

**SHAZI FAMILY GRAVE EXHUMATION AND
RELOCATION, ROSSMIN MINE NEAR PORT-
SHEPSTONE.**



ACTIVE HERITAGE cc.

For: Umzimkhulu Industrial Holdings

**Frans Prins
MA (Archaeology)**

&

**Frans Roodt
MA (Archaeology)**

**P.O. Box 947
Howick
3290**

Activeheritage@gmail.com

Fax: 0867636380

www.activeheritage.webs.com

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ROSSMIN MINE: SHAZI GRAVE RELOCATION PROJECT

1. INTRODUCTION

The Shazi grave relocation project was conducted during the week 23 – 27 October 2017. Rossmine mine officials had arranged for relatives of the interred Shazi families to oversee and assist with the project.

The supervisors were:

Mr Wilson Shazi and Mr Mcabangelwa Shazi.

The helpers (labourers) were:

Mr Sivikele Shazi, Mr Lungsani Shazi, Mr Vusi Shazi and Mr Lungani Shazi.

The project entailed the exhumation of ten (10) graves as identified by the community and surveyed by Rossmine mine. The dates of burial are unknown.

Caskets were available on site for each grave.

2. METHODOLOGY

The grave sites were numbered in the sequence in which they were excavated, namely, Shazi 1 to Shazi 10. The gravesites had previously been cleared of most vegetation. Each grave was photographed using a slate and a 1m scale prior to excavation. Excavation commenced by removing the grave marker stones where present. A test trench, placed in the centre and diagonal to the grave's layout was first measured out. This trench was dug in order to determine the depth of the grave or to identify the grave pit. These initial trenches were mostly dug about 50cm – 60cm deep, which in most instances was into the decomposed granites that under-lie the topsoil. The trenches were then extended towards both sides of the demarcated grave. The grave sites were excavated to an average depth of 1.0 meters. Photographs were taken during the process and a final photograph with scale was taken after completed of the excavation.

It must be noted that the depth and direction of the excavations were always determined in consultation with the Shazi supervisors and helpers and that the excavation only ended when orders to that effect were given by the family.

3. THE EXCAVATIONS (EXHUMATIONS)

3.1 SHAZI 1: GINGA. Ginga was an adult male.

Location: -30.65565S 30.37990E

This grave was densely overgrown by grass and shrubs and the grave markers were not visible. Nevertheless, it was marked by a low pile of stones, which measured about 2m X 1.2m and orientated east/west. The stones were removed and an initial trench of 1.5m X 0.5m was excavated diagonally over the grave in order to determine the position of the skeletal remains as well as the depth of the remains. The trench should also have revealed the original burial pit. This trench was excavated to a depth of 0.5m, where the decomposed granite was exposed where after the trench was extended in an easterly and westerly direction.

The excavation pit was extended to a size of approximately 2.5m X 1.5m (east/west) and to an average depth of 1.3m. The topsoil was shallow, 0.4m, but the excavation continued well into the hard underlying granite. No skeletal remains were uncovered and no conclusive burial pit with backfill could be distinguished in any of the profile walls.

After consultation the family members and supervisors instructed that the excavation be ceased. They were satisfied that no skeletal remains exist and concluded that it had fully decomposed. The family decided to collect soil from the excavation pit in order that a ceremonial reburial for the deceased be conducted. This ended the excavation. The images below (Figures 1-5) provide a photographic record of the excavation.



Figure 1. The gravesite of Ginga Shazi prior to excavation.



Figure 2. The pile of stone markers is removed and excavation of the diagonal test trench commences.



Figure 3. The test trench is expanded. Note yellow decomposed granite as bedrock.



Figure 4. Digging deeper into rock-bottom.



Figure 5. The finished excavation of the grave of Ginga Shazi.

3.2 SHAZI 2, 3 and 4:

These Shazi family graves, 2 – 4, belong to Sinengane, an adult male and two infants. Figure 6 below represents a schematic layout of the graves.

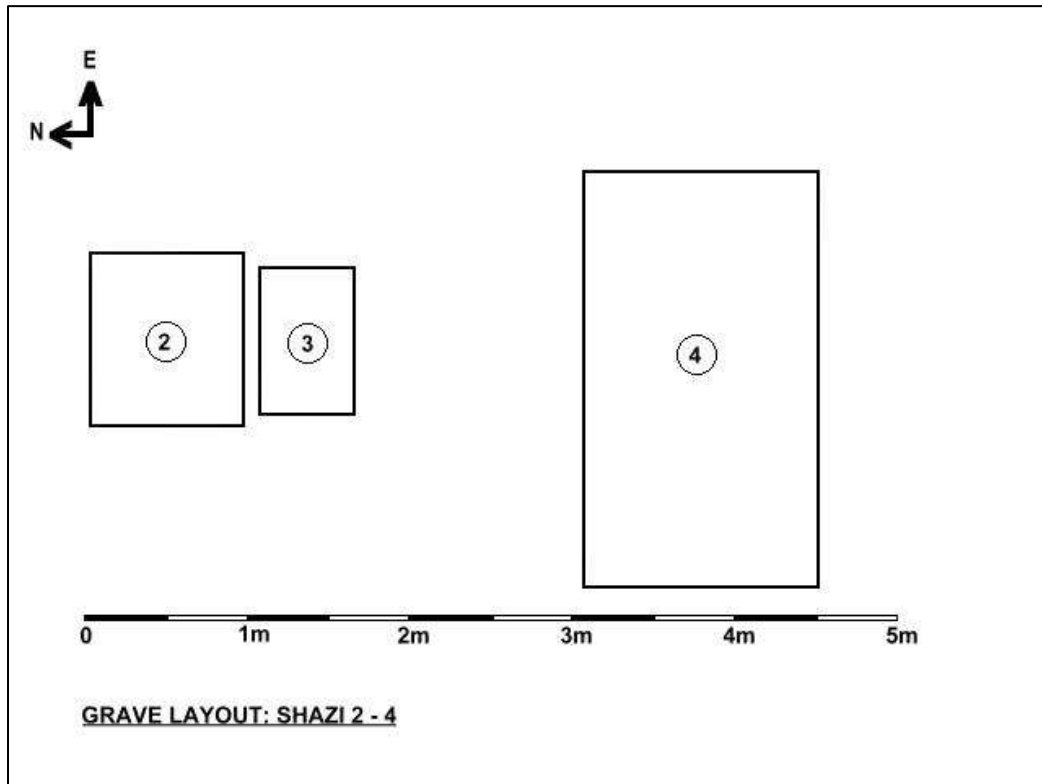


Figure 6. A schematic layout of the graves 2 – 4.

SHAZI 2:

Location: -30.65499S 30.37950E. The name of the infant, said to be a male, is unknown.

The grave was well marked by small stones, which measured approximately 1.5m X 1.0m. The same procedures as above (Shezi 1) were followed. The diagonal trench over the grave provided no evidence of the position of the grave. After extending the trench in an easterly and westerly direction the pit was excavated to the size of 1.5m X 1.5m and to a depth of 0.6m where bedrock was exposed. No skeletal remains were uncovered and no conclusive burial pit with backfill could be distinguished in any of the profile walls.

After consultation the family members and supervisors again instructed that the excavation be ceased. Being an infant, they were in agreement that the skeletal remains had fully decomposed. The family decided to collect soil from the excavation pit in order for a ceremonial reburial to be held for the deceased. This

ended the excavation. The images below (Figures 7 - 9) provide a photographic record of the excavation.



Figure 7. The well demarcated Shazi 2 grave of un-named infant.



Figure 8. The excavated test trench and beginning of the extension at Shazi 2 grave.



Figure 9. Bedrock at Shazi 2 grave.

SHAZI 3: MCUSHWA

Location: -30.65498S 30.37951E. Mcushwa, also an infant, is said to be a female.

The grave was vaguely marked by small stones, more or less in an irregular row, which measured approximately 1.0m. The same procedures as above (Shezi 1) were followed. The diagonal trench over the grave provided no evidence of the position of the grave. After extending the trench in an easterly and westerly direction the pit was excavated to the size of 1.5m X 1.5m and to a depth of 0.6m where bedrock was exposed. No skeletal remains were uncovered and no conclusive burial pit with backfill could be distinguished in any of the profile walls.

After consultation the family members and supervisors instructed that the excavation be ceased. Being an infant, they were in agreement that the skeletal remains had fully decomposed. The family decided to collect soil from the excavation pit in order for a ceremonial reburial to be held for the deceased. This ended the excavation. The images below (Figures 10 - 12) provide a photographic record of the excavation.



Figure 10. Stones marking the Shazi 3 grave of Mcushwa.



Figure 11. The test trench and extension at the Shazi 3 grave of Mcushwa.



Figure 12. Bedrock at the Shazi 3 grave of Mcushwa

SHAZI 4: SINENGANE

Location: -30.65501S 30.37950E. Sinengane was an adult male.

The grave was well marked by small stones, which measured approximately 2.5m X 1.0m. The same procedures as above (Shezi 1) were followed. The diagonal trench over the grave provided no evidence of the position of the grave. After extending the trench in an easterly and westerly direction the pit was excavated to the size of 2.0m X 1.5m and to a depth of 0.8m during which bedrock was excavated. No skeletal remains were uncovered and no conclusive burial pit with backfill could be distinguished in any of the profile walls. The pit did, however, produce a broken glass bottle and other pieces of glass, a rusted knife blade and some rusted wire, which the family regarded as grave goods (Figure 16).

After consultation the family members and supervisors instructed that the excavation be ceased. They were in agreement that the skeletal remains had fully decomposed. The family collected soil from the excavation pit so that a ceremonial reburial could be held for the deceased. This ended the excavation. The grave goods were placed in the casket with the ceremonial soil. The images below (Figures 13 - 16) provide a photographic record of the excavation.



Figure 13. Stone markers at the Shazi 4 grave of Sinengane.



Figure 14. The test trench at the Shazi 4 grave of Sinengane.



Figure 15. Bedrock at the Shazi 4 grave of Sinengane.



Figure 16. Cultural remains found in the excavation of Shazi 4 grave of Sinengane.

3.4 SHAZI 5: MBAYIZA

Location: -30.65420S 30.37920E. Mbayiza was an adult male.

The grave was not marked by stones or demarcated in any other way. There was no evidence of a grave other than an old illegible metal sheet and a position marked by a wooden peg. A trench of 3.0m X 0.6m and 1.0m deep was excavated to locate the grave. The topsoil was shallow, about 0.3m deep and the rest of the pit was excavated into bedrock. No skeletal remains were uncovered and no conclusive burial pit with backfill could be distinguished in any of the profile walls.

After consultation the family members and supervisors again instructed that the excavation be ceased. They were in agreement that the skeletal remains had fully decomposed. The family decided to collect soil from the excavation pit in order for a ceremonial reburial to be held for the deceased. This ended the excavation. The images below (Figures 10 - 12) provide a photographic record of the excavation.



Figure 17. The Shazi 5 gravesite of Mbayiza.



Figure 18. Excavating the test trench at the Shazi 5 gravesite of Mbayiza.



Figure 19. The completed the test trench at the Shazi 5 gravesite of Mbayiza. Note bedrock.

3.5 SHAZI 6, 7, 8 & 9:

This cluster of Shazi family graves, 6 – 9, belong to Pangindlu, his wife Matjali and their children; Agatha, a girl and an unnamed infant boy. Figure 20 below represents a schematic layout of the graves.

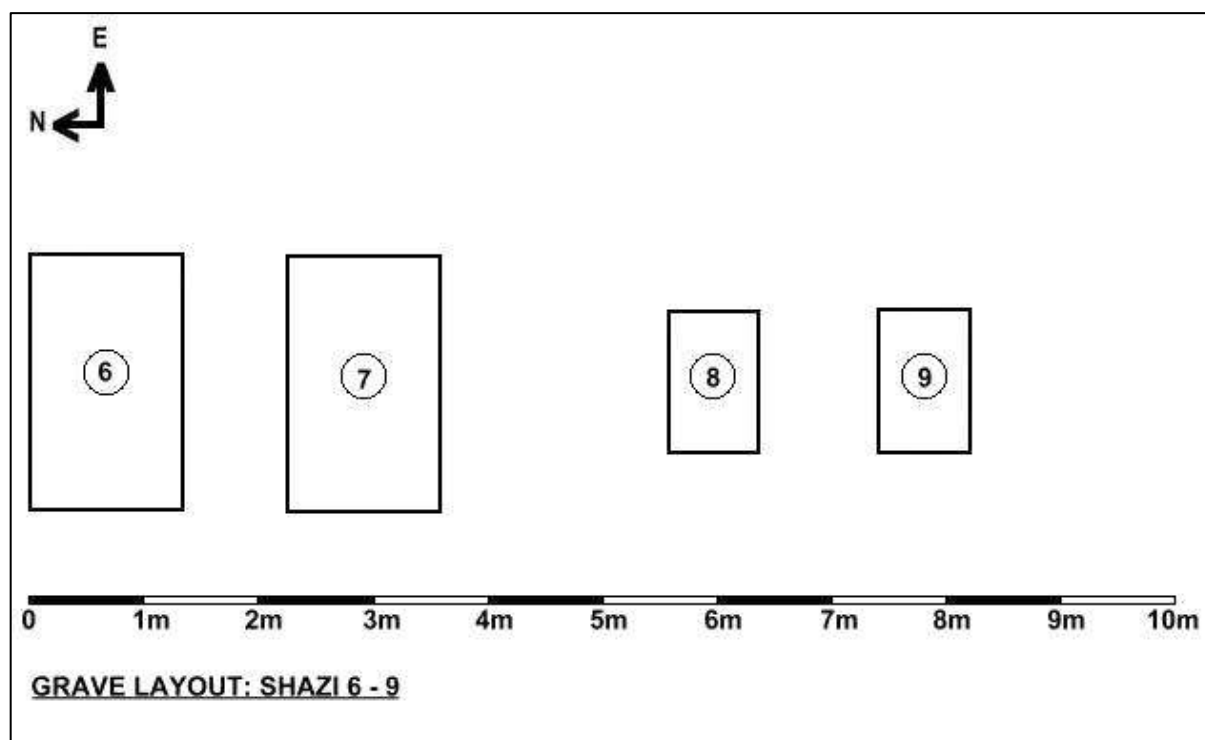


Figure 20. A schematic layout of the graves 6 – 9.

SHAZI 6: PANGINDLU

Location: -30.65329S 30.37887E. Pangindlu was an adult male.

The grave was well marked by small stones, which measured approximately 2.5m X 1.1m. The same procedures as above (Shezi 1) were followed. The diagonal trench over the grave provided no evidence of the position of the grave. After extending the trench in an easterly direction the excavation exposed a large termite nest. In the centre of the pit, the termite nest covered an area of 1.3m X 1.2m and would have filled more than half of any burial pit. The pit was excavated to the size of 2.0m X 1.1m and to a depth of 0.9m. Most of the pit contained the termite nest, but in the western section the pit extended into bedrock. No skeletal remains were uncovered and no conclusive burial pit with backfill could be distinguished in any of the profile walls, probably because of the termite nest.

The family members and supervisors consulted and gave the instruction that the excavation be ceased. They were in agreement that the skeletal remains had been destroyed by the termite working or are fully decomposed. The family collected soil from the excavation pit so that a ceremonial reburial could be held

for the deceased. This ended the excavation. The images below (Figures 21 - 24) provide a photographic record of the excavation.



Figure 21. The well demarcated gravesite of Shazi grave 6 of Pangindlu.



Figure 22. The test trench at Shazi grave 6 of Pangindlu.



Figure 23. The test trench being extended. Note exposure of the termite nest above the shovel handle.



Figure 24. A full view of the grave excavation at Shazi grave 6 of Pangindlu. Note the

termite nest in the eastern profile.

SHAZI 7: MATJALI

Location: -30.65329S 30.37886E. Matjali was an adult female.

The grave was clearly marked with small stones, which measured approximately 2.3m X 1.1m. The same procedures as above (Shezi 1) were followed. The diagonal trench over the grave provided no evidence of the position of the grave. After extending the trench in an easterly and westerly direction the pit was excavated to the size of 1.5m X 1.1m and to a depth of 0.9m. The eastern expansion of the pit was blocked by a tree and the family had no desire to remove the tree because they were of the opinion that should skeletal material have existed, it would already have been exposed in the area that was excavated. during which bedrock was excavated. No skeletal remains were uncovered and no conclusive burial pit with backfill could be distinguished in any of the profile walls.

After consultation the family members and supervisors instructed that the excavation be ceased. They were in agreement that the skeletal remains had fully decomposed. The family collected soil from the excavation pit so that a ceremonial reburial could be held for the deceased. This ended the excavation. The images below (Figures 25 - 27) provide a photographic record of the excavation.



Figure 25. Gravesite at Shazi grave 7 of Matjali.



Figure 26. The test trench at Shazi grave 7 of Matjali.



Figure 27. The completed excavation at Shazi grave 7 of Matjali.

SHAZI 8: AGATHA

Location: -30.65326S 30.37887E. Agatha was a girl child.

The grave was not marked by stones or demarcated in any other way. There was no evidence of a. A trench of 1.2m X 0.5m and 0.9m deep was excavated to locate the grave. The topsoil was about 0.4m deep and the rest of the pit was excavated into bedrock. No skeletal remains were uncovered and no conclusive burial pit with backfill could be distinguished in any of the profile walls.

After consultation the family members and supervisors instructed that the excavation be ceased. Being an infant, they were in agreement that the skeletal remains had fully decomposed. The family decided to collect soil from the excavation pit in order to conduct a ceremonial reburial for the deceased. This ended the excavation. The images below (Figures 10 - 12) provide a photographic record of the excavation.



Figure 28. Gravesite at Shazi grave 8 of Agatha.



Figure 29. The completed test trench at Shazi grave 8 of Agatha.

SHAZI 9:

Location: -30.65323S 30.37887E. The name of the new-born infant, said to be a male, is unknown.

The grave was not marked by two stones. A trench of 1.2m X 0.5m and 0.6m deep was excavated to locate the grave. The topsoil was about 0.4m deep and the rest of the pit was excavated to when bedrock was first exposed when the family members and supervisors instructed that the excavation be ceased. No skeletal remains were uncovered and no conclusive burial pit with backfill could be distinguished in any of the profile walls.

The family were in agreement that the skeletal remains of the new-born had fully decomposed. They family collected soil from the excavation pit in order to

conduct a ceremonial reburial for the deceased. This ended the excavation. The images below (Figures 10 - 12) provide a photographic record of the excavation.



Figure 30. Gravesite at Shazi grave 9 of new-born infant.



Figure 31. The completed test trench at Shazi grave 9 of new-born infant.

3.6 SHAZI 10: MNYINYWA

Location: -30.65172S 30.37871E. Mnyinywa was an adult male.

Mnyinywa's grave is located some distance from the other Shazi graves and is located in a bush thicket. The grave was unmarked. In view of the results from the other Shazi graves where no skeletal remains were found, the supervisors and family decided not to excavate this particular grave. Instead they straightaway took soil from the position where the grave was indicated in order to perform a ceremonial reburial for the deceased.



Figure 32. Gravesite at Shazi grave 10 of Mnyinywa.



Figure 33. The place at Shazi gravesite 10 of Mnyinywa where soil was taken for a ceremonial reburial.

4. CONCLUSION

The grave relocation project at Rossmine Mine was concluded to the satisfaction of the Shazi supervisors and Shazi clan members who acted as helper during the project. Although many of the graves were clearly traditionally demarcated with stones surrounding the grave, no skeletal remains were found in any of the graves. In all instances except Shazi grave 10, the graves were excavated into or at least rock-bottom depth.

The supervisors and clan member always dictated when to stop the excavation. They then collected soil from the gravesite in order for them to conduct a ceremonial reburial for the deceased. Caskets were at hand in which the soil from each gravesite was individually placed. The name of the deceased or the family relation of the un-named infants were written on the lid of the casket.