

Preliminary skeletal report by

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The observations and recommendations given in this report are based on the author's best scientific and professional knowledge, experience and available information.

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1. Introduction

I was contacted by Mr. JP Celliers, to assist in identifying several bones that were exposed during the excavation of a trench in Steelpoort Industrial Park, Steelpoort as part of the Spitskop pump station and to the Mototolo mine water pipeline project.

Mr. JP Cellier and I decided that an observation using photographs would suffice in giving a preliminary assessment of the identified bone material. By studying the photographs sent to me, I could identify the bone material as human. The bone material included fragments of a femur, possible tibias, a lumbar vertebra, and ribs. These possibly belong to one human adult individual. It is also possible that the bone material is from the same human individual. No animal bones were identified from the photographs sent to me.

The individual was not buried very deep, according to Mr. JP Cilliers the bone material was identified only 650mm from the surface. No other material was found in association of the human remains.

The photographs I received are included below and Figures 1-3 show the different bone material protruding from the side of the trench.



Figure 1. Exposed human remains – ribs, vertebra, femur, and possible tibia fragments.

In Figure 1 the arrows indicate the identified human remains that are all on the same level. Figures 2. and Figure 3., indicate the different bones. In Figure 2. the number 1 indicates the femur and number 2 indicates a possible tibia.

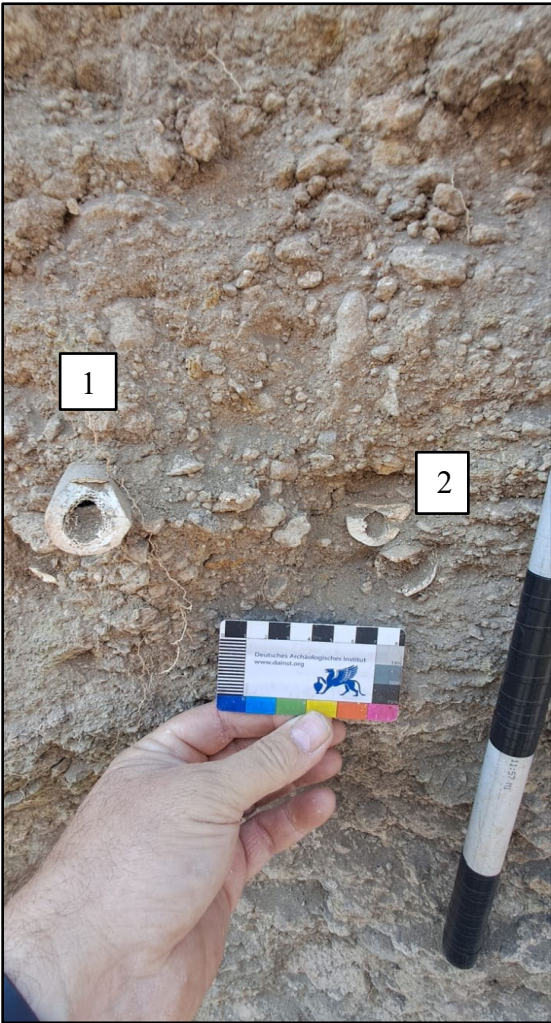


Figure 2. Human remains – No.1-femur and no. 2- possible tibia.

Figure 3. indicates the human ribs protruding from the excavation profile.



Figure 3. Some ribs and vertebrae protruding out of the trench wall.

2. Recommendations

The recommendations to the identified human bone material as part of the development project should follow the accidental archaeological find and burial procedures as stipulated in the heritage impact assessment (Van der Walt, 2021). The impact assessment stipulates to “*employ reasonable mitigation measures in accordance with the requirements of the relevant authorities.*”

Firstly, I recommend that the area is left undisturbed and an alternative route for the pipeline is excavated. If this is not a viable option, the remains should be exhumed, analysed and then reburied or sent to a formal repository for human remains.

The South African Heritage Recourses Agency (SAHRA) must be informed of the accidental discovery of human remains. Should it be deemed necessary for the development of the pipeline

to continue along the same route, the archaeologist must apply for a rescue permit to retrieve all the human remains from this burial.

For skeletal analysis, I recommend you contact Hester Roodt, roodt.hester@gmail.com and cell no. 0732224867, an archaeologist based in Polokwane.

References

Van der Walt, J. 2021. Heritage impact assessment for the proposed pipeline (SE2) between Spitskop pump station and Mototolo mine, Steelpoort, Limpopo Province.