



FINAL EXHUMATION REPORT:

South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) Permit ID: 1019/ Case ID: 3928

**EXHUMATION AND RE-INTERMENT OF EXPOSED HUMAN SKELETAL REMAINS ON THE
FARM KRAALFONTEIN 181KS, GA-SEBATI VILLAGE, WITHIN THE POLOKWANE LOCAL
MUNICIPALITY OF THE CAPRICORN DISTRICT,
LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

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26 November 2013

Disclaimer: Although all possible care is taken to identify all sites of cultural importance during the phase two investigation, it is always possible that hidden or sub-surface sites could be overlooked during the assessment programme. Vhufasha Hashu Heritage Consultants and its personnel will not be held liable for such oversights or for costs incurred as a result of such oversights.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Note: This report follows minimum standard guidelines and standard archaeological practices required by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA and SAHRIS) for compiling exhumation and analysis investigation Report.

Site name and location: Ga- Sebati village is situated on farm kraalfontein, the village is situated approximately 50 kilometres south east of Polokwane, The site is located on the following Global Positioning System co-ordinates(GPS) South 24°.02,02'.39", and East 29°.39'.32.05".

Legal documents that govern archaeological sites excavation and exhumation were obtained from South African Heritage Resource Agency. The process was conducted on the 26 November 2013. Three human skeletal remains were uncovered. This report form part of the process written to communicate on the nature of the excavation and basic findings. Graves are more than any other aspects of Cultural Resources Management, human remains are prone to be the focus of emotional, ethical and cultural controversy, where exhumation approach seldom compromise emotional, ethical, and cultural consideration, and they are regarded as sensitive .The sentimental value attached to the graves and its contents, by the relatives of the individuals is very high, therefore dealing with human remains demand the highest ethical standards, respect for the remains often involves a token gesture, real and heartfelt.

The work was commissioned by the LBMC Consulting (Pty) Ltd after they uncovered remains during the construction of Sanitation project within Chuene/Maja/Molepo Cluster The rescue excavation was conducted in line with the National Heritage Resources Act of 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999). The act protects

heritage resources through formal and general protections. The South African Heritage Resources Agency developed minimum standards for impact assessments. In addition to these local standards, the International Council of Monuments and sites (ICOMOS) published guidelines for assessing impacts within or near the proposed development.

Summary of finds:

Three human skeletal remains were uncovered, two female and one male individual, most of the remains were very brittle and disintegrated, due to previous disturbances. The orientation of the skeletal material could not be established. Unfortunately two of the individual craniums were crushed, beyond recognition, characterized by several Plates or pieces.

Acknowledgements:

Vhufashu Heritage Consultants wishes to express its sincere gratitude's to all who contributed to the exhumation process more especially the LBMC Consulting (Pty)Ltd by commissioning the rescue and the reburial of the remains. We also wish to acknowledge the role played by different stakeholders such as the South African Heritage Resource Agency Burial Grounds Unit for issuing the excavation Permit, Ga-Sebati Community, Ga-Sebati Tribal Council, Head man Sebati for his generosity and allowing us to conduct the exhumation process. And last but not least this acknowledgement would not be complete if we do not mention the excavation team members.

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PROFESSIONAL DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, Mr. Mathoho Ndivhuho Eric hereby declare that I am a Professional Archaeologist accredited with the association for South African Professional Archaeologist (ASAPA) Membership No #312 and that Vhufashu Heritage Consultants is an independent consultants with no association or with no any other interest what so ever with any institution, organization, or whatever and that the remuneration earned from consulting work constitute the basis of Company livelihood and income.



.....

Mr. Mathoho Ndivhuho Eric

Archaeologist and Heritage Consultant for Vhufashu Heritage Consultants
ASAPA Member # 312

1. INTRODUCTION

In February 2013 the Polokwane Museums informed Vhufahashu heritage Consultants that three human skeletal remains were exposed by Excavation activities during the establishment of sanitation project at Ga-Sebati village. The above mentioned activities disturbed the remains. The disturbed burial grounds were inspected in the presence of the Ga-Sebati tribal council elders in June 2013. South African Heritage Resource Agency Office was informed immediately, but could not manage to arrange a site visit. SAHRA therefore relied on the recommendation of the principal investigator that all activities within the affected areas must be put on hold and that an archaeologist must be appointed to conduct a rescue operation. LBMC (Pty) Ltd procured funding for site the exhumation. A permit to exhume human skeletal remains was issued dated November 16 2013.

Information at our disposal, shows that the development activities was not a listed activity in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998) NEMA as amended and the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) regulation of 2010. But this does not however justify that other related impact assessment should not be conducted. It is not clear if the Limpopo Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism had exempted this from the Environmental Impacts Assessments process. We are not certain whether an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) for the proposed sanitation was conducted. The aim of the exercise was thus to respectfully exhume and re-bury the exposed human skeletal remains.



Figure 1: View of site 001 where human remains were unearthed, here are member of the tribal council showing where they noted remains. GPS co-ordinates South 24°. 02, 21'.05", and East 29°.39'.55.61"



Figure 2: Site 002, indicated by mound of soil, the area was indicated by an old lady who is the owner of the stand. GPS co-ordinates South 24°.02, 06'. 86", and East 29°.39'.37.76".



Figure 3: View of site 003, indicated by an arrow where the third human remains were uncovered. GPS co-ordinates (GPS) South 24°.02, 21' 22", and East 29°.39'.30.16"

2. REGIONAL SETTING: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Archaeological and heritage studies in the region indicate that the area is of high pre-historic and heritage significance. It is in fact a cultural landscape where Stone Age, Iron Age and historical period's sites contribute the bulk of the cultural heritage of the region (Calabrese 1996, Huffman 2007)

The study area form part of the Ba-Pedi cultural group. The history of Ba- Pedi before the 20th century has been well described and documented in several literatures. The exact origin of Ba-Pedi is shrouded by mystery; they are undoubtedly, of Sotho origin. The Sotho division is so classified principally on the linguistic grounds of similar characteristic of Sotho people (Mönnig, 1967). The Tswana Chiefdom form part of the larger group of Sotho people, while Sotho group itself is one of the three great sub-divisions of the bantu-speaking peoples situated north of the Nguni communities. In addition to Batswana or Western Sotho, the Sotho group includes the Basotho of Lesotho and the Orange Free State, to whom the term Sotho has come to be more specifically the almost exclusively applied. This group some time also referred to as the southern Sotho. The third group comprises the Bapedi who have been generally referred to

as the northern Sotho, with the exception of some Tswana; this group is the one that dominated in the study area. To wrap up the above all these tribes call themselves Sotho (Mönnig, 1967).

Legassick (1969) summary of the vast and complicated literature on the Sotho- Tswana oral tradition provide a frame work for the understanding of the relevant archaeological records. It is possible to establish a meaningful relationship between archaeological and historical groups and to use this relationship to clarify the early history of the Sotho-Tswana-Ba-Pedi. The Transvaal Sotho has been subdivided into a number of groups. These are the eastern Sotho, particularly the Kutswe, Pai and Pulana; the north eastern Sotho, particularly the Phalaborwa, Mmamabolo and Lobedu the northern Sotho, particularly the Kgaga, Birwa, Tlokwa and some Koni and Tau. Historical documents and Sotho oral tradition suggest that they originated from the Great Lakes in central Africa. Their migration occurred in succession of waves over many years under the leadership of king Kgalakgadi who settled in Botswana in the early 13th centuries. The next group to have arrived in the early period seems to have been the Digoya who were the first group to cross the Vaal River, little is known of their history and they were finally absorbed by the Ba-Taung tribe. The majority of the proper Sotho followed two three migration of the Ba-Rolong, Ba- Fokeng and Ba- Hurutshe.

Documents suggest that Marota (commonly called Ba-Pedi) originated from Ba- Kgatla form central Highveld near present day Rustenburg and Pretoria, an important offshoot, the Ba- Pedi is thought to have moved northeast in the mid 17th century. Another member of the cluster may be the Ba- Tlokwa. Maggs (1976) connect Ba- Tlokwa with the Pembe ruins which are situated some few kilometers south of Ntuanatsatsi hill, he further alluded that Ba- Tlokwa once built a capital called Itholanoga in the Pilansberg near the present day Sun City; it was at a later stage that the Ba-Kgatla took over this area. The site is characterized by well constructed stone walled complex located on top of hill; the architectural style of the stone wall has been dominated by Molokwane patterns. According to Maggs (1976) the Ba-Kgatla tribes were responsible with the construction of the stone walling while Ba-Tlokwa was responsible with the earliest occupation. According to Boeyens (2005) Tlokwa are known to have lived in the late 18th century at Marathodi site.

Oral traditions suggest that migration and settlement in the sub- continent are of course conjectural with trace of genealogies of the Ba-Rolong tribe back to 1270 and the Ba- Fokeng even to 980 AD, the Ba-Rolong began their migration at the beginning of the 15th century and

towards the 16 century they were followed by two last group, the last of which was the Ba-Hurutshe who transverse the land and settle in what is now the western Transvaal. History suggest that when Mmathobele was expecting her first child the other wives of Diale (The ruler), were jealousy and they said that they could hear the child crying in her womb. Naturally this unusual event was attributed to witchcraft, and the Kgatla wanted to kill the mother and child, Diale interceded for her and the child was born normally, the child was nick-named Lellelateng (it cries inside), as the child grow older, his father, seeing that the tribe would never accept his son to attained the kingship, he instructed him to leave with his mother and followers towards the east, the group under the leadership of Thobele founded their own tribe, the Pedi. Lellelateng is generally taken as founder of the Pedi, although tradition makes no further mention of his sons or successors, where as Thobele is accepted as the man who led the Pedi to their new home (Mönnig 1967).

According to the 19th century settlement of this region, the Sotho speaking Ba-Pedi arrived relatively late, they did however build powerful kingdom in time of Thulare 1790-1820. One of the reasons was availability of excellent pasture and good landscape. Historians suggest that Ba- Kgatla clan consolidated other smaller clan forming the Ba-Pedi stronghold state. The Pedi oral traditions suggest that Ba- Pedi chief Thulare manoeuvred to the top of the ladder through his superb military tactics and became undisputed paramount chief of the region. By 1828 the new Pedi chief Sekwati had returned to the area, and over the next ten years rebuilt the Pedi stronghold. When the Voortrekker arrived in the Marota (Ba-Pedi) Empire King Sekwati (King Sekhukhune's father) resisted, and a famous battle was fought at Phiring in 1838, Sekwati defeated the Boer. The Ndzundza Ndebele, who also appear to have a long history in the area appear to have been subordinate to the Pedi up until the death of Sekwati in 1861 at this point the Ndzundza declared their independence (Esterhysen & Smith, 2007).

After the death of king Sekwati an illegitimate ruler who came to power using military force, emerged (king Sekhukhune), he maintained stronghold with neighbouring tribes through intermarriages, it was at this time that his brother Mampuru (legitimate ruler) was forced to flee from the kingdom. During the reign of Sekhukhune he sent young men under the auspices of his headmen's to work in white farms and at the diamond mines, money earned from these employment were taxed and the taxes was used to buy guns form the Portuguese in Delagoa bay where he usually sent his subordinates for trade purposes, some of the money was used for purchasing cattle in an attempt to increases Marota's wealth.

By the 19th century the Marota Empire had grown to unite all disparate people in the area (Sekhukhune land). It was the same guns that were used in the war of resistance against the Boers and British. During the wars of resistance Sekhukhune was of the attitude that the land between the Vaal and Limpopo Rivers belongs to him and his area fall outside Pretoria's jurisdictions. Communities around the region were living harmoniously, trading and farming it was up to the year 1826 when Mzilikazi Khumalo fled from King Shaka's rule and reaches the region devastating the tribes that were within the region including Ba-Pedi communities, fortunately the Ba- Pedi recovered the devastation. A notable event was the decimation of the Pedi at some point between 1823 and 1825, there were some dispute over who was responsible and Mzilikazi Khumalo (Ndebele) moved up into the region to revenge the Pedi and their land, Ndwandwe under Zwibe were responsible. The Pedi survivor took refuge in the Waterberg area (Esterhysen & Smith 2007).

Many wars of resistance were fought and later Sekhukhune was forced hide himself in the cave. And the European troops cut supply of food and water and Sekhukhune was forced to come out of the cave surrender, and was captured and locked in prison. It was after his release in 1882 that his brother Mampuru murdered him. During those years Mampuru and Nyabela fled and hid from Commandant General Piet Joubert. (Mapoch was the chief of the Ndzundza-Ndebele tribe) The cave where Nyabela and Mampuru were hiding was besiege by Joubert in 1882 and Nyabela was arrested and lost his chieftaincy and the land under his jurisdiction was divided amongst the white (Burgers) who participated in the siege.

3. LOCATION

Ga- Sebati village is situated approximately 50 kilometres south east of Polokwane, The site is located on the following Global Positioning System co-ordinates(GPS) South 24°.02,02'.39", and East 29°.39'.32.05".

Topography of the study area is much varied influenced by the presence of low mountains and rocky outcrop hills covered by small trees and shrubs. Perennial and non perennials streams occur in close proximity; these areas were the most preferred settlement places for Iron Age communities in the past. Previous settlement at this village has been structured around these granite or rocky hills and bottom slope of the mountain and river valleys. The study area has

varied geology which includes basement granite and Gneiss, clastic sediments of the Pretoria Group (Vaalian) and ultramafic and mafic metavolcanics of the Petersburg Group (Swazian).. The vegetation of the study area comprises of sparse numerous endemic plant species, heterogeneous rocky habitat, with numerous floristic links and grass cover, important plant taxa include: *acacia* sp, *Boschia albitrunca*, *Euphorbia tirucalli* and *engens* and grass etc (Ackocks 1975; Mucina and Rutherford 2006).

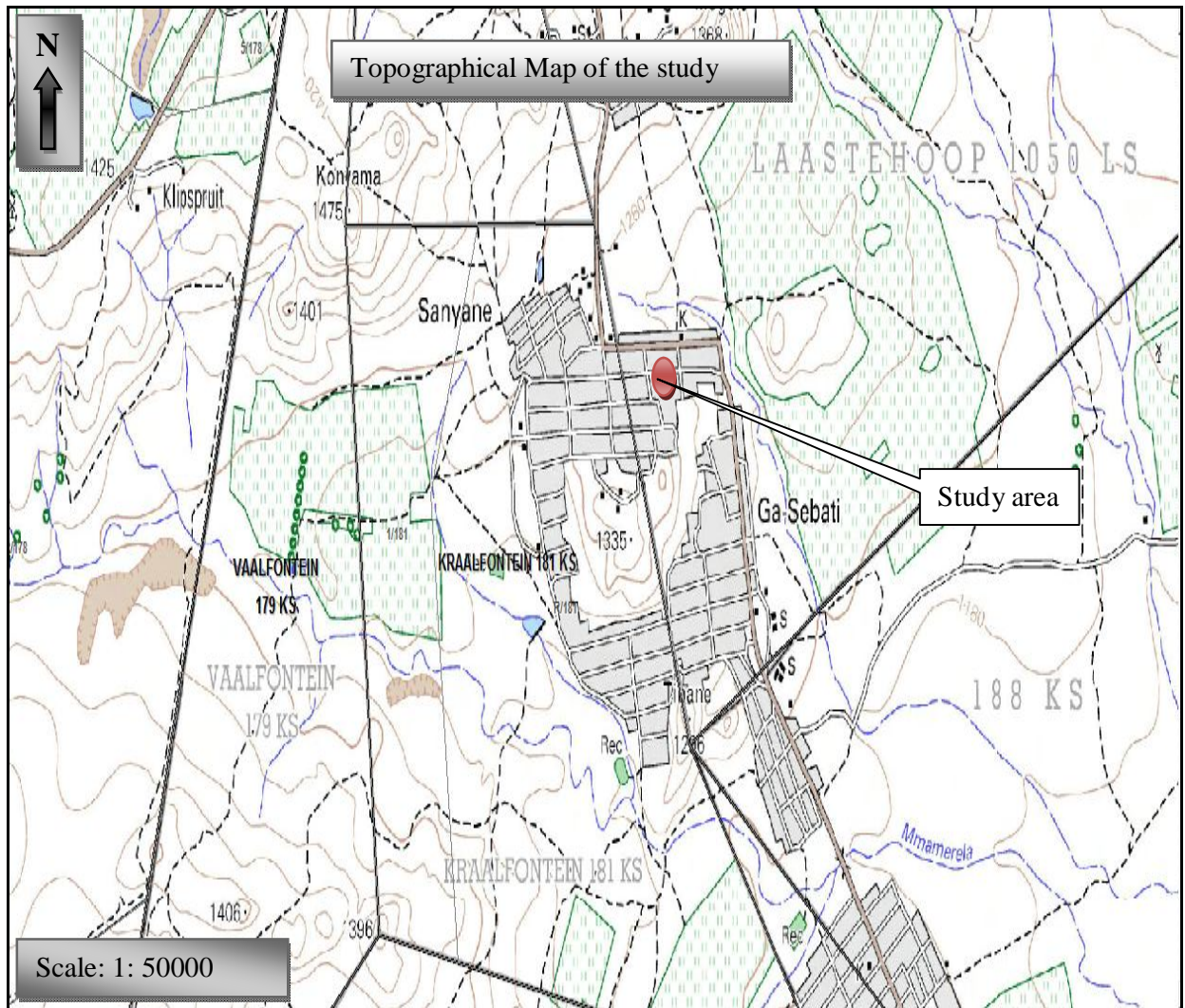


Figure 4: Topographical map of the site

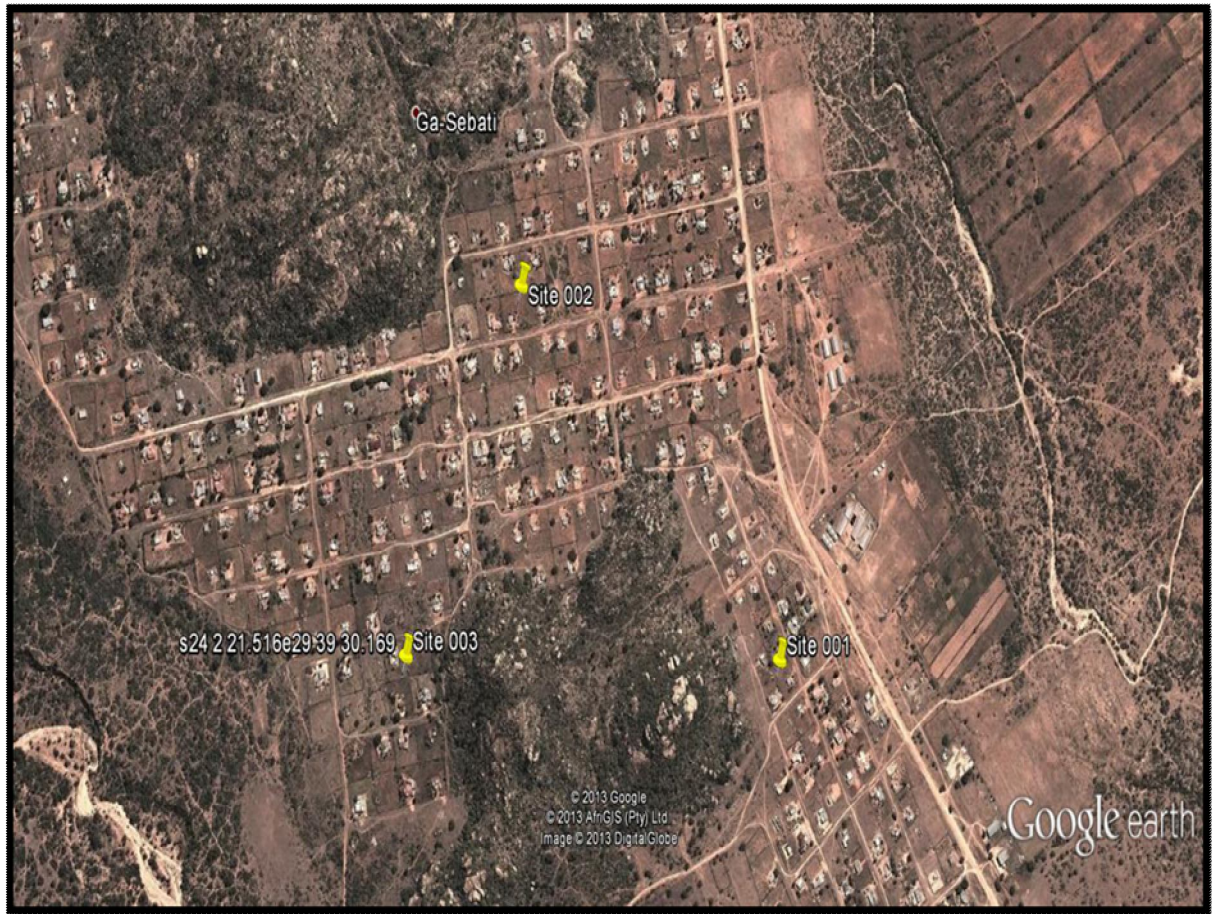


Figure 5: View of the study area adapted from Google maps, with affected sites indicated by yellow pins at Ga- Sebati village, all the remains were noted within the residential stands.

4. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Two sets of legislation are relevant for the study with regards to the protection of heritage resources and graves.

4.1. The National Heritage Resource Act (25 of 1999)

This Act established the South African Heritage Resource Agency (SAHRA) as the prime custodians of the heritage resources and makes provision for the undertaking of heritage resources impact assessment for various categories of development as determined by section 38. It also provides for the grading of heritage resources (section 7) and the implementation of a three-tier level of responsibly and functions from heritage resources to be undertaken by the State, Provincial and Local authorities, depending on the grade of heritage resources (section 8)

In terms of the National Heritage Resource Act 25, (1999) the following is of relevance:

Historical remains

Section 34 (1) No person may alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure, which is older than 60 years without a permit issued by the relevant Provincial Heritage Resources Authority.

Archaeological remains

Section 35(3) Any person who discover archaeological or Paleontological object or material or a meteorite in the course of development or agricultural activity must immediately report the find to the responsible heritage resource authority or the nearest local authority or museum, which must immediately notify such heritage resources authority.

Section 35(4) No person may, without a permit issued by the responsible heritage resources authority-

- destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or otherwise disturb any archaeological or palaeontological site or any meteorite;
- destroy, damage, excavate, remove from its original position, collect or own any archaeological or paleontological material or object or any meteorite;
- trade in ,sell for private gain, export or attempt to export from republic any category of archaeological or paleontological material or object or any meteorite; or
- bring onto or use at an archaeological or paleontological site any excavation equipment or any equipment which assist with the detection or recovery of metal or archaeological material or object or such equipment for the recovery of meteorites.

Section 35(5) When the responsible heritage resource authority has reasonable cause to believe that any activity or development which will destroy, damage or alter any archaeological or paleontological site is underway, and where no application for a permit has been submitted and no heritage resource management procedures in terms of section 38 has been followed, it may

- serve on the owner or occupier of the site or on the person undertaking such development an order for the development to cease immediately for such period as is specified in the order

- carry out an investigation for the purpose of obtaining information on whether or not an archaeological or paleontological site exists and whether mitigation is necessary;
- if mitigation is deemed by the heritage resources authority to be necessary, assist the person on whom the order has been served under paragraph (a) to apply for a permit as required in subsection (4); and
- recover the cost of such investigation from the owner or occupier of the land on which it is believed an archaeological or paleontological site is located or from the person proposing to undertake the development if no application for a permit is received within two week of the order being served.

Subsection 35(6) the responsible heritage resource authority may, after consultation with the owner of the land on which an archaeological or paleontological site or meteorite is situated; serve a notice on the owner or any other controlling authority, to prevent activities within a specified distance from such site or meteorite.

Burial grounds and graves

Section 36 (3) No person may, without a permit issued by SAHRA or a provincial heritage resources authority:

- (i) destroy, damage, alter, exhume, remove from its original position or otherwise disturb any grave or burial ground older than 60 years which is situated outside a formal cemetery administered by a local authority; or
- (ii) bring onto or use at a burial ground or grave any excavation equipment, or any equipment which assists in detection or recovery of metals.

Subsection 36 (6) Subject to the provision of any person who in the course of development or any other activity discover the location of a grave, the existence of which was previously unknown, must immediately cease such activity and report the discovery to the responsible heritage resource authority which must, in co-operation with the South African Police service and in accordance with regulation of the responsible heritage resource authority-

- (I) carry out an investigation for the purpose of obtaining information on whether or not such grave is protected in terms of this act or is of significance to any community; and if such grave is protected or is of significance, assist any person who or community which is a direct descendant to make arrangements for the exhumation and re-interment

of the contents of such grave or, in the absence of such person or community, make any such arrangement as it deems fit.

Cultural Resource Management

Section **38(1)** Subject to the provisions of subsection (7), (8) and (9), any person who intends to undertake a development*...

- must at the very earliest stages of initiating such development notify the responsible heritage resources authority and furnish it with details regarding the location, nature and extent of the proposed development.

development means any physical intervention, excavation, or action, other than those caused by natural forces, which may in the opinion of the heritage authority in any way result in a change to the nature, appearance or physical nature of a place, or influence its stability and future well-being, including:

- (i) Construction, alteration, demolition, removal or change of use of a place or a structure at a place;
- (ii) Any change to the natural or existing condition or topography of land, and
- (iii) Any removal or destruction of trees, or removal of vegetation or topsoil;

place means a site, area or region, a building or other structure

structure means any building, works, device or other facility made by people and which is fixed to the ground.

4.2. The Human Tissue Act (65 of 1983)

This act protects graves younger than 60 years, these falls under the jurisdiction of the National Department of Health and the Provincial Health Department. Approval for the exhumation and reburial must be obtained from the relevant provincial MEC as well as relevant Local Authorities.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE

(a) carry out an investigation for the purpose of obtaining information on whether or not such burial grounds are protected in terms of this Act or is of significance to any community; and

(b) if such burial grounds are protected or is of significance, assist the community which is a direct descendant to make arrangements for the exhumation and re-interment of the content of such burial grounds or, in the absence of such person or community, make any such arrangement as it deems fit and submit a specialist report to the South African Heritage Resource Agency which addresses the following:

- Executive summary
- Scope of work undertaken
- Methodology used to obtain supporting information
- Overview of relevant legislation
- Results of all investigations
- Interpretation of information
- References

6. TERMINOLOGY

The Heritage impact Assessment (HIA) referred to in the title of this report includes a survey of heritage resources as outlined in the National Heritage resources Act, 1999 (Act No 25 of 1999). Heritage resources, (Cultural resources) include all human-made phenomena and intangible products that are result of the human mind. Natural, technological or industrial features may also be part of heritage resources, as places that have made an outstanding contribution to the cultures, traditions and lifestyle of the people or groups of people of South Africa.

The term ‘pre –historical’ refers to the time before any historical documents were written or any written language developed in a particular area or region of the world. The historical period and historical remains refer, for the project area, to the first appearance or use of ‘modern’ Western writing brought South Africa by the first colonist who settled in the Cape in the early 1652 and brought to the other different part of South Africa in the early 1800.

The term 'relatively recent past' refers to the 20th century. Remains from this period are not necessarily older than sixty years and therefore may not qualify as archaeological or historical remains. Some of these remains, however, may be close to sixty years of age and may in the near future, qualify as heritage resources.

It is not always possible, based on the observation alone, to distinguish clearly between archaeological remains and historical remains or between historical remains and remains from the relatively recent past. Although certain criteria may help to make this distinction possible, these criteria are not always present, or when they are present, they are not always clear enough to interpret with great accuracy. Criteria such as square floor plans (a historical feature) may serve as a guideline. However circular and square floors may occur together on the same site.

The 'term sensitive remains' is sometimes used to distinguish graves and cemeteries as well as ideologically significant features such as holy mountains, initiation sites or other sacred places. Graves in particular are not necessarily heritage resources if they date from the recent past and do not have head stones that are older than sixty years. The distinction between 'formal' and 'informal' graves in most instances also refers to graveyards that were used by colonists and by indigenous people. This distinction may be important as different cultural groups may uphold different traditions and values with regard to their ancestors. These values have to be recognized and honoured whenever graveyards are exhumed and relocated.

The term 'Stone Age' refers to the prehistoric past, although Late Stone Age people lived in South Africa well into the historical period. The Stone Age is divided into an Early Stone Age (3 Million years to 150 000 thousand years ago) the Middle Stone Age (150 000 years ago to 40 000 years ago) and the Late Stone Age (40 000 years to 200 years ago).

The term 'Early Iron Age' and Late Iron Age respectively refers to the periods between the first and second millenniums AD.

The 'Late Iron Age' refers to the period between the 17th and the 19th centuries and therefore includes the historical period.

Mining heritage sites refers to old, abandoned mining activities, underground or on the surface, which may date from the pre historical, historical or relatively recent past.

The term 'study area' or 'project area' refers to the area where the developers wants to focus its development activities (refer to plan)

Phase I studies refers to survey using various sources of data in order to establish the presence of all possible types of heritage resources in a given area.

Phase II studies includes in-depth cultural heritage studies such as archaeological excavating and sometimes laboratory work. Phase II work may include documenting of rock art, engravings or historical sites and dwellings; the sampling of archaeological sites or shipwrecks; extended excavation of archaeological sites; the exhumation of bodies and the relocation of grave yards, etc. Phase II work may require the input of specialist and require the co-operation and the approval of SAHRA.

7. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

During the initial inspection of the affected site, the archaeologists had identified the remains as belonging to the pre-colonial Iron Age period based on the content of the disturbed archaeological deposit. Nevertheless, in accordance with legislative requirements, a community consultative process was undertaken in an attempt to test local indigenous knowledge about the remains. Mr. Marebane Adolf of LBMC Pty Ltd undertook the community consultation process. Interviews were held with local residents with the aid of Headman Sebati who called a public meeting should any of the village know about the remains. According to the headman Sebati, the area where the remains were uncovered has been previously used as cultivating fields before the stands could be demarcated, and none of the village elders were in a position to know any existence of graves. The remains were not marked, or indicated in a form of grave dressings. The community leaders, and the sanitation project leader as well as the facilitation team were extremely helpful and positively participated directly in the process. Mr. Marebane Adolf became a liaison or middle man between the Municipality, the traditional leadership and the archaeologists to successfully conclude the consultative process. The community consultation produced no direct descendants or any person who claimed the graves. Satisfactory arrangements were made with the traditional authority for the salvaging, exhumation and reburial of the remains. Skeletal analysis/ investigations on the remains were not allowed. The Traditional Authority identified site, as the reburial place, a site close to where the remains were originally exposed. A date for the exhumation and re-burial was finalised to be the 26th November 2013.

8. THE EXHUMATION SITES

The remains were noted at three different areas, all affected by the construction of pit sanitation project. The area was previously used as Ploughing zones, no associated trees used as grave marker were noted. Two of the areas were recently used as garbage refusal site characterised by recent concrete, ash, plastics and house refused goods. Currently the area was covered by overgrown bush.

9. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROCEDURE

Excavation has been defined by Shrare and Ashmore (1979) as the principal means by which data is gathered about the past the method is used to gather and retrieved data from beneath the ground. This data is seldom in primary context. The archaeological excavations included both formally laid out excavation trenches and/or squares in predetermined areas; in this regard it was decided to concentrate on disturbed areas, where human skeletal remains were noted

The objectives of the exhumation process were in three folds

- To assist the Ga-Sebati traditional council and headman Sebati with the exhumation process.
- To carefully expose and record grave evidence uncovered during the exhumation process using archaeological standards, techniques, methods and procedures
- To transfer any recovered human remains over to funeral parlous for the reburial process.

10. EXHUMATION METHODOLOGY

10.1. DOCUMENTATION

The documentation includes digital photographs taken by means of a Digital camera (Canon, EOS 1000D and Sony 7, 2 Mega Pixel, DSC-S650). Photos of the exhumation process were taken. The descriptions as well as the physical environment of the grave site, this includes site layout have been recorded on field notebook. Documentation was envisaged with great attention to detail note worthy findings associated with the grave such as grave goods uncovered during the exhumation process. Site was plotted using a Global Positioning System (GPS) WGS84 datum (Garmin E-Trek Legend). The affected sites were excavated according to archaeological techniques used to investigate historical and archaeological graves as described by Nieneber (1997) Nieneber & Steyn (1999) for the recovery and analysis of human skeletal remains. The procedures employed minimise damages to the bones and helps in determining and confirming the burial position of the deceased as well as determining the identity in terms of race, sex and age. Standard anthropological procedures were employed to analyse the remains in situ after the remains were exposed by means of archaeological methods.

10.2. EXHUMATION OF REMAINS 1.

The open dug up trench in preparation for the pit latrine was not back filled, the envisaged exercise started, by clearing any vegetation cover, however few human remains were noted on the surface this includes, cranium, and vertebrates bones. The remains seem to have been uncovered at the depth of 30cm at the central part of the pit .after documentation the remains were collected, and excavation continued to the depth of 1m where a homogenous sterile soil occurred. All the human remains collected were disturbed (out of context with no remains orientation). Some of the collected human remains includes, broken piece of mandible, with several loose teeth, humerus and vertebrates. Most of the remains were missing.



Figure 6: View of exposed human remains, inside the dup up sanitation pit



Figure 7: Some of the collected remains

- **Skeleton 1**

Skeleton: 15, 4% complete.

Dentition: 20% dentitions present (Enamel eruption with worn molars and premolar teeth)

Gender: Based on the ramim and mandible the deceased was a male individual.

Age: Between 35-50 years at time of death: according to the shape of the rami in the mandible. This was the only feature that could be used for gender determination. Ossification of acetabulum complete: Ossification starts at the age of 12 years and the process complete at the age of 16 years. Permanent dentition fully erupted: complete by 21 years. At 15 years only 3rd molar needs to be erupted. 2nd and 3rd mandibular molars are erupted, thus approximately 11 years. Mandibular 3rd molar, the last tooth to erupt, at approximately 15-21 years.

10.3. EXHUMATION OF REMAINS 2.

Here the remains were covered by soil after they were uncovered; the indicated area was excavated following previous disturbances, however brittle cranial bones pieces were collected throughout the excavation process. At the depth of 1 meter few insitu remains were notices (see photo for more detail). Some of the identifiable bones include humerus, pelvic girdle, femur, ulna and radius. An interpretation of this bones show that the individual was buried lying on the back side, with hands placed on the side of the body. All the tiny bones which include phalanges, carpals and metal carpal bones have disintegrated due to high acid con tent in the soil. No grave goods or grave pit was noted during the process. All the remains were collected and placed inside the wooden coffin.

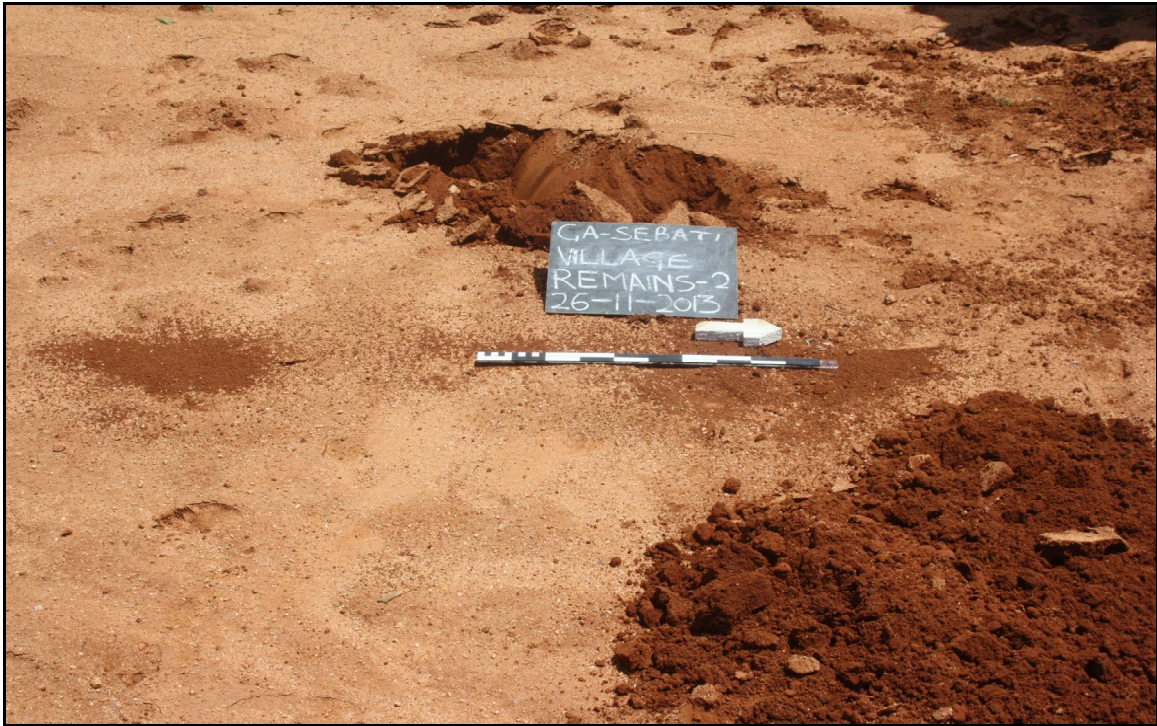


Figure 8: View of the area where the second skeleton was uncovered



Figure 9: Some of insitu remains noted at the bottom of the pit.

- **Skeleton 2**

Skeleton: 15, 4% complete.

Dentition: 20% dentition presents (Enamel eruption with worn teeth)

Gender: Insitu pelvic girdle shape, reflect that deceased was a female individual who has given birth.

Age: Between 35-45 years at time of death. The girdle was the only feature that could be used for gender determination. However most of other bones such as mandible, skull that could be used for gender determination hinder the onsite analysis. Very few teeth were collected.

10.4. EXHUMATION OF REMAINS 3.

The site was recently disturbed by cultivating activities where a tractor was used to till the soil. However the area was recently used as garbage refusal area, characterised by ash and plastic materials. The indicated area was excavated and at the depth 20 centimetres grainy sterile soil was encountered. The excavation was extended towards the northern side, here brittle rib bones, phalanges and vertebrates were collected. At the depth of 15 centimetres from the surface pelvic girdle, pieces of vertebrate femur, patella, tibia, fibula and astragalus, carpals and metacarpals, were recorded in situ. At the depth of 20cm sterile soil was noted.



Figure 10: Top section of the cultivated land where the remains were uncovered



Figure 11: The bottom section of the remains

- **Skeleton 3**

Skeleton: 45, 4% complete.

Dentition: absence of teeth

Gender: Insitu pelvic girdle shape, reflect that deceased was a female individual who has given birth.

Age: Between 25-38 years at time of death. The girdle was the only feature that could be used for gender determination. However most of other bones such as mandible, skull that could be used for gender determination hinder the onsite analysis.

11. GENERAL PRESERVATIONS.

The general preservation of the remains was very poor, not well preserved, all the remains were generally brittle, however, only a single cranium with mandible were clearly visible, from the first skeleton. None of the skeleton was complete some of the long bones were not complete, the proximal and distal ends have disintegrated (some of the ends eroded completely) the third skeletal remains long bones were well preserved however very little could be seen on the ribs and vertebrae. At the first skeletal remains, a complete cranium with mandible, and a set of permanent teeth with advanced wear was evident. However the skull was quite robust with large mastoids, prominent brow ridge and rounded orbital margins, broad nasal aperture, thus indicate an individual of African descent; it was not possible to take cranial measurement that could be used for further analysis. From the second skeleton, an insitu observation shows, pelvic girdle, with vertebrae which shows some age changes, these characteristic probably indicate an individual older than 40years. The pelvis was very fragmentary and was completely exposed but the ends of the girdle has disintegrated, however could be used in sex determination. Assessments for the presence of trauma and pathology were hampered by poor preservation.

12. DISCUSSION

We are not certain if the affected graves belong to the Iron Age communities, due to the shortage of scattered potsherd, and absence of grave goods.

About 1800 years ago the first farming communities entered South Africa and started to replace the Stone Age hunter-gatherers. For the first time, people lived in settled communities, cultivating such crops as sorghum, millets, ground beans and cowpeas, and they herded cattle as well as sheep and goats. Because these early farming peoples also made their own iron tools, many archaeologists call this block of time the **Iron Age**. For convenience and to mark widespread events, it is divided into three periods: the Early Iron Age (AD 200-900), the Middle Iron Age (AD 900-1300) and the Late Iron Age (AD 1300-1820- see page 33 for details).

Archaeologically, the Sotho-Tswana language is associated with the ceramic cluster known as Moloko. The earliest recorded facies of Moloko is *Icon*. *Icon* pottery first appears in the Phalaborwa area in the 12th to 13th centuries and then slightly later in the rest of the Limpopo Province. *Icon*, in both areas forms major disjunctions with the local sequences: it cannot be derived from *K2* and *Mapungubwe* in the Limpopo Province or from *Kgolpolwe* to the southeast. Furthermore, *Icon* cannot be derived from the *Happy Rest – Eiland* sequence elsewhere in Limpopo. Because of the constraints within an historical tradition, *Icon* cannot be derived from other **KALUNDU** facies in Botswana, Zimbabwe or Zambia. By a process of elimination, Sotho-Tswana then most likely had Early Iron Age **UREWE** sources somewhere in East Africa. Sites with this pottery are limited to the Limpopo Province, Mpumalanga and perhaps Botswana, dating to between about AD 1300 and 1500. According to the ceramic evidence, in some places *Icon* incorporated earlier *Eiland* elements (Huffman 1980, in Press). This phase predates the oral record. Because *Eiland* cultural remains were also found, this site may add to the evidence of the merging of *Eiland* and *Icon* in about the 13th – 14th centuries.

13. REBURIAL

After the completion of the exhumation process, and preliminary analysis of the skeletal remains, the remains were handed over to Ga-Sebati community via the office of the Traditional Authority and the Project Manager, Mr Adolf. The traditional authority allocated a gravesite in close proximity to the royal grave site. All the remains were placed inside wooden coffins for the reburial process the same day. Very few people congregated for the reburial process. Important to note is that traditional leadership and tribal council representatives attended the re-burial ceremony.



Figure 12: Reburial process

14. CONCLUSION

The objective of this project was concluded by re-interment of the exposed human skeletal remains at Ga-Sebati village. It was however noted that these remains were not related to the present Ga-Sebati community. The salvaging of remains was successfully concluded.

15. REFERENCES

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**Annexure 1: Excavation Permit from the South African
Heritage Resource Agency (SAHRA)**