Final Version

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF A POORLY DEFINED LATE IRON AGE STONE WALL LOCATED ON THE REMAINDER OF PORTION 58 OF THE FARM LEEUWVALLEI 297KT, TO BE IMPACTED UPON BY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT: SITE LB/3

BURGERSFORT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

REPORT PREPARED FOR

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Adansonia Heritage Consultants was appointed by Anglorand Holdings, Mr. Buks Van Der Wal, in conjunction with Principal Investigator Mr. Anton Pelser, to undertake the Phase 2 archaeological mitigation (excavations and mapping) of a poorly defined Late Iron Age stone walled site LB/3, which will be impacted upon by a residential development, Burgersfort extension 47, on portion 58 of the farm Leeuwvallei 297KT, adjacent to the town of Burgersfort in the Limpopo Province. The site was identified during 2005 by Dr. J. Pistorius, and again in 2009 by C. Van Wyk Rowe, and reported on. It was recommended that mitigation measures be put in place before development in this section may continue. SAHRA commented on the report (9/2/236/0032, October 2010) and supported the phase 2 mitigation to establish the scientific value of the site.

Adansonia Heritage Consultants (Christine Van Wyk Rowe) was appointed to undertake the detailed mapping, photographic recording and physical archaeological excavation of the site LB/3 in conjunction with Principal Investigator for the Colonial Period/Iron Age Archaeology, Anton Pelser, to establish the scientific value of the site. The foot survey in July (winter) as well as the mapping exercise provided a vague outline of at least one settlement unit which is used in this report to establish a possible reconstruction and interpretation of the cultural identity of the occupants, social economy and time-frame for settlement.

SAHRA issued an excavation permit (No: 1840), and archaeological work on site LB/3 was conducted in September 2014. LB/3 is located close to a permanent residential area. The indistinct remains of other stone walls were identified as part of the wider site. The entire area around site LB/3 has been extensively disturbed. An interview with John Matladi, who lived at the site since 1966, revealed some historical information on the sequence of the settlement.

This report includes the results of the foot survey, mapping and archaeological fieldwork, and provides recommendations in terms of the destruction for site LB/3 for development purposes. The work was done successfully and the residential development may continue.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF A POORLY DEFINED LATE IRON AGE STONE WALL LOCATED ON THE REMAINDER OF PORTION 58 OF THE FARM LEEUWVALLEI 297KT, TO BE IMPACTED UPON BY A RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT: SITE LB/3, BURGERSFORT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

INTRODUCTION

Adansonia Heritage Consultants were appointed by Anglorand Holdings Limited (Mr. B. van der Wal), in conjunction with Mr. Anton Pelser to undertake an archaeological mitigation (site layout plans, photographic recording and test excavation) to establish the scientific value of a poorly defined Late Iron Age (LIA) stone wall, LB/3, which will be impacted upon by a residential development known as Burgersfort extension 47, on portion 58 of the farm Leeuwvallei 297KT, Burgersfort, Limpopo Province (see fig. 4). Site LB/3 was identified in 2005 by Dr. J. Pistorius, and again by C. Van Wyk Rowe (2009), and reported on. During these investigations the vegetation cover was dense which restricted visibility. Mitigation measures were recommended and SAHRA agreed in the review comment (9/2/236/0032)(2010), on a phase 2 assessment.

An excavation permit was obtained from SAHRA (Permit no.: 1840) in June 2014, to C. Van Wyk Rowe, with Mr. A. Pelser acting as the Principal Investigator during the work on the site. An extensive foot survey in July 2014 (winter) was conducted while the vegetation in the area was sparse. Archaeological work on LB/3 started in September 2014. LB/3 is a poorly defined LIA stone wall (fig. 11), located towards the west of Burgersfort extention 11, and south of the main roads to Steelpoort (R555), and Polokwane (R37)(fig. 1 & 2). The foot survey revealed the indistinct remains of stone walls, which formed part of this settlement. The site is located close to a permanent residential area. Site LB/3 has been extensively disturbed by historic and recent occupation as well as current settlements and grave sites.

A formal excavation was done at LB/3 as well as another excavation close by where an upper grinder was identified. Three shovel Test Pits (STP's) were conducted at the site (figs. 19-26). The stone walling in the area is very indistinct. It has been disturbed by layers of settlement in the historic and recent past, as well as roads and paths used by the current residents on the site (fig 8). John Matladi (2014-09-13), who lived at the site since 1966, was interviewed and revealed some information on the history of the area. According to him, his ancestors were of Sotho (Pedi) origin, and were the inhabitants of the current poorly defined stone walls. The graves in the area are also connected to his family. Matladi indicated that during a war, the site was in the firing line of the battle as a canon was placed in the hill behind the site, facing towards Fort Burgers (to the north of the site). The Sotho inhabitants moved away to Ohrigstad (Klipfontein), and settled there. After the War they moved backed to the original site but were also followed by other groups such as the Tsonga and Swazi. Subsequently, square units were built on top of the circular stone walled settlement. Matladi's mother attended an initiation

school in the hill behind the site (fig. 9). There were plenty of grinding stones when they lived there, but they were used and removed by the residents. The entire area was inhabited by the latter groups and the stones of the LIA settlement were possibly used as building material for the more recent square units, of which the foundations are still visible. Livestock also played a role in the destruction of the walls.

The current surrounding area is also extensively disturbed by industrial, residential and road infrastructure. Traces of LIA stone walls were identified in the direct vicinity of LB/3, but they are all very indistinct (figs. 8 & 13).

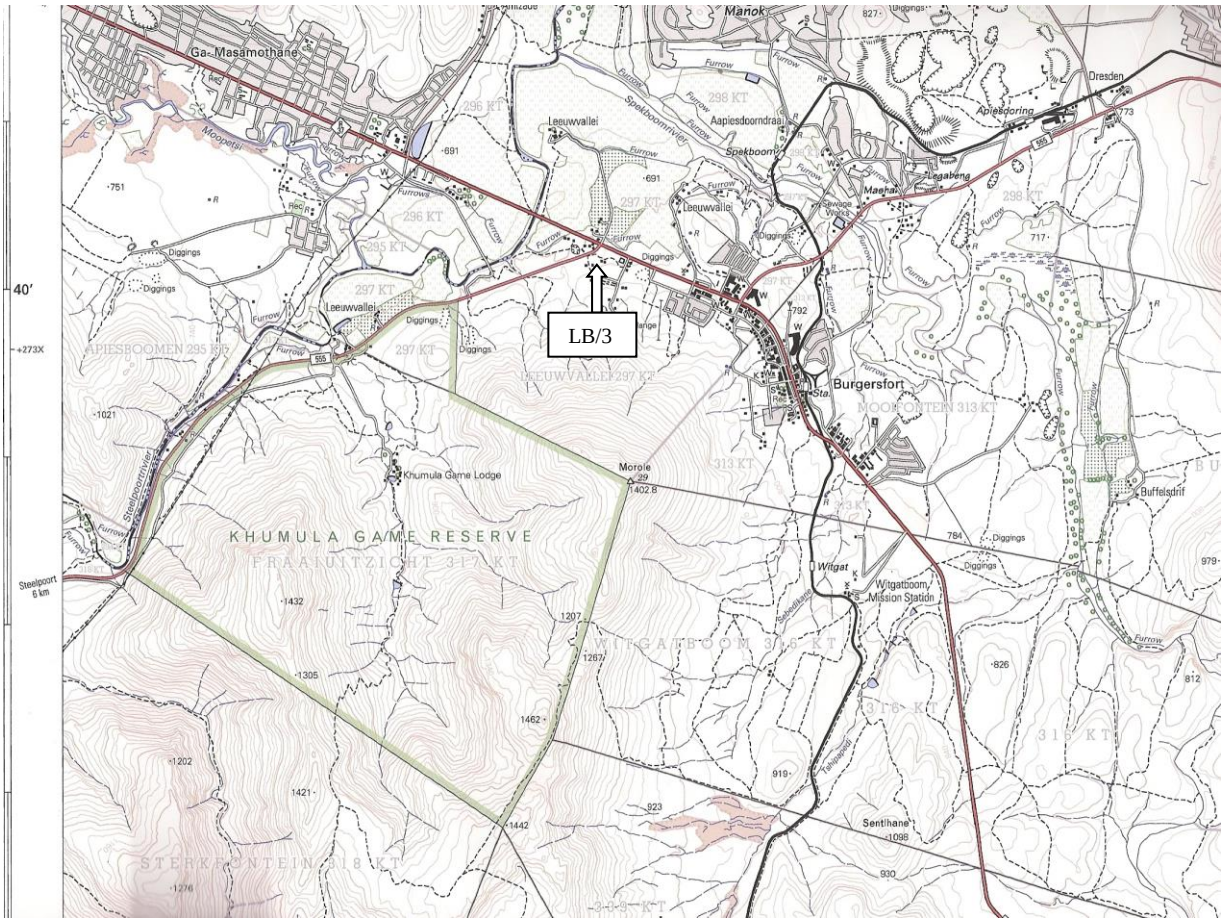

Fig. 1: Topographical map, 1:50 000, 2430CB, Burgersfort.

Two formal archaeological excavations were done at LB/3. Three Shovel Test Pits (STP's) were also completed in the direct vicinity of LB/3. The poorly defined stone wall, LB/3 was overgrown with shrubs and trees. Over 40 trees and many shrubs were removed from the area surrounding LB/3 to be able to see the possible extent of the site (fig. 9). The site has been severely disturbed in the past (see discussion later on in the report). Although visibility at this time of the year was good, a foot survey on the surface revealed only one broken upper grinder (fig. 30). The archaeological investigation of the site did not recover any cultural material. Pelser (2014: 5), mentioned in his report, that he also experienced a lack in cultural material at various sites which were excavated in the wider area.

Fig. 2: Locality of LB/3. Google image of heritage sites with the surrounding infrastructure visible.

AIMS

The aims of the archaeological investigation were to establish the scientific value of the site as follows:

a) Detailed site layout plan and mapping (to help determine settlement layout, extent, time-frame of occupation and material culture (figs. 8 & 19);

b) Mapping of sites and features (fig. 8);

c) Photographic recording (fig. 9-30);

d) Conduct excavations at LB/3 to determine the type of settlement (if possible), time-frame of occupation and material culture;

e) Analysis of the cultural material recovered during the excavations (if any);

f) Drafting of a detailed report on all the findings and recommendations on the way forward; and

g) Curation of the material at a recognized institution. Permit regulations specify that any material found must be lodged at the repository of the Lydenburg Museum.

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation of the project was done within the framework provided by the National Heritage Resources Act, no. 25 (1999).

In order to reach a comprehensive conclusion regarding the archaeological investigation, the following methods were used:

- **Background research** – This included background research on the area and its archaeology;
- **Photographic documentation** – Photographs of the site and area (before and after) were taken, while all identifiable features, excavations and individual objects were also photographed for recording purposes;
- **Mapping** – All identifiable features, excavations and the site's extent and possible layout were recorded and a map produced. Google earth images were used in conjunction with the ground survey. The study area was investigated for all possible heritage related features during the 2009 and July 2014 investigations. Another surface inspection was done after clearing of the vegetation.
- **Archaeological excavations** – Two excavations were conducted at LB/3 as well as three Shovel Test Pits (STP's);
- **Analysis and Documentation / Curation of cultural material** – No cultural material apart from one broken upper grinder on the surface, was recovered. This was documented photographically and analyzed accordingly. The upper grinder was cleaned and labeled for delivery to the Lydenburg Museum, along with the field notes.

BACKGROUND TO ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORY OF THE REGION

Site LB/3 falls within Section 1a, as described in the Phase 1 investigation (C. Van Wyk Rowe: 2009), and directly borders the town of Burgersfort (residential extention 11, fig. 4). It is situated south of the R555 road from Burgersfort to Steelpoort. The Steelpoort River is situated towards the west. Extensive disturbances to the physical landscape include road infrastructure, industrial, residential and informal settlements (recent and current) in all compass directions of the site (fig. 2). Sections of the property also show evidence of digging / quarrying activities (fig. 1). The site is vacant except for informal settlements and graves on the property, and zoned as residential 2.

Google Earth images were studied to assess current and historically disturbed areas and infrastructure. Site LB/3 is situated near the foot of a mountain and is covered by thorny bushveld vegetation and grass (fig. 10).

SITE	**GPS Co-Ordinate**
Leeuwvallei LB/3	S 24º 39' 59.5" E 30º 18' 27.5"

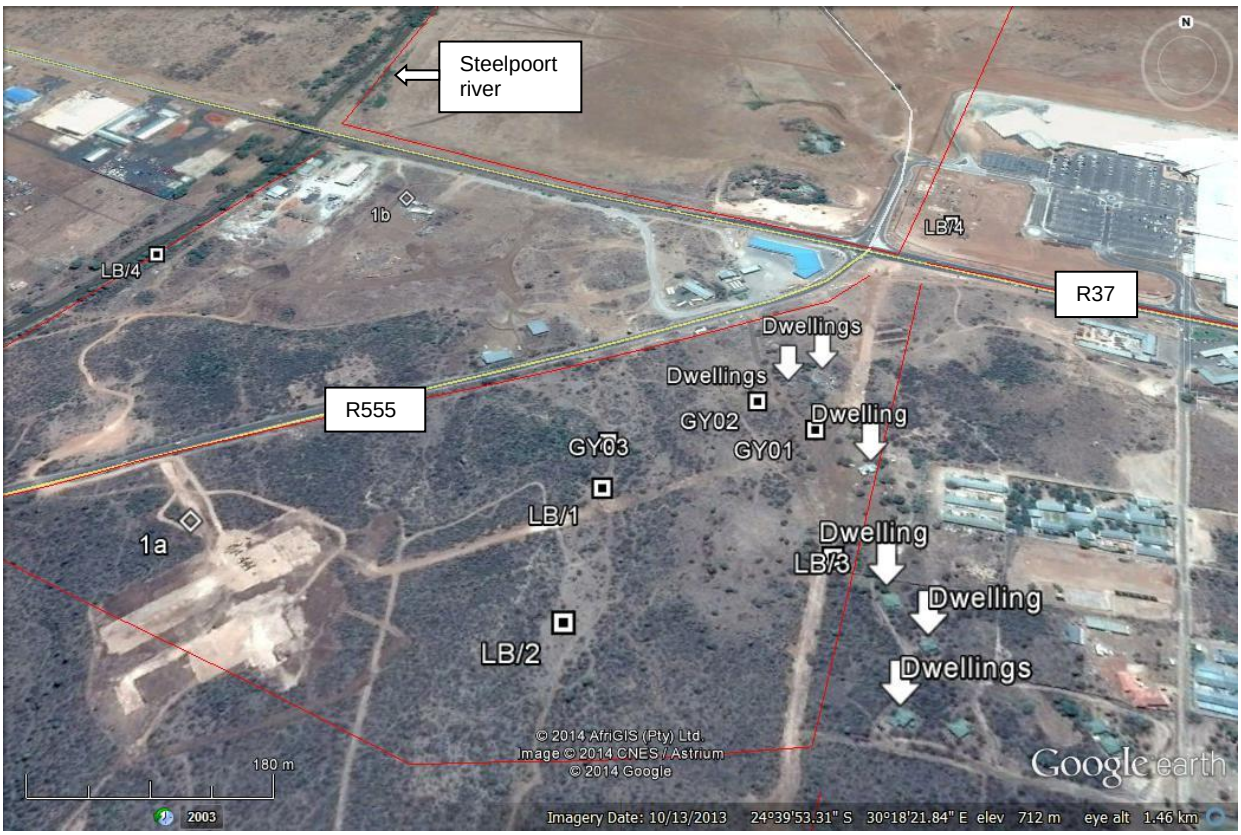

Fig. 3: Location of sites in section 1a which were identified in 2009. Some dwellings are indicated in the vicinity of LB/3. The red line is the border of the property.

The site was identified during 2005 by Dr. J. Pistorius and again in 2009 by C. Van Wyk Rowe. During both surveys the velt was dense and visibility was restricted. It was recommended that mitigation measures be put in place before development in this section may continue. SAHRA commented on the report (9/2/236/0032, October 2010) and supported the phase 2 mitigation to establish the scientific value of the site.

Adansonia Heritage Consultants (Christine Van Wyk Rowe) was appointed to undertake the detailed mapping, photographic recording and physical archaeological excavation of site LB/3, in conjunction with Principal Investigator for the Colonial Period/Iron Age Archaeology, Anton Pelser. A foot survey in July (winter) as well as the mapping exercise provided drawings of a poorly defined stone walled settlement in the vicinity of LB/3 (fig. 8). The methods as described above, are used in this report to establish a possible reconstruction and interpretation of the cultural identity of the occupants, social economy and time-frame for settlement.

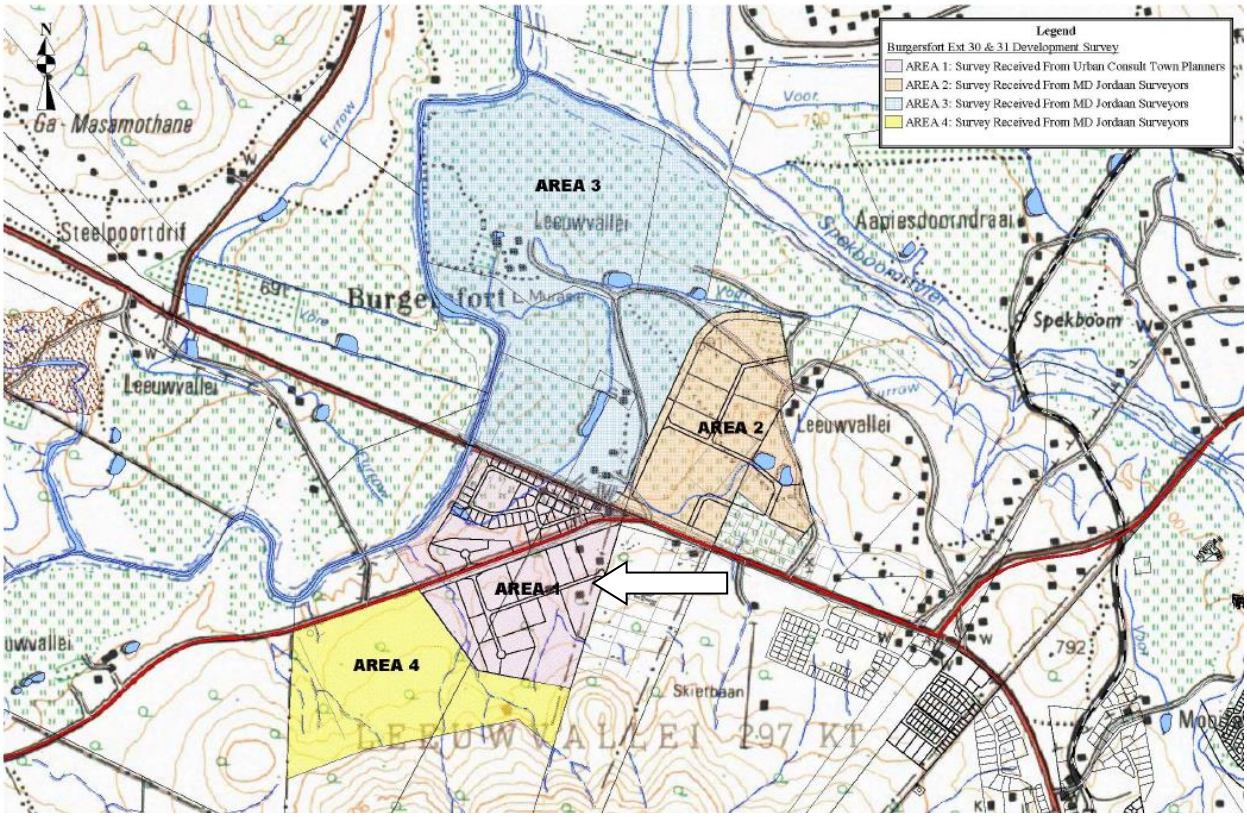

Fig. 4: Area of proposed development (arrow). The study area is located on *Area 1*, south of the R555 & R37.

This study concentrated on the poorly defined LIA site, named LB/3. Once the vegetation at site LB/3 was removed, there were indications of further poorly defined stone walls in the direct vicinity which indicated a wider past settlement. A foot survey in July 2014 in conjunction with studying the Google Earth images, indicated evidence of subsequent and more recent settlements (square foundations) at the site. According to John Matladi (personal communication 2014-09-13), there was a sequence of settlements since the LIA right through to the current date.

An **interview** with John Matladi, who lived at the site since 1966, was conducted on 13 September 2014. The interview revealed some information on the history of the area. According to him, his ancestors were Sotho (Pedi) origin, and stayed at the site. They were the initial inhabitants of the poorly defined stone walls. During the South African War (1899 – 1902), (or possibly the Sekukuni War, 1876/7) the site was in the firing line of the battle, as a canon was placed in the hill behind the site, facing Fort Burgers (towards the north). The inhabitants moved away to Ohrigstad (Klipfontein) and settled there. After the War, they moved backed to the original site but were also followed by Tsonga and Swazi groups. Subsequently, square houses were built on top of the stone walled settlement. There were grinding stones and clay pots present at the site, but these were used and removed by the latter groups. The entire area was inhabited by these groups and the stones of the LIA settlement were used as building material for the more recent units. It was further trampled and scattered by livestock.

The numbers used for the features in this report, were allocated with a code and number (eg. LB20 / LBGY01 – grave yard or burial site), which indicate the farm name and nearby town (Leeuwvallei, Burgersfort, or if it is a grave yard = GY), and number of the sequence during the investigation and survey (C Van Wyk Rowe: 2009).

Research was conducted by means of collecting primary or secondary literary sources with relevant information on the prehistory and history of the area. In order to place the sites located in the study area in archaeological context, secondary sources, such as ethnographical and linguistic studies by early researchers such as Ziervogel and Van Warmelo were consulted. Other useful sources were that of Theal (pre-historic), De Jongh (ethnographic and historic information in the area), Bergh (historic), Delius, *Mpumalanga: History and Heritage*, and *The Military History Journals* on the Sekukuni Wars.

Pistorius (2005) and Van Wyk Rowe (2009) suggested that the Late Iron Age stone wall be further researched to establish the scientific value thereof. The SAHRA review comment (2010: 9/2/236/0032) agreed that a Phase 2 investigation be conducted.

There are no museums in Burgersfort or Steelpoort, and the closest museum with relevant information on the area is the museum at Lydenburg. This museum covers information on the general history and pre-history of the surrounding area, and focuses extensively on the Early Iron Age site of the Lydenburg Heads.

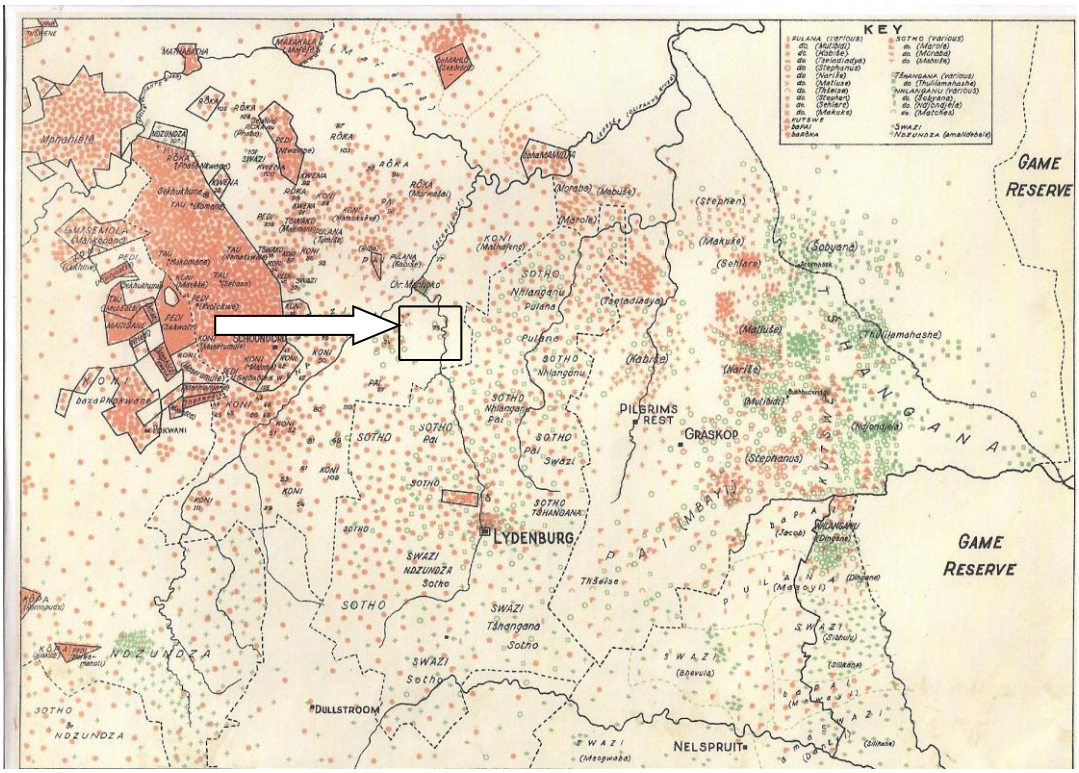

Fig. 5: 1935 Map of Van Warmelo: The study area surrounding the town of Burgersfort in 1935, is indicated with sparse habitation of various Sotho groups (baPai or Pulana) and a small presence of Nhlanganu – Chr.Manhoko), with Koni towards the north.

- **Stone Age**

Evidence from rock shelters in the Mpumalanga / Limpopo region suggests that the earliest inhabitants in the area were small groups of Stone Age hunter- gatherers. These San people led a nomadic lifestyle and rock paintings found in some of the shelters are an indication of their presence (Hampson et al 2002). Unfortunately very little research in this regard has been conducted, although several rock painting sites have been recorded in the areas of Ohrigstad / Blyderivierspoort Canyon, and rock engravings in the surrounding area of Lydenburg (Rowe 2009: 22). Bergh (2009: 4) did not record any Stone Age sites in the immediate areas of Lydenburg, Burgersfort and Steelpoort. The closest Middle- and Later Stone Age sites have been documented near Ohrigstad.

- **IRON AGE**

Later Bantu-speaking tribes from further north moved into southern Africa, bringing with them a new way of life based on agriculture, pastoralism and metal working. This period is broadly referred to as the Iron Age, starting around AD 200. Cattle played a crucial role in the world-view and social organization of these societies, which is reflected in the layout of their homesteads – referred to as the Central Cattle Pattern. This type of settlement may be recognized archaeologically from centrally located cattle pens associated with high-status burials, grain storage pits, men's assembly areas and evidence of iron-forging (Huffman 2007: 331; Pelser 2014: 8).

- **Early Iron Age (EIA)**

Secondary source evidence of Early Iron Age sites is lacking, with only one well known site indicated, the Lydenburg Heads site (Bergh 2009:8). The Lydenburg Heads site at Sterkspruit, Lydenburg dated to approximately AD 600. Excavations at the Klingbeil Nature Reserve also revealed direct archaeological evidence that the Early Iron Age people in the area introduced cattle and sheep/goat as well as crop plants. Based on pottery identification, Klingbeil is dated to about AD 1000 (Pelser 2014: 8).

- **Late Iron Age (LIA)**

The Late Iron Age spans a period between AD 1300-1840, and is associated with groups like the Ndebele, Bakoni and BaPedi in the study area (fig. 5). Sites in the area are characterized by widespread stone walling such as the Badfontein type that were used to define homestead areas, agricultural land (terracing) and cattle tracks. Maize was introduced into southern Africa by the Portuguese during the Late Iron Age contributing to an increase in population. Its cultivation is linked archaeologically to special grindstones (Huffman 2007; Pelser 2014: 8). Huffman (2007: 32) place the stone walling in the Burgersfort area into the Badfontein tradition (fig. 6).

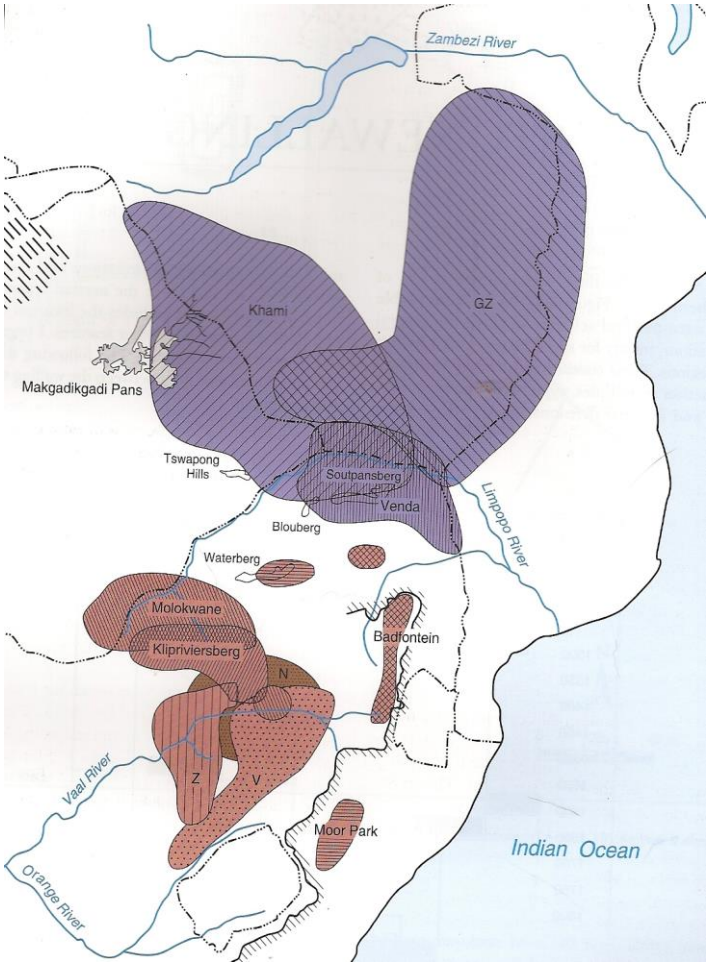

Fig. 6: Distribution of LIA stone walled complexes (Huffman 2007: 32).

The Pedi is the most famous group to have inhabited the Lydenburg / Steelpoort / Burgersfort areas in historic times. The area in which these people settled is historically known as Bopedi but other groups resided here before the Pedi came onto the scene. Among the first of these were the Kwena or Mongatane, who came from the north and were probably of Sotho origin. A second tribe to settle in Bopedi, before the arrival of the Pedi was the Roka, followed by the Koni (E-mail reply: JP Cilliers 2009-06-18).

Some Koni entered the area from the east and others from the north-west. According to historians, most Koni trace their origin to Swaziland and therefore claim that they are related to the Nguni. After the first Koni settled in the southern part of Bopedi, the area became known as Bokoni. Many people who were previously known as Roka also adopted the name Koni as the name “Roka” was not always held in esteem by other groups.

Historically the Pedi was a relatively small group who by various means built up a considerable empire. The Pedi are of Sotho origin. They migrated southwards from the Great Lakes in Central Africa some five centuries ago. The names of their chiefs can be traced to a maximum of fifteen generations. Historical events can be deduced reasonably well for the last two centuries, while sporadic events can be described during the preceding centuries (E-mail reply: JP Cilliers 2009-06-18).

According to oral tradition the BaKoni were already in the area of the escarpment before the arrival of the Pedi (a northern Sotho group), which would indicate a date of before AD 1650 for some of the settlements. Therefore the BaKoni clans were some of the earliest people to settle in what are today the Mpumalanga / Limpopo Provinces. They most likely followed a central route of migration out of northern KwaZulu-Natal, becoming 'Sotho-ized" along the way (Pelser 2014: 10). Later on the Badfontein Koni became allied to the Pedi. This is reflected in the archaeological evidence, which shows that ceramics associated with the Badfontein walling are historic Pedi pottery of the Marateng facies. By the late 18th and 19th century the Pedi ruled an extensive area that included areas surrounding Lydenburg / Burgersfort, although Swazi and Ndebele groups also occupied some parts of the region – mainly in caves referred to as refuge sites. They were shortly followed by the first European settlers in the area (Pelser 2014:10).

Recent research has linked the LIA stone walled settlement in the Mpumalanga escarpment more specifically to the Bakoni. During the 16th and 17th centuries the Bakoni built a vast complex of stonewalled settlements in this area. These cities were carefully planned around terraced farms and roads that were built to lead cattle to pasture while keeping the cows out of the gardens. In the late 1700's the sites had populations of between 30 000 to 50 000 people (Rowe 2013:10).

During the Difaqane (a period of great instability and migration in the interior of South Africa) the various groups living in the area were ruthlessly conquered by Mzilikazi, around 1826. At that time the BaKoni were under the chieftainship of Makopole. He was a son of the Pedi chief Thulare. After first warding off an attack led by his brother, Makopole was then faced by the full onslaught of Mzilikazi's Ndebele. The invaders were responsible for destroying the Lydenburg-Ohrigstad settlements of the BaKoni people (Pelser 2014: 10).

Stone walled ruins are a common feature found across the region and have been extensively mapped and researched, both through archaeological excavations and aerial photography. As a result of these various studies, three settlement types can be identified in the area:

- Simple enclosures – consisting of two concentric circles. The inner one was probably the cattle kraal and the huts were built in the space between the circles;
- Complex enclosures – includes several enclosures generally consisting of a large central one with two opposed entrances and a number of smaller circles around part of, or the whole of, the perimeter. Huts were built between the area of this complex and the outer ring wall;
- The third type of settlement in an agglomeration of small circles. It does not seem to conform to the basic pattern of the first two.

Settlements are characterized by terrace walls, cattle lanes and circular enclosures and are generally referred to as Badfontein walling. The cattle lane (track) would normally lead to a central enclosure (an area for milking and slaughter). On the opposite side an exit provided access to cattle kraals, which were attached to the central wall. Stone walling were used to define homestead areas, agricultural land (terracing) and cattle tracks. Crops were cultivated along the terraces where lines of stones were laid out parallel to the contour of the landscape. In cases of very steep ground proper walls were built. Stone-walled cattle tracks protected crops from being trampled by livestock (Pelser 2014: 10).

Two settlement traits from the Badfontein type point to people with Nguni origins. Firstly the circular homestead arrangement emphasized the centre/side axis associated with the Central Cattle Pattern, a characteristic of Nguni people from northern KwaZulu-Natal. Secondly, the Badfontein cattle track leading to a central enclosure with an exit on the opposite side corresponds to the Nguni left-hand / right hand division (Pelser 2014:11).

Pottery types which are associated with the Lydenburg / Burgersfort area settlements, are named Mzonjani (EIA), Doornkop (EIA), Klingbeil (Middle Iron Age) and Marateng for the Late Iron Age (Huffman 2007: 127-207).

The LIA Marateng facies pottery, from the Moloko branch of the Urewe tradition, dates most likely from AD 1650-1840. This pottery has incised arcades on the upper shoulder separating black and red colour (Pelser 2014: 12).

Metal and iron in particular was an important commodity during the Iron Age. Several metal artifacts have been found in association with the settlements. Collett's excavations at Badfontein revealed metal wire rings, an iron razor, as adze and a spear head. Iron slag was also discovered, pointing to possible metal working in the area. Many stones among the terraces show evidence of metal tools being sharpened on them (Pelser 2014:13).

Upper and lower grindstones are commonly associated with Iron Age settlement and several were found during Collett's excavations at the Badfontein site. These are regarded as indirect evidence for agriculture and the two different types may indicate which crops were cultivated (Pelser 2014: 13).

Beads were a trade commodity and were obtained via long distance trade routes in exchange for metal, ivory and animal skins. The most common types are royal blue hexagonal and round glass beads. Badfontein excavations revealed beads in yellow, blue, white, pink and red with white eyes, a translucent green bead, one made of soapstone as well as a large black wire-wound bead with white spots (Pelser 2014;13).

Bones of cattle and sheep / goats, found in association with cattle tracks and kraals, underline the pastoral lifestyle of the inhabitants. It also indicated that Iron Age people were responsible for introducing domesticated animals into the area (Pelser 2014:13).

Some 150 years before the *Voortrekkers* entered the area, some battles took place between the

Koni (Zulu under Makopole) and Swazi (under Moselekatse). At that time the BaPedi resided in the Steelpoort area. The Bakoni (Koni) were attacked and defeated by the Matabele and their chief, Makopole, was killed. The Matabele, not yet satisfied with their victory, moved further north towards the BaPedi headquarters. At Olifantspoortjie the whole BaPedi regiment was wiped out as well as the sons of Thulare, the BaPedi chief (except for Sekwati who managed to escape) (E-mail reply: JP Cilliers 2009-06-18).

After four years, Sekwati together with a few followers who had also managed to escape the Matabele, now slowly started to rise. In 1830 Sekwati invaded some of the smaller groups and eventually the Koni (under Marangrang) were ambushed and defeated. Now the empire of Maruteng (Bapedi) ruled the Koni.

At the beginning of the 19th century, groups such as the **Pedi, Roka, Koni** and **Tau** densely populated the immediate areas of Lydenburg, Steelpoort & Burgersfort. This was confirmed by ethnographical and linguistic studies by early researchers such as D. Ziervogel and N.J. Van Warmelo (Van Warmelo 1935: 111). The 1935 map of Van Warmelo, indicated the presence of various Sotho groups (baPai and Pulana) as well as Koni in the direct study area surrounding the town of Burgersfort. Van Warmelo also indicated a small presence of Nhlanganu groups (fig. 5).

The Pedi (who had their roots in the baKgatla, near the current Pretoria) moved under Thobele (who was banished from the Kgatla) to Sekukuneland in ca 1650, where they settled alongside the baKoni. There was initially peace, but soon the Koni had to submit to the Pedi. In time, the Pedi also ruled over the baRoka, baTau, Matlala, baMohlala,and others. They ruled over the whole of Lydenburg, Pilgrim's Rest, Middelburg and Polokwane (Pietersburg) districts. This was understandably met with a lot of resistance (De Jongh 1987: 28).

The Pedi of chief Sekwati (ca 1860) lived at Phiring (near Polokwane). Sekwati lived in constant fear of the Zulus. The country was unsafe and in an attempt to survive, some of the Koni turned to cannibalism (Van Warmelo 1944: 47). This area was heavily under attack during the *Difaqane*. The Ndebele attacked this area in ca 1822, and Zwide (Swazi) attacked the Pedi in ca 1825 (Bergh 2009: 10-28).

- **European settlement**

The *Voortrekkers* passed the northern boundary of the Leolo mountains (Pedi area) in 1837 when Trichardt looked for a route to Delagoa Bay (currently Maputo) (Bergh 2009: 14). Trichardt met the Pedi chief Sekwati (Theal no date: 257). When more Europeans settled in the area from 1845, conflict was inevitable.

The *Voortrekkers* under Andries Hendrik Potgieter, settled at Ohrigstad in 1845. Soon conflicts arose between them and the Pedi leader, Sekwati. The smaller black groups also turned to Sekwati for help against the *Voortrekkers*. Sekwati moved his capital to the Leolo mountains at *Mosego hill*. Eventually they signed a treaty and it was decided that the Steelpoort or Tubatse River, would form the border between the Pedi and the *Voortrekkers*, and peace followed for a while (De Jongh 1987: 29).

The conflict in the eastern parts of the country between white and black was of a more forceful nature than in the central areas of the country. The Kopa, Ndzundza-Ndebeles and Pedi were more able to resist European onslaught.

The stressful relationship between the Pedi and Europeans since 1850, continued throughout the 1860's and 70's which lead to war. Sekukune, who took the reign after Sekwati in 1861, played an important role in this. After the Swazi attack on Sekukune in 1869, he moved his capital from *Thaba Mosego* to *Tshate* (Bergh 2009: 31).

The relationship between the Pedi and the Afrikaners stayed stressful. In 1876 the Afrikaners attacked the Pedi. A huge part of the Pedi capital was burnt down. In December 1876, the Pedi submitted to the Republic, as it was time to plant their crops and they could not afford to lose this valuable time (De Jongh 1987: 30).

A plan had to be constructed to secure the borders of Sekukuni's country, by placing volunteer mercenaries at the Steelpoort River. A fort was built within the junction of the Steelpoort and Spekboom Rivers – Fort Burgers, named after President Burgers. The fort was manned by the Lydenburg Volunteer Corps who were placed under the command of Captain von Schlickmann (http://samilitaryhistory.org/vol1025hk.html :3).

On 29 September 1876, Sekukuni attacked Fort Burgers with the object of recovering cattle supposedly looted from the Bapedi. They killed two of the volunteers (http://samilitaryhistory.org/vol1025hk.html :3) (A monument currently at the site, marks graves of the *Voortrekker* era, and the location of the historic site of Fort Burgers is directly towards the west of this monument) (Van Wyk Rowe: 2009).

The British under Shepstone took over the Transvaal on 12 April 1877. At first Sekukune pretended to welcome them, but soon started raiding their cattle and other domesticated animals. In November, the British, with the help of the Swazi, attacked the Pedi, and Sekukune's son and heirs were killed. Sekukune fled to a cave in the Leolo mountains, but was later captured and taken prisoner. He was succeeded by Mampuru (Middelburg district) and Ramoroko (Sekukuneland). Sekukune was killed in 1882 by Mampuru, after his release (De

Jongh 1987: 30).

Several forts were erected to protect the Europeans during this time. Fort Burgers was only one of these. The area around Fort Burgers, eventually became known as the town of “Burgersfort” (Bergh 2009: 31).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

The archaeological investigations at site LB/3 aimed at obtaining as much information as possible on the settlement layout, function, time-frame of occupation and material culture deposit present at the site. The methodology employed comprised of an extensive foot survey, the study of google images, clearing of vegetation, two archaeological excavations and three STP’s.

Mapping

The aims for a mapping exercise were to reconstruct a possible settlement layout, recording of any outstanding features and material not recorded during earlier fieldwork. Site LB/3 was identified during the 2005 (Pistorius) and 2009 (C. Van Wyk Rowe), phase 1 Heritage Impact assessments. Both these studies lacked to identify a clear LIA settlement in the surrounding area, due to the following aspects:

- thick vegetation cover;
- historic and recent habitation; and
- extensive past and present disturbances by human and animal presence on the site.

It was not possible to compile a detailed map of the site but an attempt was made to identify the extent of the poorly defined LIA settlement (figs. 7 & 8). LIA settlement features could only be identified at small portions of stone walls to the west and south of LB/3, which were typical to the known building method of the Late Iron Age. The extent of the LIA site was identified through the mapping exercise, but not the actual settlement layout pattern (fig. 13).

A photographic recording of the site was undertaken as well as a surface survey of any material which might link the site to the LIA. Only one broken upper grinder was identified (fig. 30). The lack of surface material can also be attributed to the extensive historic and recent settlement on top of the LIA site. During the interview with Mr. John Matladi (2014-09-13), he mentioned that the recent inhabitants used and removed artifacts such as grinding stones or clay pots for which they had a purpose.

LB/3 was a poorly defined LIA stone wall, level with the surface. It was built with small stones. Both the 2005 and 2009 reports identified it but classified it as of “Low significance”. The site was described as “level with the surface and no surface material was observed, very indistinct and disturbed.” Pistorius indicated that this feature had been extensively disturbed, and did not qualify as a significant site. In 2014 the status of the site was exactly the same, just more

overgrown. The surrounding area revealed traces of stone walls but the entire site was indistinct. Extensive disturbances were visible and no layout pattern, cattle tracks or terrace walls could be identified. Gravel roads and paths have further impacted negatively on the site. Only one broken upper grinder was identified. The overall preservation of the site was extremely poor (figs: 11, 20, 30).

Fig. 7: Google image of the study area. The red line is the border of the farm. Current dwellings are visible, as well as the sites of the grave yards (GY01 & GY0). A drawing was done on the section indicated by the black line, and possible extent of the LIA site (see fig. 8 below). Feaure 1 (fig. 13) is a small portion of stone wall to the west of LB/3, which was typical to the known building method of the Late Iron Age.

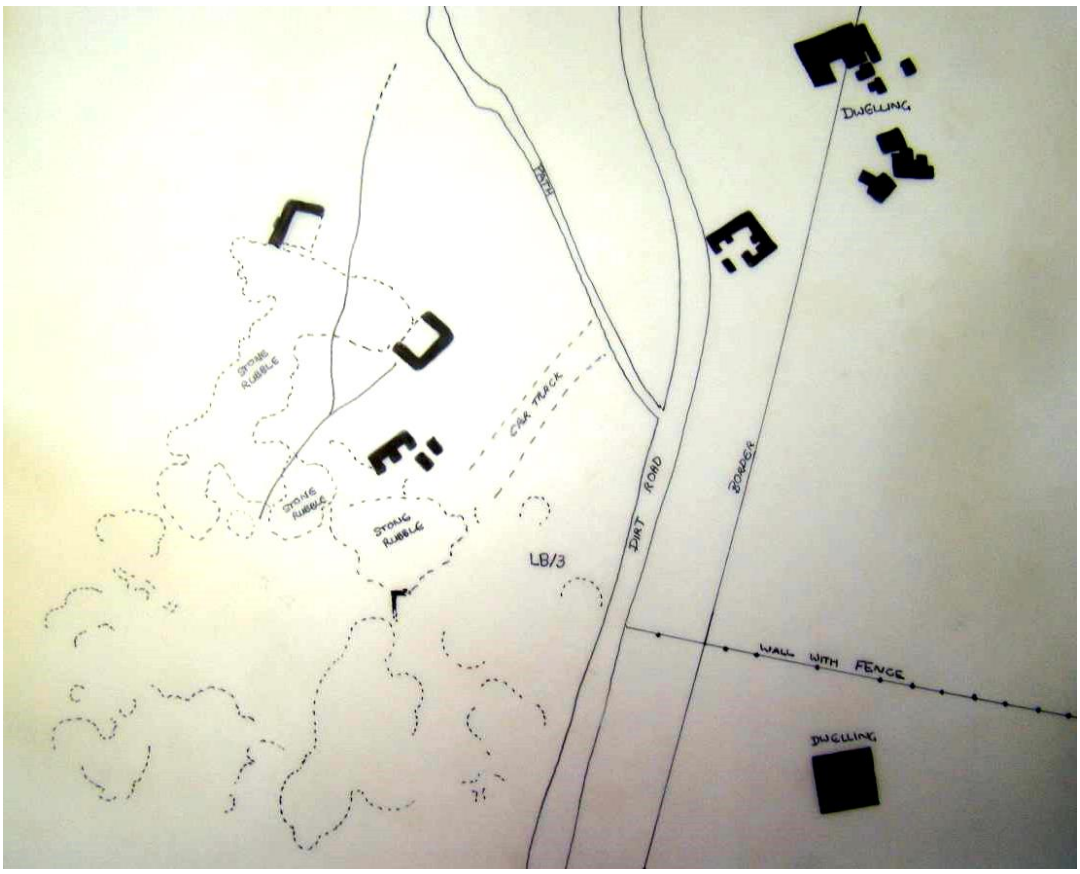

Fig. 8: Extent of LIA site. The drawing indicates gravel roads and paths and the possible extent of the LIA site (stipples), with historic and recent square foundations visible (black), as well as current dwellings (solid black squares).

Fig. 9: The site of LB/3 facing north to south. The scattered stones on the disturbed site, were visible throughout the section. The GPS co-ordinate of LB/3 is where the two figures are standing. Note the hill in the background where John Matladi mentioned the initiation school was situated.

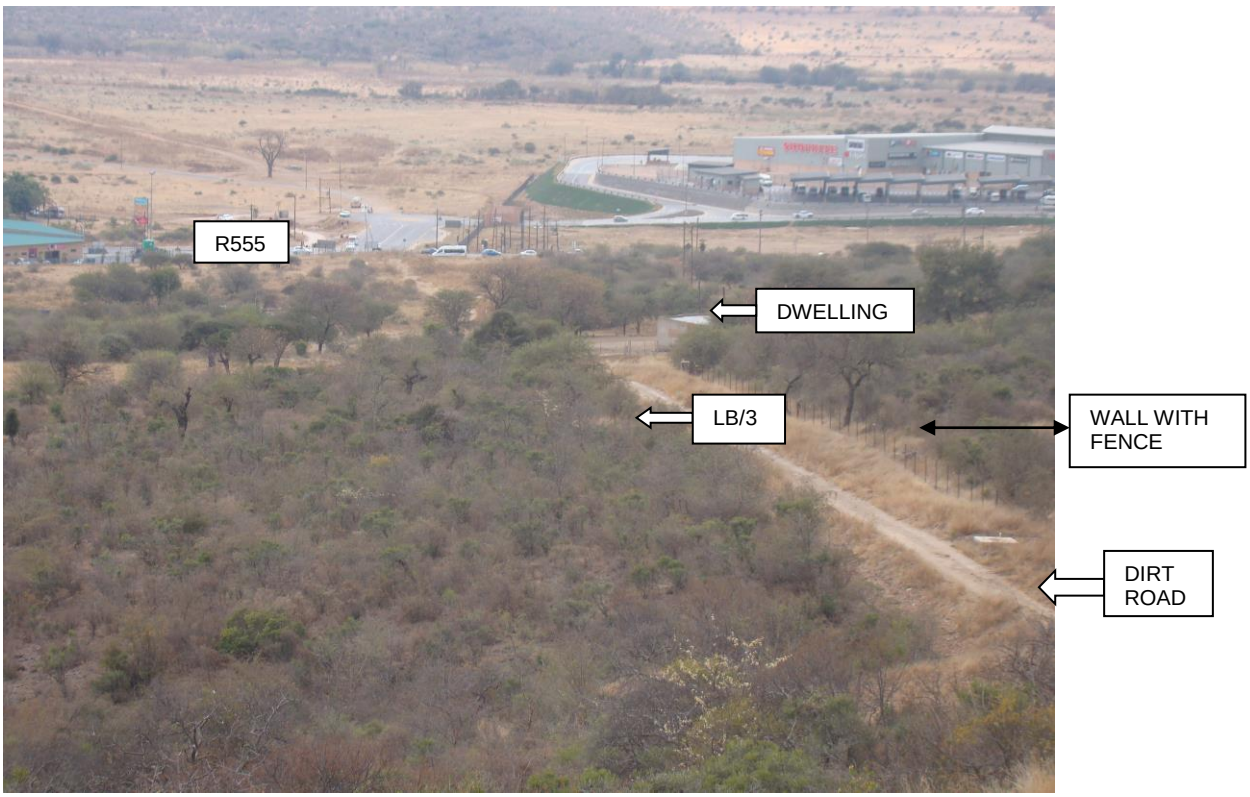

Fig. 10: This photo may be compared to figs. 7, 8 & 19 for a better understanding of the features at the site. The photograph was taken from south to north. The R555 road to Steelpoort is visible as well as the road from Burgersfort the Polokwane (R37). A mall complex next to Burgersfort is visible in the background. LB/3 is indicated next to a dirt road. The dense bush can clearly be seen.

Fig. 11: Feature LB/3. The photo was taken in 2009.

Fig. 12: LB/3: Photo taken in 2014.

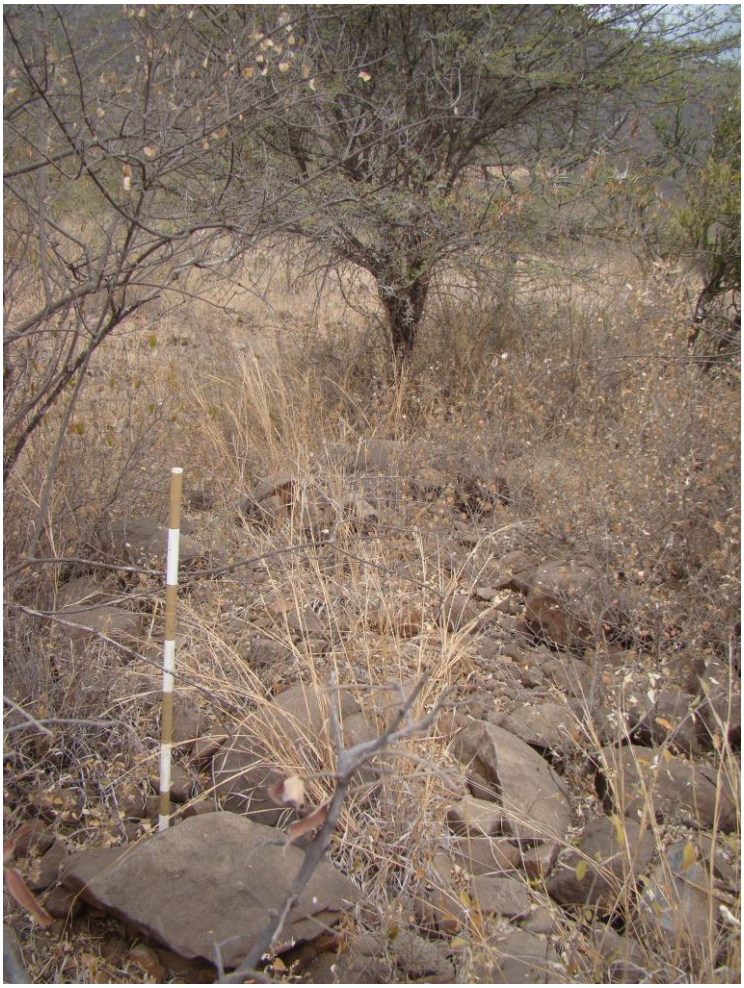

Fig. 13: A stone wall to the west of LB/3 (feature 1 in fig. 7). This wall is one of few which identified the site as a LIA settlement.

Fig. 14: The view from south to north during the excavations. Over 40 trees and shrubs were removed to clear the site. The severely disturbed site is clearly visible. A dirt road disturbed the site on the right and foundations and a dirt road disturbed the site to the north where the vehicle is parked.

Fig. 15: The section directly north of LB/3 was disturbed by a later more recent dwelling. The square foundations are indicated by the black line (see fig. 8).

Fig. 16: Part of a square stone wall, within the area of the LIA settlement.

The stone walled settlements in the Burgersfort area are grouped by Huffman (2007: 32) as part of the Badfontein tradition. Although the site in the study area is very indistinct, it is assumed that it forms part of the tradition described by Huffman. The indistinct walls may include simple enclosures that consist of two concentric circles or more complex units with more circular units. No traces of cattle tracks or terrace walls could be identified. Stone walling were used to define homestead areas, agricultural land and other domestic activities (Pelser: 2014).

It is most probable that the LIA settlement was associated with Sotho (Pedi) people. In the interview with John Matladi, he confirmed that his decendants (the Sotho people) stayed in the LIA settlement before the South African War (before 1900) / or the Sekukune War (before 1876). Matladi was not clear on which War. From the late 18th century, the BaPedi dominated the region and therefore the settlement at Leeuwvallei (LB/3) could be associated with Pedi occupation up to the year 1900. After the South African War, other groups moved back to this site, resulting in a mixture of cultures such as Sotho, Swazi and Tsonga (Matladi: 2014-09-13).

EXCAVATIONS

Two formal excavations as well as three shovel test pits (STP's), were conducted at site LB/3. The aim of the excavations were to recover as much cultural information as possible to help with the reconstruction and interpretation of the settlement on Leeuwvallei in terms of the time-frame, cultural identity of the occupants, the function of the features where the excavations were located, the material and social economy of the settlement.

Fig. 17: Position of excavations and STP's in the wider Google image.

Fig. 18: Close-up of the position of the excavations and STP's.

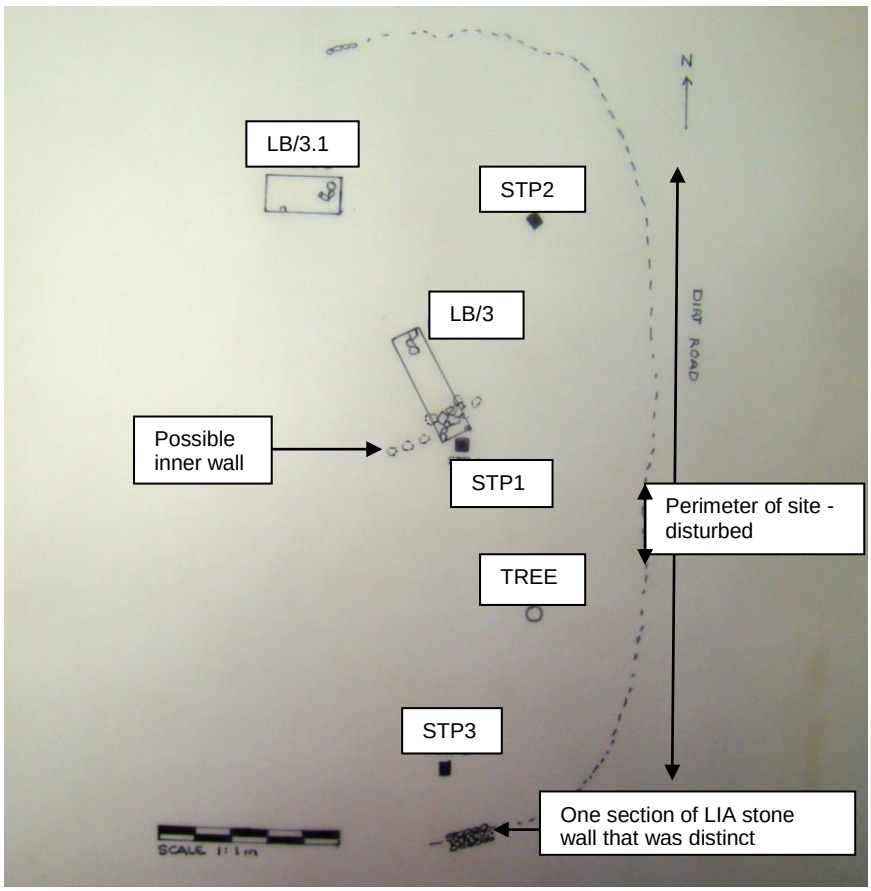

Fig. 19: Drawing showing the outline of LB/3 and the positions of the excavations and STP's.

Results

LB/3 – Excavation 1: Excavation 1 was a 700mm x 3000mm rectangular trench measured out on the site of LB/3, inside a possible circular enclosure. By studying the google images and after clearing the bush, it was clear that LB/3 must have been an enclosure wall within a bigger circular unit. The entire site was however badly disturbed by a gravel road as well as historic and recent human and animal impact. The aim of the excavation was to determine a possible function of the feature, as well as to recover as much cultural material as possible. A layer of 150mm of topsoil was removed and sifted. The soft, loose soil was very rocky and of a dark brown colour, containing small pebbles as well as bigger stones (see fig 20 & 21 below). No cultural material was observed in the topsoil or sifted material from the trench (fig. 29). The excavation continued with a layer of soft soil with smaller stones / pebbles and reached a depth of 300mm before a white sterile chalk layer became evident. All the soil in the excavation was sifted but revealed no cultural material. The foundation of a stone wall was clear in the south-eastern section of the excavation and continued indistinctly below the surface on both sides of the excavation.

The stratigraphy consisted of a layer of soft brown topsoil with a mix of small stone pebbles and bigger stones, continuing through to a depth of 300mm (soft brown soil with smaller stones), where the excavation was stopped on a natural white sterile chalk base (fig. 21). The chalk

base was identified by geologist Mario Ruygrok (2014-09-15) (fig. 28). No evidence of a hut floor (for residential use) or cattle dung (for the use of the enclosure for livestock herding) was observed.

Fig. 20: Excavation 1 (LB/3). The layer of topsoil was removed. The soil was very loose and the type of vegetation and roots on the site made it impossible to cut straight edges.

Fig. 21: The excavation was stopped at 300mm when a natural white sterile chalk base was reached.

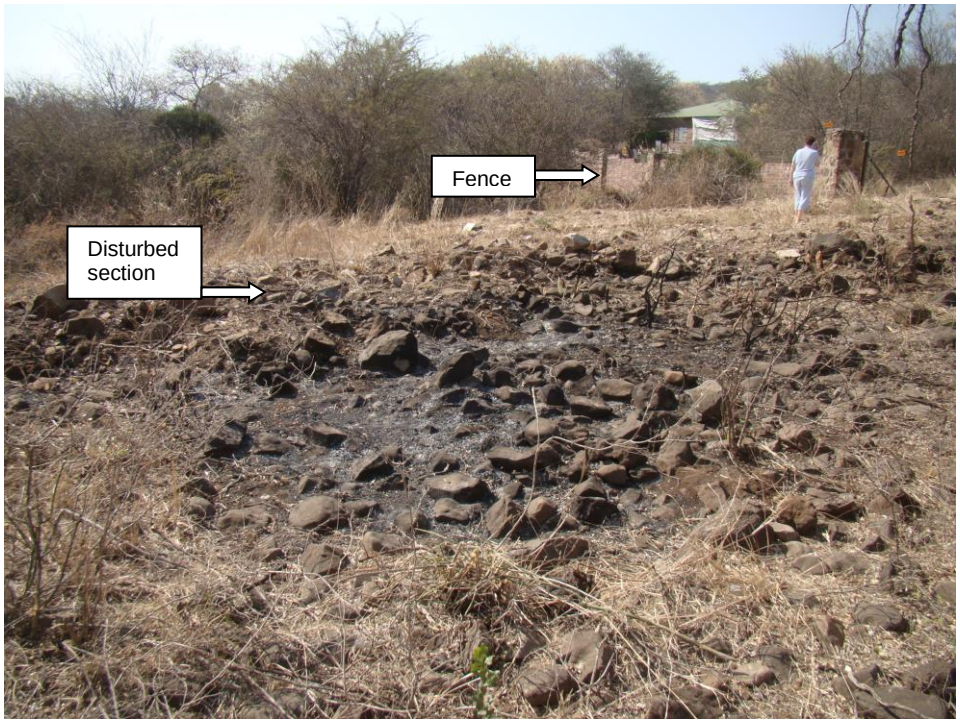

Fig. 22: The area directly east of LB/3. The gravel road (between the fence and the figure) disturbed a large section on the site.

LB/3.1 Excavation 2: Excavation 2 was a 1000mm x 2000mm rectangular trench measured out to the north-west of LB/3, also inside a possible circular enclosure. The entire site was however badly disturbed as described above and the aim was also to determine a possible function, as well as to recover as much cultural material as possible.

The position of this excavation was determined by a surface find (a broken upper grinder, fig. 30). The upper grinder was the only surface find located in the area.

A layer of 150mm of topsoil was removed and sifted. The soft soil was loose and very rocky and of a dark brown colour, containing small pebbles as well as bigger stones (see fig 23). No cultural material was observed in the topsoil or sifted material from the trench. The excavation continued with a layer of soft soil with smaller stones / pebbles and reached a depth of 250mm when the white sterile chalk layer / base became evident. All the soil in the excavation was sifted but revealed no cultural material. Stones were observed in the eastern as well as the western sections of the trench (fig. 23), but they were not part of the foundation of a stone wall. No evidence of a hut floor (for residential use) or cattle dung (for the use of an enclosure for livestock herding) was observed in the excavated area.

No cultural material was recovered from the two excavations.

Fig. 23: Excavation 2, LB/3.1. Some stones are visible on the chalk layer, but they were not the foundation stones of a wall.

Shovel Test Pits (STP 1 – 3):

Three STP's were done in the vicinity of LB/3 and within the very indistinct outer perimeter wall (see fig. 19). One STP was situated towards the south, one at site LB/3, and one towards the north. The aims of the STP's were to see if any cultural material, hut floors or cattle dung was present at the site. The presence of any material could identify the function of the sections. It was hoped that any cultural deposit, could indicate the depth and extent of such deposits. The STP's were slightly larger than a shovel size to make sure no cultural material was overlooked.

STP 1 (fig. 24) was done at the site where LB/3 was originally identified and where a possible inner wall of the LIA settlement could have been. Excavation 1 was done directly west of STP1. STP 1 was 700mm x 700mm. STP 2 (fig. 25) was conducted approximately 10m north of STP 1, in an area between the possible inner and outer walls. STP 2 was 900mm x 600mm. STP 3 (fig. 26) was done towards the south, approximately 10m from STP 1 next to a disturbed but more distinct section of the outer wall (see fig. 19). STP 3 was 800mm x 700mm. The STP's were all sterile and no cultural material was observed in any of them, and no evidence of flooring or livestock dung was uncovered. The stratigraphy of the STP's, were all similar to what was found in the formal excavations. It consisted of soft loose dark soil (up to 100mm) and then the same soil with a lot of pebbles / stones up to a depth of 500mm, when the natural sterile chalk base was reached.

Fig. 24: STP 1. The white sterile chalk base is distinct in this section.

Fig. 25: STP 2. Small pebbles can be seen in the stratigraphy, with the white chalk base at the bottom.

Fig. 26: STP 3, the stratigraphy was almost the same as with the previous STP's. The white chalk base is seen at the bottom.

Fig. 27: The stratigraphy of the STP's was almost the same, consisting of bigger stones at the top, small stones and pebbles below, and a white chalk base at the bottom.

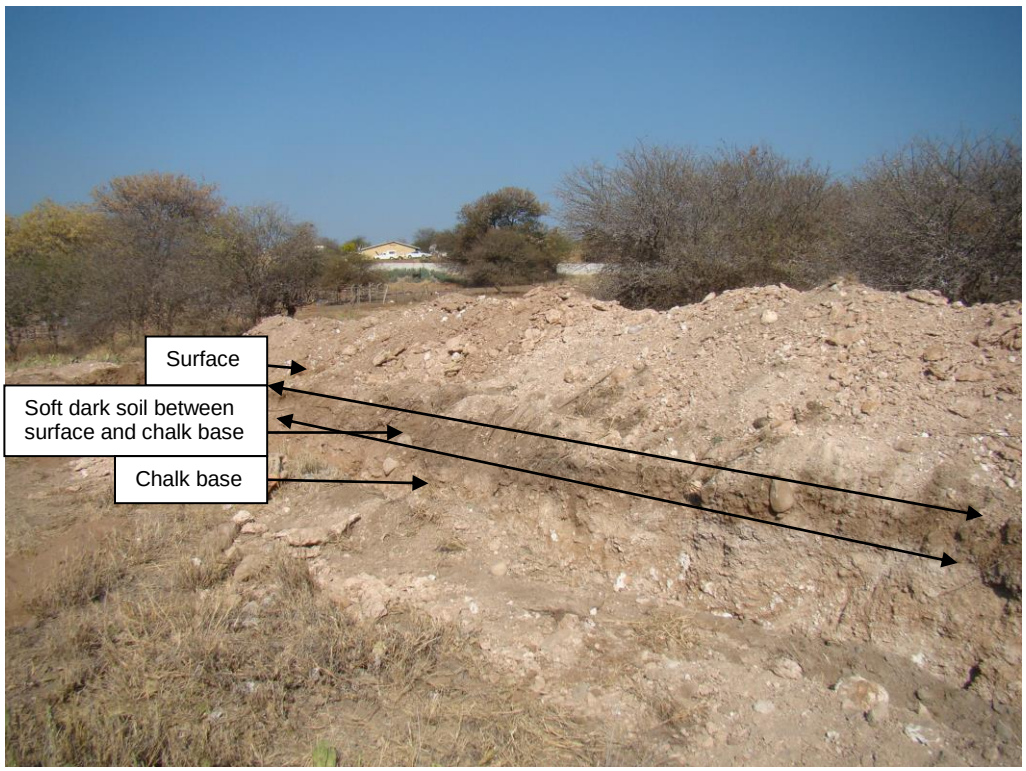

Fig. 28: An existing trench was excavated to the north of site LB3, and the chalk base is clearly visible.

Fig. 29: No cultural material was recovered from the excavations or STP's.

Discussion

The two formal excavations and STP's revealed no cultural material. During the foot survey, the only surface find was one broken upper grinder (fig. 30).

It was not possible to compile a detailed map of the site but an attempt was made to identify the extent of the poorly defined LIA settlement (see fig. 8). Although very indistinct, a vague reconstruction could be made to determine an outer stone wall (although extensively disturbed by the gravel road, previous habitation on top of the wider settlement, as well as extensive past and present impacts by humans and animals on the site.

LIA settlement features could only be identified at small portions of stone walls to the west and south of LB/3, which were typical to the known building method of the Late Iron Age (fig. 13). See fig. 8 for an outline of the LIA settlement.

There is evidence that the function of the site was that of a LIA stone walled settlement. Mr. Matladi (2014-09-13), who still lives at the site, confirmed that his ancestors of Sotho (Pedi) origin, resided on the site before either the South African War (1899 – 1902) or Sekukune War (1876). From the late 18th century, the BaPedi dominated the region and therefore the settlement at Leeuwvallei (LB/3) could be associated with Pedi occupation up to the year 1900. Huffman (2007) grouped the LIA stone walls in this area as part of the Badfontein tradition (fig. 6).

The upheavel during the War forced the peoples relocation to Klipfontein (near Ohrigstad). After the War, the Pedi came back with Tsonga, Swazi and other groups. Continuous habitation followed and the original stones of the LIA settlement were most probably used as building material for subsequent houses as well as the later square units of which the foundations are still visible.

No cultural material was excavated which could be dated and therefore it was only possible to use the information that was revealed in the interview with Mr. Matladi (2014-09-13).

Stone object

No cultural material was identified during the archaeological survey apart from one broken upper grinder where the second excavation was done (Excavation 2) (figs. 23 & 30). The upper grinder provides evidence that agricultural activities were exercised at the Leeuwvallei site. John Matladi (2014-09-13), who was born in 1966 and lived on the site since then, noted that the later inhabitants at the site removed all cultural material which could be used by them (pottery, upper and lower grinders).

Fig. 30: A broken upper grinder. The only surface find after clearing of the bush and the foot survey.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The archaeological excavations at LB/3, Leeuwvallei, have been conducted successfully. The entire area was extensively disturbed and poorly defined and therefore the focus was only in the area of LB/3. This site was disturbed by a gravel road towards the east. Any other possible evidence towards the east, has been destroyed by a residential and industrial development. Historic and recent habitation on the site was clearly evident, and humans and animals had a severe impact on the LIA site. John Matladi (2014-09-13) remembered grinding stones and clay pots at the site, but mentioned that all visible cultural material was removed by previous residents. Matladi resided on the property for 48 years and received his information from his mother and grandparents. His ancestral graves are situated towards the north. The R555 from Burgersfort to Steelpoort, and the R37 road from Burgersfort to Polokwane, are situated towards the north.

In terms of the scientific value, LB/3 is fairly insignificant, as the stone walls have been severely disturbed to such an extent that a layout plan of the LIA settlement is not possible. It was primarily disturbed by historic and recent square houses which were built on top of the site. Agricultural and grazing activities, paths and tracks further added to the destruction of the poorly defined site.

The stone walls are poorly defined and most of the stones were scattered throughout the site.

Only two very small sections were identified, which is typical of the building methods of the LIA. It is clear that stones were removed probably to build the later square units, of which the foundations are still visible. No remains of terrace walls (for agriculture) were identified. It was however mentioned by John Matladi that there were plenty of upper and lower grinders which were removed by the later residents. This might indicate that the site was used for agricultural purposes.

Huffman grouped the LIA stone walled settlements in this area as part of the Badfontein tradition, and it is most probable that the site at Leeuwvallei may conform to any of the settlement types as described by Pelser (2014). It was not possible to map the site significantly and only an indistinct outline was possible (fig. 8).

- Simple enclosures – consisting of two concentric circles. The inner one was probably the cattle kraal and the huts were built in the space between the circles;
- Complex enclosures – includes several enclosures generally consisting of a large central one with two opposed entrances and a number of smaller circles around part of, or the whole of, the perimeter. Huts were built between the area of this complex and the outer ring wall;
- The third type of settlement in an agglomeration of small circles. It does not seem to conform to the basic pattern of the first two.

In the case of LB/3, it seemed as if it was situated in the inner part of a larger unit. The outer wall of this unit was severely disturbed by the gravel road but one small section could still be identified although it was level with the surface. The simple enclosures normally consisted of two concentric circles, with the inner one probably a cattle kraal and the huts were built in the space between the outer circle and the inner circle.

For an idea of the time-frame of the Leeuwvallei settlement, I had to rely on historic information available on this subject as well as the confirmation of John Matladi (2014-09-13) that his ancestors who lived at this settlement was of Sotho (Pedi) descent. From historic sources it is indicated that these settlements could be associated with the Koni who settled in the area before the arrival of the Pedi, prior to AD 1650 and possibly as far back as AD 1600. By the late 18th century the BaPedi dominated the region and the settlement at Leeuwvallei could therefore be associated with their occupation, as John Matladi mentioned.

Only one surface find, a broken upper grinder was found. The excavations and STP's revealed no cultural material. There was no evidence of hut flooring or livestock dung. The soft soil deposit (below surface) was shallow and consisted of stones and pebbles. A sterile white chalk base is underneath the layer of soil, at an approximate depth of 300mm (fig. 28). The lack of material could point out that the site was not occupied for very long, or as John Matladi

mentioned, that any cultural material was removed from the site by the later occupants. It could also have been used for agricultural purposes, such as ploughing.

It is hereby concluded that the site at Leeuwvallei LB/3 may be demolished for the purposes of the proposed development. Should any cultural material or features be exposed during the development, then an archaeologist must be called in to investigate and recommend the way forward.

Adansonia Heritage Consultants cannot be held responsible for any archaeological material or graves which were not located during the survey.

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- Personal information: John Buti Matladi, 2014-09-13.
- Personal information: Geologist Mario Ruygrok, 2014-09-15.

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