The North of Kuruman Project

Newly discovered Middle and Later Stone Age rockshelter deposits in the Kalahari Basin at Gamohana Hill, Northern Cape, South Africa

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Abstract

We present newly discovered in situ Stone Age deposits at rockshelter sites in the southern Kalahari Basin: MSA deposit at GHN, LSA deposit at GHS, and U-series analyses of carbonate deposits provide a preliminary record of rockshelter formation and paleo-environmental adaptation in the Kalahari Basin.

Discussion

Gatherer adaptations provide potential for preserving a long record of MSA occupation in this region of the Northern Cape and may expand the range of known occupation periods.

The current age estimates for the top of the MSA deposits situate it coeval with late MSA sites in other regions of Southern Africa. No known deposits of this age have been described in the region. Additional work including K/Lu and Sr isotopic work on the Late Pleistocene and earliest Holocene at GHN is required.

Our preliminary investigations suggest that carbonate formations can contribute to a regional paleo-environmental archive. Based on various series of stratigraphic samples from the shelter walls and talus slope, there were phases of increased effective carbonate production at GHN.

Future work

• Expansion of excavation areas horizontally and vertically
• Dating analyses of sediments, including U-series and new radionuclide
• Continued sampling, analysis, and dating of carbonate deposits

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