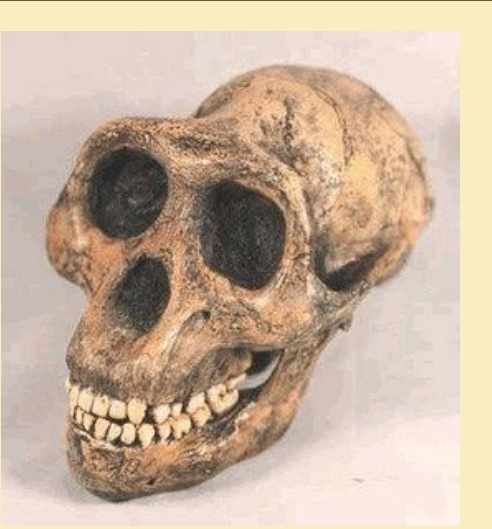
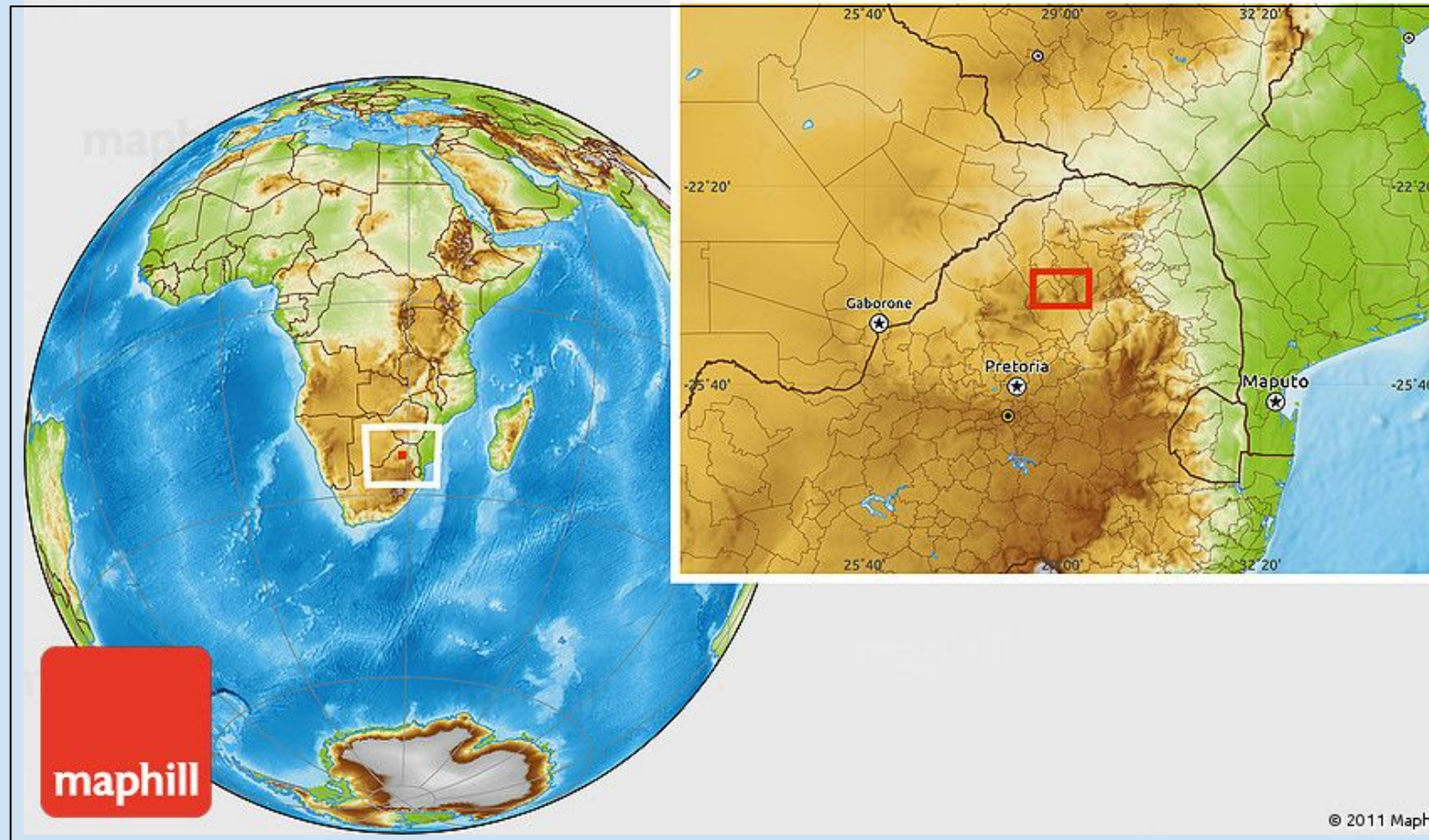


The Makapansgat Australopithecus Caves Site



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Location



Makapansgat Location generated by Maphill online map gallery.¹

Makapansgat is located in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. The habitat consists of hilly and rocky terrain, grassland, and savannah.

There are 6 major caves in the site where specimens have been found.⁹



Makapansgat Cave Site Map

Australopithecus africanus



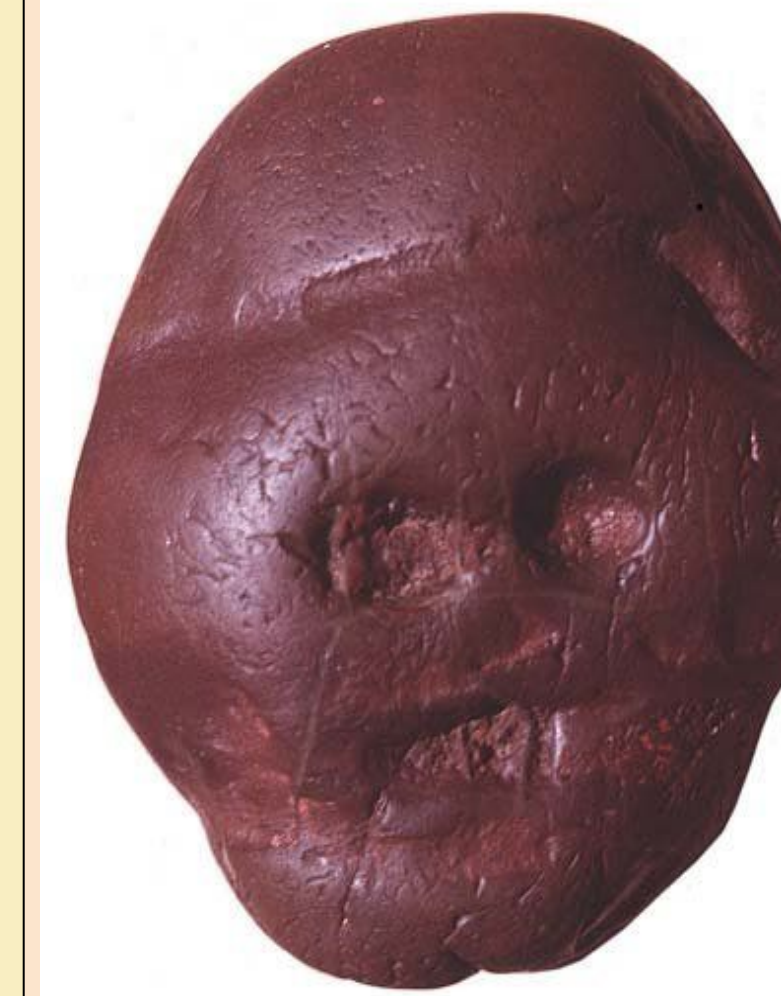
Australopithecus africanus is an early hominin that is more similar to apes that lived about 3.3 to 2.1 million years ago. It is the most studied species found at the Makapansgat site. They walked bipedally, used hand motions similar to modern humans, and were quite short.³

Types of fossils found at the site were:

- Teeth
 - Adolescent pelvis + jaw
 - bone
 - Part of an infant skull
 - Fragments of facial bones
- 35+ specimens in total!



The Makapansgat Pebble



Jasperite cobble manuport excavated in Makapansgat

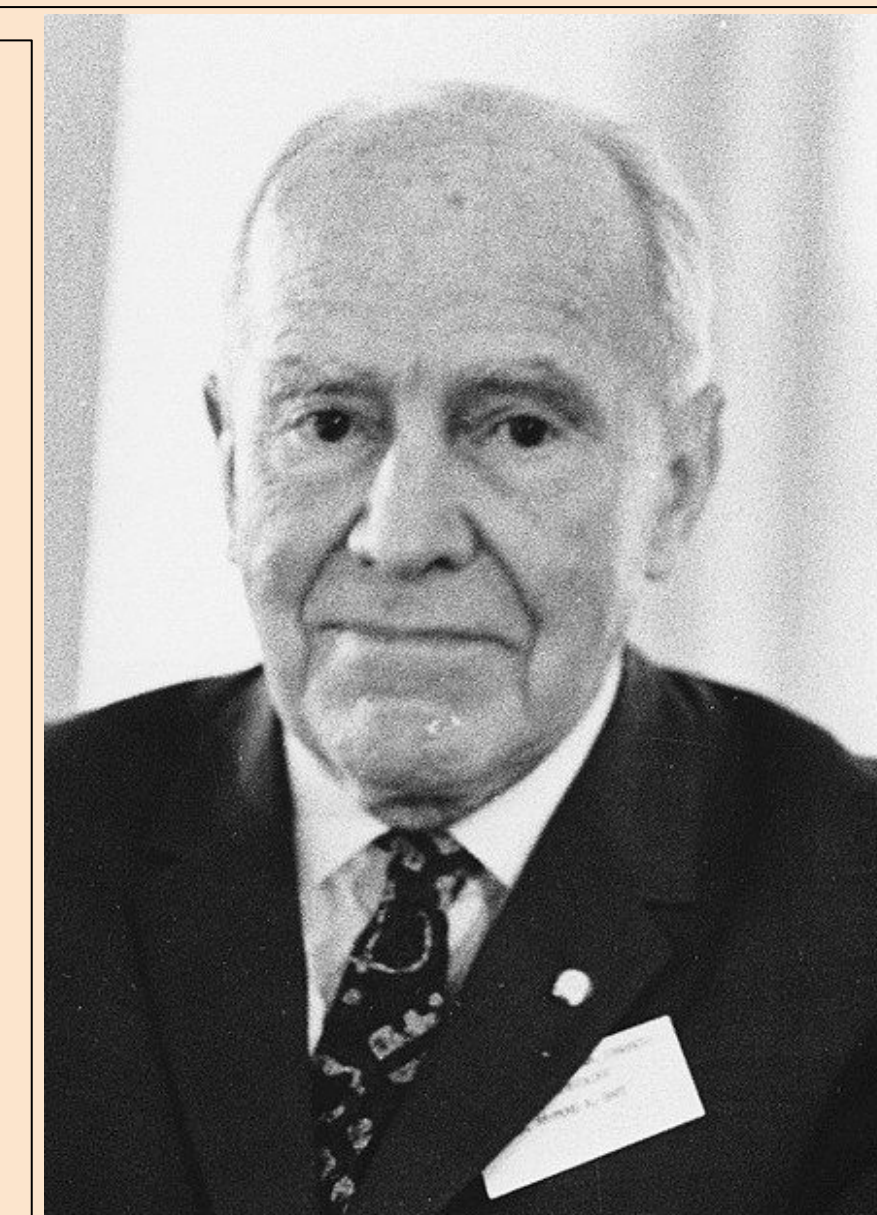
The Makapansgat Pebble is the most well-known artifact from the site. It was found near various *A. africanus* bones, and is therefore believed to be a face carved out by the early hominins, or found near a stream by them and seem as "special."

This pebble, discovered by Wilfred I Eizmanin in 1925, is symbolic because it suggests that *Australopithecus africanus* may have been self-aware.⁵

Raymond A. Dart

Raymond Arthur Dart was a significant researcher in hominin studies, and his insights led to more development of human evolution theory. He did most of his work in South Africa, and first discovered traces of *A. africanus* in Makapansgat.⁸

Dart's claims in 1924 that the ape-like species he discovered were similar to those of humans was very controversial at the time, and supported the theory that early human life started in Africa, and not Europe.⁸



Raymond Arthur Dart, 1968

Geologic Time and Paleoclimate

Using core drillings in the main caves of Makapansgat, conclusions have been made that openings to the caves were formed around 3.7 million years ago, which means the others in the site were also formed around 3.7 - 3.32 million years ago.

The *Australopithecus* specimens found here also date as early as 3.3 Ma.²

In order to find out the kind of habitat *A. africanus* lived in, scientists used teeth of several taxa found at the site to find out what their diet consisted of.⁶



Makapania broomi, of Pleistocene-aged Makapansgat, Limpopo, South Africa



Since it was found that the mammalian species that lived 3.3 million years ago were mostly grazers and browsers, scientists could conclude that the fauna lived in a mosaic bush, woodland habitat, and grassland habitat.²