

Archaeological Investigation of Shinje Settlement Site, Northern Zimbabwe

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Abstract

A Late Farming Community site belonging to the Musengezi tradition was excavated in 2007 as part of field research in partial fulfillment of the requirements of masters (Archaeology) program. Conducted under the auspices of African Archaeology Network, the field research took the form of survey, excavations, interviews and focus group discussions. Archaeological survey and excavations, which shall be the focus of this paper, revealed a wealth of material culture pointing to the generational occupation of the site which may go as far back as Stone Age times.

Introduction

Shinje site is a hilltop settlement covering an estimated area of about 5000 square metres. Characterised by bare granite outcrops and sparse bushes, the site lies at grid TS 476 624 and is located 6 km south of Guruve growth point. The site was discovered in 1991 by Pwiti (Survey Files, Museum of Human Sciences) during his archaeological surveys in northern Zimbabwe. On the basis of pottery evidence, which is dominated by wrapped fibre/bead impressions, the site belongs to the Musengezi tradition – an archaeological culture dated from 12th century to 16th century (Pikirayi 1987, 1996; Pwiti, 1996; Marufu, 2005; Katsamudanga and Pwiti, 2006) and covering a wide swath of northern Zimbabwe landscape. The hilltop settlement provides a good command of view of the surrounding landscape (see Plate 1). In addition, the site is also strategically positioned in relation to natural resources like water, good pastures and arable soils.