

Prepared for:

**SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCES AUTHORITY (SAHRA)
ESKOM LIMPOPO OPERATING UNIT (LOU)**

**A PHASE II HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT (HIA) STUDY FOR
THE EXHUMATION OF HUMAN REMAINS IN THE VILLAGE OF
MARULANENG, BAKENBERG LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

Prepared by:

Dr Julius CC Pistorius

Archaeologist & Heritage Consultant

352 Rosemary Street Lynnwood 0081

PO Box 1522 Bela Bela 0480

Tel and fax: 0147362115

Cell: 0825545449

Member ASAPA

In collaboration with:

The Department of Anatomy

University of Pretoria

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document contains the report on the results of a Phase II Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) study which was done for the exhumation of human remains from Erf 0097 in the village of Marulaneng near Bakenberg in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. These remains were uncovered during Eskom's electrification programme for rural villages in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. Eskom's Limpopo Operating Unit (LOU) received exemption from the Limpopo Heritage Resources Authority (LIHRA) to conduct Phase I Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) studies for several electrification projects for villages in the Limpopo Province. Marulaneng is located in the heartland of the Langa Ndebele, a Nguni community who settled in this region as long as four hundred years ago and who gradually Sotho-ised as a result of the presence of Sotho-Tswana communities who settled in the same region, *prior* to and after the arrival of the Langa Ndebele (See Part 3, 'Contextualising the Project Area').

The aims with the Phase II investigation were the following:

- Excavating the human and other possible remains on Erf 0097 where after these remains will be analysed and conserved in the museum and repositories of the Department of Anatomy of the University of Pretoria.
- Excavating part of the midden (archaeological deposit) in which the human was buried in order to attempt to establish a possible temporal context for the remains. Together with the spatial context of the remains (within the sphere of the Langa Ndebele) the excavators may be able to elaborate on the possible cultural-historical affiliation and context of the remains.
- Publish a report on the results of the research findings.

It is clear from the Eskom excavation as well as from the subsequent removal of the excavated soil by the archaeological team that the remains that were uncovered during both excavations are derived from an archaeological deposit. This deposit seems to be the remnants of a midden which is covered with a thin layer of soil. The deposit appears as a layer, approximately 20cm thick, which comprises soil with inconsistent concentrations of ash. Here and there the ash manifests as dense and more consistently lenses of ash (Figure 11).

The deposit is not rich in archaeological remains and mainly holds fragments of animal bone waste material, undecorated potsherds, a single piece of metal plate and two pebbles which

were utilised as artefacts. The appearance of the piece of tin plate, undecorated potsherds and the remains of a sheep/goat to a lesser extent suggest that the midden has a historical affinity. It is therefore safe to assume that the remains have a historical nature and that it may not be older than hundred years. The northern foot slope of the low range of hills in Marulaneng village therefore was occupied by people who lived in a small village before the establishment of the younger (modern) Marulaneg commenced some years ago.

The historical remains have little significance. It has been partly destroyed and disturbed as Erf 0097 and the road adjacent to the erf has been established on top of these remains. Historical remains of this nature are common in the larger area and the find does not represent any unique discovery. It is also possible that the original historical village once covered a large area along the northern foot of the hill which now has been covered by the modern Marulaneng.

As the remains have little significance no future conservation of the archaeological remains inside and outside Erf 0097 is recommended. The extent of the historical remains, now covered by the village of Marulaneng, is unknown and it is possible that the larger part of the site has been destroyed as a result of the development of modern Marulaneng. This situation is common to other villages and towns in the former sphere of influence of the Venda, Pedi, Ndebele and other long established clans in the Limpopo Province. Here, modern villages were established on top of older settlements or modern villages merely represent extensions of older historical settlements which were established hundreds of years ago.

No specific conservation measures apply to these remains other than the 'normal' or standard procedures which are followed whenever accidental discoveries of archaeological remains are made.

It seems as if the contractors who were involved with the electrification of Marulaneng village misinterpreted animal bone waste material as human remains when they dug the trench for an earth wire and bored the hole in which the earth wire was to be pegged. The fact that the Eskom contractors recognised the animal bone waste material as 'something' with significance, however, should be commented. The subsequent emergency plan which was implemented should also be recognised: all construction activities were seized; the affected area was demarcated and Eskom was contacted upon which Eskom requested a specialist to investigate the incident further.

The construction of Eskom's rural lines together with the electrification of towns and villages in rural areas will remain an important task for Eskom for years to come. These activities, however, cannot occur without conducting the necessary Phase I Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) studies as required by Section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999).

General (disclaimer)

This Phase II HIA study may have missed heritage resources in Erf 0097 in Marulaneg village as archaeological remains may occur elsewhere on this property or in any other part of Marulaneng village. If any heritage resources of significance is exposed in the Marulaneng village the South African Heritage Resources Authority (SAHRA) should be notified immediately, all development activities must be stopped and an archaeologist accredited with the Association for Southern African Professional Archaeologist (ASAPA) should be notify in order to determine appropriate mitigation measures for the discovered finds. This may include obtaining the necessary authorisation (permits) from SAHRA to conduct the mitigation measures.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This document contains the report on the results of a Phase II Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) study which was done for the exhumation of human remains from Erf 0097 in the village of Marulaneng near Bakenberg in the Limpopo Province of South Africa.

The South African Heritage Resources Authority (SAHRA) issued the author with a permit for the removal of human remains and for the investigation of an archaeological deposit associated with these remains (Permit ID_1757). These remains were uncovered during Eskom's electrification programme for rural villages in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. Eskom's Limpopo Operating Unit (LOU) received exemption from the Limpopo Heritage Resources Authority (LIHRA) to conduct Phase I Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) studies for several electrification projects for villages in the Limpopo Province. Consequently, no Phase I HIA study was done for the electrification of the Marulaneng village.

The Limpopo Province has a rich heritage comprised of remains dating from the pre-historical and from the historical periods of South Africa. Pre-historical and historical remains in the Limpopo Province form a record of the heritage of most groups living in South Africa today. Heritage resources in the Limpopo Province therefore constitute a rich and wide diversified range, also known as the 'national estate' as outlined in Section 3 of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) (see Box 1, next page).

Marulaneng is located in the heartland of the Langa Ndebele, a Nguni community who settled in this region as long as four hundred years ago and who gradually Sotho-ised as a result of the presence of Sotho-Tswana communities who settled in the same region, *prior* to and after the arrival of the Langa Ndebele. The Langa Ndebele occupied most of the mountains, hills and kopjes in the region, from Magagamatala in the present day Masebe Nature Reserve in the north to Fonthane Hill in the south as well as vast stretches of plains between these geographical features which today are part of the beautiful, scenic Waterberg mountain range, a popular tourist destination in the central part of the Limpopo Province (See Part 3, 'Contextualising the Project Area').

Box 1: Types and ranges of heritage resources (the national estate) as outlined in Section 3 of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (No 25 of 1999).

The National Heritage Resources Act (Act No 25 of 1999, Art 3) outlines the following types and ranges of heritage resources that qualify as part of the National Estate, namely:

- (a) places, buildings structures and equipment of cultural significance;
- (b) places to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage;
- (c) historical settlements and townscapes;
- (d) landscapes and natural features of cultural significance;
- (e) geological sites of scientific or cultural importance;
- (f) archaeological and palaeontological sites;
- (g) graves and burial grounds including-
 - (i) ancestral graves;
 - (ii) royal graves and graves of traditional leaders;
 - (iii) graves of victims of conflict;(iv) graves of individuals designated by the Minister by notice in the Gazette;
 - (v) historical graves and cemeteries; and
 - (vi) other human remains which are not covered by in terms of the Human Tissues Act, 1983 (Act No 65 of 1983);
- (h) sites of significance relating to the history of slavery in South Africa;
- (i) movable objects, including -
 - (i) objects recovered from the soil or waters of South Africa, including archaeological and palaeontological objects and material, meteorites and rare geological specimens;
 - (ii) objects to which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage;
 - (iii) ethnographic art and objects;
 - (iv) military objects;
 - (v) objects of decorative or fine art;
 - (vi) objects of scientific or technological interest; and
 - (vii) books, records, documents, photographs, positives and negatives, graphic, film or video material or sound recordings, excluding those that are public records as defined in section 1(xiv) of the National Archives of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act No 43 of 1996).

The National Heritage Resources Act (Act No 25 of 1999, Art 3) also distinguishes nine criteria for places and objects to qualify as 'part of the national estate if they have cultural significance or other special value ...'. These criteria are the following:

- (a) its importance in the community, or pattern of South Africa's history;
- (a) its possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage;
- (b) its potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage;
- (c) its importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of South Africa's natural or cultural places or objects;
- (e) its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group;
- (f) its importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period;
- (g) its strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons; (h)
- (h) its strong or special association with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in the history of South Africa;
- (i) sites of significance relating to the history of slavery in South Africa

2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Location

The village of Marulaneng is located approximately 65km to the north-west of Mokopane in the Mogalakwena Municipality in the Waterberg District Council in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. The site with the human remains is located in Erf 0097 in Marulaneng village on the farm Haakdoorndraai 758LR. Marulaneng village is surrounded by several other larger and smaller villages. Important beacons in close proximity include the George Masebe Provincial Hospital, Kaditshwene a former Langa Ndebele capital and the Mogalakwena River further to the south. The historically important Thutlane capital is located to the north-west and covers parts of the adjoining farms Zwartkop 742LR, Van Wykspan 759LR, Kromkloof 744LR and Paulus 743LR (2328DD Limburg, 1:50 000 topographical map 2328 Polokwane 1: 250 000 map and Google imagery).

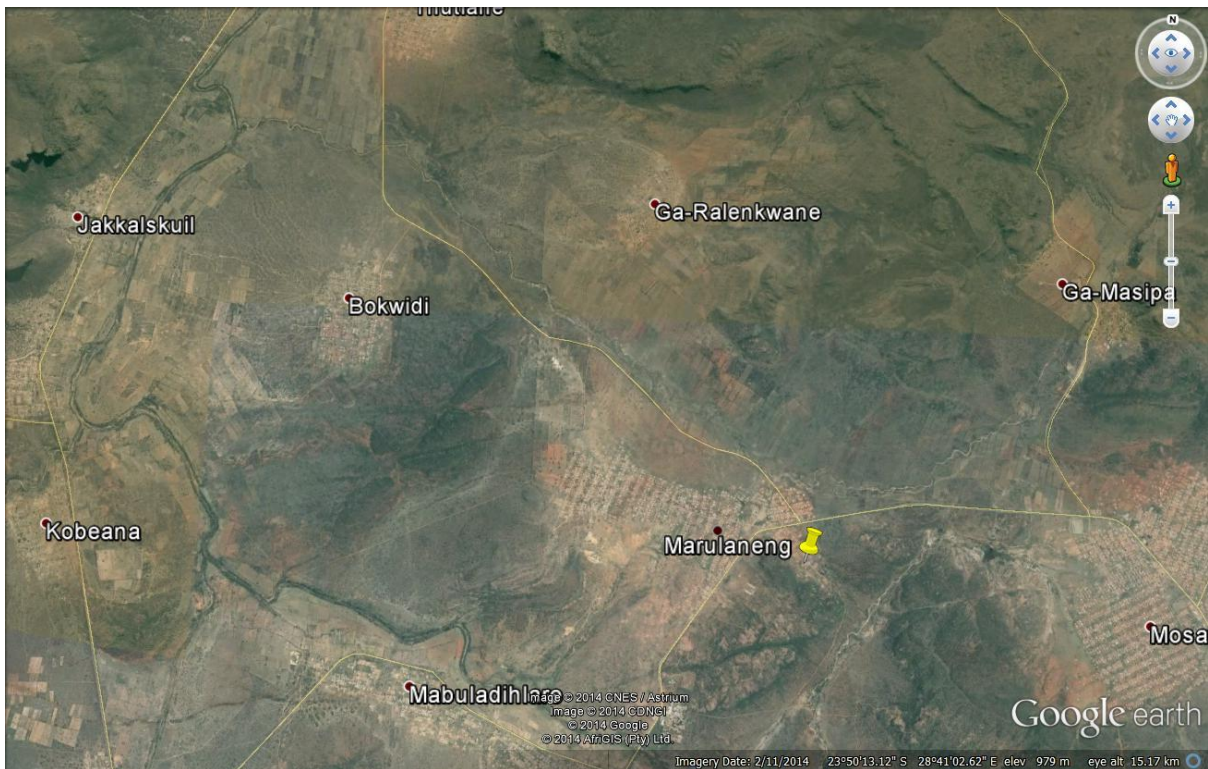


Figure 1- Regional location of Marulaneng village near Bakenberg in the Limpopo Province (above).

2.2 The nature of the Project Area

Erf 0097 is located along the north-eastern foot of a long, low range of hills on Haakdoorndraai 758LR. The range of hills is not identified with any name on the 1: 50 000 topographical map but it is possible that people who live in the area may know its historical name. Erf 0097 is part of a rural townscape which is marked by a considerable number of erven which are structured according to a grid pattern as a result of the structured spatial organisation of roads and erven in the village.

The project area cannot be described as pristine any longer as a result of the development of the village.

2.3 The nature of the uncovered remains

Eskom contractors claimed to have exposed the remains of a human when they excavated a trench for an earth leading to one of Eskom's transformers. The remains in the grave was immediately closed and demarcated with red cautionary tape (Figures 2 & 3). The find occurred in an erf (yard or homestead's confines) directly next to the fence which demarcates the erf from the pavement which adjoins the street in which Erf 0097 is located. The remains are situated near an Eskom's transformer (No 2 on Pole GKK36SA/4/9).

The remains were found when the trench and the pit for an earth wire which extends westwards along the fence, away from the transformer, were excavated. The author did not witness the remains at first hand as the grave was already sealed when the site investigation occurred. However, three spokespersons confirmed beyond any measure of a doubt that the remains were those of a human that were exposed by the excavations (see Part 8, 'Spokespersons consulted').

When the archaeologist visited Erf 0097 in the company of Prudence Khosa, environmental officer attached to Eskom LOU, the area where the human remains were encountered was demarcated with red cautionary tape (Figures 2 & 3). This area covered a surface area of approximately 4,0m² which was back-filled

immediately after the discovery. The specific remains therefore could not be investigated first hand and *in situ*.



Figures 2 & 3– The area demarcated by Eskom’s contractors in Erf 0097 near Transformer No 2 on Pole Nr GKK36SA/4/9 in the village of Marulaneng in Bakenberg in the Limpopo Province. Eskom’s contractors claimed to have encountered human remains within the demarcated area (above and below).



The unearthing (exposure) of the human remains to establish its existence first hand would have required that the Eskom excavation (which was an unauthorised activity because it occurred in an archaeological deposit) would have to be opened (disturbed) again. This would have constituted a second unauthorised activity as the archaeologist established that the remains, if it in fact did exist, were part of an archaeological deposit. This deposit could not be excavated without SAHRA's approval. SAHRA's approval could only be gained on SAHRA issuing a permit for the positive identification of the human remains where after these remains could be exhumed.

During the initial site investigation the author came to the conclusion that if the remains were those of a human it meant that the deceased was buried in an ashy deposit (such as a midden) as ash could be distinguished in the Eskom excavation. This ashy deposit was also notable in the road next to Erf 0097. The archaeologist's observation of the archaeological nature of the area where the Eskom excavation was done was reported as follow:

'The matrix of the deposit mainly consists of ash although other archaeological material may occur, e.g. faunal remains, pottery, metal items, etc. The subsurface presence of the midden is also noticeable in the road, adjacent to Erf 0097's pavement, where activities of ants have brought the contents of the midden to the surface of the road' (Pistorius 2014).

Burials in middens during the Iron Age are common knowledge amongst Iron Age archaeologists today and have been widely reported in published literature.

3 OBJECTIVES WITH THE PHASE II INVESTIGATION

The aims with the Phase II investigation were the following:

- Excavating the human and other possible remains on Erf 0097 where after these remains will be analysed and conserved in the museum and repositories of the Department of Anatomy of the University of Pretoria.
- Excavating part of the midden (archaeological deposit) in which the human was buried in order to attempt to establish a possible temporal context for the remains. Together with the spatial context of the remains (within the sphere of the Langa Ndebele) the excavators may be able to elaborate on the possible cultural-historical affiliation and context of the remains.
- Publish a report on the results of the research findings.

(Approval was received from the Department of Anatomy at UP for the storage of the human remains as well as any associated archaeological material).

4 METHODOLOGY

The Phase II investigation comprised of the following activities:

4.1 Excavation

The area where the human remains were exposed was demarcated by Eskom's contractors with red cautionary tape. This area was disturbed and collated with a trench and square which the contractors have excavated. The purpose with the trench was to install an earth to a nearby transformer. A hole was sunk into this trench with the help of an auger. The earth wire had to be plugged into this hole.

The excavation that was conducted by the archaeologist consisted of removing the soil from the contractor's earlier excavations. This was done whilst the contractor's trench was slightly widened in width (from approximately 25cm to 40cm) and slightly lengthened towards the west from approximately 6,2m (the original length) to approximately 7,2m.

No standard excavation methods were used. All soil from the previous excavation as well as the soil which was collected during the enlargement of the original excavation was removed with shovels. Some shovels of soil were screened when archaeological material seemed to be present.

After the excavation was completed the site was rehabilitated by back-filling the excavation. No bags with soil were stacked against the wall of the excavation as this may prove a hindrance to the owner when he commences with gardening.

4.2 Documentation

The middle point of the site was geo-referenced with a GPS instrument. The site's location is approximately 5,0m to the west of one of Eskom's Transformers (No 2 on Pole GKK36SA/4/9). The site is also located adjacent and directly to the south of Erf 0097's northern fence which separates the erf from the pavement and road in which the erf is located.

The excavations were photographed.

A plan was drawn of the excavated area. A profile drawing illuminates the nature of the archaeological deposit which was encountered in Eskom's excavation.

4.3 Assumptions and limitations

This Phase II HIA study may have missed heritage resources in Erf 0097 in Marulaneng village as archaeological remains may occur elsewhere on this property or in any other part of Marulaneng village. If any heritage resources of significance is exposed in the Marulaneng village the South African Heritage Resources Authority (SAHRA) should be notified immediately, all development activities must be stopped and an archaeologist accredited with the Association for Southern African Professional Archaeologist (ASAPA) should be notify in order to determine appropriate mitigation measures for the discovered finds. This may include obtaining the necessary authorisation (permits) from SAHRA to conduct the mitigation measures.

5 CONTEXTUALISING THE ESKOM PROJECT AREA

The Eskom Project Area is part of a vast plain which is dotted with scattered mountain, isolated kopjes and syenite knolls which are scattered from Mokopane westwards along the eastern fringes of the Waterberg mountain range past Bakenberg to Marken further to the north. This area used to be the sphere of influence of the Langa-Ndebele and other clans such as the Koni. The Langa Ndebele is an Nguni group who after settling in the region subjugated a number of clans from as early as the sixteenth century. The names of some of the early Langa Ndebele settlements appear in bold (2428BB Tinmyne & 2328DD Limburg, 1:50 000 topographical maps) (Van Warmelo 1930, Jackson 1982).

The area is characterised by a number of large mountains and smaller kopjes and knolls scattered over a vast plain. Some of the mountains bear historical names such as Mapela, Masenya and the historically well-known Fonthane and Thutlwane. Further to the north is Bankenberg and still further north in the Masebe Nature Reserve is the mountain of Magagamatala. Some of the mountains in this area serve as important historical settlements, battlefields and as graveyards for the Langa Ndebele.

The Ndebele of Langa are of Hlubi (Nguni) origin. The name of their clan, Langa, was derived from the name of their original chief when the clans were part of the Hlubi. They originated from eNgungunglovu (Pietermaritzburg) where they occupied a place known as Langalibalele. (Other clans such as the Mbo [Mkize], Bhele, Phuti, Polane and Swazi also trace their genealogies back to a Chief Langa who lived during the latter half of the 17th century). The second half of the 17th century was a turbulent period in Hlubi history, as the Langa clan hived off from the main body in AD1650. They were led by Langalibalele/Masebe I (Masebethêla) from Hlubi country through what is today Swaziland. Their first significant stop was near Leydsdorp or Mafefera. They moved to Bosega, an area around Bonye, east of Pietersburg, and the present territory of the Molepo chiefdom. After a short stay, the Langa moved to Thaba Tšweu (Witkoppen Mountain), a few kilometres to the south-east of Pietersburg, where they remained for four generations. The chiefs who ruled and died at **Thaba Tšweu** were Masebe I, Mapuso, Podile and Masebe II.



Figure 4- The Langa Ndebele settlement Thutlane on a flat topped hill north-west of Marulaneng was occupied during the 19th century. Note the extensive remains of stone walls on two levels of the mountain. (The stone walls are visible as circles and lines in the yellow grass veld on top of the mountain) (above). The settlement is located outside the Eskom Project Area.

During their sojourn and stay in the Limpopo Province, the Langa adopted the Sotho language and culture fully. They adopted the custom of circumcision from the Matlala (Koni). The fact that they accepted 'medicated' (treated) pumpkin, a symbolic gesture by which seniority is acknowledged, from the Ndebele of Kekana (near Zebediela) proves that they acknowledged the seniority of this clan which had also moved to the Transvaal from the KwaZulu/Natal region.

Seritarita, who succeeded Masebe II at **Thaba Tšweu**, led the clan to **Maleoko** (on the farm Bultongfontein [239KR]), where he remained for three years. From here, the clan moved to **Moumong-wa-Matswake** on the farm Zuid-Holland 773LR. Their settlement

was known as **Mokgokong**. Seritarita was succeeded by Mapela, son of Seritarita's third ranking wife.

Two sons of Seritarita higher in rank than Mapela namely Mosogo (son of the second ranking wife) and Mamaala (Makgenene) established several villages around the royal lineage of Mapela during the 19th century, e.g. **Mabyanamatshwaana**, **Tsotsodi** and **Segodini**. These lineages still enjoy seniority, as can be seen during initiation lodges.

During Mapela's stay at **Moumong wa Matswake**, numerous smaller Sotho clans were subjugated and incorporated in the Langa tribe. (Clans that were incorporated before Mapela's rule were the Tlhaloga Kwena of Tshaba, the Bakwena of Lelaka and the Dikgomo of Lebelo). The Phalane Nareng of Mabuêla and the Pedi of Matlou were attacked before the Langa Ndebele settled at **Moumong wa Matswake**. Internal strife amongst the Phalane enabled the Langa to incorporate a section of this group, as well as the Pedi of Matlou. When the Phalane fled (to Ramakôka), the Bididi (or Tlhatlherwa) fled to **Bobididi** near Villa Nora.

Also incorporated amongst the Langa were the Kwena of Ramorulane and the Hurutshse of Molokomme, after the latter were defeated at Senta Hill and Swartkop (north of Thutlwane). Groups that voluntarily joined the Langa were the Koni of Masenya and Puka; the Tlôkwa of Pila; the people of Tshokwe and the Koni of Seema.

When Thulare of the Pedi undertook his great expedition up the Steelpoort River at the end of the 18th century, the move did not affect the Langa Ndebele. When Mzilikazi moved through Mpumalanga and the Bankeveld during the early 19th century, groups such as the people of Mabuêla became dislocated and occupied mountains in the area.

When he was old, Mapela moved his village to **Fothane Hills** (Moordkopje) where he died in 1825. Maleya (a son of Mapela by a minor wife) ruled until Mankopane (the rightful heir) ousted him. Maleya fled to **Magagamatala** on Ruigtevlei 710LR but ruled from **Ditlotswana** hills.

Magagamatlala is a high flat-topped mountain with steep cliffs. On 14 April 1858 this stronghold was attacked by a punitive expedition sent by the Voortrekkers and 800 of

Mankopane's subjects were killed. (This is known as the war of 'Nterekane' or the 'War of Maruputlase'). After the Langa's defeat, the Mankopane settled on **Thutlwane** Hill (Kromkloof 744 LR). The first mission stations of the Berlin Missionary Society were established in Langa country in 1867.

Other events were the following:

- The Langa expedition in 1837 aimed to expedite Mzilikazi's departure from what is today the North-West Province into Botswana.
- The Langa (and Kekana) were involved in the massacre of Voortrekker parties and the siege of the Makapans Caves in 1854.
- The Langa Ndebele (Lamola clan) scattered the copper miners of Mussina (Messina) with whom they bartered copper shortly before 1854.
- The Langa subjugated the Bididi (Songwana) until 1890, exacting heavy tribute from this clan.

The second encounter between the Voortrekkers and the Langa took place in 1868. At the time, the Langa were in an alliance with the Kekana Ndebele of Mogemi. Mogemi acted as regent for Mankopane. While the Boers besieged **Sefakaulo** Hill where Mogemi lived, Mankopane raided white farmers and outposts. The Voortrekkers attacked Mankopane on 12 June 1868 at **Thutlwane** and raided large numbers of cattle and small stock, but they could not take the highest part of the mountain where Mankopane's headquarters were. The Boers could also not achieve much success with their raids on Mogemi's mountain fortress. The Voortrekkers then evacuated Potgietersrus (Jackson 1982, Bergh 1998).

Mankopane died on 30 May 1877 and was buried in his cattle kraal on the mountain **Thutlwane**. Masebe III was proclaimed chief on 3 June 1877. Sporadic wars continued between the Langa and the Kekana chiefdoms from 1883 to October 1886, when President Paul Kruger summoned the two chiefs before him.

After the death of Masebe III on 4 May 1890, a succession dispute split the tribe into two sections, namely the Ndebele of Bankenberg and the Ndebele of Hans Langa. Hans Langa became chief of the southern portion and Bankenberg of the northern

portion. As the ancient grounds of Mapela (**Fothane Hill**) fall in the southern portion, this section of the Langa became known as the Bagamapela.

The Ledwaba/Maune Ndebele clans, who are related to the Langa-Ndebele, live in the Bergzicht-Kalkspruit and Mašašane townships in the south-eastern part of the Eskom Project Area, near the proposed sites for the Mokopane Substation. The Witkoppen Mountains (Thaba Tšweu) near the Witkop Substation were also occupied by clans of the Langa Ndebele during the 17th century to the 19th century. According to oral tradition they lived here for four successive generations under the leadership of Masebe I, Mapuso, Podile and Masebe II. A concentration of stone walled sites is located in a southern poort of this mountain range (Van Warmelo 1930, Jackson 1982, Esterhuysen, 2008).

The colonial towns of Potgietersrus (Mokopane) and Pietersburg (Polokwane) are situated to the north of the Eskom Project Area. After the Voortrekker leaders Hendrik Potgieter and Andries Potgieter were reconciled in 1852, the former established a town at Makapanspoort, between the Waterberg and the Strydpoort Mountains, which he named 'Vredenburg' ('town of peace') to commemorate the reconciliation. The town was later renamed after Piet Potgieter (who was killed during the siege of the Makapans Caves in 1854) and was called Potgietersrus. Because of fever and trouble with the Ndebele, the town was abandoned and deserted for about twenty years after 1868, but after 1890 it was re-established (Bergh 1998).

6 THE PHASE II INVESTIGATION

The Phase 2 investigation is outlined with photographs and an illustration with accompanying descriptions.



Figures 5 & 6- An archaeological team from the Department of Anatomy of the University of Pretoria and Solly Mautla assisted the author with the excavation in Erf 0097 in Marulaneng (above). Note the excavation of the trench in which the earth wire was to be placed, the pit into which the earth wire was to be fixed as well as the excavation of a larger adjoining area (below).





Figures 7 & 8- Closer view on the excavated area reveals the pit for the earth (above) which was excavated to a depth of approximately 1,4m (below). Note the grey ash lenses in the northern profile of the excavation. These ash lenses were thought to have represented a midden in which a human could have been buries as this burial practise was common during the Late Iron Age (AD1600 to 1860).





Figures 9 & 10- The smooth surface of what seems to be a lower grinding stone together with other bone fragments from a sheep/goat may have confused Eskom contractors who may have thought that the grinder represents the top of a human skull (above). The excavated site after it was rehabilitated (below).



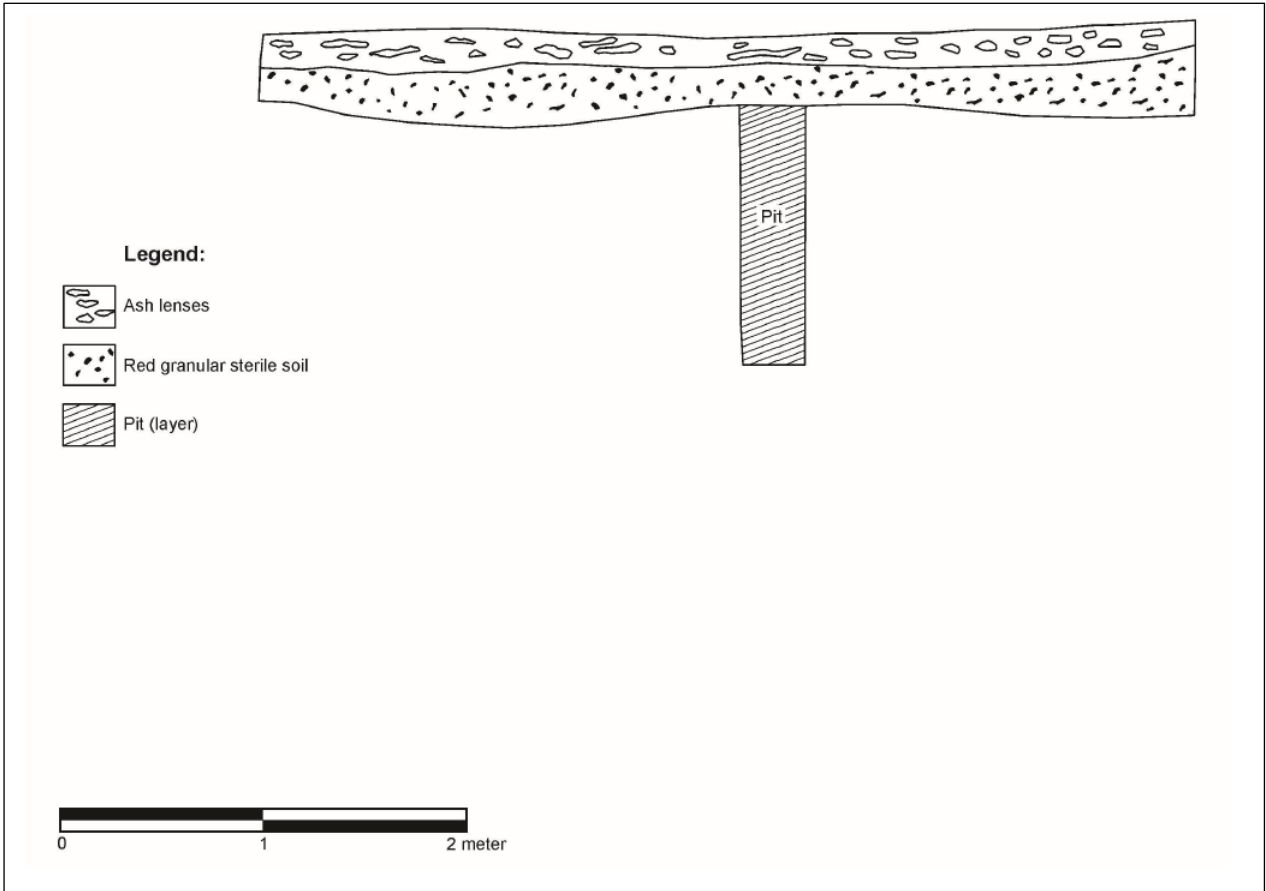


Figure 11- Profile drawing on the excavation. Note the ash lenses signifying the presence of an archaeological deposit in which archaeological material was excavated (above).

7 THE FINDS

Not all of the soil which was excavated was screened. However, the following remains were retrieved from the excavated soil.

7.1 Pottery

At least seven potsherds were excavated when the soil from the Eskom excavation was removed whilst a similar number were observed on the surface of the erf but not collected.

None of the potsherds had any decoration or any other distinctive features.

7.2 Faunal remains

Several fragments from the skull of a domesticated animal were collected from the deposit. According to Coen Nienaber, the forensic archaeologist on the team, the remains are possibly those of a sheep or a goat (*Ovis/Capra*).

Most notable between all these fragments are those which constitute fragments of the sheep/goats skull. Although these are thinner than that of a human skull it is possible that these fragments may have been confused with that of a human skull.

7.3 Metal items

The single lid of a tin can was the only metal item that was retrieved from the excavation. It is possible that this lid may have been part of a fish tin can.

7.4 Stone tools

At least two stone tools were excavated whilst a possible lower grinding stone was left *in situ* in the excavation.



Figures 12 & 13- Potsherds from the excavation had no diagnostic features (above). Bone fragments from a sheep/goat which may have caused confusion and which were interpreted as belonging to a human being (below).





Figures 14 & 15- A lid from a metal can (above). Two pebbles which were utilized as stone tools (below).



8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It is clear from the Eskom excavation as well as from the subsequent removal of the excavated soil by the archaeological team that the remains that were uncovered during both excavations are derived from an archaeological deposit. This deposit seems to be the remnants of a midden which is covered with a thin layer of soil. The deposit appears as a layer, approximately 20cm thick, which comprises soil with inconsistent concentrations of ash. Here and there the ash manifests as dense and more consistently lenses of ash (Figure 11).

The deposit is not rich in archaeological remains and mainly holds fragments of animal bone waste material, undecorated potsherds, a single piece of metal plate and two pebbles which were utilised as artefacts. The appearance of the piece of tin plate, undecorated potsherds and the remains of a sheep/goat (*Ovis/Capra*) to a lesser extent suggest that the midden has a historical affinity. It is therefore safe to assume that the remains have a historical nature and that it may not be older than hundred years. The northern foot slope of the low range of hills in Marulaneng village therefore was occupied by people who lived in a small village before the establishment of the younger (modern) Marulaneg commenced some years ago.

The historical remains have little significance. It has been partly destroyed and disturbed as Erf 0097 and the road adjacent to the erf has been established on top of these remains. Historical remains of this nature is common in the larger area the find does not represent any unique discovery. It is also possible that the original historical village once may have covered a large area along the northern foot of the hill which now has been covered by the modern Marulaneng.

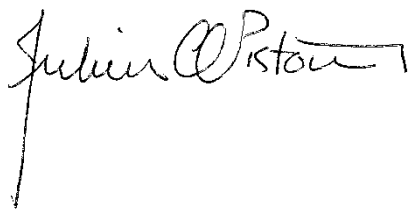
As the remains have little significance no future conservation of the archaeological remains inside and outside Erf 0097 is recommended. The extent of the historical remains, now covered by the village of Marulaneng is unknown and it is possible that the larger part of the site has been destroyed as a result of the development of modern Marulaneng. This situation is common to other villages and towns in the former sphere of influence of the Venda, Pedi, Ndebele and other long established clans in the Limpopo Province. Here, modern villages were established on top of

older settlements or modern villages merely represent extensions of older historical settlements which were established hundreds of years ago.

No specific conservation measures apply to these remains other than the 'normal' or standard procedures which are followed whenever accidental discoveries of archaeological remains are made.

It seems as if the contractors who were involved with the electrification of Marulaneng village misinterpreted animal bone waste material as human remains when they dug the trench for an earth wire and bored the hole in which the earth wire was to be pegged. The fact that the Eskom contractors recognised the animal bone waste material as 'something' with significance, however, should be commented. The subsequent emergency plan which was implemented should also be recognised: all construction activities were seized; the affected area was demarcated and Eskom was contacted upon which Eskom requested a specialist to investigate the incident further.

The construction of Eskom's rural lines together with the electrification of towns and villages in rural areas will remain an important task for Eskom for years to come. These activities, however, cannot occur without conducting the necessary Phase I Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) studies as required by Section 38 of the National Heritage Resources Act (No 25 of 1999).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julius CC Pistorius'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long vertical line extending downwards from the first letter 'J'.

Dr Julius CC Pistorius
Archaeologist & Heritage Consultant
Member ASAPA

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10 SPOKESPERSONS CONSULTED

Ralph Kanyane. Liasing Officer. Kashane Electrical Contractors.

Prince Manamela. Construction worker. Kashane Electrical Contractors.

Elvis Nkanyane. Construction worker. Kashane Electrical Contractors.

Anna Mautla. Mother of Johannes Mautla. Owner of Erf 0079.