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Statement: cancellation of the March-April 2020 fieldwork campaign at Bushman Rock Shelter and Heuningneskrans

To whom it may concern,

This letter serves as a brief statement in replacement of the usual yearly field report for SAHRIS for the combined excavation projects at the Later and Middle Stone Age sites of Bushman Rock Shelter (SAHRA permit 2983; permit holder: Guillaume Porraz) and Heuningneskrans (SAHRA permit 2852; permit holder: Aurore Val) in Limpopo Province. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to cancel the four-week fieldwork campaign that was supposed to take place between mid-March and mid-April this year. Research stay for several members of the scientific team intended to analyze archaeological material in Johannesburg also had to be cancelled and postponed until further notice. This year, we are therefore unable to provide a field report to SAHRA. We intend to resume fieldwork as soon as the situation allows it. In the meantime, general analytical work on data collected in the previous years is ongoing and several research articles were published in 2020 (see below). We remain at your entire disposal for further information.

Sincerely,

Dr. Aurore Val and on behalf of Dr. Guillaume Porraz

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2020 publications:

Puech, E., Bamford, M., Porraz, G., Val, A. and Théry-Parisot, I. (in press). Evaluating sampling methods in charcoal-rich layers and high diversity environment: a case study from the Later Stone Age of Bushman Rock Shelter, South Africa. *Quaternary International*.

Douze, K., Igreja, M., Rots, V., Cnuts, D. and Porraz, G. (2020). Technology and function of Middle Stone Age points. Insights from a combined approach at Bushman Rock Shelter, South Africa. In: Groucutt, H.S. (ed.), *Culture history and convergent evolution: can we detect populations in Prehistory?* Vertebrate Paleobiology and Paleoanthropology, pp.127-141. Springer Nature. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-46126-3_7

Rifkin, R.F, Vikram, S., Ramond, J.-B., Rey-Iglesia, A., Brand, T.B., Porraz, P., Val, A., Hall, G., Woodborne, S., Le Bailly, M., Potgieter, M., Underdown, S.J., Koopman, J.E., Cowan, D.A., Van de Peer, Y., Willerslev, E. and Hansen, A.J. (2020). Multi-proxy analyses of a mid-15th century Middle Iron Age Bantu-speaker palaeo-faecal specimen elucidates the configuration of the ‘ancestral’ sub-African intestinal microbiome. *Microbiome* 8:62. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40168-020-00832-x>.