

# **HISTORIC GRAVES AT EVEREST SOUTH, MPUMALANGA**

A Phase-1 report prepared for Metago Environmental Engineers

Professor TN Huffman

Ms MH Schoeman

Archaeological Resources Management

School of Geography, Archaeology and Environmental Science

University of the Witwatersrand

Johannesburg

May 2001

# **HISTORIC GRAVES AT EVEREST SOUTH, MPUMALANGA**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The proposed Everest South Mine covers part of the ancestral home of the Bakoni Phetla Community, now mostly living at Nebo. In terms of the Restitution of Land Rights Act (No. 22 of 1994) the Community has made a claim for the surface rights of two farms affected by the mining proposal: Sterkfontein 52JT and De Kafferskraal 53JT. The Community is particularly concerned that mining may disturb ancestral graves on De Kafferskraal. As a consequence, the environmental co-ordinators for the mining project - Jane Joughin in association with Metago Environmental Engineers (Metago) - requested Archaeological Resources Management (ARM) to examine the endangered graves in the company of members representing the Phetla Community.

## **METHOD**

Two ARM staff together with Mr T. Mokonotela of Metago met representatives of the Phetla community on site on 3 May 2001. Under the leadership of the Rev. J.S. Phetla, the delegation went to the grave area.

## **RESULTS**

Several graves exist inside an old homestead (25.09.30S 30.08.41E). The homestead itself includes three small subrectangular stone enclosures and one larger cattle kraal. The kraal, as is customary, contains several graves (twelve in this case), some dating back to the early years of the community. Because this was the homestead of the local headman, people from the neighbourhood were buried in his cattle kraal. Three other graves lie near the small-stock enclosures: one with a cement headstone and two together marked by low stone-lined ovals.

The homestead and graves stand a few meters south of an existing road and about 100m northeast of a mining cairn.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

On the basis of existing information, the graveyard complex stands outside the bulk sampling area. This point, however, needs to be established. Whatever the case, the Phetla Community would like the graves left undisturbed. If they have to be moved, then the Community will discuss a new location with the developers.