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**A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION, EXHUMATION
& RELOCATION OF THE GRAVE AND REMAINS OF
MOTSHABI SEBOBE LOCATED AT DISAKE VILLAGE
BOJANALA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, NORTHWEST PROVINCE**

For:

***AVBOB Rustenburg
PO Box 517, Rustenburg, 0300***

REPORT: **APAC014/42**

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Field Work conducted: **30 April 2019**

Report: **1 May 2019**

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**I HEREBY DECLARE THAT I AM AN INDEPENDENT
SPECIALIST APPOINTED BY THE CLIENT ON A CONSULTANCY
BASIS**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Heber". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a small dot at the end.

SUMMARY

APelser Archaeological Consulting (APAC) and AVBOB Rustenburg was requested and appointed by the family of Me.Motshabi Sebobe to undertake the investigation, exhumation and relocation of the grave and mortal remains of their grandmother and great-grandmother, located in Disake Village. The gravesite is located in the Bojanala District Municipality of the Northwest Province.

The family requested the relocation of the grave as it was in an unfavorable location and requested the reburial to be done in the formal Mmangwato Cemetery, also in Disake Village and not far from the original position of their grandparent's grave.

The fieldwork was conducted during the 30th of May 2019, in the presence of the family members, the South African Police and representatives of the Bojanala District Municipality Dept. of Health. **The archaeological work was conducted under SAHRA Permit No.2906 and Case ID#13692.**

It is believed that the requested work was concluded successfully to the satisfaction of all parties. This document represents a report on the results of the work undertaken.

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INTRODUCTION

APelser Archaeological Consulting (APAC) and AVBOB Rustenburg was requested and appointed by the family of Me.Motshabi Sebobe to undertake the investigation, exhumation and relocation of the grave and mortal remains of their grandmother and great-grandmother, located in Disake Village. The gravesite is located in the Bojanala District Municipality of the Northwest Province.

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AIMS

The aims of the work were the following:

- (a) The successful exhumation, recovery and relocation of any possible human and cultural remains from the grave of Me. Motshabi Sebobe located in Disake Village its successful reburial at the formal Mmangwato Cemetery in Disake.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology comprised the following:

Background Research – The information on the grave and the deceased individual were provided to the consultants by the family members of the deceased.

Photographic – Photographs of the Grave Site Location; Headstone and other related features; the excavation process; any possible material recovered and burial pit were taken as part of the exhumation process

Excavations

After the removal of the headstones/grave dressings and overburden by hand, the excavations were done by hand using picks, shovels, trowels and brushes. All physical skeletal remains, as well as cultural material associated, were removed and placed in a new coffin chosen by the family for reburial purposes.

SHORT BACKGROUND

According to information provided by the family the grave belongs to one Me. Mosthabi Sebobe (born Maise). Her date of birth is uncertain, but according to them she passed away in early 1920, although the exact date is not known. The family indicated that she died at an approximate age of between 20 & 30 although they were uncertain about this fact. The grave was located in Disake Village, within the BaKgatla BaKgafela Traditional

Community, and along the Main Road in Disake Village in between taverns. This was the main reason why they wanted to relocate the grave.

There was also the possibility that she might have been buried together with her son at the same time, who was a toddler at the time. No evidence of this was however found during the investigations of the grave.

The family had obtained approvals from both the Disake Village Council and the BaKgatla BaKgafela Head Offices to get the work done and subsequently requested AVBOB Rustenburg and APAC cc to conduct the work in late February 2019. After obtaining the various permits by AVBOB & APAC cc the work was done on the 30th of April 2019. The family requested the remains to be reburied in the formal Mmangwato Cemetery in Disake Village.

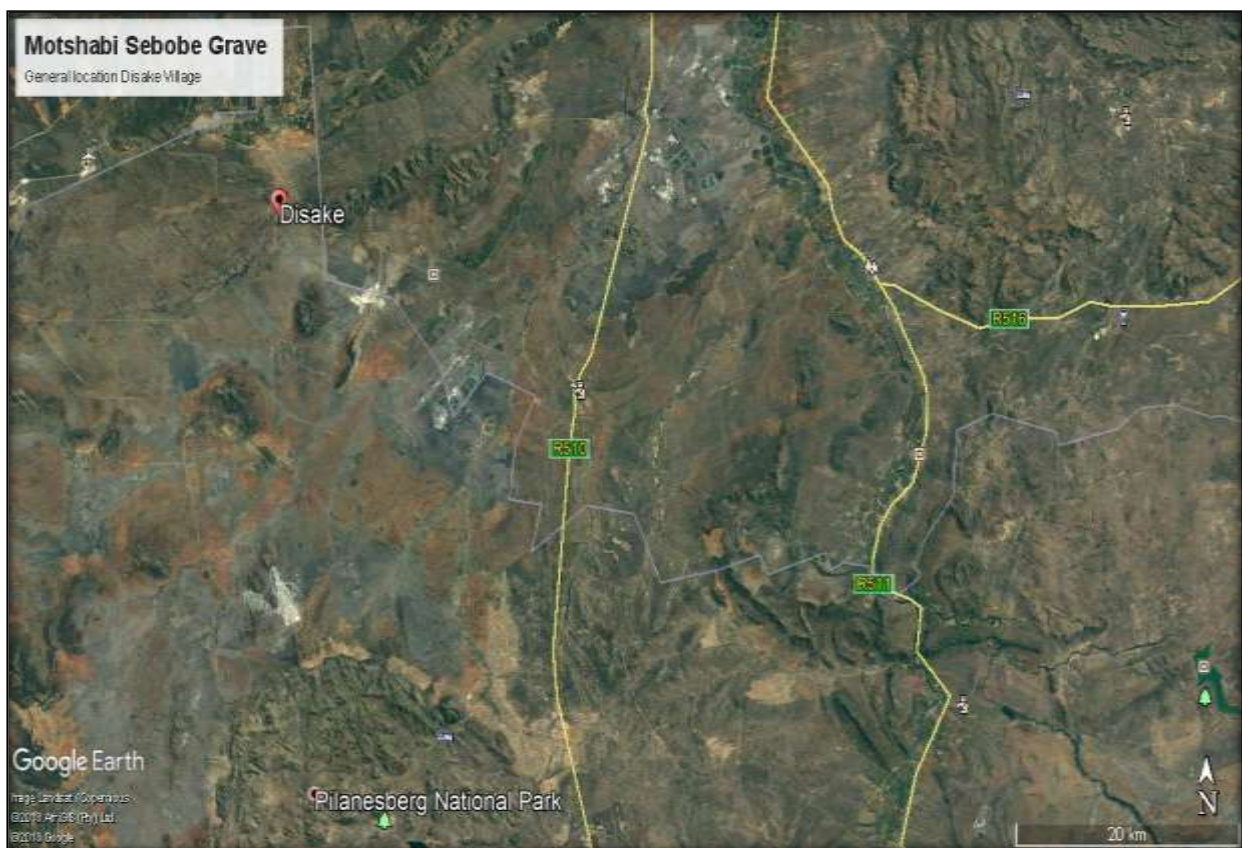


Figure 1: General location of Site in Disake Village (Google Earth 2019)



Figure 2: Closer view of location of grave site and the Mmangwato Cemetery in Disake Village (Google Earth 2019).



Figure 3: The location of the grave after being cordoned off showing the family & community members present.



Figure 4: A view of the grave prior to the investigations.

PHYSICAL INVESTIGATIONS

The physical investigations, exhumations and relocations were undertaken on the 30th of April 2019 by a team APAC cc & AVBOB Rustenburg. The aims with the physical investigations were the successful recovery of all possible remains (both human skeletal and cultural material such as clothing and other personal effects) from f the graves, in order to facilitate its successful reburial in the location chosen by the family (in the Mmangwato Cemetery not far from the original grave site).

The grave was stone-packed with a metal frame placed around it. There was no headstone or plaque with any inscription present. Before the physical investigations and excavation the stones and metal frame was removed by hand.

Excavations

The physical excavations were conducted by hand, using picks and shovels. The grave was documented photographically prior to excavation, while the burial pit, the remains in it and other cultural material were also recorded. All the human skeletal and cultural remains recovered were placed in a new coffin chosen by the family for reburial purposes in its new location.



Figure 5: A closer view of the grave after removal of the metal frame showing the stones it was demarcated with.



Figure 6: A view of the grave after the removal of the stones.



Figure 7: A view of the grave after excavation up to the level of the burial pit by staff from AVBOB.

Results

The skeletal remains of the deceased were very well preserved and complete and also still in near perfect articulation and anatomical position. The remains were those of a young female individual of an estimated age between 19 & 25 years of age (based on the pelvis, dental age and condition and skull characteristics). This corroborates therefore closely the information provided by the family members of the deceased.

Besides the skeletal remains some small fragments of coffin wood, small pieces of clothing, bottle glass and coffin nails were also recovered. Personal items found in the burial pit and associated with the remains included strings of wound copper-wire bangles; three earrings (gold?) and an ivory bangle. All of these items were also placed in the coffin to be reburied with the remains.

The grave was orientated E/W, with Me. Motshabi Sebobe buried on her back and her head located East and facing West. Her arms were on her sides with her right hand on her pelvis.

No other remains indicating a second individual in the burial pit was found as indicated could be a possibility. The story regarding her son possibly being buried with her at the same time can therefore not be corroborated.

Representatives of the family also preformed various traditional rituals, prayers and songs before, during and after the archaeological investigations and exhumations, as well as at the new grave at the Mmangwato Cemetery (see Photos below).



Figure 8: The remains in the burial pit.



Figure 9: Close-up of the arm and hand positions.



Figure 10: Closer view of skull.



Figure 11: The cultural material recovered from the grave.

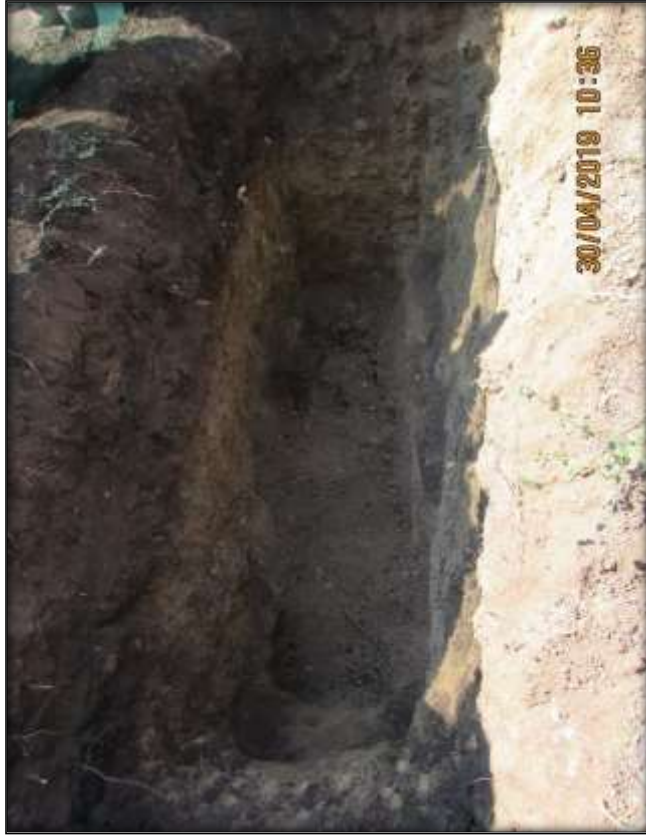


Figure 12: The empty burial pit.



Figure 13: The remains placed in the new coffin.



Figure 14: Family members performing rituals at the grave.



Figure 15: At the new grave at the Mmangwato Cemetery.



Figure 16: Getting the new coffin ready for interment at the new grave location.



Figure 17: Closing of the new grave by family members.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion it is possible to say that the archaeological investigation, exhumation and relocation of the grave and mortal remains of Me. Motshabi Sebobe (born Maise), who died around 1920 and was buried at Disake Village in the Northwest Province was completed successfully.

The skeletal remains of the deceased were very well preserved and complete and also still in near perfect articulation and anatomical position. The remains were those of a young female individual of an estimated age between 19 & 25 years of age (based on the pelvis, dental age and condition and skull characteristics). This corroborates therefore closely the information provided by the family members of the deceased.

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REFERENCES

General and Closer views of the location of the grave site and new location in the Mmangwato Cemetery in Disake Village: Google Earth 2019.

Background Information on Me. Motshabi Sebobe and the grave – provided by her family.