

**‘Sotho-Tswana’ *Difala* vessels in selected South African museums:
challenges in descriptions and catalogues**

Methodi Freddie Motsamayi [204510658]

Supervisor: Professor Ian Calder [80107]

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
PhD (Art History)
November 2018**

**Centre for Visual Art
School of Arts
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Pietermaritzburg Campus**

Prefatory note

- ‘Pottery’ and ‘ceramics’ as used throughout the thesis indicate clay vessels.
- Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafêla is sometimes spelt with a diacritic mark. I do the same throughout this thesis.
- Dimensions of artefacts are in centimetres.
- Foreign words and South African indigenous languages are written in italics.
- I emphasise the importance of the orthographics of *Sesotho sa Lebowa* in my thesis, to distinguish between the parental forms of Sotho-Tswana generally (there are three forms, *Sotho sa Borwa* [Southern Sotho], *Sesotho sa Lebowa* [Northern Sotho] and Setswana [Western Sotho]). An example of differences is found in the Sotho-Tswana word, *Sefalana* (singular; *Difala*, plural -dung-vessels) in *sa Lebowa*; in Setswana it is also *Difala*; however, in Namibia it is *Sihala*. I note that in Southern Sotho (*Sotho sa Borwa*) groups the dung-vessel form (*Sefala*) is not found.
- Illustrations are numbered consecutively and referred to as ‘Figures’ in the text.
- Some of Luvenda or Tshivenda speakers use a diacritic mark when writing, as for example in Luvenda or Tshivenda. I use this diacritic mark where necessary in this thesis.
- The Harvard short-form of referencing as outlined in the *CVA Academic Style Guide for Postgraduate Texts* is applied.
- The indigenous language preferred in this thesis is Northern Sotho (known as *Sesotho sa lebowa*, sometimes referred to as Sepedi, a dialect of Northern Sotho language spoken in the Sekhukhune District Municipality by Bapedi people).
- The term Sotho-Tswana as used in this thesis refers specifically to the Bakoni people (also known as Bakone). Thus, I will use Bakoni throughout the thesis (as for example in ‘Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum’). I do so cautiously because the Bakoni people are not ‘originally’ Sotho-Tswana as opposed to the Bakgatla, Bathlaping, Batlôkwa and Bapedi who are Sotho-Tswana peoples.
- The terms *Difala* (*Difalana*) vessels (plural) and the singular *Sefala* (*Sefalana*) are used interchangeably in this thesis.

- The vessels collected among Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafêla are referred to as *Sefalana* as this is the common or original museum description at IzikoSHC. Vessels made by Northern Sotho are referred to as *Sefala* and *Sefalana* as, I found, is the practice in Polokwane museums.
- Titles of consulted reference works are written in italics in the body of the thesis and the bibliography.
- Titles of cultural works, artworks and artefacts are enhanced in bold typeface.
- To keep captions and text together in sections of the illustrated catalogue the font is in Times New Roman. The names of all persons mentioned in this thesis are prefaced by their honorific titles, for example Mr., Ms., Mrs., Dr. and Professor. In Northern Sotho language - *Sesotho sa lebowa* - senior women are addressed by prefix and noun, for example *Mma* (*mother*), (in other regions *Mmê* with diacritic is used), *Koko* (*grandmother*). In Tshivenda, the honorific prefix *Vho-* is used to address Vhenda senior women. In my thesis I use *Mma* consistently for heterogeneous Northern Sotho speakers in Limpopo Province.
- Unless stated otherwise in the text, illustrative materials and/or photographs were produced by the candidate.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

- **BakoniMNSOAM** = Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum
- **BLM** = Blouberg Local Municipality
- **BM** = British Museum
- **CVA** = Centre for Visual Art
- **FIG** = Figure
- **FIGS** = Figures
- **GIS** = Geographic Information System
- **ICOM** = International Council of Museums
- **IKS** = Indigenous Knowledge Systems
- **IzikoSHC** = Iziko Social History Centre, Iziko Museums, Cape Town
- **MM** = Methodi Motsamayi
- **NCECA** = National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts
- **NRF** = National Research Foundation
- **PolokwaneCHM** = Polokwane Cultural History Museum
- **SAMA** = South African Museums Association
- **SES** = Soil Ecology Society
- **UCT** = University of Cape Town
- **UKZN** = University of KwaZulu-Natal
- **USA** = United States of America
- **UW-Madison** = University of Wisconsin-Madison

Declaration

I hereby declare that, to the best of my knowledge, this thesis:

1. Is my own work and that all sources used in this thesis have been fully acknowledged.
2. Has not been submitted for any degree at any other institution of higher learning for the purpose of obtaining an academic qualification.

Date:

Candidate: Methodi Freddie Motsamayi

Date:

Supervisor: Ian Calder (Professor)

Awards and Grants

- 2018, I was awarded a Multicultural Fellowship from the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA), United States of America (USA).
 - 2017, I was awarded an honorarium to give a lecture in March 2018 at the 52nd Annual Conference organised by the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts convened in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (USA).
 - 2013-2016, I received National Research Foundation (NRF) financial support for an Innovation Doctoral Scholarship award.
 - 2016, I was awarded a travel award by the Department of Community and Environmental Sociology in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison) in the USA for the purpose of functioning at the university as a visiting fellow/honorary associate.
 - 2015, I was a recipient of the Parkinson Student Travel Award from Soil Ecology Society (SES) to attend the Soil Ecology Meeting in Colorado Springs, USA.
 - 2015, I was awarded NRF Partial Travel Grant to cover some of expenses related to a meeting of the Soil Ecology Society in Colorado, USA.
 - 2014, I was awarded NRF International Travel Grant to present a paper at the Fifth Annual International Conference on Visual and Performing Arts, 2-5 June 2014, Athens, Greece.
 - 2014, I received NRF Local Travel Grant to facilitate my research and fieldwork in South African museums (in Western Cape and Limpopo Province) during 2014.
 - 2013-2015, I received UKZN PhD fee remission for the period of 3 years of my PhD studies.
 - 2013, I received UKZN School of Arts bursary for PhD studies.
 - 2013-2015, I received financial assistance from the Centre for Visual Arts at the University of KwaZulu-Natal through the Rita Strong Legacy Award towards this degree.
- I confirm that the content and conclusions of, as well as opinions expressed in, this thesis are my personal submissions and not necessarily to be attributed to the sponsors mentioned above.

Acknowledgements and Thanks

Acknowledgements to institutions

- I am grateful to the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA), United States of America (USA) for affording me the opportunity to attend the 52nd Annual Conference in the United States, this led to the publication of my article about South African ceramics in the NCECA Journal 2018 and helped me to broaden my international networks in the field of ceramic arts.
- I am grateful to the Department of Community and Environmental Sociology in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison) in the United States of America for the purpose of functioning at the university as a visiting fellow/honorary associate in 2016.
- I would like to acknowledge the Soil Ecology Society in USA for inviting me to attend a Biennial Meeting of the Soil Ecology Society and present a paper in Colorado Springs, in 2015.

Thanks

I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Ian Calder for supervision.

I sincerely thank Mrs Attie Zaverdinos for helping me to edit my thesis – and with such precision.

Academics abroad

I thank especially Professor John Dighton, director of Rutgers University Pinelands Field Station and faculty member of the Department of Ecology, Evolution and Natural Resources of Rutgers University, who facilitated my visit to the United States to meet ecologists and soil scientists through a Soil Ecology Society meeting in 2015 in Colorado Springs.

I would also like to extend my sincerest thanks and appreciation to Professor of African and African Diaspora Arts, Henry Drewal at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, who created a conducive environment and organised a special lecture for me to deliver and who played a key role in helping me to connect with his colleagues during my visit in the department in 2016. I also thank staff members at Chazen Museum of Art at the University for the tour within their museum.

I value the collegiality of Professor Gerit Grimm from the Ceramics program, by inviting me to present a lecture for her students and to attend an exhibition on 105 years of ceramic making at UW-Madison, and who subsequently introduced me to the NCECA Annual Conference - National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts – that I later took part in - Pittsburgh – Pennsylvania in 2018.

I appreciate my associates at the Department of Community and Environmental Sociology in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2016 for affording me the opportunity to appear as a guest lecturer on several occasions. I also appreciate the collegiality I have received from other academics affiliated to the Center for Culture, History, and Environment, The Nelson Institute, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

I am grateful to Professor Jess Reed from the Department of Animal Sciences at UW-Madison for his profound and valuable scientific insights into subjects related to animal sciences and animal nutrition in Africa connected to my research.

Professor Matt Turner from the Department of Geography for his collegiality during several visits to his office to discuss pastoralism, culture and environment, ecology of tropical savanna vegetation and range ecology related to my research, and for introducing me to his colleagues.

I also want to give thanks to Dr. Marcia-Anne Dobres at the University of Southern Maine in Portland, for acting as an occasional sounding-board to help me specifically with subjects related to anthropology and material culture.

Local heritage experts

I acknowledge and give thanks to the many local South African heritage workers and professionals who provided me with insights, including:

Ms. Paulina Mapheto who organised women to participate in my research in Polokwane area in Limpopo Province, and *Mma* Phuthi Francina Mathekga for helping me to recreate *Difala* vessels, both from Polokwane museums, and their colleagues who assisted me when collecting data.

Mr. N.J. Tlouamma, from Blouberg Local Municipality for introducing me to vessel makers represented by *Mma* Masimone Ramone in Black Hill-Gakobe, Blouberg Local Municipality and rock art sites within the same municipality.

Koko Rebecca Manamela, Mokwena village, in Blouberg Local Municipality, for discussions about local African pottery and heritage.

Dr. Elelwani Ramaite-Mafadza from the University of Venda Art Gallery for introducing me to Vho-Nyamukamadi Makungo in Ha-Makhuvha village outside Thohoyandou and heritage experts in Thulamela Local Municipality.

South African museum officials

Mr. Frank Roodts, Polokwane based archaeologist, who worked in the Polokwane museums in the past, for our meeting at Polokwane Cultural History Museum to view vessels.

Mr. Phalantwa Montlha, and Mr. Gideon Mokwena, both from Polokwane museums.

Mrs. Esther Esmiol, Dr. Gerard Klinghardt, both from Iziko Social History Centre for helping during my visit at the Social History Collection to locate archival materials.

UKZN Colleagues

Sincerest thanks to colleagues at UKZN who have contributed their knowledge and skills:

Graduate students whose mother tongues are Setswana, Sesotho *sa lebowa*, and Tshivenda, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College and Pietermaritzburg campus, who assisted me in clarifying some indigenous proverbs/phrases obtained from research participants around South Africa. I want to give thanks to Mr. Donavin DeVos and his colleagues from Cartography and GIS, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg for assisting me to produce all the maps for this thesis. I also want to thank anonymous individuals for assisting me throughout this research.

Personal thanks

I give special thanks to all my family members for allowing me to continue with my studies during the toughest times when I was expected to be working and to contribute in taking care of the family, associates and other relatives, as is the norm in my family to do. I also want to give thanks to Thapelo Motsamayi, my young brother who worked as a driver, photographer and research assistant during my early PhD research reconnaissance and other academic activities, I learnt from him that a good research assistant means excellent results.

Finally, I am thankful for the assistance of my sister, Margret, who helped me immensely to collect and verify research data from many women in various communities.

Keywords

- Africans, artefacts, crafts, local indigenous material culture production, vessel arts,
- Anthropology, art, *chaîne opératoire* [*chaînes opératoires*],
- Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum, Iziko Museum, Polokwane Cultural History Museum,
- *Difala/Difalana, Sefala/Sefalana*, Post-colonial theories, women,
- Highveld,
 - Sotho-Tswana peoples,
 - Bapedi
 - Bakoni,
 - Bakgatla,
 - Batlôkwa,
 - Batlhaping,
 - granary, - natural resources
 - cattle, cattle by-products

Table of Contents

Prefatory note.....	i
Acronyms and Abbreviations	iii
Declaration.....	iv
Awards and Grants.....	v
Acknowledgements and Thanks	vi
Keywords.....	x
Table of Contents	xi
Abstract	xv
Chapter 1: Introduction and outline of the study	1
1.1 Overview and theoretical constituents of the research	4
1.2 Main purposes of the study.....	8
1.3 Table I: Three examples of typology of <i>Difala</i> vessels.....	13
1.4 Literature review	21
1.5 Research methods applied in the study	26
1.5.1 Research methodology and ethical consideration in context	29
1.5.2 Fieldwork in this research design.....	31
1.5.3 Interview techniques applied in the research	33
1.6 Post-colonial theory and material culture in the museum	35
Chapter 2: indigenous pottery productions in Limpopo Province	45
2.1 Indigenous pottery in context.....	45
2.2 The social and cultural milieu of indigenous pottery production	47
2.3 Ceramic trends in Limpopo Province, South Africa	48
2.4 Observational context of indigenous clay vessel production in South Africa	49
2.5 Clay vessels in context: transcending cultural boundaries in Limpopo Province	51
2.6 Natural pigments and motifs in clay vessel making practices	54
2.7 Tools adopted in making contemporary clay vessels	60
2.8 Reflections on worldview: meanings of indigenous pottery in Limpopo Province, towards a philosophy of African pottery	61

2. 8. 1 Underpinning questions for understanding pottery in emic terms	62
2. 9 Samples of pottery and related proverbial and idiomatic expressions reflecting indigenous ideas	65
2. 10 Traditions, innovations and contemporaneity in clay vessel production.....	68
2. 11 Challenges in cataloguing African collections in South African museums: perspectives on accessioning indigenous vessels	80
2. 12 Changing façades of museums and collections.....	86
2. 13 Museum collections and contemporaneity	87
Chapter 3: <i>Difala</i> vessels, a schematic outline	92
3. 1 Accessioning <i>Difala</i> vessels	94
3. 2 Constructing a <i>Sefala</i> vessel. Form and function. Methods, materials, motifs and meanings	99
3. 3 <i>Difala</i> vessels and <i>chaîne opératoire</i>	103
3. 4 <i>Sefala</i> production: an outline of <i>chaîne opératoire</i> (as in Table II).....	107
3. 5 Table II: schematic steps [stages] in the production of a <i>Sefalana</i> vessel.....	107
3. 6 Dung composition and the making of <i>Difala</i> vessels	108
3. 7 <i>Difala</i> vessels during motif application.....	109
Chapter 4: <i>Difala</i> vessels in context	113
4. 1 Contextualising material culture, social function and meaning in a local framework	116
4. 2 Undecolonisable South African museums: case studies of <i>Difala</i> vessels in local museums	122
4. 3 Deconstructing colonial legacies and finding self-meaning through orality	130
4. 4 Anthropology seeking for meaning	134
4. 5 Anthropology and understanding material cultures	138
4. 6 Anthropology and aesthetics in art: local context	142
Chapter 5: cultural context: historical perspectives and ethnological background of Sotho-Tswana groups making <i>Difala</i> vessels	144
5. 1 Distribution of groups that produced <i>Difala</i> and cultural structures.....	146
5. 1. 1 Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafêla, a general overview	147

5. 1. 2 Bakoni-Ba-Matlala, a general overview	148
5. 2 The physiographic zone of origin of <i>Difala</i> vessels.....	164
5. 3 Socio-historical context of domestic art production	176
5. 4 Migration and changing cultural practices	184
5. 5 Materiality and perceptions of cattle in Sotho-Tswana cultures.....	187
5. 5.1 Cattle symbolism in connection with <i>Difala</i> vessels.....	187
5. 5. 3 The use of cattle by-products in the domesticity of Southern African communities	192
5. 5. 2 Patterns and decoration in vessel making	195
5. 6. 4 African ethics as related to the environment and vessel making traditions.....	196
5. 6 Localised ecologies transcending boundaries	203
5. 7 The use of land and natural resources for cultural production	205
5. 8 Gendered material culture production in Sotho-Tswana groups	208
5. 9 Historical roles of Sotho-Tswana women in African communities	223
5. 10 Changing roles of Sotho-Tswana women in their societies.....	224
5. 11 South African women, domestic roles, and the shaping of cultural creativity	229
5. 12 Black women in art and cultural practices in Limpopo Province and South Africa at large	231
Chapter 6: <i>Difala</i> vessels in South African museums	241
6. 1 Current local museum practices	242
6. 2 Interpretation: documenting and cataloguing <i>Difala</i> vessels.....	246
6. 3 <i>Difala</i> vessels in selected South African museums: a proposed descriptive catalogue	249
6. 4 Constructing a catalogue of <i>Difala</i> vessels based on taxonomic classification and incorporating indigenous nomenclature	252
6. 4. 1 Descriptive catalogue 1:.....	254
6. 4. 2 Descriptive catalogue 2:.....	259
6. 4. 3 Descriptive catalogue 3:.....	264
6. 4. 4 Descriptive catalogue 4:.....	269
6. 4. 5 Descriptive catalogue 5:.....	274

6. 4. 6 Descriptive catalogue 6:.....	279
6. 5 A comparative study of <i>Difala</i> vessels in three museums	283
6. 5.1 Polokwane Cultural History Museum	283
6. 5. 2 <i>Difala</i> vessels in Polokwane museums.....	284
6. 5. 3 Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum	286
6. 5. 4 The Iziko Social History Centre.....	289
6. 5. 5 Spherical <i>Sefalana</i> collection at the Iziko Social History Centre	290
6. 5. 6 Similarities between Sefalana collection at the IzikoSHC and <i>Difala</i> in PolokwaneCHM	295
Chapter 7: Summary of chapters, findings and concluding remarks	298
7. 1 Summary of chapters.....	298
7. 2 Findings and concluding remarks	306
7. 3 Bibliography	312
7. 4 Supplemental Sections and Appendices	334
7. 5 Supporting documents	343

Abstract

This thesis focuses on specific rare examples of Sotho-Tswana indigenous vessels, known as *Difala* ('granary vessels' made of dung), in selected South African museums, with the aim to, firstly, contextualise the vessels in their historical and cultural background, including the identification of their past usage and their perceived symbolic meanings, and, secondly, analyse the ideological and conceptual dimensions of current museum practices regarding local material culture and, thus, create the basis for formulating a contextually more relevant form of cataloguing indigenous artefacts. Thereto, I have foregrounded information needed to develop an understanding of these 'granary' vessels. There is currently great global interest in the decolonisation of museums. I have examined some museum practices currently prevalent in South African local museums and considered the challenges these institutions face in cataloguing African collections. I further explored the dynamic pottery traditions existing for the purpose of comparing the production of *Difala* vessels with clay pottery making in past and present in the region of my study. Anthropological studies, as part of major academic discourse, have lent support to my arguments. The study makes use of a variety of illustrative materials, seminal literature on material culture, archival records, maps and photographs taken specifically for the purpose of this research. Qualitative methodology was applied to the gathering of data.

Postcolonial theory underpins my critique of the museum cataloguing methods and of the colonial records I encountered in my study. The socio-historical and physiographic contexts that generated the production of undocumented Sotho-Tswana vessels were surveyed. The concept of *chaîne opératoire* has been applied in the framework of the study to consider produced artefacts. Colonial systems have shaped the ways in which people utilise natural resources, including the encouragement to exploit them. This position is problematic in view of climate change and the need for sustainable land use. The enormous gaps in the information available in local heritage institutions did pose challenges in the analysing of particular objects and the compilation of systematic catalogues. I found that, institutionally, South African museums will turn out to be undecolonisable if the artefacts collected in the past and housed in these institutions cannot be decolonised. I propose culturally more relevant models of descriptive cataloguing, that are possibly especially applicable to cover *Difala* 'granary' vessels in all their aspects.

Chapter 1: Introduction and outline of the study

Chapter one of the present thesis provides a broad overview of the research by outlining the content of different chapters.

I focus on the theoretical constituents of the study. First, I formulate its main objectives and give three examples of *Difala* vessels to be examined. *Difala* vessels are ‘portable granaries’ made purely of cow dung (cattle dung) by Sotho-Tswana women with no clay added and are thus not fired and are different from ceramics (in plural known as *Difala/Difalana*, in singular as *Sefala/Sefalana*). In the past *Difala* vessels were made for storing grain, currently they are shown as commodities to international and local tourists. This is followed by a literature review that presents the foundation of the study. I describe the challenges posed by cataloguing *Difala* collections in South African museums. Methods applied in my research are discussed. These involve qualitative methodologies used to analyse key issues. Considerations raised in post-colonial theory are presented in order to facilitate a broad theoretical framework for the study.

Chapter 2 discusses the use of clay material as well as changing pottery making practices in relation to the interface between received pottery practices and indigenous knowledge systems that will feature in considerations of the social and cultural milieus of indigenous pottery production and introduce new perspectives. As it is traditional knowledge that has shaped indigenous societies and their cultural production, I examine the concept of worldview and indigenous African pottery philosophy as embedded in proverbs linked to pottery used in gendered domestic settings. I also look at the socio-cultural context of vessel producing groups and present examples of neighbouring groups who are not makers of *Difala* in the Limpopo province. I relate these aspects to the implications of the more recent adoption of industrial products that have led to modifications in traditional pottery. Other issues considered are how these recent developments relate to the tourist market, the livelihoods of producers of material culture, and the production itself of cultural objects. Furthermore, the sustainability of pottery production in the context of globalism is examined.

In chapter 3 a schematic overview of the production of *Difala* vessels is presented. Problematic experiences in local archives are explored such as the lack of custodial records

and issues of cataloguing methods in relation to *Difala* accessioning in museums. In an examination of the material construction of *Difala* vessels attention will focus on their form and social functions, construction methods, materials and motifs used as well as meanings within a particular setting and based on an existing body of literature. Step by step illustrations are presented of building methods and motif creation in the process of making a *Sefalana* sample vessel. Several related patterns and forms of decoration in vessel making are outlined. I apply the concept of the *chaîne opératoire* to the cataloguing of *Difala* vessels in selected museums.

Chapter 4 is concerned with *Difala* cultural traditions, wider issues of traditionality and contemporary changes in *Difala* vessels. Taking account of these aspects, the chapter sets out to contextualise Sotho-Tswana material culture so that implied meanings can be considered in relation to its specific localised social situation. Regarding the deconstruction of colonial legacies, it emerges that South African museums, given their history, experience problems. I propose that South African museums are undecolonisable. I support this contention by presenting case studies of *Difala* vessels and their accession documentation in selected museums.

Anthropology plays a significant role in academic discourse supporting the search for meaning in material culture production. Hence, attention is given to studies in anthropology and aesthetics relevant to indigenous forms of visual and social expression.

In chapter 5 I consider the cultural context of Sotho-Tswana groups and their cultural distribution as shaped by their historically shared physiographic zone which, I argue, helps them to maintain and simultaneously ‘lose’ their culture through constraints imposed by the availability of physical substances required for *Difala* vessel production. On the basis of historical perspectives concerning those Sotho-Tswana groups that produce *Difala* vessels, I link migration, African ethics, local ecologies and changing cultural practices to developments in materiality and cattle-culture. As cattle continue to play an important role in Sotho-Tswana culture, I examine the use of cattle by-products and symbolism in the domestic and sacred practices of Southern African indigenous black communities. I further explore sustainable practices and changing roles of Sotho-Tswana women in their societies.

In chapter 6 I come to a major part of my thesis where I interpret *Difala* vessels in several local museums. I critically examine local museum practices currently prevalent in South Africa, and I enumerate the institutional challenges faced in cataloguing African collections in South African museums. A table lists examples of vessels in the collections of these museums. The vessels are discussed and illustrations provided. I propose a culturally contextual method of description as a catalogue model for *Difala* vessels in the selected South African museums. I, thus, present a comparative study of *Difala* vessels in Polokwane museums (Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum, Polokwane Cultural History Museum) and in the Iziko Social History Centre. *Difala* works reviewed in the three selected museums involve comparisons of vessels in two Polokwane museums (Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum/ Polokwane Cultural History Museum) and in the SA ‘flagship’ of Iziko, the Social History Collections, Cape Town.

Chapter 7 is the final chapter in which my conclusions are stated. In this final chapter, I briefly reviewed the main points arising from earlier chapters and findings, finally concluding remarks.

1.1 Overview and theoretical constituents of the research



Figure 1: Lidded Ovaloid traditional granary vessels (in plural known as *Difala/Difalana*, in singular as *Sefala/Sefalana*). Collected circa 1980. Physical measurements and dimensions of each vessel are listed on catalogue section (Example: vessel on the left is the biggest), Height 75, Width 52, Mouth 23, Base 23. Names of makers nor collectors are recorded in the museum record. Polokwane Cultural History Museum, Limpopo Province. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2013. These are the biggest vessels I have recorded in South African museums.

Chapter 1 focuses on historical collections of indigenous vessels located in selected South African museums, namely in the store rooms of the Polokwane Cultural History Museum (five *Difala* vessels) (Fig. 1) in Limpopo Province, and at the Cape Town Iziko Social History Centre (one vessel), Western Cape (Fig. 3). *Difala* are vessels produced by Sotho-Tswana women from grassland regions associated with South African Highveld, vessels are produced using fresh cattle dung, in the past these vessels were used for storing and transporting grain depending on the size.

Special attention is given to constructing, in the framework of cataloguing South African indigenous vessels, a concept for the descriptive cataloguing of *Difala* vessels in South Africa taking account of dynamic processes that affect the cataloguing of indigenous material culture. Nowadays, such vessels are undergoing modifications and presented as tourist art at

the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum. In this context tourist art is the art that is not produced for exhibitions or galleries but for sale on tourist art markets.

In this chapter I also formulate the purposes of the study and related questions to be answered in the chapters that follow. The social and cultural context of *Difala* production is discussed and the literature, methodologies and theories used are surveyed. Key concepts and issues of cataloguing indigenous material culture in local South African museums are presented in view of the South African Museums Association's (SAMA) statement that: 'Museums are dynamic and accountable public institutions which both shape and manifest the consciousness, identities and understanding of communities and individuals in relation to their natural, historical and cultural environments, through collection, documentation, conservation, research and education programmes that are responsive to the needs of society' (SAMA Constitution 2013). I emphasise that the documentation of the products of indigenous local material cultures is a vital necessity of transformation in South African museums.

The term 'vessel' requires some clarification for the sake of properly contextualizing the African indigenous container-forms central to this thesis. According to French, the term 'vessel' is 'applied to most [containers], but mainly to hollow ware rather than flatware' (1998: 77). In respect of the vessels that are the subject of this thesis, very little research has been conducted in terms of cataloguing them (Lawton 1967, Moifatswana 1993, Lombard and Parsons 2003, Huffman 2007, Motsamayi 2014). I argue that our heritage institutions have neglected *Difala/Difalana* vessels (plural, whereas the singular, *Sefala/Sefalana*, is also used for smaller vessels, produced by the Sotho-Tswana people of the Highveld. Lestrade (1929) writes that the term 'Sotho-Tswana' applies to black people who live in Botswana, Lesotho and South Africa, I included those from Namibia. In South Africa it includes Tswana speakers, Southern Sotho speakers (Basotho), and *Sesotho sa Lebowa* speakers. According to Mönning (1967: 11), 'The tribes of the Sotho group are scattered over a vast area of southern Africa, and largely as a result of geographic isolation, as well as certain historical factors, including diverse external influences, they developed into three distinct ethnic sections, namely the west Sotho or Tswana of Botswana and western Transvaal; the south Sotho of Lesotho and the Orange Free State; and the Transvaal Sotho or East Sotho of the northern and Eastern Transvaal'.

In the course of my study I show that there is no convincing evidence that links the Southern Sotho (Basotho) with the production or use of *Difala* vessels. This could be due to the fact that Basotho are in origin refugees and have a mixed heritage resulting from contacts with various groups (Van Warmelo 1935, 1946; Ross 2009) such as Nguni and Sotho-Tswana. Throughout my research I have found that *Difala* were distributed among Sotho-Tswana of the interior Highveld, Setswana and Northern Sotho speakers.

The most important records, consulted as part of my research on *Difala* collections identified as dating from between circa 1886 and the 1980's, include an exotic painting by Samuel Daniell (circa 1804-1805), an ethnographic report by Anne Lawton (about 1967), the ethnographic collection at IzikoSHC (1962) compiled by Isaac Schapera, and an ethnographic collection in PolokwaneCHM (1980s) (**Fig. 1**), collected by the founding members of Polokwane museums with no available records at all. The information gathered from these collections is supplemented by a study of current experimental reproduction vessels (2014), made for the tourist market at BakoniMNSOAM by women from various Northern Sotho groups. I emphasise that *Difala* vessels currently produced at BakoniMNSOAM are not well-moulded as compared to those in the historical collection dating back to the 1880's and those collected by Schapera between roughly 1962 and the 1980's, housed at PolokwaneCHM and at present reproduced in the BakoniMNSOAM.

The conclusion to be anticipated here is that contemporary makers of *Difala* vessels in BakoniMNSOAM have not yet reached the levels of competence of the producers of collected *Difala* vessels in PolokwaneCHM, who were skilled craft workers. Similarly, vessels collected in Botswana and Namibia, reflect differences in skills of their local makers and the effects of varying environmental factors.

For the present research, collections of *Difala* vessels were sourced from Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafêla at IzikoSHC, originally collected in Botswana, and from Bakoni-Ba-Matlala (PolokwaneCHM) in Limpopo, South Africa. In Botswana, two-third of the Bakgatla live in the large central town of Mochudi. The other third is distributed over nearly a dozen much smaller villages towards the south-west (Comaroff, Comaroff and James 2007: 61). In Limpopo Province many Bakoni people of whose traditional culture the collections that are

central to this research are a part, live in Polokwane and Ga-Matlala and elsewhere in Capricorn District Municipality (Van Warmelo 1946, Mönning 1967, Jordaan 1992).

It should be noted that the present study is not documenting the histories of above mentioned groups. The mere fact that the studied vessels have been identified as connected with particular groups does not necessarily mean that only these Sotho-Tswana groups did produce *Difala* vessels (as attested by the Namibian collection, **Fig. 31**). It simply means that South African collectors in the past have concentrated on these groups, motivated by the interests of administrations in the colonial and the apartheid eras, or else driven by specific reasons of their own (Schapera 1936, Lestrade 1937, Lawton 1967, Van Warmelo 1974). The only collections I have managed to find in the store rooms of the museums I have visited, were sourced from Bakoni (Bakoni-Ba-Matlala) and another Northern Sotho group in the area (BakoniMNSOAM was specifically built for these groups), and Bakgatla (Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafêla) among whom Isaac Schapera conducted ethnographic research making an immense contribution to the study of Batswana material culture (Schapera 1937, Schapera and Goodwin 1937, Schapera 1942). Schapera's collection was donated to IzikoSHC. To claim that *Difala* vessels belong to the tradition of only the above-mentioned groups would not only be a fallacy but also strengthen the, in the past enforced, colonial tendency of ethnocentrism (Burchell 1822, Livingstone 1857, Mackenzie 1887, Native Affairs Department 1905, Mönning 1967, Legassick 1977). An exploration of this ideologically driven ethnocentrism and its consequences lies outside the scope of the present study. In the course of this thesis it will become clear that *Difala* are communal vessels and have nothing to do with royalty.

My main concern remains the provision of a descriptive catalogue (Schmierer 1989, Hunter and Bakewell 1991, Baca and others 2006, Motsamayi 2012) of Sotho-Tswana people to whom *Difala* producing groups belong. Such descriptive cataloguing has to be based on physiographic data concerning the past, and on available current anthropographic data. In the process of developing such a cataloguing model I focus specifically on *Difala* vessels that are part of broader cultural and agricultural systems (involving the concerns of food security and contested agricultural land). *Sefalana* storage is used for special selected grain to be kept for future use whereas large quantities are stored in a small house known as *Letlolo* (**Fig. 40 [1]**) and constructed in a way similar to that of a rondavel (wattle-and-daub house) made from earth.

1. 2 Main purposes of the study

The main objectives of the present study are to culturally contextualise *Difala* vessels and to review the systems directing their museum accessioning, especially regarding their description and cataloguing in such public institutions. The close connection between the changing natural environment and cultural production will be considered in respect of *Difala* vessels, thereby highlighting the shortcomings of museum practices when it comes to cataloguing these particular items of indigenous cultural production (Motsamayi 2014, 2015). I have chosen to focus on the production of historical and contemporary *Difala* vessels housed in selected museums because they are so few in number. The reasons for their rare presence in museum collections will become apparent as they are discussed in several chapters and as specific sections of the thesis scrutinise related issues.

Generally, *Difala* vessels made of fresh cattle dung (Motsamayi 2014) and clay pottery, decorated with natural pigments that are derived from local ferruginous soils (Hughes, Bester, Calder 1997, Fowler 2008, Motsamayi 2015) in South Africa, especially in Limpopo Province, and to which the case study in this thesis is devoted, are outstanding examples of the interface of material cultural creativity and natural resources.

This study aims to produce culturally appropriate descriptions of products of indigenous material culture that may assist in museum practices of cataloguing Sotho-Tswana vessels in the PolokwaneCHMuseum, the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum in Polokwane, Limpopo Province, and the Iziko Social History Centre in the Western Cape Province.

In general, my study seeks:

1. To investigate current methodologies for cataloguing indigenous vessels (especially *Difala*) in local museums.
2. To model descriptors for vessels studied in the South African context, in particular for Sotho-Tswana cultural vessels. Research conducted for my MA degree (Art History thesis, Motsamayi 2012) argues there is a pressing need for proper contextual studies and new ways of cataloguing African indigenous material cultural artefacts in heritage collections.

3. To examine the socio-historical and physiographic contexts that have generated the production of hitherto undocumented Sotho-Tswana vessels. Though there are very few in local or major public museums, I have photographed *Difala* in the Polokwane Cultural History Museum, the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum in Polokwane, Limpopo Province, and the Iziko Social History Centre in the Western Cape.
4. To document and critique the culture and traditions associated with indigenous heritage in view of colonial legacies, specifically by critically exploring the production of contemporary indigenous domestic storage vessels. I aim to identify connections (and, possibly, recent innovations) between indigenous domestic wares on the one hand and ‘visitor wares’ on the other (Nilant 1963, Lawton 1967, Rawson 1971, Zaverdinos 1997, Vincentelli 2000, Mathieu 2003, Jolles 2005, Fowler 2006, Riep 2008, Perrill 2012), and ‘orthodox’ opinions (Laidler 1938, Arnold 1985, Cruise 1991, Richard 1999).
5. To examine the published characteristics of vessel traditions associated with the Sotho-Tswana people, in order to gain insight into the archival records present in the PolokwaneCHMuseum, the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum in Polokwane, and the Iziko Social History Centre in the Western Cape.
6. To construct, based on findings related to the above points, a documentary and culturally contextual and linguistically precise descriptive catalogue of the Sotho-Tswana *Difala* vessels in selected South African museums.
7. Moreover, I hope to enhance their cultural significance generally in the context of South African collections of indigenous arts and crafts, and to contribute to the recognition of the need for vastly improved measures of museum practice in the research, accessioning, documentation, conservation and display of objects of indigenous material culture such as the *Difala* vessels of my study.

In the process I aim to gauge the development of relevant resource material, the contextual circulation, usage and distribution of *Difala* vessels, and the stylistic elaborations that continue to dynamically transform these vessels under the influence of ongoing societal change in the temporal and spatial movement of Sotho-Tswana peoples and their correlated cultural expressions. Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum (BakoniMNSOAM), Polokwane Cultural History Museum (PolokwaneCHM) and Iziko Social History Centre (IzikoSHC) offer *Difala* in their collections, preserved by museum founders and scholars, and

studied by well-known anthropologists who judged them to be representative of cultural values (Schapera 1962, Lawton 1967).

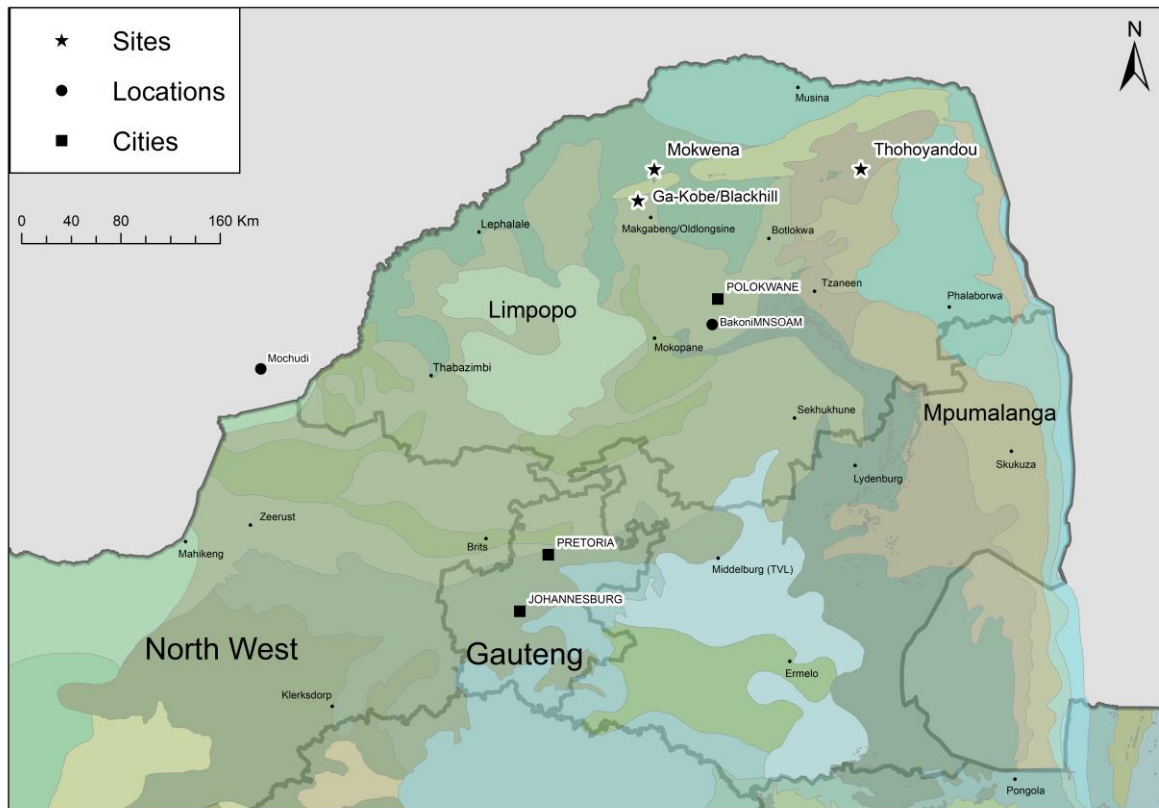


Figure 2: The large dots on the map indicate the principal areas where people associated with *Difala* in my research are currently distributed and star shows sites where pottery were interviewed. Cartography and GIS Unit, University of KwaZulu-Natal, produced 2016.

The main point of the above map is to indicate key sites where there is a scattered population of Sotho-Tswana who made *Difala*. Some of these vessels have been researched for the present thesis. They are in Botswana (Mochudi) and the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum in Limpopo Province. Towns where people live who have been identified as associated with the production of selected *Difala* are represented by a large black dot in South African territory, while a small dot across the border indicates the area of Botswana where *Difala* were found (Fig. 2).

I extend the scope of my research by including a comparative study of *Sefala* vessels in the Iziko Social History Collections, Cape Town, that were collected in Botswana, Mochudi, and that reflect historical cultural connections with the South African *Difala* vessels, made of fresh cattle dung and housed in the PolokwaneCHM. These vessels are currently replicated by

women at the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum (**Fig. 2**). The women have copied these artefacts in the past and I requested for the practice to be revitalised for the purpose of my research. In particular, I wished to investigate current methodologies for cataloguing these vessels and to propose a descriptive model based on the experiences of these women when reproducing the vessels at the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum. In order to identify practical ways to improve the interpretation of African cultural items, particularly by incorporating Sotho-Tswana indigenous taxonomies and nomenclatures. I expected their experiences to be helpful in assessing the cataloguing of these traditional vessels in the South African context of cultural history museum collections. According to Hobsbawm (1983: 4), 'Tradition is deliberately invented and constructed by a single initiator'. In the context of Africa, tradition was in the past associated with static and unchanging practices or creativities which are now dynamic (Motsamayi 2012: 24). Winters (2015: 1) notes that tradition changes over time. If a specific concept is rooted in past African experience of practice, it could have been classified as traditional. In this thesis my understanding of tradition and traditional will be based on above contestations.

To examine the socio-historical context, taking account of anthropographical aspects and of the environmental factors that generated the production of certain undocumented Sotho-Tswana vessels, I have made photographs of vessels in the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum and the PolokwaneCHM as well as in the Iziko Social History Collections. My visit to the Iziko collections gave me new insights that proved useful for my study of African vessels and their documentation, especially in respect of benchmarks currently applied in the national flagship that is Iziko and the resulting documentation of artefacts in its care.

Motsamayi (2014) notes that there is in South African heritage institutions a lack of adequate information pertaining to the study of dynamic African traditions of storage vessel making as well as on details of their production and the processes involved, particularly in the case of vessels made from natural materials such as the Sotho-Tswana vessels (Schapera 1937, Quin 1959, Lawton 1967, Mönning 1967 and Shaw 1974). Members of a good number of groups in Botswana have relatives living in rural South Africa, particularly in the Limpopo and North West Provinces, and vice-versa. It appears as if many Sotho-Tswana groups who live currently outside Highveld areas, are surrounded by artificial boundaries that were non-




existent before the arrival of the first Europeans. This confirms that culture can be taken from its place of origin and continue to flourish in a new environment as was the case with *Difala* vessels the production of which has transcended borders.

Recently, classifying these vessels in their South African context has become part of a complex discourse, just as has happened with other forms of traditional creativity elsewhere (Daniell 1804-1805, Laidler 1938, Schofield 1948, Lawton 1967, Rawson 1971, Zaverdinos 1997, Mathieu 2003, Huffman 2007). It is true that in many heritage institutions artefacts are accessible only to a limited public, due to the persisting inequalities in our societies (Bennet 1988, Davison 1998, Coombes 2003, Dubin 2006). I aim to propose cataloguing methods that may make artefacts such as *Difala* vessels more accessible to every member of the public. Even if South African heritage institutions lack modern technological facilities, they should be able to provide effective descriptions of artefacts using, for example, illustrations and written comments, and by compiling a database. In addition, my proposed methods pay attention to contemporary local society, philosophical concepts rooted in locality (Mphahlele 1962, Horton 1967, Mudimbe 1988, Mudimbe 1994, Gyekye 1997, Gray 2001). Lawton (1967: 183), Moifatswana (1993: 87) and Lombard and Parsons (2003: 82), in their respective publications, provide valuable information that is, thus far, concerned mainly with archaeological issues. Hence, some of their findings are not relevant to my model for cataloguing the material cultures of Sotho-Tswana currently.

Among the *Difala* vessels some are indicative of socio-cultural and environmental changes that are occurring in specific geographical regions. In the past it could happen that rare objects were simply collected and put in the storerooms of a museum without any information being added or questions being asked from the collectors (Pearce 1994, Hooper-Greenhill 1994, Ames 2004, Westermann 2005, Golding 2009). Even the reason why they were kept in a museum in the first place was often unknown (Durrans 1988:157, Pearce 1992: 241). By focusing on these issues, I aim to generate new, and improve current, methods through obtaining relevant information from vessel makers and from curators who, after all, are the custodians of this heritage. Such information will assist me in extending existing relevant knowledge that can lead to meaningful outcomes.

By concentrating on the above-mentioned areas, I have extracted pertinent information concerning Sotho-Tswana vessels from museums as well as producers. This has enabled me to develop an effective approach to cataloguing methodologies that, while related to current discourses on issues in the cataloguing of productions of material culture, will be appropriate in detailing such artefacts for museum purposes (Fahy 1995, Goodnow and others 2006). This would entail an improvement on the current situation and possibly also ensure future continuity. I aim, thus, to address the lack of a relevant cataloguing methodology as well as the unavailability of local methods appropriate for indigenous vessel collections that affects the accessibility of collections in most local heritage institutions. It is my understanding that the descriptive textual base cataloguing methodology presented in this thesis will add value to methods currently used to catalogue African vessels, due to its proposed revised textual analysis, specifically geared towards providing extensive details on types of vessels, materials and methods of production and the implied local cultural significance (Laidler 1938, Lawton 1967, Zaverdinos 1997). The research findings will be of value to academia and open possibilities for more relevant art-historical, anthropological and generally scientific comparisons within the scope of current research and analysis dealing with traditional and contemporary pottery (Rawson 1971, Arnold 1985, Layton 1991, Richard 1999, Vincentelli 2000, Mathieu 2003, Motsamayi 2014), among these *Difala* vessels in South Africa.

1. 3 Table I: Three examples of typology of *Difala* vessels

		
<p>Figure 3: Spherical <i>Sefalana</i> (in the form of a dung vase). Height cm Estimate 30 cm, Width 38 cm, Mouth 16 cm, Base 18 cm. IzikoSHC. Details in the catalogue Chapter 6. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2014.</p>	<p>Figure 4: Ovaloid <i>Sefala</i> vessel. PolokwaneCHM. Height 62 cm, Width 42 cm, Mouth 24 cm, Base 22 cm). Details in catalogue Chapter 6. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2013.</p>	<p>Figure 5: Cylindrical <i>Sefalana</i>. Height 24, 5 cm, Mid width 19 cm, Mouth 8,5 and Base 8,5 cm. BakoniMNSOAM. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2014.</p>

My research focuses on three types of *Difala* vessels. In the catalogue section geometric form descriptors are central to identify the distinctive structural attributes of *Difala* - and hence classifying the vessel forms into typologies. The smaller one, *Sefalana*, was used in the past for transporting and/or storing special grain for the next planting season (**Fig. 3**). The big vessel, *Sefala*, served to store grain that was to be eaten in a temporary settlement or in the homestead (**Fig. 4**). Finally, there are tourist *Sefalana* which are smaller and decorated. They are displayed in museums or used for demonstrations (**Fig. 5**). These types of vessels vary in size. In the present thesis ovaloid vessels in the PolokwaneCHM are referred to as *Difala* (plural) and *Sefala* (singular). Some persons call all of them *Difala/na*, whether big or small, but small vessels may be referred to more particularly as *Sefala/na*. Vessels in the IzikoSHC are, as per museum record, identified as *Sefalana* while also contemporary vessels produced in BakoniMNSOAM are called *Sefalana*. Historically -that is when they were still used for storing and preserving grain - the vessels were known as *Difalana* (plural) and *Sefalana* (singular). I found recently that there exists a very small type of vessel that has not been recorded although it is used for demonstrations in a contemporary local museum (Motsamayi 2014). As it wouldn't make sense to call also these smallest vessels *Difalana*, I will, for the purpose of this research, use the term *Difala/Sefala* for the bigger vessels and *Difalana/Sefalana* for the smaller ones, thus distinguishing between them by size - as the cow is distinguished from its calf. This point makes sense in the context of the close connection between the vessels and Sotho-Tswana cattle-culture; I expand on this issue in Chapter 5.

From my fieldwork in the region, I am aware that in Botswana and other parts of South Africa all these types of vessels are simply known as *Sefalana* (singular), irrespective of their size (Lawton 1967, Moifatswana 1993, Tlou and Campbell 1997). Researching *Difala* vessels, as I will call them throughout this thesis, is complicated by the paucity of pertinent information about the vessels which are in rural areas no longer produced for their original purpose, except in the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum. In Botswana the vessels are reported as being extinct (Tlou and Campbell 1997: 72) as well as in the North-West Province and Gauteng (Mokgatle 1971: 13). This information has been confirmed by my informants in these regions.

The decorative designs found on *Difala* vessels that are part of the present research are informed by the environment and surroundings in which makers and users of the vessels live.

Where natural resources are used for the creation of decorative designs, the environment takes on a different character from the village (Motsamayi 2015, 2018). However, the material culture of Sotho-Tswana groups has changed over the years although some traditional elements survive (Native Affairs Department 1905, Schapera 1936, Mönning 1967, Pauw 1974), for example the traditional dwelling hut with a conical roof (**Fig 6**), typified by some material features that are also found in a *Sefalana* vessel.



Figure 6: Traditional Sotho-Tswana house and wall painting. Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2014.

The architectural form that typifies the Sotho-Tswana dwelling is the cone, topping a cylinder (Burchell 1822, Quin 1959, Mönning 1967, Suggs 2002). The hut is constructed along lines of domestic iconography and using local materials that include woods, reeds, fibres, grasses, earth for plastering and cow dung (Schapera and Goodwin 1937: 145). The forms of *Difala* vessels found in Polokwane museums resemble those of the traditional dwellings (**Figs. 6 and 7**), common among various Sotho-Tswana groups and informed by the indigenous type of Sotho-Tswana rondavel house (Frescura 1989, Motsamayi 2014). On the floors of Sotho-Tswana homesteads traditional domestic designs are made, usually by women applying a mixture of fresh cow dung and earth (Lestrade 1937: 120, Hammond Tooke 1993: 203,

Motsamayi 2014: 8). Locally dug earth and cow dung are considered as sacred materials that can be used only for specific purposes. The decorations serve to enhance the aesthetic appearance of items or of buildings as much as to distinguish the ethnic affiliation and localised group-identity of the homestead's people.

De Jager (1973) and Steven and Munroe (2009), indicated that contemporary decorations and designs in most crafts are not perceived as having specific meanings. From my interviews with artists I learned however that shapes may be interpreted as reflecting the bodies of pregnant women, since *Sefala* provides storage space for the grain that people depend on for their survival. These vessels are produced by women. *Difala* vessels also correspond with Sotho-Tswana architecture, both in their forms and in the use of materials that also function in domesticity. The *Difala* vessels I have studied in the Polokwane Cultural History Museum are decorated with motifs that were peculiar to traditional homes and that also featured in wall painting in the past, inspired by indigenous cattle. In my experience, however wall painting is in many households in the region no longer prevalent, except where decorations are applied to draw the interest of tourists (Elliot 1989, Powell 1995). Decorations based on traditional motifs have recently been making a come-back in modern *Difala* and various other vessel types (Motsamayi 2014).

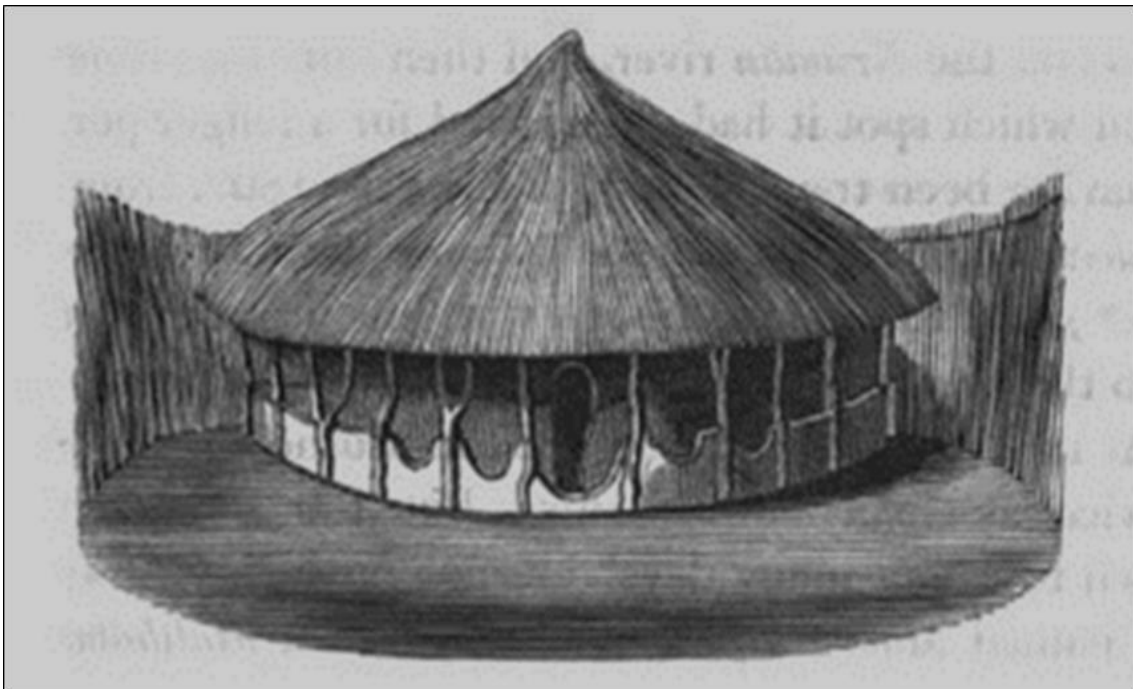


Figure 7: Traditional Sotho-Tswana decorated architecture as depicted by Burchell (Burchell 1822).

This kind of indigenous architecture (Burchell 1822) is informed by the domestic architecture of the Batswana people. 'historical' decorative motifs are currently popularised by Ndebele artists (such as Esther Mahlangu), Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum. Past African designs applied in architecture and in the domestic sphere are integrated into mainstream creative production as well [Figure 7], including the creation of contemporary vessels. My research involved a re-examination of scholarly documents focusing on Sotho-Tswana domestic practices as documented by Van Warmelo (1935), Schapera (1937), Krige and Krige (1943), Quin (1959), Lawton (1967), Mönning (1967), Legassick (1969, 1977), Suggs (2002) and Landau (2010). They report on fieldwork interviews conducted with people who identified themselves as Basotho, Batswana and as belonging to various Northern Sotho groups.

In addition, I have in the course of my research studied the reconstruction of a *Sefala* vessel (Motsamayi 2014) at the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum. While involving this public institution in the activity, I have avoided inviting private individuals to try and stimulate a revival of *Difala* vessel making traditions, not as much for the sake of possibly increasing public interest in the museum which would benefit the institution anyway, but more because I hope to foster continuity in the renewed production of these rare and almost forgotten traditional vessels.

Thus, I have interacted with Sotho-Tswana vessel makers (the names of some are not disclosed at the request of the, otherwise willing, participants), producers of clay pottery and with museum staff, advocating for the creation of more appropriate contextual documentary practices regarding archival records in the museums, thereby also advancing improved knowledge of current innovations and practices of rural potters and vessel makers in South Africa including Polokwane and Limpopo, the Capricorn District and the Vhembe District municipalities.

In the context of African society, specific objects are made for specific purposes. They are intended to be used in ways that are by communities perceived as pertinent to their cultures. Sotho-Tswana people made *Difala* vessels without classifying them as expressions of art such as is done in the fraternity of professional artists and in museums that tend to categorise artefacts into groups. The scholarly literature reviewed for the present thesis offers

convincing evidence that certain cultural objects were not intended to be displayed in, for example, museums (Lawton 1967, Summers 1975, Jordaan 1992). However, at the Iziko Social History Centre and in the Polokwane museums, circumstances at the time of collecting indigenous artefacts determined the conditions for classifying them according to their importance for museum display or their value for the tourist market. When customary *Difala* vessels are transformed from their domestic use as utilitarian granaries into contemporary forms of tourist ('visitor') art, they serve to commemorate an actual visit to an African cultural locality, overlaid, however, with a longing for an historically distant, pre-colonial idyll (Burchell 1822, Laidler 1938, Schofield 1948). Decorated and exhibited in museums, *Difala* cease to be 'granaries' and come to be perceived as cultural icons of a new, contemporary African art: 'consumer wares' that manifest ancient indigenous practices of utility, creativity and innovation for the public and heritage museums.

My visits as part of my studies to museums and heritage sites in South Africa and abroad, have exposed me to a variety of insights into issues of museum display and helped me to conceptualise processes for the cataloguing of indigenous cultural items, specifically in the South African context. Among important considerations in this respect are existing relationships between the display and the history of objects that are produced in similar ways in Southern African countries neighbouring each other. In 2009, I was part of a research team tasked with making plans for the Klerksdorp-Orkney-Stilfontein-Hartebeesfontein (KOSH) exhibition at the Klerksdorp Museum in the city of Matlosana. I had the opportunity to research and review archival records of Batswana people in the North West Province for museum purposes. For my Master's degree in 2012 I focused on documentation of Sotho and Zulu pottery. When visiting museums and communities in KwaZulu-Natal, I became aware of challenges posed by the documenting of cultural knowledge that had been neglected by museums.

Consequently, I have examined the different methods of cataloguing and documenting specific indigenous vessels in South African museums with the general aim of deconstructing a number of colonial ideological premises in this respect. I developed the view that Western tenets and methods of cataloguing (Schmierer 1989, Hunter and Bakewell 1991, Baca and others 2006) indigenous vessels in the South African context are attended by serious dilemmas of interpretation. It is part of a curator's responsibility to scrutinise entrenched

categorisations and to manage heritage works in local museums. Therefore, a catalogue of artworks needs to be available that, by encouraging the generation of new knowledge, enables audiences to act as active participants when viewing museum displays. Such audience participation will foster a sense of belonging and create or nurture a degree of attachment to the exhibited objects which, in turn, will stimulate social conscience in respect of environments (Bennet 1988, Davison 1998, Golding 2009, Dubin). In the past, the products of indigenous material culture, collected during art historical and anthropological research and found currently in South African museums, were presented as a collective witness to the status of Africans as exotic others (Summers 1975). The objects were not valued as art and craft worthy of exhibition and as a valuable contribution to positive knowledge (Hooper-Greenhill 1994, Coombes 2003, Goodnow and others 2006).

Schapera (1962) and Lawton (1967), the anthropologists who pioneered the identification of *Difala*, have left no supporting documentation or provided details on their collections. The lack of information is emphasised by the fact that I have been unable to find any relevant texted base systematic research and methodological records in respect of cataloguing *Difala* vessels in South African heritage institutions, specifically in the Polokwane museums in Limpopo Province and the Iziko Social History Centre in the Western Cape. Besides, at this moment in time no active research is conducted in any of these institutions with the aim of establishing a process for the methodical cataloguing of these vessels and their background and for tracing them back as far as their area of origin. The lack of such a process continues to be an important obstacle to future digitisation and to a visualisation process of the products of African material cultures in general.

Without a contextually-based procedure for cataloguing African material cultures, it will remain difficult to subject artefacts to a process such as digitisation, as there won't be enough analytical information on the basis of which their future significance in relation to digitisation can be established (Schmierer 1989, Hunter and Bakewell 1991, Fahy 1995). The cataloguing of African vessels cannot continue to be, as it is currently, a matter of one description fits all. In my efforts to establish solid facts, I have selected museums located in both rural and urban areas and examined their present cataloguing systems. I found they were not of a standing that could be beneficial to either audiences or researchers. Having looked at *Difala* vessels, their materials, methods of production, their local cultural significance and challenges, I set

out to collect first-hand knowledge and experience of local cultures while living among Nguni and Sotho-Tswana, Tsonga and Venda peoples. I gained further in-depth information about local South African cultures in general, which helps me to avoid generalising cultural information pertaining to one specific group by applying it to groups with other traditions. I have aimed to stress the significance of each group's material culture in its own right and as compared to the cultures of other groups encountered in the course of my research.

In most cases, *Difala* vessels are made without any intention of exhibiting or storing them in museums to be seen or studied as part of South Africa's heritage as is common practice nowadays. Usually, *Difala* vessels served domestic purposes. So as to get a good understanding of *Difala* making traditions I engaged with several senior women vessel makers and potters in Limpopo Province and other regions. They operate in the museum context as well as independently, producing artefacts for the tourist market and for cultural purposes. Many of these contemporary *Difala* are found in the areas where I conducted research. The contacts with vessel makers gave me an opportunity to document their cultural heritage productions and to experience at first hand specifically the construction of *Difala*.

The information I collected will, I hope, provide a sound foundation for the development of an advanced descriptive cataloguing model for museum purposes in the present technological era (Chenhall 1988: 24, Schmierer 1989: 8, Fahy 1995: 83). My research topic covers museums and archival retrieval, on-site and archival photographic documentation, the physical scrutiny of actual vessels and their usage in a real-life context, the accessing of material in libraries and archives, fieldwork consultation with current heritage workers, museum professionals and academic colleagues, and interviews with practitioners and groups associated with Sotho-Tswana vessels and their usage (Motsamayi 2014: 6). In the context of South African museums, the presentation of objects has often been affected by misconceptions on the part of museum functionaries who received items of material culture from collectors who themselves could not indicate the usage and implied meanings of the artefacts (Summers 1975, Jordaan 1992). Most of the theories and models associated with these objects are no longer applicable (Laidler 1938, Schofield 1948, Quin 1959, Nilant 1963, Van Warmelo 1974, Summers 1975) and require updated information to be brought into line with contemporary digitalised methods that are the future tools for the effective documenting of material cultures in museums.

1. 4 Literature review

Any contemporary development of methodologies intended for cataloguing artefacts that belong to the cultural heritage of South Africa is extremely problematic, given the entrenched (and sophisticated) practices of global museum culture (Bennet 1988, Durrans 1988, Karp 1992, Hooper-Greenhill 1994, Davison 1998, Coombes 2003, Ames 2004, Dubin 2006, Kreps 2011, Onciul 2015). The task is further complicated by the presence in many South African museums of objects in collections that are in storage and, as such, never researched or seen by the public.

Schmiegel (1988: 49) proposes that a museum catalogue should normally offer information that includes facts as well as opinions on artefacts. Chenhall (1988), on the other hand, argues in favour of nomenclature as a cataloguing system as it provides the standard names by which objects are known and that can by cataloguers be used for indexing collections. The hierarchy applied when using nomenclature as a system is based on the original function of an artefact rather than on any other of its characteristics (Chenhall 1988: 1). In any case, a system based on nomenclature would not be applicable in the context of the present thesis, as the vessels that are its subject are socially dynamic and are modified to suit a tourist market.

Nomenclature could, however, serve as a useful foundation for the development of a coherent descriptive cataloguing system, particularly if combined with other methodologies reviewed in this thesis. The idea of a *Catalogue Raisonné* as proposed by the New York Public Library (at <http://www.nypl.org/about/divisins/wallach-division/art-architecture-collection/catalogue-raisonne>) is useful for establishing a generalised starting point.

‘A catalogue *raisonné* is a comprehensive, annotated listing of all the known works of an **artist**’ (my emphasis; in the context of my research I include this to mean a maker of material cultural items), either in a particular medium or all media. They may provide some or all of the following.

- **Title and title variations**
- **Dimensions/size**
- **Date of the work**
- **Medium**

- **Current location/owner at time of publication**
- **Provenance (history of ownership)**
- **Exhibition history**
- **Condition of the work**
- **Bibliography/literature that discusses the work**
- **Essay(s) on the artist**
- **Critical assessments and remarks**
- **Full description of the work**
- **Signatures, inscriptions, and monograms of the artist**
- **Reproduction of each work**
- **List of works attributed, lost, destroyed, and fakes**
- **Catalogue number.**

Whilst useful, the quoted suggested data entries make no provision for an emic cultural context; the artist's intentions and issues of iconography are evidently assumed via etic/external observer interpretations (emphasised in the bold-face text in the above list of data entries).

Typical of ethnographic museum records of African artefacts is an example from the collections of the British Museum (BM). Three '[c]lay, grass & dung bowls' (vessels) are described as '...made of clay?, dung and grass with everted rim and round-flat base, painted rust-colour inside with four ovolos in black and white, outside painted black, white and rust', acquired in 1948 'from tribes of the Nuba Hills, Kordofan [Sudan], collected by the donor in 1940'

(http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=588642&partId=1ðname=2686&page=1). Though the data from the 'early 20thC' delimits the quality and depth of information provided by the BM's online record, there is no culturally contextual information provided about the Sudanese origins and emic utility of the '[c]lay, grass & dung bowls'.

Hence, my proposed methodology for cataloguing *Difala* indigenous vessels uses partial aspects of existing etic and emic approaches with, however, standards for documenting

African collections prescribed by ICOM (1996) and with, among added refinements, specifically a contextually-based approach for Sotho-Tswana arts and craftworks. South African museums have adopted Spectrum procedures as collection management standard (http://www.ether.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/SAMA-conference_SPECTRUM_comp.pdf). Spectrum is currently used in the United Kingdom and by museums around the world (McKenna and Patsatzi 2005). In my study I focus on cataloguing and documentation which are important in relation to *Difala* vessels found in museums in South Africa and elsewhere.

Cataloguing methods applied in museums have at some point in the past been designed for specific establishments and purposes (Hunter and Bakewell 1991, Baca and others 2006). Chenhall (1988: 1) argues that the persons who, faced with the need to classify and catalogue man-made objects, developed methods such the system based on nomenclature. Similarly, *Catalogue raisonné* is shaping contemporary debates (Gabrielli n.d.). It was anticipated that, as institutions adopted and worked with these methodologies, scholars would, if necessary, suggest improvements. In my opinion these established models of cataloguing are not suitable for all types of African vessels found in South African museums. Delsey (1989: 51) notes that standards for descriptive cataloguing have been subjected to change. Against the background of the increased availability of technology, it should be possible for my model to be integrated in the computer system database which can be updated regularly.

In describing indigenous vessels, I am aware that observers across cultures associate the shapes of vessels with parts of the human body (i.e. anthropomorphism) (Rawson 1971: 100, Richard 1999: 197, Braithwaite 2007: 4). For example, basing on research done by (Jolles 2006, Motsamayi 2014), segments of vessels are identified as the vessel's head, mouth, neck, belly, or foot (Mathieu 2003: 13).

Cataloguing requires the provision of analytical information on developments in the production of artefacts, in this case the changes occurring, from the past to the present, in undocumented objects of material culture made by Sotho-Tswana speakers. There has been no advancement in cataloguing heritage institutions since colonial times (Laidler 1938, Lawton 1967, Summers 1975). *Difala* vessels in South African museums have never been adequately studied. Museums have no records of how their *Difala* collections were acquired

or on their cultural significance. In the South African context, general perceptions of the inherent values of indigenous material cultures and their products remain embedded in concepts, modelled and influenced by Western epistemes in the mechanisms of an art industry (Burchell 1822, Livingstone 1857, Mackenzie 1887).

Researchers may by chance come across precious objects when visiting visit heritage institutions. To catalogue such finds, there is an urgent need for a process of identifying them. This process involves tracing communities that are familiar with the objects concerned.

The use of current American systems for cataloguing objects of local cultures (Chenhall 1988: 17, Schmierer 1989: 31, Baca and others 2006: 375) is complicated by the fact that these systems do not cover all the aspects that are pertinent to African artefacts. Among these aspects is, for example, the desirability to describe African artefacts from the background perspective of local South African museums. If this background is not included by a cataloguing system, it may result in the loss of the actual meanings of artefacts. Research of this nature - aiming to provide a model for a comprehensive descriptive catalogue of African, indigenous artefacts - requires a range of different approaches, also in respect of the analysis of artefacts and the sourcing of information. Adding to the complexity of the undertaking is the fact that, to date, of the small number of interdisciplinary studies of South African material cultures that are available (Levinsohn 1984, Gaylard 2004), only very few highlights and connect issues of art history (Motsamayi 2018), anthropology, livelihoods, ecology (De Jager 1973, Motsamayi 2014) and soil sciences (Hughes, Bester, Calder 1997, Fowler 2008, Motsamayi 2015). This lack has created a gap between scholars of indigenous knowledge and experts in other fields, leading to an absence of research that is built on a solid body of knowledge of the different subjects concerned.

According to Odora-Hoppers (2002), indigenous knowledge is local knowledge associated with Africans which is culturally connected local Indigenous communities (Pottier 2003, Vincentelli 2003, Arnold 2018, Motsamayi 2018), with the exception of ethnographical information, was in the past generally not considered as advanced enough to be worth documenting for the purpose of enhancing social awareness. As a result, African vessel production was often classified as 'craft' rather than as fine art. This confirms that curatorial judgement tended to associate Western cultural objects with so-called 'high art' that deserves

to be prominently shown in museums and galleries. Referring to post-colonial theories (Fanon 1994: 50, McClintock 1994: 295), I challenge such entrenched notions and insist on examining discourses that focus on the interpretation of ‘difference’ and ‘otherness’, particularly where material cultures in our cultural institutions are concerned.

Authors who have previously discussed similar issues in relation to various forms of Southern African indigenous pottery include Quin (1959), Lawton (1967), Clark and Wagner (1974), Roy (1991) and Hammond-Tooke (1993). I focus in my literature review also on other scholars who have helped to develop new insights pertinent to vessel production, basing themselves on vessels made of dung (*Difala* vessels), as opposed to authors who write on pottery made from clay. ‘Pottery’ is the term frequently used to describe any ceramics (but) it refers more properly to low-fired earthenware’ (French 1998: 77). According to Creswell (2014: 28), the literature review of a researcher should provide information on existing studies, closely related to the one undertaken by the researcher in question. Such a literature review has the potential of linking the new study to those done in the past and, if necessary, fill or bridge gaps between existing and new information, thus fostering continuity between previous and new studies. In quantitative research, literature reviews vary commonly, in accordance with the context of the study. The literature review in the present study incorporates previous study reports that identify and focus on key issues (Creswell 2014: 28). Knell (1994: 53) states that the primary purpose of studying objects located in our museums is to acquire knowledge by examining and analysing them, while determining their historical background in order to find out what materials were used for their production, how they were made and functioned, and how they relate to other, similar objects present in South African museums.

To contextualise *Difala* - an exercise that will contribute to the adequate cataloguing of the vessels - it is necessary to gain insight into the socio-historical character of the environment in which they were produced. For such an insight to evolve, historiographical texts about South African vessel making traditions are critically reviewed, among them studies by Van Warmelo (1935), Schapera (1937), Lawton (1967) and Jordaan (1992). Based on these studies, we can make observations concerning changes and developments in *Difala* production as revealed in the documentation of this form of local material culture, in particular in relation to the *Difala* vessels I have identified in selected museum collections

and which are still being made currently in some regions that I have visited as part of my fieldwork. Some of the older texts written by the above-mentioned scholars are, although no longer relevant to my research, still of interest as they provide informative details about cultural history collections. Huffman (2007: 8) has conducted extensive research on the analysis of ceramics, pre-colonial farming societies, and the identification of a central cattle culture pattern in the Southern African context. Huffman gives ethnographic data that may provide a key to the analysis of the material cultures of many ethnic groups in South Africa. His research does, however, not cover *Difala* vessels and the context of their production.

1. 5 Research methods applied in the study

For research to be effective, it must be based on the application of pertinent methods that allow the research to progress and fulfil its tasks as stated in a research proposal. Following such a procedure can help to ensure sound results and facilitates the discovery of information that was lacking in earlier studies of a similar nature (Kerlinger 1979, Ellen 1984, Pons 1992, Sarantakos 1993, Keesing, and Strathern 1998).

The research methodologies used in the present thesis have exposed me to the inadequacy of the recording systems used in respect of South African heritage collections of indigenous material culture. Whereas in the past these collections were considered as pillars of South African culture, the proper contextual methodological documentation required currently is practically absent. Among much important cultural material in local and national museums and other heritage institutions are the *Difala* vessels that are the focus of my research. By pointing at the lacunae that characterise the relevant institutional records and documentation of vessels, I aim to position myself for designing and recommending better documentary practices that will make it easier to identify and describe culturally important objects for museum purposes. The lack of information on such objects makes it difficult for curators, especially those who are newly appointed in museums, to exhibit artefacts.

By examining examples of *Difala* vessels in museum collections alongside related catalogue information, I set out to obtain descriptive details of *Difala* vessels that, as part of catalogue information, may be helpful in their identification. Part of my examination of *Difala* is the scrutinising of their forms and surfaces and the photographing of features as well as

attempting to correlate results of my studies in the museums with answers obtained in fieldwork interviews with people who make contemporary vessels and who have been asked about techniques, materials, motifs and production processes. This part of my research was done using museum records and library archives (including photographs dating from 1881 to the present), conducting fieldwork, engaging in professional consultations with museum officials, collecting oral accounts from senior descendants of groups thought to have used *Difala* vessels and from current producers as well as from potters belonging to other groups for the purpose of making comparisons.

Hence, my fieldwork involved discussions with older Sotho-Tswana women who are potters in the respective Limpopo areas of my research. Several participants did not want their details to be known but were willing to take part in the research. I will refer to them as ‘anonymous informants’. Photography was used as a tool to visually capture relevant data and to assist in a physical assessment of the areas where vessels were, and are, made. I supported my research of these issues by consulting museum officials (employed in specifically the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum, the Polokwane Cultural History Museum and Iziko South African Museums) with whom I identified and thoroughly considered problematic aspects of heritage practice in relation to documenting storage vessels and *Difala* vessel making traditions in the context of Southern African indigenous knowledge systems. To improve the quality of descriptive identification of objects proper analysis is required. Thereto, I looked into the contemporary context of *Difala* vessels in the region where they are still made and studied how they are produced. I explore what methods of classification should be used in museums and discuss the use of *Difala* vessels in relation to the materials involved in their production. These materials are of importance to raise an awareness of possible ecological influences on *Difala* traditions and resources which in turn imply a connection to environmentalist concerns (Bird-David 1993: 113, Milton 1993: 4, Argyrou 2005: 2, 6, Motsamayi 2018: 154).

During my visits to museums in the Limpopo and Western Cape Provinces where I did research for this thesis, I found that curators continue to depend on vague methods and show no evidence of a dynamic insight into the cataloguing of African collections the presentation of which is here and there characterised by stereotypical information, in particular when

artefacts produced by women in rural areas are concerned (Laidler 1938, Nilant 1963, Lawton 1967, Cruise 1991).

Art produced in African societies is often not seen as an individual venture but as emanating from, and belonging to, communities in their entirety. This perception implies the view that artefacts are made collectively and have communal meanings attached to them (Levinsohn 1984, Hatcher 1985, Hodder 1996, Joyce 2009). In this context the idea of unknown artists, as discussed by Soetsu (1989), has led to a discourse of which the complexity is difficult to express in cataloguing African vessels. The problem goes back to the fact that many objects have been collected years ago and their collectors did not provide details about their makers, simply calling them 'unknown'. As a result, artefacts are in museums often identified, not by their producer but by their collector whose name appears on identification cards. The issue of intellectual property is far from resolved in respect of many objects in South African museums.

I review and record, using documentary evidence including photographs. Among these are some images made on-site by explorers such as Daniell (1804-1805) during his African expedition, especially in South Africa. Early travellers expressed exotic and biased views of Africans, due to an inability to contextualise their observations. Particular traditions of African groups are of a dynamic nature whereas the writings of Daniell (1804-1805: 8, 27) and his contemporaries are characterised by stereotypical interpretations and exaggerations (Burchell 1822). Travellers' insights were limited as they remained unaware of the fact that African artefacts are not static but subject to continuous innovation (Motsamayi 2018) and that in the making of art, in particular by women various forms of cultural production are interlinked.

My visits to different sites provided me with an overview that led to an understanding of current relationships between cultural items, geographical areas, museum cataloguing methods and curatorial processes. All groups I surveyed had used sorghum grain as staple food. Sorghum, thus, has played an essential role in the existence of Sotho-Tswana groups. It was also used to make traditional beer. I refer mainly to colonial and anthropological studies by Van Warmelo (1935), Schapera (1937) and Jordaan (1992), whose parochial interests brought Sotho-Tswana vessels into public collections. Their stylistic and iconographic

features are presented as signifiers of ongoing and changing Sotho-Tswana cultural identity and of a contemporary tendency to globalising hybridity (Lawton 1967, Jordaan 1992, Zaverdinos 1997, Motsamayi 2012).

1. 5. 1 Research methodology and ethical consideration in context

Initially, data collection for the present thesis was a reflexive and conjectural exercise as I focused on obtaining already published knowledge of South African cultural heritage and on studying the museum records and artefacts present in heritage institutions (Lawton 1967, Summers 1975, Jordaan 1992). I need to stress that this thesis is partly the outcome of a participatory process involving contemporary respondents. Objects in the PolokwaneCHM and the BakoniMNSOAMuseum in Polokwane, Limpopo Province, as well as samples from the Iziko Social History Centre in the Western Cape form the core of my study. To contextualise the studied vessels I have conducted interviews and engaged with museum officials (specifically of the BakoniMNSOAMuseum, PolokwaneCHM, and Iziko South African Museums) with the aim of identifying issues of heritage practice in documenting *Difala* vessel making traditions in Southern African indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) in a museum environment.

Pons (1992: 106) and Bernard (2018: 163) describe qualitative research methodology as exploratory in character. Instead of asking an interviewee specific questions on a well-defined subject, the researcher invites him or her to tell their story from their own perspective. I was interested in information about environments in which *Difala* vessels are produced, in the gender background of makers, in techniques used to construct the vessels as well as in their stylisation and/or decoration. Other foci were the scientific processes involved in their production, including the examination of used materials as considered from the environmental perspective and the listing of natural resources on which *Difala* vessels are based. In order to gather pertinent information, I visited various groups in Limpopo Province - including several who don't make *Difala* – first, to hear their views and, second, to study the existence of dynamic traditions in these groups for the purpose of comparing the production of *Difala* vessels with clay pottery making.

Prior to my study, I have met informally with vessel makers, other potters and heritage professionals who deal with material culture and with artefacts relevant to the study. Following an ethical clearance process, I obtained the willing participation of informants for the purpose of my research in museums and in villages where pottery is still made and collected.

Most vessels, among them *Difala*, that I have researched at the IzikoSHC collections and the Polokwane museums, would not have survived if there had been no collectors who took them to heritage institutions. The question remains, however, if removing artefacts from their traditional background to place them in institutions is ethically sound in relation to the original producers and owners who assigned to these artefacts particular roles in their communities (Case 1988, Pearce 1994, Buck, and others 2007). The professional management of heritage collections requires the application of basic work ethics. Ethics is a branch of philosophy concerned with proper ways of doing things (DesJardins 2006: 3) and, as such, is relevant to the construction of methods for descriptive cataloguing. South African Museums Association Professional Standards and Transformation Indicators (2006), a project of the Transformation Training Programme funded by the Department of Arts and Culture, note that ‘there must be evidence of research on the museum’s collections and a permanent record of research by staff and external researchers relating to the museum’s collection must be kept’.

The principles I have applied in my research include proposing correct procedures for my handling of museum collections (De Ruijter and others 2010: 54) and for conducting interviews with contemporary makers of artefacts and museum officials. I have formally applied to heritage institutions and asked permission to interview practitioners. In the context of developing a design for a descriptive cataloguing system, I have considered the ethical soundness of, when cataloguing artefacts, tracing how they have ended up at a museum and unravelling both their perceived historical and contemporary meanings in their societies. In addition, I have enquired how institutions have obtained collections of artefacts, as well as in what state these are today and were at the time of their arrival (Bennet 1988).

The qualitative research methods of Ellen (1984: 8) and Sarantakos (1993: 54, 541) provided a useful basis for my fieldwork interviews. These consisted of semi-structured approaches as

described by Bernard (2002: 205). Questions posed to makers of *Difala* vessels and other potters were concerned with construction methods, materials used, the types of vessels produced and their social functions in past and present. I use photography as a tool to visually record data of *Difala* vessels.

To generate a catalogue, I review different systems for documenting artefacts and I examine how these can be improved to suit the South African context. This information is discussed in the descriptive catalogue section (chapter 6). I discovered that ethics provide a foundation for the research of human interaction in relation to the use of cultural and natural resources. It was specifically ethical considerations that guided me in determining the best way of cataloguing *Difala* vessels. Thereby, I developed an understanding that it is necessary to assess existing models of vessels used in past and present, and to appreciate contemporary discourses associated with vessels, before proposing new views and making assessments in respect of descriptive cataloguing. It is of great importance to catalogue the vessels concerned, by following processes in line with well-organised methodologies, being clear about an ethical foundation and avoiding disrespect of methods that have for many years been used to catalogue the artefacts. When studying collections of material culture, one needs to be aware that it is unethical to keep artefacts in museums without ensuring their identity by adding information about their origins and their significance for the community in which they were collected. The above discussed considerations on the research and contextualisation of past and contemporary *Difala* vessels have framed my attempts to design an effective method for their descriptive cataloguing in museums and heritage institutions.

1. 5. 2 Fieldwork in this research design

My fieldwork studies included the scrutinising of cataloguing processes, photographing artefacts and a physical inspection of various sites from an ethnographic viewpoint and of actual vessels and other pottery on display in institutions, in order to identify key aspects of materiality that would be useful in comparing my observations with those presented in published studies by, among others, French (1988), Jordaan (1992), Ugolini (2010) and Motsamayi (2018). Creswell (2014: 19) is of the view that researchers prefer a qualitative approach when they seek to establish the meaning of a phenomenon based on the opinions of participants in the research. The qualitative research approach could serve to identify certain

cultural practices that are common among various groups, after which attempts can be made to establish how these practices were developed in the first place. A key element in the gathering of qualitative data for research purposes (Bernard 2002: 205) consists in observing the behaviour of participants in meetings that are relevant to the actual research process. It is in this context that, instead of relying on interviewees only, I have chosen to incorporate, throughout the chapters of this thesis, relevant interviews conducted during visits to museums and photographs of artefacts, as well as the physical inspection of actual objects that appear on documentary photographs of Sotho-Tswana vessels in available records. I have, thus, used information obtained from participants in my research to back up my findings, as well as data provided by authors who foreground in their publications subjects that are closely related to my research topic.

Creswell (2014: 190) outlines four collection procedures associated with a qualitative research methodology. First, qualitative observation which occurs when, during his or her meeting with participants, the researcher takes field notes on the behaviour and activities of individuals at the research site. Second, there is the qualitative interview, conducted face to face with participants. This method involves unstructured, open-ended questions that enable the researcher to solicit more information from participants. The third procedure involves qualitative documents: the researcher collects qualitative documents wherever these are available as well as personal writings, diaries, letters and e-mails. In the fourth place, qualitative audio and visual materials are used (Creswell 2014). This procedure of data collection may involve photographs, art objects, videotapes and websites online. It is part of an ethnographic approach covering 'living' stories from the informants, metaphorical visual narratives and digital archives. I have applied these methods in the gathering of information during visits to participants and research sites.

During fieldwork it was often difficult to confine myself to specific works in the museums. Potters in the villages I visited were not expected to follow the specific procedures that I adhered to when visiting research sites and, especially when dealing with older people, I tried to avoid putting them under unnecessary pressure and chose to communicate with them in their mother tongues, namely in Sotho-Tswana languages, Tshivenda, and other South African languages. Besides, I used an informal approach in discussions and tried as much as

possible to stick to participants' favourite topics of conversation, gradually introducing my subject matter. This method was successful and elicited positive responses.

1. 5. 3 Interview techniques applied in the research

Semi-structured interviews (Bernard 2002: 205) have been used in the research to collect necessary, relevant information on historical and contemporary vessels. I found that semi-structured interviews allow interviewees to share information comfortably and without the pressure of facing both open-ended and close-ended questions. Semi-structured interviews help to avoid plain 'yes' or 'no' answers that tend to limit the researcher. I hoped to extract explanatory information on existing concepts of the descriptive cataloguing of *Difala* vessels and their condition in museums as well as expert knowledge of vessel making practices. I tried to avoid approaching interviewees in a more structured way so as to keep conversations flexible and facilitate a flow of relevant information. Many of my informants are senior members of their communities, who have a profound knowledge of indigenous culture and vessel making traditions. I kept discussions simple and adhered to the protocol peculiar to daily life in many rural communities as I had observed it. In conducting the interviews, I was informed by the questions I had prepared but, to leave space for a broader discussion I didn't read the questions out to participants. I also used the photographs of *Difala* vessels which I had taken in museums and I visited villages to show these to old people to see if they knew and could identify the vessels.

Consulting with gatekeepers before undertaking a research is vital for the success of any project. There is an underlying philosophy in African culture which says: *A ri dzheni nari ri si na mmbwa* - Literal translation in Tshivenda, he who goes to hunt the buffalo must first consult the experts (hunting dogs). To gain access to the different research sites I have made use of gatekeepers as is common practice in study projects (see appendix section). According to Miller and Bell (2002), gatekeepers are persons in a position to permit access to a site for the conducting of research. In museums authority is often centralised and in such institutions the decision to give or withhold permission to conduct research is not necessarily taken by curators. From an ethical point of view this is important as it highlights the potentiality of a few individuals exercising power, which appears to be the norm in institutional structures. In many museums visitors' access is controlled by functionaries who report on their decisions to

senior staff members carrying the factual responsibility for such decisions and for other public activities in the institutions.

In rural areas individual potters have authority over the pottery they produce for tourist markets. Therefore, in some research projects, the representative of a group is considered to be the gate-keeper as happened in my case studies. Thus, I relied for my documentation of production processes on descendants of people who in the past practised the making of *Difala* vessels and other pottery. Among the participants were professionals and community members who were considered especially knowledgeable in their particular field of expertise, irrespective of whether they were connected to a particular group of women. I also communicated with members of communities from where vessels present in museums had been sourced, especially in Limpopo Province. In Western Cape Province, on the other hand, I interviewed curators who endeavour to find information that clarifies the background of objects in their social history collections.

Discussions with the makers of vessels focused in part on the indigenous names of vessels (for example *Difala* and *Dipitša*), whereby I hoped to raise an understanding of how *Difala* makers currently use the vessels, namely as a utility (for eating, drinking, storing), as symbols, or for transport.

While considering aspects of vessel making in villages and museums, it became evident that specific environmental and seasonal factors play a role in the production of the vases. Enge and Smith (2010: 2) argue that the concept ‘environment’ is usually understood as referring to surrounding conditions that affect organisms living there. Instead, the environment is the surroundings that connects organisms to each other. Factors of an environmental or seasonal nature are among the reasons why only women make certain vessels and men have no part in their production. Many resources, needed for making the vessels, are domesticated, easy to harness and by women used on a daily basis. This practice is informed by the socio-cultural roles played by women in households. Comments related to these issues are of importance to me because, when I mentioned them, senior women among the interviewees were moved to demonstrate and explain the construction methods and processes involved in making *Difala* vessels. Explanations centered on the use of raw materials, for example cattle by-products, and clay. They described processes of drying and firing vessels and the use of motifs, incised,

applied, and/or painted. These are among the elements I considered for inclusion in the documenting of contemporary pottery, as they are useful for making comparative studies. In several conversations, social and cultural functions, associated with the vessels and connected to current creative traditions among other groups in Limpopo Province, were described to me. All this information was thoroughly integrated into the text of this study. I found that little relevant information is available from books, journals and other publications.

The vessels central to my study were chosen on the basis of their availability in the selected museums. The set of interview questions allowed the participants and me to mutually express opinions in discussions related to the research topic. A rapport with participants was developed that helped me to extract necessary information. The questions were generally simple with a logical sequence to make the discussions move smoothly. This helped me to contextualise the impact of certain cross-cultural traditions on the material cultures of the groups concerned, whereby I found that various cultures overlap, and borrow from, each other which becomes apparent when innovations are introduced.

1. 6 Post-colonial theory and material culture in the museum

In general, my study applies a post-colonial theoretical framework in its attempt to deconstruct labels associated with documenting the material cultures of Africans. According to Kerlinger (1979: 64), theory is ‘a set of interrelated constructs (variable), definitions, and propositions that presents a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining natural phenomena’. Creswell (2014: 54) notes that, in research, a theory is used to create a dialogue and a basis for subjects studied, while providing relevant explanations that may support an interpretation of the nature of that which is being studied. In this section of my thesis post-colonial theory is the central methodology, chosen because I wish to look at, and consider the analysis of, discourses involving concepts associated with African artefacts - vessels in particular - by focusing on a deconstruction of discourses that have inscribed indigenous material cultures in non-African cultures (Mudimbe 1988, 1994). Mid- to later-twentieth century Modernist studies of indigenous pottery (Schofield 1948, Nilant 1963, Lawton 1967, Jordan 1992) as well as collections in South African museums, have strongly advocated a stasis character as the core quality of African traditionality.

I challenge such tenacious Eurocentric viewpoints (Gyekye 1997) by applying post-colonial and de-colonising theories, proposed by Fanon (1961), Césaire (1994), Wa Thiong'o (1994) and Mignolo (2011) Mignolo, Walsh (2018) who take account of challenges faced by former colonised people as regards the development of identity and continuing issues of power relations between former colonial powers and their former subjects. The theories I use are rooted in Western scholarship (Stanard 2016, Buettner 2016, Collins 2017), because South African museums were used by Western institutions to shape ideological premises for dealing with collections of artefacts made by colonised African peoples. I am aware that post-colonial theory is very contested as it has questionable aspects of violence. In spite of this, I use the theory in the present research to frame concepts that may foster African perspectives on the analysis of material culture.

I found post-colonialism suitable for the present research because of its approaches to an examination of discourses on the deconstruction of ideas associated with cultural production and with subjectivity in relation to the documenting of different power relations in arts and cultures in cultural/social history institutions (Coutt-Smith 1991, Césaire 1994, Cabral 1994). In order to contextualise some of these concerns, studies, based on the integration of various disciplines and encouraging the identification of indigenous knowledge and the true history of local communities where cultural material was produced and collected, should be perfected. However, several methodologies can be used, complementing each other and aiming to avoid the risk that cultural treasures become accessible only to elites who can use modern technological tools such as the digitalised databased interpretations that are common in many institutions. Based on my assessment of objects currently in PolokwaneCHM and the Social History Centre at IzikoSHC, I have concluded that it must be possible to design a descriptive cataloguing model that accommodates every member of an audience, including those who cannot read and write, through mutually participatory processes involving interviews with experts whose views should be integrated in new cataloguing systems.

Many scholars have addressed colonialism in Africa and scrutinised manifestations of its legacies on the continent and in the diaspora (Fanon 1961: 4, Mudimbe 1988: 16). I suggest that their criticisms are relevant, also in the specific context of South Africa which is partly Anglophone with a considerable presence of Afrikaans speakers. Post-colonial writings have

shaped the understanding of the art and material culture produced by people who were subjected to colonial systems such as apartheid. Césaire (2000: 59) argues that colonisation is in part based on mentality and that there are groups of people in the world who, for unknown reasons, suffer from, what he calls, a ‘dependency complex’. Therefore, their psychological make-up would make the members of these groups tend to depend on others. Memmi declares this to be most commonly the case with people who have lived under conditions of colonisation, although they are not the only victims of colonial history (Memmi 1991: 112). Foreign styles of cataloguing, applied in South African heritage institutions, originate from such a context. In many cases, particularly in art, but also in aspects of, for example, knowledge production, black people continue to rely on descriptions produced in the colonial era and fail to challenge the static character of those records where their past is concerned (Memmi 1991, Mignolo 2011, Buettner 2016, Collins 2017).

Black people continue to validate information resulting from the colonial handling of indigenous history, that is still common practice in many cultural and educational institutions. New research is needed in the post-colonial era for the rewriting of indigenous history and for offering fertile insights into the material culture of South African peoples by presenting balanced views that may foster a new interest in the study of indigenous vessels for the benefit of future generations of scholars and for others, interested in documenting material culture on the basis of a deep understanding of the impact that the adoption of colonial values did have on the production of material culture and on the self-perception of its makers.

Martin (1999: 79) refers to this issue, using the words of Fanon who notes that there has been no effective process of decolonisation in Africa because colonial structures have not been destroyed and continue to operate, so that what happened at independence ought to be defined as the Africanisation of colonisation. In South African museums one finds the evidence of an indigenisation of colonialism. Most contemporary heritage institutions are still products of colonial structures that continue to regulate, evaluate and house African art (Coombes 2003, Rassool 2006, Dubin 2006). These institutions are based on Western views on, and perceptions of, African artefacts. Even where heritage institutions are under the control of museums, the so-called previously disadvantaged are still subjected to colonial administrative systems. These systems are used to administer institutions and to deal with their holdings of artefacts which, since they have been collected with colonial intentions, have been left

without any effort being made to deconstruct such historical legacies of colonisation (Stanard 2016, Buettner 2016, Collins 2017). Employing a black person in a managerial position does not change a whole system, nor does it add up to decolonisation.

During my fieldwork to museums and villages I have observed that the colonial sources of documentation and cataloguing have affected, and even destroyed, local histories by recording their insights in a way that alienates people from their material cultures. At the same time, it should be noted that certain colonial sources have been crucial in shaping and preserving the heritage that we find currently in our museums and that, as a result, these sources have become dominant by foregrounding specific major concepts concerning this heritage (Laidler 1938, Lawton 1967, Summers 1975). Custodians of *Difala* heritage have not been involved in efforts to extract the meanings of collected artefacts. Thus, in order to validate some of the records left by colonial sources and, generally, to test the relevance of information in heritage institutions as documented in the past and as far as related to my research topic, I have made use of oral history (Mphahlele 1962, Mbiti 1969, Mudimbe 1994, Gyekye 1997). In many African cultures age is associated with wisdom and with carrying responsibility in one's household as well as in the community at large. A family that counts seniors among its members, is considered to be a complete family. Elders may function as counsellors and seers, who share their experience with the aim of giving new generations a responsible outlook on the future. In other words, elders function as depositories of knowledge and are regularly consulted by family members of all ages. Major decisions are usually taken by senior women. As women are responsible for maintaining the wellbeing of families, they are expected to supervise all activities related to the performance of cultivation rituals and related traditions that confirm domesticity (Obbo 1980, Okihiro 1984, O'Barr and Firmin-Seller 1995).

Post-colonial theory includes discourses on issues occurring after, and as a result of, one nation being colonised by another. In this regard it must be noted that, South Africa has in fact had an extensively documented relationship with colonial powers it was a British colony following the Boer war (1909) and linked to America (Ross 1981, Meredith 2007). These colonial ties, dominant in, for example, education and economy, have left the country with a legacy that remains pertinent to present-day perceptions and analyses of the lives and material culture of African people (Mudimbe 1988, Césaire 1994, Cabral 1994, Fanon 1994,

Motsamayi 2018). For example, institutions concerned with education and other forms of knowledge production, were modelled to reflect Western paradigms of scholarship. Similarly, studies focusing on the identity of material culture of African people were dominantly inspired and shaped by colonial models prevailing in the colonised world (Fanon 1961, Wa Thiong'o 1994). Hence, perceptions of peoples in South Africa, their lives and their cultures, were determined by colonial models. This brings us to the point that many ideological premises advanced, still currently, by institutions in South Africa, including institutions of heritage and learning, are a mere reflection of the views of those who in the past colonised local people and influenced them ideologically (Coombes 2003, Dubin 2006, Motsamayi 2012).

As I illustrate below, colonisation is not only about the physical exploitation of colonised peoples which has been the subject of many studies focusing on colonial legacies (Collins 2017, Stanard 2016, Mignolo, Walsh 2018), but also manifests itself in other ways in society at large, including in institutions engaged with culture and creative production (Mphahlele 1962, Mudimbe 1988, Buettner 2016). Thus, colonial legacies continue to inform societal structures and to influence key issues (Mudimbe 1994: 8). In the context of the present research, this means that colonial legacies still put their stamp on contemporary approaches to the material culture of African people, represented in museums, for example, by indigenous vessels. In the colonial era the colonial administration was motivated by the wish to control cultural practices of colonised people and their expression of self-definition in relation to other groups (Wa Thiong'o 1994: 442).

When people lose their sense of identity as the result of alienating interpretations of their culture and its products, their trust in their significance in the world where they live is affected. This has occurred in South Africa. In many rural areas where objects of material culture continue to be produced for tourists, many wares are currently modified to please buyers but, meanwhile, compromising their authenticity as African heritage products. This means, that people will increasingly produce artefacts to which no cultural meanings are attached. Their relation to the artefacts will diminish in intensity and they will ultimately find themselves struggling to recreate a situation in which they can regain their cultural identity (Motsamayi 2018). Without knowledge of that which specific artefacts in their collections stand for, museums are faced with serious dilemmas when they attempt to properly catalogue

the works. In South Africa museums are the only institutions that appear to be privileged and allowed to keep in their care precious objects that have been found in this and neighbouring countries. Unfortunately, many people in South Africa have lost interest in visiting heritage institutions due, in part, to colonial notions and related factors discussed above, which tend to form a buffer, preventing the interested visitor from gaining insight in indigenous material culture.

Colonial history has led to a situation in which African artefacts cannot be understood without having access to past records describing the reasons for, and the circumstances of, their production. This problem can be traced back to colonial ties between Western countries and Africa as a whole. Fanon (1967: 64) indicates that, under colonialism, African peoples were denied their identity. Their cultural expression is difficult to understand since they themselves lack a clear insight into who they are, as the result of having been subjected to colonialism and its prescriptions. This is how the identity crisis that is evident in the relationship of Africans with their cultures has come about. The fact that there are no systems, specifically designed to document the material culture of black people, has contributed to the flaws that currently characterise the cataloguing of indigenous artefacts and that are evidenced by the lack of information available on *Difala* vessels in museums. It should be noted, that many artefacts in heritage institutions were not intended to be on view or kept in a museum storeroom. Therefore, one cannot blame museums entirely and exclusively for not considering the creation of a descriptive catalogue, specifically for cultural and possibly sacred objects. This leaves us with the question what purpose museums thought to be serving by collecting the artefacts.

Césaire (1994: 60) points out that the blame for the inadequate dealing of (heritage) institutions with African material culture, cannot be laid solely at the door of the former colonial masters, but that formerly colonised peoples - Africans in the present context - bear part of the responsibility. Subject people cannot distance themselves from colonial notions since they are a product of these (Memmi 1991: 15). They operate therefore, limited by the conditions imposed to indoctrinate blacks (Fanon 1994: 37). Mostly, black artists and cataloguers have voluntarily adopted Euro-American (Western) methods of dealing with their material cultures, because these were the only existing methodologies that could be used in institutions. In the following section it will become clear that the limited systems available at

the time seemed to work and enable cataloguers to account for artefacts housed in their institutions.

Fanon (1994: 37) observes that the main problem facing Africans, even after their liberation, is related to a dependency complex that makes them feel they can't become who they really are without borrowing from Western concepts. Fanon's analysis is based on his observations of Martinique in the 1950's, which had been under French rule and not really severed its relations with its former colonial master. However, Fanon's conclusion is relevant to an analysis of much discourse on former colonies in the post-colonial- era, including where Southern Africa is concerned. The current conditions in South African heritage institutions confirm that there is a need to deconstruct ideas associated with former colonial systems. In that context, old cataloguing systems need to be reviewed and contemporary models examined and changed, so that new perspectives may be developed that promote an awareness of the possibilities inherent in collaboration between local curators and indigenous custodians.

The aim should be to accommodate South African material culture in heritage institutions in such a manner as to reflect the true history of peoples. It is of importance to remember that the domination of black peoples' languages by the languages of Westerners was a crucial factor in the subjection of the mental universe of colonised Africans and their relationship to the world, as argued by Wa Thiong'o (1994: 442). For example, in the English language *Difala* vessels are referred to as granaries, in other words, as vessels meant to store grain for villagers. In reality however, *Difala* vessels, made currently in urban settings, are changing and can no longer be described as mere granaries. In addition, people in rural areas no longer preserve grain and nowadays their main motive for producing vessels and other artefacts is to serve the tourist market. For the reason of language alone, it is difficult to leave behind past mental perceptions and colonial interpretations of objects that have dominated the 'image' of *Difala* for decades.

It is essential to study the archives in conjunction with interviewing contemporary producers of artefacts and to explore how historical events have shaped the state of heritage institutions as it is currently. I am of the view that African material cultures are not always homogeneous in distribution and documentation, due to the historical developments that have shaped, and

continue to shape, all structures in African societies. In respect of the cataloguing of African material cultures, the approach of 'one size fits all' is inapplicable. In the African context every case must be treated as unique. As concerns *Difala* vessels and much other pottery, the establishing of documentation is further complicated by the fact that the vessels have undergone many changes to make them fit for museum purposes and tourist markets. Without a thorough review of historical records, the cataloguing of contemporary objects in a museum context is problematic, in particular for cataloguers who do not belong to the same culture as the makers of objects, but also for members and younger generations of African groups who are not familiar with their culture's practice of producing meaningful artefacts. Younger members of Sotho-Tswana groups may, for example, know little about dung vessels that were for their ancestors a matter of tradition. Césaire (1994: 45) remarks that colonialism justified its actions by advancing the view that colonised people cannot even imagine what freedom of expression means. This would imply that they have no idea what freedom of expression could do for, among many other issues, the practice of cataloguing their artefacts in museum collections in such a way as to bring out and preserve their cultural significance. Perhaps museums continued to use existing cataloguing systems because these were assumed to be satisfactory.

Even today there are museum functionaries who see no need to review or change current cataloguing systems and, as they are the experts, they are free to make such decisions. It would be meaningless to allow non-experts to decide on questions concerning material cultures as they lack the necessary knowledge. A lack of insight in the background of objects of material culture is evident also in the cataloguing of cultural objects in many institutions that house ethnographic collections. Fanon, recounting colonial activities, states that to undo colonialism's effect, it is not sufficient to merely empty people's minds of thinking along irrelevant colonial lines, as colonialism has, at times, distorted the history of black peoples and destroyed some of its crucial aspects (Fanon 1994: 37).

The main objectives of colonialism were profit, privilege, and usurpation as is argued by Memmi (1991: 9). In vessel making, for example, in particular by rural potters, vessels are now produced predominantly for marketing reasons. In other words, these items are made specifically to be sold to urban, often privileged individuals, who wish to include in their interiors ethnographic objects reminiscent of rural African villages, perhaps for reasons of

nostalgia. Sometimes these buyers ask vessel makers what these vessels looked like traditionally, but more often they ask for modifications to be made. Potters comply with such requests because they need to sell their products.

Traditionally, vessel makers in rural areas used to exchange their vessels for whatever they needed. After the more recent adoption of a cash economy, the inhabitants of rural areas have started to transport traditional artefacts to urban areas where there are growing tourist markets. Collectors of ethnographic materials tended to offer their collections to museums without acknowledging the makers of objects (Durrans 1988, Price 1989). They didn't feel the need to do so, because their main concern was not with the makers but with their products. One could argue that the museums have turned urban visitors and tourists into consumers of the material culture of black people. This led to a demand for specific objects and for new artefacts to be produced to meet market expectations. The result was the creation of large quantities of objects, including traditional indigenous artefacts that had been modified following the wishes of interested buyers. Memmi (1991: 102) warns that, as long as black people tolerate the effects of colonisation, their only possible alternative is to assimilate. If assimilation is refused, there will be nothing left for them but to live in isolation from their age. As is apparent from their more recent work, rural potters have chosen for assimilation and their productions are dominated by innovations conceptualised from African perspectives.

There is currently, in the post-colonial analyses of material cultures of black people in the museums, a pattern discernible regarding the appropriation and distribution of cultural items. Many museums in post-apartheid South Africa, including those which are run by black people, have assimilated colonial systems to catalogue their collections. This implies that officials, responsible for the day to day running of such institutions, are incapable of changing their views on the documentation of objects of contemporary material cultures in their care and continue to rely on outdated methodologies, failing to generate new approaches to cataloguing aspects of artefacts in their institutions. Perceptions of the world, created in the mind of a young person, take years to be eradicated, if that is even possible at all, as argued by Wa Thiong'o (1994: 443). Many staff members of museums have, at the beginning of their employment, been introduced to certain ways of thinking on the cataloguing of material

cultures as part of collective systems. They have embraced this thinking and find it difficult to operate outside the familiar systems.

In the museums on which my study is in part focused, namely the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum, the Polokwane Cultural History Museum and the Social History Centre at Iziko, *Difala* vessels are kept in store rooms with no records provided or research being conducted to identify their origins and to compile other information that could be relevant also to objects made currently by a new generation hailing from the area where *Difala* were collected.

Generally, rural museums are short on qualified staff as they regularly lose older functionaries to retirement. Besides, there appears to be little interest in documenting the material culture present in museums. As concerns postcolonial theory, the post-colonial agent - in this context the subject people - may appropriate the language of the former colonial masters for presenting their own contributions, thus staying in line with colonial predecessors (Mishra and Hodge 1994: 277). This approach is evident in the cataloguing of indigenous artworks in many museums, where the old style of documentation still prevails. The following chapters focus on practical as well as theoretical issues related to the ceramic pottery traditions of Sotho-Tswana with the aim of providing a broad contextual background for the main part of my discussion of the, uniquely non-ceramic, *Difala* vessels.

Chapter 2: indigenous pottery productions in Limpopo Province

The positioning in this thesis of the present chapter that deals with the indigenous pottery of Limpopo Province posed some difficulty. It was felt necessary to, first, provide a broad context for the production of vessels that involves the use of materials derived from the environment: clay, earth, graphite, grasses, plant-ashes and cattle-dung. My reason for letting this chapter precede the discussion of *Difala* vessels is based on the argument that, as many constructional processes and, indeed, the forms themselves of *Difala* vessels, are very similar to those used by potters, a chapter about pottery will provide an appropriate contextual introduction to the study of the *Difala* productions that are the main focus of my research.

In this chapter I will also foreground the importance of, not only natural materials and processes in Sotho-Tswana pottery production, but also the contemporary incorporation of manufactured (industrial) products that extend ancient vessel traditions. For the sake of drawing comparisons, an outline of Vhavenḁa pottery is presented since its makers are part of a close, neighbouring group of Sotho-Tswana (be it with lingual differences) and the two groups make vessels that are alike in constructional methods, techniques and forms.

2. 1 Indigenous pottery in context

The present chapter is informed by knowledge gathered during my research of *Difala* vessels of which the production, as mentioned in previous chapters, relies on the availability of cattle by-products and a conducive environment. To gain an insight in the wider background of Sotho-Tswana material cultures, I have explored other forms of material culture that are dynamic in nature and that continue to be made by many rural women, providing them with an income.

As there was in the traditional production of *Difala* vessels (continued in contemporary 's new trend of vessel making), an evident focus on the use of natural resources, I researched in particular the functioning of natural resources for cultural production linked to clay vessels. My intention was to provide museums and their curators as well as collectors of artefacts with

relevant information on, and hence a better understanding of, African pottery that, thus far, has been relatively neglected and exhibited - or kept in storage - in heritage institutions without research being undertaken to ensure their identification. For my MA degree, I have researched Zulu and Southern Sotho pottery in KwaZulu-Natal (Motsamayi 2012). I have at the University of KwaZulu-Natal also been exposed to Greek vases. This background stimulated me to further my study of indigenous vessels in South Africa. My present research on the interface between received pottery practices and indigenous knowledge systems will be used in a consideration of the social and cultural milieu of indigenous pottery production, with the aim to develop new perspectives (Motsamayi 2014, 2018). Since it is traditional knowledge that has shaped societies and their material cultures, in this section I examine worldview and indigenous pottery philosophy as embedded in a domestic gendered setting and a particular socio-cultural context, illustrating my arguments with clear examples.

I further scrutinise technical issues regarding making pottery at a time when environmental conditions are changing and new practices surface in Limpopo Province. I have studied different types of contemporary vessels made by women in the region, as well as products of contemporary tourist pottery. Other points of interest are the use of natural pigments, the application of motifs in pottery making, and the ecological aspects of contemporary pottery making practices, as industrial products are gradually becoming the norm due to changing environments and traditions. These observations are generally linked to the implications of adopting industrially-based products in pottery modifications. Other questions to be answered are how these developments affect the tourist market, the livelihoods of pottery makers, and the state of material cultures. Furthermore, the sustainability of pottery production in the face of globalism is assessed.

Environmental change and adaptation mechanisms in society (Harvey and Hallett 1977: 62) are in my research identified as two key elements that drive the use of natural resources in rural communities in South Africa, particularly as related to the gender roles that prevail in many societies. Processes of change are affecting South Africa as a whole. They are the results of socio-economic factors that touch, not only on people's cultures, but also on the material resources they use for making their traditional artefacts which, themselves, are also undergoing modifications. Vessel makers increasingly adopt new ways of producing their art works (Motsamayi 2018). This development is pertinent to the need to advocate for the

sustainable preservation of available items of material culture for the benefit of future generations. A society and its material culture are intertwined and connected with the state of the ecosystem that determines the environment, because the environment is the catalyst that allows the existence of life on earth (Hatcher 1985: 49, Argyrou 2005: 9). Hence, it is important to be aware of how various components in ecosystems are interlinked in a state of mutuality that allows certain cultural practices to occur.

2. 2 The social and cultural milieu of indigenous pottery production

My ideological premises in this chapter were honed after I attended the 2015 Soil Ecology Biennial in Colorado Springs in the US to present a paper entitled, 'Ecological considerations and indigenous pottery of Limpopo Province, South Africa' (Motsamayi 2015). The paper highlights the importance of South African natural resources, specifically the soil and clay types that are by rural communities used for socio-cultural purposes. Pottery and other vessels are decorated with natural pigments derived from local ferruginous soils and clays. These artefacts are outstanding examples of the interface between material cultural creativity and natural resources. The attendance at this conference allowed me to establish more contacts in the world of natural sciences, leading to an invitation to the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 2016. Hosted by the Department of Community and Environmental Sociology in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, I met faculty with research interests in the material science of natural products, the science of clays as a soil component, animal sciences, and tropical savanna and range ecology. The resulting interactions made me develop new ideas, based on my research on ceramic and other vessel production in the context of ecological, economic potentialities and sustainable practices in South Africa. An interest in physical and visual features of South African indigenous pottery while taking account of significant environmental aspects of social and cultural contexts of vessel production, along with an assessment of the sustainability of traditional pottery production in the face of globalism and dwindling natural resources, led me to consider the usefulness of an interdisciplinary scope, required for an understanding of resource utilisation with respect to humanities, art, science and social sciences. This is the theme of the present chapter and of my future research.

2. 3 Ceramic trends in Limpopo Province, South Africa

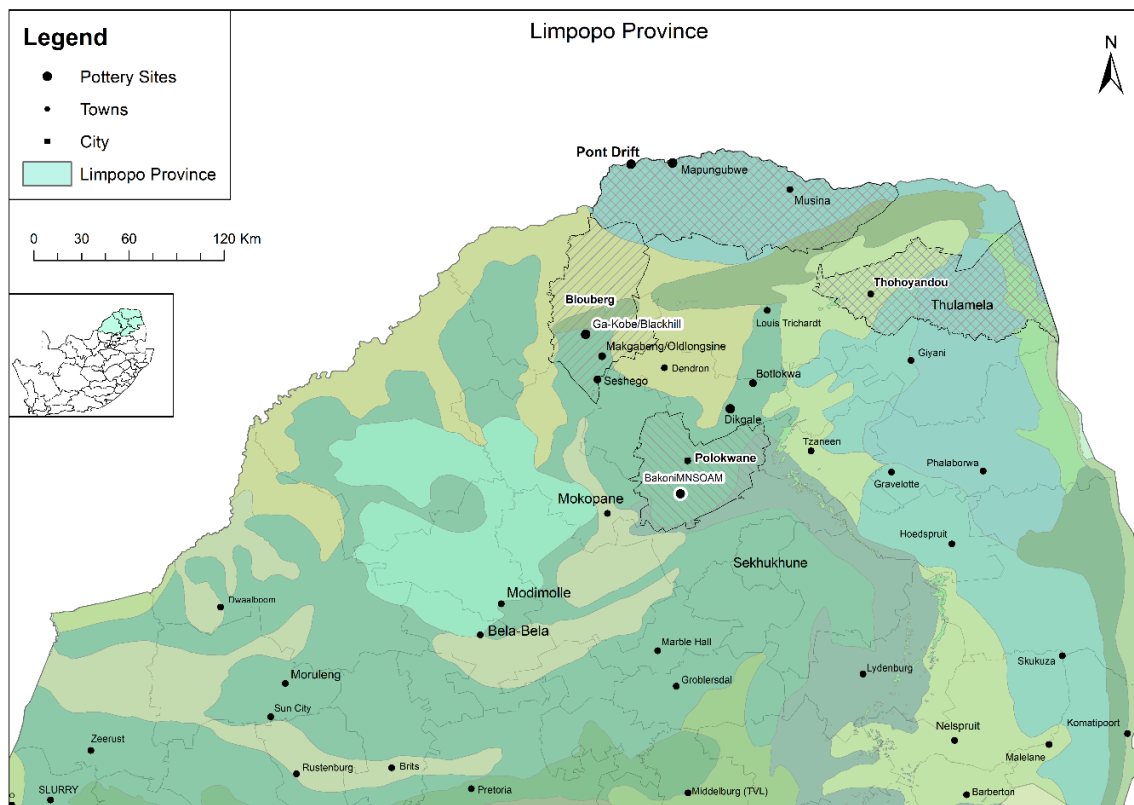


Figure 8: Map illustrating sites and municipalities where pottery has been sourced in Limpopo Province. The shaded areas (centre, and north) represent the main areas of my research. Cartography and GIS Unit, University of KwaZulu-Natal, produced 2016.

The present chapter discusses dynamic aspects of South African ‘indigenous ceramic vessels,’ commonly referred to as ‘pottery’ (Schapera and Goodwin 1937, Quin 1959, Lawton 1967, Hammond-Tooke 1993). The term ‘clay vessels’ as used in this thesis refers to wares made from clay (as distinct from the cattle dung -not clay- used to make *Difala* vessels), with a focus on domestic pottery vessels produced by Sotho-Tswana women (Motsamayi 2018). I examine the contemporary cultural context of vessel making traditions in two districts of Limpopo Province. The emphasis is on types of functions of vessels, stylistic elements, materials, and changes in their socio-cultural significance under changing (economic) conditions. I explore, in particular, recent innovations adopted by women ceramic artists who transform traditional functional vessels to suit the contemporary (tourist) market (Motsamayi 2018). Contemporary stylistic hybridity is understood as the addressing of new ways to make a living. Limpopo Province counted during apartheid three so-called homelands which have been incorporated into the new South Africa. In these homelands, art made by black South

Africans was not encouraged, nor were artefacts seen as worthwhile artistic projects and a museum was for many underprivileged people until recently an unknown concept. Some ethnic cultural museums were founded, not so much to advance cultural production, as to foster ethnic identity in line with the apartheid ideology. Still today, well after the end of apartheid, art structures in Limpopo regions have not yet been entirely reformed. Vessel makers interviewed for the present thesis came from the municipalities (**Fig. 8**) of Blouberg Local Municipality, Polokwane Local Municipality (in Capricorn District Municipality), Musina Local Municipality, Thulamela Local Municipality (in Vhembe District Municipality) in Limpopo Province.

2. 4 Observational context of indigenous clay vessel production in South Africa

There is in South Africa a growing interest in the collecting of indigenous ceramic vessels (Nilant 1963, Jolles 2005, Fowler 2006, Riep 2008, Motsamayi 2018). Current research focuses primarily on the traditional domestic functions of vessels and on museum collections of such objects. However, the cultural significance of South African ceramic vessels and their dynamic productive practices are largely neglected by art collectors as well as Western researchers (Laidler 1938, Quin 1959, Mönning 1967, Cruise 1991). There is in particular a lack of information on new, dynamic trends in production techniques and function while also little is known on the economic sustainability of vessel making by women potters. A study of the sustainability of the craft requires an exchange of knowledge between African and Western-trained researchers. It is etic versus emic, Western researchers not connected to culture researched, whereas African researchers are connected to culture concern.

My observations of historic ceramic vessels and recent innovations are informed in part by interviews with several senior women ceramic artists in the Capricorn District and Vhembe Municipalities (Limpopo Province) where I have conducted ethnographic fieldwork, and by working on the Social History Collections housed at the Iziko Museums of South Africa (Cape Town). This historical collection, studied in 2015, provides a comparative and documented ethnological record of past 'traditional' Limpopo Province vessels (especially woven fibre basketry, ceramics and related utilitarian forms of artefacts). However, there is no indication of the fact that clay vessels, currently made in the region, demonstrate

significant transformations, including innovations of traditional canons. It is essential, in this regard, to not only identify stylistic differences as related to changing market demands, but also to investigate local discourses about, and assumptions related to, both contemporary and older pottery making traditions, their different production contexts and the underlying causes for these differences. Depending on shape and size, clay vessels such as bowls, jars and pots, were traditionally used for various household purposes (Rawson 1971, Mönning 1967, Arnold 1985, Richard 1999, Vincentelli 2000, Mathieu 2003, Motsamayi 2018). Currently some domestic functions have changed because of the availability of commercially made aluminum containers and studio-produced ceramics.

It has become clear to me that ceramic making practices and their forms, which once were popular in South Africa, need to be documented, especially in relation to contemporary discourses on the subject. This will create a better understanding of how clay vessels change for the accommodation of new socio-economic and cultural conditions that bring with them new uses and that affect the future prospects of those artists who are continuing to make and use clay vessels. It would seem that, in particular, mutual contacts - whereby experience and insights are shared between different ceramic producing communities in rural areas and their intended markets - may provide the key to an explanation of why women potters prefer specific materials and styles. The research investigates the issue of mutuality as to whether is still informed by ancient traditions that are themselves embedded in indigenous (pottery making) knowledge and local ecologies. The ancient concept of mutuality however is being revitalised by new approaches to the artistry of contemporary ceramic vessels. Traditional practices and decorative motifs still inspire ceramic artistry, but are now adapted to the taste of a new audience which is the tourist market. While there are several Western scholars who have contributed immensely to the study of the African clay heritage (Stayt 1931, Lawton 1967, Jolles 2005), others did never in the past work with local ceramic vessel makers trying to understand what motivates their production. Contrary to long-standing perceptions of African 'pottery traditions' (Laidler 1938, Schofield 1948, Nilant 1963) as static, my research indicates that Sotho-Tswana women potters are open to change. They deserve to be supported in their efforts to adapt their art in response to changing market conditions.

2. 5 Clay vessels in context: transcending cultural boundaries in Limpopo Province

In the Province of Limpopo very little research has been conducted on recent developments in the specific ceramic traditions of the heterogeneous Northern Sotho and Vhavenda people. In the past all ‘Bantu pottery’ (Stayt 1931, Schofield 1948, Quin 1959, Lawton 1967) as the production was called, was regarded as an unvaried ‘low’ craft whereas, in comparison, the studio-produced ceramics was associated with Western-style ‘high’ art (Motsamayi 2012). It is essentially difficult to differentiate between art and crafts without conforming to certain constructs that identify works of art from hierarchical points of view. Concerning their clay vessel collections many museums in South Africa still adhere to entrenched ideas that may be connected with, for example, colonialism. Hence, indigenous vessels are often displayed in social history museums rather than in art galleries where fine art is dominating. Thus, an impression is created that a gallery is an elitist institution whereas museums, having a lower status, accept any form of artefact. The influence of Western ideological premises on the standing of indigenous pottery and vessels as perceived by the art enthusiasts should be examined on the basis of various developments that have impacted on artistic expressions in particular areas as well as beyond the borders and that continue to shape art production and other forms of creativity.

I draw on well-established philosophical and anthropological studies that explore new ideas about the nature of ‘Truth, fact, and ways of knowing’ (as outlined in, for example, Montague 1958: 13, Dilley 2007: 142 and Kresse 2007: 46). It is especially of interest to focus on links between indigenous epistemologies and South African worldviews as noted by Motsamayi (2018). I apply a culturally sensitive anthropological approach to my research of the following three topics: core (culture-specific) worldviews, indigenous South African material culture as featuring in local proverbs and metaphors, and the socio-cultural contexts of such material and of verbal forms of expression as they are directly relevant to anthropological analyses.

As Taylor (1976: 130) states, ‘The premises, assumptions, tenets, and axioms about life and the universe which govern behaviour tend to be more implicit than explicit for a high proportion of a society’s members’. And, following Hammond-Tooke (1937) and Geertz

(1973), an important part of any anthropological study of shared worldviews is the analysis of material culture and cultural expressions.

Anthropologists use the concept of a shared worldview to understand the relationship between philosophical (epistemic) concepts and normative cultural practices in specific social settings (Mbiti 1990, Hammond Tooke 1993, Olivier de Sardan 2015). The resulting ideas, in turn, are connected not only to explicitly stated concepts and to implicit assumptions, but also to material practices in specific societies as part of their lived experience. Many elements of a group's epistemic worldview are pervasive and enduring cultural themes that are commonly known to, and widely shared by, people who belong to the same culture (Horton 1967: 69, Motsamayi 2018: 154). Therefore, it is essential to address the question how indigenous discourse and epistemic assumptions about the world relate to traditional art as well as to the maintenance of material culture traditions (Stayt 1931, Schapera 1937, Hammond-Tooke 1937). My study adopts an anthropological approach - but one that highlights local (emic) epistemologies. It doesn't claim to produce an objective (etic) account of the shared worldview of Northern Sotho and Venda people. Instead, it aims to identify Northern Sotho and Venda versions of 'truth' and 'fact' and situate these perceptions in the contexts where they are used and give meaning to material culture. My approach seeks, essentially, to understand the indigenous nature of artefacts and their local meanings. Importantly, these interpretations will in my project be grounded in indigenous-sensitive ethnography and do not offer a single Western view of (Western) 'truth' or 'fact'. Philosophy, in essence, connects a culture's thinking (as a coherent and shared whole) to concepts of the nature of things (Taylor 1976).

The use of Western standards to evaluate and understand local traditions is problematic. Credible approaches are required to test and validate local traditions. Previous studies of Limpopo Province clay vessels are limited to expeditions by occasional observers and to archaeological explorations that paid little attention to contemporary factors impacting on the dynamics of cross-cultural interaction between pottery making communities (for example in respect of preferred raw materials), while even less efforts were made to connect production preferences to societal changes (most notably the developing tourist market). My work suggests that there exist important interconnections (involving innovations) between the production and styles of indigenous 'domestic wares' (domestic clay vessels) and 'visitor

wares' (tourist ceramics). The examination of these interconnections asks for extensive studies, incorporating (emic) socio-cultural contextual information on the state of contemporary ceramic production, rather than a continuation along the lines of inappropriate Western/colonial (etic) perspectives (Winthrop 1991: 93). Addressing the lack of contemporary (emic-oriented) information on changes in the techniques and styles of vessel production, may help to deconstruct long standing Western notions of the so-called static nature of native South African 'pottery' (Nilant 1963), especially by highlighting the roles of indigenous beliefs, values and attitudes. Interviewing people in the Limpopo Province, I found that some interviewees are wary of discussing aspects of indigenous beliefs in relation to pottery making practices. The reason for their reluctance is that pottery making is locally associated with ungodly deeds and poverty. Unlike in the West, where it is seen as a specialised skill, as an art form and a symbol of high status and wealth, rural people in South Africa who produce pottery are not recognised as art specialists but seen as workers in clay which is usually associated with dirt. Hence, there is little interest among young people in maintaining a tradition that is subjected to stigmatisation.

Older interviewees however were happy to welcome me in their families and pleased that their knowledge is valued. I contend that, due to pressure from new Western religions and their dogmas to which conditions are attached (Pauw 1937: 429, Horton 1967: 56, Mbiti 1967: 266), and in spite of Christian religions benefiting Africans, there is also a question of negative impacts on local traditions. In Limpopo Province, traditionally brewed beer served in clay vessels, was condemned as being unchristian. In fact, any surviving aspect of old traditions was considered sinful. This affected the production of pottery and other practices of material culture. Not only had traditional beer (*bojalwa jwa setso*) been stored in clay pots (Quin 1959, Mönning 1967), but these pots were also used for pouring libations. With the arrival of Christianity, such ancient practices were practically forbidden in many communities which led to a decline in the production of traditional vessels.

During my field work I learned that, in the past, elder people in Limpopo Province were accused of witchcraft during apartheid and the colonial period, this is also discussed by (Ashforth 2005: 16). Certain traditionalists who had collected clay pottery and other artefacts for cultural purposes had to abandon their cultural practices. Consequently, some people stopped producing traditional pottery because they feared possible accusations of witchcraft

by those in their communities who had converted to Christianity. The same fear led people to destroy objects of material culture. There were also producers of such artefacts who simply gave up their trade altogether with the result that their clients turned to obtaining commercially made objects. The production of pottery, beadwork and sculptural art was affected and ancient traditions as well as many cultural objects would have been lost if it weren't for museums that housed and preserved them.

2. 6 Natural pigments and motifs in clay vessel making practices

Surface decorations are key elements of the aesthetic qualities of a clay vessel as they accentuate a vessel's visibility rather than its utility (Graburn 1976). Decorative motifs are intended to please and serve as visual identifiers, marking the maker as an individual and/or identifying his/her group affinity (once known as 'isochretic variation') as noted by (Sackett 1982: 65). Stylistic motifs on clay vessels enhance their desirability in the perception of non-domestic consumers, specifically tourists (Motsamayi 2018). Some women ceramic artists stated that they gained knowledge of designs and motifs from family members and from other experts in their community as well as from potters in areas further afield.



Figure 9: Maker unknown. Motsega: hybrid storage vessel. Northern Sotho. 2015. Handbuilt with red clay, decorated with geometric ochre and graphite motifs. Height 42 cm, width 34 cm. Commissioned by Margret Motsamayi. Musina Local Municipality. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2015.

In some cases, designs may be suggested by buyers/tourists (**Fig. 9**). On this vessel the motifs are situated on the upper portion of the vessel; with a focus on the rim. Also, note that the red-ochre rim is burnished: a practical measure considering the utility of the vessel. Hence, stylistic motifs and surface designs have both conscious and unconscious origins. They often reflect the indirect influence of a world outside the immediate environment in which a maker lives and works. Hatcher (1985: 241) describes acculturation as the process of interaction between two societies in which the culture of a society in a subordinate position is modified to conform to the culture of the dominant society. The contemporary designs are not in uniforms, hybridity in ceramics is due to the movement of cultures, leading to a process whereby they become connected and to a degree dissolved and end up inventing new forms and producing new cultural practices. The globalised world is characterised by cultural exchange and some groups gain in the exchange of ideas while others lose (Hobsbawm and Terence 1983, Cowen (2002).

The types of materials most extensively used in the production of pottery, are determined by their availability in a specific area. Certain parts of the Limpopo Province are dominated by bushveld with mixed forest which is where red soil is normally found (Acocks 1988). Clay is the most common of natural resources in Limpopo Province. I have observed that, when clay is raw, dried and mixed with dirty rain water, the resulting material and its constituents are considered as sacred resources and preferred by potters for making vessels. Pools collect the water remaining from rain and heavy floods. After the red clay is excavated and collected, it is transported to homesteads where it is used, not only for pottery, but for many other purposes. At the time artistry was, according to Hammond-Tooke (1989: 15), in a sense practised like science, as the artist/potter did, in his own professional context, like the scientist acquire knowledge about the world in its different forms. Pottery production relies on a depth of knowledge in respect of the resources available in the localities where the pottery is to be made. Modern scientific knowledge cannot be fully interpreted without making use of local experience, particularly with regard to issues linked to the daily activities of local people. Local experience and daily activities include cultural practices.

Many elderly women in rural areas possess a vast indigenous knowledge about the usage of natural resources and, hence, experts from various disciplines depend on the exchange of such knowledge. Gaylard (2004: 26) argues that South Africa is rich in natural resources which are

used for cultural productions. These natural resources are vital for generating knowledge on how their products are received within societies as well as more in general in the wider world. In relation to some cultural productions, the specific resources used to make culturally significant objects may be found concentrated within a specific area (Hatcher 1985, Motsamayi 2018).

Natural resources are selected for cultural production on the basis of their cultural usages which the inhabitants of each area tend to have in common. For example, specific different soils are used by women in domesticity. Thus, soils that serve to plaster floors are not clay soils and cannot be used for making pottery, and vice versa. In the domestic sphere, Gosselain (1992: 566) describes the pottery making process as being linked to activities that characterise the daily lives of women. Women, for example, cultivate the land and usually fetch water for the household from a river. While doing so, they use the opportunity to survey soils and to determine which are best suitable for making pots. Clay soils have different properties. Primary clay happens to be the material that women ceramists do not use for pottery production but that is perfectly good for other household purposes. In fact, soils that are used by potters differ in their artistic potentiality and some users of clay experiment with soil forms found in other localities to test if these materials could help them to realise envisioned artistic aims. Peterson and Peterson (2003: 131) note that clay is formed when original igneous rock such as granite is altered due to chemical and physical reaction to winds, floods, erosion and gasses. This continuous process results in the breakdown of the parent rock into a clay. Chemically, the 'clay deposit is a hydrated aluminium silicate with formula $Al_2O_3 \cdot 2SiO_2 \cdot 2H_2O$ ' (Peterson and Peterson 2003: 131).

In making pottery, potters prefer secondary clay, in part because it is anywhere available. According to Fowler, secondary clay consists of kaolinite. This clay has a fine texture and is smooth. It is used among Zulu ceramists to construct pots (Fowler 2008: 485). The plasticity of this material offers potters the advantage of being able to simplify pottery making processes. Zulu pottery differs from Sotho-Tswana vessels in terms of decorations and forms, but the traditional materials used are similar, including the use of natural resources.

According to Peterson and Peterson (2003: 133), raw clays can be found everywhere and these are used for making earthenware. Common surface clay can be mixed with other soils

to produce specific colours and to function as plasticisers. I found that potters in many villagers I visited in Limpopo Province experimented with such processes. Aronson (1995: 130) observes that vessel production is to a considerable degree aimed at the creation of storage capacity. For example, in Limpopo Province potters used in the past clay pottery to store food and to cool water. Recently, the practical use of pottery is more varied which gives the craft a dynamic character. Peterson and Peterson (2003: 131) found that plasticity is the important physical property of clay that belongs to no other material on earth, it allows clay that has been mixed with water to be coaxed into any form. When it has dried clay uniquely holds its shape; when clay is fired, it returns to the shape and become hard, and rock-like again. In the Limpopo Province raw dried red clay is excavated, collected and transported to homesteads in bags and sacks to be used for pottery making. The process starts by mixing clay with water.

A method that is prevalent in pottery construction is to build the pot from the base upwards, step by step, until the mouth is reached that needs to be perfected. Some potters use coils of clay to build a vessel. This is in fact a most common and popular method among producers of clay pottery. Potters allow pots to dry before decorating them if they plan to apply enamel paints or natural pigmentations. Sometimes potters incise their pottery and apply ashes before letting them dry after which they are fired overnight following a common technique.

In the words of Hopper (2000: 2), a good potter is one who has developed good techniques to make desirable pottery. Techniques known to have been applied to local pottery making in the past have not changed. What has changed however are the decorative modes that play a key role in contemporary finalised products. African potters have a deeply embedded knowledge of the creation of various traditional forms of pottery. This knowledge involves a highly sophisticated process. Academic recording of pottery making, including analytical and technical assessments, is necessary for an understanding of the process in detail. The use of natural resources like soils (among these ferruginous soils), clay and plants (Motsamayi 2015) are essential in the pottery production. I have recorded the harvesting of clays from their source, their processing, the sourcing and uses of natural pigments as well as firing procedures preferred by potters, which are more or less the same as those used by pottery makers in other parts of South Africa (Jolles 2005, Fowler 2006, Motsamayi 2018).

In some cases, I found that potters in the Capricorn District Municipality mix red and black clays together to strengthen their pottery and to avoid breakages during firing. The careful selection of clay types that are suitable for the construction of specific kinds of vessels is a determining factor for the success of vessels. Some types of soil are no good for pottery making but are considered suitable for other activities such as mud house building.



Figure 10: Maker unknown. *Thiswana* (bowl). Northern Sotho. 2015. Height 7 cm, mid width 36,5 cm. Handbuilt with red clay, ochre, and graphite motifs. Commissioned by Margret Motsamayi. Musina Local Municipality. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2015.

Note the use of graphite around the rim of this vessel, also in **Fig. 11**.



Figure 11: Vho-Nyamukamadi Makungo, *Ndilo* (dish). Vhavenḁa. Thohoyanḁou. Thulamela Local Municipality. Handbuilt with red clay, ochre, graphite. Height 6 cm, mid width 54 cm. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2014.

As in **Fig. 10**, the use of graphite on the rim is significant; possibly because a bare ceramic edge is subject to damage during use – here the graphite provides a harder, and more compact surface to resist such damage.

I note that certain secondary clays which in their raw state are coloured red and black, were frequently used by potters. Potters know intrinsically where to source the best material and how to select the most plastic clays. Northern Sotho ceramic artists, for example, use a red clay (known as *letsopa* in Northern Sotho language) to make their vessels. In the past they used red ochre (a type of earth called *letsoku*) to decorate a housestead, excavated in the immediate vicinity, and ashes, graphite to mark out transient decorations (**Figs. 10 and 12**), subject to weathering. Currently, graphite is sometimes replaced by red ochre.



Figure 12: *Mma Masimone Ramone and others. Dipitsa, Northern Sotho cooking vessels. 2013. Ga-Kobe. Blouberg Local Municipality. Handbuilt with red clay; the decorative motifs are inlaid with ashes from a domestic cooking-fire. Heights 10-27 cm, widths 21-29 cm. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2013.*

For pre-fired decorations, *Motsiri* tree (leadwood) ash (*melora*) may be used. Before the final (post-fired) decoration is applied, vessel makers incise lines and rub the ash into the space marked out for the decoration. I note the complex forms here: narrow bases and wider rims. The pre-fired incisions are therefore not motifs in their own right, but rather a technical step towards decorating the finished vessel (**Fig. 12**). At a later stage in the production process, it is easy to apply enamel paints. Colourful motifs that nowadays are prevalent in vessels intended for the tourist market, play a critical role in attracting buyers.

By contrast, Vhavenḁa vessel makers prefer to use *vumba* (red clay) for domestic vessels and decorate them with ochre (*luvhundi*) and a greyish graphite (*phomo*) (**Figs. 11 and 15**).

2. 7 Tools adopted in making contemporary clay vessels



Figure 13: Mma Masimone Ramone and others. *Dipitša* (plural), Northern Sotho cooking vessels. *Pitša* (singular), *Dinkgo* (plural), *Nkgo* (singular) and storage vessels. 2013. Ga-Kobe. Blouberg Local Municipality. Handbuilt with red clay, incised motifs. Heights 15-81 cm, widths 19-74 cm. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2013.

I note (a) the large variety of different sizes of Ovaloid vessels offered; (b) the predominance of everted rims of the pottery vessels (with few exceptions - a bowl); (c) the use of red ochre on the upper sections of vessels; (d) carbonised firing-flashes. Sticks, wires, pieces of bones and stones are commonly applied in the production process. Rural South African ceramic artists don't work with closed kilns. Instead, domestic vessels are traditionally fired in the open, using woods that are common in the immediate environment. A favourite time for firing clay vessels is the evening, but firing may also take place overnight and continue into the daylight hours. The clay vessels are low- and slow-fired in a technique similar to the one used for firing typical domestic earthenware. Depending on their intended function, the size of the vessels I surveyed varies considerably. For instance, for a vessel capacity of up to 40 litres or more, the bases range from 5 to 20 cm, heights from 10 to 81 cm, and mid widths from 19 to 74 cm (**Figs. 13**). It is worth knowing that the clay vessels made by Sotho-Tswana women potters (especially Northern Sotho and Batswana) were historically considered as the 'queens of South African pottery', not only because they are the largest indigenous clay vessels but also because their terminology in reference to pottery is so complex and rich that

many vessels are given their own distinctive names (Motsamayi 2018). One of the reasons for producing such big clay vessels in the past is perhaps that there were large Sotho-Tswana settlements known as *Motsi*, where a great number of people lived and could share vessels, whereas in small, scattered settlements with only a few inhabitants there was no use for such large storage units.

The process of pottery making begins with the potter positioning a flat object to serve as a working base (also recorded by Schapera and Goodwin 1937: 145-6, Lawton 1967: 187, Roy 1991: 2, Hammond-Tooke 1993: 205). Limpopo Province ceramic artists traditionally start building clay vessels on the surface of a flat object. The building of vessels follows one of two types of construction techniques that are prevalent in traditions of pottery making, namely moulding and modelling. These techniques were widespread among interviewed potters in Limpopo Province and continue to be common practice among many Northern Sotho groups (Babirwa, Bahananwa and Batlokwa). A similar strategy is followed by some Vhavenda who prefer, however, to make multi-coloured vessels. The pottery manufactured by women in Capricorn District Municipality encompasses a multiplicity of cultures that are found in Limpopo Province.

The shapes and designs of their pottery reflect traditions that were originally associated with various other Northern Sotho. In recent times, pottery production is closely related to groups that are presently living in the area of Limpopo Province. The traces of multiple cultures in contemporary pottery may be the result of regular contacts and closer ties between different groups who hail from far North but who have recently been moving in considerable numbers in the middle of Limpopo Province. It is their traditions that now surface and appear on local pottery, of which some contemporary products feature designs that are characteristics of Northern Sotho and Venda ceramic practices.

2. 8 Reflections on worldview: meanings of indigenous pottery in Limpopo Province, towards a philosophy of African pottery

There is currently much interest in indigenous knowledge systems and their relevance in post-apartheid South African societies. Surprisingly, a large part of indigenous knowledge, although still of concern to its custodians, has been overlooked in academic discourse.

Emerging calls for epistemic decolonisation in the education sector so as to accommodate indigenous African knowledge systems, have created fertile ground for debating the continuing significance of African indigenous knowledge systems and their perceived meanings in the present South Africa (Makgoba 1997). Especially the concept of worldview, as the core of cultural beliefs, should be examined so that its content and attached traditions can be understood and kept alive. In my view, post-colonial theory is not the only approach that should be used for dealing with African pottery. There is a need for a theory that is based on African viewpoints and that African people can relate to.

In the African context, philosophical (epistemic) considerations and worldviews are central to indigenous belief systems. Therefore, the ethnographer, when examining African material and verbal customs, should approach and understand these in their own (emic) terms (Mphahlele 1962, Asante 1987, Gyekye 1997, Gray 2001). Such philosophical issues, while abstract to a degree, can be - and are - successfully communicated through language and proverbs which have often withstood the effects of past colonisation. Basing myself on this perspective, I have interviewed senior women potters about their traditions as they have accumulated an amount of culture-specific experience and witnessed historical events that qualify them to authoritatively express the indigenous worldviews in rural areas, both in words and through their pottery production, giving guidance to new generations.

2. 8. 1 Underpinning questions for understanding pottery in emic terms

1. In the present post-apartheid era, when there is a call for the decolonisation of South African education, what Western knowledge systems and ideologies are used by scholars to identify meanings inherent in indigenous South African pottery?
2. What are the shortcomings of the prevailing (Western) premises of interpretation in our African context of heritage conservation?
3. What were the traditional pottery practices and which were their (emic) symbolic meanings in relation to local approaches to 'knowing'? What are the appropriate ethnographic practices to be employed in order to get an understanding of material culture in emic terms? Which aspects of older emic traditions continue to inspire contemporary generations as custodians of their groups' traditional knowledge?

In all, it is crucial to find appropriate approaches for researchers to incorporate local cultural knowledge to contextualise and interpret South African indigenous pottery. Examples are discussed below. Every society on earth has philosophical and/or mythological explanations for the natural world and humanity's connections to it (Scheub 1977, Seeger 1986, Mieder 1994, Joubert 2004). It is through such emic explanations that members of societies are able to communicate with others, understand their actions in particular situations, and conceive of the nature of their existence (Acton 1952). In the post-apartheid South African context, philosophical and epistemic perceptions and worldviews are part of traditional belief systems. This requires from ethnographers to comprehend, in emic terms, the culture-specific material and verbal customs they are studying.

I contend that the unquestioned, Western-oriented decontextualisation of culturally significant indigenous material cultures is irreconcilable with any attempt to reveal their socio-cultural origins and pre-colonial meanings. Decolonisation (Onciul 2015, Stanard, 2016, Buettner, 2016, Collins, 2017, Mignolo, Walsh 2018), is not a permanent or indigenous discourse. In some African societies many proverbs and phrases are linked to indigenous knowledge systems and pottery traditions. However, I choose specific examples that are relevant to my study of Northern Sotho, living in the close vicinity of Vhavenda. The pottery produced by both groups is of crucial importance and can be used to educate communities, and serve as a representation of women's space and domesticity, offering the possibility of communicating certain messages to intended recipients across genders. It is evident that in many African societies knowledge related to pottery is rooted in traditions that are based on established moral and religious values (Motsamayi 2018). These notions logically also apply in a context where pottery is used to guide new generations by teaching them life's values. Thus, in the social context of a group, pottery communicates specific messages (Motsamayi 2012).

Indigenous epistemological expressions and meanings are related to, and expressed in, pottery and indigenous sayings and proverbs that are traditional to South African ethnic groups such as Northern Sotho (Babirwa, Batlokwa, Bahananwa) and Vhavenda in Thohoyandou. My identification of African indigenous knowledge systems is informed by ethnographic fieldwork, conducted with inhabitants of Limpopo Province and more specifically with senior women potters whereby I focused on their way of discussing pottery production and their use of proverbs. We have known for a long time that Western conceived meanings, imposed on

African material culture, differ from indigenous viewpoints so that, when applied to local contexts, they are highly problematic. Importantly, I emphasise interpretations grounded in indigenous-sensitive ethnography which does not offer only a single (Western) interpretation of African culture (Hammond-Tooke 1974, Van Rooy 1978, Hammond-Tooke 1981, Hammond-Tooke 2004).

My contestation draws on philosophical and anthropological research (as outlined in, for example, Hammond-Tooke 1937, Asante 1987, Coote and Shelton 1992, Carroll 1999, Gray 2001, Pottier 2003) that can generate new insights regarding pottery and the question how indigenous epistemologies are linked to African worldviews (Mbiti 1990, Mudimbe 1994, Motsamayi 2018), specifically in the South African context. It is also important to be aware that pottery productions are not useless artefacts but fulfil major roles in societies that produce them. Traditional art serves in the African context as a memory of the past and a reflection of the present and this information is transmitted through objects that have functional value in the communities. This makes artefacts into records of African culture (Manaka 1987: 10). This form of self-expression is realised in various ways, for example through the decorations applied in domestic arts, including in the manufacture of pottery with colourful motifs. The message conveyed by vessels is directed to the community in which they are sourced. Because of, on the one hand, changes in certain areas and in the country as a whole and, on the other hand, the fact that pottery is to a degree defined, and its production directed, by financial concerns, potters have been faced with the choice of, either maintaining ancient traditions and reflecting their group's values, or, adapting to changes in the demand for their products. They decided that moving with the times and accepting changes in the art world could help them to compete with artists in other regions.

It would appear that ethnic pottery may in the future cease to exist, as individual potters take to producing pottery that contains elements from vessels which are traditional among other groups. Thus, styles based on individual creativity are likely to be an important future trend, rather than the older styles dominated by the characteristic formal expressions of their own group. Future researchers of indigenous pottery would do well by starting their study looking at artefacts from before the 1990's for the sake of reaching an assessment of particular vessels as the stylistic representation of a specific ethnic group.

The plethora of indigenous meanings and the various discourses about ceramic traditions are the products of specific and local socio-historical factors that, under new market conditions, continue to shape and reflect normative artistic forms of discourse and epistemology. It is in this regard essential to, firstly, elaborate on an explicit indigenous discourse and on non-discursive assumptions expressed in both contemporary and older pottery traditions and, secondly, to associate productive processes with local (or even cross-cultural) proverbs that allude to ceramics as shown in the following example.

2. 9 Samples of pottery and related proverbial and idiomatic expressions reflecting indigenous ideas



Figure 14: *Mma Masimone Ramone and others. Pitsa.* Northern Sotho cooking pot. 2013. Ga-Kobe. Blouberg Local Municipality. Handbuilt with red clay, incised motifs and incised motifs inlaid with white ash. Height 24 cm and width 29 cm. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2013. In both Figure 14 and 15, the motif-areas are located on the upper sections of the vessels.



Figure 15: *Vho-Nyamukamadi Makungo. Khali.* Venda cooking pot. 2013. Thohoyandou. Thulamela Local Municipality. Handbuilt with red clay, decorated with red ochre, and graphite. Height 22 cm and width 28 cm. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2014. In comparison with Figure 14, this vessel has a rolled rim, though not everted.

Many observers have documented the names and functions of Northern Sotho and Vhavenda vessels. Hence, in the present context, I will focus on the specific description of selected vessels that I have identified, on the basis of a group's proverbs and idiomatic expressions, as being associated with that group's worldview.

Example, *Sesotho sa Lebowa* (Northern Sotho) related proverbial expression. (a) *Nkgo* (noun class 9) (**Fig. 13**). Large vessel for storing beer or water. (b) *Pitša* (noun class 9) (**Fig. 14**). Clay pot for cooking meal with a wide opening (b) *Pitšeng* = into the pot (locative noun class 9).

- (a) *Ya boela pitšeng ea swa* - Literal translation: if it (meat) return(s) into the cooking pot it will burn. Indigenous context: cautioning against returning to an unbearable situation experienced before, as the result could be disastrous. Sometimes proverbs contradict each other. Example of contradiction: *Maropeng goa boelwa*: old home will always be your home when you run out of homes.
- (b) *Nama kgapeletswa e phuma pitša* - Literal translation: the meat that is forced into the cooking pot breaks the pot. Indigenous context: cautioning against forcing oneself into an undesirable situation without contemplating possible negative consequences.
- (c) *Pitša ya maano ga e apeiwe gabedi* - Literal translation: a pot contains a wisdom, cannot be cooked twice. Indigenous context: a cheeky person cannot fool all the people all the time.
- (d) *Go inwesa ka Nkgo* (idiomatic) - Literal translation: letting it drink directly from a large storage clay pot. Indigenous context: an advice to check facts for oneself.

Example: Tshivenda related proverbial and idiomatic expression (*Mirero*). (a) *khali* (**Fig. 15**) (noun class 9). Used for cooking staple food. (b) *tshidudu* (noun class 9) smaller vessel than the one used for cooking meat and vegetables. These vessels have all wide uncovered openings.

Proverbs and idiomatic expressions are used to communicate messages to intended recipients with the aim of guiding, warning and even rebuking them when deemed necessary. For example:

- (a) *Nama Khombetshedzwa I phula khali*. Literal translation: the meat that is forced into the cooking pot breaks the pot. Indigenous context: cautioning a person not to force him- or herself into an undesirable situation without contemplating consequences which might be negative. This saying is similar in meaning to the *Sesotho sa lebowa* proverb (**b**).

- (b) *Khali yo bikaho i fhira yau shululelwa*. Literal translation = a cooked [clay] pot is more valuable than [clay] pot which has not cooked. Indigenous context: an account from an eye witness of an event is more reliable than that of a person who was not there when the event unfolded. Thus, it is advisable to seek first-hand information from a good source rather than trust unreliable sources.
- (c) *Tibu ndi khali, tsha mbiluniya munwe atshi tibulwi*. Literal translation: = you can lift the lid of a pot to see what is inside, but what is inside a person's heart can only be known by the person him or herself. Indigenous context: what is apparent from a person's appearance does not reflect his or her feelings or character and the truth resides in the person.
- (d) *U kokota tshidudu [U dzhia zwa mme]*. Idiomatic expression. Literal translation = to screw left overs with the hand into a small [clay] pot. Indigenous context: inheriting aspects from mother's side of the family. The expression has negative connotations for the person to whom it is addressed.

In all South African ethnic groups, pottery is associated with meaningful expressions. Some of the expressions are alike across cultures. Fairly common proverbs mentioning ceramics, refer to people offering lessons for life. I noticed that the older my interviewees were, the more knowledgeable they generally were about their trades.

2. 10 Traditions, innovations and contemporaneity in clay vessel production



Figure 16: Maker unknown. Hybrid ceramic vessel form (based on Northern Sotho (*Nkgwana*) and Venda (*Nkhwana*) domestic water-vessels) with an added conical neck. 2015. Musina. Musina Local Municipality. Commissioned by Margret Motsamayi. Handbuilt with red clay, decorated with red haematite (rock) and graphite fired with the vessel. Wax shoe-polish and floor-polish were used as a post-firing (ie cold) exterior sealant. Height 37 cm, width 13,5 cm. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2015.

The vessel on (**Figure 16**) resembles a domestic *Nkgwana*; the conical neck is an added extension in reference to Western flower vases. In Limpopo Province domestic clay vessels are mostly of a utilitarian nature and used for cooking, storing, transporting and serving foods. However, contemporary Limpopo clay vessels currently also fulfil decorative functions, for example as vases for flowers (**Fig. 16**). Vessel makers may apply wax shoe- and floor-polish to decorate tourist wares and as a post-firing exterior sealant instead of limiting themselves to the use of commercially available (enamel) paints. This demonstrates that both ceramic artisans and the users of vessels move with the times when the need for transforming traditions arises. This clearly challenges the Western perception of African pottery as static (Schofield 1948, Nilant 1963).

Similarly, traditional materials for the decoration of ceramic items, including clay vessels, are replaced by commercial paints and shoe - and floor-polish. Innovating traditional ceramics is vital to make the products more noticeable to new groups of potential buyers. Contemporary vessel makers adapt to a more universal artistic expression (Arnold 1985), which is based on

the European perceptions of authenticity in art. By doing so, indigenous vessel makers increase their ability to compete with artists from other backgrounds. Colourful vessels have been found to attract the attention of tourists and, with stylistic innovations cutting across the styles of different ceramic-producing communities, an overall increase of economic opportunities is likely. The increasing use of commercially available enamel paints by women potters is a dynamic innovation that brings newer techniques and styles harmoniously together with older traditions (**Fig. 17**).

Based on these observations, I believe that future research should give priority to identifying the specific commercial paints selected by women potters, and to understanding what the women think about these paints. It also appears, that different styles of pottery decorated with oil paints are beginning to dominate. The production process is simplified and, after drying their vessels, potters tend to decorate them with colourful paints and leave them to complete drying in the open air. Sometimes multiple colours are applied over earlier layers of paint. These styles of decoration are part of strategies that potters have adopted to commercialise their trade and make their pottery more saleable.



Figure 17: Mma Masimone Ramone and other makers (unnamed). *Dipitša le Dinkgo*. Northern Sotho cooking and storage ceramic vessels. 2013. Ga-Kobe. Blouberg Local Municipality. Handbuilt with red clay, decorated with various commercial paints. Height 12-79 cm, mid width 22-73 cm. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2013.

I took this photograph (**Fig. 17**), at the ceramist's home at Ga-Kobe; she proudly provided me with a large variety of sample vessels to demonstrate her range of skills. Irrespective of form, these enamel-painted vessels are specifically intended for visitors (i.e. not for domestic household usage). Pottery painted with industrial paints differ from earlier products in terms of the motifs used. The appearance of several pieces is dominated by the use of multiple industrial paints (**Fig. 17**), some which transform contemporary vessels into glossy products that resemble studio wares. Their shiny, multi-coloured shapes seem to be modelled on ceramics in Anglo-Oriental style, produced by Modernist potters in their studios (Hamer 1975, Rhodes 1978, Hall 2002).

Gyekye (1997: 217) argues that, 'The modern is characterized as scientific, innovative, future oriented, culturally dynamic, and industrial and urbanized'. As concerns the decoration of artefacts, commercially produced paints are favoured by potters because they offer alternatives to the traditional pigments that come in a limited range of colours. Contemporary potters show pleasure in applying their preferred colours. The resulting 'new' Limpopo Province tradition for decorating vessels can be seen as addressing the problematic aspects of the traditional use of natural resources such as soils and ochres. It means, for example, that older potters are no longer faced with the need to travel over some distance to find coloured soils and excavate them. Another decoration technique used by contemporary potters consists in over-firing, which results in a blackish colour that, when mixed with red clay, creates a natural effect as seen in the *Pitšana* below. This technique has been adopted as a form of decorating. In this pot also the effect of another technical device is noticeable, namely cutting with a sharp object along the opening. This is done as part of the process of trimming excess clay (**Fig. 18**).



Figure 18: *Mma Masimone Ramone and other makers (unnamed). Pitšana. Northern Sotho cooking earthenware. Ga-Kobe. Blouberg Local Municipality. 2013. Handbuilt with red clay (no added or applied decoration). Carbon flashes are evident where fuel (wood) was in contact with the natural red clay during the firing process. Height 21 cm, mid width 26 cm. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2013.* Though without added motifs this small vessel is intended for household use – likely for ritual purposes (such as a libation).

New enamel-painted clay vessels continue to be based on older designs. The growing tourist industry offers economic incentives to rural women who are ceramic artists and who are developing innovative ways to produce small, easily transportable vessels. This is a dynamic two-way process: tourists buy the vessels which have been designed with them in mind as a reminder of their visit to a particular place. This implies that it is no longer sufficient to have archaeologists discussing ceramic production as it is happening at village levels. South African ceramic artistry these days has moved well beyond village and tribe. In the context of these contemporary developments in pottery production it is important that the identities of potters, the regions where they work, and the motivations for their stylistic innovations are known and understood.

Facts of life such as urbanisation, the rise of a tourist market, and the availability of commercially produced materials (Enge and Smith 2010) are speedily becoming important factors, not only in contemporary ceramic technology (Levinsohn 1984, Motsamayi 2018), but also in relation to local economies and cultural change (Sansom 1974, Robertson 1995). Interestingly, because ‘outsider’ commercial paints and the resulting vessels are not considered as authentic indigenous wares, they can be used anywhere at any time without being subjected to traditional avoidance rules (taboos). One taboo, for example, concerning rural areas entails that, when people are in mourning, no excavation of soils is allowed, except digging the grave for the deceased.



Figure 19: *Mma Masimone Ramone and other makers (unnamed). Flower vases based on domestic forms of Northern Sotho *Nkgwana*. 2013. Ga-Kobe. Blouberg Local Municipality. Handbuilt with red clay, decorated after firing with commercial glossy enamel paints. Height 17-48 cm, mid width 15-27 cm. Photograph by M. F. Motsamayi, 2013.*

The use of commercial varnish to enhance the surfaces of these vessels strongly indicates that they are intended as visitor-wares. The arrival on the market of cheap ceramic wares, produced by migrants (males) from outside South Africa, puts pressure on local women potters and stimulates them to develop competitive strategies. They take, for example, advantage of poorly organised local crafts markets that previously were not internationalised. Many newcomers from outside South Africa who specialise in producing traditional art are widely experienced and able to produce artefacts that historically were made by members of both genders in South Africa. These products are offered for sale in urban and rural areas in South Africa, in large quantities and for low prices. Without having to take account of local gender issues, male migrants produce artefacts and fabrics that normally in South Africa are made only by women.

The migrants also combine elements from different South African cultures into hybrid articles to be marketed as tourist art. In addition, they introduce in their artefacts styles from their

own countries of origin, which they fuse with local styles to arouse the interest of potential buyers and/or art patrons. The materials they use are in most cases industrial products, including wire, cane, metal welded sculptures sold by the road sides some of which are not sustainable. The result of these developments is that, currently, South African artists have become economically inactive in comparison to their counterparts from other African countries and from Asia. In some part of South Africa migrants are currently dominating the South African market for tourist art. Particularly in urban areas, artefacts for sale as being representative of different South African ethnic groups, may feature elements of South African design, but have definitely not been made by South Africans.

Many people who come to South Africa to pursue an interest in making art, have no wish to produce authentic African art objects or artefacts that could end up in museums. They set out to make items fit to be sold as souvenirs at affordable prices to willing buyers (Gaylard 2004: 26). Artists who have recently moved to South Africa treat art production as a full-time occupation as opposed to South African artists. Migrants can move from one place to another, carrying their products with them. They are generally not motivated to make art for the sake of beauty but they see art production as a survival strategy in their new environment where their chances of securing a stable job are limited. This situation has resulted in high numbers of foreign artists, venturing into urban art, using elements of South African culture.

Immigrant artists are currently in all South Africa's big cities producing every type of artefact. This has made of tourist art the fastest growing industry in informal settlements. I contend that this is controlled by non-South African artists in urban areas. Sadly, it has negatively affected the growth of indigenous rural arts which is generally dominated by women artists who struggle to produce art on a full-time basis. Migration and forced relocation are among the factors that have contributed to the development of a specific culture, based mainly on the art produced by migrants.

The massive availability of commercial wares that rapidly have become popular for household purposes, has altered rural life styles. Most of the locally produced clay vessels that are for sale currently are no longer used for their original domestic functions and had to be modified to make them saleable (Motsamayi 2015). Hence, women potters came to be considered as artists who produce contemporary artefacts for the tourist market. The

availability of commercial paints gave women ceramic artists more freedom to express themselves and they began to make small portable vessels (as souvenirs), decorated with the multi-coloured motifs that tourists seem to like (**Fig. 19**). However, such innovations may unintentionally affect the emic significance of clay vessels, changing them into no more than a form of tourist art. Tourist vessels do not depend entirely on the use of natural soils and other local eco-resources (such as wood for combustion), while tourist wares cannot serve for domestic food production and/or storage because they are decorated with metal-based commercial paints (**Fig. 20**).



Figure 20: Unknown artist from Limpopo Province. *Pitša*. Northern Sotho earthenware vase; traditional name *Pitsa*. 2012. Polokwane. Polokwane Local Municipality. Handbuilt red clay, decorated after firing with painted motifs (commercial oil paints). Height 25 cm, width 28 cm. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2012.

The above colourfully painted vessel is clearly intended as visitor-ware, though its form is that of a domestic *Pitša* pot. The replacement of natural pigments for decorating clay vessels with commercial paints that are without traditional significance, is thus in question. Contemporary developments result in changing the meanings that are traditionally associated with the production of ‘low fired’ clay vessels made for domestic purposes. These vessels have been modified to suit the tourist market and, while they lack the historic-symbolic messages they used to carry, they offer new, different ecological potentialities, depending on locations. The sustainability of materials used in pottery is a very important issue that needs to be considered when contextualizing pottery making traditions in the present reality of globalisation and the resulting interconnectedness of factors influencing art production.

In the past potters had a limited knowledge of activities occurring outside their own areas (Lawton 1967, Mönning 1967). More recently, mass media and the movement of people from

one area to another, have familiarised them with developments in other environments. Various factors, discussed above, continue to shape ideas that inform the production of contemporary pottery. Modernity plays a role as well as changing perceptions of people's material culture production. Rural perspectives have come to be associated with old people who are unschooled as regards their cultural orientation, whereas urban surroundings are linked with young people who are educated, modern, part of an industrialised world and in danger of losing their group's culture. My research is concerned with field study cases, indicating that contemporary styles of painted flower vessels, inspired by industrial, mass produced vessels and marketed as local inventions, are these days considered to be durable and profitable and have begun to dominate the indigenous vessel production that, in the past, used to exclusively rely on unlimited local soils and other natural pigments such as powdered graphite and ochre.

Many tourists are admirers of African art and visit the country hoping to buy artefacts. They prefer vessels that are colourful and light enough to take back home. Thus, the new art being produced is in many regions used to promote tourism (Vincentelli 2003, Motsamayi 2018). This implies that the traditional role of pottery which is to nurture the cultural identity of groups, has disappeared into the background. Women, in their traditionally gendered role as vessel makers, have told me of their desire to organise and promote formal community projects or art centres. It is my hope that the present research will inspire art patrons to support these women in their endeavours. It would be a positive development if ceramic artists can be brought together to exchange knowledge, skills, and ideas. This may, on the one hand, strengthen the preservation of traditions and, on the other hand, advance the economic wellbeing of rural artists. Artists need assistance in marshalling community resources and obtain funding for exhibitions of their work in ways that will nurture their artistic creativity and stimulate the community's economic stability and its awareness of its cultural heritage. Historically, pottery makers, commonly working in rural areas, have not been exposed to industrial products and were limited to the use of natural resources. The growing popularity of traditional pottery in urban areas may have inspired pottery makers to turn to contemporary industrial products in an effort to revitalise traditions and make them more suited to tourist markets in a global context. The innovative use of industrial means to decorate African pottery is not only prevalent in Limpopo Province but is a widespread practice across the country wherever women still make clay pottery. In KwaZulu-Natal, for example, potters use

shoe polish to burnish their vessels and create the high gloss that tourists appreciate. It appears that industrial products offer today's potters an alternative for local resources, enabling them to produce vessels, regarded as innovative, for tourist markets and to foster a degree of continuity in material culture production.

I dedicate the present chapter of this thesis to my sister, Margret Motsamayi (**Fig. 21**) who passed away untimely in April 2017. She was a dressmaker who specialised in African designs and patterns and she was an avid collector of African ceramic vessels (her artistic hobbies included interior design, indigenous pottery, garden design and dress making). She helped me to verify data I had collected from women artists in the region I studied. Because she sewed traditional clothes which she sold in her community, Margret had connections with many women in Limpopo Province. These happened to be well versed in pottery traditions and, as Margret spoke various languages, she helped me to collect data from Northern Sotho speakers and Tsonga speakers as well as from older Tshivenda speaking women in both Capricorn and Vhembe District Municipalities respectively. Interviewees included people from Botswana who frequently visit South Africa for cross border trading and family commitments.



Figure 21: Margret Motsamayi in her garden with a variety of pottery vessels she collected for the candidate (makers unnamed). Hybrid storage vessels (combining elements of Venda and Northern Sotho domestic pottery), *Motsega* (water-vessel), and dishes (*Thiswana*) (in the Northern Sotho language). 2015. Capricorn District Municipality. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2015.

Margret thus had easier access to women than I did and collected information on my behalf. As clay vessel making is seen as a gendered practice (Motsamayi 2018), women felt more comfortable speaking to her about issues concerning females. Some of the ceramic vases used in my research, were obtained from third parties who had bought them directly from the makers to sell them around the region at higher prices and make a profit. These persons refused to reveal the names of the makers from whom they bought the pottery, perhaps fearing that potential customers might not buy from them but, instead, contact the makers to buy vessels at lower prices. This means that the vessels concerned carry no signatures, as they were made to be sold publicly and not for exhibition purposes. It also means that the makers are difficult to identify. Margret also commissioned specific hybrid vessels from clay vessel makers and these form part of my research (**Fig. 21**). There are a very few numbers of women

who wrote about African pottery, after this study I am of a view that future research will give priority on local women who conduct research on pottery, to understand what the women think about these African vessels.

On the basis of information obtained from indigenous sources and a physical examination of the vessels' form and surface, I correlate the used materials, motifs and production processes with long-standing proverbial expressions that refer to pottery. I incorporate more contextual (emic) socio-cultural information than is usually provided from a Western colonial perspective.

In this section I intend to advance this scholarship about indigenous material culture and IKS in pottery, with a strongly restorative perspective on the proposed art-historical and cultural retrievals about SA indigenous ceramic legacies of Sotho-Tswana people and other groups. My research conducted in rural areas also aims to empower rural artists - in the present case, potters who still make pottery - by giving their work more exposure. The research may draw attention to those women artists who have expressed the wish to get organised in formal community projects or art centres and fulfil their need to nurture their traditional productions, to help them get funding and to exhibit their work in various formal sectors which may advance cultural heritage production. This section on pottery pays attention to the existence of regional styles of vessel making and argues for the development of heritage strategies that promote the preservation of these styles and of the special forms and practices they are based on.

It has been brought to my attention that the women potters who were visited as part of my research have no access to local museums. These women potters are few in number in Limpopo Province and have never participated in formally curated exhibitions of their vessels. It is not an exaggeration to assert that many South African rural potters do not have ready access to visitor markets for their indigenous products. The only public exposure afforded such artists is limited to domestic markets. Added disadvantages of the women potters are that their culturally sensitive productions are highly susceptible to the degradation of local eco-systems from where their raw materials are sourced and, furthermore, the extinction of their generative cultural loci in the face of rapid urbanisation and globalisation.

In this section I identify developments in indigenous meanings, relating to ‘truth, fact, and ways of knowing’, by situating pottery production and traditional setting in their cultural-specific contexts which may promote an understanding of how they are maintained and/or transformed dynamically, in a post-apartheid society. The research is innovative as it relates to contemporary discourse in South Africa and it should advance scholarship that is relevant to the epistemic nature of indigenous material culture and knowledge more generally (Motsamayi 2018). On a practical level the study can contribute materially to existing contextual data about indigenous knowledge systems in South Africa. To do so, I make use of local pottery as its characteristics reveal information on traditional indigenous beliefs in respect of pottery production, form, and ‘décor’.

At the same time, I articulate my own understanding of South African epistemes and worldviews, exposing as well as challenging the adverse colonial experience and how it has been normalised in traditional (etic-oriented) anthropological studies. The regrettable result is that most Western anthropological documentation of indigenous worldviews as expressed in pottery is largely lacking in pertinent explanations of indigenous meaning systems (Lawton 1967, Mönning 1967, Vincentelli 2003).

The research is therefore a more accurate highlighting of indigenous knowledge systems and a greater awareness of the historical significance of the studied artefacts, underlining the importance of preserving them and their meanings and make them available for future generations. This section intends to generate an understanding of local ways of knowing that clarifies as well as separates emic/insider and etic/outsider perspectives. A contextualised emic-based analysis of the studied artefacts and of local discourse will be of value to both indigenous communities and anthropological scholarship. Based on my fieldwork and interaction with artists fieldwork my understanding the knowledge of indigenous epistemes identified through this section, will improve my own integration of Western and indigenous theories of worldviews. After visiting museums around South Africa, an enormous void in the present understanding of indigenous South African knowledge systems (and consequently of heritage issues), and my research may begin to address this void. South African traditions have had a distinctive influence on not only pottery but on the formation of a national

identity. This implies that the educational aspects of teaching from a Western point of view about indigenous ways of knowing are hugely problematic.

While exploring the topic of South African material culture by conducting the present purposeful research on pottery and indigenous discourse, I expect to obtain a deeper, theoretical understanding and practical knowledge of South African pottery traditions. This may bring about new insights into South African traditional art and worldviews, based on local experience rather than on Western conceptions. In different local contexts pottery carries meanings that go far beyond its utilitarian roles: pottery communicates. The meanings conveyed by vessels are not only essential to what art is about. One aspect of the significance of this pottery consists in the messages and meanings that are implicit in its production and of importance to the makers and their communities. Thus, a prerequisite for an understanding of the cultural significance of any indigenous object should be an appreciation of its original (emic) meanings.

2. 11 Challenges in cataloguing African collections in South African museums: perspectives on accessioning indigenous vessels

My observations lead me to deduce that South African museums have always faced challenges in dealing with African works in their collections. These challenges continue to the present and I find that many museums are not performing adequately in terms of attracting audiences to view exhibits, although they are expected to function as institutions or agencies for the development of culture and nationhood.

For museums to function optimally and attract the public, they need to facilitate access to collections by registering every artefact as fully as possible. South African museums differ in the methods by which they accept art objects as part of their collections and deal with them. Accessioning an object includes focusing on how it ended up in a museum and how to secure its preservation (Buck and others 2007). According to ICOM (Code of Ethics for Museums) in relation to the documentation of collections, ‘Museum collections should be documented according to accepted professional standards. Such documentation should include a full identification and description of each item, its associations, provenance, condition, treatment and present location. Such data should be kept in a secure environment

and be supported by retrieval systems providing access to the information by the museum' (http://icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/Codes/code_ethics2013_eng.pdf).

Deaccession is normally a legal matter and not handled by museums (Weil 2000). It is, however, in many South African museums a very serious issue that deserves careful consideration in the future. It could involve the museum selling or lending out an object. It may also be a matter of relocating objects from point a to point b as part of the collections' management policy, when, for example, a new place has been found for the object as in its current location space or resources are lacking. Former white and privileged heritage institutions have retuned privilege facilities in museums as well as human resources. This has, after the first democratic elections, occurred in many South African national museums that are located in urban areas where they mostly serve elites.

As a result of past historical injustices, whereby resources were distributed along racial lines, some issues that feature in contemporary debates in the present museum world are not easy to deal with (Goodnow and others 2006, Dubin 2006, Rassool 2006) as Draft National Museums Policy (https://www.westerncape.gov.za/assets/departments/cultural-affairs-sport/draft_national_museum_policy.pdf) indicates that South African museums require drastic measures to promote necessary change in institutional perceptions, demonstrating the will to alter the museums' outlook and to accommodate various cultures. In rural areas such as Limpopo Province, museums play less active roles than in urban areas. In fact, museums in South Africa have, historically and into the present, been strongly contested areas.

Many artefacts have in the past been collected from various places in South Africa and elsewhere on the continent and by researchers donated or offered for sale to museums. These objects should inspire the research of black Africa and its art production as being significant and worthwhile topics of study in their own right, rather than for the sake of being preserved or exhibited. Currently we have a situation in which some artefacts such as *Difala* vessels, are placed in storage facilities. These objects may not even have been accounted for and are neglected for the sole reason that they do not fit easily into contemporary structures of art definition and in the artistic hierarchy that has dominated heritage institutions in the past and continues to dominate, to a degree, currently. During my fieldwork it became clear to me that many museums in rural areas cannot afford to buy artefacts for museum purposes, because

the provision of funds for museums is, as compared to community empowerment projects, not seen as a priority in many rural municipalities.

The adequate cataloguing of indigenous vessels is important because without proper records artefacts may go missing. In fact, due to the lack of a proper cataloguing process in museums, some vessels are neglected and in a deteriorating state. Even academic institutions have not effectively addressed this problem. Some artefacts are scattered in various heritage institutions across the country which complicates the compilation of formal catalogues that properly contextualise and cover the objects. The South African museums that I have visited do not collaborate and exchange art works or skills. Some heritage institutions operate entirely independently from each other, basing themselves on their Province. In cataloguing collections, each museum, as I observed, uses its own system to document collections.

Schmiegel (1988) points out that not all museums do record data in the same way. This is possibly due to the fact that each museum targets its own specific audience. The targeted audience influences how a museum presents its collections, resulting in a degree of specialisation that, on its own, makes a museum into a distinctive institution devoted to the preservation and promotion of its heritage collections. This statement is valid in the context of South African museums and their collections. Although, in some instances in South Africa, progress has been made towards the standardisation of cataloguing, much more needs to be done, particularly by museums that house majestic works of art that continue to inspire artists, among these *Difala* vessels. When researching *Difala*, I had to travel from place to place, looking for the objects which was complicated by the fact that each museum manages its collections, and stages exhibitions, in its own independent way. Some of the cataloguing models used are entirely applicable to the collections of just a single specific museum, based on its available resources. This implies that every museum has a way of its own to document its collections.

Among the challenges faced by heritage institutions is the lack of basic resources and funds in many museums, particularly those located in the former homelands and poor provinces. As a result, these institutions cannot undertake research activities pertaining to their collections. Museums may also be unable to draw audiences and generate their own income. This means

that they cannot buy new artefacts to add to their collections, while the culture of ordinary South Africans donating objects to rural museums is not yet a developed practice. Many people sell their artefacts to tourists rather than giving them for free to a museum. As compared to the situation in rural areas, in urban heritage institutions most collections consist of donations made by wealthy persons, academics, and various institutions hoping that their gifts will be acknowledged in the display. This has led to the surprising fact that the names of a donor and a collector are given priority whereas the producer of an art work is often not mentioned and acknowledged. These are obstacles that many museums face in their efforts to decolonise their institutions. It is an ethical issue that needs to be addressed by constructing descriptive catalogues.

In the museums in Limpopo Province for example, I found that there were no researchers actively undertaking studies concerning the documenting and cataloguing of objects based there, nor was there any other ongoing research associated with the museum collections although these had been present for quite some time, especially in the case of the Polokwane museums. This state of affairs is common to other rural provinces as well. On the other hand, the IzikoSHC in Cape Town has well organised staff and management structures. Some of its employees have several research publications on their names, boosting international interest and increasing the numbers of both international visitors and regular local audiences. In addition, the museum attracts the research students to its storage facilities and these are assisted by some trained professionals of which a few have PhD's in their respective disciplines. In Polokwane museums, on the other hand, the highest qualified staff members at this moment in time[2014] are post-graduates of which some may in the future register for a Masters. Staff members at IzikoSHC also have extensive experience in organising museum activities, based on facilities they have inherited from the apartheid administration.

In many heritage institutions there were, after the democratic elections of 1994, expectations regarding the effective dealing with heritage issues (Davison 1998). According to officials in one smaller museum I visited, there was an exodus of experienced staff members who were, when they left the museums, not replaced by equally experienced persons. Poor funding by governments exacerbated the situation with no museum journals being published, no museum website being established, and no updating of potential visitors as regards current activities

taking place at museums. In addition, there is no attempt to catalogue artefacts, except from the side of a few interested academics and from people who have an interest in tourism.

In the African context, *Difala* vessels are made by persons, in the first place in their role as members of communities and only thereafter as individual art producers, since culture is among Africans not characterised by individualism. In most cases, Africans do, in their artistic expressions, stress a holistic creativity. Thus, the ownership of cultural practices is collective rather than personalised. In the past, creativity was not driven by a wish to make a profit as appears to be the case nowadays. Therefore, the communities in which *Difala* vessels have been collected should be acknowledged as custodians of this neglected heritage.

I proposed contemporary cataloguing model for *Difala* vessels includes both historical and contemporary information about material objects and their environment and clarifies what happens to these objects once they become part of a museum collection. Malaro (1998) notes, that a collection object is an item that has been, or is, in the process of being accessioned into a collection. Of some objects I sampled, information on how they were acquired is not available due to the fact that collectors have collected them for a particular reason, for example to extract ethnographic data, rather than for the purpose of display or research.

In the museum context, accessing objects entails the formal process, used to accept and record them as collection objects (Buck and others 2007). During my research I found no evidence of such a process being followed in PolokwaneCHM and Iziko Social History Centre. There is no record referring to *Difala* vessels excepts cards to identify them in storage spaces. A formal system should form part of the cataloguing process because audiences need to know how an object has ended up in a museum: does it belong to the institution or is it there on loan? Some collections in museums have been donated and the donors aren't even acknowledged. The lack of such information makes it difficult to properly identify artefacts while their historical contexts remain obscure.

Conducting comparative studies in urban and rural South African museums has made me realise that the various cataloguing models used worldwide cannot satisfactorily contribute to an understanding of Southern African *Difala* vessels and need to be re-considered. Among models used by museums is the nomenclature system, by some museums applied in an

unconscious fashion. According to Chenhall (1988: 1), nomenclature system is a structured and controlled list of terms organised in a classification system to provide the basis for indexing and cataloguing collections. The system allows holders of collections to share data with broader community and also designed to provide ways to solve problems presented by computerisation. In my view, computer-based nomenclature cannot cover all information needed to document artefacts, due to complicating factors such as regional and local preference names and issues of accessibility and affordability by museums. During my visits to various museums I found that nomenclature has been adopted as a tool for the cataloguing of indigenous vessels by many South African institutions but that it was not recognised as such. It works for some objects in museum collections in the sense that these get identified. While the system is in some instances effective, it would need to be reviewed and adapted to be able to cover broader types of objects that have - as is the case with many indigenous vessels, including *Difala* - never been considered for continuing studies and for exhibition.

It should be remembered that many cataloguing models used in South African museums have been adopted, solely for the purpose of ensuring the safekeeping of objects and for the sake of conserving the collections in museum custody, rather than with the intention to apply a model that may inspire research and lead to the gathering of information that can be made available to the public and serve educational purposes. Some of these models are perfectly suited to catalogue traditional objects other than *Difala*, providing the detailed knowledge that is necessary to develop descriptive information on objects.

After the generation and analysis of information that collectors may have omitted, objects will be easier to curate and to be made accessible for research by visiting academics and students and, occasionally, by members of other audiences. These objects can also be given on loan for exhibition in other institutions and thus begin to function in the broader context of countrywide studies, generating more detailed analyses and the addition of new, updated information. The lack of cataloguing methods that provide descriptive information on the indigenous objects in South African museums means that, in most cases, museum officials do not give researchers access to the collections in their custody, as they have no records of objects that might go missing, while there are also no organisational classifications regarding collections which makes their safekeeping problematic.

In addition, some artefacts are in urgent need of professional preservation and storage. In conclusion, the cataloguing of indigenous vessels requires proper plans, or a strong collection management procedure, to guarantee accountability for artworks present in museums and to make collections manageable. If a museum collection is well catalogued, the result is a balanced management of diverse artefacts whereby it is possible to regulate exhibited objects as well as those in storerooms that could in the future be considered for exhibition. The cataloguing practice will also facilitate the updating of information related to specific objects. As Case (2004: 23) states, a collection management procedure is a known tool used by museum officials. If collections are well stored, artefacts will be better preserved and an environment is created that is conducive for research. Unfortunately, such favourable conditions rarely exist in South African museums.

2. 12 Changing façades of museums and collections

My analysis of the presence of *Difala* vessels and other indigenous artefacts in South African heritage institutions has convinced me that museums should no longer be used merely as physical places for housing artworks, but rather as spaces in which members of communities are free to explore and connect with collections as a part of their daily living as Jeffers (2003: 109) proposes. I am of the view that South African museums need to change their roles if they wish to avoid being seen as they were in the past, namely as serving political and colonial objectives. Museums should play more dynamic roles to reach wider audiences and come to life as true custodians of South Africa's cultural heritage, unlike in some parts of the world where museums used to be associated with old buildings (Hooper-Greenhill 1994: 21).

Museums are about heritage that can be used to empower and educate audiences. Thereto they need to promote research of collections in their custody and show them to the public. Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge (2005: 29) assert that a country's heritage can not only promote tourism and related activities, but also aid in development projects and urban regeneration, especially in respect of enterprises concerned with sustainability. Many remote areas in South Africa experience a lack of recreation centres. This issue could be partially solved by investing in museums, so that new collections may be acquired and exhibitions of local heritage items organised. Museums could, besides, aim at promoting culture by

exposing the public to products of material culture that have in the past not been presented as art. Other activities of an educational nature, drawing on local heritage including craft, may stimulate environmental awareness in the public sphere.

Many artefacts from the past have survived to the present day because they were housed safely in a museum (Knell 1994: 58). Among these are *Difala* vessels. These vessels were never extensively studied, but recently museums have begun to extend their function of keeping artefacts safe by opening their doors to academics with an interest in documenting heritage objects and by making some of these objects available to educational institutions and galleries for research purposes and exhibition. Museums could play a major role in protecting a nation's cultural heritage. The combination of various activities in heritage institutions can result in the survival of many *Difala* collections. Even those that surface after having spent years in storage may offer fruitful insights to researchers. To decorate their products, vessel makers used cultural signifiers drawn from other local art and known in their own areas. Vessel production is a collective effort among African groups and this includes the making of the *Difala* vessels found in many museums.

2. 13 Museum collections and contemporaneity

This section looks at the historical as well as the present-day context in which the above-mentioned museums developed, in order to come to a better understanding of the reasons for the historical non-existence of the systematic cataloguing of artefacts and of its impact on the management of *Difala* collections at the moment. I further explore the ways in which the museums where I conducted research function in relation to their target audiences as well as their relevance in the contemporary South Africa. During my visits to selected South African museums I noticed that they tend to fashion themselves as fulfilling storage responsibilities, rather than acting to serve society and create public awareness of their collections in relation to the community in which the institution is located.

Part of the problem is that museums are based on traditional Western theories of knowledge and aesthetics (Jeffers 2003: 110). Therefore, museums cannot, in the South African context, simply accept and/or display objects without providing them with solid background

information on, for example, their origins. Such requirements are difficult to fulfil because classifying African artefacts in a way suitable for museums is complicated by the fact that the artefacts concerned were not meant to be in museums. In addition, a museum is not an indigenous African concept, but a Western institution. A museum in South Africa is thus a Western construct, that happens to house African artefacts.

When interviewing participants in my research, I had to explain to many heritage experts that museums are Western institutions. However, older people in rural areas were perfectly aware that museums are not part of their culture. Durrans (2004: 152) states that the concept of the museum emerged in the West in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For this reason, some South African museums are based on ideological notions, derived from Western schools of thought and, as a result, practise Western ways of interpreting material culture (Dubin 2006: 10). The role of museums should entail to collect and preserve objects, encourage research and gather data, exhibit artefacts and function for the benefit of communities.

Many South African museums, built in the past, before, during and after apartheid, are key institutions with an international reputation. They connect people with past and present activities that are relevant to human beings, whether they live on the African continent or anywhere else in the world (Davison 1998, Rassool 2006). The debates about indigenisation or Africanisation of museums in South Africa are characterised by controversy, partly because museums do not belong to traditional African culture. Many were built before the dawn of democracy and continue to reflect Western traditions while their role in relation to Africa consists mainly in the housing of African material cultures. Another function of these institutions in the past was to promote colonial and apartheid ideologies. Despite this, some museums have contributed significantly to the preservation of African artefacts that, otherwise, in the colonial era and during apartheid, might have been lost forever. At the same time, museums remain contested areas of cultural production (Karp 1992: 6). Some South African museums have been specifically established to promote the cultures of certain groups but, due to the locations where they were built, these institutions generally failed to reach their goals.

According to Pearce (2004: 19-29), objects in museum collections can generate knowledge of historical, economic and scientific value, provided they are supported by scholarly studies with detailed information and providing audiences with broad insights. To obtain a better understanding of existing collections, I rely on the fieldwork I have conducted among communities that produced artefacts, and on interviews with museum officials as their institutions are directly designed for educational or aesthetic purposes and have trained staff that handle and care for tangible objects, making sure that these are publicly displayed on a regular basis (Malaro 1998: 45). Museums are tools of discovery and a means of preserving cultural and historical identities, as one of their roles is that of teaching institution (Ashworth and Howard 1999: 101). According to Hooper-Greenhill (1999: 13), depending on their relationship with their past, people who share common goals can, when looking at a collection of artefacts, interpret identity by trying to understand the meanings of the artefacts. Museum collections may be regarded as artistic creations of self out of self. They can connect people with past and present and offer hope for creating a future (Pearce 1992: 66).

Societies are defined on the basis of collected materials, displayed and preserved in museums and their storage rooms. South African museums are supposed to operate in conjunction with the communities in which they are located. Museums played dynamic roles in the past and continue to do so in the present. This makes them unique and distinguishes them from other public institutions that have specialised roles (Hooper-Greenhill 1994: 4). As Ashworth and Howard (1999: 83) state, the museum has become an instrument for communicating ideas with societies. By implication, the South African museum can be identified as a reinvented, originally Western, concept that has been adopted by Africans and that, by now, has become local tradition, serving to promote and preserve African cultures.

Culture can thus be understood as a learning process happening when being exposed to ideas and exchanging these. Culture can be given form in museums, even if it concerns an African culture and in spite of the fact that museums are not part of African culture. Museums simply are institutions of major importance that preserve African cultural objects. The fact that many African ethnic groups are culturally interconnected is of influence on certain museums. This is, for example, the case in the Polokwane area where Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum was created by the apartheid government to promote Bakoni culture but that ended up housing cultural productions of multiple origins. So many different ethnic groups

with varying cultural expressions are living in the Polokwane area, that there could be no question of a monoculture dominating the museum. As a result, the museum became a place where several cultures met, serving the interests of not only the Bakoni people for whom the institution was meant, but of several other groups as well. The Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum which is located in the Polokwane area - not in Ga-Matlala area where many Bakoni live - ended up as custodian of the products of several cultures. What one finds in this museum are socially constructed concepts that are much contested in terms of culture and origin.

My observations in both the IzikoSHC and the Polokwane museums tell me that most collections in these institutions are not collected from the communities where they are situated and that the locations are neutral which causes the museums to develop a sense of responsibility, particularly in respect of the people they serve (Kaplan 1995: 37). South African museums house some excellent collections of international standing. In neighbouring countries there are many cultures whose artistic productions share characteristics with South African local heritage objects and information pertinent to those cultures is available in South African museums. At IzikoSHC, collections are sourced from nine South African provinces and outside the country. Nationally, museums are divided into national, provincial, districts and regional categories and each of these museums serves particular purposes.

As regards the museums that are part of my research - PolokwaneCHM and Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum in Limpopo Province, and Iziko-Social History Centre in the Western Cape - the founding of the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum and the Iziko-Social History Centre was inspired by colonial and apartheid ideologies, associated with perceptions of what constitutes indigenous cultures with their supposedly static nature whereby the levels of native civilisations were determined on the basis of evolutionary theories. No cataloguing systems were developed and artefacts were simply put in storage. These institutions were not in the first place established for the public. Few people could afford to live in, or travel to, urban areas anyway. In Cape Town, for example, a person living in Hout Bay or Table View, would generally be white and able to access the Iziko museums. For black people living in neighbourhoods like Imizamo Yethu, Mitchells Plain, Lavender Hill or Guguletu, it is much more difficult. The same applies to the Polokwane museums. An unemployed person in Ga-Dikgale, Seshego or Westernburg would have to

travel to Polokwane to visit the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum. On the other hand, the black and white elites who reside close to Polokwane city can pay regular visits to the museums. In other words, the accessibility of museums depends also on the spatial planning of their building sites in relation to the public they are meant to serve.

Chapter 3: *Difala* vessels, a schematic outline

The first section of chapter three explains a number of concepts that are important for the understanding (and avoiding the misunderstanding) of ways in which *Difala* vessels are described (sometimes incorrectly) in local museum collections. The chapter as a whole investigates issues, pertinent to indigenous *Difala* vessels, namely their socio-cultural context and their formal analysis. Both issues involve reflexive indigenous descriptors of form, surface, social designation and utilitarian function of Sotho-Tswana vessels. I will briefly discuss object archives, custodial issues, documentation records, and cataloguing processes as part of a schematic outline.

The National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (act no. 43 of 1996) as amended by the Cultural Laws Amendment Act 36 of 2001, defines archives as ‘records in the custody of an archives repository’. ‘Custody’ is described as referring to ‘the control of records based on their physical possession’, and ‘record’ means, ‘Recorded information regardless of form or medium’

(http://www.dcs.gov.za/homepage_paia/Documents/Legislation/Archives%20Act.pdf).

In the context of CCO (Cataloguing Cultural Objects), a record is ‘a conceptual arrangement of fields referring to a work or images; not the same thing as a database record ...’ (Baca and others 2006: 377). Cataloguing is a process. When it is concerned with ‘cataloguing cultural objects’, it involves the compilation of information by systematically describing the works and images in a collection (Baca and others 2006: 3). I explore cataloguing as related to *Difala* accessioning in museums, specifically through examining *Difala* vessels and by giving attention to form and function, methods applied, materials and motifs used, and meanings in a particular setting. I provide illustrations of the step-by-step construction and of motif application during the decoration process as well as of related patterns and decorations in vessel making. Thereafter, I consider the use of *chaîne opératoire* for the cataloguing of *Difala* vessels in selected museums.

It is important to be aware from the outset of this study, that the terms defined above as they function in a Western museum environment, together with related practices, are conceptually remote from issues of cultural heritage in Africa where vocalised histories are generally

favoured above manifestly objectified records and systematised catalogues of African material culture (vessels, in the present case).

It would appear to be an insurmountable task to propose new standards of contextually descriptive cataloguing while avoiding the limitations of present systems. I will review some examples of cataloguing models built on Western tenets and used globally for cataloguing African artefacts, among these the *catalogue raisonné*. It is vital to review this American cataloguing model (<http://www.nypl.org/about/divisions/wallach-division/art-architecture-collection/catalogue-raisonne>) (Baca and others 2006: 375), as well as the model based on nomenclature. Chenhall (1988: 1) argues that nomenclature provides standard object terms that cataloguers can use in the indexing of collections. The hierarchy applied in the nomenclature system is based on the original function of an artefact rather than on any other of its characteristics. Both models play a role in shaping contemporary scholarship. In the context of CCO (Cataloguing Cultural Objects) (Baca and others 2006: 375), cataloguing is the compilation of information by systematically describing the works in a collection. In respect of my study and the need to catalogue *Difala* vessels, the most pertinent model of cataloguing so far is the system used by British Museum Online of which, however, I propose to critique specifically the aspect of local context.

Another model used by British Museum Online for cataloguing African vessels covers, among other information: museum number, description of how artefacts are made, ethnic name, made by, date, made in (place of production), place where found, found/acquired, materials, technique, dimensions: height, width, curator's comments, further information, academic and media exposure, location on display, acquisition name, purchased from, acquisition date, acquisition notes register, collected by the donor, registration title (http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=588640&partId=1ðname=2686&page=1). A similar method is recommended by ICOM (1996). In my opinion, these systems don't cover sufficient information and should be supplemented with current ethnographic data related to contemporary discourses, physiographic data, interviews conducted by researchers doing fieldwork, consultations with experts currently working in heritage institutions and museums, results of academic research, museums records, reproductions of artefacts, interviews with practitioners and groups

connected to catalogued artefacts and the contemporary usage of objects, so that their dynamic nature is highlighted.

The interpretation of African heritage objects in South Africa continues to be dominated by invalid Western colonial perceptions of African art as being static in nature. The incorrect image of African artefacts as lacking in dynamism can be addressed by new models of cataloguing to replace the standard systems that often omit the identity of the original makers and owners of artefacts while recording the names of collectors, thus prioritising their importance over that of the makers. Schmiegel (1988: 49) notes that catalogued museum objects should provide detailed information on the artworks housed in a museum. The above mentioned systems do however not guarantee that, when applied to the cataloguing of *Difala* vessels in South African museums, the provided information will be sufficient to cover all the aspects of these productions. The models need to be reviewed and adapted so as to include data about the localities where the objects were made and used, relevant anthropographical details, colonial history if any, geographical information regarding regions, physiography, information on the producer/s of the artworks and their regions of origin, a description of motifs used, production processes and materials involved, provenance and museum documentation as well as the social and cultural functions of objects. The cataloguing model has to offer options for adding further information as soon as it becomes available. In this way, the cataloguing of artworks will encourage the widening of perspectives and a creative use of formats. The background of producers of objects should be described as accreditation as well as the dynamic traditions that activate the producing of objects and, if possible, photographs of makers should be included. Also influences from other ethnic groups have to be taken into account and recorded to avoid narrow approaches.

3. 1 Accessioning *Difala* vessels

Research material about dynamic *Difala* vessels and their distribution is not easily available. A Polokwane museum booklet (Jordaan 1992: 27) contains no information about *Difala* vessels and the few available archeological records (Moifatswana 1993: 87) provide no critical information. Booklets, written by Jacques Jordaan, mention Mr. George David, a former curator, who was by the Polokwane town council in 1979 tasked with establishing an ethnological museum in Polokwane. Mr. David's records and documents are not available in

the museum. Current members of staff have no knowledge of his research work and Mr. David has passed away. I spoke with Mr. Frans Roodts, an archaeologist and heritage practitioner in the Polokwane area, who worked for years in the Polokwane museums and who met me in 2013 at the PolokwaneCHM to identify and discuss *Difala* vessels of which staff members of the museum could not tell me how and by whom they had been collected. Mr. Roodts was very helpful but, as he is no longer part of museum activities, there are some questions that he could not answer. He was aware of the challenges posed by my research and gave me contact information for Jacques Jordaan who used to be employed at BakoniMOAM but who is no longer working in the area. My supervisor, Professor Ian Calder, and I tried to contact Mr. Jordaan several times but were unsuccessful.

At the Iziko Social History Museum, I concentrated on Sotho-Tswana indigenous material culture as represented in its collections, especially pottery and vessels. My literature review had informed me that Anna Lawton, an anthropologist who worked in Cape Town museums, had in the 1960's mentioned *Difala* vessels from Limpopo and I was hoping to find a special collection of *Difala* vessels there. Unfortunately, she had not collected any of the vessels. I requested to see Sotho-Tswana material culture in the Iziko Social History Centre and found that the museum has an Isaac Schapera collection, donated by the University of Cape Town (UCT) and kept in a storeroom. Dr. Gerard Klinghardt, curator at Iziko museum and the Social History Centre, helped me to locate the Schapera collection as well as archival materials in the Social History collection. It was unfair to expect other people to help me with my research since they are no longer employed by the institutions. New staff recruited were not yet familiar enough with the museum collections of which, besides, no key records are available nor have identification methods been applied. This complicates the studying of the contemporary *Difala* work present in the institution. One of my informants indicated that some old staff members are believed to be derailing transformation by refusing to share their skills with newcomers and that this complicates the researching of older objects in the museums.

New museum officials had apparently not become familiarised with the presence of older collections of indigenous material culture in storerooms as they could give no information about artefacts in these collections nor identify them. If such issues are not addressed, museums risk losing key historical works of material culture. Attention should be given to

skills transfer and to the funding of museums. At the time of my study visits, there was no research activity in these museums with regard to social history collections dating to before the advent of democracy. It is most likely that, in addition to *Difala*, many other collections are kept in storage and not accounted for, as new museum staff lack the necessary experience, skills and relevant qualifications to deal confidently with traditional indigenous art and are offered poor mentorship. After visiting various international museums, especially in the United States, I have reason to assume that the High-density Mobile Storage Systems that are currently used by museums internationally for the storage and shelving of artefacts and records, would not function properly in local South African museums like the ones that are part of my research, because of a lack of funding and of experts able to safely store the collections and to identify artefacts in satisfactory archival records. High-density mobile storage systems (Sampson, 1992: 183), is also known as compaction system or compactor storage, is used for space saving storage in the museum.

Compactor storage is 'a museums storage system employing storage units which can be moved to allow access when required and then 'compacted' to occupy a minimum floor area' (Lord and others, 2012: 657). Before such an effective system can be implemented, extensive preparation is needed. At the moment our museums are not ready for the introduction of High-density Mobile Storage Systems which is on the way to become a globally adopted system and considered as the easiest way to safeguard collections. It is, without doubt, better than the methods currently used in South African heritage institutions and their storerooms.

The biggest challenge of museums in rural areas is being underfunded so that no projects can be undertaken. Some of these institutions make the impression of being ancient, abandoned establishments. No exhibitions are organised and damaged artefacts are not restored due to a lack of resources and expertise, as one museum official said. I wonder if, after my research ends, there will be any further study of indigenous vessels that are, like *Difala* works, kept in storerooms. Some works need to be reassembled and restored. I found in some vessels fragments that have to be assessed, particularly in the PolokwaneCHM where I came across old clay pottery that went unrecorded but that is of significant value for ethnographic studies. Museum officials did not seem to have ideas for dealing with such objects. The Iziko Social History Museum experiences similar problems.

I had to rely on past staff members of museums and on previous researchers to identify collections in storerooms, but what will happen when all the older experts have retired? Transformation in heritage institutions has not been carried out in a careful manner which is why, currently, we are studying collections that have spent years in museums without ever being subjected to extensive research.

Debating the decolonisation of museums (Kreps 2011:72, Onciul 2015: 23) is meaningless, in the context of South Africa decolonising proposals cannot be considered, as long as no staff with the skills and expertise to run such institutions is employed. Museums need to focus on the development of concepts to decolonise artefacts that have been for years in their institutions and take into account that the idea of a museum is not African in origin (Jeffers 2003: 110, Durrans 2004: 152), but that the objects kept there are from an African background. That is where decolonisation should start. I am of the view that, institutionally, South African museums will turn out to be undecolonisable if the artefacts collected in the past and housed in these institutions cannot be decolonised.

Among the issues that hinder progress in the cataloguing of products of African material culture are the poor accessibility of institutions, inadequate funding, racist perceptions, a lack of skills and expertise, a measure of contestation regarding the ownership of objects and a physiographic regionalism exhibited by some scholars and other experts who wish to monopolise fields of research related to material culture. These problems lead to a dearth of new ideas which might advance the completion of the recording of indigenous material existing in our museums and the provision of descriptive catalogues. Of many vessels the makers are unknown while the collectors left no informative records and did not take down details of artefacts and their collection during their expeditions to the areas where they found the artefacts. They only noted details of an ethnographic nature which is all the information at present available in museums. There are no records concerning specific objects and follow up research has not been done and few attempts have been made so far to trace some of the traditions associated with, among other heritage objects, *Difala* vessels. Although *Difala* vessels present in heritage institutions cannot be sold to the public, the issue of their ownership has become a seriously contested area with many persons claiming to be the rightful custodians of the tradition.

Some indigenous collections housed in museums that form part of my research were collected in a period when certain ideologies dominated the description of African vessels. Since then the situation has changed dramatically and vessels are perceived in different ways. The focus is no longer on a collection as such, but rather on the descriptive detailing of the collected objects, on how they relate to other objects, and on the future development of their particular types. Of many Sotho-Tswana people with whom *Difala* vessels are associated, the traditional cultures have changed (Shaw 1974: 120, Dubb 1974: 447). They no longer practise, for instance, traditional farming whereby grain was a major commodity, to be stored in granaries. Sotho-Tswana speakers have generally adopted new lifestyles and the industrialisation of traditional agricultural systems has impacted on communities that for their livelihood used to depend on subsistence farming. In view of such change I contend that vessels need to be critically examined in cataloguing procedures and should not be automatically classified as granaries because the need for granaries has dramatically decreased. Along with the environment, the material cultures of Sotho-Tswana people have undergone radical developments (Lestrade 1929: 8, Levinsohn 1984: 15).

It is interesting that also persons who contributed to preserving data about *Difala* vessels did apparently not think of researching them any further and left the vessels without actual records. In my quest to find information about *Difala* vessels outside Limpopo Province, I contacted Anne Lawton in 2014 in Cape Town. She was the earliest anthropologist to mention *Sefalana* in her 1967 research. An IzikoSHM official provided me with a contact address. In our email exchange she mentions that it was a very long time since she was involved in that work and that her memory of it is not very clear. Thus, no information on past and present *Difala* was obtainable from employees of the Polokwane museums and IzikoSHM, nor was any relevant research available from anthropologists, art historians and archaeologists that, by providing records of the socio-cultural histories of black South Africans, could complement my research into the material culture and assist in a comparative study of *Difala*.

3. 2 Constructing a *Sefala* vessel. Form and function. Methods, materials, motifs and meanings

An important part of studying vessels is to develop an understanding of the processes, materials and techniques used to make and decorate them, as underlined by ceramist-authors Frank Hamer (1975) and Daniel Rhodes (1978). The connection of ceramic form and function is, in the context of *Difala* construction, not random but meaningful.

Ceramic vessels are constructed by manipulating plastic raw clay, using handbuilding techniques and/or a potter's wheel. The resulting shapes are air-dried and then combustion-fired in processes which bring the raw clay into a permanent ceramic state.

However, as opposed to pottery in ceramic productions, the construction of *Difala* vessels does not involve the use of clay but is based on the use of fresh cattle-dung. It is of interest that, in the making of both dung and clay vessels, the producers utilise the essential properties of the different materials in similar ways, firstly in the manipulation of a plastic material to form hollow vessels and, secondly, in that both kinds of material maintain their original plastic form after drying. In other words, they stay as they were constructed, without getting deformed or collapsing when they are eventually used as containers.

Comparing *Difala* with pottery, or clay, vessels, reveals another resemblance, namely in construction techniques. Coil-building is one of the most fundamental handbuilding techniques in the construction of clay forms. Plastic clay is hand-rolled into short lengths which are built up in concentric coils that are joined together to create a hollow form. Functioning as almost an equivalent of plastic clay coils, the undigested plant fibres in cow dung give the raw dung malleability so that it can be manipulated to make coils and, similarly to clay, form a hollow vessel.

The use of cow dung as an essential ingredient of long-lasting *adobe* bricks in architectural constructions is well documented in several world cultures (Motsamayi 2014: 7). It is of importance in this regard, to look at discourses and assess assumptions about current and older vessel making traditions (Moifatswana 1993: 87, Lombard and Parsons 2003: 82) concerning material issues of pottery construction and associated practices that are also

applied in other forms of indigenous pottery (Jordaan 1992: 35). Such considerations will lead to the formulation of an understanding of techniques and materials as related to vessel forms, as well as to descriptions of *Difala* vessels and their motifs and to relevant comparisons with interpretations and iconographical meanings of clay pottery (Jordaan 1992, Gosselain 1992, Jolles 2005). In order to support conclusions resulting from my fieldwork's documentary analyses, I include details of form, surface, measurements, materials, ceramic techniques, colour and patterns of *Difala* pieces which I catalogue, making use of the available literature on related traditions, and analyse on the basis of interviews I have conducted with senior individuals, pottery makers and curators of heritage institutions. These findings establish a foundation for the conception of a descriptive cataloguing model, linked to the environment and in which the objects concerned originate from the Polokwane area and are used as a case study.

Based on a physical inspection of environmental factors and of actual production practices, I pay attention to aspects of materiality that play a part in making specific vessels, including their construction and the types of vessels produced, as well as to their perceived values and roles all of which was extensively discussed during interviews with participants.

At Iziko Social History Centre, I made general technical observations about the *Sefalana* vessel's construction, form, iconography, historical background, surface and technical issues involved. Through my analysis, supplemented by available data, I was able to gain a deeper theoretical and practical knowledge to support fieldwork notes and records in relation to the current practice and challenges of cataloguing in heritage institutions. I re-examined the existing methods of cataloguing indigenous vessels in local museums with a view to a deconstruction of some ideological premises associated with the cataloguing of African collections.

In each of the Polokwane institutions where I conducted research, I surveyed catalogue reports on the physical state of archival vessels in the museums, including aspects of their display, signage, meanings of their colours, storage details and provenance, but, unfortunately, information pertinent to some of these aspects was missing. My aim was to get an insight into the vessels' contextual origins, cultural significance and usages, but no such knowledge is currently available in either of the surveyed institutions. In my proposed model

which entails the descriptive account of the detailed descriptive catalogue, containing information on changing styles of *Difala* vessels, is comprehensive in that it involves the examination and photographing of available *Difala* vessels and is based on interviews with the makers of contemporary vessels. I also include a comparison of indigenous vessels produced by Sotho-Tswana speakers in South Africa and Botswana and the interconnections between the changing natural environment in the Highveld and the indigenous cultural practices attached to the vessels as far as they still prevail.

Some techniques that were used for making clay pottery are also applied in the production of dung vessels. I observed that in the vessel making traditions of rural women two types of construction techniques are prevalent, namely moulding and modelling.



Figure 22: Phuthi Francina Mathekga. 2013. Small cylindrical vessel, linked to the form of *Sefalana*. Cattle dung with painted motifs using earth pigments. Collection Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum. No accession number because this is a demonstration vessel made for M. F. Motsamayi during a fieldwork visit to the museum. Height 24,5 cm, mid width 19 cm, mouth and base 8,5 cm. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2013. Unusual: red soil. It is associated with wall painting, not vessels. This vessel is made for demonstration purposes for museum visitors. Black decorations made using charcoal and mixture of red soil and liquefied charcoal used for drawing a middle line on the vase.

Watching a reconstruction of *Sefalana* vessels (**Fig. 22**), I observed that certain steps are followed. The preparation of the material is one of the first considerations. Ashes, by vessel makers collected from firewood hearths, are soaked and mixed with cattle dung and water. The resulting mass is used to build and decorate *Difala* vessels. Local trees are used,

preferably leadwood, while blackened left-over charcoal (*mosidi wa magala*) is used to decorate the exterior of completed vessels. I emphasise that in the *Sefalana* making process in the Polokwane area no clay is used, contrary to what has previously been stated in ethnographic studies by observers (Lawton 1967), claiming that *Difala* consist of a clay and dung mixture.

Difala vessels need an atmosphere that is conducive to open air drying. Best is the winter season. It takes almost a week to fully complete a vessel (**Figs. 23 and 24**). It could be made by one person or, depending on the vessel's size, by two. Some vessels, smaller than ordinary beer pots, were also produced in various forms. Techniques are of essential importance for the quality of vessels. Those used for making *Difala* are derive from techniques applied in other forms of pottery, produced in the past by *Difala* making communities and also serving as storage space. The studio wares that today's vessel makers are exposed to, do influence art production in contemporary South Africa. According to Gosselain (1992), African pottery techniques have been transferred from one area to another, due to the interaction of different groups. In respect of *Difala* vessels, all the materials used in their production, including decoration, are indigenous to the area of production and derived from traditional practice that has been carried over from past to present generations. Contemporary vessel makers reaffirm indigenous techniques and tools, for example by avoiding Western brushes and commonly adhering to the traditional use of twigs from trees in the decoration process. Material cultures have emanated from the environment in which groups reside. The environment thus became a cornerstone in cultural expression, in addition to offering a means of subsistence to, among others, vessel makers whose success was determined by their artistic ability as well as by the marketability of, and demand for, their products (Cotton 1996: 190). Such was the case in the creation of *Difala* vessels and associated artefacts (Motsamayi 2014).

The longstanding cultural fusions between many African groups, leading to the exchange of creative concepts, continue to be effective in vessel making, resulting from the historical meeting of groups in the South African Highveld. Presently, local people in Limpopo Province make *Difala* vessels in the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum, but usually without classifying them as granaries or even as works of art. Instead, they define them simply as 'for museum purposes' (Motsamayi 2014). However, current museum conditions determine whether the vessels are decorated and indeed displayed as art. To

understand the dynamic process that contributes to contemporary artistic styles in the area, one needs to take account of the concept of tradition in the locality and how it has shaped local societies.

The concept of tradition has been defined in many ways, often depending on the context. Based on fieldwork experience and the analysis of research results, I would argue that it is difficult to separate vessel making traditions from changes occurring in art making. In this regard, I mention Acton's (1952: 3) definition, that tradition is 'a belief or practice transmitted from one generation to another and accepted as authoritative, or deferred to, without argument'. *Difala* vessels found in Polokwane museums are manifestations of both old and contemporary traditions and, as such, they are linked to traditions, cultures and cultural practices found in the grassland or Highveld area of South Africa in past and present. This situation results from historical processes because, as Miles (1997: 7) indicates, the history of black South African art is shaped by the production of art under the influence of social conditions. This is the background of historical and contemporary production of *Difala* vessels and their cultural significance.

3. 3 *Difala* vessels and *chaîne opératoire*

In this section the concept of *chaîne opératoire* is considered in relation to my study of *Difala* vessels. South Africa as a country is part of the globalizing world and continues to be defined by Western dominated ideologies. While various African indigenous practices are manifest in South African museums of culture - including *Difala* vessels - these museums are Western oriented institutions that persist in certain Western approaches to African artefacts. An understanding of African perceptions regarding vessels already present in museums, could lead to an insight that an incorporation of some Western approaches may prove useful in the African context, as part of establishing a foundation for a discourse that can assist future African scholars in advancing views on the development of a descriptive cataloguing system of African vessels whereby every artefact's context is, separately and in its own right, taken into account. Sellet (1993: 106) writes that French archeologists have used the concept of *chaîne opératoire* (operational chain) in past and present, mainly in studying lithic industries and pottery. I focus in my study specifically on dynamic storage vessels used by Africans. An approach, similar to that of the French scholars, is adopted in the United States by processual

archeologists and cultural anthropologists, but the method remains ignored by the bulk of English-speaking archeologists in most parts of the world, including South Africa.

The *chaîne opératoire* aims to describe and render intelligible, all cultural transformations that a specific raw material undergoes. It explores the chronological segmentation of actions and mental processes involved in the producing of an artefact and in its enduring participation in the technical system of a group in the past. The initial stage of the so-called chain is the raw material procurement while its final moments are in the ultimate discarding of the artefact (Sellet 1993: 106, Martinon-Torres 2002: 16). In my study of *Difala* production did not consider disposal stage of *chaîne opératoire* as it was not useful for my experiment my example of *Difala* production only consists of making. Read (2007), on the other hand explores the classification of, and a methodological approach to, an artefact, based on examples from processual archaeology and with attention given specifically to the people who produced the artefact, to the relation between artefact and makers, to its usage in the past and to other related dynamic aspects.

In so far as my study is concerned, Gosselain (1992) uses a method, similar to *chaîne opératoire* (Martinon-Torres 2002), when analysing the styles and production of pottery among Bafia potters of Cameroon. Sometimes, the approach includes the scientific handling of analysing and documenting material culture, whereby some scholars' statements contain unjustified assumptions (Moifatswana 1993, Lombard and Parsons 2003). Recently, in my study and documentation of *Difala* vessels (Motsamayi 2014), some elements were used that are associated with *chaîne opératoire* because of their relevance to the cataloguing of dynamic dung vessels in relation to local ecosystems and art. In this context, I looked at objects from the point of view of museums, taking account of changes that have occurred, of the current state of objects, and of their present location from an ethnographic perspective. In a presentation in Colorado (2015) I reported on my examination of the sustainability of ceramic and other vessel production in the context of ecological and economic potentialities. Special attention was given to changing physical and visual features of African indigenous pottery vessels in relation to the significant environmental aspects of the social and cultural context of their production.

According to Soressi and Geneste (2011: 334), *chaîne opératoire* is associated with raw material used to reproduce or recreate an artefact that has, in a particular culture, existed in the past, in sequence form. The reproduction is based on how the artefact was produced, used, and ultimately disposed of (Soressi and Geneste 2011: 336). The usefulness of this approach lies in the fact that it has until recently been applied by few archaeologists and art historians in South Africa, whereas it offers valuable possibilities for the cataloguing of African artefacts, for instance *Difala* vessels. To make the approach relevant in local contexts, I have added information that stems from oral history and indigenous knowledge. The approach serves as a tool to establish methodological information about production details and techniques involved in recreating a particular artefact. It provides help in analysing the background and current state of artefacts studied (Martinon-Torres 2002). The approach enables one, for example, to consider the steps followed in making pottery from the first to the last one, informed by its historical background and by an account of changes that have occurred in association with the artefact concerned (Sellet 1993).

In South Africa, Maggs and Ward (2011), Jolles and Nel (2015) have studied the work of individual potters in relation to the cataloguing of indigenous Zulu pottery, focusing on regional styles and typology to define distinctions between Zulu potters regionally as well as related characteristics. In my understanding the system known as *chaîne opératoire* is useful for providing and confirming information on the regional styles and topographical identities of *Difala* vessels. I expect, however, that, where typology is concerned, my research has some shortcomings. Typological studies have failed to appreciate the value of indigenous tools (Martinon-Torres 2002: 7) for a responsive interpretation of the local African production of objects.

I am aware that the use of *chaîne opératoire* requires a taxonomy - although, being linked with evolution, controversial in its own right (Soressi and Geneste 2011: 334). Besides, taxonomy does not offer universal explanatory value. Therefore, the type of classification needed in an analysis along the lines indicated by *chaîne opératoire*, needs to be one that is peculiar to each separate situation and that answers specific analytical needs. I will explore historical and contemporary traditions in the provision of an analysis of *Difala* vessels, basing myself on the methods of classification of artefacts that connect the production of artefacts

with their makers and their usage (Sellet 1993). *Chaîne opératoire* provide thereby dynamic perspectives of local technologies, materials used and production systems.

While applying the *chaîne opératoire* approach, I avoid a static typology system as this, in the context of South African museums where many artefacts have been collected for colonial reasons, has led to the entrenchment of ‘primitivism’ in contemporary material culture studies. Durrans (2004: 157) argues that, although ‘ethnic art objects’ have been largely disengaged from their social meaning by Modernist discourses in the Western art world ‘to be displayed in flattering solitude’, most ethnographic museums have been at pains to do the exact opposite. As evidenced in South Africa, many African indigenous artefacts are ‘owned’ by heritage institutions where they find themselves in storage facilities. I contend that the decontextualisation of items of indigenous material culture in museums of art and ethnography, is irreconcilable with their socio-cultural origins and meanings, including the dynamic traditions that have over years led to changes in various societies.

Some *Difala* vessels I have seen during my research do not even have accession numbers to position them in a collection. An accession number is ‘a sequential number allocated to an item when it is added to stock’, as defined by Hunter and Bakewell (1991: xviii). The lack of such a number makes it difficult to identify makers or origins of objects without taking recourse to other methods, for example, the *chaîne opératoire*. A research history involving the use of different methods has to be reflected in the constructing of a descriptive catalogue of artefacts such as vessels, adding information from and on contemporary vessel makers to trace the region where a particular item was made. Hunter and Bakewell (1991) describe cataloguing as ‘the art of describing and listing material in such a way as to make it as easy as possible to discover the nature and extent of what is available and, if appropriate, where this material may be located or obtained’ (Hunter and Bakewell 1991: 2). This definition, however, has its limitations and does not cover all types of objects.

At my request, and in relation to my proposed descriptive cataloguing processes, a demonstration of *Sefalana* production was given by *Mma* Phuthi Francina Mathekga (see Motsamayi 2014) of the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum. There were some other offers from various groups of Batswana outside the museum context to demonstrate the processes of making *Difala*, but I preferred the museum site as it is crucially associated with

my study. The demonstration was organised to avoid that, at any time in the future, a situation would arise whereby private individuals might claim ownership of the *Difala* collection housed at PolokwaneCHM. Its collectors are unknown and have not been credited. Hence, the vessels belong to the museum. I hope that this ownership ensures that the generation of further research and critique by other scholars will be allowed to fill lacunae in the available information as well as to give the vessels public exposure and save them from being forgotten in store rooms.

3. 4 *Sefala* production: an outline of *chaîne opératoire* (as in Table II)

I provide step-by-step illustrations of making a *Sefalana* vessel, in accordance with the approach of *chaînes opératoires*.

Stage 1. After fresh cattle-dung is mixed with wood-ashes, the base of the vessel is constructed. The moist cattle-dung mixture is patted into a flat disk.

Stage 2. When the base is dry, small pats of moist material (dung mixed with water and squeezed between the palms of the hands) are added to create the vertical walls.



Stage 3. The unfinished vessel is left to dry in a secure open place.





Stage 4. After 1 or 2 days the process continues. Small pats of moist material are added until the vessel reaches the desired shape and size. Finally, it is narrowed at the mouth, using the same techniques and materials.

Stage 5. The vessel is smoothed with water by hand and left to dry for 1 or 2 days.

Stage 6. A brush made of a twig from a tree is used to decorate the vessel.

3. 5 Table II: schematic steps [stages] in the production of a *Sefalana* vessel

	
<p>Stage 1. Laying the base of a <i>Sefalana</i> vessel. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2013.</p>	<p>Stage 2. Cattle-dung is patted into a flat disk. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2013.</p>

	
<p>Stage 3. Construction of the slightly flaring walls. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2013.</p>	<p>Stage 4. Unfinished <i>Sefalana</i> vessel is left a few days to dry. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2013. I note the form of the dung vessel is similar to the <i>Nkgwana</i> in Fig. 16</p>
	
<p>Stage 5. Finished <i>Sefalana</i> as decorated with red soil, charcoal, and ashes using a brush made of a tree twig. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2013.</p>	<p>Stage 6. Another contemporary <i>Sefalana</i> vessel as made for a tourist market. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2013. I note this demonstration vessel is shown here without a lid; such visitor wares may be sold without a lid. On the other hand, domestic <i>Difala</i> wares do have lids, without which the vessel's practical utility would be incomplete.</p>

3. 6 Dung composition and the making of *Difala* vessels

Cattle faeces consists of two components. The first is undigested fibre which results from the indigestible cell walls of grass consumed by grazing cattle. These cell walls contain fibrous polysaccharides and lignin which during rumination are reduced to particle size but which, under the right conditions, can be made into construction material.

The second faeces component is a bacterial cell wall, consisting of complex structures that, under certain conditions, can, together with the fibrous undigested grass components, form

stable aggregates that support the building of *Difala* in a way that is not unlike a glue which is used to join materials.

The ratio in which these two components are present is the most important feature that makes dung fit for *Difala* production. The presence of the components in cattle dung, produced by cows grazing on different types of grasslands, can be simply determined by measuring neutral-detergent fibre (undigested grass cell wall) and neutral-detergent solubles (a measure of the bacterial component) in the dung being used for *Difala*. If dung is mixed with ash, its pH increases and alkaline conditions will affect the interaction of fibre and bacteria in the formation of the material for *Difala* making.

The above information is part of a branch of the material science of natural products (personal communication and e-mail correspondence, Reed, 2016).

3. 7 *Difala* vessels during motif application



Figures 23 and 24: Demonstrations of Sefalana making processes. Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2013.

Fresh cattle-dung is mixed with wood-ashes [Fig. 24: A]. A clay bowl is filled with water to be used in constructing *Sefalana* [Fig. 24: B]. An aluminium pot is filled with ashes [Fig. 24: C]. The base is left to dry [Fig. 24: D]. A mixture of dung and water is squeezed between the hands and added to create the vertical walls. The unfinished vessel is left to dry before continuing [Fig. 24: F]. Small pats of moist material are added [Fig. 24: G].

The vessel is built up until it reaches the desired size after which it is narrowed at the mouth, using the same techniques and materials. It is smoothed by hand, using water, and left to dry [Fig. 24: H]. The vessel is decorated with ashes and red soil [Figs. 24: C and K], using a brush made from a tree twig. I emphasise that no clay is used in the *Sefala* making process as has been widely reported in the past. For a further illustration table see below (Figs. 25 and 26).



Figure 25 and 26: Decorations, mixture of charcoal and red soil. Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2013.

Fig. 26: A: *Sefalana* after construction, during painting of motifs

Fig. 26: B: Large clay bowl of liquid (red earth and water)

Fig. 26: C: Cylindrical receptacle containing a mixture of charcoal and water. A tool (wooden stick) is used to apply the mixture to the vessel and create the motif

Fig. 26: D: Small bowl with another mixture of watery red earth and water. *Mma Phuthi Francina Mathekga* helped me to recreate *Difala* vessels.

Indigenous natural resources, techniques and tools used to make *Sefalana* vessels are discussed in this section. Item A (see above, Fig. 26) deals with locally sourced materials as opposed to materials accessed elsewhere. For example, twigs of trees (Fig. 26: B) function as brushes in the process of decorating vessels with red soil. Previously, for the colouring of vessels powdered charcoal (Fig. 26: C) from regional *Motswiri* trees (leadwood) was used (Motsamayi 2014). The charcoal was ground into a powder. To colour a vessel red, red soil

mixed with water is applied (**Fig. 26: D**), using twigs especially selected for decorating. Natural resources used are fresh cattle-dung, ashes sourced from firewood and mixed with water, aloe (*Sekgopa*) (Motsamayi 2014) ashes, locally known as *Melora ya Sekgopa*, and charcoal from a local tree known as *Mošu*. Also, acacia *tortilis* is used for pigmentation.

It is a part of indigenous knowledge in Limpopo Province concerning the making of vessels, that mixing ashes with cattle-dung makes a vessel easier to dry and prevents the material from decomposing while it acts as a pesticide when the vessel is used for storing seeds and grain. Unlike other forms of ordinary pottery that are fired (Quin 1959, Lawton 1967, Mönning 1967), these vessels just need an open space for drying and don't require any firing procedures. It is important to note that the vessels are porous. The production process asks for dedication and perseverance. It may take a week to construct and finish a vessel. Depending on the desired size, it could be made by an individual potter or, as a combined effort, by two or more persons (Motsamayi 2014).

The following section provides a catalogue of the different *Difala* vessels that I have photographed in the Polokwane museums and in IzikoSHC. It concerns a descriptive catalogue with photographs in a text-based format giving clear information about versions of *Difala* vessels, how they differ from other types of vessels produced in rural areas, about their public exposure in museums and the various influences that currently lead to their transformation. As *Difala* vessels have never been exhibited accompanied by catalogued details in the museums that I have visited. Information regarding cultural aspects that connect *Difala* vessel and pottery making traditions as well as their main characteristics was missing in the museums visited. In the Polokwane museums and IzikoSHC no relevant research had been undertaken until the time of my visit about *Difala* vessels. Information about their collection was also missing. The objects had simply been packed away in storerooms. However, as officials in the museums realise that the objects are now studied and recognised as rare historical artefacts, they have embarked on processes to safeguard them. A plan ought to be developed for the future dealing with heritage vessels, including the need to provide them with information on their signage, collectors, and display. In the process, I inquired about the education the museums provide on this heritage and whether they plan to engage with the researching of material culture. In order to properly contextualise cultural and social issues associated with *Difala* vessel production in past and present, relevant information

about traditional vessel makers is in the present thesis juxtaposed with information on the producers of other vessels in Limpopo Province.

In addition, contemporary vessel makers have been asked about current issues of vessel making activities in their area and about the materials, techniques and processes they use as well as their choice of decorative motifs and the implied literal and metaphorical meanings of those motifs. On the basis of such information, comparative studies can be conducted and philosophical tenets identified, that are attached to the actual production of vessels, illustrated above. For the recording of such broad knowledge, and to allow for the addition of any information that comes to light at a later moment in time and that might be crucial to give an artefact its full cultural weight and meaning as part of a collection or in a museum display, the necessity to compile descriptive catalogues is evident. The availability of such catalogues will be of benefit to museum curators as well as audiences. Schmiegel (1988: 49) mentions that catalogue information can generate research. The examination of objects in relation to available demographic data about their producers in past and present, can lead to the discovery of production techniques (Hall 2002: 8,13) and decorating methods, may throw light on possible connections between earlier analyses of objects and reveal traditions concerning their ownership as well as from where they were collected.

Information on artefacts in all their aspects is useful in relation to every collection stored in heritage institutions. Collections should be properly and in detail catalogued, whether items are on loan, part of a donation, or otherwise owned by the institution in question. In the information offered, a list of relevant past publications should be included as well as details regarding authenticity and attribution, so as to avoid any miscataloguing of objects which could lead to poor curatorship. In my exploration of the need to catalogue every single object, I found that pertinent iconographic details as well as transcriptions and translations of relevant texts have to be considered as valuable additions to the body of collection catalogue information. Besides, it is also vital to take account of any existing relationships between different catalogued objects. Similarly, correspondence with collectors and notes made by researchers belong in the body of catalogue information. In respect of the present study, all of the collectors of oldest *Difala* vessels have passed away so that it is difficult to give clear descriptive details of their contribution without tapping into additional forms of information left in the museums or recorded as far as these exist.

Chapter 4: *Difala* vessels in context

In chapter four I explore the socio-historical context of domestic art production in connection to migration and changing cultural practices related to materiality and cattle culture in Sotho-Tswana cultures. I further examine the deconstruction of colonial legacies in order to confirm the self-meaning of indigenous artefacts. In doing so, I employ orality as a part of modern discourses and I propose that South African museums, given their history, are problematic and undecolonisable. This is supported by case studies of *Difala* vessels in contemporary local museums. Anthropological reasoning as applied in major academic discourse is introduced to support my arguments. Thereto, perspectives expressed in anthropological discourses will be used in my search for meaning in material culture production. At the same time, I will focus on anthropology and on aesthetic in art, based on local contexts which will enable me to contextualise Sotho-Tswana material culture. In addition, it will be possible to determine their cultural distribution as shaped by their past physiographic zone which made them both maintain and lose their culture in accordance with the availability or absence of material needed for making *Difala* vessels and other forms of cultural production.

As cattle play a major role in Sotho-Tswana culture, I examine the meanings associated with cattle colours and the use of cattle by-products in the domesticity of Southern African communities. The results of my analyses are connected with gendered material culture productions in selected Sotho-Tswana groups. This implies that the historical roles of Sotho-Tswana women in African communities are considered, as well as ways in which roles of Sotho-Tswana women in their societies have changed. The aim is to try and relate the changes in women's roles to their specific domestic responsibilities and to determine how the cultural creativity of women came to be shaped in ways that led to their production of such works of art as decorated *Sefalana* vessels.

Coote (1992: 248) states that 'the philosophy of art tends towards analysing the relations between art and matters such as the true and the good which are beyond the formal qualities of works of art'. In this regard Taylor (1976: 135) notes, 'As a process, art may be defined as the exercise of skills in the expression or communication of sentiment or value'. From emic view, however, in the context of Africa this definition does not hold since art in Africa is the product of a particular culture and part of everyday life. And the making of artefacts in Africa

is more than the mere construction of objects but involves the communication of messages which essentially may be what art is about. Discussing subject matter, Durrans (1988: 157) reasons, that the Western art world has cut 'ethnic objects' loose from their social meaning but that ethnographic museums tend to go against that tendency. Many African objects, meanwhile, lead a forgotten existence in the storing spaces of heritage institutions. In this context, a prerequisite for understanding an object should be the appreciation of its original meanings as perceived by those who made and used the object before it underwent a cataloguing process. Ongoing debates about what constitutes art, include the perception, in particular from a Western perspective, that art is superior to crafts (Hatcher 1985, Motsamayi 2012).

In the context of Africa, this perception did not matter in analyses of creativity and art, because human beings do, to an extent, follow their natural creative urges, inventing and adopting ways to suit problematic situations. This ability to get around or overcome limitations gets at times expressed in art production. Theories of art attempt to give insight into what constitutes art or to define art's functioning in a specific context. Thus, an attempt to define a theme, while fully accommodating one single detail, may lead to the neglect of other aspects. This is what occurs in the case of many artefacts produced in Africa, when they are viewed from a Euro-American (Western) perspective. No doubt, however, for the generation of new knowledge it is critical to explore relevant theories.

Carroll (1999: 22) mentions that theory of art was regarded as an important tool in the eighteenth century when it began to be used to organise and analyse contemporary systems associated with fine arts, in particular in Western contexts. While museums may house important African works of art, they are in themselves not an African concept and many African artefacts have in the past been interpreted on the basis of Western perceptions. Therefore, I find it necessary to consider Western concepts in association with philosophy of art, when locating South African art. The concept of art is a complex one to define in the South African context. According to Carroll (1999: 21), art historical studies prove that art theory tends to be too exclusive and, thus, narrow. Art history, even if it has limitations, does, however, consider important matters pertaining to art forms. Carroll (1999: 2) makes a link with analytical philosophy, a philosophical school that is prominent in the English-speaking world. This implies that the school will have followers also in South Africa where, due to the

colonial legacy, English is widely spoken by many groups. Analytical philosophy is concerned with analysing concepts that are, in the present context, concepts dealing with art. The aim is to bring clarity in such questions as what constitutes art and art's nature (Carroll 1999: 4). This is relevant to, for example, *Difala* storage vessels which are decorated with motifs that are prevalent in other forms of indigenous artistry and which, as will be demonstrated at a later stage, are used to communicate messages concerning worldviews that are usually associated with indigenous knowledge. Coote (1992) argues that philosophy of art has been instrumental in shaping discourses on the aesthetic idea of art, particularly in the Western context where there is evidence of a skills tradition applied to the creation of art. Many decorations appearing on indigenous vessels are an expression of aesthetic considerations. Analytical philosophy of art is concerned with, among other things, examining the conceptualising of art, or the idea that produces art making (Carroll 1999).

It is of interest to examine this philosophy as African art categorisations have been characterised by inconsistencies whereby forms of art are, almost invariably, seen as expressions of a static tradition by scholars who are not aware that the African art production is part of a continuous process of modifications to make objects that fit in with the changing lifestyles of people who, notwithstanding changes in their environments, wish to keep producing and/or housing such artefacts. Art theories focus on, among other concerns, ideas about art as such, including issues of representation, artistic form and aesthetic. Coote (1992: 246), while doubting that works of art are ever deeply prized for their aesthetic qualities alone, argues that it is probably true that in Western societies and in other parts of the world with highly developed art traditions, aesthetic notions are most perfectly manifested in works of art and find their most refined expression in discourses that center on the philosophy of art as argued by Gordon (2005: 149).

Contemporary research has proposed many definitions of art, attempting to determine what is art and what isn't (Taylor 1976: 137). Some notions resulting from this research involve attempts to include objects that are relatively unknown and to which the world has hardly at all been exposed, although they are characterised by elements of artistry in their use of decorative motifs and in their skillful crafting. According to Price (1989), the idea that art is a worldwide language of which the expression gives pleasure to, and is prevalent in, all societies, is associated with the creativity of the artist's mind, evident in the expression of his

or her skills. The audience, responding to art, perceives it as the work of fellow human beings that speaks truth about the human condition. In relation to the above concepts, to define *Difala* vessels as a form of artistry that is associated with the contemporary understanding of material culture and that involves the modification of traditional artefacts for the sake of displaying them in a museum environment, proves to be relevant to the deconstruction of ideas on what makes an object into art.

4. 1 Contextualising material culture, social function and meaning in a local framework

In this section the *Difala* vessels are studied which are currently made, in the framework of indigenous tradition and traditionality, as works of art for visitors in the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum. Thereby it turns out, that some Western concepts when used in a local context are not applicable. The main concern of the following arguments is to explore and review the meaning of artistry in the context of South Africa for the purpose of building a concrete foundation for analyses and for making assumptions regarding current African art and related discourses. Many tenets used in analysing art result from Western perspectives (Taylor 1976, Price 1989, Coote 1992, Carroll 1999, Gordon 2005). While reviewing some concepts of what constitutes art, the definition of *Difala* vessels as a form of artistry associated with a contemporary understanding of material cultures, whereby traditional artefacts are modified for display as museum art, proves to be relevant to the deconstruction of ideas on what makes art qualify as art and craft to be classified as craft.

Debates surrounding questions of art and craft give rise to new ideas that address, for example, ways in which perceived meanings of artefacts continue to change time and again. One problem in defining art, or anything else for that matter, is that definitions pose limits to their subject matter and are sooner or later experienced as too restrictive. Hence, when a definition is concerned with art, one needs to take account of the broad context of art production. Taylor (1976) argues, that art is a process. "it is the exercise of skill in the expression or communication of sentiment or value". " This covers the sense of creativity or the aesthetic satisfaction obtained by the exercising that skill. It also means that many kinds of activities may be considered art. Ritual, dancing, painting and drawing, carving, horseback riding, bull fighting, story telling, speech making, and a host of other human endeavours may

be art to the degree that skill is exercised to express emotion. Many of these activities do not produce artifacts, though some may result in what we call object'' (Taylor1976: 262). On the other hand, Nochlin (1988: 149) indicates that the creation of art includes a language of form and temporary defined representations and has to be learned through teaching or apprenticeship using selected materials. These statements would seem to exclude African artistry as, according to Nochlin, art is a processing of a multiplicity of styles depending on its makers and open to interpretations in its various forms. Hatcher (1985) indicates that, in debating the nature of art, it is important to note that of some objects the aesthetic appearance that qualifies them as art is due to their durability.

The combining of older and newer styles in art production, introducing traditional and technological aspects that reflect both African tradition and Western inspiration, has become a part of innovation in African art (Motsamayi 2014). Western techniques are preferred to the coiling that was historically prevalent in craft work. Objects of fine art are usually exhibited in galleries and, as they are labelled modern, sold in the commercial art sector. The makers are indicated as artists. To produce modern ceramics, one needs modern facilities and the end products can be seen in exhibitions in galleries and museums that have no link whatsoever with tradition, but, at the most, with some form of pseudo-tradition (Motsamayi 2012). This is the case in the production of African vessels that are associated with the aesthetic. Vogel (1986) sees the foundation of African aesthetic as connected with concepts of beauty, worthiness, the sensational, the treasured, the perfect and suitable, based on traditions that oppose corrupted, poorly crafted and useless objects. Some of Vogel's perceived characteristics of African aesthetics, however, appear to be more prevalent in Western ways of distinguishing art from crafts, whereby some factors of exclusion come into play.

Objects that are considered to possess aesthetic value are mostly attractive to look at and may excite the viewer in line with the teaching on, or the guidance towards, moral being as it is accepted in the viewer's society. Thus, regarding artistic products made for particular purposes, decorated vessels symbolise beauty and are treasured in the African context, whereas undecorated objects are not offered or meant for public display and sometimes not considered beautiful. Such an object would in its original environment be kept inside the house or be covered. *Difala* vessels and African pottery meant for cooking are not decorated with

colourful designs, but the products meant for drinking or serving food and liquids are coloured because they are in regular use and their traditional beauty is exposed to be enjoyed.

As concerns beauty in art, it is said that an important characteristic of African art lies in its association with aesthetic value (Motsamayi 2018: 153). Some African artefacts are produced specifically for use in ceremonial functions, while others are made for household purposes. It appears that domestic artefacts like *Difala* vessels have in the past never been made to be sold but, at the most, perhaps for bartering or, in the absence of money, for the exchange of goods. This indicates that artistic production is part of everyday life in Africa. People who make artefacts are not aware that their products are forms of art which would fit in with certain categories of exhibits in museums.

Historically, the perception of an artistic hierarchy was unknown in Sotho-Tswana tradition and in Africa generally. Making artefacts was part of tradition and a way of life, or was seen simply as a cultural practice. Almost all artefacts produced in African households were linked to a specific function in the society that made them. In certain areas, artefacts produced by neighbouring groups might be adopted as the result of repeated contacts which were probably triggered by the movement of people. In other words, the concept of what constitutes art was formalised when generations of an African group got into contact with other groups and began to observe their production of artefacts. This interaction influenced the ways in which artistic creativity is perceived, based on what happens to be available at a particular point in time. Hatcher (1985: 13) remarks that ‘the distinction between a work of art and its context is by no means as clear as one would think, especially in the less complex societies. We used to think of a work of art as an object made by an artist in his studio and transported to a viewing place. The majority of the art forms that we see in museums and art books and that have come from native America, or Africa, or Oceania, are objects that were once part of a larger artistic whole from which they have been extracted’. In South Africa this statement is entirely relevant to the current situation whereby traditional objects, made in the past, are now permanently housed in museums where they are grouped with those artefacts that have been produced in a studio context, specifically to be viewed, without their background being considered.

There is in museums generally a good number of objects that are partly presented as art, in particular when they are made from Western materials (Ames 2004: 83), and used to define art. However, Khoisan rock painting is classified as art in the African context due to, among other qualities, its highly skilled execution and its links to ancient spiritual and hunting rituals of the indigenous people of South Africa (Motsamayi 2012). Debates on art in the context of gender have created gendered stereotypes, whereby the cultural subordination of women is seen as manifesting itself in the defining of art. This subordination has impacted on other forms of creativity and on the status of works of art produced by women. Men, considered as artists, see their sculptures being exhibited in art galleries and sold for high prices. In the meantime, women remain limited to doing craft work, producing many artefacts of a kind at a time. Admittedly, chopping up a big tree trunk may require the strength of men and making sculptural forms from wood is a sophisticated artistic process that is time consuming and involves such skills as the ability to select suitable wood. But, if a wood sculpture produced by a male artist is sold, it brings in much more money than the pottery made by women. It is part of African culture that art production and power relations go hand in hand and that men and women have each their specialised forms of art.

It is normal practice that people, moving from one place to another, adopt practices that they meet in their new surroundings and that these newly learned concepts help them adapt to other cultures. Encountering a new culture may offer possibilities to adopt new practices that are considered useful and that may add to, or strengthen, one's own culture which itself needs to adapt to views and customs in the new environment. Alasuutari (1995: 87) describes culture as being about how people live and perceive the world around them. Some traditional cultural practices of Sotho-Tswana people have currently disappeared and the only chance to revive them is found in exhibitions and displays in museums, where current and future generations may be informed about the lost historical and cultural traditions of their people (Durrans 1988: 157). Some traditions are currently contested, and many Sotho-Tswana speakers may not be aware that the culture they have adopted is originally not theirs.

Men and women have adopted ways of artistic expression, based on traditions their upbringing exposed them to. Cultural socialisation is a factor that influences traditions as, for example, in the past men spent most of their time in the forest so that their interests are informed by resources available in forests like wood for carving objects. In rural areas many

women worked in food processing, so that they are likely to adopt art practices linked to household activities like making storage vessels and pottery in which to keep liquid or food, irrespective whether the containers are made from cattle-dung or soil. In most cases, women's art is created by groups of women rather than by individuals. The group shares ideas about creativity as opposed to the art of men which is made individually. To define art in these circumstances amounts to a futile exercise. Art as practised by Sotho Tswana groups could in fact only be defined from institutional perspectives which would imply a narrow approach to African art, well removed from its traditional origin and meanings. Defining the art of African groups would be complicated by the fact that a word for art does not even exist in most South African cultures, even though there have been some attempts to theoretically define the concept. Some concepts evolved that presented assumptions associated with art.

In Vogel's study (1986: 26) of African aesthetic principles, she concludes that these vary from one ethnic group to another, but are similar in that, among other things, local creativity is encouraged. The ability to create an attractive artefact and to make effective use of different tools is a key that determines aesthetics. But there are other factors that are decisive in the production of African masterpieces, namely integrity, smoothness, consistency, innovation and final touches. Hence, not all expressions of human creativity can be called art. There are natural phenomena, presenting shapes that, although reminiscent of art, do not qualify as such, for example, trees, rock formations, body marks. Art, however, is attached to human creativity and roles may be assigned to it. It is produced intentionally, using hands and tools, by conscious minds. It should have a clear definition, be morally attached to, and accepted in, the community of its origin without offending either members or non-members of that community.

In this context, institutions that house artefacts and centres of cultural production are better placed to advance research about what is art. Contemporary aesthetics is of importance in the examination of art. Aesthetics is a philosophy concerned with art, with what it consists in and how to define it. In relation to the present study - and although definitions of art have been around for a long time - I would like to adopt philosophical approaches in an attempt to grasp what art entails and, in particular, to further my understanding of *Difala* vessels with their forms and motifs that are prevalent in Sotho-Tswana domestic art. Members of groups belong to cultures with different, and sometimes contradictory, insights (Taylor 1976).

As anthropologists have noted, worldviews differ considerably from one culture to another (Olivier de Sardan 2015). Many groups have symbols that members use in their communications. The symbols are embedded in their society and represented by their cultural artefacts. Thus, domestic pottery and its decorative motifs can function as metaphors. Aesthetic notions are considered as a part of the appreciation of art in terms of its appearance and its aim of perfection. As Manaka (1987: 10) argues, traditional art, in the context of Africa, serves as a memory of the past and a reflection of the present. Art is transmitted through objects with functional purposes in the community and is therefore a reflection of African culture.

Firth (1992: 6) states that aesthetics has been defined as a view of art in the Western context. Considering what constitutes art leads me to propose that *Difala* vessels should no longer be seen as merely granaries or bins for storage but rather as vehicles for the transparent processing of knowledge in societies attached to that particular knowledge and in close relation to a society's artistic expression and creativity – in the case of *Difala* vessels the knowledge and creativity found among Sotho-Tswana people. This position may be interpreted as linked to postmodernism as Sandler (1996: 333) remarks that postmodern thinkers have shifted critical attention away from a particular work of art to its social context, claiming that art can be understood only by investigating the extra-aesthetic circumstances within which it is produced and exhibited. Reasoning along those lines, *Difala* vessels housed in South African museums can not be understood, solely from the perspective of Eurocentric aesthetic cataloguing methodology. This methodology relies, in most cases, on the homogeneous cataloguing and classification of African objects as 'traditional', thus reinforcing the perceived existence of 'high and low art' which is in the context of South Africa a stereotypical point of view.

When it comes to cataloguing local vessels, however, the Eurocentric methodology could provide a basis for understanding and improvising a local descriptive catalogue suitable for *Difala* vessels. Thereby, the time and the manner of their production needs to be taken into account, as well as societal developments and the changing audience that the catalogue is expected to target and to which it has to be relevant.

4. 2 Undecolonisable South African museums: case studies of *Difala* vessels in local museums

There is currently great global interest in the decolonisation of museums. The perception of material cultures in South Africa is based on, and influenced by, Western viewpoints and historical experience. This implies a Western understanding of how the art industry operates and interpretation of local cultures. In research projects, theories are tools that enable a researcher to develop concepts and to juxtapose and re-examine these so as to generate new scholarship or validate earlier findings.

Oral traditions have kept the worldview and related concepts of Sotho-Tswana peoples in Southern Africa alive. They tell the story of an ancient mythical monster called *Kgolomodumo* that was believed to have swallowed human beings and their belongings. One pregnant woman was the only human who managed to evade the monster and she gave birth to twin boys. They grew up to manhood before one of them, *Sankatana*, after learning the fate of other people, set out to hunt and kill the monster and free the victims stuck inside *Kgolomodumo*'s belly. After doing so, he wanted to make the country safe again and became a leader (Brownlee 1938, Knappert 1985).

Extended versions of the story claim that *Sankatana* turned eventually into a villain. Some individuals freed by him, now judged *Sankatana* to be no better than the monster. It was a case of a liberator of his people becoming their oppressor. I use this well-known myth as an analogy in my analysis of the legacy of colonialism and of post-colonialism as associated with freedom for oppressed people. However, *Kgolomodumo* is myth, whereas the reality confronting me is that certain aspects of the colonial system cannot be undone and full decolonisation is unattainable. The removal of people from the monster's belly is no guarantee of total freedom, since people spent long time inside *Kgolomodumo*'s belly as a result of that particular experience they are used to that previous life inside monster's belly consequently they remain products of *Kgolomodumo* identity, in this regard *Kgolomodumo* and *Sankatana* respectively represent the personification of colonialism and its legacy. As opposed to the realm of myth, in real life the possibilities are not limited, being saved from the monster's belly without becoming fully free, formerly colonised South Africans face

many challenges, one of which is to develop their own cultural identity in an environment where colonial institutions remain prevalent.

In my contacts with elders during fieldwork, I found that the story of *Kgolomodumo* is known as part of creation mythology among Basotho, Batswana and Northern Sotho people, but is popular especially among Basotho. *Kholomodumo* is the monster's name in Sesotho, while in *Sesotho sa lebowa* and Setswana it is known as *Kgolomodumo*. Post-colonial theory assists in exploring how cataloguing models are applied in the documenting of African objects in South African museums in the present era of post-colonialism and independence, exposing that certain notions continue to influence contemporary cataloguing models used in knowledge production as indicated above.

With the help of post-colonial theory (Fanon 1961, Memmi 1991, McClintock 1994, Césaire 2000), I deconstruct assumptions about African artefacts dating from the past, in an attempt to logically construct a meaningful cataloguing model that covers artefacts and provides a sense of their origins, in particular their links to ancient traditions. In line with this, it is my understanding that *Difala* vessels should no longer exist as mere objects in museums but, by analysing how the vessels were made in the past and continue to be made at present, they should be subjected to a transparent processing of knowledge and become a stimulus of environmental awareness. Colonial systems have shaped the ways in which people utilise natural resources, including the encouragement to exploit them. Being moved from areas where resources were present to places where they were not available, did affect the use of such materials.

Addressing the legacy of colonial systems, McClintock (1994: 292) posits that post-colonial theory aims to challenge the 'grand march of Western historicism' and its notions of 'them and us' and 'othering'. These notions are evident in the categorisation of material cultures whereby handbuilt gendered works appear to be usually seen as unimportant because of their association with women in rural areas, whereas products of so-called fine art, perceived as connected mostly with urbanite males, are often exhibited in art galleries and have the potential to sell for higher prices. Such objects are often made with the use of industrial tools. The distinction between fine art and craft, stemming from the colonial past, has led to the

continuation of perceptions that artefacts made by women, constructed by hand, and purposefully functional with no institutional usage, are of less importance than male produced items (Motsamayi 2012). Césaire remarks that many colonial activities were justified by the material progress achieved in, among other fields, that of the arts (Césaire 2000:45), as a result of examples set by Western painting and sculpture that were deemed superior to African art production. In South African museums, the main reasons for collecting African objects involved colonialist purposes, propagated by the administrations in British colonies. The colonial and apartheid governments did not advance relevant research on *Difala*. While currently the African heritage is a focus of scholarly attention, such racist notions as exhibits in some South African museums that portray Khoisan as subhuman have never been scrutinised.

South African museums were institutionally not designed for the decolonisation of systems that had been established for colonial purposes. In order to secure their ideological fingerprints, colonial systems supported people in Africa who did follow their orders and colonial cultures were indeed to some degree accepted by the masses. Those Africans who could successfully communicate the colonial message to ordinary people and who functioned in a sense as colonial agents, were rewarded with privileges such as formal education and with the founding of institutions that enabled them to operate efficiently (Cabral 1994: 58). This description fits many anthropologists of the colonial era. In art production, those Africans who had adopted Western approaches to art, saw their work being considered before that of others for exhibitions in galleries and for sale on tourist art markets. Some institutions preferred certain artefacts to be modified for museum purposes. This is the case in, for example, the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum in Limpopo Province which runs a project to revitalise traditional artefacts whereby it accepts demands to, somewhat, modify the vessels so that they suit the taste and needs of Western tourists. It would be a positive move to give indigenous potters residency and honorary visitor positions in museums, so that they can experience how their work is received by museum audiences and become active participants in cataloguing processes and other museum activities.

According to Memmi (1991: 79), colonial powers have suggested that employing the colonised model is not fruitful, and authorised different, new approaches such as the one attempted by the Polokwane museum. In many instances, vessel makers have been

encouraged to adopt certain artistic expressions that may attract audiences. Even if, perhaps, there was an underlying assumption at play, that art's beauty is in the eye of the beholder, African nationalism has undeniably been ineffective in transforming colonial institutions (Fanon 1961: 4). This means that museums themselves need to negotiate ways to accommodate African artefacts in exhibition spaces and affirm their meanings, without prejudice. The South African Museum Association's Pietermaritzburg declaration of intent states, on point number 4, that 'all South Africans be encouraged to express openly their views as to how the country's museums may better serve the interests of all in South Africa' (Coombes 2003: 300).

However, the politicising of museums must be avoided as it can destroy the significance of artefacts. Politicised heritage institutions, to a degree influenced by ruling political parties, would be at risk of nationalism breeding ethnocentrism, regionalism, racism and other forms of discrimination. At the same time, it should be noted that many patrons of black art are not black. Members of black elites do in fact not regularly buy African art, so that African art cannot exist without white art patrons and the tourist industry. African tourist vessels are bought by white audiences interested in African art. This has created a relationship between African vessel makers and Western markets that results from profit-making processes whereby authenticity does no longer matter. In Said's opinion (1978: 325), the Western market economy with its consumerist orientation has produced a class of elites whose intellectual formation is directed towards satisfying market needs. Hence, there is an emphasis on businesses that cater for what are perceived as important trends associated with the West. Western trends have been prescribed and presented as a form of modernisation. This concept gives legitimacy and authority to ideas about modern life, progress and culture as seen from non-African perspectives.

Commercial markets and the professional fine arts market have also pressurised black artists to change their creative approaches for the sake of selling their art (Motsamayi 2012). This process has been influenced by ways in which colonial activities - and above all the impact of industrial Western society (Firth 1992) - have shaped societal structures in Africa. Western countries that operated extensively in Africa have left legacies that still prevail in institutions, languages and creativity adopted from the colonisers.

The ties formed in the past have created a dependence that prevents former colonised societies from freely developing their own systems without borrowing from colonial prototypes. Memmi (1991) describes the bond between coloniser and colonised as potentially destructive as well as creative. It may destroy the two partners before recreating them into colonisers and colonised. In the material culture production, for example, the making of traditional vessels has attracted the interest of the market for tourist art. This interest led to the exposure of a lack of local knowledge in respect of interpreting the vessels, their background and their traditional values. The institutions where the vessels are housed provide little relevant information and, as a result, the original identities of artefacts are compromised. This situation has arisen because buyers of artefacts on the contemporary market express preferences that affect the traditional vessel production and lead to a loss of authenticity.

Patrons of South African art are often unaware of the dynamic and metaphorical aspects of local cultures. In addition, museums cannot provide relevant information as they struggle to contextualise local heritage objects in some detail and lack knowledge of where, how and why many cultural artefacts have been produced, or to which local cultural tradition they are related. Museum curators therefore risk miscataloguing objects and misrepresenting them in cataloguing models. It should be noted that not all aspects of colonialism are bad, as there are certain forms of colonial features that can be used to benefit our society.

There are plenty examples of scholars of international standing who have offered scholarship in this regard and advanced the interpretation of African artefacts, allowing new generations to better understand African vessels, albeit not from a local but from a global perspective.

In South African museums, the names of many objects have been altered because their collectors could find no Western equivalents for the local names. Besides, most collectors had no knowledge of the communities where the objects originated and could not identify them in any meaningful way. The artefacts were, in other words, described from a Western perspective. This situation was generally the characteristic foundation on which collections of work created by the 'other' were built. In the context of South Africa, this came down to art of which the producers were in most cases oppressed people. To uncover necessary information and make it available for the relevant descriptive cataloguing of artefacts in heritage institutions, this historically determined situation needs to be deconstructed.

McClintock (1994: 293) describes post-colonial theory as a theory that is reluctant to view the world in terms of a singular perspective and a historical construct. In accordance with this approach, the term 'post-colonial', when occurring in my analyses, should not be understood as embracing all that has happened in the documentation of local material cultures since the introduction of Western cataloguing methods, but rather as referring to whatever has taken place from the very beginning of documenting vessels in Africa by scholars with various colonial motives, some of which contributed positively, and others negatively, to the situation as it is today.

That *Difala* vessels have been exhibited and catalogued in contemporary museums, modelled upon Western examples and expressing Western perspectives on the 'other', complicates efforts to understand, describe and catalogue the vessels originating from, and relevant to, the local traditions that produced them. As Said (1978: 325) asks, 'How does one represent other cultures? What is another culture? Is the notion of a distinct culture a useful one, or does it always get involved either in self-congratulation (when one discusses one's own) or hostility and aggression (when one discusses the 'other')?'. These questions are relevant to an examination of challenges, posed by describing indigenous vessels which was a task of anthropologists several of whom labelled cultural objects as 'exotic'. They may have done so in order to validate their research as useful for colonial administrative institutions that aimed to advance colonial rule by creating an understanding of local communities.

Many scholars who were active in the colonial era were not familiar with certain local practices that link indigenous knowledge with the local natural resources that informed the production of artefacts. Instead these scholars focused on cultural viewpoints while ignoring the broader picture of the communities in which the vessels were made and used, including the environmental aspects of their production in terms of the materials used. Basing ourselves on this broader picture, it should be possible to deconstruct colonial ideology in such a way as to create insights that suit current museums. As stated above, however, elements of colonial legacies remain dominant in South African communities and their heritage institutions, many of which were built in the colonial era or under apartheid with the aim of lending support to governments' power structures. In many parts of Africa have, during colonial rule, institutions been established, designed to create and sustain systems that would allow colonial

perceptions to flourish and replace local traditional structures that had existed for many years. This was a reason for the founding of many South African museums.

McClintock (1994: 442) notes that colonial domination involved the systematic interference of rulers in the capacity of appropriated cultures to organise its dispensations of power. In relation to the visual arts, Wa Thiong'o (1994) understands colonisation as a process involving the destruction and deliberate undervaluing of people's art and history, through the adoption of the colonisers' language. Thus, in Africa, colonisation aimed to control peoples' commodities, for example art, including what was produced, how it was produced, and how it was distributed (Wa Thiong'o 1994: 442). To further these goals, the colonial powers and the apartheid government, modelled on Western concepts of power distribution, established a model of patronage in heritage institutions that, after independence, allowed for its legacy to continue with respect to the administering of African artefacts.

It should not be overlooked that African vessels, currently in museums, would not have been preserved without the existence of Eurocentric institutions such as art galleries and museums where artefacts were collected, although the majority of art patrons and art dealers who work with established art institutions are not blacks. This circumstance, resulting from colonial history, has probably contributed to the shaping of black art over which, however, Africans had at the time certainly no control. Still today in South Africa, all successful galleries are controlled by private persons or by minorities who create what they consider to be ideal museum exhibitions, not because they would have ulterior motives, but simply because museums are Western institutions. Africans are not using them for the benefit of their art.

Rural women in particular are in respect of their art production victims not only of African patriarchy, but also of colonial gendered legacies. The problem is not limited to South Africa. In many African states, there have, since independence, been ongoing discussions about replacing colonial systems with institutions organised along the lines of indigenous ideologies. In essence, however, the struggle for freedom doesn't always lead to a return of authentic national cultural practices. This is true, also, for art and its former values, as Fanon (1994: 50) argues in a consideration of colonial era activities in Africa. It is at the same time important to be aware that changing the classification of ethnographic material culture is not necessarily positive in all its aspects, as it may lead to the creation of new categories, along

the lines of 'other', 'Them', and 'us'. Considering the historical and contemporary meanings of *Difala* vessels in collections and in the communities is thus a worthwhile endeavour cataloguing these vessels in local museums. Through employing indigenous model which is appropriate for contemporary discourses.

In South African museums and other heritage institutions, the end of apartheid has also not helped to change the cataloguing of African artefacts as some classifications continue to be gender biased and inconsistent with contemporary discourses concerning museum collections and gendered perceptions of power relations in institutions that in the colonial era were created to favour males over females. Black women's art is found in ethnographic museums, black men's art accepted in galleries (Motsamayi 2012). The struggle against this discriminatory practice of art institutions is far from being won. A primary task is to analyse how male authority marginalises women. Marginalisation of women's art remains a challenge in many institutions that house African art (Motsamayi 2018). It is still difficult to address these concerns from the perspectives of institutions and patronages that tend to classify types of art to target specific markets. Because of the socio-historical background of material culture, males and institutions often have power to determine the classification of, for example, vessels in the custody of museums, and of members of the art fraternity as a whole. Given the country's history, South African material culture and art have in the past been somewhat isolated from the world at large. Hence, the future of local art institutions is looking less promising than that of similar institutions in other developed countries where systems have been established that enable the cataloguing of collections without risking the intrusion of prejudicial gendered concepts.

Before proposals for decolonisation are considered, museums should focus on developing decolonising concepts for those artefacts that have been in their care for years. The concept of the museum may not be of African origin, but the objects inside these buildings reflect their African backgrounds and that is where ideas of decolonisation should start. I am of the view that South African museums as institutions can not be decolonised if the artefacts, collected in the past and kept there, are not decolonised. Their collectors did apparently not take down such information during their expeditions in villages and rural areas, except for some ethnographic notes present in the museums. Follow-up research has not yet been undertaken and there have so far been few attempts to trace traditions associated with objects of material

culture, among them *Difala* vessels. Although the *Difala* vessels will remain in museums and can't be sold, their ownership is becoming a hotly contested topic and representatives of many groups are now claiming to be the true custodians of the *Difala* tradition.

4. 3 Deconstructing colonial legacies and finding self-meaning through orality

Challenges faced in the compilation of a catalogue of African storage vessels and related objects of material culture found in museum collections will be further discussed in this section. Current methods, associated with, and used for, accessioning *Difala* vessels, are examined. The relevance of these methods is assessed in order to formulate a proposal for a model of cataloguing that is best suited to managing a collection. The proposal is based on my research and on anthropological inquiry in relation to the vessels and the context of their production. In the process I will examine colonial legacies by using oral histories that are a part of modern discourse. In contemporary society museums play a major role in preserving a country's treasures, in ensuring the sustainability of heritage, and in creating awareness of the revitalisation of past, present, and continuous traditions. In Geertz's view (1973), culture shapes people's characters as individuals and gives them a sense of belonging. Past cultures that have been abandoned and forgotten, may currently be rediscovered and reinvented for museum purposes. My research has taught me that, had it not been for museums, some cultures and practices associated with *Difala* would not have survived to this day. Museums have acted as custodians of knowledge about their collections, preserving them and continuing to do so. Through local museums, community members and the wider public are able to gain much valuable knowledge about cultures that have shaped their societies and about events that occurred long ago, while museums also expose audiences to other people's material cultures, widening their continuous learning (Golding 2009: 4). Museums' roles have shifted from storing objects made in the past to preventing them from getting lost. Currently, museums have become critical agents that, as centres of knowledge, transfer information to older and younger generations, thus preserving history and culture. In addition to the tasks fulfilled by museums, also researchers can play a role in revitalizing the significance of artefacts exhibited or stored in heritage institutions, by studying these and their connections to their backgrounds in order to reveal their meanings in past and present cultures.

Difala vessels in Limpopo Province, at the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum, are currently reproduced by senior women for museum purposes. The women decorate the vessels with natural pigments like the old *Difala* vessels many of which were perfectly decorated while others were left plain. Thus, the fact that contemporary produced and decorated vessels can be associated with historical *Difala* vessels made from dung, can be seen as countering assumptions of ‘primitivism’ and so-called static traditions as being typical for indigenous African art production. Contemporary vessel makers are living in globalised societies, dominated by Western cultures that have led to a different way of life for many people, including the women potters working at the museum. Some objects found in South African museums are no longer relevant to contemporary museology discourses although they are part of collections that are of historical importance. Before digitisation of, among other objects, *Difala* vessels can be considered, further research is needed so that a holistic foundation and sufficient descriptive detail of objects become available and to avoid future misinterpretation. There has to be enough information to support the visual characteristics of the vessels as some of them that were, from an archaeological perspective, identified as static granaries or pottery, have currently undergone change (Lombard and Parsons 2003, Moifatswana 1993, Huffman 2007). The assessment of tradition and cultures as not being static has to be accompanied by a consideration of what is generally occurring in the communities concerned.

In Africa, elders function as libraries. Their wisdom is vital for connecting past and present. I have encouraged participants in my research, especially older people in rural areas including some who were not involved in the production of vessels or of art, to discuss some topics connected to oral history in my research. According to Counce (1994: 7), oral history is based on the use of individuals’ memories as a source of information on which to build a view of history, complementing the available documents that researchers normally rely on. ‘Oral history is a two-way process, giving something to a contributor as well as the researcher, and requiring something from the collector as well as the contributor’ (Counce 1994: 25). The effort was aimed to add to, or improve on, information sourced from archives and available records, hoping to broaden the understanding and relevance of *Difala* vessels in relation to contemporary societies that are historically linked to their production and usage. In order to update currently available information, heritage practitioners and researchers in museums need to consult older generations to, for example, establish the origins of collections of

artefacts. I therefore spoke with senior citizens about traditions that have disappeared in rural areas, keeping in mind that oral history is contentious if it is not supported by reliable archival sources.

In the context of my study I use oral histories to avoid being dependent on only colonial sources and on a few dated records some of which cannot be validated. Although the information provided in museums and opinions expressed by art producers were of great importance in my research of the history and background of artefacts for cataloguing purposes, I do look upon oral history as foundational knowledge for tracing the historical origin of *Difala* vessels. Hence, I conducted extensive interviews with heritage experts, while for cataloguing and documenting the material culture of Sotho-Tswana peoples in the Highveld I rely on historical evidence found in documents from the past. In the meantime, I am aware that historical evidence which does not correspond with information collected from senior local individuals or from credible institutions, has to be thoroughly examined to avoid misconceptions which may lead to poor description of artefacts. Oral history has a different kind of credibility in the opinion of (Vansina 1985, Portelli 2006). Information based on oral history needs to be carefully checked as in the cataloguing of artefacts only reliable evidence is acceptable.

Creativity is often informed by the creator's experience of living in a particular society. In the art world, blacks have generally tended to see progress as defined in colonial terms, because Western types of education taught them so. Education was aimed at creating Westernized elites that would benefit the colonial market of artefacts (Coutts-Smith 1991: 175). This situation has shaped the manner in which African traditions are received and perceived in their communities of origin and in the outside world where African artefacts are distributed. Furthermore, in relation to oral historical sources, Portelli (2006: 35) indicates that these are narratives offered to researchers when they inquire about specific art objects. In the past, some records written by non-Africans have been used to justify stereotypes associated with African people (Motsamayi 2012). This led, as Fanon (1994: 49) remarks, to the phenomenon of foreigners becoming the tenders of local styles.

In my view, globalisation of scholarship is vital to preserve knowledge and create a foundation for a new catalogue of material cultures in heritage institutions by sharing past and

current experience and any information that is relevant for an improvement of existing cataloguing systems. In cultural production, or a description thereof, any person, irrespective of race, gender, etc., is a better expert on his or her own culture than an outsider, as a result of skills absorbed by being concerned with one's culture, of knowledge acquired from the daily observation of one's environment and by experiencing everyday interaction with fellow locals. Traditions have been lost, after they were collected, interpreted and described by outsiders who were not interested in the advancing African knowledge that could empower local populations and help them to define their heritages on the basis of in their community accepted practices. In such a process there is no thought of cultural relativism, defined by Enge and Smith (2010: 455) as the perception that every society is an expert on its own culture. The implication is that every culture determines what it accepts as traditional. The input of outsiders, reasoning from their own perspectives and traditions, should be ignored. In the words of Taylor (1976: 37), cultural relativism means that a society interprets cultural practices from its own perspective so as to avoid distortions and misunderstandings produced by ethnocentric approaches. I adopt this concept as an analogy for the status of information obtained from people who are familiar with subjects related to the present research in museums, and from communities who have knowledge of cultural practices associated with *Difala* vessels and other forms of pottery. My striving is for a full picture of the production, functioning and meanings of *Difala* vessels as a sound foundation for a system to catalogue the vessels.

Taylor (1976: 37) posits, that cultural relativism is used as a tool of observation and provides an understanding of concepts and phenomena, rather than merely evaluating them. Often, the products and cultures of different societies are by outsiders compared and evaluated. This is, however, not an important issue in my study. While conducting the present research, I did advocate the possible positive results of interdisciplinary and collaborative research. I am, however, of the view that, in examining cultures other than one's own, the ethnocentric identity of a researcher may lead to biases possibly resulting from a researcher's sense of perceived superiority in respect of the studied culture. The result could be misinterpretation of the subject culture (Horton 1967: 52). For example, if a researcher relies for the description of *Difala* vessels on, say, Western or American notions, these may influence and perhaps alter his interpretation of the original and dynamic meanings of the vessels.

Writing about subjection in the colonial past of Africa, Cabral (1994: 57) states that colonisers used to consider themselves culturally superior to the colonised peoples and ignored or undermined their cultural values. This statement is relevant to a further analysis of African material cultures in relation to colonial ties, particularly in view of the risk that contemporary cataloguers of South African indigenous material cultures would lean too much on new, sophisticated technological approaches. Such approaches continue to affirm boundaries between cataloguing vessels and validating previous notions on material culture as presented in existing records that are, however, seen as belonging in a different class. Information based on technological resources is, for example, given preference over existing information that is lacking in the interpretations of material culture provided in museums. The new technological tools have created a platform for documenting material culture and making the results available, ideally to everyone but, in practice, only to those who own the necessary electronic equipment.

The digitisation of objects does obviously offer museums a key for future cataloguing. But before any object can be successfully digitised, a clear and highly detailed description is needed of all its relevant aspects (Hunter and Bakewell 1991: 2). Some methods adopted in heritage institutions to analyse and catalogue the material culture of local groups, are in fact alienating people from their heritage by disconnecting objects from their original historical names and their contemporary contexts, in the process rendering them meaningless. It is evident that such objects are not static as their records claim. Instead they are undergoing dynamic innovations in their changing societies (Motsamayi 2014). In the colonial past and the apartheid era, products of material culture were recorded in museums as representing the 'other'. This resulted from the social conditions to which Africans were subjected by governments. Memmi (1991: 79) argues that nothing could better justify the colonisers' privileged position than the particular colonial inspired institutions that housed objects of material culture.

4. 4 Anthropology seeking for meaning

The present section is concerned with some results of my reading of anthropological studies that have informed several theoretical frameworks associated with the form that a descriptive analytical catalogue could take to deal with South African indigenous vessels or, more especially, with a collection of *Difala* vessels, located in the PolokwaneCHM and produced

by women at the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum, Limpopo Province, and with an international collection donated to IzikoSHC collections in Cape Town. This collection was created by Isaac Schapera during fieldwork trips in the early sixties in Botswana. I would like to emphasise that Schapera's collection has a special place in my research as it contains the oldest example of a dung vessel that I have come across in South African museums. Also, it links people in South Africa and Botswana, adding cultural similarities to shared elements of past language and environment.

Anthropologists and social observers have been accused of a tendency to 'junglefy' Africans and of some views that are perceived as linked to precolonial systems, as they studied subject peoples for the benefit of colonial governments and institutions (Daniell 1804-1806, Livingstone 1857, Van Warmelo 1935, Schapera 1942, Kuper 2007). However, there are anthropologists who have been very cautious in dealing with cultural practices of people around the globe and, while the research of some anthropologists did not go beyond cultural artefacts, there were others who focused on different aspects, among these, factors that impact on the dynamism of the indigenous world. These anthropologists were in the forefront of influencing ideologies, associated with local heritage collections and in need of deconstruction. Deconstruction is especially urgent in cases of artefacts with links to particular cultures.

The anthropologists concerned have documented cultures of groups as well as developments, occurring in communities, in spite of the fact that their findings were far removed from what characterises their own cultures. Past anthropological activities and cultural insights have shaped current situations which are mirrored in objects, found in the museums. An examination of this anthropological work will clarify the position of objects, studied for the purpose of this thesis. Many of these objects were collected before independence, when a good number of anthropologists were involved in a quest to understand African peoples and their environments. Some results of their studies and discoveries have contributed to the present situation and highlight the importance of objects collected in the past while allowing them to be integrated into contemporary models.

In South Africa, anthropological studies linked to the dynamic aspects of cultures and the production of material culture, have been fashioned to focus on the study of indigenous black people for the sake of classification in terms of ethnic grouping (Van Warmelo 1935,

Schapera and Goodwin 1937, Mönning 1967) and in accordance with the colonial and apartheid governments' purposes. Thereby, these governments were enabled to plan around the indigenous groupings and their cultural and other traditions (Gordon 1988: 16, Dubow 1989: 34) and to rule them in so-called Bantustans (Cohen 1986, Hammond-Tooke 1997) or in locations. Anthropology was part of a colonial project, adopted by many colonial powers and aiming to gather useful information about the cultures and norms of colonised peoples (Motsamayi 2012). Many African scholars have failed to challenge these activities and African researchers continue to rely on information that was at the time produced by pioneering anthropologists. With the development of anthropology as an academic discipline came the perceived need for anthropologists to focus on cultures, collect cultural items and study related aspects (Grimshaw 2001), all of this attached to black people in Africa, and part of efforts to better understand them. Collected items were generally placed in colonial institutions like museums and universities as tangible evidence of a real heritage.

There are good reasons for anthropologists to embark on a study of innovation in cultures, as it would benefit society. In order to achieve their goal of gathering knowledge about the ways people exist in their various environments, anthropologists have recently turned to new ways of viewing their findings, based on an innovative approach that involves collaborating with experts from other fields to try and bridge the gaps that separate related disciplines. This will possibly facilitate the generation of new knowledge by a wide range of experts. There are instances, as Kuklick (2011, Motsamayi 2015) notes, of anthropologists joining forces with natural scientists who, for gathering research data often depend on fieldwork. Amalgamation of information from different academic disciplines is taking place and improves anthropological insights.

In the South African context such joining of forces, involving anthropologists and representatives of other disciplines, is becoming increasingly common. The general aim is to broaden understanding and, concerning anthropologists, to attain more holistic perceptions of the material culture of African people. This may lead to new, detailed information on how people's creativity has been shaped in relation to their surroundings. Best suited to forge such future research hubs are those disciplines which deal with aspects of material culture that generally depend on nature and environment.

Firth (1992) mentions the well documented fact, that many anthropologists have studied groups whose traditional art production is closely associated with craftsmanship and based on social contexts. Even in the West, the distinction between art and craft is based on the social rather than the aesthetic values of objects, much as is the case in Africa. Examples are contemporary *Difala* vessels produced by women, and pottery made in rural areas, meant to be sold to tourists. It is evident that African people consider their cultures as being expressed in artefacts that are used for domestic, religious and generally traditional purposes. During their research, to supplement their ethnographic notes and data for academic studies and museums, anthropologists began to collect artefacts and found them exotic and interesting, even fascinating. Price (1989) writes that this resulted in museums, beginning to classify ethnographic objects that were perceived as exotic from the aesthetic perspective associated with Western art institutions, particularly those that are housing social history collections.

Most displays of indigenous objects were presented from Euro-American (Western) viewpoints. This further ensured that concepts, associated with aesthetic considerations, continued to be promoted, in particular in the case of African artefacts. Furthermore, Sharman (2004: 345) proposes that: 'As a meaningful category of experience, art is part of a socially constructed way of knowing the world and the objects it contains. Thus, the typical art historical contrast between fine art in Western state societies and tourist art in non-Western small-scale societies, or similar contrasts drawn between different rungs of social hierarchy in the same society, are the straw men of aesthetic philosophy'. Historically, the Western world had regarded craft as essentially functional, whereas art was seen as 'contemplated' and therefore superior to craft (Motsamayi 2012). This distinction led to an ongoing debate in the Western world about definitions of art and crafts. In this context, Taylor (1976: 137) argues that, 'Anthropologists (...) insist that art can be accurately understood only by relating it to the cultural context within which it has been produced and within which it has meaning'.

Such socially contracted categories of art classification have shaped perceptions of what constitutes art in people's environment and in society in general. These perceptions are, in other words, not limited to South Africa. In museums, the use of specific descriptions to identify objects represents a way of ranging them into categories (Jordanova 1989, Pearce 1994, Westermann 2005). The instant objects begin to be recorded and put into categories, is when their meaning is constructed. In essence, therefore, the cataloguing of an object is the

process of ensuring that it fulfils all the criteria for fitting into a specific category. However, to analyse an object in relation to concept may necessitate dividing it into forms and, sometimes, to ignore a few original features that are essential for the provision of detailed information on what the object as seen from its cultural perspective stands for (Pearce 1992). When interpreting an object from an anthropological viewpoint, the attention focuses on living traditions that are subject to change (Carroll 1999). This observation is valid for vessel making traditions that are continuously revitalised in rural contexts and that exemplify innovative developments informed by invented traditions. The above considerations represent parts of ideal anthropological features and imply the need to revisit aspects of perceptions that continue to redefine objects and their continuous social meanings.

4. 5 Anthropology and understanding material cultures

Anthropological collections have been dominating cultural history museums, popularised as ethnographic collections that were mostly collected in the colonial era with the aim to reaffirm rural and tribal notions usually associated with African people. In museums, housing collections that are listed as anthropological material - among which are, for example, *Difala* vessels - objects of non-Western origins were regarded as belonging to 'the other', or simply as crafts. Firth (1992) makes the point that anthropologists have considered art in broader ways. Some anthropologists pay attention to collections, that they consider vital to a revival of the exotification and 'primitivism' of subject peoples. Many anthropologists looked upon collections of African art not as art, but as objects that can serve to classify and identify people in terms of ethnic groups, so that colonial governments could understand them in accordance with their respective backgrounds, as stated previously. According to Keesing (1975), anthropologists have been documenting the fact that in many cultures people's lives are determined by complexities of social relations that dominate in their societies and that happen to be modified from time to time, due to changing situations. Collections of artefacts made by anthropologists consisted of objects, photographs and human remains. These items have been stored in museums and related institutions, where their presence currently indicates that anthropologists have played a critical role in ascertaining the safety and survival of such objects. It is also thanks to anthropologists (Schapera 1962, Lawton 1967), that many surviving utilitarian objects have been preserved that otherwise would not be known to contemporary generations. The efforts of anthropologists were linked to art history as they

share an interest in objects that functioned in the daily lives of colonised peoples and that by art historians are sometimes described as ‘crafts art’.

Anthropologists working in South Africa in the past, took a keen interest in matters pertaining to the recording of vessel making traditions, particularly concerning types of vessels related to *Difala* (Schapera 1937, Lawton 1967). Anthropologists were especially interested in ritual and other traditions that are, in the African context, linked to the production of vessels. Due to changes that have affected the existence of many rural people, their ways of life currently differ from those in the past. Their present material culture reflects societal change, whereas the anthropologists of the past were met by traditions that appeared to be static.

According to Bowser (2000), anthropologists focus on the motivations that inspire cultural norms learned by societies. Many ethnographic issues under discussion reflect developments in anthropological analysis and post-colonial discourses, as I will show below in my analysis of descriptions of the material culture of black South Africans. I concur that anthropology provides a broad understanding of studies of past and continuing traditions, as Hatcher (1985: 241) states. Hatcher adds that anthropology is also concerned with the nature of human beings, looking at all aspects of human life, including culture and diversity and considering these aspects in their interrelationships. I will review this definition of anthropology in line with traditional vessel making and in order to articulate the relevance of literature from past and present, associated with anthropological studies done in South Africa.

Domestic spaces were the custodians of African indigenous knowledge and have historically served to preserve artefacts, for example masks, sculptures and shrines. At the time, the concept of the museum where artists exhibit their work together, did not exist in Africa. In many black communities the idea of collecting artefacts from different areas to put them on show was non-existing, except perhaps in the case of traditional healers or of rulers receiving gifts which they arranged as a collection in their homesteads, but without the intention of exhibiting them as art. Some of these objects might have been acquired through barter exchange and be on offer for further exchange. There were also objects used to decorate one’s face and body, or one’s homestead. In addition, traditional healers in South Africa collect pottery for boiling and storing medicines. Traditional medicine is part of African healing

practices (Hoernlé 1937). Cultural items were usually not identified as art objects but known by their indigenous names.

The concept of art as a category is but vaguely present in the African traditional way of describing indigenous objects, as was evident in my consultations with senior women who make pottery. None of these women claims to be an artist. They see themselves as creative individuals who make artefacts for specific purposes, depending on their needs. With the development of anthropology into an interdisciplinary programme dedicated to the study of native people, some anthropologists began to classify objects they had collected during fieldwork, and to identify them as serving various purposes, supporting their findings about subject peoples. When traditional African objects become identified with art as happens in museums, they automatically lose their original meanings and take on a new significance in the museum context. This sometimes ends up rendering them in effect meaningless. Sharman (2004) is of the opinion, that, as such, the anthropology of art remains rooted in a reflexive attitude towards the invention of 'primitivism' in Western art and its use in current social science discourse, thus problematising the origins of the term and reconfiguring its present role in global art markets.

In South Africa the consequences, posed by African tradition as interpreted in colonial contexts, are that explanations of works of art are always rooted in subjectivity (Horton 1967, Motsamayi 2018). Hatcher (1985) argues that, when studying the arts from an anthropological point of view, one should consider art as a part of culture that can be used as a tool to examine various features of the culture concerned, with specific attention for the broader view that results from taking account of the additional perceptive angles offered by particular art forms. Based on the above arguments, it is possible to deconstruct historical anthropological stereotypes and assumptions regarding art history, specifically in relation to domestic vessel production in rural South Africa. According to Mesa-Bains (2004), much of art history and of our perceptions about art, including the concepts of the museum and of collections, stem from the colonial age. I am of the opinion that insights, resulting from past colonial assumptions, need to be reconstructed and debated, so as to accommodate contemporary discourses which redefine misconceptions. Jordanova (1989) suggests that, to analyse anthropological and scientific museum objects, we need to look into their uses and purposes in relation to the interests they serve. In many museums adequate research to

support information on their collections from the perspectives of science and social science is lacking. Hatcher (1985) and Keesing (1998) observe, that in anthropological studies the complexities of change are important for what they reveal about processes that affect the study subject, for example, how individuals and societies continually do, or do not, change while adapting to different circumstances.

I emphasise anthropological approaches in the analyses of collections that are part of my research. As Hatcher (1985) states, art historians and anthropologists are together in studying art. Importantly, anthropologists and art historians have been playing a weighty role in the revival of traditional arts by studying artefacts and examining accounts of production techniques, as well as by linking art production to the availability of resources at times when people need to use specific artefacts for cultural purposes (Hatcher 1985: 188). It is my intention to try and find the crucial information needed to fuse various concepts and, thus, develop new and coherent knowledge for contemporary discourses that aim at generating renewed scholarship on the reception of neglected traditions of African peoples in heritage institutions.

As becomes clear from studies by Wolf (1990), Coote and Shelton (1992) and Westermann (2005), past anthropological research has investigated the links between art and cultures and how these relate to each other (Motsamayi 2012). Hence, I apply anthropological perspectives to analyse the descriptive cataloguing of *Difala* vessels, based on both social and aesthetic values, as the vessels are closely related to art. Several writers highlight gendered issues of vessel production, in an African context (Motsamayi 2018), as well as from Western perspectives. Cruise (1991) and Hall (2002) for instance, demonstrate how gender has shaped vessel making in different contexts. Socially constructed gender norms that are evident in the production of material culture, have traditionally been part of African cultural practices and are manifest in the art production in societies, reflecting and communicating the perceived importance of the functioning of each gender in the local cultural hierarchy and distribution of tasks.

Hatcher (1985:10) argues that, whenever the concept of art is mentioned, it is mostly in reference to crafts production or to factory produced objects. Such an approach is focused on the social functions and indigenous purposes of Sotho-Tswana artefacts as in the case of

Difala vessels. In dealing with anthropological commentary, the present researcher is aware of the ‘ethnographic gaze’ that has been adopted by many social observers interested in objects and in peoples considered as being static in aspects of their existence. This was, in the past, also the approach advanced by Jordanova (1989), Coote and Shelton (1992), Keesing (1998), and in their fieldwork practices. The study of art historical discourses in relation to culture (Westerman 2005) is currently relevant in respect of attempts to determine the meaning of objects for the community that produced them (Coote and Shelton 1992, Motsamayi 2012).

In reviewing the earlier mentioned misconceptions of the past, I emphasise that my fieldwork is based on personal conversations with senior women with the aim to culturally contextualise the artefacts that I have examined as part of my study, including *Difala* vessels. Hence, I am not hoping to produce an idealised study as discussed by Richards (1994) and Pink (2001), but rather to review various versions of ethnographers’ experiences of ‘reality’, relative to the context in which, and the negotiations through which, their studies were conducted and presented, and where vessels were produced by women and collected by collectors. The ‘ethnographicness’ of artefacts such as the *Difala* vessels in my research, depends on knowledge that is of ‘ethnographic interest’, as argued by Errington (1998) and Pink (2001). Against this background, and trying to establish a balanced view, I examined discourses that are concerned with deconstructing ideas about, and interpretations of, art and craft production in relation to still-prevailing concepts of low and high art in association with gender and ethnicity, as perceived in South Africa and neighbouring countries.

4. 6 Anthropology and aesthetics in art: local context

As regards the relation of anthropology and aesthetics, a problem is posed by the nature of the response to an object, say to *Sefala*, from someone who is supposedly classifying art but who hails from a different, for example a Western, culture and who may favour a Western notion of the aesthetic (Motsamayi 2012). Firth (1992) argues that this could lead to an artefact losing its original meaning. Unfortunately, this situation and practice are prevalent in contemporary cataloguing systems that have been adopted by South African museums without, at least, securing consistency. Sharman (2004) underlines that the ideological premises associated with Western categories of art classification, are still commonly used in

many regions, particularly when it comes to distinguishing between art forms, and irrespective of the fact whether the region concerned did have colonial links or not. Certain ideological premises influence the art categories used, which may result in nullifying the purpose of cataloguing. Heritage custodians are faced with difficulties when attempting to construct the meanings attached to objects that look similar and have been made of the same materials. One has to keep in mind, that the materials used by vessel makers in rural areas shape notions, for example, of cow dung as being culturally significant which may be true for some cultures, whereas members of other groups with a different culture may see cow dung as a waste product without any cultural value.

In the past, while in Africa to study and gather data about African groups, many anthropologists took an interest in black art and ethnographic objects. Their aim was to collect aesthetic work produced by black people, rather than advance black material cultures. African cultures could not be understood without taking the link between culture and art into consideration. This interest of anthropologists led to the development of ideas regarding the classification of cultures and art production in Africa, particularly South Africa, by adhering to a hierarchical ranking of, for example, San art, African crafts and Western fine art.

The present section addresses and identifies different categories that represent concepts about art and internalises these in visual languages, covering concepts of the representation of African art, the metaphors associated with it, and the contemporary symbols relevant to *Difala* vessels and strongly linked to women's social space. In that way I prove, that art and culture are interconnected, and that art is influenced by culture and cultural practices which leads to the development of certain ways of living, as art and culture are considered fundamental for the relation between human beings and nature. Women are at the centre of adopted ideas that have been in existence for many years and accepted in the art industry.

Chapter 5: cultural context: historical perspectives and ethnological background of Sotho-Tswana groups making *Difala* vessels

Chapter five discusses cultural traditions associated with *Difala*, including their contextual circulation, usage and the regional distribution of vessels as well as the stylistic elaborations in past and present that continue to dynamically transform vessels, as ongoing environmental changes in the temporal and spatial movement of Sotho-Tswana people influence the correlation of their environment and cultural expression. Among Sotho-Tswana peoples who belong to heterogeneous communities which, in the past, used to be distributed mostly in the Highveld region, it is Bakoni (historically unrelated to other Sotho-Tswana groups of the Highveld) and Bakgatla people (related to many Sotho-Tswana groups on the Highveld), who are associated with current *Difala* vessels surveyed in the museums. As Mönning sees it (1967: 11), Sotho-Tswana share cultural signifiers that distinguish them from other groups found in Southern Africa, although there are also some similarities with, for example, Nguni people. Among these similarities are the Sotho-Tswana dwellings that consist in round huts with conical thatched roofs. The conical shape also occurs in the *Difala* vessels studied in the present research. Sotho-Tswana people have totems associated with animals which they honour as their cultural signifiers (Mönning 1967: 11,17). A totem is inherited from the father's side among Sotho-Tswana (Bennett 2003: 112, Preston-Whyte 1974: 203).

The original totem of Bapedi (Northern Sotho) people was, for example, a monkey (*kgabo*). *Ba bina kgabo* means 'those who dance or honour monkey', which also refers to various Bakgatla (Tswana). Later Bapedi have replaced their original totem with the porcupine (*noko*), when they moved to a new environment (Preston-Whyte 1974: 203) which might have led them to abandon *Difala* practices. Southern Sotho, or Basotho (although they live in the Highveld) do not use *Difala* storage as their exposure to Nguni people has resulted in Nguni influence on many aspects of their culture. *Difala* production may have remained concentrated among Sotho-Tswana people because of the fact that their cultural beliefs were rooted in *dikgomo di boela sakeng*, meaning, 'Cows should remain in the family kraal'. This points to the practice of endogamy whereby marriage between people with the same culture

and traditions is encouraged to keep the wealth of a family secret and intact. Wealth is namely measured by the number of cattle owned and the location of the family's fields.

Several groups of Sotho-Tswana who are living, or used to live, in the Highveld, are associated with *Difala* vessels, among them Northern Sotho and Batswana groups. Sotho-Tswana prefix, 'Ba' [plural form emphasising collectiveness as opposed to individualism] therefore 'Ba' means people of; or people associated with, for example: (Ba + Tswana) = Batswana [>tswana means similar], (Ba + Sotho) = Basotho. *Batho* (people) is from a word *Botho* in various Sotho-Tswana languages which means humanity, thus *Batho* means people who practice humanity.

According to Mönning (1967: 11), the name Sotho is derived from the indigenous expression, *Batho ba baso* which in Sotho-Tswana dialect means 'dark or black people'. Mönning mentions that, 'Van Warmelo argues, very convincingly, that such a name would only have become possible where there had been grounds for a comparison with lighter-skinned people. He therefore deduces the possibility of a fusion with other groups having occurred, many centuries ago, between a light-skinned people and a darker-skinned people. For the name, making a comparative reference to a lighter-skinned people, to have survived the disappearance of such a group, means that its members must have been numerous and influential' (Mönning 1967: 11). In this context I wonder, speculatively, if the lighter-skinned people could have been Khoisan, who are famous for their majestic rock painting all over South Africa, using motifs that have later been adopted by Sotho-Tswana to decorate artefacts, dwellings, homesteads and, possibly, *Difala* vessels, although this is still a bone of contention.

In this context Mönning (1967: 11) reasons: 'It is quite certain that the Sotho, as did all South-Eastern Bantu, migrated into those regions of the sub-continent they occupy at the present time. These areas had been principally occupied by Bushman and Hottentot tribes. All available evidence indicates that the Sotho migrated Southwards from the region of the Great Lakes in Central Africa (in Congo) some five centuries ago, and that the migration occurred in a succession of waves over many years. The great Sotho migrations seem to have preceded the Nguni migrations'. It would appear, then, that Sotho-Tswana can be credited with being the first Bantu people to occupy inland South Africa. But also, based on this account, it could

be examined why Sotho-Tswana people paint their dwellings and vessels with red pigmentation as is also common in the artistry of other indigenous peoples in South Africa.

Bakgatla and Bakoni people, who are part of the present research on vessel producing Sotho-Tswana, are heterogeneous groups both with historical ties to the Highveld (Van Warmelo 1974), while *Difala* vessels that have been studied were found among both groups. There are, however, more Sotho-Tswana peoples who claim to be familiar with *Difala* practices, namely groups who live in the present Gauteng, Northern Cape and North West Provinces. But no evidence of these groups producing *Difala* vessels in the nineteenth century survives or has so far surfaced in museum records (Mokgatle 1971). As no credible information has been found in any of the museums I visited about *Difala* vessels linked to Bakwena, I can not validate Mokgatle's claim. However, Sotho-Tswana physiographic and anthropographic data generated by my study, confirm the claim. I suspect that, due to endogamy and local ecology, the practice of making *Sefalana* vessels remains limited to groups who speak Sotho-Tswana dialects. The term 'Sotho-Tswana' is used to accommodate the heterogeneous groups associated with the specific *Difala* vessels I have studied.

Difala vessels stored, and surveyed by me, in the PolokwaneCHM, were collected in the 1980's and had probably been made by Bakoni women and other Northern Sotho from the Polokwane area for museum purposes, whereas present-day vessels at BakoniMNSOAM are destined for tourist demonstrations and produced by heterogeneous Northern Sotho groups. Surprisingly, museum booklets compiled in the past never recorded *Difala* as a local culture (Jordaan 1992).

5. 1 Distribution of groups that produced *Difala* and cultural structures

In the present section developments of relevant resource materials and the contextual circulation, usage and distribution of wares are gauged, as well as stylistic elaborations that continue to be dynamically modified in response to ongoing societal changes in the temporal and spatial movement of Sotho-Tswana peoples and their correlated cultural expressions. Groups from the lowveld do not use dung vessels as granaries. In this respect, Bakoni in Polokwane belong, through their long historical connection with the region, to the Highveld Northern Sotho group that uses *Difala* vessels. However, the South African inland Batswana

are diverse in aspects of their culture and not all Batswana found in this region use cow dung for similar purposes. Peoples who, like Sotho-Tswana, share linguistic characteristics and historical ties often have many other similarities, not limited to material culture productions (Schapera 1942, Legassick 1969). At the same time, groups who share cultural practices and geographical areas, do indeed have the use of certain materials in common. The *Difala* producing groups discussed here are Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafêla and Bakoni-Ba-Matlala. Key ethnographic information about Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafêla and other Batswana is sourced from the writings of Isaac Schapera, kept in the Social History Library and Social History Collections in the Iziko Museums, and from other sources which, although in part reliable, also hold information that is not credible in archival records pertaining to history and material culture of peoples in Southern Africa. Important ethnographic information on Bakoni-Ba-Matlala was obtained from BakoniMNSOAM records (Jordaan 1992), directly provided by museum officials and supplemented with other historical documents as can be seen below. I emphasise that the vessels I studied are currently owned by South African museums, and not by any group mentioned above.

5. 1. 1 Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafêla, a general overview

Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafêla living in Botswana are originally from South Africa (Schapera 1942: 2). I assume that Mochudi is the place where Isaac Schapera has collected an example of *Sefalana*, currently at the Iziko Social History Centre section, which forms part of my research. Of the collections I surveyed, this is the most special one. The *Sefalana* is the oldest one in the country. Schapera (1942) describes Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafêla as having settled in Mochudi, Botswana, in 1887 after the country had been made into a British protectorate (Mackenzie 1887: 243). Currently the village of Mochudi is in the Kgatleng District, where many Bakwena lived who belonged to the earliest group to settle in Botswana (Native Affairs Department 1905). In South Africa, many Bakgatla live in the North-West Province. Places like Saulspoort, currently known as Moruleng, which were by Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafêla shared with other groups, are historically and culturally associated with the Highveld and cattle culture. Many places were named by Boers who, in the past, had close relationships with Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafêla. Some Bakgatla founded villages such as Magaliesberg, today Rustenburg (Schapera 1942: 11). Many members of the group live also in Gauteng, mixed with Batswana and other groups.

According to Schapera (1942: 1) and Native Affairs Department (1905: 27), the Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafêla trace their history back to their Chiefs Molope and Mokgatla and derive their name as a people from the latter. It is not clear if these leaders are their direct predecessors, as many Bakgatla groups claim to be descended from Bahurutsi Chiefs, also known as the *Bakgatla-Ba-Bagolo* (High Bakgatla) (Schapera (1942: 2). However, also this information is contested. ‘The name Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafêla is shared by several different groups of Bantu--speaking people inhabiting the central and western districts of the Transvaal and the south-eastern portions of the Bechuanaland Protectorate’ (Schapera 1942: 10). Historically, they claim to have come from the North. In addition, to considering themselves as descendants of Bahurutshe, many honor monkey (*Go Bina kgabo*) as their totem, praising it as *Ba bina kgabo*. Several other groups call themselves Bakgatla (namely Bakgatla-Ba-Mosêlha, Bakgatla-Ba-Mmakau, etc.) each of which has its own chief (Van Warmelo 1935: 107). These different Bakgatla formed, until in around 1700 they split, one group, related to Northern Sotho, specifically Bapedi who do, however, not make *Difala* from dung. In Limpopo Province, *Difala* are only found among Bakoni who are not related to any Batswana group, but who have historical ties with the Highveld region of South Africa.

5. 1. 2 Bakoni-Ba-Matlala, a general overview

Bakoni-Ba-Matlala a’ *Thaba* as they are known, are among several groups in South Africa that call themselves Bakoni, for instance Bakoni-Ba-Dikgale, Bakoni-Ba-Maake, Bakoni-Ba-Mametje (Mametša), each group with its own chief (Van Warmelo 1935: 107). Bakoni-Ba-Dikgale (who don’t make *Difala*, but some use *Phiri* (hyena) and *Tlhantlhagane* as their totems, are a splinter group of Bakoni-Ba-Matlala (Bakoni of Matlala). Both groups live in Limpopo Province (Jordaan 1992: 3). Bakoni-Ba-Dikgale and other groups of Bakoni are also found in Blouberg Local Municipality. They don’t produce *Difala* vessels from dung. Nor does another group of Bakoni people, found in Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality in the Sekhukhune District Municipality, make *Difala* vessels using dung. Instead they produce basketry. Mud house storage and basketry for storing grain are also found among Bakgatla, Bakoni and Bapedi. In Sekhukhune, people use portable granaries made of fibres like those in use among other Sotho-Tswana and Nguni. It is interesting and puzzling that, thus far, I have

found no other groups that have been involved in the production of *Difala* vessels outside the museums in Limpopo Province except the Bakoni, as recorded by Motsamayi (2014).

I will therefore focus on the Bakoni-Ba-Matlala who make *Difala* vessels on the Polokwane plateau, known to Bakoni as *Ditlhantlhagane* (*Tlhantlhagane* is a scaly-feathered finch, by Bakoni used as totem) (Jordaan 1992: 1), and their praise totem is: *ba ana (ila) Tlhantlhagane*. Bakoni in Polokwane are culturally similar to other Northern Sotho speakers with whom they share linguistic and social characteristics. Among these other Northern Sotho speakers are neighbouring Batlôkwa and Bapedi, Babirwa and Bahananwa with whom Bakoni share common traits resulting from acculturation processes. Not all these groups are however historically related. Batlôkwa are represented in all Sotho-Tswana groups but, although they came originally from the Highveld, they do, surprisingly, not make *Difala*, probably due to their later environment.

The historical documents (Jordaan 1992) from museums I have perused and the oral history accounts I have collected suggest that *Difala* vessels were actually adopted by Bakoni-Ba-Matlala through interaction with other Sotho-Tswana living around Pretoria and in different Highveld regions in the past. There is at the moment in the Polokwane area no relevant research available, nor have archaeologists – so far, and according to my research in the area - credibly recorded any evidence of the production of dung granaries among Bapedi, Bahanwanwa, Batlôkwa and Bairwa people. My assumption is that, when Bakoni relocated to the Polokwane region and Bakgatla in Mochudi, Botswana, both groups needed vessels designed specifically to transport grains. That is why small *Sefalana* vessels were made that resemble pottery and are easy to carry during migration. BakoniMNSOAM records by Jordaan (1992: 1) put the arrival of Bakoni-Ba-Matlala in the Highveld at around 1730. The Bakoni lived in various places around Pietersburg, now Polokwane, Khorolwane (near Marabastad), and Molautsi (Blood River). Others moved further Westwards arriving between 1790 and 1800 in Makgabeng, or settled for a while in Pretoria. The latter could have brought *Difala* vessel practices from the Highveld to the Polokwane area, after acculturation had occurred through contacts with various Batswana in Pretoria. On their return to the Polokwane region, some went to live in Sefakaole, now Mokopane.

The Bakoni from Ga-Matlala are believed to be the largest of Bakoni groups in Limpopo Province. Jordaan (1992: 1) mentions museum records as clearly stating that Bakoni do not originate from the Highveld area where *Difala* vessels were common practice in the past. Instead, it appears that they adopted *Difala* vessels to transport grain when they migrated from the Highveld. It should be noted that BakoniMNSOAM records never refer to *Difala* as part of local cultures. People who lived in the area before the arrival of Bakoni did not produce *Difala* vessels. These earlier inhabitants were Northern Ndebele and Shangaan (Van Warmelo 1930, Loubser 1994, Jordaan 1992).

The lack of information in the Polokwane museums makes it difficult to pin down historical facts related to the Bakoni and *Difala*. In my conversations with participants in the research I asked after aspects of their history and some members of the Bakoni group indicated that they have Nguni origins and come from the East, this information was supported by (Mönning 1967: 17). Bakoni could have undergone a process of acculturation becoming part of Sotho-Tswana culture due to prolonged contacts, like many AmaNdebele around South Africa who, in a process of acculturation, have adopted Sotho-Tswana traditions. There is evidence of acculturation processes in respect of adopted practices of mural art and male circumcision. However, the Setswana word *Bokone* means in English, North, while Bakoni from Ga-Matlala in the Polokwane area are said to be from the East so that there is no link with Batswana groups and with the indicated direction *Bokone*. However, there are some Bakoni people who claim to be from North-West (*Bokone Bophirima*) (Mönning 1967: 17).

Van Warmelo (1946: 61) who functioned as an ethnologist under the apartheid governments, indicates in his records, that the Bakoni from Ga-Matlala, who are currently linked to the *Difala* vessels decorated with Bapedi cattle colours which I studied in Polokwane museums, had migrated into the Polokwane region. However, we cannot rule out intermarriage and acculturation having occurred in the past in the Highveld which may have produced the merging of multiple cultures. The social history and material cultures of both Bakgtlala and Bakoni need to be further investigated, particularly in museums with interdisciplinary approaches of which there is a need in contemporary scholarship but that, at present, is lacking.

I have argued that Bakoni adopted *Difala* vessels as a type of storage vessel between the 1700's and 1800's and that *Difalana* vessels played an important role as portable granaries, used by migrating people to transport grains and to preserve other agricultural products. Bakoni from Ga-Matlala thus adopted *Difala* traditions associated with grain from Highveld Batswana, in whose vicinity they had lived in the past, around Pretoria as well as in other areas. Similar to Bakgatla in Botswana, they migrated, with their *Difala* vessels, from South Africa to Botswana where they already had historical links with other groups from the Highveld. I contend that *Difala* vessels present in the Polokwane museums had actually been introduced in the area by the movement of Bakoni people from the Highveld to the Polokwane region, as there are no other groups but the Bakoni that make these vessels. The Polokwane area has bushveld and grassland (Acocks 1988:1), that make the production of *Difala* possible. Smaller *Difala* were useful as women used to carry grain during journeys. *Difala* kept the grain in good condition. Similarly, *Difala* were introduced in Botswana.

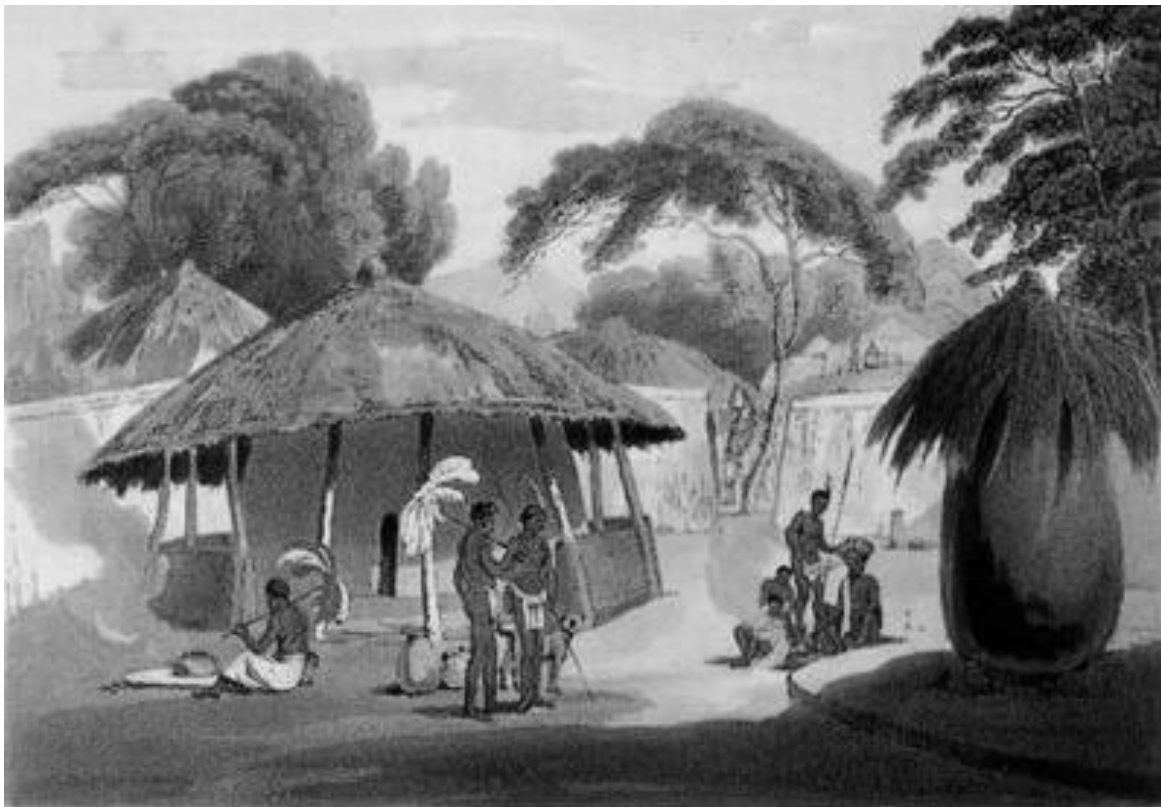


Figure 27: Booshuana Village. Illustration by the English traveller-artist Samuel Daniell (1804-1806). I note that Daniell's illustration includes *Sefalana* in the homestead. (The illustration's original colour has been altered to enhance appearance).

The earliest known representation of *Sefalana* (**Fig. 27**) produced among Batswana groups, has been made by the English painter and traveller Daniell (1804-1805). Daniell (**Fig. 28**) did not specify the group of Batswana that produced the vessels nor is a location indicated. He concentrates on the overall scene which is a common one among Sotho-Tswana people in South Africa. In the past travellers such as Daniell used 'Batswana' as a generic term to refer to Sotho-Tswana people in South Africa. The group of Batswana that produced *Sefalana* vessels above (**Fig. 27**) was not mentioned directly in this context, but I assume that they could have been among the Batswana groups that are associated with the Highveld cultures as discussed in the Daniell report (Daniell 1804-1806). Unlike the modern vessels designed for the tourist market and museum display, *Difala* vessels were in the past not decorated, as they functioned in domestic settings and were meant to be filled with grain needed for food or planting seasons. The literature on *Difala* vessels is limited to reports on archaeological investigations as reported by Lawton (1967: 183), Moifatswana (1993: 13), Lombard and Parsons (2003: 82), and Huffman (2007: 8). These reports pay little attention to the dynamic relationships between the contemporary materials used, environmental conditions and existing traditions in the area. The *Difala* vessels have as heritage objects a distinctive role in the preservation of indigenous knowledge and in creating awareness of changes in the environment, the socio-historical conditions of Sotho-Tswana people, and how these factors influenced their past distribution.

The Sotho-Tswana of the Highveld share many traditions (Lestrade 1929, Van Warmelo 1935, Schapera 1937, Van Warmelo 1946). Some of these, such as *Difala* vessels traditionally used as granaries, have disappeared and are unknown to present generations, due to a lack of pertinent information. However, Bakoni and Bakgatla are among Sotho-Tswana groups with similar roots, although their history is different, and Bakoni are not related to the Highveld groups. Bapedi people in Limpopo Province are historically closer related to Sotho-Tswana (Bakgatla) in the Highveld (Quin 1959, Mönning 1967), although Bapedi currently live in a new environment, namely the Sekhukhune area in the lowveld near the Bakoni who live close to the bushveld and who currently make *Difala* vessels, whereas present-day Bapedi do not produce such vessels. This could be a result of changes in culture and environment or of changing needs. It must be noted that *Difala* can be produced outside the Highveld, especially in grassland.



Figure 28: A *Boosh-wannah Hut*. Illustration by the English traveller-artist Samuel Daniell (1804-1806). I note that the house in Daniell’s illustration is very similar in its forms and construction to the Sotho-Tswana houses of the contemporary Bakoni-Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum. (Original colour has been brightened and altered to enhance appearance).

The type of *Sefalana* (preserver/granary), illustrated above (**Fig. 28**), its top covered with grass (*bjang*), is similar to the *Difala* vessels in (**Fig. 1**). Locations are not mentioned by Daniell who was the earliest European to travel among South African Batswana. The title, ‘*Boosh-wannah Hut*’, could be corrected as ‘Batswana hut’. Botswana did not exist as an independent country during Samuel Daniell’s visit to Africa, or what is today South Africa, in the 1790’s (Daniell 1804-1806). The country was known as British Bechuanaland, a British protectorate, from 1885 until 1965. Its capital was Vryburg in the Cape Colony, modern South Africa. Later Mafeking (Mahikeng) became its administrative capital and, after independence in 1966, Gaborone (Main 2001). I deduce that the persons in the above illustration belong to Batswana groups with historical ties to the Highveld where they have adopted *Difala* traditions that emanated from Sotho-Tswana farming practices. Daniell (1804-1895) mentions in his travel documents groups of Botswana people such as Bathlaping. This implies that *Difala* vessels were apparently part of a broader culture with agricultural

systems, and that the vessels were kept filled with grains by farmers in their domestic settings. They could also serve for the preservation of food or of grains kept over for the planting season or to be exchanged for other commodities. Agricultural practices in these communities were successful. Surplus grain was harvested and stored in granaries to be traded to other regions. This is a clear indication of the extent to which Africans depended on the products of cultivation. Large *Difala* vessels were approximately 5 feet high [=152.4cm] with a capacity of nearly 200 gallons [=757,082 litre] (Okihiro 1984). It is possible that Batlhaping in the Northern Cape Province have used *Difala* vessels during the Tswana expansion from the Highveld to other areas, as Batlhaping are believed to have come originally from a Highveld area (Landau 2010) near the Vaal river (Breutz 1963). The Vaal region has since long been associated with Sotho-Tswana people from the Highveld who used *Difala*. Batlhaping derive their name from fish (*tlhapi*) on which they depended as people living nearby a river (Okihiro 1984).

The Batlhaping are associated with Barolong and lived with other Batswana groups, among these some, such as Batshweneng, who are related to Bahurutshe (Breutz 1959, Legassick 1969, Okihiro 1984). The Northern Cape Province can't be the area where *Difala* vessels were originally developed. It is prone to dry seasons with low annual rainfall and, hence, a lack of water. Droughts occur and soils are sandy (Breutz 1963: 21). At some point in time, Batlhaping became less dependent on agriculture and began to rely on trade by exchanging goods with groups from other regions (Okihiro 1984). Breutz (1959) records that various groups in South Africa call themselves Batlhaping. He mentions Batlhaping-Boo-Marumo, Batlhaping-Boo-Molehe (also known as Phuduhudu and believed to be predecessors of Batlhaping at Dithakong), Batlhaping ba ga Phuduhutswana and Batlhaping *ba ga* Phuduhudu which are historically the main groups which, I assume, may have used *Difala* vessels. The groups later did split. Some of them used *Tholo* (kudu) as their totem (Breutz 1963), praised as *Ba bina tholo*. Batlhaping were involved in extensive agricultural activities according to Okihiro (1984). Their principal crops were *Mabêlê* (sorghum), *dinawa* and beans which are also commonly grown by other Sotho-Tswana groups, including Bakoni, Bapedi and Kgatla. These crops can be kept in *Difala* vessels for future use. Based on the big size of vessels, it would appear Sotho-Tswana communities were successful farmers, producing surplus grain to fill the granaries for trade with other regions (**Fig. 28**). Okihiro (1984) demonstrates the importance of agricultural products in the lives of Sotho-Tswana people.

Historically, these large vessels were made by Batswana groups from the Highveld (Mokgatle 1971: 13) and, more recently, by some Northern Sotho, for instance, the Bakoni (Lawton 1967: 183) who used them to store and preserve grains (*Peu le Mabêlê*). Their regular contacts with other Highveld Sotho-Tswana with whom they traded or where they sent their cattle to graze, may well have led the Bathlaping to adopt *Difala* to keep their agricultural products fresh and well preserved. There is currently in the museums I have visited, or in available records (that, by the way, contain some questionable photographs), no concrete evidence of *Sefalana* having been produced in the past by Batlhaping. I emphasise that Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafêla (Suggs 2002) and Bakoni-Ba-Matlala (Jordaan 1992) who are associated with actual *Difala* vessels present in the museums under discussion, are connected to the Highveld region but not related from where they took some cultural practices to environments where they later settled.

Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafêla are genealogically related to Bapedi, both Bapedi and Bakgatla are believed to be descended from Bahurutshe (Van Warmelo 1946, Quin 1959). It appears that in the earliest records (Daniell 1804-1806) the generic term Batswana is used to represent heterogeneous Sotho-Tswana people of the Highveld (Legassick 1969). *Difala* vessels were documented alongside Sotho-Tswana traditional dwellings where the vessels were covered with a conical roof or lid. According to Bennett (2003: 112), ‘Sotho-Tswana speakers were encountered by Europeans later than the Nguni speakers and were perceived as being technologically and socially more advanced, the early European travellers declared them as civilized’. This information is also found in Samuel Daniell’s book about African scenery (Daniell 1804-1805). Other colonial records confirm (through photographs), that Sotho-Tswana people lived in a perfectly organised, large ‘settlement’ (Schapera 1937, Van Warmelo 1946, Quin 1959). An example was the settlement called *Motse* (village).

I contend that a group of ‘*Batho ba baso*’ ancestors, collectively mostly belonging to Sotho-Tswana groups and living in the Highveld, are the original developers of *Difala* vessels for the purpose of keeping their agricultural products well preserved for long periods as, due to favourable environmental conditions in the past, abundant agricultural products were harvested that had to be kept fresh over extended periods.

This was the situation before the time when many Sotho-Tswana in the Highveld began to form subgroups. It appears that the earlier Sotho-Tswana people, sharing similar languages in the Highveld, did not consider themselves as belonging to any particular tribal group and that such groups developed after splits had occurred. Currently the generic name of 'Sotho' is associated mainly with Southern Sotho, although members of older generations of Batswana and Northern Sotho peoples still identify with the name 'Sotho'. As I have observed during fieldtrips in Limpopo Province, whenever an aspect of tradition is discussed old people will say, '*Ka se Sotho*', meaning 'traditionally'. I stress that *Difala* vessels discussed here have in the past in studies of material culture not been recorded among Southern Sotho, but only among Northern Sotho and Batswana groups.

I have serious concerns about issues related to cataloguing these vessels in museums, as very little research has been conducted on the *Difala* production of Sotho-Tswana people as a collective group, apart from a few remarks made by (Lawton 1967, Lombard and Parsons 2003, Moifatswana 1993). There are inadequate systematic records and unsatisfactory methodological documents in South African heritage collections of indigenous material culture that has been collected in the past. I established there are lacunae in records and documentation referring to material culture in local and national heritage institutions, which implies that, as a result, there are large gaps in our knowledge on local heritages.

My critique on the local cataloguing of *Difala* vessels concerns several methods currently used to identify the artefacts in the collections I have reviewed. For instance, I have examined local archives' card catalog/card index, that is used in many South African museums in the absence of a proper methodology as discussed by Hunter and Bakewell (1991), but in the context of South Africa. I found that not any model of this format can be relevant for the cataloguing of *Difala* vessels as these cataloguing systems continue to reinforce stereotypes about indigenous objects as being 'exotic' and 'other', while no makers are discussed, and only owners or donors mentioned. Furthermore, the *catalogue raisonné* exemplary which I used for my Master's degree (Motsamayi 2012) is relevant only for the stoneware vessels researched, as they are meant for art markets and tourists and they concern artefacts of which the makers can be traced. In the case of *Difala* vessels, on the other hand, makers are not known and no collection history is available from museums and their staff. In addition, staff members who were employed at the time when *Difala* vessels were collected, are no longer

working there. In museums in the Western Cape and Limpopo Province there is little information on *Difala* vessels. An example is the information of the accession records (Buck and others 2007), used in the Iziko Museum Social History Centre, Cape Town and the Polokwane Cultural History Museum which doesn't give adequate information on African vessels while none of the cataloguing models, mentioned above and currently used at these institutions, are sufficient to arouse the interest of an audience that has likely never seen *Difala* vessels in their original cultural context.

For this reason, my thesis is concerned with evaluating existing, internationally applied, models used in the cataloguing of African vessels, with the aim to propose ways to improve these for the purpose of covering Sotho-Tswana *Difala* vessels locally. At the IzikoSHC and PolokwaneCHM, a similar format of labelling vessels for storeroom purposes is used and there are no descriptive catalogue models to support computer documentation. After comparing *Difala* vessels in the two museums, I conclude that it is necessary to review available records, documents, photographs, and relevant literature in libraries, to study vessels on display and in archives, and to discuss current curatorial issues with professional staff as well as with interested persons outside the museums. This approach has helped me to strengthen my views on various issues mentioned in my research that I could not have resolved on my own without the advice and input from colleagues working with vessels.

In addition, it has at all stages of my research, including fieldwork visits, been very useful to speak to senior citizens and other practitioners of vessel making, who are experts on the heritage of material culture in their respective regions and who are aware that *Difala* vessels, depending on their type, are made from specific materials and soils. In other words, natural resources, known to indigenous communities, are used. Elderly people, some of them potters, who participated in this research, as well as other community members, museum officials and academics, willingly consented to take part in my study. I have supplemented information obtained from participants, with photographs, made under supervision of museum officials, and with maps enabling me to locate and name specific areas, using contemporary data, collected by experts for anthropological and physiographical purposes. This broad approach has generated detailed information on the production of *Difala* vessels that are the focus of my research.

The current static concepts of cataloguing and analysing artefacts of material cultures are inspired by Euro-American (Western) scholarship that guided social observers and missionaries and that re-enforced contested perceptions of the background of vessel making and the knowledge attached to the artefacts, as argued by Pearce (1994) and Hodder (1996). Some of these artefacts were used to promote the cultural significance of communities, in line with the wellbeing of the wider societies they belonged to. This significance is reflected in proverbs and worldviews. An appraisal of Euro-American cataloguing models shows up the entrenched formal categorisations of cultural heritage in our museums as well as the fact that the presence of cultural objects in South African museums is attended by dilemmas of the decontextualisation and misinterpretation of indigenous objects. Local curators dealing with such objects face the challenge of having to update their archival records and seek practical ways to improve the interpretation of African cultural items, among these artefacts of Sotho-Tswana origin.

In view of the lack of information pertaining to cultural objects, new staff in museums have difficulty identifying artefacts, including indigenous vessels and, more in general, pottery, so that such objects tend to be kept out of the main exhibition spaces and can be seen only in storerooms. As traditional vessels are exceptional, irreplaceable and at the same time perishable, they should be systematically documented. Ovaloid *Difala* vessels are in the present study associated with 'bins and storage of grain', as they were in pre-colonial archaeological studies (Lombard and Parsons 2003, Huffman 2007).

Post-colonial research cannot validate such labelling in view of the fact that *Difala* are dynamic vessels and museum art. They are subject to present, and suitable for future, innovations, for exhibitions and tourist markets as indicated by contemporary ethnographic data, provided by communities that produce the vessels. A bin is where dirt and rubbish are thrown which means that *Difala* vessels should not be called bins but rather food banks. Due to changes in communities and, in addition, the influence of the tourist market, contemporary *Difala* vessels are currently decorated and collected for museum display and have, thus, left their traditional functions behind (Motsamayi 2014).

Vessels are rarely exhibited in South African museums or displayed in art galleries, but they find, instead, a place in the storerooms of cultural history museums as part of ethnographic

collections. An exception is however the Tatham Art Gallery in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, where I saw Zulu clay vessels on display in the exhibition spaces which, from my point of view, challenges stereotypical assumptions that African vessels are not art but merely crafts that belong in cultural history institutions. It is interesting that exhibits in the Tatham Art Gallery are dominated by art produced by local black people who are in the majority in the region. Elsewhere, where blacks form minorities, their clay vessels are treated as craft work. This fits in with the perception that, in the context of South Africa, art is associated with, and judged according to, Western traditions meaning that so-called fine art is rated as high art as compared to 'lowish' craft. Obviously, not all museums and galleries in South Africa operate along the same lines, but the Tatham Art Gallery is unusual in apparently following its own norms by exhibiting objects of material culture as art, thus setting an example for other art institutions. At Iziko Museums, African vessels are exhibited at the granary section in the Castle of Good Hope. Also 'Fired', which is an exhibition of South African vessels, is shown in isolation from studio ceramics (visited in 2015).

The catalogue information found in museums distinguishes between art and crafts and, if vessels are present, the provided information is inadequate. Makers are not mentioned and descriptive details of the environment where the vessels were collected are lacking.

Admittedly, it is in the African context far from easy to gather the necessary information as the names of producers of artworks is by African people not considered important while it is the name of the clan or the community to which the maker belongs that counts. African people do not stress individual identities in relation to cataloguing their material culture production.

Case (2004) suggests that the catalogue should cover information about the donor or artist with biographies, the correspondence between involved parties, field notes, scientific analyses and, as far as relevant, business archives, manuscripts and published material concerning objects. In this regard, questions remain on how the provided information has been acquired, while cataloguers should furthermore take account of such matters as the geographical background of an object, the social awareness that it reflects and its possible continued traditional value. Knowing the languages spoken in the regions where *Difala* vessels were, and are, produced, I could develop an idea for a culturally relevant cataloguing process for

indigenous vessels, including their links to the environment and production practices, while, through conversations with the communities concerned, I gathered some information on vessel makers in the area where specific other traditional vessels used to be made that, like *Difala* vessels, are extinct.

I emphasise the importance of conversations with members of the communities where artefacts are produced. In the colonial era, South African heritage institutions had either not yet been established or did, for most of the twentieth century, simply not collect indigenous vessels and pottery. Western anthropologists did report on what they found in villages and cattle camps. Archaeologists and historians who wrote about Africa were of European origin and regarded Africa from European perspectives. Since the mid 1900's, African researchers and authors have started to contribute to the available body of scholarly literature, but even current most research is carried out by and large along Western lines.

<http://www.varldskulturmuseerna.se/en/etnografiskamuseet/research-collections/collections/africa/> (accessed 30 May 2016).

I assert that vessels produced by Sotho-Tswana groups have been mostly ignored by scholars and local heritage institutions and are therefore practically unknown among contemporary retrievals of examples of South African cultural legacies. In this context, issues of cataloguing and associated methodologies applied to vessels and their production are of the greatest importance, not only for present studies, but for heritage institutions in general as they try to define ways of providing information that is pertinent for the understanding and interpreting of indigenous vessels (Lawton 1967). Developments in academia concerning research of the material culture of black people, including contemporary trends in looking at vessel making as reported by the few communities that produce them, indicate a considerable increase in interest. Recent publications by, for example, Maggs and Ward (2011), Jolles (2005) and Motsamayi (2012), Perrill (2012), point to a growing tendency to get involved in the study of local vessel making in connection with indigenous knowledge systems in South Africa, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal and focusing on pottery. The recent increase in academic research of trends in indigenous vessel making is especially striking when set against the background of decennia of neglect of heritage objects, their production and their meanings.

During fieldtrips in Limpopo and Western Cape Provinces I began to realise that the vessels I am researching are contested objects with several ethnic groups claiming to be the true custodians of this heritage and its attributes. To establish a balanced view of this situation, evaluative methods are needed to determine and confirm where the vessels have been produced in the past and where they are currently made. I used various ways to identify aspects of materiality and contemporary innovations based on environmental factors, ethnographic data and other cultural signifiers. As noted by Levinsohn (1984: 15-16), records of the material cultures of African peoples are incomplete, lacking supporting documentation. While some relevant discourses deal in a general way with *Difala* vessels and other forms of pottery (Mokgatle 1971, Jordaan 1992, Moifatswana 1993 and Hall 2002, Lombard and Parsons 2003), a methodical example of descriptive cataloguing by anthropologists and art historians that can function as the equivalent of a catalogue in an African context is generally unavailable (Motsamayi 2012).

Aiming to provide a global outlook on how societies appropriate their heritages, Ames (2004: 83) suggests that indigenous people view their creative work, contemporary as well as other, not as art or artefact, but as both, or, even more likely, as more than both. Deciding what represents art is not just a matter of academic tradition or personal preference, but also a political act. To contextualise this view, I accentuate that this issue is part of a fairly under-researched question and related to an attempt to develop a model of cataloguing appropriate to an African context. As compared to work produced by ceramists who visited fine art schools, many vessels made in the past and still today by rural women with no formal education or training, are seen as ‘low art’ (Motsamayi 2012) and sometimes referred to as ‘crude pottery’ (Brown 1978: 34). This stereotypical classification is meaningful in relation to post-colonial theory and the current status of cataloguing indigenous vessels in our museums.

Difala vessels are originally known as part of Sotho-Tswana cultural practices linked to agriculture. Many persons I interviewed, however, believe that the *Difala* tradition is not historically indigenous to Polokwane, but results from past cultural exchange in the area rather than being fully based on local traditions. They justify this belief by pointing out that the vessels are not found in the cultures of neighbouring ethnic groups, even though there has been inter-ethnic marriage which usually contributes to the spreading of certain traditions, among these ceramics production. *Sefalana* traditions were, when two ethnic groups moved

away from the vessel making populations, preserved by them and introduced into their new surroundings in the Mochudi and Polokwane areas. Political boundaries may change over time, but historical links don't and *Difala* traditions accompanied groups in their resettlement. The current distribution of Sotho-Tswana people shows groups to be scattered all over the region and beyond.

Although the current boundaries are artificial, oral evidence about historical boundaries is not considered reliable by many researchers. Portelli (2006: 36) states: 'This does not mean that oral history has no factual validity. Interviews reveal new information that might be unknown'. In my fieldwork, for example, I found evidence to suggest that *Difala* vessels might have been adopted at the time when the Sotho-Tswana groups concerned in *Difala* production arrived in the Highveld. They lived in the Pretoria region where they met other Sotho-Tswana groups and adopted some of their cultures and languages before moving on to the Polokwane region (Van Warmelo 1930, Jordaan 1993). In the context of my research, it is possible that the Bakoni people have been moving from one place to another and that, to carry their grains along and keep them fresh, they adopted the large vessel forms from the Highveld. Such vessels are also prevalent among Bakgatla, specifically one type that resembles a clay cooking pot.

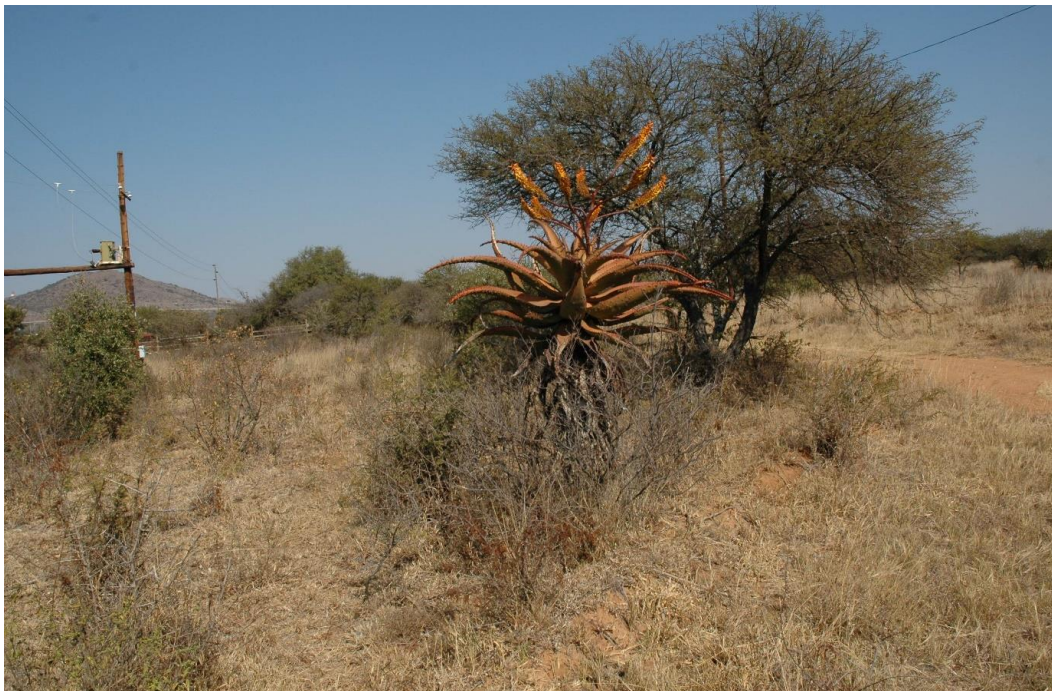


Figure 29: Polokwane bushveld adjoining the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2013.

This photograph above shows the types of grasses on-site at the museum during the dry season (winter); however these same types of grasses would not necessarily be available in rural areas where many black communities live. *Difala* vessels are still made on the Polokwane plateau in Limpopo Province for museum purposes. Limpopo Province is, however, not where *Difala* vessels originate. *Difala* was introduced in the region through migrations. My study of relevant archival records and my interviews with many older people reveal that the vessels originated and developed on the Highveld and grasslands of South Africa, spreading later to other regions and even across the South African borders. Bakoni and Bakgatla who are associated with *Difala* vessels and part of my research, live presently at some distance from each other in the bushveld (**Fig. 29**) and lowveld respectively.

Sotho-Tswana groups have undergone extensive transformation, culturally, environmentally and socially, which affects their ways of life. In part the groups have relocated from their ancestral regions, become urbanised and lost links with past cultural practices. It is not to be expected that they currently produce *Difala* vessels as they have no need of them. All groups that make *Difala* vessels and are part of the present research have different totems implying that, while there are similarities in language and belief systems, there are in their cultural practices also differences that shape their attitudes toward some traditions.

5. 2 The physiographic zone of origin of *Difala* vessels



Figure 30: Map of the Highveld in South Africa, a physiographic zone where Sotho-Tswana *Difala* vessels are historically produced. In the Highveld generally, indigenous cattle (*dikgomo*) and endemic grasses (*bwanyi*) are abundant. Cartography and GIS Unit, University of KwaZulu-Natal, produced 2016.

The central tenet of this section is the postulation that *Difala* vessels were developed on the inland Highveld of South Africa (Fig. 30), by the earliest Sotho-Tswana farmers in the early 1600's and spread from there in the 1880's to Sotho-Tswana groups in other regions. I argue that Sotho-Tswana (Batswana in particular) have been in the region since the 1600's and used the bigger *Sefala* to preserve grain for domestic use, while smaller *Sefalana* were introduced later when groups were migrating, so that women could carry the smaller vessels containing grain. A third type of vessel is currently produced to show tourists at museum displays. It is also known as *Sefalana*, but not used for grain. The destruction of African societies and the collapse of indigenous agricultural systems (Ross 1981: 227), linked to subsistence farming such as keeping livestock and crop planting, is the result of various factors such as inter-ethnic conflicts and colonialism, which impacted on the livelihoods of Africans and led to landlessness (Livingstone 1857, Schapera 1942, Legassick 1977, Legassick 2010). At a later stage, massive urbanisation and the wholehearted embracing of

maize as the new staple food to replace indigenous sorghum, resulted in the disappearance of *Difala* vessels. I hope to advance this theory and, in the process, invite contestation. The Highveld presently includes some parts of the Gauteng, Limpopo and North-West Provinces. It used to extend into the Free State where however *Difala* vessels are not found.

In 1825, Matebele (Ndebele) people, led by *Moselekatse* (Mzilikazi), entered the Western Transvaal, coming from Natal. They subdued some Sotho-Tswana groups in the area, taxed their possessions, and young Sotho-Tswana men were conscripted into the Ndebele army. The Ndebele aggressive expansion found many groups in the Highveld unprepared, not ready to resist the Ndebele army and submitting to Ndebele domination. At around the same time, the first Europeans began to make their presence felt among indigenous people in the interior. Among them was David Livingstone, a Scottish explorer (Livingstone 1857, Schapera 1942, Breutz 1963). According to Schapera (1942), the Boers, early settlers in the former Transvaal, who used to live in the Cape Colony, which they had left to escape British rule, had decided to trek to the Highveld, hoping for greener pastures and independence from the British (Ross 1981).

In 1836, a large number of Voortrekkers, or recently immigrated Boers, began to move into the fertile grasslands North of the Orange River (Ross 1981). Mzilikazi was at the time in power in the Highveld (Legassick 1977). The Boers discovered the area to be rich. They mobilised indigenous groups in the Highveld and neighbouring areas and, eventually, in 1837, they forced Mzilikazi out of the region. This is at least how these events have always been reported in the past. However, it is in my view more likely that Mzilikazi was removed by Sotho-Tswana groups from the Highveld, and not by Boers alone who were so few in number that they couldn't have effected Mzilikazi's departure on their own. When Mzilikazi and some of his followers had to leave the Highveld, they entered North-Eastern Botswana via the Crocodile River and settled in, what is today, Southern Zimbabwe. The Ndebele people were reputedly one of the most powerful indigenous tribes in Transvaal in 1837-38. After their departure, the Voortrekkers, or Boers, took the productive land and divided it among themselves, leaving born Africans (Sotho-Tswana and allies who had fought Mzilikazi) landless and impoverished (Livingstone (1857, Schapera 1942, Legassick 1977). When the dust of warfare had settled, all the Africans, North of the Vaal River, in particular the Sotho-Tswana, had become subjects of the Boers and were forced to labour on farms

without being paid by way of taxation (Schapera 1942: 10). It appears, however, that, in the aftermath of war, some indigenous groups questioned the settling of Boers in the area. In response, the Boers employed Bakgatla and their allies, Griquas, as auxiliaries to fight wars in 1854 and 1865 against indigenous tribes who resisted the Boer presence in the region (Schapera 1942). Ross (1981: 211) notes that in the nineteenth century cattle farming in the South African Highveld was by whites seen as a lucrative venture. The settlements of Trekboers with their Griqua herds and with the introduction of various new types of livestock, led to overgrazing and was detrimental to the environment.

In this context, Livingstone (1857) records that '*Mosilikatze* (Mzilikazi) was cruel to his enemies, and kind to those he conquered; but Boers destroyed their enemies and made slaves of their friends'. 'The tribes who still retain the semblance of independence are forced to perform all the labour of the fields, such as manuring the land, weeding, reaping, building, making dams, canals and at the same time support themselves' (Livingstone 1857: 26). Without land for agriculture - and hence without livelihoods - the indigenous agricultural system was in serious trouble. Sotho-Tswana people could not farm for themselves, lost their prized cattle, and their cultural practices and traditional life were affected. Indigenous cattle had been in existence since around 600 CE among the earliest inhabitants of South Africa. The cattle could adapt to what the land offered and was able to survive in harsh conditions. It was suited to the local ecosystems and for traditional farming. The arrival of European settlers impacted heavily on the agricultural practices of indigenous Africans, particularly in the nineteenth century when they were forced to adopt Europeans systems of farming. Their indigenous cattle breeds were decimated and replaced by new cattle species, not native to South Africa and of which few survived (Hoffman 2006: 172).

Changes in the material culture of black people have affected, not only the environment but also the way people lived, as interaction with other cultures was on the increase (Shaw 1974). Presently, many Sotho-Tswana who are originally from the Highveld have become urbanised, due to the industrialisation of the region. As a result, cultural practitioners are faced with dilemmas of maintaining consistent lifestyles and adhering to the cultural practices used in the past by their forefathers. In many parts of South Africa, natural resources were, and to a limited degree are, regarded as catalysts that allow the natural environment and all living

organisms to mutually act as agents, promoting the wellbeing of earth and all life on it. Land is a proxy upon which all organisms depend to meet their basic needs.

The land has been a key factor in the sustainability or discontinuation of certain cultural practices that depended on the availability of specific resources. If, for example, there is enough land for farming and for the grazing of livestock, some forms of cultural production may flourish. In the context of South Africa, the redistribution of land after dispossession has impacted on the livelihoods of indigenous people in past and present. Claassens (2001: 1) observes: ‘The policy of transferring state land to tribe is posited on recognition of the underlying ownership right of indigenous African communities. In many instances, African communities have been in occupation of land since long before white people arrived in South Africa. Colonial laws and practices which denied the nature of indigenous land rights did so for the purpose of justifying the imposition of state ‘ownership’ over African areas and the subsequent granting of the land to white settlers’. The colonial system and, thereafter, apartheid, organised the removal of people from various areas and their relocation to regions that were not favourable for earning livelihoods and maintaining traditions. In earlier periods, people had been forced to move from one place to another in search of better living conditions. Population distribution remains, also today, a crucial factor in the sustainability of societal needs. Similarly in the past, the more a community had the use of vast tracts of productive land with plenty of grass or an otherwise conducive environment for cattle to graze or for growing grains, the more it prospered and was likely to produce *Difala* vessels.

In the words of Hoffman (2006: 172), describing nineteenth century developments, ‘The advent of European Colonisation in the mid-nineteenth century and the subsequent (acting) of the colonial farmers as a role model (for) the introduction of exotic breeds (which) eventually diluted and depleted the original genepool of adaptive livestock (caused a change that) was exacerbated by additional factors such as change in the political arena, urbanisation, the erosions of cultural beliefs and practices, and natural disasters. The perception of inferiority of local cattle breed led to the promulgation of an act in 1934 in which population of indigenous breeds and types were regarded as scrub (nondescript). Inspectors were empowered to inspect bulls in communal areas and castrate them if they were regarded as inferior’. This system has contributed much to the destruction of indigenous cattle in former homelands of South Africa where many indigenous Africans were condemned to stay.

Sotho-Tswana people perceive the Highveld in Southern Africa as a physiographic zone that possesses the natural resources, necessary for past and ongoing routines of Sotho-Tswana pastoralists and cattle-culturalists, with significant implications for the socio-cultural production of forms of indigenous vessels. Cattle products are used for various purposes. *Difala* vessels are rooted in cattle culture as it evolved in the historical Highveld. An example of a saying among Northern Sotho associated with cattle, is: *Kgomo ke lehumo la batho* - a beast is the wealth of the people (Mönning 1967: 168). Hammond-Tooke (1993: 29) writes that in the Highveld region Sotho-Tswana prospered because their cattle had enough land for grazing. The prosperity was probably linked to the interconnected factors of population growth and an increase in the number of cattle owned. The abundance of forage and grazing land offered the cattle plenty grass which was, in addition, an essential requirement for roof thatching.

For the cataloguing of *Difala*, the vessels could be radiocarbon dated and phytochemical analysis study conducted to determine the types of grass eaten by cattle in the past, and the types of cattle that had become adapted to the local grasslands. As Reed notes that, 'The leaves of a typical monocotyledonous plant (especially tropical grasses) have a higher abundance of mesophyll cells than a dicotyledonous leaf. Most tropical grasses have the C4 photosynthetic pathway which allows them to have very rapid rates of cell elongation and accumulation of cell wall. These species also have a higher proportion of vascular tissue in their leaves in comparison to grass species with the C3 photosynthetic pathway' (Reed, undated unpublished paper/notes).

With a view to mitigating the effects of droughts, it may be possible to reintroduce specific identified grasses to regions where drought, overgrazing, and poor use of the land are common and where there is a need for better management of grazing lands. Of types of grasses - *Themeda triandra* occurs for example in grassland (Van Oudtshoorn 1999, personal communication, Reed 2016) and in the Highveld also *Hyparrhenia hirta* and *Sporobolus pyramidalis* grasses are grown and used, not only for grazing of cattle (personal communication, Reed 2016) but also for making basketry. Based on the above, I deduce that some kinds of grass have contributed to the production of *Difala* vessels and other objects of material culture among Highveld farmers in the past. Much grassland has been lost as a result of industrialisation. Thus, dung (samples) from *Difala* vessels can be used in laboratory

analysis with the aim of developing livestock diets for rural farmers as one of strategies for forage management (i.e. Reseeding, harvesting and storing grasses for ruminant livestock forage) in the drought prone areas. As some grassland is presently in the hands of private owners, the state and industries. The apartheid group areas act impacted on the lives of black people including the ways in which they produced their material cultures. The loss of communal and grazing land is by Claassens and Boyle (2015) suggested as a possible contributing factor to the demise of various cultural practices. In interviews with senior women who currently reproduce *Difala* vessels in the Limpopo Province, I learned that, in the past, people who owned large herds of cattle for which there was insufficient grazing, found themselves forced to sell cattle to farmers in the area. In addition, Poll Tax, known as Head Tax and livestock rates, was imposed (Redding 2006: 14) and men had to leave for urban areas to find jobs so that they could provide for their families. Fewer and fewer families could afford to keep large herds of cattle as communal lands were unavailable.

The historical patterns of regionalism as defining the movements of ethnic populations did never culturally separate people from each other. In fact, cultures which had continued to be relevant for years in certain areas, even after their original owners had left, would keep emerging in the cultural diversity of urban regions where many blacks had moved for employment opportunities. Claassens and Boyle (2015: 1) state: ‘The Natives Land Act of 1913 largely confined South Africa’s black majority to rural reserves comprising just 7% of the country – increased to 13% by the Natives Trust and Land Act of 1936. The rest was kept for white people. After the National Party came to power in 1948, it used these rural reserves as a starting point to create 10 ethnically defined ‘homelands’ for speakers of different African languages’. Building on colonial distortions of customary law that gave previously unknown powers to traditional leaders, the apartheid regime denied South African citizenship rights to those living within the so-called Bantustans and justified the denial of larger areas of land to black people. Legassick (1977: 181) remarks that, in accordance with the land act and related laws, Africans were restricted to Bantustan reserves and protectorates that were under control of the British. Mochudi in Botswana was one of those controlled areas (Schapera 1943).

Areas where people were located in the apartheid era, in many South African provinces and, especially, in Bantustan reserves, did to a large extent determine tendencies to use particular

natural resources. This obviously was, and continues to be, of influence on certain cultural practices and their distribution. Many African communities live, for instance, on unproductive land that cannot sustain their livelihoods and where ecosystems are poor due to, among other reasons, climate change. These circumstances have complicated material culture production.

At the end of apartheid, the homelands were re-incorporated into the new South Africa. One of the participants in the present research mentioned that vast stretches of land, fancied by Africans, belong to the government and to private individuals. As cattle owners in rural areas are often in the position of having to compete for grazing land, the state and private land owners may rent land to people who have large herds of livestock. This system results in the availability of certain resources needed to make artefacts, so that some forms of material culture can be maintained and acquire a dominating presence, as is the case with pottery products found everywhere. At the same time, poor environments have recently forced art practitioners to limit their production and make only certain types of artefacts, asking users to adapt. They may also have chosen to move to urban areas and modify their art production. Such unintended migration affects and disturbs traditional ways of life and the resulting urbanisation process leads people to favour industrially produced objects above traditional artefacts.

Sotho-Tswana people of the Highveld historically practiced rotational grazing, taking cattle to grazing posts far from home for days or months on end, depending on family circumstances. This system, known as *Morakeng* (cattle post), saw cattle being moved to different grassland areas, eventually to return in the home kraal where they would spend the nights. Their droppings were collected the next day and used to make *Difala* vessels for grain storage. After cultivation, the cattle were usually allowed in the fields to graze for a week after which it returned once more to the post. The cow dung, dropped in the fields, was sometimes, instead of being collected, left as manure to fertilise the soil for the next planting season. For the same purpose, residues of grain and other crops were scattered in the fields. 'The physical forms of plant communities that recur in the landscape as a result of the condition of soil, and of topographical and climatic conditions, are termed physiognomic vegetation types. Physiognomic vegetation type is a convenient term to describe vegetation as the habitat of animals. Plant communities are, however, collections of species which grow in association.

The species composition is important in evaluating the potential of vegetation to serve as food for livestock and wildlife. The diversity in the morphology of plant parts forces ruminants to selectively eat tropical vegetation. The prehensile ability of the type of ruminant determines its choice of plant species and parts to be consumed. Plant morphology has a large influence on the intake of ruminants consuming natural vegetation' (Reed, undated unpublished paper/notes).

During field work in different regions, participants in the research confirmed that cattle feeding on leaves do not produce suitable dung for making *Difala*. *Difala* are not made in drought-stricken areas where water or pasturage are lacking, nor in rainy regions. Cattle-dung collected from the cattle kraal was reserved for domestic purposes and served to make *Difala* vessels for household use. If cattle are scarce, they won't produce sufficient dung. If they lack enough grass and water, particularly in winter, and become half starved, it is likely that there will be too few droppings, or else a liquefied dung is produced with which it is impossible to make large vessels, according to local traditions.

Calf dung is also not firm enough for building *Difala* vessels as calves eat soft vegetation and drink milk from the cow. In the words of Reed regarding soft vegetation, 'Immature plants contain a predominance of undifferentiated cell types and actively photosynthetic tissues with thin primary cell wall. As the plant matures, photosynthetic products are translocated to seeds, tubers, roots and other storage tissues and the vegetative tissue becomes devoid of components within the cytoplasm. The cell wall becomes thickened into secondary cell wall' (Reed, undated unpublished paper/notes). Since some grassland areas in South Africa are no longer used for communal purposes, a feeding system can be designed, based on specific grass from grasslands to feed cattle, so that it will produce dung, or a mix of dung, that is suitable for building the traditional types of large *Difala* vessels for experiment purpose.



Figure 31: Goats are selective browsers. My field visit on-site Devrede, Blouberg Local Municipality. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2017.

The above photograph shows goats selecting their food from leaves and shrubs growing around thorn plants (**Fig. 31**). Not all ruminant animals' faeces can be used for making *Difala*. Goats' droppings are for example unsuitable. Goats, when feeding, may select leaves or shrubs growing around thorn plants. As they have narrow muzzles and an articulated lip structure, they are selective browsers, picking carefully among plants and able to survive in harsh environments. They produce small droppings. Cattle, on the other hand, are less selective grazers and their long mobile tongues enable them to grasp taller grass.

When grazing in a suitable location (grassland or a similarly favourable environment), their dung is right for the production of *Difala* vessels (personal communication, Reed 2016). Thus, grassland areas are perfect providers of basic materials for *Difala* production.

Sotho-Tswana cultural practices underwent their first modifications, when they met the cultures and lifestyles of representatives of different communities with, for example, other choices of crops. *Difala* vessels are closely associated with people who own cattle. In

heterogeneous African cultures cattle stands for wealth. Cattle were used for a range of purposes, including paying bride wealth. After marriage, women were expected to prove their worth, for example, by demonstrating some artistic capabilities, as a way to affirm their authority in the household. *Difala* vessels appear to have been developed in inland parts of the Highveld from where traditions could spread easily and rapidly to North Sotho and Western Sotho groups, rather than to Southern Sotho in the Free State Province and in Lesotho. However, these Southern regions did manage to continue the tradition of wall painting that is peculiar to Sotho-Tswana people.

Much of Botswana consists in semi-arid desert like parts of the Kalahari (Suggs 2002: 1). Bakgatla who live there are associated with groups from the Highveld plateau, as opposed to the Basarwa/Bushmen, who used to live in the Kalahari Desert. In relation to environmental conditions which are a central concern in my research, I postulate that in the Botswana Kalahari, which is the historical homeland of the San, it would not have been in the interest of these great hunters to produce *Difala* vessels for the preservation and storage of grains as, in these regions, the mixed agriculture, found among many black Africans, is not practised and there was no grain to store. They would have preferred the use of ostrich egg shells to carry food or water when they went in search of game.

In view of the warfare and the movement of indigenous groups in the nineteenth century, it would not be surprising if Sotho-Tswana, at the time, have been faced with the need to transport their grain stores to distant regions, for example, Namibia where some of them may have migrated as war refugees, taking along their portable vessels. Whatever their motivation, Sotho-Tswana people from the Highveld did indeed reach Namibia, where they introduced products of their material culture. Possible example is the vessel in (**Fig. 32**) obviously useful for preserving agricultural products while people were in transit. Batswana of Epukiro in Namibia were not originally inhabitants of that region as opposed to Herero, Owambo and Himba (Wallace, Kinahan 2011).



Figure 32: ‘Sehala’, collected by Professor August Gries. Maker not recorded. Ovaloid vessel, which I interpret as a lidded *Sefala*. Made of ‘clay and cow dung’. The author called this vessel a ‘*Sehala*’ (which I take to be a Tswana dialect; hence *Sehala* = *Sefala*) and dated it to ‘about 1912’. Linked with National Museum of Namibia.

Key information about ‘*Sehala*’ vessel (Fig. 31) that in Namibia is labelled as ‘Unfired pottery - From the BaTswana of Epukiro’ is lost and it is currently poorly documented incorrectly referring to *Sehala* in Namibia

(<http://typo3.p232710.webspaceconfig.de/home/namibia/stampsstories/stamps-13-08-27-batswana-pottery/>).

The author (also Lawton 1967: 183) thought these were made of a mixture of clay and dung; I note however that contemporary *Difala* in South Africa are made exclusively of cattle dung (with no clay whatsoever; I checked this issue with my fieldwork informants and they agree that clay is not used in *Difala* productions).

Darwin (2009: 122) writes that the *Mfecane* (in Nguni language) or *Difaqane* (Sotho-Tswana language) in the nineteenth century did shape many South African societies. These tribal wars, followed by colonial conflicts and dispossession, changed Highveld agricultural communities forever, as people moved from one area to another. Migrations of Sotho-Tswana who lived in the Highveld, during conflicts in the pre-colonial and colonial era, led to the loss of livestock and land, resulting in changing lifestyles (Livingstone 1857: 26). The wars also

produced new *Merafe* (chiefdoms). The change, occurring all over, included a switching in diet from indigenous cereal crops like *Mabêlôthôrô*, sorghum grain (also known as *Mabêlê*) which became a common food and was replaced by maize that later was introduced as staple food for Africans. Presently, *Difala* vessels are made in a specific Limpopo region, dominated by bushveld. It is destined for use in museums such as the BakoniMNSOAM. However, in the past *Difala* vessels were not recorded in the Mopani and lowveld region in the Limpopo Province. People from these regions confirm this and so do relevant historical records in various museums. The above historical observations serve to determine and, thereafter, analyse changes that have occurred in areas where *Difala* vessels used to be made in the past, leading to nature being perceived as subjected to human control. Most contemporary perspectives from which the relationships between environment and societies are explored, derive from foreign - that is non-African - notions of environmental understanding (Motsamayi 2014), some of which reject African indigenous knowledge of natural resources in favour of concepts that are not local but considered as more scientific in addressing environmental issues as related to cultural production.

While it is necessary to consider environmental issues as they are conceived in indigenous knowledge, namely seen - from a Western scientific viewpoint - as depending on local natural resources, it is equally vital to provide the empirical evidence that is required by science. The insights I gained by consulting experts from various academic disciplines, can not always be applied in local contexts without examining the indigenous knowledge systems linked to local practices and to African viewpoints, particularly when it comes to studying the sustainability of material culture of which the production methods are closely linked to local perceptions and solidly connected with past traditions. Hence, currently we have to address the issue of extinct cultural practices - or, more precisely, extinct environmental situations - affecting cultural practices in African communities where methodologies are used that do not yield any encouraging results pertaining to environmental continuity.

The present section situates the vessels made by various groups, in particular those groups who used to live in the Highveld, practised agriculture and general farming, and whose vessel production did directly depend on the availability of by-products of cattle. Recent fieldwork with senior women in the Limpopo Province and other regions reveals that the women's use of specific environmental resources synthesizes cultural practices harmoniously with the

ecosystem. Cattle by-products, and in the Sotho-Tswana context specifically cattle-dung (in Sotho-Tswana language *Boloko bja dikgômo*), are used extensively in many indigenous domestic and cultural practices where they are perceived as a form of sacred material resources, associated with certain traditions and gender roles in rural areas. These days, Sotho-Tswana often live in arid surroundings or on land and in urban areas characterized by colonial spatial planning that prevents them from prospering agriculturally and maintaining traditional practices.

5. 3 Socio-historical context of domestic art production

Difala vessels have not been recognized as art objects whereas pottery, sculptural art, and the mural art of Ndebele (Fig. 33) and Bapedi (Fig. 34) have gained massively in status worldwide, even though wall painting is an invented tradition (Hobsbawm 1983) rather than an indigenous African form of artistic expression that relies on indigenous natural resources. Mural art which has become an iconic creativity, was developed by Sotho-Tswana, and perfected well outside the South African Highveld.



Figure 33: Photograph of Ndebele artist, Gogo Esther Mahlangu painting a domestic mural. Elliot 1989.

The colourful Ndebele wall painting (**Figs. 33**) contains elements of historical Sotho-Tswana mural art which is evident in the painting of walls and houses by Northern Sotho and Batswana (**Figs. 34 and 35**). Ndebele art was positively marketed and extensively promoted for tourist purposes in the apartheid era. The same notion was applied in the context of the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum. My investigation indicates that not only the culture of Bakoni was given exposure in an especially for that purpose established museum, but also the culture of Ndebele was highlighted and revitalised by apartheid authorities. These, according to Schneider (1989: 103), did for example encourage the Ndebele production of perfected wall painting - such as had never existed in Nguni tradition - from the 1940's onwards. Powell (1995: 23) observes, that 'It is worth noting here that the styles of painting recognised and identified as 'Ndebele' came to the fore during this period when the Ndzundza found themselves, so to speak, in the wilderness. Decorative Ndebele designs were first observed in the 1940's on farms around Hartbeesfontein. Ironically, they developed to fuller articulation after the Hartbeesfontein Ndzunza had in the next decade by the South African government been moved to KwaMsiza, an instant 'traditional village' and tourist attraction, outside Pretoria'.

In Schneider's view (1989: 103), the South African government (apartheid), as a patron, presented its idea of a 'typical' Ndebele village, the picture of an idealised ethnic life in a rural area and a showpiece for apartheid with emphasis on ethnic identity. This 'Ndebele art' has become iconic and a distinctive South African creativity that was inspired by original Sotho-Tswana mural art. Historically, Ndebele people in various parts of South Africa and elsewhere did not paint their walls and houses with colourful designs. They began to do so only recently, after industrial paints became available.

Ndebele are part of the Nguni groups (Joyce 2009) and it is important to be aware that Ndebele art was encouraged for tourist purposes. Some of the colours used by Ndebele are not traditionally linked to any African cultural practice or known in African artistic expression. They involve the use of the wide range of colours available in commercially produced paints. The contemporary Ndebele decorations are derived from authentic African traditions, historically found in wall painting and currently reproduced on innovative *Difala* vessels made by Bakoni people in Polokwane in the Limpopo Province. The decorations of these vases are strongly linked to traditional African wall painting practices.

The Limpopo Province is, where recorded mutual cultural links between Sotho-Tswana and Northern Ndebele (James 1990) are apparent in artistic expression. Powell (1995: 17) mentions that some Ndebele groups were in the past living among Northern Sotho people in a situation that can lead to cultural appropriation. It would appear, that historical connections and the proximity of Sotho-Tswana enabled the Ndebele to produce the mural art that is currently being reinvented by Sotho-Tswana in the decoration of contemporary vessels, using commercial paints. The practice has now spread to other groups whereby we should keep in mind that these groups' changing practices do not signal a tendency to isomorphism, but rather point to indigenous traditions being welcomed in museums and exposed to the public for recognition. If ancient creativity had not been preserved in current art collections and over time been modified by new generations, we would not be able to see and appreciate this heritage currently. More is the pity, that the artefacts are on display without pertinent information to inspire an understanding of their background, production, usage and significance.

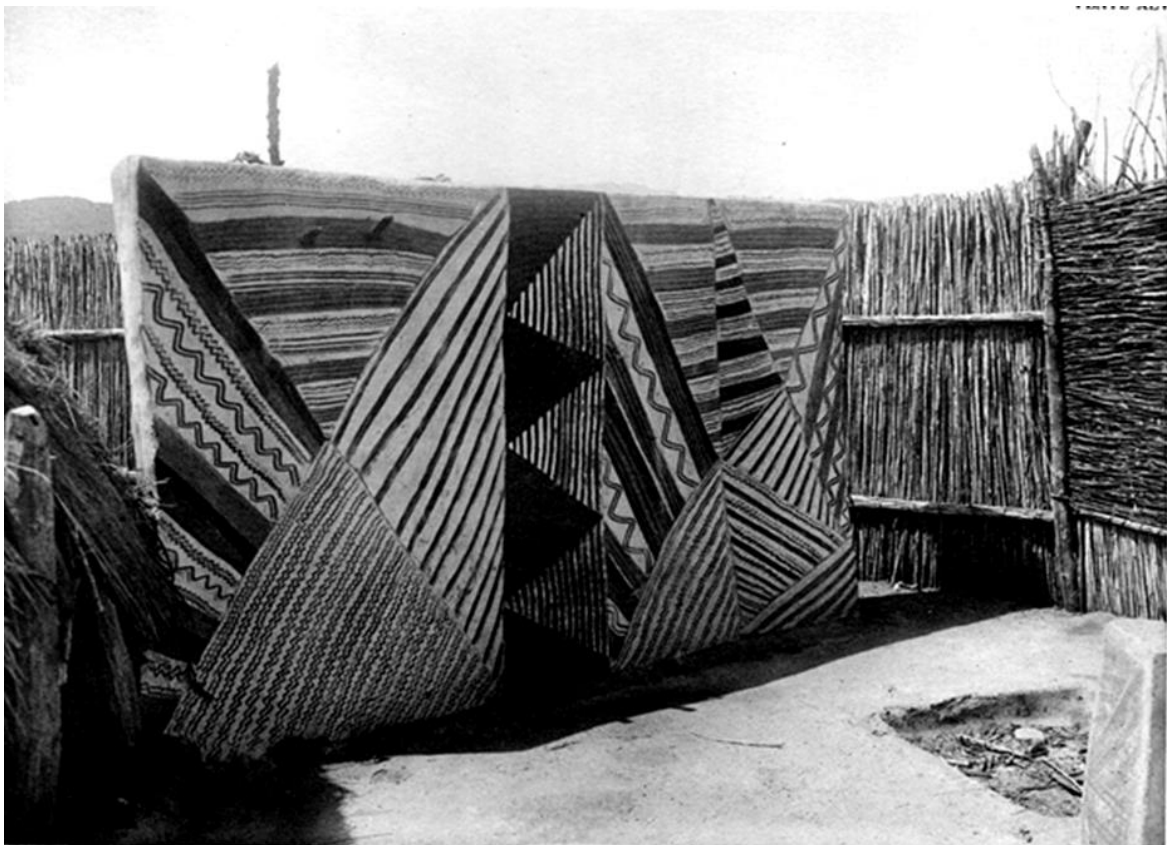


Figure 34: Mural art. Bapedi mural decoration. Duggan-Cronin 1929.

The above discussed Ndebele art innovation demonstrates how invented tradition gets to overshadow original cultures (**Figs. 34 and 35**) and become a favourite practice. The government encouraged this colourful art production by supplying the Ndebele people with paints so that they could decorate their homesteads on farms, promoting cultural tourism and tribal identity (Schneider 1989). Cultural tourism generates an income for many unemployed women who rely, even today, on cultural activities for their livelihood in remote areas of South Africa. Whereas the use of industrial paints was traditionally not considered, presently Ndebele mural art, based on the use of industrially produced paints, is most popular among local and international tourists.

Ndebele people who lived widely scattered during apartheid had to develop a new identity. Many had ended up in industrial environments to which they were not accustomed and where they lived among Northern Sotho. Some Ndebele were moved to the Northern Sotho homeland, Lebowa (Joyce 2009). There, certain cultural similarities between members of both groups came into being and these gradually extended to other areas in the province and elsewhere. According to Van Warmelo (1930: 14), 'In fact, many self-styled Ndebele are, anthropologically, pure Sotho, and in some places the language is said to be very corrupt. In other places nothing but pure Sotho is spoken nowadays'. The Ndebele referred to here, are living scattered around Mokopane, Pretoria and Polokwane (Van Warmelo 1930: 1,14) and have since become culturally assimilated by Sotho-Tswana (Northern Sotho). Of the Ndebele who are currently famous for their wall paintings, some live in the present-day Mpumalanga Province.

Indications are that South African crafts and art production reflects rich and diverse cultures. Many 'craft-artists' are inspired by tribal artefacts and demonstrate in their work a fusion with, and acculturation of, Western ideology as it has taken root in Africa. The example of Ndebele mural art is related to the motifs found in the *Difala* vessels I am cataloguing. Powell (1995: 65), reasoning from another perspective, points out that Ndebele arts, 'share a number of stylistic features with European Cubism. Indeed, the guiding principles behind Ndebele wall painting have a lot in common with European Cubism'. This statement does not present the complete picture as some elements of Ndebele wall painting before it was perfected, were known among Sotho-Tswana (**Fig. 35**). This reaffirms the cultural diversity and creativity of black people in South Africa as reflected in their art. Drawing on past

traditions and amalgamating their art production with Western approaches to artistry has become a norm among many African vessel makers.



Figure 35:
Photograph of a Kgatla girl by Duggan-Cronin using what he termed ‘grey clay’ to create a mural. Duggan-Cronin 1929.

However, my current fieldwork indicates that cattle-dung is used for murals in this context.

As *Difala* vessels are associated with ecosystems in the areas where they are produced, an understanding of ecology in relation to these localities is needed to be able to consider practices involved in making *Difala* (Motsamayi 2014). Stewart and Giannachi (2005: 29) explain that ‘ecology deals with animals and plants, our habitat and environment, as well as the analysis of the interrelationships between us all, is therefore not only one of the most interesting and crucial tools for the interpretation of nature but also an important model for cultural observation.’ In my analysis of a cultural phenomenon, I developed the view that observational knowledge can be of practical value. By observing the process of making *Difala* vessels and evaluating currently used tools, one gets to appreciate interconnections

between various ecosystems (Attfield 1983) in many communities that, for their subsistence, rely on indigenous knowledge. As *Difala* vessel making is linked to the environment, Acocks (1988) mentions that the environment covers animals, vegetation, land, water and natural phenomena. It is crucial to take account of these elements because, without the presence of certain key ingredients, the practice of making *Difala* would not have been feasible in the first place.

In the past, before they had been reintroduced in museums, *Difala* vessels, made by women, were closely linked to domesticity. The *Difala* production depended on the availability of specific eco-resources and natural materials that, in turn, depend on seasonal factors which are by women recognised and identified in relation to their artistic and cultural purposes. I argue that *Difala* vessels represent an iconic classic example of the dynamic interface between indigenous African cultural expression and the use of materials based on the Highveld ecosystem. Thus, in my approach to documenting and cataloguing some forgotten practices, I use *Difala* metaphorically for advocating environmentalism. I understand that the best way to communicate concepts concerning the protection of nature (Pepper 1984) to a wider audience and to create more awareness of environmentalism, is to use languages or objects that people can relate to so that they begin to develop insights into the vital importance of natural resources that they regularly use and that are connected to their communities.

Ongoing traditional practices in the contemporary cultures of inhabitants of Southern Africa in general, such as the creation of vessels from clay and cattle dung, continue to depend on the sustainable availability of environmental products (Motsamayi 2014). For this reason, Argyrou (2005) looks back to a time when humanity and the natural environment were in Africa not perceived from Western points of view and when no constructed perspective limited the approach to issues related to nature. The natural environment is where vegetation grows and from where natural resources, like the soils that local communities use in cultural production, are sourced. Acocks (1988) describes vegetation as made up from individual plants, few or many, depending on the habitat, but usually belonging to a number of different species. Among these, specifically grass and plant fibres were used for vessel making in African societies. The various species live together and may be in competition, but also assist each other as they are interdependent. This results in a balance that must be maintained at the

level of the local ecosystem, as determined by the specific locality or environment where this vegetation grows. Humanity and animals are crucial for each other. A poor environment affects plants and the animals that depend on the particular area for their survival (Attfield 1983). Unbalancing this dependency could affect cultural production. In relation to *Difala* vessel making, to provide potters with the opportunity to make their artefacts, cattle need to have access to grass that gets sufficient rainfall to grow.

Due to changes that have affected the cattle breeding of many Highveld agriculturalists, the patterns of animals' lives have changed along with human cultures. Contemporary cattle differ from that in the past, for example, in the sense that nowadays cattle no longer get traditional medicine, but their owners use veterinary services in line with contemporary ways of treating disease. Vessels such as *Difala* and the related cultural practices are vital ecological agents that were integral to the lives of people who produced the vessels that expressed their close connection to the environment. The natural materials used to make *Difala* vessels add meanings that are absent from ordinary clay pottery making. The materials applied in vessel making traditions could be used to make other vessels, thereby preserving their traditional significance. Levinsohn (1984: 69) notes that, as acculturation has affected every tribe's lifestyle in South Africa, the different material cultures have responded accordingly, while respecting the individual characteristics of location, habitat and ecology.

Cultural and artistic expression should always take a form that improves the environment, and refrain from undermining the sustainability of a balanced ecosystem. I have noticed, that some cultural practices linked to tradition could lead to increased degradation of natural resources, particularly in the present context of commercialisation of art. Some producers of cultural artefacts focus on making money, following the ever-changing trends related to people's ways of life, at the expense of sustaining natural resources. In many rural areas in South Africa, women still use fibrewood for fuel. There are artists who specialise in sculpture and cut down specific trees, creating a vast space open to seasonal wind and floods that may cause soil erosion (Attfield 1983: 1). Not only in the Limpopo Province, but in many rural areas in South Africa there is abundant evidence of seriously hampered vegetation growth where cattle won't find sufficient grazing. The fact that by-products of cattle have traditionally been used for many purposes, depending on societal needs, implies that, with the cattle suffering, the community will be deprived.

The older people I have interviewed about *Difala* vessel making traditions, claim that the dry grasses found in grassland offer fibres that are also used for roof thatching. This has led to a competition between community members who need the already scarce grass for feeding livestock and those who want to use it for domestic purposes. Some vessel makers believe that the dry grass, eaten by cattle in BakoniMNSOAM, supports the production of dung vessels, although here too, its scarcity, due to the demand for grass for other purposes, has weighed on the material culture production. Acocks (1988: 7) suggests that the grazing of livestock based on selective grazing is a major cause of the scarcity of grass while poor grazing management plans are worsening the situation. In most cases, cattle owners and herders in rural areas concentrate on a specific area for cattle grazing without applying rotation to allow new vegetation to flourish. Such practices can change an entire ecosystem. They could, for example, lead to ‘change in the species composition of the veld, good grazing species become eaten out and replaced by less useful species in the wetter parts, but possible not replaced at all in the drier parts, so that soil becomes exposed’ (Acocks 1988: 7). It should be noted that *Difala* vessels, currently produced in BakoniMNSOAM, are not meant to store grain as there is no communal land available at the museum for planting grain.

Indigenous land was adaptable to rotational grazing. During field work in rural areas I found that grazing is not regulated. Cattle graze anywhere, without any system having been put into place to manage the impact of grazing and to maintain the sustainability of the land in relation to the communities that depend on it for their livelihoods. It should be remembered, that the land where many rural blacks reside is exhausted in terms of agricultural potential and productivity. Rural people occupy land that cannot support them and that offers little grass, as a result of overgrazing and worsened by the droughts that accompany environmental change. In some areas, the available communal land is unable to sustain the cattle owned by traditional herders. They may rent a piece of land from private land owners or from the government for grazing their cattle. These fields are fenced and grazing operations are controlled. However, the rented land is often far removed from the villages where ordinary cattle owners live. In some instances, villagers have to spend months on end near the rented land and can take their cattle back home only after the vegetation around their villages has recovered and there is no guarantee that this will happen. According to Enge and Smith (2010), the adaptation of rangelands for grazing by livestock has major impacts on

biodiversity. The selective eating habits of livestock tend to reduce certain species or native plants while encouraging the growth of new, foreign plants. Where rainfall is low and frequently random, it is important to regulate the number of livestock in the grazing area. In many parts of the world cattle headers simply move their livestock from areas with poor vegetation to areas that offer better forage (Enge and Smith 2010: 246). That system is prevalent in rural areas these days. The above problems dominate in the new areas to which Sotho-Tswana have been relocated. Hence, the move has resulted in cultural change.

In academic discourses, many social scientists now agree that conceptions of nature are socially constructed and vary in accordance with the cultural and historical determinations of the communities concerned (Argyrou 2005, DesJardins 2006, Enge Smith. 2010). Acocks (1988: 5) reasons, that, ‘The vegetation we know today is primarily the result of all (...) migrations during millions of years, secondarily the result of the activities of the years, and, in particular, the last one hundred years’. In South Africa, like all over the world, the impact of human activities on natural resources has been instrumental in shaping the present-day environmental realities. For example, deforestation in many parts of Africa is another factor that affects the grazing available for livestock. According to Reed, ‘Most forages belong to the higher land plants (angiospermae) which are divided into two groups (Moncotyledoneae and Dicotyledoneae) based on the number of embryo leaves (cotyledons) present in the seed. Monocotyledonous forages have a single embryo leaf and are characterized by the grasses. Dicotyledonous forages have two embryo leaves and are characterized by legumes and other broad leaf plants’ (Reed, undated unpublished paper/notes). Without trees, vegetation is vulnerable to unfavourable climactic developments which can lead to a shortage of grass for cattle and to floods that prevent the growing of grain so that *Difala* vessels remain empty and cannot be made.

5. 4 Migration and changing cultural practices

It is important to take account of how socio-cultural developments affect people’s lives. Cultures, after all, are products of the human mind. A human being is able to learn what any culture, old or new, is about. But, over time, cultures undergo change as they adapt to changes in the surrounding world. Similarly, human beings make choices in life that may imply

change. They can, for example, change their behaviours, reinterpret their environment (Geertz 1973: 9), evolve new meanings and, most importantly, they may join in with any group of which the cultural practices resemble their own. That certain Sotho-Tswana adopted the production and usage of *Difala* vessels may have been due to their need to preserve and carry grains in portable containers when they were moving from one area to another. Some Sotho-Tswana would later abandon traditional vessel making practices, because they had lost their livestock and land, and become workers on farms.

The Sotho-Tswana who continued to make *Sefalana* vessels had land on which to grow grains. In support of the above, Van Warmelo (1935: 106) mentions that Bakoni people, when moving to new environments, came into contact with other groups in the Highveld region with which they exchanged cultural practices. Moving from one place to another was fairly common among these groups and led to changes in their original cultural practices. The multicultural *Difala* vessels that we see today could, with their various cultural particularities, be the result of such a process. When people began to move to urban areas, it had a strong impact on their livelihoods but also offered opportunities to encounter groups that they could not have met earlier, due to geographical distance. Ndebele people, for example, began to amalgamate with Northern Sotho and exchange cultural practices (Loubser 1994: 66).

Levinsohn (1984: 69) states that, as acculturation affected each tribe's lifestyle, their pottery traditions responded accordingly, while respecting the individual characteristics of ecology, habitat and location. In the course of these changes, the availability of natural materials (clay, earth and cattle-dung) for vessel production depended on ecological factors and urbanisation (Motsamayi 2014: 11). Artworks, and more especially the designs on contemporary pottery products, provide proof of ongoing acculturation processes. They could be seen as classic examples of the age-old occurrence in African art of cultural fusions between neighbouring ethnic groups. In Powell's description (1995: 12), 'They came into contact with one another and probably with various other peoples already in the area. In the process the original culture was transformed: intermarriage, cultural borrowings and assimilations resulted in a variety of hybridisations and the emergence of a range of different identities and groupings within both the Sotho-Tswana and the Nguni strains'.

The contemporary tradition of making *Difala* vessels could have been fuelled by migrations and resulting elements of interculturalism whereby intermarriage and belief systems are vital institutions influencing cultural change. Traces of interculturalism are also found in languages. In Gauteng Province for example, Pretoria in particular, the dialects of Sotho-Tswana language (*Sepitori*)- a mixture of Northern Sotho, Setswana language and other dialects spoken in the areas. The local interculturalism is historic in nature and dates back to the 1800's. Groups in Pretoria that have become fused, were originally living side by side in the area before the arrival of Europeans. Besides the spoken languages having elements of Northern Sotho dialects, this aspect is actually maintained by the presence of a large number of Northern Sotho and Batswana who continue to move to urban areas. Bakoni, who are today in Limpopo Province, once lived in the region of Pretoria (Jordaan 1992), long before the arrival of Europeans and Ndebele. The production of *Difala* vessels reflects the historical ties between Northern Sotho groups and Batswana that date back to long before the contemporary artificial boundaries were drawn.

In the development of cultures, contacts between two cultures with not dissimilar ideas, may well modify cultural practices where new concepts are received. Cases have been recorded of people travelling in new environments and returning home with the lived experience (Urry 1990) of other cultures to which they introduced their families in the form of new cultural practices. Observation is a critical tool for acquiring new insights. In surveying *Difala* vessels produced in PolokwaneCHM and others that were collected in Botswana and are housed at the IzikoSHC, they are not similar, although both have been made from fresh dung. Doing research at the IzikoSHC in Cape Town, I found evidence that the *Difala* vessels present there, were produced by Batswana and heterogeneous Sotho-Tswana peoples (i.e. Kgatla). They have been left undecorated as they were meant to be filled with seeds, dry vegetable and placed indoors on the floor. The shape of the vessels in the IzikoSHC collection resembles that of beer pots which are made of clay. Dung vessels are no longer made today and not available in the villages around Polokwane nor elsewhere in South Africa and Botswana. They are found only in the few museums where they are made for tourist purposes. The material resources, the cultural practices of production and usage as well as a plethora of styles in these regions are changing dramatically as a result of societal developments. The implication is that new styles of vessels, produced at the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museums, are emerging as products of socio-historical factors that continue to

shape and determine artistic expression in the Limpopo Province and in South Africa as a whole. Some ethnic groups are still moving around the province and outside it, many possibly converging on urban environments. Often, they are driven by scarce resources and poor rainfall to look for greener pastures and better opportunities in productive areas. Only few groups are amalgamating with others today.

I assume that acculturation happens in countless different ways. Crops, for example, used by many tribes, were adopted from other tribes. The same applies to livestock that people may have exchanged, much as they exchange gifts. So new species have entered communities and affected their cultures. Often people were forced to move in times of disturbances, taking their cultures with them.

5. 5 Materiality and perceptions of cattle in Sotho-Tswana cultures

5. 5.1 Cattle symbolism in connection with *Difala* vessels

Schapera and Goodwin (1937), Mönning (1967) and Motsamayi (2014) stipulate the important position of indigenous cattle in black culture and how they feature in all aspects of life, from birth and marriage to death. Cattle products are revered as an essential need of communities. There is a Setswana song that says, *Kgomo modimo wa mogae, modimo wa nko e metse; kgomo e lotlanya ditshaba, o bolaile banna ba le bantsi*, meaning, ‘Cow god of the home, god with the moist nose; cow that makes the tribes fight, you have killed many men’ (Schapera and Goodwin 1937: 138). The song presents cattle as a most important possession of Sotho-Tswana people. Cattle are, for instance, not slaughtered any time, but this can only take place on special occasions. Wealth is among black people measured by their agricultural property [land] and the number of cattle they own.

Cattle with specific colours are perceived as the embodiment of deities (*badimo*) and therefore they are revered and rarely slaughtered especially black bulls. A bull with a black colour is sacred as compare to white or redish and is often associated with ancestral spirits or bereavement. There are important rituals associate with black bull. Occasionally when the owner of cattle dies his favourite black bull is slaughtered and its hide is buried with him to intercede with ancestors on behalf of the living descendants. Similar for senior woman upon

her death, she is expected to be buried with cowhide depending on family's preference. A black bull communicates crucial messages through gesticulations. If a quiet and unprovoked black bull starts displaying some strange behaviours within specific area, it is giving a signal, omen or premonition to the owner, good or bad, or both. Even in dreams black cow or bull is associated with cautions and misfortunes.




For homestead decorations black colour is not used alone, if used it is always applied with other colours. It should be noted that a colourful animal can be seen as colourless in certain circumstances (proverbially), the association of colour is not only synonymous with naming of domestic animals, it can also be used to express cultural experience using an animal as a representation of a human character. For example, a bird. There is an adage in *Sesotho sa lebowa* which says: *Kgaka kgolo ga e na mabala, mabala a na le kgakana* - Literal translation: an adult guinea fowl has no colour in full flight. Colours are only noticeable amongst its chicks. Indigenous context: parents always pass to their children a legacy. In simple term: your children may inherit your legacy or characteristics. In actual fact, an adult guinea fowl has a wide variety of colours but in full flight it looks black. However this proverb indicates that it has no colours. In this context, unmentioned black colour signifies a powerful hidden meaning represented by colours and colourless respectively.

As part of my research inquiry to reveal hidden meaning embedded in *Difala* colours linked to the indigenous cattle, Margret Motsamayi interviewed older persons who are former shepherds. Some of these are today cattle owners in Limpopo province and have relatives in neighbouring provinces and in Botswana. Participants in this section were chosen through referrals. According to Margret, majority of the participants confirmed that among heterogeneous Northern Sotho, certain colours appear in women arts are inspired by specific cattle names. The names are based on their gender and may be used for praising and honouring specific animals. For example, a red bull or ox with a few marks is called *Kgomo ye Khulong*. Similarly, a cow is *Kgomo ye Khulwana*. Both names are derived from the animals' appearance and the pattern of spots on their bodies. Their names make the animals easily identifiable. The main colour featuring in Sotho-Tswana culture is red.

Basic colours in most cultures are black, red and white (Berlin and Kay 1969). The names of basic colours are associated with the cattle culture of Sotho-Tswana people. This is supported

by Mönning (1967) and Davies and others (1992: 1072), who identify the names of colours and the patterns, seen on cattle, as figuring in Northern Sotho and Batswana cultures. There are similarities in terms of cattle names as associated with colours and used in Northern Sotho and Batswana cultures. There is, however, some uncertainty when it comes to providing exact descriptions of the colours of given cattle in relation to a specific group in a specific region. All the *Difala* in my research are dominated by key colours identified by I, Margret and anonymous informants outside museums studied. I finally deduce that contemporary decorations on *Difala* vessels are linked to the colours of cattle (*mebala ya dikgomo*). Examples are given below in *Sesotho Sa Lebowa* and Setswana, details on catalogue section.

5.12.2 Table III: Common basic cattle (cows) and colour/patterns as named by Sotho-Tswana people of South African Highveld

		
Cow = <i>khulwana</i> (red)	Cow = <i>našwana</i> (black)	Cow = <i>tshwana</i> (white)
Illustration by Leigh Voigt. In Poland, M., and D. Hammond-Tooke, 2003.	Illustration by Leigh Voigt. In Poland, M., and D. Hammond-Tooke, 2003.	Illustration by Leigh Voigt. In Poland, M., and D. Hammond-Tooke, 2003.

Sesotho Sa Lebowa (Northern Sotho): common cattle colour/pattern names based on sex:

Bull = *khulong*. Cow = *khulwana*. Colour = *hubedu* (red).

Bull = *ntsho*. Cow = *naswana*. Colour = *ntsho* (black)

Bull = *tšhweu*. Cow = *tshwana*. Colour = *sweu* (white)

Setswana (Western Sotho): common cattle colour/pattern names based on sex:

Bull = *khunohu*. Cow = *khunwana*. Colour = *hibidu* (red, reddish-brown) reddish brown

Bull= *ntsho* - cow = *naswana* - colour = black - *ntsho*

Bull = *tshweu* - cow = *tshwaana* - colour = white – *tshweu*

According to my key informant (Margret), among Sotho-Tswana people naming cattle according to colour and patterns or relating to specific meanings, is informed by how the cattle is perceived and, ultimately, by which name one's experience of an animal is best conveyed. This information was supported by Mönning (1967), Berlin and Kay (1969). The main basic colours, black, white and red, exist across cultures (Bornstein 1973). The practices of colour naming of cattle in *Sesotho Sa Lebowa* and Setswana are similar. Only the description of the colour of an animal in relation to its patterning may differ, depending on the region.

Looking at the connection between cattle colour patterns and *Difala* made by Sotho-Tswana people and present in Polokwane Cultural History Museum (all decorated) and at the Cape Town Iziko Social History Centre (vessel not decorated), initially, I and Margret took photographs of *Difala* and showed them to senior inhabitants of the Limpopo Province who are all of them associated with Sotho-Tswana groups living in the vicinity. They included Babirwa, Bakoni, Bahananwa, Batlokwa, Bapedi, and other groups who call themselves simply Batswana. These Sotho-Tswana live scattered around the Capricorn and Waterberg regions, while some have relatives in Botswana and have worked in Gauteng or the North-West Province from where they retired to Limpopo Province. They brought to my attention that interpretations of colour/patterns are contested, and that people understand them in different ways. As regards my pictures of *Difala* vessels that have been collected among Northern Sotho speakers and are in the Polokwane museums, the names given to the colours of indigenous cattle were based on Northern Sotho dialects although some names were similar to those used by Setswana speakers.

My research into this aspect attracted much attention. Persons who identified themselves as Batswana asked to participate when they learnt (from Margret) that I am interested in the particulars of cattle colours and patterns in their region. Some invited me to join their families and interview elders on the matter. To test their knowledge of cattle colours and their meanings, I showed them the colour pictures of five decorated *Difala* vessels from the PolokwaneCHM and asked them how the colours and cattle patterns would be perceived by Northern Sotho or Batswana. Most of the male respondents were able to relate the cattle to

various patterns and colours - particularly the dominating colours - on the vessels, although, as opposed to the women, they are not makers of *Difala*. I assume that their knowledge is based on the fact that, as shepherds, they have become familiar with livestock in general. I also visited families that owned many cattle to verify the obtained information. Many persons gave their opinions on the names of cattle colours and patterns but were not always fully in agreement. Finally I made my own interpretation of which colours would be associated to specific vessels.

After this experiment I identified cattle colours, specifically associated with *Difala* in Polokwane museums and Iziko Social History Centre. These *Difala* represent cattle colours that are linked to cultural signifiers. Because the vessels have been made by women, all cattle colours used on *Difala* are associated with cows. Therefore I connect each vessel surveyed in the present research, with the cow whose colour appears on the vessel. I also describe how colour patterns are arranged in sequence.

Women decorate *Difala* vessels or walls sometimes on the basis of colours that are associated with cattle used to pay bride wealth. An example is (5.12.2 Table III): (a) ox = *khulong*, cow = *khulwana* (red colour), (b) ox = *ntsho* - cow = *naswana* (black colour), (c) ox = *tšhweu*, cow = *našwana* (white colour). Decorations in a household, based on these specific colours mixed with cow dung, represent these cattle. Space especially used by women in domesticity is painted in colours linked to specific cows. If the home of a man is decorated using these colours, it indicates 'place of men', represented by oxen. *Difala* in the Polokwane museums symbolise the significance by Northern Sotho people attached to colour patterns of indigenous cattle and reflected in their names.

The original makers of *Difala* vessels remain unknown to this day. Indigenous cattle are also known as Nguni cattle and found among both Nguni and Sotho-Tswana people in South Africa. The colourful animals are the favourite cattle among Highveld Sotho-Tswana and revered in many communities. The colours of Northern Sotho cattle play an important role in the symbolic expression of communities (Mönning 1967: 168). Taylor (1976) observes that symbols may function in rituals that are performed on specific occasions and in people's associated practices. Symbols that are linked to specific rituals are of a material nature. They

function commonly in the domestic sphere and their use is limited to persons of a certain age. Such symbols do not regularly appear.

In pottery and/or dung vessels that I have surveyed, I noticed that, as is common to most African material culture, specific symbols and designs found on artefacts, play a major role in indicating the origin of objects and identifying the meanings attached to them. The essential feature of *Difala* vessels which differentiates them from other and older vessels in museum collections, is that their inherent meanings should be made plain and be accessible to museum audiences and visiting academic researchers alike so that these may benefit, perhaps in some educational sense, from a museum visit.

5. 5. 3 The use of cattle by-products in the domesticity of Southern African communities

Cattle by-products, especially dung, may by many be seen as a waste product but in the African context such by-products feature prominently in daily rural life. Cattle dung has been associated with the female identity and domesticity from past to present. Among many Sotho-Tswana groups women are in the habit of beautifying their homesteads. They smear the walls and floors with a mixture of fresh dung and water, making decorative motifs. A similar, but drier and stiffer dung mixture is used for the flooring of homesteads. The homestead is where people work every day so that it gets dusty. The dung and water mixture applied to the floors dries to become a smooth, hard surface that helps to settle the dust in winter and prevent it from contaminating the food. In addition to wall painting, dung decorations have long been prevalent among many groups in South Africa but only recently begun to be studied as a form of art (Motsamayi 2014).

With fresh cow dung women in rural areas create distinctive patterns that relate to the spatial character of their dwellings. Most common are geometric designs that women make using their fingers and hand palms. The Limpopo Province is wellknown for the artistic quality of wall painting and other decorations. The tradition is, however, no longer typical to all the villages as a result of urbanisation and the construction of modern houses that do not rely as heavily on natural resources as the former village dwellings. Dung figures today mainly in museum contexts.

In the domestic setting of the villages, various types of soils were used for plastering the floors and for wall painting, as well as for the - continuing - production of clay pottery. Where indigenous art and crafts intersect, often local natural resources are used, such as in traditional African basketry and fibre weaving, and in domestic pottery using local clays and indigenous plant materials for firing. Natural resources and socio-cultural issues are intertwined in rural South Africa with, in the present rapidly globalising context, sustainability very much in question. Schapera and Goodwin (1959: 145) describe how the floors of courtyards by Sotho-Tswana people are made and smeared similar to that of their dwellings, while the walls of interior and exterior are often ornamented with broad geometric patterns of charcoal, kaolin, ochre, and other clays.



Figure 36: Contemporary motifs on a courtyard floor at Bakoni Malapa Museum, created using fresh cow dung and coloured earth. Capricorn District Municipality, Limpopo Province. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2013.

This use of dung was aimed at making the *lapa* or courtyard (**Fig. 36**) more habitable and avoid the spreading of dust. In domestic settings cattle dung is used for other purposes

(Lestrade 1929). When dried, dung is sometimes used as a fuel to fire clay vessels or, when firewood is scarce, dung is baked dry and used for cooking fires. Women relied on ants to determine the suitability of soils for plastering a floor. The soil from which ants build their hills, is by women selected to construct huts and build courtyards (*lapa*). Cattle dung serves a variety of purposes and can, for example, be used as medicine. It is usually old people who plaster their backs with cow dung to lend support to their spinal cords. In the past it was a common belief among Sotho-Tswana, that ailments affecting elders could be successfully treated with cow dung. Dung was furthermore used in agriculture as a fertiliser.

When cow dung is used for firing clay vessels or to produce a fire for cooking, the smoke that rises is thought to repel mosquitos which was especially useful in Limpopo Province where mosquitoes are more plentiful than in many other regions. When used in ritual, a newly dried dung is considered as being fresh and clean before it is used and, thereafter, it is perceived as having become a sacred material. When it is burned in order to purify the surrounding area, the smoke that rises from the dung is by potters as well as housewives considered to be a cleaning agent. Cattle by-products do fertilise crops and vessels made from these products, including *Difala*, protect the harvest preserved and stored in them from insects for a long time. Odours from inside *Difala* vessels act, when ashes have been used in their construction, as a repellent, keeping small insects from eating the contents. Besides, vessels made from dung are cooler than other pottery, making them suitable for keeping a range of agricultural products fresh for a long time. In the past traditional granaries have featured on Botswana postage stamps.

At harvest time the crops and grains are gathered in the field and placed on earth mixed with cow dung. Cow-dung functions in both the Western world and Africa as manure, but in Africa it is also extensively used in domestic cultural practices one of which is the production of vessels that is at the core of the present thesis. When Africans lost land and cattle and the African agricultural systems collapsed, they were left with no choice but to join, temporarily or on a permanent basis, the colonial labour market which was controlled by whites in both urban and rural areas (Ross 1981: 227). The result was that agricultural practices of Africans in rural regions were abandoned. In addition, modern ways of storing and preserving grain had been developed. The *Difala* vessels, previously associated with extensive agricultural activities and used to store grain, were gradually replaced by storage containers bought in

shops. Soon there was no more need for granaries and that is when *Difala* vessels were transformed to become works of art (Motsamayi 2014).

The producers of art and crafts in rural South Africa continue to be mostly black women. The products are generally not expensive to make and, with the materials available where the women live, they are able to produce a whole range of objects. They may produce artefacts as a hobby or as part of community projects whereby they target tourists. At the same time, these tourists are the ones who encourage such creativity. There are, in this context, some positive developments in relation to gender issues in that women play important roles in the protection of their environment where they source the materials for the production of cultural objects.

5. 5. 2 Patterns and decoration in vessel making

Various decorative patterns on vessels produced in the Limpopo Province by storage vessel makers, were invented to represent aspects of cattle colours and patterns that stand for spiritual perceptions in their communities. Some of the designs appear also in other forms of art, for example in embroidery patterns on clothing and on the painted walls of dwellings around the Limpopo Province. The interpretation of designs painted on vessels is in many regions a matter of choice and is in some cases decided by the vessel maker. The decorations are often derived from cultural symbols. Some vessel makers learn about meaningful design from cultural experts in their locality or in other areas from where they return home to integrate the new knowledge into their own cultures. Bowser (2000: 233) suggests that, ‘The analysis of pottery style focused on variables that are commonly studied by archaeologists to identify and evaluate differences between groups, form, symmetry, framing lines, line width, colour, and certain design elements’. Among vessels that have drawn the attention of archaeologists are the granaries, perceptions of which I am attempting to deconstruct as the dynamic nature of these objects has in the past remained unrecognised and needs to be understood from a contemporary perspective. Historically, the norm was to leave *Difala* vessels without any form of decoration as can be seen in the Iziko Social History Centre. Today, however, an undecorated vessel is considered of less importance and not worthy of being exhibited. Many traditional vessels are presently produced specifically for museum purposes. In that context it matters that a vessel draws interest through its colours.

There is a taboo on digging the soil to make vessels or decorate a homestead when death has occurred in the community. After a period of mourning people may start working with soil or clay again. A knowledge of cultural practices is central to an understanding of the norms associated with the production of artefacts that involve soil as a resource (Layton 1991). Some designs on vessels are derived from modern, mass produced utensils that are for sale in shops. The word 'modern', when used in the framework of culture, can be linked to changing traditions as is happening in the pottery making fraternity in general. Such changes are reflected in modern vessels, produced in the Limpopo Province, including pottery made from materials found in soil.

Vessels, among them *Difala*, can be used to transfer knowledge from a domestic setting to the community as a whole, whereby designs and decorations communicate a message or one or more cultural symbols. Such a process has in the past led to the development of new styles and designs which currently dominate artefacts produced in the areas where they were adopted from the domestic sphere and are now used by women to create art for museums. The development of a style is a social process (Jolles 2005). Styles spread and mature through social events, for instance, funeral attendance and other traditional gatherings that are held for a common purpose and allow for human interaction. Such events give individuals the opportunity to observe styles of behaving which he or she takes back home or to his or her village.

Newly acquired styles are manifested in designs and colours in vessel production. Prevalent colours used for decorating *Difala* vessels are black, reddish and white which are apparent in other cultural practices as well. Contemporary designs are not uniform. Specific styles are apparently chosen and applied onto *Difala* vessels for reasons determined by individual vessel makers in accordance with their own backgrounds or their patrons' needs but executed in more or less the same manners.

5. 6. 4 African ethics as related to the environment and vessel making traditions

As the making of *Difala* vessels, central to my research, depends on the availability of natural resources, environmental ethics is an important concern. Human beings share important

points of connection in nature and in artistic expression. Art cannot exist without a conducive environment. I view art as a part of human culture whereby expression and creativity underline human actions and behaviour in relation to the use they make of the environment. There are African cultural practices that forbid people to engage in specific activities during certain periods. Such avoidance rules create particular cultural behaviours. Some of these are perceived as linked to pollution, for instance, the taboo on women entering the cattle kraal (*lešaka la dikgomo*) (Quin 1957) or the prohibition on excavating soil as a sign of respect in mourning periods. Enge and Smith (2010) argue that there are cultural concepts involving environmental ethics. Ethics is a branch of philosophy that seeks to define the morally right and wrong in a society, for example, in respect of caring for the environment. Many cultures are adhering to a code of behaviour, governed by ethics. Indigenous ethics is concerned with African traditions and defines whether in a specific African culture certain human behaviours or activities are acceptable or objectionable.

Cultural practices differ from one area to another but may, in some regions, show similarities. In many cultures, however, there is a small number of practices that have to be observed by everyone present in the community, irrespective of whether one belongs to the local culture or happens to be visiting. In Sotho-Tswana heterogeneous cultures, and in South Africa as a whole, women are, ironically, forbidden from entering the cattle kraal. This taboo is based on avoidance rules associated with the menstruating cycle and pregnancy being perceived as making women impure. I assume that this is also the reason why only senior women are involved in performing cleansing ceremonies for their families and other individuals.

Artefacts such as *Difala* vessels have been associated with ancient concepts of environmentalism. They are not fired like pottery which requires massive soil excavation while the fires cause air pollution and are detrimental to ecosystems.

Part of African indigenous ethics consists in ritual taboos or avoidance rules that forbid engagement in practices that, in certain contexts, are considered as an aberration. Many cultures focus on insights regarding human actions being right or wrong. For instance, based on gender seniority and affiliation, it is by Sotho-Tswana seen as unethical to neglect cultural practices that are supposed to be observed by every community member, or that have been adhered to by many generations of Sotho-Tswana in the past. Ethics in an African context

may be concerned with gender or age differences. Women and children could be forbidden from taking part in practices that are associated specifically with men and vice versa.

For instance, cattle culture is rooted in patriarchal traditions, identified in many Sotho-Tswana groups with male authority. Cattle are used for paying bride wealth and for ploughing the fields. Most of the shepherds are males while, depending on their cultures, women are responsible for cultivating the fields and processing crops. The taboo that prohibits women from entering the kraals results from menstruation and pregnancy being associated with uncleanness. In relation to avoidance rules, among many Sotho-Tswana, young girls are allowed into the kraal to collect fresh cattle-dung until they reach menstruation age, when they are no longer perceived as pure. There have been South African cultures in which women were allowed to milk and look after cattle, but few of these are left today. Rituals are linked to passage (Taylor 1976). Hence, senior women and young girls are perceived as pure and may perform cleansing ceremonies and enter kraals. In support of the above statements, Shaw (1974: 96) elaborates that the avoidance rules, pointing to the perceived impurity of the menstruating cycle and pregnancy, are linked to a local traditional belief that impurity may affect cattle breeding. Therefore, the kraal is definitely a male space.

Some participants in my research expressed the opinion that the grain, after being harvested, processed and stored in a granary made of cattle-dung, is like a baby in its mother's womb. The grain is not only food but also, when sown, a source of new life. After long grazing periods away from the homestead, the cattle will drop dung in and around their owners' kraals where it is collected for household use. If cattle sleep in the kraal, herders take it every morning out for grazing. In a societal context, behaviours are deemed acceptable if they are expected to promote the wellbeing of the community concerned. Men are not allowed to plaster a floor with dung. Taboos indicate behaviour that is unacceptable in society. There are also avoidance rules pertaining to certain actions that should not to be committed by anybody for the simple reason that he or she is a person. Avoidance rules are concerned with the accordance of respect to any person, alive or dead. Taboos are, among other things, concerned with human behaviour towards the environment. At the time of death and during funerals, there may be no excavation of soil for household and cultural purposes such as decorating a homestead. It expresses respect for the departed soul.

Generally, in African cultures and specifically among Sotho-Tswana, the breaking of cultural norms is considered as abhorrent behaviour in relation to one's family and to the community as a whole. Cultural beliefs condemn, for example, showing disrespect to elders and to the departed, as immoral behaviour. From the philosophical point of view ethics can help people to understand which actions are wrong and for what reason. Ethics can also be applied to issues of biodiversity and land management (Enge and Smith 2010: 15). In the past, it was common practice of pastoralists in grassland areas to burn grass to allow for the growth of new grass and vegetation. Reed remarks that, 'Grazing on non-arable land is seasonal and consists of unimproved species. Herbaceous legumes and other dicotyledons are important during the growing season but grasses are usually dominant. During the dry season, only senescent grasses remain in the herb layer and in many areas they are completely grazed before the beginning of the growing season. Browse from woody legumes are important component of the vegetation which provide feed during the dry season. The leaves of shrubs are browsed and branches from trees are lopped to make leaves accessible' (Reed, undated unpublished paper/notes).

My research has led me to conclude that environmental ethics are a key to a better understanding of healthy ecosystems that create an environment that is favourable for the wellbeing of society and the availability of natural resources. Both *Difala* and pottery are artefacts of which the production is based on existing relationships between ecosystems and communities. To make *Difala* vessels specific materials are required, namely soils and fresh cattle dung. The materials are sourced in the areas where vessel makers live. Milton (1993: 5) remarks that human interaction with the environment is widely perceived as, both, the source of environmental challenges and the key to their solution. To address environmental challenges, analytical approaches are required. I turn to the application of environmental ethics as a point of departure. Environmental ethics is primarily concerned with best practices to guarantee the preservation of natural resources. Since natural resources and socio-cultural issues in rural South Africa are intertwined, the sustainability of these 'spaces' is, in Africa's rapidly globalising context, very much in question.

Presently, cultural objects are created using industrial products such as commercial paints instead of natural resources. This casts doubt on the cultural status of artefacts as contemporary production processes may affect the meanings attached to objects in their

original context. The philosophy of ethics is concerned with what is acceptable and unacceptable in society (Enge and Smith 2010: 16). In relation to my research, the question is if the use of natural products in cultural production can simply be replaced by industrial products without consequences for the nature of an artefact. It seems to me that environmental ethics should not merely result in the confirmation that humanity needs to be concerned about the environment but also focus our attention on the moral foundation of environmental responsibility and its implications, as suggested by Enge and Smith (2010: 16). A contemporary development is the moving away of people in rural and urban areas from using natural resources. Instead, they depend increasingly on industrial products that are abundantly available. This development will have a considerable impact on cultural dynamism.

Some industrial products are not durable and, if not suited for a certain form of art production, may end up being detrimental to the resulting work of art. Ethics disapproves of certain practices in society (Taylor 1976: 131) and, in addition, evaluates what is acceptable by the provision of alternatives. Enge and Smith (2010: 16) note that there are many theories of moral responsibility in relation to the environment. They offer different approaches each of which, however, advocates environmental responsibility and involves the assumption that, as only human beings are morally significant, they have to adopt a pertinent moral stance on dealing with the environment. Humans can control animal and plant life and, in view of the fact that the environment is crucial for human wellbeing and survival, humanity has to apply its rationality and ensure that the environment is sustainable.

Consequently, also vessel makers carry a responsibility to keep the environment habitable. Rural areas are negatively affected by many human activities every one of which should be carefully considered in attempts to address environmental issues.

A crucial question is whether humanity can continue to make and use industrial products in pursuit of short-term profit while these may be harmful to health and environment. On the other hand, does the answer lie in continuing the use of natural resources in the production of artefacts for which there may be no market? Human actions have their consequences some of which are seen as contributing to environmental changes. Mannion (1997: 209) argues that, 'Most notable environmental changes that have occurred are loss of biodiversity through

extinction associated with the loss and fragmentation of natural and semi-natural habitats.’ According to Enge and Smith (2010), cultures differ in terms of how they perceive ethical commitments to their surroundings. Thus, perceptions of ethical issues vary, based on what, in a particular culture, is considered acceptable.

Every culture poses its own limits. In rural areas, natural habitats of animals and vegetation have been transformed into land suitable for agriculture or pastoralism. This involved the loss of natural resources, soil degradation and erosion (Mannion 1997: 209). It is not easy to convince population groups that share few cultural similarities of the importance of certain considerations regarding environmental ethics such as the need to look after nature for the sake of future generations. Is it feasible to take the cultural perspectives of separate groups into account when trying to find viable solutions for environmental problems that are already with us, partly as a result of the trend to use industrial products rather than traditional resources? In relation to the present thesis, this question refers in particular to those industrial materials that have been adopted to produce art that is sold on tourist markets or in urban locations (Motsamayi 2018).

When artists produce and sell artefacts to provide themselves with an income, the simultaneous observing of ethical norms, including the protection of the environment, becomes problematic. Would it be useful to analyse the cultures of different communities and try to determine if, and how, their challenges - among these the use in creative occupations of meaningful natural resources as opposed to industrial products - can be dealt with? A pertinent analysis may also deepen and broaden an understanding of, for example, how to best catalogue and describe in detail the *Difala* vessels and pottery that are a focus of my study and of which many examples have, admittedly, been kept safe by museums without, however, providing them with crucial information that could encourage further research.

In the research process it has become clear to me that, if local cultural practices are not observed and the environment is not conducive, *Difala* vessels can not be produced. It is the presence of certain, as sacred perceived, materials in the bushveld areas where abundant grass guarantees sufficient grazing for livestock and where the BakoniMNSOAM resides, that allows the performance of specific cultural practices. In drought-prone areas when, for instance, cattle are starving due to a lack of grass, the produced dung will be insufficient for

making the large *Difala* vessels and the bits of dung that get collected are used as manure or to plaster floors.

Some interviewees expressed the opinion, that cattle fed on leaves in the lowveld or in unregulated rural areas, do not produce the correct kind of dung to make quality vessels, as compared to cattle that feeds on grass in the Highveld. The reason is that some of the Highveld grasses contain fibres that aid in the construction of vessels. In relation to environmental questions it is important to keep in mind that *Difala* vessels are currently not made in villages. In drought-stricken communities around BLM in Limpopo Province, for example, creative activities focus on clay pottery.

According to Milton (1993: 3-4), 'First, environmental problems are always defined as ecological problems and anthropologists have, for many years, been students of human ecology. Second, the understanding of environmental problems and the implementation of solutions are often trans-cultural operations, and interpretation across cultural boundaries is recognised as a distinctive speciality of anthropologists. Third, through the analysis of environmentalism itself, anthropology, along with other social sciences, can help to refine the process of environmental advocacy'. Thus, in Milton's view, anthropological concepts may lay the foundation for contextualising environmental problems that are prevalent in communities whose identities are informed by cultural belief systems that have long existed and shaped local ideas on the relations between humanity and the environment.

Anthropological expertise can serve to combine the insights, present in cultures and expressed in artefacts that are the products of their specific environments. Some of the concepts that are associated with indigenous knowledge are, in actual life, embedded empirical evidence. In the past, however, this form of knowledge was not recognised as such. Pottier (2003: 7) argues that local knowledge is substantially rooted in cultural contexts. For this reason, indigenous cultural practices should be examined and analysed with specific regard to the natural environment in which a culture is embedded. Often, studies appear to overlook the interconnections of art and cultural practices with local ecosystems.

5. 6 Localised ecologies transcending boundaries

The above argument suggests that scientific reasoning cannot present a complete picture without considering local knowledge, in particular when dealing with issues linked to the ways in which local people act in their own environment (Motsamayi 2014: 5). Many inhabitants of Limpopo Province, possess indigenous knowledge about their natural resources. Interacting with these people could be of benefit to experts from various disciplines, including anthropologists. It might enrich expert research to find out how indigenous knowledge is understood in local contexts and to translate their findings into a concept that could be of global interest. The local knowledge that I gathered from interviews with vessel makers and from accounts of oral history has not been thoroughly studied in the past when anything to do with indigenous knowledge was considered as speculative and unscientific in academic discourse, especially in colonial times and the apartheid era. These notions are to a degree being reviewed in present-day post-colonial discourse. Some indigenous knowledge cannot be understood without looking at the environment in which it was produced. That environmental issues play significant roles in supporting or hindering cultural practices and art production, is not limited to Limpopo Province but experienced by many South African societies.

The study of ecology goes back to early Western thought and is present in non-Western societies as well (Moran 2006: 27). Enge and Smith (2010: 3) mention that the approach to an understanding of the natural world has led to its division into interrelated units called ecosystems. Within the ecosystems a complex network has been defined of interrelations between plants, animals and mineral resources. A profound awareness of the complexities of ecosystems is evident in many African societies where indigenous people have applied their traditional wisdom to regulate their use of the land. They have managed their livestock, taking account of the environment on which they depend, and they have tried to create an equilibrium between people's needs and nature as a way to sustain their livelihood in a healthy ecosystem. This historical sense of the need for a balanced relationship with nature continues to influence societies today in the contemporary production of material culture. In doing so, they reinterpret the artefacts of the past stored in museums that have positioned themselves as custodians of old traditions and related artworks.

Heritage institutions appear to offer what is potentially the only alternative to the risk of present-day South Africa losing its connection with historical indigenous creativity and its cultural significance. Museums and related institutions are faced with the enormous task of creating awareness of cultural objects that have, to a larger or lesser degree, been forgotten by the groups that produced them, and of unearthing their background in order to establish their past and present relevance to communities. The tradition of associating cattle with agricultural activities is in Limpopo Province alive, as it is in some other regions of South Africa. Innovative motifs appear these days on various forms of vessels which are inspired by the natural materials familiar to rural women and common in their environments where these resources help people to maintain their unique styles and be consistent in their production of local vessels and other artefacts useful in their daily lives. Traditional farming has diminished or even been discontinued, particularly in rural communities that traditionally made and used *Difala* vessels. Persons who are still involved in agricultural activities report a low in terms of crop productivity. However, at the same time, there are in rural areas around Limpopo Province still women who depend extensively on the environment for sourcing materials which they use in their domestic settings.

Classifications for museum purposes, concerning traditions of *Difala* vessel making using cattle-dung in various locations, poses challenges, for example in terms of the structured art categories that exist in museums. The concept of eco-friendly art still has relevance in efforts to save the environment from further degradation. People look for local, eco-friendly natural resources to create art. Hatcher (1985: 244) notes that in many societies culture and traditions are amalgamated which is manifest in symbols depicted in art. This artistic expression is becoming a communicative mode to merge traditions and modernity. In South Africa vessel makers utilise the specific environmental resource of cattle dung mixed with wood ashes, soils and charcoal, to harmoniously link creativity and environment in the *Difala* vessels, presently made in the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum. As the practice is extinct in many villages in Limpopo Province, the interface between the newly produced *Difala* vessels, local ecosystems and traditional cultural practices, ensures *Difala* of a new contemporary validity.

The relation between art and environment is also discussed by Hammond-Tooke (1993: 46) who observes that there are mutual links between art, material culture and environment. An

insight into the functioning of cultural practices in their environment is fundamental for an understanding of how decorations and construction techniques of vessel making traditions are preserved, transmitted and revitalised in societies. The contemporary *Difala* vessels found in the PolokwaneCHM and the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum encompass a multiplicity of cultures reflected in shapes and designs that are linked to the traditions of different ethnic groups in Limpopo and neighbouring provinces. Making these vessels - smaller than their historical prototypes and portable for tourists - has become an important focus of artists (Hatcher 1985: 189). The old granaries that past explorers have documented among the Batswana, were big and could not be carried lightly by a single person.

The migration of people to urban areas has impacted on their livelihoods but also offered opportunities to encounter other groups from which they had until then be separated by geographical distance. Thus, Ndebele people amalgamated with Northern Sotho, leading to the exchange of cultural practices. Levinsohn (1984: 69) observes that acculturation has affected each tribe's lifestyle and their pottery traditions have responded accordingly, while respecting individual characteristics and different environmental backgrounds. It is obvious that natural materials - clay, earth, and cattle-dung - used in vessel production correspond with ecological realities such as drought, floods and urbanisation. Hence, my research has consistently taken account of the environmental background of local material cultures and their products (Motsamayi 2014:12). The vessels made by contemporary potters in the context of Limpopo museums are a strong indication of ongoing acculturation. This process can be seen as a classic example of a long history of cultural fusions, expressed in art, between African ethnic groups who have been neighbours for years. Powell (1995: 12) states: 'they came into contact with one another and probably with various other peoples already in the area. In the process the original culture was transformed: intermarriage, cultural borrowings, and assimilations resulted in a variety of hybridisations and the emergence of a range of different identities and groupings within both the Sotho-Tswana and the Nguni strains'.

5. 7 The use of land and natural resources for cultural production

The criteria applied to select natural resources for use in cultural productions, in particular for making traditional vessels, depend on the environments where the natural materials are

sourced. Historical records, together with information obtained from interviewees, clearly indicate that the natural surroundings that have been inhabited in past and present are not static but are, like other natural phenomena, dynamic. In an overview of South Africa's environmental status in the past, Acocks (1988: 1) emphasises that changes in vegetation have taken place. This gets further complicated by the lack of credible records referring to environmental changes that have occurred after Europeans arrived in the country. Relevant studies confirm that continuing change is affecting the environment around the country.

Changing vegetation happens under the influence of management systems operating in the environment (Acocks 1988). In rural areas there is often no known systematic way to manage the grazing of domestic animals. Land management remains a thorny issue in a number of rural areas. Becoming increasingly problematic, land management is in need of serious attention as the land, used by communities for cattle grazing, is in general still open land without any system regulating its usage. People let their livestock graze regularly and wherever they want without ever allowing the vegetation to recover. Cattle grazing is in rural areas not based on rotation and cattle owners keep returning to the same area which seriously complicates the protection of natural resources. Due to the fact, that many past Bantustan reserves suffer annually from extreme lack of rain, many cattle owners find themselves caught up in a vicious circle, having to find suitable grazing. Meanwhile, there is government owned land available, less dry, but located far from rural communities. People can use it for grazing, provided they are able to move their herds over such long distances.

Enge and Smith (2010: 246) mention that, as in many communities the available land is too dry to support crops, it is instead used to raise low-density populations of domesticated or semi-domesticated animals. Most animals - specific types of cattle as well as domestic animals - have been imported into an environment that is new to them. With the land too dry to support farming, rural people turn to raising domestic animals that can survive in harsh circumstances. Some livestock owners keep their animals permanently on open ranges whereas others move their herds around in search of suitable grazing. As a result, the cattle may spend much time away from the homestead which affects the culture of using cattle by-products. By introducing animals into many different areas, it has happened that cattle had to share land with already present wildlife which influenced grazing patterns.

The area where I examined which *Difala* vessels had been made from dung for museum purposes is, as part of the Polokwane area, dominated by Polokwane plateau ‘false’ grassland as Acocks (1988: 119) states. This includes places that I had selected for experimenting with the reproduction of *Difala* vessels for museum and tourist purposes. It is where contemporary *Difala* vessels are currently produced and where the plateau reaches its climax of clear, open, clumpy sourish-mixed bushveld with *acacia rehmanniana* as the typical tree. Altitudes range from 1200 metres to 500 m and rainfall from 400 to 600 mm per annum, falling in summer (Acocks 1988: 119). Rocks are granite which is mineral and often used for decorating domestic pottery. Based on Acocks’ statement, it is clear that *Difala* vessels are not originally from the Polokwane plateau. The vessels were brought there when Bakoni from Ga-Matlala arrived and the reason why they continued to produce *Difala* was their proximity at the time to the Highveld and the ‘false’ grasslands in the Polokwane area. Most of the communal land in former homelands has a badly managed ecosystem, especially the Limpopo Province.

Harvey and Hallett (1977: 62) accentuate that environmental problems have become the subject of a public discourse which deserves attention. Bookchin (1980: 35), on the other hand, remarks that elements promoting the destruction of nature are prevalent, all around the world. In the South African art circle, there appears to be little awareness of the fact that environmental resources are vital and becoming limited. If correct measures are not taken to ensure a sustainable use of the resources and to preserve them for future generations, serious problems will crop up, affecting local ecosystems.

My research visits to various South African regions have made clear that vessels based on natural resources, are only recently produced in areas known as bushveld where there is plenty grass for cattle grazing (Acocks 1988). However, today there no longer is grass in abundance (Motsamayi 2014). Whereas *Sefala* vessels were for storing and preserving grain after harvesting, these vessels have now been transformed to serve as contemporary flower vases and as museum art, both remaining associated with domestic cultural practices and produced with a view to museum audiences and tourists in a process that I have recorded in Limpopo Province.

It appears to me that, when analysing African objects like *Difala* vessels within the framework of Euro-American theories or methodologies, the artefacts are in danger of losing

their original meanings which could result in misinterpretation and, eventually, miscataloguing by museum curators.

In the above section, I examine and provide an overview of current methodologies and cataloguing models that have been, and are currently, used by scholars and museum professionals (Baca and others 2006, Schmiegel 1998) to document vessels and, generally, ceramics. My aim was to point out the shortcomings of these systems that, for the bigger part, have been designed for dealing with Western ceramics of which much is industrially designed and factory-produced or else made, studio-based, by Modernist ‘artist vessel makers’ in the Anglo-Oriental style (Hamer 1975, Rhodes 1978, Hall 2002).

5. 8 Gendered material culture production in Sotho-Tswana groups

In relation to the production of objects associated with indigenous cultures and to the obtaining of the necessary resources, perceptions of gender roles need to be taken into account as they may inform the choice of materials and the final appearance of objects. African cultural gender norms and the resulting work distribution determine material culture production. The gendered beliefs that are prevalent in a society have been identified as shaping the ways in which particular forms of art are produced and distributed. The shape of pregnant women, for example, can be linked to that of the *Sefalana* vessels collected in Botswana and intended for storing grain.

The decorations on contemporary vessels are an adopted tradition to enhance their appearance. The decorative motifs are usually inspired by those used in mural art which has since many years been practised by women in their homes. Adopted traditions are customs, voluntarily embraced due to circumstances, whereas invented traditions are imposed by circumstances. Aronson (1995) confirms that wall painting is mostly done when women have leisure time from agricultural work. This implies that the creating of art in the domestic sphere is not done on a full-time basis but that artists set specific times apart for adhering to such cultural traditions. De Jager (1992) found that black women traditionally used to focus primarily on crafts and wall decorations. These activities were common in rural areas where they continue to be practised, including in Limpopo Province where, during my fieldwork, I

found that vessel making still depends entirely on the use of natural earths and local eco-resources (woods for combustion).



Figure 37: Margret Motsamayi busy at her allotment with agricultural activities. Capricorn District Municipality. Photograph by M.F, Motsamayi, 2014.

Ploughing the fields is today taking on the character of a hobby since staple foods are produced by commercial farmers. I used a picture of my own sister in ‘this condition’ to avoid being accused of villagisation and exotification ‘others’. In relation to many African families, a picture of this nature could be misinterpreted. Images of this nature (**Fig. 37**) were common during the colonial era to portray black females in rural scenery by Western observers.

Older people with their great store of traditional knowledge find themselves today members of rural communities that no longer depend on subsistence farming as in the past, but that buy the agricultural products they need. Traditional vessels are replaced by plastic and metal ware, sold by retailers. As the older generations have extensive experience and knowledge of

weather, land, and agricultural dynamics, this know-how is no longer shared with younger generations, but could still be of benefit to society.

In the past, men and older boys would move to cattle posts to look after their livestock. They might also herd the cattle onto land that had to be cleared and ploughed. However, most of the agricultural labour, including planting, weeding and harvesting, was done by women. Today, among Sotho-Tswana in urban areas, women who are not involved in the cash economy, continue to participate in subsistence agriculture, albeit often minimally. The workload in the typical African household remains distributed according to gender. Among both Sotho-Tswana and Venda groups, pottery making is known as women's work while men do woodwork. The above observations need to be taken into account in an analysis of changes affecting cultural practices related to *Difala* vessels.

Prior to the advent of the cash economy, it was men who, in many Southern African societies, handled any tasks concerning the cattle. They were responsible for herding the livestock, defending the community's territory and partaking in political activity. Research conducted by Gosselain (1992: 564) in sub-Saharan Africa, indicates that traditions of vessel making were generally associated with women. It was a matter of certain cultural roles in African communities being ascribed to women. However, the changes that affect contemporary African communities are not bypassing women. Resulting from the socio-historical background, black women have been subjected to negative perceptions regarding their artistic activities. As the nature of one's gender, combined with preconceptions of art institutions and patronages, determines the reception of an artwork, black women are generally under-represented in art as well as in practically all other structures of society. This situation stems from African patriarchy and apartheid which diminished the traditional status of black women in favour of men in respect of education and leadership roles. Boundaries created between what is and, what is not, art should not be regarded as an integral aesthetic aspect of local heritage representation, because objects of art originate from different socio-historical backgrounds. I emphasise that the traditional functions, designs and shapes of *Difala* vessels have changed over time as a consequence of changes occurring in the cultures of people who make the objects.



Figure 38: Unnamed Mopedi woman with grinding stone next to a decorated domestic *lapa* wall. Quin 1959.

Traditionally, women were custodians of households whereas men had to provide for the family (Mönning 1967: 145, Hammond-Tooke 1993: 49). Some records referring to Sotho-Tswana groups, contain the information that, historically, women did everything, from building houses, using the natural resources they found in their areas, to making pottery, smearing the walls of homesteads and plastering floors with mud and dung, to collecting and carrying water and firewood, cleaning the house, cooking, stamping the grain, and so on (Suggs 2002, Mönning 1967). Some of this is still true today. Many roles were - and continue to be - structured around gender and seniority (**Fig. 38**).

Aronson (1995: 130) observes that the natural resources, commonly used in the production of African artefacts, are associated with the natural landscape. Aronson points out that vessel production requires the gathering of clay from earth reserves and building up the pottery which in most cases is informed by the culture to which the potters belong. Potters rely on specific natural indicators to identify the soils that are suitable for vessel making. Plants may point the way to where specific soils can be found, while also insects may be indicators of

suitable soils. Soil that ants prefer for constructing anthills is suitable for domestic purposes and potters may demolish anthills to collect the soils.

Culture generally offers the keys to an understanding of ways in which beliefs in societies are transmitted and preserved. It has in the past been well documented by social observers that people exist in dynamic relationships with their environment. Their interaction with the environment affects both people as individuals and social groups in their entirety (Motsamayi 2014: 6). The interaction of people also produces connectivity. In almost every culture - human by nature - artefacts are produced for specific purposes (Taylor 1976: 114). Artefacts have been created in the past, and continue to be made today, by black South Africans and others in urban areas around the country, whereby local South Africans tend to stress local identities whereas art producers hailing from elsewhere in Africa take a broader view of what types of artefacts can be sold on informal and formal markets to willing buyers. This leads to distinctions between the material culture productions of South African female artists who produce 'women's art' such as vessels, and foreigners who practice any art form without specialising and without being pressurised to celebrate with their art a particular region or a specific culture.

When making *Difala* vessels women borrow, for their contemporary decoration of the traditional vessels, cultural symbols that are historically linked to domesticity. Scholars have perceived African art in the past as using gender-biased lenses (Brain 1980: 23). Such perceptions continue to be reinforced by the cultural norms that are evident in South African museums. But contemporary decorated *Difala* vessels stand out by crossing boundaries, among these regional limitations. People have moved from their original ancestral homes where *Difala* used to be produced, to new areas and to the setting of a museum. Living in urban surroundings, in their art production women still traced their cultural roots back to their old villages. Women, for instance, still excavate colourful soils, gather cattle dung and clays to paint decorative symbols on homestead walls. They plaster floors with local soils and they collect natural materials in the environment to make and decorate artefacts. In this context, attention is focused on the gender based production by women of *Difala* (plural) and *Sefala* or *Sefalana* (singular) as the vessels are known in Sotho-Tswana languages. The vessels depend on eco-resources associated with domesticity. The practice of making cattle dung vessels requires dedication and perseverance as it may take a week to construct and complete a

vessel. Senior women are well placed to create these works and have the necessary experience of arranging their household tasks in such a way that there will be time to produce artefacts.

Where previously *Difala* vessels were made for storing grain, today they are shown as commodities to international and local tourists. The tourism sector has absorbed many aspects of the material cultures of black people. This is also the case in Polokwane and surroundings, particularly in the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum where I have, during my research, asked senior women to reproduce *Difala* vessels. Their contemporary products are small and can be easily transported by tourists.

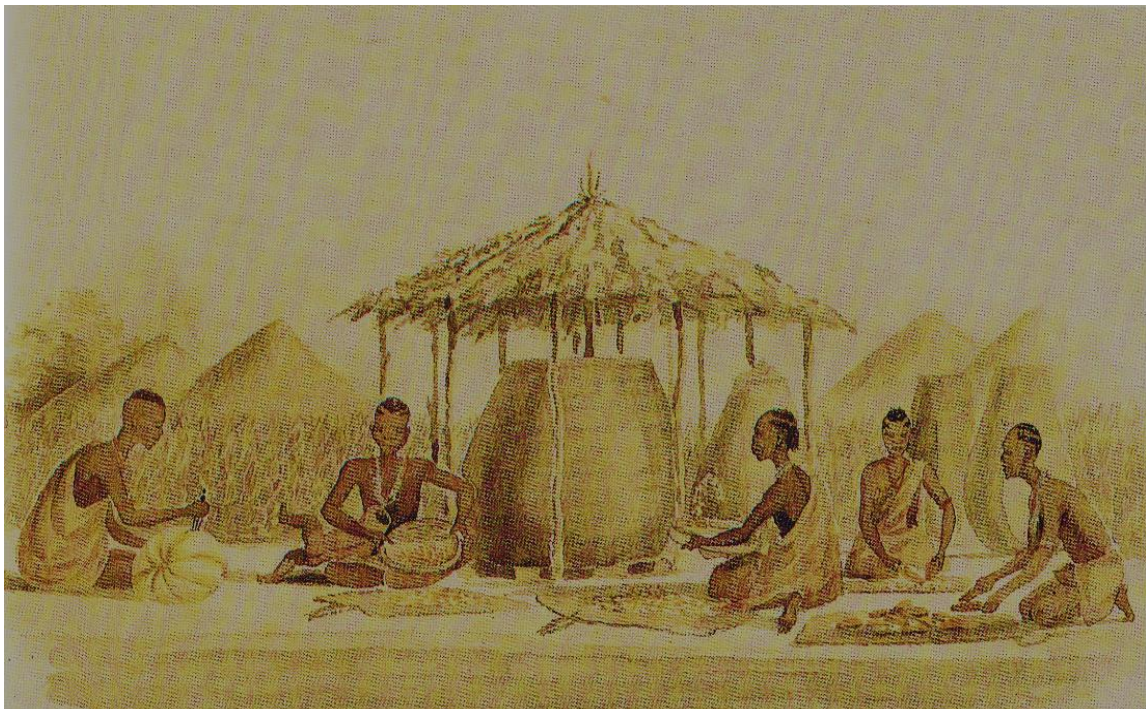
Shaw (1974: 116) confirms that there are in South Africa elements of gender based craft production. An example is the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum where all the craft practitioners are women from heterogeneous Northern Sotho groups in the municipality, who demonstrate vessel making traditions to museum visitors. The women incorporate in their work specific visual signifiers that are used in their respective cultures. The women belong to groups, other than the Bakoni people from Ga-Matlala (near Polokwane) for whom the museum was originally established (Jordaan 1992: 1).

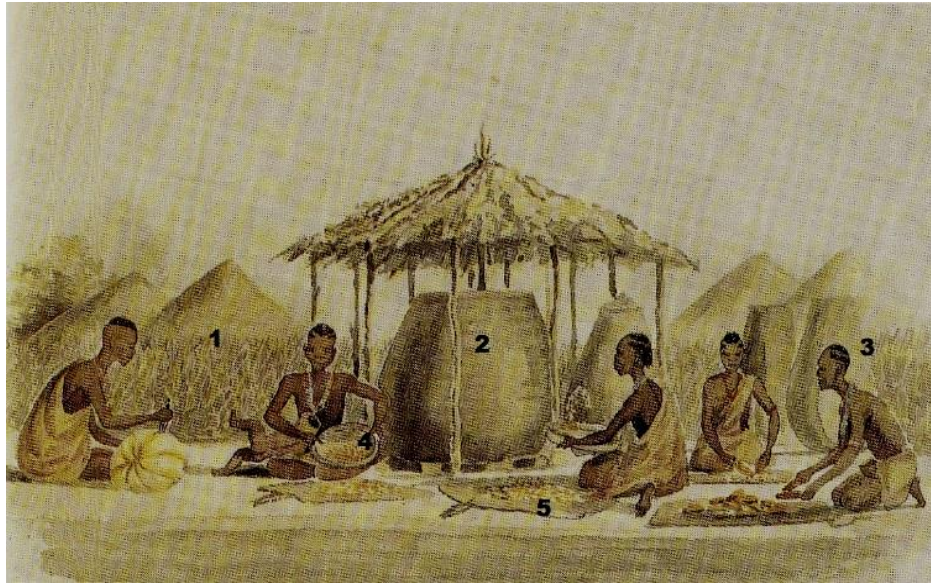
‘The most important characteristic of such a situation is the change that results in the cultures concerned due to the contact. Another characteristic is that this process is always reciprocal, that is, there is mutual influence and change and both cultures are affected’ (De Jager 1973: 17). I deduce that some of the decorative motifs on contemporary *Difala*, represent intercultural fusions of motifs used by various ethnic groups in the Capricorn District Municipality, rather than being specific to any single ethnic group. Thus, as a result of continuous innovation, the contemporary vessel making process at the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum can no longer be used to determine the ethnic identity of individual groups to which potters belong as was argued by cultural observers in the past (Lawton 1967: 183).

It is evident that women used to dominate the agricultural industry in African culture which is aimed at food production and of which the success is determined by seasonal factors and by the suitability of environments. Brain (1980: 227) argues, that in the African setting women

are not the products of men who look upon them as a group inferior to themselves. There are instances of women who have been as influential in their communities as men. Most Sotho-Tswana historically used grain, stored in mud granaries and *Difala* vessels that were made by women and intended for various purposes, such as preserving grain for later planting, food preparation, all of which tasks are mostly associated with females. There exist other traditional granaries made by Sotho-Tswana of the Highveld. These are known as *Letlolo* and *Sešhego* and shown below (Figs. Fig. 40 (1) and 41).

Grain, planted and processed by women, plays a major role in households and beyond. Hence, the need for a special place to preserve it for future use. As practically every aspect of the grain production is in the hands of women, *Difala* may be considered a women's tradition. To understand the socio-cultural history of *Difala* vessels, one needs to examine Sotho-Tswana social structures and the gendered relations in households as well as in communities as a whole. Women may be in charge of agricultural occupations, but men do lend a hand, for example, by erecting fences, clearing bushes, and ploughing with the help of cattle to make the land fit for agricultural purposes. These activities are arranged according to the time of the year which means that to each season specific agricultural activities are attached and performed by persons in accordance with rules on gender roles, age and seniority.





Figures 39 and 40: Images showing precolonial Bahurutshe (Tswana) preparing grain for storage. Illustration from Hammond-Tooke 1993. (Credit Africana Library).

I identify the elements of this picture as **Fig. 40** (1) a small house for storing grain: *Letlolo*; [**Fig. 40** (2) large granary constructed of cattle dung: *Sefala*; **Fig. 40** (3) uncovered grain baskets made of woven fibre: *Sešhego*; **Fig. 40** (4) a woven fibre winnowing basket: *leselo*; **Fig. 40** (5) mat of woven fibre: *sethebê*. Notable in this illustration is the scale of the huge *Sefala* (granary) in relation to the human figures alongside. I also observe that the granary is protected from the elements by a roofed structure built of wood and grasses, and that the vessel is supported by objects (stones) placed around the base. There are two other large woven storage baskets (depicted without lids) on the right-hand side of the illustration.

Chaînes opératoires: grain is harvested and then transported to be kept in storage in this formula: Grain in the fields > harvested > received into *Sešhego* (lightweight fibre basket) > transported harvest to a homestead > grain decanted into large *Sefala* for regular usage, special grain is kept in the smaller *Sefalana*, and surplus grain is store into *Letlolo* (immovable vessel/ small house for storing grain) for future > distributed as required by envisioned usages (grain for food/planting new season crop), this cycle corresponds with seasons. This process includes use and disposal.

Heterogeneous Northern Sotho, specifically Sotho-Tswana people, distinguish between four different seasons, namely *Marega* (winter), *Seruthwane* (spring), *Selemo* (summer), *Lehlabula* (autumn). *Hlakola* (February) is the time of the ‘kernelled’ when the corn gets

removed from the harvested cobs and stored in *Difala* vessels for future use. A family would organise a group of willing people to help with harvesting and threshing the crops, known as *letsema*. They would be thanked with traditional beer made of sorghum grain and sometimes, after the work is done, with a feast of meat. The month of May (*Motshêganong*) is considered as the first month of the year, due to the abundant availability of food which marks the end of the agricultural season. In May, small-scale threshing begins, gradually increasing until the month of June when the main and final threshing (*lefolo*) takes place. Therefore, June, called *Moranang*, is the last month on the Northern Sotho calendar. June is praised as: *ke moranang wa kgomo tša badiši, a o maruru a o marutho?* Literal translation in English, ‘It is the master of herd boys’ cattle who is asking, are you cold or are you warm?’ (Mönning 1967: 148). Finally the granaries (*Difala*) are made and filled with the harvest.

The groups that were among the earliest offspring of Sotho-Tswana people to be associated with the Highveld (Schapera 1963, Legassick 1969,1977), have been involved in such agricultural activities. The groups preferred, however, different containers for storing and preserving surplus crops (Mönning 1967, Hammond-Tooke 1993). Depending on their environment, some lowveld Sotho-Tswana speakers did make grain baskets (*Sešhego*) (**Fig. 41**). Duggan-Cronin (1929) observes that Sotho-Tswana people distributed labour according to gender whereby men specialise in cattle herding and when they return the cattle to the kraal, women gather dung and soil. In the villages most women learned making crafts by watching elderly women in their areas. There was no formal training for vessel makers. The artistic skills demonstrated in vessel production were considered as an area of specialisation and often associated with specific women in a locality. *Difala* vessels were seen as offering secure storage for grains as they can withstand every kind of weather and any temperature in all seasons. Even among those groups in South Africa that do not make *Difala*, each region has its own special containers for normal traditional storage, such as specially woven fibre basketry and containers of ceramic. Various forms of utilitarian containers have emerged as a result of tourist demand.



Figure 41: My field visit on-site at the Polokwane Cultural History Museum, Limpopo Province. Shown in the photograph is a Northern Sotho grain basket (*sešhego*; woven granary basket). Information about the museum's acquisition of this basket was not recorded. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2013.

Changing modes of food production have led people to abandon traditional storage vessels such as *Difala*. Fibre baskets serving as granaries share with *Difala* the characteristic use of materials that are associated with natural resources and the environment. There are types of traditional vessels for storing grain that are not made of dung but of other eco-friendly materials. Schapera and Goodwin (1937: 135) note seeing harvested corn and maize being loaded in baskets (also known as *Difala*), made of a certain grass that is scarce in some parts of Limpopo Province and that gets transported to the homes of vessel makers. These baskets are used to store grains for a short period, until they have become thoroughly dry after which they are used as food or kept for future planting. Several heterogeneous Sotho-Tswana groups also made hut-like structures for storing grains. However, with changing environments and lifestyles, such traditions are gradually disappearing.

In the context of craft production, Manaka (1987:10) points out that women in rural areas were known for decorating and painting walls, for constructing vessels, making beadwork and weaving basketry. Some older women potters in Limpopo Province who today make *Difala* vessels, derive their decorative motifs from original domestic art made in the past.

They source their materials in certain regions. Woven baskets are found among almost all ethnic groups in South Africa and their functions depend on the weaver's needs. Although the materials are found only in specific areas, the baskets are regional artwork. Their manufacture is not strictly gendered and varies from one area to another.

There are cases of men weaving basketry, but the task is more common to women. Basketry making is prevalent among the Nguni people of KwaZulu-Natal where women dominate the production. Many granaries found among Nguni and Sotho-Tswana are bigger than the one currently present in the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum. Because of the size of their granaries, it is not in Nguni cultures to make them from dung. Different from the *Difala* vessels made of cow dung; the woven *sešhego* can hold large quantities of grain, corn and – temporarily - dried vegetables without negative effects.

Jordaan (1992) has recorded men producing grain baskets (*sešhego*) (**Fig. 41**), from thatching-grass and plaited ropes, using spiral techniques with as tool a wooden awl. These baskets are meant specifically for keeping sorghum grain (bacolor) (*mabêlêthôrô* or *mabêlê*) (I will use *mabêlê* in this thesis). The men would dig a hole in the cattle kraal and bury the *sešhego* there to keep the basket safe for future use (1992: 27-28).

The materials used for the sorghum baskets consist of many fibres, connected to each other in a sophisticated process of interlinking that requires some degree of specialisation in the traditions of craft production. 'The basket is oval shaped and plaited using the spiral technique with sturdy inter-weaves' (Jordaan 1992: 27). The shape of woven *Difala* vessels is more or less the same as that of other cultural vessels or pottery, but with an open, wider mouth. As woven baskets are sometimes light in weight, they may be used to transport grain. They are favoured in domestic settings because they can be used to carry practically anything except liquids. Nowadays, these cultural items are increasingly used at social functions such as weddings, where they feature in the decoration of venues. On some of these objects patterns and motifs are made from combined colourful fabrics, like the harmonious patterns seen on pottery.

Many Sotho-Tswana groups practise mixed agriculture. Among these are Bapedi, Batlôkwa and others. I have discussed how these groups used to depend on livestock and subsistence farming for their livelihoods. They all had in the past grain as a staple food.



Figure 42: My field visit on-site Devrede, Blouberg Local Municipality, 2015, showing dried (ripe) sorghum heads (Sotho-Tswana: *Mabêlê/libelele*) ready for harvest. Limpopo Province. Photograph by M. F. Motsamayi, 2015.

Sorghum, in Sepedi known as *mabêlôthôrô* (**Fig. 42**) was a staple crop of Sotho-Tswana people in the Highveld and other areas in Botswana, South Africa and beyond. Sorghum used to be stored and preserved in *Difala* vessels. It was used as food or kept for later planting.

Many traditions in Southern Africa were not found elsewhere in African cultures. They were introduced into Sotho-Tswana culture and became part of their local traditions. Certain agricultural products originate from South America but have now by many indigenous groups been accepted as traditional food. Thus, some traditions that appear to be peculiar to African societies today, are in fact of foreign origin. I deduce that many Sotho-Tswana farmers might have stopped making *Difala* vessels because of changing trends in staple foods. They moved from depending on sorghum grain to a preference for maize corn as their main food which

does not need to be stored in *Difala*. Another setback for tradition is that maize had to be paid for as it is not indigenous as, opposed to sorghum, it is sustainable. See below for further details on staple food of Sotho-Tswana people associated with *Difala* and cattle culture.





Figure 43 and 44: My field visit on-site Devrede, Blouberg Local Municipality. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2014. Some cooked products (prepared by Margret Motsamayi) that used to be staple foods associated with *Difala* vessels. Such grain foods are often eaten with meat or milk, and hence associated with cattle culture among Sotho-Tswana people.

Dried sorghum head (*Lewa la mabêlê*) **Fig. 44**(1). Sorghum stiff porridge (*Bogôbê bja mabêlê /bogobe ba Mabêlê*) (**Fig. 44**(2)). Cooking stick (*lehuduê*) (**Fig. 44**(3)). Fresh cow's milk (*Maswi a kgômo a lebese*) (**Fig. 44**(4)). Soft porridge made of sorghum (*Motêpa wa mabêlê*) (**Fig. 44**(5)). Cowpea leaves relish (*morôgôwa monawa*) (**Fig. 44**(6)). *Pitšana* (small pot for boiling herbs or storing traditional medicine) (**Fig. 44**(7)). A part of the information given by Quin (1957) on indigenous grains such as sorghum and kaffir corn - a rude term and in contemporary South Africa referred to as sorghum bicolor - cannot be validated. Another indigenous crop is pearl millet (*leotša*) which is ground by top stone known as *tšhilô* (**Fig. 45**) after winnowing, to make *bupi bja leotša* (pearl millet meal). This is no longer a common food in South Africa. Its colonial names were kaffir-millet (English) and kaffermanna (Afrikaans) as recorded by Quin (1957: 29).



Figure 45: My field visit on-site at Campbell Collections Museum (UKZN), 2011. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2011.

According to Van Wyk and Gericke (2000: 9), indigenous South African cereals as staple foods have gradually been replaced by exotics such as maize. I interpret the produce shown above as maize cobs (*lefela*) placed inside a *seroto* (open collection-basket). Now maize meal, made from maize (*lefela*) and stored in basketry (*bupi bja lefela*) (**Fig. 45**), is the staple food of many black South Africans. It is thought of as traditional African food, but it was brought to Africa in the sixteenth century by Portuguese traders (Tallury and others 2001). In South Africa, it was in the mid 1600's introduced by the Dutch (Tallury and others 2001: 169). In this country it became, 'As a result of the long-term cultivation with different introduced maize types, adapted to several different ecologies, which ultimately led to the isolation of landraces and farmer cultivars'. Other reports claim that maize was brought to Africa from Central America (Quin 1959, Van Wyk and Gericke 2000). Diamond (1997) traces maize to the region of Mexico in Central America. Maize is the staple food of many Sotho-Tswana and other Africans. It is bought from stores and produced by agricultural organisations. Cooked and dried African leafy vegetables are preserved and later prepared as a relish to eat with stiff porridge at times when fresh vegetables are scarce.

5. 9 Historical roles of Sotho-Tswana women in African communities

In this section the socio-historical roles of black women in African communities from the past to the present are examined in order to define which are the social and cultural factors that determine the ways and the extent of African women's participation in the shaping of their communities. The intention is to provide a foundation for a concrete interpretation of the artistic expression of women as linked to *Difala* vessel making and its changing nature over the years. In this context, I foreground the factors that have contributed to the production of these vessels as works of art and I focus on a theoretical understanding of such vessels as are present in South African museums and heritage institutions. Bowser (2000: 229) argues that through theoretical approaches an individual's group identity is established, partly because of the apparent conformity of artefacts and their production following established rules or style conventions. Thus, an individual may create a positive self-image by expressing a sense of belonging in a group, whereas communicating an oppositional identity can be perceived as a sign of opposition to a dominant group. Visual signifiers of a traditional origin, that are prevalent in contemporary vessel making and pottery, co-exist with the reflections of invented social norms present in the environment where vessel makers live, and accommodated by them as part of artefacts that were in the past subjected to unchanging traditions. These traditions have today been absorbed into contemporary social structures associated with Western knowledge systems.

In heterogeneous African societies, particularly before the advent of colonisation, the roles of black women were highly varied across Africa's multiple ethnic groups, as O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers (1995: 189) argue. Women's roles in communities were culturally and socially inculcated from a very early age on. Today as well, young children are taught specific ways of socialisation, depending on what is expected from their families, by their community, and by society as a whole. Men and women are given different roles to play in daily life and that change from generation to generation.

Koopman (1995: 6) mentions that the roles, rights, and responsibilities in African households have traditionally been defined by gender, age and seniority in their communities. I concur that the roles of black females, particularly older women, were not a matter of female subordination in social life. It was also not about limiting the institutional status of women as

is more common today. However, also in the past in many African traditional institutions the position of black women was not equal to that of men, due to specific African belief systems accentuating that men are providers for, and protectors of, families and therefore should exercise power in households. In addition, men were given power to execute responsibilities in societal structures as is common in patriarchal societies anywhere in the world. South African cultures are heterogeneous and few black women have historically been afforded opportunities to rule or to dominate over male counterparts. Such a position of women in social structures was common in African as well as in non-African cultures. Hence, patriarchal issues that continue to manifest themselves in African social spheres can not be attributed to Western patriarchy only, although Western institutions and their governing systems have allowed patriarchal attitudes to flourish in modern institutions, for example, in those institutions that preserve heritage objects while continuing to depend on outdated cataloguing methods that are difficult to interpret and that compromise the integrity of indigenous knowledge and its validity today.

5. 10 Changing roles of Sotho-Tswana women in their societies

O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers (1995: 189) point at the responsibility of European administrators for imposing a formal legal and cultural apparatus that undermined women's traditional power bases. This structure was a tool to remodel the roles that were previously associated with women, to dilute their influence, and relegate them from their supposed original roles. As *Difala* vessels are used to store grains, black women in African societies exercise control over agricultural domestic activities. Whatever other powers women had, were stripped during the colonial era by Western governing systems. These aimed to formalise their colonial leadership by assigning to men the responsibility for controlling, and maintaining power in, the environment excepting domesticity that remained the women's domain. Consequently, black women ended up being marginalised in all existing societal structures, while also newly created institutions did not embrace what historically had been female roles. This development included the area of material culture production. As a result, art made by women was called craft whereas sculptures made by men were classified as art, thus reaffirming gendered norms that are still evident today in museums where traditional artefacts are displayed.

The marginalisation of black women has not been reversed by post-colonial, independent and African led governments and institutions, even in cases where women played active major roles in their communities. Therefore, black women remain today in a disadvantaged position in Africa as a whole (O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers 1995: 189). Meanwhile, it is women who created the artefacts that were transported to museums by men who, intentionally or unintentionally, continue to impose male perceptions on these artworks without having been involved in their production. This situation is reflected in my research in which the majority of participants were women, mainly originating from rural areas where women are considered as the true custodians of the material culture heritage. I was, besides, assisted by the expertise of female officials, working at the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum.

Notions on women and art, manifest in colonial systems, have been locally adopted, voluntarily or involuntarily, and are still reflected today in the reception of art made by African women. In the meantime, women are presently appropriating ideas common in Western classification of art and apparent in, for instance, some contemporary *Difala* vessels that feature shapes often seen in Western craft production while the vessels are too small to be associated with any kind of storage activity. With many black women having been disempowered, they found they were best accepted in their communities when fulfilling their domestic roles of raising children, preparing meals for the family, and supervising activities in and around the compound (Aronson 1995: 23). Similar limitations apply to art production where women produce only a certain range of artefacts. On the whole women's roles in South Africa have dramatically changed and women presently function in many spheres of the economy. In spite of this, many rural women who make indigenous artefacts remain caught up in traditional patterns of subjection which is evident in their art, displayed in urban museums.

Viewing black female potters as unequal participants in the production of art is not limited to the field of material culture but defines the position of women in many social contexts. For instance, at home boys and girls are taught from an early age to socialise differently. Young girls play with objects that reinforce traditional perceptions of gender whereas boys play with figurines that encourage masculinity. In the past young boys used to gather clay from which they fashioned cattle figures. Cattle are associated with shepherding, wealth and the payment of bride wealth. Girls, meanwhile, use earth to make small pots associated with cooking. The

perception of different gender roles continues to be stipulated, throughout the upbringing of children and at schools and when they finally reach adulthood girls are faced with unequal opportunities.

Modelling in clay as done by potters is in Africa historically not women's work, but gets done at a young age by children of both genders, until the boys are big enough to imitate in wood carving the objects that they are exposed to when looking after livestock. Thus, as they grow up, the gender issue as reflected in the distribution of work, leads to pottery making being defined as done by women - as it is still today in Limpopo Province. Gender identities are pivotal with women being involved in most domestic activities and senior women functioning as catalysts in the production of *Difala* vessels, as opposed to men and young women who keep far from such activities. It would appear, that middle-aged women are pre-eminently the ones who keep alive the production of age-old *Difala* vessels, using the same techniques as past generations in their respective ethnic groups. As a result contemporary decorated *Difala* represent, as it were, a 'melting pot' of historical and cultural diversities, characterising the region and fuelled by intercultural contacts, urbanisation and the socio-cultural developments in ethnic groups living in the area.

Lestrade (1937: 128) describes the major role, played by women in the food production. Ploughing the fields and reaping are among the tasks of women in Sotho-Tswana groups. In traditional villages that I visited when surveying traditions of vessel making, women still used to prepare food and older men looked after livestock while the young men had left to work in urban areas as they fulfil the role of providers and send remittance back home. As townships have been built to accommodate rural people, many moved to towns looking for employment opportunities in industries.

O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers (1995: 189) write that colonialism is understood to have altered the status of black women in Africa and reduced their influence through the imposition of Western concepts of state and society. In the previous section we have seen that this is true for the position of women in the field of arts as well. South Africa has been literally colonised and apartheid was preceded by a long period characterised by colonial features which intensified during apartheid. Western systems were imposed on indigenous people to regulate and control local traditions. This obviously impacted on the roles of black women at large in

South Africa and continues to shape discourses on womanhood and cultural production today. A good number of cultural institutions that house the material cultures of black people were built before and during apartheid. Their planning was informed by colonialism and the collectors of African objects that were to be kept in museums which functioned as part of a holistic project to gather objects associated with the cultures of subjected people or, simply, natives. However, many anthropologists were not necessarily supporters of colonialism but rather individuals who happened to be working in colonially inspired establishments, among these research institutions founded to advance a colonial agenda.

O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers (1995: 191) did find evidence, that black women, prior to the systematic penetration of a Western colonial system in Africa, had much broader responsibilities in their local societies. The roles, historically played by rural women in Sotho-Tswana and other African ethnic groups, were, as mentioned above, not equal to those of males. I must emphasise that no equal distribution of power has been found in African cultures and, generally, in households. The imbalance in the positions of men and women is based on concepts of power as shaped by belief systems in African societies. Certain cultural practices and beliefs are social constructs and have little to do with the actual power relations existing in society. Some of these constructs, however, serve to manipulate or maintain male power and continue to be used for the same purpose in the post-colonial era. McClintock (1994: 298) notes that no post-colonial independent state in Africa has granted women equal access to institutions and resources, implying that most post-colonial needs have by and large been identified with male aspirations and male interests. As a result, the representation of national power rests on prior construct of gender status perceived from colonial perspectives. This observation applies to many institutions, responsible for the housing and displaying of African material culture, including crucial artefacts.

The lack of equal opportunities for men and women is evident in South African museums, in particular the institutions I visited for the present research, where many prominent members of staff are males with good credentials. Some, however, seem to base their acts on a belief in the superiority of the male gender. This approach is characteristic of many heritage institutions where male staff members don't seem to realise that their way of distributing power determines the positions of women artists and diminishes the quality of cataloguing artefacts in general.

Since the end of apartheid many white male employees of state controlled heritage institutions such as museums have either retired or left the profession. Their jobs were taken over by white women and blacks who are still learning to deal with the collections in their custody. Many of the new employees have never been exposed to the concept of field studies. This situation results from the former colonial administrative system that, after independence, allowed Western officials to govern through the authority of indigenous males, thereby formalising that the institutions concerned were in male hands, while ignoring female equivalents as argued by O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers (1995: 194).

Keesing (1998: 278) accentuates the well documented view that, because of the past pro-male bias [of South African society], men and women have tended to look at events differently and described them with a strong emphasis on male perceptions. In the case of material culture, crafts have always been associated with low levels of specialisation whereas the concept of art was linked to knowledge. Therefore, the artefacts produced by women do have less prestige than those made by men and prices paid for the art of men are higher than those paid for the productions of female artists that, in most cases, are made in large quantities. Most artefacts produced by women are destined for tourist markets and won't be found in art galleries where prices are higher. Differences in the status of art made by men and women follow from the fact that colonial policy firmly supported patriarchal views on many societal aspects, including the interpretation and distribution of material cultures. Today then, as noted by Obbo (1980:2) and Koopman (1995: 19), the reality of the male part of a community tends to be presented as equivalent to the total reality of the group concerned. This tendency is generally apparent when examining the art industry in South Africa.

In museums, the classification of information on vessels made by individual women depends on individual males in every respect, including the curating and documenting of the artwork. This situation follows in part from a lack of opportunities given to women by South African education systems. Education in South Africa has patriarchal roots, despite efforts made to raise awareness of gender inequality, also in education. Men continue to have better opportunities in art. This has created in women a sense of social dependence of which the effects are still evident (O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers 1995: 195).

African Artists rather than sticking to old procedures of producing art, they choose to survive by adapting to contemporary market demands (Motsamayi 2018). O’Barr and Firmin-Sellers (1995: 194) confirm that administrative systems, in the past introduced by colonial officials, in black communities throughout Africa, embodied Western concepts of what constitutes a state and a society. This involved distinguishing between the public and private spheres and complementary ideas about women and gender. It should be noted that Western administrative systems were not forced on all African communities. There were Africans who voluntarily adopted them as a kind of survival strategy in modern societies and institutions. Institutions, after all, are governed by rules informed by Western views which tend to globalisation. For example, private art institutions have their own ways of operating and of dealing with African artefacts. If they decide not to prioritise women’s art, possibly for business reasons, they are not bound to reconsider such decisions. However, I focus in my study on public institutions that are expected to address issues of concern to communities in their entirety, including concerns related to gendered art production and the cataloguing of indigenous vessels of Sotho-Tswana women on the Highveld from contemporary perspectives. There is, in this context, no point in continuing to rely on foreign methods of cataloguing, that have been designed without consideration for local complexities.

5. 11 South African women, domestic roles, and the shaping of cultural creativity

With the increase of industrialisation and global influence in South Africa, the roles of women are changing. It has become clear that using Western historical perceptions as a foundation for describing African socio-cultural systems is unsatisfactory (O’Barr and Firmin-Sellers 1995: 123). South African museums contain many artefacts that have not been accounted for. In addition, the establishments that have created instruments for stimulating socio-cultural awareness, for example heritage institutions, have left the difficult task of tackling certain historical problems, particularly in respect of the need to catalogue artefacts before digitisation processes can be considered, entirely to these institutions which are, gradually, trying to come to grips with challenges.

Strobel (1984: 115) emphasises that, while there is evidence of patriarchy in African societies, the colonial, Western derived gender norms affecting black women that were

projected through Western education and media, remain apparent even today in many institutions. In line with this, Nochlin (1999: 59) notes that gender plays a major role in the creation of meaning in art. Variables such as dominance versus subordination can be used in specific contexts to represent power and control. Locally, Arnold (1996: 15), exploring this issue in the South African context, concludes that the politics of women's art is based on a Western understanding. This point of view is relevant in respect of the new *Difala* vessels produced for the tourist market. These are expected to meet the specific needs of tourists and are defined exclusively for that purpose, including the need for artefacts to be small and portable with decorative motifs.

Domestic duties continue to be what women spend most of their time on, including the necessity to find resources for fulfilling household needs. African culture links the bearing and rearing of children with women who are thereby confined to the domestic sphere. O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers (1995: 191) and Robertson (1995: 48) observe that many African societies credit black women with the ability to maintain households. Women's responsibilities in the homestead mirror the prestige of their families. In other words, how a family is judged, is based on how it is perceived. Obbo (1980: 15) notes that black women used to be considered as the bearers of African culture. For this reason, the recent, most innovative usage of natural resources to create objects of material culture in processes that are still dominated by rural women, including not only pottery but also weaving and wall painting, is a classic example of knowledge applied by women using gendered resources found in the areas where they live.

Both Koopman (1995: 6) and Potash (1995: 87) record that black women's work also entails food production, including processing, storage, and preparation for family meals. The food production involves the cultivation of crops and the winnowing of grains. In this context, *Difala* vessels and pottery vessels provide storage for grains some of which are used to brew traditional beer that can be left fermenting in pottery. In the forested areas women collect fire wood for domestic use. The wood serves as fuel and for firing the clay pottery that will be sold at tourist markets. According to Koopman (1995: 5), in some pastoral and nomadic societies black women take responsibility for farming while men and boys herd the livestock. This remains common in regions where people are still in the process of becoming urbanised. In urban areas African culture is of a heterogeneous nature. The roles of black women differ and communities are undergoing dynamic changes that transform society. Potash (1995: 87)

states that black women play major roles in growing crops, including the grain that is stored in *Difala* vessels.

The changing roles of black women result from opportunities associated with globalism. Nowadays, many women occupy prominent positions in the corporate world or in the political sphere, education and other fields where they are required to make, and give execution to, major decisions. However, in art the place of women remains unchanged. The modified gender roles in African families have also shifted some responsibilities that were associated with middle-aged women or with elderly people in general who used to remain behind in rural areas when their younger relatives moved to towns. Today middle-aged women are more likely to accompany their husbands and work in urban areas, while elderly women are the ones who supervise activities in rural areas, including making tourist pottery. Robertson (1995: 53) indicates that, in the past, South African black women could also be involved in industrial work in urban areas. But, making use of schooling systems, women nowadays can get an education and take advantage of government policies that empower them. It is clear, that traditional roles of women have dramatically changed, in some respects echoing overall change in South African societies. A major factor why women abandon traditional cultural practices is the process of urbanisation, which has impacted on such cultural practices as the production of artefacts that has been adapted to suit an urban environment. Fortunately, however, the past traditions are re-emerging as re-invented traditions for museum display and tourist markets.

5. 12 Black women in art and cultural practices in Limpopo Province and South Africa at large

The present section focuses on black women in relation to art production and on the specific cultural practices that have moved them to make particular artefacts. In many societies, women are responsible for making major decisions concerning their households. To be well equipped for this task, they are expected to be familiar with cultural practices and with productions linked to their local traditions and environment. In fact, it would appear that culture remains, also today, an important tool in promoting an understanding of a society and in shaping its wellbeing. In Hatcher's opinion (1985: 120), persons whose interest is focused on tribal societies, tend to emphasise the degree to which a society's art production reflects

that society itself and maintains its traditions. People, on the other hand, who have concentrated more on the industrialising world and the attending globalism, accentuate the role of art and artists in the promotion of social change. In my analysis I highlight specifically how art promotes change through the cataloguing of *Difala* artefacts in such a way, that an awareness is created of the use of sustainable natural resources and their importance for the wellbeing of societies. This in the context of *Difala* vessels, pottery and other domestic vessels that are still prevalent in many rural areas in South Africa where women rely on natural resources to produce art. De Jager (1987: 185) records that, at the time of his research, black women constituted a small minority in the formal art making fraternity of South Africa. Most of these women lived in rural areas which is still the case today as I found during fieldtrips.

Most writing is confined to black women and domesticity, in line with the interests of anthropologists who, in the service of governments, produced ethnographic surveys in the past. The focus on domesticity is part and parcel of women's art (Mönning 1967, Van Warmelo 1935, Schapera and Goodwin 1937, Hammond-Tooke 1993). Black women mostly produce their art in their domestic spheres, in between performing other domestic duties and, especially, while interacting with other women in their social space. Women's artistic creativity is confined to the domestic sphere (Aronson 1995: 119). Robertson (1995: 57) reports that women in post-colonial Africa were active as craftworkers making vessels and baskets. Notions of classifying women's works of art can be traced back to craft production in the colonial era. The emphasis on crafts is still prevalent in much research done today in rural communities. Aronson (1995: 119) observes that the artefacts produced by women cover an extremely broad range, including vessels, weaving, embroidery, cloth dyeing, basketry, calabash carving, wall painting, beadwork, leatherwork and body decoration. Everywhere in South Africa, women are found who engage in such art work, but mostly African women like to make domestic art associated with their families. Some of the objects they make are housed in museums, including in the Iziko Social History Centre and the Polokwane Cultural History Museum where, however, basic information relevant to their production and historical background is lacking.

In many villages and cultural institutions in South Africa where I conducted fieldwork, art produced by women is presented in association with domestic settings and, thus, according to traditional gender roles. There are instances of women making objects that used to be

produced only by men. But when women are making traditional artefacts, they do so mostly in groups or individually at home. *Difala* vessels, for example, are made by individual women at home. Most vessel makers are older women who are retired or employed at the museums as cultural custodians. They don't produce artefacts one at a time, but they make several artefacts, more or less simultaneously and from diverse points of view, demonstrating their considerable skills. In the artefacts they fuse elements from their local cultures with cultural signifiers that do not hail from local traditions and that were in the past locally unknown. The application of familiar cultural signifiers is meant to give users of the vessels a sense of belonging. The contemporary vessels produced by women in Polokwane and surroundings reflect traditions of domestic art, some impact of contacts with neighbouring cultures, and the availability of natural resources that continue to play a key role in *Difala* production for museum purposes.

In rural areas, women used to produce vessels, not for exhibitions in museums but as both artefacts and domestic utensils without any thought of classification. A problem arises when the objects are transferred to museums where they have to be labelled as part of the museum collection. Museums have ways of dealing with a variety of objects coming from different communities. The objects need to be preserved and museums are able to keep them safe for the benefit of posterity (Bennet 1988: 65). Museums develop systems to identify artefacts. Unfortunately, in South African museums many indigenous collections of objects belonging to social history, don't get any exposure by being exhibited in the museum or as part of a traveling exhibition. This is specifically true in the case of *Difala* vessels that are the focus of the current study.



Figure 46: Indigo dyed cloth (*ishweshwe*) exhibited at Iziko Slave Lodge. Date of fieldwork visit 2014. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2014.

Change has affected black people in all the cultural aspects of their lives (Schapera 1937, Hellman 1937). For instance, fabrics worn by many black South Africans today and known as cultural attire, have no roots whatsoever in ancient African traditions but have been imported and appropriated in many areas of South Africa where they became eventually considered as traditional wear. One instance of such a process is indigo dyed cloth (*shweshwe*), worn by Basotho as seen in (Fig. 46), and by Pedi (Northern Sotho) women in Phokwane, Limpopo Province (Fig. 47). The fabric is based on German prints that arrived in South Africa in the seventeenth century (Spring 2009). Batswana are also associated with this ‘traditional clothing’, among them known as *Geremani* which material is related to the *shweshwe* (Fig. 46). The German origin of the cloth survives in the local name. The cloth, nor the dresses made from it, are part of African tradition. Cotton was available in Africa, but it is not clear how it was used in the past. A species of wild cotton, known as *Gossypium herbaceum* var. *africanum*, is native to Southern Africa (Hutchinson and others 1947). Birds

make nests from it and it is possible that Africans have made use of it. As cotton products are perishable, no clothing of this type, if indeed produced in the past, could have survived.

Before their contacts with colonialists, Africans wore clothing made of the fine skins of a variety of animals, of plant fibers, and the colourful feathers of birds inhabiting the continent. They wore necklaces made of plant fibers, precious stones, woods, bones, seashells, and bits of metal. The goods were produced by families of skilled artisans and craftworkers. They could also be obtained by exchange and bartering. Even today, ornaments made of feathers and leather are globally considered a luxury as compared to industrially produced Western products. Loss of livestock by many African farmers contributed to the demise of leather clothing, while birds with colourful feathers are nowadays living in protected areas. The decimating of wild animals and trees by hunters in the eighteenth century has contributed to the disappearance of African indigenous attires as the resources have become scarce. Africans thus began to adopt Western clothes for which they paid from their earnings as labourers on farms and in other sectors of, what was by then, a cash economy.

I contend that in the colonial era and during apartheid the distributors and wholesalers of Western fabrics made sure that certain types of material were available for specific ethnic groups in particular regions. Their aim was to nurture an awareness of ethnic identity. German prints were actually traded among Sotho-Tswana as traditional attires of the groups (Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho and Batswana), while the same prints were promoted as traditional among certain Xhosa groups. Thus, Basotho, Bapedi and Tswana women were - and are - wearing fabric prints that are as similar as their languages. People living in the former homelands popularised the colourful fabrics as expressing their own cultural identities. They went on to develop patterns of their own and added embroideries, linking the fabrics to their own backgrounds. The clothes and their materials came to be appropriated and accepted as African, because their production was based on using the cheap labour of Africans. They became a form of resistance attire.

Another newly invented tradition is that of the colourful Basotho and Ndebele blankets that are not a part of indigenous African culture. The blankets have been adopted as traditional, demonstrating that indigenous people are interested in change and have adapted to modernity. Hobsbawm (1983: 1) discusses 'invented traditions', associating them with 'a set of practices,

normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past'. An example is the Scottish Highland traditional dress of kilt and tartan pattern indicating different clans (Trevor-Roper 1983: 15). This could be seen as an 'adopted tradition' as opposed to invented traditions. In the present thesis, I will refer to all non-indigenous cultural practices as 'adopted', rather than invented traditions, because some were not invented by local Africans, but adopted into African cultures and absorbed as a part of cultural practices, sometimes with the addition of a group's cultural signifiers. An example is the contemporary clothing, made from imported, factory produced materials according to African designs and with motifs originating in African domesticity, on pottery and in wall painting.



Figure 47: Northern Sotho (Pedi) women wearing 'traditional' clothes. Phokwane, Limpopo, 1973. Photograph by John Kramer, exhibited at the Iziko Slave Lodge, Cape Town.

My fieldwork in Polokwane indicates that Northern Sotho women wear headscarves known as *duku* (derived from the Afrikaans word *doek*; English: scarf); dresses known as *diele* (plural; *hele* singular); skirt: *ndepa* (singular; made from cow-hide); beads (bone/shell/wood/glass/plastic/seeds) are known as *meruka* (plural; *moruka* (singular) (see **Fig. 47**).

Many textiles are originally from Europe, mostly from Holland and Germany. Some of these so-called traditions were supported by colonial systems in efforts to legitimise the subordination of indigenous peoples to colonial administrations. It is in this context of interest that German missionaries operated extensively among Northern Sotho (Pauw 1937). Africans who attended church were forbidden from wearing clothes made of the skins of animals. The adopted tradition, entailing the promotion of Western dress was also connected to regionalism and Bantustan policies, the establishment of homelands and the associated encouragement of ethnic identity. Bapedi female traditional dress has since changed and today the women embrace colourful outfits in pinks, purples, and yellows, but designs have remained the same.

Ranger (1983: 211) writes that, when ‘many parts of Africa became colonies of white settlement, (...) settlers had to define themselves as natural and undisputed masters of vast numbers of Africans. They drew upon European invented traditions both to define and to justify their roles and, also, to provide models of subservience into which it was sometimes possible to draw Africans. In Africa, therefore, the whole apparatus of invented school and professional and regimental traditions became much more starkly a matter of command and control than it was within Europe itself’. In the context of South Africa, historical records do not link any particular ethnic group with specific fabrics and textiles (Mönning 1967, Van Warmelo 1935, Schapera and Goodwin 1937, Hammond-Tooke 1993). Based on Ranger’s statement, it is clear that culture can be invented or adopted and accepted in any society. I used the adoption of particular fabrics in African cultures to demonstrate how easily, in the process of identity construction, Africans adopted foreign traditions as part of their own cultures.

For an understanding of agricultural changes linked to the granary as an expression of the socio-cultural context of Sotho-Tswana peoples, it may be useful to look back at history and trace the traditional and contemporary foods, linked with *Sefala*, as well as the agricultural innovations in relation to present-day food security. A culture changes when it comes into

contact with new ideas and adopts innovations in order to improve life in the society concerned. I have used ancient granaries (*Sefala/ Sefalana*), sampled in selected South African museums, as indicators for a changing environment and in reference to developments in the use of land and of natural resources in the context of Southern African indigenous knowledge. Drawing on museum records and library archives dating back to 1881, as well as consulting museum officials and collecting oral accounts from senior descendants of groups thought to have used *Difala*, I have established that there are serious lacunae in existing records related to the interpretation of changes in rural agriculture, for example, the development of small subsistence farmers, producing for household needs, gradually being overtaken by a society of urbanites who relied on the agricultural products from modern farmers where contemporary consumers buy their foods. Types of staple food that were traditional among many groups have been replaced, for example by maize meal, originally from South America. *Sefalana* was used to preserve quality grain crops mentioned in the present study, such as grain sorghum (*sorghum bicolor*), pearl millet (*pennisetum glaucum*), as well as vegetables and seeds. The vessel also served for transporting products and for storing grain to be used in the future which was a way of guaranteeing food security in households. From the sorghum meal traditional beer was brewed and porridge cooked, considered to be nutritious. It was later replaced by millet as a staple food.

The dynamic *Sefalana* vessels, based on local natural resources and on cattle by-products, were historically made by Sotho-Tswana farmers, mainly of the Highveld of Southern Africa, and by arrivals from other regions who joined Sotho-Tswana and adopted the granaries to store and preserve their agricultural products. *Sefalana* vessels could be seen as a food bank in the context of the total agricultural system, in addition to the past cultural significance of the vessels, pertinent to an analysis of environmental issues and agricultural dynamism in an African setting.

Only a few museums in South Africa have a collection of the oldest original *Difala* vessels, which remain an under-researched topic in the academic sphere and other contexts. This makes it necessary to review current aesthetic assumptions, epistemologically entrenched in present scholarship, and to apply broader, innovative approaches to get a clearer picture of the development of agriculture. To date, there appear to be very few interdisciplinary studies that bring together issues of art history, anthropology and ecology. This means that there are

considerable voids in international academic discourse in this respect. After cultivation, reeds are left for cattle feed and the cattle will consequently produce dung that, after its decomposition among the reeds, makes good manure with the potential to improve the productivity of the land when cultivated.

I have emphasised throughout my research that among African agro-pastoralists only cattle dung is used to make *Difala* vessels. No droppings of other animals are acceptable, including from calves who eat soft vegetation and the resulting dung is not suitable for building large granaries. The number of their cattle determines the wealth of members of farming communities, and cattle products play an important role in every aspect of daily life, whether it is the meat, milk, leather, and hair, horns, or the bones that serve as tools. In the Limpopo Province, areas are dominated by various types of bushveld. Limpopo has a warm, clement climate and, in addition to bushveld, there are mixed forests (Acocks 1988). Based on people's historical ties with the Highveld, it was quite feasible for them to continue reproducing *Difala* vessels in former white areas, for example, in the BakoniMNSOAM where grass is plentiful as opposed to their villages where the land suffers from droughts and overgrazing.

At present, in many villages where Sotho-Tswana speakers live, dung vessels can not be produced, due to the poor environment and a shortage of grass, while in grazing areas, affected by drought, there is a lack of grass that contains the strong fibres, needed for the construction of vessels. Research activities form part of efforts to strengthen indigenous knowledge with respect to undocumented collections of *Difala* vessels that are in museums' custody. Visitors need to be enabled to get to know the collection background of important, traditional objects as well as possible meanings attached to them and potential prospects for future production. It is problematic that every museum seems to operate independently. There is no collaboration and, as a result, no exchange of collections. Without interrelationships, it becomes difficult to realise initiatives for collaboration. In both the museums that are part of my study, there are large collections of vessels that represent a significant South African heritage. I note, however, that the collection at the Iziko is not from South Africa whereas, on the other hand, most of the Limpopo vessels in the PolokwaneCHM originate from the Polokwane surroundings and adjacent areas.

There are vast collections of Limpopo art outside the province, some of it in the possession of private individuals who have no intention of making their collections available for academic research. The very limited information available on these collections exacerbates the current situation of inadequate systematic records and unsatisfactory methodological cataloguing of indigenous material culture in South African heritage institutions. I have in my research focused exclusively on what artefacts and information can be found in public institutions. It is my hope that public museums and other heritage institutions can be used to revitalise some historical cultural practices that risk being forgotten, by continuously exhibiting cultural objects and, thus, increase cultural awareness.

Chapter 6: *Difala* vessels in South African museums

Chapter six presents a major part of my thesis as it deals with critical issues in respect of local museum practices concerning African artefacts, that I identify in my research. I examine practices currently prevalent in South African local museums and the challenges of cataloguing African collections experienced by these museums. An overview of the situation in three museums is presented as well as the results of a comparative study of *Difala* vessels in Polokwane museums (Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum, Polokwane Cultural History Museum) and in the Iziko Social History Centre in Cape Town. A format of a descriptive catalogue model of *Difala* vessels in selected museums is outlined. A table of examples of selected vessels present in museums is provided.

In earlier chapters I have argued, that *Difala* vessels in the above listed museums can not be classified on the basis of static cataloguing models dating from the past. Generally, South African museums are located in urban surroundings, but some are far removed from the communities they are meant to serve. The result is that these communities have little interest in visiting the institutions that house their heritage collections. It is evident that poverty and entertainment choices merge into a powerful challenge to the creation of a keen museum audience. Poor people from rural areas and townships are not easily inclined to visit museums and rather focus on the practical issues of their daily lives.

Colonial spatial planning in relation to heritage institutions has led to a model in which different people participate in different interests, based on class and race (Goodnow and others 2006, Dubin 2006, Rassool 2006). Many South African museums lack relevant systems for handling their collections, leading to a loss of meaning and preventing their exhibition. In my view, recent events such as the #RhodesMustFall protests express the need to expunge memories of a past South Africa, manifest in public monuments, educational institutions and, ultimately, in museums, particularly as these institutions are repositories of a collective social and cultural memory that is contained in the objects that form their collections. To be able to fulfil their roles, museums need to review, not only the status of and the information on heritage objects in their collections but also, for example, their accession policies while aiming to arouse the interest of surrounding communities.

6. 1 Current local museum practices

Finch (1988: 146) states that the original intention leading to the establishment of museums was to remove artefacts from the context of their ownership and use, in other words, from their circulation in the world of private property, and to introduce them into new environments which would provide them with a different meaning. Thus, *Difala* vessels, took on different meanings from the moment they were collected and separated from their domestic use to become part of a museum collection and end up in a store room. Once objects are publicly displayed in a museum, a wide range of meanings can be ascribed to them. They may, for example, be used as vehicles of information by focusing on what they were used for (Hodder 1996: 12). When artefacts become part of a museum structure, their significance, as separate objects and as part of a collection, depends on the position into which they are categorised. Brain (1980: 231) observes that most African art objects carry symbols and designs that convey specific meanings.

The symbols and designs are communicative devices that connect art objects and communities. In the context of a transforming South Africa, there are discourses that continue to impact on the functioning of museums (<http://sama.za.net/home-page/samab-journal/>). Some changes have taken place to develop museums into institutions that are accessible to everybody, irrespective of background. In this respect, the replacing of static notions of museums by more flexible approaches is essentially positive. Unfortunately, the museums may hold some items that do not arouse the interest of the wider public. However, museum audiences will increase as exhibited artefacts are explored and provided with information that enables visitors to connect with these objects, their meanings and origins.

In discussions with museum curators, I realised that perceived inequality is a major reason why poor people don't visit museums simple because museum are located far away from townships and villages. There are persons who have jobs and live in an urban area where they often go to museums. It must be remembered that among native Africans museums and art collections have never been a priority except for cultural purposes. However, parents would often encourage a desire in their children for artistic expression. On the other hand, I am told that black parents discourage their children from studying art due to stereotypical notions. African art, in particular, is seen as an industry for the poor and makes for dirty hands - all of this based on the fact that many African artists are not rich. The apartheid government made it

difficult for black people to study art and the schools in townships and Bantustans offered no facilities for teaching or making art so that talent could be identified and encouraged. Schools are still ill-equipped to do so today. Thus, the general perception remains that the production of art and crafts is not an investment priority. There is some support for commissioning art, for example, portraits of political figures, provided the finished works meet specific political needs.

In addition, the resources currently channelled into the development of traditional art are not adequate to support students of art who wish to go well beyond the production of utilitarian artefacts or commercial art. Nettleton (1991) defines traditional art in Africa as associated with Africans and considered to be static and unchanging (1991: 32). In my view, this definition makes no sense in the contemporary world, especially in respect of the dynamic African vessels produced by rural women, that are at the centre of this thesis. While resources, directed towards the practising of traditional art, don't cover the needs of more ambitious students, it is at the same time true that in urban areas there exist art institutions - specifically where there are minority populations - which provide solid training, where strong support systems are in place, and where the passion for art is far higher than the interest found among the poor inhabitants of rural areas and townships.

In the past, museums have been perceived as places of interest by a limited audience, an elite (Finch 1988: 147). This notion is still fairly prevalent in relation to museums in South Africa today, due to the country's history with black people being excluded from museum activities. African governments have so far failed to come up with plans to bring black people aboard in efforts to promote art in the context of museums (Coombes 2003: 206). At many universities, the anthropology departments that used to be major collectors of socio-historically important African objects, are presently not actively involved in a great deal of research on African material culture. Some university collections of indigenous artefacts have been donated to public museums. Some universities, however, are trying to enrich their disciplines with new insights and knowledge and do presently leave research in the area of material cultures to archaeologists who use selective analysis approaches to generate new detailed information, relevant to their discipline. Knowledge production based on indigenous collections in South African museums continues to be structured according to historical demographic dogmas that were aimed at promoting ideologies which are no longer relevant to black people. Many poor communities don't collect cultural objects for posterity or for exhibition purposes, because

they have no museums. Members of the communities I visited in Limpopo Province, Capricorn District Municipality, produce cultural artefacts for usage in their households, for ritual purposes in their communities and, more recently, for the tourist trade. There are instances of international and local tourists having become major collectors of indigenous artworks. The production of vessels in the areas covered by the present research, increased during the 2010 soccer world cup events, but the arrival of many tourists to buy artefacts, expected by the potters, did not materialise.

South African museums are not designed as research centres although a few, particularly in rural areas, have the capacity to undertake research in respect of the artefacts in their custody. There are also museums that have developed links with research institutions such as universities, where consistent research can be conducted. In the meantime, academics remain active participants in research done in museums across South Africa whereby they function as catalysts. Through their research projects, they activate information available in museums. Pearce (1994: 241) writes that museum exhibitions represent the nature of the, by research produced, meaning of, and knowledge about, artefacts in specific ways which can be unraveled by posing questions, such as, why a display is presumed as being worth looking at, and what understanding of exhibited objects and their background is being offered to museum audiences. There has, as yet, never in any South African museum been a documented exhibition that involved the production of a catalogue focusing on *Difala* vessels. Some of the vessels become increasingly difficult to catalogue today, as their functions and meanings have been changing to suit current needs. In all the museums I have surveyed, the vessels were not professionally exhibited but kept in storage facilities. This means, that the public is generally not even aware of the existence of such rare objects in cultural institutions, solely because of a lack of information. Based on relevant research, however, it would still be possible, to construct a descriptive catalogue of *Difala* vessels that would, at least, offer South Africans an insight into the production of *Difala*, associated cultural practices, and where the artefacts can be found.

5. 6 Interpretation, documenting and cataloguing of *Difala* vessels

In the present section more culturally contextual and descriptive forms of catalogue documentation for *Difala* vessels in local collections are considered. Such data is currently not yet available in South African museums.

To make clear what a descriptive catalogue system entails, the following model is proposed for the cataloguing of only the *Difala* vessels of a Sotho-Tswana origin that I have surveyed during my study. It is crucial to take account of existing cataloguing models and to try and contextualise their significant elements in relation to contemporary discourses about indigenous material cultures of South African groups, including *Difala* vessels present in local museums. I specifically explore African perspectives on professional aspects of museum conservation and contemporary discourses concerned with indigenous knowledge as implied in African traditions of vessel production. Thereby I draw on available literature, discussing *Difala* vessels, and on interviews I have conducted with persons who are familiar with the vessels and the associated practices. The interviews were aimed at adding cultural depth to my analyses of *Difala* in selected museums.

The current methods and principal tenets, applied to contextualizing systems of cataloguing artefacts in South African heritage institutions, originate from Euro-American notions of cataloguing, as noted by Schmiegel (1988: 49) and Baca and others (2006: 375). Not only do these systems provide inadequate information on African vessels, among these *Difala* vessels, but sometimes they reinforce ideological premises of ‘low art’ or crafts, as compared to ‘high art’ or fine art (Sandler 1996: 333). African vessels were often relegated to crafts, instead of being judged as art. Curatorial classification tended to favour Western cultural objects and ideas which were considered indicative of ‘high art’. I challenge entrenched notions in, particularly, those contemporary discourses concerned with the interpretation of ‘difference’ and ‘otherness’ in visual arts and material culture production which is a highly relevant topic of discussion in the context of South African museums responsible for the historical heritage collections of many groups that have never been properly researched. Museum collections of, for example, *Difala* vessels, can be used to develop a deeper understanding of the changes occurring in communities where cultural objects were made by following processes that are presently revitalised for cultural and commercial purposes. It is possible for museums to design their own cataloguing model, as long as it is consistent in itself and suitable for their particular collections whereby, rather than relying on one static model, it should be taken into account that museums are dynamic institutions with different goals.

6. 2 Interpretation: documenting and cataloguing *Difala* vessels

This section continues to look at challenges posed by the compilation of a catalogue of African storage vessels and related material culture in the context of museum collections. Currently used methods of cataloguing are examined on their relevance for the accessioning of *Difala* vessels. The aim is to propose the model that is most relevant for a museum collection, based on an examination of objects and on an anthropological inquiry into the context of vessel production. Thereto I examine colonial legacies, using oral histories that are part of modern discourse. In contemporary society, museums preserve a country's cultural treasures, keeping them safe for posterity and creating an awareness of past, present and continuing traditions, leading sometimes to their revitalisation. Geertz (1973: 89) notes that culture shapes people as characters and as individuals who belong in the culture concerned. There are cultures that have been abandoned and forgotten and that are today reinvented for museum purposes.

My research has made clear that, had it not been for museums, some cultures and practices – or their memory - would not have survived to this day. Museums thus act as custodians of artefacts and preserve whatever knowledge is available about their collections. Through the museums, audiences can gain the knowledge that in the past has shaped their communities, including events that occurred many years ago, while exposing them to other material cultures so that they get involved in a continuous process of learning (Golding 2009: 15). For these reasons, museums should not be established in run-down buildings and have their functions limited to the storing of boring, old objects solely to prevent their loss, but become centres of knowledge and critical agents where older and younger generations can gather information and where policy makers may be influenced. During my research I have realised that it is necessary to encourage a passionate interest in the artefacts housed in museums, and to study them in their connections to their cultural backgrounds, so as to develop an understanding of their traditional meanings in local communities.

In both the Cape Town and Polokwane museums, I found museum officials not able to answer questions with respect to artefacts in storerooms, possibly because their predecessors have not adequately informed them about older collections in storage. I found that, as soon as people realised that specific vessels were being studied, they tended to claim ownership. Some of these claims were patently untrue and seemed inspired by ethnocentrism. Many

objects of material culture in South African heritage institutions were recorded in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial times. None of these were collected by African collectors and scholars. Often, as in the case of *Difala* vessels, collectors left no field notes. Since 1994, no traceable donations or purchases have been recorded in any of the IzikoSHC and Polokwane museums involved in my *Difala* research. In the selected South African museums where I conducted research in connection to my interest in cataloguing artefacts in museums, it appeared that objects such as *Difala* vessels are now coming to be seen as museum art. This will probably lead to these artefacts losing their original meanings and adopting a new significance, based on the context in which they operate today and in which museums prefer to classify them.

Some indigenous collections in the museums that are part of my research were collected in a period, when the collecting and interpretation of indigenous material culture and its products were governed by certain ideologies. This position has since changed dramatically and artefacts, including vessels, are today perceived differently. Consequently, cataloguing is no longer focused on collections but involves the descriptive detailing of collected artefacts and their relation to other artefacts as well as the possible future developments of certain objects. Many Sotho-Tswana groups whose cultures were associated with *Difala* vessels have undergone profound changes (Shaw 1974, Dubb 1974). I contend that contemporary vessels need to be critically examined when they are catalogued as they can no longer be understood in their traditional function of granaries.

Currently, *Difala* vessels in Limpopo Province are at the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum by senior women reproduced for the tourist market and museum purposes. As opposed to the original *Difala* vessels which were plain, the contemporary vessels are decorated with natural pigmentation. To simply associate today's decorated vessels with the original *Difala* vessels could support the assumption of a static traditionalism and, hence, primitivism, as characteristic of these artefacts. Present-day vessel makers and the museums they work for exist in globalised societies dominated by Western culture. Some objects present in the museums are no longer relevant to contemporary museology discourses. It is important to be aware that, before the digitisation of objects, specifically *Difala* vessels, can be contemplated, further research on these objects needs to be done in order to provide a holistic foundation including descriptive details, so that enough informative text becomes available to support visual digital content of the vessels and to avoid future misinterpretation.

Some vessels have, from archaeological perspectives, been defined as static granary vessels or pottery whereas, today, they have changed their creative nature and become art. This indicates that African traditions and cultures are not static and that an assessment of African material culture production must take account of what is presently occurring in African communities.

South African ceramic classification is based on the example of British archaeology. A number of archaeologists who developed the current South African model of ceramic classification started out in colonial Rhodesia and eventually moved to South Africa where they influenced the study of ceramics (Hall 1984). Several archaeologists were sponsored by colonial governments. Some were not traditionally trained as archaeologists, among these Laidler (1938), Schofield (1948) and Summers (1975). They developed their classification models of African material culture based on colonial perspectives and by extending European classification systems to include African ceramics (vessels) without, however, taking local African views into account. This approach was acceptable in those days. Some of the British influenced ideas are no longer relevant. British archaeology is at present seen as a sister discipline of anthropology. At the same time, archaeology is in North America recognised as part of anthropology, suggesting that American archaeology actually is anthropology. As compared to British archaeology, American archaeology indeed seems to accommodate interdisciplinary approaches to the study of material culture (Arnold 2018, Burkette 2018).

Black and white South Africans in the post-apartheid era, particularly those employed at universities that offer archaeology as a subject, are directly as well as indirectly influenced by these earlier archaeologists. There is much evidence to suggest that contemporary archaeologists continue to draw on early colonial ethnography for social models and for the explanation of changes in the ceramics production. This is in contradiction to the emic point I emphasise in this thesis, namely the need to embrace a broader, innovative approach to the study of indigenous pottery/vessels and, preferably, to develop a post-colonial (indigenously-oriented) approach whereby vessel forms are described in terms of their continuously changing nature as they enter the tourist trade. At the same time, the value of information gleaned from old museum records is increasingly recognised, as well as that of environmental information referring to the accessibility of the necessary resources as based on contemporary ethnographic fieldwork, much of it long overdue. It remains problematic to apply colonial methods in the context of contemporary South Africa.

6. 3 *Difala* vessels in selected South African museums: a proposed descriptive catalogue

The present section proposes a catalogue in tabular format that aims to assemble information on consolidated issues, including typology of vessels, their utilitarian functions, socio-cultural forms and symbolic descriptors.

My focus is on descriptive typology, based on a review of existing relevant models proposed by authors who have engaged in documenting vessels. These are:

(1) Dwight Read (2009) whose classification of artefacts is based on the perspectives of their producers and who examines the relationship between producers and users of the objects. Read describes his approach as problematic when the relationship between maker and user is indirect. The process exposes the challenges usually encountered by historical archaeologists in the classification of artefacts. Most of Read's examples are excavated objects from prehistoric sites but, in most cases, he clearly discusses concepts and methods, thus limiting the usefulness of his findings in relation to the present thesis which doesn't deal with excavated objects. Instead I did find it useful to borrow some methods used by, (2) Jolles (2005). In a model for identifying and classifying indigenous Zulu domestic beer vessels, Jolles provides information on each potter as well as on the owners of vessels, along with making observations on aspects of their general economic, social and cultural situation. Jolles' approach is eminently relevant to the present thesis as he specifically describes African (Zulu) pottery in respect of its development and distribution, its form, function and ethnicity.

Form refers to the physical features of the vessel, function covers its usage and its wider social and religious implications. Within this framework, form and function are interdependent, describing the same object from different perspectives while addressing a number of general issues, such as the meaning of 'Zulu' in the context of pottery (for example its regional or tribal identity), the general taxonomy of Zulu pottery (functional typology, size, shape, treatment of the surface by, for example, burnishing, blackening, decorating, including the use of different patterns and techniques, etc.), and the origins of Zulu pottery. Jolles proceeds with an examination of the specifics of style: is it regional or does it belong to

a special part of a region. Possible chronological variations and categorisation of the main regional styles are followed by a discussion of the impact of individual potters and pot making families in the regional framework.

(3) The method of Kent Fowler (2006) is extremely significant and assisted me in describing Sotho-Tswana vessels. Fowler pays attention to the shape and size of vessels in Zulu pottery (as was done by Jolles in his 2005 publication). Fowler (2006) proposes, ‘Deriving a functional classification’ and discusses how certain surface treatments express messages related to, ‘identity, the names of potters, status, protection, regions mystification and appropriate contexts for vessel use. He suggests that the ‘enduring symbolic and ritual significance of pottery in Zulu society and the low capital investment required for pottery-making, aid in perpetuating the craft’. Fowler (2006) significantly notes that, ‘[c]eramic ethnotaxonomy is the classification of pottery according to native, or **emic** [my emphasis], categories. Such classifications have long been recorded in ethnographic research as a point of departure for studying ceramic manufacture and use’. I add that similar (though rudimentary) approaches have earlier been adopted by Quin (1959), Lawton (1967) and Hammond-Tooke (1993).

While taking the studies and interpretations of the above scholars into account, I will also apply a key concept of *chaînes opératoires*, proposed by Olivier Gosselain in his study of Cameroon pottery (1992). I need to point out that the application of these methods implies an extension of some foundational concepts which I initiated in my MA thesis (2012). There, by analysing and interpreting motifs present in a collection of stoneware vessels at Rorke’s Drift Art and Craft Centre, South Africa, I identify the artists’ names for each vessel, explain the vessels’ forms in terms of construction methods and firing techniques, measure the scale of each work and, more significantly, interpret the artists’ indigenous narratives and visual motifs in relation to issues of emic contemporary cultural identity.

The thesis was presented in the form of a critical, explanatory text with a tabulated, illustrated catalogue. My fieldwork research for the present thesis, conducted in three local museums, shows that *Difala* vessels have never been properly documented, so that even the most basic information about the circumstances of their acquisition is missing, not to mention the more profound issues of their socio-cultural context. I wish to emphasise that all vessel forms

present signifiers that detail certain elements specific to the expression of their cultural backgrounds. For that reason, I will provide below the formal attributes of *Difala* vessels and interpret their emic significance. The use of emic, as opposed to etic, forms for describing the *Sefalana* vessels is based on the essential body structure of a cow. According to Pike (1967), ‘The etic viewpoint studies behavior as from outside of a particular system, and as an essential initial approach to an alien system. The emic viewpoint results from studying behavior as from inside the system’ (Pike 1967: 37). The concepts emic and etic are used in anthropology to examine the phonemic and phonetic systems in a specific language (Winthrop 1991: 92).

The concepts are applied in the present study. My catalogue proposal intends to produce and identify Sotho-Tswana versions of meanings of *Difala* vessels and situate these in the contexts in which the vessels function. Essentially, I try to understand the indigenous nature of the artefacts and their local significance. Importantly, my interpretations are founded on indigenous-sensitive ethnography that does not lead to a single (Western or etic) view of vessels.

To advance an understanding of the artefacts, I focus on local *Difala* vessels, aiming to reveal the traditional beliefs related to their production, form, and decoration defining the vessels, while simultaneously articulating my own understanding of South African epistemes and worldviews, thereby both uncovering and challenging the adverse colonial experience and how it has been normalised in traditional (etic-oriented) anthropological studies. The regrettable result of this last development is that most Western (anthropological) documentation of indigenous worldviews and vessel forms as expressed in pottery (Laidler 1938, Schofield 1943, Lawton 1967), is largely lacking in accurate explanations of the indigenous meaning systems represented in dung vessels.

The authors use static body forms to describe local pottery. In my format, based on emic perspectives, I use the forms and structural parts of the cow’s body to describe the forms of *Sefalana/Difala*. In doing so, my goal is to more accurately highlight indigenous knowledge systems and their importance for an understanding of the historical significance of the vessels and their meanings, so that these may be preserved and available to future generations. I hope to generate an understanding of local ways of knowing that makes clear, while

simultaneously distinguishing between, emic and etic perspectives. A more contextualised (emic-based) analysis of the artifacts and their mention in local (indigenous) discourses can provide insights of value to indigenous and academic communities.

The knowledge of indigenous systems or epistemes to be identified in this study will advance my own capacity to challenge Western theories of pottery (Laidler 1938, Lawton 1967).

Difala vessels are, in different local contexts, a presence of which the meaning goes far beyond their use as containers for the storage and preservation of food. They are not just functional objects. *Difala* vessels, being made of dung, communicate meanings that are not only essential to their status as objects of art, but their production conveys implicit messages and meanings that are of importance for the makers and their communities. Thus, a prerequisite for understanding the cultural significance of any indigenous object should be an appreciation of its original (emic) meanings (Jolles 2005, Fowler 2006, Motsamayi 2018).

The vessels' typology will be illustrated in catalogue form and cover the nomenclature of colours or patterns associated with indigenous cattle and, furthermore, the background and history of the vessel concerned, contextual, stylistic and iconographic observations and motifs, the cultural environmental context of the vessel's production and related social and scientific processes as well as any available museum information on the artefact. The information highlighted can be added to the computerised catalogue by creating a table which enables the user to update information. An example follows below.

6. 4 Constructing a catalogue of *Difala* vessels based on taxonomic classification and incorporating indigenous nomenclature

In creating taxonomic classification, vessel nomenclatures are based on their sizes, utilitarian functions are crucial in providing the description of a vessel based on the indigenous knowledge and cultural practices of makers (Motsamayi, 2012: 12, Arnold 2018: 130). Cultural practice, gender-sensitivity and recognition of local knowledge-bearers, women in the context of cultural practices, live experience, oral history obtained from the makers, are keys descriptors for African indigenous vessel classification. Makers tell their 'stories' as custodians of knowledge (Motsamayi 2018: 154). Therefore, indigenous language

and classification of vessels must be interrelated in the context of indigenous taxonomy (Kaplan and Levine 1981: 870, Rice 2015: 224, Burkette 2018: 8, Motsamayi 2018: 155).

The following descriptive catalogue uses a tabulated format, based on points raised in connection with the concept of *chaînes opératoires* (as discussed in the text above). In short, a vessel is described firstly by means of photographic documentation, with an account of raw material resources used in its production, processes of vessel-making, decorating, finishing, and (if applicable) museum curatorial issues or accession records and provenance. My emic analysis follows the museum accession data. In an effort to standardise the descriptors of vessel forms in my catalogue, I will emphasise material, environmental resources, indigenous descriptors of form, surface, social designation and utilitarian function of Sotho-Tswana vessels. *Difala* vessels form descriptors in the catalogue section are partly based on basic geometric forms which are prevalent for classification of pottery form descriptors as proposed by (Schofield 1943, Shepard 1957, Mönning 1967, Lawton 1967, Hopper 2000, Wodzińska 2009).

My **Descriptive catalogue** covers the following:

- Indigenous name (from the museum's record (if available). Otherwise Methodi Motsamayi (MM): (my assigned indigenous name).
- Collection data: museum, date of collection/date of collection unknown.

The documentary photographs in the catalogue include my captions, this cover the following:

- vessel maker (if known)
- vessel form descriptors
- indigenous name of item
- date of production (if known)
- material(s) used in production
- photographer and/or image source
- date of collection.

6. 4. 1 Descriptive catalogue 1:

MM1: Museum's name: *Sefala*. Ovaloid form with a narrow opening. Collection: Polokwane Cultural History Museum, date of collection 1980s.



MM1.1 (Whole form, three-quarter profile view). Ovaloid *Sefala* vessel (standing upright); a narrow opening (mouth) is covered with a circular disk as a lid. Resembling handles, four equally-spaced short vertical extensions are modelled onto the vessel wall and are also attached to the vessel's rim. These extensions may have several practical functions (a) in providing a grip for lifting/holding the vessel; (b) as lugs to secure fibre cords used to tie-down the vessel's lid.

The ochre-red, ash-white, and charcoal-black decorations on the outside of this *Sefala* vessel emphasise the modelled vertical extensions; at its girth, the vessel is painted with a wide horizontal band of ash and dung, lined with charcoal. The upper part of this vessel and the areas between its extensions are painted with ochre-red.

The upper surface of the vessel's lip, and part of the mouth's interior are painted charcoal-black. Below the horizontal band, the base area of the vessel is not painted (nor is the interior) and reveals the dung material of its construction.



MM1.2 (Whole form without its lid). Here the *Sefala* vessel's attached footing (red dot) provides a flat stand. The outlined horizontal band at this vessel's girth is significantly similar to patterns on the floors of homesteads. The connections of *Difala* vessels like this example to various issues of indigenous cattle-culture are many and highly significant:

- The use of dung as a *Sefala* construction material
- the earthy colours of *Sefala* vessels relate directly to the colours of local indigenous cattle



MM1.3. (Detail, applied forms). False handles decorated with ashes and charcoal, and red soil covering the shoulder of the vessel.



MM1.4. (Whole form, top-down profile view). Instrument used to measure *Sefala* vessel, focusing on a space between upper and lower part as whether designs, if space is equal.



MM1.5. (Detail of constructional attributes of form, view). Upper body appears to be narrowed as compared to lower body, which is designed to store agricultural products, such as beans, seeds.



MM1.6. (Whole form, detail, rim top, interior, top-down profile view). Inside of *Sefala* vessel undecorated but smoothed, opening mouth has a ring around it, which is carefully carved.



MM1.7. (Detail, base, view). Base of *Sefala* vessel which shows wear. A flat base was the first step in construction of *Sefala*.



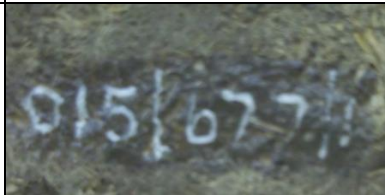
MM1.8. (Detail, neck, view top). This upper part of *Sefala* has four relief motifs emphasised with charcoal and red earth.



MM1.9. (Detail, lower body: Motif/s). The lower part of the vessel and its narrow base are not decorated.



MM1.10. (Detail, lid, view). Big *Sifala* has to have a lid to close vessel to prevent bugs from entering, visible marks on a loose lid which shows that rope was used to fasten it.



MM1.11. (Detail, unexplained number scribbled on the lid). Number is written with what appears to be a white powder.



MM1.12. (Lower body position, foot view), undecorated *Sefala* vessel with added footring.

Further notes: Similar vessels were mentioned by Lawton (1967: 183), Mokgatle (1971: 13), Moifatswana (1993:87), Lombard and Parsons (2003: 82), but no further research has been undertaken to document them.

Physical measurements: dimensions & weight

Height cm Estimate 72 cm	Width cm 42	Mouth diameter 23cm	Base diameter 23 cm	Weight (kg/g) (not available)
-----------------------------	-------------	---------------------	------------------------	----------------------------------

Technical observations: vessel construction, form, surface, motifs

Raw materials used in production:

- Cattle by-product/s: dung
- Earth/soil: red soil collected especially from a site in Polokwane area
- Charcoal: wood from household cooking hearth
- Clay (ochre)
- Ash sourced from wood from household cooking hearth
- Water

Construction method/s	Surface/ tactile (touch/feel) qualities		Motifs / decoration	Site of decoration
Hand built upright on top of flat object, Step 1. After cattle-dung is mixed with wood-ashes, the construction of the base of the vessel begins: the mixture of moist cattle-dung is patted into a flat 'disk'. Step 2. After the base disk is dry, small pats of moist material (a mix of dung and water squeezed between the palms of hands) are added to create the vertical walls. Step 3. The unfinished vessel will be left to dry in a secure open place. Step 4. After 1 or 2 days the process will continue. Small pats of moist material are added, building up until the vessel reaches the preferred size or shape. Finally, it will be narrowed at the mouth using same techniques and materials. Step 5. It is smoothed with water by hand and left to dry for 1 or 2 days. Step 6. It is decorated by a brush made of a tree twig.	Inside: Rough due to pasture material	Outside: Smoothed, compressed by hand	Painted chevrons and horizontal bands in ochre, white ash and charcoal	Lip ✓ Upper ✓ Middle ✓ Lower Foot
Provenance of vessel				
Place of origin Capricorn District Municipality	Place viewed Polokwane Cultural History Museum		Place collected Capricorn District Municipality	
Museum data (via accession register/records)				
Museum name <i>Sefala</i>	Accession number Not recorded	Date of acquisition ca.1980s	Museum storage place Polokwane Cultural History Museum	Shape of a vase Ovaloid (<i>Sefala</i>) standing in a

				vertical position with narrow lip mouth
Means of acquisition (Passive✓ / Active) Price (not recorded ✓)			Name of Donor/ Collector Polokwane Cultural History Museum	
Current physical condition of vessel (note damage & repairs) Good with minor scratches on foot ring				
Provenance: Exhibition/display records No history of known exhibition				
Additional information relating to future discoveries and digitizing of collections: N/A				

Contextual emic, stylistic and iconographic observations
Comments refer to photographic images tabled above

Emic information			
Maker/s name/s Unknown Northern Sotho women (possibly Bakoni, Batlokwa, Bapedi)	Indigenous name of item <i>Sefala</i>	Indigenous function Grain and food storage	Region and place of production Historically distributed in Highveld and grassland region, currently made in Capricorn District Municipality, Limpopo Province for museum purposes

Cattle references: In Sotho-Tswana language (*Sesotho sa Lebowa*) name of cow which is associated with colour patterns related to vessel: *Hlabana/ Nahlabana* = it is a cow with dominant red colour on its trunk and dark brown colour around the head, sometimes on its back.



Illustrator: Leigh Voigt (Poland and Hammond-Tooke, 2013:123)

Form (emic utility of the vessel)- (Small *Sefalana*), is for transporting, storing fresh agricultural products (such as beans, dried vegetables) and large *Sefala* for preserving grain and seeds

Emic observations and socio-cultural avoidances in connection with the vessel

Avoidance rules are observed. Senior women make vessels, men do not make *Sefala*. Young women are not allowed to enter kraal to collect dung (however young girls could go into the kraal to collect fresh cattle-dung in heterogeneous Sotho-Tswana groups before reaching menstruation age. At a young age females are associated with purity and innocence so that they can't affect cattle breeding. Excavating soils to decorate *Sefala* vessels is prohibited during periods of mourning.

Motifs

Applied and painted with red soil, ashes, and black charcoal motifs. Vessel is decorated with ashes, charcoal and red soil, using a brush made of a tree twig.

Social & cultural reason for production

Sefala vessel is used to preserve grain and keep it fresh for a long period as well as for food storage. Ashes are used to prevent insects to penetrate into the stored corns inside *Sefala*. According to one of participants the ashes mixed with cattle-dung make the vessel easy to dry and are applied to prevent decomposing while acting as a pesticide when seeds are stored. In the past some of these vessels were taller than an adult human and not portable or small like ordinary clay pots.

Material & environmental resources used in production processes

Sotho-Tswana agro-pastoralists and cattle culture: the abundance of forage and grazing in grassland allows their cattle to eat plenty grass and produce dungs that are used to make *Difala* vessels. Natural resources used to produce the vessels are cattle-dung, ashes sourced from firewood and mixed with water, dried leaves of aloe ashes, locally known as *melora ya Sekgopa*, and charcoal from a local tree locally known as *Mošu*, *Acacia tortilis* (Louwrens 2001: 156), is also used for pigmentation. In the Polokwane bushveld vicinity, there is a plenty of a red ochre deposit, locally known as *Letsoku* which vessel makers excavate. These mineral compositions contain natural pigments which can be used for decoration, especially the red ochres, used in the past for cultural purposes. In the past, production of *Difala* was achieved through rotational grazing practised by Sotho-Tswana agro-pastoralists whose indigenous cattle were adapted to Highveld conditions and could produce sufficient dung. According to vessel makers cattle dung for *Difala* vessels needs to contain the fibres found in the dry grass in the grassland. Cattle that feed on leaves do not produce suitable dung. Therefore vessels are not made in drought-stricken areas where there is no water and pasturage, nor in the rainy regions. If there are not many cattle or they don't get enough grass and are starved, there will not be enough dung to make vessels. The availability of dry grass in the Polokwane area makes it possible for cows to produce dung with fibres. There is false grassland in the Polokwane Plateau Bushveld (Jessop, 1974: 50,46, Acocks 1988: 1), which makes it ideal for the production of *Difala* since there is an abundance of grass for the cattle to feed on and produce fibred cattle-dung suitable for *Difala* vessels. Feeding systems can be designed using specific grasses from grassland to achieve the correct mix of dung that can be used for producing larger *Difala* vessels.

Not all ruminant animals' faeces is suitable for constructing *Difala*, for example goats' drops cannot be used because goats feed on leaves or shrubs that grow around thorn plants as, with their narrow muzzles and articulated lip structures, goats are selective browsers who can survive in harsh environments. As a result of their choice of forage they produce small drops whereas cattle who are less selective grazers with long mobile tongues which enable them to grasp taller grass when grazing in grassland or another conducive environment, produce dung that can be used for making *Difala* vessels (personal communication, Reed 2016).

How does the composition of dung affect the ability to make *Difala*?

Cattle faeces consist of 2 components:

1. Undigested fiber from the diet. In grazing cattle, this component consists of the indigestible cell walls of the grass, which is composed of fibrous polysaccharides and lignin. These components have been reduced to particle size by rumination, but under the right conditions they can be reformed into materials for vessel construction.
2. Bacterial cell wall which consists of complex structures that, under the right conditions, could help the fibrous undigested grass components to form stable aggregates, much in the way that a glue can be used to join materials. These aggregates can make the construction of *Difala* possible.

The ratio of the presence of these 2 components would be the most important characteristic of dung for making *Difala*. The component in cattle dung from grazing different types of grasslands could be simply determined by measuring neutral-detergent fiber (undigested grass cell wall) and neutral-detergent solubles (a measure of the bacterial component) in the dung being used to produce *Difala*.

If dung is mixed with ash the pH increases and alkaline conditions will affect the interaction of the fiber and bacteria in the formation of the material for use in making *Difala*.

This is a branch of material science of natural products (personal communication, Reed 2016).

6. 4. 2 Descriptive catalogue 2:

MM2: Museum's name: *Sefala*. Ovaloid form with collared and everted neck. Collection: Polokwane Cultural History Museum, date of collection 1980s.



MM2, 1 (whole form, profile view). Ovaloid form (*Sefala*) standing in a vertical position, *Sefala* vessel with decorated upper part, crafted narrow opening, with dung lid lifted on the interior of the mouth of *Sefala*.

MM2, 2. (Whole form, body profile view). The neck is decorated with charcoal, red soil, ashes and dung in parallel lines. *Sefala* is standing on its foot which acts as a stand.



MM2, 3. (Detail, applied forms, view view 3). On the lower body *Sefala* is not decorated. Vase is undecorated from the shoulder down, but smoothed with dung which creates a unique form of design.



MM2, 4. (Profile view of the form, view 5) and its smoothed dung surface. The upper body of *Sefala* is decorated with horizontal bands of natural pigments (red earth, white ash, black charcoal). The belly and lower part of the vessel is not decorated. The narrowness of the base in relation to the width of the vessel's belly is surprising considering the utilitarian purpose of the vessel, that is as a stable, well-balanced container intended to safeguard precious grain.

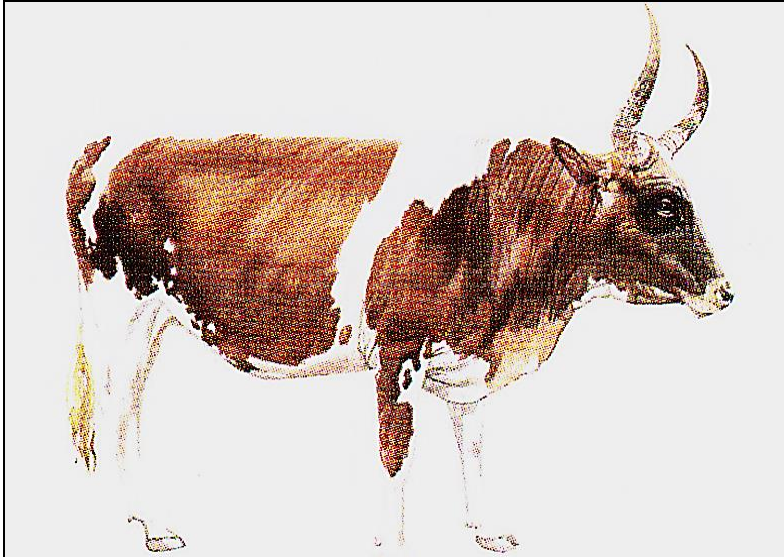
MM2, 5. (Whole form, tail, interior with a lid partially closed, top-down view 6). A view of *Sefala* from the top exposing interior and the lid with mark placed on lid of the vessel left by rope used to close *Sefala* after grain has been stored.

MM2, 6. (Detail, foot, view 7). Visible mark of added base which is constructed first before vase is built up.

		
<p>MM2, 7. (Detail of neck view with everted rim, view 8). Protruding lips of <i>Sefala</i> with decorated collared and everted neck. Mouth of <i>Sefala</i> allows an adult to extract beans and seeds the vessel and to scatter powdered ashes inside to serve as a pesticide when grain is stored. Neck is also designed to allow for a rope to fasten a lid.</p>	<p>MM2, 8. (Detail, Lip view/motif/s 9). Lying down horizontally <i>Sefala</i> with thick collared neck exposed outwards. Tape measure used to measure opening, results show sizes of mouth. Vessels that hold seeds to be used over a long period have a thick mouth. Temporary storage vessels have a thin opening.</p>	
<p>Further notes: Similar vessels were mentioned by Lawton (1967: 183), Mokgatle (1971: 13), Moifatswana (1993: 87), Lombard and Parsons (2003: 82), but no further research has been done to document the artefacts and their dynamic nature.</p>		

Physical measurements: dimensions & weight				
Height (Estimate 70 cm)	Width (Estimate 52 cm)	Mouth diameter (Estimate 32 cm)	Base diameter (Estimate 25 cm)	Weight (kg/g) (Not available)
Technical observations: vessel construction, form, surface, motifs				
<p>Raw materials used in production:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cattle by-product/s: dung • Earth/soil: red soil collected especially from a site in Polokwane area • Charcoal: wood from household cooking hearth • Clay (ochre) • Ash (source): sourced from wood from household cooking hearth • Water 				
Construction method/s	Surface/ tactile (touch/feel) qualities		Motifs / decoration	Site of decoration
<p>Hand built upright on top of flat object, Step 1. After cattle-dung is mixed with wood-ashes, the construction of the base of the vessel begins: the mixture of moist cattle-dung is patted into a flat 'disk'. Step 2. After the base disk is dry, small pats of moist material (a mix of dung and water squeezed between the palms of hands) are added to create the vertical walls. Step 3. The unfinished vessel is left</p>	<p>Inside: Rough due to pasture material</p>	<p>Outside: Smoothed, compressed by hand</p>	<p>Painted chevrons and horizontal bands in ochre, white ash and charcoal</p>	<p>Lip ✓ Upper ✓ Middle Lower Foot</p>

to dry in a secure open place. Step 4. After 1 or 2 days the process will continue. Small pats of moist material are added, building up until the vessel reaches the preferred size or shape. Finally, it will be narrowed at the mouth using same techniques and materials. Step 5. It is smoothed with water by hand and left to dry for 1 or 2 days. Step 6. It is decorated using a brush made of a tree twig.									
Provenance of vessel									
Place of origin		Place viewed		Place collected					
Capricorn District Municipality		Polokwane Cultural History Museum		Capricorn District Municipality					
Museum data (via accession register/records)									
Museum name <i>Sefala/ Sefalana</i>	Accession number (it helps to identify object) Not recorded	Date of acquisition ca.1980s	Museum storage place. Polokwane Cultural History Museum	Shape of a vessel Ovaloid (<i>Sefala</i>) standing in a vertical position with wide mouth					
Means of acquisition (Passive✓ / Active) Price (not recorded ✓)			Name of donor/collector Not recorded						
Current physical condition of vessel (note damage & repairs)									
Good with minor scratches on foot ring									
Provenance: Exhibition/Display records									
No history of known exhibition									
Additional information relating to future discoveries and digitizing of collections:									
N/A									
Contextual emic, stylistic and iconographic observations									
Comments refer to photographic images tabled above									
Emic information									
Maker/s name/s Unknown Northern Sotho Women (possibly Bakoni, Batlokwa, Bapedi)	Indigenous name of item <i>Sefala/Sefalana</i>	Indigenous function Grain and food storage	Region and place of production Historically distributed in Highveld and grassland region, currently made in Capricorn District Municipality, Limpopo Province for museum purposes						
Cattle references: In Sotho-Tswana language (<i>Sesotho sa Lebowa</i>) name of cow of which the colour patterns are relate to vessel: <i>Tsheegana</i> = it concerns a cow that is belted in the middle of its body with a colour that in most cases differs from colours found on other parts of the body.									



Illustrator: Leigh Voigt (Poland and Hammond-Tooke, 2013:121)

Form (emic utility of the vessel)- (Small *Sefalana*), is for transporting, and storing fresh agricultural products (such as beans, dried vegetables). And (large *Sefala*) for preserving grain and seeds

Emic observations and socio-cultural avoidances in connection with the vessel

Avoidance rules are observed. Senior women make vessels, men do not make *Difala*. Young women are not allowed to enter kraal to collect dung. However, young girls could enter the kraal and collect fresh cattle-dung in heterogeneous Sotho-Tswana groups before reaching menstruation age. At such a young age females are associated with purity and innocence and cannot negatively affect cattle breeding. Excavating soils to decorate *Difala* vessels during mourning periods is prohibited.

Motifs

Applied and painted with red soil, ashes, and black charcoal motifs. Vessel is decorated with ashes, charcoal and red soil, using a brush made of a tree twig.

Social & cultural reasons for production

Sefala vessel is used to preserve grain and keep it fresh for a long period as well as for food storage. Ashes are used to prevent insects to penetrate into the stored corns inside *Sefala*. According to one of participants the ashes mixed with cattle-dung make the vessel easy to dry and are applied to prevent decomposing while acting as a pesticide when seeds are stored. In the past some of these vessels were taller than an adult human and not portable or small like ordinary clay pots.

Material & environmental resources used in production processes

Central to the existence of Sotho-Tswana agro-pastoralists is their cattle culture. The abundance of forage and grazing on grassland allows their cattle to have plenty food for the production of dungs which are used to make *Difala* vessels. Natural resources used to produce the vessels are cattle-dung, ashes sourced from firewood and mixed with water, dried leaves of aloe ashes, locally known as *melora ya Sekgopa*, and charcoal from a local tree locally known as *Mošu*, *Acacia tortilis* (Louwrens 2001: 156), is also used for pigmentation. In the Polokwane bushveld vicinity, there is a plentiful red ochre deposit locally known as *Letsoku* which gets excavated. These mineral compositions contain natural pigments which can be used for decoration, especially the red ochres, used in the past for cultural purposes. Historically, the production of *Difala* was possible because Sotho-Tswana agro-pastoralists practised rotational grazing of their indigenous herds which were adapted to Highveld conditions. According to vessel makers, cattle dung for *Difala* vessels must contain the fibres found in the dry grass growing in the grassland. Cattle that feed on leaves do not produce suitable dung. Hence, *Difala* are not made in drought-stricken areas where water and pasturage are lacking, nor in rainy regions. If there are not many cattle, or they don't have enough grass and are starved, there will not be enough dung to make vessels. The availability of dry grass in the Polokwane area makes it possible for cows to produce dung with fibres. There is false grassland found on the Polokwane Plateau Bushveld (Jessop 1974:50,46, Acocks 1988: 1). This makes it an ideal place for the production of *Difala* since there is an abundance of grass for cattle to feed and produce fibred cattle-dung for *Difala* vessels. Feeding systems can be designed to achieve the best mix of dung to build the larger *Difala* vessels, using specific grass from grassland to feed

the cattle. Not all ruminant animals' faeces is suitable for making *Difala*. Goats' drops for example cannot be used for making *Difala*. Goats select their food from leaves and shrubs growing around thorn plants, because they have narrow muzzles and articulated lip structures which enable them to be selective browsers and they can survive in harsh environments. Due to their choice of forage they produce small drops. Cattle are less selective grazers and with their long mobile tongues they are able to grasp taller grass when grazing in grassland or another conducive environment and the resulting dung can be used for building *Difala* vessels (personal communication, Reed 2016). Hence, grassland areas are perfect for the production of *Difala*.

How does the composition of dung affect the ability to make *Difala*?

Cattle faeces consist of 2 components:

1. Undigested fiber from the diet. In grazing cattle this component consists of the indigestion cell walls of the grass, which is composed of fibrous polysaccharides and lignin. These components have been reduced to particle size by rumination, but under the right conditions they can be reformed into materials for construction.
2. Bacterial cell wall which consists of complex structures that under the right conditions could help the fibrous undigested grass components to form stable aggregates that influence the ability to make *Difala*, in the same way as a glue can be used to join materials together.

Therefore, the ratio in which these 2 components are present would be the most important indicator of a dung's suitability for making *Difala*. The presence of these component in cattle dung that results from grazing on different types of grasslands could be simply determined by measuring neutral-detergent fiber (undigested grass cell wall) and neutral-detergent solubles (a measure of the bacterial component) in the dung available for making *Difala*.

If dung is mixed with ash the pH will increase and alkaline conditions will affect the interaction of the fiber and bacteria in the formation of the material used to build *Difala*.

This is a branch of material science of natural products (personal communication, Reed 2016).

6. 4. 3 Descriptive catalogue 3:

MM2: Museum's name: *Sefala*. Ovaloid with flat top and simple closed form. Collection: Polokwane Cultural History Museum, date of collection 1980s.



MM3, 1. (Whole form, profile view). Ovaloid vessel (*Sefala*) standing in a vertical position, upper part decorated, mouth wide and flat.

MM3, 2. (Whole form, neck, profile view). Indigenous decorative motifs on *Sefala*, peculiar to those found on cattle and in wall painting and on mud houses. Colour apparently red made of red soil, black from charcoal and grey of ashes. Brown is the natural colour of dried dung.




MM3, 3. (Detail, applied forms, Collar view). Red zig-zag decoration resembling mountainous topography, underlined by two parallel lines made using charcoal and ashes).



MM3, 4. (Whole form, Shoulder view). *Sefala* narrow upper body with wide middle part, and extended small base used as a stand.

MM3, 5. (Detail of constructional attributes of form, view). Upper body of *Sefala* painted with ashes, followed by red soil, charcoal, ashes. The lower body is undecorated.

MM3, 6. (Whole top of vessel detail). Interior, rim edge, top-down profile view, exposing inside, with thick circular, ringed lips. Inside is smooth.

		
MM3, 7. (Detail, base view). Base of <i>Sefala</i> which is used as a stand to aid it to stand upright while filled with grain, beans, and seeds.	MM3, 8. (Detail, mouth, rim top, view). Mouth is designed to allow an adult person to handle items to be stored into, or removed from, inside. Tape measure shows that mouth is wider than base. No lid that could be fastened. Just a lid to place on top.	MM3,9. (Detail, lower body: motif/s). Lower body of <i>Sefala</i> is not decorated, but dung is smoothened, which is also a part of designs and a form of decorations mostly found on domestic floors and in wall plastering.
Further notes: these vessels are mentioned by Lawton (1967: 183), Mokgatle (1971: 13), Moifatswana (1993: 87), Lombard and Parsons (2003: 82), but no further research has been done to document the vessels and their dynamic nature.		

Physical measurements: dimensions & weight

Height (Estimate 75 cm)	Width cm (Estimate 52 cm)	Mouth diameter (Estimate 23 cm)	Base diameter (Estimate 23 cm)	Weight (kg/g) (Not available)
----------------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	----------------------------------

Technical observations: vessel construction, form, surface, motifs

Raw materials used in production:

- Cattle by-product/s: dung
- Earth/soil: red soil collected especially from a site in Polokwane area
- Charcoal: wood from household cooking hearth
- Clay: (ochre)
- Ash: sourced from wood from household cooking hearth
- Water

Construction method/s	Surface/ tactile (touch/feel) qualities		Motifs / decoration	Site of decoration
Hand built, upright on top of flat object, Step 1. After cattle-dung is mixed with wood-ashes, the construction of the base of the vessel begins: the mixture of moist cattle-dung is patted into a flat 'disk'. Step 2. After the base disk is dry, small pats of moist material (a mix of dung and water squeezed between the palms of the hands) are added to create the vertical walls. Step 3. The unfinished vessel will be left to dry in a secure open place. Step 4. After 1 or 2 days the process continues. Small pats of moist material are added, building up until the vessel reaches the	Inside: Rough due to pasture material	Outside: Smoothed, compressed by hand	Painted chevrons and horizontal bands in ochre, white ash and charcoal	Lip ✓ Upper ✓ Middle Lower Foot

preferred size or shape. Finally, it will be narrowed at the mouth using same techniques and materials. Step 5. It is smoothed with water by hand and left to dry for 1 or 2 days. Step 6. It is decorated using a brush made of a tree twig.				
Provenance of vessel				
Place of origin Capricorn District Municipality	Place viewed Polokwane Cultural History Museum		Place collected Capricorn District Municipality	
Museum data (via accession register/records)				
Museum name Polokwane Cultural History Museum	Accession number Not recorded	Date of acquisition ca.1980s	Museum storage place Polokwane Cultural History Museum storeroom	Shape of a vase Ovaloid vessel (<i>Sefala</i>) shaped on vertical position with wide mouth
Means of acquisition (Passive✓ / Active) Price (not recorded✓)			Name of donor/collector Not recorded	
Current physical condition of vessel (note damage & repairs) Good with minor scratches on foot ring				
Provenance: Exhibition/display records No history of known exhibition				
Additional information relating to future discoveries and digitising of collections: N/A				
Contextual emic, stylistic and iconographic observations Comments refer to photographic images tabled above				
Emic information				
Maker/s name/s Unknown Northern Sotho women (possibly Bakoni, Batlokwa, Bapedi)	Indigenous name of item <i>Sefala</i>	Indigenous function Grain and food storage	Region and place of production Historically distributed in Highveld and grassland region, currently made in Capricorn District Municipality, Limpopo Province for museum purposes	
Cattle references: In Sotho-Tswana language (<i>Sesotho sa Lebowa</i>), the name of the cow of which the colour patterns are related to the vessel concerned: <i>Tshungwana</i> = it is a cow with mark or spot on the head, specifically the forehead. Colours mostly associated with this cow are red and white (white spot on forehead). Note: This illustration is of a bull-calf with similar markings to those associated with <i>Tshungwana</i> . (the bull is called <i>Tshumu</i>).				



Illustrator: Leigh Voigt (Poland and Hammond-Tooke, 2013:119)

Form (emic utility of the vessel)- (Small *Sefalana*), can be used for transporting, for storing fresh agricultural products (such as beans, dried vegetables) and in the case of large *Sefala*) for preserving grain and seeds.

Emic observations and socio-cultural avoidances in connection with the vessel

Avoidance rules are observed. Senior women make vessels, men do not make *Sefala*. Young women are not allowed to enter kraal to collect dung. However, young girls can go into the kraal and collect fresh cattle-dung in heterogeneous Sotho-Tswana groups as long as they are below menstruation age. At a very young age females are associated with purity and innocence and therefore cannot negatively affect cattle breeding. Excavating soils to decorate *Difala* vessels during mourning periods is prohibited.

Motifs

Applied and painted with red soil, ashes, and black charcoal motifs. A vessel is decorated with ashes, charcoal and red soil, using a brush made of a tree twig.

Social & cultural reasons for production

Sefala vessel used to preserve grain to stay fresh for long periods and for food storage Ashes are used to prevent insects from penetrating in corns stored in *Sefala*. According to one of the participants the ashes mixed with cattle-dung facilitate drying and prevent decomposing, in addition acting as a pesticide when seeds are stored in the vessels. In the past some of these vessels were taller than an adult person or as small as portable ordinary clay pots.

Material & environmental resources used in production processes

The culture of Sotho-Tswana agro-pastoralists is centred on cattle. The abundance of forage and grazing land in grassland areas allowed their cattle to feed on plenty grass and produce dungs suitable for producing *Difala* vessels. Natural resources used to produce the vessels are cattle-dung, ashes sourced from firewood and mixed with water, dried leaves of aloe ashes, locally known as *melora ya Sekgopa*, and charcoal from a local tree locally known as *Mošu*, *Acacia tortilis* (Louwrens 2001: 156), is also used for pigmentation. In the Polokwane bushveld area there is a plentiful deposit of a red ochre locally known as *Letsoku* which gets excavated. These mineral compositions contain natural pigments which can be used for decoration, especially the red ochres that in the past were used for cultural purposes. Historically, the production of *Difala* was made possible by a system of rotational grazing practised by Sotho-Tswana agro-pastoralists whose indigenous cattle were adapted to Highveld conditions. According to vessel makers cattle dung for *Difala* must contain the fibres found in the dry grasses on the grassland. Cattle that feed on leaves do not produce suitable dung. Hence, *Difala* are not made in drought-stricken areas where there is a lack of water and pasturage, nor in rainy regions. If there are not many cattle, or they don't get sufficient grass, they won't produce enough dung to make vessels. The availability of dry grass in the Polokwane area makes it possible that cows produce dung containing fibres. There is false grassland on the Polokwane Plateau Bushveld (Jessop 1974:50, 46, Acocks 1988: 1), that makes it into an ideal place for the production of *Difala*. Feeding systems based on specific grasses from grassland can be designed in such a way that the resulting mix of cattle dung can support the production of larger *Difala* vessels. Not all ruminant animals' faeces can be used to make *Difala*. Goats' drops, for example, are not suitable. Goats, when feeding, select leaves or shrubs growing around thorn plants. They have narrow muzzles and articulated lip structures which enable them to be selective browsers and they can survive in harsh environments. They produce small drops whereas cattle are less selective grazers with long mobile tongues that enable them to grasp the taller grass when grazing in grassland or in other conducive environments. The resulting dung is often suitable for producing *Difala* vessels (personal communication, Reed 2016). Grassland areas are perfectly conducive for the production of *Difala*.

How does the composition of dung affect the ability to make *Difala*?

Cattle faeces consist of 2 components:







1. Undigested fiber from the diet. In grazing cattle this component consists in the indigested cell walls of the grass, which is composed of fibrous polysaccharides and lignin. These components have been reduced to particle size by rumination but, under the right conditions, they can be formed into materials for construction.
2. Bacterial cell wall which consists of complex structures that, under the right conditions, can help the fibrous undigested grass components to form stable aggregates that influence the ability to make *Difala*, in the same way as a glue is used to join materials.





Therefore, the ratio in which these 2 components are present is the most important condition of dung being fit for making *Difala*. The presence of these components in cattle dung resulting from grazing on different types of grassland could be simply determined by measuring neutral-detergent fiber (undigested grass cell wall) and neutral-detergent solubles (a measure of the bacterial component) in the dung destined for making *Difala*.

If dung is mixed with ash the pH increases and alkaline conditions will affect the interaction of the fiber and bacteria in the formation of the material for *Difala*.

This is a branch of material science of natural products (personal communication, Reed 2016).

6. 4. 4 Descriptive catalogue 4:

<p>MM4: Museum's name: <i>Sefala</i>. Ovaloid form with a narrow and tiny opening (mouth). Collection: Polokwane Cultural History Museum, date of collection 1980s.</p>		
		
<p>MM4, 1. (Whole form, profile view 1). Ovaloid vessel (<i>Sefala</i>) standing in a vertical position, upper part decorated. <i>Sefala</i> vessel with exterior of mouth sharpened, thick and flat.</p>	<p>MM4, 2. (Whole form, lower body, view 2). (Dot on body of lidded <i>Sefala</i>, decorated with red soil, ashes in the middle, and charcoal).</p>	<p>MM4, 3. (Detail, applied forms, view 3). This <i>Sefala</i> is decorated in the interior of opening. Probably this is due to the fact that vessel has a thin lip which could easily break if it wasn't supported by added solid material. Hence the decoration with red soil which can stay in position for a long time.</p>
		
<p>MM4, 5. (Whole form, rim top, top-down profile view). <i>Sefala</i> with a lid that does need no fastening to stay in place. It fits when simply placed on top. Any object can be placed on the lid to keep it in position.</p>	<p>MM4, 6. (Detail of constructional attributes of form, view). Neck of <i>Sefala</i> is crafted with sequence of designs around the opening. In the middle it is wide narrowing to a flat base that allows it to stand upright.</p>	<p>MM4, 7. (Whole form, rim edge detail, interior, top-down profile view). On the opening of <i>Sefala</i> a red decoration dominates the edge of the mouth of <i>Sefala</i>. The thin, red band of soil is used to protect the opening from getting damaged.</p>

		
MM4, 8. (Detail of motifs on the body view). (Dot motif painted with red soil between white line and mouth ring).	MM4, 9. (Detail, lower body view). Undecorated lower part of a vessel to the flattened base.	MM4, 10. (Detail, collar, top view). Interior opening decorated in red soil, in the ring the vessel's lips are in red soil, followed by ashes, and then charcoal.
		
Photograph (detail of foot view 7). (scratches on the edge of base ring).		
Further notes: these vessels are mentioned by Lawton (1967: 183), Mokgatle (1971: 13), Moifatswana (1993:87), Lombard and Parsons (2003:82), but no further research has been done with a view to documenting vessels and their dynamic nature.		

Physical measurements: dimensions & weight				
Height (Estimate 71 cm)	Width cm (Estimate 52 cm)	Mouth diameter (Estimate 26 cm)	Base diameter (Estimate 23 cm)	Weight (kg/g) (Not available)
Technical observations: vessel construction, form, surface, motifs				
Raw materials used in production:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cattle by-product/s: dung • Earth/soil: red soil especially collected from a site in Polokwane area • Charcoal: wood from household cooking hearth • Clay (ochre) • Ash sourced from wood from household cooking hearth • Water 				
Construction method/s	Surface/ tactile (touch/feel) qualities		Motifs / decoration	Site of decoration
Hand built, upright on top of flat object. Step 1. After cattle-dung is mixed with wood-ashes, the construction of the base of the vessel begins: the mixture of moist cattle-dung is patted into a flat 'disk'. Step 2. After the base disk is dry, small pats of moist material (a mix of dung and water squeezed between palms of the hands) are	Inside: Rough due to pasture material	Outside: Smoothed, compressed by hand	Painted chevrons and horizontal bands in ochre, white ash and charcoal	Lip ✓ Upper ✓ Middle ✓ Lower Foot

<p>added to create the vertical walls. Step 3. The unfinished vessel is left to dry in a secure open place. Step 4. After 1 or 2 days the process continues. Small pats of moist material are added, building up until the vessel reaches the preferred size or shape. Finally, it is narrowed at the mouth using the same techniques and materials. Step 5. It is smoothed with water by hand and left to dry for 1 or 2 days. Step 6. It is decorated using a brush made of a tree twig.</p>				
Provenance of vessel				
Place of origin Capricorn District Municipality		Place viewed Polokwane Cultural History Museum		Place collected Capricorn District Municipality
Museum data (via accession register/records)				
Museum name Polokwane Cultural History Museum	Accession number Not recorded	Date of acquisition ca.1980s	Museum storage place Polokwane Cultural History Museum storeroom	Shape of a vase Ovaloid vessel (<i>Sefala</i>) shaped in vertical position, with wide mouth
Means of acquisition (Passive✓ / Active) Price (not recorded ✓)			Name of donor/collector Not recorded	
Current physical condition of vessel (note damage & repairs) Good with minor scratches on foot ring, mouth and around designs				
Provenance: Exhibition/display records No history of known exhibition				
Additional information relating to future discoveries and digitising of collections: N/A				
Contextual emic, stylistic and iconographic observations Comments refer to photographic images tabled above				
Emic information				
Maker/s name/s Unknown Northern Sotho women (possibly Bakoni, Batlokwa, Bapedi)	Indigenous name of item <i>Sefala</i>	Indigenous function Grain and food storage	Region and place of production Historically distributed in Highveld and grassland region, currently made in Capricorn District Municipality, Limpopo Province for museum purposes.	
Cattle references: In Sotho-Tswana language (<i>Sesotho sa Lebowa</i>) name of cow which colour patterns are related to vessel: <i>Thamagana</i> = it is a cow which has multiplicity of colours on its body (with multiple spots), with one dominating colour. Most common example is a red or reddish-brown cow with white marks/spots around its body specifically on the back.				



Illustrator: Leigh Voigt (Poland and Hammond-Tooke, 2013:67)

Form (utility of the vessel)- (Small *Sefalana*), is used for transporting, fresh agricultural products (such as beans, dried vegetables) can be stored in it, and if large (*Sefala*) it serves for preserving grain and seeds.

Socio-cultural avoidances in connection with the vessel

Avoidance rules are observed. Senior women make vessels, men do not make *Difala*. Young women are not allowed to enter kraal to collect dung. However, young girls can go into the kraal to collect fresh cattle-dung in heterogeneous Sotho-Tswana groups as long as they haven't reached menstruation age. At a young age females are associated with purity and innocence and cannot negatively affect cattle breeding. Excavating soils to decorate *Difala* vessels during mourning periods is prohibited.

Motifs

Applied and painted with red soil, white soil, and black charcoal motifs. Vessel is decorated with ashes, charcoal and red soil, using a brush made of a tree twig.

Emic observations and socio-cultural avoidances in connection with the vessel

Sefala vessel used to preserve grain to stay fresh for long periods and for food storage Ashes are used to prevent insects from penetrating into corns stored in *Sefala*. In fieldwork discussions, it was mentioned that the ashes mixed with cattle-dung make it easy to dry the vessel and prevent decomposing while acting as a pesticide when seeds are stored in the vessel. In the past some of these vessels were taller than an adult, or they could be as small as ordinary portable clay pots.

Material & environmental resources used in production processes

The culture of Sotho-Tswana agro-pastoralists was centered on cattle. The abundance of forage and grassland allows the cattle to eat plenty grass and produce dungs that are used to make *Difala* vessels. Natural resources used to produce the vessels are cattle-dung, ashes sourced from firewood and mixed with water, dried leaves of aloe ashes, locally known as *melora ya Sekgopa*, and charcoal from a local tree locally known as *Mošū*, *Acacia tortilis* (Louwrens 2001: 156), is also used for pigmentation. In the Polokwane bushveld area there is a plentiful deposit of a red ochre locally known as *Letsoku* which gets excavated. These mineral compositions contain natural pigments which can be used for decoration, especially the red ochres that in the past were used for cultural purposes. Historically, the production of *Difala* was made possible by a system of rotational grazing practised by Sotho-Tswana agro-pastoralists whose indigenous cattle were adapted to Highveld conditions. According to vessel makers cattle dung for *Difala* vessels needs to contain the fibres found in the dry grasses growing in the grassland. Cattle that feed on leaves do not produce suitable dung. Hence, these vessels are not made in drought-stricken areas where there is a lack of water and pasturage, nor in rainy regions. If there are not many cattle, or they don't have access to enough grass, they won't produce sufficient dung to make vessels. The availability of dry grass in the Polokwane area makes it possible for cows to produce dung rich in fibres. There is false grassland on the Polokwane Plateau Bushveld (Jessop 1974:50, 46, Acocks 1988: 1) which makes it into an ideal place for the production of *Difala*, having an abundance of grass for the cattle to feed and produce fibred cattle-dung. Feeding system for cattle can be designed in such a way as to achieve the mix of dung that is suitable for building larger *Difala*.

Not all ruminant animals' faeces is fit for making *Difala*. Goats' drops, for example, are not suitable. Goats, when feeding, can with their narrow muzzle and articulated lip structures select leaves or shrubs from around thorn plants.

Goats are therefore selective browsers and can survive in harsh environments. They produce small drops whereas cattle who are less selective grazers and use their long mobile tongues to grasp taller grass when grazing in grassland or another conducive environment, produce dung that is suitable to make *Difala* vessels (personal communication, Reed 2016).

How does the composition of dung affect the ability to make *Difala*?

Cattle faeces consist of 2 components:

1. Undigested fiber from the diet. In grazing cattle, this component consists of the indigestible cell walls of the grass, which is composed of fibrous polysaccharides and lignin. These components have been reduced to particle size by rumination, but under the right conditions they can be reformed into materials for vessel construction.
2. Bacterial cell wall which consists of complex structures that, under the right conditions, could help the fibrous undigested grass components to form stable aggregates, much in the way that a glue can be used to join materials. These aggregates can make the construction of *Difala* possible.

The ratio of the presence of these 2 components would be the most important characteristic of dung for making *Difala*. The component in cattle dung from grazing different types of grasslands could be simply determined by measuring neutral-detergent fiber (undigested grass cell wall) and neutral-detergent solubles (a measure of the bacterial component) in the dung being used to produce *Difala*.

If dung is mixed with ash the pH increases and alkaline conditions will affect the interaction of the fiber and bacteria in the formation of the material for use in making *Difala*.

This is a branch of material science of natural products (personal communication, Reed 2016).

6. 4. 5 Descriptive catalogue 5:

MM5: Museum's name: *Sefala*. Ovaloid form with a narrow opening and added base. Collection: Polokwane Cultural History Museum, date of collection 1980s.

		
<p>MM5, 1. (Whole body, profile view). Ovaloid vessel (<i>Sefala</i>) standing in vertical position, upper part decorated. <i>Sefala</i> vessel is, on the upper part, decorated with soil, ashes, and charcoal. There are five lines, four narrow lines and one thick line.</p>	<p>MM5, 2. (Whole form, collar view). <i>Sefala</i> with handles like horns on neck area, on which a rope is fastened to secure a lid and close <i>Sefala</i>. Middle is decorated using ashes that mark a line.</p>	<p>MM5, 3. (Detail, applied forms, profile view). Four handles attached next to the opening and the middle are decorated with ashes. This <i>Sefala</i> has a supporting base to assist it in standing upright.</p>
		
<p>MM5, 4. (Detail constructional attributes of form, rim top view). Opening is decorated inside and outside with red the dominant colour, surrounding the vessel. Ashes are used twice for making lines whereas black colour is used once.</p>	<p>MM5, 5. (Detail, applied forms, neck view). There is a thin flat lid, designed to be fastened with a rope to close the vessel once it is filled with seeds and beans.</p>	<p>MM5, 6. (Detail, rim edge view). Mouth decorated with red soil on interior and exterior. Excised handles are decorated with ashes.</p>
		
<p>MM5, 7. (Detail, foot which is scratched).</p>	<p>MM5, 8. (Detail, applied forms, shoulder view). Red soil is applied using a brush made from a twig. In same way charcoal and ashes are applied in liquid form and left to dry thereafter.</p>	<p>MM5, 9. (Detail, flat lid to close a vessel).</p>



MM5, 10. (Detail, foot view). Stand attached to support vessel in upright position.

Further notes: these vessels are mentioned by Lawton (1967: 183), Mokgatle (1971: 13), Moifatswana (1993: 87), Lombard and Parsons (2003: 82), but no further research has been done to document them and their dynamic nature.

Physical measurements: dimensions & weight


Height (Estimate 62 cm)	Width (Estimate 42 cm)	Mouth diameter (Estimate 24 cm)	Base diameter (Estimate 22 cm)	Weight (kg/g) (Not available)
----------------------------	---------------------------	------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	----------------------------------

Technical observations: vessel construction, form, surface, motifs

Raw materials used in production

- Cattle by-product/s: dung
- Earth/soil: red soil especially collected from a site in Polokwane area
- Charcoal: wood from household cooking hearth
- Clay (ochre)
- Ash sourced from wood from household cooking hearth
- Water

Construction method/s	Surface/ tactile (touch/feel) qualities		Motifs / decoration	Site of decoration
Hand built upright on top of flat object. Step 1. After cattle-dung is mixed with wood-ashes, the construction of the base of the vessel begins: the mixture of moist cattle-dung is patted into a flat 'disk'. Step 2. After the base disk is dry, small pats of moist material (a mix of dung and water squeezed between palms of the hands) are added to create the vertical walls. Step 3. The unfinished vessel is left to dry in a secure open place. Step 4. After 1 or 2 days the process continues. Small pats of moist material are added, building up until the vessel reaches the preferred size or shape. Finally, it is narrowed at the mouth, using same techniques and materials. Step 5. It is smoothed with water by hand and left to dry for 1 or 2 days. Step 6. It is decorated using a brush made of a tree twig.	Inside: Rough due to pasture material	Outside: Smoothed, compressed by hand	Painted chevrons and horizontal bands in ochre, white ash and charcoal	Lip✓ Upper ✓ Middle✓ Lower Foot
Provenance of vessel				
Place of origin Capricorn District Municipality		Place viewed Polokwane Cultural History Museum		Place collected Capricorn District Municipality
Museum data (via accession register/records)				
Museum name Polokwane Cultural History Museum	Accession number Not recorded	Date of acquisition ca.1980's	Museum storage place Polokwane Cultural History Museum storeroom	Shape of vase Ovaloid vessel (<i>Sefala</i>) shaped in vertical position with wide mouth
Means of acquisition (Passive✓ / Active) Price (not recorded✓)			Name of donor/collector Not recorded	
Current physical condition of vessel (note damage & repairs) Good with minor scratches on foot ring				
Provenance: Exhibition/display records No history of known exhibition				
Additional information relating to future discoveries and digitising of collections: N/A				

Contextual emic, stylistic and iconographic observations			
Comments refer to photographic images tabled above			
Emic information			
Maker/s name/s	Indigenous name of item	Indigenous function	Region and place of production
Unknown Northern Sotho women (possibly Bakoni, Batlokwa, Bapedi)	<i>Sefala</i>	Grain and food storage	Historically distributed in Highveld region, currently made in Capricorn District Municipality, Limpopo Province for museum purposes
<p>Cattle references: In Sotho-Tswana language (<i>Sesotho sa Lebowa</i>) name of cow of which the colour patterns are related to the vessel concerned is <i>Nalana</i> = it is a cow with a red head and white marks around its body. Sometimes, a black and white cow will be identified as <i>Nalana</i>.</p>			
			
Illustrator: Leigh Voigt (Poland and Hammond-Tooke, 2013:123)			
<p>Form (utility of the vessel) – (Small <i>Sefalana</i>), it can be used for transporting and storing fresh agricultural products (such as beans, dried vegetables) and if large <i>Sefala</i> it can serve to preserve grain and seeds.</p>			
<p>Emic observations and socio-cultural avoidances in connection with the vessel</p> <p>Avoidance rules are observed. Senior women make vessels, men do not make <i>Sefala</i>. Young women are not allowed to enter kraal to collect dung. However, young girls can go into the kraal and collect fresh cattle-dung in heterogeneous Sotho-Tswana groups as long as they are below menstruation age. At a very young age females are associated with purity and innocence and therefore cannot negatively affect cattle breeding. Excavating soils to decorate <i>Difala</i> vessels during mourning periods is prohibited.</p>			
<p>Motifs</p> <p>Applied and painted with red soil, ashes, and black charcoal motifs. Vessel is decorated with ashes, charcoal and red soil, using a brush made of a tree twig.</p>			
<p>Social & cultural reason for production</p> <p><i>Sefala</i> vessel is used to preserve grain, keeping it fresh for long periods, and to store food. Ashes are used to stop insects from penetrating into corn stored in <i>Sefala</i>. According to one of the participants the ashes mixed with cattle-dung make it easy to dry the material, prevent it from decomposing and act as a pesticide when seeds are stored. In the</p>			

past some of these vessels were taller than an adult person but could also be as small as ordinary portable clay pots.

Material & environmental resources used in production processes

The culture of Sotho-Tswana agro-pastoralists is centred on cattle. The abundant forage and grazing land in the grassland area allows the cattle to eat plenty grass and produce dungs which are used to make *Difala* vessels. Natural resources used to produce the vessels are cattle-dung, ashes sourced from firewood and mixed with water, dried leaves of aloe ashes, locally known as *melora ya Sekgopa*, and charcoal from a local tree locally known as *Mošu*, *Acacia tortilis* (Louwrens 2001: 156), is also used for pigmentation. In the Polokwane bushveld area there is a plentiful deposit of a red ochre locally known as *Letsoku* which gets excavated. These mineral compositions contain natural pigments that are used for decoration, especially the red ochres that were in the past used for cultural purposes. Historically, production of *Difala* was made possible by a system of rotational grazing practised by Sotho-Tswana agro-pastoralists whose indigenous cattle were adapted to Highveld conditions. According to vessel makers, cattle dung for *Difala* vessels must contain the fibres found in the dry grasses of the grassland. Cattle that feed on leaves do not produce suitable dung. Hence, *Difala* are not made in drought-stricken areas where there is a lack of water and pasturage, nor are they made in rainy regions. If there are not many cattle, or they do not eat enough grass, there won't be enough dung to make vessels. The availability of dry grass in the Polokwane area makes it possible for cows to produce dung with fibres. There is false grassland on the Polokwane Plateau Bushveld (Jessop 1974:50, 46, Acocks 1988: 1), that make it into an ideal place for the production of *Difala*. The abundant grass results in sufficient fibred cattle-dung to make *Difala*. A feeding system for cattle can be designed whereby the cattle eat specific grasses from grassland resulting in the best mix of dung that can be used to produce large *Difala*. Not all ruminant animals' faeces can make *Difala*. Goats' drops, for example, are not suitable for *Difala*. Goats, with their narrow muzzles and articulated lip structures. Goats can select leaves or shrubs around thorn plants because they have, therefore as goats are selective browsers which have ability to browse various plants and shrubs (forage) survive in a harsh environment that they produce small drops whereas cattle are less selective grazers with long mobile tongues which enable them to grasp taller grass when grazing if grazing a particular location (grassland and conducive environment) their dung can be suitable to produce *Difala* vessels (personal communication, Reed 2016). Grassland areas are perfect and conducive for production of *Difala*.

How does the composition of dung affect the ability to make *Difala*?

Cattle feces consist of 2 components:








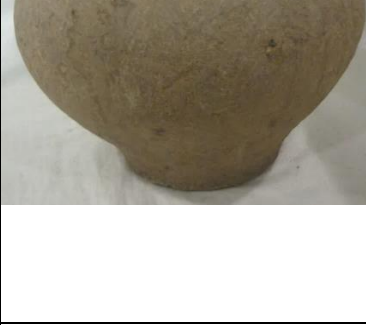

1. Undigested fiber from the cattle diet. In grazing cattle this component consists in the indigested cell walls of the grass, which is composed of fibrous polysaccharides and lignin. These components have been reduced to particle size by rumination but under the right conditions they can be reformed into materials for construction.
- 2, Bacterial cell wall which consists of complex structures that under the right conditions could help the fibrous undigested grass components to form stable aggregates that positively influence the ability to make *Difala*, in a way that a glue would be used to join material together.

Hence, the ratio in which these 2 components are present, is the most important factor for determining the suitability of dung for making *Difala*. The suitability of cattle dung resulting from grazing on different types of grasslands can be simply determined by measuring neutral-detergent fiber (undigested grass cell wall) and neutral-detergent solubles (a measure of the bacterial component) in the dung used for *Difala*.

If dung is mixed with ash the pH is increased and alkaline conditions affect the interaction of fiber and bacteria in the formation of material to be used for constructing *Difala*.

This is a branch of material science of natural products (personal communication, Reed 2016).

6. 4. 6 Descriptive catalogue 6:

<p>MM6: Museum's name: <i>Sefalana</i>. A small sub-spherical vase form with a small mouth (damaged) and narrowed foot. Collection: Iziko Social History Centre, date of collection 1960.</p>		
		
<p>MM6, 1. Photograph (profile view). Vertical position. <i>Sefalana</i> shaped in spherical storage vessel/<i>pitša</i>.</p>	<p>MM6, 2. (Whole form, rim view). Horizontal position. The mouth of <i>Sefalana</i> with narrow lips trimmed.</p>	<p>MM6, 3. (Whole form, collar profile view). 3516: a number of identification from collectors/museum.</p>
		
<p>MM6, 4. (Whole form, detail, neck view). Undecorated <i>Sefalana</i> careful shaped trunk and foot.</p>	<p>MM6, 5. (Detail body from different angle view). Marks of stretching on the body of <i>Sefalana</i> showing the nature of the material, namely cow dung. This is an indication that the maker designed the vessel to have a rough interior surface.</p>	<p>MM6, 6. (Detail, shoulder view). Undecorated <i>Sefalana</i> vessel at close range with visible elongated ringed lips, a wide middle, and an extended flat lower base.</p>
		
<p>MM6, 7. (Detail, base, view). The rounded foot ring covers lower part of <i>Sefalana</i> vessel. Supporting base is crafted to aid a woman to balance on the middle of her head when transporting grain. Base is also used as an extended stand for vessel when it is used for storage.</p>	<p>MM6, 8. (Detail, foot view). Foot: ringed base added to assist <i>Sefalana</i> vessel to stand securely when filled for storage.</p>	<p>MM6, 9. (Detail around the rim edge view). Damaged mouth with identification number. I suggest that such damaged vessels should not be repaired as any repair could worsen its current condition, due to the dung being affected.</p>

Further notes: these vessels are mentioned by Lawton (1967: 183), Mokgatle (1971: 13), Moifatswana (1993:87), Lombard and Parsons (2003: 82), but no further research has been done to document them and their dynamic nature.

Physical measurements: dimensions & weight

Height cm (Estimate 30 cm)	Width (Estimate 38 cm)	Mouth diameter (Estimate 16 cm)	Base diameter (Estimate 18 cm)	Weight (kg/g) (Not available)
-------------------------------	---------------------------	------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	----------------------------------

Technical observations: vessel construction, form, surface, motifs

Raw materials used in production:

- Cattle by-product/s: dung
- Water

Construction method/s	Surface/ tactile (touch/feel) qualities		Motifs / decoration	Site of decoration
Hand built, supporting base is crafted, vase is built vertically and upright, using a mix of fresh cow dung and water squeezed between the palms of the hands and added to create the vertical walls. The unfinished vessel is left to dry before continuing. Small pats of moist material are added thereafter, building up until the vessel reaches the required size. The vessel is narrowed at the mouth using same techniques and materials, smoothed with water by hand and left to dry.	Inside: Rough due to pasture material	Outside: Smoothed, compressed by hand		Lip Upper Middle Lower Foot

Provenance of vessel

Place of origin Kgatleng District	Place viewed IzikoSHC-storeroom	Place collected Mochudi, Botswana
---	---	---

Museum data (via accession register/records)

Museum name <i>Sefalana</i>	Accession number UCT 35/16	Date of acquisition 1962	Museum storage place IzikoSHC-storeroom	Shape of a vessel Spherical shaped vessel. Model similar to <i>Nkgwana</i> , a clay pot for transporting. Water pot because of small opening
---------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	------------------------------------	---	--

Means of acquisition (Passive✓/Active) Price/ n/a Donated by UCT	Name of donor/collector Professor Isaac Schapera
--	--


Current physical condition of vessel (note damage & repairs)

Broken around the mouth

Provenance: Exhibition/display records

No history of known exhibition.

Notes: This is possible the oldest *Sefalana* I have seen in South African museums I visited. It is made by Sotho-Tswana people, originally from South Africa, who have migrated to Botswana

Additional information relating to future discoveries and digitising of collections to be added here:			
N/A			
Contextual emic, stylistic and iconographic observations			
Comments refer to photographic images tabled above			
Emic information			
Maker/s name/s Made by unknown women among Batswana (Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafêla)	Indigenous name of item <i>Sefalana</i>	Indigenous function Storing fresh agricultural products, preserving and transporting of grains	Region and place of production Mochudi, Botswana
<p>Cattle references: In Sotho-Tswana languages (Setswana), a <i>Sefalana</i> vessel's motifs are visually associated with the markings of specific cow-hides of which the colour patterns inspire the decoration of the vessel. A <i>sêhlana/setlhana</i> is a yellow cow which looks greyish. The colour grey cannot be used to refer to human beings in Sotho-Tswana culture, but yellow is appropriate. The colour <i>Setlhana</i> (yellow), is among Northern Sotho and Batswana also used to refer to a female person's appearance, for example, <i>ke Mosadi yo Mosetlhana</i>, meaning 'she is a light skinned woman' (a complimentary remark).</p>			
			
Illustrator: Leigh Voigt (Poland and Hammond-Tooke 2013: 113)			
Form (utility of the vessel) – (Small <i>Sefalana</i>), is for transporting agricultural products and preserving grain			
Emic observations and socio-cultural avoidances in connection with the vessel			
Avoidance rules are observed. Senior women make vessels, young women are not allowed to enter kraal to collect dung. However, in heterogeneous Sotho-Tswana groups, young girls can go into the kraal and collect fresh cattle-dung as long as they are below menstruation age. At such a young age females are associated with purity and innocence and cannot negatively affect cattle breeding. Excavating soils to decorate <i>Sefalana</i> vessel during mourning periods is prohibited.			
Motifs			
None			
Social & cultural reason for production			
This particular <i>Sefalana</i> vessel was, because of its small size, used to transport and preserve grain. Ashes are added to prevent insects from penetrating into corns stored in the <i>Sefalana</i> . According to one of participants, the ashes mixed with cattle-dung make the vessel easier to dry, prevent decomposing, and act as a pesticide when seeds are transported and kept in the vessels. In the past some of these vessels were taller than an adult person or as small as ordinary portable clay pots.			

Material & environmental resources used in production processes

Natural resources used are cattle-dung, ashes sourced from firewood and mixed with water. Cattle dung for *Difala* vessels must contain the fibres found in the dry grasses on the grassland. According to vessel makers cattle that feed on leaves do not produce suitable dung. Hence, the vessels are not made in drought-stricken areas with insufficient water or pasturage, nor in rainy regions. If there are not many cattle, or the cattle can't eat enough grass, there won't be enough dung produced to make vessels. The availability of dry grasses makes an area into an ideal place for producing *Difala* since the cattle can freely feed and produce fibred cattle-dung. In the past production of *Difala* was possible through rotational grazing which was practised by Sotho-Tswana agro-pastoralists whose indigenous cattle were adapted to grassland conditions.

Not all ruminant animals' faeces is suitable for constructing *Difala*. Goats' drops for example cannot be used. Goats, when feeding, use their narrow muzzles and articulated lip structures to select leaves or shrubs growing around thorny plants. They are selective browsers and can survive in harsh environments. They produce small drops whereas cattle are less selective grazers with long mobile tongues which enable them to grasp the taller grass when grazing on grassland and in other conducive environments. Hence, their dung is suitable for producing *Difala* vessels (personal communication, Reed 2016). Grassland areas in particular provide perfect grazing.

How does the composition of dung affect the ability to make *Difala*?

Cattle faeces consist of 2 components:

1. Undigested fiber from the diet. In grazing cattle, this component consists of the indigestible cell walls of the grass, which is composed of fibrous polysaccharides and lignin. These components have been reduced to particle size by rumination, but under the right conditions they can be reformed into materials for vessel construction.
2. Bacterial cell wall which consists of complex structures that, under the right conditions, could help the fibrous undigested grass components to form stable aggregates, much in the way that a glue can be used to join materials. These aggregates can make the construction of *Difala* possible.

The ratio of the presence of these 2 components would be the most important characteristic of dung for making *Difala*. The component in cattle dung from grazing different types of grasslands could be simply determined by measuring neutral-detergent fiber (undigested grass cell wall) and neutral-detergent solubles (a measure of the bacterial component) in the dung being used to produce *Difala*.

If dung is mixed with ash the pH increases and alkaline conditions will affect the interaction of the fiber and bacteria in the formation of the material for use in making *Difala*.

This is a branch of material science of natural products (personal communication, Reed 2016).

6. 5 A comparative study of *Difala* vessels in three museums

6. 5.1 Polokwane Cultural History Museum



Figure 48: PolokwaneCHM. Date of fieldwork visit, 2014. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi. 2014.

On the site of the current historic Polokwane building known as Irish House Museum, there was an earlier structure, built by Julius Herman Moschke in 1816. Moschke was a German national. He used his building as a general merchandise store. In 1906 it was gutted by fire. It has been rebuilt between 1906 and 1910. To the old buildings, still located there today, a clock tower was added. The architecture appears to be inspired by Victorian styles. In 1920 the building was sold to James Albert Jones, an Irish businessman who converted it into a clothing shop and named it after his homeland, Irish House (**Fig. 48**). Jones sold imported Western produced clothes to locals. In 1984, the City Council of Polokwane bought the building and converted it into a local museum while preserving the Irish inspired decorations. The building continues to be a museum today (Polokwane museums' brochure ca. 2014). A collection of *Difala* vessels is kept in its storage rooms.

6. 5. 2 *Difala* vessels in Polokwane museums

The makers of the *Difala* vessels in the PolokwaneCHM collections are not known and there is no recorded information concerning them. The collectors of the vessels have either left Polokwane museums or passed away. Members of the museum staff today are relative newcomers and have no information on the artefacts. In my investigation of other types of vessels in the area, I found that these encompass the cultures of multiple local groups in the surroundings of Polokwane. This is evident from the use of different forms, motifs and colour patterns that are associated with various indigenous groups in the Capricorn District Municipality, namely the Bakoni, Batlôkwa, Bapedi (all belonging to the Northern Sotho majority in the area) and Ndebele. I have provided historical photographs to support my research finding that some cultural elements present in vessels are connected to the domestic art and cattle culture of Sotho-Tswana people. Many Sotho-Tswana groups are known for their colourful domestic mural paintings. I deduce that the motifs, used to decorate contemporary *Difala* vessels, represent intercultural fusions of various ethnic groups in the Capricorn District Municipality, rather than any specific group. Polokwane means ‘place of safety’ in *Sesotho sa Lebowa*. Thus, due to constant innovation, the contemporary vessel making process at the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum, can no longer be used to determine the ethnic identity and origin of individual groups, as has been done by cultural observers in the past (Lawton 1967).

There is evidence of cultural fusions in contemporary *Difala* vessels and of women incorporating cultural elements which are not necessarily inspired by traditional storage vessels but more likely by contemporary art. The vessels in the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum have thus been transformed from granaries (*Difala*) to small decorative vessels (*Difalana*) which resemble flower vases and are linked to multiple local cultures. There is much evidence to support the conclusion that the makers of the old *Difala* vessels in PolokwaneCHM were Northern Sotho women (possibly Bakoni, Batlokwa, Bapedi) who were linked with Highveld Sotho-Tswana groups, before they moved to the Polokwane area.

The museum houses material culture collections of diverse groups living in the Polokwane area, namely Heterogenous Northern Sotho, Northern Ndebele, Shangaan-Vatsonga and

Vhavenḁa. As some of these groups (Northern Ndebele and Shangaan-Vatsonga) do not make *Difala* vessels, they are not part of my research. However, studying the groups' material cultures could lead to useful comparisons. The material culture collections in the museum, made by groups who are not associated with *Difala* production, do contain elements indicative of contacts with Sotho-Tswana – who are the focus of the present study - and of resulting acculturation processes.

The museum is located next to the Metropolitan Centre, corner Thabo Mbeki and Market Streets, Polokwane city, Limpopo Province. Its exhibits appear to have been designed for a general rather than a particular audience. Artefacts are displayed to support a visualising process whereby the audience considers specific objects along with their attached meanings (Hooper-Greenhill 1994: 17). This approach emphasises the role of the museum as a custodian of collections and, thus, as conservating artefacts of different cultures. It must be remembered that museums, housing ethnological collections, face challenges that are quite different from those encountered in museums of natural history. Having to cope with different types of challenges is peculiar to many South African museums. Their problems are often related to collection management. The absence of relevant information results in poor management of objects. Historical objects, kept in storage without any supporting information, are an example. Such is the case with *Difala* vessels that have been neglected for years. The lack of appropriate consistent cataloguing exacerbates the problem. In addition, many persons who pioneered the research of collected objects have left before they could complete their work.

6. 5. 3 Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum



Figure 49: Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum. During my visit in 2014 I noticed that stone wall is in the backyard of the museum. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2013.

Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum in the Polokwane area was created in the apartheid era as a museum for the heritage of the Bakoni people, particularly those who originated from Ga-Matlala. It was evidently an apartheid project as it emphasised the presumed static nature of African traditions, while putting up performances that junglified or exoticised Africans in the urban space of Polokwane city. BakoniMNOAM museum also plays the role of eco-museum as described by Hudson (1992). The museum organises many cultural practices and activities, including traditional dancing. I focused on activities concerned with visual arts. I found that BakoniMNOAM was still operated as a kind of human zoo with natives from the former Lebowa homeland being transported to isolated plots or farms to entertain tourists, much as was done in the past. In order to fulfil its role as eco-museum the institution will have to change its manner of operating and accommodate new developments, for example by organising educative exhibitions that promote research on indigenous

knowledge systems in contemporary society and that impart knowledge of heritage, innovative farming, vegetable gardening and the keeping of indigenous livestock.

The Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum employs people from diverse cultural backgrounds which makes it difficult for the museum to be accepted as a custodian of the monoculture of Bakoni people. Also, in the contemporary context of Polokwane and its surroundings, several heterogeneous Northern Sotho cultures are emanating and recreated, some of which are not of a local origin and have nothing in common with the culture of Bakoni people. Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum is located approximately 9km south of Polokwane Central Business District on the Chuenespoort/Burgersfort road at the foot of a hill (Jordaan 1992).

Unlike the PolokwaneCHM, discussed above, the BakoniMNOAM consists of thatched structures and mud houses, along the lines of historical Sotho-Tswana architecture. It is constructed from natural materials found in the vicinity, using local resources and labour (**Fig. 49**). According to Jordaan (1992: 2), the site, also known as Steyn's farm, is a section of the original farm Palmietfontein which belonged to a Mr Steyn, a white farmer during apartheid. I emphasise that this museum is not located in the Ga-Matlala Setumong area as it should have been. It is in fact just outside Polokwane in a formerly white area and far from the villages of the Matlala tribe where Ga-Matlala Setumong village and Phetole village are located.



Figure 50: Mma Francinah Mathekga. Cylindrical vessel with rounded base. I would call this a *Sefalana*. 2014. Height 22,5 cm, mid width 17 cm, mouth 7,5 cm and base 7,5 cm. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2013.

My physical inspection on-site at the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum indicates that the vessel is made of cattle dung. The above shown vessel is not smoothed as is required before decoration takes place. It was meant for visitors to the museum. The museum has not allocated an accession number, because this is a demonstration vessel made at my request during a fieldwork visit in 2013. The BakoniMNSOAM employs women to demonstrate Northern Sotho traditional ways of producing artefacts (**Fig. 50**), including pottery and *Difala* vessels, while men employed at the museum concentrate on sculpture and other forms of art production that are considered as the domain of men. There is no village in the vicinity of the museum, so that it seems out of place, creating the feel of an urban institution in a forest.

Many activities in the Open-Air Museum are connected to the local environment, such as the *Difala* vessels produced as eco-friendly artefacts made from fresh cattle-dung.

Although the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum was established in the 1980's, apparently as an apartheid project, it did not fulfil its aim of creating an ethnic identity for one specific ethnic group, namely the Bakoni from Ga-Matlala. The museum failed to accomplish its apartheid ideological mission of being the custodian of specifically

Bakoni culture, as the museum staff did not consist of only Bakoni from Ga-Matlala. In this context, Claassen claims that the 'Matlala tribe' did not exist before the 1960s. Claassens argues, that the Bakoni tribe is an apartheid construct (Claassens 2001: 9). This view is supported by Kgopa (2003) who speculates that Bakoni were favoured by the apartheid administration in the Polokwane area. This led to the establishment of the museum but it also implies that the BakoniMNSOAM, just like IzikoSHM, is in need of decolonisation.

Many ethnic groups are found in the Polokwane area and their cultures are represented in the museum of which the location is historically associated with Ndebele and Shangaan (Jordaan 1992). Of the present museum staff, the majority belongs to heterogeneous Northern Sotho groups and pays attention to various ethnic material cultures, rather than focusing exclusively on the Bakoni. Their approach to the function of the museum is possibly, consciously or unconsciously, inspired by a wish to defy the apartheid ideology that set out to establish an ethnically based museum for Bakoni only. Currently the museum houses multiple Northern Sotho cultures, reflecting a degree of resistance to the separation of cultures. If the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum had been established in the nearby Ga-Matlala, it could have better served Bakoni but at the risk of turning into an instrument for the strengthening of different identities.

6. 5. 4 The Iziko Social History Centre



Figure 51: The Iziko Social History Centre. Source www.iziko.org.za accessed (20-05-2015).

The name *Iziko* is of isiXhosa origin and means 'hearth'. The Iziko Social History Centre is a part of the South African museum in the City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality. The South African museum was founded in 1825 (Summers 1975: 5) by Lord Charles Somerset, a British colonial administrator. The museum is currently located at 17 Church Square, Cape Town. The Social History Centre can be traced back to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when historical, archaeological and ethnographic collections were housed in the South African Museum (SAM), later renamed the South African Cultural History Museum. These institutions were merged to form part of the current Iziko Museums of Cape Town, Social History Collections (**Fig. 51**). The renovated building of Iziko is intended to offer facilities for the preservation and conservation of social history collections and archives. There are, among others, collections devoted to the indigenous people of South Africa and Southern Africa as a whole. In addition, there are artefacts and objects that form part of my research project.

6. 5. 5 Spherical *Sefalana* collection at the Iziko Social History Centre

There is in the IzikoSHC a significant old artefact, collected during the earliest anthropological activities. It is not decorated which makes it quite extraordinary. It is the oldest vessel in the collections that I have surveyed. It is different from the vessels in the Polokwane museums because of its size. It resembles African beer vessels found among the Sotho-Tswana people.



Figure 52: Maker unknown (not recorded). Bakgatla. 1962. Spherical *Sefalana* with extended base. Collected in Botswana. Collection: Iziko Social History Centre. Accession number UCT 35/16. Height 33 cm, mid width 38 cm, mouth 17 cm, base 18 cm. Collected by Professor Isaac Schapera. Photograph by M.F. Motsamayi, 2014.

The above *Sefalana* (**Fig. 52**), found in IzikoSHC, was at the time of its production not intended as a form of art, but purely as a vessel for storing valued grains to be planted later, or, in view of its size, for transporting grain. What sets it apart from vessels in the Polokwane collections is the absence of decorations. The Polokwane vessels consist of materials that belong to traditional culture, but they were made for museum display and therefore decorated. However, the Iziko *Sefalana* does bear some similarity to one specific vessel in Limpopo Province of which the decorations resemble those of contemporary *Difala* vessels in PolokwaneCHM (**Fig. 1**), and which was probably made by Northern Sotho women. The spherical decorated *Sefalana* below (**Fig. 53**) is similar to the undecorated vessel made among Bakgatla in Batswana (**Fig. 52**). I have noticed that groups who speak similar dialects do, in certain circumstances, also show similarities in their material cultures, as can be seen in the production of these *Difala*.

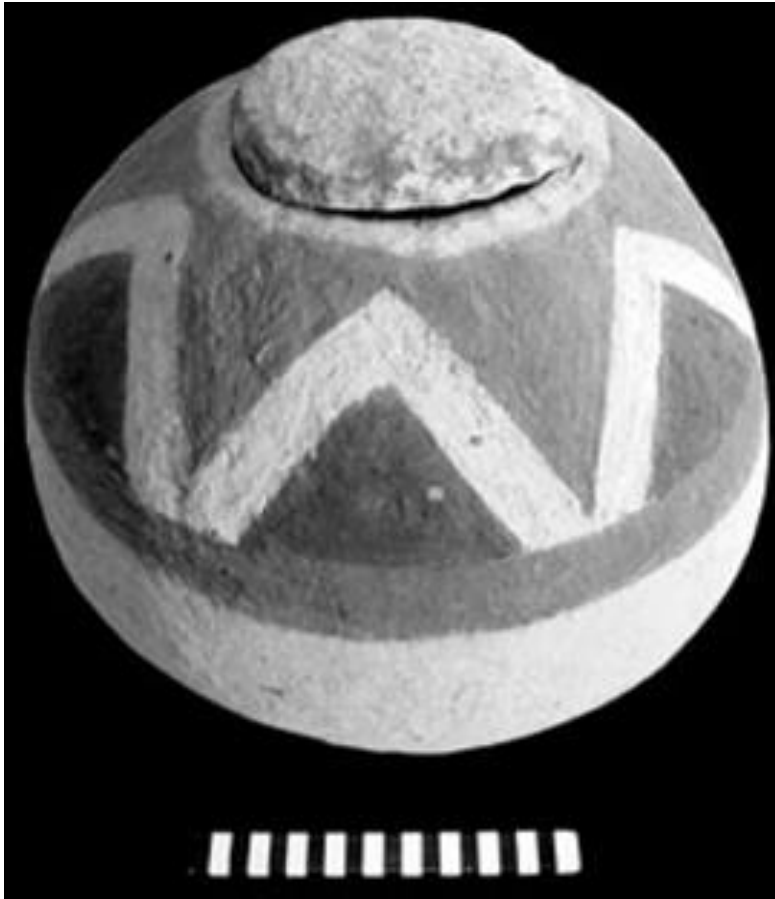


Figure 53: Contemporary decorated small sub-spherical *Sefalana* (as described by Lombard, M. and I. Parsons. 2003; no further details given by the authors).

I link above *Sefalana* to vessel types of a Northern Sotho group (Bakoni) in Limpopo Province, due to similarities in form I observe with Bakgatla works such as **Fig. 52**. The IzikoSHC, when still known as the South African Museum, housed natural history collections as well as collected material culture of several groups in South Africa, Africa and the wider world, in particular from former British colonies (Summers 1975). Some of the artefacts have in the past been collected by scholars from different disciplines. Summers states (1975: 74), that in 1896 the South African Museum had no system of registering the collections that were in its custody and, even today, some collections are not documented. I suspect that in the absence of a system for registering its collections, the museum did rely on colonial systems which means that the documentation of African material cultures was determined by colonial ideas of meeting the ‘native’ in the context of evolutionary perceptions. As many objects in South African institutions were collected in British colonies, this approach would later find a continuation in apartheid ideologies ascribing to African material cultures a so-called primitivism. It is clear, that the lack of adequate registration of artefacts in museums goes back a long way and that the problem remains unsolved. I observed that, in many social history collections, some items carry labels, but with no details on the background of artefacts

and their collection and without systematic formats. The lack of systematic descriptive cataloguing has led to a gap in the discourses that attempt to understand objects from their historical background, aiming to provide new perspectives with respect to these objects in the contemporary context.

To balance my perception of the lack of descriptive cataloguing of artefacts in the Social History Collection, I have focused on work, done by early anthropologists such as Ann Lawton and Isaac Schapera for IzikoSHC, which is crucially important in that Lawton and Schapera have during fieldwork in several regions managed to collectively establish the incomplete but considerable basis for the *Difala* collection that is part of my research and for which I wish to create a descriptive catalogue. In addition to Lawton and Schapera, there are other researchers who have provided field notes, documents and records that complement their published work.

I find it necessary to use their available information some of which has never been reviewed - in particular the data linked with *Difala* vessels in South African museums - until it was recently scrutinised as part of my research. It is of importance to acknowledge the contributions made by these researchers although some of their data could not be validated in the context of my research. I emphasise again that these earlier anthropologists have contributed much to the preservation of information on *Difala* vessels and, if it had not been for them, further research of the vessels would not have been possible.

In my opinion data collected by these earlier scholars will provide clarity as regards some important forgotten records still present in our museums and, although valuable, taken for granted. The Iziko Social History Centre is emerging as a heritage institution that hopes to make objects available for study and develop the potential to nurture future research of indigenous material culture.

The IzikoSHC has an impressive ethnographic collection that forms part of my core studies. I decided to focus as part of my research on historical *Sefalana* collection and other storage vessels. These objects are decorated with motifs that are interdependent and often exchanged in the Indigenous Knowledge/Ethnographic Collections. The *Sefala* vessel in Cape Town is a significant collection item, because it is the only one of its nature in the earliest collection by

Schapera (1962) of objects made by Bakgatla of Kgafêla. The piece is one item in an important vessel collection. There are no archival records that can be consulted for details of the makers. Only the donors are known, but nothing about the circumstances of collection and donation, or about the works themselves. In my research project I am trying to fill in gaps that have existed for long, without any research being conducted, for example, in respect of the collections of Anne Lawton and Margret Show among others. A main objective of researching these collections is to increase public awareness of their existence and of this early research, for the benefit of those interested in the social history of Southern Africa. The critical point here is that most South Africans people seem to be unaware that the country's museums house rich and significant collections of the material cultures of South Africa and its neighbours.

IzikoSHC aims at promoting the cultural heritage of South Africa by ensuring that continuous research is undertaken and that exhibitions take place (<https://www.iziko.org.za/static/page/outreach>). The centre proposes for example, that interested academics should be given access to collections for research purposes. In addition, museum officials need to take part in interpreting all the collections from different places and dates to inform museum visitors. This will provide academics with some background on objects before they start studying them. Since the South African population is diverse, the IzikoSHC also houses collections from abroad. Audiences wanting to study specific artefacts from other countries might be able to find them at Iziko, provided the museum collections are made accessible. IzikoSHC faces challenges similar to those of other museums.

The accessibility of South African heritage institutions remains problematic, in particular because many institutions that house social history collections are located in urban areas, far removed from their places of origin, where there are probably still people living who could provide valuable information on the artefacts. The chronic poverty in many black communities prevents people from travelling to museums that house their ancestral heritage. Although museums are trying their best to reach affected communities, for example, by the introduction of mobile museums, the amount and the variety of collections make it impossible to reach all the remote areas where groups live whose material cultures are represented in the museums.

In this section the state of selected South African museums has been discussed on the basis of which I now consider the roles of museums in relation to the societies they serve, as well as their readiness to become relevant and accountable to the communities whose artefacts are in their care. All dung vessels that form part of my research have, since their collection, been housed in the museums concerned without any further research being undertaken until recently. Some of the above information about IzikoSHC is obtained from the museum website (<http://www.iziko.org.za/static/landing/social-history-research>) and from museum officials during my visit to the institution in 2014.

6. 5. 6 Similarities between Sefalana collection at the IzikoSHC and *Difala* in PolokwaneCHM

During fieldtrips at the IzikoSHC and PolokwaneCHM researcher found that the makers of *Difala* are unknown in both museums while the collectors left no informative records and did not take down details of artefacts and their collection during their expeditions to the areas where they found the artefacts. In both cases the vessels are undocumented and kept in storerooms. They only noted details of an ethnographic nature which is all the information at present available in museums. There are no records concerning specific objects and follow up research has not been done and few attempts have been made so far to trace some of the traditions associated with, among other heritage objects, *Difala* vessels. Although *Difala* vessels present in heritage institutions cannot be sold to the public, the issue of their ownership has become a seriously contested area with many persons claiming to be the rightful custodians of the tradition. All vessels were not valued as art worthy of exhibition. The vessels were made by women. The original makers remain unknown to this day. *Difala* vessels were made by using two types of construction techniques, namely moulding and modelling. My physical inspection on-site at the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum indicates that all vessels were hand built, upright, using a mix of fresh cow dung and water squeezed between the palms of the hands and added to create the vertical walls. Small pats of moist material are added thereafter, building up until the vessel reaches the required size, smoothed with water by hand and left to dry.

At the IzikoSHC and PolokwaneCHM, a similar format of labelling vessels for storeroom purposes is used and there are no descriptive catalogue models to support computer

documentation. After comparing *Difala* vessels in the two museums, I conclude that it is necessary to review available records, documents, photographs, and relevant literature in libraries, to study vessels in archives, and to discuss current curatorial issues. The adequate cataloguing of indigenous vessels is important because without proper records artefacts may go missing. In fact, due to the lack of a proper cataloguing process in museums, some vessels are neglected and in a deteriorating state.

The comparative study of *Difala* vessel making traditions needs to take account of past as well as present practices. The tradition of making *Difala* vessels is thought to be extinct in the communities of the Highveld region in its entirety where they used to be made. However, some form of revival is in progress at the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum in Polokwane Local Municipality - an institution that could be called a contemporary 'living museum' of the Northern Sotho people (Jordaan 1992). Today, pottery is more commonly produced than *Difala* vessels, due to the availability of certain resources in rural areas.

In my view, the massive urbanisation affecting many African people who used to depend entirely on agriculture for their subsistence and who, being landless, had to adapt to a cash economy, has also led to the discontinuation of *Difala* production. Besides, in many rural areas where the ecology in the environment used to be supportive, traditional natural resources have become degraded and their employment is unsustainable. Hence, the natural environment is no longer conducive to produce the types of vessels in rural areas that relied on ecosystems.

Ross (1981: 226) notes that the destruction of indigenous African farming - to be later replaced by white commercial farms - cannot be attributed to the establishment of the diamond and gold mines of Kimberley and the Witwatersrand as major factors in the downturn in indigenous farming. In fact, the decline had begun way back, at the time of the arrival of the Dutch East India Company in Africa. Total dispossession of Africans came with the passing of the Native Lands Act of 1913 and eventually Africans lost most of their ancestral lands (Legassick 1977: 181, Ross 1981: 229).

In conclusion of this section, *Difala* historically belong to groups of Sotho-Tswana who originate from the Highveld. The vessels that are currently produced in the museums are

dramatically different from those made in the past as the museum collection shows. Today museums are the only institutions where the traditional types of *Difala* vessels are found. As is apparent from the above illustrations, the contemporary vessels are not as well honed as those made in the past. The reason why I chose the Iziko museums (IzikoSHC) for my research is the presence there of the oldest example of *Sefalana*, while the Polokwane museums have the largest collections of current *Difala* vessels in South Africa. In both cases the vessels are undocumented and kept in storerooms.

Chapter 7: summary of chapters, findings and concluding remarks

Before presenting the conclusions of my research in this final chapter, I will briefly review the main points arising from earlier chapters and findings.

7. 1 Summary of chapters

In Chapter 1, the objectives of the study were outlined, namely to culturally contextualise *Difala* vessels and to review systems applied in their museum accessioning, specifically in respect of their description and cataloguing. The close interconnections between the changing natural environment and cultural productions was described, especially in respect of *Difala* vessels. The shortcomings of museum practices in the cataloguing of these items of indigenous culture is accentuated. Historical as well as contemporary *Difala* vessels housed in selected South African museums are given as examples. Why these vessels are a rare presence in museum collections becomes apparent as later chapters expand on investigated methodologies currently applied in the cataloguing of indigenous cultural objects, particularly vessels of a South African indigenous origin.

The socio-historical and physiographic contexts that generated the production of undocumented Sotho-Tswana vessels were surveyed, using sample vessels photographed in the Polokwane Cultural History Museum and Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum in Polokwane, Limpopo Province, and the Iziko Social History Centre in the Western Cape Province. Issues of culture and tradition associated with indigenous heritage and colonial legacy were outlined, with the emphasis on the social context of contemporary productions of indigenous domestic storage vessels. I compared my fieldwork studies in the region with historical and published records of vessel traditions associated with the Sotho-Tswana people. I gained insights into the lack of currency in archival records of selected local and national museums that were part of my study.

In Chapter 1, I further presented an overview and the theoretical constituents of the research, based on historical collections of indigenous vessels located in selected South African

museums. Examining these collections at first hand focused my attention on the pressing need in South Africa to provide contextual cultural data in reference of indigenous vessels generally, and specifically *Difala* containers, in order to redress the shortcomings of the existing documentation of material culture generally in local museums. In considering three examples of *Difala* vessels in contextual cultural detail, the extent of lacunae within the existing literature was sharply delineated. My research methodologies exposed the inadequacy of current systematic records and the lack of proper contextual and methodological documentation in South African heritage collections of indigenous material cultures. On the basis of current museum collections and the documentation of indigenous vessels such as *Difala*, it became apparent to me that the socio-cultural functioning of indigenous Sotho-Tswana communities is barely understood.

Fieldwork for the present study included research of catalogue procedures, photographing artefacts and an ethnographic approach involving the physical inspection of various sites and of the vessels/pottery on display, in order to identify key aspects of materials used and compare these with observations made in earlier published studies. To contextualise the collections that are the focus of the present thesis, the relevant institutions were visited and collections discussed with museum officials (specifically in the BakoniMNSOAMuseum, Polokwane CHM and Iziko South African Museums). Issues of heritage practice related to the documenting of *Difala* vessel making traditions in the context of Southern African indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) in the museum locale were considered.

Prior to this study, I had met informally with Polokwane vessel makers, potters and heritage workers dealing with products of material culture. Before undertaking the present study however, I formalised UKZN ethical clearance processes and ascertained the willing participation of informants for the purpose of my research in the museums and in villages where pottery is still made and used in a contemporary domestic context.

Readings of postcolonial theory facilitated my critique of museum cataloguing methods as I encountered them in my study and led me to develop more culturally relevant models that can be especially applicable to *Difala* ‘granary’ vessels. Postcolonial discourses encouraged me in the deconstruction of ‘established’ institutional practices of accessioning indigenous cultural productions, making me aware of subjectivities apparent in the documenting of power

relations in art and culture in cultural/social history institutions. To validate records left by colonial sources, I made personal observations during fieldwork visits in Polokwane, testing the relevance of information that exists in South African heritage institutions related to my research.

In Chapter 2, the importance of, not only natural materials and processes in Sotho-Tswana pottery production, but also the contemporary incorporation of manufactured (industrial) products that extend ancient vessel traditions, is foregrounded. For reasons of comparison an outline of Sotho-Tswana pottery was presented, as its producers are not only a closely related (albeit with language differences), neighbouring group called Vhavanḁa, but they also make pottery using very similar construction methods, techniques and vessel forms. In African societies, knowledge concerning pottery is rooted in traditions based on established moral and religious views. The same notions were applied in the context where pottery was used to guide new generations, telling them about life's values. Thus, pottery communicated important messages in a social context, as indicated in phrases analysed in this chapter. My reasoning in respect of meanings attached to indigenous pottery in Limpopo Province is based on reflections about the concept of worldview and connected to the more general philosophy of African pottery. These aspects were mentioned to highlight possible perspectives on the accessioning of indigenous vessels as well as the challenges encountered in cataloguing African collections in South African museums.

Chapter 3 discusses basic concepts that are of importance for an understanding of ways in which *Difala* vessels are described - and misunderstood - in local museum collections. In this chapter, some pertinent issues regarding indigenous *Difala* vessels are dealt with, namely their socio-cultural context and a formal analysis. Both these matters necessarily involve reflexive indigenous descriptors of form, surface, social designation, and utilitarian functions of Sotho-Tswana vessels. Accessioning *Difala* vessels involves a concern with form and function, including methods, materials, motifs and meanings. Many varied indigenous practices are manifest in South Africa's museums of culture – including the *Difala* vessels that are a subject of this study. I also provide scientific information on how the composition of dung affects its suitability for making *Difala*. Schematic illustrations are added clarifying the process of making *Difala*. Indigenous natural resources, techniques and tools, used to produce the vessels, are discussed.

Chapter 4 examines the deconstruction of colonial legacies and the matter of finding self-meaning through orality as a part of modern discourses. It is argued that South African museums are problematic given their history and that they are in fact undecolonisable. This view is supported by case studies of *Difala* vessels in local museums. Anthropological studies, as part of major academic discourse, have lent support to my arguments. I use anthropological insights in searching for meaning in discourses related to material culture production. The examination of studies on aspects of anthropology and aesthetics in art based on local context, enabled me to contextualise Sotho-Tswana groups from a cultural viewpoint, including their cultural distribution as shaped by their past physiographic zone which first helped them to maintain but, eventually, led to the loss of their culture because of a diminished availability of materials needed to construct *Difala* vessels and other forms of cultural production.

In Chapter 5, I explore the socio-historical context of domestic art production in connection to shifting migration patterns and their effects on cultural practices. Cultural traditions associated with *Difala* are considered, as well as the contextual circulation, usage and regional distribution of the vessels. Attention is paid to the stylistic elaborations that are in a state of continuous transformation, giving the vessels a dynamic character, as their makers react to ongoing environmental changes resulting from the temporal and spatial movement of Sotho-Tswana peoples, and the correlation of environment and cultural expression. The possible consequences of these developments for materiality and for the cattle culture among Sotho-Tswana groups are considered. Sotho-Tswana people perceive the Highveld in Southern Africa as a physiographic zone that offers the natural resources needed in past and present for continuing the routines of pastoralists and maintaining their cattle culture. The presence of such natural resources on the grassland (Highveld) has significant implications for the socio-cultural production of specific forms of indigenous vessels. Cattle products are used for several purposes and *Difala* vessels are profoundly connected to cattle culture as it emanated in the historical Highveld. Materiality and cattle culture in Sotho-Tswana cultures and cattle symbolism meet in the production of *Difala* vessels. Perceptions of the environment and gendered vessel making traditions as part of the Sotho-Tswana material culture production are aspects of African ethics.

Chapter 5 also deals with the critical issues that form a major part of this thesis, namely the examination of museum practices in respect of indigenous material culture that currently prevail in South African local museums, and a consideration of the challenges faced by these institutions in efforts to catalogue African collections. The procedures followed at three museums are outlined and an overview is provided, based on a comparative study of *Difala* vessels in two Polokwane museums (Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum/ Polokwane Cultural History Museum) and in the Iziko Social History Centre in Cape Town. A proposed format of a descriptive catalogue model for *Difala* vessels in selected South African museums is presented. To illustrate the model, a table with examples of selected vessels in museum collections is given, followed by a discussion based on a comparative study of *Difala* vessels housed in the above-mentioned museums.

In Chapter 6, I propose a model for a descriptive catalogue for the *Difala* vessels which used to be found only among Sotho-Tswana groups of the Highveld who currently live scattered in villages and urban areas around Southern Africa. Historically, *Difala* were not made as artefacts for museums and, hence, these vessels, especially the ones made from cow dung, were in the past never catalogued in any detail and information about their nature and production was omitted, as well as any reference to what their historical background was before they were stored in museums. The vessels were traditionally used as granaries by the communities that made them. However, the changing environment, different lifestyles, the collapse of indigenous subsistence farming, and the movement of rural people to urban areas, have led to modified *Difala* vessels, making them fit for new purposes, namely for tourist markets and museums.

The present study acknowledges that, but for the existence of museums and the zeal of anthropologists, the *Difala* tradition would not have survived. Today, in museums, the objects have assumed a new identity. The museum is not an African concept. In the past traditional artefacts often ended up being placed in museum storerooms. Any added information was limited to a few words on a cataloguing card, identifying the object but not enlightening the public about its historical roles and cultural significance. As the systems of identifying indigenous artefacts, among them *Difala*, do not provide for a relevant, clear description of the objects and their backgrounds, omitting the fact that producers today rely on commercial products for decoration instead of using natural resources, I sought to develop a socio-

culturally contextual method for cataloguing *Difala* vessels. I established reasons why I found current museum methods unsatisfactory. A classification system fails because Western conventions of accession are linguistically exclusionary, especially in the case of African objects which usually belong to, and function in entire communities.

Of all the *Difala* vessels I surveyed, the makers are unknown, but the ethnic group to which the makers belonged, are identified on the vessel by a symbol specific to the particular culture of the maker's group. As, obviously, *Difala* production belongs in the collective rather than the individual sphere, classification is not relevant. Hence, there is a need for a descriptive cataloguing system that is truly pertinent to *Difala* vessels in local museums and that, on the basis of sound research, safeguards their interpretation. A point that needs to be taken into account when proposing a suitable method to identify and describe vessels in museum documentation, is the considerable change that cataloguing models have undergone over the years. Of the models to be considered, some need to be updated and adapted, as they were not designed to deal with indigenous vessels of a dynamic nature.

A model of cataloguing that is prevalent in museums I visited, is the nomenclature system, which entails a list of items organised in a classification system to provide the basis for indexing and cataloguing collections. Many museums use it, because it allows the holders of collections to record data easily. I have discovered through interviewing museums officials that computers cannot cover all information, due to regional and local preference names. I also reviewed the model called object biographies. This system includes information on how an object is made, used, and ended up in a museum. The biography of each object provides interesting facts and relevant stories. But, as the model deals with the limited lifespan of objects, it is not useful for *Difala* vessels which continue to be made and respond to contemporary challenges which makes them into a dynamic form of art. Another cataloguing method is referred to as an 'archives card catalogue'. It is based on card index key details about artefacts. For my purpose – the comprehensive describing and cataloguing of *Difala* vessels - it was also rejected as it limits the provision of information. All the reviewed systems were, however, useful in the sense that they made me more aware of what exactly was needed for the satisfactory cataloguing of *Difala*. This helped me to construct a foundation for my own proposed descriptive catalogue focused on *Difala*. Descriptive cataloguing involves presenting a catalogue that is arranged according to subjects or groups

of subjects, simultaneously deconstructing these and tracing the subjects in relation to the artefacts concerned while acknowledging the way these are perceived in the museum context.

Hence, in my view, and in the context of this thesis, descriptive cataloguing should focus on identifying and describing *Difala* vessels as seen in the museums. I have used ethnographic data, obtained from descendants of groups that are associated with *Difala* production as well as from available publications. I have taken photographs of the subject matter and reviewed colonial sources, in addition to conducting interviews with vessel makers and experts to verify my information about groups that are known to have used *Difala*, especially older people. This was done in conjunction with examining the forms of vessels in museums in order to determine which groups of Sotho-Tswana speakers produced them and to uncover associated information linked to the significance of the environment in their production. I hoped to stimulate an awareness of the sustainable use of natural resources in the context of tradition and culture.

My proposal for a descriptive catalogue involves the deconstruction of certain ideological premises that in the past were points of departure for establishing systems to catalogue African objects. As *Difala* already are in museums, a way needs to be found to describe them, their historical background and their contemporary status. This will help to prepare the ground for a future computerised documentation as part of globalised world technology and in tune with the fact that the important role of computers in cataloguing is rapidly becoming the norm. The majority of collected African artefacts are not signed; there is no acknowledgement of producers, only of collectors. Technical observations about the vessels' construction, form, iconography and surface were a constant part of my inquiry. I propose that an effective way of cataloguing should include photos of separate objects for identification, accompanied by appropriate information that will aid museum professionals to interpret and catalogue objects, while providing their history as recorded in text-based data. In my proposed format for the specific cataloguing of *Difala* vessels, I suggest a descriptive account of the detailed catalogue, with information based on an examination of each vessel concerned, as well as photographs and information gathered by interviewing the makers of *Difala* and contemporary pottery, and contextualising their contributions by consulting currently available literature and the photographs kept in museum archives and libraries.

The descriptive cataloguing of information helps to uncover additional data that gets interpreted and added to a growing body of information. It became obvious that South African museums face challenges in respect of cataloguing *Difala* collections housed in their institutions. Currently, they don't have an actual plan for dealing with cultural objects and to effectively catalogue them, nor is any preparation made for attempts to digitize them in the future. With the aim to obtain information about the original owners of *Difala* vessels kept in museums, I studied records of previous researchers who have looked at the vessels, and I visited the makers of other forms of pottery for the sake of comparing artefacts.

In attempts to determine how vessels in museum collections had been obtained (by passive or active means), I found that many of these collections have been made by anthropologists and were eventually taken to museums. These anthropologists are no longer part of the staff of museums. They have made the effort to get cultural objects housed in institutions where, however, there has been no follow-up research to provide them with the necessary information. The presence in museums of little researched and, in some cases, almost forgotten African cultural artefacts, has opened up an important area of interest and this may advance debates about, and understanding of, the place of material cultures in a globalised world, as well as lead to better descriptions of cultural products for the sake of future generations. It should be noted that the measurements of *Difala*, found in the Polokwane Cultural History museum and IzikoSHC, were taken during my visits to the institutions. I am of the view that sizes could be affected if damage occurs. I propose that in future research the weighing and carbon dating of objects should be part of documenting processes. Comparing the position of the *Sefalana* collection at the IzikoSHC with that of *Difala* in PolokwaneCHM, in both cases the vessels are undocumented and kept in storerooms. Only some details of an ethnographic nature were noted and these comprised all the information at present available in the museums.

Chapter 7 reflects my view that, when criticising existing research, it is best to make contributions of one's own by presenting new results based on credible evidence. I briefly review the main points, arising from earlier chapters, as well as findings, and I add concluding remarks. The information, during the present research collected, on vessels that are decorated using different resources, is aimed at building a foundation for a pertinent understanding of as sacred perceived materials, linked to the environment and to animals that

play significant roles in domestic settings. Products of domestic animals are all utilised in households while, in areas where cattle are kept, cattle-products function in a variety of ways. I demonstrate this by an exploration of the materials from which *Difala* vessels are made and that are considered as sacred in a perception that links various groups which live far from each other but follow similar patterns in their artistic expression. What makes collections of *Difala* vessels unique, is that they are housed in different museums and have been collected in different periods.

7. 2 Findings and concluding remarks

My research identified important lacunae in archival records and other documentation concerning *Difala* vessels that constitute valuable cultural material in local and national heritage institutions. I found that the colonial sources of documentation and cataloguing have destroyed local histories by documenting these in a manner that alienates people from their material cultures. At the same time, it should be noted that some colonial sources were crucial in shaping and preserving heritages that today are found in South African museums and that make it possible to distinguish and foreground major concepts. During fieldwork I found that, when people realise that a certain object in their institution or their community is being studied, they focus their attention on it for the time being. But as soon as the study comes to an end, the interest dies down. Research concerning rare vessels is usually conducted by academics since many museums do not have staff members sufficiently specialized to do research. Research of this nature is also likely - and meant - to raise other issues related to indigenous material culture and, therefore, it is important to make efforts and develop effective systems of documentation to counter the past years of neglect and to support current scholarship as regards the cataloguing of neglected traditions.

In the present research and fieldwork study, the above issues have been addressed by consulting museum officials - specifically at the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum, Polokwane Cultural History Museum and Iziko South African Museums - on identifying and understanding the problems that complicate heritage practice, specifically in the documentation of *Difala* vessel making traditions as part of Southern African indigenous knowledge systems.

My proposed cataloguing model stresses relevant local, regional and international considerations, questions of ethnicity, history, traditional culture and current developments in cataloguing *Difala* vessels, rather than presenting a universal form of catalogue system to be applied to all African works of art, as if African art were monolithic and homogeneous in character. *Difala* vessels cannot be viewed and catalogued along the same lines as other objects in museums, because they differ in terms of types of objects, groups of producers in past and present, and the historical background of their collection. Part of their historical background is the fact that their makers were perceived somewhat negatively, because they were women. Besides, as the vessels were made by rural black women, they cannot be viewed as representative of the overall socio-historical, authentic situation of granaries, but should rather be seen in association with a particular situation that, therefore, can be reconstructed. Many South African black people are no longer cultivating land as they did in the past, because of changing socio-economic circumstances which have resulted in their adoption of new and globalised ways of food storage (for example, the use of refrigerators).

Of African artefacts for the construction of which natural resources provide the material the production is sustainable. However, rural women who make art could benefit from the establishment of so-called ‘cultural villages’ to enable them to teach their skills to younger generations. Such ‘villages’ can present cultural workers with occasions to express their creativity more publicly. Presently, in their usual surroundings, these women make artefacts without the possibility of exhibiting them and with no prospect of meeting potential clients, except a handful of tourists. Feasibility studies should be undertaken to consider, for example, the encouraging of specific styles that may be profitable for artists, among them vessel makers.

The present study advocates that academics and researchers visit rural areas, instead of relying on sources that may tend to exoticize the material culture of rural people. Artists need assistance in marshalling community resources and obtain funding for exhibitions of their work in ways that nurtures their artistic creativity and stimulates, not only the community’s economic stability, but also its awareness of its cultural heritage. It would be a positive move to offer indigenous potters residency and honorary visitor positions in museums, so that they can experience how their work is received by museum audiences and become active participants in cataloguing processes and other museum activities. Immigrant artists are

currently found in all South Africa's big cities producing every type of artefact. This has made of tourist art the fastest growing industry in informal settlements. It is controlled by non-South African artists in urban areas. Sadly, it has negatively affected the growth of rural art production which is generally dominated by women artists who struggle to produce art on a full-time basis. In many museums adequate research to support information on their collections from the perspectives of science and social science is lacking. Among the issues that hinder progress in the cataloguing of products of African material culture are the poor accessibility of institutions, racist perceptions, a lack of skills and expertise, a measure of contestation regarding the ownership of objects, and a physiographic regionalism exhibited by some scholars and other experts who wish to monopolize study fields by sabotaging new research.

South African museums are based on ideological notions, derived from Western schools of thought and, as a result, practise Western ways of interpreting material culture. I am of the view that, institutionally, South African museums will turn out to be undecolonisable if the artefacts collected in the past and housed in these institutions cannot be decolonised. Some South African museums have been specifically established to promote the cultures of certain groups, but, due to the locations where they were built, these institutions generally failed to reach their goals. Transformation in heritage institutions has not been carried out in a careful manner which is why, today, we are studying collections that have spent years in museums without ever being subjected to extensive research. The biggest challenge of museums in rural areas is that they are underfunded and not in a position to undertake projects. Museums are unable to generate their own income. This means that they cannot buy new artefacts to add to their collections, while the culture of ordinary South Africans donating objects to rural museums is not yet a developed practice. Some of these institutions make the impression of being ancient, abandoned establishments.

No exhibitions are organised and damaged artefacts are not restored, due to a lack of resources and expertise, as one museum official said to me. I wonder if, after my research ends, there will be any further study of indigenous vessels that are, like *Difala* works, kept in storerooms. Former white and advantaged heritage institutions have kept retained privileged facilities in museums, also in respect of human resources. This has, after the first democratic elections, been the case in many South African national museums that are located in urban

areas where they mostly serve elites. It is most likely that, in addition to *Difala*, many other collections are kept in storage and not accounted for, as new museum staff lack the necessary experience, skills and relevant qualifications to deal confidently with traditional indigenous art and are offered poor mentorship.

Developing direct contacts with producers of material culture in rural areas may advance the preservation of local creative traditions, such as sustainable pottery production which depends on eco-friendly materials. In that way, potters may benefit as their products will be marketable to consumers while, simultaneously, the degeneration of local traditions is countered. At the same time, the importance of maintaining natural resources, that potters depend on, should be emphasized.

Based on my research I postulate that there is a need to review current ideological premises and epistemological and methodological discourses entrenched in current archaeology, with the aim of offering knowledge that is more specifically relevant to South African material cultures. In doing so, we should apply a broader vision by introducing credible innovative interdisciplinary research approaches while securing the involvement of South African experts. I found that some research methods rooted in foreign approaches are attended by dilemmas concerning the interpretation of local pottery. I recommend the process of validating the knowledge pertaining to clay vessels as well as its application to the society it serves, in contemporary discourse. My research intends to expose recent trends, found to exist in rural communities where clay vessels continue to be made.

The producers of *Difala* vessels don't see themselves as professional potters such as ceramists in urban areas might.

In the relevant section, information provided on clay pottery making traditions is based on case studies I have conducted in Limpopo Province, focusing on developments in many rural areas, that aim at drawing attention to the importance of using natural resources and to the role of cultural practices in the nurturing of continuity. I hope that this thesis may contribute to opening a debate on the need for local craft markets and craft promoters to prioritise pottery produced by rural potters who get little public exposure, as there are in most rural locations no galleries that could stimulate the development of artistic production. In the

Limpopo Province, potters have already started experimenting on the basis of *Difala* traditions. In view of the innovations that are introduced by these potters, researchers need to come up with equally innovative studies on eco-friendly materials suitable for clay pottery and other art production.

Today, many rural Sotho-Tswana in former Bantustans farm on poor land that cannot sustain cattle or produce sufficient crops for their resident communities. *Difala* vessels are unique to the Highveld and grassland areas of South Africa, as they were developed by the Sotho-Tswana groups who inhabited the grassland regions in a sensitive socio-cultural balance of eco-resources and cattle by-products. The production of large-scale *Difala* granaries effectively ceased after the historical stability of cultural practices in keeping with eco-resources was disrupted. Sotho-Tswana people lost their ancestral connections with specific grasslands, the associated cattle-culture and ways of life, and were forced by ethnic conflicts, 19th-century colonial, and 20th-century nationalist, imperatives to adapt to new environments that are fundamentally hostile to *Difala* production. I doubt if, in the storage rooms where they are currently housed, the vessels can be properly preserved. In my opinion, the Bakoni from Ga-Matlala in Limpopo Province, and the Bakgatla-Ba-Kgafêla in Northwest Province and Mochudi, Botswana, cannot claim to be the true custodians of *Difala* vessels as long as these belong to South African museums and the makers of present-day vessels remain unknown. If appropriate measures are not taken to ensure the eco-sustainable use of both natural and cultural resources and preserve them for future generations, the sensitive interconnections of these local systems will surely collapse.

With a view to mitigating the effects of droughts, it may be possible to reintroduce specific identified grasses to regions where drought, overgrazing, and poor use of the land are common and where there is a need for better management of grazing lands. Colonial systems have shaped the ways in which people utilise natural resources, including the tendency to exploit them. In rural areas, there is often no known systematic way to manage the grazing of domestic animals and land management remains a thorny issue. Becoming increasingly problematic, land management is in need of serious attention as the land used by rural communities for cattle grazing is in general still ‘open land’, without any systematic regulation of the usage of resources. In most cases, cattle owners and herders in rural areas concentrate on a specific area for cattle grazing, without applying rotation to allow vegetation

to renew and flourish. While indigenous foods such as cowpea and sorghum associated with *Difala*, are no longer in demand as staple foods in South Africa, the grains or crop residues can still be used for livestock feeding (forage).

I recommend the application of laboratory methods for estimating the nutritive value of forage through analysing the dung composition in selected *Difala* vessels (samples). These laboratory methods and analyses should pay attention to the research that focuses on advancing and improving the use of forage to feed ruminant livestock during drought seasons in rural areas in order to increase productivity as well as develop strategies to improve the use of tropical forage in line with sustainable land use.

The present research exposes the inadequacy of systematic records and the lack of proper contextual methodological documentation in respect of South African heritage collections of indigenous material culture. In view of serious lacunae found in institutional archival records and in the documentation of cultural materials in local and national heritage museums that house representative collections of indigenous African vessels such as rare *Difala* vessels, I further recommend more effective documentary practices. It needs to be stressed, that the *Difala* vessels, among them those that I have photographed for this thesis, are far from numerous in South African museums and have to be preserved for future generations.

I strongly recommend that *Difala* vessels are digitized and kept in national institutions where their safe preservation can be guaranteed. The digitization of objects does obviously offer museums a key for future cataloguing. But before any object can be successfully digitized, a clear and highly detailed description is needed of all its relevant aspects. I hope this thesis will encourage the development and implementation of new descriptive models for accessioning indigenous cultural items and contribute to the reconsideration of current methods applied to dealing with cultural heritage materials in South African museums.

7. 3 Bibliography

- Acocks, J.P.H. 1988. Veld Types of South Africa. 3rd edition. *Memoirs of the Botanical Survey of South Africa*, 57. Pretoria, Botanical Research Institute.
- Acton, H.B. 1952-1953. Tradition and. Some Other Forms of Order. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian society. New Series*, 53, 1-28.
- Ashforth, A. 2005. Witchcraft, Violence, and Democracy in South Africa. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Alasuutari, P. 1995. *Researching Culture: Qualitative Method and Cultural Studies*. London, Sage.
- Ames, M.M. 2004. Museums in the Age of Deconstruction. In Anderson, G. (ed). *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*. Walnut Creek, California, AltaMira Press, 80-99.
- Argyrou, V. 2005. *The logic of environmentalism: Anthropology, ecology, and post coloniality*. New York, Berghahn.
- Arnold, D.E. 1985. *Ceramic Theory and Cultural Process*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Arnold, M. 1996. *Women and Art in South Africa*. Cape Town, David Philips.
- Arnold, D.E. 2018. *Maya potters' indigenous knowledge: cognition, engagement, and practice*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado.
- Aronson, L. 1995. Women in the Arts. In Hay, M.J. (ed.) and S. Stichter. *African Women South of the Sahara*. London, Longman, 119-142.
- Asante, M. 1987. *The Afrocentric idea*. Philadelphia, Temple University Press.
- Ashworth G., Howard P. 1999. *European Heritage: Planning and Management*. Exeter, Portland: Intellect Books.
- Ashworth, G.J., B. Graham, and J.E. Tunbridge. 2005. The uses and abuses of heritage. In Corsane, G. (ed). *Heritage. Museums and Galleries: An Introductory Reader*. London: Routledge, 26-37.
- Attfield, R. 1983. *The Ethics of Environmental Concern*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell.
- Baca, M., Harpring, P., Lanzi, E., McRae, L., and Whiteside, A. 2006. *Cataloguing Cultural Objects: a guide to describing cultural works and their images*. Chicago: American Library Association.

- Bell, B. and I. Calder. 1998. *Ubumba: Aspects of Indigenous Ceramics in KwaZulu-Natal*. Pietermaritzburg, Natal Arts Trust.
- Bennet, T. 1988. Museums and the people. In Lumley, R. (ed.) *The museum time-machine: putting cultures on display*. London. Routledge, 63–85.
- Bennett, B.S. Ancient Egypt, Missionaries and Christianity in Southern Africa. In O'Connor, D. and A. Reid (eds). 2003. *Ancient Egypt in Africa (Encounters with Ancient Egypt series)*. London, UCL Press, 107-120.
- Berlin, B. and P. Kay. 1969. *Basic Color Terms: their Universality and Evolution*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, University of California Press.
- Bernard, H.R. 2002. *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*, (3rd ed.). Walnut Creek, AltaMira Press.
- Bernard, H.R. 2018. *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (6th ed.). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Bird-David, N. 1993. Tribal Metaphorization of Human-Nature Relatedness: A Comparative Analysis. In Milton, K. (ed). *Environmentalism: The View from Anthropology*. London, New York, Routledge, 112-125.
- Bornstein, M.H. 1973. Color Vision and Color Naming: a Psychophysiological Hypothesis of Cultural Difference. *Psychological Bulletin*, 80, 257-285.
- Bowser, B.J. 2000. From pottery to politics: An ethnoarchaeological study of political factionalism, ethnicity, and domestic pottery style in the Ecuadorian Amazon. *J ARCHAEM*, 7(3), 219-248.
- Brain, R. 1980. *Art and Society in Africa*. London, Brandenburg.
- Braithwaite, G. 2007. *Faces from the Past: A Study of Roman Face Pots from Italy and the Western Provinces of the Roman Empire. BAR International Series 1651*. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Breutz, P.L. 1963. *The Tribes of the Districts of Kuruman and Postmasburg*. Ethnological publications, 49. Pretoria: The Government Printer.
- Brochure. n.d. ca 2014. *Polokwane museums*. City of Polokwane, DT52740 Review Printers.
- Brown, J.A. 1978. *South African Art*. Cape Town, MacDonald.
- Brownlee, F. 1938. *Lion and Jackal and Other Native Folk Tales from South Africa*. London, George Allen and Unwin.

- Buck, R.A. and others. 2007. *Collection Conundrums: Solving Collections Management Mysteries*. Washington D.C., American Association of Museums.
- Buettner, E, 2016. *Europe after Empire: Decolonization, Society, and Culture*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Burchell, W.J. 1822. *Travels in the interior of southern Africa*, 2. London, Longman, Hurst, Tees, Orme, Brown and Green.
- Burkette, A. 2018. *Language and Classification: Meaning- Making in the Classification and Categorization of Ceramics*. New York: Routledge.
- Cabral, A. 1994. National Liberation and Culture. In Williams, P. and L. Chrisman (eds). *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: A Reader*. New York, Columbia University Press, 53-65.
- Calder, I. 1998. Continuing innovation and tradition in KwaZulu-Natal figurative sculpture: Hezekile Ntuli and Contemporary Ceramics. In Bell, B. and I. Calder (eds). 1998. *Ubumba: Aspects of Indigenous Ceramics in KwaZulu-Natal*. Pietermaritzburg, Tatham Art Gallery, 61-84.
- Calder, I. 1999. The inception of Rorke's Drift Pottery workshop: Tradition and innovation. In *South African association of Art historians, proceeding of 15th Annual conference*. University of Natal. Pietermaritzburg 24th -26th September 1999.
- Carroll, N. 1999. *Philosophy of art. A contemporary introduction*. New York, Routledge.
- Case, M. 1988. What Registers Do All Day. In Case, M. (ed). *Registrars on Record: Essays on Museum Collection Management*. Washington D.C., American Association of Museums, 13-33.
- Counce, S. 1994. *Oral History and the Local Historian*. London, Longmans.
- Césaire, A. 1994. Discourse on Colonialism. In Williams, P., and L. Chrisman (eds). *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: A Reader*. New York, Columbia University Press, 172-179.
- Césaire, A. 2000. *Discourse on Colonialism*. Translated by Joan Pinkham. New York, Monthly Review Press, 29-94.
- Chenhall, R.G. (ed). 1988. *The Revised Nomenclature for Museum Cataloguing: A Revised and Expanded Version of Robert G. Chenhall's System for Classifying Man-Made Objects*. Nashville, AASLH Press.

- Claassens, A and Boyle. B. 2015. A Promise Betrayed: Policies and Practice Renew the Rural Dispossession of Land, Rights and Prospects. *SAIIA Policy Briefing*. No 124. Published in Policy Briefings.
- Claassens, A. 2001. It is not easy to challenge a chief: Lessons from Rakgwadi'. *Research Report*, 9, Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies. Cape Town, University of Cape Town.
- Clark, G., and L. Wagner. 1974. *Potters of Southern Africa*. Cape Town, Struik.
- Cohen, R. 1986. *Endgame in South Africa? The Changing Structures and Ideology of Apartheid*. London, James Currey.
- Collection online, bowl. Viewed 06 June 2014, from (http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=588642&partId=1ðname=2686&page=1).
- Collins, M. 2017. *Nation, State, and Agency: Evolving Historiographies of African Decolonization*, in Andrew W.M. Smith and Chris Jeppesen (eds.), *Future Imperfect: Britain, France, and the Decolonization of Africa*, London, UK: UCL Press.
- Comaroff, J.L., Comaroff, J., James, D. (Eds.). (2007). *Picturing a colonial past: The African photographs of Isaac Schapera*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Coombes, A.E. 2003. *History After Apartheid: Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa*. Durham, N.C, Duke University Press.
- Coote, J. and A. Shelton. 1992. Introduction. In Coote, J., and A. Shelton (eds. 1996. *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1-11.
- Cotton, C.M. 1996. *Ethnobotany: Principles and Applications*. New York, John Wiley & Sons, Chichester.
- Coutt-Smith, K. 1991. Some general observation on the problem of cultural colonialism. In Hiller. S. (ed). *The myth of primitivism: perspective on art*. London, Routledge, 5-18.
- Cowen, T. 2002. *Creative Destruction: How Globalization is Changing the World's Cultures*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Creswell, J.W. 2014. *Research Design*. 4th edition. Thousand Oak, Sage Publications.
- Cruise, W. 1991. *Contemporary Ceramics in South Africa*. Cape Town, Struik Winchester.
- Daniell, S. 1804-1805. *African scenery and animals*. London, Samuel Daniell.

- Darwin, J. 2009. *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-system, 1830–1970*. Cambridge, New York, Cambridge University.
- Davies, I.R., C. Macdermid, G.G., Corbett, H., McGurk, D. Jerrett, T., Jerrett, T., and Sowden, P. 1992. *Color terms in Setswana: a linguistic and perceptual approach*. *Linguistics*, 30. 1065-1104.
- Davison, P. 1998. Museums and the reshaping of memory. In Nuttall, S., and C. Coetzee (eds). *Negotiating the Past - The Making of Memory in South Africa*. Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 143-160.
- De Jager, E.J. 1973. *Contemporary African Art in South Africa*. Cape Town, Struik.
- De Ruijter, M., C. Antomarchi and I. Verger. 2010. Handling of collections in storage. In *Cultural heritage protection handbook*, 5. Paris, Unesco.
- Delsey, T. 1989. Standards for Descriptive Cataloguing: Two Perspectives on the Past Twenty Years. In Svenonius, E. (ed). *The Conceptual Foundations of Descriptive Cataloguing*. San Diego, CA, Academic Press, 51-60.
- DesJardins, J.R. 2006. *Environmental Ethics: An Introduction to Environmental Philosophy*. 4th edition. Belmont, CA, Wadsworth.
- Diamond, J. 1997. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. New York, W.W. Norton.
- Dilley, D. 2007. The Construction of Ethnographic Knowledge in a Colonial Context. In Harris, M. (ed). *Ways of Knowing: New Approaches in the Anthropology of Experience and Learning*. New York, Berghahn Books, 139-57.
- *Draft National Museums Policy*. Viewed 06 June 2017, from (https://www.westerncape.gov.za/assets/departments/cultural-affairs-sport/draft_national_museum_policy.pdf).
- Dubb, A.A. 1974. The Impact of the City. In Hammond-Tooke, W.D. (ed). *The Bantu-Speaking Peoples of Southern Africa*. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 441-472.
- Dubin, S.C. 2006. *Transforming museums: mounting Queen Victoria in a democratic South Africa*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dubow, S. 1989. *Racial Segregation and the Origins of Apartheid in South Africa, 1919–36*. London, Macmillan.

- Duggan-Cronin, A.M. 1929. The Bantu Tribes of South Africa: reproductions of photographic studies. 2,1. *The Suto-Chuana tribes: The Bechuana*. Cambridge, Deighton, Bell. Kimberley, Alexander McGregor Memorial Museum.
- Duggan-Cronin, A.M. 1929. The Bantu Tribes of South Africa: reproductions of photographic studies. 2, 2. *The Suto-Chuana tribes: Bapedi (Transvaal Basotho)*. Cambridge, Deighton, Bell. Kimberley, Alexander McGregor Memorial Museum.
- Durrans, B. 1988. The future of the other, changing cultures on display in ethnographic museums. In Lumley, R. (ed). *The Museum Time Machine*. London, Comedia/Routledge, 144-69.
- Ellen, R.F. 1984. Introduction. In Ellen, R.F. (ed). *Ethnographic Research: A Guide To General Conduct*. London, Academic Press, 1-12.
- Elliot, A. 1989. *The Ndebele, art and culture*. Cape Town, Struik.
- Enge, E.D. and B.F. Smith. 2010. *Environmental Science: A study of interrelationships*. 12th edition. New York, McGraw-Hill.
- Errington, S. 1998. *The Death of Authentic Primitive Art and Other Tales of Progress*. Berkeley, CA, University of California Press.
- Fahy, A. 1995. New technologies for museum communication. In Hooper-Greenhill, E. (ed). *Museum, Media, Message*. London, Routledge, 82-96.
- Fanon, F. 1961. *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York, Penguin Book Ltd.
- Fanon, F. 1994. On National Culture. In Williams, P., and L., Chrisman (eds). *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory. A Reader*. New York, Columbia University Press, 36-52.
- Finch, P.S. 1988. The Essential Collections Inventory. In Case, M. (ed). *Registrars on Record: Essays on Museum Collection Management*. Washington D.C, American Association of Museums, 145-158.
- Firth, R. 1992. Art and Anthropology. In Coote, J., and A. Shelton (eds). *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 15-39.
- Fowler, K.D. 2006. Classification and collapse: the ethnohistory of Zulu ceramic use. *Southern African Humanities* 18, 2, 93-117.
- Fowler, K.D. 2008. Zulu pottery production in the Lower Thukela Basin, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *Southern African Humanities*, 20, 477-511.
- French, N. 1998. *The Potter's Directory of Shape and Form*. London, New Burlington Books.

- Frescura, F. 1989. An Introduction to Tswana Architecture. *SA Journal of art and cultural history*. 3, 2. 148-164.
- Gabrielli, G (PDF not dated) in *Preparing the Catalogue Raisonné: A Guideline for Publishing Online*. (n.d). Viewed 06 June 2014, from (<http://metro.org/media/files/files/0df1431c/Gabrielli.pdf>).
- Gaylard, G. 2004. *The Craft Industry in South Africa: a review of ten years of democracy, African Arts*. Viewed 06 June 2014, from (http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0438/is_/ai_n137750_92).
- Geertz, C. 1973. *The Interpretations of Cultures*. New York, Basic Books.
- Giannachi, G., and N. Stewart. 2005. *Performing Nature: Explorations in Ecology and the Arts*. Oxford, Bern, New York, Peter Lang.
- Golding, V. 2009. *Learning at the museum frontiers. Identity, Race and Power*. Surrey, UK: Ashgate.
- Goodnow, J., J. Lohman and J. Bredekamp. 2006. *Challenge and Transformation: Museums in Cape Town and Sydney*. Paris, Unesco.
- Goodwin, J.H. 1937. Habitat. In Schapera, I. and W.D. Hammond-Tooke (eds). *The Bantu-speaking peoples of Southern Africa: An Ethnographical Survey*. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 33-38.
- Gordon, G. 2005. *Philosophy of the Arts: An Introduction to Aesthetics*. 3rd edition. London, New York, Routledge.
- Gordon, R.J. 1988. Apartheid's Anthropologists: the Genealogy of Afrikaner Anthropology. In *American Ethnologist*. 15, 3, 535-553.
- Gosselain, O.P. 1992. Technology and style: Potters and pottery among Bafia of Cameroon. *Man*. 27 (3), 559-586.
- Graburn, N. 1976. *Ethnic and Tourist Arts: Cultural Expressions from the Fourth World*. Berkeley, University of California Press.
- Grace, R. 1997. The `chaîne opératoire approach to lithic analysis. *Internet Archaeology*. 2. Council for British Archaeology. *Internet Archaeology*, (2). <https://doi.org/10.11141/ia.2.3>
- Gray, C.C. 2001. *Afrocentric thought and praxis: an intellectual history*. Trenton, NJ, Africa World Press.
- Grimshaw, A. 2001. *The Ethnographer's Eye: Ways of Seeing in Modern Anthropology*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

- Gyekye, K. 1997. *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Hall, M. 1984. The Burden of Tribalism: The Social Context of Southern African Iron Age Studies. *American Antiquity*. 49, 455-67.
- Hall, M. 2002. *The Potter's Techniques Manual: a foundation course in easy step*. London, Apple Press.
- Hamer, F. 1975. *The Potter's Dictionary of Materials and Techniques*. London, Pitman Publishing.
- Hammond-Tooke, W. D. 1937. World-view I: A system of beliefs. In Hammond-Tooke, W.D. (ed). *The Bantu-Speaking Peoples of Southern Africa*. London, Boston, Routledge and Kegan Paul. 318-66.
- Hammond-Tooke, W.D. 1974. World-view II: A system of beliefs. In Hammond-Tooke, W.D. (ed). *The Bantu-Speaking Peoples of Southern Africa*. London, Boston, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 344-63.
- Hammond-Tooke, W.D. 2004. Southern Bantu origins: light from kinship terminology. *Southern African Humanities*. 16. 71-78.
- Hammond-Tooke, W.D. 1993. *The Roots of Black South Africa: An Introduction to the Traditional Culture of the Black People of South Africa*. Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball.
- Hammond-Tooke, W.D. 1975. African Worldview and its Relevance for Psychiatry. *Psychologia Africana*. 16, 25-32.
- Hammond-Tooke, W.D. 1981. *Boundaries and Belief: The Structure of a Sotho Worldview*. Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press.
- Hammond-Tooke, W.D. 1997. *Imperfect Interpreters: South Africa's Anthropologists, 1920–1990*. Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press.
- Harvey, B, and J.D. Hallet. 1977. *Environment and Society: An Introductory Analysis*. London, Macmillan Press.
- Hatcher, E.P. 1985. *Art as Culture: an Introduction to the Anthropology of Art*. Lanham, London University Press of America.
- Hellman, E. 1937. The Native in the Towns. In Schapera, I. (ed). *The Bantu-Speaking Tribes of South Africa*. New York, Humanities Press. 405-34.
- Hobsbawm, E and T. Ranger (eds). 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

- Hobsbawm, E.1983. Introduction: Inventing Tradition. In Hobsbawm, E.J., and T, Ranger (eds). *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge, Cambridge University, 1-14.
- Hodder, I. 1996. The contextual analysis of symbolic meanings. In Pearce, S. (ed). *Interpreting Objects and Collections*. London, Routledge, 12-18.
- Hoernlé, A.W. 1937. Magic and Medicine. In Schapera, I. (ed). *The Bantu-Speaking Tribes of South Africa*. London. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 221- 45.
- Hoffman, I. 2006. Management of Farm Animal Genetic Resources: Change and Interaction. In Jarvis, D.J., C. Padoch and H.D. Cooper. (eds). *Managing Biodiversity in agricultural ecosystem*. New York, Columbia University Press, 141-180.
- Hooper-Greenhill, E. 1994. Education, communication, and interpretation: towards a critical pedagogy in museum. In Hooper-Greenhill. E. (ed). *The Education Role of the Museum*. London, Routledge, 3-27.
- Hopper, R. 2000. *Functional pottery: Form and aesthetic in pots of purpose*. 2nd ed. London, Krause Publications.
- Horton, R. 1967. African traditional thought and western science. *Africa*, 37. 50 -71.
- Hudson, K. 1992. The Dream and the Reality. 20 years of eco-museums and ecomuseology. *Museums Journal*, 92 (4), 27-31.
- Huffman, T.N. 2007. *A Handbook to the Iron Age: The Archaeology of Pre-Colonial Farming Societies in Southern Africa*. Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.
- Hughes, J.C, H.C. Bester and I.M.S. Calder. 1997. Some mineralogical, physical, and chemical characteristics of some South African commercial ceramic clays and a Zulu pottery clay. Procs. *11th Int. Clay Conf.* Ottawa, Canada, 37- 44.
- Hunter, E.J. and K.G.B. Bakewell. 1991. *Cataloguing*. 3rd ed. London, Library Association.
- Hutchinson, J.B., R.A. Silow and S.G. Stephens. 1947. *The evolution of Gossypium and the differentiation of the cultivated cottons*. London, Oxford University Press.
- *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*. Viewed 06 June 2017, from (http://icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/Codes/code_ethics2013_eng.pdf).
- ICOM. 1996. *Handbook of Standards: Documenting African Collections*. Paris, ICOM.
- Indigenous knowledge/Ethnography (n.d). Viewed 06 June 2014, from (<http://www.iziko.org.za/static/page/indigenous-knowledge-ethnography>).

- James, D.A. 1990. A Question of Ethnicity: Ndzundza Ndebele in a Lebowa Village. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 16, 1.
- Jeffers, C.C. 2003. Museum as process. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 37 (1), 107-119.
- Jolles, F. 2005. The origins of the twentieth century Zulu beer vessel styles. *Southern African Humanities*, Pietermaritzburg. 17, 101-151.
- Jolles, F. and K. Nel. 2015. *Zulu Beer Vessels – In the Twentieth Century*. Stuttgart, Germany, Arnoldsche Art Publishers.
- Jordaan, J. 1992. *The Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum: establishment and management*. Booklet commissioned by the town council of Pietersburg (now Polokwane). Review printers.
- Jordanova, L. 1989. Objects of knowledge: a historical perspective on museums. In Vergo, P. (ed). *The New Museology*. London, Reaktion Books, 22-40.
- Joubert, A. 2004. *The power of performance: Linking past and present in Hananwa and Lobedu oral literature*. Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter.
- Joyce, P. 2009. *Cultures of South Africa: A Celebration*. Cape Town, Sunbird Publishers.
- Kaplan, F. and D.M. Levine. 1981. Cognitive mapping of a folk taxonomy of Mexican pottery: A multivariate approach. *American Anthropologist*, 83, 868-85.
- Kaplan, F.E.S. 1995. Exhibition as communicative media. In Hooper-Greenhill, E. (ed). *Museum, Media, Message*. London, Routledge.
- Karp, I. 1992. *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture*. Washington, Smithsonian.
- Keesing, R. 1975. *Kin Groups and Social Structure*. New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Keesing, R. and A. Strathern. 1998. *Cultural Anthropology: A Contemporary Perspective*. 3rd edition. Orlando, USA, Harcourt Brace & Co.
- Kerlinger, F.N. 1979. *Behavioral research: A conceptual approach*. New York, Holt.
- Kgopa, D.M. 2003. *The role of Pietersburg museum in post-apartheid South Africa*. Master's thesis. Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand.
- Knappert, J. 1985. *Myths and Legends of Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland*. Leiden, Brill.
- Knell, S. (ed). 1994. *Care of Collections*. Leicester, UK, Routledge.

- Koopman J. 1995. Women in the Rural Economy: Past, Present and Future. In M. J. Hay and S. Stichter (eds). *African Women South of the Sahara*. Harlow. Longman, 3-22.
- Kramer, H. 1995. Studying the Arts and the Humanities: What Can Be Done? In Kramer, H., and R. Kimball. *Against the Grain: The New Criterion on Art and Intellect at the End of the Twentieth Century*. Chicago, Ivan R. Dee.
- Kreps C. 2011. Changing the rules of the road: Post-colonialism and the new ethics of museum anthropology. In: Marstine J (ed). *The Routledge Companion to Museum Ethics*. London and New York. Routledge, 70-84.
- Kresse, K. 2007. Practicing an Anthropology of Philosophy: General Reflections and the Swahili Context. In Harris, M. (ed). 2007. *Ways of Knowing: New Approaches in the Anthropology of Experience and Learning*. New York, Berghahn Books, 42-63.
- Krige, E. Jensen and Krige, J. D. 1943. *The Realm of a Rain-Queen: A Study of the Pattern of Lovedu Society*. London, Oxford University Press.
- Kuklick, H. 2011. Personal Equations: Reflections on the History of Fieldwork, With Special Reference to Sociocultural Anthropology. *Isis*, 102, 1-33.
- Kuper, A. 2007. Isaac Schapera (1905–2003): his life and times. In: Comaroff, J. L. and Comaroff, J and James, D. (eds.) *Picturing a Colonial Past: the African Photographs of Isaac Schapera*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, USA, 19-39.
- Laidler, P.W. 1938. South African Native Ceramics: Their Characteristics and Classification. *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Africa*, 26, 93-172.
- Landau, P.S. 2010. *Popular Politics in the History of South Africa, 1400-1948*. New York, Cambridge University Press.
- Lawton, A.C. 1967. Bantu Pottery of Southern Africa. *Annals of the South-African Museum* 49 (1), 1- 440.
- Layton, R. 1991. *The anthropology of art*. 2nd edition. Cambridge, England, Cambridge University Press.
- Legassick, M. 1969. The Sotho-Tswana peoples before 1800. In: Thompson, L. (ed). *African societies in southern Africa*. London, Heinemann, 86 -125.
- Legassick, M. 1977. Gold, Agriculture, and Secondary Industry in South Africa, 1885-1970: From Periphery to Sub-Metropole as a forced labour System. In Palmer, R. and N. Parsons (eds). *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa*. London, Heinemann, 175-200.

- Legassick, M. 2010. *The politics of a South African frontier: The Griqua, the Sotho-Tswana and the Missionaries, 1780–1840*. Basel, Basler Africa Bibliographien.
- Lestrade, G.P. 1929 (1984). With introductory articles on the Suto-Chuana tribes and the Bechuana. Duggan-Cronin (A.M.). *The Bantu tribes of South Africa*. Reproductions of Photographic Studies. Vol. II, 1. Plates 1 – xxvi. The Suto-Chuana tribes. Kimberley, McGregor Memorial Museum.
- Lestrade, G.P. 1937. Domestic and Communal Life. In Schapera, I. (ed). *Bantu-Speaking Tribes of South Africa*. London, George Routledge & Sons, 119-130.
- Lesure, R. 2005. Linking Theory and Evidence in an Archaeology of Human Agency: Iconography, Style, and Theories of Embodiment. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*, 12 (3), 237-255.
- Levinsohn, R. 1984. *Art and Craft in Southern Africa*. Johannesburg, Delta Books.
- Livingstone, D. 1857. *Missionary Travels*. London, Ward, Lock and Company Limited.
- Lombard, M. and I. Parsons. 2003. Ritual Practice in a Domestic Space: Evidence from Melora Hilltop, a Late Iron Age Stone-Walled Settlement in the Waterberg, Limpopo. *South African Archaeological Bulletin*, 58, 178.
- Lord, B., Lord, G.D., Martin, L. 2012. *Manual of Museum Planning: Sustainable Space, Facilities, and Operations*. 3rd Edition. UK. AltaMira Press.
- Loubser, J.H.N. 1994. Ndebele archaeology of the Pietersburg area. *Navorsing van die Nasionale Museum*, Bloemfontein 10, 61-147.
- Louwrens, L.J. 2001. Reduplication in Sotho-Tswana plant names and the cognitive salience of life forms. *South African Journal of Ethnology* 24, (4), 147-160.
- Mackenzie, J. 1887. *Austral Africa: Losing It or Ruling It; Being Incidents and Experiences in Bechuanaland, Cape Colony, and England*. London, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington.
- Maggs, T. and V. Ward. 2011. Judith Mkhabela, an Inspirational Potter from KwaZulu-Natal. *Southern African Humanities*, 23. Sept. 2011, 151-71.
- Main, M. 2001. *African Adventurer's Guide to Botswana*. Cape Town, Struik.
- Makgoba, M.W. 1997. *Mokoko: The Makgoba Affair: A Reflection on Transformation*. Florida Hills, South Africa: Vivlia Publishers.
- Malaro, M.C. 1998. *A legal primer on managing museum collections*. Washington D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press.

- Manaka, M. 1987. *Echoes of African Art*. Skotaville Publishers.
- Mannion, A.M. 1997. *Global environmental change: a natural and cultural environmental history*. London, Longman.
- Martinon-Torres, M. 2002. *Chaîne opératoire: The concept and its applications within the study of technology*. London, University College.
- Mathieu, P. 2003. *Sexpots: Eroticism in Ceramics*. London, A&C Black.
- Mbiti, J.S. 1990. *African Religions and Philosophy*. Oxford, Heinemann.
- Mbiti, J.S. 1969. *African Religion and Philosophy*. London, Heinemann.
- McClintock, A. 1994. The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term "Post colonialism". In Williams, P., and L. Chrisman. (eds). *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: A Reader*. New York, Columbia University Press.
- McKenna, G., E. Patsatzi. 2005. *SPECTRUM: The UK museum documentation standard*. Cambridge, England, Museum Documentation Association.
- Memmi, A. 1991. *The colonizer and the colonized*. Boston, Beacon press.
- Meredith, M. 2007. *Diamonds, Gold, and War: The British, the Boers, and the Making of South Africa*. New York. Public Affairs.
- Mesa-Bains, M. 2004. The Real Multiculturalism: A Struggle for Power and Authority. In Anderson, G. (ed). *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*. Walnut Creek, California, AltaMira Press, 99-109.
- Mieder, W. 1994. *African proverb scholarship: An annotated bibliography*. Burlington, Queen City Printers.
- Mignolo, W. 2011. *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Durham, Duke UP.
- Mignolo, W. D., & Walsh, C. E. 2018. *On decoloniality: Concepts, analytics, praxis*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Miles, E. 1997. *Land and Lives - a story of early black artists*. Pretoria, Human & Rousseau.
- Miller, T. and L. Bell. 2002. Consenting to what? Issues of access, gate-keeping and 'informed' consent. In Mauthner, M., M. Birch, J. Jessop and T. Miller. *Ethics in Qualitative Research*. London, Sage, 53-69.

- Milton, K. (ed). 1993. Introduction: *Environmentalism and anthropology*. *Environmentalism: The View From Anthropology*. London, New York, Routledge, 112-125.
- Mishra, V. and B. Hodge. 1994. What is Post (-) colonialism? In Williams, P. and L. Chrisman. (eds). *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory*. New York, Columbia University Press, 276-290.
- Moifatswana, S.M. 1993. Some notes on grain storage in the North-Western Transvaal. *Southern African Field Archaeology*, 2, 85-88.
- Mokgatle, N. 1971. *The Autobiography of an Unknown South African*. London, Christopher Hurst company.
- Mönning, H.O. 1967. *The Pedi*. Pretoria, Van Schaik.
- Montague, W.P. 1958. *The Ways of Knowing*. London, George Allen and Unwin.
- Moran, E.F. 2006. *People and Nature: An Introduction to Human Ecological Relations*. New York, Blackwell.
- Motsamayi, M.F. 2018. 'Ceramic trends in Limpopo, South Africa'. *NCECA Journal*. Vol., no. 39, 152-155.
- Motsamayi, M.F. 2012. *The Bernstein Collection of Rorke's Drift ceramics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal: a catalogue raisonné*. Unpublished dissertation Master of Arts (Art History), Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal.
- Motsamayi, M.F. 2014. Art and Cultural Practices: Environmental Dilemmas in Capricorn District Municipality. Athens, *ATINER'S Conference Paper Series*. ART2014-1146.
- Motsamayi, M.F. 2015. Ecological considerations and indigenous pottery of Limpopo Province, South Africa. In *Biennial meeting of the Soil Ecology Society*. Colorado Springs, USA. June 9th-12th. Available at (<http://soilecologysociety.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/2015-Meeting-Program.pdf>), 81-81.
- Mphahlele, E. 1962. *The African image*. London, Faber and Faber.
- Mudimbe, V.Y. 1988. *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.
- Mudimbe, V.Y. 1994. *The Idea of Africa*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.
- National Archives and Records Service of South Africa act (ACT NO. 43 OF 1996) as amended by Cultural Laws Amendment Act 36 of 2001. Viewed 06 June 2015, from (http://www.dcs.gov.za/homepage_paia/Documents/Legislation/Archives%20Act.pdf)

- Native Affairs Department. 1905. *Transvaal, Short History of the Native Tribes of the Transvaal*. Pretoria, Govt. Printing and Stationery Office.
- Nettleton, A. 1991. Tradition, Authenticity and Tourist Sculpture in 19th and 20th Century South Africa. In Keene, R. (ed). 1991. *Art and Ambiguity, Perspectives on the Brenthurst Collection of Southern African Art*. Johannesburg, Johannesburg Art Gallery, 32-47.
- Nilant, F.G. E. 1963. *Contemporary pottery in South Africa*. Cape Town, A. A. Balkema.
- Nochlin, L. 1988. 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?' in *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays*. New York: Harper & Row, 145-178.
- Nochlin, L. 1999. *Representing Women*. London, Thames and Hudson.
- O'Barr, J. and K. Firmin-Seller. 1995. African women in politics. In Hay, M.J., and S. Stichter (eds). *African women south of the Sahara*. London, Longman, 189-212.
- Obbo, C. 1980. *African Women: Their Struggle for Economic Independence*. London, Zed Books.
- Odora-Hoppers, C.A. 2002. Indigenous knowledge and the integration of knowledge systems: towards a conceptual and methodological framework. In Odora-Hoppers, C.A. (ed) *Indigenous knowledge and the integration of knowledge systems: towards a philosophy of articulation*. Claremont, South Africa, New Africa Books (Pty), 2-22
- Okihiro, Y.G. 1984. Precolonial Economic Change among the Tlhaping, c. 1795-1817. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 17 (1), 59-79.
- Olivier de Sardan, J.P. 2015. *Epistemology, Fieldwork, and Anthropology*. New York, Palgrave.
- Onciul, B. 2015. Museums, heritage and Indigenous voice: Decolonizing engagement. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Our Communities. (n.d.). Viewed 06 June 2014, from (http://www.polokwane.gov.za/index.php?view_page+494).
- Pauw, B.A. 1974. The Influence of Christianity. In Hammond-Tooke, W.D. (ed). *The Bantu-Speaking Peoples of Southern Africa*. London, Boston, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 415- 440.
- Pearce, S.M. 1992. *Museums, objects, and collections: a cultural study*. Leicester, Leicester University Press.

- Pearce, S.M. 1994. Objects as Meaning; or Narrating the Past. In *Museums, objects, and collections: a cultural study*. New York, Routledge, 19-29.
- Pepper, D. 1984. *The roots of modern environmentalism*. London, Croom Helm.
- Perrill, E. 2012. *Zulu Pottery*. Cape Town, Print Matters.
- Peterson, S and J. Peterson. 2003. *The Craft and Art of Clay: A Complete Potter's Handbook*. 4th edition. London, Laurence King Publishing.
- Pike, K.L. 1967. *Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of the Structure of Human Behavior*. 2nd ed. The Hague, Mouton and Co.
- Pink, S. 2001. *Doing Visual Ethnography: images, media and representation in research*. London, Sage.
- Poland, M. and D. Hammond-Tooke. 2003. *The Abundant Herds: A Celebration of the Cattle of the Zulu People*. Artwork by Leigh Voigt. Vlaeberg, Fernwood press.
- Pons, V. 1992. *Introduction to social research*. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, Dar es Salaam University Press.
- Portelli, A. 2006. *What makes oral history different*. In R. Perks & A. Thomson (Eds.), *The oral history reader*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 32-42.
- PORTFOLIO SAMUEL DANIELL. THE COMPLETE WORKS. (39). Viewed 06 June 2017, from (<http://en.wahooart.com/@/SamuelDaniell>).
- Potash, B. 1995. Women in the Changing African Family. In Hay, M.J., and S. Stichter. (eds). *African Women South of the Sahara*. London, Longman, 69-92.
- Pottier, J. 2003. Negotiating Local Knowledge: An Introduction. In Pottier, J, P. Sillitoe and A. Bicker. (eds). *Negotiating local knowledge: power and identity in development*. London, Pluto Press, 69-92.
- Powell, I. 1995. *Ndebele: A People and Their Art*. Cape Town, Struik.
- Preston-Whyte, E. 1974. Kinship and marriage. In Hammond-Tooke, W.D. (ed). *The Bantu-Speaking Peoples of Southern Africa*. London, Routledge and Kegan, 177–210.
- Price, S. 1989. *Primitive Art in Civilized Places*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Quin, P.J. 1959. *Foods and feeding habits of the Pedi*. Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press.
- Ranger, T.O. 1983. The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa. In Hobsbawm, E.J., and T.O. Ranger. (eds). *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 211-262.

- Rassool, C. 2006. Community Museums, Memory Politics and Social Transformation in South Africa: Histories, Possibilities and Limit. In Karp, I., A.C. Kratz, L. Szwaja, Ybarra-Frausto, G. Buntix, and B. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett. (eds). *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*. Durham, Duke University Press, 286-321.
- Rawson, P. 1971. *Ceramics*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Read, W, D. 2007. *Artefact Classification: A Conceptual and Methodological Approach*. Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press.
- Redding, S. 2006. *Sorcery and Sovereignty: Taxation, Power and Rebellion in South Africa, 1880–1963*. Athens, Ohio University Press.
- Reed, J.D. Undated. *Characteristic of tropical plants that determine nutritive value*. Unpublished paper. Department of Meat and Animal Science. University of Wisconsin. Madison, United States of America.
- Reed, J.D. Undated. *Nutritive value and use of feeds in Africa feed resources on small farms in Africa*. Unpublished paper. Department of Meat and Animal Science. University of Wisconsin. Madison, United States of America.
- Richard. Z. 1999. *Ceramics, ways of creation*. Iola, WI, Krause Publications.
- Richards, D. 1994. *Masks of Difference. Cultural Representations in Literature, Anthropology and Art*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Riep, D.M.M. 2008. DVD, *South Sotho Pot Making – Southern Africa*. Distributed by Createspace.
- Robertson, C. 1984. Women in the Urban Economy. In Hay, M.J., and S. Sticher. (eds). *African Women South of the Sahara*. London, Longman, 44-65.
- Ross, R. 1981. Capitalism, expansion and incorporation on the Southern African Frontier. In Lamar, H. and L. Thompson. (eds). *The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa Compared*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 207–36.
- Ross, R. 2009. *A Concise History of South Africa*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 207-36.
- Roy, C.D. 1991. *Women's art in Africa: Woodfired pottery from Iowa collections*. Iowa City, the museum.
- Sackett, J.R. 1982. Approaches to style in lithic archaeology. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 1, 59-112.
- Said, E. 1978. *Orientalism*. New York, Vintage Books.

- *SAMA Constitution*. As approved by the 77th SAMA AGM held in Kimberley on 24 October 2013. Viewed 06 June 2017, from (<http://sama.za.net/home-page/samab-journal/>).
- *SAMA's professional standards and transformation indicators*. Retrieved 06 June 2014, from (<http://sama.za.net/home-page/samab-journal/>).
- Sampson, K.L. 1992. Value-added records management: protecting corporate assets and reducing business risks. New York, NY: Quorum Books.
- Sandler, I. 1996. *Art of the Postmodernism Era: From the Late 1960's to The Early 1990's*. New York, Harper Collins Publishers.
- Sansom, B. 1974. Traditional economic systems. In Hammond-Tooke, W.D. (ed). *The Bantu Speaking Peoples of Southern Africa*. London, Routledge, 135-76.
- Sarantakos, S. 1993. *Social Research*. Australia, Macmillan Education.
- Schapera, I. 1936. The Native Inhabitants. In Walker, E. (ed). *Cambridge History of the British Empire, VIII. South Africa, Rhodesia and the Protectorates*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 20-50.
- Schapera, I. 1937. Cultural Changes in Tribal Life. In Schapera, I. (ed). *The Bantu-Speaking Tribes of South Africa: An Ethnographic Survey*. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 357-388.
- Schapera, I., and A.J.H. Goodwin. 1937. Work and wealth. In Schapera, I. (ed). *The Bantu Speaking Tribes of South Africa*. London, George Routledge & Sons, 131-72.
- Schapera, I.A. 1942. *Short History of Bakgatla ba ga Kgafela of Bechuanaland Protectorate*. Cape Town, University of Cape Town, School of African Studies, 3.
- Scheub, H. 1977. *African Oral Narratives, Proverbs, Riddles, Poetry and Song*. Boston, G.K. Hall.
- Schmiegel, K, A. 1988. Managing Collections Information. In Case, M. (ed). *Registrars on Record: Essays on museum collections management*. Washington D.C., American Association of Museums, 47-56.
- Schmierer, H.F. 1989. The Impact of Technology on Cataloging Rules. In Svenonius, E. (ed). *The Conceptual Foundations of Descriptive Cataloguing*. San Diego, Academic Press, 97-100.
- Schneider, E.A. 1989. Art and Communication: Ndzundza Ndebele Wall. Decoration in the Transvaal. In Nettleton, A. and W.D. Hammond-Tooke.,

- (eds). *African Art in Southern Africa: From Tradition to Township*. Johannesburg, Ad Donker publisher. 103-122.
- Schofield, J. F. 1948. Primitive pottery. An introduction to South African ceramics, prehistoric and protohistoric. *South African Archaeological Society*. Kaapstad, Storey Books.
 - Schofield, J.F. 1943. A preliminary study of the pottery of the Bantu tribes of the Union of South Africa. *South African Journal of Science* 39: 256-281.
 - Seeger, A. 1986. Oratory is Spoken, Myth is Told, and Song is Sung, But They Are All Music To My Ears. In Sherzer, J., and G. Urban. (eds). *Native South American Discourse*. Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter, 59-82.
 - Sellet, F. 1993. *Chaîne opératoire*: The concept and its Applications. *Lithic Technology* 18 (1-2), 106-112.
 - Sharman, R.L. 2004. The Invention of Fine Art: Creating Cultural Elite in a Marginal Community. *Visual Anthropology*. Taylor & Francis, 17, 345-367.
 - Shaw, M. 1974. Material Culture. In Hammond-Tooke, W.D. (ed). *The Bantu-Speaking Tribes of South Africa*. London, Boston Routledge and Kegan Paul, 85–131.
 - Shepard, A.O. 1957. *Ceramics for the Archaeologist*, Carnegie Institution of Washington
 - Social History Centre. (n.d). Viewed 06, June 2014, from (<http://www.iziko.org.za/museums/social-history-centre>).
 - Social History Collections (n.d). Viewed 06, June 2014, from (<http://www.iziko.org.za/static/page/social-history-collections>).
 - Soetsu, Y. 1989. *The Unknown Craftsman: A Japanese Insight into Beauty*. Tokyo, New York, Kodansha International.
 - Soressi, M. & J.M. Geneste, 2011. The history and efficacy of the chaîne opératoire approach to lithic analysis: studying techniques to reveal past societies in an evolutionary perspective. (Special Issue: Reduction Sequence, Chaîne Opératoire, and Other Methods: The Epistemologies of Different Approaches to Lithic Analysis. *PaleoAnthropology* 2011, 334-350.
 - *South Africa and the International SPECTRUM of Museum Standards*. Viewed 06 August 2017, from (http://www.ether.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/SAMA-conference_SPECTRUM_comp.pdf).

- *South African Museums Association Professional Standards and Transformation Indicators*. 2006. A project of the Transformation Training Programme funded by the Department of Arts and Culture. Port Alfred, Published by South African Museums Association. Viewed 06 June 2018, from (http://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/tk/en/databases/creative_heritage/docs/sama_standards.pdf).
- Spring, C. 2009. *African Art in Detail*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press.
- Stanard, M. 2016. *The Colonial Past is Never Dead, it's Not Even Past: Histories of Empire, Decolonization, and European Cultures after 1945*, Jahrbuch für Europäische Geschichte/European History Yearbook.
- Stayt, H.A. 1931. *The Bavenda*. London, Oxford University Press.
- Steven, I. and A. Munroe. 2009. Inventing the 'vernacular' cases in South African crafts. *de arte*, 79, 10.
- Strobel, M. 1995. Women in Religious and Secular Ideology. Women in the rural economy: Past, present and future. In Hay, M.J. and S. Stichter. (eds). *African women south of the Sahara*. London, Longman, 101-142.
- Suggs, D.N. 2002. *A Bagful of Locusts and the Baboon Woman: Constructions of Gender, Change and Continuity in Botswana*. Fort Worth, Tx, Harcourt College Publishers.
- Summers, R.F.H. 1975. *A history of the South African museum: 1825–1975*. Cape Town, Balkema.
- Tallury, S.P., and M.M. Goodman. 2001. State of the use of maize genetic diversity in the USA and sub-Saharan Africa. Chapter 9. In Cooper, H.D., C. Spillane and T. Hodgkin. (eds). *Broadening the Genetic Base of Crop Production*. Wallingford, UK, CAB International, 159-179.
- Taylor, R.B. 1976. *Cultural Ways: A Compact Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*. Boston, Allyn Bacon.
- *THE AFRICAN COLLECTIONS*. Viewed 06 June 2014, from (<http://www.varldskulturmuseerna.se/en/etnografiskamuseet/research-collections/collections/africa/>).
- The New York Public Library. Viewed 06 June 2014, from (<http://www.nypl.org/about/divisions/wallach-division/art-architecture-collection/catalogue-raisonne>).

- Tlou, T., and A. Campbell. 1997. *History of Botswana*. 2nd edition. Gaborone, Macmillan.
- Tourism (23 June 2014). Viewed 06 June 2014, from (<http://www.cdm.org.za/index.php/led-tourism/tourism>).
- Trevor-Roper, H. 1983. The invention of tradition: the Highland tradition of Scotland. In Hobsbawm, E.J., and T. Ranger. (eds). *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge, Cambridge University, 15-42.
- Ugolini, F. 2010. Soil Colors, Pigments and Clays in Paintings. In Landa, E.R., and C. Feller. (eds). *Soil and Culture*. New York, Springer, 67-82.
- UKZN Student attends Soil Ecology meeting in the USA . Viewed 06 August 2015, from (<http://ndabaonline.ukzn.ac.za/UkzndabaStory/Vol3-Issue32/UKZN%20Student%20attends%20Soil%20Ecology%20meeting%20in%20the%20USA/>).
- *Unfired pottery - From the BaTswana of Epukiro*. Viewed 06 June 2014, from (<http://typo3.p232710.webspaceconfig.de/home/namibia/stampsstories/stamps-13-08-27-batswana-pottery/>).
- Urry, J. 1990. *The Tourist Gaze: leisure and travel in contemporary societies*. London, Sage.
- Van Oudtshoorn, F. 1999. *Guide to the grasses of southern Africa*. Pretoria, Briza Publications.
- Van Rooy, J.A. 1978. *The traditional worldview of black people in Southern Africa*. Potchefstroom: Institute for the Advancement of Calvinism. Potchefstroom, University for Christian Higher Education.
- Van Warmelo, N.J. 1935. A Preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa. *Department of Native Affairs Ethnological Publications 5*.
- Van Warmelo, N.J. 1930. Transvaal Ndebele Texts. *Ethnological Publications 1*. Department of Native Affairs, Union of South Africa. Pretoria, Government Printer.
- Van Warmelo, N.J. 1946. Grouping and ethnic history. In Schapera, L. (ed). *The Bantu-speaking tribes of South Africa*. London, George Routledge and Sons, 43-66.
- Van Warmelo, N.J. 1974. The classification of cultural groups. In Hammond-Tooke, W.D. (ed). *The Bantu-speaking peoples of southern Africa*. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 56-84.

- Van Wyk, B.E. and N. Gericke. 2000. *People's Plants. A Guide to Useful Plants of Southern Africa*. Pretoria, Briza Publications.
- Vansina, J. 1985. *Oral Tradition as History*. London: James Currey.
- Vincentelli, M. 2000. *Women and Ceramics: Gendered Vessels*. Manchester, Manchester University Press.
- Vincentelli, M. 2003. *Women Potters: Transforming traditions*. New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. 1994. The Language of African Literature. In Williams, P. and L. Chrisman. (eds). *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. New York, Columbia University Press, 435-456.
- Wallace, M. and J. Kinahan. 2011. *A history of Namibia: From the beginning to 1990*. New York, Columbia University Press.
- Weil, S. 2000. *A deaccession reader*. Washington, American Association of Museums.
- Westermann, M. 2005. Introduction: The Objects of Art History and Anthropology. In Westermann, M. (ed). *Anthropologies of Art*. Williamstown, Mass., Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute. vii-xxxi.
- White, J.C., and W. Henderson. 2003. Pottery anatomy: Review and selection of basic nomenclature as a step toward a searchable rim form database for the Sakon Nakhon Basin. *Bulletin of the Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association*, 23, 35-49.
- Winters, Y, E. 2015. *A social and cultural theoretical appraisal and contextualisation of the visual and symbolic language of beadwork and dress from southern KwaZulu-Natal, held in the Campbell Collections*. Unpublished PhD Thesis in (Art History). Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- Winthrop, R.H. 1991. *Dictionary of Concepts in Cultural Anthropology*. New York, Greenwood Press.
- Wodzińska, A. 2009. *A Manual of Egyptian Pottery (Volume 1: Fayum A–Lower Egyptian Culture)*, Puritan Press.
- Zaverdinos, A.M. 1997. *Assessment of a Collection of Basotho Artefacts in the Natal Museum*. Unpublished dissertation Master of Arts (Art History), Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

7. 4 Supplemental Sections and Appendices

Section 1: Glossary

Art works. ‘Visual arts that are of the type collected by art museums; CCO (Cataloguing Cultural Objects) deals with cultural works, which include artworks and other works’ (Baca And others 2006: 375).

Base. ‘optional vessel part comprising a surface for the vessel to rest on a horizontal plane’ (White and Henderson 2003:48).

Bowl. ‘The bowl is open, wide-mouthed, exposed and vulnerable. It holds its space lightly, because its interior is really part of surrounding space, and is connected and flowing into it’ (Rhodes 1978: 67).

Catalogue. ‘In the context of CCO (Cataloguing Cultural Objects), (this) (document) records information in the Work or Images’ (Baca and others 2006: 375).

Cataloguing. ‘In the context of CCO (Cataloguing Cultural Objects), the compilation of information by systematically describing the works and images in a collection’ (Baca and others 2006: 375).

Catalogue raisonné. ‘Provides and covers the following details of the collection: title and title variations; dimension/size of artwork; date of the work; medium; current location; owner at time of the publication of the catalogue; history of ownership from the first owner; exhibition history; condition and state of the work; bibliography of the artist; information on the artist; description of the work in detail; inscriptions and monograms by the artist’ (New York Public Library 2011).

Ceramic. ‘A generic term which describes all objects made from clay’ (French 1998: 76). Also Ceramics- ‘Clay products made permanent by heat (the ceramic change; also the study of this subject’. (t)he word comes from the Greek *keramos* meaning potter’s clay’ (Hamer 1975: 5).

Ceramist. ‘One who works with clay and glaze in an objective way’ (Hamer, 1975: 15). Also Ceramist [Ceramicist]- ‘Was coined to describe the individual potter’ (Hamer, 1975: 5).

Clay. ‘(A) hydrated silicate of aluminium. A heavily, damp, plastic material that ‘sets’ upon drying and can be changed by heat into a hard, waterproof material’. There are many types of clays, for example primary clay, secondary clay, plastic clay’ (Hamer 1975: 64).

Coiled. ‘Pots made by building up walls from a flat base, using rolls of clay. The rolls are blended together for added strength, usually using a turntable’ (French 1998: 76).

Coiling. A hand-building technique. ‘The form (of an object) is built gradually, developing upwards as it grows. In order to have enough strength in the lower part to support the upper part, the clay must be allowed to stiffen as [it] proceeds’ (Rhodes 1978: 110).

Collar. ‘The neck of a pot’ (French 1998: 76).

Collection. ‘In the context of cataloguing levels discussed in CCO (Cataloguing Cultural Objects), multiple items that are conceptually or physically arranged together for the purpose of cataloguing or retrieval’ (Baca and others 2006: 375).

Cultural works. ‘In the context of CCO (Cataloguing Cultural Objects), art and architectural works and other artefacts of cultural significance, including both physical objects and performance art’ (Baca and others 2006: 376); for the purposes of this study this includes works of art/artworks/crafts.

Cylinder. ‘A body shape that is circular in section and has no marked taper toward the top’ (French 1998: 76).

Earthenware. ‘Refers to a porous and usually white ceramic, which carries a glossy, transparent glaze. It also refers to any ceramic fired at a temperature low enough for it to remain porous when unglazed’ (French 1998: 76). Although the term is included in this glossary for the purpose of comparison, it is important to note that RD wares are technically stoneware and not earthenware.

Firing. ‘The process of conversion from clay to pot. It involves heat of at least 600 °C’ (Hamer 1975: 121).

Flatware. A term that refers to plates, dishes and saucers (French 1998: 76), but that is more usually applied to industrial ceramics in factories producing bone-china wares.

Form. ‘The three-dimensional qualities of a pot or ceramic. These can be analysed as solidity and weight. The opposite of form is space, but both should be considered as position qualities if good pottery is to be made’ (Hamer 1975: 133).

Glaze. ‘A layer of glass which is fused into plate on a pottery body’ (Hamer 1975: 144).

Handbuilt. ‘A term that covers all making methods other than those of mold-making, throwing, coiling, and slabbing’ (French 1998: 76).

Lower body. ‘Essential body portion that extends upward and away from the basal central vertical axis of revolution’ (White and Henderson 2003:48).

Lip. ‘Superior vessel endpoint’ (White and Henderson 2003:48).

Neck. ‘Optional vessel part for a cylindrical element between the upper body and rim’ (White and Henderson 2003:48).

Plate. ‘The plate and bowl are closely related. Plates are low in profile so that their shape makes a minimal visual impression; the form is felt more than it is seen. The inside surface is dominated and unlike the bowl there is little play between the inside and the outside’ (Rhodes 1978: 101).

Pottery. ‘Frequently used to describe any ceramic, it more properly refers to low-fired earthenware’ (French 1998: 77).

Record. In the context of CCO (Cataloguing Cultural Objects), ‘A conceptual arrangement of fields referring to a work or images; not the same thing as a database record ...’ (Baca and others 2006: 377).

Rim. ‘Essential part of the complete vessel that includes the outer edge of the vessel, to which the neck or body is attached’ (White and Henderson 2003:48).

Rim edge. ‘uppermost of the rim’ (White and Henderson, 2003:48).

Rim top. The uppermost horizontal surface of the complete vessel (White and Henderson 2003:48).

Shoulder. ‘Outer vessel surface on a restricted vessel with an upper boundary at the rim/body juncture or throat and an unfixed lower boundary above the vessel equator’ (White and Henderson 2003:48).

Stoneware. ‘A form of ceramic which is fired at the higher temperatures and is vitreous, but is not translucent’ (French 1998: 77).

Vase. ‘It is not necessarily different in shape from (a) jar, but the word implies a more ornamental use, or use as a container for flowers. Vessels with quite narrow openings may be termed vases’ (Rhodes 1978: 43).

Vessels. ‘A term applied to most pots, but mainly to hollow ware rather than flatware’ (French 1998: 77).

Section 2: Interviews and personal conversations: 2013-2018

- Professor Ian Calder (Skype sessions) [2018] – University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- Professor Jess, D. Reed. Personal communications [30/11/ 2016, 2016] and [05/12/ 2016]. Department of Animal Sciences, University of Wisconsin -Madison, United States of America.
- Professor Matt Turner. Personal communications [23/11/ 2016] and [02/12/ 2016]. Geography Department, Department of Animal Sciences, University of Wisconsin - Madison, United States of America.

- Professor Sissel Schroeder. Personal communication [24/11/ 2016]. Department of Anthropology, University of Wisconsin -Madison, United States of America.
- Margret Motsamayi. Personal communications, Several seasons [2013-2016]. Collaborator. Vhembe District Municipality.
- Dr. Gerard Klinghardt; personal communications [6–10/11/2014]. Iziko Museums of South Africa Iziko Social History Centre.
- Mrs. Esther Esmyol personal communication [6–10/11/2014]. Iziko Museums of South Africa Iziko Social History Centre.
- Mr. N.J. Tlouamma. Personal communication [06 /09/ 2013]. Blouberg Local Municipality 2014.
- Mr. Gideon Mokwena interview [22/06/2014]. Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum.
- Mr. Gilbert Mohale interview [20/06/2014]. Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum.
- *Mme* Jerminah Manamela interview [20/06/2014]. Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum.
- *Mme* Martina Masedi interview [20/06/2014]. Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum.
- *Mma* Masimone Ramone et al.: Interviewed [06 /09/ 2013] Ga-Kobe, Capricorn District Municipality.
- Mrs. Moloko Getrude Kgwale interview [20/06-2014]. Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum
- *Vho*-Nyamukamadi Makungo interview [23/06/2014]. Ha-Makhuvha village outside Thohoyandou, Thulamela local Municipality, Venda potter.
- Ms. Pauline Mapheto interview [20/06/2014]. Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum
- *Mme* Phuthi Francina Mathekga interview [20/06/2014]. Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum.

Section 3: List of Figures in the body of thesis

Unless stated otherwise, illustrative materials and/or photographs were produced by the candidate.

Figure 1: Lidded Ovaloid traditional granary vessels (in plural known as *Difala/Difalana*, in singular as *Sefala/Sefalana*).

Figure 2: The large dots on the map indicate the principal areas of pottery production pertaining to my research.

Figure 3: Spherical *Sefalana* (in the form of a dung vase). IzikoSHC.

Figure 4: Ovaloid *Sefalana* vessel. PolokwaneCHM.

Figure 5: Cylindrical *Sefalana*. BakoniMNSOAM.

Figure 6: Traditional Sotho-Tswana house and wallpainting.

Figure 7: Traditional Sotho-Tswana decorated architecture as depicted by Burchell (Burchell 1822).

Figure 8: Map illustrating sites and municipalities where pottery has been sourced in Limpopo Province.

Figure 9: Maker unknown. *Motsega*: hybrid storage vessel. Northern Sotho.

Figure 10: Maker unknown. *Thiswana* (bowl). Northern Sotho.

Figure 11: Nyamukamadi Makungo, *Ndilo* (dish). Vhavenḁa.

Figure 12: *Mma* Masimone Ramone and others. *Dipitsa*, Northern Sotho cooking vessels.

Figure 13: *Mma* Masimone Ramone and others. *Dipitša* (plural), Northern Sotho cooking vessels.

Figure 14: *Mma* Masimone Ramone and others. *Pitsa*. Northern Sotho cooking pot.

Figure 15: *Vho*-Nyamukamadi Makungo. *Khali*. Venḁa cooking pot.

Figure 16: Maker unknown. Hybrid ceramic vessel form (based on Northern Sotho (*Nkgwana*) and Venḁa (*Nkwana*) domestic water-vessels) with an added conical neck.

Figure 17: *Mma* Masimone Ramone and other makers (unnamed). *Dipitša le Dinkgo*. Northern Sotho cooking and storage ceramic vessels.

Figure 18: *Mma* Masimone Ramone and other makers (unnamed). *Pitšana*. Northern Sotho cooking earthenware.

Figure 19: *Mma* Masimone Ramone and other makers (unnamed). Flower vases based on domestic forms of Northern Sotho *Nkgwana*.

Figure 20: Unknown artist from Limpopo Province. *Pitša*. Northern Sotho earthenware vase; Indigenous name *Pitsa*.

Figure 21: Margret Motsamayi in her garden with a variety of pottery vessels she collected for the candidate (makers unnamed). Hybrid storage vessels (combining elements of Venda and Northern Sotho domestic pottery), *Motsega* (water-vessel), and dishes (*Thiswana*) (in the Northern Sotho language).

Figure 22: Phuthi Francina Mathekga. Small cylindrical vessel, linked to the form of *Sefalana*. Cattle dung with painted motifs using earth pigments.

Figures 23 and 24: Demonstrations of *Sefalana* making processes. Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum.

Figure 25 and 26: Decorations, mixture of charcoal and red soil. Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum.

Figure 27: *Booshuana Village*. Illustration by the English traveller-artist Samuel Daniell (1804-1806).

Figure 28: *A Boosh-wannah Hut*. Illustration by the English traveller-artist Samuel Daniell (1804-1806).

Figure 29: Polokwane bushveld adjoining the Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum.

Figure 30: Map of the Highveld in South Africa, a physiographic zone where Sotho-Tswana *Difala* vessels are historically produced.

Figure 31: Selective browsers. My field visit on-site Devrede, Blouberg Local Municipality.

Figure 32: *Sehala*, collected by Professor August Gries. Maker not recorded. Ovoid vessel, which I interpret as a lidded *Sefala*.

Figure 33: Photograph of Ndebele artist, *Gogo* Esther Mahlangu painting a domestic mural.

Figure 34: Mural art. Bapedi mural decoration.

Figure 35: Photograph of a Kgatla girl by Duggan-Cronin using what he termed ‘grey clay’ (1929) to create a mural.

Figure 36: Contemporary motifs on a courtyard floor at Bakoni Malapa Museum, created using fresh cow dung and coloured earth.

Figure 37: Margret Motsamayi busy at her allotment with agricultural activities. Capricorn District Municipality.

Figure 38: Unnamed Mopedi woman with grinding stone next to a decorated domestic *lapa* wall.

Figures 39 and 40: Images showing precolonial Bahurutshe (Tswana) preparing grain for storage.

Figure 41: My field visit on-site at the Polokwane Cultural History Museum, Limpopo Province. Shown in the photograph is a Northern Sotho grain basket (*sešhego*; woven granary basket).

Figure 42: My field visit on-site Devrede, Blouberg Local Municipality. Showing dried (ripe) sorghum heads (Sotho-Tswana: *Mabêlê/libelele*) ready for harvest.

Figure 43 and 44: My field visit on-site Devrede, Blouberg Local Municipality; some cooked products that used to be staple foods associated with *Difala* vessels.

Figure 45: My field visit on-site at Campbell Collections Museum (UKZN).

I interpret the produce shown as maize cobs (*lefela*) placed inside a *seroto* (open collection-basket).

Figure 46: Indigo dyed cloth (*ishweshwe*) exhibited at Iziko Slave Lodge.

Figure 47: Northern Sotho (Pedi) women wearing ‘traditional’ clothes. Phokwane, Limpopo, 1973.

Figure 48: PolokwaneCHM. Date of fieldwork visit, 2014.

Figure 49: Bakoni Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum. During my visit, 2014. I noticed that stone wall is in the backyard of the museum.

Figure 50: *Mma* Francinah Mathekga. Cylindrical vessel with rounded base. I would call this a *Sefalana*.

Figure 51: The Iziko Social History Centre.

Figure 52: Maker unknown (not recorded). Bakgatla. 1962. Spherical *Sefalana* with extended base. Collected in Botswana.

Figure 53: Contemporary decorated small sub-spherical *Sefalana* (as described by Lombard, M. and I. Parsons. 2003).

Section 4: Illustrations of Cattle

Red cow (1), by Leigh Voigt. In Poland, M., and D. Hammond-Tooke. 2003.

Black cow (2) by Leigh Voigt. In Poland, M., and D. Hammond-Tooke. 2003.

White cow and a calf (3), illustrated by Leigh Voigt. In Poland, M., and D. Hammond-Tooke. 2003.

Cow with red color on its body and dark brown around the head (4), illustrated by Leigh Voigt. In Poland, M., and D. Hammond-Tooke. 2003.

Cow which is ‘belted’ in middle of its body (5), illustrated by Leigh Voigt. In Poland, M., and D. Hammond-Tooke. 2003.

Cow with mark or spot on the head (6), illustrated by Leigh Voigt. In Poland, M., and D. Hammond-Tooke. 2003.

Cow which has many colors on its body (7), illustrated by Leigh Voigt. In Poland, M., and D. Hammond-Tooke. 2003. In Sotho-Tswana language (*Sesotho Sa Lebowa*) this is called *Thamagana*

Cow with red head and white marks around its body (8), illustrated by Leigh Voigt. In Poland, M., and D. Hammond-Tooke. 2003. In Sotho-Tswana language (*Sesotho Sa Lebowa*) this is called *Nalana*

Grey cow (9), illustrated by Leigh Voigt. In Poland, M., and D. Hammond-Tooke. 2003.

Section 5: Key illustrations

Table I	Chapter 1, Three types of <i>Difala</i>
Table II	Chapter 3, Schematic illustrations of making <i>Sefalana</i>
Table III	Chapter 5, common cattle (cows) colour/patterns of Sotho-Tswana people of South African Highveld

Section 6: Descriptive catalogue of *Difala* and *Sefalana*

Catalogue 1	Chapter 6, <i>Sefala</i>
Catalogue 2	Chapter 6, <i>Sefala</i>
Catalogue 3	Chapter 6, <i>Sefala</i>
Catalogue 4	Chapter 6, <i>Sefala</i>
Catalogue 5	Chapter 6, <i>Sefala</i>
Catalogue 6	<i>Chapter 6, Sefalana</i>

Section 7: Email communications

Marcia-Anne Dobres. 2017. E-mail correspondence with Mathodi Motsamayi. 31 August 2017 at 4:46 PM <madobres@maine.edu>

Henry J Drewal. 2016. E-mail correspondence with Mathodi Motsamayi. 19 November 2016 7:48 PM hjdrewal@wisc.edu

Jess D Reed. 2016. E-mail correspondence with Mathodi Motsamayi. 6 December 2016 at 2:22 PM <jdreed@wisc.edu>

Anne Lawton. 2015. E-mail correspondence with Methodi Motsamayi. 26 February 2015
02:26 PM,204510658@stu.ukzn.ac.za>

Esther Esmiol. 2014. E-mail correspondence with Methodi Motsamayi. 31 July 2014 03:41
PM. <eesmyol@iziko.org.za>

Phalantwa Montlha. 2013. E-mail correspondence with Methodi Motsamayi. 20 May 2013
02:05 PM.< phalantwam@polokwane.gov.za>

Frans Roodt.2013. E-mail correspondence with Methodi Motsamayi. 22 July 2013 at 2:11
AM<fransroodt2454@gmail.com>

7. 5 Supporting documents

Letter of permission to conduct research in Polokwane museums (unsigned and signed documents respectively).

Letter for permission to conduct research in Iziko Social History Collections, Cape Town.



Ref no 17/10/1

PO.BOX 111

Polokwane Municipality

Polokwane Museum

0700

01-12-2013

:: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH PROJECT AT BAKONE MALAPA WITH REFERENCE TO VESSELS-MAKERS OF POLOKWANE AREA.

Polokwane Museums acknowledges the request of your letter dating 05-11-2013 and it is a great pleasure to inform you that you have been granted permission to take photos and make use of information at our museum. As a writer/researcher we would like you to put an acknowledgement of our Museum on the book/thesis and indicate that the photos are from our Museum in each and every picture you will be using from our museum.

Polokwane Museums reserves the right not to allow the photos and information to be used for any other purpose other than the one that the letter intend and also, any duplication of such photos will require permission of Polokwane Museums, which is owned by Polokwane Municipality.

Yours faithfully

MANAGER CULTURAL SERVICES

Date



Method: Freddie Motsemeyi
Old Centre for Visual Art
University of KwaZulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg
Pretag X01
Guthrieville 3215
KwaZulu-Natal
South Africa

Ref no: 17/10/1

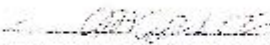
Date: 01-12-2013

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH PROJECT AT BAKOME MALAPA WITH REFERENCE TO VESSELS-MAKERS OF POLOKWANE AREA.

Polokwane Museums acknowledges the request of your letter dated 05/11/2013 and it is a great pleasure to inform you that you have been granted permission to take photos and make use of information at our museum. As a researcher we would like you to put an acknowledgment of our Museum on the book/thesis and indicate that the photos are from our Museum in each and every picture you will be using from our institution.

Polokwane Museums reserves the right not to allow the photos and information to be used for any other purpose other than the one that the letter intend and also, any duplication of such photos will require permission of Polokwane Museums, which is powered by Polokwane Municipality.

Yours faithfully


MANAGER CULTURAL SERVICES

056 40 11

Date

- 1. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
- 2. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT
- 3. ARTS AND CULTURE DEVELOPMENT
- 4. SPORTS AND RECREATION DEVELOPMENT
- 5. SOCIAL WORK DEVELOPMENT
- 6. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
- 7. POLICE AND SECURITY



7 October 2015

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

Herewith confirmation is provided that Mr Methodi Mtsamayi (204510856), a PhD candidate in Art History at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg, has made application to study the collections at Iziko Museums of South Africa in Cape Town. Mr Methodi visited Iziko Museums in November 2014 to do initial investigations into the Social History collections housed at this institution. He completed all the necessary forms required by Iziko for access to study the collections, and permission was granted for him to revisit Iziko during 2016 onwards to conduct his studies of the collections.

Yours faithfully



Paul Tichmann

Paul Tichmann
Acting Director Social History
Iziko Museums of South Africa
Iziko Social History Centre Church Square Cape Town
PO Box 61 Cape Town 8000 South Africa
Telephone +27 (0)21 467 7215
Facsimile +27 (0)21 460 8221
Cell 072 519 8054
Email ptichmann@iziko.org.za