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DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY, CULTURAL HERITAGE AND MUSEUM

STUDIES

Title

The Archaeology of elite burials of Gombe, Buhera Zimbabwe

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*A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts
Honors Degree in Archaeology, Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies*

APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certifies that he has read and recommended this dissertation to the Department of Archaeology, Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies at Midlands State University for acceptance as a research project entitled: An ethno-archaeological study of Archaeology of elite burials of Gombe in Buhera Zimbabwe, in partial Fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Archaeology, Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies in the Faculty of Arts.

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DEDICATION

To God and my family (especially my late mother)

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All views, errors and opinions are entirely my responsibility.

ABSTRACT

Most late Iron Age societies have been studied through the study of burials and their associated grave goods. This has been proven to be a significant source of archaeological record. Some of the sites that have been discovered like Mapungubwe have been understood from burials that were found. Through the associated grave goods the research is going to characterise the grave goods of burials from Gombe in Buhera Zimbabwe to understand issues of status, social organisation and negotiation of power of the people who lived and used Gombe. Looking at Buhera there are researches that have been done but most of the researches have been interested in pottery of that region. This research comes in with a different approach in understating one of the sites found in Buhera which is Gombe ruins by studying burials that are found there and such sites their burials have not been found the research tries to infer into the grave goods to understand conceptualization of power, wealth and social classes in death. These issues are going to be understood from an archaeological approach and ethnographic approach is also included to have a better understanding of the grave goods, interviews and observations were used to inquire the information needed to achieve the aim of the research. There are a number of issues that can be understood from studying burials of the prehistoric societies these are political organisation, economic and social organisation of the prehistoric societies. One can also understand the issue of status among the prehistoric societies through the study of burials and their associated grave goods in most prehistoric societies in Zimbabwe archaeologist have been able to infer into issues status using grave goods and different models have been used to interpret the material culture that has been found in association with burials

Key words Status, grave goods, social organisation and negotiation of power, archaeological approach and enthnoarchaeology

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Burials have been used to understand elite settlements of the later Iron Age period in southern Africa. Due to preferential treatments in burials, archaeologists have been able to explore issues of status, authority, political power, wealth differences amongst the farming communities. The research focuses on the elite burials of Gombe national monument. Through this research, the researcher aims to understand how status, wealth and political power were expressed within the burials of this farming community. Burials and the associated grave goods have been used to understand more about the social status and settlement patterning and the same is going to be applied at Gombe in Buhera, the research is looking at the grave goods associated with the burials and little research has been done to understand the history and archaeology of these areas.

From a processual point of view Pearson (2016) argues that there is a link between material culture and social status and this phenomenon is universal. This means that status has direct link to material reality and to material culture which is found in most Iron Age societies. In some cases grave goods represent roles and responsibilities that an individual had when living in a given society and they are represented by certain material evidence which are grave goods that one is buried with. Murimbika (1999) eludes the fact that in the late Iron Age society's material culture, acted as way of communicating personal aspects and roles immediately without the need of verbal exchange and hierarchical structures of the society became more complex. Murimbika (1999) articulates that the elite class needed to maintain status in order to remain powerful, to own the rightful material capital and to use it according to their status chiefs or kings acquired material objects that represented their superiority and were hardly accessed by the commoners. At death the chiefs or kings statuses (which is either ascribed or inherited) was represented in burials by the use of grave goods which was part of a burial ritual. It resulted in a continuous noticeable pattern in the archaeological record which resulted in archaeologist to use grave goods that are found in association with the elite burials as status objects or wealthy items. Hence this helped archaeologist to can understand social complexity of a society, status and settlement patterning.

Emanating from an archaeological and ethnoarchaeological study of grave goods the research is focusing on characterisation of chiefly burials at Gombe. The results of this study are

expected to validate and show how cultural context, role and function of grave goods were an important aspect in Gombe community. Barretto (2003) argues that there is a need to go beyond relating burial goods to status of the individuals; however it is also equally important to evaluate the nature of burial goods prior to understanding the relationship between burial goods to the individual associated with the goods. It is the main motivation of this research to go beyond identifying and look at these grave goods as symbols of status but tries to look at the nature of these grave goods.

1.2 Background of the study

Gombe ruin has been dated between 1700 and 1800 AD and Gombe archaeological site is considered as ranked society which was ruled by a chief and no archaeological researches has been focused on Gombe archaeological site especially in terms of mortuary analysis there studies that were carried out were of pottery and the nature of the site. Hence the history and archaeology of Gombe is hardly known but excavations and archaeological surveys were carried out at this site and it is included in the NMMZ heritage site lists. Like the burials that were excavated in the Northern part of Zimbabwe were burials are in selected caves where chiefs are buried are the same burials that are found in Buhera District from Gombe area. The focus of this research is on characterisation of burials goods found in association with chiefs from Gombe archaeological site as an effort to explore issues of status of the burials and the nature of materials that are found in association with elite burials or burials that are found in caves. There have been different views in trying to interpret burials and associated grave goods that are found in association with the dead. Jones (2007) notes that Paker Pearson questions some of his processualist approaches of dividing status into two categories of achieved and ascribed status and argues for more dynamic approaches to mortuary practises that take into cognisance of the process and agency of the living as well as the dead. There was drive for considering meaning in interpreting mortuary practises which would be more important than wealth and status indicated by grave goods. Bruck (2004) takes a post processualist approach to mortuary analysis and attempt to deconstruct the traditional notion of individualism and arguing for more relational interpretations of burial for the mourners rather than the dead. For the purpose of this research the research is taking a middle ground like Chapman (2003) who took a middle ground approach to weigh arguments presented by processualist archaeologist and gives a balanced view of the relevance of such approaches and acknowledges the significance that earlier approaches to mortuary investigations has had

on current thought and methods. The research is going to consider middle ground approach by Chapman (2003) in order to have a better understanding of the burials and associated grave goods.

From the archaeological study of the Northern East Africa of Jebel Moya site in Sudan, Brass (2017) concluded that experiencing and making your way through life entails material and spatial dimensions with continuous cultural refashioning of materials and landscapes and bodies. Brass then alluded that the challenge is posed by interconnectedness of diverse aspects of life that are reflected in and transformed through burial rites and how aspects of life can be reconstructed from the resulting material and skeletal remains. From an archaeological and ethnoarchaeological study of Gombe burials the researcher is going to determine how these materials can be used to reconstruct past societies social organisations. Fried (1967) although burial practises may reflect aspects of socially stratified societies the resultant material traces may not confirm to later generations the existence of deferential status. Kobusiewicz (2010) noted that moreover some grave assemblages might be attributing to inheritance which may explain some of the poor quality of grave goods in prehistoric societies in Eastern Sahara. To have a better or be able to understand the burials despite these factors, the burials in Northern east Africa were studied from placement of the body (body orientation) which also reflect the idea or shift in political system to hierarchical differentiation or alignment. It has been suggested that gender and personal identity are secondary to social standing dependent on age in kinship based societies.

Through the development of mortuary analysis there was a shift from just viewing objects that were associated with the dead as gifts or materials to be used in the afterlife then through time grave goods were considered as complete archaeological evidence because they were in good shape and more preserved that would be used to understand other aspects of life which included shift in political organisation, economic and social organisation. The need to understand more about the hierarchy of a certain society archaeologist began to be interested in studying rank and status through the use of grave goods Masbell & Preucel (2007). Mortuary studies has developed from just identifying grave goods which was aided by the development of theories and grave goods have proven to be valuable material evidence in reconstructing social classes that existed in the prehistoric period by associating the grave goods with individual position or status, while he or she was still living. Most archaeological studies of mortuary analysis manipulated the orientation, places of burial but through these studies these dead were found in association with goods and there were different grave goods

which were discovered and this provided another avenue of the study of mortuary archaeology. The grave goods that were considered by the researcher to be valuable and wealthy were considered to represent the elite class and further researches through ethno-archaeology proved to be true.

Furthermore Pearson (1999) postulates that these grave goods which are found in association with the elite are wealth objects and prestige goods which generally symbolise power and makers of elite status. The study of these elite grave goods helps the archaeologist to understand more about the social status and settlements patterning and belief systems that existed during the late Iron Age period. Since the discipline of mortuary archaeology developed and theories were formulated they were certain issues that were identified that needed to be re-considered in order to have broader understanding of burials in relation to social organisation. Different scholars discussed in this study have identified a number of issues that needed attention which affected the burial of certain individuals during the prehistoric period and this research has identified some of the issues and they are going to be the main focus of the research through the study of Gombe elite burials. Some of the issues are elite grave goods have significant attributes in which function, shape, style and raw materials which are evaluated and perceived by a particular society as admirable, desirable and worthy based on the cultural function and significance of the object in that society so there is need to determine the associated cultural values and significance of the objects to understand more about the objects, the dead and that particular society.

Apart from the fact that grave goods are makers of status Pearson (1999) argues that there is need to determine the relationship of the living with the dead and recognises that what is symbolised in burial is determined by the living and these statuses which the living recognise and choose to symbolise are the only statuses that archaeologist can really approach. Sullivan and Mainfort (2010) shares the same sentiments with Pearson (1999) and they elude that one is not exactly studying the status or identity of the deceased but rather the status and other aspects of burials as they are perceived by the individuals carrying out the burial rituals. These factors or issues have been overlooked or ignored by archaeologist when studying grave goods associated with the elite and they need reconsiderations. This implies that not all grave goods can represent status but archaeologists also have to consider the fact that some of these objects were acquired as symbols of wealthy rather than representing status of the individual in some instances these grave goods are sent of gifts to the afterlife. This led to revisiting of Anglo- Saxon burials by King (2004). To better tackle the issues identified by

Pearson (1999), Sullivan and Mainfort (2010) there is need to understand symbolic meaning of grave goods, one should understand how these grave goods were used among the living and Hally (2008) notes that function of grave goods is determined by distinguishing status and wealth items. Nelson (2014) shares the same thought or opinion as Hally (2008) that status and wealth items are distinguished by establishing the function of grave goods found in association with the elite but Nelson (2014) further argues that identification of status versus wealthy objects in the archaeological context is not an easy task. In order to establish status and wealthy objects the research is going to group the grave goods into utilitarian and non – utilitarian objects and take into account the problem mentioned that burials are made and arranged by living so that one can fully understand the use and function of the grave goods.

Mortuary analysis has also been shaped through time by the study of grave goods because grave goods enables archaeologist to understand more about the burials and the archaeological context under study. The study tries to look at the cultural context from which the grave goods came from in order to assess or establish the value of grave goods that are found in association with elite burials from Gombe archaeological site. Although the differentiation of status is explained through the use of grave goods and the need to determine wealthy and status objects through the role and function the researcher is going to consider cultural context form which the objects originated. Ames et al (2007) argues that archaeologist need to consider the cultural context of mortuary ritual, since what we consider as high – value status grave goods may not have played that role. From the grave goods that have been identified a range of grave goods that have been used to mark social status and wealthy have included a wide range of goods so there is need to consider the cultural context from which the object was used. Cultural context sometimes define the value of the goods in which different objects carry different values according the societal values placed on the objects and also their use that particular society. Barnatt & Collis (1996) value may have depended on the social context such as ritual, variable depending on region and the time or association such lineage, ancestors and community. Barretto (2003) emphasis the fact that cultural meaning is subjective this means it involves personal feelings there are no guiding facts. Hence different cultures without doubt endow different values to cultural materials and these values are dependent on what these materials symbolize in a given society. Also elite grave goods come with valuable characteristics which are evaluated and perceived by a particular society as admirable, desirable and worthy based on the cultural function and significance of the object in that society.

In trying to establish the cultural context of the grave goods and determine value of these grave goods the research is going to consider issues of trade both internal and external trading, the research is going to assess whether the Gombe was involved in trading which would determine value of grave goods like beads. Barretto (2003) articulates that objects that were used as trade goods were of great value for instance gold, ivory and copper and these goods were only limited to the elite class hence they were high value goods. In terms of locally produced objects for instance pottery which is a common grave good in most burials, value can be determined by distant travelled to the source of the materials and also issue of texture, colour and physical properties that are unique will help in determining the value of the grave goods. This will ensure that the value of the objects is determined in respect to the values the society places on these objects. Brass (2017) noted that types of grave goods recorded in association with the burials are composed of amulets, anklets, armlets, beads, bone points, bracelets, and knives in variable quantities. Brass analysed or interpreted the raw materials from which these artefacts originated, from the objects that were analysed they were locally from sources like Niles and from further to the North likely brought from south along Meroitic trade networks hence the need to consider these issues when studying the grave goods of Gombe. Also differentiating locally produced and traded objects will to understand different economic activities that sustained Gombe society.

Gombe is regarded as chiefdom society and it had its own level of complexity and is highly complex (*complexity has been grouped as band tribe, chiefdom and state, with band the least socially complex and state organisation is the most complex*). Due to the fact that chiefdom organisation have increasing levels of social complexity marked by the existence of kin groups ranked by ascribed/ inherited status and these are associated by goods that represent their status. Status is represented by certain artefacts and elite status objects are treated as artefacts that are restricted to individual or a group as a result of their specific social status, role/position. Calabrese (2000); Chirikure et al. (2015) articulates that recovery of numerous items of gold in three burials of Mapungubwe betray the high status of those individuals, looking at objects like gold rhinoceros, bowl and sceptre recovered from male burial at Mapungubwe hill suggest that gold had become a symbol of royalty and its use and circulation was restricted to the ruling class. Archaeologists have used these grave goods to understand issues of status that existed in the late Iron Age societies as was done at Mapungubwe.

Mortuary analysis has been used to understand issues of settlement pattern through study of elite burials looking at use of space in terms of spatial analysis and associated grave goods. Haller (2004), elite burials and settlement patterns offer the most significant evidence for social complexity, through analysis of burial goods. One can argue the presents of social status basing on the quality, type and quantity of goods included in the burial it also provides valuable insight into daily activities that were done at Gombe archaeological site. Looking at chiefdoms societies the nature of their hierarchy and complexity impose the greatest political control over the settlements adjacent to the political centre. The chief secure goods that are not accessible to the commoners through capitals and they acquire the goods based on his political power so through the grave goods that accompany them one can understand the link between the size of a site and degree of political centralization which is vital in interpreting settlement pattern. For instance capital sites where the chief resides or sub chief resides become the political centre and these other sites are controlled from there, they are also vital in the survival of the state. Therefore elite burials and the grave goods become invaluable to the archaeologist in understanding the issues of status and relationship between elite burials and settlement patterning.

Burial spaces vary from one ethnic group or culture to another especially among the elite classes and vast majority of data comes from within residential structures and in some cases elite residences when abandoned and they are converted into ancestor worship shrines / temples. Looking at Mapungubwe has been considered to be the sole cradle of the Zimbabwe culture before the discovery of Mapela and this has changed the perceptions in the study of archaeology of Zimbabwe. At the hilltop of Mapungubwe 12 burials were discovered and were associated with grave goods which included gold beads glass beads and different fragments of gold objects. The summit also yielded evidence of metal production, such as tuyères, slag, crucibles and possible furnace bases Calabrese (2000); Chirikure et al. (2015). There was also evidence of a low dry stone-walled platform where one or two houses were built on the same hilltop which suggest that these elite were not buried far from their settlement areas and they might have influenced how settlement was organised to pave way for these elite burials but this is yet to be archaeologically proven hence the need to include the cultural context from where the elite lived. Looking at the context of Buhera it provides a different tradition in terms of burial of these chiefs, they don't use the same space with the settlements but they choose different locations which are selected caves usually at the vicinity of their settlements. Musengezi tradition in the northern Zimbabwe has similar way of

burying the elite in hill caves. This part of the Zimbabwean plateau there is a tradition where successive chiefs and members of the family within polity were buried in a cave reserved for them as royalty. Mahachi (1986), Pwiti and Mahachi (1991) note that monk's kop location as a significant context of the association between the royalty and hills in Shona belief system. The research is going to look at these burials in relation with settlement pattern as was done at Mapungubwe where burials are found within the settlement.

Given this background of challenges and what has been done so far from across the globe and in the Zimbabwean context where little research has been done to chiefdom societies and trying to understand the status and grave goods of these chiefs that ruled these ranked societies the research is going to study the burials of Gombe from a multidimensional approach. Also to understand the level of complexity that existed in these societies from the study of grave goods has been difficult due to limited access to different burials of chiefs in different areas. Not limited to that most research that has been carried out treats these burial goods in relation to the dead excluding the people who carried out the burial ritual and in some instances these elite burials and associated grave goods are not treated independently in order to differentiate wealthy, prestige and status objects which becomes difficult to relate burial goods and status. With the understanding of preferential burials from society to society and different circumstances under which one is buried and variety of messages that are conveyed by the burials for instance commoners may be buried with high value goods as their send off to the realms of the spirit. Also they ignore the cultural context from which the grave goods came and nature of burial goods that are associated with the elite. There is need for a collective understanding of these burials also including cultural context from which the goods were selected, nature of the grave goods and role and function the grave goods played whilst still in use.

1.3 Statement of the problem

There are later Iron Age sites in Zimbabwe and often their burials have not been found. Gombe is an example of one such place where the elite burials have been found hence following how Mapungubwe burials have been used to understand the society, the elite burials of Gombe can also yield valuable information regarding elite burials and the conceptualisation of power, wealth and social classes in death. Therefore the research is also looking into issues of status and grave goods by specifically looking at elite burials that are found at Gombe.

1.4 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to characterise elite burials of Gombe hill. This characterisation would enable the researcher to know how the elite of Gombe were buried as a show of wealth, power and social class system associated with the later iron age of the Zimbabwean plateau.

1.5 Objectives

- To describe the location of burials of Gombe hill.
- To identify the goods associated with burials at Gombe hill.
- To explain the meaning and significance of the burial goods in association with death.
- To interpret the burial goods and the elite burials within the of the Later Iron Age in Zimbabwe

1.6 Research questions

1. Where are the burials of Gombe located?
2. How many people are buried within these spaces?
3. What were they buried in association with?
4. How are the grave goods arranged and what could it possible mean?
5. What does Gombe burials tells us in terms of elite burials during the later Iron Age period?

1.7 Significance of the study

Gombe ruin is a late Iron Age site that is considered as chiefdom society were status affected the social organisation of the areas and these have a unique burials which are independent from the commoner's burials. Beach (1994) argues that the history of the Mbiru Nyashanu dynasty of Buhera is interesting in that it shows how politics may have worked during the period of Great Zimbabwe. Through studying the burials of at Gombe hill were the Nyashanu Dynasty lived would help to understand more about their politics and social organisation. Also looking at Musengezi tradition in the Northern Zimbabwe has similar way of burying the elite in hill caves. Following how these burials were studied would help also to understand the burials at Gombe Hill. Mahachi (1986) articulates that this part of the Zimbabwean plateau successive chiefs and members of the family within polity were buried

in a cave reserved for them as royalty but these were understood from both archaeological and ethnographic approach and considering the prestige good value model. Chieftdom organisation represent increasing levels of social complexity, marked by appearance of kin groups ranked by ascribed and inherited status and they are also bands and state societies and these idealised categories are then operationalized and applied to past groups that have been studied by archaeologist, Johnson (2010). The research is there to validate the use of these chieftdom societies in the Zimbabwean context within Southern Africa and their associated burial system in trying to understand issues to do with elite burials and grave goods and status and goes on to consider other issues that have been ignored or mentioned in passing when looking at the study of elite burials and their associated grave goods which includes the context form which the goods or material culture was selected or originated, functions and role of the goods among the living, one should understand how these grave goods were used among the living. Also considering the value that the people who used or selected the goods rather than looking at value of grave goods by who the grave goods are associated with. Also the research is going to look at the geographical locations of the burials of these chiefs in order to understand the relationship between elite burials and settlement organisation.

1.8 Assumption of the study

The research is basing on the assumption that the burials are of the elite burials for the Gombe prehistoric site and there is a connection or relationship with the existing Nyshanu dynasty were the researcher will draw ethnographic and ethno archaeological information. Also the fact the through the study of the burials the research will be able to understand the relationship between status and objects from the burials.

1.9 Limitation of the study

Gombe ruin is a sacred place and access to it is subject to traditional rites. And also they are also taphonomic process that makes some of the archaeological evidence not to be clear and considering that the bodies were not dried when buried. This did not stop the researcher to carry out the study so the researcher had to resort to contemporary burials for other aspect that were not clear in the archaeological context since they are of the same tradition and culture. Another factor that limited the researcher was that due to globalisation and change of culture some of the practises that would explain certain actions found in the archaeological context were understand from oral tradition which ethnographic information.

1.10 Delimitations of the study

The research is going to focus on elite burials from Gombe only and mainly the elite group that is going to be included in the research are chiefs only although they are range of elite groups. The burials that are going to be included in the burial are burials from hill caves although one can study non cave burials of the elite which are still valid but for the purpose of this research it is going to focus on cave burials because they are the only burials found in that area. There are issues of burial orientation but the research is limited burial goods and the issues of burial orientation are excluded from the research.

1.11 Structure of the research

Chapter one introduces the motivation of the study in the study mortuary studies looking at Buhera chiefly burials and their associated grave goods and their connection to the ruins in which the chiefs ruled. Also gives an insight to other researches that have been done in other sites which includes Great Zimbabwe and the Musengezi tradition and their relation to burials. Chapter two reviews related literature concerning the study of mortuary studies where the researcher will build or choose a model to study the chiefly grave goods. Chapter three looks at the research methodology which includes the research design, the research sample, data collection, data presentation and analysis methods which are used for the research. Chapter four includes the data collected and analysis of data from the field data collection and interviews and pertaining to the nature, value and type of grave goods that have been discovered by the researcher. Lastly chapter five provides an in- depth discussion and conclusion of results obtained from the characterisation of chiefly grave goods.

1.12 Summary

This chapter provided an introductory background to various aspects that make up the research. Broader aim, objectives and back ground of the area to be studied as well as the various theoretical frameworks that shape up the research are also outlined. In overall this chapter serves as a framework of reference to the issues to be outlined in the coming chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the development of mortuary studies in Africa and other continents and how has been used to understand the prehistoric archaeological site and how has it shaped archaeological study. The study also explores the theories that have been used in the study of mortuary analysis in relation to the other aspects of burial activities and brings out the limitations and their contribution to the study of burial practises. Then it narrows to the conceptual analysis of grave goods and how the study of the material culture has an enabled archaeologist to understand the archaeological record.

2.2 Approaches to understanding material culture

2.2.1 Archaeological approach

Artefacts provide archaeologist with information on trade and exchange, social interaction and cultural values. In complex societies differential access to resources can be seen in types objects found across burials of both common and elite burials. Elites monopolise more goods which had were more valuable and therefore had more access to different resources these which creates social stratification and material culture becomes the centre of this differentiation. There are certain objects like gold, beads and conus shells because they are consider as prestigious and difficult to acquire hence they limited to the elite and because there is need to legitimize the dominance of other group of people over others then material culture becomes the tool to mark the status of certain individuals. Earle (2000) and Gosden (2008) argues that objects made by people tend to communicate a wide variety of messages because of their differential uses or purposes and they inform us about lives, tasks, beliefs, economy and politics of the makers and users. They further allude that these objects because they are used to represent cognitive thinking and ideas act as a mirror which reflects what was happening in those societies through the study of the object biography. The fact that objects act as mirror that reflects the social activities of a society was a concept adopted by archaeologist to interpret grave goods because these grave goods assumes the role of mirror even at death, they tend to represent status of the person in burials. To understand Gombe

there is need to determine why objects were created and manner in which they were used hence cultural context becomes vital when looking at grave goods because some of these objects would use as grave might be their secondary use or had a primary use before being used as grave goods.

In addition to the thoughts of Earle (2000) and Gosden (2008) objects used by the communities sometimes act as symbols and they are assume different values according to their use in a certain community and interpretation of objects in relation to context in which the objects were used and created before being used as grave goods. One can therefore understand the social, economic and political activities that took place in the prehistoric society under study. When dealing with objects context is very important in that different meanings and values are placed on the object, construction of meaning becomes easy and possible for instance objects recovered from religious context are bound to differ from those recovered where daily activities took place. Some objects are symbolic and expressive in nature and they are vital in understanding how power was negotiated and displayed hence when dealing with grave goods it is also equally important to understand their production and biographies. Production is understood through chaine operateure which enables a simultaneous study of technical and symbolic factors in the production and use of the object which is key factor in understanding past societies and also grave goods that are found in association with burials. In the study of grave goods symbolic meaning and function are key to understanding the status of the burials and usually looking at pottery typology is used to analyse pottery from burials. It has received a lot of criticism due to the fact that it was mainly used for chronologies hence chaine operateure becomes vital in interpretation of certain pottery found in these graves because one understands why the objects was created and what value is being placed on the object. Looking at pottery they are certain clay pots that were created for chiefs and they were not used for anything but some might have been used in the community and then used as grave goods. Object biography and chaine operateure becomes important in understanding grave goods and this is an important aspect when dealing with grave goods because it gives an insight into its use life before being used as grave goods.

Calabrese (2000) explains the fundamental basis for elite power as follows a chief or king sees his or her role as ideological specialist whose relationship with the alleged ability to profit source of agriculture, animal and human fertility ensure the successful biological and cultural integrity and continuity of a larger community. Sonnenberg (2017) concluded that this ideological system provides the structure and foundation upon which the larger political

economy is built, consolidated and maintained. Calabrese (2000) further notes that the rest of the community would have fallen into the category of commoners and would have fallen into this category due to the fact that they do not own the means of production and the entire community in some way benefit from exchange goods. Differential access to resources resulted in gaining economic power and this would have aided in the legitimization of social hierarchies. Specialized craft good production would be evident with the highest accumulation of products being evident in the elite areas. Commoners with less or restricted access to conspicuous goods and less political power that exist and influence would have subordinated themselves with settlement power and their material culture would have reflected their lower status. Earle (2000), Huffman (2007), and Kim and Kusimba (2008) note that goods that are associated with elite are prestigious goods hence access to prestige or exotic goods would have been nominal, but one would still find those goods in commoner households and the concept of prestige goods was would be viable to understand grave goods that are found at both commoner's and elite burials. Barretto (2003) stated that some scholars mentioned in passing the issue of prestige goods their studies and they focused on the socio-political developments in the Philippines from the 10th to 16th centuries and became her research focus. Even in the Zimbabwean context the concept was also used in the study of Mapungubwe where there glass beads that were discovered and a number of them were also found at commoners sites.

2.3 Conceptual Frameworks

Jones (2007) noted that there have been some arguments to date by archaeologist seeking to understand rank and status in societies through the evidence found in burials practises. In the 1970s with the development of processualist approach most archaeologists used this approach to understand mortuary evidence in order to establish how society were organised. Jones (2007) noted that in later dates a movement against processualism began by post processualist to re-evaluate the evidence and infer a greater holistic understanding of prehistoric societies through greater understanding of the symbolic aspect of material culture. These methods advocated by processualist and post processualist can be used to understand or interpret late Iron Age burials of Gombe. The alternating views and findings that these different approaches offer in relation to status and rank can be used to deduct a reasonable understanding of these burials at Gombe.

From Binford (1971) report it showed that in the early days of processualism it treated evidence that individual site would offer could be period together to form a central picture of social organisation of that whole society. Lewis Binford (1971) paper on mortuary differentiation which sought to move away from the earlier assumptions about beliefs and view differences in burials as a process of status and social complexities in response to environmental and personal attributes of individual and their effect upon society. The idea of Binford was later criticised by King (2004) from an ethnographic approach that it's not always the case but the objects might represent pestation. Later Pearson (1982) argued from a post- processualist stance and alluded that treatment of the dead should be evaluated in relation to wider context which is represented by all forms of the material remains and burial evidence not just within archaeological theories of social systems based solely on material culture in burial contexts. Jones (2007) argued that Pearson (1982) maintained that the dead were manipulated by the living for social competition between groups and conspicuous wealth advertising operated within a political framework. Pearson (1982) further questioned the processualist approach of dividing status into categories of achieved or ascribed status and advocated for a more diverse approaches to mortuary practises that reflect the process and agency of the living as well as the dead. The post- processualist argues that significance of meaning in interpretation mortuary rites should be paramount over wealth and status indicators in grave goods. Bruck (2004) also takes processualist approach to mortuary analysis and attempts to deconstruct the traditional notion of individualism arguing for more relational interpretations of burial for mourners rather than the deceased. Bruck's view takes grave goods as for the departed to use in the afterlife and are merely a statement of the status of the person while still living. Chapman (2003) takes a middle- ground approach and considers arguments by processualist archaeologist and gives a balanced view of the relevance of such approaches. Chapman acknowledges the importance of earlier approaches to mortuary studies has had on current thought and methods. In terms of the conceptual frameworks the research is following that of Chapman (2003) of taking a middle ground and evaluating all arguments and weighing them to come with a comprehensive method of analysing the burials of Gombe.

The approaches and theories that have been reviewed by this research to interpret grave goods and burials range from a processual, post processual, feminist, ethnographic perspective and the prestige good value. Stutz and Tarlow (2013) articulates that one method archaeologist utilize in mortuary data is a processual manner which is interpreting past life

through documenting and analysis of grave goods working to find a continuum of data. This one of the main objective of the research documentation and then characterise the grave goods. Conversely post-processual researchers view material culture as symbolic, individualistic and self-conscious and from this assumption interpretation of the material culture is drawn from the community and the research is going to include the post-processualist perspective. Feminist archaeologist seeks the gendered meanings of grave goods to an independent interpretation from the patriarchal hierarchy or male dominated of western thought looking at Nguni invasion in the Zimbabwean plateau the leader of one of the groups that defeated the Rozvi was led by a female. Also from the feminist approach there are certain objects that are associated with women and they are articulates to gender roles in a society. These approaches have been useful in understanding grave goods from African context hence these methods are considered in this research and they are useful because one can understand the grave goods from a multi-dimensional view. In addition Stutz and Tarlow (2013) argues that even with the nearly universal act of treating the dead we are often left with only that which survives the relative taphonomic processes. In this case most of material culture in archaeological have been decayed or decomposed. Hence in many cases this excludes the remains of bodily tissues, the more organic material culture and in many cases even skeletal elements. What is left for archaeological research are the more often surviving materials that were buried with the dead, grave goods. This is the material culture from which the research is trying to understand the social complexity or issues of status and political system of Gombe archaeological site.

2.3.1 The Saxe- Binford theory

Since the 1960s interest has increased in how mortuary or burial practices can be used to interpret social organization. Nelson (2014) eludes that Binford (1971) views mortuary practice as affected by social organisation and formulated 3 aspects of mortuary practices 1) Different social dimensions reflected by burial practises are different across societies with different forms of social complexity as measured by different forms of. 2) Social dimensions recognised in burial practices differ across societies with different form of social complexity. 3) Form of mortuary practices varies according to the social dimensions recognised. The researcher consider the second aspect of mortuary practise social dimensions recognised in burial practises differ across societies with different form of social complexity. Nelson (2014)

further eludes that these are seen in the archaeological record via associated grave goods, body position, and geographical location of the burial age and sex of the deceased.

Besides the prestige good value model, there are other theories that were used to understand cultural materials from grave goods. Saxe and Binford propagated theory that was labelled Saxe- Binford approach which rests on two major assumptions 1) as the amount of social identities held by someone in the form social ranking increases so will the number of symbols representing these identities. 2) These symbols are reflected accurately and unambiguously through burial practices and grave goods (Binford 1971, Sullivan and Mainfort 2010). Pearson (1999) Binford and Saxe used the Goodenough concept of role theory to propose that people may have multiple roles in life or social identities and that many or all of those identities will be presented during burial rites. These identities are reflected through grave goods, location of burials and body position. These are problematic in the sense that differing circumstances surrounding a death can influence the symbols buried with the individuals.

In addition in some cases grave goods might not be symbols of social status but markers of individual/ group wealth in which status and wealth are different things according to how the goods were consumed by the user or creator. Hence Paketat (2010) notes that the living people involved in mortuary practises must be considered when discussing the meaning behind burials and associated objects. Nelson (2014) agrees with Paketat (2010) and further notes that due to the limitations of Saxe- Binford theory Saxe (1970) later recognised that some cases what is symbolised in burial is determined by the living and that these statuses which the living recognise and choose to symbolise are the only statuses that archaeologist can really approach. These statuses are the ones that are used to understand the social complexity of a site. Pearson (1999) further emphasises that and eludes that not all social statuses held by a specific person are recognised. This means that the choice of the grave goods to represent one's status is subjective in the sense that one might choose to represent the ascribed status or the achieved status. Hence this another factor to consider and when one includes the people living in understanding the value of grave goods would help and this can be done through interviews which is an ethnographic approach. Because the values that are assigned to the object are determined by the living.

An archaeological study was carried out at Moundville burials using the Saxe- Binford theory to understand the grave goods that were found there. There were certain factors that they first established in terms of the nature of the Moundville in terms of the burials. The neo-

evolutionary categories were used to study Moundville burials which were thought to be a ranked society was categorised as chiefdom society containing a chief at the apex and descending order of nobles and commoners whose status was primarily ascribed according to birth. It was eluded from high status objects for instance the ceremonial objects and is seen in all age and sex groups. They further differentiated the status of the burials into subordinate and superordinate aspects of social status. Subordinate of social status is defined age, sex and achievement then superordinate of social status is defined as grave goods, symbols and aspects of burial that are not attributed to subordinate.

Nelson (2014) argued that to apply the Saxe- Binford concept to burials one must take into account the problem mentioned that burials are made and arranged by living which was later taken into consideration by King (2004) who revisited the same burials studied by Binford. In support of this view Hally (2008), Sullivan and Mainfort (2010) elude that one is not exactly studying the status or identity of the deceased but rather the status and other aspects of burials as they are perceived by the individuals acting out the burials. Nelson (2014) tends to paint another picture from what Pearson (1999) and Paketat (2010) discusses relating to issues of the living actively influencing how to bury the dead in which subjectivity is playing a role. Nelson (2014) argues that some scholars' notes that like most actions within culture, mortuary practises can be largely dictated by the customs of the culture under study rather than the person performing it. Hence this means that certain societies are guided by customs and tradition that they inherited from their forebears and this is a custom they maintain and which guides the community, which means that one might be studying the status of the deceased rather than the latter. This also means this is going to affect how the research at Gombe is going to be carried out, since these issues have been identified there is need to determine what it is affecting the burials of these chiefs whether it's a subjectivity or custom and tradition that is determining the grave goods that are being used as grave goods of the chiefs from Gombe.

Looking at the Saxe- Binford concept how it views utilitarian and non-utilitarian objects conflicts with prestige value cause they show different perspectives which present difficulty as how to treat these objects when carrying out an archaeological study. Barretto (2003) prestige views utilitarian and non- utilitarian objects as artefacts that represent wealthy because she defines prestige objects as wealthy objects and yet Saxe and Binford framework views utilitarian objects as prestige objects wealthy and non- utilitarian objects as objects of

status yet wealthy and status are two different aspects. Hence for the purpose of this study the researcher is going to use Saxe- Binford definition of utilitarian and non- utilitarian objects.

Mortuary analysis has shaped how societies are being studied by archaeologist and different aspects pertaining burials have been explored in trying to understand social organisation and complexity of different societies. In archaeological sites where there is limited archaeological evidence burials offers a different opportunity to understand these societies. One of the major material evidence that has been included in these studies is grave goods but they have never been fully explored in a broader context and a number of issues have been left out when studying grave goods. From the studies above grave goods have proven to be invaluable source of archaeological data and the most complete material evidence found these burials is pottery and beads. The function and use of the objects, cultural context, nature and values ascribed to the objects have been ignored yet they affect how these objects are interpreted and their choice by the living. Therefore this research sought to cover this gap by identifying and characterising chiefly grave goods who are buried in caves from Gombe.

2.3.2. The prestige good value concept in the study of elite grave goods in Philippines

Looking at Philippines the concept of prestige value has been used to understand grave goods which is an archaeological perspective independent from ethnographic analogy has been explored fully. This was used in the study of the burial goods in the Philippines. Prestige goods are defined as wealth objects in this concept. Barretto (2003) argues that these prestige goods generally symbolises power and markers of elite status. In the Philippine context elements of status were associated with the elites and information from the ethnography gold, silver, ivory and semi-precious stones were categorised as prestige goods due to the fact that they possessed intrinsic values or characteristics and were perceived as admirable, desirable and worthy based on cultural function and significance of the object in that society.

In the Philippines the way the prestige value was used was different from the Zimbabwean context. Barretto (2003) noted a number of issues that need to be considered when studying grave goods using the prestige value. Alekshin formulated three methods of assessing the wealth of grave goods which included 1) number of objects found in graves 2) number of types of artefacts 3) frequency of objects in assemblage of grave goods and these methods were used by Barretto to study grave goods of the elite in the Philippines. Barretto (2003) concluded that high number of objects found in graves and diverse types of artefacts were considered wealthy, also burials containing rare materials were considered as wealthy

objects. But this criterion did not consider the raw material from which the objects were made because the nature of material which was used to create the artefact will affect the prestige value of the artefact. Barretto (2003) further eludes that a singular object made of gold found in a burial maybe more valuable than 10 porcelain objects. This intern rules out the first factor identified which the number of objects is although it is sometimes useful and also it tries to give value to a single object found in burials because it might be more valuable due to the raw materials and its cultural symbolic meaning.

Looking at the application of the prestige value to study grave goods a number of factors or criteria were added to the previous criteria's by Alekshin and these yielded the desired results. Barretto (2003) identifies the factors as raw materials, source of raw materials and time and energy required to manufacture and acquire an object and cultural meaning. These criteria or factors are very useful in determining how prestigious the goods are because looking at cultural meaning these are dependent on complexity levels of the society and raw materials are qualified based on colour texture and other physical properties that are unique. In terms of source of material the research will be considering the distance travelled to acquire the materials and energy spent in acquiring it. The concept goes on to consider cultural meaning which plays an important role in determining prestige value. Barretto (2003) eludes that cultural meaning is subjective due to the fact that different cultures assign different values to cultural material. These values vary according to what they symbolise in a given society which as a factor to consider when applying the cultural meaning as factor in interpreting grave goods. The study that was carried out in the Philippines the objects was divided according to their utilitarian and non-utilitarian function in order to understand or establish the cultural meaning of the material culture. Barretto (2003) defines utilitarian objects as associated with food cultivation; procurement and storage were as the latter was defined as ornaments in which they were assigned high prestige value because they are difficult to obtain. Barretto (2003) further argues that Luxury or non- utilitarian objects contribute to the social political and cultural survival of a community. Also looking at other scholars looks at non- utilitarian objects differently these includes (Peebles 1971, Welch 1991, Blitz 1993, Marcoux 2010) suggests that status items were rare, highly crafted, non – utilitarian artefacts of copper, stone and shell that functioned as ornaments, symbol badges and other specialized accoutrements often decorated with complex iconography. There is need to determine according to the context of the objects and their use in the societies in which they were used.

The prestige value which was used to assess these grave goods or object or treated elite objects as prestigious due to the fact that they played a crucial role in strengthening socio-political alliances because these objects were used to pay tribute to show sign loyalty or allegiance and were also presented as gifts. Even in the African context more precious material or those objects that were considered to be wealthy were used to pay tribute which strengthened politics of the states of Africa for instance Great Zimbabwe, Mutapa state and Torwa state. Secondly the fact that most societies believed in life after death and the most expensive or precious goods were selected to serve as gifts to the dead ancestors which also affected how these grave goods were interpreted. In some instances prestige objects were found in the graves of the commoners and this fact of life after death provided the reason for the appearance of these grave goods in commoner burials. This shows that the prestige goods value might not be limited to the elite only also might be used to understand some of the high value goods found in association with commoners.

2.3.3 Feminist perspective

Sullivan (2011) analysed grave goods according to the feminist approach or perspective in which she included mound and village burials to demonstrate differences between biological sexes. Sullivan (2011) identified different mortuary artefacts which include adzes, projectile points, smoking pipes, clay and shell pots, shell beads and bone tools among many other objects of ceremonial and utilitarian use. Sullivan (2011) further grouped the objects into ceremonial and utilitarian objects in order to understand more about the objects because they have different values and uses. Sullivan's report on mortuary goods helps in determining the relationship between sex roles and prestige and can further allude to spheres of kinship. By comparing data sets of mortuary goods in relation to issues of sex, age, amounts and spatial confines of socio-political pattern can be understood from a broader perspective. Bruck (1999) also challenges the notion; funerary practices indicate a lower social status for women. Bruck argues that it is indicative of women's differential roles and positions in society. Bruck's feminist view is based on the assumption that women had important roles to play in the economic and social changes that occurred overtime. The ideas of Bruck also challenge the central kettle pattern used in Southern Africa which views women as occupying lower status rather than being important in the continuous survival of the community. Due to the usefulness of how Sullivan approached the material culture she identified this contributes to how grave goods from Gombe can be studied. The group that were used by Sullivan which

includes utilitarian and ceremonial nature of goods maybe useful when wants to understand nature and value of the grave goods and social changes that occurred in during that period.

2.3.4 Processual and Post processual theories in Musengezi tradition

Pwiti (1999) notes that the reconstruction of Musengezi tradition in the Northern Zimbabwe has been difficulty or not fully explored due to the lack of other archaeological evidence or limited evidence that could be used to understand its cultural social organisation. Pwiti (1999) further argues that social organisation of the population identified with the Musengezi tradition has not been explored, perhaps because it has been taken for granted or because of the limitations of the evidence available. Looking at the excavations that were carried out Wazi hill in the centenary district of Northern Zimbabwe Mahachi (1986) and Pwiti (1991), they attempted to understand the settlement patterns but recovered or discovered part of settlement site which constituted house remains situated on a hilltop. It did not provide the needed information but brief information that was used to understand the settlement pattern but it gave a complex picture about the social organisations of the state. This has been also the challenge that was noted by Lindahl when they carried out ethno- archaeological study of pottery in Buhera. Lindahl noted that there is lack of other archaeological evidence that can be used to understand these sites or states found in these regions, considering the archaeological study of the northern Zimbabwe archaeologist found out that burials were invaluable or key to understanding the social organisation of the Musengezi tradition. Hence this what the research is going to explore issues of status and settlement pattern in order to understand the social complexity of these sites.

Despite the lack of evidence that was needed more traditions were found through current surveys and cave and cleft burials sites were discovered. Then this provided archaeological evidence that could be used and Musengezi tradition has been studied through the study of cave and cleft burials sites which are common in Northern Zimbabwe and these types of burials have been found in other parts of Zimbabwe. Pwiti (1999) used this class of data and distribution of site to reconstruct or understand the nature of Musengezi society and the burial that have been studied in this part of Zimbabwe from Musengezi tradition are rock shelters and crevices of caves. The burials that have been identified had multiple burials with three or more individuals in association with a number of pots and bowls. The Monk's Kop burials which were partially excavated by Crawford (1967) which were interpreted by Mahachi (1986) and Pwiti (1991) using archaeological data and Shona ethnography this also means

that these burials were not fully explored which leaves another avenue of research to revisit the burials. If the site is revisited it might provide more archaeological data that could be used to understand more about Musengezi tradition and Zimbabwe at large maybe through the use of different archaeological theory or from processual or post processual perspective.

The Monk's Kop is a large burial cave located on a hill and dates back to the 13th century AD and most of these burials were found with complete pottery vessels, adorned with iron bangles on arms and ankles as well bead necklaces. Also there was presence of unspecified number of conus shell. This material evidence that have been found in association with the dead is referred to as grave goods and they have been useful items of understanding or interpreting the social life of the dead among the living. Due to the fact that material culture used as grave goods were socially and politically active and that they convey meanings and messages intended to portray why they were manufactured and used. Sometimes it conveys social statement about the user. Pwiti (1999) postulates that changes in ideology and changes in material culture are somehow related and the change in the latter will be a reflection of the change in the former. This is because usually the material culture in some way conveys social messages hence there is relationship between the two which is noted in the change of either material culture or ideology. These have been used to understand the Musengezi cultural social organisation and the interpretation of grave goods.

In order to understand the cultural material from the Monks burials, Mahachi (1986) and Pwiti (1991) took into consideration unique or nature of material culture and location and they used the ethnographic approach to bring out issues of ranking within Musengezi community. Mahachi (1986) states that in Northern part of Zimbabwe multiple burials are associated with chiefs not ordinary people but in some areas multiple burials are associated with the commoners hence the need to employ ethnographic approach in order to understand the burials from the community's perspective. In this part of the Zimbabwean plateau successive chiefs and members of the family within the polity shows that they were buried in caves reserved for them as royalty. Mahachi (1986) and Pwiti (1991) note that Monk's kop location is a significant context of the association between the royalty and hills in Shona belief system. Also they stipulated that the presence of un specified number of conus shells discs found in association with the burials at Monk's Kop were important to the interpretation of the burials due to the fact that they are part of chiefly regalia among the prehistoric period, they concluded that this large Musengezi burial suggest that there is existence of a chiefdom level of social organisation during the Musengezi prehistoric period.

This approach has proven to be useful in the study of grave goods or human remains but looking at the concept of ethno archaeological approach there is need of living society that has direct link or connection or similar to the cultural burial system that was found at the Monk's Kop in order to understand more about the grave goods that were discovered and explore more about the burial rites. Pwiti (1999) note that unfortunately there is no information about the living sites or societies around the Monk's kop which would have provided more weight to the model in the given context. Hence the information they provided is limited and still open for discussion or there is need to employ or use another method of studying these burials in order to have a broader understanding of the archaeological evidence. Hence looking at the study of the burials form Gombe there is need to use a more suitable method but ethno archaeology is applicable to Gombe.

2.3.5 The concept of prestige value in the study of elite grave goods in Zimbabwe

One of the models that have been applied in the Zimbabwean context which is valuable to this research is the prestige good value. Moffett and Chirikure (2016) note that materialization of power and prestige at great Zimbabwe was exposed by the presence of dynastic walling that dates from different time periods. Pikirayi (2013) argued that prestige could be understood from the stone walling because they expressed prestige, authority and legitimacy and also due to the fact sites like Mapela, Mapungubwe, Khami and Danagombe were concealed by Kings. These sites have resemblance of a continuous culture that was proven by ceramics studies that were done in these areas and also their stone wall structures were not much different form each because the rise of one state was as result of the downfall of another and there was a continuity of culture although they tried to create their own identity. Moffett and Chirikure (2016) argue that a prestige goods model might work well in other regions in the world, its application to AD 1000- 1300 Southern Africa has never been critically interrogated. In this period Great Zimbabwe site along with Mapungubwe and K2 have been at the centre of research into the development of complexity in the region. Looking at the arguments of Moffatt and Chirikure (2016) they are trying to elude that looking at the nature of stone structures of Great Zimbabwe they represented prestige and power this shown at the pattern that are found at the stone wall which includes Dentelle and Herringbone pattern. These walls or stone structures were used to understand issues of prestige so the applicability of the prestige goods model in these areas in not known or there is no effort to understand material culture from the burials through the perspectives of the prestige good

model. They make an assumption that if it is applied to study grave goods in Southern Africa it will not yield much information. If applied to other regions it might be valuable or there is still need to use the model to understand material culture from the elite burials in Southern Africa.

Looking at scholars like Wood (2002), Calabrese (2000, 2007) and Huffman (2007, 2009), they tend to validate the model of prestige good value and stress the point that regional capitals which were used as distribution and redistribution centres that accumulated wealth which were converted into political power. These were believed to be sites that were used for long distance trading and were along or closer to the trade routes (they were sites that linked the trading post and the main state where the king resided) also they were capitals where most of the economic activities took place for instance Bambará in Mutapa. They further alluded that if the case was like that the redistribution model can be used to understand the archaeology of these sites. Moffett and Chirikure (2016) shares the same opinion and postulates that if the redistribution model is appropriate then hinterland site should according to prestige model show little or no access to prestige goods, particularly if these sites exhibit no evidence of being regional or localised elite centres. Moffett and Chirikure (2016), Wood (2002) Calabrese (2000, 2007) and Huffman (2007, 2009) are trying to point out the fact that for prestige good model to be used to understand material culture from burials, the material that are classified as prestige should only be accessed by the elite not the commoners then the model will be useful or applicable. Looking at the sites in Buhera which includes Matendera, Muchuchu, Kugambudzi and Gombe are at the hinterland because they are close to the boarder of South Africa.

Despite the fact that Pikirayi (2013) noted that stone walling expressed prestige, archaeologist carried out archaeological study on grave goods focusing on glass beads they also looked at the golden objects, the sceptre, the rhino, the separate spaces used for burials at Mapungubwe. For the interpretation of beads found at the site they used the prestige good value to understand the use of the beads among the elite and the commoners. Glass beads, conus shells, ivory working, metallurgy and process of cloth production appear in quantities at commoner's sites while no glass beads/ store houses were elites resided and stored their wealth have been found and highest number of glass beads were from burials. Burials of non – elite have been found with a considerable high number of glass beads. A large proportion of beads from Mapungubwe hill are black oblates from eight of the 12 burials on the summit. Skeleton with original gold burial possessed a large quantity of glass beads as if it was buried

wearing bead garment/ girdles. Moffett and Chirikure (2016) argued that this situation is not limited to what current day archaeologist believe to be elite sites for instance Skutwater, a commoner homestead near K2 and Mapungubwe glass beads from the burials were worn in the neck and pelvic areas of the skeletons, suggesting that they were used to make items of clothing/ decoration. Van warden and Mosothwane (2015) also uncovered a commoner burial in a small homestead with 948 glass beads and 9 pots in north central Botswana. The excavations done at these sites show that glass beads were also found in both burials of the elite and the commoners and also in the residence of the elite and commoners glass beads were also found in both cases. This model becomes a valuable theory or model to the study of the Gombe elite burials in that the researcher is not going to look at common burials so through the prestige value model the research will be able to qualify the material culture from the burials of the elite as goods that represent status especially looking at beads.

Looking at the framework of prestige good suggest that noticeable consumption of beads by elites may have controlled quantities in this way although there were also found in commoners residence and burials. Due to the fact that glass beads were also found in burials of commoners and frequent in juvenile burials, one can conclude that the recurrent pattern in burial patterns and associations of beads with elite and commoner in this period suggest an underlying cultural sequence within which bead disposition in burials may have functioned. The tenets of the prestige goods hardly consider what material culture from the burials might have been used for, which results in ascription of value to the individual beads and not their possible function. This shows that when studying cultural material from grave goods there is need to understand the function and value of the goods from their original context before being disposed to the graves from which they were used. Some of the issues this study is going to consider is the function of the grave goods in order to understand their value. Also considering the fact that this research is not going to include commoner's burials the cultural function or value of the grave goods becomes important to the research.

In addition another factor that can be added to the prestige concept is symbolic meaning and to better understand the symbolic meaning of grave goods, Hally (2008) there should be an understanding of how these grave goods functioned among the living. Symbolic meaning determines the function of the good and Nelson (2014) proposes that the best way to understand how grave goods functioned among the living is by distinguishing between status and wealthy objects. The prestige good value uses the terms status and wealth simultaneously yet from the studies that have been carried wealth and status objects are differentiated

because their value and use among the society. In which status items are artefacts that are restricted to individual as a result of their specific social status, role and position in the society. These artefacts are acquired through social position or persona independent of their economic wealth and Nelson (2014) identifies these social statuses as political leadership, defined by kinship/ priest/ similar religious practitioner which may be represented by highly decorated items or conus. Different scholars who include (Peebles 1971, Welch 1991, Blitz 1993, Marcoux 2010) suggests that status items were rare, highly crafted, non – utilitarian artefacts of copper, stone and shell that functioned as ornaments, symbol badges and other specialized accoutrements often decorated with complex iconography. Nelson (2014) views wealth objects as artefacts that are valued because ownership confers prestige value of the object and these items have high value and are for utilitarian use, wealth items are not restricted to a particular social status but potentially accessible to all members of society, he further argues that identification of status versus wealth objects in archaeological contexts is not an easy task. There is an assumption that wealth items are likely to be much more widely distributed in a society than are status items.

For the sake of this research the following issues have been identified in order to improve the study of grave goods from Gombe elite burials. Looking at the analysis of the grave goods or material culture using the prestige goods value it ignores geographical location and types of burials, also the nature of the site because different cultures have different views on what is prestigious which means it is culturally determined. The model totally disqualifies local materials as prestigious objects but due to the fact that value is ascertained by the societies there is need to reconsider the prestige value analysis and provide a more improved version. Also the model fails to differentiate the difference between wealthy objects and status objects it treats the two as the same yet they are different aspects looking at an archaeological perspective. For the purpose of this study the prestige value is going to be considered and some of the aspects are going to be used but there is need to consider the above issues that are ignored by the model. Also the differentiation of status objects which articulates issues of political power, organisation and hierarchy and wealthy objects which articulates issues of social stratification and segregation is important in this study since status objects are different from wealthy which means their use are also different. Also looking at the prestige value concept might be limited to certain objects from the archaeological record because they are certain objects that need to be understood to be understood from an ethnographic analysis yet Barretto (2003) stated that “I am proposing an independent system from ethnographic

analogy by which burial goods can be evaluated from an archaeological perspective.” In the African context it might be limited to certain objects because most African material culture carry with them intangible value that can be understood from ethno analogy. Looking at scholars like Moffet and Chirikure (2016) are of the perspective that if the prestige good value model is applied to Africa it will not yield much information.

2.4 Ethnographic Approach

Ethnographic information has been used outside Africa and in Africa in the study of grave goods and has proven to be an invaluable approach in terms of explaining and deducing symbolic and cultural meaning of objects at has been used also to re -interpret some burials that have been poorly understood or interpreted and not fully explored. Looking at Saxon burials they have been interpreted from an archaeological approach and were re- interpreted from ethnographic analogy. Lucy (2000) notes that Saxon burials have objects that themselves appear to reflect a deeper social shift they no longer vary regionally in terms of style or artefact type but seem to indicate a national elite material culture. Angles and Saxon societies are not understood here as bounded, self-conscious, internally coherent groups and neither by all accounts were Native Roman British meaning that this period was necessarily a time of accommodation between groups which had different language, distance, origin and time this did not affect their material culture although they were a multi ethnic group interacting in the same environment. This was also the same basis that was used by Huffman and Murimbika (2003) in the study of Kgaswe burials were by the relationship of these different cultural groups in should share the same cultural values and customs.

From the above community of the Saxon, King (2004) revisited these burials using the ethnographic approach to understand the grave goods from their burials. King (2004) revisited the Saxon burials basing on the argument that Anglo Saxon burial goods have been treated as belonging to the person in the grave during his or her life and that we can therefore use them as a life mirror to draw references about the deceased. He further argued that these assumptions have given rise to two main interpretations that have been used by most archaeologist across the globe, the first one is from an economic analysis which equates goods with wealth it is then equated to high social status, then archaeologist conclude that these are rich burial of a rich person meaning a person of rank and power and hence the conclusion ranked society. The second approach that archaeologist use is viewing grave goods as symbolic representations manipulated by the family members to make a social

statement about a pre-existing social position and role or value. King (2004) dismisses this treatment of grave goods as biased because he concludes that symbolic and economic treatment differ markedly in their treatment of grave goods, they both rest on the assumption that goods in the grave belonged to or were presented as having belonged to the person interred. The argument by King becomes valuable when dealing with grave goods because social relations within a society may differ and certain actions may have different purposes so through ethnographic information one can fully explore the social world of certain prehistoric societies if they share the same cultural values and custom. The argument by King is that archaeologists interpret the burials according to their perceptions as being portrayed by the archaeological context yet they might convey a different social message so there is need to understand them from an ethnographic analogy.

King (2004) had a different opinion on the grave goods his basis was on the fact that grave goods were used as gifts and used the ethnographic study to produce the Anglo Saxon social world. The grave goods of Anglo Saxon in this study were seen as gifts and King (2004) proposes that gifts do not facilitate accumulation of wealth by the recipient given but in turn it is fairly consistent, they are used to reproduce and maintain relations. These grave goods were seen as mending relations between one another rather than as accumulating wealth or power. King (2004) acknowledges (Lepowsky, 1989; Battaglia, 1992) who argues that in ethnographic the giving of gifts like the practise of feasting is quite common in funerals, objects being placed into the grave or an pre inhumation displays piles there instances were all of the gifts may be quietly reclaimed or passed on to the third parties. These objects are placed in graves to be spontaneous gestures. King (2004) acknowledges (MacIntyre, 1989; Weiner, 1988, 1992) who postulated that in Tubelube Island, Papua New Guinea certain artefacts are produced for this purpose and the gift is not just directed to the person of the departed but to the dead, King (2004) then concluded that all of this is a way of saying that it wouldn't be outlandish or ethnographically unique were the early populations of Anglo-Saxons to have engaged in similar practises.

Ethnographic data would be helpful to understand some of the artefacts identified by King (2004) who argued that some items worn on the person which would have formed the functional kit of an individual such as knives or brooches it is incontrovertible someone had to dress the corpse and could have added (subtracted) items of dress to fit the emotional or social needs of the movement. He further argued that someone had carry out the burial ritual of placing the objects in the grave and could easily give one a deposit good or material

culture owned by the departed whether in a bag, on the body on a string of bead. From the conceivable to assume that most materials may be a combination of possessions and pestations. This class of material found in association with burials King (2004) agrees that they can be understood from the concept that objects are 'life mirror' and can be studied through ethnographic and archaeological approaches. Looking at the burials of Gombe these approaches can be used to understand the burials in order to have an understanding of the social life of the society in terms of its social relations and through an ethnographic it is plausible considering the fact that the Contemporary Nyshanu share the same cultural values and custom with the society that used Gombe.

The objects that King (2004) considered as gifts were beads he argued that beads as gifts came from Edix Hill and Bergh Aplon the body in grave 93 had a single bead place on its mouth, in 82 at Bergh Aplon there was a pot and eight beads resting on a ledge above the grave the placement cannot reasonably be attributed to disturbance. Dickson (1993) caution that isolated beads might be all that remains of something onto which they were sewn. King (2004) articulates that in some instances placement of materials such as the Bergh Aplon would still invite the possibility of having been pestational. Unusual placement positioning of standard grave goods items indicates scope of activity. the unusual placement of grave goods seems to be controversial if conclusions are drawn from archaeological study only so through etnoarchaeological study as noted from the case study used by King (2004) might have a different meaning from just being life possessions of the dead hence the need to use ethnoarchaeology in the study of grave goods. Also this might be useful to explain why beads were found in commoners' houses or graves at the same time in elite graves and households which also a common practise or noticeable pattern in most burials that have been studied in the African context.

2.4.1 Ethnoachaeology in Southern Africa

In Southern Africa ethnoarchaeology was also used to understand some of the societies that were discovered and it has proven to be useful in understanding the burials and the associated grave goods. Ethno archaeology has been used at K2 in South Africa by Hatting and Hall (2009). Excavations of K2 have produced the largest collections of agro pastoralist burials in Southern Africa. These comprised mostly human burials but several so- called beast burials were also found. Hatting and Hall (2009) notes that Gardner calls these burials pot a burial which draws attention to the associated ceramics as grave goods. There is a danger that any

social and symbolic interpretation of Iron Age pottery will simply become an ethnographic description ignoring other possible archaeological description. Hatting and Hall (2009) argues that a social approach to Iron Age pottery has increasingly called for by some scholars like (Pikirayi 1999, 2009). It appears to be an alternative to ceramic typology and the construction of culture historical sequences. Hatting and Hall (2009) argued that the use of ethnography by Huffman and Murimbika (2003) wanted to justify our use of ethnography by pointing out that meaning is not self-evident in data which were the sentiments by King (2004) had and had to revisit the burials of Anglo Saxon which means how archaeologist perceive and interpret burials have to be cautious about the burials that they are studying. This also implies that burials in archaeology are a complex analogy in archaeology that needs careful considerations when interpreting burials and grave goods.

Henneberg and Steyn (1995), Steyn (1994, 1995, 1998) and Steyn (2000) notes that K2 burials have received considerable attention from physical anthropologist on other aspect such as demography, health, diet and growth, the analysis and interpretation of the grave goods has been only fleetingly addressed, despite the ritualistic and symbolic density evident in them. Steyn (1995) speculates on the meaning of cranial remains interred in a pot at K2 by ranging through a number of possibilities these include human sacrifice, protection of the remains, rain making and the possibility that the pot burial was located outside settlement for fear of having it too close. Hatting and Hall (2009) in this case interpretation is hampered because more information is needed and argues that appropriate analogies and more importantly structures of meaning are to be found in a rich ethnography in understanding the social and bodily transformation of people where pottery is symbolically activated with rituals. Hence ethnography is vital in understanding some of the burials that are found in the archaeological context especially those that seem unusual or which might carry in them symbolic meaning which helps to have a broader understanding of a particular society.

The inversion of pottery can communicate ideas about the status of relationships, the deliberate breakage of vessels that represent bodies are way in which ideas about transformation, death, birth could be expressed in the context of burials. Hatting and Hall (2009) note that examination of burials through ethnography provides an insight into the significance of placing objects at the head and some possible meaning could be deducted from studying head and Pelvic pattern in the K2 burials. Generally the head is seen as the core of life in which all senses reside and which defines the person's status or role and this idea is widely accepted or used in Africa. This shows that ethnography becomes valuable to

the study of the Gombe burials in which the research is going to consider both archaeology and ethnoarchaeology study this gives an insight on how ethnography can be used to understand burials.

Huffman and Murimbika (2003) also used the ethnographic approach in the study of Kagaswe burials. The use of ethnographic approach that has guided the successful interpretation of burials from the early first millennium was used at Kagaswe site in East Botswana, Huffman and Murimbika (2003) also allude that the analysis of and interpretation of the grave goods has been only fleetingly addressed despite the ritual and symbols distinctly evident in them. The ethnographic approach is useful to this study because they are certain aspects that are still practised by the related societies to the burials and some of the material evidence can be understood from an ethnographic approach.

Huffman (2001), burial location and orientation of burials at K2 a central cattle pattern model was used to study the Kagaswe burials. It predicates that burials found in outer domestic ring will comprise of individuals of low rank that is mostly women, children and juveniles. The outer zone comprises of the domestic domain of huts, food, processing and judicial court which are under control of homestead head. The central zone of formal male power and consequently elite people mostly men will be buried there. In Most Southern Africa societies the cattle are built at the centre as they are valuable source of communities' survival in which the elite were also vital in the communities' survival and lived at the centre this was the concept used to interpret the burials that follow the same pattern. Huffman and Murimbika (2003), note that despite the fact that Shona have not applied fully spatial organisation of the central cattle pattern, Shona cosmology is still relevant for understanding burial patterns at Kgaswe Toutswe in east Botswana and this means that the burial system that is practised by the Nyashanu dynasty are relevant for understanding burial From Gombe in Buhera Zimbabwe.

This has been useful since there were able to articulate a number of issues using the model of central cattle pattern through ethnographic study of the burials that were found at the Kagaswe site which were within the settlements. Through the use of ethnography there were able to explore issue pertaining to burial rites and rituals and also the use space in terms of placement of burials within the society. The process that is followed when burying the dead was understood from the ethnographic perspective. Looking at their journal of African archaeology vol. 1 of 2003 they explained in detailed the process of burying the dead in the

Shona culture which include the cycle of life, the association of death with the west and relationship between wombs and graves. These burials were understood in relation to the seating in the house. Hence understanding of the social and religious beliefs that shaped and guided the Kgaswe and the Shona communities or sites was made possible.

The use of the cattle central pattern was useful since there were able to understand the eight burials in the cattle kraal at Kgaswe, five were adult men while one was male juvenile one was a juvenile that could not be sexed and one was an infant. Murimbika and Huffman used the setup of the kitchen to denote or understand the burial pattern that was found within these settlements because they show some resemblance. Through the ethno archaeological study of the Shona tradition in terms of sitting in the kitchen it is believed that left and right denotes status, in the main house women sit on the floor on the junior left hand side, while men sit on bench on the senior right hand side and this is expressed in the burials. They used this setup to understand the burials of men who are buried on their right hand side with their right hand under their head in which they concluded that these were of high status because of their location in the burial space. Murimbika and Huffman (1999) they concluded that the second juvenile in the cattle kraal was also male because of the burial location or the side in which the burial was found in the burial space. Through the use of the setup in Shona kitchen how people seat is also expressed in burials to denote status hence settlement patterning and organisation can actually be used to understand burials.

Huffman and Murimbika (2003) notes that the standard pattern is not limited to Kgaswe but it helps to explain several burials from other Iron Age sites in southern Africa. They further note that Happy Rest in the Soutpanserg for example yielded two burials in the central cattle kraal male and one female and the central cattle pattern can be used to understand this kind of burial patterning. This means that burials were found in close proximity or at the centre of the settlements because in most Shona societies cattle kraals were found at the centre of the site and cattle was valuable during the late Iron Age. The male was wearing an ivory armband and lion's tooth hung around the neck, both marking him as unique from other burials. The two burials were placed in what they concluded as prestige burial and the similar prestige burial with important grave goods occurred in Early Iron Age kraal at Broederstroom near Pretoria. This proves that ethnography is useful in studying burials in the Iron Age societies and a number of issues can be understood in the archaeological record pertaining to the settlement organisation as well as social beliefs

The burials at Kgaswe are different from the burials that are found at Gombe in this area chiefs are buried in caves away from the settlements. There is need to understand the relationship between these burials and settlement patterns and from the above analysis ethno archaeological study becomes relevant to this research because looking at the study of Kgaswe it proved to be the most suitable method.

In the end of their research paper they have noted a number of issues their model can comprehend the archaeological data. Huffman and Murimbika (2003) elude that burial patterns derived from archaeological data alone can never be successful because among other factors, burial patterns are not universal: they are culturally specific. They further note that age, gender, status, duties and cause of death influence the outcome and this cultural phenomenon cannot be induced from archaeological data, hence ethnographic study of the Shona societies which includes bantu- speaking people provides more information to understand burials. Their model is dependent on the relationship of these different cultural groups in which there should share the same cultural values and customs. Also it is limited to societies that arrange their settlements according to the central cattle pattern. In which the burials they studied were arranged in the same manner. Also another issue that can be noted the model views women as just occupying the lower status and ignoring the fact that these might allude to the important role women played in the continuous survival of the communities or community.

2.5 Summary

Different archaeological and etnoarchaeological across studies the globe and Zimbabwe used different methods and theories that have developed over time and have brought to light the complexities in studying and interpreting grave goods and burials that are found different context and regions. There are many possibilities of interpretations that can be drawn from the burials that are being studied hence one has to be cautious of the archaeological or etnoarchaeological inquiry that one needs from the burials. A number of issues have been discussed concerning inferring status from grave goods and the burials and due to these reasons the research is going to consider a number of issues as discovered above to achieve the outlined objectives and aim.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research methodology mainly consists of the research design, the research sample, targeted population, and data collection methods as well as data analysis. Research methodology is the systematic, theoretical analysis of the procedures applied to a field of study (Kothari, 2004). Therefore, a framework for data collection, presentation and analysis for the archaeological survey we will be laid out in this chapter.

3.2 Research design

According to Kumar (2008) a research design is a written plan for a study which communicates the purpose of the study together with a step by step plan for conducting the research. In this study of the elite burials, archaeological approach was used and ethnoarchaeological study was used on some of the aspects not covered by archaeological study was used and both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Basically qualitative method is concerned with developing explanations for a social phenomenon through discovering the underlying motives and desires which motivate people to adopt a way of life in the manner they do as well as exploring their feelings about that phenomenon. Hence the method was adopted by the research in order to understand the manner in which the people from Gombe buried their chiefs and understand their social life. (Key 1997; Hancock 1998; Kumar 2008 as well as Marshall and Rossmann 2010) notes that quantitative research method is basically concerned with numbers, statistics and facts. The quantitative method was chosen to quantify the number of objects that are more in numbers over other objects in order to have an understanding of the difference in quantities. Thus both quantitative and qualitative methods enhanced the archaeological enquiry since they both sought to understand a wider context in which grave goods from burial of chiefs from Gombe were analysed. This will help in reconstructing the social organisation of the site.

3.3 Research sample

To ensure a comprehensive characterisation of the elite burials the researcher looked at the material culture from the elite burials. Due to the nature of information needed by the

researcher purposive sampling was used by the researcher. (Brewer 2003) Purposive sampling entails selection of individuals or objects as samples according to the purpose of the research and its controls. The researcher wants to look at the characteristics of the objects found and also have an insight of the history of the site. Therefore, for the purpose of this research, the research sample of the research were only drawn from the communities which have a connection to or descendants of the dynasty that used Gombe which is the Nyashanu dynasty because they share the same tradition and custom, also from Mutare Museum. These served as both the archaeological and ethnographic samples for the analysis.

3.4 Target population

The target population for the ethnoarchaeological study will be largely drawn from the Nyashanu house hold of Buhera and Mutare Museum. The population mainly consisted of traditional leaders; people associated with the burial of chiefs and the elderly since in the Shona culture it is common knowledge that old age is associated with knowledge and wisdom Marufu (2008) and from the archaeologist based at Mutare Museum. These were chosen following their capability in the subject matter hence local informants were relied onto when it came to identifying these individuals. The population that was interviewed by the researcher were 5 which included the chief, archaeologist from Mutare museums and 3 elderly members of the Nyashanu dynasty. With the help of the one of the elder from the chief the researcher randomly chose the other respondents.

3.5 Data collection methods

3.5.1 Interviews

Interviews were carried out so as to have a better understanding of the archaeological sites under study of Gombe from people's knowledge, the people who were targeted was the chief and the local leaders, they were 3 and they had knowledge about the burials of chiefs and the goods that resembled chieftainship. The main objective of using this method is collect information about the social phenomenon of Gombe late Iron Age societies through questioning participants. Through the interviews the researcher seeks to gain knowledge of the history of the site and understand why chiefs are buried in caves and understand cultural function and meaning of the associated grave goods. Usually their knowledge is based on oral tradition which they inherited from forbearers and the information is going to be complement

information from field data collection. The interviews were extended to the department of archaeology from Mutare Museum who carries out archaeological surveys. Predefined questions will be used so as to guide the researcher to maintain a holistic approach. These interviews will be tape recorded, note taking so that the researcher will have a full documentary of the information needed. Interviewers will be chosen according their knowledge capability concerning the subject matter.

3.5.2 Observation

The researcher wanted to observe the archeological context of the burials and went to the physical location of the site where the graves of the chiefs are found, after permission was granted from the traditional leaders. This process involved taking down notes and wanted to take photographs but the taking of taking pictures at the site was restricted so the researcher had to use ethnographic pictures to represent the archaeological materials and sketch diagrams. It was of great importance to the researcher because the researcher collected first-hand information which is authentic information. The researcher documented the grave goods that were used, their position in the grave, the position which the chiefs are laid in, the direction that they are facing, are they buried in one cave or they use separate caves as it is in the archaeological context. Willems (2000) state that what needs to be done first is a complete inventory of the total burial program of a particular society as it is preserved in the archeological record. Willems (2000) further eludes that this means that all possibly significant variables such as age, sex, treatment, position and orientation of the grave and the person buried should be recorded hence the need of a check list. This data collection methodology will avoid bias since the researcher will get to see and document what is being visualized physically without asking question and analyze facts.

3.6 Data analysis

3.6.1 Methodologies to Understanding social status through material culture

In order to achieve the main aim and the objectives of this study the following methods to analyse the grave goods are going to be considered. Exploring the rarity of artefacts from the range of artefacts discovered for the burials from the ethnoarchaeological study. Also by looking at the distribution and rarity of artefacts placed in graves helps to understand issues of status in a given context. Looking at the studies that have been done, Nelson (2014) notes

that materials that are found in abundance goes against the definition of status items which are supposed to be exclusive and not widely distributed yet the latter means the objects are wealthy objects. This means that certain objects that are limited to a group of people they symbolise the status of the individual or group. So in the study of elite burials from Gombe when analysing the grave goods the rarity of the objects is going to be considered.

To add on in order to understand social organisation and status it has long been understood that many artefacts can be considered indicative of social status among hierarchically ranked groups Blitz (1993), Welch (1991), Wilson et al (2010), Marconx (2010) suggest that status items were rare highly crafted, non- utilitarian artefacts includes copper, stone and shell and functioned as ornaments, badges and other specialised ornamentation often decorated with complex iconography. So there is a need to adopt the concept of utilitarian and non-utilitarian value of the objects to understand issues of status and also the researcher is going to group the objects into utilitarian and non- utilitarian objects. More over other items of local origin can be considered to represent status. Welch (1991) postulates that some finely made ceramic serving ware can be considered as status items because they require more production steps than coarser utilitarian ceramic wares and are of more value. Also looking at Barretto (2003) locally made materials can be analysed by looking at colour, lustre, texture and other physical properties that differentiate them from other locally made objects. Hence the researcher is going to adopt the concept to analyse locally made materials in the study of the grave goods found in association with the elite to understand issues of status within Gombe archaeological sites. Another aspect is object biographies which help to reconstruct the history of the object. Which means issues of use and function of the object through time before it was discarded for its secondary use in the grave as grave goods would be established or understood it also helps to characterise the objects. Nelson (2014) objects do not exist at only one point in time but develop a history and have meanings through social interactions. This means by characterising the objects one would understand the social meanings and the use of the objects that were used as grave goods.

From the mortuary analyses that have been done they are certain material culture that is found in association with burials of the elite. These material culture have been in some instances been analysed in different ways and for the purpose of this study some of the material culture that are commonly found are going to be discussed below and how they are going to be analysed. This is based on the assumption that some of these materials are going to be found or encountered by the researcher. Looking at the excavations done at

Mapungubwe Steyn (2006) notes that gold materials were discovered which included gold rhino, arm and ankle bands of gold wire and there were also metal objects which included arm and leg bands of iron, black bowel and several pots found near the body. Pikirayi (2001) notes that elite burials at the summit of the hill were richly adorned, they included highly polished pottery, gold beads and wire bangles, iron and coper objects and trade beads. Some of the metal materials that have been found are knives and small axes

3.6.2 Ceramic study through typology

From previous archaeological study of grave goods most of the cultural material that was found in association with elite burials was pottery vessels either complete or broken. So for the purpose of the study to achieve the main aim and objectives the researcher is going to analyse pottery by looking at the typology of the pottery. Ceramic typologies are created for a purpose and mostly typology was formed or identified for a useful purpose. Typology was used to answer chronological questions were by certain ware types were associated with certain known periods. Ceramic typology was extended to understand how and why the production of the ceramic, use and discernment of ceramics and grouped to a particular ware type. This helps in understanding the cultural context from which the pottery came from hence identifying its value. Grillo and Ashely (2015) notes that pottery ware types acts as stepping- stone towards wider discussion of socio- economic structures. So the researcher is going to use ceramic typology to analyse the pottery recovered from the graves since discernment maybe for secondary use and also their use was determined by the type of pottery hence this serve as valuable to the research. Also the researcher is going to consider the raw materials, time spent to acquire and manufacture the object and also the iconographic meaning to the type of pottery that would have been identified.

3.6.3 Beads analysis

Another material culture that was mainly found in association with elite burial are beads so for the purpose of this study the researcher is going to use the prestige value goods concept although the concept is not limited to beads only. Due to the fact that beads are also found in association with common burials in order to understand or have a broader understanding of the beads found in association with elite burials there is need to use the concept. Material culture found in association with elite burials portrays prestige by the nature of the materials. Not limited to beads they are also other cultural material that was found in commoner burials

Pikirayi (2013) glass beads, conus shells, ivory working and metallurgy appear in quantities at commoner's sites and highest numbers of glass beads were recovered from common burials. So through the prestige goods value concept one can determine the prestige value of the objects found in association with the elite mainly using the prestige good value. So the researcher is going to look at the cultural function of the materials which helps to determine whether they are prestige goods or they are just ritual materials and other factors within the prestige model. The concept is going to be used to the grave goods found in association with the elite burials from Gombe.

3.6.4 Metal objects

Looking at the archaeology of Mapungubwe the interpretation of the materials discovered they used body arrangement and position of the materials to analyse them. This was successful in the interpretation of the burials. Steyn (2006) a gold bowl was clearly inverted and placed on the skull and it is conceivable that what has been perceived as a gold bowl might be indeed have been a head ornament. Also there some gold beads and two cowries were found around the pelvis and vertebrae and through the positioning of these and the quantity of the objects that were found was used to interpret the burials or understand the use of the goods as grave goods. Barretto (2003) states that the use of number of same objects in burials as more prestigious might be misleading because a singular object made of gold found in a burial may be more valuable than 10 porcelain objects. So for the purpose of this study the researcher is going to look at the form and type of the material and also the raw material that was used to create the object. Also to look at how highly crafted were the objects, Kusimba et al (2008) the quality of finished bone, ivory, pottery and iron tools leaves little doubt that this was the work of well- financed and highly skilled crafts.

3.6.5 Ceremonial objects

The political and economic importance of iron production led to the king to assert his ultimate dominion over the smith and manipulate the production to ascertain his power both tangible and intangible. This subordination was symbolised by the use of smith's hammer and other iron weapons, bracelets or bells as royal regalia and by the important role that the smith often played in royal funeral or burials. These are some of the ceremonial objects that legitimize the power of a chief or king. They differ from society to society. Schmidt has reported a several excavated royal burials form central and east Africa that contained smithy

tools which includes hammer, anvils etc. The only ruler in West Africa associated with smith's hammer was the Oba of Benin Nigeria, such rituals legitimized royal authority over indigenous metal workers while acknowledging their ancient claims to political and religious authority.

Childs and Dewey (1996) stipulated that iron axes of unusual shape and decoration that were noticeably similar to Luba ceremonial axes that were recovered from the archaeological record dated back to the 18th and 19th century. The Luba ceremonial axes almost always occur in high status burials and lab analysis by Childs (1991) indicate that they were very well made or shaped. In general evidence suggests that such axes may have been suggesting that such axes may have been linked to political power and prestige of the deceased. Today among the Luba utilitarian axes are common but specially shaped ceremonial axes can be used only in certain political and religious contexts by certain groups. Luba king, titled elder and local chiefs are the ones who can carry them at all times as symbols of royal ancestry power and social status. Shona ceremonial axes from the Zimbabwean kingdom have also been recovered dating back to 15th and 14th century at which by that time the elite legitimised their power through extensive rituals and use of numerous symbols (including specially shaped axes and spears directed to the ancestral spirits. Childs and Dewey (1990) among the Shona today axes are still kept and displayed as symbols of chiefly authority, their religious function appears to be the most important. These issues are going to be used by the researcher to understand the ceremonial and post processual is going to be adopted to analyse the ceremonial artefacts found to understand their cultural function and symbol or meaning.

Ethical considerations

According to David and Kramer (2001) archaeologist and ethnoarchaeologist must consider ethics when conducting their research. Like any other research it is vital to respect indigenous practices and knowledge systems through considering the effects of one's research on the people under study. There was also the need to respecting the burial rites that are protecting the sacredness of the site. (Stark 2003) abiding to such ethics is a vital considering the wealthy of knowledge and experience that these communities have and also their willingness to share with researchers Therefore the following ethical considerations were taken into consideration during the research.

- Seeking authority to carry out the research from responsible authorities.
- Seeking informed consent from all participants before and during the research.

- Maintaining confidentiality of the information from participants where necessary.
- Protecting the research participants from negative reactions by other members of the society if necessary.
- Adhering to myths and taboos that govern sacred heritage places such as Gombe Mountain.

3.7 Summary

In overall this chapter provided the blueprint plan that is going to be used by the researcher to gather data during the archaeological survey. This included the research design, the research ample, targeted population, and the data collection

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the data collected from the field. It also includes presentation of the data as it is in the archaeological field to provide a full appreciation of the raw data in achieving the main objective of the research and the methodologies used to understand the material evidence it also presents how the archaeological and ethno archaeological methods are used to understand the material in relation to issues of status From Gombe burials. The research was mainly guided by these objectives to: describe the location of burials of Gombe hill, identify the goods associated with burials at Gombe hill, explain the meaning and significance of the burial goods in association with death, explain the relationship between burial goods and the elite within the context of the Later Iron Age in Zimbabwe

There were different grave goods that were documented by the researcher and due to the restriction because of the sacredness of the site the researcher was able to take pictures from the archaeological context. Field data collection was used and some of the information was gathered through interviews of local leaders and the Nation museum and monuments of Mutare. The main objective of this research was to identify and characterise the objects that were found by the researcher and then make a detailed analysis of the information.

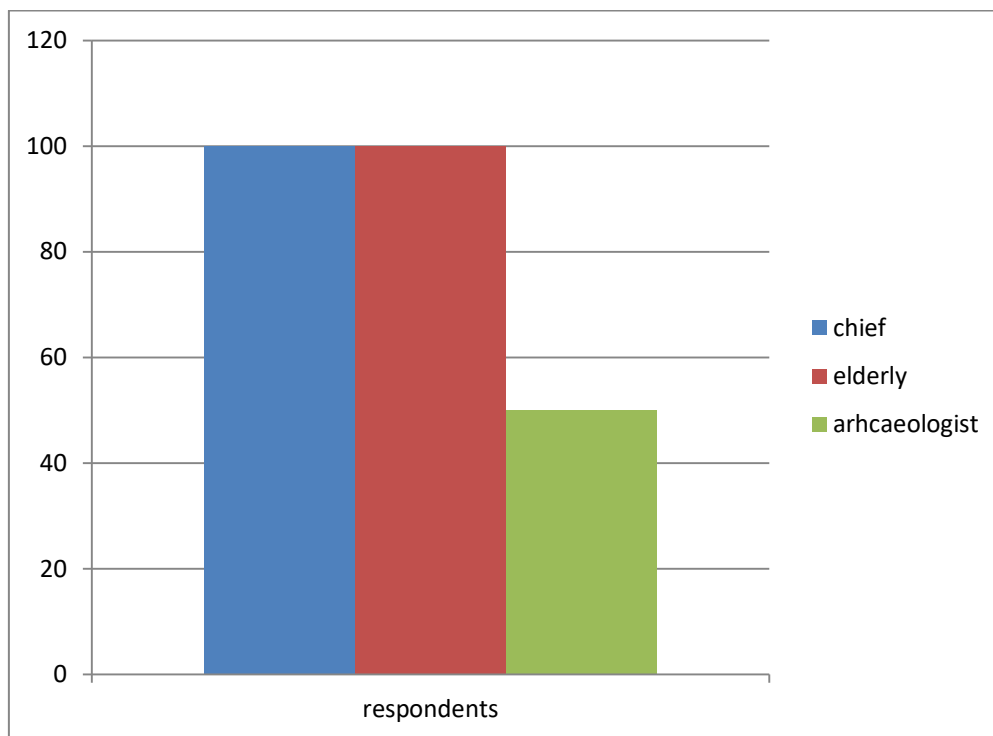
4. 2 Response rate from interviews

Targeted population	Targeted number	Actual response	Percentage (%)
Chief	1	1	100
Elderly	3	3	100
Archaeologist	1	1	50

The researcher was able to interview the needed people who included chief, elderly and the archaeologist from Museum of Mutare. The researcher was able to interview the needed person which is the archaeologist at Mutare museum the researcher had no challenges in

interviewing the respondent. The information that was acquired for the museum was limited to some extent because the museum doesn't have full custody of the site and the researcher had to rely on chiefs, elderly and field data collection and below is bar chart showing the responses rate.

Bar chart showing the response



Data presentation

4.3 Location of burials

Gombe Mountain below is showing where the burials are located. The mountain is densely vegetated with trees and below the mountain they are settlements and there mainly covered with are grass lands. The mountain is located in Buhera West along Murambinda Chivhu road under chief Makumbe.

Figure 4.1 Gombe Mountain

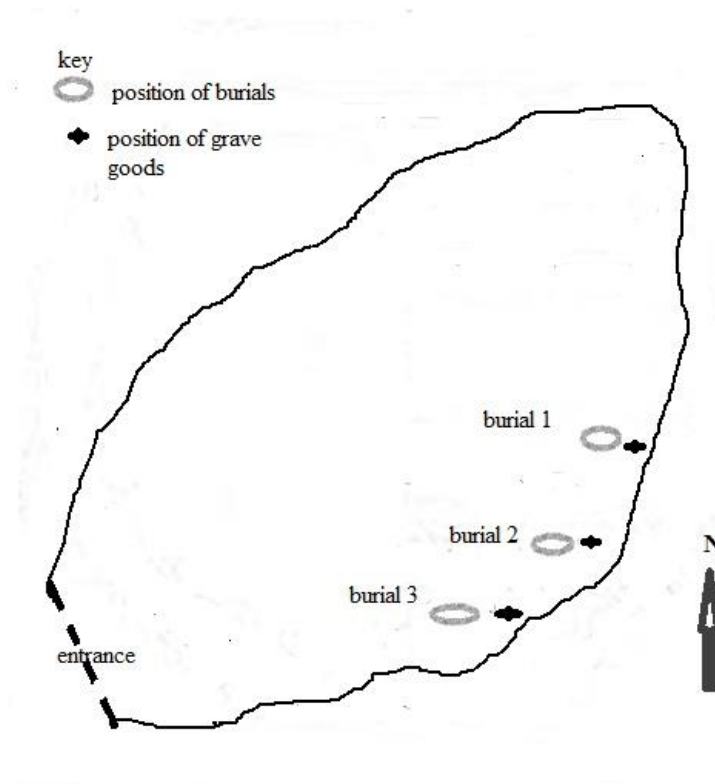


Source: field work

Figure 4.2 showing location and nature of burials

Site	Type	Location	Position of artefacts	Posture
Gombe ruins	Cave burials	Hill/ mountain	At the head	Prone position

Fig 4.3 the sketch below is showing the use of burial space



Looking at fig 4.2 and the sketch map fig 4.3 is mainly focusing on the burials location, how they were buried and the placement of burial goods. From the information these burials are mainly found in caves on a mountain these are the nature of the burials and they were no more than 3 burials from the cave. Looking at the clay pots that were there also 3 and these might represent the number of burials from the cave. Also another thing that the researcher noted was that they are buried in a supine posture whilst the face is facing up in linear pattern. There was a pillow commonly known as mustago in Shona and even in the contemporary burials of the Nyashanu they are buried in the same posture. The burial goods were placed at the head of the burial and they were nicely arranged and the burial goods included ceremonial objects, beads both copper and glass beads and pottery and these were no ordinary objects because they were highly- crafted which represents the status of these burials and the role of these individuals in the society.

4.4 Burial description and associated grave goods

Figure 4.4 showing the burials and the grave goods found in association with the 3 burials

Burials 1	Material evidence	Description
<p>supine position</p> <p>Goods were arranged or placed at the head</p> <p>The head resting on mustago (pillow)</p>	<p>a) 1 clay pot</p> <p>b) Beads both glass and copper</p> <p>c) Ceremonial axe</p> <p>d) Ceremonial spear</p> <p>e) Mutsago (pillow)</p> <p>f) Cattle hide (ndoro)</p>	<p>a) According to Soper's (2002) classification method, Large wide mouthed pots with vertical or in – sloping rims in Class 7, Surface treatment highly polished with graphite burnishing ware B. Decorations had no decorations</p> <p>b) Red, black and brown were used as ornaments. Necklace, ankle bracelets and waist bracelets which were relatively big and were on a string.</p> <p>c) It was small and was nicely designed</p> <p>d) Small spear with a small arrow head and handle made of copper</p> <p>e) Was relatively large and decorated, polished and black in colour and made of wood. It the bottom was firmly covered in the ground</p> <p>f) It was big enough to cover the body, the colour wasn't clear.</p>
<p>Burial 2</p>	<p>Material evidence</p>	<p>Description</p>

<p>supine position</p> <p>Goods were arranged or placed were the head was</p> <p>The head resting on mustago (pillow)</p>	<p>a) 1 clay pot</p> <p>b) Beads both glass and copper</p> <p>c) Ceremonial axe</p> <p>d) Ceremonial spear</p> <p>e) Mutsago (pillow)</p> <p>f) Cattle hide (ndoro)</p>	<p>a) According to Soper's (2002) classification method, Large wide mouthed pots with vertical or in – sloping rims in Class 7, Surface treatment highly polished with graphite burnishing ware B. Decorations had no decorations</p> <p>b) Red, black and brown were used as ornaments. Necklace, ankle bracelets and waist bracelets which were relatively big and were on a string.</p> <p>c) It was small and was nicely designed</p> <p>d) Small spear with a small arrow head and handle made of copper</p> <p>e) Was relatively large and decorated, polished and black in colour and made of wood. It the bottom was firmly covered in the ground</p> <p>f) It was big enough to cover the body, the colour wasn't clear.</p>
<p>Burial 3</p>	<p>Material evidence</p>	<p>Description</p>
<p>Identified as chief Dukute</p> <p>supine position</p> <p>Goods were arranged or placed were the head was</p> <p>The head resting on mustago (pillow)</p>	<p>a) 1 clay pot</p> <p>b) Beads both glass and copper</p> <p>c) Ceremonial axe</p> <p>d) ceremonial spear</p>	<p>a) According to Soper's (2002) classification method, Large wide mouthed pots with vertical or in – sloping rims in Class 7, Surface treatment highly polished with graphite burnishing ware B. Decorations had no decorations</p>

	<p>e)Mutsago (pillow)</p> <p>f) cattle hide (ndoro)</p>	<p>b) Red, black and brown were used as ornaments. Necklace, ankle bracelets and waist bracelets which were relatively big and were on a string.</p> <p>c) It was small and was nicely designed</p> <p>d) Small spear with a small arrow head and handle made of copper</p> <p>e) Was relatively large and decorated, polished and black in colour and made of wood. It the bottom was firmly covered in the ground</p> <p>f) It was big enough to cover the body, the colour wasn't clear.</p>
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From fig 4.4 is showing 3 burials and each burial there was a large clay pot From (Soper's 2002) classification method the pottery shape was classified in class 7 in which the clay pots are large wide mouthed pots with vertical or in- sloping rims. In terms of surface treatment they were graphite burnished and had no decorations and from an ethnography they were used in representation of the chief and in some instances these were used as gifts to be used in the afterlife by the family or the community and used for ceremonies. There was also glass and copper beads the researcher noticed that included red, black and brown beads and the beads were identified as necklaces, ankle bracelets and waist bracelets which were relative big in terms of beads. From the ethnoarchaeological data the beads were just used as symbols of royalty and were part of their regalia. Alongside the beads were ceremonial objects these included an axe which was a small and had decorations, spear which was made of copper and had a short arrow and spear head, cattle skin (ndoro) from ethnoarcheological data they identified it as ndoro which was used to legitimise the chieftainship. Lastly there was mustago (pillow) made of wood and was decorated. These objects were nicely placed at the head. The burials were in prone position and the grave goods were placed at the head. These materials were found across all three burials and from ethnoarcheological data they weren't

able to identify the names of the 2 burials they weren't sure of their identity but for the last burial they identified it as chief Dukute because they believed that was one of the last chief to rule from Gombe.

4.4.1 Assumed of value of the grave goods

Using the categories stipulated by (Nelson 2014) and Saxe- Binford which is the utilitarian and non- utilitarian value of objects the researcher used these categories to identify the grave goods and categorised them into the two groups. Pottery was categorised as non -utilitarian objects and (Barretto 2003) defines utilitarian objects as associated with food cultivation, procurement and storage and the type of pottery that was discovered were 3 large pots which were mainly for rituals and ceremonials usually associated with chieftain ship so they were categorised as non- utilitarian objects. These clay pots were not decorated and were arranged a linear form. Beads and ceremonial objects were categorised as non- utilitarian objects because ceremonial objects and the beads were highly crafted and beads were believed to be used as ornaments and symbol badges and were traded objects that also determined their value.

Figure 4.5 showing factors that have been used to analyse the grave goods

Artefact	Assumed value	Function	Cultural context
Beads	Non-utilitarian value	Ornaments	Traded objects
Ceremonial objects	Non-utilitarian value (highly crafted)	Rituals and ceremonies and legitimizing chieftainship	Local objects
Pottery	Non-utilitarian value (highly crafted)	Legitimizing chieftainship, gifts to chief, brewing beer for ancestors.	Local objects

In order to understand the value of the grave goods within the Gombe burials and of which the site is categorised as ranked society the researcher incorporated factors from prestige good value to understand issues of status from the grave goods of Gombe burials. Table 1 is showing the main objectives of trying to establish the value of the burial goods which the researcher when contacting the research these objects were analysed using the factors tabulated above in order to reach the desired results. In other terms that was the form of characterisation that was used by the researcher.

Figure 4.6 showing status objects identified from the burials of Gombe

Artefact	Raw material	A	B	C	Assumed value
Beads (necklaces, ankle bracelets and waist bracelets)	Glass	Ornaments/ symbol badges	These are traded objects	1	Non- utilitarian
	Copper	Ornaments/ symbol badges	Locally traded and produced locally	1	Non- utilitarian
Ceremonial axes	Iron	To represent royalty and used for rituals and ceremonies	Traded/Produced locally	2	Non- utilitarian
Ceremonial spear	Iron	To represent royalty and used for rituals	traded/produced locally	2	Non- utilitarian
Pillow (mutsago)	Wood	For the dead chiefs to rest on	Local	2	Non- utilitarian

clay pots	Clay	Tribute paying showing allegiance to the chief and used for brewing beer	Traded/Produced locally	2	Non- utilitarian
Ndoro	Cattle skin	Legitimize chieftainship	Produced locally	2	Non- utilitarian

A= possible function B= cultural context C= symbolic meaning then the numerical value 1= prestigious items 2 = representing chieftainship

From fig 4.6 is showing how the objects were grouped in order to understand their meaning and assumed value. Mostly the burials from Gombe were mainly marked by chiefly goods that were given to the chief to legitimize or represent their royalty so the people know or identify the chief. Also looking at the table there are more of ceremonial objects than prestigious items which means that these people were more into rituals and ceremonial activities. This a concept used by most archaeologist to understand grave goods from the representational number of the objects and this case ceremonial objects were high in terms of numbers. This shows that there were religious activities that were taking place at the site. One characteristic that was noted from these objects was that they were high crafted and shaped in a special way and the pottery that was there was highly polished show that they were no ordinary pots although they had no decorations. Also these clay pots were large clay pots with short necks and large wide mouth. The beads that were found included glass beads and these were traded objects and there were also copper beads which were produced locally or some were traded for paying tribute or presenting as gifts to the chief. The glass beads that were there were red, black and brown and these were more prestigious items that were there due to the fact that they are sourced somewhere else considering the time spent and the value of objects needed to trade with in order to get these beads. Some of these beads were also recovered from Matendera looking the Red Indian, black and copper beads. Copper beads from Matendera were sent for metallurgical analysis and copper beads gave 99% copper Tin,

nickel, cobalt, nil and iron 0, 02% this shows the level skills and energy spent to produce this kind of copper and it helps to trace the origin of the raw materials.

4.5 Interpretation of the burial goods

4.5.1 Pottery from Gombe burials

In order to determine the status of the burials discovered from Gombe hill an archaeological field data collection was conducted by the researcher and discovered 3 large clay pots that and the researcher had to adopt the categories that were stipulated by previous researchers in which these grave goods are either grouped into utilitarian objects or non- utilitarian objects. Also were analysed From (Soper's 2002) classification method the pottery shape was classified in class 7 in which the clay pots are large wide mouthed pots with vertical or in-sloping rims. In terms of surface treatment they were graphite burnished and had no decorations. Their possible function and symbolic meaning was drawn from ethnographic data. The pottery was grouped as non- utilitarian objects because looking at the nature of the pottery these were pots were mainly selected for the burials of the chief. Also the reason why the researcher concluded that the pottery was mainly selected for burials of the chiefs was that the pottery discovered at Gombe mostly was rough faced and carelessly incised and it was of poor quality. From the prestige good value perspective these 3 pots represented high status of these burials. Looking at luxury objects or non-utilitarian items greatly contribute to the socio-political and cultural survival of a community because looking at objects like gold and beads that were discovered from Mapungubwe is considered as luxurious objects but at the same time have non- utilitarian value. Through ethnographic analysis of the context of these objects they were assessed to be high- status because of their role in creating socio-political alliances, the chief and the elders concluded that alliances were built in form of gifts and tributes, also they believed that life continues after death in a different realm and the objects are used as grave goods in form of gifts to the dead and in some instances the religious roles of these cultural materials in daily rituals of that particular society. In addition (Barretto 2003) stipulates that specific socio-political-religious rites like forging political and trading burial goods in the Philippines played an important role of alliances, feasting and sponsoring religious ceremonies, the tradition of receiving and giving tributes in the form of prestige goods demonstrates the high cultural value attached to the objects. Looking at the nature of the pottery which was used the researcher had to rely on an archaeological

interpretation and had to consider time and energy needed to manufacture the pottery, source of raw materials used and these objects needed more time to manufacture and looking at the nature of the area where these pottery was made they needed to select an area with the more suitable clay and it was far from the area where they lived.

Another archaeological perspective that was used by the researcher was its distribution across the site. From the previous excavations and field surveys that were done most pottery that was found there were relatively small and had the utilitarian value. The rarity of these objects shows that these potteries were of high significance and were mostly found at these burials. Looking at these large clay pots were mainly used for rain making ceremonies or rituals and the only ones who drank beer from these clay pots were the chiefs and the other was given to the ancestors. In order to fully understand these pottery there was need to establish the function of these clays pots before being used as grave goods and also understand the cultural context from which they come from. As eluded before these clay pots were mainly used for brewing beer for ceremonies like the rain making ceremonies and considering the fact that these objects had a high cultural value these might represent the status of these burials and looking at these rainmaking ceremonies they were done at shrines were people for high status were laid to rest hence these burials are of the chiefs. Also another fact that can be considered is that these places were prepared as areas to carry out rituals because these large clay pots are usually used for ceremonies.

To broaden the understanding of the pottery in relation to status and the cultural context from which they came from the researcher used an ethno archaeological approach in order to understand the cultural symbolic meaning of the clay pots and cultural symbolic meaning is something that is subjective this means that different cultures without doubt place different values to the cultural materials. These values depend on what the materials symbolize in certain or given society hence the need to employ the ethno archaeological approach to analyse the information. From the interviews that were carried out by the researcher the chief and the elders strongly believed that these clay pots were presented as gifts to the chiefs especially when a new chief was installed or as tribute to the chief. They further alluded that there were no specifications when it comes to the requested vessels so the potter had to produce pottery with their own stylistic and decoration attributes. The only restriction is that these pots are not supposed to be painted hence probably that's the reason why all the vessels from both assemblages are only polished. Considering these functions and roles that these clay pots played in the societies these clay pots shows that these were burials of the chiefs

because they were only presented to chiefs and also they were given in form of gifts so from an ethnographic understanding they were presented to the chiefs as gifts to use in the afterlife.

4.5.2 Beads

The beads from the archaeological context were in terms of colour were red, black and brown beads which were both glass and copper beads. In terms of placement the beads they were heaped in one position at the head of each burial identified by the researcher the, researcher couldn't count them but they were in few in numbers and were joined using a string to create necklaces, ankle bracelets and waist bracelets. In terms of rarity of the objects these were considered rare because they were the only external traded objects found in the burials and the most common materials found in association with the burials were locally produced materials and were relatively few in number. In order to understand the beads that were found by the researcher, the prestige value model was used to understand the objects because the burial are believed to be of high- status and this is the main objective of this research to determine the status of the burials. The basic step that was taken was to qualify the objects as non- utilitarian objects because these beads play a significant role in the survival of a community and also in strengthening the political alliances. Also these were used to pay tribute to the chief and depending on the nature of the beads they might be from trading with other groups. A number of issues were considered by the researcher in order to measure prestige value of the objects these included raw materials, source of the materials, time to manufacture the object and cultural meaning of the object. In addition location and type of burials were also considered by the researcher. From the archaeological context set of beads were found these included glass beads and copper beads. For glass beads some were black, brown and red the other percentage were copper beads.

Looking at the glass beads that were found their raw materials were not from the local but they were sourced somewhere. There is the possibility that these beads came from trading with other groups. (Barreto 2003) stipulated that traded objects become more prestigious because of the more work and energy involved in acquiring them. For a society to engage in an exchange of goods, it has to produce its own goods that are equally valuable for barter exchange. In order to produce local goods for export, additional collecting trips for raw materials are required to manufacture the goods needed for trading. These goods are not just for the society's own use but for surplus as demanded by the trade partners. This means that these objects are only accessible to a certain group of people who could contact trading and

mostly this kind of goods result from external trading and the chiefs were basically the ones who controlled the long distance trading. Also for those who had the ability to engage in long distance trading had to produce or manufacture goods that would be valuable for that kind of barter exchange and the goods were used to pay tribute. Tribute was payed using high value objects to show allegiance to the chief. To further qualify these objects glass beads as representation of high status there is need to establish the use of these beads among the society and this is deducted from the nature of materials made from the beads. The function of the beads was determined by the fact that the beads were used to make necklaces; some of the beads were used to be worn in the waist and the ankles. These beads were relatively large. These beads were used to distinguish people of different statuses and looking at these beads was mainly of the high class.

Among the glass beads there were also copper beads that were used as grave goods. These copper beads are believed to have been locally made because there were also iron furnaces at the site. Also another possibility is that these beads came from local trading because looking at Matendera which was earlier than Gombe there were copper beads that were found there and because Gombe wanted to establish itself they had to trade for their survival or establish political alliances. In some cases because the commoners needed to pay tribute to the chief they had to contact local trading with objects of high value. Another determining factor is that the raw material that were needed to manufacture these objects needed high skills and time also looking the process of smelting and manufacturing the beads is time consuming and the source of raw materials is not easy to extract. In order to acquire the copper beads the goods that were used to trade with were nearly of equal value, so which means the material themselves have to be highly crafted and of high value hence qualifying these copper beads as prestigious. Consequently these beads become of high status and also their function among the consumers adds value to the beads. Hence these burials were considered to be considered of high status.

In order to authenticate the archaeological data collected, the archaeological evidence that was there in order to establish the relationship that is there between grave goods and status a follow up was made on the contemporary Nyashanu descendants. This was articulated from the interviews that were carried out by the researcher. The chief and the elders reviewed a great deal of the relationship that is there between these grave goods and status. Local leaders were interviewed pertaining their understanding of the cultural meaning of these beads and they strongly believed that these beads were not used to bury ordinary person but some one of

high status and they also strongly believed that these burials were of the chiefs that were ruling from Gombe ruins. The nature in which the beads were arranged they were nicely arranged to show respect. Also they also believed that these beads were given to them as gifts to use in the afterlife because they stated that they believed in life after death. This also in tells that one's status does not end by death but even in death those statuses are still recognised by the use of grave goods, burial location and the burial types. Due to these reason the mountain is respected and protected by the chief and access is only allowed by the chief because they believe Gombe mountain signify the Mbiru Nyashanu chieftainship. Also the geographical location of these burials is in caves and this system which is associated with the burial of chiefs and was described by (Mahachi 1991) as significant context of the association between the royalty and hills in Shona belief. Hence this qualifies prestige value of the beads because even now the contemporary Nyashanu they still bury their chief in caves.

4.5.3 Axe, spear, mutsago (pillow) and cattle skin (ndoro)

Among the beads and pottery there were also ceremonial axes, spear, mutsago and cattle skin which were described as chiefly goods also there was cattle skin referred to in Shona as ndoro this was drawn from ethnoarchaeological data and mustago. In order to interpret the ceremonial goods there were understood from an ethnoarchaeological perspective the researcher looked at previous researches that have been done to understand these ceremonial goods. Being guided by the main objective of the research the researcher looked at the role and function of the goods before being used as grave goods and also consider the cultural context there were used. Looking at these ceremonial objects they mostly included small axes that were nicely worked and shaped in a different way than the ordinary ones. These axes usually were used to symbolise royalty and in some instances legitimises the status of the chief. These ceremonial axes were used for rituals and represented ancestry power and mainly associated with the chiefs and kings. Looking at the Shona culture ceremonial axes in the Zimbabwean context were used by the elite to legitimise their power through extensive rituals. Even in the contemporary societies these ceremonial axes are still being used and their intangible value are more important to their culture.

Looking at the cattle skin that was there was understood from an ethnographic point of view the elders eluded that the cattle skin was given to a newly crowned chief which also legitimises the chieftainship of that person and when being buried they wrapped his body around with the Ndoro. Local leaders believed that the chief was selected or legitimised by

the king from Rozvi kingdom and was given the cattle skin (ndoro), this meant that they payed allegiance to the Rozvi empire to also avoid attacks from the Rozvi. From the interviews that were carried at the Mutare museum of antiquities from the archaeology department they noted that Gombe was mainly a defence fort and constantly fought with the Rozvi which also resulted in poorly constructed pottery and from the interviews that were done with the local leaders stipulated that these chiefs interacted with the Rozvi several times and from the information gathered they ended up paying allegiance to the Rozvi since it was strong group. So the cattle skin that was found was used to identify a new chief who would have succeeded the previous and this was its main function. In other way it shows the dominance of the Rozvi people of the ethnic group that resided at Gombe. Besides this cattle skin there were other chiefly goods which included (gano) and ceremonial spears and through an ethnographic approach the researcher understood that these were given to the chiefs as representing chieftainship. These classes of goods are only restricted to prominent or high status persons in the society. Hence the goods themselves review the status of the person because of their function and role in a given society. Due to the fact that these ceremonial objects are different from society to society or from one ethnic group to another there was need to use the ethnographic approach to understand the symbolic meaning or value of these ceremonial objects. Cultural meaning and value is subjective so the need to understand the value of these objects from an ethnographic approach, also these objects was also selected because they are admirable, desirable and worthy and this was drawn from an ethnographic approach.

4.6 Conclusion

The chapter was just simply presenting and analysing the data gathered from ethno archaeology and ethnography to characterise the burials from Gombe and to understand the status of these burials. As shown by the methods used to analyse the data these burials are of important people of the society and they had an important role to the well-being of the society.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

5.1 Chiefly grave goods as makers of status

Grave goods have been the centre of discussion in terms of the study of burials in the discipline of archaeology. A lot of issues have been pointed out also theories in how to approach the grave goods have been proposed some which are processual in manner and some are post processual in manner. In terms of grave goods as makers of status portrays a great relationship between the two although they are a number of factors that affect the burial of individuals. When materials are used as grave goods they assume its secondary use but before being used as grave goods they have primary use which is vital in trying to understand the relationship that exist between status and grave goods. In order to understand the relationship that exist between the issues of status and grave goods one has to consider the fact the objects are created for a reason and through its use life it assumes different values and used for different functions. Usually looking at the prehistoric periods people were differentiated by what one owns and the issue of social stratification became to be because they are certain groups who had access to vital resources and took control over the means of production. These people assume certain status in the community and by virtue of being rich they are respected and through the items that they own they tend to differentiate themselves from other members of the society through certain objects that are described prestigious objects or that the community sees as admirable, desirable and worthy. This was done to maintain the power that they had and to be recognised as important people in the society. This led to identity and the best way to present the identity was through the use material. The status is also expressed in burials and the materials that identify one's status are used as grave goods and they are the ones which archaeologist study in trying to identify the status of that individual or group of people.

Looking at the relationship that is there between the identity and role one assumes in the society and trying to legitimize that role or status is through material objects these objects assume a different value when they are consumed by that user and they reflect the relationship that exist between people in a certain community. (Nelson 2014) notes that artefacts also provide us with information on trade and exchange, interaction and social and cultural values that the object has these issues identified because of the functions that the

objects are used for and their value in a particular society. Looking at it through the use of these objects are determined by the relationship that exist between these groups and how they are used so through the analysis and considering the cultural function of the objects and the context from which the object came from one can understand human behaviour in that certain society. This behaviour is also expressed in the burials were one's status or societal position is reflected through grave goods and the way one is buried. Hence grave goods are used to understand issues of status and social interaction that exist between the societies. Looking at the nature of grave goods that were discovered from Gombe the objects themselves reflect the status of that individual and from the cultural value and cultural function deduced from the grave goods of the burials they reflected that these burials were of high status individuals in that particular society

Looking at scholars like (King 2004) have a different opinion regarding grave goods and notes that Anglo-Saxon grave-goods rather than having been the life possessions of the deceased, may have been gifts to him or her thereby directly effecting the relationship between the survivors and the donor. Through revisiting these burials (King 2004) made a conclusion that the research carried at the Anglo- Saxon burials cautions against 'life-mirror' approach to burial data that assume a reflective correspondence between the wealth of the deceased in life and in death. It also takes a Deleuzean approach to signs, emphasizing them as a means of directly producing something, social relations in this case, rather than as a means of communication and as symbols to be decoded. This means that (King 2004) is of opinion that grave goods are not always meaning something or representing the life of that person while still alive or even in death but are just gifts that are presented. Looking at these opinions one cannot totally dismiss the fact that grave goods were also presented to the dead as gifts because looking at the studies that have been carried out in archaeological context some of these objects have been used as gifts but one has to consider the context of the burials and understand the nature of that society in terms of its complexity and social interactions. Also another factor that has to be considered is that there is the maker's use of the object and the consumer use of the object and through the object use life it tends to change values and functions and these uses and values are vital in understanding that particular society that's why objects are considered as "*life mirrors*". Looking at the differentiation in burials of the people its self gives a picture in the nature of interaction or the status of the individuals. Looking at the burials from Gombe they were cave burials and the commoners were buried in different areas from those burials and looking at the difference of

the grave goods further reflect the status of those individuals because they inform the archaeologist and researchers about beliefs and social interactions that existed. (Earle 2000 and Gosden (2005) argue that objects were made by people; objects communicate a wide variety of messages that inform us about lives, tastes, beliefs, economy and politics of the makers and users. So objects are created for reason and these reasons are seen in their manipulation by different functions the object is being used for.

5.2 Symbolism

Symbolism in the analysis of the grave goods is an important aspect and it reflects the status of that individual. The symbolic meaning endowed on an object by the community is vital because they respect that symbolic meaning of the object whether you are a chief, traditional leader or black smith and symbolic meaning is understood from role and function of the object among the living. Also another factor to consider is that objects are symbols of value and the value that the object carries is the one that is realised by the researcher when studying grave goods and the symbols comes from use of the object by the user and symbolic meaning placed by that individual on the object through its use. For instance looking the ceremonial axes that were recovered from Gombe burials the objects were used to represent chiefs and also played an important role in ceremonies and rituals, these rituals were vital in the continuity survival of the community hence the object assumes value according to its use and the consumer of that product. This shows that some objects are symbolic and reflective and they show how power was negotiated and displayed. This also validates the use of grave goods to understand the issue of status. Recommended by (Hally 2008) to better understand the symbols of grave goods there should an understanding how these grave goods function among the living. Looking at the studies that were done at the Musengezi tradition on the Musengezi tradition the grave goods were studied according to their uniqueness or nature of their material culture in relation to the location of the burials. There is the function of the grave goods that is useful understanding the symbolism of the grave goods because symbolic meaning of grave goods depends on the makers and consumers of the object.

Another thing that must be noted is that sometimes functioning is independent from symbolic meaning of an object but symbolic meaning is dependent on function. Looking at the objects like ceremonial objects they usually symbolise something without the understanding of their function and if one determines their function can understand social interactions that existed in that particular society and symbolic of the objects. But if the function of the object is

determined and role that it played among the living society one can understand the status of that certain individual and social interactions that existed in that particular society. The burials from Gombe they had beads which were in different forms and through determining their function one could understand that there was social stratification or there were ranked society that existed because the beads were used to differentiate certain individual from others and these burials were of the elite by also looking at the nature of the burials. Also function is important in the understanding of grave goods like beads because they are described as prestigious they were also found in association with commoner residence and burials. Looking at the burials recovered from Mapungubwe burials which were described as commoners burials were also found in association with beads that were similar form burials that were described as elite burials. (Moffet and Chirikure 2016) in Skuwater a commoner home stead near K2 and Mapungubwe glass beads were recovered from the burial. In order to understand this situation is by determining function of the glass beads in that particular society hence one can determine why these glass beads were found in both cases and also to determine the status difference of the individuals in those burials. Also and Earle (2000, Huffman 2007 and Kim and Kusimba 2008) also notes that access to prestige or exotic goods would have been nominal, but one would still find those goods in commoner households and even in the burials. So function of the object among the living becomes vital because goods in burials are assuming their secondary use and also might take the status of their context in which they are in.

5.3 Cultural context

When dealing with objects it very important to consider the context in the construction of meaning of the objects, objects recovered from religious context are bound to differ from that come from where daily activities takes place. Another issue to take note of is that different objects are assigned different values according to the societal values placed on the objects and also their function in that particular society. (Barnatt and Collis 1996) note that value may have depended on the social context such as ritual, variable depending on region and the time or association such as lineage, ancestors and community. Cultural context gives the object value because looking at beads these were traded items and they were traded for gold which is more valuable than the beads but because they came from a different place and as unique they assumed the high status or prestigious. Also because gold and ivory was limited to a certain group of people the objects becomes difficult to acquire and the time

needed to acquire the object now determines the value of that certain object. Looking at the nature of the grave goods that were recovered from Gombe there were pottery which was undecorated and they were large pots. These were mainly used for brewing beer in the society but they ended up being used as grave goods. If these clay pots are interpreted from an archaeological point of view one would assume that these clay pots are associated with the elite but now the grave is a secondary context. There will be no explanations as to why these types of clay pots are associated with the chiefs yet they had a different value from that of being buried with the chief and one will draw a meaning from the context which they are found from yet they might represent a different meaning than drawn from the secondary context. For instance the study of glass beads were mostly found in the elite houses and considered to be prestigious but through continuous studies these beads were also found in commoner's burials and their value of representing chieftainship or elite is now biased. So by determine their original cultural context from which they were recovered or used one will understand the meaning of these beads in the commoner's burials.

Judging from the evidenced conclusions that were drawn from the burials studied at Mapungubwe in terms of the meaning of the beads in the commoners grave goods was not clear and understood the conclusion that was drawn is that beads from elite and commoner burial sites in this period suggest that the primary cultural reasons within which bead disposition in burials may have functioned. Looking at these beads were not understood from their use or function among the living and they concluded that bead in burials assumed different function from the day to day function and what if there was possibility that their use among the living determined their disposition in the grave. Also another thing is that their cultural context would have given them their meaning and because these beads were also found in commoners residence they meant something and they were used to bury them which reflects their social life whilst their living. Also these beads might have been just gifts to the dead so the need to determine the cultural context from which they were used is important. Looking at the clay pots that were found in association with the burials of the chiefs from an archaeological view point these clay pots might be representing the chiefs because they are associated with chieftainship and looking at the size of the clay pots they were large that their iconic presentation might be that of person of high status. Looking at the cultural context from which these clay pots were taken and their function was mainly for ceremonial and rituals in appeasing the ancestors and it also determines the prestige value of this clay pots. This automatically gives meaning to the clay pots that they are associated with chieftainship

and they differ from the ones that are used to brew ordinary beer which is a utilitarian value. The researcher concluded that these burials were important burial and were chiefly burials. Even in the contemporary Nyashanu dynasty there are certain pottery that the chief respects and protects that symbolise and legitimize their chieftainship which means those clay pots from Gombe ruins also played the same role among the living societies.

5.4 Nature of burial goods found in association with chiefs

In a chiefdom society the chiefs is at the top in a community followed by the members of the family and those in the polity and these group of people control the means of production hence the people pay allegiance to them. Allegiance is paid in different forms and usually it called tribute. Different objects are used to pay tribute to the chief these includes beads, shells rare animals and the most highly crafted objects in the community and this how the chiefs acquire some of the objects. Tribute was paid from time to time to the chief so the commoners had to source these materials so that they are able to pay tribute to the chief. In some cases were the chief has power over another social or ethnic group these groups had to pay tribute to the chief in control to show their allegiance to the chief some the material might be as a result of political alliance. These objects that were highly crafted and traded objects were described as prestige goods that were limited to the elite only because they were acquired for the elite only and note that in socially complex society's differential access to resources can be seen in types of objects found although elite monopolise goods and therefore had more. This means that access of these prestige goods by the commoner was just minimal and also the need to pay tribute to the chiefs might also explain why some of these materials that are believed to be limited to the elite were found in commoners homesteads and the graves which also shows their ability to source these materials but wealthy was lacking to take control over the means of production. These objects were used to bury with the chiefs and one of the main reason why they were buried with these objects is that they believed in life after death, so they would use these objects in the afterlife. From the archaeological study of Gombe burials the chiefs and the local leaders noted that some of these objects were gifts for the afterlife so that they use them because they believed in afterlife. In some instances it might be gold but this was usually found in states where the king was at the apex which is the highest level of complexity in the prehistoric period and this might have also differentiated between level of complexity were by the nature of resources that were found in these areas created that difference.

Judging from the grave goods that were found in association with Gombe burials they also included ceremonial objects which included axes, spears, and cattle skin which is the commonly known as ndoro and these relate the status that these chiefs has either ascribed status or inherited status or both and these are presented in the burials of these chiefs. Ascribed status is when assumes control over people and believes that (Calabrese 2000) their role as ideological specialist whose relationship with the alleged ability to propitiate source of agriculture, animal and human fertility ensuring the successful biological and cultural integrity and continuity of a larger community and hereditary status is natural after one has established control over community and becomes the chief of that group or might have rebelled and establish their own territory the following chiefs would have hereditary statuses. In terms of the ascribed status the chief has to be recognised by the people as the chief and the one who is able to lead the people and this result in the ceremonial axes and spears because they try to legitimize their power or dominion over the people besides owning the means of production. Through ceremonies and rituals these axes and spears plays an important role in the legitimizing of the chief. So through the ceremonial axes the status of that individual is recognised and in this case it is the chief. These grave goods are common in Africa and looking at central and east Africa Schmidt reported a several excavated royal burials with ceremonial objects in trying legitimize their control over the community. Even in Zimbabwe ceremonial axes have been recovered which shows that chiefs and kings legitimized power through extensive rituals and use of numerous symbols.

5.5 Concepts and theories in studying burials and grave goods

There has been different theories and concepts that have been advocated and formulated by different archaeologist trying to use burials and associated material culture to understand social, economic and political activities of the past societies whether prehistoric or historic period. These theories have been grouped into major methodologies like archaeological approach which include processualist theories and ethnographic approach which encompasses post –processualist theories. These have been chosen basing on questions and problems archaeologist try to solve using the burials and their associated material culture. Mortuary analysis has been a field that has attracted the attention of many archaeologists and has proven to be a field that will inform archaeologist about power negotiation, social stratification and wealth. From the reviews pertaining to theories that has be used to understand these issues in mortuary analysis has proven that burial are complex analogy that

needs careful consideration when it comes to the theory one is applying to understand the burials and their associated material culture. From the studies that have been carried and the research that have been carried out by the researcher grave goods and burials convey different messages and symbolic meanings in which the use of one theory might be controversial in that one meaning might not be enough to explain a certain social phenomenon. Looking at an processualist point of view if one finds beads associated within a burial will deduct conclusions in relation to deceased and the object and has been criticised by (King 2004) and he argues that it's not always the case that if one sees a high status objects it means the deceased is of rank hence a ranked society. This intern ignores other possible burial rites for instance as a send of gift. Also another issue is that in Southern Africa most burials have been understood from an ethnographic approach this seeks to have a symbolic meaning of the objects yet ignoring the economic value of the burials and the grave goods. This has been argued from a feminist perspective in which ethnographic approaches tends to group women as of lower status ignoring the fact that they were also important in the everyday activates and economic activities which might be eluded from the burial goods rather than seeing them as marking social status. The main contributing factor that has been identified by the researcher during the course of the research and related literature is that the focus has been on meanings of material culture and burials and treating these burials as conveying a message of the person in which these are treated separately by the use of processualist theory or ethnographic approach. For instance at Mapungubwe were beads are found in both elite graves and commoners graves from a processualist approach they concluded that it was the functional purpose of beads in disposing beads yet if one tries to understand it from an ethnographic or post processualist approach might deduce another conclusion in such burial rites. In simpler terms grave goods have been treated as social makers or ethnic makers or cultural maker which leads to archaeologist in just identifying the expressions being conveyed by the object or the burial rite. The researcher proposes that there should be an interdependence of theories and concepts when dealing with grave goods and they should consider the objects they are dealing with and the context in which the burials are found.

5.6 Conclusion

The study has proven the importance of studying elite grave goods that are independent from common burials in studying issues status of certain society and to establish some of the activities that took place in that particular society. From the study of the grave goods from

Gombe burials one could tell that these were burials of important individuals and that the society was a ranked society although their level of complexity would have been determined by also looking at the commoners burials of which this study didn't include those burials. From the ethnographic approach the researcher was able to establish that Gombe was a chiefdom society that had its own level of complexity which is different from states. Usually chiefdom society in the Zimbabwean context is answerable to a certain king and to whom they pay allegiance to and tribute. From the burials the researcher discovered a cattle skin which is commonly known as ndoro in Shona and to understand the symbolic meaning and the cultural function of the material the researcher relied on ethnographic information and the cattle skin was given to a newly installed chief by the Rozvi king this means that the chiefs from Gombe paid their allegiance to the king of Rozvi king. Also the chiefdom of the chiefs from Gombe was legitimized by the use of cattle skin. Hence Gombe was a chiefdom society.

From the archaeological study of grave goods from Gombe through looking at function and cultural context has been proved to be vital components in the study of these elite burials. They help in deducing the meaning of the grave goods and looking at the materials use life they change their context in which they are used looking at pottery they are used for brewing beer and there were clay pots that were used for ritualistic purpose and there were ones which symbolised power had no other uses in the community but used for symbolising chieftainship. To make this difference in the archaeological context one needs to understand the context from which this pottery came from because the context of that pottery gives value, symbolic meaning of the clay pot and determines its primary use (Nyamuhosho 2013) notes that It can also be noted that not every ritualistic vessel primarily carries with it symbolic messages rather symbolic status for a vessel comes as a secondary status and this is likely to have been the similar case with vessels from the archaeological site of Muozi whereby they accumulated their symbolic status due to their location. Thus because they are situated in a sacred mountain that symbolises the Saunyama chieftaincy they ended acquiring a similar symbolic status just like any other tangible heritage within the mountain. Grave goods are grouped into utilitarian and non- utilitarian value and this besides relying only on how crafted the material culture was one could consider the cultural context which the objects was used hence cultural context becomes vital in studying grave goods in order to determine if the material assumed their status from the context which they are found or through its use life among the living.

The researcher considered using the prestige value goods model in understanding the issues of status from Gombe. The prestige value was useful but it was limited to certain objects and to some it wasn't able to fully explore some of the issue and the researcher had to depend on other models of interpreting the grave goods from Gombe. Looking at the prestige model it analyse the material from the makers use and ignoring the use life of the object at mainly considers factors concerning acquiring the object and the raw materials used and this is useful in understanding material culture like the beads and mostly exotic cultural material. Even looking at (Wood 2002, Calabrese 2000, 2007 and Huffman 2007, 2009) notes that prestige good value is useful in regional capitals were distribution and redistribution centres that accumulated wealth which were converted into power and these sites were used for long distance trading. In terms of locally produced it is limited and looking at (Moffet and Chirikure 2016) they concluded that if the model of prestige good value was used to study grave goods in southern Africa it will not yield more information. But looking at the model it was useful in the interpretation of beads that were found in association with Gombe burials because the researcher was able to understand the status of those burials also not limited to that the researcher concluded that Gombe engaged in long and internal trading which might have the another economic activity that was contacted at Gombe. The possible explanation that explained the existence of these exotic goods is through trading. In addition to this model the researcher considered the function of these objects in order to further understand their prestige value because some of these objects were symbols of wealth that one used to monopolise others so through another factor of function the researcher was able to determine whether the grave goods were wealthy objects or status objects. (Hally 2008) noted that wealthy items and status items are difficulty to differentiate but if one looks at the function and the cultural context form which the grave goods was found one could easily distinguish the two and through the prestige good value. There is still need to use the prestige good value model in other context especially in state societies where there is high level of complexity.

In this study pictures of the burials and grave goods would have enhanced better understanding of the context in which the burials are found, orientation, position of the grave goods and use of burial space. Traditional rites associated with the place and its significance to the Nyashanu society in which they refer to it as "Gombe rava Hera" posed a challenge to the researcher to take pictures and they considered it as dehumanising of their ancestors and they wanted to keep it a sacred place so that it retains its intangible values. Also another thing that would have enabled a broader appreciation of these burials is the study of the settlement

patterns and their associated material culture given the limited material culture discovered from the graves they give a partial picture of the economic, social activities and power negation among the society during its existence. Also meanings of beads are also a vital avenue for future researchers in the most burials that have been discovered beads have become a common or standard grave goods and most archaeologist just conclude that these are makers of social status but looking at the complexities of burials there is need to have an understanding of the meaning of the beads other than their economic value from which conclusions are drawn to explain their existence in burials.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

INTERVIEW GUIDE

I want to thank you for sacrificing your time to meet with me today. My name is Obey K. Nyakunhuwa. I am a final year student at Midlands State University (MSU) where I am studying towards the attainment of a Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Archaeology, Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies. In partial fulfilment of the degree requirements I am currently carrying out a research project entitled: the archaeology of elite burials of Gombe, Buhera Zimbabwe.

I would like to interview you about your experiences as a chief, elders and archaeologist pertaining to burial of chiefs and the meaning of the associated grave goods that are found at Gombe mountain. This meant to have an understanding of the burials and the grave goods so to have an understanding between status and elite burials and also the economic and conceptualisation of power with Gombe pre historic society

This interview will not take much of your time therefore will you allow me to digitally record the session because I do not want to miss any one word from you and at the same time I cannot possibly write fast enough to get everything on paper. Please will you speak up as we record to make sure that we do not miss any of your information. I will make sure that all the information I will get from you will be treated as confidential. This means that your interview responses will only be shared within the research members and if necessary I will ensure that any information I include in my report does not identify you as the respondent. Remember you do not have to talk about anything you do not want to and it is your right to end the interview at any time you feel to.

Interview guide for the chiefs and the elders

1. What is the brief history of Gombe?
2. Can you tell me about the chiefs that ruled from Gombe?
3. Where are the chiefs buried?
4. How were these areas chosen to bury the chiefs?
5. How were the chiefs buried and who are involved in burying the chiefs?
6. How were the grave goods selected to bury with the chiefs?
7. What were the possible uses for the grave goods?
8. What is the symbolic, cultural meaning and values attached to the grave goods?
9. Would you say the burying of the chiefs is a custom or tradition that you inherited for your fathers?

Interview guide for the Archaeologist

1. What are the archaeological studies that have been done by the department of archaeology at Gombe?
2. How would you describe Gombe as prehistoric site?
3. Are there any researches that have been published by the department at Gombe before if not why?
4. What is the nature of material culture that has been discovered from Gombe?
5. In what context have been the materials been discovered?
6. Have the burials from Gombe been documented if not why and are there any other burials that have discovered in the area?
7. What were the material evidence that have been documented form the burials?
8. In brief how would describe the burial of chiefs of Gombe?