Hawk 2000: 269). Some scholars have, however, extended their research beyond European contact, and have rather incorporated studies of an African past that acknowledge locally preserved histories (Reid and Lane 2004; Schmidt 2006; 2016; Schmidt and Pikirayi 2018).

The new approaches in historical research included a variety of historical data. Oral sources were employed to uncover the past, and archaeology has also become a source for the past. That the use of oral sources, oral traditions, and the voices of present communities on their knowledge of the past (Schmidt and Pikirayi 2018). In the African context, oral historical sources gained popularity due to historical events that took place even before the introduction of formal writing as a form of recording events. Alternatively, oral accounts that have been recorded by missionaries, travelers, the European elites or administrators are considered in historical archaeological studies (Schmidt 2013: 37). According to Schmidt (2013: 37) the use of oral testimonies can disclose structural changes within social groups overtime. Oral traditions are also key sources of information in many

African cultures (Schmidt 20 Pikirayi 2016; Schmidt 2017). Oral traditions provide information about past cultural practices and their evolution until the present day.

Lesotho's written historical accounts began from the mid-19th Century, following the arrival of European settlers (Backhouse 1839; Arbousset & Daumas 1846; Casalis 1861). Although ethnohistoric and archaeological sources are mostly colonial in nature, they have been employed in this study to yield evidence of historical processes and social dynamics that occurred on the mountain (Fleisher 2010). To include local knowledge, studies which have recorded the histories and traditions of Basotho have been incorporated. The royal family has also been instrumental in guiding and informing on the objectives of this study.

The rise of the Basotho nation is mainly traced back to the 19th century. Major historical accounts have been sourced from this period, covering the geographical area of present-day Lesotho, particularly the Caledon/Mohokare Valley. This research adopts an interdisciplinary approach, which incorporates ethnohistorical and archaeological methods.

This study explores archival records produced by some of the earliest European missionaries and travellers. Historical recollections of the history of Basotho have been recorded mainly by the earliest missionaries to have met Moshoeshoe at Thaba-Bosiu. Each of these individuals has their own experiences with the Basotho, and thus their perspectives will paint individual pictures of nineteenth century Basotho and the occupation of Thaba-Bosiu. Among these individuals is Eugene Casalis, who in his records did not only visit the top of Thaba-Bosiu, but also interacted with Moshoeshoe on several occasions (Casalis 1861). Casalis was one of the three first Parisian Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) missionaries who visited Moshoeshoe at Thaba-Bosiu (Casalis 1861). Cassalis (1861) was invited to Thaba-Bosiu by Moshoeshoe as a pursuit to seek for alternative measures of stabilising the increasingly unstable region. To remedy this one-sided perspective of history, the archival records of Matšela (1990), Seforo (1989); and Sechefo (1960) have been explored.

Thaba-Bosiu is one of many sites in Southern Africa previously occupied by hunter-gatherers and farming communities such as the Bafokeng, and later other groups under Moshoeshoe, before European interaction. The key archaeological methods adopted in this study consisted of pedestrian and digital surveys, excavations, and material data analysis. The Morija Museums and

Archives provided historical written records and some of the original maps from as early as the 1800s. The national archives of Lesotho were also explored for any significant ethnographic record. The survey included digital mapping of areas that exhibited evidence of occupation on Thaba-Bosiu. Foot surveys were also conducted, using handheld GPS for recording the coordinates and elevation of different sites. It was through the surveys that sites that had high potential for excavations were identified. Excavations were conducted in three phases to cover the archaeology of a variety of households on the mountain. Phase One entailed test excavation at one of the sites close to the main visitor's path. Test excavations made it possible to get an idea of the type of artefacts that are likely to be found on the mountain. The second phase entailed excavations of middens on the north-western homesteads in the royal village. The third phase was excavations of the households behind Queen 'Mamohato's (Moshoeshoe's first wife) homestead, in the south-eastern part of the royal village. The last phase was the excavations of a midden in the south-western part of the royal village. The results of all excavations reflected a diverse representation of artefacts. Uncovered artefacts were then stored, and analysed.

1.7. Justification

The bulk of archaeological research that has been conducted in Lesotho mainly focuses on prehistoric Stone Age period. Pioneering archaeological investigations in the Maloti-Drakensberg by Carter (1969, 1976, and 1978) provided a glimpse of the history of human existence in modern Lesotho. Some of the highly investigated Middle and Later Stone Age sites include Sehonghong, Moshebi's Shelter, Ntloana-Tšoana, Ha-Makotoko and Ha Seloja. This series of research, however, did not uncover the history of farming communities that moved into the area. Although very few archaeological studies were done to uncover histories of farmers in the Mohokare Valley and parts of the Free State, South Africa, Maggs (1976) and Dreyer (1990; 1992) have made significant archaeological contributions (Mitchell 2018: 344-345).

Archaeological research of farming communities that resided in the present-day Lesotho is very limited. Apart from the excavation of a historical site of Makoanyane, a site that falls in the periphery of Thaba-Bosiu, there has only been a short-lived excavation of Thaba-Bosiu (Dreyer 1992; 1998; King & Nic Eoin 2014; King et al 2014). The excavations of both sites yielded glass beads, pottery, and a few metal objects (King & Nic Eoin 2014). The significance of Thaba-Bosiu

and the different political roles it has taken need to be further uncovered, and interrogated. A deeper understanding of the archaeology of Thaba-Bosiu and its surroundings will inform any current and future developments of the site. The following chapters will therefore present the historical and archaeological significance of Thaba-Bosiu in the quest to understand the identity of Basotho and also the complexity of Thaba-Bosiu as once just a mountain among many, that eventually became the centre of Sotho and Nguni communities that resided in the Mohokare Valley.

It is for the most part only recently that a few archaeological investigations have focused on farming communities, though in most cases, such studies were prompted by development projects (Thorp 2000; King 2009; Mitchell 2009; King and Challis 2017). A crucial factor contributing to this marginalised section of archaeology is because there is a significant lack of Basotho archaeologists trained or specializing in the area with local knowledge. As a way of addressing such limitations, this study adopts different methodologies to uncover the archaeology of past farming communities. Oral traditions and lived experience make this study a crucial contribution to the very understudied history of the Nguni and Sotho-speaking communities that settled in the Mohokare Valley.

1.8. Organisation of the Study

The next chapter explores the literature of Southern African Farming Communities and how archaeological and historical approaches have contributed to the knowledge about their past. The chapter further highlights major themes from the historical archaeology of Southern Africa. Included is a study of the nature of interactions between missionaries and different farming communities. The chapter additionally highlights debates on postcolonial approaches to understanding the past. The evolution of decoloniality among indigenous communities is also discussed. Chapter Three provides a historical background of Nguni and Sotho-speaking communities that settled in the Free-State and Lesotho. An assessment of the methodologies employed in this study is presented in Chapter Four. Excavations and surveys processes are also presented in this chapter. Chapter Five examines the history of settlements and architecture of southern Sotho communities, along with the architecture of the settlement structures on Thaba-Bosiu. Chapter Six presents results and analysis of local ceramics recovered during survey and

excavations on the mountain. An interpretation of these ceramics is also provided and most importantly, the function of these ceramics for past communities is discussed. A detailed analysis of the Thaba-Bosiu beads is covered in Chapter Seven. Current approaches to Southern African bead studies forms part of the discussion in this chapter. Chapter Eight provides an analysis and interpretation of faunal remains from Thaba-Bosiu. The discussion in this chapter covers the significance of animals to the Sesotho and Nguni cultures. Chapter Nine presents archaeological material that is associated with contact period and other small finds. In this chapter, foreign ceramics, metal objects, buttons and other small finds are presented and discussed. The discussion in Chapter Ten addresses the aim and objectives of the study based on the results presented in the previous chapters. The study concludes by providing recommendations for future research at Thaba-Bosiu. The following details the theoretical and literature review of this study.

2.0. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL APPROACH: DECOLONIALITY AND REDRESSING THE PAST

> "My humble claim is that geo- and body- politics of knowledge has been hidden from the self-serving interests of Western epistemology and that a task of decolonial thinking is the unveiling of epistemic silences of Western epistemology and affirming the epistemic rights of the racially devalued…" (Mignolo 2009: 162).

Africa in the last 300 years has experienced dark injustices of colonialism, imperialism, and slavery (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). These dark dynamics have resulted *inter alia* in the significant loss of control over land, freedom of expression, histories, and knowledge production (Fanon 1952; Bhambra 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; 2018; Chirikure 2020). Colonialism was met with resistance that culminated in political struggles and African philosophies that promote the preservation of an African identity (Fanon 1952; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; 2018). In the 21st century, many years after independence, Africans still experience all kinds of injustices, under the encroachment of neo-colonialism, capitalism and globalisation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; 2018). This novel phenomenon pervasive throughout the world has since been termed 'coloniality' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013).

Although colonialism is no longer in place in many places in which it was formerly a fixture, its impact is still prevalent in the Global South, albeit in mutated form. 'Coloniality', which stands in its stead, is "a power structure, an epochal condition, and epistemological design" (Gatsheni-Ndlovu 2013: 11) that continues to plague and disregard previously colonised societies. In the process, the histories, and identities of the Global South is defined in terms of its colonisers (Gosden 2001; Liebmann 2008). This has thus, influenced postcolonial scholars to challenge coloniality, though not entirely successful (Bhabha 1994; Lightfoot 2000; Gosden 2001). Postcolonial scholars have studied the impact of coloniality on former colonies, however, their methodological approaches have to date remained Eurocentric. Postcolonial thought focused on relationships and cultures that emerged from the postcolonial era, and has continued to mimic colonial constructs when studying these communities. As an alternative to postcoloniality, this

study suggests decoloniality, in service of epistemic freedom. Decoloniality successfully liberates Africa and its past from Eurocentric approaches (Fanon 1952; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; 2018; Chirikure 2020) and this study adopts this approach to uncover the histories of the people of Thaba-Bosiu and this is demonstrated later in the results chapters. To understand the political and social influences of the western culture on the history of African communities, the following section explores archaeological themes in the nature of contact between southern African farming communities and the Western world.

2.1. Themes in the history of Western Contact and Southern African Farming Communities: A historical archaeological approach

The initial contact between Europeans and southern African farmers was primarily through activities by missionaries. The arrival of missionaries in Southern Africa was not initially well-received by some African communities. Mission stations in the nineteenth century had different priorities and tasks in terms of introducing Christianity (Swanepoel 2018; 2022). Those missionaries who were welcomed tended to be received due to an interest in European goods, securing Western weapons, or learning more about Western educational systems, particularly those related to medicine (Sundkler and Steed 2000; Kirkaldy 2009). In the Eastern Cape, for instance, Africans were particularly interested in learning and adopting Western irrigation methods (Frescura 2015). Converting Africans was however challenging, because African leaders were concerned that their sovereignty may be compromised by missionary contact. These leaders were revered, and thus for a long time, their followers did not show any significant interest in converting to Christianity (Kirkaldy 2009).

The influence of missionaries on African dressing or fashion came in many forms. The Lutheran Mission, for instance, was very strict on women's clothing, specifically those who were members of their church (Ruether 2002; Frescura 2015). There were also cases where missionaries strongly opposed indigenous body modifications, or nakedness of any public kind (Frescura 2015:614). Others went as far as influencing hairstyles or mannerisms, such as walking or sitting (Kirkaldy and Wirz 2000: 30). Other missionaries, such as those from Berlin, did not have any problem with the African clothing, instead they invested in documenting their style of clothing (Ruether 2002). Concerning the adoption of a European style of clothing, there were also conflicting feelings

between mission stations. In the 1870s, the Basotho for instance, had developed a penchant for it (Frescura 2015). Some missionaries were not enthusiastic about indigenous countries wearing European clothing, while others did not have any such concern, rather, they encouraged it (Delius and Trapido 1983; Ruether 2002). Although the discussion of clothing has given us a glimpse into the complex interaction between Africans and missionaries, architecture also provides us with the alternative nature of cultural appropriation. For instance, the rectangular structures present at some historical sites may reflect this.

These amongst other aspects of African culture alienated missionaries and led to their cultural encroachment on African tradition. Architectural designs and building processes, however, were uniquely preserved from the deleterious effects of colonialism (Frescura 2015). The Basotho were also interested in learning about Western construction techniques. The missionaries at the time took advantage of this interest by training locals in handicrafts, while also introducing them to Christianity (Germond 1967:67). Not surprisingly, the historical archaeology of missions is a very healthy subject of research in southern Africa (see Swanepoel *et al*. 2008; Swanepoel 2022) vital to explorations of interactions between the local and the incoming.

2.2. Postcolonial approaches to the past

Postcolonial thought in archaeology takes different routes, depending on the region. In the United States, for instance, a postcolonial approach explores the impacts and interactions as well as representations formed within societies characterised by a history of European colonialism (Patterson 2008). The late twentieth century saw burgeoning postcolonial discussion related specifically to the impacts of colonialism on the creation of new cultures and societies (Liebmann 2008). The introduction of post-colonial theory in archaeological studies has, importantly, brought about consideration of the fluidity of cultures of former colonizer communities that has previously been overlooked in the field (Thomas 1994; 2012). ‘Static cultures’ have as a result been re-narrativised as cultures that are instead dynamic (Oyen 2013). The transformation and interrogation of unethical archaeological practices is concomitant to postcolonial thought (Hall 2005; Chami 2006; Ndlovu 2009; McIntosh 2009). Among the interventions of postcolonial

archaeology is the study of identities precisely born out of colonialism, that is, the investigation of the types of relationships and identities that exist within societies subjected to it (Bhabha 1994; Lightfoot 1995; Gosden 2001). Where the colonial impact on societies is investigated, the dichotomous dynamics between colonisers and coloniser are made plain (Bhabha 1994; Gosden 2001). Postcolonial researchers explore colonial experiences from the point of view of the gaze cast by coloniser, thereby foregrounding the agency of the indigenous societies in the colonial dichotomy, and detailing how, out of these dynamics, hybrid identities/cultures are formed (Liebmann 2008).

Interactions between different cultures necessarily results in a degree of alteration to identity. Contact between multiple cultural societies or even on an individual level has often resulted in identities that can be understood to be multifaceted. Societies affected by colonialism have sparked debates over the nature and degree of their fluidity over time. In response, postcolonial theory highlights discussions related to the type of identities and cultures that are generated in/by/of/for colonial spaces (Gosden 2001:241). Studying social structures can, therefore, help in understanding the "construction and interrelations of identities" within communities (Patterson 2008: 30). Homi Bhabha (1994; 2001) argues that re-defined identities within colonial settings differ. The conundrum of the Coloniser and Colonised is defined by complex power relations, according to which one group cannot survive without the other (Patterson 2008). According to Bhabha (1994; 2001), postcolonial approaches uncover the relationship of agency and resistance between Coloniser and Colonised to reveal how the Coloniser needs and depends upon the colonial subject to maintain its authority and identity as a dominant group (Bhabha 1994; Patterson 2008). Bhabha (1994) further argues that power and the type of relationships that evolve out of colonial frontiers are complex, where identities are constantly being re-defined.

Mimicry is a model of interaction describing relationships formed out of the intermingling of dominant and subordinate identities. Bhabha describes it as a form of both compromise and camouflage (1994). As a model of interaction, mimicry categorises the 'other' (in most cases the periphery or subordinate) as nearly identical to the core/periphery (Ashcroft et al. 2000: 139-142; Bhabha 2004: 122-123). Although Bhabha (1994) suggests mimicry to be "a strategy of reform, regulation and discipline" of the subordinate group, power imbalances are still highlighted, where the identity of the subordinate group is compromised.

In African Iron Age archaeological studies for example, African researchers continued to reproduce unequal relations by following colonial hierarchies and knowledge production matrices (Chirikure 2021), inscribing mimicry as a narrative lens. An alternative would have been to challenge the colonial power relations observed, and rewrite local histories from ways in which they have experienced and understood (Chirikure 2021).

The articulation of culture contact at colonial frontiers has also led to discussions about the nature of the relationships formed out of general culture contact. Postcolonial archaeologies discussed in the context of colonial interactions tend to isolate research into identities formed out of the colonial spectrum. Adopting methods of research that exclusively concern western interactions with indigenous societies of different regions suggests that these various societies (human agencies) are somehow homogenous. As Naum states: "Postcolonial theory could be used in approaching the complexity of borderlands because it problematises human relations and views material culture as enmeshed in negotiation, preserving or shifting social and cultural identities" (2010:105).

Postcolonial archaeologies also included approaches to pre-colonial societies, through the employment of multiple sources of data beyond the archaeological focus (Chami 2006; 2009; Schoeman 2010; Patterson 2008; Schmidt 2014). The use of oral testimonies, for instance, is advocated for in the study of Iron Age/ farming societies (Huffman 1982; 2012; Schmidt 2014). Although this has historically been the case, scholars have still failed to give agency to the subjects under their scrutiny (Huffman 1991; 2010; 2012). Postcolonial scholars have also failed to conduct their studies in a manner that is respectful and empowering to the communities in which they are studying (Chirikure 2020), hence, the radical consideration of decoloniality in transforming the archaeological discourse.

Archaeological practice was introduced in Africa as a colonial tool to learn more about the indigenous societies in different areas. The colonial agenda thus isolated communities and redefined their past (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; Mignolo 2018). The archaeology and history of many African communities has been recorded and interpreted from a foreign perspective. An attempt to address these past injustices encourages postcolonial views, which were approached and defined in multiple ways. Archaeological methods, such as excavations or analysis of material remains, are not sufficient when investigating pre-colonial societies not previously introduced to literary or written records. Archaeological investigations in the past have mainly given priority to scientific

methods, and have largely overlooked alternative sources of knowledge, such as oral testimonies (Gaudreau 2015).

In cases where at the time the historical events occurred, there were no written records kept, oral traditions and oral histories play a crucial role in either corroborating or disapproving archaeological investigations (Posnansky & Decorse 1986: 2; Martindale & Marsden 2003: 35; Behrens and Swanepoel 2008). Oral histories and traditions are, therefore, useful in answering historical questions that cannot be completely deciphered through archaeological investigation. Research in historical archaeology has, as a result, referenced oral recollection, where oral traditions and oral histories have been useful in identifying aspects of important historical events.

Postcolonial archaeologists continue to critically extend sources of data beyond their discipline. Anthropology and history have played a crucial role in providing new perspectives in archaeological approaches. Peter Schmidt (2013: 37) argues in this regard that oral testimonies are imperative in uncovering structural changes within social cultures. The use of oral traditions and oral histories has, therefore, been constructive in archaeological investigations. Oral traditions are verbal records of recollections passed along from one generation to another (Echo-Hawk 2000), while oral histories are recollections or memoirs from firsthand informants (Echo-Hawk 2000; Schmidt 1990: 253). Initially, archaeologists and anthropologists skeptically integrated oral testimonies and narratives in research, due to the influence of western scholarship (Atalay 2012; Gaudreau 2015). The critical use of oral histories and traditions in archaeological investigations has yielded valuable results in understanding the history and archaeology of present communities.

In historical and archaeological research, oral histories are significant in providing evidence of incidents that occurred in the past. Oral histories are utilised in archaeological research in order to understand past and contemporary events and situations that occurred during the lifetime of the informants (Vansina 1985: 12). Oral histories are additionally defined as "…invaluable in the ethnoarchaeology of religious and ritual practices, particularly in tracing out changes in symbolic values that have accompanied culture change in the historical era" (Schmidt 1990: 254).

The advantage of using oral histories is that they can be investigated, because inf ormants may have experienced first-hand the information they have recorded (Schmidt 1990: 253). The disadvantage of oral histories is that the recorders, particularly ethnographers, may manipulate the

findings to serve their narrative agendas (Schmidt 1990: 253). Despite this, there remains a reliance on oral histories in archaeological research.

Oral traditions continue to be utilised in answering significant questions pertaining to cultural changes within a given society. Archaeologists have employed oral traditions in order to identify archaeological sites (Scully 1979). Oral traditions provide information about historical landscapes and settings of the ancient past. In the past, researchers have rejected the use of oral traditions, because these were regarded as myths (Lowie 1917). The use of oral traditions is done with caution, because information by word of mouth can easily be altered. Researchers have, as a result, approached oral traditions by searching for evidence that confirm oral records (Ritchie 1995:95-101). In other cases, oral traditions, particularly myths have been used to reconstruct cultural changes, and historical events (Echo-Hawk 2000:270).

The use of oral traditions has been advocated for by the United State community of academics and state agencies in the historical research of Native American histories. The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) for instance, communicated the significant role of oral records in reconstructing the history in the present (Echo-Hawk 2000:270). By combining archaeological resources and oral records, archaeologists have uncovered historical contexts regarding the Arikara settlement of North Dakota in America Echo-Hawk (2000: 272-275).

The use of oral testimonies in African archaeological investigations has been crucial, particularly in trying to understand the cultural changes that led to the birth of present-day communities. Schmidt (2013) argues that oral histories and oral traditions have been readily adopted in the study of African past where African societies have experienced extensive culture change. As briefly highlighted earlier, oral testimonies are also utilised in cases where literacy was only recently introduced in the present. African societies are not an exception. Oral testimonies according to Schmidt (2013) are also applicable to research in the African context because they are useful in identifying, both geographically and functionally, the location and meaning of archaeological sites.

In the African context, oral histories and traditions have become valuable tools in uncovering the history of culture change, particularly among the hunter-gatherer communities and farming communities of Southern Africa (Behrens and Swanepoel 2014). Archaeological and oral testimonies continue to be critically employed in uncovering cultural complexes of past and

present Southern African societies. Oral testimonies have, additionally, been useful in the construction and reconstruction of the Northern Basotho, AmaZulu, Eswatini and Southern Basotho kingdoms. In response to the previously ignored histories of Southern African Bantu-speaking societies, archaeologists have re-defined the archaeological investigations of the last 500 years, in order to study African societies (Swanepoel et al. 2008). Although the use of both archaeological resources and oral testimonies does not guarantee accurate descriptions and identification of cultural changes, their use in the Southern African context has been useful. The next section discusses case studies where both oral testimonies and archaeological methods have been utilised in the investigation of identity construction within frontiers in contact periods.

2.3. Culture Contact and frontiers

> "The ethnographies, oral histories, anthropological and archaeological studies dating to this period provided evidence of intensive mixing of peoples and associated material culture and numerous and complex processes resulting in the fission, fusion and interaction of different players on the socio-economic landscape" (Esterhuysen 2009: 210).

Archaeological research has been crucial in the identification of these identities. The frontier as a concept has been long discussed in regards to Africa (Alexander 1984; Lane 2004). The discussion of frontiers was initially brought up in the period 19th and 20th centuries where researchers were investigating the range of occupation by European farmers in Asian, Australian, and North American regions (Turner 1962; Alexander 1977). The frontier is otherwise defined as constantly shifting boundary "of an expanding society at the edge of substantially free lands" (Turner 1962). Frontiers take different forms, viz. both static and moving frontiers, which are both associated with farming communities (Alexander (1977).

Frontiers that are regarded as static are usually characterised by a halt in the expansion of societies beyond original area of occupation (Marks *et al.* 2014: 30). Static frontiers in their nature are said to have developed subsequent to the rise of moving frontiers. The transition from moving frontiers to static frontiers takes place in the circumstances where certain populations reach the density of their size and occupation is near the maximum carrying capacity of the landscape they occupy

(Marks et al. 2014). The growth in density can be traced from instances of gradually moving frontiers.

Moving frontiers, particularly within the context of farmer communities, are characterised by the introduction of new lifestyles into new spaces without ecological or geographical restrictions or influences (Alexander 1984; Marks *et al.* 2004). Within these frontiers, different societies may interact, for instance, interactions that took place between agropastoralists and hunter-gatherers of Southern Africa (Marks *et al.* 2014; Mitchell 2018). Within the context of moving frontiers, farming societies are known to initially occupy certain spaces, thereafter, expanding to new areas (Ammerman & Cavalli-Sforza 1973; Alexander 1984).

An alternative model by Thompson (1983: 102) suggests a consideration of open and closed frontier stages. The open stage of frontiers entails the initial contact between different societies, while closed frontiers involve a single and more powerful group gaining authority (Thompson 1983). In many Southern African societies, this single authority has been the relevant coloniser. This model similarly applies to contact between indigenous societies. Although in the close stage a single authority establishes both political and economic authority, this does not imply that the other societies do not have any agency over their identity.

Studies have shown the expansion of the societies under the rule of King Moshoeshoe I beyond the frontiers of Thaba-Bosiu (Dreyer 1996; King 2014; Mitchell 2018). The discussion of moving and static frontiers could explain past social or political experiences in such spaces. The movement of many groups into the Mohokare Valley in the 19th century saw a constant shift of frontiers. The first occupants of Thaba-Bosiu were hunter-gatherers who experienced culture change, through which their nomadic lifestyle was significantly affected (Mitchell 2018). The constant interaction of hunter-gatherers and farmers may put hunter-gatherers in a position where they assimilate into the culture of newcomers, without alternative options of survival (Wadley 1996).

Studies of stonewall ruins, pottery, beads, and rock art for instance, are among many material remains that provide archaeologists insight into the past. A challenge, though, is critically assessing the archaeology conscious of numerous meanings that may be hidden in the artefact. Southern Africa has been home to early hunter-gatherers for centuries. Across the region, there is evidence of occupation of San groups. Rock art is evident from the Namib Desert, Zimbabwe,

Botswana, South Africa and Lesotho. Farming communities joined the region from the northern region of Africa (Mitchell 2002; Huffman 2007). Occupying the rest of Southern Africa, the different farming communities have interacted at different periods, and thus continuous and shifting frontiers.

Postcolonial archaeologies continue to advocate for multivocality within the discourse of discovering the past; particularly of those previously excluded in studies of the past (Gosden 2001; 2004; Schmidt 2009). Having become established as a colonial tool, archaeology has in the past been categorised as a discipline that serves to study subjects in direct service of colonialism. Indeed, one of the major drivers of archaeology as a discipline was to understand the way of life and the history of Africans so as to use their past as a tool to enhance colonial oppression. The archaeology of Southern Africa has, thus, mainly included a period of contact with European settlers.

2.4. Contact Archaeologies and Material Analysis: A Postcolonial Approach

Postcolonial concepts of culture contact such as creolisation, acculturation, mimicry, hybridity, frontier describe those communities that surface when two cultural groups meet. This section discusses case studies that show how postcolonial studies, focused on different societies, have been transformed both during and post contact. This is done to highlight limitations of theory. As outlined by Marks *et al.* (2014), interactions between farming and hunter-gatherer communities in Southern Africa resulted in the formation of complex identities. The case studies discussed, particularly amongst Southern African communities, provide a picture of the type of events and social changes that occurred, to assist in understanding the nature of relevant cultural changes that took place. However, such studies still do not provide a picture of how people lived.

It has been established that extreme social changes have resulted in the creation of new identities. Contact in the United State for instance, occurred between various cultural groups prior to as well as after the fact of European occupation. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Arikara Native American group came into contact with Euro-Americans and other Native American groups, such as the Mandan and Hidatsa (Rogers 1993:79). In order to identify change and continuity when cultural groups meet, archaeological and ethnohistorical approaches were

employed (Rogers 1993:79). Although historical records provided significant information about the social changes and events that took place in the Arikana territory, archaeology contributed in identifying what occurred during this period of contact.

Archaeological research, through analysis of material remains, was crucial in identifying cultural changes. According to Rogers (1993:79), the Arikana traded with Euro-Americans, and they initially controlled the rate at which they traded in foreign goods. Historical records reveal that the Arikana went through economic fluctuations due to trade in different time periods (c.f. Meyer 177). As a result of continuous conflicts and recession in trading opportunities, the Arikana abandoned the places in which they lived. In the new spaces to which the Arikana moved, contact was maintained, and as a result of shifts in political and economic processes, migrations continued. Excavations that took place in areas that the Arikana occupied yielded Euro-American and Native American artifacts. During the periods between the 1500s and early 1800s, excavations reveal a discontinuity of artifacts (Rogers 1993: 82), revealing periods where Euro-American goods would be more abundant than Arikana artifacts. In other instances, the Arikana artifacts would be more abundant than the Euro-American artifacts. Although archaeological and ethnohistorical data does not answer other questions, the available evidence reflects the type of social changes that the Arikana went through. Acculturation and hybridity in this case did take place.

Acculturation and hybridity formation can also be traced among African societies, where archaeological research reveals migration patterns and interactions of different ethnic groups towards Southern Africa. In order to understand the fluidity of identities that came out of the contact periods, archaeological methods and the evaluation of oral histories and traditions were employed (Bonner 2008; Esterhuysen 2008; Schmidt 2013). Analysis of artifacts, such as ceramics, beads, and iron materials contributed to the establishment of social and political changes that resulted in past and present Bantu ethnic groups.

Pre-colonial farming societies have moved into Southern Africa from East Africa in the last 1800 years (Huffman 1982; 2012; Hall et al 2013). The Bantu farmers of Southern Africa are made up of different clans who have formed ethnic identities and these communities can be seen to have permanently occupied the Southern African frontier because of their lifestyle. The Southern African Bantu speakers were agriculturalists, who produced crops such as sorghum, millets, cowpeas, and ground beans (Mitchell 2002; Huffman 2012:120). Metal production and use of

metals formed part of the rubric of Bantu farmers (Huffman 1982: 133; Mathoho *et al.* 2016; Chirikure 2007; Chirikure *et al.* 2008). In cases where the landscape was not conducive for iron production, communities traded goods for iron products, and it is through this manner of trade that contact was maintained (Chirikure *et al.* 2008). Analysis and interpretation of materials that were used by these communities gives insight into the type of social, economic and political activities associated with these cultural groups.

To understand the different identities of Bantu farmers, excavations have been carried out, where the artifacts such as ceramics, metals and beads found have been analysed and interpreted to establish group identities. Studies of ceramics have given us an insight into the identities of different ethnic groups. The interpretations of ceramics have been grounded in the idea that ceramic or pottery styles were used by their producers, and thus, were unique to a single cultural group (Huffman 1982, 2002; Pikirayi 1993; c.f. Evers 1988: 5). Ceramic styles have also been used to trace the distribution of the makers of the style (Esterhuysen 2008: 197). Among the first communities to be established through analysis of ceramic differences in South Africa were the Leokwe and K2 communities, named after these ceramic styles (Huffman 2014:102). Ceramic styles may also have evolved as a result of personal idiosyncratic improvements that were eventually adopted by a number of manufacturers. It is possible that the mimicry of styles may have happened within the same group, and that it was not influenced by external groups. The Leokwe, Mapungubwe and K2 communities were also one of the first ethnic communities that were in mutual contact (Huffman 2014). Through the analysis of ceramic styles of both communities the type and degree of contact were identified. Excavations of the two sites have revealed the frequency of their interactions.

The interpretation of ceramic styles was for while known to provide details about contact and identity of a certain cultural group, however, alternative interpretations have since been suggested (Pikirayi 2007; Esterhuysen 2008). Analysis and interpretation of ceramics, as suggested by Esterhuysen (2008) additionally determined the socio-political dynamics that take place within cultural groups. The pottery analysis of the northern Sotho-speaking communities of the Kekana and the BaKgatla communities of the present Limpopo showed possibilities of pottery styles introduced through marriage alliances (Esterhuysen 2008). Bantu speaking communities have historically been known to have formed alliances with their counterparts. It is therefore possible

that ceramic makers married into a different cultural group from their own would bring in part of their identity into their new family. That is, the agency of producers would be presented in the pottery style (Esterhuysen 2008). It is therefore useful to consider the elements of heterogeneity, as presented by the ceramic style (Esterhuysen 2008: 206).

Although studies of ceramics have contributed to understanding agencies of cultural transformations among Bantu-speaking communities, there are certain cultural elements that have remain unaccounted for by simply focusing on archaeological remains. Innocent Pikirayi (2007) argues that in Iron Age research, ceramic style also demonstrates social structure. Ceramic interpretations should alternatively be linked to value systems (Pikirayi 2007). In addition to the archaeological interpretations of artifacts suggested, oral histories and ethnographies have presented descriptions of alliances formed through marriage among pre-colonial farming communities.

Ceramics are not the only archaeological materials interpreted to understand socio-political structures and interactions of Southern African societies. Southern African San rock art is said to have depictions reflecting contact between not only hunter-gatherers and western communities, but also farming communities, whose mutual interaction have affected religious and socio-political structures and practices of either affected communities (Hall and Smith 2000). Painted depictions of shamans transforming into baboons in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, for instance, demonstrate a process of creolisation. Challis maintains that:

> In the instance of the AmaTola 'Bushmen', we can see symbols and painted visions of shared beliefs enabling a process of cultural creolisation that created something new that was not San or Nguni or Khoe or coloured or European, but a fusion, in different proportions, of each.

Settlement patterns of pre-colonial Bantu farmers continue to be discussed and debated in the historical investigation of contact period (Huffman 1982; 2012). In order to understand the significance of settlement patterns, Huffman (2012) investigated the layout of the homesteads and the idea of whether these are affected by social, economic, or political structures. Of course, in order to uncover these significances, oral records and testimonies need to be evaluated. Huffman (2012:120) further argues that social structures and rules of the Bantu farmers have influenced the

structural arrangements of their settlements. Cattle play a central role in the social, political, and economic structures of Bantu-speakers of Southern Africa. Religious beliefs such as ancestral roles, initiation or 'male hereditary leadership', and bride wealth ideologies and practices, have accounted for the physical set-up of farmer settlements (Kuper 1982). These are different models of understanding the significance of cattle among Southern African farming communities. The Central Cattle Pattern was introduced as an alternative method to interpreting farmer settlements in Southern Africa (Kuper 1982). This approach was, however, subsequently countered by Segobye (1998), who argued that women are central to understanding the significance of cattle among Bantu-speaking farming communities. Oral testimonies, however, give an account for the study of structural changes in technology and architecture within social or cultural groupings (Schmidt 2013: 37).

The use of oral histories and traditions in archaeological investigations of the cultural identities of the Bantu farmers of Southern Africa has yielded significant information pointing to the circumstances that led to state formation. With reference to the discussions from the previous section, oral histories and traditions are useful in the identification of possible sites that could be investigated for archaeological purposes. In the Southern African context, what we know today about existing and researched archaeological sites has partly been the result of the use of oral records. Studies of pre-colonial state formation have been enhanced to a certain extent by oral histories and traditions.

The formation of present ethnic/cultural groups of Southern Africa, particularly the Amaswati, AmaZulu and Southern Basotho states can be understood to be the result of colonial constructs. The Lifaqane/Mfecane/Difaqane turmoil of the early 19th Century has not only disrupted the political settings of many frontier zones, it has also coercively formed and shaped their hybrid and creolised societies (Mitchell 2002; Bonner 2008; Wright 2008). Oral records reflecting the history of the Amaswati state for instance show that the Kosi Bay, Breyten-Middleburg and Crocodile River frontiers were characterised as fluid and as spaces of interaction and interconnectedness (Bonner 2008). Oral records maintain that clan chiefdoms of Nguni and Sesotho-speaking clans joined the dominant Amaswati chieftainship to form the present Eswatini state (Bonner 2008: 251-253). A combination of the use of oral records and archaeological research will provide data about the identities formed along areas of interaction within this state.

2.5. Decoloniality: A solution to Epistemic Freedom

Africa's struggle against colonial rule was motivated by the constant disregard for its vast creativity and achievements (Garlake 1973; Chirikure 2020). An African past was often questioned, ignored, and mostly redefined or curtailed to maintain the power colonial rule (Caton-Thompson 1931; Hall 1990; Pikirayi 2001; Chirikure 2020), where in response, to liberate Africans from injustices of coloniality, African leaders and scholars strongly advocated for a reclaiming of an African past (Fanon 1952; Holl 1990; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013;2018; Chirikure 2020). To achieve this, a decolonial approach to knowledge of an African past has been proposed for schools as well as institutional research (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). There is an urgent need then, to explore African epistemologies and knowledges about world experiences.

The history of archaeology in Africa is one steeped in Eurocentric approaches, which have only further isolated and removed the agency of African societies. The damage brought about by coloniality to Africa, is through the domination of ideologies in schools that serve to promote Eurocentric methods and knowledges of the past (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). Archaeological practice in the past, for instance, served as a tool to maintain and preserve interests of Westerners in Africa (Shepherd 2002; Chirikure 2020). Although Africans were subjects of study, their voices were silenced, and their contributions to archaeological research served as labour and become informants (Shepherd 2002; 2003; Chirikure *et al.* 2016; 2020).

> During the colonial period, the number of African archaeologists was very small, if not non-existent, making the study of the past through material and non-material remains exclusively a non-African affair (Chirikure 2020: 5).

One may then argue that the limited or non-contribution of Africans to investigations of their past has led to an inaccurate presentation of the African history (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; Chirikure et al 2017). This further means that studies on the past served western ideologies and perspectives of African communities, and ignoring their agency. Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013:13) suggests that this colonial abstract ought to be "unmasked, resisted and destroyed". In African archaeology, several authors propose that this ought to be achieved by adopting methods that are divorced from

colonial and imperialist undertones (Fanon 1963; Lane 2011; Pikirayi 2015; Schmidt and Pikirayi 2016; Chirikure 2020).

Decolonising knowledge does not begin with that which is taught in the classrooms and institutions. Instead, it begins with empowering and encouraging African scholars to become the leaders of knowledge production by not seeking only to emulate colonialist approaches, but by adopting indigenous knowledges in their quest to uncover an African past. As argued by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013:11), African education and research institutions remain to this day hubs for reproduction of coloniality. The only acceptable methodologies in these spaces are those that are deemed acceptable in the modern/scientific world (Mignolo 2009; Gatsheni 2013; Chirikure 2020).

Chirikure (2020: 5) argues that African archaeology scholars ought to avoid mimicking structures that promote colonial methods of knowledge production, where research was deemed as a scientific subject that could only be undertaken by experts in the field (Chirikure 2020: 5). This meant that they became isolated from their communities and thus produced results that silenced key voices in their research endeavours (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; Chirikure 2020). Decoloniality is then key to changing the current dynamics of uncovering or discovering an African past (Mignolo 2009; Schmidt and Pikirayi 2016; Manyanga and Chirikure 2017).

The decolonial option entails a radical transformation of research methods, which de-westernise and decolonise thought processes, theories, and arguments in research spheres (Mignolo 2009; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; Schmidt and Pikirayi 2018). Resisting and unmasking, as suggested by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013; 2018), could take the form of acknowledging and embracing African approaches of knowledge production and dissemination of heritage and histories. Thus, African archaeology needs to be informed largely by local knowledges, including indigenous knowledge systems, as well as engaging a multidisciplinary approach to investigations of the past.

This study is a response to this call to decolonise archaeology in our different interests. The study, additionally follows a call within historical archaeology to conduct research that is informed by voices of the locals (Schmidt and Pikirayi 2018). The case of Thaba-Bosiu is in particular unique, firstly due to the limited research in the histories of farming communities that moved in the region. This research further uncovers these unknown histories and cultures by linking them to the material

remains excavated from the mountain. The next chapter sets out by exploring previous research on Nguni and Sesotho-speaking communities that settled in the Free State and Lesotho landscapes, thereafter highlighting the much-required areas of research in Iron Age studies in Lesotho.

3.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1. Introduction

The beginning of this thesis introduced the contribution of historical archaeology to our understanding of Iron Age communities. At the forefront of historical archaeology in African studies is the inclusion of various methodologies in the process of interpreting an African past (Pikirayi 2015; Schmidt 2018). Studies conducted in the Free-State and the Natal have uncovered material culture that provides insight into the livelihoods of the communities that settled in those places (Maggs 1976). Such studies will also serve as reference points to the study of Thaba-Bosiu's past. This is because the same cultural groups that settled around Thaba-Bosiu were also scattered across the then Free State and Natal. As a result, this chapter assesses studies of Southern African farming communities to situate the archaeology of farming communities that settled in the present-day Lesotho.

3.2. An Historical archaeology of Africa

The definition of historical archaeology continues to be debated. Previously, the subdiscipline was primarily linked to the presence and influence of the West on indigenous communities (Schuyler 1978; Orser and Fagan 1995; Orser 1996). This entails that historical archaeology focused on studies of modern history, which mostly accommodated histories of Europeans and their interactions with indigenous communities (Swanepoel 2009; Schmidt 2016: 183). In Africa, historical archaeological studies further focused on historical monuments that were linked to a colonial context (Chittick 1974: 498). The discipline further focused on the archaeology of written and literary records (Chittick 1974; Hall and Silliman 2006; Hall 2009; Schmidt 2016). This approach to historical archaeology is problematic, as it excludes the histories of indigenous communities before colonial contact (Reid and Lane 2004; Schmidt and Walz 2004).

The relevance of historical archaeology to an African past was previously questioned because of its prejudiced nature against non-western communities (Lane 2016). Critics of this approach

advocated for an inclusive archaeology that includes histories of pre-colonial communities (Lane 2016; Schmidt 2016; Schmidt and Pikirayi 2018).

> To seek remedies to this current segregation, we need to ask how historical archaeology may escape the bounds of implicit racism in its denial of historicity before literacy (Schmidt and Pikirayi 2018).

The institutional racism and prejudices against indigenous African pre-colonial histories can be seen to have been due to ill-informed perceptions that sees such histories as primitive and mythical knowledge (Schmidt and Pikirayi 2018: 447). Scholars are advocating for a critical decolonial approach, rather than just methodologies that are biased towards pre-colonial communities. Recent studies advocate for an historical archaeology that considers voices of indigenous communities (Lane 2016: 181; Swanepoel 2016). This study assumes a position where local knowledges and spiritual beliefs of the relevant communities are adopted to interpret the archaeology of Thaba-Bosiu.

3.3. Southern African Farmer Settlements in the Free State and Lesotho

The earliest farming communities to have moved and settled in Southern Africa represent pioneers of Iron Age settlements in the first millennium (Badenhorst 2009: 149; 2010: 88). Leading a farming lifestyle in this period also meant domesticating animals, cultivation of plants, and using metal technologies for different purposes (Mitchell and Whitelaw 2005; Badenhorst 2010). Archaeological investigations have also identified distinct ways in which these communities organised themselves within different landscapes where it was identified that water sources were most significant in the placement of the villages (Badenhorst 2010: 88). Farmers of this period built their houses with wattle-and-daub (Badenorst 2010).

The end of the first millennium and beginning of the second (AD 900-1300) is associated with Middle Iron Age sites. This period saw an increase in trade networks. Mapungubwe, located in the Limpopo Province of South Africa close to the border with Zimbabwe, was incorporated in the trans-Indian Ocean trade (Badenhorst 2010). This era could, therefore, be characterised as a period

in which global trade was on a rise. This significant rise in trade was sustained well into the end of the first millennium.

The period between AD 1300 and 1820s is primarily referred to as the Later Iron Age. The Nguni and Sotho-Tswana speaking communities were spread across Southern Africa during this period. The construction of stonewall structures across Southern Africa was prevalent during this period (Plug 1996; Mitchell 2002; Badenhorst 2008; 2010). The stone building patterns were unique to different societies. This entails that settlements in the Bokoni were built differently from those in the Free-State (Mitchell and Whitelaw 2005).

Ceramics were among some of the prevalent material culture that these different groups introduced (Mitchell and Whitelaw 2005). The pottery of the Nguni and South Basotho communities was distinguished in order to note any possible differences and similarities. There is for instance, *Blackburn* pottery, which is associated with the Nguni and is classified as part of the Early Iron Age (Robey 1980; Maggs and Ward 1984; Huffman 2020). Following this is the *Moor Park,* which is associated with the split between the Northern and the Southern Nguni (Huffman 2020). Movement of these communities resulted into the Type N (*Ntsoanatsatsi*) settlements, which were initially occupied by the Bafokeng (Maggs 1976). Huffman (2002: 9) challenges the view that the Koena moved into Ntsoanatsatsi after the Bafokeng had left in AD1550 and 1650, as is a common narrative according to oral traditions. The archaeology has not yielded any evidence of Kuena occupation at Ntsoanatsatsi (Huffman 2002; 2020)

According to Huffman (2020), Basotho pottery had similar elements to that of Tswana pottery. This is seen by characteristics such as the "sub-carinated profile, black arcades on a red background and focus on triangles near the mid-point" (Huffman 2020: 217). In addition, appliques are also common on the Basotho pottery.

The southern Basotho were among those groups with histories that may lead to understanding the modern societies and their interactions. Southern Basotho farming communities are those groups that moved into and settled in the modern Free State, parts of Cape, and Lesotho, where they encountered the Bafokeng and San communities. Trade networks across the Southern African

region was mostly dominated by Great Zimbabwe. The settlement patterns of the Southern Sotho have emerged from a careful study of archaeology and early written records. The central place of the cattle kraal in these settlements indicates the economic and symbolic importance of cattle in the life of the community (Maggs, 1976:241).

Farming communities that settled in the Free State built settlements using semi-weathered dolerite stone. The settlement walls consisted of three layers, with the outer and inner consisting of large stones, while the middle was filled with smaller rubble (Maggs 1976; Mitchell 2002: 349). These indicate that in general, the Southern Basotho preferred to build their homesteads on ridges overlooking river alleys where building materials were close at hand, either stone, wood, reeds for the *mohlongoa-fatše* style house, or stone corbelled houses (Gill 1993:32). The architectural pattern of these settlements differs across the Free State and modern Lesotho. Sesotho-speaking farmer settlements located in the Mohokare/ Caledon Valley consist of distinct differences that have made them unique to different groups. Across the present-day Free-State and Lesotho, settlements were grouped according to their technology and industry, for example, pottery or iron materials, and these are Type N, Type V and Type Z (Maggs 1976). The historical and archaeological record reflects distinct differences and similarities in the material remains and settlements. The differences in the settlement patterns, pottery, metal products and evidence of diverse social practices have given a picture of the type of lifestyles these Sotho and Nguni-speaking farming communities practiced.

Type N settlements also known as Ntsoanatsatsi (OUI) are historically regarded by the Basotho as their original home. The Basotho link many of their cultural activities to water, and this they believe is because they came from a place of water, or next to water, which is Ntsoanatsatsi (Gill 1993). Ntsoanatsatsi is associated with areas close to water sources that are either next to hills or on top of mountains (Gill 1993). The Bakoena and Bafokeng groups are also historically linked to Ntsoanatsatsi.

Ntsoanatsatsi is said to have been occupied between the 15th and 16th Centuries. Places that form part of Ntsoanatsatsi include Heidelberg, Frankford, Vrede, Standerton and Balfour. The earliest farmer occupants of OUI are believed to have been the Bafokeng, who were thereafter followed by Bakoena. The Koena clan at the time was under the rule of Napo, who had three sons,

Motebang, Lisema and Molapo. Bataung, Batlokoa and Basia also occupied Ntsoanatsatsi after the Koena clans abandoned the region in the late 16th century in search of farmland (Gill 1993; Mitchell 2002).

Type N settlements are characterised by one large circular animal enclosure surrounded by homesteads (Maggs 1976; Mitchell 2002). The material culture uncovered from OUI settlements includes beads, pottery, and different metal artefacts (Maggs 1976). A tradition of pottery characterised by comb-stamping in pendant triangles were excavated from OUI (Maggs 1976). Comb-stamping was also common in some Early Iron Age pottery. In areas of large populations such as OUI, one would expect to see evidence of either metal working or existence of metal artefacts (Maggs 1976; Chirikure *et al.* 2008: 89). Metal artefacts uncovered from excavations at an OUI site in the Free-State included corroded iron rods, and a flat-bladed spear (Chirikure *et al.* 2008: 89-90). Type N settlements are not the only settlement structures found in the Free-State.

Type V settlements, also known as Makhoareng OO1 are found in Lindley, Emerlo, Highveld and the Mohokare Valley. The sites are said to have been occupied between 17th and 19th Centuries. Type V settlements were built in a circular fashion connected by a single wall (Maggs 1993; Mitchell 2002). Connected to the primary enclosure used to house livestock is a secondary walling and these are extended by huts in some cases (Mitchell 2002).

Artefacts discovered at Type V settlements include pottery, beads, and different metal products. Type V pottery is characterised by stylus decoration and horizontal bands found in the Mohokare Valley. The OO1 pottery is characterised by pinched decoration on rims, and in others bands of clay used as decoration underneath the rims (Maggs 1976). Pottery vessels also include occasionally U-shaped and large globular pots, from which the 'red-brown to grey' colour is evidence of short-lived firing (Maggs 1976).

Type V settlements are said to be located in areas where there are no trees, and so there is no supply of wood to be used in iron smelting. Makhoareng, therefore, did not have any evidence of metal production.

> Iron-smelting was clearly not carried out locally, and supplies must have been obtained by trade, probably from north of the Vaal or east of the Drakensberg Escarpment (Maggs 1976:123).

Metal artefacts recovered from Type V settlements include spears, axes, hoes, knife blades, iron bangles, arrow heads, razors, iron rods, and awls. Copper artefacts recovered included beads, earrings and bangles.

OO1 and other similar sites near Heilbron revealed sandstone crucibles from, which copper was processed (Maggs 1976: 123; Chirikure et al 2008: 90-91). To compensate for the limitation of wood, cattle dung was used for fuel. Cattle dung in this case was not sufficient for metal production, therefore, the source of iron products is yet to be identified. The iron products are said to have come from outside through trade (Chirikure et al 2008).

Type Z settlements are also known as OXF 1, Matloang and Mooifontein settlements. These settlements are found in Ventersburg, Bothaville and Kroonstaad. Occupants of OXF 1 were farmers who practiced agriculture, herding and occasional hunting. Like many sites in the Free State, there was no evidence of metal production, and a limited number of metal products were recovered (Chirikure et al. 2008). Ceramic assemblage found at OXF 1 is characterised by pendant triangles and horizontal bands of shallow parallel grooves consisting of ochre burnish (Maggs 1976). Pottery consists of spherical shaped pots or sub-spherical bowls.

The discussion of settlement patterns and the communities associated with them is relevant in landscape research. This study not only analyses and interprets the different spaces on top of Thaba-Bosiu, but also provides an interpretation of the way people organised themselves to make different spaces useful. I, therefore, argue that an analysis of human settlements should not only encompass patterns, but it should also include the studies of material remains linked to such sites.

3.4. Physiography of the Mohokare Valley

3.4.1. The Climatology and Geology of Lesotho

Communities organise themselves in spaces in different ways that suit their cultures and their lifestyles. The study of the climate and geology of Lesotho may provide insight into people's lifestyles, the types of environments they occupy, and how these shape their culture and livelihoods. Farming communities of Southern Africa moved into the grassland biomes due to their

different ways of living. This section explores both the climate and geology of Lesotho, taking into account cultural influences.

Climate in the grasslands was conducive for an agricultural way of life (Mitchell 2002). Frequent summer rains were favourable for cultivation and livestock keeping, because of the availability of grass (Huffman 1993). Farmer communities in the grassland biomes produced sorghum, mealies and at a later stage following contact with various groups, maize was introduced (Mitchell 2002: 349). Lesotho falls under the grassland biome, and its people have for centuries adopted different ways of life that suit the environment in which they reside.

Lesotho is one of the smallest countries in Africa and is totally landlocked by South Africa with an approximate land area of not more than 30 000 square kilometres, of which 70% constitutes mountain ranges (Grab and Nash 2009: 474). The lowlands are located towards the west of the country, sharing the boundary with the Orange Free-State (Hyden 2002; Grab and Nash 2009: 474). The location of Lesotho is mostly influenced by the latitudinal and longitudinal position (Ziervoel and Calder 2003). These have resulted in extreme weather conditions, where the winters are very cold and the summers very hot (Grab and Nash 2009). The precipitation in winter is mainly snow. Lesotho's climate is continental, semi-arid to sub-humid, characterised by warm wet summers and very dry, cold winters (Grab and Nash 2009). The mean annual precipitation is between 740mm in the western lowlands and 1600mm in the north-eastern highlands (Hyden 2002). Much of the rainfall is experienced primarily in summer with 80% precipitation and only 10% in winter (Tyson *et al.* 1986). The mean temperatures for winter range between 4.3°C in the lowlands and -6.1°C in the highlands. The summer temperatures range between 17°C and 29°C in the highlands and lowlands, respectively (Moeletsi 2004).

Records show a non-consistent climatic experience throughout the 19th Century in Lesotho. Recollections by missionaries who stayed in Lesotho reflect the sometimes-extreme winter weather in the late 1830s, and mild winters in the mid-1800s (Grab and Nah 2009). Lesotho's 19th Century weather was largely characterised by conditions such as ground frost, snowfall, windstorms, rainstorms, fog, and hail (Tyson *et al.* 1986).

Climatic conditions significantly affected agricultural production (Beree 1854), where, out of this 30000 km^2, only 12% is said to be arable land (Lesmet 2021). Throughout the years, however, soil

erosion has significantly reduced productivity of the agriculture. Early farming communities that moved into Lesotho have since practiced farming and thereby being an important part of their livelihoods. Lesotho's terrain is largely steep, and this has affected the way in which people used their land.

3.4.2. Food crops and vegetal resources in the Mohokare Valley

Agriculture has been a primary practice that has shaped the economy and social structures of farming communities of Southern Africa. The very existence of both the food crops and trees in Lesotho have not only been attributed to nature, but also by human activity. The indigenous crops that were grown by farming communities in the Mohokare valley includes sorghum, beans, sweet reeds, pumpkin, and dagga (Gill 1993: 45).

With the establishment of the international relations, coupled with the Portuguese trade and with the arrival of European missionaries, and later colonialism, came the introduction of foreign plants. It is said that maize was introduced in South Africa in 1655 and has since become the dominant food crop. Maize was initially domesticated in Central México around 1500 BC (Sehlobo 2018). It was then brought into the African continent around 1500 AD, where it was disseminated throughout Southern Africa by local communities within a relatively short period of 500 years (Sehlobo 2018). It is now regarded as Africa's most important grain crop.

3.4.3. Maize in Lesotho

In South Africa, maize was initially introduced in 1655 and has since become one of the dominant food crops in Lesotho (Sehlobo 2018). Maize is produced in all the provinces of South Africa, but the most significant producing regions are the Free State, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, and the North West provinces. The geographical setting of the provinces which are very high in the production of maize in South Africa makes it inevitable for Lesotho not to have the same crop. One other thing which could have made Lesotho to become the granary for South Africa, is mainly producing for the mines, which in most cases form the base for the relationship between the two countries. On average, between 2.5 and 2.8 million hectares of commercial maize farms in Lesotho are planted each year (Sehlobo 2018). Maize managed to surpass sorghum and other small grains in dominance in Africa because maize is higher yielding and less labour intensive. which made a perfect crop for the Lesotho and Basotho due to the geographical build-up of the mountainous

kingdom (Mothibe 2002). However, the small grains still have their place in African Agriculture, not least because they are generally more nutritious and more drought tolerant (Gill 1993; Mothibe 2002).

The common types of maize grown in Lesotho are mainly white and yellow varieties, depending on the planting season (Gill 1993; Sehlobo 2018). The yellow mostly has been known to be fast-growing and very sweet. Before moving on to how Lesotho acquired maize, which became its source of staple food (papa), focus is placed on when the country first acquired maize. Lesotho's primary crops includes, among others, corn (maize), sorghum, beans, wheat, and peas (Gill 1993; Rants'o 2019). The crops that are grown in each district vary depending on the climatic conditions (Rants'o 2019). To respond to the way in which maize arrived in South Africa and then Lesotho, it is noted that it first arrived on the coast of Africa during the seventeenth century. It was initially introduced by the Portuguese to supply their trading forts, but the crop was quickly adopted by African farmers due to its high energy yield, its low labour requirements, and its short growing season (Cherniwchan and Moreno-Cruz 2017).

In Southern Africa, maize has become by far the most important staple food, accounting for over 50% of calories in local diets, in Malawi alone, maize occupies 90% of cultivated land and 54% of Malawians' total calories (Cherniwchan and Moreno-Cruz 2017). Malawians of the late twentieth have the adage '*chimango ndi moyo'* (maize is our life) (McCann 2001).

As is the case in Malawi maize has occupied the status of being the staple food in Lesotho. It constitutes the largest portion of the diet of Basotho. Far from considering it as a European food like the Bemba men, Malawians have forgotten maize's New World origins and refer to their favourite variety *chimango cha makola* (maize of the ancestors) (Morojele and Mahlapane 2020). In South Africa itself, maize comprises 60% of all land planted in cereals and 40% of total calories consumed (Morojele and Mahlapane 2020). The only crop in Southern Africa with largest composition of the diets.

3.4.4. Brief history of Beans in Lesotho

Dry beans have been part of the human diet for thousands of years, and comes in hundreds of sizes, shapes and colour. The most famously grown beans are pinto beans, constituting about 60% of the beans grown in Lesotho, Kidney beans about 30%, where later in the 20th and 21st century, the

sugar bean and others share the remaining 10% (Morojele and Mahlapane 2020). The term "bean" is quite broad, and includes a variety of plants from the Leguminosae family (Seidel 2020). When discussing the history of beans, the story begins in South America. It was domesticated in Southern Mexico and Peru for more than 7000 years (Seidel 2020). Upon discovering more lands, the early European explorers also discovered new types of beans that they brought back to Europe and shared with other nations, including the African continent, especially Southern Africa and later, Lesotho. By the 18th Century, beans had become a distinctly popular crop throughout Europe, Asia and Africa (Seidel 2020).

Lesotho became an economic power after the devastation left by *Lifaqane* wars from 1818 to 1824, where, among the main legumes it produced was beans (Brokken *et al.* 1986). This made Lesotho the granary for South Africa's emerging mines. It is not clear which year exactly beans arrived in Lesotho, but it can be associated with the growth of the *Lifaqane* wars, which caused a surge in migration in Southern region of the African continent. The 1800s were the decades in which this crop arrives in the farmlands of Lesotho.

Beans are the main grain legume crop grown in Eastern and Southern Africa and Lesotho specifically (Brokken *et al.* 1986). Consumption of common bean is high, mostly because it is relatively inexpensive compared to meat. Then this famous legume came into Lesotho upon their interaction with the European market. Perhaps what led to the crop being so famous in Lesotho and becoming the staple legume is that rather Lesotho would have not had access to the crop. For the poor, common bean plays a strategic role in alleviating malnutrition, but other health related functions exist (McCann 2001). However, fresh beans are difficult to keep, and as such they are consumed for a short time only in season before beans dry. Consequently, beans in Eastern and Southern Africa are consumed as either cooked or boiled dry legumes. Therefore, beans of different kinds are also regarded as the staple food in Lesotho.

3.4.5. Brief history of exotic trees in Lesotho

In Southern African history, it is important to separate 'the forests from the trees' as it were. While forest history has been told from the perspective of scientific forestry, forest regulation, and government bureaucracies, the history of trees has largely been neglected. South Africa's forest history relates not to the management of indigenous vegetation, but rather to the massive planting of alien tree species (Showers 2010). Tree use and propagation pre-dated the idea of forestry and

covered more land than indigenous forests (Showers 2010). This makes it inevitable for a protectorate of the same colonial power like Lesotho, to have a different culture of tree plantation. In Lesotho, trees exist for subsistence, as well as aesthetics. Despite officially sponsored tree planting competitions, it was private plantations of eucalyptus and acacia trees to supply the needs of mines, industry, and the wattle bark export market, and not afforestation campaigns, that led to significant tree coverage, in the form of the same forest trees that are common in Lesotho today (Showers 2010).

The different vegetation that was planted in the landscape included, grape vines and fruit trees, including orange, fig, apple, stone fruits, pomegranate, and almond, as well as pines and acacias (Showers 2010). Plants were introduced into present-day Lesotho *(British Protectorate of Basutoland from 1868-1966),* a landscape both colder and wetter than that the coastal regions (Showers 2010). In this landscape, thin trees grew along riverbanks in gullies, and in sheltered and wetter spots on lower mountain slopes. Within 30 years, most of these trees had been harvested 'for the glory of God', that is, to build mission stations (Showers 2010). Introductions such as orange, pomegranate, and almond ultimately failed, but other exotics such as apples and the stone fruits – particularly peach – succeeded, and were rapidly adopted by the local inhabitants, the Basotho.

The largely treeless savanna and alpine vegetation of the mountainous kingdom of Lesotho has inspired tree planting activities since the first arrival of the Europeans in 1833. Missionaries from the Paris Evangelical Society brought in their wagons planting materials from both fruits and fuel wood trees (Gill 1993; Eldredge 1991). This says by the time Chief Moshoeshoe asked for British protection in the mid-1800s, the Basotho had already adopted this new culture in Lesotho. Many of the communities had started planting peach trees. Going forward, the British fourth government representative Col Charles Duncan Griffith (1871-1881) advocated for afforestation, offering a prize in 1876 to the person who planted and took care of the largest number of trees (Showers 2010). The largest mass tree planting in existence are those of the former woodlot project (1973-1987) (Showers 2010). This project supported not only tree planting, but also training the Basotho, as foresters and the creation of a forestry presence within government.

3.5. Baroa, Bafokeng and the Sotho-Nguni Farmers in the Caledon/Mohokare Valley

The region known in the present as Lesotho was previously home to Baroa, the hunter-gatherers of the Maloti mountains. Evidence of the existence of Baroa can be seen on many rock surfaces in many parts of Lesotho. Baroa is a Sesotho term for San hunter-gatherers. The nearby Phuthiatsana ea Thaba-Bosiu valley, less than 5km from Thaba-Bosiu, is one of the many areas in modern Lesotho with numerous rock art sites (Mitchell and Arthur 2014), where archaeological investigations have uncovered material culture associated with the Later Stone Age hunter-gatherers (Mitchell and Arthur 2014; Arthur and King 2015; King 2015). As with many sites in Lesotho, the earliest occupants of Thaba-Bosiu were Baroa. An open-air site on the south-western part of Thaba-Bosiu shows evidence of Later Stone Age tools.

The Free State and modern Lesotho have been home to agropastoral communities known to have moved in from the 16th Century. The Basotho nation as known today is defined by clans and lineages of Sotho and Nguni-speaking farmers. Historically, some of the earliest farmers settled and occupied present-day Lesotho and Free-State South Africa between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries (Maggs 1976). What is presently known about these communities has been centered on historical and archaeological research of southern Sotho-speaking communities conducted in the Orange Free-State, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal regions (Maggs 1976; Dreyer 1992; 1994; Hall 1997; Hall 1998). This section, therefore, provides a brief background study of the origins of the Lifaqane wars and how Basotho nation came to into being. This section further elaborates specific events that highlight extreme societal changes that may have led to the formation of new group identities, particularly in the Mohokare Valley.

Sotho and Nguni-speaking communities encountered in most cases forced interactions due to the unrest caused by Lifaqane. Shifting frontiers along the areas of constant conflict may influence defining and re-defining of group identities (Marks *et al.* 2014). Conflict and displacement have largely been the main reasons for the uprising of multiple prominent nations, such as the Basotho Nation.

The Lifaqane unrest gained momentum into the Highveld from what was then northern Natal. The conflicts were already forcing displacement of many groups, some of which moved into the Mohokare Valley further into areas around Thaba-Bosiu. One of the groups that were displaced into the Thaba-Bosiu area in the early 1820s is the Ramantsane, which was led by None, who

moved in from north of present-day Lesotho (Gill & Nthoana 2010). It should be noted that Ramantsane had become one of the strongest forces in the Thaba-Bosiu area and at one-point BaPhuthi had become his subordinates (Gill & Nthoana 2010). Their biggest threats were the Hlubi of Mpangazitha and the Ngwane of Matiwane (Gill & Nthoana 2010).

Displacement of many communities who mainly occupied the Mohokare Valley, the Drakensburg, present KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape became persistent in the early nineteenth century. The subsequent introduction of guns, which resulted in the rise of warlords and the British imperialism that required labour forces, also resulted to conflicts in the region (Hamilton 1995: Mothibe 2002). The Lifaqane turmoil was the result of struggle for power, where political entities attempted to take charge of smaller units in order to build larger autonomous states (Gill 1993). The struggle for nation-building was not only the reason behind the rise of the Lifaqane wars. Drought also contributed to land struggles and political superiority (Gill 1993: 65).

The early nineteenth century is reportedly a period of severe drought and disease (Gill 1993). The extreme economic and political deterioration heightened competition for resources and power (Gill 1993: 66). As the tension escalated in Zululand, many clan lineages fled and crossed the Drakensburg into present-day Lesotho. The Zizi and Mpangazitha's AmaHlubi communities, for instance, crossed the Tugela Basin and moved across the Drakensburg. The Ndebele and many other Sotho clan lineages moved specifically into Caledon/Mohokare Valley in the 1820s (Thompson 1975; Gill 1993:66). The Ndebele chief Mzilikazi, who also fled from Shaka (an Amazulu chief who fought against many groups to build his empire) attacked Basotho communities in the Mohokare, in Lesotho and the Free State, in South Africa.

The displacement of the Nguni groups from Natal and Transkei forced them to struggle for land and security in the Mohokare. Mzilikazi became the main rival of the Basotho communities as he attacked and displaced many clans. Chief Sebetoane's Fokeng fled from what today is known as Senekal. Chief Moletsane of the Taung and Queen 'Mathatisi of the Tlokoa also fled their villages and along the way attacked other communities (Gill 1993: 66). The Ngwane of Chief Matioane also fled and attacked groups in the Mohokare particularly in the present Clocolan and Maseru areas (Gill 1993:68). Among the groups attacked by the Ngwane was Moshoeshoe's Koena group.

3.5.1. Moshoeshoe oa Bakoena ba Mokoteli

> There is no gainsaying in that nation-building requires bold, visionary, and above all, exemplary ethical leadership. King Moshoeshoe I of Lesotho standing as an exemplar of ethical leadership is abundantly supported both by his monumental achievements and by the ethical qualities of organisational creative leadership (Mofuoa 2015: 21).

At the height of the Lifaqane wars, small clan lineages had fled or formed alliances with other groups in the region. The formation of alliances and migrations in some cases resulted in nations. In the north of Lesotho, in a district presently known as the Botha-Bothe region, a minor lineage of Bakoena ba Mokoteli resided. Before moving into the Caledon Valley, the Bakoena group, under the leadership of Mokhachane, was one of the Basotho-speaking groups who had once settled in the modern-day area of Magaliesberg dating back to 1200 AD (Casalis 1861:10). The Mokoteli group was led into the Caledon Valley by Mokhachane in the period of 18th century, who was succeeded by his eldest son Lepoqo, later to be known as King Moshoeshoe I, one of the iconic leaders of the time (Mokhehle 1976).

Lepoqo earned three names in his lifetime. Each name was given to him following extraordinary life events he experienced. Born in 1786 at Menkhoaneng, in Leribe north of Lesotho as the first son of Morena Mokhachane, a chief of the Bakoena ba Mokoteli who settled in the Mohokare Valley, Lepoqo grew up conscious of his privileges as the son of a chief, which posed a problem later in his life as a teenager (Mokhehle 1976).

Lepoqo grew up to an age that was accepted into initiation, where he obtained other names, Letlama and Tlaputle. The name Letlama, meaning ‘the binder’, was given to him following his tactics during war, where he “allegedly b[ou]nd and subsequently subdued his enemy” (Mofuoa 2015:22). Post initiation Letlama, however, developed an attitude that proved unacceptable to his community, particularly his father and grandfather. On several occasions, Letlama displayed a violent personality, which resulted in the murder of other people (Ellenberger & McGregor 1912; Guma 1960). Ellenberger (1912:17) captured Moshoeshoe’s unruly and violent behaviour when he killed five men for delaying to execute his orders.

Fearing the possibility of losing their son as a consequence of this, Moshoeshoe’s father, Mokhachane and grandfather Peete intervened by searching for a counsellor, believing that

Moshoeshoe was mentally disturbed. The family identified Morena Mohlomi, son of Monaheng who was a chief of a different Koena group from that of Bakoena ba Mokoteli, who settled at Tebang and Fothane located in the Mafeteng District south-west of Lesotho (Mokhehle 1990:15). Mohlomi proved to have been a positive mentor to Letlama, advising him to rule with dignity (Mofuoa 2015). Having undergone extensive counseling and initiation, Letlama later earned the name of Moshoeshoe.

> Mohlomi urged him to deal justly with all, especially the poor; to be generous with his subjects as well as his enemies; to love peace and the profits of hard work rather than war; to share his wealth through the system of Mafisa; trust in many wives so as to spread the influence (Casalis 1891: 12).

Mohlomi taught Moshoeshoe the significance of becoming a great leader by treating fellow human beings with humanity and fairness (Arbousset & Daumas 1846). The name Moshoeshoe was given to him following the defeat of the Bafokeng of the Ramonaheng, an onomatopoeia which evokes the sound of shaving. In order to emphasise the significant symbolism of the defeat, Letlama was said to have shaven Ramonaheng's beard, hence, the name Moshoeshoe (Becker 1969: 23; Sanders 1975: 11-12). Having undergone counselling, Moshoeshoe and his followers made up of his clan lineage Bakoena and other small lineages of Bafokeng of Ramohau and Bafokeng of Ntsukunyane moved out of his father's village of Menkhoaneng to Botha-Bothe (presently in the district of Botha-Bothe, Lesotho) to form his small clan. During Moshoeshoe's reign, he built up his group through a system of "subordinate and cooption" (Seloma 1994:18). Moshoeshoe adopted a system of forming alliances (Mothibe 2002). To further elaborate his nation, Moshoeshoe attacked and defeated smaller clans, such as the Basia of Shekeshe and Bafokeng of Makara (Mothibe 2002).

During the wake of Lifaqane and severe drought of the 1800s in the Mohokare Valley, Moshoeshoe and his followers also experienced attacks. One of the first groups to attack Moshoeshoe was Matiwane in 1820 (Mothibe 2002:17). Moshoeshoe continued to form alliances with other clans to grow his lineage (Ellenberger 1992; Seloma 1994). Oral traditions describe the important role that Bafokeng lineage, particularly women have played in political agency. As such, marriages alliances were key in the process of nation-building (Eldredge 1993:129).

> Over the centuries the Bafokeng forged marriage alliances with Bakoena, Bakhatla, Bataung, Baphuthi and the San. The Bakoena in addition to marrying Bafokeng wives, also intermarried deliberately with the Baphuthi and the San (Eldredge 1993: 130).

Alliances formed through marriage were common among different farming communities in the region. King Moshoeshoe I was also known for his strategic marriage agreements with numerous cultural groups as a peace-maker and nation builder. Among the groups that Moshoeshoe married into were the Bafokeng, the Bahlakoana (Sanders 1975: 116; Thompson 1975: 331), the Basia (Sanders 1975: 116; Macgregor 1911:18), Batloung (Macgregor 1911: 55; Thompson1975: 332) and Bataung, among a few (Sanders 1975).

Through alliances, a chief of a certain group would remain autonomous to his following but during war, the group would cooperate with Moshoeshoe against invaders under Moshoeshoe's leadership (Thompson 1975). The upheavals of the early 1820s intensified and many groups lost their property, food and members of their lineage. Moshoeshoe similarly experienced this turmoil and he concluded that his Botha-Bothe fortress proved to be unsafe (Thompson 1975: 41).

The Lifaqane wars forced many societies to flee their villages and seek shelter and protection elsewhere. Moshoeshoe was also forced to leave Botha-Bothe and sought protection in another area away from possible invaders or aggressors. In 1824, Moshoeshoe's community moved to Thaba-Bosiu, a place on the foothills of the Maluti/Drakensburg Mountains (Tylden 1950: 5).

3.6. Discussion

The role of historical archaeology has evolved from being a discipline that incorporates Eurocentric methods in the study of African histories, to accommodating indigenous methods that give agency to the people under study (Chirikure 2020; Nyamushosho and Chirikure 2021). The use of oral traditions and histories, coupled with archaeological methods, have uncovered significant information about Iron Age communities.

Tim Maggs' (1976) studies of agropastoral communities that settled in the Free-State and Mohokare reflect continued migrations and interactions between Nguni and Sotho-speaking societies. The differences and similarities of material remains have enabled classifications of these

cultures, and thus we can trace possible identities of people who settled in the Mohokare Valley. Such studies will further contribute to understanding the history of Thaba-Bosiu. The emergence of the small Koena group to which King Moshoeshoe belonged, could be linked to the communities that settled in the Free-State and Natal areas at the time.

The history of farming communities has previously mentioned less about the significance of crop production and flora in contributing to the livelihoods and sustenance of past communities. Studies related to farming processes as practiced in the past provide an important lesson to understanding the daily lives of people in the past. The role of historical archaeology in this instance is to go beyond recent histories and uncover the agencies (Lane 2016; Schmidt 2016) of past farmers while also tracing continuity in their identities.

3.7. Summary

This chapter reflected on the evolution of historical archaeology in Africa and specifically in Southern African studies and highlighted the limitations of past research. The chapter has highlighted the imbalances that historical archaeology posed on indigenous histories, where focus was primarily on the European influence over local groups. Critiques of this approach advocate for a decolonised historical archaeology that accounts for local voices and questions of how local histories ought to be investigated (Schmidt 2016; Schmidt and Pikirayi 2018). By highlighting the importance of adopting an inclusive research approach, an assessment of Nguni and Southern Sotho archaeologies has been presented. These studies thus contribute in informing research related to the history of the Basotho nation and the role of Thaba-Bosiu in this discussion. The next chapter examines the methodology incorporated in this study.

4.0. CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

> An investigation into the formation processes (social and physical) of archaeological remains may appear as a form of direct historical ethnography (Trigger 1989: 124-5).

4.1. Introduction

Thaba-Bosiu is located in the district of Maseru, about 24km east of the capital city. The mountain covers an area of 3km north-south by 2km east-west and stands at around 1800 meters above sea level. Thaba-Bosiu is part of the Foothills of Lesotho and where the Highlands are visible in the east and the Lowlands are visible in the west. The top of the mountain consists of three villages, the first upon arrival and also seen as the main is the royal village where King Moshoeshoe I, his wives and advisors ones resided.

Studies that combine the archaeology of recent histories of Iron Age communities require a combination of different methods, as they deal with social processes to which present communities may relate. Ethnographic records and oral histories form part of the methods for this study. As part of the methodology, excavations were carried out so as to ensure that more specific objectives of this study are addressed. I adopt these methodologies specifically to uncover the histories of communities that settled in Thaba-Bosiu.

Methods incorporated in this study include a desktop study/survey, which was done to get an insight into the history of Lesotho and events that led to the establishment of the Basotho nation. I investigated the period and studies of contact, particularly relating to the Southern African past. A desktop study was followed by fieldwork that required active participation in the field. Pedestrian surveys were undertaken as part of data collection and to identify sites for further investigation.

The fieldwork conducted at Thaba-Bosiu was done in three phases, in the years between 2017, 2018 and 2019. The first phase was a general survey of the Thaba-Bosiu and surrounding areas. During this survey, sites that had excavation potential were identified. Sites in this study entail excavated areas and their associated features, such settlements or middens. The excavated squares were labelled TB, with a number. The main aim of the first phase was to identify and record

historical sites around and on top of Thaba-Bosiu to identify their potential for further research and excavation. The second phase of the project was to conduct test excavations in the north-eastern homesteads where the main aim was to identify material culture that is likely to be associated with the period of farmer occupation. Consequently, the second and third phases comprised excavations of trenches TB60, TB61, TB66, and TB 67. At TB 60, TB 61 and TB 67, the main objectives of the excavations were to firstly uncover material culture associated with the potential households that are locale to the area of excavations; secondly, to determine the site's possible chronology; and thirdly, to assess the transition and use of material culture and cultural influences on the built environment in Sesotho by European culture. To achieve these objectives, a multidisciplinary approach was taken.

A multipronged approach to an archaeological past has proven useful, for instance, in the investigation of social events of Swahili groups that settled in the coastal region of east Africa (Fleisher 2010). The use of ethnohistoric and archaeological approaches challenged Eurocentric narratives that questioned the origins of Swahili societies as being foreign (Fleisher 2010). The analysis of material remains have further shown that the Swahili societies had utilised ceramics to assume social status and power (Croucher and Wynne-Jones 2006; Meskell 2005). Multidisciplinary approaches also include the use of oral traditions.

As a response to explicit criticism of rejecting previously unheard voices within the discourse, regional associations, such as the Association of Southern African Professional Archaeologists, put in place regulations that promoted multivocality in research (ASAPA 2009). This constitutes a recent call that speaks directly to the transformation of archaeology is decoloniality.

As part of decolonising archaeological research, scholars have suggested a direct engagement with communities that hold the histories that we are investigating (Pikirayi 2016; Humphris and Bradshaw 2017; Schmidt 2017). This entails having conversations with communities Incorporation of oral traditions in archaeological research has been appreciated by indigenous communities because they (the communities) are given agency over their histories (Schmidt 2017). Oral traditions offer an alternative approach to interpreting not only the material culture, but also the known histories of specific sites (Pikirayi 2016; Schmidt 2017).

4.2. Desktop Study

The main desktop study was conducted by extensively covering literature that focused mainly on the history of the Mohokare Valley and Thaba-Bosiu. Exploring events that led to the formation of the Basotho nation was particularly important, as it highlights the different identities that were likely to be represented in the material culture and the infrastructure. Original and secondary written records by missionaries, politicians and travellers, narrating their experiences of Thaba-Bosiu and Lesotho were also explored (Backhouse 1839; Arbousset & Daumas 1846; Casalis 1861; Ellenberger & Macgregor 1912; Tylden 1950; Sanders 1975; Struik 1964). This study is grounded on theoretical perspectives about the impact of postcolonialism on the formation of new identities. As such, ideologies related to postcolonial archaeology were also explored (Bhabha 1993; 2001; Gosden 2001; Naum 2010).

4.3. Archival and Museum Research

The desktop study conducted included exploring the archives of the National University of Lesotho (NUL), the Royal archives and the National Archives of Lesotho. Archives of the University of Cape Town were also explored. Archival research found recollections, letters, and newspapers from early European settlers such as the early missionaries. The different book editions by one of the French Missionaries, Eugene Casalis were also reviewed to gain a sense of events that took place on Thaba-Bosiu in the early 19th Century (Casalis 1861; 1971). Documents and books by Fred Ellenberger provided detailed history of Lesotho, sourcing and interpreting historical records from the early 1800s (Ellenberger 1972; Ellenberger and McGregor 1912). A review of books and additional documentation by Tylden (1950) and Struik (1964) were also explored.

I sourced online journals and literature on the Iron Age and specifically historical periods in the African context. The methods adopted were meant to provide data that specifically relates to the history of farming communities and historical events that led to the establishment of the Basotho nation. The methods incorporated were further meant to provide information that specifically paints a picture of the landscape of present-day Sotho-speaking and Nguni communities in Lesotho, and how they lived within the landscape.

The initial survey of Thaba-Bosiu was carried out through a study of historical maps and sketches that were done by missionaries and explorers in the nineteenth century (see figure 4.1). An overview of these sketches provided an idea of cultural spaces and the nature of occupation around

and on top of the mountain. Another survey approach adopted in this research was a study of modern geographical maps of Thaba-Bosiu and its localities, which were useful in putting the geophysical view of the mountain in context. The geographical maps were provided by the geography department and the archives of NUL. A study of Google Earth maps of Thaba-Bosiu was also conducted to further assess the view of the top of the mountain over time. From the maps, stone wall structures, areas of dense vegetation and bedrock were highlighted.

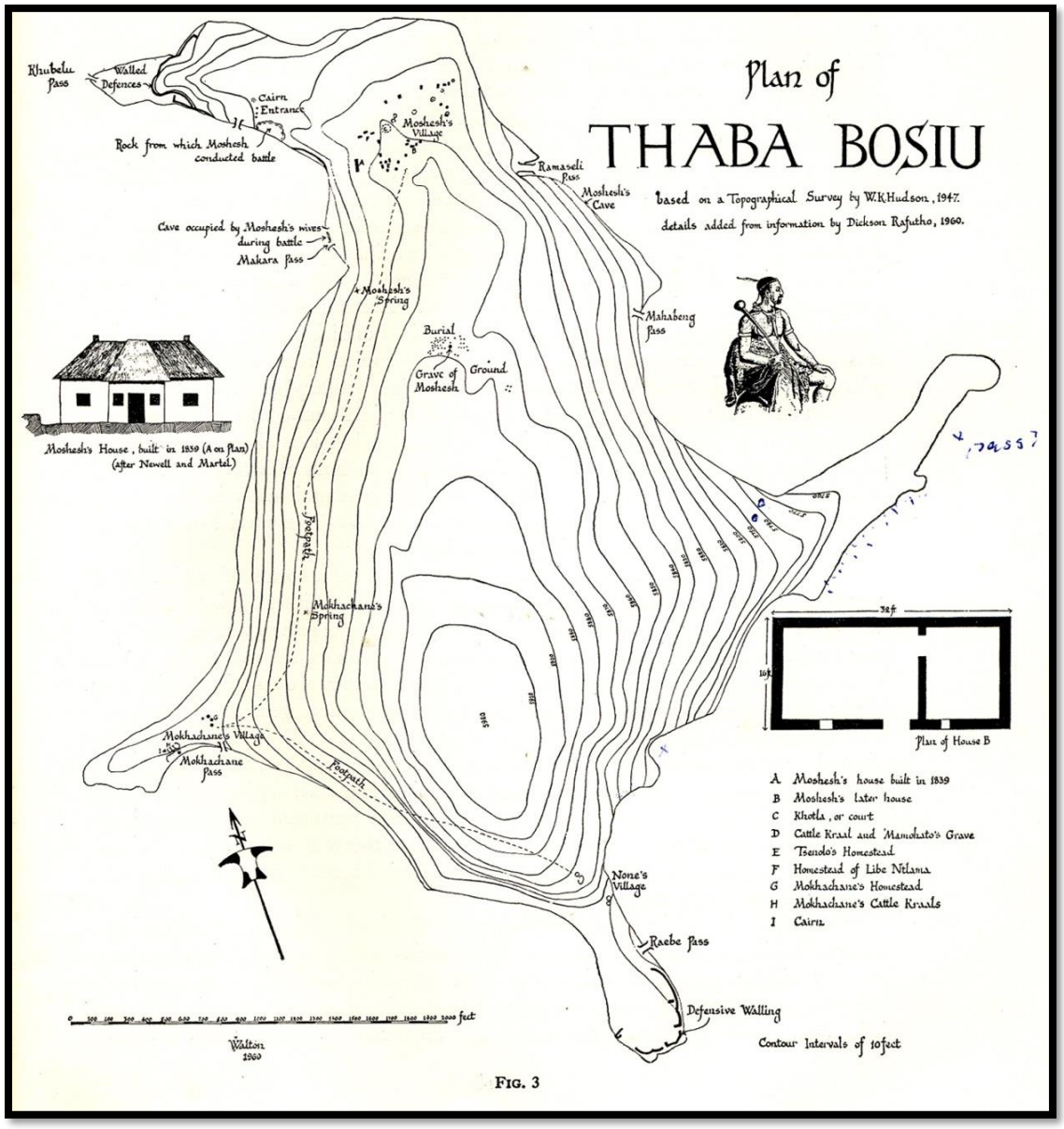

Figure 4.1: A sketch map of Thaba-Bosiu produced by Walton in the 1960s (Courtesy of Morija Museums and Archives).

4.4. Fieldwork

4.4.1. Mapping Survey Methods and oral historical geography

GIS maps offered by MTEC (See Figure 4.2) were useful in identifying key areas to survey and areas that had excavation potential. This map was also used to show the areas where excavations were carried out. The assessed Google Earth maps were from the years 2002, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2017. An extensive study of these periodic Google Earth images reflected the density of vegetation, the changing views of the stonewall structures, and the different footpaths on top of the mountain. For instance, the 2002 Google Earth image (Figure 4.3) shows dense vegetation in areas A and B; whereas, Figure 4.4 of 2012 and specifically 2013 reflects less flora intensity in the same areas. The comparison of the different images paying particular attention to the vegetation density has occupation implications. Recent studies by Sadr of the Koeneng Village have reflected that vegetation at archaeological sites provides evidence of possible occupation (Sadr 2019a; 2019b). Archaeological studies have additionally confirmed that areas densely covered in grass have a likelihood of being middens or settlement remains (Denbow 1979; Mukwende 2016). Thaba-Bosiu is not an exception to that view. The vegetation differences guided the process of identifying specific areas with high excavation potential. These areas consist of settlement structures and middens. The survey of these areas have yielded evidence of middens and settlement structures.

Digital maps and images utilised in this study further provided information about the built environment. The areas atop the mountain that had visible stone walling were highlighted as areas that were surveyed extensively for potential excavations. The top of Thaba-Bosiu covers an area of about two square kilometres. It was through the study of digital maps that different sub-villages and households were identified as main areas to be exclusively surveyed. An aerial photograph on Figure 4.5 shows part of the surveyed areas.

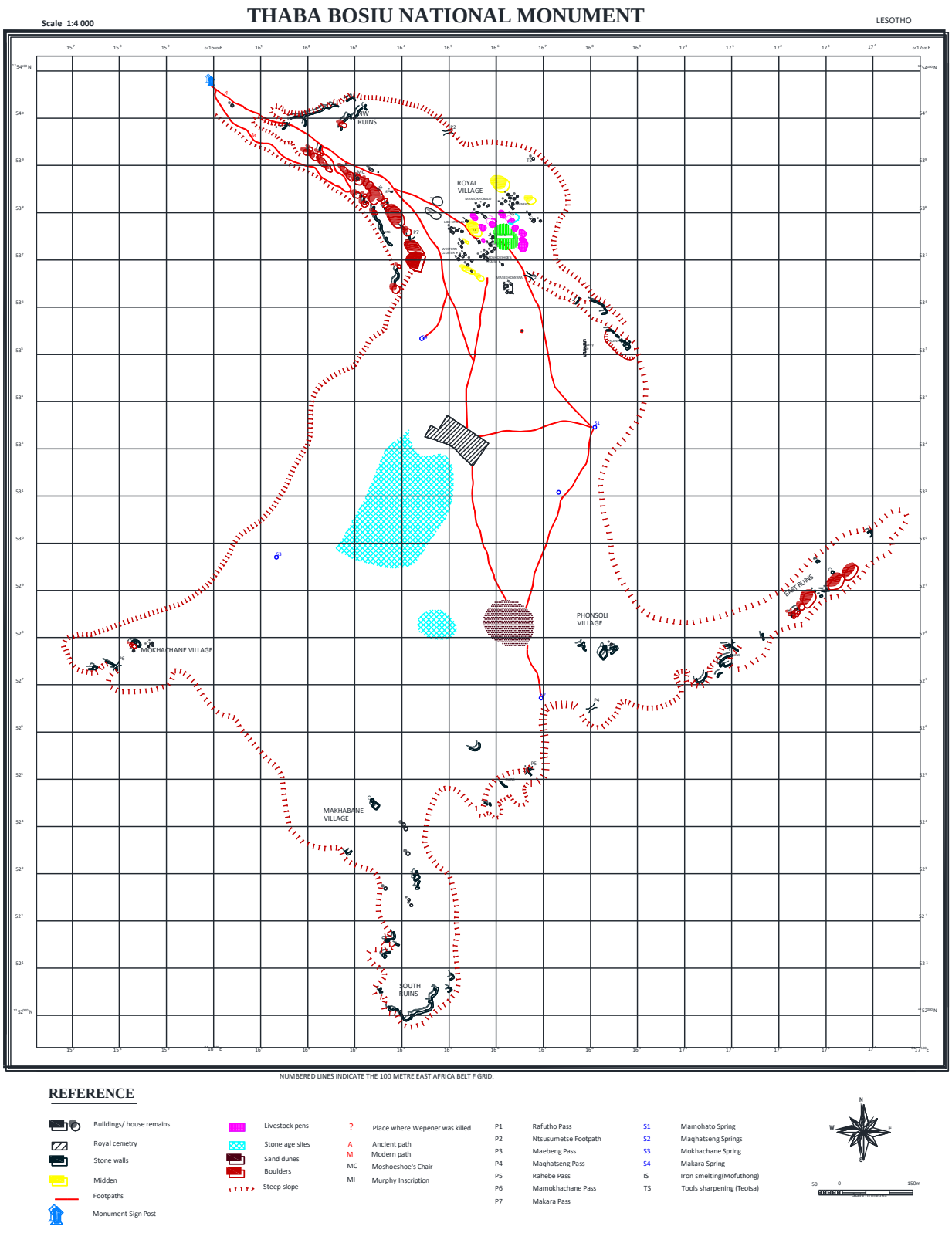

Figure 4.2: GIS map of Thaba-Bosiu (Courtesy of MTEC)

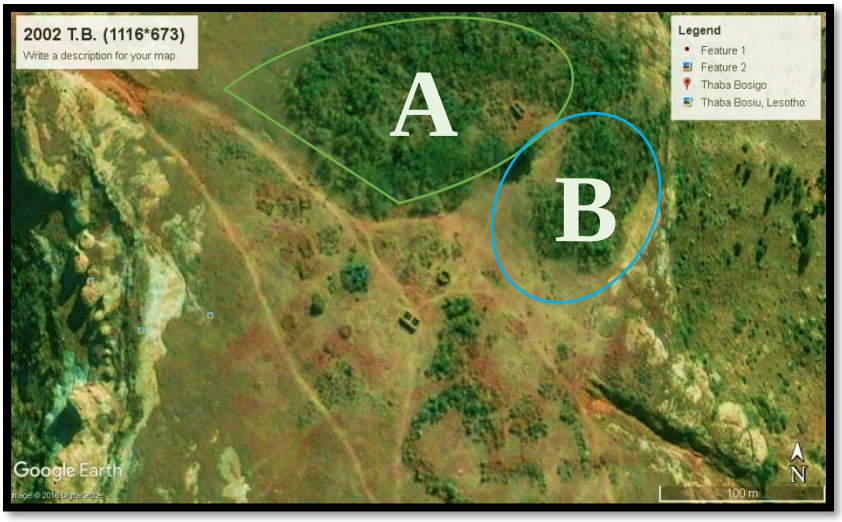

Figure 4.3: Google earth image showing the density of vegetation in areas A and B.

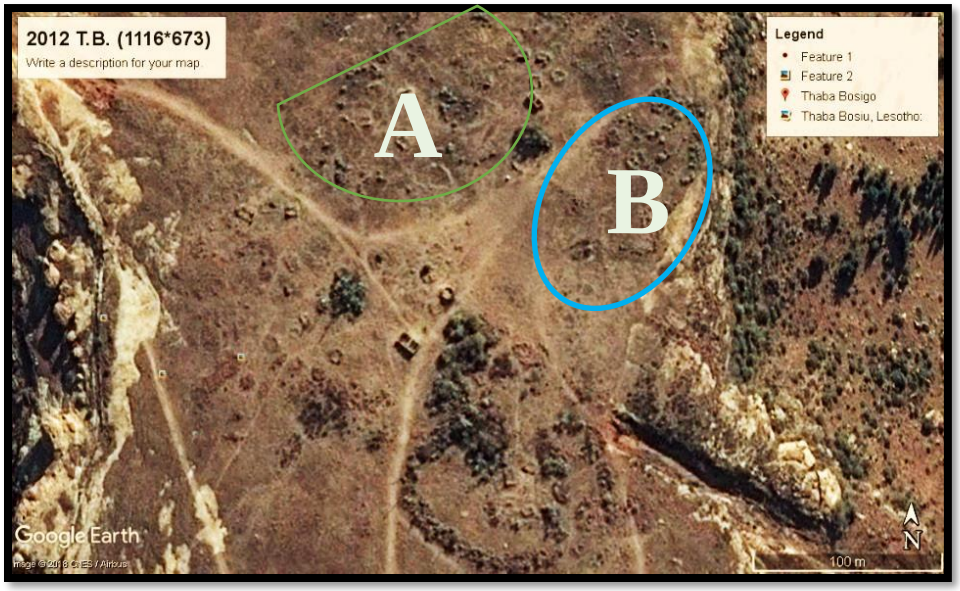

Figure 4.4: Google earth image showing areas A and B in the dry Autumn season, where there was less vegetation. The areas marked A and B are settlement structures and middens.

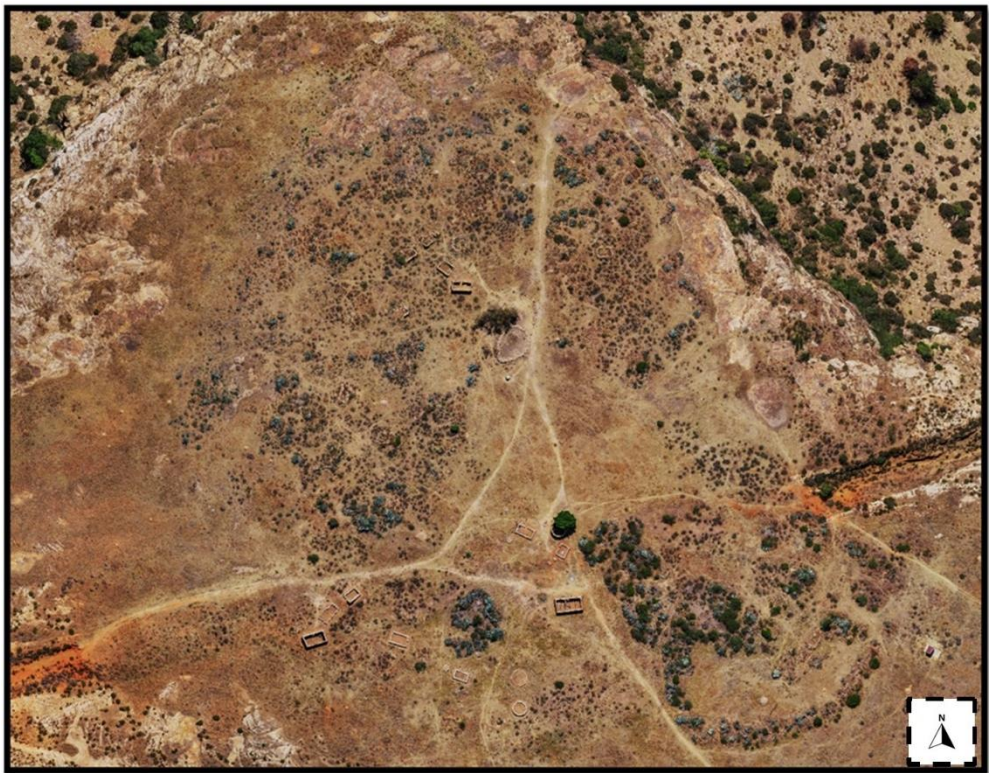

Figure 4.5: Aerial view of the Thaba-Bosiu royal village

4.4.2. Pedestrian Survey and Surface Collection

One of the first steps undertaken before the inception of this project was to consult relevant stakeholders to receive permission to undertake this study. Several meetings were held with the royal family representatives of Lesotho, who included the Principal Chief of the area of Thaba-Bosiu, the Principal Chief of Matsieng (the area where His Majesty's homestead is currently located). It was important to hold conversations and gain permission from the principal chiefs because in the early 1990s, an excavation project on top of Thaba-Bosiu was brought to a sudden halt. The Department of Culture under the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture was also included in the consultations as a body that issues field permits. Following consultations with both parties, a permit to conduct an archaeological study on top of Thaba-Bosiu was issued.

The surveys were conducted in two phases. Phase One involved pedestrian survey while Phase Two, was the recording of built structures and visible foundations of the main village and other parts of the mountain; and lastly, GPS survey and recording of surface artefacts, such as grinding

stones, pottery, beads, and middens was undertaken. After being recorded, these artefacts were cleaned with a small brush and bagged for further analysis in a lab. The first physical/pedestrian survey was carried out along the edges of the mountain, and particularly the shelters on the side where Rafutho Pass is located. The choice to survey around the mountain was done so as assess if there is any evidence of material remains. The royal village on top of the mountain, the royal graveyard and the different access paths to the mountain were recorded during extensive pedestrian surveys.

4.4.2.1 Pedestrian Survey

Evidence of occupation on Thaba-Bosiu is mainly concentrated on the north-western part of the mountain. On the south-western part of the mountain, evidence of occupation consists of circular and rectangular structures, as well as foundations that are not clearly defined, some hidden by dense vegetation. Surveys were conducted in three phases; Phase One was foot survey and recording of the village at the western side of the mountain. Recording was done by taking GPS coordinates, measuring the length and width of stonewalling and roughly sketching the shape of the structures. The main royal village is the biggest on top of the mountain where Moshoeshoe I, his wives, advisers, and other members of the royal family were located.

4.4.2.2 Surface Collection

The collection of surface artefacts was done in areas where there was a high possibility of consistent damage or disturbance such as visitor foot paths and rushing rainwater. Many artefacts were found in areas of previous occupation, which were close to stone wall structures and middens. A wide range of surface artefacts were recorded by taking pictures of their location and coordinates, these included glass ceramics, beads, pottery, and metal. The process of collecting these surface artefacts was done firstly by taking pictures of the artefacts and their surroundings; and taking GPS readings of the exact spot where artefacts were found. Features such as stone walling or paths that were in proximity with artefacts were also recorded. The areas where the artefacts were collected from were given a name, for instance TB 20. The number 20 in this phase is the chronological number given for areas in which material culture was found. TB 20 yielded artefacts, such as pieces of broken glass ceramics collected from one of the middens. A description of the surroundings was also recorded. The artefacts were then bagged and labelled for further analysis. Labelling included the date of recording, the description of artefact, the site name, and initials of the recorder.

4.3. Excavations

The current landscape of Lesotho provides evidence of continuous farming and livestock grazing since the 19th Century. The generational farming practices have significantly altered landscapes of modern Lesotho. Evidence of soil erosion as a result of extensive farming is apparent throughout the Lowlands, Foothills and Highlands of Lesotho. Pastoral farming has particularly been the main source of economic subsistence in the Highlands of Lesotho (Rydren 1993; Nüsser 2002; Nüsser and Grab 2002: 291). Landscape degradation is, therefore, one of the main challenges in the archaeological discourse, particularly in identifying areas of possible excavations.

The Basotho's social and kinship practices of settlement is that the first male son of the family takes over their father's homesteads, where as a result it is possible to find settlements that have been occupied by more than three generations. Building material that was used to build the older house is in most cases recycled to build the newer or contemporary homes for the younger generation. Another practice that makes it difficult to do any archaeological excavations is the restrictions of use of middens for research purposes (King 2014: 241). In the Sesotho culture middens are regarded as sacred spaces, as sacred sites in which stillborn babies are buried. Initially any evidence of archaeological material is restricted.

> Finally, the common practice in Lesotho of curating household middens through multiple generations for use as fuel and fertilizer has resulted in archaeological deposits being preserved to varying degrees within settlements that are still occupied. However, these ash middens often contain infant burials, whose excavation is strictly taboo throughout southern Africa [sic], and extra care is required in identifying such burial sites (King 2014: 241).

The top of Thaba-Bosiu has approximately eight middens (while there is the added possibility of smaller middens which are not visible because of disturbance or in some cases dense vegetation). The middens are of different sizes in terms of their depth. Among these one of the largest middens was 1.6 metres deep. All the middens have different surface artefacts still visible, and these include burnt bone, beads, pottery and ceramics. Excavating middens in Lesotho is a sensitive and in the case of Thaba-Bosiu, there is historically quite a strong resistance against it. Excavations of

middens on top of Thaba-Bosiu were previously forbidden by the royal family, however, I was allowed to excavate on condition that I stop the excavations in such case that the investigation uncovered any human remains.

The process of identifying areas of potential excavations included, as mentioned above, identification of areas with high vegetation density, evidence of surface artefacts, location of stonewall structures and middens. The final decisions on the areas to excavate was made by the royal family board of elders who serve as caretakers of the mountain. The elders permitted excavations on conditions and terms stipulated by their family. Upon this green light from the family, the Department of Culture under the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture (MTEC). The first permit of the excavations was issued on condition that middens were not to be disturbed. It was for this reason that test excavations were only conducted along the edges of two middens. One of the two middens was along a modern tourist path and the other one was hidden in vegetation approximately six metres from the first midden.

Throughout the excavations, seven documents were used for recording purposes. These documents were previously adopted by the Oxford University team, which worked on excavations of the Metolong area, which is less than five kilometers from Thaba-Bosiu (Arthur and Mitchell 2011; King and Arthur 2014). The excavation documents are as follows, Context record sheet, context register, photography register, sample register, sectional grid paper, small finds register and spit sheet. The purpose of each document is summarised in the table below.

Table 4.1: Table shows the use and description of documents used during excavations.

Type of Document	Purpose of Document
Context record sheet	Used to illustrate the extent and description of context
Context register	Used to record the number of contexts identified in different grids
Photography register	Used for recording the type of camera and number of pictures taken by specific cameras. Pictures are also described.
Sample register	Records description and number of samples taken during excavations.

Sectional grid paper	Used for drawing of sections post excavations.
Small finds register	Records small/unique finds and context from which they were excavated.
Spit sheet	Records and described each spit during excavations

The excavation methods adopted for this project remained uniform for all the sites, while surface cleaning, which entailed vegetation removal and surface levelling to ensure that the surface level was carried out for all excavated grids. A single context recording was adopted during excavations. Vegetation was cleared using spades, shovels, a saw, outdoor brushes, sickle, a rake, and hand trowels of different sizes. Each $1m^2$ was further divided into four equal quadrants (hereafter quads); each labelled as quads A, B, C and D. Dividing the square further into quads was done in order to provide room for any possible small layers (contexts) that might be exposed during excavations.

The process of removing small finds and in situ artefacts involved extensive recording of the material culture. Before removal of artefacts, coordinates of the location of the artefact within the trench were taken. To better record the square, photographs of it in its entirety were also taken. To capture all the visible characteristics of the artefact and trench, pictures were captured from all angles. A small find register was used to provide a brief description of the artefact; in addition to that, a detailed description was noted in a notebook. The description included the size and color of artefacts.

The excavation of the grids was carried out in spits of 10cm depth, due to the possibility of uncovering Stone Age artefacts. In this case, spits are simple arbitrary levels, which were reached uniformly in all the four quads of a square. In instances where a different context or stratigraphic layer became exposed, excavations focused on removing that specific context even before a spit of 10cm is reached. At the end of each excavation, stratigraphic layers were drawn and recorded. The excavated squares are shown in Figure 4.6 and Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.6: The main royal village showing excavated squares.

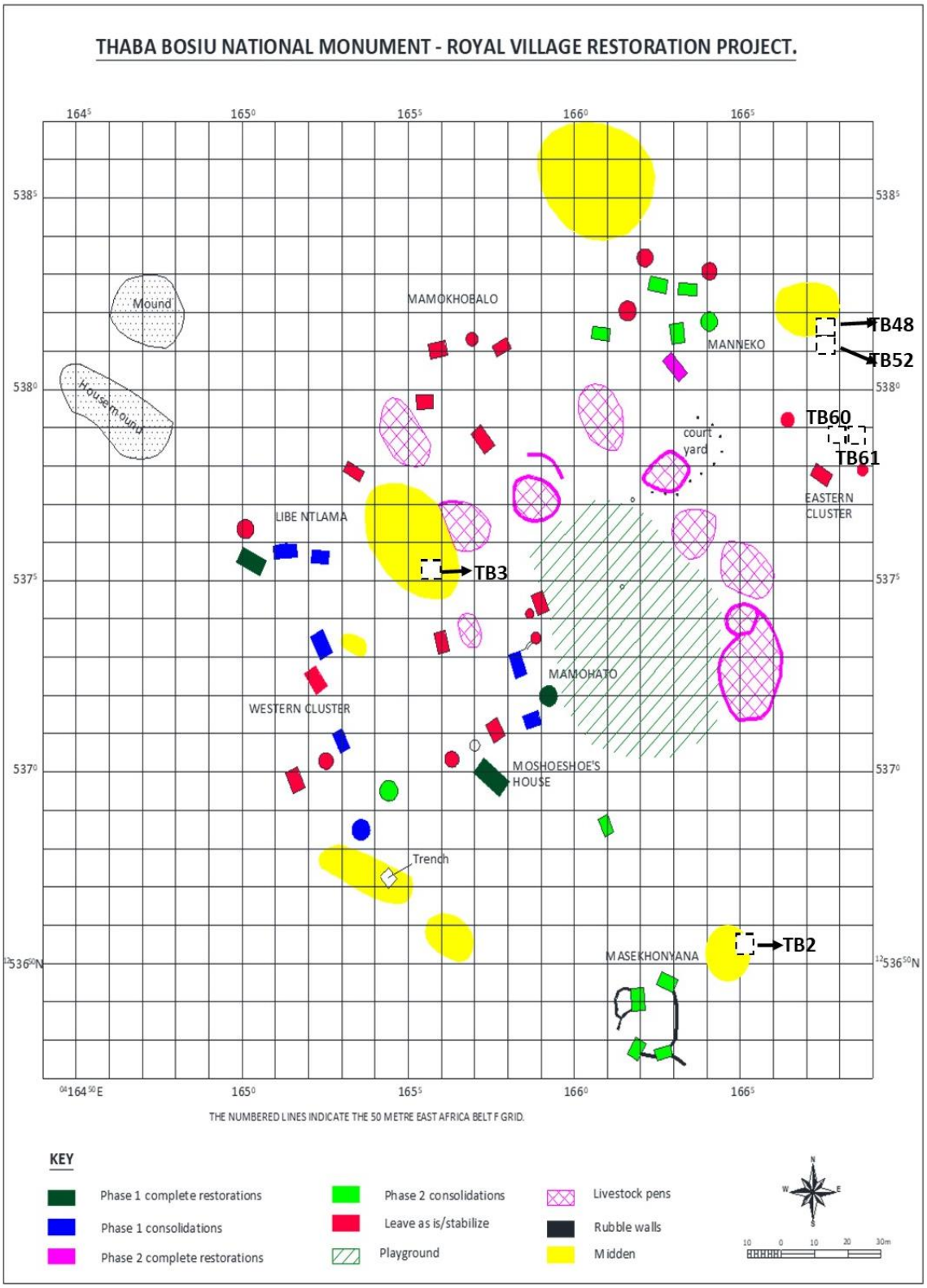

Figure 4.7: Location of the excavated squares

4.3.1. Test Excavations/Phase One/ Northwestern Area

The test excavations took place during the beginning of the winter season, which in Lesotho is associated with the rapid decrease of vegetation and onset of cooler dry weather. These conditions were most conducive for conducting open excavation as compared to sheltered excavations, because excavations can be carried out throughout the day with no danger of sudden rainfall. The purpose of the test excavations was to have an idea of what kinds of material culture was likely to be found in different parts of the occupied households on top of the mountain.

The initial plan of test excavations was to excavate a 1m² grid as stipulated in the first proposal to stakeholders requesting permission for excavations. A presentation of the finds was made following the completion of the first test grid, which led to permission of the extension of the test excavations.

As with many other recorded sites, the first grid was labelled TB48; TB meaning Thaba-Bosiu and 48 as the number given consecutively to sites. TB48 was divided into four quads. The quads were labelled A, B, C and D Students from the National University of Lesotho assisted in these excavations, therefore, for the most part of the excavations, all quads were excavated at the same time.

The first context at TB48 was excavated during the first winter rains and thus was mostly a compact and moist sediment. The first spit is a dark greyish black deposit with a thickness of 10cm. The spit consisted of two contexts. Towards the middle of the context at around 6cm, there were frequent roots. The material culture from this layer included bone pieces, two lithics, one glass piece, four glass beads and 188 pottery shards.

Similar to the first context, the second context was compact and a challenge to dig. The sediment went from a brown to a yellowish-brown deposit with occasional charcoal pieces and small stones as inclusions. This layer was 20cm thick, with roots and insect routes across the square. Artefacts uncovered from this level included pottery, beads, an animal tooth and charcoal pieces. The boundary to the next context was clear and was characterised by a change in texture and colour of the sediment.

The third context was a light brown compact deposit with frequent stones. The context further had decomposed roots and insect tunnels. The context was 10cm thick, with mainly small rocks. The bedrock was reached at 40cm. A variety of artefacts were uncovered, and these were classified as local pottery, foreign ceramics, beads, bones, charcoal, and metal objects, respectively. TB48 alone only provided data that is associated with only one homestead and not across the whole area on top of the mountain. As a result, an additional trench, TB52 (shown in Figure 4.8) was excavated as an extension of TB 48.

The decision to extend TB48 towards its north-eastern section was based on the fact that two of the quads yielded very few artefacts and quads C and D had a higher concentration of artefacts. The new trench was a one square meter square named TB52. The first context of this square was a dark brown and compact deposit. The depth of the context ranged between 3cm and 7cm. The material culture uncovered from this layer included glass beads, glass pieces, a metal button and lithics. This context extends across the whole square and the boundary to the subsequent level was clear. The context also extended from TB48 and was present in TB52.

The second context of TB 52 was a light brown and yellowish brown, compact deposit with small stone inclusions. Frequent roots and occasional charcoal were also present in this layer. The thickness of this layer was 12cm, and extended across the whole square. The artefacts uncovered from this layer included beads, lithics, a metal sheet, and a high frequency of pottery pieces in comparison to all the layers including those below it. A substantive plant root ran from Quad C into quads D and B. The boundary to the context three was clearly identifiable.

Similar to TB 48, TB 52 had a third context layer. This layer consisted of a high density of rocks and an exposed root that extended in all the quads, stemming from Quad C of the square. Among the artefacts uncovered from this layer were pottery sherds, bone fragments and a lithic. The bedrock in TB48 and TB52 was reached at the same depth (See Figure 4.9).

Figure 4.8: TB52 test pit.

Following the completion of the test excavations (see Figure 4.10 and 4.11), the stratigraphy of both squares was drawn. A presentation of the excavated material for the main stakeholders was organised. The presentation was conducted to provide feedback on the material culture uncovered from the excavations. Table 4.2 presents a summary of the excavated material from both TB48 and TB52). The presentation resulted to permission being granted for the expansion of the project.

Figure 4.9: TB48 and 52 trenches at the bedrock

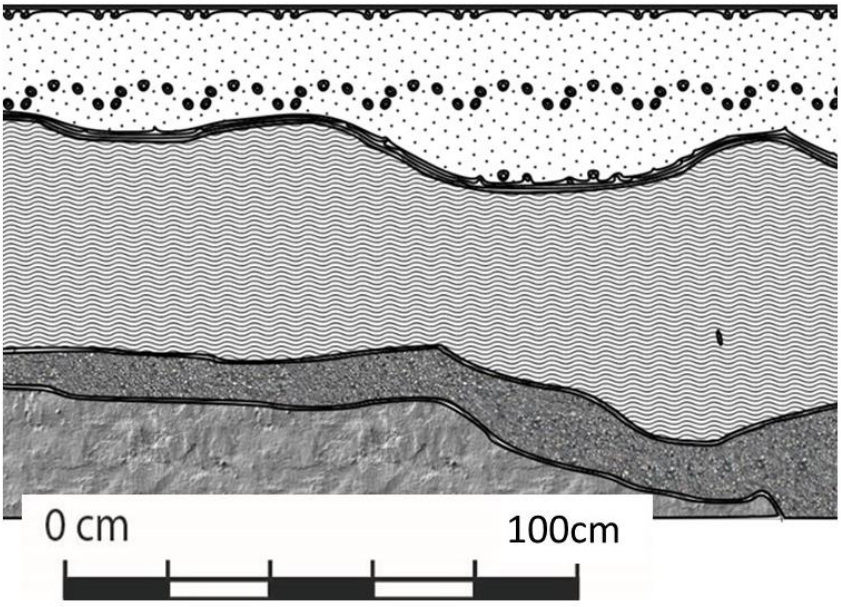

Figure 4.10: Cross-section from TB52

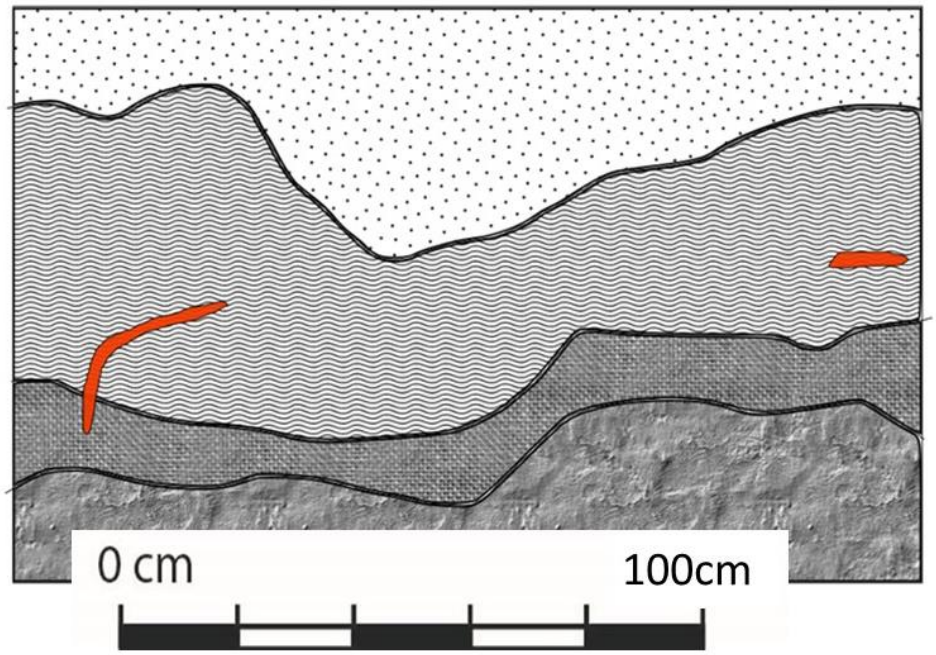

Figure 4.11: TB48 West-facing wall.

Table 4.2: Summary of Artefacts uncovered from both TB48 and TB52

Description	**Quantity**
Pottery sherds	351
Glass beads	21
Lithics	15
Glass	2
Charcoal pieces	67
Bone fragments	40

Metal	4

The stratigraphy of TB48 is made up of three layers. The top layer was exposed after vegetation clearance and the sediment is compact, dark brown with inclusions of small stones. The layer is mainly contaminated by vegetation and insects. The same layers were extended in square TB52.

4.3.2. Phase Two Excavations- Northeastern homesteads

Although the test excavations did not have extensive stratigraphy that could provide detailed activities or events that occurred in households close to the excavated area, the material culture uncovered from these test excavations provided a glimpse of the type of artefacts associated with communities that settled on the mountain. The material culture uncovered from the excavations, however, could only be associated with one site on top of the mountain. Additional data was required for different sites in order to determine whether there was a different use of the material culture. The second phase of excavations was, therefore, an extension of four squares on an ash midden and three grids in front of a single household. Permission to extend the excavations was granted after the data for the test excavations was presented to the royal family.

The second phase of excavations (Phase Two) focused on two separate areas, including a small midden, within a homestead located in the north-eastern side of the royal village. The homesteads at Phase Two consisted of both circular and rectangular structures. A stonewall structure that reflected evidence of a transition from an earlier, older style of architecture to a contemporary European style was also visible. The latter entails semi-circular structures that were possibly built to emulate four edges of a rectangular building though the corners were imperfect. Excavations that were carried out in this area also reflected a transition of an older culture to a new European style of housing. The walls of the structure were about 1.5 metres high.

Phase Two excavations were further conducted near four collapsed stone walled structures; three of the structures were semi-circular showing evidence of emulation of a rectangular style of building although the corners were not defined. Four squares were dug in what could be regarded as the central area of the eastern cluster shown in Figure 4.12. The decision to excavate at the

chosen area was mainly due to evidence of a high concentration of surface artefacts such as foreign ceramics, beads and pottery pieces that were marked during pedestrian surveys. The excavated squares were labelled TB 60, TB 61, TB 66 and TB 67.

Figure 4.12: The circled area of the village is the eastern cluster, where phase two excavations occurred.

4.3.2.1. Description of TB 60 and TB 61

Middens associated with the homesteads at Phase Two of the project were not easily spotted because of the dense vegetation (this area lies outside the tourist or visitor path; however, surface artefacts such as beads and pottery were visible during survey. The first excavated square labelled TB60 was divided into four quads. TB60 is a secondary midden that might have initially been an outdoor fireplace. This is because the exposed hearths were located close to the fireplace wall. Many of the Basotho traditional households have both indoor and outdoor fireplaces; the outdoor fireplace does not have the same common circular layout feature that an indoor fireplace has. The outdoor fireplace is associated with a straight wall that ranges between 50cm and 1m in length and 50 to 80cm in height.

The initial stage of Phase Two excavations began by clearing small shrubs and grass from the surface of the area chosen for excavations. The top surface and layers were characterised by loose topsoil and high frequency of plant roots. The sediment of TB 60 was largely a dark brown deposit, which turned darker both in areas where roots were concentrated and along a stone wall that was exposed during excavations. There were also inclusions of small charcoal pieces. At 30cm below, the deposit assumed a light grey ash with charcoal inclusions but specifically at the eastern part of the square.

Spit two of TB 61 was more colourful and the main artefacts uncovered included foreign ceramics, burnt bone and metal sheets. TB 60 and TB 61 were potentially part of a hearth, which was supported by a small wall that extended from quads B and D of TB 60 and quads A and C of TB 61.

The first context of TB 61 was a dark grey layer with light grey patches, which extended into TB 60 trench. Artefacts found in this layer included burnt bone and pottery sherds. The second context was a loose light grey sediment which extended into quad B of TB 60. This context also had a high frequency of burnt bone and a prominent sheep skull, as seen in Figure 4.13. The boundary to the underlying context was clear. Context Three is a loose light greyish brown deposit with bunt bone. This layer yielded a high frequency of pottery, burnt bone, metal pieces and an upper grinding stone.

The wall in square TB 61 did not extend throughout the square; it rather cut across quads A, C and D. Like TB 60, burnt bone pieces were frequent finds excavated in TB 61. The contexts in TB 61 varied mainly in texture, and many of the burnt bones were uncovered from light grey ash deposit. Quads B and D were mostly a yellowish-brown loose deposit yielding artefacts such as foreign ceramics and pieces of glass.

Figure 4.13: Cranial of a sheep uncovered from TB 61.

A unique feature wall, with burnt rocks extended in quads B and D of TB 60, as shown in figures 4.15 and 4.16. To study the extent of the wall, an additional square was excavated and named TB 61 (see figure 4.14). Artefacts uncovered from square TB60 were ceramics, burnt bone, unidentifiable material and rusty metal pieces. The sediment generally took a dark grey, loose and soft character along quads A, B and C. The wall that was exposed in TB 60 was 50cm high; the length of the wall could not be determined because the wall extended in the north, east and south boundaries. The wall in question was mostly built out of sandstone which did not seem to have been shaped.

Dividing walls were located on the floors at the back of some of the huts at Doornpoort (Dreyer 1993: 80-81). The wall was argued to have been a *mohaoloana* (storage) which was usually not placed indoors (Walton 1948: 142; 1949:73) in other Middle and Later Iron Age sites. However,

in the case of Lesotho, Casalis (1861: 129-130) observed an outdoor cooking area which was called *lelapa* located in front of the hut. In Sesotho homesteads, Dreyer (1992) observed burnt stones in outdoor fireplaces.

> This area was clearly marked off by a screen of rushes (*seotloana*). The fire was usually made here between stones to support the pots. At Doornpoort distinctive fireplaces were exposed in front of certain huts where several flat stones formed a base on which the fire was made (Dreyer 1992 289-290).

Figure 4.14: Surface view of square TB61.

The two top layers/contexts were a brown compact deposit and the most common findings included pottery, glass beads (including an unusual oval glass bead), rusted unidentifiable metal, construction nails and clothing nails. The contexts had small rocks. Below these layers was context three, which was a compact reddish-brown sediment with frequent plant root fibres. The bedrock of the whole square was reached at a 60cm depth.

Figure 4.15: TB 60 showing rocky context

Figure 4.16: TB 61 showing the burnt half skull of a sheep.

4.3.2.2. Description of trench TB 67

The excavations of TB 67 presented a diversity of deposit layers. Quads A and C of the square reflected layers that ranged from a light grey, grey, dark grey and reddish-brown contexts. The deposit was also interspersed by frequent rocks that measured between 15 and 35 centimetres. Context 2 of TB 67 is a compact dark grey and brown deposit. There are a few rocks in quads A, B and D. Artefacts uncovered from this layer include burnt bone pieces, small pieces of metal, and beads.

The frequency of material culture towards the north-eastern part of the square motivated for excavation of another square. TB61 was extended by a 1m² grid north of the square, at the boundary of quads A and B. The decision to expand was based on the location of the half-skull of a sheep and the context that seemed to extent outward orientating towards the north of the square.

The wall evident in squares TB 60 and TB 61 extended in square TB 66 and TB 67. Upon completion of TB 60, TB 61, TB 66 and TB 67, squares TB62, TB 63, TB64 and TB 65 were excavated. Surface artefacts such as bullet shells, pottery, and beads were collected before excavations. Both TB 62 and TB 63 maintained the same contexts.

4.3.2.3. Trench TB 62

To better understand the function of TB 60 and TB 61, an extension of 50x50cm square was excavated. This extension was named TB62 (shown in Figure 4.17). This square of TB 62 had a total of eight contexts, which have all yielded a variety of artefacts. The contexts varied from loose yellowish-brown sand to compact sediment to light grey ash, along with inclusions.

Figure 4.17: TB 62 at the first layer exposing a wall.

The similarities in contexts between TB61 and TB62 is distinctive. The apparent wall of burnt rocks in TB61 is also slightly visible in TB 62.

The first context level was a greyish brown to dark grey and loose deposit with numerous roots. This layer had ash patches and was primarily present in Quad A. Material culture uncovered from

this square included burnt bone fragments, pottery sherds, a high frequency of beads, and charcoal pieces. This layer extended to about 5cm depth. Context two of TB62 exposed the subsequent layer which was clearly identifiable.

The third context was a compact, dark grey sediment with light grey patches in specific parts of the square. Roots and insect disturbance is prevalent across the square and among artefacts found in this context included beads, bone pieces, ceramic pieces and unidentifiable metal. Context Three was 8cm thick, and exposed a light grey layer. Context Four was a light grey sediment with charcoal inclusions and brown sediment. Artefacts from this layer includes pottery pieces, beads and burnt bone pieces. The boundary to the next level was clear.

Context Five was a loose greyish brown soil, which was mostly visible in quads B and D. In Quad A, the context was mainly brown while in Quad C the sediment had patches of a yellowish brown. Root and insect disturbance is prevalent throughout the square and this may have possibly caused a slight mixture of the contexts. Artefacts uncovered from this layer includes bone fragments and high density of beads. TB 62 was extended by TB 63 by 50 cm by 100cm. The decision to extend was motivated by the density of beads towards the western section of the square.

The subsequent context was a compact greyish brown and yellowish-brown deposit that extended throughout the square. This layer was named Context Six. The material culture from this level included bone pieces, ceramic sherds, beads, metal and glass pieces. Context Seven was also characterised by numerous small rocks. This layer exposed context eight, which was a light brown deposit with dark grey patches in quads B and D. Artefacts uncovered from this square includes pottery pieces, beads, lithics, bone fragments and seeds. Context Seven was covered a depth of 3cm.

The final layer, Context 15, was a compact, light brown deposit, with frequent rocks. Root disturbance was prevalent throughout the square and this led to a collapsed section in Quad D. The section walls in quads A and C were unstable. The context yielded very few pottery shards and bone pieces.

Squares TB60, 61, 62 63 and 67 had similar characteristics and thus, suggests that they all served the same function of food preparation.

4.3.3. Phase Three-North-eastern homesteads Midden

The third phase of excavations was carried out on a midden that was associated with homesteads close to TB 61, 62, 63 and 67. The excavations of different sites on top of Thaba-Bosiu mostly yielded a variety of artefacts that were similar, for instance, the midden where squares TB 64, 65, 66, and 67 were excavated had a high density of various beads. It is for this reason that this midden is named 'bead midden'. The initial excavation was of a single grid, which was extended by one more grid and two 50cm by 1 metre square. The first trench of the midden was labelled TB 63, the second TB 64, while the third and fourth which were extensions were respectively labelled TB 65 and TB 66. The extensions of 50cm by 1 metre were done along the western boarder of squares TB 63 and TB 64. All the squares excavated in this midden maintained similar layers except for TB 64, which had a context that could have been a pit and was characterised by yellowish brown loose sand with very few pottery sherds and no other artefacts. TB 63 was the first to be excavated. A total of 6 contexts were excavated from this square. All layers have distinctive characteristics with the top two layers producing a high number of artefacts.

As with all excavated squares, TB 63 was divided into four quads. A total of eight layers were removed to expose sandstone bedrock, which is consistently visible on the top edges of the mountain. The top layers maintained a greyish brown and light grey sediment, which buried numerous beads and pottery shards. The decision to extend the excavations was motivated by the high quantity of artefacts that were visible along the walls of the squares.

4.3.4. Phase Four: TB 2 Excavations- Nkhono 'Masekhonyana/ Southeastern homesteads

Behind the hut structure of the first wife of King Moshoeshoe, Queen 'Mamohato's hut is one of the largest middens within the royal village. The fourth phase excavations were conducted in the outskirts of the midden behind Queen 'Mamohato's hut (shown in Figure 4.18). One square was excavated, and it was named TB 2 shown in Figure 4.19. The final phase was excavations of the main midden located west of King Moshoeshoe's homestead. Behind the midden is a yard characterised by stonewall structures connected by a single wall assuming a circular orientation. The homesteads are also secured by fencing of aloe vera trees, which is a common method of fencing in the rural areas of Lesotho. A royal midden associated with the homestead is located

about five metres from the stonewalling in the north-western part of the fenced homestead. The main challenge of this research has been securing permission to excavate royal middens, which have potential to yield detailed information about the site in general. Excavations were granted with conditions that specific areas were not to be excavated. One of the restricted areas was the midden close to the homesteads, behind Mamohato's hut.

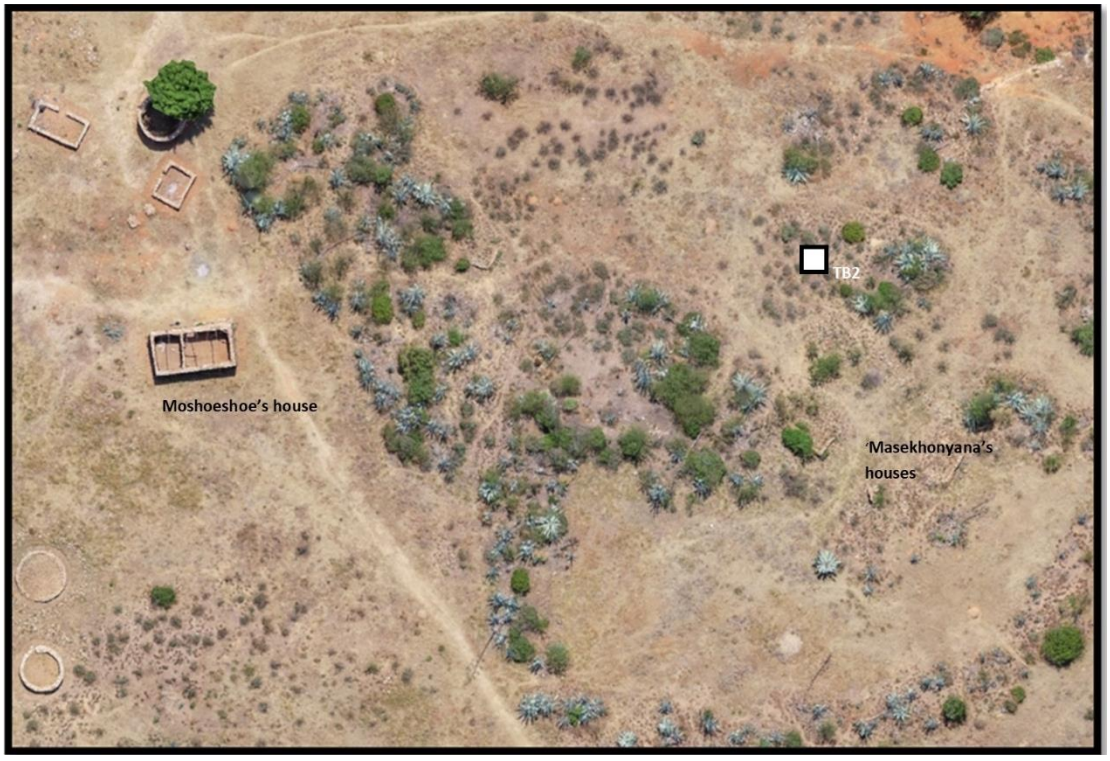

Figure 4.18: The location of TB2

The layers of TB2 were distinct and clear with mostly loose yellowish-brown sediment. A total of four layers were removed from this trench. The two top layers, contexts one and two yielded a higher number of artefacts in comparison to other layers. Figure 4.21 shows an example of one of the artefacts uncovered from TB2. Quads A and B (eastern side of the square) also had a high concentration of artefacts. To the far East of TB2, approximately four metres is a stonewall structure which was possibly a hut. The first six centimetres of context one was a greyish brown

deposit with occasional ash patches and charcoal pieces. The stratigraphy of the east-facing wall is shown in Figure 4.20.

Figure 4.19: TB2 square showing exposed foreign and local ceramics (Picture taken by the author)

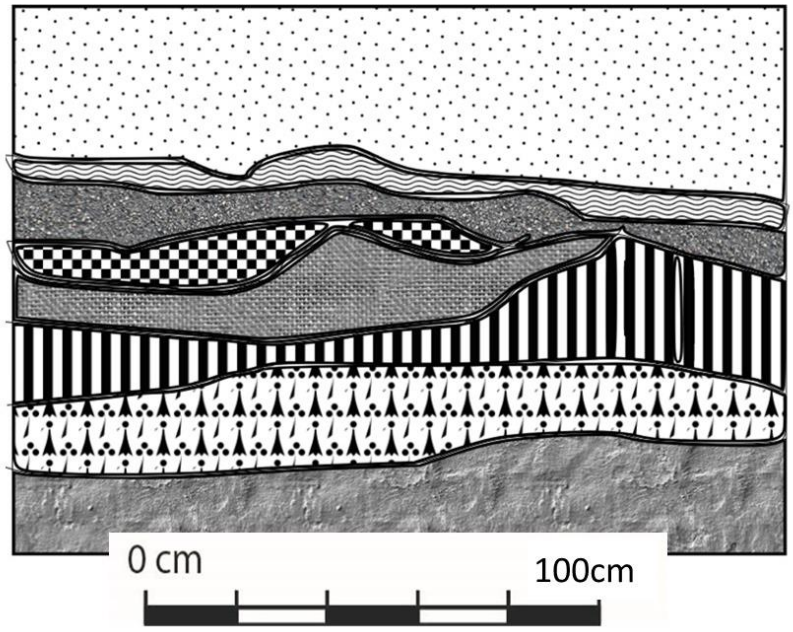

Figure 4.20: East facing wall from TB2

Figure 4.21: Exposed artefact from TB2.

The nature of this study is to accumulate a wide spectrum of the occupation of this mountain, thus midden in question was particularly significant in contextualising this part of the occupation. In order to keep good relations with the caretakers of the site, a compromise was reached where permission was granted to only excavate the outskirts of the midden. A square was setup between the midden and the main homestead. The choice to excavate that area was informed by evidence of high density of surface artefacts, specifically beads and ceramics.

The third layer is a semi-compact light brown sand soil with a few yellow patches. The context also has ash patches. Root fibres are visible in all the quads; small rocks are present in the context (visible also along the walls of the square). Material culture uncovered from this layer included

small rusty pieces of metal, animal bones and a small ceramic piece. This context was reached at a 28cm depth.

4.3.5. TB 3 Excavations/South-western Homesteads midden

Following an extensive survey of all the middens, I came across a midden that lay along a path. The midden extended about one metre from the path. Following enquiries about the midden, I then put in a proposal with the royal family with the motivation that part of the site is already damaged and for conservation purposes, needs to be excavated. Due to regular disturbances on the midden, several artefacts were exposed, most of which were beads and pottery. I presented a proposal to excavate part of the midden though not the disturbed section, and it was accepted.

The last excavations were on a midden located about 10 metres in front of King Moshoeshoe's homestead. The choice to excavate the midden was motivated by evident high quantities of burnt bone on the surface (as shown in Figure 4.22). The excavations on this midden were of core interest because it was one of the largest middens at the site and permission to excavate to be granted. Only one square was excavated, and this was named TB3.

Figure 4.22: Evidence of burnt bone on the surface of TB3.

A total of 24 layers were recorded from trench TB 3. The square consisted of a series of ash patches with charcoal inclusions (stratigraphy shown in Figures 4.24 and 4.25). Towards the bottom of the square, the sediment was yellowish-brown and yellow. The first two layers (contexts 1 and 2) are characterised by dark grey, loose ash with small bone fragments and pottery pieces. The main disturbance is mainly rodent trenches and roots. Context 3 was greyish brown. Towards the end of context 3, the sediments turn yellowish brown. Contexts 4 to 7 maintain a semi-compact and yellowish sediments with occasional ash. The dominant artefacts include pottery, bone fragments and shells. The next four contexts maintained a mixed sediment of brownish grey and in some instances with charcoal inclusions. Context 9 specifically has high density of burnt bone. The sediment starts turning darker from Context 11, which is dark grey, mostly loose, and has small rock inclusions. More compact and darker layers begin at Context 13, at about 60cm deep. Context 15 remains compact, however, the color shifts to a light brown colour. The pottery in this layer is mainly thick black pieces. Overall TB3 square has multiple layers of ash and charcoal as shown in Figure 4.23. The detailed stratigraphic content is presented in Table 4.

Excavations at TB 3 were brought to a halt as the sediment got rocky and harder to excavate. Although many of the layers of this trench were well-defined, there were, however, some which formed a complicated network of unclear and undefined boundaries. In some instances, other contexts covered only a certain section of the trench, for instance, a context only extends into one quad. The main challenge with such complex layers is that boundaries of the top and bottom layers are not well-defined, which makes periodisation difficult to interpret.

In comparison to other excavated trenches at the site, TB3 has the greatest number of excavated burnt bones. Pottery presents the second highest number of artefacts, followed by beads and ceramics. The most common material culture throughout the layers were pottery and bones. Analysis of these material is discussed in the following chapters.

Figure 4.23: The stratigraphic layers show evidence of fire with ash and charcoal.

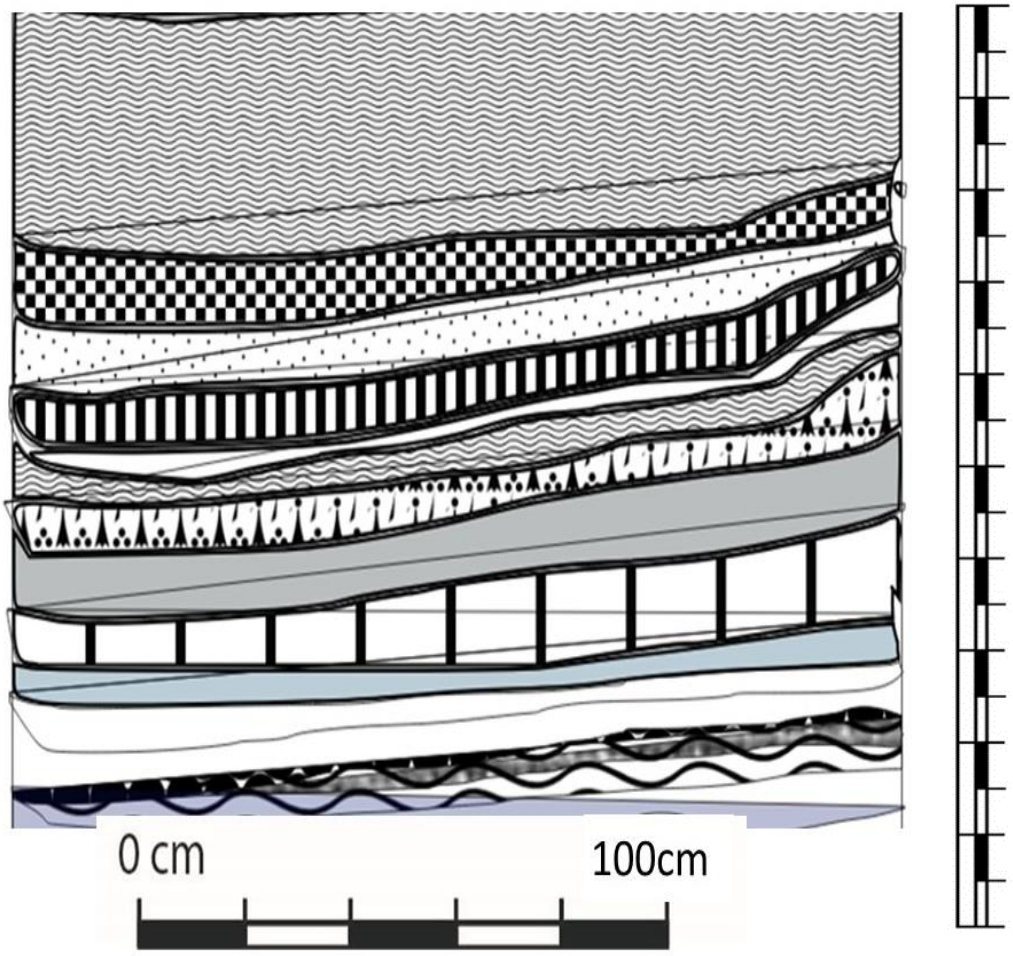

Figure 4.24: TB3 north-facing wall.

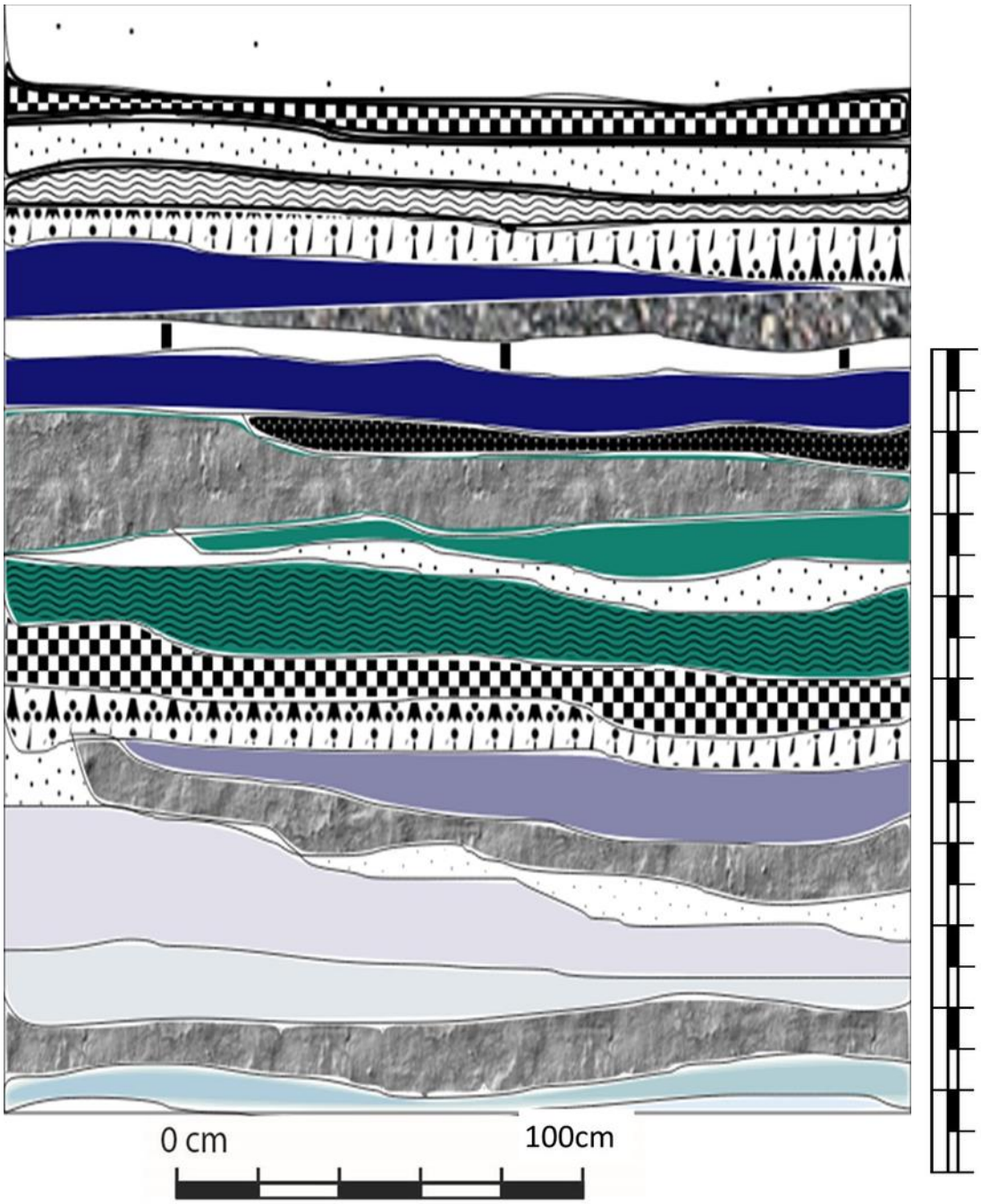

Figure 4.25: Stratigraphy of TB3

Table 4.3: A representation of layers exposed at TB3.

TRENCH TB3		
Layer	**Description of Layer**	**Artefacts**
Context 1	The top layer is a dark grey ash with numerous burnt bone inclusions.	Burnt bone pieces, pottery shards, metal pieces.
Context 2	The sediment at this layer is a dark grey loose soil that has yellowish brown patches. There are quite a few small insect holes. The sediment is crumbly, so the edges are not well intact.	Artefacts found at this level includes different sizes of bone, pieces of pottery, one ceramic piece, thin transparent glass pieces, rust metal pieces, possible foreign iron ammunition (weapon-related metal/iron).
Context 3	The sediment is a greyish brown with patches of ash.	Burnt bone and pottery shards
Context 4	The sediment at layer 4 is a loose light yellow with ashy and brown patches. This layer further has small rocks throughout. The context is 6cm deep from context 3.	The artefacts uncovered from this trench includes burnt broken bones.
Context 5	A yellowish-brown sediment with charcoal and ash patches	Burnt bone fragments and pottery
Context 6	The yellow sediment visible in contexts 4 and 5 fades in this layer to a slightly compact sand soil with frequent light grey ash. The eastern section of the layer in Quad D is intensely disturbed by insect.	Pottery pieces, bone fragments, rusty metal, glass and charcoal fragments.
Context 7	The sediment is compact with charcoal inclusions. There is insect disturbance in Quad D. The sediment is a greyish brown. This	Animal bones were in high density. Glass pieces, shells, beads and possible lithics were uncovered.

	context extends to quads C and D by only 38cm.	
Context 8	Context 8 is only present in quads C and D. The deposit is dark grey loose with charcoal fragments. The context was reached at a 40cm depth.	Bone pieces were uncovered in this context. Pottery pieces, ceramics and glass were uncovered during excavations.
Context 9	The deposit is light brown with light grey patched. There are small rocks and bone pieces.	Lots of burnt bone, pottery, and shell. Generally, artefacts are not in high quantities.
Context 10	The sediment is brown with patches of grey. The sediment is mostly compact and loose in quads B and C.	Pottery pieces, some with a rims, shells and charcoal inclusions.
Context 11	Context is a dark grey, loose sediment with plant fibres across the square. There is insect disturbance. The context is deeper towards quads B and D.	Pieces of pottery, numerous charcoal pieces, rusty unidentifiable metal, bone fragments, a few beads, eggshell pieces. In general, the context has a high density of finds.
Context 12	Dark grey and compact	Charcoal, burnt bone, glass beads and pottery
Context 13	The sediment in this context is dark grey with yellowish brown patches. A high density of finds were uncovered.	Ceramics, bones, glass beads, charcoal pieces.
Context 14	This context is a dark grey sediment with charcoal fragments. The context is mainly visible in Quad C.	Well-preserved animal bones pottery pieces (burnished),
Context 15	Context 15 is a compact, light brown sandstone with charcoal inclusions and a few yellow patches. The context also has a few small rocks.	Artefacts that were uncovered from context 15 include, glass, ceramic pieces, dentine, high density of charcoal, bones.

Context 16	Yellowish grey with charcoal inclusions	Burnt bone fragments, pottery sherds, beads
Context 17	Yellowish grey with brown patches	Pottery sherds, burnt bone fragments and beads
Context 18	The large portion of this context is in quads A and B. The sediment is yellowish light grey, and more yellow in Quad A.	Finds included glass beads, green glass, pottery shards
Context 19	Context 19 is a light brownish grey deposit. The context is a loose deposit with root fibres.	Artefacts uncovered includes broken eggshells, burnt pottery shards and burnt bone (includes dental).
Context 20	This context is a yellow sediment with a few charcoal fragments. The deposit is slightly compact with small rock inclusions. The context was reached at 101cm east of Quad B, in quad D 103cm and in Quad C, 108cm deep measured from the top of the square.	Finds uncovered include pieces of pottery, broken animal bone and teeth, possible lithics, and rusty unidentifiable metal.
Context 21	Context 21 is a light brown sediment with light grey patches and a few charcoal pieces. The deposit is compact with frequent stone inclusions.	Pottery shards, a white bead, few charcoal pieces.
Context 22	This context is a brown deposit with small ash patches. The frequency of sand stones is high in this context.	Artefacts included fragile bead, inconclusive whether it is made from glass or not.
Context 23	Flat dark (possibly burnt sandstone rocks. The sediment (frequent sandstones) is dark grey with yellow patches.	Upper grinding stone, burnt vegetation, maize cob.
Context 24	The context was hard to excavate and had small rocks.	Few artefacts compared to the previous context.

4.6. Discussion

The methods presented in this study yielded both significant and dynamic results that when interpreted have potential to provide insight into the livelihoods of the occupants of different homesteads on top of Thaba-Bosiu. A reflection on the excavations of homesteads at the north-eastern part of the Village shows a variety of a combination of foreign materials such as glass beads, material associated with weaponry such as bullet shells and glass ceramic pieces. The north-eastern homesteads are also significant as they have uncovered a possible food preparatory area evidenced by a single wall of burnt rocks.

An ash midden located east of King Moshoeshoe's homestead was the deepest of all. The single square yielded significant stratigraphy that reflected a specific material culture. While the bulk of the sediment was made up of ash, beyond 50cm evidence of ash was not frequent which possibly shows that the use of that specific space was not consistent. Towards the bottom layers, artefacts were mainly of local production, thus, showing that the spaces were used for different uses. Although limited, the excavations have reflected a dynamic use of space for the different homesteads.

4.7. Summary

The use of oral histories and traditions, coupled with archaeological methods have yielded important information about the history of Thaba-Bosiu. The surveys undertaken at the royal village resulted in the identification of areas that have not been included in the oral histories. The north-eastern homesteads have not been linked to any specific family or individual, however the excavations produced information about the daily practices of the people who lived in those homesteads. The material culture has further contributed to exploring cultural representations and use of spaces. Excavations close to other homesteads have also reflected the significance and use of space. The material culture reflected at these sites thus requires an extensive analysis. The next chapter provides an analysis of settlements that were identified at Thaba-Bosiu.

CHAPTER FIVE- THE HISTORY of SETTLEMENTS AND the BUILT ENVIRONMENT OF THABA-BOSIU

5.1. Introduction

Iron Age studies in Southern Africa have identified significant material culture linked to past farming communities. Investigations of landscapes and settlements have provided information about the social complexities of agropastoralists in the archaeological record. The studies have thus answered questions of how people in the past organised and occupied certain spaces and landscapes (Maggs 1976; Taylor 1984; Hall 1985; Whitelaw 2000; Badenhorst 2010; Sadr 2021). Such studies have investigated relationships between artefacts, surrounding spaces and events of the past.

Several models of settlement organisation in Iron Age sites have been suggested (Maggs 1976; Huffman 2000; 2007). Such models have traced the differences and similarities of Iron Age settlements in Southern Africa. One of the models is the Central Cattle Pattern (CCP) (Kuper 1998; Huffman 2007). The Central Cattle Pattern is a settlement model characterised by a central enclosure, which was considered as a meeting space (*khotla*) for the community. This central space was also used for housing grain bins as storage (Huffman 2007: 25). Connected to this space were livestock pens or cattle kraals. The outskirts of these central spaces were residential houses. Iron Age sites in the Free State and Lesotho areas that have similar spatial? organisation under the Central Cattle Pattern model have further been classified under Ntsoanatsatsi and Moor Park Clusters. Sites associated with these clusters have revealed different and unique characteristics. Many of these sites are in the Free State and KwaZulu-Natal provinces of South Africa. The CCP has, however, received several criticisms, the most important of which is that is downplays change in settlement organisation through time (Reid *et al.* 1997). Because of cultural dynamism, change should be considered in understanding settlement layout and the architecture of indigenous people (Reid *et al* 1997). This chapter presents the settlement and architecture at Thaba-Bosiu as it evolved through time. The chapter further highlights culture contact, and the different architectural styles present on top of the mountain, while also showing continuity.

5.2. Background to Thaba-Bosiu

Among the vast stretch of mountains along the Foothills of Lesotho is Thaba-Bosiu. This mountain became a landscape of many facets. Thaba-Bosiu is popularly known among Basotho as '*mokhorong oa khotla'*, which loosely translates into, 'a hut used for gathering.' *Mokhorong oa khotla* denotes a social and political collective significance of the mountain where national gatherings take place. This contradicts much of the colonial narratives that have been recorded about the mountain, which portray it more as a refuge place than an environment that allowed for growth. In recent years, the mountain has become a place of interest not only as the birthplace of the Basotho nation, but also as a symbol of a shared identity.

In search of a new home that could sustain large groups while in the process of building his nation, Moshoeshoe and his allies settled at Thaba-Bosiu. While migrating from Botha-Bothe to Thaba-Bosiu, Moshoeshoe formed alliances with smaller groups (Mothibe 2002). Among those that joined Moshoeshoe's lineage were Rakotsoane's Bakhatla and the Bafokeng (Thompson 1975: 227-228). One of the first groups to willingly join Moshoeshoe's group after their arrival at Thaba-Bosiu was the Baphuthi in 1825 (Nyabela & Gill 2011).

The mountain is located 15 miles east of Maseru along the Phuthiatsana/Little Caledon Valley (Tylden 1950). The occupation of the top of Thaba-Bosiu is evidently influenced by different cultural denominations of settlements. Tim Magg's (1976) outline of Basotho settlements is partly evident in the organisation of settlement structures that are evident on the mountain, however, there is evidence of cultural appropriation and continuity.

At the height of its occupation, Thaba-Bosiu was home to 2000 people, most of whom moved onto the mountain during social events or community meetings (Casalis 1867; Tylden 1950). Towards the end of the 19th Century, many of the people had moved and settled on the outskirts of the mountain. The mountain is accessible through Khubelu Pass (See Figure 4.2), which is currently the only access route to the top of the mountain.

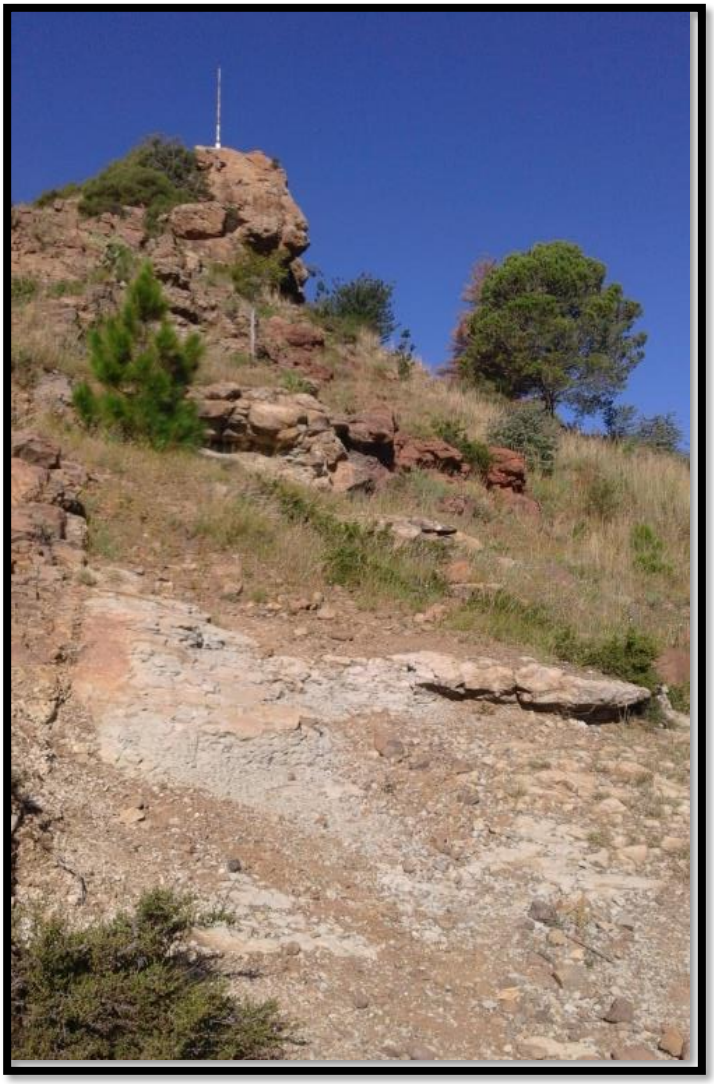

Figure 5.1: Khubelu Pass of Thaba-Bosiu

The recorded histories of Thaba-Bosiu are mostly linked to the Lifaqane wars and other conflicts among different groups (Tylden 1950; Struik 1964; Becker 1969; Thompson 1975). The narratives include conflicts of the Griqua raiders (Gill 1993), the Ndebele (Tylden 1950), and the British attacks in the 1800s (Gill 1993). Historically then, Thaba-Bosiu was narrated from a colonial gaze, which was centred around conflict and war. Very little was recorded about communities that settled on the mountain and their different interactions beyond this.

5.3. Thaba-Bosiu- From colonial glance

Over the 19th and 20th centuries, people from different walks of life have visited Thaba-Bosiu, which at one point was identified as a centre for diplomatic negotiations for the newly formed Basotho nation. Among the individuals that have provided a lived experience during their visits to Thaba-Bosiu is Eugene Casalis, who documented different events that happened at Thaba-Bosiu. Eugene Casalis is one of the first missionaries to meet Moshoeshoe I at Thaba-Bosiu. Throughout Casalis' first experience with Thaba-Bosiu is focused mainly on the physical features that the mountain had especially those that are a form of security (Casalis 1971; 1997).

The first European settlers to visit Thaba-Bosiu were three missionaries from the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) in 1833, whose mandate was to introduce civilisation and Christianity to Basotho (Tylden 1950: 77). Moshoeshoe invited the missionaries following advice of a Griqua hunter Adam Kotz, who convinced Basotho that missionaries promoted peace. Moshoeshoe also hoped to extend his sovereignty across the Mohokare Valley with the assistance of missionaries (Mothibe & Ntabeni 2002: 36). In 1833, Thomas Arbousset, Eugene Casalis and Constant Gosselin arrived at Thaba-Bosiu (Sanders 1975; Thompson 1975). PEMS missionaries established stations in Morija (Lesotho), Thaba-Bosiu (Lesotho) and Beersheba (Free State, South Africa). The missionaries were followed by the arrival of Dr. Andrew Smith at Thaba-Bosiu in 1834, who was a British explorer sent by the Cape government to explore the interior of the Southern African region (Smith 1996). Smith also served in the British Army (Smith 1996).

The PEMS missionaries' assignment was to convert Basotho into Christians and they employed strategies of condemning Basotho practices such as initiation, clientship, polygamy, *matsema* (work parties) and bridewealth (Mothibe & Ntabeni 2002: 37). The missionaries introduced European style housing to the Basotho. Evidence of rectangular stonewall structures can be seen on top of the mountain. The Basotho were also introduced to foreign crops and the use of ox-drawn plough for cultivation (Eldredge 1993: 68). The use of European household utensils, clothes, and many other goods were introduced to Basotho in the 1830s (Thompson 1975: 77; Mothibe & Ntabeni 2002:41). Thaba-Bosiu as the centre of Basotho is one of the first areas where the mentioned exchanges and contact happened.

As stated above, Eugene Casalis (1861) is one of the three missionaries to have not only initially visited Lesotho and met Moshoeshoe, but also one of the first Europeans to have arrived in the

Mohokare Valley. Casalis was a French Protestant born in 1812 in southern France. Casalis, Thomas Arboussett and Constant Gossellin left London to Cape Town in 1832. The three missionaries met up with John Phillip a Superintendent of the Cape's L.M.S. In the subsequent year, all three missionaries arrived in Thaba-Bosiu with a mission of converting African communities in the Caledon Valley.

According to Casalis (1861:15), Moshoeshoe had invited them to Thaba-Bosiu in order to advise on options that will "show him any means of securing peace for the country." The Basotho King also hoped to secure guns from his visitors so as to defend his people (Casalis 1861: 15). Moshoeshoe had experienced some attacks at Thaba-Bosiu and was, according to Casalis, desperate for alternative action to remedy the unstable political climate characterising the time.

Having crossed the Caledon Valley on their way to meet with Moshoeshoe, the missionaries were guided and welcomed by Moshoeshoe's two sons. Casalis described the mood on top of Thaba-Bosiu as being active, where, in most households, they could see mists of smoke as evidence of fire making in each hut (Casalis 1971: 174). The observation was that Moshoeshoe's followers and chiefs inferior to Moshoeshoe had settled around Thaba-Bosiu. What captured the attention of Casalis and his companions was the pathway to the top of Thaba-Bosiu. Casalis' perception was that the way to the top of the mountain seemed a herculean task, as he describes the steepness of the access pass (Casalis 1971:174).

Thaba-Bosiu is also described by Joseph Orpen (Orpen 1979:22) to have a tabletop shape that precipice about a hundred feet. Orpen (1979:22) observed five access paths to the top of the mountain which are described as not easy to manoeuvre.

A traveller by the name James Backhouse (1839) also narrated his experience of Thaba-Bosiu. The views and experiences of the landscape on the way to Thaba-Bosiu is described by Backhouse (1839: 365) as grassy and hilly as they passed through sandstone hills on top of which were kraals. Backhouse (1839) was accompanied by Thomas Arbousset, who was one of the first three missionaries to arrive at Basutoland and meet with Moshoeshoe at Thaba-Bosiu. Other views of the landscape experienced were snowcapped mountains, which were also known as the Witte Bergen or White Mountains (Backhouse 1839: 365). The White Mountains were estimated to be at the height of between 3000 feet and 9000 feet above sea level. Thaba-Bosiu, according to

Backhouse's experience, was known to be the kraal of the Basotho Chief Moshoeshoe and Basotho believed the mountain to be an impregnable fortress. From the top of the mountain, one could see a mission station, which was also named as Thaba-Bosiu Missionary Station (Backhouse 1839). The population that settled within the vicinity of the mission station was estimated at 3000 and from the station one could see twenty-one kraals. At the time when Backhouse was at Thaba-Bosiu, 400 to 500 people used to congregate at the mission station (Backhouse 1839: 367). From the mission station Backhouse was taken to Thaba-Bosiu the mountain.

Thaba-Bosiu is described to have an irregular outline with a projecting cliff at the top of the mountain. The mountain is said to have been 400 feet above sea level, with a population of 1500 inhabitants. It took approximately half an hour to walk around the top of the mountain (Backhouse 1839: 367).

> Cattle are driven up by three rough passes: there are also four footpaths by which it is accessible; some of them are so steep and broken, that a stranger in ascending, requires the use of his hands for security; but the Basutu women ascend by them, frequently carrying a child and an additional burden at the same time (Backhouse 1839: 367).

Out of the three passes mentioned was a large one which is described as between basalt rocks and 10 feet wide. The pass is further described as narrow where some parts of the sandstone have been broken through to form a wall-like structure (Backhouse 1839: 367-368). The view from easterly direction at the pass is a peak, "only the top of which is seen in etching, but of which a complete view is given in the accompanying cut" (Backhouse 1839: 368).

The recorded histories of Thaba-Bosiu have mostly been presented from a political and Eurocentric perspective that situates the mountain as a place of conflict. These narratives do not inform us about the people who lived on top of the mountain, how they organised themselves, where they lived and what day-to-day activities they were involved in. It is then important to explore these missing experiences and events.

5.4. Thaba-Bosiu Today

Thaba-Bosiu has four historical passes leading to the top of the mountain and only one is used in the present. Rafutho pass also known as *Khubelu,* which is Sesotho for red because of the colour of the soil on that pass, which leads directly to the royal village at the top of the mountain. It is famously known as a pass where Basotho accomplished victories following survival of many attacks by using the topography of the mountain for counterattack. Rafutho Pass is named after a Nguni iron smelter who was named Rafutho by Basotho (Thompson 1975). King Moshoeshoe I gifted Rafutho with land just below the Pass. It is not clear where exactly the iron processing station was located, but for tourism purposes, management put up a sign labeled '*mofuthong'* towards the middle of the pass (see figure 5.2). *Mofuthong* is a Sesotho name for iron smelting station and '*ho futha*' is the act of smelting. The belief that iron smelting used to be processed in Lesotho is open to debate, as archaeological evidence has revealed that iron smelting was said to have not been possible in the areas of Lesotho and parts of the Free-State due to the relative unavailability of wood (Chirikure *et al.* 2008). The Basotho sourced energy from animal dung and indigenous shrubs. The survey conducted in this study did not uncover any iron smelting slags or any evidence of metal processing.

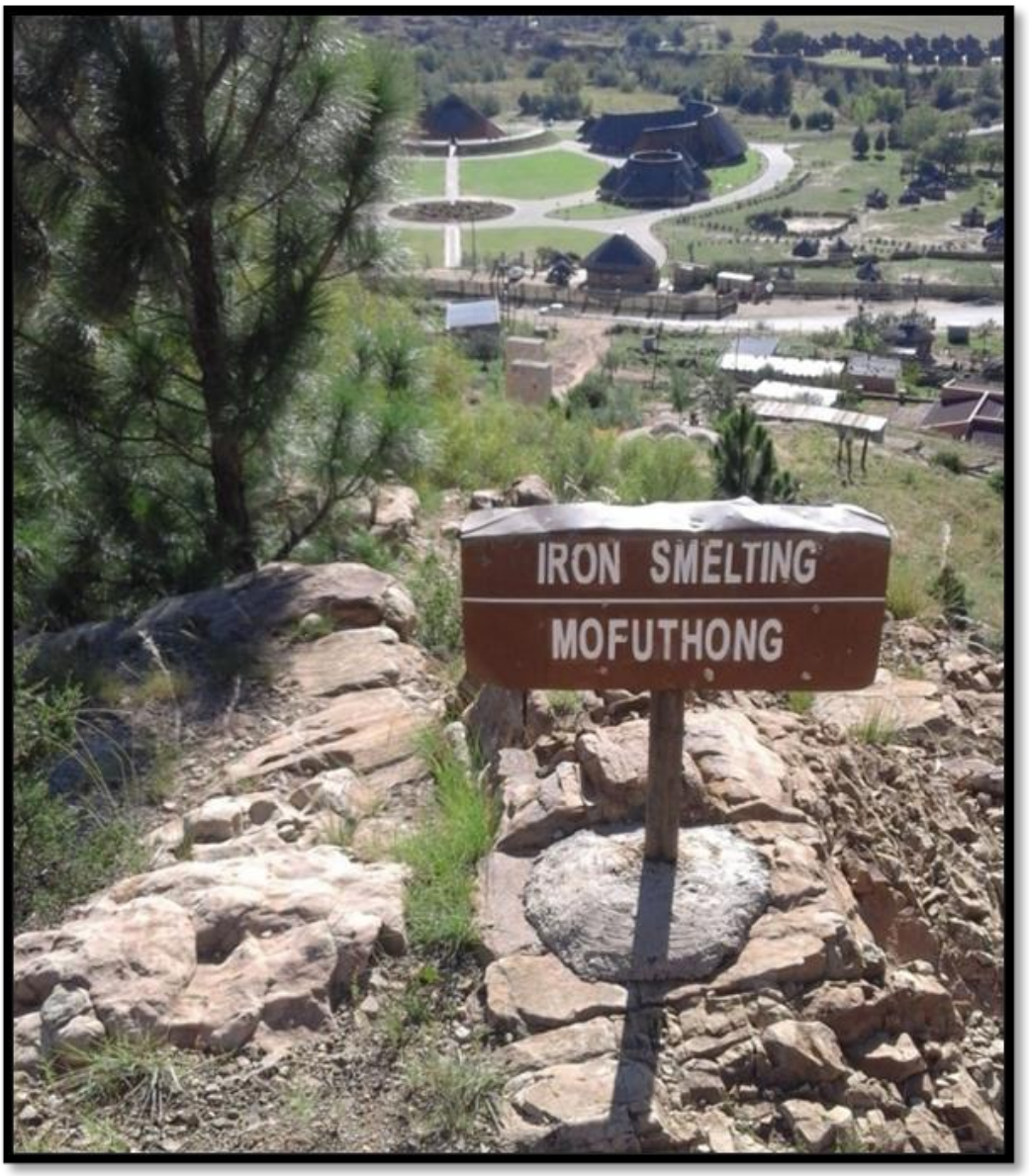

Figure 5.2: A symbolising iron smelting at Rafutho Pass (picture by the author).

One of the most sacred spaces on top of the mountain is the graveyard (see figures 5.3 and 5.4). Buried in this graveyard is members of the royal family and other important community members who worked closely with King Moshoeshoe I since the 19th Century. A recent graveyard is of King Moshoeshoe II, who was buried in the 1990s. The site is visited annually by members of the royal family and other Basotho on Moeshoeshoe Day (11th March).

Figure 5.3: Graveyard on top of Thaba-Bosiu. Picture courtesy of the author

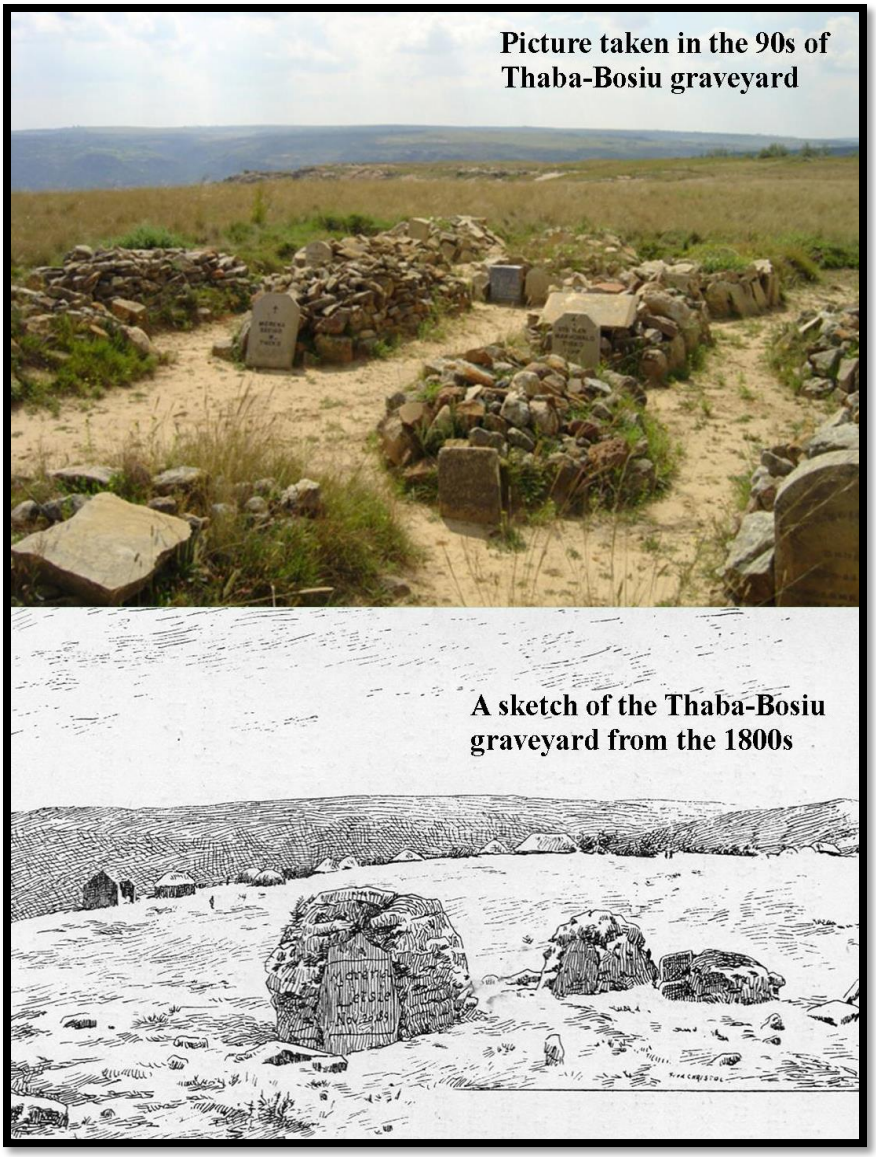

Figure 5.4: Graveyard in the 1800s and early 1990s. (Pictures courtesy of Morija Museum and Archives).

Archaeological evidence shows that the settlements on Thaba-Bosiu consist of the main royal village, the eastern homesteads and the southern homesteads. The main royal village is located west of the mountain. At the far east end of the mountain is a small village, which consists of two homesteads and two livestock enclosures. Another small village on the far southeastern part of the mountain consists of possibly three homesteads and two cattle enclosures. The historical and archaeological research in this study, however, focused on the main royal village.

The availability of water sources on the mountain could have been one of the major reasons why it was chosen for refuge. Many of the springs that were on the mountain have dried up and only three remain in use by current villages surrounding the mountain. Water is collected from the three springs through pipes that run from the top of the mountain to the villages below and around Thaba-Bosiu. Figures 5.5a and 5.5b shows two of the water sources at the top of Thaba-Bosiu.

Figure 5.5a & 5.5b: Springs on the top of Thaba-Bosiu. (Picture courtesy of the author)

The excavation potential of Thaba-Bosiu is limited to certain spaces, due to the natural and human impacts on the mountain (King 2014). Extreme climate events such as a tornado that passed through Thaba-Bosiu have demolished some of the stonewall structures on the mountain (Dreyer 1998; King 2014). Oral histories reveal that at least 2000 people lived on the mountain in the 19th Century (Gill 1993). Presently there is evidence of mainly the royal settlements designed in both Sotho and European infrastructure and a few other low stonewalled structures and foundations.

The deterioration of numerous stone walled structures at Thaba-Bosiu motivated a restoration project led by a team of experts from Zimbabwe in 2013. During this project, glass beads, European ceramics, pottery, a machete and a horseshoe were recovered from areas where there were fallen rocks from the previously demolished stonewalling. The royal stonewall structures pictured on Figure 5.6 are still evident. Moshoeshoe's main European style stonewall structure is located approximately ten metres from his first wife's hut. Evidence of Basotho infrastructure is seen about seven feet north from Moshoeshoe's European structure. The royal stonewalled structures of Moshoeshoe's first wife, Queen 'Mamohato consisted of circular structures of which some have been restored (See Figure 3.11).

Figure 5.6: Moshoeshoe's European-style house before and after restoration (Pictures courtesy of the author and the Morija Museum and Archives).

During the restoration of stonewall structures, fallen rocks that had formed part of the original structures were reused. Due to continuous extreme climatic changes, original rocks that were used to build some structures were covered in sediment, which when uncovered, exposed some artefacts. Such artefacts included glass beads, pottery pieces, stone tools and metal tools.

The British Museum also currently houses numerous artefacts from Thaba-Bosiu that were said to have been taken in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Figure 5.7 shows a collage of different artefacts that are currently displayed in the British Museum.

Apart from the royal stonewall structures, there is also lasting evidence of a *khotla* (an amphitheatre where historically, community gatherings were held). *Khotla* has over the years changed; there was a tree under which it was believed that meetings were held, which has now fallen (shown in Figure 5.8). This tree would have been planted after European contact as it is an alien plant to Lesotho. Around the *khotla* area, management has placed tree trunks for purpose of tourism that serve to show where people sat during meetings. Approximately ten metres from

khotla is a remnant of what used to be the royal kraal. The area where the royal kraal is located is covered by dense vegetation, and therefore not visible.

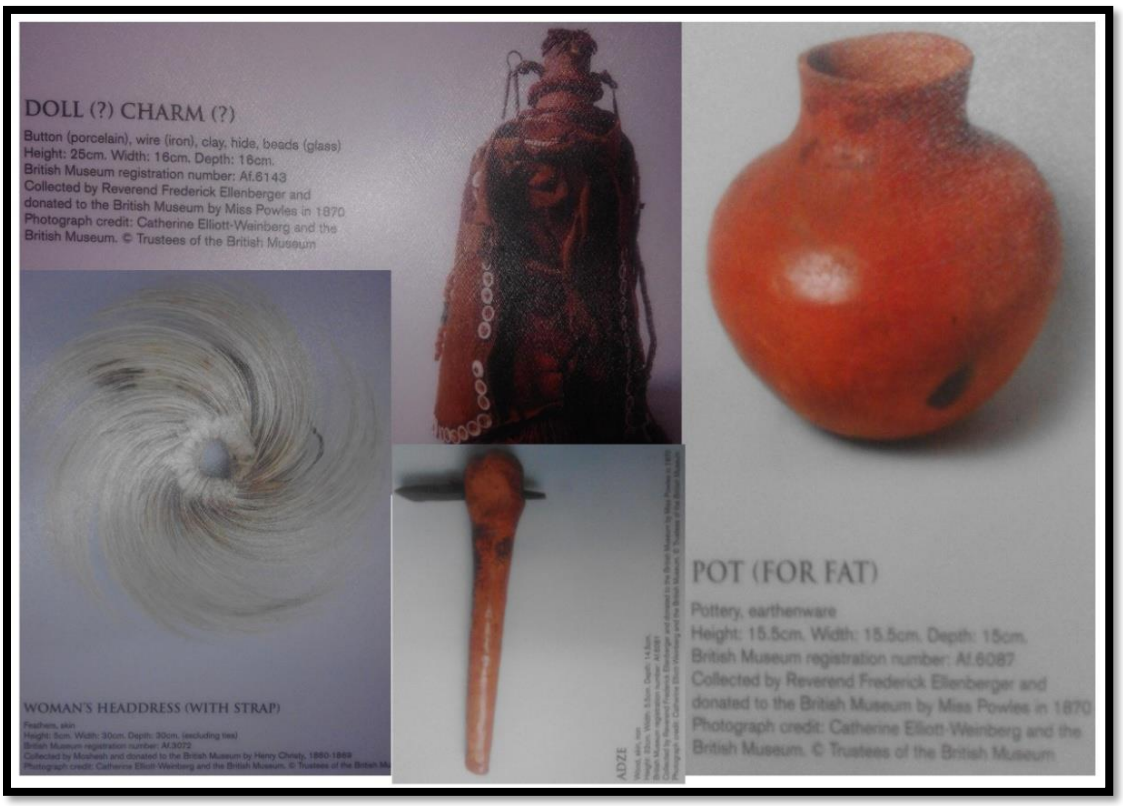

Figure 5.7: A few of the many artefacts that were collected from Thaba-Bosiu (Pictures sourced from the Basotho Village Museum).

Figure 5.8: Present state of the khotla area at Thaba-Bosiu. Picture courtesy of the author.

On their arrival at Thaba-Bosiu, Moshoeshoe and his following are said to have initially interacted with the hunter-gatherer (Baroa) groups in the area. Oral histories reveal that Moshoeshoe's group intermarried with Baroa, and as a result many became part of Basotho (Gill 1993). Moshoeshoe gave the hunter-gatherers cattle as part of this process. Baroa as a result abandoned their hunting system of livelihood and adopted the pastoral lifestyle of the Basotho instead. Evidence of the existence of hunter-gatherers in the region exists at Thaba-Bosiu. Rock art sites around the mountain are still evident (See Figure 5.9). On the mountain, there are parts where surface stone tools can be seen.

Figure 5.9: An example of the rock art found at Thaba-Bosiu.

5.5. The History of Architecture and Settlements in Lesotho

Evidence of occupation, such as stone wall settlements, has been uncovered in many Iron Age and historical sites. The earliest dwellers of modern-day Lesotho were the San/Hunter-gatherers. The San occupied many caves, with boulders and shelters able to be found in the lower and higher escarpment of Lesotho. Inside these shelters, hunter-gatherers used to build small conical-shaped reed shelters known in Sesotho as *moqheme* (Mokorosi 2017:108). In some instances, walls were built around shelters, caves, or big boulders, with an entrance made from weeds or shrubs to form a hidden dwelling (Arbousset 1842; Ellenberger 1912).

The Nguni and Sotho-speaking groups that moved into the Mohokare Valley temporarily occupied some of the shelters and caves, built small structures for their animals and for their living (Ellenberger 1912). The main areas of occupation, however, were out in the open landscapes. Historically, the Basotho established their villages on the lowlands and foothills escarpments (Mokorosi 2017: 15).

The socio-economic practices such as agricultural farming highly influenced the positioning of the villages. Many villages overlook farming areas where the landscape is less steep and in areas of fertile land.

> Some villages were organised into clusters of homesteads with invisible boundaries. An open ground was left as a residential area for the proximate generation. The presence of the chief's residential homestead in any area, made that village's headquarters of administration, *moreneng* (Mokorosi 2017: 15).

Basotho architecture has significantly transformed over the years both pre- and post-colonial contact. The history of building styles throughout the past 200 years reflects evidence of culture contact and culture appropriation. Basotho huts exist in the form of a large oval oven and are entered by creeping along a very narrow passage, which serves to prevent the wind from reaching the interior. The walls are perfectly well plastered, and often decorated (Casalis 1961:127). The homesteads were usually fenced off by reed as shown in Figure 5.10.

Figure 5.10: Reed entrance for a traditional Sesotho household

> …the house is somewhat in the shape of a beehive with a sort of narrow elongated or tube on one side for an entrance. The framework is formed of cane the extremities of which are fixed in the ground. The height of the house is about five to six feet (Sheddick 1954:69).

A similar style of housing described in Sheddick (1954) was said to have been seen on Thaba-Bosiu. The historical record, states that before colonial interaction, huts were said to have been built primarily with stone; however, post-Lifaqane huts were built with perishable materials (Dreyer 1993:80). The early architecture was *mohlongoafatse*, which is loosely translates as 'erected from the ground'. The early *mehlongoafatse* huts built before European interaction were erected on a short stone wall structure and covered with roof thatch.

Figure 5.11: Example of some of the oldest style of a Basotho hut.

Later Iron Age huts were said to have been plastered with mud only half length of the whole structure (Backhouse 1844:355; Casalis 1861: 127). A study of the Basotho architecture conducted by Dreyer in the early 90s identified *mehlongoafatse* which were built by erecting a 60cm wall, which was then extended with thatch. This style of building was a standard way of building particularly post interaction.

> …huts, which were formed like sections, of sparrow-pots, and were built of sticks and reeds, and plastered with mud. They opened into remarkably neat, circular courts, of tall reeds, neatly bound together with plastered grass… (Backhouse 1844: 390).

Figure 5.12: An example of a later 1800s and early 1900s Basotho hut

The first European style house was built in 1839 as a gift for King Moshoeshoe I from the missionaries (Mokorosi 2017: 51). This new style of housing entails rectangular and finely shaped rocks as illustrated in Figure 4.4. Basotho continued to appropriate this new culture in their style of architecture, however, they still maintained the Sotho style, which was sometimes still the oval huts, though built with carefully shaped stone, as illustrated in Figure 3.19. The shifting of traditional style was also evident in the size of the huts that were built in the late 1800s and early 1900s (Mokorosi 2017), where the newly appropriated style of housing was bigger in size. The average diameter of the new architectural style ranged between five to six metres (Dreyer 1993). As already stated in this study, early homesteads were no longer visible because newer houses were built in part with the use of stones from earlier houses.

Figure 5.13: Late 1800s and early 1900s style of huts built at Phahameng Morija (Moshoeshoe I son's abandoned village).

5.6. Landscapes and Settlements

5.6.1. Surrounding Spaces

The environment around Thaba-Bosiu is characterised by natural and unique landscapes redefined by local communities. The sharp pointed-top shape of Qiloane Mountain (seen in Figure 4.17), is one example of the natural landscapes that have become symbolic to the identity of Basotho. Figure 4.17 also shows ruins of Ha-Masupha village located on the northern foothills of Thaba-Bosiu Mountain. Chief Masupha was the uncle of King Lerotholi (Moshoeshoe's grandson) who ruled in the late 1800s (Letsie 2023). These ruins reflect the different architectural styles of the late 1800s.

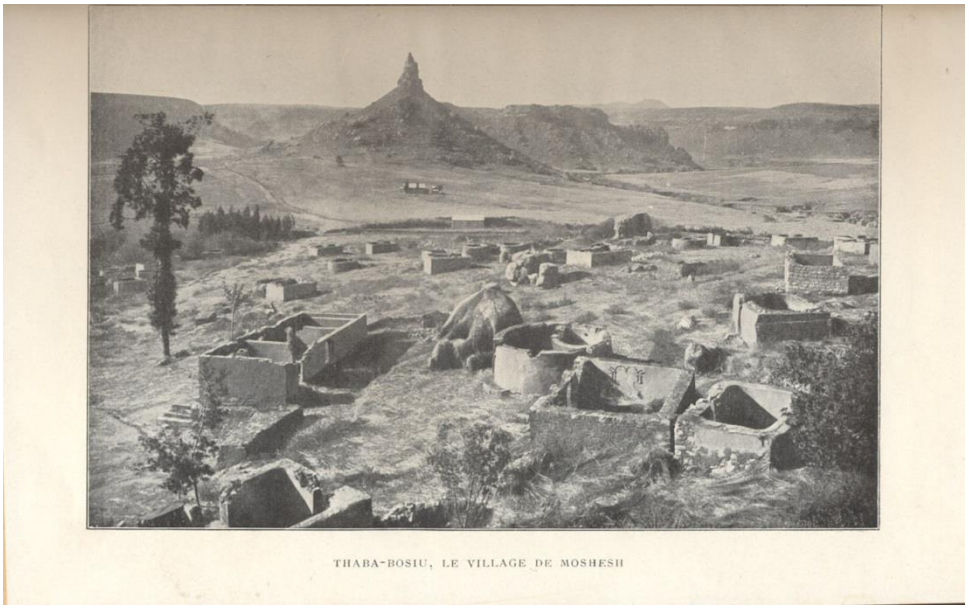

Figure 5.14: The ruins of Ha-Masupha after 1890s (Pic courtesy of Morija Museums and Archives).

Figure 5.15: Mission station in the 1850s (Pic courtesy of Morija Museums and Archives).

Today, a Basotho hat known as *mokorotlo* has been appropriated into the culture as a symbol of identity. Upon entrance in to Thaba-Bosiu, before heading to the village, all visitors are introduced to are a pile of small rocks left by other visitors, which represent the downing of arms and symbolise peaceful entrance onto the mountain.

Thaba-Bosiu stretches out into four angles, which form a cross-like shape/structure. All the entrances of the mountain are steep, though the routes are able to be negotiated. The main pass of *Rafutho* is presently the main entrance to the mountain, as it was in the past. The climb is challenging, and thus, for tourism purposes, the government has constructed a paved way, which is much longer than the main entrance.

During the restoration of stonewall structures, fallen rocks, which were part of the original structures, were reused. Due to continuous extreme climatic changes, original fallen rocks had been covered with sediment, which when they were recovered, exposed some artefacts. Such artefacts include beads, pottery pieces, stone tools and metal tools.

Figure 5.16: An Image of a European style house at Thaba-Bosiu taken in 1928 (Image courtesy of Frobenius Institute for Research in Cultural Anthropology).

Evidence of the existence of hunter-gatherers in the region exists at Thaba-Bosiu. Rock art sites around the fortress are still evident (See Figure 15). On the mountain there are parts where surface stone tools can be seen.

5.6.2. Evidence of Settlement Structures

The stonewall structures visible on Thaba-Bosiu represent different cultures and time periods. Both Sotho and European architectural styles have been observed. The stonewall structures represent evidence of three eras, the pre-European interaction era, the culture transitional era and the post-European interaction era. The pre-colonial era entails cultural influences before contact with the French missionaries and other European explorers; while the transitional era represents incorporation of cultural influences of a variety of cultures, mainly European. The post-European era entails appropriation of European architecture as new contemporary buildings.

The general preservation of stonewalling for all the represented eras differs. Unfortunately, many of the pre-European structures have been destroyed and their stones were re-used to restore the European style houses. The only existing evidence of early structures is in foundations visible on the ground.

The stonewall restoration project also encompassed an extensive survey and recording of visible stonewall structures. A record of landscapes on top of Thaba-Bosiu was presented on a GIS map produced by the Department of Culture (Government of Lesotho), who commissioned stonewall restoration (see Figure 4.15).

Although the map below captures stonewalling structures mainly of well-preserved bigger homesteads, foundations of older smaller circular structures were not highlighted. For instance, about four metres from *khotla* is a barely visible circular foundation, which is possibly one of the early homesteads.

There are a total of 46 house structures that represent pre-colonial structures, transitional period households and post-European style housing. The outlined areas on Figure 4.19 are areas where is evidence of stone wall structures and middens. Out of these, only six visible structures are classified under precolonial households; these are characterised by smaller circular structures and

foundations. The pre-colonial structures are known to Basotho as *mehlongoafatse* and have been discussed early in this discussion.

As mentioned earlier in this discussion, the first European-style house on Thaba-Bosiu was Moshoeshoe's house, which is to date still visible and is one of the recently restored structures. Moshoeshoe's house was initially used to welcome guests and thereafter eventually became used as an administration office (Mokorosi 2017: 51).

Upon entrance into the royal village, the first visible homesteads (Figure 4.20 and Figure 4.21), there are two rectangular structures, located less than two metres east of the visitors' path. Between these structures is only one circular homestead which is visible through its foundation. Restoration of the homesteads only covered a few stonewall structures. The restoration of stonewalls is not uniform for all the structures. There is a total of four rectangular stonewall structures in this homestead. Behind these structures are a mixture of rectangular and circular structures, which were also restored.

Behind the first homesteads seen upon entering the village, are two visible larger rectangular structures. Close to the homesteads are smaller circular structures that were not easily identifiable. The first homesteads are followed by Moshoeshoe's European style house, mentioned earlier as an administrative office. Close to the administrative office are three other stonewall structures (two rectangular and one circular), which were also restored. The circular structure is said to have belonged Moshoeshoe's first wife, Queen Mamohato. In front of the homesteads are three circular foundations, which are not easily identifiable. Stones that were used to restore Queen Mamohato's hut (Figure 4.16) and two rectangular structures close-by were repossessed from two *mohlongoafatse* homesteads in front of the hut.

Figure 4.21: Queen 'Mamohato's newly restored hut.

In front of Moshoeshoe's European style house are two small circular foundations that have been identified as *mehlongoafatse*. The stones or rocks that were on the older homesteads were, unfortunately, used to reconstruct some structures of the later homesteads. During pedestrian surveys, it was, therefore, very difficult to identify precolonial homesteads, because they were not visible, hidden by overgrown vegetation.

Figure 4.22: King Moshoeshoe's restored European style house.

The overall organisation of the stonewall structures on top of the mountain is that there is one large central space that is not defined by stonewall. Rather, it is outlined by livestock pens as presented in the map below. The livestock pens do not have connecting walls; however, they are not far apart from one another. Approximately 10 livestock enclosures have been recorded in the main royal village. The residential structures are built in the outskirts of the cattle enclosures. The positioning of the livestock pens does not indicate association with specific homesteads. There is no evidence that suggests that each homestead was connected to a specific kraal. Hence, the is the thinking that a holistic approach that the cattle enclosures were under the responsibility of the king's house.

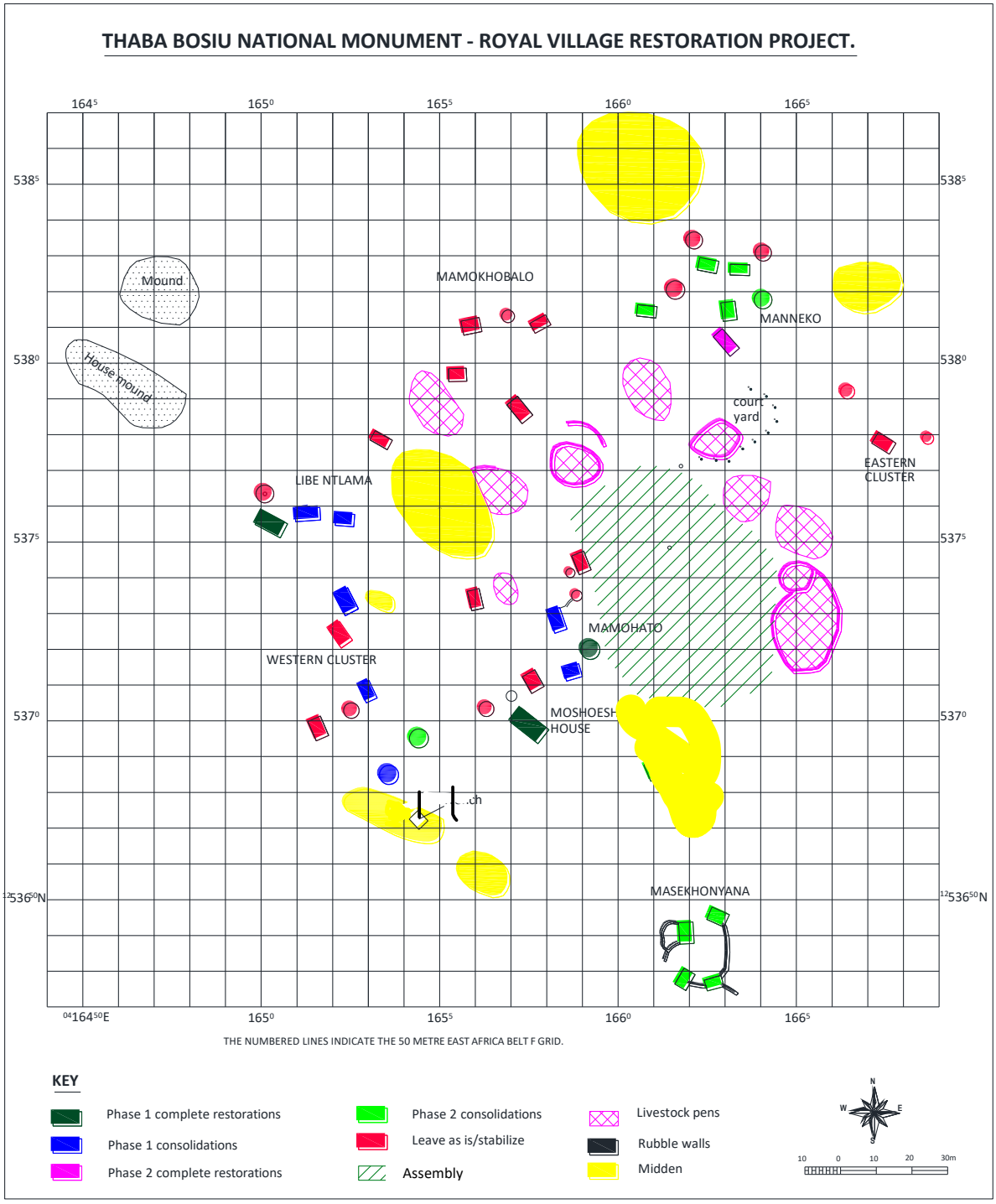

Figure 4.23: A GIS map of the top of Thaba-Bosiu. Map courtesy of the Department of Culture.

Residential quarters of the king and his first wife (Queen Mamohato) are the only ones that are located on the outskirts of the main assembly area. The nearest livestock pen is located 10m west

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of the homestead. This arrangement gives the main royal house full view of and access to the livestock enclosures.

The number of residential structures differ for each homestead. The homestead with the highest number of stonewall structures was of Queen 'Mamohato, with six structures; three circular, and three rectangular. 'Manneko's (One of Moshoeshoe's wives) homestead also has more structures when compared to others. The houses do not have a distinct pattern of placement; however, one common feature is that the entrances face towards the direction of the livestock enclosures, almost forming a circular effect. One unique settlement is of 'Masekhonyana (also one of Moshoeshoe's wives), whose houses are connected by short walls stretching in-between each structure.

5.7. Discussion

The transformation and continuity of Basotho's architecture is one that is defined by the different cultural influences and time periods. To address the different traditional and social practices, spaces on top of Thaba-Bosiu have been well-defined according to the various activities that historically occurred on the mountain. Architectural design and settlement structures have evolved through time, where Basotho homesteads consists of two main structures, one is a kitchen known as *moholoaneng*, and another is sleeping quarters. The homestead would be fenced with thatch and with a narrow and low entrance. The settlements also reflect socio-political influences over the organisation of the built environments. This is seen where homesteads of the King's advisers are located closer and behind the palace (Moshoeshoe's European house), while his wives' houses are located in front of his house.

Analysis of the architecture of Thaba-Bosiu's homesteads revealed representation of three periods. These are as follows:

- older smaller circular foundations that possibly represent *mehlongoafatše;*
- transitional period represented by the imperfect (rounded) semi-square homesteads; and
- perfect square and rectangular structures that are associated with the period of later nineteenth century.

These three identified architectural styles show the cultural fluidity and continuity that is especially visible post-European interaction. Acculturation should be considered in this understanding of the evolution of architecture (Bhabha 1994; 2001; Gosden 2001; Patterson 2008). The introduction of European style housing reflets the processes of how the assimilation of the new culture was introduced. The architecture on top of Thaba-Bosiu reflects a multicultural identity that has resulted in the housing style now commonly seen in most rural areas of Lesotho.

Contact between different groups results in exchange of culture and knowledge. Hybridity and creolisation have been highly debated terms that defined a mixture between different groups (Palmie 2006; Hall 2010; Challis 2012; 2014; 2018). An alternative way to look at creole state is as the 'third space' forwarded by Bhabha (1994; cited in Challis 2018) which is further regarded as a space of shared experience (Voss 2015; Challis 2018). Creolisation then could be defined as

> …the development of new traditions, aesthetics, and group identities out of combinations of formerly separate peoples and cultures – usually where at least one has been deterritorialized [sic] by emigration, enslavement or exile (Spitzer 2003: 58-59).

The Basotho believe Ntsoanatsatsi to be their place of origin (Mokorosi 2017: 10). This belief is associated mostly with the local views that the Basotho came from a place with lots of water, where beliefs are centred around wellsprings. Ntsoanatsatsi is believed to have been a place with abundant water supply, where Basotho then led a prosperous life.

Agricultural production, particularly animal husbandry, forms the key influence over how people of Thaba-Bosiu organised themselves on the mountain. Livestock were important symbols of social and economic wealth among the community. The placement of cattle enclosure at the centre of the village shows a system of protecting livestock as well as a way of maintaining social order. In the Sesotho culture, women are not allowed to walk close to a kraal, because of the potency associated with kraals, which it is believed may cause infertility. Furthermore, cattle and caprine contributed to maintaining social activities in the village. For instance, dung was the main source of fuel used for cooking. This practice is still common in the remote villages of Lesotho, where livestock is the main source of family wealth.

The settlements of Thaba-Bosiu thus reflect both fluidity, and culture contact. As the population increased, and cultures interacted with the people that settled on the mountain, new identities were born. The architecture and settlements on the mountain reflect fluid cultures that have informed how people occupied space.

5.8. Summary

The archaeological survey of Thaba-Bosiu identified settlement and architectural layout with potential to inform understanding of complex socio-economic and political influences on the settlement organisation. The village was organised in such a way that centralises the main source of socio-economic and political wealth. The homesteads show evidence of both circular and rectangular structures in different households. This chapter has presented the cultural influences over settlement and architectural spaces. To extend the investigation of the history of Thaba-Bosiu and its people, the next chapter details results of local ceramics uncovered from Thaba-Bosiu.

6.0. CHAPTER SIX: CERAMICS FROM THABA-BOSIU- STYLE AND FUNCTION

> It is no longer acceptable to simply equate ceramics with ethnicity, or to use them as chronological tools and little else; ceramics are a key resource in the region, and archaeology needs to draw as much data and insight from them as possible (Ashley 2010: 158).

6.1. Introduction

A total of 1938 ceramic sherds were excavated from Thaba-Bosiu. The sherds were uncovered in all the excavated squares at the site. This is the case only for pottery as other material remains were present in specific squares. The majority of which is distributed between contexts 3 and 8 for all the squares. Very few across the squares are burnished, thus non-burnishing is common throughout all the excavated ceramics.

Ceramics are globally regarded as one of the most significant forms of material culture found at archaeological sites. This is specifically the case for sites at Iron Age sites in Southern Africa. Ceramics are particularly important globally and in southern Africa because it was a widely used material. The ethnographic studies of ceramics in the region can be traced back from as early as the 17th Century (Bollong *et al.* 1997: 272-284; Sydow 1967: 15-34). Archaeologists have extensively researched ceramics in order to understand the agency and shifting frontiers of different groups (Maggs 1976; Pikirayi 1993; 2007; Huffman 2007). This form of material culture is further important when discussing the social structures of different communities because we can better understand processes of their manufacture, the functions and cultural associations. As with other material culture, ceramics were regarded, within limitations, as central to the identities of the makers of ceramics or associated group identities (Pikirayi 1993). Specifically, the assessment of ceramic style was symbolic, and ceramics performed different functions (Sackett 1977; Wobst 1977; Gosselain 2000). Scholars have recently been calling for a more radical decolonial transformation of studying African ceramics, in a way that recognises the function and typology from the perspectives of their makers (Nyamushosho et al 2021; Nyamushosho and Chirikure 2020; Chirikure 2020). This approach is globally recognised (Gosselain 2016; Pikirayi 2007, 2016; Lane 2011; Chirikure 2016, 2020; Chirikure *et al* .2018) as a movement towards generating locally centred knowledges of an African past (Nyamushosho *et al.* 2021).

Many of the Iron Age and historical sites excavated in Southern Africa and Africa in general are likely to produce ceramic shards, including refined earthenware or porcelain ceramics depending on the period of occupation (Evers *et al.* 1988; Lindahl and Pikirayi 2010). The significance of ceramics among Southern African Iron Age communities is evident in the abundance of this material culture at archaeological sites. The rate at which ceramics are uncovered in many Iron Age sites proves their durability and survival rate through long periods of time (Huffman 1982; Pikirayi 2007). Early observations regarding the significance of ceramics were that ceramics were central to the interpretation of cultural identities, particularly because ceramics are produced by people (Wheeler, 1956). The popular narrative is that researchers rely on ceramics to understand past human cultures/behaviour and linking to the usefulness of the environment in production of ceramics (Charles 2005; Pikirayi 2007; Kahl and Ramminger 2012). Analysis of ceramics is, therefore, believed to provide an inside into the everyday living and cultures of the past, particularly those of Iron Age communities (Soper 1971; Maggs 1984; Pikirayi 2007; Huffman 2007; Pikirayi 2015; Nyamushosho and Chirikure 2020). Therefore, a crucial element of a decolonial approach to African archaeologies is to redefine and rethink how we understand the everyday living (Nyamoshosho *et al.* 2021; Chirikure 2020).

The study of ceramic typologies has often been associated with radiocarbon dates in order to place them in the broader regional chronological framework. This approach has indeed been significant in the identification of different ceramics and their association with different cultural groups. In Southern Africa, analysis of material culture through typological approaches began in the 1930s through ceramic studies of Great Zimbabwe (Caton-Thompson 1931). Ceramic studies of the 1950s focused on linking typologies with regional identities and then in the 1970s studies of interpretation examined single trait listing, which led to the use of ethno-archaeology where ceramic sequences are linked to modern societies (Pikirayi 2007). Issues of group interactions, migrations, trade, production, manufacturing, and distribution are central to understanding the socio-political significance of ceramics (Gosselain 2000; Manyanga 2006; Pikirayi 2007). However, this has proved problematic, due to the nature of cultural contact.

In archaeological studies, ceramics are regarded key material culture for understanding the culture and lifestyles of communities (Huffman 1974; Chirikure *et al* 2006; Manyanga 2006; Pikirayi 2007; Pikirayi & Lindahl 2013). This section presents the excavated pottery of Thaba-Bosiu and

highlights their significance and use in different homesteads, as informed by local knowledge of production and functionality. The ethnographic analysis included in this study contributes towards the identification of Sesotho names given to the different pots. The study further sheds light on the stylistic variability of ceramic sequence at all the excavated sites. The process and approach thus include the analysis of ceramics from an anthropological and archaeological standpoint in linking ceramics to their functionality among communities (Chirikure *et al.* 2002; Pikirayi & Lindahl 2013).

6.2. Ceramic studies of Iron Age Sites in southern Africa

Ceramics have taken centre stage in the pursuit of identifying and relating group identities and tracing movement of cultures (Maggs 1976; Huffman 1980; Pikirayi 2007; Chirikure *et al.* 2013). As stated earlier in this chapter, ceramic studies offer knowledge about the function and use as experienced by past farming communities in the Southern African region. Iron Age archaeology scholars have considered ceramic groupings in the identification of societies based on the view that ceramics are made by people and reflect identity at various levels (Pikirayi 1997; 1999; 2015). One of the earlier approaches employed by archaeologists in ceramic analysis was the grouping and linking typology of ceramics to certain makers (Pikirayi 1993; 2007). Thomas Huffman (1989) was of the view that the frequency and stylistic variability of ceramics could be the determining factors of group identifies. The marriage between ceramics and group identities was often determined by forms and decorations that were further linked to specific cultural group (Cruz 2011).

Historically, local (African) ceramics received little attention in their analysis and interpretation (Pikirayi 2007: 287; Orton *et al*. 1993: 8). Typological studies of Iron Age ceramics were initially undertaken during a period when local ceramics were deemed insignificant to archaeological investigation (Hall and Neal 1904; Nyamushosho 2020). Attention subsequently shifted towards analysis of African earthenware in the 1950s (Pikirayi 2007). This alternative view mainly focused on identifying the makers of ceramics. The approach was built on defining specific cultures (Huffman 1971). A contextual approach initially adopted to study and interpret ceramics was, however, problematic in that it only focused on addressing the form, layout, shape and technique, and not necessarily their significance and use (Pikirayi 2007).

Ceramic typology currently dominates ceramic studies in African Iron Age studies (Pikirayi 2007; Nyamushosho and Chirikure 2020; Nyamushosho *et al.* 2021). Typology entails classes formed through transect-groupings of different dimensions (Huffman 1980: 128). As more attention was given to Early and Middle Iron Age sites in Southern Africa (Caton-Thompson 1931; Fouche 1931), more comprehensive typological ceramic studies were undertaken. Some of the prominent sites where typological studies yielded significant information about local ceramics were the Khami, Great Zimbabwe, and Mapungubwe (Nyamushosho 2020). A growing interest in typological studies by scholars continued as more southern African Iron Age studies spread through the region (Robinson 1966; Garlake 1966;1968; Summers *et al.* 1961; Pikirayi 1997).

Several approaches to ceramic analysis were later employed and these included the 'core-concept' approach, which entailed consideration of decoration technique and vessel shape. The other approach was a 'multi-dimensional' approach, which considered numerous factors in the interpretation of ceramics (Huffman 1978; 1980; Maggs 1976; Phillipson 1985; Sinclair 1987).

Within Southern Africa, archaeological and ethnographic studies of ceramic manufacture, composition, and raw material provenance and use, have been limited (but see Jacobson et al 1994; Fowler 2006, 2008; S. Hall *et al.* 2008). Simon Hall (1998) looked at ceramics from a gender perspective, where he addressed the agency of women making and using ceramics in their day-to-day lives.

The migration of farming communities throughout Southern Africa was also traced through ceramics studies (Soper 1971; Huffman 1978; Phillipson 1985). Scholars began to grapple with the view that ceramics could be considered to reflect their makers (Pikirayi 1997). The decoration and formation of ceramics are used in establishing cultural similarities (Cruz 2011). Typological classification has been criticised numerous times; however, most archaeologists argued that typological method offers an understanding of specific cultures, hence, more research in the Zambezi, and Shashe-Limpopo has been carried out in different Iron Age sites (Sinclair 1987; Chirikure *et al*. 2002; Manyanga 2006; Calabrese 2007; Pikirayi 2007; Denbow *et al.* 2008; Chirikure *et al*. 2013; 2014; Nyamushosho *et al.* 2018; 2020; 2021). The significant contribution of these studies is that they reflected migration patterns and thus models were considered (Phillipson 1975; Nyamushosho 2020). The migrations of the Nguni and Southern Basotho communities into the Free-State were also considered (Maggs 1976).

Tim Maggs (1976) pioneering work of the Later Iron Age studies in the Free-State, South Africa, contributed significantly to the archaeology of southern Sesotho- and Nguni-speaking communities. Chapter Three of this study has outlined the different settlement patterns and cultures represented by the material culture of Type N and Type V clusters. The Ntsoanatsatsi tradition is one of the identified clusters in the region. Ntsoanatsatsi cluster was also known as Type N and further labelled as Group I (Taylor 1979) and Class 1 (Jones 1935; Dreyer 1992; Huffman 2007). Type N settlements were in the areas of the Vaal and spread into Gauteng (Dreyer 1992). The Type N ceramics were characterised by bowls, pots, and small jars, which were decorated with stamped arcades on shoulders, appliques and neck stamping.

Type V (Vegkop) clusters were classified under Group II. The archaeological studies conducted at these sites yielded ceramics characterised by short-necked globular vessels with frequent rim notching. Open mouthed, neckless vessels were also frequent at these sites. Decoration motifs included finely stamped triangles, appliques and rim notching (Derricourt and Evers 1973; Dreyer 1992; Maggs 1976; Taylor 1979; Huffman 2007). The Makgwareng clusters were also classified as OUD 2 (also Type V) settlements. The pottery associated with these sites was characterised by neckless and short-necked vessels with rim-notching. Decorations are mostly placed on the rim, neck, and shoulders of the vessels. Open-mouth, thick vessels are also common.

Ceramics with a mixture of both Type N and Type V characteristics were classified as Rooiberg pottery. This cluster yielded ceramics decorated by stamped and incised bands, rim bands, as well as arcades and triangles placed on the vessel necks (Hall 1985; Lathy 1996). The use of colour and burnishing was particularly common in the ceramics (Huffman 2007). The shapes of vessels were mostly open short-necked with decorations on the rim, neck and shoulders.

Ceramic profiling of sites in the Caledon Valley has reflected in some instances, not only a single technical tradition, but also a variety of vessel-forming techniques with ornate decorations (Maggs 1976). Rachel King's (2015: 290) study of the BaPhuthi (in the south-eastern region of Lesotho) uncovered an assemblage characterised by rim notching, cord-stamping, and appliqués. Makgwareng facies was dominant in the Ha-Makoanyane site near Thaba-Bosiu. Pottery uncovered from Ha-Makoanyane, yielded vessels that were described as:

> …occasionally burnished but almost never incised, with the exception of a single sherd showing a ridge immediately below the rim (King *et al*. 2014: 72).

The main traditions identified at this site were represented through coiling, modelling and finger-shaping. Similar traditions were also identified at Thaba-Bosiu.

Typological studies of ceramics at many Iron Age sites have thus, been useful to a certain extent. The prominent challenge of analysing ceramics of the Caledon/Mohokare is that many vessels are undecorated (King *et al*. 2014; King 2015; c.f. Moffett 2017). This, then, poses a challenge in terms of classification. A crucial approach to overcome this challenge is to focus on the use of ceramics by past communities.

6.3. Methods

The analytical approach adopted in this study includes an ethnographic investigation of names and functions of Basotho pots. Included in the study was an analysis of the typology of these pots. Coupled with this approach was an archaeological study of the pottery uncovered from Later Iron Age sites in the Free-State, South Africa. This approach was successfully employed by Nyamushosho and Chirikure (2020), c.f. Nyamushosho (2017), and Chirikure *et al*. (2017). An investigation of published and unpublished archival records of Basotho cultures, which included food preparation, pots, and their function (Lawton 1965; Pisane 1983; Leluma 1987; Seforo 1990).

6.3.1. An Ethnographic Study

Lived experience of growing up in a household where pottery was used for storage also influenced the interpretation of the pottery uncovered from Thaba-Bosiu. From a visit in the rural highlands of Lesotho, and another at the Morija Museum and Archives (where Basotho pots are curated), images of existing pots were taken to be considered in a comparative analysis.

6.3.2. An Archaeological Approach

This study included a multivariate approach, which focused on an examination of the design layout, motifs, and vessel form (Huffman 1980). Although this approach has its limitations, it has been adopted to interpret Iron Age sites in Southern Africa (Evers 1982; Mags 1984; Huffman 1989; Chirikure, Pikirayi and Pwiti 2002). The multi-dimensional approach has been commanded for its focus on highlighting previously unnoticed stylistic differences (Lindahl 1995). The analysis of the ceramic assemblage was classified into two categories, namely the diagnostic and non-diagnostic vessels. According to Pikirayi (1993), diagnostic potsherds are those that could the studied to identify useful data that could be assigned to vessel part and thus can give an insight about the makers and users of the vessels. Diagnostic shards are considered those which were clearly identifiable in terms of decoration, the visible profile of the vessel and the rim (Pikirayi 1993). Non-diagnostic pot shards, on the other hand, do not have any apparent or obvious analytical features, and are mostly plain.

Following Shepard's (1956: 345) view that detailed classifications give room for effective inter- and intra- site comparisons, intra-site analysis of the pottery assemblage focused on the identification of the type and thickness of the profile, the motif on the vessel, the lip form, and surface treatment.

6.3.2.1. Vessel Profile

Among the most significant methods of ceramic analysis is the description of vessel profile. The profile entails the assessment of the vessel's outline and possible decorations (Huffman 2007). The ceramic assemblage from Thaba-Bosiu were primarily shards, however, vessel parts that were identified included the shoulder, neck, rim and occasionally the base. The identifiable pottery was classified into four profiles, viz. short-necked, long-necked, constricted/globular and open bowls. The long-necked vessels were primarily vertical necks. Vessels also constitutes rounded, pressed, recurved and externally thickened lips. Some of these globular shaped vessels (Evers and Van der Merve's 1987) had concave necks. The most frequent vessels included short-necked and open bowls, which were characterised by an open mouth diameter similar to Evers and Van der Merwe's (1987) analysis of hemispherical bowls.

Table 6.1: Vessel Profile identified from Thaba-Bosiu

Short-necked	Long-necked	Globular/Constricted	Open bowls
Rounded lip	Recurved lip with vertical neck	Rounded lip	Tapered lip
Concave neck with rounded lip	Thin- rounded lip	No lip	Pressed lips
Thin external lip		Externally thickened lip	
		Concave neck	

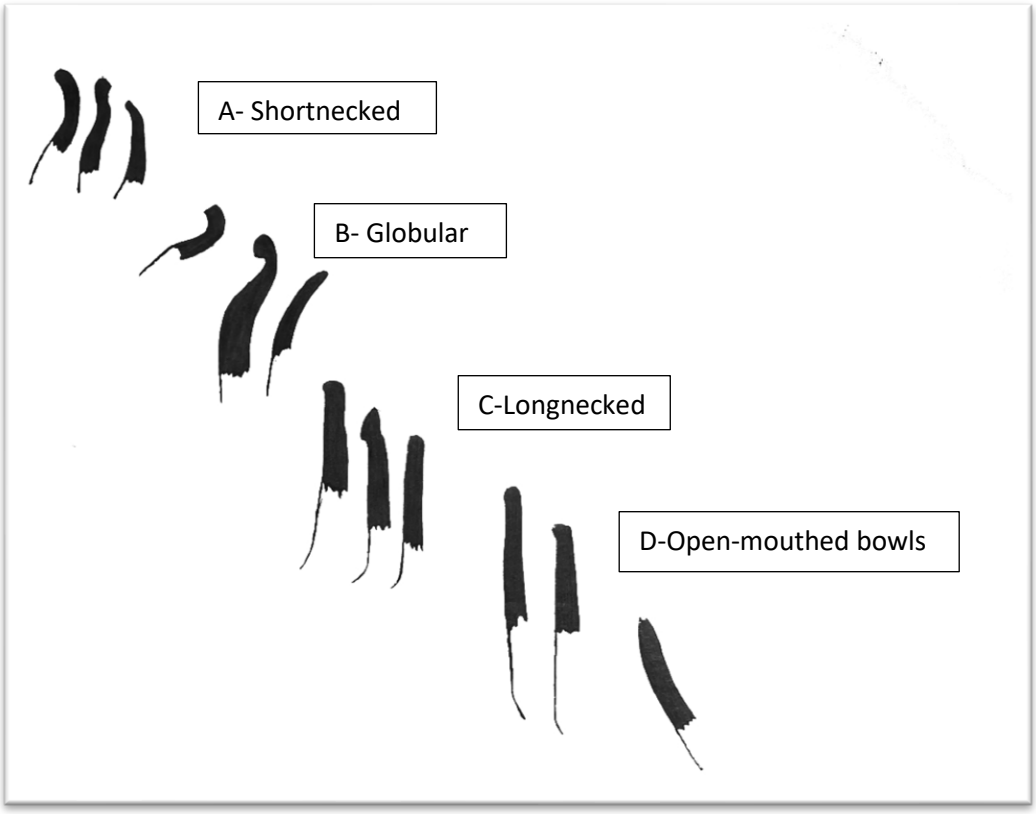

Figure 6.1: Ceramic profiles from Thaba-Bosiu

Figure 6.2: An example of a short-necked pot shard for the excavations

Figure 6.3: A small bowl from TB 3

Figure 6.4: A globular potsherd

6.3.2.2. Ceramic decorations and motifs

Generally, the analysis of 19th Century ceramic decorations at many Southern African Iron Age sites has mainly been a multi-dimensional approach (Huffman 2007). This system of pottery analysis investigates basic ceramic motifs and decorations. Ceramic decorations techniques include identification of burnished vessels, incisions, and secondary descriptors.

The bulk of ceramics uncovered from Thaba-Bosiu were numerous small fragments. Even though the highest quantity is not decorated, there were a few which had neck and rim decorations. The undecorated pot shards are similarly useful for analysis and interpretation because they can reflect profiles (Evers and Van der Merwe 1987; Sampson 1988; Loubser 1991; Sadr and Sampson 1999; Ohinata 2001).

The dominant decoration included different rim notching techniques, which entail the pinching and fine moulding of rims. Punctuation was also identified in some of the pot shards; this entails different designs made from stabbing the vessels with a sharp pointed tool. Among the identified techniques were various patterns made from incisions (some with fine line and incised chevrons) positioned on the rim and neck of the pottery shard. Fingernail impressions were also identified on one of the pot shards to form a unique impression. Comb-stamping was also identified in a few pot shards. The comb stamping technique entails patterns made from a linear multi-toothed tool

and these were placed on the neck and shoulder of the vessel. Herringbone and chevron patterns were also visible on a few pot shards.

Figure 6.5: Cross-hatching

Figure 6.6: Rim-notching, cross-hatching and incised chevrons

Figure 6.7: Fingernail impressions

Figure 6.8: A rim-notching style

Figure 6.9: Comb-stamping and cord-impressions decoration

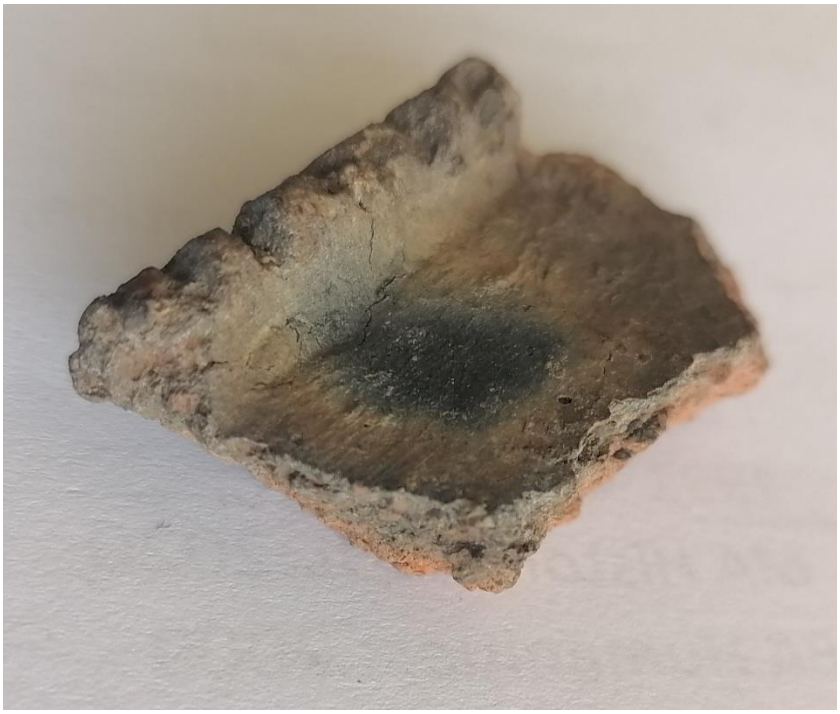

Figure 6.10: Rim-notching

A comparison was made across all the excavated squares for this project. The comparison was made in terms of the quantity of ceramic vessels, size, pieces uncovered and decoration.

6.3.2.3. Decoration Placement

Decoration placement was also considered in the analysis of the Thaba-Bosiu ceramics. This entails the positioning of the decoration motifs on individual vessels. Decoration was mostly dominant on the rims and shoulders of the Thaba-Bosiu ceramics. Some pot shards were decorated on both the rim and neck of the vessel. The assemblage consisted of very few burnished vessels. The Thaba-Bosiu ceramics did not yield a great deal of diagnostic and decorated shards, however, a total of 48 decorated pot shards were identifiable by decoration. The majority of the decorated pot shards were from trench TB3 with 47.9% (n=23).

6.4. Results

6.4.1. The typology and function of Sesotho pots

The Basotho had numerous purposes for ceramics. Pottery-making depended on the availability of the appropriate clay. Clay in the Basotho landscape comes in different colours, which include greyish white, and reddish brown. The process of pottery-making included kneading of different types of clay, which were mixed with crushed pieces of dry broken pot shards (Lawton 1965: 214; Leluma 1987; Seforo 1990: 23). Once the mixture is kneaded to satisfaction, the clay is then moulded into different shapes depending on the intended function of the vessels.

Numerous tools and techniques were used in the manufacturing of different vessels. Decorations were executed using either grass stems or nails specifically for stamping (Lawton 1965: 214). Stones and a hoof of an ox were used for burning of vessels (Lawton 1965: 214). For smoothing of inner and outer surfaces, blades were used. Upon completion of the moulding and shaping, the vessels would be left to dry overnight or for a couple of days, then buried on dry dung for firing (Lawton 1965:214-215; Seforo 1990:23).

Basotho pots are mostly classified under four functions, storage, culinary, brewing and hygiene. The ceramics were named depending on their use, which has also influenced their shapes. The table below summarises the functions and names given to the pots.

Table 6.2: Culinary Vessel class

CULINARY						
Typology		**Metric Attributes**		**Decorations**	**Function**	**References**
Sesotho Name	**Description**	**Thickness range (Analysis phase in a lab)**	**Height range**			
Lefisoana	Short-necked vessels with open mouths	4mm-6mm		Chevrons, rim notching	Preparing, serving and preparing food including soft solids	(Lawton 1965; Du Pisani 1983)
Pitsa	Globular, short-necked	7mm-10mm		None	Cooking larger meals such as sorghum pap on open fire	(Du Pisani 1983)
Pitsana	Globular short-necked	5mm-7mm		None	Used for cooking smaller meals	(Du Pisani 1983)
Pitsa-ea-sethlare	Wider opening and globular	6mm		None	Used for cooking traditional herbs	(Du Pisani 1983)

Table 6.3: Brewing Vessel Class

BREWING						
Typology		**Metric Attributes**		**Decorations**	**Function**	**Reference**
Sesotho Name	**Description**	**Thickness range (Analysis phase in the lab)**	**Height range**			
Morifi	Bowl-shaped with open mouths	7mm-10mm	50-80cm	Rim notching, appliques	Preparing and brewing traditional beer	(Du Pisani 1983)
Mopotjo	Narrow beaker	4mm-5mm		Rim notching punctuates and appliques	Drinking traditional beer	(Lawton 1965; Du Pisani 1983)
Mopotjoana	Smaller narrow beaker	2mm-4mm			Drinking beer	(Du Pisani 1983)
Setlhotlelo	Very large with wider opening	7mm-10mm	80cm-100cm	Rim notching, punctuates	Used for collecting liquid in the process of beer brewing	(Du Pisani 1983)

Table 6.4: Storage Vessels

STORAGE						
Typology		**Metric Attributes**		**Decorations**	**Function**	**Reference**
Sesotho Name	**Description**	**Thickness range**	**Height range**			
Lefiso	Short-necked, globular vessel	5mm-7mm	50-70cm	Rim notching, chevrons, appliques	Storing liquids	(Du Pisani 1983)
Nkho	Narrow-long-necked open	7mm-10mm	50-80cm	Rim notching punctuates and appliques	Storing water	(Lawton 1965; Du Pisani 1983)
Khamelo	wide open bowl, pintch botton	4mm-6mm	10cm-20cm	None	Milking and storing	(Du Pisani 1983)
Sehoro	Small opening	4mm-5mm	10cm	Rim notching, punctuates, spaced motifs	Preserving animal fat	(Du Pisani 1983)
Selibelo	Small opening	3mm	5cm	Spaced motifs, rim notching	Storing cooking fat	(Du Pisani 1983)

Table 6.5: Ceramic use in hygiene

HYGIENE						
Typology		**Metric Attributes**		**Decorations**	**Function**	**References**
Sesotho Name	**Description**	**Thickness range**	**Height range**			
Thuoana	Wide open mouth	4mm-7mm	20cm	None	Waste	(Du Pisani 1983)

The most common vessel in a Mosotho household was known as a *lefiso* (Leluma 1987; Seforo 1990: 23). A *Lefiso* was used daily for storage of liquids and sometimes food preparation. This type of pottery was mostly medium-sized, with a short neck and globular in shape (du Pisani 1983: 12; Seforo 1990). There pots were also used for other purposes.

A *lefisoana* was a vessel used for different purposes, however, the most common use was to prepare or serving food. The name *lefisoana* was derived from *lefiso* meaning smaller globular vessels. The letters '-ana-' symbolise something small or a smaller version. A *lefisoana* was also globular in shape with a short neck. In other instances, a *lefisoana* did not have a neck (Du Pisani 1983:12). This type of pottery vessel was also used in rainmaking and storm blocking rituals. Traditional healers would use it to mix animal fat and traditional herbs during these ritual (Sekese 1953: 39).

A type of vessel that was used primarily to store water was a *nkho* and a smaller version was known as *nkhoana*. The word *nkho* is also used in modern households to refer to any water storage container, specifically buckets. The size of a *nkho* is much larger than a *lefiso*. This type of vessel has a long, narrow neck, with a smooth and sometimes pinched rim.

Figure 6.12: An example of a setlhotlhelo

A *morifi* was used for preparing and brewing traditional beer. In some instances, a *morifi* was also used by women to store and serve food to male initiates. A smaller version of a *morifi* was known as a *moritšoana,* which was also used to serve herdboys a type of porridge known as *bohoko* (du Pisani 1983: 12).

A smaller vessel that was used to drink beer with was called a *mopotjo*. A *mopotjo* was a narrow/slender beaker. A smaller version of a *mopotjo* was a *mopotjoana,* which was also slender and long-necked (Seforo 1990: 23).

Figure 6.13: A mopotjo

The most common vessel used for cooking was known as a *pitsa,* a pot. A *pitsa* was a very thick, heavy, and dark throughout with a wide opening (Du Pisani 1983:13). The *pitsa* came in different sizes and did not have handles or legs; however, three rocks were usually placed under the pot as supporting structures. A *pitsa* was primarily globular in shape with a short necked. A smaller version of a *pitsa* was a *pitsana,* which was similarly used for cooking smaller meals.

Setlhotlelo is a big vessel that was used for collecting liquids in the process of brewing beer. The size of a *sethlotlelo* could carry liquids with a volume as high as 100 litres.

Figure 6.14: A 100+litre setlhotleho

There were also vessels that were used when milking animals, and this was called a *khamelo*. A typical *khamelo* had a wide opening at the mouth with a flat, roughly-pinched base. The bottom of a *khamelo* was left rough, in order to prevent possible slipping during milking. A smaller version of a *khamelo* was known as a *khameloana*.

A vessel used for preserving animal fat was a *sehoro*, while one used for storing cooking fat (small in size) is known as *selibelo*. A *selibelo* is one of the smallest vessels with a small opening. *Pitsa-ea-sehlare* was a vessel used to prepare or cook traditional herbs and medicine. A vessel that was used as a chamber pot was known as a *thuoana*.

Although the archaeological assemblage was fragmented, an attempt was made to identify some of these pots in the excavated materials. Most vessels identified were placed under the category of

storage, brewing and culinary. The analysed vessels also consisted of shards with evidence burning (including some unknown substances) on the outside. None of the vessels were linked to hygiene.

6.5. Ceramics from the South-Western Site

6.5.1. TB3 pottery results

Vessel shape

A total of 254 potsherds were excavated from TB3. The potsherds included numerous small pieces of which some were challenging to identify. However, form and shape were identified. In the TB3 assemblage, five vessel shapes were identified. Constricted short-necked globular with rim and neck decorations, thick open mouth, neckless vessels, small open globular jars, with rim notching and neck decorations, concave and vertical necks, and medium to thick long-necked vessels.

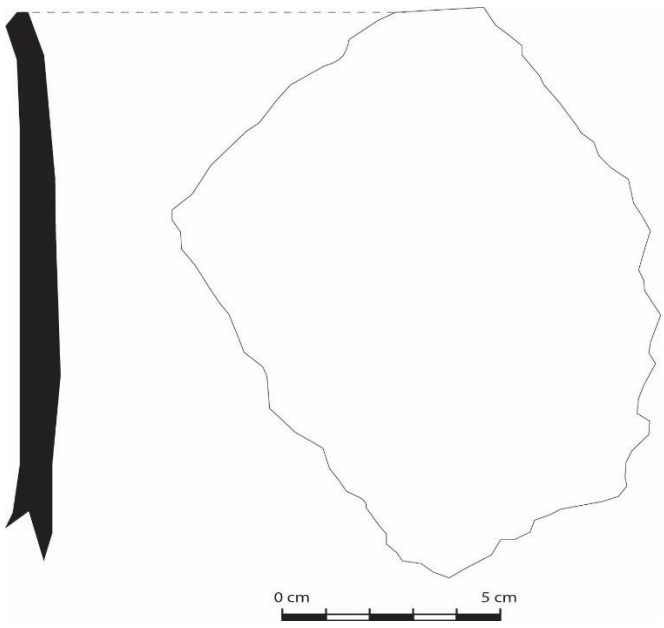

Figure 6.15: Profile of one of the ceramics uncovered from the site.

Figure 6.16: A small concave-shaped vessel

Decoration and motif placement from TB3

TB3 had the highest number of decorated potsherds. Placement of decoration motifs were commonly on rims, necks and shoulders of the potsherds. The TB3 trench yielded a variety of decorated pottery when compared to other trenches at Thaba-Bosiu. Very few decorations were on the body of vessels. The decoration motifs consisted of stamped arcades, appliqués, rim notching, incised bands, herringbone and chevron patterns and broad bands of stamping, specifically finely stamped triangles. Potsherds with stamped triangles and notched rims were also present. The lower layers of the trench consisted of small pottery shards, with incised triangles and arcades on the neck.

Other ceramic attributes and distribution of vessels from TB3

The majority of the diagnostic shards had lip forms and in some cases neck decorations. The ceramics from TB3 were either primarily rounded or flattened on the rim. Two black short-necked vessels were also recorded. A red burnished piece with black patches which is associated with a *lefiso* was also identified in the assemblage. Very few (n=7) shards were burnished. The highest number of pot shards were uncovered from Context 7 with 18.1% (n=46) followed by Context 2, with 17.3% (n=44). Context 6 yielded 11.0% (n=28) of the total assemblage, while Context 5 yielded 8.7% (n=22); Context 11 followed with 8.7% (n=22); Context 8 was 7.1% (n=18); Context 4 followed with 6.7% (n=17), and Context 9 with 5.9% (n=15). Contexts with the lowest number of pot shards were 1 with 3.1% (n=8) and Context 12 with 2.4% (n=6). The context with the lowest number of pot shards were Context 21 and contexts 14, 15, 18 and 22, with 0.4% (n=1) each.

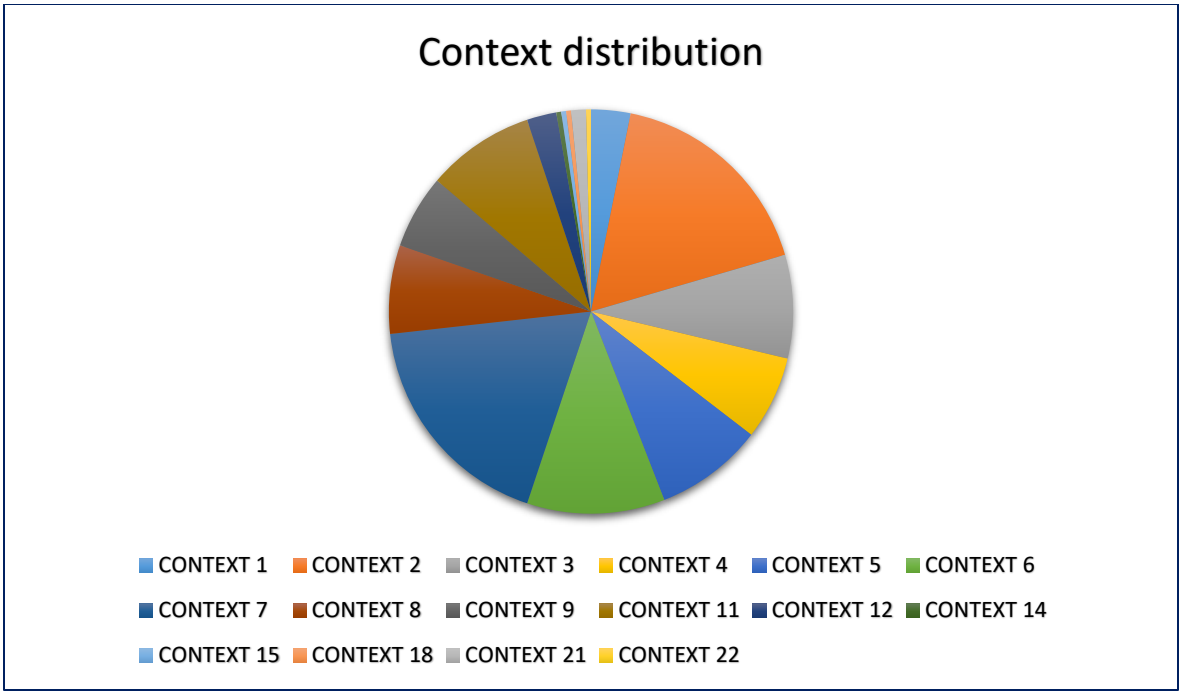

Figure 6.17: Distribution of shards by context

6.6. South-eastern site: TB 2 Pottery assemblage

The TB2 trench produced a total of 72 pot shards, which were distributed between three layers. Context 3 had the highest number of pot shards with 51% (n=39); the second highest number of potsherds were uncovered from Context 2, with 41% (n=31) and the least number of pot shards were was in Context 1, with only 8% (n=6). The pieces were classified under the storage and culinary and brewing. There is a high frequency of vessels classified under brewing.

Vessel shape from TB 2

A minimum of three vessel forms dominated TB2. The highest number of potsherds were mostly short-necked bowls, with rim notching and neck decorations. Some of the vessels were small neckless bowls. The assemblage also yielded constricted vessels with no-lip. The less common shape and form in the TB2 assemblage was the long neck and thick vessels. These vessels have been classified under the culinary and brewing category because of their thickness and their profiles. Among vessels that were identified include *mepotjo*, *lefiso*, *morifi*, *nkho* and *lefisoana*.

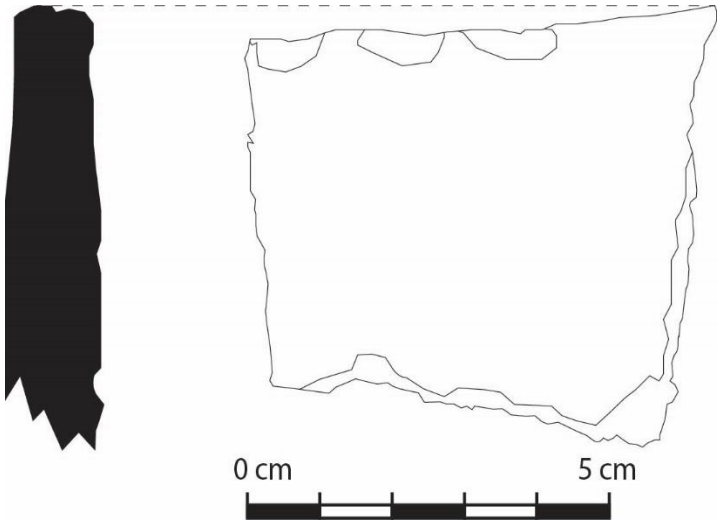

Figure 6.19: Example of rim-notching on some of the ceramics

Decoration and motif placement

A total of 73 pot shards were not decorated. Three diagnostic pot shards had rim notching and appliques. Another vessel had a more complicated decoration pattern of stamped arcades extending from the rim to the shoulder (see figure 6.18). Appliques were also present on the same shard.

Figure 6.18: A potsherd from TB 2. With *comb-stamping and cord-impressions decoration*

Other ceramic attributes from TB2

The pot shards in TB2 yielded only seven burnished pot shards and the other four, which were not smoothed from Context 2, and three (n=3) were from Context 3. The lip forms on the three rims had square lips.

6.7. North-Eastern Site Trenches

TB 60 Pottery Assemblage and distribution

The TB 60 trench yielded a total of 156 pot shards. The assemblage from this trench was distributed between the first three contexts. The highest quantity of the assemblage was from Context 2, with 74% (n=116). This highest number is distributed between two spits. Context 1 yielded 19% (n=30) of the assemblage, while Context 3 produced the least number of ceramics, with 6% (n=10).

Vessel shapes from TB60

The dominant shape from the TB60 assemblage included short-necked vessels in the majority of 89.7% (n=140), followed by long-necked with 5.1% (n=8). Pot shards with short and vertical neck with open mouth covered only 3.8% (n=6) and only 1.3% of the assemblage had a beaker shape. The short-vertical necked and long necked jars were mainly distributed between the first two spits. The vessels were classified under the culinary and storage categories and these included *lefisoana*, *nkho,* and *lefiso*.

Figure 6.20: Pot shard from TB64 with rim notching

Decoration and motif placement

Very few vessels were decorated. Decorations of vessels was mainly rim notching. No vessels were decorated on the body. Only 16 pot shards were smoothed and burnished with dark orange colour and black patches on the body. The diagnostic pottery with rims had square lips with rim notching.

TB61 Pottery Assemblage and distribution

A total of 227 pot shards were uncovered from TB61. A majority of the assemblage came from Context 3, with 39% (n=88). The layer with the second largest number of pot shards was Context 1, which produced 30% (n=69) of the assemblage. Context 5 yielded 15% (n=34) of the assemblage, followed by Context 4 with 8% (n=19) and Context 6, with the least number of pot shards with 7% (n=17).

Vessel Shape

The dominant shape from the TB61 vessels included short-necked globular pots, with 94.7% followed by 4.4% of the long-necked jars. The shape with the lowest number of pot shards was the short concave necked jars with only two pot shards. A total of 12 pot shards had visible rims. The pot shards were identified as *pitsa* and *nkho*, and these are classified under culinary and storage use.

Decoration and motif placement

The TB61 assemblage yielded only 12 decorated sherds. The decoration motif was rim notching and appliqués on neck. Decorated pot shards were distributed between all the five contexts and two top spits. The TB 61 assemblage yielded the highest number of burnished and smoothed potsherds in comparison to all the excavated squares, with a total of 42. The maximum number of burnished pottery pieces were uncovered from Context 1 in the first spit.

TB 62 Ceramics

A total of 257 pot shards were recovered from trench TB 62. The highest number was from Context 6 with 49% (n=126); Context 1 has the second highest number of pot shards at 18.7% (n=48); Contexts 14 and 15 yielded the same number of pot shards with 8.2% (n=21) each. Context 3

produced 5.1% of the assemblage, followed by Context 5 with 4.7% (n=12); Context 4 yielded 3.5% (n=9); Context 2 produced 2.3% (n=6), and the context with the lowest number of pot shards was Context 7 with only 0.4% (n=1).

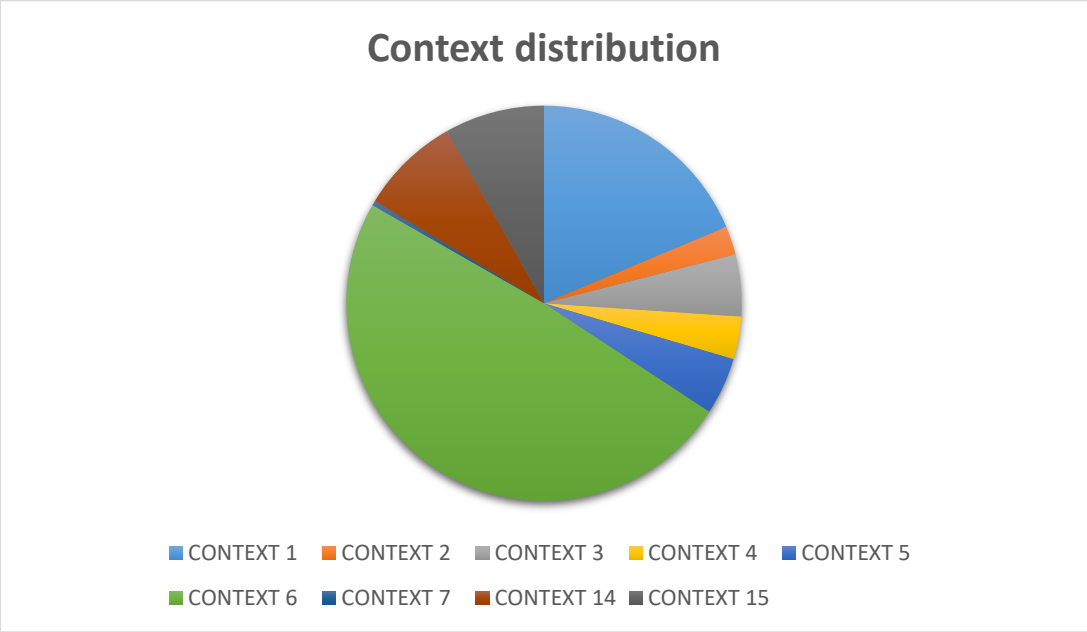

Figure 6.21: Pottery assemblage from TB 62

Vessel shape

The vessel shapes present in the TB 62 assemblage include short-necked with concave shape, short-necked, shallow bowls and long necked pot shards. Many of the pot shards are short-necked, and are distributed throughout all the contexts. The assemblage is present in all the spit levels of the trench. The vessels from this trench included a *lefiso, mopotjo* and *nkho*.

Decoration and motif placement

Only two pot shards were decorated on the rim and these were recovered from contexts 4 and 6. Appliqués were also visible on one of the potsherds. A total of 33 potsherds from TB 62 were burnished. The burnished pot shards were distributed in the first six contexts at three spit layers.

TB 63 Ceramics

The TB63 trench produced a total of 40 pot shards. The highest number of the assemblage came from Context 1 with 48% (n=19), followed by Context 3 with 43% (n=17) and Context 2, which yielded the least number of pot shards with 10% (n=4).

Vessel Shape

The dominant shape from TB63 short-necked vessels that were present in Contexts 1, 2 and 3. The assemblage was only recovered from the first spit level. The vessels uncovered in TB63 are associated with storage vessels such as *nkho* and brewing vessels such as *mopotjoana*.

Decoration and motif placement from the TB 63 assemblage

Only one notched rim pot shard was recovered from this trench, in the third context and first spit. A total of nine pot shards were smoothed and burnished. These pot shards were distributed Contexts 1 and 3. No polished pot shards were recovered from Contexts 2. All the burnished pot shards were excavated from the first spit.

Ceramics from TB 64

The TB 64 trench produced a total of 405 pot shards. The maximum number of the assemblage came from Context 10 with 32.3% (n=131), followed by 18.8% (n=76) from Context 8. Contexts 1 and 11 yielded 10.6% (n=43) of the assemblage each. Context 2 produced 6.9% (n=28); Context 4 yielded 4.7% (n=19); Context 7 yielded 4% (n=17); Context 6 had 3.7% (n=15), context 5 with 3.2% (n=13); the lowest quantity was distributed between Contexts 3 with 2.7% (n=11) and 2.2% (n=9) from Context 9.

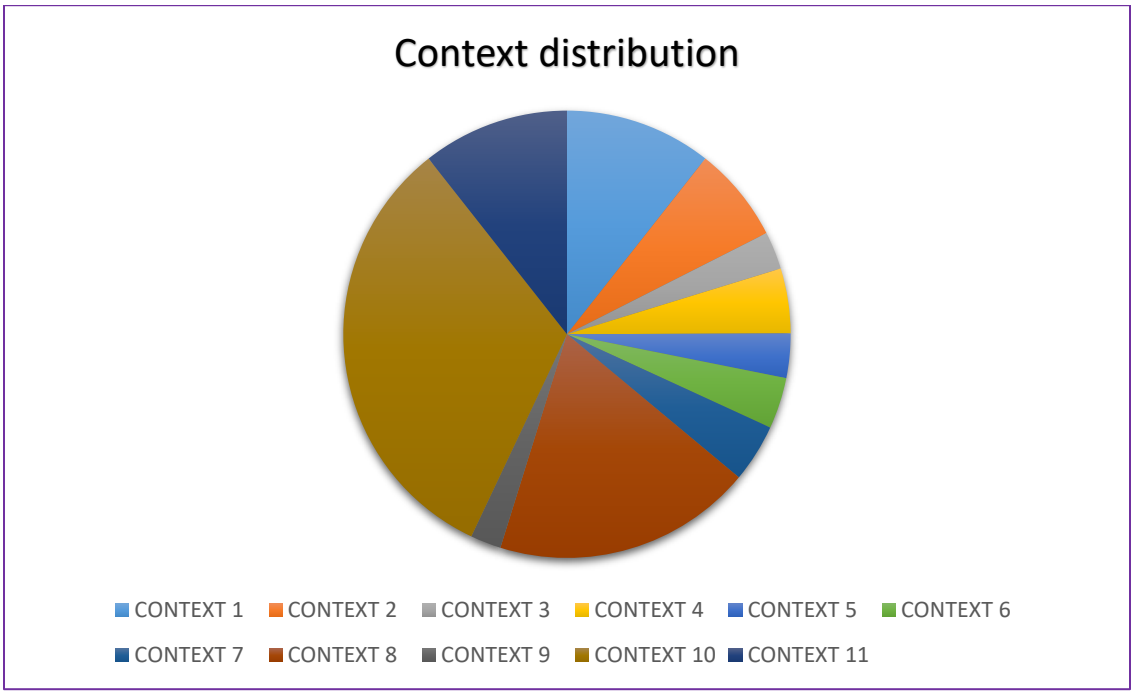

Figure 6.22: Pottery distribution from TB 64

Vessel shape

TB 64 consisted of vessels of various shapes and sizes. The vessel shapes present included short-necked, beakers, constricted and long-necked potsherds. The short-necked ceramics dominate this assemblage, followed by the constricted wares. The least number of ceramics were the long-necked ceramics. The vessels were classified under the culinary, brewing and storage categories. Among the vessels identified included *mopotjo, mopotjoana, nkho, lefiso, morifi, pitsa* and *lefisoana*.

Decoration and motifs placement

Many of the potsherds were characterised by rim notching on short-necked and open mouth vessels, appliques and stamping on necks of some vessels. The TB 64 ceramics consisted of burnished potsherds with rounded lips.

6.7.1. Ceramics from TB 65

A total of 30 potsherds were recovered from TB 65. The highest number of these ceramics were present in Context 1, with 73% (n=22); followed by Context 3, with 17% (n=5) while Context 2 yielded the lowest number, forming 10% (n=3) of the assemblage. The highest number of this assemblage were recovered from the first spit. Only five pot shards from Contexts 1 and 2 had evidence of burnishing. The pot shards were recovered from the first and the third spit.

Vessel shape and decoration motifs

Ceramic vessels from TB 65 consisted of short-necked and small open mouths for bowls. No decorated pot shards were recovered from the TB 65 assemblage. The vessels identified at TB 65 included *lefisoana* and *lefiso*.

6.7.2. Pottery Assemblage from TB 66

The TB66 trench yielded a total of 164 pot shards. The highest quantity of these pot shards were recovered from Context 1, with 58% (n=95) assemblage. Context 2 followed, with 24% (n=40) of and lastly Context 3 yielded the lowest number of pot shards, at 18% (n=29).

Vessel shapes

TB 66 produced the highest number of short necked vessels. Long-necked ceramics were also present in the assemblage. Small thin-lipped open mouth bowls were also present. The assemblage is distributed only in the first two spits; the assemblage is additionally distributed in Contexts 1, 2

and 3. Storage, brewing and culinary vessels were identified. The vessels included *nkho, pitsa, mopotjoana* and *morifi*.

Decoration and motif placement

The decorations of TB66 vessels were appliqués, few stemmed triangles, and rim notching. The decorated ceramics were present in Contexts 1,2 and 3. All the decorated pot shards were recovered from two top spits.

Figure 6.23: Example of a pot shard from square TB66

Other ceramic attributes

A total of 21 pot shards were smoothed polished and mainly distributed between Contexts 2 and 3 of the square.

6.7.3. Pottery Assemblage from TB 67

A total of 53 pot shards were uncovered from TB 67. The highest quantity of the pot shards was uncovered from Context 1 with 62% (n=33), followed by Context 2 with 25% (n=13). The lowest

number of the TB67 assemblage were from Context 4, with 13% (n=7). The pot shards were also uncovered from two top spits.

Vessel shape and motifs placement

The dominant vessel shapes yielded by TB67 includes short necked and long-necked pot shards. Distribution of these shapes was from Contexts 1, 2 and 4. Only two top spits were recorded. Only one body decoration was recorded from the TB 67 assemblage from Context 2 and Spit 1. A total of nine pot shards had evidence of burnishing. These were distributed between Contexts 1 and 2 as well as spits 1 and 2. *Lefiso* and *pitsa* were identified among the pot shards.

6.7.4. TB 68

A total of 280 pot shards were recovered from TB68. Context 1 yielded the highest quantity with 56% (n=158), followed by Context 3 with 38% (n=107) and the context with the lowest quantity was 2 with only 5% (n=15). The assemblage at TB68 included a variety of motifs, though few were decorated or incised.

Vessel shape

Only three shapes were identified from the TB68 assemblage. From the total of the assemblage, the short-necked potsherds covered the highest number with 86% (n=241). Necked jars covered 8.6% (n=24) of the assemblage, while only 5.4% (n=15) were long-necked jars. The necked jars were mainly distributed between Contexts 1 and 3; the short-necked potsherds were present in the first three top contexts and four top spits. Open bowls were also present in the assemblage. The vessels at TB 68 were classified under the storage, culinary and brewing. A possible *khamelo* was identified; also present were *lefiso, nkho, pitsa, lefisoana, pitsana, mopotjo, morifi* and *mopotjoana*.

Decoration and motif placement

Only nine potsherds from TB 68 were decorated. The present decoration motifs present in this assemblage included stamped arcades on shoulder and appliqués. One of the pot shards had broad band stamps on the neck. Rim notching was also visible in four of the pot shards. Only one pot shard had finely stamped triangles on the body. At total of 11.2% (n=32) were smoothened. The burnished pot shards were mainly dominant in Context 1 and a few in Contexts 2 and 3, the highest quantity being 88.6% (n=248) of the assemblage were coarse in texture. The assemblage had both flattened and rounded lip forms.

6.8. Discussion

Like many Iron Age/Historical sites, ceramics are usually found as numerous fragments, rather than whole pots. In most cases, these pottery fragments are undecorated, and this usually restricts a multidimensional analysis (Huffman 2002). The pottery at Thaba-Bosiu includes occasionally burnished pottery, with very few decoration motifs. The southwestern midden Trench TB3 yielded the highest number of shards. This midden is associated with King Moshoeshoe's homestead. These results suggest that there were a lot of activities that took place.

The most common shapes are short-necked vessels, which were mostly used during food preparation. The open-mouthed vessels, which have been linked to beer-making were also common and this indicates frequent feasts as traditional beer is mostly prepared for important events. Small bowls are not common, and this may suggest that serving was mostly done on a large scale, where a group of men or women were served in one large vessel. The vessels are mostly classified under the culinary (food preparation), storage and brewing.

The makers of the Thaba-Bosiu ceramics paid less attention to decorating their ceramics. The reason could be due to a sudden shift in cultural interactions, due to newly formed alliances and relationships formed between different groups. This, coupled with continued migration, may have discouraged pottery makers from investing in decoration. A variation of decorated pottery and regional differentiation was generally rare during pre- and early colonial period in the region, specifically among Amazulu communities (Maggs 2018:118). Basotho pottery in the present also show less investment in decorating vessels. The focus is mostly put on perfecting the shape to enable daily household needs. Pottery-making and use of ceramics defined the daily living among people that settled at Thaba-Bosiu. Basotho potters were women, and they produced different vessels depending on the household demands (Lawton 1965). Pottery making was a process that involved identification of a specific type of clay strong enough for pot making. Basotho potters would recycle pot shards by grinding them, and mixing with clay (Lawton 1965). The pot shards were believed to make the strong clay pots. The potter would knead the crushed pot shards with clay until smooth and well combined. The clay is then sculptured into the desired shape and placed into extreme heat.

It is important to address the question of what the ceramic facies represent, as well as the relationship between the different facies and their use. The ceramic facies recorded in this study, have similar characteristics to that of the *Ntsoanatsatsi* and *Makgwareng* (Maggs 1976; Huffman 2007). Rim-notching, stamped arcades and appliques were most common alterations on the ceramics. Undecorated coarse ware was also common in the assemblage. The black short-necked and red burnished vessels could be the *Nqabeni* facies (Hall and Maggs 1979; Maggs 1982). Stylistic variations have also been noted in the different trenches. It is then important to compare these findings within the wider region.

The excavations at Ha-Makoanyane, Metolong, in the late 1800s about 10km from Thaba-Bosiu have produced occasional red burnishing potsherds, which have no decorations (King *et al.* 2014). Comb-stamping was also present in some of the ceramic ware. Type V sites also had similar ceramic styles (Maggs 1976:226). Some ceramics present modelling, coiling, and finger-shaping (King *et al.* 2012). Historical records have also reflected pottery making processes by women that settled in and around Thaba-Bosiu. Eugene Casalis (1861; 1997) described his experience of Basotho women as taking pride in pottery making.

> Without any other aid than a crock to scrape away the clay as they work it, they contrive to make vases as perfectly round as those turned on a lathe. They do not varnish them badly, but rarely succeed in baking them as well as they wish… (Casalis 1997: 146).

The techno-typological approach adopted in the analysis of the Ha-Makoanyane mostly revealed undecorated pottery (King *et al.* 2014; c.f. Roux & Courty 2009). This technique allowed for an analysis that identifies both modifications and technical traditions. In that study, modelled, coiled and finger-shaped pot shards were identified. Although the Ha-Makoanyane assemblage did not yield ample data in terms of conclusive classification of ceramic facies present at the site and in the Mohokare valley.

6.9. Summary

This chapter presented a variety of ceramics excavated from Thaba-Bosiu. Although very few ceramics were decorated, this study mostly focused on identifying the shapes, and thereafter,

linking these to their use. Basotho ceramics are given different names according to their use and the most common use was storage and serving. The Thaba-Bosiu vessels reflect beer-brewing, water storage and food preparation as primary uses for daily practices. The ceramics have further reflected similar characteristics as the Makgwareng and Nqabeni facies, however, because of the limited decorations, Thaba-Bosiu ceramics may represent a new agropastoralist culture, born from interactions between different groups. This culture contact is also represented by other material remains from the site. The next chapter thus presents the types of beads that were excavated from Thaba-Bosiu.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE THABA-BOSIU BEAD ANALYSIS

> "The circulation of beads as currency is another indication of the level of trade in the region. Beads were useful as a circulating medium because they were fungible, could not be easily obtained, and could be given different values, according to their sizes and colours. Thus, like gold and silver, cowries, cloth, salt, and metal rods elsewhere in Africa, beads facilitated the relay trade system in which groups who traded directly with one another but did not need each other's trade goods accepted compensation in beads that could be used elsewhere to obtain the goods they did need" (Eldredge 1993: 21).

7.1. Introduction

Exchange of goods among Southern African Iron Age communities was not a practice introduced upon the arrival of Europeans in the region. International trade routes were also open and thus these communities could access goods outside the continent. Among the most commonly imported goods were glass beads. They are one of the most common items of material culture that has been uncovered from southern African Iron Age sites (Pwiti 2005; Killick 2009; Huffman 2009; Robertshaw et al 2010; Sinclair et al 2012; Wood 2012). As with other imported goods, glass beads were largely considered prestigious, and thus defined political economies of their consumers (Huffman 2009; Sinclair et al 2012; Wood 2012). The consumption of glass beads with only the elite is not, however, always the case (Pwiti 2005; Wilmsen 2009; Wood 2012).

As with other forms of material culture, the presence of beads at archaeological sites poses questions about their producers, the place of origin, their uses and process of how they got there. Such detailed information about beads will put into context the identities of the users and the nature of appropriation into their cultures. In the context of Southern Africa, the presence of beads at archaeological sites is linked to economic status, and most specifically, to trade (Pwiti 2005; Robertshaw *et al* 2010; Sinclair et al 2012; Wood 2010). Research into beads in the Southern African context has shown trade routes across the Indian Ocean (Wood 2011). Mapungubwe is one of the southern African sites the study of beads was pioneered. Thus, glass beads serve as the link between Africa and the outside world from as early as the 8th Century AD (Robertshaw 2010:

1898). In Southern Africa, some of the earliest glass beads were from Schroda, K2, and Mapungubwe (Beck 1931; Saitowitz 1996; Wood 2011).

The most common approach towards understanding the significance of beads among communities, specifically in the context of Southern Africa is the consideration of status. As with modern indicators of wealth, the process through which goods reach certain communities determines the status of those specific societies or individuals (Wilmsen 2009). For a long time in archaeology, imported goods that include glass beads were regarded as not only chronological markers, but also as symbols of status and wealth (Caton-Thompson 1931; Beck 1937; Van Riet Lowe 1955; Robinson 1961; McIntosh 1999; Wood 2000; Pwiti 2005). This approach is what Moffett and Chirikure (2016:4) have regard as Prestige Goods Theory. The approach is, however, problematic as it suggests that economic and political wealth among southern African farming communities were determined only by imported goods. This study, however, provides an alternative perspective on the use and consumption of beads from Thaba-Bosiu. The chapter further demonstrates how the consumption of beads among farming communities that settled in the Mohokare Valley did not determine prestige. Rather, they were regarded as alternative clothing and accessories for daily consumption by men, women, and children. The objective of this study involves using material culture as a way of highlighting culture contact and different identities that settled on the mountain and around it. To address this objective, contact and trade networks in the region are explored.

7.2. Glass Bead studies in southern Africa

Research on glass beads in Southern Africa has contributed to uncovering the origins of and people associated with these beads (Calabrese 2000). The main common focus on glass beads analysis has partly been determining the chronology of archaeological sites. The main interest in glass beads in Southern Africa served in part to determine the origins of glass beads, more specifically the original place of manufacture. Research conducted by Henderson (2000: 76) has provided information that glass beads are highly likely to have not been manufactured in Southern Africa because of the very high temperatures that go into making them. The results of Henderson's study instead showed evidence of re-working of imported glass (Wood 2011: 68). Prior to chemical analysis of glass beads as conducted by Henderson (2000) and Wood (2011; 2012), a series of

research approaches have been conducted as an attempt to interpret the presence of glass beads at Southern African archaeological sites.

Over the years, researchers have developed different ways of analysing beads through typological classification. Amongst these approaches is taxonomy, based on differences in the shapes of the beads (Beck 1937). The classification was carried out through comparison of bead shapes found in Southern Africa with those found at archaeological sites outside Africa (Beck 1928; 1937). A more substantive study down the line was carried out by Robinson (1959; 1961), which identified different bead series specifically in Zimbabwe. This approach, however, was not sufficient in the attempt to study further the system of manufacturing glass beads.

Each approach to glass bead analysis that has been introduced so far has paved the way to more advanced and detailed studies that link to group identities. An extensive study of glass beads has additionally focused more on sites in present-day Zimbabwe and parts of South Africa. One of the pioneering approaches to bead analysis introduced by Beck (1937) specifically looked at glass beads uncovered from Mapungubwe and K2. These sites are regarded as part of the Zimbabwe culture. The glass bead study conducted by Beck was largely a comparative study aimed at the origins of the glass beads (Beck 1931; 1937). Great Zimbabwe and Mapungubwe were used as comparative sites that associated beads with trade as most were found to be of Indian origin (Beck 1931). The classification of beads through shape as adopted by Beck (1928; 1931; 1937) proved to be a crucial element of analysis as it challenged the narrative that the beads were of European origin. Classification of beads as adopted by Beck (1937), however, was limited mainly to colour and did not yield any information about the size, shape, and composition of the beads.

A series of studies following the classification approach adopted by Beck (1937) were introduced as attempts to come up with advanced and close to accurate approaches to bead analysis and their role in understanding the socio-economic stands of past Southern African communities (Robinson 1959; Van Riet Lowe 1955; Gardner 1963; Wood 2002; 2011; 2012). Previous bead studies have, however, not been effective in identifying useful comprehensive and temporally-defined series as analytical measures (Wood 2005). Marilee Wood's (2000: 2005) careful analysis of this data has enabled the development of a temporally sensitive glass bead sequence for the region that can, at least partially, be applied to other regions as well, such as East Africa and Madagascar.

Taxonomy as an approach in bead analysis does not provide enough information about the systematic manufacturing of beads, leading to a neutron-activation analysis approach pioneered by Claire Davidson (1973; Davidson and Clarke 1974). Davidson (1972; 1973) classified glass beads from K2 and Mapungubwe into three categories, viz.: the Trade Wind Bead Chemical Group, the M1 Chemical Group, and the Mapungubwe Chemical Group. The M1 Chemical Group was said to have made locally by reworking smaller imported beads (Van Riet Lowe 1955; Gardner 1963; Davidson 1973). A study by Jill Kinahan (2000) looked at 17th and 20th century AD glass beads that were excavated from the Namibian coast was significant in determining a change in the social and economic among past communities. Kinahan (2000) did this by combining bead classification with multivariate statistics. This was done in order to assess a seriation of bead assemblages.

This scientific approach was developed further by Wood (2000, 2005, 2009, 2011, and 2012), who focused specifically on creating typology of beads series of Southern Africa. Chemical analysis of beads has recently been considered as alternative measures of bead identification. This approach concluded that Southern Africa's consumption of beads was active and independent, along with being integrated into the Eurasian-Africa world system (Wood 2011: 53).

The typology of glass beads has also provided information about the manufacture of glass beads and the origins. For this particular study and in an attempt to account for the aim of this study, I analysed glass beads with the intention of understanding the chronology of the site and also the culture and origins associated with these beads. Analysis of these beads has indicated the means through which the beads arrived in Lesotho, specifically on Thaba-Bosiu. The main questions I attempt to answer in this chapter include: What were the beads used for; what are the different sizes; where were beads made; whom did the beads belong to; and approximately how old are the beads?

7.3. Methodology in Bead Analysis

The evolution of bead analysis particularly in Southern Africa has seen transformation from classifications through sizes, colour and shape to a more scientific approach that looks at the chemical composition of beads. Marilee Wood (2005, 2011, 2012) developed a beads series that

determined the composition, source, sites, and dates; in addition, glass bead analytical approach as initially pioneered by Beck (1931), which was later adopted by Wood (2011: 69), encompassed size, shape, diaphaneity, length ratio and colour. According to Wood (2011: 70) glass beads shapes are classified as tube, oblate, cylinder, sphere, ellipsoid barrel, and bicone. The analysis and interpretation of beads involves firstly determining the type of material that the beads were made from. Beads may be made from material such as bone, stone, glass or eggshells, among a few. However, for this study, focus is primarily on glass beads. Bead material may also give insight into the types of natural or manmade material prevalent at different periods.

The method of manufacturing beads is another form of analysis that has been conducted. Following the identification of bead material, the determination of the process of bead manufacture. This involves determining whether certain beads were drawn or winded. According to Wood (2011), glass beads found in most parts of Southern Africa were manufactured according to three methods; these are winding, drawing, and moulding. All these methods result in a series of beads.

7.4. Type of Manufacture

7.4.1. Moulded Beads

Moulding of beads is associated with decoration of glass beads. Moulding is a form of shaping a malleable substance. Pressing and blowing are carried out during the process of moulding (Gove 1976: 1454). Moulded beads are also known as Garden Roller beads and in the context of Southern Africa, they were known to have been made at K2 (Wood 2011: 69).

7.4.2. Drawn Beads

Drawn beads are also some of the frequently occurring beads in archaeological sites. Drawn beads are referred to in different terms and these include tube (Kidd and Kidd 1970: 50), cut (Storm 1976: 106), tubular drawn, cane and hollow-cane (Harris and Harris 1967: 135). Southern African moulded beads were mostly associated with K2 where original beads were re-melted to create new bead designs.

7.4.3. Wound Beads

Beads made through a technique known as furnace winding. The process of manufacturing wound beads includes winding of glass around a mandrel core (Saitowitz 1996; Wood 2015), where a mandrel or iron rod is dipped into melted glass crucible in a furnace (Wood 2011: 69).

7.5. Glass Bead Shape

Beads come in different shapes and this is influenced by the rounding and reheating process. Different systems of analysing bead shapes have been adapted over time. These systems include Kidd's (1970) and Karklins' (1982), where emphasis has been placed on differentiating tubular and non-tubular shaped beads. Another system is one that was established by Beck (1928), which included the analyses of bead shapes that may be regarded as uncommon (Wood 2011: 69). Conventional beads shapes include cylinder, ellipsoid, barrel, bicone, sphere, tube, and oblate (see figure 7.1), (Wood 2011: 69). The beads analysed in this study are of different shapes as stipulated by Wood (2005; 2011; 2012).

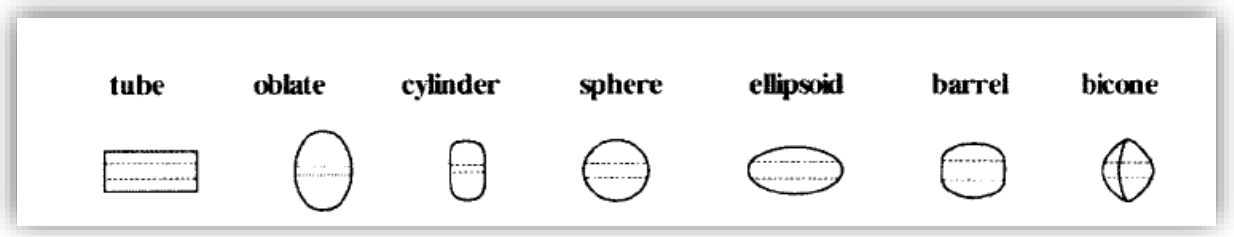

Figure 7.1: Different shapes of beads as adapted from and by Wood (2011: 69).

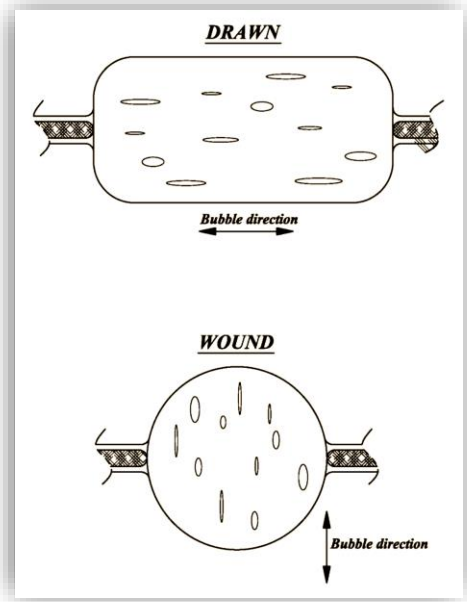

Figure 7.2: Diagram showing drawn and wound beads (Van der Sleen 1958:207)

7.6. Beads Size

The dimensions of a bead determine the bead's "largest diameter perpendicular to its perforation" (Wood 2011:71). The bead's diameter is taken perpendicular to the perforation and length and the end to end parallel to the perforation is also considered. Marilee Wood (2011) developed bead size categories for Southern African beads. She determined five size categories, which include very small, under 2mm; small, 2-4mm; medium, 4-6mm; large, 6-10mm; and very large, over 10mm. Measurements of these beads are usually made to the nearest 0.05mm using vernier callipers or a ruler.

7.7. Bead Colour

According to Wood (2005: 36; 2011:70), bead colour is influenced by the process of its manufacture. The colour of beads that are uncovered from excavations is in most cases affected by the conditions of the deposit in which it was buried, and these beads could be in conditions such as "patina, dirt, scratches, density, corrosion, *etc.*" (Wood 2011: 70). The recommendation is that light should be central to the analysis and identification of bead colour, therefore, reflected light is recommended over transmitted light (Wood 2011: 70). For the purposes of this study, the method used to identify bead colour is that adopted from Munsell colour number series, as articulated by Wood (2011).

7.8. Bead Diaphaneity

Diaphaneity is otherwise said to be the translucency (means that light passes through the bead but one cannot see an object through it) of glass and its categories include transparent (means that one can see a pin or other object through glass), transparent-opaque, translucent, translucent-opaque and opaque (which means that there is no light coming through the glass), opaque-translucent, transparent-translucent (Wood 2005:34). There are different factors that may affect diaphaneity of beads and these include surface abrasion, dirt, and even colour of beads. To accurately determine the diaphaneity of beads, magnification and a strong transmitted light are recommended (Wood

2011:70). For the purpose of this study, the diaphaneity of beads was assessed through exposure to high degrees of light and magnification.

Glass beads are seen as chronological and temporal indicators (Bvocho 2005; Wood 2011). Archaeological studies have shown that glass beads have assumed a political economy approach/assessment. The consumption of beads also differs based on how specific communities receive them. The use of glass beads may also be exclusive to certain identities, and thus may be identity markers.

7.9. Bead Results from Thaba-Bosiu

A total of 12 trenches were excavated on Thaba-Bosiu, where beads were uncovered in four trenches, namely: TB3, TB61, TB64 and TB68. A total of 756 individual beads were uncovered the four squares excluding test squares (TB48 and TB52). The least number of glass beads were uncovered from TB3 with a percentage of only 2.7 % (n=21). The highest number of glass beads were mainly uncovered from square TB 64 with 49% (n=379). Twenty-two percent (n=163) of the total glass beads came from square TB61; Similarly, twenty-one percent (n=157) came from TB68. Apart from the 756 glass beads uncovered from the excavations, 56 glass beads were also collected from a disturbed midden located northwest of the royal village, on a tourist/visitor pathway. Additional beads were also uncovered from test excavations of TB48 and TB52.

Thaba-Bosiu bead assemblage is largely classified under drawn, and oblate. The drawn beads include white hearts (red beads with a white centre). White hearts are said to have initially been manufactured between 1835 and 1836 in Venice (Wood 2005). This type of bead is said to have arrived in Mgungundlovu at Dingane's kraal in 1839 before the kraal got burnt down, and the bead type became popular since (Wood 2005). One category of white hearts followed the colour preferences of Northern Basotho groups, while the other followed Amazulu preferences (Wood 2005). This could indicate that people in Lesotho at the time may have been obtaining beads from two different sources. The white hearts were part of the Amazulu tradition along with pink and white beads. This could mean that the came via Natal.

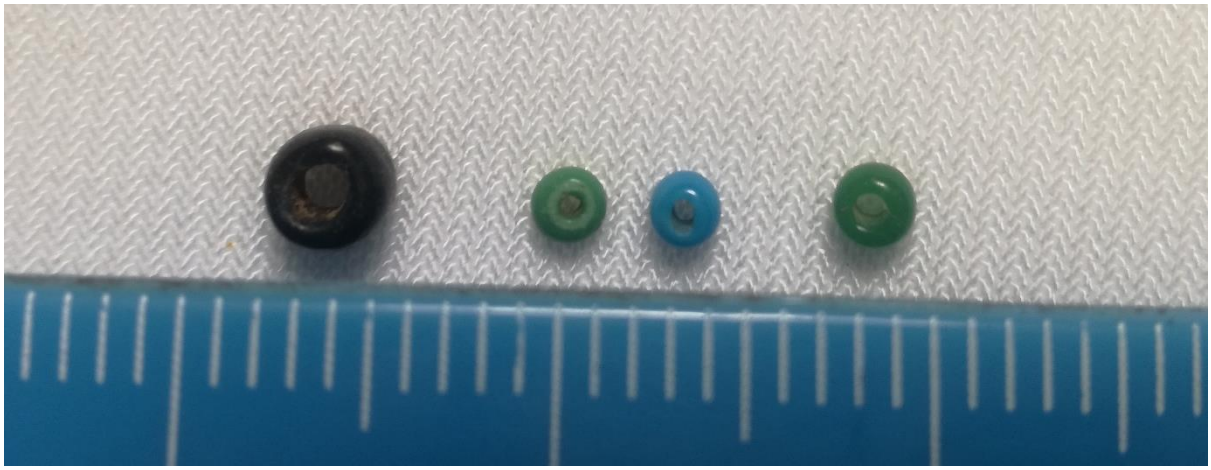

Figure 7.3: Example of drawn and oblate beads from Thaba-Bosiu excavations.

In the Thaba-Bosiu assemblage, there are glass beads which were also manufactured in a way that mimicked stone beads. These types of beads were largely produced by treating glass like stone in Czech Republic, and these were commonly known as Bohemian (Wood 2012). The Czechs were known for faceting both stone and glass in their bead production (Wood 2012). These types of beads are said to be very rare in southern Africa, and were probably reserved for royalty.

Beads in general were also used in traditional clothing. Evidence of beaded dress hides has been articulated by Casalis (1997:142). They were either sown onto dresses or worn around the waist as a form of clothing by small children.

Figure 7.6: Beaded dress of a Mosotho woman in the 1800s as witnessed by Eugene Casalis (1997:142).

Figure 7.7: Stone-like glass beads

Among the different types of beads found were Prosser moulded beads. Prosser beads were named after Richard and Thomas Prosser in 1840. These beads were manufactured through crushing clay earths, feldspar and flint into powder, which was then dyed. The powder mixture was then put inside a fly press at 200 PSI (Kirkish 2014: 311). The mixture was then compressed and moulded into beads (Kirkish 2014: 311). The Prosser beads uncovered from Thaba-Bosiu included a black star bead with a raised hexagonal base. One unique moulded Prosser is a red raspberry bead.

7.9.1. Surface Collections of Glass Beads

The bulk of the surface bead collections was found in different spaces in the royal village. A high number of beads was collected along the visitor path north of the village towards the edge overlooking the Qiloane Mountain. Surface beads were also collected in an area close to households located in the northern part of the royal village. These beads were embedded directly on the surface in the middle and near a tourist path that leads to the edge of the mountain where the Qiloane Mountain can be viewed. The area of the path where the beads were collected also had a few surface pottery pieces and foreign ceramics. The area where the beads were collected was recorded by taking a series of pictures that included nearby households, TB48 and TB50 excavations. The distance from the excavated units was measured and the surface area where the beads were collected was noted.

7.9.2. TB 61 Bead Assemblages

A total of 163 glass beads were uncovered from square TB 61. Green glass beads have highest number with 31.90% (n=52), the second highest number are black beads with 17.79% (n=29). Blue beads follow, with 16.56% (n=27); then yellow beads, with 9.20% (n=15); the total of peach coloured beads was 6.13% (n=10), while light blue and mustard-coloured glass beads each represented 5.69% (n=9). Glass beads with the colours red and white each represented 1.84% (n=3). The least numerous beads with 0.61% (n=1) each included those that were blue green, oyster, royal blue, and dark blue. The majority of the beads are spherical in shape. Four of the beads are blue tubular hectogon. One of the beads is a red, corner-less hectagonal. There is also one hexagonal yellow bead. There is one of each of the following, red oblate, green oblate, royal blue, white on blue oblate and one ellipsoid blue.

Table 7.1: Contextual distribution of TB61 beads

TB61	black	blue	blue-green	Blue-white	brown	cobalt blue	Dark Blue	faded red	green	mustard	orange	oyster	peach	red	red heart	reg glass	royal blue	white	yellow	Total
context1		**1**							**4**											**5**
sphere		1							4											**5**
context3	**23**	**16**	**6**	**1**		**2**	**2**	**1**	**24**	**8**	**8**	**1**	**2**	**1**		**1**		**2**	**7**	**105**
ellipsoid		1																		**1**
oblate				1												1				**2**
oblate-Bicone														1						**1**
sphere	22	11	6			2	2	1	24	8	8	1	2					2	7	**96**
Tubular Hectagonal	1	4																		**5**
context4	**1**	**6**			**1**				**10**								**1**		**1**	**20**
Barrel		1																		**1**
cylinder	1																			**1**
Hexagonal																			1	**1**
oblate																	1			**1**
sphere		5			1				10											**16**
context5	**5**	**10**	**1**						**7**	**1**					**1**			**1**	**7**	**33**
oblate		1							1											**2**
sphere	5	9	1						6	1					1			1	7	**31**
Total	**29**	**33**	**7**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**45**	**9**	**8**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**3**	**15**	**163**

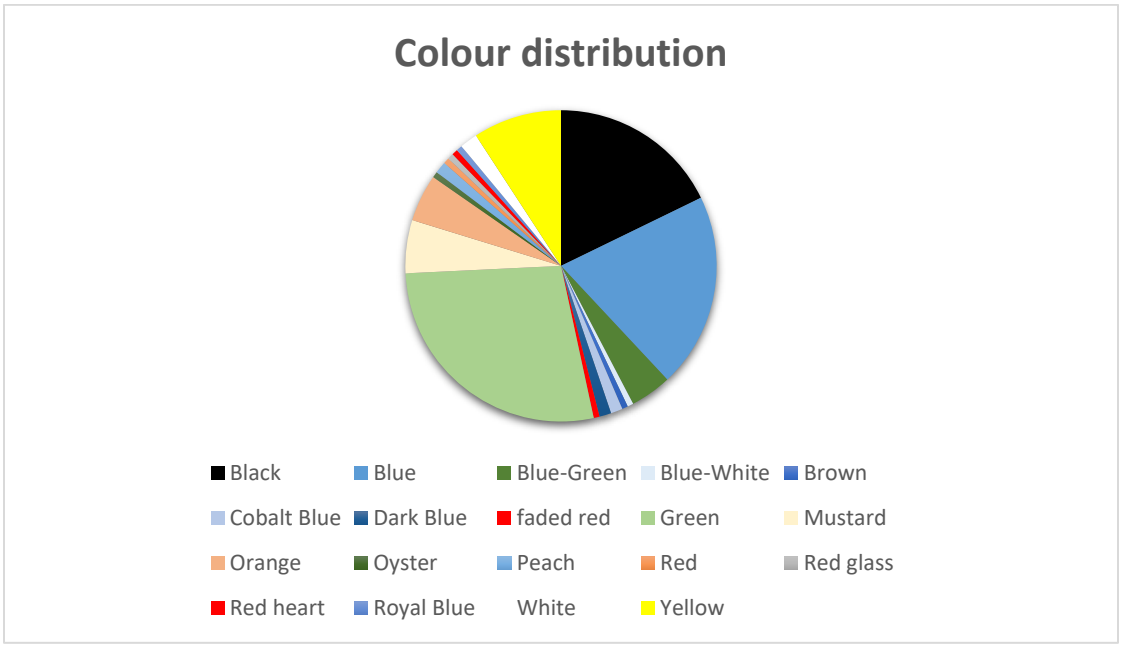

Figure 7.8: Colour distribution from TB61

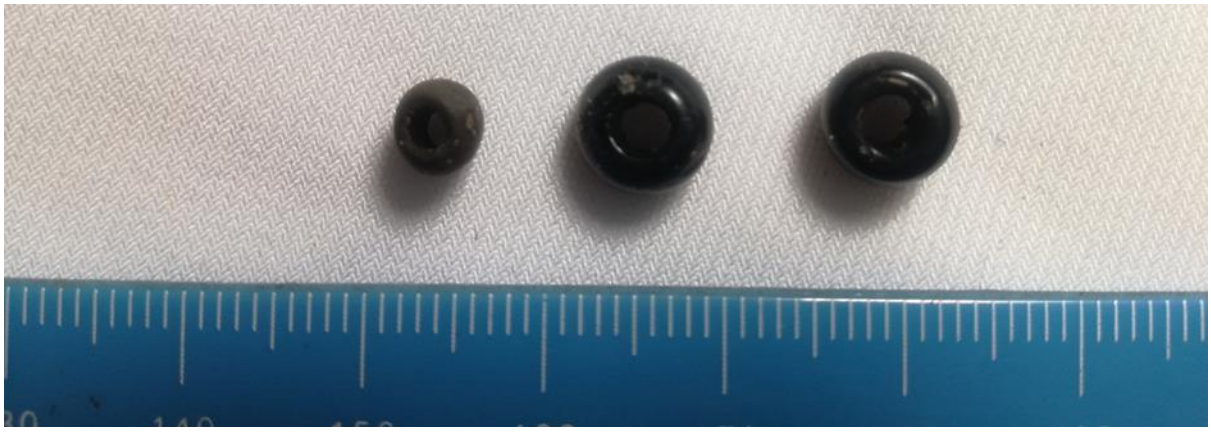

Figure 7.9: Black beads recovered from TB61. These are in different sizes.

Table 7.2: Distribution of beads across TB 61

Shapes	Black	Blue	Blue-Green	Blue-White	Brown	Cobalt Blue	Dark Blue	faded red	Green	Mustard	Orange	Oyster	Peach	Red	Red glass	Red heart	Royal Blue	White	Yellow
Barrel		1																	
Cylinder	1																		
Ellipsoid		1																	
Hexagonal																			1
Oblate		1		1					1						1		1		
Oblate-Bicone														1					
Sphere	27	26	7		1	2	2	1	44	9	8	1	2			1		3	14
Tubular Hectagonal	1	4																	
Total	29	33	7	1	1	2	2	1	45	9	8	1	2	1	1	1	1	3	15

The bead assemblage at TB 61 was recovered from contexts 1, 3, 4 and 5. The highest quantity of bead assemblage (oblates, spherical, oblate-bicone, tubular hectagonal and ellipsoid) were recovered from Context 3 at 64.4%. Context 5 yielded 20% of both oblate and spherical beads; Twelve percent of the bead assemblage (barrel, cylinder, oblate, hexagonal and spherical) were from Context 4 and the lowest number of beads were from Context 1.

7.9.3. Bead Assemblage at TB3

A total of 21 glass beads were uncovered from square TB 3. The highest number of beads were between purple and white, representing 27.78% respectively. Twenty-two percent of beads from TB3 were brown; Each of blue, green, purple oblate and brown oblate represented 11.11 percent. Spherical beads were as follows; 22.22% white, 16.6% purple, 11.11% brown, 5.56% blue and 5.56% green. Thirty-eight percent (n=8) of the beads were recovered from Context 2. Forty-three percent (n=9) of the bead assemblage dominates Context 3. The context with the lowest number of beads was Context 1, with only 19% (n=4). A total of 12 white beads were excavated from TB 3; only two beads n=2 were brown; three of the total beads were blue; two beads were green n=2; Five beads were purple; two beads were blue and white n=2 (one out of these is navy blue with white stripes); there is one red heart n=1; only one faded red bead was uncovered; two beads were glazed yellow.

Figure 7.10: One of the beads recovered from Context 3

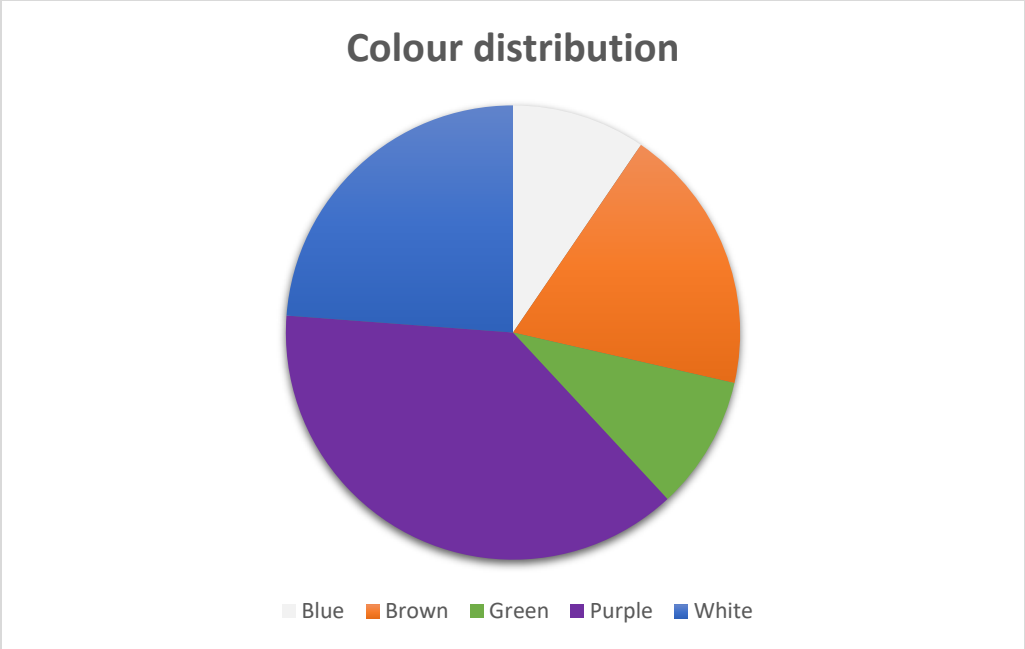

Figure 7.11: Distribution of beads by colour

Many of the beads uncovered from TB3 had an opaque diaphaneity. Other beads are translucent and were uncovered from Context 4 of the trench. Most of the opaque beads were uncovered from contexts 1,2,3 and 6. The beads at TB 3 have various shapes which include spherical, oblate, and ellipsoid. Spherical and oblate beads dominate the trench while beads of ellipsoid and barrel shapes are infrequent in contexts 2 and 3. The main glass bead shapes from TB3 include oblate and spherical. Eleven percent (n=2) of the beads are brown oblates, 5.56% (n=1) are blue oblates, 11.11% (n=2) are purple oblates and 5.56% (n=1) were green, and 5.56% (n=1) was white. On the other hand, spherical beads included 11.11% brown (n=2) were two, 5.56% was blue (n=1), 5.56% was green, 16.67% was purple (n=3), and 22.22% were white (n=4). The sizes of the beads are mainly small and medium.

Table 7.2: Distribution of TB3 beads according to contexts

TB3	blue	brown	green	purple	white	**Total**
context1	**2**	**2**				**4**
oblate	1	1				**2**
sphere	1	1				**2**
context2		**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**8**
oblate		1	1	1	1	**4**
sphere		1	1	1	1	**4**
context3				**6**	**3**	**9**
oblate				3		**3**
sphere				3	3	**6**
Total	**2**	**4**	**2**	**8**	**5**	**21**

Table 7.3: Distribution of bead assemblage from TB3

Shape	**Blue**	**Brown**	**Green**	**Purple**	**White**
Oblate	1	2	1	4	1
Sphere	1	2	1	4	4

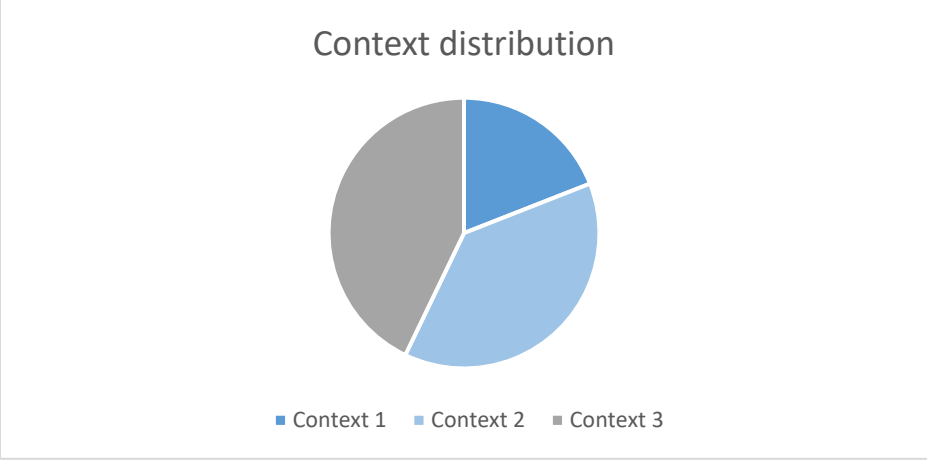

Figure 7.12: Context distribution for TB3 beads (Context 1 yielded 19%, Context 2 yielded 38% and Context 3 yielded 43%)

The beads excavated from TB3 were mainly distributed among three contexts. The top layer, Context 1 yielded 19% (n=4) of the beads. Thirty-eight percent (n=8) of the beads were from Context 2, while 43% were uncovered from Context 3.

7.9.4. Bead Assemblage from TB 64

A total of 380 glass beads were recovered from TB 64. Green beads dominate the trench with 48% (n=184). Blue oblate and barrel beads follow with 15% (n=56); there were also white beads 6% (n=23); brown beads were total of 6% (n=22); purple beads were 7% (n=25); there were also yellow beads with 3% (n=10); red beads covered 3% (n=11); Black oblates at 7% (n=27); mustard beads were 1% (n=2); turquoise green at 2% (n=6), pink, maroon/red-brown.

Table 7.4: Distribution of TB64 beads according to contexts

TB64	black	blue	brown	Cobalt Blue	green	maroon	mustard	pink	purple	red	red-brown	Turquoise Green	white	yellow	**Total**
context1	**5**														**5**
sphere	5														**5**
context10	**7**	**13**	**2**		**13**				**6**	**6**			**3**	**4**	**54**
cylinder	1														**1**
oblate		4								5					**9**
sphere	6	9	2		13				6	1			3	4	**44**
context11					**4**										**4**
sphere					4										**4**
context2	**3**	**9**	**1**		**71**			**1**	**1**	**2**			**3**	**5**	**2**	**98**
oblate					2										**2**
sphere	3	9	1		69			1	1	2			3	5	2	**96**
context3	**4**	**10**	**2**	**11**	**20**		**2**		**1**		**1**			**2**	**3**	**56**
Bicone		1														**1**
oblate					1											**1**
sphere	4	9	2	11	19		2		1		1			2	3	**54**
context4	**4**	**3**			**12**					**3**				**2**		**24**
barrel	4															**4**
oblate		1														**1**
sphere		2			12					3				2		**19**
context5		**1**			**6**											**7**
sphere		1			6											**7**
context6		**2**			**20**	**1**							**3**	**3**		**29**
Annular		1														**1**
oblate														1		**1**
sphere		1			20	1							3	2		**27**
context7	**2**	**5**	**2**		**19**				**12**					**2**		**42**
Annular	1															**1**
sphere	1	5	2		19				12					2		**41**
context8	**2**	**5**	**4**		**12**									**4**	**1**	**28**
oblate					1									2		**3**
sphere	2	5	4		11									2	1	**25**
context9		**2**	**4**													**6**
sphere		2	4													**6**
Total	**27**	**50**	**15**	**11**	**177**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**20**	**11**	**1**		**6**	**21**	**10**	**353**

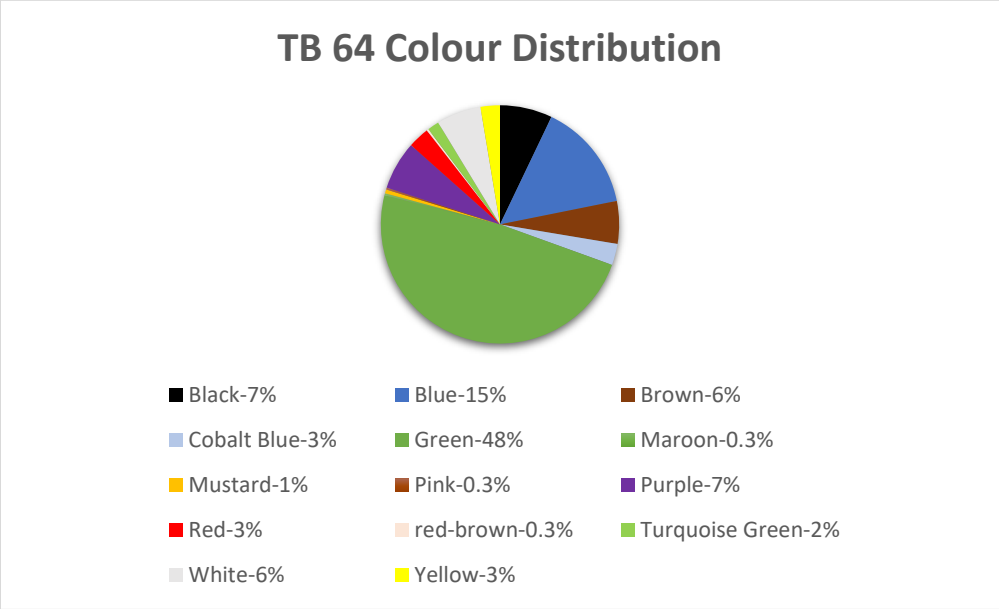

Figure 7.13: Colour distribution from TB64

Figure 7.14: Shades of yellow and mustard beads uncovered from TB 64

The beads excavated from TB64 were distributed between 11 Context layers. One percent (n=5) of the assemblage was recovered from Context 1. Twenty-nine percent of the assemblage was from Context 2 with 29% (n=109); Context 3 yielded 17% (n=65); Context 4 yielded 6% (n=24) while 2% (n=7) was recovered from Context 5. Context 6 and Context 7 produced 8% (n=29) and 12% (n=45), respectively. Eight percent (n=29) of the assemblage came from Context 8; Two percent

(n=6) of the beads were recovered from Context 9, while 15% (n=57) was recovered from Context 10. The context with the lowest quantity of beads was Context 11, with only 1% (n=4).

Figure 7.15: Beads recovered from TB64

Table 7.5: Bead colour distribution

Shape	Black	Blue	Brown	Cobalt Blue	Green	Maroon	Mustard	Pink	Purple	Red	red-brown	Turquoise Green	White	Yellow
Annular	1	1												
Barrel	4													
Bicone		1												
Cylinder	1													
Oblate		5			4					5			3	
Sphere	21	49	22	11	180	1	2	1	25	6	1	6	20	10
Total	27	56	22	11	184	1	2	1	25	11	1	6	23	10

7.9.5. Bead Assemblage of TB68

A total of 163 beads were recovered from TB68. Green beads dominated the assemblage, representing19% (n=31), followed by Oyster and blue coloured beads at 12% (n=20) each; black, crazed yellow, and purple beads each representing 9% (n=15). Brown and white beads were each at 7% (n=12). Beads with cobalt blue colour were at 3% (n=5). The lowest colour distribution of beads were cerulean blue, dark blue, ivory and red each at 1 percent.

Table 7.6: Distribution of TB68 beads according to context

TB68	black	blue	blue & white	blue-green	brown	cerulean blue	cobult blue	crazed yellow	dark blue	green	ivory	navy blue	oyster	purple	red	transparent	white	white on red	Total
context1	**14**	**19**	**3**	**2**	**12**	**1**	**5**	**14**	**1**	**30**	**1**	**3**	**20**	**12**	**1**	**4**	**4**	**3**	**149**
barrel			1																1
sphere	14	19	2	2	12	1	5	14	1	30	1	3	20	12	1	4	4	3	148
context2	**1**									**1**				**1**			**1**		**4**
sphere	1									1				1			1		4
context3		**1**												**2**			**6**		**9**
sphere		1												2			6		9
Total	**15**	**20**	**3**	**2**	**12**	**1**	**5**	**14**	**1**	**31**	**1**	**3**	**20**	**15**	**1**	**4**	**11**	**3**	**162**

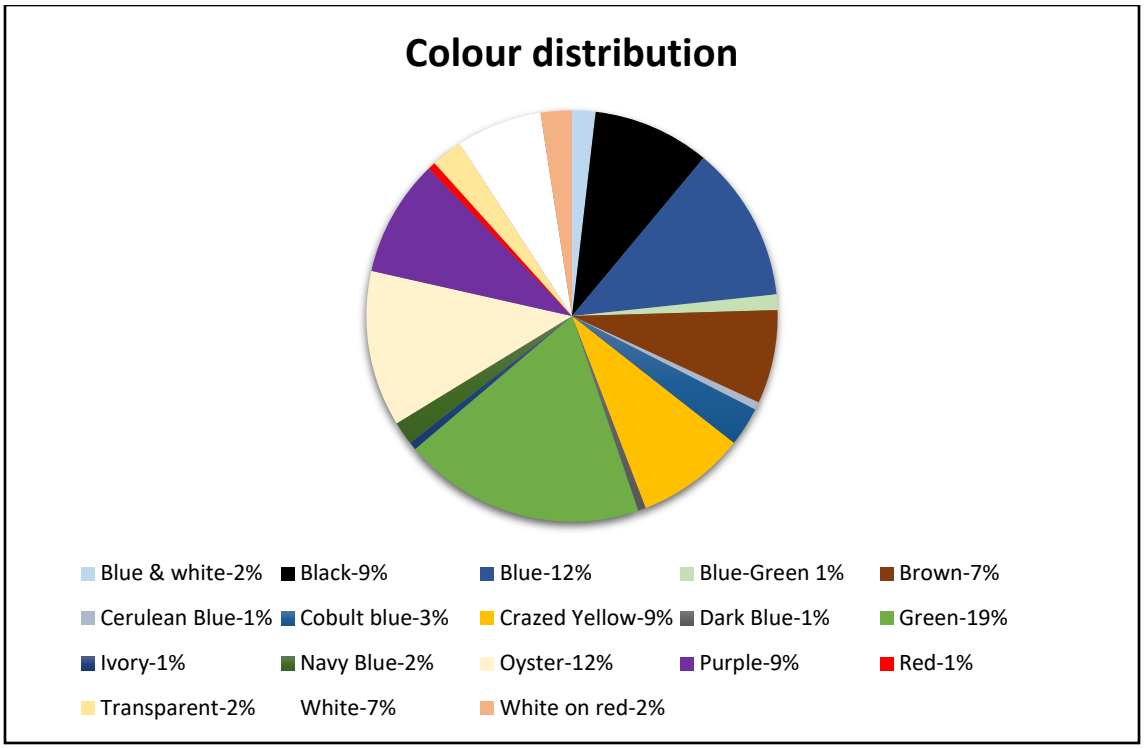

Figure 7.16: Colour distribution from TB 68

Table 7.6: Distribution of the shape and colour of beads

Shape	Blue & white	Black	Blue	Blue-Green	Brown	Cerulean Blue	Cobalt blue	Crazed Yellow	Dark Blue	Green	Ivory	Navy Blue	Oyster	Purple	Red	Transparent	White	White on red
Barrel	1																	
Sphere	2	15	20	2	12	1	5	14	1	31	1	3	20	15	1	4	11	4

The TB68 bead assemblage was distributed between three top layers, viz. contexts 1, 2 and 3. Context 1 yielded the highest number of beads at 92% (n=150); Context 3 yielded 6% (n=9) of the assemblage. The final context with the lowest number of beads, Context 2, produced only 2% (n=4) of the TB 68 bead assemblage.

7.10. Discussion

The bead results uncovered from Thaba-Bosiu were recovered from five excavated trenches, TB3, TB2, TB61, TB64, TB68. The distribution of beads covers all the sites selected in this study. The highest quantity of beads came from trench TB64 while the least number of beads were from TB3. The results presented above reflect Context 2 as one of the layers that yielded the highest number of beads, including Context 2 of TB64. The top layers in the majority of the trenches yielded the lowest quantity of beads. In the TB3 trench, beads were uncovered only in three top layers of the 22 identified contexts; the top-most layer, Context 1, yielded the least number of beads, while Context 2 had the highest quantity.

In most of the excavated trenches at Thaba-Bosiu, top layers (contexts) did not yield a lot of beads compared to other contexts; however, beads were abundant from the second to the third layers. The north-western homesteads of the royal village indicate evidence of heightened consumption of beads as excavations produced the highest quantity and a variety of bead types. TB64, which produced 49% of Thaba-Bosiu beads and the green spherical beads, dominated the trench, while less common beads were spherical mustard. Although no string was identified, TB64 further produced in-situ layered beads. The pattern of the in-situ beads is similar to what beaded clothes would have looked like. The location of TB64 is close to the tourist path were numerous beads were exposed, which suggests common use of beads in the north eastern homesteads.

The most common bead colour for TB3 is white, TB61 is green, TB64 is green as well as for TB 68. This suggests that green beads could have been the colour preference for many of the sites. Blue beads were also common throughout the squares.

The significance of beads to Basotho is seen in the religious practices and social settings of Basotho in contemporary times. Young boys of ages four and younger wore beads on their waists, their necks and wrists. In the past, wearing only a string of beads by young boys was considered a form of attire, hence, no clothing was required (Sechefo 1990).

Beads were and are still also very popular among the male initiates. During the graduation ceremony, initiates accessorised with numerous beaded necklaces. Beads play a central role in a traditional healer's attire in Basotho spirituality. Traditional healers wear beads of specific colours on their ankles, around their waists, on their necks and on their heads.

The distribution of the Thaba-Bosiu assemblage provides an idea about the periods when beads were used. In general, contexts 1,2, and 3 yielded a higher number of beads when compared to other contexts. As mentioned above, TB 3 produced the lowest number of beads which include oblate and spherical. Bead distribution at two trenches, TB3 and TB61 was in Context 3. The assemblage in TB64 was mainly distributed in Contexts 2 and in TB 68 the number of beads were higher in Context 1.

The bead analysis of this study has shown a diverse assemblage in terms of regions that produce these beads. This thus addresses the question of possible trade with Nguni groups from the Natal area. Although this study has produced a significant assemblage, there is still not sufficient information to address the rate of interaction that would then reflect a multicultural identity.

7.11. Summary and Conclusion

The analysis and results presented in this study show the presence of beads at all the sites that were excavated. This reveals a wide distribution of beads across the mountain. As a result, this study challenges the existing view that beads were a prestigious item only accessible to the elite among the Southern African Iron Age communities. This view is supported by Moffett and Chirikure (2016), who have argued against the notion that beads were an indication and source of prestige, wealth and power among Iron Age communities of Southern Africa. There was an abundance of surface beads along the north-eastern area, which currently forms part of the visitor path on top of the mountain.

As an alternative to symbols of wealth and prestige, Moffett and Chirikure (2016) argue that cattle and land would have been associated with the elite. Unlike beads, cattle and land were under the control of the rulers, hence, they were symbols of power. TB3, which is associated with King Moshoeshoe the first, yielded more faunal remains than beads, and this would mean less interest placed on beads. The excavated squares in north-eastern side of the village yielded more beads than other sites, and this may mean that those homesteads had access to beads. This then entails the significance of beads in daily lives and cultures of the communities that settled on Thaba-Bosiu. The next chapter presents results of faunal remains from the site as part of addressing the everyday living.

8.0. CHAPTER EIGHT- FAUNAL ASSEMBLAGE FROM THABA-BOSIU

8.1. Introduction

The study of faunal remains from Thaba-Bosiu provides the potential to interpret the significance of animals to different households and the larger groups based in the Mohokare and Phuthiatsana Valleys in the 19th Century. Historical and oral accounts that stipulate the significance of animals to Basotho have primarily focused on the diet and cultural significance of different animals (Matšela 1990). Such records inform us of the types of animals that were of interest to past communities. It is from such accounts that we learn about the different social, economic, and spiritual activities linked to certain animals. While informed by faunal studies in southern Africa, this study utilizes oral histories to understand the significance of specific animals in the Basotho cultures. The Basotho have incorporated animals in any of their cultural practices. Cattle and sheep, for instance play a significant role in certain traditional practices which have shaped many farming communities. The analysed faunal material was from the three excavated areas of the mountain, the northwestern homesteads, Moshoeshoe's midden, and Mamohato's midden. The primary remains uncovered from these excavations include cattle and caprines. There were also small game, such as rodents and small birds. The south midden associated with Moshoeshoe's homestead had the highest volume of both well-preserved and burnt faunal remains.

8.2. Faunal Remains Studies in Iron Age Communities of Southern Africa

Faunal discoveries at archaeological sites provide an insight into how past communities interacted with different animals (Thorp 1984; 1995; Murray and Manyanga 2008). The discovery of faunal remains at archaeological sites reflects both human and animal interaction as well as human activities and subsistence strategies linked to different animals (Voigt 1983; Thorp 1984; Murray and Manyanga 2008). Conditions of animal exploitation in certain environments is also considered in faunal studies (Schulz and Gust 1983). The human activities to note include animal domestication, hunting, and butchering techniques (Daly 1969; Voigt 1983). In Southern Africa, faunal studies have explored the significance of animals in culture, ornamental and in tool manufacture (Cooke and Robinson 1954; Robinson 1959; Brian 1974; Voigt 1983; 1995; Murray and Manyanga 2000; Plug 2000).

Animals have been used in shaping the social, economic and political status of human life. Thus, faunal studies may provide information about the diet of past people. Faunal studies continue to provide knowledge about the significance of animals (domesticated or wild) to past people. The studies may inform about specific diets, which may reflect the presence of diverse animals, both wild and domesticated (Ashby 2002; Le Roux *et al.* 2013). Zoo-archaeology as a sub-discipline continues to uncover the different relations that human beings have had with animals and how animals affected and influenced the day-to-day living of different communities (Schulz and Gust 1983).

As mentioned earlier, faunal remains studies have contributed to archaeological research by providing information about the people's possible diet in the past (Klein and Cruz-Uribe 1984). Meat consumption among many African communities has been a significant part of diet. Meat consumption also defines the social status of specific communities or households (Crabtree 1990). This section demonstrates the significance of animals, specifically cattle and sheep to Basotho culture, and a subsequent section discusses various cultural practices in this regard.

Faunal research in Southern Africa has focused on numerous areas, and these include diet, rituals, and bone tools (Cooke and Robinson 1954; Robinson 1959; Hammond-Tooke 1974; Plug and Voigt 1985; Pwiti and Mawoko 1997; Manyanga 2002; Kansa 2004; Murray and Manyanga 2008; Badenhorst 2009; 2010; 2011; Badenhorst 2012). Though utilized differently, animals were as significant to Stone Age communities as they are to Iron Age societies (Cooke and Robinson 1954; Prendergast and Lane 2010).

The study of faunal remains as ornaments and tools, as another area that has been researched in the region. Past communities have made tools such as needles, bows and arrows, and whistles from faunal bones (Cooke and Robinson 1954). Bone tools also contributed to understanding the cultural significance of animals to certain communities.

Faunal studies not only reflect daily human activity, but also relationships between humans and animals (Crabtree 1990). In San mythology, animals were believed to have spiritual potency, which made them a key component of their daily lives. In the Lesotho Highlands, the San considered the eland a very powerful animal, which they associated with their identity and spirituality (Vinnicombe 1976; 1967; Lewis-Williams 1981).

It is common even at Iron Age sites. Animals such as cattle and caprines (sheep and goats) were a central part of diet of farming communities in the Late Iron Age (Badenhorst and Boshoff 2015). Faunal remains studies in Lesotho and parts of the Free State have largely covered the Holocene and Pleistocene periods in the northern eastern and southeastern highlands of Lesotho. Research at sites such as Sehonghong, Likoaeng and Melikane the place the history of fauna in the ancient history of Lesotho (Mitchell 1996; Plug 1997; Plug *et al.* 2003; Plug and Mitchell 2008; Pietersen *et al.* 2016; Badenhorst *et al.* 2019; Steward 2021). The 2008/2009 archaeological research in the Metolong area has furthermore provided more data on the faunal landscapes of the Foothills and lowlands of Lesotho. Such research has revealed of how historically Lesotho and the Free State were habitable landscapes for both humans and animals. The climatic diversity and topography have enabled an abundance of water sources as well as Afro-montane shrublands and semi-arid grasslands (Carbutt and Edwards 2015). Such environments have thus become a habitat for diverse fauna.

Wild game that includes both herbivores and carnivores was uncovered from such studies (Mitchell 1993; Arthur and Mitchell 2009; Arthur *et al.* 2018). Oral historical accounts provided information about the fauna that was still present in the 19th and early 20th centuries (*Leselinyana la Lesotho* 1863; Kirby 1939; Arbousset and Daumus 1968; Mapetla 1969; Arbousset 1991; Lesitsi 1990; Sekese 1999; Ambrose 2006).

Wild animals are also said to have roamed in the Mohokare Valley as attested to by Thomas Arbousset:

> As to the quaggas which were killed, they were grazing among a great number of others, but they did not appear to be a single zebra in the whole herd; it is the fact, moreover, that the zebra is not found either among the Basutos or the Mantetis, while the quaggas is very common in their district, a new and conclusive proof that the latter is not the female of the former, as was for a long time believed (Grab and Harsh 2020).

Both domestic and wild fauna has been recorded in the Foothills, Lowlands and Highlands of Lesotho around the 19th and 20th centuries (Mapetla 1969; Ambrose 2006). Lesotho's environment is said to have accommodated a wide range of both large and small antelope. Among the most

common were the eland, mountain reedbuck, red hartebeest, steenbok duiker, grysbok and red duiker; however, the majority of these antelopes were last seen in the 19th century (Mapetla 1969; Ambrose 2006; Grab and Nash 2020). The eland was particularly common in the Lowlands and Foothills of Lesotho; a place within 20km of Thaba-Bosiu was named Liphofung (a place of the eland), as eland was found in great numbers. Other common animals were springhare, African hedgehog, bushpig and porcupine (National Environment Secretariate 2000).

Historical and oral accounts have further noted the existence of wild carnivores and predators in many parts of Lesotho. Although most were last reported in the 20th century, many survived throughout the 19th century (Kirby 1839; Skead 1987; Mapetla 1969). Among the common carnivores in the region were leopards, serval, African wild cat, brown hyena black-backed jackal and mongoose (Arbousset and Daumas 1968; Ambrose 2006; Pietersen *et al.* 2016; Grab and Nash 2020). Smaller carnivores that have previously been seen include yellow and water mongoose, striped weasel, Cape clawless otter and spotted genet (Grab and Nash 2020). This diversity in animals, however, has significantly dropped since the late 19th and early 20th centuries, particularly as domestication of some animals grew and a rise in the competition for grazing lands.

Iron Age communities have been associated with the Central Cattle Pattern model (Mitchell 2002), though many researchers have criticized it (Hall 1987; Lane 1994;1995; Maggs 1995). Although the model has been criticised, there has not been an effective alternative model to CCP (Badenhorst 2009).

8.3. Social Identity and Symbolism of Animals in Complex Societies

Evidence of the significance of animals is seen in the painted walls of rock shelters, caves and boulders across Lesotho. As with hunter-gatherer groups that settled in Lesotho, farmer communities also regard animals as having not only a spiritual significance, but also serving social and consumption purposes. The Basotho have a high regard for cattle and sheep for consumption and other cultural activities. The social and religious practices are primarily linked to specific animals.

Among the key significant social roles that animals play among groups that settled in modern Lesotho is *bohali*, also known as bride wealth. King Moshoeshoe I formed alliances with other groups through marriage and payment of bride wealth had both economic and political

implications. The animals considered for bride wealth include cattle, sheep, goats, and recently after colonial contact, horses and donkeys. In certain cultures, among Basotho, the process of negotiating and delivering of animals to the bride's family is a form of negotiating peace between not only two families, but also between two groups with different cultures. The symbolic significance of cattle is, therefore, reflected in this practice (Semenya 2014). It is almost impossible to isolate the material or economic aspect of *bohali* transfers from their ideological or cultural aspect, and to ascribe priority to one or the other (Ansell 2001). As such, many communities have been able to gain wealth through *bohali*.

The different Sotho-speaking and Nguni-speaking groups that settled in the Free-State, modern-day Lesotho and parts of KZN and Eastern Cape identify themselves with different animals. Group identities (ethnic identities) are in fact named after animals. For instance, we have clan names named after animals such as elephants, lions, crocodiles, hares, as well as cats (Tšiu 2006: 77-78). The clan praise totems form part of the oral traditions and are also regarded as an art form (Tšiu 2006). The composition of these clan praise poems is the collective responsibility of the clan or tribe, and authorship is, therefore, unknown.

Totem culture is popular across many different regions around the world. As reflected in history, totems are not restricted to any particular continent, but are found throughout the world, including Africa, the Artic polar region, Australia, Eastern Europe and Western Europe (Makgopa 2019). Totems are regarded as significant as they reflect power dynamics linked to animals as well as, shaping social wisdom, respect among communities and spirits. In totemic beliefs, symbolic representation plays a significant role because some communities imitate animal traits (Makgopa 2019). Groups that identify with certain animals have a belief that they have assumed the characteristics of that animal. For instance, the Bataung, whose totemic animal is a lion, are believed to be aggressive, while the Bafokeng are believed to be smart, because their totemic animal is a hare.

The social significance of animals is further seen in the names of certain places. Some communities have named their villages after animals that they either identify as their spirit or clan animal or one that historically found in abundance, for instance, Liphofung (Place of eland) Masianokeng (place, Mokhotlong (place of southern bald ibis), Ha-Ntsi (place of grasshopper) and Litšoeneng (Place of monkeys) (Grab and Harsh 2020).

8.4. Significance of Animals in the History of Basotho

For Southern African farming communities, animals have historically been a key factor in their economy. Culturally, the wealth of a family has been considered through the number of animals they have. Herds of cattle, for instance, could determine the wealth of a family and thus positioning them into a place of power. Horses were necessary means of transport and, through selective breeding, the 'Basotho pony' evolved as a breed appropriate for the mountainous terrain; small, sure-footed, and strong. Colonial projects broadened the scope for rearing sheep and goats which Basotho had acquired in the early nineteenth century and now become the scale measuring the wealth of Basotho men (Quinlan 1995: 492).

The different groups that settled in the present-day Lesotho have largely depended on agriculture including animal husbandry (Mohale 2000). The Sotho through their mixed economy of farming, herding and hunting coupled with different intrigues, curtailed and controlled much of the land previously under the San (Gill 1993: 266).

Collectively, Basotho have been remarkably successful in keeping livestock and in return have been economically well off throughout history (Mothibe 2002). The population of 1.2 million people owns roughly 500,000 head of cattle, 1.3 million sheep, nearly a million goats, 100,000 horses and a similar number of donkeys (Quilan 1995). Official statistics suggest that for 50 years the national herd oscillated around the figures that were recorded in 1995 (Quinlan 1995). This suggests that there has been a long-standing equilibrium between the economy of Lesotho and the capacity of livestock and the gross number of livestock, and hence, regeneration of the national herd within the general capacity of the land to support it (Reid 1995).

8.4.1. Significance of Cattle to Basotho

The Maloti-Mountain San communities regarded the eland as a spiritually powerful animal that formed part of their identity (Vinnicombe 2000). Similarly, Basotho regarded a cow as their spiritual animal. There is a saying in Sesotho that *khomo ke molimo o nko e metsi* (Sechefo 1990), which directly translates to ‘a cow is a god with a wet nose’. A wet nose in this instance is associated with water/rain and prosperity. The current Lesotho’s coat of arms has the words *Khotso, Pula, Nala*, which translates to ‘Peace, Rain and Prosperity’, which the cow in turn represents to the nation. In some instances, the elderly were buried inside a kraal because it was believed that the owners should not be separated from their wealth.

Diet

Although cattle are social markers of Basotho's identities, they also form a very important diet for Basotho's dishes. The dishes are prepared in numerous ways and are specific for different members of the community. The elderly of the community, for instance, were given *lekhotloane*, which is over-cooked beef, made very soft and tender for easy chewing (Lesitsi 1990: 118; Segoete 2015: 9). One common dish was *matlala*, meat cooked from different parts of a cow, including intestines (Lesitsi 1990). For beef to remain available throughout the year, the Basotho also used to dry meat and made what was called *lihoapa*, commonly known as *biltong*, which was eaten by all.

Meat was not the only type of food that was consumed, where cow meat, milk and pap (*bohobe ka lebese*) was another common dish that was served to different members of the family (Martins 2020: 101). Cow milk was further cultured to make sour milk (*lebese-la-mafi*), which was prepared as a meal with pap.

Clothing

Basotho's clothing differed, based on age and gender. The clothes were largely made from animal hides. Adult men's clothing made from cow hides consisted of a blanket/cloak, known in Sesotho as *lefoqo*, worn particularly in winter and during special occasions. A common adult male clothing was *tšeha*, like shorts, though made from cow hide. Women's clothing included skirts made from cow hide (*mose oa khomo*). *Sehoqo* is a type of blanket that was worn during the day. This type of blanket is a type of a cloak made by cutting a hole at the centre of a cow hide, which was worn by putting the head through that hole (Leluma 1987; Mats'ela 1990; Sechefo 1990).

Cattle and Marriage

As with many African cultures, the Basotho also embrace bride wealth, *bohali*, as a process in the union of two families through marriage. The process of marriage in Sesotho starts by a man expressing their interest in marriage by letting cattle out and not attending to them, sitting by the kraal with a blanket with a big hole in it (Sekese 1999: 3-4). This is said to be a symbolic way of the young man communicating to his father that he is ready for marriage.

The family then prepares to select cattle to be considered for *bohali*. Before *bohali* is released, two special cows are selected for the parents of the young women who will be engaged for marriage.

The two cows were known as *khomo tsa selelekela*[1], one that was gifted to the bride's mother was named *khomo ea letsoele*[2] directly translating to 'the cow of the breast' (symbolising that the mother gave birth and fed the bride) and another gifted to the bride's father was named *khomo ea soholoholo*[3] (Sekese 1999: 4-5). The bride's family also gift one or sometimes two cattle as a way of accepting the union of the two families. Cattle are, therefore, a significant part of the Sesotho marriage (*lenyalo la Sesotho*).

8.4.2. Significance of Sheep

Different animals have a symbolic significance to the traditions and culture of Basotho. The sheep are similarly considered as an important animal for different cultural activities. The birth of a child in a family is a monumental event that is celebrated in different ways and one of those is by giving the newly born baby a sheep along with a name to welcome the child into the family. The process involves choosing a healthy sheep and showing it to the child, then holding both the baby and sheep to lock heads to symbolise ancestral ties. The baby is then told that the sheep is hers/his and then given a name while still with the sheep. Once the baby is introduced to the sheep, the sheep is then killed and prepared for the child. The family appoints a member of their family whom they believe to have good deeds and could be a good influence, to feed the child with meat. Such a ritual happens when the baby is three to four months of age. The sheep, therefore, represents an ancestral bond with the child. The sheep is also important in marriage.

When a young woman gets married, sheep are also offered as part of *bohali*. The event of welcoming the bride is symbolised by giving the bride a sheep and giving her a new name from her husband's family. The new bride gets to be the first one to eat the meat and is specifically given the ribs of the sheep. These traditions are still practiced today.

Diet

Lamb is an important source of protein for many Basotho. Specific parts of sheep are catered only for certain members of the community. This also forms a significant part of Basotho's traditions.

[1] Directly translated as 'an introduction' *khomo tsa selelekela* are cattle gifted to the bride's family before the main *bohali* is paid.
[2] *Letsoele* directly translates as 'breast' and thus *khomo-e-letsoele* entails the other that birthed and fed the child.
[3] *Seholoholo* in this context is an alternative word meaning birth, thus, birth cow.

For instance, intestines (*maleu*) are only catered for men who were involved in the slaughtering of sheep. Part of a liver is served only to married men in the community. Kidneys are prepared specifically for elderly (men) members of the community, because they were believed to be at an age where they will no longer reproduce. Sheep kidneys were believed to be harmful for newborns.

Clothing

Sheep hide is used to make a variety of clothing. *Letata* is a large, soft blanket made from sheep skin. Winter hats were also made from sheep's skin and this was named *kuoane*. The type of clothing that was mostly common was, *tšeha*, made from sheep hide.

8.5. Methodology: Understanding the Thaba-Bosiu Faunal Assemblage

The methods adopted in analyzing faunal remains in this study include excavations and lab analysis. The faunal analysis adopted in this study follows those suggested by Driver (2005). This method states that an identifiable specimen is that which can be assigned to an element. The element in this case may refer to a skeletal part such as a tooth or a radius (Badenhorst & Boshoff 2015:53). Braun's (1974) faunal study and Le Roux *et al.* (2013) research on the Historic Cave site in Makapans Valley World Heritage Site was additionally considered to provide a detailed analysis. The faunal remains were further quantified in order to identify, differentiate and group species with similar features. Many of the faunal remains were found from grey and black ash, as well as burnt orange sediment. The burnt bone may imply the consumption of animals at these sites because meant was eaten next to hearths.

The highly debated method of faunal analysis is faunal quantification. Numerous approaches have previously been adopted; however, the most common methods include Number of Identified Specimens (NISP), Minimum Number of Elements (MNE), Minimum Number of Individuals (MNI), Quantifiable Skeletal Parts (QSP) and meat Weights (Brumley 1973; Casteel 1977; Watson 1979; Grayson 1984; Driver 1991; Plug 1988; Plug and Plug 1990; Beukes 2000; Lyman 2008). Although these identified methods have been regarded as highly problematic (Plug and Plug 1990; O'Connor 2000), NISP (O'Connor 2000) is mostly considered in faunal studies (Schulz and Gust 1983; Plug 1988; Plug and Plug 1990; O'Connor 2000).

Cattle usually dominate in the faunal assemblages at many Later Iron Age sites (Beukes 2000; Badenhorst 2011; le Roux 2016). The Bantu-speaking historical and ethnographic accounts also inform that cattle were the most important domestic animal for Late Iron Age societies (Schapera 1939; Bruwer 1956; Hammond-Tooke 1974; Kuper 1957; Badenhorst 2011). Archaeological studies have further shown evidence that cattle dominated faunal remains at many Late Iron Age sites (Badenhorst 2011). This is due to the central role that cattle play among farming communities in Southern Africa. Although cattle as diet forms an important source of protein (milk and meat), the significance is also linked to different cultural or divining purposes such as marriage, skins, religion as well as transport (Quin 1959: 93; Hammon-Tooke 1974: 94; Martins 2020). Cattle were kept by Iron Age farmers for domestic purposes.

8.6. Sorting Faunal Assemblage

In preparation for detailed analyses in this study, the well-preserved bones were cleaned off excess dust using small paint brushes during excavations, then were bagged and labelled. The fragile fragments were stored in small containers for preservation. The faunal assemblage was further prepared for analyses in a lab where they were further cleaned using paint and toothbrushes to rid of surplus dust. After cleaning the assemblage was then sorted into 'identifiable' and non-identifiable specimen.

8.7. Quantification of Faunal Assemblage

The decision on identifiable bone assemblage was based on how well the skeletal elements were well preserved and determinable. This entails classification into bovid and non-bovid assemblage (Klein and Cruz-Uribe 1984:17). The non-identifiable fauna was grouped based on vertebrae, skull fragments, enamel fragments, bone flakes, miscellaneous fragments and rib fragments and vertebral fragments (Klein and Cruz-Uribe 1984: 17). Bone fragments classified as miscellaneous were weathered, burnt and broken beyond identification. Small bone fragments were labelled as flakes and thus could not be thoroughly analysed because they did not yield significant information about specific species.

Quantification of the faunal assemblage in this study mainly included consideration or recording of Minimum Number of Individuals (MNI). MNI entails the expected minimum quantity of

animals in each sample per trench (Plug 1984; Klein and Cruz 1984; Baker *et al*. 1997; Reitz and Wing 1999: 194). The MNI of each sample was considered based on the high frequency of skeletal parts for each identified species (Marshall and Pilgram 1993: 267).

The faunal assemblage was quantified according to the Number of Identified Specimen (NISP) (Le Roux *et al.* 2013). Faunal bone quantification is useful in determining animal use through time and space (Chiripanhura 2018:151). The statistical analysis involved quantification of bones recovered from all the excavated trenches. NISP approach is, however, not without its faults. This approach as outlined by Klein and Cruz-Uribe (1984; c.f. Plug 1990) tends to exaggerate the description of species. The identification of large mammals such as cattle tends to be less challenging when compared to smaller bone fragments (Marshal and Pilgram 1993: 262; Baker *et al.* 1997; Manyanga 2001: 47).

A few sites yielded identifiable faunal remains. The non-identifiable bones were classified under five skeletal categories: enamel, rib, skulls, miscellaneous, and fragments, the latter referring to those that broke off from bone shafts. Faunal material that fell under miscellaneous were those that were damaged beyond recognition, for instance, fragmented burnt bone. All tooth fragments were classified under enamel. Only one *in situ* sheep skull was removed and all fragments were grouped under skull.

8.8. Identifying Skeletal Parts

Quantification of the faunal assemblage was based on the identification of skeletal parts. The skeletal element representation included identification of species. The classifications were made on bovid sizes. The assemblage yielded at least four bovid sizes, Bov I, Bov II, Bov III and Bov IV. The Bov II size were identified as sheep and goat, while the large Bov IV were identified as possibly cow.

8.9. Results

8.9.1. Livestock pens on top of Thaba-Bosiu

A majority of visible stonewall structures on top of Thaba-Bosiu were homestead/dwellings. A total of 12 livestock enclosures were identified during survey. Nine enclosures are located in the main royal village. Four other enclosures are located outside the main royal village. The enclosures outside the main royal village are located in the south-western edge of the mountain, at Mokhachane's homestead. The homestead is located at the edge of Mokhachane Pass. Very little

information is known about this isolated homestead, however, the evidence of stonewall structures suggest occupation and accumulation of wealth. Overgrown vegetation has made it difficult to identify any possible hidden livestock enclosures.

In the far north-western part of the Thaba-Bosiu mountain, just above Raebe's pass are stonewall structures including a large animal enclosure. The homestead is said to have belonged to None, one of Moshoeshoe's advisers. Two animal enclosures were recorded from the site; one of the structures at the site is a large animal enclosure 11m in length.

8.9.2. Archaeofauna from Thaba-Bosiu

As part of analysis, the faunal assemblage for each trench were divided into identifiable and non-identifiable fragments. A total of 3251 bone fragments were recovered from the Thaba-Bosiu excavations. A large number of this assemblage was unidentifiable at n=1865 and only n=1386 were identifiable. A majority of the unidentifiable bone fragments were burnt and fragile while others were highly fragmented. No evidence of natural modification nor rodent and other animal damage was noted on the sample. This indicates consumption by humans as opposed to other animals (Le Roux and Badenhorst 2016). No polished or reworked bones were present in the sample. The trench with the highest quantity of faunal remains was TB3, followed by TB 66 and then TB67. The identifiable fauna were classified under bovids of classes I, II, III, and IV. The class IV bovid fragments were mainly recovered from TB 3. No evidence of worked bones were identified from the analyses. Trenches TB66 and TB67 mainly produced remains of caprines and cattle.

Table 8.1: Taxa (NISP)

Taxon	Common Name	TB2	TB3	TB 66	TB67
Capra hircus	Goat	-	64	25	36
Ovis aries	Sheep	25	167	120	139
Bos taurus	Cattle	12	278	77	107
Rodentia	Rodent	17	58	25	34
Lagomorph	Hare	-	94	53	39
BOVID IV	Large Bovidae	-	16	-	-

Table 8.2: Skeletal Parts from the Thaba-Bosiu assemblage

Skeletal Part	**Caprines**	**Cattle**	**Rodent and Hare**	**Unidentifiable Bovid**
Cranial	4	-	-	-
Metacarpal	53	12	-	12
Vertebra	97	63	15	4
Radius	35	26	-	17
Metapodial	23	12		3
Mandible/Maxilla	6	3	-	-
Tibia	31	21		5
Molars	4	7	9	1
Humerus	54	31	-	8

Pelvis	15	11	12	5
Tarsal	12	23	-	13
Phalange	5	32	-	22
Ulna	11	9	12	4
Astragali	43	12	-	-

8.10. DISCUSSION

Cattle and caprine dominate the faunal sample of Thaba-Bosiu. The data set shows keeping of animals was part of the daily processes. The southwestern trench produced the highest number of bones. This midden is associated with the King's homestead, and this shows the frequency of activities that occurred at the palace. The King was said to have hosted his visitors at his quarters and in the Sesotho culture an animal is usually offered to show hospitality (Cassalis 1861). The presence of cattle and sheep remains could also be linked to the traditional practices of Basotho.

Just like many Iron Age communities, Basotho regarded cattle to be very important in maintaining their socio-economic status. Cattle dung was primarily used for fuel supply, especially because of the absence of trees in the area. Apart from consumption, cattle were an integral part of marriage, funerals and religious practices. Such practices were maintained by keeping animals and securing rangelands.

Iron Age communities are said to have been important players in the domestication of animals (Maggs 1976;1982; Garlake 1978; Plug 2000; Manyanga 2001; Huffman 2007). This practice explained a great deal about the continued regard for the environment to maintain their wealth.

Animals and belief systems

Spirituality, ritual, and belief systems are significant elements to many African societies (Attuquayefio and Gyampoh 2010; Diawuo and Issifu 2015). Animals have been a significant part of African spirituality and beliefs. This was evident even among hunter-gatherer communities whose belief systems are centered around different animals. San cosmology is defined by the

interactions that human beings have with animals. Ethnographic studies have revealed that shamans assumed healing powers from animals. The eland is popularly painted at numerous sites once occupied by the Maloti San. The eland was regarded as a powerful animal that had supernatural powers such as healing.

Different groups connect with their ancestors through certain animals. Many customs are linked to and facilitated through animals. Ceremonies such as coming of age, initiation, funerals, welcoming newborn babies, are some of the belief systems in which animals play a central role.

Traditional healers also use animal bones when connecting with the spirit world through "divination" (Thorp 1995). "Cattle had high social value among Later Iron Age societies in southern Africa. Cattle were a source of wealth and status indicator. More cattle meant more power" (Manyanga 2001: 83-84). Cattle were thus, an indicator of political and social power. Thaba-Bosiu is on the Grassland Biome, which is thus suitable for the keeping cattle and caprine.

Animals and identities

The symbolism of animals to the African communities is a crucial element of their identity. These identities are known as totems. A totem refers to either animals or plants declared by a particular group as "holy sacred" (Diawuo and Issifu 2015: 117). Moreover, totems are "considered as an emblem consisting of an animal or plant that serves as the symbol of a family or clan" (Diawuo and Issifu 2015: 117). The family names are specifically linked to different animals. The different clan names of most Sotho groups are associated with animals. Examples of these include the Bataung (lion), Bakoena (crocodile), Bafokeng (hare), Batloung (elephant), Basia (cat), and many others. Bantu-speaking communities generally identify with different animals as a representation of their identity.

Animals and the political economy

Cattle were regarded as part of bride price (*bohali*) and a big part of the domestic economy (Hall 1986). Marriage was an important nation-building strategy for Moshoeshoe at the time of his rule. As much as paying *bohali* symbolised a social commitment between two families, it was also indicative of the strengthening of political economies. The newly formed relations that evolved

from marriage alliances resulted in sustained political ties between two cultural groups. This thus, created socio-political order.

8.11. Summary

This chapter has presented the faunal sample excavated from Thaba-Bosiu. To assess the relevance and significance of the identified animals, oral histories and traditions offered important perspectives about the importance of animal keeping to Basotho. The chapter further presented statistics of faunal remains found at different sites on the mountain and the results show the highest presence in the midden associated with the King's quarters. To have a picture of what other materials show, the next chapter presents foreign material and small finds excavated from the mountain.

9.0. CHAPTER NINE: SMALL FINDS AND OTHER FOREIGN MATERIAL

9.1. Introduction

The history of some Southern African sites in the 18th and 19th centuries includes contact between local communities and European settlers and travellers. Contact between African societies and colonial institutions was primarily defined by power relations. Thaba-Bosiu experienced its first European interaction in 1833, where the first missionaries met with King Moshoeshoe I (Ellenberger 1997). The introduction of a new culture often meant an introduction of foreign materials. Studies of culture contact look into the nature of adoption of new materials by the host community.

Excavations at Thaba-Bosiu produced a variety of artefacts that are significant in identifying any implications related to class, gender, and identity. The three different areas of excavation yielded material culture that indicates culture-contact and acculturation. The diversity of material culture in this context enables the analysis of households that occupied the top of Thaba-Bosiu. Many of the small finds excavated from Thaba-Bosiu are foreign to the historical region of Lesotho. In this section, I demonstrate the transition and fluidity of culture by exploring the foreign and small finds. Among the finds uncovered from the excavations were foreign ceramics, buttons, glass pieces, iron material, seeds and other small finds that are outlined in this chapter. The purpose of this chapter is to further demonstrate that the use of these foreign materials was limited to only a selective number of homesteads on top of the mountain. This study further shows how the appropriation of foreign material was selective in terms of design and function.

9.2. Studies in Imported Ceramics in South Africa

The presence of imported ceramics has been prevalent mainly in 19th century South African sites that include mission stations, European farm dwellings, Dutch-era sites as well as old wells and mine dumps (Moffett 2010; Zachariou 2017). The foreign ceramic assemblage found across Southern Africa were largely European and Asian ceramic refined industrial wares (Malan 1993; Klose and Malan 2000; Malan and Klose 2003). In the Southern African region, the archaeological research at mission stations around South Africa have yielded a bulk of data related to foreign ceramics from Europe and Asia (Hall 1993; Reid *et al.* 1997; Boshoff 2001; 2007; Morris 2008; Swanepoel 2014 and Klatzow 2016). The consumption of foreign ceramics differed between societies, and their significance and function were unique to their consumers. I argue in this section

that the choice of size and shape of ceramics was a demonstration of local agency over the utilisation of imported goods.

The spread of European culture in southern Africa was most prevalent in the 18th and 19th centuries. The same period was also a time when the Cape became a global trade link Europe and the Middle East (Klose and Malan 2000:49). This new trade link allowed for the import of ceramics from the Indies and Europe, which thus resulted in the rapid rise of European ceramics and the decline of Asian ceramics (Klose and Malan 2000: 49; 2009; Malan and Klose 2003). An introduction of this foreign material was immediately spread across Southern Africa, where archaeological research has uncovered foreign ceramics at sites occupied by African communities.

In this section, the European ceramic assemblage from Thaba-Bosiu is outlined and discussed. The third chapter of this study noted that the first European or colonial interaction with the groups that settled at Thaba-Bosiu was in the early 19th Century, when three French missionaries met with King Moshoeshoe I in 1833. Towards the middle 19th Century and early 20th century the British and Dutch moved into the Mohokare Valley also meeting with King Moshoeshoe I at Thaba-Bosiu. The arrival of these groups into the region brought about the introduction of new material culture. Among these was the introduction of European and Asian ceramics. The ceramic assemblage uncovered at Thaba-Bosiu was mainly embedded in the top layers, which reflected evidence of colonial material culture.

The ceramic wares from Thaba-Bosiu form part of a variety of ceramic traditions of the colonial and postcolonial era. The main objective of this section is to describe the typology and function of the 19th Century ceramic assemblage excavated from Thaba-Bosiu.

Outside of Africa, archaeological research at mission stations and isolated frontier sites focused on addressing the ways in which indigenous communities reacted to new colonial cultures (Harrison 2002; 2003; 2004; Paterson 2005; 2011; Birmingham and Wilson 2010; Griffin 2010).

Postcolonial thought explores the nature of relationships that occur across frontier lines and colonial states. Postcolonial theories such as creolisation, acculturation, mimicry, and frontiers are applied in the interpretation of the archaeology of Thaba-Bosiu. The power dynamics that exist between the coloniser and the colonised are highlighted.

9.2.1. Methodology

Among the primary objectives of this study was to explore the culture contact and identities that may be reflected by the material culture at Thaba-Bosiu. Analysis of this foreign material culture is based on how the host adopted the use and function of the material. The excavations yielded very small fragments, which were challenging to determine the shape of ceramic wares. The less challenging aspect of the analysis was determining the thickness of the pieces. Ceramic research is historically not common in Southern Africa; however, with work by Klose and Malan (2000; 2005) 19th Century research of the Cape assemblage, different methodologies may be applicable for the Thaba-Bosiu assemblage. The methodology that was adopted in the analysis of Thaba-Bosiu ceramics was adopted from Klose and Malan (2009).

The ceramic assemblage from each trench were analysed in isolation to maintain analysis based on specific area and site. This approach of analysis provides an understanding of activities and use associated with the areas. The typology present in the ceramic assemblage was considered. For reference on typology and form, the UCT Ceramic booklet was used (Malan 2009); c.f. Klose and Malan (2009).

The approach adopted by Klose and Malan (2000: 51; 2005) for both 18th and 19th Centuries was useful when considering the possible association between ware type as well as form and function in the assemblage. The 19th century and 20th centuries marked an introduction of a new ceramic typology when compared to the 18th century assemblage as presented by Klose and Malan (2000); Moffett 2010). Classifications were considered based on decoration, form, and function.

To better analyse the assemblage, ceramics were cleaned by washing, and then when dry, were labelled according to the layer they were found and the site from which they came. Following this process was counting all the ceramic pieces in all the excavated trenches. The assemblage was then counted and grouped as per each trench, context number, spit, and quad. The analysis was further grouped according to ware type and form. Although the ceramic pieces were fragments which were challenging to identify, the minimum number of vessels (MNV) were considered according to the decorated style and ware type. The ceramic pieces were classified into form and function. Some of the ceramics could not be identified as hollowware because of apparent features,

however, many pieces were not easily identifiable due to fragmentation. Some of the vessel pieces were rims and bottoms and thus could be classified as mainly small bowls and hygiene ornaments based on the profiles.

9.2.2. Foreign Ceramics from Thaba-Bosiu-Results

A total of 133 ceramic pieces were uncovered from all the excavated trenches excluding the two test excavations from TB48 and TB52. The highest number of these came from TB66 (n=68). The distribution of ceramic pieces differed. TB 60 yielded 7.5% of ceramics, 9% (n=12) of ceramic pieces were uncovered from TB 61, and 17% (n=23) ceramic pieces were uncovered from TB62. In the TB63 trench, only 3.8% n=5 ceramics were uncovered, TB64 yielded 3% n=4 of fragments, while TB66 yielded the highest number of ceramic pieces. TB67 had the lowest number of ceramics at 0.75%, and TB2 yielded 7.5 percent. Other trenches produced ceramic numbers as follows: TB61, TB60, TB2 and TB68 each produced (n=10) ceramic pieces and these were recovered from TB67 at only n=1. TB3 did not produce any foreign ceramics.

9.2.2.1. Ceramic Ware Types

The foreign ceramics from Thaba-Bosiu were mainly small broken pieces, most of which could not be reattached. Many of the foreign ceramics were uncovered from the top layers, for instance, Context 1 and Context 2 of the first spit of individual trenches. A few of the ceramic pieces included typological markers, such as the Asian market underglazed bowl pieces, with blue decorations. Although inconclusive because only one broken piece was uncovered, the colour and thickness of this is similar to that of the British salt-glazed stoneware. Among the identified styles were the Chinoiserie on pearlware (painted decoration) ceramics. Single colour European scenes (Rhine pattern on right), Transfer printed blue floral design, slip decorated, sponged ceramic pieces with a red flower on the neck and a red line on the rim were identified. The assemblage further included evidence of lined ceramics and domestic hygiene ceramics.

Figure 9.1: glazed painted ceramic pieces from Thaba-Bosiu

Figure 9.2: Example of sponged ceramic bowl from TB66.

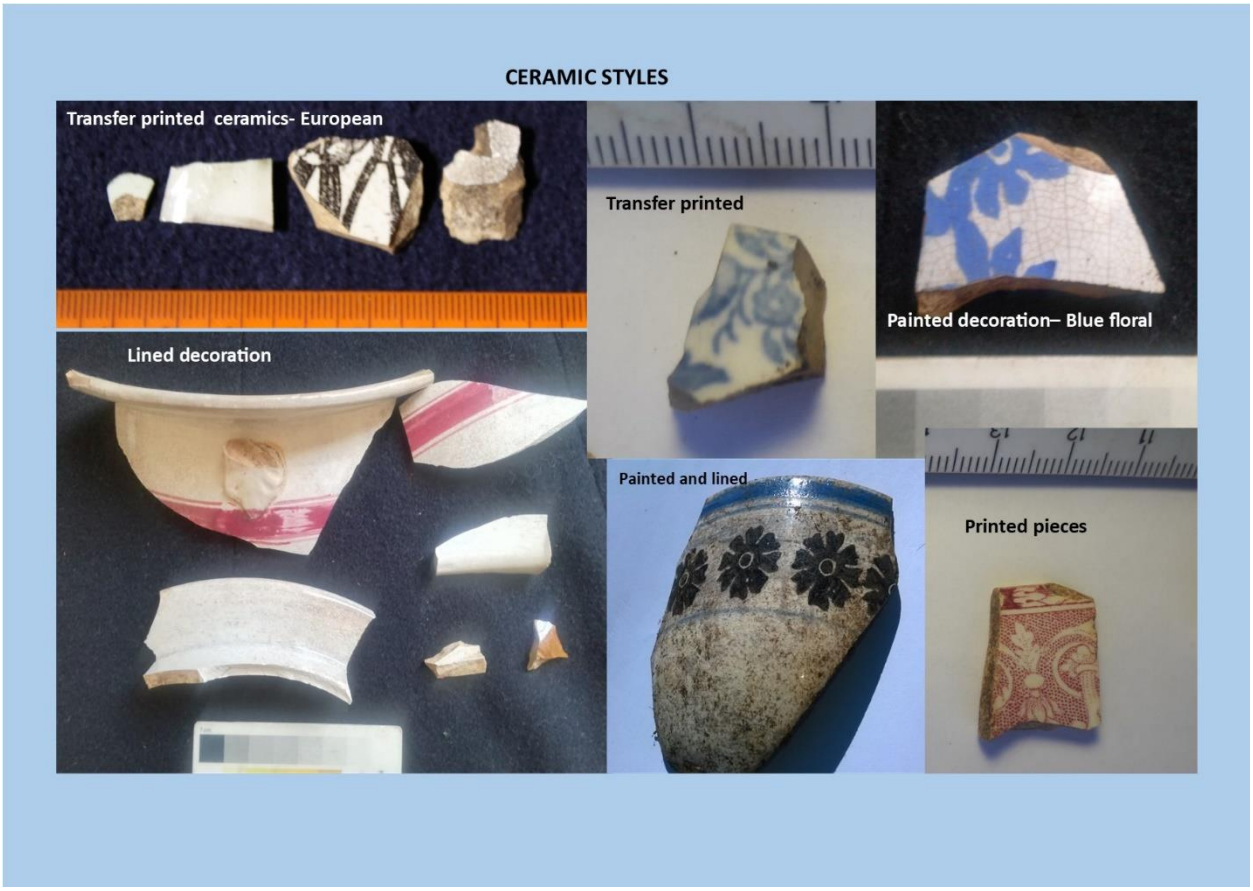

Figure 9.10: Types of ceramic styles and decorations

9.2.3. Discussion

The presence of foreign ceramics in the Thaba-Bosiu material remains is only limited to the northeastern and southeastern homesteads. The trench associated with the King's quarters produced the least number of ceramics. The important question in this case would be to understand the reason for this. Historical records have shown resistance by King Moshoeshoe I to accept some of the cultural practices introduced by the missionaries (Cassalis 1861). This resistance is reflected in the lack of foreign items in the southwestern midden.

The ceramics recovered from the other sites reflect a similarity in terms of shapes. None of the ceramics were associated with flat hardware such as plates. Many of the ceramics were hollow wares which could be linked to the shapes of the local ceramics. Preference was informed by the function of local ceramics. This then reflects the agency of the locals over the goods they were

receiving. Just as presented by other scholars, precolonial communities received and consumed foreign goods in a way that suited their daily practices (Gosden 2001;2008; Patterson 2008).

9.3. Buttons as Material Culture

9.3.1. Foreign clothing and buttons

At many Iron Age sites, emphasis has mainly been placed on the analysis and interpretation of ceramics and beads, and little on other small finds, such as buttons. Literature mainly covers clothing styles, and little discussion is given to the types of accessories such as buttons connected to this type of material culture. In this section, I discuss the background to introduction of European clothing at Thaba-Bosiu. This is followed by an outline of the types of buttons that were uncovered from excavations while also exploring the likelihood of this material culture being a class indicator. To understand the use of buttons and associated clothing, I outline the associated occupants of Thaba-Bosiu, finalizing the discussion by exploring buttons within the context of clothing. As this study focuses on daily living and culture contact, it is worth exploring the role of buttons and clothing as foreign material to Basotho.

It is often the case in many historical or Iron Age excavations that the significance of analysis of small artefacts is understated. Artefacts that are related to the 'every day and personal activities' (Lindbergh 1999:50) are not highlighted along with other high quantity material culture from different sites. Even though these small finds may result in providing significant details about the livelihoods or everyday lifestyles of people in the past, clothing is largely an indicator of cultural identity and in some instances status. The study of rarely discovered finds such as buttons forces a study of the type of clothing associated with the button, and thus the following questions may be asked: What are the types of buttons found? What kind of clothing is associated with the buttons? Who wore clothing associated with the buttons? Can the buttons become indicators of status?

Button manufacturing takes different forms and are made from a variety of materials. The materials include ceramics, metal, bone, cloth, celluloid, glass, enamel, ivory, horn, pearl and shell, wood, and rubber buttons (Hinks 1988; Marcel 1994; Lindbergh 1999).

9.3.2. Types of Buttons

Metal Buttons

Metal buttons come in different sizes and are said to have pioneered from the 16th Century. Metals such as gold, aluminum, copper and silver are examples of metal buttons manufactured and consumed in the 18th and 19th centuries (Marcel 1994; Luscomb 1967: 181). Silver buttons were mostly manufactured in the 16th century, and these were mostly linked or paired buttons where a shank is attached to another button (Marcel 1994). The 1830s became a period where gold buttons were most popular (Marcel 1994:7) while iron four and five-holed, sew-through buttons were common in the early 1800s.

Ceramic Buttons

Ceramic buttons were mainly produced in the 1700s and later in the 1800s porcelain buttons were introduced (Marcel 1994: 6). Some of these buttons are sew-through with a hollow shape and consists of mostly three or five holes. Porcelain buttons were mainly associated with women's clothing (Marcel 1994). In the late 19th Century, ceramic buttons were stamped "with either country of origin or registry marks" (Marcel 1994: 6).

Bone Buttons

Buttons made from bone are said to have mostly been homemade in the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe (Salmi and Kuokkanen 2014). The manufacturing of these types of buttons in the 19th Century, involved mounting a bone on metal shanks, then the bone is prepared by soaking and steaming; when it dries up the bone is polished and drilled to create sew-through holes (Marcel 1994). A new method of carving bone buttons was introduced specifically for more valuable clothing in the second half of the 19th century.

Glass Buttons

Glass buttons were classified into lacey glass, drop buttons, blown buttons, and milk glass buttons. The manufacturing of glass buttons was done in Britain in the 1700s (Marcel 1994). Glass buttons that have a milky colour had two or four sew-through holes; they were mostly utilitarian. Blown buttons had both metal shanks and glass shanks; and these were made in the late 19th century and

early 20th century (Marcel 1994: 6). Drop buttons were "those constructed of globs of glass and polished or faceted and mounted on a U-shaped metal shank" (Marcel 1994: 6).

Enameled Buttons

Enamelled buttons were made by an application of numerous coats of coloured glass powder and frequent firings. These buttons were in some cases made with stamped glass and metal bases (Marcel 1994: 6).

Ivory Buttons

Ivory buttons were either made from vegetable ivory of corozo nut and these were made by American firms (Marcel 1994:6).

Horn Buttons

Buttons made from horns were manufactured by soaking and straightening horns to the extent that they became soft and could be stamped, where "composite buttons consist of ground horn and hoof mixed with various resins, which were then molded into various decorative motifs" (Marcel 1994:6).

Pearl or Shell Buttons

Shells buttons were manufactured by soaking shells then making circular drills to remove blanks and cut to desired size. Pearl buttons were manufactured by carving artistically, then treating and polishing them.

Rubber Buttons

In the pool of the diverse buttons are rubber buttons. These types of button are not common in the clothing industry. Rubber buttons were rather stamped and molded to reflect the consumer's slogans or identity brands (Marcel 1994). These buttons, therefore, are commonly used as a form of an advertisement.

Wood Buttons

Wood buttons were plain and utilitarian. The buttons were common in the 19th Century and some were carved and painted (Marcel 1994).

European Clothing in the 19th Century

The arrival of the French missionaries in 1833 and Dr. Andrew Smith in 1834 introduced a variety of aspects of foreign culture, which was appropriated at different rates among specific individuals

(Tylden 1950). Clothing was one of the foreign cultural elements introduced to the different groups that settled on Thaba-Bosiu. King Moshoeshoe I and his government were also presented with foreign clothing as seen below in Figure 9.2. The common male clothing included tailcoats, waistcoats, and close-fitting pants (Wood-Murray 2019). Button down shirts were also common. These items of clothing were fastened by different kinds of buttons.

The distribution of buttons uncovered from Thaba-Bosiu excavations is mainly concentrated at the northern areas or squares. Many of the buttons were not recovered attached to any clothing so it was a challenge to link certain buttons to specific clothing. Buttons are usually associated with different kinds of European clothing, and these include trousers, dresses, shirts or even waistcoats. There are specific terminologies used to describe button types. However, the squares vary in colour and in design or make. Many of the buttons are white in colour and have two or four stamped holes.

Figure 9.3: King Moshoeshoe and his counsellors dressed in European attire in the mid-1800s (Picture courtesy of the Morija Museum and Archives).

Figure 9.4: A group of girls and their instructors from the first European Thaba-Bosiu Girls school from the late 1800s in foreign dresses (Picture courtesy of the Morija Museum and Archives).

9.3.3. Buttons from Thaba-Bosiu

A total of 42 buttons were uncovered from the Thaba-Bosiu excavations. The buttons were recovered from trenches TB66, TB67, TB64, TB68 in the north-eastern homesteads and TB 2 in the southern homesteads. TB67 yielded the highest number of buttons with 47.5% (n=19), TB66 produced 12.3% (n=14), TB 64 produced 7.5% (n=3), while the lowest number was from TB68 and TB2 both with 5% (n=2) each. TB 61 and TB 62 yielded one button each.

TB61 buttons were excavated from context 3 in Spit 1. These also included metal buttons. Buttons in TB62 came from contexts 5 and 6. In the square TB64, buttons were uncovered from context 10 of spit 3. TB 68 yielded buttons from Context 1 of spit 1. In TB 2, buttons were uncovered from Context 2 of Spit 1.

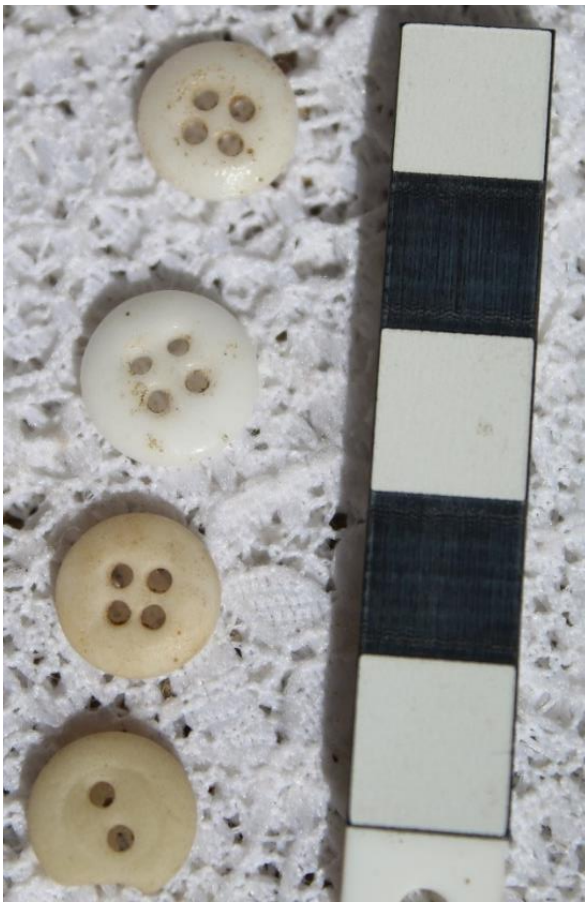

Figure 9.5: Buttons uncovered from Thaba-Bosiu

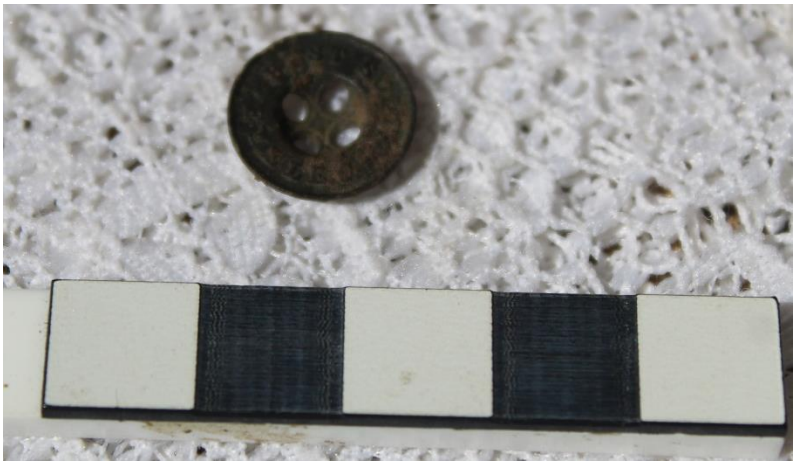

Figure 9.6: Example of metal buttons uncovered from the excavations

Figure 9.7: Types of buttons from Thaba-Bosiu. The two bottom buttons were made from metal.

9.3.4. Discussion

The distribution of buttons is only restricted to two areas that were excavated, the northeastern homesteads and the southeastern homestead. No buttons were recovered from TB3, which is a trench in a midden associated with King Moshoeshoe's homesteads. Looking at the type of material uncovered from northeastern and southeastern sites, foreign materials are present. The white porcelain buttons are mostly associated with women's clothing while the metal buttons were mostly interwoven on male jackets.

Although the missionaries brought a variety of foreign material, access to trade was already advancing. The variety of buttons at the site may have also been brought in through trade networks that were advancing throughout the nineteenth century. Although there was still resistance by locals to consume foreign goods, the requirements by mission stations created the demand.

9.4. Foreign Metal

9.4.1. Background to metal artifacts

Farming communities in Southern Africa are also labelled Iron Age communities because of their practice of producing metal as part of technologies that influenced their daily livelihoods (Mitchell 2002). As such, the distribution of metal goods possibly reflects trading network and contact among Iron Age communities (Eldredge 1993: 19). The Iron Age period has also been adopted to refer to an archaeological period associated with production and use of metal and has been sub-divided into Early Iron Age (a period between 200 and 900 AD), Middle Iron Age (a period between 900 and 1300 AD) and Later Iron Age (a period between 1000 to 1900 AD) (Huffman 2007; Bandama 2013).

9.4.2. Culture Contact and Metal Goods Exchange at Thaba-Bosiu

Chapter Two of this study detailed the complexities of postcolonial theories as well as concepts of culture contact and their nature among different groups (Gosden 2001; 2004). Postcolonial approaches such as hybridity, creolisation, acculturation, and mimicry emphasise different relationships and identities that result from interactions between different groups. The nature of interactions between two foreign entities may reflect power dynamics that may inform cultural influences (Hall and Smith 2000; Mitchell 2002; Bonner 2008; Wright 2008). This study also considered different dynamics born from interactions between different groups that once occupied or visited Thaba-Bosiu in the past. These relationships meant that there was an exchange of knowledges and materials among different groups (Mitchell 2002; Bonner 2008). An exchange of goods may come in a form of trade or gifting.

Trade has played a pivotal role in the movement of goods in Southern Africa as early as the 800s (Wood 2000). Exchange of glass beads (Wood 2000), ivory (Theal 1902; Smith 1970) and metal products (Beach 1977; Tolmacheva 1979; Miller 2002; Smith 1970) has resulted in cultural influences, where communities received foreign products to suit their changing livelihoods. As such, goods that have been exchanged between Basotho and Europeans included metal goods.

9.4.3. Metals uncovered from Thaba-Bosiu

The excavation of Thaba-Bosiu yielded metal fragments and the majority of the assemblage was not identifiable in terms of the type of artefact. A total of 957 metal fragments were recovered from the excavations. Five percent of the assemblage was identifiable. The distribution of metal

fragments was as follows: TB60 n=225, TB66 n=244, TB61= 97, TB64= 110, TB68 n=52, TB67 n=105, TB65 n=12, TB62 n=47, TB63 n=7, where the lowest number came from TB3 2.

The identifiable metal objects from this assemblage include different sizes of builder's nails, a pot lid, buttons, a belt buckle, wires, metal associated with weaponry (a possible bullet shell) and a metal doorknob. A high number of identifiable materials were retrieved from TB 62 and TB 64 trenches in the north-western midden.

Figure 9.8: Door knot from TB67

Figure 9.9: A pot handle from TB64

Figure 9.10: A possible bullet shell from TB67

9.5. Oil Lamp

An alternative source of lighting was one of the newly introduced material culture to the occupants of Thaba-Bosiu. Although the existing literature does not address the use of alternative lighting in the 19th Century, this study has uncovered evidence of possible use of oil lamps in the Mohokare region. The use of oil lamps by occupants of Thaba-Bosiu may contribute to the discussion of the nature of interactions with this new culture. In the same light, these would have been used missionaries.

The history of oil lamps globally is traced back as early as the 9th century in Persia (Sheridan 2020). The lamps are said to have run on animal fat, vegetable oil, or tallow (Sheridan 2020). A drastic change over the manufacture and maintenance of oil lamps took place in 19th century. The period saw the evolution of glass oil lamps that were powered by alternative fuel. The 10th and 13th century lamps from Southern Portugal for instance, were zoomorphic-shaped with incised decorations. This type of oil lamp was then replicated to produce the 19th Century lamps. Another type of oil lamp had two beaks, while others had a bird-shaped handle (Bottaini 2019).

Figure 9.11: TB2 object associated with oil lamps. A study by Anotonio Fevereiro (2020) shows lamps that were manufactured in Berlin.

Excavations at trench TB2 yielded evidence of an object associated with oil lamp. The area where TB2 was excavated is associated with King Moshoeshoe I's third wife. The homestead close to the excavated site consists of rectangular stonewall dwellings built in a circular orientation.

9.6. Crops and Trees

The basic vegetation history in Lesotho besides the indigenous has been mainly the legacy of the colonial era. Most of the plants in Lesotho have either come with the missionaries, or with British government officials. The main food in Lesotho being maize, beans, and fruit trees like peach and apple trees have also been the direct result of the foreign life in the mountain Kingdom. The history of the forest trees like eucalyptus and pine trees also were brought into the county around the 1800 and 1900 respectively mainly by the missionary activity in the country and has since become part of the vegetation of Lesotho.

Evidence of plant-based material from Thaba-Bosiu

Very few plant-based material was uncovered by the excavations. Material that was removed during excavation were associated with corn and peach trees. Corn based material was recovered

from TB3 (southwestern site), while fruit seeds came from TB2 (southeastern site). Crop production was an integral part of the subsistence activities performed by farming communities. In the late 19th Century and early 20th Century, Basotho were said to have been the biggest suppliers of grain in southern Africa (Gill 1993; Mothibe 2002). This is evidenced by the presence of surface grinding stones throughout the site.

Figure 9.12: Evidence of plant-based material, corn cob

Figure 9.13: Upper and lower grinding stones

9.7. Discussion

The introduction of this chapter mentioned movement of first contact between Basotho and European missionaries to have occurred in the early 19th Century. This interaction meant exchange of goods and expertise. Thaba-Bosiu mountain became a place of diplomatic negotiation, where different identities interacted with the occupants of the mountain. The nature and influence of these interactions were fluid, and thus, the extent of impact differs with different identities. The introduction of a European culture upon the arrival of the first French missionaries resulted in the introduction of new material culture (Casalis 1861; Tylden 1950; Arbousset & Daumas 1846). Influence of this new culture is not only evident in the social and political settings, but also in the livelihoods of specific households.

The presence of missionaries at Thaba-Bosiu resulted in cultural influences where the local groups accepted the new culture at different levels and at a different rate. The beginning of this study demonstrated the relationship that Moshoeshoe I had with different groups. The new cultures have in some cases been incorporated into Moshoeshoe's larger group of Bakoena (Gill 1993; Mothibe

and Ntabeni 2002). The nature of interactions with the new European culture was also received at different levels and acculturation at the household level.

The traditional wear of the different indigenous groups that settled in the Mohokare Valley was influenced by what the environments offered them. European clothing was then introduced upon their arrival. The common fashion in the 19th Century were shirts, trousers, dresses, capes, and coats. This foreign style of dress was received by the local community, especially those who were interested in converting to Christianity, and who were attending the newly formed missionary schools (Cassalis 1861). The elite were also introduced to this new style of clothing and gear was worn by the King and his advisers and possibly his immediate families.

The buttons recovered from Thaba-Bosiu reflect a diverse style of European wear introduced to the occupants of Thaba-Bosiu. The different ways in which the local groups received this new culture differed depending on individual or group choice. As demonstrated in the previous images, the new culture was not received by all. However, clothing does reflect a level of acculturation of groups that settled on top of Thaba-Bosiu.

9.8. Summary

This chapter outlined the material culture which has been classified under the small finds category. The bulk of these artefacts were associated with European culture and thus the chapter attempted to understand the extent of appropriation of these materials into the Basotho culture on the mountain. A resistance towards adopting all areas of the European culture can be highlighted in the restricted attire at traditional events and other members of the communities retracted from wearing European attire. Furthermore, the use of glass ceramics was selective. Local groups only utilised bowl-like vessels because Basotho activities included storage, brewing, and drinking. Bowls or globular shaped vessels would maintain or sustain the daily activities. Thus, a lot of the foreign small finds can be understood as appropriate to maintaining continuity of culture in a new world. The next chapter provides a detailed discussion of all the material evidence uncovered in this study.

10.0 CHAPTER 10- DISCUSSION

10.1. Introduction

As outlined earlier in the introduction, the purpose of this study was to undertake a historical archaeological study of Thaba-Bosiu focusing on the everyday life. The motivation was to exploit the analytical utility provided by decolonial historical archaeology frameworks to develop new understandings of Thaba-Bosiu that emphasise local agency and the significance of everyday processes in shaping our reading of past developments. The work complements the limited archaeological studies that include two studies of Ha-Makoanyane (King *et al.* 2014) and the Mount Moorosi site in the southeastern mountains of Lesotho (King 2015). Other Iron Age studies were carried out in the nearby Free-State (Derricourt and Evers 1973; Maggs 1976; 1982; Hall 1985; Mason 1986; Dreyer 1992; Lathy 1996). This great imbalance and lack of historical archaeological research in the Lesotho provided the rationale for the study. To reconstruct the histories and livelihoods of past farming communities, I built on the theoretical prescripts and methodological foundations of a decolonial approach. which entailed adopting resources and sources of data that directly represents the voices of Basotho and their cultural practices as a new call to an inclusive historical archaeology (Schmidt and Pikirayi 2018). The excavations and ethnographic investigation conducted in this study produced a wide range of material culture that includes local and foreign ceramics, beads, faunal remains and other foreign materials which would have been introduced by early missionaries who settled in Lesotho. This discussion reassesses the objectives of this study considering the results and interpretations to reimagine the everyday processes at Thaba-Bosiu. Guided by limitations encountered in the research, the discussion situates the archaeology of Thaba-Bosiu within the wider region of southern Africa. The chapter ends with recommendations of prospects for future research directions in Lesotho and beyond.

This study took advantage of decolonial approaches to the study of African pasts of different time periods. Motivated by Swanepoel's (2016:17) call that Africa's past not to be centered around exploitation or political conflict, this provides an alternative look into the archaeology and history of Lesotho. Decoloniality approaches emphasise the significance of producing histories informed by local situations, knowledge systems and worldviews. In the context of Thaba-Bosiu, most previous narratives emphasised and linked the history of Lesotho to the *Lifaqane* wars and

considered the site as a place of refuge rather than highlighting on the daily lives of people who settled on the mountain. However, everyday material traces show that the place was a home where interaction, contestation, mingling of identities, and other processes took place. This resonates with views of scholars of decoloniality (Mignolo 2009; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; 2018; Chirikure 2020), who argue that, in order to promote epistemic freedoms, Africans need to recognise and appreciate their own methods of knowledge production and dissemination. In essence, decoloniality gives Africans agency over their past, present, and future.

The major approach in investigating an African past, as outlined in this study is to adopt methods that were historically not recognised as appropriate in western epistemologies where local knowledges are acknowledged (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). Decoloniality encourages scholars to do their research in a way that gives agency to the people they are investigating (Chirikure 2020). The royal family for instance, had uncertainties about archaeological studies being conducted on the mountain, fearing that such research may affect their graves. The use of indigenous knowledge systems in academic studies, for instance, was previously regarded as an unreliable method of investigating heritage and histories in the African context (Schuyler 1978; Connah 2007). However, this study adopted a multi-disciplinary approach, where knowledge of spiritual and cultural practices was considered in the analysis and interpretation of the material remains excavated from Thaba-Bosiu.

This study attempted to interpret data and Thaba-Bosiu from a local perspective, as also informed by my own lived experience. Another important decolonised contribution of this study is the inclusion of Basotho voices in the interpretation of the material culture. The significance and use of local ceramics has been explained by the local cultural practices in social and political spaces. As a result, a combination of archaeological and indigenous methods has contributed to understanding the daily lives of the people who settled on top of Thaba-Bosiu.

As stated earlier, one of the objectives of this project was to study the material remains from Thaba-Bosiu in order to explore the identities of people who settled on the mountain. Recorded histories stated the presence of the Bafokeng and Batlokoa at Thaba-Bosiu and the Mohokare Valley. The pottery uncovered from the site had similarities with the Ntsoanatsatsi pottery named after the Ntsoanatsatsi area, which was previously occupied by the Bafokeng. Similarly, the pottery that was uncovered from Batlokoa sites in the eastern highlands of Lesotho were similar to some of the

pottery uncovered from Thaba-Bosiu. As such, this study employed archaeological methods as part of the process of uncovering the material remains. The historical archaeologies of Southern Africa (Funari *et al.* 199; Maggs 1984; Badenhorst 2010; Hall 2013; Silliman 2009; Lightfoot 2008; Pikirayi 2018), particularly studies in the Free-State and Lesotho areas, have outlined the types of methodologies employed in uncovering the histories of Iron Age sites. To contribute to the existing studies of farming communities in the region, this study has emphasised local voices and worldviews as part of enhancing local histories at Thaba-Bosiu.

10.2. Settlements and the link to material culture and identities

Landscapes have shaped the livelihoods of many communities. The choice to settle on specific areas is based on what the environment offers and what communities may benefit from such spaces. Of importance to this study was to investigate the architectural evolution of households on top of the mountain, especially considering culture contact. The archaeological findings presented in this study place Thaba-Bosiu in the Later Iron Age category of farming communities. The built environment presented a fluid representation of social organisation. Positioning the king on top of the mountain allowed him better view over his people. It is said that Moshoeshoe's following was rapidly growing during the time of his rule in the 19th Century. In the mid-century, Moshoeshoe is said at one point to have had a following of 3000 on top of Thaba-Bosiu (Tylden 1950). Thaba-Bosiu was then a metropole or capital for the different groups that had then formed the Basotho nation.

The assessment of settlement structures identified three phases characterised by the architectural designs; the pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial. Pre-colonial architecture were small circular structures, which have mostly been demolished. The only visible evidence of these structures are the circular stone foundations. As stated in Chapter Four, these structures are known as *mehlongoafatse*. There is a high possibility that some of the larger structures are built on top of older structures, as it is practice in the indigenous culture that old homesteads should be reconstructed (*ke ho tsosolosa lithako*); *lithako* in this case are old, decrepit houses. This has been a long-standing practice that is still followed today. King (2015) has argued that identification of precolonial structures in the present-day Lesotho is restricted for this reason. The contact phase is characterised by an introduction of larger circular structures built with stone throughout, as well as semi-rectangular structures with imperfect corners. The rectangular structures were from the

colonial era. The contact structures occupy a higher percentage of the homesteads on top of the mountain. The settlement organisation and artefact distribution tell us more about the occupants of the mountain. This transitional period as articulated in this study entails not just an emulation of new culture (Gosden 2001), but instead, a continuity of architectural styles. The transitional period was further highlighted, where homesteads and architectural designs embody both the traditional Basotho style and the newly introduced European style.

The settlement atop Thaba-Bosiu reflect a circular orientation, where the livestock pens form part of the central space, while residential houses were built around the enclosures. This style of organisation is common to many Basotho villages, because there are local restrictions of movement by women around cattle kraals. Placement of these kraals then provides a better organisation of the cultural practices.

The pottery and ceramic assemblage produced in this study has been classified under four and possibly four facies, which are Ntsoanatsatsi, Makgwareng and the, Nqabeni and a combination of Thabeng and Makgwareng facies. Type N settlements are dated between 1400s and mid 1600s (Huffman 2007: 167). Type V (Makgwareng) settlements were dated between mid-1600s and 1800s; Settlements associated with Nqabeni facies were dated 1500s and early 1800s (Huffman 2007: 167).

The Ntsoanatsatsi facies is historically associated with the Bafokeng, who are said to have moved into the Mohokare Valley as early as the 1600s (Gill 1993). Although Bafokeng were among the first farming communities that moved into present-day Lesotho, Moshoeshoe's Bakoena group assumed power over the different communities they found in the valley. Power dynamics are, therefore, highlighted in this case. This study, thus, addresses the nature of relations and contact among these groups, as guided by the postcolonial studies of identities.

Although the pottery presented a significant number of undecorated vessel's a few decorated has assumed characteristics of the Makgwareng and Ntsoanatsatsi facies. The Thaba-Bosiu pottery thus reflects continuity and change as diverse cultures interacted through time.

10.3. Everyday Life at Thaba-Bosiu

As with many Later Iron Age communities in Southern Africa, the residents of Thaba-Bosiu led a mixed economy of an agropastoralist lifestyle. Evidence of centralised cattle enclosures and traditional practices linked to animals shows how domestication of cattle and caprine was vital for the sustenance of the community (Gill 1993; Mothibe 2002). Crop production was also a big part of agriculture that was supported using cattle during the ploughing seasons. Crop production was also an important practice among the Basotho. Towards the end of the 19th century, the Basotho were said to have been among some of the biggest producers and suppliers of grain in Southern Africa (Gill 1993:91). Other crops that were produced by Basotho included beans, sorghum, pumpkin and reeds. This significant growth in agricultural production was primarily as a result of the practice of *matsema* (Eldedge 1991; Gill 1993; Seloma 1994). *Letsema* (singular for *matsema*) was a communal activity, where members of the community formed large, organised groups who strategically were involved in sowing, wedding, and harvesting fields (Gill 1993; Seloma 1994). This activity ensured timeous large-scale production that resulted in the economic growth of Basotho in the 19th Century. The significance of cattle is demonstrated first by the strategically constructed cattle enclosures towards the centre of the village, as well as the cultural practices centered around cattle.

Thaba-Bosiu was home to Moshoeshoe and his followers for about 80 years. The different homesteads that are visible on top of the mountain were not occupied at the same time. The northeastern and southeastern homesteads for instance could have been resided after contact with the missionaries. This is evidenced by the frequency foreign material remains at the site. Artifacts uncovered from the site include foreign ceramics, bullet shells, lanterns and European beads. The settlement structures associated with the middens are rectangular and only one circular. This shows that there was already contact. The southwestern midden which is associated with the King's homestead, is one of the oldest middens due to its size and the artefacts uncovered. Very few foreign artifacts were uncovered from the top layers of the midden. The most common material remains are potshards and faunal remains.

The presence of pot shards and beads in the material culture of Thaba-Bosiu suggests that there were crafting processes that took place. Pottery-making is particularly a special art that required

knowledge about the local soils, and which ones were suitable for making pots. The process also required patience and meticulous attention during the process of mixing, kneading, and shaping the pots. Although decorating was not a common practice in pottery making, the art of producing pots of different shapes would have been an important domain in women's daily activities.

Women and girls were also producing different bead items. The high density of beads in the northeastern sites of Thaba-Bosiu indicate a possible glass and stone bead-processing station where different materials were made from beads, while jewelry and dress decorations were made from beads. The current visitor path next to the northeastern homesteads also produced numerous small beads, even though these were not part of the stratigraphy. Beads were made according to the item being produced. For instance, a certain number of bead layers were required for the women's dresses. On the other hand, a single strand of beads were sufficient for necklaces, bracelets and wait belts. This craft also required meticulous skills because beading was done according to colour and shape.

10.4. Culture Contact and Networks

The material culture presented in this study has provided a different lens that places Thaba-Bosiu as a home where everyday life activities continued amidst the narratives that mountain was an unstable war zone. The material culture has shown that the communities that settled on Thaba-Bosiu were agropastoralists, who engaged in farming activities to sustain their wealth and social structures. The networks established by this community were motivated by everyday activities, as well as the growing need to sustain and maintain wealth. History tells us that in the process of expanding his socio-economic and political wealth, King Moshoeshoe I focused on accumulating cattle through marriage alliances (Ellenberger 1992; Eldredge 1993; Seloma 1994; Mothibe 2002). In some Southern African cultures, the process of marriage included an exchange of cattle and other gifts between the bride and groom's family (Bourdillon 1976; Shoko 2007; Nyamushosho 2020). In the Sesotho culture, bridewealth (*bohali*) is offered to the family of the bride (Seloma 1994; Mothibe 2002). *Bohali* was offered in the form of cattle, caprine and in recent times, horses and donkeys. My own experience of this matter are the stories I was told by my parents when my mother's family was offered cattle, sheep, and a donkey for bridewealth and this, I was informed was a crucial event for both families, where the whole process was a major social event for not just the family's involved, but also the rest of the community.

Bohali serves two primary purposes in the Sesotho culture, one of these is to unite the ancestors of the two families. As such, it a spiritual activity that promotes kinship ties. Another rationale is that *bohali* is a form of gratitude offered to the bride's family for allowing their daughter to join a new family. This is further motivated by the belief that a woman married into a family contributes to the expansion of the clan of her husband's family. In such important social activities, livestock which included both cattle and sheep, were very important to the Basotho.

As stated earlier, marriage was a crucial part in forming kinship ties between families, and thus livestock becoming a crucial element in the process. This was also the case for King Moshoeshoe and his community while living in Thaba-Bosiu. To expand networks beyond his area, King Moshoeshoe I married into royal families of other groups in the region. Among such groups, were the Bafokeng, Bahlakoana, Baroa (the San), Baphuthi and Bakhatla (McGregor 1911; Sanders 1975; Thompson 1975). The marriage alliances served as network strategies to gain and maintain political and socio-economic growth and stability.

Trade networks appear to have been another important factor in connecting Thaba-Bosiu and other regional players. The presence of beads in the archaeology of Thaba-Bosiu reflects possible networks with other communities who had better access to such goods. Bead studies in Southern Africa have not shown any evidence of bead manufacturing in the region, however, beads were imported from Asia, the Middle East, and Europe (Beck 1937; Robinson 1959; Gardner 1963; Wood 2005; 2009; 2011). As stated earlier in this study, there was no evidence that suggested beads to be indicators of wealth, however, beads were consumed by all member of the community. Beads formed part of the attire of many Basotho traditional clothes. *Tšeea,* for instance was worn by small boys and in the warms seasons, and this was sometimes in the form of a strand of beads around the waist.

As a result, beads are among goods that were exchanged within Southern Africa and the global world. The Mozambican coastal trade network (Wood *et al* 2012) also affected Thaba-Bosiu. As indicated in Chapter Seven, beads uncovered from Thaba-Bosiu were similar to those that were consumed by Amazulu communities in the 18th and 19th centuries. History tells us that King Moshoeshoe I had links with Nguni communities in the Natal. This then reflects the external networks motivated by the demand for beads as cultural items for Basotho.

Contact and networks were also extended to the presence of European settlers in Southern Africa. As stated in Chapter Four, the first interaction between Moshoeshoe's community with Europeans was in the early 19th Century. The arrival of the first French missionaries at Thaba-Bosiu (Ellenberger 1992; Mothibe 2002) meant an introduction of foreign material culture that was appropriated into the daily practices. This study has yielded evidence of foreign material culture such as ceramics, buttons, and other small metals. Foreign ceramic studies in Southern Africa have focused on sites that were previously occupied by European communities as well as previously colonised societies (Malan and Klose 2000;2003). British ceramics were said to have been mostly common in many 18th and 19th Century sites. This study then has uncovered foreign ceramics, which mostly had similar shapes as local ceramics; for instance, no flat vessels such as plates formed part of the ceramics. This then shows a specific interest in form following function. The appropriation of these foreign materials was mostly influenced by local needs and activities.

10.5. Situating Thaba-Bosiu within southern African historical archaeology

In chapter, I outlined that one of the motivating factors behind this study was the lack of archaeological research of farming communities in Lesotho. This meant that we could not place the history farming communities that settled in Lesotho within the greater regional discussion on Later Iron Age. The results presented in this study will then enable us to compare the local archaeology with that of other places in order to track any difference and similarities. Another important factor that I highlighted in the beginning was the lack of research undertaken by local archaeologists. In this section, I discuss the relevance of the archaeology Thaba-Bosiu in the 19th century, while also addressing issues of power and Afro-Euro relations or the importance of archaeology in understanding Thaba-Bosiu in the 19th century.

The history and archaeology of Thaba-Bosiu provides insight into the cultures of communities that settled in the modern-day Lesotho and Free-State areas. Archaeological investigations of Iron Age sites in the Natal and Free-State areas show that the sites were once occupied by Nguni- and Sotho-speaking agropastoralist communities (Maggs 1976; Plug 1990; 1993; Dreyer 1998; Hall and Silliman 2006; Chirikure *et al.* 2008). As highlighted earlier, this study has assumed a historical archaeological position, which adopts a decolonial approach to understanding the past. Central to these histories is the voices of the royal family, as well as local cosmologies that have reflected community relations between the king and his subjects.

10.6. Limitations and Recommendations

The major limitation of this study is the lack of comparable data from any Later Iron Age archaeological sites in the Mohokare Valley, especially at Thaba-Bosiu. The only available comparative study was of Ha-Makoanyane (King 2014) less than 30km from the mountain. Further archaeological studies need to be undertaken on top of the mountain, as well as neighbouring areas. Such research will provide more details about communities of the Mohokare Valley, as well as tell more stories of the LIA communities that settled in the region. The existing history of Basotho delves more on the political events of the 18th and 19th centuries and less on the socio-economic activities of past communities. That gap needs to be filled.

Trade relations between southern Basotho communities and the rest of southern African farming communities need to further be explored. Such research will contribute to understanding any complex socio-economic relations past Sotho communities had and this informing their cultural practices. Trade of beads and metal should form some of the research questions related to trade. The lack of evidence of metal production in the area should also be explored to investigate sources of metal products.

The significance of these villages in relation to the history of Thaba-Bosiu is not known. This then poses possible research question about the archaeology and history of the homesteads. Questions to be explored may include:

- Who lived in those homesteads?
- How many families occupied the settlement?
- What was daily life for these communities like?
- How many stonewall structures?
- Is there a relationship between those villages and the main royal village?

The study area covered in this research was the main royal village on top of the mountain. As has been established, the village was mostly occupied by the king, his wives, his advisers, and immediate assistants. Very little is known about the material culture commoners. Future research should then look into a comparative analysis of the royal material culture with that of the commoners.

10.7 Conclusion

Postcolonial studies as reflected in Chapter Two, attempted to challenge the colonial impacts on how we investigate histories of previously colonised societies. These efforts, however, limited impact in liberating African histories from Eurocentric epistemologies. This study demonstrated these limitations by giving agency to the past communities. Ethnographies and oral traditions revealed cultural practices that were previously unknown and unrecorded in the Basotho history. The specific contribution of this study has been to shed light into the daily lives of people who settled at Thaba-Bosiu. The excavations, coupled with investigation of oral histories and traditions provide alternative narratives away from the conflict heavy histories associated with the history of Thaba-Bosiu. The archaeological remains have also revealed the types of interactions that occurred between different groups that eventually resulted to what we know today as the Basotho nation. The study further shows that Basotho were agropastoralists, who were also involved with the trade Mozambican trade networks through KwaZulu-Natal.

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Appendix 1: Context Sheets used during excavation

Site THABA-BOSIU	Context Record Sheet	Sheet no.	Context No. 1
Plan No.	Context Type: Deposit / Cut		
	Overlain by:	Overlies: 2	Excavated in squares: TB49
Section No.	Cut by:	Cuts:	
	Filled by:	Fill of:	
	Same as:		

DEPOSIT CHECK LIST		CUT CHECK LIST	
1. compaction	8. boundary to	1. shape in plan	7. truncated by
2. colour	next context	2. orientation	8. variation
3. composition	9. variation	3. dimensions	within context
4. inclusions	within context	4. break-of-slope /	9. associated with
5. thickness	10. associated with	sides / base	10. conditions
6. extent/shape	11. conditions	5. inclination	11. uncertainties
7. truncated by	12. uncertainties	6. truncates	

this context is 1

2

1. Compact (wet)
2. Black & dark brown
3.
4. Stones of varying sizes
5. 0-10cm (?)
6. 0-10cm uniform
7. Roots, insects, pebbles
8. 10cm excavated all squares
9. Colour changes (Black, Brown)
10. —
11. Cloudy morning & afternoon partly cloudy
12. Could be contaminated by vegetation

1. Cuts across the square
2. North Eastern
3. Covered ¼ of
4. Covered the whole square
5.
6. Roots, insects
7. Colour changes Brown, light brown & dark brown
9.
10. Cloudy & Partly cloudy

Interpretation Formation processes: wind-/water-borne deposit, in-situ hearth deposit, organic content, intensity of occupation, rapid/slow deposition, natural erosion, re-working of deposit, roots/insect/animal disturbance, trampling/sweeping

Water-borne deposit
No hearth
A lot of plant material, roots, occasional charcoal
Pottery is frequent with occasional stone tools
Rapid deposit
Frequency of roots, insects (not frequent)

NB Excavations were carried out during a rainy day and dry day. Some areas sediment were dry while others were wet.

Finds (tick): None ( ) Lithics (✓) Pottery (✓) Bone (✓) Shell ( ) OES ( ) Wood ( ) Ochre ( ) other:

Description (tool types/ typology; bone species; concentrations of artefact type/ distribution; etc)

6 lithics; 1 scraper, 2 unidentified (but parts of material are missing), 3 flakes
1 Bead
3 decorated pottery with stamp
4) Bones, glass, 1 burned plastic, scrapper, Rubber
5. Rimmed edge pottery

Photographs: 134650 - 142712

Recorded by: MM
Date: 12/09/2017

Site TB 48 THABA-BOSIU	Context Record Sheet		Sheet no.	Context No. 2
	Context Type: Deposit / Cut			
Plan No.	Overlain by: 1	Overlies: 3		Excavated in squares: TB48
	Cut by:	Cuts:		
Section No.	Filled by:	Fill of:		
	Same as:			

DEPOSIT CHECK LIST		CUT CHECK LIST	
1. compaction	8. boundary to next context	1. shape in plan	7. truncated by
2. colour	9. variation within context	2. orientation	8. variation within context
3. composition	10. associated with	3. dimensions	9. associated with
4. inclusions	11. conditions	4. break-of-slope / sides / base	10. conditions
5. thickness	12. uncertainties	5. inclination	11. uncertainties
6. extent/shape		6. truncates	
7. truncated by			

[1] [2] [ ] [ ]

this context is [2]

[3] [ ] [ ] [ ]

1. Compact in a few number of areas
2. Yellowish brown
3. Charcoal pieces and stones, sand
4. small stones
5. 20 cm
6. covers the whole site
7. Roots and insect routes
8. Last 20 metre spit
9. Other area did not have charcoal pieces, but the small stones are common
10.
11. Partly cloudy
12. The context was difficult to follow since all sediment was wet and some parts dry.

1. Covered whole square
2. North easterly
3.
4. At 30cm
5.
6. roots
7.
8. Darker colour but [illegible]

Interpretation Formation processes: wind-/water-borne deposit, in-situ hearth deposit, organic content, intensity of occupation, rapid/slow deposition, natural erosion, re-working of deposit, roots/insect/animal disturbance, trampling/sweeping

Water-borne deposit, with alot of roots and of stone pieces. Occupation seems to be intense within context [illegible], looking at the intensity of artefacts. Slow deposition, wind and water erosion, roots and insect disturbance.

N.B. Excavations were carried out during a period of rain and dry season. In some areas sediment was wet and in other areas it was wet. (Context to the ne) Boundary to the next level was not clear in some areas.

Finds (tick): None ( ) Lithics (✓) Pottery (✓) Bone (✓) Shell ( ) OES ( ) Wood ( ) Ochre ( ) other:

Description (tool types/ typology; bone species; concentrations of artefact type/ distribution; etc)

A stone tool, burnished sherds, a rimmed edge pottery and a decorated pottery, beads and ceramics, tooth and a charcoal.

Photographs: 174819 – 174943

Recorded by: N.M

Date: 06/09/2017

Appendix 2: Spit Sheet used to record the surface drawing of each spit

Site	Spit Record Sheet	Sheet no.	Context No.
THABA-BOSIU			1

Plans / Sections	Spit thickness	Addional Sheet/s	Square co-ord
Photographs Folder: 113002 Picture No.: 113119	10cm 3&7		T652SQ
			Spit No. 0-7 (1)

Finds: None ( ) Lithics (✓) Pottery (✓) Bone (✓) Shell ( ) OES ( ) Wood ( ) Ochre ( ) other: metal button

Finds description (retouched flakes/cores; raw materials; condition/size of bone; diagnostic fauna; concentrations/distribution; compare with over- and under-lying spits/other squares)

Beads, Charcoal, glass,

- A metal button, which is rusty and it is about 0.6mm and the colour was military green x(1), Lithics x1, Pottery 54, Charcoal x10, beads 2(2), glass (1), metal button (1)

Number of buckets

Quad A 1

Quad B 2

Quad C 2

Quad D 3

Small find	Description (show location on plan below)	Co-ord.	Level
	1. A metal shell/button, military green colour (0.6mm)	S29.34764 E27.64225	1760M

Sample	Description (show location on plan below)	Co-ord.	Level

Description (divergence from original context description; extent in plan; finds density; disturbance/truncation; volume excavated in square & relative to over & underlying spits/adjacent squares; likelyhood of contamination)

The context covers all the square, frequent pottery alot of roots and a little vegetation cover 0-10 cm composition of roots and insects. The sediment is brown and dark in some squares. The roots are moving within the context

Levels	
no	RL
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10