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An analysis of the Micromammal assemblage from Sibudu Cave, KwaZulu-Natal.

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D E C L A R A T I O N

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 degree or examination in any other University.

……

Signature of candidate

…….. day of …..…… 2005

A B S T R A C T

The analysis of micromammal remains from the MSA deposits at Sibudu Cave, KwaZulu-Natal, constitutes the first in-depth study of the micromammal assemblage at this site. This study highlights the usefulness of taphonomic analyses and micromammal assemblages in the reconstruction of past environments. Little digestive etching suggests that *Tyto alba*, *Tyto capensis* and *Asio capensis*, are the most likely nocturnal raptors responsible for the accumulation of the assemblage. The environmental information from the Sibudu micromammal assemblage showed similarities with other proxy site data from charcoal, seed and macrofaunal analyses. These studies indicate that the immediate environment around Sibudu Cave was very similar at 53.4 ± 3.2 kyr (OSL) and 35.2 ± 1.8 kyr (OSL), consisting of a complex mosaic environment, dominated by open savannah grassland with a small woodland and riverine element.

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

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Dedicated to my son.

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