

## A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF KHAMI POTTERY, ZIMBABWE

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## INTRODUCTION

The site of Khami is associated with the development of a socio-political complexity in the south-western part of Zimbabwe around AD1450 (Huffman 1996). While these developments were occurring, parallel developments were also taking place in the northern part of Zimbabwe and adjacent lowlands. The *zimbabwe* sites of Mutota and Kasekete in the mid-Zambezi valley can be seen within the context of socio-political developments that led to the establishment of the Mutapa state in northern Zimbabwe (Pwiti 1996a: 20). Basing his conclusions on limited archaeological evidence, Robinson (1965: 5) observed that pottery from Kasekete and Mutota in the mid-Zambezi valley was closely related to that from Khami and other stone buildings in south-western Zimbabwe. However, little has been done to make a detailed comparative analysis of this category of material culture to demonstrate the existence of such a relationship. It is against this background that it was hoped that a comparative analysis of pottery from these sites was conducted in order to establish similarities and differences between these two distinct areas.

## RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Pioneer Zimbabwean archaeologists concluded that there were affinities between pottery from the Zambezi valley cluster of stone buildings and Khami ware (e.g. Robinson, 1965: 5; Beach 1980). The first aim was to review these statements in the light of evidence from excavations by Pwiti (1996a) at Kasekete and by Thorp (1995) and Hughes (1997) at Khami. Much has been done on the individual sites but there has been little attempt to establish the relationship between the ceramics from these broadly contemporary sites in different parts of the country. The second aim was to attempt an identification and classification of ceramics from these sites. Such data could act as a baseline for future comparative analysis of pottery. The ultimate objective was to lay the basis for reevaluating our current understanding of the relationship between pottery from Khami and other contemporary sites in Zimbabwe.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Khami is located 22 km due west of the modern city of Bulawayo (Fig. 9.1). The area around Khami is riparian to the Khami