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Manuscripts of original research undertaken in southern Africa will be considered for publication. These may 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. Southern African Field Archaeology also welcomes general information on archaeological matters such as reports on workshops and conferences.

*Southern African Field Archaeology* accepts manuscripts in English and Afrikaans but manuscripts submitted in Afrikaans must be accompanied by an English abstract.

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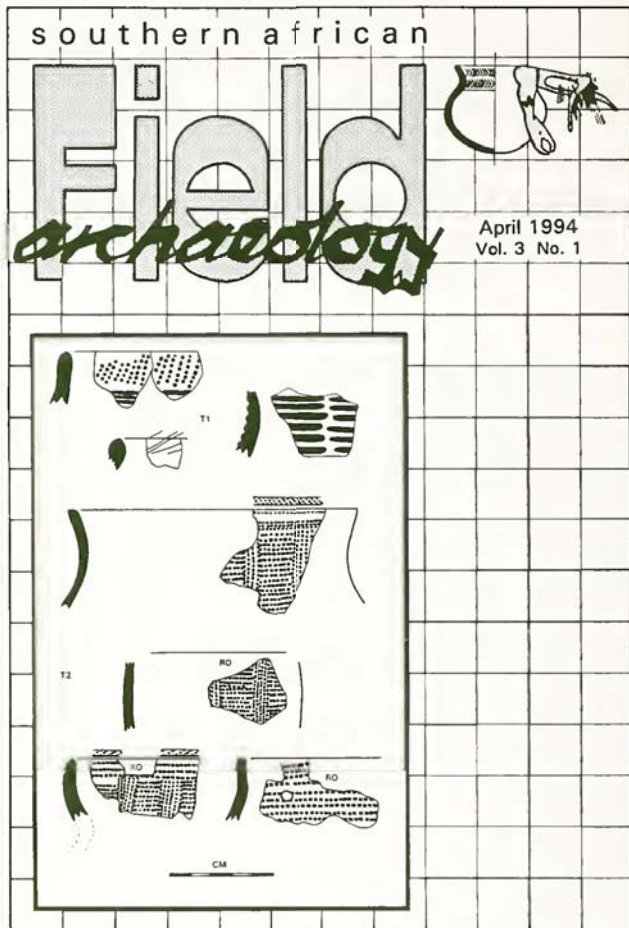
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**Logo**

Decorated pot from an Early Iron Age site in the Great Kei River valley, eastern Cape, and a painting of a 'trance figure' from the same region.

**Cover illustration**

Decorated Bambata Early Iron Age ceramics from Toteng in western Botswana, p. 3.

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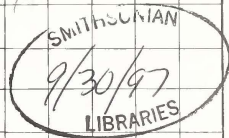
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southern african

# Field archaeology



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## OPINIONS

### CONTRACT ARCHAEOLOGY AND DATABASES

The 'Opinions' column in November 1992 raised the question of access to Museum databases. Comment followed in the next issue by David Morris of the McGregor Museum. At first sight reasonable, the concerns raised in both commentaries have potentially serious consequences for archaeology in southern Africa.

Although the debate is ostensibly about databases, it cannot be separated from the larger issue of the role of archaeology in the consultancy business. It must also be seen against the current financial and political climate. It is no secret that museums are feeling the squeeze. One method to supplement revenue is through archaeological contracts. Contract archaeology, however, must be run as a business. As Morris states, regional recording centres offer local expertise. But a distinction needs to be made between the skills of archaeologists and the data contained in their institutions. By controlling access to information, a Museum could attempt a regional hegemony. This is a practice that cannot be allowed for at least three reasons.

First, it is unethical to use resources accumulated through public taxes to limit competition. This is a matter of principle that has little to do with archaeology and the competition board is currently investigating a variety of semi-state organisations accused of such unethical behaviour.

Contract units should compete on the basis of their personal ability rather than the information they control. According to Dave Fredrickson, in California, at least, databases and contract groups are kept separate to avoid conflicts of interest.

In the case of museums, their collections and information are public property, and they have no right to charge a 'consultancy fee' for providing information. Whether or not a consumer may ultimately benefit financially from that data is irrelevant. Information should be free.

The time needed to extract data, however, is another matter. No one should object to a nominal fee for assistance. The HSRC, for example, charges R80 to conduct a search of their computerised databases.

Secondly, contract archaeology will probably develop as part of the environmental consultancy business. Many contracts are likely to derive from Environmental Impact Assessments funded by international agencies such as the World Bank. These contracts are awarded on the basis of separate technical and financial tenders submitted by multi-disciplinary teams. If the successful team is denied access to archaeological data, those records are likely to be ignored. As Morris states, this deplorable process is already happening, and archaeology is the loser.

Thirdly, should institutions regard their databases as a bankable resource, the resulting competition will have a deleterious effect on archaeological research. Inevitably, institutions will entomb their data in jealously guarded files. As a consequence, communications between scholars, essential for scientific progress, will be stifled.

Contract archaeology is still in a formative period in South Africa, but already certain problems have arisen. At present most clients are reluctant to pay for archaeological surveys. Generally speaking archaeology is not taken seriously, and the EIA mentioned by Morris is by no means unique. Indeed, some reports are an embarrassment to our profession, and we are partially responsible for the low status of archaeology in South Africa.

Archaeologists therefore need to address the future of the profession as a whole. Contract archaeology requires a set of skills that most archaeologists simply

do not possess, and we have to decide whether or not we wish to acquire them at the expense of our research activities.

Archaeologists who become consultants will specialise in the business of archaeology rather than research. It is therefore important to protect the profession by establishing an institute of consultant archaeologists, separate from SA3. A permanent office and secretariat will be required and therefore subscriptions would necessarily be high. The institute would establish and maintain professional standards for contracts. It would also undertake *inter alia* to promote archaeology with the government, clients and the public. It would liaise with international funding bodies such as the World Bank and USAID to inform them of the standards required for cultural property surveys in South Africa.

This is not a job for the National Monuments Council. The role of the NMC must be to ensure that conservation legislation is enforced and more importantly has public support.

Archaeologists should look beyond vested interests and fears for their security and strive to improve the image and professionalism of their chosen vocation. Whether the focus is research or business, archaeologists need to obtain respect from other professions and a mandate from the public.

C. Campbell  
T.N. Huffman

\* \* \* \* \*

The Editors of Southern African Field Archaeology would like to congratulate Ursula Evans of the University of Cape Town on winning the competition for the best paper by an archaeology student. Ursula's paper will appear in the September issue of Southern African Field Archaeology. Both Ursula and the Archaeology Department at UCT will be receiving free copies of our journal during 1994. We will be running this competition again this year and we call on all archaeology students to submit reports on their field work no later than 30 November 1994.

for the shank of the arrow and is of this shape going into the reed by the sharp end or the blunt. The spear head with the poison fixes on this bone for which purpose it has a small piece of reed attached to the wood in which the spear head is fixed - the arrows are straightened by heating either on a piece of cow dung in fire (without flame) or a heated stone - the bone is always put in about 4 inches from a joint so that

the bone goes into it halfway to the joint. The string is pulled by the first joint of the fore finger so that not the slightest strain is put on the arrow which is lightly kept in its place by the thumb and when it full stretch the fore finger slips on one side and the string flies back. The name of the maggot is "Aap" - the cement for the feather is euphorbid milk and red clay.

## REPORTS

### THE XI BIENNIAL SASQUA CONFERENCE

DAVID MORRIS & PETER BEAUMONT

*McGregor Museum, P. O. Box 316,  
Kimberley, 8300*

The McGregor Museum hosted the XI Biennial Conference of the Southern African Society for Quaternary Research from 12 to 14 July 1993. Comment on the conference and three associated excursions has already been made (Avery 1993; February 1993; Kershaw 1993; Scott 1993), but for the benefit of non-SASQUA folk we highlight a few aspects.

The conference attracted 58 delegates who presented a packed programme of 39 papers and 6 posters, amongst which were notable contributions by overseas guests, from both hemispheres. These provided comparative insights into palaeoenvironmental features and research elsewhere, and useful measures against which to gauge local problems and progress. From south of the equator, Peter Kershaw (Victoria) presented impressive data on long palynological sequences from Australia; while Martin Iriondo (Argentina) put across a detailed account of Late Pleistocene to Holocene environments in South America. From the north, Yolanda Fernandez-Jalvo (Madrid) provided results of small mammal taphonomy studies at Atapuerco in Spain; and Lars Larsson (Sweden) illustrated a minutely documented and dated sequence of ice movements, sea level changes and human exploitation of rapidly shifting environmental opportunities in southern Scandinavia during Younger Dryas times.

Local papers and posters addressed an enormous wealth of Quaternary features ranging through periglacial to coastal, marine, fluvial, lacustrine, interior plateau and desert environments in southern Africa - viewed from perspectives as diverse as geomorphology, sedimentology, macro- and micro-faunal analysis, isotopic studies, palynology, dendrochronology and, not least, archaeology. Spatially, the focus took in much of the coastline from Namibia to Zululand (Ward, Burkinshaw, Illenberger, Hattingh, Zhang, Brink, Scharf, Maud and

others - see below), some of the adjacent hinterlands (Jacobs and others - see below), the escarpment areas (see below), and the inland plateau (Thackeray *et al.* and others); while chronologically the papers ranged from Mio-Pleistocene times to the present. The 90 metre core from the Pretoria Saltpan (Tswaing) impact crater (Partridge), recently dated by interpolation from a 220 000 year fission track age on the impact event, has yielded pollen, diatoms and a sediment sequence which together document pronounced moisture fluctuations over the past 200 000 years. In conjunction with other data, this remarkable sequence holds promise of providing more accurate palaeoclimatic models for the last glacial cycle in the southern hemisphere than presently exist. Preliminary results were presented of pollen analysis (Scott) from the Pretoria Saltpan as well as from a 20 000 year Cedarberg hyrax midden sequence, and palynological evidence from other sites in the subcontinent. Multi-disciplinary work including major archaeological input at Verloren Vlei and the south Cape coast covered terminal Pleistocene through Holocene to colonial times (Cohen, Jerardino, Meadows & Baxter, Parkington), while a number of papers addressed archaeological and archaeozoological aspects of the Late Pleistocene up-country (Behrens, Brink, Esterhuysen, Mitchell, Opperman). These were interestingly contrasted with studies of contemporary periglacial phenomena in the high escarpment areas of the eastern Cape (Lewis) and Drakensberg (Grab).

A keynote synthesis from the 1991 Conference (Tyson & Lindsay 1992) provided the springboard for 'theme papers' on the final day, devoted entirely to the last two millennia. Several presenters considered in closer or amplified detail the data sets used in Tyson and Lindsay's synthesis, for example, a review of several



International guests at the XI SASQUA Conference, with museum director Liz Voigt (second from left) and conference organiser Peter Beaumont (fifth from left): Dr Peter Kershaw (Australia), Dr Martin Iriando (Argentina), Dr Yolanda Fernandez- Jalvo (Spain), Mr Kenneth Juell (USA) and Prof Lars Larsson (Sweden).

fossil micro-mammalian sequences, mostly from the interior (Avery); new hyrax dung pollen records which again illustrated the potential of this method (Scott); oxygen isotopic data for a number of late Holocene sequences (Talma); and refinements and future possibilities in dendrochronology (February, Thackeray, Vogel).

New data were presented relating to Verloren Vlei sea level fluctuations (Jerardino), and vegetation change (Meadows & Baxter); human impacts at Richards Bay (Cooks & Bewsher); new lake pollen data from the eastern Cape (Adams); and the innovative use of Oxygen isotopes in ostrich eggshell to deduce palaeohumidity (Talma). The potential of horizontal debris accumulations at Northern Cape specularite mines to yield high (Beaumont & Morris). Bone density profiles from Karoo archaeological sites were discussed in terms of their environmental implications (Sampson - and published in the last issue of *Southern African Field Archaeology*), while ceramic analytical methods used on some of these

sites were outlined as a basis for detecting inter-group interaction (Jacobson). Shifting patterns of Iron Age settlement were shown to correlate meaningfully with the evidence of climatic change (Huffman). The session closed with general discussion on progress made in the preceding two years, and the need for further research into this time period.

Illustrated particularly well in this session was the value of collaborative projects, and where there had been a danger of people talking past each other, as in-coming SASQUA President Margaret Avery (1993) remarked, this concerted look at the last two millennia was evidence for the profitable way common problems could, and were being, addressed from different angles. The high level of collaboration was in fact one of the features of local research which Australian palynologist Peter Kershaw found impressive - along with the interaction he noted between "daters and users", the high quality of student presentation, and "the degree of innovation in environmental archaeology and in extracting data from sub-optimal Quaternary environments" (1993:7).

The conference papers are to be published in a single future issue of *Quaternary International*. For anybody interested, abstract booklets are still available from the McGregor Museum, P.O. Box 316, Kimberley 8300.

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## CONFERENCE IN HONOUR OF DR MARY LEAKEY'S OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO PALAEOANTHROPOLOGY.

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A palaeoanthropological conference, "Four million years of hominid evolution in Africa: an international congress in honour of Dr Mary Douglas Leakey's outstanding contribution to palaeoanthropology", was hosted by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Learning of

Tanzania with the collaboration of the University of Dar es Salaam, the Muhimbili University College of Health Sciences and the Department of Antiquities and National Museum in the Ministry of Education and Culture. It was held at the Arusha International Conference Centre, from

8-14 August 1993. Some 150 delegates attended from countries such as Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Spain, Netherlands, Israel, Slovenia, USA, Canada and Switzerland, and of course there was a strong contingency from South Africa. We received a warm welcome. Indeed, the delegates from South Africa were invited to a special lunch by the organising committee, and we all felt honoured.

The proceedings were organised in three sessions: 1. archaeological, 2. palaeontological and 3. palaeo-environmental.

After the conference was officially opened Amini Mturi outlined the valuable contribution that Mary Leakey made to the history of Tanzania. The other keynote speakers were J. Desmond Clark, honouring Mary Leakey for her contribution to the archaeology of East Africa, and Richard Hay, the geologist primarily responsible for the interpretation of Olduvai. Both were long time colleagues of Mary Leakey.

A. Nkini opened the archaeological session by describing the palaeoanthropological research achievements in Tanzania after independence and the Government's policy in the issuing of research and excavation permits. The remaining papers that day summarised current archaeological projects in East Africa.

The following day the archaeological session dealt mostly with Africa. Lyn Wadley (MSA), Amanda Estherhuysen (charcoal) and Joanna Behrens (stone tool residues) presented papers on Rose Cottage Cave. Kathy Kuman took us back further to the new findings at Sterkfontein. Tom Huffman gave new information on climatic changes during the Iron Age and this was followed by Judy Sealy's paper in the revised chronology for Stone Age pastoralism in South Africa. We then made a jump back to Tanzania with two papers, the first by N.J. Karoma on the later Quaternary and the second by F. Masoa on 'Sangoan'-like material from Kilwa, after which P. Meneses talked on the Acheulian in Mozambique. J.L. Cormack from the UK gave us more on the ESA in Africa and O.B. Yosef closed the morning session with the ESA in Israel.

The afternoon session started off in Uganda with a paper on an Oldowan site at Nyabusosi, Lake Albert Basin, Toro (P.J. Texier). The following four papers dealt with land use and landscape archaeology: A.Z. PMabulla (Eyasi Basin, northern Tanzania), J.W.K.

Harris (Lake Turkana Basin), M. Rogers (Koobi Fora, Kenya) and R. Blumenschine (Olduvai Gorge).

A session on rock art included papers by Lewis Matiyela on the Transkei, Tim Maggs on Iron Age art and Hannali van der Merwe on recent rock engravings in the north-western Cape. I. Lim closed the session with a paper on rock art in Tanzania.

On Wednesday we started off with the palaeontology session. The papers were divided between actualistic reports and fossil hominid research. Among the latter, F. Schrenk and T. Bromage announced a new early *Homo* mandible from Malawi, estimated to be between 2,5 and 2,3 mya on faunal grounds. M. Mbago, C. Msuya and T. Harrison described new projects in the Manonga valley of northern Tanzania.

Questions of taxonomy were of major concern. D. Lieberman and D. Pilbeam discussed the number of species required to account for the earliest *Homo*, while P. Rightmire argued that early Pleistocene forms in Africa should be classified as *Homo erectus* rather than *Homo ergaster*. Several participants presented papers on individual hominids or specific taxa (e.g. S. Cachel, A. Bilsborough, J. Thompson, S. Pfeiffer, L. Aiello and B. Wood), and Alan Morris brought Boskop back into focus. A. Zihlman and R. Tuttle considered Laetoli and the origins of bipedalism.

The palaeoenvironmental session included Andrew Sillen's paper on the use of stable isotope geochemistry for habitat reconstruction. N. Sikes (Olduvai) and S. McBrearty (Simbi, a MSA locality) used similar evidence. Margaret Avery used micromammals as environmental indicators, while C. Denys was concerned with rodent evolution. Our own Francis Thackeray presented his environmental reconstruction of the Swartkrans area based on ungulate fauna. D. Rayner outlined a new environmental interpretation of Makapansgat, while C. Feibel, J.W.K. Harris and N. Boaz presented a new reconstruction for parts of East Africa.

The four days of scientific papers were followed by an excursion to some of the most important hominid sites ever discovered. Sixty eight delegates visited the Ngorogoro Crater, Olduvai Gorge, Laetoli and Lake Manyara. Dr Mary Leakey was present throughout. She addressed the conference briefly at the end of the formal sessions and it was a great privilege to meet her. She remains an inspiration to us all.