

**PROGRESS REPORT 02 – April 3, 2012**

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**Archaeological Monitoring of Tower 205 and  
Inspection of Archaeological Site at Tower 206**

**PROPOSED 400KV TABOR-WITKOP  
TRANSMISSION LINE, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

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## TOWER 205

Construction of Tower 205 has progressed to the stage where all the shuttering is in place except for Leg C, and casting of the foundations should commence on April 11, 2012. Various vehicles had been used on the site, including the excavators and delivery trucks. Since the graves had been marked with the yellow sign boards, no problems were encountered and the vehicles did not damage any of the graves, although manoeuvring space is limited. Yellow markers were temporarily erected in the area where the contractors and visitors park, because more graves were identified in that area. The co-ordinates for these had also been added to the Google Earth map and a copy had been given to Mr Peter D'Oliveira.



**Fig 1.** In the image above it is clear that the access road to the tower foundations just misses two of the graves, indicated in red.

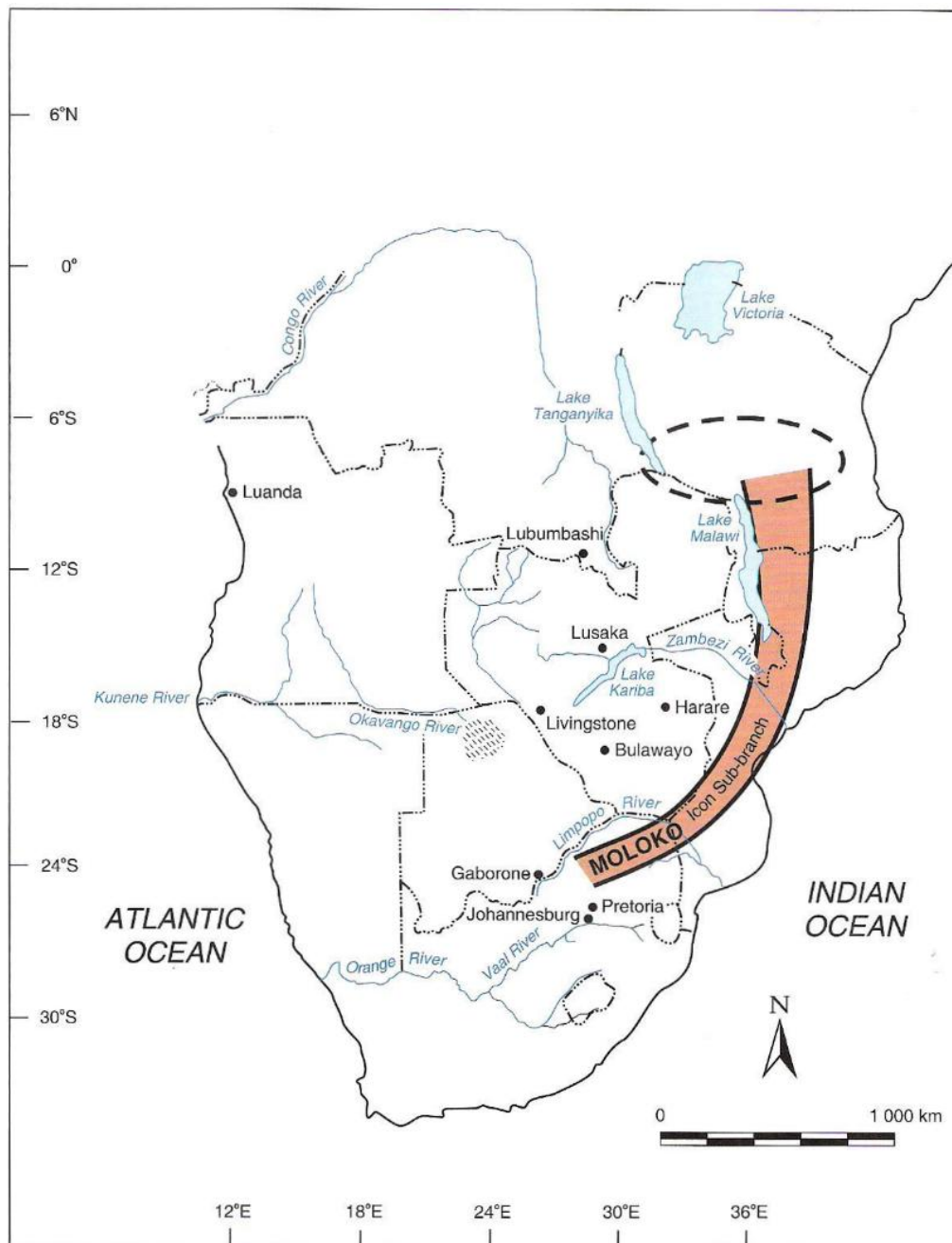
The markers, however, cannot be driven deep and secure into the stony soil, and tends to fall over (this is also visible in the above image). Their numbers were also reduced, which could be the result of removal by the contractors or of theft. Mr T Scarrott, who was on site for a few days, was to report it. After discussion with Mr Peter D'Oliveira, it was decided to rather use long wooden stakes which are marked with a bright colour.

### Background to the settlement of the area

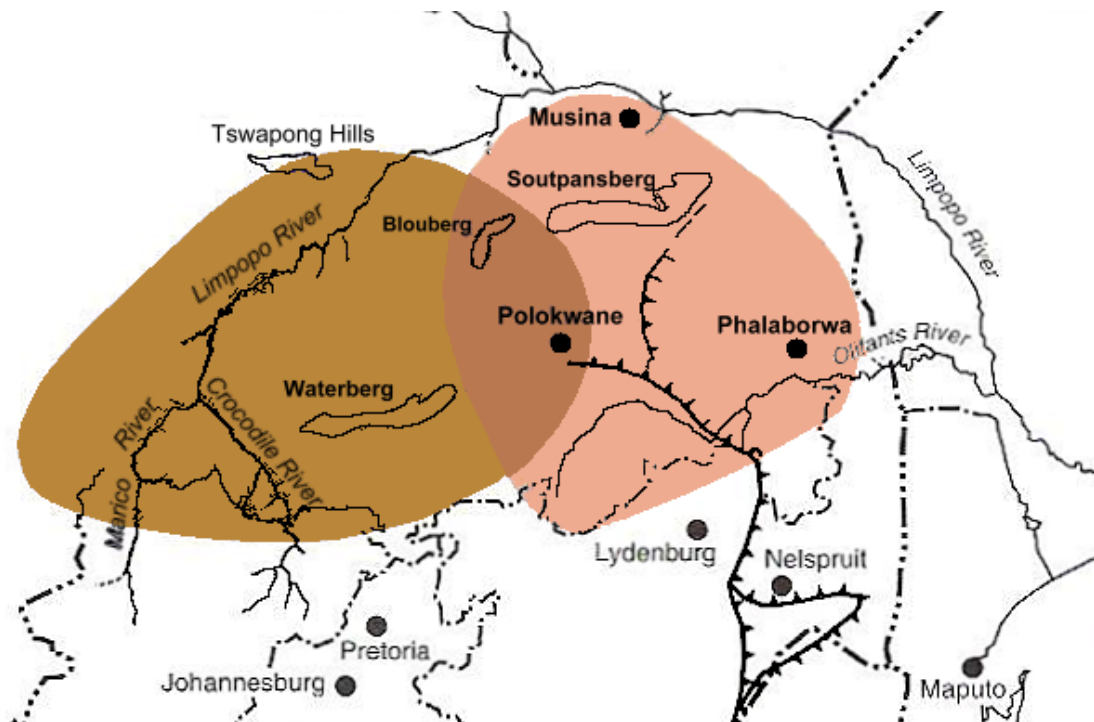
In Progress Report 01, mention has been made of the pottery finds which were identified as Eiland and Moloko (Icon) facies. Only a few sherds were recovered under the cairn of the one grave. No other surface finds were made, although dense vegetation growth impeded a surface survey. The fact that some examples were

found on the site is evidence that these peoples were in this particular area, while previous studies by others (Loubser and Huffman) had also confirmed this.

Although the graves do not belong to this period (See *Progress Report 01*), it is standard procedure to include all information gathered from an archaeological site. It is also of interest to know that a thousand years ago, when the Eiland people moved into this area, it was habitable; able to support people and their livestock. The second settlement of this area by the so-called Moloko people occurred around 1300 and 1500, long preceding the arrival of the Dutch at the Cape of Good Hope.



**Fig 2.** Late Iron Age movement of the Moloko Branch. (In: Huffman TN 2007. *Handbook to the Iron Age – The Archaeology of Pre-Colonial Farming Societies in Southern Africa*).



**Fig 3.** The distribution of the Eiland and Moloko (Icon facies). (Adapted from: Huffman TN 2007. *Handbook to the Iron Age – The Archaeology of Pre-Colonial Farming Societies in Southern Africa*). Icon pottery first appears in the Phalaborwa area in the 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries and then slightly later in the Limpopo Province (Huffman 428). Icon is the earliest recorded facies of Moloko. Sites with this pottery are limited to the Limpopo Province, Mpumalanga and perhaps Botswana, dating to between about AD 1300 and 1500.



**Fig 4.** The third sherd, top row, is an example of the Eiland facies which dates to AD 1000 to 1300. The other sherds are characteristic of the Icon facies of the Moloko branch from the Urewe Tradition.

Evidence for contact between the Eiland and Icon (Moloko) groups is confirmed by Icon's incorporation of decorative Eiland elements. Neither Eiland nor Icon is associated with stonewalling. Very little historical evidence of their building styles exist. In the Soutpansberg, Icon merged with Khami pottery which eventually developed into the Letaba style, associated with the Venda people.

The small circular stonewalled structure at Tower 205 as well as the other stonewalled sites closer to Tower 206 thus bears witness to settlement by a people who used stone as building material. The Ndebele and Koni peoples arrived on the Pietersburg Plateau around the 1650's (their history is fully described in the progress report of Tower 146). The hill just north-north-west of Tower 205 (24°00'27.39"S 29°24'53.37"E) and some smaller sites (24°00'03.87"S 29°24'50.97"E) contain some stonewalled structures resembling the typical settlement pattern of these peoples.

It is possible that the stonewalled structures close to Tower 206 belong to the pre-colonial period. These structures were, however, not yet investigated for the archaeologist needed the co-ordinates of the different towers. If this area was not going to be endangered by the construction, it would not have been necessary to take any further action.



**Fig 5.** *The robbed foundation of probably a cattle enclosure is clearly visible. Robbed walls are usually an indication that the site is of considerable age, the walling being robbed by later inhabitants such as the Late Iron Age peoples, or in historical times by farmers or their labourers. This wall is the most visible of these structures.*



**Fig 6.** Mr Philip Reitz is standing in one of the circular structures, here hidden from view by the grass and other vegetation.



**Fig 7.** Although better discernible on site than in the image, this is to show how difficult it is to gain access to these structures due to the vegetation.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1. Cemetery

- a. Since vehicle traffic is a real threat to the cemetery, it is strongly advised that permanent demarcation of this area should receive urgent attention. According to The National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999, some infringement of this law has already taken place:

### 36. Burial grounds and graves

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

(a) destroy, damage, alter, exhume or remove from its original position or 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, 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 equipment, or any equipment which assists in the detection or recovery of metals.

(6) Subject to the provision of any other law, any person who in the course of development<sup>1</sup> or any other activity discovers 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 resources authority which must, in co-operation with the South African Police Service and in accordance with regulations of the responsible heritage resources authority-

(a) 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

(b) 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 arrangements as it deems fit.

- b. Stefanutti Stocks Power has accidentally discovered the cemetery, had immediately ceased work on the site and reported it to the archaeologist. The grave was closed, and they have taken all measures possible under these circumstances to avoid any further damage to the site. However, it should be stressed once again that archaeological sites (such as in the case of Tower

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<sup>1</sup> NHR Act (No 25, 1999) defines “development” as any physical intervention, excavation or action, other than those caused by natural forces, which may in the opinion of a 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 –

- (a) Construction, alteration, demolition, removal or change of use of a place or a structure at a place;
- (b) Carrying out any works on or over or under a place;
- (c) Subdivision or consolidation of land comprising, a place, including the structures or airspace of a place;
- (d) Constructing or putting up for display signs or hoardings;
- (e) Any change to the natural or existing condition or topography of land; and
- (f) Any removal or destruction of trees, or removal of vegetation or topsoil.



205) should preferably be avoided and/or repaired to indemnify them from being penalised:

#### **45. Compulsory repair order**

(1) When the heritage resources authority responsible for the protection of a heritage site considers that such site –

(a) has been allowed to fall into disrepair for the purpose of –

(i) effecting or enabling its destruction or demolition;

(ii) enabling the development of the designated land; or

(iii) enabling the development of any land adjoining the designated land; or

(b) is neglected to such an extent that it will lose its potential for conservation, the heritage resources authority may serve on the owner an order to repair or maintain such site, to the satisfaction of the heritage resources authority, within a reasonable period of time as specified in the order: Provided that the heritage resources authority must specify only such work as, in its opinion, is necessary to prevent any further deterioration in the condition of the place.

(2) Subject to subsection (3), upon failure of the owner to comply with the terms of an order under subsection (1) within the specified time, the authority which served the order may itself take such steps as may be necessary for the repair or maintenance thereof and recover the costs from the owner.

(3) If the owner can show good cause, he or she may, within 21 days of the service of a repair order under subsection (1) –

(a) apply to the heritage resources authority which served the repair order for the extension of the time specified in the order; or

(b) appeal to the Minister, in the manner prescribed under section 49.

## **2. Stonewalled sites at Tower 206**

The extent of these sites could not be clearly established due to the vegetation. It is possible that the structures are part of a single complex or that they are separate units, which could indicate historical occupation, e.g homesteads of farm workers.

All structures older than 60 years are protected by the law, as stipulated in the National Heritage Act (No 25, 1999):

#### **34. Structures**

(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.

(2) Within three months of the refusal of the provincial heritage resources authority to issue a permit, consideration must be given to the protection of the place concerned in terms of one of the formal designations provided for in Part 1 of this Chapter.

(3) The provincial heritage resources authority may at its discretion, by notice in the Provincial Gazette, make an exemption from the requirements of subsection (1) within a defined geographical area, or for certain defined categories of site within a defined geographical area, provided that it is satisfied that heritage resources falling into the defined area or category have been identified and are adequately provided for in terms of the provisions of Part 1 of this Chapter.

(4) Should the provincial heritage resources authority believe it to be necessary it may, following a three-month notice period published in the Provincial Gazette, withdraw or amend a notice under subsection (3).

Regarding archaeological sites, it further states:

**35. Archaeology<sup>2</sup>, palaeontology and meteorites**

(4) 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 which assist in the detection or recovery of metals or archaeological and palaeontological material or objects, or use such equipment for the recovery of meteorites.

It is suggested that either of the following actions should be taken:

- a. These sites should be cleared of vegetation well in advance of excavation for the foundations for Tower 206, to enable identification, and if necessary, to implement a Phase II (excavation) archaeological operation, particularly in the region of the tower. It is possible that graves could be located in the immediate surroundings of these stone walls.
- b. Another viable option would be to relocate the position of the tower so as not to endanger these sites. If the transmission lines still cross the site, it should be clearly and permanently demarcated to prevent any future damage to the site, and an access road delineated for line/tower inspection.
- c. Application for a destruction permit should be obtained from SAHRA (the South African Heritage Resources Agency).

## SOURCES

**Changuoin L** 1986. *Pietersburg – Die Eerste Eeu 1886 – 1986*. V&R Drukkery (Edms) Bpk: Pretoria.

**Government Gazette**, Republic of South Africa 1999. *National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No 25, 1999)*. Vol 406, No 19974. Cape Town.

**Huffman TN** 2007. *Handbook to the Iron Age – The Archaeology of Pre-Colonial Farming Societies in Southern Africa*. Univ of KwaZulu-Natal Press: Scottsville.



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<sup>2</sup> NHR Act (No 25, 1999) defines “archaeological” as material remains resulting from human activity which are in a state of disuse and are in or on land and which are older than 100 years, including artefacts, human and hominid remains and artificial features and structures.