



SALUTES, LABELS AND OTHER ARCHIVAL ARTEFACTS

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Introduction

1. This essay is one of a number in the long-term research project of the Archive and Public Culture Research Initiative, *Ethnologised Pasts and their Archival Futures* (www.apc.uct.ac.za). The project draws attention to the archival capacities and challenges of ethnographic material. It does this in order to enable on-going recuperation of pasts which were denied by colonialism and apartheid, a process which Frantz Fanon recognised as colonial mortification.

Restorative justice in South Africa is focused on the acknowledgement of apartheid atrocities and economic redress, notably through the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the land-claims processes.¹ Less attention has been given to vitiations of the world of ideas. The damage done by colonialism and apartheid's disavowal of the region's history before colonialism has received some attention, largely in the form of heritage initiatives such as those concentrated in the development of the Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape.

Archaeology has long contributed to knowledge of the remote past and, since the mid-1960s, professional historians have researched the immediately precolonial era. Collaborations between historians and archaeologists have had productive results, notably in recent years, which have seen the publication of a number of useful syntheses (Esterhuysen et al. 2008; Hamilton & Hall 2010). But the pursuit of knowledge about the region's deeper past continues to be hampered by the conditions of production of the available archive on which this depends. Shepherd and Haber (in this volume) raise questions about the ways in which the archaeological material record is affected by the practices of the discipline. Premesh Lalu's *The Deaths of Hintsa* (2009) uses insights drawn from Subaltern Studies to demonstrate how impossible it is to use the tainted colonial archive to write a history of the Xhosa chief Hintsa that evades reproducing the violence of the past. While Lalu is surely right in his understanding of the implication of the archive in the heart of colonial violence and misrepresentation, it is far from clear that recognition of its suspect nature negates its archival potential.

'Heiden-Frauen arbeiten vor der Hütte Nov. 1912 Umlazi'
Caption as written on strip of paper attached to the glass plate negative. Original glass plate and caption probably created by Br Aegidius Müller. Date 1912. (Reproduced with permission of the Congregation of Mariannahill Missionaries Archive)

