

Archaeological Site Report	SiteNo	9/2/504/0001
	Site Name	Dzata Ruins II, District Zoutpansberg
	Date	
	Project	
	CaseNID	
	Coords	-22.869257, 30.143317

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Site Category: Stone walling

SiteComments:

Archive Import History: Dated to between 1700 and 1760, the site has strong associations with the Venda people, being the place where the Venda people are believed to have established themselves as a group. There are a number of explanations as to the establishment and leadership of Dzata. It is theorized by archaeologists that Dzata was established by a group of people, the Zingu, who moved from central Zimbabwe across the Limpopo River and settled in about 1700 at Dzata. Shona tradition, language similarities and names tend to corroborate this theory. (The leader of the splinter group is in Shona tradition said to have been Soroendu similar in meaning and sound to the local tradition of the leadership of Thoyandou) Tradition on both sides has it that a magical drum, the Ngomalumundu drum, given by God protected them, and it is said that while the King beats the drum, the people will be invincible. Dzata was destroyed by fire in about 1760.

Originally excavated in the 1970s by the University of the Witwatersrand, the site underwent partial restoration at a later stage. This reconstruction appears not to have been very accurate. Under the Venda Development Corporation, a Museum designed and constructed in 1986. This appears not to have been very successful, but a new project is underway to redevelop facilities at the site, as well as to undertake reconstruction work.

Visual Description: Dzata is a substantial Iron Age Site situated on the edge of Nzelele River valley and set against the Soutpansberg mountains. It comprises various precincts, and entrances demarcated by stone walls. The walls are in a ruinous state, other than where apparently inaccurate reconstruction has taken place. The original entrance approached the complex perpendicularly from the river. (The current Euphorbia lined approach, although impressive is modern, and lined with Euphorbia trees.) The first court, surrounded by stone walls is the public forum, where the people would congregate. In the centre is the speakers platform (modern reconstruction). Beyond this, reached by means of a narrow passage is the royal enclosure, which is made up of a royal court, the king's audience chamber, and to the rear the houses of the wives of the King. Other house platforms are visible, and are possibly the sites of houses of the king's concubines. On either side of the ruins, some 300 metres on either side are low hillocks where sentries would have been located.

Colours: Site Features: Condition: PoorThe original walls are in poor condition, and modern landscaping of the area has had a negative impact of old features. Recent inaccurate reconstruction work is in better condition.

Construction Date: Materials: Catalogue: , No: , Significance Category:

Damage Types: