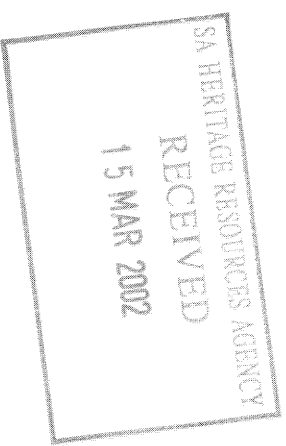


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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECONNAISSANCE OF THE EVEREST SOUTH
BULK SAMPLE AREA AND THE FORMER HEADQUARTERS OF
THE PHETLA CHIEF**

A phase-1 report prepared for Metago Environmental Engineers

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INTRODUCTION

Aquarius Platinum South Africa has begun preparing their Environmental Management Programme Report for a new mine at Everest South, Mpumalanga. In 2001, the environmental coordinators, Jane Joughin in association with Metago Environmental Engineers, commissioned Archaeological Resources Management to assess the archaeological potential of the first proposed bulk sample area (Schoeman & Huffman 2001). Later, ARM also examined some Historic graves, belonging to the Phetla community, that may be disturbed by mining (Huffman & Schoeman 2001).

The Phetla Community has made a claim for the surface rights of Sterkfontein 52JT and De Kafferskraal 53JT (Government Gazette Notice 4492 of 2000). They want to reestablish the chief's settlement on De Kafferskraal.

The environmental coordinators have again commission ARM to examine two other areas for graves and other sites of historical and archaeological significance: (1) the new bulk sample area on Portion 26 of Sterkfontein 749JT; and (2) the former headquarters of the Phetla chief on the northern boundary of De Kafferskraal (Figures 1 & 2).

METHOD

Two ARM staff investigated the study area on 22 February 2002. As usual sites were recorded with a GPS instrument (reported in Results), and then transferred to the 1:50 000 map 2530 AA Draaikraal.



Figure 1. Location of sites near Everest South bulk sample area on the 1:50 000 map 2520AA Draaikraal. C = Church, G = Graves, HC = Homestead Complex, K = Kraal and MSA = Middle Stone Age.



Figure 2. Location of sites in the Everest South bulk sample area. G = Grave, HC = Homestead Complex, K = Kraal, MSA = Middle Stone Age and RG = Rock Gong.

RESULTS

Area 1: New Bulk Sampling Area

An African grave with headstone (Figure 3) lies next to the stone foundations of a rectangular house at 25 09 01S 30 08 47.2E. More remains of this homestead complex lie inside a fenced area.

A few pieces of older pottery and slag have eroded from underneath the recent remains. This material may mark an older Historic Pedi occupation.

A substantial Historic Pedi complex centres around the rock dome in the northeastern section. Low stone lapa walls, burnt daga (a mixture of mud and dung) structures, slag and characteristic pottery extend across this section (25 09 01 to 12S 30 08 45 to 54E). This complex probably dates to the late 19th century. Another homestead complex lies some 200 metres to the west. One stone-walled cattle kraal still stands inside the second complex.

A modern rock gong appears on a small outcrop on the west side of the rock dome, and other rocks here show signs of recent bashing. This area may have been used by an indigenous African church.

We examined a possible grave in the maize field (near peg E 03), reported to us earlier. Several stone piles there are the result of land clearance for agriculture: none are obvious graves, and bedrock is too close to the surface for a normal graveyard.

The previous investigation noted some sites at the southern end of Area 1. Middle Stone Age (ca 250 000) to 25 000 years ago) artefacts were noted at 25 09 2.8S 30 08 30E and 25 09 31.6S 30 08 29.3E. Two historic stone kraals were also recorded at 25 09 26S 30 08 34.8E and 25 09 28.2S 30 08 31.4E.

Significance

- The Middle Stone Age occurrences have low significance.
- The Historic kraals in the southern section have low significance.
- The African grave in the northern section has moderate significance.

- The Historic homestead complexes in the north have moderate archaeological significance.
- The second complex has low significance.
- A social team needs to establish the significance of the rock gong.

Area 2: The Former Headquarters of the Phetla Chief

The stone walls of a school, or church (or both), still stand at 25 07 41.8S 30 09 09.7E (Figure 4). The remains of this building appear on the First (1977) and Second (1988) Editions of the 1:50 000 map 2530AA. Apparently abandoned in the 1940s when the Phetla community was forced to leave (Mgogi: 1996), the building could be over 100 years old.

A large African cemetery (25 07 55.5S 30 09 12.1E) lies south of the school. Dated headstones range from 1939 to 1975. Some of the older headstones bear S-shaped spirals (Figure 5). North of the school stand two stone-walled kraals (25 07 32.8S 30 09 12.3E and 25 07 33.5S 30 09 14.5E) about 50m apart. They are associated with a small cemetery with at least 5 graves. Some headstones also bear the S-shaped spiral.

It should also be noted that an older archaeological horizon lies underneath the level of the school. Daga pieces, slag and pottery are exposed in the old road next to the building. To our knowledge, this kind of pottery (Figure 6) has not been recognised before. It may have been produced by 16th century Sotho-Tswana who predate the rise of the Pedi confederacy.

Significance

- In terms of the land claim, the church/school and grave yards have high significance.
- The older site is archaeologically significant. If it were endangered its significance would be moderate, and it would require mitigation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The grave in the Bulk Sampling Area needs to be removed. A social team should therefore identify the descendants and determine where (and how) the contents should be re-buried.

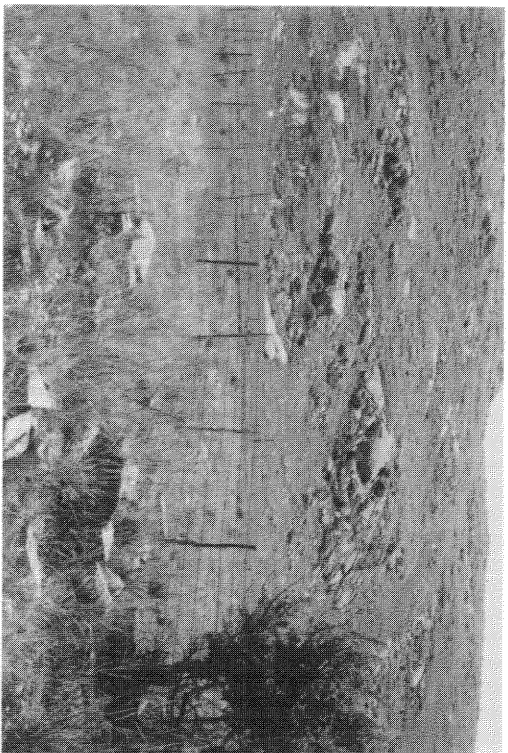


Figure 3.
Grave with headstone next to the stone foundations of a rectangular house in Area 1.



Figure 4.
The stone walls of the school/church in Area 2.



Figure 5.
Headstones bearing S-shaped spirals in the south cemetery in Area 2.



Figure 6. Iron Age ceramics from Area 2.

The Historic complex in the Bulk Sampling Area may well yield more human burials when the top soil is removed. In addition, the site is archaeologically important because of the information it may contain about Bakoni and Pedi settlements in the late 19th century. Archaeologists should therefore be present when the topsoil is removed. They can record any burials that may be uncovered. One week on site and two weeks in the laboratory should be sufficient.

If the headquarters of the Phetla chief are re-established in Area 2, then the archaeological site beneath the level of the school would require excavation. A week on site and a week in the laboratory should be sufficient. Test excavations such as this normally occur in the dry season.

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