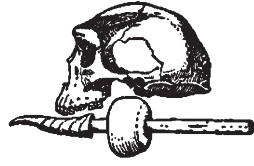


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Editorial

Before the sun gets down: Reflecting on the journey that has been

It is now history that the transformation efforts initiated by the ‘gang of three’ culminated in the unanimous approval of the Transformation Charter) during the 2008 biannual conference of the Association of Southern African Professional Archaeologists (ASAPA). These efforts had been initiated in 2007 (see Ndlovu 2009; Smith 2009) to provide a forum through which the lack of transformation in South African archaeology was to be discussed.

As part of implementing transformation, there were intentions to appoint someone of indigenous African descent to the position of Editor-in-Chief for the *Bulletin*. As Smith (2010: 121) notes, “Unfortunately there were no suitable applications from people of indigenous African descent.” As a result, the ASAPA Council elected in 2008 to serve a three year term, advertised for the position of Editorial Assistant for the *South African Archaeological Bulletin*. This position was aimed at providing Africans with opportunities “to gain practical experience of high standards of editing and editorial processes...” and to transform “the face of *Bulletin* editing and provide a long-term mechanism for skills transfer” (Smith 2010: 121). I was one of the only two applicants for this two-year editorial internship position and the ASAPA Council decided to appoint us both on 1 March 2010. I resumed official duty on 1 July 2010, becoming active in the publication of the December 2010 issue of the *Bulletin*. Indeed, the sun was rising, shining on the transformative possibilities of South African archaeology. But not everyday characterised by sunshine becomes a warm one.

Initially, the intention was that we would alternate between the two positions of Assistant Research Article Editor and an Assistant Field and Technical Report Editor. The aim was to provide us with a greater exposure to the different sections of the *Bulletin* in order to gain the much needed experience. This never happened though. Between July 2010 and 2013, I worked with the Editor-in-Chief as his assistant on the publication of Research Articles. This allowed me an opportunity to gain valuable experience as had originally been the intention (see Smith 2010). On the 24th of April 2015, the ASAPA Council appointed me for three months to the acting position as the Editor-in-Chief of the *Bulletin*. I later became the Editor-in-Chief following my successful application for the position. This brief historical context provides one with an understanding of how I came to work within the Editorial Committee of the *Bulletin*. Thus, my appointment as the Editor-in-Chief of the *Bulletin* in July 2015 was a culmination of long-term goals to transform the face of this prestigious journal.

Looking back, I have been involved with the *Bulletin* for almost ten years now. During this period when the sun was rising, I learned a lot, particularly about the politics of South

African archaeology and the production of knowledge. I could have done some things differently, but I have no regrets. It has thus been a long day, defined by warmth from the sun rays. But this warmth was intercepted by periods during the day when clouds covered me and thus affected the warmth I could get from the sun rays. These cloudy periods have been painful, representing the many challenges I had or continue to be having during my tenure with the *Bulletin*. I had to remain calm, steadfast, and sourced the warmth I needed from many sources that could provide me with such alternative comfort in the absence of the sun rays.

As the sun is beginning its descent for the day, becoming less hot, and the shadow is becoming even longer, I have begun reflecting back on the career it has been with the *Bulletin*. It has been four years filled with hope, excitement, and frustration. Thus, it has been quite an experience having to manage the production of eight issues to date under my leadership. I have had a bigger voice in the production of these issues. Prior to this, my voice existed within authority that was higher than the role I occupied. My powers were thus severely limited, in contrast with the ability I now have to make meaningful decisions. It was only when I was appointed into the apex position that I began having plans for the five-year appointment I was offered in 2015 by the then ASAPA Council.

The strategic document I submitted to the ASAPA and SAAS Councils at the beginning of my tenure was defined by a number of issues I considered valuable (see Ndlovu 2016, 2017): (i) changing the guidelines which included making a clear distinction between research articles and field and technical reports and the process of managing submitted manuscripts; (ii) ensuring that editorials and guest editorials focus on specific topical issues regarding taking the *Bulletin* forward; (iii) changing the format of the discussion forum to have responses to articles published under this section; (iv) coming up with a mission and vision for the *Bulletin*; (v) ensuring that transformation is part of the agenda by focusing on increasing the number of publications from African scholars, particularly young emerging academics (see Smith 2014); (vi) adding a new section to profile high achievers in the discipline of archaeology; (vii) having a more involved Editorial Board as well as appointing additional members; (viii) initiating discussions around the use of Electronic Journal Management software to improve the general management and production of the *Bulletin*; and (ix) creating a platform to consider the possibility of having the *Bulletin* published online other than only in print. Over the next two issues of the *Bulletin* before I retire from being the Editor-in-Chief, I will reflect on the achievements and failures recorded thus far during my reign.

To weather the storms I have had to face as the Editor-

in-Chief, I have had to rely on a limited number of people who became reservoirs of inspirational power and wisdom for me. One of these has been the evergreen Prof. Lyn Wadley. As a member of our Editorial Board, Prof. Wadley had played a valuable role in reviewing articles, writing editorials, and providing insightful advice. I wish to congratulate her on yet another achievement: she was recently elected as a Fellow of the British Academy. This election is a confirmation of her outstanding contribution to the production of knowledge about the past. She is the only South African amongst the many other scholars who were elected into this Fellowship. This recent accolade is adding on many others that she already has: Prof. Wadley is an A-rated scientist by the National Research Foundation while also being listed on the Thompson Reuter's list of the top 1% highly cited researchers. This demonstrates how much of an impact she has had in the discipline of archaeology. She was the first runner-up for the 2016 South African Women in Science. I was in a first year class she taught early in 1997. She thus was the first person ever to teach me archaeology. I am proud to have been taught by her and other esteemed lecturers at the university. I am proud of her inspiring career to date. Prof. Wadley is indeed a high achiever of note.

I conclude this editorial by warmly welcoming our two

new Editorial Board members. Dr Ancila Nhamo from the University of Zimbabwe and Prof. Laurajane Smith from the Australian National University have been appointed to add the necessary academic expertises amongst our current Editorial Board members. Welcome to both colleagues, and we all look forward to working with them.

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