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Goldsmith's: Preliminary Study of a newly discovered Pleistocene site near Sterkfontein.

Winnie Dipuo Mokokwe

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Science in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, University of the Witwatersrand.

Johannesburg, 2005

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Master of Science in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other University.

_____

D.W. Mokokwe

_____Day of _____2006

Abstract

Goldsmith's is a newly discovered fossil and archaeological site 4km south-west of the famous Sterkfontein Cave Site, in the buffer zone of the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site. It preserves one of the rare occurrences in South African fossil cave sites of stone artefacts with associated fossil fauna. Thirteen artefacts from two Stone Age cultures are represented within the site: namely the Earlier Stone Age and the Middle Stone Age. Eleven stone artefacts represent the Earlier Stone Age, dated to *ca,* 2-1 million years within the Sterkfontein Valley sites, while two artefacts represent the MSA. The stone tools from both cultures are not embedded in breccia and may have originated from decalcified breccias, or alternatively from slope wash. Various faunal taxa were recovered including bovids, primates, carnivores and others. Carnivores are the most highly represented, followed by bovids. Analysis of bone surface modifications indicate that the majority of the bones are slightly weathered, and some bone specimens are also abraded, suggesting that they may have accumulated through slope wash. The high frequencies of carnivore remains, including *Dinofelis* and a representation of most carnivore body parts, support a possible death trap scenario. The fauna suggests a palaeoenvironment with open woodland or savannah within the vicinity of a closed environment.

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God bless you all.

Dedication.

To my siblings, Keatlaretse and Kegomoditswe Mokokwe.

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List of abbreviations used in the Goldsmith's stone tool sample catalogue

Raw mat.	Raw material
Direction	Scar direction
V. weathered	Very weathered
Sl. Weathered	Slightly weathered
Stain	Staining
Polyhed. core	Polyhedral core
Discoid core	Discoidal core
Unidirect.	Unidirectional