

978 1 86814 774 8
(print)

978 1 86814 775 5
(digital)

November 2014

240 x 200 mm
180 pp
Soft cover
Illustrated in
full colour

R250.00

Forgotten World

The Stone Walled Settlements of the Mpumalanga Escarpment

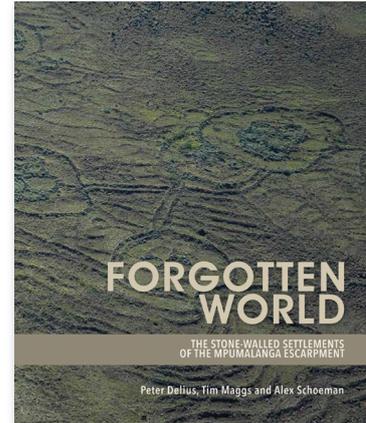
Peter Delius, Tim Maggs and Alex Schoeman

If you drive through Mpumalanga with an eye on the landscape flashing by, you may see, near the sides of the road and further away on the hills above and in the valleys below, fragments of building in stone as well as sections of stone-walling breaking the grass cover. Endless stone circles, set in bewildering mazes and linked by long stone passages, cover the landscape stretching from Ohrigstad to Carolina, connecting over 10 000 square kilometres of the escarpment into a complex web of stone-walled homesteads, terraced fields and linking roads.

Oral traditions recorded in the early twentieth century named the area Bokoni – the country of the Koni people. Few South Africans or visitors to the country know much about these settlements, and why today they are deserted and largely ignored. A long tradition of archaeological work which might provide some of the answers remains cloistered in universities and the knowledge vacuum has been filled by a variety of exotic explanations – invoking ancient settlers from India or even visitors from outer space – that share a common assumption that Africans were too primitive to have created such elaborate stone structures.

Forgotten World defies the usual stereotypes about backward African farming methods and shows that these settlements were at their peak between 1500 and 1820, that they housed a substantial population, organised vast amounts of labour for infrastructural development, and displayed extraordinary levels of agricultural innovation and productivity. The Koni were part of a trading system linked to the coast of Mozambique and the wider world of Indian Ocean trade beyond.

Forgotten World tells the story of Bokoni through rigorous historical and archaeological research, and lavishly illustrates it with stunning photographic images.



Peter Delius is Professor of History at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. He has published a number of books, including *A Lion Amongst the Cattle and Mpumalanga: An Illustrated History*. Tim Maggs headed the Archaeology Department at the KwaZulu-Natal Museum from its inception in 1972. Publications include *Iron Age Communities of the Southern Highveld*. Alex Schoeman is a senior lecturer in archaeology at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. She has published numerous peer reviewed papers in scientific journals.

CONTENTS

Introduction	Conflicting Readings of the Rocks
Chapter 1.	Making of a Walled World: The context and emergence of Bokoni
Chapter 2.	Living amongst the Terraces: The changing way of life at Bokoni
Chapter 3.	Neighbours and Nemesis: Survival and defeat in an increasingly dangerous world
Chapter 4.	Aftermath: Legacies in the 19th and 20th centuries
Chapter 5.	What should be done: The case for decisive action to protect these sites

ORDERING INFORMATION:
Bookstore and bulk orders:

Wits University Press publications can be ordered online from www.witspress.co.za
Africa: Blue Weaver, Tel: 021 701 4477, orders@blueweaver.co.za
UK & Europe: +44 (0)20 7240 0856, www.eurospanbookstore.com
North & South America: Toll-free: (800) 888 – IPG1 (4741), orders@ipgbook.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.witspress.co.za; Tel: +27 (0)11 717 8700, info.witspress@wits.ac.za