

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS OF THREE
POSSIBEL GRAVES ON SUTTON WITHIN ZUKA
GAME RESERVE, NEAR HLUHLUWE, NORTHERN
KWAZULU NATAL.**

FOR ENVIROSCOPE CC

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INTRODUCTION

Umlando cc was contracted by Enviroscope to undertake an assessment of three possible graves at Sutton, Within Zuka Game Reserve, Near Hluhluwe, Northern KwaZulu-Natal. These possible graves were surveyed and noted in 2006, by Umlando.

The original report stated:

“PHIN3 is located in the general eastern area of the tiger cages and about $\frac{3}{4}$ up the hill, on a less acute slope.

There are three possible graves in the area. The ‘graves’ consist of semi-circular stone features that are “hollowed” out in the middle. That is it appears that these are not part of the natural rock outcrops of the area (of which one occurs nearby). The area is also vegetated and I could not see the circles completely.

If these are not graves then they are the result of trees growing through natural outcrops and thus creating the “hollow” in the centre. We will re-assess the site after bush clearance has occurred – we did not have permission to undertake bush clearance”

The area is located east of the N2, between Hluhluwe and Mkuze (fig. 1). The possible graves are located along the northern part of a small hill overlooking a small river. The area is not densely vegetated, however the low bushes do hinder observations and we had to relocate the possible graves by means of GPS. Bush-clearance had not taken place.

Figure 1: General Location Of PHIN3

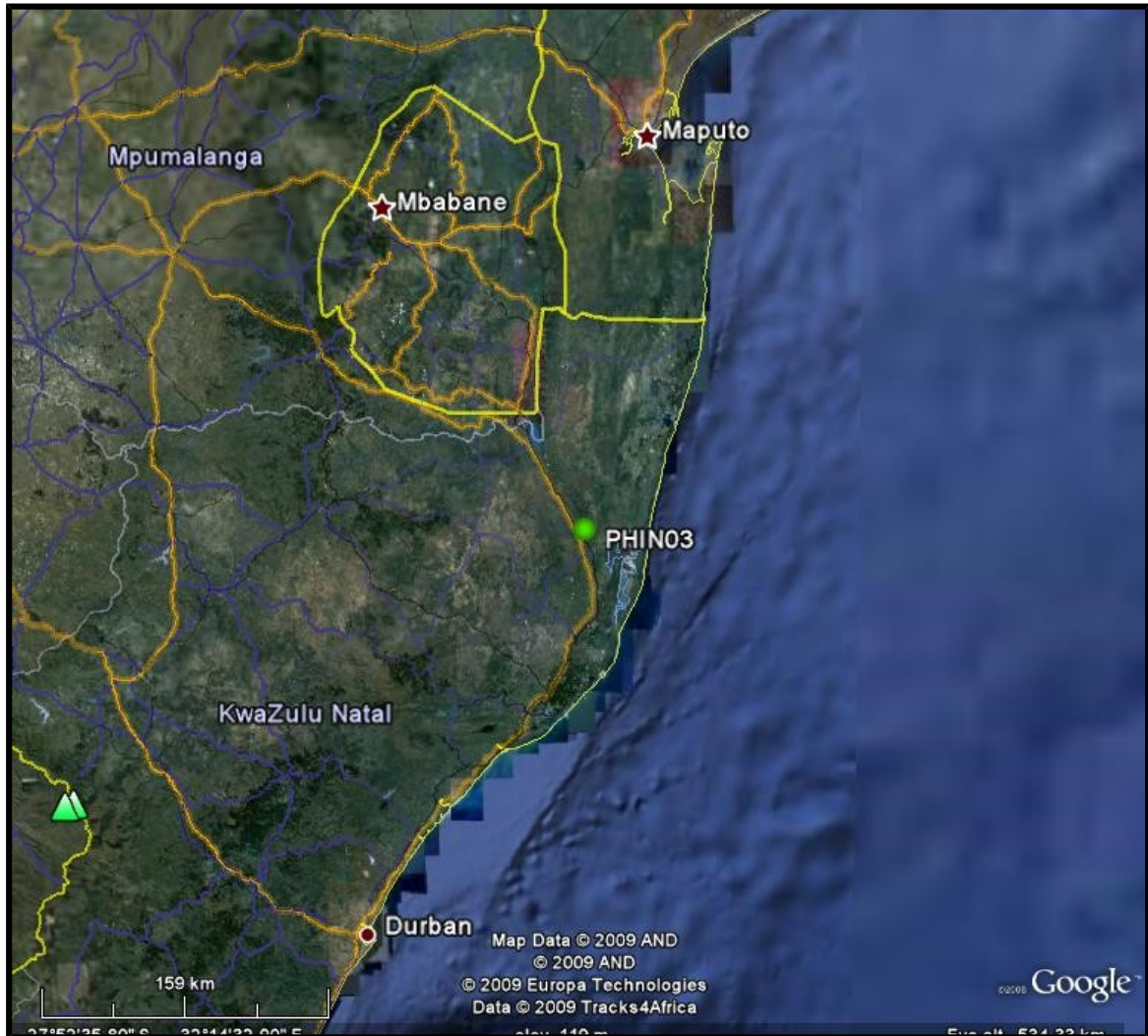


Figure 2: Location Of PHIN3



The yellow marker is another grave observed the same day as the test-pit excavations

METHOD

The method for assessing the graves is relatively straightforward. The same method was practiced on each circle.

We demarcated half of the stone circle and partially cleared it of bushes and trees. The sand layer was removed as far as possible until we reached a rocky

layer. I surmised that if it was a layer of large rocks, then this could be a cairn that has sunken over time¹. If it was a continual layer of compacted small rocks and stones then it was probably similar to the rock floor adjacent to the graves. The layer of larger rocks would be removed until either a skeleton was found, or the basal layer of compacted rocks.

RESULTS

Stone Circle 1:

This area comprised of two stone circles adjacent to each other. The stone circles were not obvious, and consists of several small rocks forming a circle-type pattern. The surface soil was ~10cm deep, until I came across a layer of medium sized rocks. These rocks were removed to a depth of ~5cm. The next layer was a compacted “bedrock” layer and we stopped excavating.

This pattern was repeated at the second stone circle.

Stone Circle 2:

The second stone circle consists of a semi-circle of larger rocks. The soil was ~15cm deep, until I came across the “bedrock” layer.

All three of these excavations suggest that there are no human burials underneath them and that these are probably a result of natural causes, as suggested in the previous report.

CONCLUSION

¹ These observations are from recording many human graves with stone cairns in KZN.

An heritage survey of the possible graves at Zuka was undertaken. These possible graves were originally identified in 2006, where it was noted that these are possible old graves. Older graves, especially those that are several centuries old, would consist of a shallow stone circle.

I undertook the test-pit excavations to ensure that if there were human remains, then they would be adequately salvaged. The test pit excavations did not yield any signs that there were human remains or burials.

A definite human burial was located near PHIN2 (see fig. 2). We were informed of this burial by our guide. While it is not part of the Zuka development, the grave should be noted by the management.