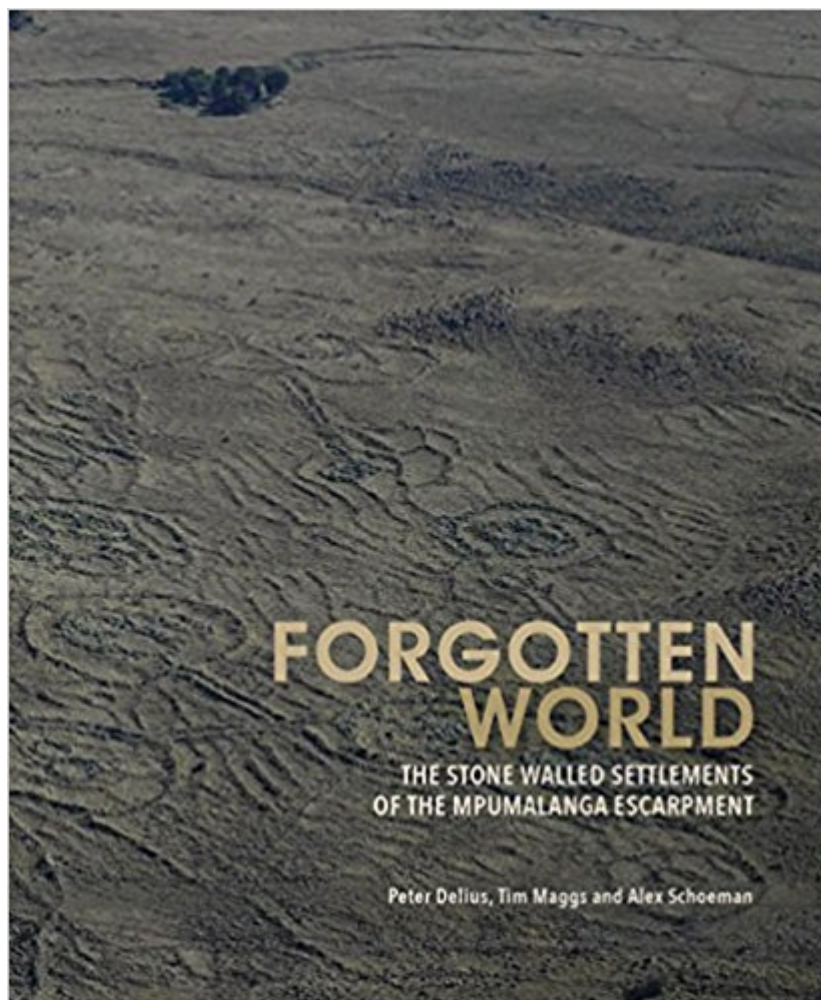




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Forgotten World: The Stone Walled Settlements Of The Mpumalanga Escarpment



Synopsis

The Mpumalanga Escarpment in South Africa saw massive changes in precolonial times. Still visible today is a vast expanse of man-made stone walling, which connects more than 10,000 square kilometers of land into a complex web of circular homesteads, towns, terraced fields, and linking roads, stretching for 150 kilometers in an almost continuous belt. Oral traditions recorded in the early 20th century named the area Bokoni "the country of the Koni people. Few people know much about these settlements, how and when they were created, and why today they are deserted and largely ignored. In *Forgotten World*, two leading archaeologists and a distinguished historian provide a rich account that defies the usual stereotypes about backward African farming methods. They show that these settlements were at their peak in the period between 1500 and 1820, that they housed a substantial population, organized vast amounts of labor for infrastructural development, and displayed extraordinary levels of agricultural innovation and productivity. The inhabitants were connected to a trading system which linked them to the coast of Mozambique and to the wider world of Indian Ocean trade beyond. They straddled trade routes, especially in metal, that connected the mineral-rich northern reaches of South Africa to more southerly areas. Most intriguingly, oral traditions allow the authors to reconstruct the epic political and economic struggles that ultimately brought about the downfall and abandonment of the Bokoni settlements.

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Customer Reviews

Peter Delius is a 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. He is also a coeditor of *A Long Way Home*. Tim Maggs headed the archaeology department at the KwaZulu-Natal Museum from its inception in 1972. Alex Schoeman is a senior lecturer in archaeology at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Any search for South African ruins comes back with returns about ancient aliens or Hindu Dravidian gold miners. The idea behind these assumptions is that Africans are incapable of making simple stone walls, let alone sophisticated agricultural systems. Not only was there an "island of intensive farming" in South Africa hundreds of years ago but other African communities were centered around metal production, mining and smithing iron, bronze and copper which they would sell to other Africans and import grains from people like the Bokoni. The Bokoni is the identity of the people who built these stone settlements. The Bokoni people who built these structures did more than just build a series of ruins for modern people to addle their minds over, as they became scattered they spread their influence to the kingdoms they took refuge in leading to fortresses in the latter part of the 19th century. This truly is a forgotten world that most people in South Africa don't know about, but the mystery of the South African stone circles is solved

I found this book after someone linked me to some nonsense about "Adam's Calendar" being a stone calendar of some ridiculously ancient gold-obsessed civilization dominated by Sumerian aliens or something like that. I spent forever googling to find out the actual story, but it looks like Michelle Tellinger and her ilk don't use standard archaeological terms. Which is partially because these fascinating archaeological finds have been sorely neglected. So if you've been searching for "Adam's Calendar" or "Enki's Calendar" or "Inzalo yAçÂ Â™Langa", what you're actually looking at is the Blaauboschkraal stone ruins, a minor ruin from the Bokoni civilization of the 15-18th century. Ignore the crazies, stop being a condescending racist who assumes that native Africans couldn't construct stone walls without alien assistance. Get this book instead. Or listen to the author's lecture here:

<http://www.pasthorizonspr.com/index.php/archives/07/2015/forgotten-world-the-stone-walled-settlements-of-the-mpumalanga-escarpment>

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