

By-Laws of the Society of Africanist Archaeologists

(published in *Nyame Akuma* 33 (1990) and amended 2004, 2006, 2016, and 2021)

Article I - Name and Location

Section 1 – Name. The name of this organization shall be the Society of Africanist Archaeologists, a nonprofit corporation.

Section 2 – Offices. Offices of the Society shall be located in a locality as may be determined by the Executive Board.

Article II - Objectives

The objectives of this Society shall be:

1. To promote and to stimulate interest and research in the archaeology of the African continent.
2. To advocate and to aid in the conservation of archaeological resources.
3. To encourage public access to and appreciation of the aims, accomplishments, and limitations of archaeological research.
4. To serve as a bond among those interested in African Archaeology, both professionals and non-professionals, and to aid in directing their efforts into scientific activities.
5. To publish and to encourage the publication of archaeological research.
6. To discourage commercialism in archaeology and to work for its elimination.

In the pursuit of its objectives, the Society shall promote and support all legislative, regulatory, and voluntary programs that forbid and discourage all activities that result in the loss of scientific knowledge and of access to sites and artifacts. Such activities include, but are not limited to, the irresponsible excavation, collecting, hoarding, exchanging, buying, or selling of archaeological materials. Conduct that results in such losses is declared contrary to the ideals and objectives of the Society.

Article III - Structure

The Society shall be composed of members. It shall have (1) an Executive Board, which, in addition to such duties as may be prescribed in these By-Laws, shall act as the policy-making and administrative body; (2) Committees of the Society; and (3) Such Officers and employees as are necessary to

accomplish its purposes. The Executive Board may approve establishing relationships with other archaeological societies and associations.

Article IV - Membership

Section 1 – Membership Basis. Membership is open to any person who subscribes to the Objectives of the Society, without regard to sex, race, religion, or nationality.

Section 2- Classes of Members. The membership shall consist of the following classes:

- a. Member
- b. Student Member
- c. [Recent Degree Member](#)
- d. Retired Member
- e. Joint Member
- f. Affiliate Member
- g. Life Member

Section 3 – Member. Any person who is engaged in archaeology or any related aspect thereof or any other person who supports the objectives of the Society shall be eligible to become a member.

Section 4 – Student Member. Any person matriculating in an educational institution pursuing candidacy for a degree (Associate or higher) in a field of study related to some aspect of archaeology shall be eligible for membership as a Student Member ([reduced dues](#)).

[Section 5 – Recent Degree Member. Any non-student who is less than 5 years past their most recent degree and who has not yet obtained a permanent or tenure-stream appointment, shall be eligible for membership as a Recent Degree Member \(reduced dues\).](#)

Section 6 – Retired Member. Any Member who has retired from professional life in a remunerative capacity and is age 65 or over shall be eligible for retirement membership. Individuals in a Retired status shall retain all rights and privileges previously held ([reduced dues](#)).

Section 7 – Joint Member. Any person who is a spouse of a Member and who supports the objectives of the Society shall be eligible to become a Joint Member.

Section 8 – Affiliate Member. Any Member who Resides in a country where foreign exchange restrictions prevent payment of membership fees. Such membership must be renewed annually by special petition to the Treasurer. Voting rights will be conferred to those who have renewed their affiliate status for two or more successive years.

Section 9 – Life Member. An amount to be set by the Executive Board for life membership. Funds will be invested in an endowment, the proceeds of which will

be used to support the Society's activities.

Section 10 - Privileges

- a. All classes of members shall enjoy the privileges of the Society except where certain privileges are specifically restricted to a specific class of member in these By-Laws.
- b. Joint Members and their spouses shall be eligible to receive one copy of all Society mailings, which are sent to the member, except for election material which is sent to both.

Section 11 - Membership Application. The following membership procedures shall be followed:

- a. Applications for membership shall be submitted to the Executive Board in such form and accompanied by such supporting documents as the Executive Board may determine.
- b. The Executive Board may assign a committee and/or staff to assist the Executive Board in the processing of membership applications, and in the overall appraisal, ruling or interpretation of questions and inquiries relating to membership.

Section 12 - Suspension for Non-Payment of Dues. Any member whose dues are 90 days past due shall be suspended and all privileges of membership discontinued. Members suspended for non-payment of dues may be reinstated at any time upon payment of the current year's dues.

Section 13 – Termination of Membership.

- a. The Executive Board may **at any time**, by three-quarters vote of the Executive Board members present and voting, remove from the membership rolls any member whose acts are contrary to the ideals, objectives, and accepted standards of the Society as set forth in these By-Laws, SAfA Code of Ethics, or **Sexual Harassment Policy**, or who otherwise makes improper use of membership in the Society. The action of the Executive Board may be subject to any appeal to the Society at its Business Meeting.
- b. The membership of those members who are under suspension for nonpayment of dues at the close of a membership year shall be terminated.

Article V – Dues and Charges

Section 1 – Annual Dues.

- a. The annual dues, payable in United States funds, shall be fixed annually by the Executive Board.
- b. The rates for annual dues may differ by membership class and/or by other criteria determined by the Executive Board.

Article VI – Executive Board

Section 1 – Authority and Responsibility. The governing body of this Society shall be the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall have supervision, control, and direction of the affairs of the Society, its committees, and publications; shall determine its policies or changes therein; shall actively pursue its objectives and supervise the disbursement of its funds. The Executive Board may adopt such rules and regulations for the conduct of its business as shall be deemed advisable.

Section 2 – Composition. The Executive Board shall be composed of a President, **President-elect**, Treasurer, **Treasurer-elect**, Recording Secretary, **Recording Secretary-elect**, Organizing Secretary, and four Executive Board At Large members: 2 Members-at-Large from Africa, 1 Member-at-Large from North America and 1 Member-at-Large from Europe. Officers-elect serve as ex-officio members of the Executive Board, **as do the Webmaster(s) and the Editor(s) of the Nyame Akuma** bulletin. The Executive Board may appoint other ex-officio members of the board without voting rights.

Section 3 – Duration of Office – **Members-at-Large**.

- a. The four Executive Board Members-at-Large shall typically serve for a term of two years, unless extraordinary circumstances (such as those described in Article VII Section 3 below) force a prolongation. The term of the Executive Board Members-at-Large shall begin at the close of the biennial Business Meeting of the Society following their election.
- b. **Members-at-Large have the possibility to stand once for re-election.**
- c. **A Member-at-Large** may resign upon presenting a written (**or email**) resignation to the President of the Society, and the resignation shall become effective upon acceptance by the Executive Board.

Section 4 - Quorum and Voting.

- a. At any meeting of the Executive Board, a majority of the voting members of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business of the Society.
 1. **Voting members of the Board are the President, Recording Secretary, Organizing Secretary, Treasurer, and four Members-At-Large.**
- b. Unless otherwise specifically provided by these By-Laws, a majority vote shall govern. No **Board** member shall vote by proxy.
- c. The President may request action by the Executive Board between meetings of the Board by email ballot, by telephone, or electronic conferencing vote. Action taken by email ballot, telephone, or electronic

conferencing by a majority of all voting members of the Executive Board shall constitute a ballot action and shall be reported at the next meeting of the Executive Board.

Section 5 – Vacancies. Vacancies on the Executive Board that occur between the regularly scheduled elections of the Society for any reason in any office, shall be filled by appointment by the Executive Board. Such an appointment shall be effective only until the Society's next election, at which time the vacancy shall be filled by the newly elected person.

Article VII – Officers

Section 1 – Elected Officers. The elected officers of the Society shall be President, [President-elect](#), a Recording Secretary, [a Recording Secretary-elect](#), a Treasurer, and [a Treasurer-elect \(see Article VI, Section 2\)](#). [Officers-elect serve ex-officio](#). All officers are elected by the membership of the Society. The officers-elect shall automatically succeed to their designated offices at the completion of the incumbents' term of office.

Section 2 – Qualification for Officer. Any individual who is a voting member of the Society in good standing shall be eligible for nomination and election as an officer.

Section 3 – Term of Office.

- a. The President, Treasurer, and Recording Secretary shall take office immediately upon the conclusion of the Business Meeting of the Society and shall typically serve for a term of two years, from the close of one Biennial Business Meeting to the close of the next Biennial Business Meeting. Under extraordinary circumstances (such as a pandemic disrupting global travel and changing the SAfA conference schedule, or the building of new mechanisms for electronic voting), elected officers may continue to serve until such time as the rescheduled SAfA conference takes place, and/or the new electronic voting mechanisms to elect the next Executive Board have been established.
- b. [The President-elect, Recording Secretary-elect, and Treasurer-elect shall serve a term of one year, from their election in the year between biennial meetings until moving into the office at the close of the next biennial Business Meeting.](#)
- c. [The Treasurer and Recording Secretary may be encouraged to serve multiple, consecutive 2-year terms, for continuity of society business. The President is normally not eligible for re-election. Incumbents must stand for re-election with each election cycle, although, at the Nomination Committee's discretion, they may run unopposed.](#)
- d. [In the event that either the Treasurer or Recording Secretary plans to step down, they must notify the Nominations Committee no later than November 30 of the year before elections, so that the committee can constitute a slate for their position in](#)

[a timely fashion. In this case, the Treasurer-elect or Recording Secretary-elect shall serve a 1-year term, concurrent with the final year of the incumbent Treasurer or Recording Secretary, in order to assure a smooth transition of office. The Treasurer-elect or Recording Secretary-elect takes full office as Treasurer or Recording Secretary, at the end of the Business Meeting at the next biennial meeting of the society.](#)

- e. An officer may resign upon presenting a written resignation to the President of the Society, and the resignation shall become effective upon acceptance by the Executive Board.

Section 4 – Removal. Any officer of the Society may be removed by a three-quarters vote of the Executive Board present and voting, whenever in its judgment the best interests of the Society would be served thereby.

Section 5 – President. The President shall be the presiding officer of the Society and Chairperson of the Executive Board. The President shall also serve as an ex-officio member of all committees.

[Section 6 – President-elect. The President may delegate some of his/her responsibilities to the President-elect. The President-elect's regular duties will include](#)

- a. [liaising with the Organizing Secretary regarding meeting arrangements and communicating with the President and Executive as needed on meeting planning;](#)
- b. [in the first three months of the meeting year, organizing and chairing the Committee on Graduate Student Travel Awards, working with Treasurer to disburse awarded travel funds. In the event of the President's incapacitation or resignation, the President-elect shall be the presiding officer of the Society and Chairperson of the Executive Board.](#)

Section 7 – Recording Secretary. The Recording Secretary shall oversee the proper recording of the proceedings of the meetings of the Society and the Executive Board, shall ensure that accurate records are kept of the corporation and all members, that appropriate archival procedures are used, and such duties as from time to time may be assigned to the office by the President or the Executive Board.

Section 8 – Treasurer. The Treasurer shall oversee the Society's funds and records; the collection of members' dues; the establishment of proper accounting procedures for the handling of the Society's funds; the performance of an annual audit by a Certified Public Accountant (USA); and further, shall report on the financial condition of the Society at all meetings of the Executive Board, at the Business Meeting, and at others times as called upon by the President.

Article VIII – Meetings and Voting

Section 1 – Business Meeting of the Society. The Business meeting of the Society shall be held at such a time and place as the Executive Board shall determine. Notice of said meeting shall be given to all members not less than 60 days prior to the date thereof.

Section 2 – Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Society may be called by the Executive Board at any time, or shall be called by the President upon receipt of a written request by ten percent of the paid voting membership as listed in the current membership list, specifying the purpose of such meeting. At such special meeting, no business shall be transacted except as specified in a notice to members. Written notice of such meeting shall be given to all members not less than 60 days prior to the date thereof.

Section 3 – Joint or Regional Meetings. Joint or regional meetings for the purpose of discussing archaeological problems, symposia, and matters of mutual interest among members and/or other related parties may be called by the President upon approval of the Executive Board.

Section 4 – Voting.

- a. Votes shall be cast in regular electronic elections or electronic ballots or, as necessary, in person at the Biennial Business Meeting. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted.
- b. Only active members who have paid their annual dues shall have the right to vote.
- c. All candidates will be asked to submit a Candidate Statement, to be published online in concert with the electronic voting.
- d. Regular voting for officers of the Society shall be conducted electronically, in the first quarter of the year between regular SAFA meetings. Elections shall be organized and supervised by the Nominations and Elections Committee.

Section 5 – Quorum of Members for in-person events that involve voting. Upon the convening of any Business Meeting or special meeting at which a vote will be taken in person, a quorum shall consist of 50 percent of those voting members registered for said meeting, provided that no fewer than 20 voting members are present. In addition to in-person participation, online ballots may be cast at the General Business Meeting if the Executive Committee determines that circumstances permit or require it.

Section 6 – Procedures for electronic voting. For electronic voting that is *not* undertaken as part of a General Business Meeting,
- The opening date and general topic(s) of an online ballot must be communicated to the membership at least 45 days in advance (or longer, if other By-Law sections stipulate more extended notice);

- An informational package containing all details to be voted upon must be circulated to the membership at least 7 days in advance of the opening date for the ballot (or longer, if other By-Law sections stipulate more extended notice);
- The opening of the electronic voting system shall be announced to the membership so people can start to cast their ballots;
- Electronic voting will have no quorum requirements; rather, the electronic voting system must be open for a period of 20 days to ensure robust participation by the membership;
- Voting reminders should be sent to the membership three times: once 7 days, once 48 hours, and once 24 hours before the electronic voting system closes.

Section 7 – Rules of Order. The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the conduct of meetings of the Society in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these By-laws and any special rules the Society or the Executive Board may adopt.

Article IX – Publications

Section 1 – Journals and Other Communications.

- a. The Society shall publish a Bulletin to be known as *Nyame Akuma* and other publications approved by the Executive Board.
- b. Each class of member shall receive such publications as the Executive Board may designate.
- c. Editorial Policy. Manuscripts submitted to *Nyame Akuma* will be written and formatted in accordance with the Editorial Policy, which is published on the Society's Web site.

Section 2 – Editorial responsibilities.

- a. The Editor(s) of each publication of the Society shall be appointed by the Executive Board for a term to be determined by the Executive Board, and shall be subject to such editorial policy as may be adopted by the Executive Board.
- b. Each Editor may, subject to review by the Executive Board, appoint such associate and assistant editors as may be required, in addition to clerical and editorial assistance subject to authorization and budget approval by the Executive Board.

Article X – Committees

Section 1 – **Committee Type.** The Society shall have three types of committees: Standing Committees, Ad Hoc Committees, and Service Committees.

- a. The President, to the extent necessary and/or possible, shall assign a member of the Executive Board to provide liaison with each committee.
- b. Each committee, regardless of type, shall submit written reports of its activities and

recommendations to each regular meeting of the Executive Board.

Section 2. Standing Committees of the Society are expected to be in regular operation to execute routine business matters. The President, with approval by the Executive Board, shall appoint members to the Standing Committees except where the By-Laws and/or Executive Handbook specifically state other procedures. Standing Committees include:

- a. The Nominations and Elections Committee. This committee consists of 5 voting members: One past President out of office for >2 years; One past Executive Board member out of office for >2 years; One individual who has not served on the Executive Board but has been a SAfA member for more than 15 years; and two individuals who have been SAfA members less than 10 years, with or without Executive Board experience. The Webmaster serves as an ex-officio member of the Nominations Committee and will see to the circulation of candidate statements and ballots and other technical matters. The Nominations Committee is responsible for soliciting candidates for slates (optimally 2 for each post, minimally 1 for each post), for running the online election, and for reporting election results to the Executive Board, which announces them to the general membership. The Nominations Committee will circulate a Call for Nominations to the membership, and may also propose additional nominations if necessary. A member of the Nominations Committee cannot stand for election in that cycle.
- b. The Student Travel Committee, which solicits, reviews, and awards funds for travel to the biennial meetings. This committee shall consist of at least 3 voting members: the President-elect, plus two Members-at-Large from regions other than that represented by the President-elect; the Treasurer will serve as an ex-officio member. If the Organizing Committee also undertakes fundraising for student travel, and the Executive Board approves a unified review process for all Student Travel applications, then the Organizing Secretary, or other member of the Organizing Committee, will also have a seat on the Student Travel Committee.
- c. The Book Prize Committee (2 SAfA members >10 years post PhD, with high competency in both French and English, with the Recording Secretary as ex-officio member).
- d. The Student Paper Committee reads, rates, and ranks all papers submitted and awards the prize to the highest ranked paper, notifying the President and Recording Secretary of the basis for their selection.
- e. The Student Poster Committee reviews, rates, and ranks all student posters at the biennial meetings according to criteria outlined in the Executive Handbook and award the Student

Poster Prize, notifying the President and Recording Secretary of the basis for their selection.

- f. The ASA/SAA/EAA Affiliated Society Committee (3 voting members and the Recording Secretary as ex-officio member): This committee shall be composed of three voting members who collectively hold memberships in the African Studies Association, the European Archaeology Association, and the Society for American Archaeology; the Recording Secretary shall serve as an ex-officio member. Voting members are preferred not to be members of the Executive Board.
- g. The Organizing Committee is appointed by the Organizing Secretary for the purposes of planning and fundraising for the Biennial meeting.

Section 3. Ad Hoc Committees of the Society may be appointed to handle special tasks, challenges, or opportunities that arise on a non-regular basis. The Executive Board shall create and dissolve each Ad Hoc Committee, designate charges, and establish policy with regard to budget, size, type of membership, and term.

Section 4. Service Committees may arise when SAfA members recognize the need to address a specific issue in a way that can be of service to the broader community of Africanist archaeologists. In that case, a group of member volunteers can coalesce as their own accord, define their agenda, and formally petition the Executive Board for status as a Service Committee. The Executive Board will review the incipient committee's agenda and composition; if the Executive Board approves granting of Service Committee status, the President shall assign one or more members of the Executive Board to work with the new committee either as liaison or as direct participant(s). If the Service Committee entails any financial activities, the Treasurer must be a voting member of it. Each Service Committee shall submit written reports of its activities and recommendations to each regular meeting of the Executive Board.

Article XI – Fiscal and Legal Procedures

Section 1 – Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the Society shall be set by the Executive Board.

Section 2 – Fiscal Authority. The Executive Board may receive by devise, bequests, donations, or otherwise, either real or personal property or both, and hold the same absolutely or in trust, and invest, reinvest, and manage the same, and apply said property and the income arising therefrom to the purposes of the Society except where restricted by these By-Laws.

Section 3 – Working fund. The income from annual dues and from investment and other sources shall constitute the Working Fund, available for operating, publications, and other current expenses consistent with the objectives of the Society as the Executive

Board may direct.

Section 4 – Annual Budget. The Treasurer shall present a budget to the Executive Board to approve.

Section 5 – Non-Compensation. No member of the Executive Board acting in the capacity as an officer or Executive Board member-at-large shall receive compensation for services rendered. Travel expenses personally incurred by the Executive Board members attending to the business of the Society shall be paid by the Society in accordance with rules and procedures adopted by the Executive Board.

Section 6 – Annual Financial Report and Audit.

- a. The Treasurer shall provide to the Executive Board at each regular meeting a report of all receipts and disbursements of Society funds.
- b. The Executive Board shall appoint an independent Certified Public Accountant to audit the financial records of the Society and submit an annual audit report.

Section 7 – Legal Counsel. The Executive Board may appoint legal counsel to act as general legal counsel and to advise in the legal affairs of the Society.

Section 8 – Indemnification. Every officer, Executive Board member, employee of the Society, and such others as specified from time to time by the Executive Board, shall be indemnified by the Society against all expenses and liabilities, including counsel fees, reasonably incurred or imposed upon them in connection with any proceeding to which they may be made a party or in which they may become involved, by reason of being or having been an officer, Executive Board member, or employee of the Society, or any settlement thereof, whether the person is an officer, Executive Board member or employee at the time such expenses are incurred, except in such cases wherein the officer, Executive Board member, or employee is adjudged guilty of willful misfeasance or malfeasance in the performance of duties. The foregoing rights of indemnification shall be in addition to, and not exclusive of, all other rights to which the indemnified may be entitled.

Article XII – Affiliated Units

Section 1 – Authorization. There shall be affiliated units of the Society when, in the opinion of the Executive Board, such affiliations are in the best interests of African archaeology, the Society, and the affiliated units involved as a means of encouraging and promoting more effective cooperation and coordination of activity between the Society and such organizations. Such affiliated units shall be and remain completely autonomous and independent of the Society.

Article XIII – Dissolution

The Society shall use its funds only to accomplish the objectives specified in these By-Laws, and no part of said funds shall inure, or be distributed, to the members of the Society. On dissolution of the Society, any funds remaining shall be distributed to one or more regularly organized and qualified charitable, educational, scientific, or philanthropic organizations to be selected by the Executive Board.

Article XIV – Amendments

Section 1 – Originating Proposed Amendments.

Amendments to these By-Laws may be proposed by the Executive Board on its own initiative or upon petition by any 30 voting members of the Society. Such amendments shall be submitted to the Executive Board for review and for preparation of a recommendation to the Membership.

Section 2 – Approval of By-Laws. Amendments to these By-Laws shall be approved by a two thirds affirmative vote (>67% of votes cast) either via electronic ballot, at the Business Meeting, or in special meetings of the Society duly called, provided written notice of proposed changes have been sent to the members 60 days before such meeting or electronic voting takes place.