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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE  
MINES  
VENTERSPOST, LIBANON, LEEUDOORN AND KLOOF**

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MINES  
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**SYNOPSIS**

Several sites dating to the Late Iron Age and Historic periods were found on the four mine properties. A Late Iron Age complex at Leeudoorn and a European cemetery at Venterspost are in eminent danger and require urgent mitigation.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Archaeological Resources Management Programme (ARM) was contracted by Steffen, Robertson & Kirsten to survey the Kloof Division Mines for archaeological sites as part of their Environmental Management Programme Report.

On September 23rd ARM staff visited the area to make the necessary arrangements with appropriate mine personnel to begin the survey the following week.

Over a period of 4 days two staff examined four areas (Fig. 1): 1) Venterspost, 2) Libanon, 3) Leeudoorn and 4) Kloof. Because of the short grass and recent veld fires, it was relatively easy to locate archaeological remains. These sites were recorded on a series of 1:10 000 maps provided by the mines and given to SRK. The survey, however, was not intensive. As instructed, ARM staff did not examine ploughed fields or other areas already heavily disturbed by mining activity.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

### **AREA 1: VENTERSPOST MINE**

The Venterspost Mine is of historical interest, for the oldest mine shaft on this property was the first shaft sunk in the Carltonville area.

#### **Historic**

All sites found on this property date to historic times. Sites V1 to V3 and V5 to V8 are remnants of farming activity dating to the latter part of the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries. Some house ruins have sandstone foundations with sun-dried brick and mud plaster walling. Site V5 is an old farm house with a ring of eucalyptus trees marking off the boundary of the farmyard. The thick walls, sun dried bricks, red painted cement stoep and remains of the fire place are all characteristic of old Transvaal farm houses. Besides the house foundations at Site V3, there are also rectangular stone kraals.

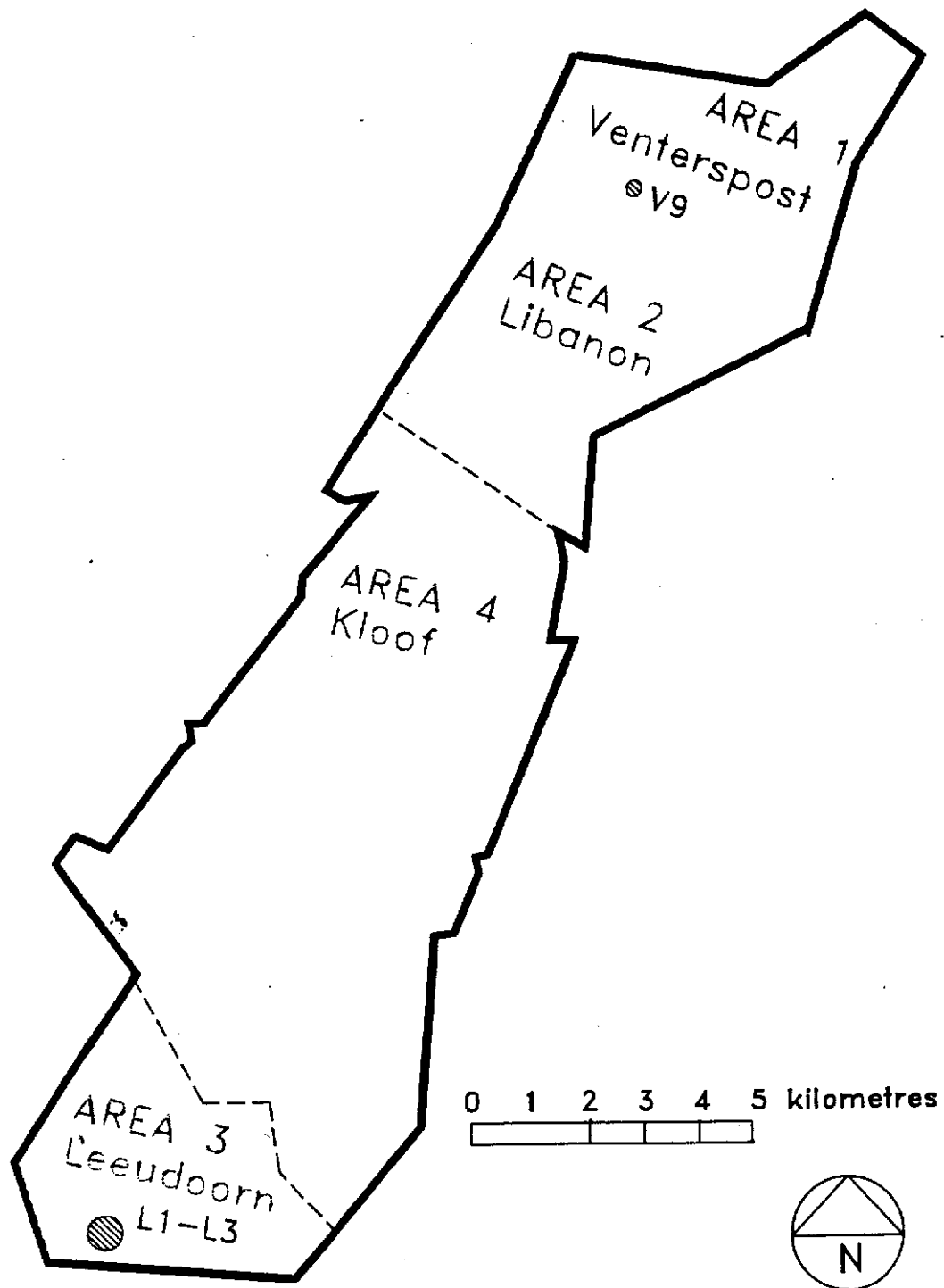


Figure 1. Mining areas included in this report, highlighting endangered sites.

Site V11, the BANDA CASH Stores (c.1920), is still in use, while the Malawi Stores is a newer addition. About 100m away stands a stone-and-cement kraal and shed.

Sites V2 and V3 have numerous prospecting holes, while Site V3 also incorporates a  $\pm$  500m long prospecting trench. These signs of prospecting may predate the present mining companies, but it is difficult to establish their dates.

### **Cemeteries**

Site V4 is a cemetery with about 100 graves and 3 stone structures. Each grave is marked by a stone cairn, without a headstone, and the arrangement appears to be random. The graves at Site V9, however, were oriented East-West, and there were several headstones. From the inscriptions, this was the cemetery of the Du Plooy family. Dates on the headstones cover a period of 33 years, beginning in 1896. Despite the obvious antiquity, cow manure has been dumped at one end, and some graves have probably been destroyed (Plate 1). The original farm house about 100m away was destroyed last year by the local authorities (Plate 2).

## **AREA 2: LIBANON MINE**

### **Historic**

Most of the archaeological sites on this property are historic stone kraals (Plate 3) varying in shape and size (Sites LB4 to LB9 and LB11 to LB13). Site LB4, for example, has a large 20x15m kraal with several smaller rectangular and circular kraals inside, attached or nearby.

Site LB14 has two square foundations and wall remains with mud plaster; they probably had been occupied by farm labourers. Next to the foundations is a rubbish dump, and pieces of rusted metal wire, glass and porcelain lie scattered over the area. About 75m away are 3 similar structures with their own rubbish dump. This material dates from the 1930s to the 50s. Site LB3 includes a rectangular stone foundation and two similar structures about 150m away.

### **Cemeteries**

We have located two cemeteries in the area. Site LB1 is situated next to the railway line and contains about 33 graves. Most have stone cairns with no gravestones. Five, however, have granite headstones, while others have cement rectangular frames with heart-shaped headstones. All graves are oriented East-West, and the dates range between the 1930s and 1940s.

Site LB2 includes a cemetery with about 70 graves. All except one are stone cairns with no gravestones: the one exception has a cement rectangular frame and headstone dating to 1937. These graves are also oriented East-West.

### **AREA 3: LEEUDOORN MINE**

#### **Iron Age**

This property has numerous stone-walled settlements dating from about AD 1500. These settlements were organized according to what is called the 'Central Cattle Pattern'; that is, central cattle enclosures were surrounded by a ring of houses and grainbins. The walling, layout and pottery show that these settlements were occupied by Sotho/Tswana-speaking people.

One type of settlement is distinguished by a complex series of cattle kraals in the centre and small stock kraals behind the residential zone, against the outer wall. This pattern probably dates to AD 1500-1700. Sites L16 and L17 are examples of this type. Site L16 is associated with a few isolated circles, while L17 had been reoccupied and a square structure built inside.

Sites L1 to L5 belong to another type. It is different from the first in that the outer wall forms a series of scallops. Each scallop demarcates the back courtyard of individual households. All five sites form a line along the ridge on the southern boundary of the Leeudoorn mine, extending into the neighbouring farm, Weltevreden. Site L1, the largest, appears to have a double arc of scallops on one end. We noted hut remains, grainbin stands, fire places and pottery in situ at Sites L1 to L3 (Plate 4). These three sites are in the way of a new slimes dam (Plate 5). Site L19, another example, is situated in the saddle of the northern ridge and extends down the north side. A headman or chief probably lived on the saddle and his followers down the slope. This type of settlement was normally built on ridge tops in defensive positions because of the military tension throughout the Transvaal at the beginning of the 19th century.

#### **Historic**

There are also numerous house ruins dating to the first half of the present century on Leeudoorn. Sites L6 to L8 and L14 are old farm houses in a very dilapidated condition. Site L7 is a farm house with an outside oven. The stone foundations and thick original walls of the main house contrast with a more recent addition and

suggest that the house dates to at least the 1920s. Other more recent additions include a brick wall around the front veranda, and all the outside buildings. These include a pumphouse, dam and pig sty.

At Site L8, the entrance facade and part of a rear wall are the only features still intact. The rubble pile includes remains of wooden floors and pressed metal ceilings, and therefore the house dates back to the 1920s.

Sites L9, L13 and L20 are ruins of smaller houses. Site L9 is associated with a stone kraal about 100m away. Site L13 is a complex of small house structures, stone kraals and ash midden. A broken maize grindstone lies next to one house foundation, while scattered over the entire area are rusted metal objects, glass bottles and farm implements. Clearly farm labourers lived here.

The hilly part of this area contains a number of historic stone walls (Sites L11, L15 and L18). Each consists of a large complex of stone kraals, some rectangular and others more circular. The walling tends to be low, and often the natural features of the ridge have been incorporated. There are no material remains, and these sites were probably used as cattle and sheep posts. Site 15 may originally date to the Iron Age, before it was used by European farmers.

### **Cemeteries**

Site L12 is a graveyard with 19 graves oriented East-West. All but one are stone cairns with no gravestones. The one exception has a cement rectangular frame and a weathered headstone with the name SAM.. and possibly a date of 1948.



## **AREA 4: KLOOF MINE**

### **Historic**

Sites K1 to K4 and K6 are a series of stone kraals along the slope of the northern boundary ridge. Site K5 is situated at the same level on the opposite ridge to the south. They consist of loosely packed, low walling. Similar to these are Sites K11 and K13. Site K16 near the southern boundary could have been an older Iron Age settlement reused by European farmers. As at Leeudoorn there are no artefacts visible on the surface of any of these sites.

Sites K7 to K10, K12, K14 and K15 in the southern and western sections are all small stone and mud structures varying from 1 to 2 rooms. Sites K7, K8 and K12 have stone kraals associated with them. Site K9 has a grave marked by a stone cairn with a broken maize grindstone. The other half of this grindstone lies next to the small house at K10. These sites therefore appear to be contemporaneous homes of farm labourers.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Iron Age settlements (Sites L1 to L5) on Leeudoorn are endangered by the development of the new slimes dam. In fact Site L4 has already been partially destroyed by the dam foundations and existing road, and there is hardly anything left of Site L5. Sites L1 to L3 are still intact but are under threat. They must therefore be recorded before any expansion takes place. In this case, archaeologists need to map and test excavate them.

All graves are protected by National Monuments legislation (see for example Policy for Cultural Conservation, 5 July 1993). The removal of any grave or graveyard, or the exhumation of any remains should be preceded by an historical and archaeological report. This includes a complete record of the original location, layout, appearance and inscriptions by means of measured drawings and photographs. In this regard the historic cemetery on Venterspost (Site V9) has been damaged and is in danger of further destruction: it needs immediate attention.

The National Monuments Act (No. 28 of 1969, as amended) also extends legal protection to buildings 50 years or older. In essence the National Monuments Council requires a record of the building before it is destroyed. Some have already been destroyed with out such record. If any archaeological or historical sites noted during this survey are threatened by development, they should be properly recorded. In most cases photographs, a plan and surface collections will be sufficient.



Plate 1. The 19th century at Site 9, Venterspost, with cow manure in the background covering some graves.



Plate 2. The original farm house at Site V9, recently destroyed by local authorities.



Plate 3.

Examples of the numerous historic kraals in the area.

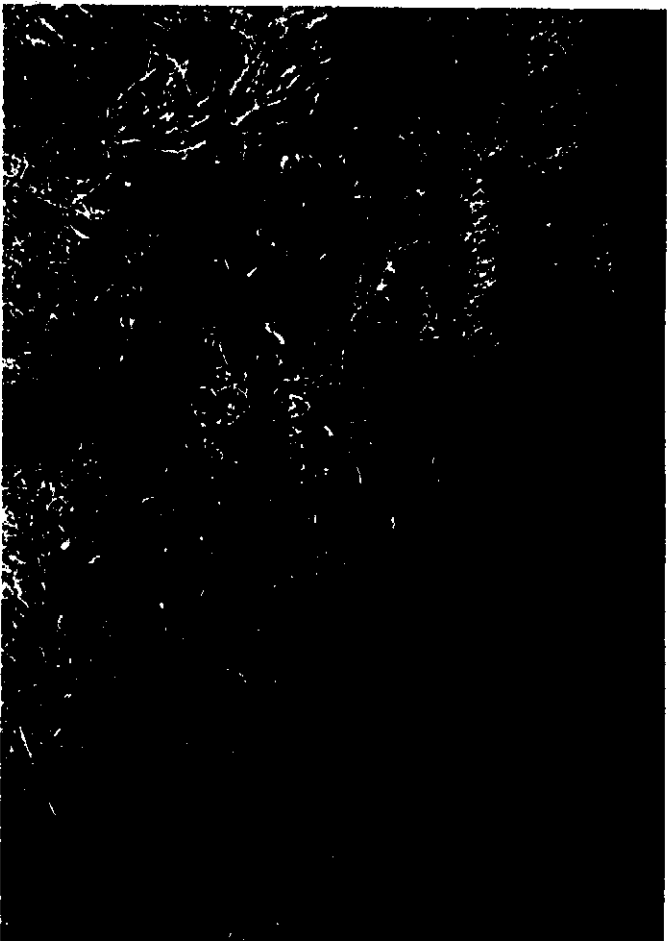


Plate 4. Stone foundations of a hut inside Site 1, Leudoorn.



Plate 5. The new slimes dam wall behind Site L1.



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Plate 5. The new slimed dam wall behind Site L1.