

The aim of *South African Field Archaeology* is to communicate basic data to professional archaeologists and the public. Manuscripts of original research undertaken in southern Africa will be considered for publication. These include reports of current research projects, site reports, rock art panels, rescue excavations, contract projects, reviews, notes and comments. Students are encouraged to submit short reports on projects for publication. *South African Field Archaeology* will also welcome general information on archaeological matters for publication, such as reports on workshops and conferences.

South African Field Archaeology will accept papers in English and Afrikaans. Manuscripts submitted in Afrikaans must be accompanied by an abstract in English.

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Ten reprints will be supplied free to authors, which must be shared in case of joint authorship. Additional reprints will be supplied on request at cost price.

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COVER

Logo

Decorated pot from the first *in situ* Early Iron Age site discovered south of the Great Kei River, eastern Cape, and a painting of a 'trance figure' from the same region.

Cover illustration

Plotted horizon from the Middle Stone Age occupation at Klasies River Shelter 1B, p. 14.

EDITORS

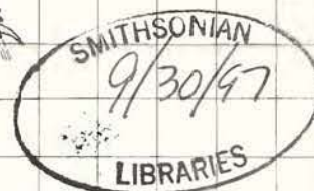
Johan Binneman
Lita Webley

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EDITORIAL

Significant changes in our socio-political environment during the last decade has meant that archaeology, like many other disciplines in South Africa, has had to re-evaluate its goals in order that it remain 'relevant' in the construction of a new, non-racial society. Archaeologists are all involved to some degree in this process of reflection and introspection and, inevitably, some pessimism has been expressed about the future of archaeology as it is currently practised in South Africa.

In his guest editorial in the *South African Archaeological Bulletin* of June 1988 entitled "What future has archaeology in South Africa?", Hilary Deacon specifically addressed the problems that face universities, particularly the curtailment of government funding. He concluded that the future of archaeology in South Africa would be secured through contract archaeology.

Although contract archaeology may be a stimulus for the creation of new posts for archaeologists at universities and museums, we are of the opinion that the future of our profession lies not only herein but also in public education programmes and the wider dissemination of basic archaeological research data. In this regard archaeology departments at state and provincial museums in South Africa have a very valuable contribution to make. Despite the fact that they too are under considerable economic stress, they are still fulfilling an important function with their public educational programmes. These programmes are geared toward schoolchildren of all ages and cultures. For the majority of schoolchildren their only exposure to archaeology is likely to be in a museum. Here museum archaeologists are reaching the general public at grassroots level, communicating the importance of archaeology in the construction of the past. By so doing, archaeologists are creating an audience that will be sympathetic to the cause of archaeology and that will in time advocate stronger support for the maintenance of archaeological posts and the creation of new ones. It is the opinion of the editors that public programmes serve as one of the most important investments we as archaeologists can make in securing the future of the discipline in South Africa. We can illustrate the importance of these programmes by citing some statistics gathered at the Albany Museum. During the course of 1991 some 500 schoolchildren

black schoolchildren visiting the Department on International Museum Day alone.

Public programmes by themselves are not sufficient to convince the public of the importance of archaeology. Archaeologists also have to market their profession, and one of the means of doing this is through the publication of research findings. Aron Mazel has pointed out in a recent guest editorial in the *South African Archaeological Bulletin* of Desember 1991, that it is our moral obligation to make our research findings accessible to both our colleagues and the public. It is also true that our responsibility to the broader South African community is only partially addressed by the publication of basic research data in journals, the readership of which is likely to be limited to professional archaeologists and a few dedicated amateurs. Nevertheless, the editors are of the opinion that by publishing our findings we make available to historians the material which they require for the synthesis of historical events and processes which will, in time, become incorporated into school text books.

The time has come for archaeologists to realise that they cannot depend on improved legislation or the changing attitudes of government/university officials to secure the future of archaeology in this country. If archaeology wants a future in the 'new' South Africa then the communication of basic research data together with public education programmes are two important ways to reach such goals.

It is the intention of *Southern African Field Archaeology* (SAFA) to make a contribution in this respect. Many archaeologists in South Africa have during the course of their professional career conducted excavations at sites but, for a variety of reasons, have not published the results. We therefore invite our readers to use SAFA as a forum for the publication of their unpublished site reports. Contract archaeology, too, has generated a number of surveys and excavations but little of that data has been published to date. SAFA also provides a platform for students wishing to publish their research projects as well as additional, Honours and Masters theses. This should enable them to gain the necessary publishing experience needed when employed as professional archaeologists. There is clearly a niche for a journal which will publish this kind of data. A 11 new ventures experience growth pains and the editors foresee that this one will be no exception. One of the first obstacles we have encountered, which may jeopardize this venture, is the issue of the accreditation of scientific journals and the financial benefits which

accrue to authors and some institutions from publishing in such journals. There are no financial benefits for Provincial museum staff, however, in publishing in accredited journals. Some researchers have indicated that they will not publish in non-accredited journals because there are no financial incentives to do so. They are, however, prepared to publish in SAFA once it becomes accredited. It is important to note that no new journal "will be considered for accreditation before it has had a good track record for at least three years" (pers. comm., spokesperson for the Department of Education and Culture). This creates a 'chicken-and-egg' situation. Professional archaeologists could make a contribution towards having SAFA accredited by publishing in it, then all will reap the benefits of having an archaeological journal in which to publish site reports and research findings.

The editors of SAFA will be assisted in their task by an advisory editorial board comprising some of the younger archaeologists from a range of institutions and with differing research interests. The papers published in this first issue of SAFA are indicative of the nature of articles which will be published in future issues. Although it may be argued that some of these papers are 'too theoretical' for SAFA, the editors are of the opinion that all archaeological research is conducted and reported within a theoretical framework. Future issues of SAFA could debate this and related topics, such as the nature of present site reports and whether they should not be re-structured as Ian Hodder (1989) and Christopher Tilley (1989) suggested recently.

We believe that in SAFA we have created a forum for those archaeologists who are concerned about the future of archaeology in southern Africa. This forum will enable them to communicate their research findings to their colleagues and the public and we cordially invite them to assist us in making this venture a success.

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