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A landscape approach to the archaeology of the Vredefort Dome

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Abstract

New technologies are continuously being developed that can aid us in archaeological research. The purpose of this project is to revisit an area containing Late Iron Age (LIA) Stone Walled Structures (SWS) that have received sporadic archaeological research over time, and employ new techniques and technologies to test/re-evaluate previous findings. This involves developing new mapping techniques, which involve the use of Geographical Positioning Systems (GPS), which allowed for a wide survey/mapping exercise in a time effective and budget conscious manner. From these data, a new typology was created in order to reflect new types as well as further segregate exiting types. The resulting data was analysed in a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) environment, allowing us to tackle issues such as spatial distribution and landscape patterns in a digital environment. This analysis allowed us to re-evaluate the original spatial distribution, looking at possible reasons for the inaccuracies in the original study. We then explore the implications of these new data. We tested the results of these analyses based on proposed scenarios for the location of these sites, in order to try better understand the positioning, as we as identify possible diagnostic sites that can undergo further examination.