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## ARCHAEOLOGY OF ST AUGUSTINE'S BAY, LOWER AND MIDDLE ONILAHY VALLEY, SOUTHWESTERN MADAGASCAR

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This paper presents a summary of former archaeological research in southern Madagascar, in order to place current archaeological research. Archaeological survey and excavation of a cave in St Augustine's Bay in south-western Madagascar are therefore presented here with consequent conclusions.

Le présent article est une présentation succincte des travaux de recherche archéologique antérieurs menés dans le Sud de Madagascar pour pouvoir situer les recherches en cours. Les reconnaissances archéologiques et les fouilles d'une grotte dans la Baie de St-Augustin dans le Sud-Ouest de Madagascar, font état des premières découvertes et les conclusions qui s'ensuivent

### INTRODUCTION

Pioneering works in the field of archaeology were undertaken in southern and south-western Madagascar soon after independence in 1960 and following the establishment of the University of Madagascar. Palaeontological and archaeological sites were surveyed and the most ancient human settlements known then were located and studied. Intensive regional prospecting and a number of excavations were carried out in different places in the region. Major results from this research will be summarised in the present paper. It is worth noting at the outset that archaeologists and geographers who brought their insights together at that time, point to the fact that sub-fossil fauna and human beings were contemporaneous. However, given the size of the island, some areas remain untouched by archaeological research. In the framework of questions and challenges in the African Archaeology Network programme (Wetlands-riverine, Landscapes and Urbanism, Dry lands, Ancient peoples migrations), Madagascar with the University Museum of Antananarivo and the Centre de Recherches en Archéologie et Traditions Orales à Madagascar (CEDRATOM) of Toliara University, has carried out archaeological survey, collection of oral traditions related to the sites and excavations along the Onilahy River and in St Augustine's Bay. The present paper reports the first results from the different 2005 field seasons: location of archaeological sites such as rock shelters, caves, *manda* for defence, tombs, simple settlement sites and the excavations in a cave in St Augustine's Bay.