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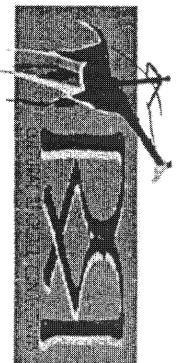
PHASE I
ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT
ASSESSMENT

FRY DAM: Raising of Dam Wall
Matomashoek 371 LT & Gembokspruit 372 LT
NORTHERN PROVINCE

Frans Roodt
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SM

Tel: (015) 225 7075
Cell: 083 293 3166
E-mail: hr19@pixie.co.za



PO Box 1600
PIETERSBURG
0 7 0 0

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SYNOPSIS

A phase 2 archaeological assessment is recommended for the area destroyed by the burrow pit.

INTRODUCTION

The Fydam wall was washed away during the floods of February/March 2000. The wall has to be rebuilt and it was proposed by the developer to raise the dam wall to increase the original capacity of the dam. This impact assessment forms part of an EIA undertaken by the Environmental Consultant, GAA EARTH SCIENCES. For the purpose of this report readers are referred to the main EIA report prepared by GAA EARTH SCIENCES for detailed aspects such as the capacity of the Dam, floodline map, geographical features, vegetation, fauna and other ecology aspects. The riverine environment of the Koedoes River has been altered drastically by human activity in the recent past as a result of the construction of the Fydam, as well as modern farming activities. This report will deal only with the archaeology of the terrain.

AIM

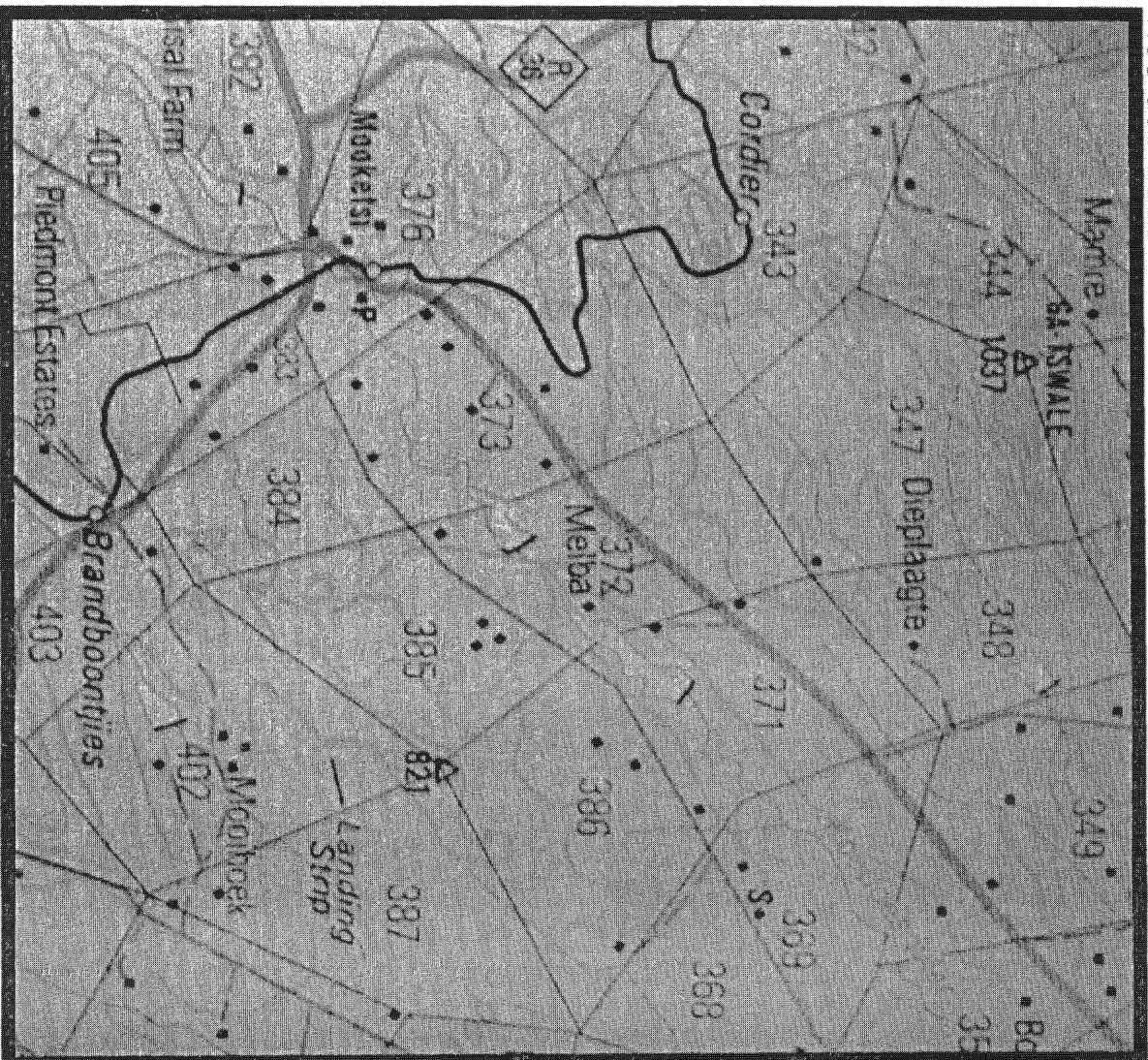
The aim was to undertake a Phase 1 *Archaeological Impact Assessment* in order to assess the impact of the proposed project on archaeological sites and features in the demarcated area; and to submit appropriate recommendations with regard to the cultural resources management measures to be implemented at affected sites/features. Two areas were identified for consideration, namely: (1) to assess the impact that the raising of the floodline will have, and (2) to assess the impact that was caused during the excavation of the large-burrow pit from which material was taken for the building up and raise of the dam wall. The task was performed during January 2000.

METHOD

A survey of the terrain was undertaken on foot. Locations were recorded by means of a GPS (Garmin 12), and archaeological features were photographed with an EPSON 850Z Digital camera.

LOCATION AND DISCRPTION

The proposed project is located on the farms MATOMASHOEK 371LI and GEMSBOKSPRUIT 372LI in the Koedoes river valley (see Map). The demarcated area that was assessed included the area between the original shore line and the new floodline that would result from the raising of the dam wall, and the burrow pit from which construction material was obtained. Most of the shoreline is covered with dense vegetation consisting of various tree and scrub species. Much of this is impenetrable.



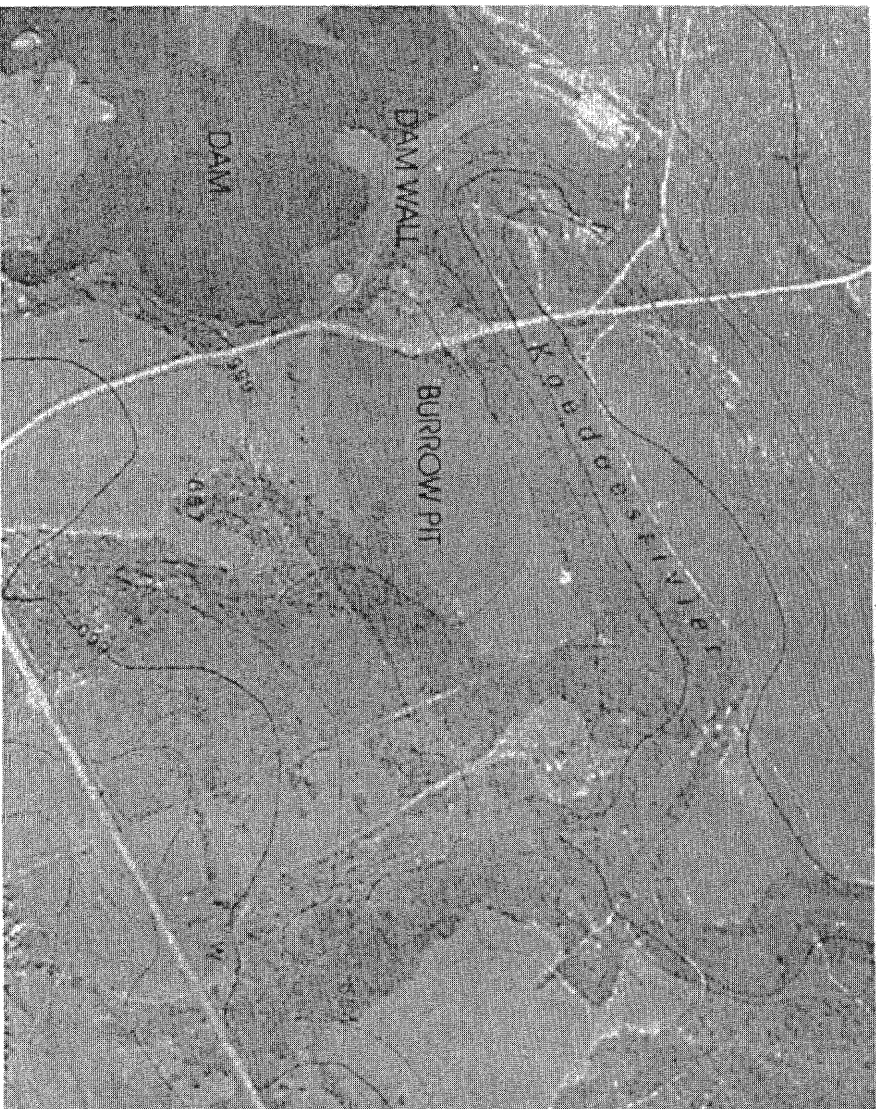
General Locality Map

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS

IRON AGE

The remains of what used to be an Early Iron Age archaeological site was found in the burrow pit: Coordinates: S23°33'22.1" E30°09'18.2". The archaeological remains consist of pottery, burned dagha, bone, metal slag and ash. Although the site had been ploughed previously for the cultivation of tomatoes (the plough depth had not destroyed the deposit), most of the entire site has now been destroyed by

the earthworks: Some deposits still appear to exist at the edge of the burrow pit. A total area of at least 2ha was destroyed by the earthworks.



Location of burrow pit

Some of the piled up soil containing archaeological material have been left in the pit. These are a source of important information.



Figure 1. Burrow pit showing eastern edge and heaps

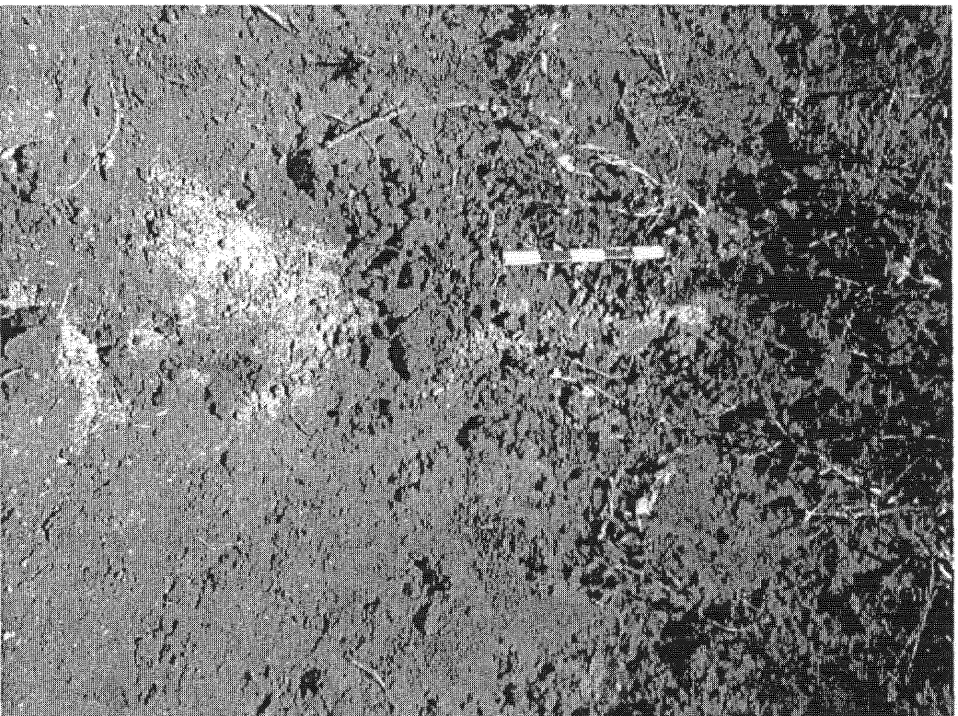


Figure 2. Ash remains in pile of soil (scale: 50cm.)

Discussion

The pottery has been identified as Matakoma. This tradition dates from the fourth to the ninth centuries AD, and is roughly contemporaneous with the Matola tradition (found for example at Izaneen [silver leaves]). Matakoma sites however lie to the north and west of Matola and had its origin in a completely different pottery tradition that spread into the region south of the Limpopo river from a northwesterly direction (the so-called western stream), as opposed to the eastern migratory route of the Matola tradition.

Matakoma pottery is characterised by recurved jars with combed, stamped or incised bands of hatched or herringbone motifs placed below the rim and in the neck. A limited number of sites have been recorded. It was first described by De Vaal in 1943 and has been found on both sides of the Soutpansberg range and along the Letaba river in the Kruger Park.

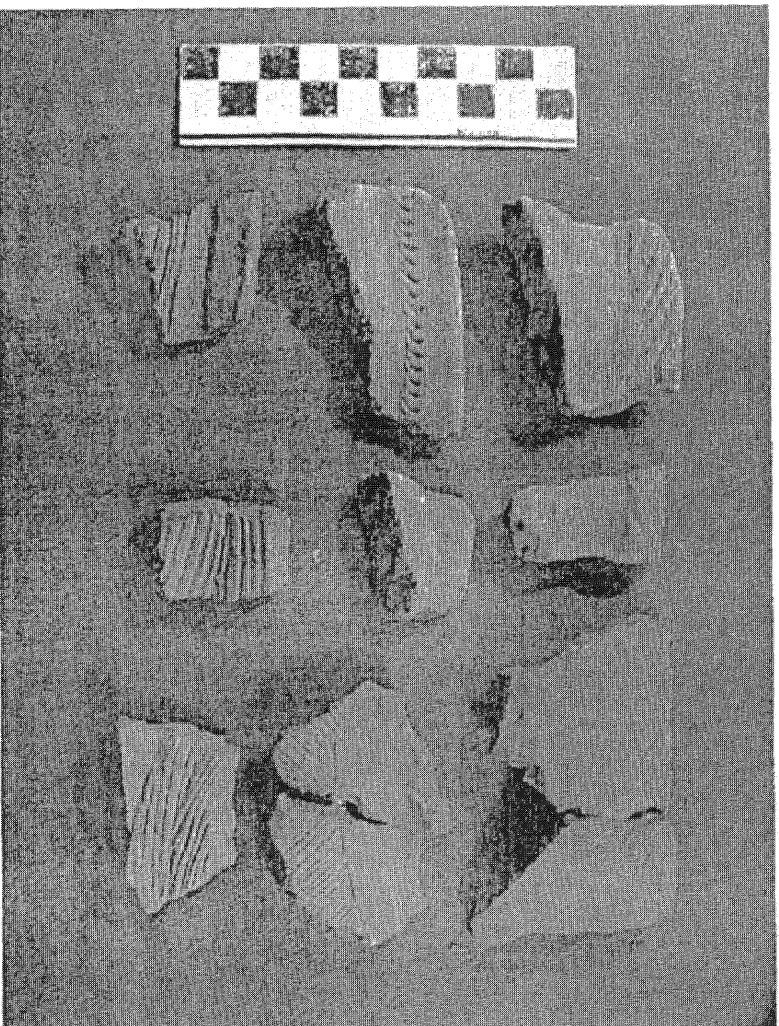


Figure 3. Assortment of decorated potsherds

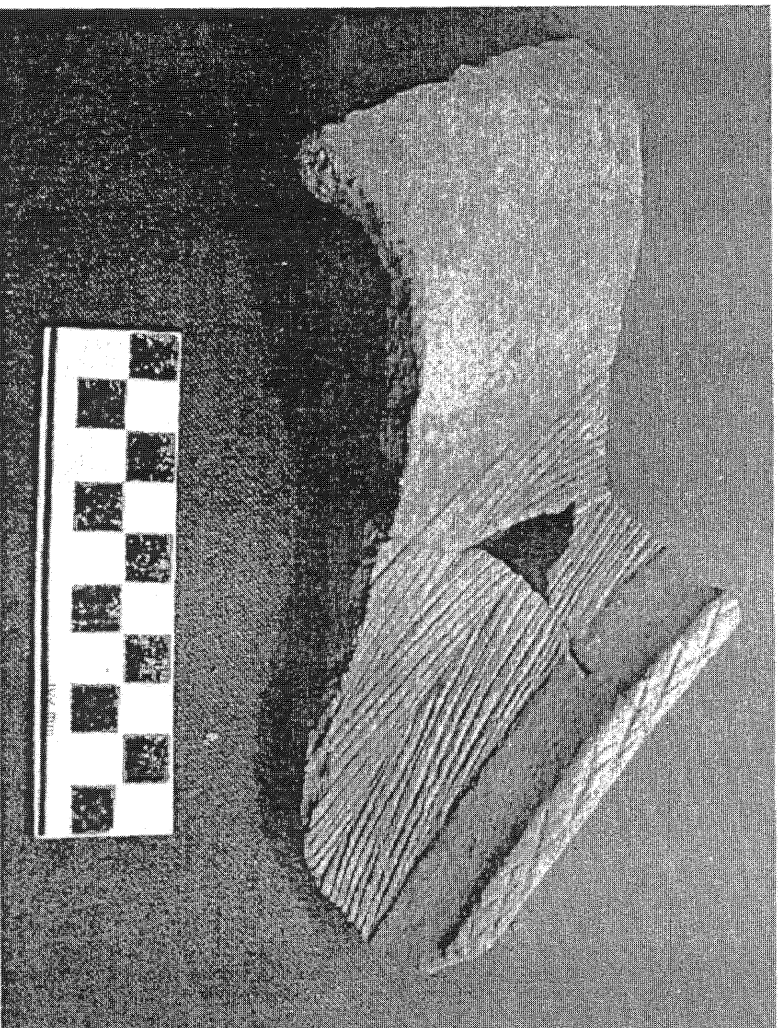


Figure 4. Typical Matakoma pottery decoration style and shape

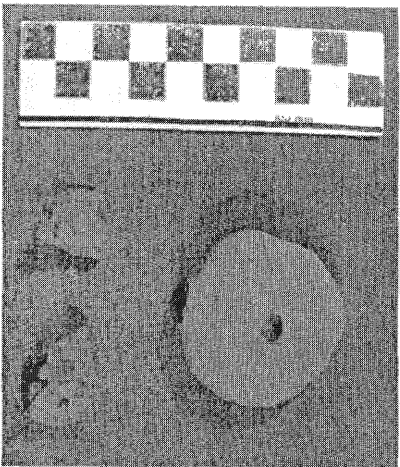


Figure 5. disc & metal slag

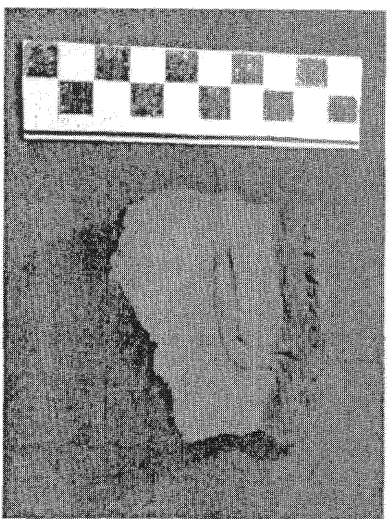


Figure 6. Decorated potsherd

Apart from the site discussed above, a number of non-diagnostic potsherd were found in various other place in the ploughed fields surrounding the dam. Because of the ploughed nature of the area, it has not been possible to pinpoint specific archaeological sites.

STONE AGE

Some Middle Stone Age flakes were found in various eroded place . No significant concentration or deposit was found that would warrant any further assessment.

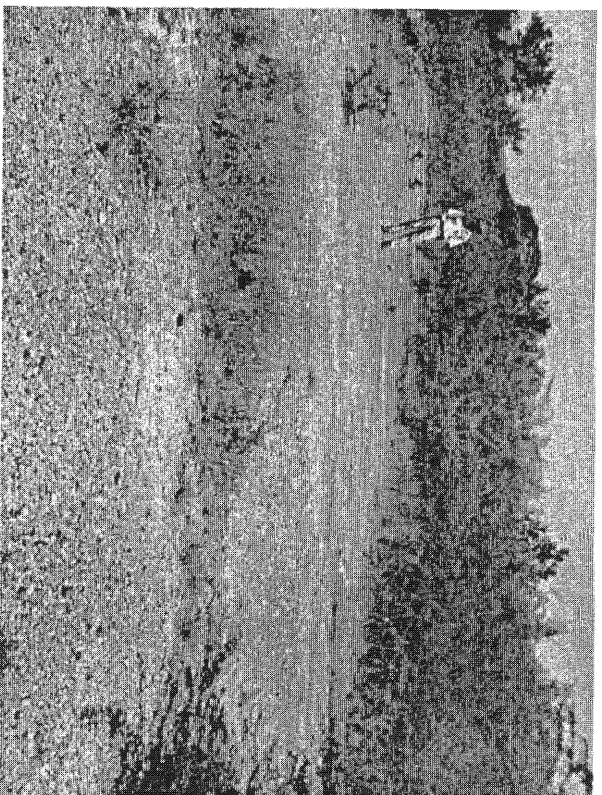


Figure 7. Eroded area with MSA flakes

EVALUATION

The Early Iron Age site found in the burrow pit at Fydam is regarded as an extremely significant site – even though it has been largely destroyed. It fills a geographical gap between the sites found in the central part of the Soutpansberg and those found on the Letaba river. All remaining evidence and material that will assist in interpreting the site must be recovered. It is expected that a representative sample of pottery could still be recovered and that C¹⁴ dating of the site may be possible.

RECOMMENDATION

A phase 2 archaeological assessment is recommended. This should consist of:

1. Sifting through the soil dumps in order to collect as much of the remaining material as possible, and
2. Excavating a number of test pits on the eastern and northern side of the burrow pit where some deposit seems to be intact.

Attention is also drawn to Sections 35 & 36 of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999). An extract is given below:

Extracts from:
The National Heritage Resources Act (Act No. 25 of 1999).

Archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites

Subsection 35. (3) Any person who discovers archaeological or palaeontological objects or material or a meteorite in the course of development or agricultural activity must immediately report the find to the responsible heritage resources authority, or to the nearest local authority or museum, which must immediately notify such heritage resources authority.

Subsection 35. (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.

Burial grounds and graves

Subsection 36. (6) Subject to the provision of any law, any person who in the course of development 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 content of such grave or, in the absence of such person or community, make any such arrangement as it deems fit.

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Frans Roodt (BA Hons, MA Archaeology, UP)
For: R & R Cultural Resource Consultants