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## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED UPGRADING OF THE R57 ROAD (P9/2) BETWEEN REITZ & PETRUS STEYN, FREE STATE**

### **INVESTIGATION**

The R57 (P9/2) road between Reitz and Petrus Steyn, Free State, was inspected on 10 June 2005 in the company of Dr Johan du Preez of Cebo Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein.

The different intersections where secondary roads link up with the main road, borrow pits and by-passes were examined for the presence of archaeological and cultural material.

### **LOCALITY**

The work concentrated on the proposed upgrading of the R57 (P9/2) road between Reitz and Petrus Steyn (Map 1).

The different sites are identified by the following GPS coordinates (Cape):

**MAIN ROAD CROSSING TO REITZ / BETHLEHEM / FRANKFORT /  
HEILBRON** 27°46'40"S. 028°24'49"E. Altitude 1615m (Fig.1).

**LANGESPRUIT BRIDGE** 27°46'24"S. 028°24'22"E. Altitude 1603m  
(Figs.2&3).

**BP1 LANGESPRUIT 334** 27°45'56"S. 028°22'39"E. Altitude 1666m.

<b>BRIDGE 949</b>	27°46'09"S. 028°23'39"E. Altitude 1609m.
<b>T2343</b>	27°45'18"S. 028°18'20"E. Altitude 1588m.
<b>S595</b>	27°45'19"S. 028°18'25"E. Altitude 1587m.
<b>LIEBENBERG SVLEISPRUIT</b>	27°45'27"S. 028°19'40"E. Altitude 1562m (Figs.4&5).
<b>BP2 (EXISTING) WATERVAL 796</b>	27°45'09"S. 028°17'51"E. Altitude 1629m (Fig.6).
<b>KLIPSPRUIT BRIDGE 896 (PAULSHOOP 296)</b>	27°45'13"S. 028°16'40"E. Altitude 1579m.
<b>S511</b>	27°45'13"S. 028°15'27"E. Altitude 1622m.
<b>BP3 (EXISTING)</b>	27°45'15"S. 028°15'23"E. Altitude 1628m (Fig.10).
<b>(NEW)</b>	27°45'17"S. 028°15'28"E. Altitude 1631m.
<b>BP4</b>	27°45'24"S. 028°11'21"E. Altitude 1650m.
<b>BP5 (PETRUS STEYN)</b>	27°39'40"S. 028°08'28"E. Altitude 1716m (Fig.12&13).

## FINDS

All the existing intersections with the R57 road between Reitz and Petrus Steyn have been in use for many years. The different areas had clearly been exploited during previous road building activities, resulting in the disturbance of the soil surface of the immediate areas.

The temporary by-passes planned along the road did not produce any remains of cultural material.

It was only in the case of BP5 on the outskirts of Petrus Steyn (Fig.11) where the remains of a Late Iron Age stone-walled settlement have been found (Fig.16). In this case the edge of the borrow pit will also be very near the boundary fence.

The cultural material occurred in the form of potsherds and porcelain on an ash heap at BP5 (27°39'39"S. 028°08'30"E. Altitude 1715m.) (Figs.13&14).

The porcelain fragments are been identified as sponge ware, which had been known to be very popular amongst European women in the former British colonies. Sponge ware decorated crockery had been manufactured at Staffordshire, England, for distribution in the different British colonies, including

South Africa. The fragments from BP5 could therefore, date from a period well before the Anglo-Boer War (Trehaven 1996, Dreyer 2001) (Fig.15).

At BP2 on the farm Waterval 796 some boulders contained vague remains of etchings resembling graffiti or engravings (Figs.8&9), but they were actually quite illegible and could not be connected to any group or origin.

## **DISCUSSION**

Although no stone-walling was found in the case of BP5, it will be important to investigate the origin of the potsherds on the ash heap. If people were living there in the past, it could be possible that there may be graves at the site or in the vicinity.

Every archaeological occurrence is unique and should be treated as a non-renewable commodity. All efforts should, therefore, be made to avoid disturbance or destruction of any graves or stone feature.

## **MITIGATION & RECOMMENDATIONS**

Concerning the areas for the proposed developments, mitigation measures will only be needed in the case of the BP5 at Petrus Steyn.

It is recommended that a borrow pit should be selected elsewhere or that the extent of the pit should be planned to by-pass the ash heaps in the area. It is recommended that the disturbance should be limited near the ash heaps.

No further reason could be found to delay the commencement of the work and it is recommended that the proposed development may proceed.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Map 1 Locality of Reitz and Petrus Steyn in the Free State.

### LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS:



Fig.1 The main crossing on the R57 from Reitz to Bethlehem, Frankfort and Heilbron. The photograph was taken facing towards Petrus Steyn.



Fig.2 From the bridge at Langespruit on the R57.



Fig.3 The bridge at Langespruit on the R57.



Fig.4 Liebenbergsvleispruit on the R57 between Reitz and Petrus Steyn.



Fig.5 Liebenbergsvleispruit on the R57 between Reitz and Petrus Steyn.



Fig.6 BP2 (Existing borrow pit) at Waterval 796.



Fig.7 Remains of a rectangular stone structure at Waterval 796.





Fig.8 Boulder with vague etchings at Waterval 796.



Fig.9 Another boulder with vague etchings at Waterval 796.



Fig.10 BP3 (Existing) to be extended.



Fig.11 View from BP5 facing towards Petrus Steyn.



Fig.12 Existing sandstone quarry at BP5 near Petrus Steyn.



Fig.13 Potsherd and stone flake from the ash heap at BP5 near Petrus Steyn.



Fig.14 Sponge ware decorated crockery from BP5, Petrus Steyn.



Fig.15 A sponge ware bowl with lid. Sponge ware decorated crockery, manufactured at Staffordshire, England, for sole distribution in South Africa. This specimen dates from pre-Anglo Boer War times. (J. Dreyer Private Collection).



Fig.16 Base of a stonewall at BP5 near Petrus Steyn.