

Settlement Patterning in the Shashe-Limpopo Valley: Reflections From Surveys in Maramani and Lower Mzingwani Area

Munyaradzi Manyanga

INTRODUCTION

Archaeological research by the Archaeology Unit of the University of Zimbabwe in southern Zimbabwe has shifted its attention from the archaeologically rich Mateke Hills area to cover the valleys of the Shashe-Limpopo Rivers and its tributaries. This new research area, just to the north of Mapungubwe has yielded a wide range of sites, some of them extensive in size. Sites ranging from Stone Age to more recent historical periods show that the Shashe-Limpopo confluence and adjacent areas has accommodated human settlement for a long time. A number of the sites show close affinities with those that have been recorded on the South African and Botswana side of the Valley. This suggests that a related and an interacting community once occupied both sides of the Shashe-Limpopo rivers. While the area surveyed covered a distance of about 20km from the Shashe-Limpopo area, the general trend is that most Iron Age sites had a strong orientation towards the rivers overlooking the flood plains. This strongly suggests a possibility of flood plain agriculture, a practice commonly used by local communities in the area today.

Research Background

The work presented here is a result of archaeological surveys that were conducted under the SIDA/SAREC-sponsored pilot phase of the Global