

Our Ref:



an agency of the
Department of Arts and Culture

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South African Heritage Resources Agency | 111 Harrington Street | Cape Town
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Enquiries: Elijah Dumisani Katsetse

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CaseID: 17738

Date: Thursday September 01, 2022

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Letter

In terms of Section 35(4) of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999)

Attention: Mr Johan Nel

Digby Wells Environmental

Digby Wells Environmental

C14 and DNA analyses of human skeletal remains

Dear Johan,

RE: Dwars River C14 DNA Tests

Thank you for submitting a permit report on DNA Tests and C14 dating of two skeletal remains unearthed during construction of the Richmond Road, Dwars River, Limpopo Province. C14 dating and DNA test were undertaken under permit (Permit ID: **3448**) as follows:

- C14 Dating will be done by Beta Analytic Inc. Miami, Florida, United States of America,
- And DNA Analysis will be done at the Genetics Department, Ampath National Reference Library, Centurion, South Africa.

The SAHRA acknowledges receipt of the permit report with C14 dates that indicate that **REM001** can be dated to **880 +/- 30 BP** calibrated to 794-680 BP and 1156-1270 AD and **REM002** has a C14 date of **870 +/- 30 BP** calibrated to 771-678 and 1179-1272. This dates indicate that the persons died nearly 900 years ago which places the remains within the first century of the LIA. The C14 dates are corroborated by the LIA Eiland facies ceramics identified in close association with the remains.

The DNA analysis could only get a profile from **REM001**, indicating a male individual. No DNA profile could be obtained for **REM002** despite several attempts. The lack of a DNA profile for REM002 is due to the age of the remains. Therefore, the samples obtained from REM002 did not contain sufficient variable DNA to produce a profile. Only REM001 could be used for comparative DNA analysis with representatives from both the Makanyane and Mawela families. ***The comparative DNA results indicate that none of the subjects from either family are related to REM001.***

It is also noted that the results preclude any DNA match to any living person given the early dates

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obtained. This extends to identifying the remains as belonging to any current or ethnic historic groups. The specialist has recommended that:

Anglo-American Platinum notify the families supported by SAHRA, and that Anglo-American Platinum facilitate the reburial of the remains be reburied in accordance with conditions set in the original permit considering:

- erecting a grave stone at the grave site whereon the original location of the burial is indicated; and
- Anglo-American Platinum, SAHRA, and the families to agree to the wording on the grave stone that acknowledges that the area had been occupied by people long before any modern settlement or industry. Consideration could be given to the remains as representative of unknown or collective ancestors, similar to the 'Unknown Soldier' commemorated in times of war.

SAHRA supports the recommendation for a continued consultative process where the results of both the DNA and C14 tests are relayed to the affected families and a way forward sought collaboratively. SAHRA acknowledges the recommendation proposed by the specialist for the reburial of the remains as per the original permit, however, this is depended on the acceptance of the report and its findings by the affected families.

Should you have any further queries, please contact the designated official using the case number quoted above in the case header.

Yours faithfully

Elijah Dumisani Katsetse
Heritage Officer
South African Heritage Resources Agency

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Phillip Hine

Manager: Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites Unit
South African Heritage Resources Agency

ADMIN:

Direct URL to case: <https://sahris.sahra.org.za/node/590736>

Terms & Conditions:

1. This approval does not exonerate the applicant from obtaining local authority approval or any other necessary approval for proposed work.
2. If any heritage resources, including graves or human remains, are encountered they must be reported to SAHRA immediately.
3. SAHRA reserves the right to request additional information as required.