



Archaetnos Culture & Cultural  
Resource Consultants  
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**A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION,  
EXHUMATION AND RELOCATION OF A NUMBER OF BURIALS  
IMPACTED ON BY THE LANSERIA COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
ON BULTFONTEIN 533JQ & NOOITGEDACHT 535JQ,  
NEAR LANSERIA, GAUTENG**

For:  
**Cavaleros Construction Co. (Pty) Ltd  
P.O. Box 40037  
CLEVELAND  
2022**

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## SUMMARY

During 2011 Archaetnos cc was requested by Cavaleros Construction Co. to undertake an HIA (AE11116 – November 2011) on portions of the farms Bultfontein 533, Nietgedacht 534 and Nooitgedacht 535JQ near Lanseria. An Industrial development (Lanseria Commercial Crossing) is being undertaken. During the HIA a number of grave sites (6 in total) were recorded that would be impacted on by the development and it was recommended that the graves be exhumed and relocated after following all due legal processes. Three of these sites (G1, G2 and G6) were to be directly impacted and the client then appointed Archaetnos (in conjunction with AVBOB Johannesburg) to undertake the grave investigation, exhumation and relocation process as well. SAHRA concurred with the recommendations and requested that a permit be applied for.

A permit from SAHRA (BG/12/10/001/87) was obtained and used for this purpose after all processes were followed (newspaper advertisements, social consultation and consents obtained from family members). A total of 66 graves, of which most were unknown in terms of identity and age, were investigated during the exhumation work in November 2012. The family members of the identified deceased were present during the work undertaken. All the graves (except 7 that will be reburied at Majakaneng near Brits) will be reburied at the Waterval Cemetery in Midrand.

This report discusses the results of the investigations and exhumations. The required work was completed successfully and the development can therefore continue, taking cognizance of the recommendations given at the end.

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AND RELOCATION OF A NUMBER OF BURIALS IMPACTED ON BY THE  
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**INTRODUCTION**

During 2011 Archaetnos cc was requested by Cavaleros Construction Co. to undertake an HIA (AE11116 – November 2011) on portions of the farms Bultfontein 533, Nietgedacht 534 and Nooitgedacht 535JQ near Lanseria. An Industrial development (Lanseria Commercial Crossing) is being undertaken. During the HIA a number of grave sites (6 in total) were recorded that would be impacted on by the development and it was recommended that the graves be exhumed and relocated after following all due legal processes. Three of these sites (G1, G2 and G6) were to be directly impacted and the client then appointed Archaetnos (in conjunction with AVBOB Johannesburg) to undertake the grave investigation, exhumation and relocation process as well. SAHRA concurred with the recommendations and requested that a permit be applied for.

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This report discusses the results of the investigations and exhumations and provides some further recommendations at the end.

**AIMS**

The main aims with the investigation and exhumation of the 66 graves from various sites on the farms Bultfontein 533 and Nooitgedacht 535 JQ were the following:

- (a) the detailed investigation of all the burials older than 60 years of age, as well as those of unknown age, located on these farm sections that will be impacted by the proposed Lanseria Commercial Development. These graves included a number identified by members of the Mahlangu family and other community members
- (b) the successful exhumation and relocation of each burial to a cemetery chosen by the descendants and family members of the deceased individuals buried at each locality, including those unknown and unclaimed burials.
- (e) to submit a final report on the results of the physical investigation, exhumation and relocation of the burials to SAHRA and the client (Cavaleros Construction).

## LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Aspects concerning the conservation of cultural resources are dealt with mainly in two acts. These are the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) and the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998).

### 1.1 The National Heritage Resources Act

According to the above-mentioned law the following is protected as cultural heritage resources:

- a. Archaeological artifacts, structures and sites older than 100 years
- b. Ethnographic art objects (e.g. prehistoric rock art) and ethnography
- c. Objects of decorative and visual arts
- d. Military objects, structures and sites older than 75 years
- e. Historical objects, structures and sites older than 60 years
- f. Proclaimed heritage sites
- g. **Grave yards and graves older than 60 years**
- h. Meteorites and fossils
- i. Objects, structures and sites of scientific or technological value.

#### Archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites

Section 35(4) of this act states that no person may, without a permit issued by the responsible heritage resources authority:

- a. destroy, damage, excavate, alter, deface or otherwise disturb any archaeological or palaeontological site or any meteorite;
- b. destroy, damage, excavate, remove from its original position, collect or own any archaeological or palaeontological material or object or any meteorite;
- c. trade in, sell for private gain, export or attempt to export from the Republic any category of archaeological or palaeontological material or object, or any meteorite; or
- d. bring onto or use at an archaeological or palaeontological site any excavation equipment or any equipment that assists in the detection or recovery of metals or archaeological and palaeontological material or objects, or use such equipment for the recovery of meteorites.
- e. alter or demolish any structure or part of a structure which is older than 60 years as protected.

The above mentioned may only be disturbed or moved by an archaeologist, after receiving a permit from the South African Heritage Resources Agency.

## Human remains

In terms of Section 36(3) of the National Heritage Resources Act, no person may, without a permit issued by the relevant heritage resources authority:

- a. destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position of otherwise disturb the grave of a victim of conflict, or any burial ground or part thereof which contains such graves;
- b. **destroy, damage, alter, exhume or 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**
- c. bring onto or use at a burial ground or grave referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) any excavation, or any equipment which assists in the detection or recovery of metals.

Human remains that are less than 60 years old are subject to provisions of the Human Tissue Act (Act 65 of 1983) and to local regulations. Exhumation of graves must conform to the standards set out in the **Ordinance on Excavations (Ordinance no. 12 of 1980)** (replacing the old Transvaal Ordinance no. 7 of 1925).

Permission must also be gained from the descendants (where known), the National Department of Health, Provincial Department of Health, Premier of the Province and local police. Furthermore, permission must also be gained from the various landowners (i.e. where the graves are located and where they are to be relocated) before exhumation can take place.

Human remains can only be handled by a registered undertaker or an institution declared under the **Human Tissues Act (Act 65 of 1983 as amended)**.

**Unidentified/unknown graves are also handled as older than 60 until proven otherwise.**

### **1.2 The National Environmental Management Act**

This act states that a survey and evaluation of cultural resources must be done in areas where development projects, that will change the face of the environment, will be undertaken. The impact of the development on these resources should be determined and proposals for the mitigation must be made.

## **METHODOLOGY**

**Background information** – The results of previous work carried out in the area (Heritage Impact Assessment) were used to provide background to the project and the graves identified and recorded in the areas under discussion. Information on the deceased

individuals (those who were identified and claimed by descendants) was obtained from the family members.

***Mapping and Photographing*** – A Google Earth image of the area, providing a location for the area and each grave site, was produced. Maps of the development area (commissioned by the client) indicating the location of the grave sites, were also used. Photographs of each individual site, grave and burial, any skeletal remains and grave goods that were recovered were also taken as part of the documentation process.

***Archaeological Investigation and Exhumation*** – Graves were individually photographed and all details on the headstones of those with them recorded. The graves were then excavated by using a TLB machine to remove topsoil and overburden up to the level of coffin and/or skeletal remains. All human skeletal remains and grave goods (such as coffin fragments) were then uncovered and removed and after detailed recording the remains were then placed in coffins for reburial. It should also be mentioned that in cases where no skeletal and/or cultural remains were found soil samples were taken for reburial purposes as per standard practice. During the exhumation process family members were present.

***Burial Forms*** – A Burial Form for each individual burial was completed. Basic information on burial position, grave goods, general preservation and other general observations are included on these forms. These forms will not be reproduced in this report and the information on each individual burial will be discussed in the report, while finally the information recorded will be summarized and interpreted at the end.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA AND SITES**

The graves (on three sites) are located on portions of the farms Bultfontein 533 and Nooitgedacht 535JQ, near Lanseria in Gauteng. The area falls within the Krugersdorp Magisterial District (Mogale City). Six grave sites were initially identified during the HIA undertaken for the Lanseria Commercial Crossing (a warehousing, some high density residential, retail/office and industrial development, is being proposed) development and three of these sites were deemed to be negatively impacted by the proposed development and had to be exhumed and relocated as a result. The three sites - initially numbered G1, G2 and G6 – were re-named A (G6), B (G1) and C (G2) for the purposes of the exhumation process, and contained around 66 graves in total.

Site A contained 22 visible graves, with 6 of these belonging to the Mahlangu family who lived in the area until recently, 1 to the Khumalo family and 7 to the Boiketso family. The other graves remained unidentified. Site B contained around 35 graves, with four of these belonging to the Tau family (identified by Rebecca Tsotsetsi). Site C (close to Site B) contained 9 possible graves.





**Figure 1: Aerial view of grave site locations. G1 (B), G2 (C) and G6 (A) were the ones that had to be relocated (Google Earth 2011).**





**A14 – Michael Boikotso      A15 – Daniel Boikotso**  
**A16 – Martha Boikotso**

According to Hendrick, Jerry Boikotso died in the 1960's and that he was around 20 years of age when he passed away. His grave had a brick dressing and one large stone at the head. The skeletal remains were poorly preserved and only plastic coffin wrapping was found as grave goods. Molatlegi (Baby) Boikotso was apparently only a few months old when he died and Hendrick is his uncle. The grave was also packed with bricks and had no headstone. No remains were found and a soil sample was taken for reburial purposes. Hendrick is also the uncle of Daniel Boikotso (grave A12). Bricks were again used as dressing. Daniel was only 18 months old when he died, and although some small bone fragments were recovered mainly soil was taken for reburial purposes. Plastic coffin wrapping and clothing fragments were also found.

Toon Boikotso (A13) was Hendrick's sister, and according to him she was between 20 and 30 years old when she died (he was still very young when this happened). Her remains were fairly well preserved and plastic coffin wrapping and clothing fragments were also recovered. Hendrick's brother Michael (A14) was between 40 – 45 years old when he died (Hendrick was also very young). Besides skeletal remains plastic coffin wrapping, coffin handles and some rubber arm bands were also found. Daniel Boikotso (A15) was the nephew of Hendrick and was around 30 years of age at time of death. His grave had a cement border, with stone dressing at the head and feet. Plastic coffin wrapping, clothing fragments, coffin handles and a hospital ID tag was recovered with the remains. The last Boikotso grave (A16) was that of Martha Boikotso (Hendrick's grandmother) and apparently she was nearly 100 years old when she passed away. The grave dressing was similar as that of A15. Plastic coffin wrapping and coffin handles were also recovered.

**A19** was a stone packed grave without any headstone and belonged to an unknown adult female individual. According to Solly Mahlangu she was murdered by a man some years ago, but her name he did not recall, as well as her age. Coffin wood fragments, lead coffin handles, nails, cloth wrapping and plastic coffin lining was recovered over and above the skeletal remains. **A20** was an unknown stone packed grave containing the remains of an adult individual. The age and sex could not be determined as the remains were too fragmented. **A21 & A22** was two smallish stone cairns/heaps very close to each other that looked like possible graves. The families could not determine if these were in fact graves, but we decided to investigate the possibility in order to ensure that all possible graves have been relocated from the site. No remains were recovered, but it was decided to take a soil sample and rebury this as a possible infant/child.

### ***Site B (G1)***

This grave site contains 36 graves, mostly stone packed and without any headstones. At least 5 distinct rows of graves are visible. Two of the graves have headstones with visible (painted on) inscriptions, namely Elizabeth Saile Ntasi. Died 17/7/1956 and Sarah M.Segaile. Last mentioned has no date. According to Mr. Solly Mahlangu most of the

people buried here were farm workers and their children and mainly migrants from countries outside of South Africa such as Malawi (Pers.comm: Solly Mahlangu 2011-11-28). All the graves relocated from here will be reburied in the Waterval Cemetery as well (including the known ones).

Site Location: **S25.97365 E27.93768**

Of the 36 marked graves at the Site B only 6 were identifiable (2 of those by painted inscriptions on the headstones and 4 by family members). Of the 30 unknown graves at least 18 were those of small infants or children (based the small size of the graves and sometimes fragmented remains of coffins and/or skeletal remains), while the others were those of adult individuals. With the infants/children mostly soil samples were taken for reburial purposes as is standard practice. The skeletal remains found with the adult burials were in the main very fragmented and incomplete, and this could have something to do with both the age of the graves, as well as soil type and possibly underground water.

With the unknown adults it was very difficult to determine age and sex of the individuals due to the fragmented nature of the remains. One individual (**B12**) could be of old/senile age based on a small fragment of mandible (thin jaw line/no teeth), while the other (**B36**) individual was a young adult with his/her teeth not worn down badly. The remains (coffin wrappings) of two small infants were found in grave **B34**. Grave goods recovered from the burials included plastic coffin lining, corrugated iron sheeting fragments, coffin handles and nails, clothing fragments and a few medicine bottles with some burials. A bay girls' dress was found in **B34**, while two plastic hospital tags were found in grave **B36**. Unfortunately no writing was visible on these to help with the positive identification of the individual buried here.

**Grave B28** was a space in between two distinct graves (**B27 & B29**) and although there were no clearly marked grave (stones) there was a slight elevation of soil and the area was open. In order to ensure that all possible graves have been exhumed and relocated we decided to excavate and to take a soil sample for reburial purposes.

**B3** was a stone and brick packed grave and had a cement/concrete headstone with a painted inscription "**SAILE.NTASI ELIZABETH DIED 17:07:1956 R.I.P**". Besides the fragmented remains of an adult individual recovered, some coffin handles and fragments of corrugated iron sheeting was also found. **B13** was another grave with stone and brick dressing and had a handmade wooden cross with painted inscription "**SARAH.M. SEGAILE**". The age and date of death is not recorded. The very fragmented remains of this adult female were recovered.

**B26, 27, 29 & 30** belonged to the Tau family, and these four graves were identified by Rebecca Tsotsetsi (born around 1950 although she is unsure) who gave consent for their exhumation and relocation. All four graves were stone packed and had no headstones. **B26** is the grave of Caroline Tau (identified as Katrien during the earlier site visit in March). She was an infant of unknown age. No remains were found and a soil sample

was taken for reburial purposes. B27 is the grave of Jan Tau. He was around 20 years of age when he passed away. No remains were found and a soil sample was taken. B29 belonged to the Rebecca's grandmother Rebecca Tau (age unknown). This grave/burial was interesting because as soon as the coffin (hard polystyrene) was reached water immediately rushed out. It seems as if water must have flowed into the coffin at some point, forming some kind of reservoir. Once the coffin lid was breached the water ran out. Because of the water-logged situation the skeletal remains were not well preserved and mostly long bones remained. Besides the skeletal remains and coffin a glass beer mug and a rope was recovered from the grave. B30 was the grave of John Tau – apparently an old male. Although the remains were very fragmented, most skeletal parts were present. Plastic coffin lining, coffin handles, coffin fragments and coffin nails were also found.

### *Site C (G2)*

This site was located during the mapping and plotting of the other graves in the area. It contained at least 9 stone packed graves. The site is situated in close proximity to G1, and is probably related (in terms of age). None of the graves here were identified and no descendants/family members come forward during the consultation process.

Site Location: **S25.97295 E27.93767**

**C1** contained the fragmented remains of an adult individual of unknown age or sex. Plastic coffin lining was also recovered. **C2** also contained fragmented remains of an adult. Coffin lining and clothing fragments (including a jersey) indicate that the individual was possibly a male person. **C3** was another adult individual represented by fragmented remains (mainly long bones). Plastic coffin lining and coffin nails were also recovered. The size of the grave of **C4** indicated that it was probably that of an infant or small child. No skeletal remains were found, but coffin plastic lining and cloth fragments of the coffin cushion were recovered, as well as a coffee mug that was placed on top of the grave. A soil sample was taken for reburial. **C5** contained the fragmented remains of an adult person (age and sex unknown), as well as some coffin lining, nails and a piece of rope. The skeletal remains from **C6** represent an adult individual – possibly a very old person based on the mandible which is thin with no teeth visible. A coffin handle and plastic coffin lining was also recovered. The small size of the grave of **C7** indicates an infant or small child. Besides coffin plastic no remains were found and a soil sample was taken. Both **C8 & C9** was very small stone packed cairns/heaps and possible would have contained the burials of small infants. No remains were found and soil samples were taken for both.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In conclusion it is possible to say that the investigation, exhumation and relocation of the approximate 66 graves from the three sites (A – G6; B – G1 and C – G2) during November 2012 were conducted successfully. Although the largest number of the graves was unknown and unclaimed by descendants or community members, 18 of the graves were identified by family members who gave consent for their exhumation and relocation. These graves belonged to the Mahlangu (6 graves), Khumalo (1 grave),

Boikotso (7 graves) and Tau/Tsostetsi (4 graves) families. Most of the graves (including the unknown ones) were reburied at the Waterval Municipal Cemetery in Midrand, while the Boikotso family graves will be reburied at Majakaneng near Brits/Madibeng.

From a heritage point of view (and especially in terms of the graves that would have been negatively impacted on by the proposed Lanseria Commercial Crossing development) it is therefore possible to recommend that the development could continue. It should however be mentioned that many historical and archaeological sites, features or objects have a subterranean nature. This includes unknown and unmarked burials, and although we have tried to ensure that all possible burials in the area has been exhumed there is always a possibility that more could be uncovered during construction work. Should any of this be discovered during the development activities a heritage specialist should be called in to investigate.

## **REFERENCES**

Aerial view of area and grave site locations: Google Earth 2011: Imagery date 2011/31/03.

Map of area and development indicating location of the various grave sites: Courtesy Harald Wattrus & Associates

Pelser, A.J. 2011. **A Report on a Heritage Impact Assessment for the proposed Lanseria Commercial Crossing development on various portions of Bultfontein 533 JQ, Nooitgedacht 534 JQ and Nietgedacht 535 JQ, near Lanseria Gauteng.** Unpublished Report Archaetnos cc AE11116. For the Cavaleros Construction Co (Pty) Ltd. November 2011.

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**APPENDIX 1 – BURIAL PHOTOS**

*Site A (G6)*

















































*Site B (G1)*





























































*Site C (G2)*













