

# **RESEARCH PROPOSAL FOR THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF LATE IRON AGE STONE WALLED SITES ON SHYLOCK 256JQ (SHY01) NEAR RUSTENBURG, NORTH-WEST PROVINCE**

## **Broad historical background**

The pre-historical and historical background to the Rustenburg Pilanesberg Area (RPA) in the North-West Province of South Africa has been documented in a number of sources which range from oral historical accounts about the origins and settlement history of indigenous people such as Tswana groups who occupied the region from as early as AD1600 (Legassick 1969, 2010; Horn 1996; Manson 1996; Morton 2003, 2008; Bengha & Manson 2010); post-graduate studies which outline the origins and development of the town of Rustenburg (Pretorius 1967; Bergh 1992) and ethnographic accounts about the origins, settlement history, cultural life ways and material culture of Tswana groups who lived in the area during the last four centuries (McDonald 1940; Breutz 1953, 1987; Pauw 1960; Redelinghuys 1968).

The corpus of recorded oral tradition pertaining to indigenous groups in the RPA have given little attention to the presence of early Nguni populations even though the oral records of groups such as the Tlhako, Bapo (Rustenburg, Pilanesberg) and the Bagamelete (Marico, Zeerust) clearly indicate that these communities are derived from the KwaZulu/Natal region as early as AD1500 (Breutz 1953). The current discourse amongst Iron Age archaeologist therefore debates whether all 'traditional' Tswana groups in the RPA in fact are monolithic ethnic entities or whether groups such as the Fokeng, Tlokwa and Kgatla in fact may have both Sotho-Tswana and Nguni inheritances as is demonstrated by the material cultural record and diagnostic settlement features of sites occupied by these groups (Huffman 2002, 2004; Hall 2012; Kruger 2008; Jordaan 2013).

## **Tswana and Ndebele archaeology**

Archaeological research and heritage surveys in the RPA have resulted in the publication of several research articles and a still larger number of unpublished heritage reports which outline the spatial distribution of stone walled sites across the

Rustenburg, Marikana, Madibeng and Pilanesberg regions. The focus of most of these publications and reports is on the distribution of stone walled sites, settlement styles and in some instances on diagnostic site-specific settlement features which can be linked to either Tswana or Nguni identities in the region.

The research has outlined a clearly defined Tswana settlement style which comprises explanations for the spatial composition of the Tswana village on a macro as well as on a micro level (Pistorius 1992, 1996). Whilst the Tswana macro settlement pattern can be equated with the Batswana village (*motse*) the micro settlement features which are contained in the village (*motse*) represent wards (*dikgoro*, singular *kgoro*) which were occupied by related and unrelated family groups (*masika*, singular *lesika*). The residential unit of the chief (*kgosing*) is usually the largest settlement in the village and serves as the focal point in the village (Pistorius 1996).

This 'blue print' for the spatial composition of pre-historical and historical Tswana settlements was established by combining archaeological data with ethnographic information. The results of these findings are currently compiled in a book format which is well advanced and will be published in 2023.

Historical evidence also points to the presence of Nguni populations in the RPA region from as early as AD1500 (Breutz 1953, 1986). Nguni populations such as the Tlhako, Bapô and Bagamelete were culturally absorbed by early Sotho-Tswana groups or *vice versa*. Mzilikazi's Ndebele entered the RPA during AD1827 (Rasmussen 1978) and re-established Nguni settlement patterns and cultural life ways amongst subjugated Tswana chiefdoms (Harris 1963; Lye 1975). At least two of Mzilikazi's village complexes in the region were recovered with historical evidence whilst one of the settlement complexes was archaeologically investigated (Pistorius 1997a, 1997b, 1998). This research outlined more recent Nguni settlement features which are associated with Matabele (Ndebele) villages and how this settlement style differed from local Tswana settlement styles.

Archaeological work currently underway at Roodewal, Zephanjeskraal 251JQ and Shylock 256JQ (consequently therefore this permit application) west of the Magaliesberg revealed that these stone walled settlements may be associated with

early Nguni populations such as the Batlhako and Sotho-Tswana such as the Tlokwa who settled in this part of the RPA. The Batlhako (Matsutu, Mahlangu) is derived from the Ndzundza Ndebele (Nguni) and settled in this area from as early as AD1600, probably contemporaneously with Sotho-Tswana speakers such as the Bakwena and Batlokwa (Breutz 1954).

### **Aim with the investigation**

The farm Shylock 256JQ is located west of the Magaliesberg in the North-West and is home to a number of stone walled sites which reveal a mix of two different settlement styles, one of which have not been identified and described earlier. Historical information and oral records link the stone walled sites on Shylock 256JQ with the Kwena Modimosana Ramanamela, one of four branches of the Modimosana lineage cluster. The neighbouring stone walled settlements on Zephanjeskraal 251JQ which are currently under investigation is historically associated with the Ramanamela. According to oral records the two groups had close family relationships. This can be seen in the two styles of settlements on Shylock 256JQ

The archaeological research of the Shylock stone walled sites will comprise of the mapping and test excavation of some of the stone walled sites on Shylock 256JQ which exhibit both these two settlement styles with the following objectives:

- To outline the spatial distribution of these stone walled sites west of the Magaliesberg.
- Compile detail ground plans for the different styles that were distinguished by means of surveying and mapping of the sites.
- To identify, describe and to compare the different settlement types which occur on Shylock 256 and Zephanjeskraal 251 with stone walled sites with similar spatial features and compositions such as Roodewal and Selonskraal which are neighbouring farms with large numbers of stone walled sites.
- Scrutinizing available historical and oral accounts to outline and to describe the archaeological and historical identities of these stone walled complexes.
- Excavate settlement components (homesteads/dwelling compounds; enclosures for stock; court areas; middens, etc) of the different settlement types

to determine the function and interrelationships of the material culture of these various settlement types with each other and with other settlement styles in the RPA.

- Analyse and compare archaeological and spatial evidence from Shylock 256JQ with ethnographic evidence which outline the settlement layout of Tswana and Nguni settlements to generate possible explanations for the spatial features of the Shylock stone walled settlements.
- Collect material remains, particularly pottery from Shylock 256JQ. These remains will be analysed and described in reports and will be stored at the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology at the University of South Africa.
- Publish the results of the research in accredited journals or a book.

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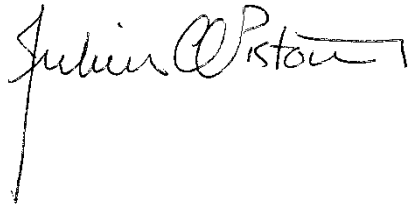
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A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Julius CC Pistorius". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long vertical line extending downwards from the 'J'.

**Dr Julius CC Pistorius**  
**Archaeologist & Heritage Consultant**  
**Member ASAPA**