

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE  
DEELKRAAL AND DOORNFONTEIN MINES

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## SYNOPSIS

One historic site was found on Doornfontein, while the survey on Deelkraal recorded 3 Stone Age sites, 6 Iron Age ruins, 29 historic remains and 1 cemetery. If development proceeds beyond the mine centre at Deelkraal, some of the archaeological and historical sites will require mitigation.

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## INTRODUCTION

Steffen, Robertson and Kirsten (SRK) contracted Archaeological Resources Management (ARM) to survey the Deelkraal and Doornfontein Mine properties (Fig.

1) for archaeological and historical sites as part of their EMPR.

Deelkraal was visited on November 1st and 2nd and Doornfontein on the 15th.

The sites were recorded on 1:5 000 maps provided by the mines and given to SRK along with a draft report. The survey was not intensive. As instructed, ARM staff did not examine ploughed fields or other areas already heavily disturbed by mining activity. It was also not possible to enter some of the areas currently under private lease. Nevertheless, we recorded a representative sample of archaeological and historical sites in the area.

The Deelkraal area is well known for its Late Iron Age and Voortrekker history. The farm Kleinfontein, excluded from this survey contract, contains a famous underground settlement (a proclaimed National Monument) dating to the 1820s and 30s (Haughton & Wells 1942). The Bakwena chief Maselwane is alleged to have stayed in the cave after his capital near Rustenburg was sacked by Mzilikazi in about 1826 (Breutz 1953). Maselwane may have chosen this area in order to take advantage of the protection provided by Voortrekkers.

The name Deelkraal dates back to when Voortrekker divided their cattle here. By the 1840s, after the Voortrekkers, European farmers were settled in the area (e.g. Sanderson 1860).

## OBSERVATIONS

### AREA 1: DEELKRAAL MINE.

#### Stone Age

The presence of human activity in the area dates much further back. Stone Age flakes lie scattered over most of the area. Sites 13, 20 and 36 have high

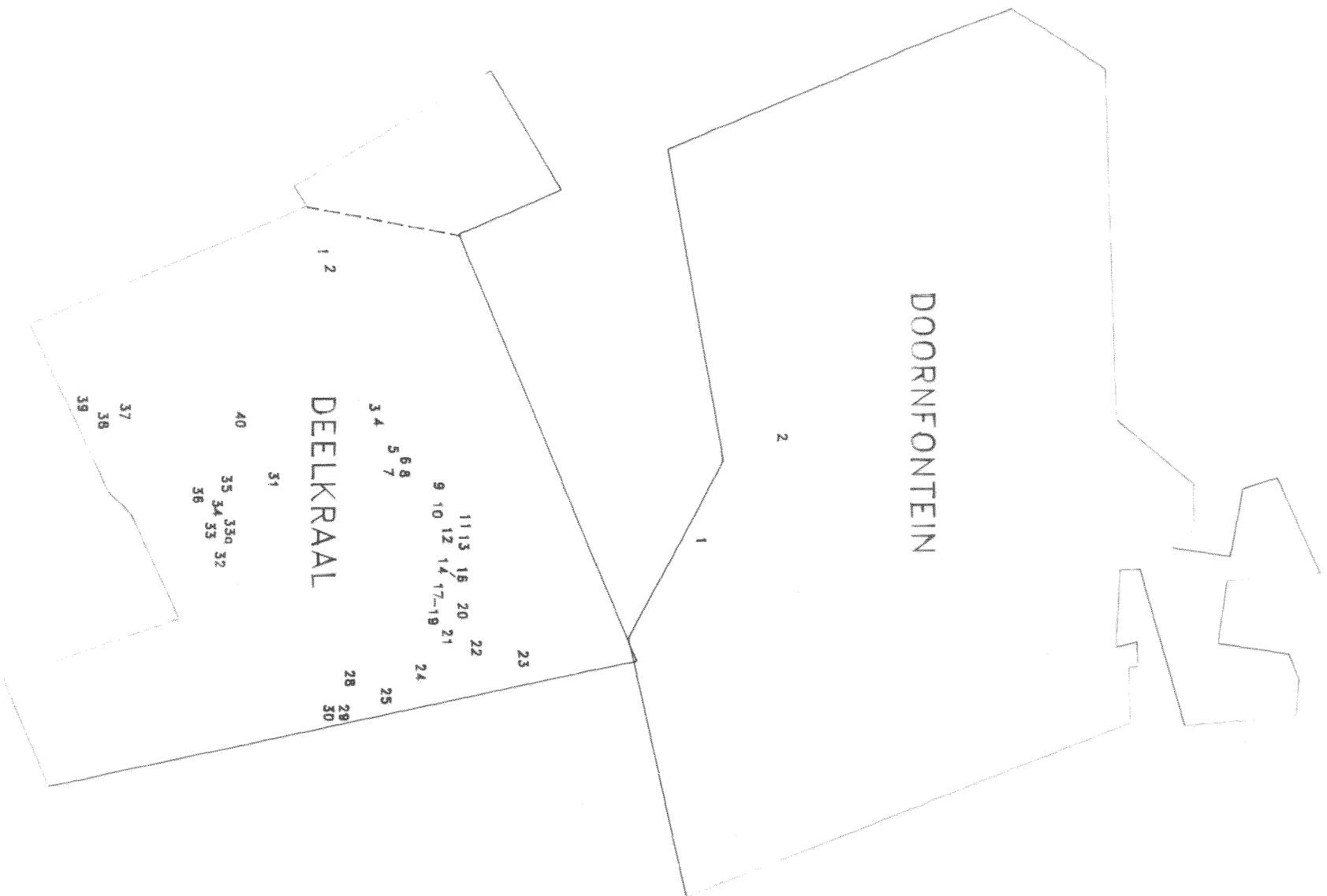


Figure 1. Mining areas included in this report.

concentrations of Later Stone Age (30 000 to 500 years ago) and Middle Stone Age (250 000 to 30 000 years ago) tools, and Site 36 even included a few Early Stone Age (250 000 to 2 million years ago) flakes. Site 36 covers the entire hill down to the flat areas at the base. The raw material comes from the immediate vicinity and includes chert, agates, quartz and quartzite.

### **Iron Age**

Numerous stone-walled remains dating from the 18th and 19th centuries (Sites 32 - 34, 38, 38a and 39) stand on top of the ridge running along the southern side of Deelkraal. These settlements were built in defensive positions because of the military tension throughout the Transvaal at the beginning of the 19th century.

These settlements were organised according to what is called the 'Central Cattle Pattern'; that is, circular central cattle enclosures were surrounded by a circle of domestic units and grainbins. The outer walls form a series of scallops, each demarcating the back courtyard of individual households. We noted stone foundations of huts and verandas, grainbin stands, grindstones and pottery. The types of walling, layout and pottery show that these settlements were occupied by Sotho/Tswana-speaking people. The oral history, suggests that these people may have been Bakwena associated with Maselwane.

### **Historic**

A large number of other sites date to historic times. Sites 1-19 are remnants of stone-walled kraals used by European farmers, some until recently.

These stone-walled kraals are all situated against the slopes of the central ridge. The size and shape vary somewhat, while wall heights range from low to up to 2m. The high walls were probably used to keep horses, and the low walling probably enclosed cattle and other stock. There are no visible artifacts nor evidence for residential structures nearby. Consequently, these were most likely stock posts. Some may have been built by the first Voortrekkers and farmers, while others were probably constructed during the Anglo-Boer War.

Sites 25 to 31 are all ruins of small stone-and-mud walled houses. Rusted metal objects, glass bottles and old farm and household implements surround these structures, and clearly farm labourers lived here. None of the house structures are associated with stone-walled kraals, like those on Kloof and Leeudoorn Mines, and so these houses seem to be associated with agricultural activities rather than stock keeping.

Sites 35 and 37 are ruins of much larger homesteads. The first house was originally L-shaped with a Cape Dutch gable; a second gable was later added. The thick walls of the original house contrast markedly with more recent additions. Most outside buildings date to the same period, and most buildings are dilapidated. Some stone walling here is typical of the early Voortrekker style.

The architecture and press metal ceilings of the farm house at Site 37 date it to the 1920s. A stone wall around the house was decorated and inscribed with the names Deelkraal and W. Kok. About 100m away is a cemetery of the Kok family with 3 granite headstones dating from 1937 to 1963.

#### AREA 2: DOORNFONTEIN MINE

A stone-walled kraal and house complex stand (Site 1) about 700m north of the disused No 2 shaft. Rectangular walls and artifacts such as bottles, tin plates and a prospecting pan date the complex to the early 20th century.

A few MSA and ESA flakes (Site 2) were found around the beacon next to the sink hole. Most of the remaining portions of Doornfontein were already developed and were therefore not examined.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Because we lack information on any future development of the Deelkraal and Doornfontein mines, it is impossible to note which sites are endangered. If,

however, any development should take place, some mitigation will be needed.

First, surface material should be collected from Sites 13, 20 and 36. Site 36 should be test excavated.

Secondly, the Iron Age settlements were probably contemporaneous with the underground village on Kleinfontein, and are thus part of a unique phenomenon. If ever endangered, they would need to be mapped and test excavated.

Thirdly, all graves are protected by National Monuments legislation (see for example Policy for Cultural Conservation, 5 July 1993), and among other things a permit is required before they can be moved. The National Monuments Act (No. 28 of 1969, as amended) also extends legal protection to buildings 50 years or older. In essence the Council requires a record of any building before it is destroyed. In most cases photographs, a plan and surface collections will be sufficient.

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