

Anthropomorphic clay figurines from Early and Middle Iron Age sites in South Africa

by

ADRIANA JACOBA HUMPHREYS

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Declaration

Name: Adriana Jacoba Humphreys

Student number: 32176317

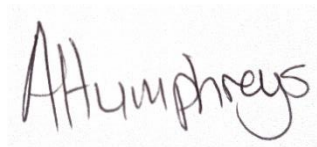
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Abstract

This collections-based research project focuses on anthropomorphic clay figurines from archaeological sites in South Africa dating to the 1st and 2nd millennium AD. These archaeological sites were occupied by Iron Age farming communities in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and the Shashe-Limpopo Confluence Area in the Limpopo province of South Africa. The figurines in the collections of various museums were classified using modal analysis, and a basic catalogue was compiled. The study further explores archaeological context and ethnography as potential sources to better understand the role of figurines in rituals and everyday life. Further, the decoration patterns on the figurines are examined with reference to the practice of scarification in historical and modern societies. This study has shown that, in whatever context they are used, anthropomorphic figurines convey ideas through embellishment and form. An embodiment perspective is used to investigate the close relationship between figurines and women in these Iron Age communities.

Keywords:

Anthropomorphic clay figurines, Iron Age, South Africa, museum collections, modal analysis, ethnography, rituals, decoration, scarification, embodiment, gender



Abstrak

Hierdie versamelingsgebaseerde navorsingsprojek fokus op antropomorfiere kleibeeldjies van argeologiese terreine in Suid-Afrika wat dateer van die 1ste en die 2de millennium nC. Hierdie argeologiese terreine is bewoon deur Ystertydperk-boerderygemeenskappe in die Oos-Kaap, KwaZulu-Natal en die Shashe-Limpopo Samevloeiingsgebied in die Limpopo-provinsie van Suid-Afrika. Hierdie beeldjies in die versamelings van verskillende museums is met behulp van modale ontleding geklassifiseer en 'n basiese katalogus is saamgestel. Die studie ondersoek ook die argeologiese konteks en etnografie as potensiële bronne om die rol van beeldjies in rituele en die alledaagse lewe beter te verstaan. Verder word die versieringspatrone op die beeldjies bestudeer met verwysing na die praktyk van inkerwing in historiese en moderne samelewings. Hierdie studie het getoon dat antropomorfiere beeldjies, in watter konteks dit ook al gebruik word, idees oordra deur versiering en vorm. 'n Verpersoonlikingsperspektief word gebruik om die noue verband tussen beeldjies en vroue in hierdie ystertydperkgemeenskappe te ondersoek.

Sleutelwoorde:

Antropomorfiere kleibeeldjies, Ystertydperk, Suid-Afrika, museumversamelings, modale ontleding, etnografie, rituele, versiering, inkerwing, verpersoonliking, geslag



Manweledzo

Thandela heyi ya thodisiso yo disendekaho nga khuvhanganyo yo sedza kha zwiṭetshu zwa vumba zwi re na zwiṭaluli zwa vhathu kha vhupo ha vhufukumarubi ha Afrika Tshipembe u bva miṅwaha ya gidi AD ya u thoma na ya vhuvhili. Vhupo ha vhufukumarubi uvhu ho vha hu tshi dzula zwiṭshavha zwa vhulimivhufuwi ha Iron Age ngei Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal na Vhupo ha Shashe-Limpopo Confluence vunduni la Limpopo Afrika Tshipembe. Zwiṭetshu zwo kuvhanganyiwaho miziamu yo fhambanaho zwo khethekanywa hu tshi khou shumiswa musaukanyo wa zwiṭaluli zwine zwa shanduka, ha bveledzwa khathalogo ya mutheo. Ngudo yo svela phanda na u wanulusa nyimele dza vhufukumarubi na divhamirafho sa zwiko zwa ndeme zwa u pfesesa khwine mishumo ya zwiṭetshu kha nyitelatherelo na vhutshilo ha duvha na duvha. Hu tshi iswa phanda, phatheni dza u khavhisa kha zwiṭetshu dzi tolwa hu tshi livhiswa kha maitete a tshithavhelo kha zwiṭshavha zwa kale na zwazwino. Ngudo heyi yo sumbedza uri, hu nga vha kha nyimele ifhio zwe zwa shumiselwa yone, zwiṭetshu zwi re na zwiṭaluli zwa zwivhumbeo zwa vhathu u fhirisa mihumbulo nga kha u sumbedzisa na nga tshivhumbeo. Mbonalo ya u sumbedzisa i shumiselwa u todisisa vhushaka ha tsini vhukati ha zwiṭetshu na vhafumakadzi kha zwiṭshavha izwi zwa Iron Age.

Maipfi a ndeme:

Zwiṭetshu zwa vumba zwi re na zwiṭaluli zwa vhathu, Iron Age, Afrika Tshipembe, khuvhanganyo ya muziamu, zwiṭetshu zwa vumba zwi re na zwiṭaluli zwa vhathu, divhamirafho, nyitelatherelo, khavhisa, tshithavhelo, u sumbedzisa, mbeu

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Introduction

An anthropomorphic figurine can be described as an object representing a human image that is also:

laden with ritual and religious associations, associations which to many minds preclude any consideration of play as part of their existence ... and ... active in establishing value systems and constructing identities.

(Cameron 1996: 11)

Figurines have fascinated people for decades. They form part of many museum exhibitions across the world and attract wide audiences. Some would even argue they are one of the more fascinating finds in archaeology, as seen in the ongoing interest in artefacts such as the Venus of Willendorf found in Austria, dating around 25 000 – 30 000 years ago (Dove 1992; Greydanus *et al.* 2008; Schott 2007; Soffer *et al.* 2000). The potential symbolism of figurines has been interpreted in many ways. They are vital in the investigation of pre-colonial and prehistoric ritual practices and gender identities across the world, including southern Africa. They are an important part of the evidence used in reconstructing prehistoric ontologies and, by studying their life histories and depositional context, we can uncover the ways that ritual values are embodied in material culture (Aragon 2013: 10).

A figurine is a small replica that represents the bodily form of an animal, human or deity. Although figurines are made from various types of materials, clay is the material most commonly used in the manufacture of these objects. Some of the earliest reported figurines date back to the Lower Palaeolithic, while some of the oldest known examples of figurines made of stone were found in Africa and Israel. The stone figurine from Africa dates to the African Middle Acheulian industry of Morocco – between 500 000 and 300 000 years (Bednarik 2003: 405), while the Acheulian



Berekhat Ram figurine from Israel (dating between 250 000 and 280 000 years) was found in the northern Golan Heights (Bednarik 2003: 409).

Figurines were a familiar sight in the early farming communities of South Africa and form part of the archaeological assemblages recovered from such sites. I was initially intrigued by the discovery of a small rhinoceros figurine in 2003 on the Melora Saddle in the Laphalala Wilderness area in the Limpopo Province, a find that subsequently sparked my interest in figurines, particularly anthropomorphic figurines. This inspired my honours research project on anthropomorphic figurines (Humphreys 2005). While conducting this research I realised that work by previous researchers (*inter alia* Dederen 2010, 2013; Dederen & Mokakabye 2017; Hanisch & Maumela 2002; Schoeman 2017; Steele 2012; Wood 2002) concentrated on specific Iron Age sites that had yielded animal and anthropomorphic figurines, yet none of them had undertaken a comparative study (where all figurines by site have been compared) of the complete record of South African figurines. In particular, early and current literature (Dederen 2010; Dederen & Mokakabye 2017; Hanisch & Maumela 2002; Schoeman 2017; Steele 2012; Van Schalkwyk 2002; Wood 2002) largely concentrates on the anthropomorphic figurines from Schroda offering possible interpretations and comparisons to other figurine finds across the country. No complete study has been done, however, where all the anthropomorphic figurines recovered from archaeological contexts in South Africa have been recorded and compared within the confines of a single research project. This encouraged me to look at all the figurines held in the museum collections across South Africa with the goal of compiling an inclusive catalogue. However, looking at all Iron Age sites, was beyond the scope of this project and I focused my study on figurines from Early Iron Age (EIA) and Middle Iron Age (MIA) sites.

This collections-based study includes anthropomorphic clay figurines from archaeological sites across South Africa. These figurines were manufactured by Iron Age farming communities that occupied the archaeological sites along the east coast of South Africa as well as the Shashe-Limpopo Confluence Area (SLCA) in the



Limpopo Province. The Iron Age is associated with various early Eastern Ntu-speaking people (also known as Eastern Bantu-speaking people) who settled in southern Africa in semi-permanent settlements, manufactured their own iron tools, herded livestock and cultivated crops (Huffman 2007: xi). The sites discussed in this dissertation date to the Early and Middle Iron Ages of South Africa. According to Huffman (2007: xi, 331, 361, 393) the Iron Age of southern Africa can be divided into the EIA (AD 200 – AD 900), MIA (AD 900 – AD 1 300) and Late Iron Age (LIA) (AD 1 300 – AD 1 840). The figurines were retrieved by means of surface collection as well as controlled excavations (Binneman 1996; Gardner 1963; Hanisch 2002; Huffman 1974; Loubser 1993; Maggs & Ward 1984; Meyer 1998, 2002; Prins & Granger 1993; Van Schalkwyk 1994; Whitelaw 1993).

Research Questions

This study is focused on classifying and cataloguing available figurines in museum collections in South Africa. The literature consulted explored many views on the possible interpretation and meaning of figurines and the use of ethnography linking archaeological examples to the contemporary use of figurines. With these various views in mind, I explore the following central question:

What can a comparative study of South African archaeological figurines, across space and time, including historic and ethnographic contexts, contribute to our understanding of the functions and meanings of such figurines in the past?

In particular, I focused on the following aspects and how they changed over space and time:

- Does the original context/provenience of figurines reveal a specific function or meaning of these figurines?
- Do the anthropomorphic figurines depict certain gender types?



- What are the type, location and distribution of body markings on the anthropomorphic figurines in the study?

Purpose of Study and Research Aims

The purpose of this research is to compile a database and catalogue of anthropomorphic figurines in the museum collections taken from various archaeological sites in South Africa and gain new insights into the meaning and use of figurines through a comparative study.

The primary aim of this study is to examine and compare the accessioned samples of 223 anthropomorphic clay figurines in South Africa by using a standard classification framework. As previously stated, this study concentrates on the EIA and MIA. The information collected is contained in a database (in Excel format included as Appendices I–III) and comprises a short description and dimensions of each figurine in the various collections.

The second aim is to investigate the similarities and differences in the figurine collections by using a basic methodology incorporating the observation and analysis of the anatomy, style, form and material of manufacture.

My third aim is to review the various contemporary approaches to the interpretation and use of figurines. The depositional context, in particular the discard patterns where these figurines were discovered will be investigated along with the ritual use and interpretative frameworks suggested by other scholars.

Objectives

In order to achieve my aims and answer my research questions, I:



1. Developed a comprehensive database and catalogue of the figurines and fragments in the accessioned museum collections that I examined.
2. Analysed the collection according to similarities and differences in manufacturing style, form, anatomical attributes, decoration of and gender depicted by the fragments.
3. Explored the ethnographic and archaeological literature to develop an interpretation of the patterns observed.

Significance of study

This study takes a descriptive, exploratory approach in search of possible patterns in manufacturing style, decoration and the provenience of the figurines and fragments from the different sites. Only anthropomorphic figurines were studied and classified according to their anatomical attributes. The assemblages were analysed and documented, which entailed taking measurements of the figurines and fragments. Using a stylistic approach, stylistic comparisons, physical descriptions of anatomical detail and decoration patterns were recorded. This empirical study will thus enhance our understanding of the functions and use of these figurines and the similarities across the various Iron Age sites of South Africa.

Many scholars have debated the roles that figurines may have played in various rituals and their potential associated meanings such as a connection to fertility (*inter alia* Becker 1998; Boeyens *et al.* 2009; Cameron 1996; Dederen 2010, 2013; Huffman 2012: 127, 2014: 122–123; Inskeep & Maggs 1975; Jolles 1998; Roumequere & Roumequere-Eberhardt 1962; Van Schalkwyk 2002: 70; Van Wyk 1998: 53; Whitelaw 1994a; Wood 2002). Few, however, have pursued these questions from a thorough review and descriptive comparison of existing, accessioned figurine collections from South African sites. The latter, which form the crux of this study and the resulting catalogue will thus be a valuable resource for scholars who wish to pursue future research on the topic.



Chapter Outline

In Chapter 1 I discuss the various definitions of figurines and give a short overview of how archaeological figurines have been studied across the world. I also provide an account of figurines from other countries in southern Africa including Botswana, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

Chapter 2 explores the various approaches and themes explored by scholars who study figurines, along with a summary of the key sources and ideas shaping my own research.

Chapter 3 provides the background to the archaeological sites and the figurine assemblages. This chapter concentrates on the primary sites along the eastern coast and in the northern part of South Africa that borders Botswana and Zimbabwe.

In Chapter 4 I describe previous typological approaches; how my analytical framework was designed and why I chose a modal analytical approach in this study. My methodology is briefly explained.

Chapter 5 presents the results of the analysis of my analytical framework.

Chapter 6 offers the interpretation and discussion of the analysis with reference to ethnographic and other data.

In Chapter 7 I propose some concluding thoughts and directions for future research. The last part of this study comprises an Appendix of colour photographs, measurements and short descriptions of samples of figurines from the various accessioned museum collections that I studied.



Chapter 1: Figurines as Artefacts

1.1 Defining Figurines

Female human figurines in Southern Africa, like the wall paintings of Southern Africa are *missing links* that assist us in understanding the significance of such cultural objects.

(Dart 1959: 458)

Different scholars have defined anthropomorphic figurines in different ways. Joyce (2005: 148) describes figurines as “a site of representation and a represented object,” while Hamilton (1996a: 281) defines them as “miniature human representations modelled in clay or stone” and “one of those key categories of prehistoric material that no archaeologist who finds one can ignore.” Figurines can be regarded as mostly small artefacts and the term encompasses a wide range of various forms and styles ranging from abstract to realistic representations of humans with some exaggerated or underrepresented parts of the body. Figurines are also “a form of prehistoric art to express social ideas since they depict cultural significance and symbolic meaning” (Tiley-Nel 2017: 42).

It is not always easy to differentiate between a figurine and a statue since they both embody depictions of humans or animals. However, a figurine is deemed a small moulded or carved figure (statuette) representing a human, animal or deity, whereas a statue is a three-dimensional work of art of whatever size created by carving, casting or sculpting. Sculptures are classified as “works of art from a European perspective” (Jolles 2010: 18). Sculptures are often created with the primary purpose that they be displayed.

While I prefer to use the term “figurine” for the purpose of this study, in the African context it is also necessary to address the status of the term “doll”. The term “doll” is often used when referring to African human sculptures or figurines. This generally



applies to **historical** dolls as opposed to archaeological figurines (Dederen 2010). Many scholars avoid the use of the term “doll” with reference to figurines as it generally implies that these objects are toys. However, while dolls are typically considered to be playthings, possessing no particular omnipotence, in the Western worldview, this is not necessarily the case in African contexts. In many African cultures objects described by Western observers as “dolls” in fact play distinct roles and are imbued with symbolism. The English nouns “doll” or “child” do not necessarily convey the range and depth of meaning implied in the vernacular term(s) used by Africans (Dell 1998: 11). These include for example the Ovambo *okana kondunga* (Child of the palm fruit), *okana kositi* (Child of wood), the Venda *milayo*, and the Zulu *udoli* (Dederen 2010; Nettleton 2002; Wood 2002).

Children and young maidens’ play and their interaction with small figures have been observed and recorded during the early part of the century by American and European explorers, missionaries, scholars and adventurers among the Ntu-speaking communities across Africa. Although the term “doll” is often used, and young adolescents have been observed to “play” or “interact” with figurines, these objects have a far deeper meaning (Wood 2002: 87) and are commonly referred to as “children or child figures by their users” (Wood 2002: 88). Cameron (1997: 21) has further argued that in the imagination or play world of a child, these objects are regarded as people and act as mediators and that while adult spectators would merely observe “play”, the child sees the figures as having their own life and will.

The overlap between what is a “doll” and what is a figurine is most evident in the category of objects regarded as fulfilling the role of “fertility dolls”, which Dell (1998: 11) defines as “small, usually anthropomorphic forms fabricated by women, with a believed ceremonial use.” She describes these objects both as “playthings, not unlike the kinds of figures which are used in games of socialization all over the world, where young girls mimic the actions of their mothers in nursing and caring for infants”, but also as “objects used by adults in the performance of specific rituals” that “can function as intermediaries between living and dead – between women and their



powers to reproduce” (Dell 1998: 11). These issues are explored further with reference to southern African contexts in Section 1.4.

As will become clear in Section 1.2, anthropomorphic figurines are a common archaeological find in many areas of the world. They are given specific relevance in particular contexts and there is wide variation in the way in which they were handled and the specific sets of values that they likely expressed.

1.2 Figurines in the Archaeological Record

Abundant studies exist of figurines excavated across the world, many of which were made of fired clay, carved in stone or made of wood or plant material (Bednarik 2003: 405, 409; Hanisch 2002: 30; Marcus 2019: 29; Nettleton 2002: 96, 98; Van Schalkwyk 2002: 71; Wood 2002: 88). Figurine types also vary in style and iconography and method of manufacture. Below, I briefly review some of the major groups of figurines common in the archaeological past of different parts of the world to illustrate the ubiquity of such artefacts in human history.

Europe

The Upper Palaeolithic period yielded the earliest representations of the human female form – known as the “Venus figurines” – from multiple sites across Europe. These were made by hunter-gatherers, and date to between 23 000 and 25 000 years ago. The vast area of distribution of these Palaeolithic figurines spans Europe as far as Siberia (Dixson & Dixson 2011; Dove 1992; Farbstein 2017; Greydanus *et al.* 2008; McDermott 1996; Pettitt 2017; Schott 2007; Soffer *et al.* 2000; Svoboda 2017).

These figurines are relatively small objects made from an assortment of materials. Well-known figurines carved from ivory and bone were found across Europe for example: The Venus of Hohle (believed to be 35 000 years old) from Germany; the Venus of Willendorf, from Austria and the Parabita Venuses from southeast Italy.



Other figurines such as the Kostenki figurines were made of fired clay (for example, the Dolní Věstonice Venus). These Venus figurines were found in open-air prehistoric settlement sites, inside caves and in very rare cases in burial places (Dixson & Dixson 2011; Skeates 2017; Svoboda 2017).

The European Neolithic dates to between 7 000 BC and 2 500 BC. This period marks the early settlement of communities in villages and the introduction of agriculture. Archaeological evidence indicates that figurines were more predominant in South-eastern Europe compared to the relatively small numbers in Western Europe during this period (Bailey 1994, 2005; Bánffy 2017; Knapp & Meskell 1997; Lesure 2002; Scarre 2017; Skeates 2017; Voigt 2000). This suggests that, like other artefacts, figurine traditions may be indicative of cultural and linguistic boundaries.

Figurine traditions are reported from across Europe in archaeological deposits dating to the Neolithic period. The early communities that settled on the southern Aegean Cycladic Islands (east of Mainland Greece and west of Turkey and north of Crete) in the middle of the Aegean Sea, made marble and clay figurines. Although the original context in which large marble figurines were used is unknown, clay and, in some cases, small marble figurines are mostly found in household contexts (including middens) and in some cases were buried in graves along with other cultural materials (Branigan 1971; Renfrew 2017).

Evidence of figurine traditions were found in the Aegean, on the mainland of Greece and Crete, dating to the Neolithic period and the Early and Late Bronze Ages (Minoan period – 2 800 BC – 2 200 BC; Mycenaean period – 1 450 BC – 1 200 BC). Figurines were predominantly made from clay during the Bronze Age, although they also made use of stone, ivory and bone to carve figurines. Large quantities of figurines were reported in ritual sites across the Aegean, while individual figurines were found in settlement areas and burial sites (Morris 2017; Weinberg 1951).



Likewise, figurines were produced by sedentary communities inhabiting South-eastern, Eastern and Central Europe during the Neolithic period. The poorly made cult objects of the early foragers in these areas were replaced by the large numbers of anthropomorphic and goddess figurines of the Neolithic farmers. Figurines were mostly found *in situ* in household areas, communal and funerary areas as grave goods, and in buildings containing other cult objects. The manufacturing style of figurines differed in these regions and a variation is also reported from the early to late Neolithic period. There also appeared to be a decline in the use of figurine in the sites of the northern part of Central Europe around the 5th millennium, while figurines were still manufactured and used in South-eastern Europe (Bailey 2017; Bánffy 2017).

Asia and the Near East

Limited literature is available on the figurine traditions of Japan and China, although figurines are eminent in the archaeological record of these areas. Anthropomorphic figurines initially emerging 16 000 years ago, were used for the duration of the Jomon period in Japan (16 000 – 2 900 years ago). Prehistoric Jomon figurines were made from clay by hunter-gatherers in the Jomon Chubu highlands. Figurines in the early periods of the Jomon culture were scarce and small abstract representations of the human body. The figurine tradition went through a shift of changes between regions and became more “specialised” with figurines having arms, legs and rudimentary heads. Around 5 470 years ago a decline in figurine use and manufacture in the southwestern region spanning to the Chubu highlands occurred with a total disappearance of figurine use towards the end of the Jomon period. (Hudson *et al.* 2008; Mizoguchi 2017).

The early sedentary communities from the southern Levant in the Near Eastern Neolithic period (11 500 years ago) witnessed a change in lifestyle and ideology with the settlement in small villages. Clay figurines were used in the community and households of these villages to express their ideas in everyday life. Around 10 500



years ago, figurine use increased with differences in style and materials. Figurine deposits appeared in multiple contexts such as residential areas, middens and public areas (in some cases clusters of figurines were found in public ritual places). Figurine use continued throughout the Bronze Age to the Iron Age in the Levant (Kuijt 2017; Roux 2018).

The use of figurines is evident in the archaeological records of prehistoric Anatolia, spanning the area of contemporary Central and Southeast Turkey (10 000 BC – 5 200 BC). These regions – with the Neolithic site of Çatalhöyük being the most well-known – yielded large quantities of figurines mostly found among household debris and in middens. Although numerous publications are available, studying these large assemblages of artefacts proved challenging, given the many countries with different excavation methodologies, recording methods and languages. The Bronze Age still sees the use of figurines (disposed of in household debris and burials) throughout Anatolia to the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean (Atakuman 2017; Croucher & Belcher 2017; Makowski 2005; Roux 2018).

The history of Mesopotamia covers the earliest human occupation in the Lower Palaeolithic era until the Late antiquity. The land between the Tigris and Euphrates valleys (modern Iraq, north and northeast Syria and southeast Turkey) known as Mesopotamia, yielded figurine art in clay and stone dating 10 000 BC – 4 000 BC. The farming communities benefitted from the geography and climate of these areas. These communities settled in small villages during the Neolithic period and were mostly engaged in agriculture. The area shows a wide variety of figurine manufacture in the various regions and throughout time. Figurines – animal and human – tend to be broken and disposed of in pits in association with other cultural material. Certain regions yielded specific figurine styles with variety in detail and Mesopotamia sees a decline in the use of figurines towards 4 000 BC (Campbell & Daems 2017; Roux 2018; Ucko 1968).



Similarly, evidence of figurine use in prehistoric Iran shows an abundance of anthropomorphic figurines made from stone and clay. During the 9th millennium BC, figurine manufacture was restricted to the Susiana plain and western Iran with figurines made from lightly fired clay. The Neolithic period yielded more realistically styled and fired figurines made by the sedentary communities, with the peak of production around the 7th to 6th millennia BC mostly retrieved in association with the domestic or communal domain. The late 6th millennium BC shows a decline in figurine manufacture. (Daems 2004, 2017).

The Americas

Although early figurine traditions were recorded in Mesoamerica, the majority of figurine usage fits into the Formative period. The Formative period is a series of an overall cultural development from hunter-gatherer societies to sedentary permanent settlements, dependent on agriculture (1 800 BC – 200 BC). This period is analogous to the Neolithic to Early Bronze Age eras in the eastern Mediterranean. Figurines in this region – evident in the southern lowland of Mexico, the Arctic and North American coast – were mostly found in settled communities (in some cases haphazardly) and were made from clay, mud, plant materials and, less often, stone. Deliberate breakage of the figurines is evident in most deposits (Blomster 2017; Carlson 2017; Lesure 1997, 2017; Marcus 2019; McLellan & Triadan 2017; Overholtzer 2017; Pool 2017; Schaafsma 2017; Sears 2017).

The earliest figurines reported in Southwest America were made by Archaic hunter-gatherers (8 000 BC – 1 000 BC). Some of the earliest figurines were reported in the South American lowlands around 3 000 years ago and during the 1st millennium in the greater Amazonia. Figurine traditions were also reported in all neighbouring regions of Mesoamerica, with a discontinuation of figurine production in the western North America. Following the Archaic period, figurines occurred in much larger numbers in the Southwestern farming communities. The literature is unclear as to why there was a decline in figurine manufacture in the western area and also an



increase in manufacture in the southwest. A probable explanation could be related to social changes in these communities. It is suggested by Schaafsma (1994: 50–56) that anthropomorphic figurines were more often used in various shamanic ritual practices, which are also linked to the widespread rock paintings in the region.

Figurines were broken before being discarded in household middens, although this is not reported in the Central Andes where they mostly occurred in a funerary/offering realm. The context in which they were found signify their social role and the connection with the ancestor, spirit realm and shamanism. AD 200 until the onset of the Classic period in the Americas (AD 1 150) marks the transition of figurine manufacture and the use of figurines. Figurines from the Northwest Coast shows art works with supernatural elements connected to various ceremonies and the supernatural realm (Barreto 2017; Carlson 2017; Fitzhugh & Engelstad 2017; Lau 2017; Schaafsma 2017).

The Basin of Mexico has yielded the oldest known Mesoamerican figurine (2 300±110 BC), from Zophapilco, which was found near grinding stones and hearths (Marcus 2019). Furthermore, clusters of figurines found in burial sites are reported in the Basin where 37 burials of the 214 burials included figurines. Marcus (1996: 287) further elaborates on the archaeological evidence of the figurines found in a village in the Valley of Oaxaca dating between 1 300 BC and 110 BC, with the oldest dating to 1 500 BC, depicting a feline. Small figurines were found in abundance in households of the village. It appears that women's rituals took place in the house, while men's rituals took place away from the residences. She also notes that the manufacture of figurines in the household context disappeared when the first standardised temples appeared, leaving this ritual to be performed by priests (Marcus 1996, 2019).

Excavations of contemporary Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and Belize have yielded Maya figurines dating to the Classic period (AD 600 – AD 900) and the reuse of these archaeological figurines are reported to still be used in ceremonial rites by the modern Guatemalan highlanders. These figurines were recovered from house middens and



debris as well as ritual areas. Large quantities of crude figurines were also found in household contexts, which could indicate that they were toys. Central Mexico yielded Aztec figurines in households, burial sites and large numbers of figurines near healing ritual areas such as sweat baths. Although figurines are not usually associated with burial sites in the Maya realm, the ancient Maya city of Ceibal in Guatemala (AD 800 – AD 900) yielded many burial sites of children in residential houses with figurines associated with other grave goods (Marcus 2019; McLellan & Triadan 2017; Overholtzer 2017; Sears 2017).

Africa

Prehistoric figurines occurred all over the African continent, apart from East Africa, which might lead us to think that they did not use any figurines or, if at all, they could have been manufactured from materials that do not survive in the archaeological record.

The Sahara region has yielded clay and stone objects representing animals (for example, the Barbary sheep figurine fragment) and infrequent numbers of anthropomorphic items dating to the Middle Holocene (7 000 – 4 000 years ago). The region, where these figurines were found, comprises the largest rock art complexes reported, and they were found in association with thousands of lithic and ceramic assemblages for this period. Given the small number of objects, it is believed that these objects were not for everyday use and may have been used for specific situations. Anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines were also found in the pastoral deposits of the Afalou Bou Rummel site – “the classic site of the Iberomaurusian groups, the ‘Cro-Magnons’ of Africa” – in a domestic deposit dating between 18 000 and 11 000 years ago. No evidence of figurine use is known in the Saharan region in hunter-gatherer contexts (Barich 2017: 108).

The first North African predynastic ceramic figurine – dating around 5 500 years ago – is found in ancient Egypt. The first Egyptian state emerged during the 4th millennium



BC and this era is marked by the presence of a small number of predynastic anthropomorphic clay figurines, mostly found in Upper Egypt predynastic burial (cemetery) sites and settlement areas. Archaeological evidence indicates that the figurines were scarce and not widespread and were probably part of ritual practices (however, it seems not to be a vital element) and were part of the daily lives of small communities or individuals. (Stevenson 2017; Ucko 1968).

The Neolithic period yielded the first figurines in agro-pastoralist Sudan in North-east Africa. Figurines became more prevalent with the development of complex societies and ranges from the 5th millennium BC to AD 200, with distribution sites in northern and southern Sudan dating AD 800 – AD 1 300. Clay, copper and in some cases bronze figurines were found in funerary sites in association with elaborate grave goods of male, female and children. They were also part of household and mound sites and formed part of various rituals. It is noteworthy that large numbers of cattle figurines were widespread in these archaeological sites (Gregory 2021; Haaland & Haaland 2017).

Figurine traditions are widespread in archaeological deposits in West Africa, dating from 2 000 BC to the late 19th century AD. They are mostly made from clay, although some examples of stone and wood figurines are also reported. Soapstone figurines depicting human and animal attributes, are prominent in Sierra Leone, Guinea and western Liberia, where they were exposed during farming or other human activities (Insoll 2017).

The oldest Stone Age figurines were reported in the Akan region of central Ghana, dating around 1 500 BC – 800 BC with some dating between 3 600 and 3 200 years ago. Iron Age (6th – 12th centuries) sites in northern Ghana yielded considerably larger numbers of animal and human figurines, disposed of in burial mounds or shrine deposits, in association with human and animal remains and other cultural materials. Although the majority of figurines are made from clay, reports of brass figurines were also found. Figurine traditions varied across the landscape. Figurines found in



southern Ghana dated from the late 1st millennium to the beginning of the 12th century, with a noticeable variation in style and were also found in funerary context (Insoll 2017; Kankpeyeng *et al.* 2013).

Rich figurine assemblages were found in Nigeria with the earliest from the northeast dating between 2 000 BC – 500 BC and the Gajiganna site dating between 2 700 and 3 100 years ago. These assemblages consist of animal and anthropomorphic figurines found in mound sites. The Nok culture (900 BC – 300 BC) from central Nigeria produced large numbers of human and, to a lesser extent, animal figurines. Apart from figurines emerging from mining activities, archaeological excavations from 100 sites yielded broken figurine fragments in pits – occasionally lined with stones. Although these objects are larger in size, they are commonly referred to as figurines and are thus included in this discussion. Many of the Nok figurines depict diseases represented in deformities, as is the case in some of the figurines found at Ife in southwestern Nigeria (Atwood 2011; Breunig & Ameje 2006; Insoll 2017).

Between the 12th to 16th centuries AD, the site of Ife yielded elaborate clay figurines along with bronze and stone sculptures. Figurines were found in shrine sites during excavations, while others were recovered during roadworks and construction work. Stylized anthropomorphic figurines were placed on shrines. Figurines were distributed in deposits associated with rituals and some were reused in later ritual ceremonies, while animal figurines are known to be used as sacrifices during rituals. Benin is famous for their bronze figurines, but clay figurines have also been found in this kingdom southeast of Ife. Clay figurines were predominantly found in rural areas of the kingdom. Male and female clay figurines, as well as figurines with depictions of diseased individuals and animal figurines were found in the holy orchard at Owo, dating between mid-15th and mid-18th centuries. Esie, located north of Ife, yielded a thousand soapstone figurines in a shrine together with a large number of clay figurine fragments used in various rituals and annual festivals. Fragments of soapstone figurines dating between AD 1 644 and AD 1 652 were excavated from the shrine site, indicating deliberate breakage before disposal. Figurine traditions were also



reported from other Nigerian sites, to name a few: Ilorin (AD 100 – AD 700), Niger Delta (AD 1 345 – AD 1 850) and Zaria in northern Nigeria (Insoll 2017).

Reports also exist on figurine traditions at Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Cameroon in West Africa. Northern Mali yielded some of the earliest clay figurines (2 000 BC – 1 360 BC) consisting of zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figurines. Elaborate figurines were found at the site of Jenné-jeno, including some that were possibly in shrine contexts. Different styles in the figurine production are evident at the various sites in Mali, including wooden figurines found in funerary contexts in two cave locations in the Bandiagara Escarpment (Insoll 2017).

Large quantities of figurines were found in southern Chad and northern Cameroon, dated to between the 10th and 16th centuries AD, in settlement mounds, shrines and in funeral sites. The spatial distribution of the figurines, human and animal, indicates the importance of ritual practices of these farming communities (Insoll 2017).

Figurines were widely used in Central Africa. However, no evidence of figurines has been found in the archaeological record, because they were made from perishable materials. Since clay was not a popular medium for figurine manufacture, only a few clay figurines have been recovered in Uganda and the Congo in Central Africa. A clay figurine dated around the 16th century AD was found in Kinshasa and another in Uganda in association with several body fragments and other pottery (Devolved Urewe pottery – late 1st or early 2nd millennium AD – early to late Iron Age) in three pits in Luzira, a suburb of Kampala. The phallic/anthropomorphic figurine (so-called Entebbe figurine) is believed to be used in a ritual context. Funerary jars, adorned with small human figurines were found in grave sites in the Congo. Small stone statues were recovered from tombs and several small cylindrical figurines in the shape of bottles were found in children's graves (De Maret 2016, 2017).

As can be seen from this brief review, globally figurines are found in all kinds of societies – from hunter-gatherers to complex societies – and in all types of contexts.



From a southern African archaeological perspective, however, figurines date from as early as the 1st millennium AD and are solely associated with agricultural communities that moved into the region, settling south of the Limpopo River in the first millennium (Coutu *et al.* 2016; Hanisch 1980; Huffman 2001, 2007; Loubser 1993; Maggs 1980; Meyer 1998, 2000; Mitchel 2002; Prins & Granger 1993; Whitelaw 1993).

Southern Africa

The early agro-pastoralists who settled in South Africa in the 1st and 2nd millennium AD, appear to have brought a figurine tradition with them. These communities initially settled along the rivers along the east coast, contemporary Eastern Cape, Transkei and the SLCA, cultivating the land. Houses were arranged around large cattle enclosures. Figurines at these sites are found in household remains and middens. Excavations in the SLCA at Schroda (10th century AD) yielded more than 2 000 figurine fragments. Figurines were found in both the household central area, with a large concentration of figurines in the central area, and the cattle enclosure. These figurines were deliberately broken before being discarded. The 2nd millennium sites yielded anthropomorphic and animal figurines deposited in domestic areas and middens. Figurines, including the gold figurines from the 2nd millennium site of Mapungubwe, were also found in burial sites (Hanisch 1980; Hanisch & Maumela 2002; Huffman 2002; Humphreys 2011; Maggs & Ward 1984; Schoeman 2017; Whitelaw 1993, 1994a). These are discussed in greater detail in the rest of this dissertation.

Over 200 archaeological sites in Zimbabwe yielded 1 180 figurines spanning a period of 1 700 years. These figurines (human and animal) were generally found in occupational household debris, throughout the settlement areas. Human clay figurines were the most commonly found figurines, with elite sites yielding figurines carved from ivory and soapstone. Figurine production at these latter sites peaked between AD 900 – AD 1 500, after which clay figurines were mostly found in commoner sites until the early 19th century. A cluster of soapstone figurines, as well



as clay figurines were found among the debris of a *daga* platform in the Great Enclosure at Great Zimbabwe. Other clusters of figurines were found in so-called “altar” sites across Zimbabwe (Matenga 1993).

Figurines are still used in initiation rituals by some communities in South Africa, Botswana and Mozambique (Denbow 1983: 115; Ekosse 1994; Nettleton 1992, 1998, 2002; Schoeman 2017; Smith 1997).

1.3 Figurines and “Dolls” in southern Africa: 19th-21st Centuries

As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, the term “doll” is often used with reference to figurines used by societies in southern Africa during the last two centuries. Many of these objects are symbolic and central to many rituals in the African cultures and “are not intended as portraits of specific persons but rather as prototypes which represent ideals or ideas” (Dagan 1990: 28). According to Cameron (1996: 20) they function as mediating tools that connect visible and invisible worlds, attesting to the ongoing role of figurines in modern-day societies.

Various rituals, related to the use of figurines, have been reported across southern Africa. These figurines are made from many types of material, but their essential shape often represents a conical or cylindrical form. Wood, clay, bottles, beads, fabric, leather, animal skin, plant material (for example, reeds and maize cobs) are used in their manufacture (Jolles 1998: 101; 2010: 26; Van Schalkwyk 1998b: 203; Wood 2002: 88). Figurines still have an important role in various rituals, such as rainmaking, procreation, initiation, marriage and fertility. Below is a brief description of some of the ethnolinguistic groups in South Africa known to use figurines in various rituals that may offer insights into the possible use of and thus shape our interpretation of the archaeological figurines.

The practice of doll-making is common among Sotho-speakers. Boys make clay oxen to play with, while the girls make dolls from cloth and straw. When a young girl



reaches a marriageable age, her grandmother will give her a small, beaded doll that is worn publicly around the neck and serves as a symbol that she will be pursued by young men (Cameron 1997). This small doll is replaced by a larger doll, once the girl is preparing for her marriage and is carried around during the wedding service to show the woman's yearning to bear many children. It is named, then taken care of until the birth of her first child (Lange, cited by Cameron 1996: 104–105).

The Bapedi or Northern Sotho-speakers are known to make use of two types of figurines. One type of figurine known as *mokoto* has both male and female iterations (representing a pair) and is used during initiation rituals as didactic tools for guidance on sexual conduct to initiates. These figurines, used in a private domain, are carved from wood and are destroyed afterwards (Blacking 1969; Mojapelo 2011; Van Schalkwyk 1998a: 69). The second type of figurine called *bana ba pelego* is made by the mother of a bride and is always cylindrical in appearance and made from reeds, corn stalks or wood with leather or cloth and covered with beadwork. These figurines are called "children of birth." They are destroyed and the beads reused for the adornment of the baby after the birth of a child and when the child is considered to be strong enough (Van Schalkwyk 1998a: 73).

Although there is no evidence today that Zulu-speaking people have initiation rituals involving figurines, they are used for playing by both boys and girls, resulting in a distinction of gender roles. Boys play with animal figurines, while girls play with human figurines. These figurines are fired and dressed in cloth and beads. In the Zulu tradition, dolls (*udoli*) are regarded as children or babies by their users and are made of a variety of products such as wood, bottles, beads and maize cobs to mention a few (Wood 2002: 87–88). Zulu-speaking people make dolls to convey various messages and these dolls play a role in many aspects of their everyday lives (Cameron 1996: 114; Dube 2009; Jolles 2003: 35, 38; Shaw 1948; Wood 2002: 87–88):

- For play: dolls are used by young girls as playthings;



- For courtship: a young woman would give a beaded doll to a young man as a symbol of love. Should the young man accept her gesture, he would carry the doll around or display it in his house;
- For fertility: an older woman would make a doll as a good luck symbol, which is kept by her bed if she desires to have a child. These dolls serve to encourage procreativity and cure infertility;
- For healing: traditional healers will use dolls to heal the sick.

Figurines are known to be used by the Venda as mnemonic devices (Zubieta 2016: 23) during the female initiation ritual in “the sexual functions of the body” (Harber 1998: 111), accompanied by tales or narratives (also known as *milayo*), emphasizing traditional mores, social and political associations (Mulaudzi 2014: 187; Nettleton 1992, 2002: 95–111). The ritual comprises three stages:

- *Vhusha*: the puberty initiation stage for young girls who have started menstruating, under the instruction of senior women of the village. This puberty initiation is held in the village where the girls started their first menstruation, or else it is held in the chief’s capital. Figurines made of unfired clay are most commonly used during this ritual and are afterwards destroyed and discarded. These figurines are assumed to be secret, hence the discarding thereof after the ritual is completed. Figurines that form part of initiation rituals are found concentrated in the ritual area (Nettleton 2002: 97; Wood 2002: 91).
- *Tshikanda*: a short transitional stage preceding the third stage – the *domba*, held at the court of a particular chief. No figurines are used during this short ritual.
- *Domba*: the pre-marriage and final stage of the initiation where women are bestowed with adult status. Knowledge is conveyed through practical lessons where initiates are taught about sex, marriage, and childbirth. Initiates are forced to perform certain “feats of endurance which humiliate but harden them” (Mulaudzi 2014: 190). This final stage of initiation is supposed to be held at



the chiefs' court, contemporarily "with the *thondo* for young men and that young men would attend parts of the *domba*" (Nettleton 2002: 97). The *domba* rite entails girls shuffling towards a big round drum where they are instructed to jump and dance on it. The said drum represents the womb and jumping on and descending from it symbolises the processes of pregnancy and child birth (Blacking 1969: 16, 157). It is believed that the knowledge that initiates acquire during the *domba* assists them with coping with life after marriage, while the young men are taught to be accountable for their wives (Mulaudzi 2014: 196). This stage of the ritual also features the python dance.

This ritual involves the use of clay and wood figurines as part of the performance of singing, dancing and accompanying narratives with critical explanations on oral and visual symbolism. Figurines are demonstrated to the initiates in a group or on their own, accompanied by the related *milayo*, which requires a metaphorical or symbolic explanation (Nettleton 2002: 101). The clay figurines used during the *domba* are made of unfired clay as they are broken and discarded after use, but the wooden figurines are kept (Blacking 1969; Huffman 1985; Nettleton 2002: 98). Wadley (2018: 5) argues that paraphernalia, including figurines, used during initiation rituals are deliberately broken to demonstrate changes of social status.

The figurines used in the Venda rituals were mostly depicted in the nude or "dressed in 'traditional' styles of clothing, either by using actual cloth or carving the dress as an integral part of the figure" and "some of the older figures and most of the clay examples are left nude or given only beads" (Nettleton 1992: 215). Duggan-Cronin (1928) and Kirby (1968) learnt that the figurines used in the *domba* rituals appear to be dressed in attire similar to modern Venda women's wear, consisting of cloth and leather skirts.

Roumequere and Roumequere-Eberhardt (1962) describe these dolls as mediating between a mythical and a social reality. According to Dederen, (2010: 25–26), they



were the first to link the use and continuity between clay figurines, Venda clay fertility dolls and beaded marriage dolls “in terms of the procreative powers of women.”

As can be seen from the above discussion, the use of figurines by young women in the recent past, is largely focused on the need to guarantee fertility or remedy infertility (Dagan 1990; Cameron 1996; Wood 1998). This should not be surprising. Having children is central to an African woman’s existence. If an African woman experiences difficulty in conceiving she will, equipped with a doll, visit a diviner who will perform a ritual to bestow the doll with special powers that will help her to conceive. Women strongly believe in the powers these dolls possess. (Dagan 1990: 23). Cameron (1997: 33) has suggested that when a “woman is infertile, dolls and women, working together, use the freedom of agency to move her back into the social pattern.” In addition, it can be seen that such dolls were also used for educational purposes in the African context so as “to prepare girls physically and emotionally for their future roles as mothers and wives” (Dagan 1990: 8).

1.4 Conclusion

Insoll (2017) is correct in stating that prehistoric figurines are intricate objects, as are the dolls and figurines still used by various groups today. As highlighted in the discussion, dolls and figurines are instrumental in the promotion of fertility among many of the southern African Ntu-speaking people, for example, the South Sotho, Ovambo (Namibia), Venda, Zulu, Pedi, Tsonga and Valenge from Mozambique (Becker 1998: 119–129; Nettleton 1992, 2002: 95–111; Shaw 1948; Van Schalkwyk 1998a: 68). It is not too much to assume, therefore, that if these objects are imbued with ritual and religious meanings today (Cameron 1996: 19), the same can be said for their role in the past. Drawing on this, it can be inferred that such objects were imbued with symbolism and form an integral part of African cosmology.

As highlighted in this chapter, figurines have been retrieved from numerous archaeological contexts in different parts of the world. In order to understand them as



artefacts, therefore, it is not enough to merely describe them. Rather, it is necessary to place them within a framework of interpretation. A number of the different frameworks that have been devised will, be explored in the next chapter.



Chapter 2: Interpreting Figurines

2.1 Introduction

Variable interpretations of anthropomorphic figurines from the Neolithic Near East, Europe, and Mesoamerica and their potential links to gender, economy, and ritual have been widely explored by scholars. Theoretical frameworks combining strands of evolutionary theory, sociology and anthropology, ethnology, fertility, contextualisation and ecofeminism are proposed by *inter alia* Bailey (1994, 1996, 2005), Haaland and Haaland (1995, 1996), Hamann (1997), Hamilton (1996b), Knapp and Meskell (1997), Lesure (1997, 2002), Marcus (1996), Morales (1990) and Ucko (1968). Marcus (2019) condenses these down to seven research approaches that have been used in the study of figurines. These approaches are the “iconographic and stylistic approach, the contextual approach, performance and practice, ethnographic analogy, the direct historical approach, chemical composition analyses, and embodiment and materiality” (2019: 15). Many of these approaches are now combined in the study of figurines. They will not all be discussed in this chapter, rather I will focus on those themes most useful and used in the southern African context, namely: physical composition analysis; figurines as representations of reality; fragmentation; and the utilisation of figurines within ritual or ceremonial contexts. I conclude with an overview of ideas around symbolic reservoirs and embodiment as these have shaped my own interpretation.

Before proceeding, it would be useful to highlight two common factors that apply across all discussions of archaeological figurines, human or otherwise. First is the importance of context when discussing figurines, both their original social and economic context and their archaeological context. The original social context in which figurines were manufactured and used can be considered crucial to their understanding and meaning. In addition, from an archaeological perspective, figurines cannot be studied in isolation, as the physical contexts from which these figurines were recovered are possibly the only means enabling us to interpret them



(Hamilton 1996a). Marcus (1996, 2019) highlights this, arguing that the discard patterns evident in the contexts in which figurines are found provide crucial clues to their meaning and function. In the case of her work on Mesoamerican figurines, the discard context associates figurines found in middens with household rituals. Other contexts may imply other uses. Steele (2012: 63), who approaches figurines from an art history perspective, recently salvaged a modern rudimentary female torso moulded by someone in his studio and was

struck by the fact that people often tend to position items of interest, value, or specific function together in particular places, and thus that both the item and site thereby gather further significances because of such use, value and setting.

That is, context not only gives meaning to figurines but figurines add layers of meaning to the spaces in which they are exhibited or even discarded.

Scholars believe that the regularity with which figurines are found in archaeological deposits is indicative of the possible use thereof. It is assumed that some kinds of figurines were used in rituals while others were everyday household objects. Arguably, figurines recovered in the domestic realm were probably personal, even if they were ritualised items, while figurines in big concentrations found in ritual areas could be indicative of the dedicated use of space for specialised activities and more public-facing rituals of social import to the community or society as a whole. These differences may become clear once the archaeologist tries to understand the place of figurines in “the social world by linking them to the associated objects that co-occur in houses, burials, and neighbourhood middens” (Marcus 2019: 31). This understanding may partially derive from ethnographic interpretations of the form/style and context in which figurines are found (Hanisch & Maumela 2002; Van Schalkwyk 2002; Wood 2002).



Thus, the second factor to be taken into account broadly across all interpretive frameworks is the role and application of ethnography. Although using ethnographic analogies to interpret figurines dating as far back as a thousand years can prove problematic, models based on the use of contemporary figurines could provide valuable insights into their possible similar use and function. The use of ethnography of recent societies to explain phenomena in prehistoric societies may fall short, however, since many changes that influenced those societies took place over the centuries. According to Schoeman (2017), scholars working on figurines in the southern African context use ethnography and historical text, seeking likenesses over time in the form/style of the figurines and context in which they were found.

Ethnography, in particular, aids attempts to understand the roles that figurines may have played in the southern African past as it facilitates comparisons with artefacts used in the initiation ceremonies, rites of passage, fertility and agency among the Venda, Zulu, Nguni, Pedi, North and South Sotho and Tsonga ethnic groups in South Africa (Hammond-Tooke 1981; Hall 2015: 4; Hanisch 2002: 24–39; Hanisch & Maumela 2002: 52; Huffman 2002: 18, 2007: 62; Inskeep & Maggs 1975: 136; Loubser 1993: 149; Marcus 2019; Matenga 1993: 124–126; Nettleton 2002: 100–101; Prins & Granger 1993: 165; Schapera 1966: 146; Summers 1957: 72–73; Van Schalkwyk 2002: 70; Wadley 2013: 318; Whitelaw 1994b: 93). Furthermore, it is evident that without ethnography and the early historical reports of encounters with the various ethnic groups and the understanding of the ideology and their worldview, it would be vastly more difficult to interpret the role of figurines that were manufactured more than a thousand years ago.

The fact that artefacts are not static and may have changed over time should, however, always be borne in mind. Objects such as figurines, representing the human body, have the ability to convey ideas through form and adornment in any context (Braithwaite 1982) and there may be long-term continuities. This is not a given, however, as the meaning and symbolism of figurines are not always clear and might have changed over time even within the same society.



2.2 Physical Composition Analysis

Although various types of materials are used in the manufacturing of figurines, clay is the most common material used. According to Arntz (2013: 31)

clay is not an uniform material but varies, and its properties can be manipulated as well by adding other materials to it. The plasticity of clay makes it one of the most powerful expressive mediums and its durability after firing makes it one of the most common artefacts found in the archaeological record.

When studying figurines, it is also helpful to study the materials used to make them. Early farming communities across southern Africa made use of clay to manufacture household objects and figurines. However, figurines carved in stone and ivory were also present in these societies (Hanisch 2002; Loubser 1993; Matenga 1993; Van Schalkwyk 2002). Ethnographic research shows that figurines made from fibre and wood are also known to be used, although these figurines would not survive in the archaeological record, due to their poor durability (Matenga 1993). Research has been done on the geological sources of clay as to whether clay was sourced from a particular location in the region (Hurcombe 2007; Jacobson & Van der Westhuizen 2002). Not all figurines were baked, which could indicate that they were not intended to be durable and reused. The variation in the colour of clay is also indicative of firing conditions – changing its properties – and its exposure to the heat during the manufacturing process (Arntz 2013). Furthermore, the differences in the clay (fine versus coarse clay) may be indicative of the usage thereof in various rituals (Schoeman 2017: 132).

By analysing clay and its components, it is possible to determine whether clay was sourced locally or imported from other sources near the archaeological site. After conducting an analysis on a small sample of the Schroda collection (using X-ray fluorescence and a Phillips PW 1404 XRF apparatus), Jacobson and Van der



Westhuizen (2002) indicated that the clay used in the manufacturing of the figurines were made from clay sources within the area. They concluded that there were no significant differences in the clay used for the coarse figurines as opposed to the finer figurines.

The clay composition of figurines may also vary within a site (Marcus 2019: 15–16). Goldstein (1979, 1980) studied figurines in coastal Campeche and the island of Jaina and found not only differences in clay chemistry but also manufacturing technology. He proposes three different clays used in the manufacturing of these figurines indicating that the clay was obtained from either different sites or yielded over a wide area.

2.3 Figurines as Representations of Reality

Several scholars have explored the idea that figurines mimic aspects of reality. McDermott (1996) argued that the female figurines from Palaeolithic contexts in Europe may have been based on real-life models. He hypothesised that they were created by Palaeolithic women based on their top-down observations of their own bodies. He supported his argument by creating photographic images of modern female's self-observations during different stages of their reproductive life, and placing these images over the archaeological figurines from a similar view to illustrate similarities. Although this approach proved unique and innovative, scholars were sceptical of its validity (McDermott 1996: 248–275). Other scholars have suggested that figurines from the Near East and Mesoamerica could have been prototypes of human individuals and that people expressed their thoughts and awareness in tangible forms (Bailey 1994; Knapp & Meskell 1997). Drawing on this idea, Bailey (2005: 11) infers that figurines represent mirror images of human beings and are “things through which people expressed, maintained, negotiated and contested identities and realities.”



While not accepting the idea that figurines are representative of specific individuals, some studies have argued that they represent the physical appearance of groups of people at particular periods of time. Various scholars report on enlarged or steatopygous buttocks observed in figurines found across the globe, including those in the southern African context (*inter alia* Gardner 1963: 7; Hanisch & Maumela 2002: 51; Hudson *et al.* 2008: 87–91; Loubser 1993: 132; McDermott 1996: 233; Nettleton 2002: 101; Schoeman 2017: 142; Whitelaw 1993: 59; Wood 2002: 91). According to Hudson *et al.* (2008), early literature describes the presence of steatopygia in ancient art. They propose “the fact that there seems little doubt that steatopygia was geographically more widespread in prehistory than at present raises the question of the role of steatopygia as an evolutionary adaptation in human history” (Hudson *et al.* 2008: 87).

Hudson *et al.* (2008) focus their study on the depiction of this physical trait on prehistoric Jomon figurines from Japan and argue that this exaggerated feature may suggest a dietary condition that is often described as the storage of excess fat on the buttocks, instead of an evenly distributed fat layer (Johnson 1962; Molnar 1983). Furthermore, Hudson *et al.* (2008) suggest that steatopygia may be the result of food/nutritional and water shortages. The Middle Jomon Chubu highlands sites yielded chipped stone axes that were possibly used to dig for wild yam. Yam was an important food source and may be an indication of the large population increase in the highlands. Yam is believed to have very low fat levels and when consumed in large amounts could have led to nutritional problems. Tobias (1961) concluded that the presence of steatopygia is a disorder related to food stress.

As outlined by Hudson *et al.* (2008: 87), the presence of steatopygia among groups such as the “herding Khoi and hunter-gatherer San groups of southern Africa and from Onge Andaman Islanders” stoked racist ideologies about the condition in 19th century Europe whereby it came to be regarded as a “primitive trait that symbolized not just blackness and sexuality but a whole earlier stage of evolution between animals and modern Europeans” (Hudson *et al.* 2008; Linfors 1996). It is therefore



not surprising that such racialised ideas should also come to the fore in initial interpretations of the southern African figurines in the first half of the 20th century. Gardner (1963: 7), for example, initially suggested that figurines excavated at K2 represented Bushman/San or Khoekhoen females. He further argued that the makers of these figurines “drew their inspiration from what was daily before them” and “could not have invented such a thing”, implying that these characteristics were not an attribute of the Ntu-speaking people (Gardner 1963: 14). In addition, he stated that the figurines were made by “any of the later Bantu invaders who saw the deformity on the women they captured and then produced it in clay” (Gardner 1963: 36).

Most scholars today, however, would recognise this interpretation as deeply flawed, not least because, within southern African Iron Age studies, there is a great emphasis on the need to understand settlements and artefacts from the worldview of the people in the past. This is discussed in greater detail below.

2.4 Fragmentation

A common feature of archaeological figurines is that they are often broken (possibly intentionally) before being discarded. Scholars have advanced a number of theories to explain why so often large numbers of broken figurines are discovered in household middens and other contexts (Chapman 2000; Gardner 1963; Hanisch 1980, 2002; Insoll *et al.* 2012; Meyer 1998). More often than not, interpretation of this characteristic is linked to the ritualistic significance and use of figurines.

In a number of southern African contexts, figurine heads are rarely found connected to the torso of the figurine or could easily be separated from the torso (Maggs & Ward 1984; Marcus 2019; Matenga 1993; Summers 1957). Grove (2008: 139) indicates, with reference to Jaina, Mexico, this may be a form of “ritual decapitation” and this is observed in many sites in south-western Mexico, including Santa Cruz Tayata, Cantón Corralito and Las Honduritas, to name a few. Nearly all figurines in these sites were found with the head separated from the torso and in some cases with limbs



removed. Marcus (2019: 30) proposes the breakage of a figurine would set the inner spirit free at the end of a ritual. Marcus (2019: 17) further ponders on the deliberate breakage of figurines at the site of Gualupita, in Mexico as “such a practice may have prevented someone from a different family or kin group from being able to manipulate one’s ancestors. Decapitation was perhaps one of the many ways to de-animate the figurine.”

It has also been suggested that ritual objects are deliberately broken before being discarded and these objects should be protected against malicious forces (Boeyens *et al.* 2009; Huffman 2012: 128; Maggs & Ward 1984: 133; Morris 1993: 95; Wadley 2013: 318; Whitelaw 1993: 52, 1994b: 117; Whitelaw & Moon 1996: 60). Alternatively, if used in a rite of passage, the fragmentation may be symbolic of the change that the participant has achieved through the ritual (Dederen 2009: 228). This is discussed further below and in Section 6.5.

Life history/biographical approaches in particular, have focused on whether or not figurines are fragmented, and where they were subsequently discarded. According to Aragon (2013: 10) “a life history approach considers the progression of interactions and activities that objects go through over the course of their existence, from their manufacture, through deposition, subsequent excavation, and ultimately where they end up on the present day.” Figurines carrying different functions may also be disposed of in different ways, symbolising the life cycle and context of the figurine during a ritual (Arntz 2013; Dederen 2009; Hanisch 2002; Huffman 2012; Insoll 2017; Kankpeyeng *et al.* 2013; Knox 2012; Loubser 1993; Marcus 2019; Schoeman 2017; Schofield 1948; Steele 2012; Van Schalkwyk 2002; Wood 2002).

2.5 Ceremonial/Ritual Use of Figurines

A common explanation of figurines is that they were objects to be used on specific ceremonial occasions or during rituals, and these types of uses dominate other suggestions. Ucko (1968) for example, characterises the possible functions and uses



of figurines from different early societies as cult objects, vehicles of magic (that is, increased fertility), teaching figurines for initiation rites, as well as toys. Of these, only the category of “toys” speaks to an ordinary, everyday function. Further to this, Bacquart (2004: 9) argues that these “objects” (figurines) are “always related to magical or social rites – even to the supernatural world” or its link to the supernatural.

Scholars have assigned various definitions to describe “ritual.” According to Bell (2009) ritual is seen as a way to establish a shared set of values or beliefs in a community. She maintains that ritual is the connection between tradition and the ever-changing social change in a society, with a model based on three elements: continuity and change, personal experience and social forms, behaviour and beliefs and thought and action (Bell 2009). Furthermore, she argues that ritual is the means of communication among people, more than individuals with the divine (Bell 2009).

Ritual, as Cameron (1996: 27) describes it, “provides a context where the play world and the real world intersect.” The definition of Gazin-Schwartz (2001: 268) is particularly relevant to figurines where “[r]itual actions are distinguished from habitual ones to the extent that they have the effect of connecting a person with something – gods, spirits, or society – beyond the physical and concrete world of the individual.” Rituals include rites of passage, seasonal changes, health and fertility of animals, community members and their crops (Huffman 2012: 127). Figurines form an integral part of a large number of rituals that, according to Turner (1977), still exist in many African rural societies to ensure the well-being and good fortune of the society – including rain-control and the fertility of agricultural crops – and in the form of rites of passage.

Various rituals and the involvement of ceremonial objects have been known to almost all human societies in the past or present. Ritual can be seen as a mode of behaviour ordered by the shared beliefs of a community and a vital fact of group life (DeMarrais 2011: 165). However, recognising ritual behaviour in the archaeological record has long proved problematic. According to Huffman (2012: 119), ritual behaviour is not



obvious in the archaeological past. One needs to recognise the worldview of the people of the time to possibly understand prehistoric rituals. Rituals, such as rainmaking, first fruit festivals and the fertility and protection of agricultural crops, are performed to safeguard the wealth and well-being of the society while another ritual is held to appease the ancestors at times of affluence, hardship or sickness in the community (Hammond-Tooke 1974; Huffman 2007; Wilson 1957).

Once again, archaeological context is an important component. Overholtzer (2012) and Smith (2002) link figurines found in the households and yards of Aztec women to household rituals such as curing, healing, divination and agricultural harvests (also see Marcus 1996 on the Valley of Oaxaca figurines).

As noted above, rites of passage are one of the prominent forms of ritual. As Turner (1967) explains, rituals are inherently characteristic of the transition from one state to another. Rites of passage form an integral part of African socialisation, whereby the different stages of an individual's development and social role in the larger community are demarcated. These rituals (for example, childbirth, puberty and marriage) signify new beginnings and the transition from one stage to another in a person's life. They underline the social codes that distinguish the community and incorporate the person into the community and the powerful spirit world. Through rites of passage, gender roles and gender identity are conserved, and the men are prepared for their responsibilities within the community and the women for their duties as wives and mothers. These rituals vary among societies. Song, dance, the use of masks and figurines, scarification and tattooing have been used for ritual symbolism (Dederen & Mokakabye 2017; Mulaudzi 2014; Nettleton 2002). Some societies focus on endurance and bravery by means of various ordeals and tests while others focus on communicative or spiritual aspects or a combination of these rituals (Dederen & Mokakabye 2017: 172–173; Harber 1998: 111; Huffman 2012: 119, 122, 142; Mulaudzi 2014: 187; Nettleton 2002: 96, 100, 108–109).



The ritual contexts with which figurines are often associated will be discussed below but the components of ritual outlined by Marcus (1996: 286–287) should be borne in mind as they apply to all rituals. She identifies these aspects as:

- The content that refers to the theme of the ritual;
- The particular locations where rituals took place; and
- The participants of the ritual.

The ritualistic use of figurines will be discussed in greater detail with regard to ancestors, fertility, and initiation below. It should be noted, however, that these three associations are not mutually exclusive and, in some contexts, they may be integrated in a single ritual.

Ancestors

The role in the daily life in many societies where figurines are or were used suggest that ancestors play an important role in their daily lives and these “invisible forces are thought to pervade all life” (Turner 1967: 507) and many rituals involve the supernatural. The presence of ritual places is attested by the integral role that the ancestors play in a specific society. This has led some researchers to posit that, in some contexts, figurines may be representative of ancestral spirits.

Lesure (2002), for example, maintains that figurines in the Neolithic Near East and Mesoamerica, are usually characterised in a general way, and may be deities that represent myths and legends or ancestors. Such interpretations may be bolstered by ethnographic analogy to modern contexts where there is a close relationship between ritual spaces where figurines are used and the home of the ancestors. Marcus (2019) draws on the work of Simon and MacGaffey (1995) among the Kongo people of West Africa where these people make figurines of their ancestors and, should a family need help, the spirit of the ancestor is enticed to animate a figurine. The role that ancestors play in African belief systems and everyday life has intrigued scholars (*inter alia*,



Hammond-Tooke 1974; Huffman 2012; Knox 2012; Marcus 2019; Matenga 1993; Schoeman 2017). This is also evident among the Komaland sites in northern Ghana where recent excavations on mound sites revealed burial shrines with figurines possibly used in ceremonies “communicating with the supernatural world for healing and other purposes” (Kankpeyeng *et al.* 2013: 475).

Ethnographic observations indicate that, in some contexts, figurines may have fulfilled a similar role in some southern African societies. Robinson (1988: 51) applied an ethnographic approach by consulting the elders of the Mari in the Chivi region of Zimbabwe regarding the use of figurines, which led him to conclude that some figurines are kept in the part of the house allocated to the ancestral spirits, connecting them to ceremonies dedicated to the spirits. Matenga (1993: 151) quotes the missionary/amateur ethnographer Emily Dora Earthy who, writing in 1933, stated that the wooden human figurines used by the Valenge of southern Mozambique during the girl’s initiation rite were also of “high religious value as they become the vehicles of ancestral spirits by means of sacrifices who have been offered.” It is implied these rituals are performed to appease the ancestors during times of misfortune as well as prosperous times.

Fertility

A long-standing, one might say the most popular, assumption assigns figurines to the paradigm of “fertility icons”, primarily used in the private and domestic realm. A number of scholars propose that figurines are related to fertility and/or that they represent prosperity and a guaranteed supply of food and descendants (Ucko 1968; Voigt 2000). Interpretations of figurines in Europe, the Near East and the Aegean, where the majority of figurines were female and naked, were shaped by matriarchal theories and the figurines were thus acknowledged by many as evidence of a “female-oriented religion based on fertility, sexuality, birth and motherhood” (Hamilton 1996a: 282–283; also see Lesure 2002).



Connections to fertility are also favoured by some southern African researchers, except that they point to continuities between the archaeological and the ethnographic past in order to support their arguments. This fertility doll/figurine hypothesis is extensively deliberated relating to pre-colonial and contemporary use of figurines (Becker 1998; Boeyens *et al.* 2009; Cameron 1996, 1997; Dederen 2010; Dell 1998; De Maret 2016; Hanisch 2002; Huffman 2012; Matenga 1993; Nel & Leibhammer 1998; Roumequere & Roumequere-Eberhardt 1962; Summers 1957; Van Schalkwyk 1998a; Wood 2002). Jolles (1998: 99) relates Zulu figurines to rituals “invoking fertility in newlywed couples as well as those that have remained childless” while Van Wyk (1998: 53) argues that figurines used in the South Sotho context are all associated with ideas of fertility in some way. Wood (1998, 2002: 90–91) and De Maret (2016: 505) both proposed that figurines are used among various African ethnic groups to promote fertility or cure barrenness.

Archaeologically, Huffman (1974) suggested that the Leopard’s Kopje figurines could have been associated with a fertility ritual. Matenga (1993) elaborated on this theme from an archaeological perspective in southern Africa. He systematically assembled existing evidence on Zimbabwe’s archaeological figurines and, by using a Shona worldview and oral traditions as known today and in the recent past, established the cultural meanings and use of archaeological figurines. He argues that, even though the Shona do not make and use figurines today, there is adequate evidence to believe that archaeological figurines dating from about AD 1 000 were made by the Shona (Matenga 1993: 7–8). He concludes that the Shona conception of fertility was the impulse behind the manufacturing of certain animal and human figurines.

Matenga (1993: 17–18) is of the opinion that continuity of the manufacturing style and form of the figurines from Zimbabwean contexts may be embedded in the way of thinking and religion of the Shona over the centuries. He compares the shape of iron smelting furnaces and shape of stone structures with the similar form of the figurines that have been manufactured since the 14th century to the present. He further traced the utilisation of figurines in the context of the traditional folk fertility



model observed in some of the rural areas in Zimbabwe. This folk model is defined as “a community’s idealized image of itself and the world that surrounds it” (Matenga 1993: 125). He further attempted to interpret these archaeological figurines in the traditional and philosophical context of the contemporary beliefs around fertility and sacred leadership, as well as his own knowledge about the Shona.

Commentary on archaeological figurines by cultural experts from African communities support the view that some archaeological figurines formed part of rituals held in a domestic realm and signify fertility dolls that had a didactic function (Roumequere & Roumequere-Eberhardt 1962; Wood 2002). This is the case with figurines that are associated with Zhizo sites in both South Africa (Schroda) and Zimbabwe. They are characterised by a form in which the body and female features of the figurines are emphasised, while the facial features are absent on the phallic shaped heads (Wood 2002). Roumequere-Eberhardt, a French-speaking anthropologist, interviewed a Lemba individual who indicated that a woman’s fertility (represented by the body) is a gift from God through her patrilineal ancestors (the phallic head). This interview will be discussed in greater detail below in the section on embodiment.

Whether figurines belong to “fertility cults” or “mother goddesses”, they were made and used in the social realm of a community, with a particular meaning and symbolism associated with the object. Therefore, they may have had multiple meanings as indicated by Earthy’s comments above about the association of figurines used in puberty rituals with ancestors. Cameron (1997: 29), in fact, suggests a very close relationship between the concept of ancestors and that of fertility, in that “fertility is the blessing of the ancestors” while “infertility – of the land, animals, and humans – is the work of ancestors, gods, or spirits who are trying to gain people’s attention.” “Dolls” may be used to ensure or re-instate fertility. According to Cameron (1997: 29), “when a girl is able to bear children, dolls protect and celebrate her fertility.” Once married, they increase her ability to conceive whereas dolls are engaged “to create the ability to conceive” for infertile women. Young girls play and



protect these dolls and they also serve to instil the desire to motherhood (Cameron 1997: 30).

Early accounts for the predominant occurrence of figurines in the archaeological record attributed the “female imagery to a generic feature of womanhood, typically some aspect of reproduction” (Lesure 2002: 595). Lesure (2002: 587) further argues that while “a long-standing interpretive tradition links these [figurines] to ‘fertility cults’ or ‘mother goddesses’, ... recent feminist scholarship suggests that such interpretations simply perpetuate our own society’s preconceptions about gender, nature, and culture.” Feminists deem these interpretations to be the “norm” in the interpretation of figurines and maintaining contemporary Western hypotheses about gender, nature and culture and have criticised this “model” of application to past societies (Conkey & Tringham 1995; Talalay 1994). New ideas have emerged about the figurine traditions in early communities, highlighting the diversity in style, appearance and meaning of figurines (Lesure 2002: 587).

Initiation

As was discussed in Section 1.3, dolls and figurines played and continue to play an important role in the initiation rites of various groups in southern Africa. It is perhaps for this reason that it is one of the most favoured explanations of archaeological figurines in the region. The use of figurines in rituals and various initiation ceremonies, with reference to ethnography, have been widely considered (Arbousset, cited by Riep 2005; Hall 2015: 4; Hammond-Tooke 1981; Hanisch 2002: 24–39; Hanisch & Maumela 2002: 52; Huffman 2002: 18, 2007: 62, 2012: 128; Inskip & Maggs 1975: 136; Loubser 1993: 149; Matenga 1993: 124–126; Nettleton 2002: 100–101; Prins & Granger 1993: 165; Schapera 1966: 146; Summers 1957: 72–73; Van Schalkwyk 2002: 70; Wadley 2013: 318; Whitelaw 1994b: 93).

Initiation into adulthood is one of a number of rites of passage. Rites of passage mark a person’s transition from one status to another. These ritual events include birth,



coming-of-age, marriage and initiation rituals. Davis (2017) describes rites of passage as “play[ing] a central role in African socialization, demarcating the different stages in an individual’s development (*gender and otherwise*), as well as that person’s relationship and role to the broader community.” The transition of an individual from one status to another is synonymous with changes in the human body and also signifies the symbolism around these transitions.

As epitomised in the three-stage Venda initiation ritual (Section 1.3), anthropologically-speaking rites of passage are divided into three parts (Turner 1967: 13–14):

- (1) separation of the person from a previously secure point in the social structure;
- (2) margin (seclusion), when the person is between the old and new state; and
- (3) aggregation (end of seclusion period), when the person reached the new state with new responsibilities and own privileges, commonly signified by dance celebrations (Deflem 1991; Turner 1967: 13–14).

These stages of transition are accompanied by “practices of body alteration and adornment”, tattooing and piercings (Coleman 2002; Whitelaw 1994b: 121). According to Loubser (1993: 145–147), ethnography has shown the use of different sacred objects in male and female puberty initiation and premarital rituals. These ritual objects are subsequently broken and discarded, concluding these rituals and symbolising the permanent change of status of the initiate (Dederen 2009: 228; Krige & Krige 1980: 138; Loubser 1993: 147; Whitelaw 1994a: 51). Loubser (1988: 108, 182) identified archaeological figurines in the Soutpansberg area, comparable to figurines used by contemporary Venda women in initiation rituals with limbs broken off before discard.



This view of figurines being used to fulfil some form of didactic function during initiation rituals, has been applied in both of the archaeological areas discussed in this dissertation. Loubser (1993), Prins and Granger (1993), Van Schalkwyk (1994) and Whitelaw (1993, 1994a) follow an ethnographic approach by linking figurines excavated in archaeological sites in KZN to rituals performed in initiation and rites of passage. The association of figures with deliberately broken pots in some KZN sites is regarded as supporting this interpretation. Various scholars propose that pots with broken bases found in Iron Age sites are related to important rituals, symbolically linking pots and people. It is also believed that the clay pot is synonymous with the womb and relates to rituals where a girl's transformation from childhood to adulthood takes place (Boeyens *et al.* 2009; Huffman 2012). Hammond-Tooke (1981) describes an initiation ritual among some African societies where beer is poured from a small pot into the vaginas of young girls held upside down. He suggests that this symbolises sexual intercourse, comparing the beer to semen. The pots are broken after the ritual, possibly symbolising defloration.

Turning to the Shashe-Limpopo area, Van Schalkwyk (2002: 70) links the Schroda figurines to rites of passage associated with puberty initiation ceremonies, divided into the three stages described above, namely:

- “*The rite of separation*”, involving “symbolic actions whereby individuals or groups are isolated from a previous state in the social structure or set of cultural conditions.”
- “*The rite of transition*”, where the “novice enters a ritual time and space that are betwixt and between those ordered by the categories of past and future social existence.” This phase is marked by various actions involving:
 - “the communion of symbolic objects and actions representing religious mysteries”;



- a section of “games during which the participants are confronted with masks, figurines, contraptions, costumes and such, and
- the “‘fostering of communitas,’ a direct, spontaneous and egalitarian mode of social relationships.”
- The last stage is known as “*the rite of reincorporation*” involving the reintegration of the initiate(s) with a new standing in the community.

Nettleton (2002) draws a direct connection in this vein between Schroda and the practices of the Venda suggesting that the Schroda settlement area where ceremonies were conducted, could possibly have been the predecessor of the *domba* among the Venda. Olivier (1960), too, drew comparisons between figurines found amongst the Bemba, Swazi, Venda and other cultures of Africa with reference to their social, economic and symbolic context in these cultures, but tended to concentrate his study on initiation rituals amongst the abovementioned cultures. He applied these rituals to the K2 and Mapungubwe figurines and supported the arguments of Robinson (1988), Schofield (1948) and Summers (1957) that the figurines were used as teaching props during initiation rituals. Calabrese (2005: 157) suggested that the distribution of figurine assemblages might reflect an initiation-related custom in the region, with Castle Rock being used as a ritual site, serving the elite at K2 at the height of its occupation (Calabrese 2005: 178, 333).

It is evident that there are many discussions and debates on the role and possible didactic function that figurines played in rituals (*inter alia*, Huffman 2012: 127, 2014: 122–123; Inskeep & Maggs 1975; Jolles 1998; Roumequere & Roumequere-Eberhardt 1962; Van Schalkwyk 2002: 70; Whitelaw 1994a; Wood 2002), however, that is not the primary concern of this project and the remainder of this chapter will focus on two theoretical aspects that have shaped my own thinking.



2.6 Embodiment

Anthropomorphic figurines illustrate the unique human characteristic of self-awareness. Their makers often conceal or exaggerate some features in the modelling of the human form that represent various aspects of belief and ritual context and are seen as products of particular societies and cannot be interpreted as isolated artefacts. It is for this reason that the theme of embodiment is important in this dissertation.

Embodiment can be defined as the representation of something in a visible or tangible form, within a societal role – as ritual embodiment using figural imagery and other cultural materials – and ideology (Brumfiel 1996; Meskell 2017; Schmidt 2009). The human body has been an important focus in the archaeological studies of sexuality and gender (*inter alia*, Joyce 2019; Meskell 2017: 25; Schoeman 2017; Wood 2002). Arguably, embodiment exists as an aspect of many of the interpretive frameworks already discussed in that many of them are concerned primarily with the female body. There is often a gendered component to interpretive frameworks, in part because as Hamilton (1996a: 282) has argued: “figurine studies did not develop in a vacuum, but within a diverse framework of post-enlightenment theories”, resulting in an “explanation of sexual inequality, which began with the theorizing of biological sexual difference.”

The human body has been the focus of many archaeological studies over the decades through the figurative representations of bodily gestures such as dress or ornamentation of the body and as the personification of thoughts about identity and gender. Figurines, particularly those that take a female form, have multiple dimensions of symbolic meaning and are referred to in many cultural contexts directly related to fertility and rites of passage or form part of various rituals as instruments of instruction (Dederen 2013: 22–38; Huffman 2012: 119–146; Humphreys 2011: 202; Mönning 1967: 126–127; Schoeman 2017: 129–150). Scholars engage with ideas of materiality and embodiment of figurines and discuss the various materials



used to make and decorate a figurine, the symbolism of these figurines in society, and the role they play in the household or the community (Insoll 2017; Joyce 2005; Lesure 2005; Marcus 2019). Sandstrom (1991) suggests that the Nahua people of the Gulf Coast of Mexico deem corn to be anthropomorphic and that the human body adopts the form from the corn. They compare the stages of life of humans from childhood to adulthood to the life history of maize.

Schoeman (2017) describes the southern African figurines as anthropomorphic in form with rounded bodies and small tapered heads (phallic in form) accentuating both male and female sexual attributes (also see Wadley 2013; Wood 2002). Dederen (2010), furthermore, proposes that the stylized figurines from Schroda are dual-sexed, with a female body and phallic head, symbolising the connection between male and female and that the small heads could indicate the limitations on an individual's independence in matters related to fertility (Schoeman 2017).

Schoeman (2017: 129) suggests that the anthropomorphic South African figurines in particular have been “approached as the embodiment of ideas about sex, gender, and selfhood.” Her research on the meaning and context of figurines is focused on the “feminist understandings of the construction of sex and gender.” In part this is due to the role that they are believed to have played in ensuring fertility and in the initiation rites of young women. She further draws on methodologies and uses ethnography and historical records in her approach to explain the use, form and discard patterns of these figurines. She suggests that the anthropomorphic shape of the figurines resembles the human body. Although they are not bodies, they reflect the imagery and ideas of the early farming communities about the body. These ideas include sex and gender and are embodied in the creation of figurines. It is believed that the sexual identities of these people were formed through everyday acts and ceremonial rituals. Figurines were made for a specific use and discarded in particular “contexts in order to materialize specific ideas” (Schoeman 2017: 131).



Schoeman (2017) incorporated new interpretations to study the Schroda figurines (Hanisch & Maumela 2002; Van Schalkwyk 2002; Wood 2002), combining ethnographic and historical documents on the form and find contexts to infer the meaning of these figurines. In her discussion, she elaborates on figurine form, use and discard patterns of these communities and included records of various rituals of past and contemporary communities.

Initiation ceremonies are the most familiar rituals where figurines feature. The associated use of clay objects during these ceremonies have been reported throughout southern Africa. Figurines are used to portray messages and act as a learning device during the initiation process of young girls when they will also interact with the figurine. Pottery manufacture was the domain of women and believed to be a “deeply gendered process” (Schoeman 2017: 146). It was also the women who made the clay figurines for initiation and fertility-related rituals. The large quantities of figurines in the archaeological context of initiation areas suggest that women might have played a more important role in the control of these ceremonies as opposed to ceremonies observed in historic Venda (Schoeman 2017).

Furthermore, it is evident that the form (style), material and context (discard patterns) of figurines are important to demonstrate the use and assist with the interpretation of figurines. Figurines formed an integral part of ritual ceremonies such as initiation schools in early farming communities, for example, Schroda yielded a cluster of broken figurines (phallic objects, animal-like figurines and anthropomorphic figurines with explicit sexual features) in the kraal area separated by a fence. The discard pattern, form of the figurines and place proved similar to historical initiation schools (Hanisch 2002; Loubser 1993; Van Schalkwyk 2002). Initiation is synonymous with bodily transformation where paraphernalia and acts (for example, figurines and masks) are used in the embodiment of personhood and in marking the transition from young person to adulthood (Schoeman 2017). She further suggests



in southern Africa embodied personhood would be gendered, and to achieve this transformation in gendering, children's mutable sexual and gendered identities would need to become more fixed.

Crossley (2004: 31) describes rituals as “embodied, that is, that we do them and that this ‘doing’ is a bodily act.” Rituals comprise postures, gestures, dances and patterns of movement. Dederen and Mokakabye (2017: 173–174) elaborate on the relationship between “feeling and experiencing” of novices during rituals. Furthermore, they refer to “bodily learning”:

It is not surprising then that with procreation as a major concern, the body constituted a primary metaphor in ritual pedagogy. It featured both as message and medium, as subject matter and didactic tool. The initiates discovered the meaning of intercourse through body related symbolism, activities and imagery. They learned about their bodies through the mediation of their bodies. The repeated didactic encounter with sex-related aphorisms, songs, ritual performances, dance/exercises and installations of figurines and other objects enhanced the awareness of their sexuality and instilled the social and cosmological relevance of intercourse.

Figurines are, however, not living bodies. Bailey (1996: 292) argues making a figurine “was to have transformed something or someone into something else.” He further postulates that “figurines represent a defamiliarization of object from subject (of figurine from human).” Figurines can be described as images of human beings and can be “objects that were made not with an [sic] purely utilitarian function in mind, but with the express purpose of symbolising something” (Arntz 2013: 6). However, the fact that it takes a human form, is crucial in fostering understanding. As Smith and Kotzé (2010: 5) maintain, the shape of an object or the pattern embedded in it has great significance in Africa.



It is therefore worthwhile to return to the interview between Roumequere and Roumequere-Eberhardt (1962) and their Lemba interlocuter. The Lemba traditional healer was familiar with initiation ceremonies in South Africa and Zimbabwe. He disclosed the significant role of the figurines in rites of passage ceremonies. These figurines (displaying both male and female sexual features) are made by the women to present to their young daughters as a “child” to teach them about the laws of the figurine (*milayo*). This is embedded in the ideology of patriarchal communities where it is perceived that males own the “female body, procreative powers, and spirit” (Schoeman 2017: 143). The girl belongs to her father. However, after she is married, the husband owns her procreative powers and children born from the marriage. According to the *milayo*, the head of the figurine belongs to the father (small/phallic shaped, which is linked to a woman’s mind and spirit), while the rest of the body represents the reproductive elements of the female body depicting a navel, legs, buttocks and breasts (Schoeman 2017; Wood 2002). The figurine thus mediated the relationship between the women, her own family and ancestors, and her husband.

Material culture is a means of non-verbal communication through which people socially interact with objects (Hodder 1990; Hurcombe 2007). According to Arntz (2013: 31) “meaning and thought gives shape to material culture, and material culture also shapes meaning and thought.” Figurines conveyed messages on the process of socio-economic change in a community, reflecting and embodying cultural and social transitions taking place. A figurine is also the expression of the ideas of its maker and the vehicle of specific social behaviour. The ideas of the maker are instilled into the figurine and are internalised and interpreted by others in the community (Hourmouziadis, cited by Bailey 2005: 154).

Performing acts include everyday rituals or communal ceremonies where social relationships are formed during these performances and may extend beyond the time of the act (Kray 2007). Ritual is a network through which society operate and new social relationships are formed by participating in these acts. By participating in a



figurine ritual, the participant – individual or community – forms a relationship with the object and the spirit it represents (Kray 2007).

All the South African figurines are found in agro-pastoral settlements in both domestic and central areas. The distribution pattern and form of these figurines indicated different uses – embodied with ideas; with the clusters of figurines being associated with communal ceremonies as opposed to scattered figurines in household contexts being associated with household rituals. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

Symbolic Reservoirs

Some scholars have used the idea of symbolic reservoirs where closely related societies are seen as sharing a system of symbols and beliefs, meaning that objects do not have to have the same set of categories/style in order to be comparable. This is evident in the material culture of these societies and their expressed behaviour (McIntosh 1989).

However, MacEachern (1994: 205) proposes that the term presents ideas of “an entity too bounded and too stable usefully to reflect the dynamics of social interaction within and (especially) between African societies.” He further suggests that shared cultural systems between different groups that do not necessarily share a common origin, were spread between interacting societies in the past.

As suggested by MacEachern (1994: 209), the elements of this elaborate material culture

would themselves have become central to the continuation of structures that formerly they only represented. To do so, however, they would have had to incorporate elements of known meaning and



significance to other members of the society, elements derived from a single “symbolic reservoir.”

In many parts of the world, figurines form part of the material culture of different ethnic groups. According to Van Schalkwyk (2002: 69) “cultural meaning does not exist inherently in objects, but is invoked in practice and may be perceived differently in different situations by different people.” However, this does not suggest that we understand the rationale behind their creation and possible use. McIntosh (1989: 79) suggests that similar stylistic elements are shared within and between different ethnic groups and this concept of symbolic reservoir may define the role that stylistic variation plays in complex societies (also see De Maret 2016). Behavioural patterns change as society becomes more complex and the expression of symbols and ideologies shared within a society change and can be identified in settlement patterns and particularly burial position as observed in Western African archaeological sites (McIntosh 1989).

Cultural systems are expressed in material culture and can be transmitted through interaction continuously over time, from one community to another with which “they may or may not share cultural elements” (MacEachern 1994: 220) and

[w]e should thus expect that artefact variation will usually derive, not from the recombination of elements held with an unchanging corpus of cultural information, but from interaction between conceptual/material system that may be organized entirely differently. We cannot, under these circumstances, assume that the cultural association of artefact variation will stay constant over time, as symbolic sets combine, mutate and adapt in response to changing natural and human environments.

Scholars critique the notion that different ceramic classes represent different ethnic groups and dispute the subjective concepts of material cultures based on ceramic



classifications and their relationships with ethnic groups in southern Africa (Hall & Morris 1983; Pikirayi 2007). There is broad agreement, however, that there are many similarities in material culture between different groups in southern Africa (*inter alia* Coutu *et al.* 2016; Dart 1959; Dederen 2010; Huffman 1970, 2002; Kuper 1980; Schoeman 2017).

2.7 Conclusion

It can likely be assumed that the occurrence of figurines in Iron Age sites across South Africa (in the domestic as well as communal realm), is an indication that the use of figurines in a ritual and educational context has formed part of the lives of the early farming communities (Evers & Hammond-Tooke 1986; Fouché 1937; Gardner 1963; Hanisch 1980; Hanisch & Maumela 2002; Huffman 2000, 2005, 2007; Inskip & Maggs 1975; Loubser 1993; Maggs & Ward 1994; Meyer 1998, 2000; Prins & Granger 1993; Schofield 1948; Summers 1957; Whitelaw 1993, 1994a).

Huffman (2012: 120–122), in particular, argues that archaeologists may not be able to interpret ceremonial objects and activity areas without the access and understanding of the worldview of the people. Only by familiarising oneself with the worldview of the people can one attempt to understand prehistoric rituals (Huffman 2012: 119). He uses the worldviews of various Eastern Ntu-speaking people to propose a basis for understanding where rituals may have taken place on Iron Age archaeological sites. He further implies that it is possible to use settlement organisation to find and interpret ritual spaces (Huffman 2012: 120). To create order in a society, people arrange their corporeal environment into spaces where special activities take place, demonstrating social values and significance resulting in “sets of shared beliefs” (Huffman 2012: 121). According to Huffman cultural rules or norms are closely associated with a specific worldview and form an integral part of social life and daily action.



Various theoretical frameworks in the study on the interpretations of anthropomorphic figurines were explored in this chapter. Figurines are made of various types of material all across the globe, and I discussed some of the various materials figurines were made of and the chemical analysis done on a sample of figurine fragments in South Africa. I also concentrated on the physical appearances and depositional context of figurines from various parts of the world and the use of figurines in ceremonial contexts. I concluded with various thoughts on embodiment and symbolic reservoirs.

The next chapter will focus on the background of the archaeological sites in this study and ideas around worldview and settlement organisation of the Iron Age communities.



Chapter 3: Background to the Archaeological Sites

3.1 Introduction

The “Iron Age” is an archaeological term defining the period and sites associated with various Eastern Ntu-speaking peoples in southern Africa who cultivated crops and lived in settled communities. Iron and copper tools and ornaments appeared in the archaeological record at this time, that resulted in archaeologists assigning this period to the Iron Age (Huffman 2007: xi; Mitchell 2002: 259). These people were also the creators and manufacturers of stylized pottery and other related artefacts. The herding of cattle, sheep and goats and cultivation of millets and sorghum formed part of their everyday lives.

Changes in southern Africa occurred when these early communities – often referred to as agro-pastoralists – moved into South Africa from the north in different streams (based on linguistic variation (Huffman 2002: 10; Whitelaw 2007: 22) in the 1st and 2nd millennium AD. These communities included the ancestors of today’s Nguni, Sotho-Tswana, Shona and the Tsonga-speakers (Huffman 2007: xi). They settled in areas with adequate water supply for domestic use as well as for the cultivation of crops in the fertile river valleys of the coastlands of southern KZN. The tropical crop plants they brought along, required a warm to hot climate to flourish with an abundant summer rainfall (Maggs 2000: 1).

These early Ntu-speaking people settled along the east coast of southern Africa in KZN around AD 400 and in the northern Transkei and the Eastern Cape Province by AD 600 (Swart *et al.* 2007) (Table 3.1).

According to Huffman (2002: 10–12), the early Eastern Ntu-speaking farmers moved into the Limpopo Valley around AD 350 and AD 450. He postulates that this region was not occupied from AD 600 – AD 900 due to drier and colder temperatures. It was only around AD 900 (MIA) that the Zhizo farmers then moved into the area (Huffman & Woodborne 2021). Archaeological evidence indicate that these agricultural



communities kept livestock and cultivated crops. They lived in settlements consisting of houses with storage pits, grain bins and cattle byres, herded cattle, goats and sheep, and cultivated millets, sorghum, groundnuts and beans (Huffman 2002; Mitchell 2002: 272).

The spatial distribution of the EIA and MIA archaeological sites discussed in this dissertation are divided between the eastern coastline and the northern part of South Africa, namely the Eastern Cape Province, Northern Transkei, KZN and the SLCA in the Limpopo Province (Fig 3.1). The figurines can be dated by their association with the pottery traditions found at these sites. (*inter alia* Binneman 1996: 29; Fouché 1937; Gardner 1963; Greenfield & Miller 2004; Huffman 2000; Maggs & Ward 1984; Mitchell 2002: 272; Prins & Granger 1993; Swart *et al.* 2007; Van Schalkwyk 1994). These communities produced ceramics with distinctive designs and decorations for everyday use around the homesteads, as gifts and for trade purposes. Different facies of pottery traditions are representative of the various iron-working communities that once occupied these settlements. These pottery sequences have been used by archaeologists to develop a relative dating sequence, thus establishing a chronological framework within which to understand change over time in these communities (Huffman 2002, 2007; Huffman & Woodborne 2021). The profile, decoration pattern and the layout thereof on a vessel are the attributes used to define different ceramic types and traditions (Huffman 1989, 2007). Ceramic data proposes a connection between the EIA communities of the east coast to the modern Nguni and Sotho-Tswana-speakers and the descendants of the contemporary Sotho-Tswana and Venda of the Limpopo Valley (MIA) in southern Africa (Huffman 2007; Swart *et al.* 2007).



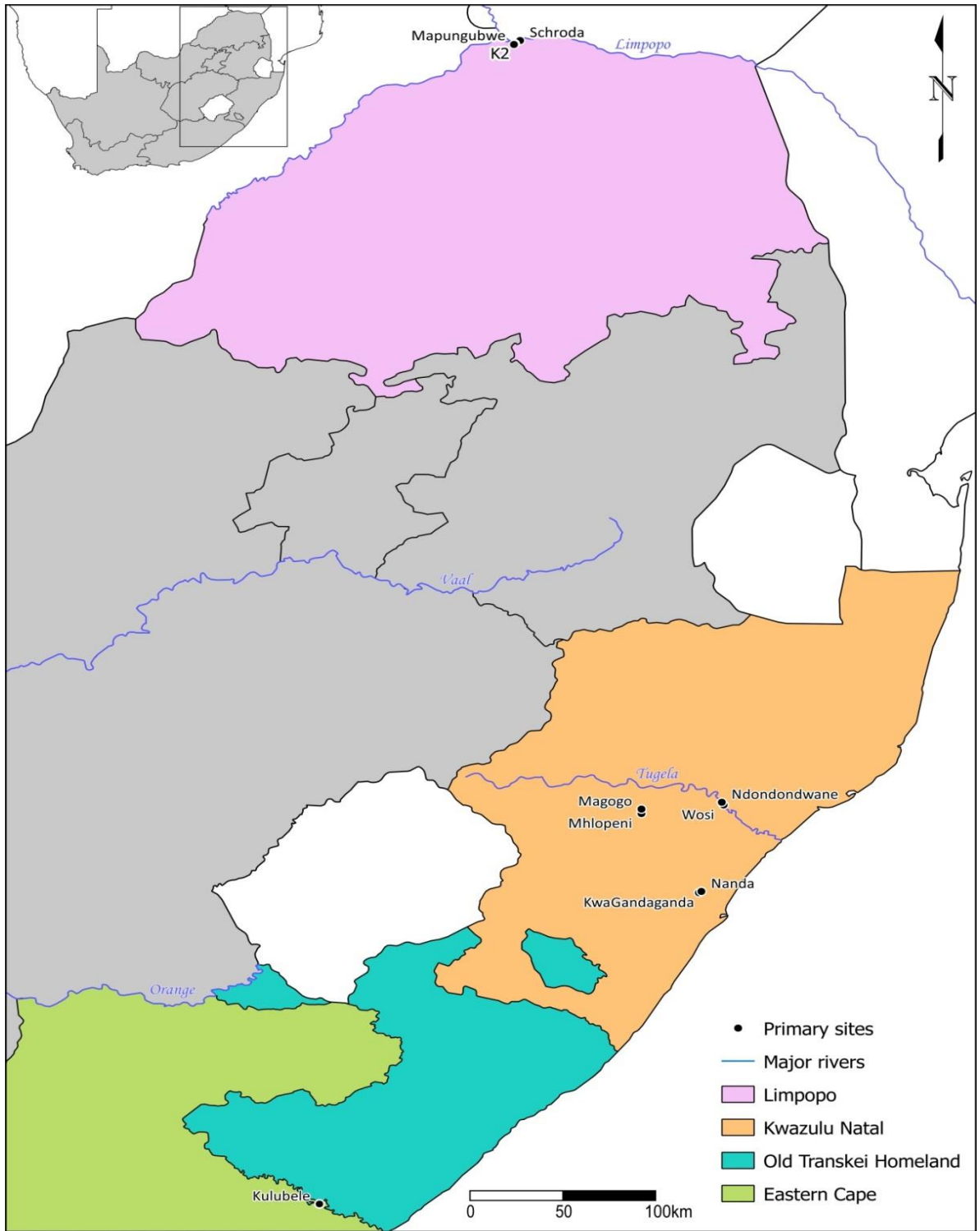


Figure 3.1: Archaeological sites referred to in the text (map: C. Bruwer)



Table 3.1: The chronology and location of Early and Middle Iron Age sites of figurines in South Africa

Site	AD 500-700	AD 700-900	AD 900-1000	AD 1000-1200	AD 1200-1300
Magogo	4				
Mhlopeni	3				
Ntsitsana	4				
Wosi		2			
Ndondondwane		13			
Nanda		18			
KwaGandaganda		41			
Kulubele		8			
Leokwe Hill				4	
Schroda			27		
Baobab				1	
Castle Rock				3	
K2				91	
Mapungubwe					16
Total	11	82	27	99	16

3.2 Settlement and Worldview

Structuralism was explored in the 1980s as cognitive archaeology by Huffman, who developed models of human behaviour, which he applied to settlement patterns in southern Africa. This included Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe, where communities developed into complex societies with distinct social classes, resulting in changes in spatial patterns (Huffman 2005, 2012: 122; Mitchell 2002: 304). Huffman's (2012) premises about social organisation and worldview resulted in the development of the Zimbabwe Pattern (ZP) and Central Cattle Pattern (CCP), settlement models that were applied to the South African archaeological record.

Therefore, one cannot discuss the Iron Age in southern Africa without also addressing the CCP settlement organisation model. This model was first developed by Huffman (1986, 1993), and is derived from the ethnographic work of Kuper (1982) on the



settlement organisation of the Eastern Ntu (where cattle are used for bride-wealth), the economic and social organisation of these societies and the division of space between where the male and female activities take place within a settlement. Huffman (2004: 67) argues that the CCP is a result of the relationship between worldview, social organisation and settlement organisation, and is not limited to a specific cultural group. It is applicable to patrilineal Eastern Ntu-speaking people with “male hereditary leadership, bride price in cattle and a positive attitude about ancestors” resulting in social behaviour being expressed in spatial patterns. The CCP – characterised by a male area in the centre – is also synonymous with the location of female residential homes in the area surrounding the male zone (Huffman 2010: 165–167).

Huffman (2010: 164–174) applies the CCP to EIA and MIA mixed farming sites. He uses the ethnography of the Nguni, Shona and Sotho-Tswana to demonstrate the CCP. He states that “the core of the CCP is based on the ideological centrality of cattle” (Huffman 2010: 165–167). A typical spatial layout of a village organised according to the CCP would comprise (Huffman 1982: 140; 1997: 152–153; 2002:14; Whitelaw 1994a: 49):

- a central cattle kraal;
- huts arranged around the central kraal;
- storage pits in association with huts/kraal
- elite burials in kraal – usually of men;
- iron-smithing area in the central part.

Houses were arranged around the central kraal and were constructed with circular walls made of *daga* (a mixture of dung and mud) and covered with thatched roofs, that would in some instances enclose a veranda. The chief lived on the edge of the residential complex and the wives, children and sons with families occupied the other houses (Fig 3.2). It is believed that women and men had their own sleeping rooms as well as separate sleeping huts for young boys and girls. The rest of the domestic area consisted of a separate cooking area for the women. According to Huffman (2010),



throughout the Eastern Ntu-speaking world, the main residential area of such a settlement would have belonged to the domain of the women, whilst the court was always near the cattle kraal – cattle were the main source of wealth – and belonged to the leader of the settlement and formed the principal part of the men’s domain. The central cattle kraal formed an integral part of the society, since men were buried near or in the cattle kraal and cattle were sacrificed to male ancestors in the kraal. Cattle also formed part of another important social practice in southern Africa, the *lobola* – where cattle are payment of the bride price. The women made grain bins and temporary storage pits behind the houses where they stored beans, while the male area consisted of cattle kraals, long-term storage pits, and other areas associated with male activities (Huffman 2010; Swart *et al.* 2007).

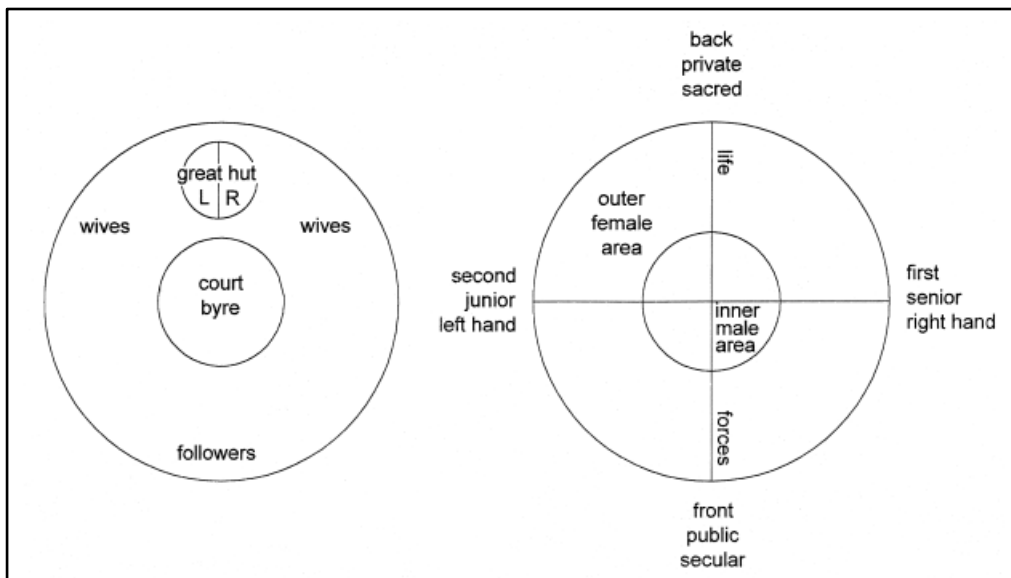


Figure 3.2: Plan of CCP layout (Huffman 2001)

Huffman (2012: 142) further states that female fertility is vital and was signified in a variety of objects, including clay figurines, pots, houses and grain bins. The kraal area was controlled by men and contained deep pits where sorghum and millets were stored and was also the area where male ancestors were buried. Because of the positive approach towards the ancestors, Huffman argues that the Eastern Ntu people want them nearby (Huffman 2010: 167). These ancestors protected the male kraal area. Evidence of such spatial organisation is present at the K2-period site in



the Limpopo Province as well as the EIA site of KwaGandaganda in KZN (Huffman 2007: Fig 19; Whitelaw 1994a: Figs 30, 31). This model is not without its critics, and, in particular, the question of to what extent it can be applied to the Early Iron Age is a matter of debate (Badenhorst 2009; Greenfield & Miller 2004; Lane 1994). An intensive discussion of this issue is, however, beyond the scope of this dissertation.

The CCP and its association with patrilineal authority offers a milieu for the interpretation of cultural material from Iron Age communities. Ceramic masks, appliqué heads and figurine fragments found in the central area of the EIA site of Ndongondwane in KZN (discussed later), suggests that these objects formed part of initiation ceremonies, as is the case with the figurines found in the central area near the cattle kraal in the MIA site of Schroda in the Limpopo Province. Since initiation ceremonies are the responsibility of the chiefs in contemporary patrilineal societies, this may have been the case in the past as well (Swart *et al.* 2007).

3.3 Settlement and Political Organisation

As mentioned before, EIA farmers settled and established homesteads in the fertile valleys of the east coast of southern Africa. However, the scale of the political activities was rather limited in these early communities, with each small village – possibly a few hundred people – being independent and economically self-sufficient. It is also possible that a small group of villages in a specific area might have formed a small chiefdom, trading with communities in other areas. However, the evidence for trade indicates that it was relatively small-scale until AD 800 (Maggs 2000: 1).

The MIA saw a transition in the political organisation of communities in the Limpopo Province, with the development of the first complex society in southern Africa. This transition is evident in the distinct social classes and sacred leadership with the establishment of the first town, first stone-walled palace and the first state. According to Huffman (2005) Schroda (AD 900 – AD 1 000) was the first capital, followed by K2



(AD 1 000 – AD 1 220) and Mapungubwe (AD 1 220 – AD 1 300), which was a precursor to the developments at Great Zimbabwe.

Huffman (2000, 2005, 2012: 122) maintains that class distinction evident in the spatial organisation of a society, provides the basis for the sequence of transformations that developed into socially structured, hierarchical societies such as Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe. The role of the court and the senior leader of the community were fundamental in every settlement where political matters and disputes were handled. According to Huffman (2002: 15), the senior leader was the wealthiest and most powerful person in the community. The size of the settlement was closely associated with the court hierarchy and the relationship between male political power and the distribution of wealth (Huffman 2001: 10). The court handled disputes between members of the leader's family, other homesteads and neighbourhoods. Court officials played an important role in assisting the leader in the management of the chiefdom. Many people lived under the senior leader in the district of the capital that served as the national centre and a district headquarters, with many officials serving under the leader. This hierarchy was copied by subordinate leaders according to power and wealth distribution. The overall size of the population and territory determined the political power and wealth distribution (Huffman 2000, 2002). Political stratification was determined by the number of courts in a society and as a community expands, the number of courts would increase. Huffman (2000) suggests that Schroda was probably a level-3 capital – the only one in the area at the time – based on its magnitude, controlling access to the resources of the chiefdom. He further uses ethnographic patterns from the Sotho-Tswana-speaking people to illustrate the range of hierarchy of a settlement (Table 3.2):



Table 3.2: Hierarchy levels of capitals (Huffman 2002: 16):

Hierarchy	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Paramount Chiefs	-	-	1
Senior Chiefs	-	1	19
Petty Chiefs	1	5	316
Ward Headman	4	133	1006
Total Population	1 800	13 900	150 000

In the remainder of this chapter, I will discuss the sites from which the figurines in this study originated.

3.4 The Eastern Sites

First millennium farming communities along the eastern part of southern Africa appeared to have been concentrated in village nodes, surrounded by large areas used for common grazing, as well as hunting and the collection of food or natural resources for building (Coutu *et al.* 2016; Mitchel 2002; Whitelaw 1993).

The first farmers arrived on the east coast area of South Africa around AD 400 settling along the river valleys. These valleys were suitable for the cultivation of crops with the fertile soil and accessibility to water. The favourable climate and dense vegetation with its abundance of elephants and other wildlife made this an ideal area for these early farming communities to settle (Coutu *et al.* 2016; Huffman 2007; Loubser 1993; Maggs 1980; Maggs & Ward 1984; Maggs 2000; Prins & Granger 1993).

The occupation phases of early farming communities in KZN are based on the ceramic assemblage sequences that places these early farming communities in the earliest phase of occupation at AD 400 – AD 600 (Mzonjani), with subsequent phases of Msuluzi (AD 650 – AD 780), Ndongondwane (AD 780 – AD 910) and Ntshokane (AD 950 – AD 1 030) (Coutu *et al.* 2016: 412–413; Huffman 2007: 129, 307, 311, 315) (Table 3.3).



Table 3.3: Ceramic sequence from KZN with decoration patterns (Coutu *et al.* 2016)

<i>Eastern Stream</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Decoration patterns</i>
Mzonjani	AD 400-AD 600	Punctate decoration on rim with spaced motifs on shoulder
<i>Western Stream</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Decoration patterns</i>
Msuluzi	AD 650-AD 780	Complex decoration of blocks of lines on rim and broad cross-hatching on neck and shoulder
Ndondondwane	AD 780-AD 910	Multiple bands of herringbone and cross-hatching on neck
Ntshekane	AD 910-AD 1030	Multiple fine bands of herringbone on sloping neck

3.4.1 Magogo and Mhlopeni

Magogo and Mhlopeni are two Early Iron Age sites situated in the Muden area of the Tugela Basin. The Muden area, with its sweetveld grazing and colluvial soil, constituted an ideal environment for EIA farming communities that depended on herds and crops for survival (Maggs & Ward 1984). Small-scale excavations were undertaken at these sites by personnel from the Natal Museum in 1979. The dates of the two sites were determined from charcoal samples and vary from AD 550 – AD 760.

Magogo, a settlement of approximately 7.6 hectares, is situated between Magogo Hill and the Mpofana, or Mooi River. The majority of excavations took place in the central area of the site. An area of approximately 20 m² was exposed, containing several pits and an abundance of scattered smelting debris, which was interpreted as an indication of iron smelting. A charcoal sample from Pit 1 yielded a date of 1 360±50 BP (AD 590, Pta-2874) (Maggs & Ward 1984: 110).

A variety of cultural remains were excavated from Magogo, including worked shell, ostrich eggshell (OES) beads, worked bone, metal objects, stone objects (lower grindstones with oval grooves), glass beads and botanical remains, such as millet. The latter indicates the cultivation of these grains (Maggs & Ward 1984). The majority



of features excavated yielded Msuluzi pottery, while two pits yielded pottery similar to the Ndondondwane type with some samples that combined the two types (Maggs & Ward 1984).

Figurine fragments (including animal figurine fragments) were found in association with other cultural materials (including both Msuluzi and Ndondondwane pottery) in various pits excavated at Magogo (Maggs & Ward 1984).

The nearby site of Mhlopeni, situated 3.5 km from Magogo, was built on colluvial soil along the perennial tributary of the Mpofana in a narrow valley. Small scale excavations concentrated on a surface scatter, a nearby pit and two human burials in the eroded soil (Maggs & Ward 1984). The pit did not contain much cultural material apart from pottery and charcoal that was dated at Pta-2878, $1\ 400\pm 50$ (AD 550), close to the date of Pit 1 at Magogo. Among the other cultural material in the pit was decorated pottery of the Msuluzi phase (Maggs & Ward 1984: 130). Three figurine fragments were recovered from the pit. One resembling a small human hand with five fingers exhibits three grooves on the arm, which could possibly indicate bracelets. Another two anthropomorphic figurines were among the surface scatter near the excavated pit at Mhlopeni.

3.4.2 Wosi

The EIA village of Wosi (co-ordinates: $28^{\circ}54'25''S$ and $31^{\circ}01'50''E$) is situated in the lower Thukela Basin at the confluence of the Wosi and Thukela Rivers. The site lies on a colluvial ridge on the banks of the Wosi River and covers approximately 10 hectares. This semi-arid area is said to be ideal for dry-land agriculture and the soil is well suited to support drought-resistant crops such as sorghum (Van Schalkwyk 1994).

The site is believed to date to the 7th century AD with a second occupation in the 8th century AD. Various phases of pottery were recognised with intra-site differences and



the association of two type-sites belonging to Ndongondwane (Maggs 1984a) and Msuluzi Confluence (between AD 600 and AD 800) (Maggs 1980) to Mamba and Wosi Traditions (during 7th and 8th centuries) (Van Schalkwyk 1994). Van Schalkwyk (1994) observed a remarkable shift in the expression of style in the pottery during the two occupation periods, but no notable change in the rest of the cultural material or possible new groups of people moving in between the occupation periods. He suggested that the site provided the earliest Msuluzi-phase settlement thus far excavated in the Thukela Basin. However, Huffman (2007) is of the opinion that the pottery from Wosi belongs to the Msuluzi or Ndongondwane ceramic facies.

The archaeological site comprises a number of haphazardly scattered middens – six of the 11 middens were excavated extensively in 1983 but the settlement layout could not be determined. Glass and OES beads, shells, pendants, worked bone and modified stone were among the cultural material remains excavated at the site. It would appear that the site was a centre for craft production of various kinds. Each excavated midden yielded numerous broken, unfinished ivory bangles and ivory chips – the earliest known production of ivory bangles in the southern African Iron Age (Coutu *et al.* 2016; Voigt & Von den Driesch cited in Van Schalkwyk 1984). There was also evidence for small-scale iron working, as well as the large-scale working of micaceous talc-schist. The latter led Van Schalkwyk (1994: 65) to propose that this may have been used for trade and cosmetic purposes.

Fragments of hollow sculptures and two anthropomorphic figurine fragments were excavated from the midden area at Wosi. They were found in association with ivory objects and other cultural material. The hollow sculptures display extended “beaks” with teeth and other facial features. This find is similar to those from Ndongondwane (Loubser 1993). Other clay fragments included a clay horn and decorated human torso fragments and a complete bullock (Van Schalkwyk 1994: 82). Charcoal samples from the various layers of the midden date between AD 615 – AD 790.



3.4.3 Ndongondwane

This EIA archaeological site is situated on the eastern bank of the Thukela River in the lower Thukela Basin (co-ordinates: 28°53'S and 31°01'E), approximately 1 500 m downstream from Wosi. It is situated on a flat area, with the confluence of the Wosi and Thukela Rivers approximately 2 km to the south. The sweet grass, suitable for all-year round grazing, forms part of the warm, dry savanna landscape (Edwards 1967). According to Maggs (1980), the environment was ideal for agriculture with an abundance of fresh water and nearby natural resources for iron and copper production and smelting, making it a haven for early agricultural communities. The calibrated radiocarbon dates from the bottom layers of the mound at Ndongondwane (also known as Middledrift) date to the 9th century AD. Potsherds recovered belong to the Ndongondwane ceramic facies (Loubser 1993: 140).

Initial excavations started in 1978 (by Maggs), with subsequent excavations during 1982 and 1983 by Loubser and Greenfield and by Van Schalkwyk in 1995. Loubser (1993) excavated the mound, *daga* (baked clay) and dung areas (Fig 3.3) – marked with scattered *daga*, bone and pottery on the surface of each excavation area – over an area of about 7 hectares. He concentrated the excavations around the enclosure in the mound area that was also the main area of the initial excavations by Maggs in 1978. The mound, at its highest was 600 mm above sterile sub-soil and Loubser proposes five periods of dumping. A large slag pit and remains of a smelting furnace were also evident in the mound area (Fig 3.3).

Various cultural objects were found such as the remains of an iron smelting furnace with fragments of tuyères, large amounts of ivory and different kinds of ceramic, glass, shell, stone and metal objects dumped in and around the enclosure of the mound and ash area surrounding the dung assemblage (byre).



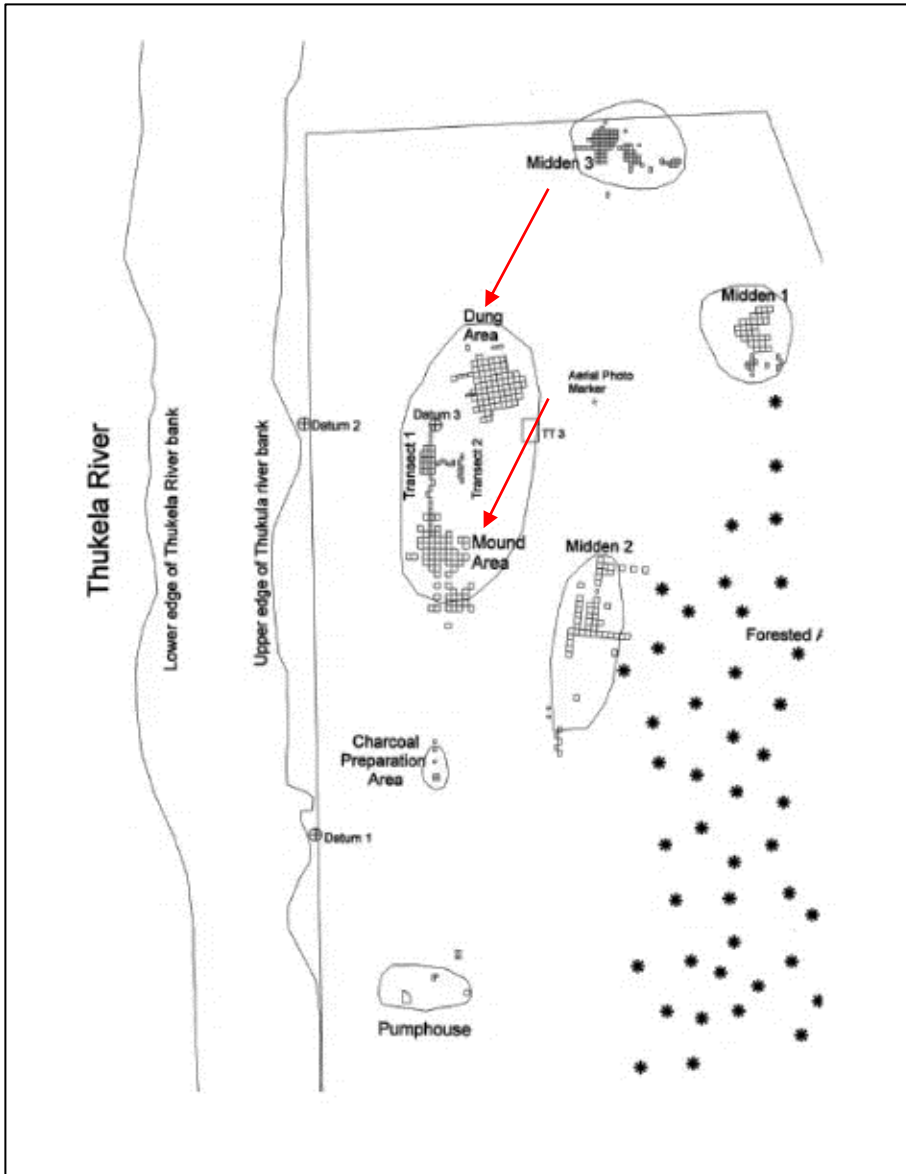


Figure 3.3: Map of Ndongondwane with arrows indicating the largest excavation areas (Greenfield & Van Schalkwyk 2003)

Cultural objects include several figurine fragments (in addition to several clay mask fragments/appliqué head fragments) of which 13 were identified as being from anthropomorphic figurines (mound and dung area). The fragments of clay mask(s) and appliqué heads were found in the furnace rubble. These fragments are decorated with incisions and features representing ears and a nose. Other cylindrical shaped objects (resembling legs) were found in the mound (n=5) and dung area (n=1) (Loubser 1993).



The extensive excavations by Loubser (1993) of the mound revealed variations in the soil deposits as first reported by Maggs (1978). Loubser identified various channels in the sub-soil, filled with ash and stones, enclosing a roughly rectangular area (Fig 3.4). He observed small circular holes in the outer channel of the mound site, appearing at irregular intervals, evidently man-made, suggesting a fence constructed of poles, possibly indicating a “corridor or marks left when the fence was shifted.” He suggests that the presence of a fence is evident in the build-up of deposits after its construction as indicated by a line of stones facing the shape of the channel “indicating that they had been placed on the side of the fence” (Loubser 1993: 117–118). Noteworthy is the deposits of ceramic material discarded on each side of the fence with pottery largely concentrated on the inside line of the channel and with the larger head fragments on the outside (Loubser 1993: 118) (Fig 3.4).

According to Greenfield and Miller (2004: 1515), the mound area “becomes a centre for initiation, ivory working, and other activities, much of which is sealed off from public view by a fenced enclosure.” They further propose that the mound area showed at least three different occupation levels, suggesting a cultural continuity in social organisation of EIA to LIA production.

Along the eastern boundary were three domestic midden complexes in association with a hut, hearths and granary storage areas. Ivory and other clay objects were also uncovered from possible hut structures and surrounding enclosures. It is evident that household activities took place in the *daga* area where floor and wall *daga*, in association with a concentration of grindstones and other cultural remains, such as ceramics, were found. Loubser (1993) postulates this to be a single occupation area dating to the 9th century AD. He ascribes the area to be an area for both male and female initiates and compares customs of various cultures such as the Venda, Sotho, Sotho-Tswana and others in relation to the archaeological material and provenience from Ndongondwane.



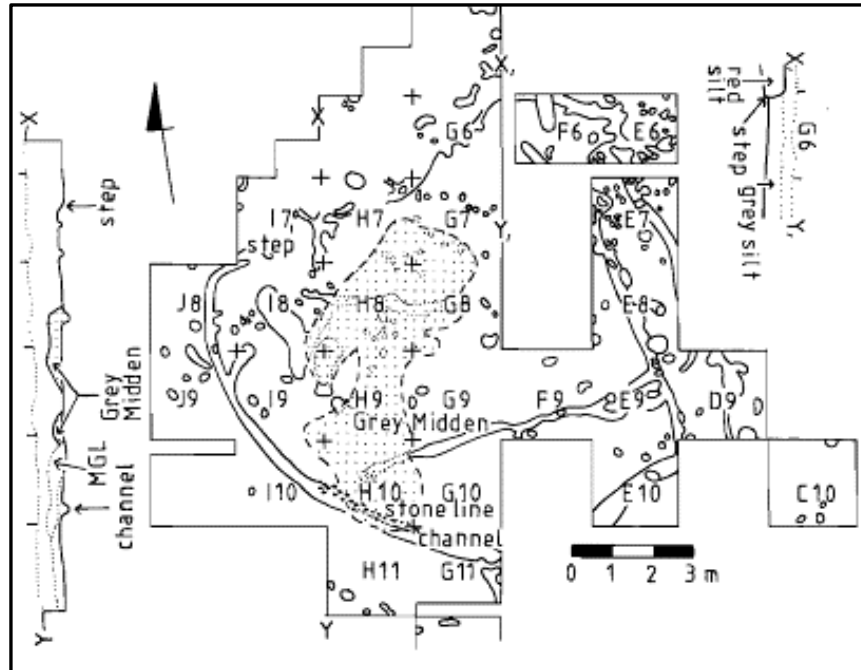


Figure 3.4: Plan of sections of the mound indicating the midden, channel and associated features (Loubser 1993)

3.4.4 Nanda

This 7th century site (co-ordinates: 29°40'04"S and 30°51'21"E) was located in a valley on the northern bank of the Mngeni River, near Durban. Whitelaw (1993) proposes that the area was densely populated and extensively cultivated. It is the first of two EIA sites (out of a total of ten) in the Mngeni Valley (Maggs 1984b; Maggs & Ward 1986) that contained figurines. It is now flooded by the Inanda Dam.

Disturbance by ploughing revealed cultural materials that resulted in the excavation of the site. The majority of pottery represented the Msuluzi phase while some sherds belong to the Ndongondwane phase (Huffman 1980; Maggs 1980). Limited excavations during 1983 also yielded Matola pottery (Silver Leaves facies) in the centre of the site with scattered surface material on the western part.

Whitelaw (1993: 78) excavated different settlement units in the central and western parts of the site. He is of the opinion that the site consisted of several homesteads,



“each spatially distinct from the others” that would have housed extended families. The presence of storage pits and burials in or near the cattle byre, site location and other types of features found, suggested that Nanda was organised in a form of the CCP (Whitelaw 1993: 47) (Fig 3.5).

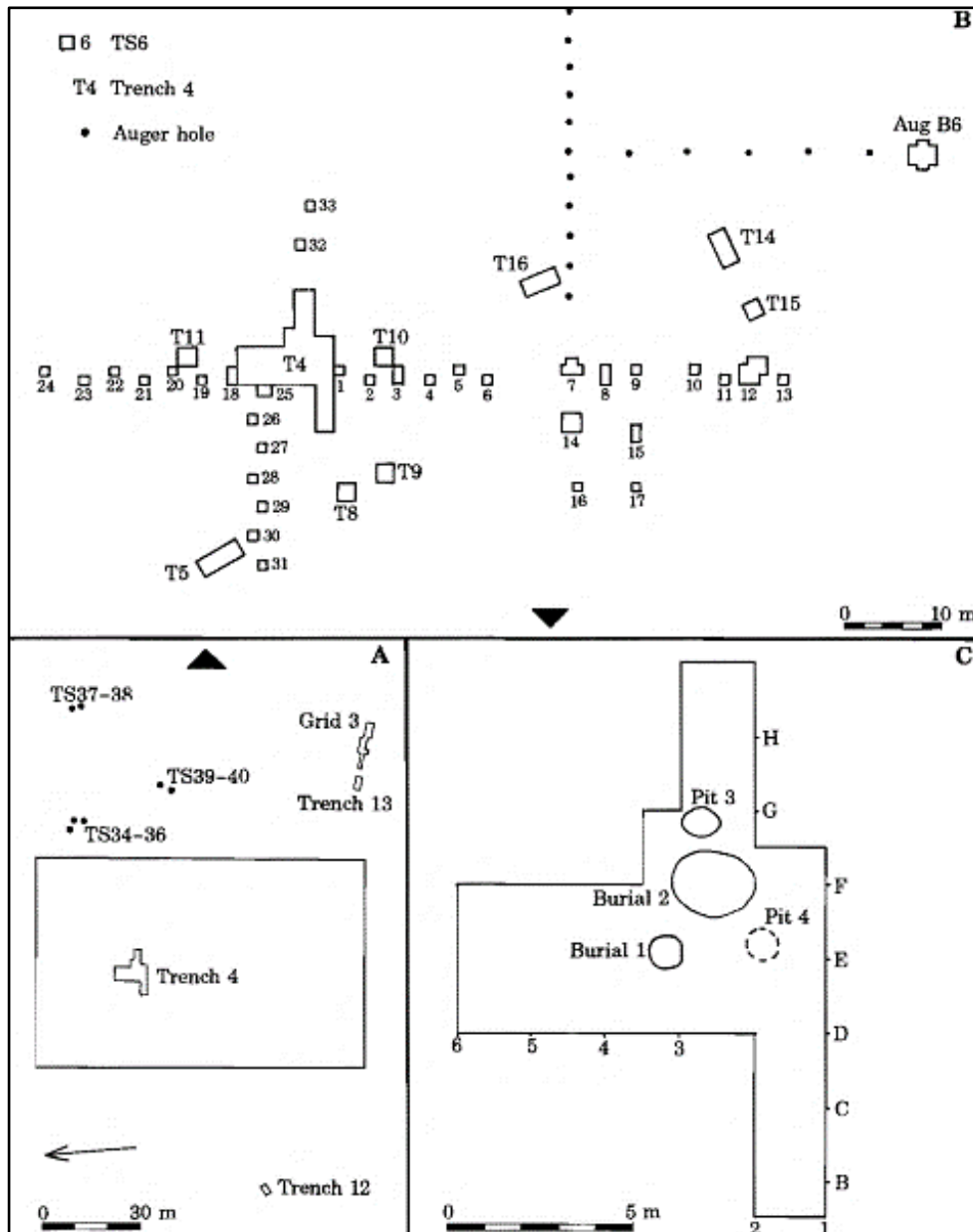


Figure 3.5: Site plan of Nanda excavations (Whitelaw 1993)

Anthropomorphic figurine fragments were found in various trenches with the largest fragment from the TS12 pit. Four other fragments were recovered from Grid 3. A



number of smaller fragments of figurines were found in the Burial 2 pit, Pit 3 and Pit 4 E1 of Trench 4 (Whitelaw 1993). Figurine fragments (some decorated) were located in close proximity to human burial areas, a midden area as well as in pits at Nanda. These figurines were discovered in association with worked stone, remains of iron working and large quantities of pottery. One figurine fragment was found in association with a large number of charcoal remains and a bottomless pot in a pit 2 m below the surface (date AD 675±60).

3.4.5 KwaGandaganda

KwaGandaganda (co-ordinates: 29°40'43"S and 30°50'10"E) was situated on a large bend of the Mngeni River near Durban. It is the second site to contain anthropomorphic figurines out of the ten EIA sites identified in the survey of the Mngeni Valley. It, too, has now been flooded by the Inanda Dam (Maggs 1984b; Maggs & Ward 1986). According to Whitelaw (1994a), the Mngeni River was shallow, wide and easy to cross, even during the summer months and this flat area could thus easily sustain a fairly large settlement with its deep and fertile colluvial soil.

Whitelaw's (1994a: 35–38) excavations of the settlement area of KwaGandaganda revealed evidence of multiple occupation phases dating between the 6th and 10th centuries AD (Fig 3.6). Pottery similar to that found on nearby sites of the Msuluzi Confluence dating between the 6th and 10th centuries AD was recovered, as well as evidence of later occupation (Whitelaw 1994a). According to Whitelaw (1994a) the EIA pottery found at KwaGandaganda can be ascribed to the Ntshekane, Ndondondwane and Msuluzi phases.

According to Whitelaw (1994a: 49) the settlement layout during the various phases at KwaGandaganda subscribed to the CCP pattern and its associated worldview. He argued that the Ntshekane phase was categorised by a central area, surrounded by a number of burnt house and granary remains, including midden deposits, lower grindstones and debris scattered over the site. The Ndondondwane and Msuluzi



phases were identified by livestock byres, iron working areas, intermittent pits and surrounding remains of houses and raised granaries.

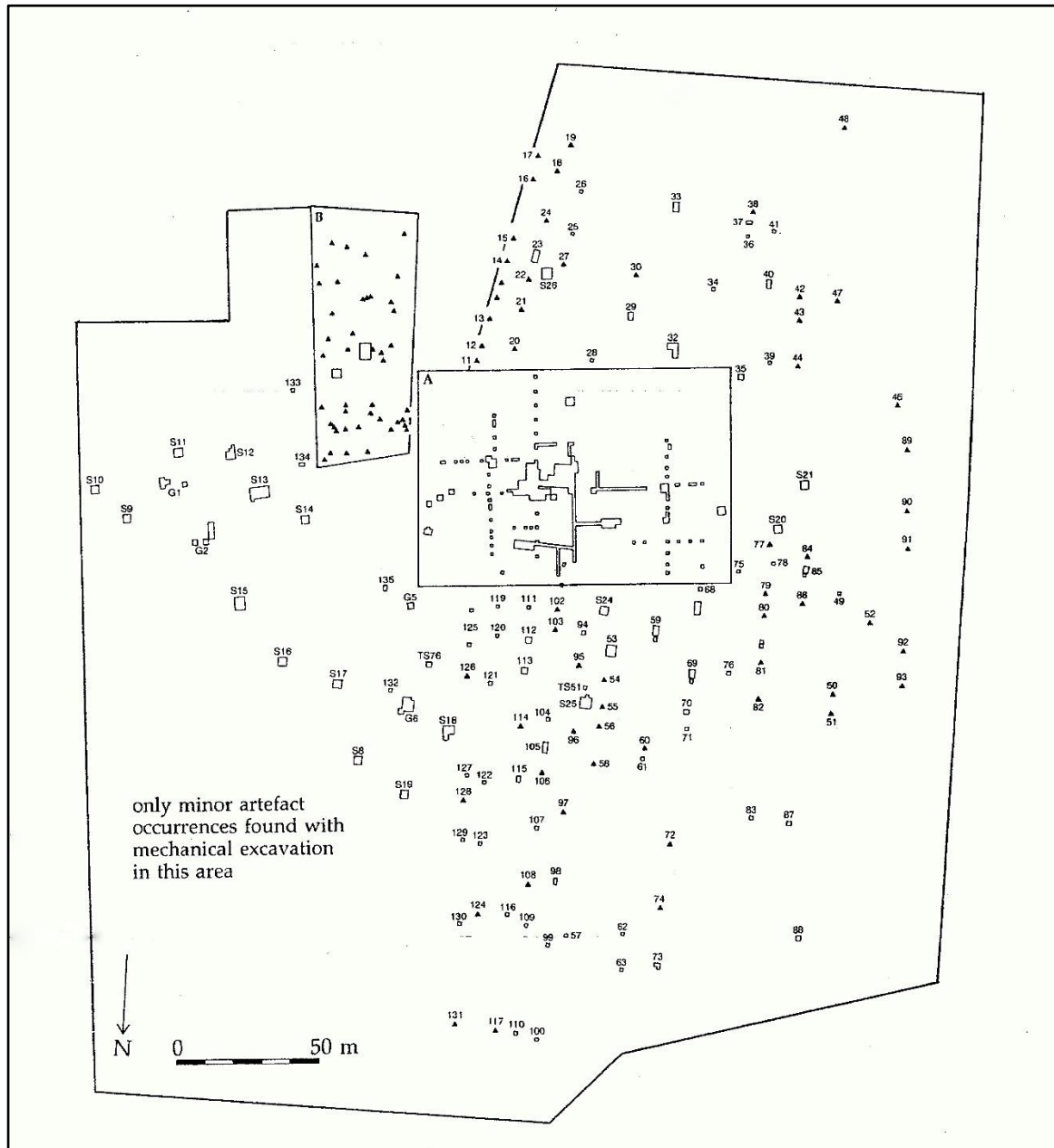


Figure 3.6: Plan of KwaGandaganda excavations (Whitelaw 1994a)

A rich variety of material was found, both during an earth-scraping operation and the excavations. Whitelaw's (1994a: 35–38) excavations of KwaGandaganda focused on the byre and adjacent midden area. The site contained worked bone artefacts, shell-



disc beads, slag, tuyéres and *daga* blocks with grass or reed impressions (Whitelaw 1994a). A significant find was a small ceramic fragment from an Islamic vessel with a pale-yellow fabric and a blue-green glaze found in association with Ntshekane pottery that Whitelaw (1994a: 35) dated to approximately the 9th century AD. Other material objects included copper and iron beads, a glass cane bead, worked stone, bone and shell.

The midden (Square 25), extending nearly 400 m² and 90 cm deep contained a rich deposit of cultural materials that included ivory shavings, pieces of ivory bracelets, pierced canine teeth and bone beads (two were decorated) (Whitelaw 1994a). Several nearly complete Msuluzi vessels were recovered. The midden also contained a dung deposit of between 7 cm and 16 cm deep with large pieces of charcoal, slag, complete pieces of ore and strips of tuyéres. Two human burials were also present in this midden (Whitelaw 1994a: 34).

Anthropomorphic figurine fragments were recovered in association with Ntshekane, Ndongondwane and Msuluzi potsherds among numerous other classes of cultural material. These were recovered from a variety of contexts including from the vicinity of a cattle byre and from a pit, although the majority were recovered, in association with Msuluzi ceramics, in the midden. Byre 1 (Fig 3.7) yielded an unusual small clay head with facial features (Whitelaw 1994a).



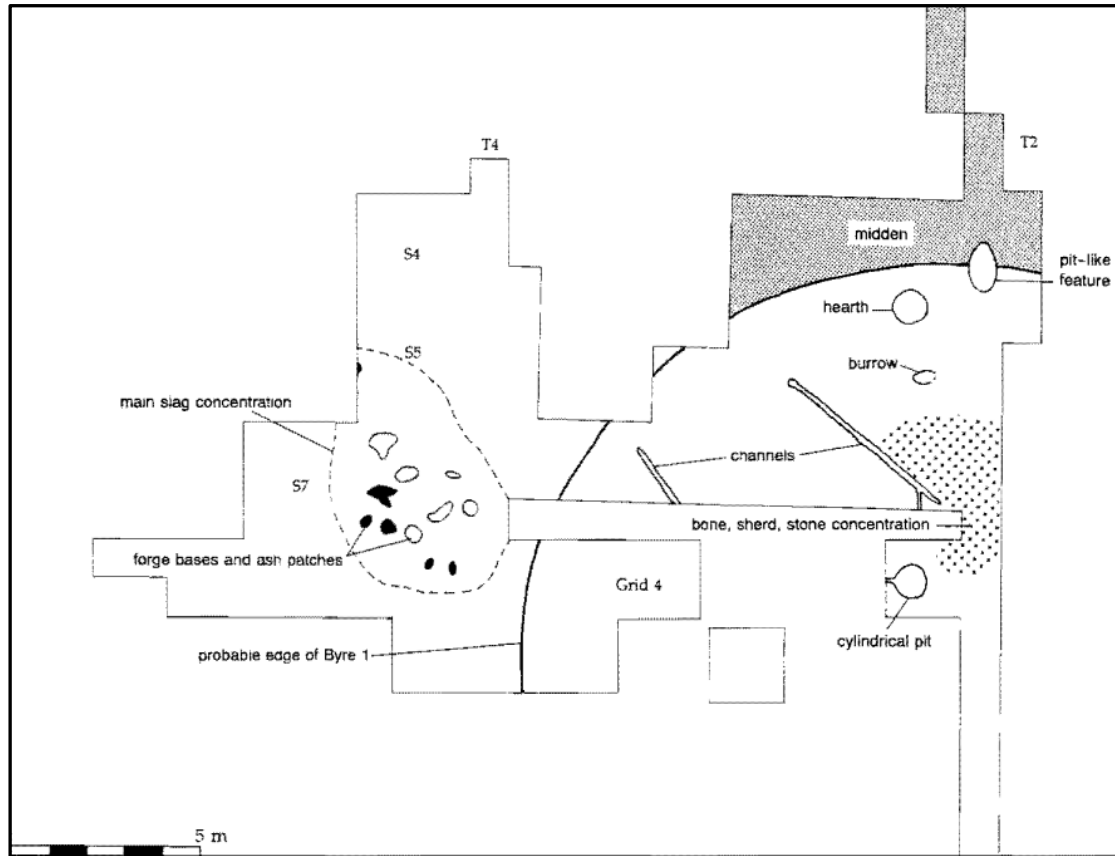


Figure 3.7: Excavation areas in and near Byre 1: KwaGandaganda (Whitelaw: 1994a)

3.4.6 *Kulubele in the Eastern Cape*

Kulubele is situated 60 km inland (co-ordinates: 27°51'S and 32°25'E), on the west bank of the Great Kei River valley in the Stutterheim district near the town of Komga in the Eastern Cape Province (Binneman 1996: 29) (Fig 3.1). The settlement was radiocarbon-dated to somewhere between AD 790 and AD 857. The cultural material from the excavated areas in the midden and a test pit yielded Msuluzi potsherds, previously associated with KZN sites. It appears that the site was occupied somewhat



later than those in KZN and may have been the first EIA site in the Eastern Cape (Binneman *et al.* 1992; Binneman 1996: 29) (Fig 3.8).

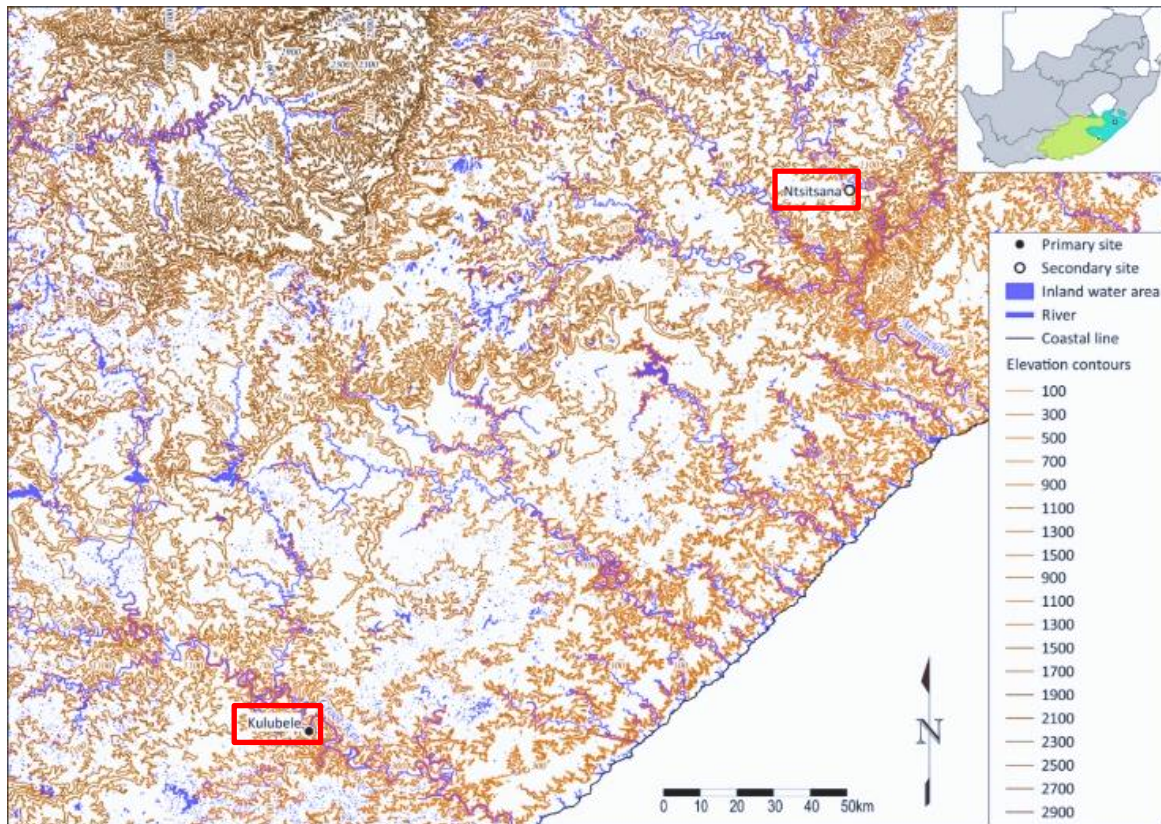


Figure 3.8: Research area in the Transkei (map: C. Bruwer)

The site was discovered during the late 1980s and small-scale excavations were carried out between 1993 and 1995. These included the excavation of two storage pits, a midden and a *daga* floor. The cultural remains included a small number of decorated potsherds, small ceramic figurine fragments, several bone points, awls, a pendant, broken ivory bangles, shell beads, OES beads, a decorated pipe fragment and polished bone (Binneman *et al.* 1992; Binneman 1996: 29). The practice of iron-working is evident in the abundant tuyère fragments and iron slag. Binneman (1996) further suggests that the presence of microlithic stone tools and OES beads in the cultural remains is evidence of interaction between the early farming communities and hunter-gatherers.



The 1996 site report by Binneman does not specify the exact area (in the midden or a pit area) where the figurine fragments were discovered. The report only makes note of some small clay fragments that were recovered, but it is unclear where they came from. However, it can be assumed that the fragments were retrieved from within the settlement area.

Binneman (1996: 35) suggests that the ceramics found at Kulubele may signify a shift between the Msuluzi/Ndondondwane phases and, if the socio-economic organisation and cultural remains are considered, the Early Iron Age farming communities in the Great Kei River valley (Eastern Cape) were comparable to those further north in KZN.

3.5 The Shashe-Limpopo Confluence Area

The Shashe Limpopo Confluence Area (SLCA) in the present-day Limpopo Province is known for the prominent archaeological sites of Schroda, K2 and Mapungubwe, representing the MIA cultures that existed in the region between AD 900 and AD 1300. The MIA is connected to a complex society with distinct social classes (Huffman 2001: 7). This area appears to have experienced some dynamic population shifts over the period, marked archaeologically by changes in the corpus of the ceramics (Antonites 2018; Calabrese 2005: 318). According to Hanisch (2002: 38), Schroda marked the beginning of a shift in settlement that eventually resulted in a “socio-political change into the Mapungubwe system of divine kingship” – Huffman’s (1982) Zimbabwe Pattern (see below).

During this period, the Limpopo River flowed permanently and occasionally the Shashe River would flood, pushing the water in the Limpopo back, resulting in a natural dam. The floodplains were very fertile with dense forests along the riverbanks. Isotopic analysis shows that the climate was similar to today and not suitable for farming. So why did these people settle in this area? Evidence of ivory objects and international glass beads found at Schroda and associated sites, indicate that these



people probably settled in the basin to exploit the ivory trade by hunting elephants (Hanisch 1980; Huffman 2001, 2021; Mitchell 2002).

The sample of figurines in this study includes artefacts from three sites, Schroda (AD 900 to AD 1 000), K2 (AD 1000 to AD 1220) and Mapungubwe (AD 1 220 to AD 1 300), which is now a World Heritage Site. The first mentioned site is located on the farm Schroda 46 MS, while the latter two are located on the farm Greefswald 37 MS (Hanisch 1980, 2002; Huffman 2005; Meyer 1998, 2000; Vogel 2000: 51–57). Other excavated sites in the area, with related cultural material, including figurines, are Castle Rock, Leokwe, and Baobab (Fig 3.1), but they are not included in this study.

3.5.1 Schroda

The site of Schroda (co-ordinates: 22°11'0"S and 29°25'45"E) is situated approximately 7 km downstream from where the Shashe River joins the Limpopo River and approximately 65 km west of the border post at Beit Bridge. Today, the area with its rivers, periodic flooding and dry vegetation sustains large herds of elephant and other wildlife. Early Arabic documents refer to the abundance of elephants and their tusks, which were in demand for trade. Iron, which was sought after by India, is also mentioned. Archaeological evidence, such as early Indonesian glass beads (Freeman-Grenville 1962; Wood 2005) indicates that Schroda was the earliest known interior settlement in the Shashe-Limpopo area to be linked with the Indian Ocean trade network. This trade would have run via Sofala, which is situated in present-day Mozambique (Freeman-Grenville 1962; Hanisch 2002: 38; Huffman 2002: 16) (Fig 3.9).

In terms of the site's settlement history, people designated by archaeologists as having a Zhizo cultural identity (after their ceramics) appear to have moved into the area around AD 900 from eastern Botswana or southern Zimbabwe, perhaps attracted by the easy accessibility to water (Antonites 2018; Hanisch 2002; Huffman 2001, 2007, 2021). Huffman (2001, 2007, 2021) suggests that the area was occupied



until shortly after AD 1 000 when Schroda's influence waned due to the establishment of a new capital at K2. The occupation of K2 is associated with the users of Leopard's Kopje ceramics. With this influx of new people, changes occurred in the Zhizo ceramic style, to what is referred to as Leokwe ceramics in the 10th century (Huffman 2021).

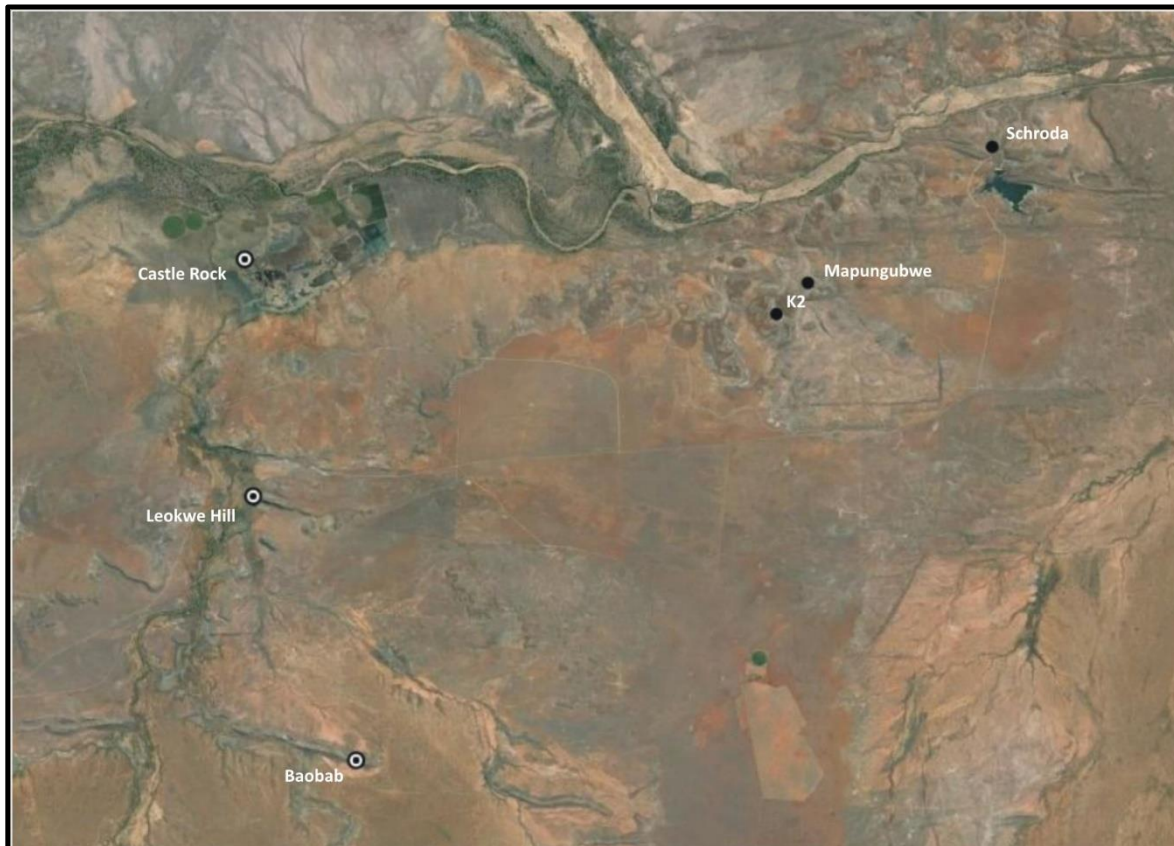


Figure 3.9: Location of SLCA sites mentioned in the text (image: C. Bruwer)

There are thus two cultural horizons at Schroda in that the Zhizo ceramic style (AD 900 – AD 1 020), which belongs to the Nkope Branch of the Urewe Tradition, was superseded by ceramics of a different style (Leokwe). Despite their cultural differences, these Eastern Ntu-speakers all dipped into the same “symbolic reservoir”. The later phase was originally thought to be a Leopard's Kopje phase, but Calabrese (2007) reclassified the ceramics as Leokwe, which is a style of Zhizo ceramics with some influences from K2 designs. Also, further investigations on the other areas of excavation, indicate that the Leokwe occupation phase represents a



continuous occupation by the Zhizo people after AD 1 000 and not a new occupation as previously believed (Antonites 2018, 2020; Calabrese 2007; Raath 2014). These Zhizo-K2 or Leokwe style ceramics appear between AD 1 020 – AD1 200 and their disappearance coincides with the establishment of state-level society at Mapungubwe (Antonites 2018). The relationship between those making and using Leokwe and K2 ceramics respectively is not entirely clear. Calabrese (2007) has, however, argued that there was an ethnic or class differentiation based on a relationship that saw Leokwe individuals acting as craft practitioners, ritual specialists, and herdsmen for elite K2 communities. At this time, groups of Zhizo people moved to Botswana, while others stayed behind at the capital, maintaining their own material culture, ultimately resulting in the first stratification of cultural groups (Antonites 2020; Huffman 2021: 2–3).

Excavations at Schroda yielded a large number of local ivory objects and imported glass beads. According to Huffman (2001) the presence of these beads at Schroda is evidence of the trade relations with the Indian Ocean ivory trade network. Archaeological evidence supports the presence of glass beads (among other trade goods) being found on the East Coast (Sinclair 1982). Although imported glass beads were found elsewhere inland, excavations at Schroda yielded a large quantity of these beads in association with local ivory objects (Hanisch 2002; Huffman 2000, 2001, 2002).

Schroda is located on top of a rocky plateau overlooking the Limpopo River to the north. The site is protected from wind by a long, high sandstone ridge on the southern side, with a series of narrow rock outcrops running parallel with the sandstone ridge. There are two natural areas divided by a stone ridge, that may have served to separate a royal section from that inhabited by the commoners, according to local informants (Hanisch 2002: 38). Starting in 1975, extensive excavations directed by Edwin Hanisch were initiated at Schroda, and continued on a regular basis until 1982. The site covers an area of 15 hectares and six separate areas were excavated by means of trenches and horizontal excavations (Fig 3.10).



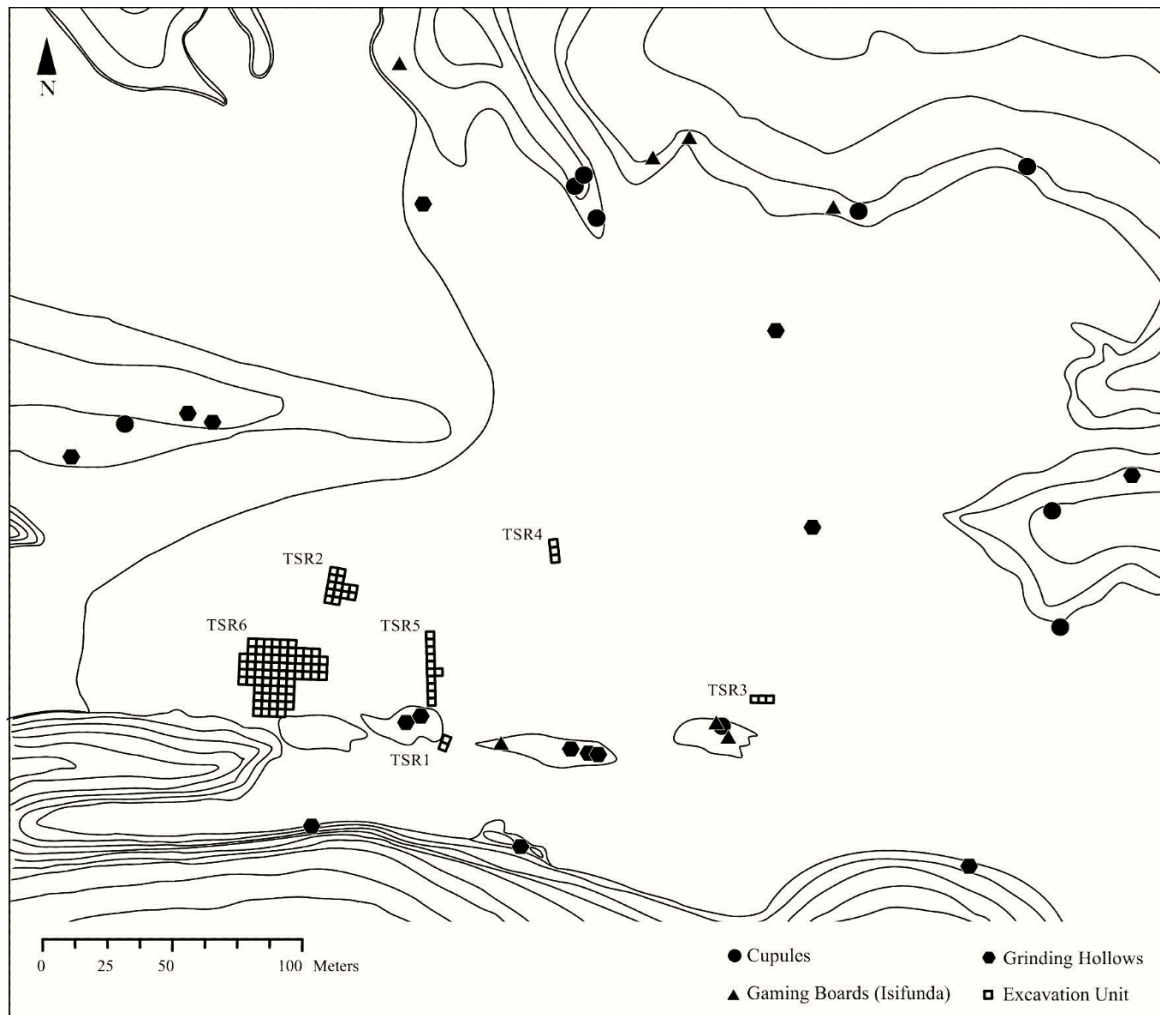


Figure 3.10: Schroda site map of excavated areas by Hanisch (Raath 2014: 31)

These excavations revealed that the site most likely closely followed the typical pattern associated with the CCP and southern African agro-pastoralists, including thick deposits of dung found in the central region (Huffman 2005). Several other features were exposed during excavations, including hut floors, hut rubble, gravel courtyard floors in front of the huts, as well as grain grinding hollows (Hanisch 2002).

Cultural deposits in some areas yielded few remains while others comprised large quantities of faunal material and pottery, with Areas 4, 5, and 6 yielding large numbers of bone, pottery, anthropomorphic and animal figurines. These remains consisted of



ivory and bone ornaments, tools, arrowheads and beads (glass, ostrich eggshell and achatina shell). Although glass beads were not often found, they occurred in all levels of excavations. Copper ornaments and iron objects were also reported as well as a variety of stone features, human skeletal remains and ceramics belonging to the Zhizo Tradition – discussed in detail above. Interestingly, two pits in Areas 3 and 6 contained pot burials with numerous bones and potsherds buried in one or two complete pots (Hanisch 2002). Area 6 yielded the largest number of burials with associated grave goods such as glass beads and achatina shell beads (Antonites 2016; Hanisch 2002). Pottery recovered from Area 6, linked to the Leokwe phase, indicates craft specialisation in ceramic production of storage vessels, possibly used for serving food and beverages at large public events. Ceramics were also found in association with burial ceremonies and other rituals (Antonites 2020).

One of the most well-known features of the site is the large number of figurines and figurine fragments that were recovered – more than 2 000 fragments in total. According to Hanisch (2002: 35), this is the first record of such a large number of figurines retrieved in South Africa, and it has not been surpassed since. The figurines comprised animal, anthropomorphic and phallic objects, but some were so fragmented that their original shape could not necessarily be determined. All excavated areas at Schroda yielded fragments of figurines, although the majority were clustered in one part of the site (Area 6), where Hanisch (2002: 26–28) reported numerous discrete clusters with finds of single/isolated figurines interspersed between them.

It is thus possible that the spatial organisation of figurines at Schroda offers us insights into the different contexts in which figurines may have been used. As stated above, the majority of figurines at Schroda were found in large concentrations in Area 6, the excavation eventually spanning an area of 30 m x 30 m (Fig 3.11). The main groups of figurines were retrieved from the western side of what was once a cattle byre. The area with figurines was divided into two sections, separated by a fence (the existence of which is indicated by a line of charred posts), demonstrating two



methods of disposal (Dederen 2009; Hanisch 2002). The northeastern side of the fence yielded fragments from large figurines of wild animals, stylized birds, semi-human and stylized human forms, whereas small domestic animals (goats, cattle and sheep) were found on the south-western side of the fence. No female figurines were present on the south-western side. These figurines are assigned to the occupation era of the Leokwe phase, which post-dates the arrival of K2 people in the area and the incorporation of elements of their ceramic style with that of Zhizo ceramics (Antonites 2018).

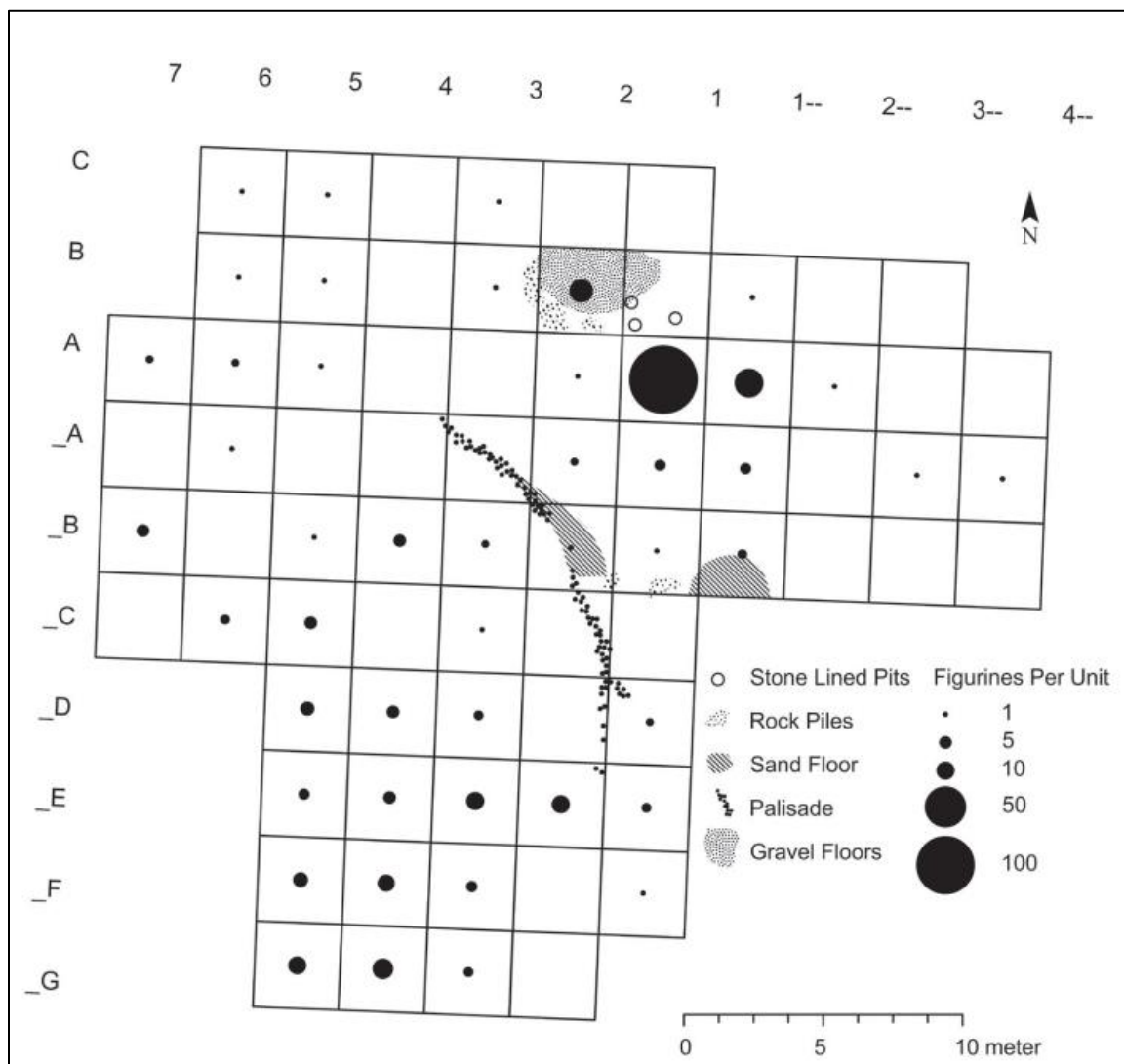


Figure 3.11: Excavation area 6 showing concentration of figurines and features (adapted by Antonites from Hanisch & Maumela 2002: 48)



Although figurines were scattered throughout Area 6, there were three distinct clusters. One small pit contained a cluster of figurines, which was covered by half of a broken pot. Nearby was another cluster in a pit, lined with potsherds, that included well preserved figurines of two giraffe, an elephant, two stylized male and female anthropomorphic figurines and several stylized birds. The third cluster was buried and covered with stones, in association with tuyère fragments (Hanisch 2002).

Overwhelmingly, scholars have associated the Schroda figurines with ritual activities (Antonites 2018; Hanisch 2002; Huffman 1996; Van Schalkwyk 2002). Local informants indicated that, from their knowledge of how such spaces were traditionally organised, the chief's space would have been behind the rocky outcrop with the court towards the west of the chief's residence, placing these sections near the area where the figurines were found (Hanisch 2002: 38). If Schroda had the status of a capital, it would have undoubtedly been the centre of many rituals with the chief being responsible for the fertility of the land and rainmaking (Hammond-Tooke 1993: 70).

K2 and Mapungubwe

When the Leopard's Kopje people moved into the area, they started farming on the floodplains of the Limpopo River, cultivating sorghums and it is proposed that they came to control the trade routes that were formerly dominated by the Zhizo community at Schroda (Antonites 2018; Huffman 2001, 2021; Raath 2014: 13). Huffman (2001) further suggests that this Leopard's Kopje settlement was the largest in its day and consisted of several residential areas, each under the authority of a family head.

This is epitomised in the K2/Mapungubwe archaeological complex (Fig 3.9), situated in the Limpopo Province in the northern part of South Africa near the confluence of the Shashe and Limpopo rivers that form a natural boundary between South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe. The K2 and Mapungubwe MIA sites form part of the Mapungubwe complex of sites, occupied between approximately AD 1 000 – AD 1



300 (Huffman 2000, 2005; Meyer 1998; Vogel 2000). The capital of this society is believed to have moved from K2 to Mapungubwe around AD 1 220. This move is significant as it culminated in a new settlement pattern, which Huffman (1982) dubbed “the Zimbabwe pattern (ZP).” The ZP is characterised by an organisational structure of sacred leadership and distinct social classes only practised by the Eastern Ntu-speaking people, as is the CCP discussed in Sections 3.2 and 3.3 above.

Since 1934, excavations on these sites by a number of researchers (Eloff 1979; Fouché 1937; Gardner 1963; Jones 1937; Meyer 1998, 2000) yielded a rich assemblage of artefacts, including clay fragments of anthropomorphic and animal figurines as well as phallic objects. Brief reports on the figurines were published by Fouché (1937), Gardner (1963), Jones (1934), Meyer (1998, 2000), Olivier (1960) and Schofield (1948), with a detailed study by Voigt (1983) on the animal figurines. Significant finds were among the large number of cultural objects from these sites, including the famous golden rhinoceros and other gold objects from Mapungubwe discussed in Sections 3.5.2 and 3.5.3 below.

The majority of the figurine fragments from K2 and Mapungubwe were sub-surface finds under controlled excavations, with only a few being surface collections (Fouché 1937: 18, 26; Gardner 1963: 36 & Inventories; Meyer 1998: 95, 102, 202). However, the provenience of some figurines has been difficult to establish since the older literature yielded insufficient data when correlated to the figurines in the collection at the Mapungubwe Museum. In a previous study, I identified 107 anthropomorphic figurine fragments (Humphreys 2011). Among this collection, three figurines were partially restored. One came from Mapungubwe Hill and the other two from K2.

What is known of the contexts of the figurines retrieved from each site is described below:



3.5.2 K2

Sixty kilometres west of the town of Musina is the site of K2 (co-ordinates: 22°13'04"S and 29°22'52"E). It is located in a small valley surrounded by sandstone cliffs, southwest of Bambandyanalo Hill, approximately one kilometre from Mapungubwe Hill. Huffman (2005) reasoned that around AD 1 000, the Leopard's Kopje people moved into the valley, replacing the Zhizo chiefdom (with some Zhizo people staying behind or returning later, as is evident from the ceramics), and established K2 as their capital. The site spans approximately five hectares and appears to have been occupied by an extensive farming community (Meyer 2000: 6).

The K2 settlement area, situated towards the centre of the valley floor, consisted of a cattle kraal, nearby court and the chief's area on the western edge with hut complexes forming a central homestead complex surrounded by a peripheral settlement area in between grain bins and middens (a typical feature in the pattern of the CCP). K2 people were keen metal workers and had an agro-pastoral economy with livestock consisting of goats, sheep and humped cattle. The population in the valley flourished and sufficient rainfall and occasional flooding of the rivers aided in the cultivation of millets, sorghum, cowpeas and beans (Huffman 2001; Meyer 2000).

Originally, K2's settlement organisation was marked by relative egalitarianism but archaeologists have argued that over the 200 years of occupation, "the spatial organisation of the settlement changed" (Huffman 2005: 30) and developed into a society with distinct social classes. Huffman (2005) proposes that the kraal area became the central court, a place for commoners and possibly incipient formal class distinction and social ranking as cattle belonged to the elite. During the occupation period of K2, the central or court midden became so large, it overwhelmed the central cattle byre and the cattle were moved away from the centre. This resulted in a change in settlement and spatial organisation.



Figurine fragments at the site were commonly found scattered in a variety of deposits and contexts, including household middens, storage pits, in or near hut remains, eroded surface levels and in the middle at the central midden at K2. Soil erosion due to the poor water retention capacity of the topsoil of the area, and the rapid run-off of water during thunderstorms, could have had an impact on the archaeological context in which these figurines were found. The figurines were found in association with an abundance of other cultural material such as spindle whorls, whistles, imported glass beads and pottery of the Leopard's Kopje Tradition, K2 and Mapungubwe Series. Other interesting finds were decorated ivory armbands and numerous ivory and bone points and needles indicating trade in worked ivory as well as locally made Garden Roller beads – made from remelted glass beads – which were first discovered by Gardner during his 1934 excavations at K2. (Bruchmann 2003: 49; Gardner 1963; Huffman 1974; Meyer 1998: 28, 195–259, 2000: 4–13; Voigt 1983; Wood 2000: 81).

The largest number of figurines from K2 were retrieved during Gardner's excavations. In his 1963 publication, he provides the following summary (Gardner 1963: 26):

- A total of 26, identifiable steatopygous figurines, located between 30 cm and 150 cm below the surface;
- A total of 18 ordinary or broken figurines found at levels of 30 cm to 120 cm below the surface;
- A total of 15 animal figurines were found at levels of 30 cm to 120 cm below the surface (further studies by Voigt [1983] reported in detail on a total of 46 fragments of animal figurines from K2 and Mapungubwe, including two ceramic figurines of wild animals), and
- Sixteen phallic figurines, 5 stoppers, 5 artificial penes and 4 tuyères.

During later excavations by Eloff (1979) in the central midden and kraal, near Gardner's earlier excavations, a small number of figurines were found in association with household debris, bone fragments and pottery (Meyer 1998). The North-eastern midden deposit (layer 1) of the settlement area on the lower slope of Bambandyanalo



Hill yielded bone fragments, stone, pottery, a clay figurine and a glass garden roller bead. Later excavations on an extended area of the midden yielded similar household materials. The graves of three children were also found. The surface deposit contained scattered bone fragments, pottery, stones and a pottery head. Another feature in the midden were two shallow pits filled with bone, stones, slag, pottery and a broken clay figurine (Meyer 1998).

Around AD 1 220 “social and political processes in the valley culminated into state formation and the regional center relocated from K2 to nearby Mapungubwe Hill” (Raath 2014: 14). Furthermore, Huffman (2005: 30) ascribes the move of the K2 society to Mapungubwe Hill being “transformed from one based on social ranking to one based on social classes”, resulting in a society where the sacred leader was isolated from his followers.

3.5.3 Mapungubwe

Mapungubwe is widely seen as the first state in southern Africa on account of its complex social structure. Centred around its capital, Mapungubwe Hill (co-ordinates: 22°12'43”S and 29°23'12”E), the state is envisaged as encompassing a population of approximately 5 000 people within the Mapungubwe territory (Huffman 2005; Meyer 1998). The site’s various components are understood within the framework of Huffman’s Zimbabwe Pattern. The elite established their new royal residential area on the hilltop, with the Southern Terrace at its base and a settlement area for the commoners on a sandy plateau between the sandstone hills to the east and north-east of the hill, comprising approximately ten hectares. The first evidence for stonewalling is at Mapungubwe, providing the leader with a secluded area to perform rituals.

The economic basis of the community was subsistence farming and excavations of the settlement area revealed copious remains of storage huts, gravel floors and huts, along with large deposits of household refuse and artefacts. Excavated cultural



material included potsherds (K2 and Mapungubwe Vessel Series), animal and anthropomorphic figurine fragments, large numbers of domesticated animal bone, charred seeds of cultivated plants, OES and glass beads, ivory and bone objects as well as iron and copper fragments (Huffman 2007; Meyer 1998). Sherds of Chinese ceramics were also recovered (Meyer 1998; Prinsloo *et al.* 2005: 806, 814; Tiley-Nel 2007: 28). Most notable was the recovery of a number of graves with rich and elaborate grave goods, including the famous objects referred to as South Africa's crown jewels (Tiley 2004). These are reported as the earliest discoveries of objects made of gold, which appeared to be the insignia of royalty that include the rhinoceros (discovered by Jerry van Graan in 1993), remnants of animals, ornaments, a sceptre and a bowl (Huffman 2005: 53; Mitchell 2002: 305; Schofield 1948: 122; Tiley 2004: 24). Other interesting finds were the fragments of Chinese Sung celadon ware (AD 960 – AD 1 279) found by Fouché during the 1934 excavations. Other everyday cultural material found includes ceramics (for example, spoons, small bowls, whistles and spindle whorls), glass beads, OES beads, achatina shell beads, cowrie beads, needles, bone points and awls. Large quantities of iron and copper objects, in the form of arrowheads, spearheads, chisels, hoes, blades, rings, copper bangles, etc. were found at Mapungubwe (Fouché 1937).

The kingdom accumulated great wealth as a result of trade with the Indian Ocean network and some of the high-quality trade goods (imports and exports) found included many thousands of glass beads, gold, ivory and copper. This evidence for extensive involvement in and possible control of long-distance trade routes, along with the rich assemblages of artefacts, grave goods and remains of walls that formed part of the royal palace, indicate the change in social life and political organisation from the community at K2 to Mapungubwe Hill (Huffman 2005: 52).

A small number of conical figurines were found in association with both anthropomorphic and animal figurine fragments at Mapungubwe. The first accounts of figurines (anthropomorphic and animal) were reported by Jones (1934), Gardner (1963) and Eloff (1979). Voigt (1983) studied the animal figurines in detail. The



majority of clay objects and figurines were found during the large-scale excavations during the 1930s (Gardner 1963; Meyer 1998, 2000, 2011). In his 1963 publication, Gardner reported that only 18 clay figurines were recovered from Mapungubwe Hill during his excavations. These comprised (Gardner 1963: 36–37):

- A total of 3 coarse animal figurines;
- A total of 7 phalli (“exfoliated figurines”); and
- A total of 8 human figurines with one exhibiting steatopygous features.

Jones (1934) first reported on figurines found at Mapungubwe. Among the finds reported, were cattle figurines, a giraffe, a spoon, spindle whorls and other unidentified objects. Among the anthropomorphic and animal figurines, a special feature that is prominent at Mapungubwe, is the small conical figurines found by Gardner (1963) and Eloff (1979).

The figurines were located between levels of 30 cm to 150 cm (Gardner 1963: 36–37) and the majority were found in or near hut remains and scattered in household middens (Gardner 1963; Meyer 1998: 63, 95, 202). Meyer (1998: 202) describes the anthropomorphic figurines as “particularly interesting, especially those shaped without individual human features such as legs, arms or facial features, and shaped like something between a human and a conical figurine.”

The remains of the final phase of settlement at Mapungubwe indicate a decline or an end of the settlement phase, which may be ascribed to climate or environmental change that had a direct impact on the people who were dependent on subsistence farming. During this period, the high-ranking elite were probably also not an influential factor anymore and Mapungubwe was eventually abandoned by AD 1300 (Huffman 2005; Meyer 1998).



3.6 Conclusion

Figurines were widespread in the archaeological record, and they provide a glimpse into past societies of the southern African Iron Age. They hold several meanings, are imbued with cultural significance and are believed to provide valuable clues in the interpretation of ceremonies, rituals and daily lives of Iron Age communities. Figurines represent various functions such as political control and rainmaking, common views of gender and identity as well as agricultural activities and, in a domestic realm in the maintenance of fertility (Huffman 2012; Schoeman 2017; Wood 2002). The next chapter will concentrate on the methodology followed in the documenting of the various collections and the analytical framework developed to classify the figurines in the collections.



Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Classification frameworks are a means of classifying or grouping objects by general type or individual physical attributes. Organising artefacts into different types is the outcome of a typology where similarities and differences are identified and objects are grouped together into various classes accordingly. This is the approach that has been the most common in studying figurines in southern Africa. While typologies are the most common aids used in managing a large amount of archaeological data, thereby assisting archaeologists in making meaning of material culture (Adams 1988; Adams & Adams 2008; Gorodzov 1933; Hanisch & Maumela 2002; Matenga 1993; Palıncaş 2005; Read 2018; Rouse 1960), they are not the only means of doing so. Various methods can be used to organise (classify) objects, including taxonomic typology, paradigmatic classification and analytical analysis. The latter is often also referred to as modal analysis (Agbe-Davies 2015: 42; Rouse 1960). In typological analysis, an object cannot belong to more than one category and the groups are refined as you move from level to level. A non-typological approach focuses on modes or attributes that allows one to re-sort and classify figurines into more than one group or class. Since it was difficult to assign many figurines to particular global types, attributes were analysed individually, hence the selection of a modal analytical approach as discussed in Section 4.3 below.

In this chapter I will describe how the study assemblage was selected and the data recorded. I explain the process used in developing my classification system, which utilised a modal analytical approach to classify the figurines. Full descriptions of the sample of figurine fragments can be found in Appendix IV of this study and a discussion of the results of the analysis in Chapter 5.

A classification framework was deemed necessary to facilitate the capturing of descriptive detail, and subsequently, the comparison of the selected assemblages.



In designing my approach, I explored various classification models used to record human figurines from Predynastic Egypt, Crete, the Near East and Greece (Ucko 1968), Zimbabwe (Summers 1957), Great Zimbabwe (Matenga 1993), Schroda (Hanisch & Maumela 2002) and Syria (Arntz 2013). The framework developed by Matenga (1993) in his study of the figurines from Zimbabwe, and that used by Hanisch and Maumela (2002) for the Schroda figurines proved to be the most useful in light of the similarities between the Zimbabwean and South African figurines. However, it proved problematic to fully adopt the abovementioned frameworks as they were typologies developed to analyse specific collections. Therefore, I combined the analytical framework I had previously developed for the anthropomorphic figurines from K2 and Mapungubwe Hill (Humphreys 2005) with some of the typological groups of Matenga (1993) and Hanisch and Maumela (2002), to develop a modal analytical approach that focused on individual attributes. This resulted in a simplistic framework that could accommodate the fragmented figurine collections in the various museums.

In addition to the classification system, I also identified the need to create a summary catalogue that other researchers will be able to use as a resource when studying figurines. This was inspired by Arntz's (2013) work on the figurines of Halaf (from Tell Sabi Abyad in Syria). Her catalogue of the Halaf figurines, which contains detailed descriptions, measurements and provenience details, was used as a guideline in my catalogue of the South African collections.

Over a period of two years, I visited a number of museums where I was granted access to the collections for my research. I documented my research findings by developing a basic database (recorded in Excel) of each collection where a detailed description of each figurine was recorded (Appendices I–III). Where possible, the provenience of each figurine was determined with the assistance of excavation reports, museum inventories, archives and available published literature. The figures were then recorded and described using the system discussed below. It should be noted that some of my observations differ from some of the researchers' descriptions



in the reports and literature. Although the NISP numbers for each assemblage are provided by previous researchers, I could not always correlate the total number of figurines reported in the literature and the numbers in the collections that I have examined. Therefore, I have only reported on the number of fragments that I could locate in the collections. Where this is the case, I have indicated as such.

The figurines were measured in millimetres by height and width (at the widest point of the figurine) using callipers. All anatomical, as well as decorative patterns, were noted as per the recording forms (Appendices I–III). All the figurines were classified according to their attributes and the criteria of the framework. Figurines were photographed and recorded by site in the database using the accession number allocated by the museum and a unique photograph reference number was assigned. I included the unique photograph reference in the database and created separate files of all the colour photographs of the collections for identification and reference. Observations and comments on, *inter alia*, the decoration patterns and the anatomical details of each figurine were also noted in the database.

As illustrated previously, clay figurines are a not uncommon occurrence in Iron Age deposits. It must be borne in mind that these collections are very fragmentary; the missing fragments may still be in the archaeological record, may have been missed in the post-excavation sorting or have been removed by earlier archaeologists. Complete figurines are, therefore, rarely found and the majority of the figurines in this study consist of fragments or partially re-fitted objects. This makes it difficult to place some of these fragments in a specific Class within the classification framework. The description of each figurine in this study is based on my own observation and interpretation according to a set of criteria. I did not attempt to reassemble any of the fragments.

A limitation of the records that I created is that the photographs were taken over a long period of time and different scale instruments and backgrounds were used for the various collections. As a result, the photographs are not as easily comparable as



we might hope. To allay this limitation, I have provided the dimensions of each figurine.

4.2 Developing the Classification Framework

As stated above, various classification typologies have been developed for figurine assemblages all over the world, usually taking the form of taxonomic typologies. I explored many of these typologies to find one suitable or applicable to the South African figurine collections and found that only some of the criteria of these typologies could be applied. In the end, however, I had to step away from a strictly typological to a modal approach. I offer a brief review of those typologies that are deemed most useful in the southern African context, aspects of which were incorporated into my modal analysis. As with any analytical framework (Antz 2013; Gardner 1963; Hanisch & Maumela 2002; Matenga 1993; Meskell *et al.* 2008; Ucko 1968), they were shaped by the theoretical and research contexts of the scholars involved.

4.2.1 The Zimbabwean Typologies

Numerous EIA and MIA archaeological sites in Zimbabwe where figurines were excavated, date to between AD 200 and AD 1 900. Various scholars have classified these assemblages according to their own typologies (Matenga 1993; Schofield 1948; Summers 1957). Some of the figurines classified by these researchers, show similarities to the Iron Age figurines from South Africa in decoration style and form.

Schofield (1948) was the first to develop a typology of Zimbabwean figurines. He attempted to place archaeological figurines within an overall reconstruction of the cultural pottery sequence of Zimbabwe. He correlated figurines from Great Zimbabwe with the archaeological timeframe by observing similar decoration patterns with strung bead impressions on pottery. This decorative motif was initially thought to characterise pottery traditions of the EIA but has since been found to be associated with Later Iron Age communities. His initial comparisons are thus no longer valid,



although he was the first to attempt the correlation of figurines and vessel types (Matenga 1993: 10).

Summers (1957) described the anthropomorphic figurines from Zimbabwe in detail and divided them all into three classes. He concentrated only on anthropomorphic figurines since these are the most prominent on Zimbabwean sites. Working with a sample of 220 figurines from thirty sites across Zimbabwe, he categorised the figurines into three Classes, linked pottery traditions with figurines and deliberated their possible function and chronology (Summers 1957: 70–71). He divided the figurines as follows:

- Class 1: Stylized figures without bases
- Class 2: Stylized figures with bases
- Class 3: Naturalistic figures

Expanding on Summers' work, Matenga conducted a study on figurines excavated from 124 sites in Zimbabwe spanning a period of 1 700 years (Matenga 1993: 16). He presents chronological and spatial trends on these sites and designed a typology to classify the 1 180 figurines. He offers detailed descriptions of the figurines by site and classifies them into the categories outlined below:

- Category 1: Human Figurines
- Category 2: Domestic Animals
- Category 3: Wild Animals
- Category 4: Fungi
- Category 5: Unidentified Figurines

He further subdivided Category 1, i.e., the human figurines, into classes and sub-classes, based on the absence or presence of anatomical detail, scarification, ornamentation and dress. For example:



- Category 1 Sub-class 1a: Figurines with Legs and Arms
- Category 1 Sub-class 1b: Figurines with Legs and without Arms
- Category 1 Sub-class 2a: Figurines without Legs but with Arms
- Category 1 Sub-class 2b: Figurines without Legs and without Arms

4.2.2 Limpopo Province

The archaeological sites of Schroda, K2 and Mapungubwe in the Limpopo Province have yielded numerous figurines. These sites are located in close proximity to one another. As mentioned elsewhere, excavations at the earlier site of Schroda resulted in the recovery of the largest assemblage of figurines from a single site in South Africa. The only other reports on clusters of figurines found in southern Africa were in KZN and Zimbabwe. The large spread of clusters of figurines from Schroda were reported in concentrated areas that, according to Hanisch (2002: 35), is significant and is an indication of ritual use. These finds thus provide an “opportunity for interpretation seldom encountered in African archaeology” (Huffman 2002: 18).

The anthropomorphic figurines from Schroda were classified by Hanisch and Maumela (2002: 47–67) into four broad groups according to identifiable characteristics, namely:

- H1: Humanlike Figures with Genitalia
- H2: Large Stylized Humanlike Figures (with Subdivisions)
- H3: Fertility Dolls
- H4: Miniature Humanlike Figures

The later, nearby occupation areas of K2 and Mapungubwe were excavated since 1933 by a number of researchers under the auspices of the University of Pretoria. Numerous excavation reports and inventories (including the classification of the figurines) emanated from these excavations and include detailed reports on the cultural material, including figurines, found at these sites.



Gardner (1963) was primarily concerned with the interpretation and understanding of the pottery traditions, everyday lives and social organisation of the communities that occupied K2 and Mapungubwe. Nonetheless, the early publication and inventories on the artefacts from K2 and Mapungubwe by Gardner (1963: 36) provide detailed descriptions of the figurines. The K2 figurines were identified by Gardner as falling into one of the following categories:

- Steatopygous Figurines
- Ordinary or Broken Figurines
- Animals, often Fragmentary
- Phalli, perhaps Exfoliated Figurines
- Stoppers
- Artificial Penes
- Tuyères

Olivier (1960), worked on the K2 and Mapungubwe figurines and the collection housed in the Mapungubwe Museum in the 1960s. His work is unpublished but is useful for the classification of the figurines (anthropomorphic and animal). After examining the anthropomorphic figurines, however, I noted some discrepancies in his text and drawings. In his study, he refers to figurines that I was unable to identify or locate in the accessioned collection (for example, two male figurines versus the one male figurine in the literature and in the accessioned collection I studied). Olivier developed his own framework and classified a limited sample of the figurines (n=41) from K2 and Mapungubwe and divided these figurines into two groups:

- “Class A”: Figurines with Human Features or Anatomy, including Colour and the Absence or Presence of Decoration
- “Class B”: Figurines that cannot be Classified as Human in Form



4.3 This Study: A Modal Analysis

Agbe-Davies (2015: 43) describes a typology as a specific type of classification and that “all typologies are classifications, but not all classifications are typologies.” This means that we should not be hesitant to utilise different kinds of classifications if the existing ones are unsuitable. The typologies described above proved problematic in developing my own classification framework. Each researcher classified their samples according to various classes or categories that they have developed, but these classes could not be fully applied to my figurine sample.

The major difficulty of adopting any of the abovementioned typologies for classifying the figurines in this study is that a) the figurines are very fragmentary; and b) the sample size is small. It is thus difficult to develop a typology that can accommodate all fragments and aspects of figurines without creating such small classes of objects that we run the risk of each figurine being in its own category. Therefore, I have used a modal approach that focuses on different individual aspects (attributes) of the figurines. The result is that a single figurine can belong to multiple categories as the method involves working with single attributes at any one time.

Modal analysis is where objects are “grouped according to their attributes into a *series* of successive categories or ‘modes’” (Agbe-Davies 2015: 42; also see Rouse 1960). With the classification of the figurines in this study, I took the collective sample and removed the ones that shared a particular attribute and assigned them into the first class and then returned them to the pool. The figurines were then resorted according to another attribute and the ones fitting into the second class were then removed and assigned before being returned to the pool. This was subsequently done with the other classes as well (Fig 4.1). This modal analytical approach is particularly useful when dealing with a highly fragmented assemblage and I found it viable to divide the fragments into classes focusing on the physical anatomical attributes and the most prominent feature(s) on the figurine. As stated above, it



should be noted that any one figurine may have attributes that can be included under one or more Classes.

The classification framework consists of the seven Classes (defined by attributes) outlined below:

- **Class 1: Figurines with Defined Physical Features**
(Figurines with attributes such as vestigial arms [or the remains thereof], legs [or the remains thereof] and/or a head [or remains thereof])
- **Class 2: Figurines with Undefined Physical Features**
(Fragments of the torso of a figurine without arms, legs or a head)
- **Class 3: Figurines with Breasts**
- **Class 4: Figurines with Umbilici**
- **Class 5: Figurines with Genitalia**
- **Class 6: Figurines with Decoration**
- **Class 7: Unique (including phallic) and Miscellaneous Figurines**

All the figurines were grouped together according to their attributes and the criteria of the framework. As mentioned earlier, using a modal approach, any one figurine may exhibit attributes of more than one class.

4.4 Recording the Data

My research comprises an empirical and descriptive study of the figurines (housed in various museums) from archaeological sites in the eastern coastal region (KZN and the Eastern Cape) and the Limpopo Province of South Africa. I included only the accessioned figurines that I had access to in the museum collections originating from the previously discussed sites. Although animal figurines are referred to at times, this study concentrates on anthropomorphic figurines in the collections. In addition, I



excluded the ceramic heads from the Lydenburg Heads site because a) I did not have access to this collection and these objects; and b) they do not fully align to the definition of a figurine as used in this study.

The figurines analysed in this study were drawn from the sites as indicated in Table 4.1 by site.

Figurines in most of the collections represent remains of arms, legs and heads, while others are merely torso fragments without any of these attributes. Figurines displaying small breasts and prominent umbilici (small lumps of clay – present or indications thereof) are represented in the collections from both KZN and the SLCA. In many cases, the protruding umbilici is surrounded by incised lines or dot (punctate) decoration. Decoration patterns are evident on all the collections, apart from the collection from Wosi. Genitalia is represented in the form of punctates or prominent genitalia. A large number of phallic/conical objects and unique figurines are represented in the majority of the collections.

The accessioned collection of figurines from KZN is the second largest collection of anthropomorphic figurines (81) that I examined. I also included a discussion of the Kulubele archaeological site in the Eastern Cape with only eight identifiable anthropomorphic fragments in this collection housed at the Albany Museum in Grahamstown.



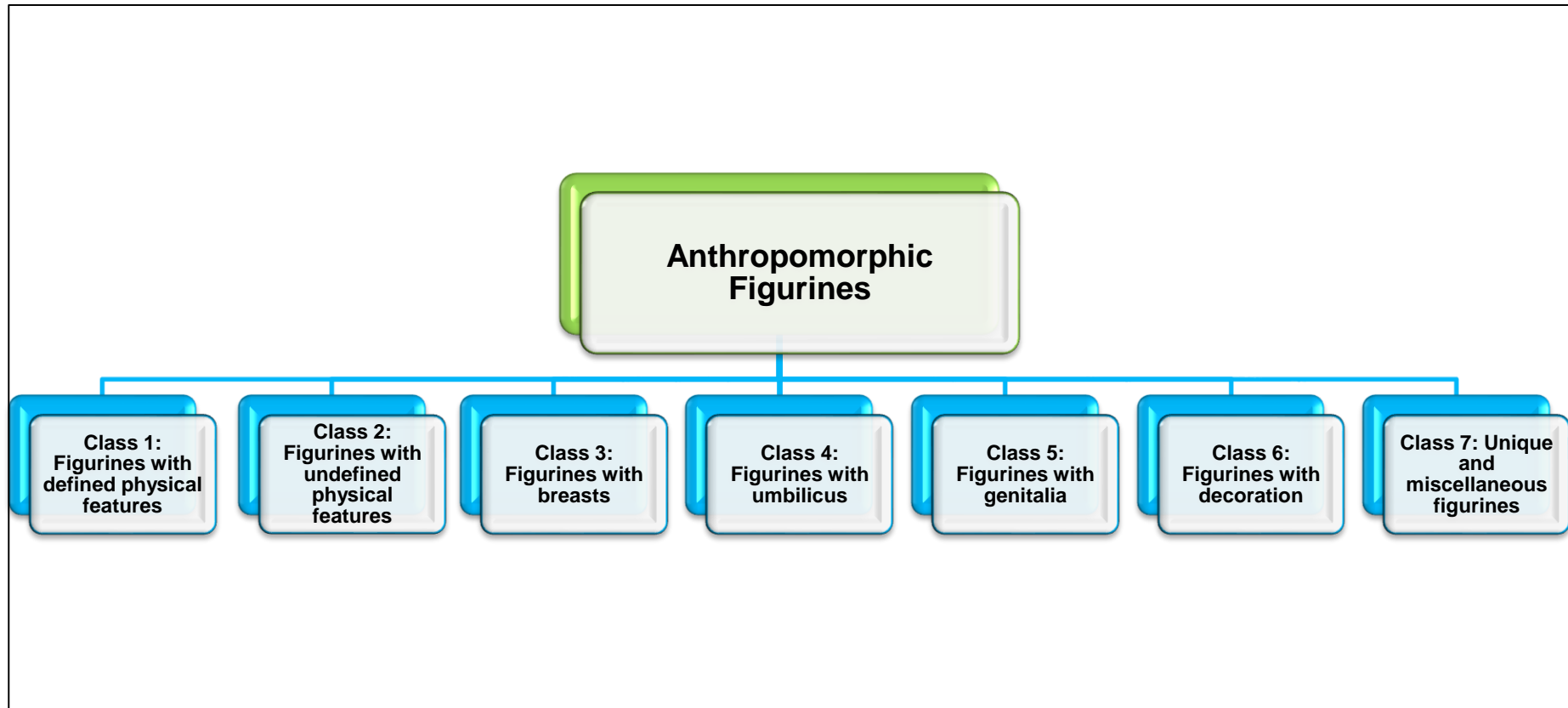


Figure 4.1: The modal classification framework used to analyse anthropomorphic figurines in this study (designed by J. Humphreys)



Four torso fragments in the KZN collections were identified from the Magogo site. A unique find among the three fragments from Mhlopeni is the human hand with webbed fingers (Fig 5.30) (Table 4.1). KwaGandaganda yielded 41 of the figurines in the collection, while 18 fragments were found at Nanda, 13 fragments at Ndongondwane and the remaining two were excavated at Wosi.

Table 4.1: Basic classification of anthropomorphic figurines in the studied collections

Site	Total number of figurines	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 5	Class 6	Class 7
Magogo	4	2	2		2	1	3	
Mhlopeni	3		1				2	1
Wosi	2		1		1			1
Ndongondwane	13	2	3	2	2		4	9
Nanda	18	7	7		2		3	7
KwaGandaganda	41	3	14	2	1	2	8	24
Kulubele	8		8				1	
Schroda	27	23		5	4	4	5	4
K2	91	33	26	15	17	6	42	32
Mapungubwe	16	5	3		3	1	8	9
Total	223	75	65	24	32	14	76	87

I examined the Schroda collection, but was unable to include the total number of fragments from the site in this study as most of the figurines were so fragmented that they did not allow for a meaningful classification. Thus, only the restored or partially restored figurines that are on display in the museum are included in this study. The majority of figurines from Schroda were manufactured from coarse clay and were not well fired while several were apparently merely sun-dried. This accounts for their high rate of fragmentation (Hanisch & Maumela 2002: 49). One example is an incomplete figurine base consisting of 19 fragments (Hanisch & Maumela 2002: 50). Only 27 figurines from this collection were included in this study.

The largest accessioned collection of anthropomorphic figurines is housed at the Mapungubwe Museum in Pretoria. This collection comprises the figurines from K2



(91) and Mapungubwe (16) (Table 4.1). Excavated figurine finds were also reported from other archaeological sites in the Limpopo Province, namely Baobab, Leokwe Hill and Castle Rock, and Ntsitsana in the Northern Transkei, that are briefly referred to in this study for comparative purposes.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the background to the development of the classification system and various typologies developed by other scholars in the classification of figurines across the globe. I discuss the results of the analysis in the next chapter.



Chapter 5: Results

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will present the outcome of my analysis of the figurines from the various collections. Classifying the figurines into the various Classes in itself was challenging because of the fragmentary state of some of the figurines. Although it was difficult to be exact in the description of the fragments, working with them made it possible to divide them according to a description of their observable physical attributes.

Although numerous figurines have been collected from early to late African farming settlement sites in South Africa, only four museum collections housing material from the ten sites under discussion were accessible for inclusion in this study. The figurine museum collections from the East Coast (EIA) and the Limpopo Province (MIA) of South Africa yielded a total sample of 223 figurines from the various sites in this study. Although some of the figurines display only rudimentary human or even animal-like facial features, they were placed under anthropomorphic figurines, if they displayed human anatomical characteristics.

It was the case among all the collections that the head is usually not well represented and phallic in shape. Facial features in all the collections are very rudimentary. These features consist mostly of punctate markings representing the eyes, mouth and, in rare cases, ears. Only one figurine in all the collections, from Ndongondwane (Fig 5.1) displays punctates for eyes as well as punctate decoration running across the fragment (similar to the three figurines from Zimbabwe – Three Skids Claim – which display face scarification in the form of punctates) (Matenga 1993). Only the anthropomorphic figurines from Schroda display unique facial



Figure 5.1: Figurine from Ndongondwane resembling facial scarification marks (accession number 1982/03 R1(1))



features such as “large, prominent ears, extended face reminiscent of an animal snout, little or no forehead, as well as the absence of marks indicating eyes, nostrils and mouth” ... and one of the figurines has a “unique crest-like hairstyle” (Hanisch & Maumela 2002: 53). None of these features were observed in any of the other collections. Many figurines in the EIA and MIA assemblages are without heads and only show abrasion marks where the heads were attached.

The sample comprises 81 figurines from KZN sites, eight (n=8) from the Eastern Cape, and the remaining 134 from the Limpopo sites. The figurines of KZN were excavated from the archaeological sites of *Magogo*, *Mhlopeni*, *Wosi* and *Ndondondwane* in the Muden area in the Tugela Basin and *Nanda* and *KwaGandaganda* in the Mngeni Valley. The Eastern Cape collection, excavated from *Kulubele*, yielded only one (n=1) small, decorated torso fragment while the remaining seven consisted of very small fragments of figurines that could not be placed in any of the Classes.

The Mapungubwe Museum houses the largest sample of accessioned anthropomorphic figurines. This collection was excavated from the archaeological sites of K2 and Mapungubwe Hill at the SLCA in the Limpopo Province. I previously identified 74 anthropomorphic figurines in the Mapungubwe Museum collection (Humphreys 2005). Further recording and observation yielded a total of 107 anthropomorphic figurines. It is thus the most representative sample of anthropomorphic figurines in a collection in South Africa. K2 yielded 91 figurines, while 16 were from Mapungubwe Hill and the Southern Terrace at Mapungubwe. However, the overall identified figurines in the various literature reports, found at these sites, amount to more than 300. Although Schroda yielded 2 000 fragments of animal and anthropomorphic figurines only the 27 reconstructed figurines were included in this study (Fig 5.2).





Figure 5.2: Cluster of figurines excavated at Schroda (photograph courtesy of Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History)

While clay figurines occur in many Iron Age archaeological sites, complete figurines are rare in these deposits. There are thus no “complete” figurines in the collections observed and recorded but only partially restored figurines and the remaining consisting of fragments of body parts. Many of the fragments consist of small portions of the torso (with some fragments displaying signs where the buttocks or breasts were attached), leg fragments, head fragments and buttock fragments. Some of the figurines display evidence of breakages where arms or legs were attached and I identified the breakage points on the figurines as being:

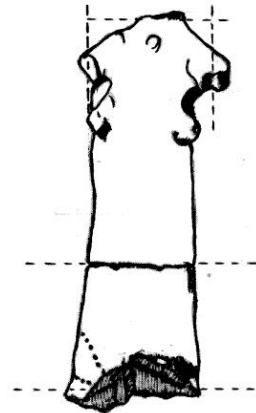


Figure 5.3: Potential breakage points illustrated by dotted lines (redrawn: Mapungubwe Museum Archive)

legs, necks, arms and the torsos (Fig 5.3). The dividing line between the lower and



upper torso is proposed to be just above the navel, thus the navel is categorised as part of the lower torso.

The majority of figurines, particularly those from the East Coast Region, are very fragmented. The samples were not well-preserved, possibly due to the poor quality of the clay and appear to have been deliberately broken before being discarded. No complete or restored figurines were recorded among the 81 figurine fragments in the KZN Museum collection.

Some of the figurines from the SLCA sites have been conserved and reconstructed to a degree. A two-week conservation project was undertaken by the Mapungubwe Museum and conservator, Julia Greiner, in 2008 where forty-eight objects from that collection were conserved and restored (Tiley-Nel, pers. comm. 2008). These include 23 anthropomorphic figurines and fragments, five phallic figurines, two stopper figurines and two fragments with detailed decoration. The project proved very successful; the restoration and cleaning process resulted in the colour of the clay becoming more vibrant and revealed decoration, previously not visible, on some of the fragments.

The figurines in the accessioned collections were classified, using the framework outlined in Chapter 4, in their present conserved state. Therefore, in some cases, the analysis is based on a single fragment of a figurine, in others on a figurine reconstructed from a number of fragments. Classifying the former proved problematic in some cases as it was difficult to place some of these fragments in a specific analytical class. For the purpose of this study, therefore, only the figurines or fragments with distinct features, form or decoration will be discussed in detail. The largest samples of the assemblages were classified under Classes 1, 2, 6 and 7 (with Class 7 representing mostly fragments that could not be placed in a specific other Class). The classification and description of each figurine is based on my own observations and interpretation (Table 4.1 in Chapter 4).



The figurines vary in size. The largest fragment, found at Nanda in the Mngeni Valley, measures 72 mm x 55 mm. The average size of the fragments in the KZN collection ranges overall from 45 mm x 35 mm to 70 mm x 35 mm, while the largest figurine from Schroda measures approximately 210 mm in height and the largest figurine from Mapungubwe measuring approximately 120 mm in height.

Materials and Manufacture

All the figurines were hand-moulded – in most cases, from a single body of clay – and display great variation in size, form and colour. The colour of the clay varies from black to brown through to grey. Most of the figurines are manufactured from coarse clay and were not properly fired or only sun-dried. The figurines from the EIA (KZN and Eastern Cape) collections are approximately the same size, made from coarse clay (with very few figurines showing added colouring) and much smaller in contrast to the considerably larger figurines from the MIA sites of Schroda, K2 and Mapungubwe.

The figurines from the MIA consist of both coarse and fine clay figurines. The coarse clay figurines are darker in colour with some variations of red ochre on the fragments. These coarse clay figurines are mostly brittle in appearance and, in some cases, colouring was applied before they were sun-dried. Two of the figurines from Schroda display signs of yellowish-orange colouring. The fine clay figurines were burnished with some showing variation in colour with distinct red colouring. Most of the fine clay figurines were made with a rich brown colour and are more durable in appearance (Hanisch & Maumela 2002).



5.2 Classification

5.2.1 Class 1: Figurines with Defined Physical Features

A total of 75 figurines (34%) from seven sites, excluding Mhlopeni, Wosi and Kulubele were classified under Class 1. The KZN sites are under-represented (n=14) in the sample, with the majority from Nanda (n=7) from this area in this Class. The best examples are from the Limpopo Province (Schroda n=23; K2 n=33 and Mapungubwe n=5) – even though the figurines are fragmented, the torsos show short legs or vestigial arms (Table 4.1).

Figurines that were placed in this Class, display physical attributes – or the remains thereof – on the upper or lower torso of the figurine. The “complete”/restored figurines from Schroda and the Mapungubwe collections were placed in this Class. The main criterion was the presence of attributes such as vestigial arms, legs and heads with rudimentary facial features, as seen in some of the examples from Schroda, K2 and Mapungubwe.

KZN

The figurines in this class from the sites of Magogo (n=2), Ndongondwane (n=2), Nanda (n=7) and KwaGandaganda (n=3), are all small fragments consisting of only small portions of the upper or lower torso, displaying attributes – or the remains thereof – such as vestigial arms, legs and/or a head. No complete figurines were observed in this collection and the figurines are not well-preserved.

Schroda

Although the Mapungubwe collection contains restored figurines, the most complete restored figurines are in the Schroda collection (n=14) even though some of these figurines were very fragmented before restoration.



The bulk of the Schroda figurines in this Class have their heads still affixed. Facial features appear in the form of a snout-like mouth (bear-like) and either pierced or protruding eyes and nostrils, or simply a punctate marking for a mouth or eyes. The body consists of vestigial arms, or a pedestal body without legs, whereas some have rudimentary lower torsos with legs and pedestal-like feet. Some figurines retrieved are considerably larger than the figurines found in the other sites, apart from a few from K2 and Mapungubwe.

Two of the figurines in this collection were moulded in a ball-like form with arms and legs touching in front, while another two figurines appear to be in a kneeling position. One figurine is moulded in a seated position with its arms holding its head, while another is missing the arms and head (Hanisch & Maumela 2002: 54). The Schroda collection also contains the only example of seated figurines (one with knees up posture, indicating a male/high status posture).

The large figurines from Schroda are designed to stand upright on large pedestal-like feet, while none of the other sites yielded figurines with pedestal-like feet (Fig 5.4). The figurines were very fragmented before they were restored, as is evident in the many different body parts that are glued together. The three elongated figurines from Schroda ("fertility dolls", according to Hanisch & Maumela 2002: 55) are tall with a tapered shaft-like torso (cylindrical) with vestigial arms (at shoulder level) and shapeless head extending above the arms, measuring on average approximately 210 mm in length (Fig 5.21). These figurines have small protrusions just below the arms that represent the breasts, while the umbilici are often depicted with punctates around them and protuberant buttocks are present. The steatopygic buttocks are divided by a definite line in some figurines with an opening, indicating a vagina, pierced between the legs.



K2 and Mapungubwe

Twelve (n=12) Class 1 figurines in the Mapungubwe collection have one or two legs. Legs are slim (without any indication of a knee) and some end in a small flat base for a foot while others are broken off near the lower torso.

The unusual, partially complete, elongated female figurine recovered from K2 (Fig 5.5) has a close resemblance to the three stylized elongated Class 1 “fertility dolls” in the Schroda collection (Fig 5.21). The long torso has a shapeless head just above the abrasion marks where the arms were attached and the lower torso ends in a short vestigial leg with one remaining protruding buttock.

The smallest, near complete figurine in this Class also came from K2 with two slim short legs, prominent buttocks and umbilicus and a large hole in the head, probably representing the mouth.

Another near complete, and since restored, figurine was found at Mapungubwe, measuring 120 mm in height (Fig 5.6). The figurine features a cylindrical, elongated torso with one stubby, flat-based leg. The head – which was broken from the body – is complete and rounded. Three punctates represent the mouth and two eyes. The short neck ends on rounded shoulders with short vestigial arms that are broken off on both sides.





Figure 5.4: Large figurine from Schroda with pedestal-like base (accession number TSR 1/1 B2.4.1)

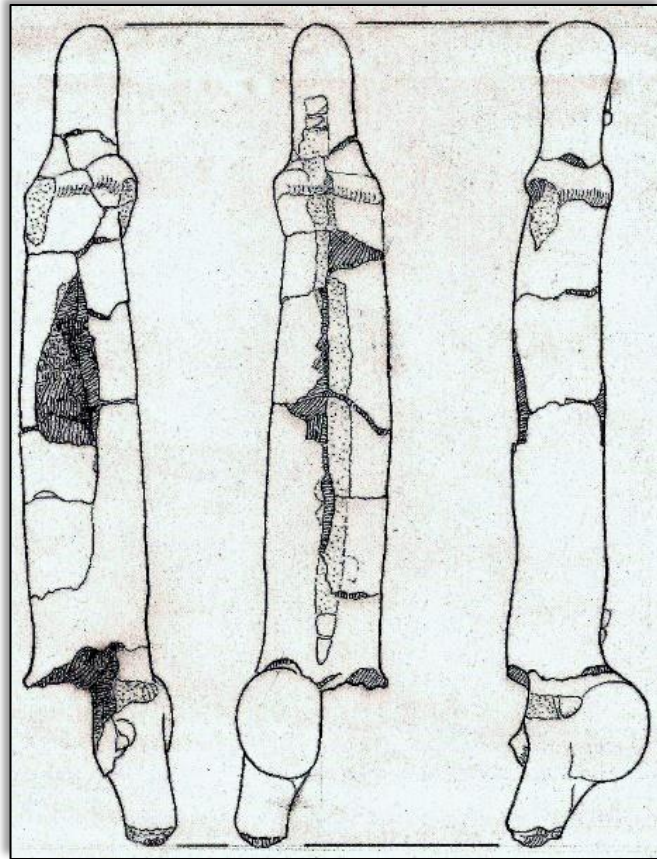


Figure 5.5: Restored elongated figurine from K2 (drawing: Mapungubwe Museum Archive – accession number N294)

5.2.2 Class 2: Figurines with Undefined Physical Features

The figurines that were placed in this Class are torso fragments without arms, legs or a head. These figurines have no typical physical attributes and are fragmented. I examined these figurines to organise the fragments and ascertain the parts of the body they present and attempted to construct their complete appearance but could not establish their complete form. All the figurines from Kulubele (n=8) were classified into this Class, although one from this site also has attributes that assign it to Class 6 (figurines with decoration). Sixty-five figurines (29%) from all the sites, with the exception of Schroda, fall into this Class.



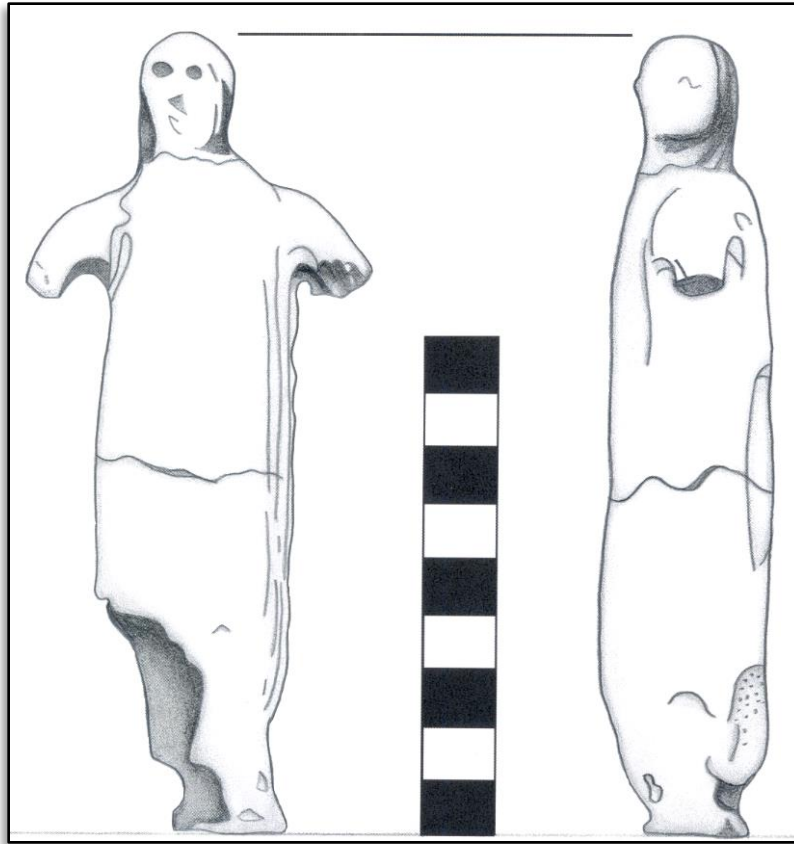


Figure 5.6: Restored figurine from Mapungubwe (drawing: Mapungubwe Museum Archive, redrawn by C. Bruwer)

5.2.3 Class 3: Figurines with Breasts

Twenty-two fragments (10%) were allocated to this Class. Only two of these originated from the KZN site of KwaGandaganda (n=2). The remaining 20 figurines were from Schroda (n=5) and K2 (n=15) in the Limpopo area. In some cases, the breasts are no longer present but they are included in this Class as abrasions in the breast area indicate where they were formerly attached.

Two manufacturing techniques are visible. Breasts appear to have been part of the moulded torso and not added as separate lumps of clay during the manufacturing process. In other cases, the way in which both breasts were broken off from the torso, leaving abrasion marks, indicates that the breasts were probably added on as small lumps of clay after the manufacturing of the torso (Figs 5.7–5.9).



Those breasts that are still present are all small and rounded and no signs of hanging or sagging breasts were observed. It is thus likely that the figurines are representative of young girls.

5.2.4 Class 4: Figurines with Umbilici

Fourteen percent (n=32) of the figurines fall into this Class (Table 4.1). They originate from eight of the sites, with the exception of Mhlopeni (KZN) and Kulubele (Eastern Cape). A quarter (n=8) of the figurines with umbilici originated from the EIA sites in the KZN region, the remainder (n=24) were retrieved from the SLCA sites. The majority of figurines from the Limpopo area in the sample, with attributes that assign them to this Class, came from K2 (n=17), while four were identified in the Schroda collection and three from Mapungubwe.

In general, where the umbilicus is present, it is fairly large. Abrasion marks are visible in the instances where the umbilicus (and breast(s)) is broken off from the torso (Fig 5.13). Figurines displaying a protruding navel surrounded by incised or punctate decoration, or a combination thereof, constitute 8% of this Class while (6% of this sample is from K2 and Mapungubwe) (Figs 5.10–5.12). No swollen abdomens were observed in any of the figurines where an umbilicus is present.





Figure 5.7: Elongated stylized figurine with small breasts from Schroda (accession number TSR 1/1 5C1.7)

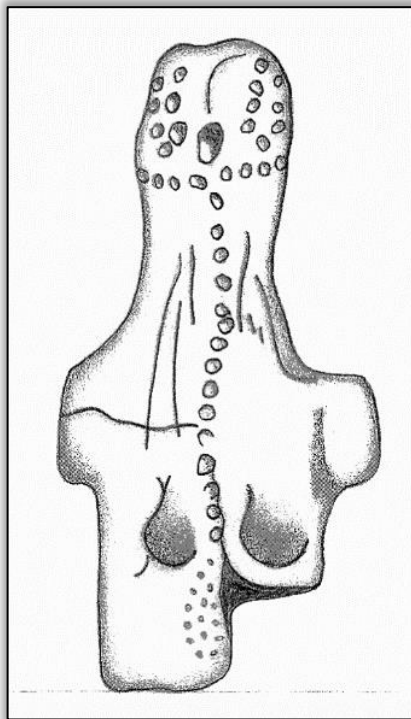


Figure 5.8: Figurine with small protruding breasts (drawing: Mapungubwe Museum Archive, redrawn by C. Bruwer)



Figure 5.9: Figurine with small protruding breasts from K2 (accession number C/4463)



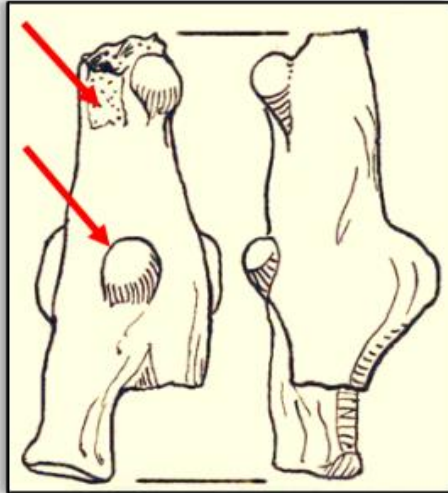


Figure 5.10: Figurine from K2 with protruding umbilicus and breasts (drawing: Mapungubwe Museum Archive)

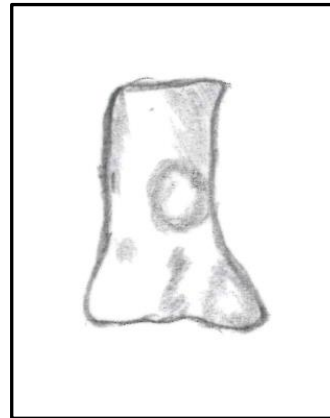


Figure 5.11: Figurine from Ntsitsana with prominent navel (drawing: A. Humphreys)



Figure 5.12 Protruding navel on figurine from K2 (accession number C/4316)

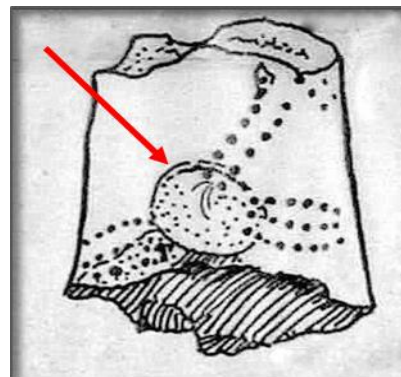


Figure 5.13: Fragment from K2 with abrasion mark (drawing: Mapungubwe Museum Archive)



5.2.5 Class 5: Figurines with Genitalia

Of the total sample of figurines in the study, 6% (n=14) have identifiable genitalia, indicated by imprints or punctates that were made in the wet clay between the legs (female), or a prominently defined penis (male), and were thus assigned to Class 5. In the KZN collections, fragments from only Magogo (n=1) and KwaGandaganda (n=2) were identified with genitalia whereas Schroda (n=4), K2 (n=6) and Mapungubwe (n=1) in the Limpopo area yielded the largest number in the sample.

These genitalia are shown in a variety of ways. Large punctate marks between the legs are understood as indicating female genitalia and one figurine from K2 displays two such punctate marks. Another figurine from K2 displays a prominent vulva, half of which is chipped away (Fig 5.14). One of the large female figurines from Schroda also exhibits a large, deep hole in the frontal pelvic area of the figurine. Two of the large figurines from Schroda and the only male figurine from K2 show explicit male genitalia. One of the figurines from Schroda displays an erect penis and testes (Figs 5.15–5.16). Including those figurines with recognisable genitalia, sixty-one (n=61), have other female attributes (umbilici and breasts) and these features are represented in a number of ways as described in previous sections and they are present in all the collections.

5.2.6 Class 6: Figurines with Decoration

Seventy-six figurines (34%) were assigned to this Class from all of the various sites, except for Wosi. These include 20 figurine fragments (n=20) from KZN, one (n=1) from Kulubele in the Eastern Cape and the remainder from the SLCA sites: Schroda (n=5); K2 (n=42); and Mapungubwe (n=8) (Fig 5.17).





Figure 5.14: Small female figurine with explicit genitalia half chipped away from K2 (accession number C/4383)

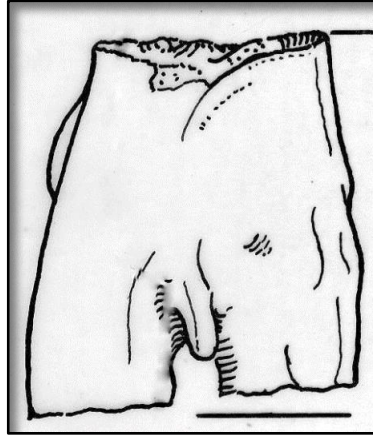


Figure 5.15: Small male figurine from K2 (drawing: Mapungubwe Museum Archive)



Figure 5.16: Large figurine from Schroda (drawing: Raath 2014: 35)



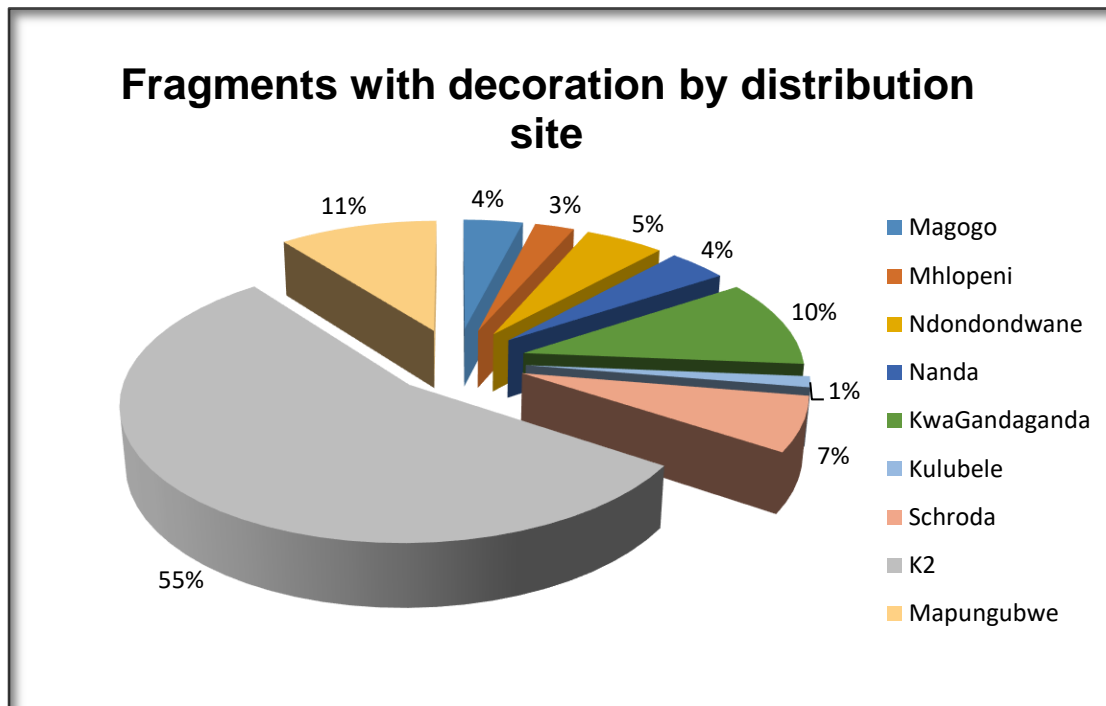


Figure 5.17: Percentage of total number of figurines with decoration according to site (excluding Wosi)

Decoration markings (Fig 5.18), assumed to be a portrayal of scarification markings on the figurines, take the form of punctates and/or incised lines and in some cases combinations thereof (Figs 5.19–5.26) (Table 5.1). Decoration was applied into the wet clay before the figurines were fired or sun-dried. Punctates were usually made with deep impressions. They are commonly located on the front of the torso (ventral surface), including around protruding umbilici when that feature is present, while some figurines display markings on the back (dorsal surface) and occasionally a combination of designs on both the anterior and posterior sides of the torso (Fig 5.18).

The decoration patterns on the figurines in all the collections vary from the simple (for example, a single line of punctates) to more sophisticated and elaborate patterns (for example, an elaborate flower-like pattern of incised lines around the navel, and punctates on the side of the torso of the figurine from Magogo (Fig 5.25)). The figurines in the KZN collections are decorated by incised lines and/or punctates, while two of these are decorated with elaborate and intricate designs on the torso (Figs 5.20 and 5.25).



Table 5.1: Distribution of decoration motifs on figurines according to site

Site	Number of decorated fragments	Punctate decoration	Incised line decoration	Combination of punctate/incised line decoration
Magogo	3		1	2
Mhlopeni	2	1	1	
Ndondondwane	4	2	2	
Nanda	3	2		1
KwaGandaganda	8	3	2	3
Kulubele	1			1
Schroda	5	2		2
K2	42	27	8	7
Mapungubwe	8	3	4	1
Total	76	40	18	17

According to Matenga (1993: 19) all figurines show a certain amount of stylisation. Stylisation, as such, differs from decoration in that, in this instance, it is used to refer to the form of the figurine. Hanisch and Maumela (2002: 55) classified the H3-type figurines from Schroda as stylized figurines, commonly referred to as “fertility dolls”. They further describe these figurines as long and elongated with stylized arms, in the form of small protrusions at the shoulder and formless heads. All these figurines display long legs and protruding umbilici, frequently decorated by punctates, and prominent buttocks (Fig 5.21). One figurine displays an exceptional clear channel-shaped depression along the spine shaded with red ochre.

These stylized figurines display fine, small punctate decoration while some of the anthropomorphic-like figurines display rudimentary and deep incisions or punctates (Fig 5.19).



Punctates	Front Back	Front	Front	Front	Front	Front	Front
	Front	Front	Front	Front	Front	Front	Front Back
Incised lines	Front	Front	Front	Front Back	Front	Front Back Side	
	Encircling		Front	Front	Front	Front Back	
Combination (Punctates/Incised lines)	Front Back	Front	Front Side	Encircling	Front Back	Front Back	

Figure 5.18: Examples of decoration motifs on figurines from the various sites (drawings: K. Humphreys)



The largest female figurine is from K2, measuring 153 mm to mid-torso in height. The abdomen of this figurine is decorated with punctate markings around the prominent navel, with a vertical punctate decoration on the back of the fragment running onto the large buttocks (Fig 5.22).

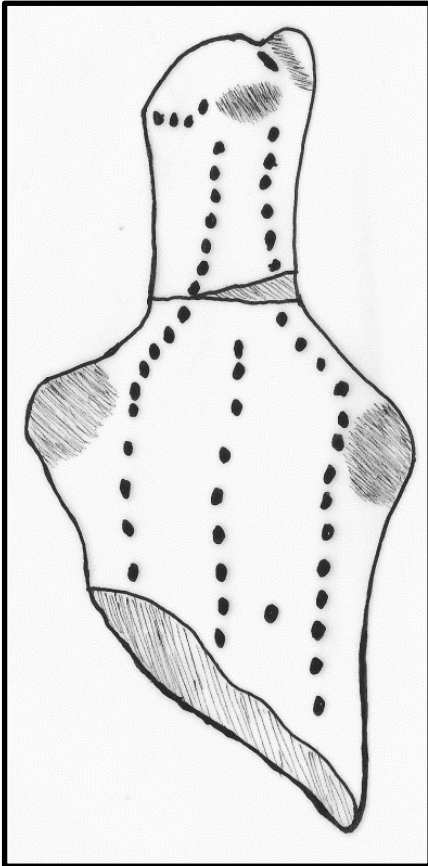
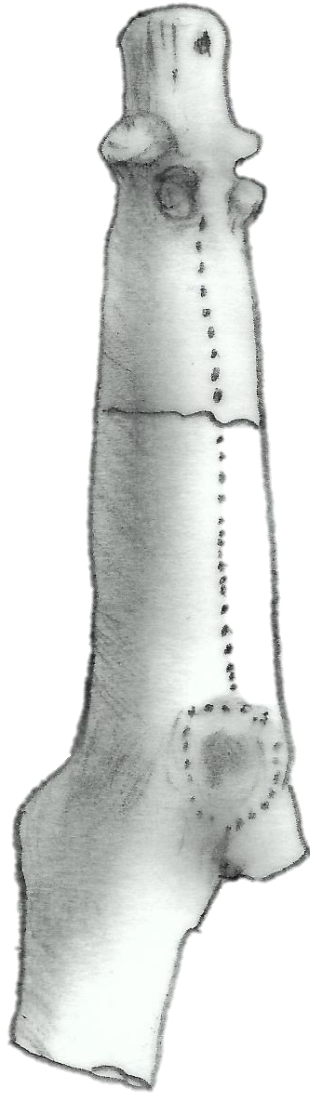


Figure 5.19: Anthropomorphic figurine from Schroda with deep punctate decoration (drawing: K. Humphreys)



Figure 5.20: Elaborate decoration on side and front of torso on figurine from Magogo (accession number 80/1 SF)





**Figure 5.21: Large elongated figurine from Schroda
(redrawn: A Humphreys from Huffman 2012: 130)**





Figure 5.22: Large figurine from K2 with punctate decoration (accession number C/4216: K2)



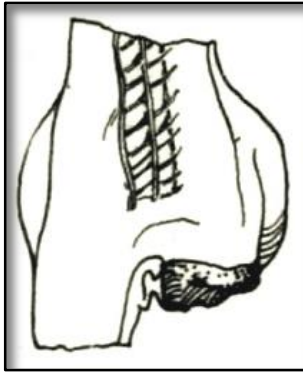


Figure 5.23: Fragment from K2 with incised line decoration (drawing: Mapungubwe Museum Archive)

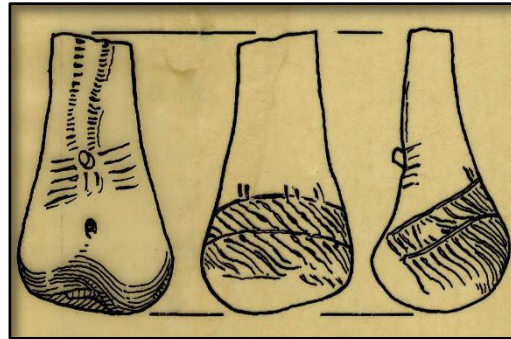


Figure 5.24: Figurine with incised line decoration from K2 (drawing: Mapungubwe Museum Archive)

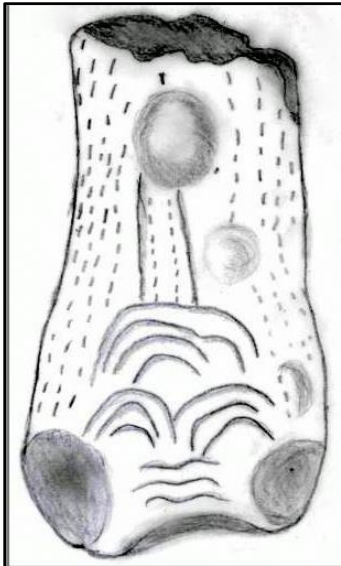


Figure 5.25: Incised line and punctate decoration on fragment from Magogo (drawing: A. Humphreys)

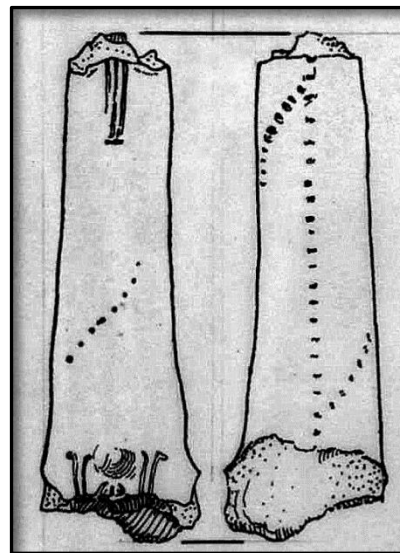


Figure 5.26: Upper torso fragment from K2 with punctate decoration (drawing: Mapungubwe Museum Archive)

Nine of the ten sites included in this study, yielded decorated figurines, with the exception of Wosi. Decorations were mostly found on the torsos and in minor instances on the head and head fragments of the figurines (discussed in detail in Section 5.1). Punctates indicating genitalia are not included in this discussion since they fall under another category of the framework and their primary purpose was likely not decorative.



The EIA sites yielded only a small number of decorated figurines, overall, only 23.6% of the figurines from these sites were decorated (Table 5.2). Most of these decorated figurines come from the site of KwaGandaganda, which produced 38% (n=8) of the 21 decorated figurines from EIA sites. From the perspective of the site assemblage, 20% of the KwaGandaganda figurines overall were decorated.

Table 5.2: Percentage of decorated figurines per site

Site	Total number of figurines	Total number of decorated figurines	%
Magogo	4	3	75
Mhlopeni	3	2	67
Wosi	2	0	0
Ndondondwane	13	4	31
Nanda	18	3	17
KwaGandaganda	41	8	20
Kulubele	8	1	13
Subtotal	89	21	
Schroda	27	5	19
K2	91	42	46
Mapungubwe	16	8	50
Subtotal	134	55	
Total	223	76	

The MIA sites yielded a comparatively greater number of decorated figurines, overall, 41% of the figurines from these sites were decorated, with Schroda yielding 9%; K2 76% and Mapungubwe 15% of the 55 decorated SLCA figurines (Table 5.2). The largest number came from K2 (n=42), which represents 46% of the K2 assemblage.

Collectively, 23.6% of all the figurines from the EIA were decorated, whereas K2/Mapungubwe, collectively, had 47% of their figurines decorated out of a total of 107. Schroda is not included in the collective number of MIA sites, since the limited



number of figurines I worked with are not necessarily representative of the much larger collection.

5.2.7 Class 7: Unique and Miscellaneous Figurines

The figurines in Class 7 were grouped as unique figurines and included phallic shaped figurines (because of the small sample size) without the presence of any anatomical features, while miscellaneous figurine fragments include remnants of legs, heads, buttocks and small fragments of the torso. Although some head fragments could unmistakably be identified as being from a figurine, some leg or small buttock remains could easily have been misinterpreted by various researchers. A total of 87 figurines (39%) were assigned to this Class with the largest number originating from K2 (n=32) and the second largest from KwaGandaganda with a total of 24 figurines (Table 4.1).

These can be discussed in greater detail in three broad categories:

Unique figurines

The unique figurines could not be placed in any of the other Classes and do not share any similarities with the other figurines apart from material and method of manufacture. Both of the figurines classified as unique come from KZN sites.

One is a small complete hollow head (measuring 50 mm x 36 mm from Trench 2 UB3) from KwaGandaganda with large eyebrows and eyes in the form of large punctates and a large mouth (Fig 5.29). The other is a small human hand (from Mhlopheni, measuring 61 mm x 31 mm) with incised lines on the wrist and fist depicting the fingers (Fig 5.30).



Miscellaneous figurines: Phallic shaped/conical objects

Seventeen fragments from the Limpopo sites were classed as falling into the miscellaneous category of phallic/conical figurines. These figurines are cylindrical in shape with no arms or legs. All the specimens have large bases that enable the objects to stand on their own. The majority of these figurines are manufactured in fine clay, with the one exception from Schroda, which was manufactured from coarse clay. The decoration on these objects are incised lines surrounding the base with some depicting one or more small holes in the top of the figurine (Fig 5.31).

Miscellaneous figurines: Legs

Fragments in this section, identified as stand-alone leg fragments, end in a flat base indicating a foot. No knees or toes are represented on any of the fragments. I identified 12 leg fragments in the KZN collections (Fig 5.28), with two displaying protruding large buttocks still attached. No leg fragments were present in the Schroda collection, while 11 leg fragments (two with enlarged buttocks still attached) were identified in the Mapungubwe collection (Fig 5.27).



Figure 5.27: Leg fragment with enlarged buttock still attached from K2 (accession number C/4454)



Figure 5.28: Leg fragment with flat foot from Ndondondwane (accession number 82/3 I8(1))



5.3 Determining Sex

The bulk of figurines in the sample could not be assigned to a specific biological sex and thus, by extension, gender. Although sex and gender (per se) do not form part of my analytical criteria, by combining the data from several of the classes, it is possible to gain insights into the degree to which the figurines are gendered. However, there would have been any number of figurines that were purposefully not gendered. Anthropomorphic figurines represent both sexes and, when they do, they appear anatomically correct. In total I managed to positively identify three male figurines (1%) (by the presence of male genitalia), and 61 female figurines (27%) (Table 5.3).

The female form is typically illustrated by:

- Breasts
- Protruding umbilicus (some accentuated by decoration)
- Genitalia

Table 5.3: Male and female figurine distribution by site

Site	Sex/Gender	
	Male	Female
Magogo		2
Mhlopeni		
Wosi		1
61Ndongondwane		
Nanda		3
KwaGandaganda		3
Kulubele		
Schroda	2	6
K2	1	42
Mapungubwe		4
Total	3	61



The K2 collection yielded the largest number of fragments of female figurines (n=42) (66%), with the KZN collection having the second largest percentage of female figurines (n=9) (14%), six female figurines (n=6) (9%) from Schroda and four (n=4) (6%) figurines from Mapungubwe. Only Schroda and K2 yielded male figurines that could be positively identified. Of the 64 figurines that were sexed, 95% were female and 5% male. However, due to fragmentation, it is not always possible to determine the “sex” of the figurine. The Schroda collection also displays the most explicit genitalia of all the figurines in the collections.

5.4 Conclusion

Figurine manufacture is evident from the EIA to MIA in southern Africa and appears to have been more “specialised” in the societies of the Middle Iron Age in SLCA. The size of the assemblages recovered from these sites is also greater in those dating to the MIA. However, it appears that during the settlement of the leader on Mapungubwe Hill and the ideological changes in the community, the manufacturing of figurines started diminishing, resulting in a smaller number of figurines found during this period, where the figurine tradition was more related to the domestic realm (as argued for in other contexts by Marcus 1996, 2019).

The following chapter will elaborate on the chronological and spatial patterns in which the figurines were found as well as possible patterns in the use of the materials in the manufacture of figurines and the use of figurines in a ritual context. The possible correlation between the decoration patterns on the figurines and the practice of scarification and body markings in contemporary societies will also be explored.



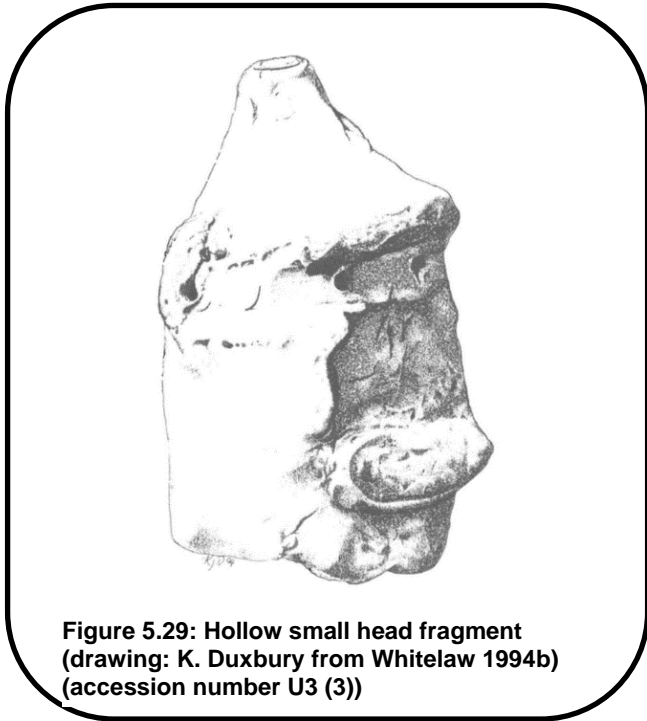


Figure 5.29: Hollow small head fragment
 (drawing: K. Duxbury from Whitelaw 1994b)
 (accession number U3 (3))



Figure 5.30: Small human hand from Mhlopeni (accession number 80/2 H.F.)

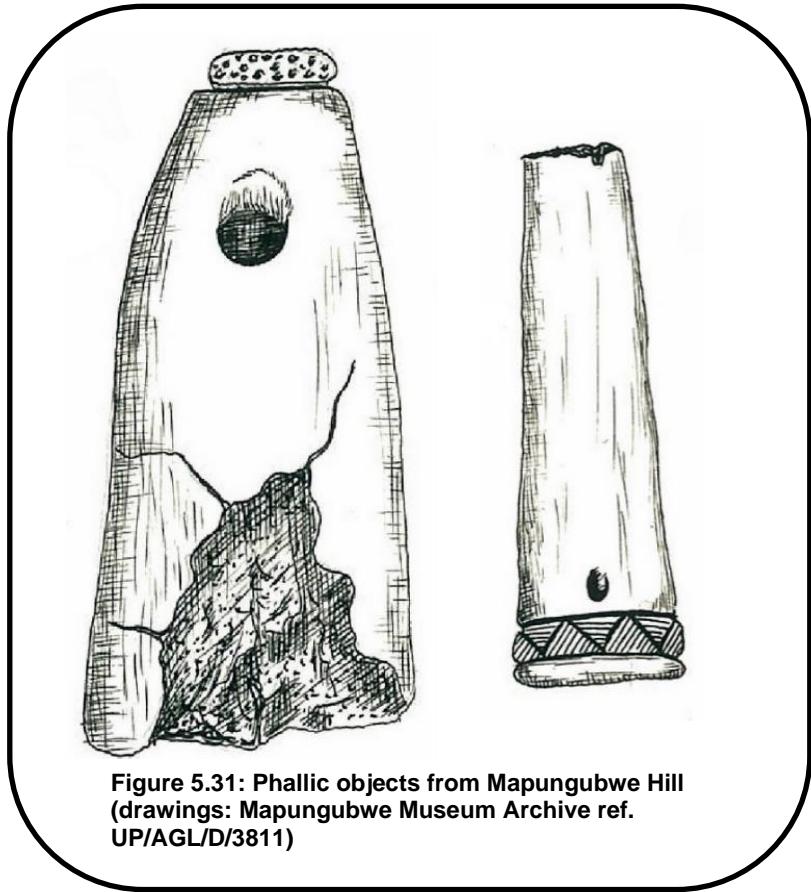


Figure 5.31: Phallic objects from Mapungubwe Hill
 (drawings: Mapungubwe Museum Archive ref. UP/AGL/D/3811)



Chapter 6: Interpretation and Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will explore the degree to which I have been able to answer my research questions through my analysis of the figurine assemblages of the designated sites, with particular reference to chronology, context, body forms and decoration. I will thus address the research questions highlighted in the introduction of this dissertation with reference to the figurines studied:

- Does the original context/provenience of figurines reveal a specific function or meaning of these anthropomorphic figurines?
- Do the anthropomorphic figurines depict certain gender types?
- What are the type, location and distribution of body markings on the anthropomorphic figurines in the study?

As explored in Chapter 2, it has long been argued by all the scholars who have worked on southern African archaeological figurines that they played an integral role in the everyday lives of early southern African farming societies, and in some cases, continue to do so in contemporary societies. Therefore, it is necessary to also look beyond the archaeological finds and to draw on other sources that might inform on this integral role. As Smith and Kotzé (2010: 10) stated:

Traditional Africa has a rich system of communication, using artefacts and symbols which are embedded with these artefacts. It is also evident that interpretation of the artefacts is not trivial and requires knowledge of the community in which the artefact was made. Without this background, the meaning of the artefact remains a mystery.



Therefore, I have drawn on more recent ethnographic work in order to further discussion around the potential use of figurines in rituals or other aspects of daily life. Obviously, there is no one-to-one correlation between archaeological and modern-day societies, but such ethnography and contemporary practice do help inform us on the potential meaning of some attributes of the figurines, such as the decoration and their possible use.

Figurines excavated from the South African sites are all manufactured from clay, but in Zimbabwe, Matenga (1993) notes that figurines carved in ivory and soapstone were introduced during the Zimbabwe Tradition since these objects were mainly found at Zimbabwe sites dating between the 12th and 16th century. Ethnographic research demonstrates that figurines are still being manufactured today, with the majority of them being carved from wood or made from plant material, bottles, cloth, and beads. It is not unlikely, therefore, that various materials were used to manufacture figurines in the past as well but that not all have been preserved. Unlike stone, ivory or clay, wood and fibre do not endure the elements, hence the absence of these types of material in the archaeological record. However, while we may only be working with a partial record of all figurines present in past southern African societies, this does not preclude us from being able to draw some conclusions about the evidence that we do have from the clay figurines.

6.2 Chronology and Context

In order to answer the first question posed – does the original context/provenience of these anthropomorphic figurines reveal a specific function or meaning of these figurines? – it is necessary to consider the figurine finds from the perspective of chronology and context. As is evident from the sample included in this study, archaeological figurines occur widely in South Africa at sites associated with, and post-dating, the arrival of Ntu-speaking farmers in southern Africa. It is at times difficult to identify the exact context in which such artefacts were used, as figurines were often recovered through surface collections (due to soil erosion) or mostly in the



upper layers of excavations (Fouché 1937: 18, 26; Gardner 1963: 36 & Inventories; Meyer 1998: 95, 102, 202), while other finds resulted from the disturbance of underlying deposits by ploughing (Whitelaw 1993). Where the context is known, however, it is possible to conclude that figurines were located or discarded in various areas on the excavated sites. This pattern leads to the conclusion that figurines, as a category of artefacts, may have filled more than a single role in these societies. It would appear that there were two broad groups of figurines. The first group comprises domestic or personal figurines that are found singly and scattered in household middens and in or near huts and cattle byres, as evidenced at the majority of sites. This suggests that these figurines formed part of the everyday domestic life of the community, possibly in household rituals or as part of fertility practices (Loubser 1993; Prins & Granger 1993; Van Schalkwyk 2002; Whitelaw 1993, 1994a). The second group consists of those found in close association with one another – in pits or other discrete clusters within clearly demarcated areas, such as the group of figurines found at Schroda in the Limpopo Province (Hanisch 1980, 2002) or the spatially segregated cluster at Ndongondwane. Their location, and the fact that they were found together, led scholars to suggest that they were used during specific rituals of public import, such as the initiation/puberty rites of boys and girls (Hanisch 1980; Roodt 1992).

Whether classified as personal/domestic or found in a ritual deposit, the figurines are all fragmented, that could indicate that they were deliberately broken before they were disposed of (Hanisch 2002; Wadley 2013; Whitelaw 1994a; Wood 2002). The brittle nature of many of the unbaked coarse clay figurines in particular, imply that they were purposefully made to be used only once and then discarded, since they would not stand up to multiple uses. The archaeological contexts in which they are found suggest that objects with different functions were disposed of differently, for example, in pits as opposed to middens and so on (Arntz 2013; Dederen 2009; Hanisch 2002; Knox 2012; Loubser 1993; Maggs & Ward 1984; Marcus 2019; Matenga 1993; Schoeman 2017; Wood 2002).



Figurines were primarily recovered from the domestic areas of all the sites with the exception of the clusters that were found in ritual spaces at Ndongondwane and Schroda. These figurines were found in spaces that were possibly once used to host communal rituals, i.e. the ritual nature of the space is linked to the temporality of the event. Once figurines had fulfilled their function, they were discarded, perhaps *in situ*. At Ndongondwane, a cluster of hollow ceramic head fragments and figurines were found discarded in the central mound area, next to the fence surrounding the enclosure. It is proposed that such demarcated areas belonged to male versus female activities on opposite sides of the fence (Hanisch & Maumela 2002; Loubser 1993). Contemporary initiation ceremonies, where figurines are used on a communal basis during the ritual, are reported to be held in the chief's capital under the auspices of the chief (Nettleton 1992). The single large deposits of concentrated – deliberately broken – figurines found at Ndongondwane and Schroda are thought to possibly have been areas where such rituals took place. Such concentrations of figurines could therefore attest to specific events (taking place in a short period of time), as opposed to the other figurines found scattered across domestic/residential areas, which may have been discarded over the lifetime of the site. The disposal pattern (broken before discard) and style of the coarse figurines are comparable to the reports of figurine use in historical initiation schools (Dart 1959; Hanisch 2002; Loubser 1993; Van Schalkwyk 2002), whereas the stylized figurines may have been intended to last a long time for regular or multiple use (Nettleton 2002: 100; Schoeman 2017: 132).

The figurines in my study collection comprise both coarse clay and fine clay figurines, with the KZN and Schroda collections yielding mostly coarse clay figurines. The clay was mixed with various grit materials such as sand, bone splinters, grass, ash and crushed rock/stones as tempers to bind the clay and make it more pliable (Schofield 1948). The majority of clay figurines found in the central areas of homesteads, such as the ritual spaces described above, were made from coarse unbaked clay and were found in association with animal figurines and other cultural material. The figurines from the EIA are all small fragments, with the majority made from coarse clay, while the MIA sites yielded small and larger pieces made from both coarse and fine clay at



each site. The MIA figurines made from coarse clay are considerably larger in size and appear to be unbaked and poorly manufactured, resulting in the crumbling and fragmentation of the figurine. The coarse clay figurines were broken into several pieces before being discarded, which makes it very difficult to restore them to their original form, while the more stylized figurines have been made with fine clay and appear to be better preserved and show evidence of being exposed to fire (Hanisch 2002). The colour of the clay varies from light to dark brown with occasional black areas on some figurines. The black colour is not consistent on each of the figurines and could have occurred during the firing process where branches touched the figurine (Hanisch 2002).

Figurines in all the sites of this study – apart from a few complete figurines from Schroda – were common finds and fragments are found throughout the sites. Figurines (human as well as animal) are often found in association with other purposefully broken or incomplete artefacts such as bottomless pots, in and around household areas and middens, central storage pits, cattle byres or in close proximity of human burials. Examples of pots where the bottom was purposefully removed as well as pot burials were found at KwaGandaganda, Nanda, Ndondondwane, Kulubele and the historical site of Melora Saddle in the Waterberg of South Africa (Boeyens *et al.* 2009; Morris 1993; Van Schalkwyk *et al.* 1997; Whitelaw 1993). Huffman's (2012: 128) view is that "as a rule, ritual objects should be protected against malevolent forces after discard. The purposeful breakage and careful burial therefore suggest that bottomless pots were part of important rituals." With reference to the figurines, however, Wadley (2013: 318, 2018: 5) has argued that figurines and other paraphernalia may have been deliberately broken to indicate transitions in the social status of individuals or once they had served their (ritual) purpose (Wadley 2013: 318).

In addition to the archaeological context in which the figurines were recorded, there is also the larger sociopolitical context in which they were used. As demonstrated in Table 3.1 in Chapter 3, the collections in this study derive from sites dating from



between AD 500 and AD 1 300. They were recovered in relatively low numbers (apart from KwaGandaganda) from the EIA sites in KZN and the Eastern Cape and in greater numbers from Schroda and K2/Mapungubwe in the Middle Iron Age (see Fig 6.1). The tradition of making clay figurines did not end at this time, however, as their presence at Later Iron Age archaeological sites elsewhere in southern Africa has also been reported (Küsel, pers. comm. 2016). Unfortunately, a study of all figurines was beyond the scope of this project. Nevertheless, the comparative study of figurines from two different chronological and geographical contexts in South Africa has revealed some interesting patterns.

As highlighted in Chapter 3, Huffman (2012) proposes that the settlement patterns of widely dispersed agricultural communities in the last two millennia in South Africa were influenced by the worldview and social organisation of the people concerned. This is archaeologically expressed through what is known as the CCP, a manifestation of a broadly shared worldview that also speaks to the existence of a symbolic reservoir (see Chapter 2), from which societies with shared worldviews might draw to express concepts in slightly different ways. Shared cultural systems of symbols and beliefs are “expressed in behaviour and in material culture to support and articulate group social strategies: they are therefore capable of structuring artefact variation on a large scale” (MacEachern 1994: 205). Furthermore, McIntosh (1989: 79–83, 1992: 149) proposes that communities within a larger society produced cultural material related to their established ideological system of ideas that controlled their place in their community. MacIntosh (1989: 79) further says:

In the process of an emerging complex society ... ever increasing numbers of subgroups engage in the erection of legitimating myths, ideologies, symbols, and the like from a larger cultural heritage or legacy of beliefs and their material representations.

According to McIntosh (1989: 77), different communities “dip into a long-held reservoir of symbols, myths, and beliefs in order to extract, craft, and visually display



a legitimating tradition to serve their own sectional interest." Although there are similarities between the figurines from the EIA and MIA contexts, when the theory of symbolic reservoirs is applied, the meanings and usage of the figurines between different social groups may have differed considerably, as such meaning and symbolism is subject to change over time and is specific to the cultural context. There is no direct historical continuity between the people at the EIA and MIA sites in this study even though there may be broad cultural relationships.

The EIA sites yielded small figurines, rarely representing the actual human body as opposed to the larger figurines from the early Zhizo/Leokwe figurines found at Schroda and the more refined style of figurines dating to the transition period of occupation at K2 and Mapungubwe. The form and style of the figurines from K2 and Mapungubwe are more refined and, in most cases, represent a more realistic human shape compared to the figurines from Schroda. The change in figurine style may also be attributed to a different cultural group with a new ideology moving into the Limpopo basin, adopting or bringing their own figurine tradition.

The majority of figurines were excavated at K2 with only a few found at Mapungubwe, suggesting a shift in social complexity. During the transition from rank-based society (Schroda/K2) to a fully hierarchical society lead by a sacred leader, major social changes occurred, and the cultural material and objects used by complex societies probably helped to organise their society in more elaborate ways, resulting in artefacts becoming more elaborate and the range of objects that people made and used, appeared to increase (Bailey 2005: 5). It appears as though the use of figurines started to diminish at Mapungubwe, while the occurrence of more elaborate artefacts became evident. Objects such as spindle whorls, clusters of glass beads and objects made of gold (including gold-foil-covered figurines) are associated with the insignia of royalty (Huffman 2005: 53; Mitchell 2002: 305; Schofield 1948: 122).

As mentioned earlier, the context where figurines were found, provides insight into the use of the figurine. Female figurines are predominant in all the sites, and this



leads us to the vital role that women played in these early farming communities, whether in a communal or household context.

6.3 Bodies and Embodiment

In order to answer the second question – do the anthropomorphic figurines depict certain gender types? – we need to consider the degree to which the figurines can be regarded as gendered objects. Figurines, representing the human body, have the ability to express ideas through form and decoration whether used in non-domestic or domestic context (Braithwaite 1982) and it is therefore important to consider what bodies are being represented in figurines and why. As highlighted in Section 5.3, while it is not always possible to assign the figurines to a specific sex, when one can, they are invariably female (1% of the total sample was determined to be gendered male, 27% to be female). To a certain degree, therefore, we can regard figurines as being representations of and embodying the female in these societies. By extension they are thus gendered objects due to the close relationship between biological sex and gendered social roles in these societies.

Archaeologists in southern Africa have long recognised embodiment as a crucial aspect of the artefacts produced by agricultural societies in the region, particularly those made of clay. From the very beginning, clay formed part of the material culture of the early farming communities where it was used to manufacture figurines, pottery and a host of other artefacts. Clay was moulded to “represent expressions of abstract forms as the figurines were an embodiment of both the human and natural world” (Tiley-Nel & De Kamper 2016: 56, 2017: 42). Clay, in its natural form or mixed with other substances to produce various colours, is also used throughout Africa for the decoration of houses as well as the adornment of the human body in ceremonial rituals (Cameron 1996; Ekosse 1994; Mpako 2011; Van Schalkwyk 2002: 74–77; Van Vuuren 2012; Van Wyk 1998: 53–67).



As noted in Section 2.6, embodiment can be defined as “the representation of something in a visible or tangible form, within a societal role – as ritual embodiment using figural imagery and other cultural materials – and ideology” (Brumfiel 1996; Meskell 2017; Schmidt 2009). In particular, iron-smelting furnaces and pottery have been singled out as being interpreted by their users as analogous to the human body, this analogy being manifested through language (the naming of parts), decoration and form.

In the case of furnaces, the linkage is often drawn between iron smelting and fertility (Matenga 1993: 144–145), whereby the tuyères can be interpreted as a metaphoric male penis. Schmidt (2009: 262) concurs, arguing that iron smelting furnaces can be seen as the “largest baked clay figure[s] in Africa” and that they are constructed in the form of the human female body. Wadley (2018) also links fertility symbolism to smelting furnaces representing the body of a woman displaying breasts and a vaginal opening, while the blow pipes represent a penis with “testicle-like bellows.” She argues that furnaces “mimic reproductive systems by combining female and male body parts through ritual motions” (Wadley 2018: 12).

Pots and other features, such as grain bins, are also linked to the female body. Scholars, such as Huffman (2012: 135–136), Matenga (1993: 141–145), Schmidt (2009) and Schoeman (2017: 145), have drawn attention to the resemblance between the scarification designs on female bodies and the decoration on beer pots, women’s aprons, and clay grain bins. Schmidt (2009), for example, compares the decoration on clay grain bins to the markings on a female’s body, which link her to her ancestors and her father. According to Schoeman (2017: 145), “body scarification patterns are depicted on a range of clay-based material culture items associated with the female form, such as clay pots and iron smelting furnaces.” Aschwanden (1982: 33, 190–191) argues with reference to Karanga jars that they serve as symbols of women and that some of the decorations, such as the markings on the *rongo* jar, duplicate the tattoos that are found on a woman’s abdomen (see discussion in Boeyens *et al.* [2009]).



Scholars further draw connections between these embodied forms and figurines. Matenga (1993: 145–146) compares some of the stylized figurines in his study with the general shape of an iron smelting furnace that includes features resembling breasts, an umbilical protuberance, scarification marks on both sides of the umbilicus and a vaginal opening. He observed such furnaces in Zimbabwe (Fig 6.1). Wood (2002: 84–86) compares the form and markings on such furnaces to the specific form of the stylized figurines from Schroda, which demonstrates the connection between the woman, her father, her husband and her ancestors. Once utilised for a smelt, these furnaces are left to wear away in the open to a fragmentary state, much like the figurines that are broken and discarded after they have served their purpose (Schmidt 2009: 262).

The difference between these artefacts that may be analogous to the human, particularly female, body and anthropomorphic figurines is that figurines are first and foremost representations of the human body with no other apparent purpose. While scholars such as Hanisch (2002: 35) suggest that the “fine clay figures give the appearance of having been made as toys, much along the lines of domesticates that are frequently still made today by herd boys”, the coarse clay and anthropomorphic figurines do not appear to have play or entertainment as their primary purpose. These figurines were broken prior to disposal after the completion of the ritual and according to Hanisch (2002: 35), with reference to the Schroda figurines:

the nature and size of the assemblage of figurines indicate that these were not made as toys for children. When the phallic objects are taken into account as well as the clay figurines where the human sexual organs are heavily emphasized, then the hoard: [sic] takes on another significance and potential use, namely that of initiation.



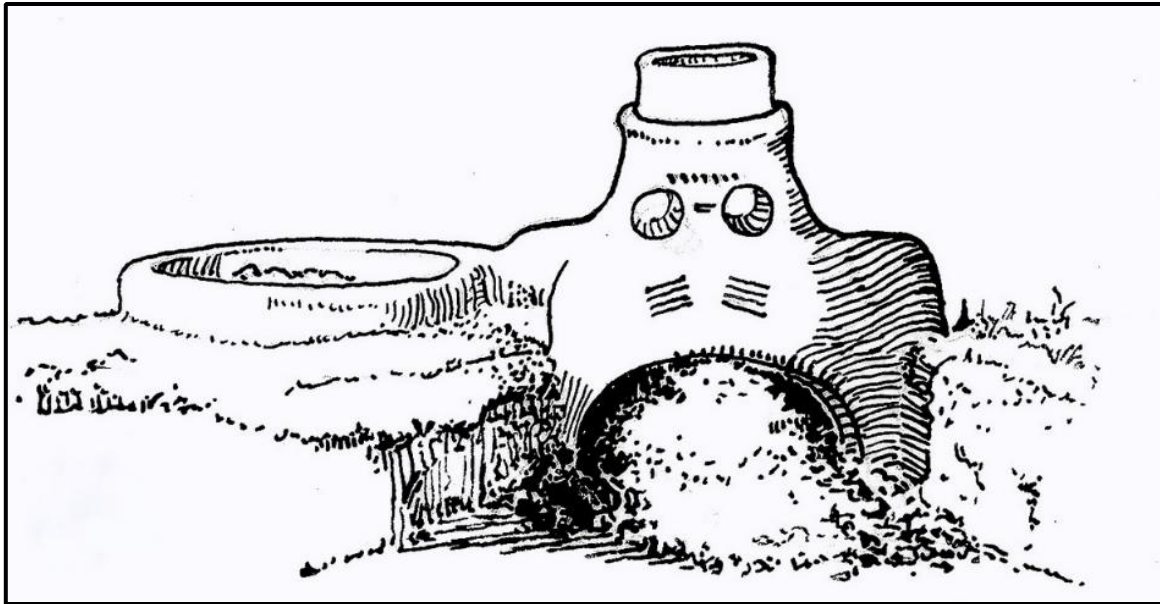


Figure 6.1: Artist's sketch of a furnace (image copyright and courtesy University of Pretoria, Mapungubwe Archive: ref UP/AGL/D/804/4)

In the sample of figurines included in this study, there is a clear emphasis on the female body. It is evident that female figurines are widespread and more common in all the sites and Matenga (1993) also reports that the female figurines were widespread in the Zimbabwean sites that yielded an overwhelming number of female figurines compared to male or unidentified figurines. The male figurines from Schroda and K2 are not phallic in shape but represent a “human” figure and were possibly used in conjunction with the female figurines. It is known that figurines formed an important role in female rites of passage rituals among the Eastern Ntu-speaking people throughout southern Africa and that Schroda might have been evidence of such a puberty initiation ritual area (Huffman 2012; Nettleton 2002; Wood 2002; Zubieta 2016).

The figurines in the EIA collections show no evidence of prominent legs or arms while the figurines excavated at Schroda have more crude characteristics, such as the broad-based legs and vestigial arms, and some are more fragmented than the figurines from K2 and Mapungubwe. The figurines in the K2 and Mapungubwe collections show evidence of arms and legs, but are mostly broken away from the



torso. K2 also yielded many leg fragments, some with the one buttock still attached. Schroda as well as K2 yielded figurines with long slim cylindrical legs or remains thereof. Abrasion marks on some of the figurines show where the legs or arms were broken off from the torso.

Steatopygic buttocks and genitalia are present in both EIA (excluding Mhlopheni, Wosi and Kulubele) and MIA collections. These enlarged or steatopygic buttocks were observed on 49 figurines (22%), 11 from KZN and 38 from the Limpopo sites. The majority of figurines with enlarged buttocks were found at K2. The buttocks or remains of buttocks were depicted in solid lumps of clay attached to the body, which in some cases appeared to be added after the manufacturing of the lower torso.

Some figurines have both buttocks still attached to the torso, while some display only one buttock or abrasion marks where the small lumps of clay have been attached. Some buttocks are moulded in a solid lump of clay, with a deep incised line separating the two cheeks (Fig 6.2), while other figurines display perfectly separated lumps of clay (Fig 6.3).

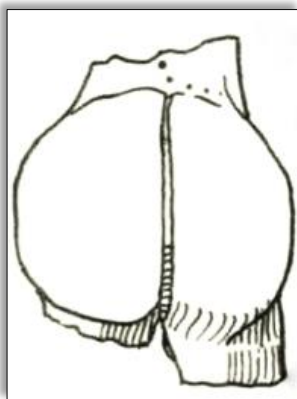


Figure 6.2: Example of buttocks with incised line from K2 (drawing: Mapungubwe Museum Archive)

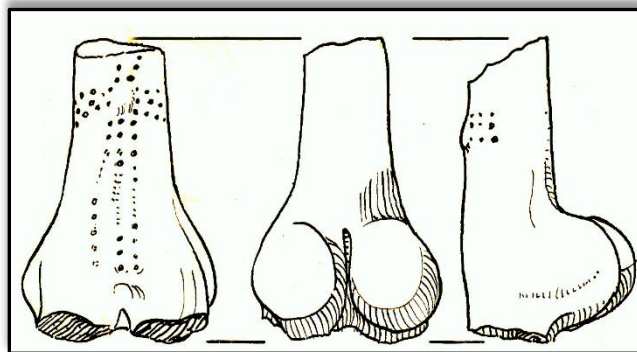


Figure 6.3: Figurine with protruding buttocks (drawing: Mapungubwe Museum Archive)

Of the 27 restored figurines in the Schroda collection, three distinct elongated stylized female figurines (referred to as “fertility dolls”) have long slim legs ending in a flat base, with small protruding arms, and reproductive elements displayed in small



breasts, prominent buttocks and a small protuberant navel. These figurines are normally related to the Leopard's Kopje/K2 sites and differ in form from those figurines commonly associated with the Zhizo figurines found at the Zimbabwean sites (Hanisch & Maumela 2002: 51). These stylized figurines represent a female body and a phallic shaped upper torso, and are regarded as dual-sexed objects symbolising the relationship between female and male (De Maret 2016: 505).

Furthermore, Schroda also yielded figurines (from the ritual deposit) with rudimentary features (anthropomorphic), in some cases resembling the human form, genitalia, protruding arms and pedestal-like feet enabling them to stand alone. These figurines are thought to belong to the Leokwe phase of occupation at Schroda.

As indicated earlier, the EIA sites yielded only small, fragmented figurines and no males could be identified in those collections. The MIA sites yielded a variety of figurines, including the stylized figurines from Schroda and K2, which are similar to the stylized figurines identified by Matenga (1993: 100). As mentioned earlier, only one figurine from K2 (Fig 5.5) resembles the stylized figurines in the Schroda collection.

Dederen (2010: 24–37) describes these stylized “fertility dolls” from Schroda as an “icon” with a “dual sexuality” comprising of a “female human body and a male sexual organ”. This is supported by the observations of the Roumegueres (1960: 205) who reported on the continued use of figurines in Zimbabwe, where a mother would present her daughter with a doll used as an educational tool when she is eligible for marriage. As part of the marriage procedure the “girl’s fiancé must take the doll to her grandmother to learn its meanings. Essentially, the head is small and phallus-like because a woman’s fertility is a blessing from her ancestors” (Huffman 2012: 129–130).



The Use of Colour

Various scholars have reported on the use of colour in rituals in contemporary societies and the symbolism surrounding the use of colour (Hamilton-Tookey 1981; Kuper 1982; Nettleton 1992, 2002; Pauw 1990; Turner 1967; Van Schalkwyk 1995, 2002). Furthermore, the evidence of the use of colour on the figurines in the sample indicates that colour probably also played an important role in the early farming communities' use of figurines.

As indicated in Chapter 5, the colour of the clay that figurines were manufactured from varied considerably in colour and some samples in the MIA collections show evidence of added colour after manufacturing. It is clear that colour plays an important role in contemporary initiation rituals among communities of various African cultures (Ekosse 1994; Van Schalkwyk 2002). Some figurines from Schroda display evidence of red (ochre), white (ash) and black (graphite) colouring, that is "different from the colours that arise from the inherent properties of the clay or from firing" (Van Schalkwyk 2002: 74), suggesting that colour played a significant role and is loaded with important symbolism in the Ntu-speaking world (Huffman 2012: 131; Van Schalkwyk 2002: 74). Evidence of the use of colour was also found on other figurines in the MIA collections examined. No use of colour was observed on any of the EIA figurines in the sample. Given that these are representations of bodies, particularly female bodies, it is likely that this applied colour on the MIA figurines represents clay body paint.

Clay is used daily and in ceremonial body and face decoration and particularly kaolin clay is known to be used to paint the whole body for rituals (Ekosse 1994: 141). Clay has also been used for aesthetic purposes during initiation rituals and rites of passage of both boys and girls and was applied on different parts of the body. Clay and various colours of clay played a vital role in protection, cleansing and smoothing of the skin, as well as for cosmetic purposes (Matike *et al.* 2010). The clay also provides protection against the sun (Matike *et al.* 2010; Van Wyk 1998). In preparing the clay,



it is crushed and mixed with water to form a paste and then further mixed with other substances such as Vaseline or animal fat before application.

Other rituals where clay was used were in those pertaining to births, dancing, and marriage celebrations (Blacking 1969; Cameron 1996; Fayers-Kerr 2018; Matike *et al.* 2010; Mpako *et al.* 2011; Wood 2000). The evidence that clay was applied to the figurines in a way that echoes the way in which clay is applied to bodies during rituals, supports the assertion that the people who resided at Schroda made use of this triad of colours, since these colours “are part of a very complex, all pervading system of belief and that it has specific applications and meanings, which one is able to understand in the present” (Van Schalkwyk 2002: 78).

Colour has its own symbolic meaning in the historical Venda *domba* initiation ritual. The triad of colours are linked to the fire described in the *domba* as white to ash, black to burnt wood and red to the flame (Blacking 1969). These colours are laden with symbolic significance in the Ntu-speaking world (Turner 1967: 59–62):

- *White* is associated with semen and rain representing fertility and the procreative powers of women;
- *Black* is believed to have cleansing properties;
- *Red* is associated with heat and blood.

Figurines and Fertility

It should be noted that the majority of figurines recovered from all the sites where sex could be determined, represent the female form with a small number of male figurines present at Schroda and K2. Women played an important role in these communities in the domestic and agricultural realm as the labourers and protectors of the crops to ensure abundance and an assured supply of food. Figurines found in the context of early agricultural communities are therefore connected with the maintenance and future fertility of a woman (Summers 1957: 73; Wood 2002: 87). According to Huffman



(2012: 142), female fertility is vital and “was represented in a variety of objects, including pots and clay figurines as well as houses and grain bins.” This suggests there is a definite link between fertility of the land and a woman’s reproductive ability “as well as between potting and procreation” (Boeyens *et al.* 2009: 213).

Archaeological evidence has demonstrated that figurine manufacture likely typically took place in the domestic realm, and it is clear that figurines were generally made and used by women. Schoeman (2017: 146) argues that “transforming clay into pottery or figurines is a deeply gendered process”. She further adds in this regard that the

attempts to manage fertility... occurred in the context where economic resources, such as cattle, were controlled by older men. It is therefore significant that the material culture types chosen to embody these gendered ideologies were clay-based. Traditionally, women were the potters and made the clay initiation and fertility-related figurines.

They thus likely served important symbolic functions during rituals (public and household) and are central in ceremonies invoking fertility and procreation (Hanisch 2002; Jolles 1998; Matenga 1993; Roumeguere & Roumeguere-Eberhardt 1962).

The use of figurines to promote fertility and induce pregnancy is widespread across the globe. The occurrence of clusters of figurines, such as those found at Schroda, are associated with ceremonies such as rites of passage which are also linked to fertility (Cory 1994; Hanisch 2002; Matenga 1993; Nettleton 2002). Stylized figurines (phallic in shape), known to be fertility-related, are prominent in household middens across much of southern Africa throughout the Iron Age community sequence and are comparable to historical figurines used to treat infertility (Matenga 1993; Wood 2002). With the shape of the figurine and protruding navel (usually surrounded by decorative marks) it is clear that it is a symbol of female power of fertility and



procreation (Dederen 2009; Ekosse 1994; Matenga 1993; Roumequere & Roumequere-Eberhardt 1962).

6.4 Body Markings

As discussed in the previous section, the number of attributes that are indicative of a gendered body, such as breasts, genitalia, and protruding umbilici, indicate that when the figurines are sexable they are overwhelmingly female. The remaining attribute of import that can also be linked to modern-day ethnography, and thereby to the female body, relates to the third research question – what are the type, location and distribution of body markings on the anthropomorphic figurines in the study?

As highlighted in Chapter 5, Table 5.2, a number of figurines (n=76) in the sample depict embellishment in the form of punctate or other markings on the torso and, when looked at collectively, the proportion of decorated figurines is far greater at K2 and Mapungubwe than at the KZN and Eastern Cape sites. Many scholars have reported on the markings on the torsos of these types of figurines excavated from the various archaeological sites (*inter alia* Binneman 1996; Hanisch 1980; Hanisch & Maumela 2002; Huffman 2012; Loubser 1993; Maggs & Ward 1984; Van Schalkwyk 2002; Whitelaw 1994a). These decorative elements on the torso appear similar to bodily markings observed in contemporary communities in southern Africa.

According to *Segen's Medical Dictionary* (2012), “body marking is the practice of embellishing the body with piercings, colourations, tribal marks or scarifications.” As indicated, this may take a number of forms, the three most common in southern Africa being scarification, cicatrisation and tattooing. Scarification is a permanent modification of the skin, which is a painful and long process, usually performed by an expert elderly person at the request of a young maiden in southern Africa. Scarification is medically defined as a “[c]ontraction of fibrous tissue, formed at a wound site by fibroblasts, reducing the size of the wound while distorting tissue” (*Segen's Medical Dictionary* 2012). Tattooing is the “art of inserting metabolically inert



pigments in a desired pattern and at the optimum level into the skin” (Vasudevan *et al.* 2018: 637). Coleman (2002) describes cicatrisation as “a special form of scarification, whereby a gash is made in the skin with a sharp instrument, and irritation of the skin caused by applying caustic plant juices forms permanent blisters.” Scars are made by incisions on the skin with a sharp object, forming scar tissue in the shape of many motifs (Coleman 2002). The scars may be made by cutting and pinning tissue together with thorns, or by cutting with a razor. Other dark substances such as cow dung or charcoal may also be rubbed into the wounds to cause irritation and raised bumps (also known as keloids) on the body (Armstrong *et al.* 2008: 538; Coleman 2002; DeMello 2007: 235–236).

Scarification has been observed as a traditional activity widely performed across Africa (Coleman 2002). Historically, it has been observed as a practice amongst many cultural groups in southern Africa. David Livingstone (1857: 272) encountered people in a village of the Balonda-people on his travels during 1854 and noted that:

they are generally tattooed in various parts, but chiefly on the abdomen: the skin is raised in small elevated cicatrices... a number of them may constitute a star or other device. The dark colour of the skin prevents any colouring matter being deposited in these figures, but they love much to have the whole surface of their bodies anointed with a comfortable varnish of oil.

British merchant, William White, observed women bearing tattoo markings in southern Mozambique during his visit to Delagoa Bay in 1798 (Gengenbach 2010). Attesting to the longevity of these practices, Gengenbach (2006) explores the history of tattooing in southern Mozambique over a period of 200 years. Frederick Elton (1872), who travelled across what is today Mpumalanga to Mozambique in 1870, also observed the practice of scarification among the young Tsonga women, while Junod recorded the practice of scarification by young Tsonga women in the former Transvaal Province in the early 1900s (Junod, cited by Gengenbach 2003: 111).



These practices were recorded well into the twentieth century – Bullock (1950: 44) commented in the 1950s that young girls were still given tribal tattoo marks in the former Rhodesia, to ensure that these girls could “please their future husbands.” Matenga (1993: 98–99) drew extensively on observations by Gelfand and Swart (1953) during the 1950s of scarification practices among the Makorekore and Vakaranga women in Zimbabwe. Lister Haig Hunter – a trader of curios and ethnic artefacts and a keen photographer, since after World War II up until his death in 1981 – observed and recorded the scarification process among the Xhosa-speaking people in Umtata (former Transkei) and Elliotdale in the Eastern Cape of South Africa (Figs 6.4–6.6) (Hunter 1960). Delius *et al.* (2014: 21) also noted the practice of scarification among the Pedi during initiation.

Ethnographic research indicates that this custom is slowly diminishing and, in some contexts, it is now only seen on the elderly (Armstrong *et al.* 2008: 538; Coleman 2002), although tattooing and piercing are still widely practiced. Kennedy (1993: 230) argues that while the custom of scarification was commonly practised among the Zulu in earlier periods, it declined around the end of the 19th century. Junod (1962: 181) also reported that the custom had “more or less disappeared” among the Tsonga people.

Adornment of any kind on the body is a way of communication and there are a range of reasons why such markings are used, including: in rituals – especially initiation rites (Brain 1979); for medicinal purposes (Matenga 1993: 98–99); to indicate group membership (Matenga 1993: 98–99); and for the purposes of beautification, sexual pleasure and fertility (Gengenbach 2003; Tiley-Nel 2017). Scarification markings on a woman’s body tells the story of their life during various stages, (for example, puberty/initiation to womanhood), and these practices are reflected on the figurines (Gengenbach 2003). Given the emphasis, discussed above, on the female body in the figurines in the sample, the uses most pertinent to the discussion here are scarification as part of initiation rites and for the purposes of fertility, beautification and sexual pleasure. This position is shared by many archaeologists. Steele (2006:



34), for instance, compares the decoration practices observed in the ethnographic present with the emphasis on the protruding navel and genital area of the figurines and ascribes both to the transitional rituals of a girl to a woman and human reproduction. Matenga (1993: 98–99), too, draws a parallel between the observations of Mauch in 1871 (Burke 1969: 168) of the presence of scarification markings on women around Great Zimbabwe and the markings on some of the figurines in his study that displayed similar patterns.

Scarification is often noted in association with the various stages of initiation rites of young girls in southern Africa (*inter alia* Coleman 2002; Delius *et al.* 2014; Gengenbach 2003; Junod 1962: 180–181; Krige 1962 [1936]: 375; Krige & Krige 1980: 138; Loubser 1993: 147). These markings on the body may thus have started from a young age and continued being embellished through adulthood, a testimony of the transition from one state to another during an individual's lifetime (Brain 1979: 177; Coleman 2002; Wadley 2013: 317–322; Whitelaw 1994b: 121). As such, they are likely also closely related to ideas around fertility. In some instances, they are regarded as a statement that the girl will be able to endure the pain of childbirth (Coleman 2002; DeMello 2007: 235–236). In some groups, scarification is so obligatory that, without it, a woman would not be eligible for marriage (DeMello 2007: 235–236; Junod 1962). The body incisions on the archaeological figurines thus support the argument that such objects may have been used in puberty and fertility rites in the southern African context. The decoration on the figurines could have been incised in order to correlate to the changes made to the human bodies of initiates during rituals, thus symbolising the permanent change from child to adult.

Equally important is the importance that women place on these markings for their own purposes outside of ritualistic contexts. Matenga (1993: 99) for example notes that in Zimbabwe, some markings or *nyora* were made on the face, visible to all, while the others on the buttocks and abdomen were concealed. The private *nyora* were done purely for sensual admiration and satisfaction of the lover. It is important to note that in the case of women, these markings/cicatrices would have been mostly visible



and their intended meaning thus visually expressed and conveyed to the onlookers. During her interviews with women in the Magude District, Mozambique, Gengenbach (2006: 10) concluded that women “tattoo” or cut their bodies to beautify themselves and desire to “be as beautiful as one’s fellows”, thereby challenging the suggested theory that women have their bodies tattooed or cut to make themselves desirable to men. One interviewee “stressed that the possession of identical tattoos – whether by coincidence or design – made one woman the *munghanu* (friend) of another” creating peer pressure among the young women in the community (Gengenbach 2006: 10).

It is against this background that the disparity in the proportion of figurines that are decorated with body markings in the EIA sites as opposed to the MIA sites should be considered. These decorations vary within and between the sites. Decorative markings range from simple designs to more elaborate designs in the form of punctates or incised lines – or in some cases, a combination thereof. These markings are commonly concentrated on the stomach or in some cases along the spine. The marking on the front of the torso is normally found around the protruding navel, (which is typically associated with young girls), running up/down the torso and in some cases wrapping around the torso. The placement of the decorative motifs on the figurines in all the collections are commonly placed in the same positions on the torso, although they are all quite individual and no common pattern was observed in the collections. These decorative patterns on the figurines, are similar to body scarification observed in the ethnographic present and were likely imbued with specific cultural meaning. They may be representations of scarification markings on the female inhabitants and “important in traditions relating to fertility and child-bearing” (Humphreys 2011: 201; Tiley-Nel 2007: 27).

The Iron Age has been recognised as a male dominant period and K2 and Mapungubwe have been interpreted as male dominated societies where authority and ruling power were in the hands of senior men, whereas women fulfilled an important role as wives and mothers being responsible for the domestic realm. On the other hand, women were also responsible for the fertility of the land and crops



and also contributed to the social and economic success of their community. With the new socio-political organisation at Mapungubwe, it seems that women were also the guardians of their society. Some obtained royal status and authority and were key in the role of rituals and ceremonies of rainmaking. The greater proportion of decorated figurines from K2 and Mapungubwe may therefore be a result of both the importance attributed to this form of representation by Leopard's Kopje people but also to changing roles of women with the shift in complexity (Huffman 2001: 10, 2012: 122; Tiley-Nel 2007: 29, 2017: 43).

6.5 Conclusion

Figurines, whether part of a communal or private ritual, formed an important part of everyday lives of the early communities in southern Africa and the embodiment of artefacts such as figurines, were part of their material culture. They personified “specific moments in making women and men, in evoking children, and inscribing personhood” (Schoeman 2017: 146).

This chapter explored the outcomes of the research with reference to the three research sub-questions. The overall context as well as the differences between the clay that the figurines were made of, indicates to us that the coarse clay figurines (commonly unbaked) were not made to be durable and that they were made to be used in a specific context and be discarded after use as opposed to the other well-preserved clay objects found in the archaeological record. Their brittle nature resulted in easy breakage, probably as part of how they were supposed to be used and discarded.

Observations of contemporary Venda initiation rituals and the prevalence of figurines, particularly female figurines, in the archaeological record in ritual contexts, signify the important role that women played in these rituals in the past.



Numerous records (mentioned in Section 6.4 above) of body scarification practices among historic communities, linked to various rituals were explored and might relate to such practices observed on the figurine decoration patterns found in the archaeological sites in this study.



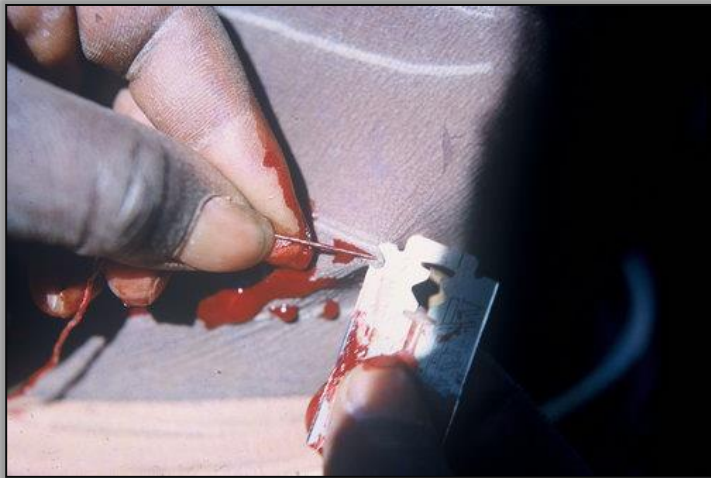


Figure 6.4: Scars are made by cutting the skin with a sharp object (photographs: Lister Haig Hunter Collection (Hunter 1960) (www.ezakwantu.com))



Figure 6.5: Cow dung is applied to irritate and infect the skin, causing the scars



Figure 6.6: The results after healing



Chapter 7: Concluding Remarks and The Way Forward

7.1 Introduction

It is evident that figurines were manufactured throughout the Iron Age and formed an integral part of the life in the early farming communities that occupied the areas along the East Coast and in the northern parts of South Africa. At some sites, such as Schroda, they appear to have been utilised in large numbers. At K2, people made use of more realistic figurines. The manufacture and use of figurines started declining with the transition to Mapungubwe Hill and the onset of a new spatial pattern associated with class distinction and a hierarchical society under the leadership of a sacred leader. This may suggest that the tradition of figurine manufacturing was commonly used at a domestic level and perpetuated by commoners rather than the elite. Huffman (2005: 30) and Hamilton (1996a: 290) suggest that a new state ideology developed at Mapungubwe Hill with the emergence of a defined class distinction and the physical separation of the leader from his followers. Hence only a small number of figurines were found on the hilltop. However, highly specialised gold foil covered animal figurines, such as the rhino, show that the idea of figurines could resonate with the idea of sacred leadership.

The classification of the figurines in my sample proved challenging due to the fragmented state of some of the collections. I ran into a number of challenges during the compilation of this study and I came to realise it was not an easy task to classify and interpret figurines dating back a thousand years. Hence, my attempt to use ethnography to gain insights into these figurines and their makers. Ethnographic reports on the contemporary ceremonial use and symbolism of figurines gave insight around the possible role that the figurines played in the early farming communities in South Africa.

My original idea with this study was to compile a master catalogue of all the figurines in the museum collections, but this proved to be far more complex than I thought.



Therefore, only a few samples of the figurines in the different Classes in the analytical framework from the various sites are included in Appendix IV.

7.2 Main Conclusions

As in all societies, material culture played a particularly important role in shaping and affirming social relations.

(Davison 2004: 3)

Domestic objects, such as figurines together with ethnography, are suggestive of the important role that women played in practices such as agriculture, rituals and the maintenance of fertility. The emphasis on the female body in my sample of figurines demonstrated that they are probably an integral expression of the cultural values and the role that women played in these societies, both in rich symbolism and social meaning, and were most likely made and used by women.

With the overemphasis of female figurines in archaeological assemblages, it is evident that women were more important than originally anticipated (Hodder 1987: 52). The social context in which figurines are made and utilised, proved crucial in their understanding and meaning. Figurines are human imagery in a tangible form. “Figurines are nevertheless given specific relevance in particular contexts in the way which they are handled and have a specific set of values which are expressed” (Humphreys 2005: 76). Turner (1977) believes figurines are central in a number of rituals which still exist in many African cultures to safeguard good fortune and the well-being of the community, which includes rain-control, ensuring the fertility of agricultural crops and rituals such as rites of passage. Irrespective of the context in which figurines were found and of what material they were manufactured, they appear to have been associated with some ritual purpose of which fertility appears to be the most common. They thus formed part of the early communities’ everyday lives.



The archaeological evidence of ritual areas at Ndondondwane and Schroda, where the clusters of figurines were recovered, is supported by the ethnographic records of the use of figurines by contemporary communities in initiation rituals and give new insight that these rituals may have existed for a very long time. This is further supported by the fact that figurines discarded in these ritual spaces are always broken before being discarded, hence the large number of fragmented figurines found at these sites.

I do realise ethnography should be used with caution, but the records of the practice of scarification and other body markings in contemporary communities proved useful in the relation to the decoration markings on the figurines. Markings on the figurines might have served a different purpose and ethnography does not prove that these markings on the figurines can be directly linked to scarification, but could indeed be an explanation? However, ethnography also suggests that these markings convey messages during the transition stages that an initiate undergoes during initiation rituals. Although figurines are still being manufactured and used in rituals by various groups in South Africa, they differ in appearance and material from their earlier counterparts.

7.3 Future Studies

Figurines will always intrigue people. Although I attempted to find some explanation for the use of figurines by exploring the existing literature on figurines, I still feel that these objects will always be shrouded in some secrecy.

The materiality of the various collections may be an interesting investigation for future research. The chemical composition of the clay on the Schroda figurines was investigated to possibly determine the source of the clay and whether the figurines were locally made (Jacobson & Van der Westhuizen 2002). This is the only record of clay analysis on any of the figurines from the various sites. An interesting future investigation may be to look at the origin of the clay (and other substances/tempers)



used for the manufacture of figurines in all the collections. Does the clay differ from the clay used in the manufacturing of the other clay objects, such as household pottery, excavated from the various sites? Another avenue worth investigating is whether the same clay was used in the making of the fine vs coarse clay figurines in the collections.

Furthermore, future research could include the compilation of a full catalogue, comprising colour photographs with descriptions, provenience and measurements of each figurine in each collection, including those from Later Iron Age sites.

7.4 Conclusion

I came to realise that interpreting the figurines is very challenging. It is evident that not all attempts to interpret figurines can be substantiated, since we cannot place ourselves in the mindset of these early farming communities. However, there is no doubt that figurines are imbued by many symbolisms that are not always clear to us. With the writing of this study, I realise that many questions still remain unanswered.



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Appendices



Appendix I: KZN



Acquisition source	Site	Survey number	Block/square	Layer	Acc. Number on fragment	Object Name	Dimensions	Physical Description	Box	Remark	Condition	Image file name
Muden area - Tugela Basin	Magogo	SF	Grid 1		2002/03	Torso fragment	62 mm x 41 mm	Large torso fragment with traces of ochre in front and white paint on back	Box 40 Magogo	Nr 2002/3 written on fragment	Broken off at top and bottom. Abrasion marks where buttocks were attached	p111-7609-7611
Muden area - Tugela Basin	Magogo	SF	Near 4		80/1 SF near 4	Torso fragment	66 mm x 39 mm	Large torso fragment with protruding navel near bottom of fragment. Long line decoration splitting into 'leaf-like' lines above navel, also incised line decoration on top of fragment on right and left side of line where broken. Dot decoration on right-hand side running from top to bottom	Display	80/1 SF near 4	Broken on both ends, top sloping towards left-hand side, bright red clay on front side of fragment, fine well-preserved	p111-7835-7839
Muden area - Tugela Basin	Magogo	U Pit 1	Pit 1	40 cm	80/1 U Pit 1 40 cm	Torso fragment	66 mm x 36 mm	Large lower torso with 4 protruding lumps of clay indicating buttocks and stumpy legs. Light brown clay. Protruding navel with incised line decoration at the bottom and dot decoration running on both sides from top to bottom (4-5 lines of dot decoration). Small 'block' of dot decoration just below navel (2 rows of dots). Small punctate in bottom of fragment indicating genitalia?	Display	Large lower torso with dot and line decoration	Broken at top and all 4 protrusions also 'chipped' - abrasion marks where legs were attached. Fine, light colour clay	p111-7840-7842
Muden area - Tugela Basin	Magogo	H2 Pit 2	Pit 2		80/1 H2 P2	Torso fragment	44 mm x 42 mm	Upper torso with 2 protruding, 'pointed' arms facing forward. 'Circular'-line decoration running downward from between arms. Short neck still visible	Display	Upper torso with line decoration	Broken at top and bottom. Fine, light brown clay, well-preserved	p111-7844-7855
Muden area - Tugela Basin	Mhlopeni	Hut floor			80/2 H.F.	Hand fragment	61 mm x 31 mm	Human hand with grooves indicating 5 fingers and 2 lines circling the wrist	Display	Human hand with 'fingers'	Broken behind second line on wrist, fine light brown clay	p111-7828-7834
Muden area - Tugela Basin	Mhlopeni	Hut floor			80/2 H.F.	Torso fragment	30 mm x 20 mm	Torso with horizontal incised line decoration - 3 rows - and one line of dot decoration running from top to bottom	Box 3	Torso with 2 decoration types	Broken on both ends and a part of clay vertically split off - small stone in clay, little eroded	p111-7822-7824
Muden area - Tugela Basin	Mhlopeni	Pit 1			80/2 Pit	Arm fragment	35 mm x 25 mm	Protruding arm-like fragment in rich brown clay with incised line decoration where fragment broke off rest of torso	Box 3	Arm fragment with decoration	Broken on side, top and bottom in brown clay (fine)	p111-7825-7827
Muden area - Tugela Basin	Wosi	G2 Q4 T2	Test pit E		84/5 G2 Q4.T2 E	Torso fragment	61 mm x 38 mm	Small protruding navel, no decoration, light brown clay. Torso has hole in middle from top to bottom	Box 2 B	Torso fragment with hole in middle	Broken on both ends, fine light brown clay, well-preserved	p111-7873-7882
Muden area - Tugela Basin	Wosi	G2 T5	Test pit D (1)		84/5 G2 T5 D (1)	Buttock fragment	19 mm x 12 mm	Small lump of rounded clay in rich brown colour, chipped from torso	Box 2 B	Buttock fragment	Chipped from torso, fine rich brown clay, well-preserved	p111-7883-7885
Muden area - Tugela Basin	Ndondond wane		H10		78/131 (2) RM	Foot fragment	14 mm x 11 mm	Foot fragment with clear definition of flat foot	Box 39	Flat surface - foot fragment	Broken off from rest of leg	p111-7612
Muden area - Tugela Basin	Ndondond wane		H9		Unclear? H9	Leg fragment	35 mm X 19 mm	Leg fragment broken from torso with flat foot surface. Indications of possible hole in front (between legs) and steatopygous buttock	Box 39	Unclear, H9 only clear writing on fragment	Leg fragment well preserved	p111-7613-7614



Acquisition source	Site	Survey number	Block/square	Layer	Acc. Number on fragment	Object Name	Dimensions	Physical Description	Box	Remark	Condition	Image file name
Muden area - Tugela Basin	Ndondond wane		19		82/3 I9 (2)	Leg fragment	23 mm x 11 mm	Leg fragment broken from torso with flat foot surface.	Box 39	Flat foot surface on short leg fragment	Small black circular area on foot, otherwise well preserved	p111-7615
Muden area - Tugela Basin	Ndondond wane		19		82/3 I9 (2)	Foot fragment	24 mm x 19 mm	Stumpy foot fragment - larger figurine with ochre on outside and black particles in centre of foot	Box 39	Large foot fragment	Ochre and black particles clearly visible	p111-7616-7617
Muden area - Tugela Basin	Ndondond wane		8		82/3 8 (2)	Leg fragment	21 mm x 12 mm	Leg fragment in fine clay broken on both ends	Box 39	Leg fragment in fine red clay	Broken on both ends, well-preserved fine clay fragment	p111-7618
Muden area - Tugela Basin	Ndondond wane		18		82/3 I8 (1)	Leg fragment	28 mm x 13 mm	Fine clay - red in colour - leg fragment with flat foot surface broken off from torso	Box 39	Leg fragment in fine red clay	Broken off from torso, well-preserved fine red clay fragment	p111-7619
Muden area - Tugela Basin	Ndondond wane		18		82/3 I8 (1)	Torso fragment	65 mm x 38 mm	Fine clay upper torso fragment with one protruding arm and rounded head. One punctate on front of head with single row of dot decoration running downward in front of arm in vertical direction	Display	Upper torso with arm and rounded head, punctate on side of head and decoration	Fine clay fragment, broken at bottom and one arm broken away. Back part of fragment is broken away revealing dark brown clay	p111-7856-7860
Muden area - Tugela Basin	Ndondond wane		69		78/131 (2)	Torso fragment	43 mm x 24 mm	Front part of torso with line incision and protruding navel and incised decoration running from top to bottom of fragment	Box 39	Front part of torso with decoration	Fragmented torso, front part only, broken away from back and rest of torso with red ochre on right side	p111-7621-7635
Muden area - Tugela Basin	Ndondond wane		69	30-40 cm	78/131 69 (2)	Torso fragment	43 mm x 36 mm	Possible back part of torso broken away from part	Box 39	No decorations - two-toned colouring - bottom dark and top red	Back part of torso - possible part of decorated fragment above - same clay texture in dark brown clay on bottom and red clay towards the top	p111-7636-7637
Muden area - Tugela Basin	Ndondond wane				78/131 G12 (1)	Head fragment	37 mm x 31 mm	Bear-like head fragment with protrusions on side, 'nose' broken away, rounded on top - short neck where broken away from torso	Box 39	Bear-like head fragment	Similar bear-like head as Schroda with 'nose' part broken away, protruding 'ears' and short neck	p111-7638-7642
Muden area - Tugela Basin	Ndondond wane		H9	'Ash'	78/131 H9 (2)	Torso fragment	33 mm x 24 mm	Decorated torso fragment - badly preserved broken at top and bottom and halved - possibly front part of torso	Box 39	Broken torso fragment with decoration	Dark coloured clay with evidence of clay 'chipped' away leaving 2 lines of incised decoration and a few lines on the side - not well-preserved	p111-7643-7644
Muden area - Tugela Basin	Ndondond wane		R1		1982/03 R1(1)	Head fragment	42 mm x 35 mm	Large head fragment - rounded - 1 hole on top, 3 holes on one side and dot-decoration running from left to right and v-shaped towards the bottom of the fragment where it is broken away from the torso	Box 39	Round large head fragment with decoration and holes	Very large head fragment with decoration and holes possibly representing 2 eyes and a mouth with another hole in the centre top of the head	111-7645-7648
Mngeni Valley	Nanda	Test pit 12	Test pit 12		86/1 Test pit 12	Lower torso fragment	72 mm x 55 mm	Large lower torso fragment broken at top. No decorations, 4 rounded protruding lumps of clay around the bottom of the fragment	Box 136	Large long lower torso fragment with protruding lumps of clay	Large and long round fragment - lower - with no decoration - with 4 rounded protruding lumps of clay making it able to stand upright	p111-7650-7667



Acquisition source	Site	Survey number	Block/square	Layer	Acc. Number on fragment	Object Name	Dimensions	Physical Description	Box	Remark	Condition	Image file name
Mngeni Valley	Nanda	Trench 4	Test pit 1 (east)		No number	Torso fragment	64 mm x 41 mm	Large torso fragment with protruding navel and dot-decoration from navel to bottom of fragment. Large white chunk of clay on right-hand side of fragment. Broken at top and bottom and possible evidence where buttocks were attached at the back	Box 136	Very dark clay with large chunk of white 'clay' on right-hand side	Clay is darker than all other fragments with a large piece of white 'clay' on right-hand side. Decoration - dot running from navel to bottom of fragment	p111-7668-7677
Mngeni Valley	Nanda	T4 Area	Test pit 38		No number	Torso fragment	44 mm x 28 mm	Torso fragment in 'light slip clay' broken at top and bottom. Decoration - incised lines in front with dot decoration on both sides of the torso	Box 136	Light coloured clay - seems like slip covering - with decorations in front and sides	Dark fragment covered in light 'slip' with incised line and dot decoration - broken on top and bottom	p111-7679-7683
Mngeni Valley	Nanda	Trench 1	Test pit 18a		No number	Leg fragment	36mm x 36 mm	Short stumpy leg fragment with flat base. Bright red in colour broken at top	Box 136	Thick, short leg fragment broken at top	Stumpy leg fragment with flat foot base - protruding on the one side, possibly where the buttock started - flat surface where broken off	p111-7684
Mngeni Valley	Nanda	Trench 4	E1	0-7 cm	No number	Torso fragment	40 mm x 31 mm	Torso fragment broken at top and bottom as well as length. Rich in colour - no decoration	Box 136	Broken torso fragment	Torso fragment in rich brown colour broken at top, bottom and halved - no decoration	p111-7685
Mngeni Valley	Nanda	Grid 3	4/3		No number	Head fragment ?	22 mm x 14 mm	Possible head fragment - narrow and slightly pointed with round top - broken at bottom	Box 136	Possible head fragment	Small head fragment slightly pointing with round top and broken at bottom	p111-7687-7688
Mngeni Valley	Nanda	Trench 1	Pit 1	75-90 cm	No number	Leg fragment	34 mm x 19 mm	Leg fragment broken at top and bottom. Fragment slightly tapered towards top	Box 136	Leg fragment	Small leg fragment, rich brown colour broken at top and bottom	p111-7690-7691
Mngeni Valley	Nanda	Test pit 16		0-17cm	No number	Lower torso fragment	35 mm x 31 mm	Lower torso fragment - 'eroded' not well-preserved. One leg broken off and remainder short and rounded at end. Remaining leg pointing slightly forward	Box 136	Lower torso fragment	Eroded lower torso fragment with one leg broken off and remaining leg pointing slightly forward ending in a rounded stump	p111-7692-7693
Mngeni Valley	Nanda	Trench 4	B2P	0-20 cm	No number	Torso fragment	17 mm x 17 mm	Possible torso fragment - no decoration broken on both ends - coarse clay	Box 136	Torso fragment broken on both ends	Small torso fragment, coarse clay not well-preserved and broken on both ends	p111-7694
Mngeni Valley	Nanda	Grid 3	3/4		No number	Torso fragment	16 mm x 10 mm	Possible small torso fragment with groove on one side - broken on both ends	Box 136	Small, smooth fragment, light brown clay	Possible small torso fragment, smooth and well-fired with slight groove on one side	p111-7695
Mngeni Valley	Nanda	Test pit 39		30-34 cm	No number	Leg fragment	19 mm x 8 mm	Small leg fragment in rich brown colour broken on both ends	Box 136	Small, round and smooth leg fragment	Smooth, well-fired rich brown coloured fragment, possibly a part of a leg broken on both ends	p111-7696
Mngeni Valley	Nanda	Grid 3	Test pit 6B	24-44 cm	No number	Torso fragment	31 mm x 18 mm	Coarse clay possible torso fragment with slight groove on one side, broken at both ends	Box 136	Possible torso fragment - human	Torso fragment - coarse clay and not well-preserved, broken on both ends. Slight groove on one side	p111-7700-7701



Acquisition source	Site	Survey number	Block/square	Layer	Acc. Number on fragment	Object Name	Dimensions	Physical Description	Box	Remark	Condition	Image file name
Mngeni Valley	Nanda	Test pit 7	As VII		No number	Torso fragment	28 mm x 14 mm	Torso fragment in very rich brown coloured coarse clay broken on both ends	Box 136	Small bright coloured fragment	Possible small torso fragment in very rich brown colour - coarse clay broken at both ends. Possible small protrusion in middle of fragment and another small protrusion on the one end	p111-7697-7699
Mngeni Valley	Nanda	Trench 4	P3	40-62 cm	No number	Torso fragment - possibly arm	33 mm x 30 mm	Fragment consist of broken off protrusion possibly representing an arm.	Box 136	Torso fragment - possibly representing an arm	Rich in colour, large protrusion possibly representing an arm broken off from the torso of the figurine	p111-7702-7703
Mngeni Valley	Nanda	Grid 3	1		No number	Head fragment ?	24 mm x 13 mm	Rounded head fragment, dark in colour, broken at bottom	Box 136	Head fragment	Fragment is tapered with rounded top, in rich brown colour	p111-7704
Mngeni Valley	Nanda	Grid 3	1		86/1 T13	Lower torso fragment	27 mm x 28 mm	Lower torso fragment broken at top and bottom. Small part of protruding navel left, no decoration	Box 136	Lower torso fragment	Lower torso fragment with no decoration, small part of protruding navel remained	p111-7705-7708
Mngeni Valley	Nanda	Trench 1	P2		No number	Torso fragment	30 mm x 22 mm	Badly eroded fragment, coarse clay, possibly part of torso	Box 136	Torso fragment	Badly eroded, possibly part of torso with small protrusion on one side	p111-7709
Mngeni Valley	Nanda	Grid 3	3		No number	Head fragment ?	16 mm x 16 mm	Possibly a head fragment, pointed toward back and one small hole in front	Box 136	Possible head fragment	Light coloured clay, possibly head fragment pointed towards the back with one small hole in the front	p111-7710-7711
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Grid 6	F7/8	Ash	No number	Head fragment ?	33 mm x 45 mm	Large fragment, possibly a head fragment. One large hole in the top, forming a 'lip' at the top and narrower towards the bottom. Broken at the bottom	Box 454	Possible head fragment	Large fragment, possibly a head fragment with a large hole in the top. Top is wider than the 'neck' and broken at the bottom	p111-7712-7715
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Trench 6	3		No number	Torso fragment - possibly arm	35 mm x 31 mm	Fragment consist of broken off protrusion possibly representing an arm	Box 454	Protruding arm fragment	Dark coloured clay fragment, protruding fragment possibly representing an arm broken from torso. Fragment also 'chipped' at end of protrusion	p111-7716-7717
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Grid 6	Test pit E 7&8		No number	Head fragment	14 mm x 11 mm	Small head fragment with rounded tip and broken at bottom. Two incised lines at bottom of fragment	Box 454	Head fragment with decoration	Head fragment with incised line decoration at base, rounded tip and broken at the bottom	p111-7718
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Grid 6	Test pit E 7&8		No number	Torso fragment	23 mm x 26 mm	Top part of torso broken at both ends. Protruding piece on one side, possibly arm	Box 454	Torso fragment, possibly top	Top part of fragment with protruding lump of clay on one side, possibly representing an arm. Broken on both ends	p111-7719-7720
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	SVP 49			No number	Head fragment	19 mm x 10 mm	Head fragment, very rounded at the top. Broken at bottom. Light coloured clay	Box 454	Head fragment, fine light colour clay	Rounded head fragment with no decoration broken at the bottom	p111-7725



Acquisition source	Site	Survey number	Block/square	Layer	Acc. Number on fragment	Object Name	Dimensions	Physical Description	Box	Remark	Condition	Image file name
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	TS 6	4		No number	Head fragment	29 mm x 10 mm	Head fragment, rounded at the top. Fragment broken at bottom and split in half from top to bottom	Box 454	Head fragment, light coloured clay	Head fragment with rounded top and broken at the bottom and split in half from top to bottom with other part missing. Light coloured clay	p111-7721-7722
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Grid 6	DAI/BI		No number	Torso fragment ?	16 mm x 12 mm	Red fragment of clay, could possibly represent a part of the torso, but appears to be 'worked' - smooth on one side?	Box 454	Torso fragment, 'worked'	Round fragment, bright red, possibly part of torso but appears to have been 'worked' - smooth and flat on one side	p111-7723-7724
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Trench 2	U3 (3)		No number	Head fragment	50 mm x 36 mm	Hollow head fragment with prominent forehead/eyebrows above the eyes, nose appears to have been broken off, possible prominent bottom lip present, 2 large holes for eyes, small ears on both sides indicated by small punctuates. Pointed head and dot decoration around ears. No signs that it was broken off a body	Box 453	Hollow head fragment with facial features	Fragment well-preserved, rudimentary facial features	p111-7726-7737
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Trench 2	U3 (3)		No number	Head fragment	28 mm x 16 mm	Rounded head fragment with no decoration or facial features, broken off at the bottom	Box 453	Head fragment, no facial features	Well-preserved, rounded head fragment in reddish clay	p111-7738-7740
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Trench 2	U3 (3)		No number	Arm fragment	39 mm x 21 mm	Arm fragment, broken off torso with 4 incised line decoration under protruding part	Box 453	Arm fragment with decoration	Broken off body with protruding arm and incised decoration running downward on fragment	p111-7741-7742
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Grid 4	DB30 B IV	Dung/As h	No number	Torso fragment	46 mm x 24 mm	Body fragment in light coloured clay with 2 protruding small lumps of clay/breasts?	Box 453	Torso fragment with protruding lumps of clay	Broken off on both ends and one protrusion also half broken away in coarse clay	p111-7743-7746
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Test pit 25	DB 30 D11		No number	Leg fragment	45 mm x 24 mm	Large leg fragment, dark clay broken at top and small part at bottom of flat base	Box 453	Large leg fragment - dark clay	Coarse clay, not well-preserved, broken at top and chipped at base	p111-7747
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Grid 1	A4		No number	Torso fragment	36 mm x 25 mm	Torso fragment in coarse clay with white spots (temper), no decoration	Box 453	Torso fragment in coarse clay	Not well-preserved, broken on both ends and eroded	p111-7748
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Grid 1	A4		No number	Torso fragment	31 mm x 22 mm	Decorated torso fragment richly decorated with dot and incised line decoration	Box 453	Torso fragment with decoration	Broken on both ends and split in half in rich brown colour	p111-7749-7752
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Trench 2	U13 (3)		T2 U13 (3)	Torso fragment ?	31 mm x 25 mm	Light coloured fragment, possibly part of a torso, with rounded small protrusion on one side	Box 453	Torso fragment, not clearly identified	Light clay fragment broken at top and bottom and split in half	p111-7753
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Trench 1	U7 (4)		No number	Torso fragment	27 mm x 20 mm	Dark coloured fragment, decorated in dots running in length of torso	Box 453	Torso fragment with dot decoration	Dark, coarse clay torso fragment, split in length and broken at top and bottom	p111-7754
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Square 25	Extension	30-50 cm	No number	Head fragment	33 mm x 13 mm	Head fragment with rounded top in darkish clay with no facial features	Box 453	Head fragment in darkish clay	Broken at bottom	p111-7755
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Square 18	(2)		No number	Torso fragment	36 mm x 19 mm	Torso fragment in very dark clay ending in 2 small rounded points/breasts?	Box 453	Torso fragment with rounded tips	Very dark coarse clay broken at bottom	p111-7765-7766



Acquisition source	Site	Survey number	Block/square	Layer	Acc. Number on fragment	Object Name	Dimensions	Physical Description	Box	Remark	Condition	Image file name
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Grid 2	G6 (3)		No number	Torso fragment	40 mm x 21 mm	Torso fragment, possibly upper part with protruding arm? with single line circling edge of protrusion and 2 incised lines under the protrusion. Large groove on inside of fragment running from top to bottom	Box 453	Torso fragment with protrusion	Broken off from torso and eroded	p111-7756-7758
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Grid 1	E3		No number	Torso fragment	37 mm x 27 mm	Head fragment with flat top and 2 protruding small lumps of clay representing arms, facing forward, no facial features present	Box 453	Head fragment with arms	Broken at bottom below protruding short arms	p111-7759-7761
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Test square 37	(2)		No number	Head fragment	50 mm x 21 mm	Possible head fragment widening towards the base with flat top. Very thin line impression running around middle of fragment with no facial features	Box 453	Head fragment with flat base	Long fragment broken at bottom and halfway down length in brown fine clay	p111-7767-7773
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Grid 1	D3		No number	Torso fragment	33 mm x 19 mm	Fragment of torso with one small protrusion on side in dark red coarse clay - no decoration	Box 453	Eroded torso fragment with protrusion on one side	Eroded red coarse clay torso fragment - 'chipped' away from rest of torso	p111-7774
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Grid 3	J7	Red ashy soil	No number	Arm fragment?	33 mm x 26 mm	Protrusion fragment, possibly arm fragment in coarse clay with small distinct red patches of clay on one side	Box 453	Eroded arm fragment	Eroded coarse clay arm-like protrusion broken off from torso	p111-7775-7776
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Grid 3	H6	Light grey ashy soil	No number	Buttock?	23 mm x 18 mm	Rounded lump of clay with small hole - not completely hollow	Box 453	Possible buttock	Fine round lump of clay broken off giving it a flattish surface where broken off with small hole - not completely hollow	p111-7777-7779
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Grid 3	H6	Light grey ashy soil	No number	Leg fragment	24 mm x 14 mm	Leg fragment slightly narrowing towards bottom and flat on 'inside' of leg - possibly where joint with other leg?	Box453	Leg fragment with flat side at top	Fine small leg fragment broken on both ends and smooth top on inside	p111-7780-7782
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Trench 2	U5 (3) & hole (H)		(3)	Arm fragment?	20 mm x 23 mm	Arm-like protrusion broken from torso and broken on end, light brown clay	Box 453	Arm-like protrusion	Fine clay fragment, probably arm broken off torso and broken on tip	p111-7783
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Trench 2	U5 (3) & hole (H)		(3)	Head fragment	21 mm x 14 mm	Head fragment, rounded at the top with no decoration	Box 453	Head fragment rounded at top	Fine clay fragment, probably head fragment broken at bottom	p111-7784
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Trench 2	U5 (3) & hole (H)		H	Torso fragment	28 mm x 27 mm	Torso fragment with small protrusions simulating buttocks with clear indication of a small hole between the buttocks representing genitalia - back part of fragment broken away in half from top to bottom - not decoration present	Box 453	Torso fragment with indication of genitalia and buttocks	Fine clay fragment - appears to be back part of fragment split from top to bottom and broken at top	p111-7785-7789
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Trench 2	U4 (3)		86/2 T2 U4 (3)	Torso fragment	39 mm x 31 mm	Fragment of middle part of torso, slightly widening towards bottom. Two rows of large dot decoration - running from left to right - around hole representing navel (on very small protrusion) - Some dot decoration on edge - probably more decoration but not very clear	Box 453	Middle part of torso with decoration and navel	Fine, light colour clay, broken on both ends	p111-7790-7792



Acquisition source	Site	Survey number	Block/square	Layer	Acc. Number on fragment	Object Name	Dimensions	Physical Description	Box	Remark	Condition	Image file name
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Trench 2	U4 (3)		No number	Torso fragment	44 mm x 30 mm	Torso fragment with no decoration in blackish and light brown clay	Box 453	Torso fragment - no decoration	Broken on both ends and on side running from top to bottom	p111-7793
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Test square 73		Brown	No number	Foot fragment	23 mm x 24 mm	Foot fragment with flat bottom with white patches in clay (temper), mixture of dark and light clay	Box 453	Foot fragment - flat bottom	Broken at top, eroded, coarse clay	p111-7794-7795
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Square 9	Test pit 9?		No number	Arm fragment ?	33 mm x 28 mm	Arm-like protrusion with rounded tip, broken from torso in mixed coloured clay	Box 453	Arm-like protrusion	Broken on side from torso	p111-7796-7797
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Trench 5	U1/2 (2)		No number	Breast fragment ?	11 mm x 15 mm	Small, smooth lump of clay (protrusion) - seems to have been added to torso after it was made, remnants of torso still attached	Box 453	Breast fragment	Rounded small lump of clay with part of torso attached in brown smooth clay	p111-7798-7802
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Trench 2	U21 (3)		No number	Head fragment	19 mm x 11 mm	Rounded head fragment with no decoration or facial features, broken off at the bottom	Box 453	Head fragment with no facial features	Smooth fragment with rounded top and broken at bottom in light brown clay	p111-7803
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Square 25	Slag dump		No number	Torso fragment	27 mm x 20 mm	Lower? Part of torso with one protruding end in light brown clay - no decorations	Box 453	Possible torso fragment - lower	Roughly made fragment with one small protrusion at bottom, broken on both ends	p111-7804
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Square 22b	(2)		No number	Head fragment	29 mm x 18 mm	Rounded head fragment with no decoration or facial features, split from top to bottom in light brown clay	Box 453	Head fragment - no decoration	Smooth rounded top and broken at bottom and split in half	p111-7805
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Square 25	Extension	55-70 cm	No number	Torso fragment	9 mm x 11 mm	Small lower torso, in rich brown colour, incised line decoration running downwards above genitalia area as well as on back with small holes in front and back indicating genitalia	Box 453	Lower torso fragment	Broken at both ends, well-preserved and fine clay	p111-7807-7809
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Trench 2	U2 (3)		No number	Torso fragment	17 mm x 16 mm	Possible middle part of torso in light brown clay with no decoration	Box 453	Torso fragment - no decoration	Broken on both ends made with fine clay	p111-7810
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Test pit 25a	DB30	54-80 cm	No number	Head fragment	17 mm x 19 mm	Possible head fragment, rounded at top - small hollow inside with no facial features	Box 453	Possible head fragment	Broken on one side, rounded lump of clay with small hollow, fine light brown clay	p111-7819
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Test pit 46	(3)		No number	Torso fragment	15 mm x 12 mm	Possible middle part of torso in light brown clay with no decoration	Box 453	Possible torso fragment	Broken on both ends, light brown clay	p111-7820
Mngeni Valley	KwaGandaganda	Square 25	(3)		No number	Head fragment	24 mm x 24 mm	Large head fragment with flat top, split in length, light brown clay - 3 dot decoration at top near end where split	Box 453	Head fragment with flattish top	Broken at bottom and split down length, fine light brown clay	p111-7821
Wosi - sheep fragment	G2 Q3 T5 Test pit A						All Wosi collection at AMAFA	Although probably 6 fragments, could not locate more than 2 human and 1 animal - Ulundi confirmed that all was sent to AMAFA PMB				p111-7886-7887



Appendix II: Schroda



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT			STYLISTIC FEATURES			ANATOMICAL DETAILS						DECORATION				SEX			OTHER	PHOTO
												UPPER TORSO		LOWER TORSO						
ACCESSION NR	ORIGIN	PROVENIENCE	UPPER TORSO	LOWER TORSO	DIMENSIONS	HEAD	BREASTS	ARMS	NAVEL	BUTTOCKS	LEGS	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FEMALE	MALE	UNSEXED		
TSR 6/3CD/4 (right leg fragment); TSR 1/1 G.B.2.41 (torso); TSR 6/3CD/4 (right buttock); TSR 1/1 6.1A.4 (right arm)	Schroda		1	1	220mm x 65mm(hip) x 22mm(head)	1		2		1	2							1	Large restored figurine with rounded head, pointed mouth (horizontal incised line), 2 small holes indicating the nostrils and a shallow hole indicating a left eye. Right protruding buttock remained (clear evidence that buttocks are added after manufacturing as small lumps of clay). Two long arms (both arms are glued to upper torso) pointing forward in a downward direction - clay pinched at end. Two very short stumpy remains of legs evident. Both legs were broken off from main body and figurine consists of 4 parts that are joined together - very rudimentary characteristics? Fragments of this figurine were found in various areas of the site	101-8510 - 101-8511 115-8512 - 8513
TSR 1/1 6A 1.2.1 (torso) TSR 1/1 (right arm)	Schroda		1		68mm x 70mm (shoulders) x 48mm (head)	1		1										1	Rudimentary large upper torso with right long arm slightly arched ending in a rounded tip. Fragment consists of 3 pieces joined together. Head fragment has crude facial features with a protruding animal-like right ear, pointed chin, protruding nose and 2 protruding eyes, left ear is broken off. Facial features appear animal-like - possibly not human?	101-8500 - 101-8502
TSR 1/1 6.AA1.4	Schroda		1		69mm x 43mm	1		1										1	Upper torso fragment broken just below stumpy left arm (broken off). Right arm broken off from torso. Right 'elf-like' (pointed upward) ear with large hole - left ear broken off - just hole remaining in rounded pointed (at back) at the back head. Mouth pointed - incised horizontal line with 2 small holes representing the nostrils right on top of upper lip. Two bulging eyes with deep holes giving the fragment an anthropomorphic characteristic?	101-8496 - 101-8498
TSR 1/1 6A1.2.1	Schroda		1		36mm x 32mm	1												1	Large head fragment with pointed (at the back), rounded head. Two bulging eyes with large holes representing eyes. Long protruding (snout-like) jaw and nose 2 large holes representing nostrils. Features appear animal-like	101-8499
HC1.5??	Schroda		1	1	63mm x 40mm (legs) x 32mm (head/arms)	1		2			2							1	Small rudimentary complete figurine. Rounded arms covering face. Head slightly tapered towards top with thick neck. Short body with flat bottom and forward-facing rounded legs. Arms are jointed to head and a visible line present evident that the arms were jointed to the face when the clay was still wet. Figurine moulded from a single piece of clay	101-8490 - 101-8491
TSR 1/1 6/AA1/4	Schroda		1		43mm x 41 mm (legs)						2							1	Small rudimentary lower torso broken midway through the upper torso. Flat bottom with two triangular pointed legs - fragment is moulded from a single piece of clay	101-8492
	Schroda		1	1	178mm x 88 mm (legs) x 30 mm (head)	1		1			2							1	Very rudimentary large figurine (some missing parts of the torso) - very dark clay. Figurine has very large stumpy legs ending in a large flat base representing feet - can stand unsupported on these flat based feet - Large wide body with wide hips tapering slightly towards broad shoulders, thick neck and rounded head. Left arm - joined (2 pieces) faces downward and is broken at the tip. Head is rounded with protruding 'beak-like' mouth with deep horizontally incised line representing the mouth. Figurine is very fragmented and consists of 7 pieces of fragments joined together	101-8507 - 8509
TSR 1/1 6A1.2.1	Schroda		1	1	135mm x 43mm (hip) x 23mm (head)	1		1										1	Large fragment long cylindrical lower torso broken away at the bottom. Left arm (broken at tip) points upward towards left side of head. Short stumpy right arm also pointing upward. Rounded head - no facial features - chipped away at top. Figurine consists of 6 pieces of fragments - joined - coarse dark clay	101-8503 - 101-8504
TSR 1/1 6A1.2.1	Schroda		1	1	95mm x 24mm	1		1										1	Small terracotta coloured figurine consisting of 3 fragments - joined - Cylindrical shaped torso widening slightly at the bottom where is it broken. One arm-like protrusion pointing upward towards the head. Another protrusion pointing downward, broken off. Head is very pointed at the one end	101-8482 - 8486
TSR 1/1 6.A1.2.1	Schroda		1	1	160 mm x 51mm (hip) x 39 mm (head)	1		1										1	Large cylindrical upper and lower torso broken just below 'hip' area. Left arm broken off, right arm facing forward, broken midway. Thick neck with large rounded head - protruding 'snout-like' face with no features. Figurine consist of 3 pieces (head, arm and long torso) - dark coarse clay	101-8505 - 101-8506



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT			STYLISTIC FEATURES			ANATOMICAL DETAILS						DECORATION				SEX			OTHER	PHOTO
												UPPER TORSO		LOWER TORSO						
ACCESSION NR	ORIGIN	PROVENIENCE	UPPER TORSO	LOWER TORSO	DIMENSIONS	HEAD	BREASTS	ARMS	NAVEL	BUTTOCKS	LEGS	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FEMALE	MALE	UNSEXED		
	Schroda		1	1	97mm x 39mm (hip) x 27mm (head)	1		1			1						1		Animal-like figurine consisting of 4 fragments joined together. Left leg remaining - banded with right leg broken off lower torso. Left arm facing upward towards eye - not touching head - right arm broken off but stumpy remains faces upward. Rounded (arched) back with thin neck and 'animal-like' face with dog-like ears, small protruding eyes (no holes), pointed snout-like mouth with 7 small holes running along jawline - possibly indication of teeth. Large lump of clay hanging from just above the small legs downward - possibly genitalia? Rounded buttocks	101-8493 - 8494
	Schroda		1		76mm x 44mm	1		1										1	Dark coarse clay upper torso fragment, not well-preserved. Broken in front with one short remaining stump of a right arm. Left arm broken off. Very thick neck with 'pinched' tip forming a head with slight protruding face - no facial features	115-8515 - 115-8517
TSR 1/1 B2.4.1	Schroda		1	1	190mm x 71mm (base) x 20mm (head)	1		2			1							1	Large light colour complete figurine with large rounded base (chipped away at the left back) - no individual legs present - self-standing. Body tapers upward to a narrow upper torso with two short (broken off) arms facing forward and a thin neck. Head rounded at top with upward protruding tip	101-8487 - 101-8489
TSR 1/1 6A1.2.1	Schroda		1	1	190mm x 67mm (base) x 41mm (top)	1												1	Large, thick phallic object, consisting of 4 fragments (joined). Large flat base, broken away on one end object is the same width to the top - large rounded top with a large hole	115-8518
TSR 1/1 6B2.4.1 (55)	Schroda		1	1	230mm x 84mm (base) x 24mm (top)	1												1	Large, self-standing phallic object with very large flat base tapering to a narrow, rounded top - cylindrical. Moulded from a single piece of clay. Rounded top with several holes on the top. Slight crack in clay along flat base	115-8521 - 101=8522
TSR 1/1 6A1.2.1	Schroda		1	1	122mm x 55mm	1												1	Large cylindrical, thick phallic object (same circumference from top to bottom). Flat base with rounded top. Large piece of clay broken away from top revealing a large hole on the top. Object consists of 3 fragments (joined), crudely manufactured (All fragments recovered from the same area)	115-8519
TSR 1/1 6A1.2.1	Schroda		1	1	147mm x 53mm (base) x 19mm (top)													1	Phallic object, cylindrical in shape with flat base (broken away halfway - vertically) - tapering towards a narrow top - top broken off. Object consists of 4 fragments - joined	115-8520
TSR 1/1 6.B2.4.1 (1)	Schroda		1	1	209mm x 92mm (feet) x 31mm (head)	1		2			2	Do ts/ ine					1		Large complete/restored figurine. Legs are thick ending in large flat base - self-standing figurine. Body tapers slightly from hips upward toward 2 arms (ending in rounded tips) facing downward in front of upper torso. Neck is slender. Head has a crest on top running from in front of right ear to the back of the left ear. Ears are rounded and face is pointed ending in a rounded 'snout-like' mouth area (Underneath pointed jawline a slight incised line is visible running horizontally) - face appears animal-like. Two small buttocks are present, separated with an incised line. Genitalia consisting of a penis - pointing upward - and two testicles are well represented. Figurine is moulded in a single piece of clay - both arms consist of 2 fragments each that have been glued on)	115-8531 - 115-8533
HC 1.3	Schroda		1	1	185mm x 81mm (feet) x 30mm (head)	1	2				2	Do ts					1		Large figurine consisting of 8 fragments - all joined. Legs are thick ending in large flat base - self-standing figurine. Body tapers from base towards shoulders into a slim long neck. Arms are facing slightly forward but are broken off from upper torso - remaining stumps of arms are facing slightly downward. Two small breasts are evident between the arms - one slightly lower than the other (right) with dot decoration running vertically towards the head - front and on sides ending just before the ears (decoration in rows running into jaw line where it ends in horizontal line) - left ear slightly broken. Face appears animal-like with rounded ears and pointed snout-like face. A very large hole is present between the thick legs indicating genitalia	115-8528 - 115-8530
TSR 1/1 6A 1.2.1.5	Schroda		1		44mm x 21mm (shoulders) x 13mm (head)	1		2										1	Small upper torso consisting of 3 joined fragments. Torso is broken just below forward-facing arms. Right arm was broken off - now joined. Both arms are slightly pointed at the tip. Short neck ending in animal-like head with rounded tip and snout-like face. Hole running through torso from right-hand side	115-8525



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT			STYLISTIC FEATURES			ANATOMICAL DETAILS						DECORATION				SEX			OTHER	PHOTO
												UPPER TORSO		LOWER TORSO						
ACCESSION NR	ORIGIN	PROVENIENCE	UPPER TORSO	LOWER TORSO	DIMENSIONS	HEAD	BREASTS	ARMS	NAVEL	BUTTOCKS	LEGS	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FEMALE	MALE	UNSEXED		
TSR 1/1 6.8 GAT	Schroda		1	1	117mm x45mm (lower torso) x 24mm (head)	1	1	1				Do ts				1			Large upper torso broken from under breast (right) downward toward hip on the left. Short protruding right arm - broken off - still visible - left arm broken off torso. Thick cylindrical body with dot decoration running in lines vertically in the front of the torso up to the face where it ends in a horizontal line on the jaw. Right upward pointy ear visible - left ear broken off. Two large holes representing eyes in the front of the face with a beak-like mouth - protruding jawline. Figurine consists of 2 fragments - joined	115-8527
	Schroda		1	1	77mm x 44mm (torso) x 22mm (head)	1		1										1	Large upper torso fragment broken just below arms. Short stumpy left part of arm still evident where broken off. Right arm broken off against torso. Slim tapering neck with small head, pointed jawline/face and rounded ears. No facial features visible - face appears animal-like	115-8526
	Schroda		1		72mm x 24mm (torso) x 23mm (head)	1		1				Do ts						1	Very dark clay - upper torso with left downward facing arm ending in rounded tip. Large dot decoration running from tip of arm to top of neck. Rounded head with animal-like face. Right ear is folded flat against the head while the left is pointing upward. Torso consists of 3 fragments - joined. Large hole running through torso just behind protruding arms	115-8523 - 115-8522
TSR 1/1 6.1H.3	Schroda		1	1	170mm x 55mm (buttocks) x 30mm (head)			2	2	1	2					1			Large elongated, cylindrical female figurine consisting of 3 pieces - joined - broken at both ends. Thick thighs with abrasion marks where legs have been broken off. Two small breasts and small protrusions just below neck, indicative of arms. Two small buttocks - separated by dark, shallow incision. The left cheek has been chipped away at the bottom. Three fragments are joined - one small fragment on the right is a small fragment ending just above the navel while the other 2 large fragments are broken midway through the upper torso. A large punctate between the thighs in front below the protruding navel, indicating genitalia. The clay appears coarse and varies in colour. Deep depression, coloured in ochre along the spine.	101-8447 - 101-8455
TSR 1/1 4C 1.12	Schroda	Area 4	1	1	216mm x 19mm (head) x 51mm (hips)	1	2	2	1	2	1	Do ts		Lin es		1			Large, stylized, elongated figurine short right leg remaining. Figurine consists of two fragments that are joined midway at the torso. Two small breasts evident just below two small arm-like protrusions. Arms extend into a thick neck forming a flat base head - slightly rounded at the edges with a large punctate in the front of the head indicating a mouth with two smaller punctates on the sides that indicate ears. Two small vertically incised lines visible around the mouth. The prominent navel is surrounded by small dot decoration running vertically between the breasts. The spine is clearly visible by the deep depression in the clay - running from between the buttocks halfway up the spine. The left buttock is halfway broken away where the left leg is broken midway through the buttock just below the navel - horizontally.	101-8463 - 101-8472
TSR 1/1 5C1.7	Schroda		1		82mm x 40mm (bottom) 32mm (top)					1						1			Large upper torso fragment broken at top and bottom - just below protruding navel. A deep depression in the clay running vertically along the spine of the fragment. Fragment is moulded from a single piece of clay - rich terracotta colour.	101-8455 - 101-8458
TSR 1/1 5C1.7	Schroda		1	1	210mm x 58mm (hip) 30mm (top)			2	2	1	1					1			Large elongated, cylindrical female figurine with right leg broken off just below right buttock cheek. Right leg remaining, slim and long ending in a flat base representing a foot. Two small breast situated just below short protrusions, representing arms. Head is broken off just above the shoulders. Protruding navel - slightly chipped away on one side. The buttocks is divided by a deep incised line joining the deep depression along the spine. The fragment is moulded in a single piece of rich terracotta coloured clay.	101-8459 - 101-8462



Appendix III: K2 and Mapungubwe



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT			ACQUISITION SOURCE	STYLISTIC FEATURES			ANATOMICAL DETAILS						DECORATION				SEX			OTHER	PHOTO
													UPPER TORSO		LOWER TORSO						
ACCESSION NR	ORIGIN	PROVENIENCE	UPPER TORSO	LOWER TORSO	DIMENSIONS	HEAD	BREASTS	ARMS	NAVEL	BUTTOCKS	LEGS	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FEMALE	MALE	UNSEXED			
N21 2	Mapungubwe Hill/southern terrace	Block K8/Layer 7	Greefswald 37 MS	1		20mm x 11mm	1					Dots	Lines					1	Fragment has been pinched from single piece of clay. Cylindrical body with decorated tip. Possible head fragment. Protruding tip displays incised and punctuated details. Dots appear on only one side of fragment while lines are circular on tip of fragment	101-8163 - 101-8167	
N29 4	K2	Block 4.12 (head & buttock) 4.13 (torso)	Greefswald 37 MS	1	1	200mm x 45mm	1				1	1				1			Large-sized figurine with elongated, cylindrical torso extending from buttock to neck. Shoulders characterised by one coiled protuberance that encircles the upper torso - evidence of possible arms that are broken off. Small head with small hole representing mouth. One steatopygic buttock (Restored)	101-8168 - 101-8179	
N29 5	K2	Block 1.2 Section 13/Layer 9'.21'.2' (upper torso) 8'.18'.1' (lower torso)	Greefswald 37 MS	1	1	62mm x 25mm		2	2				Dots	Lines	Dots	1			Elongated cylindrical torso extending from waist to above arms. Two breasts below arch of armpits. Two stubby arm protrusions. Front decorated with incised arch-like protuberance at bottom of torso. Dots in line extending from frontal arched protuberance around to the back.	101-8242 - 101-8245	
N29 6	K2	Block 2 Section 6	Greefswald 37 MS	1		56mm x 12mm	1	2	2				Dots			1			Small fragment with elongated head with hole representing mouth, 2 protruding short arms, 2 breasts with dot decoration running along spine as well as on sides above small arms towards tip of slightly rounded head	101-8180 - 101-8182	
N29 7	Mapungubwe Hill	Block 6 Section 5	Greefswald 37 MS	1		56mm x 20mm	1		1				Dots					1	Conical figurine, cone-shaped, cylindrical body with triangular protuberance at side. Tip decorated with numerous small punctured holes. Tip area delineated from rest of body by incised line	101-8237 - 101-8238	
N29 8	K2	Block 4 Section 4/Layer 9'.7'.4'	Greefswald 37 MS	1	1	75mm x 32mm			1				Dots	Dots	Dots	Dots			1	Broken at top & base, nose- /armlike protrusion. Cylindrical with triangular protuberance.	101-8183 - 101-8185
N30 0	K2	Block 3 Section 14/Layer 8'.12'.2'	Greefswald 37 MS	1		109mm x 24mm	1						Dots						1	Elongated cylindrical torso, extending into a cone-like head. Legs and arms broken away. Head is modelled with a very rounded tip. Dotted line extending in horizontal line.	101-8186 - 101-8188



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT			ACQUISITION SOURCE	STYLISTIC FEATURES			ANATOMICAL DETAILS					DECORATION				SEX			OTHER	PHOTO
												UPPER TORSO		LOWER TORSO						
ACCESSION NR	ORIGIN	PROVENIENCE	UPPER TORSO	LOWER TORSO	DIMENSIONS	HEAD	BREASTS	ARMS	NAVEL	BUTTOCKS	LEGS	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FEMALE	MALE	UNSEXED		
C30 1	K2	Test Trench 3/Block O2	Greefswald 37 MS	1	1	63mm x 24mm				1		Dots	Dots	Dots		1			Decoration around naval, buttocks broken off, broken away at head & legs	101-8189 - 101-8191
N30 2	K2	Block 5 Section 14/Layer 7'.5'.1'	Greefswald 37 MS		1	46mm x 25mm				1	2			Dots		1			Decorations around navel, large steatopygous buttocks divided by incised line defining the 2 cheeks. Small protruding navel. Punctuated lines extend outward and below to the belly in cross-formation	101-8192 - 101-8193
N30 4	K2		Greefswald 37 MS		1	39mm x 22mm								Line s	Line s			1	Conical figurine. Base decorated with small diagonal lines, moulded from a single piece of clay. Small pierced hole close to the base rim	101-8194
N30 3	Mapungubwe Hill	Block 5 Section 1/Layer 1'.65'.3'	Greefswald 37 MS		1	40mm x 23mm				1				Line s		1			Pear-shaped, horizontal incised lines around naval. Waist is flattened and expands into rounded hips. Hole in front punctured representing female genitalia	101-8239 - 101-8241
N30 5	Mapungubwe Hill	Block 2 Section 3	Greefswald 37 MS	1	1	60mm x 18mm								Line s	Line s			1	Conical figurine. Cone-shaped base with small pierced hole close to base rim. Rim decorated with small incised triangles.	115-8440
C30 6	Mapungubwe Hill		Greefswald 37 MS	1	1	40mm x 17mm												1	Conical figurine. Round base cone-shaped, cylindrical body with pierced hole close to the rim that is decorated with a slightly incised spiral encircling the figurine, moulded from single piece of clay	115-8441
C34 5	K2	Test Trench		1		28.5m m x 17.5m m		2				Line s	Dots			1			Line decoration under breasts, dot decoration on back/front vertical	101-8195 - 101-8197
C20 3	K2	Surface	Greefswald 37 MS	1		37mm x 20mm						Line s	Line s					1	Line decoration running from top to base, one protruding point	101-8198 - 101-8201
C20 4	K2	Block A2 Layer 4(a)	Greefswald 37 MS		1	57mm x 18mm					1							1	Possible leg fragment with small base at bottom representing foot. Badly broken off from lower torso	101-8202 - 101-8203
C29 9	K2	Test Trench 3/Block A2/Layer 4	Greefswald 37 MS	1	1	60.5m m x 11mm	1		1		2	2						1	Small complete figurine, conical shaped head, perforated mouth	101-8233 - 101-8236



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT			ACQUISITION SOURCE	STYLISTIC FEATURES			ANATOMICAL DETAILS						DECORATION				SEX			OTHER	PHOTO
													UPPER TORSO		LOWER TORSO						
ACCESSION NR	ORIGIN	PROVENIENCE		UPPER TORSO	LOWER TORSO	DIMENSIONS	HEAD	BREASTS	ARMS	NAVEL	BUTTOCKS	LEGS	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FEMALE	MALE	UNSEXED		
C209	K2	Surface	Greefswald 37 MS		1	62mm x 30mm										Dots			1	Dot decoration running parallel from top to base. Dot decoration running at an angle on both sides	101-8204 - 101-8205
C215	Mapungubwe Hill/Southern terrace	Block F4 Layer 7(iv)	Greefswald 37 MS	1		34mm x 12mm	1												1	Possible head fragment. One side indication of protrusion that is broken away	101-8206 - 101-8207
C2160	K2		Greefswald 37 MS		1	48mm x 38mm											1			Lower torso fragment with signs of buttocks that have been broken off. Small hole representing female genitalia	101-8208 - 101-8211
C4834	Mapungubwe Hill	Block 1 Section 3/Layer 11'.27'.2' (chest) 4'.23'.3' (lower torso)	Greefswald 37 MS	1	1	120m m x 40mm	1		2			1							1	Unique figurine with perforated mouth & eyes, bulky body. Torso elongated & cylindrical with rounded/extended upper-arm stubs with small head. Left leg ends in foot with flat base	101-8246 - 101-8250
C4207	Mapungubwe Hill	Block 1 Section 3			1	44mm x 23mm						1							1	Leg fragment with foot	101-8212 - 101-8213
C4208	Mapungubwe Hill	Block 1 Section 2			1	29mm x 30mm					2								1	Large steatopygous buttock, no line indicating separate buttocks	101-8214 - 101-8216
C4209	Mapungubwe Hill	Block 1 Section 2/Layer 3'.70'.4'	Greefswald 37 MS	1	1	51mm x 23mm				1	2						1			Protruding naval with two small buttocks	101-8217 - 101-8219
C4211	Mapungubwe Hill	Block 2 Section 1		1		30mm x 13mm	1						Lines				1			Horizontal & vertical incised decorations, worn away at bottom	101-8220 - 101-8222
C4214	Mapungubwe Hill	Block 8, Section 6/Layer 60-4-1/30'.4'.1'	Greefswald 37 MS	1		73mm x 10mm	1						Dots						1	Cone-shaped, cylindrical body with large pierced hole close to the tip, decorated with numerous small punctured holes - this tip area is delineated from rest of body through incised line	101-8223 - 101-8226
C4215	Mapungubwe Hill	Block 7 Section 6	Greefswald 37 MS		1	33mm x 22mm									Lines	Lines			1	Cylindrical fragment with incised lines around flat base with one punctuated hole above line decoration	101-8227 - 101-8228



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT			ACQUISITION SOURCE	STYLISTIC FEATURES			ANATOMICAL DETAILS						DECORATION				SEX			OTHER	PHOTO
ACCESSION NR	ORIGIN	PROVENIENCE		UPPER TORSO	LOWER TORSO	DIMENSIONS	HEAD	BREASTS	ARMS	NAVEL	BUTTOCKS	LEGS	UPPER TORSO		LOWER TORSO		FEMALE	MALE	UNSEXED		
													FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE					
C53 3	Mapungubwe Hill	Pit 5	Greefswald 37 MS		1	31mm x 22mm												1	Consists of 2 fragments - broken apart with a thin crack line near the base of the fragment	101-8229	
C42 16	K2	Block 3/Layer E8	Greefswald 37 MS	1	1	153mm x 71mm				1	1	1	Dots	Dots	Dots	Dots	1		Large figurine, protruding 1 buttock with dot decoration on back & around protruding navel		
C42 19	K2	Block 3 Section 14	Greefswald 37 MS		1	27mm x 21mm						4						1	Small fragment with 4 protruding rounded stumps. Base of figurine - similar to Nanda figurine/Pietermaritzburg	101-8230 - 101-8232	
C42 29	K2	Block D8 Layer 4		1		78mm x 56mm	1	1	1								1		One arm broken away, mouthlike perforation in head	101-8257 - 101-8259	
C42 34	Mapungubwe Hill	Block JS4	Greefswald 37 MS		1	45mm x 21mm						1						1	Two fragments - attached - light clay, possible foot fragment with flat base	101-8260	
C42 35	K2	Block D8		1		43mm x 18mm			2				Dots	Dots			1		Dot decorations on front and back of figurine	101-8261 - 101-8262	
C42 69	K2	Block 2 Section 2			1	67mm x 27.5mm						1						1	Leg fragment, broken off at top	101-8263 - 101-8264	
C42 71	K2				1	50mm x 41mm						1	1				1		Right buttock broken off, hole between legs, right leg broken off, left leg mid-way	101-8265 - 101-8267	
C42 74	K2	Block 4 Section 6	Greefswald 37 MS		1	61mm x 18mm						1						1	Leg fragment with flat base representing a boot. Broken off from lower torso - some indication where buttocks were attached	101-8268	
C42 75	K2	Block 4 Section 13	Greefswald 37 MS		1	41mm x 14mm						1						1	Leg fragment with flat base representing a foot. Light coloured clay	101-8269	
C42 77	K2	Block 5 Section 13	Greefswald 37 MS		1	39mm x 16mm						1						1	Leg fragment with flat base representing a foot. Thick in dark brown clay	101-8270	
C42 81	K2				1	76mm x 37mm						1	1					1	One leg and one large steatopygous buttock fragment	101-8279	
C42 82	K2				1	76mm x 45mm									Dots	Dots		1	Front portion of fragment broken away with line dividing buttocks	101-8280	



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT			ACQUISITION SOURCE	STYLISTIC FEATURES			ANATOMICAL DETAILS					DECORATION				SEX			OTHER	PHOTO
												UPPER TORSO		LOWER TORSO						
ACCESSION NR	ORIGIN	PROVENIENCE	UPPER TORSO	LOWER TORSO	DIMENSIONS	HEAD	BREASTS	ARMS	NAVEL	BUTTOCKS	LEGS	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FEMALE	MALE	UNSEXED		
C42 78	K2	Block 2 Section 5/Layer 6'.15'.3'		1	1	78mm x 50mm	1		2			Line s	Line s	Line s	Line s			1	Fragment with long body, one arm broken away, incised line decoration front and back, pointed head	101-8271 - 101-8273
C42 79	K2	Block 1 Section 13			1	51mm x 43mm				1	2					1			Large lower torso with 2 steatopygous buttocks and short stump where leg is broken off. Two holes on bottom between buttocks indicating genitalia. Protruding navel	101-8274 - 101-8278
C42 83	K2	Block 1 Section 12/Layer 4'.29'.2'			1	69mm x 30mm						Line s	Dots	Dots		1			Rich brown lower torso, decorations around protruding navel and on back, perforation in bottom of fragment (vagina?) Decoration runs horizontal as well as vertical towards the upper part of the fragment	101-8281 - 101-8285
C42 87	K2				1	50mm x 20mm			1		1					1			Small figurine with 1 remaining leg with a flat base, small swollen navel, protruding buttocks and 1 breast in light brown clay	101-8286 - 101-8289
C42 88	K2	Block 3 Section 4				51mm x 34mm									Dots	Dots			Large middle part of torso with sporadic dot decorations on front and back (horizontal & vertical), broken at top and base	101-8300 - 101-8301
C42 90	K2					42mm x 25mm									Dots	Dots			Conical shaped middle part of torso with single line dot decoration from top to base	101-8302 - 101-8303
C42 91	K2				1	33mm x 22mm			2			Line s	Line s					1	Upper torso with 2 short stumpy arms, horizontal line decorations on front and back	101-8305 - 101-8305
C42 93	K2					34mm x 29mm												1	Undecorated buttock fragment	101-8306
C42 94	K2	Block 4 Section 10				28mm x 18mm												1	Undecorated buttock fragment	101-8307
C42 95	K2	Block 3 Section 8			1	49mm x 18mm						Dots	Dots					1	Rough cylindrical fragment with two small protrusions at tip with single row of dot decorations	101-8298 - 101-8299
C43 00	K2	Block 5 Section 7				39mm x 32mm								Line s		1			Lower torso with navel and buttocks broken away, line decorations above navel	101-8318 - 101-8319



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT			ACQUISITION SOURCE	STYLISTIC FEATURES			ANATOMICAL DETAILS					DECORATION				SEX			OTHER	PHOTO
												UPPER TORSO		LOWER TORSO						
ACCESSION NR	ORIGIN	PROVENIENCE	UPPER TORSO	LOWER TORSO	DIMENSIONS	HEAD	BREASTS	ARMS	NAVEL	BUTTOCKS	LEGS	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FEMALE	MALE	UNSEXED		
C42 96	K2	Block 2 Section 14		1	41mm x 33mm							Dots	Dots			1			Middle/lower part of torso with navel broken off and dot decoration running horizontal from navel to back. Dot decoration along spine and horizontal decoration running to front (dots) towards top part of fragment. Very dark clay	101-8308 - 101-8309
C42 97	K2			1	1	45mm x 37mm				1		Lines	Dots	Lines		1			Lower torso, rich terracotta colour clay. Protruding navel with incised decoration below and above navel, buttocks broken away. Dot decoration along spine with decorative line decoration on left side of the back. Very black where buttocks have been broken off - 'restored'	101-8310 - 101-8313
C42 99/U P/A GL 286	K2	Block 3 Section 13/Layer 6'.3'.1'	Greefswald 37 MS		1	44mm x 37mm					1			Lines	Dots			1	Lower torso with large steatopygous buttocks with incised line separating the buttocks. Double line decorations running vertical towards top of fragment and a few dots running just above the large buttocks (horizontally) towards the top	101-8314 - 101-8317
C43 02	K2	Block 2 Section 11			1	59mm x 26mm				1	1				Lines	1			Elongated lower torso with protruding navel, with fine line decoration along spine, small part of 1 buttock still attached	101-8320 - 101-8321
C43 05	K2	Block 2 Section 15		1	1	77mm x 37mm				1	2					1			Long elongated lower torso, undecorated, red in colour, 2 steatopygous buttocks, protruding navel	101-8322 - 101-8323
C43 07	K2				1	77mm x 23mm					1							1	Long leg fragment with flat base representing a foot	101-8324
C43 08	K2			1		66.5m m x 18mm						Lines	Lines					1	Elongated torso fragment, arms broken off at top, vertical line decoration on front and back	101-8325 - 101-8326
C43 09	K2	Block 1 Section 13	Greefswald 37 MS		1	16mm x 13mm					1							1	Possible leg fragment with small base at bottom representing foot	101-8327
C43 14	K2	Trench 1 Section 10	Greefswald 37 MS	1		83mm x 22mm						Lines						1	Phallus shaped, broken on both ends with incised lines running from top to bottom. Small hole at top where broken	101-8337 - 101-8338



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT			ACQUISITION SOURCE	STYLISTIC FEATURES			ANATOMICAL DETAILS					DECORATION				SEX			OTHER	PHOTO	
												UPPER TORSO		LOWER TORSO							FRONT / TYPE
ACCESSION NR	ORIGIN	PROVENIENCE		UPPER TORSO	LOWER TORSO	DIMENSIONS	HEAD	BREASTS	ARMS	NAVEL	BUTTOCKS	LEGS	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FEMALE	MALE	UNSEXED		
C43 11	K2	Block 1 Section 7		1		92mm x 21mm				1			Lines	Dots			1			Elongated thin upper torso, protruding navel (with line decoration around), dot decoration with sporadic incised lines at top of fragment. Top and bottom broken away. Varies in colour from rich light terracotta colour from midway up and very dark brown at the bottom	101-8327 - 101-8333
C43 12	K2	Block 1 Section 4/Layer 9'.11'.3'		1	1	110mm x 32mm				1			Dots	Dots	Dots	Dots	1			Restored large upper torso, buttocks broken away with large dot decoration around navel, running horizontally and from left to right across front part. Large dots running along spine and around the body horizontally	101-8334 - 101-8336
C43 15	K2	Block 2 Section 14	Greefswald 37 MS		1	50mm x 39mm						1							1	Large leg-shaped fragment with smooth flat base with protrusion. Clay chipped away on the back of the foot	101-8339
C43 16	K2				1	68mm x 48mm				1		1							1	Large lower torso, large protruding navel, right leg & buttocks broken away, no decorations	101-8340 - 101-8342
C43 18	K2		Greefswald 37 MS		1	99mm x 21mm						1							1	Long, slim leg fragment with flat base representing a foot. Thin crack in clay from top to bottom	101-8343
C43 22	K2	Block 3 Section 11		1		37mm x 25mm		2					Dots	Dots					1	Small upper torso fragment with small breasts, very small decoration under breasts and line of dots on back	101-8349 - 101-8351
C43 19	K2		Greefswald 37 MS		1	63mm x 27mm													1	Possible lower torso, cylindrical in shape with both ends broken off and some clay chipped off	101-8344
C43 20	K2			1		52mm x 26mm	1						Dots	Dots					1	Rounded head with rounded shoulders, perforated mouth and ears, evidence of 2 breasts broken off from torso. Dotted line running from middle of head to bottom of fragment along spine	101-8345 - 101-8346
C43 21	K2	Block 2 Section 1		1		64mm x 57mm	1	2	2				Dots						1	Upper torso with rounded head, stumpy arms with rounded tips, protruding breasts, vertical dot decoration along spine. Face characterised by slightly incised features. Remnants of fingerprint visible on right side of face - only visible after restoration	101-8347 - 101-8348
C43 23	K2	Block 1 Section 12		1		55mm x 24mm							Dots	Dots					1	Upper torso, arms broken off, deep v-shaped line on front and dot decorations along spine	101-8352 - 101-8353



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT			ACQUISITION SOURCE	STYLISTIC FEATURES			ANATOMICAL DETAILS					DECORATION				SEX			OTHER	PHOTO
												UPPER TORSO		LOWER TORSO						
ACCESSION NR	ORIGIN	PROVENIENCE	UPPER TORSO	LOWER TORSO	DIMENSIONS	HEAD	BREASTS	ARMS	NAVEL	BUTTOCKS	LEGS	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FEMALE	MALE	UNSEXED		
C43 24	K2	Block 3 Section 13		1	40mm x 31mm		2					Dots	Lines			1			Upper torso with small protruding breast, line decorations below breasts and along spine	101-8354 - 101-8355
C43 25	K2	Block 2 Section 11		1	38mm x 31mm							Dots	Dots					1	Upper/middle part of torso with line of dot decorations vertically from top to base in front and along spine with one line running horizontally towards front of fragment	101-8356 - 101-8357
C43 83	K2			1	47mm x 26.5mm					2	1					1			Lower torso with left leg broken away, right leg ending in flat base, steatopygous buttocks divided by definite line and possible protruding genitalia half chipped away	101-8358 - 101-8364
C43 84	K2		Greefswald 37 MS	1	28mm x 16mm						1							1	Leg fragment with well-represented foot as base	101-8365
C43 85	K2	Block 1.2 Section 12	Greefswald 37 MS	1	39mm x 12mm						1							1	Possible leg fragment - long and tapered towards slightly rounded tip	101-8366
C43 86	K2	Trench 1, No 9	Greefswald 37 MS	1	38mm x 12mm						1							1	Possible leg fragment, very dark clay, broken on both ends with top slightly wider than bottom, indicating where it would have been attached to the lower torso	101-8367
C43 92	K2			1	49mm x 18mm						1							1	Leg fragment with flat foot base	115-8368
C46 76	K2	Block 3 Section 13	Greefswald 37 MS	1	21mm x 12mm						1							1	Small fragment possibly a leg fragment with flat base	115-8439
C43 95	K2	Section 14	Greefswald 37 MS	1	58mm x 22mm	1	2	2								1			Upper torso with breasts, arms, conical neck and disc-shaped head. Torso cylindrical, from just below breasts to head. Arms appear wing-like, pinched protrusions, flattened and rounded along edges. Neck extends directly from arms. Large hole punctured in head with no decoration on torso	115-8369 - 115-8373
C44 54	K2	Block 1.2 Section 12		1	70mm x 39mm				1	1				Dots		1			Large lower torso with protruding navel, dot decoration running towards hip, one steatopygous buttock, leg extends to flat base representing a foot. Fragment broken away from other leg - vertically and just above navel	115-8380



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT			ACQUISITION SOURCE	STYLISTIC FEATURES			ANATOMICAL DETAILS						DECORATION				SEX			OTHER	PHOTO
ACCESSION NR	ORIGIN	PROVENIENCE		UPPER TORSO	LOWER TORSO	DIMENSIONS	HEAD	BREASTS	ARMS	NAVEL	BUTTOCKS	LEGS	UPPER TORSO		LOWER TORSO		FEMALE	MALE	UNSEXED		
													FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE					
C43 96	K2			1		40mm x 24mm		2					Dots				1			Upper torso with small protruding breasts - torso broken directly above breasts - very small dot decoration below breasts, back part of torso broken away vertically	115-8374
C44 48	K2	Block 5 Section 7		1	1	56mm x 26.5m m				1							1			Long upper torso fragment broken off just below protruding navel. No decoration visible, clay a variation of very dark and terracotta colour	115-8375 - 115-8376
C44 49	K2	Block 3 Section 11			1	35mm x 26mm									Dots		1			Small lower torso, evidence where buttocks broken away, large dot decoration on upper left side of torso	115-8377 - 115-8378
C44 50	K2	Block 1 Section 4	Greefswald 37 MS	1		22mm x 14mm												1		Very small fragment with possible arms protruding in front, dark clay	115-8379
C44 55	K2	Block 1 Section 13			1	32mm x 25mm											1			Buttock fragment, broken away from main body	115-8381
C44 56	K2	Block 3 Section 15			1	78.5m m x 33mm						1						1		Lower torso fragment (2 pieces glued together) with thin left leg ending in foot-like base. Navel and buttocks broken off from torso. Light coloured clay	115-8382 - 115-8385
C44 57	K2	Test Trench 1970/Layer 15	Greefswald 37 MS	1		71mm x 23mm		1	1								1			Cylindrical fragment, elongated and cylindrical, 'restored' with left protruding breast, right arm flattened and rounded edges, matt appearance, head broken off	115-8396 - 115-8397
C44 58	K2	Block 4 Section 12			1	32mm x 24.5m m											1			Steatopygous buttock fragment	115-8386
C44 61	K2	Block 3 Section 14	Greefswald 37 MS	1		24mm x 15mm	1											1		Possible head fragment. Flat top with small punctured hole representing a mouth	115-8387
C44 62	K2	Block 4 Section 4		1	1	54mm x 24mm				1			Dots	Dots			1			Lower torso fragment with dot decoration around middle section - front - protruding navel and dot decoration along spine	115-8388 - 115-8390
C44 63	K2			1		43.5m m x 19mm		2									1			Small upper torso with small protruding breasts with body extending - tapering - in long upper body, broken at the top, rich terracotta colour at back and brown in front	115-8391 - 115-8392



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT			ACQUISITION SOURCE	STYLISTIC FEATURES			ANATOMICAL DETAILS						DECORATION				SEX			OTHER	PHOTO
													UPPER TORSO		LOWER TORSO						
ACCESSION NR	ORIGIN	PROVENIENCE		UPPER TORSO	LOWER TORSO	DIMENSIONS	HEAD	BREASTS	ARMS	NAVEL	BUTTOCKS	LEGS	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FEMALE	MALE	UNSEXED		
C44 72	K2	Block 1 Section 12	Greefswald 37 MS		1	49mm x 37mm													1	Lower torso fragment. Cylindrical tapering towards tip. Broad base. Rich brown colour	115-8405 - 115-8408
C44 85	K2				1	57mm x 19mm						1							1	Possible leg fragment broken on both ends in light coloured clay	115-8424
C45 19	K2		Greefswald 37 MS	1		19mm x 11mm	1												1	Small cylindrical head fragment with flat top	115-8431
C44 64	K2	Block 2.2 Section 14		1	1	49mm x 26mm		2		1			Dots	Dots			1		Lower torso with small protruding breasts & navel, broken just above breasts and body broken diagonally on right side next to navel. Dot decoration running from between breasts to below navel and along spine and vertically towards hips	115-8393 - 115-8394	
C44 65	K2	Block 3 Section 11			1	50.5m m x 23mm					1						1		Lower torso - long elongated body - 1 steatopygous buttock (left), legs & left buttock broken away. Lower part of fragment dark brown while long waist is light in colour	115-8398 - 115-8399	
C44 70	K2	Block 1 Section 13/Layer B13	Greefswald 37 MS		1	45mm x 31mm					2							1	Small lower torso. Two buttocks moulded from single body of clay with distinct male genitalia. Cylindrical torso slim compared to buttocks	115-8400 - 115-8404	
C44 77	K2	Pit 28			1	43.5m m x 43.5m m					1	1			Dots		1		Lower torso broken just below navel, left leg - ending in flat base & 1 left steatopygous buttock present, 2 perforations between legs indicating genitalia. Dot decoration on left hip - vertically	115-8409 - 115-8411	
C44 79	K2	Block 2.3 Section 6	Greefswald 37 MS		1	43mm x 32mm											1		Small lower torso, cylindrical shape - tapered towards upper part. Navel broken off from torso and both legs broken off	115-8412 - 115-8413	
C44 92	K2			1		22mm x 16mm	1							Dots					1	Head fragment, perforated mouth with dot decoration - incised line - on back	115-8437 - 115-8438
C44 93	K2				1	28mm x 11mm				1	2					Dots	1		Small lower torso in dark clay with small protruding navel, 2 protruding buttocks, divided by deep incised line, dot decoration along spine	115-8425 - 115-8428	
C44 94	K2			1		15mm x 9mm	1												1	Possible small head fragment with flat tip	115-8429



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT			ACQUISITION SOURCE	STYLISTIC FEATURES			ANATOMICAL DETAILS					DECORATION				SEX			OTHER	PHOTO
												UPPER TORSO		LOWER TORSO						
ACCESSION NR	ORIGIN	PROVENIENCE	UPPER TORSO	LOWER TORSO	DIMENSIONS	HEAD	BREASTS	ARMS	NAVEL	BUTTOCKS	LEGS	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FRONT / TYPE	BACK / TYPE	FEMALE	MALE	UNSEXED		
C44 98	K2	Block D8/Layer 2	Greefswald 37 MS	1		28mm x 17mm	1											1	Cylindrical head fragment, elongated with flat top and very small hole representing a mouth near the tip	115-8430
C45 02	K2	Grid 3 Block C8			1	21mm x 11mm					1							1	Small leg fragment with flat foot base and pointed tip	115-8432
C45 69	K2	Test Trench		1		29mm x 19mm	1											1	Head fragment with small ridge at the top of the head from front to back and small perforation for mouth	115-8433 - 115-8436
C45 70	K2	Test Trench		1		61.5m m x 30mm		2								1			Large upper torso with small protruding breast, small arms right next to breasts broken away, no decoration	115-8421 - 115-8423
C48 32	K2	Block 4 Section 4	Greefswald 37 MS	1	1	49mm x 21mm			1	1	2		Dots			1			Small fragment with elongated upper torso and lower torso with 2 buttocks and right arm. Arm stubby and rounded around edges. Protruding navel, punctured decoration (flower-like circular formation) around navel. Grey in colour	115-8414 - 115-8420



Appendix IV: Catalogue



This section contains examples of figurines classified in the various Classes, including the name of the site, provenience and measurements of each figurine. A short description of each figurine as observed by the author is outlined in Appendices I–III.

Class 1: Figurines with Defined Physical Features

(Figurines with attributes such as vestigial arms [or the remains thereof], legs [or the remains thereof] and/or a head [or remains thereof])

KZN collection



Ndondondwane

Block I8

Accession number 82/3 I8 (1)

65 mm x 38 mm

Upper torso with rounded head and small protruding arm. Decoration and large punctate on head representing a mouth



KwaGandaganda

Grid 1

Survey number E3

37 mm x 27 mm

Upper torso with large head and small protruding arms in rich brown colour



Schroda collection



Schroda

Accession number TSR 1/1 6A 1.2.1

135 mm x 43 mm

Large restored figurine with long protruding arms and rounded head with large punctate on top, made from coarse clay



Schroda

178 mm x 88 mm

Large restored figurine with beak-like mouth in rounded head with thick legs, one remaining arm, made from coarse clay





Schroda

Accession number TSR 6/3CD/4 (right leg fragment); TSR 1/1 G.B2.41 (torso); TSR 6/3CD/4 (right buttock); TSR 1/1 6.1A.4 (right arm)

220 mm x 65 mm

Large restored figurine with two arms, rounded head with punctate representing facial features and short stumpy legs, made from coarse clay

K2/Mapungubwe collection



K2

Block 1.2 Section 13/Layer 9'.21'.2 (upper torso) 8'.18'.1' (lower torso)

Accession number N295

62 mm x 25 mm

Restored figurine with small protruding arms, breasts and abrasion marks where head, arms and legs were broken off. Smooth light brown clay





Mapungubwe Hill

Block 1 Section 3/Layer 11'.27'.2' (chest) 4'.23'.3'
(lower torso)

Accession number C4834

120 mm x 40 mm

Large restored figurine with punctures representing facial features, two short remaining arms and one remaining leg ending in a flat base. Made from fine clay with colour variations from light to dark brown



K2

Block 2 Section 6

Accession number N296

56 mm x 12 mm

Upper torso with short arms, small protruding breasts and large punctate representing a mouth





K2

Block 4.12 (head & buttock) 4.13 (torso)

Accession number N294

200 mm x 45 mm

Large cylindrical figurine with rounded head with one protruding buttock and short stumpy leg



K2

Test Trench 3/Block A2/Layer 4

Accession number C299

60.5 mm x 11 mm

Small near complete figurine with protruding arm, small buttocks and short legs with punctate representing a mouth





K2

Block 2 Section 5/Layer 6'.15'.3'

Accession number C4278

78 mm x 50 mm

Large figurine with protruding arms and pointed head with incised decoration. Colour variation in the clay from very dark to light brown

Class 2: Figurines with Undefined Physical Features

(Fragments of the torso of a figurine without arms, legs or a head)

KZN Collection



Ndondondwane

Block 69

Accession number 78/131 69 (2)

43 mm x 36 mm

Small torso fragment made from coarse clay varying in colour



Nanda

Trench 4 B2P

17 mm x 17 mm

Small torso fragment made from coarse clay



K2/Mapungubwe collection



K2

Block 1 Section 12

Accession number C4472

49 mm x 37 mm

Small torso fragment in rich brown colour



K2

Accession number C4519

19 mm x 11 mm

Small fragment with flat top

Class 3: Figurines with Breasts

KZN collection



KwaGandaganda

Grid 4 DB30 B IV

46 mm x 24 mm

Small upper torso in rich brown colour with small protruding lumps of clay representing small breasts





KwaGandaganda

Square 18 (2)

36 mm x 19 mm

Torso fragment in rich brown coarse clay with small protrusions/breasts?

Schroda collection



Schroda

Area 4

Accession number TSR 1/1 4C 1.12

216 mm x 19 mm

Large restored stylized figurine with rounded head, small protruding breasts, small navel and one short remaining leg. Punctate decoration, made from fine clay





Schroda

Accession number TSR 1/1 6.1H.3

170 mm x 55 mm

Large restored figurine with small protruding breasts, buttocks and navel, made from coarse clay

K2/Mapungubwe collection



K2

Accession number C4287

50 mm x 20 mm

Small figurine made from fine clay, with small protruding breasts, navel and one remaining leg and two protruding buttocks.





K2

Block D8

Accession number C4235

43 mm x 18 mm

Small figurine with small breasts and punctate decoration on the front and back of the torso

Class 4: Figurines with Umbilici

KZN Collection



Nanda

Trench 4 Test pit 1 (east)

64 mm x 41 mm

Small protruding navel, coarse clay and punctate decoration on front of torso



Nanda

Test pit 7 As VII

28 mm x 14 mm

Small torso fragment with very small protruding navel made from rich brown coarse clay



Schroda collection



Schroda

Accession number TSR 1/1 5C1.7

210 mm x 58 mm

Large fine clay figurine – in rich brown colour – with small breasts and protruding navel with one remaining leg



Schroda

Accession number TSR 1/1 5C1.7

82 mm x 40 mm

Torso fragment with small protruding navel, made from fine light brown clay



K2/Mapungubwe collection



K2

Test Trench 3/Block O2

Accession number C301

63 mm x 24 mm

Small figurine with elaborate punctate decoration around protruding navel, upper torso and along the spine, dark brown in colour



K2

Block 1 Section 12/Layer 4'.29'.2'

Accession number C4283

69 mm x 30 mm

Rich brown figurine with deep punctate decoration around the small protruding navel and along the spine. Abrasion marks are present where the buttocks were broken from the back

Class 5: Figurines with Genitalia

KZN collection



KwaGandaganda

Trench 2 U5(3) & hole (H)

Accession number 86/2 H

28 mm x 27 mm

Small lower torso with punctate indicating genitalia



Schroda collection



Schroda

Accession number TSR 1/1

6.B2.4.1. (1)

209 mm x 92 mm

Large restored male figurine in rich brown clay with explicit genitalia, short arms, protruding buttocks and pedestal-like feet. Bear-like facial features



Schroda

97 mm x 39 mm

Small coarse clay figurine with large male genitalia and short arms and pointed leg





Schroda

Accession number HC 1.3

185 mm x 81 mm

Large restored female figurine with pedestal-like feet, bear-like facial features, punctate decoration and large hole indicating genitalia

K2/Mapungubwe collection



K2

Block 1 Section 13/Layer B13

Accession number C4470

45 mm x 31 mm

Small male figurine with genitalia made from fine clay, varying in colour from light to dark brown





K2

Block 3 Section 15

Accession number C4456

78.5 mm x 33 mm

Lower torso (restored) with one leg remaining and deep punctate representing genitalia, made from light brown clay



K2

Pit 28

Accession number C4477

43.5 mm x 43.5 mm

Small lower torso with short stumpy leg and punctates representing genitalia and anus



K2

Block 1 Section 13/8'.10'.1'

Accession number C4279

51 mm x 43 mm

Small lower torso with protruding buttocks, navel and punctate representing genitalia



Class 6: Figurines with Decoration

KZN collection



Magogo

U Pit 1

Accession number 80/1 U Pit1 40 cm

66 mm x 36 mm

Small torso with elaborate incised and punctate decoration



Magogo

H2 Pit 2

Accession number 80/1 H2 P2

44 mm x 42 mm

Small upper torso in fine clay with incised decoration in the middle of the torso, made from fine clay



Nanda

T4 Area Test pit 38

44 mm x 28 mm

Small lower torso with deep punctate decoration, made from coarse clay





KwaGandaganda

Grid 1 A4

31 mm x 22 mm

Small torso fragment with elaborate incised line and punctate decoration



KwaGandaganda

Trench 2 U4 (3)

Accession number 86/2 T2 U4 (3)

39 mm x 31 mm

Mid torso fragment with large punctate surrounded by smaller punctate decoration



Ndondondwane

Block R1

Accession number 1982/03 R1(1)

42 mm x 35 mm

Large head fragment with large punctate decoration on one side and small punctate decoration on the other side



Ndondondwane

Block 69

Accession number 78/131 (2)

43 mm 24 mm

Very small torso fragment with incised line decoration, made from coarse clay



Eastern Cape collection



Kulubele

Accession number H10 II

28 mm x 21 mm

Small torso fragment with incised line decoration made from fine clay

Schroda collection



Schroda

Accession number TSR 1/1 6.8 GAT

117 mm x 45 mm

Upper torso with deep punctate decoration and head with bear-like facial features in coarse clay.

Abrasion marks are present where arms were broken from the torso





Schroda

72 mm x 24 mm

Small upper torso in very dark coarse clay and deep punctate decoration on torso as well as remaining arm

K2/Mapungubwe collection



Mapungubwe Hill

Block 5 Section 1/Layer 1'.65'.3'

Accession number N303

40 mm x 23 mm

Pear-shaped lower torso with elaborate decoration on front and back of torso



K2

Block 5 Section 14/Layer 7'.5'.1'

Accession number N302

46 mm x 25 mm

Pear-shaped lower torso with small protruding navel with punctate decoration and two protruding buttocks





K2

Block 3 Section 14/Layer 8;.12'.2'

Accession number N300

109 mm x 24 mm

Elongated cylindrical torso, rich brown colour with small punctate decoration pattern in front and along the spine in the back, made from fine clay



K2

Accession number C4297

45 mm x 37 mm

Torso with protruding navel and incised line decoration in rich brown colour



K2

Block 3 Section 13/Layer 6'.3'.1'

Accession number C4299/UP/AGL 286

44 mm x 37 mm

Small lower torso with incised line decoration and two large buttocks, separated by a deep incised line



Class 7: Unique (including phallic) and Miscellaneous Figurines

KZN collection



KwaGandaganda
Trench 2 U3 (3)
50 mm x 36 mm
Small head figurine with protruding nose, eye brows and rudimentary facial features, made from coarse clay



Mhlopeni
Hut floor
Accession number 80/2 H.F.
30 mm x 20 mm
Hand figurine with incised lines on wrist

Schroda collection



Schroda
Accession number TSR 1/1 6B2.4.1 (55)
230 mm x 84 mm
Large phallic figurine with flat base in rich brown colour and punctate holes on the top





Schroda

Accession number TSR 1/1 6A1.2.1

190 mm x 67 mm

Large restored phallic object with pedestal-like bottom and large hole in top of object, made from coarse clay

K2/Mapungubwe collection



Mapungubwe Hill

Accession number C306

40 mm x 17 mm

Small phallic figurine with incised line and deep punctate





Mapungubwe Hill

Block 2 Section 3

Accession number N305

60 mm x 18 mm

Phallic shaped figurine with large punctate at the bottom with
incised line decoration made from fine clay

